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The Theme of Dystopia in Indian Fiction in English: An Exploration

By

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## Executive Summary

One of the most common aspects of the studies that normally form the bulk of the scholarship of Indian Writing in English is that it is of a more general nature. Studies focusing on the different aspects or the different dimensions of the area are often rare in the entire ambit of serious academic study in this field. When it comes to the representation of the dystopian elements in Indian Writing in English, some stark facts stand out quite clearly. The most important among them is the complete absence of any similar treatment on the representation of the dystopia themes in Indian Writing in English. Some scholars like Anupama Mohan have only tangentially dealt with the idea; but there is hardly any scholar who has tried to go to the core of the issue. The dystopian sensibility is indeed one of the most potent and discussed issues in postmodern literary criticism. Thus it is a wonder that it has almost been neglected in the area of postcolonial literature in general and of Indian writing in English in particular. It is in this respect that this work claims to be unique and one of the first of its kind. I will regard it as successful if it is taken in a similar vein by researchers and scholars.

This brings us directly to the purpose of the study. The purpose of this study has been to identify and analyse the trajectories taken by Indian Fiction in English down the ages when the representation of the self and the other has taken recourse to elements which would qualify as dystopian in nature. And in the process of such location and analysis, what comes out as an abiding aspect of the representation of the dystopia themes in mainstream Indian fiction in English is the fact that it has always dominantly reflected the different socio-cultural aspects going through the different modes of representation. In the time of the national awakening, it took the form of representing the politically ruling class presented through abstractions as dystopian through a mode which is fraught with elements of postcolonial ambivalence vindicating the postmodern theory that utopia and dystopia lie in close proximity to each other and frequently invade each other's territory. If on the one hand there is a direct materialistic manifestation of the struggle in which the two sides reflect two warring groups, on the other, it goes through the changing process of a renewed estimation of the dystopian West and the tendency of representing the Indian experience, or the third world experience in general through

narrative modes like that of magic realism. Similarly, if Khyas Chunder Dutt's representation of the West was the expression of mythopoeia, there is much of it in that of Raja Rao's representation in terms of the Puranic myths or of Salman Rushdie's imagination of Grimus. This interrelatedness of the different modes of representation also makes one thing absolutely clear. It is that this representation is a kind of continuum, a kind of development integrally linked to each of its components. The sociological continuum that the chronologically unfolding study reveals provides a kind of backdrop of the continuous nature of this development. In the conclusive chapter, perhaps a chapter by chapter account of the study would lead us to the final vindication of the hypothesis stated in the second chapter of the study.

Apart from stating the purpose and the scope, the first chapter of the study brings in the fore a few definitions of what is meant by dystopia fiction. It quotes Keith Booker's definition of dystopia fiction or dystopia literature which is more general than specific and sets the very scope of the present study. The works from the dystopian literary canon which are taken up to provide the necessary understanding into the common features and the necessities of the genres, works like *A Sojourn in the City of Amalgamation, in the Year of Our Lord, 19—* (1835), the first ever specimen of dystopia fiction, deal with a theme that is quite consistent in the realities projected by the Indian dystopian texts, the interracial marriage in the dystopian city of Amalgamation. The other works which have been taken up for the study for the constitution of the canonical paradigm to judge the work under the present case studies for their representation of the dystopian reality in fiction include Jules Verne's *The Begum's Fortune* (1879), an amalgamate linking an utopian and a dystopian vision, Ann Bowman Dodd's *The Republic of Future* (1887), H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Sleeper Awakes* (1910), *The First Man in the Moon* (1901) and *A Story of Days to Come* (1897), Zamyatin's *We* (1924), George Orwell's *1984*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). All of them represent the different aspects of the dystopia both in each of them as well as collectively. Other works like *Clockwork Orange* (1962), *Make Room! Make Room* (1966), *The Stone Gods* (2007), *The Sheep look Up*, (1972), *The Long Walk* (1979), *Running Man* (1982) *The Handmaid's Tale*, (1985), *The Children of Men* (1992) all are studied to find out the basic aspects of dystopian fiction which are enumerated in the following section of the chapter so as to provide the parameters against which the dystopian elements of the Indian novels taken up would be viewed.

