

The Way to the Self and Midlife Crisis in Tyler's novel "*Morgan's Passing*" Through the Lens of Jungian Process of Individuation.

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the life journey of Morgan, protagonist of Tyler's novel «*Morgan's Passing*», in terms of Jungian process of individuation. Methodology. The researcher has used C.G. Jung's theory of individuation, accompanied by hermeneutical methodology. Theoretical framework and results. "*Morgan's Passing*" is the story of a man who is resolute by controversy who is in a state of uncertainty. While asking ontological questions, the middle-aged protagonist needs a refuge to stabilize his situation. Such a refuge is his new marital life, or his new lifestyle in general. This can be seen as formulating new values for the afternoon of life. This idea is based on Jung's concept of the collective unconscious. And the very novel «*Morgan's Passing*» brightly illustrates Jung's individuation process. Morgan's mission is to overcome opposition between self and ego, to understand the mystery of his new identity and to grasp his own Self. Scientific novelty. In the novel, Morgan, major character, has reached midlife identity crisis which is somehow the outcome of his communication with people around him; the study, therefore, has focused on interpersonal relationships. The novel depicts the personality maturation or development. Individuals have to realize this unity on their way to the Self. The process of individuation is, in fact, the way to identity development. Morgan has yet to find his way to himself and self-realization. Throughout the novel, Morgan is found changing his roles quite often. He is always accompanied with disorder and uncertainty; almost a marginalized state which drives him into a search for self-identity. He craves for an orderly life which he tries to attain by assuming the roles of various personae. This paper attempts to explore how Morgan in his life journey tries to achieve the self-realization and thereby a stable and mature identity

Key words: Self, ego, collective, persona, individuation, midlife identity

1. Introduction

By C. Jung, the process of individuation itself is a stepwise approach to the content and functions of the psychic integrity, as well as the recognition of the impact of its conscious and unconscious contents on conscious «I». Individuation begins with dissociation from Persona and continues with deepening into the unconscious sphere that should be raised into consciousness. Carl Jung's great contribution to psychology was to emphasize the importance of the individual person and the teleological purpose and meaning of one's inner and outer life on the conscious and unconscious level. The general role of the individual for Jung is to merge both the conscious and unconscious components of the psyche, with these components having both a personal and a collective aspect. (Danylova 7)

Within this compound integration of the individual, the main goal is to blend these components by a process called "individuation," or getting an un-split fully conscious Self. Some consider this process "self-realization" by means of disposing of false covers (such as the persona or the complexes) and completely evolving into unity the power of the archetypes. For Jung, this process usually happens in two phases: youth and middle age. In Youth, one develops the social or outer side of the personality through using well one's education, work, marriage, etc. In middle age, one develops the inner side of the personality by means of blending the opposites within the psyche. Such opposites that are to be integrated are the extroverted and the introverted, sensation and intuition, thinking and feeling, perceiving and judging. Further, one can also separate and to unite the very components of one's overall Self: the conscious and unconscious, the rational and irrational, the feminine and masculine, matter and spirit. The general movement of the later part of life is called the transcendent function, which brings all these structures of the Self into full individuation and integration on a higher level. (Leigh 95-112)

Like most of her "development stories" (Gullet 108) Tyler in *Morgan's passing* enters the realm of families. Morgan Gower, the protagonist of Tyler's eighth novel, is a man whose wishy – washy lifestyle makes him go wherever his muscle lead him (Morgan's Passing 131). He is a man who apparently rejects a normal life for the sake of a simple one. Beside numerous conflicts, the novel has two triangle relationships at the core of its plot: Leon-Morgan-Emily and Bonny-Morgan-Emily. Morgan is a married man and father of seven daughters. He takes care of his old mother, who is apparently developing Alzheimer's, and his mentally stagnated and middle-aged widowed sister. Frustrated with stale matrimonial life, he pops out in

Emily and Leon's life, falls in love with Emily, and finally illegally leaves his wife, Bonny, and her big brick colonial house to live with Emily in a trailer.

