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THE TRIVIALIZATION OF GENDER AND ITS IMPACT ON COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Military leaders grappling with the transformation of the military must have an understanding of the ideology behind the drive for complete gender integration of the military. Its essence is not fairness or equity, as is commonly suggested, but rather the trivialization of gender differences. The claim that to the contrary gender does matter is remarkably resistant, even after twenty-five years of an aggressive program of gender integration. If true, the reality of gender provides a basis for a rational and legitimate continuation of war fighting as a gender specific activity. Thus, despite changing social imperatives and the demonstrated performance of women in the service the central issue remains - are combat organizations better served by gender integration and the attendant trivialization of gender? In order to bring fresh perspective to the issue, principles of complexity theory are applied to the question. In this context, it is evident that disregarding the essential nature of gender differences and their impact on relationships adversely effects a combat organization's ability to deal with the stress and chaos of war. The paper concludes that unrestricted gender integration is not in the best interest of the military or the society that it serves.

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PREFACE

An apology for one more SRP on gender: Officers of my generation - graduating from college in the mid to late 70's - represent the bow wave of a generation in which an expectation of gender equality was the norm. We left home and went off to school as colleges, dormitories, and even bathrooms were integrated sexually. We have served our whole career in an army without a Women's Army Corps. Our commissioning programs were almost all integrated. We came of age in a society that believed it had clearly evolved in its notions of gender and sexuality, and that this evolution was necessarily right and proper. The attitudes towards gender with which we were brought up in the military could not be more different than that of the generation before of us. Now we are moving into the senior ranks of the military, and a reckoning of what the past 25 years has wrought needs to be made. My only claim to be a credible commentator on gender in the military is exactly this. I have been brought up - as a man, a father, and a combat arms officer - in a world that attempts to be gender blind. This far down the trail, I look back and conclude that it just doesn't make sense. This study then was undertaken in order to understand why our gender policies don't make sense, by an officer who has grown up with them.

THE TRIVIALIZATION OF GENDER AND ITS IMPACT ON COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS

> **As for myself, I do not hesitate to avow, that, although the women of the United States are confined within the narrow circle of domestic life, and their situation is, in some respects, one of extreme dependence, I have nowhere seen woman occupying a loftier position; and if I were asked, now that I am drawing to the close of this work, in which I have spoken of so many important things done by the Americans, to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of that people ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply, To the superiority of their women.**[1]
>
> — Alexis de Tocqueville, from Democracy in America, 1832

Recently developed theories of complex systems suggest that something can come from nothing. This seems at first glance to be absurd, but consider a football team. A team depends not only on the quantifiable characteristics of its players (speed, weight, coordination, etc.) but also on the complex and fleeting relationships among and between the different players. Value is added or subtracted to a team by intangible factors that enable the team members to maximize their collective effectiveness far beyond that which their individual efforts would otherwise suggest. We call these factors harmony, teamwork, cohesion, communication, and other such terms. The inability to define precisely and conclusively the relationships that add or subtract value in no way detracts from the reality of their consequences. Therefore the intangible can indeed produce the tangible: victory or defeat. Quantifiable characteristics matter also, but they are not definitive.

So we are surrounded with examples of something coming from nothing. Why then do we have such a difficult time accepting this basic premise of complex systems? Is it because our normally linear way of thinking hobbles our understanding of complex systems and the non-linear dynamics behind them?

A classic example of the intellectual and ethical conundrum we invite by failing to appreciate the non-linear nature of complex systems is the issue of gender integration of combat organizations. Gender - particularly the reality of the differences between male and female - has been trivialized in much of our conventional thinking.[2] Because gender differences (other than the obvious physical characteristics) cannot be quantified, they amount to 'nothing'. Some even go so far as to deny they exist. This 'nothing' then should produce nothing in turn, *if* we regard gender integration as a straight-line linear equation, in which input equals output.

But what if this trivialization of gender, which the military has been pursuing for a quarter century, is wrong? What if gender matters? If complexity theory is correct, and something can arise from nothing, then we may be in for a rude shock should we decide to remove all restrictions on gender in our combat organizations. Through a review of the consequences of gender trivialization we will demonstrate that indeed gender matters. The willful denial of the reality of gender has led to unfortunate consequences,

and should we take the step to remove the final restrictions we will most certainly be doing so to the detriment of combat effectiveness.

One perceptive proponent of eliminating restrictions on women in combat complained that "critics inside and outside the Army are more comfortable with concepts than facts, when discussing why women cannot be warriors."[3] Exactly. The argument is not about facts and figures; it is about concepts, specifically the concept of gender.

While the writer intended this comment to be a criticism, it demonstrates the linear thinking that underpins the gender integration argument. Few people, except those lost in the fever swamps, will deny that women have the ability to fight, or the history to back up that statement. The women's 1999 World Cup soccer team demonstrated the physical abilities that women can attain, as well as their skill, aggressiveness, and tenacity. Twenty-five years of gender integration of the military substantiates the contributions made by women to the military. But this is not the issue.

The question is not *can* women be warriors, but *should* women be warriors? How might the reality of gender impact the complex adaptive systems that are our combat organizations? How will gender and the irreducible differences that flow from men and women effect these systems and each other? And significant for its absence in most discussions on gender integration, how will the dynamics of war fighting effect society if both men and women are warriors? The answers can only be determined by an intuitive and holistic consideration of concepts, not by an analysis of facts. These are not questions that can be resolved by linear analysis.

THE TRIVIALIZATION OF GENDER

> **The idea that a woman's life is somehow more precious than a man's is skewed and passe.**[4]
>
> — From an AWC Student Strategy Research Project, 1998

Such concepts as fairness, justice, and need are used to argue for complete gender integration.[5] These words disguise the real argument however, and put opponents of gender integration on the defensive because we are all for fairness. The real argument - the presupposition underneath all the talk of fairness and justice - is that gender doesn't matter. Therefore, this line of thought suggests, it doesn't constitute a legitimate, valid factor for deciding anything. Once this argument is out in the open, there is room for substantive disagreement, for not everyone embraces the notion that gender is meaningless.

