

**From Deterritorialization to Reterritorialization:
Exploring Feminist Becoming of Palestinian and
Nigerian Women in the Selected Works of Etaf Rum
and Abi Daré**

BY

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Thesis Title: From Deterritorialization to Reterritorialization: Exploring Feminist Becoming of Palestinian and Nigerian Women in the Selected Works of Etaf Rum and Abi Daré

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **From Deterritorialization to Reterritorialization: Exploring Feminist Becoming of Palestinian and Nigerian Women in the Selected Works of Etaf Rum and Abi Daré** submitted by me in partial fulfilment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in the future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Title: From Deterritorialization to Reterritorialization: Exploring Feminist Becoming of Palestinian and Nigerian Women in the Selected Works of Etaf Rum and Abi Daré

This thesis delves into an examination of the novels *A Woman is No Man* by Etaf Rum and *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Abi Dare through the theoretical lens given by Deleuze and Guattari along with Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook. Textual analysis offered by Catherine Belsey is the research method used to analyse the selected texts. The research aims to understand how female characters in these novels undergo identity shifts and navigate societal expectations, employing a feminist theoretical framework that emphasises fluidity and transformation. Through a comparative examination of the shared experiences of women from diverse cultural backgrounds within these novels, the research sheds light on the transformative potential embedded in Deleuzian feminism. The analysis explores how the narratives within the selected texts illustrate the dynamic nature of becoming woman, emphasising the fluidity of identity through the lens of deterritorialization. Simultaneously, the study investigates the processes of reterritorialization, investigating how the female characters, Isra, Deya, Sarah, and Adunni, navigate and assert agency within complex socio-cultural contexts. Furthermore, this research contributes to the discourse by challenging and refuting prevailing notions surrounding early or forced marriages. The analysis highlights the transformative potential of education as a tool for women to defy oppressive norms, shatter barriers, and assert their agency. The importance of education in both novels transcends cultural boundaries and emphasises its role in women's empowerment. This comparative analysis reveals the transformative potential of Deleuzian feminism, offering a critical examination of oppressive cultural practices, especially regarding marital expectations imposed on women. This research inspires future researchers to address pressing concerns of early marriages and underscores the significance of empowering girls.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my father, Akhtar Ali Khan, whose enduring love, unwavering support and constant encouragement have been the pillars of strength throughout my journey. His guidance and belief in my abilities have shaped every step of this academic endeavour.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The present study aims to explore the agency involved in the new becoming of females across cultures. Women from different cultures, spaces, temporalities face problems and violence at the hands of society, specifically men. Women around the world manage their own households, while others work outside their home. Women from around the world, from different cultural backgrounds, such as some women from Palestine, Palestinian American society and Nigerian society, face subjugation, double marginalisation, early/forced marriages, and violence to this day.

This study is delimited to exploration of the journey of feminist becoming in the lives of Palestinian and Nigerian women as portrayed in Etaf Rum's *A Woman is No Man* and Abi Daré's *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. The main focus is to examine how the novels' female protagonists show a transition from cultural, social, and emotional displacement to reclaiming their identities and agency. This transformation is understood through the Deleuzian concepts of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and becoming-woman, which provide the primary lens for the analysis.

The heart of this study lies in the idea that identity is not fixed, stable, or predetermined. Instead, identity, especially in the case of oppressed women, can be reshaped through resistance, self-awareness, and the challenging of social and cultural norms. The Deleuzian framework is essential for analysing such transformations, as it emphasises fluidity, multiplicity, and the possibility of creating new ways of being. These ideas are introduced and expanded in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's philosophical works, particularly *A Thousand Plateaus*, where they explore how individuals can escape rigid systems of power, such as patriarchy or traditional culture, and reimagine their existence in more liberating forms.

The concept of deterritorialization in Deleuze and Guattari's theory refers to the process by which individuals or groups move away from fixed meanings, identities, or structures. It involves breaking away from the dominant norms that define who a person is

supposed to be within a particular system, whether it be family, culture, religion, or politics (Deleuze and Guattari 508). In the context of this research, deterritorialization shows how the female protagonists become dislocated, silenced, and disconnected from societal expectations and traditional roles imposed on them. These female characters, Isra, Deya, Sarah and Adunni from the selected texts, experience this journey as they begin to question, resist, or reject the roles that are expected of them as women in their communities.

However, deterritorialization is not a final state. According to Deleuze and Guattari, it is always followed by reterritorialization, a journey where new meanings, identities, and structures are formed (508). It is a way of re-establishing oneself but on different terms. This research focuses on the reterritorialization of the characters' journeys toward education, independence, and self-expression. Through small acts of resistance, the pursuit of knowledge, and their refusal to be silenced, these women begin to re-create their identities, and in doing so, they engage in a process of feminist becoming.

To further explain this journey, this study employs the concept of becoming-woman, another central idea in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. Becoming-woman does not simply mean becoming female in a biological sense; instead, it refers to a political and philosophical movement that resists fixed categories and opens up new possibilities for subjectivity. According to Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-woman is a path of transformation, where individuals, regardless of gender, resist dominant identities and choose fluid, creative, and alternative ways of being. For this research, becoming-woman is understood as a feminist process through which the protagonists in the novels move beyond societal restrictions to assert their agency and reconstruct their identities (173-309).

Similarly, the works of Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook have been instrumental in shaping this feminist reading of Deleuze's philosophy, as both theorists offer accessible yet critical interpretations that bridge Deleuzian concepts through cultural and gender analysis. Both scholars emphasise how Deleuzian theory can be used within feminist criticism to explore how identity is never stable but always in the process of becoming. Buchanan sees becoming-woman as a powerful tool for resisting patriarchal control and

embracing the fluidity of identity. Colebrook, similarly, explains how Deleuze's ideas help us see gender not as a fixed trait but as a dynamic process shaped by culture, power, and resistance. Their interpretations of Deleuze provide a solid foundation for applying his philosophy to the literary narratives studied in this thesis.

Therefore, for this study, I have chosen the novels *A Woman is No Man*, published in 2019 by Etaf Rum, and *The Girl With The Louding Voice*, published in 2020 by Abi Dare' to analyse the female characters who face challenges in life by being away from their homeland.

1.1 Background of the Study

The background of the study involves a thorough understanding of early marriages and the challenges linked to forced marriages, emphasising the crucial role of education in empowering individuals and facilitating the process of becoming-women. Early marriages, often referred to as child marriages, occur when one or both parties involved are below the legal age of consent. This practice is prevalent in many societies worldwide and is often driven by cultural, social, and economic factors. Forced marriages involve individuals compelled into marital unions without their free and informed consent. Such marriages are characterised by pressure or suppression to violate fundamental human rights, particularly those related to autonomy and choice.

This study explores how early marriage operates as a form of patriarchal control in *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, shaping female identity, resistance, and becoming. For the purpose of this research, early marriage refers to the formal or informal union of individuals, primarily girls, under the age of 18, often arranged without their informed consent. According to UNICEF, such practices violate basic human rights and disproportionately impact girls by curtailing their access to education, health, and personal development (UNICEF 6). Within the Nigerian and Palestinian cultural contexts portrayed in the novels, early marriage becomes more than a personal fate, it is a socio-political mechanism that maintains gender hierarchies and suppresses female autonomy, often framed as duty, honor, or necessity. This cultural silencing forms a critical node in the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of female identity in both narratives.

The lack of agency and autonomy, especially for women, exacerbates the issue of forced marriages. Women subjected to forced marriages often experience a profound loss of control over their lives and futures, as their decisions are dictated by external forces such as family, tradition, or societal expectations. This restriction on autonomy not only undermines their fundamental rights but also perpetuates cycles of inequality and oppression.

Likewise, education emerges as a potent tool in challenging and breaking free from the confines of forced marriages. By gaining access to education, individuals, particularly women, acquire knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities that empower them to assert their rights and make informed life choices. Education provides a pathway to independence, self-determination, and agency, enabling individuals to transcend the constraints imposed by forced marriages and societal norms. In the context of becoming women, education plays a transformative role in shaping identity and fostering personal growth. Through education, individuals are exposed to diverse perspectives, experiences, and opportunities, which broaden their horizons and expand their sense of self. Education equips women with the tools to challenge traditional gender roles, dismantle oppressive structures, and envision alternative futures. Ultimately, education catalyses empowerment, enabling women to navigate the complexities of identity and agency as they embark on their journey of becoming-women. Etaf Rum, as an Arab-Palestinian, offers insight into the world and the experiences of Arab women residing in a conservative American-Palestinian society.

This novel is set in Brooklyn and narrates the story of an eighteen-year-old girl, Deya, who is forced to meet suitors. The book focuses explicitly on Palestinian-American society, where early or forced marriages are deemed ideal for disposing of girls who have been viewed as burdens in their parents' lives. When Deya learns that she will not be able to reject or refuse this marriage proposal like her mother Isra did back in Palestine, history appears to be repeating itself.

On the other hand, Deya learns that her mother was married at an early age. Isra, Deya's mother, faced forced marriage at a very young age and bore children, all of whom turned out to be daughters, and all this made her life miserable. Isra, as a teenager, left Palestine after marrying Adam with no choice offered. Deya was raised to lie about her parents' death being crafted as being a car accident by her grandmother. When Deya asks

about her parents' deaths, her grandmother constantly responds that it was an accident and that both of them passed away right there. However, Adam used to beat Isra whenever he was back from work. Eventually, it was Adam who savagely killed Isra after beating her like every day and rushed towards the bridge, where he drowned himself to death.

The plot of the novel swings back and forth between Isras' life in Palestine and Deya's life in America. Once Deya learns about her mother's death, she understands the dark and complex secrets of her community. She rejects the idea of getting married and threatens her grandparents that she will run away if they do not respect her choice of a better life for herself and her sisters.

A Woman is No Man is representative of Etaf Rums' life as well as the lives of Palestinian ladies who went through and are still facing violence. Rum calls this novel a semi-autobiographical one because she was part of Brooklyn's tight-knit and conservative Palestinian American community, which she left behind. Out of frustration caused by restrictions in her life, Rum wrote this novel to highlight the lives of Arab Palestinian women, which are filled with restriction and oppression. As a teenager, Rum was wedded into an arranged marriage by her family, just like her protagonist; she was left with no alternative. Eventually, she got married and had children just like Isra. However, Rum continued to complete her education and take care of her kids and household. Rum then realised her part in the social cycle of oppression against her. She started talking about her experiences as a female writer to give voice to other women going through similar things since she was inclined not to give her daughter the next life.

On the other hand, Abi Dare's *The Girl with the Louding Voice* narrates the life of a young Nigerian girl, Adunni, living in a rural village with her father and brothers. This novel is a bildungsroman which describes the life of a young Nigerian girl. Her mother passed away at a very young age. Adunni, a fourteen-year-old girl who comes from a poor home, lives in a small town near the city of Lagos. She longs for education to have her loud voice. "Louding voice" here signifies confidence, power, rightfulness, and authority. Adunni's mother, Idowu, always advised her to pursue her education even if she must leave everything behind. She used to pay for school fees. As the only daughter of an underprivileged person, she is a significant asset. However, due to a lack of resources, her father tends to get rid of

her burden and marries her off to an already-married man, Morufu. As his third wife, she is shifted to Morufu's house, where he tries to use her against her wish. Adunni's life is none other than a housekeeper who works day and night without being noticed.

After a nonconsensual sexual experience, she tries to look for ways so that she can run away for a better life ahead. Once she gets a chance, she runs towards Lagos, where she serves as a servant at Big Madame. Even though, called a "house-young lady", she is enslaved since her wages are kept from her and given to her procurer. Adunni likewise shapes a companionship with Tia, a rich natural expert and specialist's better half who lives close by. Tia is favored and knowledgeable, however credulous, about the cruel real factors of Adunni's life. Their fellowship, wherein they trade information, is one of the book's features. Adunni is always determined to seek education, which is the only way for women like her to be free from societal norms. All through her frightening transitioning venture, which results in her new becoming, Adunni never loses the "Louding voice" that makes Daré's story and her hero.

Adunni, with the Louding Voice, manages the female voice, the capacity to shout out, and the drive toward pushing to get to one's goal in life as exhibited by the principal character Adunni. It has likewise been noted for its practical portrayal of neediness in Nigeria and early marriage in which the primary person fights to get an education and seek a better life.

According to Abi Daré, the idea of writing this novel clicked in her mind when she was reading a news article about a 13-year-old house helper whom the house lady ill-treated. She also states that she was inspired by her daughter's experiences while living in a rural Nigerian village for a year. *The Girl with the Louding Voice* is like many other books that talk about important topics and get people talking about how to improve the world. It is great when a book stands up for what is right, but sometimes people read these books to find more minor, less obvious things that also make a difference. It is like finding hidden gems in a story that can inspire us unexpectedly.

Both, *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice* are influential novels exploring women's empowerment and resistance. These narratives resonate with readers

globally due to their compelling portrayals of the struggles and triumphs of their female protagonists within the specific contexts of their cultures and societies.

In the novel, *A Woman is No Man*, the character Isra's journey elaborates on the theme of women's empowerment within a conservative Arab-American community. Isra, born to Palestinian parents, faces the challenges of an arranged marriage and the confines of conventional gender roles. She dreams of education and self-determination, aspirations often in conflict with the traditional expectations set for her. Isra's story highlights the complexities of women's lives in patriarchal societies where cultural norms intersect with the desire for empowerment. The yearning marks her quest for empowerment for a voice that can challenge societal norms and expectations.

In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Adunni, a young Nigerian girl, represents the theme of women's empowerment and resistance against oppressive forces. Adunni's journey takes her from a rural village to the bustling city of Lagos, where she becomes a housemaid for a wealthy family. Adunni's narrative focuses on her pursuit of education and realising her agency. Her strong desire for a "louding voice" pictures the essence of her empowerment journey. In a society where child marriage, servitude, and a lack of educational opportunities are the norm, Adunni's resistance against these oppressive forces represents the importance of education as a tool for empowerment.

Furthermore, a common theme in both novels is the theme of resistance against patriarchal norms. In *A Woman is No Man*, Isra's resistance is particularly effective as she seeks to transcend the traditional gender roles imposed upon her. She fights with the expectations of being an obedient wife and mother, roles that limit her personal growth and self-expression. Her determination to break free from these roles signifies her resistance against the oppressive forces of patriarchy within her community. The novel depicts women's challenges when they seek to assert their identities and challenge the boundaries set by traditional gender norms.

In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Adunni's resistance against oppressive societal norms is equally significant. As a young girl subjected to forced marriage and servitude, she defies these injustices by conspiring to receive an education and assert her identity. Her resistance against child marriage and her undefeated commitment to her educational pursuits

challenge the deeply rooted patriarchal structures that restrict women's agency in Nigerian society. Adunni's story exemplifies the strength and resilience of women who confront oppressive forces.

Therefore, education plays a vital role in both novels, serving as a means for women's empowerment. In *A Woman is No Man*, Isra's yearning for knowledge and her eventual access to books symbolise her journey to liberation. Education becomes a means for her to transcend the confines of traditional gender roles and discover her own identity. Her journey underscores the transformative power of education and its role in women's empowerment. It challenges the prevailing belief that women should be confined to domestic roles and limited opportunities.

Hence, Adunni's quest for education in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* is equally inspirational. Her determination to receive an education serves as a driving force in her empowerment journey. Despite the societal expectations that deny her access to learning, Adunni remains resolute. Her story highlights the transformative potential of education as a tool for women to defy oppressive norms, shatter barriers, and assert their agency. The importance of education in both novels transcends cultural boundaries and emphasises its role in women's empowerment.

Furthermore, these narratives also shed light on the impact of cultural and societal constraints on women's lives. In *A Woman is No Man*, Isra's story delves into the weight of cultural expectations within the Arab-American community. Isra's Palestinian heritage's traditional values and expectations influence her journey. Her struggle to reconcile these cultural norms with her aspirations underscores the complexities women face at the intersection of cultural identity and empowerment. The novel raises questions about the role of culture in shaping gender roles and expectations.

Likewise, Adunni's journey in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* takes place within the Nigerian cultural and societal context. Her experiences are influenced by the traditions and norms of her society, where child marriage and servitude are deeply entrenched. Adunni's resistance to these cultural expectations reveals the struggle between the need for self-determination and social norms. The novel offers an intriguing investigation of the struggle between tradition and young women's goals.

The rationale for connecting the two different contexts of Brooklyn and Lagos in this study lies in the shared themes of female empowerment, resistance to patriarchal structures, and the transformative journeys of the protagonists in both *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. While Brooklyn and Lagos represent distinct socio-cultural landscapes, one within an Arab-American immigrant community in the U.S. and the other within a rural Nigerian setting, both environments impose restrictive norms on certain women and limit their agency.

By examining these two contexts together, the study seeks to highlight how patriarchal oppression and the struggle for female empowerment transcend specific cultural settings, manifesting in different forms but ultimately driven by similar forces. In both Brooklyn and Lagos, women face traditional expectations that define their roles within family and society, often involving early marriage, limited education, and domestic servitude. The protagonists, Deya in Brooklyn and Adunni in Lagos, challenge these norms, illustrating a shared process of deterritorialization as they break away from prescribed roles, and reterritorialization as they reconstruct their identities through education and self-discovery.

Therefore, this comparative approach enriches the analysis by demonstrating that, while Brooklyn and Lagos offer distinct socio-political contexts, the overarching themes of resilience, identity formation, and the pursuit of agency resonate across cultures. The juxtaposition of these settings emphasises the universality of the struggle against patriarchal norms and the potential for empowerment, aligning with the Deleuzian feminist framework of becoming-woman across diverse socio-cultural landscapes.

Similarly, the quest for voice is a central theme in both novels. Isra, Deya, Sarah, and Adunni seek to find and assert their voices in societies where women's voices are often marginalised or silenced. In *A Woman is No Man*, Isra's journey is a poignant exploration of how she discovers her voice. She yearns for a voice that can challenge the constraints placed upon her and the women in her community. Her journey symbolises the universal desire for self-expression and personal freedom.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, becoming represents a movement away from a static state of "being", where identity and roles are defined by rigid boundaries and societal expectations, toward a dynamic, transformative process of self-definition. In this way,

becoming challenges the notion of identity as fixed and unchanging, emphasising the possibility for continuous growth and transformation instead. This process is vital for marginalised or oppressed individuals, as it allows for redefining oneself outside imposed roles and limitations.

Becoming-woman, a specific form of becoming introduced by Deleuze and Guattari, further explores how individuals, regardless of gender, transcend traditional notions of femininity imposed by patriarchal structures. It signifies a path of empowerment and self-discovery, where individuals embrace fluidity, complexity, and creativity to resist fixed identities. Through this lens, becoming-woman is a process by which the protagonists in these novels break free from restrictive norms, particularly those governing women's roles, marriage, and autonomy.

In this study, the concept of becoming-woman serves as a part of the framework for analysing how each protagonist navigates her journey toward empowerment. By embracing the becoming process, these characters reject societal expectations, redefine their identities, and claim agency. Thus, becoming-woman acts as a transformative framework, allowing the protagonists to explore new possibilities of selfhood and challenge oppressive cultural norms. Through this theoretical foundation, the study examines how each protagonist's journey exemplifies a movement from a state of "being" defined by external forces to "becoming" that embodies self-empowerment and individual autonomy.

In brief, this research deals with the challenges and violence faced by females, focusing on their journey of deterritorialization and reterritorialization as they struggle to gain agency and construct new identities. Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* define "Being" as a static entity that exists in the world represented by fixed boundaries and identity. On the other hand, "becoming" is the dynamic and transformative newness that produces new relationships and experiences in a new world. Becoming as an experience shapes into a new representation and brings authoritativeness, which underlies existence and goes beyond fixed boundaries. Becoming-woman on the other hand, is a specific aspect of becoming. It involves the process of deterritorialization and the exploration of feminine qualities or modes of existence, regardless of one's biological sex or gender identity. They argue that becoming-woman is not limited to women; anyone can engage in the process of

becoming-woman, regardless of their gender. It is a mode of becoming that challenges the binary understanding of gender and opens up possibilities for transforming subjectivity and creating new forms of existence. It is an invitation to embrace fluidity, multiplicity, and creativity, often associated with the feminine as a means of breaking free from fixed roles and oppressive gender roles (173-309).

In the novels, we see that cultural and spatial contexts shape the process of becoming-woman. The experiences of Palestinian women in a conservative diasporic community in Brooklyn, and Nigerian women in a patriarchal rural setting near Lagos, are different in detail but similar in structure. Both groups of women are initially confined by traditions, gender expectations, and familial pressures. Yet, as the narratives unfold, we see how these women resist, question, and ultimately reterritorialize themselves through new forms of expression, often through education, voice, or self-determination. This process can be understood as rhizomatic, in that their becoming does not follow a linear path but branches out in multiple directions, shaped by unpredictable encounters, resistance, and redefinitions of self (Deleuze and Guattari 21). It shows that becoming-woman is not a singular or uniform experience, but one that is culturally rooted, nonlinear, and context-specific..

Furthermore, using Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical concepts, supported by feminist interpretations from Buchanan and Colebrook, this study critically analyses how deterritorialization and reterritorialization operate within the selected novels to shape female subjectivity. The researcher argues that the protagonist's journeys from silence and submission toward voice and agency exemplify the transformative power of feminist becoming. In doing so, the thesis sheds light on how literature reflects and critiques women's lived experiences, and how theory can provide the tools to understand these narratives more deeply.

This research provides an analysis of both novels and tries to investigate Adunni, Isra, Sarah, and Diya's shared experiences of oppression and early marriages. It aims to expose real brutality against females and the treatment of females as enslaved people without chains in different cultures and spaces. It discusses the situation of females in different spatial realms and cultures with the sameness of oppression and violation of equal rights.

