

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FREUD'S THEORY *THE UNCANNY* IN
NELLA LARSON'S *PASSING*:
A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

This study closely investigates the elements of Sigmund Freud's theory "The Uncanny" in one of Larson's most famous novels. Although the novel touches upon racial issues, the study explores the mysterious relationship between Irene and Clare based on the main features of Freud's "The Uncanny," which are represented by hidden sexual desire, envy, supernatural power, and double characters. The aspect of the sexual desire is indicated in the novel by sexual undertones expressed by Irene towards Clare's physical features. Envy in the novel is expressed by Irene who shows resentful longing aroused by Clare's possessions and qualities due to her passing to the white community. The aspect of omnipotence of thoughts is indicated by the fact that Irene throughout the novel believes that her husband has an illicit relationship with Clare where this leads Irene to have paranoia and to the probable death of Clare.

Keywords: Freud's "The Uncanny", Stylistic Analysis, Psycholinguistic Analysis

أهمية نظرية "الخارق للطبيعة" لعالم النفس سيغموند فرويد في رواية "عبور" للكاتبة الأمريكية

نيلا لارسن: دراسة تحليله نفسية

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الملخص

الغرض من البحث هو تسليط الضوء عناصر على نظرية "الخارق للطبيعة" لعالم علم النفس التحليلي سيغموند فرويد في احد اشهر روايات الكاتبة الأميركية نيلا لارسون. على الرغم من تطرق الرواية الى مواضيع تتعلق بالعرق تركز الرواية على العلاقة الغامضة بين ايرين وكليير والتي تتركز على جوانب نظرية فرويد "الخارق للطبيعة" والمتمثلة بجوانب الرغبة الجنسية المخفية ومشاعر الحسد والغيرة والقدرة الكلية الخارقة للأفكار وثنائية ازدواجية الشخصيات. ان جانب الرغبة الجنسية متمثل في المشاعر المكمنة في شخصية ايرين اتجاه الجوانب الجسدية لشخصية كليير. ان الحسد في الرواية يتتمثل في شخصية ايرين التي تبدي شعوراً للتوق بما تملكه كليير من خصائص تتمتع بها جراء انتقالها الى المجتمع الأبيض. بسبب الشك الذي يراود ايرين فإن القدرة الكلية الخارقة للأفكار هو جانب من الجانب الخارق للطبيعة الذي يلازم ايرين من خلال احداث الرواية بسبب اعتقادها بحدوث علاقة غير شرعية بين زوجها وكليير والذي يؤدي ذلك الى جنون الشك لدى ايرين ومن ثم ربما الى موت كليير نتيجة لذلك.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظرية " الخارق للطبيعة"، التحليل الاسلوبي، التحليل النفسي اللغوي.

1-Introducton

Although Larson's *Quicksand* is more popular than *Passing*, the latter gained fame and the critics paid much more attention to it. *Passing* encompasses critical issues about racial relationships that were common at the beginning of 20th century. This novel focuses on the issue of hybridity and biracial identity, where many black people tried to pass for white for job opportunities and for not being inferior in the society at the beginning of 20th century. However, the novel is also centered on the ambiguous relationship between Clare and Irene, where there are feelings of envy and obsession connected with this relationship, yet Irene's suspicion of her husband and Clare prevails in the whole novel. The triangular relationship that links Irene, Clare, and Brian has sexual undertones, referring implicitly to the theory of the uncanny coined by Freud—one of the important and implicit features on which the novel is based. The theory of the uncanny in the novel is represented by main features, such as hidden sexual desire, envy, omnipotence of thoughts, and doubleness of characters. Therefore, the main themes on which *Passing* focuses beside the issue of race and identity are the aspects of uncanniness where Irene's envy of Clare's beauty and her jealousy of her husband, Brian, that he might have a secret affair with Clare dominates the mysterious atmosphere of the novel.

