



85. Solstice and Christmas

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Future Sense is a podcast edited from the radio show of the same name, broadcast on BayFM in Byron Bay, Australia, at www.bayfm.org. Hosted by Nyck Jeanes and well-known international futurist, Steve McDonald, Future Sense provides a fresh, deep analysis of global trends and emerging technologies. How can we identify the layers of growth personally, socially and globally? What are the signs missed; the truths being denied? Political science, history, politics, psychology, ancient civilisations, alien contact, the new psychedelic revolution, cryptocurrency and other disruptive and distributed technologies, and much more.

This is Future Sense.

Nyck: You're tuned to *Future Sense* now, and of course it is the holiday season. It's a couple of days before Christmas, as you well know, so we're laying back fairly casual today. Nevertheless, we have some themes to talk about and hopefully you find them interesting. You can always dialogue with us.

Steve: In between sipping our coconut juice.

Nyck: Oh, the coconut juice. Mmmmm. Of course, completely straight at this time of day. There's nothing extra in the coconut juice.

What are we talking about today, Mr McDonald?

Steve: Well, I think we'll talk just a little bit about some of the mythology around Christmas—the origins of it—briefly.

Nyck: True or untrue? We don't really know. There's some crazy stories out there.

Steve: That's right. Then I thought we'd have a bit of a chat about utopianism, and later, in the second half of the show, look at some not so-hidden-agendas that are happening globally.

Nyck: And we should probably frame today's discussion a little bit, just in the knowledge of the intense fires that are occurring across Australia at the moment in four states—I think

there are about 200 fires currently—pretty crazy situation, to say the least; and tragic in the case of South Australia yesterday. I think some 72 homes were lost in South Australia. It's a sort of dys-topian vision, I guess you could say, what's happening across Australia at the moment with fires.

Steve: It certainly has been that way. I saw a Tweet yesterday from somebody in Melbourne saying that there were fire alarms being set off by bushfire smoke in Melbourne, but the fires were actually in Sydney, which is quite a long way from Melbourne. There was even evidence in a short satellite video showing the fire smoke heading out into western New South Wales and curling back around to Melbourne, which is just extraordinary.

Nyck: Extraordinary, yes. Our hearts and minds and love and compassion go out to all the people who've lost and are still battling. There's nothing much to say about it. There but for the grace of God go those of us who are in relatively comfortable situations right now. We've had our local intensity and our local danger a few weeks ago and let's hope that that doesn't happen again. It's big stuff.

Steve: Indeed.

Nyck: You are tuned to *Future Sense* here with Nyck Jeanes and Steve McDonald on this couple of days before Christmas, so we're feeling a little loose and free this morning and very happy to receive any texts that you might like to drop us about anything that we're talking about or anything you'd like to bring attention to.

Christmas time of year. It was my father's birthday on Saturday, and I do believe Clare W. Graves was also born on December the 21st, 1914.

Steve: I think that's right.

Nyck: So happy birthday.

Of course, this time of year we have Christmas which also coincides with the solstice that's just been at 3.21pm on Saturday. That conjunction, so to speak, of the solstice—the summer solstice here, the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere—and the Christmas time and the supposed birth of Jesus and all of that, seems to be a rather confusing time for actually what this period represents for us.

Steve: It is, and if you look at what actually happens on the solstice, you can understand where some of our current stories have come from. Of course, due to the tilt on the earth's axis as we orbit around the sun—and interestingly, I had a look at a nice little short video

about the earth's orbit around the sun, which, of course, is a spiralling action as we spiral through the galaxy—it's not actually a uniform orbit at all. Each time we go around the sun, it's all on a slightly different kind of angle, and it's kind of elliptic. It's very interesting to look at actually.

Anyway, because of the tilt on our axis, the angle of the earth in relation to the sun shifts, and this is, of course, what gives us the variable summers and winters in the northern and southern hemispheres. As we go around the sun, it looks like it's actually the sun tilting in relation to the earth, but it's our tilt that does it. At the end of each season or six-month movement of the sun through our sky, we come to the end of that trajectory and the sun stands still for a short period of time. To the naked eye, it really looks like the sun stands still for about three days. The Ancients would say, particularly at the winter solstice, that the sun would die because it basically was stationary for those few days—the shortest day of the year and the coldest part of the year—and then, of course, it was reborn and started to move again. And that might sound familiar, that story.

Nyck: It does sound a little like some of our religious stories! Strange, that!