1.2 Thesis Statement

This thesis employs Deleuzian feminist theory to critically analyse *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. It delves into the process of becoming-woman through the lenses of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and the politics of agency. By examining themes of education, marriage, and gender equality, this study exemplifies the transformative power of Deleuzian feminism while also challenging and negating the pervasive concept of early/forced marriages.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research focuses on the following objectives:

1. To explore the effects of deterritorialization and reterritorialization on female identity and their gaining of agency.
2. To investigate the novels' role in challenging and negating the pervasive concept of early/forced marriages and bringing to light the force of change that empowers women.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do deterritorialization and reterritorialization shape the process of female becoming in Etaf Rum's *A Woman is No Man* and Abi Dare's *The Girl With the Louding Voice*?
2. How do the novels challenge and negate the pervasive concept of early and forced marriages, while also shedding light on new forms of empowerment and identity formation among women from diverse cultural backgrounds?

1.5 Significance And Rationale Of The Study

This research presents a unique cross-cultural feminist analysis by applying Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical concepts of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and becoming-woman, to two culturally distinct literary works: *A Woman is No Man* by Etaf Rum and *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Abi Daré. By focusing on the narratives of Palestinian and Nigerian women, the study foregrounds how women from diverse geopolitical spaces confront gender-based violence, forced marriages, and socio-cultural

silencing. Unlike conventional feminist readings rooted in trauma or liberal paradigms, this research offers a transdisciplinary intervention grounded in Deleuzian feminist theory within postcolonial and non-Western contexts. The originality lies in its nuanced approach to exploring nonlinear, culturally embedded forms of female resistance and agency formation, making it one of the few works that extend Euro-American philosophical frameworks to African and Middle Eastern diasporic literatures.

To fully comprehend the importance of this study, it is crucial to consider the broader context of the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the current situation. Palestinian women often bear the brunt of the conflict's impact. In addition to their roles as caregivers, they must also contend with the trauma of displacement and the loss of their loved ones. The weight of these responsibilities is immense, and it is in these challenging circumstances that their strength and resilience shine through.

What makes this research even more significant is the fact that Palestinian women are doubly marginalised. They face societal constraints and patriarchal norms while also dealing with the traumas of war and conflict. Their experiences can provide invaluable insights into how women can navigate such complex and adverse conditions, find their voices, and exercise agency.

Although semi-autobiographical, as depicted in the novel *A Woman is No Man*, the stories offer a glimpse into the intricate dynamics of traditional Palestinian communities. The characters in the novel are not just symbols; they represent the real struggles of Palestinian women in their quest for self-empowerment and a more equitable society.

This research serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration not only for Palestinian women but also for women worldwide who confront similar challenges. It sends a powerful message that despite adversity and systemic oppression, women can find the strength to stand up for their rights, their voices, and their futures. Nigeria and Palestine, though geographically and historically different, share patriarchal traditions where early and forced marriages, gender-based silencing, and rigid family expectations deeply affect women's lives. By studying the protagonists' journeys toward voice and gaining agency, Adunni in Nigeria and Isra, Deya and Sarah in the Palestinian diaspora, this study highlights how women from

vastly different backgrounds negotiate cultural restrictions, reclaim identity, and forge new forms of empowerment.

Similarly, this study holds particular significance in the Pakistani context, where patriarchal norms, early and forced marriages, and restrictions on female autonomy remain pressing social issues. By examining how women in Nigerian and Palestinian cultures resist similar forms of gender-based oppression, the study provides valuable comparative insights into the struggles and resilience of women in conservative societies like Pakistan. It also encourages critical reflection on how literature can be used as a platform to challenge silencing, promote education for girls, and inspire empowerment.

In resonance within the Pakistani socio-cultural landscape, where early marriages, patriarchal norms, and female silencing remain prevalent. By drawing parallels between the challenges faced by women in Nigeria, Palestine, and Pakistan, the study facilitates a reflective analysis of shared oppressive structures and the transformative power of female voices. It encourages Pakistani readers and scholars to reimagine literature as a platform for advocacy, education, and empowerment, emphasizing the urgency of dismantling cultural stereotypes and fostering gender equality.

While the cultural and legal frameworks governing early marriage in Palestine and Nigeria differ in structure, they share notable parallels with the Pakistani context. In all three settings, patriarchal norms deeply rooted in traditional and religious practices reinforce early and often forced marriages, particularly for girls. In Pakistan, despite the legal age of marriage being 18 for males and 16 for females under the Child Marriage Restraint Act (1929), implementation is inconsistent across provinces, and under Sharia interpretations, marriage upon puberty remains socially acceptable in many rural and tribal areas. This mirrors the situation in northern Nigeria, where Sharia law permits marriage based on physical maturity, and in Palestinian territories, where judges have discretionary power to lower the legal age of marriage despite recent reforms. In each of these contexts, notions of family honor, female chastity, and economic dependency underpin the persistence of child marriage, limiting girls' education, autonomy, and mobility. These shared socio-cultural patterns suggest that the experiences of the protagonists in *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, marked by premature domestic roles, restricted desires, and

repressed identities, resonate strongly with the lived realities of many Pakistani girls, especially in rural or conservative communities..

Moreover, through Academic research, the following research helps to utilise, the theoretical concepts of Deleuze and Guattari's notions of "deterritorialization" and "reterritorialization" along with "Deleuzian Feminism" proposed by Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook, to evaluate becoming-woman and the shared experiences of violence and subjugation of females through the lens of female writers.

For scholars of gender studies, postcolonial theory, and comparative literature, this research contributes critical insights by juxtaposing the specific cultural dynamics of Arab Palestinian and Nigerian societies. It interrogates how women, despite being rooted in traditionally patriarchal structures, disrupt and reshape their subjectivities through acts of defiance, resilience, and education. The study not only broadens the scope of Deleuzian feminist applications beyond Western literary canon but also engages with intersectional realities, such as class, displacement, and diaspora, thereby offering a more inclusive and globally relevant feminist discourse. It highlights the protagonists' complex negotiations with oppressive structures, illustrating how cultural reterritorialization enables forms of becoming that resist fixed identities and hegemonic gender roles.

While the experiences of Adunni, Isra, Sarah and Deya offer powerful insights into the mechanisms of gendered oppression, they are not universally representative of all Nigerian or Palestinian women. Adunni's narrative, rooted in the socio-economic struggles of rural Yoruba communities, and Isra and Deya's stories, shaped by the specific constraints of the Palestinian diaspora in Brooklyn, reflect particular cultural and class-based realities rather than generalized national experiences. This study contributes to feminist discourse by extending Deleuzian feminist theory, particularly the concepts of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and becoming-woman, into postcolonial and non-Western literary contexts. Unlike existing studies that have largely approached these texts through trauma theory or liberal feminist frameworks, this research offers a transdisciplinary intervention that examines how minoritized female subjects negotiate agency through nonlinear, culturally embedded acts of resistance. By juxtaposing two distinct geopolitical settings, this thesis not

only highlights the contextual nuances of feminist becoming but also expands the applicability of Deleuzian theory beyond its Euro-American philosophical roots.

Furthermore, this research interests international readership because it explores the means of female oppression and violence against them. *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, are highly significant novels with global appeal. The former delves into the nuanced lives of Arab-American women, bringing to light the intricate themes of tradition, patriarchy, and identity. It provides a unique perspective into a culture often shrouded in silence, allowing international readers to comprehend the immigrant experience and the universal pursuit of self-empowerment. The latter, *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, exemplifies the essence of resilience, education, and the battle for women's agency. It explores themes of gender equality, voice, and cultural diversity, captivating global readers and inspiring a collective commitment to justice and female empowerment. These works resonate with the simplest academic language, enriched by the theoretical concepts of Deluzian feminism, making them essential for worldwide audiences. It helps to understand and analyse female immigrant experiences and the impact of displacement on their roles in society and culture.

Therefore, by raising awareness about these issues and amplifying the voices of those affected, we can work towards ending oppression against women and promoting gender equality. This can involve challenging cultural norms and stereotypes, advocating for policy changes, and empowering women to take control of their own lives and gain agency in their new becoming.

1.6 Delimitation

The scope of the research is narrowed down to the text and data available in both the novels, *A Woman is No Man* (2019) by Etaf Rum and *The Girl with the Louding Voice* (2020) by Abi Daré. This research is limited to the evaluation of shared experiences of oppression of females and deconstructing the norms set by society regarding early marriages of young girls and not allowing them to assert agency and reclaim their selfhood.

1.7 Chapter Breakdown

The major body of the paper comprises of the following chapters:

Chapter 1, the introduction, provides the background regarding the topic, texts, and understanding and also specifies the objectives of the study. It also poses some research questions which are the primary reason for this paper.

Chapter 2 is the Literature Review chapter. This allows us to locate the available literature and help find the research gap. This contextualises the research.

Chapter 3 includes theoretical lens and textual analysis as a research method.

Chapter 4 and 5 is the analytical part which is subdivided on the basis of answering or responding to the posed research questions along with theoretical intervention. Each work has been analysed in a different chapter to provide detailed evaluation of the process of Becoming-women.

Lastly, chapter 6 is the conclusion, which concludes the discussion and analysis of the shared experiences in both the novels. Also, some suggestions and recommendations are given for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter serves to situate the following study in the current scholarship and point out the research gaps in order to substantiate or differentiate the intervention of the proposed research. I have done background research and reviewed the present works done on the primary and secondary texts used in this research. Reviewing the previous works done helps you to collect the relevant data and points out the need for carrying the following research. Also, literature review helps you to timely check whether the following research has been carried out before or not to avoid duplication of work.

The primary reason for doing a literature review is to find a research gap in the literature and position the current study in the present-day scholarship. Therefore, I have reviewed literature related to deterritorialization, reterritorialization, Deleuzian Feminism, female experiences, female agency, and in the second part I have narrowed down the literature on the selected texts, *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl With The Louding Voice*. This process helps to find a researchable gap for this study.

2.1 Surveying Research Frontiers: Deterritorialization and Reterritorialization in Literary Criticism

In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari define deterritorialization as a process by which fixed boundaries or territories, whether physical, social, or psychological, are destabilised, broken down, or overcome. They argue that deterritorialization is a fundamental aspect of capitalism, which constantly seeks to break down boundaries and create new ones in the pursuit of profit. (Deleuze and Guattari 5-6)

Reterritorialization, on the other hand, is the process by which new boundaries or territories are established following a period of deterritorialization. These new territories may be similar to the old ones, or they may be completely different. According to Deleuze and Guattari, reterritorialization is a necessary part of the deterritorialization process, as it allows for the establishment of new forms of social, economic, and political organisation. (Deleuze and Guattari 5-9)

According to Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-woman involves a movement of deterritorialization, which means breaking free from the established territories, boundaries, and norms imposed by society. They argue that becoming-woman is not restricted to individuals who identify as women but is a more general process of escape from the limitations of prescribed gender roles and binary categories. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that becoming-woman is characterised by a series of transformations and exchanges that challenge fixed gender identities. It is a process of adopting, inhabiting, and experiencing the flows and intensities associated with what is conventionally considered feminine.

Becoming-woman is not about imitating or assimilating existing models of femininity but rather about embracing the creative and disruptive potential of the feminine as a force of change and liberation (Deleuze and Guattari 276-77). In Deleuzian philosophy, identity is not fixed or predetermined but is shaped through processes of deterritorialization and becoming. These processes are not spontaneous, they are triggered by forces that disrupt the subject's embeddedness in dominant social codes. In the context of feminist becoming, these forces often emerge through acts of resistance, emotional rupture, exposure to new environments, or the awakening of desire. Deleuze and Guattari assert that "becoming is a rhizome, not a classificatory or genealogical tree" (Deleuze and Guattari 239), suggesting that the subject's transformation occurs through connection, rupture, and movement, rather than through a predetermined path. Within the framework of this study, the force of change refers to the emotional, social, and intellectual catalysts that spark a woman's departure from cultural restrictions, such as access to education, emotional trauma, the discovery of knowledge, or moments of defiance. These forces are essential in initiating deterritorialization and enabling reterritorialization, allowing the subject to move toward new forms of empowered identity, or what Deleuze and Guattari call becoming-woman. This study applies this concept to explore how such forces operate differently in the Palestinian-American and Nigerian contexts, shaping the feminist becoming of the protagonists in Etaf Rum's *A Woman is No Man* and Abi Daré's *The Girl with the Louding Voice*.

2.1.1 Mapping the Terrain: A Review of Earlier Investigations into Deterritorialization and Reterritorialization

About deterritorialization during a war period and yet again reterritorialization of boundaries, Sofiya Voytiv writes about diaspora and conflict in ‘homeland’. In her article *Deterritorializing Conflict, Reterritorializing Boundaries Diaspora and Conflict in the Homeland*, argues about a particular instance of Ukrainian-Russian clash and Ukrainian, Russian, and struggle created diasporic bunches in Sweden. Due to war in the homeland, the diasporic individuals face difficulties in settling in a hostland which is a transnational space of residence. It can cause personality changes and they feel problems in the diasporization process while interacting with the new social space. During the settling process- conflict reterritorialization- comes into play. Together, the ideas of contention deterritorialization and reterritorialization assist with making sense of the examples and systems of the equipped struggle in its important aspect. Moreover, such hypothetical conceptualization empowers the examination of the impacts the contention could have in the diasporic setting, including cycles of politicisation. Utilising the particular instance of the Ukrainian-Russian clash (2014-continuous) she broke down the cooperation organisations of Ukrainian, Russian and struggle-created associations dynamic in Sweden somewhere in the range of 2013 and 2016 and interviewed Ukrainians and Russians from Ukraine living in Sweden. She shows that the two examples of struggle deterritorialization and reterritorialization are available in this particular diasporic setting to various degrees. This work focuses on the process of diasporization and the problems faced by diaspora people to settle in a hostland while my problem of the research deals with the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization and the identity change in women and sharing their experiences.

Thus, Voytiv utilises deterritorialization from homeland and reterritorialization in hostland during war as theoretical concepts. Taken together the four studies expect to reveal insight into the non-regional importance aspect of the ethnicized outfitted clashes hypothetically and experimentally. Hence, the exposition adds to the advancement of the all-encompassing comprehension of war and diaspora while considering the significance of settings, factors, and states of the nation of home, the “country” and the transnational space. In her article she explains the deterritorialization and reterritorialization process as explained

by Deleuze and Guattari: “The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen.” (Deleuze and Guattari 12)

Simultaneously, Deleuze and Guattari fostered a complex connection between the ideas of deterritorialization and reterritorialization of images and implications, depicting it with a straightforward representation of an orchid and a wasp: the wasp "deterritorializes" the orchid by taking its dust and "reterritorializes" it somewhere else as a feature of the orchid's regenerative framework. In short, Voytiv's article discusses the effects of war-torn diaspora individuals who face problems in reterritorialization in a hostland and the idea of war can travel with them to the new space where it shapes their identity, lives, and meaning of their new homeland (Deleuze and Guattari 32).

Similarly, Pirkko Markula in the paper, *Deleuze and the Body without Organs: Misreading the Fit Feminine Identity*, explores the potential for a resistant feminine body identity by employing Deleuzian feminist perspectives. This article starts by critiquing Deleuze's challenge to philosophical thought that constructs identity through dichotomous oppositions, a process occurring within dominant strata, organism, significance, and subjectification, which Deleuze argues limits the creative potential of understanding bodily identity. The author delves into Deleuze's alternative approach, emphasising concepts like the plane of consistency, assemblage, and the Body without Organs as positive ways to rethink bodily identity. The article aims to demonstrate the applicability of Deleuzian philosophy to the realm of sport and exercise, particularly in the context of women's fitness practices. Using Pilates as a case study, the author analyses how such exercise practices might contribute to the creation of a Body without Organs.

On the other hand, my research centres on a Deleuzian feminist analysis of the novels *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl With The Louding Voice*, examining the process of becoming-woman through deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and the politics of agency. While both works engage with Deleuzian feminism, the focus and methodology differ. The mentioned article concentrates on bodily identity and women's fitness practices, whereas my research centres on literary analysis of female characters' journeys within the novels.

2.2 Mapping Becoming-Woman: A Comprehensive Review of Deleuzian Feminist Studies

The concept of “becoming-women” in “Deleuze and Feminist Theory” by Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook, refers to the philosophical idea introduced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. This concept challenges fixed notions of gender identity and emphasises a process of transformation or becoming that transcends traditional gender categories.

“Becoming-women” does not actually mean the transformation into a female identity; but, it implies a movement towards a state of being fluid, multiplicity, and transformation that goes beyond fixed gender roles. It is a part of the broader concept of “becoming” or “becoming-minoritarian”(A Thousand Plateaus) in Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical framework. (291)

In the book, *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, Buchanan and Colebrook likely explore how this concept of “becoming-women” intersects with feminist theory, discussing its implications for feminist philosophy, gender studies, and identity politics. They likely talk about how Deleuze's ideas can be applied within feminist discourse to challenge conventional understandings of gender and contribute to discussions on identity, subjectivity, and social transformation.

2.2.1 Identity Dynamics and Becoming-Woman: A Critical Analysis of Research in Deleuzian Feminism

In the essay, *A Minoritarian Feminism? Things to Do with Deleuze and Guattari* by Pelagia Goulimari, the focus revolves around the relationship between feminist philosophy and minority groups both within and outside of feminism. Goulimari explores this connection by delving into the philosophical concepts of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, particularly emphasising their idea of “becoming minoritarian” along with associated notions. (290)

The essay discusses the concept of “becoming minoritarian” put forth by Deleuze and Guattari in the book, *A Thousand Plateaus*. This concept doesn’t solely concern numerical minorities; rather, it involves a broader understanding of becoming that challenges dominant majoritarian structures. It's about embracing a process of transformation and becoming that

transcends fixed identities, advocating for a fluid and multiple existence that opposes rigid categories and hierarchies. Goulimari uses close readings of Alice Jardine's "Woman in Limbo" and Rosi Braidotti's "Patterns of Dissonance" to shed light on differing perspectives regarding Deleuze and Guattari's ideas within feminist discourse. These assessments are critical but offer insight into the complexities and challenges involved in integrating the notions of "becoming minoritarian" into feminist philosophy. By examining these viewpoints, the essay outlines the potential advantages and merits of a "minoritarian" feminism. (291)

However, the aim of the essay is not to provide a definitive conclusion but rather to highlight the possibilities and implications of adopting a "minoritarian" approach within feminist philosophy. It prompts readers to consider the transformative potential embedded in Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, encouraging a rethinking of feminist thought and activism beyond fixed structures, thus opening avenues for diverse and inclusive philosophical discussions within the feminist discourse.

Similarly, Rosi Braidotti in a chapter, *Toward a New Nomadism: Feminist Deleuzian Tracks; or, Metaphysics and Metabolism* from the book *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy* Edited By Constantin V. Boundas, Dorothea Olkowski explores how the ideas of philosopher Gilles Deleuze intersect with feminist theories regarding the changing experiences of women. It focuses on the concept of materialism, emphasising the importance of desire in shaping how women see themselves and their role in society.

Likewise, the chapter suggests that desire is a central aspect of the feminist effort to create new definitions of what it means to be a woman. It aims to develop an ethical framework centred on the idea of sexual differences as a means of empowering women. In this context, feminist theorists emphasise desire's political significance over will power and highlight how desire plays a crucial role in forming a person's identity. They aim to redefine what it means to be a woman by exploring different perspectives on female subjectivity.

While my research delves into a Deleuzian feminist analysis of *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl With The Louding Voice*, focusing on the process of becoming-woman through deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and the politics of agency, the mentioned chapter contributes to the literature review by exploring the intersection of Deleuzian thought and

feminist theories. It emphasises materialism and the political significance of desire in reshaping female subjectivities. While my research is grounded in literary analysis, specifically novels, the discussed chapter centres on theoretical discussions within feminism, addressing the political and epistemological dimensions of the feminist project. Irigaray's proposal of portraying a “woman divine” is also a distinctive aspect, adding a comparative dimension to representations of female transcendence. Overall, the difference lies in the focus areas, methodologies, and theoretical discussions within the broader context of Deleuzian feminism.

On the other hand, Ian Buchanan, influenced by Deleuze, introduced the concept of “becoming-woman” in Deleuzian feminism. This idea aligns with the themes discussed in Rosi Braidotti's chapter. “Becoming-woman” in Deleuzian feminism doesn't imply a biological or fixed state but rather explores the idea that everyone, regardless of gender, can embody traits or experiences traditionally associated with femininity. It's about breaking away from fixed gender roles and embracing fluidity. Braidotti's chapter emphasises the importance of desire in feminist theories, highlighting how desire shapes subjectivity whereas, Buchanan's concept of “becoming-woman” aligns here as it challenges rigid gender norms by suggesting that individuals can “become” or embody different aspects of what is conventionally seen as feminine without necessarily identifying as female. Both Buchanan's concept and Braidotti's discussions revolve around breaking away from fixed gender expectations, exploring the fluidity of identity, and challenging traditional notions of femininity and masculinity within feminist thought influenced by Deleuzian philosophy. In short, the purpose of discussing desire in relation to female-becoming is to encourage comprehension of the theoretical framework and provide deeper understanding of new-becoming through different means and methods.

Therefore, The correlation between Buchanan's notion of “becoming-woman” and Braidotti's emphasis on desire reflects a shared goal: redefining feminine subjectivity beyond traditional norms. Both concepts advocate for a departure from rigid gender roles, promoting a fluid understanding of identity formation and encouraging a reconceptualization of femininity not tied solely to biological determinants but inclusive of diverse experiences and expressions. The correlation between Buchanan's and Braidotti's ideas provides a foundational framework for rethinking gender identity and subjectivity within the context of

fluidity and desire, which forms a significant theoretical backdrop for this thesis's exploration of becoming-woman.

