



11. Late Stage Capitalism and Beyond

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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: Welcome to you all and welcome to my co-host, Steve McDonald. Morning, Steve, how are you doing?

Steve: Good morning, Nyck. I'm really well, thanks.

Nyck: And lovely to see you again. Lovely always to see your face over the side of mission control here.

Steve: Same, same.

Nyck: What are we talking about today?

Steve: Today I'm going to dive into late stage capitalism and I'm using that title because it's become common in public discourse at the moment. More correctly, it's really late stage Layer 5 in Clare Graves's model of the evolution of human consciousness and it's what most people know is our dominant global paradigm which has shaped our social structures, etc. We'll take a deep dive into that, we'll talk about its characteristics, what drives it, how people think when they're operating from that particular system, and then have a look at how it's playing out across society at the moment, because there's some really interesting stuff happening, as you know.

Nyck: Yes, indeed. I think we mentioned the term last week, surveillance capitalism, which is an aspect of this, and which is a term that has sort of become a bit of a meme at the moment around the world, appearing in a number of articles around this. I guess an example would be the *Banking Royal Commission* and the responses to that—the very tardy response, particularly by the current government—and also the political donations, 56 million bucks, which can't be exactly accounted for, where it came from, from both the Liberal and the Labor Party, so I guess these are examples of late stage capitalism in operation.

Steve: They are. It's a really interesting time at the moment as we're in this transition phase between what has been the dominant global paradigm for the last 300 years or so, to what's next. As any paradigm runs its course towards the end of its time, its way of being and its way of solving problems actually starts to become deconstructive. Evolution has this beautiful process where once something has run its course, it will actually deconstruct itself to make room for whatever is next, and that's what's going on right at the moment.

Nyck: And I guess that's a part of the adaption, isn't it, that sometimes is like pruning. It's like shedding the old skin. It's an adaptive process.

Steve: Absolutely, yes. As you've just suggested, you see it in nature. At a certain time of the year, trees will shed their leaves to make room for new growth. It's exactly that same kind of process.

Nyck: Fantastic.

Nyck: You are tuned to *Future Sense* here with Steve McDonald and Nyck Jeanes. We're talking largely today about late stage capitalism—that's where we are at now—and the transformations that are going on there and the indicators of change.

Steve: Yes. This is the fifth stage or layer in Clare Graves's model, which resulted from a developmental psychology study that he did decades ago. What I might just do quickly Nyck, is to run through the stages or layers just for listeners who might not be familiar with the model, just so they understand where we're at.

We're talking about the sequence of evolution of human consciousness here, as it's reflected in our mindsets, our worldviews, our values and behaviours. Of course, we started as Hunter-Gatherers, which was a very automatic way of living and because that

was such a long time ago, we sort of transitioned out of that at least, I guess, about 50,000 years ago. There's not a lot of accurate records as to what it was like, but we know from looking at people who are living in very, very basic automatic ways these days, like, for example, people who might be mentally ill and homeless, those sorts of things. What we do know is that basically they're just living off their instincts and urges and fulfilling their primary needs. There's no elaborate culture or art necessarily associated with that when they're at that basic Hunter-Gatherer automatic way of living.

Nyck: There's also no judgement about that. That is just where they're at; that's how they're living.

Steve: Absolutely, and all of these layers or stages are a direct result of the complexity of life conditions, so it's about the elastic nature of our brain, our mind, our consciousness and our capacity to adapt to whatever level of coping that we need in order to live life appropriately. It's a very natural process and not something that has any particular moral character, and yet each layer or stage, of course, comes with its own different perspectives about that.

We're starting at 1, which is basically the Hunter-Gatherer automatic way of living, and we transition then into the very Traditional-Tribal way of living. We're talking here about the kind of existence that you might find deep in the jungles of Papua New Guinea or in places in Africa, those sorts of things, where people are living in a subsistence kind of way. They have their sacred land, a boundary that they live within and there are customs and those sorts of things which shape the way that they live, how they live. We also see that play out in in modern life in cities at a family level, so that same kind of thinking, worldview values, comes with family-unit living.

The third stage or layer is an Egocentric, power-oriented way of being human, which is a transition out of the Traditional-Tribal. Think historically about societies like the one led by Genghis Khan, for example, which went raiding and pillaging and those sorts of things, and the wild teenage years in terms of our own personal lives where we bust out of the family structure and we start to explore our power in the world.

From there we transition to the fourth stage or layer, which is where the rational mind really kicks in. The frontal lobe development is completing and we're getting the capacity to moderate urges and instincts and those basic drivers that come at the previous stages of or layers. Usually at this fourth layer, we look for a set of rules to live life by, so we look to a higher authority, and that higher authority can show up in many, many different ways. It could be in a structured way, in an organisation like, for example, the military or the police force or just a strict kind of working environment. It could be a religion, it could be the law.

Nyck: An educational institution.

Steve: Those sorts of things, yes, but there's always a higher authority that gives us a set of rules to live by. Classically, in a religious sense, we're talking about things like the Ten Commandments. It's like, 'okay, this is what I should do to live a good life'. The thinking at that layer tends to be quite rigid and linear because it's latched onto one set of rules and that's the only right way, so it's quite bound to that singular path and rejects anything that doesn't fit with the rules as we know them.

The fifth layer, which is our topic of discussion today, is multiplistic—it's the Modern Scientific-Industrial mindset. We break out from that linear way of living in the fourth layer to a multiplistic way of living where all of a sudden we can see many, many options and we can select any of those options, whichever one seems to be the best, and we select the best option or the best path forward by a process of experimentation, which, of course, is the foundation of our mainstream science.

Nyck: I just noticed there, the interesting thing about coming from stage 3, where we come out of the Tribal into that adventurous 'what's over the other side of the hill? Can we conquer them? Can we defeat them? What have they got over there?' It seems like at that stage, the boundaries sort of fall away, and then in stage 4, as you just articulated, the boundaries come into play again—a sense of boundaries and structures—and then at stage 5, those boundaries fall apart to a degree and everything's possible again.

Steve: Yes, exactly. What you're describing there are characteristics of this alternation that happens as we go up through the layers between an individualistic way of living and a communal way of living. We've got individualistic at Layer 1, we've got communal at Layer 2 Tribal, we've got individualistic again at the Egocentric 3, communal again at 4, and then individualistic again at 5. When we're in the communal ways of living, they are, by nature, conformist because we have to conform with a certain way of living in order to live in community, otherwise it doesn't work. And then—you're quite right—when we transition out of a communal way into an individualistic way, then that conformity falls away and it's much more loose, and it's during those individually-oriented paradigms that we sort of surge forward. When we're living in communal, conformist ways, we are by nature bound to live within certain rules sets and parameters, and it's when we transition into the individual layers or ways of living that we bust out, we make progress, we fly to the moon and do those sorts of things, yeah?

Nyck: At the same time, though, of course, that gives us a certain licence to do what the hell we want to do if it works for us or for those that we're associated with.

Steve: That's right. There's a certain looseness, a certain lack of conformity—a lack of rules, in other words—that gives it a particular flavour and we're certainly getting a big taste of that right now at the end of this fifth stage or layer.

Let me just continue on for the benefit of those who don't know the model. So beyond the fifth layer, which is currently the dominant global paradigm, the sixth, which is the emerging paradigm that we're seeing early signs of at the moment, is again a communal way of living. It comes with a certain conformity, it's very humanistic.

