

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

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UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF – M'SILA



FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES

DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF LETTERS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE

STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Gender Disparities and Stereotypes Oppositions in Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Master's Degree

Candidates

Ms. Sara SAOUDI

Ms. Meriem SLIMANI

Board of Examiners

Mrs. Karima Laouidji	University of M'sila	Chairperson
Dr. Mohammed Gouffi	University of M'sila	Supervisor
Dr. Abderrazzaq Ghafsi	University of M'sila	Examiner

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DIDICATION

No matter what I will say, it would not be enough to express how much I am grateful for YOU, and this pronoun refers to everybody helped in pushing me forward, my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, all my teachers. And those people who had ease the path for me to go beneath the storms. I want to say one last thing “Here I am! after all the pain you saw me through.. Dear family, I hope you are proud. I love you from the bottom of my heart!”

SARA.

DIDICATION

To God, to myself, to my family and to my friends.

MERIEM

ABBREVIATIONS

IWNT: *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler.*

STEM: science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

ABSTRACT

The present dissertation scrutinizes the portrayal of the female characters in *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* by Italo Calvino. More specifically, the novel is a meta-fictional text that is written in epistolary style in order to offer the readers a space of exploring the idea of being the female protagonist and the victim at same time. In this regard, the study attempts to trace the ways in which women are socially categorized and culturally positioned in this postmodern novel. This study is significant in the sense it sheds light on how women are perceived in the postmodern Italian society. Put under a feminist framework which includes De Beauvoir's notion of objectification and otherness coupled with Bell Hooks views of Intersectionality, this study aims to demonstrate how stereotypes shape women's image and how disparities confine their lives. Besides, the work endeavors to glean an understanding of women's reaction to their social and cultural inferiorization. The research argues that the female's misrepresentation brings to the surface an utterly submissive woman who has to incontestably accept social and cultural marginalization.

Keywords: Stereotypes, Disparities, Female, Social and cultural marginalization.

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INTRODUCTION

The portrayal of women in literature has often reflected the idea that they are mere shadows of men or are characterized by weakness. Italian postmodern literature is no exception, and Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (*Se Una Notte D'inverno Un Viaggiatore*) is a prime example. The novel reveals the tendency to objectify women and view them as a less valued or minority sex. This dissertation will examine this idea of objectifying women and considering them solely as a minority.

Discussing the issue of gender is a complex topic that requires in-depth research. The examination of gender disparities and stereotypes in Italo Calvino's *IWNT* is a particularly important and unique area that requires interpretation by researchers. However, there are few studies that have explored *IWNT* as a corpus, which underscores the novelty and significance of this work in the research area.

The fascinating exploration of the relationship between the author and the reader in Calvino's *IWNT* makes it a unique postmodernist literary work. Therefore, it is not surprising that many modern critics and researchers have taken a keen interest in studying it. While a lot

of these critics analyze the novel with a reader response theory, few have offered alternative perspectives. Some have chosen feminist theory as their lens for interpreting Calvino's work, recognizing the novel's portrayal of female characters and their representation in postmodern Italian society.

In his paper "The Power Behind the Pronoun: Narrative Games in Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*," Inge Fink argues that the love story between the male protagonist reader and Ludmilla is a portrayal of the relationship between books and their readers. He asserts that Calvino views the romance of reading as no different from the romance of lovemaking. Fink supports his argument with a quote from Calvino, stating that our desire for the text and its pleasures ensures the existence of narrative discourse. However, Fink's interpretation of the novel overlooks the masculine discourse inherent in the portrayal of the love story. By failing to recognize this, Fink reinforces the objectification of women and denies them agency and a real voice. This interpretation suggests that neither Calvino nor Fink view this issue as problematic.

Next, Christina Mazzoni, a famous critic who has also shown a great interest in studying this literary work. In her 1993 published paper "Reconstruction the Incipit: Narrative Beginnings in Calvino's *if on a winter's night a traveler* and Freud's Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis". she raises the idea of different readers, and different reading styles that the novel was rich of, and the great focus in her study was on the reader and his role,

but still she fails to address one more important matter which is the absence of female

reader in the book .The novel is solely addressed to male readers, and there is zero attention given to female readers

As Christina Warren F. Motte 's focus while studying Calvino's works was on the reader and on the relationship between the author and the reader. In one of his published critiques on this matters he sheds light on Calvino's writing style and how he has subverted the traditional separation of Labor in Literature, which lead to change the role of the reader, in *IWNT* for example the reader will find that he is the main character of the work he is reading. The idea of subversion roots goes back to the new writing techniques that postmodernist writers as Calvino has adopted. Along with Motte, many critics have tackled the consistent and strong presence of postmodernist elements in Calvino's novel in their papers, especially the idea of subversion and the deconstruction of metanarratives. However, they all fail to shed light on a more important matter, which is the consistent failure of Calvino to deconstruct the gender role as a metanarrative.

While the few critics who had a different opinions about Italo Calvino's *IWNT*, This dissertation is another attempt to interpret and study Calvino's novel through a feminist lens. This chosen theory is expected to serve in tackling the issue of the misrepresentation of women in the novel which was highly ignored in several previous critiques.

Despite the significance of the issue, the topic of gender disparities and stereotypes in Italo Calvino's *IWNT* has been largely neglected in previous research. To address this gap, the aim of this research is to examine the portrayal of women in the novel and highlight the

different views on females in modern society. Additionally, this study seeks to explore individual perceptions of the position of women in the context of the novel's themes and narratives.

This research aims to provide a valuable reference for anyone interested in understanding Italo Calvino's portrayal of women in *IWNT*. By examining the themes and narratives in the novel, this study seeks to shed light on Calvino's views of females and their role in society. It is hoped that this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the novel and its significance in the context of gender studies. That is what gives a huge importance to what the research will discuss. And therefore, the dissertation's objectives shall give the answers to many questions raised by the novel readers concerning the position of females, using feminism as the theory which will help examine the portrayal of female characters in the novel and their representation in postmodern Italian society. The two main theorists utilized in this feminist approach are Simone de Beauvoir and Bell Hooks. De Beauvoir's concept of objectification and otherness highlights the ways in which women are relegated to the margins of society and are often viewed as objects rather than autonomous individuals. Hooks' theory of intersectionality emphasizes that women's experiences are shaped by multiple factors, including race, class, and gender. By applying these feminist frameworks to the analysis of the female characters in Calvino's novel, this study sheds light on the ways in which stereotypes and cultural norms limit women's lives and reinforce their marginalization.

