ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I was introduced to the work of Randolph Stow at the witching hour of midnight, in the almost deserted waiting-hall of the Bangalore City Railway Station. We were a small group of Professors and Research scholars, on our way to attend a Seminar at Mysore University. Professor D.V.K. Raghavacharyalu of Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh who had known of my interest in Australian literature, chose what I now consider an 'auspicious' time, to advise me that it would be more rewarding for me to work on an Australian novelist called Randolph Stow, than on the Australian Ballad which I was hoping to study. He described Stow as a writer whose work contained all the major themes in Australian writing. In his opinion, Stow was on a par with Patrick White, but had not received the critical attention he deserved.

At that time Stow's reputation rested on only five novels. With the publication of his last three novels between the years 1979 to 1984, Stow's reputation as a novelist of international standing was confirmed in America and England and what is more significant he achieved recognition in his own country. Visiting Australia in 1980, I had occasion to meet at Perth and Melbourne two eminent Professors of English, who were also leading critics in the country. Both had known Stow personally. While one Professor admitted to not really
having read Stow, the other said that Stow "was all worked out". This was depressing but not discouraging, because my first Stow book had been the hauntingly beautiful Tourmaline and I was not going to give Stow up for all the academics in Australia!

While in Australia I read Visitants and The Girl Green as Elderflower. Anthony J. Hassall had already done a study of Visitants and in February 1982 I had an opportunity of presenting a Paper on Visitants at a Seminar on Australian Literature in Hyderabad. In the same session, Fay Zwicky presented a Paper on Stow's poetry. Helen Tiffin, from the beginning, with her perceptive and sensitive studies of Stow, particularly her exposition of Taoist thought and the influence of anthropology on Stow's work, was a major source of inspiration and encouragement. Anthony J. Hassall and Helen Tiffin remain leading authorities on Stow.

To Prof. D.V.K. Raghavacharyalu, I thus owe an immense debt of gratitude. My life would have been the poorer had I never known Randolph Stow. Studying his work has been a labour of love, and I hope, of scholarship. The pleasure his work has brought me sustained me through long periods of self-doubt. This thesis would never have been completed if the rapport between the author's work and the scholar had been broken.
As the first Research Scholar to undertake a study of Commonwealth Literature in the University of Madras, I am grateful for the encouragement and unfailing kindness of Dr. T. Prabhakar, former Professor and Head of the Department of English. His colleagues, Dr. M.S. Nagarajan and Dr. N. Bakambaram, have always been accessible to research scholars and have been particularly helpful to me.

I have the privilege of being Dr. C.T. Indra's first Research Scholar. A teacher in every sense of the word, she combines a keen intellect and wide scholarship, with nobility and simplicity of character. She has influenced both my work and my life. While my approach to Stow has been influenced by her philosophical bent of mind, my thesis has been moulded by her clarifying criticism. Through Dr. Indra, I have had the privilege of meeting her mentor, Professor V.S. Seturaman. He gave me valuable insights into Hindu philosophy and mythology to which I had to make a few references in the course of my thesis.

My interest in Commonwealth Literature was fostered and sustained by my visits to the University of Mysore. Prof. C.D. Narasimhasiah, has done pioneer work in India in extending the meaning of English Literature to include writing in English from countries outside Great Britain. At his Seminars, to which I was, at first, an uninvited but welcome guest, I had the opportunity of meeting not only writers like
Anita Desai, and Indian Professors of repute, but also internationally known Professors and critics, such as Chris and Helen Tiffin, Arthur Ravenscroft, Kenneth Ramchand, John Moss and Veronica Brady. Prof. Narasimhaiah's "Dhvanyālōka" remains a Mecca for all students of Commonwealth Literature.

To Veronica Brady, Fay Zwicky and especially to the very charming and popular couple, Chris and Helen Tiffin, I am grateful for stimulating and enlightening conversations as well as generous gifts of books and research material.

My husband made it possible for me to spend three months in Australia. A library card of the University of Western Australia remains a treasured souvenir, a reminder of an enjoyable and rewarding six-week stay in Perth. My thanks to Dr. Veronica Brady for arranging for me to work at the Library and to Miss Mary Alexander and the members of her staff, for their assistance in helping me to locate research material. My special thanks to Miss Bernie Holder of Perth, for her warm and generous hospitality.

At Monash University, Melbourne, Dr. David Bradley was kind enough to allow me to work in the library of the Department of English. His office staff, Mrs. Dougherty, Mrs. Tyndall and Mrs. Wilson were very welcoming and helpful. I am also grateful for permission to use the library of the University of Melbourne.
I must record my thanks to my uncles, Mr. Bertie Garrett and Mr. Harold Garrett and their families, and my sister Lauretta and her Australian husband Mr. Howard Race for their hospitality, while at Melbourne. I am grateful to my cousin Mr. Edward Ireland who very nobly undertook the task of air freighting my entire research material.

Among the friends and colleagues who have helped me with all the drudgery of getting my manuscript ready, I am especially grateful to Miss Kadambari Research Scholar, and Prof. Jamuna Kalyani Sridharan, Mrs. Amritha Mohan, Prof. D. Victor and Dr. P. Balaswamy my colleagues, who have been especially supportive.

A final word of thanks to my daughters Caroline and Bettina and their young friend, Sunil Vaidyanathan, who helped me in small but invaluable ways. My friend Miss Alma Philip has sustained me throughout with her moral support. I must finally thank Mr. Pasha not only for typing this thesis to my satisfaction, but for his unfailing patience and cheerfulness.

There are many others, relations, friends and colleagues, who have given me their support and encouragement. It is impossible for me to mention all of them by name. They can be assured, however, that they have my gratitude and affection.