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THE PROBLEM OF REFLECTION-C AS PURE APPERCEPTION IN MERRITT'S *KANT ON REFLECTION AND VIRTUE*

El Problema de la Reflexión-c como Apercepción Pura en *Kant on Reflection and Virtue* de Melissa Merritt

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to expose and criticize Melissa Merritt's interpretation of the concept of reflection in Kant's philosophical work as presented in her book *Kant on Reflection and Virtue*. Specifically, it attempts to establish that her equalization between pure apperception and c-reflection is problematic. To achieve this, the paper exposes Merritt's notions of reflection and compares them with the notion of pure apperception in Kant's first *Critique* to show how pure apperception cannot be identified with c-reflection as it is characterized by her.

Keywords: Kant, Merritt, apperception, reflection-c.

Resumen: El propósito del siguiente artículo es exponer y criticar la interpretación del concepto de reflexión en la obra de Kant según lo plantea la autora Melissa Merritt en su libro *Kant on Reflection and Virtue*. Específicamente, este trabajo intenta establecer que su igualación entre apercepción pura y reflexión-c es problemática. Para lograr esto, el trabajo expone las nociones de reflexión de Merritt y las compara con las nociones de apercepción pura en la primera *Crítica* de Kant para mostrar cómo la apercepción pura no puede ser identificada con la reflexión-c como es caracterizada por ella.

Palabras clave: Kant, Merritt, apercepción, reflexión-c.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to expose and criticize Melissa Merritt's interpretation of the concept of reflection in Kant's philosophical work as presented in her book *Kant on Reflection and Virtue*. Specifically, this paper tries to establish how her equating of pure apperception with the constitutive requirements of reflection, or how she names it, reflection-c, is false. This problem of interpretation will be exposed by analyzing the difference between affection and passion as modes of reflective failure, wherein affection has an impact on reflection-c whereas passion has an impact on normative requirements for reflection, or reflection-n. The paper will first expose Merritt's work by presenting her goal of dealing with the Kantian Caricature, then it will characterize the notions of reflection-c, reflection-n, passion and affect, and show how they relate to each other. Lastly, it will attempt to explain why reflection-c cannot be regarded as being the same as pure apperception by trying to explain the difference between pure apperception and empirical apperception, and how they are confounded by Merritt's characterization of reflection-c.

2. Kant on Reflection and Virtue

The purpose behind Melissa Merritt's book *Kant on Reflection and Virtue* is to try to correct the Kantian caricature present within an abundant number of exegetical and non-exegetical interpretations and works, wherein the Kantian reflective ideal is interpreted as too strict, or as she expresses it, "precious, hyper-deliberate and repugnantly moralistic".[1] These problematic interpretations of Kant's reflective ideal stem from Kant's own assertion: "all judgments (…) require a reflection – if not before the judgment, then at least following critically after it".[2] This statement is sometimes interpreted as if an

1) Melissa Merritt, *Kant on Reflection and Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 2.
2) Ibid.

agent should always reflect on what he is going to do before he does it, if he is to act correctly, which imposes an extremely strict demand to rational agents, because we, as rational beings, not always reflect on every action we are about to perform, what does not necessarily mean that we acted immorally. "The ideally reflective agent is envisaged as someone who most assiduously tests whether he proposes to act on a maxim whose universal adoption he can coherently will".[3] Furthermore, if we are to interpret that *all judgments require reflection* is a fundamental proposition for Kant's model, and if reflection means to undertake some kind of deliberate activity, then we will be unable to account for certain common modes of knowing, such as sensible experience, for these are usually not deliberate activities, albeit many times well justified as a source of knowledge. So, in order to criticize and correct this caricatural interpretation that goes beyond the realm of morals and ethics, Merritt endeavors on trying to demonstrate how we should understand this problem and the aforementioned Kantian statement as to demonstrate that Kantian ethics is not so strict as it is commonly portraited, and neither is his epistemological model. It is true that reflection does play a crucial role within Kant's philosophy; however, the problem is not the supreme value that Kant assigns to this concept, but rather what it means to be reflective and what the ideally reflective person looks like within Kant's philosophical model.