When we move from one stage or layer to the next, typically one of the characteristics is we strongly reject the way of living that came before, so what we're seeing is a very strong rejection of this capitalist Scientific-Industrial corporate military-industrial complex kind of way of living, and that's typical. The same thing happened when the fifth layer emerged; we saw a rejection of the rigid, bureaucratic, absolutistic way of living. The sixth is bringing a very humanistic approach to life. The fifth was very materialistic and so we're moving away from that back into a more spiritual way of thinking, and there's a strong focus on the human experience—the internal human experience—and also on personal healing. It's a very network-centric way of structuring society and living. Obviously, we have a huge global structure now in the internet, which is growing out of the technology from Layer 5, and that's developing into technologies like blockchain.

We're still in the early stages of the emergence of this Layer 6 structure. It's something that has been highly criticised in its early stages. If we go back to early waves of this sixth layer, like in the 1960s and 70s with the flower power movement, social justice movements, anti-war movements and those sorts of things, they copped a lot of criticism, but what we were seeing was very early stages of this new way of thinking that lacked the social scaffolding that it needs to support itself, and now with time, the scaffolding has emerged in the form of the internet and other social structures that are supporting this thinking, which actually gives it a new level of sophistication. I think that the kind of blockchain-based technology that we're seeing in cryptocurrency and those arenas is an example of the more developed, mature version of this new way of being human that has the structure it needs to do what it does in the way it does it.

That sixth layer brings us to the end of what Clare Graves called the First Tier of human consciousness, and the transition from the sixth to the seventh marks the beginning of a new era. In fact, it's more than a new era, it's a whole new way of being human and it's different than the transitions between 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 because it takes us beyond rational thinking into what's known as a trans-rational way of being, where we actually are moving beyond using the rational mind in order to cope with the problems that life throws at us.

Steve: Layer 7, stage 7—you will hear me saying 'layer' and 'stage' here, so 'stage' is the old terminology that was used when this research was done and I'm slightly transitioning myself and listeners into using and getting accustomed to this idea of calling it a 'layer' because these layers are actually nested inside each other. They're not discrete things where we leave one behind and we go to a new one. We actually grow each layer over the top of the previous one, so by the time we get to 6, we've got 6 on top of 5 on top of 4, 3, 2, 1, and it's kind of like they're layers of skin on an onion. We

don't lose those previous capacities, they're always there inside of us, and so our life conditions dictate which one we use as our current operating system and we can switch instantly between one and another. An extreme example of that would be that we're having a fairly sophisticated philosophical conversation here at a fairly complex layer of consciousness, but if there was some kind of emergency in the building, like the building caught fire or there was an explosion or something, then very quickly we'd instantly switch back to survival mode in that automatic first layer—instantly, because it's there inside of us. It was developed in our past and it's there for us to apply to our thinking and behaviour when it's needed, and that's the amazing thing about this evolutionary process.

Nyck: It's quite a big change, this perception from a linear perception of how things evolve and change to this sort of nested more multidimensional aspect. I'm thinking of reading recently a thing you sent me from Ken Wilber, who, of course, is one of the many intellectuals and theorists who based much of his work on Graves's work, initially, from *Spiral Dynamics* in that stream, and talking about the difference between what was known as "the chain of being" to "the nest of being". I really like this idea because we're really still very addicted to the linear, aren't we, to the causative somehow, to 'this causes that, this causes that' and so on, rather than actually seeing it all embedded in each other in a way in different layers, which is quite beautiful, like a flower unfolding somehow.

Steve: It is, that's right, and of course, these ways of making sense of things relate back to these layers and stages. As I was saying before, at the fourth layer, our thinking is linear and therefore we come up with linear models and one of the really interesting things about these present time is with the emergence of the sixth layer, which is network-centric, we're seeing new network-centric understandings being published in scientific papers, which is, I think, just remarkable, to see that evidence coming out of this divergence. Very, very interesting indeed.

Just to finish running through these layers, at the seventh, we move into a trans-rational, multidimensional way of being human, which opens up our sensory perception of dimensions that weren't accessible to us before. It's true to say that as we transition from every layer to the next, we have an expansion of our sensory perception in some way, and that can show up in, for example, our capacity to relate to second person, third person, fourth person, fifth person and those sorts of things, those concepts, but also, I think, although the evidence for this is sketchy, but I expect that there is an expansion in our everyday senses to some extent also. We certainly find ourselves listening to different types of music, more complex music, for example, appreciating complexity through our various senses. So at 7, we have what's often called the Integral or Integrative way of being human, where we get an amazing integration of left- and right-brain.

The tendency to defer to left-brain or right-brain thinking is part of what's behind these individual versus communal ways of living, with our left-brain being the part of our brain which looks at detailed information, for example.

Nyck: Rational information.

Steve: Yes, right-brain being more about large picture pattern recognition and the merging or connection between things. At 7, we get a level of integration that we haven't seen before where all of a sudden, instead of really being biased towards one side of the brain or the other, we're now operating in an integrated way. It's not like the be-all and end-all, it's just the first step into this new way of being human, but it gives us amazing capacity. Clare Graves wrote that there's more coping capacity, in terms of our capacity to solve problems that are presented to us, in this seventh layer integrative way of being human than there is in all of the previous six layers combined, so if you add up all of the capacities that come with the first six layers, then you get all of that plus more in this single transition between 6 and 7, which is why it's such an extraordinary move.

Some people now are suggesting that what we're seeing here is actually the emergence of a new species of human being, and I tend to lean in that direction as well. I think there's a lot more science to be done before we can confirm that but it's certainly looking like it's such a radically different way of being human that it may well be a new species of human.

Just to finish to the sequence now, the last layer or stage that Clare Graves documented was the 8th, which was again a swing back to a communal way of being human; extremely complex and sophisticated. He only had six people out of 1,065 people in his longitudinal study who showed up in this space so he really didn't get very much data, but he made some general conclusions. He said that it's a very spiritual way of being, in other words, it's very aware of and constantly referring to the non-material aspects of life, not necessarily connected to any particular religion or anything like that, but just being aware of this multidimensional access to non-physical realms, and extremely intuitive, which reflects the trans-rational way of being. It will most likely give rise to some kind of a global sphere of accessible and connected consciousness between humans in the same way that we see organisation--self-organisation--in, for example, insect communities, where there's apparently no rational process going on, there's no one in charge. I'm not implying that termites are at this eighth layer of consciousness, but it's a similar kind of concept,

Nyck: Like the murmuration of starlings, as birds fly that way, or the way that fish move.

Steve: Yes, and it's implying some kind of telepathic communication, I would suggest also. But again, we really don't know much about it; a lot of this is just speculation, but anyway, there we have it, the sequence of 1 through 8 as recorded in Clare Graves's model, and today we're talking about Layer 5.

Nyck: Yes, indeed. I find this is an incredibly useful model—more than useful. I find it very resonant with my way of thinking for quite a long time overall, but for many people, it's probably still just a theory, an idea, a model and so forth, and yet we're seeking here to bring practical applications of how it's revealed, how it's shown and where it may be leading us, because it would seem that the solutions that we require for the very significant global problems we now have are not, as Einstein said (I've said this many times), are not able to be solved with the same level of thinking that created them—full stop, and yet we still try, even as we move into Layer 6 in Graves's model—much more communal, much more egalitarian, much more sustainable and sharing and compassionate and connected. Nevertheless, we're still struggling for an expression that that actually solves the problems. It's hard to articulate really what I mean here, but I think you get the idea, and I think it's really great because we do repeat Graves's work in these layers in different ways, as you said. For you guys out there who listen often, you've heard it many times. Each time you listen to it, you're hearing something slightly different; you're getting a different angle and I think that's really important, too. That's what I heard as you made that explanation there.

