

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOME KEY METAPHORS IN URI ZEVI GREENBERG'S POETRY

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The term "sod" ("mystery" or "secret") is Uri Zevi Greenberg's signal to the reader that he is making a statement of profound ideological pathos.¹ Among these statements there is often an interweaving of negative and positive "sod": the "sod" of *bedidut-keritut* (being cut-off, bereaved, alone) and its corollary, the "sod" of *kosef* (longing and hope).²

After the Holocaust, Greenberg frequently refers to a uniquely Jewish potential and agenda for achieving an awareness of amputation.³ Greenberg's post-Holocaust Jew experiences a combined shock and thrill at realizing that his soul's wings were "clipped at the shoulder while still flapping."⁴ The act of recollection is immensely powerful. It elicits a trance-like state of painful bliss — a mixture of Platonic ecstasy and a choking-up with ineffable national pride. The metaphors of amputation, moreover — minus the element of intense national pride — antedate the Holocaust. Following World War I, for example, Greenberg conjures up the emotional tension of the elderly amputee who relives his first shock-of-awareness of his empty sleeve every time he hears the crippled organ-grinder's music.⁵ This early version of the recollection, too, interweaves with metaphors of inferred prophetic meaning — however nihilistic and bleak — and destiny. In a manner of speaking: Vision arises out of the awareness of incision (*hittukh*). Vision is a function of incision.⁶

In Greenberg's early work, the "sod" that the Jews' reservoir of pain is their reservoir of strength⁷ is not as fully realized as it is following World War I. After the First World War, in fact, the very word "sod" and his consolatory water metaphors are not used with even a fraction of the frequency with which they occur after the Nazi era. Following World War I, Greenberg's Incision-Vision is egocentric, if not narcissistic,⁸ despite the fact that he addresses universal, not parochial, issues. Contrariwise, after the Holocaust Greenberg's incision consciousness is more sympathetic and humane — and this in spite of his fierce chauvinism. His water metaphors, particularly, indicate this change in the direction of that mystical-biological nationalism familiar to every reader of Greenberg. These metaphors, furthermore, reveal a growth towards love and empathy. The chauvinism and the empathy alike, we believe, are traceable to the influence of Yehudah Halevi.⁹

By contrast to the water metaphors, Greenberg's music metaphors reveal a striking psychological unity in his poetry over a very long span of time. Music serves as the key to the mind-transporting awareness described above. The music metaphors interlock with metaphors of amputation, water and the moon, but they can be isolated to demonstrate Greenberg's faith in a supernal Jewish resilience. His musical metaphors, therefore, will be our primary focus in this paper.

We shall see that throughout Greenberg's work, his thunderous temperament cries out for a transmutation of pain into power and despair into joy.¹⁰ Keeping Greenberg's preoccupation with this theme in mind, we shall com-

ment on various orchestrations of it through metaphors connected primarily to music, but also to music and water, the moon, the moon and water, the moon and blood. Greenberg's literary power, one should note at the outset, lies not at all in his diversification of metaphors, but rather in his talent for dazzling variations on a limited number of them. Following the movement of his ground metaphors is an intellectual and esthetic exercise reminiscent of listening to a complex symphony.¹¹

Some preliminary comments are necessary in presenting our thesis. Our recurrent comparison of symbols stemming from World War I with those stemming from World War II is prompted by three considerations. First is the simple fact that a few archetypal experiences of Greenberg during the First World War are crucial for understanding his poetry as a whole.¹² Secondly, we wish to test the rather fashionable thesis set forth by Lawrence Langer in his book *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*. Following Steiner, Adorno and others, Langer argues that the Holocaust radically altered our universe of discourse in a manner unprecedented in all the "literature of atrocity."¹³ Uri Zevi Greenberg, as this century's foremost poet of "atrocity" — if only because of his very long and prolific career and overall excellence — is an important case-study for challenging Langer's proposition. Thirdly, we seek to continue our observations based on the premise of Greenberg's polar attraction to the medieval poets Solomon Ibn Gabirol and Yehudah Halevi. Greenberg moves from his post-World War I —Gabirol-like—preoccupation with introspective and intellectual metaphors towards the type of ethnic and biological metaphors utilized by Halevi. While never abandoning Gabirol, he is drawn dramatically towards Halevi after World War II.

One magnificent post-Holocaust poem, "*Le-Qol Kinnorotenu*" ("To the Sound of our Violins") (1945),¹⁴ combines music and water imagery, and first alerted me to the importance of these literary-psychological symbols. The poem is set in a Tel-Aviv cafe on the Mediterranean. Numbing his grief with tobacco and alcohol, the poet becomes transported by the sound of violins in the cafe and by the sight of the Mediterranean. He internalizes the music and the sea both sensorily—as an ocean of his grief, a melodic consciousness of his Jewish suffering — and historically — as a dual means for conjuring up and reliving the experience of Jewish sovereignty. As Greenberg meditates on the ocean and on the uniqueness of Jewish violin music, his soul, as it were, sprouts new wings.¹⁵

"*Le-Qol Kinnorotenu*" is a hermeneutic expansion in verse on the Psalm (#137) "By the Rivers of Babylon." This famous Psalm merges the notions of singing, violins, weeping, rivers, and Babylon — for Greenberg paradigmatic of every *galut*. In its variegated associations, this Psalm may be the single most important ground-metaphor in all of Greenberg's poetry.¹⁶

One must review the well-known episodes of Greenberg's World War I experience in order to appreciate his musical metaphors and the interlocking metaphors of water and the moon. As Yom Tov Hellman and others have emphasized, two terrifying events were most jarring. The first was the sight of Serbian soldiers hanging upside down from an electrified barbed wire fence by the Sava River in Yugoslavia, where Greenberg fought as a young soldier on the side of Austria in 1917. Seeing these soldiers' upstretched feet with their hobnailed boots scratching the face of the moon filled Green-

berg then with the combined *emah* (terror) and *kosef* (yearning) which "electrified" his being and his verse.¹⁷

The second experience was the terror of almost having been executed by a firing squad together with his family against the wall of a church. That narrow escape in a cloister in Pinsk prefigured the caustic anti-Gentile tone of Greenberg's later writing and taught him for the first time, as Greenberg wrote in 1929, "that the symbol of our terror is: the cross."¹⁸ With regard to Langer's thesis, therefore — we note preliminarily — any exclusive critical preoccupation with the Holocaust may be overblown and incorrect when dealing with Jewish writers who, like Greenberg, also experienced World War I and the Russian Revolution.¹⁹

The archetypes of World War I predominate in Greenberg's literary universe, albeit with modifications in his later poetry. The late Reuven Rabinovitz analyzed this brilliantly in his discussion of a poem written by Greenberg in 1953 (in which music figures prominently).²⁰ Here Greenberg harkens back to the scene by the waters of the Sava. The poet attempts to assess at a remove of thirty-six years why the sight of these upturned soldiers so "electrified" him as to prompt him to write that he "would never weep again in [his] life as [he] wept by the waters of the Sava."²¹ Greenberg reinterprets in 1953 what in 1917 was a universalistic sense of trauma and quest for meaning in human (not specifically Jewish) atrocity. The vision at the Sava now assumes a particularistic coloring, but it remains no less critical as a symbol. Greenberg, in 1953, reasons that the Serbian rebels against the Austrian empire (heirs to the holy Roman empire) must have reminded him, back in 1917, of his ancient Jewish ancestors in their rebellion against Rome.²² The exiled Serbian king now reminds him of the Biblical king Saul in tragic defeat.²³ The Serbian girls and soldiers shine in his memory as soul-brethren from a previous incarnation.²⁴

Greenberg also speaks glowingly of the Serbian music he knew and loved as a young man. And this brings us, finally, to our major heading: music. Let it be noted that the Hebrew "*meshorer*" denotes both "poet" and "singer." For Greenberg struggle and song (and/or poetry) are the essence of his life and of the collective life of the Jews. Hence, at critical junctures of the poet's life, one may expect to find Greenberg speaking in musical metaphors. At significant poetic moments he expresses his calling as a unique melodic consciousness, and conveys his faith in the incantatory power of music and poetry. In the case at hand Greenberg exhibits surprising enthusiasm as he conjures up the memory of the Serbian Guslar musicians:

"Naggenu Guslarim niggun

Li yesh millim be-'Ivrit

Navi hinneni le-Belgrade."