To achieve this purpose, Merritt attempts to give her account for Kant's statements that can lead to the common, overly simplistic, and strict misinterpretation. Especially important for the purposes of this work is the first chapter of her book, in which she introduces the fundamental differences between types of reflection that differentiate themselves by their specific requirements. On one side there is reflection-c, which is *grosso modo* characterized as the constitutive requirements to think, while on the other

3) Ibid., 4.

side there is reflection-n, which are normative requirements to reflect. These two types of reflection are Merritt's way of establishing a distinction that will allow her to interpret Kant's statement about reflection in a different light, a perspective that will allow to expose what Kant really meant by reflecting (or reflection) and how this reflection greatly differs from the common more widely spread interpretation. She will argue throughout the book that *inter alia* the kind of reflection to which Kant is referring to in the aforementioned quote specifically refers to reflection-n, a normative requirement to reflect in a morally good manner, as opposed to constitutive reflection.

3. Types of reflections: reflection-c and reflection-n

According to Merritt, the difference between reflection-c and reflection-n, as different kinds of reflection, can be deduced from four different textual sources present throughout Kant's work, in which he writes about *Überlegung* and *Reflexion*. These sources are summarized by Merritt as a) reflection as the activity of thinking quite generally; b) the self-consciousness that is internal to the activity of thinking or that makes it possible; c) some mental operation by which concepts, or general representations, are possible; and (d) all judgments require reflection. Descriptions (a) to (c) are all variants of the constitutive notion of reflection i.e., what she denominates reflection-c, which she will distinguish from the normative requirement of reflecting expressed by (d) as a normative reflection.[4]

> The result is that items (a) through (c) of the textual record all belong together as remarks about a constitutive requirement to reflect: a reflection that is always going on, by sheer default, inasmuch as one manages to think at all. This notion of reflection belongs to pure logic, which is concerned with the constitutive requirement on thought.[5]

4) Cf. Ibid., 16.
5) Ibid., 28.

This characterization of reflection-c is of outmost importance for Merritt's interpretation, for it serves the purpose of showing that there is in fact a type of reflection happening *by sheer default* that does not require us to consciously think about the situation. This reflection is somehow always occurring, and we do not always have an explicit handle of its occurrence, although "There is necessarily a standing possibility of my actively thinking that these thoughts are mine, but I may not in fact actively think this all that often".[6] Reflection as constitutive of thought accounts for all possibilities of reflecting in which the thinking subject is not necessarily required to engage consciously or attentively, which lessens the strictness commonly associated with Kantian ethics. Therefore, when speaking about reflection in the constitutive sense, one does not have to imagine someone actively and consciously engaging on something that requires reflection, but rather one must understand that –for the most part– this reflection is being taken unattentively, albeit the subject is sometimes able to take control of such reflection.

Merritt establishes that reflection characterized as (a) the activity of thinking in general and (b) as the self-consciousness that is internal to the activity of thinking are tantamount to the characterization of reflection (c), wherein "some mental operation by which concepts are possible",[7] which ultimately ties all these conceptions into the single notion of reflection-c. She further adds that reflection (b) is nothing other than pure apperception.[8]

Merritt ties characterizations (a) through (c) by arguing that all of them are in some way or another pointing out how concepts are possible through mental operations, which unavoidably ties the notion of pure apperception (from (b)) with the other notions. Specifically, characterization (a), as presented by Kant in his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, states

6) Ibid., 48.
7) Ibid., 27.
8) Cf. Ibid.

that reflection is the activity of the intellect as distinguished from sensibility, i.e., the intellect only *reflects* in the sense that it does not receive representations, but only unifies them to some determinate content.[9] In this sense, (a) is very closely related to reflection (c). Characterization (b) in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* describes pure apperception as an inner activity' by which a concept (a thought) becomes possible, which Merritt associates with sense (c).[10] All of these characterizations mean that reflection refers to the process of unification of representations within a single consciousness, which must always involve the possibility of recognizing that one's own thinking is the source of this unity of representation, which in turn is unified in a single consciousness.[11] Having these three characterizations of reflection as a constitutive component of thought, Merritt will go on to further assert that reflection-c "is most basically pure apperception",[12] which is what this essay will further analyze: "Therefore, Kant must mean either to identify reflection with pure apperception in this remark or at least to take the two to be so closely linked that only a notional distinction between them can be drawn".[13]