Steve: I think it's good to do that, and I do try and just tweak my explanations every time I give one just to add to the total amount of information that we're putting out there about the characteristics of these different ways of being human. For those people who might have read the book *Spiral Dynamics* or studied *Spiral Dynamics*, Layer 5 is, of course, labelled Orange in the *Spiral Dynamics* version of Clare Graves's work. They gave colours to the different layers, with 1 being Beige, 2 Tribal being Purple, 3 Ego-centric being Red, 4 Absolutistic being Blue, and Layer 5 Modern Scientific-Industrial, multiplistic, being Orange; and then 6, of course, Humanistic network-centric, is Green. Then into Second Tier in the *Spiral Dynamics* model, 7, the Integrative layer of consciousness was called Yellow, and then 8 was called Turquoise. In Ken Wilbur's work, Ken has used a slightly different model again, where he's using the visible spectrum, and so his colours are slightly different again.

Nyck: You are tuned to *Future Sense* here with Nyck and Steve, and just while we're on the subject of where you can hear us, if you're not listening to us now, or you want to listen to us later or send what you're hearing to someone else, you can listen to *Future Sense* wherever you get your podcasts, including *Apple* podcasts, *Spotify*, *Twitter*, *Stitcher*

and *Overcast* or anywhere else out there, and also the articles that we refer to in the show are tweeted to our @futuresenseshow *Twitter* feed.

Steve: That's right, and they're tweeted very carefully.

Nyck: Tweeted very carefully by Professor Ross Hill down there in Melbourne, our associate. Hello, Ross. I know he's listening, keeping an eye on us.

Steve: We're talking today about Layer 5 in Clare Graves's model, which is better known as the Modern Scientific-Industrial paradigm, the dominant global paradigm. Of course, the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions were both very formative turning points in the shift of the dominant paradigm. In fact, if we go back beyond the Modern era—let's go back even further, say a thousand years ago—then the most prominent paradigm on the planet was Layer 4, which was the Absolutistic way of living where thinking was quite rigid. It was very much about living according to a very strict rules set, which often was dominated by religious belief, and of course, if you look at the history from that time, you'll see that religion had an enormous impact on the world. It's only really about 4 or 500 years ago that we started to see the tide turn, and in fact, before then, there was really no concept at all of a dominant global paradigm. It was only roughly 500 years ago, in that era, that we had the first journeys around the world that kind of stitched it all together and they started to understand that the world was round and not flat.

Nyck: Magellan and the like.

Steve: Yes, of course, and I must just put a little qualification in here, too, being that on this show we often talk about historical examples based on mainstream history, just for the ease of understanding for the listeners, but we do recognise that there's a lot of history that really will be rewritten, I think, in the coming decades as we discover more information about ancient technologies and ancient civilisations that's been lost to us. I think it's quite likely that there was an understanding that the world wasn't flat well before 500 years ago in some civilisations, but we try and keep it simple.

Nyck: A topic we will come back to it in another show.

Steve: I'm sure. So, Layer 5 has done some amazing things for us through the Scientific-Industrial revolutions. At an extreme, it's taken us to the moon and back. It's also taken

us deep inside our own biology and the geology of the Earth with microscopic viewpoints and those sorts of things.

Nyck: The depth of the oceans and somewhat out into space now as we extend our reach out there as well.

Steve: Exactly, but it's been very physically-oriented in its perspective and it has actually downplayed the non-physical—it has been very materialistic in that sense—and like most of the individualistic ways of living, they tend not to be deeply spiritual in a structured sense. That structured spirituality usually comes from the communal ways of living: animism at the Tribal stage, classic religions at Layer 4, and the diversified and the connecting of different structures of religions, the networking together of religious beliefs between different faiths and those multifaith kind of understandings in Layer 6 as it's emerging.

Nyck: It's interesting when you talk about the technology, because I immediately started to think that whenever I see a rocket taking off for space and launching a satellite or going to the moon, an incredible amount of high-tech fuel, basically fossil fuel, that's burnt in order to lift us out of the gravity. I always think that it's so backward somehow. It's sort of an example of how that layer that you're talking about has used what for us at that time was advanced technology, and yet kind of a gross technology, in order to burst our way and force our way into space.

Steve: I know, and people in the Modern era have looked back at some of the early ways of propulsion and laughed at them as being primitive, but there will be a time in the future when we'll say to our kids, 'we used to drive around in these machines that were powered by controlled explosions' and they'll say, 'oh, my God, you're kidding me!'

Nyck: Bring on those times, please. Bring them on.

Steve: Exactly. So back to human evolution. Often it's assumed that human evolution kind of stopped somewhere, you know? I mean, when I was coming through school, there was really no talk of current evolution, it was always an historic thing that happened some time before. The same thing was evident in religious teaching as well. It was like, 'all this stuff happened in the past but it doesn't really happen now', and there's this assumption that humanity and human nature is one category or one thing at the moment, instead of understanding that it's actually a multidimensional thing and it's quite adaptive and forever changing. So the discussion that we're having on this show on an ongoing basis is based on this multidimensional adaptive understanding of

human consciousness—that it is ever-changing, that it's amazingly adaptive and it has many, many facets. If we look at the whole of humanity right now, the level or layers of consciousness are spread right across the spectrum, and again, as I mentioned earlier, it's linked to the complexity of life conditions. We are adaptive to the complexity of the problems that are thrown up in everyday life and the more complex those problems are, the more multi-layered, connective and interactive they are, then the more multidimensional our consciousness needs to be in order to cope with those problems and solve those problems. Therefore, people who are living in very simple life conditions will simply adapt, literally, to live according to fairly basic values and simple sets of behaviours because they don't need anything further.

Nyck: And that's the key, they don't need anything. I think I've used this example before: once when I was in Sumatra years and years ago, in 1980 or so, it was my first experience of a third world country and it was incredible because they had nothing. I was in this village called Bukittinggi in central northern Sumatra, and the villagers were living with a bowl of rice, a few vegetables a day and in little humpies, but the smiles on the faces, the natural ability of them just to be in their environment, within their life conditions, quite satisfactorily was extraordinary.

Steve: It is extraordinary, and for us, coming out of a complex world, it can be extremely refreshing. I have the same kinds of memories from trekking through the remote jungles of Papua New Guinea and up in the highlands and coming across very simple villages that are a couple of days walk from the nearest road so there's no machines, life is very simple, they grow their own food, often very, very happy.

Nyck: Yes, and a great thing, too, that we have that diversity of layers on the planet, and at the same time, the global issues that we face are now truly global and so do need global solutions, so everybody on the planet would in some way be influenced and affected by and taken up and brought forward with this in some way—ideally, hopefully.

Steve: Yes, that's right. One simple way to think of human evolution—and this is a kind of a linear concept, of course—is just as a conga line. For those younger listeners who've never heard of a conga line out there, and I know there are some because I bump into them occasionally, the conga is a dance that comes from South America where people line up behind each other and put their hands on the waist of the person in front and they all kind of bop along to a rhythm, so you can imagine that the whole of humanity is in a line bobbing along like that and there are kind of pathfinders up the front who are living in very complex life conditions where they've had to sort of forge forward and develop very, very complex levels of consciousness in order to cope. You've got all the folks in the middle and then you've got people down the back who are still

living a very simple life conditions and who are very happy and capable and productive living life according to very simple value sets and behavioural sets.

