CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION
The title of the thesis—"I" Across the Boundaries: A Feminist Approach to the Study of Three American and Three Indian (Marathi) Autobiographies Written by Women is self-explanatory. The thesis will cast a critical eye on the literature of "I" written by three American and three Maharashtrian women and examine it through a feminist approach.

The following are the three American autobiographies selected for analysis, listed according to their dates of publication:

1. Pearl S. Buck, My Several Worlds (1954)
2. Marian Anderson, My Lord, What a Morning (1956)
3. Virginia Foster Durr, Outside the Magic Circle (1986)

The three Marathi autobiographies that have been studied in the original are:

1. Laxmibai Tilak, Smriti Chitre (1958)

Although for reasons of convenience the autobiographies under study have been taken only from the Twentieth Century and though a modicum of symmetry has been maintained between the three American and three Indian autobiographies in terms of time-periods covered and areas of interest, it is not a simplistic one to one comparison. Indeed such a comparison is impossible because each autobiography is embedded in its own unique historical context.
Still, the autobiographies of Pearl S. Buck and Laxmibai Tilak have been selected because they were both writers and wrote their autobiographies at about the same time. Marian Anderson and Durga Khote were performing artists who peaked in their careers at the same time i.e. 1940s and 1950s. Virginia Foster Durr and Kamal Padhye, wives of successful men but important in their own right as social activists, wrote autobiographies that described the era spanning the 1940s to the 1980s. So, autobiographies have been selected from mainly three areas of interest: literature, performing arts and social activism. The Indian autobiographies have been confined to Marathi because they could be read in the original and moreover, restricting the study to a single linguistic category made it easier to trace the development of the genre in a specific cultural context. The questions that need to be answered here are: Why autobiographies? Why autobiographies written by women? Why autobiographies across the East-West border?

The selection of autobiographies as a subject of analysis immediately brings up the question of genre studies. Unlike the genres of novel, poetry and drama, which are well entrenched in the canon, literary significance was accorded to the genre of autobiography very recently. Although the autobiography has been in existence for long, it is only in the Twentieth Century that this unique literary discourse has flourished. Critical interest in this genre started even later, only in the late 1950s. Theory and criticism of women's autobiography is even more recent—barely a decade old.
Most contemporary discourse around autobiography centers on the problematic nature of generic definition. As feminist theories have entered the debates around autobiography, the question of generic definition and tradition has shifted in order to challenge primarily masculine conventions and canons. As most of the early autobiography criticism was by men, the generic definition given by them has served only as an instrument of exclusion for the self-writings by women. In his essay "The Law of Genre" Jacques Derrida suggests that the institution of literature works a particularly deceitful arrangement. The "law of genre" is based on a "counterlaw", i.e. the possibility of genre limits is already undermined by the impossibility of maintaining those very limits. Yet the law of genre asserts that "genres are not to be mixed." Somewhat ironically and sarcastically Derrida says: "As soon as the word 'genre' is sounded, as soon as it is heard, as soon as one attempts to conceive it, a limit is drawn. And when a limit is established, norms and interdictions are not behind: 'Do', 'Do not' says 'genre', the word 'genre', the figure, the voice, or the law of genre... Thus as soon as genre announces itself, one must respect a norm, one must not cross a line of demarcation, one must not risk impurity, anomaly or monstrosity." This anxiety about the "purity" of the genre is particularly acute in the case of autobiography. The introduction to James Olney's 1980 anthology, *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, is marked by signs of
uncertainty. "Autobiography", Olney writes, "produces more questions than answers, more doubts by far (even of its existence) than certainties." 

A brief glance at the history of autobiography criticism in the West confirms Derrida's thesis. Although genre criticism frequently consists of continual definition and redefinition, most autobiography criticism appears to be engaged in a valiant bid to stabilise and fix generic boundaries. For example, the "father" of autobiography criticism, Georges Gusdorf describes autobiography as "a solidly established literary genre, its history traceable in a series of masterpieces from the Confessions of St. Augustine to Gide's Si le grain ne meurt, with Rousseau's Confessions, Goethe's Dichtung und Wahrheit, Chateaubriand's Memoires d'outre tombe, and Newman's Apologia in between." One notices immediately the Eurocentric and male bias in the works cited as examples. Part of Gusdorf's effort to circumscribe autobiography includes drawing a limit at the borders of Western culture: "Autobiography is not to be found outside of our cultural area; one would say that it expresses a concern peculiar to Western man; a concern that has been of good use in his systematic conquest of the universe and that he has communicated to men of other cultures; but those men will thereby have been annexed by a sort of intellectual colonising to a mentality that was not their own."