On the other hand, and less important for the purpose of this work, Merritt presents a normative requirement to attentively think about the situation. This kind of reflection differs from reflection-c because it requires us to consciously be aware of what is happening in the situation so that we can act in a morally good fashion. However, this kind of reflection is enabled only because there is a reflection-c, for this is the constitutive requirement of reflection in general. Reflection-n is made possible by the occurrence of

9) Cf. Ibid.
10) Cf. Ibid.
11) Cf. Ibid., 27-28.
12) Cf. Ibid., 24.
13) Ibid., 28.

reflection-c as the "typically tacit grip on myself as the source of my own thoughts".[14]

This essay will not delve in the more specific characteristics of reflection-n, albeit it plays a much more important role within Merritt's book. Its purpose is that of explaining how its relationship to moral virtue can be cultivated in such a manner that it no longer requires reflection as an attentive or active way of handling oneself when facing different kinds of situations. However, since reflection-n depends on reflection-c, and the latter is equated with pure apperception, a more detailed analysis of it is required to further justify how reflection-n can actually occur.

4. Affect and pure apperception as modes of reflective failure

In order to understand the aforementioned argumentation more clearly, Merritt quotes an example provided by Kant that aims to show what the different types of reflection mean in a specific scenario. However, to understand this example, she introduces the concepts of *affect* and *passion* as modes of reflective failure, wherein someone finds himself in a kind of "blindness"[15] unable to properly reflect. With regards to reflection-c, Merritt will argue about affect that:

> The distinguishing mark of affect is its lack of reflection. By that, Kant means that affect lacks reflection-c: that typically tacit handle that one has of being the source of one's own thought, or being the source of a point of view on how things are. Affect is blind because it radically (although, fortunately, only momentarily) occludes genuine self-conscious thought.[16]

Passion, on the other hand, consists in the failure of not taking an appropriate normative interest in the capacity to discern what matters and why. In this sense, the passionate man reflects-c, because he has a direct

14) Cf. Ibid., 49.
15) Ibid., 38.
16) Ibid., 46.

commitment to action, but he fails to meet a specific normative requirement of reflection, i.e., he fails to reflect-n.[17]

So, passion is a kind of *blindness* caused by a failure of reflection, just as affect, but they differ in what type of reflection actually fails. In the former, the subject fails to correctly reflect in the normative sense, while in the latter there is a failure of reflection in a constitutive level. Without reflection-c there can be no reflection-n, for one would lack the tacit grasp of being the source of its own thoughts, which is necessary for reflecting in a normative manner. With that in mind, the example provided by Kant will allow a better understanding of what has been explained until now.

A rich person watches how his servant clumsily drops and breaks a beautiful and rare crystal goblet while moving it around. If the rich person were, at the same moment that the accident occurs, to compare this one loss of one pleasure with the multitude of all pleasures that his fortunate position as a rich man offers him, then he would think nothing of the accident at all. However, if the rich man is to completely give himself over to this one feeling of pain, without making that calculation, then he would feel as though his entire happiness were lost.[18] If the rich man is unable to keep his composure and the necessary apathic distance from the situation i.e., if he is unable to keep in mind his general situation (that he is rich and fortunate), he will succumb and be completely affected by the pain of that particular present situation. Merritt will argue that this is an example of how affect works, and how this means a failure in reflecting-c.

> All there is, for the rich man, is an overwhelming feeling: he cannot, for the moment, so much as survey the situation, and consider what does and does not matter within it. To do that, he would have to have some handle on himself as the source of the point of view in question. But that

17) Ibid., 42-43.
18) Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Ak. VII, 254.

> is precisely what he has lost, inasmuch as he has succumbed to affect. This is what Kant means when he claims that affect lacks reflection, *it lacks reflection-c*.[19]

Up to this point, both reflection-n and reflection-c have been characterized and exposed as being two different kinds of reflection present in Kant's works according to Merritt. Reflection-c was described by Merritt as being pure apperception and has also been described as the type of reflection that is lacking when someone is affected by affects i.e., it is the kind of reflection that is lacking when someone loses the tacit handle of himself as the source of the point of view when he suffers something derived from feelings. By this account, one can directly see how, according to Merritt's interpretation, when someone is affected in this manner, namely, he is affected by some kind of pathological feeling, there is a lack of pure apperception (since pure apperception is basically reflection-c). The purpose of this essay is to show how this novel interpretation of pure apperception conflicts with an account of pure apperception as strictly based on Kant's *Transcendental Analytic* of *The Critique of Pure Reason*.