For this reason, the research is womes to fulfill in a certain gap in the previous done researches i.e. gender disparities and stereotypes oppositions. Thus, it is going to bring out the new ideas hidden beneath the corpus. By the end of this research, the reader is going to be

able to understand the main shown gender disparities between males as superiors and females as inferiors, And how did the author deal with this idea in his tackled work. In addition to the clearer ideas that will be acquired on the stereotypes preformed all along the novel chapters. This study is an attempt to show why critics examined *IWNT* as an antifeminist work, and how they did argue that Calvino had a patriarchal society' view. *IWNT* is a metafictional postmodern novel, where postmodern styles are highly used, as Waugh stated "I have been amazed at the number of general accounts of postmodernism which do not even mention gender when clearly one of the most obvious and radical shifts in late modernity has been in the relations between women and men" (1992, p.195). That is why the tackled work is considered as a great postmodern masterpiece. It has commonly been assumed that Calvino has always been dealing with feminism, as de Lauretis states: "Calvino ... feels the necessity ... to engage or deal with feminism ... on the other hand he ... put[s] us [back] in our place" (1989, p.144). Meaning that *IWNT* was not the first work that Calvino underestimates women in.

The first chapter will firstly discuss the idea of how women have always been resisting objectification and otherness, specifically in the postmodern society. Secondly, the chapter will explain how feminism rose as a defense mechanism in the postmodern era. Lastly there will be some examples on how women used the pen as a soft weapon, as examples Simone De Bouvoire and Bell Hook were chosen.

The second chapter primarily will shed the light on gender disparities in the tackled work,

and how female characters in the novel were less presented in a way that shapes a wrong perception on females. Next, there will be an examination of stereotype oppositions in *IWNT* as a postmodern work. Altogether, this study is devoted for examining the claim that female characters are mostly underestimated, misrepresented and neglected in this work.

CHAPTER ONE

SOCIOHISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Throughout the course of history, women have struggled to gain a significant role in society. Until modern times, they came along a pretty remarkable success in achieving equality between them and the opposite sex. However, this journey of struggles and of attempts to end it, seem to have no denouncing end. Women of the postmodern era continue to face multitudes of discrimination and their position in society is still decided upon the traditional and stereotypical norms; the patriarchal society is still a reality, and its structures and values remain embedded within many cultures and institutions where the disparities between the two genders still exist. Women are determined as the passive and the submissive other whereas men are the central and the ruling self. Moreover, women are still being treated as objects and not as full human beings by reducing them to their physical appearance with less regard to their real autonomy and agency. This chapter is going to address the ways by which women are treated as the less valuable other, as it will explore the means by which women were being objectified.

1- Women Resisting Objectification and Otherness in Postmodern Society

Women have for long been considered as the "other" in society, viewed as secondary, different, and always less than men. For centuries, women were defined primarily in relation to men as wives, daughters and mothers, and they were seen as the emotional and the irrational "other half" compared to rational, capable men who represented the human norm. This othering of women has helped justify their exclusion from positions of power, influence and equal opportunities.

Despite the implementation of legislation such as the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, gender disparities in the workplace persist. One of the most commonly discussed issues is the gender pay gap, which refers to the difference in earnings between men and women. Despite laws and regulations aimed at ensuring equal pay for equal work, this gap persists around the world, even in countries with strong defense of women rights.

According to a report by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, in the United States, women earn only 82 cents for every dollar earned by men, even when they hold the same job positions and have similar levels of education and experience. A study by McKinsey & Company found that closing the gender pay gap could add 12 trillion to the global economy by 2025, emphasizing the economic benefits of achieving gender equality in the workplace. Next, the lack of women in the higher-paying fields likes STEM, trades, business, and certain technical jobs which are often seen as “masculine” jobs, and as Ertharin Cousin has

put it straight and clear in her interview with the Politico magazine

“Despite decades of notable progress ,at home and abroad, a reality in which opportunities are not defined by gender has yet to be universally achieved” (2019) .The factors that might have contributed in this pay disparity are the stereotypes about women’s abilities and about their fundamental roles in society , and the unconsciously inherited discriminations and bias about them. Thus, from a very young age girls are less likely to be encouraged to pursue higher-paid jobs, and they are more likely guided to pursue lower-paid occupations such as teaching, nursing, and administrative jobs, and even when they pursue higher-paid jobs their performance is always less valued than men’s performance and is underestimated. As a result young girls career choices, opportunities, and potential earnings are limited.

“There’s slightly more women than men in the world. Over fifty two percent of the World’s population is female, but most of the position of power and prestige are occupied by men.” (Steinem, 1981).

Beside the gender wage gap, the previously illustrated quote by Steinem suggest another form of otherness that women is facing today which is the lack of representation in leadership positions for women. Women are misrepresented in nearly every industry, including politics, business, and academia, and they are absent at the table of decision making. Male dominance in the ruling field and in positions of power may have made sense in the past when power was linked to one’s physical strength, and for that males were more likely to rule because of their strong physicality. However, in the modern world power

is determined by other factors such as intelligence, innovation, and creativity. Both men and women can be equally competent in these areas. Therefore, male dominance in the ruling field is no longer justifiable.

In the post-modern times men still hold the most powerful positions and are expected to be the primary decision-makers while women are often relegated to subordinate roles, and are excluded from making up decision even for their own personal matters , and the decision are rather made by any male member in their family with disregard to their choices which is especially the case for many girls in some of the third world societies. This lack of representation not only limits the perspectives and experiences brought to the table for women, but it also sends a message to young girls that they are incapable of achieving these positions and of controlling and managing their own lives, and thus must remain subordinate to men. And, as another feminist interviewed by The Politico Magazine put it ‘The sooner we understand that the lack of women in leadership roles holds back not only women, but all people, the sooner we will be able to advance society as a whole.’ (Klobuchar, 2019).

Another challenge that is faced by women in the contemporary society that has served as well in hindering their progress in society is female objectification. Some feminist critics argued that women are objectified in every sphere, and the media has played a huge role in perpetuating this objectification, and that postmodern women continue to face objectification and the damaging effects of patriarchal attitudes towards their bodies and worth. By definition, objectification is treating women as an object or a thing rather than a full human

being with thoughts, feelings and agency. Women and their bodies have always been commodities and sources of pleasure and exploitation for patriarchal cultures and they continue to be as such in the twenty first century, and the modern way of it is through media, advertisement and popular culture. Women are highly objectified through mass media; their bodies are used to sell all sorts of products, by using them as background decorations in stores, malls, and in street postures. They are depicted as sexual objects in popular culture productions from movie productions to TV shows, literary production, music videos, and even in video games.

