

Quicksand And Passing Nella Larsen

Born to a Danish seamstress and a black West Indian cook, Nella Larsen lived her life in the shadows of America's racial divide. Her writings about that life, briefly celebrated in her time, were lost to later generations--only to be rediscovered and hailed by many. In his search for Nella Larsen, George Hutchinson exposes the truths and half-truths surrounding her, as well as the complex reality they mask and mirror. His book is a cultural biography of the color line as it was lived by one person who truly embodied all of its ambiguities and complexities.

Born to a white mother and an absent black father, and despised for her dark skin, Helga Crane has long had to fend for herself. As a young woman, Helga teaches at an all-black school in the South, but even here she feels different. Moving to Harlem and eventually to Denmark, she attempts to carve out a comfortable life and place for herself, but ends up back where she started, choosing emotional freedom that quickly translates into a narrow existence. *Quicksand*, Nella Larsen's powerful first novel, has intriguing autobiographical parallels and at the same time invokes the international dimension of African American culture of the 1920s. It also evocatively portrays the racial and gender restrictions that can mark a life. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Nella Larsen's 1929 novel *Passing* is hailed today as a significant literary work of Harlem Renaissance, though for several decades it, like all of her works, was out of print. As history rights a wrong and recommitments Larsen's name to memory, it is beneficial to look at the other writings she published over her short career, collected here in *Beyond Passing: The Further Writings of Nella Larsen*. Contained within are her autobiographical novel *Quicksand*, and three short stories "Freedom," "The Wrong Man," and "Sanctuary." With a growing number of titles under its Magna Releases banner, CSRC Storytelling promotes and provides positivity, power and presence in print, restoring literary classics across genres and making them newly accessible to modern readers. This collection of Nella Larsen stories is a CSRC Storytelling Magna Release.

A groundbreaking examination of how twentieth-century African American writers use queer characters to challenge and ultimately reject subjectivity *Black Queer Flesh* reinterprets key African American novels from the Harlem Renaissance to Black Modernism to contemporary literature, showing how authors have imagined a new model of black queer selfhood. African American authors blame liberal humanism's model of subjectivity for double consciousness and find that liberal humanism's celebration of individual autonomy and agency is a way of disciplining Black queer lives. These authors thus reject subjectivity in search of a new mode of the self that Alvin J. Henry names "black queer flesh"—a model of selfhood that is collective, plural, fluctuating, and deeply connected to the black queer past. Henry begins with early twentieth-century authors such as Jessie Redmon Fauset and James Weldon Johnson. These authors adapted the *Bildungsroman*, the novel of self-formation, to show African Americans gaining freedom and agency by becoming a liberal, autonomous subjects. These authors, however, discovered that the promise of liberal autonomy held out by the *Bildungsroman* was yet another tool of antiblack racism. As a result, they

tentatively experimented with repurposing the Bildungsroman to throw off subjectivity and its attendant double consciousness. In contrast, Nella Larsen, *Henry* shows, was the first author to fully reject subjectivity. In *Quicksand* and *Passing*, Larsen invented a new genre showing her queer characters—characters whose queerness already positioned them on the margins of subjectivity—escaping subjectivity altogether. Using Ralph Ellison's archival drafts, Henry then powerfully rereads *Invisible Man*, revealing that the protagonist as a queer, disabled character taught by the novel's many other queer, disabled characters to likewise seek a selfhood beyond subjectivity. Although Larsen and Ellison sketch glimpses of this selfhood beyond subjectivity, only Saidiya Hartman's *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* shows a protagonist fully inhabiting black queer flesh—a new mode of selfhood that is collective, plural, always evolving, and no longer alienated from the black past. *Black Queer Flesh* is an original and necessary contribution to black literary studies, offering new ways to understand and appreciate the canonical texts and far more.

