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Kritik der Urteilskraft in the perimeter of translation and interpretation

Abstract: In this presentation I want to bring into focus the way Kant's volume title: *Kritik der Urteilskraft* in its German original form was translated and interpreted. Even the German original form of the title of this volume created difficulties when building it, and it passed through more attempts of changing terms. In the present approach I will emphasize the similarities and differences among the ways Kant's title *Kritik der Urteilskraft* was translated into other languages. It is important that the sense and the depth of the words from Kant's last Critique remained the same, but also that they changed their meaning in accordance with the translation in the host language. There are many translations of this book of Kant's, but in I will remind only some of the translations of the German book into some languages; my analysis focuses on the translation and interpretation of the respective volume into Romanian or English. Therefore, I will compare the translation of the title of Kant's book into different languages, but I will also observe the possibility of translation and interpretation of the contents of this book, so that to emphasize the fidelity of the translation and the problems of terminology occurring during a translation. Being in the perimeter of translation and interpretation, on the one hand, Kant's *Critique* keeps its initial structure of title and content, and on the other hand, it is affected by different linguistic terms.

Keywords: power of judgment, Kant's sense, translation of the *Critique*, Kant's terminology, the interpretation of the power of judgment

1. Historical data and the interpretation of *Kritik der Urteilskraft*

Kant's idea to write this book comes from his interests in the "aesthetic taste", the initial title of the book being *Critique of Taste (Kritik der Geschmack)*. This subject comes from German philosopher aesthetics – Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) – who was the first to write about aesthetics in 1735, focusing on "beauty sensitive knowledge". In *The Critique of Pure Reason (Kritik der reinen Vernunft)*, aesthetics is seen in Aristotle's sense (as a science of sensibility), but in the second edition of this *Critique* (1787) – Kant recognizes the possibility of the "apriorism" in aesthetics, the philosopher maintaining the title of *Critique of Taste (Kritik der Geschmack)* (the letter from January 1787 to Chr. Gott. Schütz). The translations of this

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writing tell us that just in the letter from the 12th of May 1789 to Reinhold the work received the actual title *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*) from which *Critique of Taste* is only a part (Kant 1981, 18).

Some information tell us that this *Critique*, sent as letter to Reinhold in December 1787, was sent to Berlin for publication as a new manuscript on the 21th of January 1790, as a critique about the power of judgment (*The Blackwell Philosopher Dictionaries* 1995), but other sources plead that the 3rd *Critique* was published at Leipzig at end of April 1790, but the next week Kant has to fulfill 66 years (his years of life: 1724-1804). *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*) completes the series of *Critiques*, starting with *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*) (1781) and continuing with *Critique of Practical Reason* (*Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft*) (1788). “The two versions of the introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* suggest that Kant did indeed see the formulation of a new kind of a *priori* principle as the key to a critique of both taste and teleology [...]” (Kant 2000, XXI).

The translators and the interpreters of Kant’s work tell us that this volume comes as a completion to the other two *Critiques*. Kant associates “the power of judgment” with “teleology”, defining “the power of judgment” as a “capacity to think the particularity as contained within the universal” (Kant 1981, 17). Kant defines “teleology” as being the unity between nature and liberty, and as a mode to contemplating and to viewing nature. Kant claimed that the power of judgment is “too large” for aesthetics; therefore, it can encompass teleology. It seems that “the power of judgment” is not autonomous as reason is because it can apply to any action, but it applies “only to himself”, being a subjective point of view.

It is interesting that the first interpretation of the *Critique* that we have already mentioned was Friedrich von Schiller’s interpretation, which made him develop this subject later on, in his work: *Aesthetic Letters* (*About the Aesthetical Education of Man*). Schiller’s text is inspired by Kant’s writing, as well as Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling’s *System of Transcendental Idealism*. The resemblance between the “teleology” and the “aesthetics” of the “Introduction” of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* represents a solution for Schelling’s writing. The book of Kant enforced itself as a fundamental philosophical purpose for the Neo-Kantians or Kant’s disciples, when it comes to German philosophers: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, and others.

2. The approach of the *Critique* in other languages

The origin of the German title (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*) comes from Latin. There are two forms of the title in the language of origin: *Die Kritik der Urteilskraft* and *Critik der Urteilskraft*. Then the actual form of the title was

chosen: *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. From the German original form of this title different directions of translation head for: English, French, Italian and other Western languages, as well as for the languages of Eastern Europe.

