

THE HETEROTOPIC RANCH: A FOUCAULDIAN READING OF JOHN STEINBECK'S *OF MICE AND MEN*

Soumaya BOUACIDA
University of Skikda, Algeria
soumayabouacida@gmail.com

Mohamed BOUSSEKAA
University of Skikda, Algeria
mohamedboussekaa@gmail.com

&

Bochra BOUTERAA
University of Skikda, Algeria
bouchranestou@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper explores John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937) from the perspective of Michel Foucault's heterotopia (1967). Foucault defined a heterotopia as a space which is separated from ordinary places, yet it reflects the realities these places belong to. Therefore, this study illustrates how the ranch in Steinbeck's novella constitutes a heterotopic space to mirror the American society. First, the gathered people in the ranch are different from the norms of society, a mentally-disabled Lennie or a maimed Candy, which makes it a "heterotopia of deviation". Secondly, Foucault said that heterotopias might "change their function over time"; the function of the ranch, which is a place for farming and agriculture, change over time to serve new purposes such as a home or a refuge. The third principle of heterotopia shown in the ranch is the existence of "incompatible spaces" within its space. Moreover, the principle of the relationship between heterotopia and time is reflected in the temporary existence of the ranch in the journey of workers like George and Lennie. Next, the ranch has its own "system of opening and closing" as it is exclusive to certain people only such as George and Lennie who needed a work permit to get there. Finally, the ranch is what Foucault called a "heterotopia of compensation" as its role is to portray an organized safe place in contrast with the messy dangerous reality of American society during the Depression.

Keywords: Heterotopia, Six principles, Foucault, Space and Ranch.

LE RANCH HÉTÉROTOPIQUE : UNE LECTURE FOUCALDIENNE DE L'OUVRAGE DE JOHN STEINBECK *OF MICE AND MEN*

Résumé : Cet article vise à explorer *Des souris et des hommes* de John Steinbeck (1937) du point de vue de l'Hétérotopie de Michel Foucault (1967). Foucault a défini une hétérotopie comme un espace séparé des lieux ordinaires, mais qui reflète les réalités auxquelles ces lieux appartiennent. Par conséquent, cette étude illustre comment le Ranch dans la nouvelle de Steinbeck constitue un espace hétérotopique à l'image de la société américaine de l'époque. Ceci sera réalisé en analysant les principes des hétérotopies présents dans la nouvelle. Premièrement, les personnes rassemblées dans le ranch sont différentes des normes de la société, un Lennie handicapé mental ou une Candy mutilée, ce qui en fait une "hétérotopie de la déviation". Deuxièmement, Foucault a déclaré que les hétérotopies peuvent « changer de fonction avec le temps » ; la fonction du ranch, qui est un lieu d'élevage et d'agriculture, change au fil du temps pour servir de nouveaux objectifs tels qu'une maison ou un refuge. Le troisième principe d'hétérotopie montré dans le ranch est l'existence d'"espaces incompatibles" dans son espace, par exemple, pour George c'est l'espace où il réalise ses rêves tandis que pour la femme de Curley c'est l'espace où ses rêves meurent. De plus, le principe de la relation entre l'hétérotopie et le temps se reflète dans l'existence temporaire du ranch dans le parcours de travailleurs comme George et Lennie vers la réalisation de leurs rêves. Ensuite, le ranch a son propre "système d'ouverture et de fermeture" car il est exclusif à certaines personnes seulement, comme George et Lennie qui avaient besoin d'un permis de travail pour y entrer. Enfin, le ranch est ce que Foucault

a appelé une « hétérotopie de compensation » car son rôle est de dépeindre un lieu organisé et sûr en contraste avec la réalité désordonnée et dangereuse de la société américaine pendant la Dépression.

Mots-clés : Hétérotopie, Six principes, Foucault, Espace et Ranch.

