

### **Prefatory Remarks**

“The day the Woke Mob Came for the Herbalists,” as you will soon see, has a very different tone to other articles I have posted on this blog. That is intentional and for a specific reason.

I have been concerned for some time about the increasingly strident moralism now afflicting our communities, including the herbal world. Every thought, every utterance these days seems to have somewhere in its background a moral nutrition label. Violating it, that is, whatever the current “moral normal” is pronounced to be, subjects an increasing number of people to public censure, emotional and sometimes violent attacks, and ostracism. It is no wonder that the behavior is often being likened to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* (which far too few of the woke mob seem to have read). As Anne Applebaum comments in her article (“The New Puritans”) at *The Atlantic* (which I highly suggest you read):

*The modern online public sphere, a place of rapid conclusions, rigid ideological prisms, and arguments of 280 characters, favors neither nuance nor ambiguity. Yet the values of that online sphere have come to dominate many American cultural institutions: universities, newspapers, foundations, museums. Heeding public demands for rapid retribution, they sometimes impose the equivalent of lifetime scarlet letters on people who have not been accused of anything remotely resembling a crime. Instead of courts, they use secretive bureaucracies. Instead of hearing evidence and witnesses, they make judgments behind closed doors.*

I don't believe in this kind of shaming or these moralistic attacks, whether from the left or right. I have never been a fan of the puritans, in fact their genetic intermingling in our culture has led to a great many damaging events in our history, from the christian version of sharia law (the remnants of which can still be found in numerous laws still in force throughout the nation – alcohol and drug prohibition, anti-blasphemy and anti-cursing statutes, dress codes for women, and anti-sex attitudes seemingly everywhere ) to the Mccarthy hearings to the satanic ritual day care panics of the 1980s (which resulted in a number of innocent people being put in prison) to our present leftist insanities.

The articles I posted previously were not, as I had hoped, having any real world effects in reducing the attacks or on the destruction of our herbal communities. And still, every day, I received emails and facebook messages telling me of the shabby treatment (and increasingly hostile attacks and shaming) of herbal students and colleagues. Finally, it became clear to me that remaining silent was compromising my own sense of integrity and wholeness. I was violating everything I believed in (including my relationship with the Green and my dedication to the herbal communities in this country) by remaining silent in the face of the harm that was occurring. So, I decided to take a more assertive position and utilize especially strident language while doing so *in order to stimulate a response* from the reliably unstable fringe of the wokerati who were using the current moral panic to act out their own particular unresolved psychological issues – especially long-held archaic rage and pain. (I posted links to the article on Facebook to facilitate this.)

My strategy was successful. It brought the craziness of the behavior now permeating the herbal community out into the open where people could get a good whiff of it, finally get a good

view of its cruelty in action. A number of people, including one on the board of the American Herbalists Guild, responded by attacking me (which I thought rather humorous) but also anyone who had the temerity to “like” the post. They also began attacking my family – as cowards often do – to try and force me to acquiesce to their demands; I consider this to be especially egregious behavior but it is pretty much standard behavior for fanatics of whatever sort.

Later, that same board member burned some of my books and posted a video of it online. In fact, those who publically posted supportive comments or liked the post were actively attacked, many for their skin color or gender. Dehumanizing vitriol rained down on anyone who dared speak up in any fashion. (In consequence a number of people were frightened enough to remove their supportive posts; others wrote me privately telling me they were glad I had spoken up but that they had been warned that their business would be destroyed if they dared to speak out.) Nevertheless, supportive comments ran about 100 to 1 in favor.

The problem is a great deal worse than is publically known. Like many things it grows best in darkness. It is the McCarthy witch hunts all over again. This time from the left.

Book burning? From the left? It is shameful.

Over the past few years there has been a huge amount of emotional brutality and shaming directed at many people in the herbal community – a community that has taken forty years to come into being, a community that was, until now, one that was relatively peaceful and mutually supportive. These attacks have caused deep emotional hurt, in some instances very severe harm which I doubt will ever completely heal. It is emotional violence under the guise of social justice. There is nothing that justifies it, this emotional brutalism, this assault on people who have spent decades of their life building up the herbal communities in this country. The (ostensible) end

does not justify the means being used. *This was the entire point of the post. It is the only point.*

(Thankfully, because of the post, a great many more herbalists who had been harmed have begun to speak out. The conversation that should have occurred long ago has begun – we are either human together, children of the Green, or we are only another group of people hating each other. Further, the two herbal organizations to which that herbal book burner belonged did in fact censure him for his behavior, his racist attacks on other herbalists, and his violations of the ethical standards of the organizations.)

