RECONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES AMIDST SPATIAL TRANSGRESSION IN EMILY BRONTË'S *WUTHERING HEIGHTS* (1847)

Zhixing Nie and Hardev Kaur*

Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia.
E-mail: hardevkaur@upm.edu.my
*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

This study explores Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), a novel thoroughly examined through feminist, trauma, narratological, and psychoanalytic perspectives, especially concerning its enigmatic character, Heathcliff. However, the theme of spatial transgression as a crucial narrative element has received less attention. Applying Deleuze and Guattari's notions of "striated space" and "smooth space" from *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), this paper investigates the spatial dynamics within *Wuthering Heights*. It uncovers how the restrictive environments of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange and patriarchal and religious constraints confine Catherine and Heathcliff within "striated space." Brontë contrasts detention and freedom, confinement and mobility, and oppression and liberation to highlight this binary opposition. This study reveals the complex interplay between "striated space" and "smooth space", and their significant impact on Catherine and Heathcliff's identities. It particularly examines how themes of "flight," "nomadism," and "becoming" are woven into the narrative, illustrating the characters' struggles with identity crises and their processes of identity reconstruction.

Keywords: Emily Brontë; self-identity; smooth space; striated space; *Wuthering Heights*

INTRODUCTION

Emily Brontë's sole novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), defies traditional literary conventions by exploring the themes of desire, violence, and complex human emotions (Dujić, 2023, p. 5). Bloom (2008) notes that *Wuthering Heights* is unique in its narrative techniques, akin to Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) in its challenge to genre limitations (p. 3). Set against the windswept Yorkshire moors, the novel intricately chronicles the intertwined destinies of the Earnshaw and Linton families. As Bernard (2023) highlights, "the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is one of the most striking in Victorian literature" (p. 11).

Despite extensive analyses using feminist, trauma, narratological, and psychoanalytic lenses, the theme of spatial transgression in the narrative has been less explored. This paper, employing Deleuze and Guattari's concepts from *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), seeks to illuminate the factors contributing to Catherine and Heathcliff's entrapment within a "striated space". This includes the confinement associated with Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, the pervasive influence of patriarchal power, and the repressive impact of religious constraints, all of which define their limited spatial existence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* showcases her literary brilliance through her sophisticated narrative techniques and complex plot, securing her esteemed place in world literature. The novel has intrigued both readers and scholars worldwide. Tytler (2016; 2022) analyses the symbolism of weather and tears, noting that fire symbolises happiness and significantly influences character development. He also discusses the roles of weather and tears in realism and character portrayal. In contrast, Takahashi (2023) focuses on identity and feminism, examining the tensions between insiders and outsiders and the impact of societal factors on identity formation. Various studies have examined *Wuthering Heights* from diverse perspectives, namely geographical structure, queer theory, ethical emotion, comparative analysis, and trauma studies. Myburgh (2014) explores how spatial dynamics are influenced by powerful figures and the potential for marginalised individuals to challenge authority and redefine spaces. Poklad (2017) employs concepts from Mikhail Bakhtin and David Harvey to analyse the novel's geographic structure, revealing its unique temporal and spatial dimensions. Additionally, Ciucu (2024) investigates the representation of women in film adaptations of *Wuthering Heights*, assessing how these adaptations reflect and alter the original text and exploring the intertextual dynamics of various film versions.

Narrative discourse has also been a focus. Lu (2019) analyses Brontë's ethical sensibilities, emphasizing her inventive narrative style and the novel's moral and ecological consciousness. Morse (2021) suggests that Heathcliff's portrayal as a symbol of trauma might be influenced by Frederick Douglass, linking Heathcliff's experience to the historical context of slavery. Conversely, Datskou (2020) applies the queer theory to assert that the novel disrupts heteronormative temporal concepts through recurring characters and narrative structures. Comparative studies have further enriched the analysis of *Wuthering Heights*. Colvin (2021) compares it with *Romeo and Juliet*, highlighting similarities in themes of sex and tragic endings, particularly in the symbolic actions of Heathcliff and Romeo. Lindskog (2020) examines the contrasting depictions of the sky in *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, noting that, while the

sky in *Jane Eyre* represents a sanctuary for the psyche, in *Wuthering Heights*, it symbolises the futility of freedom.