To better understand, Mike Murphy, and Elizabeth J. Done in their paper, *Towards a Deleuzo-feminist ethics of empowerment and freedom from logics of judgement*, combines ideas from Gilles Deleuze's different writings to create a Deleuzian feminist ethics relevant to current education debates. We explore how Deleuze's thoughts on Spinozan ethics, Foucault's 'practice of freedom,' Nietzschean concepts like the 'doctrine of judgement' and 'system of cruelty,' and Bergsonian 'fabulatory processes' shape a poststructuralist understanding of ethics versus morality. This understanding guides feminist responses to neoliberal education, including practices, identities, and cultures. Drawing on the work of Gannon, Braidotti, Colebrook, Grosz, and others, we use Deleuzian ideas to rethink the existential side of teaching as an ethico-aesthetic relationship. A Deleuzo-feminist ethics of empowerment envisions breaking free from harmful systems that cause shame and blame, while also urging for political engagement with these systems. While both studies involve Deleuzian frameworks, my research focuses on literary analysis, specifically novels, whereas the mentioned study applies Deleuzian ideas to educational discourse.

Similarly Eklund and Henrik in their paper, *Deleuzian Feminism* discusses "Becoming-women" in the context of Deleuzian Feminism. They state that, "Minority denotes a distinctive deviation from established standards and norms. In the realm of feminist theory, the concept of 'becoming-woman,' as articulated by Deleuze as the primary form of becoming, holds significant implications. Women can embark on a process of becoming-woman by disrupting dichotomies and navigating their own trajectories rather than conforming to imposed identities". This study, rooted in the framework of Deleuzian feminism, focuses on the exploration of 'becoming-woman' in the context of New Turkish cinema, specifically analysing the film *Zephyr* (2011) by Belma Baş. The evaluation of the film is conducted through the lens of three fundamental elements of minor cinema. This article contributes to the understanding of 'becoming-woman' within the cinematic landscape of contemporary Turkey. The primary difference in this research and my analysis lies in the medium and cultural context of the analysis. Your research engages with literary works, examining the transformative journeys of female characters, while the mentioned article delves into the cinematic portrayal of 'becoming-woman' in the specific context of Turkish

cinema. Both works share a common foundation in Deleuzian feminism, but they diverge in their focus on different forms of artistic expression and cultural contexts.

In their recent work, *Deleuze and Guattari's becoming and the Potential for Feminist Criticism of Cultural Content*, Hee Jeong Han and Jung-Ah Shin explore the concept of becoming as theorised by Deleuze and Guattari. The article delves into feminist micropolitical practices by interpreting and creating content, drawing connections with the transformative potential of becoming. While traditional feminist critiques of media content often focus on patriarchal ideologies and issues of representation, the authors argue that the concept of becoming offers theoretical utility for interpreting minority politics, including feminism. The article introduces various content examples to enhance the understanding of “Becoming” a driving force for women seeking to transcend traditional roles in the patriarchal system. This interdisciplinary exploration aims to pave the way for future examinations of feminist micropolitical practices within the framework of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming. While my research delves into a Deleuzian feminist analysis of the novels *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl With The Louding Voice*, exploring the process of becoming-woman, the mentioned article focuses on Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming within feminist criticism of diverse cultural content. My research involves literary analysis, examining the transformative journeys of female characters, while the article explores the broader concept of becoming in interdisciplinary contexts, particularly in relation to feminist micropolitical practices.

Similarly, Grace V.S Chin in the essay, *Woman becoming... Gender possibilities in selected speculative short stories of Intan Paramaditha and Isabel Yap*, centres on the ontological inquiry into the nature of womanhood, introducing the concept of “woman-becoming.” It delves into the subversion and reinterpretation of hegemonic patriarchal discourses and constructs of woman and femininity within speculative short stories by transnational Southeast Asian women writers. Specifically, the analysis focuses on Intan Paramaditha’s “Beauty and the Seventh Dwarf” (2018) and Isabel Yap’s “Good Girls” (2021). The exploration revolves around the gender possibilities embodied by female characters, emphasising their roles in upholding women’s freedom, agency, thought, emotion, creation, narration, and expression in the construction of her story. This extends to every woman's potential for change and transformation, challenging societal expectations. Through

the resistant and rebellious multitudinous female self and body, the essay interrogates and unsettles entrenched sociocultural and politicised meanings, representations, and stereotypes of women's nature in the Southeast Asian context.

Likewise, Derya, Çetin in *Becoming Woman in Table Secrets*, explores the movie *Table Secrets*, looking at how it represents becoming a woman in minor literature and cinema, based on Deleuze and Guattari's ideas. The focus is on themes like escape and deterritorialization, mixing private and public spaces, and having multiple identities. It starts with minor literature and cinema concepts, then analyses the film's portrayal of becoming and becoming a woman. Through purposive sampling, the film is studied in terms of “lines of escape and deterritorialization,” “blurring private-public space,” and “pluralization of identities.” The story highlights Neslihan's journey, navigating between societal expectations and a more assertive identity involving planned murders. Despite initial stereotypes, the study suggests a transformative process of becoming-woman for the female characters throughout *Table Secrets*.

Overall, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialization and reterritorialization along with Deleuzian Feminism explained by Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook provides a framework for understanding the complex ways in which social formations and power relations are formed, maintained, and transformed over time and helps to specify the shared experiences of female characters from different time and space.

2.3 Unpacking Theoretical Frontier: An Overview of Scholarship on *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*

In this part of the chapter, I conducted a thorough examination of existing and current scholarly research on the specified novels. This review aims to identify research gaps, understand prevailing academic perspectives, and contribute to the ongoing scholarly discourse surrounding these literary works.

2.3.1 Locating Empowerment: A Systematic Review of Research on *A Woman is No Man*

Mega Dwi Wulandari, Supiastutik Supiastutik and Hat Pujiati in their paper, *The Representation of Liberal Feminism in A Woman is No Man by Etaf Rum*, explores how

liberal feminism is portrayed in *A Woman is No Man* and its impact on Arab women in Arab-American society. Using representation theory and Michel Foucault's discursive approach, the authors analyse the challenges faced by female characters in the novel as they strive for equal rights. The narrative and dialogues highlight the discourse of liberal feminism, where Arab women are deemed inferior, and men are seen as superior. Despite this, the novel showcases the women's struggle for equality. The study draws on Stuart Hall's representation theory, Michel Foucault's approach, and Betty Friedan's "Feminine Mystique" to delve into the complexities of liberal feminism in the narrative, revealing a prevalent societal perception of Arab men as superior and Arab women as inferior, while my research focuses on Feminist Becoming and negating the notion of fixed societal boundaries.

Frisky Nur Salvianny and Eka Nurcahyani in their article, *Women's Resistance Towards Oppression in Etaf Rum's A Woman is No Man*, argued about patriarchal oppression of women and the ways in which their daily activities are controlled by men. Therefore, ladies resist oppression by talking up for their rights to their lifestyles. This takes a look at investigating girls' oppression and their resistance in the novel *A Woman is No Man* by Etaf Rum. Depicted by the three ages of Middle Easterner(Arab) American female characters, the consequence of this study finds ladies are encountering persecutions overseen inside the four spaces of power: primary, disciplinary, authoritative, and relational space of power. This research utilises Patricia Hills Collins theory of the Matrix Of Domination and Self-definition.

While men have the honour of being free, ladies are troubled with the family's standing and homegrown obligations that transform them into a mild person. Besides, women's self-definition assists them with social affairs and their self-esteem to counter the mistreatment. Women's protections are understood through their capacity to keep up with self-valuation and regard, confidence and freedom, and individual strengthening through the demonstration of being courageous in voicing their contemplations, heading off to college, and living all alone, and empowering each other to bring issues to light of self-definition. This research mainly talks about two things, one is the patriarchal oppression of females and the second is females' realisation of this oppression and women's ability to respect others and be respected by others while my research specifically talks about women's resistance and

cutting off from the rhizome in the process of their new becoming and sharing their experiences to build connection with women around the globe.

Similarly, In *Patriarchal Oppression to the Main Characters in Etaf Rum's A Woman is No Man*, Alfatih Nur Indah Sari talks about oppression against females which is always prevalent in society and it always threatens females. Placing women under men in a hierarchy is still discussed. This research utilised Radical Feminism and Theorizing Patriarchy as a theoretical base proposed by Sylvia Walby. This research resulted in discovering four kinds of Patriarchal oppression which are stated as patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal state, patriarchal culture, and male violence. The female characters in the novel face abuse and violence. The head of the family is a man who is treated as a king. Marriages are arranged without women's consent and they are beaten to death under a patriarchal state. Only Isra and Deya struggle to get rid of the patriarchal system in their home. Female characters such as Deya and Isra struggle to get an education and are willing to make decisions for themselves. This research mainly talks about patriarchal oppression and culture that negates women's rights and my research talks about women becoming deterritorialized from the existing cultural norms and creating a new feminist becoming.

Likewise, Belkis Yaiche in, *Colonialism and Cultural Patriarchy in Etaf Rum's A Woman is No Man*, talks about the trauma of war and its effects on war-torn and colonised people. In her novel *A Woman is No Man*, Etaf Rum introduced the Palestinian Nakba and its impacts on the minds of Khaled, Yacob, Fareeda, and Mother, who were kids when the main Zionist flood emptied individuals of their homes. She has moreover ended the code of quiet to handle aggressive behaviour at home which is a sensitive issue the Bedouin people group hushes up by shadowing these practices on Isra; her real female person. Rum has familiarised the perusers with the day-to-day routine of Palestinian exiles after the Nakba and coordinated the consideration towards the dejection and awful day-to-day environments Palestinians have been battling with starting around 1948. This paper utilises hypotheses of postcolonialism and Patriarchy. The current paper presents how expansionism and social male-centric society are connected and how the colonised characters in the novel are so frantic to misinterpret their displeasure involving brutality. This paper concludes that the male-centric practices tracked down in Muslim societies and inside colonised social orders don't have anything to do with Islam and that the Bedouin societies need to zero in on applying Islamic lessons to

exile male-centric society and free their nations from colonialism. This research paper speaks about patriarchal society and the reasons behind men being brutal whereas my intervention would be to talk about women's rights and their feminist becoming while sharing their experiences with the world.

Furthermore, Marijana Mikić wrote an essay, *Arab American Women and the Generational Cycle of Shame: A Cognitive Reading of Etaf Rum's A Woman is No Man*. In this essay, Mikić talks about Arab American patriarchal culture through narrating the experiences of Arab American women who are always termed as a symbol of shame and being labelled as "Shame of Gender"(115). According to Mikić, the novel reveals the various manners by which disgrace influences the personalities and assemblages of Middle Easterner American ladies across three ages, while likewise exposing the mental, gendered, and socio-socially installed angles that shape the elicitation, experience, articulation, and guideline of disgrace. It likewise features the socio-social and gendered power structures that impact feeling and conduct. My intervention would be to highlight the means and methods through which the female characters in the text acquire feminist becoming and identity building.

In the same way, Humaira Saddiq, Dr. Sahibzada Aurangzeb, and Saba Hassan collectively worked on a study, *Gender Ideology: A Patriarchal View Of Etaf Rum's A Woman is No Man*, which utilises Theorizing Patriarchy as in the theoretical base proposed by Sylvia Walby. In this study, they talk about the idea that in underdeveloped nations ladies are going through torment and agony on account of the man-centric framework. The present review asserts that female characters that show up in Rum's novel are dehumanised, embarrassed and defrauded by the organisations of society. The scientist involves male controlled society as a systemic focal point. According to the study, female characters in the novel are not allowed to act. Particularly female characters are affected by man controlled society. They are treated as a maker of kids and cook nourishment for men even not permitted to leave the home. Moreover, they are not permitted to get schooling. In an open arena, they don't have an equivalent possibility than those of man. The basic worry of this study is to examine the sufferings, difficulties and battle for opportunity, freedom and liberation of ladies in contemporary times. Women's rights and man-centric society manage comparative matters. In this vein, the current review figures out that male-controlled society

fighters ladies who are experiencing twofold overlays. The review features the state of ladies living in the contemporary world and my intervention is to discuss the feminist becoming by experiencing deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

Similarly, Rihaadatul Aisyil Mubarakati in his paper, *Potret perjuangan perempuan oleh isra hadid dan deya ra'ad dalam A Woman is No Man karya Etaf Rum* (Portrait of women's struggle by Isra Hadid and Deya Ra'ad in *A Woman is No Man* by Etaf Rum), explores the challenges faced by Isra Hadid and Deya Ra'ad in *A Woman is No Man* by Etaf Rum. The authors use the Narratology method to understand how these women struggle against gender hierarchy and religious constraints. The story reveals how religion is used to justify patriarchal practices within the families of the main characters. Despite growing up in different countries and generations, both Isra and Deya face similar oppression. Amina Wadud's Islamic feminism theory is applied to analyse their struggles, emphasising equality between men and women in Islam. By re-reading religious texts, the study concludes that gender inequality persists in the family traditions of Isra and Deya, though it shows signs of decreasing in intensity over time. However, this research elaborates on equality of men and women in Islam my research deliberately speaks for women empowerment and gaining new Identity.

Likewise, Andaleen H. Al-Khateeb and Mahmoud F. Al-Shetawi in an article *A critique of Etaf Rum's A Woman is No Man*, discusses that Etaf Rum by taking help from the literary platform to challenge the stereotypes and re-claiming narratives in raise voice especially for Arab-American women. In the context of Arab-American diasporic women, literature has served as a powerful arena for presenting counter-narratives and addressing the injustices perpetuated by both patriarchal and Western discourses. Etaf Rum's novel *A Woman is No Man* is a notable example of this endeavour. The novel delves into the lives of three generations of a diasporic family, with a particular focus on the female characters, reflecting the author's own experiences. Rum's portrayal of Arab women in the novel has been subject to critique, with questions raised about whether she reinforced or corrected stereotypical images constructed in Western minds. However, it is evident that Rum's approach is far from simplistic. She navigates the complexities of cultural identity and intergenerational transitions, allowing her female characters to speak up and shape their own narratives. This nuanced representation not only challenges one-dimensional stereotypes but

also emphasises the value of self-representation and the empowerment of female characters to assert their own stories.

The analysis of *A Woman is No Man* contributes to a deeper understanding of the transformative power of literature in providing a voice to marginalised communities and reshaping perceptions. It underscores the importance of literature as a tool for self-representation and the exploration of multifaceted cultural identities within diasporic contexts. In other words, if this article tries to examine whether Etaf Rum in her novel corrected or reinforced the stereotypical image of Arab women constructed in the western minds while my research simply focuses on the fluidity of female character to get rid of all set norms and start a new-becoming. While the article discusses the novel's portrayal in relation to external perceptions and stereotypes about Arab women, my research seems to concentrate on the internal evolution and agency of the female characters themselves. It appears to delve into how these characters navigate societal norms, challenge boundaries, and embark on a transformative journey towards self-reinvention and self-determination.

Therefore, my research focuses more on the internal dynamics of the characters and their quest for personal transformation, while the above mentioned article centres on the novel's potential impact on external perceptions and stereotypes regarding Arab women. Both perspectives offer valuable insights, albeit with different emphases and angles of analysis within Etaf Rum's novel.

In addition, Nisha Khan along with, Dr. Goyal, Dr. Mamgain in their article, *Resistance to female education in A Woman is No Man by Etaf Rum*, talks about Education and gender roles as a central theme in diaspora literature, reflecting evolving societal dynamics. Etaf Rum's novel, set within a conservative Palestinian immigrant community in Brooklyn, provides a powerful exploration of these themes through the interconnected stories of three generations of Palestinian women: Isra, Deya, and Fareeda. The narrative delves into the profound impact of gender roles on female education and the consequences faced by those challenging traditional norms. Within this community, cultural hegemony perpetuates the subjugation of Arab-American women, restricting their access to public spaces, including schools. The societal emphasis on women's roles confined to marriage, child-rearing, and domesticity inhibits their autonomy and ability to voice their opinions. Additionally, the

patriarchal household customs maintain women's extreme obedience to men, hindering their pursuit of education and perpetuating their inferior status. This inequality is further worsened by the favourable treatment of sons over daughters in educational opportunities, reflecting a broader gender disparity entrenched within the society.

According to Nisha et.al, drawing from feminist perspectives, such as liberal feminism exemplified in Betty Friedan's "Feminine Mystique" and Mary Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Women," this paper aims to critically analyse the portrayal of gender roles and education within the context of Rum's novel. These theoretical frameworks offer valuable insights into historical contexts and theoretical lenses through which to understand the challenges faced by Arab-American women in their pursuit of education and empowerment within a patriarchal immigrant community. This analysis of gender roles and education in Etaf Rum's *A Woman is No Man* contributes to the broader discussion of diaspora literature's engagement with social constructs, gender dynamics, and the complexities of educational access and empowerment within immigrant communities.

While the previous analysis explored the discriminatory behaviour regarding sons and daughters' education within Etaf Rum's *A Woman is No Man*, my research takes a different approach. Specifically, my study focuses on amplifying the voices of girls striving to assert their basic right to education and achieve their life goals. In contrast to the depicted gender biases favouring sons over daughters in educational opportunities, my research highlights the stories of girls within the novel who stand up against such discrimination. It seeks to illuminate their resilience and determination in pursuing education despite societal barriers and patriarchal norms. By providing a complementary perspective to the gender disparities in education depicted in *A Woman is No Man*, my research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding gender roles and educational access within the immigrant community portrayed in Etaf Rum's novel.

In resonance with perspectives by Dr Almas Fatma shared on Goodreads about, *A Woman is No Man* by Etaf Rum echoes the struggles faced by individuals navigating cultural traditions and personal aspirations. The review highlighted the poignant exploration of identity, societal constraints, and the struggle for female empowerment within the narrative. Comparably, my research delves into similar themes, emphasising the resilience and

determination of girls striving for education and self-realisation despite societal barriers. Both the review and my research underscore the significance of standing up against societal pressures to assert one's voice and redefine traditional expectations.

Similar to the themes explored in *A Woman is No Man*, my research delves into the complexities of societal expectations and personal aspirations, particularly focusing on the quest for female empowerment and identity. According to Fatma, Etaf Rum's powerful narrative beautifully intertwines the lives of three generations of Palestinian women, mirroring the challenges faced by individuals navigating cultural traditions and their own desires. Just as Rum's characters strive against societal constraints to find their voices, my research highlights the resilience and determination of girls in seeking education and self-realisation despite societal barriers. While Rum's novel masterfully addresses the clash between tradition and modernity, shedding light on the struggles within families and communities, my research echoes the importance of breaking free from societal norms to achieve personal goals. Both the novel and my research underscore the significance of standing up for one's voice amidst societal pressures, portraying the strength required to challenge and redefine traditional expectations.

2.3.2 The Girl with the Louding Voice: A Systematic Review of Literature on Becoming-Woman

Lisa Firgiawaty and Eka Nurcahyani in their article *Empowerment In The Girl with the Louding voice*, speak about the empowerment of girls. They use Patricia Hills Collins theory of Matrix Of Domination and Self-definition. They discuss the four main domains of Patricia Collins theory which intersect in female lives and cause oppression of age, gender, and class. These domains are domains of power named as structural, hegemonic, interpersonal, and disciplinary. According to the theory, the female gender faces oppression sexually, religiously, racially, and ethnically. There is an interlocking system of oppression that does not let any female and more specifically young adult girls find ways for their better future. Within Nigerian society, Adunni and other women struggle to obtain their basic rights and opportunities. These girls are married at an early age and pressured to have kids. Whenever a woman raises her voice she is considered rebellious and insubordinate. Adunni's engaged brain keeps up with her battle to accomplish opportunity, in this manner, she is

ready to enable others. The female characters show to be commonly enabling through their free psyche notwithstanding the impediments. Collins theory focuses on forms of oppression whereas Deleuze and Guattari's concepts refer to breaking down boundaries and building new ways of thinking and my intervention would be to focus on feminist becoming.

However, In a research paper, *Discussing the migrant experience: From Dakolo and Darey's songs to Chika Unigwe and Abi Dare's Novels*, Faith Ben Daniels focuses on analysing two African songs along with two novels to discuss the migrant and travelling experience when they show up at their objections or new spaces. It is critical to take note that every one of the two well-known tunes is composed by men. The fantasies and any expectation of movement that they present is here and there an immediate difference to the real factors female transients face in the records of the two books, *On Dark Sisters Road* and *The Girl With The Louding Voice*, which are composed by ladies. Daniels endeavours to draw examinations between the transient's fantasy versus the truth as investigated in the tunes and the books and deliberately centres around movement inside home spaces and relocation outside home spaces, and such relocations are not set out because of the explanation of war or political uprooting as frequently discussed by movement specialists. Although this research talks about relocation and uprooting but not about new feminist becoming. However, my research talks about relocation and sharing experiences of women in their new becoming through the lens of female critics.

On the other hand, Roseline Adebimpe Adewuyi, and Wale Oyedeji are of the view in their article, *Narratives of Stratification: Complications of Girl Child Education in Lola Akande's What It Takes and Abi Dare's The Girl with the Louding Voice*, wrote that there are many complications in a girls education in Nigeria as presented in the novel. Specifically, some of them are poverty, lack of funds, child marriages, trafficking for domestic use, and sex workers and early marriages. The collection of writing that examines the different foundational aspects of gender imbalance and abuse is unarguably huge, with many researchers' mentally animating records of how females have been painstakingly underestimated, persecuted, and at last oppressed. According to them, a large number of these social orders are male-centric and their perseverance through interest is to see to the everlasting oppression of the ladies. To this degree, they utilise every one of the habits of accounts that would help their predispositions and proceed with their unbalanced treatment.

