

# FYS 16: Fourth Essay (Dec. 5, 2010)

## Two: Property

### 124

*>How does 124 function as a character to limit and, perhaps ultimately, enable freedom?*

*This topic posed the challenge of (1) actually showing 124 as a character, not just as a setting for the haunting and all the other business that goes on, and (2) addressing the “so what?” question. There follow two complete essays with strengths on both counts, and an excerpt from a third essay that looks at individual rooms (the shed and the keeping room) as well as all of 124. For a good compilation of the passages where Morrison directly personifies 124, see Essay #1, ¶3 & ¶4.*

#### **Essay #1**

#### 124: “As though a house was a little thing”

For freed slaves, nothing is sweeter than the transition from being owned to owning—however, sometimes “the things you own end up owning you”...quite literally. In Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, the house, simply called 124, functions as a character within the novel that prevents the freedom of its inhabitants by depriving them of ownership. When Sethe first arrives at 124, her apparent ownership of 124 reflects her ownership of her family and herself—however, this ownership is ultimately false. After *Beloved*’s death, 124 begins to control the feelings and actions of its inhabitants, trapping them physically and mentally, and thus depriving them of ownership as it is previously defined. Finally, Sethe and Denver must gain ownership of themselves to control their own actions and feelings and be truly free. While at first 124 symbolizes freedom for Sethe in ownership, this ownership is revealed to be false, and 124 begins to claim its inhabitants by controlling their feelings and actions; ultimately, both Sethe and Denver must achieve freedom by owning themselves and thus escaping 124 mentally and physically.

At first, 124 appears to be a place of freedom for Sethe: her ownership of the house represents an ownership of a community, a family, and a self. Sethe describes her escape to freedom: “I did it. I got us all out...it was the only thing I ever did on my own. Decided...I birthed them and I got em out and it wasn’t no accident. I did that....Me having to look out. Me using my own head” (190). “My own” signifies Sethe’s self-ownership in freedom. The repetition of “I” and “me” emphasize Sethe’s agency in her actions. Likewise, Sethe says of

her children: “maybe I couldn’t love em proper in Kentucky because they wasn’t mine to love” (190). Sethe establishes ownership (“mine”) as a requisite for an emotion, “love.” Sethe says that “bit by bit, at 124 and in the Clearing, along with the others, she had claimed herself. Freeing yourself was one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self was another” (112). Sethe distinguishes between freedom and ownership, but shows that one must be free to have ownership of one’s self. “Along with the others” implies a community and a shared search for ownership in freedom. Sethe also says that “before it had become the plaything of spirits and the home of the chafed, 124 had been a cheerful, buzzing house where Baby Suggs, holy, loved, cautioned, fed, chastised, and soothed...it was in front of *that* 124 that Sethe climbed off a wagon, her newborn tied to her chest, and felt for the first time the wide arms of her mother-in-law” (102). Morrison uses the long string of verbs — “loved, cautioned, fed, chastised, and soothed” — to reflect the active, “buzzing” nature of the house itself, connecting the house’s qualities with those of its inhabitants. The diction of “her newborn tied to her chest” and “her mother-in-law” emphasize Sethe’s ownership of family, and the italicized “that” connects the house to this ownership. However, just as Sethe does not truly own the house, she does not own herself either; 124 belongs to the Bodwins, and Sethe has stolen her freedom by running away. The arrival of schoolteacher emphasizes this stolen freedom: “it was clear, to schoolteacher especially, that there was nothing there to claim...the whole lot was lost now” (175). Schoolteacher comes to “claim” Sethe and her children, and only chooses not to because he believes them to be dead or “wild” — thus stolen freedom brings Sethe no true ownership. While at first 124 represents freedom for Sethe to own herself and others through feelings and actions, these ownerships prove to be false.

