

libertarianism,” and that his “left-leaning followers . . . have at least as good a claim to his legacy as the right-leaning ones do” (145, 201).

As Smith was also a practical man of affairs, it is fitting that the final part should be devoted to his views on the vices of politicians, and a discussion of the various governmental policies that he either condemned or advocated. The epilogue, “Learning From Smith Today,” will primarily interest those who wish to see what relevance WN has for us now. There is a very useful Index Locorum which should be emulated in all scholarly works on Smith.

DAVID R. RAYNOR

*The University of Ottawa*

Salomon Maimon. *Versuch über die Transzendentalphilosophie*. Edited by Florian Ehrensperger. Hamburg: Meiner, 2004. Pp. lii + 324. € 19,80.

“I had now resolved to study Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, of which I had often heard but which I had never seen. The method, in which I studied this work, was quite peculiar. On the first perusal I obtained a vague idea of each section. This I endeavored afterwards to make distinct by my own reflection, and thus to penetrate into the author’s meaning. Such is properly the process which is called *thinking oneself into a system* [sich in ein System hineindenken]. But as I had already mastered in this way the systems of Spinoza, Hume and Leibniz, I was naturally led to think of a coalition-system [*Koalitionssystem*]. This in fact I found, and put it gradually in writing in the form of explanatory observations on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, just as this system unfolded itself to my mind. Such was the origin of my *Transcendental Philosophy*.” The peculiar method of “thinking oneself into a system” might remind the reader of the works of the great French historian of philosophy, Martial Gueroult. However, these lines are taken from the autobiography of Salomon Maimon (1753–1800), one of the most brilliant as well as eccentric figures of modern philosophy (*Solomon Maimon – An Autobiography*, trans. J. Clark Murray (Urbana, 2001 [1792–93]), 279–80). The reader who still wonders about the similarity between Gueroult’s and Maimon’s methods is invited to consult the former’s mostly neglected dissertation (1929).

Maimon’s life story is as fascinating as it is hard to believe. Having grown up in traditional Jewish surroundings in Lithuania, Maimon developed a deep interest in medieval Jewish philosophy in his early teens. Presumably, the uncompromising and iconoclastic spirit of this corpus struck a deep chord in his psyche and launched a life-long obsessive search after *the truth*. Upon hearing about the supposed appearance of “Lady Truth” in the emerging Hassidic movement, Maimon rushed to the house of the leader of the movement, but was disappointed to find out that the Lady had just left the place (or at least so the rumor said). Then, came the idea that perhaps Berlin, the city of the *Aufklärer*, was the new place of residence of the Lady (alas, had he only known . . .), and in 1777 Maimon packed a small bag of food and some manuscripts, said goodbye to his wife and young children and departed for Berlin. Then, began an odyssey of ten or twelve years in which he succeeded, among other things, in being kicked out from the shelter of Jewish community in Berlin due to his suspected heresy, learning and pursuing the delicate art of beggary, returning to Berlin and becoming a protégé of Mendelssohn, getting into a quarrel with Mendelssohn (on account of Maimon’s unhidden Spinozism, and his frequent visits to certain not-so-respected houses), leaving Berlin to go to Amsterdam (for it was said that Lady T. was fond of a certain local Benedict), being stoned in the open street by the children of the Jewish community in Amsterdam, attending a Gymnasium at Altona at the age of thirty, and finally landing back in Berlin shortly after Mendelssohn’s death. Then, the Lady was glimpsed again between the lines of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. Well, the story just begins, and the reader should consult other books—such as the aforementioned *Autobiography*—if she wishes to find out the end of this obsessive affair.

Published in 1790, Maimon’s *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy* was originally conceived as a commentary on Kant’s first critique. The main part of the book consists of ten chapters

in which Maimon presents his criticism of Kant, and suggests several crucial improvements of Kant's system. To this Maimon added a (rather lengthy) "Brief Survey of the Book," a commentary on Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* (entitled: "My Ontology"), and an appendix "On Symbolic Cognition and Philosophical Language." Presumably, Maimon circulated the book's manuscript and in response to criticisms he added another section of "Remarks and Clarifications" (for Kant's comments on the manuscript and his praise for Maimon—"none of my critics understood me and the main questions as well as Herr Maimon does"—see Kant's letter to Marcus Herz from May 26, 1789).

The current edition is the first modern edition of the book (a good French translation appeared in Vrin in 1989). The editor, Florian Ehrensperger, provides an excellent introduction which outlines lucidly the main issues discussed in the book. The helpful editorial notes provide the context for various issues and people mentioned in the book, as well as point out relevant references to other works of Maimon. This humble editorial policy, aimed at assisting the reader without enforcing a particular interpretation, is steered skillfully by Ehrensperger and deserves all praise. In general, the editorial work seems to be wholesome.

Philosophically, the book is dense and rich in substantial and surprising arguments. It is hard, in fact impossible, to do justice to the book's content in a brief review. Yet, there is one line of argumentation that runs through the book, and whose elucidation may help the reader in understanding what the book is aiming at. Arguably, Maimon was the most consistent and radical rationalists among his contemporaries insofar as he was willing to grant the principle of sufficient reason unlimited validity. As such Maimon was committed to the rejection of any brute facts. If Kant, for example, was satisfied by the claim that although we cannot *explain* why our sensibility and understanding agree, this should not bother us insofar as their unexplainable agreement is necessary if we are to have experience (Ak. 11:51–2), Maimon was not. For Maimon, brute facts cannot claim necessity. Hence, we *must* speculate about the explanation of the agreement between our cognitive faculties. Otherwise, we will be deluding ourselves in the old *asylum ignorantiae*. Indeed, time and again, we find Maimon attempting to speculate beyond the limits set by Kant. But, even when he finds an explanation, Maimon remains a skeptic, since these explanations answer the *quid juris?* question (i.e., what justifies a fact F), but not the *quid facti?* (whether the explanation of F really obtains). Hence, the same demand of comprehensive explicability pushes Maimon to the brinks of both skepticism and dogmatism (i.e., rationalist metaphysics) and he at times described his position as a "rational skepticism."

As a philosophical as well as real life *Ausländer*, Maimon was fortunate to be alienated from what was commonly considered natural and unquestionable assumptions, and as such was able not once to observe some of the blind-spots of his generation. But just like other *Ausländer*, Maimon was doomed to be marginalized, and his work to be neglected. In a recent review (*Die Zeit*, June 6, 2004) Manfred Frank suggested that we currently witness the discovery of Maimon as a great philosopher. Indeed several important studies of Maimon have appeared in the past few years, and hopefully this strand will continue and develop. Florian Ehrensperger's new edition of the *Versuch über die Transzendentalphilosophie* is a substantial contribution to this emerging movement. We should warmly congratulate him and Meiner Verlag for this fine piece, and look forward to the continuation of this project.

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YITZHAK Y. MELAMED

*The University of Chicago*

Ludwig Bernays, editor. *Otto Friedrich Gruppe 1804–1876: Philosoph, Dichter, Philologe*. Freiburg: Rombach, 2004. Pp 279. Paper, € 39,90.

Two hundred years after his birth, Otto Friedrich Gruppe is commemorated in essays by American and European scholars. Contributions in English, French, German, and Italian