Military leadership must examine what this ideology means to combat effectiveness and what its true cost is to both the military and society. This must be done as carefully as one would examine the consequences of replacing the tank with a twenty-ton fighting vehicle. Unfortunately we have simply

neglected the profound implications of gender integration and it is time for this to change.[6] The "culture cracking,"[7] to use the phrase of former U.S. Representative and feminist advocate Pat Schroeder, is moving forward under the benign neglect of an officer corps which has largely bought into the trivialization of gender.

In the military, which when it comes to gender issues is currently in thrall to the extremists of the feminist movement, the notion that women are not essentially different from men is implicitly accepted. As John Hillen puts it, a "benign and respectful androgyny" in which "gender is physically and behaviorally irrelevant" seems to be the goal.[8] Colonel André Sayles, one of the proponents of the U. S. Army's Consideration of Others Program, and a Department Chairman at the United States Military Academy, suggests that "our mark on the wall" should be "total integration and interchangeability of service members."[9] The presupposition of a completely gender-integrated military is that this androgynous approach to gender is both possible and desirable. While it may be *possible*, to call it *desirable* is an act of willful blindness towards the damage being done in the furtherance of a gender-neutral environment.

The guardians of proper thought in this matter, such as Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service (DACOWITS), ensure that the civilian leadership is properly focused.[10] These watchdogs, who are not necessarily representative of military women, let alone women in general, suggest that equity between the genders requires identical treatment.[11]

Instances of gender exclusivity, however, as well as common sense, suggest otherwise. An article in the Washington Post, hardly a bastion of sexism, quotes the coach of the 1999 Women's World Cup Soccer team, Tony DiCicco. He says, "male and female athletes respond differently to criticism, separation from their families, and personal relationships within the team." The article continues, "Outsiders might disagree with his thesis, but the players under DiCicco have responded favorably." One of the players, Kristin Lilly, says, "There is a difference between coaching men and women, and that's the key."[12]

Our fixation with creating a gender neutral society has driven us into such bizarre situations as denying a woman the opportunity to breast feed her baby, or forcing a married officer to spend days locked in a room with a woman not his wife.[13] One of the unintended - but apparently acceptable - consequences of attempting to make a gender blind environment is that we have created an environment on our military installations in which three-fourths of school-aged children come home to empty houses.[14] Even a self-professed feminist like Sally Quinn, journalist for The Washington Post, senses the irrationality of it all. Writing during Desert Shield she says, "If we can't win a war without mothers, what kind of sorry fighting force are we? Even the evil Sadam Hussein doesn't send mothers to fight his war."[15] Evidently, we are supposed to get over these issues. For an organization that is nominally supportive of the family, it makes no sense.

To those who advocate gender integration, gender is not important. Eventually, they promise, we will get over the differences. The Coast Guard Academy has been extremely successful in gender integration. The Cadet Corps human relations officer, Cadet 1st Class Angelina Hidalgo says, "Our

academy shows that it can be done; you can get over gender. I went to a conference at the Naval Academy last week, and they were all taking notes. They realize the dynamics are a little different here - it's a newer academy and smaller - but gender is not even a factor here, and that's how they want it at their schools."[16] Clearly gender is a factor, as demonstrated by sexual harassment complaints, the newsworthiness of gender issues, or just the plain mountain of literature that has been written - and will continue to be written - on gender.

Trivialization of gender distinctions has led to the view that gender and race are similar, at least in their impermissibility as a factor. For example, Colonel Haeckel, the commander of Lieutenant Ryan Berry, (the male Air Force officer who asked not to be partnered with a female officer while on missile crew duty) said, "There is absolutely no difference between Berry not wanting to serve with females in the capsule and Berry not wanting to serve with blacks."[17] Race had absolutely nothing to do with the issue, but the ideological position that gender can't matter has our military in such a stranglehold that if one tries to make an issue of it - as Berry did - one is simply declared a bigot. The fact that Berry had no objections to serving with women in general, and based his objections on his understanding of his own fallen nature, as informed by his religion, is lost in the noise.

Air Force Staff Sergeant Cynthia Poole sees the reality of gender, although she is too professional to criticize it. She 'gets over it.' On a remote overseas assignment in the Air Force, she left her husband (also in the service) and children (age 5, 8, and 9) back in the States. "My husband's doing a good job, but this was really hard on them and me. I'm much closer to them; I'm the one that helps with the homework; I'm the one that does the prayers at night, that does the talking to . . . My thing is not to cry." She goes on to say that duty and a sense of purpose helps her get over the separation.[18] Here is the modern hero - she is getting over the consequences of gender integration. Of course, one might say, all this is her choice.

But is it? Simone de Beauvoir, one of the prophets of radical feminism, and author of The Second Sex, predicted in 1975 that "No women should be authorized to stay at home and raise her children. . . Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one."[19] Ironically, she predicts the Orwellian consequences we see today. The ideology that says that people are "neuter monads, to which accidents of personality are arbitrarily fixed" simply cannot be maintained by its own merits. Inevitably, we see "persuasion giving way to coercion" [20] in order to sustain it.

Pregnancy, according to another advocate, is just a choice as well. Apparently it is the only thing which distinguishes a female soldier from a male one.[21] It is the only thing that we cannot just 'get over', but we can be sure someone is working on that, too. In addition to better ways to terminate the 'choice' of pregnancy, a helpful contributor to the cause of women warriors suggests, "When the technology is developed, why not transfer the fetus to the father's abdomen shortly after conception?"[22] Ultimately the trivialization of gender is a far more misogynist philosophy than that of recognizing and accepting the consequences of the reality of gender.

