



68. The Underground, Part 1

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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 now tuned to *Future Sense* on BayFM with Nyck Jeanes and my co-host, Steve McDonald. Good morning, Steve.

Steve: Good morning, Nyck. We're fresh back from the bush, aren't we?

Nyck: We're fresh back from the bush and we're talking today about the underground. You might have noticed today if you've read the newspapers, if you've been out in a café, that all the Australian papers across the board—all the Murdoch press and the previous Fairfax press (now and by Channel 9, of course) and other press around Australia—have come underneath one banner called *Australia's Right to Know Coalition* and redacted all their front pages (see: <https://yourrighttoknow.com.au/media-freedom/get-the-facts/>). So you pick up the *Sydney Morning Herald*, for example, and most of the front page text is blacked out as a protest against the legislation that is trying to destroy press freedoms. That's the notion. I guess it's sort of triggered, in a way, our theme party today and also our experience away over the weekend.

Steve: Yes, I mean, it didn't really trigger it because we were talking about our theme last night.

Nyck: That's true.

Steve: But it certainly fits nicely. Very synchronistic.

Nyck: Yes, indeed. The word, redacting, in this way is a fascinating thing. I think of the word spell—the word is a spell—and the words that you read in the newspapers, the words that are printed, the way that we speak, the way that we report, the way that we give some meaning to our experiences through the word is like a spell. When you black that spell out, black that word out, you kind of change the spell. That's a bit of my take on that this morning.

Steve: I guess it becomes a dark spell when it's blacked out, doesn't it?

Nyck: Precisely. Old wizardry of some sort or other.

So we're going to dip into this theme today.

Steve: We are indeed. I guess it's probably been reported in every newspaper today, but I'm looking at the *ABC's* coverage, and isn't it wonderful that we have a government sponsored broadcaster in this country which can rebel against government policy? I love that. I love that freedom. It's wonderful, really. We should appreciate that.

Nyck: Indeed. Community broadcasters like ourselves, of course, have a certain degree of freedom, but we arguably don't have the same sort of power, although there are about, I think, four to five million Australians who listen to community radio in a given week, which is a lot of people, so don't underestimate the power of this station or community radio generally.

Steve: That's right. You better play that little thing about the broadcasters not being a doctor and don't do this at home, just to make sure.

Nyck: I'll get to that when get into darker topics as we go forward.

Steve: That's right. We're talking about the underground movement today; various underground movements and their role in cultural revolution, so if you've got any thoughts about the underground—maybe you belong to the underground—then text and let us know; ask some questions.

Nyck: Of course, there are many undergrounds at any one time. We actually thought about this theme last night where we were away for the weekend—and we will come back to that too—at a very interesting underground event over the weekend which gave us a number of

ideas. But we're talking today at the beginning about the redacted newspapers around Australia at the moment—in a revolution itself against the federal coalition government's new laws that seem to be repressing the freedom of the press.

Steve: Very interesting development, and it's been triggered in part by some Australian Federal Police raids on journalists and media outlets, which came from some classified information being leaked to the media around potential war crimes committed in Afghanistan and Iraq. There was a strong media reaction, as you can imagine, to these police raids and it raised questions about the whole process of whistleblowers having the right to leak information and the legalities of that. Also, it's the end result of a long process which goes back at least to Australia signing up for the US *War on Terror* and the various changes to law that have come out of that—for our own safety, of course, as they always claim.

Nyck: Or in the national interest, which is John Howard's favourite saying.

Steve: Oh, yes, nationalism. The thing is that these laws have been—I think you said, Nyck, there have been something like 75 changes to legislation.

Nyck: Yes, since 2002, there've been 75 pieces of federal legislation intended to protect the public from national security threats, but that have found new ways from stopping the public's right to know what the federal government is doing.