At the point when the accounts are recreated in manners that would be reasonable for everybody, the general public would discover undiluted harmony that can work with improvement that humankind merits. There is the need to reexamine these stories so that females who accomplish a degree of opportunity have merit and that they can live with their respectability undenied. At this point, my research focuses on these issues and talk about the new feminist becoming and giving voice to women around the globe. *The Main Character's Struggle Against Patriarchal Structures in Abi Dare's The Girl With The Louding Voice*

Similarly in a thesis by Renanda Indriati, *The Main Character's Struggle Against Patriarchal Structures in Abi Dare's The Girl With The Louding Voice*, argues about different struggles of the female character against patriarchal norms of the society as presented in the novel. Indriati has utilised Radical Feminism, a theoretical base proposed by Sylvia Walby. The outcomes of this exploration are as per the following: *The Girl with the Louding Voice* novel contains four models of male-centric designs, to be specific man-centric connections in family creation, culture, sexuality, and male viciousness. The fundamental person goes against the man centric structures in more than one way, to be specific: Valiant to take the choice not to have kids from her spouse (Sexuality), Valiant to make what is going on she doesn't need (Family Creation), Courageous to battle the culprits of sexual brutality (Male Viciousness), Bold to make some noise (Male Brutality), Courageous to contact her fantasy (Family Creation). My intervention would be to amplify the voice of those affected and promote gender equality.

In the same manner, Muhammad Yudi Ardiasyah in his thesis, *Oppression Experienced by Adunni In Abi Dare's The Girl With Louding Voice*, specifies different types of oppression and according to him oppression frequently happens locally. It may very well be because of destitution or existing propensities. This research uses a feminist critique approach with textual studies to analyse the data and apply Young's oppression and Lerner's feminism theory. The mistreatment incorporates weakness, social dominion, minimization, viciousness, and double-dealing. Adunni encountered everything. This persecution is exceptionally hindering to Adunni. In any case, she endeavours to go against her privileges by completing a few endeavours. My intervention would be to promote gender equality through my research and share women's experiences.

Likewise, Claudia Anwar along with Shita Dewi Ratih P, Agnes Setyowatiij in their article, *The Female Main Character's Struggle Against Gender-Based Subordination in Abi Daré's The Girl with the Louding Voice* discusses the struggle of the main character, Adunni, to achieve freedom in the novel. The study uses a qualitative descriptive analysis method and a library research approach through a feminist perspective.

The main character, Adunni, faces gender-based discrimination and subordination, particularly through forced marriage and societal expectations. She aspires to pursue education and become a teacher but is hindered by societal norms and patriarchal structures. Adunni's resilience and determination are evident as she seeks to break free from her oppressive circumstances and pursue her dreams. The forms of oppression experienced by the main character include subordination, gender injustice, and physical oppression.

The article concludes that Adunni's oppression comes to an end when she is awarded a scholarship to a workers' school, symbolising women's resistance against gender-based oppression. The main character's portrayal reflects strength and resilience amidst the patriarchal environment, highlighting her determination to overcome gender-based discrimination and pursue her aspirations. In comparison with my research utilising the concepts of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and becoming-women, provide a deeper understanding of how these theoretical concepts intersect with the gender-based struggles depicted in the novel. It offers a multidimensional analysis of the main character's experiences and the broader implications of gender-based discrimination within the context of feminist theory and literary criticism.

Simultaneously, In line with the themes explored in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Abi Daré, Gita Saputri and Harianto II in the article, *An Analysis of Feminism in the novel The Girl with the Louding Voice by Abi Dare*, investigates the various forms of feminism exemplified within the novel's narrative. The story depicts the journey of a resilient protagonist facing exploitation, oppression, and slavery within a patriarchal society. The study identifies and categorises feminism types evident in the narrative, employing a structuralist approach inspired by Ferdinand de Saussure. It adopts a qualitative descriptive method to analyse quotes extracted from the novel, uncovering distinct feminist ideologies showcased, namely Liberal, Marxist, Socialist, and Existential Feminism. The novel's central

character, Adunni, embodies these feminist movements, navigating a societal landscape that emphasises women's submissiveness and domestic roles. The narrative portrays a patriarchal society rife with oppression, prompting the protagonist's resistance and advocacy for women's equal rights alongside men. While the following research examines different types of feminism in the novel, my study specifically focuses on the concept of becoming-women, which signifies the fluidity of gender identities and the continual process of self-reinvention and empowerment. Unlike the above mentioned research article, exploration of feminist movements within a specific narrative, my research aims to dissect the broader implications of these conceptual frameworks in reshaping societal norms and identities, providing a more theoretical lens to understand the dynamics of gender and societal structures highlighting the significance of my study which focus on deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and the concept of becoming-women in the context of feminist discourse and societal transformation.

2.4 Research Gap

Based on the review of primary and secondary texts, it is evident that scholars have extensively examined the concepts of Identity, Being to Becoming, Deterritorialization, and Reterritorialization put forth by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. While a considerable body of scholarship has examined these concepts,, there remains a significant gap in how these ideas are applied to questions of female agency and subjectivity in literature. In particular, the selected novels have not been critically explored through the lens of Deleuzian theory with a focus on women's becoming. Existing research often overlooks how these philosophical concepts can illuminate the lived experiences, resistances, and transformations of female characters within specific socio-cultural contexts. This study addresses that gap by offering a gender-focused analysis of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in the lives of Palestinian and Nigerian women characters, thereby contributing a unique perspective to both Deleuzian literary criticism and feminist literary studies. My intervention lies in connecting these theoretical concepts to narratives of female struggle, choice, and empowerment, bringing forward a reading that centers gendered becoming within the broader philosophical discourse.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher explores the theoretical framework and justifies the theoretical tools for analysing the primary texts. Following the discussion of the theoretical framework, I delve into the methodology for my research. It offers a concise overview of key concepts such as Deleuzian Feminism, Becoming-women, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization to substantiate the rationale behind incorporating these theoretical elements in my study.

3.1 Research Design

The research focuses on examining the portrayal of suppression against female characters and their progression in challenging patriarchal oppression. Text are explored through the textual analysis method given by Catherine Belsey. The theoretical concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, as proposed by Deleuze and Guattari in their books *Anti-Oedipus* (1983) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). Additionally, the study draws insights from *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* (2005) by Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook, which explores women's transformative journeys and shared experiences in both novels.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

Deleuze and Guattari define deterritorialization as the migration or uplifting of one who leaves a domain” otherwise termed a “line of flight”; however, deterritorialization is and expands that region. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), in the second volume, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, they discuss the difference between relative and absolute deterritorialization. They are of the view that deterritorialization and reterritorialization occur side by side. Reterritorialization is the first phase; absolute deterritorialization, the preceding one, is more oriented toward establishing what may be considered a fundamental basis, similar to Spinoza's conception of the structure of the universe as a whole. In simpler terms, when we discuss negative deterritorialization in the context of the subjectivation cycle, we discuss how individuals or concepts can become less tied to their traditional or expected roles or

meanings. This process involves reevaluating and redefining the significance of things like “the face” and “faciality” in a way that breaks established norms or boundaries.

Deleuze and Guattari posit that deterritorialization and reterritorialization are perpetual processes intertwined within social dynamics. They utilise the concept of the “rhizome” to illustrate the non-hierarchical, interconnected nature of social formations resulting from these processes. The rhizome serves as a metaphor for decentralised growth and expansion, contrasting with the hierarchical nature of traditional social structures. Coined by Deleuze and Guattari, the term “rhizome” denotes interconnectedness akin to roots, spreading underground without defined beginnings or endpoints. This concept challenges the linear progression of traditional structures, instead emphasising the networked relationships between elements. In contrast to hierarchical trees, which branch out predictably from a central point, rhizomes form assemblages, representing the collective gathering of diverse elements within social systems. (3-25).

Therefore, by applying Deleuzian concepts such as the rhizome, we can illuminate the complex and multifaceted nature of the characters' transformations. Rather than following a linear narrative arc, their experiences unfold in interconnected and often unexpected ways, challenging conventional understandings of identity and agency. The rhizomatic nature of their journeys underscores the fluidity and complexity of becoming-woman, highlighting the interconnectedness of individual and collective struggles for empowerment and self-determination.

In short, In their books, *A Thousand Plateaus* and *Anti-Oedipus*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari develop the concept of deterritorialization and reterritorialization to describe the process by which social formations and power relations are formed, maintained, and transformed. On the other hand, “Deleuzian Feminism” by Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook in their book *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* (2005) is highly significant as it has its contribution to the field of feminism by exploring the intersection between Deleuze’s philosophy and feminist thought, offering new possibilities for feminist theories and activism. The book aims to establish connections between the philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and feminist theory, demonstrating how Deleuze's concepts and methodologies can be fruitfully employed to address and challenge various issues within feminism. It explores the

potential for Deleuze's ideas to transform feminist theory and practice by offering new conceptual frameworks, tools, and approaches.

In Deleuze and Guattari's framework, "becoming-woman" is not about the literal transformation of a man into a woman or vice versa. Instead, it refers to deterritorialization and a movement towards becoming-other, which challenges fixed identity categories and binary thinking. Some of the key aspects and implications of becoming-woman are that Becoming-woman, as viewed through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari, is a process of breaking free from the fixed roles and expectations that society often assigns based on gender. It is about stepping away from the rigid ideas of being a man or a woman. Instead, it is a journey of embracing fluidity and transformation in how we perceive ourselves and others. This approach rejects the idea that femininity and masculinity must fit into specific boxes; it encourages us to explore the vast possibilities beyond these strict categories.

Imagine it as a path of escape, a "line of flight," from the established territories of gender norms. It is like walking on a new trail, breaking boundaries, and allowing for the emergence of diverse and alternative ways of being. Becoming-woman is not just about personal change; it carries important social and political implications. It challenges the power structures that often favour one gender over another and encourages us to rethink how our society is organised.

In the Deleuzian framework, desire is not merely lack or need but a generative force that drives the subject's transformation. This study engages desire as a feminist tool of disruption, fueling the protagonists' deterritorialization from patriarchal structures and enabling processes of becoming-woman. It calls for more equality and a world where everyone's unique journey is valued and respected. In addition to the concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization by Deleuze and Guattari, this study draws on selected ideas from existentialism to further examine the psychological and moral dimensions of female becoming. Existentialist thought, particularly that of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, centers on the individual's freedom to choose, act, and define themselves in an often absurd or constraining world. Sartre argues that "existence precedes essence," suggesting that humans are not defined by predetermined roles but by the choices they make (Sartre 22). This is evident in the protagonists of *A Woman is No Man* and *The*

Girl with the Louding Voice, who resist culturally assigned identities and begin shaping their meanings. De Beauvoir further explains this idea by linking women's oppression to their being made the "Other," denied subjectivity and agency (de Beauvoir 6). Deya and Adunni confront these existential dilemmas as they question societal norms and begin to assert individual purpose. While Deleuze and Guattari help trace structural movements across territories of power and identity, existentialism highlights the internal struggles of choice, fear, and self-realization that underlie these transformations. In essence, becoming-woman invites us to explore a world beyond the confines of traditional gender roles, a world where our individuality and diversity are celebrated.

These concepts are utilised in this work to explore displacement and debordering from one place to form and develop a new becoming in a new space, which helps females gain agency. Grounded in both feminist and postcolonial theory, this research recognizes early marriage as a structural form of gendered territorialization. Defined here as the union of individuals, particularly girls, under the age of 18, early marriage is often arranged without informed consent and justified through cultural, economic, or religious norms. As UNICEF reports, the practice infringes on human rights and perpetuates gender inequality (UNICEF 6). In the novels under study, early marriage serves as a narrative device that illustrates how patriarchal societies institutionalize female silence and dependence. It functions as both a literal and symbolic barrier to selfhood, triggering processes of deterritorialization and, eventually, the reterritorialization of identity through resistance and education.

In general, the concept of "deterritorialization" and "reterritorialization" put forth by Deleuze and Guattari offers a framework to comprehend the idea of "becoming-woman" and the intricate manner in which social formations and power dynamics are established, upheld, and altered over time. These concepts, in conjunction with Deleuze and Guattari's ideas, can assist in delineating the common experiences of female characters from diverse cultures. By employing Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical concepts, we can explore how female characters navigate and adapt to new environments to undergo personal growth and transformation. Moreover, this framework aids in analysing literature from a female perspective, enabling a deeper examination of the unique obstacles and opportunities faced by women within various cultural contexts. By examining the shared experiences of female characters through this lens, we can gain a more profound understanding of the process of

relinquishing established spaces and constructing new ones to achieve empowerment and personal evolution.

In the first novel, *A Woman is No Man*, by Etaf Rum. In this story, the female characters challenge traditional gender roles and expectations, embodying the concept of deterritorialization. They break away from established norms, seeking to define their identities on their own terms. This is where reterritorialization comes into play. The characters create new, more inclusive gender identities, showing the potential for transformation. On the other hand, in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Abi Daré, the protagonist resists oppressive societal norms, symbolising deterritorialization. She defies child marriage and seeks education, striving for self-determination. As she shapes her identity, reterritorialization takes place. She is creating a more flexible and empowering sense of self.

A central theme in this framework is fluidity and transformation. It highlights the importance of change and the exploration of diverse gender identities. The framework offers individuals agency in shaping their subjectivities. Deterritorialization allows freedom in defining one's identity, and reterritorialization supports the creation of inclusive and empowering identities.

Similarly, beyond personal transformation, there are social implications to consider. This framework contributes to discussions on gender equality and social justice. Recognizing the role of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in shaping gender identities can inspire change and challenge the status quo.

In the light of the analysis of, *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, we can see how these themes manifest in different narratives. Both texts illustrate the potential for individuals to challenge traditional gender norms and define their identities. While the specific journeys may differ, the overarching framework of deterritorialization and reterritorialization remains a powerful lens through which we can understand the fluidity of gender, the agency of individuals, and the potential for social change.

3.3 Research Method

This study is qualitative in nature and employs textual analysis as a method to analyse the chosen texts, *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl With The Louding Voice*. This research employs purposive sampling to deliberately select texts to study the impacts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization on the gaining and reclaiming identity and asserting the agency of the female characters in the novels. “Textual analysis as a research method” (2013), as presented by Catherine Belsey, is utilised because she considers it an essential component of cultural criticism. As the research focuses on cultural criticism, it utilises textual analysis as a research method to achieve the proposed objectives of this research. This analysis method focuses on interpreting and understanding the text itself. This approach allows for a deep exploration of texts and the manifestation of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and Deleuzian Feminism in the narratives of the novels.

Belsey further justifies textual analysis as “a research method that involves a close encounter with the work itself, an examination of the details without bringing to them more presuppositions than we can help” (Belsey 160). This shows that Belsey emphasises the essentialism of focusing on the textual material of the selected texts to conduct specific research on it. However, Belsey does not disregard the importance of knowledge beyond the text while emphasising the text itself, as she states, “interpretation always involves extra knowledge” (163). According to her, unlike close reading, textual analysis focuses primarily on the text and gives secondary attention to outside knowledge. Belsey also believes that research is expected to contribute to knowledge by uncovering something new through analysing the present structure of the text. (Belsey 160). By using this method, the researcher provides a comprehensive view of how external factors impact gender and identity transformation. This method also enables researchers to discuss the broader implications of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in challenging gender norms and persistent societal standards.

The method involves a multi-step approach where the process begins with a close reading of both primary and secondary texts. This involves carefully examining the selected novels and relevant scholarly works. During the close reading phase, the researcher analyses the texts in detail to identify relevant passages, themes, and character developments that

relate to the portrayal of violence against female characters and their evolution in challenging patriarchal oppression.

The next step involves finding and analysing evidence that supports the assertions made. The researcher conducts a comprehensive search for specific examples, quotes, or instances within the primary and secondary texts to address the research questions. Finally, the researcher establishes the connections between variables by drawing upon the evidence provided in the primary and secondary texts. This process involves identifying and articulating the key concepts and elements within the research context, linking them to the evidence gathered, and providing clear definitions and explanations.

By applying this method on the selected texts, the researcher aims to conduct a rigorous analysis, build a strong argument, and establish a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between violence, patriarchal oppression, and the transformative journeys of female characters within the selected novels. Using the textual analysis method is essential in this research as it allows for a systematic and in-depth examination of the language and narrative elements within the novels *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl With The Louding Voice*. This method enables us to closely scrutinise the textual nuances, linguistic choices, and literary devices employed by the authors. In the context of a Deleuzian feminist analysis, textual analysis helps reveal how language constructs and reflects the transformative journeys, identity shifts, and expressions of agency within the narratives. By employing this method, the researcher can extract meaningful insights, identify patterns, and provide a nuanced interpretation of how the novels engage with Deleuzian feminist concepts, contributing to a richer understanding of the texts and the theoretical framework applied. Moreover, it allows the researcher to uncover the intricacies of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and Deleuzian feminism in the texts, contributing to a richer understanding of gender, identity, and power dynamics.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the researcher used a qualitative approach in this research and utilised textual analysis as my research method. The researcher constructed a theoretical framework that brings together Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization with Deleuzian feminism by Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook. These

concepts have been used to analyse the novels, *A Woman is No Man* by Etaf Rum and *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Abi Daré. This framework centres on the idea that individuals can break free from traditional gender roles and societal norms, a process known as deterritorialization. This involves challenging established structures and expectations, particularly those related to gender and identity. Simultaneously, it explores reterritorialization, where individuals create new, more inclusive gender identities that better reflect their authentic selves. These themes of transformation, fluidity, and the agency to define one's identity are paramount in our analysis.

CHAPTER 4

Unveiling New-Becoming: Deleuzian Feminism and the Journey of *A Woman is No Man*

In this chapter, I have analysed Etaf Rum's *A Woman is No Man*, in which I have interpreted the lives of female characters Isra, Deya and Sarah, who are struggling for a better life. In a better future where they could be free from all societal norms and restrictions. In *A Woman is No Man*, Rum portrays the struggles of these three female generations of a family where one generation is represented differently, stronger than the earlier one. Comparatively, the second and third generations are resilient and more empowered. The younger generations, Diya and Sarah, possess greater resilience and agency to navigate their challenges with a stronger determination and the will to break away from societal constraints.

4.1 Patriarchal Boundaries: Gender Roles and the Groundwork of Deterritorialization in Palestinian-American Society

Etaf Rum's *A Woman is No Man* is set primarily within the Palestinian-American immigrant community in Brooklyn, New York, a setting shaped by deeply rooted cultural traditions, religious values, and patriarchal norms that have been carried over from the homeland. While the novel takes place in the United States, the lives of the characters are governed not by the broader American ideals of individual freedom or gender equality, but by the conservative expectations of their Arab-Palestinian heritage. Within this tightly knit community, women are expected to fulfill traditional roles as wives, mothers, and caretakers, and are systematically silenced when they attempt to challenge these expectations. Honor, obedience, and family reputation are emphasized above individual autonomy, especially for women, who are seen as the bearers of familial dignity.

This fictional context aligns closely with real-world Palestinian sociocultural dynamics. In conservative areas such as Hebron and Area C, the patriarchal construct of *sharaf* (family honor) determines how women dress, speak, travel, and even think. As Human Rights Watch reports, "A woman's access to education, freedom of movement, and choice in marriage is often subject to the approval of male family members. These restrictions are

socially accepted and legally condoned in both the West Bank and Gaza” (Palestine: Women Face Discrimination). The same report notes that “a male guardian can prevent an unmarried woman from traveling if he believes the travel will cause ‘absolute harm,’” reinforcing the control over female autonomy. These cultural codes serve not only as personal obstacles but as structural forces of gendered subordination.

In Palestine, the practice of early marriage reflects the persistent constraints faced by girls in patriarchal societies. UNICEF reports that “13.4% of women aged 20–24 in Palestine were married before the age of 18,” with higher rates observed in poorer and rural areas (Child Marriage in State of Palestine, 2024). Although a 2019 amendment raised the legal marriage age to 18, religious courts retain the authority to permit younger unions through judicial exceptions. As the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) notes, “legal pluralism and religious conservatism allow child marriage to continue, especially where courts are empowered to make exceptions based on ‘best interest’ claims” (Strategy for Addressing Child Early/Forced Marriage, 2020). This socio-legal dynamic parallels the cultural setting in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, where Adunni’s marriage at fourteen is sanctioned by community leaders despite the absence of her consent. In both contexts, the coexistence of statutory reforms and customary or religious authority creates space for patriarchal interpretations of “best interest” to override the girl’s autonomy. Furthermore, as in Adunni’s case, economic pressures often influence such decisions in Palestine, where families in financially vulnerable circumstances may perceive early marriage as a means of ensuring social security or reducing household burdens. This alignment between the novel’s narrative and Palestinian realities highlights how cultural authority and economic hardship interact to sustain early marriage despite formal legal prohibitions, reinforcing the urgency of safeguarding female agency to challenge and transform these entrenched norms.

While statutory laws in Palestine now stipulate 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage, historical norms reveal a different standard. The Tahirih Forced Marriage Initiative notes that “in the West Bank, the age of consent for marriage is 15 for girls and 16 for boys; in Gaza, the age of consent is 17 for girls and 18 for boys” (Tahirih – Forced Marriage Initiative). These age markers establish a cultural baseline that normalizes child marriage and conditions marriageable roles well before adulthood. In *A Woman is No Man*, this contextual backdrop helps explain why characters like Isra and Sarah internalize gendered constraints as

immutable, setting the stage for later deterritorialization and struggles for becoming through education, voice, and defiance.

The consequences of these practices are stark. A report by the Aisha Association for Protecting Woman and Child reveals that among girls married under 18 in Gaza, “31% reported miscarriages, 27% suffered anemia, and 72% said they experienced psychological issues including depression, fear, and low self-esteem” (Remedies and Attitudes, 2019). These outcomes parallel the experiences of Isra in the novel, who suffers isolation, abuse, and despair within a marriage she did not choose. Her fate is not just personal, but emblematic of wider societal patterns.