5. Pure (or original) apperception and empirical apperception

> For this reason it is customary in the systems of psychology to treat inner sense as the same as the faculty of apperception (which we carefully distinguish).[20]

Throughout the second section of the *Transcendental Analytic* in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant gives an account of a necessary synthesis that unifies the manifold of intuitions for the understanding. This synthesis is a combination of representations[21] that must precede all pure concepts of understanding, i.e., it is a combination that even precedes the category of

19) Merritt, *Kant on Reflection and Virtue*, 38. My emphasis.
20) Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), B153.
21) Cf. Ibid., B130-B131.

unity, since this category presupposes said combination. This synthetical element unifies each sensible intuition as given to the same subject, in other words, to a same conscience and not as presented unconnected to each other. This unifying element contains within itself the basis of the unity for different concepts within judgments, and therefore, it contains the possibility of the understanding.[22] Without this element, each representation would be impossible or - at least- nothing for the subject of the representations.[23] It can be discovered or thought about as being the “I think” that must be able to accompany all of my representations as representations that are given to me or the same someone. Kant names this synthetic principle pure or original apperception, which is to be distinguished from empirical apperception, because the former is the basis for the latter, since pure apperception even precedes the category of unity, while empirical apperception comes to be after the understanding affects the manifold already affected by the pure categories of sensibility i.e., time or space.[24] Pure apperception is a result of the spontaneity of the understanding,[25] which enables the unification of the representation within one consciousness.[26] Just as the supreme principle for the possibility of any intuition with respect to the sensibility is that the manifold must stand under the formal conditions of space and time, with respect to the understanding, the whole manifold of the intuition must stand under the supreme principle of pure apperception.[27] This means that without pure apperception the understanding cannot determine that which comes from sensibility. Without pure apperception, nothing can be thought or known through the categories, for they would lack

22) Cf. Ibid., B131.
23) Cf. Ibid., B132.
24) Cf. Ibid., B154.
25) Cf. Ibid., B135.
26) Cf. Ibid., B137.
27) Cf. Ibid., B136.

the common act of apperception which makes the manifold of intuitions as given to someone.[28]

> Understanding is, generally speaking, the faculty of cognitions. These consist in the determinate relation of given representations to an object. An object, however, is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united. Now, however, all unification of representations requires unity of consciousness in the synthesis of them. Consequently, the unity for consciousness is that which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object (…) The synthetic unity of consciousness is therefore an objective condition to all cognition, not merely something I myself need in order to cognize an object, but rather something under which every intuition must stand *in order to become an object for me*.[29]

Therefore, pure apperception is a necessary requirement not only to cognize an object, namely, to get to know something, but also so that any intuition becomes an object for me (*für mich*). Without pure apperception, objects *per se* stop being such and become something that one would be unable to differentiate from oneself or anything else.

Kant also refers to another type of apperception, which he names empirical apperception or inner sense, when explaining the two types of apperception.

> Now this original and transcendental condition [referring to necessary synthesis by which it is possible to think any object] is nothing other than the transcendental apperception. The consciousness of oneself in accordance with the determinations of our state in internal perception is merely empirical, forever variable; it can provide no standing or abiding self in this stream of inner appearances, and is customarily called inner sense or empirical apperception.[30]

Here one can discern how transcendental or original apperception differs from empirical apperception because empirical apperception is

28) Cf. Ibid., B137.
29) Ibid., B137-B138. My emphasis.
30) Ibid., A107. My parentheses.

characterized as the consciousness of oneself in accordance with the determinations of internal perception (i.e., time): “time is nothing other than the form of inner sense, i.e., of the intuition of our self and our inner state”.[31] Therefore, empirical apperception is consciousness of oneself in accordance with the determinations of time. Pure apperception synthesizes the manifold of sensible intuition of objects in general, including the manifold that is derived from our inner phenomena, while inner sense only contains the mere form of intuition of which conscience is aware.