That the ideology underpinning the feminist movement is not friendly to the average woman is increasingly being recognized: "if you flip open any page of the 'Second Sex' or 'The Feminist Mystique' you are bound to find more misogyny than in the writings of Aristotle and Norman Mailer combined."[23] This comment is by a young writer named Wendy Shalit, author of the ground-breaking critique of modern gender relationships, A Return to Modesty, in which she illuminates the damage being done to her generation of women and men in the name of equal opportunity and liberation.

The ideology's impact on the other gender is equally damaging. It is not coincidental that rates of sexual harassment, if not the very concept of sexual harassment, have expanded with increasing gender integration of the military.[24] Once upon a time, sexual harassment was known as ungentlemanly or even dishonorable behavior. Today it is just against the law. Without the concept of a lady, the concept of a gentleman is meaningless, and the concept of 'ladies' is sexist. Which, not incidentally, is a good thing for a man if he has the gender sensitivity of a "Bay Watch" lifeguard, and judging by entertainment today young men aspire to exactly that attitude towards women. The irony of Seinfeld and the banality of the "Simpson's" have replaced respect for masculinity and male honor for much of the younger generation. These are the young men, after all, that we will count on to implement the gender-neutral military of the future.

Tragic consequences to young men of this trivialization of gender are being seen at an earlier and earlier age. Rates of adolescent depression and suicide have risen over the last decade according to the National Institute of Mental Health.[25] Young boys, growing up in a society which is antithetical to masculinity and increasingly embarrassed by the notion of 'male bonding', are being doped with Ritalin at record levels.[26] 10-12% of American boys are taking this addictive drug in order to socialize them. "The androgyny agenda of progressive thinkers has . . . zero tolerance for male adventurousness."[27] It also is showing up in plunging rates of academic success for men, according to Judy Jolley Mohraz, the president of the liberal arts Goucher College, a school that has actively sought a gender-neutral environment.[28] What impact this will have on the ranks of the future military remains to be seen.

The consequences of gender trivialization are even visited upon the next generation. Recently Michelle Kelly of Old Dominion University conducted a study for the Department of Defense on women sailors.[29] She found that there is an adverse impact on children if their mothers are at sea for extended periods. What once we might have naturally been concerned about – the absence of mothers from their children – we now ignore in the name of choice and equal opportunity. The Wall Street Journal comments on the notable absence of reaction to this finding:

> If you didn't know this was a problem, you're not alone. The idea seems to be that to admit even the slightest difficulty with women in the service threatens to drag women back to the 1950s. So instead of an open debate we get the movie version. In 'Courage Under Fire' actress Meg Ryan plays a heroic Army helicopter captain who leaves her daughter behind with grandma as she goes off to die in the Gulf War - and feels just fine about it.[30]

She got over it.

This trivialization of gender is reflected in the notion that combat effectiveness is all about having the best individuals. This view suggests that a unit composed of the best individuals will be the best unit. Major General (Ret.) Jeanne Holm says that the best possible military "can only be served by a gender neutral, best qualified personnel system that matches individual talents and aptitudes with the legitimate validated requirements of the job."[31] This is a classic example of the sum of the input being equal to the output, which is the very essence of linear thinking. It explicitly trivializes gender because the impact of gender cannot be quantified. Therefore, as the reasoning goes, it can't be important.

Gender then, from a strictly engineering point of view, is not supposed to exist other than in a biological sense. Try telling this to the women's World Cup soccer team: "We are different. We don't see it [being coached differently than men] as sexist. It works. We appreciate that. We don't want to be treated like guys."[32] Mohraz, in seeking an explanation for the declining rate at which men complete college asks at the risk of heresy, "Do boys learn differently from girls?"[33]

The feminist writer Camille Paglia, hardly a fan of right wing moralists, recognizes the consequences of the suppression of gender. She recently said:

> So one of the biggest problems is that there has been a suppression of the masculine in our culture, and not just because feminism has been questioning it, but because there is no room in our service-sector economy for anything genuinely masculine. Now men and women do exactly the same kind of work; they are interchangeable.[34]

Gender, in other words, has been trivialized. Perhaps this suppression in the interests of gender neutrality is appropriate working the counter at McDonald's, but have we thought out the consequences to the military of enforcing a gender neutral environment?

Are the ways in which men and women process information, conceptualize, visualize information, learn, value experiences, socialize, nurture, hate, love, live, and die essentially different? Were we created separately, or is it all just an accident of biology and upbringing? Do sexual differences skew communications, particularly in times of stress and turmoil? These sorts of questions and concepts must be resolved to our collective satisfaction before we so blithely integrate our combat organizations in the name of fairness and justice. When Secretary of Defense Aspin ordered the integration of combat aircraft and naval surface combatants simply because "it was the right thing to do"[35] it was an act of breathtaking shallowness.

When the onion is peeled back far enough, we see that on both sides of the argument concepts matter more than facts and figures. The ideologues at the core of the feminist movement maintain that gender is not real; that it is merely a construct of our socialization. Andrea Dworkin wrote in the seminal feminist work Woman Hating, that "The discovery is, of course, that 'man' and 'woman' are fictions, caricatures, cultural constructs . . . demeaning to the female and dead-ended for male and female both.[36] One recent writer referred to gender as a verb: "gender is something we do, as opposed to something we

simply possess . . . . The concepts of the feminine and masculine may possess some utility . . . but their assignment to women and men, respectively, serves no purpose."[37]

To the gender ideologues those who insist that there are real differences between men and women are not just 'passe' but are downright genocidal: "The genocidal mentality was a product of ideas that continue to govern our sense of self. The monster of Nazism stills roams among us - for the fictions of gender duality that permitted it to gain power still darken our lives."[38] So we see that trivialization of gender is not just a rational way of thinking, as Major General Holm would have it, but it is the approved, modern, and moral way of thinking. Getting over gender is not just politically correct, but a moral imperative.