That those in the woke mob have been so unwilling to address the harm that is being done, to actually hear the pain expressed by those who have been harmed and which is reflected in the many comments that have been posted says a great deal about the people who make up that group. They clearly have no capacity for compassion; they are wolves in social justice clothing, they are not social justice activists. As I have made clear, I make a distinction between social justice activists of good heart and the woke mob. These are not identical groups nor should they be confused with each other. I have nothing but admiration for the young social justice advocates of good heart who are in fact addressing problems in the American culture. I do not respect nor will I support the woke mob or again overlook the harm they are causing.

Please travel well, and remember, to the plants we are all one family and they come to us equally. No one owns the medicine of the plants – except the plants themselves and they do not believe that anyone, including groups of people, should take ownership of them or their medicine. (What hubris that is, to think that one group owns the medicines the Earth and plants have given us!) The plants have been clear ever since people have been that when we are in need they will help us in our suffering. That is their job, once upon a time the herbal communities in

this country knew that. Perhaps they have forgotten.

In the spirit of the Green,

Stephen

### **The Day the Woke Mob Came for the Herbalists**

Stephen Harrod Buhner

*In the intoxication of youthful successes I had felt myself to be infallible, and I was therefore cruel. In the surfeit of power I was a murderer, and an oppressor. In my most evil moments I was convinced that I was doing good, and I was well supplied with systematic arguments. And it was only when I lay there on rotting prison straw that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good. Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart—and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. And even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of all hearts, there remains ... an unrooted small corner of evil. - Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn*

It is a strange phenomenon, the current historical amnesia of the young. To be sure, it's a common generational problem; every new generation seems to think, for instance, that they discovered sex. It's easy to grasp how out of touch they are with the nature of human sexuality if

you ever mention their elders having intercourse or worse, fucking. The image of the wrinkled bodies of their parents, grandparents, and even, horribly, their great-grandparents – I mean the really *old* – slapping together in frenzied ecstasy is just too much to bear. (It *is* amusing watching them trying to get the images out of their heads.) But, I digress.

The psychological myopia and historical amnesia of the young is, again, a common generational problem. Nevertheless, I think it has reached rather greater proportions than usual and now possesses some extremely dangerous ramifications. In consequence, the tendency to apply current morality (if that is in fact what it is) to previous generations is done so without an understanding of the epistemological or cultural context in which those generations lived. That is, previous generations were born into a scenario (as this one also has been – though they don't yet realize it) and a great many beliefs, ways of seeing the world, expectations, and insistences were embedded within that scenario. People swim in their epistemological and cultural scenarios like fish do in water; they ingest all that embedded software with every breath they take. Yet, they don't know it. It just is.

Everyone, and I mean *everyone*, has to adapt to the human world as it is when they are born and as they grow. Failure to adapt means to die. The world they come into is the *only* world they know; for them it *is* reality. And I mean *reality*. Seeing outside it when you are in it is like asking a fish to understand the world beyond the sea. It just isn't easily done. Some people *can*, sooner or later, see beyond their cultural prejudices it's just that they almost never, ever, ever do so until they are older, or have spent a lot of time in other countries or taken a lot of LSD or something. For the most part, they just think that their way of life and thought constitutes the rules of reality. Regrettably they don't usually have much humility. They then apply their

underdeveloped intellectualizing and sophomoric morality to everyone they run into, as if it is a law of nature – like the Chinese and ventriloquists and donut makers and people with Asberger’s who work at Google – whether it fits or not. This is pretty much basic information-about-life-as-it-is that seems to have passed current generations by. They are ignorant of the fact that moral frameworks shift over generational time – *and they do so for a very particular reason*. This is one of the axioms of life. Every 25 to 50 years, what was once moral suddenly no longer is, for instance, owning slaves or thinking baseball is important to a lived life. The thing that always strikes me though is the bravery of those who opposed slavery and being willing to say so when everyone else around them thought it was just a natural thing, a part of life like the moon and the rain. Same goes for those who thought that women were mentally inferior to men (though really, I can’t easily understand this one; hadn’t those people ever met any women?) The ones who fought against these things just wanted the promises of the Founders to apply to everyone and they fought to make it so. But as is always true, there were some who went off the rails and began to separate everyone into good and bad with no room for future reconciliation. The totalitarianists who, as they always do got into, oh, I don’t know, thinking something like, oh, say, that the world would be just perfect and there would be no more bad stuff happening, ever, if my personal beliefs were forced on everyone else whether they wanted them to be or not.

