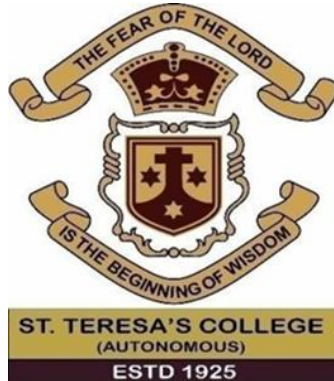


**THE PORTRAIT OF AN UNSEEN WORLD : MAPPING THE VERSES OF YEHUDA  
AMICHAÏ THROUGH THE LENS OF MICHEL FOUCAULT’S THEORY OF  
HETEROTOPIA**



*Project submitted to St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) in partial fulfilment of the  
requirement for the degree of BACHELOR OF ARTS in English Language and Literature*

*By*

**RISHIKA SRI PARVATHI**

**Register No. AB22ENG021**

**III B.A. English**

**St. Teresa's College**

**Ernakulam**

*Supervisor*

**Ms. LISSY JOSE**

**Assistant Professor**

**Department of English and Centre for Research**

**St. Teresa's College ( Autonomous)**

**Ernakulam**

**Kerala**

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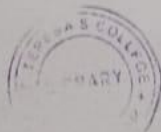
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I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “The Portrait of an Unseen World: Mapping the Verses of Yehuda Amichai through the Lens of Michel Foucault’s Theory of Heterotopia”, is a record of bona fide work done by me under the supervision of Ms Lissy Jose, Assistant Professor, Department of English, and that no part of the dissertation has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma or any other similar title of recognition.

Ernakulam

March 2025

Rishika Sri Parvathi

Register No. AB22ENG021

III B.A. English

St. Teresa’s College(Autonomous)

Ernakulam

## **CERTIFICATE**

I hereby certify that this project entitled “The Portrait of an Unseen World : Mapping the Verses of Yehuda Amichai through the Lens of Michel Foucault’s Theory of Heterotopia” by Rishika Sri Parvathi is a record of bona fide work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

Ernakulam

March 2025

Ms. Lissy Jose

Assistant Professor

Department of English

St. Teresa’s College (Autonomous)

Ernakulam

# **The Portrait of an Unseen World : Mapping the Verses of Yehuda Amichai through the Lens of Michel Foucault's Theory of Heterotopia**

**By**

**RISHIKA SRI PARVATHI**

**B.A. English**

**St. Teresa's College (Autonomous)**

**Ernakulam**

**Reg. No. AB22ENG021**

**2022-2025**

**Supervising Teacher: Ms. Lissy Jose**

This research examines the spatial dynamics in ten short poems by Yehuda Amichai, using Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia as a framework. Amichai, a poet who deeply reflects on history, memory, and identity, crafts poetic spaces that question traditional ideas of space and power. The study proposes that Amichai's poems reveal heterotopic spaces which are real locations within society that also serve as "other" spaces, where normal order is disrupted and alternative power structures emerge. These spaces provide insight into how space can be a tool for resistance and personal reflection. The research method involves a detailed examination of the poems, concentrating on spatial metaphors, shifts in space, and the relationship between physical and symbolic landscapes. The central argument is that Amichai's poetic spaces function as heterotopias, exposing the complex power relations that both support and challenge dominant spatial narratives. By focusing on space as a site of negotiation, Amichai's poetry offers a detailed perspective on the operation of power within and through spaces.

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## Introduction

We live in a world where time and space are crafted into a global garment. The concept of spatial dimension and temporal dimension are inevitable in every span of life. The temporal and spatial elements become a whole new level in the field of arts. In the movies, the past and the future are represented in different spatial segments. The novels present the future and the pasts collide in luminal spaces beyond time. The writers who have mastery over the art of time and space have given birth to literature that presents veracities of the space-time continuum. Some poets have captured eternity into their verses while some poems have persevered the beauty in their urns. Yehuda Amichai's poetry is renowned for its seamless interweaving of time and space. This creates rich narratives that bring personal recollection, historical events, and contemporary politics together. His literary settings are both intimate and historical, divine and secular, allowing him to explore topics like power, resistance, love, and loss. He shrinks time by combining biblical, historical, and personal occurrences in the poetic space. His works frequently suggest that time is nonlinear, with historical wars, childhood memories, and contemporary conflicts blending into one another.

Yehuda Amichai (1924-2000) is known for his deeply personal and historical poem built on his Jewish identity and rootlessness. In the early 1950s, he led a vernacular revolution in Hebrew verse after rejecting the previous generation's use of high literary language and rhetoric standards. In his first volume of poetry, *Now and in Other Days* (1955), he used everyday language and images to create poetry that any ordinary person can relate to. Amichai and his parents arrived in Palestine from Germany in 1936, when he was twelve years old. In addition to



his native German, he knew enough Hebrew to get along right away. Having attended a bilingual school in his hometown of Wurzburg since the age of three, with a curriculum that included religious teaching. Even though he naturally preserved some affinity to his mother tongue, English modernist literature appears to have had a greater influence on him than German poetry. Amichai was passionate about the Hebrew language, its sounds, historical significance, and grammatical structure. His poetry explores the formal and cultural aspects of the Hebrew language in unique ways that make translation challenging. One extreme and hence instructive example is an early poetry titled *The Sonnet of the Conjugations*. The story follows the seven conjugations of Hebrew verbs taught in school, from "simple" (qal) to "reflexive" (hitpa'el). In this poem Hebrew grammar's paradigms turn into a frightening representation of the human situation that English cannot describe. Amichai's relationship with his Orthodox upbringing and the new "Israeli realities" distinguishes him from other Hebrew poets of his generation. During his adolescent immigration, he swiftly grasped the newly revived spoken Hebrew, which he valued for its clarity. He remained rooted in traditional sources like the Bible and prayer books, which he was exposed to as a youngster in Germany and then at a religious school in Jerusalem. Although he finished high school as a secular Jew, he did not completely abandon Jewish traditions. In his poems, he combined humor and sadness to explore his upbringing in a religious environment. At the age of 18, he joined the British army and was stationed in Egypt. During the Israeli War of Independence in 1948-49, he experienced combat in the Negev. Although he didn't suffer from post-traumatic stress, the experience left a lasting mark on him. His use of Hebrew to depict the realities of war and love is a standout feature of his work. Such conventional components pop up in unexpected locations. The two extremes of his life were love and battle. Despite his wartime scars, he nevertheless showed a certain quickness in falling in love. The first

