LITERATURE AND UTOPIAN POLITICS IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

Hundreds of writers in the English-speaking world of the seventeenth century imagined alternative ideal societies. Sometimes they did so by exploring fanciful territories, such as the world in the moon or the nations of the Antipodes; but sometimes they composed serious disquisitions about the here and now, proposing how England or its nascent colonies could be conceived of as an "Oceana," a New Jerusalem, a "City on a Hill." *Literature and Utopian Politics* provides a comprehensive view of the operations of the utopian imagination in England and its nascent colonies from the accession of James VI and I in 1603 to the consolidation of the Restoration under Charles II in the late 1660s. Appealing to social theorists, literary critics, and political and cultural historians, this volume revises prevailing notions of the languages of hope and social dreaming in the making of British modernity during a century of political and intellectual upheaval.

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*To the memory of Sandy Solomon,
a man who tried*

And to my loving and beloved mother

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Acknowledgments

The idea for this book was hatched one afternoon while I was in the midst of working an eighteen-hour shift, harried and cranky, as a limousine driver in the San Francisco Bay Area. The final draft but one was completed while I was unemployed, hopefully "between jobs," and living on the dole in Cincinnati, Ohio. It has not been easy to complete this project. But along the way I have been the beneficiary of many, many kindnesses and a good deal of direct and indirect institutional support.

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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 unemployment bureau, the foundation, the university, the publishing house – that nurtures our lives as creative workers. But I cannot. I have to conclude by expressing my deepest thanks to Terri Zucker and Meredith Appelbaum, the two loves and twin pillars of my life.