

'Male Machine' describes changing male roles

The Male Machine by Marc Feigen Fasteau, with an introduction by Gloria Steinem. McGraw-Hill Book Company, \$7.95.

Straight off the time-honored American assembly line comes that product of products, *The Male Machine*. Built to last, built to test, built to be strong. And, according to Feigen Fasteau, also built to be unnecessarily tough, intolerably competitive and, most unfortunate of all, cast in an unfeeling mold that becomes ever more dangerous to society.

Feigen Fasteau, 33, is a prime example of the male machine. A 1963 graduate of Harvard University, he admits that he sought to emulate the tight-lipped, hard McNamaras and Bundys of the early 1960s. After serving on several government staffs and picking up a Master's degree in American history at Georgetown University, he entered Harvard Law School. He graduated magna cum laude and was editor of the Harvard Law Review.

Met feminist

He might have continued to climb, rung by hard-fought rung, up some plush corporate ladder, had he not collided with feminist Harvard Law student Brenda Feigen. They became, eventually, the Feigen Fasteau's and he began to realize:

"I was judging my behavior against an ideal of invulnerability that was shared on rough outline by other men but not, for some reason, by women... it was the fear of emotions associated with being vulnerable, rather than the emotions themselves... that was the major cause of the unease I felt... in the process of trying to 'protect' myself against these 'unmasculine' feelings, I was somehow cutting myself off from all but a narrow range of human contact..."

While Feigen Fasteau examines all the sacred cows of the male machine—his sports, his women, his job, his friendships, his work, his family and his

machismo with an intelligent and well-researched analysis, he also presents his personal struggles.

Friendships with men

He talks about the friendships men have with men, moments of trivial and nonincisive exchange. Moments when each tries to awe the other, or at least present an unchanging facade because "it's just like a woman to change your mind."

After Feigen Fasteau began to see what essence and confidence women shared among themselves,

what true friendships his wife savored, he began to realize how impersonal and restrained his own friendships were.

He points out that some of this is changing, especially in younger college-age men, but I think his premise is still too true. I think of my friends and

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realize that it is mostly with the women I know well that anything is really shared. With just a handful of male friends will I share anything personal. And even fewer ask and would take time to listen.

'Performance Ethic'

In the sexual realm, the "you old devil you" love them and lay them image has been subtly altered, not essentially changed, Feigen Fasteau says. Now the male is expected to be the orgasmatron for the woman ("men, like efficient machines, should give it to them."). The shakeup occurs, though; men unable to measure up to the "performance ethic" for one reason or another are experiencing impotence at ever-increasing rates.

That men fear they may not be able to meet the

sexual demands women make—women newly freed from the restraints of the past—is not just an idea of Feigen Fasteau. Witness the runaway bestseller (not only men are buying it) *Fear of Flying* and articles in *Esquire* such as "The New Impotence and Who's Got It?"

Women as coworkers and partners in the social arena also are prey to the idealized conception of what it is to be a man. As Feigen Fasteau points out, in work, male superiority is the putdown of women. He writes:

"Women who are good at organization, follow up and detail are assumed to have only that ability and are described as having compulsive, tidy and therefore limited minds; the same attributes in a man make him a prime candidate for controller of the company... A gift for blunt, articulate analysis gives a man the valuable reputation of having a mind like a steel trap; it turns a woman into a pushy broad."

Feigen Fasteau continues, exploring men as fathers and marriage partners, men's attraction to sport and violence, and the effect of men's decision making on recent history.

Particularly intelligent is his analysis of why Kennedy and Johnson committed the United States to Vietnam; they feared appearing weak—to the country, to the Congress and to the press. It is also why Nixon and Kissinger kept us in the war long after there were no more justifications. "Peace with honor" meant simply that after the battle lines are drawn, one must never back away. The case is more involved, and Feigen Fasteau does not down play other reasons for our Vietnam fiasco.

Salvation will be a type of androgyny, he says, when men and women can share characteristics and power, when men can break out of the die and realize that the male machine never gives them a chance to really live. It is not an easy or immediate task, but the assembly line must be stopped.

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