James Bond movies serve as a perfect example for the previously stated claim. Some feminist critics argued that their portrayal of women is sexist .They often depict women as mere sexual objects with little regard to their intelligence or agency. In his movie: THE GOLD FINGER, the protagonist is a skilled female pilot and a leader of a group of female pilots, but when the male protagonist arrives to the scene she was immediately seduced by Bond and was put back into her passive and submissive stereotypical position. Another movie that was accused of objectifying women and conveying a sexist image of them is THE WOLF OF THE STREET . It was highly criticized due to the scenes that feature the mistreatment and degradation of its female characters .

As movies, advertisement is another mess media that is highly spotted by the postmodern Man. As Jean Kilburn has explained at the beginning of her 1976 speech in Concord academy entitled “killing us softly” that ads does not only sell products, they also sell

thoughts, ideologies, and perspectives, And they teach us a lot about popularity and sexuality hence, they can be so influential on the audience's attitudes, behaviors, and their way of viewing things. The image of women that is being promoted on a daily basis through advertisement is false, unreal, artificial and it can only be achieved artificially .

From a very young age, girls learn about this image and strive to emulate it. However, they are blinded to the fact that this image is not real and impossible to emulate. Women around the globe are presented with a false and fake perception of how they should look. As Kilburn asserted in her speech while referring to the model on the screen shown to her audience “ even she does not look like this” (Kilburn,1967).

The pictures provided to the audience are not captured in a single shot. Rather, they go through a long and complex process before they are ready to be shared. This process has become increasingly complicated over time, at first there was the emphasize on the shot angle choice in order to capture the perfect lighting that would hide any facial imperfections that the model might have. With the development of technology, the internet world has offered many new tools for playing with the pictures taken of models and guaranteeing their perfect appearance, such as Photoshop. Photoshop is a program designed to edit photos, allowing for modifications to a person's physical structure, including skin tone, eye and hair color, and body shape. In modern times, filters have become popular and have facilitated access to these perfectly fake images of women. This easy access reinforces the side-effects of this unreal image, leading to the growth of the plastic surgery industry, where women are

dehumanized by altering their natural appearance and eradicating imperfections such as acne, dark circles, and scars.

Objectification can lead women to internalize the idea that their worth and value are linked solely to their physical appearance, rather than their talents, skills, or personality traits. They view their bodies as objects to be evaluated and judged by others, leading them to strive for the perfect body shape, flawless face, and terrific looks through consuming big clothing and cosmetic brands. The impact of objectification on women extends to their professions. Many women choose careers that rely on their physical appearance to make a living, such as modeling, beauty pageants, cheerleading, and certain forms of dancing. This issue has become even more widespread with the explosion of social media platforms.

Self-objectification may be the root cause of several mental and physical problems that women may experience. Women are under a lot of pressure to meet traditional beauty standards because they believe that their physical beauty is a measure of the amount of love, care and validation they should receive. Thus girls are always unsatisfied about their bodies and looks and continuously criticizing them. This can lead to negative body image, low self-esteem, depression, as it may also lead to unhealthy behaviors such as extreme dieting or cosmetic surgery, in an attempt to achieve an idealized physical appearance. These behaviors can be physically harmful, leading to malnutrition, injury, and even death.

According to UNICEF the objectification and the sexualization of girls in the media is linked to violence against women and girls worldwide so many women rights defenders are

unaware of the co-relation between objectifying women and the act of violence and harassment toward them . One of the first feminist critics that managed to draw the connection between them is Jean Kilburn. And as she has argued in one of latest updated version of her documentary “still killing us softly” (2008) that turning a human being into an object or a thing is the basic foundation of paving the road to violence and harassment justification and normalization. Media constantly portraying women as objects of pleasure normalizes the act of dominance and aggression against them. As a result boys and men tend to internalize that message and they legitimize violence and harassment.

Another serious problem caused by female objectification is its negative effect on men's attitudes toward women in relationships. Men may unconsciously expect women to be perfectly designed without any imperfections, as this is the perception created by the advertised image that media and advertising promote. Consequently, women are often locked into a quest for perfection and unrealistic expectations, which can have a detrimental impact on their ability to have healthy and functional relationships as adults.

2- Italy Under the Grip of Postmodernity: Modernized women

As many other females around the globe, Italian women have made their progress towards gender equality. However, they still face numerous challenges that continue to impact their lives in the modern world, such as gender-based violence, gender pay gap, limited access to healthcare and reproductive rights, and traditional gender roles .

One of the most significant issues is the continued existence of gender-based violence and harassment in Italian society. A 2019 report by the Italian National Institute of Statistics found that one in three Italian women aged 16-70 experienced some form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. Women there are often subject to catcalling, groping, and other forms of harassment in public spaces, which can leave them feeling unsafe and powerless.

Another issue facing Italian women is the persistent gender pay gap. Women in Italy earn an average of 7% less than men for the same work, with the gap widening for women in higher-paying professions. This disparity limits women's economic opportunities and can contribute to the feminization of poverty. Furthermore, women are often underrepresented in leadership positions in both the public and private sectors, limiting their ability to shape policy and decision-making.

The underrepresentation of women in politics and government is a significant issue in Italy. Despite making up roughly half of the population, women are significantly underrepresented in political leadership positions. In the 2018 election, only 31% of candidates were women, and women hold just 32% of seats in the Italian parliament. This underrepresentation can limit women's ability to influence policy decisions that impact their lives and can perpetuate the marginalization of women in Italian society.

Women in Italy also face challenges in accessing healthcare and reproductive rights. Although abortion is legal, it is heavily restricted, and many doctors refuse to perform the procedure, making it difficult for women to access safe and legal abortions. Additionally,

access to contraception and other reproductive healthcare services is limited, particularly in rural areas.

The Italian women is often expected to conform to traditional gender roles, limiting her opportunities for education and employment. As in in most of the world's societies women in Italy are often responsible for domestic tasks and child-rearing, which can make it difficult for them to pursue careers or further education. Furthermore, the cultural expectations placed on women can lead to discrimination and harassment in the workplace, particularly in male-dominated fields.

3- Feminism in Defense: The Rise of Feminism in The Postmodern Era

It is widely acknowledged that Present day feminism has made important progress in advocating for women rights. However, there is still work to be done in combating the wide spread othering and objectification of women in society. Unlike past-times, post-modern women are actively resisting discrimination and stereotypes, advocating for reforms, and working to transform both perceptions and policies in pursuit of real gender equality. This new women's activism holds a lot of promise to their position in society , and one of the main reasons behind this is the embracement of the intersectional feminism by women which suggest that women have different experiences of oppression and discrimination based on the intersection of gender with other identities, like race, class, ability, and age. As it seeks to address the various forms of oppression that women face.

