

Salomon Maimon, or Szlomo Ben Jehoszua<sup>1</sup>, was born in 1753 in Lithuania, in an orthodox Jewish family. He studied in Berlin, where he was active in Mendelssohn's friends and the Haskalah movement circles<sup>2</sup>. The philosopher belonged to three cultures: German, Jewish and Polish. He wrote in German and Hebrew. Being an intellectual of his time, he perceived himself as a European belonging to the cultural circle of Berlin.

The articles entitled *Versuch über den Geschmack* (one written as a commentary on Marcus Herz's *Versuch über den Geschmack*, a dissertation of 1776, and the other, *Über den Geschmack*, as a polemic with Lessing's *Laokoon*) are the basis for the reconstruction of the aesthetic concept of Maimon. The first one was published in 1791 in Moritz's journal: "Annalen der Akademie der Künste und mechanischen Wissenschaften", whilst the other in the "Deutsche Monatsschrift" journal, in 1792, vol. 2. Both articles were later published together entitled *Über die Aesthetik*, in: Salomon Maimon's *Streifereien im Gebiete der Philosophie*, 1. Theil, in 1793 in Berlin. The last of Maimon's important articles on aesthetics, *Das Genie und der methodische Erfinder*, appeared in "Berlinische Monatsschrift" in 1795, vol. 26.

Aesthetic considerations of Salomon Maimon are very much inscribed in associative philosophy<sup>3</sup>. Their basis consists in thinking about the creation of imagination and the way in which aesthetic phenomena are experienced by man. The basis of aesthetics are feelings that accompany us in the assessment of beautiful objects and phenomena. We may deal here with the direct reception of stimuli, as is the case with pleasure derived from eating a tasty dish or sensing of some sweet scent. Such a sensation, however, can also be evoked indirectly and result from the association of ideas.

Already in the first pages of the essay, *Versuch über den Geschmack*, he explicitly states:

<sup>1</sup> Woleński, J.: *O Salomonie Majmonie*, In Maimon, S.: *Autobiografia*. vol. 1., Warszawa 2007, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ochman, J.: *Filozofia oświecenia żydowskiego*. Kraków 2000, pp. 64-65.

<sup>3</sup> D'Aprile, I.-W.: *Die Schöne Republik*. Tübingen 2006, pp. 126-136.

A sense of beauty in the latter sense can again be considered either as a direct result of sensations in the first meaning, such as the sensation of good taste, nice smell, etc., or as a direct result of a judgment that an object is consistent with a certain concept, principle or purpose. Finally, it may not be about some kind of direct sensation, but simply about the effects of subjective conditions – according to the common laws of association of ideas. Everything that in the representations of the subject in a random way according to the common laws of association of ideas is connected with a pleasant feeling, evokes the feeling of pleasure.<sup>4</sup>

The problem is, of course, that we cannot prove which relations between ideas always evoke pleasure in us. Maimon, however, has no doubt that such rules do exist; the problem is only that we cannot create a specific science systematising the knowledge on this subject, and at best we may show what these relations between ideas are like and when they occur. He concludes: “Real taste, in my opinion, rests in the ability, acquired through reflection, to get to know all kinds of charms that do not fall under the concept of beauty, and to distinguish them from beauty.”<sup>5</sup>

In this context, the Jewish philosopher also places his thinking about taste. To him, taste is an ability allowing us to judge the unanimity of a given phenomenon or an object with its perfection. In this respect, he refers to the theory developed by Baumgarten and Sulzer<sup>6</sup>, while at the same time he remains close to Aloys Hirt’s deliberations on the notion of specificity. Referring to Baumgarten’s philosophy, he establishes the following: “The right of judgment holds that when the diversity of a thing is recognized as either compatible or incompatible, we then recognise either the perfection or imperfection [of the thing]. The ability of sensory judgment (vague) in the broadest sense is taste.” In accordance with this explanation, taste depends on the ability to judge objects in the aspect of their perfection, i.e. their consistency with a concept.<sup>7</sup>

Maimon has no doubts that the ability to judge aesthetic phenomena is common to all people. In his polemic with the English aesthetician Hugo Blair he writes: “The ability to judge is common to all people. And it varies in individuals only in a level of proficiency.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Maimon, S.: *Pisma estetyczne*. Toruń 2018, p. 12. There are no English translations of aesthetic writings by Maimon to which I refer in this paper. The quotations of his writings used here are my own translations from Polish. The Polish version was translated from original, German editions.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pp. 12-17.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, pp. 13-14.

