Chapter 1

Introduction: The World Order

During the twentieth century, the world events, especially the two World Wars that had seen the greatest carnage of the century proved beyond doubt that the savage is not tamed properly despite the trappings of civilization. On the one hand the twentieth century world was mirrored scholastically in The Waste Land of Eliot and on the other, a world of faith and spirituality was presented in The Windhover of Hopkins. Between these two extremes the Auden generation felt and gave vent to their dilemma. Auden, the prominent of the group more than anyone else presented the dilemma through his poems. The situation was no different for V.K. Gokak the Indian writer writing in English. The colonial period in which he had grown up had given way to Swadeshi rule after 1947. The tender nostalgia of Toru Dutt’s poems had given way to layman’s spirituality as is reflected in Tagore’s Gitanjali and the highly philosophical spiritualism of Aurobindo’s Savitri. Gokak traversed the paths to realization with the guidance of these eminent people’s writings.
Concept of Western Philosophy

The constant European wars created quite a number of philosophers and philosophical schools of thinking. While most of them were theologian-philosophers, like Kierkegaard, Tillich, and Nietzsche, there were others who were philosophers par excellence and contributed much to the development of philosophy as solutions for the existential problems of mankind. Kant, Sartre and Kafka presented the problem of alienation through their characters in a fictional world which influenced not only Europe but the whole world. Marxism as a philosophy also influenced the world especially when a Communist regime for the first time came into power in the Soviet Union. Naturally the poets the world over including Auden and Gokak were much influenced by Marxist philosophy. Both were disillusioned later for valid reasons. But for a short-time in their life, they were inspired by Marxist ideologies.

The purpose of the different schools of philosophical thinking appears to be the same, that of giving solace to confused humanity, after a great deal of deliberation and contemplation on the part of the philosophers. Philosophy, a higher level of thinking is an aspect of a highly civilized human being. The Greek civilization produced Plato, Aristotle and Socrates. The history of philosophy was a beacon of hope to the intelligent educated human being, wandering in a confused world.
Twentieth century men found their thoughts synonymous with those of the great masters.

Understanding the self is only a step ahead of this. In order to understand the different aspects of the self philosophers propose various means and methods. They had thought about the self and, with an analytic mind, enlarged upon it to give expression through words. Theologian-philosophers took a step further by acknowledging the presence of God in their lives as well as in their writings. A few of them like Nietzsche found a solution in the form of a Super man or the super intelligence, with higher thinking, an ideal worth admiring.

Concept of Indian Philosophy

The age-old texts of India like the Vedas and Upanishads along with the teachings of religious reformers like the Buddha and Mahavir had enriched Indian philosophy. Sankhya-Yoga, a part of the Upanishads acknowledges the duality of the self and nature while Jainism believes in the conscious spirit and the unconscious spirit. Buddhism believes in the ultimate self, thereby establishing the moral responsibility of human beings. The importance of self in human beings attains predominance in the teachings of Buddha. Salvation comes through this self. Man attains nirvana by controlling and sublimating this self to overcome the
attractions of this world and moving towards a state where knowledge of the Self becomes the focal point of life.

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh combines the socio-political life of a human being with that of his religious life. The philosophy of a country gives vigour to its religion and religion in turn gives strength to its philosophy. Sri Aurobindo is of the opinion that in a country like India where the fight against colonialism was on, man could not stand aloof. Aurobindo's religion and philosophy cannot be expounded in this restricting situation. Thus the socio-political scene becomes very important to an Indian of such crucial times. He believed that religion should not be an escape from one's responsibilities as a citizen. The different stages of an Indian life, as formulated by the Indian ideal of existence, give a lean to Artha, Kama and Dharma.

Gokak too feels quite differently about religion and spirituality and he emphasizes,

The eternal religion gave itself no name, because it set itself no sectarian limits, admitting all beliefs, allowing even a kind of atheism and permitting all possible spiritual experiences. The word 'spirituality' is co-extensive with the whole of life.

