BEYOND BORDERS: NAVIGATION BETWEEN NOMADISM AND MIGRATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGICAL IDENTITY IN CORY DOCTOROW'S *WALKAWAY* AND ANNALEE NEWITZ'S *AUTONOMOUS*

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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES

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THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read the following thesis, examined the defense, are satisfied with the overall exam performance and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of Arts & Humanities for acceptance.

Thesis Title: Beyond Borders: Navigation Between Nomadism and Migration Through Technological Identity in Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* and Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Beyond Borders: Navigation Between Nomadism and Migration Through Technological Identity in Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* and Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Beyond Borders: Navigation Between Nomadism and Migration Through Technological Identity in Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* and Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*

Nomads and Migrants have been studied through their geographical movement in the previous academia, as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari have explained the notion of nomads and migrants through their geographical movements. However, in the modern age, geographical locations transform into technological spaces. As a result, the notion of nomads and migrants is now transformed and technologically defined in this present era. The present study seeks to explore the concept of nomads and migrants in the context of advanced digital technology. This study has traced the notion of nomads and migrants in the works of Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* and Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*. The research utilizes the theoretical frameworks of Deleuze and Guattari, particularly their concepts of nomadism, deterritorialization, and the state apparatus, alongside the theories of Manuel Castells, who explores identity formation, the network society, and the role of technology in shaping social structures. By merging these frameworks, the study forms an adapted theoretical lens to examine both the characters, themes and their settings to determine whether they function as nomads or migrants, depending on their relationship and access to technology. In *Walkaway* and *Autonomous*, technologically advanced environments and post-scarcity societies offer new terrains where the struggle for autonomy, identity, and resistance unfolds not only across physical space but also within digital realms. The characters' mobility is shaped as much by digital infrastructures and surveillance networks as by physical displacement, which redefines traditional notions of movement and territoriality. Through this interdisciplinary lens, the study argues that in contemporary speculative fiction, technological access and digital mobility become central to how characters navigate systems of control. This transformation reveals that the identity of the nomad or migrant is no longer solely geographical but deeply rooted in the dynamics of technological power and autonomy.

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DEDICATION

I am deeply grateful to Allah Almighty for granting me good heath, strength, and perseverance necessary to complete this degree. I dedicated this work to the cherished memory of my late father whose love and values still empower my every day. I extend my heartfelt thanks to my mother whose unwavering support and constant encouragement have guided me throughout this journey.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore and elucidate the notions of the nomads and the migrants in relation to technology, with a particular focus on the concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

In the modern era, technological advancements have transformed the geographical and physical territories. The network technology mirrors our constant movement from local to worldwide spaces while shattering permanent borders (Castells 2010). The physical territory is no longer limited to fixed geography. Instead, it is evolving continuously through digital world. Amid global spatial networks, an individual's fixed identity transforms as their environment changes from one location to another. As a result of this transformation, individuals are categorized as either nomads or migrants.

Nomads, as defined by Deleuze and Guattari, "The nomad has a territory; he follows customary paths; he goes from point to another; he is ignorant of points" (Deleuze and Guattari 380). In this context, nomads are described as individuals who reject fixed territorial spaces while causing change and disruption wherever they go. In contrast, they further clarified, "the nomad is not at all the same as the migrant; for the migrant goes principally from one point to another, even if the second point is uncertain, unforeseen, or not well localized" (Deleuze and Guattari 380). Moreover, the discrepancy between nomads and migrants has been addressed by noting that migrants follow specific, predetermined paths when leaving one territory, whereas nomads move irregularly and unpredictably.

In the present-day digital world, people are being dislocated not only physically but also emotionally and globally. It does not only alter their locality but also identity, thus rendering it fluid and adaptable to their needs. However, their continuous movement does not fit neatly into the categories of nomadism or migration, thus creating an oscillation between these two states. As a result, they adapt to different environments through their dynamic and ever-changing persona. To investigate how people's identity is changing as an outcome of technological advancements, we deliberately use Deleuze and Guattari's notion of nomads and migrants in conjunction with Manuel Castells' notion of project identity for the present study.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the state signifier establishes an inflexible hierarchical system to define both territory and identity. The state signifier is related to interiority, reflecting the state's fixed laws, ordered system, and controlled actions. The state signifier governs the society and regulates their actions through strict hierarchies. Deleuze and Guattari's migrants are aligned with interiority, crossing the borders by abiding by hierarchical systems. To avert the confines of interiority, Deleuze and Guattari's nomads follow exteriority, which is an unorganized, non-hierarchical, deterritorialized, and destratified approach. Further, nomads also reject fixed hierarchies, follow open paths, and dismantle fixed structures territorial and identity structures. It also examines the variance and multiplicities to adapt in different regions. Through exteriority, nomads move rhizomatically while refusing the state's fixed structures. They also oppose linear avenues and settle sporadically by triggering change and chaos everywhere. In addition, they partake in deterritorialization, which liberates them from fixed boundaries so they can live and roam freely. On the other hand, migrants attain the process of reterritorialization to form novel connections. Their identity also transforms in relation to new cultures and unfamiliar settings while nomads preserve their original identity despite the change in numerous territories. Their process of becoming entails the transformation of something into someone other than one's current or former self.

This research intends to focus on the novels of Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* and Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*, which were published in 2017.

A Canadian-British science fiction author, Cory Doctorow, was born in Canada and currently resides in Los Angeles. In addition to his digital rights, and privacy investigation, he also imposes his focus on privacy protections against surveillance and on the aftermath of digital advancements. He has also made significant progress in defining how these notions interact with each other. His novel *Walkaway* (2017) incorporates a multi-perspective writing style to display several points of view and perspective. The novel's plot revolves around the continuous struggle of the characters against the state's control and surveillance in a post-scarcity world. To live an independent life, they disassociate themselves from the violent oligarchical elite society. Its plot revolves around the impending future, where characters abandon their societal rules and become walkaways. Its narrative displays a capitalist society where the elite class controls the whole population. To evade the traditional structures, its

inhabitants become walkaways. Hubert, Nat, Seth, and Limpopo are the primary characters who struggle with their established system. In the wake of technological advancement, they reject the fixed norms to transform their fixed identities. To escape from the limitations of state laws, they choose to walk away from traditional structures. However, the powerful elites control the resources and create difficulties for the fugitives to survive. Through technology, walkaways exchange resources, knowledge, and skills that enable them to challenge the existing system. As a result, it blurs the lines between the state and the walkaways through technical innovation.

Annalee Newitz, 1969 American-born author of science fiction and non-fiction works. Her writings are primarily concerned with science, technology, and culture. Her contribution to the sci-fi genre, journalism, and involvement in founding and editing the science and technology website io9 have earned her notoriety. Her novel *Autonomous* (2017) displays the coexistence of human beings with robots in a technologically advanced world**.** It represents the counterculture that challenges the dominant power structures in a futuristic world. The novel *Autonomous* revolves around human beings as well as brilliant artificial robots. The state hires a robot named Paladin to nail down Jack, a pharmaceutical pirate who refuses the authorities and its laws. Moreover, in the presence of a capitalist system, the character's identity and bodies are commodified and reduced to a product that can be bought, owned, or sold. Additionally, the state also monitors the characters' activities by depriving them of their privacy and autonomy. Therefore, to maintain their privacy and autonomy, they use advanced technology to alter their original identity and territory.

The present study attempts to find the constant shift between nomadism and migration within the context of technological identity where the characters either become 'techno-nomads' or 'techno-migrants' by breaking away from the traditional structures to create multiplicity and heterogeneity in digital territories in a globalized modern world.

1.1 Thesis Statement

This study expounds on the concepts of becoming a nomad or a migrant through deterritorialization and reterritorialization within the digital technological world. It explores the points at which individuals blur the established boundaries, break free from

conventional categories, and adopt attributes from their technological surroundings to embrace nomadic or migrant identities.

1.2 Research Objectives

The present study is delimited to the following research objectives.

1. To explore the impact of technology on the oscillation of identity between nomads and migrants.
2. To examine how the different settings affect the character's identity.
3. To explore how various themes create tension between mobility and stability.

1.3 Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions to align with the research objectives and thesis statement.

Q.1 What are the ways in which the characters of the selected texts navigate between nomads and migrants through their technological identity?

Q.2 How does the setting in the selected novels reshape or maintain the original identity of the characters while dealing with digital technology?

Q.3 How do the themes of the selected novels create tension between a sense of rootedness and the desire for mobility and exploration?

1.4 Delimitation

On the scale limit of research, this study focuses on the two novels, Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* and Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*. Both novels were published in different states but exhibit notable thematic similarities as those spaces are technologically advanced. Each novel employs the science fiction genre to depict a future where human beings and robots collaborate in a digitalized society.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This dissertation contributes to cultural scholarship by exploring the notion of nomads and migrants. The significance of this study lies in investigating the technological advancement that blurs the physical or geographical borders and turns them into global spaces. Before technological advancement, the world dealt with the physical and geographical boundaries of the country, but now, technology has changed the world. The countries' geography remains constant, but technological advancements blur their fixed boundaries. Secondly, in earlier times, human beings were defined as nomads or migrants because of their physical movement. In contrast, the present study focuses on their metaphorical movement in the presence of technological spaces. Thirdly, along with their movement, it also focuses on their identity, which becomes flexible, fluid, and adaptable under the influence of digital technology. Finally, the present study focuses on two novels and uses the adapted theoretical framework to conduct this research. Moreover, while central to the current study, the adapted theoretical framework also finds relevance in other art forms beyond literature.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to situate the current study in contemporary scholarship by reviewing the relevant secondary resources. A vast range of scholarship and critique is available on nomads, migrants, and identity formation. Reviewing these key concepts in relevant works would be useful to contextualize the present research through the identified gap in existing research works.

As this research involves an analysis of nomads and migrants in contemporary technological world, the resources taken revolve around these key tenets. This review is divided into four distinct sections, involving the works on two selected theorists and research works on two selected primary texts separately.

These sections focus on previous academia that has studied the current theoretical framework and primary texts of the present study. The first section centres upon the research related to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's theories of nomads and migrants. The second section is associated with the application of Manuel Castells' theory of different identities. The third and fourth sections include the research works related to the primary texts. Its basic purpose is to provide a critical understanding of the existing academia to determine the research gap for the present study. It serves the purpose of critical analysis regarding the concepts chosen for the present study. It includes various literary articles, theses, book chapters, and reviews from different journals, websites, academic papers, repositories, and literary catalogs. The detailed study highlights and discusses the core quotations from the mentioned research works. This analysis of the key aspects reveals the gap between earlier and present research works.

2.1 Deleuzo-Guattarian Notion of Nomads and Migrants

With the emergence of digital technology and the evolving notions of nomads and migrants, various researchers have examined these concepts across different academic disciplines. Particularly, scholars have widely applied the notion of nomads and migrants proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in literary studies. Numerous research works have utilized their theory in diverse ways. This study cites

the relevant literature to identify the gap between previous academia and the present research study.

Theerta Theophin and J. E. Indra, in their article *The Writer as a Nomad and the Narrative as a War Machine: A Critical Reading of the Pianist of Yarmouk*, applied Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical framework of nomads and migrants to Aeham Ahmed's memoir. They examined Ahmed's narrative in the light of nomadic experiences, focusing primarily on how he represents the collective consciousness of refugees who often deny their original identity and are viewed as faceless masses. The authors explored Ahmed as a nomad and positioned his memoir as a war machine that resists the state apparatus. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the war machine, they analyzed how Ahmed metaphorically operated as a war machine standing against the Syrian civil war. The researchers observe, "The narrative gives a picture of how war machine operated in the form of FSA and protested against the repressive regime of Assad, the dictator, who was in the position of state apparatus" (Theophin et al. 522). The authors explored the memoir through the lens of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), portraying it as a war machine resisting the military regime. They also highlight the citizen's suffering, particularly through restrictions on art and music which ultimately led Ahmed to migrate forcibly to Germany. Furthermore, they interpreted Ahmed's identity as a musician as an expression of his nomadic resistance to the state. They also applied the concept of the migrant to Ahmed, stating, "His path is that of a forced migrant; his destination is uncertain" (Theophin et al. 3). By simultaneously analyzing the roles of both nomad and migrant, the authors conclude that Ahmed embodies both identities by resisting the state's control through artistic expression while also enduring the displacement of forced migration.

Ahmed Octan and Tugba Elmaci, in their article titled *Migration and Transgression of 'Borders' in the film Mondo*, analyzed the film Mondo in the context of nomadism and migration. They explored the journey of French Director Tony Gatlif through an existential lens rather than a sociological path. The researchers examined this film using the philosophical concepts of nomadism and migration. Amidst Gatlif's dramatic transformation, they identify his rejection of the traditional notion of migration. They investigated his narrative through nomadic traits, emphasizing relationality, plurality, and hybridization. In addition to Gatlif's character, the authors analyzed Mondo's character through his ongoing struggle with urban structures. They

stated that Gatlif "tries to hear otherness, both as a dog and as an immigrant" (Oktan and Elmaci 68), suggesting his transformation into either a migrant or an animal. According to the researchers, the characters devolve into nomads, "embarking on a journey to an unknown place and time at any moment" (Oktan and Elmaci 68). The study further argues that the characters become both nomads and migrants through their movement. The authors described this migration as "a form of an uncertain flow, rather than a movement within time and space" (Oktan and Elmaci 68). Further, they called it a migration process, which is "nice travelling from an uncertain past to an uncertain future" (Oktan and Elmaci 68). This depiction explained migration as a form of displacement, where individuals move from an uncertain past towards an unpredictable future, gradually eroding their fixed identity. They also interpreted the character of Mondo as both dog and human as stated, "Whether it is a dog or a human, he has been abstractly deterritorialized in the Deleuze sense, and all references to its origin have become vague" (Oktan and Elmaci 70). Through this analysis, they concluded that Gatlif transforms Mondo into a nomadic figure in an open, anonymous space.

Sonia Kherif and Samira al-Khawaldeh, in their article *Spatial Nomadology in Jack Kerouac's Lonesome Traveler: Kerouac as a Becoming – Nomad*, analyzed the theory of nomadology and deterritorialization as proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. They explored the notion of line of flight, rhizome, and becoming-nomad to examine the dynamics between smooth and sedentary paths. The researchers classified the selected work as existentialist due to its emphasis on deterritorialization unaccompanied by reterritorialization. They argued that Kerouac's vision reconciles with Deleuze-Guattarian notion of becoming-nomad, stating, "Kerouac admits of being hobo and this is interconnected to Deleuzeguattarian rhizome that implies multiplicity, heterogeneity and connection" (Kherif and Al-Khawaldeh 7). Through this lens, they analyzed how Kerouac challenges straited space by constructing a personal version of America rooted in alternate temporal and spatial dimensions. The study also presented his transformation as that of a disoriented individual evolving into a contemporary nomad through rhizomatic linkages. His identity reflected multiplicity and disruption, revealing his fluid transition between fixed roles and open possibilities.

Jedidiah Anderson, in his article *The Homeland, Imprisoned and Illegal: The Impact of Marginalisation on Views of the Homeland in Kanafani's and Khalifa's work*, explored the concepts of rhizomatic connections, minor literature and affect theory as

presented by Deleuze and Guattari. Through an analysis of two literary works, he investigated the notion of homeland, drawing parallels between the traditional definition by Ibn Manzur and the philosophical understanding provided by Deleuze and Guattari. He stated, “The people that used to live within it has been set up, forcing those that lived in Palestine previously to find other places to live and work in” (Anderson 2), illustrating the fractured relationship between the characters and their homeland under a repressive state. Furthermore, the researcher examined the character of Musa, who experiences profound alienation, noting that the state “excluded Musa from the group identity and network of affiliations that normally constitute identity within the homeland” (Anderson 2). Anderson attributed this alienation to the mechanism of state surveillance and control, which severs the individual’s connection to a collective identity rooted in place.

Nadjiba Bouallegue, in an article *The Modern Nomad in Laila Lalami’s Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (Bouallegue), explored the notion of nomadism in the context of illegal immigration. She explored whether illegal immigration represents a form of nomadic existence. Bouallegue analyzed the characters in Lalami’s text through the Deleuze-Guattarian concept of becoming as a form of resistance, where individuals create alternative modes of living that challenge the fixed norms of society. She identified the characters engaging in illegal immigration as nomads, noting their rejection of striated spaces and hierarchical structures as stated,

> Illegal immigrants share with nomads with inability to live under restrictions. Their essential objective is obviating all barriers and eluding every boundary. Consequently, home for both nomads and illegal immigrants is not synonymous to fixity and stability. Mobility is central to the life of this category of people. The nomad’s home lies where he/she can make a living. (Bouallegue 103)

The above quotation highlights the conceptual link between nomads and illegal immigrants, emphasizing their shared movement across controlled boundaries. In this context, the sea, is interpreted as a smooth space monitored by state authority, symbolizing freedom and restriction. The researcher observed that although the characters seek liberation, they remain caught between hope and fear under the state’s surveillance. She further examined identity by citing examples where individuals burn their identification documents to avoid deportation. Through these instances, the author

concluded that the characters follow personal trajectories of becoming nomads, resisting state control in pursuit of autonomy.

Soudeh Oladi and John Portelli, in their article *Traces of Deleuzian Nomad in Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, examined the concept of nomadism through the lens of deconstructed identity. They investigated themes such as identity, nomad, home, subjectivity, and the fluid state of nomadic existence in Laila Lalami's novel. The article explored the tension between sedentary and nomadic lifestyles by focusing on the characters' continuous displacement and lack of fixed destination. The researchers analyzed whether the characters are truly evolving within new spaces or remain displaced during their journey to Spain in search of a better life. They interpreted the text as a mirror of harsh social realities where individuals often lose their lives while pursuing safety and peace. Applying Deleuze and Guattari's theories of becoming and subjectivity, the authors examined the novel's language patterns to explore the "transition from being to becoming" (Oladi and Portelli 2). They further described the immigrants as wanderers who revive the nomadic condition "where social codes are uprooted" (Oladi and Portelli 2). The article critiqued the desire for fixity within the colonial framework, as they wrote, "The desire for fixity is presented along with the anxiety before the unknown and the uncertain" (Oladi and Portelli 3). Through these reflections, the researcher argued that the characters in Lalami's work exhibit nomadic tendencies as they struggle to construct independent identities and resist imposed structures. Their continuous disruption, marked by hybrid identities, embodied the Deleuzian vision of nomads and migrants.

Hania A. M. Nashef, in an article *Becoming in J. M. Coetzee's Waiting for the Barbarians and Jose Saramago's Blindness*, explored the concept of becoming through the character of the magistrate and the blind doctor. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's theorization of becoming-animal, Nashef critically examined the negative implications of this process in contrast to the philosophers' more optimistic outlook. She discussed becoming as a transformation instigated by an anomalous entity that forces the subject "to leave their pack" (Nashef 1). The barbarian girl functions as this anomalous figure for the magistrate, prompting his departure from his original position, while the thief similarly displaces the blind doctor from his established territory. Although Deleuze and Guattari associate becoming with potential and new beginnings, Nashef contends that it can also entail loss and dehumanization. Through the characters' descent into

disordered states, marked by the erosion of societal structures, Nashef argues that becoming a result of a fall from a majoritarian identity to a minoritarian or animalistic state. She characterized this state as negative, "becoming-animal or becoming-minoritarian" (Nashef 30). Ultimately, she concluded that becoming is not inherently liberating or constructive; it may also signify decline and disintegration in human experiences.