Among Tyler's protagonists, Morgan may be called the black sheep of the family. Part of the notoriety that the novel has gained results primarily from the complexities of his personality, and his inclination toward decline. To some critics, Morgan is not a believable literary character (Bail 103), while there are others who believe that Tyler is a successful adherent of Victorian writers who created eccentric literary characters for their own sake (Towers 30). Although Morgan's *Passing* received the Janet Heidegger, Kafka Award and was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award, it was nevertheless "treated unkindly by many critics and sales suffered" (Bail 93). However, Joseph C. Volker, who used the Freudian theory of the death drive to interpret Tyler's 1985 novel *The Accidental Tourist*, excluded Morgan's *Passing* from his essays on Tyler's major works, simply because he believed the story was based on "a psychology so abstract and implausible that the story drifts off its anchor" (12). Undoubtedly, Morgan is one of the most exotic protagonists in Tyler's oeuvre ___ so much so that Hoffman strongly disapproves of him, and rejects his weirdness as a "novelistic subject" (97).

Morgan's *Passing* covers nearly twelve years of Morgan's life from 1967 to 1979, from the ages of forty-one to fifty-three. On the basis of major developmental theories, this period of life, 'middle adulthood', is the mostly likely time for an identity crisis to occur (Hunter and Sundel 158). Tyler, however, claims that her work does not merely depict a man's midlife crisis, since "Morgan's whole life is a crisis" (Cook 52). Regardless, the main section will be to analyze Morgan's midlife identity crisis on the basis of major developmental theories, and to show how the protagonist's life can be psychologically interpreted so that the novel can be classified as midlife Bildungsroman. It is also important to note that Tyler is an author who follows certain narrative obligations, and one who does not complicate his works with postmodern experimental techniques (Evans 234).

And since the present study aims to find that during the midlife transition period ongoing modifications in the character and interests of individuals happen which are often unconscious to them. The major protagonist (Morgan) may have to admit that some of his early life values that were formulated are not as an outcome of rational goals. Some valued labors may not have been worthwhile, and aspirations were not realized as he had comprehended they would be. However, this does not mean that new dreams cannot be created and different life paths taken as well as new interests,

new friendships and the formation of new relationships Jung was of the notion that troubles would arise for the individual who is incapable to admit that life does not always develop as we had aspired it would.

Morgan is in struggle with his family: seven daughters who find him embarrassing, a careless though good-looking wife, a doddering mother, and a dejected, sluggish sister. Morgan feels stuck and misunderstood in a house jumbled with “the particles of related people’s unrelated worlds” and full of women with whom he is incapable to deal suitably. Although his family insists on going about life unconsciously, Morgan, determined and highly resourceful, faces a midlife crisis that requires a change or individuation. He must also compromise with his past life, the outcomes of marrying Bonny for her fortune as well as his father’s mysterious suicide when Morgan was a teenager. He is a type of mechanical genius who adopts different plans, then drops them— “a tinkering, puttering, hardware sort of man.” He ultimately forsakes his Baltimore family to initiate new life and individuality with a traveling amusement company.

Morgan is also a complex character, an impersonator who takes up identities suiting costumes. At times he is “Father Morgan, the street priest of Baltimore”; at other times, he is an immigrant with family still abroad, a doctor who delivers a baby in the backseat of a car—any role in which people will accept him. Though most of this role-playing is harmless, Morgan is an antihero lacking a stable identity who revels in the anonymity and emptiness of decaying city neighborhoods and a man who puts on a false identity to take up life with another man’s wife without profit of divorce. Not surprisingly, reviewers found it hard to like Morgan, but few found him incredible.

2. Methodology

The researcher has used C.G. Jung’s theory of individuation conducted by hermeneutical methodology. Jung points out that it is in the psychic sphere of midlife that there is more transformation. Some people are totally ill-equipped for the second half of life and often believe that the truths and ideals of the first half of their lives will satisfy and serve throughout the lifespan.

The second half of the lifespan should be a period when the self gets illuminated and that living in the past is a disappointing alternative. Jung opines that if one conducts aspects of the first half over into the second half of life this could result in troubles with the agreement that his or her life is unavoidably coming to an end.

In an essay he wrote in 1931 entitled "The Stages of Life," (from "The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche," Volume 8, The Collected Works of Carl Jung), Jung illustrated the stages of life in terms of his own theory into four phases:

Stage 1. Childhood. During this stage we are a problem for others but not yet conscious of any problems of our own.

Stages 2 and 3. Young and middle adulthood. During these stages conscious problems in the second and third quarters of our lives arise.

Stage 4. The last quarter. This stage refers to extreme old age when we descend into the unconscious and once again become a problem for others.