It's interesting because the word 'solstice', I think you looked it up, literally means the sun standing still as you're saying.

Steve: Making a stand, yes from the Latin origin. That's right. It is interesting, and of course, if you look at the history of Christianity, you'll find that it was very, very much wrapped up in politics and power and conquest. Inevitably, when the Christian Roman forces would move into an area, they would seek to make Christianity the dominant spiritual belief system wherever they went. Often the way they did that was to take over the local sacred sites and build a church on top of them, and in that process, it's easy to see how some of the original Earth-based belief systems, which were based on simple observation of nature, were incorporated into the Christian stories as well.

Nyck: Interestingly, too, if churches, and particularly some of the great cathedrals of the really monumental and amazing architecture of some of the Christian buildings and other religions, too, that have been placed on those earlier sites, I guess with or without knowing perhaps, the power of the particular location with regards to ley lines or dragon lines as they are also called in various places in the world, with or without that knowledge. Maybe they did know, maybe they didn't.

Steve: I think in some cases they certainly did, particularly in the Gothic era where people like the Templars were involved in citing and building some of those amazing cathedrals.

Nyck: But one way or the other, of course, the power of the earth's magnetic grid, if you will, or the unseen grid that maybe has very many qualities that we are still yet to totally

understand, infuse these new Christian (or other expressions) buildings with this energy, whether they knew it or not. So that, in a sense, was a sort of capture of power, you could argue, whether it was done consciously or otherwise.

Steve: Definitely. An interesting mix of belief systems.

Nyck: And that's the thing, so many belief systems mixed in at this time.

The solstice on Saturday was interesting. Our good friend Varij Viridium, known to many people here in this region—one of the one of the best astrologers here—talked a little bit about that in a post the other day on social media. He quotes, first of all, Osho—Bhagwan, Shree Rajneesh—who's saying: "times change, the world changes, but the experience of silence remains the same. This is the only thing you can rely on." In some ways—because we're going to be talking about utopia, dystopia and madness, or hyper-sanity a bit later on—but I think that's the thing now: the noise of reality at the moment is kind of excruciating. I think that to find a place where silence can emerge still is not an easy thing, and I guess in this region, many of us seek that through various practices.

Steve: And I think for a lot of people, it's found over this Christmas period, too, where most people stop work, with the exception, of course, of our wonderful emergency services people who are often most busy at this time of the year.

Nyck: Yes, indeed.

The astrological chart for the solstice on Saturday, which is still current: The Sun was conjunct Jupiter at that point and trine Uranus in Taurus, which is a strong thing to begin , or just before, the New Year. It bodes well for taking far-sighted and innovative action to address long-standing and now urgent economic and ecological issues. This is kind of important. The Saturn-Pluto conjunction at the same time, which sextiled Mars in Scorpio, applies a necessary contractive pressure and corresponding will to survive to push us along the birth canal into a longed-for new world. There's that idea of the new world, the utopian sort of idea perhaps, right there. But that idea, as we've talked about often, of the slingshot effect where there is this tense pressure, this pullback within the energy on the planet, generally speaking. We've just seen a strong representation of that on the solstice and in this period that we're in right now.

Also, we've got a wonderful post from our dear friend Dena, who helps us out with our podcasts, about the length of the days. Did you read that? It's a rather interesting piece about tidal friction on the planet and the longest day that may have happened on the Earth. They reckon it was in 1912.

Steve: Yes, it is an interesting one. It's talking about the fact that from year to year, the length of time is not exactly the same—it does vary by a few seconds for various reasons, which is quite interesting.

If anyone's interested in the relative motion of the earth and the sun and the solstice phenomena, I'm going to post a link on our social media and you can read a bit more about that (<https://www.space.com/24014-winter-solstice-sun-movement-explained.html>).

Nyck: Yes. Our social media is @futuresenseshow on Twitter, and also I should mention our website, www.futuresense.it, where you can go to all of our podcasts. We also have a Facebook page which we often post on as well.

I have often have talked in the past about the idea of Christmas from a completely different angle, and that is that perhaps the representations, the colours, and in fact, Santa Claus himself, comes from certain traditions which we don't give enough credence to. It's sometimes associated with fairy tales, and in this case has to do with the idea that the modern Santa Claus, "the omnipotent man"—I'm quoting here from an article in The New York Times from a couple of years ago (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/21/opinion/santa-christmas-mushrooms.html>)—"who travels the globe in one night, bearing gifts, and who is camped out in shopping malls across the world this month, is linked to a hallucinogenic mushroom and an hallucinogenic mushroom-eating shaman from the Arctic", and these are called "the Sami people of Lapland." What do we know about this pretty wild stuff?