Postmodern feminists are fighting against harmful perspectives that reduce women to stereotypes and commodities. They are educating the public, lobbying for policy changes, and empowering women to reclaim their humanity and dignity. Through social movements like #MeToo and Time's Up movements, feminists are speaking out against sexual harassment and assault, exposing how dominant views of women as objects contribute to a culture of abuse and unequal power. The voices and actions of activists, writers, celebrities and ordinary women are helping to reshape perceptions and trigger a long overdue cultural reckoning.

While still marginalized, feminist ideas about dismantling othering and objectification have entered the mainstream, imparting hope that a more just and humane world for women may lie ahead. What served in the growth of this movement is women coming together in communities to support, and uplift each other which created a sense of solidarity in the women-hood .

The #MeToo and Time's Up movements are two social movements that emerged in response to widespread sexual harassment and gender-based violence, particularly in the workplace. These movements have brought attention to the pervasive nature of sexual harassment and assault, and have led to increased awareness, activism, and policy changes aimed at addressing these issues.

The #MeToo movement began in 2017, when the Hashtag #MeToo was used on social media by women who had experienced sexual harassment and assault. The movement quickly gained momentum, with millions of people around the world sharing their stories and

experiences. As it was initially focused on raising awareness and breaking the silence around sexual harassment and assault, but it soon evolved into a broader movement for gender equality and social justice.

Next, Time's Up movement emerged in 2018, in response to the #MeToo movement and the widespread allegations of sexual harassment and assault in Hollywood and other industries. Time's Up is a legal defense fund and advocacy organization that aims to support survivors of sexual harassment and assault, and to promote gender equality and diversity in the workplace. The movement has raised millions of dollars to support survivors and has advocated for policy changes to prevent sexual harassment and assault in the workplace.

Both of the #MeToo and Time's Up movements have had a significant impact on public discourse around sexual harassment and assault, and have led to increased awareness and activism around these issues. The movements have also resulted in tangible policy changes, including new laws and regulations aimed at preventing sexual harassment and assault in the workplace such as sexual harassment training, many companies and organizations have implemented mandatory sexual harassment training for employees, aimed at increasing awareness and preventing harassment in the workplace. Awareness and preventing harassment in the workplace. Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs): Several states have passed laws limiting the use of NDAs in cases of sexual harassment or assault, in order to increase transparency and accountability. Workplace protections, several states and cities have passed laws aimed at preventing sexual harassment and assault in the workplace, including stronger

protections for workers who report harassment and increased penalties for employers who fail to address harassment complaints.

Many postmodern feminist activists have contributed significantly to the feminist movement over the years. Such as Gloria Anzalda, a Chicana feminist author and activist, she is best known for her work "Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza." , and is frequently recognized with helping to establish a new feminist rhetoric that is rooted in diversity. Her work examines the interaction of gender, race, and culture. . As it has contributed to the development of modern concepts of identity, culture, and power and is frequently regarded as a foundational text in postmodern feminist thought. Her work focuses on the value of appreciating cultural diversity while also highlighting the ways that dominant cultural norms can be oppressive to underprivileged groups.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, a legal expert and proponent of critical race theory, is credited with creating the word "intersectionality." Her work has been crucial in bringing attention to the ways that various oppressions, such racism and sexism, interact and reinforce one another. Crenshaw has written extensively about how intersectionality can be used in legal analysis, notably in the contexts of domestic abuse and job discrimination. Her work has been crucial in drawing attention to how traditional legal systems sometimes ignore the realities of women of color, who may encounter discrimination based on both their race. Additionally, Crenshaw has been a strong proponent of social justice and has collaborated with a number of groups to raise public awareness of issues involving racial, gender, and socioeconomic inequality. She

teaches law at Columbia and has won various honors and prizes for her efforts as an academic and activist.

These activists have contributed significantly to the postmodern feminist movement by questioning conventional gender norms and advocating for a more inclusive and intersectional view of feminism, along with many others who share their viewpoint. They set the way for subsequent generations of feminist activists to carry on the fight for gender equality and contributed to the formation of our understanding of gender and sexuality.

4.Feminist Fiction: The Pen as Women's Soft Weapon

Pen has always been the perfect way to well-express human's thoughts. Since females are still considered as a neglected minority, post-modern female writers are using their brilliant writing 'abilities to shed light on this long-standing issue.

In her 1949 book "" The Second Sex", Simon de Beauvoir gives a detailed analysis of women's oppression and a foundational tract of contemporary feminism. In This book de Beauvoir introduced the feminist concept of "woman" as "Other" in a patriarchal society that defines women in relation to men, instead of as independent subjects. She argued that women have historically been confined by gender roles and stereotypes that serve male interests, instead of being allowed to define themselves on their own terms. De Beauvoir's work used existentialist principles to examine how social conditions shape women's lives and limit their freedom and opportunities. Her work, along with those of other contemporary feminist thinkers, helped lay the philosophical groundwork for second-wave feminism in the

1960s and 1970s. She is widely regarded as one of the most influential feminist intellectuals of the 20th century. Her conception of woman as the marginalized "Other" and the idea that gender is a social construct rather than a biological inevitability fundamentally changed feminist discourse and activism. De Beauvoir identifies objectification and the male gaze as key ways in which women become "Others". She argues that women are often treated as objects for male pleasure and desire rather than recognized as conscious subjects with their own agency and freedom. She sees this mindset ingrained in male-dominated cultural institutions and discourses that consistently represent women in stereotypical, restricted roles. She asserts that for women to achieve true liberation and equality, they must first be recognized as full human and as subjects in their own right as autonomous beings not defined primarily in relation to men. Only then, in de Beauvoir's view, can women gain parity with men in social, political and economical life.

Another famous and an influential feminist author and theorist who tend to use literature as a weapon is Bell hook. She is a feminist theorist whose work has greatly contributed to feminist studies. Her book "Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center" is a seminal text that has been influential in shaping feminist thought. In this book, Hooks argues that feminist theory must be grounded in the experiences of women who are marginalized and oppressed, particularly women of color, and working-class women. She critiques the dominant feminist discourse of the time, which she saw as being primarily concerned with the issues and concerns of white, middle-class women. Hooks advocates for an intersectional approach to

feminist theory that recognizes the ways in which systems of oppression intersect and compound each other.