It must be said, in conclusion, Jung's focus on the midlife transition is the most important attribute of his theory for midlife researchers. This current researcher will investigate some of Jung's assertions regarding the impact of religion, openness, introversion and neurotic personality factors in this current research study (Wethington, 527-46).

3. Discussion

In *Ann Tyler: A Critical Companion* (1998), Paul Bail analyses Tyler's first twelve novels, including *Morgan's Passing*. Bail notes that Morgan finally reveals his true identity to the Merediths out of a midlife crisis "brought by his daughter's marriage" (94). Such a claim suggests that midlife crisis is a momentary reaction or impulse. Not knowing the true nature of midlife crisis, one may think if Morgan's daughter had not married, then Morgan would never reveal his identity to the Merediths. But as discussed earlier, midlife crisis refers to a transitional period between early adulthood and middle adulthood, and is a component of a more general process known as individuation, which covers the entire human lifespan. Therefore, to analyze this novel, one must be aware that Morgan's trivial reactions are all typical of a longer journey from one stage of life to the next. That is why we may consider *Morgan's Passing* a midlife narrative, or a second type of Bildungsroman.

It was also discussed in the preceding sections that accommodation acts as the background and the preliminary condition of midlife crisis. Such accommodation

predominantly consists of adopting strategies, including masking or developing personas, therefore ___ as a consequence of social interactions and as a strategy of accommodation ___ the first half of life is a time of psychic disintegration. Morgan's life is no exception, and when the story begins, the reader is confronted with a ramshackle middle-aged eccentric:

You could say he was a man who had gone to pieces, or maybe he'd always been in pieces; maybe he had arrived unassembled. Various parts of him seemed poorly joined together. His lean hairy limbs were connected by exaggerated knobs of bone; his black bearded jaw was as clumsily hinged as a nutcracker. (*Morgan's Passing* 18)

Morgan's life is just as rickety (18). His past is unknown, and the only links that connect him to his previous stages of life are unreliable or dark. Louisa, Morgan's Alzheimer's-afflicted mother, refuses to explain the reasons behind her husband's suicide---either because she does not know. or does not want to tell Morgan about his father's absurd death (40). The only legacies left from his father are the philosophy of craftsmanship (40) and the memory of his bitter unjustifiable suicide. Brindle, Morgan's sister is of no help too. She is a stagnated middle-aged widow, unable to finish the sky of her ideal world, represented as a jigsaw puzzle (19). Brindle's stagnation is also represented in her way of dressing in her home. She is almost always in a "faded lavender bathrobe" (44) which hangs on her like old orchid petals, wilted, striated, heavy –smelling (92). Brindle 's first attempt to leave her stagnated life leads to disastrous life with Horace, before a similarly disastrous reunification with Robert Roberts, her childhood love. Her stagnation is also represented in the form of infertility __she has no child, which means she has been neither productive nor generative. Further, Morgan "had never felt very close to Brindle" (147) The lack of understanding and intimacy between these siblings has deprived Morgan of an important social role, namely brotherhood.

Morgan's matrimonial life is driven toward what Jim and Sally Conway call a "stale marriage" (105). It is process which usually takes a long time to develop, but to do something about it (105). Morgan and Bonny lack any emotional attraction, which is an important element in family cohesion (Fisher et al.273). All these details point to one fact: Morgan has not succeeded in determining his positions as a husband, brother, son, and store manager. Plus, Morgan is not much of a father to his seven daughters. Most of them have already moved out of the house. Where once as a

father he attends fairs alone. In the sense that takes place inside the ambulance cabin, he regretfully confesses that his daughters are grownups and do “womanly things with their mother” leave “their father out in the world” (16)

Though he has family, Morgan still suffers from a lack of communication. In the morning, when Morgan sits at the table with his family, his “communication skills” (Fisher et al., 274) become so poor that his thirteen-year-old daughter doesn’t directly address him, and talks to her mother instead: “For heaven’s sake, she said to Bonny, ‘What’s that he got on his head?’ (*Morgan’s Passing* 28). Furthermore, the lack of two vital qualities has also rendered Morgan’s family a distinguished but “related “group of people who live in “unrelated worlds” (19): “flexibility” (Satir 55) and “adaptability” (Fisher et al., 273-4). Even when he tries to change himself to meet his children’s mental needs. His endeavors are doomed to failure (*Morgan’s Passing* 28).

