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Second-person Narrative in Literature and Cinema

Vyprávění ve druhé osobě v literatuře a filmu

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Abstract

This bachelor's thesis focuses on a very unusual storytelling method – the second-person narrative. Its main goal is to interact with the reader directly, which includes them into the story as the main protagonist. After introducing this narrative method as interpreted by Brian Richardson who categorizes it among so called “unnatural storytelling” methods, I will continue to examine the theoretical debate about second-person storytelling by analyzing the texts of Gérard Genette, Monika Fludernik, and Irene Kacandes. The second part of this thesis will be dedicated to analyzing one of the most famous works of Italo Calvino called *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, which is one of the most defining texts for this method of storytelling. The thesis will then continue to show a comparative analysis of a novel (*You* by Caroline Kacandes), a film (*Beau is afraid*) and three series (*You*, *The Office* and *Fleabag*) with the aim to capture the unique attributes, use, and effect of this narrative method in the fields of film and literature.

Key words: Narratology, Narrator, Second-person narrative, Reader, Public

Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá velmi vzácnou a neobvyklou metodou vyprávění, a to vyprávěním ve druhé osobě. Hlavní úlohou tohoto vyprávění je přímá interakce se čtenářem, která ho uvádí do příběhu jakožto hlavního hrdinu. Poté, co tuto metodu vyprávění představím v pojetí Briana Richardsons, který ji řadí mezi takzvaná „nepřirozená vyprávění“, přiblížím dále teoretickou debatu ohledně vyprávění v druhé osobě představením textů Gérarda Genetta, Moniky Fludernik a Irene Kacandes. V druhé části se budu věnovat analýze jednoho z nejslavnějších děl Itala Calvina *Když jedné zimní noci cestující*, které je jedním z nejcharakterističtějších textů pro tento typ vyprávění. Práce se pak bude věnovat komparativní analýze jedné knihy (*Ty* od Caroline Kacandes), filmu (*On se bojí*) a

tří televizních seriálů (*Ty, Kancl a Potvora*) s cílem uchopit zvláštnosti, užití a působení této narativní metody na poli filmu a literatury.

Klíčová slova: Naratologie, Vypravěč, Vyprávění ve druhé osobě, Čtenář, Veřejnost

Astratto

Questa tesi di laurea triennale si occupa di una tecnica narrativa particolare e piuttosto rara in letteratura, ovvero la narrazione in seconda persona, la cui funzione principale è quella di interpellare direttamente il lettore, facendolo diventare il protagonista della storia. Dopo aver inquadrato questo tipo di narrazione nell'ambito delle cosiddette „narrazioni innaturali“ o „estreme“, secondo la definizione di Brian Richardson, la tesi si concentrerà, in un primo momento, sul dibattito teorico intorno alla narrazione in seconda persona, attraverso i saggi di Gérard Genette, Monika Fludernik e Irene Kacandes. In un secondo momento, a partire dall'analisi di una delle opere più note di Italo Calvino, *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*, emblematica di questa tipologia testuale, la tesi tenterà un'analisi comparativa di un libro (*Tu* di Caroline Kepnes), due film (*Beau ha paura*, *La rosa purpurea del Cairo*) e tre serie televisive (*Tu* (serie Netflix), *The Office* e *Fleabag*) con l'obiettivo di capire le specificità, gli usi e gli effetti di questa tecnica narrativa tra cinema e letteratura.

Parole chiave: Narratologia, Narratore, Narrazione in seconda persona, Lettore, Pubblico

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1 Introduction

This bachelor's thesis focuses on a narratological phenomenon called the second-person narrative or storytelling. The second-person narrative is defined by the narrator using the second person instead of the traditional first or third person. In order to fully comprehend the problem of theorizing the second-person narrative, we will first need to understand the debate around it. Therefore, in the first part of my bachelor's thesis, I will be presenting the main streams and theories on this topic by Brian Richardson, Gérard Genette, Irene Kacandes, and Monika Fludernik.

In the second part of this thesis, I will be discussing some examples of second-person narratives in literature, specifically *If on a winter's night a traveler* by Italo Calvino, and *You* by Caroline Kepnes. Further in the text, I intend to show how second-person storytelling is portrayed in film and TV series. To give an illustration, I will be using several examples from modern television such as *Fleabag*, *The Office* and *You*.

In conclusion, I will be trying to search for some aspects of film theory that are coincident with the second-person narrative in literature and others that might help develop some of the existing second-person narrative theories.

2 Second-person narrative in literary theory

A second-person narrative is a form of storytelling that uses the second-person view to narrate a story. Generally, this tendency is grammatically expressed by using a pronoun of the second person and its appropriate morphological adjustment. In English, this pronoun would be “you” which can be understood as both singular and plural. Then again in her work, Monika Fludernik notes that a formal address present in many languages such as German, Italian, or French might also be considered a second-person narrative.¹

An example of a second-person narrative:

“Stai per cominciare a leggere il nuovo romanzo *Se una notte d’inverno il viaggiatore* di Italo Calvino. Rilassati. Raccogliti. Allontana da te ogni altro pensiero.”²

However, the definition of a second-person narrative becomes even more complicated once there is an attempt to draw a line on where this unique mode of storytelling stands and how it can be distinguished from apostrophes, direct addresses, dialogues, etc. Due to its presence in many genres, periods, functions, and characteristics, it is very difficult to categorize second-person storytelling as a whole based on a few literary examples. Another problem with theorizing the second-person narrative is its unnatural aspect and long absence in literary theory.³

¹ Fludernik, Monika, “Second Person Fiction: Narrative “You” As Addressee And/Or Protagonist” *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1993), pp. 219

² CALVINO, Italo. *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore*. Torino: Einaudi, 1984, 261 s. ISBN 88-06-49130-X., pp. 3, English trans. : “You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler*. Relax. Concentrate. Dispel every other thought. Let the world around you fade.” CALVINO, Italo a William WEAVER. *If on a winter's night a traveler*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981. ISBN 0-15-143689-4., pp. 6

³ ILIOPOULOU, Evgenia. *Because of you: understanding second-person storytelling*. Bielefeld, Germany: transcript Verlag, 2019, 1 online resource (256) . ISBN 3-8376-4537-1. Dostupné z:

2.1.1 Unnatural Voices by Brian Richardson

In the text *Unnatural Voices*, Brian Richardson focuses on the so-called “extreme narrations” one of which is also the second-person narrative. Richardson divides the second-person narrative into 3 main categories the “standard,” the “hypothetical”, and the “autotelic”.

The standard form is the most frequent one and is also closest to a traditional narration. It is usually represented by a narration in the present tense that only refers to a single protagonist. As examples of the “standard” narrative, Richardson mentions *La Modification* by Michel Butor, *Bright Lights*, *Big City* by Jay McInerney, *A Man Asleep* by Georges Perec, and others.

In the “standard” narration, usually, the protagonist or narratee is distinct from the actual reader, however, the second-person narration manages to break this distinction and may still create passages in which “you” refers to both the actual reader and the protagonist. He adds that many authors use the break of this boundary between the reader and the protagonist which makes the reader attach to the protagonist, yet it also detaches him as at a certain point they can no longer relate.

Richardson calls the “standard” form of second person narrative “a playful, original, transgressive, and illuminating form that is always conscious of its unusual own status and often disguises itself, playing on the boundaries of other narrative voices.”⁴ In fact, the “standard” second-person narrative is able to switch between the first and the third point of view very naturally which Richardson shows in a passage from *Aura* by Carlos Fuentes. This transition is also possible between an

doi:10.14361/9783839445372, pp. 21-22

⁴ RICHARDSON, Brian. *Unnatural voices: Extreme narration in modern and contemporary fiction*. Ohio State University Press, 2006., pp. 23

internal and external view as Richardson later points out in a discussion of some passages from *Maps* by Nuruddin Farah.

Overall, Richardson points out that the second-person narrative “standard” form is a unique unnatural voice that brings out new ways of representing consciousness that oscillates between the third and the first person as well as between homo- and hetero-diegesis.

The hypothetical form of second person narrative according to Richardson “cannot be simply converted to the first or third person”⁵. It often differs from the “standard” form by using the imperative, future tense, and a clear distinction between the narrator and the narratee. The type of texts Richardson mentions here could be called “pseudo-guidebooks” in which the protagonist is a potential future version of the narratee. This form of second-person narrative is present for example in Lorrie Moore’s *Self-Help* collection of short stories. Richardson in non-literary examples of this form of narrative it is common to encounter a gender coding that is connected to many gender stereotypes as fix-it manuals usually address men whereas recipe books target female readers.

Richardson defines the “autotelic” form of second person narrative by direct address which can at times be an address also to an actual reader. The passages in which this form occurs are often very short. In this form, the narrator is distinct from the narratee and the narration mostly occurs in the present tense, similar to the “standard” form. Richardson uses the beginning of Calvino’s *If on a winter’s night a traveler* as an example of this form of narrative that tries to describe a likely situation of the actual reader. Richardson then points out that throughout the book this narration transforms into a different one that shifts between addressing the narratee and the actual reader.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 33

However, Richardson and others also find it important to remind that this role of “you” as a direct address is still restricting. For example, in *If on a winter’s night a traveler* Calvino is forced to specify the gender and number of The Reader. This aspect can be useful for minority writers that can put a stronger emphasis on their voice by “identifying and contesting an already appropriated “you””.⁶

Among the other unnatural voices Richardson discusses in his book, he finds the second-person narrative “one of the most important technical advances in fictional narration since the introduction of the stream of consciousness”⁷. Despite its frequent use in postmodern literature, it has also been used in other streams as romanticism, realism, expressionism, modernism etc. The second-person narrative shows new possibilities of expressing mind states and enables the authors to create a sense of “intimate unfamiliarity”, “mythopoetic adventures”⁸ or grasp and give space to suppressed voices, etc.

