

What's So Good About WOKE?

Culture is getting greener and sometimes meaner

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Hey folks, Jeff Salzman here and welcome to The Daily Evolver. Today. I want to again think out loud a bit about a topic that is arising in the culture. In terms of the evolution of the culture, this is what's up and it's very confusing, upsetting, and inspiring too, depending on who you're talking to. And I'm talking about this phenomenon of 'wokeness' or woke culture that is arising out of Green postmodernism. I get a lot of questions about it and I've also talked to friends about it. I got an interesting letter from a friend of mine who is an integralist through and through and who is actually for Trump. And I value him very much because he makes the argument for Trump that I can't even consider as a good Boulder liberal. I'm not that integral. So he wrote to me, and he said, "as I was reading a few pieces from media sources that are more from the center to right, such as National Review, Wall Street Journal, Fox News, et cetera. I was again, noting what they identify as the lack of coverage by the mainstream media, meaning everybody else, basically MSNBC, CNN, and most of the networks-mainstream media, a lack of coverage by the mainstream media regarding what is going on in American cities. I can go into certain sites and see mountains of video and image evidence of some pretty bad stuff that's still going on there. When I switched to an MSN mainstream media channel of whatever persuasion, there's no coverage of the rolling craziness. I'll just attach a couple of links that get at this." And I'll play one in a second. He says denial seems to approach Orwellian proportions at this point. What I'm interested in if there's a will for exploration is to learn more from you about what you understand and appreciate about how the mainstream media is not covering all of this. He ends with, "I want to better understand what the upside of woke is. So I'm going to try to respond here and I'm going to deal more with the second question first which is the upside of woke and then we'll take a look at what's going on with the mainstream media because I agree with my friend that it is really astonishing and yet we try to put it in some integral perspective and I'll die trying here.

So answering the first question, the upside of woke. As I said, woke is emergent from postmodernity. It's actually the logical effect or the philosophical or operational effect of Green. It's Green operationalized. And I'll explain that in a second. But before I do, let me just say that using basic integral theory, this Green stage of development, what we call the sensitive self that comes on-line after modernity, which is the rational self. And before that traditionalism,

which is the mythic self. And before that, various kinds of magic and tribal stages. But in this new stage of the sensitive self, we want to make room for all of it. Not that there is a justification for the parts of it as there are with every new stage of development that are totalitarian and truly dangerous and in some cases, especially in the earlier stages, murderous. Green is a little more pacified, but nevertheless, there are aspects of it that can be quite dangerous. And when I think about how to think about all of this integrally, I come to a teaching that I learned when I was studying Buddhism at Naropa University. And they talked about that in every religion, certainly, in Buddhism, there is an outer teaching, an inner teaching, and secret teaching. And the outer teaching in Buddhism is the four noble truths. It's how things work. It's the teachings. It's the stories that are seen as true. It's the catechisms, if you will, of the religion. It's what's written down. The inner teaching is the felt experience of that. And from an integral perspective, we might say it's the subtle body awareness of this teaching as opposed to the physical body or sort of the physical teachings. The subtle teachings, the energetic teachings, the inner teachings. And then, with the secret teachings, in a sense it engages the causal body or the spiritual body because in the secret teachings, you have entered a new world and the old you have been shed like a skin. In Christianity, you'll be said to be born again, but it's you're actually born again at every one of these stages. And from an evolutionary point of view, it's even cooler because we can see this growth in terms of the world that you inhabit. Now, all of a sudden, it's not just a new you, but it is the universe itself growing towards perfection. So you're not just creating a new you, you're creating a new world, a new piece of the cosmos. So it's really something. It's really important, it's wonderful to see, and we like it at integral.

So as an example, I think of another friend, actually, a mutual friend who was talking to us about his experience of becoming a Christian and he's a well-educated, modern, sophisticated American guy. And so Christianity came to him late in terms of its authenticity and in terms of its secret teaching. And he talked about being around a lot of Christians and his community was full of Christians and his family and so forth. And he said, I finally got to the point where I could be with them without pretending. I could actually see what they saw. I was lit up by what they were lit up by, and it allowed me to have a non-hypocritical relationship with them. And so this is an entree into that secret teaching. So what I'm talking about here. So if we look at Christianity and every religion of traditionalism has this outer, inner, and secret teaching. The outer teaching is some version of the Nicene Creed that goes something like, "I believe that God is the father and sent his Son to die for our sins." And sort of the rules of the Bible. The inner teaching is what happens when you believe that and the passions and the inspiration that it unleashes and the feelings of love and lushness and connection with other people who feel it. That's one of the really important things about evolution is we evolve in the first person, that is what we are able to see, but also the second person in terms of what we are able to relate with other people within these new worlds. So all of a sudden I'm with these people. I remember being born again as a kid and the feeling of deep connection with other people who

