

Provoking novel giovanni's room essay

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James Baldwin explores and reflects his controversial history in his thought-provoking novel *Giovanni's Room*. Baldwin effectively utilizes the literary metaphor of reflective surfaces from the first page of the book and continues it throughout the book in order to illustrate the protagonist David's loathsome self-image. Two of the most compelling and recurring reflective surfaces Baldwin employs are mirrors and the window of Giovanni's room, both of which serve as painful reminders of the everyday struggle David fights against his homosexuality.

David's arc throughout *Giovanni's Room* follows a troubling desire to both face his inner demons while at the same time trying to continue some semblance of a normal existence. David continuously struggles to somehow come to terms with both his body and his mind, "[My body] is trapped in my mirror as it is trapped in time and it hurries toward revelation... I long to crack that mirror and be free" (247). This passage represents the inner turmoil David confronts every time he catches his reflection. Throughout the book we see David almost hating himself for feeling that his body is dirty due to his sexual preference. He longs to come clean with his body, but does not know how and that is why the image of the mirror contains so much gravity in the story.

Analogous to the symbol of the mirror is the window in Giovanni's room. The window here serves as a metaphor for the relationship between Giovanni and David. When they initially were together they always kept the window open, as a sort of symbolic metaphor for the openness of both their relationship and their alternative sexuality. But as the story progresses and David cannot reconcile his inner struggle, the relationship ends on a chilling

note, ' It's cold,' I said. ' Close the window. ' and Giovanni replies, ' Now that you are leaving you want the windows closed' (209).