Steve: That's right and in these last days of the modern Scientific-Industrial era, we need to remember that that particular mindset—the mindset of this fifth layer of consciousness or the modern scientific way of being human—thinks that information is power, and so people who are in power always want to withhold information. They always want to know more than you do and they always want to say, 'no, you don't need to know that, only I can know that.' I often use the example of a poker game where people hold their cards secretly, close to their chest, and if you know what card someone else is holding, then of course it collapses the entire game and the power structure associated with that game. You can't have a winner if everybody knows what the cards are, so any opportunity to gain power by the restriction of information is seen as an advantage, and in these days when the control of society is slowly slipping from the fingers of our governments and authorities, then they are getting desperate to hold onto that power and to gain more power by restricting information and telling us that we don't need to know things. And what a wonderful protest by the media here today where the newspapers have blacked out their front pages. I'll tweet a photo of that on the Future Sense *Twitter* account (@futuresenseshow) so everyone could see that (<https://twitter.com/futuresenseshow/status/1186047084895408129/photo/1>). It's wonderful to see different media outlets who normally would be competing with each other, working together in what they're calling the *Right to Know Coalition*, of which, as I mentioned at the start of the show, our government broadcaster, the *ABC*, is a member, which is so amazing

and fantastic that they can get away with that kind of thing, even though the government is paying them to do it.

Nyck: And even though many of us, of course, on the supposedly progressive side of politics would always damn the Murdoch press, the Murdoch press are also in this—the Murdoch press has also redacted it's front pages.

Steve: Very interesting indeed, isn't it? Signs of change.

And what have you got there?

Nyck: The organisation is *Australia's Right to Know*. This is all the media outlets in Australia who are members of this. There are six *Right to Know* reforms that are being sought, and these are: 1. The right to contest any kind of search warrant on journalists or news organisations before the warrant is issued; 2. A law change to ensure public sector whistleblowers are adequately protected; 3. A new regime that limits which documents can be marked secret; 4. Review of freedom of information laws; 5. That journalists be exempt from national security laws enacted over the past seven years that currently can put them in jail for doing their job; and lastly, to reform defamation laws. They're strong request, but pretty reasonable, that's for sure.

Steve: Absolutely, and it implies a misuse of the classification of restricted documents as well, because, again, as I've mentioned previously on the show, from my military background, I was always taught that the security classification of a document was there to protect the source of the information, not the information itself, and what we're seeing now is allegedly things being classified to protect the government from getting into trouble and losing favour.

Nyck: The ABC's Managing Director, David Anderson, has said that "Australia is at risk of becoming the world's most secretive democracy. We've seen the public's right to know slowly erode over the past two decades with the introduction of laws that make it more difficult for people to speak up when they see wrongdoing, and for journalists to report these stories." It's big. It's very big.

Steve: It's very big. Another example of this kind of behaviour, as we mentioned on last week's show, is the offshore detention of refugees by the Australian government and the restriction of access prohibiting the media from visiting them or covering, face-to-face, what's going on there.

Nyck: And if you are at the *Byron Bay Film Festival* at all, which is current at the moment, or you see the film outside of that time, there's a lovely little locally produced film called *Manus*, which gives a completely different face to what we hear, particularly from the current government regarding refugees in our country, in Manus Island and the other localities.

Steve: Indeed. Maybe we'll take a break and we'll come back and talk a little bit about the definition of the underground or counterculture and where those terms have come from.

Nyck: What we're saying here, of course, is this current redaction today is, in a sense, a rebellion, and it is not an underground movement. It's certainly, perhaps you could argue, coming from various underground countercultural movements around the world in response to various policies and directions of governments and society and culture, generally speaking. We're seeing those influences moving through culture now.

Steve: It is definitely counterculture; it's push-back against mainstream culture for sure.

Nyck: You are tuned to *Future Sense* here on *BayFM 99.9* with Steve McDonald and myself, Nyck Jeanes, and we're talking a little bit, or leaning into, the notion of counterculture—underground—and what that means. We're starting with revolution, I guess, and as you can hear, we've been playing some revolutionary songs.

Steve: That's right, although I don't know about 'leaning into'.

Nyck: It's a phrase I borrowed from a speaker we were listening to yesterday.

Steve: I think we're swimming in it.

Nyck: Yes, revolution. Music always has been revolutionary, certainly since the 60s, and arguably, jazz was highly revolutionary earlier than that, among other forms of music, often associated with psychedelic substances like cannabis. Jazz was clearly associated there and demonised because of that association, particular African-American jazz at that time.

