

Gender Roles in Little House on the Prairie Essay

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Building an Empire through Gender Roles in Little House on the Prairie Children's literature of the Nineteenth Century is notoriously known for its projection of expected Victorian gender roles upon its young readers. Male and female characters were often given specific duties, reactions, and characteristics that reflected society's particular attitudes and moral beliefs onto the upcoming citizens of the empire. These embedded concepts helped to encourage nationality and guide children towards their specific gender roles which would ensure the kingdom's future success. Even in class situations where the demanding gender roles were unreasonable to fulfill, the pressure to conform to the Victorian beliefs was still prevalent. During the Victorian Era, society had idealized expectations that all members of their culture were supposedly striving to accomplish. These conditions were partially a result of the development of middle class practices during the "industrial revolution... [which moved] men outside the home... [into] the harsh business and industrial world, [while] women were left in the relatively unvarying and sheltered environments of their homes" (Brannon 161). This division of genders created the 'Doctrine of Two Spheres' where men were active in the public Sphere of Influence, and women were limited to the domestic private Sphere of Influence. Both genders endured considerable pressure to conform to the idealized status of becoming either a masculine 'English Gentleman' or a feminine 'True Woman'. The characteristics

required women to be “passive, dependent, pure, refined, and delicate; [while] men were active, independent, coarse ...strong [and intelligent]” (Brannon 162). Many children's novels utilized these gender..... middle of paperg citizens successfully had their attention directed towards their expected gender roles and appropriate spheres of influence within their roles to support the empire in order to continue the domination of the Kingdom.

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