Gusdorf is not the only Western critic to claim that only Westerners can write autobiography. Roy Pascal, writing in 1960, claims that autobiography
is "a distinctive product of Western, post-Romantic civilisation, and only in modern times has it spread to other civilisations." Pascal's attempts to fix the national and cultural boundaries of autobiography are challenged by his own consideration of the sixteenth century memoirs of Babar, the Turkish founder of the Moghul dynasty in India. Of course a consideration of why the boundaries of the genre are drawn in ever-narrowing circles of cultural specificity throughout the twentieth century is outside the scope of this study.

What this study will try to investigate is the importance of the autobiographical genre as a writing strategy by women and whether it transcends national and cultural boundaries.

Recent feminist autobiography criticism has begun to re-evaluate Gusdorf's generic conditions and limits. Leila Ahmed has critiqued the Gusdorf School of autobiography criticism by examining the tradition of autobiography in Islamic-Arabic letters. Ahmed distinguishes between the classical autobiographies of "rulers, religious - mystic autobiographies, and the autobiographical accounts of scholars and modern Arabic autobiography in order to pose questions of historical continuity and change in the aftermath of European colonialism." Another refutation of the Eurocentric origin of autobiography can be found in Domna Stanton's reference to the "introspective writings " of Japanese women in the Heian period. Stanton and Ahmed read
contemporary autobiography criticism through the lens of gender in order to see beyond the national and ethnic borders constituted by at least two generations of Western critics.

Estelle Jelinek says that "the various forms in which women write their life-studies are often appropriate for rendering the authors' intentions and / or personalities, and autobiographical critics do a disservice to these many fine works and to the genre itself when they saddle the autobiographical mode with their confining criteria."^{14}

Most feminist critics agree that the complexity of the modern world has made a holistic view of life difficult and it has affected the form and content of autobiography as well. One has to acknowledge however, that what appears to be new, may in fact be, for women, the culmination of a long tradition.

Feminist criticism, especially gynocriticism, has found in women's autobiographical writing a rich mother lode. Gynocriticism is a term coined by Elaine Showalter to describe a dominant mode in Anglo-American criticism which has been concerned with the specificity of women's writing, a tradition of women authors and an exploration of women's culture. The gynocritic dedicates herself to the female author and character and develops theories and methodologies based on female experience, the touchstone of authenticity. The gynocritic discovers in her authors and characters an understanding of female identity--not that she expects her authors and
heroines to be superwomen, but the essential struggle will be towards a coherent identity, a realisation of selfhood and autonomy. Theories of women's writing presently make use of four models of difference: biological, linguistic, psychoanalytic and cultural.

Biological criticism is the most extreme form of gender difference. For theorists of biological criticism, anatomy is textuality. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have used this extensively in their famous book *Madwoman in the Attic*. "If the pen is a metaphorical penis, from what organ can females generate texts?" they ask in this provocative and extremely readable book. Feminist criticism written from the biological perspective generally stresses the importance of the body as a source of imagery. Critics following this line of thought borrow extensively from the imagery arising from motherhood, childbirth, menstruation etc. But since biology is the most significant and obvious difference between the sexes, criticism based on biology can lead to further polarisation between the texts written by men and women. This difference can be used to justify full power of one sex over the other. The study of biological imagery in women's writing is useful and important as long as we understand that factors other than anatomy are involved in it. The difference of women's literary practice therefore must be sought (in Nancy Miller's words) in the "body of her writing and not in the writing of her body."
Linguistic theories of women's writing ask whether men and women use language differently. Many French feminists like Helene Cixous, Annie Leclerc, Chantal Chawaf etc. advocate an oral break from the dictatorship of patriarchal speech. Helene Cixous especially, represents a distinctively French brand of radical feminism which centres on the concept of *écriture féminine* or feminine writing—the inscription of the female body and female difference in language and text. The advocacy of a woman's language is a political gesture that also carries tremendous emotional force. But despite its unifying appeal, the concept of a woman's language is riddled with difficulties. Linguists agree that there is no evidence that would suggest that the sexes are pre-programmed to develop structurally different linguistic systems. Analyses which look for "feminine style" in the repetition of stylistic devices, image patterns and syntax in women's writing tend to confuse innate forms with the overdetermined results of literary choice. Language and style are never raw and instinctual but are always the products of innumerable factors, of genre, tradition, memory and context. The more important task, as Showalter has pointed out, is to concentrate on women's access to language. Because women are culturally denied the luxury of making full use of the available lexical range, they are forced into silence, circumlocution and euphemism. She says: "Women's literature is still haunted by the ghosts of repressed language, and until we have exorcised
those ghosts, it ought not to be in language that we base our theory of
difference."^{15}