Several features of the dystopia, as represented in these novels have been taken up and analysed in connection with the works taken up for case studies.

From this part of the study, one of the essential points that appear to emerge in all dystopian literatures is the presence of a warning, a warning into a present that is going to turn into a bleak future. And it is this being strongly rooted into the reality of the present, despite the futuristic pattern, that has played a major role in inspiring the hypothesis of the study. A dystopian narrative basically presents a conflict between the establishment and the individual in which the individual is pitted against the invincible forces of the establishment, which is most often political and administrative and individualism with individual liberty and autonomy both at the personal and institutional levels are at stake. Thus, a conflict is inevitable between the two ends, one representing the oppressive establishments with its media of control through coercion and hegemony and the other through the dystopian protagonist's recourse to the ways unsanctioned by the establishment. And in this oppressive control for the fulfilment of the vested interests of the establishment, often the environment has to bear the brunt. Again, in a dystopian narrative most often technological and scientific development are often seen as an accessory to some kind of development-displacement paradigm and resisted by the forces that oppose the dystopia. Technological empowerment creates also a kind of class division among the people placed at different distances from the modes of economic production and thus a dystopia is a highly divided society in terms of benefits and fulfilment of the meaning of existence. However, perhaps the most common and the abiding characteristics of all dystopian fiction lie in the resistance against the dystopia represented in it, whether organised or personal. The protagonists in the dystopia always resist the dystopian establishment and deeply connected with it is the aspect with which we began enumerating the different characteristics of the dystopian fiction over here, the fact that it is a veiled warning towards a bleaker future moored to the socio-economic realities of the time. It is also this final aspect that has an important bearing on the hypothesis that connects the two ends.

But before the hypothesis needs to be set, one always needs a literature survey to set up the theoretical paradigm which would provide an essential perspective into the study. This is done in the second chapter in which this study concentrates on the theorists in this field. The literature survey of the study is divided into sections, the first dealing with dystopia theory in

general and the second dealing with this particular area in the works preceding the present study. The theoretical works which are taken up at the very beginning in the first part are perhaps the most extensive ones of dystopian literary theory. M. Keith Booker's *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and Research Guide* (1994) is a dissertation on the dystopia theory in general and the utopia/ dystopia paradigm in selected utopian and dystopian fiction, drama and films. This work, along with another work by Booker on this field, *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism* (1994) establishes dystopian literature, again, as a reaction to a utopian vision and generalises the term dystopia by disassociating it from the kind of futuristic science fiction with which it is most often identified. This idea has a very important role to play in deciding the texts the present study would take up for case study, particularly in a context where very few of them are dystopian literature in the strictest sense of the term. Booker is the dystopian theorist who deserves the foremost mention; but his work has been preceded by Krishan Kumar's *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (1987), a work which traces the dystopian tradition back to the satiric tradition that runs through the 18th and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and in the course of history being one of the ways of man's reaction to change. If Booker broadens the scope of dystopian literature of the study, Kumar adds a historical perspective to it, making it imperative for any such study on dystopian writings to be moored to the realities of space and time.

While Booker and Kumar sets the basic parameters of the dystopian elements in literature, the other theorists studied in this part lend different perspectives to the representation of the dystopia. Erika Gottlieb's *Dystopian Fiction East and West* (2001) stresses on the importance of the availability and the denial of justice, -- legal, political and social, for the setting up of a utopian-dystopian binary while *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* (1986) and *Scraps of Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia* (2000) by Tom Moylan sees his "critical dystopias" as produced by the socio-economic and political reversals that the literature of the eighties and the nineties were experiencing. *Transformation of Language in Modern Dystopias* by David W. Sisk which came out in 1997 is a treatment on the use of language in a typical dystopian fiction in which Sisk finds the conflict between the dystopian and the power resisting it expressed basically by means of language. In this conflict between the language of the dystopian establishment and that of the agencies opposing it, comes into play the third category of language belonging to the writer who mediates

between the dystopian establishment and the forces contesting it. In works like *Revisiting Literary Utopias and Dystopias, Some New Genres* (2009), Clare Archer-Lean discusses various manifestations of the utopian and the dystopian in different forms of literature and different specimens of case studies drawn from different genres. This forms an important theoretical precedence to the present work in that the present study also picks up works for case studies which are not ostensibly dystopian in the strictest sense of the term but are abundant with the elements that qualify as dystopian. Similar works in this vein are *Representations of Dystopia in Literature and Films* (2005), edited by Pat Wheeler and *No Place Else: Exploration in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction* (1983), and *Utopias off Language in Contemporary Feminist Literary Dystopias* by Ildney Cavalcanti (2000) which becomes seminally important in the study, particularly in its development of the parameters of the study of the feminist dystopia.