Beyond literary studies, scholars in the social sciences have employed Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual frameworks to examine social and subjective captures. This approach, known as "transcendental empiricism," offers methodologies for analysing territorialisation and striated space processes and exploring the potential for change through concepts like lines of flight (Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007). Deleuze and Guattari's integration of micro-sociological and geographical concepts, termed "geo-philosophy," provides a new vocabulary for analysing social change and recovery (Tamboukou, 2009; Protevi & Bonta, 2004; Ringrose, 2011). While substantial scholarship exists on *Wuthering Heights* using Deleuze and Guattari's theories, this paper seeks a fresh perspective by applying their philosophical framework. The central goal is to examine *Wuthering Heights* through the lens of smooth space and striated space, illustrating how the concept of 'smooth space' facilitates exploration of 'flight', 'nomadism' and 'becoming'. These concepts, in turn, support Catherine and Heathcliff's journey through identity crises, ultimately empowering their independence and growth.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gilles Deleuze plays a pivotal role in transitioning from structuralism to post-structuralism in Western philosophy and aesthetics. As a leading space philosopher in the 20th century, Deleuze's influence extends beyond philosophy into metaphysics, cultural theory, film studies, urban planning, and political technology. In their seminal work *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari introduce three categories of lines: the striated line, the smooth line, and the flight line.

Deleuze and Guattari describe a "line" as a generative concept rather than a tangible or visible entity. It represents how people live and organise social structures (Hou, 2021, p. 104). Maps and geographic analyses can further illustrate these lines (Chen, 2018, p. 34). By applying this theory to *Wuthering Heights*, the emotional intensity map can be reduced to these three lines: the striated line, the smooth line, and the flight line. The striated line, or cutting line, represents a rigid form that divides, stratifies, and encodes aspects of life into fixed boundaries and territories. This includes distinctions between family and profession, work and leisure, or different stages of life (Dong, 2020, p. 119). According to Deleuze (1987), these lines create a predictable and quantifiable trajectory, often regulated by societal structures and institutions (p. 500).

The smooth line, in contrast, is flexible and molecular. Deleuze describes it as adaptable, capable of traversing different social and individual territories, subtly rearranging codes and desires. The smooth space is constantly being translated and transversed into a striated space, and the striated space is constantly being reversed and returned to a smooth space. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 474-475). Hence, this smooth line disrupts linear trajectories and conventional norms, embodying a degree of rupture and deviation from standard life paths, also known as the rupture line. The flight line, the third form, is nomadic, generative, and vitalistic. It breaks through established meanings and escapes from rigid structures, signifying continuous movement and transformation. Chen (2018) characterises it as an active, creative line that leads to resolution and liberation (p. 39). Unlike the striated and smooth lines, the flight line relies on an external plane of organisation and is marked by its pursuit of complete deterritorialisation and freedom (Kellner, 2001, p. 118).

Deleuze and Guattari posit that these lines and spaces provide a rich foundation for understanding human cognition and social dynamics. Smooth space, described as full of intensities and sensory experiences, contrasts with striated space, characterised by measurable and quantifiable qualities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 479-487). Smooth space facilitates greater deterritorialisation compared to striated space. This study aims to apply Deleuze and Guattari's spatial concepts to Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and will examine Catherine and Heathcliff's journey from self-imprisonment to freedom by analysing the interplay between striated and smooth spaces. Through this analysis, the study seeks to illuminate themes of duality, confinement, liberation, oppression, and emancipation within the novel, offering a deeper understanding of these spatial dynamics in the context of Brontë's work.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Jenks, "[t]o transgress space means to surpass the limits set by a commandment, law, or convention, effectively violating or infringing upon these boundaries" (2003, p. 2). This paper investigates the spatial transgression in *Wuthering Heights* using Deleuze and Guattari's striated and smooth space concepts. The analysis will demonstrate that the confinement of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, combined with pervasive patriarchal and religious constraints, leads to Catherine and Heathcliff's entrapment within striated spaces. Brontë contrasts these settings to emphasise the tensions between incarceration and freedom, confinement and mobility, and oppression and liberation. The study will also reveal how the dynamics between striated and smooth spaces affect Catherine and Heathcliff's self-construction. Smooth space becomes essential for expressing themes such as "flight," "nomadism" and "becoming", showing how the characters navigate their identity crises and reconstruct their selves. This study therefore highlights the importance of spatial transgression in *Wuthering Heights*, providing deeper insights into the novel's thematic complexity and character development.