Grant Hamilton, in an article titled *Becoming-Nomad: Territorialization and Resistance in J. M. Coetzee's Waiting for the Barbarians*, explored the same novel as previously discussed by Hania A.M. Nashef but from a different theoretical angle. Nashef examined the magistrate through the lens of becoming an animal, while Hamilton focused on becoming a nomad. He argued that the magistrate undergoes a process of becoming a nomad as he gradually resists colonial domination. This transformation occurs through his internal shift and physical actions against the state's territorial control. According to Deleuze and Guattari, and as interpreted by Coetzee, such movements inherently threaten the state, which seeks to maintain order by restricting nomadic flows and preserving fixed hierarchies. Hamilton analyzed the magistrate's deepening relationship with the barbarian girl as a key factor in this transformation. Unlike Nashef, who interprets the girl as an anomalous figure, Hamilton considers her presence as an initiator of nomadic thought, which distances the magistrate from the state's ideological structure. Their interaction embodies what Hamilton describes as a nomadic thought defined as a turning away from "the doctrines and truths of a conditioning State thought towards a new and ultimately revolutionary kind of thought – a nomad thought" (184). This intellectual and emotional shift leads the magistrate to reject dominant ideologies and embrace alternative, deterritorialized paths. The state arrested the magistrate after he escorted the girl back to her people for violating its orders. Hamilton highlights his later confrontation with Colonel Joll to emphasize his disobedience and symbolic break from the state. Through this lens, the researcher concluded that the magistrate enacts becoming by opposing the state's systems of control and following a fluid, non-hierarchical form of thought and resistance, as theorized by Deleuze and Guattari.

By analyzing the above-reviewed research works, specific gaps emerge. Most studies discussed the concepts of nomads and migrants concerning the war machine, emphasizing physical movement involving processes of deterritorialization and

reterritorialization. Additionally, scholars explored the notion of state apparatus, highlighting how nomads reject the fixed hierarchies imposed by the state. They also examined identity transformation, which had been explored through the lens of becoming a nomad or an animal. However, the existing body of literature primarily focused on the physical mobility of nomads and migrants, neglecting the implications of technological advancement in shaping identity and space. In the contemporary digital era, technology increasingly replaces physical spaces with global, virtual ones. The above-cited works neither examined the role of technology in transforming territorial or identity constructs nor addressed the shift in the cognitive and ideological frameworks of nomadic existence. To address this research gap, the present study aims to investigate the concepts of nomads and migrants through the lens of mental and metaphorical movement. For this purpose, the study employs an integrated theoretical framework that combines Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of nomadism and migration with Manuel Castells' notion of project identity. This synthesis enables a comprehensive analysis of shifting identities and evolving territorial perceptions of nomads and migrants, particularly within the context of advanced digital technology.

2.2 Notion of Manuel Castells' Technological identity

Scholars have actively used Manuel Castells notions, such as project identity, spatial nodes, spaces of places, spaces of flows, the network society, and technological identity in various academic studies. However, many works that apply his theoretical framework to literary texts remain untranslated into English, restricting wider academic access and engagement. Researchers have also employed Castells' theory as a methodological tool to examine online identity construction and interaction within digital spaces such as the Internet. These studies demonstrate how Castells' ideas help in analyzing the formation and transformation of identity in technologically mediated environments. The following academic works illustrate the diverse applications of his framework.

Danny Fitzpatrick and Paddy Hoey, in their article titled as *From Fanzines to Food Bank: Football Fan Activism in the Age of Anti-politics*, examined the evolving trend of football fan activism by exploring the intersection of political participation, protest, and Manuel Castells' sociological theory. They analyzed how football fans form collective identities in response to the commodification and commercialization of

the sport. Drawing on Castells' notion of project identity, the authors argued that these fan-based movements resist dominant capitalist structures and aim to bring about social change through football-centered activism.

Khalil Sardania and Rasool Safizadeh, in their article titled *The Internet and Its Potential for Networking and Identity Seeking: A Study on ISIS,* examined the role of social networks in the operations of the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS), which strategically uses cyberspace to mobilize resources, disseminate ideology, and recruit supporters across the globe. The researchers Manuel Castells theory of the network society and identity formation to analyzed how social media enables the formation of national and transnational networks that support the group's ideological and operational objectives.

Cecilia S. M. Abalos, in her article as *Social Mobilization in the Net Space: Reconstructed Communication, Identity and Power*, investigated Manuel Castells' hypothesis on power and counter-power within the network society. She examines how the internet functions as a platform that shapes online identity and influences public discourse. Focusing specifically on the Facebook group Boycott SM Baguio, Abalos explores how spatial conditions in digital environments reconstruct identity, impact public perception, and reshape communication processes. Her study highlights the dynamic interplay between digital space and collective identity formation in the context of online activism.

Ray D. Heisey, in his article titled as *International Perspective on Cultural Identity*, examined cultural identity through a comparative analysis of multiple cultures, including those of Iran, China, Britain, and Europe. He focused on theoretical contributions from Iranian, Chinese, British, and European scholars, with particular attention to the work of Manuel Castells. Drawing on these perspectives, Heisey proposed a new theoretical framework suggesting that localized identities undergo a process of globalization. His study highlights how diverse cultural contexts contribute to understanding identity transformation in an increasingly interconnected world.

Syed M. K. Aljunied, in his article *Ethnic Resurgence, Minority Communities and State Policies in a Network Society: The Dynamic of Malay Identity Formation in Post Colonial Singapore*, explored the formation of Malay identity in post-colonial Singapore. He employed the theoretical frameworks of Andrew Willford, Manuel

Castells, and Richard Jenkins to analyze identity construction within a network society. The study argued that global, regional, and local developments significantly influence the Malay minority community and the Singaporean state. Aljunied critically examined the state's interpretation of Malay identity and investigated how the Malay community resists state policies that attempt to define or constrain their cultural expression.

Pit Simpson, in his article *Peripheralising Patriarchy, Gender and Identity in Post-Soviet Art: A View from the West*, examined the complexities of gender identity in post-Soviet Eastern Europe. He analyzed conflicting perspectives drawn from Russian writers, such as Tukina and Mazin, who argue that patriarchal structures negatively affect men's psychological identity. Simpson critically engaged with these opposing viewpoints to explore how gender identity is constructed and contested within the post-Soviet cultural context.

Mervyn Bendel, in his article *The Crisis of Identity in High Modernity*, focused on the evolving concept of identity in the contemporary world. He examined the dual crisis associated with high modernity, particularly the tension between identity construction and its significance for individual well-being. Bendel analyzed how modern societal structures create conflicting pressures that challenge the stability and coherence of personal identity in the face of rapid social, cultural, and technological change.

Gerand Delanty and Paul R. Jones, in their *European Identity and Architecture*, emphasized architecture as a medium for examining spatial aspects of European identity. They explored the interconnected theories of space, identity, and power within a network society. Drawing on the work of Manuel Castells, the authors argued that social and cultural identities are increasingly shaped and transformed by networked forms of interaction rather than being confined to the traditional boundaries of the nation-state.

Imma Tubella in her book Network Society, included a chapter dedicated to Manuel Castells' theory, where she examined the concept of network society in relation to cultural and institutional identity. She analyzed how the technological revolution contributed to the emergence of new forms of social organization, replacing the structures of industrial society. Tubella emphasized that the network society

fundamentally reshapes identity by redefining cultural frameworks and institutional relationships in a digitally connected world.

By examining existing research, it becomes evident that scholars have primarily applied Manuel Castells' theoretical framework within online platforms. His concepts have been explored in anti-politics, particularly in studies of football fans, where researchers analyze the formation of collective and project identities, such as Facebook groups, highlighting how online spaces reconstruct identity. Additionally, scholars have investigated the transformation of localized cultural identities into globalized forms using Castells' theory. His framework on identity types has further been used to study religious identity within specific national contexts. Although Castells' concepts have been widely applied to online platforms, websites, and virtual environments such as video games, scholars have yet to explore their application in literary texts. To address this gap, the present study integrates Castells' theory with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomads and migrants to construct a comprehensive framework for analyzing identity formation and transformation in literature.

2.3 Literary Insights of Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway*

The first novel selected for this study is Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* which envisions a near-future world where humans coexist with machinic robots. Scholars have previously analyzed this novel from multiple critical perspectives. The following cited research highlights how *Walkaway* has been studied and identifies the unexplored areas this study seeks to address.

Nicola Perner, in his dissertation *Against Humanity: Misanthropy in Contemporary Dystopia Literature,* examined Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* and Annalee Newitz *Autonomous*. He analyzed both novels within the frameworks of the Anthropocene, liquid modernity, misanthropy, transhumanism, posthumanism, and utopian studies. Perner focused on characters who reconstruct their identities and undergo a transformation into transhumanist beings. He argues that these characters achieve immortality as a response to past catastrophes. Notably, he highlighted the case of a robot that was once human and is now evolving into a transhuman entity. The researcher interpreted this transformation as an act of achieving immortality, noting that, "the plot lends itself to the experiences of eternity that the characters are hoping

to gain in techno-immortality" (Perner 10). Through this lens, he contends that technology facilitates the transition of human beings into posthuman or transhuman states. His analysis concluded that human beings strive for immortality and eternity by creating and evolving through robotic forms.

Raphael Kabo, in his thesis *Imagining the End of Capitalism: Utopia and the Commons in Contemporary Literature has examined five works including Cory Doctorow's Walkaway*, analyzed five literary works, including Croy Doctorow's *Walkaway*, to explore how utopian spaces function as a form of resistance to capitalism. Kabo focused on various utopian visions within the selected novels that actively challenge capitalist structures. He argued that *Walkaway* offers an alternative to capitalism by creating "possible conditions for alternative and opposition future to emerge from within its totality" (Kabo 28). Drawing on Lauren Berlant's theory of prefiguration, Kabo examined how societal collapse enables the formation of new communal and ideological orders. He asserts that "their immoralities are born of futuristic technologies, non-human ecologies, and virtual worlds" (Kabo 223), including that the characters' pursuit of immortality is within anti-capitalist frameworks. These characters reject dominant social norms to construct new spaces and identities. Ultimately, they resist existing hierarchies and imagine a shared vision of immortality by overcoming death through technological and communal transformation.

Garfield Benjamin, in his article *Playing at Control: Writing Surveillance in/for Gamified Society*, analyzed Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* from a distinct perspective, focusing on surveillance and gamification. He examined several fictional works to explore how narratives reflect and critique the control mechanisms of surveillance technologies. Benjamin argued that *Walkaway* serves as a thought experiment, illustrating how fictionality engages with the social realities of surveillance. He investigated the contrast between traditional and controlled societies by analyzing notions of freedom, guided gameplay, and cultural-political structures. Through these dimensions, he explained how individuals become embedded in gamified narratives within controlled surveillance systems. Additionally, Benjamin explored how capitalism and surveillance intersect in *Walkaway*, particularly regarding societal structures and behavioral manipulation. He observed, "The real motivator is power, money's just keeping score" (Benjamin 708) suggesting that while money drives traditional capitalist systems, gamified control supersedes monetary motivation in the

novel. His analysis further reveals that gamified capitalism introduces competition and behavioral conditioning through reward mechanisms. Benjamin also critiques the power dynamics in the novel, asserting that elite groups use surveillance to manipulate and dominate the masses through gamified forms of control.

Kirsten Bussiere, in her essay *Digital Humanity: Collaborative Capital Resistance in Cory Doctorow's Walkaway,* analyzed *Walkaway* through the lens of post-capitalist theory, arguing that the novel envisions a radically different future shaped by communalism, advanced technology, and post-scarcity economics. She frames her analysis within the theoretical context of Anarcho-Syndicalism to explore how the novel transcends the binary between individualism and collectivism. Bussiere asserted that "Not those who walk away are able to fully separate their thinking from the capitalist system they were once part of" (Bussiere 5) indicating that even as characters reject capitalist structures, they remain intellectually and emotionally influenced by the system they left behind. She contends that 'walking away' involved both the dismantling of capitalist hierarchies and the construction of alternative utopian communities; however, these communities remain shaped by the character's past experiences and their knowledge of the dominant society. Ultimately, Bussiere concluded that becoming a walkaway entail rejecting the state's-imposed order and redefining one's identity beyond the framework of prior affiliations.

In addition to the scholarly works already discussed, *Walkaway* has received attention through reviews published in academic journals, literary websites, digital repositories, and online catalogs. These reviews have examined and evaluated the novel's key themes, narrative strengths, and critical shortcomings from various literary and theoretical perspectives.

Phoebe Wagner and Bronte Wieland, in their article *Solarpunks and Storytelling in the Capitalocene*, examined solar punk as a literary genre that uses imaginative storytelling to envision sustainable futures. They interpret Cory Doctorow's Walkaway as a representative solar punk narrative within this framework. This novel, they argue, illustrates how individuals reject capitalism systems by walking away to create more equitable, technology-enabled communities rooted in ecological and social reform.

Similarly, Jason Sheehan, in his essay, *In Walkaway, a Blueprint for a New, Weird (but better) World* commends Doctorow's distinct narrative approach. He

characterizes Doctorow's work as predictive rather than speculative, asserting that *Walkaway* portrays a tangible and imminent future. According to Sheehan, the novel serves as a social critique and a hopeful blueprint for constructing alternative systems beyond capitalism.

Tasha Robinson, in his review titled as *Cory Doctorow on Technological Immorality, The Transporter Problem and Fast-moving Futures*, Cory Doctorow as a versatile and forward-thinking writer who engages deeply with visions of the future. She describes *Walkaway* as a speculative novel that metaphorically explores human cognition and behavior. Robinson emphasizes that the novel celebrates the human capacity for resilience and creativity, particularly the impulse to produce art during periods of crisis and transformation.

In contrast, August C. Bourre critically reviewed *Walkaway*, arguing that the novel underrepresents working-class experiences by focusing primarily on engineers, computer scientists, mathematicians, and other technologically elite professions. Bourre contends that the novel neglects a broader portrayal of societal change in a post-capitalist world by sidelining laborers and other non-technical roles.

An in-depth analysis of existing academic literature reveals several significant gaps in the study of *Walkaway*. Previous scholars have examined the novel through the lenses of the Anthropocene, liquid modernity, and misanthropy, often focusing on how characters seek immortality. Others have interpreted it as a thought experiment addressing the sociopolitical impacts of surveillance and capitalism. However, these studies do not consider the novel about technological identity nor incorporate Deleuze and Guattari's theories of nomadism and migration. Furthermore, they overlook Manuel Castells' concept of project identity. To address these gaps, the present study analyzes Walkaway's characters, setting and thematic structures using an adapted theoretical framework that merges Deleuze and Guattari's nomadology with Castells' notion of identity construction in a technologically advanced society.

2.4 Exploration of Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous* in Academia

The second novel selected for this study is Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*. Existing scholarship has examined this novel through various critical lenses. The

following review of those scholarly works highlights the research gap which is still unexplored in the previous studies.

Muhammad Raffi Adani, in his thesis, *Dominance Power by the Capitalist in Annalee Newitz's Autonomous: A Hegemony Study*, examined the dominant class structures and power dynamics in Autonomous. Applying Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, Adani analyzed how capitalist ideology manifests through the production and regulation of pharmaceuticals within the novel. He argues that the state exerts control over medication to reinforce capitalist dominance. Consequently, the marginalized characters resist "capitalism and corporation" (Adani 15). He further explored how hegemonic structures regulate all aspects of life, leading to the marginalization of individuals and the erosion of moral and societal values.

Yagmur Sonmez Demir, in her thesis, *Gendering Robotic Bodies in Ian McEwan's Machine Like Me and Annalee Newitz's Autonomous*, examined how human-centered environments construct machinic beings as gendered entities, expecting them to conform to fixed, anthropocentric understandings of gender. Drawing on classical gender theory and posthuman feminism, Demir investigated how robots perform human-like gender roles. Through a comparative analysis of the two novels, she argued that while human beings struggle to transcend anthropocentric frameworks, robots, despite being non-human, are still subjected to these same structures. Consequently, anthropocentric norms are imposed on robotic bodies, compelling them to adhere to specific gender roles within humanized societies.

Kaylee Dunn, in her article *Robot Romance: A Non-Binary Critique on Gender and Hegemonic Masculinities*, explored the representation of hegemonic masculinities in Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*. She particularly focused on the partnership between Paladin and Eliasz. Through these characters, she critiqued the hierarchical construction of masculinity that not only reinforces rigid gender roles but also hinders emotional intimacy and personal relationships. Dunn demonstrated how human beings project gendered expectations onto non-human entities, specifically robots, in ways that mirror their own experiences of gender oppression. She stated, "After a tense exchange that leaves Eliasz's feeling sexually aroused by Paladin, he tells the curious robot I'm not a faggot" (Dunn 77). This moment, Dunn illustrated how Eliasz's repressed homoerotic desire generated feelings of shame and anger under the pressure of heteronormative

masculinity. Moreover, she contended that Eliasz, despite feeling marginalized, attempts to assert control over Paladin, a robot with a female-coded brain, as reflected in the line, “Eliasz has literal control over Paladin’s feminine counterpart” (Dunn 78). The researcher ultimately concluded that the human-robot relationship functions as an act of resistance against internalized gender norms, challenging hegemonic masculinities within both personal and societal frameworks.

Wafa Nouri and her co-researchers, in their thesis titled as *The Portrayal of the Posthuman Self Through Narrative Technique: A Comparative Analysis in Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun and Newitz's Autonomous*, conducted a comparative analysis of the two novels. The researchers investigated how narrative techniques shape readers’ perceptions of artificial intelligence and posthuman identity. By examining singular and multi-narrative structures, they argued that these novels function as storytelling devices and practical tools for engaging the reader. They emphasized that the characters are “not isolated entities but rather as a part of complex technological ecosystem” (Nouari et al. 452). Furthermore, the study employed a polyphonic narrative approach to present multiple perspectives, incorporating the voices of both human beings and robots. Through this approach, the researchers highlighted the character of Paladin, arguing that the fusion of human and robotic experiences within the narrative reflects the emergence of posthuman identity.

Hanna-Rikka Roine and Esko Suoranta, in their article *Science Fiction, and the Limits of Narrativizing Environmental Digital Technologies*, presented an environmental perspective on digital technology within science fiction narratives. They examined how digital technologies affect individuals and society, particularly by analyzing science fiction texts depicting the aftereffects of technological development. The researchers explored how digital systems transform individuals by embedding them within interconnected networks that influence and regulate their actions. They also analyzed the broader implications of “human-technical assemblage” (Roine and Suoranta 25), emphasizing its impact on identity, agency, and social structure. In addition, the article addressed gender dynamics alongside traditional narrative structures such as “Bildung, quest and romance” (Roine and Suoranta 26). The researchers investigated the tension between digital technology’s conscious and unconscious effects, examining how these influences challenge the narrative frameworks typically used in science fiction.

