



Conservatives Defend Google Bro James Damore Against ‘Neurotic’ Ladies

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It takes a lot to get conservatives to defend an employee’s freedom of speech. You never see them crying over people who lose their jobs for supporting Democrats, socialism, or “homophones,” or for saying things like, “Anyone know how to pass a drug test in 24 hours?!” on Facebook. To them, the world of at-will employment is the capitalist ideal, in which the boss can fire the worker for anything at all, including his behavior on or off the job.

But there are some narrow circumstances under which conservatives will go to the mat when speech gets a brother in trouble. When Brendan Eich lost his place as CEO of Mozilla for supporting anti-gay causes, they went ballistic. Ditto when Paula Deen briefly lost her TV show for some racist comments she’d made long ago. Only when the speaker is canned for putting down people conservatives don’t like will they rush to defend them. They’re like reverse Voltaires.

Last week conservatives got a new hero: A Google employee named James Damore got fired when, in response to workplace diversity efforts, he turned in a ten-page “manifesto” declaring women are less well-represented than men at Google for “biological” reasons.

In his manifesto, Damore affected an interest in diversity but also asserted that “despite what the public response seems to have been, I’ve gotten many personal messages from fellow Googlers expressing their gratitude for bringing up these very important issues which they agree with but would never have the courage to say or defend because of our shaming culture and the possibility of being fired.” Sounds like he’s just trying to be helpful, right?

Damore then asserted that “the distribution of preferences and abilities of men and women differ in part due to biological causes” and “these differences may explain why we don’t see equal representation of women in tech and leadership”; ladies, for example, are subject to “neuroticism,” and are more into “feelings and aesthetics rather than ideas,” which may explain why so many of them found his argument to be bullshit. It’s called a *manifesto* for a reason, girls!

The manifesto was filled with buzz-phrases regular readers of this column will recognize from my subjects, including “ideological echo chamber,” “I consider myself a classical liberal,” and, of course, “politically correct.” As for its arguments, they will be familiar to anyone who has belonged to a frat or attended a bachelor party: For example, “the same forces that lead men into high pay/high stress jobs in tech and leadership cause men to take undesirable and dangerous jobs like coal mining, garbage collection, and firefighting, and suffer 93% of work-related deaths.” (Who knew coal mining and coding had so much in common?)

You can read the whole wretched thing if you want — but if you’d rather not bother, and who could blame you, prominent conservatives are here to tell you that 1.) He didn’t say women were ill-suited to succeed in tech because they’re women, 2.) Women are totally ill-suited to succeed in tech because they’re women, and 3.) Damore was fired because Google is liberal which means it’s hostile to free speech.

National Review racked up over a dozen stories on Damore. (The single-sculd trophy goes to Rod Dreher, who at last count had 275, all over 10,000 words long.)

Robert Verbruggen found the manifesto “awesome” and agreed that while men are “more likely to climb the corporate ladder and ask for raises,” women “rate higher on other psychological traits such as anxiety.” So, see? It all evens out.

David Harsanyi scoffed at liberals who were offended that Damore credited women with “being less pushy and having less interest in status than men.” Can’t you take a compliment, ladies? Harsanyi also said Damore was “misrepresented” as anti-diversity; he merely pointed out women failed to rise in tech because of “self-selection,” so really it’s their own choice.

“I don’t hear many people bleating about the lack of sexual diversity among trash collectors” was the typically astute analysis of Jonah Goldberg.

“The Google Firing Demonstrates That Identity Politics Is Incoherent and Vicious,” cried David French. For “the social-justice Left” (which I think is a ska band out of Cleveland), French said the main concern was not “everyone succeeding in the same ratios in every field,” but “that the white male must lose.” Later, going for the daily double, French posted a column called, I swear to God, “Lena Dunham and Google Demonstrate Why Our Free Speech Culture Is Slipping Away.” (These guys just can’t quit her!)

Speaking of white men losing, here’s Charles C.W. Cooke: “Suppose [Damore] had charged that minorities and women were under-represented at Google because Google is institutionally racist,” Cooke asked. “Suppose he had proposed that men and women have identical traits and proclivities.... Do we imagine that he’d have been fired for ‘criticizing his employer,’ or for ‘making his colleagues uncomfortable?’” No, Cooke suggested, because “grievance-laden manifesti” of a certain kind gets “swift and humble acquiescence,” unlike the kind Damore submitted.