What's really interesting, and I think you just alluded to it, is that as time goes on and we develop better technologies and those technologies become widely available, these technologies which belong to layers that might be many sets in front of a particular society are actually becoming available to that society, and so we have Tribal people who have smartphones and those sorts of things, which is just adding to the complexity of the whole picture. I think our understanding of this whole arena of human consciousness and human values and behaviours is still very small. We've got much, much more to learn and it's going to be interesting in the future to see how these societies that are living according to the earlier, less complex layers of consciousness will change and adapt with access to these interesting and complex technologies.

Nyck: Because that distributed technology can be empowering, enabling smaller businesses, people who don't have bank accounts, people who don't have access to the normal the structures of the fifth layer of first world technology and the like, but these technologies may well instil—and there are examples of this around the world—an accelerated evolution of their own empowerment, you could say.

Steve: Yes, it's going to be very interesting to watch that play out in the years ahead, and what was life according to Layer 5 at a time 10, 20, 50 years ago, is probably going to look very different to those people who are transitioning and living according to Layer 5 in the future, because they might have a whole bunch of technologies that we didn't have back in the day, so there is a deeply interesting future ahead.

On a very personal level, as I've been saying, our own development goes through this same sequence that I'm talking about. It doesn't just apply to large-scale humanity. We grow through these layers and we will grow up to and adapt to whatever the dominant level of complexity is in our own life conditions, and yet we live side by side in our towns and cities with other people who are living life from completely different value sets.

This is one of the most amazing things about humanity, is we have people living in multiple different worlds, and you can think of each one of these layers variously as perhaps like a computer operating system, a different computer operating system for each layer, or you can think about it as a as a bubble—actually living in your very own world with your own values and understandings and explanations and coping capacities—right alongside other people that you might be sitting on the same bus seat with who are living in a completely different world, and yet we manage to talk to each other, we manage to get on most of the time. Often these different values sets, different expressions of the various layers of consciousness, simply show up as disagreements, misunderstandings and conflicts and those sorts of things. They really are one of the driving factors behind most of the conflict on the planet, is just that people are seeing life very differently and have different standards and values.

Nyck: Indeed, but I guess what is happening, though, even given what you just said there, really with great articulation, is that elements of late stage capitalism have been revealed as being downright crooked, distorted, manipulative, or in the case of the phrase 'surveillance capitalism', a concerted effort to mine your personal data and information to estimate, to project the potential futures that you might be interested in to sell you stuff to put it bluntly. We're seeing examples revealed now, particularly in the last couple of years with the whole discussion around social media generally, the role of social media and how that plays out. We're seeing, for example, the issue of political donations, not just in Australia, but pretty well around the world—certainly in America—and how that's constructed; and we're seeing a lot of other examples.

So let's go to some of those practical examples that articulate this late stage capitalism and the revelations that are coming about—that everybody actually is starting to see, on one level or other (which is interesting in itself)—that the person sitting on that bus next to you, who may be completely different to you, is still reading that same information. They might be reading it in *The Daily Telegraph* and we're reading it on some much more interesting and evolved internet platform, perhaps, nevertheless, we're listening to and understanding, to some degree, the same issues that are at play here.

Steve: We are, and just making sense of it in different ways. In order to make sense of the late-stage capitalism, we need to look at the fundamental drivers of this Modern Scientific-Industrial mindset. They evolve out of the previous Absolutistic layer, which had a very linear way of doing things and relied on a higher authority for information. The rules of life, the ways of solving problems, came from some higher authority so we always had to reference whatever the instruction book said in order to figure out how to go about things. Then, with the Scientific Revolution in particular, we transitioned from that deference to a higher authority, into an understanding that we could actually discover it for ourselves, and through a process of curiosity, experimentation, risk-taking, we could actually discover our own truth and we didn't have to get it out of a book that was written by some unknown authority. That provided a tremendous amount of freedom. All of a sudden we could bust out and explore, as you were saying earlier on, kind of throw the rulebook away, really—that's exactly what's happened—and we could figure out our own rules. From a moral point of view, the morals of the fourth layer were very clearly proscribed—they were given—and yet in Layer 5, we get to construct our own morals, and so what they end up being is basically whatever we can get away with, right? The fundamental driver of this level or layer of consciousness is personal success, and in a world of money, that often translates as being financially successful.

Nyck: Thus we have the exemplar of what Steve's talking about in Donald Trump, for example.

Steve: Yes. We can, in a sense, buy whatever it is we need if we have enough money and so there's this individual drive to succeed, which often shows up in mainstream society as a drive to make as much money as we can. Any kind of communal collaboration, co-operation, is simply there as an enabler, so unlike the communal ways of living in the communal layers where it's a fundamental part of the structure of life, it's just a necessary evil, really, in Layer 5.

Nyck: Utilitarian. I'm going to work with this person even though I don't like them, I don't agree with them, because it functions to support me in getting what I want.

Steve: Exactly, and you can see the kind of divisive, individual-oriented thinking in corporations, for example. I mean, let's face it, a corporation has the legal status of an individual, according to the law, right?

Nyck: Yes, since about 1880-something.

Steve: That says it right there, but then if you look at the structure of a corporation, they're divided up into silos, usually, so narrow departments that have a speciality. This is very much an example of the Layer 5 mentality, is that we want to go as far as we can within a narrow spectrum, so we will dive deep and each different department will have a deep understanding and a deep collection of information about one particular thing, which might be, for example, marketing or production or something else, and yet often those different silos or departments don't talk to each other very well because they're just really focused on being as successful as they can within their own narrow paradigm.

Nyck: The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing, which also gives an excuse when things are revealed in the large businesses and the like that, 'oh, we don't know about that'. We saw that in the Banking Royal Commission a lot.

Steve: That's exactly right, and then if you look at the governance of a corporation, the people who actually pull the strings—in other words, the shareholders who are demanding results from the governing board—they are so far disconnected, not only from what's happening inside the organisation, inside those narrow, siloed departments, but they are far, far removed from the end product and its impact on society because they're simply focused on their own success, which means financial success from their dividends as shareholders.

Nyck: Yes, that's right. In economic structures, in economic theory, a lot of the very resources that we use—just take trees, for example, forests, the oceans themselves—are not really factored into the economic model. It doesn't serve the financial objective to do so, generally speaking.

Steve: Yes. This kind of disconnected structure is a key influencer of the kind of outcomes that we've seen revealed in the Banking Royal Commission here in Australia, which I can only call atrocities, where in order to make more money for the shareholders—and you've got to remember that it's not just the shareholders, but the CEO and the senior executives, all the people in the chain that lead back to the end of the line are all benefiting in some way, because when the CEO gives good returns for the shareholders, then he gets his bonus and the executives below him get their bonuses and staff, so there's *quid quo pro* all along the way—and yet there's this disconnection from what's actually happening out there in society as a result of these actions, and it's only when there's an enquiry like the Royal Commission that digs deep and says, 'well, hang on, what about this? And we spoke to these people here and they said this happened', of course, the senior executives are aghast and can't understand. They're so far removed from thinking about those things because they're so focused on their own success that it's just a massive disconnect.

Nyck: In the end, the amount of corporate malfeasance that's been revealed across the board on the planet, generally speaking, is best exemplified or ... one of the cutting things that I see is that very, very few executives are ever charged with any criminal activity, even though there's clearly a lot of criminal activity out there. From the global financial crisis, the GFC of 2008-09, very few of those bankers ended up with any sort of criminal or other kind of charges, and it's incredible—very few in jail other than in Iceland, apparently, where they jailed a bunch of the bankers back then.

Steve: That's right, they're famous for doing that.