Psychoanalytically oriented feminist criticism locates the difference of women's writing in the author's psyche and the relation of gender to the creative process. Penis envy, the castration complex, and the Oedipal phase have become the Freudian co-ordinates defining women's relationship to language, fantasy and culture. Lacan has extended castration into a total female metaphor for female literary and linguistic disadvantage. In psychoanalytic terms "lack" has traditionally been associated with the feminine. Gilbert and Gubar opine that the nature and "difference" of women's writing lies in its troubled and even tormented relationship to female identity. They speak about "her culturally conditioned timidity about self-dramatisation, her dread of the patriarchal authority of art, her anxiety about the impropriety of female invention—all these phenomena of 'inferiorization' mark the woman writer's struggle for artistic self definition and differentiate her efforts at self-creation from those of her male counterpart."^{16} The most dramatic and promising work in feminist psychoanalysis has been Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (1978). Chodorow's work suggests that shared parenting, the involvement of men as primary caretakers of children, will have a profound effect on our sense of sex difference, gender identity and sexual preference. One important effect of feminist
psychoanalysis for literary criticism has been the growing interest in the mother-daughter relationship. One of the critics who makes use of this configuration is Elizabeth Abel who makes a bold investigation of female friendships in contemporary women's novels. She brings together women's texts from a variety of national literatures, choosing to emphasize "the constancy of certain emotional dynamics depicted in diverse cultural situations." But though psychoanalytically based models of feminist criticism have succeeded in providing us insightful and persuasive ways of reading texts from a variety of national and cultural circumstances, they cannot always account for historical change, ethnic and class differences and the difference arising from generic and economic variety. One will have to go beyond psychoanalytic theory to a point where it and a cultural investigation of women's writing overlap.

A theory based on a model of women's culture can provide the most comprehensive analysis of women's writing. A theory of culture in fact incorporates ideas about women's body, language and psyche but interprets them in relation to the social and cultural contexts in which they occur. A cultural theory acknowledges that there are important differences between women as writers—class, race, nationality and history are literary determinants as significant as gender. Nonetheless, women's culture forms a collective experience that binds women writers to each other over time and space. Gerda Lerner explains the importance of examining women's
experience in its own terms: "History must include an account of the female experience over time and should include the development of feminist consciousness as an essential aspect of women's past." However, it is important that we do not look upon "woman's culture" as a subordinate culture, because women live a duality—as members of a general (patriarchal) culture and as members of women's culture. Women writing then are not inside and outside the male tradition, they are inside two traditions simultaneously. Virginia Woolf says in A Room of One's Own that a woman writing thinks back through her mothers. But, as Showalter has pointed out, a woman writing unavoidably thinks back through her fathers as well. The difference of women's writing then, can only be understood in terms of this complex and historically grounded cultural relation. As Showalter states: "The first task of a gynocentric criticism must be to plot the precise cultural locus of female literary identity and to describe the forces that intersect an individual woman writer's cultural field. A gynocentric criticism would also situate women writers with respect to the variables of literary culture, such as modes of production and distribution, relations of author and audience, relations of high to popular art, hierarchies of genre." Thus there is not one but several feminist theories. For those who are looking for a uniform feminist practice, this can be very disturbing. For others, this pluralism is an indication of feminism's flexibility. A suspicion of theory is widespread throughout feminism. And we see a constant
straining against the boundary of categorisation. Therefore the feminist approach that will be used in this thesis will not adhere to a particular feminist framework but will borrow liberally from all the important and relevant feminist theories.

Just as the boundaries of feminist literary criticism are ever-changing and defying restriction, the boundaries of autobiographical writing are also straining against fixity. Although the genres of life-writing have been in existence in all civilisations, the term autobiography is a post-Enlightenment coinage. Yet, the word and practice invoke a particular genealogy and ideology.

