

# **Strategies of Life Writing and Autofiction in Contemporary Novel:**

Reading Édouard Levé, Rachel Cusk, and  
Ayşeg l Savaş

**Serhat UYURKULAK**



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## Abstract

This book discusses the overall path of life writing and autofiction, and demonstrates how the works of Édouard Levé, Rachel Cusk, and Ayşegül Savaş contribute to the redefining of the practice of self-representation in the postmodern period. It follows how Levé's *Autoportrait* and *Suicide* break with confessional and linear autobiographical models to offer a formulation of the fragmented self as an inventory. Using a minimalist anti-narrative style that turns identity into discrete data points, these novels also contest the so-called "autobiographical pact," thus anticipating the data-driven identities of the digital era. Differing from Levé's approach, Cusk's *Outline* trilogy builds selfhood through relationality as the narrator Faye avoids explicit self-exposure by sketching her identity in terms of attentive listening and reflecting others' stories. This dialogism opposes the demand for performative individuality and underlines the instability of memory, truth, and belonging. Savaş, on the other hand, primarily in *Walking on the Ceiling* but also in *White on White*, proposes a poetics of withdrawal that regards autofiction as a method of concealment rather than revelation and crafts a self that is at once intimate and knowingly mysterious, whereby the value of withholding in an era of hyper-transparency is affirmed.

These authors shun the idea of a coherent, readily comprehensible self and opt for fragmentation, discontinuity, and non-linearity as more adequate modes of representation for contemporary subjectivity. Their autofictional endeavors merge fact and fiction, and prompt readers to move beyond traditional (auto)biographical expectations to question the notion of authentic selfhood in a mediated world. The book argues that life writing today is in the process of reinventing itself, providing malleable structures for writing personal experience as autofiction breaks free from rigid generic conventions, hence enabling new ways of seeing, understanding, and expressing the self.

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