Acknowledgements
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The proverb ‘Pen is mightier than the sword’ has become a cliché but the truth of the potency of mind that moves the pen can never be denied. It is ideologies that unite, divide, propel and conquer people. Men count it an honour to die for a belief which they hold to be true. Academies generate ideologies and it has been my fascination to be a part of that system. But destiny took me to be a tax gatherer. Fortunately after a break of three decades, I could indulge in the rarified field of intellectual satisfaction. For this opportunity, I owe a deep sense of gratitude to the Bharathiar University which has opened its portals to a non-academic person like me. I am equally indebted to my employer Income-Tax Department who permitted me to pursue this study.

On the North coast of Cornwall and Devon is a light house which was first placed high upon the cliffs where mists and fogs often obscured and hid its brightness from passing mariners. Hence it was taken down and rebuilt on a rock out of the sea amid the waves of that dangerous coast, to shine where it was most necessary.

I propose to do the same with John Updike, a prolific and versatile American writer of his generation. When I was first introduced to Updike it never occurred that I would be writing a thesis on him. Later as I prodded along to find a theme for the thesis, my mind kept going back to him for I saw in him a streak of rebellion that made him quite interesting. It is perhaps easy to enlist writers with extraordinary achievements in numbers, but still more difficult to come across one whose literary productions are coupled with consistent high quality. No work of Updike has appeared without attracting
serious review and close scrutiny of the critics. Not all critics have been kind to Updike, yet one could cite a chain of encomiums uttered by the ablest critics.

The enchantment of this study of John Updike spontaneously stirred in me three virtues: appreciation, attitude and gratitude. Of these three, I rate gratitude as the highest, which I would like to offer to many who have helped me in the course of the completion of this thesis. Praise, Honour and Glory to Lord Jesus Christ, for enabling me to complete the thesis by sustaining my interest in this work. But for His constant grace, this effort would not have been possible. I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Diwakar Thomas, M.A. M.Phil., M.A., M.Ed., M.A., Ph.D, Professor and Head, PG Department of English, Kongunadu Arts and Science College, Coimbatore. His encouragement, fruitful advice, meticulous responsiveness even to minute details, scholarly acumen and highly supportive attitude have contributed a lot for the completion of this thesis. I remain truly in debt for all these and other kindness.

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