

We ignore the past not because of superficiality but because history often seems distant and unrelated to everyday life. This book, on the other hand, starts from basic personal experiences such as being a son or a daughter, and attempts to show how daily conflicts, for example with one's parents, are influenced by images, symbols and events that are rooted in a distant past, even though we are not fully aware of them. By translating our individual experience of emotional conflicts within the family into the public sphere, we can interpret otherwise unintelligible historical events. The misogyny which is present in ethnic violence and nationalist wars, thus emerges as a variant of the difficulty of relating with one's mother, while anti-Semitism appears to originate in the difficulty of relating with one's father.

Beauty and the Monster addresses the evolution of the symbol of conception in Catholic culture from the representation of the conjugal couple (Giotto) to the representation of the mother alone (Tiepolo). If we compare religious discourse with religious art, the female symbol of the Mother par excellence emerges as a screen for men's violent and unresolved conflict with the father: on the one hand a refusal of fatherhood, on the other an exclusion from paternal responsibilities. The Marian cult thus serves to place celibate sons above all others, even their own fathers. This 'war' of representations has significant consequences in the civil sphere.

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Discursive and Figurative Representations of the Parental Couple from Giotto to Tiepolo



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