

Chapter Five

Reflections on the Development of Lesley University's Extension in Israel December 1979-2009

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In the span of 30 years, Lesley University's programs in Israel have succeeded in influencing multiple generations of therapists, educators, and activists. In addition, Lesley's presence in Israel has significantly affected the Cambridge campus by offering complex and engaging teaching experiences, human interactions and research opportunities to its Cambridge-based faculty, researchers and administrators.

Lesley's programs in Israel began in 1979, when a group of Lesley alumni including Yaacov Naor, Toby Zaitchik, and Vivien Marcow Speiser returned to Israel and found a strong interest for expressive therapies studies that was not being met by Israeli academic institutions. Founding director Marcow Speiser created a non-profit organization for the purpose of teaching expressive therapies and established an affiliation relationship with Lesley in which students would train in Israel and then travel to Cambridge to finish their degree. This relationship changed in 1997 when the Israel program became a full-fledged extension of Lesley University. Today, Lesley University's Extension in Israel has about 300 students studying in five master's degree programs at its campus in Netanya. Its graduates have gone on to top positions in Israel's therapeutic and educational communities and the institution has become synonymous with quality arts-based education.

The secret of Lesley's success in Israel has been the tremendous synergy between the goals and values of the parent university and the needs of the country. Professor Speiser noted in her 2008 graduation address, that "Lesley has been operating in Israel for half of the State's existence." Indeed, the history of Lesley's extension has been bound to the history of the State of Israel.

We begin by presenting the history of Lesley's operations in Israel, from its first class in 1979 until the present. In addition to describing the development of Lesley's programs of study in Israel, the article highlights special extra-curricular projects and conferences that Lesley has organized, which put it at the vanguard of applying the arts to therapeutic and educational issues. After surveying the history, we discuss the mutual impact that Lesley has had on Israel and that the Israel extension has had on the parent university. We conclude with an analysis of some of the reasons why this partnership has been so successful.

A History of Lesley in Israel

Until the early 1980's, the field of expressive therapies was relatively unknown in Israel. Few academics or practitioners were working on integrating the arts into therapeutic and educational programs. Those who understood the power of the arts and wanted to learn how to harness them had to travel abroad to acquire an academic education.

One such student was Vivien Marcow Speiser. She immigrated to Israel from South Africa in the early 1970's and soon after arrival, experienced the trauma of the Yom Kippur War. In a surprise attack on Judaism's holiest day, the armies of two neighboring countries nearly succeeded in taking over the country. As a young mother to an infant, she experienced, along with her neighbors, the existential fear of extermination. In the aftermath of the war, she observed the extensive and continuing national and personal trauma all around her. She volunteered at a rehabilitation center and saw first-hand the powerful impact of injury and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The country's psychological services were not equipped to deal with the war's emotional consequences. With her background and belief in the arts, she thought that a new therapeutic paradigm would be necessary to treat an entire country suffering from severe PTSD. She realized that she needed to acquire skills, which were not taught in Israel. To this end, she traveled to the United States to study in the Expressive Therapy Program at Lesley College.

In Cambridge, she met Shaun McNiff, the Dean of the Expressive Therapy Program that he founded in 1974. The program attracted a community of artists and activists from around the world who created a new way of working therapeutically with all of the arts and engaging the imagination and the creative process. In the heady days of the mid-seventies anything and everything was possible. McNiff noted "Everyone was interested in this phenomenon" (Kossak, 2004, p. 13).

Upon returning to Israel, Professor Marcow Speiser found a country in need of an innovative new approach to working therapeutically with the arts. Together with other Lesley alumni, Yaacov Naor, and Toby Zaitchik, she discovered that there was much interest in Lesley's expressive therapy approach. She didn't have any guidebook or mentor in Israel but she knew that she needed to teach this powerful healing method and became the founding director of Lesley's inchoate program.

