

MACARIA AND THE PURITAN ETHICS OF DIRECT PARTICIPATION IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD

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Abstract. This paper explores a particular way in which the Baconian reformation of knowledge can be seen as providing conditions of possibility for the emergence of Puritan ethics in the mid-seventeenth-century England. *Macaria*, along with other works belonging to the Puritan literature, shares the concern for moral and cognitive reformation of the human being, as well as the desire to continue some of the unfinished projects and writings of Francis Bacon, developing a specific type of ethics, the Puritan ethics of direct participation in the transformation of the world. I will show that the Puritan ethics developed in *Macaria* is a response to the Baconian “quest for knowledge” and a continuation of Bacon’s providentialist views on the history of humankind.

Keywords: Macaria, Puritan ethics, reform of knowledge, restoration, direct participation, Francis Bacon

Introduction

A relatively novel trend in the study of early modern thought emphasizes the moral sides of the “scientific revolution,” seen as a major project to reform the human being.¹ According to this direction of interpretation, the new science, or – in actor’s categories – the “new philosophy” (in itself no more than a rewriting and updating of one or another of the ancient philosophies) is a major moral project and produces the “modern science” only as a secondary outcome. If several years ago, the moral-political projects of some authors like Francis Bacon, Robert Boyle, Samuel Hartlib, Jan Amos Comenius etc., were read within a framework imposed by the history of political thought, as ideological by-products of the scientific revolution, the interpretative school I am talking about goes in the opposite direction, seeing the 17th century thought as primarily moral (practical) in nature.² For example, the Baconian project of the Great Instauration has been read as a reconstruction of a *persona* for the new philosopher³ and only secondary as a “scientific” project. Subsequently, the 17th century Baconianism is firstly seen as

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working at a communitarian moral, political and “utopian” level and only subsidiary as a characteristic of a new experimental philosophy. Consequently, experimental science itself has been investigated from a moral point of view,⁴ or as having associated a pedagogical project of moral reformation of a new kind of philosopher and a new kind of community.⁵

In this context, of particular interest are a number of relatively little known writings, difficult to classify, but still sharing utopian and pedagogical traits and sometimes also a label: “culture of the mind” or “cultivation of the mind.”⁶ Various at first sight, these writings have in common the concern for moral and knowledge reform of the human being, as well as the desire to continue some of the unfinished projects and writings of Francis Bacon. *Macaria* joined the ranks of the large number of petitions and letters, both printed and in manuscript form, which were designed to apply the new Baconian method of producing knowledge and therefore, to direct the energies of the Long Parliament in order to create an ideal image of a society “methodically” organized and ruled by representative and responsible institutions. Placing the reform in the hands of the Parliament, the author of *Macaria* emphasizes the importance of the reform of knowledge which deserves political attention and has to be directed from a state level.⁷ Bacon also pointed to the importance of the reformation of knowledge viewed as a state policy. He even proposed James the Ist to be the master of a new organization able to produce knowledge.⁸ Although Bacon realized that knowledge can be achieved only by collective effort, he was also confident that only a few, the chosen ones, will ever be able to enter the territory of the interpretation of nature: “and amongst the generations of men, elected a small flock, in whom (by the participation of himself) he purposed to express the riches of his glory.”⁹ It means that if achievement of knowledge is to be pursued, then the proper, the chosen and the representative institutions have to be actively involved in this process.

Following this direction of interpretation, I argue in this paper that *Macaria*, an expression of the utopian movement and an important manifesto belonging to a type of Reformation literature produced at the outset of the Puritan Revolution, makes an interesting contribution to the project of moral reformation, developing important moral and political ideas. Also, along with other works belonging to the same Puritan literature, continued and popularized some of the Baconian ideals (such as the importance and the moral dimension of the advancement of learning). *Macaria*, along with other utopian tracts of the 17th century England, creates a specific type of ethics of direct participation in the transformation of the world. Adopted from the Protestant tradition of engagement in worldly affairs, the Puritan ethics of direct participation in the transformation of the world seeks to restore the qualities lost in the Fall by direct and active participation in this restorative (transformative) process. The humankind must work (by producing knowledge) to restore the attributes man possessed prior to sin, and must be actively involved in the restoration of the “virtuous man.” This work of restoration draws ethical

conduct and brings salvation in a religious manner. The Puritan ethics developed in *Macaria* and in other “utopian” writings of the mid seventeenth century is a response to the Baconian “quest for knowledge” and a continuation of Bacon’s providentialist account of history.¹⁰ *Macaria* also adopted the Baconian idea of instituting a new method for knowledge production, in the meantime, emphasizing the importance of the institutions involved in the reform of knowledge.

