Despite the book's range, its argument often seems constrained by a certain narrowness in what counts as "political." Like Abate, Suzuki does not give religion much space in her otherwise extremely thorough book. In concentrating on the "egalitarian imaginary," she neglects the "millenary imaginary" and an even more pervasive and powerful imagined entity: religious conscience. After all, the majority of the women and apprentice petitioners at the heart of Suzuki's book explicitly justified themselves as driven by zeal for a "true religion" which expunged all remnants of popery. Suzuki's book, however, advances the conversation, and this, one hopes, is what Ashgate's new series will continue to do.

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Robert Appelbaum. *Literature and Utopian Politics in Seventeenth-Century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. xi, 256.

In its first incarnation as an 800-page dissertation from the University of California at Berkeley under the direction of Stephen Greenblatt, Robert Appelbaum's *Literature and Utopian Politics* sports an unusual Acknowledgments section that begins with a taxi driver (the author) who, in the middle of a long shift, "hatches" the idea for this study. In final the section of the book, Appelbaum teases, "If I could, I would like to conclude by noting once again the importance of the indifferent, impersonal, social domain of the institutional system in our lives, for it is the institution, for better or worse — the house — that nurtures our lives as creative workers. But I cannot" (p. xi). Readers know before the first chapter that this author is unusual, and we are left to hope that he can deliver more than an amusing tale. After all, "the house" has trained us to demand reasonable accounts, substantial research, and precise prose, particularly when we pay so much for a slim volume.

Appelbaum opens by discussing his title: "'Literature and Utopian Politics.' Or is that 'Politics and Utopian Literature'? Either one would do" (p. 1). Those in the period who desired and were willing to work for an improved political climate cast their dreams in literary form. At the same time, writers were "always grounded in the political conflicts of the day." For these reasons, Appelbaum considers all annunciations of "ideal politics" as utopian, where ideal politics is "discourse in any of a number of forms which generates the image of an ideal society." To discern the particular voices within this extremely broad discourse, Appelbaum defines what he considers its sister phenomenon: "utopian mastery," or "the power a subject may exert over an ideal society." By assessing the degree to which each voice in the discourse of ideal politics — from monarch to Puritan and parliamentarian — can claim

utopian mastery, Appelbaum charts chronologically the “terrain of the ideal” (p. 2) through seventeenth-century England. In this introduction, Appelbaum also demonstrates a precise understanding of the most important theorists within utopian studies and thereby reveals why in 1997 he won the Eugenio Battisti Award for the best essay in *Utopian Studies*.

In Chapter One, Appelbaum provides an assessment of the “look of power” cultivated by James I, beginning prior to his accession. Initially this “look of power” — the “conditions under which power might be imagined, arrogated, contested, and deployed” (p. 23) — met the nation’s hopes. “James’ accession was not only an act of peaceful succession; it was also an act of conquest” initiating “a whole new ‘look of power’” (p. 23) that appeared more stable and prosperous than that which an aging Elizabeth could manage. At the same time, many saw James as the fulfillment of the “Columbus topos” — the story of one man improving the future for many. In Chapter Two, Appelbaum assesses the flip side of the Columbus topos, in which one discovers the foolishness in thinking oneself a Columbus. When James I squelched the ideal politics of those against them, only those who had fled to America could put their radical intentions into literature and practice. In England, men like Robert Burton and Francis Bacon dared not call for a change in government. Instead, in their literary works, they ask for a “utopia of mine owne” in the mind and a new infrastructure, respectively.

In Chapter Three, Appelbaum treats the 1640s, when individuals and groups challenged inherited understandings of government and, for the first time, forged new models in writing and then in practice. Parliamentarians and Puritans alike determined that they needed a break with the past and perhaps with the king. The problem was that they did not know what should replace the old. Their voices in the discourse became increasingly more reactive than utopian, and soon the war left little time for visions. In “Out of ‘true nothing,’ 1649–1653,” Appelbaum takes us on the relatively short ride from national utopianism, when “the nation itself seemed ready to be brought to the smithy of public imagination” (p. 141), to its loss in the hands of a new leadership. Men who rose to power on the wings of ideal politics and the practice of utopian mastery writ large had to turn right around and restrict the very thinking, writing, and action by which they had successfully revolted. The condition was “unresolvable” (p. 188) and an “anti-utopian discourse” evolved (p. 191). Moreover, by this time, groups like the Diggers and Fifth Monarchists came to acknowledge that their most radical views were not coming to fruition because they depended upon revelation and miracle rather than upon the work of humans. By the mid 1650s, and then with the restoration of the king, writers sublimated their desire for an ideal politics that could change real politics. The subject of Chapter Five is the emergence of a purpose for utopian literature. Aesthetic mastery of utopian energies permitted a harmless “*feeling of power*”

(p. 210), while showing none that would threaten the status quo. Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World* is an example of what Appelbaum might call Gonzalo's dream defanged, utopia for those who decide that "All must be as it is" (p. 216).

In the process of plotting a well-documented and engaging discourse, Appelbaum provides a fresh reading of familiar authors including Thomas More, Francis Bacon, John Milton, and Margaret Cavendish. He also introduces us to lesser-known writers in such a way that readers will have a new desire to utilize interlibrary loan and microfiche — a noteworthy accomplishment. Yet I question the degree to which Appelbaum's perspective would have suited the writers he studies. They might have laughed at the concepts of ideal politics and utopian mastery, believing they were involved more directly in national change of real consequence to the nation and, in some cases, to their souls. Moreover, Appelbaum's prose is cumbersome, decidedly ruling out an undergraduate readership and frustrating this reader, who grew weary of untangling what were reasonable if not simple points. In final analysis the story does remain intact, and it will prove valuable for those studying seventeenth-century history, literature (particularly utopian), and politics, as well as utopian and cultural studies more generally. Appelbaum's Acknowledgments section dared us to hold him accountable. We can. He obeys enough of the house rules while reminding us that there is a human being behind each scholarly endeavor — even the most traditional.

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Konrad Eisenbichler, ed. *The Premodern Teenager: Youth in Society, 1150–1650*. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2002. Pp. xii, 349.

Konrad Eisenbichler has produced an excellent interdisciplinary collection of seventeen essays that cover a wide range of topics related to youth culture in Europe during the pre- and early modern periods. The Introduction sets the stage for the subsequent essays. Eisenbichler provides a rationale for the groupings, outlines the themes, and explains the organization. No one methodology prevails or is favoured over any other; instead, each article stands on its own merits and analysis. The collection provides readers with a variety of windows into the ways youth impacted society and was, in turn, influenced by it. *The Premodern Teenager* concentrates on Italy and England, which are examined from the perspectives of such disciplines as literature, history, art history, theatre, architecture, history of warfare, and medical history. The editor has grouped the essays around common themes such as rituals, educa-