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Naomi Nir Papers

1948-1973 (*Bulk:* 1948-1956)
14 boxes (9 linear ft.)
Call no.: MS 952



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Background on Naomi Nir

Naomi Nir created what Virginia Woolf named “a room of one’s own” for herself in the late 1940s in what was at the time, the country of Palestine. While raising her young daughters in the midst of a country violently birthing itself, Naomi Nir kept copious journals and wrote extensively on philosophical, psychological, and spiritual matters that rarely touched upon the political or quotidian matters surrounding her. Nir’s recorded intellectual journey was one of intimacy and universality, with nothing in between. As is historically typical of most women whose calling was to write: her writings have remained, until this collection was made available, private.

Born in Palestine in 1912, Naomi Nir née Tolkowsky was raised in a prominent Jewish family, the daughter of Samuel (1886- 1965) and Hannah Tolkowsky. Her father had a highly successful career in citrus cultivation: he was an agronomist, diplomat, and scholar, eventually becoming Israel’s Minister to Switzerland. Her mother, Hannah, was the daughter of Isaac Leib Goldberg (1860-1935), a noted Zionist, and Naomi’s brother, Dan Tolkowsky (b. 1921), was commander of the Israeli Air Force in the 1950s. Married in 1940 to archaeologist and ethnographer, Rapheal Patai, they had two daughters Jennifer (b. 1940) and Daphne Patai (b. 1942). Sometime in the early 1950s after her divorce from Patai, Naomi took the Hebrew name Nir, which she used for the rest of her life. Naomi was fluent in English, Hebrew, and German: reading and writing freely in all three languages.

The heart of Nir’s intellectual journey began at the end of 1948 when Naomi sought out Jungian analysis with Erich Neumann. She immediately and deeply connected with the style of dream analysis, active imagination, and archetypes that are well-known to Jungian systems of inquiry. Shortly thereafter she and Neumann began a

short-lived but transformative and heartbreaking affair. The aftermath of the affair served to give a sense of urgency to her intellectual work.

In 1953 she spent time at the Jungian Institute in Zurich—only founded in 1948—and developed a relationship with Emma Jung (Carl Jung's wife). Pushing back upon some of the shortcomings she saw in the Jungian dogma of the day, Naomi struggled to find belonging in the niche through which she had discovered her weltanschauung, or: comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world.

Naomi was a perennial student of the sort that was intellectually driven to use her prodigious intellect to reach into and then beyond her own personal experience in a life-long attempt to understand the, as she saw it, central force of love. In an understated summation she stated: "there is the problem of how to live by these deeper awarenesses." Throughout her life, Naomi maintained, not without controversy vis á vis her peers of the day, a fierce commitment to a truth tenaciously informative to her way of understanding: there is no deeper awareness without love.

Naomi Nir is an important voice in the all-too-often silenced history of female intellectual thought. She died in Israel (?) in (date?).

Scope of collection

The contents of Naomi Nir's papers include both her original books of journals, or "notes" as she referred to them, as well as her transcription of the notes. The notes cover the period between 1948 through 1973, with intense activity focused between 1948 to the mid-1950s. They explore Nir's intellectual insatiability in regard to psychological and spiritual self-reflection in the midst of Jungian analysis with her mentor and lover, Erich Neumann. Naomi transcribed letters that she wrote to Neumann and others in her notes.

The notes also offer a uniquely intimate look into the world and players of Jungian society. Seen through the eyes of an enthusiastic, yet questioning acolyte, Naomi's notes reveal a quasi-contentious student/teacher relationship with Emma Jung (Carl Jung's wife), developed through a letter of introduction from Neumann at the Jungian Institute in Zurich and in Tel Aviv, and offer a peek inside the burgeoning school of thought and institute.

Additionally, the collection contains letters written to Naomi from Erich Neumann, attesting to their complex relationship and mutual intellectual and personal passions. Naomi transcribed many of her letters to Neumann (sent and unsent) within her notes, evincing a more complete picture of their correspondence and relationship.