In Romanian, *Critica facultății de judecare* received new forms of adaptation of the translation. Here we speak about *Critica facultății de judecare*, but also about *Critica puterii de judecată* as the first form of the translation and with the simplified structure in which it is treated only the subject about “Analytic of the Beautiful”, about Taste and Agreeable; other parts about Sublime and its connection with the nature, as well as Teleological problem, it do not play in this edition. About the mode how was translated the volume in Romanian, it determines some editions appeared in Romania in 1981, 1995 and 2007.

The first integral Romanian edition (except I. Gherincea’s try of the “Analytic of the Beautiful” from 1927) (Kant 1927) dates from 1940, being signed by Traian Brăileanu. The 1981 edition from lays the groundwork of the translation in Romanian space of this *Critique*, having as translators Vasile Zamfirescu and Alexandru Surdu, and “The First Introduction” was translated by Constantin Noica. The German edition which was the basis of the translation of this edition and the edition from 1995 is Ernest Casirrer’s volume from 1992 (volume V of *Immanuel Kants Werke*, Berlin, 1922). There exist three editions of this *Critique* appeared in 1790, 1793 and 1799. Casirrer’s is based on the writing from 1793, because as shown in the existent documents, the edition from 1799 has no evidence of Kant’s achievement.

The direct translations of the *Urteilskraft* that would mean “puterea de judecată” (the power of judgment), the form that we see in the first translations, is incomplete. However, the translators of the editions from 1981 and 1995, as well as the translator of the Kantian work – Rodica Croitoru – chose other adaptations of this title, in accordance with original Latin form *facultas discretiva* and *judicium*, because Romanian is a Latin language, so that the reader should not be puzzled, and in order to preserve the terminological unity of the entire volume. (Kant 1981, 17). Hence, out of linguistic reasons, the next translation of the term *Urteilskraft* imposes itself: *Urteil* – judecată (judgment), *Kraft* – putere (power), *Beurteilung* – judecare sau apreciere (judgment or evaluation), but the letter “s” represents the connection of that two terms. The second reason for the adaptation of this form holds to fact that the solution „putere de judecare” (the power of judgment) has the disadvantage of not being a technical term of psychology, the philosopher from Königsberg being influenced by Tetens’s psychology of the faculties. The translation of *Urteilskraft* by *the power of judgment* meets this exigency and keeps the Romanian translation at an adequate terminological level, without contravening with the psychology of the faculties (Kant 1981, 55). The 1995 Romanian edition is a reedition of the 1981 version, without the critical apparatus (Kant 1995, 11).

The translators of the Romanian editions explain the choosing of the term “judicare” (judgment) and “judicată” (judgment) (which in Romanian language is a “perfect correspondent” of the German term), because the term “judicată” (judgment) causes confusion among readers. ([...] we designate through *judgment* not only one from our faculties, but the product of activity of this faculty – judgment, as logic studies. But in German language there exist two terms for the faculty and product of its activity – *Urteilskraft* and *Urteil*.) (Kant 1981, 56). As a result, the translations of the term *Urteilskraft* by *judgment* would not fit Kant’s own intentions, as he analyses the limits of the faculties of the soul, and not of the activities of these faculties.

I have to add the fact that the 2007 Romanian edition of *The Critique of the Power of Judgment* (*Critica facultății de judicare*), with its rigorous completions, is translated according to the German original work edited by The Academy of the Sciences of Berlin: Immanuel Kant’s *Werke* (Opere), Band V. *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Band XX, *Erste Einleitung in der Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Berlin, Akademie Textausgabe, 1968 (the first edition dates from 1908). The translator of the 2007 edition – Rodica Croioru states that this translation not is realized by means of interpretation or by mixing the sense of the ideas of the author with the meanings of the translators (Kant 2007, 35). Maybe this affirmation is risky, because every translator appeals to the methodology of the interpretation of the text. It is sure that the mentioned variant of the translation of the original German form jeeps the system and content of the *Critique*.

Therefore, in Romanian culture, the first translator of Immanuel Kant at the 3rd *Critique* was I. Gherincea (1927), which conferred to *Urteilskraft* the translations of “judicată” (judgment); but Tr. Brăileanu (1940) translated the German term by “putere de judicare” (the power of the judgment). Constantin Noica (1943) translated it by “judgment”, while Zamfirescu and Surdu (1981) by “the power of the judgment”, approaching the sense of Kant’s philosophy.

It is curious how this book was translated and interpreted into English. Here we see a concern of the translators exposed in more versions of the translations of the title, reserved over the years.

