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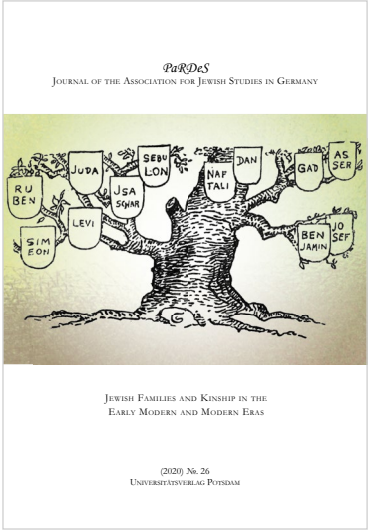

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Images of Parenthood in the Pre-Modern and Modern Jewish Family in the Russian Empire[1]

by Ekaterina Oleshkevich

Abstract

This article explores childhood discourses in the Jewish society of the Russian Empire. It focuses on images of parents, while exploring the differences between pre-modern and modern narrative types in Jewish autobiographies. In the pre-modern paradigm, mothers are barely present while fathers appear more often, although neither parent demonstrates emotional affection toward the child. In the modern paradigm, parents are either equally present or the mother is more prominent, they engage in the everyday activities with the child, and do not hesitate to show their emotional love. Moreover, the notions of inner world and child's individuality emerge. These changes correspond to major shifts in discourses shaping the attitude toward children in the European society.

1. Introduction

Avraham Ber Gottlober (1811–1899), a famous *maskil,* wrote in his memoirs: "I was born on the 18th day of the month of Tevet, in the year 5571, to the joy of my father and mother who did not have any sons."[2] On another occasion, he mentioned his mother's name – Shifra – along with the traditional Jewish title, "the modest and pious lady."[3] That is all Gottlober had to say about her when describing his childhood.[4]

[1] I thank Uriel Gellman and Vladimir Levin for valuable comments. Also, I thank the anonymous reviewer for the suggestions.

[2] Avraham B. Gottlober, *Memoirs and Travels*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1976), 64 (Hebrew).

[3] Gottlober, 1:62.

[4] His mother appears in the narrative later, for example, being the unintentional reason for his divorce (Gottlober, 1:243–45). But when describing his childhood there was no place for her.

Isidore Kopeloff (1858–1933), a Jewish anarchist who was born half a century later, put his mother at the center of an extensive description of his childhood. She was "my dearest mommy" and he confessed that in his early years he could not bear even a second without her.[5]

In this article, I would like to argue that the difference between these two examples reflects less on the personality of the memoirist but rather on the shift in the discourse of childhood and the perception of parenting that had been occurring during the 19th century among the Jews of the Russian Empire.[6]

Further I will call this shift a transition from type A narrative to type B narrative and argue that it can be perceived as a transition from the pre-modern to modern narrative of childhood. These narrative types arise from an analysis of the descriptions of childhood, particularly situations with parents involved, in autobiographies written by Jews born before the 1910s, who spent their childhood in the Russian Empire.[7] (I limit myself here to the Russian Empire only, though I hypothesize that my conclusions may be true for the Jewish childhood in whole eastern Europe in a similar chronological period.) I have analyzed the corpus of more than fifty autobiographies written in Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian and German.[8] Obviously, this list does not cover all the autobiographies related to the period and the geographical area,[9] but it reveals significant patterns.[10]

5 Isidore Kopeloff, *Once Upon a Time* (New York: Yiddishe Farlag far Literatur un Vissenshaft, 1926), 29 (Yiddish).

6 On changes in European childhood discourse, see, for example, Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962); Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), et al.

7 The only exception is Solomon Maimon. His autobiography is the earliest one examined, and his childhood took place before the partitions of Poland-Lithuania. The region where he spent his childhood was annexed by the Russian Empire only in 1793.

8 The term "autobiography" is problematic. Here I consider an autobiography a text telling a life story and defined by its author as an autobiography. Moreover, further I will use the terms "autobiography" and "memoirs" as synonyms. For more on the current approaches to the definition of autobiography see Marcus Moseley, *Being for Myself Alone: Origins of Jewish Autobiography* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 1–10.

9 No extensive list of the autobiographies written by the Russian Jews was ever compiled. According to my evaluations, the general amount of the autobiographies written by Jews who stemmed from the Russian Empire comprises more than 300 items.