In other words, the surrounding environment serves as the foundation from which the protagonists must detach, a process Deleuze and Guattari define as deterritorialization. The cultural landscape functions as a “territory” embedded with fixed codes and meanings, where femininity is equated with silence, obedience, and submission. The characters’ early experiences within this terrain are marked by repression, isolation, and various forms of violence, all of which catalyze their departure from traditional constructions of female subjectivity. This movement can be understood as rhizomatic, nonlinear, fragmented, and constantly evolving, as their identities are reshaped through unpredictable encounters, relationships, and expressions of agency (Deleuze and Guattari 21). Viewed through this lens, the Palestinian-American setting is not merely a narrative backdrop but a formative force that both restricts and propels the women’s trajectories of becoming.

4.2 Isra’s Deterritorialization: From Silent Endurance to Limits of Resistance

Etaf Rum, In *A Woman Is No Man*, portrayed Isra as a character who feels she must stay quiet and not speak up for herself. She faces mistreatment from her father and later from her husband, but she does not find the courage to stand up against it. Even when she is unwell, she keeps working and feels thankful to her in-laws for caring about her. Her silence is not just about her; it is a belief that women should not speak up, and should stay quiet to be seen as good. Since childhood, she learned that staying silent is the only way to keep going in life. Her mother teaches her to keep all her feelings and pain inside, saying that is what it means to be a woman.

Isra feels sad about herself and thinks of herself as miserable, as the novel begins with:

Where I come from, voicelessness is the condition of my gender, as normal as the bosoms on a woman's chest, as necessary as the next generation growing inside her belly. But we will never tell you this, of course. Where I come from, we've learned to conceal our condition. We've been taught to silence ourselves, that our silence will save us. It is only now, many years later, that I know this to be false. Only now, as I write this story, do I feel my voice coming. (Rum 1)

Isra's mother always taught her that staying at home is a woman's duty and she is not allowed to breathe outside the four walls of her home. She was always told that home is where she could be safe and when she tried to argue, her mother would scold her and set her to work at home. Her mother always silenced her whenever she wanted to explore her village.

What lay beyond the edges of her village? Yet as much as she wanted to go out there and venture into the world, there was also a comfort and safety in the known. And Mama's voice in her ear, reminding her: A woman belongs at home. Even if Isra left, she wouldn't know where to go (Rum 5)

Whenever Isra wanted to talk about her basic rights like going to school or reading books, her parents said these things were not for girls. They believed it could bring shame later in life. Isra secretly wished she could speak up and tell her parents, "No! This isn't the life I want"(Rum 6). She was always silenced for speaking for her existential rights.

4.3 Disrupting Cultural Fixity: Existential Rights, Desire and the Path

Towards Selfhood

In every society, choosing who to marry and having the right to education are important for everyone as are their existential rights, whether they are a man or a woman. But sadly, girls often aren't given these rights. Women's rights have not been seen as important for a long time, and even now, many women still struggle to get these rights. Etaf Rum shows these problems through characters like Isra, Deya and Sarah in the novel. They also face similar challenges, trying to have a say in who they marry and wanting to get an education.

Isra is taught from day one that growing up to marry and bear children is the only destiny a woman has in society, and if anyone tries to go against it is a symbol of shame for the family. Her mother would always say, “There is nothing out there for a woman but her bayt wa dar, her house and home. Marriage, motherhood, that is a woman’s only worth” (Rum 11). Isra always listened to her but she never truly accepted this fact.

Similarly, In the society where Isra lived, girls were seen as burdens, only meant to be married off and managed by someone else. According to Isra’s father Yacob, “A daughter was only a temporary quest, quietly awaiting another man to scoop her away, along with all her financial burden”(Rum 6).

Similarly, when Isra's parents arranged her marriage to a man from America, Adam Ra’ad, she felt scared about her future. But she hoped that moving to the United States might give her a chance to find the love and better life she always dreamed of, different from her mother’s life. Isra thought marrying Adam and moving to the U.S. would give her freedom. However, she realised that even in America, things were similar. Women were still controlled and expected to focus on marriage, household work, and having children. Whether in Palestine or the U.S., women were still expected to follow these traditional roles, showing that the idea of freedom didn't change much for them.

In many Arab communities, families strongly influence women’s lives, especially when it comes to choosing whom they marry. Marriage is crucial for a woman's life and tied to the family's honour. This belief leads all the women in the novel to accept arranged marriages to avoid criticism from the community.

For instance, Isra’s deterritorialization begins with her move from Palestine to America after her marriage. This shift represents a departure from her native cultural context, challenging her preconceived notions and disrupting her established identity. Isra experiences internal conflict as she grapples with the clash between her Palestinian heritage and the American way of life. This conflict signifies a deterritorialization from the fixed cultural boundaries she was accustomed to, leading to a questioning of her role and identity within these different contexts. Isra’s experiences in America offer opportunities for personal growth and a redefinition of her aspirations. The exposure to a different environment allows

her to explore new possibilities, challenging the limitations imposed by her cultural upbringing.

Despite every influence, Arab-American women, like those in the book, use their storytelling abilities as a form of resistance. They share their experiences through art and stories, helping others heal and find strength. This resistance and empowerment becomes evident in Isra's character towards the end. While navigating the American lifestyle, Isra's reterritorialization requires more independence and autonomy. She starts to yearn for freedom and self-determination beyond the restrictive norms of her traditional upbringing. Isra's reterritorialization is evident in her quest for self-expression. Isra's life is shaped by cultural expectations that demand silence, obedience, and submission. Her forced marriage, migration, and domestic confinement represent a deeply territorialized identity. Yet, within this confinement, the force of change appears in subtle ways, through her love for books, her quiet longing for education, and her desire to give her daughters a different life. These inner tensions mark the beginning of deterritorialization, a slow rejection of the fixed identity imposed upon her. As in *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari note, "becoming is a process of change, flight, or movement within an assemblage" (Deleuze and Guattari 10). Isra's movement remains internal and repressed, with no external support for full transformation. Her resistance is powerful but tragically unrealized, showing how the force of change can exist without leading to reterritorialization when conditions offer no space for becoming. As she engages with a different environment, she seeks ways to express herself beyond the prescribed roles of a wife and mother, indicating a move towards new self-discovery and expression. She makes a big sacrifice to secure her daughters' future, allowing them to pursue their dreams.

Therefore, when Adam tried to take the girls out of public school, which he considered would corrupt his daughter, Isra argued with Adam about them. She didn't want her daughters to face all the dreary things she had suffered all her life. She wanted to educate them and let them be confident about themselves in the coming life. The least she expected she could do for her daughters was to stand against them in their education. So, she calls out Adam and argues which she never did in her life before, not even for her own sake. She says, "I am worried about our daughters. I'm afraid of what kind of life we're going to give them.

I'm scared of losing them, too. But I don't think it's wise to take them out of public school.”(Rum 331)

Adam gets infuriated and he starts beating Isra, grabbing her by her hair and slapping her one after another. She fell on her knees, barely breathing, blood leaking from her nose and down her chin, but she wiped her face and told herself she would take a beating every night if it meant standing up for her girls.

Thus, Adam always beat Isra and this became a usual thing in her life. Domestic violence remains a persistent issue in Palestinian society. According to a 2020 report by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, approximately 58% of married women in Gaza reported experiencing some form of domestic abuse. However, cultural taboos and fear of community shame prevent many women from seeking legal or social redress. The patriarchal legal framework often leaves women without adequate protection, and the stigmatization of divorce makes escape from abusive marriages socially and economically prohibitive. This silence mirrors the repression of female voices depicted in *A Woman Is No Man*. (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020)

Isra used to think that being good and obedient would make her worthy of a man's love. The novel presents Isra's abuse as something to be hidden to preserve family dignity: “No one talks about what happens behind closed doors. That's our way” (Rum 113). Palestinian women facing domestic abuse often remain silent due to community stigma and the pressure to maintain family cohesion. Divorce is heavily stigmatized and often seen as a disgrace for the woman's family (Nasser, 2011). But when she started reading books alone by the window, she felt a different kind of love, one that came from inside her. This made her believe, maybe for the first time, that she might actually be worthy. Isra's transformative journey of deterritorialization into new becoming unveils a fundamental shift in her perception of love and self-worth. In addition to this, Isra's story showcases that when women respect themselves and are respected by others, it helps them feel better about themselves. This respect from both themselves and others makes a big difference in how they see their value and feel about themselves.

For so many years she had believed that if a woman was good enough, obedient enough, she might be worthy of a man's love. But now, reading her

books, she was beginning to find a new kind of love. A love that came from inside her, one she felt when she was all alone, reading by the window. And through this love, she was beginning to believe, for the first time in her life, that maybe she was worthy after all. (Rum 211-212)

Consequently, Isra's journey embodies a transformation marked by both deterritorialization and sacrificial devotion to her daughters' futures. Isra's deterritorialization, an upheaval from fixed cultural norms, unfolds as she transitions from her traditional Palestinian background to the American landscape following her marriage. This shift causes an internal conflict within Isra as she is wrestling with the clash between her heritage and the contrasting American lifestyle, challenging a transformation of her identity within these conflicting contexts. Her journey includes moments of self-reflection, especially through reading.

Isra's quiet longing for books and emotional connection signals a repressed but persistent desire that unsettles the rigid expectations imposed upon her as a Palestinian wife and mother. Her yearning remains largely unspoken, yet it represents what Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize as "molecular" deterritorialization, a subtle, internal rupture from dominant codes of identity (Deleuze and Guattari 204). This internal conflict is not marked by overt rebellion but by a slow accumulation of affective resistance, as Isra silently questions the life she is expected to accept. As Rum describes, Isra's buried longing for books and emotional intimacy marks an unspoken desire that resists her assigned role as submissive wife. Though repressed, this desire silently accumulates as a form of internal deterritorialization, later mirrored and vocalized by Deya. The text thereby positions desire not as mere lack but as generative force, a latent current that passes from mother to daughter, ultimately catalyzing Deya's more vocal defiance. In this lineage, Isra's internal struggle becomes the groundwork for Deya's becoming-woman, showing how affective and intellectual longing can transgress the silences imposed by patriarchal tradition. This introspection contributes to her empowerment, as she begins to form a different understanding of love and worthiness, distinct from the cultural norms by which she was initially bound.

Amidst societal constraints and a suffocating marriage, Isra's deterritorialization manifests a quest for independence and self-expression. Due to her exposure to American culture, she feels the need for independence. She wants to explore paths outside of the traditional roles of wife and mother. Her search for independence symbolises her changing identity, challenging cultural norms and opening the door to new self-exploration.

At the same time, Isra is a mother who is devoted to her daughters' happiness. Despite the silence and oppression in her marriage, Isra bravely perseveres in order to provide stability to her daughters in a patriarchal society. Even though Isra herself was denied an education, she still encourages her daughters to learn because she sees education as a path to self-empowerment. Isra's secret encouragement of her daughters' education is an act of resistance against society's norms. It signifies Isra's willingness to take her daughters beyond their limitations.

Of all the sacrifices Isra has made, the most important is the one she made to protect her daughter's future. Isra's choice to run away with her daughters is like fixing something that's broken. She's doing it to make things better for herself and her daughters. This strong decision shows that Isra is finding a version of herself that isn't defined by feeling worthless as a woman. She's determined to protect her daughters from a culture that harms women's sense of self. In simple terms, it's like Isra saying, "I want a better life for us, away from what's holding us back." When she finally understood, "There was no turning back now. If Adam knew she was running away, if he found her now, he would beat her to death. She was sure of it. But it didn't matter. She had made her choice". (Rum 337)

Simultaneously, knowing the limits of her situation, she courageously decided to sacrifice her own dreams in order to give her daughters a better chance of achieving their goals. This act of love and sacrifice set the tone for her daughters to be independent and have dreams that go beyond what is expected of them.

Therefore, the journey of Isra in *A Woman is No Man* captures a dual story of self-improvement and selfless dedication. Isra's journey exemplifies a constrained form of deterritorialization, where she is uprooted from her homeland and thrust into a rigid patriarchal structure in Brooklyn that mirrors, and even intensifies, the gendered oppression she faced in Palestine. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's theory, her displacement

represents a break from one fixed identity, but without the empowering reconstruction of self that reterritorialization requires. Though Isra internally resists, through her love for books, her desire for education, and her quiet hope to raise her daughters differently, her resistance remains repressed and unrealized. According to Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook, becoming-woman involves challenging dominant structures and embracing fluid subjectivity, yet Isra's journey shows how this process can be stifled by cultural violence and the absence of supportive space. Her tragic end underscores the devastating consequences when a woman's becoming is denied the opportunity to fully emerge.

Hence, her deterritorialization represents a break from conventional cultural norms and a step toward new goals and self-awareness. In spite of continuous personal suffering and social constraints, her steadfast devotion to empowering her daughters is symbolised by her selfless love and sacrifices. Isra paves the way for her daughters' empowerment and independence by being a shining example of persistence and unwavering maternal love.

4.4 Deya's Becoming-Woman: From Inherited Trauma to Emergent Agency

Years later, being an elder daughter and sister, Deya mirrors the challenges and struggles her mother had gone through. This reflection of Isra's hardships in Deya's life illustrates the enduring impact of generational trauma and societal expectations. Deya's journey of becoming-woman also involves a process marked by deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Deya experiences deterritorialization as she questions and challenges the traditional expectations imposed upon her. Growing up in a conservative Palestinian family, societal norms dictate her future, primarily revolving around arranged marriages and adherence to cultural traditions. However, Deya's exposure to a broader world through education and exposure to different perspectives initiates a process of deterritorialization. She starts questioning the predetermined path set by her family and community, seeking her own identity beyond the confines of traditional roles.

Thus, Deya begins to question the cultural expectations imposed on her, especially regarding arranged marriages. She engages in internal dialogue, contemplating whether she wants to follow the path set by tradition or forge her own. When she is confronted with the prospect of arranged marriage, despite societal expectations and familial pressure, Deya pushes back against this traditional norm that dictates her life. She argues, "But what if I

don't want to get married?" Deya asks "Why does my entire life have to revolve around a man?" (Rum 25)

Likewise, Deya's journey reflects a more visible and supported response to the same forces that shaped her mother's life. While she is also expected to marry young and stay silent, Deya's questioning of her past, her rejection of arranged marriage, and her pursuit of education signal the presence of a force of change grounded in truth and voice. Her resistance initiates deterritorialization, as she detaches from cultural roles assigned to her. Unlike Isra, Deya's transformation is supported, through knowledge, emotional guidance from Sarah, and opportunities to act. This allows her to deterritorialize her identity around freedom, learning, and self-determination. As Claire Colebrook writes, "becoming-woman is the creation of a life that resists fixed identities and opens space for something new" (119). Deya's voice and choices reflect this process of becoming, one that is shaped by both internal desire and external support.

Similarly, Deya's resistance becomes a poignant expression of her desire for autonomy and opportunity to shape her own life. Deya's resistance to conforming to traditional gender roles is evident in her refusal to accept a predetermined fate. She challenges the notion that a woman's worth is solely defined by marriage and motherhood and complains that, "This isn't Palestine, Teta. We live in America. There are other options for women here." (Rum 26)

By other options, Deya meant to seek education and provide her sisters with better lives and opportunities. When she was a child, she had another understanding of the word "marriage", but when she grew up, she came to know the real meaning of it, which made her feel she would never have a legitimate control over her life. Deya learns the importance of self-love and telling one's story. Deya, who describes herself as voiceless and mute, ends up telling her own story and owning the narratives of the three generations. Not only does Deya function as a transitional and a voiced character but also as a character who defends women against the set norms by society.

She discovers a new world through books and learning that goes beyond what her community expects. After her parents' death she found solace and comfort in books; they were her only hope. This made her think about the roles given to women and dream of a life

beyond what tradition says. Deya learns about her wishes and dreams, realising she can aim for more than what society tells her to be. As she delves into literature and education, she undergoes a process of personal empowerment. The knowledge she gains empowers her to question the oppressive norms and envision a future beyond the predefined roles for women in her community. She was prompted to go to college and started protesting against her early marriage. She wanted to be free from societal constraints in the form of marriage. She wanted to be free and make her own choices in life, as at one point when Naseer (her suitor) asked her:

“What do you want, Deya Ra’ad?”

She couldn’t help but laugh. As if it mattered what she wanted. As if it were up to her. If it were up to her, she’d postpone marriage for another decade. She’d enrol in a study-abroad program, pick up and move to Europe, perhaps Oxford, spending her days in cafés and libraries with a book in one hand and a pen in the other. She’d be a writer, helping people understand the world through stories. But it wasn’t up to her... So she tucked her dreams away, did as she was told.

“I just want to be happy,” she told Nasser. “That’s all.” (Rum 31-32)

However, she did not express herself in front of him because she was always instructed to speak less for women who talk more are not accepted by their society.

Despite societal expectations and family pressures, Deya values herself and seeks independence through education. Her decision to pursue knowledge secretly showcases a form of self-reliance, as she takes steps to shape her own identity beyond the traditional roles imposed on her. Also, her exposure to a broader world through literature brings about a new consciousness. This newfound awareness allows her to challenge the limitations placed on her, fostering a free mind within the constraints of her cultural sphere. Deya’s evolving consciousness parallels the idea that self-reliance contributes to a liberated mindset, when she reminds her grandmother that, “But there are other ways here, Teta. Besides, I wouldn’t need a man to provide for me if you let me go to college. I could take care of myself.” (Rum 26)

Deya aspired to be independent and free from any form of control. She didn't want to rely on a man for her needs when she could provide for herself and her sisters. The turning point in her life occurred when she met Sarah, her aunt, and everything completely changed for her. Before meeting Sarah, Deya kept her dreams hidden because she feared judgement from her community. She was afraid of damaging her reputation or being cut off from her sisters, who were like her home and family. After learning about her parents' life and deaths through Sarah, Deya rebelled against the cultural norms that had contributed to her parents' demise. At this stage, she developed a sense of self-reliance and decided to pursue her dreams by going to college, regardless of the obstacles that might come her way.

Similarly, Deya's journey of new becoming takes a significant turn on the day she decides to travel alone and meet Sarah. This choice represents a pivotal moment in her life, marking the beginning of her quest for independence and self-discovery. By taking this step, Deya challenges the societal expectations that dictate her actions and ventures into uncharted territory. The decision to travel alone reflects her growing autonomy and a desire to explore a world beyond the confines of traditional norms.

“No!” she screamed. It would not happen again. Not to her. Not to her sisters. Isra's story would not become theirs. She ran until she reached the bus stop, telling herself again and again: I will not repeat my mother's life. As the bus turned the corner she watched her sisters climb down its steps. Deya realised that Sarah was right: her life was her own, and only she controlled it. (Rum 245)

This life turning moment from the novel encapsulates Deya's determination to break free from the cycle of oppression and silence that marked her mother Isra's life. The vehement “No!” signifies her refusal to succumb to the fate predetermined by societal expectations and cultural norms. Deya's declaration echoes her commitment to forging her own path and preventing the repetition of the hardships faced by her mother and sisters. The act of running until she reaches the bus stop symbolises her pursuit of independence and the agency to shape her destiny. The realisation that her life is her own and that she alone controls it reflects a newfound sense of empowerment. This scene aligns with Deya's journey

of becoming-women, highlighting her resistance against the limitations imposed by cultural traditions and her determination to create a different narrative for herself and her sisters.

“I got accepted into a college in Manhattan,” Deya had told her, keeping her voice steady. “I’m going.”

Fareeda eyed her. “What about marriage?”

“Marriage can wait. After everything I know now, do you think I’m just going to sit here and let you marry me off? Nothing you say will change my mind.” Fareeda started to object, but Deya cut her off. “If you don’t let me go, then I’ll leave. I’ll take my sisters and go.” (Rum 333)

Thus, Deya’s declaration of getting accepted into college and her insistence on pursuing education before marriage marks a significant moment in her journey of becoming-women. The confrontation with her grandmother, Fareeda, showcases Deya’s determination to break free from the traditional expectations that prioritise marriage over personal aspirations. In the context of our theoretical framework, this excerpt illustrates Deya’s resistance to the established norms (deterritorialization), her redefinition of priorities in favour of education and personal growth (reterritorialization), and her assertion of agency to control her own life and decisions (becoming-women). By explicitly stating that marriage can wait and expressing her resolve to leave if her choices are not respected, Deya exemplifies the transformative power of education and the quest for autonomy. This scene reinforces Deya’s commitment to rewriting her narrative, echoing the themes of self-reliance, independence, and the pursuit of personal empowerment, when she thinks, "I can tell my own story now, she thinks. And then she does." (Rum 334)

This statement encapsulates the essence of Deya’s transformative journey in *A Woman is No Man*. It symbolises Deya’s newfound ability to shape her own narrative, breaking away from the silencing cultural norms that have confined women in her family for generations. In the context of our analysis, this moment aligns with the concept of becoming-women, where Deya not only discovers her voice but also uses it to assert her agency and redefine her identity. The act of storytelling becomes a powerful tool for Deya to reclaim her autonomy and challenge the oppressive narratives that have historically shaped her family's destiny. It reflects her deterritorialization from the traditional roles imposed upon

her, the reterritorialization of her identity, and the conscious effort to assert her own story, a story of resilience, self-discovery, and the pursuit of a life beyond predetermined societal expectations. This concluding declaration underscores the transformative power of storytelling as a means of empowerment and self-representation for women like Deya.

