

# Gender roles and marriage

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



Compare and Contrast of Gender Roles and Marriage Gretchen Farricker  
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In this essay, I would like to compare and contrast gender roles and marriage and initially show through two literary works found in my text the differences and likenesses of each story, as they are being told to the audience essay writer typer. The initial stories that I have chosen to use for this essay are "The Necklace", by Guy de Maupassant and also "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty", by James Thurber.

I will attempt to compare and contrast both stories and give the audience a brief synopsis, explaining the likenesses and differences and engaging the reader, whilst doing so. Gender roles and marriages can play an important role in literature. It can be one of the most influential ways that gender roles are constructed. Works of literature construct images of boys and girls and men and women. These works usually depict the girls and women doing housework, playing with dolls, and cooking.

The men are usually depicted as sports players and lovers, providers, and figures that are overall stronger than women. Guy de Maupassant's, "The Necklace" and James Thurber's, "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" are two works of literature that focus on the themes gender roles and marriage, with some similarities, but with even more differences. In "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," Thurber shows a marriage that is not typical. In this marriage, Walter has a wife who is controlling, bossy, and runs the household. She's aggressive, overbearing, and condescending.

She's everything Walter, the husband, is not. In comparison, Walter is very passive and compliant. This type of gender role reversal is quite unique

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considering that Thurber has given Mrs. Mitty the character traits that are generally expected of the man or husband to possess, and Walter has the traits usually given to the woman. In "The Necklace," Guy de Maupassant focuses on femininity. He develops a character as a woman who possesses all the attributes needed to be desirable by other men. "She had no dresses, no jewelry, nothing.

And she loved nothing else; she felt herself made for that only. She would so much have liked to please, to be envied, to be seductive and sought after (Clugston, 2010). "She's in a marriage where she does not care for her husband and hates the house in which she resides. Because she is a woman and is living a world where men are dominating, she has absolutely no control over her life. The author played upon feminine characteristics making Mathilde overly emotional and extremely sensitive. "Walter's failures in life and his successes in dreams are closely connected with gender roles.

Everyday life for him consists of being ridiculed by women, such as the one who hears him mutter "puppy biscuit" on the street and his wife who nags him. Among women, Walter is subservient and the object of derision. Among men, Walter fails to meet traditional expectations of masculinity. He is embarrassed by his mechanical ineptitude: when he tried to remove the chains from his tires, he ends up winding them around the axles, and he has to send for a tow truck. The mechanic who arrives is described as "young" and "grinning. The description implies that the man, younger and more virile, is laughing at Walter's ignorance of cars and makes Walter feel emasculated, or less of a man. Walter resolves that the next time that he takes the car to the shop to have the chains removed that he will cover his

shame by wearing his right arm in a sling. Walter compensates for his failure to fulfill conventional expectations of masculinity in his daydreams. His fantasies center around feats of traditionally masculine prowess, and many of them involve violence.

He can hit a target three hundred feet away with his left hand, fix sophisticated machinery with a common fountain pen, and walk bravely into battle in his fantasy worlds. Thurber's exploration of sex roles in modern America can be understood in various ways: Thurber might be suggesting that men have become weak and ineffectual and women overly aggressive, or he may be pointing to a lack of opportunities for men to perform meaningful, heroic action in modern, suburban, middle-class America (Wolfstation, 2013). "

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sling. Walter compensates for his failure to fulfill conventional expectations of masculinity in his daydreams. All of his fantasies center around feats of traditionally masculine prowess, and many of them involve violence.

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