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The Poetics of the Other Planet: Testimony and Chronotope in Ka-Tzetnik's *Piepel*

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The past two decades have yielded a rich body of studies examining the life and writing of Yehiel Dinur, who published the *Salamandra* sextet (1945–87) under the name Ka-Tzetnik 135633. This is a significant and encouraging development because, even today, the available scholarship on Ka-Tzetnik is fairly limited, certainly in comparison to the vast and unique body of his work and to the profound impact it left on the shaping of Israeli Holocaust consciousness. The prolific use, in all types of Israeli discourse, of the phrase the "Other Planet" to refer to the Nazi concentration camps is but one example of such impact by a public figure who, as Dan Miron observes, "fulfils in Israeli culture an almost official role as the 'spokesman' of the Holocaust and its atrocities."[1] It is perhaps because of Dinur's iconic status and the testimonial value of his texts that the poetics of his writing has received little scholarly attention. Although Yechiel Szeintuch's recent biographical investigation of this writer-survivor is essential to any discussion in the field, it provides only a partial examination of Ka-Tzetnik's literary art, and it focuses on only one poem and one book, both titled *Salamandra*.[2] Dan Miron's study of the 1993 scandal, which resulted when Dinur removed and destroyed an original copy of his 1931 book of Yiddish poems from the national library in Israel, zeroes in on Ka-Tzetnik's persona and his work as a pre-war poet, while the author's craft in his Holocaust writing is of secondary interest.[3] Although both Omer Bartov's investigation of the author's reception in Israel and Iris Milner's analysis of the ethical dimension of his writing provide important observations on Ka-Tzetnik's technique, neither focus on poetics.[4] While these and other studies certainly shed some light on *Salamandra*'s narrative art, there has been a tendency to dwell too narrowly on what has been described

as “pornographic” descriptions or “Kitsch and death” in Ka-Tzetnik’s narratives, to the detriment of serious attention to the literary aspects of his writing.[5] What is missing from the existing scholarship, as valuable as it otherwise is, is a comprehensive investigation of Ka-Tzetnik’s poetics: an attempt to identify the underlying system of his writing, to formulate how the multitude of elements, techniques, and dimensions of the *Salamandra* texts function cooperatively to convey a worldview or experience and generate a readerly effect. Such a system can reflect how Ka-Tzetnik’s vast textual project—as well as the act of writing itself—is tied to extratextual factors, such as the conditions of writing and the author’s biography, and it can allow for a fuller integration of the literary text and the historical and cultural circumstances of its creation.

A useful entry point into this system may be Yehiel Dinur’s brief testimony at the Eichmann trial, most tellingly his denial of literary calculation:

> I do not regard myself as a writer of literary material. This is a chronicle of the planet of Auschwitz. I was there for about two years. Time there is not like it is here on earth. Every fraction of a minute there passes on a different scale of time. And the inhabitants of this planet had no names, they had no parents nor did they have children. They did not dress in the way we dress here; they were not born there and they did not give birth; they breathed according to different laws of nature; they did not live—nor did they die—according to the laws of this world. Their name was the number “Ka-Tzetnik.”
>
> … This oath was the armour with which I acquired the supernatural power, so that I should be able, after time—the time of Auschwitz—the two years when I was a Musselman, to overcome it. For they left me, they always left me, they were parted from me, and this oath always appeared in the look of their eyes. For close to two years they kept on taking leave of me and they always left me behind. I see them, they are staring at me, I see them, I saw them standing in the queue.[6]

These lines are famous, especially since they were followed by Dinur’s dramatic collapse on the witness stand, yet they are not usually analyzed for their insight into his literary writing.[7] In the context of his art, however, the above-cited testimony proves especially valuable not as a metaphor but literally as a key to what I propose calling the “Poetics of the Other Planet.” By this phrase I refer to Ka-Tzetnik’s aesthetic mediation of the world of the Holocaust, which, even if not conveying accurate historical details, strives to generate within the reader a perception and conceptualization of the camps as they were experienced “from within”—at least in terms of Dinur’s own testimonial insights. How does

Ka-Tzetnik's literary construction of the Nazi camps constitute a planet? What forms this planet's otherness? What is the poetic manifestation of these "different laws of nature" that governed the camps? Answers to these questions and others come to light when the "concentrationary universe" in Ka-Tzetnik's writing is examined against the background of historical facts, on the one hand, and various textual articulations of these facts, on the other.[8] A close reading of the differences may reveal the principles that govern Ka-Tzetnik's textualization of the camp and, through them, the perspective and experience that his poetics strive to convey. *Piepel* (1961), the third book in the *Salamandra* sextet and perhaps Ka-Tzetnik's best, provides the richest possibilities for this analysis.[9] With a plot that takes place entirely within Auschwitz and with its multifaceted exploration of the camp's operations through the personal stories of its inmates, *Piepel* constitutes the fullest realization of Ka-Tzenik's perspective, experience, and poetic vision.

"The planet of Auschwitz"

Various widely circulated maps of the locations of Nazi concentration camps reveal their proximity to towns, roads, borders, or rivers. Aerial photographs or detailed charts of the camps themselves present a strict organization of space, where the camp is internally divided into separate areas by walls and fences, which also separate it from the external world. The overall impression is that of meticulously arranged spatial order and discretely separated functions for specific places in the compound. Keeping this sense of spatial order in mind, let us examine the following passages from Ka-Tzetnik. The first describes Daniella Preleshnik's arrival in the "Labor through Joy" section of Auschwitz in *House of Dolls* (*Beit habubot*, 1953). The other two passages from *Piepel* render Auschwitz through the eyes of Hayim-Idl and Moni, two of the camp's old-timers.

> "Fall in! Snap to! Snap to!"
>
> They are being pushed, prodded along with bludgeons. Daniella runs with the others. A labyrinth of blocks. A queer new world. A world all blocks. Alleys and blocks … "Run! Run! On the double!" … The camp suddenly stood forth enormously vast and terrifying. Alleys and blocks. Blocks and Alleys.[10]

> The edges of the camp were invisible. Coils of mist shrouded the upper rows of barbed wire. Now the camp seemed shrunken, again it seemed boundless, covering the entire world.[11]

> All the blocks are identical. Everywhere the same triple-tiered hutches along the walls. Everywhere the same long brick oven bisecting the entire length of the block, the same skeletons, five hundred on the right, five hundred on the left.[12]

The experience conveyed most strongly in these passages—as in so many others in Ka-Tzetnik's writing—is that of the beholder's disorientation, diminution, and powerlessness before an endless and elusive space. While camp maps and other factual representations of the camp's space—including tourists' visits—create the impression of spatial omniscience, in Ka-Tzetnik's representation, camp space duplicates itself in an interminable, deceptive, and overwhelming labyrinth of blocks and passages, watchtowers, and fences. His descriptions reflect the sensual and conceptual perspective of those trapped within the camp, newcomers and old-timers alike, for whom these topographical facts posed not only the physical threats with which we have become so familiar, but also the threats to the mind, which slowly but surely created an equally deadly despair.

