Chapter I

INTRODUCTION
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The introduction of English education in India during the early part of the nineteenth century at the initiative of Lord Macaulay and at the behest of enlightened Indians like Raja Rammohun Roy was destined to have a lasting influence not only upon the history and the political system of the country but also on its literature. The habit of thought this education propagated and the fabric of society it gradually helped to construct led to a literary renaissance which gave birth to Indian Literature in English. This nascent branch of Indian literature has since then provided a distinctively individual voice to the nation's ethos.

This new branch of Indian literature has to its credit a large output of material on a wide variety of subjects ranging from purely escapist fantasies like Kylash Chunder Dutt's *A Journal of 48 Hours of the Year 1945* to realistic pictures of society like Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta*. This literature can also boast of a considerable achievement in the domain of poetry, while the urgency and immediacy of its prose has always been appealing. However, it is Indian fiction in English that has succeeded most in reflecting the deeper tensions of that period of transition during the later part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth. This branch of Indian English literature has
shown an amazing vitality especially in the hands of three of its staunch votaries - R.K Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. They, besides establishing Indian English Fiction as one of the authentic expressions of Indian life, have also inspired several young writers to take this Literature seriously. They have, as a result, become the focal point of both national and international acclaim, and critical evaluations of their works are available in large numbers.

Paradoxically however, this burgeoning of academic interest in the great trio -- Narayan, Anand and Rao -- has led several critics to adopt a dismissive attitude to quite a few writers who had contributed significantly to the growth and development of Indian English Fiction at its formative stages in the beginning of this century. Not enough critical attention has been bestowed on many of the early writers and even where such attention has been given it was very often in the nature of "a literary chit chat" which makes "reputations boom and crash in an imaginary stock-exchange", as Northrop Frye comments in a different context (The Archetypes 423).

The writers, Venkataramani and Nagarajan, selected for this study, fall into the above category of neglected authors. Venkataramani's reputation which was at its peak during the 1930s has since 'crashed' in Frye's "imaginary stock-exchange" whereas Nagarajan has been remaining in
undisturbed obscurity for many years. Apart from a few articles in learned journals and one or two scholarly monographs very little criticism has been published on these two. But the creative worlds of these temperamentally different contemporaries show an amazing vitality. Moreover they have also succeeded in laying bare the conflicts and tensions of their era and from their works we may obtain a broader perspective of the spirit of that age.

But in order to comprehend fully the significance of writers like Nagarajan and Venkataramani and to evaluate their contribution to the flowering and enrichment of Indian Fiction in English we must have a panoramic view of the cataclysmic period of transition that India experienced during the early decades of the present century. Such a view is indispensable as mimesis - imitation in literature - "depends for its value on the implied or in some way suggested application of known facts of experience to provide depth, background [and] even meaning" (Daiches 91).

The introduction of English education in the country helped to rekindle its dormant spirit and generate a new awareness and an intellectual alertness among the writers. The term 'Indian Renaissance' is broadly applied to describe this continuous process of reawakening the country underwent during that period. This Renaissance brought with it a new
spirit of enquiry making Indians aware of the numerous inequities practised in their society in the name of custom and religion. Similarly, the study of British history and institutions made Indians acknowledge the values of constitutional law and individual liberty -- values not altogether alien to the Indian culture but which none the less glowed only "in fitful embers" (Iyenger, Indian Writing 23) during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The comprehensive term 'Indian Renaissance' contains within its ambit three different movements -- for political, social and spiritual resurgence -- which are not hermetically sealed from each other but are in many ways mutually complementary. Of the three, the movement for spiritual reform harbingered the other two. This is something to be expected in a nation which traditionally has venerated the values of spirit more than anything else in the materialistic plane.