Hmmm, I don’t know, like prohibiting the consumption of alcohol or drugs to *everyone* because *Jesus!* and making sure that homosexuals were locked up or at least ostracized because *The Children!* I mean, there should be a law! We need to be *safe!* and as one of those old conservative justices said long ago, “Just knowing that a homosexual is out there doing those things causes us moral harm.” (Does this sound familiar to you? Where do you think those stupid

ideas the woke mob have come from anyway?) Utopianists always end up becoming totalitarian fanatics sooner or later and it never works out and it never will. But I digress.

One of the things that the current we-are-the-ones-telling-you-like-it-is activists is their total lack of understanding about herbalism in the United States in our time – that is, where it came from and how it got here.

How and why herbal medicine was outlawed after it had been legal here for centuries is another, relatively long story which I am not going to go into here, but the story involves allopathic physicians – what are now called (but really aren't) doctors, pharmaceutical companies, modernism, evangelical christians, a lot of fear-mongering (which also included a terrible fear of nature), and a very strong desire for money and power and control by some very psychologically damaged people. But you know, *it's for your own good!* The usual sort of things found in most history books. The end result being that herbal medicine and herbalists were outlawed (some of whom went to jail afterwards). Only a few of the wacky, brave, really insistent ones kept it going once it was illegal (people like Dr. Christopher, Hannah Krueger, Norma Meiers, Dr. Bronner, and so on). Then the 1960s happened. Young men and women started taking drugs and growing their hair long and wearing interesting clothing and exploring the world without using the maps they had been told to use and among them was a young woman named Rosemary Gladstar.

I don't think it ever occurred to her that herbalism was *illegal* in any you-are-going-to-jail sense. After all it was not the 50s anymore. The McCarthy witch hunts were over, attacking people for their beliefs or associations was ancient history. And there were a lot of us exploring outside the box and rock and roll was happening and there were all those protests against the war



and for civil rights and so on and on. We had thrown ourselves into the world and found ourselves for one reason or another exploring its nooks and crannies and some of us discovered folk music or the blues or handmade pottery or how to build pegged post and beam houses or organic farming and home brewing or sculpting or blacksmithing maybe and really, just a lot of the old, forgotten crafts that for whatever reason really excited us. Far too many of us had grown up with frozen TV dinners and instant coffee and velveta cheese and polyester clothing and Frank Sinatra and in the suburbs and decided that if that was life, well, fuck it. There had to be another way of living. We started putting eros and ethos into our lives and work and as an inevitable part of all that we rediscovered the natural world and began spending time in old forests and fell (without really realizing what was happening) into the enchantment of the world. And after that it was pretty hard to go back to that old empty life. Some people, of course, got caught up in the human world again and the need to make money and so they cut their hair and got jobs and married and had children and after while all those early years seemed to be just something they dreamed of long ago when they didn't know any better. But others didn't do that. They decided to embed themselves more fully in the enchantment of the world and worked to bring those forgotten realms and crafts back to life again. And all the while the grown-up world was telling them there was no money in it and they would starve and who the fuck would want to be an herbalist anyway and besides if you try and treat disease with herbs you are going to die for sure and are you some kind of superstitious throwback to the time when people thought the world was flat? I mean *science!* We are after all now in an enlightened age and *modern medicine!* and what the fuck is wrong with you?

Still, there was something in what we had found that we were not going to let go of and

besides most of the grown-ups we knew looked like someone had beat the shit out of their hearts a long time ago and we were pretty sure we didn't want to live our lives like that. The weeping child looking out of our parents eyes was more than many of us could bear. And the thought of having eyes like that was something we were not willing to do. So many of us did something else and Rosemary Gladstar was one of them.