10 The list of the analyzed autobiographies was compiled in such a way so that all decades starting from the late 18th century and finishing with the early 20th century were covered more or

Type A narrative is mostly focused on educational and religious issues, less on working experience, and childhood happens mostly outside the family: usually in the *heder*, sometimes on the streets or at work.[11] Family plays a less important role in this narrative. It has a functional, but not emotional, significance – parents take care of the child physically, but demonstrate less emotional affection. Mothers are barely present, while fathers are more visible, but are occupied mostly with their formal paternal duties, i. e. the child's education. Similar absence of emotional attitude toward children and concept of family space was demonstrated in the research on pre-modern central European childhood.[12]

In the type B narrative, by contrast, the family experience becomes important and childhood happens within the family, which begins to be a major topic of discussion. Both parents demonstrate love to the child, perceiving communication with him/her as an important part of the parent–child relationship. Type B narrative features such modern concepts as special and reflexive attention to love as emotion,[13] the idea of individualism,[14] a concept of child's internal world, the idea of special family space distinct from public space,[15] etc.

2. Applying Childhood Studies to East European Jewish Autobiographies

Differences between pre-modern and modern childhood discourse in European Christian society were first noticed by Philippe Ariès (1914–1984), the

less equally. Though, there are very few autobiographies written by authors born in the late 18th–early 19th century, therefore this period is underrepresented. Different ideological movements were also covered equally. No attention was paid to the concrete political affiliation of the authors, since I am convinced that political convictions as adult do not have much to do with the childhood experience of the author.

11 About the construction of the childhood narrative in the early modern ego-documents (which are typologically similar to the traditional memoirs discussed here), see Tali Berner, "Constructions of Childhood in Early Modern Jewish Ego-Documents," *Journal of Family History* 39 (2014): 101–113.

12 See, for example, Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, 170–240.

13 On love as a modern concept in the European family see Stone, *The Family*, 282–88, 325–36; Flandrin, *Families in Former Times*, 112–73. On modern love in the east European Jewish culture see David Biale, "Love, Marriage and the Modernization of the Jews," in *Approaches to Modern Judaism*, ed. Marc Lee Raphael (Chico: Scholars, 1983), 1–18, here 10–13, 17.

14 On development of individualistic component in ego-documents see Rudolf Dekker, *Childhood, Memory, and Autobiography in Holland: From the Golden Age to Romanticism* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000), 12–13.

15 See Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, 206–30.

founder of childhood studies. He argued that the notion of childhood as a separate stage of human development, different from adulthood, began to emerge in the wake of the Middle Ages. This shift was completed in the late 18th century with the modern concept of the child, and was accompanied by a rising interest in children, the development of the modern family and the modern educational system.[16] Developing Ariès's ideas, Chris Jenks speaks of Dionysian and Apollonian images of the child (using Nietzsche's dichotomy), which correspond to pre-modern and modern concepts of the child. The Dionysian child is "bad" in its nature and requires disciplining to become "normal," i. e. to conform to "external and consensual" rules.[17] The Apollonian child, on the contrary, is believed to have an innocent and good nature; such a child is appreciated for its uniqueness. The control becomes internal, focusing on the child's soul, not his/her behavior. The Dionysian child represents a pre-modern model of child-rearing, while the Apollonian child is a modern pattern, the basis for the development of the child-centered society.[18]

When applied to the east European Jewish narratives of childhood, Jenks' system corresponds with narrative types A and B. The type A narrative focuses on the external, on the formalized experience of childhood (*heder* and other educational issues),[19] and lacks emotional involvement or realization of the author's uniqueness. In contrast, the type B narrative focuses on the internal, seeks to demonstrate the unique family experience and places the child at the center of the story.

I am convinced that those two types of narratives reflect different childhood and family discourses, which shape parenting forms and childhood experience. The shift in discourse leads to changes in reality, because practices do not exist on their own, but are embedded in a certain discourse and are justified only within it.[20]

16 See Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*.

17 Chris Jenks, *Childhood* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 78.

18 Jenks, 70–82.

19 Mordechai Zalkin explains the difference between descriptions of childhood in traditional and modernized memoirs by using the dominant idea of traditional Jewish society that "everything that happened beyond the walls of the *heder* or the *bet midrash* was perceived as meaningless" (Mordechai Zalkin, "Childhood in Jewish Society in Eastern Europe," *Zmanim* 102 (2008): 61 (Hebrew)). I agree with this explanation, but argue that the difference was more essential than that and included discourse change.

