

Women Can't Build Civilization

But they sure can wreck it. By Janice Fiamengo

The case of Matt Taylor and #Shirtstorm was the last straw for me.

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Matt Taylor celebrating with his scientific team

In 2014, a chorus of angry women and their male enablers roasted British astrophysicist Matt Taylor for wearing an “inappropriate” shirt for a historic occasion. Taylor was part of a European Space Agency team, the Rosetta Mission, that sent a probe four billion miles through space to land on a comet, a journey of ten years.

But that achievement was overshadowed by Taylor’s alleged masculine insensitivity. To discuss his team’s success, he

had worn a bowling shirt decorated with images of scantily-clad gamer-style female characters. The shirt had been made for Taylor as a birthday present by a female friend.



The doyennes of social media went berserk, charging that the shirt was a symbol of sexism in science, with men like Taylor living emblems of the not-so-subtle hostility that was keeping women out STEM research.

The outrage grew until the comet was essentially forgotten amidst the frenzy of hysteria.

At one point, *Verge* magazine published a headline emphasizing the infantile equivalency: “I don’t care if you landed a spacecraft on a comet, your shirt is sexist and ostracizing.” The sub-heading drove the point home: “That’s one small step for man, three steps back for humankind.”

A number of the commentators hadn’t even looked closely enough at the shirt to see its design.

“The fact that a scientist of any gender, but especially a man, would think it’s a good idea to wear a shirt covered in

naked women while representing a major space agency and a significant research project is appalling,” [wrote one](#), failing to realize that none of the characters was naked, “and clearly, he had no idea that he was engaging in exactly the kind of casual sexism that drives women away from STEM.”

Astrophysicist Katie Mack was adamant that “a shirt featuring women in lingerie isn’t appropriate for a broadcast if you care about women in STEM.” I don’t know about Mack, but most women do not wear leather for their night’s sleep.



Even after Taylor [issued a tearfully contrite apology](#), *Verge's* gender whiner was not satisfied, criticizing the European Space Agency for allowing Taylor to wear a shirt that “demean[ed] 50 percent of the world’s population.”



After months of hectic work and the thrill of achievement, the leader of the Rosetta Mission was reduced to shame-filled repentance for wearing a shirt his female friend had made for him.

[When a brilliant man's accomplishment can be eclipsed](#) by poor-me grandstanding of such embarrassing proportions, we are witnessing a profoundly destructive phenomenon. And there was no backlash of women telling their crazy sisters to leave the man alone.

Unfortunately, Matt Taylor was not the first and has certainly not been the last. Why are so many women drawn to indulge in this kind of nonsense? We already know why men allow it.

Female Power and the End of Innovation

Recent studies and discussions have raised the alarm about female power. Pundits such as [Helen Andrews](#), [Cory Clark](#), and [Bo Winegard](#) (see my [discussion and links here](#)) have made the evidence-based case that women in general are not as committed as men in general to objective excellence and the pursuit of truth. Women overall prefer equity, inclusion, and compassion for victims.

When women are the majority in an organization, the values of the organization shift away from meritocracy and toward group consensus, the suppression of dissent, and protection of the vulnerable.

These trends strongly suggest that women are not likely, as a group, to uphold and maintain the traditional foundations of civilizational flourishing: equality before the law, free speech, truth-seeking, competitive excellence, and rigorous debate. All of these, in fact, are already in evident decline—undermined, attacked, flouted and fought against by feminist lawyers, advocates, academics, judges, journalists, teachers, social workers, political leaders, legislators, and CEOs.

The concerns raised by Andrews and others are important, but behind that discussion lies a more fundamental question about women's role in civilization, namely: do women build civilization?

Do women as a sex—leaving aside a relatively small number of extraordinary individuals—have it in them to compete and innovate at the same level as men?

Are women driven to master nature and solve intricate technical, logistical, structural or methodological problems?

Are they obsessed with the minutiae of numbers, systems, and abstract ideas to the extent that many men are?

Are they willing to sacrifice decades of their lives in order to become the first or the best in a scientific, philosophical, or artistic endeavor?

The answer is no.

Men as System-Builders



Disputing ideas and inquiring into the nature of reality have been male domains for millennia.

Social psychologist Roy Baumeister explored the relevant research in [*Is There Anything Good About Men*](#) (2010), a cautiously non-feminist book in which the author readily asserted that he, like most everyone else, prefers women to men. Women are more lovable, he claimed, and more pleasant to be around.

But he was not quite willing to accept the now-mainstream thesis that women can replace men in all areas of society.

His thesis is summed up in the book's sub-title: *How Cultures Flourish By Exploiting Men*. Men are the foot soldiers of civilization as well as its leaders. They are the ones who make things work or make new things.

Men are the ones who must prove their utility to society. Their drive to be useful has powered centuries of back-breaking work, risk-taking, tool-building, self-sacrifice, and outstanding performance of a sort that has never been expected of women (and still isn't).