The principles underlying Ka-Tzetnik's construction of camp space correspond to what M. M. Bakhtin, in his discussion of the chronotope, calls "interchangeable space," a space which is unspecific and abstract.[13] The events could have taken place not only in any one of the blocks of the camp, but also in any of the Nazi camps, and Moni, Daniella, and Hayim-Idl could have been any of the Jews who populated these camps. The space of the camp in Ka-Tzetnik's novels is presented, in Bakhtin's terms, as an "alien world." Although both the author and the protagonist know it well, this space is deprived of the small and particular details that differentiate one block or corner of the camp from another. It is indefinite, undifferentiated, abstract, alien. "All the blocks are alike. As alike as the camplings in them."[14] When little Moni finds a temporary hideout on a bunk in one of the blocks, he looks around:

> All around him they lay, as afar as the eye could reach in the dark: camplings above him, below him, to his right, and to his left. He lay amidst them like a single particle of sand bearing the seed of a huge mountain. He lay among them in one of the blocks in one of the endless camps of the Auschwitz planet, but the horror of Auschwitz's infinity has taken hold deep in his soul—whole and undivided.[15]

Needless to say, the death camps were hostile and lonely spaces, especially for a young boy such as Moni. But in Ka-Tzetnik's writing these feelings are not conclusions drawn from facts or given directly as testimony. Rather, they are integrated into the descriptions of the character's experience and generated as a readerly effect by the construction of the camp itself as alien, abstract, and

undifferentiated space. In such spaces, as Bakhtin observes, "man can only function as an isolated and private individual, deprived of any organic connection with . . . his own social group . . . He does not feel himself to be a part of the social whole. He is a solitary man, lost in an alien world."[16] In the camp, the alienation of the individual from the world means that the individual is lost, consumed, extinguished among the endless blocks and masses.

Ka-Tzetnik's construction of space becomes especially tangible when contrasted with a representation governed by entirely different principles. In the following passage, which opens the *Wassermann* section of David Grossman's *See Under: Love* (1986), Anshel Wasserman is taken to the office of the camp commander, Herr Neigel:

> When the third attempt to kill Anshel Wasserman came to naught, the Germans sent him running to camp headquarters with a very young officer named Hoppfler at his heels yelling, "*Schnell*." I can see them now, as they leave the grounds of the lower camp, where the gas chambers are, and approach the two barbed-wire fences concealed by hedges between which new arrivals are forced to run naked past a double file of Ukrainians, who set up dogs on them and pound them with clubs. The inmates call this route the *Schlauch,* or tube, and the Germans with their peculiar humor call it *Himmelstrasse*—the Heavenly Way . . . Now they pass the parade grounds and stop in from of the commander's barracks. Wasserman is panting. The barracks are a grim-looking wooden structure, two stories high, with curtained windows. A small brass sign on the door says CAMP COMMANDER, and another, on the outer wall, CONSTRUCTION–SCHOENBRUN INC., LEIPZIG, AND SCHMIDT INC., MÜNSTERMAN.[17]

The sense of space evoked in this passage is fundamentally different than what we find in Ka-Tzetnik. This is not only because Grossman's choice of genre is closer to fantastic-realism or due to any lack of knowledge about the camps; Grossman has obviously studied the relevant scholarship in detail.[18] It is precisely this thorough, even scholarly, familiarity with the facts of the camps that Grossman—or, more accurately, Momik, his internal second-generation narrator—demonstrates throughout his narrative that conveys an experience so different than the one we find in Ka-Tzetnik's writing. Even if the details Grossman provides were known to Jews in the camp, describing these details is less likely to evoke a sense of the inmates' perspective exactly because they are so organized and lucid. The continuous and uninterrupted movement within space, as in a long stroke of a brush, reflects Grossman's look from the outside inwards, as if one were closely studying a map or a photograph or as if one were taking or,

indeed, leading a tour of one's own home, naming and explaining the most marginal and intriguing details of the landscape. Grossman's rendition of the camp depends upon a geographical stability and tranquil focus that we do not find in descriptions of the camp given directly by Ka-Tzetnik's narrator or through the consciousness of his Jewish characters. Grossman narrates the most minute details with the pleasure and craft of a storyteller, slowly and eloquently unfolding an imaginative world to the audience of his tale. In contrast, it is sometimes painful to read Ka-Tzetnik's description of the camp exactly because he writes without pleasure, without an attempt to produce a vivid illusion of reality. In the *Salamandra* novels, the camp is not rendered as a sequence of places or objects, well-defined, ordered, and observed. Rather, in accordance with the prisoner's experience, it is portrayed as an overwhelming, endless, duplicable, and agonizing space. There is no pleasure in it or in the art of its narration. The camps in which Ka-Tzetnik's characters are trapped evoke not the sense of a cage, through the metal bars of which one can see the inside and outside, but rather the sense of an endless maze of mirrors, in which some objects and people are permanent and well discerned, and the masses of bodies, blocks, and fences duplicate themselves infinitely and painfully in time and space.

The specificity and concreteness demonstrated in Grossman's description of camp space typify, in Bakhtin's terms, a depiction of "one's own native world."[19] Such a world opposes the abstractness of the alien world emerging in Ka-Tzetnik's text, and this contrast in portrayals of space is a symptom of a fundamental contrast between narrations of the camp that look "from within" and those that look "from without": through the eyes of the Ka-Tzet, struggling to survive in the camp's time and space, or through the eyes of an external observer, whose detailed demonstration of facts only sets a barrier between readers and life as it was actually lived in the conditions of the Lager. If applied to additional camp locations, Grossman's mode of narrating space would have eventually provided a fairly clear, detailed, and comprehensive picture of the camp as a whole. This cannot happen in the abstract and alien world constructed in *Piepel*, where the numerous descriptions of the camp's landscape only duplicate each other, never allowing an integrative, definite, and comprehensible picture of space, which therefore remains undefeatable for body and mind.

The despairing effect evoked by such spatial imagery is accessible to both readers and dwellers of the camp, thereby creating a higher level of narrative integration as audience and characters share one experience. From the perspective of his characters, Ka-Tzetnik's poetics illustrates well how "temporal and spatial determinations are inseparable from one another, and always colored by

emotions and values."[20] Confined in Auschwitz for over a year, with no hope of rescue, Moni's conceptualization of space is shaped by his surroundings and situation. The barbed wire, the blocks, guards, and watchtowers—all visible to the eye of the visitor or scholar—are visible, of course, to Moni as well. But in the understanding of the one who is trapped within, the camp gains a different meaning—one that exceeds its manmade boundaries:

> Outside the barbed wire the lorries rode without cease. He knew there was no "outside." Outside it is the same as inside. Outside-Germans, and inside-Germans. He's been "outside." That's where the Germans brought him from. He knew that "outside" no more home or family existed. Not only his home, and not only his family. Outside there were only Germans. Everything else was here, inside. Everything ended on the inner side, at the barbed wire, at the electric mesh.[21]

In the experience of the Ka-Tzet, the camp is not an isolated, well-defined location or object within the world, restricted in time and space, as it would appear looking from the outside in, then or today. Rather, it is everything and everywhere. It fills the world and consumes it.

