

Zohar Shavit

Cultural Translation and Educational Media

Wash your hands and your face and also your neck with water / Do not forget to rinse [your] mouth and teeth, and keep your nails short / And [keep] your head combed every day and your hair in order.¹

These practical instructions appear in the book *Sefer toldot Israel* by Peter Beer, published in 1796. Trivial as they may seem, I contend that they were part of a major cultural and social reformation – even a revolution – undergone by Jewish society in German speaking regions. This reformation was carried out by the *Mas-kilim*, a group of young Jewish intellectuals who strove to transform Jewish society at the turn of the nineteenth century and who, to this end, recruited texts for children and adults. These texts aimed, as we will see, at changing Jewish society in both the private and the public spheres. They were intended to introduce into Jewish society both a new habitus and models pertaining to social organization, namely models of *Bürgerlichkeit* and *Bildung*.

1 The Notion of Cultural Translation

This article describes how educational media – mainly texts for children and young adults – functioned as agents of change in socio-historical processes. All these texts were, in one way or another, translations of European texts of the Enlightenment movement. Most were German, but some were French and English as well. In the latter cases, however, the German system often served as a mediating system. The point of departure for my discussion is the view of these translations as cultural translations.

Before turning to the case study, I would like to discuss briefly the concept of “cultural translation” and suggest a different understanding of it. The act of translation involves, as is commonly known, a process by which the textual and cultural models of a source system – rather than texts alone – are transferred to a target system, which may be part of the same macro-system or not. This transfer, as Gi-

Note: The article is written in the framework of a DFG-funded research project: Innovation durch Tradition? Jüdische Bildungsmedien als Zugang zum Wandel kultureller Ordnungen während der ‘Sattelzeit’ (with Prof. Dr. Simone Lässig, German Historical Institute, Washington).

1 Peretz Beer, *Sefer Toldot Israel* (Prague n.p., 1796), 285 [Hebrew].

deon Toury² and Itamar Even-Zohar³ have argued, often involves an adaptation and adjustment of the source system's texts and models to the texts and models of the target system, while subordinating them to the systemic constraints of the latter in response to its needs and requirements.

In light of this understanding of the act of translation, we may well ask whether there exists any translation that is not cultural. In fact, every translation is cultural in the sense that it is always the result of an ongoing dialogue between at least two cultural systems and of continuous tensions between the demands of the source and the target systems. As such, I contend, the concept of cultural translation becomes rather superfluous. This is why I propose to adopt a narrow definition of cultural translation reserved for those cases where translations play an active role in the dynamics of a certain society; in the case study this article examines translations acted as agents of social change in Jewish society during the period of the *Haskalah* (the Jewish Enlightenment movement). Members of the *Haskalah* movement employed translations not only to augment the repertoire of the Jewish cultural system, but also as part of the movement's efforts to induce change in Jewish society.

In many cases of cultural translation the source text is used as raw material, subject to considerable changes directed toward meeting the needs and demands of the target system. Thus it is often the case that source texts are regarded as no more than a starting point for the introduction of new cultural and social models into the receiving system – models which will become active agents of change. (I would like to remark that such treatment of source texts by many translators, who may introduce far-reaching changes to adjust the texts to the receiving system's needs, often renders it difficult or even impossible to trace the source texts.) The motives behind the decision to translate a certain text are to be found in the receiving system rather than in the source system. Naturally it is the norms and needs of the receiving system which determine how a given text may be transferred to the target system and received by it. Cases of cultural trans-

2 Gideon Toury, "Transfer Operations and Translation," in *Semiotics Unfolding: Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies, Vienna, July 1979*, ed. Tasso Borbé (Berlin, New York & Amsterdam: Mouton, 1984), 1041–1048; Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995).

3 Itamar Even-Zohar, "Translation and Transfer," *Polysystem Studies*, a special issue of *Poetics Today* 11, no. 1 (1990), 73–78; Itamar Even-Zohar, "Polysystem Theory," *Polysystem Studies* (ibid.), 9–26; Itamar Even-Zohar, "Laws of Literary Interference," *Polysystem Studies* (ibid.), 53–72; Itamar Even-Zohar, "The Making of Culture Repertoire and the Role of Transfer," *Target* 9, no. 2 (1997) 373–381. See also: Rachel Weissbrod, "From Translation to Transfer," *Across Languages and Cultures* 5, no. 1 (2004) 23–41.

lation, therefore, should be analyzed primarily in the context of the receiving and not the source system.

