

Author traces women's role

ed. Evelyn *Woman's Evolution* Pathfinder Press Paperback \$9.95, 464 pp.

Have you ever wondered where women were in that obscure period of prehistory when the human race went through the transition from ape to *homo sapiens*? Or why, in every living species males exercise dominance only over other males, while in the human species it is the females who are dominant?

If you have had a nagging feeling that Desmond Morris (*The Naked Ape*) and Lionel Tiger have left something out, then read Evelyn Reed's book *Woman's Evolution*. Reed's theories are fascinating, they explain the unexplained, they are documented - and they make sense. Woman's biology, looked upon today as a handicap, was the very basis for the rise of humanity. What has been called the ascent of man would more correctly be called the ascent of woman.

Reed draws out the important point that this transition required, before all else, cooperation of the members of the group - social bonding. The first of these bonds was the maternal bond. While other members of the group were busily seeing to their own needs, women were caring for themselves and for someone else - their offspring.

Women with their children were the only exception to the rule of pure self-interest. They were also accustomed to cooperating with each other. The fact that as a group they controlled the young for a longer period of time than any other primate put them in a position to institute taboos - rules that were necessary to preserve the group and to enlarge it. They socialized the young males. And the males needed the socializing - they, not women, were 'robbed' by their biology, by their competitive instincts.

Reed credits women with the discovery of agriculture and medicine among many other things. The two most ancient tools found by archeologists are the chipped stone-scraper and the digging stick. To this day these tools are used by women in primitive cultures. Through the use of the digging stick women learned the art of cultivation of the soil - the art of agriculture.

Women were the first doctors. Through their familiarity with plants and herbs, gained in the course of this work, women were also the first to become familiar with the properties of these plants. They were the natural people to introduce their use as medicine.

Through their productive activities, women also lead the way to the first uses of language. The fact that hunters and fishermen must remain silent and isolated precludes the possibility that they took the lead in the use of language. Women, on the other hand, were free, in their work, to "chatter all day long."

The fact that early anthropologists, like Morgan, discovered that the matriarchy preceded the male-dominated patriarchal family system, and the fact that sexual equality had been the norm (facts conveniently ignored by male-supremacist anthropologists today) point to women's esteemed position in the past. But we all know where women stand now. How did their fall come about?

Reed answers that "women's downfall lies in the evolution of private property." But women were at the height of their power. How did private property end up in the hands of men? Reed links it to the transition from matriarchal society to the one-father family and undivided father right.

It is well known that the first fathers recognized by society were not the biological fathers

of today but rather sociological fathers. Usually this was the mothers' brother. When the woman's mate got into the act there were inevitable tensions between the two. Each wanted possession of the mother's child.

Through the payment of 'bride price,' which Reed points out is really 'child price,' the struggle settled in favour of the husband. What had formerly been tribal interchange of mates and gifts now became a true economic transaction. Of course a sufficiently high level of economic well-being had to have been achieved before this transaction could take place. Cattle surpluses were (and are) the common coin of this trade. (It is interesting that Hoebel traces the origin of our word "chattel" to the word "cattle.") As Reed says, "The importance of cattle in the development of private property has long been recognized."

Women's wishes concerning marriage were no longer considered important. Women became valued not for their contribution to society but for their ability to produce children.

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Evelyn Reed, widely acclaimed Marxist anthropologist and feminist author, has spoken in many countries on women's liberation.

The arts

Strange farces at work

You've perhaps heard about Italian film audiences. If they don't like a film, they throw things at the screen; dead cats, candywrappers, unwanted family members, shoes, and so on.

Edmonton saw the closest thing to an Italian film audience that it may ever see, last Saturday night at the Odeon 2. Such hissings! Such boosings! Such mass exodusings!

There were two reasons for such behavior from this city's normally civilized audiences: *The Devil's Triangle* was one, and *Encounter With the Unknown* was the other.