2- Psycholinguistic and Psychoanalytical Theory: Sigmund Freud's *The Uncanny*

One of the features of the uncanny is the quality of the character that has two equal, identical, or similar things. The similitude in characters can be seen from similar behavior, thoughts, shape, and characteristics. "These themes," Freud says, "are all concerned with the phenomenon of the 'double,' which appears in every shape and in every degree of development" (Freud, 1964: P. 234). Larson in *Passing* made Irene and Clare look alike. They share various qualities as they belong to a similar community. Freud states that the feature of the uncanny double occurs in the literary work when there are two characters who have similar experiences and feelings and the sense of uncanniness excites fear in one of the characters: "Thus, we have characters who are to be considered identical because they look alike. This relation is accentuated by mental processes leaping from one of these characters to another— by what we should call telepathy—, so that the one possesses knowledge, feelings, and experience in common with other" (Freud, 1964: P. 234). In the novel, Irene and Clare are doubles and share multiple aspects. The main connection between these two characters is that they are from a similar gender group and have similar social and racial roots. Clare and Irene are both African American women who were raised in a black community. In the novel, Irene starts avoiding Clare and based on Freud's theory of the uncanny, "the 'double' has become a vision of terror" (Freud, 1964: P. 389).

As Freud states, the uncanny double excites fear in one of the similar characters and it is evident to notice why Irene avoids Clare throughout the novel. That is to say, Irene's real fear is caused and aroused by the appearance of Clare for Irene sees herself in Clare as Clare is a reflection of Irene. Irene sees herself in Clare in a frightening way. In Irene's mind, it is frightening to think of Clare as the latter does not live the life for which she adopted a new identity. It is the fear of passing to a different community that Irene fears. This is evident when Irene feels comfortable when Clare is absent and does not ask about her.

Freud includes envy in his theory, the uncanny, and describes it as being evil: "one of the most uncanny and wide-spread forms of superstition is the dread of the evil eye, which has been exhaustively studied by the Hamburg oculist Seligmann (1910-11)" (1964: P. 240). Freud states that envy strikes fear in the hearts of many people: "there never seems to have been any doubt the source of this dread. Whoever possess something that is at once valuable and fragile is afraid of other people's envy, in so far as he projects on to them the envy he would have felt in their place" (Freud, 1964: P. 240). The reason behind the fear is the envy with which one is paralyzed because he believes that envy whether expressed by words or feelings will become a harmful action: "a feeling like this betrays itself by a look even though it is not put into words; and when a man is prominent owing to, noticeable, and particular owing to unattractive, attributes, other people are ready to believe that this intensity will convert it into effect" (Freud, 1964: P. 240). This is what is inferred in the last scene of Larson's *Passing*— Irene's repressed feelings that most likely turned into physical harm and adverse effect inflicted on Clare: "What is feared is thus a secret intention of doing harm, and certain signs are taken to mean that that intention has the necessary power at its command" (Freud, 1964: P. 240).

An instance of the envy and the omnipotence of thought Freud states in his theory is when an old gentleman occupies a room in which a patient wanted to stay. Expressing his disturbance caused by the gentleman, the patient expressed his strong emotions of anger and resentment saying, "I wish he may be struck dead for it" and

after a period of two weeks, Freud remarks that “the old gentleman really did have a stroke. My patient thought this an ‘uncanny’ experience” (Freud, 1964: P. 239). Based on Freud’s theory, Irene might have murdered Clare as an unconscious act of envy.

The features of uncanniness, Freud says, could recur to humans as remnants of the feelings of the primitive men: “It seems as if each of one has been through a phase of individual development corresponding to this animistic stage in primitive men, that none of us has passed through it without preserving certain residues and traces of it which are still capable of manifesting themselves” (P. 240-241). Freud calls the uncanny indications and marks “animistic mental activity” that hunts humans as they believe in the supernatural power that animates the material universe: “and that everything which now strikes us as ‘uncanny’ fulfills the condition of touching of those residues of animistic mental activity within us and bringing them into expression” (1964: P. 240-241). These feelings, Freud states, are hidden inside humans as being frightening, strange, and unfamiliar; but then they become uncovered: “this reference to the factor of repression enables us, furthermore, to understand Schelling’s definition of the uncanny as something which is to have remained hidden but has come to light “ (1964: P. 241). Freud proceeds to say that “it may be true that the uncanny [unheimlich] is something which is secretly familiar [Heimlich-heimisch], which has undergone repression and then returned from it, and that everything that is uncanny fulfills this condition” (1964: P. 245). Hence, the events of the novel starts mysteriously, especially in relation to the relationship between Clare and Irene— Irene’s strange feelings towards Clare, Irene’s mistrust of both her husband and Clare, and the uncanniness that connects Irene and Clare. However, at the end of the novel, the mystery in the novel becomes gradually revealed.

