

Chapter 1 : Ten of the best visions of hell in literature | Books | The Guardian

visions of extremity in modern literature - in 2 volumes - #1 the tragic vision, the confrontation of extremity --#2 the classic vision, the retreat from extremity paperback -

Index Introduction We did not attune our expectations to a distant morrow, but to their lifetime. As soon as today is over. Quickly, in our time. Not dreams of a far-off future or the Kingdom of Heaven at the end of a dark tunnel. It would all be right here, tomorrow. The redemption will come here and now and not in a generation that is all saints or all sinners or on the day that the tears of Jacob and Esau cease. Then, at night, the drowsy and companionable silences of those sipping Wissotzky tea after being reluctantly roused for the early milking shift. Those seemingly endless days all came and went in a rapid stream, yet now they pause and linger because neither heart nor mind ever wishes to relinquish any of it. To a great extent, this study is inspired by the many extraordinary years I was fortunate to share with some remarkable people, a few of them gone now, who actually acted on a fairly radical political vision. Although they could be as petty, scandalous, or annoying as just about anyone else, to a striking degree, they were also tireless and often even truly selfless. Sharing a preternatural utopian impulse, they were perfectly willing to spend their lives laboring on degree days within the confines of an isolated settlement of homely prefabricated dwellings and sparse greenery, patiently rotating jobs and working unseemly hours whenever that was required of them, in plain view of the modest cemetery they figured to one day inhabit. There is no other way to put it: It was world making at its purest, unhindered by nostalgia or our immediate pasts, every choice consciously, painstakingly made. Like many others, during my kibbutz years, I often felt a sense of euphoria but sometimes also disaffection and withdrawal. As I gradually began to discover during that sojourn, there is a significant body of extraordinary literature brimming with a heady mix of ardent idealism and lonely alienation, richly illuminating the complex responses many of us have experienced. Over time, many of those works became intensely meaningful companions for me in periods of both faith and disaffection. First and foremost, there were the works of Amos Oz a veteran of more than thirty years of collective living , his early kibbutz stories often written in the collective persona, an ironic voice leaving delicately veiled traces of malaise in its wake that, back in those days, struggling at times to hold onto my idealistic ardor, left me shaken. The buildings are whitewashed, and most of them are topped with bright red roofs. This color scheme contrasts sharply with that of the mountain range. Along the lower terraces on the slope stretches the border between our land and that of her enemies. There is a kind of enmity between the valley, with its neat, geometrical patchwork of fields[,] and the savage bleakness of the mountains. The houses, as we have said, are brightly painted. They are laid out at regular intervals. Their windows all face northwest, since the architects tried to adapt the building to the climate. Here there is no agglomeration of buildings clustering or ramifying haphazardly down the ages, nor blocks of dwellings enclosing secret courtyards, for the kibbutz does not have family homes. There is no question of separate quarters for different crafts; the poor are not relegated to the outskirts nor is the center reserved for the wealthy. The straight lines, the clean shapes, the neatly ruled concrete paths and rectangular lawns are the product of a vigorous view of the world. That was what we meant when we stated that our village was built in a spirit of optimism. Anyone who draws the shallow inference that our village is stark and lacking in charm and beauty merely reveals his own prejudice. The object of the kibbutz is not to satisfy the sentimental expectations of town dwellers. Our village is not lacking in charm and beauty, but its beauty is vigorous and virile and its charm conveys a message. So does the sloping fence that surrounds the kibbutz on all sides. Attractive portrayals abound in the fiction and memoirs of even those writers most critical of the kibbutz, perhaps in acknowledgment of our intrinsic human yearning for utopia sometimes even after we are disillusioned. Largely indifferent, if not altogether hostile, to the kibbutz as an institution that he finds markedly unwelcoming to Mizrahi Jews like himself, Ohayon is nevertheless charmed by its attractive spaces and alluring rhythm of life: Michael sensed the contradiction between the tempo of his movements and the surrounding serenity. Children rode bicycles on the paths, and three toddlers were being pushed in a mobile playpen. The young man pushing it and the toddlers sitting inside were tanned and serene. Once or twice old