2.1.2 Gérard Genette

One of the first literary theorists who has been attempting to approach a second-person narrative as a literary term was French literary theorist Gérard Genette. He approaches narrative very broadly and is the only one of the theorists I am mentioning who does not focus on the second-person narrative issue specifically but rather gives it a place in his narrative discourse in which he discusses much more than the narrative grammatical person as order, duration, and frequency.⁹

⁶ Ibid., pp. 34

⁷ Ibid., pp. 36

⁸ Ibid., pp. 35

⁹ GUERLAC, Suzanne. Narrative Discourse, an Essay in Method. MLN [online]. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980, 95(5), 1414-1421 [cit. 2023-06-28]. ISSN 0026-7910. Dostupné z:

In the categories of mood and voice, Genette distinguishes the grammatical appearance of the narrator and narrative style. The category of mood consists of two modalities, distance and perspective. By distance, Genette intends as a platonic distinction between mimesis and diegesis or Jameson's showing and telling. The perspective Genette understands through "focalization". By that, he means a distinction between the information that the narrative provides, such as non-focalization (omniscient narrative), internal focalization (the information provided from the point of view of a character), and external focalization (the information provided by a narrator that knows less than the character).¹⁰

The category of voice determines the status of the narrator and their role in the story. In this topic, Genette also includes "time of narration" which can be subsequent (narration in past tense), predictive (narration in future tense), simultaneous (narration in present tense), or interpolated (the tense changes throughout the work to encapsulate a shorter narrative).¹¹

Genette also introduces various diegetic levels such as extradiegetic (a character outside of the story narrating it), intradiegetic (a character inside of a story narrating a story about themselves), metadiegetic (a story in a story), and pseudodiegetic (a combination of metadiegetic and intradiegetic level). But most importantly, Genette distinguishes between two stances of a narrating person which are heterodiegetic and homodiegetic. In a heterodiegetic narration, the narrator stands outside of the story and does not interfere with it. The homodiegetic narration by contrast stands for a narrator that is interfering with the story.¹²

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2906507> doi:10.2307/2906507, pp. 1415

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 1416

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

2.1.3 Monika Fludernik's view on second-person narrative

Fludernik's second-person fiction theory critiques Genette's and Stanzel's dichotomic theories on narratives as well as other narrative theories that according to her research were found "inadequate to an incorporation of second-person fiction"¹³. According to Monika Fludernik, Genette's theory revolves around homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narration; therefore, his perception of the second-person narrative is incomplete. "Genette had suggested that second-person writing was a part of heterodiegesis, a claim which ignores the overwhelming number of second-person texts in which the narrator, as well as the narratee, participate in the actions recounted on the *histoire* level."¹⁴ An example of such a narrative is Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* which will be discussed later in this thesis. Fludernik enhances Genette's and Stanzel's theories by including crucial terms such as the communicative and noncommunicative narrative and homocommunicative and heterocommunicative texts.¹⁵ That allows her to distinguish between all cases in second-person narrative fiction without the omission of any function of second-person narrative fiction.

However, it is not Fludernik's intention to restrict the second-person narrative to a given definition and therefore exclude and indicate any adequate uses of it. Her goal is somewhere halfway between defining a phenomenon yet leaving its borders broad and blurred enough for any unusual case that might potentially qualify.¹⁶ Fludernik's

¹³ FLUDERNIK, Monika. Introduction: Second-Person Narrative and Related Issues. Style (University Park, PA) [online]. Northern Illinois University, 1994, 28(3), 281-311 [cit. 2023-06-12]. ISSN 0039-4238.

¹⁴ FLUDERNIK, Monika. Second-Person Narrative As a Test Case for Narratology: The Limits of Realism. Style (University Park, PA) [online]. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University, 1994, 28(3), 445-479 [cit. 2023-06-12]. ISSN 0039-4238.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ FLUDERNIK, Monika. Introduction: Second-Person Narrative and Related Issues., ref. 8

work also lies in a multitude of theoretical analyses of literature and films where she detects and determines individual types and cases of second-person narrative fiction.¹⁷

2.1.4 Irene Kacandes' "talk fiction"

Irene Kacandes offers an interesting viewpoint on the second-person narrative with the term "talk fiction". Like many others, Kacandes begins her exploration of this phenomenon by reading Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler*. She notices a certain ambiguity that exists in the text. The text attempts to talk to the reader through a direct address which is very soon followed by a reassurance that the interaction that the reader believes to have is spurious.¹⁸

The general criteria Kacandes uses to connect texts are not through traditional categories such as content, national tradition, literary movement, style, or narrative technique, "as through the type of orientation to exchange they exemplify, as through the type of interaction they create between themselves and their readers, as through the type of response they seek outside the writing and reading transaction."¹⁹ That is to say, Kacandes regards literary texts as a form of "Talk" and therefore identifies texts that require an endeavor by the reader as "talk fiction".

¹⁷ FLUDERNIK, Monika. Second-Person Narrative: A Bibliography. *Style* (University Park, PA) [online]. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University, 1994, 28(4), 525-548 [cit. 2023-06-12]. ISSN 0039-4238.

¹⁸ KACANDES, Irene. *Talk fiction literature and the talk explosion*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001, 1 online resource (xxiii, 284 p.). ISBN 0-8032-0129-X.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

“Talk fiction” is divided into four groupings; “storytelling”, “testimony”, “apostrophe”, and “interactivity”.²⁰ Even though Kacandes only considers four modes of talking in her work, she assumes that there must be other modes to be identified by experts with cultural knowledge different from her own.²¹

Kacandes’ approach is much more interdisciplinary than any of the other approaches mentioned in this thesis. It extends the “talk fiction” phenomenon on film and culture while employing studies from cultural anthropology and psychology. Her work focuses on the phenomena of secondary orality and its effect on culture, literature, and media.

According to Kacandes, we live in the age of secondary orality. The term comes from a diachronic approach to history, consisting of an age of “primary orality” followed by one based on writing. With the increase in literacy, we come to the “secondary orality” age in which orality, despite having a major role in communication, often relies on a written text.

3 Second-person narrative in literature and cinema analysis

To comprehend the extent of the second-person narrative in contemporary art, I have chosen to analyze the emblem of this type of narration *If on a winter’s night a traveler* by Italo Calvino. Calvino’s work is one of the most discussed texts in the second-person narrative theory. I will be comparing it with a novel by Caroline Kepnes, *You* which is also a book written in second-person narrative. I chose Kepnes’ work for my analysis because I find it important to see the second-person

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

narrative in the context of nowadays culture and the change of use of certain aspects that can be observed in Calvino's work. Another work I will be discussing in this thesis is the series *You* produced by Netflix in 2018. The series is an important milestone in the path of my thesis. I intend to demonstrate how the second-person narrative can be perceived on screen and how the transition from a book to a Netflix series may develop slight innovation and diversity within the narrative. Another occurrence of second-person narrative in cinema that I will be discussing in this thesis is also a very recent work. It is a passage from a film released in 2023, *Beau Is Afraid*, that is a film by an independent entertainment company A24. In order to understand different cinematic approaches to the second-person narrative in cinema, I chose this passage from a more artistically compelling and experimental piece of work which I believe *Beau Is Afraid* is. The passage in *Beau Is Afraid* not only identifies with *If on a winter's night a traveler* on a narratological level but also includes a metaleptic mode that is also vitally important to the book's essentiality. In the latest part of my thesis, I will be discussing some particular narratological types of storytelling in two television series that are directly addressing the audience. This series is the commercially known *The Office* (2005-2013) and a more alternative British series *Fleabag* (2016-2019).

3.1 If on a winter's night a traveler by Italo Calvino

If on a winter's night a traveler is one of the most discussed texts regarding second-person narrative. It tells a story of a Reader who buys Italo Calvino's book *If on a winter's night a traveler*. After a few pages, Reader finds out that the book he bought is repeating itself over and over. However, when he returns to the bookshop, he finds out that the book he thought was *If on a winter's night a traveler* is a completely different book called *Outside the Town of Malbork*. In the bookshop, Reader meets a person that had the same problem as him, and they both decide to proceed with reading *Outside the Town of Malbork* instead of the book by Calvino they thought they originally bought. Together they begin a journey over a book they both started

reading which brings them into reading 10 different story beginnings and falling in love.

The book is Calvino's experimental child and consists of many of his thoughts and beliefs on literature and literary theory. Crucial is the Reader protagonist, who is, according to what the book suggests, an essential part of reading. That thought comes from a debate that has been going on in the late 70s in Europe about a reader being a part of literary theory. Calvino in *If on a winter's night a traveler* makes his contribution to this debate.²²

3.1.1 Second person narrative in *If on a winter's night a traveler*

The narration in *If on a winter's night a traveler* could be simply divided into two categories.²³ The first and dominant one is a second-person narrative which is vastly used to narrate the storyline of Reader and Ludmilla which in a way could be considered the book's frame story. This part of the book is narrated by an extradiegetic narrator. In the rest of the book, the narrations vary thematically and stylistically, but they are always written in the first person. The second-person narrative, however, interferes with the story told in the first person, giving a sensation of being constantly watched and studied. These passages are very present, especially in the first part of the book. For example, in the first two chapters, the passages that are written or supposed to be written in the first person, are in reality an interpretation of The Reader reading the book, or rather the narrator is interpreting or guessing the Reader's reading of the book.

