

The secret life of walter mitty



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The Secret Life of Walter Mitty Carl Gunther ENG125 Professor King February 13, 2012 Walter Mitty is an imaginary character, but he reminds me of myself and many people that I know. The main focus of the story is Walter's behavior. Walter tends to get distracted from the real world and his normal life, sent into day-dreams in which he is more important. Walter uses his everyday interactions to make a fantasy world in which he is the main character during a drastic time, making him feel more important.

While Walter goes in and out of day-dreams throughout the story he is not totally disconnected from reality but uses these day-dreams to cope with everyday situations. This literary work captured my interest because Walter was jumping in and out of day-dreams always switching up the situation that he was in. The overall theme of this literary work was imagination, in which we, as the reader, dove into Mitty's day-dreams. This literary work reminded me of many of times that I have jumped into a day-dream during a particular event that was happening in the real world.

While Mitty's everyday life seemed bland and mundane, his day-dreams were fantastic and interesting enough to keep the story going. While jumping into the real world of Mitty's life I was constantly interested and awaiting his next day-dream to see what was going to happen next. One literary approach that is used in critical essays is the formalist approach. " This approach is most widely used in literary criticism; it focuses on the form and development of the literary work itself. " (as cited in Clugston, 2010, section 16.)

Instead of focusing on the readers emotion and how the literary work made them feel this approach focuses on literary tools and techniques that the writer chooses to use. Some such techniques that are described using this approach include: setting, characters, plot, figurative language, and the point of view that was used. Examining The Secret Life of Walter Mitty using the formalist approach I found that the setting of this story took place predominantly in the mind of Walter Mitty.

While the story did jump from his day-dream to reality in which he was in his car with his wife the majority of the story took place in the mind of Walter Mitty. Each scene was a different imaginary reality in which Mitty was either a Commander, famous surgeon, witness on trial, or a captain in a war plane. The jumping in and out of these imaginary worlds makes the scene memorable and keeps the story exciting. Reading this story without the cliff-notes on the left-hand side telling the reader where in the story Mitty is, one would get lost due to the constant shifting of the setting.

However this constant setting change keeps the plot intriguing and moves the pace of the story along well enough to keep the readers interest. The main two characters in the story are Mitty and Mrs. Mitty. Mitty was portrayed as a day-dreamer, however he did keep connection to the real world as stated in this verse of the story where Mitty is connecting to the parking attendant. " They're so damn cocky, thought Walter Mitty, walking along Main Street; they think they know everything.

Once he had tried to take his chains off, outside New Milford, and he had got them wound around the axles. A man had had to come out in a wrecking car

and unwind them, a young, grinning garageman. Since then Mrs. Mitty always made him drive to a garage to have the chains taken off. The next time, he thought, I'll wear my right arm in a sling; they won't grin at me then. I'll have my right arm in a sling and they'll see I couldn't possibly take the chains off myself. " (as cited in Clugston, 2010, section 1. 1, para. 3).

This scene shows that while Mitty may day-dream often he still has a connection and concerns with the real world around him. Finally the point of view that was used throughout this story was from the main character Mitty. The reader viewed the world from Mitty's point of view throughout the story going in and out of his day-dreams while staying with him through the points of reality that were shown as well. Overall this was a great piece of literary work that captured my attention and kept me interested until the very end.

Using the formalist approach in analyzing a piece of literary work includes looking at the plot, characters, and setting of the story. While using this approach I was able to break down the various characteristics of this story and provide feedback into where each one of them stands. While Mitty was shown as a day-dreamer we also saw that he did have a connection with the real world. References Clugston, R. W. (2010). Journey into literature.

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