The first formal Lesley event in Israel took place in December 1979 at the Dance Library in Tel Aviv, when Norma Canner, currently Professor Emeritus at Lesley, offered a dance movement therapy workshop. Following her presentation, Norma engaged in a vehement debate with some of the country's established dance therapists about a multimodal versus a single modality therapeutic approach.

Following this workshop, there was a deluge of inquiries for training, as Israel is the kind of country where word travels by mouth. She consulted with Dean McNiff and together with Naor and Zaitchik and with the addition of Dorit Amir, they began offering Lesley courses in a basement in a fashionable Tel Aviv suburb.

One day, she got a surprise call from a representative of Israel's Council of Higher Education, the country's accrediting body. She remembered this amusing interaction in which she was told, "It is not possible to offer Lesley courses in Israel – what you would need to do is to create an Israeli non-profit organization which could affiliate with Lesley." Wanting to comply with local laws, Speiser created a non-profit organization in Israel for the purpose of teaching expressive therapies called the Arts Institute Project in Israel (AIPi). The program was moved to the Ramat Aviv Hotel, and teaching space was rented from the neighboring Seminar HaKibbutzim College.

In those years, students would take AIPi training courses in Israel and at a certain point in their studies, travel to the United States in order to complete their master's degree. In 1981, the first class of Israeli students graduated from Lesley. The Cambridge

expressive therapy summer-school, consisting of predominantly Israeli, as well as other international affiliate students, contributed in no small measure to the growth and vibrancy of the expressive therapy program from the early eighties till the mid-nineties.

In 1982, Marcow Speiser co-chaired the First International Conference in Expressive Therapies at Kibbutz Shefayim. This professional gathering brought world authorities in the field to Israel for the first time and raised the profile of expressive therapies in the country. Marcow Speiser noted,

The reason this conference was so important was that it was a pivotal moment in the history of the country. Israel was fighting in Lebanon and many of the conference participants were in uniform. The late Professor Peter Rowan mounted a psychodrama with a protagonist soldier that was one of the most powerful pieces of work I have ever witnessed. (2009, p. 11)

Following the first war in Lebanon, with the Lesley-affiliated Israel program on its feet, Marcow Speiser returned to Boston in 1985 where she became the Assistant Dean of Lesley's Institute for the Arts and Human Development. However, she always maintained her connection to the program in Israel. Since then, Baruch Zadik, Talila Mor, and Dalia Ben Shoshan have directed the local non-profit partner, AIPI.

The program continued to grow and every year dozens of Israeli expressive therapy students arrived each summer in Cambridge to train on campus with Lesley faculty. These students contributed towards the development of a thriving and vibrant international summer school. Faculty fondly recall their days of teaching these challenging yet endearing students. Like the native Israeli sabra prickly pear plant, these students might have been prickly on the outside yet were soft and surprising inside.

The next big change in the program occurred in 1994, when Lesley moved to its current location in Netanya's (then) new industrial park. By knocking down walls and using other creative design techniques, Lesley transformed a drab commercial building into a thriving educational communal structure with the arts at its core.

In 1995, Lesley introduced its Master of Arts in Education degree in Creative Arts in Learning. This program's focus on integrating the arts complemented the ongoing expressive therapies studies. It met an academic need at that time when it attracted hundreds of educators from the entire length of Israel. Teachers from the Golan Heights in the North to Eilat in the South flew in to participate in the program which they completed in summer intensives in the United States.

While Lesley was one of the first foreign universities to operate in Israel, in the intervening years, many other institutions established campuses. The Israeli government tried to supervise the foreign programs and its parliament, the Knesset, passed a law requiring all such institutions to seek a license of operation by 1998. Lesley understood the direction the government was moving and in 1997, the Lesley Extension Program in Israel applied for and received a license to operate as an official extension from Israel's Council of Higher Education.