The movement for social and spiritual reforms was spearheaded by four organisations - the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society and the Ramakrishna Mission. These four, while partaking liberally from the Hindu traditions, nevertheless consciously aspired to reform the Hindu society of the numerous ills that had crept into it over the years.
At the time of introducing the English education, Lord Macaulay had argued in his 'Minute' that having become instructed in European knowledge the natives might demand European institutions also. This prophecy did not take much long to materialise as initial though hesitant steps were taken, as early as 1839, towards the founding of an association to fight for the rights of the natives. This association, called the British India Association, was soon followed by Bengal British India Society in 1843 and the British Indian Association of Calcutta in 1851. In 1876, Surendranath Banerjea founded the Indian Association which spearheaded agitations against the lowering of the age limit for Civil Service Examinations, the Arms Act and the Vernacular Press Act. But complete freedom from the foreign rule was not the aim of these organizations. Nor was it the aim of the Indian National Congress formed in 1885, with the approval of liberal thinkers like A.O.Hume, Sir William Wedderburn and Sir David Yule. It was in the initial stages an association of moderates passing "courteously worded resolutions requesting the Government for political and social reforms" (Naik, A History 34).

However the continued negligence of Indian aspirations by the imperialists fermented the rapid growth of radicalism in the Congress movement. Tilak and Aurobindo Ghosh belonged
to this group of radicals who were not ready for any compromise with the British empire. The National movement got a great boost with Lord Curzon's ill-advised partition of Bengal in 1905. The partition itself was not so much prompted by any administrative necessity. It was rather a subtle move to partition the intellectuals of Bengal who were the leaders of the Movement. But the move soon boomeranged on the government as it had to face a continuous popular outrage not only in Bengal but in Lahore, Bombay and Madras. Gandhi, then unknown to name and fame, wrote in 1908 that "the real awakening [of India] took place after the partition of Bengal" and he was shrewd enough to prophecy that "that day may be considered to be the day of the partition of the British Empire" (qtd. in Majumdar 61). The movement against partition had an all-India character and it helped the movement for 'Swarajya' at a later stage.

Thus the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a vigorous and alert India shrugging off the bitter disappointments and aimless unrest of the preceding two centuries. As India began to feel the full impact of the three movements mentioned earlier, her literature also began to reflect the fullness and many-sidedness of life around it. Such an eventuality can be naturally anticipated since it is a great axiom of interpretation that literature invariably reflects the life of the era out of which it springs. Thus,
the second half of the nineteenth century can be justifiably called a tortuous corridor leading the Indian consciousness into a bright new era.

The new vision of life that the Renaissance embodied took some time to percolate into the creative literary consciousness of the nation. Actually, in the first major literary creation of the nineteenth century, *The Dutt Family Album*, a collection of 187 poems by three Dutt brothers, very few traces of contemporary realities are visible. The major subjects here are Christian sentiment, Nature, Indian history and legend and the poets of the Album are "content to play the sedulous ape to the British Romantics" (Naik, *A History* 36). Though Indian Poetry in English came out of the clutches of imitation with Toru Dutt, her premature death put an end to its further development along that line. Manmohan Ghose, another leading poet of the period, was completely cut off from the native tradition. Tragedies of personal life coupled with his sense of alienation from the native culture made his poetry disconcertingly remote from the nineteenth century Indian life. But with the arrival of Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarojini Naidu on the poetic scene, Indian English poetry attained a depth and consistency. Poetry was no more a lightweight entertainment but a serious concern for these poets and contemporary realities were often the central determining factors in their works.
Indian English Prose of the nineteenth century also consciously aspired to reflect the life of that period. The chief prose writers of the period like Dadabhai Naoroji, Ranade, Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjea, Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo showed a propensity to deal mainly with historical, political, religious and cultural themes. They used the powerful medium of prose to propagate their ideals as most of them were not idle dreamers but men of action.

The novel as a literary form was the last to arrive on the scene. The first experiments in fiction were made in Bengal. Bankimchandra Chatterjee's only novel in English, *Rajmohan's Wife*, appeared in serialized form in 1864. This novel is unmistakably Indian in its theme and sensibility but its author did not attempt to write any more novels in English but turned his attention to the vernacular and all his famous novels like *Durgesnandini* and *Anandamath* were written in Bengali.