20 See, for example, Karin Lee Fishbeck Calvert, *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600–1900* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994).

Both types of narratives were present in the Jewish autobiographies describing the 19th-century childhood experience. However, toward the end of the century, type B narrative ousts type A narrative almost completely. Nevertheless, there is no strict chronological boundary and for some time both types of narrative coexisted, which reflects the uneven modernization of Russian Jewry. We tend to presume that the memoirs written earlier reflect pre-modern society and the ones written later – modernized society. Chronology, however, is not the sole predetermining factor. For example, Avraham Paperna (1840–1919) and Pauline Wengeroff (1833–1916), who claim to describe traditional society, paradoxically depict their childhoods using the type B narrative, which falls into the modern category. In contrast, Yehezkel Kotik (1847–1921) born later used the type A narrative and falls into the pre-modern category. Thus, the terms "pre-modern" and "modern" are used here conceptually describing socio-cultural norms adopted by the author and not chronologically.

The convictions of the author as an adult do not predetermine narrative type, either, as will be shown below by the example of the *maskilim*. Therefore, I argue that the produced narrative is deeply related to the typology of the family (pre-modern or modern) and the social environment, not intellectual convictions or adult experience, nor the time of composing an autobiography.

When analyzing autobiographies, I consciously abstract away from the individual features of the authors, their gender, class, ideologies and peculiarities of their life stories in an attempt to distinguish a discourse shaping their narrative. As postmodernist theory teaches us, one cannot think outside the framework of the discourse one was brought up in, which regards both intellectual discourse and behavioral/spacial habits (or habitus as Pierre Bourdieu called it). Thus, ideology might influence writing style and highlights, but cannot significantly change the image of childhood shaped in the author's mind.

In this article, I limit myself to a discussion of the images of parents. One must keep in mind, however, that the described changes were broader and included the self-perception of the child, the general role of the family, and other aspects.

3. Type A Narrative – Unemotional Parenthood and Material Care

3.1. Mothers

As Shaul Stampfer has demonstrated, the 19th-century traditional east European Jewish family cannot be called "patriarchal" – the authority of males in the family was limited, and women as major breadwinners enjoyed a great deal of independence, at least in the private sphere.[21] However, men's leading role in the public and ritual spheres made for differences in the social and cultural status of men and women. Women were responsible for housekeeping and taking care of children. Mothers were physically present in the life of children unless they died, and spent much time looking after them. But were mothers perceived by children as important figures?

In the type A narrative, mothers are almost absent.[22] Most instances where the mother is mentioned are either very general statements saying that she existed, worked hard, etc. or situations where she does not play an active role. Most importantly, as depicted in the autobiographies, mothers rarely demonstrate affection toward the child. By affection, I mean actions that are not performed for any practical or pedagogical reason but are aimed at showing love to the child and spending time with him/her (as Shorter puts it, "love in the sense of spontaneity and empathy").[23]

In the autobiography of Solomon Maimon (1753–1800), the first east European Jewish modern autobiography, his mother is barely present.[24] In the very beginning, Maimon describes her briefly, saying only that she "was a woman who, unlike him [father], enthusiastically embraced all of these [economic]

21 Shaul Stampfer, *Families, Rabbis and Education: Traditional Jewish Society in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe* (Oxford; Portland: Littman, 2014), 121–144. See also ChaeRan Y. Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2002), 35, 64.

22 Adar-Bunis also paid attention to this fact, though she did not call it a traditional feature nor categorize it as a different type of relationship within the family, see Mattat Adar-Bunis, "Childhood in Middle-Class Jewish Families in Poland-Lithuania in the 19th Century and the Rise of Social Movements," *Soziologiya israelit* 7 (2006): 351–79, here 365 (Hebrew). I thank Prof. Shaul Stampfer for referring me to this article.

23 Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, 168.