women in golf carts forced them to step off the path onto the lawn. People in bathing suits were returning from the pool on their bicycles. Imagine a group of people in a not very big house, who have committed themselves to sleeping together, eating together, bathing together, and toiling on the land together. The ancestral land yields wheat and olives and milk. On feast days there is such rejoicing that the heart seems to melt, and even on working days, after supper. An old comradeship envelops the inhabitants. Even the late Tony Judt, more famously known for his sharp criticism of Israel, was at first enraptured by the kibbutz experiment, toiling three long summers as a young volunteer during the s. For the neophyte fifteen-year-old Londoner encountering the kibbutz for the first time, the effect was exhilarating. Eight hours of strenuous, intellectually undemanding labor in steamy banana plantations by the shores of the Sea of Galilee, interspersed with songs, hikes, lengthy doctrinal discussions carefully stage-managed so as to reduce the risk of adolescent rejection while maximizing the appeal of shared objectives , and the ever-present suggestion of guilt-free sex. Fond kibbutz coming-of-age reminiscences by North American or British Jewish writers who, like Judt, became briefly acquainted with kibbutz life whether or not they enjoyed amorous adventures in the volunteer quarters or orchards are not all that uncommon. In the orange orchards of Kibbutz Ein Shemer, Avital Geva, barefoot and shirtless in the early-morning sun, was frying eggs in a blackened pan. Turkish coffee was boiling in the aluminum pot, and his friends were laying out plates of tomatoes and cucumbers and olives, white cheese and jam. It was mid-May Avital and his crew had been working since dawn, to outwit the heat of the day. One could almost forget about the crisis on the Egyptian border. Yet, more strikingly, we encounter the same kind of appealing utopian simplicity in the evocative imagery of a writer from a strikingly different background, Atallah Mansour b. Whether or not they ever experienced the life of a kibbutz, those who read the novels of Gur and Mansour or the memoirs of Balaban and Judt will likely succumb to the warm tug of their alluring renderings of bucolic community life—that is, until things take a more dystopian turn, as they often do in the disenchanting nuances of many kibbutz narratives. For such writers self-critical insiders and outsiders alike , writing honestly about kibbutz life demands keeping at least two central contraries in mind at once—the absolute necessity of euphoric dreaming and the mellowing inevitability of disillusionment. These brief vignettes serve to illustrate that, for almost all who doubt whether they harbor a secret attraction to communal life, such uncertainty vanishes upon their first visit to a kibbutz, if only for a brief glimpse. What they perceive there will likely strike a deeply resonant chord even when they cannot imagine themselves actually living in such a place. Such encounters often elicit the sense of wonder and even wistful daydreams of alternative lives sometimes associated with visits to monasteries. Yet important distinctions between the self-understanding of these short-lived experimental antecedents—or even contemporary American exemplars such as the Twin Oaks Community, East Wind, and The Farm whose members numbered 1, in the late s—and the kibbutz must be acknowledged. As journalist Daniel Gavron points out: Still, like any other human institution, the kibbutz in its fullest realization evolved in some ways and devolved in others, adapting to the internal and external forces severely buffeting it over a century of transformation. The study before you examines some of the most provocative narratives created mostly by insiders but occasionally by outsiders , to imaginatively portray that ensuing struggle over generations. I share the sentiments of Yossi Klein Halevi, who, in an interview that often stresses his roots in the Betar Movement and his onetime loyalties to Revisionist Zionism, paused to passionately affirm the extraordinary legacy of the kibbutz: How have we allowed this movement to fade away, without at the very least saying thank you. We are a society of ingrates. What followed was a debilitating blow to that pride. As historian Anita Shapira notes: It combined a vision of equality, devotion to society, and recruitment for national missions. The values prized by the kibbutz were physical labor, a simple lifestyle, a culture of low-key restraint, and making do with little. There was no other sector in Israeli society whose values so opposed those of Begin and the culture he represented. Begin realized that if he wished to change the narrative of the state, he would have to undermine the status of the kibbutz as the most important creation of Zionism. And that interior metamorphosis bore unanticipated consequences, which later proved explosive in the drastically changed conditions of privatization that the surrounding society imposed. Attentive readers of my study may conclude with some justification that, in the earliest kibbutz narratives, the individual is tested, whereas, in later decades, the collective itself seems to bear the burden of demonstrating its capacity