hint occurred in high school, when he was ready to wed his young sweetheart, a move that was inevitably rejected by both her and his parents. He went on to have more relationships, and in contrast to most people, he kept thinking about them for decades after they ended, penning poems about the anguish of the split. In 1950, he wed Tamar Horn, with whom he had a son named Roni. Later he met Hana Sokolov, the love of his life, and had two children. He studied Bible and Hebrew literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem after first attending a teachers' seminary. He worked as a school teacher for two years before moving on to a teachers' seminary and an international college program. By the 1970s, he had a well-established international reputation, with his work translated into other languages. His works in Hebrew were Israeli bestsellers. Despite becoming a well-known public personality in Israel, he refused to take on the position of "the poet," ridiculing those who did. Some passages may be familiar to English readers with a biblical background, while others may not.

Amichai's poetry has garnered numerous English interpreters. Few foreign poets have had such a strong presence in English-speaking countries as he has. Amichai collaborated with British poet Ted Hughes to translate a collection of verse called *Time*. Amichai's poetry are sophisticated in terms of both content and language. He is a deeply personal poet, drawing inspiration from his own life. Many of his early poems focus on the significance of personal experiences during war. Works like "God Takes Pity on Kindergarten Children," "The Smell of Gasoline in My Nose," and "I Waited for My Girl and Her Steps Were Not There" resonated with Israeli readers who endured the pain of war from 1948-49 to 1956 and beyond. In "The Smell of Petrol," the poem ends with lines about a jet making peace in the sky: "For us, and all those who love in the autumn." These lines echo the final words of the kaddish, a prayer familiar to Hebrew readers: "He who makes peace in his heights, may He make peace for us and all

Israel." The poem about a young soldier separated from his girlfriend, with the scent of petrol in the air, reflects the fragility of life during difficult times.

The concept of "heterotopia," meaning "other places," was introduced by Michel Foucault in 1966 during a radio presentation. Although the concept of heterotopia has been around for decades, it is still an ambiguous, and perplexing term when applied to contemporary study of spaces. As a result, there have been numerous attempts to define and interpret this phrase. Many scholars have attempted to define Heterotopia as a "third space" while many others have called it a "cultural sphere". Foucault himself identified schools, prisons, old people's homes, libraries, motels, cinemas etc as examples of heterotopias. He frames this term as spaces that disrupt the perceived continuity and routine of everyday spaces. This was Foucault's response to challenge the idea of homogeneous space. He wanted to demonstrate that space extends beyond a backdrop and is shaped by personal and social history. Heterotopia teaches us the unanimous division and leads us to dive into the intricate threads of posthumous society. And this society has several levels of power play from countless directions finding its way through the unanswered probability of peace. In this gravity of power play, literature has its own pull towards the grip of power.

This thesis investigates how Yehuda Amichai's poetry creates and challenges spatial structures using Michel Foucault's concepts of heterotopias, power, and surveillance. By exploring Amichai's poetry of Jerusalem, battle, exile, and the personal landscape, this research contends that his poetry portrays space as a location of control and resistance. This research aims to investigate how his poems transform into heterotopic environments, which are multifaceted and paradoxical. This project has been divided into two chapters. Chapter one evaluates the relevance of space in literature, mapping its origins, theoretical development, and the crucial

contributions made by Michel Foucault. It probes into the theory of Heterotopia and briefly explores the six major principles that Foucault has stated. It also positions my study within this broader framework, highlighting how Foucault's spatial theories, particularly his concept of heterotopias, can be a window to the horizon of poetry. In chapter two, ten short poems by Yehuda Amichai are scrutinized through the prism of Michele Foucault's theory of heterotopia. The research delves into his lyrical vision, supported by an extensive understanding of the imagery and symbolism. The study will next move on to how these poems investigate and use the concept of space to gain a deeper understanding of power relations through the principles of heterotopia.

## Chapter 1

### Conceptual framework: Of Other Spaces

The study of space in literature examines how places are portrayed in stories and how they shape the meaning and themes. This research looks at both real and imaginary places, such as cities, landscapes, and interiors, as well as ideal worlds (utopias), troubled worlds (dystopias), and transitional spaces. These spaces might be real locations, like London in Charles Dickens' novels, or places of exile or displacement, as seen in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. Spaces can symbolize social class, power, or isolation, or they might reflect a character's inner thoughts. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* focuses on a postcolonial setting and shows how colonialism influences space and identity. In contrast, *Neuromancer* takes us into virtual, digital realms.

Studying space in literature is very significant since it improves text interpretation. Understanding spatial features enriches thematic analysis and contextual meaning. It facilitates the exploration of power dynamics, social hierarchies, and psychological depth, while also connecting literature to geography, architecture, urban studies, and philosophy. Literary spaces reflect historical and sociological changes and contribute to the analysis of colonial, postcolonial, and global narratives. Space has the ability to influence reader perception and affect representations of identity and belonging. Space in literature frequently reflects personal and social identity problems. Especially Diaspora, exile, and nationalism are all related to geographical representation. The study of space in literature is critical for understanding how settings influence human experiences and cultural identity.

The use of space in writing has roots in ancient times. Stories like Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* emphasize movement through journeys, epic landscapes, and mythological scenes. In medieval times, writers used symbolic spaces to represent moral and spiritual ideas, as seen in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. During the Renaissance and Early Modern period, Shakespeare's plays explore symbolic settings like towns, forests, and islands, which reflect different cultural norms.