Morgan is an outsider in his own family. When his eldest is getting married, nobody tells him until the last moment (87). There seem to be re to be reciprocal centrifugal forces driving more and more distance between him and his family. This is so severe that he barely notices the presence of his would-be-son-in-law in his own home (87). Finally, when he sits with others to talk about the preparation of the wedding party, no one consults him “in any way whatsoever”: “if you go up right now and left, he told himself” they might not even notice “(88). While it is true that one of the main reasons why individuals undergo midlife identity crisis is empty nest syndrome (Hendry & Kloep 103), such depressive feeling is commonly associated to female midlifers (Conway & Conway 157). However, some studies show that middle-aged men may also suffer from it (Hendry & Kloep 103). In Jungian psychology; this syndrome can be interpreted as a neurosis caused by an imbalance between individuality and collectivity. To be collective, Morgan needs his children, but they are never home (107). Furthermore, Morgan’s stress and crisis is intensified by other factors too:

Men experience stress, sometimes extreme stress, in reaction to crises such as divorce, drug and alcohol problems, and unemployment in their newly launched children’s lives. Other works show that middle-aged fathers’ perception that their relationship lack intimacy and emotional intensity. (Thomas 201)

It is this same empty nest syndrome that Morgan invite the Merediths to cottage of Uncle Ollie. Now that the children have left them, Morgan had been worried over

his children's well-being and safety (89), and he now he has to sit and watch them leave the home one by one. Even the very thought of his youngest daughter having a boyfriend makes him anxious, because it is a sign of probable future departure and distance (41). Morgan could feel like a father as long as his daughters were young and dependent. Their maturity causes a sense of loss in Morgan's unconscious psyche, and it derogates from his role as father. He mourns, and tells Bonny that he feels all her daughters are dead (89). That is why he lays awake in his bed mourning for his daughter the night before her wedding ceremony (93) and, even during the party, he regretfully remembers how once he had helped his toddler walk on the same rug (94). At forty –five, he suffers from a hollowness, which is the result of being unable to play the role of the father. When Bonny tries to calm him down by “No. no they're gone, for all intents and purposes Out every evening, off somewhere, up to something they're gone” (90). This hollowness, in return, affects their matrimonial life too: “He brightened. ‘Aha!’ he said, ‘Almost at last my dollink!’ But it called for too much effort. He drifted over to the stove, depressed, and lit some cigarettes on a burner” (90). Such an aggressive reaction is partly due to the fact that Morgan holds Bonny responsible for this loss (92).

A lack of communication and improper interpersonal relationship among Morgan's family give rise to his depression and identity crisis. Morgan's thoughts at his daughter's wedding party is another representation of such feeling of loneliness. There, he finds no one to talk to: “In fact, who here was a friend of Morgan's? He stopped and looked around him/ Nobody was. They were Bonny's friends, or Amy's, or the grooms” (97). He leaves his daughter's wedding party, and apparently no one notices. This seems to be the underlying tragedy of Morgan's life: his presence is not palpable. Morgan is a man trapped in loneliness. This loneliness intensifies his midlife crisis, and leads to consequent behavioral disorders. He seeks refuge in the Merediths, and Emily is the only one who seems to understand him (108). Once again, during their July vacation in Bethany Beach, Morgan bursts out and speaks of his loneliness to his mother: “Sometimes I feel I 've just been plunked here. I have. I have no one from the old days; I am just a foreigner on my own” (139). Although they are a family, each of them lives a lonely life (170).

As stated earlier, Morgan's matrimonial life is an example of a “stale marriage.” Moreover, Bonny seemingly 'wears the trousers' in the house--- it is she who is in charge of mending, repairing, and refurbishing (23). This makes Morgan stagnated. In fact, one recurrent motif in *Morgan's Passing* is his negative attitude towards his house. Since the house was bought by Bonny, this leaves Morgan with no role in

preparing a shelter for his family. As such, he feels the house is “slipping” (Conway& Conway 105). This sense of unsteadiness and instability is an abundant motif in the novel. It can be easily traced in Morgan’s marriages and divorces as well. Since his marriage to Letitia was never formally ended by divorce, his marriage to Bonny technically makes him a “bigamist” (*Morgan’s Passing* 119). And when he leaves his family to live with Emily, there is again on legal marriage or divorce (263). These illegal marriages and divorces are all other representations of his unstable situation. He is a husband, but he cannot legally call himself a husband and play the role of a husband.