The hysterical denunciation of gender essentialists, such as the attack by the National Organization of Women (NOW) on Promise Keepers,[39] is a reflection of the fear that gender must remain trivialized if they are to maintain the political and material gains they have achieved. For if gender matters, certain cherished agendas collapse. Happily, former Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Sara Lister lets us know that this won't happen because gender is not significant, and "careful planning, good training, and strong leadership" can resolve gender issues, just like it has done to all other social issues.[40] For one who shares her dogma that gender is merely something to 'get over', a respectful unisex society can be achieved given proper training and leadership, or failing that, just plain coercion. Absent such misplaced faith however, gender exclusion in combat organizations is neither discriminatory nor unfair.

Colonel Sayles toes the conventional line when he writes that we cannot retreat from any gender initiatives. It would be an admission that "women are a problem."[41] So, rather than admit a politically motivated and ideologically bankrupt agenda is a problem, we proceed with it, regardless of the wreckage it leaves in its wake, or the destruction of our military effectiveness it may cause in our future.[42]

A consequence of the essentialist view of gender which is argued here is that men and women are understood to have natural responsibilities and obligations which are derived from their having been created distinctly and fundamentally different. Saying that this is 'passe', as the officer quoted at the beginning of this section maintains, does not make it so. But what does the reality of gender have to do with gender integration in combat units. It matters, but how so? And what does complexity theory tell us about that?

COMBAT ORGANIZATIONS AND COMPLEXITY

> **The application of rational business concepts to the profession of arms runs contrary to the nature of war . . . The clear and simple rational model never captures the scope of the human predicament. Alfred North Whitehead was right when he said, "There is danger in clarity, the dangers of overlooking the subtleties of truth."[43]**
>
> — Vice ADM James Stockdale

Tom Czerwinski, a professor at National Defense University who has studied the application of complexity theory to the military, says that complexity theory finally allows us to describe in a coherent manner with established terminology an environment where:

> inputs and outputs are not proportional; where phenomena are unpredictable, but within bounds are self-organizing; where unpredictability frustrates conventional planning; where solution as self-organization defeats control as we think of it; and where a premium is placed on nonlinear reductionism. . . the effect of conscious nonlinearity will largely be to go back over alternatives and choices with a different lens and say, 'Hey, you overlooked this,' or Yes, you were right all along.[44]

Complexity theory is a holistic theory that is useful in studying complex interactive systems. It is holistic in that it accepts the whole as more than the sum of the parts. In fact, it proposes *that the interaction, or relationships, of the parts make the system fundamentally different than an analysis of the parts themselves would suggest.* One cannot study an entire interactive system by reducing it to its parts. Any predictions about such a system based on an analysis of its parts would be suspect.[45]

Linear thinking, by contrast, tells us that there is a proportional cause for every effect. A whole, it says, is the sum of its parts. Its parts can be isolated, analyzed and predictions can be derived that will hold true no matter how far out they are extended. However, some equations, due to extraordinarily high levels of complexity, resist linear reduction. In such cases, breaking down the equation to its subordinate parts probably will not reveal much about the whole.

When considering the impact of gender integration on the military it is integration of combat organizations which are the litmus test. Combat organizations are those that carry the fight to the enemy. For the purpose of this essay, the term includes all military organizations that have as their central purpose the *collective* task of warfighting - whether they are naval surface combatants, submarines, air combatants, or ground combatants. Not withstanding the appropriately different cultures of each service, what combat organizations have in common is that they must be optimized for maximum collective performance in an environment of combat, and are subject to complex, non-linear dynamics. It is these types of organizations that earn the military the "right to be different."[46] This right to be different transcends the differences between the services.

Modern war fighting is not distinct from past warfighting in responding to applications of complexity theory. It has always has been a nonlinear phenomenon, we just never looked at it that way. Clauzewitz intuitively understood this suggests Alan Beyerchen:

> On War is suffused with the understanding that every war is inherently a nonlinear phenomenon, the conduct of which changes its character in ways that cannot be analytically predicted. . . in a profoundly unconfused way, he understands that seeking exact analytical solutions does not fit the nonlinear reality of the problems posed by war.[47]

Until we had the computing power to model complexity, and the vocabulary to describe it, we could not articulate the theory, but that does not mean its reality hasn't always been out there, like the western continents awaiting Columbus.

A key concept of complexity theory is that of a *complex adaptive system* or CAS. A CAS is any system which " has many relatively independent parts that are highly interconnected and interactive."[48] Its complex nature enables it to adapt to unpredictable, complex environments. In the process of adapting it can absorb energy (grow), put off waste (shrink), change form, and change strategies in order to adapt to its environment. A CAS is "the engine that drives nonlinearity."[49] Some examples are an economy, an ecological system, a community, or in the case of this analysis, a combat organization.

A signature feature of a CAS is that of *self-organizing criticality*. This means that a CAS naturally organizes itself out of equilibrium and towards a critical state. A critical state is at one and the same time the state in which the system is most evolved and adaptable, yet closest to destruction and chaos. Complexity theory proposes a continuum beginning with equilibrium moving with increased energy through the regime of complexity and finally entering a regime of such intense complexity that it cannot be comprehended with any coherence - what we call chaos.[50] A CAS will tend toward chaos, but remain within the realm of complexity, until sufficient stress is placed on it; then it lapses into chaos and finally destruction. In destruction it reaches a state of equilibrium in which the system is static. Eventually, sufficient energy is acquired and the CAS will once again begin organizing itself toward a critical state. In a non-linear environment a CAS maximizes its behavior and adaptability the closer it gets to the edge of chaos, the boundary between order and randomness. This is what Tom Peters meant when he entitled his management book Thriving on Chaos.[51] The greater self-organized coherence the CAS has the closer it can approach the edge of chaos, the more stress it can endure, and the longer it can survive in the area in which its behavior is maximized.