The autobiography is one of those complicated, self-conscious texts in which the author stands both naked and veiled. What makes women's autobiography even more problematical is the fact that in defying the traditional injunction to silence for women the autobiographical act itself contests the biological and cultural role chalked out for a "woman". Women's autobiography is a mirror glimpsed at, gazed into and negotiated with in public. Writing an autobiography is therefore a self-conscious act and for women especially, speaking out with a strong, assertive "I" in public has to be done with a wary eye on the reading community it is meant for. The real defence against unseemly egotism can be found in the spoken or unspoken justification given by women for writing their autobiography. But as we shall see, the purposefulness of women's autobiography does not
entirely obscure the frank pleasure women take in constructing a text from a life. This anxiety about the female autograph transcends national and cultural boundaries and it is worth while to examine the autobiography across this boundary.

An examination of the literature of the Self across the cultural, i.e. the East-West boundary can make the study richer. The different historical periods during which women's autobiography flourished in different cultures is an interesting area of study, though outside the scope of this thesis. Women's diaries and autobiographies increased as literacy and educational opportunities for women improved. In the U.S. peak periods of autobiographical productivity for women have been during the Progressive era—1890 to World War I, an era of unprecedented public service by women— and during the 1960s and 1970s. The periods of greatest productivity for women's autobiographies have not been during revolutionary (male) times but during the high points of women's history.

In India, autobiographies by women started to be written not, contrary to common belief, during the Freedom struggle, but earlier, during the Reform Movement when educational opportunities for women increased. Maharashtra and Bengal were the two states in India where literacy for women was undertaken seriously during the Reform Movement in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, and the autobiography became, for women,
an important tool to affirm their identity and create a space for themselves in
the community.

In America, the dominant tradition of women's autobiography has
roots in Puritan beliefs about the Self and the Puritan practice of conversion
narratives. The present-day secular autobiography is in many ways a direct
descendant of the conversion narratives.

In India, autobiographical writings are rarely found outside the
tradition of individualism and selfhood. Yet, of the 473 abhangs available
today of the seventeenth century poet and philosopher from Maharashtra,
Bahinabai (1628-1700), the first twenty-eight are an atmanivedan, an
autobiographical account of her soul's journey through twelve previous lives
as well as through her present one. The women saint-poets of the Bhakti
Movement in Medieval India also composed poems and lyrics with
autobiographical accounts of their mystical union with their chosen gods.

The origin of the autobiography, in both the Indian and American cultures
thus, has strong spiritual links.

But the modern definition of an autobiography has changed
considerably. Philippe Lejeune, one of the most respected names in
autobiography studies proposed the following working definition of the
genre:
"We shall define autobiography as the retrospective prose narrative that someone writes concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality."^20

Lejeune in his subsequent books was to extend the meaning of autobiography to include collaborative autobiography and expand the frontiers of the study of autobiography from a narrowly literary to a broadly social context. Like all the early critics working on autobiographical studies Lejeune too places the concept of confession at the heart of the autobiographical domain. Feminist scholars were to later question this valorisation of the confessional mode in autobiographical studies. Arlyn Diamond says: "The concept of 'truthfulness' is central to the way we generally discuss autobiography, unreflectingly equating truth with the acknowledgement of suppressed desires or unacceptable behaviours."^21

Estelle Jelinek refers to the confessional ideal in the autobiographical mode as "the autobiographical fallacy of self-revelation."^22 She opines that life-studies by public figures often lack confidentiality while writers have produced some of the best autobiographies without conforming to the confessional ideal.

What is worth exploring is the question of whether this lack of confidentiality in women's autobiography extends on both sides of the cultural divide. For this, one will have to study the autobiography in the context of the socio-political landscape of the nation. The autobiography has
always been an important genre for marginalised people. The blacks, the
ethic minorities, the public women in America have made extensive use of
the autobiography to put forward their viewpoints. Social historians and
literary critics like Robert F. Sayre, Daniel Shea, James M. Cox etc. have
pointed to the importance of the autobiography in nation building in America.

In India, the autobiography gained popularity at the turn of this
century when a spiritual and social awakening amongst the educated
colonised subjects prompted a closer self-examination. These educated
Indian men were liberals who taught their wives to read and write and
encouraged their education in order to make them "better" companions and
life partners. Most of the early autobiographies written by women in Marathi
are by those who were "also" wives. A closer look at their autobiographies
however, reveals latent tensions and a subtle but clear undermining of the
agenda set out for them by their men.

Women writers may not be exempt from the ideologies that shape
their worlds, but it does not follow that there is no sense in which women's
writing can be regarded as different or as warranting separate attention.
Women articulate and respond to ideologies from complexly decentered
positions within them. Familial ideologies, for instance, clearly constitute
male and female subjectivities in different ways, as do ideologies of nation or
of empire. Further, ideologies are not experienced in the same way from
different subject positions. What may appear just and rational from a male or
upper class point of view may seem exploitative and contradictory from a working class woman's point of view.