Rosemary started the first new herb store in the United States in probably a half century (though Nathan Podhurst was, of course, still running his curmudgeonly store in San Francisco – which would continue for some 62 years or so before he died, and of course there were those inscrutable stores in Chinatowns in LA and SF and NYC that we didn't yet know much about). After awhile Rosemary started doing a few classes out of her store and the interest grew so she started the first herbal school since the last eclectic college closed in Cincinnati, OH in the early 1930s. And though she is not involved with the school or the store any longer, both of them are still in business some half century or more since they opened.

There were of course a few others who found their way into the herbal world outside of Rosemary's influence. David Hoffmann in England (who wrote one of the first new herbals in generations), Jeanne Rose (who wrote some of the first new herbals in the U.S.), Michael Moore in the southwest (who also wrote some of the more useful and funny herbals), William LeSassier in the east (with his eccentric newsletters that were some of the first to go into treatment in depth), Steven Foster (who rediscovered the Shakers and their herbal world), Susun Weed among the lesbian communities (who wrote some of the first women's herbals), Sun Bear (who began bringing into cultural awareness tribal cultures' relationships with plants), Michael Tierra (who immersed himself into traditional Chinese medicine), Matthew Wood (who immersed himself in

the eclectics texts and course notes at the Lloyd Library), and others whose names are just not occurring to me now. And while I am mentioning mostly men here, it is important to understand that from the start the American herbal movement has been developed mostly by women. While Rosemary, Susun Weed, and Jeannie Rose and Cascade Anderson Geller (and others, later on) did write and publish, it was mostly the few men who were involved who tended to focus on that sort of thing. (Men like Mark Blumenthal [who started the American Botanical Council] and who, along with Rob McCaleb [who created the first herbal quality control lab at Celestial Seasonings Tea Company] began *HerbalGram* which grew from a small, rather ratty newsletter to a professional magazine which included monographs and articles on the herb world and any legislation which affected that world). Nevertheless, the American herbal movement and its world is primarily a community of women and has been since the beginning. In part this is because the American medical system did not and does not treat women's health very well and, further, tends to medicalize the female reproductive system and childbirth, something that most women hate and if you pat my head or talk down to me again I will kill you or at the very least kick you in *your* reproductive organs which will be tremendously satisfying and most likely hurt a lot but will certainly shut you the fuck up. In a sense the American herbal movement came into being, in large measure, because of the second wave feminist movement's insistence on reasserting control over their own bodies. While more men are moving into herbalism now that it is more respectable (and besides there is a lot of money in it these days – about four billion dollars a year if my memory serves) there are still nine women for every man and that is the way it should be and the way I hope it always is. Women are the core of our herbal world, the ones who are most often community herbalists, the ones who bring plant medicines to the common

people, the ones who don't intend to get rich helping the sick. And they are humble, these women (well most of them anyway, there are a few bad apples in every barrel, and yes I am talking about you A and B and T). But most of them are humble because they know that they are in service to the plants and it is with the plants that the power resides. It has always resided with the plants and never with humans – something the doctors forgot long ago. (And something I regret to say that some of the young social justice activists seem to have forgotten as well.)

Rosemary is rightly called the godmother of American herbalism. Without her we would not have the herbal world that we now have, nor would we have the many off-shoots that have sprouted everywhere in the western world, and especially in North America, like weeds breaking through sidewalks.

The important thing to remember here is that *no one* and I mean **no one** wanted anything to do with herbalism in those early years except for a few hippies and eccentrics who didn't seem to fit any place else in society. They had the certitude of their youth and felt they had nothing to lose and so threw themselves into it with all their hearts. Few of us really understood just how intensely and aggressively adversarial the FDA and the American medical establishment had been throughout the 1930s, 40s, and 50s toward herbal medicines and the people who worked as herbalists. As Michael Tierra once remarked, "I remember Nathan [Podhurst] describing how in the late 1940s the FBI stormed into [Nathan's store] Nature's Herbs and confiscated thousands of herb books containing formulas sold in the store and took them out on the street for a public book burning." Those kinds of things supposedly didn't happen in America anymore, especially with the Nazi's burning books as intently as they were then, but such things did happen here just as they always have and as they are still happening today. The 60s loosened things up but as the

neo-herbal movement grew those of us who had immersed ourselves in the plants would run into that same aggressive violence ourselves. And some of us would be thrown to the wolves or burned at the stake (just as examples to the rest of us) and there was little that the rest of us could do to stop it.