The Confinement, Patriarchy, and Religion in Wuthering Heights

Lysen and Pisters state that "[t]he smooth and the striated presents smoothness and striation as a conceptual pair for rethinking space as a complex interplay between nomadic forces and sedentary structures" (2012, p. 1). Striated space refers to fixed spaces created by national institutions that embody the principle of wholeness; it is a homogeneous space marked by quantitative diversity and hierarchical organisation (Shi, 2014, p. 94). This concept encompasses physical environments and systems characterised by uniformity, closed structures, and hierarchical organisation. Architectural forms, such as houses, cities, places of worship, and social institutions, frequently "reflect varying degrees of patriarchal bias in various societal and familial settings" (Gruber & Szołtysek, 2016, p. 135).

In *Wuthering Heights*, both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange symbolise striated space. These locations embody patriarchal authority, hierarchical organsation, and restrictive systems, reflecting the rigid structures and power dynamics described by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Confinement is defined as "the phenomenon of absence in the physical spectrum of those particles (fields) which are presenting the fundamental Lagrangian" (Simonov, 1996, p. 314). Catherine and Heathcliff experience a profound sense of imprisonment rather than protection within these settings. The oppressive atmosphere and inherent restrictions of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange contribute to their

entrapment. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue, "One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns or to utilize smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of striated space" (p. 407). Both residences reinforce this confinement as state apparatus elements and striated space embodiments. Catherine, for instance, is surrounded by the ornate constraints of Thrushcross Grange, a house that, despite its name suggesting elegance, proves to be equally confining. Brontë invites us to experience the eerie and foreboding nature of Wuthering Heights through Lockwood's initial impressions. The setting is depicted as cold, harsh, and inhospitable:

> Wuthering being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind blowing over the edge by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way as if craving alms of the sun. (Brontë, 2005, p. 4)

This depiction deepens the sense of confinement central to *Wuthering Heights*. The cyclones and tempests mirror the physical environment and echo the characters' intense passions and turbulent emotions. The ceaseless howling of the northern wind around Wuthering Heights, combined with its small windows, thick walls, and jagged rock formations, reinforces a feeling of isolation and entrapment. Brontë employs the harsh, unyielding nature of Wuthering Heights to symbolise the difficulties of human existence while the disruption of familial spaces reflects the transformation of social spaces.

We argue that neither Wuthering Heights nor Thrushcross Grange aligns with the ideal of a warm, domestic space. As Sim (2004) asserts, these settings are "not domestic spaces characterised by invitation, safety, or sanctuary" (p. 34). This reinforces our argument that both estates, far from offering security, embody structures of repression that constrain the physical and emotional freedom of their inhabitants. It is precisely this oppressive spatial dynamic that shapes the characters' fates and interpersonal conflicts, turning the estates into symbols of control and isolation. Brontë's depiction of Wuthering Heights starkly contrasts with the ideal home, incorporating Gothic elements and striated spaces that evoke a sense of confinement and desolation. Lockwood's initial description of Wuthering Heights further emphasises its inhospitable and oppressive nature: "The architect had the foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones" (Brontë, 2005, p. 4). These architectural features underscore the building's impenetrable and restrictive qualities, heightening the sense of confinement. Botting (2013) reinforces this view, arguing that the Gothic domestic space functions "as a prison rather than a sanctuary, a limited space constrained by a value system that privileges the male" (p. 58).

Wallace (2009) observes that the prison-like striated space embodies "both inherent imprisonment and metaphors for a broader system of confinement" (p. 29). Despite being Catherine and Heathcliff's childhood home, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange deviate from the ideal of a house as a protective refuge. Instead, they function as impregnable fortresses that impose repression and confinement. Contrary to the view of the home as a sanctuary, these estates evoke a pervasive sense of confinement and desolation. The architecture and spatial dynamics within these estates create an atmosphere of entrapment for Catherine and Heathcliff, reflecting their internal struggles and lack of freedom. This interplay between the

oppressive physical environment and the characters' personal experiences highlights how space becomes a tool of control and confinement, depriving them of solace and security.