The only thing that distinguishes us from each other is the degree of “training” within this skill. Lack of the ability to make a judgement about the beauty of an object results solely from the lack of suitable proficiency, and thus simply from the lack of practice. Thus, taste can be learned and developed. Therefore, our ability to evaluate beauty may increase. As part of reflections on the ability to develop taste, the Jewish philosopher critically evaluates the concept of Hugo Blair<sup>9</sup>. He accuses him of seeing taste as an ability allowing us to be moved (agitated) by what is beautiful in nature and art. Thus, Blair brings taste to the level of passion. He does not understand it as a form of a certain reflection<sup>10</sup>. Taste in Blair’s description is more like an ability to passively react to a stimulus rather than to make a conscious and active reflection. To Maimon, taste belongs to the cognitive abilities associated with the skilful use of imagination, memory and the ability to associate ideas.

When one considers as beautiful something that is simply directly pleasant or indirectly useful, one does not consider as true false beauty, but as beautiful something that is not at all beautiful, in other words, one recognizes as beauty a certain kind of a pleasant sensation.<sup>11</sup>

The same perceptions, as Maimon notes, may induce varying judgements among different people. Therefore, making a judgment of taste requires the recipient to link the observations with one another. And this ability to make an association between observations may and should be learned. The more ideas we can connect with each other, the longer the association chain we can build and the better judgement of taste we are able to formulate. Therefore, the judgement of taste is a cognitive type of judgment which is learned through practice and gathering new experience. In Maimon’s opinion, what Blair writes about refers merely to a very simple experience of beauty. But in the case of such a simple experience, we may only talk about the feeling of passion and not about a reflection.

Every man has the ability to judge beauty, but his upbringing, habits and hallucinations of imagination sometimes lead him in the wrong direction. All this should be opposed in reflection and then natural taste will not encounter any obstacles [...]. If one were to ask: how do I achieve good taste, I would not be able to give him any positive rule. On the contrary, I would draw his attention to all kinds of predilections that

<sup>9</sup> Most probably he got acquainted with H. Blair’s theory thanks to Markus Herz. See also. D’Aprile, I.-W.: *Die Schöne Republik*, p. 120.

<sup>10</sup> Maimon, S.: *Pisma estetyczne*, p. 14 footnote.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

do not belong to taste, but are considered as such, e.g. certain fashions which are underlaid by bad trends in imagination and, therefore, reveal bad taste. And then good taste will manifest itself [...].<sup>12</sup>

To Maimon, taste also operates in another way. Its task is to distinguish beauty from all other charms and pleasures that do not constitute beauty. This function of taste can be described as “delicacy of taste” or its “sublimation”. “Delicate taste relies on the ability, also most delicate, to distinguish between types of charms that belong neither to beauty nor to the exploration of beauty.”<sup>13</sup>

Salomon Maimon points to the fact that taste training also has a hazardous aspect. Our education and habits that we acquire can set imagination in a wrong direction. For this reason, he explicitly accentuates: “The basic principle of taste is expressed through induction and the commonly accepted law of sensory predilection in the form of an object itself, regardless of any interest.”<sup>14</sup> This is when natural, uneducated taste begins to distort. The result of such inappropriate development of taste are all the fashions and trends that arise and, seemingly for a certain amount of time, take over the direction of our assessment of beauty. In that case, we should talk about “bad taste”<sup>15</sup>. The Jewish philosopher refers to the observations made by Mandeville, Rochefoucauld and Helvétius<sup>16</sup> by claiming:

As long as such a state remains intact, pleasant sensations will be evidence for the ability of the actions that evoke them to support survival, while unpleasant ones will be evidence for the ability to destroy. In turn, if the state of simple awareness has already been breached, then pleasurable feelings are not any evidence of actions for the purpose of survival, similarly as unpleasant feelings are not any evidence for the destruction of the said state of undisturbed awareness.<sup>17</sup>

The Jewish philosopher positively assumes that as soon as the accumulated, erroneous tendencies subside, good taste will manifest itself. For this reason, the task of aesthetics is not so much to show what the principles of good taste are based on, but rather to discover all the falsities and distortions of taste. In this manner, aesthetics purifies the field for our imagination so that good taste itself can develop naturally. As an example of a negative attitude that changes the sense of taste, he gives an example of a person for whom material goods constitute the most important value and where desire appears in place of selfless feeling:

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, pp. 17-18.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 20.