²² GIOVANNETTI, Paolo. Faccio delle cose coi libri» Calvino vs anni Settanta. *Enthymema* (Milano) [online]. Università degli Studi di Milano, 2012, (7), 401-408 [cit. 2023-06-28]. Dostupné z: doi:10.13130/2037-2426/2685

²³ of course with some exceptions, for example in chapter 1, pp. 17 where in a seemingly first person narrative text we find again a passage that addresses the actual reader "Or perhaps, the author still hasn't made up his mind, just as you, reader"

“Un fischio come di locomotiva e un getto di vapore si levano dalla macchina del caffè che il vecchio barista mette sotto pressione come lanciasse un segnale, o almeno così sembra dalla successione delle frasi nel secondo capoverso, in cui i giocatori ai tavoli richiudono il ventaglio delle carte contro il petto e si voltano verso il nuovo venuto con una tripla torsione del collo, delle spalle e delle sedie, mentre gli avventori al banco sollevano le tazzine e soffiano sulla superficie del caffè a labbra e occhi socchiusi, o sorbono il colmo dei baccali di birra con un’attenzione esagerata a non farli traboccare.”²⁴

However, this involvement in the stories narrated in the first person is present only in the first two chapters. Later, the second-person narrative’s interferences with the story are still present, although they are way less striking and frequent and don’t have a form of “indirect narration”.

As the story proceeds, the second-person narrative becomes a habitual point of view that can be perceived as natural by the actual reader even when put in contrast with the first-person narrative that alternates it. Layers and interactive elements are still present in the text that uses the habituality of second-person narrative to its advantage. The indeterminateness of the narratee allows the narrator to emerge and immerse himself with an appeal or a note for the actual reader. The erasure of the line between the reader and the main character enhances a certain sense of confusion that again only manages to interconnect them even more.

²⁴ CALVINO, Italo. *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*. Torino: Einaudi, 1984, 261 s. ISBN 88-06-49130-X., pp. 11, English trans. : “A whistling sound, like a locomotive’s, and a cloud of steam rise from the coffee machine that the old counterman puts under pressure, as if he were sending up a signal, or at least so it seems from the series of sentences in the second paragraph, in which the players and the table close the fans of cards against their chests and turn toward the newcomer with a triple twist of their necks, shoulders, and chairs, while the customers at the counter raise their little cups and blow on the surface of the coffee, lips and eyes half shut, or suck the head of their mugs of beer, taking exaggerated care not to spill.” CALVINO, Italo a William WEAVER. *If on a winter's night a traveler*, pp. 10

3.1.2 The Reader

It is no accident that the main character doesn't have a typical name but instead is only referred to as The Reader. The "name" contains all the information it needs to make an actual reader relate to the main character. They both are readers and therefore the actual reader whose only activity at the moment is reading might find it very easy to relate to a character of the name Reader. Also, the name Reader might indicate an identity crisis of the protagonist whose "you" is transferred into everyone's "I" and therefore lacks its own subjectivity.²⁵ Thanks to that the actual reader is likely to have a sense of interaction with the book. Another connection between the actual reader and the character lies in the overall confusion over the work and the seemingly never-ending fragmentation that they are being subjected to.

While talking about The Reader, it is important to note a shift in the perspective in the seventh chapter of the book. In this chapter, the one whose actions are narrated in the second person is Ludmilla.

"Sei possessive? Forse non ci sono ancora elementi sufficienti per dirlo: per ora si può dire che sei possessiva verso te stessa, che ti attacchi ai segni in cui identifichi qualcosa di te, temendo di perderti con loro."²⁶

As The Reader walks into Ludmilla's apartment in her absence, he makes assumptions and tries to imagine what her life is like. The narrator in this chapter is Reader's inner voice and the narrator therefore becomes homodiegetic for this

²⁵ SILVIA T. ZANGRANDI. Il potere d'evocazione dei nomi» in "Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore." *Enthymema* (Milano) [online]. Università degli Studi di Milano, 2020, (26) [cit. 2023-07-24]. Dostupné z: doi:10.13130/2037-2426/14868, pp. 24

²⁶ CALVINO, Italo. *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*. Torino: Einaudi, 1984, 261 s. ISBN 88-06-49130-X., pp. 144, English trans.: "Are you possessive? Perhaps there is not yet enough evidence to tell: for the present it can be said that you are possessive toward yourself, that you are attached to the signs in which you identify something of yourself, fearing to be lost with them." CALVINO, Italo a William WEAVER. *If on a winter's night a traveler*, ref. 2, pp. 110

passage. All the assumptions are written in the second person as if Ludmilla was addressed. Differently from the rest of the second-person narrative that describes the actions of the reader, in this part of the book, we can sense uncertainty represented by frequent questioning and deductions. This style of writing recalls the hesitant tone of the first chapter in which the narrator also speculates about which kind of reader “you” are.

3.1.3 The paratextual aspect of *If on a winter's night a traveler*

Even though the book is called *If on a winter's night a traveler*, it offers several other titles within itself. The book's paratextual characteristics are also a way of interacting with the actual reader. In every chapter, despite the reader's engagement in the story, they are reminded that they are being lied to and reminded of the book's fictionality. Knowing that they are reading a book called *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler* and being constantly opposed results in the book creating a confronting environment. This ambivalence creates an interesting dynamic in the story and makes room for an interaction of the actual reader with the author, which leads to a feeling of entrapment and being put things in the mouth as “No, vede, ormai a me di quell'Italo Calvino lí non me ne importa piú niente.”²⁷

Calvino's use of the incipit in *If on a winter's night a traveler* can be perceived in many ways. Davide Savio's interpretation suggests that the form of Calvino's novel represents his autobiographical tendency to demonstrate that there are many paths he could've taken as an author and each unfinished novel means a lost opportunity but also still a part of what he is. “La soggettività dell'autore può trovare spazio nella scrittura solamente per sottrazione, o meglio per espulsione, per spreco di sé: come il nostro corpo è composto da tutto ciò che assimiliamo, al netto delle deiezioni, così

²⁷ CALVINO, Italo. *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*. Torino: Einaudi, 1984, 261 s. ISBN 88-06-49130-X., pp.28, English trans.: No, actually I don't really give a damn about that Calvino anymore.” CALVINO, Italo a William WEAVER. *If on a winter's night a traveler*, ref. 2, pp. 21

l'identità di uno scrittore si dà al termine di un analogo processo digestivo, che coinvolge tanto le opere rimaste allo stato di abbozzo quanto quelle compiute e pubblicate.”²⁸

3.1.4 The metaleptic mode in *If on a winter's night a traveler*

Monika Fludernik classifies *If on a winter's night a traveler* as the third type of Genette's metalepsis because the extradiegetic addressee becomes a character in the book and therefore comes to a “diegetic level”.²⁹ The beginning of the book shows an attempt at the interaction between the actual reader and the narrator by describing a potential situation of the actual reader. The book even starts with an undoubtful statement “Stai per cominciare a leggere il nuovo romanzo *Se una notte d'inverno il viaggiatore* di Italo Calvino.”³⁰ and continues by describing the potential situation of the actual reader.

“Dunque, hai visto su un giornale che è uscito *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*, nuovo libro di Italo Calvino, che non ne

²⁸ SAVIO, Davide. Il libro dello spreco. Sullo stile tardo di Italo Calvino. *Enthymema* (Milano) [online]. Università degli Studi di Milano, 2020, (26) [cit. 2023-07-23]. Dostupné z: doi:10.13130/2037-2426/14871, pp. 59, trans. “The author's subjectivity can find its space in writing only for deprivation, or elimination, for wastage itself: as our body is composed by everything we assimilate, to the clearest excreta, similarly the identity of a writer can be compared to the digestive process that involves works that are only drafts as well as the completed and published works.”

²⁹ FLUDERNIK, Monika. Scene Shift, Metalepsis, and the Metaleptic Mode. *Style* (University Park, PA) [online]. DeKalb: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003, 37(4), 382-400 [cit. 2023-06-29]. ISSN 0039-4238., pp. 385

³⁰ CALVINO, Italo. *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*. Torino: Einaudi, 1984, 261 s. ISBN 88-06-49130-X., pp. 3, English trans. CALVINO, Italo a William WEAVER. *If on a winter's night a traveler*, ref. 2, pp. 6, “You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*.”

pubblicava da vari anni. Sei passato in libreria e hai comprato il volume. Hai fatto bene.”³¹

As the story proceeds, the level of direct interaction in the book decreases and the direct address transforms into second-person storytelling with the addressee being the protagonist and not the actual reader. The level of interaction does not, of course, decrease gradually. Some passages break this tendency and again lead to interaction. For example, there is a part in which the narrator makes a digression and talks about how people in the past were used to standing while reading after some tiring horse riding. After that, he remarks that no one thought of reading while riding and adds:

[...] “eppure ora l’idea di leggere stando in arcioni, il libro posato sulla criniere del cavallo, magari appeso alle orecchie del cavallo con un finimento speciale, ti sembra attraente.”³²

By this specific address, the narrator once again gains control over the reader by predicting their thoughts as they read. This interaction disappears from the text within the first chapter and the transformation of the extradiegetic reader into the Reader character begins.

