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## GENDER IN GOTHIC AND SENSATION FICTION

This article will discuss the construction of gender in Sensation and Gothic novels. The novels I studied for this article are Zofloya, Jane Eyre, Lady Audley's Secret, Far From The Madding Crowd and The Beetle. The main theme of the article is how harmful the construction of gender is on both sexes within a patriarchal society. Men and women must police themselves or do not recognise that they are acting in a toxic manner. Women act violently towards each other both physically and mentally, and men treat women as objects or are unable to be open with their emotions. Other main ideas and themes would be, fetishism of child-like women, emotional repression, subversion of stereotypes, and possible queer readings of certain characters. Women like Lilla (Zofloya) are attacked by women who are their romantic rivals. Characters like Lilla and Lady Audley (Lady Audley's Secret) are often referred to in troublesome and uncomfortable terms that have inappropriate undertones. Each woman is uncomfortably compared to a child but that is what was considered the ideal women and because of this are hated

by their female counterparts. These types of women are often attacked physically or mentally by other women. Emotions are repressed by characters like Jane Eyre and as a result she almost loses a chance at a happy life with Mr. Rochester who, on his own, suffered maiming which ends in him becoming an equal or even lesser person to Jane. The characters Zofloya and Mr. Rochester also play into gender subversion. Zofloya is described as effeminate and Mr. Rochester wears a woman's clothing and pretends to be a fortune teller. Alicia (Lady Audley's Secret) subverts the idea of the ideal woman in Lady Audley by being described physically as the evil woman but truly being a pure woman. In some of the texts there is the possibility of queer characters. Characters like Robert Audley and Gabriel Oak (Far From The Madding Crowd) may possibly be homosexual characters but because of the staunch rules of gender in the 19th century are unable to act on these feelings. My article studies these ideas and ultimately acknowledges how troublesome the creation of gender and binaries is on the two sexes.

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