Speak to a money holder as long as you want trying to convince him that his pleasure in possessing money is unfounded. He will only laugh at you. He will say: perhaps the mere possession of money does not bring joy to you, but I am going to follow my own taste. I would like to show him that there are other kinds of pleasures, more perfect than that one, but he will not believe me. He will not agree that his pleasures are worse for him. All that he thinks is better consists in the fact that money is not an object of simple pleasure, but in a social context it becomes a means to achieve all kinds of pleasures. The long practice of using [money] as a means ultimately changes imagination so that one imagines it as a means of achieving the end: thus, it is considered as an object that in itself gives pleasure. However, a great deal of effort will be needed before a situation develops in which such an influence will destroy conflicting habits and one will be able to act in accordance with their own imagination, which may never happen here.<sup>18</sup>

Taste is therefore a natural disposition of our cognitive powers. It can be compared to a physiological taste which allows wild animals to instinctively avoid poisonous plants. It is not until they are introduced to the world of agriculture that their original, instinctive ability slowly becomes distorted and causes that farm animals lose their natural taste. The question is whether such original taste is lost forever, or whether the return to nature allows animals to “restore” their instinctive behaviours? Maimon has no doubt that, in the case of aesthetic taste, its natural tendency remains intact. Aesthetics as a field of science dealing with taste should determine the area within which taste can function safely; therefore, it should discover all the causes of distortions of taste and eliminate possible deviations. Hence, it is to protect taste, rather than establish definitions and conditions for the existence of beauty; that is why the Jewish philosopher so emphatically points out:

People can think of everything as subjective, but their judgments about beautiful works must be different according to certain rules that define their judgments. These works must always be judged correctly in relation to the rules that everyone holds before their eyes.

However, it is possible to judge in an absolutely correct way if we define a large sum of rules observed simultaneously in one work with a single word. But since this maximum is more difficult to determine because of the great variety of rules and the degree of usefulness, in many cases the dispute over taste is also difficult to resolve.<sup>19</sup>

A few paragraphs further on, he stresses:

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pp. 20-21.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 56.

In horticultural art, one is a proponent of French taste and the other of English. Some people perceive beauty in regularity, while others perceive it in imitation of (beautiful) nature. In all these cases, it is easy to explain the diversity of taste judgments without denying someone being right.<sup>20</sup>

In the footnote to this fragment of his considerations, Maimon – deliberating on the difference between philosophical and esthetic taste – adds some important remarks; unfortunately, they are barely outlined and not developed. Above all, he points to the fact that teachers and educators of aesthetics do not usually distinguish the formal and the material aspects of the judgement of beauty. This distinction in Maimon's concept is the result of inspiration in Kant's philosophy:

The communicativeness of thoughts does not refer to their specific matter, but to their universal form. Empirical judgment: sugar is sweet, is communicable. Those who understand my language also understand what I want to say by such a judgment. But do I mean that I experience the sweetness of sugar through the organ of taste, just as I experience its white colour through the organ of sight? Not at all. Someone else may experience the bitterness of sugar through the organ of taste instead of sweetness, and through the organ of vision its black and not white colour, and yet, they will understand me well if I say: sugar is sweet, sugar is white, except that they need to translate this statement into their own language. [...] The material side of the subject and the predicate are completely ignored in this judgment. Attention is paid only to the formal side (relation to certain organs). However, beauty is not a quality of an object that results from its connection with other qualities. It is not merely a formal property.<sup>21</sup>

Although Maimon does not refer directly to the philosopher from Königsberg, there is no doubt about it. The confusion of the formal and the material side<sup>22</sup> causes a confusion with regard to the diversity of taste in different eras and cultures. The criticism of fashions and trends is not a critique of a subjective feeling; nor is it any kind of coercion to adopt an objective judgment of taste, as Maimon notes. These disputes usually relate to the material aspects of beauty which from the time perspective prove to be relative. Therefore, the Jewish philosopher notes that he is interested only in the formal side of aesthetic considerations.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 57.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, pp. 33-34.