In *Morgan’s Passing*, one can see a man who apparently leaves situations to get stuck in some worse ones. Tyler’s description of Morgan’s three living places implies retreat; he lives in a big colonial house. Then, he moves to a small apartment to live with Emily. Finally, they move to a trailer in the vicinity of a town. To describe the first and the third houses, the author uses metaphor: a child who is playing with toys. Bonny’s house is described as being located among buildings that were “clean and precisely played like something built of toy blocks” (274), while Morgan and Emily’s trailer park seems to have been designed by a child:

As discussed earlier, the first half of Morgan’s life has left his psyche disintegrated. He has no certain social role and, as a result, he has unconsciously been driven into an illusory world. What makes his actions less Mittyesque is his ability to role-play which, as he repeatedly claims, is often accompanied with people’s willingness to believe him (108). In response to his sense of loss, Morgan tries to create new identities.

Morgan’s behavioral abnormalities are represented in three interrelated forms: his clothes, impersonations and sneaking into other’s lives. All these peculiarities can be analyzed and justified on the basis of Jungian persona theory. Morgan wears numerous clothes because they give him a personality:

In the expression *persona*. Jung is talking more about specific motifs than about dream figures. Thus it often occurs that in our dreams we are naked or there is something embarrassingly wrong about our clothes. Our clothes are part of us and express our special relationship or adaptation to our surroundings. The psychic function corresponding to this relationship is called the persona. As the saying goes, the trailer makes the man, or, to put it more precisely, makes his appearance, Clothes indicate the role we are prepared to

play. This is where Jung gets the term ‘persona’ for in ancient theatre it was the term used for the stylized mask of the actor. (Meier 91).

Morgan has a closet full of clothes. This is his secret identity reservoir for his lost social roles. His hats especially are very important to him. His wearing of strange hats is a resource of contention between him and his daughters (*Morgan’s Passing* 28), but he does not quit the habit. His daughter, Amy, actually asks him to promise not to wear one of his hats on her wedding day, but Morgan thinks he can only assume his role as the bride’s father only if he wears a “tall black father-of-the-bride top hat” (228). As a child, this act of masking was a way to find an identity; but what was appropriate for that age seems inappropriate now.

Morgan easily” impersonate a ragtag assortment of selves” (Hoffman 96). From a big-game hunter to a doctor, he deceives people quite easily. Bonny knows this, but apparently has no problem with it (*Morgan’s Passing* 46, 131). But such a behavioral disorder can be considered as a defense mechanism of a man who is deprived of his roles and identities. With his daughter almost all grown up Morgan has no role at home. He even considers voluntarily stagnation and retirement at the age forty-five (91). In this way Morgan is very much like the persona of Robert Frost’s “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” (1923) who is considering either staying or continuing. Morgan is fed up with his monotonous life. A life in which his wife’s “dirndl skirts (once so breezy, so understand) began dipping at the hems, and her blouses somehow shortened and flopped bouncily out of her waistbands” (*Morgan’s Passing* 24) cannot vitalize and inspire him anymore. His stale marriage is represented the raincoat Moony “had owned since he first met her” (45) nineteen years ago, and Brindle’s ever-present bathrobe. Clothes are important motifs in Morgan’s *Passing* and, as it will be discussed.

Morgan has an insatiable desire to sneak into people’s private lives which is a direct result of his dissatisfaction with his own “very confusing” and very tedious” life (105). To him, newspaper classifieds are doors to people’s private lives, and hence more interesting than the others (26). The classifieds act as doors through which people reveal trivial secrets of their lives. It must also be noted that his desire to sneak into people’s lives is the result of his deprivations. As noted above, Morgan always praises simplicity and order (117), which is the reason why he is drawn to the Merediths’” footloose, “carefree,” and “unattached” life in the first place (7). All of Emily’s belongings, for instance, can be put into a single suitcase, and she knows

how to get rid of extracts (65). Unlike his former marriage, this time, Morgan is in true love with Emily (198) because all he wants is Emily's pure, plain view of things"(208):

He loved her old-time, small-town manners__her prompt gifts and cards and thank-you notes, her Christmas fruitcake, her unfailing observance of every official occasions. She was the most proper person he had ever met. (Morgan's *Passing* 205)