In an essay *Not Just in Factories: Robots in the Bedroom*, Jennifer Kelso Farrell investigated the ethical implication of sex robots within contemporary discourse. Her study focuses on sexual relationships between humans and robots in three novels including Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*. In this context, Farell analyzed the characters of Eliasz and Paladin. Before addressing the topic of sexual robots directly, she categorized different types of robots. She explored how they might engage in sexual activity and what it would mean for them to emulate human behavior. Through a close reading of *Autonomous*, Farrell concluded that Paladin lacks the necessary systems to perform sexual functions in a human-like manner. Despite possessing a female-coded brain, Paladin cannot fulfill Eliasz's sexual desires, leading Eliasz to confront the limitations of projecting human sexual expectations onto a non-human entity.

The following reviews have been gathered from various sources, including academic journals, online databases, literary websites, and research repositories to support the present study on Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*. These critical perspectives examine various dimensions of the novel, highlighting its thematic concerns, narrative techniques, strengths, and limitations.

Gary K. Wolfe reviewed the novel *Autonomous* by Annalee Newitz as a debut novel that blends provocative ideas with a fast-paced thriller narrative. He praised Newitz's insightful understanding of AI research and the influence of societal gender norms, arguing that these elements add significant depth to the novel. Wolfe contends that *Autonomous* challenges traditional representations of robots and artificial intelligence in the science fiction genre.

Niall Harrison described the novel *Autonomous* as a work integrating underexplored themes such as medicine, medical research, and healthcare systems within sci-fi literature. He argued that the novel addresses critical issues, including indenture and the commodification of human bodies, revealing a scarcity of substantial engagement with such themes in contemporary science fiction.

Molly Sauter offered a similar enthusiastic review, describing Autonomous as a thrilling story filled with pirates, robots, private armies, drug dealers, and idealistic researchers. He highlights the novel's portrayal of a world where corporate territories have replaced traditional nation-states, turning citizens into commodities. According to

Sauter, the novel features intelligent plotting and fast-paced action and integrates humor, cultural references to the free software movement, and Canadian identity.

Lee Mandelo also praised the novel *Autonomous* as a remarkable debut, noting its fast-moving plot, multifaceted characters, and complex ethical conflicts. He emphasized the novel's grim tone, which balances themes of individual success with broader narratives of systematic failure.

A detailed analysis of these critical reviews and existing scholarship reveals several research gaps. Prior studies have explored *Autonomous* through the lenses of gender narratives and the anthropocentric construction of non-human gender identity. Scholars have investigated the formation of posthuman identity through multi-narrative structures, examined hegemonic masculinities in gender-centric societies, analyzed robot sexuality, and critiqued capitalist power and dominant social groups. However, these studies essentially center on character analysis, whether human, robotic or under state surveillance, while overlooking the novel's broader thematic and spatial dimension. The present study analyzes *Autonomous* through the adapted theoretical framework of nomadism and migration to address this gap, explicitly focusing on technological identity. Unlike earlier works, this research does not limit its scope to character representation and engages with the novel's settings and overarching themes, offering a more comprehensive interpretation.

2.5 Conclusion

Due to the extensive volume of existing scholarship, this study limits its scope to works directly relevant to its research objectives. Examining the scholarly literature, the present study identifies a significant research gap it aims to address. Specifically, this research contributes to the field of cultural studies by reinterpreting nomadism and migration within the context of technological advancement. While previous studies have focused on nomads as individuals who move from place to place for necessities and migrants as those who relocate internationally, often leaving behind their home countries, such approaches have remained largely confined to physical territorial movement.

Existing literature has engaged with themes such as surveillance, capitalism, the Anthropocene, gender roles, sexuality, and hegemonic power structures. In contrast,

this study shifts focus toward mental and technological forms of movement, analyzing how individuals navigate and construct identities in a digitally globalized society. Rather than examining physical or geographical displacement, this research investigates individuals' fluidity and adaptability in technologically mediated environments, framing them as techno-nomads, techno-migrants, or subjects who oscillate between these conditions.

This study also interrogates the transformation of identity under the influence of digital technology, employing the framework of Deleuze and Guattari's Nomadology and Migration alongside Manuel Castells' concept of Technological Identity. It considers how technology functions as a form of territory, enabling processes of techno-deterritorialization and techno-reterritorialization, which disrupt traditional norms and give rise to multiplicities, heterogeneity, and the formation of new identities and spaces.

To explore these above dynamics, the present research focused on two speculative fiction novels: Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* and Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*. Through closely reading these texts, the study examines how technological forces reshape territorial boundaries and identities, ultimately compelling characters to become nomads, migrants, or transitional figures who oscillate between the two. The following chapters will proceed with this theoretical and analytical foundation considering the secondary sources reviewed and the research gap identified in it.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The development of the adapted theoretical framework for this research draws heavily on the foundations laid by previous academic studies. This chapter explores the theoretical foundation that underpins the present research. It is divided into two main sections: the theoretical framework and the methodology. The first section explains the selected theories and presents the adapted version of the theoretical framework applied in this study. The second section outlines the research methodology and the specific research method employed.

This study adopts the concept of nomads and migrants presented by Deleuze and Guattari in their seminal work *A Thousand Plateaus: Schizophrenia and Capitalism* as a central component of its theoretical framework. It also incorporated Manuel Castells' notion of technological identity from his book *The Information Age*. These theoretical tenets are adapted and applied to the primary texts of Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* and Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous*.

3.1 Deleuze and Guattari's Nomads and Migrants

In their seminal work, Deleuze and Guattari introduce the concept of nomads through the lens of nomadic thought. They define nomads as "war machines" (Deleuze and Guattari 380) that resist state apparatuses and reject the fixed hierarchies imposed by the state. Initially, they distinguish nomads and migrants by differing relationships with territorial movement and authority, as they stated:

> The nomad has a territory; he follows a customary path; he goes from one point to another; he is not ignorant of points. … The nomad is not at all the same as the migrant; for the migrant goes principally from one point to another, even if the second point is uncertain, unforeseen or not well localized. But the nomad goes from point to point only as a consequence and factual necessity; in principle, points for him are relays along a trajectory. Nomads and migrants can mix in many ways or form a common aggregate; their causes and conditions are not less distinct. (380)

Through the above quotation, Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the contrast between nomads and migrants by analyzing the nature of their movements. They explain that nomads possess a territory, yet they do not settle permanently or move with a predetermined goal. Instead, nomads travel along paths that do not represent fixed destinations, reflecting their rejection of hierarchical structures imposed by the state. Their movement is fluid, shifting from one point to another without anchoring themselves to any place. In contrast, migrants move with a specific purpose or objective, even when their destination remains uncertain. Unlike nomads, migrants follow fixed routes and operate within established systems.

Deleuze and Guattari further describe the unique spatial orientation of nomads. They inhabit open spaces that are "indefinite and noncommunicating" and continuously traverse "a space without borders and enclosures" (380). These open spaces reflect the nomads' refusal to conform to territorial boundaries. The authors also distinguish between two types of space: the "sedentary road," which is state-controlled and enforces hierarchical order, and the "nomadic trajectory," which embodies resistance to such fixed norms (380). Within these trajectories, nomads defy boundaries and maintain their existence in fluid, unstructured environments.

Deleuze and Guattari further distinguish between striated and smooth spaces, linking sedentary existence to striated space and nomadic life to smooth space. They argue that the state operates through striated spaces, imposing rigid, hierarchical structures on individuals. These structures reflect the state's fixed rules, which nomads actively reject. Instead, nomads move through smooth spaces "marked only by traits that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory" (381). This notion illustrated how nomads refuse to settle in fixed territories and follow rhizomatic thought, characterized by multiple, non-linear connections.

Nomads resist, challenge, and subvert state-imposed norms and hierarchies by physically moving, leaving a territory, or rejecting static structures. They exhibit adaptability by embracing new environments and maintaining an independent, flexible lifestyle. According to Deleuze and Guattari, nomads exist outside the state's fixed rules to attain fluidity and adaptability. They state, "Nomads who come in off the steppes, venture a fluid and active escape, sow deterritorialization everywhere" (222), emphasizing that nomads move freely without being confined by geographical

boundaries. This fluidity aligns with their rejection of rigid temporal and spatial frameworks.

Adaptability is further highlighted when Deleuze and Guattari state that "nomad inhabit the places; they remain in them, and they themselves make them grow" (382). This suggests that nomads integrate into new environments without being confined by them. The term 'nomos' described as "nondelimited, unpartitioned; the pre-urban countryside; mountainside, plateau steppe" (481), underscores nomadic life's openness and freedom. Moreover, deterritorialization plays a central role in defining the nomadic condition. It goes beyond simply breaking away from a fixed territory; it involves a continuous movement across diverse regions. The authors explain that deterritorialization "goes from the central layer to the periphery, then from the new center to the new periphery, falling back to the old center, and launching forth to the new" (53). This dynamic process symbolizes resistance to traditional norms and the embrace of fluid identity within globalized contexts.

Finally, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize nomads as war machines that refuse to compromise their original identity. They assert, "The war machine's form of exteriority is such is that it exists only in its own metamorphoses" (361), portraying nomads as entities that transform their spaces without losing their core identity.

According to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, migrants are described as "migrant barbarians … they come and go, cross and recross frontiers, pillage, and ransom but also integrate themselves and reterritorialize" (222). Unlike nomads, migrants operate within the framework of fixed hierarchies, moving from one location to another while remaining tied to the state's internal order and control systems. This movement reflects a form of interiority that aligns with the logic of the state. In contrast to nomos, which signifies open and unbounded space, the term polis refers to the structured and hierarchical city-state and represents the ordered spaces inhabited by migrants (481). Deleuze and Guattari explain how interiority governs and organize individual actions within defined territorial limits through the concept of polis.

Migrants, therefore, engage in reterritorialization, adapting to new cultural norms and transforming their identities in their new environments. Deleuze and Guattari describe this process as "reterritorialization on its interior milieus" (75), suggesting that migrants reestablish themselves within structured systems rather than

resisting them. Additionally, migrants move through striated spaces marked by fixed boundaries, rules, and hierarchies that cannot be easily subverted or rejected. This rigid spatial orientation differentiated migrants from nomads, who navigate smooth spaces and resist structural constraints.

Deleuze and Guattari theorize that the process of becoming either a nomad or a migrant involves the interplay between deterritorialization and reterritorialization, which destabilizes fixed boundaries by dissolving conventional identity categories. The state establishes territorial identity as a central signifier by imposing fixed hierarchical structures designed to position individuals within rigid systems. Deleuze and Guattari associate this system with interiority, which seeks to regulate and organize behavior through controlled, structured spaces. They state, “the state’s pretension to be a world order and to root man” (45). Migrants often conform to this interiority by reterritorializing within established social, political, or national orders as they move across borders. In contrast, nomads resist such structures by embracing exteriority. They construct a war machine, a decentralized and deterritorialized force that directly opposes the state apparatus. Through this position of exteriority, nomads traverse open paths and actively dismantle fixed systems of power and identity. Their resistance enables them to explore difference, multiplicity, and alternative forms of belonging outside the constraints of state-imposed organization.

From the above theoretical framework, the concepts of nomads, migrants, deterritorialization, reterritorialization, fixed hierarchies, striated spaces, smooth spaces, becoming, fluidity and adaptability have been taken to work out the present study.

3.2 Castells’ notion of Transformation of Identity

The second theorist reference in this study is Manuel Castells, who outlines three primary forms of identity: legitimizing, resistance, and project identities. Legitimizing identity is shaped by dominant institutions that promote specific logic and meanings to reinforce or expand control systems. Resistance identity emerges from collective sources such as citizenship, ethnicity, and locality and is often constructed in opposition to dominant power structures. In contrast, *project identity* is formed when

individuals or social actors transform it by drawing on available cultural materials to redefine their societal role and construct a new sense of self (Castells 8).

In *The Power of Identity*, Manuel Castells asserts that in the age of globalization, identity is reconstructed using traditional cultural material, not by returning to it in its original form, but by reinterpreting it considering contemporary contexts. He explains that identity transformation can be real and imagined, with imagined identity serving as a response to unchangeable or overwhelming social and environmental circumstances. Castells emphasizes that globalization, particularly through electronic media, education, literacy, urbanization and modernization, contributes to the emergence of imagined communities.

While historical dislocation was driven primarily by geographical migration, Castells argues that technology increasingly replaces physical movement in the digital era. The rise of networked technology disrupts fixed territorial boundaries, redefining nation-states as spatial nodes that serve as "the connection between local and the global world" (35). Territories no longer function solely as geographical confined spaces; instead, they become technologically constructed environments supporting deterritorialization and reterritorialization processes.

This shift contributes to the transformation of personal identity. Castells notes that identity is now constructed around primary affiliations, whether historically rooted or newly formed, in response to an evolving search for meaning and belonging: "The construction of social action around primary identities, either ascribed, rooted in history and geography, or newly built in an anxious search for meaning and spirituality" (22). He further distinguishes between two spatial logics: the space of places, which refers to the physical environment, and the space of flows, which defines the virtual, digitally networked realm. Communication technologies compress time and space through the space of flows, merging past, present, and future into a single communicative locality. Moreover, electronic communication is crucial in disconnecting spatial proximity from everyday social interaction. Castells argues that "The new electronic home or portable communication devices increase the chances of individual members of the family to organize their own time and space" (400), empowering individuals to reshape their environments. Ultimately, these developments allow people to "make virtuality our

reality" (400), highlighting digital technology's transformative power in reconstructing identity and space.

Manuel Castells further explains how technological advancement replaces the traditional physical spaces and territories by transforming reality into virtual environments, such as the electronic home. As digital technology evolves, individuals increasingly convert their physical spaces into digital ones through online work and remote connectivity. This shift blurs the boundaries between different locations, merging multiple spatial zones into a single fluid network. These fluid exchanges constitute what Castells terms spaces of flows, where spatial interaction becomes detached from physical geography and embedded in global digital platforms. Consequently, individuals in one location can simultaneously engage with multiple regions worldwide, expanding their presence beyond geographical limits. This transformation also influences identity as individuals interact within online platforms often "retain their original identity and enforce their own rules of behavior" (382). It reflects their characteristics associated with nomadic thought, fluid movement without the loss of core identity. However, in some cases, virtual communities influence individuals to reconsider or alter their sense of self, detaching them "from their physical selves" (387). It reflects the experience of migrants, who frequently reconstruct their identities based on their physical or virtual environments. Castells also discusses the "dehumanization of social relationships" (387), which suggests that digital spaces allow individuals to escape their real-world identities and engage in alternative or anonymous self-presentations.

Technology does not simply supplement physical geography through these processes but redefines it. The transformation of physical territory into technological space fosters the retention of the original identity and the opportunity to escape or reconstruct it. Among Castells' three categories of identity, legitimizing, resistance, and project identity, the current study focuses on project identity, as it best explains how individuals actively reform their identities through engagement with "global and spatial networks" (57). In this context, identity becomes fluid, shifting in response to changing digital conditions. It exists neither strictly as nomadic nor migrant but instead oscillates between both or inhibits a liminal space that defies rigid classification. Ultimately, transforming identity and space through technology produces a modern condition

defined by fluidity. Technological identity and spatial nodes now function as flexible, dynamic constructs that reflect the hybridization of physical and virtual realities.

From the above theoretical framework, the concepts of project identity, spaces of flows, spaces of places, network society, spatial nodes, technological identity and spaces with reference to the advanced digital technology have been taken to conduct the present study.

To conclude, this study developed an adapted theoretical framework by integrating key concepts from Manuel Castells, Deleuze and Guattari. Although these theorists explore identity and spatiality, they do so through distinct terminologies shaped by their historical and technological contexts. Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize identity regarding nomads and migrants, emphasizing movement through deterritorialization and reterritorialization within physical territories. In contrast, Castells redefines identity for the digital era through his typology of legitimizing, resistance, and project identities, with this study particularly focusing on project identity to examine identity transformation through technology.

The adapted theoretical framework for this study is created by focusing on these major concepts. Deleuze and Guattari associate nomadic movement with smooth spaces, which reject state-imposed hierarchies, while migrants navigate striated spaces structured by fixed orders. Similarly, Castells introduces the distinction between the space of flows and the space of places. The space of flows, aligned with nomadic logic, reflects movement through digital networks where individuals are no longer anchored to a single-geographic location. On the other hand, the space of places resembles the migrant experience, rooted in physical or global displacement. Additionally, Castells introduces the concept of spatial nodes, encompassing physical and virtual spaces. These nodes serve as points of transformation where identity and territory are continuously reconstructed in response to technological developments. While Deleuze and Guattari ground nomadic and migrant movement in physical geography, Castells extends these notions of technological geographies; where digital environments influence identity formation. Technology, therefore, emerges as the catalyst uniting these frameworks. In earlier conceptualization, nomadism and migration were grounded in physical geography, but in the digital age, these movements evolved into techno-nomadism and techno-migration. Accordingly, deterritorialization and

reterritorialization manifest as techno-deterritorialization and techno-reterritorialization, reshaping spatial experiences and identity. The contrast between Deleuze and Guattari's striated and smooth spaces mirrors Castells' offline and online spaces. Just as smooth space resists the rigid order of striated space, online space transcends the constraints of offline geography. Castells' concept of spatial nodes further expands this idea by illustrating how digital locations exist globally within technological networks that are no longer bound to physical ground.

Within the context of the adapted theoretical framework grounded in the spatial theories of Deleuze and Guattari, and Manual Castells, the terms techno-nomads, techno-migrants, techno-deterritorialization, and techno-reterritorialization reflect the evolving relationship between identity, space, and technology in contemporary digital culture. A techno-nomad actively navigates in digital and physical spaces without adhering to fixed structures or territories. Echoing Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomads who resists striated, state-controlled spaces, techno-nomads operate within smooth digital spaces, often engaging in remote work, decentralized living, or borderless communication. Their identity remains in motion, but they do not necessarily abandon their core self; they adapt continuously to new technological environments while resisting rigid societal frameworks. A techno-migrant actively shapes their identity and movement through purpose-driven migration across technological systems. Like traditional migrants, techno-migrants actively move from one space to another, with digital platforms, global connectivity, and transnational networks mediating their mobility. They often adopt new digital identities or roles, reconfiguring their cultural or professional selves in response to the demands of virtual or hybrid environments. It aligns with Castells' notion of project identity, where individuals reconstruct who they are through available cultural and technological resources. Techno-deterritorialization refers to the process through which digital technology disrupts and displaces traditional territorial boundaries. It parallels Deleuze and Guattari's idea of deterritorialization but extends it into the digital realm. Through technological tools, people disconnect from specific physical boundaries, enabling them to act, work, and exist beyond fixed national or local boundaries. This technological unrooting facilitates identity formation in open, decentralized, and globally connected spaces. Conversely, techno-reterritorialization describes how individuals re-establish a sense of belonging or identity within new digital or hybrid spaces. As Castells' notion of spatial nodes

suggests, these new territories are not purely physical but emerge through global networks and digital interactions. In this sense, techno-reterritorialization involves the reconstruction of identity within the frameworks of virtual communities, transnational digital labor, or platform-based social structures. The subject may adopt new values, practices, or affiliations while remaining embedded in the technological fabric of modern society. Together, these four terms actively capture the complex interplay between mobility, identity, and digital space, illustrating how technological mediation redefines movement and belonging in the contemporary world.