The emergence of trip narratives and utopian literature, such as Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), shows increased spatial awareness. Realist books from the nineteenth century, such as Charles Dickens' *London* and Thomas Hardy's rural England, used space to illustrate social realities and class differences. Even Romantic literature, such as William Wordsworth's nature poetry, idealises landscapes and natural settings as sources of inspiration. Early twentieth-century theories the formal study of space in literature gained grip with structuralist and phenomenological approaches. Mikhail Bakhtin (1930s-40s) coined the term "chronotope" to describe the link between time and space in narrative. Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space* (1958) , he investigated the psychology of space, namely domestic places such as homes. Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* (1974), he proposed that space is socially produced rather than passively existing. Edward Said's (1978) *Orientalism* investigated how colonial discourse shapes space, resulting in the emergence of postcolonial spatial studies. Postcolonial spatial studies investigate how space reflects power, migration, and identity for instance, Homi Bhabha's concept of the "third space". Cyberspace, dystopian futures, and science fiction landscapes are all topics of interest in contemporary literary studies. Recent research has integrated spatial studies into the environmental humanities, examining how literature depicts ecological landscapes, climate change, and human-environment relationships. Modern literature investigates the impact

of urbanisation, digital spaces, and cyberculture on narrative structures. Space in literature is more than just a backdrop, it actively shapes narrative structure and character development.

Michel Foucault's lecture *Of Other Spaces* (1967), published posthumously in 1984, examines the role of space in shaping human experience. He says that, while the nineteenth century was preoccupied with all the historical issues, the modern era is defined by spatial relations. The essay discusses heterotopias, which are real-world spaces that challenge traditional understandings of space by existing as "other" sites with distinct rules and functions.

"Heterotopias are real places... in which the real sites of culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted "(Foucault). Foucault begins by claiming that Western philosophy has traditionally prioritised time over space, emphasising ideas such as historical progress, development, and catastrophe. However, in the present day, space has grown more significant.

"The space in which we live... is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. We do not live inside a void, but inside a set of relations that delineates sites." Foucault charts the historical evolution of space in Western culture: Mediaeval space demonstrates a clear distinction between sacred and profane, protected and open, urban and rural areas. From the Renaissance until the 17th century, scientific discoveries such as Galileo transformed space into something endless and measurable. In the modern era, space is defined by relationships between places rather than permanent locations.

He defines "Heterotopias of Deviation" as spaces that restrict individuals who deviate from the norm, such as jails, asylums, or retirement homes. "Heterotopias of Accumulated Time" include spaces that preserve and structure history, such as libraries, museums, and cemeteries. "Heterotopias of Illusion" are spaces that show social reality as artificial, such as brothels and theme parks. "Heterotopias of Compensation" are idealised, regulated settings that mirror

perfection, such as Puritan communities and Jesuit missions and "Heterotopia of Crises" such as boarding schools and honeymoon hotels.

Michel Foucault emphasised the importance of space in shaping historical and societal structures, advocating for spatial histories rather than simply writing about space. His concept of heterotopia, developed in *Of Other Spaces*, refers to real-world settings that serve as counter-sites which means locations that exist inside but question conventional norms. He describes power as a spatial strategy. Power, according to Foucault, is diffuse and ingrained within social institutions, rather than being hierarchical from a sovereign to the people. He claims that power is exercised through spatial mechanisms rather than being imposed from above. This provides a fresh understanding of how spaces are managed and implemented to discipline people. Foucault's work highlights the concept of specialized power through examples like prisons. The Panopticon serves as a model for constant surveillance. Hospitals are spaces meant to classify and govern medical information. Schools function as architectural and institutional environments that reinforce discipline. According to him, heterotopias are counter-spaces of resistance. Foucault, in his essay, introduces the idea of heterotopia, which are places that do not follow regular rules but still show power dynamics. These include prisons and asylums, meant for people society views as "different". Museums and libraries are places where time is accumulated and organized. Colonial Spaces are the spaces where power and knowledge create new hierarchies. Heterotopias challenge dominant power structures while simultaneously reinforcing them by highlighting differences.

Foucault outlined six significant principles about his view of heterotopia, which became solid bricks in understanding the theory. The very first principle was that every single culture has its own heterotopia. These would become spaces that are unique from the so-called everyday



locations and these are very culture specific. Every culture has its own values, systems, ideologies and dialectics which gives birth to cultural specific heterotopias. Even the historical formation of that locality has an effect on this deviant location. When we look at the postcolonial sites in Goa or Fort Kochi we can't help but notice fusion of the west and east. This is well evident in the food they serve, the dialect they speak and in the architectural heritage. When we study the location of pilgrimage sites like Jerusalem temple, which forms a space in itself due to the religious and historical relevance.

The second principle states that the heterotopias can change according to the context of the society and it can switch its function in time. As literature students, we have seen how the simple houses which writers like William Shakespear or William Wordsworth once lived has now transformed into historical sites. People travel from across the globe to visit these places, which now looks as if it is caught in time. Even burial spaces like Westminster Abbey has turned into a tourism ground and a historical monument.

The third principle talks about the ability of the heterotopia to juxtapose several spaces and fuse them into one creating a "contrasting reality". These spaces are the kind which usually never cohabit. When we go to theaters to watch three dimensional movies, we often see how reality is blended into the world of fiction. Disneyland and museums etc are examples of such a fusion. While one visits lulu mall, the decorations made of artificial trees bring in a blend of green to the world competing brands. A Persian carpet, for example, represents a miniature and imagined world within the greater world of the room in which it is located.

The fourth principle brings out the connection between heterotopia and time. Heterotopias are closely linked to time, known as "heterochronisms", which accumulates time

forever. For example, heterotopic sites like libraries and museums keep collections that allow us to explore the past. Being a Kochi resident gives you plenty of opportunities to attend carnivals and multicultural fests. These fairs are time-bound and are season specific. Kochi is known for her museums like Kerala Folklore museum or Indo- Portuguese museum or David Hall Gallery in which several objects from different timelines are preserved.