Women in the main tend not to work as hard as men to succeed because they don't have to. Women developed different

strengths and tendencies.

Women's strength, for good and ill, is in the inter-personal arena: not only in caring for those who are weaker but also in being cared for by those who are stronger. Women are good at reading people's emotions and desires, and at expressing their own.

Men are not rewarded for expressing emotions and desires; men are oriented to acting, often under pressure to perform competently, in large groups and systems.

"The female brain," according to Baumeister, "tends to be geared toward empathy, which includes emotional sensitivity to other people and deep interest in understanding them and their feelings. In contrast, the male brain is oriented toward understanding systems, which means figuring out general principles of how things operate and function together, and this applies to inanimate objects as much as social systems" (p. 85).

Baumeister supports his argument in a book-length exploration of men's system-building. He shows how men are driven to work with, and in competition with, other men to make it possible for large numbers of human beings to live together in complex, efficient networks. The large social institutions that have characterized western cultures, from the army to churches, from corporations to unions, and from market places to police forces, give evidence of men's system-building.

Women can work well within the systems that men devise, but they rarely devise new systems on their own. This is not because women are, on average, less intelligent than men (except at the very highest levels). It is because women's motivations and sources of satisfaction are generally different from men's.

Women's contribution to culture in nurturing children, providing companionship, and looking after the family home has

been a crucial one. But it does not drive innovation or invent new technologies.

Even the most intelligent women are rarely compelled, as highly intelligent men often are, to pursue scientific and other breakthroughs with the single-minded focus necessary for greatness. Often, as in the case involving Matt Taylor discussed above, many women do not seem to value or understand the nature and importance of such breakthroughs.

Women's main contribution in the male civilizational sphere has been to lobby for admission and then to complain about, and work to undermine, the male culture of competitive excellence.



Women are good at complaining, demanding, excoriating, marching, protesting, and expressing their sense of victimhood.

Innovators Do Not Need Encouragement and Special Advantages

Conservative author Kenneth Minogue addressed this subject more than two decades ago in his still-relevant essay, "[How](#)

[Civilizations Fall](#)" (2001), in which he contended that feminism has constituted a potent assault on western civilization in its insistence that representation matters more than achievement, inclusiveness more than merit.

For Minogue, the feminist assumption that women are owed (at least) 50% of all desirable positions has fundamentally damaged the meritocratic ideal at the core of western culture. Western culture distinguished itself historically through its appreciation for achievement.

For centuries, despite some restrictions, brilliant women were able to make contributions to their societies. These were never on the scale of men's contributions. As Minogue puts it, "Women can do marvelous things with a house, but they do need the house to be there in the first place."

Minogue considers and rejects the feminist claim that western women were less innovative than men because, historically, they had fewer opportunities. He points out that the special pleading of that argument is itself a kind of refutation.

"It may be, of course, that as the feminists sometimes claim, this [lesser female innovation] is because [women] were never encouraged to engage in these activities. But to need encouragement, to depend on models to follow, is precisely not to have a capacity to innovate."

The endless feminist demand for encouragement—as well as for special workshops, male mentoring, material assistance, role models, the hectoring and exclusion of any man who steps out of line or offends a woman, loads of government funding, media cheerleading, and more than half a century of propaganda attesting to female brilliance and male oafishness—is itself proof that women are not, generally, inclined to innovate. Persons who are driven to create do not need special grants and non-stop media propaganda . They will create if given the chance.

Worse than inability is the deep resentment that seems to characterize many women's response to male greatness. Minogue reports, "I once heard a feminist put it this way: 'There's no such thing as a great mind.'" Contempt for the achievements of men—and lack of understanding of their significance—is one of many toxic features of feminism.



The stereotypes that some early feminists objected to have now become badges of honor.

Finally, Please Stop

How many more decades are we willing to wait to see if women's civilization-building capacities develop? How much more encouragement, confidence-building, and taxpayer-funded financial assistance—[while many able men are forced to sit on the sidelines, or worse](#)—are we willing to give to “equality”? And what kind of equality requires such a [long-term relinquishing of male opportunity](#) and fair return?

A society that is willing to forego the ingenuity and obsessive pursuit of excellence that have been the primary domains of men is a society that will steadily lose its competitiveness. It will collapse under the weight of non-productivity and exploitation.

For centuries, women were assumed to be the nurturers of the world, praised for their tenderness and ability to create spaces of emotional comfort and renewal. These enabled men to do their work well. Now, large numbers of women have withdrawn these qualities from the home, attempting to apply them to the outer worlds of business, politics, social work, academic research, and the law. They lavish care on those that feminism deems worthy while withholding it from those deemed privileged or oppressive.

Many feminist women's indifference to the achievements of western civilization and outright preference, in some cases, for the west's enemies may be an intuitive recognition of the civilizational vulnerability that their sex exploited and furthered.

Whether those who love the west will have the will and wherewithal to curtail the damage remains to be seen. But let us at least stop deluding ourselves.

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