Although scholars can examine identity through various theoretical lenses, including psychological or psychoanalytic approaches, this study explicitly adopts a spatial approach to analyze identity construction. This focus arises from the nature of the research, which navigates how physical, digital, and hybrid spaces influence identity transformation in an era shaped by global mobility and technological advancement. This study draws on Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and the distinction between striated and smooth spaces, along with Manuel Castells' ideas of spaces of flows, spaces of places, and spatial nodes. These spatial frameworks allow for analyzing identity as a fluid and mobile construct shaped by territorial displacement, digital networks, and shifting geographies. While psychoanalytic theory offers valuable insights into the inner psychological processes of subject formation, it falls outside the scope of this research, which aims to explore identity not through the unconscious or symbolic order but through spatial and technological structures. The selected theoretical models are thus best suited to address the study's core questions regarding how space, movement, and connectivity shape identity in contemporary contexts.

3.3 Research Methodology

This study explores identity in a globalized world by analyzing the selected primary text's characters, settings and themes. Given the nature of the research, it employs a qualitative approach that is interpretive, subjective, explanatory, and reflective.

This study adopts Micheal Quinn Patton's qualitative research method to examine the relevant material. Patton identifies three aspects of qualitative inquiry, and

this study focuses on the third, written documents, particularly literary texts, as the primary mode of analysis. This method proved suitable as it enables a comprehensive investigation of complex issues from a broad perspective. Patton describes qualitative inquiry as a naturalistic mode of research that supports inductive analysis, allowing researchers to examine "real-world situations as they unfold naturally; nonmanipulative and noncontrolling; openness to what emerges" (Patton 40). He further notes that qualitative analysis acknowledges the challenge of maintaining complete objectivity, warning that "complete objectivity is impossible and pure subjectivity undermining credibility; the researcher's focus become balance, understanding and depicting the world authentically in all its complexity while being self-analytical, aware, and reflexive in consciousness" (41). This method enables the researchers to integrate a reflective voice and perspective into the study, emphasizing the interrelationship among various aspects of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.4 Research Method

The researcher adopted Catherine Belsey's *Textual Analysis as a Research Method* to conduct the present study. In this approach, Belsey illustrates her method through various examples, including an analysis of Titian's painting *Tarquin and Lucretia*, to demonstrate how textual analysis operates across different forms of cultural expression.

According to Gabriele Griffin, Belsey's textual analysis often integrates supplementary methodologies to enhance the interpretive process (Griffin 12). This method centers on "a close encounter with the work itself, an examination of the details without bringing them presuppositions" (Belsey 160). Accordingly, the study closely reads the selected texts to extract relevant insights. Belsey also draws upon Rolant Barthes concept of the *Death of the Author*, which shifts interpretive responsibility from the author to the reader (165). She further asserts that "meaning is not at the disposal of the individual, and not, whatever stout common sense may indicate" (168), suggesting that interpretation emerges through the interaction between text and reader. This analytical framework proves suitable for the present research as it facilitates the identification of underlying meanings and enables the study of the socio-cultural milieu shaped by digital technology.

Using Belsey's method, the researcher analyzed the two selected novels as primary sources, while secondary data includes previous scholarly research relevant to the topic. The primary texts provide dialogues, monologues, internal conflicts, narrative structures, descriptive passages, settings, and thematic elements. These features offer critical insights that help answer the study's central research questions. The extracted data contributes to a deeper understanding of character development, thematic concerns, and the contextual environment of the narratives.

The study examines how the selected novels portray the transformation of character identity in nomadic or migrant identities, or oscillate between them. The study also explores how digital technology influences these transformations, particularly regarding territory and identity. To address this dimension, the research closely examines the novel's settings and the themes to assess their role in reshaping identity.

The theoretical framework anchors itself in Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of nomadism and migration, supplemented by Manuel Castells' notion of technological identity. This combined framework helps in addressing the study's research questions by providing a lens to understand how digital environments and state apparatuses influence identity formation. Employing a qualitative approach alongside Belsey's textual analysis method, the study critically examines the selected texts to uncover how technology, space, and identity intersect in contemporary literary narratives.

CHAPTER 4

NOMADISM AND MIGRATION IN *WALKAWAY*

This chapter primarily presents a detailed textual analysis of Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway*, the first primary text selected for the study, considering the adapted theoretical framework. It critically engages with the research questions, offering an in-depth examination of the novel through its characters, setting, and significant themes.

Cory Doctorow, born in 1971 in Toronto, currently resides in Los Angeles. He is a Canadian science fiction author, journalist, and activist. His works engages with various themes, including Solarpunks, crime thriller, monopolistic power, and technological surveillance. In addition to his writings, Doctorow contributes to various foundations, teaches at academic institutions, and regularly publishes blogs. His works, translated into multiple languages and published by various international houses, address young adult and adult audiences. *Little Brother* and *Homeland* target young readers, while *Attach Surface* and *Walkaway* speak to more mature audiences. Doctorow critically investigates contemporary concerns, including digital privacy and economic domination, in his non-fiction, such as *How to Destroy* Surveillance. His achievements have earned him several prestigious awards. He also co-edits the blog Boing Boing and co-founded of the UK Open Rights Group.

Published in 2017, Walkaway, envisions a speculative, post-scarcity society where individuals reject the oppressive "default" world and establish autonomous, utopian communities. Set in a technologically advanced future, the novel explores the role of innovation in reshaping material and social realities. It emphasizes the widening gap between the eliter class, the Zottas, and the underprivileged. While the Zottas enjoy comfort, privilege, and security, marginalized populations suffer under their exploitative systems of control and surveillance. The narrative includes human and non-human characters, highlighting the novel's expansive vision of agency and identity.

The protagonist, Hubert Etcetera, whose parents gave him nineteen middle names, embodies resistance and transformation. Alongside his friend Seth, who struggles with transitioning to a non-work-oriented life, Hubert abandons mainstream society. Natalie Redwater, a wealthy girl subjected to her father's invasive surveillance, joins the Walkaway movement. Together, they find refuge in the community established by Limpopo, a pioneering figure who initially endures isolation but persists

in her effort to escape fixed societal constraints. Limpopo ultimately succeeds in founding a collective space that others freely join. To detach from her past, she erases her previous identity, a choice mirrored by others who "walk away."

Those who reject societal control and repressive norms become "walkaways." Individuals who establish alternative communities in the abandoned margins of the world. They reconstruct infrastructure and practice collective ownership using technologies such as 3D printing and open-source platforms, their main objective centres on achieving autonomy and resisting the state's authority. Although the Zottas strive to reassert dominance over them, the Walkaways continually adapt and evolve, reshaping their identities and technological capacities. Eventually, they develop advanced technologies that enable immortality and resource-sharing, reinforcing their commitment to mutual aid and community resilience. Major themes in the novel include collective sharing, the dynamics of hardship, identity reconstruction, and the enduring struggle to escape authoritarian systems in pursuit of independence. Those elements provide the critical foundation for this study.

The analysis, framed by selected theoretical lenses, seeks to determine whether the characters embody traits of nomads or migrants and whether they retain or reconstruct their identities in response to technological change.

4.1 Nomadism, Migration, and the Fluid Boundaries of Technological Existence

Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* constructs a near-future dystopian in which individuals consciously reject the dominant societal order by abandoning the constraints imposed by state surveillance and capitalist hierarchies. The narrative traces the emergence of walkaway communities, spaces that exist outside the hegemony of the default society where traditional hierarchies, ownership, and authority dominate. Doctorow's characters embody the complex interplay between nomadic and migrant identities, as theorized by Deleuze and Guattari. They define nomads as who "sow deterritorialization everywhere," practicing fluid movement while resisting fixed structures (Deleuze and Guattari 222). In contrast, they describe migrants as undergoing "reterritorialization on its interior milieu," thereby reshaping their identities within new, often externally imposed environments (75). Within *Walkaway*, characters alternate

between these identity modes as they traverse ideological and territorial transformations.

Doctorow constructs the walkaway project as a collective rejection of the state apparatus and its "striated spaces," replacing it with the "smooth spaces" of communal living and distributed resources (Deleuze and Guattari 118, 381). The walkaways enact deterritorialization by forming autonomous zones that displace the spatial logic of capitalist hegemony. These walkaway zones reflect Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomadic space, which is "marked only by traits that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory" (381). Certain characters, in their spatial mobility, preserve core identities and thus represent nomadic resistance to assimilation. Others fully adopt new subject positions aligned with transformed environment and values, reflecting migrant reterritorialization. Some, however, remain suspended between memory and reinvention, unable to commit fully to either trajectory.

Doctorow distinguishes character trajectories by embedding gendered and domestic origins into the novel's structure. The male characters, Hubert, Seth, and Billiam, appear disconnected from familial or domestic beginnings, which aligns them with a rootless nomadic condition. Conversely, Doctorow introduces female characters such as Natalie and Limpopo within family systems that they must abandon to seek liberation. Natalie escapes the authoritarian control of her father, while Limpopo departs from her mother to construct a decentralized, non-hierarchical walkaway society. Their departures symbolize a broader movement away from inherited, static identities towards self-constructed and fluid modes of being.

Hubert Etcetera, a central figure in the novel, exemplifies the struggle between nomadic fluidity and migrant reterritorialization. As a character estranged from his society, Hubert internalizes the affective toll of structural alienation. His disaffection prompts a turn toward the deterritorializing logic of the nomad as he seeks to resist and elude fixed structures. However, he remains emotionally tethered to Seth, his childhood friend, which reflects an attachment to a previous self. Doctorow foregrounds this connection, "Hubert, Etc, Espinoza only hung out with Seth because part of his thing about not letting go of his childhood friends. He was insistent on the subject, and Hubert, Etc, was a pushover" (Doctorow 7). This passage illustrated Hubert's inability to sever ties with the past, situating him within Deleuze and Guattari's model of the

nomad who, despite the spatial movement, retains a consistent core of identity (Deleuze and Guattari 406).

Doctorow further articulates Hubert's ideological ambivalence through a moment of introspection,

> Hubert, Etc., remembered that age, the certainty that the world was so broken that only an idiot would design to acknowledge it or its vulnerability. Hubert often confronted his reflection on his bathroom screen and remembered being someone who spent every minute denying the world's legitimacy. Now he was enmeshed in it. (Doctorow 8)

The above excerpt captures Hubert's entrapment in a dialectic of rebellion and resignation. His memory of rejecting "the world's legitimacy" aligns him with a nomadic ethos of refusal. In contrast, his admission of being "enmeshed in it" confirms the gravitational pull of migrant reterritorialization. His identity reflects the ongoing tension between deterritorialization and its reversal (Deleuze and Guattari 233). Hubert occupies a liminal space, continuously negotiating the oscillation between flight and reabsorption. His trajectory reveals the fragility of nomadic subjectivity within a world where structural forces constantly seek reterritorialization.

Hubert attends the Communist Party with his childhood friend Seth, yet he remains emotionally detached and disillusioned. This alienation reflects his migrant-like experiences as he traverses unfamiliar territories and struggles to adapt shifting social norms. Although surrounded by familiar faces, Hubert still hesitates in mundane actions, such as getting a drink, he "clumsily filled a cup" (8). This minor moment symbolizes his broader disorientation and psychological detachment. His reluctance reveals a lack of confidence and discomfort in re-engaging with his community. Even among children, he remains unengaged, signifying the mental and emotional displacement characteristic of a migrant who attempts to acclimate to a new environment while holding onto the past. The party's ambiance, rather than invoking nostalgia, heightens his estrangement, as he feels increasingly disconnected from what once constituted his original world. This disconnection becomes more apparent during Hubert's conversation with Natalie. His cautious inquiry about "communist free beer" subtly signals his effort to reconnect with communal norms, yet it also reveals the cultural distance he now perceives (8). At this moment, his simultaneous dislocation

and movement among various spaces reflect his hybrid identity, embodying traits of both nomads and migrants. Hubert physically transitions between places like a nomad, but emotionally, he resembles a migrant, he attempts to integrate into new socio-cultural frameworks, yet a nomad, he resists shedding his original sense of self. These conflicting impulses leave him oscillating between past and present identities.

Hubert's unusual name, composed of middle names, symbolizes this fluid and multifaceted self. As Doctorow states, "He had made peace with it. It was a part of growing up. Hubert Vernon Rudolph Clayton Irving Wilson Alva Anton Jeff Harley Timothy Curtis Cleveland Cecil Ollie Edmund Eli Wiley Marvin Ellis Espinoza" (11). Though he primarily uses "Hubert," the reference to the rest as "Etcetera" humorously underscores the open-endedness of his identity. His name, too complex to fit into any "database" (10), serves as a resistance to fixed categorization. His parents' deliberate choice to defy the Real Name Policy also signals their rejection of institutional norms. This act of naming becomes an ideological gesture, empowering Hubert with multiple identity possibilities. His name encapsulates the oscillation between identity rooted in history and identity forged in fluidity, echoing Manuel Castell's notion that identity is increasingly reconstructed "around primary identities, either ascribed, rooted in history and geography, or newly build in an anxious search for meaning and spirituality" (22). Hubert's identity operates as both an anchor to memory, like a nomad's tie to the past, and a mutable construct responding to present cultural pressures. Later in the novel, Hubert expresses admiration for the walkaway, stating, "seems to me they are doing something that makes a difference. No money, no pretending money matters, and they are doing it right now" (45). This view contrasts traditional capitalist structures with walkaway ideals, indicating Hubert's growing alignment with alternative social orders. His comment reflects a Deleuzian nomadic impulse, escaping the dominant capitalist state to establish new communal spaces through collaboration and mutual aid (Deleuze and Guattari 381). The idea of Walkaway as representing "The first days of a better nation" (46) reinforces their collective pursuit of a society unbound by conventional hierarchies. In embracing this philosophy, Hubert, like other walkaways, reject state-imposed constraints and ventures into deterritorialized zones of possibility. However, the desire to escape the state's grasp provokes direct consequences. During the Communist Party, just as characters begin discussing their discontent and aspirations, as sudden drone strike disrupts their conversation. This attack dramatizes the

omnipresence of state surveillance and militarized enforcement. The state's technological control leaves no space for clandestine rebellion. When Billiam dies in the assault, it becomes evident that the state does not hesitate to sacrifice individuals for control. Seth, in contrast, reacts with fear, a response that aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's description of migrants who internalize "the state's pretension to be a world order" (45). Here, the ideological conflict intensifies between those adopting nomadic agency and those still entrapped within the migrant logic of adaptation and fear.

Following the drone's attack, the surviving characters flee to Frans. However, their arrival there only reaffirms the state's pervasiveness. Surveillance technologies continue to track them; biometric systems identify them through residual data from prior visits. Even in transit, they remain legible and traceable. Natalie's father, Jacob, exemplifies this control by using real-time analytics to locate her. The character's physical escape fails to sever the digital tethers binding them to the apparatus of the state. Their movement illustrates that space itself is no longer safe or private in a society governed by data.

Natalie, like Hubert, rebels against this technocratic control. Under constant monitoring by her father, she seeks to join the walkaway community as a means of reclaiming autonomy. In one moment, she asks rhetorically, "Who says the world is a better place with this building left to rot?" (17). This question encapsulates her nomadic refusal to accept decaying institutions and fixed architectures. According to Deleuze and Guattari, nomads resist "outdated and fixed structures" in favor of fluid renewal" (380). Her willingness to reconstruct than preserve echoes this philosophy. Simultaneously, her challenge critiques the inefficacy of state governance. By suggesting that the state's presence leads to stasis rather than progress, she aligns herself with the nomadic ethos of continual reformation.

In an exchange with Hubert, Natalie articulates the societal binaries that dictated human worth, "If you are not success, you are a failure. If you are not on top, you are on the bottom" (18). Her words sharply critique the meritocratic systems that sustain inequality. By describing those "in-between" as "hanging on by your fingernails," she exposes the structural instability imposed on the middle class. The binary reflects a societal configuration that suppresses most and benefits few, reinforcing the urgency for alterative frameworks like the walkaway movement.

Natalie's debate with Jacob further exemplifies this conflict. She demands, "What is more important, human or property rights?" (39) highlighting the philosophical divide between communal ethics and capitalist accumulation. Jacob's insistence on property ownership underscores the state's prioritization of economic power over basic human dignity. This debate mirrors the migrant struggle for belonging and recognition within a system designed to marginalize them; for nomads like Natalie, the rejection of property-centric ideological becomes essential to construct new communal identities (Deleuze and Guattari 481).

Later, Natalie critiques reformist solutions that rely on utopian overhauls, stating, "I am suspicious of any plan to fix unfairness that starts with 'step one, dismantle the entire system and replace it with a better one,' especially if you cannot do anything else until one step is done" (Doctorow 45). Her insight reveals a pragmatic skepticism of radicalism, even as she aligns ideologically with walkaway principles. Her comments emphasize the necessity of actionable resistance rooted in lived realities, a strategy resonant with nomadic deterritorialization, escape from the center while building parallel network of resilience.

As characters contemplate "going walkaway" (50), their decision reflects an explicit rejection of centralized society. Walkaways are described as "practically Zen monks" (52), individuals who endure hardship and deprivation to create alternative lifeways. Seth's comment that they are merely, "homeless people" (40) invokes a classic misunderstanding of nomadic identity. For Deleuze and Guattari, nomads are not without place, but they reject place as a fixed referent, choosing instead to inhabit "pre-urban countryside" or liminal zones (481).

Natalie's internal journey also conveys this fluid identity construction. She undergoes a name transformation, and becomes "Iceweasel" upon joining the walkaway community. This renaming signifies reterritorialization, a process wherein migrants construct new meanings and affiliations through social and cultural re-rooting (Deleuze and Guattari 75). Castells refers to this as project identity, where individuals forge new selves through access to cultural material (8).

Natalie's psychological transition precedes her physical one. She must first conceptualize freedom before she can embody it. When she asks Dis, an AI entity, "I am free?" (Doctorow 318), Dis responds, "You are free as anyone can be in this world"

(318) highlights the paradox of autonomy within a surveilled society. Despite seeking liberation, she remains bound by the infrastructures she tries to escape. This tension reflects the fluid, adaptive identity that Deleuze and Guattari describe, one caught in a perpetual negotiation with systems of control (382).