Freud explains the mechanism of envy psychologically by saying that the one who hides a feeling of envy towards others has the intuition to do harm. When the envious man says words indicating envy and these words become an action that is negative to the one who is envied, the envious man is considered to have exceptional and powerful ability being referred to as uncanny: “We can also speak of a living person as uncanny, and we do so when ascribe evil intentions to him. But that is not all; in addition to this we must feel that his intentions to harm us are going to be carried out with the help of special powers” (1964: P. 243). It can be deduced that Irene envies Clare for the opportunities that Clare acquire for passing to the white community.

Clare’s mysterious death is indicative of the uncanniness reflected in aspect of death indicated in the fairy tales such as, dismembered limbs and cut off head and hands. Freud explains that some people consider the idea of unintentional death of being buried alive “the most uncanny thing of all. And yet psycho-analysis has taught us that this terrifying phantasy is only a transformation of another phantasy which had originally nothing terrifying about it at all, but was qualified by a certain lasciviousness— the phantasy, I mean of intra-uterine existence” (1964: P. 244). The indication of lasciviousness is associated with the uncanny and one can unlock the repressive code of the feeling of the covert sexual desire that Irene has towards Clare and this is attributable to the pre-Oedipal pleasure and ecstasy with the mother.

3- Stylistic Analysis

The main literary style that the novelist uses in the novel is that she gives ominous clues of Clare’s passing to the white community. In the novel, Clare passes for white and is married to a wealthy man named Bellevue. As the plot progresses, the

novelist gives one of many hints about the warnings that Clare has received related to her secret of passing, which anticipates her death at the end of the novel. One hint is seen when Clare's husband feels comfortable when he says that there is no black person in his house: "No niggers in my family. Never have been and never will be" (Larsen, 1992: P. 201). This shows how Bellow's feelings are understood against seeing a "negro" in his house, but Clare does not pay attention to this pressing matter of the natural feelings of human beings. Because of Clare's recklessness in the novel, the reader feels how Clare is "stepping always on the edge of danger" (Larsen, 1992: P. 172).

Another danger in the novel lies in the close relationship between Clare and Irene. Irene outwardly represses feelings towards Clare, which can be seen either assexual feelings, envy, or jealousy. Her husband and Clare are objects of suspicion to her. She fears that Clare may have a secret affair with her husband Brian. She repeatedly tries to keep away from her to maintain her normal life with her husband and children, but she is unable to do so. Irene often indirectly tells Clare to forget her. The idea of forgetfulness is strange because Irene and Clare are close friends. Irene gives a veiled hint to Clare not to come and see her again: "You know how it is. Everybody's so busy. People leave, drop out, maybe for a little while there's talk about them, or questions; then, gradually they're forgotten" (Larsen, 1992: P. 183). Irene gives excuses to Clare that she is extremely busy with her husband and children in order to make Clare keep away from visiting her. She indirectly means Clare should not think of her.

Moreover, the third person narrator of the novel makes a reference to the word "uncanny" at the moment of Irene's contemplation of Clare's face: "Irene felt a warmth creeping into her cheeks. Uncanny, the way Clare could divine what one was thinking" (Larsen, 1992: P. 196). The word "uncanny" of the third person narrator can have an etymological interpretation to understand better the relationship between Irene and Clare. This term is originally German and is derived from the adjective *unheimlich*, which means weird, bizarre, and "opposite of what is familiar" (Freud, 2012: P. 2). The root of this adjective is *heimlich*, which is an adverb and means "secretly" and "privately" (2012: P. 2). Sigmund Freud relates this term to other meanings, which refer to the feelings of scariness and religious devotion.