The significance to the military of this notion of self-organizing criticality should be obvious. Combat organizations must have a high degree of internally generated coherence. They seek to be more than the sum of their parts in order to maximize their fitness on the boundary between order and chaos - the realm of complexity. "It now begins to appear that systems in the complex regime can carry out and coordinate the most complex behavior, can adapt most readily, and can build the most useful models of their environments."[52] The stronger the relationships within a combat organization, the more stress the whole

can endure, the better it can cope with complexity and the longer it can adapt to an increasingly complex environment. The best combat organization is Therefore not necessarily the one composed of the best individuals, but the one with the greatest internal cohesion. This observation is intuitively obvious to many soldiers, but now explainable thanks to complexity theory.

A marksmanship team whose measure of success is a numerical score on a known distance range is a fairly linear equation. The team that is composed of the best overall individual marksmen will most likely be the best team. Their performance on any given range can be adequately predicted based on weather conditions, type of ammunition, and other observable phenomenon. However, a combat sniper team that is composed of the best overall marksmen may not be the best team. The vast number of other factors that impact on a sniper team in combat, not least of which is the relationship between the shooter and the spotter, as well as the relationship between the team and its combat environment suggest otherwise. Predictions may be made, but they will rely as much on intuition and experience, as they will on any observable phenomenon. Thus the relationships between individual parts, or agents, within a complex system are more likely to define the system's nature than the parts themselves. The environment in which the system resides is also in a relationship to the system, and that relationship can force the system to unpredicted adaptations, thereby altering it even further from what a linear analysis of its parts might have suggested.

Three of the properties of CAS are relevant to the analysis of the potential effects of gender integration of combat organizations.[53] These are the properties of *aggregation, nonlinearity,* and *diversity.*

The property of *aggregation* suggests that the behavior of a complex adaptive system is a function of the nature of the relationships between agents within the system. Positive or negative value is added to the system based on the interactions of subordinate parts. It is inherently non-linear reasoning because as the preceding suggests, something material results from something intangible. Furthermore, the relationships themselves, as illusive and fleeting as they may be, become dynamic agents of interactions at a higher level. Thus the relationship between individual soldiers determine the behavior of the squad. Here we see the criticality of whether gender matters or not. If gender does not matter, then the differences between men and women can be surmounted (we 'get over' them) and relationships between individuals could conceivably be the same regardless of the gender of the individuals involved. However, if gender matters, then the relationships between men and women will always be fundamentally different than the relationships between men/men and women/women.

Clearly leadership is a mitigating factor here. Leadership can inform or mold the relationship between individuals, but the relationship between the leader and the led is, of course, a relationship between agents. The behavior of the squad and its relationship to the platoon leader, as well as the other squads, becomes a factor when determining the behavior of the platoon, and so forth. Thus the behavior of a large scale CAS, let's say a submarine crew, is the result of the aggregate relationships within that submarine - the watches, departments, sections, down to the individual crewmembers. The stronger and more reliable those relationships and interconnections are, the stronger and more reliable the overall

submarine will be, irrespective of the individual capabilities of the sailors - provided they are minimally competent.

The property of *non-linearity* proposes three rules: within a CAS results cannot be predicted from separate actions, the strategy of a CAS is affected by the strategies of others, and last, a variable may have a disproportionate impact at one end of its range.[54]

The first rule says that the same unpredictable behavior of a system in a non-linear environment applies within the system itself. The result of external interactions may be unpredictable, but so are the results of the interactions within the CAS itself. Since gender matters, relationships between men and women are much harder to predict and control than are relationships exclusively within a gender. This is why coercive, external policing of cross gender relations have been – and will remain – necessary.

The second rule explains why CAS can adapt, and indeed why they are so successful in complex environments. Their success is based on the fact that adaptation and change is inherent - but not predictable. A CAS may attempt to alter an environment, and find itself changed by the environment. This suggests that while many are motivated to eliminate gender restrictions for what they legitimately believe to be reasons of fairness and equity, the end result will be significant, unforeseen, and completely unpredictable changes to the overall organization.

The third rule, disproportionate impact, is illustrated by the role of a catalyst or critical mass. For instance, the effect of gender integration is not manifested in a linear progression. Only at a certain density will the gender fundamentally alter the organization and then it will do so dramatically.[55] Disproportionate impact of non-linearity is also seen in an inverse fashion when "women may thrive in a profession only after there are enough of them so that they do not feel like strangers."[56] This suggests that a policy that results in only a few women in any particular military field or organization will never be acceptable to those who seek gender integration. Predominately male organizations will not be considered integrated until a critical mass is achieved.[57] In a recent interview, Admiral Shackelton, the Chief of the Australian Navy, was asked about his navy's experience with gender integration on submarines: " We learned early on that when you put women into ships, and submarines for that matter - submarines are a particularly difficult set of circumstances - in small numbers, that creates a problem. So . . . we're running between [10 - 20%] out of a ship's company. . . it's a significant proportion."[58] Despite protestations from some, gender integration will inevitably produce strong pressure to set quantitative goals or quotas.

The property of *diversity* inversely reflects the property of aggregation. Diversity to a certain degree is not only useful, but also essential to a CAS. Diversity is a resource that the system can draw upon to strengthen its ability to adapt and cope. However, the degree of diversity of agents within a CAS can increase beyond a point that is productive. Past that point the self-organized coherence of the system breaks down. The system then reaches a critical state far too early, and cannot cope. Czerwinski writes, "it is more than likely that recent movements which define 'diversity' in terms of political correctness, for example, actually decrease that essential diversity so essential for CAS."[59] The value added of diversity

within any system must be very great in order to compensate for the increased complexity. The need for diversity competes with the need for homogeneity within the system. The more that heterogeneous agents within a complex system can integrate and subsume their differences, the more stress the system can take; and the more that homogenous agents can diversify, the more adaptive the system can be. This all makes intuitive sense, but it can now be demonstrated empirically.[60]

The burden of proof that such an increase in diversity through mixed genders will increase value without degrading aggregation rests with those who would propose it. Since there is no such proof however, advocates of complete gender integration fall back on the trivialization of gender. If, *prima facie,* gender is invalidated as a meaningful factor, then there is nothing that needs be proven.