24 On Maimon as the first Jewish memoirist see Moseley, *Being for Myself Alone*, 50–64.

activities. She was small in stature and, back then, still very young."[25] After that, the reader meets Maimon's mother only on five occasions. Two of them are her illness and death, and even then, she is described as uninvolved in the events. Maimon does not demonstrate any emotional attachment to her in any of the situations described, even when referring to her death. Furthermore, he does not hint at any emotions she had toward her children. The only emotional moment he mentions is that she was very upset when his wedding was cancelled because of his bride's death. However, her sadness was caused by the fact that she already had begun to cook for the wedding and now the cooked food was good for nothing.[26]

Mordekhai Aharon Gintsburg (1795–1846), a Lithuanian *maskil,* who authored the first Hebrew autobiography in eastern Europe, also barely mentions his mother, especially in comparison to his father who is omnipresent in the narrative. There are some traces of an attempt to pursue emotional relations with his mother, though. Describing his father who left for some distant place to earn money, Gintsburg mentions once that he wanted to "find comfort on his mother's lap," but did not succeed, because another child was born to her and she was busy taking care of a newborn baby.[27]

In the type A narrative, regular everyday relations between mother and child are not deserving of description. It does not mean that the regular mode of mother–child relations did not exist, it naturally did. However, the fact that type A authors were not interested in describing such relations reveals their priorities and perceptions of childhood. For them, caring for a child was "no more than a duty laid upon them [parents] by the laws of Nature," as

[25] Solomon Maimon, *The Autobiography of Solomon Maimon: The Complete Translation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 11.

[26] Maimon, 36.

[27] Mordekhai Aharon Gintsburg, *Avi'ezer – Autobiography*, ed. Samuel Werses (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 2009), 84. Preger-Wagner gives different explanation to the absence of Gintsburg's mother in his autobiography, see Rotem Preger-Wagner, *That Child is I and No Other: Children and Childhood in Nineteenth Century Hebrew Fiction* (Tel Aviv: Ha-kibbuz ha-meuhad, 2018), 82 (Hebrew). She assumes though that childhood was not perceived by Gintsburg as a life period suitable for feelings, which supports my argument, see Preger-Wagner, 76. For yet another example, see Shmuel Kofman, *Memoirs* (Tel Aviv: published by the family, 1955), 6–7 (Hebrew).

formulated in the autobiography of Chaim Aronson (1825–1888).[28] It was taken for granted and mentioned only in the context of other, more important events.

The Yiddish poet, Eliakum Tsunzer (1840–1913), wrote in his autobiography that at the moment when *khapers* burst into their house and took his nine-year old brother away from his mother, his brother was sitting at her knee as she recited the *Shema* together with him as she did every night before putting him to bed.[29] This small episode shows the mother's affection toward her son, but it deserves mention only in the context of tragic events, i. e. it was not perceived as intrinsically valuable. Moreover, reciting the *Shema* with the child differs principally from bedtime stories or reading a book: it was a part of the ritual, not leisure.

Still, there are some situations when an emotionally involved mother is found in the pre-modern narrative – in situations when something out of the ordinary happens. For example, after Tsunzer's younger brother was taken as a recruit, his mother threw herself on Tsunzer's neck and cried that he was the only one left for her in the whole world.[30] When, a few years later, Tsunzer himself was caught by *khapers* and then released, his mother cried from happiness, embraced him and did not want to let him go.[31] But if nothing exceptional occurred, mothers remained silent and invisible.

The peak of unattachment, however, was reached by the *maskilim.* The pattern indicated by the example of Avraham Ber Gottlober above, was radicalized by Moshe Leib Lilienblum (1843–1910), a *maskilic* writer and later Zionist. In his *Hat'ot Ne'urim,* he mentions his mother only once, reporting matter-of-factly that she died from cholera and that the numerous amulets she wore did not help her.[32] He expresses no emotions about this fact, and his remark about amulets seems even sarcastic. Moreover, when mentioning, for

[28] Chaim Aronson, *A Jewish Life under the Tsars: The Autobiography of Chaim Aronson, 1825–1888* (Totowa: Allanheld, Osmun, 1983), 51.

[29] Eliakum Tsunzer, *Tsunzer's Biography* (New York: Zunser Jubilaum Comittee, 1905), 18 (Yiddish).

[30] Tsunzer, *Tsunzer's Biography*, 18.

[31] Tsunzer, *Tsunzer's Biography*, 26.

