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Reviews & Products: DELUSIONS of Gender: How Our Minds, Society & Neurosexism Create Difference (Book)

People: FRANCE, Cordelia

Abstract: The article reviews the book "Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference," by Cordelia France.

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DELUSIONS OF GENDER: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference

Fine, Cordelia

DELUSIONS OF GENDER:

How Our Minds, Society, and
Neurosexism Create Difference

Norton (304 pp.)

\$25.95

Aug. 30, 2010

ISBN: 978-0-393-06838-2

Fine (A "Mind of Its Own." How Your Brain Distorts and Deceives, 2006) unpacks the myths surrounding differences between male and female brains.

Though sex-based judgments are ostensibly archaic, at least in the context of latter-day generalizations, the author combs through the pervasive discrepancies and claims made, differentiating between the way we are born and how patterns of behavior and thought processes are affected by cultural rules. She effectively blows the lid off of old tropes, examining, for instance, the challenges facing women who pursue careers in science and engineering. "Women who are invested in masculine domains," she writes, "often have to perform in the unpleasant and unrewarding atmosphere created by stereotype threat." This threat not only impairs performance, but also decreases the interest in cross-gender activities. As a result, these women have fewer same-gender role models. Like Robert Wright, in his book on evolutionary psychology, *The Moral Animal* (1994), Fine's greatest strength is her accessible voice and clear structure. Weaving together anecdotes, dense research and quotes from numerous experts, she offers a well-balanced testament to the many ways in which cultural rules inform behaviors often mistaken as organic to our brains, as opposed to learned. Nuanced details like the size difference between male and female brains (the former of which is larger) make a difference, and it's fascinating to discover that so many of these scientific reasons. However, though the work is well-rendered and lucid, it may be too academic for a general audience.

A heavy but informative and often surprising study. (Agent: Barbara Lowenstein/Lowenstein Associates)

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