(Sri. Aurobindo's View of Spirituality in Indian Poetry, 247)

It takes a life-time to find the truth that is God. The search for the Eternal truth leads man in his particular chosen path. As a poet, artist,
teacher, or businessman, a person fulfil the path chosen for him even before he is born. Through this chosen path one leads the life according to the accepted norms of the society and nation. A deviation from this means he will be on his own, an outcast, scorned by his friends as well as by his near and dear ones. But the satisfaction afforded is much stronger than any scorn. This search transcends religion, caste and creed. There is nothing to bind the seeker because what he is searching for is also limitless. The Upanishads and other sacred texts do not advise rituals. They preach meditation and not sacrifice of either animals or any live being, with other rituals. All the great men that India had seen preached the everlasting nature of the eternal spirit in human beings. Whatever formal religion and ritualistic practices that came later on they were all inventions of the dominant people, especially the higher caste, who wanted the controlling power over people in the name of religion. To a great extent their ploy succeeded with the result that a ceremony was no ceremony without a priest and dakshina for him. It became a must.

Later, as the historians record it, there were occasional revolts against this religious supremacy, in the form of verses. The most dominant example was the Bhakti movement of the early sixth century B.C. producing poets like Kabir, Thulasidas, Surdas and, Mirabhai. All wrote verses of a totally different nature from those of the earlier ones:
totally against ritualistic religion. They were preaching an eternal spirituality that transcends everything. The priestly class needed a deity to serve and had grown greedy by too much worldly life and they tried to exploit the common man. They were the people who opened up a very vulgar and materialistic aspect of religion which became anathema to the seekers of truth. The philosophic texts of India do not preach a ritualistic, materialistic religion. The philosopher or jnani knew that the real God is far beyond human conception. If one is eager to know the Truth, one will abandon everything that the world offers and will continue in the path of Truth, for one will realize that god is indeed Truth. This truth is manifested in Siva, the vedic God and he is also the artist who makes and breaks the universe. Thus the philosophic teachings, is condensed and is synonymous with the maximum Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram. Siva is the truth and truth is beauty. To be in harmony with oneself and God is the ultimate aim of a created being. Understanding this, man comes to terms with his life on this earth and the meaning of his creation.

Parallelism in Western and Eastern Spirituality

The basic difference between the culture of the East and the West governs the norms for parallels in the spirituality of these two sections of the globe. This is also the difference between Semitic and Vedic civilization. While one is nomadic, the other is agrarian. Naturally their
way of life, cultural norms, ruling nature etc., all differ. The Semitic race
goes from place to place, never settling in one place, their attitude to
possessions is never that of a settled race; for them time is important.
Time is God's gift. Time is an element of being; it is an integral
ingredient of our existence, we are in Time. For the old Semitic race,
time is very important. What guides them are thoughts of tomorrow. They
are future-conscious and their movement is always a march forward. To
them history, time, future, progress all mean moving forward. Therefore
heaven is important for them. From oasis to oasis they move and it takes
them to heaven and not to sand or to hopelessness. Naturally, the
symbols their religions have adopted also indicate their affinity to the
heavens symbolized by the sky. Thus it is, that their Gods are
represented by heavenly bodies as is seen in the case the crescent of
Islam, the star of the Jews, and the sun of Christians. Their life is a
constant stirring for the tomorrow and progress accompanies as a result
of this strain and naturally the western world represents progress to the
modern world.

The Eastern culture represented by India, here, was primarily
agrarian and the Vedic Indian had a settled culture because the land was
fertile. So for the present is important and he doesn't worry too much
about tomorrow. For him Earth or Mother is more important; so in the
East we have a matriarchal culture concerned with conservation and
presentation. The Jewish culture is patriarchal representing the West. Time is cosmic for an Indian, moving according to the rhythms of the sun. So naturally it is a slow existence, while the western world is hectic with no time to wait for anyone or anything. In this aspect both worlds differ entirely from each other.