The hardest thing for some kind of women is to see her existence threatened by someone else, especially by another woman. The feelings of anxiety, fear, and delusion are clear to notice from the third person narrator's description to the unusual state of Irene: "Time with Brian. Time without him. It was gone, leaving in its place an almost uncontrollable impulse to laugh, to scream, to hurl things about. She wanted, suddenly, to shock people, to hurt them, to make them notice her, to be aware of her suffering" (Larsen, 1992: P. 253). Irene's mistrust of Clare and Brian makes her have a paranoid state to think obsessively and represses these feelings in front of people and her husband. Therefore, Irene's jealousy takes two kinds: the envy of Clare as a woman whom Irene feels she is better than her and the jealousy that comes from her suspicion that her husband might have a love affair with Clare. Thus, the wife's jealousy of her husband can cause a serious damage to the relationship between them, and it may lead the family to the edge of the abyss and collapse.

The result of the loyalty towards the race and the close relationship between Irene and Clare is the suspicion that Irene has that Clare and her husband might have a secret affair. Irene thinks profoundly: "And all, she assured herself, because she understood him so well, because she had, actually, a special talent for understanding

him. It was, as she saw it, the one thing that had been the basis of the success which she had made of a marriage that had threatened to fail. She knew him as well as he knew himself, or better” (Larsen, 1992: P. 218). Here, the overlap of the voices and opinions is clearly felt between the writer and Irene. Does the writer mean that she is quite sure that Irene totally knows her husband and she confirms his unfaithfulness as an aspect of omnipotence of thoughts, does only she express Irene’s opinion and the internal thinking of her mind about her husband? If it is the writer’s opinion, the “special talent” said by Irene would confirm and unfold the betrayal of her husband and she may be responsible for the homicide she commits against Clare at the end of the novel. If it is just Irene’s opinion expressed by the writer, it would be a part of Irene’s delirium and paranoia of her suspicion she has towards her husband, and this simply muddies the waters.

4- Linguistic Analysis

When Clare and Irene meet regularly, Irene describes Clare’s “exoticism” and her physical appearance in idiosyncratic language. She describes Clare’s physical appearance accurately as if she fantasizes her. Irene’s description reinforces the sexual desire that she might have towards Clare. Irene seems to fix her gaze on Clare as though she looks at her closely. Irene also describes Clare’s lips as “tempting” and this word is overtly erotic. She describes Clare’s skin as “peculiar soft luster” (Larsen, 1992: P. 191). The word luster means a soft sheen and glow, which gives the idea of the sexual feelings that seem to be repressed in Irene. Irene is also fond of Clare’s hair as being “exotic” and her eyes as being “mesmeric” (Larsen, 1992: P. 191), which hypnotizes, and that is an extended expression to reflect the idea of sensuality.

The mysterious relationship between Irene and Clare seems to be connected with Freud’s theory of “The Uncanny”. In the essay, Freud says, “The subject of the ‘uncanny’ is a province of this kind. It is undoubtedly related to what is frightening-to what arouses dread and horror...certain things which lie within the field of what is frightening” (Freud, 2012: P. 2). The “uncanny”, as Bate points out, might refer to what is known as “social taboo” which is fraught with risk, danger, and retribution, and it is kept out of sight but known by tacit assumptions (P. 39-40). Accordingly, the “uncanny” is secretive, invisible, and covert, and it can also refer to sexual undertones, which causes the feelings of disapproval and disgust (Bate, P. 39-40). Freud, however, argues that the “uncanny” can only be found in fiction not in reality, and the sexual desire accompanied to it can be repressed and overcome: “what is involved is an actual repression of some content of thought and a return of this repressed content, not a cessation of *belief in the reality*” (P. 16). Apparently, Irene struggles with her sexual identity. She seems to repress her sexual desire by avoiding Clare, but that is a “dreadful thing” (P. 191). Irene is unable to give up seeing the “caress” of Clare’s eyes. The word “caress” also has a sensual connotation: “At that moment it seemed a dreadful thing to think of never seeing Clare Kendry again. Standing there under the appeal, the caress, of her eyes, Irene had the desire, the hope, that this parting wouldn’t be the last” (P. 191). Irene’s repressed feelings towards Clare can be as dangerous as Clare’s secret and both secrets are sinister connotations in the novel. Irene’s jealousy might result from her sexual desire she feels towards Clare. She apparently represses these feelings, and that reflects negatively on her. Perhaps, she does not stand the idea that Clare talks with any man. In this way, Irene’s obsession leads her to have paranoia at the end of the novel.