In 1998, Samuel Schwartz took over as the extension's Associate Director. He had worked as the spokesperson for Israel's Consulate General to New England, where he first was introduced to Lesley. After serving as the Director of Academic Affairs for Israel's Los Angeles Consulate, he and Marcow Speiser, who had been promoted to the

position of Director of International and Collaborative Programs, took over the work at the extension. One of their first jobs was preparing for the introduction of new programs of study. Schwartz noted:

For decades Lesley had been associated with expressive arts therapy. However, students in other disciplines were also intrigued by Lesley's unique approach to learning. There were many related subjects that the mainstream universities were not teaching and we hoped to pioneer the academic studies of these (2001, p. 3).

In his first year, Lesley opened its third program of study, a Master of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a focus in Women's Studies and the Arts. This marked the first time that a master's level Women's Studies program opened in Israel. In 1999, Lesley followed up with two new Interdisciplinary Studies foci, Holistic Health and the Arts and Group Leadership and the Arts. The Holistic Health program was the first and continues to be the only academic program of its type in the country. In 2003, Lesley's Extension submitted 3 more foci to Israel's Council of Higher Education in Elder Studies, Creative Leadership, and Creative Mediation. The Council was impressed with these programs and approved them the following year.

Today, Lesley University's Extension in Israel has about 300 students studying in five master's degree programs of study at its campus in Netanya. In Israel, the word Lesley has become synonymous with creative learning approaches that integrate the arts. "Lesley College" (still known as such, nearly a decade after it achieved university status) has instant name recognition among anyone interested in therapy, education, and the arts.

Social Action Projects Alongside the Programs of Study

Throughout its years in Israel, Lesley has maintained its commitment to social issues and has operated numerous extra-curricular programs targeted to the wider community alongside its degree programs. For many years, Lesley maintained a subsidized low-cost treatment clinic for at-risk youth in the Netanya area. For a nominal fee, local area children were able to receive treatment from some of Lesley's top expressive arts therapists.

In addition, every March for the past decade, Lesley has sponsored a public seminar on International Women's Day, focusing on a specific aspect of women's experiences in Israel. These events featured a combination of scholarly inquiry, reports from the field, and experiential, arts-based participatory workshops, in the best Lesley tradition.

A particularly exciting and moving event took place in 2004, when the extension invited members of the Hebrew Israelite community of Dimona to visit the Netanya campus. This visit took place in the context of the Traditions and Cultures course that is part of the Master of Arts program in Interdisciplinary Studies with a focus on Women's Studies and the Arts. The Hebrew Israelite community was founded in 1967 by Ben Ammi Ben Israel. He led several hundred African-Americans to "return home" to Israel in 1968, founding a community in the southern Israeli city of Dimona, near the Negev desert. Today, the community numbers about 3,000 people. During the visit, Lesley students engaged in fascinating interchanges with the Hebrew Israelite women about their

unique culture, which in many ways diverges from and challenges the Western norm. The visit concluded with a performance of the community's Spirit of David Dance Theater, which featured the community's distinct clothing, music and artwork.

In recent years, the extension has been involved in three intensive extra-curricular undertakings. In April 2006, to mark Lesley's 25th anniversary in Israel, the University sponsored an international conference entitled, "Imagine: Expression in the Service of Humanity - Creative Approaches to Working with Conflict in Groups." Speiser explained that the vision of the conference emerged when:

The second Intifada was in full swing, suicide bombings in the areas were on the rise, and the cycle of violence, occupation and retaliation was intensified. We felt we needed to do 'something' to help professionals working with the pain and the trauma of both the Israeli and the Palestinian populations and to show support for creative action in the face of uncontrollable political events. (Serlin & Marcow Speiser, 2007, p. 280)

Almost immediately, the idea caught on. All the major universities in Israel, plus some in Palestine and numerous international psychological organizations, became cosponsors. The conference attracted 350 participants including a group of 60 Palestinians. Most participants came from the fields of counseling (including psychologists, expressive arts therapists, group psychoanalysts, social workers, and healers) while educators, artists and grass roots activists represented large minorities of conference attendees. Speiser remembered that throughout the lectures, seminars, panels, artistic presentations, there were "deep, difficult, and always meaningful dialogs" (Serlin & Marcow Speiser, 2007, p. 282). For the most part, political slogans were put aside and participants engaged in people to people communication, sharing their insights concerning healing traumatized populations. Marcow Speiser (2009) recalled, "While many of the underlying tensions came to the surface it was a great opportunity to also talk, sing, dance and create together" (p. 13).

The camaraderie between the participants was intense and professional collaboration continued in the months that followed. Israeli and Palestinian scholars who met at the conference maintained their relationships and went on to engage in cooperative research projects and published joint academic articles (Joubran & Schwartz, 2007). In addition, Lesley sponsored a series of additional workshops in using the arts to heal trauma at Al Quds University in Abu Dis.

Also in 2006, Lesley University began a community organization project in cooperation with the Nes Ziona, Israel municipality in order to improve the quality of life of the city's Ethiopian immigrant population. Schwartz (2009) noted that previous programs to integrate Ethiopian immigrants were only partially successful due to the large cultural, economic, linguistic, religious, and technological gaps between the Ethiopian and Israeli societies.

Lesley began by studying the problem, holding numerous fact-finding meetings with various office holders and employees in the Nes Ziona municipality. Lesley's senior faculty conducted a town meeting with a cross-section of Ethiopian immigrants in order to identify the community's needs. The extension also brought representatives of potential funders to Nes Ziona in order to get a first-hand understanding of the situation.

In 2007, Lesley University sponsored a leadership training seminar for Ethiopian youth following their mandatory military service, led by long time faculty member Avi Hadari. This group was identified by the municipality as most at-risk for social alienation. Schwartz (2007) noted that participants in the workshop indicated that it offered them “opportunities for creativity and expression” and they expressed a “desire to continue” (p. 23).

The extension followed up in April 1998 by conducting a day-long seminar at a Nes Ziona middle school with a large Ethiopian student population on the subject of “Imagining the Future: Building Dreams.” This event featured performances and workshops by the Peace Train, an African singing duo. The Peace Train is a social movement founded in 1993 by South African musician, Sharon Katz. In order to promote a peaceful transition from Apartheid to democracy, Katz organized a “Peace Train” of 150 musicians who traveled South Africa by train bringing diverse ethnic groups together and using music to dissolve conflicts and violence. Since then Sharon has taken the Peace Train to many other conflict points around the globe.

In the spring and summer of 2008, Lesley conducted an art therapy support group for young Ethiopian mothers of small children. Led by Lesley graduate and art therapist Keren Askayo, this workshop served not just to help the participants process their issues through the arts; it also helped bridge the gaps between the Ethiopian immigrants and the Israeli establishment.

In parallel, Lesley began working with Ethiopian immigrants and their children at the Hadassah Neurim Youth Village’s boarding school located to the north of Netanya. The students at this state boarding school come from particularly difficult backgrounds and Lesley hoped to apply the expertise developed in Nes Ziona to the problems of the Ethiopian and other pupils at Hadassah Neurim. In the spring of 2008, Lesley conducted a smaller version of the “Building Dreams” workshop on the Neurim Campus as well. In the Fall of 2008, the extension organized some of the school’s Ethiopian young women in a women’s empowerment seminar and made Hadassah Neurim a focus for the practical training of its expressive therapy students.

In 2009, Lesley, together with Israel’s union of expressive and creative arts therapists, sponsored an academic conference entitled, “Creative Arts Therapies Approaches to Working with Conflict and Trauma.” The conference brought together a multi-disciplinary group of about 200 researchers and practitioners from the fields of expressive therapy, psychology, education, group leadership, and the arts. Distinguished scholars from around the world, including some of the founders of the field of expressive therapies, presented workshops and lectures. A highlight was an onstage dialog between Professors Shaun McNiff and Paolo Knill, who discussed the evolution of expressive therapies, from their own perspectives over the last four decades.

In the framework of the conference Lesley organized a reprise of the Peace Train, this time working with Jewish and Arab youth around the subject of music and coexistence. In cooperation with Israel’s Ministry of Education and the non-profit organizations Artsbridge, Jerusalem Heartbeat, and Seeds of Peace, Lesley brought three groups of Jewish and Arab youths to its Netanya campus where they took part in workshops that culminated in a combined musical performance.

The Impact of Lesley and its Graduates On Israeli Society

As noted, Lesley's unique programs of study and social action projects have had a significant impact on Israeli society. Since its founding, Lesley University has been one of the largest and often the only institution in Israel offering academic courses in its fields of study. Lesley has been the country's most influential and pioneering educational institution in the field of expressive therapies. More than 30 years after Norma Canner first passionately espoused the virtues of multi-modal expressive therapy, Lesley continues to serve as the standard bearer for this approach in Israel.

Similarly, Lesley has defined and has come to be seen as the definition of experiential learning in Israel. When Israelis speak of "the Lesley way" they refer specifically to the triangular formulation of theoretical studies, practical training, and experiential learning that the extension has exclusively popularized over the last three decades.

For Lesley's students, faculty and administrators, Lesley has served as an island of peace and tranquility. Professor Mary Clare Powell, the former head of the Creative Arts and Learning program noted that Israeli students told her, "Lesley is an oasis for us, a normal place; we are glad to be spending a week in this course" (2002, p. 19). During the country's most tumultuous periods, the hours spent at Lesley provide immersion in arts-based training that does not just distract from the painful and ubiquitous personal and national psychic assaults. The time spent at Lesley also heals and enriches those who work and study here, while providing hope for a future with less trauma and suffering.

Faculty members at Lesley are gratified that the university has been able to help its students and staff distance themselves from the most painful parts of their realities. However, the goal of learning at Lesley is not to cut one's self off from the events going on in the wider community. To the contrary, faculty at Lesley are proud to teach students the skills and prepare them with the experiences that are necessary to overcome external hardships and help others to do so as well. This has been one of Lesley's greatest gifts during Israel's troubled times.

This potential has been translated into action by generations of Lesley graduates who have spread the learning they acquired at Lesley to all corners of the country. Lesley alumni have risen to the top echelons in Israel's government, non-profit organizations, and private initiatives. They are recognized for their contributions in the fields of therapy, education and community activism. Some of Lesley's graduates have achieved national recognition and often mention to the public and the media the important influence that Lesley's education has had on their careers.

One such graduate is Judith Yovel-Recanati. After graduating from Lesley College in 1989, Yovel-Recanati became a licensed art therapist in Israel. She conducted individual and group treatments through art psychotherapy, worked with PTSD patients at the Beit Levinstein Hospital, the National Institute for Rehabilitation of Head Injury Patients, and the Neurological Rehabilitation Center at Sheba Medical Center.

Recanati's therapeutic work brought her into repeated contact with victims of terror and their families. Numerous victims and their relatives have undergone the most extreme of traumas and were in need of rehabilitative services. In this environment, in 1998, Ms. Recanati co-founded NATAL: The Israel Trauma Center for Victims of Terror and War. In its more than 10 years of operation, NATAL has treated tens of thousands of

trauma victims through its individual and group therapy sessions, and telephone hotline. For her efforts in founding and running NATAL, Judith was awarded second prize as “Israel’s community innovator of 2005,” and in 2007 she received Lesley University’s Alumni Community Service Award.

In addition to training the next generation of leaders in the subjects taught at the extension, Lesley also has made more direct contributions to Israeli society by focusing the knowledge and experience of its instructors, students and administrators to the most pressing problems facing Israeli society. In the framework of its practicum training, Lesley sends its students to assist at-risk populations in various public and private settings. Lesley’s students work with a wide variety of clients including: the mentally ill, battered women, the developmentally and physically disabled, at-risk youth, Ethiopian and Russian immigrants, victims of eating disorders, and prison inmates.

The Impact of the Extension in Israel on the Greater Lesley Community

At the same time, the unique people and experiences that characterize the Lesley extension have left an indelible impression on the faculty and administrators at the parent campus in Cambridge. Instructors from the US who have taught in Israel consistently note that the experience is one of the most challenging, yet also one of the most rewarding of their entire careers. Lesley faculty have established long, meaningful and enduring friendships with their Israeli students and colleagues. In addition, the Israel environment has proved to be an extraordinarily fruitful laboratory for research and academic advancement.

For the past 10 years, Schwartz has briefed each new Cambridge-based faculty member before s/he teaches for the first time in Israel. Schwartz noted that these discussions are frequently eye-opening. He said:

I tell them that on the one hand, they should be prepared for students who will violate all the conventions of the faculty student relationship. Most importantly, when the students walk into the classroom, they haven’t adopted the most basic educational assumption, that the teacher has something to teach them. On the other hand, I tell them that they have probably never taught more open, engaging, challenging or heart warming students in their careers. After the course, I check with the faculty, and I am usually right on both counts. (S. Schwartz, personal communication, July 14, 2008).

Professor Mary Clare Powell (2002) added, “I always find Israeli students enthusiastic and passionate, opinionated and smart, but I don’t remember them being grateful before [this last trip]” (p. 19).

In its years of operation, dozens of Cambridge-based faculty members have taught in Israel and many of them are “repeat customers” who request to come back, time after time. During these visits, they have managed to form deep and lasting personal ties with the extension’s students, faculty and administrators. Powell (2002), former Creative Arts and Learning Division Director wrote “Just about every night I was invited out – to Sam’s home, to Noya’s and to Nira’s (Lesley’s librarian)” (p. 20). Israel has an extremely informal culture and students and faculty members often form meaningful personal

relationships even before their courses are over. The Lesley faculty members are frequently overwhelmed by the demonstrations of appreciation they have received from their Israeli students. Professor Julia Byers (2004), former Division Director of Expressive Therapies, remembered that following a particularly dynamic off campus orientation course, her students gave her an artwork consisting of a matchbox out of which emerged a feed of folded paper bearing miniature images of the students as well as their words of gratitude for teaching them the concept of “letting go.” Byers recalled being deeply moved.

Lesley faculty members have frequently conducted important research during their visits to Israel or published academic papers about their experiences there. Israel’s multi-ethnic demographic and the rich experiences that are to be had there make it an ideal laboratory for testing theories in the fields of therapy, education and intercultural study.

On a number of occasions, whole publications have been dedicated to the work at Israel’s Lesley extension. In 2002, the Fall issue of Lesley Magazine was entitled “Teaching At War” and featured recollections of visits to the Israel extension. The July 2007 special edition of *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology* was dedicated exclusively to Lesley’s 2006 Imagine conference in Israel. The upcoming edition of Lesley’s *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism, and Practice* will focus on the recollections of faculty members who have taught at the Israel extension.

The Secret of Lesley’s Success

What is the secret of the success of Lesley’s Israel extension? Professor McNiff sharpened the question asking, “Why do so many thousands of people in Israel, such a large percentage of the total population, unparalleled by another nation, show such interest in the arts and healing?” (McNiff, May 31, 2009)

The authors would like to argue that the synergy between the goals and values of the parent university in Cambridge have been uniquely in tune with the needs of Israel. This synergy functions both in principle and in practice. In addition, the Extension Program in Israel has retained the original spirit and philosophy of the Institute for the Arts and Human Development at Lesley, from which it was born.

Philosophically, the non-traditional teaching style pioneered by the extension, and now known in Israel as “the Lesley way” speaks to the soul of the people of Israel. Generations of Israeli students have embraced the mix of academic theory, practical applications, and experiential learning.

These goals derive directly from the mission statements of Lesley University. All three elements of the Lesley way are contained in the first line of the University’s mission statement (2009) which reads, “Lesley University is committed to active learning, scholarly research, critical inquiry, and diverse forms of artistic practice through close mentoring relationships among students, faculty, and practitioners in the field.” The mix of traditional and alternative ways of experiencing the learning process, so beloved to Israeli students, is also directly referenced. The mission statement continues, “Central to the mission of all its programs is a commitment to excellence, creative instruction, the integration of academic and field-based learning, and responsiveness to the needs of society and the student.”

Lesley's mission statements also encompass the institution's belief and commitment to the arts, which is central to every program of study offered at the Israel extension. The extension has become defined through the arts, as an organizing principle, whether in therapy, education, group leadership, women's studies or holistic health. The arts, as a means of overcoming conflict, dealing with trauma and building hope have been especially useful for the Israeli people who have had more than their share of the former, and too little of the latter.

Lesley's focus on diversity and social justice have also resonated with the people of Israel. Israel's long biblical tradition of effecting tikkun olam (repairing the world) and being "a light unto the nations" through social equity perfectly fits with Lesley's stated mission "to provide opportunities for all to participate in the cultural, political, and economic life of the nation and the world." Lesley's slogan, "Let's Wake Up the World," appears to be a modern take on the ancient Israelites' biblical injunction. This is especially so in the context of Lesley's integration of the arts into all of its programs. Theater critic Joel Derfner (2009) argues explicitly that the arts both bring about, and are, a form of "tikkun olam." Proving his point, Derfner (2009) quotes D.H. Lawrence's (1923) study of Walt Whitman which noted:

The essential function of art is moral. Not aesthetic, not decorative, not pastime and recreation. But moral. The essential function of art is moral. But a passionate, implicit morality, not didactic. A morality which changes the blood, rather than the mind. Changes the blood first. The mind follows later, in the wake. (Derfner, 2009, p. 56).

In practice, Lesley's advantages have correlated closely with the needs of the State of Israel. On the one hand, Israel is a dynamic nation that in just over 60 years has gone from the ashes of the European Holocaust to become a world leader in scholarship, science, and the arts. This dynamic has created a large niche for Lesley's programs. On the other hand, as citizens of a country that over this same span has fought 7 wars and lost nearly 30,000 of its people to conflict, Israelis uniquely benefit from the healing, help, and hope provided by Lesley's programs of study. Marcow Speiser (2009) captured some of this complexity as follows:

There are deep wounds in this society, yet at the same time there is a dynamic at work in this area, which far transcends the boundaries of territoriality, and this is the area I am calling the spiritual domain. This is the area that encompasses all people's hopes and all people's pain. This is the area that contains the cultural continuities and contradictions of the accumulated human experience. Here is where transformation and healing can take place. This then is the ground in which we do our teaching. (p. 65)

Lesley's focus on intercultural and interdisciplinary learning is another practical reason Lesley's programs have been particularly suited to the Israeli environment. The State of Israel in an immigrant society in which interactions between citizens from dramatically different backgrounds are commonplace. It is a complex polity with a plethora of fissures along religious, national, economic, linguistic and cultural axes (to

name just a few). Lesley's programs of study, with their dedication to inclusion and multi-cultural education, have taught Israelis the skills and theories they needed to navigate their complex society.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, Lesley's contribution to the development of Israel over the past 30 years has been significant. This is largely because of the great extent to which Lesley's values and practical education have been uniquely matched to the needs of the State of Israel. However, it is also clear that Lesley as an institution, its faculty and administrators have benefited equally as much from their collective experiences in Israel. Over the past three decades, Lesley has developed a local interest in and laid a foundation for the continued teaching of the concepts, skills and values that it holds dear. No matter what the future of Lesley University's extension in Israel, it is this legacy that will endure into the indefinite future.

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