Furthermore, Deya's journey in *A Woman is No Man* represents a more visible and complete process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Unlike her mother Isra, Deya begins to question the cultural norms and expectations placed upon her, particularly around early marriage and female silence. Her growing awareness and rejection of these roles mark her deterritorialization, as she detaches from the fixed identity imposed by her conservative Palestinian-American community. Influenced by hidden truths about her mother's life and the support she receives from her aunt Sarah, Deya gradually begins to reshape her sense of self. Through her pursuit of education and her decision to speak out against forced marriage, she actively engages in reterritorialization, rebuilding her identity on her own terms. As Deleuze and Guattari state, "You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each time, and you have to lose enough of it to have a chance of reforming it differently" (Deleuze and Guattari 160). Deya embodies this balance, breaking away from inherited roles, yet reforming herself through voice, choice, and change. Her journey reflects the potential of becoming-woman, a process of feminist transformation made possible through resistance, knowledge, and support.

4.5 Sarah's Rhizomatic Resistance: Negotiating Cultural and Emotional Spaces

Sarah's life is not different from that of Isra and Deya's life journey. Sarah also emerges as a pivotal character embodying a profound journey of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and becoming-women. Initially confined within the oppressive norms of her community, Sarah undergoes deterritorialization by challenging the prescribed roles for women, particularly in rejecting an arranged marriage. Her act of voicing her will becomes an act of defiance against the dominant patriarchal structures. In this process of deterritorialization, Sarah steps out of the prescribed boundaries and expectations, challenging the conventional femininity image.

As she resists oppressive norms, Sarah simultaneously experiences reterritorialization by establishing a new territory of independence. She leaves her home, rejecting societal

expectations and marital norms, and begins living on her own terms. This transition signifies a reclaiming of agency and autonomy. Sarah's determination to live independently reflects her desire to break free from the cultural constraints that previously defined her existence.

But I managed. I stayed with a friend for the first year until I could afford to live on my own. Then I rented a small apartment in Staten Island. I worked two jobs to pay for community college and changed my last name so no one could find me.(Rum 149)

She faced problems too but she remained consistent on her journey. The culmination of Sarah's journey aligns with becoming-women, wherein she recognizes her self-worth and endeavours to instil a sense of self-value in others. By encouraging Deya to find her own self-definition, Sarah empowers herself and those around her. Her newfound understanding of personal empowerment is not only manifested in her independent living but also in her efforts to inspire others to recognize their intrinsic value.

Similarly, Sarah's journey in *A Woman is No Man* reflects a powerful example of becoming-woman as she undergoes both deterritorialization and reterritorialization through rebellion, suffering, and eventual healing. Unlike Isra, Sarah outwardly resists the cultural expectations placed on her—refusing a forced marriage and escaping the domestic violence that follows. This act of defiance marks the beginning of her deterritorialization, a conscious break from the fixed, oppressive role assigned to her by her family and culture. Over time, and especially through reconnecting with Deya, Sarah begins to reassemble her identity in a more empowered and self-aware form. Her decision to return and support Deya signifies a form of reterritorialization, grounded in both personal growth and a commitment to intergenerational healing. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, “Becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness... to become is to emit deterritorialized particles” (Deleuze and Guattari 272). Sarah's journey emits such “particles” as she sheds the trauma of her past and embraces a new, fluid identity that supports resistance in others. In doing so, she not only reconstructs herself but also contributes to the collective process of feminist becoming.

In essence, Sarah's journey encapsulates the complexities of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and becoming-women. It highlights the transformative power of

individual agency, resilience, and the pursuit of self-defined identities within a cultural context that seeks to confine women to predetermined roles. Through Sarah's narrative, the novel presents a nuanced exploration of women's experiences as they navigate the intricate interplay between societal expectations and the pursuit of personal autonomy.

4.6 Conclusion: Feminist Becoming and Dynamics of Deterritorialization in *A Woman is No Man*

This chapter has examined the journeys of Isra, Deya, and Sarah through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and becoming-woman, offering a theory-driven interpretation of feminine subjectivity in a Palestinian-American context. Each character's trajectory reflects a different dimension of feminist becoming, shaped by their cultural environment, family dynamics, and personal acts of resistance.

As the narrative progresses, Isra's life illustrates a painful and incomplete process of deterritorialization. Although she internally resists the oppressive roles imposed on her, she is ultimately silenced by the cultural forces that define her existence. Her death marks a tragic failure of reterritorialization, emphasizing how cultural codes and patriarchal structures can violently suppress feminist potential when no space for becoming is allowed. In contrast, Deya's journey represents a more empowered form of becoming-woman. Through education, critical inquiry, and the rejection of arranged marriage, Deya begins to reconstruct her identity on her own terms. Her reterritorialization reflects the possibility of transformation when resistance is paired with support and self-awareness. Sarah's story, however, moves through a different path, her initial rebellion marks a clear line of flight, but her eventual return, healing, and support of Deya shows a rhizomatic form of reterritorialization that highlights resilience, compassion, and intergenerational continuity.

Furthermore, this analysis aligns with the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 2 and the methodological approach described in Chapter 3, which emphasized a textual, theory-led reading using Deleuzian feminism. As Ian Buchanan notes, becoming-woman is not about copying a model but about disrupting the fixed structures of identity to create new possibilities (Buchanan 92). Similarly, Claire Colebrook stresses that becoming-woman is a dynamic process through which women resist cultural codings and reimagine themselves

through desire and motion (Colebrook 67). These theoretical insights have shaped the reading of the text by moving beyond narrative description and toward a critical engagement with how female subjectivity is constructed, challenged, and transformed.

In the collective narrative of Sarah, Isra, and Deya within *A Woman is No Man*, each woman forges her path of personal empowerment, challenging societal norms that confine them to predetermined roles. Deya's decision to resist Fareeda's insistence on an arranged marriage after high school, driven by the stories of her parents and Sarah's experiences, symbolises a break from traditional expectations. Sarah's daring act of running away to live independently showcases a profound deterritorialization, while Isra's newfound courage leads to her liberation from oppressive circumstances.

These women, each in her unique way, embody the principles of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and becoming-women. Their collective resistance takes diverse forms, resulting in individual acts of freedom. Sarah chooses a life on her own terms, Isra discovers the strength to free herself from societal constraints, and Deya courageously pursues higher education, refusing to succumb to an arranged marriage. Their journeys collectively reflect the transformative power of personal agency, resilience, and the pursuit of self-defined identities within a cultural context that seeks to confine women to predetermined roles.

In conclusion, Rum's *A Woman is No Man* not only narrates the distinct struggles of Sarah, Isra, and Deya but also illuminates the nuanced intersections of their experiences. It serves as a powerful commentary on the importance of individual agency in overcoming societal constraints.

CHAPTER 5

Deleuzian Feminism Unveiled: Reclaiming Agency in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*

In this chapter, I have analysed *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Abi Dare, in which I have analysed the lives and struggles of the main characters against societal odds and restrictions. In this novel, Abi Dare unveils the journey of its protagonist, Adunni. The novel is set in contemporary Nigeria, and the story explores societal expectations and the resilience of the human spirit, particularly through the lens of Adunni's transformative journey.

5.1 Territorial Constraints: Silencing and Subjugation in the Nigerian Context

In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Abi Daré draws attention to the layered challenges faced by young Nigerian girls who are born into environments marked by gender inequality, poverty, and cultural expectations. Adunni, the young protagonist, is raised in a rural village where a girl's worth is often measured by her obedience, her role in the home, and her ability to secure a bride price through marriage. These forces work together to shape a rigid identity for her, one that does not allow space for education, personal growth, or even voice. In the framework of Deleuze and Guattari, such a condition represents a form of territorialization, a process through which identity is assigned and controlled by social structures that demand conformity.

At its core, *The Girl with the Louding Voice* explores gender inequality, the struggle for education, and the pursuit of selfhood, all of which shape Adunni's transformative journey of "New-Becoming." At just fourteen, Adunni is forced into marriage in exchange for a bride price of fifty thousand naira, a transaction that commodifies her youth under the guise of tradition. As Adunni narrates, "I am thinking of the fifty thousand naira he is giving us. Do you know what that kind of money can do for us?" (Dare 13). This stark exchange reflects a pervasive practice in parts of Nigeria, especially among the Hausa and Yoruba communities, where adolescent girls are frequently married off to alleviate financial burdens.

According to UNICEF Nigeria, "In Nigeria, 44% of girls are married before their 18th birthday, and 18% before age 15" (Child Marriage in Nigeria: Factsheet, 2017). This

figure climbs in northern regions like Zamfara, Bauchi, and Katsina, where poverty and gender norms deeply entrench early marriage practices. The National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) supports this, noting: “The younger a girl is at marriage, the greater her likelihood of suffering social isolation, early pregnancy, school dropout, and domestic violence” (NDHS, 2018). These dynamics mirror Adunni’s own trajectory, her dreams of education are abruptly severed when she becomes a child bride, her voice ignored and her consent disregarded.

While Nigerian law is explicit on the legal age for marriage, practice often diverges sharply from statutory norms. Section 18 of the Child Rights Act 2003 states, “No person under the age of 18 years is capable of contracting a valid marriage, and accordingly a marriage so contracted is null and void and of no effect whatsoever” (“Explainer”). Yet, as UNICEF reports, 44% of girls in Nigeria marry before turning 18, particularly in northern states where poverty, religious interpretations, and patriarchal norms override legislative protections. This disjuncture between law and lived reality mirrors Adunni’s experience in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, where her marriage at fourteen violates legal safeguards but remains normalized within her community.

Adunni’s act of resistance, refusing silence, demanding education, and ultimately telling her story, embodies deterritorialization. She disrupts the territorial codes that equate femininity with submission and challenges the communal silence surrounding child marriage. Her voice, though marginalized, becomes “louding”, a rhizomatic force that refuses erasure and insists on becoming.

The pursuit of education marks her journey, the recognition of self-worth, and the courageous encounter of societal norms that seek to confine her to predetermined roles against her will. Her desire, though fragile at first, signals the beginning of what Deleuze and Guattari call deterritorialization, a shift away from fixed and oppressive forms of identity. As they explain, “Deterritorialization is not the destruction of territory, but a movement away from the rigid coding of life, toward new ways of becoming” (Deleuze and Guattari 508). Adunni’s refusal to accept silence, and her insistence on having a “louding voice,” become early signs of her movement toward becoming-something-else.

Similarly, this journey is central to what Deleuze and Guattari term becoming-woman, a concept that does not refer to biological femininity, but rather to a transformation that resists social control and opens up new possibilities for identity. As Claire Colebrook explains, becoming-woman is “a political and ethical task: the creation of new forms of subjectivity that are not reducible to what society says a woman should be” (Colebrook 118). In this sense, Adunni's resistance, her longing to attend school, her curiosity, and her constant questioning, reflects the early stages of feminist becoming. It is not a dramatic rebellion, but a quiet, persistent rejection of the silence imposed upon her.

Throughout the novel, Adunni's environment presents both obstacles and opportunities. The village, the city, and the households where she works all represent spaces of control, but also sites where she begins to reshape herself through new experiences and relationships. Her becoming is not immediate or linear, it unfolds through struggle, pain, and growth. This aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's idea that “A becoming is not a correspondence between relations. It is a matter of alliance, of sympathy, of sympathy in feeling, in action, or in expression” (Deleuze and Guattari 238). Her journey follows a rhizomatic pattern of development, nonlinear, branching, and rooted in unexpected encounters rather than a fixed trajectory. In other words, Adunni's transformation depends on small acts of connection, resistance, and renewal—moments that allow her to gradually reterritorialize her identity on her own terms.

5.2 Deterritorialization through Desire: Claiming Existential Rights through Resistance via Voice, Education

The author conveys her main ideas by highlighting the conflict of slavery and the exploitation of a teenage girl, Adunni, in Nigeria's patriarchal society. Adunni's mother initially supported her education by valuing the importance of learning and encouraging Adunni to attend school. Despite facing financial challenges, Adunni's mother recognized the significance of education for her daughter's future. She insisted on Adunni learning English as a means of empowerment, understanding that proficiency in the language could open doors to broader opportunities. Adunni's mother viewed education, particularly English proficiency, as a key to breaking the barriers of societal expectations and offering Adunni a

chance to transcend the limitations imposed on women in their community. Adunni's mother played a crucial role in fostering her daughter's aspirations for a better life and increased opportunities, through this insistence.

That day, I told myself that even if I am not getting anything in this life, I will go to school. I will finish my primary and secondary, and university schooling and become a teacher because I don't just want to have any kind of voice... I want a louding voice. (Dare 25)

This desire and determination stems from her mother's support and insistence on the importance of education. She believed that learning English, in particular, would be a key to unlocking opportunities for her. So, with her mother's encouragement echoing in her heart, she set forth on a journey to educate herself, not just to acquire knowledge but to amplify her voice and break free from the silent constraints that society imposes on girls. As Claire Colebrook explains, "To become-woman is to speak in a way that breaks with the roles already assigned to women by culture and power" (Colebrook 119). Adunni does exactly this, not through dramatic revolt, but through everyday refusal to be erased. She continues to speak up in school, at home, and even in situations where she risks punishment, showing how her voice is her first and most enduring form of resistance.

Desire, in Deleuzian terms, is not a lack or longing for something absent, but a productive force that drives becoming and social transformation. Adunni's pursuit of education is animated by this generative desire, not merely to learn, but to become a subject who is heard, recognized, and valued on her own terms. Her longing to have a "louding voice" reveals how her desire is deeply political: it is a force that unsettles the normalized structures of female silence, domesticity, and economic exploitation. This desire connects her personal aspiration to a broader form of resistance that challenges what women are allowed to want or imagine within her cultural context.

However, the conflict arises when Adunni, desiring an education, is instead sold by her father to become the third wife of an older man who seeks a son for inheritance. This decision leads to mistreatment from the man's first wife. Education, in the novel, is not just about formal learning, it symbolizes the possibility of transformation. This desire, though seemingly simple, becomes the foundation for her deterritorialization, the process by which

she begins to detach from the oppressive identity imposed upon her. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari explain that deterritorialization involves a shift in which “the individual escapes the structuring codes of identity in order to open themselves to new ways of becoming” (Deleuze and Guattari 508). For Adunni, this shift is expressed most clearly through her determination to pursue education, despite every effort by her community to silence that dream.

Therefore, through her encouragement, Adunni begins to imagine herself as capable of achieving something more than survival. These encounters represent what Deleuze and Guattari describe as “lines of flight”, pathways through which individuals break from dominant structures and begin to form new, creative connections (Deleuze and Guattari 204).

5.3 Early and Forced Marriage: Territorializing the Female Body and Silencing Desire

The theme of forced marriages is a prominent and distressing aspect of the narrative. Adunni, the protagonist, becomes a victim of forced marriage, illustrating the pervasive societal norms that subjugate women and limit their agency. She does not consider marriage as an element of happiness for her, “Marriage is a good thing in our village. Many girls are wanting to marry, to be a wife of somebody, or of anybody; but not me, not Adunni.” (Dare 21)

Whereas, Adunni’s journey begins with the dream of obtaining an education, but her aspirations are abruptly curtailed when her father, faced with financial difficulties, decides to marry her off to Morufu. Beyond its economic dimension, the bride price also functions as a marker of social status and masculine accomplishment in many Nigerian communities. In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Morufu boasts about marrying multiple wives, declaring: “I am having two wives already, but I want to be marrying another one... because it is good for a man to be marrying many wives and having plenty of children” (Dare 16).

This assertion reflects cultural values prevalent in some Yoruba and Hausa communities, where a man’s ability to pay bride price and marry multiple wives is often equated with virility, wealth, and honor. In parts of Oyo and Zamfara states, for instance, polygyny remains culturally sanctioned and is often intertwined with the ability to

accumulate property, both literal and symbolic, through the acquisition of wives (Aluko, 2015). The act of paying bride price is thus not only a familial transaction but also a performance of male power. For girls like Adunni, this reinforces a system where marriage is not a mutual partnership but a structure of control in which women are exchanged, ranked, and silenced. The legitimization of such practices through social norms furthers the marginalization of girls' voices, desires, and autonomy.

Similarly, in a village where everyone supported early marriages, Adunni never appreciated it. This marriage is coerced and becomes a form of forced union, as Adunni has little say in the matter. The oppressive nature of her marriage is intensified by Morufu's strict rules, including the expectation that Adunni should bear him a male heir.

Thus, the portrayal of forced marriages in the novel sheds light on the harsh realities faced by many women in societies where traditional norms and economic hardships often take precedence over individual aspirations. "In Nigeria, Child marriage was made illegal in 2003 by the Nigerian government. Yet an estimated 17% of girls in the country, particularly in the northern region of Nigeria, are married before the age of 15" (Dare 179). Similarly, the portrayal of forced marriages in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* not only serves as a narrative element but also reflects the harsh realities experienced by many women in Nigeria. The acknowledgment that child marriage was made illegal in 2003 by the Nigerian government underscores the legal framework in place. However, the disheartening statistic that an estimated 17% of girls in the country, particularly in the northern region, still face marriage before the age of 15 reveals the persistent challenges rooted in traditional norms and economic hardships.

In Nigeria, multiple legal systems—including civil (statutory), customary, and Islamic (Sharia) laws—coexist, creating a fragmented regulatory landscape that affects the legal age of marriage (Human Rights Watch, 2003; The Conversation, 2021). Under the Child Rights Act of 2003, marriage under the age of 18 is explicitly prohibited and considered void, with violators subject to fines or imprisonment (Care for Legal Assistance and Human Rights Protection, 2017). However, because Nigeria is a federal state, this Act is only enforceable in the 24 of 36 states that have formally adopted it (The Conversation, 2021). Meanwhile, in several northern states governed by Sharia law, a girl may be married once she reaches

puberty, often between ages 12 and 15, regardless of the CRA (The Conversation, 2021; Vanguard News, 2013).

This pluralistic legal framework explains why Nigeria's child marriage prevalence remains high: approximately 43% of girls are married before age 18 nationally, and over 50% in northern states, including some where the CRA has not been enacted (Human Rights Watch, 2022; Wikipedia, entry "Women in Nigeria"). These variations significantly impact girls like Adunni in *A Girl with the Louding Voice*, whose early forced marriage reflects the legal ambiguity and patriarchal enforcement present in certain Nigerian contexts.

Furthermore, Adunni's struggles within her forced marriage stand as a commentary on the enduring difficulties women face while navigating societal expectations. Her determination to defy early marriage becomes an inspirational narrative, resonating with the broader context of girls in Nigeria. Adunni's resilience serves as a motivation for many, highlighting the need for societal change and the empowerment of women to challenge and overcome the deeply ingrained practice of forced marriages.

Thus, this disjunction between legal provisions and the lived experiences of girls, just like that of Kike and Rabeeca, depicted in the novel and supported by real-world statistics, emphasises the complexity of dismantling deeply rooted cultural norms. Adunni's story becomes a powerful catalyst for awareness and advocacy, shedding light on the ongoing struggle for women's agency and the importance of creating an environment where individual aspirations can thrive, free from the constraints of forced marriages.

As Adunni's story unfolds, the narrative explores the detrimental impact of forced marriages on women's lives, emphasising the need for societal change and the empowerment of women to escape these oppressive structures. The theme of forced marriages serves as a powerful lens through which the novel addresses issues of gender inequality and the resilience required to break free from societal constraints.

5.4 Reterritorialization of Adunni: Reclaiming Identity through Education and Self-Articulation

Adunni, seeking a better life, escapes to the city but discovers that her only option there is to serve a wealthy family. Throughout her journey, as a submissive daughter, wife, and slave, Adunni is repeatedly told through words and actions that she is considered nothing.

Whereas Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy states the rejection of fixed identities and focus on the process of becoming and transformation, this narrative portrays Adunni's deterritorialization from societal expectations, particularly the imposed roles of daughter, wife, and slave. The conflict she faces embodies the challenges and constraints that Deleuzian feminism seeks to address, with Adunni's journey reflecting the struggle against predefined identities and the pursuit of empowerment. According to this philosophy, the process of Becoming-Women refers to the process of deterritorialization or breaking free from the established norms and identities which in this case Adunni follows.

Similarly, Adunni's journey in breaking free from the society's predefined roles and expectations serves as a powerful metaphor for deterritorialization and becoming-women, aligning with the philosophical concepts we discussed earlier. In her quest for education and self-empowerment, Adunni defies the rigid constraints imposed by gender norms and societal expectations in Nigeria. The term "deterritorialization" aptly captures her breaking away from the prescribed territories of a submissive wife and daughter.

Moreover, Adunni's story embodies the essence of "becoming-women" within the context of Deleuzian feminism. As she navigates through adversity, Adunni undergoes a transformative process, shedding the predefined roles of a submissive wife and daughter to assert her own voice and identity. Also, when she insists on not bearing children against Morufu's will, it also serves as a form of deterritorialization. She prioritises her wish and freedom over conforming the expectations imposed on her as a wife. This metamorphosis symbolises the continual evolution of women beyond societal norms, embracing new identities and expressions of self.

In essence, Adunni's narrative serves as a compelling example of how individuals, particularly women, can challenge and deviate from pre-established norms, illustrating the dynamic process of deterritorialization and becoming-women as they strive for autonomy and self-expression within the broader framework of Deleuzian feminist philosophy.

Similarly, Adunni's realisation about the oppression faced by women in her society resonates deeply with the theoretical concepts discussed earlier, particularly those related to deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and the challenges of forced marriages. The societal expectations and discrimination against girls, as highlighted in Adunni's thoughts, align with the concept of deterritorialization, the breaking down of established territories or roles.

Thus, the force to be married at a young age, a common experience for girls in her society, becomes a source of worry for Adunni. This concern reflects the reterritorialization aspect, as societal norms attempt to shape her into predefined roles, limiting her chances for education and personal aspirations. The emphasis on marriage as a primary concern for girls, unlike boys like her brother Kayus, illustrates the unequal power dynamics and discrimination deeply embedded in the social fabric.

