Week 5

**Critical**

**Describe how metafiction is used in any one of the readings from Week 5. What effect does the use of metafiction have on the narrative, and why might the author have chosen to use metafiction in this way?**

The metafiction narration used in *If On A Winter’s Night a Traveler* by Italo Calvino utilises strong fourth wall breaks and reader incorporation to make the story more relatable and memorable. Here, the author stages the reader as the main character of the story and sets them in a second person style of writing. The author breaks the fourth wall by adding himself into the story and conversing with the reader, you:

“I am not at all the sort of person who attracts attention, I am an anonymous Presence against an even more anonymous background. If You, reader, couldn’t help picking me out among all the people getting off the train and continued following me in my to-and-fro-ing between bar and telephone, this is simply because I am called “I” and this is the only thing you know about me, but this alone reason enough for to invest a part of yourself in the stranger “I’“– (Calvino, 1982, p17).

Ultimately, this draws the reader in as it asks the readers opinion, it makes the events that are happening happen to the reader. This form of metafiction serves as a reminder to the reader of how themes in the story relate to real life, by acting as a mirror unto reality (Waugh, 1984). By placing the reader in the story to allow the reader to draw more parallels which can make the story and the situations more believable. The story is happening to them rather than a plain character which can in turn make the reader more connected to the story which may be beneficial for the author.

Authors predominately use fourth wall breaks and reader incorporation for a unique form of conveying a story. The second person references to you, the reader, becomes intrusive, allowing for the reader’s attention to be held for longer to convey a point or simply tell an entertaining uniquely set narrative, alike in *If On A Winter’s Night a Traveler*. This engages the reader differently to how they usually would in non-metafiction to leave a lasting impression.

Reference:

Calvino, I. (1982). *If On A Winter's Night a Traveler*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Waugh, P. (1984). *Metafiction: the Theory and Practise of Self-Conscious Fiction*. London: Methuen.