¶3 After Beloved’s death, 124 begins to control its inhabitants’ emotions and actions through a personification that reflects their human qualities, depriving them of self-ownership by ensnaring them physically and mentally. Sethe says that “124 was so full of strong feeling” (47), thus personifying 124. After Beloved’s death, “124 shut down and put up with the venom of its ghost” (105). The diction of “its ghost” shows the house’s ownership of its inhabitants, a reversal of the norm (people owning a house). The novel begins eighteen years later: “124 was spiteful. Full of a baby’s venom” (3). 124 is described as “spiteful”; the transition from “put up with venom” to “full of venom” suggests that 124 is now imbued with Beloved’s spite, represented in “venom.” Morrison states that “now Denver was lonely” (14); later Denver says that the house is “not evil. But not sad either...Lonely and rebuked” (17). The correlation between Denver’s perception of the house’s feelings and her own implies a connection between the personified house and its inhabitant. Similarly, Sethe “lived with 124 in helpless, apologetic resignation because she had no choice” (193). The phrase living “with” as opposed to “in” reveals the human qualities of 124 and Sethe’s lack of ownership regarding it: “she had no choice.” Similarly, Paul asks Sethe, “Who owns this house?...They won’t let you leave?” and Sethe simply says “No” (17), suggesting her lack of ability to physically escape. Sethe also

mentions her “dreams [roaming] outside 124 [and] when she woke the house crowded in on her” (47). “Dreams” reveals a mental state that the house interferes with, preventing Sethe from going “outside” psychologically as well as physically. Once Beloved starts controlling Sethe, “she [takes] to going to work later and later each day” (282). Sethe’s lack of agency, caused by 124, and by extension Beloved, leads her to alienate herself from the outside world even more than she had previously. Thus a personified 124 traps Denver and Sethe mentally and physically, therefore depriving them of self-ownership.

¶4 Finally, Denver and Sethe must claim ownership of themselves through action and emotion to gain true freedom—Denver physically leaves 124, controlling her actions, while Sethe contemplates the possibility of true self-love, choosing her own emotions. Denver realizes that Beloved might kill Sethe, and she has to “leave the yard; step off the edge of the world, leave the two behind and go ask somebody for help” (287). Denver’s first step toward freedom is to literally leave 124—only then is she able to find a job, reintegrate herself into the community, and be truly free. Baby Suggs speaks to the people in the clearing, saying, “*You* got to love it. This is flesh I’m talking about. Flesh that needs to be loved...More than lungs that have yet to draw free air...hear me now, love your heart” (104). The emphasis on “*you*” recalls Sethe’s repetition of “I” and “me.” Sethe must achieve love of herself, of her own “heart.” Only then can Sethe consider the possibility of being her “own best thing” and ask “Me? Me?” (322). Through ownership of self, Sethe may choose to love and thus free herself, because as Paul D realizes, “to get to a place where you could love anything you chose—not to need permission for desire—well now, *that* was freedom” (191). Once Beloved is gone, Paul D visits 124; “he looks toward the house, and, surprisingly, it does not look back at him. Unloaded, 124 is just another weathered house needing repair. Quiet, just as Stamp Paid said” (311). 124 is no longer personified: “it does not look back at him.” While before “quiet” represented a kind of death, now it merely implies a lack of inhabitants to claim or be claimed by it. 124 thus becomes simply an object, characterized by “weathered” and “needing repair” as opposed to human qualities.

Therefore, 124 progresses from being a representation of Sethe’s false ownership in freedom when she arrives in Ohio, to a personified reflection of its inhabitants that traps them emotionally and physically, and finally to a mere object once Sethe and Denver achieve freedom through self-ownership. Morrison uses the image of a house (an inanimate object that can and should be owned) as owning its inhabitants to reveal the equally nonsensical atrocity of slavery, in which a person who should not be owned nevertheless is; she also highlights the long-term effect of slavery by portraying a supposedly free former slave continuing to suffer under the control of another—even more terribly, of a mere object, no less. However, she ultimately reveals that it is not ownership of “things” that defines one’s true freedom, but the ownership of the self.

## Essay #2

*This essay approaches 124 as character by showing how the house becomes an extension of Sethe by a process of reification, that is, the process of turning something immaterial into a concrete thing. Rather than surveying the instances of personification of 124, the essay explores how and why that animation takes place. The frame story would be that, where slavery turns people into things, Beloved shows the opposite – and perhaps curative – process of a thing (124) becoming a person.*

### *From Yours to I*

*On the relationship among Sethe, Beloved, and 124*

*How does 124 function as a character to limit and, perhaps ultimately, enable freedom?*

#### **0. Slavery, Possession, Human Beings as Dead Commodities, 124, Life**

Slavery inculcates into people, white or black, a distorted notion of property: human beings are possessed as lifeless commodities. Misery in *Beloved* arises from the internalization of such a relation between property and life: for African Americans, owning something becomes the antithesis of being possessed. The nature of possession is altered only in its direction while the brutality, which deprives people in slavery of their lives and love, remains the same. A property is a being; being is being a property.

