

The Vibe Shift We Need



By Steven Yates

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“Fundamentally, the Vibe Shift is a return to – a championing of – Reality, a rejection of the bureaucratic, the cowardly, the guilt-driven; a return to greatness, courage, and joyous ambition.” –Santiago Pliego, “Vibe Shift,” [Substack](#), Feb 24, 2024.

Santiago Pliego’s article sent me on fire more than anything I’d recently encountered on Substack. It did more than keep my mind occupied before the “minor” heart surgery I had scheduled for the following Monday.

Since I’d not heard of him before, I did a search and learned that he’s involved with a venture firm called [New Founding](#), which (according to its website) “build(s) and back(s) companies defined by American ideals and a positive national vision.” Followed with, “We explicitly oppose all DEI/ESG and the bureaucratization of American business culture.”

They sound like my kind of folks! Naturally I signed up to receive their newsletter!

But what on Earth is a “vibe shift”?

Vibe Shifts 2022.

The phrase was kicking around online in early 2022. The catastrophic lockdowns and “social distancing” measures were starting to end, and people were trying to figure out what was what. It was a time of great disorientation, as so many were

still uncertain what had hit them during the previous two years. Some of us started waiting for the next shoe to drop.

A trend-watcher/forecaster named Sean Monahan claims credit for coining the phrase. He identified it with changing fashions like the return of “hipster” culture. Why, he asked, does one such trend seem to define an era? Why do certain things seem “in” or “out of style”? His [first article](#) on the subject is (unfortunately) behind a paywall. He did leave us [this illuminating diagram](#). You’ll also find him commenting publicly [here](#):

The US supreme court judge Potter Stewart refused to define obscenity, saying in 1964 rather: “I know it when I see it.” Trends are a bit like this. You know them when you see them – you just have to have your pattern recognition goggles on.

In other words, if you’re looking and you have some idea what to look for, you just “see” it. Earlier that year, one Allison P. Davis elaborated in [a widely circulated article](#) in a publication called *The Cut*:

In the culture, sometimes things change, and a once-dominant social wavelength starts to feel dated. Monahan ... breaks down the three vibe shifts he has survived and observed: hipster/indie music (ca. 2003-09) ... post-Internet techno revival (ca. 2010 – 16) ... [including] ... dressing like *The Matrix*... And Hypebeast/Woke (ca. 2016-20)...

There’s been a real paranoia that people have, everyone coming out of hibernation being like, *What are people wearing? What are people reading? What are people doing?*

Not everyone survives a vibe shift, Davis continues. Trends move on. Something new and exciting comes along, embraced by early adopters. The crowd follows. Then you’re asked, hopefully by friends, “Why are you wearing that?” Or perhaps, “Why are you *saying* that?”

I *thought* I was something of a pop culture watcher who didn't take it too seriously. I've always been a music aficionado with a substantial collection covering all the decades of my life (and before). Most "vibes" are associated with clothing and hair styles. Bright-colored bellbottoms were everywhere in the 1960s and gone by the 1980s. I don't know exactly when women started getting tattoos and men started wearing earrings, or when either started dyeing their hair every color of the rainbow. What I know is that when I was in high school in the early 1970s, heaven help anyone who did any of those!

Remember when TikTok became "a thing"? Seems that was late in 2020. All of a sudden, selfie videos of Gen Z-ers gyrating mindlessly seemed to be everywhere. I just assumed that someone, somewhere, was making a killing. (Turns out, it was the Chinese.)

I've no clue what *Hypebeast* is (or was). I guess I didn't have the right pattern-recognition goggles on. I knew what it meant to be goth back in the naughty-aughties – for the "unhip," that's the '00' decade. Goth was kids (sometimes adults) dressed like Barnabas Collins or Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, and dancing to dark music.

I also know what *Woke* is, and I consider it disastrous (it didn't stop in 2020, either!).

Ending Cancel Culture, Returning to Reality.

Getting back to Santiago Pliego ... I have my doubts the commentators above would find his article all that conducive to what they're up to. He begins with a discussion of the James Damore versus Google fracas back in 2017. Damore, if you remember, was cancelled by Google after penning a piece questioning that the imbalance of women to men tech engineers was due to systemic discrimination. The essence of Damore's question:

"Hey, what if Reality – and not targeted misogyny – accounts

for the fact that more men than women work in tech? Also, why does it feel like I could get fired for asking this?"

It took just three months. What followed was a lawsuit alleging that the *real* discrimination in Big Tech was against white male conservatives. The suit was eventually dropped.