Introduction

“I think that I would like to write the story of this whole valley, the little towns and all the farms and the ranches in the wilder hills” John Steinbeck wrote to his friend George Albee in 1933. Commenting on this excerpt, David A. Laws explains how these towns, farms, and ranches provided the settings and experiences that have inspired the author's stories. He further maintains how Steinbeck's hometown of Salinas inspired *East of Eden*, and how the sugar farms and fields, where the writer worked part-time jobs as a teenager, provided the material for *Of Mice and Men* and *Tortilla Flat*. Laws continues to show how almost every one of Steinbeck's works is related to a place he grew up in or lived in or a landscape he visited in that region of California. From her part, Mimi Reisel Gladstein(2014) tells us about Steinbeck's “Edenic vision” and how the author has used the archetype of a Garden of Eden throughout his major works, and particularly *Of Mice and Men*, *Grapes of Wrath*, and *East of Eden*. For her, having been raised in the “rich and fertile Salinas Valley”, Steinbeck developed this vision of a rich, bountiful land that his characters long to get to in order to enjoy the same life Adam and Eve wanted in the heaven of Eden. In *Of Mice and Men* in particular, this Edenic vision is represented by George and Lennie's dream of their little farm, a space where they can be rich, safe, and accessible. Gladstein also identifies a substitute Eden where the novel opens and ends, which is a small clearing among the trees by the Salinas Riverbank. This beautiful and quiet location is a haven that Lennie can run to from the dangers of the outside world. Additionally, writing about symbols in *Of Mice and Men*, Peter Lisca (2006) mentions the significance of the “little spot by the river” that “symbolizes a retreat from the world to a primaevial innocence” (cited in *Bloom's Guides*, 2006, p.69) while the darkening mountains for John Timmerman symbolize the mystery of death in that same novel. This symbolism shows how vital places are in Steinbeck's works. Once space and spatiality become major components of literary studies, critics started reading John Steinbeck's works from other perspectives. In “In Between a Past and Future Town”: Home, The Unhomely, and “The Grapes of Wrath», Frank Eugene Cruz (2007) for instance, drawing on the theoretical writings of postmodern critics like Homi Bhabha, looks at the different places inhabited by the characters in *The Grapes of Wrath*. More pointedly, he demonstrates how some places represent “home” while others are “unhomely”, and how such representations leave impact on the text and its lasting relevance. On the other hand, Terrell Tebbetts (2014) offers a feminist reading of the short story “*The Chrysanthemums*”. He investigates two different kinds of spaces: men's competitive spaces and women's competitive spaces. He maintains that male public spaces are well-protected while women are confined to domestic spaces and that the struggle for competitive public space defines each gender. Verónica Maksymiw (2017), in her study of *Of Mice and Men*, highlights the power of the bunkhouse to subdue the workers and establish discipline. Space, for her, is the new means of educating people. This paper is another study of space in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* to prove that Steinbeck was really a mind ahead of his time and a forerunner of postmodernism. The latter has witnessed the rise of authors, literary critics and, most importantly, thinkers and philosophers who have freed themselves

from the constraints of historicism and acknowledged the value of space. Additionally, postmodernists maintain that the relationship between space and the social life in our contemporary times is a twofold. Space produces and affects our social relationships, but at the same time, it is a product of our human experience. Space is no longer static, but it is dynamic, flexible, and shaped by human interactions. Steinbeck is one of the first authors who share these notions on space and spatiality with postmodernist thinkers. In this paper, *Of Mice and Men* will be interpreted from the perspective of one of the postmodernists who led the movement of the “Spatial Turn”, Michel Foucault. His concept of “Heterotopia” will be applied to Steinbeck’s novella to prove the significance of space in this work published in 1937.

Of Mice and Men is one of John Steinbeck’s most successful novels and a proof of his writing genius. When he was working on it, the title he had in mind was “Something That Happened”. That something was no less than a ranch hand murdering his friend because he can no longer control his behavior. These two friends, George and Lennie, are lifelong companions who arrive at a ranch in California to work during the Depression Era, but they were not like everyone else in the ranch. They just wanted to save some money to buy their own piece of land where they can be the masters of themselves. However, that place proved to be the graveyard of their plans when Lennie lost control of his actions and accidentally killed the only woman in the farm. This puts the final nail in the coffin of George and Lennie’s shared dreams and the former’s bullet in the latter’s head. The obvious contrast between the nonchalance of the title and the awfulness of the murder is meant by Steinbeck to show us how insignificant individuals’ lives are in the face of Life itself and its circumstances. “You hadda, George. I swear you hadda. Come on with me.” (Steinbeck, 1937, p.107) said Slim, one of the other ranchers, to George right after the latter shot his friend to mean that he had to put an end to Lennie’s crazy behavior since no one could control his actions and that he had to wake up from their shared dream of the piece of land because dreams rarely come true in reality. In order to represent these circumstances in the best effective manner, the writer uses the space of the ranch, a space where ninety per cent of the story takes place. In the Salinas Valley ranch, Steinbeck has brilliantly constructed a microcosm of American society of the thirties. Importantly, the space of the ranch will be interpreted from the perspective of Foucault’s heterotopiain order to provide a thorough reading of those circumstances and their impact on the lives and dreams of the characters.