The interplay between the natural landscape and familial space in *Wuthering Heights* underscores how industrialisation has eroded the rural ecological environment and destabilised traditional family structures (Wang, 2021, p. 13). Therborn (2004) describes patriarchy as "the rule of the father and the rule of the husband, in that order" (p. 13), emphasising the hierarchical control men exert over one another based on seniority within patrilineal and patrilocal communities. Joseph (1996) suggests that patriarchy fosters a "sense of selfhood that emphasises the connectedness of individuals" and produces "selves with fluid boundaries who defer to males and elders" (p. 18). Similarly, patriarchal dominance is evident in both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. These estates, governed by patriarchal norms, impose constraints on Catherine and Heathcliff, hindering their self-expression and aspirations. Within the confines of striated space, deviations from established norms are met with discipline, reinforcing patriarchal control.

Heathcliff's suffering as an adopted child illustrates his marginalised status. Fatmawati (2019) notes that Heathcliff's origins and his role within the patriarchal system of Wuthering Heights result in his isolation and disdain (p. 91). His identity as an abandoned juvenile is erased upon adoption and he faces increasing suppression within the patriarchal structure. His background as an orphan of gipsy descent exacerbates his mistreatment and exclusion. Similarly, Hindley's patriarchal authority intensifies the oppression after Mr. Earnshaw's death. Hindley's harsh treatment of Heathcliff and his control over Catherine, including physical punishments, reflect the enforcement of patriarchal power within Wuthering Heights (Brontë, 2005, p. 48). This control limits their freedom and identity, confining them within the estate's oppressive environment. At Thrushcross Grange, Catherine's behaviour and attire are regulated by patriarchal standards, further illustrating her confinement. Showalter (1985) critiques the idealised female role as one of submissiveness and self-sacrifice (p. 22). Catherine's transformation into a compliant figure at Thrushcross Grange represents a sacrifice of her true self for patriarchal approval, culminating in a restrictive marriage to Edgar.

Religion also contributes to Catherine and Heathcliff's self-imprisonment. Tytler (2007) observes that religion is depicted in "drab colours" and functions as a tool of repression within the confined space (p. 41). Heathcliff and Catherine are subjected to strict religious doctrines that penalise their independence and restrict their actions. Joseph's harsh religious views and maltreatment of Heathcliff further illustrate how religion enforces conformity and suppresses individual desires (Brontë, 2005, p. 44). Tytler (2007) also notes the pervasive role of religion in everyday life within *Wuthering Heights* (p. 42). Heathcliff and Catherine's natural inclination toward freedom on the moors is punished by the oppressive religious environment, which disciplines their bodies and spirits. Under the dual influences of patriarchy and religion, they are compelled to conform to restrictive ideologies, repressing their true selves within the confines of striated space.

The Moors, Dreams, Schizophrenia, and Self-Starvation in Wuthering Heights

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) assert that "smooth space always possesses greater deterritorialisation power than striated space" (p. 480). Characterised by the absence of rigid constraints, smooth space allows for freedom and new possibilities, serving as a force that "arrives from outside to break constraints and open new vistas" (p. 371). In *Wuthering Heights*, the moors, dreams, and the concept of schisophrenia represent smooth space, playing pivotal

roles in Heathcliff and Catherine's self-expression. We argue that Catherine and Heathcliff's key strategies for self-expression within this smooth space involve seeking freedom on the moors, expressing their true desires through dreams, and rebelling against patriarchal constraints through schizophrenia and self-starvation.

The moors are a critical smooth space where Catherine and Heathcliff reclaim their freedom and resist patriarchal and religious constraints. As Deleuze and Guattari (1996) note, "[t]o flight is to produce reality, to create life to find weapons" (p. 49). In the oppressive environments of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, societal and religious structures confine them. However, the moors provide a sanctuary where they can freely express their desires and identities. Marginalised and mistreated due to his orphaned status, Heathcliff finds solace in the moors. The wild and nomadic nature of the moorland, with its wind, ice, snow, thunder, and lightning, resonates with Heathcliff's desire for freedom. Thus, the moors symbolise liberty and offer an escape where both characters can express their true selves.

