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Society's Influence on Gender Roles

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Society's Influence on Gender Roles

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Grand Island Senior High 2016

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Abstract

The Civil War was a time of hardship for everyone regardless of gender. Louisa May Alcott and Stephen Crane embody the spirit and mood of the Civil War through their novels and the use of the gender lens. Through the protagonist of the novels we see the influence war has on their state of mind and on their home and social life.

Key Points

- ❖ Gender Role
 - Jo March in *Little Women* compromised her true personality to fit societal norms
 - Henry Fleming in *The Red Badge of Courage* restricted himself from reaching his true potential due to not fitting male stereotypes
- ❖ Expectations
 - Women were expected to be good housewives and be like porcelain dolls
 - Men were expected to be masculine, have no fear and fight with courage

Conclusions & Discussion:

The novels *Little Women* and *The Red Badge of Courage* capture the essence of the Civil War era. Louisa Alcott and Stephen Crane reflect their own experiences and thoughts through their character's mindset, personality and hardships. Gender roles and family values go hand in hand with the home and societal atmosphere in shaping the characters through the novels and altering their personalities and state of mind.

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