And this brings us to the immediate precedence to the study in the area to which the present study belongs, -- Postcolonial Literature. One of the most important influences on Postcolonial Literature in general is that of Bill Ashcroft and over here, in the study of dystopian elements in Postcolonial Literature, an article by Ashcroft becomes all the more relevant. In “Introduction: Spaces of Utopia” (2012) the close association between the vision of utopia and dystopia from the postcolonial standpoint is established to lie in close proximity and frequently invade each other’s territory. In a deconstructive reading of the postcolonial utopia, Ashcroft’s essay locates every trait of its bipolar opposite in it, though he does not use the term dystopia to designate that opposite. The rest of the works taken up in the chapter *The Quest for Postcolonial Utopias: A Comparative Introduction of Utopian Novels in New English Literatures* (2001) by Ralph Portzi, *Dystopia and the Postcolonial Nation* (2011) by Suparno Banerjee and O.P. Mathur’s *Indira Gandhi and the Emergency as Viewed in the Indian Novel* (2004), all represent the dystopian reality as it comes out in the postcolonial literature in general and Indian writing in English in particular. However, Anupama Mohan’s *Utopia and the Village in South Asian Literatures* is the one that strikes out in this part as a kind of precedence to the present study. It is an exploration of the 20<sup>th</sup> century literature of Indian and Sri Lanka in which literature has transcended the binaries of utopia/ dystopia towards what Foucault calls a “heterotopic” state of being which “desiccate(s) speech, stop words in their tracks, contests the very possibility of grammar at its source: they dissolve our myths and sterilise the lyricism of our sentences” (xviii). The setting in Indian writing in English is most often a “heterotopic” one and as the hypothesis

posits, the dystopian elements in Indian writing in English has been closely moulded by the socio-economic and political realities of the time.

In its bid to examine this hypothesis, the study has taken up specific novels as constituting its case studies. The first chapter in which the case studies begin takes up the earliest specimen of prose fiction available. In fact, it takes up the earliest extant work in Indian Prose fiction narrative, Kylas Chunder Dutt's *A Journal of 48 Hours in the Year 1945* published in the same year of the publication of Macaulay's infamous minutes on Education, a work which proposed to create "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (online). Kylas Chunder's text is a purely futuristic dystopian one, unlike most of the texts taken up for case study following it which have dystopian elements in varying degrees but cannot be termed as dystopian texts in the strictest sense of the term. Nevertheless, the way Kylas Chunder locates the dystopian elements is not much different from the way other contemporary works following his work does. He locates the dystopia in the oppressive institutions of the West, in its governmental control and in the way it manipulates the different organs of society like the press and the army. Nevertheless, the study also locates an element of ambivalence in the representation of the dystopia in the West, its subversion of the West also occurs in the representation of the modes of resisting the dystopian establishment. The next work surveyed, Soshee Chunder Dutt's *The Republic of Orissa: Annals from the Pages of the Twentieth Century* (1845) is also a futuristic novel but the time span is much closer to the time in which it was being written, only seven years in the future. While the element of ambivalence and postcolonial mimicry is less present than what we find in Kylas Chunder's novel, neither the association of the governing authorities with dystopia, nor the element of ambivalence are completely brushed aside. As Soshee Chunder predicts the fall of the dystopian British Empire he also laments the loss of its "former glory" (356). If one tries to locate these elements of dystopian reality in S.M. Mitra's *Hindupore* (1909), the next novel taken up, it would be found in the European Orientalist (in the Saidian sense) theoretical perspective of the English characters like Colonel Ironside though the element of ambivalence is constantly present all throughout.