<sup>22</sup> Separating the material from the formal side appears mainly in Maimon's considerations on transcendental logic. Maimon, S.: *Versuch einer neuen Logik oder Theorie des Denkens. Nebst angehängten Briefen des Philaletes an Änesidemus*. Berlin 1794. See also: Kozłowski, R.: *Salomon Maimon jako krytyk i kontynuator filozofii Kanta*. Poznań 1969, pp. 142-143.

Beauty does not signify here something real in a series of sensations (such as, for instance, red colour), because in this sense it is not communicable and in effect cannot be a predicate of any common judgment.<sup>23</sup>

He draws attention, above all, to the unselfishness of judgment of taste, its universality, the sensually captured unity in diversity, and the fact that by making the judgment of taste, we refer to the transcendental properties of our cognition.

The material aspects of our judgments of taste apply not so much to the assessment of beauty, but rather to judging certain sensory preferences. Salomon Maimon pays particular attention to this when criticising the aesthetics of Karl Heinrich Heydenreich (in *System der Ästhetik*<sup>24</sup>). When establishing the classification of beauty, Heydenreich notes that the fondness of colours and sounds arises solely on the basis of sensory stimulation; in their assessment, it is not necessary to refer to the judgment of taste. Nevertheless, Maimon points out that Heydenreich makes the mistake of recognising our sensory preferences as beauty. In the case of sensory preferences, we do not really need to refer to the judgment of taste, the sensation itself is enough. However, this experience is only sensual; it is not an aesthetic reception. Heydenreich regarded material things (sounds, colours) as beauty whereas in Maimon's opinion the latter occurs only when we are able to see the intentional connections between material experiences. This, in turn, requires a reflection on our part.

Beauty in the broadest sense is not, of course, a pleasure [resulting] from any particular property of the object, but from the autogeny [of the subject] caused by it. The criterion according to which we recognize that this pleasure is not a pleasure caused by a particular object but by autogeny constituting an affect of its particular characteristics, is that we recognize that not only this object, but also every other that induces pleasure in us if we treat it in precisely that manner.<sup>25</sup>

To illustrate the difference between the feeling of pleasure and the experience of beauty, Maimon refers not only to Kant's philosophy<sup>26</sup> but also to Aristotle's reflections on the relationship between matter and form in a work of art. The sensual stimuli that make up a piece of work are a raw matter which only through the artist's activity takes on the form of a work of art. This is an obvious statement; however, the Jewish philosopher does not stop there. He notes that

<sup>23</sup> Maimon, S.: *Pisma estetyczne*, p. 34.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 35 and following.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>26</sup> Por. D'Aprile, I.-W.: *Die Schöne Republik*, p. 128.

the more forms an artist can create from a particular matter of sensory stimuli, the more perfect work of art will be achieved. Thus, music is not the sounds we play or hear but the harmony that our imagination is able to create from them. The more intentional structures an artist can create from the matter of sounds, the better an effect it has on his work. The longer it keeps our imagination in active operation, the more associations and memories it stimulates, the more established it is in our memory and may continuously evoke various pleasures.

In music, in the aspect of rhythm, there occurs only a formal unity of rules, but in the aspect of melody and harmony also a unity of concepts or, perhaps, of goals. Music is a language of sensations in which one can experience not only the grammatical but also the rhetorical and logical.<sup>27</sup>

An attempt to understand the principles taste is based on is an important part of aesthetic considerations. However, it is not about taste itself, as Maimon notes. Taste, as an ability to judge, is not an intellectual skill but a work of genius that simply perceives beauty. Such a capability of expressing an aesthetic judgement is for the Jewish philosopher equal to the genius needed to create a work of art. In order to be able to judge the works by Raphael or Shakespeare, one must have the same genius as the creators of these works<sup>28</sup>. Critics, of course, can notice and explain mistakes made by authors of works. However, critics do not disturb the natural ability of taste to see the beauty in them. To Maimon, genius and taste are similar to instinct as they instantly and infallibly capture the “purposefulness without purpose”. The ability to perceive purposefulness where it does not objectively exist or to bring imagination to such a state as to capture and combine into a sensible whole the most essential of the multiplicity of sensations is, according to Maimon, typical of genius and taste. The difference lies in the fact that this unity of diversity is brought out by the genius of a creator, whereas the role of taste is to judge. At this point, the Jewish philosopher still remains within the field of Kant’s aesthetics. This relationship can be particularly seen when he writes:

The unity of the diversity that genius brings out and taste judges is as little sensual (meaningless) as it is intellectual (or intellectually limited). But it is, if I may say so, more than intellectual. It is an idea that genius continuously approaches but never achieves. Reflections on antique and, yet more, Italian ideals of beauty will teach the artist more than any critical rules.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Maimon, S.: *Pisma estetyczne*, p. 61.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*



Since every man has some taste, each of us must also be endowed with genius. Maimon has no doubt about it. Although he adds that by the concept of genius he understands natural, theoretical (cognitive) ability and not the knowledge of rules and a practical artistic skill. Thus, genius is only a potential ability thanks to which one may but does not have to become an artist.