The Baconian reformation of knowledge

The Baconian reformation of knowledge sets as its first task to understand and to reshape the nature and the natural processes rather than to define an ethical approach.¹¹ Under these circumstances one can wonder how is it possible for a research program more concerned with the appropriate methods for producing knowledge to influence a moral transformation of both the individual and the society. The key element in Bacon’s reform of knowledge is that it intends to restore the human qualities lost as a result of the Fall.¹² The human intellect has to purify itself and, as a consequence, the process of knowledge will be able to revert a part of the qualities lost in the Fall. Bacon’s interpretation of Genesis represents an important start for understanding the nature and the aims of knowledge. Bacon’s opinion was that God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden to work (to contemplate, to exercise and to experiment).¹³ The focus is not only on the contemplative life but also on the active life, Bacon suggesting a way of living able to combine the contemplative and the active life.¹⁴ Contemplation cannot do the work of knowledge production. At many times, the activity of contemplating nature takes a different course: instead of focusing upon nature, the instinctive tendency of the human mind is to rush to conclusions.¹⁵ The fundamental errors and the causes of these errors may be remediated by instituting a new method for knowledge production. The new method is needed to keep the mind from rushing to conclusions. Therefore, contemplation must be corroborated with a new kind of activity which keeps the human mind steady: experimental natural philosophy. In order to restore the lost qualities, man has to reunite the two forms of life in the practice of science (the contemplative and the active life).¹⁶

Natural philosophy is an important part of knowledge. As a body of knowledge, natural philosophy should attempt to restore the condition held by man prior to the Fall by keeping the mind at work upon nature. This Baconian “quest for knowledge” entails a moral dimension: the end of knowledge is to relief the man’s estate and to restore man’s prelapsarian condition. This means that the Baconian “quest for knowledge” is a quest for restoration of the virtuous man and for bringing salvation, an idea later adopted by the Puritan ethics. The notion of virtue requires a specific definition. Virtue, in Bacon’s opinion, is a concept resulting as an interesting synthesis between the Renaissance (neo)platonism and the stoic theory of virtues. Virtue is a particular disposition of the soul with divine descent able to urge the human being in order to achieve knowledge and also able to release and perfect

the process of knowledge.¹⁷ The rational part of the soul was only partially affected by the Fall and is not submitted to the laws of nature. The rational part of the soul has only been impaired in the Fall, it has been affected because all workings of nature escaped man's control.¹⁸ However, although the mental capacity to know nature has not been lost, the knowledge of nature is only possible as a result of a set of practical activities doubled by the existence of the virtue of charity. It appears that the virtue behind the action of knowledge is charity, the greatest virtue of all.¹⁹ The final goal of knowledge (the restoration of the human qualities lost in the Fall) can only be possible if it is accompanied by the virtue of charity, because charity is the virtue that protects the mind from the dangers of the venom produced by errors and by the mistaken end of knowledge. Charity replaces wisdom as the "bound of perfection, because it comprehendeth and fasteneth all the virtues together."²⁰

So, even if the fallen mind wanders through errors and if "the human intellect left to its own course is not to be trusted," knowledge must be "discharged of that venom"²¹ and the mind must be purified. This part of the Baconian reformation project had influenced the Puritan ethics of direct participation in the transformation of the world described in *Macaria*. Man has to restore the qualities lost in the Fall and he can achieve this goal only by participating in the process of the transformation (reformation in the sense of restoration) of his soul doubled by the participation in the process of the transformation of the world he is living in. Even if the lost qualities cannot be restored, man can become a moral person by simply understanding his duty of trying to bring relief to his own estate. Here we can also see a Stoic influence because according to Stoic philosophy, the only thing in man's power is the moral character, the only thing that brings the happiness of a virtuous life.²² However, this transformation is not contributing mainly to the moral perfection of the individual mind, but rather to the moral perfection of the society. The natural philosopher should aim to share his discoveries and help others in their quest for new ones.²³

The spirit of direct participation points out to the active aspect of the transformation process, in the sense that all "industrious" men have to take part in this transformation (the acquisition of knowledge and the restoration of the lost qualities) following a specific method or procedure. "The whole way, from the very first perception of the senses must be laid out upon a sure plan."²⁴ The most important consequence of this kind of attitude is a spirit of direct participation in the historical moment, the attitude of responsibility for making it happen.