1. Heterotopia

The concept of heterotopia originated from Foucault’s passion with space and place and their significance in our contemporary social life. Together with earlier postmodernist thinkers like Bachelard, Lefebvre, and others, he theorized for the ‘Spatial Turn’ movement that was dominant in the second part of the twentieth century, where space and spatiality overtook time and temporality as the main focus of humanities. Foucault argued that the space where our lives, histories, and time are spent is not a blank emplacement, but it is filled with a set of social relationships that affect and shape our lives and which are organized in well-defined “heterogeneous” places. Places such as the museum, the military school, or the cemetery...etc., share for Foucault the property of representing society while being different from its common spaces, and thus contesting its settings. In shaping his perspective of space, Foucault (1984) has initiated his conceptual introduction by referring to the concept of Utopia. His vision on the concept equals in meaning an imaginary space with no concrete

existence of the actual place. Utopia denotes a place of interrelated relations with other places on the basis of imagination. Foucault argues, in this context, that “utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces” (p.3) or, in other words, “a utopia...is a placeless place.” (p.4) Heterotopia, on the other hand, represents a different space that exists within the real world unlike a utopia. On that basis, various studies adopt the analysis of heterotopia by categorizing it as a special place created for certain reasons. In articulating the distinctive functionality of utopia and heterotopia, Foucault takes the example of a mirror. On the one hand, he claims that the mirror is an embodiment of a utopia in the sense that it allows for a second-handed visualization of the unreal place while reflected as an image. One can say that the reflection of the mirror represents the bigger picture of a utopia, Foucault explains:

In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. (4)

On the other hand, the heterotopic representation of the mirror is different from what precedes. From a heterotopic standpoint, the mirror symbolises the real realm an individual occupies. It exists as the real item through which a person is able to visualise his presence and to observe the existence of the space surrounding him. In order to determine exactly which places are heterotopic and which are not, Foucault has provided six principles. To begin with, the first principle reveals that almost every single society constitutes its own heterotopias. This is why there exist multiple forms of heterotopias and probably none of them is universal. But, Foucault tells us that these other spaces can be categorized into two main kinds. First, the heterotopias of crisis which are spaces reserved for individuals who are in a crisis and cannot remain within the ordinary space of society. For example, we have the retirement home for old people. The second kind is called the heterotopia of deviation. This space is reserved for individuals who deviate from or are unable to follow the norms of society such as the madhouse. Furthermore, the second principle concerns the function of a heterotopia. Although each heterotopia has its specific function, society can make such heterotopia alter its function and start re-functioning in new ways. The cemetery in Western society is a fine example of that. Up until the XIX century, cemeteries were seen as a mere burial space where people get rid of their dead, but, from that point forward, the cemetery took a new perspective. Society now considers the grave as a resting place for its members and devoted a personal well-decorated space for each one.

The third principle of a heterotopic place is its ability to juxtapose or encompass with its space other different spaces that are incompatible with each other. Foucault provides the example of the ancient Persian garden which is used to be divided into four separated spaces: the north, the south, the east, and the west. Each space had plants and ornaments that differ totally from those in the neighboring spaces. Moreover, the fourth principle addresses the relationship between the heterotopia and time. A space is fully heterotopic when a section of society does not follow the temporal arrangements of the rest of society. This is why a cemetery is highly heterotopic since time in it ceases to function. Again, we may find two kinds of heterotopias according to their relationship with time. The first one deals with the accumulation of time or an accumulation of human experience over time in one specific space like in the case of the museum or the library. The second one is the heterotopias of passing time like the fair or the holiday village. These heterotopias are temporary spaces for human

experience. Additionally, principle number five says that heterotopias have their own system of opening and closing and that entering or getting out of a heterotopia is not available for everyone. Instead, we are obliged to enter that space as it is the case with a prison or military base, or we are only allowed inside once we accomplish a set of rites or gestures as it is the case with the act of washing that precedes entering a religious venue. In other words, individuals get the illusion of entering, but, in reality, they are not inside.