An Exploration of the Double-Conscious African- Americans on their Journey for an Identity along the Colour Line in -*Passing*, *Quicksand*, *The Autobiography of an Ex-colored Man*

The Complete and Unabridged Fiction of Nella Larsen

The Nella Larsen Collection; *Quicksand*, *Passing*, *Freedom*, *the Wrong Man*, *Sanctuary*

Nella Larsen

Beyond Passing

A collection of essays exploring black female self-representations across all media includes such authors as Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Lucille Clifton.

This book looks at how differences among women have been textually represented at a variety of historical moments and in a variety of cultural contexts, including Victorian mainstream fiction, African-American mulatto novels, late twentieth-century lesbian communities, and contemporary country music. *Sororophobia* designates the complex and shifting relations between women's attempts to identify with other women and their often simultaneous desire to establish and retain difference. Michie argues for the centrality to feminism of a paradigm that moves beyond celebrations of identity and sisterhood to a more nuanced notion of women's relations with other women which may include such uncomfortable concepts as envy, jealousy, and competition as well as more institutionalized ideas of difference such as race and class. Chapters on literature are interspersed by "inter-chapters" on the choreography of sameness and difference among women in popular culture.

Nella Larsen's novels *Quicksand* and *Passing*, published at the height of the Harlem Renaissance, fell out of print and were thus little known for many years. Now widely available and taught, *Quicksand* and *Passing* challenge conventional "tragic mulatta" and "passing" narratives. In part 1, "Materials," of *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Nella Larsen*, the editor surveys the canon of Larsen's writing, evaluates editions of her works, recommends secondary readings, and compiles a list of useful multimedia

resources for teaching. The essays in part 2, "Approaches," aim to help students better understand attitudes toward women and race during the Harlem Renaissance, the novels' relations to other artistic movements, and legal debates over racial identities in the early twentieth century. In so doing, contributors demonstrate how new and seasoned instructors alike might use Larsen's novels to explore a wide range of topics--including Larsen's short stories and letters, the relation between her writings and her biography, and the novels' discussion of gender and sexuality.

Two novels of 1920s Harlem describe Helga Crane's search for freedom and personal expression, and Irene's friendship with Clare, who attempts to pass for white

Recovering the Black Female Body

Two Novellas

A Woman's Life Unveiled

Shaping African-American Female Representation in Quicksand and Passing

Passing, Quicksand, The Wrong Man, Freedom, Sanctuary

"American author Nella Larsen's novel Quicksand features the mixed-race daughter of a Danish white mother and a West Indian black father. As protagonist Helga Crane searches for a community of people among whom she feels comfortable, she experiences the racial prejudice, sexism, and suffocating disillusionment and entrapment many women of color endured at the time. The text of Quicksand is enriched by a full introduction, A "Queer Dark Creature," a note on the text, and explanatory footnotes. A section entitled "Backgrounds and Contexts" presents contemporary reviews of and articles on Quicksand, in addition to further writings and various relevant correspondence of Larsen's. The section is rounded out by selections from historical and contemporary sources that shed light on the cultural context for Larsen's novel. "Criticism" contains commentaries from several scholars on the theme of sexuality, race, and identity as they pertain to Quicksand. A Chronology and Selected Bibliography are also included"--

Seminar paper from the year 2008 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 1,3, University of Bamberg, language: English, abstract: ..". the feeling of smallness which had hedged her [Helga] in, first during her sorry unchildlike childhood among hostile white folk in Chicago, and later during her uncomfortable sojourn among snobbish black folk in Naxos." This quotation demonstrates the complexity of racial issues Nella Larsen deals with in Quicksand. Both, interracial ("hostile white folk") and intraracial ("snobbish black folk") constructions of racism are considered within the text. The heroine, Helga Crane, moves to several places throughout the novel and in all of these locations she has to face stereotypes which restrain and oppress her. Helga is forced to fight "against imposed definitions of blackness and womanhood"² which are inflicted on her by an oppressive white and black society. Consequently, when discussing the topic racism in Quicksand, one must keep in mind the importance of the mutual influence and the coaction between race and gender.