Why were translations chosen in favor of original texts to serve as a platform for the introduction of the desired change? I assert that there were two main reasons for the preference of translations over original texts:

1. It was easier to translate a text than to compose texts from scratch in a culture whose repertoire lacked most of the models that comprised the repertoire of the source texts' cultural system.
2. Translations facilitated the introduction of new and foreign models into the receiving system, since the translated texts benefited from the source texts' prestige and legitimacy. Most originated from German culture, which the *Haskalah* considered an ideal model for emulation.

2 The Case Study

During the last decades of the eighteenth century, Jewish society in German-speaking regions was undergoing a social transformation that reshaped it completely.⁴ As already mentioned, behind this transformation were the *Maskilim* – members of the *Haskalah* movement – who joined forces with the Jewish economic elite in their efforts to modernize Jewish life.⁵ One of their initiatives was the systematic publication of books for Jewish children and young adults, almost all of which were translations. These books voiced the change that the *Haskalah* movement strove to engender in Jewish society, among other things by establishing a network of schools whose pedagogical approach embraced Philanthropinist values – albeit filtered through their *Maskilic* interpretation.⁶ The *Maskilim* realized that in order

4 Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1880–1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973); Simone Lässig, *Jüdische Wege ins Bürgertum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); Steven M. Lowenstein, “The Lifestyle of Modernizing Berlin Jews,” in *The Berlin Jewish Community* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 43–54; Azriel Schochat, “The German Jews’ Integration Within Their Non-Jewish Environment in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century,” *Zion* 21, no. 3 (1956), 207–235 [Hebrew with English summary]; Azriel Schochat, *Beginnings of the Haskalah Among German Jewry* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1960) [Hebrew]; Jacob Toury, *Prolegomena to the Entrance of Jews into German Citizenry* (Tel Aviv: The Diaspora Research Center, 1972) [Hebrew].

5 M.[iriam] Bodian, “The Jewish Entrepreneurs in Berlin and the ‘Civil Improvement of the Jews’ in the 1780’s and 1790’s,” *Zion* 49, 2 (1984), 159–184.

6 Mordechai Eliav, *Jewish Education in Germany in the Period of Enlightenment and Emancipation* (Tel Aviv: The Jewish Agency for Israel Publishing House, 1960) [Hebrew]; Ernst A. Simon, “Peda-

to make their modernization project viable, they must act to change the models of Jews' daily practices. Because written texts were the main media of the *Haskalah* movement and because the new educational system was one of their main projects, they recruited translated texts to their aid in order to present to the Jewish public guidelines for new forms of daily practices, or more accurately of a new habitus.⁷ It must be emphasized that, trifling as they may seem, such practices that organize a person's life are not spontaneous actions; rather, they derive from social norms and cultural codes that comprise the habitus of individuals and characterize them as a distinct social group.

As is well known, the concept of habitus was developed by Pierre Bourdieu, building on the work of Norbert Elias;⁸ a thorough analysis would call for a separate discussion. For my purposes here, however, it is important to mention that habitus generally refers to a set of implicit behavioral codes, or a *doxa*; it is then interesting to note that the efforts to construct a new Jewish habitus also involved the introduction of *explicit* guidelines, which were presented in several of the most popular translated *Maskilic* texts for children.

These guidelines included simple matters such as: What should one do after rising in the morning? Should one wash, and, if so, when? How should one behave at the table? How should one dress, employ one's leisure time or interact with others, including non-Jews? All these were among the aspects of daily practices that the translated *Maskilic* texts addressed. Such guidelines made their way into not only a variety of texts for Jewish children, as we will see, but also into one of the most important texts of the *Haskalah* movement – the manifesto *Divrei shalom ve-emet* (Words of Peace and Truth) written by Naphtali Herz Weisel. In this manifesto Weisel presented the universalist nature of the Enlightenment and the place therein of *Torat ha-Adam* (“human knowledge”) versus “instruction in the Law of God” *torat ha-eloim*. Nevertheless, he did not refrain from dealing with mundane matters such as daily practices and wrote plainly that his manifesto was aimed, inter alia, at teaching his readers proper table manners, modes of dress and modes of interaction with others:

gical Philanthropism and Jewish Education,” in *Jubilee Book in Honor of Mordecai Menahem Kaplan*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1953), 149–187 [Hebrew].

⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Habitus and the Space of Life-Styles,” in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 171–175.