felt the way I did. The secret teaching is, 'Oh my God' in Christianity, literally. I realized that there is an almighty creator God who created me and created me special and individual, and who sees me and loves me the way that a loving parent would. Like a mother or father beyond all measure. And that my world is with him generally in Christianity. That's the outer teaching. The inner teaching is its mother, its father, and this world is not my home. So this is experienced as a new, bigger world. A new one. So talking to my friends who weren't Christians and hadn't been born again and tried to explain it to them and why they should be this way too, was feudal. Just as it was a few years later when I had lost my religion. And I would talk to my religious friends about how believing in God is kind of stupid and that got nowhere too. And so here we are, this illuminates the radical nature of these new worldviews that come online, including our new Green woke sensitive self, which leads us to the first principle of using this understanding in the culture war.

And that is that people are more forgiving of the zealots on their team in their world than they are of the zealots of the other team. And every team has zealots. Every team has people who they get lit up, but their red comes online. It's like, "I must overcome everybody who doesn't think the way I do." Welcome to human history. And, you know, the downside of the zealots of traditionalism is that they burn witches and have Holy Wars. And what can you say? What can you say when you talk about woke? And woke are in some ways the zealots of Green. Is there anything good about people who are violent? No. That's a bright line that at integral we recognize. So there's really nothing good to say about that just as there's nothing good to say about the zealotry of traditionalism and zealotry of modernity. It's just where the ego is run rampant over the environment, for instance. I won't get into that, but the pernicious downsides of modernity are they don't burn witches, they burn the planet. We do that by the way, it's not them. So again, we see the zealots of the other team and it's like, 'Oh, these are the worst. That's dangerous. Even people with inner teachings have passions that are weird and what they are talking about. And we focus our energies on what they get wrong, how they don't practice what they preach, how they're all caught up in their ideology about how many angels you can get on the head of a pin or how microaggressions work in the matrix of karma through history. Welcome to development. Welcome to one stage growing out of the other. And so we can spend all our time looking at their hypocrisy and the failure of how they're not living up to their own teachings and how their passions are dangerous. And to do that is to miss the beautiful thing that they bring to the party. Which is that we are created by a loving, creative, fourth person, I don't know and that we can become rational and understand the world on its own terms and be observable. We can be the masters of our own life. I mean, these are huge developments. And so Green has its new world too. It has its new secret teaching that to not see it is to miss the point.

Now, most people, including the person who wrote me the letter, are plenty Green. Most people at Integral are plenty of Green. In fact, the truth is that a lot of people in the culture are adequately Green in the sense that they are world-centric. But you don't want to just be

world-centric in terms of the modern world-centricity, which reduces the world to supply lines. But you want the postmodern world-centric view, which is multiculturalism and wants to appreciate the precious individualism of every culture, actually every person, but particularly, every culture. And this is the sensitive self, and there's no end to the sensitivity that we can develop at the sensitive self. Just as there's no limit to how rational we can be or how much we can understand the world in our modern self. That continues to grow. We grow both horizontally and traditionally too. We want to re-appreciate the great mystic stories. And those stories are actually more important than truth or accuracy, at least. So what comes online here is this new realization of, in some ways, the horrors of history, you know, Green ones too. And I always love this, and it's a great back-pocket teaching from Ken that I love on how the previous stages of development separate the world into red warrior stage, separates the world into predator and prey and traditionalism, where we have the transcendent God and laws of the universe of the world separating the world between saints and sinners. Because even though they have a great sort of new moral dimension and a new bigger circle, Christianity, for instance, you know, bring on the heathens, bring on the non-Jews. It's an amazing widening of the circle. There are still people on the inside and people on the outside, there's God, and there's the devil. And so we have saints, we have the people who follow our God, the right God, and we have the sinners who don't. So, you know, Green looks at that and says, boy, that's a lot of sinners.