[32] Moshe Leib Lilienblum, *Autobiographical Writings*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1970), 83 (Hebrew). On his autobiography see Alan Mintz, "Guenzburg, Lilienblum, and the Shape of Haskalah Autobiography," *AJS Review* 4 (April 1979): 71–110; Samuel Werses, "Autobiography in the Haskalah period," in Werses, *Trends and Forms in the Haskalah Literature* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990), 249–60 (Hebrew).

example, his first day in *heder*, he gives the exact date when it happened – when mentioning his mother's death, he gives only a year. Furthermore, when mentioning his birth, he does not even use the word "mother:" "[My father] married another woman and after five years of his being with her, the only son was born to them."[33]

Thus, despite the fact that the *maskilim* are considered modernized Jews, and according to David Biale, they "gave the term [of childhood] its first social definition by rebelling against the traditional treatment of the child," it turns out that it was their traditional environment that shaped their childhood narrative, not their modernized life as adults.[34] Modernization affected them only on the rational level, as they opposed traditional society condemning *heder* education and early marriages, but unconsciously they still thought within the pre-modern paradigm. *Maskilim* were well acquainted with contemporary European literature including modern autobiographical writing, which presumed emotional involvement, sentimentality, and major focus on childhood. Nevertheless, they did not follow this pattern because it was too alien to their real experience of childhood. Their childhood narrative is a clear type A narrative (with absent mothers and focusing exclusively on educational issues) and sometimes a very extreme one.[35] *Maskilic* autobiographies are modern in their intellectual content, but pre-modern in their discursive framework of childhood, which brings us to the conclusion that modern ideas appeared earlier than the modern discourse.[36]

The lack of descriptions of maternal love obviously cannot serve as evidence that mothers did not love their children – they certainly did. Barukh Tsukerman (1887–1970), born into a poor, traditional family wrote that once his mother gave birth to twins, one of whom died in infancy. The surviving

33 Lilienblum, *Autobiographical Writings*, 1:81.

34 David Biale, "Childhood, Marriage and the Family in the Eastern European Jewish Enlightenment," in *The Jewish Family: Myths and Reality*, eds. Steven M. Cohen and Paula E. Hyman (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986), 45–61, here 49.

35 Ironically, *maskilic* authors often mention their mothers-in-law, with whom they usually conflicted, but not their own mother. See Biale, "Childhood, Marriage and the Family in the Eastern European Jewish Enlightenment," 52–53; Stampfer, *Families, Rabbis and Education*, 125.

36 More on *maskilic* autobiographies, see, for example, Samuel Werses, *Awake, My People: Haskala Literature in the Epoch of Modernization* (Jerusalem: Magness, 2000) (Hebrew). See Moseley's distinction between autobiography as text and autobiography as discourse (*Being for Myself Alone*, 37–66).

baby became her consolation and she called him "a piece of gold that one cannot compare with millions."[37]

Children were not absolutely devoid of empathy either, though they usually did not show it. When describing small boys caught by *khapers*, Tsunzer mentions that they cried: "I want mother! I want to go home!" Their cries seem to reflect an "instinctive" affection for their mother, which was inseparable from home in the child's mind.[38] Mothers expressed their emotions only in extreme situations – and so did the children.

In the type A narrative, "love as emotion" was not a major expectation of parents. Their duty was "love as care," i. e. they were expected to take care of a child by feeding, clothing, providing with a proper education, etc. In the pre-modern discourse, the idea, for example, of spending leisure time on communication with children was less common. Love was expressed in a more material way and was less reflected. Thus, the family was perceived as a functional unit (providing material care), not an emotional one (providing love).[39] This pattern differs significantly from the type B narrative, where the mother becomes the center of the narrative. As Edward Shorter puts it, "good mothering is an invention of modernization."[40]

3.2. Fathers

If mothers are nearly absent from the pre-modern narrative, fathers play a more important role there, for several reasons. First, men were much more present in the cultural and religious space – the main religious duties could be performed only by men, and males had more importance in society. Second, the overwhelming majority of the memoirs were written by men, and in traditional society there were more activities for boys to share with their fathers than with their mothers. Going to synagogue, praying, discussing what the boy studied that day in *heder* – these actions presumed valuable in the traditional world could not be performed nor discussed with mothers. Apparently, in a narrative describing for the most part intellectual and

37 Barukh Tsukerman, *Memoirs* (New York: Yiddisher Kemfer & Farband Bikher, 1962), 30 (Yiddish).

38 Tsunzer, *Tsunzer's Biography*, 24.

39 Shorter comes to similar conclusions discussing the birth of modern family in Europe, see Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, 168–204.

