

I dedicate this thesis to Ramu, the woman sweeper who cleaned the dry latrine at our 21/26, Old Rajinder Nagar home, New Delhi, until 1972 and to my mother, B. Seethalakshmi, who taught me about Ramu when I was five thus: "Avaalum Nambala Madiri Manusha Daan" (They too are human beings like us).