Catherine's yearning for self-expression on the moors stems from her inability to do so within the constraints of her gender role and the rigid boundaries of striated space. Her transformation during adolescence begins after she is injured and seeks refuge at Thrushcross Grange. Despite this, her marriage to Edgar further confines her to the limitations of striated space. Inman (2008) suggests that "Catherine's death can be interpreted as a symbolic return to nature, emphasising her yearning for the freedom and authenticity found on the moors" (p. 194). Catherine desires a lasting connection with the moors: "I shall never be there but once more, said the invalid; and then you shall leave me, and I shall remain for all eternity. Next spring, you will yearn to have me under this roof, and you will reflect that you were content today" (Brontë, 2005, p. 140). Even after her death, Catherine's spirit continues to wander the moors, reclaiming the freedom she was denied during her life, especially after her marriage.

As a wife, lady, and soon-to-be mother, Catherine's access to the moors is restricted by patriarchal norms. However, Catherine's situation differs; her marriage to Linton results in a stifling existence at Thrushcross Grange, which suffocates her. Gary Kelly (1992) describes domesticity as "including the idea of the home as a refuge from a hostile and competitive social world" (pp. 12-13). However, neither Wuthering Heights nor Thrushcross Grange provides a true refuge for Catherine, as both environments contribute to her sense of suffocation and torment.

Ferber (1999) argues that dreams "often foresee the future, and the connotations conveyed by dreams may be directly literal or expressed in vague symbols that require an interpreter" (p. 76). Dreams serve as a medium through which characters can express their deepest impulses and authentic selves. Within the confines of striated space, dreams provide a way to transcend these restrictions and explore uncharted realms of freedom and possibility. Like smooth spaces, dreams "are open, dynamic, and allow for transformation to occur" (Tamboukou, 2008, p. 360). A smooth space is characterised by its expansiveness, lack of hierarchical boundaries, and connection to the unconscious and desire, filled with power streams and potential for transformation. In *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff and Catherine use their dreams to escape the limitations imposed by patriarchal authority and religion within the striated environments of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Catherine, during her illness at Thrushcross Grange, reveals to Nelly a significant premonition, where she dreams of heaven but perceives it as alien and unwelcoming:

I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home, and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth, and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights, where I woke sobbing for joy. (Brontë, 2005, p. 84)

Catherine's dream transports her to the vast expanse of the heath atop Wuthering Heights, where she awakens with tears of delight. This dream symbolises her longing to return to the moors, which she associates with liberation and authenticity. The moors represent a space of freedom that starkly contrasts with the constraints of striated environments like Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Similarly, Heathcliff's humble origins create a significant social divide between him and Catherine, impeding his ability to express his profound affection and desires within rigid societal norms. Heathcliff's inability to convey the depth of his feelings to Catherine due to these societal constraints continues to torment him even after her death. His yearning to reconnect with Catherine transcends the boundaries of life and death, finding solace and expression in his dreams. Heathcliff believes that Catherine's presence endures beyond the grave and longs to be haunted by her spirit, which he perceives as a means to relive their profound connection. He vividly describes her ethereal presence:

When I sat in the house with Hareton, it seemed that on going out, I should meet her; when I walked on the moors, I should meet her coming in. When I went from home I hastened to return; she MUST be somewhere at the Heights, I was certain! […] I must open my lids to see. (Brontë, 2005, p. 301)

In this way, dreams serve as a conduit for characters like Catherine and Heathcliff to transcend their social and physical constraints, allowing them to experience freedom and connection within their unconscious desires. Demsey and Zimbardo (1978) argue that "human development seems to be the product of two streams of influence: what we are born with and what happens to us after we are born. Environment and experience help shape the growing individual, often modifying the effects of inborn qualities" (p. 140). Catherine's childhood image and Heathcliff's vivid memories of their shared happiness intensify his yearning for her. Heathcliff confides in Nelly that Catherine's image permeates all aspects of his existence, including nature and his thoughts.