In the sense that property is the extended form of being, 124 functions metaphorically as a character, a being alive yet possessed; 124 becomes the central locale where the life and desire of the people in slavery are reincarnated as “spiteful (p.3b)” specters. In other words, the house 124 is an incomplete, undead embodiment of the “African Americans’ lives, “unspeakable and unspoken” (p.235). Therefore, true liberation – freeing of the undead souls or exorcism – is possible only when the life takes the form of being, not the form of possession or property. They must “know” that, however tormenting the life is, they should *live* and “go on out. (p.288)”

#### **1. The Mode of Production in Slavery and the Internalization of that Mode**

The mode of production under slavery desiccates the concrete meaning of human lives – life, for people in slavery, is nothing but the realization of their own value as *things*: “[they] discover [their] worth, which is to say they learn their price ... of their hearts, ... and their future. (Paul D, p.267)” Even eating food is self-ridiculed as “improving [one’s master’s] property. (p.224)” Under this mode of production, anything alive becomes the object of possession, the worth of which “schoolteacher”, the white jurisdictional figure, “would know.” (p.269) This extreme notion of human property also characterizes the mother-daughter relationship. Sethe’s mother is identified by a stigma “burnt right in the skin, (p.72)” just as homogenous properties are distinguished by labels. A mother or a daughter must enter the relation of property; or she would ask, “How will you know me? Mark me too. (p.73)”, identifying herself as a mother or daughter by being possessed.

## 2. Mine, Yours; 124 as a Womb or a Tomb

*If I am what I have and if I lose what I have who then am I? – Erich Fromm*

*“Not you, not none of mine, and when I tell you you mine, I also mean I’m yours.” – p.239*

As a result, Sethe’s love for her daughter also reflects the distorted notion of property: death –where else can she possess her and her daughter’s life, if life is possession and she cannot really possess anything? “For a used-to-be-slave woman, to love anything that much [is] dangerous (p.54)”, since her beloved thing would disappear anyway; yet her love is so “thick (p.193)” that her beloved ones, or Beloved, cannot be but sublimated into the form of a dead property.

Sethe’s *own womb* is where “[she] could love anything [she] chose – not to need permission for desire – ... *that was freedom.*” Yet the house 124 replaces her biological womb, since she cannot bear her daughter again. 124’s imagery as a womb becomes clear when Beloved comes to 124 and Sethe feels, as if it is a birth pang, “[her] bladder filled to capacity ... no stopping water breaking from a breaking womb, and there was no stopping. (p.61)” In 124, Beloved is fed and took care of by Sethe ( ).

Still, 124, Sethe’s metaphoric womb, is also a *tomb*: while white people can keep their properties in the realm of life, people in slavery cannot, for whom the secure place is “over there (p.192)”, where no one could hurt them. Sethe, out of her maternal feelings that “[Beloved] had to be safe”, she “put her where she would be. (p.236)” Therefore, Beloved’s retreating into a womb also means retreating into a tomb: “over there”, the realm of death or a tomb, is as “dark” as a womb. (p.88)

On the other hand, the house 124 functions as an incubator for Sethe: it satisfies her natal need as a daughter of Sethe’s mother. To possess is to be possessed, as Sethe says: “When I tell you you mine, I also mean I’m yours. (p.239)” Since a slave child goes through natal alienation and thus can be recognized only by her stigma, Sethe can recognize Beloved’s “mark”: “I would have known who you were ... because the cup after cup of water you drank proved and connected to the fact that you dribbled clear spit on your face the day I got to 124. (p.239)” Yet at the same time, since Sethe used to be a property marked, she can replace Beloved’s mark with hers: “You came right on back like ... a daughter, which is what I wanted to be (p.240).” As a result, Sethe’s feeding and caring Beloved becomes the same as loving herself as a child.

