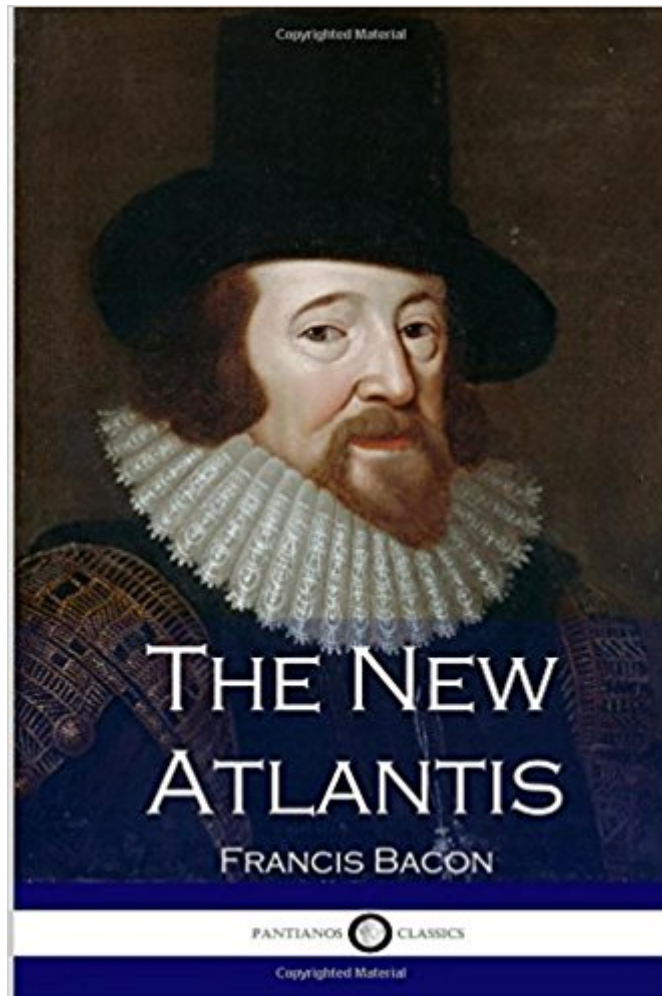




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The New Atlantis



Synopsis

The New Atlantis is a novel by Francis Bacon which details the ideas and vision of a scientific utopia conceived by the author. Although unfinished, this story sets out a process of discovery whereby sailors, lost somewhere off the Peruvian coastline, stumble across Bensalem. While the opening passages hold only the bare bones of plot, the emphasis once the explorers arrive in Bensalem is its university - Salomon's House. Various tenets of the society include kindness, compassion and honesty at all levels of the social strata, aesthetic beauty in public buildings and civic life, an intellectual spirit fostered among the population, a university named Salomon's House where both theoretical and applied sciences are studied and developed, and a strong sense of religious piety held by the entire population. Today the work is most significant for its statement of the ideals of the nascent Enlightenment period, in which Francis Bacon was one of the most influential thinkers. However the text is richly interpretative, with Bensalem's conversion to Christianity and the nature of its hierarchy all poignant elements in the fiction. It was The New Atlantis and other writings of Bacon which inspired the creation and assembly of the Royal Society, which exists today to promote the ideas of scientific study and development. The New Atlantis specifically is also notable for inspiring a famous and humorous mockery in Jonathan Swift's satire Gulliver's Travels.

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