Steve: That's right. I think it goes back a long way. You've got the troubadour traditions. They're like the travelling teachers, teaching different ways to live using music and poetry and those sorts of things.

Nyck: And 'culture' itself is an interesting word. If you think of the roots of that, of course, culture comes from the same root as cult, and you could say, at a bit of a stretch, that one's culture is actually a cult to some degree. It depends, I guess, on how much you identify with it and that's perhaps one of the issues—is how much we identify with our culture, embed ourselves there and don't allow ourselves to be more open to something other than that.

Steve: Yes, I guess culture is a cult with U R.

Nyck: Cult you are. You are a cult.

Steve: So once you are added to the cult, then it becomes culture because you're part of it, right?

Nyck: That's good. Well, as you, probably know, you educated people out there, culture comes really from the idea of tilling soil. It comes from agriculture initially.

Steve: It does, yes. It emerged from late Middle Ages English, French with Latin roots, meaning 'a place tilled' or 'tilling', tilling of course being like hoeing or digging up the soil, making it ready for planting. So it implies a field of possibility, a garden bed where something can sprout.

Nyck: Yes, and I think that's a very appropriate use of the word 'underground' now, even though that figurative sense of cultivation through education, systematic improvement and refinement of the mind and these kind of ideas, not literal sense of the agriculture, was not common before the 19th century. So it's a fairly recent use of the idea that we grow a way of being, a value system and so on, from the ground up.

Steve: Absolutely, and in our everyday language, you can hear that connection, even though most people probably don't even realise the connection to the roots of the word culture. People talk about grassroots movements, you know, and sprouting of new ideas and those sorts of things. Very, very interesting,

Nyck: Very interesting, that, and really, when you start thinking about that, that metaphor continues. It's very big, of course, in the grassroots green movement and other movements—political movements—around the world.

Steve: It is absolutely, yes. And it's interesting also to distinguish between counterculture and other subcultures. You'll always get pockets of different values within society where the dominant mainstream values are regarded as mainstream culture, and then some of the pockets of different values can be remnants of old value systems. One example of that would be something like, for example, the mafia from Italy, which, of course is spread all around the world and means, of course, family. It's a remnant from older value systems, particularly Purple [Layer 2, Tribal] and Red [Layer 3, Ego-centric], Purple being literally the family or the tribe, and Red being the aggressive ...

Nyck: Militaristic.

Steve: ... militaristic angle on that, which is a natural evolution, of course, for that Purple tribalism to develop into. That's certainly the case with the Mafia. The Mafia wouldn't be seen as a counterculture. It's not a culture that's threatening to and about to overthrow the mainstream, but it certainly is an example of a subculture.

Throughout history there are other examples. If we go further up the spiral of evolution to the Authoritarian-Agricultural era, that was a communally-oriented way of being human and typified by structured societies and structured organisations, and there we saw the rise of things like structured secret societies, like the Freemasons, the Knights Templar and those sorts of things, who were actually really counterculture because they were examples of emerging new values, and they were definitely trying to influence and overthrow the dominant value system at the time.

Nyck: Although both of those examples, of course, come from arguably deeper roots in our prehistory, even—the Masons and Knights Templar, some wisdoms that are still secret—because perhaps they were once sacred and that equivalence between secret and sacred exists a lot and I think it is dismantling to some degree, so a lot of those old secrets are coming forth into a more culturally acceptable place, arguably.

Steve: Absolutely, and there are good reasons for that. At the heart of the ancient mysteries is a very practical motivation for restricting information in that people needed to be prepared for deeper understandings. Particularly with altered state work, if people are exposed to an absolutely radical perspective, it can upset their own values anchors and leave them in a very difficult place, even to the point of sending people insane if what they're exposed to is so radically different to what they thought was real or actual, then they just can't integrate it. So for that reason, a lot of those secret teachings were restricted to those who had been prepared and who were ready for and taking the next step to a new understanding.