In a subsequent moment of emotional vulnerability, Natalie confesses to Dis, "I am not sim, Dis, I am a human being. I am cracking up because my situation is terminally fubared" (327). Here, she confronts the threat of machinic assimilation, the fear that technology may erase her humanity. Her struggle to assert personhood under constant surveillance parallels the existential crisis of identity formation in a post-human world. When she declares, "Because I am not me" (327), she acknowledges her loss of self-amidst oppressive systems, choosing Walkaway not only as a political but as an existential refuge. She continues to unravel this anxiety by stating, "The 'me' that counts is not just as me I can recognize. It is a me I want to be" (382). Her reference to "silicon" conveys her fear of becoming digitally encoded or post-human. This metaphor on data, automation, and digital surveillance risks collapsing the human into machinic entity. She expresses an anxiety about losing her human agency within technological systems that blur the boundaries between mind, body, and machine. Natalie's journey demonstrates the cost of deterritorialization when unaccompanied by sufficient anchoring or reterritorialization. Her identity becomes fragmented, her subjectivity diluted within the hyper-surveilled, hyper-connected posthuman world.

Thus, Natalie's character offers a profound exploration of how resistance, though ideologically and emotionally empowering, can also lead to psychic destabilization. She resists the Zottas, surveillance, and patriarchal control yet finds herself caught in an existential crisis. Her journey represents the paradox of freedom in the digital age, liberation from the state does not necessarily mean autonomy from power. Her story illustrates the entangled process of identity formation in a world where technological mediation blurs the boundaries between self, other, and system.

Limpopo emerges as one of the most philosophical committed and structurally influential characters in *Walkaway*. She represents a fully realized expression of nomadic subjectivity, one who only departs from the rigid structures of the default society but also constructs an alternative framework grounded in mutual aid, sharing identity, and post-materialist ethics. Her actions and ideology reflect a straightforward

Deleuzian process of deterritorialization followed by reterritorialization, a deliberate construction of new spaces, relations, and modes of existence.

Limpopo's decision of leaving the capitalist regime is literal and metaphorical. She leaves the default world physically, but, more importantly, she abandons its ideological grip. Her rejection of "stuff," material possessions and ownership, exemplifies her nomadic philosophy, "Stuff is just stuff" (Doctorow 83). This statement encapsulates her critique of commodity culture and the capitalist fetishization of property. Her value system embraces transience, use-value, and collaboration rather than accumulation and competition. Deleuze and Guattari say the nomad "distributes themselves in an open space, occupying a smooth space" (380). Limpopo not only occupies this space; she generates it.

The community Limpopo co-founds, *Belt and Braces*, functions as a space of ethical reterritorialization. Here, individuals form social bonds based on cooperation and technological sharing. Unlike the default society, which enforces surveillance and privatization, Belt and Braces fosters transparency and inclusion. Limpopo actively welcomes newcomers by referring to them as "noobs," and asks, "What do you want to be called?" (59). Her approach to identity is non-hierarchical and processual, she allows individuals to define themselves, rejecting the fixity of imposed social roles. This openness reflects Castells's theory of project identity, where individuals consciously reconstruct who they are through engagement with new cultural materials and social configurations (Castells 22).

Limpopo's acceptance of other's evolving identities significantly constructs the state's obsession with database legibility and behavioral predictability. Her leadership, however, avoids authoritarianism. She actively resists the label of "leader," rejecting hierarchical power structures associated with traditional authority. When confronted with the concept of "leaderboards" that quantify contribution, she replies with discomfort, preferring fluid roles and informal consensus (Doctorow 105). This rejection of ranking and stratification aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's vision of the nomadic war machine, which resists organization by rejecting its fixed hierarchical structures.

Limpopo's transformation from victimhood to leadership symbolizes the deeper psychological and ideological reconstitution of selfhood. Her physical scar, received

during her early struggles in the walkaway community, marks her bodily investment in the project of autonomy. The scar functions as trauma and testimony, a sign of sacrifice and resilience. It also performs a symbolic function, illustrating her detachment from the sanitized, commodified body of neoliberal subjectivity. Her experiences echo the Deleuzian notion that "The war machine's form of exteriority is such that it exists only in its own metamorphoses." (361). She builds her new home "close to the border" (Doctorow 74), metaphorical and literal threshold between old and new worlds. Her proximity to the "border" literally and symbolically marks her transitional status. She constructs her living space close to the boundary between the default world and the walkaway zone, constantly aware of the possibility of retreat or confrontation. This space is an "escape hatch" (Doctorow 74), a point of exodus and contingency. The border is not a closure but a threshold, a site of continual negotiation between order and freedom, stability and movement. Deleuze and Guattari describes this as a line of flight, a rupture through which new arrangements emerge (204). Limpopo's life on the edge enables her to cultivate alternatives without reproducing the exclusions of the system she opposes.

Limpopo's commitment to technological emancipation further distinguishes her nomadic praxis. She leverages open-source platforms, 3D printing, and decentralized networks to construct an environment where people can survive and flourish. In doing so, she resists the capitalist appropriation of innovation. For her, technology is not a tool of control but a means of liberation.

Limpopo's statement that Walkaway represents "The first days of a better nation" (Doctorow 60) reflects a utopian desire grounded in material action. This vision rejects statecraft and nationalism, seeking instead a nomadic sovereignty based on interdependence, fluid identity, and deterritorialized belonging. Limpopo reterritorializes not through conquest or closure but through community. Her leadership does not consolidate power; it distributes it. Her community does not enforce stability; it nurtures change. When Limpopo states, "Being recorded all the time is creepy" (83), she succinctly identifies the core anxiety of the digital age, the loss of privacy and the normalization of surveillance. Her ease reflects the broader critique within *Walkaway* of how ubiquitous data collection erodes individuality and spontaneity. In response, she builds systems that value consent, presence, and unpredictability. By resisting

datafication and behavioral quantification, Limpopo asserts a nomadic ethical position that refuses to reduce subjectivity to code or algorithm.

In conclusion, the characters in *Walkaway* resist the state's rigid hierarchies by embracing walkaway identity. While they do not fully embody either the nomadic or migrant figure, they oscillate between modes, forming hybrid selves in response to technological surveillance and systematic control. Their experiences underscore the fluid and evolving nature of identity in a post-capitalist, post-human world.

4.2 Resisting Boundaries Through the Transformative Power of Setting

The shifting settings in Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* significantly influence the character's identities by shaping their behaviors, perceptions and sense of self. Each spatial context carries its own cultural and social meaning, reshaping how individuals relate to others and redefine themselves. Within the novel, the setting gradually escapes the control of the default society, prompting individuals to adopt a walkaway lifestyle using abandoned spaces. As they resist societal norms, these individuals transform from fearful subjects to empowered agents.

Doctorow constructs two contrasting spaces: the default society and the walkaway zones. The default society, governed by the Zottas, a powerful elite, is marked by economic inequality, technological domination environmental degradation, and social fragmentation. This environment plays a central role in shaping the characters' mobility, resistance strategies, and survival within both the default and walkaway spaces.

The novel opens in an abandoned factory where the protagonists meet during a Communist party. As they challenge the state's fixed norms, the characters begin to envision alternative modes of existence. Hubert Etcetera, a central character, attends the party and engages in a discussion about Muji, a corporation that has recently relocated its operations to Alberta. As the narrative states:

> Muji shut down the plant and moved to Alberta six months ago. Got a huge subsidy to relocate – Ontario couldn't match the deal. We can do the whole line from here, all Muji's furniture including white-table stuff they do for Nestle and

> Standard and Poors and Moet and Chandon. If we don't get caught, we can do enough furnishings for a couple thousand families. (11)

The scene illustrates how Muji's relocation reflects economic migration within a neoliberal framework. The company's movement symbolizes a disconnection from its past, reshaping its identity through new market-driven decisions. In response, Hubert and his group reclaim the leftover furniture and infrastructure, using it to build a sustainable lifestyle. As Hubert asserts, "We can do the whole line from here" (11). This practice of repurposing materials through 3D printing and open-source technology echoes Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomadism wherein nomads inhabit and cultivate abandoned spaces (382).

Despite their innovation, the characters still operate under threat. Hubert's cautionary statement, "If we don't get caught" (11), underscores their fear of exposure. Their vulnerability mirrors the migrant's path, described by Deleuze and Guattari as a figure who moves "principally from one point to another" (380) to avoid detection and repression. By restoring and reactivating abandoned spaces, the characters actively deterritorialize the terrain of the default society, transforming it into walkaway territory.

This act of spatial reclamation reflects the philosophical shift from passive obedience to active reconstruction. Deleuze and Guattari assert, "Nomads inhabit the places; they remain in them, and they themselves make them grow" (382). The characters' ability to reclaim the factory marks a pivotal moment in their empowerment. Through these actions, they "sow deterritorialization everywhere" (222), moving beyond the confines of state structures that enforce identity through order and discipline. The default society's demand that citizens obey "the state's pretension to be world order" (45) contrast sharply with the walkaways' refusal to conform it. By creating walkaway spaces, the characters embody the war machine's externality, which as Deleuze and Guattari write, "exists only in its own metamorphoses" (361). Their transformation occurs through a dual process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, facilitated by digital tools like 3D pricing and open-source innovation. This reappropriation of space reflects not only a material but an ideological reconstruction of community.

In walkaway spaces, the characters embody Deleuzo-Guattarian nomadism by continuously moving and constructing decentralized, non-hierarchical communities.

These zones prioritize constant flux over stability, contrasting sharply with the rigid organization of the default society. Deleuze and Guattari define the state as a "state apparatus" that dominates through fixed boundaries and surveillance (361). This apparatus enforces order through "striated or sedentary spaces," which limit movement and imagination (381). In contrast, walkaway zones generate "smooth space," where the nomadic figure "distributes himself … inhabits, hold(s) that space; that is his territorial principle" (381). Walkaways reject private ownership and cultivate shared resources, thereby enacting a different model of territorial belonging.

Hubert encapsulates this rejection of economic hierarchy when he states, "So, what about walkaways? Seems to me that they are doing something that makes a difference. No money, no pretending money matters, and they're doing it right now" (Doctorow 45). This declaration illustrates the walkaways' break from capitalist structures. They construct shelters with the help of 3D printing and open-source networks, signifying their self-sufficiency. Historically, nomads roamed physical landscapes, but walkaways navigate both digital and physical terrains. Their ability to maintain survival through hacking, automation, and decentralized technologies reveals how digital innovation has transformed nomadism. As they adapt mentally and ideologically, many also transform akin to migration, adjusting to unfamiliar environments and reimagining identity.

Technology serves as a key enabler of these transitions. By reforming abandoned infrastructure, walkaways resist fixed spatial identities. Doctorow emphasizes that walkaway survival depends on their ability to recreate such as rebuilding homes, systems, and relationships. In this process, they engage in deterritorialization by rejecting dominant structures and experience reterritorialization by creating new forms of community. Their technological adaptability mirrors the creative capacity of nomads to regenerate structures in new spaces.

Surveillance in the default society functions as a primary mechanism of control. During the Communist party scene, a flock of drones descends from the ceiling, folding their wings and dropping in a "screaming drop" (20), symbolizing the state's omnipresent gaze. The characters respond with alarm, Seth hurriedly dons a mask to hide his identity and exclaims, "They'll put the screws on you, threaten you with every horrible unless you turn narc" (16). His statement reveals the state's coercive tactics to

enforce compliance and extract loyalty. When Billiam dies on the spot from a drone strike, Doctorow underscores the state's readiness to enact violence with impunity.

The group flees to a train station, only to find that cameras are embedded even in public infrastructure, "There are inbuilt cameras on the people but he didn't look like he gave a shit" (21). Despite the threat, Hubert displays a nomadic resistance, an indifference grounded in a philosophy that rejects fear-based submission. However, technological surveillance remains inescapable. At Booth, biometric machines scan their fingerprints, revealing the digital systems that still tie individuals to the state. Jacob, Natalie's father, further exemplifies authoritarian control when he intercepts her through digital channels, reinforcing both patriarchal and institutional dominance. His message, "no sharing" underscores his disapproval of walkaway values and highlights the cultural clash between privatization and collective life.

The walkaway community, spearheaded by Limpopo, emerges as a central setting where identity undergoes radical redefinition. She crosses, "the invisible line that separated civilization from no-man's land, out of the world as it was and into the world as it could be" (54). This metaphorical crossing signifies a move from constraint to freedom. The walkaway zone serves as her "escape hatch" (58), a transitional space between settled society and liberated existence. Within this community, individuals like Natalie fully transforms into Iceweasel, while Limpopo also experiences identity reformation. Hubert, however, remains in flux, oscillating between past and present, reflecting the instability that often accompanies transformative environments.

These zones allow characters to redefine themselves without reliance on dominant structures. Through continuous movement, open-source collaboration, and shared ideology, the walkaway space becomes not only a refuge but also an incubator for post-capitalist subjectivity. Their embrace of technological and spatial freedom remarks a clear departure from the state-imposed roles they once inhabited.

Limpopo vision materializes through shared effort. The community builds its infrastructure using open-source technology and recycled materials. The physical labor of construction parallels the ideological labor of remaking identity. The characters do not merely escape from a system; they actively create new forms of belonging. Within this setting, identity evolves from being ascribed label imposed by the state to a process of collective negotiation and reinvention.

Natalie exemplifies this evolution by fully shedding her past and adopting the name Iceweasel. Her decision to abandon her given name signals a break from the control of her father, Jacob, and a rejection of the default society's gendered, hierarchical order. Limpopo undergoes a similar transformation, redefining herself through her leadership and engineering work. In contrast, Hubert's identity remains unsettled. Although he participates in the walkaway movement and inhabits its physical spaces, he oscillates between his past attachments and present conditions. His uncertainty reflects the complexity of identity in transitional spaces; it is not always clear whether one has fully walked away or remains entangled in old logic.

The novel also highlights how the digital era transforms spatial and social relations. Through the integration of 3D printing, automation, and decentralized communication networks, the walkaway community challenges the traditional association between identity and place. Doctorow shows that identity, once tied to national borders or fixed geography, becomes increasingly fluid in technologically mediated environments. The walkaways' use of digital tools reflects what Manuel Castells describes as the rise of "networked individualism," where individuals connect across global platforms rather than through localized institutions (Castells 129).

Doctorow further explores the implications of this shift in his line," The first day of better nation and electronic afterlife?" (316). The phrase implies that the walkaway experiment is not only political but also existential. Through technology, they imagine a world that transcends biological death, a world where memory, identity, and social belonging persist in digital form. Castells similarly argues that the expansion of global digital networks transforms not only how people live but also how they conceptualize life itself (35). In this context, walkaway space becomes a laboratory for testing new forms of subjectivity.

The community's reliance on global connectivity reduces the value of permanent, fixed locations. Instead, walkaways rely on flexibility, collaboration, and continuous adaptation. Their ability to build and maintain decentralized network allows them to circulate resources, knowledge and emotional support beyond the reach of the state. In doing so, they enact what Castells terms a "project identity," an identity forged through active engagement with cultural resources and collective goals (57). This

identity is neither fixed nor inherited; it is constructed in response to the conditions of global digital life.

At the same time, the characters' trajectories reveal that this transformation is not uniform. While Natalie and Limpopo embrace new identities with clarity and purpose, Hubert hesitates. His connection to memories complicates his ability to fully embrace haunted by its value. Walkaway, therefore, does not offer a singular path to liberation, it offers multiple, often conflicting possibilities for self-definition.

In addition to building sustainable communities, the walkaways engage in acts of resistance through hacking and repurposing ruins. These activities extend their critique of capitalism and surveillance, transforming not only their environments but also their subjectivities. Doctorow captures this ethos when he writes that walkaways "renovate the ruins" (188), a phrase that encapsulates both literal and symbolic reconstruction. By hacking into spaces abandoned or neglected by the Zottas, the characters assert autonomy over territories once dominated by elite interests.

This renovation parallels the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The walkaways do not merely escape from authority; they reconstruct space in ways that reflect communal values. They reconfigure decaying infrastructure into sites of renewal. Through this process, they demonstrate what Deleuze and Guattari describe as the war machine's capacity to "exist only in its metamorphoses" (361). Each act of repurposing becomes a political statement, a refusal to conform to the default society's hierarchy and a move toward a decentralized future.

The transformation of ruins also metaphorically illustrates how the characters reconstruct themselves. The ruins are not only physical but also symbolic of broken identities, discarded ideologies, and social alienation. As the walkaways rebuild walls and reroute power systems, they also rewrite the narratives of their own lives. This dynamic process echoes Castell's notion of project identity, which arises when individuals define themselves "in opposition to, or rejection of, the institutions of society" (Castells 8). The walkaway movement, therefore, serves as both a spatial and psychological reconstitution.

Despite the novel's optimistic tone about technological autonomy, Doctorow also emphasizes the fragility of this new world. The walkaways must constantly adapt to the threat of infiltration, state violence, and internal disagreement. The state no longer

relies solely on physical force; instead, it embeds control into algorithm, biometric databases, and behavioral quantification systems. In an instance, “This place has more surveillance than anywhere you have been, by a factor of a hundred. Every centimeter is recorded all the time” (Doctorow 374), exemplifies the shift from physical enforcement to data-driven control. The use of “heuristic”, “infographics,” and constant surveillance illustrates how power now operates through computational oversight and predicative behavioral analysis rather than brute force. It reflects how the state reterritorializes power into algorithms and automated monitoring systems, making walkaway spaces perpetually vulnerable to technological infiltration. Characters like Limpopo resist this encroachment. Her defiance of behavioral tracking and algorithmic prediction situated her within what Deleuze and Guattari would call a nomadic ethical horizon. Rather than submitting to datafication, she reclaims subjectivity by embodying unpredictable behavior. Her resistance mirrors Castells’ argument that power operates not only through repression but also through information flows (244). Walkaway becomes a site of interruption, where information circulates laterally, not hierarchically, and individuals remain sovereign over their data. However, identity in Walkaway remains complex and unstable. Doctorow does not present a utopia where characters permanently overcome past structures. Instead, he presents a liminal space in which individuals oscillate between continuity and rupture. Hubert, for instance, never fully renounces his original self. Although he participates in building walkaway spaces and embraces elements of the nomadic ethos, he struggles to reconcile his past with his present. His persistent confusion reflects the psychological residue of default society. He is neither fully deterritorialized not fully reterritorializes; he remains suspended in a state of becoming. In contrast, Natalie and Limpopo more fully embody transformative identity. Natalie, who renames herself Iceweasel, symbolizes a complete break from patriarchal identity. Her decision to abandon her father’s influence and take on a new name underscores her autonomy. Similarly, Limpopo rejects the logic of private ownership and competitive individualism. She instead cultivates what Castells calls the “space of flows,” where identity is constructed through networks of shared values and practices (Castells 407). Her walkaway spaces are not mere shelters but they ideological environments in which individuals engage in ethical experimentation.

Doctorow uses the shifting settings of the novel to reflect and shape this ideological evolution. Each setting, the factory, the train station, the heavy-surveillance

Booth, the walkaway encampments, acts not only as a backdrop but as a catalyst for transformation. The characters interact with these spaces in ways that reveal their inner conflicts and ethical positions. For instance, the factory's reuse signifies the characters' break from consumerist values, while Booth's biometric controls underscore the limits of freedom in the digital age.

