

Orthodox Holocaust literature : content and bibliometric analysis, (1941-2012) / Haviva Ivri

The purpose of this study was to analyze various genres of Haredi (Ultraorthodox) Holocaust literature, written in Hebrew, by Haredi authors, between 1941 and 2012, in order to determine differences and trends over a period of about 70 years. The books included in our comprehensive sample were analyzed both qualitatively, using content analysis and quantitatively, using some bibliometrical techniques.

The research procedure: The books included in the sample were located by a thorough search of various libraries and catalogues, and once a relevant title was identified, its content as well as its bibliographical details were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, built according to the research questions.

Each chapter discusses a different genre, from both a qualitative and a quantitative points of view. The qualitative analysis discusses the ideological attitude of the authors to the theological problems posed by the Holocaust to the believer. The quantitative analysis discusses statistically various changes occurred in this specific kind of literature along time.

Findings: Over the years, one can clearly see, except for one decade, a general trend of increase in all genres of Haredi Holocaust literature. However, the proportion of the different genres has been changed from decade to decade. There has been a trend of transition from remote, historical and ideological writing to a more personal writing and to novels. Thus, for example, novels comprise almost half in the recent decade vs. only 12% in the first decade.

There has been also a significant increase in the ratio of women authors in all genres, and a lack of non-European originated authors. The proportion of books had "Rabbinical Agreements" was relatively low, below 20%.

One of the main characteristics of Haredi literature related to the Holocaust, like most Haredi literature, is its educational goal, though it is not always explicit. In all genres, over the whole period checked, in books written for all ages, for women, children or adults, the authors' aim is to educate the reader. This aim sometimes appears explicitly in the introduction or on the cover: "A fascinating educational plot."



The suffering and the spiritual courage of the Jews under the Nazi occupation is a recurrent theme in most of the books, in all genres and all decades checked. Likewise, is the theme of Providence intervention in various events. Both are not surprising in view of the educational goal of the Hareidi authors.

Most books describe events which took place in Poland, the home of many Haredi communities, from which the authors survived. Many books deal with German jewry, even though this country did not have a big Haredi community during the 1930's.

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