Finally, the sixth principle deals with the function of heterotopias in regard to the rest of space in which human life goes on. Again, heterotopias from this perspective can be of two opposed kinds. On the one hand, a heterotopia is a space of “illusion” where, once inside, individuals would see the rest of their real space as more illusionary. For instance, we have the houses of now-illegal pleasures like drugs ‘consumption or prostitution. On the other hand, a heterotopia is a space of “compensation” where people run to compensate or make up for the shortcomings of their usual space. In this type, individuals are in a sort of a breakup with their previous spaces, and this is exemplified in the space of a colony where most ancient colonies’ aim was to compensate for the “economic” shortcomings of a society. Foucault gives the example of the English colonies in North America where Puritans ran to found a new society empty of the deviations of the Protestant Church. This article will follow each one of these principles separately to see how the ranch in *Of Mice and men* is heterotopic.

1.1 The First principle

The first principle reveals that heterotopias are universal and can be found in every society in two major forms: those of ‘Crisis’ which are spaces that “...comprises privileged or sacred or forbidden places that are reserved for the individuals who find themselves in a state of crisis with respect to the society” (Foucault, 1967, p. 3), and those of ‘Deviance’ which are “occupied by individuals whose behavior deviates from the current average or standard” (Foucault, 1967, p. 4). Here, Foucault differentiates between spaces according to the individuals who occupy them. Considering the ranch in *Of Mice and Men*, we find that it is a heterotopia of crisis as it is occupied by workers who are running from the dire economic conditions in America. “Americans had a folk tradition of returning to the countryside when the cities went into a slump” (p. 46) says Eric Rauchway (2008) in his *The Great Depression and the New Deal: A Very Short Introduction*. These economic conditions together with their social and psychological side effects on Americans are considered the biggest crisis in the history of the United States of America. It all started with the stock market crash in 1929 which threw the whole country’s economy in depression, a situation known as “The Great Depression” that lasted throughout the 1930s, the decade in which *Of Mice and Men* was written. Consequently, the unemployment rate rose to 25 per cent and a permanent job was a quasi-impossible dream.

In a conversation between the two protagonists of this novella, George reminds Lennie how difficult it was for them to get the job in that ranch: “You remember settin’ in that gutter on Howard Street and watchin’ that blackboard?”; “you remember about us goin’ into Murray and Ready’s, and they give us work cards and bustickets?” (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 6). It is noticeable that they were in miserable conditions waiting for their luck to turn around. Besides, they were very broke to the extent that the job agency had to give them bus tickets to get to their new jobs. But, the most obvious reflection of the crisis is the dream of owning land. This was the driving motive of

George, Lennie, and the other men who passed by the Soledad ranch. "Iseenhunderds of men come by on the road an' on the ranches ... an' every damn one of 'em's got a little piece of land in his head" (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 74), said Candy to George when the latter told him why he and Lennie were travelling and working together. The reason was, as with all those affected by the crisis, to achieve economic stability and to escape poverty. A piece of land was for all those landless people a secure source of livelihood, less hard work, and a relief from tough and mostly unfair employers. When talking about his dream place, George told Lennie: "We'd jus' live there. We'd belong there. There wouldn't be no more runnin' round the country and gettin' fed by a Jap cook. No, sir, we'd have our own place where we belonged and not sleep in no bunk house" (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 59). These words, said passionately, portray what hardships and suffering the two men, and the other millions of Americans they represent, faced during that period.

