

A portrait of Francis Bacon, a 17th-century English philosopher, statesman, and writer. He is depicted from the waist up, wearing a dark, high-collared garment with a large, ornate white ruff. He has a dark beard and mustache, and is wearing a black hat. He is holding a small white card or piece of paper in his right hand. The background is a dark, draped curtain.

Second Edition

*New* Atlantis  
and The Great  
Instauration  
Francis Bacon

Jerry Weinberger  
Editor

WILEY Blackwell

# New Atlantis and The Great Instauration

## Francis Bacon

Jerry Weinberger, Editor

"If the point of philosophy is to change the world, Sir Francis Bacon may be the most successful philosopher ever – but his work is not yet done. Jerry Weinberger fixes the reader's mind on Bacon's hopes for the modern age – and his fears. This edition repays close reading."

Peter Thiel, entrepreneur and author of *Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future*

"An indispensable collection for teaching Bacon's plans for progress, now including texts epistemological and religious as well as scientific and political. Weinberger, a leading scholar, adds valuable introductions and summaries."

Robert Faulkner, Boston College, author of *Francis Bacon and the Project of Progress*

"This new and revised edition makes even better what has become an essential text for undergraduate courses in political philosophy and theory. Here we have in brief compass, and with crystal clear introductory commentary, the key texts through which Bacon laid the original normative foundation for our modern technological society."

Thomas L. Pangle, Joe R. Long Endowed Chair in Democratic Studies, University of Texas at Austin

This richly annotated second edition of the now classic pairing of Bacon's *New Atlantis* and *The Great Instauration* adds his "Idols of the Mind," "Of Unity in Religion," and "Of The True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates." Along with summaries and questions for the reader, expanded bibliography, and principal dates, the new introduction and interpretive essay situate Bacon's technological project in the wider context of his political and moral thought and show Bacon's enduring relevance for modern-day readers.

A new and generous internal layout makes this second edition classroom-friendly, with easy-to-navigate pedagogical features.

Jerry Weinberger is University Distinguished Professor of Political Science (Emeritus) at Michigan State University. Among his books are *Science, Faith, and Politics: Francis Bacon and the Utopian Roots of the Modern Age* (1985), *Francis Bacon: The History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh* (1996), and *Benjamin Franklin Unmasked: On the Unity of His Moral, Religious, and Political Thought* (2005). He is an adjunct Fellow of the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C. and a regular contributor to *City Journal*, the nation's premier urban-policy magazine.

[www.wiley.com/go/history](http://www.wiley.com/go/history)

**WILEY** Blackwell



Also available  
as an e-book

ISBN 978-1-119-09798-3



9 781119 097983

Editor  
Weinberger



New Atlantis and The Great Instauration

WILEY  
Blackwell

FRANCIS BACON

*New Atlantis  
and  
The Great  
Instauration*

Second Edition

Edited by

Jerry Weinberger

WILEY Blackwell

This second edition first published 2017

© 2017 John Wiley & Sons, Inc

Edition History: Harlan Davidson, Inc. (1e, 1980; revised edition, 1989)

*Registered Office*

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

*Editorial Offices*

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at [www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell](http://www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell).

The right of Jerry Weinberger to be identified as the author of the editorial material in this work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

**Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty:** While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services and neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising herefrom. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Bacon, Francis, 1561-1626, author. | Weinberger, Jerry, 1944- editor.

    | Bacon, Francis, 1561-1626. New Atlantis. | Bacon, Francis, 1561-1626.

    Instauratio magna. English.

Title: New Atlantis ; and, The great instauration / edited by Jerry Weinberger.

Description: Second Edition. | Hoboken : Wiley, 2016. | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015049558 | ISBN 9781119097983 (cloth) |

    ISBN 9781119098027 (pbk.)

Subjects: LCSH: Philosophy—Early works to 1800. | Philosophy of nature—Early works to 1800. | Science—Philosophy—Early works to 1800. | Utopias—Early works to 1800.

Classification: LCC B1155 2016 | DDC 100—dc23 LC record available at <http://lccn.loc.gov/2015049558>

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Cover image: Portrait of Francis Bacon by Paul van Somer, Di Agostini Picture Library/Getty Images

Set in 10/12 pt SabonLTStd-Roman by Thomson Digital, Noida, India

Printed and bound in Malaysia by Vivar Printing Sdn Bhd

1 2017

*New Atlantis  
and  
The Great  
Instauration*

## *Crofts Classics Series*

Francis Bacon: **New Atlantis and the Great Instauration**, Second Edition,  
edited by Jerry Weinberger

**The Constitution of the United States and Related Documents**, edited by  
Martin Shapiro

Pierre Corneille: **Le Cid**, edited by John Lapp

Hamilton, Madison, Jay: **Selections from The Federalists: A Commentary on  
the Constitution of the United States**, edited by Henry Steele Commager