"Play on, O Guslars, your niggun

I have Hebrew lyrics for your melody

*A prophet am I for Belgrade."*²⁵

The Serbians' struggle, their rebellious spirit, and their singing appear to Greenberg in retrospect as having anticipated all of his subsequent battles. The song of the Guslar musicians was an intimation of Greenberg's life's essence, his struggle and song as a Jew. The Serbian songs and indeed Greenberg's entire vision at the Sava River had to be rendered into "Hebrew lyrics." But having emphasized at length the importance of the World War I

archetypal experiences, let us now concentrate on the centrality of musical metaphors as a recurrent unifying psychological theme in Greenberg's poetry.

The ecstatic exclamation "*Naggenu, hai naggenu*" ("Play, oh play on") appears in Greenberg's poetry at some moments of his greatest grief. It is a defiant outcry which may derive from Greenberg's Hasidic background²⁶ or from the tremendous importance ascribed to music by the Symbolists and their followers.²⁷ Greenberg, for whatever reason, views the innate musical reflex of the Jews as one key to their emotional resilience and capacity for survival. The very same exclamation "*Naggenu, hai naggenu*" occurs in the above-mentioned poem, "*Le-Qol Kinnorotenu*." There the poet proclaims the miracle that bare-headed and shaven ("*beli zaqan u-fe'ah*") Jewish musicians continue the melody of his annihilated Hasidic brethren.²⁸

"*Naggenu, hai naggenu*" is an eruption of Greenberg's defiant and soul-transporting optimism at times of his profoundest awareness of loss and amputation. I have compiled a list of similar musical manifestoes beginning with Greenberg's earliest works. Some of the most striking formulations can be grouped under the following ten motifs:

- 1) Death itself is a melody (1924): "Like beautiful melodies the villages faded away...; a body which is dying...is itself a melody."²⁹
- 2) The grumbling of a deserter is a kind of melody (1924): "The hissing of this snake is also the shadow of a melody."³⁰
- 3) The melody of grandeur in defeat [connected with the legend of the hidden subterranean organ (*ugav*) salvaged from the destroyed Jerusalem temple]. Already as an infant Greenberg absorbed through his pores "the melody of the wondrous catastrophe, the majesty of destruction." (1926)³¹
- 4) The survival of one Hebrew poet-singer ("*meshorer*") is a sign that Judaism's eternal spirit lives. (1926 and 1951)³²
- 5) The barren scenery of Palestine reminds him of violins (1928): "I will lay my body across a boulder/Like a violin upon a shoulder."³³
- 6) The ecstasy of pain (1924): "He walks naked and insane through the ravaged Ukraine, his "one hand a bow, the second a kind of violin."³⁴
- 7) Defiant dances. Greenberg identifies with his Polish Jewish brethren who were forced to play the jester and dance the degrading "*ma-yofis*."³⁵ (1924) He muses over his ability after the pogroms to resume dancing the *hora*. This highlights the wonder that he was not driven insane. (1928)³⁶ After the Holocaust Greenberg dances a *freilachs* on his ancestors' graves (in praise of the partisans). (1951)³⁷
- 8) The feast of worms as an apocalyptic prelude to majesty. (1928)³⁸ Greenberg invites the worm-eaten skeletons to play on "moon-lit pianos." (1924)³⁹
- 9) Greenberg's melodic consciousness insulates him from his threatening surroundings. These are either (a) seductive and assimilatory (1922-23)⁴⁰ or (b) hostile and destructive (1951). A certain melody sung by his mother was with him in the trenches during World War I; it was also the melody she sang in the train to the crematorium.⁴¹
- 10) The Jewish sense of humor is a corollary of their musical resiliency.⁴² The Gentiles are abashed that Jews still know how to laugh. There is a mysterious symbiosis of sadness and joy. They are as resilient as water, able to regain their surface calm although every stone hurled into them remains on their soul's bottom.⁴³ Jewish refugees in the hold of a ship let fly a "dove of humor" ["*yonat halasah*"—a pun on *hassalah* (salvation)],⁴⁴ "a humor of many nuances, caressingly soft, yet like the dove possessed of a beak [of biting cynicism]." The poet muses in wonderment: "And there is no one insane among them and no one jumping overboard."⁴⁵

The wit of the Jews — like their music — is an emotional resource which saves them from insanity and suicide. (1951)

Gideon Katznellson has argued cogently that the music of the *'ugav* or organ — whose effect Greenberg indeed strives to recreate through poetry⁴⁶ — is the “key” to Greenberg’s symbolism.⁴⁷ Katznellson compares Greenberg’s schematic presentation of the soul’s “elevations” in his “*Shir ha-'Ugavar*”⁴⁸ to Baudelaire’s poem by the same name (“*Elevation*”) in *Les Fleurs du Mal*.⁴⁹ Intimations of the *'ugav* — according to legend salvaged from the destroyed Jerusalem Temple and hidden in an underground cave⁵⁰ — can stimulate the soul to ascend even beyond “the sphere of lights” by dint of the power of *kosef* (longing). Hence this music — or poetry, its surrogate — can restore to the soul its clipped wings and enable it to soar back into the workaday world; there the inspired soul can illuminate even the lightless *nofim* (realms) of the mundane.⁵¹

What is interesting in Katznellson’s study is the fact that he neutralizes the journalistic or ideological features of Greenberg’s concept of *kosef*, and deals exclusively with the structural or experiential aspect of the soul’s career and destiny. As Shalom Lindbaum points out, however, the nationalistic element is virtually omnipresent in Greenberg’s evocation of the *'ugav* or *harpe* as far back as Greenberg’s first published poem in Yiddish in 1915.⁵² Therefore, building on the insights of Katznellson, Lindbaum, Hillel Barzel⁵³ and others, I would like to suggest a broader interpretation. For Greenberg, a wide variety of musical instruments and metaphors possess incantatory and/or insulating power. The effect is cumulative, and the thrust of this power is psychological resilience — both national and personal. Of course, Greenberg distinguishes between “strong” music and “weak” music played on flaccid strings by Jews of ineffectual or maudlin temperaments.⁵⁴ But in no way can our attention be limited to his evocation of the *'ugav*.

In expressing his compulsion to be a poet-“singer,” he refers interchangeably to any one of three concepts: music, singing, or poetry. These poetry-music metaphors, in turn, are often linked to Greenberg’s other key metaphors of destiny such as the ocean, fire and the moon. One important example of Greenberg’s intermeshing of music and water imagery was the poem we discussed above, “*Le-Qol Kinnorotenu*.”⁵⁵ Another dramatic and moving poem is the one in which Greenberg recalls his father’s chanting of the *Shirat ha-Yam* (Moses’s Song at the Sea of Reeds).⁵⁶ On the occasions that Greenberg’s father, a cantor, sang this special *niggun* (melody), the listener had the psychic experience of once again standing at the shores of the sea and witnessing that great miracle of the waters parting.⁵⁷ This sense of reliving historical moments — of reincarnation and mind-transporting trances — is traceable to the influence of Yehudah Halevi,⁵⁸ and it is crucial to Greenberg’s poetic universe. It would appear — at least from this poem and others in *Rehovot ha-Nahar* (1951) — that for Greenberg, the miracle-at-the-sea is the single most psychically beneficial event which the post-Holocaust Jew must try to conjure up and relive.⁵⁹

