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Description

Woman in Male Imagination: A Study of Mirror Metaphors in Shamoil Ahmad's "The Dressing Table"

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Abstract:

In this paper I have chosen to analyse the Urdu story "Singhardaan" by Shomail Ahmad (1999), translated by M Asaduddin as "Dressing Table." "Singhardaan" exemplifies the employment of mirrors in a similar discourse. It presents the psychic paranoia of Brijmohan, the protagonist who has stolen a dressing table from a Muslim prostitute Naseem Jaan, during communal riots. He loses his peace of mind when he sees/imagines the women of his house (his wife and three daughters) obsessing with the mirror of the dressing table and eventually adopting the ways of the prostitute. The story leaves scope for the reader's interpretation of whether this is an illusion or happening in reality, however, since the story has been narrated from Brijmohan's perspective it is in all likelihood, his exaggerated imagination. As the story proceeds, it seems Brijmohan is losing his sanity and has started accepting himself first as a pimp or procurer for the women of his house, then as a male prostitute.

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