PREFACE

It was during my fairly long stint with a College students’ movement as its national adviser that I began to dabble in liberation theology and liberation movements and struggles in various third world countries. As it became an absorbing interest I felt urged to make a study of some third world English novelists who have sought to capture the liberationist aspirations of their people and their struggles in their novels.

It was at this juncture, that a friend of mine who had already examined the cultural assumptions of a group of South Indian novelists, proposed that I could consider the possibility of a comparative study of two third world novelists from the perspective of liberation. As Mulk Raj Anand of India and Chinua Achebe of Nigeria came across to me as novelists with a basic liberative thrust, I decided to work on them keeping in mind the liberation parameters and the literary aspects of a study like this. I discussed this topic with colleagues and professors of English. I found their responses quite positive and challenging.

The topic, however, assumed its present form only after I held a series of discussions with my guide. It was he who enabled me to understand the full import of such a topic and the hurdles I would have to cross in order to complete my research successfully. It dawned on me during these sessions that an investigation of the novels of Anand and Achebe from the perspective of liberation could not only yield some invaluable insights into the perceptions
and performance of these two writers as committed novelists but throw light on some hitherto unexplored areas in the realm of third world English fiction.

This was how I commenced my research odyssey realizing that, while investigating the comparative merits of Anand and Achebe as committed artists, it would not be an influence study but an analogical one. In point of fact, the whole exercise turned out to be a fascinating and liberating one, as it helped me to rethink my own traditional and stereo-typed approaches to literature in general and fiction in particular and to be open to culture-specific literary categories, outputs and approaches.