1.2. *The Second Principle*

The second principle has to do with the function of a heterotopia. Foucault said that a society has the ability, along with its development, to make an existing heterotopia disappear or create a new heterotopia out of an already existing space. He gave the example of the cemetery in European Christian countries: "In western culture the cemetery has practically always existed. But it has undergone important changes" (p. 5). The cemetery used to be a simple burial ground inside the church where individual tombs had no consideration, but, from the beginning of the 19th century, societies began to move cemeteries to the outskirts of their cities. By doing so, they created a heterotopia from the space of the cemetery. The cemetery became an extension of society where individuals continued their afterlife journey in a personalized tomb where they could still hold ties with family and friends and vice versa. This principle is suitable for the ranch in *Of Mice and Men*. Ranches were traditionally a place exclusive to farming and agriculture where the owners did all the work by themselves or with the help of owned slaves. But, during the Great Depression, which is the case for George and Lennie's ranch, ranch life witnessed major changes. These changes were multiplied after the Dust Bowl catastrophe when severe dust storms hit the central regions of the United States causing drought and damaging crops and farming lands. Consequently, inhabitants of those regions had to migrate to the Western regions of the country, especially to the fertile rich lands of California. In his book on the Great Depression, Rauchway (2008) talks about this movement: "As they did before the Depression, many migrants went West, to California, where the job market might be" (p. 90). All these factors transformed the nature and function of the ranch; it became a haven and a safe space for impoverished migrants who moved to live on a permanent basis. Again, Rauchway (2008) mentions the relevance of farms at that time, saying: "Farm jobs traditionally enjoyed a resistance to the problems that plagued cities, and in the Depression many Americans did seek out the security of a subsistence farm." (p. 87) From these words, one can see what agricultural spaces had become in the eyes of Americans. For this sake, Steinbeck set his story in a ranch because he realizes that in that space he can recreate a sample of US society of the time. Accordingly, George says: "Guys like us, that work on ranches... They don't belong no place. They come to a ranch an' work up a stake and then they go into town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch" (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 15). Evidently, the ranch is their surrogate home.

1.3 The Third Principle

The third principle says that a heterotopia has the ability to juxtapose or bring together in one real place a set of incompatible spaces. As an example, we have the cinema or the theatre which have the ability to represent as much different spaces or sites as possible in the same place. Going back to the ranch in *Of Mice and Men*, it is amazing to see how such a place can represent a different space for each character of the story. Beginning with the protagonists, George and Lennie, the ranch, for them, represents a space of opportunity and hope that can lead them to freedom. George's plan to realize his and Lennie's American dream relies on the Soledad ranch. It is the place where they could put together the money they need to buy their own piece of land. Consequently, the ranch is for them a happy positive space despite the harsh treatment and difficult conditions. And even though they were faced with difficult conditions like the miserable bunkhouse, the demanding work, or the bullying of Lennie by the boss' son, they do not despair and keep to their plan. In a conversation with another rancher, George told him "I'm stayin' right here. I don't want to get mixed up in nothing. Lennie and me got to make a stake." (Steinbeck, 1937, p.55) This shows that the ranch represents for him the path to their dream, and that he does not want to be distracted by any other issues.

On the other hand, if we look at the only female character in the story, Curley's wife, we find that the ranch represents for her the exact opposite of what it does to George and Lennie. For her, the ranch is the burial ground of her dreams, a miserable place where she is locked in. This woman is a young girl who has aspirations to be a cinema star, but life has decided another fate for her, and she ends with Curley who treats her badly and confines her to the ranch the whole time. Therefore, the ranch represents, for her, a space of despair where her personality, hopes, and dreams are buried. This is evident in her conversation with the ranch hands. In Crooks' room, she says: "Think I don't like to talk to somebody ever' once in a while? Think I like to stick in that house afa time?" (Steinbeck, 1937, p.78) From these words, one may realize how lonely and miserable she is in that place though she has a husband. And in her last ever conversation, she has told Lennie: "I tell you I ain't used to livin' like this. I coulda made somethin' of myself." She said darkly" (Steinbeck, 1937, p.88). Here, she talks about her aspirations and how she could have achieved them, but, maybe, her dark tone in that conversation is a sign that the ranch was always a space of failure and misery for her.

Another incompatible space within the ranch could be seen in the room where the stable groom, an African American man, lives. Stereotypes like 'Stable buck' as well as 'nigger' embed the difference between him and the other ranchers; both terms are intentionally employed by the author to represent the segregation suffered by African-Americans in a white American society. While the other inhabitants of the ranch have ordinary rooms, the stable groom stays in the harness room where the stable tools are kept. Accordingly, Steinbeck (1937) writes: "...had his bunk in the harness room; a little shed that leaned off the wall of the barn. . . a range of medicine bottles, both for Himself and for the horses." (p.67) This association of the African-American man with animals represents the unfair treatment of the African American ethnicity within US society. However, the real incompatibility between the space of Crooks and the rest of the space in the ranch could be seen in these two passages: "And he had books, too; a tattered dictionary and a mauled copy of the California civil code for 1905. There were battered magazines and a few dirty books on a special shelf over his bunk" (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 68) and when George says: "An' I ain't so bright neither, or I wouldn't be buckin' barley for my fifty and found. If I was bright, if I was even a little bit smart, I'd have my

own little place..." (Steinbeck, 1937, p.40). Crooks' room is of an educated and smart person within a space of non-educated people who are supposedly better than him. Again, these differences or incompatibility between the stable groom and the rest of the ranch is meant by the author to challenge the social setting and show that although people of color are discriminated, they could be better than the privileged white people.