to accommodate individual aspirations and even human weaknesses. By the s, that shift seems to reflect the growing restlessness that swept through the movement. Hence, amid the plethora of critical external transformations and pressures described by many kibbutz economists and sociologists, there also emerged the sharply divergent sensibility of the young kibbutzniks themselves. At a kibbutz youth conference held by the Ihud Movement in , a member from Kibbutz Rosh Hanikra spoke of the need to satisfy the aspirations of members of a new generation no longer content to spend their entire lives working in a cowshed: This was usually accepted without opposition. Writing in from the perspective of a much earlier generation, Zerubavel Gilead, who arrived at Kibbutz Ein Harod as an eleven-year-old in , decries the worldwide skepticism of the younger generation about the validity of traditional idealistic values, and the worldwide permissiveness that springs from the skepticism. Although the kibbutzim, and indeed the country as a whole, have generally been free of the conflicts between the generations that have afflicted most of the world since the s and beyond, the spirit of rebellion against accepted values has expressed itself among our young in a new tendency to insist on what they call self-realizationâ€”meaning the realization of what they deem to be good for them individually, without much reference to what may be good for the community as a whole. This drive toward self-realization. Gilead and Krook Whether or not one bemoans the degradation of the traditional kibbutz, this critical shift clearly laid the foundation for the radical processes of privatization that followed the economic crisis of later years. As we will see in chapter 1, intimations of this monumental swingâ€”from the primacy of the collective to the primacy of the individualâ€”surface as a source of anxiety in some of the earliest literary narratives by kibbutz writers. The kibbutz movement preserved the collectivist ethos as its formative and guiding principle. The kibbutz made the collective tasks a top priority and demanded that the members complyâ€”that they sacrifice their private desires and aspirations to the needs and demands of the society. And that difference gave rise to all the questioning by kibbutz writers, culminating in the critical narratives of doubt and recrimination addressed in the later pages of this study. Self-consciously, the earlier writers recognized that if the kibbutz was somehow intended to be a permanent departure from or a radical discontinuity with recent Jewish history, that grandiose revolution failed and as we will discover in chapter 1, sobering misgivings emerged even in portrayals by writers who were among the most fervent ideologues. Yet such was the mythic power of that revolution that its allure persists for many. Imagining the Kibbutz aspires to fulfill what I have long felt to be an urgent needâ€”to provide an altogether different perspective from that afforded by the long tradition of kibbutz research amassed by social scientists and other investigators of various spheres of kibbutz life industry, agriculture, education, economics. The relationship between literature, the rise of the kibbutz, and the individual is a fascinating story, one whose beginning Iris Milner astutely recounts: The first decades of the kibbutz were marked by a consistent rise in its status as a leading, indispensable factor in the Israeli social and political milieu. This is particularly evident in the historical novels that follow the development of specific kibbutzim through their initial stages. The chain of events these novels commonly recount starts from the very first steps of the communal group and leads to its successful establishment. Accordingly, in the s, I leaped at the opportunity to help establish a young kibbutz, Yahel, in the southern Arava Desert with other young people from Israel as well as the United States. And though every day seemed to present daunting challenges, both agricultural and social, in those halcyon and endless days, it seemed to many of us that everything was possible. Some of us felt that we had found fulfillment beyond anything we had ever thought possible, and we could not imagine ever leaving, whereas others were soon discomfited by the lack of privacy for individuals or families or by the difficulty of adjusting to a life so far removed from urban pleasures. Stories from a Changing Society strikes me as a profoundly perceptive portrayal of new developments, one that also grapples with the themes that have long preoccupied the literary witnesses to the rise and perpetual transformation or deterioration of the kibbutz. Since my friend is both a genuine autodidact and a natural optimist, it is hardly surprising that his stories are largely hopeful. Yet, after experiencing thirteen years of communal life, I find myself more drawn to the few stories in his collection that are decidedly darker, more ambivalent in tone. These feature veteran kibbutzniks dreading changes that threaten the values they have spent lifetimes defending or former kibbutzniks looking in from the outside.

