# Acknowledgements

This book began as a 'revision' and ended up as a complete 'rewrite'. There is still no excuse for the long gestation period of what I intended as a 20-year anniversary publication. Still, I have been assured, by those who have used this work for teaching, that a rewrite is both welcome and perhaps even urgent. Meanwhile, the original version has gone out of print.

I have a long list of people who despaired at the thought of ever seeing this book in print and yet honoured my every request with grace and great alacrity. I owe them more than a mere word of thanks. Meenu Deswal patiently collated, early on, a lot of material for me to read and occasionally gently prodded me, wondering if her efforts had gone to waste, since nothing appeared on the horizon for years. Other students, such as Prachi Bhagwat, Adhitya Dhanapal, Madhavi Jha, Divya Kannan, Karventha Maagaraj, Megha Sharma and Swathi Aravind were very prompt in scouring the internet for many and frequent requests. I have many who have more actively egged me on, and have also promptly sent me materials and comments, for fear that I might take their silence as a discouragement. To the feminist scholars and friends who have all obliged me from time to time, a warm and grateful salute—of these, a special word of thanks to Mary John, Poorva Rajaram and Ratna Appendar for painstaking reads of the whole manuscript. J. Devika, D. W. Karuna, Padma Anagol-McGinn, Rashmi Pant, Radhika Singha, Samita Sen, Mrinalini Sinha and Rachel Sturman also suffered many queries and confusions. To my Feminist Kitchen at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, which sustained whacky and sometimes irreverent conversations over the years, while allowing me to persist with my pessimism, heartfelt thanks for that daily witches brew. And to Steve Legg, who furrowed his brow on my behalf and cheered me on, a salute.

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pandemic added another two years to the protracted rewriting process. When I finally got to Würzburg, in May 2022, the support and encouragement I received was unmatched by any previous experience in an educational institution. In addition to support from Heeba and Jacqueline who ferried and downloaded books for me, there were Judith Unterdorfer, Pauline and Anna Esposito who solved many computer, book and health issues. To my Indology colleagues, I owe much for the pleasures of undisturbed reading and writing, which often ended in equally pleasurable evening rituals. They included Jörg Gengnagel, Karin Steiner, Barbara Lotz and Elisabeth Kusterer Schömbucher. Heidrun Brückner nurtured me throughout my Würzburg stay, providing in equal measure intellectual stimulation and wonderful and educative distraction. Anette Finger-Albert, Laila Abu-er-Rub and Himanshu Chawla disentangled many knots to make travel and stay easy and painless.

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October 2024 **Janaki Nair**

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