It is interesting that Alice Hall Petry, in *Understanding Anne Tyler* (1990), indicates that those who were critical *Morgan's Passing* were mostly baffled by the untidiness and unruliness of the novel (155). But as Peter Grier observes, the style of the novel is ideally suited to its subject (102). The structural and narratological aspects of the novel seem to be means to convey the untidiness that is bothering the protagonist's psyche. Unruliness and untidiness are the result of existence of "extras" These extras are represented in different shapes: an old mother, a stagnated sister, a useless dog, and other things have stuffing Morgan's life. This, in turn, is a source of imbalance. As discussed earlier, the first half of an individual's life is the time when the balance between personal unconscious and collective unconscious gradually diminishes, and the very same process has decreased Morgan's psychological balance. When, for the first time, Morgan enters the Meredith's' apartment, he is clearly fascinated by their simple life. His annoying probes into their drawer (Morgan's *Passing*103), or Emily's purse, are not borne out of curiosity per se; like a hunter (one of his many impersonations) Morgan has trailed them, lurking in doorways, and peering around corners for a long time, to hunt what he cannot find in his life. He is not, in this sense, a womanizer, instead, he is suffering from unruliness of his life. He is looking for that unique "starkness"(101) and "uncurtainedness"(105) of Emily's life. Since his own lacks order and organization: "Well, it all seems so disorganized I come to you people for peace and quiet" (113). When Leon's parents try to equip the Merediths' house with necessary items, Morgan senses the danger of untidiness (110), and warns them about the possibility of their apartment being overstuffed (218). Morgan is escaping from extras, and longs for a life that can be uprooted and moved "in a taxi "after "ten minutes" (98). To take revenge, Bonny, who seems to know Morgan well, throws his "extras," including Louisa's dog, on the sidewalk, and then sends Brindle and Louisa to his house (235). Much like their owner, "people were so eager to get rid of his clothes" (246)

Accommodative strategies of the first half of his life cannot be used in the second half of life. Therefore, during the transitional period between young adulthood and middle adulthood, an individual will feel instability. In other words, the journey towards individuation starts with a period of identity suspension, known as liminality, and in Jungian theory, this liminal state is the result of wide gap between ego and self. Morgan is faced with such a state, and he is desperately seeking for a way out (139). This transitional period is also the time when an individual begins to ask ontological questions, much like Morgan asks: “What do I have to go on here?” (139). His lost identity is replaced by a series of clothes which gives him new identities, such as when Emily states: “Sometimes you act like a certain person long enough, you become that person” (63).

The chief aim of this study is to show that *Morgan's Passing* is a midlife Bildungsroman; hence, psychological theories must show the outcome of transition which is individuation. But before showing elements implying Morgan's successful individuation, there is one more point to be discussed. Contrary to Tyler's opinion that Morgan is not another Walter Mitty, the former does, on occasion, passively daydream without acting out. Once, he remembers how he had imagined an amorous life with Marie, Cullen Hardware's girl clerk (34). In another instance, he imagines himself as an army officer whose commanding officer is ripping off his insignias (269). The first dream is a reaction to his miserable social status. All he wants is a simple rural life without extras. The second dream, meanwhile, is more than a Mittyesque because it depicts Morgan's life: it fits into the notion that the protagonist is “a man who had willfully, recklessly directed his life on a collision course toward ruin” (168-79). This decline, of course, can be considered a superficial outcome of Morgan's individuation.

The final chapter of the novel implies a death and rebirth theme. Morgan loses his identity totally. His death is declared in the obituaries (266), and the Cullen Hardware store is demolished and “gone” (280). Morgan cannot even use his own name anymore (271). But then. A new man with new identity, Mr. Meredith, is born. Now he is a man who can live without extras. Morgan's interest in life does not “thin to trickle and dry up” like his father's (40). Morgan's individuality is shaped as Mr. Meredith, and he seems to be more psychologically integrated. Morgan was an unassembled man, and only Emily, the doll maker, could assemble him. With Emily, Morgan is released from the bondages of extras. David Kubal suggests Morgan's kinship with Bolivian characters, one of which is Herzog (Kubal 440), especially in terms of his final salvation. Even Tyler's claim that Morgan's “whole life is a crisis

“(Cook 52) is somewhat spurious; Morgan’s mistakes in the first half of his life are very obvious. He tried to push himself into a world which was not his. After all, he was “a penniless graduate student with no foreseeable future” (24) who had to wear a mask to ask Bonny’s father for his daughter’s hand.