⁸ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000). On Elias' influence on Bourdieu, see: Rakefet Sela-Sheffy, “Models and Habituses: Problems in the Idea of Cultural Repertoires,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* XXIV, no. 1 (1997), 35–47; Gadi Algazi, “The Shaping of the Concept of Habitus in Bourdieu's Work,” *Israeli Sociology* 4, no. 2 (2002), 401–410 [Hebrew].

[...] These lessons teach a person how to behave in the company of his friends, when he enters and when he leaves: He should speak calmly and not raise his voice, nor whisper. [They also teach him] table manners, comportment and dress, how he should behave with his household, how he should negotiate, so that other people will enjoy his company and his business and will wish to do business with him, and so on.⁹

My discussion of the guidelines will first examine four central books for children and young adults written by *Maskilim* and intended principally for the *Maskilic* schools. It will then address the translation of Rousseau's *Émile* into Hebrew. The four central *Maskilic* texts, which until now have escaped almost any analytical examination, were reissued time and again in many editions in German-speaking regions and continued to be published in Eastern Europe, some even until the end of the nineteenth century. I refer to the following four books, which present explicit and implicit guidelines in each of the areas mentioned above: *Avtalion*, by Aaron Wolfsohn-Halle (Wolfsohn-Halle, 1790);¹⁰ *Mesilat ha-limud*, the first part of *Bet ha-sefer* by Judah Leib Ben-Ze'ev (Ben-Ze'ev, [1802] 1836);¹¹ *Sefer toldot Israel*, by Peter Beer (Beer, 1796);¹² and *Moda le-yaldei bnei Israel*, by Moses Hirsch Bock (Bock, 1811).¹³ One could further add the epistolary *Igrot Meshulam ben Uriya ha-Eshtemoi* by Isaac Abraham Euchel (Euchel, 1789–1790), whose instructions were more implicit.¹⁴

In the reader *Mesilat ha-limud* – the most successful reader of the *Haskalah* (it would certainly appear in best-seller lists today), Ben-Ze'ev meticulously prescribed rules for personal hygiene, with precise instructions for rising from bed, washing, and maintaining the cleanliness of one's clothes: "You shall wake up and wash your face and hands, and brush and rinse your mouth with water and clean it and purify it of mucus and filth; and you should put on clean and splendid clothes and go over your hair with a comb, so that you will not be called by shameful names."¹⁵

This need to keep clothing clean is mentioned repeatedly in almost all the guidelines. In *Avtalion* Wolfsohn-Halle maintained: "Your name will honor you

9 Naftali Herz Weisel, "Fourth Letter," in *Sefer Divrei Shalom ve-Emet* (Warsaw: Y.Kh. Zabelinski Bookshop, 1886 [1782]), 237 [Hebrew]. All citations of the Hebrew texts are mine, Z.S.

10 Aaron Wolfsohn-Halle, *Avtalion* (Berlin: Chevrat chinukh ne'arim, 1790) [Hebrew].

11 J. Lev Ben-Ze'ev, *Mesilat ha-Limud* (Wien: Anton Edlen von Schmid, 1836 [1802]) [Hebrew].

12 Beer, *Sefer Toldot Israel*.

13 Moses Hirsch Bock, *Moda le-Yaldei Bnei Israel* (Berlin: Chevrat chinukh ne'arim, 1811) [Hebrew].

14 Isaac Euchel, "Igrot Meshulam ben Uriah ha-Eshtemoi," *Ha-Me'asef*, Part 1 (Cheshvan 5550), 38–50; Part 2 (Kislev 5550), 80–85; Part 3 (Adar 5550), 171–176; Part 4 (Iyar 5550), 245–249 [Hebrew].

15 Ben-Ze'ev, *Mesilat ha-Limud*, 114.

in your homeland and your dress abroad”,¹⁶ whereas Ben-Ze’ev asserted: “Your clothes should always be white and your dress clean of filth and spots, because a man is respected for the splendor of his clothing.”¹⁷

Similarly, in *Moda le-yaldei bnei Israel*, Moses Hirsch Bock offered general instructions on the use of soap: “Remove all filth from your body, wash it and clean it with soap, because cleanliness is very conducive to bodily health.”¹⁸

In his popular book *Sefer toldot Israel*, Peter (Peretz) Beer gave his readers concrete instructions concerning personal hygiene. Beer emphasized time and again the need to keep one’s body clean:

My child! Before you lie down in your bed, / Go and kiss your father’s hands and do not forget to rinse your mouth and teeth / before you lie down to sleep, in clean water. So that in the morning your mouth will not smell foul, / and you will not disgust and repulse to all who encounter you.¹⁹

