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## **Informal Writing on Nella Larsen's Passing**

One of the most important works relevant for the American literature is the novel *Passing* by Nella Larsen. There have been many attempts by the literary critics to discover the reasons for such ending of the novel, but there is not mutual agreement on the reasons for Claire's death. The final scene of the novel brings its readers an unexpected twist and climax of the tragic hero. However, the question is how did Claire die?

For me, both women are tragic heroines because Claire ended her life by sudden death, and Irene destroyed her family life by introducing Claire into her life. Therefore, three possible reasons for Claire's death are that she was killed by Irene, accidentally died or intentionally committed a suicide. I agree with Tate that "The last alternative-suicide-tends to be inadvertently neglected altogether, inasmuch as Claire's motives are not discernible" (145). Even though Tate agrees with the majority of critics that "The most obvious interpretation is that Irene in a moment of temporary insanity pushed Claire out of the window" (145), I would also give preference to the third explanation, and that is that the Claire committed a suicide. The writer does not give the readers psychological insight into the Claire's mind, but the readers may notice that under than psychical beauty, a tortured soul hides. For a long time, Claire did not look back into her childhood; broke every relationship with her former friends and led a life of a dignified white woman consciously always on alert if someone would recognize her and her origin. When Claire met Irene, Irene returned her to the careless childhood and memories emerged to the surface. For these reasons, Claire could have triggered her intention to commit a suicide.

The given possible reasons for the ending of the story reveal intention of the author for the possibilities of analyzing the novel and the forces that move characters to act in a certain way in multiple ways. The "psychological ambiguity" that exists in the novel permits its readers to identify with the characters and always find new ways of interpretation.

Tate, Claudia. Nella Larsen's *Passing*: A Problem of Interpretation. *Black American Literature Forum*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter, 1980), pp. 142-146. Web. 29. November 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2904405>