After the annihilation of Greenberg’s “violin-like” father and of his father’s world, Greenberg — a secular Jew — is obsessed by a profound sense of duty to translate that soul-transporting *niggun* of his father into a new, secular, idiom. He wishes thereby to eternalize for secular Jewry the reflex of being able to relive psychically the wonder of the sea splitting.⁶⁰

If his father was “*kinnori*” (“violin-like”),⁶¹ then Greenberg, too — he tells us agonizingly — is a “*kinnor hai*” (“a living violin”).⁶² Already in his earlier poetry, Greenberg describes his feeling of having been singled out to speak always from the depths of his being, as if he had “a cello implanted in his chest.”⁶³ Now, after the Holocaust, Greenberg speaks of his vocation “to be [for the annihilated ones] a world spokesman for their blood through billowing waves of poetry.”⁶⁴ Greenberg expresses his painful, yet ecstatic, sense of calling through a wondrous blending of music and water imagery in the poem about his cantor-father’s chanting of the Song at the Sea.⁶⁵

There is room for much more work on Greenberg’s neo-medieval tendencies, in general, and his specific debt to Gabirol and Halevi, in particular. Greenberg received much of the Jewish intellectual and mystical content of his poetry through the conduit of medieval liturgical poetry (*piyyut*).⁶⁶ Without any pretention to exploring this subject adequately here, we may note that Greenberg’s poems following World War I recall Gabirol’s combined nihilism and ascetic sense of mission.⁶⁷ Yehudah Friedlaender has already studied the sources in Gabirol for Greenberg’s intense preoccupation with death and dying, decomposition of the body, raw flesh and the like.⁶⁸ Now, none of these influences should be understood as exclusive. A case could be made, for example, that Bialik had greater influence on Greenberg than did Gabirol or Halevi.⁶⁹ However, that would not highlight the distinctively medieval affinities of Greenberg’s neo-*paitanic* style and content which set him apart from Bialik and other moderns. The linguistic borrowings from the medieval writers are so blatant as to cry out for interpretation. In the one significant instance referred to at the beginning of this paper, the key word “*sod*” is a clear evocation of the exegetical intellectual or mystical world frame of Yehudah Halevi and Abraham Ibn Ezra.⁷⁰ Whether Greenberg studied these medieval writers deeply or only superficially is not the issue here. His acquaintance with them may have been pedestrian, but his declared or implicit identification with one or another of these major figures is still a useful critical tool for us. A close analysis of all the recurrences of the word “*sod*” — as but one example — throughout Greenberg’s opus would reveal, first, an increasing frequency of usage over time and, secondly, a growing recourse to ethnic and biological metaphors reminiscent of Halevi.⁷¹ But that will require another paper.

We would like to attempt here a consideration of Greenberg’s obsessive fascination with the moon against the backdrop of the speculative influence of Gabirol. We suggest that particularly in Greenberg’s early period of introspection and ascetic struggle there is a marked parallel between his poetic statements and Gabirol’s poetic night-vision of the moon struggling to penetrate the clouds.⁷² For Gabirol the moon represented knowledge, intellectual-“prophetic” virtuosity and also a highly egocentric sense of divine election and ascetic struggle.⁷³ The object — not the emotional temper — of Greenberg’s quest as represented by the moon differs from that of Gabirol. For Greenberg what is important is not so much a comprehensive knowledge of the world’s structure, but rather an understanding of the nature and implications of “atrocities.” The moon symbolizes for him the world’s glaring stain of “atrocities,” an eternal witness to discordance in the moral order. This discordance, in turn, triggers the response of divine and human compassion, emotionality, madness, prophecy.⁷⁴ I offer this interpretation fully

aware of other views, such as that of Ya'akov Bahat, which emphasize the specifically Jewish "messianic" allusions in Greenberg's moon metaphors.⁷⁵ I feel, however, that there is more to be said about Greenberg's profound obsession with the moon both as a haunting stimulus to reflective prophecy and as an externalization in the cosmos of humanly perceived atrocity.

Now, of course, the Bible and the Classics already refer abundantly to the heavenly bodies as omens and mirrors of disaster. Let us look speculatively, however, at another famous poem of Gabirol, his lament for his patron Yekutiel.⁷⁶ Gabirol first describes a glaring redness. Then the heavens, as if draping themselves in sackcloth, affirmed a sign to Gabirol that nature would not go on unmoved at the death of his friend.⁷⁷ Greenberg, I believe — for all his other influences and sources — has attempted to duplicate Gabirol in the distorted neo-Gothic⁷⁸ lines of Expressionism. Like Gabirol, Greenberg yearns to visualize all of nature draped in crimson, purple and black — but also in glaring lunar whiteness — as a sign of mourning and lamentation. His metaphorical infusion of grief into nature and from nature is truly remarkable.⁷⁹

I would like to call attention to Greenberg's very frequent use of the words "*dimdumim*" (blood-red of sunset) and of related verbal neologisms such as "*lehakhlel...kemo dimdumim*" (to make blood-red).⁸⁰ He uses these terms with regard to the words of his poetry. Greenberg wishes he could accent his every line of commemorative poetry with the blood-red tints of sunset.⁸¹ For Gabirol, the medieval poet, the *dimdumim* of grief were still *out there* in the sky. For Greenberg the natural order pales. He must either radicalize and skew nature with hallucinatory metaphors or he feels compelled "*ledamdem*," to bring into his verse more palpably the dimensions of a great sky reddening in horror and pain.

One must consider in this context the influence of Greenberg's inaugural vision of the moon by the waters of the Sava during World War I.⁸² At the Sava, in fact, Greenberg saw not only electrified bodies by the glaring light of the moon but also pools of blood reddening the waters.⁸³ The sight of blood on the water is another experiential archetype of World War I which helps to govern Greenberg's frequent recourse to the root words "*dimdumim*" and "*ledamdem*." Just as we observed expansion and self-conscious interpretation by Greenberg of this vision at the Sava over the course of his career,⁸⁴ we are entitled to speculate as to Greenberg's growing sense of national commemorative mission.

The moon as a symbol somehow helps Greenberg to bear life's discordance. In his magnificent poem "Song to the Moon's Fullness," for example, he is somewhat comforted by the hallucination that the moon's extraordinary brightness derives from an excess of whiteness created in the cosmos as a result of all the unused white burial shrouds for those multitudes lying in mass graves.⁸⁵ Moreover, Greenberg's moons occasionally take on a reddish appearance — as in Expressionistic painting. It is important here to recall the archetypal experience at the Sava as well as its transfiguration as the blood-on-the-water of Jewish refugees during the Holocaust.⁸⁶ Greenberg depicts the moon as actually having siphoned or drunk the blood out of the water. The red moon — for all its other possible interpretations — commemorates both the whitish electrification of bodies, the whitish shrouds, and the reddish sight of the bloody water. The red moon thereby broadcasts

the shame of violence; it reflects God's own "blush of shame";⁸⁷ and it conceals in its embarrassed creases "the congealed blood of stifled prophecy."⁸⁸

We recall our opening claim with regard to Greenberg's mellowing and increasing national sympathy after the Holocaust. His motif of commemoration on the cosmic scale also intensifies. This, as suggested, is a Gabirolian motif which Greenberg develops, even as he departs from the other introspective and nihilistic metaphors of Gabirol in favor of Halevi's biological-ethnic mystique. After World War II, Greenberg yearns to have nature, God's great canvas, reflect the blotches of his grief. But the poet cannot will it so. In this century of unprecedented horrors, Gabirol's metaphors seem inadequate. He, Greenberg, must do more, but his verse veritably writhes in frustrated effort. It is not only that as an Expressionist poet Greenberg feels free to use the most fantastic and stark imagery — as he did after World War I (with a greater degree of self-satisfaction, it seems to me). After Hitler, it would appear, all the conventional categories of grief — even hallucinatory Expressionism — have been exploded. Greenberg writhes. For him it is an insult that the heavens of springtime should be so nonchalantly sunny and blue after Hitler.⁸⁹ He would deem it appropriate for mankind to witness eclipses of the sun and moon,⁹⁰ stains of blood in the orb of the sun,⁹¹ a human skull of raw flesh rising in the East,⁹² and an enormous divine fresco of commemoration in bold relief against the sky.⁹³ Only such unlikely signs could do something to assuage the agonizing awareness of discordance in the cosmic order.

