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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.