Thomas Jefferson: **Selected Writings**, edited by Harvey C. Mansfield

John Locke: **Second Treatise of Government**, edited by Richard H. Cox

Niccolò Machiavelli: **The Prince**, edited by T. G. Bergin

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: **The Communist Manifesto: With Selections  
from the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte and Capital by Karl  
Marx**, edited by Samuel H. Beer

John Stuart Mill: **On Liberty**, edited by Alburey Castell

John Milton: **Areopagitica and Of Education: With Autobiographical  
Passages from Other Prose Works**, edited by George H. Sabine

John Milton: **Samson Agonistes and Shorter Poems**, edited by A. E. Barker

Thomas More: **Utopia**, edited by H.V.S. Ogden

Blaise Pascal: **Selections from The Thoughts**, translated by Arthur H. Beattie

Plato: **The Republic**, translated by Raymond Larson with an Introduction by  
Eva T. H. Brann

Plato: **The Symposium and The Phaedo**, translated by Raymond Larson

George Bernard Shaw: **Major Barbara**, edited by Elizabeth T. Forter

Adam Smith: **Selections from The Wealth of Nations**, edited by George J.  
Stigler

Sophocles: **Oedipus the King and Antigone**, translated by Peter D. Arnott

August Strindberg and Henrik Ibsen: **Ghost Sonata and When We Dead  
Awaken: A Dramatic Epilogue in Three Acts**, edited by Thaddeus L. Torp

Voltaire: **Candide or Optimism**, edited by Norman L. Torrey



## Preface: Why a Second Edition?

The Crofts Classics edition of Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis and The Great Instauration* has been in classroom use since the late 1970s, having been revised to correct typography in 1980. Since those early years much scholarship, including some of my own, has been published on Bacon in general and on these two texts. I therefore thought a significantly revised second edition was in order, especially since some of my earlier conclusions about these works of Bacon had changed, even if only slightly.

Given the opportunity to bring a new edition into print with Wiley, I thought it best to increase the amount of material in order to provide student-readers wider context in which to consider Bacon's project as a whole and *New Atlantis* in particular. To this end I decided first to provide the aphorisms on the Idols of the Mind from *The Great Instauration: Novum organum Book One*. The purpose of this addition is to make clear how much Bacon thought the problems of human reason resulted from reason's inherent weaknesses, not just the weight of obscure traditions. In order to broaden the political context for *New Atlantis* I have included two of Bacon's *Essays*: "Of Unity in Religion" and "Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates." These two essays, along with reference in the interpretive essay to Bacon's 1622 *The History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh*, link Bacon's utopian fable to some of his most concrete considerations of practical political life, especially as regards religion and war. I decided as well to place the interpretive essay on *New Atlantis* and Bacon's essays at the end of the volume, as it will be more useful to students *after* they have read Bacon's texts.





# *Acknowledgments*

For his warm and helpful support for this second edition I would like to thank Andrew J. Davidson, Senior Editor (History, Social Sciences & Humanities) at John Wiley & Sons, Inc. The project could not have gone forward without the indispensable help of Project Editor Julia Kirk and Editorial Assistant Maddie Koufogazos. Project Manager Ian Critchley did a masterful job overseeing the copy editing, typesetting, and proofreading stages of production. My wife Diane, as usual whenever I'm absorbed in a book project, put up with much neglect while I worked on this new edition. Her cheerfulness during my distraction never fails to amaze.



## Note on the Texts

The text of the *New Atlantis* is reprinted from the widely respected, once standard edition of Bacon's works by Spedding, Ellis, and Heath. The original spelling and punctuation have everywhere been retained. The *New Atlantis* was first published by Rawley in 1627, after Bacon's death, and no original manuscript of the work remains. All the editions of the *New Atlantis* since 1627 have been reprints of Rawley's first edition, and fortunately there are no serious variations in the editions. The 1627 edition has "Solamona" and "Salomon's House," while the 1658 and 1670 editions, among others, have "Salomona" and "Solomon's House." Spedding follows the 1627 edition and is supported in this choice by the Latin translation. Although Spedding is probably correct, the variation makes no difference at all in the meaning of the text. The 1627 and 1670 editions have "It so fell out, that there was in one of the boats, one of our wise men of the society of Salomon's House . . ." while the 1658 edition, which Spedding follows, has "It so fell out, that there was in one of the boats one of the wise men of the society of Solomon's House . . ." (see p. 74, below). In this instance, Spedding is perhaps wrong, since the 1627 and 1670 texts are supported by the Latin translation. But Spedding's text is not emended in this volume, because, again, the variation makes no difference at all in the meaning of the text. The 1627 edition and Spedding have "came aboard" (see p. 64, below), while the 1658 edition has "made aboard"; and the 1627 edition has "that we knew he spake it . . ." (see p. 77, below), while the 1658 edition and Spedding have "that we knew that he spake it. . . ." These minor variations require no emendation. No critical problems in the text have so far been discovered that would warrant rejecting Spedding's text as the standard edition of the *New Atlantis*. The *Great Instauration* was published originally in Latin in 1620 as *Instauratio magna*. The translation used in this volume for the preliminaries and the aphorisms of *Novum*