It is our conjecture based on the above that for Greenberg the moon metaphors retain their Gabirolian tone of challenging disquiet and ascetic mission. He feels partially fulfilled through interpreting the moon's reddish glare as God's admission of guilt and as his own unceasing charge to commemorate and rebuke through his verse. He does not, however, accomplish the leap to ecstatic optimism and euphoria through the moon metaphors, but rather through the uplifting music metaphors. The lunar metaphors — for all their suggestion of destiny — possess a coloring of guilt and of a mission which is unfulfilled because it is unfulfillable. Contrariwise, the musical symbols, as we have demonstrated, succeed in elevating Greenberg's mood and in transmuting his consciousness from a state of self-doubt to one of ineffable certainty.

The musical symbols also combine with water imagery — in a manner which has yet to be explored — in achieving a trance-like beatitude. Among the ideas we have suggested are: 1) the evocatio of the Psalm "By the Waters of Babylon,"⁹⁴ 2) the association through the word "sod" with Yehudah Halevi's biological mysticism and rehabilitating trance-like states of psychically reliving past moments of national glory,⁹⁵ 3) the suggestion that the awareness of amputation leads to a sense of the soul's sprouting new wings through the mediacy of musical metaphors and water metaphors, since both music and water point to the Jew's mystical symbiosis of sadness and joy.⁹⁶ Halevi's influence might conceivably be linked to the studies of the Zohar's impact on Greenberg.⁹⁷ But for our purposes we have attempted to focus on the psychological poles of Gabirol's "lunar" intellectualism and ascetic struggle versus Halevi's musical-incantatory and water-biological mysticism as these help us to appreciate Greenberg.

NOTES

¹On Greenberg's ideological or "journalistic" pathos, see Binyamin Hrushovski, *Ritmus ha-Rahvus* (Tel-Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad, 1978), p. 56. On the usage of "sod," see *infra*, n. 70.

²On the interweaving of terror and longing, see Reuven Rabinovitz, "'Be-Lelot Rehoqe ha-Mahut' le-Uri Zevi Greenberg" in *Uri Zevi Greenberg, Mivhar Ma'amarim 'al Yesirato* (Tel-Aviv: 'Am 'Oved, 1974), p. 176ff. (henceforth cited as *Mivhar*).

³See, for example, the following passages from his *Rehovot ha-Nahar* (Tel-Aviv: Schocken, 1951): "For this is the *sod* of aloneness-severedness, the hand alone [attached] to the armpit (p. 81); "For a heavenly singing is in the depths of our being and the *sod* of our wings having been clipped on either side at the shoulder" (p. 87); "...poor and horrible-looking like the amputee's sleeve" (p. 339).

⁴See his "Min ha-Hakhil u-min ha-Kahol" (1950), cited in *Uri Zevi Greenberg, Ta'arukhah bi-Melot Lo Shemonim* (Jerusalem, 1977), p. 165 (henceforth cited as *Ta'arukhah*): "*sod karet kenafayim ve-'od hen mashshiqot...hu sod rogez ha-nedod*."

⁵See his *Anacreon 'al Kotev ha-'Issavon* (Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1928), p. 51 (henceforth cited as *Anacreon*) and the analysis of Dov Landau in "Uri Zevi Greenberg — Meshorer Humanist," *Mivhar*, pp. 230-231.

⁶I purposely use the rhyming words "incision" and "vision" as an approximation of Greenberg's "hectic oxymoronic lyricism." See *infra*, n. 11. The use of the word "*hittukh*" ("incision") is very common throughout Greenberg's work. See, for example, the gruesome description of a reddening sunset in his *Ha-Gavrut ha-'Olah* (Tel-Aviv: Sedan, 1926), p. 14, as "the place of *hittukh* after the head has been lopped off." See also (*op. cit.*, p. 12) the notion that fear and hunger are transmuted into vision. And see his *Kelev Bayit* (Tel-Aviv: Hedim, 1929), p. 31; after describing Jewish fate as "a sharp knife," Greenberg compares his presence in Palestine to the feeling one might have "within the depth of the *hittukh* of a wound." The most famous passage is from his "With My God the Blacksmith," *Anacreon*, p. 30. There Fate's every wound on his body widens into a deep *hittukh*. This *hittukh*, in turn, "emits in sparks of moments the pent-up fire [of prophecy]." In *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 315, he writes similarly that his crying is "like molten lava" ("*ka-barzel ha-mehuttakh*"), his pain like that of a man "completely cut up with incisions" ("*kullo mehuttakh*"). The grim rhymes link "incision" to the "vision" of prophetic fire.

⁷See *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 179: "*Ki khe- 'ogen ba-yam gam 'ogen kohenu ba-devai hu*" ("For like an anchor in the sea, the anchor of our strength is in agony.") See *infra*, nn. 70-71. And see n. 9.

⁸One finds a negative assessment of Greenberg's egocentric tendencies in David Cana'ani, *Le-Nogah 'Es Raqav* (Merhaviah, 1950).

⁹In the present paper I am able to deal with both the water metaphors and Halevi's influence only tentatively.

¹⁰See, for example, the figure of the skull-globe which becomes a cannonball, discussed in the next note. One memorable passage is from "Ma'aseh bi-Yerushalmi Qadmon mi-Yeme Yannai ha-Melekh," *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 347: "*nafshenu sofeget damehah ki-sefog / aval bi-khefalehah genuzim gil u-sehoq*" ("Our soul soaks in its blood like a sponge / But joy and laughter are concealed in its folds")... "*zeh tamu'ah me'od ve-zeh nes nora hod*" ("this is very amazing and a miracle of awesome majesty").

¹¹Greenberg's recurrent use of certain metaphors might, in fact, sound repetitious were it not for (at least) two of his prodigious literary gifts. The first is his genius for what Hrushovski has termed "the realization of figures." See *Ritmus ha-Rahvus*, p. 50ff. Greenberg takes aspects of a metaphor introduced only incidentally such as, for example, the burden of Jewish fate — represented alternately as a heavy globe or as the poet's own skull. At one moment this skull-globe is the poet's daily bread of stone and gravel; at another, it is a Jewish cannonball shot in revenge at the perpetrators of a Ukrainian pogrom. [The skull-globe figure is from "Tur Malka," *Sedan*, I-II (1925); reprinted in *Ritmus ha-Rahvus*, pp. 43-46 and in U. Z. Greenberg, *Be-Ems'a ha-'Olam u-ve-Ems'a ha-Zemannim* (B. Hrushovski ed.) (Tel-Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad, 1979), pp. 42-48].

Unraveling Greenberg's ground metaphors is not too difficult a task even for the reader who knows no Hebrew. It is much harder, however, to convey to such a reader an appreciation of Greenberg's second important literary gift: his incredible ability to produce compound words such as "*vaikep*" ("agony-heads"), "*vaishet*" ("agony-towns"), and "*uryidden vai*" ("Jewish primal agony") in Yiddish [see the poems in his journal *Albatross* (Berlin, 1921-1923), reprinted in his *Gesammelte Werke* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1979), II, 457, 459, 466-467, 470] and equivalent compounds with the Hebrew "*devai*" ("agony"). Greenberg frequently uses the latter in elliptical noun sentences in hyphenated juxtaposition. [Most memorable are the following from *Rehovot ha-Nahar*: he writes of Elijah the Prophet — "*hu ha-devai le-lo demut*" ("incorporeal agony") (p. 285); Levi Yishaq or Berdichev appeals to God — "*ai da'at ha-devai, ribboni, mahmat devai*" (an allusion to the Kol Nidre introductory formula) (p. 274); and Greenberg's perception of his "prophetic" calling as "*gush ha-devai ha-lohet*" [a burning (lava) mass of agony] (p. 226), as "*be-kho'ah magnet shel devai*" ("the magnetic pull of agony") (p. 298) and as "*neshet ha-devai*" (the Promethean eagle of agony gnawing at the poet's liver) (p. 329). Note also "*ketav-devai*" (p. 105), "*admat-devai*" (p. 112), "*lehom-devai*" (p. 126), "*qiyum devai u-fehadim*" (p. 159), "*be-sav devai hayye berit*" (p. 195)]. The cumulative impact of these phrases produces what Shalom Lindbaum has termed "a hectic oxymoronic lyricism." See Lindbaum's "Shirat Uri Zevi Greenberg be-Yiddish ve-Yahav ha-Biqqoret Eleha ve-Elav," *Mivhar*, pp. 251-252. Greenberg is Hebrew literature's unsurpassed master of the oxymoron effect, the

juxtaposing of seemingly self-contradictory figures of speech. My own rendering "incision-vision" is a feeble effort to approximate in English this effect, but it pales before the real thing.