From 1860s up to the end of the century stray novels continued to appear chiefly written by writers from Bengal or the South. The important achievements of this period were Lal Behari Day's *Govinda Samanta*, Toru Dutt's unfinished novel *Blanca* and Rajam Iyer's *True Greatness of Vasudeva Sastri*. 
With the turn of the century, the field of fiction witnessed a good deal of activity and writers with substantial output began to appear on the scene. Sarath Kumar Ghosh, A. Madhaviah and T. Ramakrishna Pillai were the chief figures among them. Though these authors, provided their readers with authentic vignettes of social life, they often indulged in romantic fancies with intrusive commentaries. Today some of their artistic creations may appear very learned, laborious and dull but it has to be borne in mind that these early novelists were primarily experimenters than accomplished artists.

The stimulus and direction given by the latter half of the nineteenth century produced intense activity in the political, social and literary spheres in the early decades of the present century too. This period witnessed significant changes in all walks of life, the prime motivator of them being none other than Mahatma Gandhi himself. Gandhiji's arrival in India in 1915 can be justifiably treated as a watershed in Indian history. The nation was never the same either politically or socially or even culturally after his entry into Indian public life.

With Gandhiji's arrival, there was a stir of expectancy in the whole land, an uncanny feeling that the country is going to witness something very unique, the world as such has
not witnessed hitherto. The Congress movement itself became more democratic and more rural oriented. Gandhiji even spiritualised politics, something that has not been done before. "For me, Gandhiji said once", politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt, ever to be shunned" (qtd.in Narasimhiah, Writer's 21). Thus in Gandhiji's person, the spiritual, political and social aspects of Renaissance became a unified whole. The three movements that originated in the preceding century became inherent parts of the struggle for freedom. Jawaharlal Nehru had all these and much more in his mind when he wrote in his The Discovery of India that Gandhiji "was like a powerful current of fresh air" (303).

The political awakening which the country witnessed with the ascendancy of the Gandhian mode of thought and agitation acted as a rich quarry for the Indian English writers, especially the novelists. As M.K. Naik has stated, it was an era of "sudden flowering of the novel" (A History 118). Writers who had a message, either political or social, to convey soon began to perceive in the novel an appropriate medium to propagate their ideals. Many of the dominant themes of Indian English Fiction were also developed during this era. The plight of the Untouchables and the landless poor, the evils of addiction to liquor, communal and caste conflicts, social evils like child-marriage became the themes that have special importance to the generation of
novelists of the 1920s and '30s. Major Indian English novelists like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan explored and exploited the Gandhian themes in their fiction. Along with these great writers, a host of others like K.S. Venkataramani, Shanker Ram, A.S.P. Ayyar, K. Nagarajan and Bhabani Battacharaya also used the ideals of the National movement in their fiction.

Thus Indian literature enters what now is broadly called the Gandhian age, by which we mean the whole period extending from the arrival of Gandhi in India to his assassination in 1948. Venkataramani was the first Indian English novelist to give artistic expression to the strenuous idealism and moral earnestness that went with the Gandhian movement. Elena Kalinnikova points out that he made "the first furrow on the virgin soil of Indian English fictional prose ...." (80). As Venkataramani is one of the two authors identified for the present study, it would not be out of place, if his background also is analysed.

K.S. Venkataramani was born in 1891 at Kaveripatnam in Tanjore District of Tamil Nadu as the son of Sidhantha Iyer. After completing his primary education in Chengleput District, where his father was employed as an excise officer, Venkataramani went to Mayavaram National High School in the

1 His initials 'K.S.' stand for Kaveripatnam Sidhantha Iyer.
eastern part of Tanjore District. Here, for the first time, he came under the spell of patriotic sentiments which were to last a lifetime. Of this momentous period of his life Venkataramani writes thus: "Temperamentally I was a text book scholar till then but the river Cauveri, Edmund Burke, Sri Aurobindo, Bankim Chatterjee's 'Vande Mataram' and the partition of Bengal.... inspired me with the first patriotic sentiments and love of humanity and of my country..." (qtd. in Ramaswamy 16).