The Autobiography as a genre has evolved considerably over the years. It is interesting to note the changing face of women's autobiography in Marathi literature. Indeed, some of the best known autobiographies in Marathi have been written by women. What are some of the similarities and differences between the three Marathi autobiographies chosen for analysis? Has the form of the autobiography changed over the years? Are the three Marathi autobiographies different in any way from the three American autobiographies? These are only some of the questions that need to be answered.

The three American autobiographies selected for this thesis are also written by women from diverse backgrounds and though they are all American and all belong to the Twentieth Century, there were significant changes in the socio-political and economic history of the U.S. in the last few decades to merit a significant change in attitudes towards women. Have these changes brought about a change in the handling of the autobiographical genre? In what ways are these three women different from and similar to each other? Are there major differences across the East-West divide? Or does a common gender sweep cultural differences away? Is such a cross-cultural examination legitimate at all? Cultural relativists insist upon the uniqueness of each culture. For them, comparing one culture to another is like comparing
apples to oranges. For the cultural relativist, differences are not related to one another, they are not even commensurable.

Current post-modernist thought has picked up where anthropology's relativization of the world left off. According to post-modernist theory all groups have a right to speak for themselves, in their own voice, and to have that voice accepted as legitimate. Indeed feminism has a close affinity with post-modernism in its concern with "otherness" and difference. Feminism questions universalist discourses which allow men--white, dominant, male--to represent themselves as humanity and excludes and marginalises women as well as colonised peoples, races, ethnicities. But does this mean that we should plunge into particularism, and discard "universalisation" and theory once and for all? Could we do this even if we chose to? Gayatri Spivak has this to say: "I think it is absolutely on target to take a stand against the discourses of essentialism, universalism as it comes to terms with the universal--of classical German philosophy or the universal as the white upper class male...etc. But strategically we cannot. Even as we talk about feminist practice, or privileging practice over theory, we are universalising. Since the moment of essentialising, universalising, saying yes to the ontophenomenological question is irreducible, let us at least situate it at the moment; let us become vigilant about our own practice and use it as much as we can rather than make the totally counter-productive gesture of repudiating it."
Disempowered and marginalised people need to change existing relations of power and domination, therefore to act; to act they need a common basis for reasoned action, and to communicate with each other. This gives rise to a common discourse. The problem of course rests in creating a common discourse, which will take into account the uniqueness of each particular group and situation without erasing their respective differences.

Feminism has succeeded in challenging androcentrism (the habit of looking at the world through male eyes). But in the present post-Marxist and post-Modernist era where all totalising discourses are being called into question, feminist theory too has to cope with the accusation that it is just another "grand narrative". There is growing awareness of differences between women of differing cultural, social and economical backgrounds. The concept of "woman" as a unitary notion is shattered. Putting all women under one umbrella term would be fallacious.

Susie Tharu and K.Lalita make the following observation in this regard: "As it enumerates the themes and sets up the agenda for women's writing the world over, the present day concerns of Western feminists are writ large to encompass the world, and the world collapses into the West."\textsuperscript{24}

The challenge of pluralism from the inside therefore confronts feminism with the difficult task of developing theories and strategies which embrace differences, and which can still provide a framework for the commensurability of culture and values.
As Fatmagul Berktay says: "Trying to think and theorise through difference is obviously no easy task. But this should not discourage feminists, or cause them to avoid engaging in the effort to reclaim 'knowledge'. Knowledge and its systematic form, theory, have the potential to pave the way for resistance and subversion. Women need to reclaim the right to knowledge and to theory, precisely because the possessors of the right to name, to define and to theorise, are also the possessors of power." These debates about differences between women have often resulted in a disillusionment with feminist work. Audre Lorde has written passionately on the subject: "We have all been programmed to respond to human differences between us with fear and loathing. The challenge remains for difference to be an empowering exchange, rather than a threat. It is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognise those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behaviour and expectation. We need to develop tools for using human difference as a springboard for creative change within our lives."

Studying these autobiographies across the East-West boundary therefore, can bring us unexpected surprises. All forms of thought and representation dealing with the "alien", the "other" are problematical and in the process of making interpretative statements about foreign cultures and traditions, dichotomising and restructuring are inevitable. While this is quite
justified, studying other cultures and learning about their experiences teaches
us that the "other" (in my case the "Westerner") is not so removed from "us"
after all. It might also open up new insights into analysing oneself and one's
own cultural context.