Greenberg's recurrent use of a fixed number of key metaphors also invites the type of literary-psychological analysis which 'Edi Zemah has done for Bialik in *Ha-Lavi ha-Mistatter* (Jerusalem: Qiryat Sefer, 1969). Similar analyses of Greenberg have been presented by such critics as Hillel Barzel in *Shirah u-Morashah* (Tel-Aviv: 'Eged, 1971), pp. 65-110. We are proceeding here along similar lines.

¹²See *infra*.

¹³Lawrence Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975). On World War I, cf. Paul Fussler, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

¹⁴*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 119-125.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶See, for example, *Anacreon*, p. 6; *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 91-93; and poems as late as 1973 in Yehudah Friedlander ed., Uri Zevi Greenberg, *Mivhar Shirim* (Tel-Aviv: Schocken, 1979), pp. 141, 149. Many of the motifs of *Rehovot ha-Nahar* — such as the rivers and willows of Babylon — are anticipated in Greenberg's Yiddish poems. See particularly those published in *Albatross* (1921-1923) and reprinted now in Greenberg's *Gesammelte Werke* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1979), II, 420ff. A representative selection of his Yiddish poetry in Hebrew translation appeared in *Siman Qeri'ah*, IX (1979), 103-143.

¹⁷Yom Tov Hellman, "Shirat ha-Ke'ev ve-ha-Kemihah," *Mivhar*, p. 41ff. For instances of this archetypal vision see Greenberg, "Ergis oif Felder" [originally in *Zeitens Roish* (Lemberg, 1919)], *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 41; "Mefisto" and "Albatross" in *Gesammelte Werke*, II, 337, 415; *Anacreon*, p. 49; and "Mi-Nofim Rehoqe ha-Mahut," *Lu'ah ha-Ares*, 1953, p. 28. In the secondary literature, see Cana'ani, *Le-Nogah 'Es Raqav*, pp. 17, 19, 34; Yehudah Friedlander, Uri Zevi Greenberg, *Iyyunim be-Shirato* (Tel-Aviv: Schocken, 1973), pp. 30-31 (henceforth cited as *Iyyunim*); Reuven Rabinovitz, *Mivhar*, p. 165ff.; and Ya'aqov Bahat, "Iyyunim bi-Yesirato shel U.Z. Greenberg," *Moznayim*, XXX, No. 2 (January, 1970), 136. Bahat cites still more references to this vision at the Sava. He contrasts its "universal" import for Greenberg in *Anacreon* (p. 49) with Greenberg's "particularistic" reading of this experience in *Rehovot ha-Nahar* (p. 72).

¹⁸U. Z. Greenberg, "Min ha-Genizah shel Paitan 'Ivri Hai," *Mizrah u-Ma'arav*, IV, No. 2 (Heshvan, 1929), 134-136. Also see his reference to this event in *Kelappe Tish'im ve-Tish'ah* (Tel-Aviv: Sedan, 1928), p. 33.

¹⁹As only one example of the need for caution, I might note [along with Ya'aqov Bahat, *Moznayim*, XXX, No. 2, January, 1970], 138] that Greenberg's statements about God after World War I are far more vehement and unsettling than his statements after the Holocaust. After World War I, Greenberg charges that death with its inexorable rotting of the flesh is God's "unforgivable sin." [See *Anacreon*, pp. 77-78. The motif is traced by Cana'ani in *Le-Nogah 'Es Raqav*, pp. 15, 103, 163. On the rotting of the flesh, see Y. Friedlander, "Ha-Metaphorikah shel ha-Mavet be-Shirat Uri Zevi Greenberg," *Iyyunim*, p. 42ff.; *Anacreon*, p. 21; the segment of *Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah* (Tel-Aviv: Hedim, 1924) cited in B. Hrushovski, ed., *Be-Ems'a ha-'Olam u-ve-Ems'a ha-Zemannim* (Israel: Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad, 1979), p. 15; and H. Barzel's discussion in *Shirah u-Morashah*, I, 67ff.]

For Greenberg after World War I, moreover, this entire world is Godless, unredeemably rotten. Whoring and the other blandishments of "Mefisto" have totally displaced God. [See "Mefisto," *Gesammelte Werke*, II, 322-378 (particularly p. 335ff.) And see the citations from *Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah* in *Be-Ems'a ha-'Olam u-ve-Ems'a ha-Zemannim*, p. 13.]

By sharp contrast, after World War II, Greenberg is moved to believe in "other regions for the soul" [see *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 138-139] — an afterlife. He states [in *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 388] that not God but man is responsible. Generally speaking, he mellows. He applauds the docile qualities of *menschlichkeit* in God's Jews despite the painful fact that these same qualities may have, in some ways, facilitated their annihilation. See the suggestions throughout *Rehovot ha-Nahar* that Jewish "bird-like" flights of longing, anesthetizing chants and tragic naivete made them "accomplices" to their destruction. At Jewish weddings, for example [see *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 122-123], diaspora Jewry imagined themselves under a Jerusalemite blue sky of tranquility, while, in reality, they lived at the edge of a volcano.

One should complete the catalog of Greenberg's harsh statements against God following World War I, because these are unmatched in Hebrew literature. Greenberg paints a scenario in which God is the manic prisoner of his own opium-den heaven, a sadist who makes sport with Israel as with the body of a woman, and a detached coward who looks on while Jews are made to kiss the rectum of a horse. See "Albatross," *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 462 and "Tur Malka" (cited by Hrushovski in *Ritmus ha-Rahvus*, p. 56). [Cf. the description of God as a coquettish woman in *Anacreon*, p. 31 and Bahat's discussion of this entire theme in *Moznayim*, XXX (1970), 134, 138-139. Bahat also sees a sexual reference in the famous poem "Im Eli ha-Napah," but here he is far from the mark.] See "Qefisat ha-Derekh" in *Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah*, pp. 61-62 [reprinted in *Be-Ems'a ha-'Olam u-ve-Ems'a ha-Zemannim*, pp. 38-40.] Also see Greenberg's statement that in Europe after World War I there is no God — "just smoke" (*Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah*, p. 59). On the other hand, Greenberg does cry out to God lovingly or beseechingly (intermittently in *Anacreon* and in *Ha-Gavrut ha-'Olah*, p. 26).

There are, of course, numerous passages after the Holocaust in which Greenberg satirizes God. [See, for example, "To God in Europe," *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 237-252 and in English translation in S. Penueli,

An Anthology of Modern Hebrew Poetry (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1966), II, 264-278.] But these do not compare in vehemence to the diatribes following World War I. It is likely that Greenberg's augmented nationalistic faith in the 1930's softened his nihilistic assault on God. Cana'ani's analysis (in *Le-Nogah 'Es Raqav*, pp. 39, 69-75, 86, 93-119, 156-158) of the psychological genesis of Greenberg's "fascist" tendencies are most instructive in this regard.