To sum up, the house 124 functions as a medium of Sethe’s *liminal* healing process: it helps her fulfill her unsatisfied role both as a mother and as a daughter. Yet the healing does not lead her to better life. Rather it leads her to “give up her life, every minute and hour of it” for Beloved. 124 as a nurturing womb still remains as a tomb, where “[Sethe and Denver] are locked in a love that wore everybody out. (p.286)” The desire in vain to retreat into a womb-like existence, one where, you might say, the umbilical cord has never been cut<sup>1</sup> is doomed to fail;

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<sup>1</sup> Erich Fromm’s concept of ‘rootedness’, Dr. C. George Boeree

the mother-daughter relationship based on the concept of property, “mine” to “yours”, leads one in limbo.

### 3. Disclosing the Womb / the Tomb

*“Anything dead coming back to life hurts.” – p. 42*

Then how can Sethe overcome the limbo? It is notable that the roles that Sethe and Beloved play are reversed (p.294) and that Beloved takes the shape of a pregnant woman (p.308). Considering that 124 functions as both a womb and a tomb, then the opposite, reversed end of the limbo in 124 can mean Sethe’s impending *rebirth*, as opposed to re-conception. Sethe’s rebirth is symbolized when she “tremble[s] like the baptized in its wash. (p.308)” The dark womb/tomb is now open: “Sifting daylight dissolves the memory, turns it into dust motes floating in light. (p.311)”

On the other hand, the exorcism of 124 cannot happen without the help of the African American community, to which Denver called for help. And it is out of hunger, the need of life, that Denver could “step off” of 124 (p.281-286). In other words, Denver’s will to live plays the role of a “midwife” which pulls Sethe out of 124, the “world (p.215)” that cannot sustain itself alone (p.294).

### 4. Me, I; Life

*The mother-child relationship is paradoxical and, in a sense, tragic. It requires the most intense love on the mother’s side, yet this very love must help the child grow away from the mother, and to become fully independent. – Erich Fromm*

After 124 is exorcised, Sethe cries out of the sense of deprivation (p.321). Yet it does not follow that she must go back into the limbo; rather than crawling back to the possessive womb/tomb, she has to come back to life. When Paul D calls Sethe’s name, she realizes herself as objective “me”: “ ‘You your best thing, Sethe. You are.’ He holding fingers are holding hers. ‘Me? Me?’ ” (p.322) That is, she overcomes the mode of living as a property by becoming an individual subject/object of love (“me”, “I”), as opposed to “mine”, which meant being “yours.”

Baby Suggs’ Word resonates here: “More than your life-holding womb and your life-giving private parts, hear me now, love your heart. For this is the prize. (p.104)”. Even if being, not as a property but as an independent subject, is overwhelming, she now has to “know it, and go on out the yard, (p.288)” just as a child must detach herself from her mother, however painful. “Along with the *others*”, Sethe must “claim herself” again – “freeing oneself [is] one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self [is] another. (p.112)”

### 5. Not a Story to Pass On

In conclusion, 124 embodies the lunatic relationship between Sethe and Beloved, either as a mother-daughter one or vice versa. It is a locale where the distorted images of life and

death are reified; it is a womb and, at the same time, a tomb. Sethe cannot but go back into 124 at first, yet she has to come out again. In this sense, 124 as the place of death and rebirth must be overcome, yet cannot be absolutely negated – just as a child must detach herself from her mother yet cannot forget her; or, just as a history of slavery and Imperialistic capitalism cannot be allowed yet can be regarded as a necessary step toward a better world.

### **Essay #3 (excerpt)**

The shed is evidence of the notion that feelings are essentially thrown into the house with the hope that they will cease to exist. Beloved is killed in the shed by Sethe, and that is where Sethe keeps that memory; not in her head, but in the shed. This action becomes problematic because the feelings and history that now linger in the house control Sethe. 124 stops Sethe from being totally free because “even if I don’t think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened” (Morrison 43). The shed provides the power 124 has over its inhabitants and employs that power to keep them from reaching true freedom because the thoughts they want to forget never go away. This symbol of power emerges again when Beloved seduces Paul D. Beloved “moved him nonetheless, and Paul D didn’t know how to stop it because it looked like he was moving himself” (Morrison 134). The feelings that exist in this room give the supernatural house power and even those who are supernatural themselves, and this control takes away freedom, even their freedom to forget.

