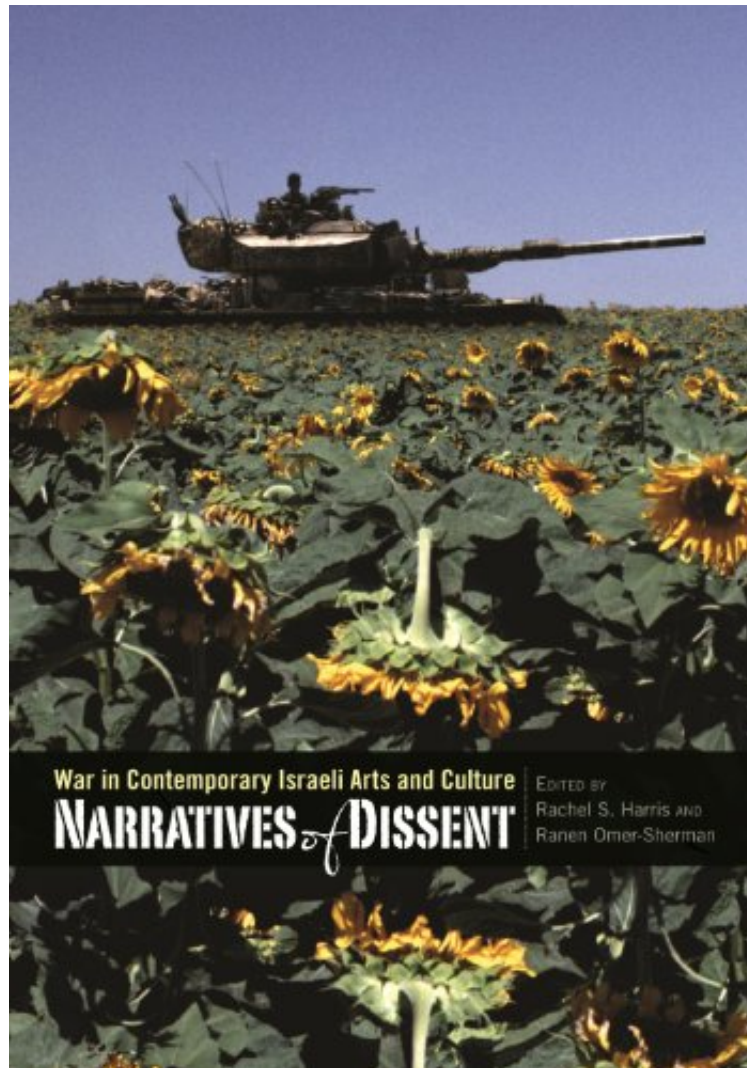


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Narratives of Dissent: War in Contemporary Israeli Arts and Culture

Rachel S. Harris

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Rachel S. Harris : Narratives of Dissent: War in Contemporary Israeli Arts and Culture before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Narratives of Dissent: War in Contemporary Israeli Arts and Culture:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A balanced, multi-disciplinary approach to War Narratives in Israeli Public DiscourseBy recent PHDTTo say that Narratives of Dissent is an important work would be to utter a gross understatement about what is, in my opinion, the most wide-ranging piece of scholarship of its kind to date. Unprecedented in scope, this book goes beyond the usual Cultural Studies-style volume on modern-day Israel--the

kind that inevitably focuses on mostly cinematic or literary depictions of strife and bellicosity, much of it from works that have been discussed to death for over a generation or so. This volume, in contrast, skillfully brings together essays on such diverse topics as architecture, popular music, online social media, memory studies, and photography, while incorporating discussions on important recent (and older) specimens of Israeli cultural production. The essays in this volume are written in intelligent, jargonless prose that exhibits familiarity with the relevant historical debates and theoretical frameworks, necessary critical apparatus, and the sometimes frankly personal expressions of the concerned, yet highly analytical, contributors. The editors have obviously taken great pains to produce a balanced and nuanced tome that, as Ranen Omer-Sherman points out in his Introduction, would not have the all-too-common effect of being "instantly polarizing," as is much of the discourse surrounding Israeli letters and policy. This unique combination of academic acumen and invested interest makes for an enjoying and stimulating read. I, for one, plan to use this volume in my university courses on Israeli culture and society, as it is accessible both to the scholar and educated layperson alike. Kudos to the authors, the editors, and Wayne State UP for providing us with a multidisciplinary and up-to-date collection on issues whose relevance is ever-present, both from within and without the academic world.

The year 1978 marked Israel's entry into Lebanon, which led to the long-term military occupation of non-sovereign territory and the long, costly war in Lebanon. In the years that followed, many Israelis found themselves alienated from the idea that their country used force only when there was no alternative, and Israeli society eventually underwent a dramatic change in attitude toward militarization and the infallibility of the IDF (Israel Defense Forces). In *Narratives of Dissent: War in Contemporary Israeli Arts and Culture* editors Rachel S. Harris and Ranen Omer-Sherman collect nineteen essays that examine the impact of this cultural shift on Israeli visual art, music, literature, poetry, film, theatre, public broadcasting, and commemoration practices after 1978. Divided into three thematic sections—Private and Public Spaces of Commemoration and Mourning, Poetry and Prose, and Cinema and Stage—this collection presents an exciting diversity of experiences, cultural interests, and disciplinary perspectives. From the earliest wartime writings of S. Yizhar to the global phenomenon of films such as *Beaufort*, *Waltz with Bashir*, and *Lebanon*, the Israeli artist's imaginative and critical engagement with war and occupation has been informed by the catalysts of mourning, pain, and loss, often accompanied by a biting sense of irony. This book highlights many of the aesthetic narratives that have wielded the most profound impact on Israeli culture in the present day. These works address both incremental and radical changes in individual and collective consciousness that have spread through Israeli culture in response to the persistent affliction of war. No other such volume exists in Hebrew or English. Students and teachers of Israeli studies will appreciate *Narratives of Dissent*.

About the Author Rachel S. Harris is assistant professor of Israeli literature and culture in the Department of Comparative and World Literature and the Program in Jewish Culture and Society at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She has published articles on Israeli literature in *The Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* and *Israel Studies*. She is also the series editor for the Dalkey Archive Press series *Hebrew Literature in Translation*. Ranen Omer-Sherman is professor of English and Jewish studies at the University of Miami. He is the author of *Israel in Exile: Jewish Writing and the Desert and Diaspora* and *Zionism in Jewish American Literature* and editor of *The Jewish Graphic Novel*. He lived in Israel for thirteen years as a founding member of a desert kibbutz and served in the IDF as a paratrooper.