3.1.5 Calvino’s influences

It is very important to note the possible influences in Calvino’s late work. He was participating in *Tel Quel* which was a group of writers focusing on ontology of

³¹ Ibid., pp. 5, English trans. CALVINO, Italo a William WEAVER. *If on a winter's night a traveler*, ref. 2, pp. 7 “So, then, you noticed in a newspaper that *If on a winter's night a traveler* had appeared, the new book by Italo Calvino, who hadn't published for several years. You went to the bookshop and bought the volume. Good for you.”

³² Ibid., pp. 3, English trans, CALVINO, Italo a William WEAVER. *If on a winter's night a traveler*, ref. 2, pp. 6 [...] „and yet now, the idea of sitting in the saddle, the book propped against the horse's mane, or maybe tied to the horse's ear with a special harness, seems attractive to you.”

language, as well as in Oulipo which was experimenting with principles of mathematics and science to create a new kind of literature. Calvino often liked to call *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler* “an Oulipian novel” because he applied in it the mathematical principles they discussed in the group.³³ The inspiration for the extradiegetic second-person narrative comes from the French experiments and the Nouveau Roman, concretely from Perec’s *A Man Asleep* and Butor’s *La Modification*.³⁴

There might also be influence by a sudden rise of soap operas³⁵ that used a technique that in today’s terminology we would call “cliffhanger” which stands for a break off a storyline in the very climax of thrill and suspense. A similar situation happens in *If on a winter’s night a traveler* every time a new story arises and ends just at the point one is getting interested in it. As Calvino says in *Risposta a Angelo Gugliemi*, “qui non si tratta del «non finito» ma del «finito interrotto»”³⁶. The beginnings of stories can be also viewed as a satire on various genres of pop culture fiction literature that have been trending at that time as crime or romance.³⁷ Similarly, as in pop cultural fiction, also stories in *If on a winter’s night a traveler* seems passing and unimportant, almost as if they were only a filling to a book.

Another great influence on Calvino when he was writing *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler*, had Barthes’ conception of the death of the author. In the text, it is many

³³ OVAN, Sabrina. Names, Travelers, Transindividuality: Italo Calvino in the 1970s. *Enthymema* (Milano) [online]. Milan: Università degli Studi di Milano, 2012, 7(7), 409-424 [cit. 2023-06-29]. ISSN 2037-2426. Dostupné z: doi:10.13130/2037-2426/2704, pp. 416

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ MARKEY, Constance. *Italo Calvino: a journey toward postmodernism*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999. ISBN 0-8130-2300-9., pp. 117

³⁶ “Here we are not talking about incompleteness but about an interrupted completion”

³⁷ Ibid.

times indicated that the reader plays an essential role in the writing and that the writer only writes what the reader wants to read.³⁸

3.2 *You* by Caroline Kepnes

You is another example of second-person narrative literature. I am including this example due to its recent popularity as a book as well as a book-inspired Netflix series that I will be discussing in a section on second-person narrative in audiovisual media. I find it very convenient that there is an audiovisual *adaptation* of this book and it will be useful for my later analysis.

You tells a story of a bookshop manager named Joe. Once a beautiful girl named Beck walks into his bookshop and he falls in love with her. Joe soon becomes obsessed with Beck. At first, he stalks her on social media where he tracks her friends and boyfriend. Soon he starts to follow her at night or gaze at her through a window in her apartment. Later he even breaks in into that apartment to “get to know her”. As another step of seducing Beck, Joe makes sure that she leaves her boyfriend by imprisoning him in a cage in the basement of the bookshop and later killing him yet keeping him active on social media. So Beck or anyone else doesn’t notice that he is dead. Joe’s obsession and jealousy cause the death of three other people including Beck who found out about Joe’s stalking and murders. Beck tries to leave him as soon as possible but Joe imprisons her in the basement and kills her when she attempts to escape. He then burns her body and pretends as if it wasn’t his fault whatsoever. The book finishes with an open ending in which another girl that attracts

³⁸ PANIGRAHI, Sambit. Author, Reader and Text in Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*. Notes on contemporary literature [online]. Notes on Contemporary Literature, 2011, 41(4), 6 [cit. 2023-06-13]. ISSN 0029-4047. Dostupné z: <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A274115303/GLS?u=karlova&sid=bookmark-GLS&xid=3e91a7fa>

Joe's attention walks into the bookstore, which suggests that this story might as well repeat itself.

3.2.1 The narratives in *You*

In *You*, the second-person narrative is subsumed in the first-person narrative. It is possible to distinguish a concrete homodiegetic narrator which would be Joe and a protagonist to whom "you" refers which is Beck. The second-person narrative represents an inner voice in Joe's head and it almost exclusively refers to Beck with several exceptions that are referring to Joe himself and maybe underline his certain mental instability as:

*"Calm down, Joe. They don't like it when a guy comes on too strong."*³⁹

The first-person narrative expresses the narrator's feelings, descriptions, personal opinions, actions, motivations, etc. Whereas the second-person narration that refers to Beck expresses (often unreliable) descriptions of her and her actions and many assumptions Joe makes.

The only passages that seem to be untouched by Joe's point of view are text messages and social media posts. Joe owns a phone that has access to Beck's text messages, e-mails, etc. These texts give proof of a discrepancy between what Joe is thinking and narrating about his relationship with Beck and how she is feeling about him. So, if the unfoundedness of Joe's assumption isn't enough of an argument to prove his unreliability, Beck's text messages are.

*"Joe is really intense. I don't know, he's a maybe.... Anyway, do you guys think I should write to Benji?"*⁴⁰

³⁹ KEPNES, Caroline. *You*. 2. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018. ISBN 978-1-4711-3737-2., pp. 6

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 103

One might argue that there are other conversations that Joe is not involved in, such as when he follows Beck and her friends to a bar and other dialogues in which he is only an observer. However, what I find unique about the text messages in *You* is that they don't seem to give Joe space for any assumptions, as well as they don't give him visual or auidial subtext, and nothing but the real words stays.

3.2.2 The Narrator in *You* and the male gaze

The second-person narrative is told by an unreliable narrator, Joe, who is obsessed and has psychological problems. From the beginning, it is clear that something about this narrator is off as one of the first things he has got to say about Beck is “I let you disappear into the stacks—Fiction F–K—and you’re not the standard insecure nymph hunting for Faulkner you’ll never finish, never start; Faulkner that will harden and calcify”.⁴¹

Interestingly, the author uses the word nymph in this utterance. There are aspects of Joe, that resemble another psychologically challenged unreliable narrator, Humbert Humbert from Nabokov’s *Lolita*. The common theme of both of these books is a male character and a homodiegetic narrator trapping, isolating, and manipulating their love interest in a web of lies and control. There is suspense created by very fragile lies that both female characters (Dolores and Beck) must defeat to earn their freedom. In both works, there are descriptions of love interests that are unsettling and objectifying.

“It was the same child—the same frail, honey-hued shoulders, the same silky supple bare back, the same chestnut head of hair. A polka dotter black kerchief tied around her chest hid from my aging ape eyes, but not from the gaze of young memory, the juvenile breasts I had fondled one immortal day.”⁴²

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 6

“YOU walk into the bookstore, and you keep your hand on the door to make sure it doesn’t slam. You smile, embarrassed to be a nice girl, and your nails are bare and your V-neck sweater is beige and it’s impossible to know if you’re wearing a bra but I don’t think that you are.”⁴³

These two examples are the first sentences from when narrators meet their love interests for the first time. As I stated earlier, in these very first sentences, both narrators immediately bounce into objectification and the male gaze by focusing on and describing the breasts of the female characters.

But there are differences in the focus of each book, in *Lolita*, the main attention is given to the controversy of Dolores’ and Humbert’s age difference, and a lot of space is given to Humbert for the defense of his actions. Whereas *You* is focused on stalking and unwanted attention, for which it is very convenient to be expressed in the second-person narrative as a tool to objectify and manipulate. However, both of the works give an unsettling feeling of an unwanted male investment and discomfoting descriptions. *You* points out the importance of awareness of the male gaze and the second-person narrative helps to emphasize this issue on a more personal and concerning level.

3.2.3 Gender and relatedness

In the next paragraphs, I will be discussing some gender-related issues that are connected with the relatedness of the second-person narrative characters. I will be

⁴² NABOKOV, Vladimir Vladimirovič. *Lolita*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989. ISBN 0-679-72316-1., pp. 37-38

⁴³ KEPNES, Caroline. *You*. 2. New Zork: Simon & Schuster, 2018. ISBN 978-1-4711-3737-2., pp. 5

using the terms male and female, even though I know not everyone identifies themselves as such. Please note that I am using this discourse because both of the discussed books use pronouns that are masculine or feminine. I personally think that a more gender-fluid approach to second-person narrative writing might help it to be more relatable. However, these books refer to their protagonists as male or female and when I will talk about the gender of these protagonists or related readers, I will do it similarly.

I think while talking about second-person narrative it is important to mention the relatedness of the protagonists. I want to analyze different approaches regarding relatedness in *If on a winter's night a traveler* and *You* and see if their approaches might be problematic.

