



FUTURE'S SO BRIGHT YA GOTTA WEAR SHADES

People have suspected for some time that the entire country is being secretly governed by an oligarchic federation, unassailable, and wielding huge power. Think about it: there is no aspect of life, no action or activity too trivial or nebulous, that it doesn't have some governing body looking over its shoulder, sucking its teeth and pointing out that you can't do that. Or rather, you can, but if you do, we'll tax it.

Something has gone wrong. I use "gone wrong" in the debased sense in which a drug deal that turns into a double murder is said to have "gone wrong". If I've got this right, in order to be virtuous these days, one has to be worthy, and in order to be worthy one must be rich. Because if you can afford good things, you will be afforded recognition – the brand name of fame. Poverty is invariably seen as a personal failing, rather than any failed government policy.

I have this image of the rich elite all wearing sunglasses and drinking champagne standing up in an illuminated swimming pool, pausing between mouthfuls only to bray loudly about investment portfolios and insider trading.

Why the sunglasses? Well, back in the 1950's certain types of people began to wear shades as a form of chic. Jazz musicians could dramatise the underground, persecuted, jokey character of their existence and telegraph the idea that even at night they already knew too much about what was going on to want to see any more. Sunglasses were a means of demonstrating that a great deal of the passing parade was better left unseen. Then again, perhaps the rich are wearing shades because they may have spent too much time with the wrong people trying to get to the right place, and as a result, don't want to be

recognised at all.

Ironically, politicians like to believe they are on the side of light (which they identify exclusively with goodness), but because they insist on light's absolute domination over darkness – and will stop at no dark deed to insure that domination – they end up transforming light into darkness. This is not a merger. But a takeover. Yet when politicians are accused of scamming by an opposing political party, they cry foul. It is a political plot. An injustice has been done. The continuing belief that the world is fundamentally just is implied in the very complaint that there has been an injustice.

Back in 1977, the Voyager space probes began their endless journey into space carrying messages of goodwill from Jimmy Carter, night chants from the Navajo Indians and, oddly, a note from the Chinese which translates into English as "Have you eaten yet?"

Politically correct down-dumbing: the act of "prayer" in our global village has now been rebranded as "multi-denominational, fusion pleading". Jesus wept.

A group of badly-educated devil worshippers – or perhaps adequately-schooled textile fanatics – desecrated a graveyard in New York, with "Satin Lives!"

It took nearly 80 years to pacify Northern Ireland where there are only two factions, while in Iraq there are about 120, who can all trace their vendettas back to the Garden of Eden. What you have left are 120 different teams all playing different games on the same pitch. To make matters worse, there's not much cohesion among the

occupying forces either. One minute a burly Australian comes into your house looking for nuclear weapons, the next a Ukrainian pops round to see if you'd like a job in the police force – and then you get shot in the face by a Shi'ite because a Sunni saw you talking to a Norwegian sergeant about that well-stacked Bulgarian girl in the wireless section.

An email from someone calling themselves Tinatinython.

"Dear Mr Humanity Warp, I recently bought a new mobile phone. One of its strange and pointless gimmicks is a thermometer. I keep my phone inside my trouser pocket, which is warmer than the outside world; so when I turn on the thermometer it does not tell the temperature of the room until it has had a chance to mop its brow and take in the view. But first it



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reports the temperature experienced during its immuration. I wish it to be known that the temperature inside my trousers is very nearly 100F. Not quite the highest temperature ever recorded in Thailand, but I think the Met Office should be informed."

"I don't think Tom Hanks is ready to play me." – Former royal butler Paul Burrell, who hopes his book about Diana will be made into a film.

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