



Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past

By Amir Eshel

Download now

Read Online 

Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past By Amir Eshel

When looking at how trauma is represented in literature and the arts, we tend to focus on the weight of the past. In this book, Amir Eshel suggests that this retrospective gaze has trapped us in a search for reason in the madness of the twentieth century's catastrophes at the expense of literature's prospective vision. Considering several key literary works, Eshel argues in *Futurity* that by grappling with watershed events of modernity, these works display a future-centric engagement with the past that opens up the present to new political, cultural, and ethical possibilities—what he calls futurity.

Bringing together postwar German, Israeli, and Anglo-American literature, Eshel traces a shared trajectory of futurity in world literature. He begins by examining German works of fiction and the debates they spurred over the future character of Germany's public sphere. Turning to literary works by Jewish-Israeli writers as they revisit Israel's political birth, he shows how these stories inspired a powerful reconsideration of Israel's identity. Eshel then discusses post-1989 literature—from Ian McEwan's *Black Dogs* to J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*—revealing how these books turn to events like World War II and the Iraq War not simply to make sense of the past but to contemplate the political and intellectual horizon that emerged after 1989. Bringing to light how reflections on the past create tools for the future, *Futurity* reminds us of the numerous possibilities literature holds for grappling with the challenges of both today and tomorrow.

 [Download Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest fo ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest ...pdf](#)

Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past

By Amir Eshel

Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past By Amir Eshel

When looking at how trauma is represented in literature and the arts, we tend to focus on the weight of the past. In this book, Amir Eshel suggests that this retrospective gaze has trapped us in a search for reason in the madness of the twentieth century's catastrophes at the expense of literature's prospective vision. Considering several key literary works, Eshel argues in *Futurity* that by grappling with watershed events of modernity, these works display a future-centric engagement with the past that opens up the present to new political, cultural, and ethical possibilities—what he calls futurity.

Bringing together postwar German, Israeli, and Anglo-American literature, Eshel traces a shared trajectory of futurity in world literature. He begins by examining German works of fiction and the debates they spurred over the future character of Germany's public sphere. Turning to literary works by Jewish-Israeli writers as they revisit Israel's political birth, he shows how these stories inspired a powerful reconsideration of Israel's identity. Eshel then discusses post-1989 literature—from Ian McEwan's *Black Dogs* to J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*—revealing how these books turn to events like World War II and the Iraq War not simply to make sense of the past but to contemplate the political and intellectual horizon that emerged after 1989. Bringing to light how reflections on the past create tools for the future, *Futurity* reminds us of the numerous possibilities literature holds for grappling with the challenges of both today and tomorrow.

Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past By Amir Eshel Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1791365 in Books
- Brand: Brand: University Of Chicago Press
- Published on: 2013-01-14
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.30" w x 6.00" l, 1.45 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 368 pages

 [Download Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest fo ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online *Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past* By Amir Eshel

Editorial Review

Review

“At a time when the pace of change seems to have the velocity of a bullet, it is refreshing to read an affirmation of literature’s sustained power to transform on a more profound, enduring level. *Futurity* lauds the sustainable beauty and power of real literature to outstrip the instantaneous and insubstantial veneer of wireless social networks. . . . A provocative and stimulating read.”

(*Choice*)

“[Eshel] coins the concept of ‘futurity’ to describe the way that literature helps us face past historical traumas while also prompting us to remain optimistic about shaping the future. . . . It’s a nice idea, that the most depressing fiction is also potentially the most catalytic. In this way, authors are trying to say: I get it, things are awful, but if my characters can do it, so can you.”

(*Boston Globe*)

“Compelling. . . . Throughout, Eshel urges us to consider how we read, to what end we analyze literature, and what drives our practice of literary criticism.”

(*Hebrew Studies*)

“The book is an impressive achievement. Eshel covers an enormous range of authors in three languages and offers subtle and nuanced readings of all of them. Moreover, his ability to discern narrative patterns across generations and literatures as well as particular repeated motifs that speak to ‘futurity’ . . . is remarkable.”

(Carolyn J. Dean *History and Theory*)

“A perceptive, wide-ranging, and thorough investigation. . . . By way of accessible prose, meticulous and consistent methodology, insightful readings, and sophisticated analyses, Eshel not only adds significantly to the scholarship on each period, author, and novel, but makes this volume a must-read for scholars and students of contemporary literature.”

(*Studies in the Novel*)

“Eshel advocates for a political reading of contemporary literature. This opens our eyes to connections and, with them, possibilities for action previously unseen.”

(*Arcadia*)

“Engages with world literature and reads magisterially across a wide range of Western literary traditions. . . . Eshel’s argument is crucially important for our understanding of recent US literary production.”

(*American Literary History*)

“Eshel’s study constitutes an important contribution to the interdisciplinary field of futurity studies. . . . His book delivers a powerful justification of the role literature can play in serving as mediator and arbiter of the retrospective and prospective viewpoints on modern human social life and of its challenges moving forward into the twenty-first century.”

(*German Quarterly*)

“*Futurity* is a generous and innovative work, with a remarkable breadth of cultural reference. More than

most books on post-1945 literature and culture, it is a true work of comparativist criticism, moving effortlessly between three languages and several national literary traditions, impressively identifying connections between texts that most readers would not notice.”