This takes us to the representation of the dystopian characteristics in terms of the European characters present in the next few novels taken up in this chapter. The characters of

Mr. England, Dr. Marjoribanks, the atmosphere of Sir John White Cotton Mills with the manager Mr. Little and its foreman Jimmie Thomas, the “Chimta Sahib” (248) and the Eurasian Mrs. Mainwaring in Mulk Raj Anand’s *Coolie* (1936) bring out the dystopian characteristics in terms of characters while the whole of the environment of the Bombay in which Munoo and people like him live becomes a prototype of the industrial dystopia. The difference between the dystopian characters in *Coolie* and the next novel taken up for case studies, *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) is that latter, Anand depicts some European characters who are sympathetic about the plight of the tea plantation coolies, thereby falling conveniently into the common stereotype of the good Englishman and the bad Englishman. Among the Englishmen who exploit the common workers at the tea estate, there was Reggie Hunt, Croft-Cooke, Tweethie, Hitch Cock and Major Barbara. Among the other type of Englishmen were Dr. John De La Havre, an employee of the farm and Miss Barbara, the daughter of the Croft-Cookes. Thus, one can also find the representation of the postcolonial ambivalence that we have already located in writers like Kylas Chunder and Soshee Chunder Dutt. Here the atmosphere of the tea estate, Macpherson Tea Estate and the hellish life of a worker is another way of building up the dystopian element and it reminds us of the stifling atmosphere of Sir John White Cotton Mills. The focus gets more concentrated on the atmosphere, however, in the description of the war torn Europe in Anand’s *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) and the opposition to the Gandhian Utopia located in the Skefington Coffee Estate in Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* (1938). Thus while the dominant representation of the dystopian elements in the pre-independence novels is concentrated around the individual and the collective image of the colonial West, despite a strong undercurrent of ambivalence and mimicry, there is also a tendency of the broadening of perspective roughly with time in which the individual westerner is exonerated from being a component of the dystopian and the colonial process. This element of ambivalence is effectively present throughout.

This broadening of the perspective can be most conspicuously noted in the works that were taken up in the next chapter. Santa Rama Rau’s two novels taken up there *Remember the House* (1956) and *The Adventuress* (1971), both set in 1946, deal with the dystopia operating through the hegemony of the western education and the aggressive policies of war-mongering during World War II. Noteworthy is the fact that the locale shown in the latter novel, *The Adventuress* as coming close to the dystopian setting is the war torn Japan after its surrender, and with Santa Rama Rau and others in the chapter, we saw the dystopian being located more

globally than locally. With the end of the hundred odd years of the struggle of independence, it seems that the tentacles of the dystopia were being located and represented as spread beyond the realities of the colonial rule in India. The same tendency to move out from the limited representation of the West as dystopian comes to the fore in Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1954) in which the dystopian atmosphere is represented at various locales, even in the policies of Gandhi, in quite a conspicuous departure from the Gandhian utopia represented by Raja Rao and the other novelists of the pre-independence era. Gandhism is thus not pitted against the general context of the Western imperialism as is done in Raja Rao, first in *Kanthapura* and then in novel after novel, nor is it provided as an alternative to the Western culture of industrialization, as in Bhabani Bhattacharya's novels but presented as a kind of ineffectual idealism which however is effective as a means of establishing hegemony, which further aggravates the dystopian predicament. Other concerns featuring in postcolonial India that is represented in this phase include concerns with ecological imbalance leading to a kind of environmental dystopia, as is represented in Kamala Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice* (1966) where a movement towards an environmental ecocide is projected at different levels. This idea of ecological apocalypse becomes another concern of *The Nowhere Man* (1972), the only novel by Markandaya which is entirely set in London though memories of the expatriate protagonist connect the present inhospitable London with the ecocide of the past of the protagonist's childhood. In *Two Virgins* (1972), the bipolarity between the East and the West comes out in the contrast between the two central characters of Lalitha and Saroja. Lalitha is westernized, while Saroja, the narrator, is more attuned with her rural upbringing. The West, thus, is still described in terms of anglicized Indians, the city and, for a change in this novel, by an Anglo-Indian lady of dubious moral character. Thus, in spite of the broadening of the issues and the expansive setting, the postcolonial dystopia is still seen as a legacy of the British dystopian domination of the jewel in the crown. Elements of ambivalence also abound in this phase, yet the representation of the exonerated West is more at the personal level than at the institutional. It is no doubt the expression of a nation still reeling under the effects of its colonial history.