The fifth principle of heterotopia deals with its rules of entry and exit. Heterotopias have gates of openings and closings that may restrict or permit access. That is, heterotopias can segregate space and time from ordinary settings. Any gated community or holiday resort can be an example of this. Specific rituals, norms, or criteria are frequently used to govern or mediate entry into heterotopias. Every visit to Cochin International Airport, reminds us of the entry restriction and permission requirements for each entry point.

The sixth principle states how each heterotopia has a connection to other everyday spaces. That is, heterotopic locations can meet the communal and individual requirements of the public in ways that conventional spaces cannot, for example Theme parks. Its ability to serve as a compensation gives it a title of the “third space”. Heterotopias have a relationship with other locations, functioning as illusions or substitutes. Mirrors are metaphorically referred to as heterotopias because they reflect real space while still existing outside of it.

In the world of heterotopias inside a mega heterotopia, what is the role of power? And who holds the key to the doors of such a deviant world. Although Foucault describes heterotopias as areas of deviation, he does not go into detail about how power systems materialise or are fought inside these spaces. Prisons, for example, are designed to govern and control, but what role do captives' experiences within these dynamic locations. During such

occasions does heterotopias turn into sites of resistance, or can they support hegemonic ideologies is a matter to be analysed. Poetry as a literary site explores conflicts and fluctuations in spaces in multiple spheres. Unravelling each of its threads can reveal the writer's inner resistance or the structure of power dynamics. Since Amichai's poetry is rich in personal history, trauma of war, and cultural diversity of Jerusalem it becomes a niche to explore by the lens of Heterotopia.

## Chapter 2

### Navigating the Spatial Layers

In Amichai's poems, space is more than just being ordinary locations, it carries history, personal feelings, and political issues. This chapter examines ten of his poems through the lens of heterotopia. It explores how Amichai creates poetic spaces that challenge and break away from the usual boundaries. The first poem that has been dissected through the lens of heterotopic principles is “My Mother Baked the Whole World for Me” from Amichai’s collection titled *Now and in other days*, translated by Benjamin and Barbara Harshav. The poem depicts domestic space as a metaphor for childhood and mother’s affection. The speaker describes the world as being contained within sweet cakes, transforming an enormous external space into something personal and delightful. The window serves as a gateway between the personal household world and the boundless universe. The speaker's internal condition is likened to a loaf of bread, implying a mental space contained within a structured, tangible shape. The speaker's smooth, brown appearance contrasts with the sad, reed-like nature of their hair, pointing out that despite they fit in with the outside world, they are somehow alienated inside. The departure of uncommon birds emphasises the notion that space is vulnerable and continuously shifting away. This is a heterotopia of crisis, a childhood space that remains psychologically intact yet is unapproachable in the present. In this poem, the writer paints the world as a sweet and warm creation of his mother. “My mother baked the whole world for me / In sweet cakes.” (Amichai 1-2). This becomes a heterotopic paradox as the world he grew up in is cold and full of bloodshed. The poet attempts to build his space into the past. His longings are compared to air trapped inside the dough of bread, which are empty spaces caused by the yeast. But this spaces of vacuum in his childhood memories are part of who he is in the present. Even his hair is drenched by the

sorrows of his past and even birds with a beautiful future and wings find him as an unsafe location. The poet has brought together a domestic space of kitchen and wilderness which follows Foucault's principle of juxtaposition of incompatible space. The speaker himself becomes a space that carries two different worlds. The inside of the speaker is a closed and isolated space filled with yearnings and outside the world loves him for the smooth person he is. The poet is crushed between the façade he had to put on for the brutal outside world and the past that is sealed in him. Here we can also see the coexisting of multiple chronographs which follows Foucault's principle of time.

The second poem is "A House Toward Evening" from Amichai's collection of poems between the years 1948 and 1962, translated by Robert Alter. The poem takes place in a tiny flat, which is continually in motion and being transformed. The gradual transformation of furniture from a sitting area into a bed, and then into an altar, exemplifies the impermanence and fluidity of household space. "And white sheets flap in the windows: / a surrender to the night before battle"(Amichai 5-6). The windows act as both literal and figurative entrances, with swaying white sheets representing a surrender to the coming darkness. The house is depicted as a living thing experiencing transformation, reflecting the passage of time and the unavoidable loss. The imagery of a graveyard acquired before death associates personal space with death and loss. The poem ends with the "double cave," a biblical allusion to the Cave of Machpelah, which symbolises burial, love, and immortality all in one constricted space. In this poem one can see the poet's agony in the impermanence of a roof to live, in this vast world the poet finds no permanent space for himself. The future ahead looks dark and void. This cramped apartment represents the collective pain of Jewish exiles. Even the white curtains covering the window remind him of the upcoming battle. These sheets also represent the pale layers used to cover the

corpses. The cramped apartment is the heterotopic space of crises which keeps on transitioning from a place for resting to a place for sleeping to a place of worshipping and to finally turning into the place of death. The apartment becomes a place for living and dying at the same time juxtaposing contrasting realities. The apartment's moving furniture in the present and the gravesite and double cave for the future presents the principles of colliding timelines.