What you're talking about is a result of what's often called corporate capture. In this strive for personal success and in the process, gathering up as many financial resources as possible, then continued success comes from using money to be able to control all of the things around you, and so we've seen this creeping corporate capture over the years. It's important as we talk about these deconstructive detrimental aspects of this paradigm, to remember that if we go back in history to the transition from the previous era, the Absolutistic Layer 4 era, all of these things were amazing problem-solvers and this capacity to bust out of the rigid rule sets and do new things and experiment and splash money around and create amazing things were revolutionary, quite literally. They solved many, many of the problems that were created by that rigid bureaucratic kind of thinking. There's kind of like this bell curve, where at the early stage of a paradigm we have this amazing upward trajectory where we're solving our old

problems and making life better, and then at some stage it will peak and then eventually, in the later years of a paradigm, we'll get this deconstructive trend where it actually becomes detrimental to society and in the process creates the evolutionary tension required to transition us to whatever is next, and so as bad as these things are that we're discussing here in late-stage capitalism, they are actually the fuel for evolution.

Nyck: It's a signpost that there is actually a progression happening.

Steve: That's right.

Nyck: I wonder what your opinion is, because, having resisted right to the very end the establishment of the Banking Royal Commission, for example, the Coalition still continues, especially with Morrison—with our Prime Minister—to warn against excessive response to the findings of the Royal Commission. I wonder what that's actually about, given that it's happened now, and even though it was a truncated version of a Royal Commission, it nevertheless revealed an incredible amount of malfeasance across the board, but the response now that the report has been released is still a kind of 'dampen it down, don't respond to it'. I wonder what you feel that's about with respect to what we're talking about.

Steve: I think it's another example of corporate capture where the way that we've structured our political system, our democratic system, is that the parties need funding in order to do what they do, they have to appeal to the public to donate to them, and, of course, who are the organisations within society that have the most money, the most resources to throw around? They are the large corporations, and of course, they have a vested interest in political policy which affects their capacity to make more money, to be more successful, and so what they want to do is they want to use the resources that they have, the financial resources, in order to influence government to make sure that the policies are as friendly as possible so that they can keep on being successful and make more money. It's just a cycle and so with the recent disclosure that we had here in Australia of donations ...

Nyck: \$56 million of income to the Liberal and Labor parties that could not be traced. \$56 million! That was in 2017-18 from the *Grattan Institute*.

Steve: That's right, and one of the amazing things about this Modern Scientific-Industrial mindset, Layer 5, is that it will always find a way, ok? It will always find a way around whatever it is. Remember it grew out of finding ways around the rigid rule sets

in Layer 4—that's its speciality—and so what it's done over time is it's gradually influenced the design of our political systems such that they can get away with whatever they want to get away with, and that is really the moral benchmark for Layer 5, is if we can get away with it without compromising our own future success then it's morally acceptable, and it's as simple as that. You add that to the materialistic mindset which lacks a kind of spiritual depth and you get the kind of things that we've seen governments doing in recent years where the outcomes of their actions are often terrible, terrible human suffering and yet all they're looking at is their own personal success and downplaying, in what comes across as a very cold and unfeeling way, the 'collateral damage'—and there's a great expression that's come out of the Modern Scientific-Industrial era, right?

Nyck: Good point.

Steve: It's a way that we can just package all that stuff and put a label on it, put in a box and stick it over there.

Nyck: Yes: 'Unfortunate, the affects and influences on these people of the situation up here, sorry about that, but we've got to get on with business over here.' Very cynical. It's interesting because, of course, Victoria has recently passed laws forcing all donations over \$1,000 to political parties to be declared and capping them at \$4,000 over four years and the Greens want a similar cap passed in the federal parliament. The Greens also particularly want an outright ban on donations from mining, gambling, alcohol, property and banking sectors. Interesting to delineate how we see the 'evil group', and I'm going to agree with that. I find those to be an evil group of companies if you were going to put the word 'evil' there, but again, can we impose those values here and not over there? That's a tricky equation, too, isn't it?

Steve: These kinds of efforts are last ditch attempts to kind of plug the holes on a sinking ship, and they'll work, they'll help to some extent, but what you've got is a ship that's got many, many holes in it and it's like people are saying, 'okay, let's get a bigger patch.' Sooner or later, we're going to reach the point where we realise that this ship can't be patched anymore, it's going to sink anyway, and that is true because we're transitioning in an evolutionary sense out of this era into a new era that's going to bring new ways of being human, new social structures, new ways of doing business. We should expect at this late stage to see these last ditch attempts to try and repair an old broken system that's actually beyond repair. They may work in the short-term, but they're certainly not long-term solutions.

Nyck: Yes. Thanks for your texts, and I should have mentioned already, you can text in on 0437 341119. A few texts have come in. One just said about Scott Morrison: "Apparently there's a new book that talks about his Pentecostal faith and he believes he is guided by God and hence many actions are irrational" is what you're saying. Thanks for that, and yes, we were going to mention that. There's actually an article I was trying to find again. We were going to talk about it a bit last week or just touch into it but you may be interested in that particular aspect of Scott Morrison, because perhaps it's a bit exaggerated, perhaps not. It's a curious thing, but thanks for that.

Steve: Yes, it's interesting because we are seeing this regressive search at the moment as part of the transition dynamics. When we transition between these layers, what happens is, typically, as soon as there's a feeling that something's not working right, we begin this regressive search looking back to old values sets, which in this case means going back to Layer 4 or Layer 3 values and let's try those on to see if they work as they used to work, right? We remember that they worked a while ago and this Layer 5 stuff isn't working as well anymore. Typically we see this regressive search leading to the emergence of the expression of old values, and we hear it all the time from politicians: 'Let's get back to blah, blah, blah.'

Nyck: 'Make Australia safe again', for example. That's apparently Morrison's speech before the opening of parliament this year—today, I guess—at the *Press Club* or perhaps it's in parliament, I'm not sure, but apparently it's about safety. It's all about safety—keeping Australia safe again.

Steve: Yes, I think it's a wonderful fear-based attempt to convince people not to elect the other party because 'they won't keep you safe, we will.'

Nyck: That's right. They'll let the boats come in and all that stuff.

Steve: Just like we kept your money safe and all that other stuff.

Nyck: Yeah right. Thank you very much.

Nyck: You're tuned to *Future Sense*. We've been talking about Layer 5 and we're particularly talking now about corporate capture. As Steve has said, corporate capture means, in a sense, that things can't be changed, they have to actually collapse, and

we're in that process of collapse of some of the institutions, you could argue, certainly the revelations around some of the malfeasance and malpractice of corporations such as the banking sector in Australia. I think it's that growing awareness amongst all people on the planet now of the inability of these fifth layer organisations—businesses, governments—to actually serve the people and to actually solve the problems away from their own selfish interests which is quite extraordinary.

One of the terms that's come into our awareness in the last couple of weeks is the term 'surveillance capitalism'. It comes, I understand, from a woman, Shoshana Zuboff's book of the same name, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, which is drawing comparisons to seminal socio-economic investigations like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in the 60s—a seminal book there—and Karl Marx's *Capital*, although it's a lot more than this, according to Sam Biddle. He writes about this book and the age of surveillance capitalism and how we are sold and captured by that corporate capture of social media and how that information is sold on, as we're now becoming aware of in the last year. 2018 in particular, was a year where a lot of those awarenesses around *Facebook*, for example, and other social media platforms came to most of us here, but has the horse bolted? Can we change what has already happened in terms of the amount of information that we have put out onto the net and how that is being used to sell us? Or actually not? As she said, "we're not technically the product ourselves because we're something even more degrading: an input for the real product, and that is predictions about our future sold to the highest bidder so that this future can be altered" (<https://theintercept.com/2019/02/02/shoshana-zuboff-age-of-surveillance-capitalism/>).