40 Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, 168.

educational experience, there were more options for the involvement of men than of women.

Concentration on paternal figure with neglect of maternal one is characteristic of the pre-modern European autobiographical writings, and this feature is clearly present in the type A narrative.[41] For example, Maimon in his autobiography uses the word "mother" 18 times (a third of them when describing one situation) and "father" – 108 times.[42] Interactions with the father provoked more emotions in the child – fear, anger, content, and others. Still, there is almost no trace of affection from the father's side. Moreover, most situations of communication are initiated either by the child (e. g. the child comes to the father to ask a question) or by the circumstances (e. g. the child did something wrong and the father scolds him). In both situations, the father only reacts. He does not initiate an independent act of communication of his own accord.

For *maskilim,* the father is a central figure in the narrative. Yet, the described situations of communication are of a purely practical or pedagogical nature, mostly related to the boy's educational development and his engagement. If Lilienblum seems critical of his father, Gottlober's and Gintsburg's fathers are idealized figures.[43] However, for all of them the father was more of an icon than a real man.

The image of the father is often connected to religious experience, impersonal and unrelated to the child. As Shmuel Kofman (1855–1925, a storeowner from Podolia), confesses, his main recollection about his father is him crying about the destruction of the Temple and inquiring, "When will You rule at Zion?" in every morning prayer.[44]

When traditional fathers expressed emotions concerning their children (which happened rarely), they were usually limited to pride and satisfaction on the one hand, and anger and dissatisfaction on the other hand. The reasons for the latter were usually misbehavior or doing something not having a direct

41 Moseley, *Being for Myself Alone*, 187.

42 Solomon Maimon, *Autobiography* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1911) (German).

43 Biale argues that "parents were seen as thoroughly positive figures" speaking on *maskilic* memoirs, which may be right concerning the father figure in some cases, but is definitely wrong concerning the mother figure that is almost absent from the narrative, thus can be defined neither positive nor negative. See Biale, "Childhood," 49–50.

44 Kofman, *Memoirs*, 3.

connection to the Torah studies.[45] Maimon's father scolded his son for drawing and studying astronomical books instead of studying Talmud; Aronson was reprimanded for making a wooden imitation of a clock and for failures in his studies.[46] The reasons for satisfaction and pride were also closely related to Torah studies and intellectual development. When Maimon's father found his son reading astronomical books, he scolded him for not learning Talmud, but was also proud that his seven-year-old son was able to read and understand serious books without any help.[47] Satisfaction and dissatisfaction as the main emotions experienced toward a child fit perfectly into the Dionysian child model. Important here is the external expression of the child's development, making him "normal" – successful Torah studies and intellectual development, in this case. No attention is paid to the internal part of this development – the very idea of a child's inner world is missing.

However, fathers did not necessarily lack empathy. They loved their children, but expressed their love in a material way – just like pre-modern mothers.

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Everything written above discusses boys. Perhaps the experience of girls was different? Unfortunately, this question is difficult to answer – I have not yet found memoirs in the pre-modern model written by women in eastern Europe (the memoirs of Pauline Wengeroff, as explained above, fall into the modern category).[48] This lack of evidence produced by women is probably connected to their social and cultural status in pre-modern society, where they were not considered (and did not consider themselves) suitable for producing

45 In contrast to Adar-Bunis, I consider that this kind of relationship is different from love in the modern family, as will be described later. For her explanation see Adar-Bunis, "Childhood," 363–64.