The western world was often at the brink of total destruction or on the path of walking roughshod over other nations as in the case of colonialism. Both retracted the civilization from the level it had reached before the onset of these invasions. Western philosophy, starting from the Greek philosophers, was always there to bring man back to humanity in times of crisis. Throughout the ages, philosophers and theologian philosophers, after the coming of Christianity, tried to feed the intellect and the soul of the western man. The spirituality of the western man reaches new dimensions with the coming of Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, Frederic Nietzsche and Søren Kirkegaard on the scene with their philosophy. Niebuhr was more a social scientist than a philosopher and tried to discover God through his social theology. Tillich on the other hand advocated systematic theology reflecting the depth level with God as the depth of our being. At this depth level with God, all religions influence the intellectuals of Europe and America of the 1950's. Nietzsche, on the other hand, was more practical and his solution for the problems of the world was to have a Superman or a being more than a
mere mortal with astonishing powers. The Christian theologian philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, advocated ‘the leap of the faith’ into the void surrendering everything to the will of god. The Self becomes delineated from the human being and becomes pliant to the will of god.

The influence of Indian philosophy on western world was stigmatized in the 1960 by the Hare Rama Movement and by the Flower Children concept which made use of drugs which in turn caused hallucinations and lethargy. The Hare Rama Movement disintegrated and free sex, which was part of the movement, resulted in the total collapse of morality in the western world. Those who came over to India in search of spirituality often ended up in the hands of drug suppliers. The escapism of this movement created a need to hold up the spirituality of India among the western people. As a result there had been attempts to revive Indian culture, philosophy and spirituality in the western world. Indian culture is a meditative culture, as the ancient rishis and their lives would show.

In all religions, prayer is to see God, in the ‘You’ concept. The ‘You–I’ relationship between god and man is the basic structure of prayer in all religions. For a human being this is necessary due to the I-you concept of his life. But to attain the ‘You’ there should be only ‘I’. To attain ‘I’, the ‘sakthi’ of the inner mind rather than the person before you should remain. In meditation this is possible and meditation is one
way of understanding and attaining true spirituality. It is also the root and depth dimension of prayer. While prayer is man speaking to God, meditation is God speaking to man. The great Indian philosopher J. Krishnamurthi speaks on meditation in his book *Beyond Violence* thus,

[. . .] it is the absolute stillness of the mind, the absolute quietness of the brain. The foundation for meditation has to be laid in daily life; in how one behaves, in what one thinks. One cannot be violent and meditate; that has no meaning [. . .] one behaves, in what one thinks [. . .]. For the stillness of the mind, its complete quiet, an extraordinary discipline is required; not the discipline of suppression, conformity, or the following of some authority, but that discipline or learning which takes place throughout the day, about every movement of thought; the mind then has a religious quality of unity; from that there can be action which is not contradictory.

(156)

From the East, meditation had been transplanted to the west where the people welcomed it whole-heartedly. Whereas the western philosophy failed to impress the people there, the *shantih* or peace of the East was accepted by the modern generation. It so happens that wherever you are and whatever your existence be, you can recognize and attain your spirituality. The spiritual progress is actually a journey within us.
Therefore the obstacles are also those within us. Speaking of the path to self-realization Swami Dattavadhut says:

The prime purpose or human life is spiritual evolution through charity, devotion, selfless service and love for all. And all this without any expectations. A golden rule with deep spiritual significance is "Perform and forget" i.e., one should perform all noble deeds and have performed them, simply forget about them. Such a person will be blessed with supreme peace and is closer to self-realization (Dattavadhut 17)

*The Bhagavad Gita* says:

The steady-minded, by giving up all (attachment for) the fruits of action, obtains peace, born of steadfastness. The unsteady (fickle), being attached to fruits through desire, is ever bound (by action) (5:12)

The Karma yoga which the Indian philosophy advocates is also one of the paths of self-realization, thereby travelling towards one's spirituality to attain the Divine Light. Here one becomes an instrument in the hands of God to serve humanity. As Van Kaam states while talking about spirituality in his book *Spirituality and the Gentle Life*:

Spiritual life, [. . .] may include a person to some kind of social involvement, but it does not imply the same kind of social life for every one. The involvement that is clearly the
will of god for you may be as clearly a failing of god’s will for me. (Spirituality and the Gentle Life 71)