Many of those first few apprentices and students of Rosemary's started other herb schools, others began the first new herb companies in the United States since herbal prohibition began (HerbPharm was one of them). Other students wrote about what their explorations and the plants were teaching them, crafting the beginnings of a truly new American herbalism. Others began mining the unread documents left us by the physiomedicalists and eclectics at the Lloyd Library in Cincinnati or spent their time in used bookstores seeking out the older herbals from England and the European continent. We were reclaiming the western herbal tradition from the bin of history but also adding much that those ancient peoples never knew. And none of us made any fucking money – for decades. We did it because we believed, because we were in love with the Green, and because one day when we least expected it a plant saved our life.

Some of us did end up making money, a few, like Ed Smith who started HerbPharm made millions but no one and I mean no one made much money at all until they were in their 50s or even their 60s. (And you should remember here that all of them started down this road as teenagers.) Before that it was hand-to-mouth and how am I going to pay the rent this month and fuck I need to go to the dentist.

Many in the woke mob look at us now and all they see is where we got to after decades of struggle and all that not-enough and only our love and belief to hold us to the path we had chosen. And some of the ones we loved never did make more than not-quite-enough and others

died far too young and now none of those blathering on about being woke knows their names. What is true, though hardly anyone will say it out loud, is that some of our friends and teachers died from broken hearts, which, yes, really is a thing, because this road we chose is a fucking hard one. I *remember* the ones who died – as many of the older herbalists do – they have a special place in our hearts but, if you are one of the young woke mob activists, they are not in your hearts nor are they in your memories. They are *ancient* history, like John Lennon who, for you, has always been dead. And you don't even know, in all your social justice, woke mob certitude, that the only reason you have this herbal world for you to be in is because of the dead who walked this road before you.

Some fifteen years or so after Rosemary started her herb store she started what I am pretty sure was the first herbal conference in the United States since the nineteenth-century at Breitenbush Hot Springs in Oregon. Later, after moving to Vermont, she became part of a second one (which was started by Gail Ulrich) the New England Women's Herb Conference and which she took over when Gail died. Then a few years later she started the International Herb Symposium. The first two were held yearly for over 30 years and the International every other year for 30 years as of this year, 2021.

Breitenbush has always been more of a hippie affair – in the early days most of the attendees spent a lot of time naked in (and out of) the hot springs. The Women's conference welcomed women of all sexual orientations, of all colors, races, creeds. It was a place for women to share what they had learned about being a woman, about plant medicines, about using plants to heal women and their children, to help with childbirth, to help with reproductive problems. It was a place to have fun, and laugh, and sing, and have intimacy with each other – year after year

after year. The International was a somewhat more formal affair, a place for herbalists from all over the world to come, from every continent, from every part of the plant world, whether academic or Earth-based, of every religion and color and creed, culture, language, and tradition. All were welcome. And the thing is that while there were the usual squabbles that happen when two people get in a room together, for decades these conferences were convivial gatherings, places where love of the Green world was predominant, where kindness was the order of the day, where our petty grievances and competitive strivings were left behind or put aside. There are very few conferences – and I have been to a great many different kinds – that I can say that about. In fact, there are *none* I can say that about but these. At *these* conferences we made the acquaintance of herbalists from all the different American traditions (Tommy Bass anyone?) and from Africa and Russia and England and France and China and Japan and India – from all over the world, and herbalists from many different tribal traditions and cultures, and herbalists from schools of healing that few of us had ever heard of. There was a great intermingling of traditions and love of the Green and such joy in it for so many of us. We found that because we had fallen in love with the Green, because it had taken us into its world, that even though we didn't know it until we met, all of us were family in the very best sense of that word. It was like coming home, for most of us, for the first time in our lives.

Rosemary, as part of her work, dove deep into our herbal heritage and traditions and found many of our herbal elders, the ones who had been forgotten, and brought them into this new herbal world so they could be honored. Elders such as Juliette de Bairacli Levy who had learned herbs from the Roma in Europe so very long ago. She had been very famous at one time but had been forgotten as the world moved on. Rosemary flew to her island home (at her own

expense) and brought her out into the world again and I don't think Juliette had been so happy in decades. She was *loved* by those of us who revered what she had done and her place in our history. And Rosemary brought other elders to us as well, every one she could find, so that they would know, at the end of their lives, the value of their work, to the world and to us. All of this happened for only one reason: Rosemary Gladstar.