Seminar paper from the year 2002 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1 (A), University of Frankfurt (Main) (Institute for England and American Studies), course: Harlem Renaissance, 17 entries in the bibliography, language: English,

abstract: This seminar paper will sketch some of the elements of the cultural "Zeitgeist" that shaped and was reflected in Nella Larsen's writings. But it will concentrate on the novels that she left behind: Quicksand and Passing. An important topic Larsen is dealing with is race-identity. Larsen assimilates these themes in her two novels, not by representing the lower-class problem, but more by focusing on the life and problems of middle-class females. It is more the psychological than the sociological side she portrays. This paper demonstrates that race identity and race dualism reflects Larsen's own life story. First I will give an introduction on the Harlem Renaissance era. Then I will focus on Nella Larsen's life. I will examine her two novels Quicksand and Passing to find out how race identity and race dualism is assimilated in her novels.

Library of America presents one of the masterworks of the Harlem Renaissance, the tragic story of a young woman caught between worlds. Quicksand (1928) turns the techniques of literary naturalism on questions of race, gender, and class, with unforgettable results. Nella Larsen's immensely stylish debut novel tells the story of sensitive, proud, and beautiful Helga Crane, the daughter (like Larsen herself) of a black West Indian father and a white Danish mother. She has what some would consider a promising career in the South, teaching at "the finest school for Negroes anywhere in the country," and a respectable fiancé. But she refuses to settle for the loveless future she envisions, hemmed in by petty conformities and the realities of southern racism, black as well as white--and so she sets off in search a happier life, a journey recounted with great feeling and psychological precision in Quicksand. In Chicago, white in-laws disown Helga. Other relatives, in Copenhagen, fête her as a gorgeous exotic, and arrange a relationship with a famous Danish artist, but fail to see her as anything other than a marriageable commodity. Only in cosmopolitan New York, encountering what Larsen describes as "the continuously gorgeous panorama of Harlem," does she begin to sense that she may have found a place where she might belong. But hers is a fate full of ambivalence, in which even the faith and family to which she turns are forms of entrapment.

Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Nella Larsen

Between Two Worlds

The Tragic Mulatto in Nella Larsen's Quicksand and Passing

Collected works by Nella Larsen. Illustrated

A Study of Nella Larsen's Quicksand & Passing

The Nella Larsen Collection is comprised of five Nella Larsen fiction including; Quicksand, Passing, Freedom, The Wrong Man, and Sanctuary. Quicksand, Larsen's first novel, tells the story of Helga Crane who is the lovely and refined daughter of a Danish mother and a West Indian black father who abandons Helga and her mother soon after Helga is born. Unable to feel comfortable with any of her white-skinned relatives, Helga travels America, visits Denmark searching for people she feels at home with. In Passing Clare and Irene are childhood friends who lose touch when Clare's father dies and she moves in with two white aunts. By hiding that Clare was part-black, they allowed her to 'pass' as a white woman and marry a white racist.

Irene lives in Harlem, commits herself to racial uplift, and marries a black doctor. Passing centers on the meeting of these childhood friends later in life, and the unfolding of events as each woman is fascinated and seduced by the other's daring lifestyle. Freedom, The Wrong Man, and Sanctuary are three stories about love, loss, mistaken identity, and death. Nella Larsen was an American novelist of the Harlem Renaissance. Though her literary output was scant, what she wrote earned her recognition by her contemporaries and by present-day critics.

A writer of the Harlem Renaissance, Nella Larsen wrote just two novels, published here, and a handful of short stories. Critically acclaimed, both speak powerfully of the contradictions and restrictions experienced by black women at that time. Quicksand, written in 1928, is an autobiographical novel about Helga Crane, a mixed race woman caught between fulfilling her desires and gaining respectability in her middle class neighbourhood. Written a year later, Passing tells the story of two childhood friends, Clare and Irene, both light skinned enough to pass as white. Reconnecting in adulthood, Clare has chosen to live as a white woman, while Irene embraces black culture and has an important role in her community. Nella Larsen's novels are moving, characterful, and important books. She pioneered writing about the conflicts of sexuality, race and the secret suffering of women in the early twentieth century.

