Acknowledgements

This thesis would never have been accomplished without the generous help, advice and guidance of my Supervisor, Professor Shanta Dutta, Head, Department of English, Presidency University (formerly Professor, Department of English, Jadavpur University). I owe my deepest gratitude to her for giving me her precious time despite her demanding schedule. Her outstanding scholarship, expert advice, unfailing patience and encouraging suggestions helped me to face the challenges confronting me at various stages of my research. Her careful reading of the written draft of this thesis and subsequent observations have proved to be invaluable.

I am highly indebted to my professor, Dr. Bharati Banerjee, for her critical suggestions, her keen interest in the research work and her constant encouragement. I deeply regret that my dear professor (Late) Krishna Banerjee could not see the culmination of this research but her advice, insight and scholarly views have always been a source of inspiration to me.

I would also like to thank my colleagues in St. Paul’s Cathedral Mission College, Kolkata, especially Chaitali Moitra, Subhendu Kanjilal and Sutapa Rani Dasgupta, and my friends in college, Monorima Sen, Bikash Kumar Shaw, Sudipta Mondal and Shyamosree Mukherjee for their helpful interest in the continuance and completion of my work. My undergraduate and post graduate students in college served as an intelligent audience for my reflections and arguments in the last four years. This list of acknowledgements would be incomplete without a special word of thanks to Dr. Tridib Chattopadhyay, our college Librarian, for acquiring the institutional membership of N-LIST (National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content under UGC INFONET, Digital
Library Consortium) and for providing all academic staff members of the college with access to it. I am also indebted to my long-distance friend, Dr. Anju Arya, for her continuous motivation and support.

My thanks are especially due to the Director, officials, and staff of National Library, Kolkata; Ramakrishna Mission Library, Golpark, Kolkata; British Council Library, Kolkata; and the American Library, Kolkata, for their ready assistance with books and journals and for permission to photocopy much of the documentary evidence required for my work.

In my quest for those who went beyond domesticity, I am most indebted to certain members of my family whose cooperation enabled me to concentrate on my academic commitment while deviating from and often neglecting my domestic responsibilities: especially my mother, Dr. Farzana Ali, for her encouragement and patience while this long research underwent completion. My heartfelt thanks are especially due to my sister, Syeda Nadia Ali, for her assistance in every step of this research undertaking. She persuaded me to explore the possibility of the internet, and especially the use of the invaluable JStor, as a vehicle of my research. Finally I am highly indebted to my beloved father, (Late) Syed Shah Marashid Ali Alquaderi, without whose ardent desire for higher research, and inspiration I might never have embarked on this research journey.

I would also like to thank all working women for inspiring this venture and giving me the courage to persevere.