The keeping room, however, is a room that enables freedom to an extent. For Sethe, “words whispered in the keeping room had kept her going. Helped her endure the chastising ghost” (Morrison 101). Here the characters’ feelings are not being used against them, but used to help them. Sethe explains that the room “kept [Howard and Buglar] whole in the world because in her dreams she saw only their parts in trees; and kept her husband shadowy but there” (Morrison 101). This room exists to put things back together. For instance, after her long journey, Baby Suggs fixes Sethe before she reunites with her children. While this room provides the things Sethe never had a Sweet Home (family ties, care, and love), it still does not create full freedom because these memories can also bring Sethe sadness because they trigger thoughts of other painful experiences which is why she sometimes “avoided the keeping room” (Morrison 52). Again, with characters’ feelings lingering throughout the house, 124 possesses the power to move these memories anywhere forcing the characters to cope with them or, like Sethe, disregard them. Sethe’s choice, to me, is not freedom because constantly running from one’s past impedes on the progress they can make for the future.

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## One: Renunciation

### Debtless, Loveless

*>How do Ella's and Stamp's ways of compensating for personal loss reflect their respective positions as woman and man or, alternatively, complicate assumptions about gender?*

*The gender issues in this topic proved particularly challenging in the need to show how Stamp and Ella are – or fancy themselves as – gender atypical, but remain nonetheless gendered. The following essay uses the private/communal distinction to get leverage on this difficulty.*

#### **Essay #4**

#### Rejecting an Identity to Save an Identity

Stamp and Ella remove themselves from the involvement in the private sphere of social relations in order to save themselves from further pain inflicted from loss of someone close to them. In different ways, they renounce or sacrifice their personal ties and invest them into the community. This course of action they choose demands a creation of new identities for the characters that do not fit into normal masculine and feminine spheres. While initially the means they use to help may complicate or undermine their former gender identities, we see how this combination instead forges a new identity that challenges preconceived notions of gender. Ella and Stamp incorporate both of these aspects into their actions involving the aid of others.

We see some of Stamp Paid's actions strongly reaffirm his place within the male identity. Because this essay deals with generalizations made about gender, the image of the aloof male, looking out for only himself, serves as an accurate representation of Stamp. This is accurate when we view his renaming after he gives up his wife (218). Stamp stares into the face of his oppressors and accepts the fact that he is better off alone. He does not and cannot take on the burden of love and stands to fight by himself as man against the world. We see many instances of stubborn refusal to open up in Morrison's men. Paul D fights to hold onto his identity during his many journeys. He says while settled in one place "Anything could stir him and he tried not to love it" (316). Stamp also runs away from connections with people. He explains "whatever (my) obligations were, that act paid them off" (218). He turns his back toward these obligations that could stir him and remains his own man. However, this same lone wolf or "I am my own hard nosed man" mentality undermines Stamp's status as a man with a male identity. By withdrawing from society in a way, by internalizing his feelings and avoiding the confrontation with his own problems, Stamp admits his weakness, the fact that he is vulnerable. This debtless attitude parallels Baby Suggs at the end of her life. Stamp makes the comparison himself when



he says, “(This tiredness) must be what Baby Suggs felt when she lay down and thought about color for the rest of her life” (208). She reaches a certain point in her life and gives in, retreats to her obsession with color. Stamp is no different in this regard when he shuts himself out of the world of other people around him, admitting the outside forces of slavery have beaten him. When we view Stamp in this way, we see a weakness in his lack of confrontation. He is no Nat Turner set to destroy his oppressors. He is no Paul D either. Notice the contrast in Paul D’s actions when he enters 124 and physically removes the ghost from the house for a time and says “You want to fight, come on!” (22). This stands out as a moment when a man battles adversity head on. Contrast this to Stamp’s interaction with 124 and the supernatural happenings. He hears the odd voices, and plagued by guilt and unable to know how to respond to Sethe, he cannot even knock at the door (203). Stamp’s retreat from owing anyone and his independence as a man do not simply reaffirm his status as a man but show how he becomes something else, something more feminine in his submissive nature. For much of this story, we see male characters a male identity as someone in charge while female characters often relent to the forces around them. Stamp’s typically uncharacteristic action in this example illustrates the blurring of his standard male identity.