> Apperception [pure] and its synthetic unity is so far from being the same as the inner sense that the former, rather, as the source of all combination, applies to all sensible intuition of objects in general, to the manifold of intuitions in general, under the name of the categories.[32]

With this in consideration, we can once again come back to the example of the rich man provided by Kant. According to Merritt, if the rich man is to succumb to the feeling of sadness provoked by the dropping of this precious goblet, he is affected by affection, which means a lack of reflection-c. If this is true, according to the aforementioned characterization of pure apperception present within the *Critique of Pure Reason*, we should be able to deduce that the rich man, for however long he is affected, will be in a state wherein he would be unable to recognize objects as objects, which would mean that he would be unable perceive his surroundings as things that are given to him, which would mean that he would be lost in some kind of perceptual and understanding limbo, unable to perceive or make sense of anything because without pure apperception no object would be able to be given to him (not even himself).

If one is to think about a personal similar situation in which one has been intensely affected by a specific occurrence one can easily see, just by means of experience and remembrance, that that is not what actually

31) Ibid., B50.
32) Ibid., B154. My parentheses

happens when one is momentarily affected by feelings. If one is actively trying to write about some difficult subject and is suddenly affected by a particular emotion (like the rich man), then it is reasonable to state that one would be unable, at least for a moment, to concentrate in the task at hand, for one would be distracted and incapable of focusing on the present task because of the emotion and its intensity. However, this does not mean that one would lose pure apperception, in other words, one would still be able to constitute objects as such. In fact, without pure apperception one could make the argument that it would seem impossible to imagine that someone would be able to feel anything at all, for feelings as representations of the inner sense that affect us also require pure apperception, since they are feelings given to a particular subject. Namely, the manifold of representations of what someone is feeling are unified and given to the same someone (a process, that as explained, requires pure apperception). Without pure apperception, the person would be unable to know or identify (as with a spatial object) that he is the one feeling.

This is why Merritt's characterization of reflection-c, albeit remarkably interesting, is somewhat problematic. Her proposal should be able to give a relatable account of experiences that have most likely been experienced by most rational subject, including us. However, this does not seem to be case, at least if one is to take into consideration Kant's characterization of pure apperception and Merritt's proposal of affect as a lack of reflection-c.

Merritt, when trying to give an account of her interpretation of pure apperception, uses a footnote present within Kant's book *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View,* wherein Kant explicitly characterizes reflection as being a pure apperception. Specifically, Kant explains how the inner sense sees his relation of its determination in time (as opposed to external senses, which occur in space) where there is no stability for observation since time is a flux. This is the context in which the footnote appears.

> If we consciously represent two acts: inner activity (spontaneity), by means of which a *concept* (a thought) becomes possible, or reflection; and receptiveness (receptivity), by means of which a perception (perception), i.e., empirical *intuition*, becomes possible, or *apprehension*; the consciousness to oneself (*apperception*) can be divided into that of reflection and that of apprehension. The first is a consciousness of understanding, *pure* apperception; the second a consciousness of inner sense, *empirical* apperception.[33]

This footnote shows that the conscience of oneself can be divided into reflection and apprehension if one simultaneously represents 1) the internal action (spontaneity) by which a concept is possible, and 2) the receptiveness (receptivity) by which empirical intuition is possible. Number 1) is consciousness of understanding, or pure apperception, while 2) is consciousness or inner sense or empirical apperception. So, the representation of the spontaneity or internal action by which a concept is possible is the consciousness of the understanding, which means pure apperception. As it was portraited above, this characterization of pure apperception is consistent with the one present in the first *Critique*, so the problem does not seem to lie in Kant's consistency throughout his different works. The problem occurs when relating one type of reflection (understood as pure apperception) with another type of reflection that is not pure apperception, and that can explain her interpretation of affection as a lack of reflection.