But Rosemary, as is true for so many of us now, has grown old and she finally had to pass the work on to others. Her ability to work 80 hours a week as she had done for a half century or more was no longer possible. So she passed the International and the Women's on to a new generation. And it was into this that the woke mob came and destroyed in a year what she (and we) had built up over decades. *A year*. A fucking year. (And will it ever rise again? And if it does what will it be now? A venue for racial blame and wokeness and divisiveness or a place where those who love the Green come together in love and conviviality and service to the plants to which they have dedicated their lives?)

The woke mob came with their rage and their blame and their intellectual vapidness and their critical race theory (which posits that all human and institutional relationships are *solely* based around power and power differentials) and their intersectionality (which, truly, at its core is solely about the degree of victimization of identifiable groups by power differentials) and demanded safe spaces tents and classes on subtle racism and white privilege and threw their accusations at everyone about how all these women who had worked years of their lives to bring the Women's conference into being had culturally appropriated herbal medicine. Into the Women's conference came an insistence on skin color or ethnic background or tribal membership as *the* determining factor in a person's worth or knowledge, not kindness or their



past history or the genuineness of their work or the years of love they had spent and about which these new children knew nothing and cared less. They had come merely to kill the generations that preceded them and destroy their elders. For what knowledge of use could any elder of the wrong skin color or gender or blood purity have?

I have heard the stories, the ones told by the women who worked long years with the committee that oversaw the structure of the women's conference. These were the women who brought in the teachers, who oversaw the budget, and did the work, nearly always unpaid, to set it up and run it each year. Year after year after year. After the woke mob inserted their sharpened words into the heart of the committee, these women would leave the meetings, make the long drive home, weeping with every mile they drove. Once home they would grieve long into the night for how they were treated, how they were disrespected, from the cruelty. But most of all they grieved for what was being lost, what was being done to this thing they loved as much as they loved life itself. For they knew that it would not survive the cruelty being injected by those venomous teeth as they bit down harder and harder into that good heart that had held us in love for so long. And it didn't.

These young hate-filled woke mob activists who are so consumed by their certitude and their moral unclarity are – though in their ignorance and lack of rigorous self-examination they do not know it – engaging in displacement. And for those of you who have not taken the time to look into the secret corners of your own psychological darkness, this is what displacement is.

*Displacement is a psychological defense mechanism in which a person redirects a negative emotion from its original source to a less threatening recipient. A classic*

*example of the defense is displaced aggression. If a person is angry but cannot direct their anger toward the source without consequences, they might "take out" their anger on a person or thing that poses less of a risk.*

Another way to describe this is that it is far easier to attack mild-mannered suburbanites for wearing leather than to accost Hell's Angels for doing so. It's a form of cowardice operating under the guise of social activism. And the problem is that among the liberal left it has been very difficult to figure all this out because some of the things the woke mob are saying do overlap with all our years of activism and deeply held beliefs. (Their poison found its way into our depths because of this, and because of our misplaced, tremendously naive, egalitarianism.) Yes, we are against racism (why the fuck do you think we marched in the 60s?) And yes we are feminists (why do you think we marched in the 60s you fucks?). And yes, we believe that a person's sexuality is their own business and should not be regulated by the state (why do you think we fucking marched in the 60s?). And why do you think we did all that work and supported legal interventions and wrote legislation and did the foot work necessary to help it all change? So you would have a better world than the one we were born into. So that that old racist, segregated whites only, women not wanted, homosexuals are perverts, herbalism is superstitious nonsense world that we fucking hated would change. That's why. And despite your intellectually vapid protestations to the contrary, skin color and blood purity as determinants of a human being's worth are evil. And the children of killers are not killers but children and anyone who assigns blame to a whole race or a whole gender knows nothing of history or where that evil has led to in the past and is leading to once again now, in our time.