Chapter 2 : Imagining the Kibbutz: Visions of Utopia in Literature and Film By Ranen Omer-Sherman

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Martin Heidegger[edit] Martin Heidegger rejected the philosophical basis of the concepts of "subjectivity" and "objectivity" and asserted that similar grounding oppositions in logic ultimately refer to one another. Instead of resisting the admission of this paradox in the search for understanding, Heidegger requires that we embrace it through an active process of elucidation he called the " hermeneutic circle ". He stressed the historicity and cultural construction of concepts while simultaneously advocating the necessity of an atemporal and immanent apprehension of them. In this vein, he asserted that it was the task of contemporary philosophy to recover the original question of or "openness to" Dasein translated as Being or Being-there present in the Presocratic philosophers but normalized, neutered, and standardized since Plato. To do this, however, a non-historical and, to a degree, self-referential engagement with whatever set of ideas, feelings or practices would permit both the non-fixed concept and reality of such a continuity was requiredâ€”a continuity permitting the possible experience, possible existence indeed not only of beings but of all differences as they appeared and tended to develop. Such a conclusion led Heidegger to depart from the phenomenology of his teacher Husserl and prompt instead an ironically anachronistic return to the yet-unasked questions of Ontology , a return that in general did not acknowledge an intrinsic distinction between phenomena and noumena or between things in themselves de re and things as they appear see qualia: In this latter premise, Heidegger shares an affinity with the late Romantic philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche , another principal forerunner of post-structuralist and postmodernist thought. In direct contradiction to what have been typified as modernist perspectives on epistemology , Foucault asserted that rational judgment, social practice, and what he called " biopower " are not only inseparable but co-determinant. Instead, Foucault focused on the ways in which such constructs can foster cultural hegemony , violence, and exclusion. His writings have had a major influence on the larger body of postmodern academic literature. This crisis, insofar as it pertains to academia, concerns both the motivations and justification procedures for making research claims: As formal conjecture about real-world issues becomes inextricably linked to automated calculation, information storage, and retrieval, such knowledge becomes increasingly "exteriorised" from its knowers in the form of information. Knowledge thus becomes materialized and made into a commodity exchanged between producers and consumers; it ceases to be either an idealistic end-in-itself or a tool capable of bringing about liberty or social benefit; it is stripped of its humanistic and spiritual associations, its connection with education, teaching, and human development, being simply rendered as "data"â€”omnipresent, material, unending, and without any contexts or pre-requisites. The value-premises upholding academic research have been maintained by what Lyotard considers to be quasi-mythological beliefs about human purpose, human reason, and human progressâ€”large, background constructs he calls " metanarratives ". These metanarratives still remain in Western society but are now being undermined by rapid Informatization and the commercialization of the university and its functions. We are now controlled not by binding extra-linguistic value paradigms defining notions of collective identity and ultimate purpose, but rather by our automatic responses to different species of "language games" a concept Lyotard imports from J. Richard Rorty[edit] Richard Rorty argues in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature that contemporary analytic philosophy mistakenly imitates scientific methods. In addition, he denounces the traditional epistemological perspectives of representationalism and correspondence theory that rely upon the independence of knowers and observers from phenomena and the passivity of natural phenomena in relation to consciousness. As a proponent of anti-foundationalism and anti-essentialism within a pragmatist framework, he echoes the postmodern strain of conventionalism and relativism , but opposes much of postmodern thinking with his commitment to social liberalism. Jean Baudrillard[edit] Jean Baudrillard , in Simulacra and Simulation , introduced the concept that reality or the principle of " The Real " is short-circuited by the interchangeability of signs in an era whose communicative and semantic acts are dominated by electronic