This leads us to the phase of the study which is perhaps more immediately moored to the politico-economic realities of the time. The emergency novels represent the contemporary India during the twenty-one month period of internal emergency between 1975 and 1977 when the then Prime Minister declared a unilateral state of internal emergency throughout the country,

allowing the curbing of Civil Liberties and the suspension of elections. Though it was very much within the rule of the law, the provisions of which, Mrs Indira Gandhi said, she was not aware of before she invoked it, the Internal Emergency was officially issued by the President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed under Article 352 (1) of the Indian Constitution citing Internal Disturbance as its reason. Imprisonment of political opponents, suppression of the right to expression by censoring the media, mass campaigns like forced eviction and the notorious sterility campaigns spearheaded by the Prime Minister's son, increasing government aggression in judiciary and above all, a systematic suspension of most human rights mark the period of internal emergency and the resultant literature, broadly called Emergency Novels, are perhaps what comes the closest to the idea of a national dystopia. In this phase, the study deliberately breaks the timeline as though most of these novels are either literally or figuratively set in the time of the Internal Emergency, they are mostly written in the eighties and the nineties. Novels like Raj Gill's *The Torch Bearer* (1983), Manohar Malgonkar's *The Garland Keepers* (1980), Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us* (1995) and perhaps the most succinct expression of the form, Sashi Tharoor's *Great Indian Novel* which came out in 1989, all represent most of the aspects of the socio-economic and political realities that are essentially dystopian in their very nature and constitution.

If the aftermath of the colonial experience and the Internal Emergency becomes a major preoccupation of the literature of the fifties, sixties and the seventies, the eighties came with a big bang, with Salman Rushdie in which the issues of independence and partition of the subcontinent in lines of the western Two Nation Theory gets primary focus. And also what comes to the fore is the Diaspora man's predicament in a cosmopolitan dystopia. The chapter is entirely dedicated to Salman Rushdie and the dystopia elements that come out in his novels. In fact, Rushdie's first novel, *Grimus* (1975) is strongly informed by elements of dystopian fiction. While, externally, the use of the labyrinth symbol in *Grimus* makes the dystopia more conspicuous in the use of technology which is an abiding feature of most dystopian novels, the dominance of the power of the eponymous character in which he even manipulates the life of the central protagonist, even when he feels that he is opposing the powers of the dystopia establishment, has something of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century reality in it. Further, the fact that the central protagonist Flapping is a refugee in the Axona tribe in Phoenix, a place which has been rendered heartless by its preoccupation with progress and its fervid pursuit of western capitalism, brings

out the fate of every migrant, an issue which has been repeatedly addressed as the central concern of Rushdie's works. This predicament of being an émigré gets a twist in the character of Saleem Sinai in *Midnight's Children* (who is an émigré in his own "imaginary homeland"). *Midnight's Children* (1981) presents multiple patterns of reading into the life of its central character, Saleem Sinai. Saleem represents on a personal scale a Muslim of Kashmiri parentage living through the years after independence to experience the dystopian trauma of the internal Emergency. But he is also representative of the newly emerging nation, "a country which is itself a sort of dream" (159). It is a country which is the product of the Western idea of nation-building and thus a dream in both the senses of the term, of aspiration and of unreality. And it is in this unreality that the newly emergent nation not only disappoints but also ends up in a virtual dystopia where the state freezes the assets of an innocent businessman like Ahmed Sinai, Saleem's father. If the callousness of the dystopian nation is the reason behind Saleem's becoming an orphan, its over activism during the Internal Emergency proclaimed by Indira Gandhi, in the cleansing of the Jama Masjid Slum, allegedly orchestrated by her son Sanjay, irks and destabilizes him and people like him. Saleem finds an India ruled by the exact prototype of a dystopian authority in its lust for power and dynastic tendencies. *Midnight's Children* does not only represent in its setting all the aspects of a postcolonial dystopia, it also is an important emergency novel, dealing with the dystopian situation in the context of the national emergency, linking up with the novels studied in the previous chapter, many of which are indirectly influenced by it.