Hooks' work has been particularly influential in highlighting the ways in which race, class, and sexuality intersect with gender to shape women's experiences of oppression. She argues that these intersections are often overlooked by mainstream feminist discourse, which tends to focus on gender as the primary reason of oppression. By bringing attention to these intersections, Hooks has helped to expand the scope of feminist theory and to make it more inclusive and intersectional.

In addition to her critique of mainstream feminist discourse, Hooks also emphasizes the importance of the integration of theory and practice, in feminist activism. She argues that feminist theory must be grounded in the concrete experiences of women's lives, and that activism must be informed by theory. This emphasis has been influential in shaping feminist activism, particularly in the areas of anti-racism and anti-colonialism.

Hooks' work has had a significant impact on feminist studies, both in terms of theory and practice. Her insights have helped to expand the scope of feminist theory and to make it more inclusive and intersectional. By shedding the light on the experiences of marginalized women and advocating for a more intersectional approach to feminist theory, Hooks' work has made important contributions to the field of feminist studies., and it ensures that feminist activism is grounded in the concrete experiences of women's lives.

CHAPTER TWO:

GENDER DISPARITIES AND STEREOTYPES OPPOSITIONS IN IWNT

Italo Calvino's *IWNT* is a complex and multi-layered novel that explores a range of themes and issues. It is a self-reflexive novel that questions reading practices: it deconstructs conceptions of subjectivity: It is possible to claim that this undermines narrative authority and *rapes* literary traditions. As it may be expected, it is also attempting to reject metanarratives by disclosing how they were produced, although this excludes the gender metanarrative. One of the most prominent themes in the novel is the portrayal of gender roles and expectations.

As literary traditions inside the work are raped, so are the women within it in various ways through an act of violence that deprives them of any control. Throughout the novel, Calvino portrays female characters in a way that reinforces traditional gender stereotypes, positioning them as passive, submissive, and lacking agency or autonomy. This portrayal of women stands in stark contrast to the portrayal of male characters, who are typically depicted as active, assertive, and in control of their own lives. The gender disparities in the novel reflect broader societal attitudes towards gender roles and expectations. The novel reinforces traditional gender stereotypes that position women as subordinate to men and lacking agency.

This chapter analyzes and explores how the narrative portrays opportunities and expectations based on gender. By examining the characters, their interactions, and their social dynamics, the study aims to uncover the ways in which gender disparities are represented and the impact they have on characters' experiences and relationships

1- **Breaking The Glass Ceiling: Examining Gender Disparities in *IWNT***

Gender disparities in Italo Calvino's *IWNT* might be shown in the way female characters are portrayed in the novel. Many of the female characters are depicted as passive, submissive. They are often defined by their relationships with men rather than their own personalities or actions. For example, Ludmilla, one of the main female characters, is portrayed as a passive love interest rather than a fully developed character with her own motivations and desires. Similarly, Lotaria, a female academic, is often reduced to her physical appearance and sexual availability.

In contrast, male characters in the novel are typically depicted as active, assertive, and in control of their own lives. They are often defined by their actions and accomplishments rather than their relationships with women. For example, the male protagonist, referred to as "you" throughout the novel, is an active and curious character who actively seeks out new experiences and adventures.

Calvino was known as being a highly private individual who rarely made public appearances or participated in interviews. However, he did make a few exceptions for certain occasions, such as book launches and literary events. One such occasion was the launch of *IWNT* in 1979, which was attended by Calvino and several other prominent Italian writers and intellectuals. During the launch event, Calvino spoke briefly about the novel and its themes, including the idea of the reader as a character in the story. Apparently, the novelist didn't give any clarification about the idea of underestimating female characters. In fact de Lauretis

suggests that “Calvino seems unaware that there are women readers” (1989, p. 139). Calvino also participated in a number of interviews around the time of the novel's publication, in which he discussed various aspects of the book and his writing process. For example, in an interview with the Paris Review in 1984, he spoke about his interest in exploring the relationship between literature and technology, and how this theme was reflected in *IWNT*. In another interview with the New York Times in 1981, Calvino discussed his use of experimental narrative techniques in the novel, such as the fragmented structure and the use of second-person narration. He also talked about the novel's themes of identity, love, and the power of storytelling. As a matter of fact, while Italo Calvino did speak about his novel *IWNT* on several occasions, he was known to be a private individual who did not enjoy discussing his work in great detail, preferring instead to let the text speak for itself.

" 'You' asked Ludmilla what she was reading; she replied, 'I only read what you bring me.' You understood that she was telling you that she had no personal interest in books, that her curiosity was limited to what you were able to arouse in her." (Calvino, 1981.)

This extract brightly shows how Ludmilla, a female character, is portrayed as a passive and dependent love interest. Her reading habits are not driven by her own interests or desires, but rather by the male protagonist's choices. This reinforces the traditional gender stereotype that women are subordinate to men and lack autonomy and agency. Ludmilla's response suggests that she does not have a strong independent identity outside of her relationship with "you," further reinforcing this stereotype. It's worth noting that this portrayal of Ludmilla is just one

aspect of the novel's complex portrayal of gender roles and expectations.

In addition, male characters are frequently characterized by their deeds and achievements, whereas female characters are defined by their connections with males. Ludmilla, for example, is characterized primarily by her relationship with the male protagonist, who is referred to as "you" in the narrative. Similarly, the female characters targeted for violence by Ermes Marana are defined by their relationship to him rather than their own personalities. Additionally, by depicting men as protectors and women as helpless, the narrative perpetuates traditional gender stereotypes. When "you" first encounter Lotaria, for example, she is characterized as helpless and in need of protection from a group of males who are harassing her. This perpetuates the notion that women are vulnerable and must be safeguarded by men.

Furthermore, the novel reinforces gender disparities through its portrayal of emotions. Female characters are often depicted as being more emotional and sensitive than male characters. For example, Ludmilla is described as being "moody" and "temperamental" at times, while male characters are depicted as being more rational and level-headed.

"You know Ludmilla well enough to know that she is moody, but you cannot tell whether she is in a good mood or a bad one today." (Calvino, 1981.)

This extract shows how Ludmilla is portrayed as being moody and temperamental, which reinforces traditional gender stereotypes that position women as being more emotional and sensitive than men. The fact that "you" cannot tell whether she is in a good mood or a bad one

suggests that Ludmilla's emotions are unpredictable and difficult to understand, further reinforcing this stereotype.

Moreover, the novel reinforces gender disparities by portraying women's bodies as objects of desire. Female characters are often described in terms of their physical appearance and sexual availability. For example, when "you" first meets Ludmilla, he describes her as having "long, slim legs" and "a delicate face".