Thesis (M.A.) from the year 2006 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,0, Dresden Technical University, 36 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: In the following, I would like to give a brief abstract of my thesis. Chiefly, I want to explore three major novels of the Harlem Renaissance - Nella Larsen's Quicksand (1928) and Passing (1929) as well as Jessie Fauset's Plum Bun (1929). As all of them deal with racial passing, this issue will be the topic of the first part in order to provide an insight into the matter. The main focus will be on black-to-white passing, which is primarily a cultural phenomenon of the United States. After a definition of the term with the help of several basic typologies, I would like to proceed to concomitants like secrecy, the question of guilt and the white people's view on passing. Subsequently, the passer ought to be the focus of closer examination, followed by an exploration of laws and folk beliefs evolving around the mulatto as the typical passing figure. After this theoretical embedding, I will take a closer look at passing in literature including an analysis of the emergence of the phenomenon as a literary genre. Additionally, the passing figure in literature, the "tragic mulatto," is to be investigated.

Concluding, a chapter on other forms of passing shall be added for the sake of completeness. In the second part, these theoretical cognitions are supposed to be employed to find an approach to the novels that are going to be examined with regard to the matters that evolve around passing, i.e. the secrecy involved, the return home and the tragic death of the heroine. Juda Bennett's list of similarities among passing novels is supposed to provide a framework here. Afterwards, other forms of passing depicted in the novels will come to the fore including an examination of racism in connection with sexism.

*Nella Larsen (1891-1964) occupies a central place in African-American and Modernist literature, and her status as a Harlem Renaissance woman writer is rivaled only by Zora Neale Hurston's. This Norton Critical Edition of Larsen's electrifying 1929 novel is accompanied by Carla Kaplan's insightfully detailed introduction, explanatory annotations, and a Note on the Text "Backgrounds and Contexts" connects *Passing* to the historical events of the day, most notably the sensational Rhineland/Jones case of 1925. Fourteen contemporary reviews are reprinted, including those by Alice Dunbar-Nelson, W. B. Seabrook, Mary Griffin, and W. E. B. Du Bois. Little-known documents, including those by Juanita Ellsworth and Caleb Johnson, reveal America's fascination with-and fear of-the cultural phenomenon of passing. Also included are Larsen's statements on the novel and on passing, as well as a generous selection of her letters. The theme of "The Tragic Mulatto(a)" in American literature is explored through related writings by Lydia Maria Child, William Wells Brown, Kate Chopin, Mark Twain, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes, among others. Finally, Joseph Seamon Cotter, Jr., Jessie Redmon Fauset, Countee Cullen, W. E. B. Du Bois, Allen Semi [Nella Larsen], George S. Schuyler, Carl Van Vechten, and Langston Hughes voice their impressions of passing from the perspective of the Harlem Renaissance. "Criticism" provides sixteen diverse interpretations of *Passing* by, among others, Deborah E. McDowell, Judith Butler, Cheryl A. Wall, Thadious M. Davis, George Hutchinson, Mary Helen Washington, Ann duCille, Gayle Wald, Claudia Tate, and Jennifer Devere Brody. A Chronology and Selected Bibliography are also included. Book jacket.*