46 Maimon, *The Autobiography of Solomon Maimon*, 17; Aronson, *A Jewish Life under the Tsars*, 33, 42.

47 Maimon, *The Autobiography of Solomon Maimon*, 17.

48 When discussing central Europe, one could refer to the well-known memoirs of Glückel of Hameln. On its difference from the modern autobiography, see Moseley, *Being for Myself Alone*, 155–75. On Glückel, her life and writings see Chava Turniansky, "Introduction," in *Glikl: Memoirs, 1691–1719* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2019), 1–36; Hebrew original Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 2006, 9–103.

intellectual products. The very idea of a woman writing a book (except for *tkhines*) is a modern one.[49]

4. Type B Narrative – Emotionally Involved Parents

The type B narrative portrays parenthood in a different manner. First of all, in the type B childhood narrative, the mother shows up, not only as a person who provides material care, but as a major source of love for the child.[50]

Isidore Kopeloff (1858–1933), the anarchist, describes his mother as follows: "My dear beloved mama to whom I was very attached, we became inseparable as body and soul and I could not endure even a second without her."[51]

In the type B narrative, the child also tends to be engaged in activities together with his mother. Socialist Kalman Marmor (1876–1956) liked sitting together with his mother in the evenings and studying Talmud as she did her mending, and his mother used to ask him questions about what the holy books said about something.[52] Russian-Jewish author Avraham Paperna (1840–1919) discussed future *heder* pranks against a bad *melamed* with his mother and got her complete approval.[53]

The father figure undergoes changes as well. The father is not as dominant as he was in the type A narrative, and he is no longer only connected to educational and religious issues. The father-child relationship begins to include other things like playing, storytelling, and doing things together. Marmor remembers his father playing with him and his sisters, singing and showing tricks to amuse them.[54] Later, they picked apples together: the father climbed

[49] On female authors of *tkhines* see Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs: Listening to the Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women* (Boston: Beacon, 1998).

[50] A Freudian analysis of interviews and autobiographies by Ruth Landes and Mark Zborowski brought them to a similar, though exaggerated, conclusion about east European Jewish mothers. However, their materials describe the modernized Jewish family, not the pre-modern one, despite the fact that they claim to explore the traditional family. See Ruth Landes and Mark Zborowski, "Hypotheses Concerning the Eastern European Jewish Family," *Psychiatry* 13:4 (1950): 447–464, here 453–55.

[51] Kopeloff, *Once Upon a Time*, 29.

[52] Kalman Marmor, *My Life-Story*, vol. 1 (New York: Yiddisher Kultur Farband, 1959), 135 (Yiddish).

[53] Avraham Paperna, "From the Nikolaevan Epoch," in *Jews in Russia: 19th century*, ed. Victor Kelner (Moscow: NLO, 2000), 94 (Russian).

[54] Marmor, *My Life-Story*, 1:26.

the apple tree and threw apples down from there, while Marmor and his sisters arranged them on the ground.[55]

"Professional" grandmother Pauline Wengeroff describes the after-dinner ritual in their family when she and her sisters would tell their father about everything that happened at home or in the city during the day and he told them what he had heard or discussed in the synagogue.[56] Moreover, the concept of family space appears that is distinct from public sphere and considered valuable.

The second feature of the type B narrative is the change in position of the child. The child becomes an independent personality whose opinion is considered valuable. Pre-modern children did not dare to express their opinion, while modern children demanded to be asked. Marmor, when describing how he moved to his grandparents' house, sounds offended when writing that his "father did not ask him where he preferred to live" and just took him to his grandparents' place.[57] In other words, he expected that he would be asked – or at least realized that there was such an option.

Furthermore, children could make their own decisions, including those that had a great impact on their lives (and on their parents' budget). Chaika Sivak Kirsh (1906–?) born in Monastyryshche (today Ukraine) describes how her elder brother Avroml, even before becoming a bar mitzvah, was a dedicated Zionist and did not want to attend a state school, and their father had no choice but to hire a private teacher for him.[58]

Eleven-year-old Aliza Greenblatt (1888–1975), who became later a Yiddish poet, insisted that she wanted to leave for America with her stepfather and stepbrothers, and was allowed to do so in the end. However, her stepfather no longer had enough time to get a passport for her as he did for himself and her stepbrothers, so Greenblatt had to cross the border illegally, separately from her family.[59] Thus, her request put her at potential risk of being caught,

55 Marmor, *My Life-Story*, 1:31.
56 Pauline Wengeroff, *Memoirs of a Grandmother*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1908), (German), here 1:7.
57 Marmor, *My Life-Story*, 1:32.
58 Chaika Sivak Kirsh, *From My Nights* (Tel Aviv: Problemen, 1981), 17–18 (Yiddish).
59 Aliza Greenblatt, *Window on a Life* (New York: Knight Printing, 1966), 28 (Yiddish).