Curbing the right to expression is one of the seminal concerns of the dystopian novels of all times and our next novel studied in this chapter, *Haroun and a Sea of Stories* (1990) is a novel in which a dystopian authority, dreading and subsequently strangling the flow of stories which are not up to political correctness, is another prime thematic concern. This aspect is further engendered with the idea of the immense power that literature bears in changing the socio-political dystopia into an existence which, if not utopian, is a state that comes closer to it. In *Haroun and a Sea of Stories* one finds a fictionalization of a dystopian reality in which the kingdom of Gup has to enter into a conflict with the dystopian kingdom of Chup to oppose Khatam Sudd, the one who ends all stories and all liberty of personal expression: 'And because everything ends, and because dreams end, stories end, life ends, as the finish of everything, we use this line. "It is finished", we tell one another, "it's over. Khattam-Shud: the end."' (39).

Bearing overtones of Rushdie's own predicament in the wake of the infamous Fatwa, the novel relates the way of resisting against the dystopian powers that suppress self expression. In the next novel taken up for case studies, *Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), the present day sectarian Bombay as opposed to the Bombay of Umeed's childhood is represented as dystopian while the West, in its multiculturalism is not fully spared, though its aggressive consumerism as a component of its dystopian aspects is more stressed in the next novel studied in this chapter, *Fury* (2001). It is perhaps in this novel that the postcolonial ambivalence comes out most effectively. While the multiculturalism that comes with the all engulfing globalization is attractive, it also devours individual identities, much like the earthquake does at the beginning of the *Ground Beneath Her Feet*. Most of these novels, set in the West and dealing with Indian characters represent the dystopian realities in the diaspora situation, something that becomes the central concern of the next and the penultimate chapter under case study, entitled 'Rushdie's Children' and dealing with the dystopian sensibility that comes out in the writers following Rushdie.

Meena Alexander's *Nampally Road* (1991), the first novel taken up in this chapter, depicts the dystopian characteristics in both the 'Return Home' and the Diaspora sensibility of the new age individual. *Nampally Road* is a novel of a return from the apparently protective but actually dystopian West to the newly emerged nation state in the East modelled after the political dictates of the West, either directly or through the dictates of thoroughly westernized intellectuals like Nehru. If *Nampally Road* deals with the representation of the dystopian reality in post independence India, *Building Babel* (1996) brings about a recurrent feeling of the dystopia against which the women, represented by different mythological animals react to build up their own Babel, asserting in its own way that an inverted dystopia is also no less than another dystopia. Anuradha Marwah-Roy's *Idol Love* (1999) is set partly in the present and partly in the dystopian future in Rajdhani, which is the present day Delhi in the future, the capital of Raminland, the future India ruled by fundamentalist theocratic *Hindutva* radicals. Being a dystopia novel proper, despite its extremely controversial proposition, it is perhaps one of the novels apparently most moored to the reality of the present than any other taken up in this penultimate chapter of the study. And like most dystopian novels, it includes an emergence of resistance in the emergence of the Maya, a group that is sufficiently pluralistic to counter the hegemony of *Hindutva* through the representation of the interest of the minorities. The condition

of the woman becomes a major issue in Anuradha Marwah-Roy's novel just as it does in the next work studied, a typical Diaspora novel, *Sister of My Heart* (1999), by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni which explores the comparison and contrast between the predicaments of two women living in the East and the West, both fraught with elements of dystopia. One finds how the tendency to cultural assimilation is limited essentially by the native conventions of the family and the affiliating patriarchy that is upheld in the novel by the character of Sunil. Despite the apparent freedom that Anju, his wife, enjoys in the West, his life is thus more or less defined by the male gaze and the male view of the ideals of womanhood which turns both the home and the adopted homeland of the émigré dystopian in its essence. It deals with the predicament of the émigré woman who remains an émigré all throughout, essentially drawing her sustenance from her camaraderie with other women in fighting the dystopia. Through going beyond the generic borderline, the final case study deals with a play by Manjula Padmanavan namely *Harvest* (1997), which is one of the very few instances of a dystopian play proper in which the ethical aspect of medical technology is questioned drawing its relevance from a post-independent India in which medical technology, often at the expense of other sections of society, has become a consumable article for the rich and the powerful.