In this context, *Macaria* develops some important religious, moral, scientific, economic and philosophical ideas, such as a religion based on rational arguments, a specific kind of ethics based on direct participation in the process of transforming the world, a system of government ruled by a representative elite, a scientific pattern inspired by the Baconian Solomon's House and an economic system founded on agriculture and social distribution. The idea that Parliament was the embodiment of the nation and the agent of reformation gave it authority to produce and initiate

fundamental changes. *Macaria* was written to present to the Parliament a basis for a “methodical” and rationalized model of a good society.

The Puritan ethics of direct participation in the transformation of the world

First of all, it is important to clarify that in identifying Puritanism I am following Christopher Hill’s definition. For Hill, the Puritans are “all those radicals protestants who wanted to reform the church (before 1640 at least) but did not wish to separate from it.”²⁵ The Puritan ethics emphasizes the importance of the individual religious experience through purification of self and society. Adopted from the Calvinist tradition of salvation, in the context of millenarian expectations, Puritanism considers ethical conduct to be a consequence of the interpretation and participation in the providential history. Calvin never tired in pointing out that Christians need to be actively engaged in worldly affairs so that society could be restored and transformed. Puritans desired to be moral and active in the worldly calling. This idea of the sanctity of the work (seen as constitutive of the active life) and its transformative effects (seen as the possibility of restoring the qualities lost in the Fall) has echoes in the Puritan ethics of the direct participation. According to the Puritan doctrine, God is in every human being and every human being has a particular role in the New Kingdom of God, as both means and ends of God’s plan.²⁶ Those who are responsible for accomplishing God’s will (meaning every true believer) are also the beneficiaries of God’s will. And they are also empowered with the capacity of shaping the rules which are to be followed in order to make the reformation and to create the effects of the providential history,²⁷ meaning that they have to impose a rigorous method which is to be followed by anyone willing to reform himself and to participate in the transformation process. It means that ethical responsibility is conferred to all those involved in the process of transforming the world and, more than this, all those involved have to obey the rules and to follow the norms. This kind of obedience, a willingness to adopt measures able to pursue divine objectives, created a certain type of ethics which started to spread in the mid seventeenth-century.²⁸

The Puritan ethics considers salvation as possible only if people directly participate to the accomplishment of God’s will (pointing to the Calvinist idea of active engagement and to the Baconian condition of active life). The process of reformation involves both the reformation of the soul and the reformation of society. Puritans have to purify their souls and their society, to restore the qualities lost with the Fall by glorifying God in the world using a specific method. Supporters of predestination, Puritans consider that learning and erudition can be signs of God’s election. Robert Merton argued that “by cultivating the values of diligence and utility, the notion of calling and the perception of scientific research as a way of worshipping the Creator, Puritanism was responsible for the flowering of the ‘new science’ in the 17th century.”²⁹ Merton used the term “the new science” to refer to natural philosophy and considers that Puritanism influenced men like Robert Boyle,

John Wilkins, Isaac Newton, people who saw the discovery of divine providence and the attributes of God as an important part of their natural philosophical endeavors.³⁰ Even if Merton's point of view is not so nuanced in identifying Puritanism with the whole of English Protestantism,³¹ a connection between Puritanism and Baconian natural philosophy seems to be conveyed. The connection is identified in the Puritan active engagement in the process of transforming the world by purifying the soul and the society versus the Baconian cultivation of the mind by curing it from errors. The Puritan ethics sees the transformation as a process of purification from evil of the soul and of the society, while Bacon sees the cultivation of the mind as a process of purging the mind from errors. Both Puritan Ethics and Bacon's natural philosophy propose a rigorous method in order to achieve this goal.