(*Partial Answers*)

“It is a tour de force, in which German, Hebrew, and Anglo-American contemporary literature—more precisely, literature of catastrophes—is compared and linked. But what do Günter Grass, Martin Walser, and Bernhard Schlink have in common with Abraham B. Yehoshua, Amos Oz and David Grossman, and the latter with Ian McEwan, Philip Roth, and Paul Auster? . . . [Eshel] draws a bold arch from *The Tin Drum* to Oz’s *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, to Auster’s *Man in the Dark* and Roth’s *The Plot Against America*—from the Holocaust to the flight and expulsion of the Palestinians, to American catastrophes that remain fictions in the work of Auster and Roth. . . . Eshel believes that such works different cultures ‘expand the reservoir of words, images, and ideas’ which we use to create ourselves anew.”

(*Die Zeit*)

“[Eshel’s] vast, lavish, tightly argued and exceptionally interesting book—in which every sentence, every word, is important—may be for many years to come the resource *par excellence* for provoking philosophical reaction (and reflection, as Eshel himself would hope for) on a concept of the future as a potentially fruitful and genuine development of the traumatic past.”

(*Consciousness, Literature and the Arts*)

“Fascinating. . . . A rich and stimulating meditation on contemporary literature of all stripes. . . . Reminds us that futurity remains intimately connected to arts of memory, debates about history, and our undiminished need for new forms of commemoration.”

(*German Studies Review*)

“Amir Eshel writes from the perspective of a new ethics of literary and historical narration, whose focus is a new, post-utopian humanitarianism based in remembrance of the past.”

(*Der Tagespiegel, on the German edition*)

“Using an appealing combination of novels by German and Israeli writers, Amir Eshel produces a powerful and refreshing argument that these texts, which look back at past events, nonetheless point forward to future solutions to the problems they address. Convincing and engaging, *Futurity* will open the eyes of many readers to an important but often neglected function of literature.”

(*Judith Ryan, Harvard University*)

“Amir Eshel’s *Futurity* is a remarkable book about contemporary German, Hebrew, and Anglo-American literature and its obsession with the catastrophic world of the twentieth century. Animated by the passionate belief that literature has the power to change us, Eshel shifts the focus away from our own obsession with this catastrophe, uncovering the dimension of the future that these texts harbor at their core. A committed and lucid reader of the literary, Eshel recovers the complexities of literary texts by reviving the humanism of Arendt’s post-catastrophic philosophy. Deeply political, *Futurity* makes the strongest possible case for poetic language as a practice that asserts human agency.”

(*Robert Alter, University of California, Berkeley*)

“Amir Eshel’s *Futurity* is a remarkable book about contemporary German, Hebrew, and Anglo-American literature and its obsession with the catastrophic world of the twentieth century. Animated by the passionate belief that literature has the power to change us, Eshel shifts the focus away from our own obsession with this catastrophe, uncovering the dimension of the future that these texts harbor at their core. A committed

and lucid reader of the literary, Eshel recovers the complexities of literary texts by reviving the humanism of Arendt's post-catastrophic philosophy. Deeply political, *Futurity* makes the strongest possible case for poetic language as a practice that asserts human agency."

(*Julia Hell, University of Michigan*)

About the Author

Amil Eshel is Edward Clark Crossett Professor of Humanistic Studies and director of the Europe Center at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mark Giordano:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important act, like looking for your favorite guide and reading a e-book. Beside you can solve your short lived problem; you can add your knowledge by the book entitled *Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past*. Try to the actual book *Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past* as your friend. It means that it can to be your friend when you experience alone and beside those of course make you smarter than before. Yeah, it is very fortunated for you personally. The book makes you far more confidence because you can know everything by the book. So , let me make new experience and also knowledge with this book.

Nydia Kelly:

Book is written, printed, or highlighted for everything. You can realize everything you want by a reserve. Book has a different type. To be sure that book is important issue to bring us around the world. Beside that you can your reading expertise was fluently. A guide *Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past* will make you to become smarter. You can feel considerably more confidence if you can know about everything. But some of you think which open or reading the book make you bored. It's not make you fun. Why they could be thought like that? Have you looking for best book or suited book with you?

Tracy Painter:

You can obtain this *Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past* by check out the bookstore or Mall. Only viewing or reviewing it might to be your solve issue if you get difficulties on your knowledge. Kinds of this book are various. Not only by means of written or printed and also can you enjoy this book through e-book. In the modern era such as now, you just looking because of your mobile phone and searching what their problem. Right now, choose your personal ways to get more information about your book. It is most important to arrange you to ultimately make your knowledge are still up-date. Let's try to choose proper ways for you.

Maria Holder:

Reading a book make you to get more knowledge from the jawhorse. You can take knowledge and

information from a book. Book is published or printed or highlighted from each source this filled update of news. Within this modern era like now, many ways to get information are available for you actually. From media social just like newspaper, magazines, science publication, encyclopedia, reference book, novel and comic. You can add your knowledge by that book. Isn't it time to spend your spare time to spread out your book? Or just looking for the Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past when you desired it?

Download and Read Online Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past By Amir Eshel #YU7C0HDN9KG

Read Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past By Amir Eshel for online ebook

Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past By Amir Eshel Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past By Amir Eshel books to read online.

Online Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past By Amir Eshel ebook PDF download

Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past By Amir Eshel Doc

Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past By Amir Eshel Mobipocket

Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past By Amir Eshel EPub