Passing

A Biography of the Color Line

The Stereotype of the "Tragic Mulatta" Revised

Racial Passing

Passing, Quicksand, and The Stories

This volume brings together the complete fiction of the author of *Passing* and *Quicksand*, one of the most gifted writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Throughout her short but brilliant literary career, Nella Larsen wrote piercing dramas about the black middle class that featured sensitive, spirited heroines struggling to find a place where they belonged. *Passing*, Larsen's best-known work, is a disturbing story about the unraveling lives of two childhood friends, one of whom turns her back on her past and marries a white bigot. Just as disquieting is the portrait in *Quicksand* of Helga Crane, half black and half white, who is unable to escape her loneliness no matter where and with whom she lives. Race and marriage offer few securities here or in the other stories in this compulsively readable collection, rich in psychological complexity and imbued with a sense of place that brings Harlem vibrantly to life. It was the last letter in Irene Redfield's little pile of morning mail. After her other ordinary and clearly directed letters the long envelope of thin Italian paper with its almost illegible scrawl seemed out of place and alien. And there was, too, something mysterious and slightly furtive about it. A thin sly thing which bore no return address to betray the sender. Not that she hadn't immediately known who its sender was. Some two years ago she had one very like it in outward appearance. Furtive, but yet in some peculiar, determined way a little flaunting. Purple ink. Foreign paper of extraordinary size. It had been, Irene noted, postmarked in New York the day before. Her brows came together in a tiny frown. The frown, however, was more from perplexity than from annoyance; though there was in her thoughts an element of both. She was wholly unable to comprehend such an attitude towards danger as she was sure the letter's contents would reveal; and she disliked the idea of opening and reading it. This, she reflected, was of a piece with all that she knew of Clare Kendry. Stepping always on the edge of danger. Always aware, but not drawing back or turning aside. Certainly not because of any alarms or feeling of outrage on the part of others. - Taken from "Passing" written by Nella Larsen

Brave, bold, and brilliant, Larsen's autobiographical portrait of a biracial woman's quest for self-identity and acceptance offers a cautionary tale of an individual lost between two cultures.

Seminar paper from the year 2004 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,0, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (Seminar für Englische Philologie), course: Jazz in America, 8 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: Nella Larsen's *Quicksand* was published to critical acclaim in 1928 and is said to be one of the key texts of the Harlem Renaissance era. Larsen herself was of Danish-Caribbean ancestry and was highly interested in issues of racial identity, especially as they relate to being female. For that reason one should not be surprised that *Quicksand* focuses on the protagonist's struggles toward selfhood, her attempts to find her place in the world as a woman who is considered neither white nor black. The child of a Danish mother and a black West Indian father, a so-called "mulatto", Helga Crane finds herself outside of the black as well as the white world, fully comfortable in neither one nor the other. During her unhappy childhood she learns to regard her skin color with

hatred and self-loathing, resulting in a deeply rooted sense of insecurity about her blackness and mixed heritage, which continues to be felt all her life. Internalized (white) stereotypes about black women's promiscuous, "primitive" and immoral sexuality lead Helga to fear and repress her sensuality and female desires. As she detests and completely denies these emotions she is incapable of developing an identity as a woman either. In this seminar paper I will argue that Nella Larsen's *Quicksand* is about Helga Crane's search for a black female identity which she will fail to find. Further, my aim is to demonstrate how intimately connected race and gender oppressions are, since imposed definitions of blackness and womanhood complicate Helga's search for her personal identity as a black woman. As *Quicksand* has a geographical symmetry to it, I will follow this pattern in my analysis. It starts out in the South in Naxos where Helga works as a teacher, then moves on to Chicago and Harlem, from there it shifts to Copenhagen, returns back to Harlem and finally ends in the deep South, in a tiny Alabama town, where Helga's search ends in tragedy.

Nella Larsen - African-American Artist of the Harlem Renaissance

A Comparative Reading of Jessie Fauset's *Plum Bun* and Nella Larsen's *Passing* and *Quicksand*

Nella Larsen's Use of Racial and Sexual Stereotypes in Her Novels *Quicksand* and *Passing*