Thus one can see how patriotic sentiments were dominant in him when he joined the Madras Christian College and then went to the Presidency College for his B.A. (Hons.) and from there to the Law College, Trivandrum to complete his B.L. Degree Course. But as a lawyer, Venkataramani was not much of a success; his heart was not in the profession. Hence before long he turned his attention to his favourite vocation -- that of a creative writer.

Venkataramani's maiden attempt at creative writing was a collection of sketches which he published under the title Paper Boats in 1921. The book "presented a transitional form from journalism to the genre of short-story" (Kalinnikova 76). This was followed by On the Sand Dunes, a philosophic prose-poem where reclining on the sands of Kaveripatnam, Venkataramani muses on the problems of life and
death and man's essential loneliness in the world. These reflections in rhymeless verse, wherein the author heralds the superman of Nietzsche, the 'Mahapurusha' of the Hindus, sometimes, as Venkataramani's close friend and admirer Manjeri Isvaran has pointed out, "degenerates into sentimental self pity which is antithetical to Nietzsche's ideals themselves" (5).

From the gloomy and occasionally copybook moralisings of Sand Dunes, Venkataramani soon turned to what his genius was best suited for, that is to the novel form. This form provided ample scope for his rambling style and didactic impulse and he selected it as the most appropriate medium to propagate many ideas which he regarded as close to his rural self. His first novel Murugan, the Tiller came out in 1927. It was somewhat well received by the reading public and was subsequently translated into Tamil and Telugu. This singular work established his reputation as a Gandhian thinker. Gandhian theories on economics and rural re-construction provide the basic matrix for the novel and for the first time Venkataramani's art assumes a functional purpose.

Immediately after the success of Murugan, Venkataramani published certain journalistic collections: The Next Rung (1928), Renascent India (1928) and A Day with Sambhu (1929). In these too, he adhered rigorously to some of his favourite
leitmotif — regret for the passing out of old traditions and
a nostalgic longing for the disappearing patriarchal ways of
life.

Venkataramani's intense individuality and passionate
moral earnestness are nowhere better reflected as in his
second novel Kandan, the Patriot (1932) which firmly
established his reputation as a novelist. Here, unlike in
his earlier novel, he concentrated more on the political
aspects of the National movement than on the economic. This
novel is Venkataramani's contribution to the cause of the
Freedom struggle and it leaves none of its readers in any
doubt as to the identity of the protagonist -- Kandan -- who
in words and deeds reminds us of Mahatma Gandhi himself.

Venkataramani's last major literary work Jatadharan and
Other Stories also has a great deal in common with his
earlier fiction. Though the book is an assortment of short
stories on various themes, one can easily notice the idealism
and the urge to iron out a society befitting the author's
ideals in almost all the stories. Apart from these works,
Venkataramani, towards the closing years of his literary
career, authored a few more works more or less loyal to the
essentially reformatory ideals he held dear throughout his
life. Thus After Gandhiji: Our Problems came out in 1949
and *The Nature of Creative Art* in 1950; the latter being inspired by His Holiness the Sankaracharya of Kanchipuram.

While one has to turn to the novels for the full exhibition of his creative powers, Venkataramani appears primarily as a writer with a mission. Therefore the umbilical cord that exists between the non-fiction and fictional ventures of Venkataramani cannot be easily ignored. Venkataramani was in many ways a committed writer who had implicit faith in the magic and efficacy of the written word. He thought of himself somewhat as an "unacknowledged legislator of mankind" and his biographer and critic Ramaswami might have had this in mind when he wrote thus: "He was a seer who was also a literary artist" (69).