Sounds like Cooke meant black and/or female complainants have an advantage over white men, doesn’t it? Sadly he didn’t make his meaning more plain, though he did say “there is a severe

imbalance in those forces, and one that's worth remarking on" before dissolving into the shadows.

Many of the brethren said that Damore couldn't be anti-diversity because he *said* he wasn't: "Despite the repeated avowals — 'I value diversity and inclusion' are the first five words of the essay — most media outlets refers to it as the 'anti-diversity memo,' " tut-tutted Michael Brendan Dougherty. "He states repeatedly that he believes in diversity, and there's no reason to doubt his self-description as a classical liberal," said a suddenly credulous Rich Lowry. The best of this bunch was Ben Boychuk at the *Sacramento Bee*, who said, "Damore did not claim women are 'biologically unsuited' to work in tech," but rather that they were not interested in tech "because there are biological differences that lead men and women down different paths." It's their vaginas that steer them from coding or coal mining!

Few women, even with right-wing bona fides, could be found to go along with the guys; Nicole Gelinas, while agreeing Google shouldn't have fired Damore, burned his manifesto to the ground ("Women like to stay home making babies and cuddling kittens, while men like to go to war and drive red sports cars fast"). But Mona Charendu filed a "Google Burns a Heretic" column, and at *Bloomberg*, Megan McArdle suggested Damore was right because *she'd* worked in tech and washed out, and ain't she a woman?

Many of these authors had to acknowledge — usually in a little "of course" section, followed by "but" — that employers can indeed fire anybody for anything and that goes for Google too. Michael Brendan Dougherty got sweaty about it: Liberals, the ones in his head anyway, told him, like the Tempter in the desert, "If only you would grant unions or appropriate federal mandates to govern these relationships, you wouldn't have to fear being a conservative at the workplace." This Dougherty called, ironically, "a bully's taunt." Get thee behind me, Chomsky!

"Well, Google can fire its employees," admitted Brett Arends at *MarketWatch*. "But we can fire Google — just. And that's what I'm doing. Starting now." Look out, Sundar Pichai, Brett Arends switched to Bing.

But there were signs that conservatives were willing to stretch a little — as were those conservatives who like to call themselves libertarians; at that movement's flagship, *Reason*, Nick Gillespie admitted the case "Exposes a Libertarian Blindspot When It Comes To Power." Relax, he wasn't talking about abortion. Political correctness, he said, scales falling from his eyes, "is an attitude that is hardly limited only to state capitols, state agencies, and state universities. It exists everywhere in our lives and should be battled wherever we encounter it..." He didn't say how libertarians should battle it in the corporate setting — maybe with long diatribes in magazines nobody reads.

But at *USA Today*, Walter Olson argued that government puts "pressure on employers to ban speech" to avoid hostile-environment claims, and "hostile-environment law is not content-neutral. It plays favorites on topics and it takes sides in debates." Guess who the favorites are? Olson noted that "anti-feminist statements" get action, while "generalizations, stereotypes, or loaded language unfriendly toward males" don't. See, Charles C.W. Cooke, it's not hard!

At *National Review*, Andrew Stuttaford — inspired by Olson and, God help us all, Andrew Sullivan — seemed willing to go further. “I have always been somewhat suspicious of the ideology behind antitrust law and I have also (FWIW) written in the past against the EU’s attempts to use antitrust as a protectionist ploy against Google,” he said. “Nevertheless, I’m just beginning to wonder if Google is not getting too big for our own good, and if even I am starting to think in this way, well...”

Might conservatives be willing to fight against the sacred *droit du employeur*, at least if it’s judged prejudicial to the one class from which conservatives will entertain claims of unfair treatment — straight white men? Why not? In the age of Trump, they don’t have to be intellectually consistent, and neither do the judges they’re currently ramming through the system.

Meanwhile, Damore has been working his options; he recently appeared in a video with alt-right crackpot Stefan Molyneux; then, following a typical right-wing career path, he got an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Maybe his example will encourage others: I see some of the neo-Nazis who showed up in Charlottesville last weekend have been outed in the media and are losing their jobs. Perhaps the movement can come to their defense. Aren’t they, too, victims of the social-justice Left?