"Time there is not like it is here on earth"

Historians have already determined when the Nazi camps were constructed and liberated. We know when trains arrived at the camps from the different ghettos, and we can even describe in detail the daily routine of the inmates in various camps.[22] Testifying during the Eichmann trial, Dinur himself mentioned twice that he had spent about two years in Auschwitz.[23] But how was time experienced by the Ka-Tzets, who had no access to clocks and calendars and for whom every living second incorporated a tormented struggle to survive? "Time there is not like it is here on earth," Dinur testified. "Every fraction of a minute there passes on a different scale of time." How is this inner sense of time articulated in the poetics of *Piepel*?

Ka-Tzetnik's representation of the camp operates to diffuse the conventional sense of time for readers and characters alike, while creating an alternative and gripping temporal experience. In *Piepel*, Moni Preleshnik survives as a servant and sex slave ("Piepel" in camp jargon) for the block-masters. He manages to keep transferring from one block to another, just in time to avoid being murdered by a master who wants to replace him with a new Piepel. At some point,

Moni entirely loses his invaluable *Funktion* (a position that provides him with extra food and protection) and is immediately thrown back into the general population of prisoners, where he risks not only death at the hands of an abusive block-master, but also, his greatest fear, becoming a Muselmann.[24] "There's just six hours between a full belly and a hungry one in camp," Rostek, the block-master's cook, reminds Moni. "And once you lose your *Funktion*, inside of six hours you're just as hungry as the rest of them. And you know where the hungry go in Auschwitz, Piepel. Six hours is all you need to tell you."[25] This is the window of opportunity during which Moni must find food or, better, a *Funktion*, if he is to survive. On the Other Planet, Ka-Tzetnik tells us, time is not measured by days or months, but by hours—a simple matter of physiology. And if the interval between meals is longer than six hours, the risk is that by the time some food is miraculously procured, it may be too late to recover one's previous strength. "When do you become a Muselmann?" Moni wonders. "Do you feel the moment? He isn't a Muselmann yet! Why, he still realizes with everything in him that he must save himself immediately. It's after the last hunger that you become a Muselmann."[26] Further down this terrifying path, then, the sand in the hourglass gains the form of purely physiological symptoms of the hunger's type and its place in the sequence. As long as one is still capable of being hungry, there may still be a chance of rescue, and Moni is happy to feel that "he's going to be hungry again!"[27] In another manifestation of the unprecedented otherness of the Auschwitz planet, hunger is a positive symptom of a mind and body that are still capable of responsiveness and thought. Mediating these sensations and insights through Moni's consciousness allows Ka-Tzetnik to animate the substitution of objective chronometry with biological pace and its intrinsic meaning as inseparable from the experience and perspective of the planet's inhabitants.

The accelerated and biologized passing of hours is complemented and made more compelling through the story's suspension of larger time units. While the date of September 1, 1939—the day that the Wehrmacht invaded Poland and began setting up ghettos for Jews—is explicitly indicated early in the first volume of the *Salamandra* series, Ka-Tzetnik leaves the counting of days, weeks and months, or any reference to the conventional temporal sequence or historical events, at the camp's gates.[28] Even the change of seasons is obscured: "In Auschwitz you never know whether it's winter or summer. Your frame is consumed by the fire of hunger. So, what's the season of the year to you? Here it is the never-ending season of hunger."[29] This suspension of conventional chronometrics mirrors Bakhtin's observation that in the "literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete

whole."[30] Just as camp space is alien and interchangeable, without concrete markings, so the passing of time in the camp seems to be suspended, making units of time that are longer than hours similar and indistinguishable. Ka-Tzetnik's narrator aptly expresses the unique spatiotemporal nature of Auschwitz in one pensive observation:

> The day had unfurled over Auschwitz. A new Auschwitz day, but familiar in every scent and hue. One just like it was here yesterday, and one just like it will be here tomorrow—after you. Besides it, there is nothing here. Everywhere-Auschwitz. As far as the eye can see—an Auschwitz-latticed sky.[31]

In the agonizing and desperate experience of camp life, time and space fuse into an indistinguishable, inescapable, and infinite sequence that language can capture only from within: an "Auschwitz day," an "Auschwitz sky." The Other Planet erases any different, previous, normal existence, along with one's ability to sense or even imagine such an existence. There is only Auschwitz, from within and from without. There is nothing but it, in time, space, and mind.

The temporal experience of the Other Planet distorts the conventional perception and measurement of time. While the counting of hours dominates the characters' sense of time as their bodies collapse into the irreversible stage of becoming Muselmänner, days, months, and years are suspended in a world where, to quote Elie Wiesel, "the stomach alone was measuring time."[32] And the stomach can only measure hours between meals, leaving the hungry temporally disoriented and helpless, without a concrete grip on the time that has passed and without the basic ability to draw comfort from the length of survival or to make plans for the future. The inhabitants of the Other Planet are as lost in time as they are in space. Making this perception of time into a readerly effect is no simple task given that writing about fictional or factual events of the Holocaust always assumes a well-defined timeframe that stretches between 1933 and 1945. Even readers only remotely familiar with the history of the Holocaust tend to be aware of when plots located in the Nazi camps must end, and this assumption holds even more strongly for Hebrew and Yiddish audiences. Ka-Tzetnik approaches the challenge by extending the temporal experience of the Other Planet from the declarative and thematic level into his poetic design. Moni's six-hour timeframe is a key factor in shaping his line of plot, and his growing psychological distress as he observes the hours pass in hunger is shared with the reader since the world of the camp is discovered through this character's mediating consciousness. Through the coordinated reworking of these two opposing timeframes—accelerated biologized hours and suspended longer units of time—Ka-Tzetnik

weakens his readers' grip on the historical timeframe as they move further and further into his story, replacing it with an experiential, inner sense of time. Although describing a place with a familiar temporal setting and an obvious date of termination, Ka-Tzetnik desynchronizes our—and his characters'—sense of historical and camp time, allowing only the latter to dominate the text. From a perspective that is interior to the camp, clock-time quickly becomes obsolete, and the devastating otherness of the Auschwitz planet and the sense of isolation and helplessness it imposes upon its concentrationees is revealed.[33] All that is left is the sense of the rapidly collapsing body over a calendar that has frozen.