The novelist uses hyperbole in the relationship between Irene and Clare. The hyperbolic language is used by Irene when she talks about Clare. Because of the deep thinking and obsession in her husband, Irene is not able to sleep: "She couldn't, of course, though she was so tired, having had, of late, so many sleepless nights. Nights filled with questionings and premonitions" (P. 247). Evidently, Irene's feelings are a mixture of envy, jealousy and suspicion. She envies Clare for being "intelligent" and having a "marvelous" status and station: "She's intelligent enough in a purely feminine way. Eighteenth-century France would have been a marvellous setting for her, or the old South if she hadn't made the mistake of being born a Negro" (P. 248). Irene actually envies Clare for her skills, smartness, and the "decorative qualities": "Well, then, all I can say is that you take it wrongly. Nobody admires Clare more than I do, for the kind of Intelligence she has, as well as for her decorative qualities" (P. 249). Irene's speech is ambiguous. Irene often warns Clare of the danger of her secret, but at the same time, the reader can detect a tinge of envy in Irene's tone when she talks about the great capabilities that Clare has. It is clear to see that the extraordinary abilities that Clare has according to Irene's speech is her passing to the white community in order to climb the social ladder that guarantees the powerful position and wealth.

Furthermore, Irene envies Clare's beautiful face: "Clare's ivory face was what it always was, beautiful and caressing. Or maybe today a little masked. Unrevealing. Unaltered and undisturbed by any emotion within or without" (Larsen, 1992: P. 253). Generally speaking, the person who feels jealous has usually the feelings of fear, anger, sadness, anxiety, and hatred because of the threat that he or she feels from the rival (Sona Al Mostkbal [Future Makers], 2012: Par. 7), and that what Irene exactly feels towards Clare: love and anger simultaneously. The jealous person usually fears of losing an important thing, and then rushes to maintain it with a violent and aggressive behavior (2012: Par. 7). Consequently, Irene feels that Clare's closeness to her husband threatens her existence.

The novel is based on the linguistic fallacy. Aspects of misinterpretation of the intentions are quite evident. Clare incessantly tries to see Irene and meet her. Clare's insistence on seeing Irene is ambiguous: "You would understand my wanting to see you again, and maybe forgive me a little" (Larsen, 1992: P. 207). She wants to see her because she might want to be closer to her husband and that what disturbs Irene and increases suspicion in herself: "It roused again that old suspicion that Clare was acting, not consciously, perhaps — that is, not too consciously — but, none the less, acting. Nor was Irene inclined to excuse what she termed Clare's downright selfishness" (Larsen, 1992: P. 212). Irene feels that Clare pretends to her, and Irene, however, might also be mistaken if Clare wants her to be close friends.

As Clare's hideous mistake of her secret (passing for white) is seen as a fissure in the novel, Irene's suspicion towards her husband is also a conspicuous rift in her family. Irene's absorption in Clare and Brian makes her neglect her children: "Gradually Irene's thought slipped away from Junior and Ted, to become wholly absorbed in their father" (Larsen, 1992: P. 223). This statement can indicate a climactic scene in the novel. Irene starts her intense thinking to be "absorbed" in thinking of her husband and the suspicion she has with "weariness" of that thinking: "There was only an intense weariness from their shutterlike procession in her brain" (Larsen, 1992: P. 224). Irene neglects her children because of the time consumed on thinking of her husband. Irene's suspicion becomes serious because it undermines the cohesion of the family and deepens the rift between herself and her husband.