Steve: Very interesting article, actually. I remember talking to a colleague of mine in the US a few years ago who is in the marketing industry about this idea that you are a product, and it wasn't so long ago that that was the new revelation that people were realising—that actually you're the product—and now it's gone a step further where we're looking to predict people's behaviours in order to make money out of that.

Nyck: And to actually shift, as this article is suggesting—I think that's interesting—it is actually shifting the future by doing that. Not just predicting the future that someone's going to go on, but actually changing that, controlling that.

Steve: It's really, really interesting. Another way of looking at Layer 5, another characteristic that it has, is that it loves to push the limits, and it will push the limits. It will push the limits as far as they can be pushed, and then sometimes beyond and then pull back, and then do the same thing over and over again. We see this in cycles of, for example, the stock market, where prices are pushed higher and higher and higher and higher and the idea is we want to push them as high as they can go and we'll keep pushing them until they actually crash and then we'll step back and do the whole thing over again, and that repeats in cycles. So that's a fundamental characteristic and

whenever you operate that way, you are inevitably going to reach the limit at some point and go beyond it, so the system or the process is going to break and that's quite predictable. Then what happens over time as the paradigm, and particularly corporate structures, have gained more and more success and hence more and more financial control over social systems, they have redesigned the systems to suit themselves. I think the political donation system is one good example that we mentioned earlier where the corporate capture has happened, so the corporations can say, look and listen, Mr. Politician, we'll make you successful if you accept our money and then do this for us. And of course, you've also got to factor in the idea of information being empowering and the retention and non-disclosure of information being a key to success.

Often I talk about Layer 5 using the analogy of a poker game where you've got to hold your cards close to your chest. You can't show your cards to the other players because what your cards are, are actually your power, and if somebody else knows what your cards are, then that just kind of collapses the whole game. So in this world, you're not going to tell the truth; you're not going to disclose what the actual motivator is, and so politicians are always left with holding this kind of bad-smelling parcel where they're very keen on their own success so they've got to do what they're being told by their sponsors, and yet they're not allowed to actually say the truth. They've got to concoct some story to cover the truth because revealing the truth actually collapses the whole game and it's no longer possible to succeed. Hence, we see examples of politicians coming out and saying the most ridiculous things publicly and making themselves look extremely stupid, but all in service to their own success and the success of their financial sponsors.

Nyck: You have to wonder, though, whether that's really effective now, given the drivel that many of them actually come out with publicly.

Steve: Yes, well, thanks to the Internet and to the far reach of social media and the fact that anybody can publish anything and have it seen globally these days, provided they've got access to the technology, it's collapsing the game because people who would normally have been privy to this inside hidden agenda, their values are shifting and they're saying, 'well, actually, this isn't right, I don't agree with it now, because my values have changed and therefore, I'm going to tweet about this' and the whole world knows about it. So it's actually gradually collapsing the game and that collapse is gathering speed.

Nyck: Well, there's been response—and I didn't know that until the other day when I was looking at this—there's been response in Europe and some laws that came into effect in May last year called the *European General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR*, and it's claimed it's the most important change in data privacy regulation in 20 years. It

basically "gives users the right to verify their data, including marketing profiles generated by data brokers, internet platforms or online media. While companies can still protect their code and algorithms as business secrets, they can no longer hide personal data that they generate about their users" (<https://qz.com/1525661/your-digital-identity-has-three-layers-and-you-can-only-protect-one-of-them/>). That's pretty amazing and I wonder whether that's going to be successful, how they can get around it or will they? Obviously, as usual, Europe is a bit ahead of the game in terms of these kind of privacy matters.

Steve: Yes, and what we really need to do is develop completely new systems which are more sophisticated and have this kind of guarantee of privacy built in so we don't actually have to trust a third party to uphold our privacy and our data privacy and that kind of thing. What we're seeing now, as with the previous example you quoted, is really continued efforts to try and patch the increasing number of holes on this sinking ship. This is a wonderful move by the European Union to introduce this policy, however, they are still trying to patch the holes on a sinking ship and the ship is going to sink. There's no doubt about that, it's inevitable; as inevitable as the process of evolution.

Nyck: There's an article that I quoted from in that piece I just read there, from *Quartz* magazine, entitled *Your Digital Identity Has Three Layers and You Can Only Protect One of Them* (<https://qz.com/1525661/your-digital-identity-has-three-layers-and-you-can-only-protect-one-of-them/>). Very simply put, the first layer is the one that you do control; that is what you post: the photos, the comments, the likes and everything on whatever platforms you might post on. The second layer is made of behavioural observations that the algorithms then interpret of what you've posted there, and the third layer is composed of interpretations of the first and second layers, and by that time, of course, it's way out of your hands and you have no idea what that profile looks like—that digital identity—and it may have no relationship to you at all; or it also may. It may be invading your privacy, but also may not actually indicate what you're interested in, what you do and who you are. The article says that Shoshana Zuboff calls this "gothic algorithmic daemons at play", I like that, "that follows us at nearly every instant of every hour of every day to suck us dry of metadata" (<https://theintercept.com/2019/02/02/shoshana-zuboff-age-of-surveillance-capitalism/>). It's a pretty strong statement but this is actually what's happening.

Steve: It is what's happening, and let's maybe give a really simple example of how that might play out. You might be talking on social media to your friends about the fact that the heel's kind of loose on your shoe and you had trouble walking to work today because of that issue with your shoe, and so the algorithm would scan that language and pick it up and it might conclude that actually you need a new pair of shoes, and therefore, the end analysis is that you actually need to find some new shoes that are

affordable according to your social status and that kind of thing, and so it might start to present you with opportunities to buy those shoes online or in a store that's near you. It probably knows which day you get paid and all that kind of stuff and so hence we see these ads popping up after, 'hang on, a minute, I was just talking about that yesterday and now I'm seeing ads in my feed on social media offering me this', and that's how it happens.

Nyck: I'm glad I never actually look at advertisements. I just don't. I mean, occasionally I get captured by something, but very, very rarely. So I don't even know, I haven't had a good look at what they're trying to sell me because I don't even take note of it.

Steve: I know, and what's happened is that this push advertising is becoming more and more intrusive. Gosh, it's almost every time I look at my phone or computer now, I've got some ad popping up in my face that I really don't want to see, just the same as you're not interested in them.

Again, this is a trend that's taking us towards collapse of the process, so what's happening with the shifting values to Layer 6 is that people are valuing privacy of their own data, they're valuing transparency of processes, and they really don't want intrusive information in their life that actually they don't want to see. The last thing they want to see is somebody trying to push a sale on them that they don't want to make or for an item that maybe they don't even want and so this trend is going to collapse the whole push advertising process, eventually. I predict that we will move to a completely opposite process, which will be 'pull advertising' where you'll know where to go if you want information about new shoes, and when you want new shoes you'll go there, but otherwise it's not in your face. And really, that's what people will want in the future.

Nyck: Well, some of these articles regarding surveillance capitalism talked about the fact, well, why don't they just ask us? It sounds quite simplistic, and then I read into that, well, maybe. Why don't the social media people say, so who are you? What are you interested in? What do you do? What sort of advertising do you want to see, if any, and actually go with that? But is a highly unlikely scenario to occur in stage five capitalism.