1.4 The Fourth Principle

The fourth principle touches on the relation between a heterotopic space and time. Again, Foucault differentiates between two types of heterotopias depending on their connection to time. There are heterotopias that are related to the accumulation of time where human experience keeps on piling up. And, on the other hand, we have heterotopias where time is transitory because human experience with them is temporary. For the first type, Foucault gives the example of the museum with their function of preserving human culture for eternity. As for the second type, there is the example of the fair where people celebrate for a temporary while, and, then, they go back to their usual lives. Drawing on this principle, the ranch in *Of Mice and Men* is again a heterotopic space. It combines both aspects of connection to time, again depending on what the ranch represents for each character. Principally, as it is the case for George and Lennie, the ranch is a short-term stop in the journey of migrant job seekers toward salvation during the harsh conditions of the Great Depression. Their time in the Soledad ranch, or any other ranch they tried before, depends on the volume of work there. Once the job is done, they go back to their lives and struggles. This is similar to the fair in Foucault's example; the ranch represents a "chronic heterotopia", a temporary space for survival, which is apparent in George's statement mentioned earlier: "Guys like us, that work on ranches... and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch." (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 15) From this quote, one may notice how hands are susceptible to change workplaces quickly. For other characters in the story, the ranch is a permanent space. Their lives, social interactions, and future are bound to that space. The most obvious case is that of Crooks, the African-American stable buck. Being a slave means that his whole life belongs to his owners, and that there is no way out. His time and experience are accumulated and piled up in the space of the ranch. People and conditions may change, and he remains a constant witness of all this. Another character for whom the ranch is a space of permanency is Curley's wife since she died right there. The woman has been a prisoner of that space; she is never allowed to leave and reach out to the rest of society till death. This reflects the highest heterotopic space for Foucault which is the cemetery. The ranch represents her cemetery and her eternity.

1.5 The Fifth Principle

The fifth principle for heterotopias maintains that they have a system of opening and closing, which isolates them from the environment surrounding them. In other words, heterotopias are exclusive sites that should not be as accessible as other public sites. This exclusivity is ensured by either a permission to get into that space, an obligation that is enforced upon the individual as it is the case for prisons, or a rite of purification in order to gain access. Two of those criteria of exclusivity are set in the ranch of *Of Mice and Men*. Apart from the owners of the ranch, workers who live in the ranch need a permission to enter and work. In times of difficult economic conditions, ranches have become a dream workplace among migrants, and not anybody could get

a job there. George and Lennie have needed work cards to get access to that ranch. But even with cards, George has been afraid that the boss would not accept them because of Lennie's mental issue; that is why, he has kept insisting on Lennie to stay silent when they meet the boss. This proves that entering the ranch is reserved only to skilled efficient workers. Moreover, throughout the story, workers have been always afraid to get fired or "get the can" (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 30), which proves that being in the ranch is very important. However, staying in the ranch is an obligation for some of the characters in the story which made their life miserable, and they felt like being in a prison. It is the case of Curley's wife and Crooks. These two, who represented two marginalized groups of people which are women and colored people, were thought of as objects owned by white males and could not leave the ranch.

1.6 *The Sixth Principle*

The sixth principle is considered by Foucault the most significant one since it deals with how heterotopias represent the other spaces that exist in a society. Following this representation, heterotopias can be divided into two types. There are heterotopias of illusion, which create an illusionary image that counters or challenges the rest of the spaces of human life. Furthermore, there are heterotopias of compensation that are considered as a real space which is "as perfect, meticulous, and well-arranged as ours is disordered, ill-conceived, and in a sketchy state." (Foucault, 1984, p.6). These heterotopias compensate for the shortcomings of the ordinary places of human life. In *Of Mice and Men*, this principle is reflected through the ranch and its representation of the real spaces of American life. This will be a commentary on the power of literature to represent and challenge the reality of people. In the Soledad ranch, Steinbeck was successful in creating a microcosm of American society of the Thirties. And through the events and social interactions within that space, he pointed out what was wrong with that society. The unique relationship between George and Lennie was a reminder that people should trust each other in order to fight loneliness and selfishness. "Because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you" (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 15), said Lennie to his companion to remind him that they cannot get in trouble because they have each other. Also, the way George was taking care of Lennie despite his mental disability and all the trouble he caused is a challenge to a society that does not care for the sick and treated them badly as Curley did with Lennie. Another objection in the story concerns the situation of colored people in American society. This is represented by the African-American stable worker. Steinbeck told readers, through Crooks, that blacks are normal people who can work hard and get an education, and who would like to be a natural part of social life. This is shown in Crooks' presentation of himself "I was born right here in California...the white kids come to play at our place, an' sometimes I even went to play with them, and some of them was pretty nice" (Steinbeck, 1937, p.71). The situation of woman was also dealt with in this novella. The only female character of the story didn't even have a name and was only mentioned as a man's wife. This is to say that woman weren't thought of as individuals but considered a kind of a property of their male relatives.