From Venkataramani, when we turn our attention to Nagarajan, we meet an artist who was very different in character and genius. Nagarajan was never a "career novelist" like his contemporary and his work had to be forced out of him very often. We have, as evidence, the testimonial of none other than his closest friend Hilton Brown who writes thus in the foreword to *Chronicles of Kedaram*: "So diffident was he about his work that at one stage, if I had not cracked my whip very loudly and vigorously, I believe he would have abandoned it" (vii). He does not seem to have any residual faith in his literary
creations and therefore the ardent idealism of Venkataramani is the thing most lacking in his works. Despite his casual attitude, he shows an honest love and appreciation of literature though not particularly to his own creations.

Nagarajan was born on 20 June 1893 in Pudukkottai, as the son of A.G.Krishnaswami Iyer who was a Superintendent of Police, in the former Pudukkottai State. Nagarajan completed his F.A. in the Rajah's College, Pudukkottai from where he went to Madras Christian College for his B.A. He took the B.A. degree in 1914 and then joined the law College. On taking his law degree he joined the Pudukkottai Bar and remained there for the major part of his life. Nagarajan was versatile in his interests and this has inadvertently placed a sort of embargo on his literary creativity. So much so, his creative ventures were few and far between.

Nagarajan started his literary career with a few one act plays: A Man of Principle (1933), The Lucky Ring (1935), The Golden Palm or The Buried Treasure (1937). These were not initially meant for publication but were written for the

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2 K.Swaminathan speaks of him: "With versatile steadfastness, he has proved loyal to his chosen Radha, the Law, while carrying on fierce flirtation with a host of other jealous mistresses -- Music, Languages, Authorship, Education and I know not which other delightful damsels" (qtd. in Jagadisan and Nagarajan XVI).
leisured people of the court of the King of Pudukkottai and whatever literary merit, as was provided to them, was subsidiary to the main purpose of giving entertainment. Of the three plays, only A Man of Principle deals with contemporary realities; the other two being more or less connected with myths and legends.

Nagarajan's literary reputation was made with the publication of Athawar House in 1937. This novel written against the backdrop of the National movement deals primarily with the fortunes of a joint family. It was followed by yet another one act play Law in the Dock (1944); a skit making fun of the mess lawyers and judges are capable of creating out of law and lawcourts. In 1945, Nagarajan published Cold Rice which was a collection of twelve short stories written during various stages of his life. The wide range of themes here is fairly indicative of the author's ecleticism. Some of the short stories deal with familiar themes such as East-West relations while some others appear to be anecdotes culled out from judicial diaries. Nagarajan has also to his

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3 There is some controversy as to the exact date of publication of 'Athawar House'. Iyengar in Indian Writing in English mentions the year 1939 as the year of publication (795). But Uma Parameswaran points out that the novel was reviewed in The Hindu in Oct. 1937 itself (Athawar: A study 151). The book itself does not have a date.
credit a chronicle play *Chidambaram* (1956) written for an occasion, namely, the Silver Jubilee of the Annamalai University. Apart from this he has also published a series of pen-portraits of a few eminent personalities which he later collected into a book *Footprints on the Sands* (1960).

Next in the chronological order comes Nagarajan's 'magnum opus' *Chronicles of Kedaram* (1961), a novel which took an unduly long time to mature. The gap between the first novel *Athawar House* and the second and last *Chronicles of Kedaram* is an unusual twenty four years. The book established Nagarajan's reputation for times to come. Finally, towards the end of his literary career he published a travelogue *Cauveri, from Source to Sea* (1975), and *History of the Annamalai University* (1979); the latter book being his tribute to an institution to which he held a lifelong connection. Besides these, Nagarajan has also authored three full-length biographies -- *Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar* (1989), *Rajah Sir Muthiah Chettiar* (1989) and *Sir Alexander Tottenham* (1992) which were posthumously published.