Steve: Well actually, it's a very cunning strategy by Layer 5, right? Why don't you just give us all the data that we want instead of having to make us work harder to get it off you? It'll be so much easier for you and us. Of course. I'm sure.

Nyck: Then of course, you've got what's happening in China as another angle to this and their social credit system, which we haven't talked about that much before, but this is pretty amazing that they've put in place. It's where every citizen, 1.4 billion of them, is

ranked on professional and personal interactions, online activity and public appearances. "If you fail to pay a parking ticket or you look up a banned topic online, your actions in real life have lasting effects, such as your ability to buy train tickets or send your kids to a good school" (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-18/china-social-credit-a-model-citizen-in-a-digital-dictatorship/10200278?nw=0>). This is an article the other day in the *ABC News* that talks about China's Hebei province, where "a red circle sweeps out a radius on a map like a naval radar scanning for enemy ships" (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-01-24/new-wechat-app-maps-deadbeat-debtors-in-china/10739016>). It's called the "deadbeat map" and this "mini programme is accessible within Chinese social media platform *WeChat*, and it allows users to pinpoint the location of those who have failed to pay their debts within a 500-metre radius", etc. This is a quintessentially Chinese way of, in a sense, manipulating the same kind of information in a different way—in a sort of non-democratic way, not that you'd call *Facebook* exactly democratic anymore, but ...

Steve: Yes, so much to talk about on that particular issue.

Nyck: Yes, I know there's a lot of angles there.

Steve: In a very general sense—this is a vast generalisation—but the West in recent times has tended to be more individually-oriented, where the Eastern part of the world has tended to be more communally-oriented and so what we're seeing is the emergence of these kinds of surveillance systems which actually have been existing in Western countries for some time. Snowden, of course, broke the news on the vast surveillance systems that the US government has had operating throughout the world, and of course they're not the only ones who are doing it, there are plenty of other governments doing similar things. Now of course, China, having that primary communal influence, is starting to move into Layer 5, which is individualistic, and it's looking at these systems and saying, OK, how can we roll these systems out? And of course it's not worried about people knowing about them, and in fact, it sees that as perhaps an advantage—that people know that there is a surveillance system. If they don't do what they're told or pay the bills or follow rules, then they're going to suffer. I think it's a massive disaster in the making, personally, because they're relying partially on artificial intelligence to analyse some of these behaviours and match data and those sorts of things, and when we've got that human disconnection, we know from the experience of Layer 5 playing out as the dominant global system, that these disconnected, Layer 5-oriented systems eventually lead to the collapse of the systems. Processes have to play themselves out naturally and we'll see where this goes, but I think those kinds of social rating systems, where you've got artificial intelligence involved in analysing someone's social credit and changing their social credit based on data which may not even be analysed by a human, all sorts of errors and mistakes and false assumptions are going

to be made there, which are going to have very real human impacts and quite possibly create a massive social underclass who can't get access to the things that they need to live life adequately. So that remains to be seen.

Nyck: Yes. The last little piece I'd like to ask you to comment on from this piece by Sam Biddle on Shoshana Zuboff's book, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, is a question that Sam Biddle asks of her. I'm interested because I don't know much about this and I think you know a bit more. "I've been surprised", he says, "by the number of people I know who I consider very savvy as far as technology, interested and concerned about technology, concerned by Facebook, who still have purchased an Alexa or Google Assistant device for their living room. It's this weird mismatch of knowing better and surrendering to the convenience of it all. What would you say to someone like that?" And she answers: "Surveillance capitalism in general has been so successful because most of us feel so beleaguered, so unsupported by our real-world institutions, whether it's health care, the education system, the bank ... It's just a tale of woe wherever you go. The economic and political institutions right now leave us feeling so frustrated. We've all been driven in this way toward the internet, toward these services, because we need help and no one else is helping us. That's how we get hooked." Layer after layer.

Steve: Absolutely, and let's not downplay the sophistication of the Layer 5 thinking. The idea of strategy itself really came out of the Modern era, right? I'm not too sure that word was around before the Modern era. It's extremely cunning, extremely sophisticated—it got us to the moon and back, after all—and it has learnt how to not only exploit the systems, but how to influence the design of our social systems for its own purposes. This can only end badly, and this is not an unusual thing. Every era, when it comes to its close it has to collapse, to some extent at least, in order for the social structures and the thinking, the mindsets, the neural networks even, to rewire themselves to change and become more capable and more complex and more sophisticated, and that's exactly what we're facing now globally. It's hard to put a time frame on this, but the milestones that I'm seeing into the future are leading me to believe that we may see this change of dominant global paradigm between Layer 5, the Scientific-Industrial way, to Layer 6, the Humanistic, network-centric way, around about the early 2030s.

Nyck: Yes, let's hope so.

Steve: So that means that we're looking at now over a decade of the continued collapse of these systems, of the introduction of new ways to try and get success from these corporations that are going to impact our lives in huge ways, in many undesirable ways, so we've got quite a number of challenges ahead. The only saving grace is that

simultaneously to that difficulty and the collapse that it will cause, we're seeing the rise of a new world. We're already seeing the rise of Layer 6 technology, Layer 6 thinking, Layer 6 ways of actually surpassing Layer 5 systems, bypassing Layer 5 systems, and that new technology, those new ways, are only going to get better over the next 10 years as well. So it's an interesting kind of dichotomy that we're facing in the near future.

There needs to be a level of collapse, and how severe that collapse is during this transition between paradigms ... when you look back at the transition between Layer 4 and Layer 5, you look at the kind of widespread violence—the Spanish Inquisition of the church, all of these really, really chaotic and crazy and violent things that happened—we're going through a similar dynamic now between 5 and 6, and how bad it gets is really a factor of how effectively human consciousness can grasp the nature of the dynamic and take steps to soften the impact of the transition. What's really interesting about this discussion that we have on *Future Sense*, is that by attempting to bring a Second Tier perspective on the underlying dynamics between these things, instead of being carried along in a turbulent river current like humanity has been up until now ...

Nyck: Reactionary currents, you could say.

Steve: ... all of a sudden we have this empty witnessing capacity that comes from the Second Tier perspective to step out of the river and look back on the river—even look into the future, in fact—and say, okay, we know that when a river goes past an area like this that has big rocks, then certain currents are created, you get this chaos and turbulence and then it all sorts itself out further downstream, and we can actually look ahead in the river now and we can see we're actually right there. We're just about to go through the rapids.

Nyck: Unless the cotton growers take too much water out of the river.

Steve: Exactly. So from a Second Tier perspective, we can predict the turbulence that's going to come because we can see the rocks ahead in the river. This is the way it's always been during the transition of a paradigm or era in human history, and so armed with that knowledge and knowing what the dynamics, what the chaos, is going to look like and what the causative factors are, then we have, perhaps for the first time, certainly for the first time in history on this scale, the capacity to influence the nature and the human experience of a paradigm shift more than ever before, which is a very, very exciting thing, and it just really reinforces the importance of this conversation.

Nyck: Indeed. I thought I'd give you, just very quickly, a couple of websites. If you are interested in at least trying to contain or stop some of the online tracking that is definitely occurring, you can go to a few websites. There's one called <https://myshadow.org>, another one called <https://www.howtogeek.com>—that's particularly for an article I've got in front of me about avoiding geotagging photos of your location, for example. It's a relatively small thing, but you may not want that to be happening (<https://www.howtogeek.com/303410/how-to-prevent-android-from-geotagging-photos-with-your-location/>). And one's called <https://www.betterinternet.sg> about various encrypted messaging apps that you can start using today, so there are certainly ways around some of this if it's a particular concern to you.