This brings us to the hypothesis posited at the end of the second chapter. It was a hypothesis that came up as a result of the literature survey of both theoretical texts dealing with dystopian literary theory and those focusing on the dystopian elements in Indian English prose fiction. It purported to prove the point that Indian dystopia fiction in English, has, down the ages, been closely influenced by the socio political realities of the day and as all dystopia fiction does and has pointed at a future which is alarmingly bleak and insecure. The hypothesis also hopes to locate the element of ambivalence in the representation of the postcolonial other as dystopian. As the study as proved, all the representing texts taken up for study, Kylas Chunder Dutt's *A Journal of 48 Hours in the Year 1945*, Soshee Chunder Dutt's *The Republic of Orissa: Annals from the Pages of the Twentieth Century*, S.M. Mitra's *Hindupore*, Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie*, *Two Leaves and a Bud* and *The Sword and the Sickle*, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, Santa Rama Rau's two novels taken up here *Remember the House* and *The Adventuress*, Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* Kamala Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice* and *Two Virgins* Raj Gill's *The Torch Bearer*, Manohar Malgonkar's *The Garland Keepers*, Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*, Sashi Tharoor's the *Great Indian Novel*, Salman Rushdie's *Grimus*, *Midnight's*

*Children*, Haroun and *a Sea of Stories*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, *Fury*, Meena Alexander's *Nampally Road*, Anuradha Marwah-Roy's *Idol Love*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Sister of My Heart* and Manjula Padmanavan's *Harvest* all are both specifically and generally connected to the reality of the time they represent. Moreover, the image of the dystopian authorities can be located in the different aspects of the Western domination and hegemony in the literature before independence which is often complemented by the internal dystopia of the racist and ritualistic inner constraints to proper societal development in the form of orthodox brahminism in works like *Kanthapura*. The external dystopia continues to remain dominantly the West, though not without the ambivalence inherent in representing that West at different levels, while the co-ordinates of the inner dystopia changes with time to involve even the hegemony of Gandhism as in Mulk Raj Anand's *The Sword and the Sickle*. In post-independence literature the dystopian aspect evolves to form a broadening perspective with the expansion of the historical context to include issues of over-urbanisation and that of environmental dystopia and the location of the dystopia reality in the multicultural West to which people migrate, but which never becomes their home; it is the West which engulfs and disorients, as it does with the central characters of Salman Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. Back home, the internal dystopia has also started growing its own counterparts in the westernized post-independence India modeled after the two nation theory and ruled by its western educated prime minister. Police atrocity at home, corruption, communal unrest and, most importantly, the suppression of political and moral liberty of the citizen in measures like the Internal Emergency are the components of this internal dystopia. The literature of the eighties and the nineties, set in these decades, however, represent the consolidation of the site of dystopia in both the East and the West and addresses other contextual issues like the representation of a feminist dystopia with all these works carrying the common strand of a warning towards a consumerist, neocolonial dystopia in the future.

Working on an area where very little has been done is both difficult and challenging; but it has its own rewards too. This is my second full-fledged research and this time my primary acknowledgement is due to the University Grants Commission as, with the funding available through the ERO of the Commission, I did not have to work under economic constraints. Moreover, thanks are due to my college authorities, particularly the principal Dr Saroj Kumar Chattopadhyay. His help and co-operation has always been there in times of necessity. My thanks are due to my parents, one alive and the other physically not present, but very much there

with me in the way parents continue to live in us, to my wife and my two children. It has been a great enjoyment for them as well; for, with their lives flooded with school projects, at least once they have found one of the parents to be in a similar plight. My son has even copied a few documents for me and thus the project has enabled me to introduce him to the world we intellectually inhabit in the way it can be done to children. It may be a subsidiary gain but still it is an opportunity for which I am grateful. One of the merits of any pioneering study is the fact that it is generally followed by studies in similar vein unfolding many other sunny spots of greenery in the area. If this study becomes treated as one such trailblazer in its area of scholarship, that would be perhaps the greatest reward for all the labour, all the sleepless nights.