but even so, her parents surrendered to her despite the circumstances, giving more weight to Greenblatt's opinion.[60]

These changes are related to another global feature of the modern narrative: the focus on everyday life and on the inner world of the child, as is typical in the Apollonian child model. In the pre-modern narrative, education was seen as the core of childhood.[61] The modern narrative emphasizes other aspects, like the child's experience with relatives and friends, feelings, and everyday life.[62] This type of narrative witnesses the appearance of the concept of the child's inner world. Naturally, schooling was still described, as the child spent most of his/her time in *heder* or at school. However, only the topic remained the same while the descriptive practices changed. The newfound mother and rebranded father figures fit quite well in this framework of interest in a child's life as such.

Finally, the concept of "love as emotion" appears and "this gave the entire family a new emotional base."[63] Authors describe how their parents showed their love toward their children and how they themselves loved their parents or suffered from an absence of love (which equally reveals the presence of the concept). Ternivka (Ukraine)-born David Davis (1884–?), whose parents died when he was six years old, suffered from the absence of love in his grandfather's house and envied his classmates, who returned home to their mothers who would greet them with love and joy.[64]

For others, on the contrary, the presence of love became a key theme, as for Marmor and Kopeloff. Yiddish poet Joseph Rolnick (1879–1955) describes how both parents loved him, but in a different manner – while his mother's

60 *Maskilim* also had their own opinions. After discovering Haskalah, they had two options: either to study prohibited books secretly, or to go somewhere to study. However, even when they went to study, they did not seem to need permission nor to take into consideration the opposition of their parents (see Simon Dubnow, *Book of Life* (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, 1998), 58 (Russian). In contrast, modernized authors acted in relation to their parents: they first insisted and acted only after permission was granted.

61 On the role of educational issues in the childhood narrative of early modern ego-documents, see Berner, "Constructions of Childhood," 101–13.

62 It goes hand-in-hand with the concept of secularism, though its role deserves a separate analysis.

63 Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, 168.

64 David Davis, *As the Years Go By* (Tel Aviv: Nay Lebn, 1974), 20 (Yiddish). For another example see Chaim Schmulewitz, Back from the Other World (Tel Aviv: Amkha, 1979), 14–15 (Yiddish).

love was calm and warm, his father's love was passionate.[65] Lawyer Henrich Sliozberg (1863–1937) mentions that his father loved him infinitely and expressed tenderness that seemed unusual for an Orthodox Jewish family.[66]

The very idea that parents should love their children, not just take care of them, arises here as a discourse that shaped both the narrative and reality. Love begins to be an obligation imposed on parents and other relatives, and acknowledged as a seemingly natural factor in relationships between parents and children.

5. Conclusions

If analyzed from the perspective of childhood description's specifics and the discourse they reflect, autobiographies prove to be an amazingly rich source shedding light on the family functioning in the author's childhood. As has been demonstrated, the typology of childhood narrative reveals figures and issues perceived as important in the family of the author's parents. Such unconsciously absorbed concepts are especially important being less biased by obliviousness or later ideological development. My analysis allows to gain first-hand experience of the emotional reality in the 19th- to early-20th-century Jewish family and to explore the modes of parental love as well as social expectations of parents in that society. We see that those changed significantly from the pre-modern to modern societies. In the latter, emotional love was an ultimate value and the child was an individual, while in the former, love was understood materially and attitude to children was not individualistic.

The change of paradigms demonstrates a slow shift in the Jewish understanding of parenting, emotions and family under the influence of modernization. Those alterations are part of the major discourse shifts in the Western culture as described by Michel Foucault on the example of structures of power and disciplining modes.[67] The shift in question is a major development experienced both by Jewish and non-Jewish society in modernity, though the detailed changes among the Jews differed from those among non-Jews. As a result, the government of children turned to the correction of the internal

[65] Joseph Rolnick, *With Rake in Hand: Memoirs of a Yiddish Poet* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press 2016), 22–25.

[66] Hernich Sliozberg, "Tales of Bygone Days," in *Jews in Russia: 19th Century*, ed. Victor Kelner (Moscow: NLO, 2000), 275 (Russian).

[67] See Jenks, *Childhood*, 74–79.

world rather than external expressions. It created the modern notion of the child as an individual possessing unique features, needs and rights. The child ceased to be an object and began to be a subject.