Cancel culture was definitely "in" during the latter 2010s, Trump notwithstanding. It continued to be "in" when Captain Covid hit, and afterwards as the New Normal began. Look at all the people kicked off Twitter, YouTube, etc., etc., for questioning the necessity of the lockdowns or the safety and efficacy of the mRNA shots that appeared at the start of 2021: obviously without the years of laboratory tests, clinical trials, etc., *real* vaccines had always undergone.

Censorship was definitely "in" during the early 2020s. Add to the above, Election 2020 and Hunter Biden's laptop.

Pliego intimates that the tide is turning, and that while Google might be able to get away with canceling a James Damore today, there's be a louder outcry than there was in 2017.

He pins down the turning point as Elon Musk's buying Twitter and turning it into X. Quoting [Mike Solana](#), also of New Founding:

For over twenty years it's been obvious the internet doomed the 20th Century media oligopoly. But it took decades for a majority of Americans to move online, and in 2016, at precisely the moment it seemed social media would replace the former order, an unofficial alliance of powers refortified an elitist hold on discourse. A year ago, Elon shattered that alliance. The thought criminals were freed, and the window of acceptable discourse broadened until it broke – a total Overton collapse. Now, for better and for worse, there is no more curation, there are no more fake trends, there are no more Washington Post-employed state sock puppets propped up

artificially, and there is no more political censorship. Yes, whatever Elon finds personally annoying tends to vanish (R.I.P Substack links), and he's still not been tested by a major election. But, for now at least, news trends are dominated by stories people actually care about (even when they suck). This has never happened before, and so the phenomenon necessarily poses opportunity that has never before existed.

While his description of the present state of affairs seems a bit optimistic to me, remember [PropOrNot?](#)

Anonymous "experts" alleged in a totally unsourced article on the front page of *The Washington Post* that "Russian propaganda" had infiltrated online discourse, fueled Trump's campaign, putting him into the presidency.

It was so transparently an attempt to delegitimize the election the leftist-globalist alliance had just lost that it practically caricatured itself. Hillary Clinton's loss was the biggest upset that what Solano calls the oligopoly had yet seen, a consequence of the [collapse of the narratives](#) the oligopoly had championed for decades.

The oligopoly is more than "legacy" (corporate) media, of course. That's just another term for the leftist-globalist ruling class. This class, which I sometimes call GloboCorps, controls the money and international banking system (via the Federal Reserve and its overseers the Bank of International Settlements, SWIFT, etc.), intel agencies and the military hierarchy; globalist "think tanks" here and abroad (think: Trilateral Commission, Atlantic Council, etc.); the WHO; the WTO; Big Tech; Big Pharma; academia via the Ivy Leagues which DIE (Diversity, Inclusion, Equity) has substantially compromised and weakened over the years.

Haven't you noticed: the oligopoly's minions *still* don't need to produce evidence for their claims. No one ever *proved*, for example, that Donald Trump sexually assaulted E. Jean Carroll.

She couldn't even remember the year of the supposed assault. An honest judge and jury would have thrown that case out in embarrassment. Come to think of it, there's no evidence of a tryst between Trump and Stormy Daniels; at one point, [she denied it!](#) Until she didn't!

Leftist Democrats make up Reality as they go along.

Thus absence of evidence didn't prevent a leftist judge from fining Trump almost half-a-billion dollars total for exercising his rights under the First Amendment. We have no "rule of law"! What we have is a system in which money, power, and weaponized language dominate. This is becoming obvious to anyone paying attention.

Is the obviousness of this starting to bring about a change from the outside? That's the really interesting question!

Vibe Shift 2024!

Vibe shifts apply to the information world, not just the worlds the trendwatchers watch (fashion trends, music, aggregate generational behavior).

Maybe, because so many people are sick and tired of the lies, the canceling, the bullying, the *bullshit*,* the biggest *vibe shift* in quite a while might be starting!

It might indeed have begun when Elon Musk turned Twitter into X, those called the "woke mob" left on their own, and the platform became a place where real conversations could take place.

Substack, I've also noticed, is full of real writers of various stripes encouraging real conversations (some earn decent incomes doing so!).

Even a few Democrats have noticed, after all, that our present VP, a DIE pick if ever there was one, *isn't even remotely qualified to be one heartbeat away from the presidency.*

This, with the guy at the helm often stumbling, slurring words, trying to shake hands with people who aren't there.

Now consider the torching of Claudine Gay's short-lived, DIE-sponsored presidency at Harvard (I've discussed this [here](#); it is also at the center of Solana's piece). Hers was just one of a wave of resignations of the unqualified.