This new ethics was seen as an instrument of reformation able to re-direct, using a certain kind of language, the energies of the nation and of those responsible with the governance. The rhetoric of the texts addressed to the Parliament, in sermons and other kind of discourses, had changed as well. A large majority of such texts were considering the Parliament as an agent for the future reformation and transformation of the society. It seemed that in this the new capacity, the Parliament made itself open to external influences and, for individuals and groups of individuals, the new situation offered a real opportunity to influence changes in policy, doctrine and law. Discourses and words gained an unprecedented power because it was expected for them to have a direct impact and to influence the Parliament's position toward certain issues in English society. This was the spirit of Puritan meliorism, a spirit which created the ethics of direct participation in the transformation of the world.

But, because "one cannot simply tell Parliament what to do, but had to provide a model, a kind of moving picture,"³² a new type of literature emerged in the mid-seventeenth-century England. The utopian tract seemed to be the best way to express the new kind of ethics. But the utopian texts written during the mid-seventeenth century look more like well developed programs of social and political action than fictional stories. These utopias emphasize the material aspect of the future prosperity for English people, proposing certain measures which are to be taken in order to provide the "commonwealth" and considering labor and industry as the solution for the social, political and moral issues facing the English society. A new fictional form emerged under these circumstances, "the utopia of industry."³³ *Macaria* belongs to this type of literature.

A Description of the Famous Kingdome of Macaria and the Puritan ethics of direct participation in the transformation of the world

Macaria is a very short text, merely 15 pages in-quarto. It was for a long time considered to be a work by Samuel Hartlib, on the basis of its clear connection with Hartlib's circle and because Hartlib was the one who brought it out and

addressed the Parliament. Hartlib's circle was a complex network of intellectuals, sending letters and developing laborious projects of intellectual, religious, political and economic reformation. It was also the place of origin for a number of interesting and novel ideas. Hartlib's circle was not a society *per se*, but an international brotherhood that involved members from all over Europe. Its aim was mainly devoted to two major projects: ecclesiastical peace and the advancement of learning. The ecclesiastical peace was an ideal regarding the reconciliation of the Protestant churches, especially the Lutheran and the Calvinist. The Baconian "advancement of learning" was mainly read and interpreted as having to do with organizing, administering and transmitting knowledge.³⁴ The Long Parliament convened in October 1641 (Charles I had to re-convene the Parliament in the context of the Irish Rebellion after an episode when his party was defeated). There was general hope that the Parliament was willing to reform things in England. Samuel Hartlib, by directly addressing *Macaria* to the Parliament, was aiming, in fact, to bring into attention other reform projects regarding politics and religion, projects developed within a group of numerous intellectuals. Among other names associated with that group, John Dury, Jan Amos Comenius can be recalled, but also inventors like Gabriel Plattes.³⁵

Another important fact that should not be overlooked is that *Macaria* was published in the context of Jan Amos Comenius' visit to England. Hartlib's plans were to promote in the Parliament a project for a true Baconian College and *Macaria* seemed to be the perfect manner to draw attention to the project. Comenius, a famous religious reformer and a Baconian, seemed to have been another key element in Hartlib's project.

In fact, as Charles Webster has demonstrated, *Macaria* was not written by Hartlib but by another member of Hartlib's circle, Gabriel Plattes.³⁶ Webster has drawn attention to the fact that while Hartlib never claimed to have written the text, Plattes actually claimed authorship in a later essay, published 10 months before his death, and entitled *A Caveat for Alchymists*, an essay signed G. P. and dated Westminster 10 March 1643/4. Its publication was delayed until 1655 when it was included in Hartlib's *Chymical, Medicinal and Chyrurgical addresses*.³⁷ Three hundred years later, Webster successfully argued that the work's author was Gabriel Plattes.³⁸ Very little is known about Gabriel Plattes; he was probably born at the beginning of the century. All his works seem to have husbandry and mining as main topics. In 1638 his first work was published and in 1639 he published *A Discoverie of Infinite Treasure, hidden since the World's Beginning, Whereunto all men, of what degree soever, are friendly invited to be sharers with the Discoverer*. This work was very popular, frequently read and quoted. In this book, Plattes presents schemes of intensive husbandry, but says little which can be considered a revolution in husbandry. The book also deals with alchemical experiments, transmutation experiments and new inventions which should help the economic advance of the country. Plattes' ideal is simple: making

England the most beautiful country on earth, meaning that England could be made the richest, the most peaceful and the happiest country in the world.