6. Problems with characterizations (b) and (c) as confounding pure and empirical apperception

The problem with Merritt's interpretation is that she identifies pure apperception with reflection-c by means of identifying characterization (b) with characterization (c). Reflection as the self-consciousness that is internal to the activity of thinking or that makes it possible (b) actually describes in

33) Kant, *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 134b.

some way what pure apperception is. As it was explained, pure apperception is in fact that which makes possible the mental activity of thinking, however, thinking as an activity also requires other constitutive elements. Furthermore, it is not clear if this characterization refers specifically to thinking as an internal activity with regards to empirical apperception, or a thinking as the process of applying pure concepts of the understanding to the manifold provided by the sensitivity (through the synthesis of pure apperception), because characterization (b) identifies reflection with the self-consciousness that is internal to the activity of thinking *or* that makes it possible. This *or* conjunction joins two notions that are quite different within Kant's epistemological model. On the one hand, reflection as the self-consciousness that is internal to the activity of thinking could mean empirical apperception without any further consideration, albeit it could also mean pure apperception with further stipulations. But, on the other hand, the self-consciousness that is internal and that makes thinking possible could also mean empirical apperception or pure apperception, for it is not clear what precisely does the word *thinking* in this context mean. It could mean applying the pure categories of the understanding to the synthesis of the manifold, or it could also mean thinking as in coming up with new concepts through a conscious effort. Therefore, this characterization is joining into one same notion reflection as the internal activity of thinking and that which allows that internal activity of thinking, and these are two vastly different elements. Performing an activity is not the same as that which allows the performance of said activity. Thus, although one could identify characterization (b) with pure apperception, one could also identify it with empirical apperception, depending on what does one mean by the self-consciousness internal to the activity of thinking. However, Merritt does argue that characterization (b) is basically the same as characterization (c).

> That leaves item (b), that reflection can refer to the self-consciousness that is internal to thinking. Reflection, in this sense, would be nothing other

> than pure apperception. The textual evidence for this claim comes from the *Anthropology* (7:134n). Kant speaks there of an 'inner activity' by which 'a concept (a thought) becomes possible' and calls that 'reflection' – which straightforwardly accords with sense (c).[34]

The problem with this association is that, just as with characterization (b), characterization (c) is vague –or its scope too ample– and does not allow one to distinguish between mental operations in an empirical manner, and mental operations in a transcendental manner. Namely, this conception of reflection does not specify *if some mental operations that allow general representations* refer to the empirical apperception as the consciousness of oneself, for example, active reflection on a particular task, such as writing an essay, or pure apperception, which allows the constitution of every kind of knowledge and object.

The way Merritt entwines characterization (c) and characterization (b) is through the ambiguity present in both. Since the two characterizations can refer to either empirical apperception or pure apperception, Merritt equivalates them both without a problem because they can both mean empirical and pure apperception. However, one should give a precise enough characterization as to allow the differentiation from both concepts. If a sufficiently precise characterization is not given, then it is easy to confound different concepts.

Merritt identifies empirical apperception with pure apperception through these vague characterizations that do not distinguish sufficiently enough what is their difference, and then she joins characterization (b) and (c) in the notion of reflection-c by describing said reflection as "the typically tacit handle that one has on oneself as the source of a point of view on things are or what is worth doing".[35] Nonetheless, this characterization of reflection-c does not describe the role that pure apperception has within Kant's

34) Merritt, *Kant on Reflection and Virtue*, 27.
35) Ibid., 18, 28.

epistemological model, albeit it does presuppose it. So, Merritt groups up empirical and pure apperception into the notion of reflection-c and then characterizes reflection-c, which includes the ambiguous characterizations (b) and (c), as something that has much more to do with empirical apperception than pure apperception.