For the first time, DIE is being rolled back across the country. Its premises, that the U.S. is an irredeemably "systemically racist" country also drowning in misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, etc. (what's next? pedophobia?), are being challenged openly.

I've been saying all along that 2024 has the potential to be a year with some of the biggest pivots we've seen in our lifetimes!

In that spirit I very much applaud Santiago Pliego's proposals:

The Vibe Shift looks like ditching childless civilizational nihilism and saying, yeah, having kids is good, actually.

The Vibe Shift is the repudiation of homogenizing hyperglobalism and instead intentionally pursuing the communal, the local, and the national.

The Vibe Shift is the rejection of reality denial and instead embracing that men and women are unique and different.

The Vibe Shift is the refusal to subordinate yourself and your family to the whims and anxieties of activists and bureaucrats and relearning to trust your eyes and ears.

The Vibe Shift is the rejection of secular liberal materialism and a return to the Christian foundations of the West.

Last emphasis mine, because actually, believing in God and trusting in Providence suddenly sounds kind of cool!

Atheists are as tiresome as they are arrogant!

Pliego lists more, so I'll again send you to the [article](#) (scroll down).

The Vibe Shift We Need rejects everything that is holding us back if not actually destroying us.

It embraces equal treatment under the law but rejects DIE. Hire your people based on your best determinations of *merit*, not *politically-coerced favoritism*. I've been arguing this since 1989. Too bad we've had the disasters we've had before this started to sink in.

The Vibe Shift We Need embraces science but rejects The Science (Tony Fauci's faith to be "believed in" and followed blindly).

It embraces technology so long as technology is our *servant* and not our *master* (at the hands of corporate predators).

It embraces markets in the same spirit: they are our *servants* and not our *masters*. Money is no more a good surrogate for God than the state.

The Vibe Shift We Need looks toward the Christian elements in our national founding and rejects paranoid nonsense about "theocracy" or "dominionism."

It urges a *life* culture and rejects the *death* culture. It might embrace the idea that human beings, as individuals, were created in God's image, and urge an ethic of the intrinsic value of a human being that acknowledges this and develops the consequences.

Needless to say, after this Vibe Shift, [women killing their unborn children will no longer be cool!](#) They won't want to. They will see that *children are our future*.

The Vibe Shift We Need embraces human finiteness. *We are not*

God. Anyone who thinks he/she is, or thinks himself/herself able to plan the planet for all of humanity, is possibly a sociopath and will be shunned no matter how much clout he/she wields or money he/she throws about.

It thus supports Pliego and New Founding in embracing the local, the communal, the national.

I'd add that this Vibe Shift embraces approaching others with kindness and empathy, as all our lives can be viewed as lengthy adventures including struggles, with oneself the central character and protagonist.

Everyone you pass on the sidewalk may be fighting battles you can't see or hear.

This Vibe Shift thus encourages civility towards those who disagree, assuming charitably that the reason they disagree goes to their life story in some way. This to the extent they will permit disagreement, of course, and *not confuse disagreement with hate*. If they don't, the new ethos will counsel simply walking away.

In the new ethos, bullying will not be tolerated.

For civil dialogue is a better path to truth and justice than shouting and cancelation. Through conversation and careful identification of our common problems in a common world, we might work together instead of separately to improve the human world just a little. Cancel culture – efforts to erase whatever makes political bullies angry and afraid – will be seen as increasingly uncool! (Even [progressive rock groups](#) are now subjecting cancel culture to ridicule.)

Can we turn the New Normal in a new direction? We'll find out. The future will come regardless; and it might be best if we took charge of it and worked to make it better.

*For more delicate readers: I'm using the term *bullshit* the

way the late philosopher Harry Frankfurt used it in his slim tract *On Bullshit* (2005). The truth-teller and the liar both care about what is true; the former tells it while the latter tells something else intending to divert your attention from it. The bullshitter, Frankfurt argues compellingly, couldn't care less about truth or falsehood. He/she is only interested in trolling.

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This essay is also [available](#) on Steven Yates's Substack publication *Navigating the New Normal*. Please consider subscribing if you haven't already.

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 more than 20 articles, 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 2021 he moved to Chile. He is married to a Chilean national.

He has a Patreon.com page. Donate [here](#) and become a Patron if you benefit from his work and believe it merits being sustained financially.

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

His philosophical work *What Should Philosophy Do? A Theory* (2021) can be obtained [here](#) or [here](#).

His paranormal horror novel *The Shadow Over Sarnath* (2023) can

be gotten [here](#).

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