All CAS will self-organize to a critical state, but those that have the tightest relationships between their agents and the best balance between diversity and homogeneity will maintain a critical state much longer than those which do not. Patrick Mileham, a British student of military ethics describes the imperative for this balance: "the need to reach a high degree of integration is Therefore at the heart of virtuous military behavior and moral effectiveness."[61] Gender is an expression of valid, purposeful differences between men and women, and it unavoidably denies this high degree of integration and homogeneity. Complete interchangeability of men and women, to the extent necessary to form effective combat organizations is simply not possible, and recognizing this has nothing to do with being unfair or discriminatory.

Is it any wonder then that Anita Blair, the chairman of the Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender Related Issues, noted in her testimony to Congress in 1999 that the services "should realize that they will continue to experience gender-related problems (or challenges) as long as they pretend that "gender" is not a problem?"[62] Elaine Donnelly, testifying before Congress also, but in regards to the 1998 Kassebaum-Baker Committee which preceded Blair's, said just about the same thing: "Male/female tension is everywhere, but administration officials proclaim - disingenuously - that gender is not a factor."[63]

GENERAL MCPEAK WAS RIGHT

> **I couldn't think of a logical reason, a logical argument, for defending a policy of excluding women from combat assignments [but] I haven't changed my mind. I have thought about it since the sexual harassment problems popped up. I still think it is not a good idea for me to have to order women into combat. . . So I take some solace here in thinking that not all human problems yield to strict logic. There are other factors, human factors, and some judgement here.** [64]
>
> — General Merrill McPeak, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, in Congressional testimony, 1992

The argument to eliminate all restrictions on gender assumes that gender is not a substantive reason to restrict one from warfighting, as for instance, being blind may be considered. It relies at its heart on the presumption that relationships between men and women can be as integrated and reliable as relationships among men or among women. This can be done, it further presumes, by coercion, sensitivity training, or leadership. This is simply a false premise which leads directly to the trivialization of gender. Thus the question of gender, if left to social imperatives, will inevitably be resolved in the favor of those who would seek a gender neutral society. Such a result will have grave consequences for the effectiveness of our warfighting organizations. It is the classic conflict between social and functional imperatives, as described by Samuel Huntington in The Soldier and the State.

Complexity theory shows that in a complex adaptive system relationships among the individual agents within that system matter more than the sum of the individuals themselves. In their dynamic relationship, the ties between individuals determine the nature of the system, its ability to adapt, and its ability to endure stress. Therefore, irrespective of any objective standards for warfighting, or of any objective attributes one may assign to the respective genders, the mere fact of essential differences between men and women work against the success of gender integrated units. This conclusion rests on the two pillars established in the preceding pages: first, that gender matters and secondly, that complexity theory appropriately explains the criticality of interrelationships within a combat organization.

The first pillar says that gender matters in obvious physical ways (strength, size, biology, etc), in less tangible psychological ways (perceptions, values, emotions, cognitive processes, etc), and in essential ways (mothers are not fathers, sisters are not brothers, and husbands are not wives, etc). Gender is Therefore a valid criterion for decision making, and exclusion of a gender from a certain situation is not *necessarily* discriminatory. For example, the liberal European Union Court recently found that Germany must open its army to women. Nonetheless, even they said gender might matter in some instances, "However, derogations [from this ruling] remain possible where sex constitutes a determining factor for access to certain special combat units."[65]

The second pillar substantiates the intuitive belief of most soldiers that the relationships between soldiers, and between themselves and their immediate leader, are the most important factors in predicting the performance of a unit in times of stress. That the individual soldiers need to be somewhat diverse, but share sufficient homogeneity that they can be closely integrated is the underpinning of effective military indoctrination. It would follow from the first pillar that such homogeneity is not possible, except in sufficiently rare circumstances as to prove the rule, if men and women are mixed in combat units.

Considered together then, mixing gender creates more complex, less homogeneous relationships. In a normal civilian setting, or even in a peacetime military setting, this may not be an issue. In some circumstances gender integration might be preferable to gender exclusivity. However, in the lethal environment of combat, with extraordinary levels of complexity, a mixed gender organization will be less able to cope as will one that maintained gender exclusivity.

General McPeak has been taken to task for his statement quoted above.[66] Lieutenant Colonel Karen Dunivin, a sociologist and Air Force officer herself, goes on at length in this vein when referring directly to McPeak's comments: "In a cult of masculinity with a core principle of exclusion, women and homosexuals are viewed as outsiders and deviants in a man's world. Their presence and participation (especially in war) challenge the ancient paradigm of the combat, masculine warrior."[67] Comments like McPeak's are considered simply of no account, dismissed as if one was arguing that the world was flat. The approved solution is that we have grown up and no longer are bound by gender, which after all, is merely a construct of less enlightened precursor societies. But what if three thousand years of Judeo-Christian history, not to mention the experience of General McPeak's thirty plus years of service are right? What if there is something substantive to the reality and exclusiveness of gender? It might be a hard truth, but it just might be that McPeak was right.