1. *Critique of Judgement* – the letter “e” appears after letter “g”;
2. *Critique of Judgment* – without letter “e” after letter “g”;
3. *The Critique of Judgment*;
4. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*;
5. *The Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

Werner Pluhar (1987) adopts the form *Critique of Judgment*, arguing his option with the fact that *Urteilskraft* is *power, ability, faculty of judgment*; therefore, it would designate both power and faculty of judgment. Instead,

Eric Matthews's version (2002) – *Critique of the Power of Judgment* – resembles terminologically the Romanian translation of Tr. Brăileanu (*Critica puterii de judecată*). The translation and discussion about Kant's English works was affected by terminological problems. If in Germany Kant published this book in Leipzig, then in Great Britain and in North America the Kant's text was received in an atmosphere dominated by John Locke (Holzhey and Mudroch 2005).

The first editions which is the base of the translation in English, were the German volumes: *Critik der Urtheilskraft* and *Die Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, then it came to the contoured volume: *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. Kant's fame as a philosopher gained after writing *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) was prevalent beyond the countries that speak German. The translations in English were published before 1800. Since then, the interpretations of Kant's philosophy led to an important perspective in Classical and Modern Philosophy. As in other languages, in English, the generations of the scientists devoted to produce “fiducial translations” from Kant's work. The English translators are based on a complete transmission of Kant's text and on the approaching the Latina of the title. It seems that in English, the title of *Critique* reflects more on the “power of judgment” than on the “faculty of judgment”; “power of judgment” comes from *Urteilskraft* and it was translated in a manner that reflects the common grammatical structure as “power of determination” or “reflexive power” (Kant 2000).

The time when “The First Introduction” of this *Critique was written* constituted the high point of the certainty in the system of the entire philosophy, as well as an important criterion for which the notion *Third Critique* must be articulated. The English volumes, as well as the Romanian translations, support that in time of work, the philosopher changed the title from *Critique of Taste* into the actual title – *The Critique of Power of Judgment*. The English *Critique* receives light with the translations from German made by a professor from The United States of America – Paul Guyer. Except for this translator and interpreter, another important English translator of Kant's philosophy is Eva Schaper. Also, there are more good English translators.

The first translations in French realized by Jules Barni and then by Gibelin, which translated *Critique about art* in *Critique du jugement*, but contemporary translators – A. Philonenko (2000) and A. Renaut (2002) opted for similar versions in the Romanian translation: *Critique de la faculté de juger*. However, Eric Weil did not agree with these two versions, because they would not fully express the German original. Thus, he proposed *Critique de la faculté judiciaire* (*Problèmes kantians*, Vrin, 1962), but this author did not retain that term, because French contemporary language gave a precise and technical sense to the term “judicial”. In a French article in the volume about Kant's Congress, the author focused on the continental interpretation of the 3rd *Critique* (Taminiaux 1976).

Here I want to remind the translation for Kant's *Critique* in a language from Eastern Europe and I chose Russian. In this language, *The Critique of Judgment* is translated *Критика способности суждения*, which "способности" signifies "capacity" or "faculty", but „суждения” – “judgment” (Podico 1793). Therefore, the title can be translated through “*The Critique of Power of Judgment*”. Russian text reflects the original writing, having and new terms or linguistic forms of adaptation in oriental language.

Finally, I want to discuss the content of *The Critique of Power of Judgment*. As far as I observed, the majority of editions of this book, indifferent to the language of translation, preserves the initial structure of the text, having in content: “Translator’s Note”, “Preface”, “Introduction”, then the parts about “Beautiful” and “Sublime”, but in finally – the chapters about “Teleology”. That is different in the translated volumes, which order the parts in the beginning differently or change the number of the pages for “Preface” or for “Introduction”. The 2007 Romanian edition has a simplified content, but with a rich introductory study. This edition contains two Introductions: *The First Introduction* is about the place of the faculty of judgment in transcendental philosophical system for faculties of knowledge, but *The Second Introduction* treats the same problem from the point of view of the domains of these faculties (Kant 2007, 13).

Kant's *Critique* preserves the initial structure of *Kritik der Urteilskraft* as the “Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment” and the “Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment”, which in Romanian, as well as English, French, or Russian preserves the same delimitation of the two parts with many chapters and subchapters. If in Romanian there is an ample content in two editions, then the majority of English editions concentrate the text in the same chapters without detailing the matter in the subchapters.

In conclusion, that is added, reviewed, interpreted – can help to better understanding of Kant's philosophy. The translation and the adaptation of Kant's text in different languages, nuances the fidelity of the translation; it also emphasizes the terminological problems which appear during the translation. Being in the perimeter of translation and interpretation, Kant's *Critique*, on the one hand, preserves the initial structure of thinking in the title and its content, and, on the other hand, is affected by different linguistic terms. If it is not translated into corresponding terms, then Kant's *Critique* can get to same discordant or false perspectives, because of treating easily of this small snag, which can overturn the cart of the full work (Kant 2007, 39).

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