Till very recently, feminism too was considered a Western notion. But
it has now been accepted that an idea cannot be confined within national or
geographical boundaries. In any case, while the term feminism may be
foreign, the concept stands for a transformational process, a process that
started in South Asia in the Nineteenth century as an organised and
articulated stand against women's subordination. Thus feminism was not
artificially imposed here, nor was it a foreign ideology. Feminism and
feminist struggles arose in Asia when a consciousness developed about
democratic rights and the injustice of depriving half the population of its basic
rights. In fact, feminist consciousness arose in Asia during certain historic
periods of heightened political consciousness, especially in the Nineteenth
and early Twentieth centuries, during struggles against foreign rule and
against the local despotism of feudal monarchs.

The issues which present-day feminists are raising in South Asia are
both indigenous and very concrete. Many of them have also been raised by
Western feminists but this fact neither makes them irrelevant for us nor
proves that South Asian feminists are "followers" of Western feminists. For,
if some forms of women's oppression are universal, then the struggles must
and will also be universal. A study of autobiography at the interface of
genre and culture will therefore throw up interesting facts.

A cross-cultural examination of three American autobiographies with
three Marathi autobiographies is a new approach to reading texts and one that
has not been attempted before. None of these autobiographies has been
analysed before in such detail or with a feminist approach. Hopefully this
method of comparing and contrasting autobiographical voices of women
from two different global environments and from different social, religious
and economic positions will help in widening the scope of autobiographical
and feminist studies.

Each of the six books selected for this study is analysed in a separate
chapter and the final chapter, the Conclusion, brings together the threads of
all the preceding chapters and make inferences about women's autobiography
across the boundary.

The chapter on My Several Worlds examines the evasiveness of the
writer as is apparent in the form and content of the book and concludes that
My Several Worlds defies the notion of the autobiography as a confessional
ideal. The chapter explains the erasure of a strong self in the book on the part
of Pearl S. Buck in terms of her spectacular professional success in an era
when success was the prerogative of men.
The third chapter on *My Lord, What a Morning* states that Marian Anderson identifies strongly with the phallocentric status quo and therefore her autobiography is not a feminist text at all.

The chapter on *Outside the Magic Circle* examines at length a book that is different from the other five books because of its being a transcription from an oral discourse. This confidence in manipulating the generic format and the institutionalising of her autobiography by the Southern Oral History Programme (SOHP) speaks of the growing influence of the female signature.

Chapter 5 deals with Smriti Chitre and the presence of undercurrents of feminist thought apparent in the text. However, the social and cultural compulsions of Laxmibai Tilak's life dictated that this opposition would only be silent and suppressed.

Durga Khote's autobiography reveals the dilemma about placing her sense of self in the mind of a woman who was successful at a time when women celebrities were few and far apart. Durga Khote's splitting of her private and public selves textually as well as literally speaks of her struggle to fit into the mould of a "good" Indian woman.

The chapter on *Bandh-Anubandh* concludes that of all the six autobiographies, this is the one most like a classic autobiography in its close adherence to Lejeune's idea of "le pacte autobiographique". Fully conscious of the sanctity in the Indian society of the very ties she speaks against, Kamal
Padhye has written a text that is close to being subversive in articulating literally the feminist slogan of "the Personal is Political".

The eighth chapter is the conclusion that states that the basic difference in the autobiographies of the three American and three Indian women arose due to cultural variety, and the historical place of the autobiography in their specific cultures. The three American women tend to use the autobiography more as a social document while the three Indian women use the autobiography as a literature of the Self. There is also a change in the handling of the autobiographical genre over the years. We see in the autobiographies of Kamal Padhye and Virginia Foster Durr an intermingling of the private and public selves. They also show a greater willingness to experiment with the standard framework of the autobiographical genre. However, such evolutionist conclusions should not blind us to the unique historical specificity and narrative strategies used variously by the six women. Hopefully, this study will throw more light on the variety of women's voices that had hitherto been marginalised or excluded from the canon.

At the threshold of the twentieth century we confront a world which is becoming a big global village but also a village where each group is becoming more aware of its own special quality, its unique feature. A study of women's autobiography that spans the twentieth century and straddles the
globe will make us more aware of the rich literary inheritance left to us by our mothers.
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Ibid. 29.

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