Acknowledgements

My gratitude to God, my eternal Guide, is indeed inexpressible.

I am profoundly thankful to my academic guide, Dr. R. Balachandran of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for his professional competence, pragmatic approach and patient disposition which have helped me to complete my work with satisfaction. I gratefully remember his acute and attractive comments on many of the things discussed in the chapters here. I am immensely thankful to his wife, Ms Manju and their children as well for their kindness and hospitality. Indelibly etched on my memory are many of the pleasurable hours of discussion held with my guide in the midst of the delicious dishes dished out to us.

Dr. S. Ravindranathan, Professor of the Faculty of English in this university has laid me under a deep debt of gratitude to him by encouraging me to overcome my limitations with his timely tips on how to pursue my doctoral work. I vividly remember the day I made up my mind to choose a Canadian writer in consultation with him. He scribbled a note to Dr. R. Balachandran asking him affably to be my supervisor. His sensitiveness, scholarship and his sense of humour have throughout been a source of inspiration not only to his scholars but to those of his colleagues as well.
Dr. S. Thillainayagam's affection, accessibility and his joyful readiness to lend me the books I was in need of would never pass out of my memory.

I gratefully remember the motivation and the reading material provided by Dr. A. Jameela Begum, Director, Centre for Canadian Studies, Thiruvananthapuram. Dr. Jameela has throughout been a serious scholar and a woman of sweet disposition.

My indebtedness to Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute in New Delhi needs to be acknowledged here. Its former Resident Director, Prof. Ronald Neufeldt, who gave me permission to borrow books from the Institute's library, deserves to be specially thanked here. I had the privilege to meet this able and amiable Canadian at some of the seminars on Canadian Literature.

The person that I must particularly thank is Ms Minakshi Mishra, the angelic lady in the library of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute who promptly provides research scholars across this country with all the material needed for investigation at the doctoral level. I could never afford to forget the selfless service rendered by this lively librarian.

I must express my profound thankfulness to the eminent Canadianists and comparatists like Prof. K. Chellappan and Prof. Maruthanayagam for all the insights that their books, papers and lectures provided me with during the period of my pursuit.
The writer-critic, Sundara Ramaswamy, his son, Kannan, and Mythili, Mrs Kannan, have a great claim to my gratitude as they took special pains to get me some of the stories of Ambai which had been out of print. I must indeed thank the widely revered critic in Sundara Ramaswamy for his frank answers to my questions on short-story writers in Tamil. His valued comments on the fiction of Ambai greatly contributed to my insight into the psyche of the Tamil writer.

It was my great fortune to meet the writer, Ambai, and get better acquainted with her at subsequent meetings. I have great admiration for the humane approach of this great literary figure. She generously agreed to be personally interviewed and graciously spent a lot of her time answering the questions put to her during her visits to the Ramaswamys.

I must thank Prof. Jasmine Asir of P.K. College from the bottom of my heart for her keen interest in getting me all the critical material I needed on Ambai and other Tamil writers. I am deeply appreciative of her selfless service to her fellow-scholars.

Mr. Neelakantan of M.S. University Library, Mr. Soma Raj of M.K. University Study Centre need to be remembered with thanks for their helpful dispositions. I have great pleasure in formally acknowledging the valued suggestions and critical comments I received

The poet-critic, Sirpi, must be thanked next for his critical comments on Ambai's stories.

The poet-critic, Bala, has been providing me with fresh insights into the obscure passages of Ambai's fiction, in particular, and Tamil short-fiction writers in general. I must thank him for all the help I have got from him.

Another sensitive scholar interviewed on the telephone is Dr. James R. Daniel. His readiness to answer my questions on different authors and their works really made my investigation easier.

It is now my delightful duty to place on record the rectitude, dedication and diligence of my friends who helped me to gather relevant data. Among them the contributions made by Josey, Shobhana and Anu P. Jacob, who spent their time and energy in a spirit of selfless service.

Next I need to thank Mr. Sudhakaran, Mr. Rajan, and Mr. Rajan Babu for their painstaking efforts to help me in all possible ways. Ms Jalaja, Ms Seetha Lekshmi and Ms Ceeja must be mentioned for their part in the preparation of my work.
I wish to note down here my gratitude to my teacher, Mr. K. Chandrasekhara Pillai, for clarifying all the doubts that arose in the course of my work.

I recall with a sense of deep thankfulness the moral strength and academic encouragement extended to me by the Secretary, Mr. A. Chelliah, M.A., B.T., and the Principal, Prof. T. Ganapathy, M.Sc., M.Phil., of Pioneer Kumaraswamy College in Nagercoil, to attain professional proficiency. My thanks also go to most of the members of the staff of P.K. College for their encouragement in my intellectual endeavours.

I must now say how thankful I am to my wife, S. Sreelatha, who has done her best to help me complete this work. I thank my sons, Praveen Kumar and Ayyappadas, for their prayers on my behalf. God alone has the power to reward my friends and folks for their unselfish and untiring work.

I should like to thank the committed professional of Bharathi Communication Centre without whose computer expertise the manuscript might have gone astray between the disk and the data bank. I ought to offer my thanks to Mr. V. Chinnathurai of Bombay Printers for the excellent binding done by him and his staff.

Finally, I wish I could "heave my heart into my mouth" and turn to my mother, father and well-wishers for their labours of love.
I dedicate this piece of my work to the Almighty in all humility in return for His earnest endeavour to

"lead me from evil to good,
lead me from darkness to light,
And lead me from decay to deathlessness."

S.Suresh Kumar