In *You*, the use of second-person narrative manages to create a feeling of being observed. Even though the addressee is Beck and the book doesn't seem to address an actual reader, especially the female audience of this book may find it addressing. That indicates that the book is targeting a female audience that can be familiar with many of Beck's situations. Also, the danger that Beck is confronting is non-visible to her. Yet, the danger is visible to the reader that is reading from the point of view of a stalker which can create a sense of paranoia or even disgust.

At the criteria of relatedness of the character, Calvino seems to be covering a broader audience. Even though his character is written in male pronouns, there are still many aspects that the actual reader and Reader protagonist might share apart from their gender role. The aspects that might differentiate the reader from the Reader seem to be omitted intentionally.

Instead, Beck is much more specified. That causes she might be relatable to a smaller group of readers. She has a name that already dissolves a certain aspect of relation. Throughout the book, a lot of information about her is revealed however most of it is determined by gender stereotypes which again can be related and understood only by a certain group of people.

“You are classic and compact, my own little Natalie Portman circa the end of the movie *Closer*, when she’s fresh-faced and done with by British guys and going home to America.”⁴⁴

Because *You* targets a specific group of readers that can relate to it, it can also incorporate many pop-cultural references with which such an audience identifies.

“We kiss good night as Elton John sings louder, sitting like a princess perched in her electric chair.”⁴⁵

Relying on pop-cultural references is also an important part of Joe’s personality. He applies them to his life, which again prevents him from seeing the world as it is and it keeps him in the world he has created for himself. However, realizing that his life is not a movie doesn’t stop him from romanticizing it. The references Joe uses are almost exclusively western cultural references, often related to film, literature, or music.

“IN the movie *500 Days of Summer*, IKEA is the most romantic place on earth. Joseph Gordon-Levitt and the girl start out in one kitchen and she’s sweet on him and pretending to feed him dinner and when the faucet doesn’t work—the joke being that all the appliances are props—Joseph jumps out of his chair and walks through a doorway into another kitchen and she is in awe of him and he says, “That’s why we bought a home with two kitchens.” I watched the clip right after you tweeted about going to IKEA and it’s not like I’m some moron who expects life to be like the movies, but it has to be said.”⁴⁶

3.2.4 The parallels of *You* and *If on a winter’s night a traveler*

First, I would like to point out the relationship of both of these novels with intertextuality. For example, in the very first passage of *You*, when Joe meets Beck

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 5

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 148

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 112

there are numerous literary references integrated. Beck and another customer are observed by Joe as they look around the bookstore. This whole situation is seen from Joe's perspective and is framed by an assumption a person is defined by the books they read and buy.

“You don't stage Faulkner and your jeans hang loose and you're too sun-kissed for Stephen King and too untrendy for Heidi Julavits and who, who will you buy?”⁴⁷

Joe loves books the same way as The Reader and Ludmilla, for him, reading books determines people. At the beginning of *If on a winter's night a traveler*, there is a very similar scene in which The Reader goes to a bookstore to buy a book, the same bookstore where he later meets Ludmilla. In this passage, there is a very concretely described Reader's movement around the books through the bookstore. The similarity of these second-person narrative fiction openings makes me think that this passage from Caroline Kepnes' *You* might be actually a tribute to Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler*.

In both *If on a winter's night a traveler* and *You* other books are an important and repeated theme. In *If on a winter's night a traveler* other books constantly interfere with Reader's and Ludmilla's storyline and they are the propelling motive of everything that is happening to them. Whereas in *You* Joe uses the books as references and his personal escapes from reality. He is surrounded by books at all times, in his work, in his house, and his thoughts. In both of these works, however, there is an undeniable impact of books on characters' thinking and behavior.

If on a winter's night a traveler contains a chapter in which “you” until then only used as a reference to The Reader, focuses on Ludmilla instead. It happens as The Reader visits Ludmilla's apartment in her absence and based on her belonging tries to penetrate her mind and see what kind of person she is. A very similar passage occurs in *You* as well, with the slight difference that in this situation, Joe breaks into Beck's apartment without her knowledge or approval. However, this *If on a winter's*

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 5

night a traveler passage is written in a style in which the whole *You* by Caroline Kepnes is written, only the tone is different. This again makes one think if *You* could be a tribute to Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler*. Here are some examples for comparison.

“A glance into the refrigerator allows other valuable data to be gathered: in the egg slots only one egg remains; of lemons there is only a half and that half-dried; in other words, in basic supplies a certain neglect is noted. On the other hand, there is chestnut purée, black olives, a little jar of salsify or horseradish: it is clear that when shopping you succumb to the lure of the goods on display and don't bear in mind what is lacking at home.”⁴⁸

“In your bathroom, when the door is closed and you sit on the toilet, you stare at a photograph of Einstein. You like to look into his eyes while you struggle against your bowels. (And believe me, Beck, when we're together, your stomach issues will be over because I won't allow you to live on frozen shit and cans of sodium water labeled “soup.”) You like Einstein because he saw what nobody saw. Also, not a writer. He's not a competition, now or ever.”⁴⁹

A comparison of these passages suggests that Kepnes' Joe could be a dark evil version of the Reader in Calvino. The Reader chooses an innocent place as his point of interest and looks around Ludmilla's kitchen as he wants to find out something

⁴⁸ CALVINO, Italo a William WEAVER. *If on a winter's night a traveler.*, ref 2, pp. 110, in Italian: “Un'occhiata al frigorifero può permettere di raccogliere altri dati preziosi: nei palchetti portauova c'è rimasto un solo uovo; di limoni ce n'è solo mezzo e mezzo secco; insomma, nei rifornimenti essenziali si nota qualche trascuratezza. In compenso, c'è crema di marroni, olive nere, un vasetto di salsifis o scorzobianca: è chiaro che nel far la spesa ti lasci attrarre dalle merci che vedi esposte, più che avere in mente ciò che manca in casa.”

⁴⁹ KEPNES, Caroline. *You*. 2. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018. ISBN 978-1-4711-3737-2., pp. 24

about her and makes some overall innocent assumptions about her shopping habits. Joe during his stay in Beck's apartment chooses to violate her privacy even more. He goes to her bathroom and fantasizes about her stomach problems and how, in the future, he will solve them. This whole situation is preceded by Joe reading Beck's writings on her laptop and drinking from her table mug. All of his assumptions about Beck seem to be negative. In Joe's point of view, Beck is living a dissatisfactory life that he can help her improve. Differently from the Reader, he involves himself and his opinions in descriptions of the apartment. Also, by his visit, he only intends to support his point of view in which Beck's life is a misery, and he is a valiant knight that saves her as a princess from the castle. This view of Joe once again proves his obsession with literary characters and a dichotomic diversion of the real world to good and evil.

3.3 You (Netflix series)⁵⁰

You is a series based on a novel by Caroline Kepnes which I have been discussing above. The first season was released by Netflix in 2018 and immediately earned huge success. One of the reasons for its success was, of course, the second-person narration that is rare in the cinema and therefore it gained a lot of attention from the commercial spectators on Netflix.⁵¹

The series season 1's story majorly matches the story of Kepnes' novel. Several differences were made to maintain the series' excitement and to simplify its presentation of certain aspects of the story. Also, the series attempts to make the main character Joe more likable by casting a *Gossip Girl*'s⁵² handsome Penn Badgley. Joe's likability in the series is also won by adding one character. Paco is a

⁵⁰ You [series] cr. Caroline Kepnes, Sera Gamble, Greg Berlanti

⁵¹ In the following pages, I will be discussing only the first season of this series, whose story corresponds to Kepnes' *You*

young reader and lives in the same building as Joe. Joe shows sympathy to the boy and helps him out in his difficult family situation. Neither the character Paco nor a similar situation appears in the book.

3.3.1 The second-person narrative in *You* (Netflix series)

The second-person narrative in *You* is represented in a voiceover. Similarly, as in the book, this second-person narrative speech represents Joe's inner voice that narrates the story. The voiceover imitates the style of the novel *You*. The second-person narrative is in the present tense and subsumed by a first-person narrative. The visual narrative of the series indicates that the focalization is on Joe's narration, however not entirely as in the book.

Despite Joe being an unreliable character in the book, in the series, what he describes seems match to what the viewer sees.⁵³ There is an aspect though that represents Joe's unreliability. That is the blurry background, that is present in many of the scenes. The blurriness seems to surround everything apart from the focus of Joe at the moment. This blurry background also seems to be most potent when Joe is focusing on Beck and sometimes it even blurs the edges of her body.

Most of the scenes follow Joe whose actions are related to Beck either when he stalks her, does things for her, or is spending time with her. Other scenes are completely focused on Beck and it is clear that Joe is not present in these scenes. For example, when she's at the university. That tells us that the camera does not only focus on Joe's actions but also follows Beck's storyline. Also, in these scenes, there

⁵² A popular 00's series based on book series by Cecila von Ziegesar. Similarly, as *You*, the *Gossip Girl* series is narrated but here it is an unknown voice of a gossip girl that controls the lives of New York's cream of society

⁵³ The unreliability in Joe's speech remains, only in the book, it is on the reader to decide what is actually happening, in the series, the camera shows it.

is no voiceover, and they have an appearance of a “classic” series. These scenes are likely incorporated in order to maintain the audience’s attention and it allows the series to evolve and graduate diverse, parallel storylines.