As far as Langer's admirable book is concerned, only one of his categories — the chapter entitled "Men into Beasts" — helped me in reading Greenberg. One detects a radicalization of Greenberg's animal metaphors following World War II. He relentlessly compares the Jews to birds, dogs and sheep. [For example, *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 48, 92, 180, 256, 361 (and cf. "Albatross," *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 415, 468, 471)]. For Greenberg, not only have men now become beasts, but the world now knows a new symbol for helpless hunted fright. No longer does one say "like a hunted animal," but rather "like a Jew." Greenberg increases the horror when he describes a dog living in a Jewish home as experiencing "a Jewish spine-chill of terror" at the approach of the Gestapo and when he states that in Europe after Hitler only the birds now flutter away in fright at the sound of church bells because "birds are of the Jewish species." This reversal, this "Judaizing" of frightened animals, is something new for Greenberg after the Holocaust. [For the above references, see *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 242, 257 and 361 (for a second reference to frightened birds, see p. 92). See also Greenberg's notion that European Christianity is an amalgam of "Jerusalemite Christianity" and the Teutonic man-beast God Wotan (*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 243).]

Dov Landau (*Mivhar*, p. 231) argues that such phrases of Greenberg's first period as "tiv ha-kevasim be-enenu" ("a sheep-nature in our eyes") or Man as "camel" or "lowing ox" reflects a human-existential (not national Jewish) suffering. By contrast, the post-WWII verse: "lo nidminu li-khelavim ba-goyim...lo huvalnu ka-son la-tivah" ["we were not compared (even to) dogs among the Gentiles...we were not led (even as decently) as sheep to the slaughter"] (*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 252; Penuei, *op. cit.*, p. 271) is clearly a new dimension of Jewish, *subhuman* suffering. Compare also Greenberg's preoccupation with the terror incarnate in a bird's flight or in a bird's frightened sideways glance (*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 332) with Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* discussed by Langer, *op. cit.*, p. 176ff. (Cf. "Albatross," *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 427). And see Greenberg's parable of the fish transplanted to a well [in Y. Friedlander, ed., *Uri Zevi Greenberg, Mivhar Shirim* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1979), pp. 112-117]. But cf. Greenberg's startling epitome of European terror of the twenties (or "premonition" of the thirties reminiscent of Picasso's *Guernica*): "Let God open up the mouths of horses that they may begin to recount terror in the cities of the Gentiles." ["Min ha-Genizah shel Paitan Ivri Hai," *Mizrah u-Ma'arav*, IV, No. 2 (Heshvan, 1929), 136.

²⁰Reuven Rabinovitz, "Be-Lelot Rehoqe ha-Mahut" le-Uri Zevi Greenberg," *Mivhar*, pp. 165-177.

²¹Greenberg, *Anacreon*, (1928), p. 49 and reflected upon by Greenberg in his "Li-Se'if Sel'a 'Etam" (*Me'assef*, 1967, p. 12), cited by Rabinovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 165. The longer poem of 1953 discussed by Rabinovitz is "Be-Lelot Rehoqe ha-Mahut," *Lu'ah Ha-Ares*, 1953, pp. 17-29. It is my own thesis, not Rabinovitz's, that in 1953 Greenberg was as self-consciously reflective of his 1928 statement as he was to become in 1967.

²²See Rabinovitz, *Mivhar*, pp. 171-174.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 173.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 174 and see the original in *Lu'ah Ha-Ares*, 1953, pp. 24-27.

²⁵"Be-Lelot Rehoqe ha-Mahut," *Lu'ah Ha-Ares*, 1953, p. 25 and in Rabinovitz, *Mivhar*, p. 174.

²⁶See the view of Yom Tov Hellman, *Mivhar*, p. 54.

²⁷C. M. Bowra, *The Heritage of Symbolism* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1947), pp. 8-9, 19.

²⁸*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 123.

²⁹*Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah*, p. 14. See also *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 226: "This silence which is also the power of a song — conjuring, edifying, commanding." And see the poem "Beni u-Ven Yosef Makhov," *Moznayim*, XXVIII, No. 1 (December, 1968), 3: "Sunset [*sheqi'ah*] — also signifying 'decline', too, is a [form of] shining in its [very] evening[ness]."

³⁰*Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah*, p. 57 ("Yerushalayim shel Mattah"); reprinted in *Be-Ems'a ha-'Olam u-ve-Ems'a ha-Zemanim*, p. 33.

³¹*Ha-Gavrut ha-'Olah*, p. 13; reprinted in *Be-Ems'a ha-'Olam u-ve-Ems'a ha-Zemanim*, p. 52. On the 'ugav as symbol of the will to convert defeat into triumph, see *Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah*, p. 40: "Play, play, prince of the depths/From the underground to me of terror"; in *Sefer ha-Qitrug ve-ha-Emunah* (Jerusalem: Sedan, 1937), p. 75 he writes of "the power of the pen in his hand" to simulate the power of the 'ugav which he experienced in a vision (*infra*, p. 9, nn. 46, 50); in *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 331-333 he describes how in the cemetery on the Mount of Olives he begins digging wildly with his fingernails to unearth the 'ugav whose melody he hears. As a "choral" accompaniment to this hysterical digging all the mothers living and dead on the Mount of Olives sing exultantly: "For the sake of the melody, all the terror of death has been worthwhile."

³²*Ha-Gavrut ha-'Olah*, p. 28: "The sanctuary has been burnt, but the Holy Spirit is saved...; the sign [for that] is that there is yet a Hebrew poet in the world."

³³"Le-Qol Kinnorotenu," *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 124: "Proof of it is: I myself and you who are playing in a tavern as if for a wedding.../Proof of it is: This simple poem of mine/In rhymed Hebrew, a combination of heart segments."

³⁴*Hazon Ehad ha-Ligyonot* (Tel-Aviv: "Sdan," 1928), p. 27. See also *Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah*, p. 50:

"There are musical instruments brought from the *golah* to play here/In order to elevate the blood to the highest heights and to cause even flint rock to vibrate/Made of a fir tree against the shoulder of a boulder."

³⁴*Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah*, p. 61: "And blessed is the imagination which creates strings for itself and plays magnificent melodies...in honor of the pogroms and to the glory of the butchers/And to all those who walk the earth: Tituses, Petliuras, I sing the wondrous song."

³⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 60-61. See also *Ha-Gavrut ha-'Olah*, p. 29; (reprinted in *Be-Ems'a ha-'Olam u-ve-Ems'a ha-Zemannim*, p. 62: "All those who aforesaid danced the *mah yofis* in Poland and who were *kings in their pain*, which reached a height greater than all the steeples in the land of the Slavs."

³⁶*Hazon Ehad ha-Ligyonot*, p. 3.

³⁷*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 291. Of the partisans he writes (p. 290): "Wells of wrath fermented in them and the agony of melodies."

³⁸*Hazon Ehad ha-Ligyonot*, pp. 27-29.

³⁹*Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah*, p. 41.

⁴⁰"Albatross," *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 471.

⁴¹"Zemer min ha-Bayit," *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 83-86.

⁴²This is my own intuitive appraisal. Note, too, the use of water imagery as a metaphor of resiliency.

⁴³*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 180-181. These pages contain a dazzling array of music and water metaphors. As Jews, he writes, "all the tangled network of our arteries constitute its [Judea's] powerful strings [for playing the music] of its primal sorrow and primal joy." See also *infra*, n. 71.

⁴⁴The allusion is to Noah's sending off of the dove.

⁴⁵*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 261. See also the citation *supra*, n. 10 and *ibid.*, p. 123: "For we have chosen to live...for in us are power and melody and good blood." See also *Kelev Bayit* reprinted in *Be-Ems'a ha-'Olam u-ve-Ems'a ha-Zemannim*, p. 97: "An eternal joy, indeed a primal joy is stored up in the wine-vat of our ancient blood." Cf. *Anacreon*, p. 10: "What is joy? Ascent only for the purpose of intensified descent into sadness."

