FOREWORD

"I am not particularly pleased to be told that my work is being studied", said Philip Larkin in an interview in 1964 and voiced his conviction that the poetry should be read only for pleasure and enjoyment. This itself made my task difficult, almost daunting, and the only compromise was to call this thesis 'A Survey', refraining from overstressing any one aspect of his delicately wrought poetry, at the cost of the others. The thesis attempts to trace the emergence of Philip Larkin as a major poet from the coterie of the post-war poets known as the Movement group. The survey encompasses his major poems from the four volumes that are published during the span of about four decades - The North Ship (1945), The Less Deceived (1956), The Whitsun Weddings (1965) and High Windows (1974). Larkin is known, not for his prolificity, but has been certainly acknowledged as a very serious poet. He confessed once:

It becomes still more difficult to find
Words at once true and kind,
Or not untrue and not unkind.

However, his ruthless honesty does not distance him from the common men, 'the cut-price crowd' (as he called
them once) and their suffering. He is a poet with exceptional intellectual integrity and sensitivity. I would like to avoid what is perhaps the tendency to over-emphasize what is known as Larkin’s ambivalence, and hope to go beyond the tantalising phenomenon into a more positive quality of Larkin’s poetry which is in ample evidence as one reads him closely.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. R.A. Malagi, Professor and Head of the Department of English, Gujarat University, for his constant encouragement, scholarly suggestions and invaluable guidance.

I am grateful to Dr. Suguna Ramanathan who first introduced me to Larkin’s poetry while I pursued my M.Phil. studies in 1981 and has never ceased to help me ever since. I am thankful to Prof. Mirenjan Bhagat for the readiness with which he has helped me at every stage.

I remember gratefully all my colleagues at the H.K. Arts College, Principal Dr. Chimubhai Nayak, and Dr. Ilaben Pathak and Prof. Diarsa of the Department of English who have made my task easier to accomplish. I thank also the faculty of Department of English, Gujarat University, especially Dr. Digish Mehta and Dr. Amina Amin for their helpful suggestions.
I take this opportunity to thank the librarians and the other members of the staff of the British Library (Ahmedabad), M.J. Library, H.K. Arts College Library, Gujarat University Library, and also the Libraries of the University of California, Berkeley, and Los Angeles for providing me with books, articles and the other material whenever I visited them.

I thank Mr. R. Pandurangan for the promptness and elegance with which he typed this copy.

Indeed I am very happy to acknowledge a particular debt to my friends and family without whose support this task would not have been just possible. Even from a long distance, my children continued to provide me with the necessary warmth of affection which has always made my difficult undertakings so entralling.