Steve: Yeah, I know a little bit about it. The story goes that these interesting looking red and white mushrooms grow in that part of the world.

Nyck: Amanita Muscaria.

Steve: That's them, yes, and they're the Christmas colours, aren't they, red and white?

Nyck: The Christmas colours, yes. In fact, according to writer and mycologist, Lawrence Millman, "the shaman would make use of Amanita muscaria's psychoactive effects in order to perform healing rituals. The use of Amanita muscaria as an entheogen (that is a drug used to bring about a spiritual experience), would enable the shamans to act as intermediaries between the spirit and the human world, bringing gifts of healing and problem-solving. Although these mushrooms are poisonous, the Sami reduced their toxicity by drying them", and also there are other ways. We'll come back to the reindeer, perhaps, or we'll get to the reindeer in a minute.

"Various accounts describe the shaman and the rituals performed in ways that are fascinatingly similar to the narrative of Santa. An all-knowing man who defies space and time? Flying reindeer? Reindeer-drawn sleds? Climbing down the chimney? The giving of

gifts? The tales of the Sami shamans have it all." So these figures that we hold so dear in our childhood, in our Western world and other places, have these heritages in a folklore that perhaps has some kind of origins in the use of hallucinogenic mushrooms. Pretty wild.

Steve: Just a small correction there. That piece you were reading said that the *Amanita muscaria* is poisonous. It's not actually poisonous—I ate one once, in fact—but apparently it does have some mild toxicity which can be filtered out through that method that the Sami shamans used.

Nyck: And that method was to actually drink the reindeer piss. The idea in some of these stories—and many of you would know these; are familiar with this story, and there are different versions of it—but certainly, according to these reports, the Sami noticed over millennia, perhaps, that the reindeer would eat these mushrooms and they would eat them, not just for food, but they would eat them for some other reason. But what happened was, they'd also drink their own piss, so they would consume the mushrooms, they would process the mushrooms and somehow remove any of the toxicity that was there, piss out the rest, and then the shamans would drink the reindeer piss.

Steve: I think what they actually did was wait for the reindeer to pee in the snow and then go and eat the snow. That's what the BBC reported anyway.

Nyck: Well the BBC should know.

Steve: It must be true.

Nyck: It must be true. It's interesting, too, because the wider theory about the acceleration of the human brain—the brain of the average *Homo erectus*—doubled in size about 700,000 to 2,000,000 years ago and it's never been really explained how that happened in such a quick space of time.

Steve: No, I don't think anybody was studying it at the time, actually! But something that has come out in very recent research into some of these psychedelic medicines is that they can result in neurogenesis, that the various compounds in the medicines can cause the formation of new brain cells, so I guess it's not beyond the realm of possibility.

Nyck: Well, as Paul Stamets says—many people would be familiar with Paul Stamets, the mycologist who's been here on the show, and talking a couple of times at some conferences a few years ago—this idea is called the *Stoned Ape Theory*. He says "it's a very, very plausible hypothesis for the sudden evolution of *Homo sapiens* from our primate relatives." He said: "what is really important for you to understand is that there was a sudden doubling of the

human brain about 200,000 years ago"—OK, so that's the time frame he's giving—"From an evolutionary point of view, that's an extraordinary expansion and there's no explanation for this sudden increase in the human brain", the idea being that our ancestors way back there, started eating psychedelics of some sort or other and it created a neurogenetic response (<https://bigthink.com/mind-brain/stoned-ape-return?rebellitem=3#rebellitem3>).

Steve: Mmmm, interesting. Interesting hypothesis, yes.

Nyck: How does it fit in? How does something like that fit in with Clare W. Graves that we base much of the show's approach on?

Steve: Well, I don't think it does, to be really honest. Graves was a pretty down-to-earth kind of guy and just reported on the data that he collected during his research, so he tended not to speculate at all, really, and was pretty careful about that, which I think is why his work is so valuable.

Nyck: Yes. We are speculating today folks, because it is Christmas time and anything goes, sort of!

Let's play this little piece that you found, of just a brief couple of minutes from the BBC.

Steve: This is the word from the BBC, the official viewpoint.