The third poem is "My Father" from Amichai's collection titled *Now and in other days*, translated by Stephen Mitchell. His father is remembered for the minimal spaces that he occupied, such as his physique and work clothes. "The memory of my father is wrapped in white paper / like slices of bread for the workday"(Amichai 1-2). Even Memory becomes a space wrapped up in white paper, like slices of bread, implying that memories are maintained and unwrapped when desired. The shift from life to death is represented by spatial transformation: in life, the father actively influences his environment, but in death, he is reduced to images and texts in obituary announcements. "I wear his blue work shirt and become him, / And love walks beside me like a lost child." (Amichai 11-12). Wearing his blue work shirt, the speaker metaphorically enters the father's physical and emotional realm, resulting in spatial unification. The idea of love strolling by him like a lost child implies that emotions live in a misplaced, wandering zone, neither altogether absent nor completely present. Amichai was born in Germany in 1924 and his family had to move to Palestine in the 1930s. In between this constant switch of places, the one thing that was permanent in his life was his bond with his father. The slice of bread is a constant presence in many of his poems along with reference to the colour white. One may feel that the poet saw God in his Father. The weight of this inseparable memory is engraved into every verse. The poem "My Father" brings in the heterotopic space of memory and glues it to the space of food. The poet uses the past as the heterotopic location to preserve his father and

his love. The poet has found three doors to this location, which is food, obituary and dreams. This becomes a heterotopia of crises when the poet is trying to navigate through father's absence. Just like how his father is stuck in a luminal space between life and death, the poet is also caught up in a luminal space outside time. Even the obituary notices and photographs function as spaces that once captured life. Since the past and present, death and life coexist here, it follows Foucault's principle of juxtaposition of spaces and the principle of Heterochrony.

The fourth poem is "Laundry" from Amichai's collection of poems between the years 1948 and 1962, translated by Leon Wieseltier. In this poem Amichai paints the vanity of war to the civilians:

laundry hanging in the late afternoon sunlight:  
 the white sheet of a woman who is my enemy,  
 the towel of a man who is my enemy,  
 to wipe off the sweat of his brow. (Amichai 1-4)

The poem draws a contrast between public and private spaces, with laundry hanging out in the sun, symbolising adversaries' common vulnerability. The hanging laundry represents daily domestic life, but it also serves as a banner of battle, belonging to both the speaker and the opponents. The Old City sky is converted into a vertical zone of contrast, holding a child's kite as well as political boundaries. The physical partition of space, with a wall barring a child flying the kite, represents how political conflict disrupts interpersonal relationships. Flags are positioned as symbols of territorial authority, but they are paradoxically employed to portray happiness rather than division, demonstrating how spaces are frequently exploited to create illusions. This is a heterotopia of illusion in which everyday activities such as hanging clothes and playing with children are overwhelmed by spatial politics of war and division. In the poem "Laundry", the

laundry itself becomes a location of “third space” that connects the space of war to ordinary lives. There are two different spaces in the poem divided by wall and war. The old city is the past that has travelled into the present, and its sky is another space that unites what’s divided by flags. Here the poet is taking a forward movement in time, starting from the present slowly moving to the future. The poet is not happy about the division of space with the war and flag as he does not feel home either. The time is moving towards evening and again this movement of the day towards darkness, is placed next to a white sheet. The poet doesn’t even know who his foes are and he feels compassionate towards them. The wall represents the war that is blind to the lives of innocent children. Even the poet himself was a victim who lost his childhood in war. While the child has raised a kite of hope towards the sky, the adults are raising flags of battles. Both the sides are never at peace or in joy, they are just putting up a façade of happy masks. The wall is in between and not outside, hence there is no protection. There is so much going on in the heterotopia of Jerusalem, the war has transformed the meaning of spaces over time as the laundry of daily use becomes a marker of the unknown foes.

The fifth poem is “With My Mother”, from Amichai’s collection titled *Now in the uproar: Poems 1963-1968*. The poem opens in an outdoor setting, with the mother calling the speaker home. This indicates a shift from exterior to home. The subsequent setting is a quiet, internal area in which the mother's presence has become frozen and not responding, similar to mute stones. The journey home is postponed for years, representing a temporal and emotional dislocation in which space is not only physical but also mental. The mother's presence becomes like an unchangeable monument, demonstrating that space, while continuous, may become empty of interaction. Language is characterised in spatial terms, with the speaker's words spilling out like an "oily outpouring," implying that communication has become incapable of bridging



the emotional divide. This is heterotopia of loss in which space preserves memories but no longer provides emotional fulfilment.

My mother always calls me home  
when I'm playing outside. And once she called me  
and I returned only years later,  
and not from playing (Amichai 1-4)

The poet's childhood experiences in Germany prior to immigrating to Israel and his close bonding with his mother is reflected in this poem. In this poem one may see how the presence of the poet's mother creates a world to call home for him. The pain in transition from childhood to adulthood where playing is no longer the reason for separation but battles and bloodshed. And now she is asleep in her stone tomb and her inability to reciprocate poet love stings his heart. Poet's mother calling "home" suggests that home is a heterotopic yet fluid location. In fact, it transforms over time, and when the poet comes back, it is completely different. His mother's voice becomes the door to his past, a space he still longs to belong. This is consistent with crisis heterotopias, in which home is a place of alienation and irrevocable change rather than comfort. The mother, who was previously the centre of the household, now appears nearly lifeless and stone-like. Her presence becomes a heterotopic place of transition as a result of this metamorphosis, caught between life and her absence. The heterotopic conflict between the past and present is reinforced by the mother as an environment. Compared to the exaggerated speech of a travel salesperson, a pimp, and a carpet salesman, the speaker's once-meaningful words now are seemingly artificial. Language itself becomes a heterotopia of illusion, a space where words are supposed to connect but instead cause estrangement, commodification, and superficiality. This mismatch between language and genuine meaning implies that the speaker has become

distorted or powerless in the face of personal loss. This poetry creates many heterotopic locales. Home is an alienating space which becomes a heterotopia of crises that preserved time on one hand yet transformed in time on the other. The mother with her silent, stonelike presence is heterotopia as she exists in two timelines in two different characters. The Language becomes a third space filling the space between past and future