The Devil's Triangle, narrated by Vincent Price (his price for this one must've been low, very low), began inauspiciously enough. You all know the story behind the Bermuda Triangle: it's that area of ocean just off the Bermuda coastline where numerous ships and planes have mysteriously vanished. The film begins with one or two poorly-filmed and poorly-directed mock disappearances (quick shots of toy boats in bath-tubs). Then the film goes on to show three or four more of these badly-faked disappearances. A little later on, the film goes on to show us five, six, seven, eighteen and twenty-five of these

mysterious disappearances.

After several hundred planes and boats have mysteriously (not very) disappeared, and the film is about to crescendo to a whimpering climax, we are informed by Vincent Priceless that no one, especially not the film's director, has any idea why all these vehicles have vanished in the Devil's Triangle. End of film. Boos. Hisses. A few popcorn cartons bounce off the screen. A lot of people groan and rise and shuffle out the exits. Those of us determined to get at least thirty cents worth of our three-dollar ticket remain.

Doubtless many people came to see *Encounter With the Unknown* because Rod Serling (remember television's *Twilight Zone*?) narrated the film. If Vincent Price can plug orange juice for pocket money on television, I suppose we shouldn't be surprised when Serling plugs cinematic porridge for the same.

Well, anyhow, what happened was, the film's alleged characters all encountered the Unknown. The Unknown, contrary to popular expectations, did not strike fear into our hearts, rather, the Unknown was pretty damn silly.

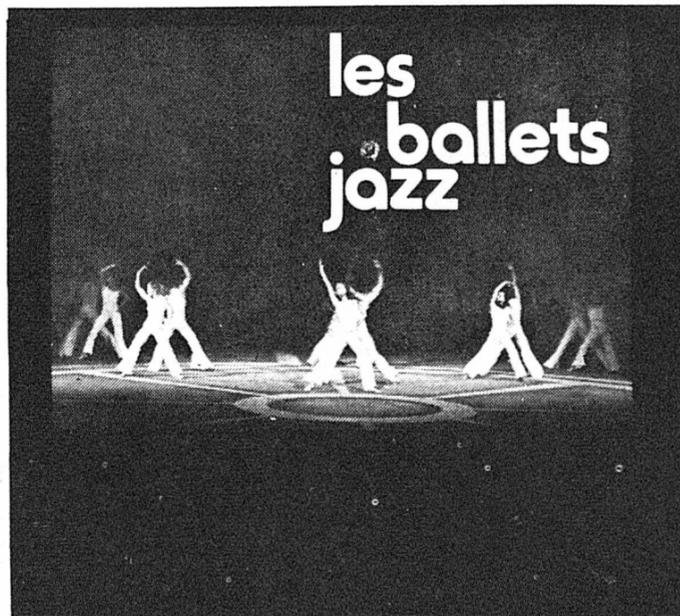
The actors must have come

from the dead files of Central Casting Ltd., either that, or they were the brothers-sisters-cousins-etc. of the producer. You could almost hear the director (cursing his untalented soul) shouting from the sidelines: "Sad! Now, happy! Okay; fear! Alright; some

anger!"

One could go on and on. These films did. But suffice it to say that this is mainly meant as a warning: *Parental Guidance Required - There May Be Some Offensive Movies In This Theatre.*

by Lindsay Brown



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A Students' Union Theatre Presentation

Audio-visual presents films

The Audio-Visual Division of the Central Library is continuing the presentation of its two film series throughout March.

On Saturday, March 13, the science fiction film THX 1138 will be presented and on Sunday, March 14 the award-winning film *West Side Story* will be shown.

Both films will begin at 2 p.m. Admission is free and everyone is welcome.

Admission Procedures 1976 Division of Physical Therapy - School of Rehabilitation Medicine

Students wishing to be considered for entry into the Bachelor of Physical Therapy programme in September 1976 are advised that:

(a) May 1st is the final date for receipt of Applications for Admission or Re-enrolment.

(b) All applicants are required to take the Allied Health Professions Admission Test on May 15th, 1976.

Further details may be obtained from Mrs. D. Johansen, at 432-5983 during normal office hours.