



Francis Bacon's New Atlantis in the Foundation of Modern Political Thought

Kimberly Hurd Hale

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Francis Bacon, long considered a minor figure in the founding of modern political thought, is now recognized as one of its foremost thinkers. Bacon not only championed a new type and method of scientific inquiry, he also developed a plan for how modern society could be re-ordered to accommodate and promote scientific progress. Bacon's scientific writings cannot be wholly understood apart from his political writings, and many of his works combine the two topics so subtly that it is difficult to even place them in a definitive category; in this book, Kimberly Hurd Hale identifies the thread in Bacon's body of work that links modern science and liberalism.

Hale provides a detailed analysis of *New Atlantis*, examining Bacon's place in the founding of modern political philosophy and the ways he relates to Plato, Machiavelli, and Hobbes. Hurd argues that Bacon's demonstration of scientific rule in the *New Atlantis* is not meant as a blueprint for modern society; rather it shows us the dangers of a scientific society devoid of liberty. By examining what is troubling about the *New Atlantis*, this book explains what problems lead to the emergence of Atlantean societies, i.e. societies that are prosperous, ambitious, and doomed. It shows that Bacon's portrait of Bensalem may provide the light necessary to guide those of us living in a world shaped by modern science through the dangerous seas.

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