One can see this confounding when analyzing her own analysis of Kant's rich man example. If the man succumbs to his affect, he loses *the typically tacit handle that one has of oneself as being the point of view on how things are*. That is a kind of affection that affects reflection, specifically reflection-c, as the affected rich man momentarily loses the handle of himself as being the point of view on how things are. This is reasonable, but because Merritt included within her definition of reflection-c pure apperception through the vagueness of characterizations (b) and (c), she must conclude that that example also shows how affect means a lack of pure apperception, which is false. Reflection in the sense of empirical apperception, i.e., the consciousness of oneself in accordance with the determinations of state in internal perception, does seem to be lacking if the rich man is unable to avoid affection. He will maybe and temporarily lose consciousness of himself as a fortunate man because he will be overwhelmed by a momentary emotion. But in this same scenario, the affected rich man does not lack pure apperception, that is to say, he does not lack that which is required to constitute himself and objects, for he will not suddenly stop perceiving objective reality. If one is to expand the example, one could add that the affected rich man can become overcome by such intense anger that he would pick up trinket from his table and throw it against the wall. This seems like a feasible and consistent continuation for this example, which more clearly illustrates how the rich man, or any affected subject, does not lose pure apperception when being affected in the way described by Merritt.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this essay was to show and explain how Melissa Merritt's interpretation of reflection in Kant's philosophy confounds pure apperception with empirical apperception when characterizing reflection-c. To try to achieve this, the work first exposed the different accounts of reflection as portrayed by Merritt, wherein she distinguishes constitutive reflection, or reflection-c, and normative reflection, or reflection-n. The former was characterized as "the typically tacit handle that one has on oneself as the source of a point of view on how things are or what is worth doing" which was comprised by three different accounts on reflection within Kant's work. Specifically, reflection-c includes (a) The activity of thinking quite generally; (b) The self-consciousness that is internal to the activity of thinking or that makes it possible; and (c) the mental operation by which concepts or general representations are possible. Merritt also affirms that reflection-c es basically pure apperception. Reflection-n is the normative requirement for reflecting correctly and requires reflection-c.

The work then exposes the concepts of affect and passion as different kinds of reflective failures, in which the former refers to a type of blindness with respect to reflection-c and the latter to a blindness with respect to reflection-n. To show this, an example provided by Kant is analyzed, in which a rich man is exposed to the breaking of his precious goblet. Merritt asserts that, if the man succumbs to any feeling and as a consequence fails to recognize that this particular situation has little meaning when compared to his overall wellbeing, then the rich man would be affected, being unable to reflect and would therefore be lacking reflection-c. Because Merritt homologates reflection-c with pure apperception, when the rich man succumbs to affect, one is logically obliged to deduce that he is also lacking pure apperception. This is where one can see the problem with Merritt's interpretation, for it is false to state that someone being affected lacks pure apperception. Merritt's analysis of Kant's rich man's example show how she misunderstood what pure apperception is and what is its role.

To show this mistake, the work exposes and explains pure apperception as described by Kant, especially within the first *Critique*. Pure apperception is that which unifies the sensible manifold so that the object that affects the sensibility is presented as given to one and the same subject. This is what Kant defines as the synthesis of the manifold, which is undertaken by the understanding through transcendental synthesis of the imagination. Pure apperception is necessary to constitute any object as an object, for it is what unifies the manifold so that it is given for one and the same someone. Empirical apperception, on the other hand, is consciousness of oneself in accordance with the determinations of internal representation within time.

By going back to the rich man example, the work shows how Merritt's interpretation of affect as being a lack of reflection-c can be so if one is to understand by reflection-c a constitutive requirement for empirical thought, i.e., empirical apperception. However, Merritt equates reflection-c with pure apperception which generates a problem because it is hard to see how the affected rich man in the example lacks the necessary unifying principle that allows objects to be presented as such. Nonetheless, it is possible to understand the affected rich man as lacking empirical apperception. To justify this, the essay shows how Merritt confounds pure and empirical apperception by uniting them through too vague characterizations. Characterization (b) and (c) are not precise enough to distinguish between pure and empirical apperception because both of them do not specify the kind of thinking taking place, which can include the possibility of thought and the thinking of thoughts (which are not the same). These are different elements within Kant's model and must be specifically distinguished if one is to avoid problematic characterizations as those presented by Merritt and her interpretation of Kant's example.

Merritt's book *Kant on Reflection and Virtue* mostly shows how reflection-n and moral virtue as a type of skill are connected in such manner

that one can avoid the caricature of the overly stringent man. Her emphasis on what has been exposed in this paper in her book is mostly superficial when compared to the characterization of reflection-n. However, I do believe it is important to make clear what pure apperception is if one is to better understand what Kant actually means when he speaks about reflection. This is a complicated endeavor, to say the least, for as Merritt mentions at the beginning of the book, Kant is not particularly clear when using the concept of reflection (*Überlegung, Reflexion*)[36] which leads to interpretational problems as the ones exposed in this work.

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36) Ibid., 15, 27.

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