The temporal dimension of the Other Planet is observed most clearly when considered against the background of the chronotope of the Greek romance, which Bakhtin uses as a point of departure for his theoretical discussion. In the abstract, interchangeable, and alien space of the Greek romance, where no organic relationship between people and world can be developed, characters are passive and lack initiative; they are constantly at the mercy of the absolute power of chance. This vulnerability in space, however, is balanced by the temporal dimension of a chronotope, in which the order of events could be altered and even reversed while leaving characters unaffected. "Greek adventure time," Bakhtin observes, "leaves no traces—neither in the world nor in human beings," and characters can continue to be thrown from one adventure into another infinitely and in any order.[34] Bakhtin's definitions help us to understand the daunting invincibility generated by the chronotope of the Other Planet. Its spatial dimension is atypical of the modern European novel, especially the realist novel, with its localized events and depiction of concrete details of a world which is familiar or native to its dwellers, hence a world offering the potential to empower characters and limit the absolute power of chance. This type of space Ka-Tzetnik reserves for scenes set in the ghetto. In contrast, his narration of the camp adopts the spatial dimension Bakhtin observes in the Greek romance (with its interchangeable, alien, and abstract space), which renders the characters powerless. Time in the camp, on the other hand, does comply with the conventions of the European novel in terms of having an impact on characters and in the way that the author utilizes the theme of "becoming" and a "man's gradual formation" through developing experience.[35] However, while European novels tend to actualize characters' growth in the form of "education" or "coming of age" (as in the genre of the *Bildungsroman*), in the camp time has the opposite effects almost exclusively. Even as every passing moment in principle brings the Ka-Tzets closer to possible liberation and allows time to procure a life-saving *Funktion*, it also weakens their bodies and minds. Every moment

on the Other Planet accelerates mental and physical aging toward becoming a Muselmann. The intersection of time and space in Ka-Tzetnik's textualization of the camp constitutes a diabolic hybrid that might be called a "concentrationary chronotope." In the world governed by this chronotope, the individual is powerless and isolated in an alien and interchangeable space, always at the mercy of the absolute power of chance and defenseless before psychological and physical formation. This formation almost exclusively takes the form of dwindling spiritual and biological resources to the inevitable point of collapse.

"The inhabitants of this planet"

The human domain in Ka-Tzetnik's textual construction of Auschwitz is rich and diverse, encompassing a multitude of communities. It is populated by Zionist leaders and Orthodox Rabbis, tradesmen and businessmen, children and adults, family members and complete strangers, men and women, Jews, Poles, and Germans, the camp's *Funktion* holders and the rankless, the good and the evil. In this regard, Ka-Tzetnik's portrayal of the camp's population is efficient, comprehensive, and factually compelling, but except for the historical circumstances it contains, it is not unique among the panoramic explorations of a place and its people that are typical of conventional novels of social realism. Yet, when these individuals constitute a mass of people—a crowd—a mimetic challenge that is unique to representations of the camps arises. In our ordinary experience, it is an observer's sensual or cultural perspective that groups a large number of individuals into a mass of people, and this mass is formed by a coincidence of circumstance or a momentary act soon to dissolve. The "inhabitants" of the "planet of Auschwitz," on the other hand, comprise a mass of people not as product of a perceptual process in the eyes of the beholder, but rather through a metamorphosis imposed upon them as the object of perception itself. They "had no names, they had no parents nor did they have children," Dinur testified on the witness stand. "They did not dress in the way we dress here … Their name was the number 'Ka-Tzetnik.'" A systematic erasure of all distinctive features—name, familial status, clothing, normal physical appearance—forces the camp inmates into anonymity, not only as a mass of people but as individuals. As such, how can they be captured with senses and text? The eye has no grip on this amorphous mass, and if the exception is found, the individual cannot stand for the rule, who is, again, defined by anonymity as a visual feature (for both a member and a spectator). This anonymity constitutes both cause and effect: it is a

result of the first stage of violence in a Nazi system in which victims who cannot escape anonymity quickly in the form of a *Funktion* will soon become victims once more on their way to annihilation.

It is perhaps the conceptual, visual, and mimetic impasse that the masses create that accounts for the nature of their presence in Ka-Tzetnik's texts. What Ka-Tzetnik's narration lacks in its ability to individualize the masses it makes up for in the attention it pays them. Reading *Piepel*, one develops the sense that although Moni and Hayim-Idl are the heroes, and many other characters gain considerable narratorial attention—be it favorable or disparaging—the focus of the novel is in fact on the masses of anonymous Ka-Tzets. They are constantly mentioned and integrated into the narrator's descriptions of the landscape on the one hand and into the consciousness of the main characters on the other. They are ceaselessly positioned before the eyes of the readers, who cannot evade them, and before the main characters as part of their world. This spatial and visual deployment can, of course, be grounded in the factual image of the camps, but it is also be a projection of Dinur's own mindset and nightmares, which he reveals in the testimony he gave in the Eichmann trial:

> For they left me, they always left me, they were parted from me, and this oath appeared in the look of our eyes. For close to two years they kept on taking leave of me and they always left me behind. I see them, they are staring at me, I see them, I saw them standing in the queue.

In her analysis of this testimony, Shoshana Felman notes that "what K-Zetnik keeps reliving of the death camp is the moment of departure, the last gaze of the departed, the exchange of looks between the dying and the living at the very moment in which life and death are separating but are still tied up together and can for the last time see each other eye to eye."[36] Felman is drawing here on Dinur's testimony and his later memoir *Shivitti*, but her understanding of Dinur's consciousness can also provide us with insight into the way that he depicts the camp's anonymous masses in the *Salamandra* narratives. He is haunted by the masses, by their presence, by the grip they take of his mind and soul. He is mesmerized by their image, by the look in their eyes, which connects with his and forms a bond that haunts him long after his liberation. He has internalized them and constantly feels that they are looking at him with the expectation that he tell their story; he constantly sees them in his mind's eye, in the eye of Ka-Tzetnik, who broadcasts from within the Other Planet with its spaces, nightmares, and anguished inhabitants.

The actualization of Dinur's consciousness in poetics is also evident in the violent erasure of all markers of individuality, as this passage from *Piepel* demonstrates well:

> He [Moni] opened the door of block 4. Everything looked the same as before. Nothing had changed ... All hutches looked identical. All of them crammed with the identical tangle of bodies. The identical heads. All one color. No young, and no old. A monotonous stream of murk reaching from the platform to the crematorium.
>
> A thousand camplings, brought from diverse lands; diverse languages. All identical now. All drops in the same stream. He went among them.
>
> He lay among them, side by side with them, body to bodies. He had no way of telling whether the one lying beside him was his age or his father's. He did not know who they were, just as he did not know who the other thousand in the block were; as he did not know who were all the hundreds of thousands who had previously streamed through these very hutches. They were all one thing to him: camplings.[37]

Deprived of their individualizing features, the "inhabitants of this planet" are integrated into the chronotope; interchangeable and alien as blocks and hutches, undifferentiated like days and seasons, one inmate can be substituted for another—a whole that has no visible boundaries and that threatens, like an ocean, to drown its beholder. By repeatedly referring to this mass of anonymous inmates, by investigating their uniformity and the differences it erases, Ka-Tzetnik maintains narratorial eye contact with the nameless masses mentioned in his testimony. Coloring the "spatial determinations," to use Bakhtin's terminology, through the hero's "emotions and values," Ka-Tzetnik's narrator is able to convey the enormous sense of loneliness Moni feels among this mass of people of similar situation and destiny. Even to this lonely child, who has been observing them closely, they are just "camplings"; their individuality has been abolished. Exploring the inner world of one person enables Ka-Tzetnik to "bring it [the Holocaust] down," as Aharon Appelfeld puts it, "to make events speak through the individual and in his language, to rescue the suffering from huge numbers, from dreadful anonymity, and to restore the person's given and family name, to give the tortured person back his human form, which was snatched away from him."[38] When the explored mind is that of an individual within the mass and when that mind is occupied with perception and conceptualization of that mass, this process becomes especially tangible.

