

BURSTING OUT OF THE CENTER AND BREAKING INTO IT IN TWO  
LITERARY AUTOBIOGRAPHIES: YORAM KANIUK'S *POST MORTEM*  
AND LEAH AINI'S *ROSE OF LEBANON*

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The international boom in biography and autobiography studies over the last two decades, following what Leigh Gilmore calls a 'culture of confession', is still not fully evident in Israeli literary life. While hundreds of books and thousands of articles are published in this field globally, and the International Association of Autobiography and Biography founded in 1999 convenes regular international conferences, in Israel few literary studies, dissertations, and critical essays are published on this subject, despite the wave of autobiographical novels sweeping Israeli book stores since the nineties. This article aspires to widen the field and contribute to the understanding of this genre and its driving forces in contemporary Israeli autobiographies, as manifested in two autobiographies published seventeen years apart: Yoram Kaniuk's *Post Mortem* (1992) and Leah Aini's *Rose of Lebanon* (2009). Whereas Kaniuk, a member of the Palmach Generation, categorized in literature as the State Generation, has passed through all the formative stages of modern Israeli identity, Aini grew up in the margins of Israeli society in the 60s and 70s as the daughter of a domineering Holocaust survivor father from Salonika and a passive and indifferent mother. The article examines how these two writers foreground their 'otherness' and strive to expose their identity through rhetorical countermotions. Using the rhetoric of grotesque, Kaniuk pushes centrifugally to break out of the social and literary elite in which he was born in order to move away from his native Israeli identity towards a more Jewish cosmopolitan one. Aini, on the other hand, in her search for her identity as a female writer, advances centripetally to inscribe herself into Israeli literary history, while dismantling and deconstructing social and national archetypes. This article interrogates the two narrative forms selected by the authors to forge their identities, the authentic and brutal confessional mode of *Post Mortem* against the literariness and hybridity of *Rose of Lebanon*.