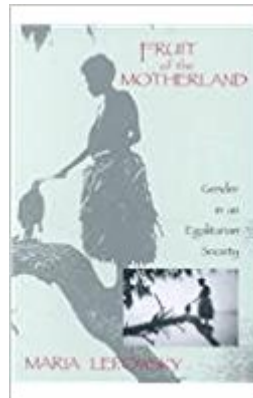




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Fruit Of The Motherland: Gender In An Egalitarian Society



Synopsis

Challenging the portrayal of sexual inequality as a universal condition, Lepowsky presents a vivid account of Vanatinai, a matrilineal society in New Guinea. Contradicting scholars who consider sexual inequality a universal condition, *Fruit of the Motherland* reveals an exceptional society in which women have equivalent access to power and prestige and significant control over the means of production. Lepowsky presents an ethnography of Vanatinai, a matrilineal, decentralized society in New Guinea where there is no ideology of male dominance and women and men are considered fundamentally equal. Tracing the life cycle of islanders of both sexes, she examines the role of gender in the Vanatinai's: social life and history, religious philosophy and worldview, practice of ceremonial exchange and ritual. In addition, *Fruit of the Motherland* includes useful cross-cultural analysis of gender roles, ideologies, and power.

Book Information

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"Lepowsky deals evenhandedly with topics of primary concern to islanders -- subsistence, life passages, sorcery, relations with the dead and with spirits, exchange, and power -- presenting general analyses through specific incidents. This ethnography is important as a touchstone for accounts of Melanesian societies and for theories of gender relations." -- "Choice"

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An ethnographic study of how gender is negotiated in Vanatinai, a small matrilineal island near New Guinea.

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