Sometimes, I want to be just like Kayus, to have no fear of marrying a man, to not have any worry in this life. All Kayus ever worries about is what food to eat and where he can kick his football. He doesn't ever worry about no marriage or bride-price money. He doesn't ever worry about schooling because I've been the one teaching him school since all this time. (Dare 31)

Adunni's desire to be like her brother, free from worries about marriage and education, further emphasises the oppressive nature of the societal structures. This contrast between the experiences of Kayus and Adunni sheds light on the disparity in opportunities and the specific challenges imposed on women. Adunni's role as the one teaching her brother also hints at the potential for change through education, aligning with the idea of new-becoming – the transformative journey toward redefining one's identity and breaking free from imposed norms.

Hence, after lots of hindrances in her way, she never gave up on her quest for education, and at a certain point in life, she gets a chance to run away when Kadija asks her

to accompany her to the midwife. Unfortunately, Khadija did not make it back to Ikati alive. She died at the banks of Kere River where Bamidele took her and Adunni with a promise to bring a special soap for a supposed sacrifice that ought to be done on Khadija to prevent Khadija and the baby from dying. After a while, it became apparent that Bamidele deceived them. Bamidele refused to return and Khadija died right on the spot where Bamidele left her and Adunni. Adunni ran back to Bamidele's house only to be told that he has been away for some days and so Adunni was dumbfounded she had to run back to her father's house to seek her father's help to avoid the looming injustice that will come upon her should anybody in the village link her to the dead body of Khadija at Kere river. After hearing her father's view on the incident, she decided to run away from home.

Therefore, Adunni, escaped from her troubled past, sought refuge in Agan village with Iya, an elderly woman known for her kindness. Despite Iya's own challenges, she reached out for help, summoning her brother, Mr Kola, an agent who supplies house help to influential people in Lagos. The next day, Adunni found herself on the way to Lagos in Mr Kola's car, destined to work for Big Madam in Lekki.

However, Adunni soon realised that Big Madam's house was another kind of prison, devoid of the education she longed for. Enduring long working hours and relentless beatings, Adunni persevered without complaints. She loves to be at the library because of her love for books and reading. During the day, she hides some time and keeps reading and learning new words from Big Daddy's library. She also uses the Collins dictionary to learn spellings of household stuff she needs to write in the list.

Her encounter with Tia Dada, an environmentalist, at a meeting hosted by Big Madam's Wellington Road Wives Association proved to be a turning point, opening doors to potential help and opportunities for Adunni's future. Adunni's relationship with Ms Tia unfolds as a significant and transformative connection. At the start, Ms Tia, despite having a seemingly perfect life, confides in Adunni about her choice not to have a child. This decision stems from a difficult relationship with her own mother, motivating Ms Tia to break the cycle of familial strife. Adunni, in response, shares her determination to succeed and make her father proud despite her hardships.

Remarkably, Adunni's resilience influences Ms Tia's perspective. After their conversation, Ms Tia, initially adamant about not having a child, decides to try for one with her husband. This shift reflects the impact of Adunni's optimism and determination on Ms Tia's life choices.

Simultaneously, Ms Tia faces challenges from her Mother-in-Law due to her inability to conceive. This subplot adds complexity to Ms Tia's life, showing the societal pressures and expectations placed on women regarding motherhood. The evolving dynamics in Ms Tia's life, influenced by her interactions with Adunni, underscore the power of human connections in shaping perspectives and fostering positive change.

It was Kofi who brought a newspaper cutting for Adunni. There was an advertisement for a scholarship for all female domestic workers by an oil servicing company. According to the scholarship requirement, any female worker ages 12 to 15 and working as a housemaid who is able to write a compelling 1000-word essay can get this opportunity where she will be provided with the tuition at the prestigious Diamond Special school for up to 8 years. After she learned about the scholarship, she was never the same Adunni. She diverts all her attention to start her education again.

Thus, this phase of Adunni's life presents a pivotal moment where hope and opportunity emerge amidst adversity. Kofi, revealing the Ocean Oil Secondary School scholarship for Female Domestic Workers, becomes a catalyst for Adunni's aspirations. The scholarship represents a chance for her to pursue her dreams and become the girl with "the louding voice" she envisions.

However, it also introduces a new set of challenges. Adunni's fear of meeting the scholarship requirements, particularly the essay, and the need for a well-standing Nigerian citizen as a guarantor and referee highlights the obstacles she faces. This phase captures the tension between Adunni's aspirations and the practical challenges posed by societal norms and expectations.

Likewise, it underscores Adunni's resilience and determination to overcome barriers for education, shedding light on the complex journey of self-discovery and empowerment.

The scholarship becomes a beacon of hope, symbolising Adunni's relentless pursuit of a better life and the opportunity to amplify her voice.

Also, Adunni's endeavour to learn and apply for the Ocean Oil Secondary School scholarship marks a significant turning point in her life. Previously confined to domestic work and facing numerous challenges, this step signifies a decisive shift towards pursuing her dreams and breaking free from societal constraints

Thus, the scholarship opportunity opens a pathway for Adunni to pursue education, a dream she has cherished despite the obstacles. Learning becomes a tool for her empowerment, symbolising a deterritorialization from the limiting roles assigned to her. The scholarship, with its requirement of a 1,000-word essay, aligns with Adunni's desire to have a louding voice. It presents an opportunity for her to express her thoughts, dreams, and aspirations, showcasing her potential beyond the confines of a domestic worker.

Therefore, Adunni challenges societal norms that confine women to traditional roles by daring to apply for the scholarship. This act represents a reterritorialization, as she seeks to establish a new territory for herself, one defined by education, aspirations, and self-determination.

Similarly, the pursuit of the scholarship indicates Adunni's growing independence and agency in shaping her own destiny. It is a move away from dependence on others, especially men like Morufu, and towards a future where she can make choices for herself.

So, Adunni's decision to learn and apply for the scholarship represents a transformative phase where she actively strives to redefine her narrative, pursue her dreams, and ultimately achieve a sense of agency and self-empowerment in a society that often seeks to silence voices like hers.

Likewise, Adunni's reterritorialization process in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* unfolds through her determined efforts to redefine and establish new territories in her life. This transformation is notably exemplified by her decision to pursue education, particularly through the application for the Ocean Oil Secondary School scholarship. By actively seeking education, Adunni breaks away from the predetermined roles imposed on her as a domestic worker, creating a new territory where she can explore her potential and pursue her dreams.

The scholarship's essay requirement becomes a platform for her to express her thoughts and aspirations, allowing her to claim a territory for her voice and challenge the silence imposed on women like her. In choosing education and autonomy, Adunni shifts from being a victim of oppressive circumstances to an agent of change in her own life. This reterritorialization process represents a significant step towards independence, challenging traditional gender roles and affirming her right to shape a future beyond societal expectations.

Throughout her journey, she never gave up on two things: her education and her self-esteem or self-worth. Adunni's strong sense of self-worth is evident in her response to a classmate's attempt to degrade her. When mocked for being the oldest in class and called 'Aunty' in a derogatory manner, Adunni doesn't allow herself to be belittled. Instead, she confidently fights back, using her voice to assert her dignity. This act of self-defence highlights her resilience and refusal to internalise the negativity imposed on her.

In the years I was in school, I was always having an answer for the people laughing at me. I always fight for myself, always keeping my head up because I know I am in school to be learning. Learning is not having age. Anybody can learn, and so I keep to my learning, keeping good marks in my work, and it was when I was getting better in my plus, minus, and English that Papa said I must stop because he didn't have money for school fees.

(Dare 21)

Adunni's assertion that she always had an answer for those who laughed at her underscores her determination to stand up for herself. Her ability to maintain her confidence and keep her head held high despite facing mockery emphasises her understanding of her own worth. Importantly, she recognizes that learning is not bound by age, emphasising the intrinsic value of education for everyone, regardless of when they begin their learning journey.

Eventually, this episode powerfully represents Adunni's commitment to self-definition. In a society where she faces various forms of discrimination, her ability to fight against degradation confidently is a testament to her strength and resilience. It also aligns with the theoretical concept of new-becoming, as Adunni actively shapes her identity

and challenges societal expectations, refusing to let age or external judgments dictate her worth and potential.

Simultaneously, Adunni's open resistance, expressed in her statement to her father, reveals her profound understanding of the consequences of early marriage on her aspirations. By articulating that marrying Morufu would be akin to throwing all her futures in the dustbin, Adunni vehemently rejects the societal expectation imposed upon her, "If I marry Morufu, that means you are throwing all my futures inside the dustbin. I have a good brain, papa" (Dare 26). This reflects a bold act of resistance against the prevailing norms that dictate women's roles. Her assertion, "I have a good brain, papa," emphasises her belief in her intellectual capabilities and the potential for personal growth through education. Adunni recognizes the intrinsic value of pursuing her dreams and education, challenging the notion that her primary role should be that of a wife at the tender age of fourteen.

Thus, this open resistance is closely linked with Adunni's broader defiance of early marriage. It highlights her unwavering determination to resist being confined to societal expectations that limit her opportunities. Adunni's resistance becomes a powerful narrative of self-empowerment, as she actively asserts her right to define her own path and shape her identity beyond the constraints of traditional gender roles.

In the context of the theoretical concepts discussed earlier, Adunni's resistance aligns with the process of deterritorialization, as she breaks free from the prescribed territories of early marriage. Furthermore, Adunni's deterritorialization goes beyond her personal journey. Her efforts to help and empower other women, such as Khadija and Tia, showcase a broader challenge to systemic issues affecting women in the society. This advocacy reflects her commitment to breaking down the established norms that perpetuate the oppression of women. Adunni contributes to the deterritorialization of the systemic barriers that limit women's agency and opportunities by extending her struggle to empower others.

Adunni's positive relationships with Khadija, Kike, and Ms Tia underscore the importance of respect and self-valuation in her deterritorialization journey. Unlike the oppressive relationships in her past, these connections are built on mutual respect and acknowledgment of each other's worth. Adunni's commitment to empowering others stems from her own understanding of the significance of respect and self-worth.

In fostering positive relationships, Adunni contributes to the deterritorialization of societal norms that devalue women. Her connections with Khadija, Kike, and Ms Tia exemplify a shift away from the established norms that perpetuate oppression. These relationships become a collective challenge to systemic issues affecting women, as Adunni breaks down barriers limiting women's agency and opportunities.

Similarly, by surrounding herself with individuals who value her, Adunni not only strengthens her own sense of self-worth but also contributes to a broader deterritorialization process. This positive network becomes a source of empowerment, reflecting the transformative potential of respectful and mutually valued relationships in challenging oppressive societal structures.

Ultimately, Adunni's journey in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* culminates in a powerful new-becoming. In this transformative evolution, where she emerges as a woman with a louding voice, unafraid to assert her identity. This transformation is deeply connected to the broader ideas of Deleuzian feminism. At one point of her life, when she was going to the shop with Florence, she called her "godforsaken idiot". Adunni gets triggered and she starts talking to herself,

I know it means when somebody has left you by yourself. When you are of no use to the person. A wasted waste. I am not a wasted waste; I am Adunni. A person important enough because my tomorrow will be brighter than today. (Dare 216)

Adunni's response to Florence's derogatory remark, calling her "Godforsaken," showcases a crucial moment of self-realisation and affirmation. In the face of such demeaning language, Adunni refuses to internalise the negativity. Instead, she asserts her worth and existence by declaring, "I'm not a waste; I'm Adunni, a human."

Meanwhile, this moment represents a significant shift in Adunni's perception of herself. The acknowledgment of her own worth and existence becomes a form of self-empowerment. Adunni's rejection of being labelled as "Godforsaken" reflects her newfound understanding that she deserves respect and recognition as an individual. This

assertion aligns with her journey of deterritorialization, breaking away from the dehumanising labels and reclaiming her agency.

In the broader context of the novel, this moment emphasises the importance of self-affirmation and resilience in the face of adversity. Adunni's refusal to accept derogatory language contributes to her new-becoming as a woman who asserts her identity and challenges societal norms that seek to devalue her. This instance resonates with themes of self-worth, identity, and the empowerment of marginalised voices in the narrative.

Thus, the new-becoming of Adunni's voice represents a departure from the silenced and oppressed existence she faced at the beginning of the narrative. Through her struggles and deterritorialization, Adunni actively reshapes her identity, breaking free from the predetermined roles and societal constraints imposed upon her. The louding voice becomes a symbol of her agency and resistance, challenging the established norms that seek to keep women silent.

In the context of Deleuzian feminism, Adunni's journey aligns with the concept of becoming-women. This idea goes beyond fixed identities and encourages a continual process of transformation and self-creation. Adunni's new-becoming epitomises this philosophy as she navigates through challenges, actively shaping her identity and asserting her voice in a society that often seeks to suppress it.

Moreover, her empowerment extends beyond personal growth. Adunni's new-becoming is interconnected with her advocacy for other women, contributing to the broader deterritorialization of systemic issues affecting women in her society. This aligns with Deleuzian feminism's emphasis on collective struggles and the interconnected nature of becoming-women.

In other words, Adunni's new-becoming as a woman with a louding voice encapsulates her transformative journey towards self-empowerment and resistance against oppressive norms. This evolution resonates with Deleuzian feminist ideas, emphasising the continual process of becoming-women and the interconnected nature of collective empowerment and societal change.

In a significant moment in the story, Kofi tells Adunni that if she gets the scholarship, she will be known in history for her efforts and hard work. However, Adunni, in a powerful response, asserts that it won't be “his-story” but rather her-story, Adunni’s story: “Not his-story,” I say. “My own will be called her-story. Adunni’s story” (Dare 253)

This exchange holds profound meaning in the context of Adunni's journey and the theoretical concepts we've discussed. Firstly, Adunni's rejection of “his-story” reflects a conscious choice to challenge the dominant narrative often shaped by societal norms, especially those that overlook or marginalise the experiences of women. By claiming “her-story,” Adunni is emphasising her right to narrate her own experiences, acknowledging the importance of personal perspectives.

Thus, this assertion aligns with the concept of new-becoming, a transformative journey where individuals actively shape their identities and challenge pre-established norms. Adunni’s desire to own her story represents a deterritorialization from the narrative imposed on her by societal expectations. It’s a reclaiming of agency and a declaration that her experiences are valid and valuable.

Furthermore, this moment resonates with the broader ideas of Deleuzian feminism, especially in the context of women’s voices. By insisting on owning her story, Adunni is deterritorializing the traditional power structures that often silence women. It’s a bold move towards breaking free from the limitations imposed by a patriarchal society.

In simple terms, this exchange emphasises Adunni’s determination to define her own narrative, challenging established norms and contributing to the broader themes of empowerment and agency in the novel.

Simultaneously, Adunni’s journey in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* aligns strongly with Deleuzian feminist principles, showcasing her deterritorialization from oppressive societal norms. From her resistance to early marriage to her pursuit of education and empowerment of other women, Adunni actively challenges pre-established roles. Her newfound voice, symbolised by the “louding voice,” represents a new-becoming, a transformative journey asserting her identity.

The poignant line, “I cry for Papa, who thinks that a girl-child is a wasted waste, a thing with no voice, no dreams, no brain”(Dare 281), encapsulates the struggle against the devaluation of women in Adunni's society. This echoes the Deleuzian feminist emphasis on breaking free from oppressive structures and reclaiming agency. Adunni's resilience becomes a testament to the power of women's voices and the importance of recognizing their dreams and intelligence.

Also, the shared room with Rebecca becomes a symbolic space where Adunni affirms her humanity and value. It stands as a reminder that women like Adunni are not voiceless or devoid of dreams. This aligns with Deleuzian feminism's call for collective struggles, emphasising that the acknowledgment of women's worth is a shared narrative.

5.5 Conclusion: The Force of Change and Education as Catalyst of Feminist Becoming

This chapter has explored the transformative journey of Adunni through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical framework, particularly focusing on the processes of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and becoming-woman. In the early sections of the novel, Adunni's identity is shaped by her cultural and familial environment, which seeks to confine her within the role of a submissive wife and unpaid domestic worker. This stage reflects a state of territorialization, where identity is controlled by social codes and enforced traditions. However, her desire for education and her refusal to accept silence mark the beginning of deterritorialization, a movement away from rigid definitions of womanhood. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, this movement is not necessarily physical but is rooted in the refusal of fixed roles and the emergence of new desires and directions: “To deterritorialize is to free oneself from the dominant codes of identity and begin a process of becoming” (Deleuze and Guattari 508).

In the broader context, the novel contributes significantly to discussions on women's empowerment. Adunni's story challenges stereotypes and amplifies the importance of education, resilience, and women supporting each other. By portraying Adunni's deterritorialization and new-becoming, the novel adds a powerful voice to the ongoing dialogue on dismantling oppressive norms and empowering women.

In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, the transformation of Adunni begins not with freedom or access to resources, but with a strong internal desire to learn, speak, and be heard. This desire acts as the force of change, the element that challenges the social and cultural codes that attempt to define her solely as a wife, servant, or child. This force is central to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialization, which refers to the process of breaking away from fixed and restrictive identities shaped by dominant institutions. Although Adunni is physically bound by poverty and patriarchal expectations, her imagination and longing for education allow her to mentally and emotionally step beyond the boundaries imposed on her.

Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari argue that transformation begins when individuals depart from inherited roles and open themselves to new possibilities. They write, "Becoming is not to imitate or identify with something; it is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 272). In Adunni's case, her voice and her desire for knowledge are such "particles", early signs of movement away from a silenced and controlled existence. Her refusal to accept early marriage as her destiny, and her persistent hope for schooling, demonstrate the emergence of an identity in motion.

Thus, the encouragement Adunni receives from Ms. Tia plays a key role in strengthening this internal force. With support, she begins to believe that change is not only possible but necessary. This is the beginning of reterritorialization, the stage in which she starts to reconstruct her sense of self through new relationships, learning, and self-expression. This process reflects what Claire Colebrook describes as the ethical potential of becoming-woman: "a way of transforming what it means to live, speak, and be female by refusing predetermined roles and identities" (Colebrook 127).

Likewise, Adunni's journey shows that the force of change is not abstract. In her case, it is grounded in two very real and accessible elements: voice and education. These not only allow her to resist the identity others try to impose on her, but also give her the tools to reimagine and reshape her future. Her story suggests that empowerment begins with a refusal to be silent and grows stronger when supported by relationships that nurture rather than suppress. In this way, the force of change becomes both personal and cultural, rooted in

individual desire, but made possible through shifting social conditions and meaningful human connection.

In simple terms, Adunni's journey, her newfound voice, and her relationships with other women contribute to the broader movement for women's empowerment. The novel sends a message that every woman has a story worth telling, a voice worth hearing, and a place of value in society.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This chapter serves as the conclusion of this research, which aimed to investigate the selected novels, delving into the concepts of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and Deleuzian feminism. A central focus of my analysis was to discern the motives behind the female characters' identity shift and becoming-women process. The novels under scrutiny are *A Woman is No Man* (2019) by Etaf Rum and Abi Dare's *The Girl with the Louding Voice* (2021). I adapted a qualitative approach and applied Catherine Belsey's textual analysis as my research method. The theoretical framework encompassed the concepts of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and Deleuzian feminism, forming the basis for addressing the two research questions posited in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

In Chapter Four, my analysis focused on the first novel, *A Woman is No Man*, where I systematically addressed the stipulated research questions. The primary objective was to comprehensively explore the impacts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization on female identity, particularly examining how these processes contribute to acquiring agency among the characters.

In *A Woman is No Man*, Isra's transformative journey reflects the Deleuzian concept of becoming-woman, challenging societal norms through deterritorialization and negotiating a new identity via reterritorialization. In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Adunni embodies becoming-woman by defying early marriages, showcasing deterritorialization in confronting societal expectations and reterritorialization as she forges a path beyond traditional boundaries. These instances highlight the resonance of Deleuzian concepts in enriching the characters' narratives with themes of identity, agency, and societal defiance.

In the novel, Isra's deterritorialization is evident as she questions and challenges societal expectations placed upon her. She moves beyond the predefined roles expected of her as a wife and mother, seeking autonomy and self-realisation. Her reterritorialization occurs as she strives to redefine her identity within the constraints of her cultural context. This journey involves a negotiation between her desire for personal agency and the societal norms that attempt to confine her. Isra's becoming-woman is a gradual process marked by her

increasing awareness of self and a determination to break free from societal restrictions. This transformation empowers her to make choices that align with her individuality, such as reading novels in her room and raising her voice for her daughters. Isra challenges the notion of early marriages by resisting the traditional expectations placed upon her. Her defiance becomes a force of change as she endeavours to secure a different future for her daughters.

Deya experiences deterritorialization through the revelations about her family's past. This newfound knowledge challenges her preconceived notions and prompts her to question the cultural norms shaping her identity. Her journey involves a process of reterritorialization as she grapples with the implications of her family's history. Deya navigates the tension between tradition and her desire for autonomy and seeking education, attempting to forge her path within the cultural constraints. Deya's becoming-woman unfolds as she confronts the expectations placed upon her and seeks to define her identity independently. Her journey reflects a pursuit of self-discovery and autonomy. Deya challenges the legacy of early marriages within her family by questioning the narrative imposed upon her. Her quest for education becomes a form of resistance, defying the traditional path set for her and embodying a force of change.

Similarly, Sarah's deterritorialization occurs as she distances herself from the traditional roles expected of her. Her pursuit of education and aspirations beyond societal expectations departs from the established norms. Her reterritorialization is shaped by her pursuit of education and her determination to chart a course beyond the expected boundaries. This journey involves reconciling personal aspirations with societal expectations. Sarah's becoming-woman is exemplified through her pursuit of education and independence. Her defiance of societal norms represents a conscious effort to break free from traditional constraints and assert her individuality. Sarah challenges the prevailing acceptance of early marriages by prioritising education and personal growth. Her journey represents a powerful force of change as she seeks to redefine the narrative for herself and future generations.