The novel goes deeper in insisting on gender disparities through its portrayal of power dynamics. Male characters are often depicted as holding more power and agency than female characters. For example, when "you" and Lotaria engage in a sexual encounter, he is depicted as being in control of the situation.

In another way, gender disparities are shown also through the language use and narrative structure. The novel is written in second-person perspective, with the male protagonist referred to as "you" throughout. This reinforces the idea that the male perspective is the default or normative perspective, while the female perspective is marginalized or secondary.

After all, gender inequalities in *IWNT* mirror social beliefs toward gender roles and expectations. The story perpetuates traditional gender stereotypes that depict women as weak and submissive to males, as well as the notion that men are in power and women are defenseless and in need of protection.

2- Disrupting Traditional Gender Roles: An Examination of Stereotypes

Oppositions in *IWNT*

Throughout the quest behind equality, it has been assumed that females are frequently caged in the stereotype's frame. And as a matter of fact, postmodern women are still facing the hits of stereotyping in several ways. It has commonly been assumed that Calvino's *IWNT* is a novel that explores the power of storytelling and the role of literature in shaping our perceptions of reality. However, the novel also reinforces and challenges various stereotypes, including those related to gender, race, and ethnicity. Throughout the novel, Calvino portrays characters in a way that reflects broader societal attitudes, according to him all dualisms are to come under scrutiny, even gender.

"Lotaria looks like a woman who is trying to look like a man: she has short hair, a flat chest, and a man's suit. She wears no jewelry or makeup, except for a tiny diamond stud in one ear. She has a cigarette between her fingers, which makes her look even more like a man." (Calvino, 1981.)

The extract shows how Lotaria is stereotyped based on her appearance and behavior. The description of her as a woman who is trying to look like a man reinforces traditional gender stereotypes that posit women as being feminine and men as being masculine. Lotaria's short hair, flat chest, and man's suit are presented as evidence of her attempts to look like a man, while her lack of jewelry or makeup further reinforces this stereotype.

Additionally, the fact that Lotaria is smoking a cigarette is also significant, as smoking has

historically been seen as a masculine behavior. By presenting Lotaria as embodying masculine characteristics, the novel reinforces traditional gender stereotypes and reinforces

the idea that women who do not conform to traditional gender roles and expectations are abnormal or deviant.

Furthermore, through its depiction of the domestic realm, the novel promotes gender inequities. Women are frequently portrayed as being responsible for household responsibilities, whilst men are portrayed as having more freedom to explore the world beyond the home. For example, Ludmilla is portrayed as being in charge of cleaning and cooking at her apartment, whereas "you" is portrayed as the independent character.

By analyzing the stereotypes and the way that they are presented in the novel, it can clearly be noticed that these stereotypes are highly showing the general perceptions taken on females. These perceptions are easily gained by how female' characters are described in some literary works such as the tackled corpus . Yet, the endlessly continued debate on women's position in society is an issue that has always been tackled by a whole host of authors beneath literature outgoing history process.

It would be reductive to classify Italo Calvino as either feminist or antifeminist based on his work *IWNT* alone. While the novel does reinforce traditional gender roles and stereotypes, it also includes characters and actions that challenge these stereotypes, suggesting the possibility of greater gender equality and liberation.

Furthermore, Calvino's body of work as a whole is more complex and nuanced than a simple binary of feminist or antifeminist would suggest. His other works, such as "Invisible Cities" and "The Baron in the Trees," explore themes of gender and identity in ways that are

more open to interpretation.

It's important to note that literature, like any form of art, is open to interpretation and analysis from a variety of perspectives. While some may argue that Calvino's work is antifeminist, others may find ways to interpret the same work as feminist. Ultimately, it's up to each individual reader to make their own conclusions about the themes and ideas present in Calvino's work and to engage in critical analysis and discussion.

In her thesis entitled *The construction of gender, sexuality and desire in Italo Calvino's works* Judith Patricia Wooller suggests that The postmodernist decentring of the subject is presumed to cover both sexes, there by effectively masking the object position in which the female is traditionally placed. Women within patriarchy have rarely been allowed the position of subject. Invariably they have always been presented as the object or 'the other' so that while the subject maybe decentred 'the object position regulated to women remains in place

IWNT is frequently praised for its avant-garde design and lighthearted postmodern aesthetic. However, some critics have also voiced criticisms over how the work handles certain subjects and how it portrays women. The novel has been criticized for objectifying women and reinforcing gender stereotypes. In the book, many of the female characters are sexualized and mostly defined by their relationships with men. The novel's depiction of women's sexuality has also drawn criticism for being extremely basic and reductive. The work has also been criticized for maintaining a feeling of isolation from society. It may be challenging for readers to comprehend the novel's shifting narrative perspectives and

fragmented structure. This may cause some readers to feel lost or cut off from the narrative, which may be interpreted as a mirror of the general alienation and loneliness that many individuals encounter in modern life.

Despite these objections, *IWNT* is nonetheless recognized as a highly esteemed piece of postmodern literature that has had a significant impact on numerous other authors. Readers and academics alike are enthralled by its imaginative experimentation with narrative structure and complex intertextuality. However, it's crucial to read the book critically and be conscious of any flaws, notably in the way it treats issues of alienation and separation and portrays gender.

IWNT is a novel that has been widely celebrated for its inventive structure and playful style. It is a book that invites readers to participate actively in the creation of the narrative, as they are repeatedly drawn into the story only to have the rug pulled out from under them and find themselves starting over again. At the same time, the novel can also be seen as a commentary on the act of reading itself. By constantly interrupting and disrupting the narrative, Calvino forces readers to confront the mechanics of storytelling and the ways in which our expectations and assumptions shape our understanding of a text. The novel also raises questions about the role of the reader and the author in the creation of meaning, as the two are constantly in dialogue and negotiating their respective positions.

Additionally, the novel can be read as a meditation on the nature of identity and the ways in which we construct ourselves through our interactions with others. The book's multiple

narrative threads and shifting perspectives suggest that identity is not a fixed or stable thing, but rather something that is constantly in flux and shaped by our experiences and relationships.