And so Green wants to bring them in and give them special dispensation just as they do to people who would pray. The great underclass. We talk about our underclass now, everybody was the underclass in Red, except for the warlords and the gangs who were running things or the empires. So predator and prey, saints, and sinners, and then modernity separates the world into winners and losers. Into people who can make it, people in the meritocracy who can make it. And people who can't, are left behind. And so in humanity's long slug to the promised land, here we are. This is the stage we're at where in the developed world maybe about half of the people get that part of history and that needs to be corrected and 10 or 15% of it gets it in an extreme way. They become the Holy warriors of this new sensitivity. Again, the karmas of history, this moving matrix of cause and effect through history is still online, and can still be felt, and I can feel into it. And I can see the burdens that different peoples and different individuals can see. Now, Green, just like every other stage it overdoes it and does it in a blunt way. It still has people who are in and people who are out, even though they're multiculturally Green, they still don't like anybody who's not Green. So there are plenty of enemies at Green, but still, to critique that and just spend all your time critiquing that even though it is worthy of critique, is to not do what integral allows us to do, which is that while we're defending ourselves against the nots, we also are seeing the piece of the truth that they're being lit up by that we didn't see before. We want to be the ones who are not influencing but being influenced. So I'm going to play a clip that he sent that is kind of challenging. This is an example of an extreme of what culture. This is Ariel Atkins, a black lives matter organizer in

Chicago. She's out in the streets and Chicago had a couple of very bad nights recently. So here she is commenting on a looting spree that is going on in real-time behind her in some of Chicago's finest stores,

"People in this city are struggling through a pandemic. So I don't care if somebody decides to loot a Gucci or a Macy's or a Nike, because that makes sure that that person eats. That makes sure that that person has clothes."

So there we have possibly the worst of woke that justifies violence basically, and justifies violence more to property than people. But still, it's a bright line that we don't want to cross or justify, and at integral, we don't have to. We can say that's just wrong. We reject that, but then we don't just leave it there. And we want to ask ourselves just as a thought experiment, you know, just as part of integral practice, and that is what's the truth that she is bringing to the party. And that very question stimulates our own growth in terms of sensitivity to people who have been left out. And an example I often use because it comes from my own experience, is me being a gay kid in the Steel Valley in the seventies. So I realize I am at 12 or 13 or however old I was. And I realized that, okay, I can't ever tell anybody and that I can't ever act on it and I'll live my life. I didn't spend a lot of time or any time thinking about why it was wrong that I couldn't do that. I assumed I was wrong, but I didn't really care because I liked it. But that was me. So then, I moved into modernity. There are parts of me that realize my future lies in getting out of that traditional setting where I can be more open. And I do. I moved to Boulder and I moved to, 'don't ask, don't tell.' We didn't really have that formulation yet, but that's what it was. I mean, I could live freely. I lived with my partner. People knew us. We had our friends. I worked, and we would go to the Christmas party and so forth, but I didn't talk about it much. I didn't shove it down people's throats as one of my friends once said. Even talking about it, my family didn't want to talk about it at all. And so that's that modern view. And then there's the postmodern view that I grew into where it's a sensitivity that, 'Wait a second, why have I been denied my sexuality? My life force in terms of how I love and who I love?' And how is it that I could even tolerate that my childhood and my teenage years were stolen from me. And there was this period that I grew into where I almost - I've lost it a couple of times in my life. Not often, but three or two or three times, and this was close to being one of them where I was in some movie theater and watching probably one of those wonderful Tom Hanks, Meg Ryan rom-com and the outrage of looking at another heterosexual love scene was just too much for me to bear and I wanted to stand on the arms of the chair and the theater and shout "where's my story?" And I remember that. I remember that moment. I think I probably stayed and enjoyed the movie, but you know, at that point I couldn't see it and not be hopeful. But that's what happens. And so that's a new sensitivity that I just see. It's not about being convinced, it's real. And I'm a bigger person for seeing it, actually.

So this is what happens. Women my age will tell you stories about how they can't believe what they tolerated from men in the sixties and seventies. By the eighties, there was more equality,

but still, there's this new 'Me Too' realization that actually brings on growth. And is it overdone? Yeah. I mean, I think of the Aziz Ansari story. Aziz Ansari, the comedian everybody loves Aziz. He got Me Tooed. And it was this woman who wrote about a date that she had with him and he was a big star and she was nobody. And how he just kept pestering her for sex through the evening. And finally, I think she gave in and then regretted it. So she writes this story and so people pile on Aziz that he's a predator and all that good stuff and then there's a backlash. Like, "no, wait a second. He didn't do anything. He talked to her, he asked her, but he just never let it go." And so it turns out that there was learning there culturally, in terms of first of all, that it's dragged to be pestered for sex. And that yes, in the outer teachings, it's spelled out that men can't rape women, men can't grab women, men can't force women, but then there's this other sort of inner part, this attitude and that pestering for sex are actually all the way down through the tree of life. Male insects pester female insects for sex. Fish, primates. And then the female gives in sometimes because she wants it to stop. And so there's this awakening and Aziz himself talked about how unfair it was that he was being criticized and canceled and piled on. And yet, there was a realization that he had that there's this sort of inner that it's the left-hand quadrant part. It's beyond the laws of rules that we have to be aware of. It's this space between people where there are all kinds of oppression going on, that you want to call out.

