
Symbolism in The Secret Life of Walter Mitty, Thank You Ma'am, and Test

Symbolism in "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty", "Thank You Ma'am", and "Test" In Literature, symbolism is when an author uses an object, person, situation or word to represent an idea or another meaning other than its literal meaning. Symbolism is used short stories such as "Test" by Theodore Thomas, "Thank You Ma'am" by Langston Hughes and "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" by James Thurber. The symbols in these stories portray a deeper meaning, like how Walter struggles with facing reality, Roger's desire for better life and the number of people who fail their driving tests. An example of symbolism in "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" is Walter Mitty's daydreams. There is an evident correlation in his fantasies where he is always being the hero. The roles in his dreams in the story is a commander of a Navy hydroplane, a surgeon, an assassin, a captain and a firefighter.

The reason why Mitty daydreams of being a hero very often is because he is dissatisfied with his real life. He is a very ordinary man who is inept and has an overbearing wife. The world around him hardly notices him. In contrast to his daydreams, he is skilled, brave, decisive and most importantly respected. Another reason as to why he fantasizes is that he fails to live up to his masculine ideals in his real life. He possesses very masculine qualities in daydreams like bravery and saving people. Walter Mitty's daydreams are very different to his actual life because he wants to live the lives of the people he fantasizes to be. In addition, symbolism in "Thank You Ma'am" is the blue suede shoes that Roger wants. One of things the shoe represent is wanting things he cannot have. The boy wanted to steal the money from Mrs. Jones' purse so he can buy the blue suede shoes. It is evident that Roger does not have money. The shoes can also represent his desire for a better life. He has no one to care for him and give him things that he wants. He also has no one to tell him from right from wrong, otherwise he would have not attempted to steal from her in the first place. When Mrs. Jones gives Roger money she leaves him with the decision of what to do with the money. In the end he actually does not buy the shoes and he learns to not make the same mistake as he did before.

Furthermore, a symbol used in "Test" is the two grooves worn on the floor in the drivers testing facility. The grooves are mentioned at the end of the story after Robert is told that he failed his driving test and tries to protest. Robert lives in a world that is based on control. The grooves in the floor is supposed to symbolize the many people before him who were dragged out of the testing facility after the authorities declare that they are unfit to drive. The authorities in the story make the decision of failing someone when that person agrees to drive after experiencing their hypnosis. Robert Proctor wanted to continue driving after his test and they proclaimed that he is sick and has the capability of killing people on the road. Many before him had the exact experience and they all struggled and tried to fight the authorities. With the large number of people that this happened to, it will eventually create two worn grooves on the floor. Therefore, Symbolism is greatly used in these short stories. Walter Mitty's fantasies are his ideals of the man that he wants to be and uses these daydreams as an escape from his real life. Roger's longing for a good life and money is represented in the blue suede shoes. The two worn grooves resemble how frequently people fail their driving test. It is important to recognize and acknowledge symbolism used in any form of literature so that the reader can really understand

the author's message and story.

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