Nyck: Have a listen to the BBC on magic mushrooms and reindeer:

"In the Arctic Circle, this fungus also has magical associations with animals. Fly agaric contains hallucinogenic chemicals and is a favourite food of reindeer. For thousands of years, the lives of reindeer and Sami people have been entwined. Fly agaric was important to both of them. In autumn, reindeer seek out the mushrooms even under an early fall of snow. No-one knows whether the reindeer are affected, but in the past, Sami Shaman's took fly agaric and their visionary rituals. They even drank urine from reindeer believed to be under the influence. In trance, they contacted the great reindeer spirit. On humans, the drug heightens senses and creates visions of flying. Some believe the greatest of all modern myths arose in the Sami's visionary flights of fancy. Perhaps early 19th century ideas drew on these stories to create a Christmas legend."

There you go. That's the BBC and some dramatic music and sound effects there to go with it. You can check out that video, it's quite easy to find: *Magic Mushrooms and Reindeer* from the BBC (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkCS9ePWuLU>).

Interesting, too, though, that on a purely scientific level—just going back to reindeer—I thought this was interesting. An article from *New Scientist* recently states that there's a whole range of amazing innovations that allow reindeer to survive in the frigid Arctic (<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24432610-700-reindeers-real-superpowers-could-help-us-beat-depression-and-cancer/>). For example: "Their eyes change colour like living sunglasses from gold in summer to blue in winter. They see the world in glorious ultraviolet. They can switch their body clocks on and off, produce lots of vitamin D even in limited sunlight, and grow antlers up to a metre long in just a few months. What's more, we might be able to borrow some of those abilities. Discovering more about Rudolph could lead to new ways of tackling jetlag, insomnia and cancer and even allow us to grow new limbs. Thanks to recent work revealing the genetic underpinnings of reindeer's unusual traits, their superpowers could one day be ours." There are about 5 million reindeer still roaming the frozen North from Alaska to Siberia and Greenland. That's a lot of reindeer.

Steve: That's a lot, isn't it? You just reminded me, too, about a recent Kryon channelling, speaking of superpowers. Kryon, of course, has a wonderful, solid reputation for accurately predicting scientific breakthroughs. He's been talking about them for about 30 years now and he's been amazingly accurate, and one of the latest Kryon channellings said that there is an invention coming which will allow us to view our energetic bodies. It sounds like it's some sort of device that can pick up something on the ultraviolet end of the spectrum, he indicated, which would allow us to see what's been described in mythologies as our Merkabah or our spiritual vehicle, which is in scientific terms, an energy field that surrounds our body which basically has been spoken about, mostly in religious texts, really, but science hasn't identified it or proven that it's there yet. Kryon's saying that an invention is coming—he didn't give an actual timeframe, but it sounds like it's not all that far away—that will allow us, through a process of super-cooling and using this device, to be able to map these magnetic, subtle energy fields. That's quite fascinating. He said it's going to change the world, kind of like in the same way that the wheel did. It's going to have an extensive, wide ranging impact on human existence, not the least of which I think will be in relation to our health, because he said by reading this energy field around the body, we will be able to see anything that's out of order.

Nyck: And of course, there are there are people who can do this already, one way or the other—to see auras, if you will, or to see energy fields in this way—and I'm thinking as you speak that it sounds like the next level of Kirlian photography, which is quite well known as photography that can take a photograph of auric fields. It's different to what you're saying.

Steve: It's pretty vague.

Nyck: It's a bit vague, but some people can see these things, of course, which is amazing. Those capacities seem to be arising.

Steve: This is science, though, Nyck!

Nyck: From our Kryon channel.

Steve: Yes! Anyway, I look forward to seeing if Apple might be going to release it sometime soon or something like that. But we'll see. We'll find out.

Nyck: We will. Thanks for a couple of your texts that have come in. You're in the spirit of what we're on about today, because we're just having a bit of fun. Nicky Ramone has written in and said: "Didn't you get the memo? Never eat yellow snow. Merry Crickle to you." Thank you, and from Howie: "A new Aussie beer for Christmas: Reindeer Piss to celebrate dear rain pissing down." Yeah, I like that. That's good.

Steve: I'd get that. That could sell.

Nyck: That could sell.

And: "Hi, Good morning, I was thinking of how women had to pretend to be men to get their books published, then maybe Mother Christmas had to do the same because it's been traditionally mums who do the job of supplying presents." I don't ... yeah ... okay.

I remember my good friend, Troy, had a bumper sticker when he lived here in the 90s and it used to read "I'm forever unwrapping the eternal present". I like that one.

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The future is here now, it's just not evenly distributed.