The lives of great spiritual leaders of the world reveal two aspects of their lives, their life of silence and their public life. The most appropriate examples are Jesus in Jerusalem and Sidhartha or The Buddha in India. After thirty years of silence, Jesus sets out on his public life with his baptism of Holy Spirit. His life mission was compressed into three short but voluminous years when he lashed at hypocrisy and preached a life of spirituality, based on humanism. His teaching ‘Love your God; love one another’ became the sum total of his life which ended in a death of such violence that it was the ultimate cruelty that mankind did to its prophets and seers. The Buddha on the other hand renounced a life of luxury and went on a spell of meditation, which made him a great influence on war crazy emperors of later times. Hemispheres apart, these two had attained enlightenment and used the light of knowledge to light up the path of other human beings in their own specially chosen manner. Called to a life of salvation, both Jesus and the Buddha opted out for a salvation with fellow human beings rather than apart from them. Their self-realization and their spirituality had made them realize the truth of the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit for Jesus and Brahma, Vishnu and Siva for Buddha. Both had experienced God like the sap running from the root to the trunk to the branches and to the leaves. They wanted to
share their god experience with the rest of humanity. The words to transmit their experience, were got from silence, from the inner well. We humans talk too much, ignoring even the silence of culture and so we live in ignorance of this god-experience. These great people had taught the world that internal silence is essential; it is the womb of words.

Poet's Place - As a Universal Citizen

Better than a speech of a thousand vain words is one thoughtful word which brings peace to the mind. Better than a poem of a thousand vain verses is one thoughtful line which brings peace to the mind. Better than a hundred poems of vain stanza is one word of the dharma that brings peace to the mind

(The Dhammapada 8:100-102)

When Buddha speaks of long poems in this manner, he was not denigrating poets. On the other hand, he was talking about the importance of meaningful words which have the force of making people peaceful. The force and strength of words are such that they have got the power to kill or save people. Unless used properly for the good of humanity it would have lost all meaning in itself. Poets, who consider themselves as the children of the Muses, understand the fire of their words. They consider it a blessing. Their talent cannot be 'put under a bushel'; it is to be used as god wills it. The truth of their inspiration
cannot be ignored. When the pathways to self-realization vary from Karma yoga, to Bhakti yoga to Jnana yoga, the place of the poet lies somewhere in between all these three. Poets appear as social reformers; there are poets who lead a saintly life in total devotion to their Lord and there are poets who spent time amassing knowledge finding the meaning of life.

Both in the East and in the West we find poets who fall into these categories. The real jnani with self-realization finds that he is a part of the great humanity and for him there are no barriers of caste or creed nor will he be restricted by the narrow bounds of regionalism and nationality. For him the whole world is one whole. The universality of the poet takes him out of his usual milieu to the vast world. The poet emerges as universal citizen through his poems which reflect his journey of self-realization to spirituality with the aid of philosophy. It helps his inquiring mind to find and recognize truth as it appears before his mind’s eye.

The various literary movements and cultural holocaust had their impact on the writers of both the East and the West. W. H. Auden in the west and V. K. Gokak in India had gone through the experiences like any other writer of the times. As global contemporaries their shared interest in philosophy had led them to the path to spirituality. The gradual evolution of self-realization is seen in a remarkable manner in their
poems. The impact of communism and the world wars on these two poets, for a time added to their experience and formed the main asset of their life experience. Caught between two world wars, both poets understood the centrality of death in the life of a mortal. Despair and pessimism pulled them apart at the time of war. Their poems, like those of any other poet of any other country during war, were a lament for the lost, old world virtues like kindness, sympathy and fellow feeling. While humanity around them is suffering, they cannot stand apart from life and in their writing like a catalyst in Eliot’s “Tradition and Individual Talent”, helping to evolve a poem, delineating one’s personality. Auden and Gokak were too sentimental and sensuous to keep back their personality from their poems. A poet cannot keep back his self from his poems when this self is very much part of his personality.

Poets for ages had been the torch bearers of enlightenment. Their divine inspiration takes them through untrodden paths of this universe, undertaking the task of enlightening and entertaining people by their verse. Most often both the poet and his readers benefit by this role of the poet. With the subjective and the objective way of looking at things, events and people, the poetic craft enchants and enriches the reading public.