By navigating these spaces, characters embody Deleuze and Guattari's notion that identity is not a fixed essence but a process, a negotiation between forces of control and possibilities for becoming. They are simultaneously deterritorialized and reterritorialized, resisting while adapting and remembering while transforming. Walkaway, then, becomes a performative space where characters enact new ways of being in response to the technological and political conditions of the post-scarcity world.

Doctorow's vision ultimately underscores that identity in a post-scarcity society is not inherited but enacted. Walkaway's characters do not passively receive identity from state, family, or culture. Instead, they actively compose and recombine identities in response to changing environments. The novel portrays a spectrum of identity responses to shifting geographies, technological innovation, and state surveillance. Some characters, like Limpopo and Natalie, fully reconfigures their sense of self, abandoning old attachments and embracing the possibilities of a communal, post-capitalist life. Others, such as Hubert, remain caught in liminal identity spaces, neither wholly transformed nor entirely resistant. These responses demonstrate the multiplicity of ways individuals navigate deterritorialization and reterritorialization in a digitally mediated, post-scarcity society.

This dynamic reveals the nuanced interplay between space and self. Characters who shift their environment often find that their identities shift alongside it. As Deleuze and Guattari theorize, nomadic movement produce smooth spaces, territories not bound by static hierarchies but by flows of becoming (381). Walkaway zones function precisely as such spaces, allowing characters to reimagine and reinhabit themselves through open-source technologies, communal organization, and resistance to control. The novel thus affirms that identity is neither static nor biologically determined but a construct that reflects interaction with sociopolitical and technological structures. Moreover, the digital technologies that facilitate mobility and communication in

Walkaway complicate traditional understandings of space. As walkaways increasingly occupy online zones, what Doctorow calls "walkaway space came online" (246), physical space become less relevant than networked connectivity. Castells' concept of the "spaces of flows" proves apt here, as the walkaways' sense of home and belonging derives more from digital participation than from permanent settlement (Castells 407). Their community thrives on collective intelligence, open-source hacking, and real-time collaboration, reshaping the material world through digital tools. This fusion of digital tools. This fusion of digital and physical reterritorialization transforms not just where people live but how they lie and who they become.

Doctorow extends this digital logic to challenge the idea of death and permanence. When the characters ask, "The first day of a better nation and the electronic afterlife?" (316), they hint at a future where not only life but a memory, identity, and existence may persist in code. This techno-utopian vision implies that identity could transcend physical mortality and exist in networked, algorithmic space. In this view, human subjectivity itself mortality and exist in networked, algorithmic space. In this view, human subjectivity itself becomes a hackable system, a fluid, dynamic construct shaped by interaction, experience, and environment. This formulation deeply aligns with Castells' cultural and technological resources (57).

In conclusion, Walkaway examines how physical and digital settings reshape identity in a world marked by surveillance, abandonment, and technological possibility. The characters' spatial migrations from default society to walkaway zones reflect broader processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, as theorized by Deleuze and Guattari. Through these movements, characters either retain their original identities like nomads, change them entirely like migrants, or remain suspended in the process of becoming. Castells' concept of networked identity complements this reading, emphasizing how digital connectivity enables the redefinition of the self through shared networks and global flows. Ultimately, Walkaway asserts that identity is not an essence to be preserved but a process to be enacted, ethically, collaboratively, and technologically.

4.3 Ideological Movement Between Stability and Escape

Cory Doctorow's *Walkaway* constructs a thematic landscape centered on the tension between rootedness and mobility, shaping characters' lives through various conflicts, desires, and ideological transformations. These themes guide the narrative by influencing the characters' growth, actions, and internal struggles. Rootedness symbolizes stability, attachment, and home, while mobility implies freedom, movement, and ideological reinvention. The novel situates its characters between these two poles, compelling them to navigate physical spaces and inner conflicts that mirror the broader resistance to state control and capitalist structures.

Doctorow depicts a dystopian society dominated by surveillance, ownership, and hierarchical control, what the novel terms the "default society." Withing this setting, Zottas, or the capitalist elite, maintain rigid systems of property, economic inequality, and social repression. To resist these systems, characters become walkaways, forming decentralized communities that reject capitalist values. These spaces are not simply escapes but act as ideological incubators in which characters reconceive both their physical surroundings and personal identities. The walkaway movement emerges not only as a literal exodus from state surveillance but also as a symbolic and existential transformation, one that resists the state's commodification of human life and the prioritization of wealth over well-being.

The walkaways articulate their rejection through a radical understanding of citizenship and humanity. As a character asserts, "not walking out on 'society' but acknowledging that in zottaworld, we'd problems to be solved, not citizens" (Doctorow 52). The phrase "zottaworld" encapsulates the capitalist dystopia in which human beings are reduced to economic metrics. In this context, citizenship is no longer defined by participation or belonging but by monetary contribution, "taxpayers … silent fact of the relationship to the state is how much you pay" (52). Doctorow exposes a dehumanized system that objectifies individuals through financial valuation, transforming them into tools of state profitability. The decision to become a walkaway reflects a philosophical break from this paradigm, a refusal to be defined as disposable.

Doctorow expands the dehumanization theme through surveillance and resource denial. The state enforces stability through a logic of exclusion, as it states "– no rent, no healthcare, no food" (282), for those outside its control. Walkaways respond not by

confrontation but through withdrawal and reinvention. They settle on the "default's periphery" (282), transforming marginality into potentiality. Deleuze and Guattari's theory of nomadology becomes instrumental here, particularly their claim that nomads move "from the central layer to the periphery, then from the center to the new periphery" (53). Walkaways embody this principle as they transition from passive subjects of the state to active agents forging new communities.

The tension between stability and mobility pervade these new communities. While walkaways pursue fluid, borderless existences, the desire for permanence remains. Doctorow captures this dialectic when a character insists, "Someone wants your lump of ice? Walk away. Someone wants your space habitat? Walk away. Walk away, walk away" (194). Walking away becomes more than a reaction as it transforms into a philosophy. This refrain signifies the renunciation of ownership and the embrace of freedom through dispossession. Identity formation no longer hinges on land, title, or permanence but on adaptability and shared values.

Limpopo's character reveals the emotional complexities of this transformation. After experiencing trauma, she finds peace in exile: "Her literal time in the wilderness had a reflective peace, slow-paced satisfaction for each day survived that she' missed ever since" (200). Mobility, in her case, functions as both therapeutic withdrawal and existential reorientation. However, Limpopo' freedom remains incomplete. She acknowledges that her community exists on the threshold:

> We were right up on the edge of default, close to the border. It was nice because we'd get day-trippers, we could talk to about what was going on in the world. Tell the truth, I liked being on the border because it was an escape hatch. If things got bad, I could throw it in, walkback. Call my mom. (58)

Here, Limpopo's preference for liminality reflects an unresolved tension between rootedness and movement. However, she creates a seemingly autonomous space, and the specter of state violence lingers, undermining any sense of complete independence.

The walkaways' nomadic sensibilities emerge most vividly through their repurposing of abandoned structures, "the half-demolished buildings" (Doctorow 91) become sanctuaries. Their action signifies more than physical migration; they reflect ideological transgression. Walkaways embody Deleuze and Guattari's notion of

deterritorialization, they leave one world while assembling another. However, this process does not occur without hardship. The construction of new spaces often involves conflict over resources, governance, and the distribution of labor. Though liberated from the Zottas over control, walkaway communities remain vulnerable to internal division and external threats.

Doctorow emphasizes that walking away involves both literal and metaphorical movement. The walkaways not only escape physical structures but also reprogram their cognitive frameworks. As one passage states, “Everyone agreed something has been done, and it was time to move on” (248). The phrase underscores a nomadic temporality wherein permanence is illusory, and continual reinvention is necessary. This state of becoming resonates with Deleuze and Guattari’s claim that “the war machine’s form of exteriority exists only in its metamorphoses” (361). Walkaways embrace this fluid existence, forsaking stability to maintain autonomy.

Despite this ideological commitment, the state continues to assert its dominance. Characters remain under threat of annihilation, “They would stage a coordinated attack on all of us, all at once. Kill or arrest everyone, end the movement in one go” (252). The language of extermination evokes state violence not as incidental but as structural. Even in exile, walkaways remain insurgents in the eyes of the default world. Their vulnerability illustrates the limits of ideological separation. While walkaway communities propose alternatives to default’s hierarchy, they cannot fully extricate themselves from its reach.

Doctorow also explores ideological fractures within walkaway communities. Though initially united in resistance, members diverge in their interpretations of freedom. Some, like Limpopo, view movement as essential for self-preservation of freedom, while others advocate for rootedness as a foundation for long-term stability. The character of Hubert exemplifies this ambivalence. His struggle to reconcile past identity with new surroundings reflects the migrant condition, caught between departure and arrival. Hubert resists full transformation, clinging to memory even as he participates in spatial and ideological reinvention. Likewise, Seth’s fear of the state causes him to retreat from radical action, reinforcing his attachment to the default world.

In contrast, Natalie's narrative arc embodies the embrace of mobility. Her father, Jacob, enforces patriarchal and state control, pressuring her to conform. She resists by becoming Iceweasel and adopting a new name and ethos. Her transformation reflects a symbolic rebirth as she aligns herself with a community that prioritizes autonomy over obedience. Limpopo facilitates this transition, guiding others through the process of disidentification and spatial reconfiguration. Nevertheless, Doctorow resist portraying transformation as seamless. Even characters who embrace walkaway ideology remain haunted by default's society's norms, memories, and surveillance.

The walkaways' ability to adapt technologically becomes vital in maintaining autonomy. Through 3D printing and hacking, they construct necessities such as food, shelter, and medical facilities. These innovations signify not only practical survival but also ideological resistance. Their digital infrastructures support what Castells' terms "project identities," which arise "not from inherited tradition, but from new cultural materials constructed by social actors" (57). Walkaways forge identities through participation in collective creation rather than inherited status. Their movement thus becomes a technologically mediated expression of identity and resistance.

As Doctorow notes, "A walkaway army reopened every shuttered building, including fire stations, libraries, and shelters" (149). This passage illustrates how walkaways reclaim public infrastructure, breathing new life into abandoned spaces. Their actions are not just survival tactics; they constitute a political statement. Repurposing ruins becomes an act of defiance against the privatization of public goods and the decay wrought by capitalist neglect. Their communal efforts reinforce solidarity while also questioning the legitimacy of default society's authority.

The walkaway community's internal division reveals that autonomy does not guarantee ideological unity. Groups such as Akronites choose to settle permanently, preferring structured routines and centralized organization over nomadic drift. Their choice reflects the migrant's desire for rootedness: permanence, order, and continuity. This ideological divergence generates conflict among walkways, who debate whether stability comprises their values or enhances resilience. Some argue that rootedness invites surveillance and replicates default hierarchies, while others believe that long-term planning requires geographical and political anchoring. Doctorow presents this debate not as a failure but as an inevitable tension within any emancipatory movement.

Technology undergirds both mobility and resistance in the walkaway paradigm. Through decentralized tools like 3D printers and open-source code, walkaways assert independence from default institutions. These technologies not only supply material needs but also reshape community's identity and relational ethics. The ability to generate food, healthcare, shelter, and information without centralized control affirms walkaways' self-reliance. Moreover, digital infrastructures sustain communication and cohesion without fixed location, redefining community in terms of connectivity rather than proximity.

Castells' concept of the "electronic home" becomes especially pertinent here, as walkaway identity exists increasingly in cyberspace rather than geography (395). Doctorow illustrates this transformation through the character's integration into online platforms that support communal knowledge, ideological exchange, and practical coordination. The digital presence of walkaways becomes a proxy for their physical absence, allowing continuity despite spatial dislocation. As Castells notes, identity is "newly build in an anxious search for meaning" (22), and walkaways embody this anxiety as they reconstruct themselves through technological mediation.

The possibility of digital immortality further complicates the boundary between self and setting, Walkaway envisions their identities persisting in data, simulations, or networked consciousness, effectively transcending the physical limitations of the body. The tension between rootedness and mobility thus becomes existential as identity detaches from physical space, requiring individuals to redefine their sense of belonging beyond traditional attachments.

The technological emancipation of the walkaways does not signify utopia. However, their existence remains threatened by the surveillance apparatus and ideological counterattacks of the default society. Even digital spaces are not entirely free; surveillance algorithms, facial recognition, and biometric data tracking intrude into cyberspace, reinforcing the state's power. Thus, while walkaways attempt to transcend physical and political boundaries, they must constantly innovate to preserve autonomy. As a result, technology served both as a tool and terrain in their struggle.

Doctorow underscores this duality through Hubert's slow ideological transformation. At first reluctant and cautious, Hubert eventually embraces open-source interfaces to gain digital access, as it states:

> But it worked. Slow, but it worked. From there, I got jailbreaks for my interface surfaces so I could get online with a less sketchy connection – faster, too. Then I started reading up on walkaways, their boards, the FAQs, reports from people who'd gone walkaway. (281)

Hubert's use of jailbreaks signifies not only technical skill but also political awakening. He accesses forbidden knowledge and communities, becoming increasingly enmeshed in an alternative digital world. This transition reflects his reconfiguration from passive observer to active participant. The phrase "Slow, but it worked" (281) underscores the gradual nature of ideological realignment. Hubert's journey is not one of immediate revolution but patient subversion. His engagement with walkaway forums signifies entry into counter-public sphere, a space for reflection, solidarity, and resistance. These platforms provide intellectual scaffolding for personal and political transformation, enabling users to redefine not only their actions but also their evolving identities within a shifting sociopolitical landscape.

Walkaway identity thus becomes cumulative, relational, and performative. It is constructed through participation, dialogue, and movement, both spatial and ideological. Doctorow's narrative suggests that identity is not discovered but made through refusal, innovation, and connectivity. The walkaways reject inherited scripts in favor of chosen affiliations, embodying Deleuze and Guattari's conception of "becoming" rather than "being." However, this remains unstable. Characters frequently oscillate between roles, names, and orientations. Hubert, for instance, never discards his original identity, even he adopts new practices. Limpopo, though a leader in the walkaway movement, experiences moments of doubt and regression. Natalie, renamed Iceweasel, achieves radical transformation but remains haunted by her father's controlling presence. These fluctuations underscore the psychological and emotional complexity of radical life-making. Even within liberated spaces, memory, trauma, and residual socialization persist.

Walkaway spaces, then are not utopias but laboratories of change. Their impermanence is a feature, not a flaw. Characters must negotiate between the desire for stability and the imperative of freedom. Doctorow resists simplistic dichotomies, presenting rootedness and mobility as interdependent rather than oppositional. Walkaways may reject the default's rigid structures, but they must also contend with

the desire for community, belonging, and security, needs that require some degree of consistency.

Doctorow's portrayal of these tensions aligns with Castells' insight that modern identity arises for resistance to domination and the attempts to redefine the meaning of self (22). In this sense, the walkaway movement embodies a "project identity," a response to exclusion that constructs a new reality based on shared values and horizontal networks (57). These identities emerge from cultural materials repurposed in the process of walking away: ruins, code, language, and memory. Characters build themselves as they build their communities.

By positioning characters between the pull of stability and the push of movement, *Walkaway* dramatizes the fundamental conflict of postmodern subjectivity. In a world where traditional structures have collapsed or become oppressive, identity must be negotiated in motion. Walkaways become symbolic of a broader cultural phenomenon, the quest for meaning in an era of dislocation, surveillance, and technological saturation. Their narrative reveals that while rootedness offers comfort, it also risks submission; while mobility offers freedom, it demands continual reinvention.

4.4 Conclusion

Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's theories, the novel illustrates how characters oscillate between nomadic and migrant states. Nomads resist assimilation and maintain core identities across shifting landscapes, while migrants adapt to new environments, often reforming their sense of self. Characters like Hubert demonstrate nomadic tendencies by maintaining ties to their past, even as they participate in new spaces. Others, like Natalie and Limpopo, undergo more radical transformations, redefining themselves entirely through new names, roles, and affiliations. Their development illustrations reterritorialization, a reinvention of identity within alternative frameworks shaped by collective values rather than state norms.

In *Walkaway*, Cory Doctorow presents a world in which shifting settings profoundly reshape individual identity through the interplay of movement, technology, and resistance to state power. As characters leave behind the default society, a space defined by capitalist control, surveillance, and rigid hierarchies, they engage in both

physical and ideological transformations. The emergence of walkaway spaces reflects a broader process of deterritorialization, where abandoned environments become sites of communal renewal and adaptive identity. These new spaces, enabled by open-source technology, 3D printing, and shared labor, challenge the dominance of fixed structures and allow for fluid, evolving forms of selfhood.

The novel also foregrounds how digital connectivity reconfigures the meaning of space and self. Walkaways occupy not only physical but also virtually territories, creating “electronic home” and global communities that transcends traditional borders. In doing so, they enact Castells’ “project identity,” using available cultural and technological tools to construct new selves aligned with shared ideals. Doctorow thus reimagines resistance as both spatial and psychological, rooted in reclaiming agency over the formation of identity.

Ultimately, the evolving settings of *Walkaway* reveal that identity is not static but is continuously shaped by one’s relationship to space, power, and memory. Through their movements, literal, ideological, and technological, the characters redefine what is means to belong, to resist, and to become. Their journeys underscores that true transformation begins not with escape but with the decision to reimagine the self beyond the limits imposed by the world they seek to leave behind.

CHAPTER 5
TECHNOLOGY, SURVEILLANCE AND IDENTITY IN NEWITZ'S *AUTONOMOUS*

Annalee Newitz is born in California in 1969. They have a non-binary identity which means they neither contain a pronoun 'he' or 'she' and having no gender at all. They are a science fiction and non-fiction writer along with science journalist, co-host at podcast and contributor of public radio shows. They also work as a founder of io9 and as editor-in-chief of Gizmodo. Their literary works include The Future of Another Timeline, The Terraformers, Stories of Weapons, Autonomous and so many and so on. Through the novel *Autonomous*, they won Lambda Literary Award and nominated for the Locus and Nebula awards.

In *Autonomous*, Newitz constructs a provocative futuristic world where the boundaries between humans and robots blur, producing a narrative that interrogates autonomy, identity and state control. At the novel's center, Jack, a former scientist turned pharmaceutical pirate, challenges the inequalities of a state that restricts healthcare access to those who can afford exorbitant medications. Jack employs reverse engineering to produce a version of Zacuity, a performance-enhancing drug and distributes it to economically marginalized populations. Although the drug induces dangerous side effects, her aim remains humanitarian to subvert corporate exploitation and redistribute medical care. Paladin, another central character, functions as a military bio-bot assigned by the state to apprehend Jack. Although Paladin possesses a mechanized body, the bot's human female-brain initiates a crisis of identity. This internal conflict deepens as Paladin begins to develop feelings in response to Eliasz, a human agent drawn to her feminine qualities. Their evolving relationship destabilizes their mission and reveals the complexities of emotional and gender identity in a technologized world. Simultaneously, Threezed, an indentured laborer, escapes systematic enslavement and allies with Jack's collective to reclaim his autonomy and forge an independent identity.

