ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The first ever introduction to ‘feminism’ during the undergraduate days ignited my already existing cravings for equality and hatred for gender discrimination in general. Long before the theoretical discourses came into light before me, I had unanswered questions in a socially, politically, financially and educationally regressive Muslim locality of Gujarat, India. Being an eye-witness to a certain discrimination in the name of religion and gender, it was my intuitive desire to comprehend the implications of the gender questions in the purview of religion. As I strongly believe that literature is one of the most effective art forms and mediums for social changes, I was inspired to accomplish a rational and intellectual inquiry through fictions to understand the power political representation of religion. For the same, this thesis presents my genuine efforts and beginning to touch the depth of this research. I attest that this research has transformed my perspectives completely and has opened new doors for further inquiries in future. For the same, I take this opportunity to extend my appreciation and gratitude to those who stimulated me to venture into this research.

First and foremost, I acknowledge, with gratitude, my debt of thanks to my erudite guide Dr. Indira Nityanandam for her advice and encouragement throughout my research journey. I assert that without her invaluable and essential guidance, this thesis would not have been completed. “Thank you” is a very short and insignificant expression to show my feelings. Her timely criticism and sense of perfection helped me re-think, re-write and re-work on critical issues and analysis. I could have an open dialogue with her about various controversial thoughts and views. There is no exaggeration in saying that she has taught me how to “write” what I think, argue, believe and research verbally/orally. I am, and I will be extremely grateful for her immense help and guidance. Every time, on each single controversial issue, she alarmed me jokingly for not inviting ‘fatwas’. That same alarming tone provided me a sense of objectivity in my writing. I cannot forget to mention that she has been a source of encouragement, motivation and support whenever I need it.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thankfulness to Bhupinder Juneja (Bhupi), without whom I could not have fulfilled my dream of completing this task. Time and
again, my friend Bhupi has motivated me to “read” various non-fictional writings, reports, articles and books on innumerable aspects related to my thesis. He believed and put faith in my capabilities and very often helped me in returning my lost confidence during difficult times throughout this research. He has been my Guru, who stood by me in all psychological, academic, educational and philosophical inquiries. His support is invaluable throughout my quest to question the status quo. Besides him, I take this opportunity to thank Harshil Agrawal who has always supported and motivated me during challenging times. He has always taken an interest in my work with his critical and severe analytical understanding which has helped me contemplate the issues throughout these important years. My Abbu, Mr. Gousmohammed, as always, believed in my potentials and supported my sense of inquiry. His support has been enormously helpful to finish this task. My siblings, especially Vaseem Qureshi and Mohsina Qureshi, have shown solidarity with me during my research journey. I am indebted to all my dear teachers, students, colleagues, friends and well wishers for continuously encouraging me to finish the task in time.

I would like to mention that though physically not present, my Amma, late Mrs. Rahimunnishan has been with me always and especially during dire need to solace my soul. She had always taught me to be truthful and brave while facing new challenges in life. I am indebted to her for bringing me up as a sensible human being. With utmost love and respect, I dedicate this thesis to my Amma.

Mubina Qureshi