

## Society, not testosterone, is the driving force in sex, equality

*[Editor's note: Excerpts are from a review of a book by writer Cordelia Fine, who challenges the notion that testosterone is the driving force in sex and society.]*

“Testosterone Rex”, Fine’s target, is the name she gives to “that familiar, plausible, pervasive and powerful story of sex and society”, which holds that inequality of the sexes is natural, not cultural. After all, testosterone makes men tall, hairy and deep-voiced; it makes a certain superficial sense to imagine it also produces other characteristics we think of as masculine, such as leadership, violence and horniness.

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If [neuroscientist Simon Baron-Cohen](#) was correct that hormones make the man or woman, and we are what we secrete, then efforts to end male dominance would be futile at best and possibly downright harmful. But this, of course, assumes that “Testosterone Rex” is fact when, as Fine compellingly argues, it’s actually fiction.

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In other words, being male or female isn’t enough to make you into your society’s version of a man or a woman. There is no “male brain” or “female brain”. But as soon as your maleness or femaleness is recognised, other people start to treat you in ways that form you into a man or a woman, with the support of toys, books, role models and a million other subtle nudges.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Testosterone Rex by Cordelia Fine review – the question of men’s and women’s brains](#)**