In the modern times psychology had developed to such an extent that a better understanding of human nature becomes possible. This in
turn has made possible the idea of forgiveness. While the world drowns its sorrows in ‘wine, women and weed’ as Gokak remarks, it is the duty of the poet as a universal citizen, to sober them and lead them through the right path, not by advice as was the custom of old but by sharing their life experience with the readers. No preaching or advice is necessary. There is no dearth of prophets and god-men even in this modern world. Yet the importance of the poet and his verse is such that it has a wider coverage and following than any seer or prophet.

The post war era welcomed a totally different type of verse and verse composers. The natural boredom caused by the futility of war has made them antipathic to the old world charms. *The Waste Land* became such a success because it did not preach nor did it tell them what to do. Auden and Gokak through their philosophy attain their spirituality. The obvious fact that the world is very much in need of spirituality puts both poets on an edge. The didactic role of the poet as a moralizer and entertainer cannot be ignored. How far this didactic role must be played rests with the poets. An in-depth study of the philosophical trends in the poems of various poets is called for in the modern times. Poets who had been through an atomic war just cannot help being philosophical. Their journey of discovering their own self takes them not only to self realization but also to spirituality.
Review of Criticism - Auden

Critics of Auden view his poems and personal attitudes in a contrasting manner while some persistent critics juxtapose his writings along with his personal attitudes. Austin Warren in “The Quest for Auden” discusses the aspect of religion and the corresponding influence of it on his writings. He assigned poetry

[.. .] to the humbler position which earlier ages than the romantic had given to literature, including poetry: that of a craft with words, which described, characterized - perhaps even, in one of Auden’s favourite words and concepts, “diagnosed” - human life in its more permanent, as well as its more transcendent, more age bound, features. Poetry can never take the place of religion: [...]. Poetry cannot change history or even morally reform or spiritually regenerate a single man. It can soften or refine, but cannot alter character. (Sewanee Review, 229-30)

With the collapse of his leftist attitudes, Auden turned to philosophy and from there to Christianity. According to Warren, Auden adhered to his new found religion for thirty-three years and his writings echo Christian humanism as a natural order of the conversion. John Press on the other hand discusses three poems of Auden in Notes on Literature. “Our Hunting Fathers”, “Song for St.Cecilia’s Day” and “The Shield of
Achilles’ are, according to Press, illustrations of Auden’s pre-occupation with history, time and human destiny. Each of these poems is a representative of that particular stage in his career as a poet. The musical importance of the first two poems is also emphasized by Press. To Anthony Thwaite, he is a contemporary, a much admired one who had kept up a very high standard of skill, seriousness and fertility of thought for over forty years. He considers his plays “flamed but provocative” and verse dramas better than that of Eliot and Christopher Fry. Monroe K. Spears, critic and an authority on Auden, gives apt and thoroughly detailed analysis of categorized poems and writings of Auden giving special emphasis to religion as he chronologically discusses them. While so much controversial criticisms had been going on about Auden’s conversion, Spears argues that

Auden’s religious position is not a denial but a fulfillment of his earlier beliefs; the religious values do not contradict the others, but clarify them and take them to another level. It is no accident nor effect of temporary intellectual fashions that his religious approach should be existential, for this type of religious philosophy starts from the same kind of psychological analysis that had formed the perduring basis of Auden’s various attitudes and convictions.” (Spears, 171-2)
The literature and politics of England in the 1930s are discussed in *The Auden Generation* of Samuel Hynes, giving equal emphasis to the contribution of his contemporaries, Stephen Spender and Cecil Day Lewis to literature, their aspirations and their ideals.