When you eat and your hands become grubby and soiled, / wash them afterwards so that you do not soil your clothes.²⁰

As already mentioned, another source for guidelines on personal hygiene was Rousseau’s *Émile*. Elsewhere I have dealt extensively with the strategies that *Maskilim* employed for the introduction in disguise of that work into the Jewish cultural and educational system.²¹ Here I will refer very briefly to Shimon Baraz’s translation of passages from *Émile* into Hebrew. Baraz was a virtually anonymous writer who belonged to *Maskilic* circles in Königsberg; his article entitled “The Education of Boys: On the Necessity of Educating Boys Properly”²² was published posthumously in five parts in *Ha-me’asef*, a Hebrew-language publication that was the leading organ of the *Haskalah*. The article incorporated various passages from *Émile*, twenty-five years after its original publication.

We will probably never know for sure which edition of *Émile* Baraz used for his translation, but we may assume quite confidently that Baraz did not read *Émile* in French but rather worked from one of the German translations, as *Émile* en-

16 Wolfsohn-Halle, *Avtalion*, 12.

17 Ben-Ze’ev, *Mesilat ha-Limud*, 114.

18 Bock, *Moda le-Yaldei Bnei Israel*, 189.

19 Beer, *Sefer Toldot Israel*, 294.

20 *Ibid.*, 290.

21 Zohar Shavit, “Rousseau under Maimonides’ Cloak: The Strategy of Introducing Enlightenment Literature into the New Jewish Library: The Case of Publication of Paragraphs of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Émile* in *Hame’asef*,” *Zion* 79, no. 2 (2014), 135–174 [Hebrew]; English summary: xiii–xiv.

22 Shimon Baraz, “Chinukh Ne’arim: Al Devar Chinukh ha-Banim ka-Ra’uyi,” *Ha-Me’asef* (Tishrei 5548 [1787]), 37 [Hebrew].

joyed enormous success in Germany, having been translated into German immediately after its publication in France in 1762 and reissued multiple times.²³ Baraz may also have had access to some of the summaries, reviews, and articles written by intermediaries who introduced the ideas of *Émile* into the German narrative of the Enlightenment.

Baraz refers to Maimonides as his source and does not mention Rousseau as the author of the text. He does, however, point vaguely to a recent work by foreign “sages”, which a detailed analysis suggests referred to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Baraz translated and adapted several paragraphs of *Émile* which deal with concrete issues of child-raising and provide detailed guidelines pertaining to various phases of everyday life: how to dress, bathe, and feed children, and even teach them how to swim. He selected from *Émile* those passages which best accorded with Maimonides’ view of physical health as a prerequisite for mental health. In doing so, Baraz tried to draw connections between Rousseau’s and Maimonides’ discussions of the human body as well as to link the healing of the body with the healing of the soul (Maimonides 1187–1191, Part III, and Chapter 27).

Lavez souvent les enfants; leur malpropreté en montre le besoin. Quand on ne fait que les essuyer, on les déchire; mais, à mesure qu'ils se renforcent, diminuez par degré la tiédeur de l'eau, jusqu'à ce qu'enfin vous les laviez été et hiver à l'eau froide et même glacée. Comme, pour ne pas les exposer, il importe que cette diminution soit lente, successive et insensible, on peut se servir du thermomètre pour la mesurer exactement.²⁴

They [the caretakers] will also make a habit of bathing children / at least twice a week in cold water / so they will be strong and healthy / because apart from this being in keeping with cleanliness and ritual purity / it is also good and conducive to bodily health.²⁵

Baraz also strove to tie his adaptation of Rousseau to rabbinical teachings. For instance, to Rousseau’s recommendation to teach children to swim Baraz added a quotation from the tractate *Kiddushin*, the most significant source in rabbinical literature on educating children: “And the Sages already warned of this when they said (*Kiddushin*, Aleph), ”The father is obligated to teach his son, etc. Some say, to teach him to swim as well.”²⁶

23 On Rousseau’s place in the German Enlightenment see Jacques Mounier, *La fortune des écrits de Jean-Jacques Rousseau dans les pays de langue allemande de 1782 à 1813* (Thèse, La nouvelle Sorbonne [Sorbonne 3, 1979]; idem, *La fortune des écrits de Jean-Jacques Rousseau dans les pays de langue allemande de 1782 à 1813*, Paris 1980).

24 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile ou De l'éducation*, livre I (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1872), 34.