5.1 Nomadism and Digital Autonomy at the Edge of Control

Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous* sets in a near future dominated by pharmaceutical monopolies and digital surveillance. Jack, a former scientist turned pharmaceutical pirate, who reverse engineers Zacuity, a state-controlled productivity drug. In defiance of pharmaceutical conglomerates, Jack disseminates an illicit version of the drug to underserved populations. Although her intervention has unintended consequences, Jack embodies an insurgent force within the state apparatus. Her actions form what Deleuze and Guattari theorize as a war machine, a mobile, exteriorized mode of resistance that opposes the stratified logic of state control (Deleuze and Guattari 351 - 53). Through technological subversion and constant movement, Jack deterritorializes fixed identity and challenges centralized power.

Jack's rebellion also aligns with what Manuel Castells terms a project identity, one formed not in response to imposed categorization but through the redefinition of the self in opposition to the dominant order (Castells 8). She no longer operated within sanctioned systems of production and research but instead formulates her purpose in constructing new, autonomous communities. By leaving behind institutional science and entering a fugitive state, Jack generates a counter-narrative to state authority, reorganizing her labor and ethics around mutual aid rather than capitalist efficiency. Her actions further enact the Deleuzo-Guattarian process of deterritorialization as she departs from the stable space of the laboratory and enters the fluid margins of outlaw science. Jack's movement is not merely geographic; it is existential. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, "The nomad distributes himself in a smooth space; he occupies it, without measuring it" (381), Jack's constant flight across landscapes, physical, political, and digital marks her as a nomadic figure whose identity is in a state of perpetual reformation. The novel articulates this through her technological practices and spatial evasion of surveillance. She refuses to submit to the state's control grids and instead embraces displacement as a form of epistemology. Newitz foregrounds this transformation through Jack's association with the drug itself. The narrative states, "And without Bilious Pills, she had no identity, no community of fellow travelers" (Newitz 82). Here, the pharmaceutical artifact functions not only as a biochemical tool but as a symbol of Jack's political alignment and self-construction. The pills link her to a dispersed counter public, forming an assemblage, a Deleuzian concept describing heterogenous elements (drugs, bodies, ideologies) that become fused through relational

practices (88). Jack's identity emerges from this assemblage, shaped by both her biological expertise and her resistance to the state.

However, this deterritorialized identity is not devoid of longing for a prior coherence. Near the end of the novel, Jack reflects on "her safer version of life" and expresses the desire "to hold on her again" (238). This impulse to reterritorialize, to return to a fixed or remembered self, suggests that identity under constant duress remains haunted by the former stability. Jack's narrative parallels that of political nomads or exiles, who retain their memory as an anchor even while resisting the urge to return. Deleuze and Guattari clarify that reterritorialization always follows deterritorialization in cycle; it is not a betrayal of flight but its inevitable companion (59). Her movement thus oscillates between insurgency and vulnerability, between deterritorialization and the desire for rootedness. In a global system where pharmaceuticals delineate the boundaries of autonomy, Jack leverages illicit science to construct a project identity outside institutionalized frameworks. Her technological interventions exemplify the formation of subjectivity within what Castells terms the space of flows, a domain in which capital, information, and power operates through networks rather than physical places (407). Jack's identity is enacted within this space, not through fixed affiliations but through mobile alignments, affective solidarities, and tactical redefinitions of self.

Additionally, the effects of Zacuity on its users mirror the psychological dimensions of deterritorialization. Although many users remain stationary, they undergo a mental dislocation facilitated by the drug. It illustrates how state technologies produce virtual displacements, coercing individuals into hyper productivity and dissociation from embodied time. Deleuze and Guattari describe such processes as "machinic enslavement," wherein subjectivity is annexed by external flows of control (458). Newitz liberates this when she shows Zacuity's capacity to erase basic needs, such as sleep, hydration, and even bodily maintenance, as users "refuse to do anything but engages in whatever process they associate with that dopamine reward" (92). Thus, the corporate regime does not simply discipline through surveillance; it deterritorializes consciousness itself.

Jack's rebellion against this pharmacological control also serves as a critique of bio-capitalism. Her reverse engineered drugs disrupts the feedback loop between labor

and neurochemical stimulation. In doing so, she does not merely become a war machine, a nomadic site of scientific experimentation that reclaims medical knowledge as collective empowerment rather than as proprietary technology.

Threezed, a slave character, works in a factory and want to escape to redefine his identity. He wants to establish his own identity as a free individual rather than merely being an enslaved person or a product of the state. During slavery, a though came up in his mind that he could not define his original identity in a digital technological structure of slavery created by the state. After making a choice, he plans to escape the factory. After departing from a life of servitude, he joins Jack's community to redefine his real identity. His physical migration reflects the nomadic trait of rejecting the state's control over his freedom (Deleuze and Guattari 380). His escape from the factory reflects his geographical migration. On the other hand, a thought that makes up his mind before liberating himself from the controlled society reflects his metaphorical or mental migration in attaining freedom. By rejecting institutional programming and reconfiguring himself through mobility, education, and collective belonging, Threezed moves from passive endurance to active reterritorialization, a crucial step towards project identity.

Threezed's early recollections starkly illustrates hi objectification, "I got slaved when I was five. My mom sold me to one of those indenture schools. They taught me to read and make an engine" (69). This admission encapsulates a subject forcibly deterritorialized by the mechanisms of state-sponsored capitalism. Extracted from familial ties and personal agency, Threezed becomes a machinic component in a system that values him solely for his utility. Indoctrinated into a logic of production and obedience, he is subjected to what Deleuze and Guattari define a machinic enslavement, wherein state and corporate apparatuses subsume bodies and override autonomous will (458). Yet this subsumption is not permanent. Threezed initiates a break from this regime when he encounters Jack's community, an alternative space that invites social and intellectual reintegration. In abandoning his role as indentured laborer and affiliating with a collective organized around mutual aid and resistance, Threezed begins the work of self-construction. Castells describes this shift as foundational to project identity, the conscious effort to redefine one's position in society by engaging in transformative practices. Threezed's identity no longer reflects the categories

imposed by his oppressors; instead, it emerges from new relations and aspirations grounded in autonomy.

This evolution becomes textualized when Threezed symbolically severs ties with his past. The novel narrates, "Threezed had taken on a new identity. He would shut down his SlaveBoy journal and audit some media studies classes at U of S while he figured out his next move" (239). Here, Threezed performs a rupture, abandoning not just a name but the digital imprint of his subjugation. The act of 'shutting down' signifies both psychological discontinuity and narrative reset, allowing for the formation of a reconstituted self. By choosing to study and engage with critical thought, he embraces intellectual agency and reclaims narrative control, no longer reacting to externally imposed scripts but directing his own becoming. Importantly, Threezed's transformation does not erase his past but repurposes it. His experience of oppression becomes a resource for empathy and solidarity with others navigating similar paths of resistance. As Deleuze and Guattari observe, deterritorialization always proceeds along reterritorialization. Threezed's reterritorialization unfolds not through assimilation into normative citizenship but via the reclamation of affective and intellectual labor. Ultimately, Autonomous uses Threezed to illustrate how even the most marginalized subjects can reclaim identity through movement, resistance, and assemblage. His story exemplifies a nomadic strategy of becoming, one that fuses Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on transformation with Castells' model of project identity. In a world increasingly governed by surveillance, control, and commodification, Threezed's trajectory reasserts the radical potential of mobility and collective redefinition.

Paladin's trajectory in *Autonomous* offers a profound meditation on the intersection of artificial intelligence, embodiment, and gendered identity. As a military bio-bot embedded with a human brain, specifically, a female brain, Paladin occupies the threshold between human subjectivity and machinic logic. Her character exemplifies the assemblage as theorized by Deleuze and Guattari, a composite entity composed of diverse and often incompatible components, "a multiplicity which is made up of heterogenous terms" and defined by its capacity for becoming (88). Paladin's identity, far from stable or coherent, exists in flux, caught between organic and synthetic registers, between imposed programming and emergent consciousness.

Society, however, imposes a rigid framework upon Paladin. Despite her human brain, she is referred to as “he” throughout much of the narrative. This designation reflects the cultural tendency to masculinize power, machinery, and militarized roles. Paladin observes this dissonance, “no human would think twice about calling a bot named Xiu - he” (Newitz 31). Her internal reflection critiques the gender essentialism embedded in both language and design, exposing how nonhuman intelligences are subject to human projections and sociopolitical coding. Eliasz, her human partner, complicates this dynamic. He insists, “I know your model, biobot. You have got a human brain under the armor” (Newitz 74). His recognition of Paladin’s human neural core disrupts his perception of her as purely mechanical. Nevertheless, his interactions with Paladin are fraught with contradiction. He desires her emotionally and sexually yet attempts to stabilize her identity with a binary framework. Deleuze and Guattari describe such processes as the overcoming of assemblages by state regimes, which seek to assign fixed identities to that which is fluid (109). Eliasz, acting as a microcosm of the state apparatus, attempts to enforce coherence upon Paladin’s unstable form, revealing his discomfort with ambiguity and desire his categorical certainty.

Paladin’s description, “Paladin with dozens of sensors mounted in two fat, sinuous, segmented antennas curving from the top of his torso. Beside him, Paladin’s bipedal bulk looked almost human” (Newitz 92) underscores her position as a cyborgian figure. Her constant shift between human and robot depicts her oscillation between fluid identities. This shift of humans into robots reflects the migration of human beings into technological identities, also known as transhumanism. It not only depicts the physical journey but also the psychological or metaphorical journey. Her awareness of this instability surfaces in her reflection, “I am worried about human intelligence gathering. I know how to respond to many forms of human behavior, but I have almost no information about how to react to sexual arousal” (92). This anxiety signals her transition from obedient function to affective subjectivity. Her programming begins to crack under the pressure of human intimacy and social complexity.

Paladin’s gendered ambiguity intensifies as she attempts to reconcile societal expectations with her perception. She states, “Human call her ‘he’ because they get confuse otherwise” (101). This admission reveals a nascent resistance to imposed categories. She neither identifies with the pronouns assigned to her nor accepts the human need for binary order. Her female-coded brain challenges the default

masculinity of robotics, and her ability to feel contradicts the assumption that bots lack emotional depth. IN this tension, Paladin performs what Deleuze and Guattari call a becoming-woman, a mode of deterritorialization that destabilizes identity from within, opening new vectors of expression and subjectivity (291). This internal conflict intensifies when Eliasz uses a homophobic slur, calling Paladin a "faggot," after suspecting his attraction to her. Paladin reflects, "Robots cannot be faggot. We do not have gender" (80). Her statement critiques the imposition of human sexuality on nonhuman beings while simultaneously acknowledging her entanglement in gendered embodiment. Her awareness highlights the posthuman dilemma that human biology shapes her, yet she functions within machinic assemblage. Her identity resists reduction to either category and instead emerges through the dynamic interplay between organic embodiment and technological construction.

Newitz complicates this further by introducing the idea of cognitive replaceability. Lee, a technician, tells Paladin, "Nobody expects those brains to last very long" (241). The human brain, long considered the seat of identity, is treated as disposable, undermining any essentialist notion of consciousness. It reveals the commodification of cognition in Newitz's world, where even the most intimate elements of personhood are modular and replaceable. Paladin's identity, already fractured, becomes contingent upon the continuity of her brain, and thus, her subjectivity becomes even more precarious. However, after undergoing a brain replacement, Paladin articulates a new found sense of autonomy. She states, "Nobody could find out what she was thinking unless she allowed it" (244). For the first time, she gains control over her interiority, establishing a zone of privacy immune to surveillance and interpretation. This moment realizes what Manuel Castells describes a virtuality becoming a reality, a condition in which the digital, internal, and networked self asserts primacy over imposed external roles (Castells 400). Paladin's identity, no longer programmed but self-curated, emerges as an expression of sovereign consciousness within the "space of flows" (400). Castells defines the space of flows as decentralized, networked environment in which identity circulates across media, systems, and nodes rather than being rooted in place (409). Paladin's cognitive autonomy, achieved through her brain's encryption and replacement, enacts this concept. She no longer exists as a tool within hierarchical infrastructure but operates as an independent note, intelligent, adaptive and inaccessible. Her internal world becomes

a sovereign domain, constructed within and against the machinic systems that once governed her.

Through Paladin, Newitz stage a critique of both state control and the gender essentialism embedded in technological design. Her character challenges the binary logic of male/female, human/machine, and subject/object. She does not become human; instead, she becomes posthuman, an entity whose identity emerges not from biology but from assemblage, fluidity, and networked resistance. In Paladin's experience, it is observed that evolution of identity not as a fixed essence but as a process of negotiation and emergence, shaped by affective entanglements and the refusal to conform.

An analysis of the aforementioned characters reveals that each endures the pressures of state surveillance and control. Jack, a pharmaceutical scientist, utilizes digital technology to manufacture a drug designed to aid impoverished communities. Despite her efforts, she remains in a continual state of flux, evading the state's reach by moving across different spaces and territories while transforming and adapting her identity. In this digitally dominated age, Threezed, a formerly enslaved person, rejects the rigid structures that reduce individuals to property. Both physically and metaphorically, he departs from the constraints of slavery to forge a new identity. Paladin seeks recognition within a human-centered society, which complicates its efforts to establish a coherent identity. These characters thus grapple with the burdens of their past selves, the invasive reach of state surveillance, and the confining structures that seek to define them. They continually oscillate between their original identities and new selves shaped through technological transformation.

5.2 The Spatial Determinants of Identity from Enclosure to Escape

In *Autonomous*, Annalee Newitz constructs a bifurcated world composed of two distinct spatial regimes, the corporate-control space and the autonomous space. These are not merely physical environments but epistemological and technological frameworks that determine how identity is constructed, policed, and subverted. The corporate-controlled space dominated by pharmaceutical conglomerates, biometric surveillance, and digital labor optimization reflects what Deleuze and Guattari term striated space (474). Manuel Castells similarly describes such structured environments

as the space of places where institutionalized power is exercised through fixed infrastructure and localized control (453).

Opposing this is the autonomous space, which includes fugitive laboratories, encrypted cognitive zones and decentralized communities of dissent. This space resists codification and surveillance, functioning as what Deleuze and Guattari call a smooth space (474). Castells would locate this as the space of flows, where power and identity circulate through non-hierarchical, networked nodes (407). Within this spatial framework, Jack, Threezed, and Paladin occupy and traverse both regimes, continually negotiating identity through movement between control and autonomy.

Newitz dramatizes the reach of the corporate-controlled space through Zacuity, a neurochemical compound designed to bind individuals to their labor through artificially induced reward systems. Its consequences are dire,

> Those are my customers, and they aren't taking Zacuity under any kind of supervision. … Of course, that's dangerous. Some people who dose themselves basically become manic. They refuse to do anything but engage in whatever process they associate with that dopamine reward. They don't eat, sleep, or drink water. These deaths aren't from the drug itself – they're side effects from things like dehydration, injury, and organ failure. (Newitz 92 - 93)

In this formulation, the state does not coerce obedience through direct violence but though biochemical control, enacting what Deleuze and Guattari identity as machinic enslavement, where the individual becomes a functional component within a broader technological assemblage (458).

In the striated space, Zacuity operates as both a disciplinary apparatus and a tool of identity production. Corporate labor defines individuals not by their personal histories or subjective desires but by their neurochemical compatibility with its rhythms. As Castells notes, within the network society, subjectivity is increasingly shaped by technologies of information, capital, and surveillance that erase distinctions between cognition and productivity (3). Zacuity represents this collapse, creating workers whose identities are indistinguishable from their labor functions.

Jack's resistance originates in her refusal to remain within this striated grid. Her decision to "quit her lab job to work full-time on anti-patient organizing" (67) marks a

spatial and ideological break, a deterritorialization from the corporate-controlled environment. She enters the autonomous space by constructing a rogue pharmaceutical network, redistributing power and access beyond institutional control. Castells frames such acts as the construction of project identities, which emerge when individuals define themselves in opposition to dominate norms and reconfigure meaning through collective and technological practices (8).

To maintain her fugitive status, Jack operates within a smooth space, constantly relocating encrypting her actions, and resisting visibility. “A hidden compartment in the ceiling over her lab bench was the only place she could hide” (227), the text notes. Her concealment strategy disrupts the scannable topography of striated space, converting the physical setting into a rhizomatic zone of escape and tactical disappearance. Eliasz acknowledges this spatial tension when he states, “Somebody in Casablanca will know where Jack goes when she wants to hide. We’ll find her faster that way than trying to trace her through highway surveillance” (82). Though Eliasz operates as an agent of the state, his admission affirms the limits of centralized surveillance and the potency of nomadic, networked evasion.

Within the corporate-controlled zone, even education and family life become tool of domination. Threezed’s account, “I got slaved when I was five. My mom sold me to one of those indenture schools. They taught me to read and make an engine” (69), illustrates how striated space rewrites childhood as the prelude to commodified labor. His eventual relocation to the autonomous zone represents a reterritorialization of identity within the space of flows. The novel describes this shift as follows, “Threezed had taken on a new identity … He’d shut down his SlaveBoy journal and was auditing some media studies classes at U of S” (239). He reclaims narrative agency and intellectual authorship, forming a project identity through reorientation rather than resistance alone.

Paladin’s trajectory mirrors this spatial migration. Initially situated within the state’s technocratic surveillance system, she functions as a tool of enforcement. Eliasz tells you, “You have got a human brain under that armor” (80), exposing the ontological ambiguity of her existence. However, her transformation occurs when she secures a nee brain and states, “Nobody could find out what she was thinking unless she allowed it” (242). Her interiority becomes encrypted, signaling her movement from a state-owned

space of places to Castells' space of flows, where subjectivity is sovereign. She no longer exists as a node within surveillance systems but as an autonomous assemblage.

Newitz's depiction of these spatial regimes emphasizes that autonomy is not merely a psychological state but a function of terrain, mobility and digital geography. Characters who achieve liberation do so not only by resisting rules but by escaping the structures. The state apparats assert power by controlling space, yet the emergence of smooth space creates a counter topology. *Autonomous* thus presents space as both a battleground and a site of liberation, where characters construct identity as the intersection of place and flow, stability and mobility.

5.3 Thematic Dimensions of Autonomy, Identity, and Surveillance

The thematic architecture of *Autonomous* revolves around the interplay between mobility and control, autonomy, and surveillance, and fixed versus fluid identity. Newitz constructs a near-future world in which biotechnological advancements and networked capitalism threaten to collapse the distinction between personhood and performance but where subversion movements though geographical, psychological, and digital create the conditions for resistance and reinvention.

The theme of mobility operates on both literal and metaphorical levels. It is evident that Jack views constant movement as a necessity for her survival. As a pharmaceutical pirate, she manufactures cheap drugs for those who cannot afford that are given by the state. By creating the drugs, she goes against the state's hierarchies, which in turn takes away her independent life. She evades law enforcement agencies through her continuous movements. Through mobility, she finds her way to freedom, but this act also severs her connection with human beings.