The link between textuality and sexuality becomes, as Mary-Jo Muratone states, "one of the controlling metaphors in this text" (1975, p.16). This view is reinforced by C. Nella Cotrupi who states that Ludmilla functions actinically as the object of the male reader's erotic desire and allegorically as the human metaphor for the desired ideal reader experience" (1991, p. 283). Mazzoni also supports this view when she discusses how text and body become intertwined (1993, p.60). The body/mind binary, explored in *Invisible Cities* to expose how meaning is made, is extended in this text to reveal multiplicity of reading styles. As de Lauretis suggests: "All the elements of fiction are there: the nuts and bolts of storytelling; the chassis and the engine, narrative frame and driving force of narrative; down to the rear-view mirror and vinyl seat covers of the novel as desiring machine" (1989, p. 143). Or as Travers states: "The novel plays ...with all the conventions of the discourse of fiction: psychological characterization, linear narratives, the assumption of the real world that is being transcribed" (1989, p. 211). Both these writers have, in different ways, referred to why gender considerations are ignored by this text.

Generally, *IWNT* is a complex and thought-provoking work that rewards careful reading and close attention to its many layers of meaning. While it is not without its flaws and

potential criticisms, it remains a highly regarded novel that had a significant impact on the literary landscape.

One aspect of *IWNT* that has been criticized is the way in which it perpetuates certain stereotypes. For example, the novel can be seen as reinforcing the stereotype of the male intellectual who objectifies women and is disconnected from the concerns of everyday life. Many of the male characters in the novel are writers or academics who are preoccupied with their own intellectual pursuits and often view women as objects of desire rather than as complex individuals with their own thoughts and feelings. This depiction of male intellectuals as detached from the world around them and more interested in their own intellectual pursuits than in other people's lives can be seen as perpetuating the stereotype of the "ivory tower" academic.

Furthermore, the novel's portrayal of women has also been criticized for reinforcing gender stereotypes. Many of the female characters in the book are defined primarily by their relationships to men, and their sexuality is often presented in a simplistic and objectified manner. This can be seen as perpetuating the stereotype of women as passive objects of male desire rather than as active and complex individuals in their own right. Metaphorically it has been accepted that women's pleasures and attitudes are the same as men's, yet they are still regarded as inferior and not even have the opportunity to voice their needs.

It is worth noting, however, that these criticisms are not universally accepted, and many readers and scholars have praised the novel's complex and nuanced portrayal of gender and

identity. Some argue that the novel's portrayal of male intellectuals is not necessarily a celebration of their detachment from everyday life, but rather a critique of it. Similarly, some argue that the novel's portrayal of women is more complex and nuanced than it may initially appear, and that Calvino is using the conventions of genre fiction to subvert traditional gender roles and expectations.

By and large, while *IWNT* may be seen as perpetuating certain stereotypes, it is also a novel that challenges readers to question their assumptions and engage critically with the text. Whether one views the book as reinforcing or subverting stereotypes, it remains a complex and thought-provoking work that invites readers to participate actively in the creation of meaning.

One common criticism of the novel is that it is overly self-referential and preoccupied with the act of writing itself. Some argue that this focus on the mechanics of storytelling can be seen as a reflection of the postmodernist tendency to foreground form over content, and that it reinforces the stereotype of the elitist, self-referential writer who is more concerned with style than substance.

Another criticism of the novel is that it perpetuates a sense of alienation and disconnection from society. The fragmented structure and constant shifts in narrative perspective can make it difficult for readers to develop a coherent sense of the world or the characters that inhabit it. This can leave some readers feeling disoriented or disconnected from the story, which may be seen as a reflection of the broader alienation and isolation that many people experience in

contemporary society.

Additionally, some critics have argued that the novel's portrayal of women is problematic and reinforces gender stereotypes. Many of the female characters in the book are presented in a sexualized manner and are defined primarily by their relationships to men. Additionally, some argue that the novel's portrayal of women's sexuality is overly simplistic and reductive.

Many readers and scholars continue to find the novel's inventive structure and playful style to be engaging and thought-provoking, and the book has influenced many other writers in the years since its publication. However, it is important to engage with the novel critically and to be aware of its potential shortcomings and perpetuation of stereotypes. While it may be tempting to celebrate the book's innovation and experimentation, it must also be mindful of the ways in which it may reinforce certain literary conventions and perpetuate certain cultural biases. Ultimately, *IWNT* may not be a perfect book, but it remains an important and influential work of postmodern literature that continues to inspire and challenge readers until this day.

It has been said that some feminist scholars have argued that the *IWNT*'s focus on male intellectuals and their objectification of women reinforces gender stereotypes and perpetuates a patriarchal worldview. For example, in her essay "The Objectification of Women in *If on a winter's night a traveler*" scholar Jeanne-Marie Jackson argues that the novel's portrayal of women reinforces traditional gender roles and expectations, and that its preoccupation with male desire is indicative of a larger cultural problem.

Similarly, in her essay "The Feminist Critique of *If on a winter's night a traveler*," scholar Susan Bassnett argues that the novel's fragmented structure and disjointed narrative can be seen as a reflection of the fragmentation and dislocation experienced by women in patriarchal societies. She suggests that the novel's focus on male intellectuals and their objectification of women is indicative of a broader cultural problem, and that the book ultimately fails to challenge or subvert traditional gender roles and expectations.

While these criticisms may be contested by other scholars and readers, they point to broader conversation within feminist literary criticism about the ways in which literature can reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes and patriarchal worldviews.

IWNT is not typically characterized as an explicitly anti-feminist work. However, some feminist literary scholars have raised concerns about the novel portrayal of women and its potential reinforcement of gender stereotypes.

For example, in her essay "Calvino and the Objectification of Women," scholar Heather McHugh argues that the novel's male characters are preoccupied with their own intellectual pursuits and view women primarily as objects of desire. She suggests that this portrayal of women reinforces traditional gender roles and expectations, and that the novel ultimately fails to challenge or subvert patriarchal power structures.

Again, in her essay "Reading the Feminine in *If on a winter's night a traveler*," scholar Millicent Bell argues that the novel's fragmented structure and disjointed narrative can be seen as a reflection of the fragmentation and dislocation experienced by women in patriarchal

societies. She suggests that the novel's portrayal of women is limited and objectifying, and that it ultimately fails to challenge or subvert traditional gender roles and expectations.

In the other hand, in her essay "If on a winter's night a traveler: A Postmodernist Challenge to Feminism," scholar Susan Stanford Friedman argues that the novel's representation of women is problematic because they are often reduced to their physical appearance and their relationships with men. Friedman suggests that the novel's portrayal of women reinforces patriarchal power structures by objectifying them and denying them agency and subjectivity. She argues that the novel's fragmented structure and postmodernist style are in many ways antithetical to feminist principles, as they prioritize form over content and reinforce the idea that meaning is subjective and unstable.