The principal object of the above survey is to give a panoramic view of the influences that shaped the thoughts and evolved the tastes of the two writers, Venkataramani and Nagarajan. Even while keeping in view the hostility marshalled by critics like Wellek and Warren in *Theory of*
Literature against the biographical method of interpretation of literary works, we are struck by certain striking parallelisms in the lives of these two writers. Both of them were born in the Cauveri delta region of Tamil Nadu into high caste Brahmin families which had partaken liberally from the Hindu culture as well as the English education. Both Venkataramani and Nagarajan were products of elite educational institutions like the Madras Christian College and moreover both were trained for the legal profession. Manifestly both of these writers also came under the influence of Gandhian doctrines at a very early stage of their lives. Therefore it is no wonder that the thematic content of their fiction displays a striking similarity.

Anyhow, such similarities should not be carried too far as basic differences can be noticed in their approaches to the themes. Another pointer to their differing perceptions can be obtained from the respective attitudes they adopted towards their literary creations. Here again, we have to search for documentary evidence among the available biographical details.

Venkataramani's biographer and critic, P.S. Moni, has noted that towards the end of his life, "outlived by his schemes, his wife, his income, his health, and almost everything but his kind heart" as Thackeray says of Steele,
Venkataramani yearned for the republication of his works (183). But this last dream of a visionary who fought and wrote for the emancipation of his nation was not fulfilled. He was in many ways a broken man when he breathed his last in Mylapore on 21 February 1952. His yearning for the republication of his works is fairly indicative, in one sense, of the deep and honest commitment Venkataramani had towards his writings.

On the other hand, Nagarajan was very casual in his attitude to his own creative ventures and left them either to survive or perish on their own merits. K.P.K. Menon complains that Nagarajan had "done nothing to retrieve his published works from oblivion" (1) though as a successful lawyer that was never beyond his means. Needless to say that this casual and easygoing attitude is the main reason why most of his works have become as rare as "archeological relics" (Menon 1). Nagarajan's eclectic tastes, quick wit, abundant fancy and deep and honest love for literature have not helped the survival of his works.

Thus in Nagarajan and Venkataramani we get two contemporaries who are antithetical in several respects. But this antithesis is confined only to their approach to the problems of their era and to the attitude they display
towards their literary creations. Mostly, the thematic contents of their fiction display a striking resemblance.

**Aims and Objectives of the present study**

The present study attempts to project the thematic similarities in the fictional works of Venkataramani and Nagarajan, keeping in view the prevalent social, cultural and political milieus of their time. But while projecting the thematic similarities no attempt has been made to gloss over the dissimilarities which are apparent at times.

Since a mere cataloguing of thematic resemblances may become superfluous in the long run, the study has ventured to deduce the underlying pattern in them and to obtain through them a richer perception of the formative trends of the period. As Venkataramani and Nagarajan hold mostly divergent views on the momentous events of their period it is sincerely hoped that a comprehensive analysis of their works would lead to a fuller understanding of their age.

Yet another aim of the present study is rather more ambitious in that it tries to focus the attention of the academic community on the works of the two writers who are practically forgotten even in their own native state of Tamil
Nadu. Apart from a few studies on Venkataramani's works like K.S.Venkataramani - Writer and Thinker by Manjeri Isvaran, K.S.Venkataramani by N.S.Ramaswami and "Ezhuthidai Chezhitha Chemmal" by P.S.Moni in Tamil, very little on him has come out in the last twenty years. Still worse is the position of Nagarajan. The only substantial work on his writings came in 1984 -- K.Nagarajan's Writings by K.P.K.Menon. Most other critical judgments appear in, what K.S.Ramamurti calls "survey-class" studies where the effort is more at "covering" authors and their works than at critical assessment (Rise of Indian Novel 9). Such assessments, at their best, are only casual since it is wellnigh impossible to assess a writer's achievement of a lifetime in a page or two.

