Why is it said that breaking a mirror causes seven years of unhappiness?

For time immemorial, a belief has persisted in the collective unconscious: breaking a mirror brings bad luck, specifically **seven years of misfortune**. This well-known superstition has traversed centuries and cultures, but where does it originate from? To answer this question, we must journey back to the time of Ancient Rome, where this peculiar custom appears to have taken root.

The Origins of the Belief

The belief that breaking a mirror leads to seven years of misfortune has uncertain origins, but it is often attributed to the Romans. Romans were renowned for their numerous superstitions and beliefs, and this one was no exception. In their time, mirrors were crafted using a thin layer of silver on glass or polished metal. Reflection in a mirror was considered a reflection of the soul, and shattering a mirror was thus interpreted as an affront to the soul itself.

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The Relationship with the Number Seven

But why seven years of misfortune? Romans had a special relationship with the number seven, which they considered sacred. They believed that every individual underwent a cycle of seven years throughout their life, and breaking a mirror could disrupt this cycle. The seven years of misfortune thus represented the time needed for the soul to regain its equilibrium.

The Mirror and the Legend of Narcissus

Another theory links this belief to the famous legend of Narcissus. According to Roman mythology, Narcissus was a young man of extraordinary beauty who fell in love with his own image reflected in water. Unable to tear himself away from his reflection, he eventually drowned in the river. This tragic tale could have contributed to the association of mirrors with a curse, further reinforcing the superstition.

A Belief that Transcends Eras

Over the centuries, this belief has spread worldwide. Cultures across the globe have adopted this superstition, although the exact reasons may vary from one region to another. The symbolism of the mirror as a reflection of the soul and the concept of seven years of misfortune are recurring themes in many cultures.

Conclusion

Thus, the belief that breaking a mirror causes seven years of misfortune traces its origins back to Ancient Rome, where mirrors were regarded as precious objects linked to the soul and the superstition of a seven-year cycle. While we cannot scientifically prove that shattering a mirror indeed leads to a period of misfortune, this superstition continues to persist as a fascinating example of how ancient beliefs can influence our culture and thinking even centuries later. So, the next time you hold a mirror in your hands, remember this ancient story and the power of beliefs that transcend time.

Sources

- fr.wikipedia.org

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