Maimon notes that his concept of good taste, non-imposed and natural, is a kind of chimera, an idea shaped for the needs of philosophical considerations. While considering taste, we refer to the existence of a perfect primitive man who is only a model idea and not a real, actually existing person<sup>30</sup>. In real, concrete situations, we can only demonstrate examples of taste spoiled by the habits or particular individuals. It is possible to prove the existence of “natural taste” only through some indirect proof. Maimon attempts to justify the existence of natural taste in the following manner. The repair of a badly shaped taste is possible by showing to a given person the conditions underlying their habits; it is therefore a presentation of how far and in what way the taste has been changed. By tracking these changes and transformations, man will gradually be able to retreat to the state of original taste. For this reason, Maimon writes:

The simplest human state, which in the eyes of philosophers is a chimera, has a very important (*richtig*) meaning and as an idea must be established at the foundation of practical philosophy. The science of morality (ethics) together with what is subject to it (legislation, politics, etc.), aesthetics, the science of happiness, etc. - all this must be embedded in the same idea, as long as the diversity of [these disciplines] is not to be only random and subjective, but is to be a necessary, commonly valid reality. All these disciplines recognize one and the same basic principle, which is not positively established, but is being continuously negatively defined.<sup>31</sup>

In this context, Maimon shows specifically the task faced by an artist. Indeed, the artist is responsible for shaping the taste of the recipient. For this reason, he should not create works consistent with the prevailing fashion, nor flatter the tastes of recipients. His task is to improve the audience's taste. Therefore, the task of art is understood by Maimon in accordance with the classical, Aristotelian definition – art should not present things as they are but as they should be. Similarly to art, taste should not refer to people as they are but as they should be. Here, Maimon refers to Lessing's concept presented in *Laokoon*<sup>32</sup>.

In the article *Das Genie und der methodische Erfinder* Maimon discusses, inter alia, the diversity of tastes. He criticises the approach according to which

<sup>30</sup> D'Aprile, I.-W.: *Die Schöne Republik*, p. 127.

<sup>31</sup> Maimon, S.: *Pisma estetyczne*, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 27.

differences in taste result from accidental and subjective factors such as climate, education, tastes, etc. In his opinion these differences result from the objective principles of beauty, to which we refer while making an aesthetic judgement.

The diversity of the judgment of taste does not have to, as is commonly believed, result from random and subjective factors, from education, climate, etc., but above all from the necessary, objective rules of beauty (to which the judgement refers). These first factors do not give us any satisfactory explanation for the differences in taste.<sup>33</sup>

The classic approach of the Jewish philosopher to the issue of beauty is clearly evident here. The problem with the evaluation of works of art and nature lies in the fact that in the same subject or phenomenon we may see different principles and rules of beauty. To illustrate this, Maimon refers to two examples. The first concerns the discussion whether music should be based on harmony or melody. The Jewish philosopher rejects the position of Rousseau, who points to the priority of melody in musical art<sup>34</sup>. Obviously, Rousseau's view is justified on the basis of his assumptions. Because he considers music as an expression of feelings, he highlights melody and not harmony. If, however, contrary to Rousseau's approach, music is considered as a means of extracting and modifying feelings, we will recognise harmony as the most important element of this sort of art. The same is true in the case of a dispute between supporters of French gardens and supporters of English parks. In both cases, the initial assumption defining what art should be like is different. Therefore, the principles used in the evaluation of this art are different, as are the differences in judgments of tastes.