And now I would say, that the growth in the culture, when I look at the young on Reddit - I'm such a voyeur- I'm on Reddit reading these boards of communities, of particularly young people talking about their sex lives and the freedom that women have and the communication that young people are having around sex. And I can remember my own trajectory around it. What's all the brouhaha about consent and the rape culture. And it's like, What? Do we need a contract before we can have sex? And all that. And in a way, yes. But if you see how so many young people are doing it now, it's lovely. And it's hot because it allows you, once you get these sort of inner teachings of feminism, if you will, the outer teaching being that women are people too. That's Gloria Steinem's great statement of feminism. That, the inner teachings of these energies and get them under control. And then the secret teachings are revealed. And that is that two people are kegs of dynamite with each other. We just talk about forces of nature with each other. We have our fears and we have our wants and desires and kinks, and you know, what fun it is to actually explore that together. And, there's a whole new world of sexual expression that comes online, and are there dead bodies in the wake? Are there people who were hurt? Were they fanatics? Are they fanatics or are they zealots? Yes. But we want to get in touch with this real, new world. And I think that's fun as an integral practitioner because we can do more than one thing at a time. We can condemn violence and looting. And then we can turn and say, okay, she's got a moral defense for this hat is based on principles of egalitarianism. And maybe we're ready at this stage to take another look at one of the sacred principles of modernity, the meritocracy and its downsides, the downsides of capitalism. There are tremendous upsides to both of those things. I mean, they released

people from the grip of the King, you know, I mean, it's created the modern world. The circle of moral compassion is enormously increased by modernity and capitalism. But, from an evolutionary perspective, it's like evolution says, great, so what have you done for me lately? And the beat goes on. And so there's an ever-deepening understanding of the people who have been left out and how that works. And there's a correction that wants to happen, and we see it. There's an extra effort in the culture at large to include people who have been left out. And a lot of that is just going to happen because we're awake to it. We're woke, actually to it. And again, there's an ever-increasing wokeness that we can have around that. I experienced it the other night, where a couple of friends came back from a visit they had with their friends who are billionaires. And the guy had just gotten four new 200 plus thousand dollar cars, all painted in his signature color and they talked about their house and the staff and the 20,000 square feet and the pinball machines and the indoor pool and the sidewalks that were melted by gas and all of that good stuff. And I have to say there was a time in my life where I would've thought, "Wow, cool." And now there's a part of me that goes, "Ooh." There's something that's a little out of kilter. And again, there's this new world that we oscillate as we develop through these stages. We have this communal tribalism and then Red breaks out of that. And it's more individual and strong versus weak. And then we go back to the communitarian traditionalism, and we oscillate and orange modernity is very individualistic and there is going to be a Green Green. We don't know what that is exactly yet, but there's something that arises where I am my brother's keeper and I don't really love that, honestly. I mean, I like being a free agent. It's worked very well for me, but I get my privilege. And the problem with getting your privilege is that if you realize you have privilege, you have to sort of set that right. And I feel a little bit about that the way I do about eating animals. It's like, I don't want to know too much because then I'll have to do something. And also, I'm pretty much out of the game now, but I am encouraged by just the extra effort.

And again, the mainstream media is leading the way because they've got the secret teaching here. And so they tell the story of the secret teaching. And so the New York Times, the New Yorker, the Atlantic, they're all as woke as can be now and their pages are full of the stories that really haven't been told. Is it overdone? Well, conservatives think so and many modernists think so. But again, welcome to fighting it out. Welcome to being friendly to the arena itself. In evolution, we fight our way forward in nature and in human culture. And we also love our way forward. And I always say the other F-word, our way forward. We do both of those things and, a paradise for people in these first-tier memes, traditionalism, modernism, even postmodernism, their vision of paradise is when everybody thinks alike. You know, everybody accepts Jesus as their personal savior, everybody's rational and gets rid of these myths and horrors of history, everybody's postmodern and helps the people who've been left out. And in integral, we want to see that all of those are true and it's not that I don't have to disbelieve one to believe the other. It's so great.

So, anyway, in terms of this wokeness, it's not just sensitivity to history, it's sensitivity to today. A conservative will tell me that all things being equal, in most HR departments of corporations these days, the person of color is going to be chosen. Fair enough. I think that's true. So there are many ways in which these corrections are happening, over-happening, or whatever. Again, welcome to the arena. But even though nothing is permanent, there's still this permanent feeling that there is an underclass. We have a black middle class. There's a huge development among African Americans that I've talked about in other podcasts. And you can refer yourself to those if you're interested in that, but still, the network of the average black family is one-tenth of what it is for the average white family. Health, education, all of these markers that we rightly associate with development points out that there is a stubborn black underclass, and there's a white underclass too, by the way. And this is where integral really helps because it shows that development actually is more important than race in terms of red people. People who really don't want to work in a system. Their hearts are really not there. Those come in all colors and all races, and there's a stubborn underclass of white people as well.

