

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910480718503321
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Titolo	Imagining the kibbutz : visions of utopia in literature and film // Ranen Omer-Sherman
Pubbl/distr/stampa	University Park, Pennsylvania : , : Pennsylvania State University Press, , [2015] ©2015
ISBN	0-271-07057-9 0-271-07061-7
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (342 pages) : illustrations
Collana	Dimyonot: Jews and cultural imagination ; ; 2
Disciplina	892.409355
Soggetti	Kibbutzim in literature Kibbutzim - History Israeli literature - History and criticism Kibbutzim in motion pictures Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (pages 323-333) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Introduction -- 1 Trepidation and Exultation in Early Kibbutz Fiction -- 2 "With a Zealot's Fervor" Individuals Facing the Fissures of Ideology in Oz, Shaham, and Balaban -- 3 The Kibbutz and Its Others at Midcentury Palestinian and Mizrahi Interlopers in Utopia -- 4 Late Disillusionments and Village Crimes Th e Kibbutz Mysteries of Batya Gur and Savyon Liebrecht -- 5 From the 1980's to 2010 Nostalgia and the Revisionist Lens in Kibbutz Film -- Afterword Between Hope and Despair Th e Legacy of the Kibbutz Dream in the Twenty-First Century -- Acknowledgments -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	In Imagining the Kibbutz, Ranen Omer-Sherman explores the literary and cinematic representations of the socialist experiment that became history's most successfully sustained communal enterprise. Inspired in part by the kibbutz movement's recent commemoration of its centennial, this study responds to a significant gap in scholarship. Numerous sociological and economic studies have appeared, but no

book-length study has ever addressed the tremendous range of critically imaginative portrayals of the kibbutz. This diachronic study addresses novels, short fiction, memoirs, and cinematic portrayals of the kibbutz by both kibbutz “insiders” (including those born and raised there, as well as those who joined the kibbutz as immigrants or migrants from the city) and “outsiders.” For these artists, the kibbutz is a crucial microcosm for understanding Israeli values and identity. The central drama explored in their works is the monumental tension between the individual and the collective, between individual aspiration and ideological rigor, between self-sacrifice and self-fulfillment. Portraying kibbutz life honestly demands retaining at least two oppositional things in mind at once—the absolute necessity of euphoric dreaming and the mellowing inevitability of disillusionment. As such, these artists’ imaginative witnessing of the fraught relation between the collective and the citizen-soldier is the story of Israel itself.