Since the works of Venkataramani and Nagarajan constitute a rich part of our heritage, ignoring them or relegating them to the backyard of unread books would be only to the nation's disadvantage. And it is felt that the time is opportune to have a reappraisal of both Venkataramani and Nagarajan and to preserve their works from the curse of oblivion. The study has been undertaken with this motive also in mind.

Moreover, we can see that in the existing evaluations of the works of Venkataramani and Nagarajan many facile simplifications and rash generalisations have crept in. The study attempts to rectify some such errors of judgment.
Finally, an impression has gained ground in certain academic circles that since Venkataramani and Nagarajan deal with incidents that occurred half a century back their works too have become outdated and that their themes and attitudes are now bereft of both life and originality. The study hopes to establish that this view is fallacious by emphasizing the contemporaneity of their fiction in relation to present-day realities.

HYPOTHESES
I. Venkataramani and Nagarajan are generally dismissed by critics as clumsy and casual respectively. Their fiction deserve a reassessment in terms of themes and techniques.

II. Evaluating the works of Venkataramani and Nagarajan, N.S. Ramaswamy has stated that they are different "in almost every respect that can be imagined" (64). This is an overstatement.

III. Both the novelists were tremendously influenced by the forces released by the Mahatma and his ideals govern their thematic predilections. But they deal with them in contrasting styles and levels of seriousness.

IV. These two novelists are not mere chroniclers of social life. They are also good literary artists.
V. Though they confine themselves to the same themes there is qualitatively a vast difference in their artistic achievements. Clumsy technique is the bane of Venkataramani's fiction. Nagarajan's carefully evolved technique, while casting a pall of casualness over his fiction, imparts to it a depth and suggestiveness.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The present study is limited to the fictional writings of Venkataramani and Nagarajan. It is confined to thematic and stylistic analyses of Venkataramani's Murugan, the Tiller, Kandan, the Patriot, Paper Boats, Jatadharan and Other Stories and Nagarajan's Athawar House, Chronicles of Kedaram and Cold Rice.

However, writers like Venkataramani, who have a temptation to use all their works to disseminate their private and individual vision, make the task of limiting the study difficult. The connection that exists between his fiction and non-fiction is too obvious to be ignored; his commitment to his ideals being what they are. Therefore parallel themes and ideas, as and when they occur in the non-fiction of Venkataramani, are pointed out primarily to provide a wider canvas to the study. The same method is applied in the case of Nagarajan too.
It has already been mentioned that paucity of standard critical materials is the main hurdle that faces the scholar when he undertakes a study of Indian Writing in English and this is particularly true in the case of writers like Venkataramani and Nagarajan. This meagre equipment of secondary sources places the scholar in an unenviable plight since he has to rely mostly upon his own critical judgments. Such a risk is unavoidable and, in all humility, the scholar wishes to record this as a limitation of the study.

**METHODOLOGY**

Besides consulting primary and secondary sources, the researcher, when he was working as Lecturer in English, H.H. the Rajah's College, Pudukkottai had the good fortune to meet and talk to Nagarajan a few years prior to his passing away. Afterwards, he went to Nagarajan's home at Pudukkottai and had a lengthy discussion on various aspects of his writings with his son and son-in-law who are persons noted for their erudition and scholarship. Such discussions had exerted a seminal influence in the formulation of this study. Further, he had also the opportunity to meet several of Nagarajan's friends and colleagues whose viewpoints are assimilated into the study.

As for Venkataramani, the attempts have been not that successful. Still the researcher had a series of
correspondence with P.S. Moni, one of the biographers of Venkataramani, who offered him clarifications regarding various aspects of Venkataramani's personal life and works.

In the analysis of the data the approach has been both comparative and contrastive. For research and documentation procedures, the style recommended in *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (Third Edition) by Joseph Gibaldi and Walter Achtert is followed.