And I thought we would finish this little bit with a brief positive message and that is about surveillance in terms of police surveillance, which is a big issue. In fact, you noticed, just as an aside here Steve, that there's a surveillance camera outside the bus stop over here in Byron Bay all of a sudden, or how long has it been there, we wonder?

Steve: Yes, I've been reading about the fact that the local council here has introduced surveillance cameras in our town of Byron Bay. It's been driven by quite legitimate reasons because we do have an unusually high incidence of alcohol-fuelled violence in the town here because we get so many visitors come to town. It's certainly not a local aspect of Byron Bay life, but we get bunches of visitors who come from all over the place who like to drink alcohol and play up when they here because it's a holiday, and so that's driven the introduction of surveillance cameras in the main street, but it just looked really weird, seeing a pole sticking up there with a whole bunch of cameras pointing at us.

Nyck: Well, in the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts in America, it has become "at least the tenth local jurisdiction in the US to adopt a crucial measure enabling civilian control of police surveillance technology at the local level. The measure requires local police to obtain civilian permission before purchasing surveillance equipment to document the security rationale and privacy impacts of any such purchase, and also to comply with an annual audit to reveal potential misuse or overuse of the technology" (<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2018/12/cambridge-ma-joins-growing-ranks-cities-requiring-civilian-control-police>), so that's rather interesting, isn't it? The tenth jurisdiction to do so.

Steve: It is interesting and it's introducing a human factor in the process rather than just following systems, because that's what the systems tell us we can do. We're bringing in a human values element where somebody outside the police system can apply a different set of values and a different perspective to this decision to undertake surveillance. I think it's a very healthy thing and we probably can expect to see more of that.

Nyck: Indeed.

Nyck: You're tuned to the last few minutes of Future Sense here with myself, Nyck Jeanes and Steve McDonald. Both Steve and I are going down in the next day or two to Melbourne for a couple of days for the launch of Mind Medicine Australia—I think we mentioned it last week—a new paradigm for mental health with Professor David Nutt. David Nutt is head of neuropsychopharmacology at Imperial College London and under the auspices of Professor Nutt, the psychedelic research group at *Imperial College* is one of the world's foremost psychedelic research laboratories, publishing landmark research on psychedelic therapies and neural imaging studies of the psychedelic state. We just thought we'd mention a bit of that because of the discussion continually about pill testing. It's not the same thing, of course and yet we have this illegality on one hand of people taking substances at festivals and concerts and the like, and on the other hand, this growing movement, highly researched and becoming more and more authentic, into the use of psychopharmacology for mental health conditions in particular.

Steve: That's right, and such big values gaps between some of our political leaders and mainstream opinion.

I saw an interesting example of what could be an undue influence over a politician. It's impossible to say really without the evidence, but the Premier of Victoria was standing up in parliament (just recently I saw the video clip) and he was ruling out, absolutely, the possibility of introducing pill testing as a harm reduction mechanism in Victoria, particularly at music festivals. He was asked by another member of parliament, 'did you seek professional medical or health advice in making that decision?' And of course, apparently he didn't according to his answer. His answer was that he was going on the word of Victoria Police—it was their advice—and then he just threw out that 'these illicit substances are completely unsafe at any level of consumption, that's a fact', and of course, it's actually not a fact at all but in his position as the Premier and in that particular context of parliament, no-one contradicted him immediately after that because, I guess, it wasn't appropriate for the way that parliament runs.

Here we have a very responsible member of society who has a lot of authority and influence over the State of Victoria, who can roll out what is basically an untruth and call it a fact. Probably a lot of people who are listening, who don't have access to the facts or the evidence, just take it on his word that this guy, he wouldn't lie to us, but he is clearly being influenced in some unusual way to, as I said before, look stupid, as if he hasn't done his homework, because he's unable to reveal whatever the hidden agenda is behind this pushback on pill testing. The hidden agenda is most likely a fear of social change, and that fear could be coming from the Victorian Police Department because they're fearful about losing the funding that's associated with the drug war, because it's

a terribly large amount of funding that is associated with the kind of drug war-related work that they do. Much more money is spent on police enforcement of drug laws than is spent on a harm reduction within society, which is a terrible shame, but this is another great example of this late-stage capitalism and how it's playing out.

Nyck: Yes. There's a great article that you pointed to from *The Conversation* from a couple of days ago, and it's entitled *In Debates About Drug Use, Fun Is Important* (<https://theconversation.com/in-debates-about-drug-use-fun-is-important-110696>). It clearly points to a number of studies and so forth which indicate that young people take drugs for fun, essentially.

Steve: Of course.

Nyck: And essentially for connection, and I think this is really important when we talk about stage 5 to stage 6, to Layer 6, the Green layer, which is much more about connection, it occurs to me that this is what people are looking for in a relatively disconnected society—these kind of substances at these kind of events enhance that enjoyment and socialisation that occurs there, and that's never factored in. Boldly, one of the Greens from New South Wales, Cate Faehrmann, summed it up when she explained why she had used MDMA in her 20s, and since—it was bold and courageous of her to say so—and she said 'we knew the risk, the *just say no* message was around then, too, we ignored it, some things never change because we were just having a good time; that was our priority.' Quite straight forward.

Steve: Yes, that's right. It's very hard for people who haven't experienced these drugs to really understand it, but most of those people I'm talking about probably drink alcohol, and of course they enjoy having a drink with their friends. It's fun and that's why they do it, and of course, this is why people take these drugs like MDMA, not only because they're fun, but because they're actually more sophisticated and less harmful drugs than things like alcohol. You don't wake up with a terrible hangover from MDMA. Of course, it can be abused if you take too much—I mean, that's the case with anything.

Nyck: And it's about purity, too, so we're not advocating taking a pill from someone just coming up to you at a festival at all.

Steve: Not at all. Don't try this at home, not on our recommendation anyway, but there was an interesting study released on Tuesday that I found in an article on www.inverse.com from the *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, which suggests that there's no real reason to be concerned about the use of pure MDMA, and in this study, they

say: "Long-term MDMA users were shown to have higher levels of empathy than long-term users of other drugs" (<https://www.inverse.com/article/53143-psychological-effect-mdma-drug>), so there's a developmental benefit from the use of this particular drug in its purest form, of course, compared to, say, alcohol, which kills 15 Australians every day—far more than any illicit drug does.

Nyck: And an article on the other side of the equation, from www.businessinsider.com.au is entitled, *A top psychedelic scientist says 'the climate's looking good' for magic mushrooms and MDMA to turn into medicines* (<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/davos-top-psychedelic-scientist-mdma-magic-mushrooms-medicine-2019-1?r=US&IR=T>), and this was spoken at a gathering of the world's billionaires at Davos just recently: "At the World Economic Forum's annual meeting there in Davos in Switzerland, a leading neuroscientist said drugs like magic mushrooms and MDMA are moving closer to regulatory approval. If given the green light, the drugs will be used to treat a variety of mental health indications, including depression and PTSD", so it's appearing even in these sorts of conferences now.

Steve: Yes, it's great. I think that was Robin Carhart-Harris, wasn't it, who is a colleague of David Nutt's who has been doing some amazing work with magnetic resonance imaging.

Nyck: Yes, that's right. He's also at London's *Imperial College*, quite right. That's it, we'll have to leave it there. Thanks for joining us here.

Steve: It's been so much fun. Thank you.

Nyck: Yeah. We'll be back next week here on *BayFM*, on *Future Sense*.

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