And with that said, there's still an extra added burden that comes from the color of the skin. That's just a fact. And as we understand it, and as we let that secret teaching in, is there a new sense of how corporations need to work with this underclass, how the society itself does? And of course, conservatives, including many conservative African Americans will argue that well, yes, the state of black America is a result of the maybe right-hearted, but wrong-headed policies of the sixties where there was social welfare and these big housing projects built and where there was an incentive for families to break up. And I don't rule that out at all. I actually think that has a very important piece of the truth. I think as we go forward with it, we want to make sure we learn those lessons to say, but it has been 60 some years now since the civil rights and voting rights legislation and do you think we'd be better off. And so this is this new realization where it's like me standing on the seats in the movie theater where I can't stand this. This is wrong. Just the outcomes, not the equality of opportunity. Fuck that. The equality of outcomes of what we see in front of us is intolerable now. I can't stand it anymore. That's Green. That's a subtle energy. That's the inner teachings of Green. And, I can feel that. I can feel that and I want to feel that and I want to then act on it, and not keep my head in the sand.

So we're seeing evolution in action here. We're seeing a polarization of the media. I mean, again, I'm astonished. I'm with my friend here. I can't believe that you can watch MSNBC all day and not know anything about what's going on in Portland, what was going on in Seattle, and then what's going on now in Chicago. It's really something. Do I think it's the end of the world? No. I mean, it's hard to know how these things come online. It's like asking a 10-year-old, what it's going to be like, to be 12? Well, they'll tell you what it's going to be like to be 12. But, it's largely nonsense because it's a new world at 12. They are a new person then and they're bigger. So I don't know where the polarization of the media is going to go and that's okay because it's widening the field and it's the great engine of evolution. I've said it

many times. The great engine of evolution is boredom. You get bored with it. I'm bored with it. I can't watch it anymore. I check in on it, but I'm more interested actually in watching the polarized version of the right on Fox news. At least I'm learning something. It's not my normal diet of the liberal catechism. So that's happening on one end of the side of the street. And the other is that there's this enormous democratization, and this is the Green media. This is Green in the third person. You know this is the lower right-hand quadrant of Green. And that is social media. It also relates to the others, the lower left, and so forth. But everybody, it's not only mass media like it was in orange where there are corporations putting out media to the masses. Now, everybody's got their microphone. Everybody's got their own printing press and everybody's online and talking, and yes, it's confusing and yes, it's vexing. And yes, we seek out our tribes till we get bored with them. And are there new differentiations that we can see? Yes. We're seeing it in real-time. We're seeing the 'defund the police' protests. And even in the New York Times covering very well the backlash against 'defund the police' from the black community in New York, where they're like, no, we want the police. And this idea that the message of racial justice has been corrupted by anarchists and Marxists, which is also true as we've seen that happen and also the resentment for black people about that. And then how white people get splintered off. I think of a friend telling me of a friend of hers who lives in Portland and is just the white girl who's as woke as can be and has been well-educated into all of the whole postmodern woke culture and went to the demonstrations in Portland. And came back one night after hearing a black speaker talk about how they hate white people. And suddenly, she wasn't so sure she was on board with all of this. The process of evolution is that we differentiate things that were fused together. We thought it was just these demonstrations, but now we see these strands of these demonstrations and these different worldviews and these different groups of people. And so we continue to differentiate and then we integrate. After we get them all out there, then we can have a new integration and we're having that.

I was going to show, and I might as well since I'm on a roll here, this is the mayor of Chicago and African-American lesbian woman, and this is what she has to say about the looting and rioting.

"What occurred in our downtown and surrounding communities was abject criminal behavior, pure and simple, and there cannot be any excuse for it."

So we see that. We see the black police chief of Seattle resign because of funding cuts. We see all kinds of things. And there are people that are just getting hipped to all of this. Again, this is where as integralists, we can be friendly to the fight itself and try to usher in a new integral stage, both within ourselves, our relationships, and the culture at large. And the integral view sees evolution as just fundamental and that in evolution, goodness, truth, and beauty are created often by means of their opposites. It's just one of the mistakes God made, but we've got to live with it.

Well, you guys take care and we'll see you on the next episode of The Daily Evolver.