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Sommario/riassunto

A central thesis of this volume is that what human beings cannot contain of their experience - what has been traumatically overwhelming, unbearable, unthinkable - falls out of social discourse, but very often onto and into the next generation, as an affective sensitivity or a chaotic urgency. What appears to be a person's symptom may turn out to be a symbol - in the context of this book, a symbol of an unconscious mission - to repair a parent or avenge a humiliation - assigned by the preceding generation. These tasks may be more or less idiosyncratic to a given family, suffering its own personal trauma, or collective in response to societal trauma. This book attempts to address this heritage of trauma - the way that the truly traumatic, that which cannot be contained by one generation, necessarily and largely unconsciously plays itself out through the next generation - and to do so both from clinical and societal perspectives.