Another book regarding mining and metallurgy was also published in 1639, *A Discovery of Subterranean Treasure, viz., of all manner of mines and minerals ... and also the art of melting, refining, and assaying of them, which contains more practical advice*. In it, Plattes promised that, if his advices were to be followed, people might find a “cure” for poverty and unemployment. The important thing about Plattes is that, in all his works, besides giving practical advice for mining and alchemy, he developed an interesting and elaborate concept of the public good based on social distribution. Plattes seems to be one of the first authors to speak about a project of public works, such as public roads, or bridges accomplished through individual subscription. From an economic point of view, his ideas were visionary. Considering agriculture as the firm basis for a strong and well developed economy, he advocated a system of progressive taxation for those who failed to improve their lands. He also considered that emphasizing agriculture is the most suitable manner to provide employment and to fulfill the wider task of enriching the nation. All his work seems to demonstrate that salvation can be reached by rational economic conduct.³⁹ The ethics of salvation was corroborated with a specific type of ethics of labor, an ethics of direct participation in the transformation of the world, in the process of reformation. Good measures of husbandry of the land were also capable to provide rules and principles for the husbandry of the soul,⁴⁰ meaning, in Baconian words, that a rigorous method is able to assure reformation (restoration) for the individual as well as for the society. Here is one example:

That will be a good change, when as well superiors as inferiors shall be more happy: Well, I am imparadised in my minde, in thinking that England may be made happy, with such expedition and facility.⁴¹

Also:

I have read over Sr. *Thomas Mores Utopia*, and my Lord *Bacons New Atlantis*, which hee called so in imitation of *Plato's* old one, but none of them giveth me satisfaction, how the Kingdome of England may be happy, so much as this discourse, which is briefe and pithy, and easie to be effected, if all men be willing.⁴²

Plattes was equally aware of the fact that if reformation was to be successful, people should be the means and the ends of this project, subjects and also objects of the reformation. The ideal of enriching nation could only be achieved if people became themselves involved and followed the economic principles. He proposed peace as an alternative to warfare, and argued in favor of colonialism using economic arguments. When he talked about regular planting and better manure provisions, he planned to solve a social problem. So, his first task was to

convince his audience to become aware of the importance of this goal, to become actively involved in the social distribution plan and to put his recommendations into practice. In describing the way a good society should work, Plattes used the metaphor of the hive. The image of industrious bees working together, an image also used by Bacon in the *Advancement of Learning*, is descriptive of people working together for the public good (according to the virtue of charity), without having a guardian (the king) to supervise them. People should not work only for the sake of their private interests, but they should work, like the bees, for the community's sake, for the public good. This is the "infinite treasure" discovered by Plattes, humanity itself, which is able to work and live happily together, enriching itself through rationalized cooperative behavior.⁴³ The Calvinistic ethics of frugality and the shoring up of capital is also advocated by Plattes in *Macaria* ("a man may be rich that is industrious"). This is the new kind of ethics, the Puritan ethics of direct participation in the transformation of the world by rationalized labor and perpetual endeavor in order to achieve prosperity of the soul and of the nation as well. This is the new form of good promised by this ethics (the promise of prosperity for all the laborer people) and charity and rational husbandry (of the soul and of the land) are the virtues required.

Macaria does not have a 'story' properly speaking. It is written as a dialogue between a "Schollar" and a "Traveler," a philosophical dialogue reminding one of Campanella's *Civitas Solis* (1605). The title is inspired by the former utopias of More, *De optimo republicae statu deque nova insula Utopia* (1518), Andreae, *Respublicae Christianopolitanae Descriptio* (Strasbourg 1619), George Abott, *A brief description of the whole worlde*, (London 1599) etc. In Greek, μαχαρία, perhaps points to the Blessed Isles of Greek myth. More also talks about *macarians*, a people who, in spite of the *achorians*, lives near the *utopians* and lives in peace and happiness due to their wise form of governance.⁴⁴