Irene makes a strong hint when she says that Clare will be “happy” if she leaves her: "I Imagine you'll be happy enough, once you get away" (Larsen, 1992: P. 240). It can be inferred that Irene is unhappy and desperate whenever Clare keeps closer to her. Irene does not trust Clare and she feels she is in a sexual relationship with her husband, and Irene thinks that Clare's insistence on seeing her proves that. In this way, Clare is careless to her race and family so that she might be unaware of her expected secretive affair with Brian. Irene is fully convinced of her husband's unfaithfulness. This feeling is attributable to what Freud calls in his theory of the uncanny “omnipotence of thoughts” (Freud, 1964: P. 393). The novelist builds up the grounds for suspicion by giving many statements of warnings, hints, and foreshadowing that are put in the hermeneutical circle that Irene needs to decode the suspicion pertaining to Irene's omnipotence of thoughts represented by the possibility of the sexual relationship between her husband and Clare.

At the same time, Clare is always away from her husband and this causes a clear danger to Irene's life because Clare is the uncanny double of herself and she is filled with trepidation that she may come to her and affect her personality and existence and destabilize her relationship with her husband.

The writer says that Irene is merely a mother for her children and there is no space for love and affection between them: “She was, to him, only the mother of his sons. That was all. Alone she was nothing. Worse. An obstacle” (Larsen, 1992: P. 254). It can be noted that there is a lack of interest from Brian towards Irene as it is understood from the writer's speech. She says that she is only a “mother for his children” and she might mean that he does not show her sufficient love or even she might mean that her husband neglects their sexual relationship. Brian's eschewal of Irene reinforces the fragility in their relationship: “he slept in his room next to hers at night. But he was remote and inaccessible” (Larsen, 1992: P. 257). However, Irene might have wronged her husband and violated his love to her because she is strangely uncertain about his true intentions.

Irene plays the role of a cryptographer. She tries to decipher Clare's speech and utterances by putting forward propositions based on limited evidence. She tries also to analyze Clare's possible attempt in marrying Brian when Irene thinks that money and wealth do not prevent Clare from marrying Brian but, in fact, her daughter does so: “If she wanted Brian, Clare wouldn't revolt from the lack of money or place. It was as she had said, only Margery kept her from throwing all that away” (Larsen, 1992: P. 268). Irene's thinking of Clare's torrid affair with Brian is based on propositions not upon facts and strong evidence, and that implies the dilemma of discovering the true intentions of others. If Irene misinterprets Clare's intentions, this may lead to death of either of them.

Because she is extremely suspicious of her husband, Irene analyzes profoundly the physical behavior of both her husband and Clare. As a part of her omnipotence of thoughts, Irene focuses on the way Clare holds her arm tightly. She also observes the motions of her eyes. To Irene, Clare's looks are a “glance” that has a sexual and deliberate desire towards Brian. It is by no means certain that these looks are sexual or have sexual intentions. Irene's observation to the behavior of her husband seems to represent a crucial point to put an end to her obsession and paranoia to the issue of unfaithfulness. She creates thoughts, turning into a vortex of energy. She wants to make sure that he is unfaithful. The specter of suspicion hovers around her and might instigate her for a physical reaction. She plays the role of a detective when she describes herself that she has an insightful view and knows her husband very well as a sort of intelligence

in catching his real intention towards Clare: “ In a quick furtive glance she saw Clare clinging to Brian's other arm. She is looking at him with that provocative upward glance of hers, and his eyes were fastened on her face with what seemed to Irene an expression of wistful eagerness” (Larsen, 1992: P. 270). The novel also hides the truth about Clare and Brian whether they may have an adulterous affair, and that adds a major complication to it. The reader and the character (Irene) are not certain about the reality. Irene deals with the physical movements of “arms” and “eyes” more accurately and attentively. She wants to put an end to the inner conflict of her suffering. She has a hard task in observing the attitude and mood of both Clare and Brian. Since there is no strong evidence about the unfaithfulness of her husband, she observes his behavior with Clare, trying to have keen eyesight and visual acuity as in the pivotal scene of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the play-within- a-play.