Ella, similar to Stamp Paid does not have personal ties to others. After she leaves the ownership of “the lowest yet”, we see how her owners took part of her female identity from her. Their sexual violations of her lead Ella to stop loving other people. She turns inward as Stamp does for a while, and like Stamp she exchanges her commitment to the private life and channels her efforts into the community. In much of her exchange with Stamp Paid about Paul D, we do not see Ella as a typically caring or motherly type of woman. She knows Paul D is without a home but does not feel the need to extend her home to him (220-221). Contrast this woman with other female figures. We see how Sethe is defined by motherhood when she expresses her extreme anguish from the violation of the schoolteacher’s nephews occurs because they took her ability to be a mother, a provider for her child, away from her (20). When we look beyond motherhood as a marker for female identity, we see women as typically social beings, beings generally found more connected to a sense of community than their male counterparts. For example Baby Suggs is tied to family and community, so much that when she is void of these connections, she does not recognize herself as separate from those around her: “Fact was she knew more about them than she knew about herself” (165). She finally breaks down because of all the community she had around her is lost.

On the surface, we see very little of this desire to be part of a group or a need to be needed in Ella. Even when she makes the journey with the thirty other women, we see her as noticeably separate from the group. We see the divide between Ella and the women in the following dialogue from page 302:

“Shall we pray?” asked *the women*.

“Uh-huh,” said *Ella*.

Ella is separate from the collective voice of the other women. And this is what she wants. Morrison writes of Ella, “Nobody loved her and she wouldn’t have liked it if they had...” (301). She does not want to be loved and does not love because of its hampering effects and its ability to cause much suffering. She instead chooses to be free to do her own thinking and perform her

own life this way because the forces that influences the other women, emotions and the sense of connectedness, “clouded things and prevented action” (301). This direct approach mirrors the previously mentioned image of Paul D smashing the ghost out of the possessed house.

So it would appear that Ella does not fulfill the role of a woman based on her separation from the community and refusal to love. We believe this because Ella chooses to believe this, but her actions are not so definitive in clouding her female identity. She may be an angry and solitary woman, but she is not void of compassion and sympathy. She is the woman who convinces the other that intervention is in order at 124. She hides her compassion for the Sethe and Denver behind an objective sense of justice, and she explains her practical reasoning and says, “she didn’t mind a little communication between the two worlds, but this was an invasion” (302). By acting so directly to solve a problem, Ella thus extends her abilities to another and actually displays a motherly or nurturing attitude toward the family at 124. Separate from conventional womanhood, Ella creates her own female identity by incorporating aspects of more masculine agenda with latent feelings of understanding that are found in both men and women. Stamp Paid similarly redefines what it is to perform a male role by at times acting out of the male context.

Stamp Paid also extends himself to others seeking help. He directly gets involved in the freedom of others by helping pay off debts or helping people escape entirely from their masters (218). We see these actions as openly male in nature, straightforward and practical, much like Ella’s dealing with the exorcism is, but it is important to notice the difference in what Stamp Paid does. He gets directly involved with the lives of others, but through secrecy and indirection. He acts in a fatherly way, trying to protect Paul D from the truth like he would keep things from a child (181-183). We see here how he directly takes the initiative to put the well-being of another at the forefront when acting, but he does so by hiding information from Paul D. Even when he does decide to tell Paul about Sethe, he does not do so himself but must use the newspaper clipping because he does not have the ability to say it himself. After this confrontation, Paul D encounters Sethe frankly tells her “You got two feet Sethe, not four” (194). He does not subtly suggest what she did was wrong through other means as Stamp does, but derides her, telling her that what she did confirms every notion white people have about blacks at the time. But the question then becomes: was Stamp’s way of handling this better than Paul D’s? Stamp still withholds information from Paul D, and the man falls apart. Through this uncharacteristically mild or passive, stereotypically female, attempt, Stamp directly makes the best out of horrible truth for Paul D.

Stamp Paid and Ella experience tremendous hardship that tears away their respective, traditional gender roles. And so they embrace this loss by turning their backs on their loss, and what it meant, and in a sense turn from that personal interaction and become organizers whose goal is to help the people around them. On their own, it appears that their suffering renders them gender neutral, without an identity to relate to. Their actions in both in dealing with their own selves and in creating a chance for the freedom of others forge new identities that are not tied down to one specific set of standards. Stamp Paid and Ella disregard gender expectations, and by doing so, incorporate new attributes and values into their identities.