

Matriarchy

The touch of wild mood, which insists on playing its role as part of the social formative process, carries us backwards into the Euboean woodlands, where forces like the Bacchae of Euripides ruled exotically over male regents too hapless to cleanse their own stables. Early stages of cultural growth inevitably pay tribute to centers of female power—maenads, amazons, bewitchers, belles dames sans merci, bacchae—to which males pay fealty. The Pentheus in each of us shudders at the women's cry in the night. Whether male or female we participate in that gender other which stipulates the gender we are. The homosexual potential, latent in the sexual doubleness we all inhabit, is one factor in the testosterone diversity we all display. A straight like me has only to review a cast of texts like Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood*, or Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* social.,' to recognize the chilling actuality of the dark world of sex fraught-neutral.