Nyck: Do you think that's still appropriate now? I mean, it's very interesting that, because it's clear what you're saying is exactly right, but is that the case now, do you think? Because I feel like those secrets are, firstly, more available due to our technology and the way that we are

now on the planet, but also because perhaps we're more ready for some of those deeper, more complex secrets.

Steve: I do agree. I think you're right. As we—and when I say we, I mean the whole of humanity—have progressed up this spiral of evolution, we have opened our understanding, expanded our understanding, expanded our sensory awareness, and so somebody in the mainstream today would be, in terms of their values and their frameworks for understanding reality, they would have been equal to some of the high initiates way, way back in history in terms of their understanding, and particularly the structure of their value systems. So I think people are more ready now, but I also still think there is a need for structured processes of education and development, and a stepped or staged approach to the revelation—the revealing of deep truths.

Nyck: Interesting. Of course, social change is often seen as incremental, or just sort of predictably moves along at a certain linear pace, but it's not really the case because "once in a while, outbursts of resistance break open a world of possibility", I'm quoting here, "creating unforeseen opportunities for transformation. Indeed, according to a leading theorist of disruptive power, Frances Fox Piven, 'the great moments of equalizing reform in American political history'—securing labor rights, expanding the vote or creating social safety nets—have been directly related to surges of widespread defiance. Unlike elected officials who preoccupy themselves with policies considered practical and attainable within the political climate of the moment, social movements change the political weather" (<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/three-times-when-impractical-movements-led-to-real-change/>).

Steve: That's true, and this is how change happens. It's not a linear thing. The human consciousness and society, and everything that comes out of human consciousness, really, is essentially a complex adaptive system, and complex adaptive systems don't change in a linear fashion. They fluctuate wildly—they go through periods of stability and then when life conditions change and they need to adapt, then that adaptive process involves fluctuations. If you were talking about like a scientific or mathematical graph, there are fluctuations both up and down, towards both poles, and that's what we're seeing in society at the moment. And, of course, we're going through change not just at a societal level, but at a planetary level and so we're seeing the same kind of dynamic in our climate as well, where we're getting peaks of hot, peaks of cold, and people are guessing at the linear trajectory of that, but not in a very educated way, in my opinion.

Nyck: You are tuned to *Future Sense* here. We'll take a break. We're going to be talking a bit more about some of the local experiences we've had recently. We saw the underground, too, which is rather important.

Steve: That's right. This is a revolutionary edition of *Future Sense*.

Nyck: It is indeed.

Nyck: We are talking about a counterculture, about revolution, about the underground through history and in relationship to the evolution of our psychological development, our new value systems that are emerging or how value systems emerge on the planet, and how these countercultures factor into that to some degree.

Steve: And we are, of course, right in the middle of another renaissance right now. This is the way that values change when we go through paradigm shifts—you get these little bubbles of different thinking that crop up, essentially as subcultures, countercultures in particular, because they are opposing the dominant culture and they represent something new—a new way, which has emerged out of the growing complexity of a society.

Looking back in history, if we look back to the previous major paradigm shift that humanity went through, which was from the Agricultural era into the Scientific-Industrial era, there were little waves of renaissance happening way, way back. I'm looking back to the renaissance of the 12th century, which was an earlier one—not the European Renaissance, but an earlier one. On the Web, reading about that, it's mentioning even earlier waves going back into the 700s and the 800s in France—waves of new thinking that represented very, very early stage Scientific-Industrial thinking; new perspectives that were particularly individually-oriented rather than communally-oriented, and breaking out of the rigid and very conformist structures of the Agricultural-Authoritarian era. So right back as early as the 700s, maybe even earlier, there were little waves coming through where little crops of new culture were sort of growing up and then also subsiding because they didn't have the momentum or the popularity to really sustain themselves, but each time I'm sure they made some impact—some small impact—on dominant society before they faded away again. Then, of course, there were other incidents or other occasions mentioned in the 800s, the 900s, and then we had this renaissance of the 12th century, which was at the time of the high Middle Ages, which was including the social, political and economic transformations, and intellectual revitalisation and strong philosophical and scientific roots. This is at a time when we were pushing back against the conformity and the deference to higher authority, which was really about an empowerment of the individual and allowing people to believe that they could discover the truth themselves—they didn't have to rely on whoever the authority was, be it the earthly authority or heavenly authority, to lay down the rules.

