

Sarah Gage (2018)

“*The Vagabond: Finding Freedom in Androgyny*”

“*The Vagabond: Finding Freedom in Androgyny*” presents a gender analysis of the novel *The Vagabond*, which was written by French author Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette and published in 1910. Colette finds commonalities with her main character, Renée Néré, as they both resist standards of femininity. Renée can be seen as a written image of Colette herself and is used to express Colette’s own desires, passions, thoughts, and opinions in *The Vagabond*. The novel questions the idea and social construction of femininity and gender as a whole, as Colette and Renée both defy the expectations of early twentieth century womanhood. Drawing on the theories of Simone de Beauvoir (*The Second Sex*) and Monique Wittig (“One is Not Born a Woman”), the project explores how Colette creates a character who rejects gendered expectations in order to live androgynously. By living a genderless life, Colette promotes the idea that a woman could gain social independence without being limited by society’s gendered rules. This project argues how, through their denial of society’s gender binary in *The Vagabond*, Renée and Colette struggle with identity and freedom as they redefine “womanhood” by living androgynous lives.