In their analysis of capitalism and schizophrenia, Deleuze and Guattari discuss two distinct polarities of subliminal desire: paranoia and schizophrenia. Paranoia is characterised by a relentless pursuit of order, completeness, identity, and territorialisation, whereas schizophrenia is marked by a diffuse and nomadic nature, embodying pluralism, becoming, flux, fragmentation, and deterritorialisation. As Roberts (2007) notes, Deleuze and Guattari posit that schizophrenia is the process of the production of desire and desiring machines (pp. 114-127). Schizophrenia represents a deterritorialised mode of existence within striated space, finding its place in smooth space where it is liberated from the constraints of striated space, allowing for new visions. In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine employs schizophrenia and self-starvation as forms of resistance against patriarchal authority and as means of expressing her true self within the domain of smooth space. Within the striated space of her existence, Catherine's true self is constrained and dominated by patriarchal power and religious restrictions, preventing her from freely expressing herself and fulfilling her aspirations. She

uses schizophrenia as a way to escape the constraints and oppression of patriarchal authority and religion, thereby deterritorialising her repressed personality.

Catherine's resistance against patriarchal authority is further manifested through self-starvation. Her acts of self-starvation and manifestations of schizophrenia are both acts of self-expression and defiance against the oppressive dominance of patriarchal power within the striated space. The motif of illness is intricately connected to self-starvation and schizophrenia in *Wuthering Heights*. For instance, Catherine expresses her intent to break others' hearts by breaking her own: "I am in danger of being seriously ill. I wish it may prove true... I will try to break their hearts by breaking my own" (Brontë, 2005, pp. 121-122). The illness depicted in the novel embodies intense emotions and serves as a means of self-expression, allowing Catherine's authentic self to communicate through her suffering.

The Flight, Nomadism, and Becoming in Wuthering Heights

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explain that "[s]mooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space" (p. 474). According to their concepts in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the notions of "flight," "nomadism," and "becoming" illuminate how Catherine and Heathcliff transcend the constraints of striated space and embrace the liberating potential of smooth space for their self-construction. They assert, "[t]o leave, to escape, is to trace a line... The line of flight is deterritorialisation" (p. 36). By adopting the flight strategy, Catherine and Heathcliff transcend the limitations of striated space, using windows as passageways to enter the expansive, liberating realm of smooth space.

As Ringrose (2011) notes, "[l]ines of flight are not magical escapes" (p. 603). Instead, they are complex processes marked by intricate interconnections and subtle movements at a molecular level (Beddoes, 1996). The line of flight should be seen not as mere evasion but as a dynamic process of creation and deterritorialisation. It represents the liberation of possibilities and the pursuit of freedom, serving as a powerful resistance to centralised authority. Catherine and Heathcliff undertake a transformative journey through windows, breaking free from societal norms and conventions. Deleuze and Guattari (1996) argue that "[t]he single greatest mistake in thinking about a line of flight is to think about the flight from life... Instead, to take flight is to produce reality, to create life, and to find weapons" (p. 49). This flight allows them to explore new horizons, generate novel ideas, and embrace transformative experiences, propelling them into a boundless domain and facilitating the birth of new realities.

In *Wuthering Heights*, the concept of flight represents Catherine and Heathcliff's escape from the confines of striated space into the liberating realm of smooth space. Catherine's final moments illustrate this as she asks Nelly to open the window, symbolising her wish to transcend her imposed limitations. After her death, Catherine metaphorically takes flight through the window beside her bed, moving beyond the boundaries of space and time. Similarly, Heathcliff, guided by Catherine's apparition, escapes through the bedroom window, transitioning from the restrictive confines of striated space to the boundless expanse of smooth space.

Newman (2018) notes that "Heathcliff and Catherine are reunited under the earth and have left it to wander through the landscape as they did as carefree children" (p. 213). Their escape through windows into the vast moors signifies a transcendence of their earthly existence. The fragile and transparent nature of windows allows them to break free from restrictive boundaries, facilitating liberation and self-discovery. Deleuze's notion of nomadic thought, involving constant geographical and mental transformation, is crucial to their departure from

the constraints of striated space (Kang, 2014, p. 70). Nomadism, as described by Deleuze (1987), involves being "distributed in a smooth space: The nomad occupies, inhabits, holds that space: that is his territorial principle" (p. 403). This approach to space allows for the transgression of traditional boundaries, enabling characters like Catherine and Heathcliff to escape societal constraints and embrace new possibilities.

