

UTOPIA AND THE CONTEMPORARY BRITISH NOVEL

This book examines how the experience of time functions in a specific set of British novels to reveal the persistence of the utopian imagination in the twenty-first century. Through close textual analysis Edwards develops a new strategy of reading such anticipatory ‘fictions of the not yet’, including novels by Hari Kunzru, Maggie Gee, David Mitchell, Ali Smith, Jim Crace, Joanna Kavenna, Grace McCleen, Jon McGregor and Claire Fuller. Read in the context of the philosophical category of non-contemporaneity, these novels reveal a significant new direction in twenty-first-century fiction. Their formal inventiveness and suggestively non-mimetic encounters with otherwise realist narrative representations of contemporary experience open up a realm of utopian possibility that shines through in moments of temporal alterity: glimpses of the future, redeemed strands of past hopes and alternative social worlds already alive in the present.

CAROLINE EDWARDS is Senior Lecturer in Modern & Contemporary Literature at Birkbeck, University of London. Her work on living writers has led to two co-edited books: *China Miéville: Critical Essays* (2015) and *Maggie Gee: Critical Essays* (2015). Caroline has published in a number of journals, including *Telos*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Textual Practice*, *ASAP/Journal*, *Contemporary Literature*, *Subjectivity*, *Times Higher Education* and *New Statesman*. Caroline is a founding member of the British Association for Contemporary Literary Studies (BACLS) and a director of the scholarly publisher Open Library of Humanities.

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*For Aelita,
who has always been both with us and not yet*

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