The challenge of representing the anonymous masses is further complicated when the Muselmann is the object. If the Muselmänner are what Boaz Neumann calls "live object[s]" and "human merchandise," should a novelist consider them objects or characters?[39] How should a person who had lost his character be characterized? How can the mind be presented if it shows no signs of activity or operates in modes unknown to both narrator and reader? Retaining a solid factual grounding and a perspective that is interior to life in the camp—where the Muselmann was beyond the realm of human communication—Ka-Tzetnik does not attempt to explore the mind of those who "crossed the invisible border between existence and nonexistence."[40] But he also does not betray his oath to tell their story. In *Piepel*, the Muselmänner are omnipresent and inescapable, not only in order to provide factual accuracy in the historical sense or realistic fullness in the a literary. Ka-Tzetnik integrates them into the poetics of his narrative, presenting the encounter with the Muselmänner as experienced from within the Other Planet.

Primo Levi writes that the Muselmänner crowd his memory "with their faceless presence." "Their life is short, but their number is endless; they … form the backbone of the camp, an anonymous mass, continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who march and labour in silence."[41] Ka-Tzetnik animates a similar experience through his characters and plots:

> Hundreds of human shadows drag by Moni, this way and that. Their blank stares collide with him as they seek something, not remembering what. They crawl down from their hutches, go out of their blocks to the latrine, but they no longer know the way. They cannot tell the front of the camp from the rear, where the latrine is located. All blocks look alike. Everywhere are the same rows of barbed wire and the same block gates.[42]

The rift between Moni and the Muselmänner in this passage is evident not only in the fact that the child clearly resides in the domain of the living while the Muselmänner have crossed the threshold into that of the dead. Perceived against the background of the latrine and the camp, Moni and the Muselmänner differ in their relation to space. For Moni the camp is an alien world, an interchangeable space deprived of particularities, with its endless duplicable blocks, wires, and masses, a space that has continuously been closing in on him and that he has ceaselessly been trying to push away. For the Muselmänner, this interchangeable space is not alien at all. This is not because they have formed organic connections with it—of that they are incapable—but because they share the qualities of this space and have become part of it. "You could never tell the skeletons of one block from the skeletons of another," Moni observes upon entering a random

block, "just as you could never tell the hutch board of the left side from the hutch boards of the right. All the boards of all the Auschwitz hutches are identical, just like the skeletons lying on them."[43] Like the camp's topography, the Muselmänner are deprived of individual identities; they are endless in number and identical in appearance, and they are threatening in the type of death they epitomize, even more than the sentinels in the towers, the beatings, and the disease. It is for the Muselmänner, Ka-Tzetnik observes, that "Auschwitz was created: from the smokestacks to the barbed-wire walls, from the block to the sentries in the watchtowers."[44] Most importantly, while Moni agonizes in fear of becoming a Muselmann and constantly analyses the risks and possibilities around him, a single mind seeking insights about the nature of the place, the Muselmänner remain indifferent, patient, helpless but at peace with their fate. Their actions reflect the end of the struggle, and their minds remain sealed for both the reader and Moni, who seems to be fascinated by them and longs for their tranquility.

The haunting, ghostly presence of the Muselmänner reflects the dynamics of two interconnected minds. "I see them, they are staring at me," Dinur relates his unbreakable mental bond with the nameless inhabitants of the Planet of Auschwitz. Just as they haunt him in his post-Auschwitz life, his waking moments, and his nightmares, so they surround his hero, little Moni, following every step of his struggle to survive in the camp. These nightmarish figures, who haunt the author's memory, also haunt his characters' present and determine the narrative's substance and shape. It is from this perspective that Ka-Tzetnik calls the Muselmänner "human shadows." In addition to capturing their mode of existence in both the author's remembrance of the past and in the life of his hero in the narrative present, the phrase fuses the appearance of Muselmänner with their conceptual status. As shadows they are between light and darkness, as bodies they are between life and death, and in the conditions of Auschwitz they are what is left of the living body as well as the reflection of the dead body, which is about to emerge. Ka-Tzetnik's poetics of the Other Planet integrates the Muselmänner into the plots as shadows of the living, accompanying them wherever they go in their physical presence, but also acting as an intrinsic signpost of the inevitable and immanent end.

In another of Moni's visits to the latrine, the narration of his experience and stream of thought is interspersed with a description of a group of Muselmänner, who appear out of the darkness:

> Out of the dark along the walls, shadows—Mussulmen—began to emerge one by one. Silently they came from the rear gate on bare, muffled skeleton-feet. Along

> the walls they stood, wiping the excreta oozing from their trousers. Unheard they stood, as though they had no tongue. All identically occupied, each sealed off within himself. A row of shadows silent beside dark walls. The latrine now seemed emptier and more ominous than before. The stillness, too, was more menacing.[45]

There is no interaction among the Muselmänner or between them and Moni, and any communication would have of course been impossible because the Muselmänner had crossed the threshold that marks the world of the living. They are confined to a physical presence forming an essential detail of the camp's landscape, just like the blocks and the watchtowers. Yet, the latrine seems "emptier and more ominous than before" due to these shadows' psychological impact on Moni, for whom they serve as a physical and mental reminder of his most probable fate. In the convoluted logic of Auschwitz, Moni is less terrified by the constant rapes that he endures at the hands the block-masters or even by the impending murder that awaits Piepels who do not escape their masters in time, than he is seized by the horror of "oncoming Muselmanity."[46] This special type of death was invented in the Nazi camps, the mental phase of which, the "irreversible withdrawal from life; the phase of acquiescent capitulation to despair," precedes turning into a "Muselmann in body."[47] "Oh God!" this child begs silently, "let him at least keep on realizing that he must save himself."[48] While the Muselmänner themselves are only shadows unable to participate actively in the narrative's plot, let alone propel it, the paralyzing horror, panic even, of becoming a Muselmann serves as a powerful motivation for Ka-Tzetnik's central characters. It was the desperate struggle to "save his mind from degeneration," leading into the initial mental phase of Muselmanity, that saved the life of Harry Preleshnik, Moni's older brother and the protagonist of several of the *Salamandra* volumes, although "his body was ravaged and fleshless."[49] It is the fear of becoming a Muselmann that generates many of Moni's agonized inner monologues as well as his persistent struggle to secure another portion of food, if not a *Funktion*. This set of priorities and motivations reveals the terrifying psychological drama of life and death on the Other Planet.

