ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

If you are anything like me, the acknowledgements section is one of the first things you read in a thesis, if only because this is where the author can show something of a human face in this otherwise most scientific of publications. Never one to disappoint, I will utilize this chance for unscientific chit chat to the fullest.

My very first and more sincere acknowledgement must go to my supervisor, Dr. Kirti Aggarwal. Without her intervention, I would probably never have put foot on the noble path, and without her help, I certainly would never have reached this far. Dr. Kirti Aggarwal has given meaning to the age – old practice of master and apprentice, and now that I am about to become a journeyman, I can begin to fully appreciate her work. Thank You.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to family and friends. Special thanks to my father Dr. Manjeet Singh Bawa for always taking an interest in my work and constantly urging me onto greater achievements, and to my mother, Smt. Inderjeet Kaur Bawa, for always being supportive and taking care of me the few times each year I come home. Thanks to my brother, Shri Maninderjeet Singh Bawa, for being my skiing partner during the holidays and for giving me the kind of friendship that you always know is there, come rain or high water. And to my beloved Ramanpreet Kaur Bawa, my son, Inderpreet Singh Bawa and companions – mere words cannot express my feelings, so I will not even try.

Imanjeet Singh Bawa