The sixth poem is “Jerusalem’s Suicide Attempts” from Amichai’s collection titled *Not for the sake of remembering 1971*. The poem depicts Jerusalem as a living space formed by warfare and as a series of unsuccessful self-destructions, each linked to past catastrophes. Space is rigid and unyielding, as illustrated by the imagery of tears that refine and polish the hard face, like rock. The city exists under two opposed spatial conditions: one is a space of self-induced collapse, a city attempting to obliterate itself through destruction. Second is a space of resilience, despite its endeavors, it stands firm. The picture of "red and fire" emphasizes immediate destruction, yet the slow degradation of white dust depicts a long-term, growing ruin over time. The city sits between the past and the future, representing a historical cycle of demolition and survival. The city's historical layering of ruin like fire and war creates a multifaceted record of sorrow. This is a heterotopia of crisis, in which space is constantly destroyed and rebuilt but never escapes its destructive cycle. Amichai has written countless poems about Jerusalem and if the poem is not about Jerusalem, the city still appears as a metaphor of pain in his poem. In other words, Jerusalem is engraved in the blood of the poet. Due to the constant conflicts and war, the city has lost the will to be alive. Here too the poet has brought in the colour white to bring out the absence of life and red to convey the blood life that was lost. In this poem, the poet has taken a specific day as the space in time. On the Jewish calendar, the ninth day of the month of Av is known as the most miserable day. This day is set

aside for remembering and grieving over the many tragic events in Jewish history. One of the main reasons for this mourning is the loss and destruction of Jerusalem, along with the first and second Temple, which happened around 2,000 years ago. These events are deeply significant and are remembered by Jewish people around the world each year on this day. Here Jerusalem itself is a heterotopic space which because of the struggle has become like a polished surface on one side but like a cemetery on the other end. The past of the ninth of Av and the future of the white dust brings out heterochrony. In keeping with Foucault's concept of a heterotopia of deviation and death, the descriptions of "red and fire" and the "slow decay of white dust / in the wind"(Amichai 7-8) conjure up an atmosphere that is almost like a cemetery.

The seventh poem is "Abandoned House" from Amichai's collection titled *Not for the sake of remembering 1971*. The house is shown as a physical space that has lost its function and is deteriorating. Traditional housing components such as doors, windows, and chains are no longer serving their intended purposes, but have instead become symbols of absence and displacement. The house's construction is defined by negative space, which represents the absence of people and function. The window is blocked with stones, indicating confinement. "Doors are carried away like corpses" (Amichai 2), resulting in a spatial inversion in which what was once an entry point is now a remnant of loss. The poem depicts a cyclical and transient nature of space, with the house serving as both a ruin and a prospective location for future residents. The final parallel to a hotel room emphasizes the notion that spaces are transient and continuously transformed. Every house is a memory that one lived. When the war destroys places, it is also terminating myriad houses and the lives inside. The poet still lives in the memory of the past which was once a home. Now he has no place to call his home. The window filled with stones symbolizes the grave as the horizon of future. Every hope of entry and exit has

died and has turned into sheer carcasses. Now what remains is rootlessness and chains that once bound the civilians. Here the house is a heterotopic space of memory. One thing Foucault mentions about heterotopic space is that it has the capability to preserve time or change in time. This house does not have a future and according to the poet the future is the past, as both spaces in time are in ruins. Now the house has become a site of ruin and the hotel has become a house. The walls and doors are gone and the entry and exit points are lost. There is no space in the past nor space in the future. The poet is stuck in the post war scene where the doors to past and future are carried outside.

The eighth poem is “End of the Archaeological Season in Eyn Gedi” from Amichai’s collection titled *Not for the sake of remembering 1971*. Eyn Gedi is one of the most renowned places in Israel, known for its greenery and even mentioned in the Bible several times. The world now wants to make a museum out of their past. The place has now become like a woman who has been violated. Here we find a violated location, where history has been revealed and left vulnerable. Archaeologist’s controlled and measured effort contrasts with the raw, exposed remains of the past, creating an uneasy tension. The horizontal, open position of the site described as “gaping on her back”(Amichai 7) implies helplessness and defilement. The imagery of “threads left / as secreted webs”(Amichai 4-5) depicts space as something that was briefly occupied and then abandoned. The Roman excavation as a violated body represents space as something that may be forcibly transformed and revealed but never completely repaired. The lack of a scream emphasizes the notion that space does not actively resist its colonization, rather, it absorbs the intrusion, becoming a silent witness of history. The very first location mentioned in the poem is home, it could signify several meanings. The ones who were concerned about the history, artefacts and excavation have returned to their own locations or they have become an

artefact as they have died. The home at the same time represents the space of belonging and the space of death and hence it becomes the third principle where two contrasting spaces are merged into one. Now the archaeologist has collected two important things. They have tried to collect the past which is represented as “black and white” (Amichai 2). They have collected everything that can be measured, which means anything that is of economic and cultural value. But the poet is saying that they have intruded in their past space and have left it to rot. Eyn Gedi, a space known for its rich beauty and greenery has now been violated. The space with her past taken away, has become a woman who has been raped. A victim who has accepted the condition. Here the violation of the space reminds us of Foucault’s principle of entry and exit points. Here the outsiders have broken the entry principle and the space is left open.

The ninth poem is “The Doors are closed” from Amichai’s collection titled *A Great Tranquillity: Questions and Answers 1980*. The poem explores the duality of open and closed settings, with doors serving as metaphors of access and closure. Space is defined by emptiness and absence, as empty spaces look like ancient robbed cemeteries, implying that what remains is only a shell of what once existed. Doors that were expected to remain open indefinitely have now closed, symbolising broken promises, missed possibilities, or even broken relationships. The contrast between open and closed spaces highlights that spaces that were once alive and vibrant now stand as guardians of emptiness. The alarm clock that no longer wakes anyone shows time itself as a form of a space that is frozen and no longer serves its original function. The title of the poem itself brings the readers into a confined space. The doors that were supposed to be kept open forever are now closed. Here the poet is again picking up a location in time and creating a luminal location inside of it. The poet is unable to move into the future as the future is a closed space before him. The only door he can open is the door towards the past. Here

the past again becomes a heterotopic location where he preserves himself. This past is described as emptied spaces and is like a looted grave which would remind the imagery of an Egyptian mummy. The dead are gone and what belongs to the dead are taken away. When Foucault mentioned that every culture has its own heterotopia, the poet reminds us that every individual being has his or her own heterotopia. Even though the world follows the same chronograph and lives at the same time, the people living in this world are stuck in different timelines. Some are in the past unable to move into the present reality while some are in the future, furious about the present conditions. This could remind one about the museum of the future in Dubai where the past of the future is shown in the present. The timelines are colliding especially in the war zones where the people who are alive want to live in the time where their loved ones are still alive before the war. Now following the sixth principle of Foucault, poet is connecting this “third space” into the everyday reality where civilians are attacked unexpectedly even during a holiday celebration. Poet himself is unaware of the length of his existence, he sees himself absent in the future and alive in the past unknowingly drawing from Foucault’s fourth principle of time. Again, the poet creates a heterotopic space of time, taking the readers into the hour of early morning and juxtaposing the future when the rattle of time would not reach the ones who are currently alive but will be killed in the future.