Within the concentrationary chronotope, the Muselmann fulfills the function of what Bakhtin calls the "chronotopic motif," where the "intersection of spatial and temporal sequences" materializes most visibly and echoes the chronotope of the novel as whole.[50] The Muselmann, however, is not an event—meeting, discovery, recognition—or a place—castle, road, salon—like in the examples of chronotopic motifs that Bakhtin discusses.[51] The Muselmann is a stage that

combines place and event; it is a transformation that occurs in the camp as a result of the set of conditions that it imposes on the concentrationees. On the Other Planet, where movement in space is limited by barbwires, where events are duplicated by camp routine, and time has frozen, the prisoner's body becomes the site of development from one stage to another, demonstrating the intersection of time and space in the most visual and terrifying manner. A Muselmann is a person who, within a period of time (weeks or months) and in a specific place (the Nazi camp) has lost his personhood. Discussing the great realist writers of the nineteenth century, Bakhtin observes that Balzac's depictions of houses are "materialized history" demonstrating the French novelist's extraordinary "ability to '*see*' time in space."[52] Looking at a Muselmann, one can "see time in space" in a horrifying manner that Balzac or Bakhtin never imagined and that may serve as a marker of the Holocaust as a modern invention. In the camp's very particular type of space, time leaves its traces on the living bodies in the form of an industrially inflicted accelerated decay.

But the chronotopicity of the Muselmann exceeds the function of a motif. As a "formally constitutive category," Bakhtin observes, the chronotope "determines to a significant degree the image of man in literature … The image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic."[53] In the Greek romance, where characters are not changed by the tests they pass, their immutability affirms "their identity, their durability and continuity."[54] The various categories of the modern novel, in contrast, present a process of human "becoming" and "emergence," where life and events "reveal themselves as the hero's experience, as the school or environment that first forms and formulates the hero's character and world view."[55] In the realistic novel, which Ka-Tzetnik's writing more closely resembles in period and conventions, human emergence is not a "private affair."[56] Rather, in it the human "emerges *along with the world*," reflecting "the historical emergence of the world itself," and is forced to "become a new, unprecedented type of human being."[57] In its combination of the abstract, interchangeable, and alien space (characteristic of the Greek romance) with the impact of time on characters (typical of the realistic novel), the chronotope of the Other Planet determines the image of the individual not to a "significant degree," as Bakhtin observes in the corpus he analyses, but absolutely. The item manufactured at the end of the concentrationary production line is the Muselmann, an unprecedented type of human being, who reflects in the most tangible manner the unprecedented historical developments of the Holocaust. Under the horrifying circumstances of the concentrationary chronotope, the process of "becoming" or "emergence" is not that of character growth or ideological development forged through the experience of interaction

with history. Becoming a Muselmann is a process of descent during which an individual is drained of all mental and physical capacities in a procedure that embodies, in the most literal sense of the word, the historical conditions of the Nazi camp and reifies the image of the human as a chronotopic motif. Unlike conventional characters, a Muselmann is not a fictional individual who participates in events against the background of the chronotope. The Muselmann has lost the most basic psychological and physical agency, to the point of becoming a camp object, perceived by other inhabitants of the Other Planet—Ka-Tzets, SS, Kapos—not as an individual but as another duplicable element of the concentrationary chronotope.

Finally, Muselmanity is consequential for Ka-Tzetnik's act of narration. The tension between Moni's gushing, idiosyncratic stream of thought and the looming erasure of individuality imposed by the Muselmann condition motivates the text in the domain of telling as much as in the domain of the told. If the novel's focal character degenerates to the point in which his mind is no longer able to comprehend his surroundings or even reflect them passively, this is the end of the story in the most literal sense.[58] This drama of narration is encapsulated in the recurring motif of the eye. As a skinny Piepel who had lost his appetite, Moni is no longer attractive to the block-masters through conventional sexual qualities. These are his enchanting "virgin" and "velvet" eyes that captivate the appetite of the masters and secure his *Funktion*, his life.[59] Nearby, endless, identical, their individuality erased and awaiting with everlasting patience are the Muselmänner, on whose faces and in whose eyes, as Levi observes, "not a trace of a thought is to be seen."[60] The transition from Moni's "virgin" eye to the Muselman's "blank stare" is a movement from the world of the living to the world of the dead, constituting the eye as a metaphor for life.[61] Such transition would also terminate the psycho-literary function of Moni's gaze as a channel through which Dinur maintains eye contact with the camp's masses and explores the Other Planet from within—a channel "colored by [the] emotions and values" of a participants in the event—character and author. Indeed, in the final lines of *Piepel*, when Moni lays on the ground after his failed attempt to escape, the "Auschwitz sky leaned over his eyelashes," and the "earth gathered him in like a mother cradling her little one to sleep."[62] The child's shut eyes can no longer observe the sky or resist, through an alert consciousness and a stubborn will to live, the camp's fatal grip. Although not as a Muselmann lingering on the threshold between the living and the dead but through a frail act of defiance; although he continued to struggle until the very last heart beat; Moni is eventually integrated, not in mind but in body,

into the concentrationary chronotope. This is where Ka-Tzetnik's narration concludes.

"Chronicle" or "literary material"?

Understanding the Other Planet as a chronotope may illuminate a problematic tension that arises in Dinur's testimony at the Eichmann trial. "What was the reason that you hid behind the pseudonym 'Ka-Tzetnik,' Mr. Dinur?" the judge asked. "It is not a pseudonym," Dinur replied. "I do not regard myself as a writer of literary material. This is a chronicle of the planet of Auschwitz."[63] *Salamandra*, *House of Dolls*, and *Piepel* cannot be considered chronicles in the strictly formal sense—they are not records of events given in a chronologically arranged list of entries. Nor do these books qualify in terms of the chronicle's substance: instead of a dry factual account that minimizes authorial intervention, they illustrate a comprehensive and very particular poetics that places them well within the domain of "literary material," to use Dinur's own terms.[64] How, then, can this incongruity between Dinur's statement of intention and his published output be explained?

One way to resolve this tension is to suggest that in the context of the trial, Dinur wished to emphasize the factual value of his work at the expense of the poetic qualities that he would not otherwise deny. But when read closely, the testimony reveals a more comprehensive explanation, which rests on the intimate relationship between Dinur and Ka-Tzetnik, the survivor and the texts. Dinur, it should be noted, did not state that he had written a "chronicle of Auschwitz"—a type of work standing in opposition to literary accounts of the camps. Instead, he testified that his books are a chronicle of the "planet" of Auschwitz. This is a fundamental distinction.[65] Even if he does not regard himself as a "writer of literary material," but aspires to maximum objectivity and minimum authorial intervention in textualizing historical facts, Dinur narrates through his conceptualization of the camp as a "planet," which in his novels he further qualifies as an Other Planet, "distanced from the land of man as it is distanced from the sun."[66] This qualification proves especially important when the concentrationary universe that Ka-Tzetnik describes is viewed through the lens of the chronotope. Bakhtin observes that the "chronotope in a work always contains within it an evaluating aspect."[67] In Ka-Tzetnik's portrayal of the actual Auschwitz this "evaluating aspect" is realized as he conceptualizes the camp as an Other Planet, a conceptualization that materializes Dinur's personal experience and insights as

a Ka-Tzet and mediates between the factual Auschwitz and its novelistic articulation in the *Salamandra* volumes. The form of a chronicle—a chronologically arranged list of events—cannot apply to this chronicle of the Other planet. Time itself, like space, is perceived differently in this universe of unprecedented otherness, and it produces radically different meanings and implications for humanity.