What is interesting, however, is that Maimon clearly distinguishes taste from the correctness of rules used in art. Hence, he states:

I believe that the subtlety of the outlines, the inner tension of muscles and the pleasant setting actually belong to being correct; for what else does the outline signify if not the exact correctness of the representation? The only difference is that the correctness is determined simply by taste, as opposed to the correctness in the proper sense by the rules for relations.<sup>35</sup>

These are the sensations of taste that cause an artist to choose and apply particular rules, and not vice versa. The same applies to the reception of a work of art. We admire not so much the good or correct application of rules but rather

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 56.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 59.

certain regularities that are captured by our taste, as the instinctive rather than the conceptual power. Beauty is not the mutual relations between particular parts, as Maimon puts it, nor on correct proportions between the parts and the whole, but results from the fact that these proportions are easy to grasp for imagination. The artist needs to encourage our cognitive powers to look for purposefulness between particular elements of a work of art. Our imagination must be able to enjoy the continuous discovery of new patterns. The obviousness (schematism) of systems imposing particular rules must disappear as to enable us to find them in the work by ourselves. And it is the role of taste to judge whether this happens. It sounds remarkably up-to-date when Maimon observes: "The correctness of a judgment of taste is not based on a majority of votes or authority, but on the agility in solving these questions each time and the capacity to distinguish pure beauty from the associated beauty of a different kind of pleasure"<sup>36</sup>.

## Bibliography

- D'Aprile, I.-W. (2006). *Die Schöne Republik*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.
- Erdmann, J. E. (1848). *Die Entwicklung der deutschen Spekulation seit Kant*. Lipsk: Frommann.
- Jacobs, N. J. (1960). Maimon's Theory of Imagination. *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, 6, 249-267.
- Kozłowski, R. (1969). *Salomon Maimon jako krytyk i kontynuator filozofii Kanta*. [Salomon Maimon as a Critic and Continuator of Kant's Philosophy]. Poznań: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Maimon, S. (2007). *Autobiografia*. [Autobiography]. Warszawa: Biblioteka Midrasza.
- Maimon, S. (2018). *Pisma estetyczne*. [Aesthetic Writings]. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK.
- Ochman, J. (2000). *Filozofia oświecenia żydowskiego*. [Philosophy of Jewish Enlightenment]. Kraków: TAIWPN Universitas.
- Poritzky, J. E. (1922). *Phantasten und Denker*. München: Rösl.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 70.

## Abstract

### **Taste as a Cognitive Ability Shared by all People in the Concept of Salomon Maimon**

The subject of the paper is the concept of taste in Salomon Maimon's philosophy. In his view, taste constitutes an ability to judge the perfection of surrounding phenomena. It is a skill shared by all people, although developed to a different degree. Maimon deals with the issues of development of taste, the relationship between taste and imagination, the acquisition of habits, the difference between usability and beauty. The concept of the Jewish philosopher is presented against the background of the aesthetic thought of Lessing and Kant, as well as French intellectuals of the Enlightenment era, whom Maimon himself cites. It appears that taste is not only the power of an aesthetic evaluation that refers to art, but it is also used as a tool for understanding the world by man as a social being, capable of creating and understanding culture.

**Keywords:** Salomon Maimon, taste, education, human cognitive abilities, imagination, community

## Abstrakt

### **Vkus ako kognitívna schopnosť všetkých ľudí v koncepcii Salomona Maimona**

Témou príspevku je poňatie vkusu vo filozofii Salomona Maimona. Podľa jeho názoru predstavuje vkus schopnosť posúdiť dokonalosť okolitých javov. Je to zručnosť, ktorú síce majú všetci ľudia, ale je u nich rozvinutá v rôznej miere. Maimon sa zaoberá vývojom vkusu, vzťahom medzi vkusom a predstavivosťou, získavaním návykov, rozdielom medzi použiteľnosťou a krásou. Koncepcia tohto židovského filozofa je predstavená v protiklade k estetickému mysleniu Lessinga a Kanta, ako aj francúzskych intelektuálov obdobia osvietenstva, ktorých cituje samotný Maimon. Zdá sa, že vkus nie je iba silou estetického hodnotenia, ktoré odkazuje na umenie, ale používa sa aj ako nástroj na pochopenie sveta človekom, ktorý je spoločenskou bytosťou schopnou vytvárať a chápať kultúru.

**Kľúčové slová:** Salomon Maimon, vkus, vzdelávanie, ľudské kognitívne schopnosti, predstavivosť, komunita

**Dr hab. Kinga Kaśkiewicz, prof. UMK**

Instytut Filozofii UMK

Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu

Toruń, Polska

kinga.kaskiewicz@umk.pl