25 Baraz, “Chinukh Ne’arim”, 37.

26 Ibid, 38.

Baraz followed Rousseau faithfully, even at the expense of contradicting Maimonides; for instance, he advised bathing children in cold water despite Maimonides' instruction to keep the body warm. Yet Baraz's version condenses Rousseau's: his translation leaves out many of the topics covered in Rousseau's discussion of childcare, such as the sections in Book I that deal with the tight swaddling of infants, as well as weaning and teething. At any rate, despite Baraz's effort to follow Rousseau faithfully, his incorporation of passages from Jewish texts inevitably lends the Hebrew translation of the passages from *Émile* a different character and meaning than they possess in the original.

In addition to the introduction of a new habitus into Jewish society, translations were used to introduce models pertaining to social organization, namely models of *Bürgerlichkeit* and *Bildung*. Translations were recruited to present and disseminate the social models the *Maskilim* aspired to bring into Jewish society. These models were based on the values of the German bourgeoisie, particularly in terms of familial relations, *Bildung*, vocational training, and relations with non-Jews. For example, the translation by David Samosc, a writer and translator from Breslau, of Campe's *Robinson der Jüngere* (1824), was used as a platform for imparting these values. It is difficult to determine which edition of *Robinson der Jüngere* Samosc used for his translation; he appears to have worked from a different edition than the canonical one of 1779, which Reclam has used for its publication. This is evident, for instance, from two sections that appear in his translation but are absent from the Reclam edition:²⁷ one ten-page long section that describes, in vibrant and nearly graphic detail, the rescue of passengers from a shipwreck; and a scene in which the father offers the children a coconut to taste.²⁸ Samosc leveraged his translation to introduce to his Jewish brethren the values of *Bildung* and the familial model of the bourgeoisie as part of the *Maskilic* efforts to reform Jewish society. Such reform included becoming part of bourgeois civil society, in the spirit of Christian Wilhelm von Dohm's recommendation that Jews be granted equal civil rights provided they adopt *Bildung* values and the be-

27 The epilogue to the Reclam edition notes: "Im folgenden werden alle inhaltlich bedeutenden Abweichungen aufgeführt, die die achte Auflage (A8) von der ersten (A1) unterscheiden. Diese Stellen wurden auch mit der dritten Auflage (A3) verglichen..." In: Joachim Heinrich Campe, *Robinson der Jüngere, zur angenehmen und nützlichen Unterhaltung für Kinder* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981), 354.

28 Joachim Heinrich Campe, *Robinson der Jüngere, zur angenehmen und nützlichen Unterhaltung für Kinder*; A8 [= eighth edition] (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981), 60–63; A3: 68–72, 361; David Samosc (Trans.): Joachim Heinrich Campe, [German in Hebrew letters:] *Robinson der Jüngere, ein Lesebuch für Kinder* (Breslau: 1824), 25f. From this point onward, all references to Campe's original novel published by Reclam will be noted as "Reclam", and all references to Samosc's translation will be noted as "Samosc".

havioral codes of German civil society's bourgeoisie. The *Maskilim* enthusiastically supported the adoption of such values because they saw it as a way to open up new horizons for Jews' integration into non-Jewish bourgeois society, where one was judged on one's ability to achieve independent status by attaining a profession, a broad education, and financial and cultural capital. David Samosc's translation was designed to provide teachers and parents (primarily fathers) with a text that could be used to impart this new set of values to children, thereby generating a social and cultural transformation in Jews' way of life in German-speaking areas.

I have dealt extensively with Samosc's translation elsewhere.²⁹ Here I would like to point to two conclusions of that analysis: (a) that David Samosc utilized Campe's status among the *Maskilim* to embed Philanthropinist approaches to education into Jewish literature; and (b) that he used his translation as a platform for imparting the values of *Bildung* and the family model of the bourgeoisie.

In his translation of Robinson, Samosc presented a model of bourgeois life and, like Campe, "staged" or dramatized various principles of Philanthropinist pedagogy, such as the existence of a constant dialogue between parents and children and between teachers and children. Staging scenes of family life and intra-familial dialogues between children and parents (the latter often acting in a pedagogical capacity) and among the children themselves provided a way to illustrate the ideal model of interaction between parents and children and between teachers and students – a model that Philanthropinists believed should replace the alienation between teachers and students that characterized children's education among the nobility and the bourgeoisie. Campe's *Robinson der Jüngere* offered a clear alternative to such alienated relationships because the story, which evolves as a dialog between father and children, enabled the dramatization of various scenarios in a typical bourgeois family and thus provided an almost visual illustration of the ideal model of bourgeois life in which children are educated according to the principles of Philanthropinism.