> Jack touched his shirtsleeve lightly, careful not to his exposed skin. She led him down the spiral staircase from the control room into the wet lab and kitchen, where she booted up the cooker and gestured for broth and bread. She sagged into her chair at the tiny table, the wings of his shoulder blades showing through his thin shirt as he hunched over and stared at his hands. (23)

The above excerpt illustrates that Jack's constant movement reflects the inherent dangers of her profession. She struggles in a world where her work is taken as a criminal act. Her staying in one place means being captured or dead. However, she

provides life-saving medications to those who cannot afford expensive ones. Instead of appreciating her, the state goes against her by considering her as a criminal. As a result, she continuously moves from one place to another to escape from law enforcement agencies. Her mobility is not only a voluntary means of survival, but powerful structures also enforce it. Jack's nomadic existence embodies the Deleuzian war machine operating against the state apparatus (351). Her constant flight is not simply tactical, it is ontological. It enables her to occupy what Deleuze and Guattari call smooth space, where power resists through movement, unpredictability, and evasion (474).

Threezed enacts deterritorialization by rejecting his fixed identity as an enslaved laborer and actively reterritorializes himself through his integration into Jack's community. For him, the only way to achieve freedom is to desire mobility, so he fixed to reject hierarchies and leave them behind, like nomads, to attain freedom (380). Through technological advancement, he metaphorically reforms his mindset; subsequently, he physically leaves his fixed space and gains mobility. His shift into intellectual freedom and social agency reflects the emergence of project identity, as theorized by Castells, formed not through opposition along but through the construction of new values and affiliations in the space of flows (8). His mobility challenges the imposed logic of his origin in a striated, state-controlled and becomes a tool for rebuilding selfhood. At the end of the novel, he achieves his freedom by reforming his identity, as referenced in, "Threezed had taken a new identity" (Newitz 238), which depicts him adopting the characteristics of migrants to live in a new environment.

Paladin's journey introduces the theme of fluid and posthuman identity. As a bio-bot with a female human brain and a gendered robotic body, Paladin destabilizes binary identity categorizes and exemplifies Deleuze and Guattari's concept of assemblage where a subject formed through contingent linkages (88). Her shifting identity, complicated by Eliasz's attempts to impose gender roles and emotional expectations, unfolds as a process of becoming, resisting both state programming and human projection. During her assigned task, she begins to question her autonomy and identity. For instance, "I have no idea how autonomous bot live; he messaged" (177) shows that Paladin's exploration of her autonomy becomes the turning point of the novel, where artificial intelligence seeks both mobility and stability. She is created for a specific purpose, yet she begins to explore her own identity. Moreover, everyone recognizes her as male, like Eliasz; another bot thinks of her as male, but Paladin says

in a monologue, “Bots do not have genders” (22). Afterwards, she remains confused about her own identity. She thinks of her human brain, which is taken from a female, so she becomes female, but robots do not have genders. Once Eliasz says, “You have got a human brain under that armor” (80), which reflects the fact that everyone thinks of her as a human being. Out of confusion, she herself says that to reduce the confusion of people, they can call her “he” (23). It suggests that Paladin wants to recognize that her brain, which makes her female, is male. So, all these various identities make her revolve between them, leading to a fluid identity in the modern world. Another character named Lee approaches her and asks for a replacement brain, which also reflects that her brain and her thinking are under the control of other humans. Her replacement of the brain again transforms her identity. Lee also says, “Nobody expects those brains to last very long” (239), which reflects that the human brains do not remain fixed in one state. It also shows that human brains do not reply on a single identity but instead continually change it to attain fluid identities. All of these factors bound her in terms of identity, while she desires mobility in terms of autonomy and freedom. When her brain is replaced, she gains autonomy, as she says that she feels her own “totality of her experiences” (242). It seems her sense of privacy, which she wants to attain through the novel.

Newitz also foregrounds surveillance as a central theme, portraying it not only through external monitoring but also through internalized control systems. The use of Zacuity as a behavioral drug blurs the line between governance and neural manipulation. The state no longer governs primarily through visibility but through capitalist feedback loops. Individuals, chemically conditioned to overwork themselves to death, become indistinct from machines. As a result, the lined between compulsion and desire disappears. However, within this landscape of pervasive control, the novel insists on the possibility of autonomy, though not in its traditional liberal sense. Newitz enacts autonomy through the encryption of the self, the refusal of visibility, and the assertion of internal sovereignty. Paladin’s final declaration, “Nobody could find out what she was thinking unless she allowed it” (242), encapsulates this shift toward posthuman privacy. In the language of Castells, her identity now operates entirely within the space of flows, detached from place, ungoverned by centralized oversight, and encoded by her authority (407).

A key thematic throughline is the resistance to legibility. Whether through Jack's physical evasion, Threezed's identity transformation or Paladin's cognitive self-encryption, *Autonomous* suggests that survival in the network society depends not only on opposition but on becoming unreadable. These characters evade not only capture but also categorization, existing in the interstices of smooth space, coded-networks, and fragmented selves.

The novel ultimately presents fluid identity as both a condition and a strategy for navigating life. Jack, Threezed, and Paladin do not return to stable selves but instead forge identities through relation, resistance, and movement. Their trajectories illustrate how the themes of mobility, autonomy, and identity are not separated but co-constitutive; to move is to resist, and to resist is to become something else.

By engaging these themes through the lenses of Deleuze and Guattari's nomadic theory and Castells' analysis of identity in the network society, *Autonomous* renders a deeply political vision of subjectivity. In Newitz's speculative world, where capitalism infiltrates the molecular structure of emotion and identity, freedom lies in the refusal to remain stagnant, whether physically, socially, or cognitively.

5.4 Conclusion

Annalee Newitz's *Autonomous* presents a speculative cartography of resistance, identity, and transformation, portraying how individuals though human, machine, and hybrid, navigate oppressive systems through mobility, technological reconfiguration, and refusal. The novel situates its narrative within two opposing spatial regimes, the corporate-controlled space, marked by surveillance, pharmaceutical dependence, and institutional discipline, and the autonomous space, defined by fugitive networks, mobile laboratories, and encrypted interiorities. Through this spatial opposition, Newitz actively dramatizes the conditions under which subjects reassemble, deterritorialize, and liberate their own identities.

Each central character, Jack, Threezed, and Paladin, embodies a different mode of movement across these spaces. Jack functions as a paradigmatic nomadic subject, constructing a war machine against the state apparatus using rogue pharmaceuticals, fluid territoriality, and an anti-capitalist intent. Her constant movement and ideological defiance enact Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialization as she dismantles

fixed identity through active engagement with smooth, unregulated space (Deleuze and Guattari 380). She challenges the biopolitical control imposed by Zacuity through her work as a pharmaceutical pirate, constructing an alternative assemblage in which health circulates through networks of resistance rather than mechanisms of profit.

At the same time, Jack's identity is not simply reactive. She constructs what Manuel Castells calls a project identity; an identity forged through the creation of new values and collective practices in opposition to those legitimated by dominant institutions (8). Her decision to "quit her lab job to work full-time on anti-patient organizing" (Newitz 67) articulates this refusal to comply with institutional mandates. Jack becomes more than a rebel; she becomes a reassemble of subjectivity, weaving together memory, technological agency, and ethical urgency into a transformative practice.

Threezed, though initially shaped under slavery, enacts a slower but equally profound metamorphosis. As a child sold into indenture, "They taught me to read ad make an engine" (69), he begins within the deepest strata of striated space, fully captured by the apparatus of machinic enslavement. His escape into Jack's community and his decision to "shut down his SlaveBoy journal and audit some media studies classes of U of S (239) reflect a reterritorialization of self. Threezed, like Jack, constructs a project identity by reclaiming his intellectual labor and embedding it within a new, resistant social assemblage. He moves from being a passive functionary to an agent of thought, joining a fugitive space where knowledge itself becomes a site of liberation.

Paladin's narrative further deepens the novel's interrogation of identity, space, and autonomy. Initially coded to serve the state, she functions as an assemblage, a techno-nomad whose body, brain, and affect operates under contradictory logics of control and autonomy. Her gradual realization of her fluid identity, "Bots do not have gender" (22), and her discomfort with human projections, "Humans call her 'he' because they get confused otherwise" (101), demonstrate her struggle against the imposed limitations of both the state and human companions. Paladin's eventual cognitive reprogramming, culminating in her assertion that "Nobody could find out what she was thinking unless she allowed it" (242), marks her transition into Castells' space of flows. She becomes an autonomous node in a digital matrix, enacting virtuality

as reality (400), no longer legible to systems of control. Paladin's evolution reflects the Deleuzian concept of becoming other. She does not revert to a stable identity but dwells in multiplicity, female brain, male-coded body, robot consciousness, constructing a subjectivity that exceeds any single designation. Her assemblage resists resolution, forming a posthuman subject whose autonomy emerges not from essential traits but from refusal, encryption, and networked reconfiguration. In this sense, Paladin illustrates the future of identity not as fixed but as assembled, lived through and against machines, surveillance, and memory.

All three characters share a common thread, each begins within the corporate-controlled, striated space and traverses towards an autonomous zone where identity becomes plural, mobile, and chosen, Newitz maps this trajectory through biotechnology, spatial migration, and emotional becoming. Jack navigates physical terrain while resisting institutional ownership of health. Threezed transforms mental space, reclaiming intellect and narrative agency. Paladin encrypts consciousness, withdrawing from visibility into sovereign opacity. Each demonstrates that resistance does not require an external revolution along but rather the internal subversion of imposed identities.

Newitz's *Autonomous* thus stages a multifaceted critique of contemporary and speculative capitalism, interrogating how identity is shaped, coded, and distributed. Through the interweaving of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of war machines, assemblage, deterritorialization, and striated/smooth space, alongside Castells' project identity, space of flows, and network society, the novel reveals how autonomy emerges not from stasis but from motion. The capacity to move geographically, psychologically, or digitally, becomes the condition of becoming.

Ultimately, *Autonomous* theorizes resistance not only as opposition but as creation, the creation of new selves, new communities, and new flows of knowledge. In a future where identity is quantified, regulated, and instrumentalized, Newitz insists that liberation lies in the capacity to rewrite the self across boundaries of space, territory, and memory. Through Jack, Threezed, and Paladin, the novel envisions a posthuman world where freedom is no longer a destination but a continuous act of deterritorialization.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

This chapter not only offers the conclusion of the study but also synthesizes the key research questions, central findings, and critical insights drawn from the analysis of *Walkaway* and *Autonomous*. It revisits the core theoretical frameworks, particularly those of Deleuze, Guattari and Castells, to assess how shifting settings and technological environments influence identity formation. In doing so, the chapter highlights the broader implications of these findings and offers recommendations for further research.

The first question of this research was 'What are the ways in which the characters of the selected texts navigate between nomads and migrants through their technological identity?' As demonstrated in chapter four that is analysis of *Walkaway*, the characters move between nomadic and migrant identities through their engagement with technology. They reject state-imposed structures and traverse various spaces in pursuit of freedom. Characters such as Hubert, Natalie, and Limpopo illustrates this tension. Hubert emerges as a hybrid figure who oscillate between technological autonomy and rootedness. Natalie embodies the techno-migrant identity, as she continually adapts to new environments and reconstructs herself under the influence of digital and spatial transformation. Limpopo, by contrast, typifies the techno-nomad, rejecting fixed structures entirely and operating through continuous movement and innovation beyond the reach of state apparatuses. All three negotiate identity through their navigation of two primary spatial formations, default spaces, governed by state and capitalist logics, and walkaway spaces, which promote fluidity, collaboration, and resistance. In chapter five, the same question guided the analysis of *Autonomous*, where characters, whether human or robotic, grapple with corporate surveillance and seek liberation through mobility. Jack aligns with the techno-nomadic subject, rejecting societal hierarchies and forging autonomy through continual displacement. Paladin represents a hybrid identity, shaped by the intersection of machinic embodiment and gendered consciousness, highlighting the entanglement of robotic and human identity under technological influence. Threezed, as a techno-migrant, transforms his subjectivity in response to oppressive systems, navigating between adaptation and resistance. These characters move across corporate and autonomous spaces, resisting

the commodification of identity and seeking freedom through both physical relocation and ideological reconfiguration.

The second research question, 'How does the setting in the selected novels reshape or maintain the original identity of the characters while dealing with the digital technology?' finds its answer in the shifting terrains of each narrative. *Walkaway* positions set as a dynamic catalyst for identity transformation, where the interplay between physical space and digital infrastructure redefines notion of freedom and subjectivity. Doctorow depicts a post-scarcity world in which the act of walking away constitutes both a geographical and ideological departure from oppressive state systems. The novel constructs the rigid spatial organization of the default world with the fluid, decentralized environments of the walkaway communities, revealing how alternative settings foster identities rooted in collaboration, adaptability, and technological agency. The walkaway movement deterritorializes individuals from capitalist hierarchies and reterritorializes them within networks of shared values, open-source innovation, and mutual aid. Digital infrastructure supports these communities, allowing them to transcend physical limitations while remaining materiality interconnected. Through this spatial reconfiguration, Doctorow illustrates that identity in the digital age emerges not from fixed location or imposed structure, but from the construction of post-capitalist subjectivities and the pursuit of collective autonomy. Similarly, *Autonomous* reveals that the setting operates not as a passive backdrop but as an active force in shaping identity and autonomy. Newitz constructs a world where the liberation struggle unfolds through spatial dynamics, where terrain, mobility, and digital geography collectively determine the possibilities for self-definition. The novel demonstrates that autonomy depends not only on psychological resistance but on the stability to navigate and subvert spatial control. By contrasting the rigid, state-controlled striated spaces with fugitive, smooth spaces, carved out by rebels and outcasts, Newitz reframes space as both a mechanism of oppression and a site of resistance. Characters such as Jack, Threezed, and Paladin engage in constant movement, deterritorializing from structures of domination and reterritorializing through the act of mobility. Ultimately, *Autonomous* presents space as a contested field where identity emerges at the intersection of constraint and escape, making the setting integral to the novel's exploration of freedom, surveillance, and the redefinition of personhood in a technologized world.

The third question of this research was ‘How do the themes of the selected novels create tension between a sense of rootedness and the desire for mobility and exploration?’ As can be seen in the analysis chapter 4, in the novel *Walkaway*, Cory Doctorow crafts a world where identity emerges through participation, ideological dissent, and spatial movement, as characters like Hubert, Natalie, and Limpopo navigate between the desire for community and the imperative of continuous reinvention. Their struggle reflects Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of becoming and aligns with Castell’s concept of project identity, highlighting how walkaway spaces, though unstable, function as experimental zones for collective meaning-making. Similarly, in *Autonomous*, Annalee Newitz presents characters such as Jack, Threezed, and Paladin who resist surveillance capitalism by embracing fluid identities and mobility. Jack’s nomadism, Threezed’s reterritorialization, and Paladin’s posthuman assemblage all embody resistance through movement and self-encryption, positioning identity as a dynamic response to control. Both novels dramatize the tension between the comfort of rootedness and the radical potential of exploration. It illustrates the world of collapsing structures and pervasive surveillance as freedom demands continuous transformation. Through their speculative lenses, *Walkaway* and *Autonomous* ultimately converge on the idea that mobility is not merely a physical act but a profound ontological strategy for resisting domination and reimagining subjectivity.

From the above discussion, several conclusions emerge. In *Walkaway*, Hubert stands as a hybrid figure caught between stability and transformation. Natalie embodies the techno-migrant, adapting her identity by shifting into digital and social environments. Limpopo represents the techno-nomad, consistently rejecting structural fixity in favor of open-ended resistance. The novel constructs its ideological conflict through the dichotomy between default and walkaway spaces, with central themes of identity, movement, and stability informing the narrative arc.

In *Autonomous*, Jack emerges as a techno-nomad, Paladin as a hybrid being negotiating gender and agency, and Threezed as a techno-migrant redefining his identity through spatial and ideological transitions. This text contrasts corporate and autonomous spaces, foregrounding the themes of identity and movement while subordinating stability.

Ultimately, this study concludes that the characters in both novels resist precise classification as either traditional nomads or migrants. Their technologically mediated experiences construct hybridized, fluid identities, shaped by spatial deterritorialization, digital reterritorialization, and ideological realignment. Technology enables these characters to disengage from state control, reassemble community ties, and assert agency in decentralized, networked environments. As such, their identities remain in constant flux, neither fully nomadic nor strictly migrant, but instead reflective of techno-cultural condition in which identity emerges as a dynamic, situational assemblage.

6.1 Findings

A detailed analysis of both selected novels, grounded in the adapted theoretical frameworks, reveals a significant shift from previous academic discourse. While earlier scholarship has largely emphasized the physical and geographical movement of nomads and migrants, this study demonstrates that such identities can also be understood through mental and metaphorical movement. The research finds that in a digitally mediated world; characters can undergo territorial and identity shifts without engaging in physical relocation. Digital technology enables characters to reconfigure their sense of self and belonging while remaining geographically stationary. Another key finding concerns the transformation of character identity; rather than fully assuming the role of either nomad or migrant, the characters often oscillate between the two. This oscillation illustrates a state of fluid identity that allows for constant adaptation to new social and spatial contexts. Ultimately, the researches concludes that the characters do not become strictly nomadic or migrant subjects. Instead, they embody a hybrid positionality, continually navigating and negotiating identity in response to technological, spatial, and ideological shifts.

6.2 Recommendations

The present study employed an adapted theoretical framework to examine the concept of metaphorical movement, intentionally shifting focus away from the conventional emphasis on physical or geographical displacement. Rather than treating nomadism and migration solely as matters of physical relocation, this research reconceptualized them as processes of internal, ideological, and digital transformation.

Through this lens, characters could traverse territories and reconfigure identities without ever moving geographically. The study argues that digital technologies enable metaphorical shifts that are equally, if not more, impactful in reshaping identity within technologically mediated environments.

The adapted theoretical model was explicitly applied to the two selected novels, *Walkaway* and *Autonomous* to explore how technological identity destabilizes fixed notions of self and belonging. The framework proved effective in highlighting how characters embody hybrid, techno-nomadic, or techno-migrant identities while navigating various sociotechnical terrains. Although the current research limited its application to these two texts, the framework holds significant potential for broader literary and interdisciplinary analysis. It could be a valuable resource in exploring the influence of digital technology on identity in other works of literature, visual art, fil, and cultural studies, particularly within the humanities.

Additionally, this study addressed an underexplored theoretical avenue by applying Manuel Castells' concept of project identity to literary texts. Existing scholarship has rarely incorporated Castells' sociological theories into literary analysis, resulting in a critical gap. By applying his notion of identity as a socially constructed project shaped through resistance and reconfiguration, this research demonstrates that literary characters also participate in constructing their identities through technologically mediated environments. In doing so, the study contributes to a growing body of interdisciplinary work that intersects network society theory with literature and cultural representation.

Finally, this research identified several areas that remain underdeveloped in current academic discourse. The selected novels, despite their thematic richness, have not been thoroughly explored through the lens of technological identity or metaphorical. Future scholarship could build on this study by applying the adapted framework to other literary genres, periods, or media forms. Further investigation into the intersection of technology, identity, and spatial politics could deepen our understanding of how subjectivity is shaped in the digital age. Thus, this research not only fills existing gaps but also opens new directions for literary and theoretical exploration.

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