Unlike Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Plattes' *Macaria* depicts a kind of societal model that seems to be within the reach of the reformers. Plattes' dialogue speaks about an ideal organization which seems not only possible, but also relatively easy to achieve. Plattes uses deliberately a concise language, emphasizing the seriousness and practicality of his purpose. What could very well have been developed in hundreds of pages is argued briefly, as in formulating a theorem: there can be a kingdom where people can live in peace, prosperity, health and happiness. In other words, it is possible for a kingdom of that kind to exist. Plattes proposes a model of moderate reforms, easy to accomplish. In Plattes' commonwealth there are no fundamental changes, but a better administration of the government. Plattes emphasizes the importance of economic specialization in governance, and of a new way of disseminating knowledge. The author calls for five councils to improve the administration of government: one for husbandry, one for fishing, one for internal trade, one for foreign trade, and one for new colonies.⁴⁵ He emphasized the development of agriculture and of trade, because agriculture was the basis for food

production and for providing employment. In order to stimulate agricultural production, a system of progressive taxation is advocated for those who failed in improving their lands.⁴⁶ The king is restricted just like any citizen to derive his normal income from the improvement of his legitimate estates. Plattes imagines a pattern of systematic happiness,⁴⁷ pattern which can guarantee prosperity for all sections of the community.

Apart from his economic solutions, Plattes is also an advocate of universal peace. Plattes is, in fact, one of the first authors who argued for the uselessness of war and the importance of rational husbandry and of a social distribution model as methods for combating poverty and encouraging welfare.

Schollar. But you spoke of peace to be permanent in that Kingdome, how can that be?

Traveler. Very easily; for they have a law, that if any Prince shall attempt any invasion, his kingdome shall be lawfull prize: and the Inhabitants of this happy Countrey are so numerous, strong, and rich, that they have destroyed some without any considerable resistance; and the rest take warning.⁴⁸

More also argued in *Utopia* that, from an economic point of view, war is not a good instrument and that maintaining an active army wastes money.⁴⁹ In fact, he is one of the first authors claiming that war is not a proper instrument for enriching a country. War can only waste money and other resources, it cannot produce wealth. Even if you win the war and conquer foreign territories, they would be very hard to administer and control. If a country wants to be rich, their governors should concentrate on agriculture and trade as the strong basis for a prosperous economy.

Sch. That is excellent: I cannot conceive, but that if a Kingdome may be improved to maintaine twice as many people as it did before, it is as good as the conquest of another Kingdome, as great, if not better.

Trav. Nay, it is certainly better, for when the Townes are thin, and farre distant, and the people scarce and poore, the King cannot raise men and money upon any sudden occasion, without great difficulty.⁵⁰

Plattes imagined a parliamentary regime in *Macaria* because he wanted to highlight the idea that the nation should be governed by those who are legitimate, responsible and representative for the whole nation, and not by an absolute monarch. Except for matters of warfare, where the king still has an important role to play, the king's responsibilities are reduced. The Great Council has, in fact, control over government in *Macaria* and over the five sub-councils which are in charge with the prosperity of the kingdom.⁵¹ He also proposed permanent parliamentary committees, in what is probably the first project of this kind. Being an intellectual advocating of the ideas of the Puritan Revolution, Plattes saw in

Parliament the embodiment of the nation; not only the legitimate body representing the nation, but the substitute for the nation.

Considering knowledge as one of the most important conditions for prosperity and wealth, Plattes imagined a “College of Experience,”⁵² a research institution, reminiscent of Solomon’s House in *New Atlantis* and the experimental laboratories in *Chritianopolis*. Advocating the two major projects of the Hartlib circle, ecclesiastical peace and the advancement of learning, Plattes proposed a college whose major tasks were to gather materials for knowledge and to adopt practical solutions. Thus, the College of Experience’s first task is to oversee the dissemination of learning and knowledge in the kingdom. The advancement of learning and the development of science have to be parts of an elaborate policy. Science and technology are considered to be so important for the progress that the government has the duty to elaborate political strategies for their betterment. One of the outstanding aspects of *Macaria* is the author’s determination to put responsibility in the hands of the state.⁵³ Bacon also advocated the project of *Instauratio Magna* as state policy, the King being advised to have Solomon, the wise king of the Jews, as a model.⁵⁴ The fact that the ‘merchants of light’ do not have to pay any tax “upon such a commodities” [as transmitting knowledge], and “the book of rates” does not contain any “imposition,”⁵⁵ can also point to the importance of the reformation of knowledge as political policy.