The tenth poem is “Everyone Needs an Abandoned Garden in His Life” from Amichai’s collection titled *The Hour of Grace* 1983. Even though the concept of an abandoned garden sounds more fictional than the reality, the poet is actually speaking of a post war reality. There are several abandoned gardens in Israel as repercussions of war. Hillsides northwest of Beit Meir, Wadi al-Ein, Busatin in upper Galilee are historical examples. The poem delves into the idea of abandoned regions as crucial to human experience. Gardens, old houses, and locked

doors function as metaphysical retreats, containing memories and loss. The body-space metaphor is fundamental, as landscapes are portrayed in human anatomical terms, such as the back of the mountain and foot of the mountain. Space is also used in combat, with targets being given peaceful names. The poem contrasts the importance of abandoned areas for contemplation and longing with their physical degradation. The locked door that will never open again may also indicate an irreversible division, implying that while some areas can be revisited in recollection, others are forever inaccessible. Looking through the heterotopic lens, the poet tries to confide in three heterotopic spaces which are “abandoned garden”, “old house” and “forgotten world”. One thing common about all the three spaces are isolation from the rest of the world. Here the poem is portraying a space after the war, where the soldiers have left, the civilians have left yet nature is thriving. While delving in the concept of wall, the poet has always placed it as an obstruction from the true reality and a cause of blindness. Now this old house with its walls peeling is the poet's attempt to bring the past into the future and thereby creating a space outside time.

According to the poet everybody needs such a space to thrive. A space which is outside time yet with the essence of time. Because a space without the past cannot be a garden or a house yet a place without the future cannot exist. So, in the first part of the poem, he has created a luminal heterotopic space following Foucault's fourth principle of time. And since the past and future are separate spaces in time, he is also following Foucault's third principle of juxtaposing contrasting realities. After mentioning the locations, the poet directly transitions into the location of war. A world where mountains with its feet and shoulders are referred to as humans while the real humans are destroyed with the same mouths. For the poet the world outside his space is the world of brutal war, where no one is safe.

For everyone needs an abandoned garden in his life  
 (Adam and Eve knew everyone needs such a garden)  
 or an old house,  
 or at least one locked door  
 that will never open again. (Amichai 10-14)

From the location of war, he again transitioned back into the past location of the garden of Eden, where everything began. Now he brings in the location of God as a separate space where Adam and Eve were safe and secure. Here the garden becomes the space of power where there is no war. The poet ends the poem with the locked door which will never open again, which follows Foucault's principle of entry and exit points. To this heterotopic location the poet is willing to offer no entry or exit, as every door is imagined as a point of intrusion and movement forward in time.

Foucault's first principle of heterotopia refers to areas of crisis and deviance in which individuals exist outside of society standards, such as exile zones. Jerusalem, like a crisis heterotopia, is a place where agony repeats itself while survival persists. "The Doors Are Closed" creates a heterotopia of crisis through exclusion, with previously open doors abruptly closed. Heterotopias juxtapose opposing aspects, allowing disparate realities to live within the same spatial framework. "Laundry" juxtaposes household and political space. Heterotopias collapse linear time while retaining historical traces within physical places. Amichai's poetry regularly addresses memory rooted in space, demonstrating how places preserve remnants of the past even as they change. "Abandoned House" transforms a demolished house into a dystopia in which the past persists in its shattered doors and shuttered windows, refusing historical erasure. Heterotopias frequently have restricted access. Amichai's poetry illustrates how power



determines who has access to space and memories. "The Doors Are Closed" literalizes restricted access, demonstrating how doors that were supposed to remain open are now permanently closed. "Laundry" depicts unseen walls, with a wall preventing the speaker from seeing a child flying a kite, symbolizing how authority divides space. Heterotopias are frequently areas outside of the rhythms of regular life, such as ruins and abandoned sites. Amichai's poetry continually creates spaces that exist beyond their intended function, serving as centers of reflection and resistance. "Abandoned House" and "End of the Archaeological Season" represent areas that have lost their original use but nevertheless serve as sites of historical value and memory. Heterotopias can be used as illusions to conceal reality or as compensatory environments. "Laundry" dispels the illusion of flags being symbols of happiness. "Everyone Needs an Abandoned Garden" implies that abandoned areas are compensating. His poetry defies historical amnesia, political erasure, and limited access, promising that abandoned, and contested locations persist in thoughts and language.