Similarly, the idea of thoughtfulness and sobriety that Irene acquires reinforces the aspect of her ingenuity in observing her husband's behavior. When someone says that she never laughs, this means that she hides something uncanny, and that might have a relation to the setting of the window where Clare is standing by: “What's the matter, Irene?’ someone asked.”Taken a vow never to laugh, or something? You're as sober as a judge” (Larsen, 1992: P. 270). Irene's sobriety might make a reference to the scene of the play-within- a-play when Hamlet decides to observe the physical reaction of Claudius, and he asks Horatio to help him in observing the King's behavior. The most important foreshadowing or hint of Clare's death, which is seen in the ending section of the novel, is the reference to “the second gravedigger” (Larsen, 1992: P. 252). In the party, Felise Freeland tells Irene that she “looks like the second gravedigger” (Larsen, 1992: P. 252). Hence, the novelist prepares the reader for the imminent tragic event of Clare's death almost like the gravedigger scene in *Hamlet*. The reference to the death in the novel is a clear indication of Freud's uncanny when he states that humans since primitive men have experienced the feelings of the fear of death and the return of the dead: “Many people experience the feeling in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts” (Freud, 1964: P. 241). Thus, Larson uses death in the novel as a source of fear that Irene experiences as a primitive feeling returning in a form of fear and anxiety: “it is no matter for surprise that the primitive fear of the dead is still strong within us and always ready to come to the surface of any provocation”(Freud, 1964: P. 242). Freud also states that the dead body, in one's phantasies and mind, returns from death in an attempt to take his soul to live together: “the dead man becomes the enemy of his survivor and seeks to carry him off to share his new life with him. Considering our unchanged attitude towards death, we might enquire what has become of the repression, which is the necessary condition of a primitive feeling recurring in the shape of something uncanny” (Freud, 1964: P. 242). Based on Freud's theory, the scene of Clare's death indicates clearly Irene's phantasy of an embodiment of a dead body represented by Clare as if she returns from death and Irene might have pushed her from the window as the latter protects her soul from being taken by Clare.

The novelist perplexes the reader and makes the possibility of Clare's death complicated. She describes Clare as somebody who is about to do something dangerous to her life similar to suicide: “Clare stood at the window, as composed as if everyone were not staring at her in curiosity and wonder, as if the whole structure of her life were not lying in fragments before her” (Larsen, 1992: P. 271). The narrator describes Clare when she stands before the open widow and closely loses her consciousness: “She

seemed unaware of any danger or uncaring. There was even a faint smile on her full, red lips, and in her shining eyes” (Larsen, 1992: P. 271). Afterwards, Irene is seen to enter to Clare with the feelings of extreme fear and intense feelings: “She ran across the room, her terror tinged with ferocity, and laid a hand on Clare's bare arm” (Larsen, 1992: P. 271). The novelist pays a great attention to the hands and arms: Irene’s hand and Clare’s arm when Irene puts down her hand on Clare’s arm. Then, she describes Clare’s sudden absence from the people in the party after Belle crashes into the party, insulting Clare as a “Nigger”: “One moment Clare had been there, a vital glowing thing, like a flame of red and gold. The next she was gone” (Larsen, 1992: P. 271). In this scene, the reader feels that Clare is dead. When Irene stands at the window, she contemplates the flaks of cigar falling from the window. While contemplating these flakes, she is forming a mental image of Clare’s death. Her phantasy of Clare’s death is indicative of her omnipotence of thoughts where she thinks that Clare’s death is predictable and even unavoidable. The tiny pieces of flakes are a symbol of the Clare’s body that will be fallen, broken, and divided. Irene’s phantasy of Clare’s death springs from her envy that has been transformed into an evil action that ended Clare’s life.

Irene might have done a psychological reaction that lead to Clare’s death. Her behavior towards Clare’s death might prove her responsibility. When Clare’s death is declared, she releases strong emotions of sadness mixed with fear and horror “in her a whimper, like a hurt child's” and also her “shivering arms” which could be a conclusive evidence of her cause of Clare’s death. Irene then “began to cry wrackingly” (Larsen, 1992: P. 274). Irene’s briskness of feelings of regret is similar to the feeling of guilt of murdering somebody; Irene has the feelings of killing Clare understood by observing her feelings of sudden sorrow and deep remorse for her death.