Nella Larsen, Novelist of the Harlem Renaissance

Black Queer Flesh

Quicksand and *Passing* Rutgers University Press

"*Quicksand* and *Passing* are novels I will never forget. They open up a whole world of experience and struggle that seemed to me, when I first read them years ago, absolutely absorbing, fascinating, and indispensable." --Alice Walker "Discovering Nella Larsen is like finding lost money with no name on it. One can enjoy it with delight and share it without guilt." --Maya Angelou "A hugely influential and insightful writer." --The New York Times "Larsen's heroines are complex, restless, figures, whose hungers and frustrations will haunt every sensitive reader. *Quicksand* and *Passing* are slender novels with huge themes." -- Sarah Waters "A tantalizing mix of moral fable and sensuous colorful narrative, exploring female sexuality and racial solidarity." --Women's Studies International Forum Rutgers' all-time bestselling book, Nella Larsen's novels *Quicksand* (1928) and *Passing* (1929) document the historical realities of Harlem in the 1920s and shed a bright light on the social world of the black bourgeoisie. The novels' greatest appeal and achievement, however, is not sociological, but psychological. As noted in the editor's comprehensive introduction, Larsen takes the theme of psychic dualism, so popular in Harlem Renaissance fiction, to a higher and more complex level, displaying a sophisticated understanding and penetrating analysis of black female psychology.

Seminar paper from the year 2002 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1 (A), University of Frankfurt (Main) (Institute for England and American Studies), course: Harlem Renaissance, 17 entries in the bibliography, language: English,

abstract: This seminar paper will sketch some of the elements of the cultural "Zeitgeist" that shaped and was reflected in Nella Larsen's writings. But it will concentrate on the novels that she left behind: Quicksand and Passing. An important topic Larsen is dealing with is race-identity. Larsen assimilates these themes in her two novels, not by representing the lower-class problem, but more by focusing on the life and problems of middle-class females. It is more the psychological than the sociological side she portrays. This paper demonstrates that race identity and race dualism reflects Larsen's own life story. First I will give an introduction on the Harlem Renaissance era. Then I will focus on Nella Larsen's life. I will examine her two novels Quicksand and Passing to find out how race identity and race dualism is assimilated in her novels.

Nellallitea 'Nella' Larsen (first called Nellie Walker) was an American novelist of the Harlem Renaissance who wrote two novels and a few short stories. A revival of interest in her writing has occurred since the late 20th century, when issues of racial and sexual identity have been studied. Her works have been the subjects of numerous academic studies, and she is now widely lauded as "not only the premier novelist of the Harlem Renaissance, but also an important figure in American modernism."

Since the late 20th century, Passing has received renewed attention from scholars because of its close examination of racial and sexual ambiguities and liminal spaces. It has achieved canonical status in many American universities. Passing Quicksand

The Wrong Man Freedom Sanctuary

Quicksand ; And, Passing

The Further Writings of Nella Larsen

The Quest for a Black Female Identity in Nella Larsen's "Quicksand"

Quicksand and Passing

Quicksand & Passing

A comical and poignant memoir of a gay man living life as he pleased in the 1930s In 1931, gay liberation was not a movement—it was simply unthinkable. But in that year, Quentin Crisp made the courageous decision to "come out" as a homosexual. This exhibitionist with the henna-dyed hair was harrassed, ridiculed and beaten. Nevertheless, he claimed his right to be himself—whatever the consequences. The Naked Civil Servant is both a comic masterpiece and a unique testament to the resilience of the human spirit. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Published in 1928, Nella Larsen's first novel "Quicksand" regards the story of Helga Crane, the lovely and refined mixed-race daughter of a Danish mother and a West Indian black father. The character is loosely based on Larsen's own experiences and deals with the character's struggle for racial and sexual identity, a theme common to Larsen's work. In Larsen's second novel, "Passing," published in 1929, the author revisits this struggle through the lives of two childhood friends, Clare Kendry and Irene Redfield, both of whom are of mixed African

and European ancestry and are "passing" as whites. The novel picks up in the lives of the two as they later reunite in adulthood. An ambiguous relation develops between the two as they share a fascination for how each other's lives have transpired since they last knew each other. Larsen's work has been lauded for its exploration of race, gender, class, and sexuality amongst African Americans in early part of the 20th century. Now considered as a major figure of the Harlem Renaissance, Larsen's writing gives a firsthand insight into the struggle of African Americans during this era. Along with her two novels three of Larsen's short stories, "The Wrong Man," "Freedom," and "Sanctuary" are presented together here in this volume.