⁴⁶Greenberg, "Me-Ahore ha-Pargod," *Sefer ha Qitrug ve-ha-Emunah*, p. 75. *Supra*, p. 8, n. 31. This poem is discussed by Barzel, *Shirah u-Morashah*, I, 65-66 and by Bahat, "Be-'Iqvot Kele Neginah bi-Yesirato shel Uri Zevi Greenberg," *Karmelit*, XIX-XX (1975), 76-77. I came across this article only after this paper was completed. Bahat cites many of the same sources, but he does not interpret them as I do.

⁴⁷Katznelson, "Maft'e'ah le-Shirato shel Uri Zevi Greenberg," *Mivhar*, pp. 137-146.

⁴⁸*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 227.

⁴⁹Charles Baudelaire, "Elevation," *Les Fleurs du Mal* (New York: Bantam Books, 1963), pp. 26-27.

⁵⁰Greenberg identifies the 'ugav (organ) with the legendary "magrefah" of the Jerusalem Temple cited in the *Babylonian Talmud*, 'Arakhin, p. 10B. See Bahat's very valuable information in his footnotes to his articles in *Karmelit* (*supra*, n. 46), p. 85, n. 20.

⁵¹Katznelson, *Mivhar*, pp. 137-146.

⁵²Lindbaum, *Mivhar*, pp. 270-273. The poem cited by Lindbaum on p. 270 is from "Ergis oif Felder" (Lemberg, 1915): it is in *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 17, the very first poem in the collection.

⁵³Barzel, *Shirah u-Morashah*, pp. 65-66, 84-89, and elsewhere.

⁵⁴For example, *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 292.

⁵⁵*Supra*, pp. 3-4, nn. 14-15.

⁵⁶*Rehovot ha-Nahar* ("Shir Asir Sav"), pp. 131-132.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸See the *Kuzari*, Book I, Paragraph 25 and Book III where Halevi dwells on the purpose of the psychic rejuvenation inherent in the Sabbath and Festivals.

⁵⁹See, for example, *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 15, 123, 275, 291.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 131-132. See also Greenberg's laudatory description (p. 293) of Judaism's mandate to transmute its melody-vision of prayer and biblical cantillation into reality.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, pp. 146, 203 *et passim*.

⁶²*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 325.

⁶³Greenberg, *Kelev Bayit*, p. 72. Throughout his long career Greenberg speaks with the reluctant, if not begrudging, tone of an unsure martyr haunted by conflicts over his status either as latter-day Jeremiah or malcontent "outsider" [see Collin Wilson, *The Outsider* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1956)].

⁶⁴An "addendum" to *Rehovot ha-Nahar* printed originally in *Ha-Ares*, April 10, 1964, reprinted in the fourth edition of *Rehovot ha-Nahar* (1978), and available also in Y. Friedlander ed., *Uri Zevi Greenberg, Mivhar Shirim*, p. 108.

⁶⁵*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 131-132.

⁶⁶As only one instance, Greenberg himself is alleged to have testified that he derived the title "*Rehovot ha-Nahar* (a mystical term in the *Zohar*) from a *piyyut* of Rav Avraham Maimon which was chanted during

the Sabbath *se'udah shelishit*. See the citation from David Tamar's book *Biqqoret u-Massah* (1973) in the article by Yishaq Barmor in *Ha-Do'ar*, LIX, No. 19 (March 28, 1980), 325.

⁷¹I base my assessment primarily on the themes of *Anacreon*. See the next note and see *infra*, n. 72ff.

⁷²Gabirol, as is well known, suffered and died from a degenerative disease. See Gabirol's poems in Haim Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-Ivrit bi-Sefarad u-ve-Provence* (Tel-Aviv: Mosad Bialik, 1959), I, 185, 188, 193-194, 209-210, *et passim*. For evidence of Gabirol's impact on Greenberg, see, dramatically, Greenberg's verses from "Min ha-Hakhlil u-min ha-Kakhol" (1950) (cited by Friedlander, *Iyyunim*, pp. 61-62), where he describes the death of skeleton-like Jews who were not cremated:

Or he who is not led like a divine-lamb-man
by a soldier to the fire
And dies like *Shelomo Ibn Gevirol*: who no longer
brings to the grave
Any flesh for the worms, but only a skeleton
covered with skin;
Neither a drop of blood, for this has been
totally burned up [as fuel] in the *menorah* of the body.

Friedlander also cites Greenberg's line: "the divine Ibn Gevirol" [from *Sefer ha-Qitrug ve-ha-Emunah* (1936), p. 163] and a poem from the mid-1960's in which Greenberg depicts Gabirol arising from the realm of the dead. In *Kelev Bayit* [(1929), p. 92] Greenberg writes:

But mountains of probing ("bin") from *Geviroi*
are upon me:
Not a *paitan* (liturgical poet) spelled with
a *fet*, but
rather from the root "tan" (jackal)
A *paitan* (jackal-wailer) of a tongue, not [my]
mother tongue....."
(i.e., in Hebrew, not Yiddish, and therefore all the more taxing and draining.)

Also in *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 329, following a paragraph in which Greenberg writes:

"But he who is the writer of this poem with his aching intellect
Senses the rotting of the bodies tangibly...."

Greenberg asks why he, besieged by doubts, should be the spokesman for this generation? "Why are not Halevi and Gevirol close at hand?"

⁷³See, for example, the transparent influence of Bialik's "Be-Ir ha-Haregah" on Greenberg's catalog of atrocities in "Mi-Yabshet va-Yam Mahazeh le-Elohim," *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 253ff. (particularly, p. 257).

⁷⁴See the use of "sod" in Halevi's *Kuzari*, Book IV, Paragraph 23. "Sod" for the medievals was a more intellectual concept than it was for the mystics of the Kabbalah. The way "sod" is used, for instance, in the introduction to Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed* or in Ibn Ezra's allusions to "mysteries" refer either to the esoteric insight of the "philosopher" or the biological and physical preparation for this high level of comprehension. The way "sod" is used by Halevi, (i.e., a physical-biological predisposition in the Jewish race for grasping truths about the universe) is closest to the way "sod" is used in *Rehovot ha-Nahar*. Halevi grappled with the problem of Jewish suffering in terms of the "sod" of a seed planted in the earth (IV:23) which, although ostensibly dead, possesses "mysterious" powers of regeneration. Halevi also had recourse to the metaphor of Israel as "the heart" of the nations, at once the most sensitive and vulnerable while, at the same time, the strongest and most resilient. (See Book II, Paragraphs 36-44). In Greenberg the term "sod" points to this neo-medieval intellectual probing as to the meaning of Jewish suffering. I am grateful to my colleague Dr. Leonard Kravitz for his comments on the medieval uses of "sod." A full treatment of "sod" in Greenberg requires an expanded treatment.

⁷⁵As one example of the very frequent and striking metaphors of this type, I refer to the verse (cited also *supra*, n. 7) "ki khe-'ogen ba-yam gam 'ogen kohenu ba-devai hu" ["For like an anchor in the sea, the anchor of our strength is in agony."] The context of this verse links the Jew's crying of his heart's blood to his ability to regenerate himself through the "sod" of "dem'a ba-sefer" [the secret "weapon" of muffled tears] which gradually ferment into new life's blood (pp. 178-180):

"Tears are in us from birth...indeed,
our blood-sap, before it courses to the tree-top
and to the young shoots of our stock,
It passes through the chambers of heart's tears,
the route of the Jordan [flows] through
the waters of Kinneret.

In the above verses the Jordan represents sovereignty, while the Kinneret — as linked perhaps to the legendary "Well of Miriam" with its curative powers (see *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 224ff.) — represents therapeutic crying. This mystical symbiosis is referred to in the verses cited *supra*, n. 43.

⁷⁶See his poem beginning "ani ha-ish asher shinnes azoro" in Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-Ivrit bi-Sefarad u-ve-Provence*, I, 186-187. It is not our purpose to prove direct borrowing but rather Greenberg's serious and revealing affinity for Gabirol. See *supra*, n. 68.