Indeed, Campe himself noted in his preface that his "authentic" scenes of family life expressed his ideal model of parent-child relations as well as teacher-student relations:

Ich hoffe nemlich, durch eine treue Darstellung wirklicher Familienscenen ein für angehende Pädagogen nicht überflüssiges Beispiel des väterlichen und kindlichen Verhältnisses zu geben, welches zwischen dem Erzieher und seinen Zöglingen nothwendig obwalten muß.“

²⁹ Zohar Shavit, "Robinson der Jüngere in the Service of the Haskalah: Joachim Heinrich Campe, the Haskalah and the 'Bildung' Project in Jewish Society". In Dorothea M. Salzer (ed.), *Jüdische religiöse Erziehung im Zeitalter der Emanzipation*. Konzepte und Praxis, Europäisch-jüdische Studien Beiträge, Volume 56 (Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin, 2022), 201–252.

“I assume that providing future pedagogues with a true representation of actual family scenes will give them a useful example of father-child relations – the kind of relationship that should prevail between an educator and his pupils.”³⁰

Campe’s work was also a natural fit for *Maskilic* translation because his understanding of religion is universalist. He drew a strong connection between accepting God and achieving success in life, and believed that religious education and a genuine acceptance of God were fundamental to the construction of a “bourgeois person” – that is, to the adoption of bourgeois values and the bourgeois way of life: “wenn du Gott erst recht wirst kennen lernen: so wirst du dich noch vielmehr bemühen, so ganz gut zu werden, und dan [sic] wirst du noch vielmehr Freude haben, als jetzt.”;³¹ and in Samosc’s translation: “if you know the ways of God and strive to do only good, happiness will be yours from now on.”³²

This universalist conception of religion eased Samosc’s task, and he found little difficulty in transmitting Campe’s ethical and religious message to Jewish readers. When, for instance, in the process of educating and civilizing Freitag (Friday), Robinson teaches him about God, the message is a universalist one:

[...] und fing von dem Augenblicke an, ihm besser Begriffe von Gott und von dem Leben nach dem Tode mitzuteilen. Er lehrte ihn, daß Gott ein unsichtbares, höchst mächtiges, höchst weises und gütiges Wesen sei; daß er Alles, was da ist, erschaffen habe, und für alles Sorge; er selbst aber habe nie einen Anfang genommen; daß er überall zugegen sei, und wisse alles, was wir denken, reden und thun; daß er Wohlgefallen am Guten finde und alles Böse verabscheue.³³

And he taught him of the ways of God and told him that there is an end, that there is reward and punishment in eternal life, and instructed him that God is powerful and glorious, that wisdom is his and he is compassionate to all. He created everything that exists on this Earth and breathes life into us all. He has no beginning and no end, and even if he is beyond our ken he exists and knows our thoughts and our deeds, loves what is good and hates what is evil.³⁴

Samosc’s translation aspired to equivalency with Campe’s text and presented his Philanthropinist ideas fully. The story of Robinson Crusoe, a young man who travels the world, was perfectly in line with the *Maskilim*’s aspiration to broaden Jews’ horizons beyond their narrow and provincial world. In his translation of Campe’s *Robinson der Jüngere*, Samosc depicted a society that was open to the world and

³⁰ Reclam, 14.

³¹ Reclam, 59.

³² Samosc, 23.

³³ Reclam, 233–234.

³⁴ Samosc, 108.

was characterized by social mobility, rationality, and a universalist outlook – a society of people who attained a profession, were knowledgeable about the world, and lived on their own hard work. In place of the isolated Jew keeping to the confines of his home, Samosc sought to portray a society that was open, inclusive, and characterized by fruitful interactions and relations with others in its local environment. David Samosc's translation of *Robinson der Jüngere* thus allowed him – an unknown *Maskil* from Breslau, a provincial city in Prussia – to make his own modest contribution to the major reforms the *Maskilim* aspired to bring to Jewish communities in the spirit of the European Enlightenment.

The “New Jew” in this society adopts the daily practices of non-Jews, speaks the language of the society in which he lives and is familiar with its culture. He makes his living through various professions and enriches his spiritual world not only through religious study but also through secular studies. The *Maskilim*'s effort to reform Jewish society thus involved the intentional use of a new educational system and of the media created for it, namely non-religious texts aimed officially at children and young adults, which unofficially reached adults as well, who were searching for a path towards Enlightenment.