Nella Larsen's distinctive and revealing novel about racial identity set in New York in 1929. Soon to be a major motion picture starring Tessa Thompson, Ruth Negga and Alexander Skarsgård. Irene Redfield, married to a successful physician, enjoys a comfortable life in Harlem, New York. Reluctantly, she renews her friendship with old school friend, Clare Kendry. Clare, who like Irene is light skinned, 'passes' as white and is married to a racist white man who has no idea about Clare's racial heritage. Even though Irene knows that reigniting her friendship with Clare will lead to trouble, she can't resist allowing Irene into her world. Irene in turn wants to rekindle her bonds with the African American community of her youth. As tensions mount between friends and between couples, this taut and mesmerizing narrative spins towards an unexpected end. This edition of Passing features an introduction by writer and academic, Christa Holm Vogelius.

Born to a white mother and an absent black father, and despised for her dark skin, Helga Crane has long had to fend for herself. As a young woman, Helga teaches at an all-black school in the South, but even here she feels different. Moving to Harlem and eventually to Denmark, she attempts to carve out a comfortable life and place for herself, but ends up back where she started, choosing emotional freedom that quickly translates into a narrow existence. Quicksand, Nella Larsen's powerful first novel, has intriguing autobiographical parallels and at the same time invokes the international dimension of African American culture of the 1920s. It also evocatively portrays the racial and gender restrictions that can mark a life. "Fine, thoughtful and courageous. It is, on the whole, the best piece of fiction that Negro America has produced since the heyday of [Charles] Chesnut." (W. E. B. Du Bois)

Differences Among Women in Literature and Culture

The Naked Civil Servant

Racism in Nella Larsen's "Quicksand"

Black in White

Seminar paper from the year 2015 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Culture and Applied Geography, grade: 2,7, University of Bonn, language: English, abstract: Passing by Nella Larsen, published in 1929, features the issue of racial passing in a society which segregates people of Negro descent from the dominant white American class. Wall claims that "Not only is Passing set in Harlem at the height of its

vogue, it is itself a product of the vogue. Aptly then, it acknowledges the opportunities as well as the risks that the more fluid racial and cultural boundaries of the period created". Irene Redfield, one of the two female protagonists, is able to pass, but still chose a life within Harlem and a coloured husband. Her counterpart Clare Kendry, on the contrary, is completely passing by being married to a white man who does not know about her descent. Still, she is highly fascinated by the life Irene leads in Harlem and thus she attempts at leading a double-life. As Clare becomes increasingly involved in the black culture of that time, she also has to fear about her husband finding out the truth about her. In order to set the issue of racial passing in a historical and cultural framework, I attempt at focusing on the connection between the novel and a jurisdictional case from 1925, called the Rhinelander Case. This case is also being referred to in Passing: "What if Bellew should divorce Clare? Could he? There was the Rhinelander case". Furthermore, Madigan claims the following: "That Larsen has the case enter Irene's mind so quickly, however, testifies to the Rhinelanders' importance to discussions of miscegenation, the law, and racial passing during the period of the Harlem Renaissance". Leonard Kip Rhinelander, who was from the upper white class of New York, got married to Alice Jones, who was mixed-raced and from the working class. Rhinelander attempted at annulling the marriage as he claimed he had not known about his wife's race before the wedding. She countered by claiming that he has known about their race before their marriage as it was unmistakable. The jury the young couple had to face was all-male and white. Thereupon, this term paper will deal with the following research question: How can the relationship between the Rhinelander Case and Nella Larsen's Passing be defined and which are the means by which this relationship is being constituted?