In *A Woman is No Man*, the narratives of Isra, Deya, and Sarah intricately intertwine with the concepts of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and becoming-woman, reflecting their nuanced struggles and triumphs against societal expectations, particularly

early marriages. Their individual quests for autonomy and self-definition contribute to the force of change within the novel.

In chapter Five, the analysis is shifted to the second novel, *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. Within this section, I rigorously investigated and provided insightful answers to the research questions. Firstly, I delved into how deterritorialization and reterritorialization manifest in shaping the female characters' identities and empowering them. Secondly, the focus turned towards evaluating the novels' pivotal role in challenging and negating the prevailing notion of early or forced marriages. The analysis emphasised shedding light on the transformative force within the narratives that empowers women and challenges entrenched societal norms.

Therefore, Adunni's deterritorialization unfolds as she breaks free from the confines of traditional expectations placed upon her by challenging early marriages. In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Adunni's narrative portrays her resistance to the prevailing norm of early marriages, reflecting a departure from the expected path for young girls in her community. Her refusal to conform becomes crucial for her deterritorialization, marking a deviation from societal norms.

Likewise, Reterritorialization in Adunni's journey is shaped by her pursuit of education, an aspiration that transcends the boundaries set by her societal context. As she endeavours to acquire knowledge, Adunni navigates the complexities of redefining her identity within the constraints of her cultural surroundings. Her reterritorialization is characterised by a negotiation between personal aspirations and the societal expectations that seek to limit her educational pursuits.

Adunni's becoming-woman is a transformative process, underscored by her resilience and determination to chart her path independently. As she confronts the challenges of her environment, Adunni undergoes a profound evolution in her understanding of self and her capabilities. Her journey mirrors the Deleuzian concept of becoming-woman, emphasising a shift towards autonomy and self-discovery.

Challenging early marriages becomes a central facet of Adunni's defiance. Her resolute rejection of the traditional practice serves as a force of change within the narrative, challenging entrenched norms and advocating for a different trajectory for young women.

Simultaneously, Adunni's pursuit of education further contributes to this force of change, as she strives to transcend the limitations imposed by societal expectations and reshape her destiny.

In summary, Adunni's journey in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* intricately weaves the concepts of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and becoming-woman into the narrative. Her resistance to early marriages and pursuit of education challenges established norms and also symbolises a powerful force of change, illustrating the transformative potential within her character.

Both chapters collectively contribute to a nuanced understanding of the novels' thematic intricacies, illustrating the profound impact of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and the challenge against early/forced marriages on the female characters' identities and agency.

Deterritorialization, used in this research, is a concept that describes the loosening or disruption of established norms, boundaries, or structures within a specific context. It involves breaking away from the usual rules, allowing new ideas or perspectives to emerge. This process creates a space for change and innovation as traditional constraints are challenged.

However, Reterritorialization, on the other hand, involves establishing new structures or norms after a period of disruption or deterritorialization. Once the established order has been shaken up, reterritorialization defines new rules or structures, bringing about a sense of order and stability in the changed landscape.

Furthermore, Deleuzian feminism is an approach influenced by the philosophical ideas of Gilles Deleuze. It emphasises the dynamic and fluid nature of gender, rejects fixed categories. In the realm of Deleuzian feminism, gender is seen as a constantly evolving concept, and the focus is on how individuals, particularly women, navigate and transform their identities within societal structures. This perspective challenges traditional views of gender and opens up avenues for a more nuanced understanding of identity.

Similarly, Becoming-woman is a specific concept within Deleuzian feminism that signifies a transformative process. It involves individuals, often women, undergoing a

journey of change in their understanding and expression of gender. Becoming-woman emphasises the fluidity and dynamic nature of identity, encouraging a departure from fixed notions of what it means to be a woman. This concept aligns with the broader Deleuzian philosophy, highlighting the ongoing process of transformation and self-discovery in the realm of gender identity.

Therefore, the amalgamation of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, Deleuzian feminism, and becoming-woman constructs a robust theoretical framework for my research, aligning seamlessly with the rationale of exploring transformative journeys in the selected novels. Deterritorialization offers a lens to scrutinise disruptions and challenges to established norms, crucial for understanding how characters navigate identity shifts. Reterritorialization complements this by unveiling how new structures emerge post-disruption, aiding in comprehending societal adaptations. Grounded in Deleuzian feminism, the framework provides a dynamic perspective on gender, aligning perfectly with the research's focus on characters' evolving identities. Becoming-woman, as a facet of this feminism, serves as a nuanced tool to dissect transformative processes within the narratives. Together, these concepts systematically address my research questions, offering a comprehensive toolkit to analyse forces of change, particularly in the context of challenging societal norms related to early marriages. The comparative analysis across novels ensures a holistic exploration, enriching the understanding of how these concepts operate in diverse settings, ultimately enhancing the depth and relevance of my research.

The shared aspects between *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice* make them fitting subjects for a joint analysis in the context of my research questions. Both novels prominently feature female protagonists navigating societal expectations and cultural norms in their pursuit of empowerment and autonomy. This aligns seamlessly with my research focus on exploring the effects of deterritorialization and reterritorialization on female identity and agency.

A common thread in both narratives is the characters' resistance against traditional gender roles. As outlined in my research questions, Isra, Deya, Sarah and Adunni challenge predetermined roles, providing fertile ground for investigating how these challenges contribute to the characters' processes of identity shift and becoming-women. The

exploration of identity shifts is a shared theme, allowing for the analysis of how the female protagonists evolve within their respective contexts. This aligns with my research aim to unravel the reasons behind the characters' transformative journeys and their navigation through societal expectations.

The resistance against early or forced marriages in both novels offers a compelling avenue for comparative analysis. Isra, Deya and Sarah's defiance in *A Woman is No Man* and Adunni's determination in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* provide rich material for understanding how societal norms impact characters' deterritorialization and reterritorialization processes. Additionally, the shared theme of educational aspirations as a form of resistance connects directly to my research questions. Exploring how education becomes a tool for deterritorialization and reterritorialization in both narratives contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the characters' journeys and the broader implications of Deleuzian feminism.

Likewise, the Deleuzian feminist analysis applied to *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, holds profound societal implications, extending beyond the confines of the novels' pages. By connecting the characters' transformative journeys to broader cultural conversations, this analysis serves as a literary critique that resonates with contemporary discourses on gender, identity, and power dynamics.

The novels become more than mere narratives; they become mirrors reflecting societal norms and challenging established conventions. The exploration of deterritorialization and reterritorialization within the characters' lives serves as a catalyst for cultural discourse, inviting readers to reflect on the implications of rigid gender constructs and societal expectations.

These literary echoes extend into real-world discussions by prompting conversations about autonomy, agency, and resistance against predefined roles. The novels become entry points for addressing pressing issues such as early marriages and limited opportunities for women, inviting readers to question and challenge societal norms.

Similarly, the Deleuzian feminist lens illuminates the characters' struggles, it simultaneously sheds light on the multifaceted nature of gender dynamics in our own society. Through this literary critique, the novels contribute to the ongoing evolution of cultural

conversations, encouraging a more nuanced understanding of identity and empowering readers to envision a world beyond the limitations imposed by traditional power structures.

In this thesis, the “force of change” refers to the transformative process by which female characters in *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice* resist and reshape the social norms that restrict their autonomy, particularly in relation to forced and early marriages. This force of change, when examined through a Deleuzian feminist lens, is understood as a dynamic journey of becoming-woman, where the characters actively challenge and redefine their identities by moving beyond the constraints imposed by patriarchal structures.

Therefore, using Deleuzian concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, we can see how the protagonists in these novels reject traditional roles and, in turn, construct new identities that allow for agency and self-definition. In *A Woman is No Man*, Isra represents this force of change subtly yet powerfully. While she lives under the oppressive control of her husband and in-laws, who adhere strictly to cultural expectations that see marriage as her sole purpose, she begins to break free from this confinement through her private act of reading. This seemingly small rebellion allows her to explore ideas and emotions outside of her immediate reality, sparking an inner transformation. Her encouragement of her daughter Deya to question these restrictive traditions further exemplifies deterritorialization, as she challenges the patriarchal norms imposed on her and seeks to instill a similar desire for freedom in the next generation. Deya, influenced by her mother’s subtle defiance, ultimately embodies the process of reterritorialization as she actively pursues her own path toward education and independence, reshaping her life away from the confines of forced marriage.

Similarly, in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Adunni’s journey represents this transformative force. Sold into marriage as a young girl, Adunni’s unyielding desire to learn and gain independence represents her process of deterritorialization, as she mentally and emotionally rejects the life forced upon her by her family and society. Her aspiration to gain “a louding voice” reflects her refusal to be silenced and her determination to find a new identity outside the constraints of early marriage. Through her employment with Ms. Tia and her determination to get an education, Adunni undergoes reterritorialization, as she begins to

construct a life that aligns with her aspirations rather than societal expectations. Her story highlights the transformative potential of becoming-woman, as she not only rejects the limits imposed on her but actively redefines her sense of self and agency.

Thus, in both novels, the force of change is embedded in the protagonists' journey of becoming-woman, where they challenge and redefine their identities through acts of resistance. This transformation, grounded in Deleuzian feminist theory, illuminates the profound impact of female agency in challenging and overcoming the social structures that enforce early or forced marriages, illustrating how these characters reconstruct their lives and identities through self-determination and resilience.

In this thesis, empowerment and identity formation are examined as transformative processes that challenge traditional roles imposed on women within patriarchal societies. Drawing on Deleuzian feminist concepts, the analysis explores how *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice* illustrate new forms of empowerment through becoming-woman, where characters move through deterritorialization, a rejection of confining social structures, and reterritorialization as they build new identities that align with their aspirations and sense of agency.

In *A Woman is No Man*, empowerment is initially subtle but crucial. Isra's identity formation begins through small acts of resistance, such as her decision to read in secret. Reading becomes a source of empowerment as it allows Isra to imagine a life beyond the roles prescribed to her as a daughter, wife, and mother. Through Deleuzian deterritorialization, Isra mentally breaks away from the limitations of her reality, envisioning possibilities that give her a sense of self beyond her family's expectations. This form of empowerment is internal and symbolic, as Isra never openly defies her family. However, her influence persists in her daughter Deya, who, inspired by her mother's subtle resistance, actively seeks education and autonomy. Deya's journey exemplifies reterritorialization as she constructs an identity distinct from the one imposed on her, embracing her own values and ambitions. Deya's choice to pursue education and delay marriage embodies an explicit form of empowerment, showing how identity formation can manifest across generations as women redefine the roles assigned to them.

Similarly, in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Adunni's empowerment is shaped by her pursuit of education and her quest for a "louding voice" that would allow her to be heard. Adunni's story vividly illustrates deterritorialization when, despite being forced into marriage, she clings to her dream of learning and independence. Her determination to resist her situation internally, even when outward resistance is impossible, empowers her to pursue work outside her marriage, ultimately leading her to Ms. Tia. Under Ms. Tia's guidance, Adunni finds opportunities to learn, expanding her worldview and reinforcing her desire to reshape her own life. Adunni's journey of reterritorialization becomes evident as she actively seeks out educational opportunities and strives for a new identity beyond her imposed roles, reconstructing her life on her own terms.

Also, through the Deleuzian lens, empowerment in both novels emerges as an ongoing, layered process where internal acts of resistance lead to outward transformations in identity. This is not a single moment of defiance but a gradual process where the protagonists redefine themselves within and against their cultural contexts. In both cases, identity formation is deeply influenced by the protagonists' decisions to seek knowledge and self-expression, emphasising a form of empowerment rooted in self-discovery and personal agency. By illustrating how Isra, Deya, and Adunni construct new identities through internal and external acts of resistance, the novels highlight empowerment as a multifaceted process that enables women to navigate, resist, and reshape the societal expectations that confine them. This analysis therefore contributes to understanding empowerment as a transformative force grounded in the gradual reconfiguration of identity, aligning with Deleuzian feminist theory's emphasis on fluidity and change in the becoming-woman journey.

Therefore, in both *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, socio-cultural and political influences play crucial roles in shaping the protagonists' journeys toward empowerment and identity formation. Through a Deleuzian feminist lens, these factors can be viewed as forces that both constrain and enable the processes of deterritorialization (breaking away from traditional roles) and reterritorialization (constructing new identities). The protagonists' transitions away from traditional hegemonies are deeply influenced by their cultural contexts and the limited but significant opportunities presented within these contexts, which offer them glimpses of alternative possibilities.

Likewise, In *A Woman is No Man*, the socio-cultural expectations within Arab-American society place immense pressure on women to conform to traditional roles of marriage and motherhood, with little regard for personal aspirations or autonomy. Isra's life is heavily restricted by these norms, as her family and husband view her primary purpose as a wife and mother within a closed patriarchal framework. However, a subtle political influence—American society's broader openness to female independence and education—creates a contrast that Isra's daughter, Deya, gradually comes to understand. Deya's exposure to teachers and counsellors who encourage her to question her family's expectations exemplifies deterritorialization as she begins to see herself beyond the constraints of her cultural heritage. Her journey toward empowerment is fueled by these outside influences, which introduce her to the possibility of a life not defined by early marriage and subservience. The American socio-political landscape thus becomes a backdrop against which Deya rethinks her identity, symbolising her reterritorialization into an empowered young woman who seeks education and autonomy.

Similarly, in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Nigerian socio-cultural norms similarly impose restrictions on Adunni, with early marriage and domestic servitude seen as inevitable paths for young girls, especially from impoverished backgrounds. However, political factors such as the growing awareness of education's importance as a tool for social mobility subtly influence Adunni's journey. Her exposure to different socio-economic classes through her employment in Lagos with Ms. Tia, a woman who values education and independence, represents a form of socio-cultural influence that expands Adunni's understanding of what is possible for her as a woman. This environment contrasts sharply with her rural background, enabling her to envision a life where she can voice her own desires. Additionally, Ms. Tia's assistance in connecting Adunni to education demonstrates the influence of individual actors within the socio-political sphere who, even indirectly, enable empowerment. This support aids in Adunni's deterritorialization, breaking away from traditional expectations, and her subsequent reterritorialization as she redefines her identity as a young woman determined to gain an education and assert her voice.

In both novels, socio-cultural and political factors play a dual role, acting as barriers while also providing channels for empowerment. The protagonists' transitions are marked by interactions with individuals and institutions that represent alternative values, such as the

significance of education, the importance of personal autonomy, and the possibility of a life beyond patriarchal constraints. These influences shape their becoming-woman journeys by showing them that their identities can be fluid and self-defined, rather than fixed by cultural or familial expectations. Through the Deleuzian framework, empowerment transitions in these narratives illustrate how socio-cultural and political elements can serve as catalysts for reimagining identity, with the protagonists reconstructing their lives in response to these broader influences. Thus, the novels suggest that while traditional hegemonies remain powerful, moments of exposure to alternative social and political values can be instrumental in the protagonists' paths toward self-empowerment and redefined identities.

The cultural backgrounds of Etaf Rum and Abi Daré significantly shape their portrayals of empowerment and identity in *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. Rum's experience within a conservative Arab-American community informs her depiction of Isra and Deya's struggles against restrictive gender norms that prioritize family honor and obedience. This context allows Rum to illustrate how Arab-American women navigate the conflict between traditional expectations and personal aspirations, with Deya beginning to redefine her identity through the influence of American values.

Similarly, Abi Daré's Nigerian background shapes her portrayal of Adunni, a young girl resisting early marriage and domestic servitude in a society where poverty and limited educational opportunities restrict women's agency. Daré's understanding of these barriers enriches Adunni's journey of becoming-woman as she fights for an education and self-empowerment. Both authors leverage their cultural habitus to authentically represent the socio-cultural pressures on their protagonists while highlighting the potential for deterritorialization and reterritorialization—the process of breaking from traditional roles and constructing new identities.

Through their own cultural perspectives, Rum and Daré emphasize empowerment as a transformative process, showing that, even within restrictive socio-cultural settings, women can challenge norms and reclaim their voices, aligning with Deleuzian concepts of fluid identity and continuous transformation.

Hence, the analysis of *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice* through the Deleuzian framework has provided a nuanced understanding of the characters'

transformative journeys. By identifying key moments of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, the novels exemplify the fluidity and evolution of gender roles, aligning with the concept of becoming-woman. The characters, such as Isra and Adunni, challenge societal expectations and redefine their identities, showcasing the transformative potential within their narratives.

However, the intervention in this analysis involved mapping out the characters' deterritorialization and reterritorialization phases, emphasising the significance of education as a form of resistance against societal norms. The comparative analysis of characters allowed for a deeper exploration of their unique embodiments of Deleuzian concepts. The assessment of societal and familial impacts on the characters' transformations added a layer of complexity, highlighting the broader implications of Deleuzian feminism within the societal context presented in the novels.

Furthermore, examining the narratives through the lens of Deleuzian feminism enriched the analysis and also contributed to broader discussions on gender, identity, and power structures. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing the transformative potential within characters' journeys, challenging traditional norms, and fostering a more inclusive understanding of autonomy and agency. Ultimately, this exploration invites readers and scholars to engage in ongoing conversations through literature about the multifaceted nature of gender dynamics and the potential for societal change through literature.

In brief, the central argument of my research centres on employing Deleuzian feminist theory to critically analyse *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. The primary focus is on unravelling the process of becoming-woman within the narratives, using the lenses of deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and the politics of agency. The thesis aims to showcase how Deleuzian feminism enriches the interpretation of these novels by providing a theoretical framework that explores the characters' transformative journeys and resistance against societal norms.

Deleuzian feminism serves as a powerful analytical tool to dissect the nuances of the characters' experiences. It sheds light on moments of deterritorialization, where established norms are disrupted, and characters challenge traditional gender roles. Simultaneously, the

lens of reterritorialization is applied to understand how characters navigate and establish new identities within their cultural contexts.

Therefore, the politics of agency become a central theme, emphasising the characters' assertions of autonomy and resistance against prevailing norms. The importance of agency lies in its capacity to enable women to assert autonomy, resist structural oppression, and redefine their identities beyond the boundaries imposed by patriarchal traditions. In both *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, the female protagonists inhabit cultural spaces where silence, obedience, and submission are institutionalized through family, religion, and community expectations. Within such restrictive settings, agency does not emerge as an immediate or overt rebellion but as a gradual process of internal awakening and outward defiance. Isra's suppressed desire for books and education, and Adunni's insistence on having a "lounding voice," represent early acts of resistance that grow into more pronounced forms of self-assertion. These moments mark a departure from inherited gender roles, a process Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize as deterritorialization, where the characters begin to break away from fixed social codes and initiate their own trajectories of becoming. By exercising agency, these women disrupt the cycles of forced marriage, gendered silence, and economic dependence that have historically undermined their subjectivities. Thus, agency becomes not only a means of personal empowerment but also a critical force that challenges cultural norms and envisions alternative futures. In this context, the reclaiming of agency is essential for transforming passive endurance into active self-definition, and for allowing women to emerge as subjects capable of choice, change, and resistance within deeply conservative and oppressive environments.

Similarly, this theoretical framework elevates the interpretation of the novels by offering a comprehensive perspective on the transformative power within the narratives. It enables a nuanced exploration of the characters' journeys, showcasing how they navigate societal expectations and redefine their identities. Furthermore, Deleuzian feminism allows for a broader critique of societal norms related to gender and identity, enriching the analysis with a theoretical depth that extends beyond the surface narratives. Overall, the application of Deleuzian feminism enhances the understanding of the novels, revealing layers of complexity and empowerment embedded within the characters' stories.

In brief, this study has critically examined the process of female becoming through the lens of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in *A Woman is No Man* by Etaf Rum and *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Abi Daré. By applying the philosophical concepts of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari alongside the idea of existential rights, the research highlights how the protagonists, Isra, Deya, Sarah and Adunni, navigate and resist the socio-cultural confinements that shape their lives. The study emphasizes that the journey toward empowerment begins not with outward rebellion alone, but with an existential awakening, the recognition of the right to choose, to question, and to exist on one's own terms. This internal shift becomes the first step in the process of deterritorialization. Through detailed textual analysis, it was demonstrated how these characters disrupt hegemonic structures, challenge imposed identities, and gradually reconstruct their own sense of self. This research fills a noticeable gap in existing scholarship by foregrounding gendered becoming in relation to Deleuzian theory, an area that has received limited attention, especially in the context of these specific narratives. The intervention of this thesis lies in bringing together feminist concerns with philosophical inquiry, offering a fresh theoretical approach to the study of female agency, identity formation, and resistance in postcolonial contexts. In doing so, it not only broadens the interpretive possibilities of the selected texts but also contributes to the wider academic conversation on literature, gender, and philosophy.

6.1 Recommendations for Further Research

For further research on the novels *A Woman is No Man* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, a researcher may incorporate psychoanalytic theories, such as those by Freud or Lacan, to delve into the subconscious motivations and desires of the female characters. The researcher may explore how the characters' psychological experiences intersect with the process of becoming-woman and identity transformation.

Prospective researchers may opt for a postcolonial perspective to further enrich their analyses. They could explore the intersections of postcolonial theories with Deleuzian feminism, providing a nuanced comprehension of the characters' struggles for agency within the cultural and societal contexts depicted.

Additionally, researchers in the future might expand their analysis by incorporating poststructuralist theories beyond Deleuze and Guattari. Scholars such as Foucault or Derrida

could offer insights into how power structures, discourse, and language contribute to the constructing of female identities in the examined novels.

To broaden the scope, future researchers are encouraged to apply the same theoretical framework to a wider array of literary works, not confined to novels exclusively. Investigating how Deleuzian concepts manifest in various literary genres, including poetry, short stories, or plays, could provide a comprehensive understanding.

Moreover, an innovative avenue for research lies in exploring the application of Deleuzian feminism to analyse representations of women in media and popular culture. Investigating how narratives in film, television, or digital media align with or challenge the theoretical concepts explored in the research can contribute to the evolving discourse in this field.

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