Once upon a time, I would have spent the time to write up a reasoned, well researched article on all this. To take the statements of the intellectually-challenged and parse them and their logical inconsistencies and reply in depth to each and every one of them. It isn't hard to do that with the commentary of people who don't yet have the ability to reason or examine what is hidden in the darkness of their own hearts. And I would have spent some time talking about all the groups and businesses and herbalists who have rolled over and absorbed this nonsense and who were now spouting it out on their websites and in public talks so they can show that, yeah, we are with you babe. We are morally pure, too (don't hurt us), and forgive us our sins (as we don't forgive others), and can I wash your feet, and for sure we will own our white privilege and our cultural appropriation of . . . well, everything. But other people are going into all that with intellectual depth, people like John McWhorter, Matt Taibbi, Freddie deBoer, Thomas Chatterton Williams, Wesley Yang, Andrew Doyle, Bari Weiss, Ella Whelan, Margaret Atwood and on and on and on. And frankly after doing that in depth for the past forty years with the rationalists and reductive scientists in order to make a philosophical case for animism and herbal medicine while using their own incredibly fucking boring language while at the same time writing a parallel commentary in a language that actual, real people use I am just fucking tired of it.

So, I will tell every one of you reading this all that you need to know about the woke mob and the social justice activists who are trying to take over the herbal world with their thinly-disguised puritanism and its focus on everybody else's sins, and their smug glee over now we can finally get some good shunning going again or let's-put-you-in-the-stocks-in-the-public-square-shall-we religion filled with all that repressed rage and blind psychological wounds they just don't have the time to deal with in themselves.

All you need to know is this:

*Is the feeling of what they are doing kind? Is the behavior itself kind? Is it filled with compassion? Is there laughter and intimacy? What is the trust level between the people involved? Are their hearts open? Is their behavior creating outcomes that bring people closer together or push them further apart? Is it building up or tearing down? Is it breaking hearts or mending them? Is it bringing a sense of universal humanness to our world or the opposite? Is it supporting human tendencies towards violence or towards peace? It is filled with love of the Green world or have they forgotten that world entirely in their drive for power and control? What in fact do they serve that is outside and larger than the human world? In short: How does what they are doing feel to your heart? If you walked into a restaurant that felt this way would you want to remain there or even eat their food? How does it feel to the child within you that sat under trees talking to flowers and trees when you were young? To the part of you that believes in the good, that believes that as people we can come together in caring and mutual support, to the part of you that knows the smell of evil in comparison to the smell of goodness? How does it fucking feel?*

I suspect you already know the answers to these questions. The woke mob activists I am speaking of serve only themselves and their sense of injustice and their grievances and their desire for power. They are destroying communities that took decades to build, conferences filled with love

and compassion and caring and trust and service to the Green, as well as the hearts of people I love.

*I repudiate them and what they are doing. Is that clear enough?*

I stand against them as I have always stood against this kind of evil. I began taking this kind of stand in the 60s but then it was against the cops and the war and the segregation of people into worth depending on the color of their skin. It was against the republicans and their oppression of the common people, those who were acting to destroy the unions and the rights of workers, against those who attacked Earth-based religious forms and ceremonies, against repression of speech and assembly and sexual freedom and the oppression of plants that altered consciousness. I have taken this stand and worked for over 40 years of my life to change those things, to make herbalism freely available and accessible to any and all who need it. And I have worked thousands of hours *for free* answering questions from those damaged by Lyme disease and its coinfections, from people suffering all manner of ills, just as I am now doing with those suffering long-covid. And I am still doing so while I myself am dying, when some days I can hardly get out of bed for the pain and the damage to my body.

And I will be damned if I sit by and say nothing about this intolerance of the left for the good, for the kind, for those who have worked their entire lives so that people in this country have access to the plants and the Green world for their healing. I have never rolled over for those who wish to oppress others in the name of their moral crusade, whatever it might be; I won't do it now. To do so would make me the enemy of everything I believe in, force me to become an enemy of my soul and my memories.

I know many of the people and groups who have now let themselves be cowed by these

cowards. We have talked, some of us, in the past, wondering how the *good* Germans could have let the Nazis do what they did while saying and doing nothing. Well now you know. It starts slowly, doesn't it? Reasonably, with just a little compromise, just a little casting out of someone who doesn't quite fit or who has said something a bit off. It moves on from there, of course, step by step by step.