Perspective-wise it is interesting to discuss the scenes in which Joe stalks Beck. In one scene, for example, Joe cannot see a clear image of what is happening as he spies on Beck through her window. The spectator sees the whole image of what is happening which leaves us with two options, either these scenes and dialogues are happening, and the camera here does not correspond to Joe’s point of view, or these conversations are nothing more than Joe’s obsession creating an image of what is happening. The series consists of scenes that are only in Joe’s mind. Although the circumstances of the situations in the book and series may differ, they are most often sexually motivated. The fact that the imaginative scenes are very clearly marked suggests that the scenes with Joe’s limited view are only a step towards the audience’s comfort at the cost of a narrative inconsistency.

3.3.2 A shift in perspectives in the episode The Captain

The Captain is the fourth episode of season one. It is significant because the viewer experiences a shift in perspective. In this episode, Beck becomes a homodiegetic narrator in the story. The narrative is represented by a voiceover and the voice belongs to Elizabeth Lail that plays Beck. The narration is in the second person but instead of relating to an outer subject, the “you” is Beck’s inner voice addresses herself and she speaks of everyone else in the third person.

Joe is not missing in this episode, and neither is his narration. The opening of this episode is narrated by both Beck and Joe. First by Beck who shows us where she is going and then by Joe who furiously tries to find out where is she heading and why through the texts in Beck’s phone. As the episode proceeds, Beck and Joe take turns in narrating and giving a whole image of a situation. Beck is confronted by her father and his new family. In this situation, she doesn’t feel welcome or appreciated. In her

voiceover, she describes her personal feelings and occasionally throws in inappropriate comments toward her stepmother and her children.

This whole episode lets the audience learn a lot about Beck's character. She shows her insecurities, the hurt she still feels for her father leaving her family, her unhappiness about what he has become, and her antipathy towards his new family. And even though her comments are inappropriate, and she has a mean inner voice in her, what this episode tells us is that she is normal, especially in comparison to Joe.

3.3.3 Narratee shift in the episode Everythingship

In this episode, Joe is telling his view on his breakup in retrospect to Beck's therapist under a fake identity. The frame story of this episode is a dialogue between the therapist Dr. Nicky and Joe, pretending to be a bartender named Paul. Most of the scenes are dedicated to Joe's and Beck's break up and only in moments of interruption, the frame dialogue between Dr. Nicky and Joe emerges.

Unlike other episodes, there is very little inner voice second-person voiceover. The second-person narration appears only during the dialogues between Dr. Nicky and Joe. I think it is so because Joe always comments in the present tense but the scenes in this episode are in retrospect. Another reason for this could be the switch of the narratee, as Joe seems to be saying this story out loud to the therapist, there is no space for expressing his obsession. He even intentionally hides it because he believes that Dr. Nicky is Beck's lover and also because he wants to avoid a confrontation about his obsession. The episode Everythingship offers a broader view of Joe's situation. The re-enactment format fast-forwards the series and can put things in a new perspective.

Dr. Nicky also appears in the following episode, creating another shift in narration. Beck and Joe keep on seeing him after they separate and talk about getting together again. In this part of the episode, Beck and Joe take turns narrating their story to Dr.

Nicky (each one on their separate session) and become the narrators of what is happening in their relationship. This part of the episode has a form of a dialogue with Dr. Nicky as the narratee and Beck and Joe as narrators.

3.3.4 The book and the series adaptation

The series *You* takes some important steps and uses several techniques to engage a viewer as many other Netflix series do. It is important for an online streaming platform to stick to a form that has been working for it for the last few years, which is making “binge-able” series that one can watch in less than four days.⁵⁴

Season 1 of *You* is shot as a primary narrative unit, that graduates throughout the season and has a distinct finale, and the book by Kepnes seems to be chosen for a Netflix adaptation because it already meets the requirements. Even one of the authors, Sera Gamble, in one of the interviews says about reading the book that “it felt like binging a great TV show”.⁵⁵ The series has also another popular feature among the Netflix series which is placing an antagonist in the middle of the story, for example, in *Casa de Papel* or *House of Cards*.⁵⁶

Making Kepnes’ book a binge-able series, however, took more than what is already in the book. Therefore, differently from the book, the series focuses on Beck individually even without Joe, and makes sure that her character development aligns with Joe’s. That helps the story to proceed faster than if it were as in the book where

⁵⁴ JENNER, Mareike. Binge-watching and contemporary television studies. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021 - 2021, 1 online resource (297 pages). ISBN 1-3995-0909-8. Dostupné z: doi:10.1515/9781474462006, pp. 211

⁵⁵ BUILD series, 2019, Penn Badgley, Shay Mitchell, Elizabeth Lail, Sera Gamble & Caroline Kepnes Talk Lifetime's "YOU", YouTube Video, [cit. 25.6.2023], dostupné z: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StuFfLouaNw>

⁵⁶ JENNER, Mareike. Binge-watching and contemporary television studies., ref. 48

all of Beck's character is only presented by Joe's descriptions of her. Another mechanic that speeds up the narration is Joe's friendship with the boy Paco. Through their interaction, the viewer can find much intimate information about Joe that in the book he only shares through his thoughts. Similar effects also have flashback scenes that substitute long passages in the book that are narrated in the second person.

In my opinion, the series' use of narrative and narratee switches is motivated by the desired engagement of the viewer. Both of the episodes where we can experience a major narrative switch occur at the critical points of the series when the second-person voiceover slowly starts to lose its power and the attention of the audience. The episode *The Captain* is the 4th of the season and the episodes with narratee switches are 7th and 8th out of the total of 10 episodes.

In conclusion to this comparison, I would like to summarize that the first season of the series *You* on Netflix is staying more or less faithful to Kepnes' model. However, in order to maintain the viewer's attention, it was forced to make several partial changes to the plot and the narration form such as including new characters, breaking the second-person narrative more often, narration changes, including flashback scenes or following storylines of other characters than Joe. This allows the series to have better fluidity while still being able to express the feeling of paranoia and being watched which play an essential role in Kepnes' book.

3.4 *Beau Is Afraid*⁵⁷

Beau Is Afraid is a film released in 2023. It was directed by Ari Aster, famous for writing and directing distinct horror films. His last piece, *Beau Is Afraid*, fits into that category although in this film Aster also attempts to include humor and make a tragicomedy horror.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *Beau Is Afraid* [film] dir. Ari ASTER. USA (2023)

Beau Is Afraid is a film about anxiety and how people suffering from it perceive the world. The main character, Beau, lives an ordinary life, that is shaped by his fears, anxieties, illusions, and paranoia. One day, he receives a phone call in which he finds out that his mother whom he has deeply feared, has died but that he needs to attend her funeral. Throughout the movie, we see how Beau is coping with his mother's death. He meets many people. Some of them try to help him, others scare him. But in the end, he manages to get to his mother's house where the funeral is supposed to take place. Beau is late for the funeral, but it doesn't matter because his mother hasn't died and has only pretended to be dead to draw Beau to her house and torture him again over the insecurities, lies, and wrongs they have caused each other. At the end of the film, Beau's mother lays the blame on Beau for being a bad son and renounces him at a public trial that takes place in an old, flooded stadium.

Even though Beau is the main character in this film, his role is rather passive. Due to his fears, he doesn't take initiative for almost anything that happens in the film. Sometimes it is noticeable that he disagrees with some actions or that his intentions are being overlooked by others however he never takes the step to change anything. The result of this behavior is that he is always being portrayed as a victim of other people's actions because it never seems to be him, Beau, who is deciding about his own life.

3.4.1 The second-person narrative sequence in *Beau Is Afraid*

I have included *Beau Is Afraid* in my selection because, in the middle of this film, an extremely interesting inset appears that incorporates the second-person narrative. In this part of the film, there is a metadiegetic narrative that is imagined by Beau and is narrated by a metadiegetic narrator. This narrative includes another metadiegetic

⁵⁸ Mixing of genres is typical for postmodern and metamodern films. We can also see that in other examples that I am using in this thesis, *You* is a thriller romance with components of crime and horror, *The Office* is a documentary comedy and *Fleabag* is a tragicomic series based on a monologue play.

narrative within itself that describes the actions of Beau that are happening in the first metadiegetic story.

In *Beau Is Afraid*, the second-person narrative, similarly as in *You*, is represented by a voiceover. This voiceover appears only in this part of the film and it is logistically possible because it appears in a play that Beau is watching in a theater.

Beau is in a forest where he meets a pregnant woman that shows him a theater company she travels with. The company accepts Beau and invites him to a play. As Beau is on his way to the theater, a man asks him if he wants a costume because in their plays, they “blur the line between the audience and the players.”⁵⁹ This already gives a hint to an astute viewer that some narrative changes may occur. Beau takes a white shirt from the man and sits down in the audience. The play begins. There is an actor, grieving over his dead parents. As the actor is grieving, another character shows up, it is an angel wearing a mask over her face. She approaches the orphan and tells him that he has grieved well and that now it is time for him to go on a journey and build up his own life. As the orphan walks toward the path the angel has shown him, he notices chains on his leg. He reaches out for an axe to break them and as does so, we no longer look at the actor from the play, but it is Beau, standing on the stage, holding an axe in his hands. The voice of the angel resounds again and it orders Beau to go forward. After the angel leaves the scene, the second-person narrative appears.