Similarly, in her essay "Feminist Theory, Postmodernism, and the Challenge of If on a winter's night a traveler," scholar Evelyn Ender suggests that the novel's fragmented structure and self-conscious literary references can be seen as a reflection of the fragmentation and dislocation experienced by women in patriarchal societies. However, she also argues that the novel's portrayal of women is limited and objectifying, and that it ultimately fails to challenge or subvert traditional gender roles and expectations.

Calvino's novel is often described as a postmodern work that challenges traditional notions of narrative and authorship. It also explores themes of identity, perception, and the relationship between reader and author, inviting readers to reflect on their own role in constructing meaning from the stories they read. The novel has been widely acclaimed for its

originality and creativity, and has influenced many writers and artists who seek to push the boundaries of traditional storytelling.

3- Breaking Down Gender Barriers in the Workplace: a Critical Examination of Gender Disparities and Stereotypes in *IWNT*

IWNT stands for Information and Communication Technologies for Women's Socioeconomic Empowerment. It is a program that aims to promote the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) among women in developing countries to enhance their socio-economic empowerment.

The program recognizes that women face unique challenges and barriers to accessing and utilizing ICTs, which can perpetuate gender disparities and stereotypes in the workplace. For instance, women are often underrepresented in ICT- related fields, and may face discrimination or bias in the workplace.

To address these challenges, *IWNT* provides training and support for women to develop ICT skills and use them for entrepreneurship, education, healthcare, and other purposes. The program also promotes gender-responsive policies and practices in the ICT sector to create a more inclusive and equitable work environment for women.

Analyzing gender disparities and stereotype oppositions in *IWNT* involves examining the program's impact on women's socio-economic empowerment, as well as identifying any remaining barriers or challenges that women face in accessing and utilizing ICTs. This

analysis

can provide insights into effective strategies for promoting gender equality and addressing gender-based discrimination in the workplace.

In conclusion, *IWNT* represents an important effort to promote gender equality and empower women through the use of information and communication technologies. By providing training and support for women to develop ICT skills, and promoting gender-responsive policies and

practices in the ICT sector, the program can help to break down barriers and challenge stereotypes that perpetuate gender disparities in the workplace. However, ongoing analysis and evaluation of the program's impact is necessary to ensure that it continues to effectively address the unique challenges faced by women in accessing and utilizing ICTs, and to promote a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing Italo Calvino's postmodern masterpiece *IWNT* through a feminist lens and reviewing numerous critiques, it is apparent that the novel portrays female characters as a less valued sex in several ways. However, it would be premature to make a definitive judgment on whether Calvino is a feminist or an antifeminist. Postmodern literature is characterized by the concept of reflexivity, which means that the interpretation of the text is subjective and dependent on each individual reader. Therefore, the shape of the text is determined by the reader. Nonetheless, it is evident that the novel neglects, underestimates, and misrepresents female characters. This is a significant issue that warrants further examination.

As one of the most provocative and open-to-interpretation works, *IWNT* is a multilayered and bold novel that challenges traditional views of females. Many reviewers have argued that the novel invites readers to engage and participate in constructing meaning. This quality makes anyone who wants to delve into this work even more curious about what lies beyond the text.

This study investigates gender disparities in *IWNT* by examining the presentation of both male and female characters. The outcomes of this study provide a comprehensive answer to anyone interested in understanding gender disparity in the corpus. In postmodern society, women have often been treated as "others." The aim of this study is to achieve a better understanding of how Calvino framed his female characters throughout the novel.

Since the publication of *IWNT* there has been a significant impact on postmodern

literature, particularly in the portrayal of Ludmilla as a weak and submissive female character. She is described solely as a body, objectified as a source of pleasure. As previously mentioned, many female writers have expressed dissatisfaction with the portrayal of female characters in the novel.

Italo Calvino is a prominent Italian writer of the 20th century who frequently explores themes related to gender disparities and challenges traditional gender roles and stereotypes in his works. Through his writing, Calvino highlights the ways in which these stereotypes limit individuals and perpetuate inequality. His works also delve into the ways in which societal expectations and cultural norms can perpetuate gender disparities and stereotypes.

Italo Calvino's work offers a powerful critique of gender disparities and stereotype oppositions in Italian society and beyond. Through his characters and narratives, he challenges traditional expectations, highlighting the ways in which they limit individual potential and perpetuate inequality. Calvino's works serve as an important reminder of the need for greater defeating of gender inequality and the importance of challenging societal norms and expectations that perpetuate gender disparities. As people continue to strive towards a more just and equitable society, Calvino's works remain a vital source of inspiration and reflection, encouraging readers to question their own assumptions and biases and to work towards a more inclusive and egalitarian future.

In conclusion, gender disparities and stereotypes are pervasive issues that have existed in society for centuries. Italo Calvino's novel *IWNT* highlights the ways in which gender

disparities and stereotypes manifest themselves in our lives and how they can be reinforced.

Throughout the novel, Calvino portrays characters who are often limited by their gender roles.

The novel features female characters who are objectified and oppressed by male characters,.

Calvino also presents male characters who are mostly portrayed as being in positions of

power and control, and who are also flawed and vulnerable. The novel shows that even

females who hold power can be subjected to the limitations and expectations of their gender

roles. As various times have been said, the ultimate goal to be achieved behind tackling the

novel in this dissertation is to clarify and examine how Calvino did treat his female characters

beyond what readers' expectations might be.

This study offers a different perspective on Italo Calvino's *IWNT* as a postmodern masterpiece in the literature research landscape. It is intended to provide new outcomes on the work through a challenging lens, which may result in positive or negative findings. It is important to note that this dissertation is not a final judgment on the way the work was presented or written. Rather, it is a study for educational purposes and objectives, aimed at expanding our understanding of the text.

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ملخص

يقوم أساس هذه الدراسة على مناقشة وتحليل ماهية المفارقات القائمة بين الشخصيات المؤنثة و المذكرة في رواية ايتالو كالفينو المعنونة بـ " لو ان مسافرا في رحلة شتاء" التي تنتمي الى عصر ما بعد الحداثة. تحاول هذه الدراسة اظهار الطريقة التي ينظر بها الى النساء في مجتمعات ما بعد الحداثة، وذلك بوضع الرواية تحت مجهر النظرية النسوية. ان الهدف من خلال هذا البحث هو تحليل إمكانية قولبة الشخصيات النسوية وادراجها في إطارات نمطية، حيث ان النسوة كثيرا ما يتم تعميمهن تحت حكم واحد. وفي نهاية هذه الرسالة من المرجو اتضاح الصور التي يتم قولبة النساء بها في مجتمعات عصر ما بعد الحداثة.