



The Lost Girls: Demeter-Persephone and the Literary Imagination, 1850-1930. (Textxet Studies in Comparative Literature)

Andrew Radford

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The Lost Girls analyses a number of British writers between 1850 and 1940 for whom the myth of Demeter's loss and eventual recovery of her cherished daughter Kore-Persephone, swept off in violent and catastrophic captivity by Dis, God of the Dead, had both huge personal and aesthetic significance. This book, in addition to scrutinising canonical and less well-known texts by male authors such as Thomas Hardy, E. M. Forster, and D. H. Lawrence, also focuses on unjustly neglected women writers - Mary Webb and Mary Butts - who utilised occult tropes to relocate themselves culturally, and especially in Butts's case to recover and restore a forgotten legacy, the myth of matriarchal origins. These novelists are placed in relation not only to one another but also to Victorian archaeologists and especially to Jane Ellen Harrison (1850-1928), one of the first women to distinguish herself in the history of British Classical scholarship and whose anthropological approach to the study of early Greek art and religion both influenced - and became transformed by - the literature. Rather than offering a teleological argument that moves lock-step through the decades, *The Lost Girls* proposes chapters that detail specific engagements with Demeter-Persephone through which to register distinct literary-cultural shifts in uses of the myth and new insights into the work of particular writers.

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