“You will walk many miles. Dozens will become hundreds,
hundreds will become thousands. You will pass through countless
villages. But finally, one will speak to you, some deep, essential
part of you will recognize it, and you will say “This village is
mine.””⁶⁰

The second-person narrative is in the future tense. It describes what is happening on the screen but this future tense gives suggest that it is not happening, it is a story, that

⁵⁹ *Beau Is Afraid* [film] dir. Ari ASTER. USA (2023)

⁶⁰ *Beau Is Afraid* [film] dir. Ari ASTER. USA (2023).

could be true in the future but in the present, as Beau is watching a play, this story is nothing but hope for a bright future.

And so, the narrator keeps on telling Beau's story, how he will learn a trade, make his own house, meet a woman, have children, and have a happy life. Through the encouragement that was given to him by the narrator, Beau manages to live a happy life without fears and struggles, which shows in his physical appearance as he looks healthier and more confident. Beau probably perceives himself like this in the future. He imagines himself happy and confident if only given the right conditions. He thinks that a village "will speak to him" and will help him become the person he wants to be. Even in his fantasy he cannot rely on himself and is insecure about his decisions. He settles somewhere because he is told that he will. It is no accident that the narrator is using the second person that is telling Beau what to do. In his fantasy this is what he wants, he requires that someone tells him what to do to be happy. Also, Beau wants help but he does not want to feel guilt for wasting anyone's time. That's why the second-person narrative also works. The voice does not belong to a real person but only exists and tells him what happens next and he can give himself over to it.

The narrator announces a storm coming to Beau's village. It separates him from his family and he finds himself in "a strange country"⁶¹. He tries to look for his family "for days, then weeks, then months, so many months that you will come to lose count"⁶². But Beau won't find his family and spends the rest of his life searching for them. As he has dropped from exhaustion, an entity similar to the angel from the beginning of his journey but dressed all in black stands next to him and asks him:

WOMAN IN BLACK: Oh, sweetheart... Why are you crying?⁶³

⁶¹ Beau Is Afraid [film] dir. Ari ASTER. USA (2023)

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

And this is the first time in the metadiegetic narration that Beau speaks as he replies:

BEAU: Because I've searched for my family all my life, to the end of my life, and I'm still alone.

WOMAN IN BLACK: You should not be crying for your misfortunes, for your own sins. You also have been searched for, but you're so lost in your own selfishness that no one could ever find you. Confess. Before your peers.

BEAU: But what did I do?

WOMAN IN BLACK: You know. Confess.

BEAU: I've been a coward. My whole life.⁶⁴

The passage in which Beau talks finally resembles Beau which is seen in the rest of the movie. His voice is full of exhaustion but also submission and fear. Beau is laying on the ground, hopeless and alone which is how he feels in the real world.

"You will confess everything."⁶⁵ the narrator takes the word again and Beau is silently following her narration. He wakes up "at the foot of the village"⁶⁶ where he lived with his family. The surrounding changes. Until then he was moving in the theater scenery but now he is surrounded by a real forest again. Like the forest in which the actual Beau is finding himself. He unrecognized walks through the village where he goes to see a play. As Beau comes to sit in the audience, the second-person voiceover has disappeared and, on the stage, a woman is narrating a story to three young men. The story is told in the third person, and it tells Beau's metadiegetic story.

WOMAN ON THE STAGE: Over the last forty years, his memory had faltered to the extent he couldn't remember his own mother's face, but just by breathing in the air, he was seized by the absolute

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

certainty that this was his village. Nobody remembered him, and even though all of his neighbors had been replaced by younger generations, he recognized everything, and somehow he too felt recognized. His home had waited for him, just as loyally as he has searched for it. Even the sight of the evening sun, casting slashes of amber light across a familiar chimney, sent him reeling into a flood of memories.

ONE OF THE BOYS ON THE STAGE: What did our father do next? And where was the village? We only saw it as boys and have no memories! Please, tell us how to find it.

OTHER BOY: No, wait... What did he do next?

WOMAN ON THE STAGE: He was delirious with hunger and only had enough money for one bowl of soup, but before he could spend it, he was invited to a special play. It was already in progress, but he felt compelled to go in, so he spent his last dollar. Not long after sitting in, he saw that the details of the plot were impossibly similar to those of his own life, and there were three young men on the stage who looked remarkably like himself.

BEAU: This is me!

WOMAN ON THE STAGE: And he rose up, at once exhilarated and terrified that it might not be true, and he announced...

BEAU: This is my story!

WOMAN ON THE STAGE: And the three young men immediately recognized the man as their father.⁶⁷

The metadiegetic narration that Beau is finding himself in, switches to another metadiegetic level. The actual audience is now watching a play in a play in a film. Interestingly, it is partly the narration form that bounds the two plays and also the different actors and scenery. However, the forest theater itself in Beau's reality, appears to be the same as the one in the second metadiegetic play.

The third-person narration fluidly continues the second-person narrative's story. First, it repeats some parts that were said in the second person with some additional

⁶⁷ Ibid.

information, and it proceeds to meet Beau's actions in the present. The narrator, however, even when describing what is happening in the present, continues to use consistently the past tense.

The three young men then walk down the stage and hug Beau. They ask about their family and Beau replies that they had a grandmother, but she had died. And when they ask about how their grandfather died, the scene suddenly changes and there is Beau's mother by his bed as he was little, and asked her the same question. She narrates to him a story of his father's death and tells him he had died the night he was conceived by finishing into her. And that he died because of a heart murmur from which Beau suffers as well. The same way as Beau's grandfather and great-grandfather had died. When the camera comes back to the forest, one of Beau's sons asks him if that was a lie. Beau responds that it wasn't, looking surprised by that question. He then adds that that's why he has never been with anyone and the boys, realizing the inconsistency of his words ask him how he could have conceived them. Beau doesn't know what to say. He stares at them for a moment and then he finds himself standing close to his original seat in the forest theater again. There is a play being performed on the stage that has nothing to do with Beau's experience, which implies that all happened only in his mind.

At the moment when Beau realizes he couldn't have had sons if what his mother had told him was true, there is no narration. The play he imagined is over, Beau has lost his "guardian angel" and no longer anyone tells him how he will decide nor how what he will do. And as the decision depends only on himself, the fear of his mother sways it as he sits back down in his place at the forest theater.

The second-person narrative arouses a sense of control in the addressee. In *Beau Is Afraid*, the narrative form symbolizes a part of his personality that the author is trying to portray in this part of the film. Narration, guidance, a guardian angel, that is

what Beau needs or thinks he needs to be happy. A homodiegetic narrator⁶⁸ that follows him everywhere, tells him about his great future without his omnipresent fears and helps him when needed. This figure might represent a parent. The second person goes very well with expressing parents' discourse that is often used to determine or navigate children's future as "You will be a doctor." or "You will come here or else I'll count to three."

3.5 The use of direct addresses in TV series

Narratology is omnipresent on television, it can be seen in series or films themselves as well as in commercials or even sports matches. The narrator can be often inconspicuous and unobtrusive.

The television often works as a unit, independent of the outer world, "the television screen affords access only one way"⁶⁹ and the viewer for a long time was expected to work in that one-way idea of "voyeur"⁷⁰ silently watching when nobody sees him, close to reality yet in the safety of their home. Metafiction is trying to disrupt this scheme and involve the viewer in the story. One of the techniques for viewers' involvement is directly addressing the viewer which works in many popular series and apart from its metafictional effect it also manages to make interesting narrative changes and give out information.

⁶⁸ I suggest the narrator be homodiegetic because both, the narrator and the Angel figure are played by the same actress, Maev Beaty, therefore they are likely to be perceived as a single character.

⁶⁹ WALLACE, David Foster. *E unibus pluram: Television and US fiction. Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 1993, 13: 151-151., pp. 152

⁷⁰ Ibid.

For example, in *The Office*⁷¹, the characters often talk to the cameras in a special room and react to what we just saw on the screen or share some information. Sometimes the cameras follow other characters as they explain things, as in *The Pilot* where Michael goes around the office and explains many things about himself and the people around him. However, he does not only explain things without context but is very aware of the audience behind him that he wants to make laugh or show off in front of it.

MICHAEL SCOTT: Pam Beesly. Pam has been with us for... forever, right Pam?

PAM BEESLY: Well, I don't know.

MICHAEL SCOTT: If you think she's cute now, you should've seen her a couple of years ago.⁷²

In this scene, Michael turns at the audience and tries to make it laugh, also he is trying to present himself as someone cool, the guy to hang out with. On the actual viewer, this has a different effect, Michael appears to be embarrassing, egoistic, and mean. Nonetheless, the contrast between how we see Michael and how he is trying to present himself creates humorous situations. As in the example above where he comments on Pam's age and appearance. What is in his eyes a normal and acceptable conversation, in the viewer's eyes looks inappropriate, but it also doesn't make sense given that he is way older and worse looking than Pam.

The comments of the individual characters alter based on the episode's story and their persona. In some cases, the utterances sound as if they were a response to a question, however, no question is ever heard. It is only in the later seasons that the actual viewers find out that the purpose of the cameras in the office is for a documentary that is supposed to follow a typical work environment for a large amount of time. After this confession, the series even includes the crew that is

⁷¹ *The Office* [series] cr. Greg DANIELS, Ricky GERVAIS, Stephen MERCHANT (2005-2013)

⁷² *The Office*, *The pilot* [episode] dir. Ken KWAPIS (2005)

filming the documentary in the storyline, so the crew becomes intradiegetic. This revelation also makes it doubtful whether the characters speak to the future audience of the documentary or rather to the crew, that is present in the room and probably is asking them questions that are being cut out.