Dinur's use of "chronicle" may be understood in reference to the genre's other major quality, its factual substance, which gains special relevance in a trial testimony. The Auschwitz we encounter in *Piepel* is indeed immersed through and through in the details and sights of the actual camp; but allusions to discrete historical facts constitute only the surface of the text's intrinsic relationship with history. Bakhtin observes that a "literary work's artistic unity in relationship to actual reality is defined by its chronotope," and art reflects "forms of an actual chronotope."[68] The process of "assimilating an actual historical chronotope in literature," as Bakhtin calls it, sustains, according to Bernhard Scholz, the ties between the literary chronotope and the actual world in the context of which the text was created.[69] Once reflected in art, the plot-generating potential of the actual chronotope is harnessed to produce fictional narratives, which recreate the relationship between time, space, and the events of historical plots.[70] By reflecting the concentrationary universe as a chronotope, Ka-Tzetnik utilizes the literary dimension of his work to recover and document the physical and psychological conditions endured by the concentrationees in history. It is exactly this intersection of striving for a chronicle's maximum factuality while narrating the Other Planet as Ka-Tzetnik that enables Dinur to compellingly convey an interior perspective—a perspective that is indispensable for understanding the facts of the Holocaust but is suppressed by any blind adherence to the facts alone. By conceptualizing the actual camp as an Other Planet and giving it a body in the form of the concentrationary chronotope, Ka-Tzetnik testifies to the experience of survival in Auschwitz through the force of his poetics.

Notes

1 It must be noted that despite the popular belief, the phrase "Other Planet" does not appear in the testimony Dinur gave at the Eichmann trial, where he uses the phrases "Planet of Auschwitz" and "Planet of Ashes." The "Other Planet" seems to have made its earliest appearance a decade-and-a-half earlier, in Ka-Tzetnik's

first book, *Salamandra* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1946), 216. Yet, considering the phrase is merely given in passing in a large novel, it is unlikely that it is from *Salamandra* that it made its way to public discourse. Ka-Tzetnik's most extensive use of the phrase is made in his final book, *Tsofen: EDMA* (Tel Aviv: Hakibutz hameuhad, 1987), translated in English as *Shivitti*, trans. Eliyah Nike De-Nur and Lisa Herman (New York: Harper & Row, 1989); Dan Miron, "Beyn sefer le'efer," *Hasifriya haiveret* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Ahronot, 2005), 148. Originally published in *Alpayim* 10 (1994): 196–224.

2 Yechiel Szeintuch, *Salamandrah: Mitos Ṿe-Hisṭoryah Be-Khitve K. Tseṭniḳ* (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2009). For some of this study's findings in English, see Yechiel Szeintuch, "The Myth of the Salamander in the Work of Ka-Tzetnik," trans. Daniella Tourgeman and Maayan Zigdon, *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 3, no. 1 (2005): 101–32.

3 For more about the event, see Miron, "Beyn sefer le'efer."

4 Omer Bartov, "Kitsch and Sadism in Ka-Tzetnik's Other Planet: Israeli Youth Imagine the Holocaust," *Jewish Social Studies* 3, no. 2 (1997): 42–76. Iris Milner, "The Gray Zone Revisited: The Concentrationary Universe in Ka. Tzetnik's Literary Testimony," *Jewish Social Studies* 14, no. 2 (2008): 113–55.

5 Galia Glasner-Heled investigates reader responses to Ka-Tzetnik's daring and hard-to-bear descriptions of atrocity, and Howard Needler analyzes the scriptural dimensions of Ka-Tzetnik's use of Hebrew: Galia Glasner-Heled, "Reader, Writer, and Holocaust Literature: The Case of Ka-Tzetnik," *Israel Studies* 12, no. 3 (2007): 109–33; and Howard Needler, "Red Fire upon Black Fire: Hebrew in the Holocaust Novels of K. Tsetnik," *Writing and the Holocaust*, ed. Berel Lang (New York: Holmes, 1988), 234–44. See also Galia Glasner-Heled, "Et Mi Meytseg Ka-Tzetnik," *Dapim le-Kheker ha-Shoah* 20 (2005): 167–200. Rina Duday discusses Dinur's use of fictional writing as a protective barrier between him and the horror, a barrier that enables his testimony. Rina Duday, "Kitsch vetraquma—mikre mivhan: Beit habubot me'et Ka-Tzetnik," *Mikan* 6 (2005): 125–42.

6 Dinur's testimony is available in English at www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/Sessions/Session-068-01.html, accessed March 22, 2017. The website provides the complete protocol of the trial. All quotes from Dinur's testimony included in this chapter are from this website, and in some cases, they have been slightly amended to reflect the Hebrew original more accurately.

7 The most extensive analysis of Dinur's testimony and court performance is provided in Shoshana Felman's *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 131–66. Felman's discussion uses "psychoanalytical vocabulary informed by jurisprudential trauma theory" and conducts a dialog (146) with Hannah Arendt's report on Dinur in *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, revised edition (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1963).

8 The term "concentrationary universe" ("L'univers concentrationnaire") is David Rousset's. See his *The Other Kingdom*, trans. Ramon Guthrie (New York: Reynal & Hitchcok, 1947).

9 The Hebrew edition is *Kar'u lo Piepel* (Tel Aviv: Am Hasefer, 1961), translated as *Moni: A Novel of Auschwitz*, trans. Nina De-Nur (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1963). Throughout this chapter, I refer to the book as *Piepel*, which is closer to the original Hebrew title, and I quote from *Moni* while also providing the reference to the Hebrew original.

10 Ka-Tzetnik, *Beit habubot* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1953), 172; *House of Dolls*, trans. Moshe M. Kohn (London: Senate, 1997), 131.

11 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 176; *Moni*, 198.

12 Ka-Tzetnik 135633, *Piepel*, 73; *Moni*, 85.

13 M. M. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson, revised ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 100. Bakhtin's vague definition of the term "chronotope" as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" poses a continuous challenge to scholars (84). Holquist and Emerson define the term in their glossary as "a unit of analysis for studying texts according to the ratio and nature of the temporal and spatial categories represented . . . an optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring" (425–6). Gary Soul Morson and Caryl Emerson provide a thorough discussion of Bakhtin's essay in *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of Prosaics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 366–432. More useful for our purposes is Bernhard Scholz's approach to the chronotope. He sees it as a "principle of sequentially and appositionally ordering a manifold of events." It must not be thought of as an element of the work, but as a "principle of generating plots of narratives." See his "Bakhtin's Concept of 'Chronotope': The Kantian Connection," in *The Contexts of Bakhtin: Philosophy, Authorship, Aesthetics*, ed. David Shepherd (London: Routledge, 1998), 160.

14 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 224–5; *Moni*, 252.