⁷²See, for example, Schirmann, *op. cit.*, p. 192. Temperamentally, Greenberg is extremely close to Gabirol. Both display a kind of megalomania. Greenberg repeatedly affirms his self-abnegation from and contempt for sex, opting instead for a life of "prophetic" commitment. There are psychological complexities here not apparent in Gabirol, who was physically ill. In both poets, however, one detects echoes of a life of deprivation acquiesced to under duress.

⁷³See *Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah*, p. 41. Greenberg had begged of the moon "*mi-zohar ha-gushpanqah*," a kind of divine assurance that there would be a reward after death for those slain, but he was disappointed and found only "the face of the moon round and mocking made of wax." In the same work of 1924 Greenberg suggests on pp. 13 and 54 that the moon is symbolic of the redemptive power of lunacy and of the marginal and criminal elements of society. Throughout this work and also in *Rehovot ha-Nahar* the moon is suggestive of divine or cosmic compassion and grace. For example, in *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 222, the moon is "a divine cricket," the conscience of the universe. [Incidentally, in Cabbalistic ritual, the new moon is a sign of the renewal of the Divine Presence following its exile. (See Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbala and its Symbolism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969) pp. 151-152)]. In *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 187, Greenberg writes of "the sun of the intellect and the moon of the soul." On p. 109 *et passim* he speaks of the moon as "the face of prophecy."

⁷⁴See Bahat, "Ha-Levanah-ha-Yare'ah-ha-Sahar — Meqomam, Meqorotem u-Mashma'utam be-Shirato shel Uri Zevi Greenberg," *Ha-Sifrut*, XXVI (April, 1978), pp. 87-93.

⁷⁵See Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-Ivrit bi-Sefarad u-ve-Provence*, I, 202.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

⁷⁷The term "gothic" has both an artistic and ideological connotation for Greenberg. Along with Expressionistic artists he "received much inspiration from the style of wood-cuts which was widespread in the Middle Ages in the Gothic art...of Northern Europe, the main principle of which was stark realism, exaggerated prominent lines, and distorted forms." (See *Ta'arukhah*, p. 25). I am not as troubled as Ya'aqov Bahat ["Ha-Ra'ayon ha-Goti — Mashma'uto u-Meqoro be-Shirato u-ve-Mishnato shel Uri Zevi Greenberg," *Heqer ve-Iyyun be-Madda' ha-Yahadut* (Haifa University, 1976), pp. 49-59] by the inconsistency of Greenberg's hatred of Christianity and his borrowing from the "gothic." First of all, it is well-known that Greenberg was quite fascinated with Christianity in his early phase. Secondly, he used the term loosely. I believe that his specific references to the word "gothic" have the connotation: "barbarous, crude, grotesque." It should be recalled that Jabotinsky and other Revisionist Zionists were enamored with Edgar Poe. For them Poe's vision of evil and the grotesque was translatable into a prophecy of struggle, pioneering and revolution. It is only in the latter context that the following quotation from Greenberg makes sense: "Because mothers delivered us during a time of limbo ('*be-ems'a ha-zemannim*') without a single Jewish homeland in the world.../And a golden pyramid did not arise in this world in the name of Jewish longings and aspirations/Our gothic idea did not erect a-house-of-God-for-all-the-living" (my emphasis). See *Ha-Gavrut ha-'Olah*, pp. 20, 24. Greenberg uses the word "gothic" in the general context of such phrases as "*ivriyyut pera'il*." I conclude, therefore, along with Hillel Barzel ["Uri Zevi Greenberg, "Shir Esh-Dat-Kissufim," *Mivhar*, p. 182ff.] that the terms "barbarous" and "pioneering" are synonymous, and I surmise further that the term "gothic" in these contexts means very much the same thing. Bahat's perplexity arises from not considering this ideological context, which has nothing to do with the artistic Northern European influences on Expressionism. On Jabotinsky's literary-ideological influence see my articles "Hebrew Language and Literature and the Beginnings of Jewish Resistance to the British," *Hebrew Studies*, XVIII (1977), 70-86 and "Jabotinsky — Master-Feuilletonist," *Jewish Book Annual*, XXXVII (1979-1980), 132-141.

⁷⁸See Greenberg's magnificent intertwining of nature imagery and internalized sensations of grief in the following passages (from *Rehovot ha-Nahar*): 1) p. 15ff. — a reddening sunset prompts him to absorb from it the "kerosene" of his mission; 2) p. 91ff. — his body is like the drooping wings of a bird, like drooping willows over a river; 3) pp. 115 and 119 — his grief-racked body is like a saturated cloud; 4) p. 309 — the ocean, as equivalent to death, has devoured so ravenously that it has bitten a piece out of the clouds; the rift in the clouds is experienced as a rift in the poet's flesh; 5) p. 331 — "Jerusalem is bedecked with dark clouds, because God has taken/All the sadnesses and all the darkening gloom, all the sponginess of crying/Of the juice-extract (*tamsit*) of our ineffable and faceless catastrophe/And he has placed it as a covering for one night over all of Jerusalem."

⁷⁹Most extraordinarily in the poem "Song to the Moon's Fullness," *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 201. The poet senses his inadequacy as a "professional" lamenter; he feels the grotesqueness of laying out rhymed verses block upon block. In a wonderful rhyme he describes his meager efforts to write a "poem the order of whose stanzas he perfects":

*u-fa'am be-shir she-et seder battav ashakhlei —/
lu yakholiti kemo dimdumim kol millah lehakhlei!*

He exclaims: "If only I were able to make each word red as the reddening sunset!" See also, for example, *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 131, 273, 276, 311 and p. 255: "*yesh zerihat dam ba-nahar*" ["there is a shining (sunrise) of blood in the river"]. Cf. Greenberg's ironic verses of September 26, 1973 published in Friedlander, ed., *Mivhar Shirim*, p. 137 where he writes of "my nation, a nation which bleeds (*ha-medamdem*) the blood of annihilation (*karet*) in every era." Greenberg satirizes their inveterate attraction to foreign cultures:

That Titus has not taught them, that Hitler has not taught them self-knowledge...

They gaze upon the bloody rivers of Babylon
Not as rivers of blood, but as the waters of a river in the colors of sunset..
Not as their own blood of sunset (decline).

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²See "Ergis oif Felder," *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, 41.

¹³*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 201.

¹⁴See *ibid.*, p. 255. The moon appears often as an obverse image of the reddening waters. See *Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah*, pp. 35, 39, 42 and "Albatross," *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 462, 472. Cf. "Albatross," p. 468 where he describes the waters as reflecting the Christian host, the shewbread, ripened with blood.

¹⁵Suggested particularly in *Emah Gedolah ve-Yare'ah*.

¹⁶*Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 108.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 117, 121, 278-279 and 309 ("Birds are flying high, even the chariot of the sun/Has a certain cheery wistfulness ("advah levit") in its wheels..no squeeking of hinges, silence." The irony is acerbic, although understated.

¹⁸The basis for my thesis here is the series of poems entitled "Be-Vo'i Heshbon," *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, p. 298ff., particularly 315, but it is also based on a synthetic view of the entire volume. Eclipses are described on p. 200, but this is only one of many. Cf. "Albatross," *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 433, 466.

¹⁹The approximate sense of this is suggested in *Rehovot ha-Nahar*, pp. 73, 87, 90, 184, 309. I recall reading many more of Greenberg's Expressionistic treatments of the sun as a kind of arch condoner of atrocity, but I am unable to cite them now. The point is: The sun should be and *is* different; it is blotched in the poet's vision after Hitler.

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 315 and suggested by the book's tone and scope.

²²*Supra*, n. 58 and nn. 70-71.

²³*Supra*, n. 71 and n. 43.

²⁴See the article by Yishaq Barmoor cited *supra*, n. 66.