

## The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Illusion, disillusion, persuasion and violence, in mother-daughter relationship and in politics

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*In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, we can listen to the voices of mothers and daughters telling us how they symbolize their early experiences. Our early experiences of illusion, disillusion, persuasion, and violence, that shape our psychic and social reality. The Hymn to Demeter sings the eternal cycle of wrath, withdraw and return as the centre of the female experience. It presents the maternal persuasion and violence in mother-daughter relationship and in politics. It provides the etiological myth to the Eleusinian Mysteries. The Mysteries took place at Eleusis, near Athens. They were an important cultural institution, a counterpart to the highly developed politics of Athens. They allowed Athenians to acknowledge and integrate the mysterious supernatural forces of the unknown; these are split-off, primitive, 'supernatural' forces and limits that lie beyond the order of politics, words and reason. The Hymn to Demeter is a sang prayer, a poem that was sang in public gatherings. Poetry was always a political activity. It made a community out of separate and different individuals who gathered together to listen to a poem. They merged with each-other in a 'substance of illusion', with primary identifications. And they then could emerge and experience themselves a new. Poetry used an apocalyptic action language that revealed deep aspects of the self, and the stranger, the mysterious xenos, that constitutes the foundations of identity. In these foundations are embedded the traces of primitive experiences that are created out of the original mother-infant intersubjective matrix. Through listening to poetry, people were enabled to recreate and share such experiences where they could be in contact with the mysterious other inside the self via the other outside. The Eleusinian Mysteries played an important role in politics. They allowed Athenians to say that, they need not fear death and extinction; they need not fear the future; they need not to know with reason and words; they only need to experience, and believe that experiences convey meaning at a deep psychosomatic level. In the poem, there is a shift from bodily and psychic violence to use of verbal persuasion which reminds us the negotiations in politics. However, there is a mysterious act of faith, that is common in the maternal persuasion, and in political negotiations. The unknown is our constant in politics.*