15 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 72; *Moni*, 85 (translation with my modifications based on the Hebrew original).

16 Bakhtin, "Forms of Time," 108.

17 David Grossman, *See Under: Love*, trans. Betsy Rosenberg (New York: Washington Square, 1989), 187.

18 The use of the fantastic is one of the distinguishing markers of Holocaust representation in the fiction of the second generation, where it serves as a means of dealing with the taboos involved in writing about the topic. For an elaborate discussion of the issue, see Gilead Morahg, "Breaking Silence: Israel's Fantastic

Fiction of the Holocaust," in *The Boom in Contemporary Israeli Fiction*, ed. Alan Mintz (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1997), 143–83.

19 Bakhtin, "Forms of Time," 100–101.

20 Ibid., 243.

21 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 225; *Moni*, 252.

22 For discussions of time and routine in camp life, see, for example, Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, trans. William Templer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 73–93; and Eugen Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell: The German Concentration Camps and the System behind Them*, trans. Heinz Norden (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 73–80.

23 As we know from Dina Porat's biographical essay in this volume, Dinur's testimony conflated the time that he spent in the main Auschwitz camp (about six months after his arrival in August 1943) and the Auschwitz sub-camp Günthergrube camp in Lędzin (then called Lendzin), from where he left on the death march that led to his escape in January 1945.

24 The term Muselmann refers to inmates in the final stage of emaciation and is commonly explained as an allusion to the fatalism or prayer movements of Muslims. See Sofsky, *Order*, 199–205. The spelling of the term varies, and it is standardized here following Sofsky as "Muselmann" in singular and "Muselmänner" in plural. For a compelling discussion of *Funktion*, see Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Vintage, 1989), 36–69.

25 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 32; *Moni*, 41. Italics in *Moni*.

26 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 205; *Moni*, 231.

27 Ibid.

28 Ka-Tzetnik, *Salamandra* (Tel Aviv: Hakibutz hameuhad, 1987), 27; Ka-Tzetnik, *Sunrise over Hell*, trans. Nina de-Nur (London: Corgi, 1977), 29. All references are to these two editions. The first edition of the novel *Salamandra* was written in Yiddish in 1945 and published in Hebrew translation in 1946. In 1971, Dinur published a revised Hebrew edition, which served as basis for the English translation.

29 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 211; *Moni,* 237–8.

30 Bakhtin, "Forms of Time," 84.

31 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 102; *Moni*, 119.

32 Elie Wiesel, *The Night Trilogy: Night, Dawn, Day*, trans. Marion Wiesel (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 70.

33 "Concentrationee" is David Rousset's term for the inhabitants of the concentrationary universe, the Ka-Tzets. Rousset, *Kingdom*, 102.

34 Bakhtin, "Forms of Time," 106.

35 Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination*, 392–3.

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36 Felman, *Juridical Unconscious*, 147.
37 *Piepel*, 225; Moni, 252–3.
38 Aharon Appelfeld, "After the Holocaust," in *Writing and the Holocaust*, ed. Berel Lang (New York: Holmes, 1988), 92.
39 Boaz Neumann, *Reiyat haolam hanatzit* (Heifa: University of Heifa Press, 2002), 208.
40 Zdzisław Ryn, "Between Life and Death: Experiences of Concentration Camp Mussulmen during the Holocaust," *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs* 116, no. 1 (1990): 7.
41 Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York: Collier, 1961), 82.
42 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 43; *Moni*, 53.
43 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 73; *Moni,* 85.
44 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 43; *Moni*, 53.
45 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 199–200; *Moni*, 224–5.
46 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 203; *Moni*, 228. Ka-Tzetnik's spelling is "Mussulmanity," which is standardized here according to "Muselmann."
47 Ka-Tzetnik, *Salamandra*, 154; *Sunrise over Hell*, 210
48 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 205; *Moni*, 230.
49 Ka-Tzetnik, *Salamandra*, 154; *Sunrise over Hell*, 210.
50 Bakhtin, "Forms of Time," 247. For a concise discussion of the term "chronotopic motif," see Morson and Emerson, *Bakhtin*, 374–5.
51 Bakhtin, "Forms of Time," 247.
52 Ibid.
53 Bakhtin, "Forms of Time," 85.
54 Ibid., 107.
55 Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 393.
56 M. M. Bakhtin, "The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel)," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. Mcgee, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 23.
57 Ibid. Italics in original.
58 "Focal character" or "focal hero" is the character through whose perspective the story is narrated. See Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 189–98.
59 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 105, 81; *Moni*, 122, 94. See also p. 9 of the Hebrew for descriptions of Moni's eyes, which are not rendered in the translation.
60 Levi, *Survival*, 82. Another survivor describes the Muselmänner as having sad faces and "vacant expression, eyes lacking luster did not react to their environment." Others describe them as "messengers of death in the camp" and "apathetic …

seemed to be already dead, did not reflect the will to live, but blind and vacuous hunger." Cited in Ryn, *Life and Death*, 12.

61 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel*, 43; *Moni*, 53

62 Ka-Tzetnik, *Piepel,* 256; *Moni,* 286.

63 In the original Hebrew, the judge and Dinur use the phrase *shem sifruti* ("literary name") for "pseudonym," hence Dinur's reference to "writer of literary material." The most extensive discussion of Dinur's enigmatic choice and use of the name "Ka-Tzetnik" is Jeremy Popkin's, who observes that " 'Ka-Tzetnik 135633' is not a pseudonym, but the real identity of the author who wrote the words that were published as *Salamandra* and all the books that followed. The continuous reenactment of the loss of identity that occurred in Auschwitz is only part of the significance of Ka-Tzetnik's gesture, however. The other half is his insistence that the story he tells is that of all the prisoners, and particularly of those who did not survive" (347). See his "Ka-Tzetnik 135633: The Survivor as Pseudonym," *New Literary History* 33.2 (2002): 343–55.

64 For a discussion of the chronicle's characteristics, see Philippe Carrard, "Chronicle," in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2005), 63–4; Harry E. Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1937): 64–8.

65 The Hebrew original in fact reads that the chronicle is "out of" (Heb. *mitoch haplaneta*) rather than "of" the planet, which strengthens Dinur's inner view: not a chronicle "of," written in retrospect, but a chronicle "out of," as if extracted from the place.

66 The phrase the "Other Planet" appears in the 1971 Hebrew edition of *Salamandra* (140), but is missing from *Sunrise over Hell* (188). The quote "distanced from the land of men" appears in the Hebrew *Piepel* (53) but is omitted from the English *Moni* (64).

67 Bakhtin, "Forms of Time," 243.

68 Ibid., 243, 85.

69 Ibid., 85. Bernhard Scholz, "Bakhtin's Concept of 'Chronotope': The Kantian Connection," *The Contexts of Bakhtin*, ed. David Shepherd (London: Routledge, 1998), 161.

70 Indeed, as Scholz indicates, "what Bakhtin actually does in all of his analyses of historically manifest chronotopes" is to "reconstruct chronotopes and plots as corollaries of each other." Ibid., 160.