*organum* on the Idols of the Mind is Spedding's widely reprinted translation. Although Spedding's translation was long considered to be the standard, it is sometimes loose, and two important corrections have been noted (see pp. 21, 32, below). Volume XI of the *Oxford Francis Bacon*, edited by the late Graham Rees, will doubtless become the standard and, it is to be hoped, widely reprinted translation and edition. I have referred to it as necessary for this classroom edition.

# *Principal Dates in the Life of Sir Francis Bacon*

1561	Born in London, son of Lord Keeper of the Seal.
1573-1575	Studied at Cambridge.
1576	Enrolled at Gray's Inn, where he studied for less than one year.
1582	Became a barrister.
1584	Sat in the Commons. Bacon was an influential member of the House of Commons for the next thirty-six years.
1597	<i>Essays</i> .
1603	Knighted by James I.
1605	<i>Advancement of Learning</i> .
1612	<i>Essays</i> , enlarged.
1613	Appointed Attorney General.
1618	Made Lord Chancellor; created Baron Verulam.
1620	<i>The Great Instauration: Novum organum</i> .
1621	Created Viscount St. Albans; impeached for accepting bribes.
1622	<i>The History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh</i> .
1624	Most likely date by which Bacon had written <i>New Atlantis</i> .
1625	<i>Essays</i> , greatly enlarged.
1626	Died April 9.
1627	<i>New Atlantis</i> published.





# *Introduction to the Second Edition*

Along with Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Descartes, Francis Bacon was one of the founders of modern thought. These thinkers coupled realistic politics with a new science of nature in order to transform the age-old view of humanity's place in the world. They contended that once the efforts of the human intellect were directed from traditional concerns to new ones—from contemplation to action, from the account of what people ought to do to what they actually do, and from metaphysics to the scientific method for discovering natural causes—the harsh inconveniences of nature and political life would be relieved and overcome. No longer to be revered or endured, the realms of nature and society would become the objects of human control.

Bacon called his version of this project the “Great Instauration,” an ambiguous term that means at once great restoration and great founding. But he left no doubt that he was engaged in something altogether new: His restoration—his reform of the ways and means of human reason—would in fact be a founding because its aim would be “to lay the foundation, not of any sect or doctrine, but of human utility and power,” in order to “command nature in action.”<sup>1</sup> Bacon did not, however, think his instauration would be quick or easy. It would surely provoke opposition from political, theological, and academic interests with something to lose in a new intellectual order. But for Bacon, the larger problem was that the impediments to the power of reason are deeply rooted in the character of reason itself. In his famous doctrine of the “Idols of the Mind,” he outlined four categories of defects that infect and mislead human reason.

First, reason seeks more order in the world than actually exists and it gets fooled into thinking that impossible things

<sup>1</sup>*Below*, pp. 17, 21.

exist. Second, reason tends to become obsessed with one cause that it thinks explains everything. Third, words fool reason, as if all words refer to something real. Finally, reason has been seduced by a long history of fruitless and quarrelsome philosophical speculation. Bacon has an especial dislike for the baleful influence, still active at his time, of Plato and Aristotle. Their dogmatic preference for contemplation over action reflected contempt for the practical arts, a contempt much more harmful than noble. For it merely served to hide the real courses of nature from view, so that from Aristotle one hears “the voice of dialectics more often than the voice of nature” and in Plato one sees that “he infected and corrupted natural studies by his theology as much as Aristotle did by his dialectic.”<sup>2</sup>

For Bacon, these defects of reason had first to be exposed and rooted out as far as possible before reason’s true powers could be unleashed. Then, an entirely new science, based on careful induction and especially experimentation, could discover the latent actions of nature and bend them to human purposes. Human life needs tools for action, but from the ancient wisdom we got nothing but theological and metaphysical claptrap. Moreover, the ancients applied this intellectual junk to practical and political affairs, especially after Socrates, who was famous for having brought philosophy down from the heavens. But the ancients’ concern for practical affairs was in fact impractical and served merely to fuel violent controversies about justice and the best regime, controversies that are inevitable when we are faced by material scarcity and a cosmos that is hostile to our wills and indifferent to our needs.

For Bacon, reason directed by new means and ends would endow human beings with powers over nature unimaginable by his contemporaries. He wasn’t restrained in what he predicted. Bacon’s new science would put nature on the rack: it gives up its secrets “when by art and the hand of man she is

<sup>2</sup>“*The Refutation of Philosophies*” in *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*, ed. Benjamin Farrington (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1964), pp. 112–15.