A small group of writings and lectures collected by Naomi of Neumann's work accompany this collection, as well as multiple works of art in the form of paintings and drawings produced by Naomi during this intense period in her life.

Series descriptions

[Series 1. Diaries: Notes and Art](#)

1948-1973
7 linear feet

Series I consists of twelve boxes, ten of which contain the diaries, or "notes" of Naomi Nir. Folders in this series are organized by Naomi's original notebooks spanning the years of 1948-1973. The transcriptions of each notebook, typewritten by Naomi, are separated and collocated into the folders containing their approximate corresponding notebook manuscript. Boxes eleven and twelve contain drawings, charcoals, and paintings on paper made by Naomi produced in, and relating to, the period covered by her notes.

[Series 2. Erich Neumann: Correspondence and Writings](#)

1925-1969
1 linear foot

Approximately 130 of Erich Neumann's letters to Naomi spanning the years of 1949-1960(bulk 1949-52). The collection also includes a box containing photocopies of lectures and writings of Neumann's work collected by Naomi.

Inventory

Series 1. Diaries: Notes and Art

1948-1974

7 linear feet

Notes and Translations

1948 Dec 21-1949 Feb 28

1-16 pp.

Box 1: 1

Notes

1949 Mar 04-27/pp 17-30

Box 1: 2

Notes

1949 Apr 16-25/pp 31-43

Box 1: 3

Notes

1949 Apr 26-30/pp 44-49

Box 1: 4

Notes

1949 May 01-11/pp 50-56

Box 1: 5

Notes

1949 May 12-19/ pp 57-71

Box 1: 6

Notes

1949 May 22-31/pp 72-78

Box 1: 7

Notes

1949 Jun 01-09/pp 79-90

Box 1: 8

Notes

1949 Jun 10-30/pp 91-106

Box 1: 9

Notes

1949 Jul 01-04/pp 107-124

Box 1: 10

Notes

1949 Jul 05-09/pp 125-142

Box 1: 11

Notes and Translations

1949 Jul 11-13/pp 143-151

Box 1: 12

Notes

1949 Jul 15-21/pp 152-162

Box 1: 13

Notes

1949 Jul 22-24/pp 163-170

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Notes

1949 Jul 24-25/pp 171-183

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Notes

1949 Jul 26-31/pp 184-194

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1949 Aug 01-06/pp 195-203
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Notes
1949 Aug 07-13/pp 204-216
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1949 Aug 14-15/pp 217-229
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1949 Aug 15-16/pp 230-240
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1949 Aug 17-19/pp 241-252
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1949 Aug 19-20/pp 253-259
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1949 Aug 21-24/pp 260-271
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1949 Aug 25-28/pp 272-283
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1949 Aug 28-30/pp 284-294
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1949 Sep 08-25/pp 295-307
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1949 Sep 27-30/pp 308-319
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1949 Oct 03-07/pp 331-342
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1949 Oct 07-08/pp 343-351
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1949 Oct 08-10/pp 352-364
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1949 Oct 13-14/pp 365-370
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1949 Oct 15-17/pp 371-376
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1949 Oct 18/pp 377-386
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1949 Oct 19/pp 387-397
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1949 Oct 19-20/pp 398-404
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1949 Oct 22-30/pp 405-411
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1949 Nov 04/pp 412-419
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1949 Nov 05-19/pp 420-425
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1950/pp 426-440
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1951 Jan 01-31/pp 441-481
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1951 Feb/pp 482-494
Box 3: 6
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1951 Mar/pp 495-521
Box 3: 7
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1951 Apr 02-08/pp 522-535
Box 3: 8
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1951 Apr 09-22/pp 536-546
Box 3: 9
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1951 Apr 22-26/pp 547-567
Box 3: 10
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1951 May/pp 568-573
Box 3: 11
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1951 Sep 02-05/pp 574-587
Box 3: 12
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1951 Sep 05-09/pp 588-600
Box 3: 13
Notes
1951 Sep 10-11/pp 601-610
Box 3: 14
Notes