## Conclusion

Examining each poetry through the lens of heterotopia has brought to light various dimensions of space and time which otherwise would stay hidden behind the metaphors and similes. Poetry has the power to construct complex spatial and temporal relationships which could be unique to the author's collective or personal insight. Using the theory of heterotopia, have furthered a hand in comprehending and appreciating this intricate layer of meaning. Yehuda Amichai has entered into the labyrinth of time and his verses have never found a way out. The world where he grew up has been fashioned into the world that would take away everything that belongs to him. The child in him and the soldier in him are coinciding and yet existing at a different timeline and when one wakes up the other sleeps. Amichai's use of space creates personal and historical space, combining memory with deeper ties to history. Each poem depicts the alteration and transition of familiar settings as they shift between purposes, addressing the conflict between public and private, past and present, and both being and not being. His spatial representations frequently highlight impermanence, showing how locations, relationships, and even bodies are constantly changing, affected by both personal experiences and historical influences. He shows spaces as a quiet witness to historical and personal anguish, whether in Jerusalem or an abandoned house, or an excavation site. He used everyday locales like houses, doors, windows, and ruins to symbolize the shift in power and resistance. Amichai creates a network of heterotopias in which space is never neutral, but rather a location of tension, memory, alteration, and resistance. Spaces work differently in each of his poems. Homes, fathers, and closed doors transform into "Heterotopias of Memory". Jerusalem, abandoned buildings, and ruins become "Heterotopias of Crisis" while flags, laundry, and

abandoned gardens become "Heterotopias of Illusion". Some areas are open but abandoned like Eyn Gedi, while others are obstructed but still represent memories like an abandoned house, while some are permanently closed like the locked door in "Everyone Needs an Abandoned Garden". Amichai connects human existence with spatial metaphors, likening landscapes to anatomy or ruins to violated bodies, transforming physical geography into emotional terrain. Amichai's spatial explorations reveal that heterotopic spaces are reservoirs of memory and desire for continuity in the face of unavoidable change.

Probing into ten handpicked poetry, each poem brought out a new impression of belongingness and rootlessness. In the poem "My Mother Baked the Whole World for Me" the poet does not want to leave the space of memory and transition into the world of painful reality. The home and mother's kitchen are places where power nurtures rather than oppresses. The act of baking the world into cakes, represents a symbolic resistance to outside brutality. The Power of the external world imposed on the speaker is met with resistance from the mother's caring. It counteracts extraneous stimuli, resulting in a resistive memory. He has created a heterotopia of memory to preserve his mother along with him. In the poem "A House Toward Evening" one may see how the space of living can intrude into the site for burial. The shifting nature of space in the home emphasises the impermanence of domestic space. The double cave represents both burial and survival, making the dwelling a location where the past and present coexist. The notion of purchasing a burial before death implies a defiance of fate by planning for it in advance. Power buried in time and mortality determine the final closure of space. Resistance is found in the act of loving at night, modifying the places within the home. The poem depicts space as a location of shifting power, while the home as a heterotopia of transition and remembrance. The poem also depicts space as a site of resistance to time and history. In the

poem “My Father”, the poet has tried to revive the absence of his father through the principle heterochrony. The father becomes a space for love and labour, defying economic norms that frequently restrict people to their labour alone. His work shirt and hands represent a quiet defiance and assertion of humanity against impersonal systems. In the poem “Laundry” the laundry has lost its meaning, it has become a site of war. The garments of foes hanging in the sun imply an involuntary unity, contradicting narratives of absolute isolation. The wall that blocks the speaker from seeing the child with the kite reflects political power's spatial control, resulting in a literal obstruction of visibility. The flags on both sides serve as illusions of happiness, created by authorities to maintain control. Power is disguised behind borders, fences, and political divides that enforce separation and control perception. Here, the laundry becomes a space of resistance and questions the legitimacy of these divisions. In the poem “Jerusalem’s Suicide Attempts”, the heterotopic location becomes a mirror of reality, a fire of war and a dust of burial ground. The city has both suffered from and survived previous political conflicts. The attempts to annihilate themselves represent the cyclical imposition of power on space. However, Jerusalem never fully crumbles, demonstrating the strength of place and identity in the face of imposed brutality. Power is in the war, and historical oppression is continuously attempting to eliminate the city. But the city's persistence is an act of resistance, showing that some locations can withstand destruction. In the poem “Abandoned House” the poet is willingly chained into space that has no doors. The house's emptiness depicts a space seized by power through conflict, migration, or forced relocation. However, the poem contends that what was once a past will become another's future, refusing total erasure. In this case, the power in the war, governmental forces that destroy people's claims to space, are resisted by claiming that ruins are not final. In the poem “End of the Archaeological Season in Eyn Gedi” the poet grieves the intrusion into

their space, even their past is taken away. Archaeology is portrayed as a violent act, a rape of history, in which ancient civilizations are excavated, measured, and then abandoned. The scientific measuring of ruins reflects imperial efforts to categorize and regulate history. Archaeology exerts historical influence on space, influencing how the past is perceived. The poem examines the ethics of excavation and opposes the erasure of historical agency. In the poem “The Doors are closed” the poet locks himself inside the world of colliding timelines. Doors indicate both entrance and exclusion, implying the ability to regulate who enters and who remains outside. The remaining holiday decorations show that even after people have left, power systems continue in the areas that remain. Remembering is a method of resistance that preserves what power wants to obliterate. In the poem “Everyone Needs an Abandoned Garden in His Life” the poet creates a liminal space that would lock him in the safe haven forever.

Amichai's poetry embraces Foucault's heterotopic ideas through these spaces, demonstrating how the personal and historical intersect in both literal and metaphorically cooked spaces. Through this study, It was observed that several heterotopic spaces exist inside a heterotopia and it changes according to the personnel understanding of space. Heterotopias indeed exist outside the normative structure yet it has the power to shape the psychological realities and time. This is no place in this world where there is a vacuum of power. Power is like the air in that domain. When we enter into a world which is separated from the dominant ideology in title. What actually happens inside that world is deeply personal. For the poet, the usage of heterotopia was not just for mere isolation, but for resistance and resisting the intrusion.

Foucault's work demonstrates that space is not neutral, but is actively formed by power and knowledge. Understanding this relationship makes it possible to evaluate contemporary institutions, political systems, and spatial inequities. War, damage, and political naming all

influence the structure of spaces. The human yearning for forgotten spaces is an act of resistance, reclaiming areas that exist outside of authority. Here, space becomes a battlefield for power and resistance. Across these ten poems, Amichai's spaces depict tyranny through walls, ruins, and closed doors while concealing resistance in various heterotopic locations such as memory. His poetry implies that, while authority constantly reshapes and imposes meaning on space, spaces themselves defy total control via memory, endurance, and discreet displays of rebellion.

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