There are indications that the series is not the documentary itself because some scenes would have to be played out as when the documentary premieres or when the people from the office go to the Q&A of the documentary. The actual viewer is likely provided with information that this is a comedy series and the people in it are actors and that throughout the years this series became very famous, therefore the series allows this inconsistency within itself.

The direct speeches themselves not only provide information and create humorous situations, but they also bond the characters with the viewer. There is a tone of confidentiality and often secrecy of the things the characters say, often only to the viewer. Often the characters in the scenes look right into the camera, often when something hilarious happens but also in other cases, almost as if they were saying “I know you know.”

The sense of secrecy also comes from the movement of the camera. In some shots, the camera is making clear that the viewer is not supposed to be there and that they are observing something very private. Some of the indications are handheld cameras, hiding behind some objects, or sudden lowering of the camera as if it weren't recording.

Another example of addressing the viewer is Phoebe Waller-Bridge's *Fleabag* (2016-2019). The series is based on a play by Waller-Bridge that she wrote and performs. The series starts with Phoebe Waller-Bridge standing by the front door and then unexpectedly turning at the camera saying:

“You know that feeling when a guy you like sends you a text at 2 o'clock on a Tuesday night asking if he could come and find you and you've accidentally made it out like you've just got in yourself so you have to get out of bed, drink a half bottle of wine, get in the

shower, shave everything, dig out some Agent Provocateur business, suspender belt, and wait by the door until the buzzer goes - (buzzer goes) and then you open the door to him like you'd almost forgotten he was coming over."⁷³

Fleabag begins by addressing the viewer, immediately making them a part of her perception of the world. She invites them into her problems and is aware of them. Again a tone of confidentiality is present. As if she could tell you anything because she is aware of the fact that you are only an observer and you cannot do anything. Differently, from *The Office*, *Fleabag* is the only one who shares her thoughts with the viewers and she doesn't try to give an explanation why is she talking to the audience. Also in *Fleabag*, what she says can be only heard by the audience,⁷⁴ however, in *The Office*, even though the utterances of the characters have a confidential tone as well, they take place in actual time and space and therefore can be and often are overheard by other characters. In her talks to the audience, *Fleabag* introduces the other characters and walks them through her life situations. Of course, her talk is not only informational, she tries to entertain the audience as well when she makes faces to the camera as she could've made to a friend.

Fleabag's suffering from the trauma of losing a friend is surely a motivation for such a familiarity with the audience. Her talking to the "non-visible" audience could be a way of working through a loss in her life and a feeling of guilt. Many times, during the series she states her unhappiness, loneliness, and hopelessness, however, these feelings are often misread for anger or rudeness. As we follow *Fleabag*, it seems as if she was asking for help or understanding and the only ones who could give it to her are we, the viewers that are trapped in a one-way communication with her. However, at the end of the first season, *Fleabag* finally manages to leave talking to the camera

⁷³ *Fleabag* [series] dir. Harry BRADBEER, Tim KIRKBY (2016-2019)

⁷⁴ In the second season of *Fleabag* this aspect changes and another character hears what *Fleabag* is saying. In this thesis I will be focusing on the first season in which only the viewers hear *Fleabag*'s comments.

behind and talk about her problems with an actual human being instead of escaping them.

The Fleabag series was adapted from a play of the same name, which has only one actor – Phoebe Waller-Bridge, and has a form of a monologue. In the play, Waller-Bridge narrates Fleabag’s story, impersonates other characters as they talk to her, and has dialogues with them. This sort of format recalls a stand-up comedy performance and gives an impression of Fleabag telling a story. In the series, however, many things are explained visually and therefore it saves many passages from the play. Fleabag turning to the camera with her comments or additional information is a way of maintaining the overall intimate atmosphere of the play while moving into a more visual and approachable environment.

4 Conclusion

This bachelor’s thesis was aiming to approach different ways of second-person storytelling in literature and cinema. Studying narratology in other fields than literature is not an easy task, however, it is necessary in order to understand how different media achieve similar effects on their audiences, especially in the age that is called the “metamodern” era.

Calvino’s *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler* after over 30 years of its publishing arouses the attention of literary theory and I think it is important that it does so. The second-person narrative is a very interactive form of narration and in the “age of secondary orality,” as Kacandes calls it, or attention-oriented society, it is important that we are aware of narrative changes that are happening around us in all fields of literature, cinema, streaming platforms, video games, journalism, advertising, etc.

For example, in the case of video games, we can see that interaction with a story can be a useful tool to maintain players' attention and it probably has and will have more impact on the development of literature and its perception. A similar effect may have also other media, as when the creator of the series *You* says about the book "it felt like binging a great TV show."⁷⁵

The influence of different art forms on themselves is undoubtable. Therefore, I think perceiving film and literature through the form of narrative and disengaging from the category of a "form of art" is a very useful tool to analyze narrative changes in contemporary art and society.

Resumé (CZ)

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vyprávěním v druhé osobě v literatuře a ve filmu. V úvodu se práce věnuje literární teorii vztahující se k tomuto zvláštnímu druhu vyprávění a zabývá se texty největších odborníků na vyprávění v druhé osobě, Briana Richardsona, Gérarda Genetta, Moniky Fludernik a Irene Kacandes.

Stať práce pojednává o vyprávění v druhé osobě u vybraných textů, jednoho filmu a tří serialů. Vybranými texty jsou *Když jedné zimní noci cestující* od Itala Calvina a *Ty* od Caroline Kepnes. Oba tyto texty jsou skvělými ukázkami vyprávění v druhé osobě. Calvinovo dílo je jakousi modlou teoretiků vyprávění v druhé osobě a zároveň jedním z nejslavnějších děl napsaných tímto způsobem. *Ty* od Caroline Kepnes je velmi novou a poněkud kontroverzní ukázkou vyprávění v druhé osobě, která vytváří příjemný kontrast ke Calvinovu *Cestujícímu*. Další díla, kterými se práce zabývá jsou audiovizuálního formátu. Jedná se o seriál *Ty*, jehož předlohou je již výše zmíněná stejnojmenná kniha Caroline Kepnes, pasáž z filmu *On se bojí*

⁷⁵ BUILD series, 2019, Penn Badgley, Shay Mitchell, Elizabeth Lail, Sera Gamble & Caroline Kepnes Talk Lifetime's "YOU", YouTube Video, [cit. 25.6.2023], dostupné z:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StuFfLouaNw>

(2013) od režiséra Ariho Astera a dva televizní seriály, *Kancl* (2005-2013) a *Potvora* (2016-2019).

Cílem bakalářské práce je ukázat různé umělecké přístupy k vyprávění v druhé osobě v odlišných formátech a poukázat na jejich podobnosti či odlišnosti.

Resumé (EN)

This thesis focuses on the second-person narrative in literature and film. The introduction contains literary theory on this unusual storytelling method and it discusses texts of the foremost experts on the second-person narrative – Brian Richardson, Gérard Genette, Monika Fludernik, and Irene Kacandes.

The body of the thesis contains the second-person narrative in specific texts, one film, and three series. The chosen texts are *If on a winter's night a traveler* by Italo Calvino and *You* by Caroline Kepnes. Both of these works are great showcases of second-person storytelling. Calvino's novel is an idol of second-person theorists and one of the most famous ones written in this manner. *You* by Caroline Kepnes is a very new and fairly controversial use of this storytelling method, which creates a pleasant contrast to Calvino's *CESTUJICI*. Other works discussed in this thesis are audiovisual. They are the series *You*, which are an adaptation of the aforementioned novel by Caroline Kepnes, a scene from the movie *Beau is Afraid* (2013) by the director Ari Aster and two television series, *The Office* (2005 - 2013) and *Fleabag* (2016 - 2019).

The aim of this thesis is to show different artistic approaches to second-person narration in different formats and media and to demonstrate their similarities and differences.

Resumé (IT)

Questa tesi si concentra sulla narrazione in seconda persona nella letteratura e nel cinema. L'introduzione presenta la teoria letteraria su questo inusuale metodo narrativo e discute i testi dei principali esperti sulla narrazione in seconda persona -Brian Richardson, Gérard Genette, Monika Fludernik e Irene Kacandes.

Il corpo della tesi contiene la narrazione in seconda persona in specifici testi, un film e tre serie. I testi scelti sono *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* di Italo Calvino e *Tu* di Caroline Kepnes. Entrambe queste opere sono grandi esempi di narrazione in seconda persona. Il romanzo di Calvino è un'icona per gli studiosi del secondo- persona e uno dei più famosi scritti in questo modo. *Tu* di Caroline Kepnes è un uso molto recente e piuttosto controverso di questo metodo narrativo, che crea un piacevole contrasto con *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*. Altri lavori discussi in questa tesi sono di natura audiovisiva. Si tratta della serie *You*, che sono un adattamento del suddetto romanzo di Caroline Kepnes, una parte del film *Beau ha paura* (2023) diretto da Ari Aster e due serie televisive, *The Office* (2005-2013) e *Fleabag* (2016-2019).

Lo scopo di questa tesi è mostrare diverse approcci artistici alla narrazione in seconda persona in diversi formati e media e dimostrarne le somiglianze e le differenze.

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