1951 Sep 22-25/pp 611-629
Box 3: 15
Notes
1951 Oct/pp 630-659
Box 3: 16
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1951 Nov 01-19/pp 661-702
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1951 Nov 20-30/pp 703-733
Box 4: 2
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1951 Dec/pp 734-755
Box 4: 3
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1952 Jan/pp 756-764
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1952 Mar/pp 765-786
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1952 Apr 01-12/pp 787-799
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1952 Apr 30-May 13/pp 800-820
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1952 May 14-24/pp 821-833
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1952 Jun/pp 834-839
Box 4: 9
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1952 Aug 04-Sep 05/pp 840-848
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1952 Dec 06-11/pp 849-858
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1952 Dec 13-15/pp 859-871
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1952 Dec 16-21/pp 872-884
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1952 Dec 26-27/pp 885-896
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1953 Feb/pp 914-932
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1953 Apr/pp 938-944
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1953 Apr 01-20/pp 938-944
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1953 May 21-31/pp 967-990
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1953 Jun 03-19/pp 990-1010
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1954 Jun/pp 1675-1713
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1954 Jul/pp 1714-1729
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1954 Aug/pp 1730-1748
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1954 Sep/pp 1748-1772
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1956 Jan-Feb/pp 1971-1990
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1956 Aug/pp 2108-2118
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1956 Dec/pp 2187-2197
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1957 Feb/pp 2201-2219
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1962 Apr-Jun 20/pp 2561-2569
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1963 Jul 30-Aug/pp 2598-2608
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1964 Jan-Apr 25/pp 2611-2613
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1968-69/pp 2649-2653
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Art
Paintings, Charcoals, Drawings on Paper
Box 11
Art
Large Paintings, Charcoals, Drawings on Paper
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Series 2. Correspondence
1949-1960 (*bulk*1949-1952)
1 linear foot
Correspondence
1949 Jan, May-Oct 20 /8 letters
Box 1: 1
Correspondence
1949 Oct 25-Dec 21 /7 letters
Box 1: 2
Correspondence
1950 Jan-Mar /8 letters
Box 1: 3
Correspondence
1950 Oct 25-Dec 04 /8 letters
Box 1: 4
Correspondence
1951 Jan- Feb 05 /7 letters
Box 1: 5
Correspondence
1951 Feb-Mar/ 7 letters
Box 1: 6
Correspondence
1951 Mar 27-Apr 15 / 9 letters
Box 1: 7
Correspondence
1951 Apr 18-Jun/ 6 letters
Box 1: 8
Correspondence
1951 May 15-Jul 29/ 8 letters
Box 1: 9
Correspondence
1951 Jul 31-Oct 21 /8 letters
Box 1: 10
Correspondence
1951 Oct 30-Dec 10 /9 letters
Box 1: 11
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1951 Dec 14-1952 Jan 03 /10 letters
Box 1: 12
Correspondence
1952 Jan 17-Mar /10 letters
Box 1: 13
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1952 Mar 25-Apr 29 /7 letters
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1952 Mar-Jul /10 letters
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1956-60 /10 letters
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Box 2: 2
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Box 2: 3
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Eranos Lectures III
Box 2: 4
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1949-69 Articles

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Daphne Patai, 2017.

Processing Information

Processed by Jessica Ryan, March 2017.

Related Material

For materials related to Naomi Nir, see:

- Daphne Patai, 1943-
- Raphael Patai, 1910-1996

Language:

English

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Search terms

Subjects

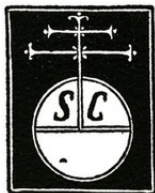
- Israel (nation).
- Israel.
- Jung, Emma.
- Jungian psychology.
- Neumann, Erich.
- Palestine (historical region).
- Psychoanalysis.
- Religions.

Contributors

- Nir, Naomi. [main entry]
- Nir, Naomi.

Genres and formats

- Art (visual works).
- Diaries.
- Personal Correspondence.



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