By analyzing the issue with the tools of complexity theory we can see that in some circumstances gender exclusivity makes sense. The evidence is clear that women can fight just as viciously as men can, if not more so, but so what? War fighting is a collective effort, and it involves more than just killing. It must have an element of "moral effectiveness" as Mileham put it. Perhaps this means that women should fight, if they must fight, in a gender exclusive unit. In any event, gender matters. General McPeak was right. His only error was in trying to explain his position within the context of linear analysis.

FUTURE WARFARE

> **The reality is that there is absolutely no intelligent, logical, sensible reason for women not to be in combat with the technological style of warfare that abounds today.**[68]
>
> — Captain (Ret) Barbara A. Wilson, author of the internet site, Myths, Fallacies, Falderol, and Idiotic Rumors about Military Women

The preceding analysis assumes that future war will be horrible, violent, and chaotic. There are some that would disagree and as the quote above indicates, many of them are in favor of complete gender integration. Indeed, in an antiseptic, high-tech form of warfare, far removed from the death and dying, perhaps all of the foregoing makes no difference. In any event no clear picture about the effect of gender integration can be formed without a clear vision of what future warfare will be like. As Major General Scales, Commandant of the U.S. Army War College wrote, "Today's debate about the preferred structure of American military forces thus in the end is a debate about the future of war itself."[69]

There is a valid question in this debate as to whether technology in future combat organizations will reduce the importance of relationships and cohesion as we have known them. Technology, some suggest, will provide near-perfect information thus reducing uncertainty, if not eliminating it. It will also reduce stress and remove fighters from the immediate proximity of combat. Indeed one of the arguments (just an extension of the trivialization of gender argument) for eliminating all gender restrictions is that the nature of war in the future is going to be so removed from the blood and guts of the past that gender won't matter.

Regardless of whether future warfare is bloody or antiseptic, relationships and interactions will continue to matter. Charles Perrow, a safety engineer who applies complexity theory to his work, points out when describing the failure of a complex system, "Though the failures were trivial in themselves, and each one had a back-up system or redundant path . . . The failures became serious when they interacted. It is the interaction of the multiple failures that explained the accident."[70] Likewise, there is a constant friction from the countless interactions between individuals in a combat organization. If the frictions stem from differences that are surmountable, the system can maintain coherence. But if they stem from substantive essential differences, eventually there will be failure - but not from a single flawed relationship, but from the aggregate effect of many.

As we grapple with predictions of what warfare will be like, one thing is certain - we don't know. We are certain however that our human resources are precious and must be managed so as to maximize their potential. Spiteful and narrow-minded use of gender as a factor in military personnel management would indeed be discriminatory. But it is even more damaging to say that it is not a factor at all.

There is another way. There is plenty of room to determine *how* it matters and how a respect for gender can work to the advantage of both society and the military. Throughout this paper the discussion has focused on integration of combat organizations only. However, in some other types of military organizations, gender integration might be better than exclusivity.[71] In still others, it might be best to be all female - indeed the USSR had great success with an all female fighter squadron during WW II. Another example is a recent report about demining activities in Kosovo. Among the organizations conducting demining is an exclusively female platoon of contracted Kosovar women. "'Women are better deminers in general,' said the programme manager, Swedish army officer Thomas Jamehed. 'Among women you find very few Rambo types. They are persistent and don't take short cuts.' "[72]

This is not to suggest women be banished to probing for mines, but the point is that a fairly neutral observer was able to apply general characteristics of a gender to a job that had to be done. The gender wars of the past have not been without benefit, and we do not need to roll the clock back to the Womens Army Corps days. Laura Miller, a sociologist who was co-author of an often quoted Rand study of gender integration in 1997 said in a later essay, "We can use gender as grounds for assigning work, without using gender as grounds for assigning value to that work. It is feminists own misogynist attitude that suggests work most appropriately done by women is of less value than work done by men."[73] She goes on to comment about the paucity of research into how women could contribute uniquely, because that would lend credence to the argument that gender matters.

WHOSE LIBERATION IS IT ANYWAY?

What did I ever do to these guys?[74]

— Carol Barkolow, one of the first female cadets at USMA, Class of '80.

Since this is all ostensibly about women's liberation it is fair to ask who has really been liberated here. Twenty-five years ago the answer to that question seemed pretty easy. Carol Barkalow says that her matriculation to West Point liberated women.[75] Today we see that the feminization of the military is resulting in the militarization of females and the release of men from traditional obligations, neither of which is necessarily a good thing. Males are the only gender being liberated here.

What did Carol Barkalow do to her male classmates at West Point? Nothing personally, but the animosity she encountered was an instinctive reaction to the trivialization of gender implied by her presence. It struck at the heart of male honor and the brotherhood of arms, replacing it with the vapid and rootless sense of right and wrong we have as an institution today. Women themselves don't know how they want to be treated, so how can men know? Ellen Goodman, a columnist with strong feminist credentials, wrote recently, " Women are now told to be proud of their bulging biceps and scornful of the male inability to ask directions. They can't cry at the office but want men to cry at home. They believe in

equality but don't know what kind."[76] Small wonder that we end up with such spiritually empty programs like the Army's Consideration of Others to guide us. Our basic ethical underpinnings as men and women have been swept away and replaced with androgynous bureaucratic programs that are as absurd as they are serious.