“The College” also supervises the training of parsons who are medical doctors, too, looking after the sanity of both body and spirit, *cura animarum et cura corporum*.⁵⁶ This is a very original interpretation of the Baconian project of Solomon’s House. The main function of Solomon’s House is to relate the natural and the divine knowledge, and this function is rediscovered inside the “College of Experience.” The members of the “College of Experience” make experiments with new medicines and new treatments and apply them to the inhabitants of *Macaria*, but also cure their souls.⁵⁷ Plattes has drawn upon more than one tradition here. There are some elements which can be related to the Paracelsian tradition of “the cure of body and soul.” The ideal person both being a physician and a philosopher must know in detail the patient’s disposition of body and soul in order to select a proper cure.

Sch. But you spoke of health, how can that be procured by a better way than we have here in England?

Trav. Yes very easily; for they have an house, or College of experience, where they deliver out yeerly such medicines as they find out by experience; and all such as shall be able to demonstrate any experiment for the health or wealth of men, are honourably rewarded at the publike charge, by which their skill in Husbandry, Physick, and Surgery, is most excellent.

Sch. But this is against Physicians.

Trav. In *Macaria* the Parson of every Parish is a good Physician, and doth execute both functions, to wit, *cura animarum*, & *cura corporum*; and they think it as absurd for a Divine to be without the skill of Physick, as it is to put new wine into old bottles; and the Physicians being true Naturalists, may as well become good Divines, as the Divines doe become good Physicians.

Sch. But you spoke of great facilitie that these men have in their functions, how can that be?

Trav. Very easily: for the Divines, by reason that the Societie of Experimenters is liable to an action, if they shall deliver out any false receipt, are not troubled to trie conclusions, or experiments, but onely to consider of the deversitie of natures, complexions and constitutions, which they are to know, for the cure of soules, as well as for bodies.⁵⁸

The citizens of *Macaria* apply the new science and technology for the improvement of the wealth of the nation, under the supervision of the College. Plattes, like Bacon, imagined an establishment with a double function: first, as an institution of the state and second, as an institution of experimental investigation. "The College of Experience was probably conceived as a counterpart to the Universal College which Comenius hoped to establish according to a plan outlined in *Via Lucis*, a work composed shortly after his arrival in England in the autumn of 1641. Whereas Plattes' college was basically to be concerned with science, technology, medicine, agriculture, and economic affairs, the Universal College of Comenius was designed to superintend the work of ecclesiastical negotiation, universal peace, the reform of education and universal knowledge, the purification of language, and the compilation of a pansophic system of knowledge."⁵⁹

The happiness of *Macaria* depends on four conditions.⁶⁰ The first condition is the meliorism provided by Providential history and the possibility of imagining an articulated political organization ruled by a representative and educated elite. The second is the Baconian legacy of a college assembling and disseminating the organized knowledge,⁶¹ namely the "College of Experience." Another is the Comenian pansophic system of universal knowledge and the doctrine of ecclesiastical peace, a doctrine of salvation and religious-political solidarity and prosperity. The pedagogical aspect of knowledge in *Macaria* involves a new type of learning and a new type of science which can connect natural philosophy and divine revelation. The fourth is the Puritan idea of the great sense of immediacy, creating a certain type of ethics and meaning that the reformation is in everyone so, it is up to everyone to make it happen. To these four conditions it could be added another one, the Paracelsian tradition of the cure of body and soul both for individual and society. All these traditions together influenced Plattes' reformation which was designed in order to simultaneously work at individual and collective, interior and exterior, physical and spiritual level.

Conclusion

While the English tried to redefine themselves as a nation, during the mid-seventeenth-century and in the context of the Civil War, they imagined an ideal type of society, governance and organization, corroborated with a certain kind of ethics. That was the Puritan ethics of direct participation, through active engagement and labor, to the process of reformation and restoration, in the process of transformation of the world. As the Kingdom of God is within you, so the reformation that belongs to it is an inward Reformation, meaning that the individual has to glorify God in the world through purification of the soul and of the society in order to reach salvation. When the soul is reformed, everything is reformed. So, the subject of reformation is also the object of reformation, the means are also the ends of reformation. They have an influence in shaping the ends toward which the effects of providential opportunity might be directed and they have to set out proper method for reformation. But the outstanding aspect of *Macaria* is the author's determination to argue that moral conduct can arise from divine inspiration as well as resulting from sustained human effort. Plattes insisted on putting responsibility both in the hands of ordinary people and in the hands of the state. The Puritan ethics of salvation through direct participation in the transformation of the world works only as a perfect combination between methods of husbandry of the soul and husbandry of the land.

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