To summarize this study, we may claim that Morgan’s *Passing* is a midlife narrative on the basis of conventional narrative pattern. Morgan is fed up with his life. Throughout his life, he has been trying to accommodate himself to his society and environment. To do so, he had to develop different personas. This, in turn, has weakened his connectivity with his true self and the collective unconscious. At the same time, he has lost all his connections with his past, and with family members. This lack of communication intensifies his fear of aging and death, which is accompanied by a period of psychological liminality, and an ontological questioning of his position in the world and the meaning of life. One

There is also another sign of Morgan’s developed personality. Since his search for self involves taking different roles and identities, getting rid of his clothes can be a sign of his psychological balance. To Bail, Tyler’s works show a reciprocal constructive effect between husbands and wives (101). At the very least, after passing through critical period of his life, Morgan has Emily with whom he shares the aesthetics of simplicity. He realizes that his restlessness, which intensifies with Emily’s pregnancy, is “merely a stage” (*Morgan’s Passing* 223).

4. Conclusion

The accommodating behaviors of the first half of life will logically and unconsciously increase the distance between the ego and the self. This is what one finds in conventional Bildungsromans. In these Bildungsromans, the pressure of protagonist’s life is self-establishment: an adolescent who is searching for his identity come into a world which compels him to acquaint himself or herself with the surrounding conditions. Human communications, however, impose ego alienation. This ego alienation is continually stimulated by masking, or developing different personas, over the course of an individual’s life. In other words, the protagonist of the first kind of Bildungsroman has to develop masks in order to face society. But this process ultimately results in psychic fragmentation, since personas increase the distance between self and ego.

Then comes the time for an individual to change principles at the noon of the life. This is exactly where the story of a midlife Bildungsroman starts, in medias res___namely when a protagonist is supposed to unconsciously strive to reduce the

distance between ego and self. This phenomenon can also be interpreted as a kind of disequilibrium between the personal and the collective unconscious. This protagonist such as Morgan who has spent his life fulfilling other's needs, have unconsciously ignored individuality for the sake of the collective unconscious. Such a disequilibrium can cause an identity crisis. Those who go the opposite way, like Morgan, also become stuck in self-absorption or egocentricity. A middle-aged protagonist soon realizes that the principles of the morning of her life are no longer practical and useful in the afternoon, because his or her energy and passion has been exhausted. Such an awareness also originates for inevitability of death, then those who appear in conventional Bildungsromans. This awareness is also accompanied by ontological questions, and the seeking of the meaning of life. These are mainly questions to navigate the location of man's soul in the "night sea journey" of individuation (Jacoby 68-70).

Due to the fact that midlife identity crisis is somehow the outcome of an individual's interaction with people around him or her; the study a midlife Bildungsroman, therefore, must pay extra attention to interpersonal relationships. Since a middle-aged literary figure usually belongs to the dominant group of his society, every single relationship threatening his or her dominance can shake his or her role, and intensify the identity crisis. Familial status is another crucial notion in midlife Bildungsroman. One's family can be interpreted as a metaphorical collective unconscious. So, devoting one's life to family or ignoring it, can be interpreted as respectively forgetting one's individuality and egocentrism.

Another theme that is typical of Midlife Bildungsroman's is liminality, or a state of uncertainty. While asking ontological questions, a middle-aged protagonist in a midlife Bildungsroman needs an anchor to stabilize his position. Such an anchor can be religion, a new matrimonial life, or a new lifestyle in general. This can be considered as finding or establishing new principles for the afternoon of life. Those who fail to do so may reassess their old principles, and may fall into a pit of meaninglessness. On the whole, the most important theme in such novel is creating an equilibrium, which can rival psychic health and maturation. This does not necessarily mean that there must be a physical change in protagonist's life. Therefore, the protagonist of a midlife Bildungsroman is surely a dynamic character who moves toward psychic reintegration. Considering Jungian Ego psychology, certain conflicts are expected to be traced in a midlife Bildungsroman: mental conflicts such as masking versus unmasking, individuation versus self-absorption, selflessness versus selfishness.