media and digital technologies. Baudrillard proposes the notion that, in such a state, where subjects are detached from the outcomes of events political, literary, artistic, personal, or otherwise, events no longer hold any particular sway on the subject nor have any identifiable context; they therefore have the effect of producing widespread indifference, detachment, and passivity in industrialized populations. He claimed that a constant stream of appearances and references without any direct consequences to viewers or readers could eventually render the division between appearance and object indiscernible, resulting, ironically, in the "disappearance" of mankind in what is, in effect, a virtual or holographic state, composed only of appearances. For Baudrillard, "simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or a reality: Eclectic in his methodology, Jameson has continued a sustained examination of the role that periodization continues to play as a grounding assumption of critical methodologies in humanities disciplines. He has contributed extensive effort to explicating the importance of concepts of Utopia and Utopianism as driving forces in the cultural and intellectual movements of modernity, and outlining the political and existential uncertainties that may result from the decline or suspension of this trend in the theorized state of postmodernity. Like Susan Sontag, Jameson served to introduce a wide audience of American readers to key figures of the 20th century continental European intellectual left, particularly those associated with the Frankfurt School, structuralism, and post-structuralism. Thus, his importance as a "translator" of their ideas to the common vocabularies of a variety of disciplines in the Anglo-American academic complex is equally as important as his own critical engagement with them. Douglas Kellner [edit] In *Analysis of the Journey*, a journal birthed from postmodernism, Douglas Kellner insists that the "assumptions and procedures of modern theory" must be forgotten. His terms defined in the depth of postmodernism are based on advancement, innovation, and adaptation. Extensively, Kellner analyzes the terms of this theory in real-life experiences and examples. Kellner used science and technology studies as a major part of his analysis; he urged that the theory is incomplete without it. The scale was larger than just postmodernism alone; it must be interpreted through cultural studies where science and technology studies play a huge role. The reality of the September 11 attacks on the United States of America is the catalyst for his explanation. This catalyst is used as a great representation due to the mere fact of the planned ambush and destruction of "symbols of globalization", insinuating the World Trade Center. One of the numerous yet appropriate definitions of postmodernism and the qualm aspect aids this attribute to seem perfectly accurate. He questions if the attacks are only able to be understood in a limited form of postmodern theory due to the level of irony. Similar to the act of September 11 and the symbols that were interpreted through this postmodern ideal, he continues to even describe this as "semiotic systems" that people use to make sense of their lives and the events that occur in them. He finds strength in theorist Baudrillard and his idea of Marxism. The conclusion he depicts is simple:

Chapter 3 : Formats and Editions of Visions of extremity in modern literature. [calendrierdelascience.com]

volumes under the new title, Visions of Extremity in Modern Literature. Murray Krieger has written a new introduction to the set. From reviews of The Tragic Vision.

Chapter 4 : Visions of the Modern City: Essays in History, Art, and Literature by William Chapman Sharpe

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Chapter 5 : Visions of Extremity in Modern Literature (è±†ç“£)

were later published together as Visions of Extremity in Modern Literature (). Krieger was among the earliest literary critics to insist on the importance of literary theory; he also stated, in The Play and Place of Criticism (), that language provides order and meaning to human experience.

Chapter 6 : Dream vision - Oxford Reference

In an earlier book Professor Krieger discussed the tragic vision as the confrontation with extremity-the writer's commitment to a master metaphor even as he acknowledges the incompleteness of that metaphor.

Chapter 7 : Visions and Visionaries in Contemporary Austrian Literature and Film - Google Books

2. Visions of extremity in modern literature / Vol. 1, The tragic vision: the confrontation of extremity. 2.

Chapter 8 : Postmodernism - Wikipedia

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Chapter 9 : Visions of the Modern City

The Classic Vision: The Retreat from Extremity in Modern Literature of union and the first moment of collision between the classic and tragic visions in.