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## **The Mystique, Magic, Myths and Superstitions of Mirrors**



by [C Jordan](#) in [Folklore](#), November 8, 2009

**“I looked in the mirror and what did I see...”**

**What does one see when one looks in a mirror? Is it merely as the song says “...A nine stone weakling with knobbly knees...” Or is there more to be seen in a mirror than one’s own reflection?**

**Mirrors have a certain mystique about them, which gives rise to beliefs, magic, myths, legends and superstitions.**

**Amongst many things they have been seen as a “tool of the devil”, a “catcher” of the soul, a harbinger of things to come, a portal to another dimension and a source of bad luck.**

**But what are these beliefs myths and superstitions and where do they come from?**



[Image source](#)

**“I looked in the mirror and what did I see...”**

(The Kinks: *Superman* )

In the Bible, the Book of Genesis says that God made man in his own image. Therefore when we look into a mirror do we merely see our own reflection, our doppelganger, or are we looking into the face of God? This may have been the starting point where religious teachers found the [answer](#) to be: that of course, one could not see the face of god, which relied on faith, but if “man” was made in his image, therefore one must surely be looking at the nearest thing possible: one’s own soul.

There are areas of the world, including parts of [the USA](#), Greece and Southern Ireland, where it was, and in some cases still is, the tradition that when there is a death in [the house](#), all the mirrors in the household are covered until the body has been removed, so that the soul of the dead person will not be forever trapped there. There is also a belief that if a person was to look at the reflected image of the dead person in a mirror then they would see the face of the devil.

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The thought of the soul being seen in a mirror, would also explain why, in stories of vampires, the vampire does not have a reflection in a mirror. As the vampire is already dead it has no soul and therefore cannot have a reflection.

**“But strong of limb and swift of foot Misfortune is, and, far outstripping all, comes to every land, and there wreaks evil on mankind.....”**

(Homer: [The Iliad](#))



[Image source](#)

To break a mirror is to have seven years of misfortune and bad luck, is a widely held superstition.

There are a couple of reasons as to how this may have come about and became widely believed.

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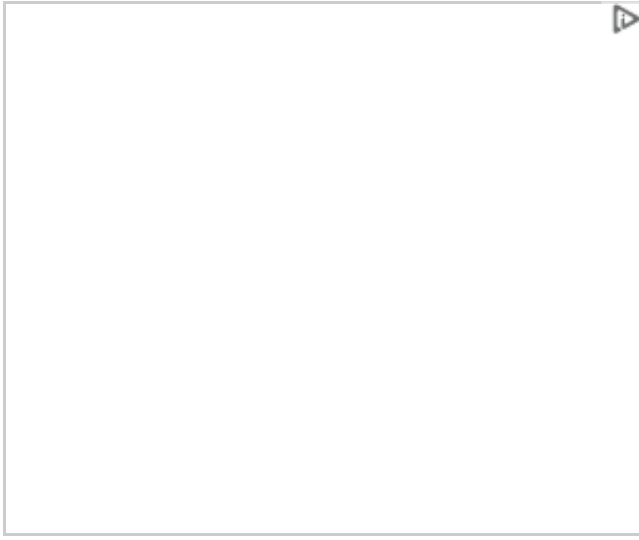
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1.

[Patrick Bernauw](#)

On November 8, 2009 at 1:14 pm

What a great and in-depth article, Chris! Well crafted and running from ancient myths to modern myths! And with some very good illustrations! This really is “magazine” quality!

2.

[svishnugopal](#)

On November 8, 2009 at 1:43 pm

wonderfully scripted and i am able to make out the amount of research you should have done for this article...

3.



[cutedrishti8](#)

On November 8, 2009 at 1:55 pm

A nice presentation..

4.



[ahmad joko setyawan](#)

On November 8, 2009 at 6:29 pm

This is a well presented,well written and throughly reseached article! Very interesting work,so interesting I bookmarked it.I write a lot of horror and your article sure did spark some imagination in me!! Excellent work by all standards,loved it!

5.



[s hayes](#)

On November 9, 2009 at 7:46 am

Wonderfully interesting article well researched.

6.



[Dee Gold](#)

On November 10, 2009 at 8:47 am

good job

7.



Juancav

On November 10, 2009 at 10:02 am

Deep research in this article.

8.



[John McDonnell](#)

On November 10, 2009 at 11:18 am

Great research! I learned a lot reading this article. One thing you didn't mention is that mirrors first became widely used during the Renaissance, and scholars think that is when the cult of individualism was born. There was an explosion of portrait painting during this time, and that could be because people were more concerned with their appearance, due to the use of mirrors.

9.



[papaleng](#)

On November 10, 2009 at 12:04 pm

well-researched and well presented.

10.



[R J Evans](#)

On November 14, 2009 at 1:27 pm

Cool article – with lots of food for thought.

Have blogged it at <http://www.webphemera.com>

Thanks!

11.



[Francois Hagnere](#)

On November 22, 2009 at 4:27 pm

Extremely well researched article. So interesting and nicely presentled. I think mirrors would have a lot to tell, if we could make them talk! Thank you so much and bravo!.

12.



[Authoress Terry E. Lyle](#)

On November 22, 2009 at 4:52 pm

Excellant research, and very well presented, I like your articles because they are thought provoking. I had a computer problem when I tried to rate that other article of yours about the doll aging in the attic, that was creepy, I wouldn't have even touched the doll Looked demonic and wierd.

13.



[Joe](#)

On December 23, 2009 at 9:00 am

This is a very informative article. I bounced here from another blog. I love [the pics](#) you chose for the article as well. Especially Bloody Mary. Bloody Mary is something I have never done in a mirror. Not because I think she'll come kill me. I just don't want any negative energy to follow me around. Call it superstition...

14.



[patampar](#)

On February 21, 2010 at 9:33 pm

excellent

15.



[dltart](#)

On April 10, 2011 at 11:07 am

Wow that was a cool and fun article. You captivated my attention and took me on a journey. Fun, informative, educational, and enchanting. Well written and well researched.

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**Joe** — It means what you say. Blacks can't be succesful unless they are doing something illegal

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