Nyck: Well, of course, as you're saying, a lot of the teachings of the time came from the great religions, but those texts at that time were basically only available to a very, very small elite number of people who could read them, who had access to that information. So the

rest of it was kind of second hand: 'this is the truth, you follow this and that's what you're going to get' and so forth.

Steve: That's right, and 'you know it's the truth because he or she said so.'

Nyck: Usually 'he said so,' unfortunately.

Steve: Well yes, but not to forget that that Agricultural era was communal, therefore a somewhat feminine flavoured and themed era.

Nyck: Somewhat more matriarchal in places.

Steve: So we shouldn't lose track of the fact that there were queens ruling countries—you know, Queendoms, I guess you would call it, at the time.

Then, pushing forward in history, we had things like the Protestant Reformation of the Catholic Church, which was a little rebellion against the authoritarianism of the Catholic Church by Martin Luther in Germany, and one of his big things was translating the Christian Bible from Latin into German so it could be more available to the general public and they could actually understand what the priests were saying.

Nyck: And start to broaden the mind and start to contest that very stuff, therefore.

Steve: That's right. So it was a process of empowering the individual to understand and to make decisions for themselves. Then we progressed further—and these are all waves of emerging Scientific-Industrial thinking and values that were appearing throughout history, and slowly, the waves were getting bigger and stronger and washing further up the beach of change as the tide was coming in on the Scientific-Industrial era.

Nyck: Did you just make that up?

Steve: No, no, I've said it before.

Romanticism was an artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement that originated in Europe towards the end of the 18th century and sort of peaked between 1800 and 1850, and it was characterised by its emphasis on emotion and individualism, as well as glorification of all the past and nature, preferring the mediaeval rather than the classical, and it was partly a reaction to the Industrial Revolution.

This is very interesting because this regressive value search, as we know, is a characteristic of any paradigm shift and there are echoes of this romanticism in the current shift beyond the Scientific-Industrial into the Humanistic and network-centric Relativistic era that's emerging right now. We've seen the same themes which are a flashback to the past—seeing the past as being better and desirable, and even something that we should go back to—rather than what's emerging. And even as the new revolution happens—as these new counterculture grow up—there's pushback against them as well. In this Romantic era, there was a pushback against the emerging Industrial Revolution, and we're seeing pushback now by elements in the mainstream, of course, against the emerging culture that's coming through right now.

Nyck: Well, Victor Hugo, the French poet, novelist and dramatist of that very time of the Romantic movement, famously said this: "An idea before it's time must wait, for no-one is crazy enough to grasp it at the moment that it's occurring. An idea whose time has passed must hope for a future in which it will be needed again, but an idea whose time has come is a force. It changes the world, it alters reality, it's unstoppable", and I think that that very notion at that time was probably something that hadn't really been declared before and became a statement of, I guess, hope that you could actually shift and change things. I think that that expansion of the human capacity to think that way in a movement is interesting at that time.

Steve: It is very interesting too, and the earlier renaissance, particularly in the 12th century, part of that was the invention of the printing press, where all of a sudden we had another way of communicating apart from word of mouth. So that in itself was a radical shift and that gave power to and enabled the change that was to come.

The European Renaissance, which most people would be aware of, then rolled out between the 14th and 17th centuries. This was an emergence of the scientific way of viewing the world, and of course, there was big push back from authorities against that, and some people were arrested and burnt and poisoned, etc. for speaking things that weren't according to the higher authority's list of what to say and what to believe.

Nyck: Sounds a bit familiar today with the redacted press and the response to the suppression of our current masters.

Steve: That's right. What do they say? History doesn't repeat, but it sure does echo.

And then, of course, through the Renaissance that led us into the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, which were really major, major waves of the emerging Scientific-Industrial paradigm, which was strong enough and structured enough to actually allow its emergence as the dominant mindset globally.

Nyck: Should we take a break?

Steve: Yes, I think I think that's a good foundation. We'll come back and talk next specifically about the current paradigm shift and the role of underground movements and counterculture there.

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