Hazelton, one of the party guests, says that he sees Clare before she dies and he says that she falls out the window. Irene’s speech may reinforce the evidence of her responsibility for Clare’s falling out the window. She might have meant in her saying that she pushed Clare. That is to say, the dash at the end of her statement could be filled as “I pushed her”: “No, no!” she protested. ‘I’m quite certain that he didn't. I was there, too. As close as he was. She just fell, before anybody could stop her. I — ’” (Larsen, 1992: P. 274). Nevertheless, the readers are inveigled into thinking that Irene is a murderess. In this way, the writer’s speech is full of unfilled meanings to the expressions she or her characters say. There are many gaps that need to be filled by the readers. The writer deliberately creates unclear meanings and conflicting feelings to make the events more dramatic. The ending of the novel is enigmatic, and it reflects the impossibility of understanding the one’s intentions and identity and also the tragic consequence of racial passing.

The ending of the novel related to Clare’s death can be seen as a sophisticated puzzle that the reader needs to decipher. The situation in the ending is worsened by lack of demystification. It shows uncertainty of Clare’s death to the people who are in the place of the accident. Irene seems secretive when she hears somebody says that this death was caused accidentally without intent to harm. This might reflect an ironical sense where the reader feels that Irene is responsible for Clare’s death, and the reader might know better than the character who is “the strange man”: “Centuries after, she heard the strange man saying: “Death by misadventure, I'm inclined to believe. Let's go up and have another look at that window” (Larsen, 1992: P. 275). Not only can the strange man who is close to the accident be mistaken, but also the readers can be unsuccessful

detectives. However, Freud's reference to the uncanny death that is made by mistake fosters Clare's death that may have happened unintentionally.

The ending scene of the novel is also vague where no one in the party knows about Clare's responsibility for Clare's death. Irene might have succeeded in getting rid of Clare secretly. The novel seems to include several dangerous secrets; after Clare's secret is uncovered, another secret appears on the surface. After Clare's death, Irene seems to have another reason about Clare's death, and the writer makes her character at the end more mysterious and secretive. Irene's repressed sexual feelings are also seen as a secret that Irene keeps inside herself until the end of the novel. The novel begins with a secret and ends with other secrets: Clare's secret with her husband, Irene's secret with her husband and other people who witness Clare's death, and also the writer's secret she puts into the end of the novel, who wants the reader to decipher the puzzle of this novel. The writer makes the truth within the words and lets the reader excavate it with a sense of ingenuity and intelligence.

Whether Irene fails or succeeds in knowing the intentions of Clare and Brian, the reader is left with an attempt to search and think about the original intentions of Irene, Clare, and Brian. The multiple possibilities of Clare's death seem to be all correct. Clare might have committed a suicide because her secret is uncovered by her husband. Otherwise, she might have tried to escape of the window when she heard Bellow's voice and died by mistake. Irene's feelings of suspicion, jealousy, and envy towards Clare reinforces the evidence that she might have pushed her and caused her death. The cobwebby event of Clare's death is made intentionally by the writer in order to emphasize the idea of the futility, fruitlessness, and failure of interpretation of the intentions of other people and interpretation of race and identity as well. The novel itself requires a deeper truth and all the interpretations of its major themes might be erroneous. Thus, the vagueness of Clare's death comes along with the vagueness of intentions and identity.

Conclusion

The potential danger that is felt in the novel related to Clare's passing has a relation to the danger of the close relationship between Irene and Clare. Irene's relationship with Clare is based on the obsessive jealousy, which can be seen as Irene's envy of Clare's physical appearance and her status and the jealousy that comes from Irene's suspicion that her husband might be guilty of adultery with Clare. Another kind of jealousy is also caused by the repressed sexual feelings that Irene seems to have towards Clare, implying the concept of the uncanny theorized by Freud. To sum up, the vital message of *Passing* is that passing of one's identity and misinterpreting others' intentions can be fatalist. As discussed, the themes of sexuality and envy are all connected cryptically with the feelings of uncanniness.

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