

REED, Evelyn. \$4.95
 Woman's evolution: from matriarchical clan to
 patriarchal family. Pathfinder. .
 xviii, 491p. bibliog. index. 21cm. LC74-
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Evelyn Reed's Woman's Evolution attempts to examine the early history of half of the human species -- womankind -- which, the author claims has largely been hidden from view. The product of more than twenty years of anthropological research, the book is an affirmation that women, via the matriarchy, once held an esteemed and influential social position; and, moreover, were primevally responsible for some of the most civilized and cooperative aspects of modern human society. Her thesis is an outstanding effort to account for many of the discrepancies found in the patterns of social evolution as delineated by many traditional anthropologists. For example, the ancient taboo on sexual intercourse with certain relatives has previously been described as a function of a universal fear of incest. Ms. Reed challenges that assumption, offering evidence that the incest taboo was derived primarily as a force against cannibalism in the hunting epoch. Contending that the maternal clan system was the original form of social organization, the author additionally traces the course of its development and the causes of its downfall. Her partisanship is self-acknowledged, her dialectic impeccable, and her material provocative.

Woman's Evolution is stimulating and readable, and important for anyone interested in the women's movement as well as anthropology.

K.M. K.