Chen Dengjie (2022) asserts that:

> Becoming involves a continuous movement between virtual space and reality. In Deleuze's philosophy, the becoming movement represents the mutual transformation and generation between virtual and real space. 'Becoming,' like desire, is a form of flow that seeks new connections and generates new space through its boundary. It is a process from virtual space to real space, where the world is generated in this transformative process. (p. 26)

This notion of becoming is reflected in Catherine and Heathcliff's journey as they persistently evolve and transform, breaking free from their imposed constraints to embrace new, liberating realities. Their ghostly apparitions exemplify this transition, transcending the boundaries of striated space. Gilbert and Gubar (2020) argue that Catherine and Heathcliff are "alternate selves, and only by merging can they construct a complete self" (p. 246). In their resistance to the oppressive patriarchal structure of Hindley's tyranny and the rigid social conventions represented by the Lintons, Catherine and Heathcliff engage in a process of double becoming. Catherine's expression of this transformation reveals her struggle and ultimate aspiration for unity:

> My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning; my great thought in living is himself 〔…〕 Time will change it, I am well aware, as winter changes the trees, my love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath 〔…〕 Nelly, I am Heathcliff [emphasis added], he is always, always in my mind. (Brontë, 2005, p. 86)

This process of becoming subtly allows a work of art to achieve its full potential, embracing vibrant possibilities and the dynamism of life. Through continuous deterritorialisation, the artwork transcends its confines and expands its horizons. Catherine's transformation into a reflection of Heathcliff symbolises her self-fulfilment and affirmation. Their separation renders them incomplete and their ultimate demise serves as a means to overcome these limitations. Their transition into an ethereal existence represents the realisation of their eternal unity. Catherine and Heathcliff's final union on the moors signifies their liberation from the constraints of striated space, achieving absolute freedom and eternal love, which are central to their self-construction. By merging into a unified whole, they embody deterritorialisation, rejecting the oppressive principles of striated space and fully actualising their process of self-construction.

CONCLUSION

Deleuze and Guattari emphasise that "it is more common for a group, an individual, to function as a flight line; he creates the flight line, not follows it; instead, he is a living weapon – he

forged it, not stole it" (Yin, 2022, p. 152). In *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë leverages her literary skill and personal insights as powerful instruments to challenge the patriarchal and religious constraints of 19th-century British society. She transforms these limitations into sources of creativity, using them within her narrative to transcend boundaries and explore liberation. Brontë integrates spatial concepts into her story, illustrating how the confinement, patriarchal control and ecclesiastical repression in Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange contribute to Catherine and Heathcliff's self-imposed restrictions. The interplay between striated and smooth spaces profoundly impacts their process of self-construction. Within the realm of smooth space, concepts such as "flight," "nomadism," and "becoming" are essential for Catherine and Heathcliff to reconstruct their identities. Their love is a unifying and liberating force, resisting fragmentation throughout the novel. Brontë depicts their love as a catalyst for achieving a liberated and autonomous whole. As they overcome the obstacles separating them from their true selves, their eternal reunion symbolises liberation from patriarchal and religious constraints. In the expansive realm of smooth space, Catherine and Heathcliff regain control of their identities, achieving absolute freedom and eternal love. This broad space satisfies their spiritual needs and reconstructs their sense of self. Future research on *Wuthering Heights* could investigate other characters, settings, and events to understand further how the dynamic between smooth and striated spaces influences self-construction and relationships in the novel.

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About the authors

Zhixing Nie, a PhD candidate in English Literature at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, specializes in Victorian Women's Literature, Trauma Studies, American Ethnic Literature, Postcolonial Studies, Anglophone-Caribbean Literature, and Literature and Translation Studies. His recent article, *"Unveiling Jane Eyre: Space Escape and the Construction of Subjectivity through a Foucauldian Lens,"* appeared in the *Journal of Literary Studies*.

Hardev Kaur, PhD, the corresponding and co-author, is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research focuses on African and Caribbean Literature, Postcolonial Literature, Contemporary World Literature in English, and Trauma Literature. She has published articles in journals such as the *Journal of Literary Studies*, *Pertanika*, *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, *3L*, and *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*.