Inhaltsangabe:Introduction: My old man died in a fine big house. My ma died in a shack. I wonder where I m gonna die. Being neither white nor black? These are the first words with which Nella Larsen commences her novel Quicksand in 1928. The quatrain belongs to the poem Cross (1925) by Larsen s contemporary Langston Hughes and addresses the issue of duality, where mixed racial heritage leads to self-doubt and struggle in the definition of identity. Larsen and other African-American writers, including James Weldon Johnson,

explored the intricacies and contradictions of the concept of race at the beginning of the 20th century, in particular by addressing the phenomenon of passing . Passing has many definitions, most often it is associated with the term passing for white , which implies the crossing of the colour line from black to white in order to transcend racial barriers. Ratna Roy refers to it as assimilating into white society by concealing one s antecedents and according to Sollors, passing can be understood in a more general sense as the crossing of any line that divides social groups. Perhaps most importantly is to understand passing as the ability of a person to be completely accepted as a member of a sociological group other than their own. Until the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, writers hardly had addressed the passing figure in literature because racial passing only thrived in modern social systems in which as a primary condition, social and geographic mobility prevailed. Passing has always been a much camouflaged topic because the successful passer does not want their identity to be uncloaked. This constitutes probably also the main reason why only little, and rather pioneering, research has been conducted up to today and why it still remains difficult to investigate the issue. The sole witnesses of the concepts of passing in the time period are passing narratives. James Weldon Johnson s Autobiography of an Ex-colored Man (initially published anonymously in 1912 but reissued under Johnson s authorship in 1927), Nella Larsen s Quicksand (1928) and her novella Passing (1929) are perhaps the most exemplary and promising examples of an analysis of the passing figure and classic epitomes of the racial situations during the Harlem Renaissance. The novels challenge stereotypes of race and disclose concepts of doubleness and visibility. In order to disentangle the complexities of the theme, these novels, [...]

Nella Larsen (1891–1964) is recognized as one of the most influential, and certainly one of the most enigmatic, writers of the Harlem Renaissance. With the instant success of her two novels, Quicksand (1928) and Passing (1929), she became a bright light in New York's literary firmament. But her meteoric rise was followed by a surprising fall: In 1930 she was accused of plagiarizing a short story, and after 1933 she disappeared from both the literary and African-American worlds of New York. She lived the rest of her life—more

than three decades—out of the public eye, working primarily as a nurse. In a remarkable achievement, Thadious Davis has penetrated the fog of mystery that has surrounded Larsen to present a detailed and fascinating account of the life and work of this gifted, determined, yet vulnerable artist. In addition to unraveling the details of Larsen's personal life, Davis deftly situates the writer within the broader politics and aesthetics of the Harlem Renaissance and analyzes her life and work in terms of the current literature on race and gender. This book, with the prodigious amount of new material and insights that Davis provides, is a landmark in African-American literary history and criticism.

VINTAGE CLASSICS' HARLEM RENAISSANCE SERIES Celebrating the finest works of the Harlem Renaissance, one of the most important Black arts movements in modern history. 'She could neither conform nor be happy in her unconformity' Nella Larsen wrote two novels in her lifetime, both of which are collected here. The first, Quicksand, follows a mixed-race woman who runs from the fictional town of Naxos to Chicago to Harlem to Copenhagen. It becomes easy for her to leave behind places but the discrimination she's running from is inescapable. In Passing, two childhood friends reconnect later in life. One, slightly more light-skinned than the other, lives her life passing for a white person, married to a flagrant racist while her friend observes uneasily. Masterfully plotted and infinitely illuminating, Quicksand and Passing are two of the finest works of the Harlem Renaissance. 'A beloved novel from the Harlem Renaissance that follows the fraught relationship between two childhood friends, one who passes for white and one who chooses not to' Brit Bennett 'Absolutely absorbing, fascinating and indispensable' Alice Walker 'Buy the book' W. E. B. Du Bois

The Representation of Identity in Nella Larsen's Passing and Quicksand

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