

Of Childless Cat Ladies and Healthy Civilizations



By Steven Yates

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The woke left can't stand J.D. Vance. It never could. Leftists attacked him furiously when he ran for Senate in Ohio. Why?

Was it because despite his Yale education, his time in the Marine Corps, and his Silicon Valley successes – an enterprise no one forced him to leave – he had not forgotten his roots; and that instead of serving the ruling oligarchs, whether of Big Tech or the Asylum on the Potomac, he presented himself as a voice of the people: *real* people, that is – *real* human beings who work for a living and are trying to raise families in an increasingly hostile environment?

On top of that, Trump selected him for running mate...

After once delivering scathing criticisms of Trump including in his book *Hillbilly Elegy* ... but then changing his stance.

I've no trouble envisioning leftists, possibly dozens of them, combing through Vance's past interviews looking for anything they could hit him with. They were bound to find something, and [they did](#).

They found the now-infamous "childless cat ladies" remark he made to Tucker Carlson three years ago.

I won't bother quoting it. Anyone likely to have clicked the link and found their way in here has probably seen it a dozen

times.

Now my wife and I don't have kids. We do have two cats, which I happen to adore.

I didn't take offense to Vance's remarks. Why not?

Maybe because I knew right away that Vance wasn't issuing a general broadside against childless people.

Because surely he knows that people might be childless for any number of reasons. Never married, married too late in life, fertility problems, etc.

How dense can people be, anyway?

Vance was criticizing a political mindset which is either anti-family, whether openly or by pushing policies that are making it harder and harder for a couples to raise children in America. Or by promoting "alternative families," let's call them, e.g., Pete Buttigieg and his husband having adopted two children; or Kamala Harris's stepchildren saying that they "love their three parents," which is, on the face of it – to use one of the words of the moment leftists are wielding (they sound like fifth-graders) – *weird*.

Were the attacks on Vance a product of the blind, bitter hatred of those who *knew* they were his targets?

This mindset has concentrated in the Democrat Party. Some have children in some form, many don't. AOC doesn't have kids that I know of. She's an easy example. Kamala Harris has no *biological* children. Pete Buttigieg and his husband can't have *biological* children for reasons obvious to grownups.

The mindset goes hand-in-hand with a-woman-needs-a-man-like-a-fish-needs-a-bicycle feminism, which has inspired millions of women to choose singlehood and career over families and children.

I don't know what percentage of the population we're talking about here, but the epidemic of singlehood in America has become common knowledge: both men and women who either never married (perhaps because they never found a suitable partner), or married and got divorced in our easy-divorce environment.

Now they are aging alone. Many aging single men in particular will die alone and unmourned because they have no close friends, either.

Picture such a guy who has been alone for much of his adult life. Maybe he's retired. Eventually he has health problems. A stroke, perhaps, leaving him partly paralyzed on the floor, unable to call for help if his phone is by some chance out of his reach. He lies there until he dies of thirst and starvation.

Would such a scenario make the feminist radicals happy?

Given that those I had to interact with during my aborted academic career were the most *unempathetic* people I knew at the time, I don't think I want the answer to that.

The derogatory word for at least some men who burn with resentment against the women who rejected them is 'incel' (short for 'involuntary celibate').

There is no culturally acceptable derogatory word for 'at least some women' who burn with resentment against the men they associate with 'The Patriarchy.'

Overall, and to say the least, this is not a healthy state of affairs.

Childlessness seems to be on the rise in all Western societies, alongside aging populations of singles.

Guys like J.D. Vance propose to try to turn this around while there's still a little time. They are articulate and outspoken.

This led to his remark to Tucker being ripped out of context and weaponized against him.

All of which brings to mind something I've been pondering of late.

What does a healthy civilization consist of, in terms of functioning institutions, political-economic arrangements, and fundamental (perhaps tacit) worldview commitments able to shape and guide culture?

Thinking the matter through, I found myself singling out seven ingredients for civilizational health. They overlap and should be thought about in light of my two earlier pieces on conservatism ([here](#) and [here](#)). How many of these conditions currently exist in America in 2024?

The ingredients: (1) cheap, abundant energy; (2) affordable housing; (3) strong families (two-parent or extended); (4) safe neighborhoods and cohesive communities; (5) a work ethic parents are able and willing to transmit to their children; (6) the capacity and the will to defend themselves preventively from invaders; and last but hardly least (7) a worldview that grounds the intrinsic value of all persons and is also transmissible, propagating through the culture.

This is not the article to discuss all these. Some I've discussed previously; a few such as (1) and (2) I hope to say more about in future articles later this year. We're just talking about (3) and possibly (4), because it implies lots of children running around, in an environment that's safe for them to do so, and attend neighborhood schools (homeschooled or at least private is better!), so that the values that shaped whatever successes the community is presently enjoying are passed on: the children have chores to do, homework to do, are kindly instructed by mindful parents and teachers that it is *wrong* to hit other children, etc. These can all be communicated in ways that children grasp the benefits and

internalize behaviors that will serve them well in the future.

Despite the very real problems of the decade, with signs of more problems to come, we were on track towards achieving this kind of society in the 1950s and early 1960s. I think this is why many of us aging Boomers look back on our childhoods and adolescent years with fondness. We recall times of optimism, when truth seemed to matter, and technology was still far more our friendly servant than a vaguely menacing master.

We look at the prevailing trends of today with disdain at best, and have little trouble returning the contempt we sometimes get from hostile left-wingers who *really are* (as Vance put it) “miserable with their lives” consciously or not and *want us* to be miserable.

One of the reasons these people are so spit-spraying furious with Vance is that his remark hit home so accurately.

I sometimes envy those who can respond to the continuing political and cultural circus with amusement (as could the late comedian George Carlin, and eons before him, H.L. Mencken).

It is hard to be amused, though, at people pushing policies that encourage “gender” confusion in 9-year-olds, inviting them to wonder if their “gender assignment” at birth was correct.

Or at the fact that if you’re a teacher and you speak out against this sort of thing, your career is in ruins.

This is where we are today.

This is why I’ll be casting my vote, using whatever ID is required, for the Trump-Vance ticket.

Because looking back on those seven requirements of a civilization that can anticipate continued long-term health: I look at America in the New Normal, the 2020s, and I don’t see

any of them. Think of the almost-20 percent increase in the cost of living during the era of Biden-Harris. Or think of the disaster on the Southern border, in which Harris had a direct hand whether again through malfeasance or simple incompetence. Now she's the Democrat Party's presidential candidate. I truly believe a Kamala Harris presidency, all criticisms of which would likely be parried with allegations of the racism and misogyny of the critics, could easily take the U.S. the rest of the way over the cliff.

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Steven Yates is a (still recovering) ex-academic with a PhD in Philosophy. He taught for more than 15 years total at several universities in the Southeastern U.S. He authored three books, more than 20 articles, numerous book reviews, and review essays in academic journals and anthologies. Refused tenure and unable to obtain full-time academic employment (and with an increasing number of very fundamental philosophical essays refused publication in journals), he turned to alternative platforms and heretical notions, including about academia itself. In 2012 he moved to Chile. He is married to a Chilean national.

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Steven Yates's book *Four Cardinal Errors: Reasons for the Decline of the American Republic* (2011) can be ordered [here](#).

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