Moreover, as said earlier, Foucault followed the path of other thinkers who advocated the social value of space. Among those is the other French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1884 – 1962) who was ahead of Foucault in working on space. One of Bachelard's ideas fits with the fifth principle of heterotopias. Foucault explained that sometimes presence in a heterotopic space can be only an illusion; one is inside the space but does not really belong there: "Other heterotopias ... have the appearance

of pure and simple openings, although they usually conceal curious exclusions” (p.6). This explanation coincides with Bachelard’s perception of the “window”. In a house, which is the space of the inside, the window is our opening into the space of the outside. Oppositely, when being outside, the window is our opening into the inside of the house. Windows represent the illusion of being in one space where in reality we are in the other. So, we can see how the space of the ranch is heterotopic by observing its windows. For instance, in a conversation between Crooks and Lennie, the first has been complaining about his loneliness and how he has got nobody to talk to in his room, and while he was doing so “Crooks was looking across the room now, looking toward the window.” (Steinbeck, 1937, p. 74). The significance of looking toward the window is to show that Crooks longs for a space outside his current prison where he could get freedom and companionship.

Conclusion

Steinbeck has successfully conveyed a heterotopic vision of the ranch that is a vivid representation of the American society at the Great Depression time. Though space has been given more attention in the postmodern era, Steinbeck was prior to highlight the dynamicity and the social significance of space in the majority of his works, mainly *Of Mice and Men*. The six principles of heterotopia that have been elaborated by Michel Foucault are coincidentally present in Steinbeck’ ranch as if he was reading the mind of Foucault when he wrote his novella. Throughout this spatial analysis of the novella, one may deduce that Steinbeck is a writer of all times and all ages. Though he belongs to the realist movement, his works are still subject to different modes of contemporary criticism. Amidst the various spatial notions, the focus of this paper has been directed to Foucault’s heterotopias, but the door is still open to Steinbeck critics to read *Of Mice and Men* or other Steinbeck’s works from the perspective of other spatial theories for Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja and others.

References

- Bachelard, G. (1994). *Poetics of Space*. Translated by John R. Stilgoe and Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Cruz, F. E. (2007). In Between a Past and Future Town: Home, The Unhomely, and "The Grapes of Wrath." *Steinbeck Review*, 4(2), 2007, 52-75.
- Foucault, M. (1967). Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias, in *Architecture /Movement/ Continuité*. Translated by Jay Miskowiec (1984). Paris: France
- Gladstein, M. R. (2014). Edenic Ironies: Steinbeck's Conflicted Vision, *The Steinbeck Review*, 11(1), 1-13.
- Laws, D. A. (2009). The Settings for the Stories: A Tour of John Steinbeck's Valley of the World, *Steinbeck Review*, 6(1), 27-43.
- Lisca, P. (2006). Symbols in *Of Mice and Men*". In *Bloom's Guides: John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men*. Edited by Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers.
- Maksymiw, V. (2017). The Docile Bodies & Vulnerability in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, *Blue Gum*, 21(4), 43-52.
- Rauchway, E. (2008). *The Great Depression and New Deal: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: OUP USA.
- Steinbeck, J. (1937). *Of Mice and Men*. London: Penguin UK, Print.
- Tebbetts, T. (2014). Out of the Fence and into the Ring: Steinbeck's Engagement with Public Issues in *The Chrysanthemums*. *The Steinbeck Review*, 11(1), 55-65.
- Timmerman, J. (2006). On Locations and Frames in the Novel in *Bloom's Guides: John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men*. Edited by Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers.