

Poems, Bereavement and Friendship/

Orly Naama Elkariv

Abstract

This research named "Poem, Bereavement and Friendship" deals with a rare literature genre, which was not researched yet. Until now, it was exposed only to a very narrow public of readers. To the existence of this literature genre I arrived due to a personal circumstances. In the summer of 1995, a tragedy occurred during the Arad festival, in which three youngsters were crushed to death: Itan Peled, Chen Ytzchak and Naama Elkariv – my eldest daughter. After the funeral, Naama's friends published poems to her memorial in booklets and in memorial books, which were published by the family, the school and the youth movements in which Naama took part. Those poems revealed the feeling of pain, sorrow and anger of the adolescents for Naama's death and they led to the writing of this research.

This work examines the connection between writing a poem as a means of expressing emotions and the feeling of loss of the adolescents who lost their friends.

The research method is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative research includes the poem analysis and answers to questionnaire that was sent to the writers. The quantitative research is expressed in the bibliographical part, where poem collections are dealt with and with the questionnaire's answer analysis.

The poetry collection was compiled from all over the country, from adolescents who experienced the loss of a close friend in tragic unexpected circumstances between the years 1990-2000. One hundred sixty three poems written by youngsters to their friends were assembled together.

The research examines the contents of twenty poems that was written by adolescents and were published in poem collections, and analyzed replies to the open questionnaire that was sent to twenty three adolescents, that their poems were

published in poem collections. Writers who did not answer to the questionnaire wrote some of the poems that were analyzed in this study. The questionnaire included twenty questions relating the motivation for the poems writing, the feelings and thoughts expressed in those poems and the attitude of the poems writers to loss before their friends' death and afterwards.

This research is an interdisciplinary and includes the following topics:

- Bibliotherapy – which includes the literature and psychological aspect which displays, among other things, the psychological characteristics of the adolescents expressed in the creative writing.
- Bibliography – in which the collections and the poem's characteristics were analyzed from a bibliographical aspect.

The issues dealt with in this thesis are:

1. What are the dominant content categories repeated in the poems?
2. What bibliotherapeutical processes are noticed in the poems?
3. Why do the writers prefer to express themselves especially in poems?
4. What did the poem writers felt after seeing their poems published?
5. Is there a link between writing poems and love to music and to listening to songs?
6. Whose initiative was it to publish the poems? In which formats? Who is the target group?
7. Was there a change in the writer's attitude towards death after the loss experienced?

Most of the hypotheses were verified.

1. It results that the poem content's categories repeated themselves, they were taken from the adolescent inner world and from the attitude to their loss. For example: the poem includes physical and emotional characteristics of the dead friends, great difficulty to accept the loss, etc.

2. The hypothesis that there are four bibliotherapeutical processes in the poems was verified and indeed, all poems revealed the following processes: identification, implication, catharsis and insight.
3. The hypothesis claimed that the writers preferred to write a poem for its literary characteristics: essence, spontaneous and short expression, was verified as well.
4. The hypothesis that the poem's publication helps the writers to cope with their pain was partially verified because most writers' feared the criticism resulting from the publication of the poems.
5. The research assumed that listening constantly to songs and love to music, in general, is one of the reasons to the adolescent preference for poetry upon prose or some other literature writing. This hypothesis was not verified.
6. The research assumed that the initiative to the poem publication comes from the family, their friends, and the school and from the youth movement. These poems were published in the following formats: booklets and memory books. The target group was the family and their friends. This hypothesis was verified.
7. The last hypothesis was that there was a change in the adolescent's attitude towards loss. This hypothesis was verified and, indeed, a big change occurred in the adolescents' attitude towards death. Part of them repressed the existence of death and thinking about it. The experienced loss caused them to become more sensitive and empathic towards other mourners and the existing fact of life's finitude was internalized by them.

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