The postmodern feminist movement has hijacked women's liberation. The original women's suffrage movement was anti-war. It assumed that gender mattered.[77] In fact, the original suffrage leaders believed that a woman's sense of morality was different – and superior – to that of a man's. For instance, the first woman to serve in Congress, Jeanette Rankin from Montana, saw her pacifism as inseparable from her fight for women's suffrage.[78] Now, in the thirst for equal treatment this notion of different sensibilities is jettisoned as sexist. A GI Jane who out-rambos the men would be a bizarre creature to a Jane Addams or Carrie Chapman Catt.[79] Yet such a thing is accepted unblinkingly by some, indeed claimed as a natural product of women's liberation. From the Minerva list server comes this current description of women in combat:

> "Dressed in dirty black jeans, a T-shirt, and floppy camouflage hat, a single woman fighter stood out among the Chechens resting in the shade of the trees outside their new headquarters in Grozny last month. Clearly in a position of authority, she was shouting orders to the men and listening to petitions from civilians . . . Inside the headquarters a few minutes later, she clouted a 13 year old boy hard across the face without warning when he muttered about throwing foreign journalists out of the room. Her severity was shocking, especially since the boy, armed and a menace, was being indulged by the surrounding male fighters. [80]"

Only unthinking men will gain from this. The ultimate consequence of the trivialization of gender is that men are letting go of their obligation to respect women. They might fear this woman, but respect her? Probably not. A banal unisex society will eventually trivializes the most precious things. As liberated women insist on their rights to be warriors, men are no longer faced with the obligation to fulfill that role - or any other role for that matter - for something cannot be an obligation and a right at the same time. Absolutely any proposition can proceed from a logical contradiction, and that is exactly what we are seeing today.[81]

As the concept of obligation to defend is vaporized under pressure of gender and sexuality deconstruction, the concept of male honor is vaporized as well. This is not to say that males have always stepped up to the plate and realized the ideal of male honor - far from it. But the ideal has always been there. The concept of male honor is inextricably bound to the notion of obligation - to family, to women, to parents, and to society. Unbind the latter and the former is unbound as well.

Harold Bloom, a critical observer of modern culture, notes in The Closing of the American Mind that women receive far less than do men of the benefits of so-called 'liberation.' Writing about the denial of natural responsibilities distinct to the genders and the consequent liberation from the obligations of gender, he says, "So nature weighs far more heavily on women. In the old order they were subordinated

and dependent on men; in the new order they are isolated, needing men, but not able to count on them, and hampered in the free development of their individuality. The promise of modernity is not really fulfilled for women."[82]

This isn't just philosophical nonsense, but has practical repercussions. The draft, for example, is a casualty of this deconstruction. The parallel between the steady demise of the draft in Western liberal democracies and the increase in gender integration is exact.[83] A thing cannot be a right and an obligation at the same time, although the advocates of a unisex military will try to make it so. Colonel (Ret.) Lloyd J. Matthews, former editor of Parameters, argues for all things for all people when he says, "defending one's country is at once a right, a privilege, and an obligation accruing from the Constitution."[84] This just doesn't make sense, unless one is an advocate of postmodern semantics in which words mean whatever we want them to mean. Major Wells-Petry, an Army Judge Advocate, makes this point in her book, Exclusion, Homosexuals and the Right to Serve. There is no right to serve as such under the law or precedence established today, but if there was construed such a law, then the obligation to serve is traded in exchange.

The concept of male honor will most likely be the ultimate casualty of all this. This is not just a lament for vanishing sensibilities but regret for the loss of the only effective tool for respecting women and treating them with dignity. Absent a sense of honor the male resorts to coercion, sensitivity training, numbness, or sheer fatigue to ensure women are treated properly. Can any man look around the landscape of gender relations in the military today and see any sense of how women should be treated? One only sees how not to treat women. Sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic violence, child abuse and a host of sins can be traced back to men. But it is not because men don't know how to act right, it is because men have abdicated the moral obligation to be right, and only prevent themselves from being worse by legislation and rigorous policing.

If the military is going to fix its gender problems the first thing it needs to do is recognize gender for what it is - a defining characteristic of human kind that is immutable and inherent in our creation. Our founding fathers did not hesitate to quote the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God",[85] and neither should we. Secondly the military needs to restore to women what they have lost in their rush to liberation - the right to be treated as women, and that doesn't include sharing a squad bay with a rifle platoon. And last, men need to pick up the burden of male honor again, and it is as soldiers and warriors that this is most critical.

CONCLUSION

If when all is said and done, and all restrictions on gender (or sexual orientation) have been removed in the name of fairness and justice, what might be the consequence?

In Shakespeare's play "King Henry V", King Henry makes a speech just before the battle of Agincourt, in which he appeals to his fellow soldiers as "we few, we happy few, we band of brothers".[86]

This speech is often quoted in military circles for its appealing sense of the nobility of sacrifice and the brotherhood of arms, particularly since it is delivered in the context of fighting outnumbered and winning. Less quoted however is a speech in an earlier play made by a knight known as Sir John Falstaff.

Falstaff was the boyhood friend of the young King Henry. Shakespeare created Falstaff to be the antithesis of the very human yet noble King Henry. He was in effect the counterpoint to what Henry became. Falstaff was the first postmodern warrior - a pleasant enough fellow, but uniquely self-centered, cowardly, and a champion of moral relativism. He treated men and women equally - he exploited them both. He was always quick to demonstrate that hard truths are not real . . .

> What is honor? A word. What is that word honour? Air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died o'Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. It is insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No, Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it: honour is a mere scutcheon; and so ends my catechism.[87]

Falstaff says that honor is a "nothing", and as those who insist on linear reasoning in a non-linear world would tell us, nothing can come from nothing.

The army which trivializes gender, and allows rights to outweigh obligations will be an army manned by soldiers the likes of Falstaff. They will be equipped and armed, but full of only bluster and pomposity. They will be only too happy to let others do the fighting, and like Falstaff, will avoid all obligations. They will be an army of volunteers, there because they have the perceived right to be there, but they will no more be prepared to cope with the demands and complexity of the battlefield than was Falstaff.

We cannot go back. But wholesale trashing of what we held to be true in the past, in order to meet the desires of today should at least give us pause for thought. Can women and men be warriors together? Certainly they can, for with sufficient energy applied we can do anything. But should they? If gender matters, women should not be warriors. As long as our society needs warriors, men have the obligation to serve as such. In doing so exclusively, they do not devalue women, but honor them.

Word Count: 12, 264

ENDNOTES

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