People forget that the Nazis believed that there were certain categories of people that were toxic. They believed that their tribe, the German people, had something unique that no other people had, something carried by their culture and blood alone. And those who were not a part of that culture and people, well, they carried within them something that was passed down from generation to generation which, if it got into the body of the community, resulted in damage to the health of the people. The Nazis believed that the German's poverty and inability to succeed was because of the toxic people in their midst – that they had become infected by them, victimized by them, by the power imbalance that existed. And so they had to get rid of all the people and groups that were keeping them down, preventing them succeeding, stopping them from becoming all they could be. So they got rid of the Jews and the homosexuals and the Roma and the physically and mentally disabled and the little people and the communists and the anarchists and anyone who spoke out against what they were doing or saying. They thought of themselves as standing up for their people, as physicians who were healing the body and soul of their community by removing those who had infected them with toxic beliefs and ways of being. They were creating their own version of safe spaces in which no one else was allowed.

At first they just set those who were deemed toxic off to the side, separated them from the body of the people in order to protect themselves from the toxins. But then, step by step, they

went further and then further still. Until finally they killed them by the millions. All so the toxins would be removed, so they would be protected from the infection.

It started as it always does, with a few people coming up with theories about why certain groups of people were toxic and unhealthy to be exposed to. After the theoretical basis was laid, it was improved upon and spread further through bestselling books and public speeches. Later, all the corporations had their employees attend seminars where members of the party would teach them about the theory and just how some people were toxic and others were not. They would teach them in just what way the others were toxic, insist that the toxins were in them and in their every expression, in the words they used and how they dressed, what they believed, the gatherings they held, the books they wrote, the texts they studied, the classes they taught, and for sure in their art. (And of course the toxic groups were made to attend these seminars as well so they could be shamed in front of their neighbors.) As Raul Hilberg, the great Holocaust historian, put it, "It always begins with the intellectuals. They formulate the theories and publish books and papers to develop and spread them further. The theories spread slowly at first, then ever further and faster. Once they have taken hold the legislators begin to make laws based upon the theories. Then the police carry out the laws and the judges uphold them. And finally the people as a whole embrace it. Then the mobs begin to form. But it always, always begins with the intellectuals."

I remember the talks we had when we were younger and how all of you said, well, we won't sit by and do nothing, we won't do that. But you have. You are. You are following the pattern that people always follow when these things happen, simply because you are afraid. You are the good Germans of our time.

These young vapid destroyers don't love you, you know. And to be clear: they will *never*

love you. They don't even know how to love themselves. They will never forgive you, for they don't know how to forgive themselves. They will never know you as more than your skin color or your gender, for they don't even know themselves. And you will never do it right no matter how you cavort or to what tune you dance. For this is a religion with no forgiveness, no redemption, no restoration of the world inside it, and the goal posts are always going to be moved just as you think you are about to reach them. For the purpose is power and displacement and enhancing their feelings of moral superiority and nothing else.

I think back now on all the herbal elders I met because of Rosemary. How she brought them up in front of the room to speak and to be honored by us, their children, who came to this Green world so many years after they had walked this same path. But these rabid children now, they know nothing of how to honor their elders, how to honor the ones who have gone before, know nothing of the ones who gave their lives and hearts to this work, who gave up safety and suffered financial deprivation and the social lack-of-place it entailed so that herbalism would be accessible to all as it is now and shall hopefully forever be.

The plants don't know the color of a person's skin. (Have you forgotten that you fucks?) The plants don't know which tribe a human belongs to. The plants don't know your nationality or your religion or how pure your blood is or what your sex or gender is. They don't care about those things. They have told us more than once that we are their children and that when we are in need all we have to do is call out to them and they will help us in our suffering. (Have you forgotten that, or did you ever know it, you cannibalistic pricks?) What the plants do know and care about is re-balancing the world when it trembles, healing damaged ecosystems when they are hurting – whether they be out there in the wildness of the world or here, inside our own



bodies. I serve them, as I have served the wild all my life. And you have nothing to say about that or to anyone (and there are thousands of us) who has lived this life of service, a way of life that you know nothing about.

If you come to claim the Green as your own and deny it to others because of the color of their skin, if you call my extended community and family names, if you seek to do them harm, to break their hearts, to damage their ability to find joy in this life, or to make a living, then you are my enemy. And I will stand against you. Always.

Now, put that in your smipe and poke it.