*The Case of the Helmeted Airman* of François Duchêne emphasizes the heightening of life in the poetry of Auden, after tracing the early radical poems of Auden through the isolation, caused by religion, to the poems which are “nearly all fragments of a Progress of the Soul.” (209)

Hoggart, on the other hand, discusses the technique and themes that dominate the poetry of Auden and the connection between the shifting to America and the long works, giving more emphasize to the geometric order that Audenaved for along with the “image-making faculty”(93). Stephen Spender’s personal experience of Auden finds expression in “W.H. Auden and His Poetry,” while Marianne Moore discusses longer poems in “W.H. Auden” G.S. Fraser in “The Career of W.H.Auden” evaluates Auden in three stages; ‘Auden as the young prophet,’ ‘Auden in Midstream’ and ‘Auden’s Late Manner’ and he admits that is Auden is the most irritating not because of mannerisms but of entertaining ideas. Carlo Izzo has pin-pointed the divided self of the poet, “divided between his pitilessly critical intellect and a need, consciously felt, for a world less diseased and stricken with wrongs,
mistrust, terror” (Izzo, 135) “Auden’s Sacred Awe” of Richard M. Ohmann, is a concise evaluation of the position of Auden as the leader of the Auden generation to the poet of ideas as Auden emerges in his later life and his “sacred awe” for the intellectual left – Freud, Marx, Lawrence before he became a Christian, and philosophic giants like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Tillich and Neibuhr entered his horizon. Cleanth Brooks speaks of the use of imagery in the longer poems in *Auden’s Imagery*. The more technical aspects of Auden’s verse are discussed by Allen Rodway in the essay “Logicless Grammar in Auden Land” where the incorrect usages are pointed out and his constant tendency at image making is criticized with examples taken from various poems.

Allen Rodway is yet another Auden critic. In “A Preface to *Auden*” while discussing the poems of Auden, he classifies them into different periods and emphasizes the American period and Auden’s preoccupation with the reading of Kierkegaard.

Anthony Thwaite, on the other hand, discusses the twin aspects of Auden, the Marxist follower, and Auden, the Christian in his critical essay *W.H.Auden*. In the extensive criticism entitled *Man’s Place: An Essay on Auden*, Richard Johnson takes time to go through the important poems of Auden and comes to the discovery of humanism in all of us, as is depicted in his poems. He had found how Auden had successfully placed man in his rightful place in the universe through his verse.
George T. Wright in *W.H.Auden* discusses the poems, plays and verse dramas of Auden in detail, giving minute details to all the longer poems, after giving biographical details of Auden with the formative influences in his life.

*In the Poetic Art of W.H.Auden*, John G.Blair finds Auden an ‘Anti Romantic Modern’ and takes into consideration the existing criticism on Auden, while discussing the form and technique of his writings. Joseph Warren Beach in his book *The Making of the Auden Canon* considers Auden as the “most gifted of poets of the radical school” who is original and brilliant with imaginative and linguistic effects. The two theses *The Oxford Group: A study of the Poetry of W.H.Auden, Stephen Spender, Cecil Day Lewis and Louis Mac Neice* of John Frederic Povey and *The Auden Group: The 1930’s poetry of W.H.Auden, Cecil Day Lewis and Stephen Spender* of Justin Maynard Replogle, deal with the emergence of the group through the war. Povey in particular focuses on Auden after a discussion of the Oxford group. Both theses together form an initiation into the study of the poems of Auden rather than an in-depth study of the poet. Even Mark Rowan’s *Politics in the Early Poetry of Auden* is not an overall view of Auden’s poems but a very limited study of the evolution of politics in his early poems and “the insight that human pride and hatred are even more
destructive than economic surplus value, and that what can be loved can be cured.”

Katarine Bail Hoskin’s *Today the Struggle: A Study of Literature and Politics in England During the Spanish Civil War* discusses Auden’s poetry in the context of the Spanish Civil War, even though the title of the thesis encompasses the whole of literature rather than one particular poet. Such is the prominence of Auden in England during the Spanish Civil War.

Though most of the critics of Auden hint at the influence of Freud, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche on his poetry, Justin Replogle in his book *Auden’s Poetry* analyses Auden’s poems in the background of these great men and their writings. Hence his analysis of Auden on the basis of The Pattern of Ideas and The Pattern of Personae remains impressive. He takes time to analyse the comic art of Auden and insists that with Auden “Style is part of the message, and in Auden’s comic poems it is usually the most important part” (Replogle 223). Published in 1969, this book had included almost all the writings of Auden, in its evaluation. Anthony Hecht in his *The Hidden Law* analyses the poetry of W.H.Auden. The difference of this criticism published in 1993 from those of the earlier ones is that it is more scholarly and the references brought into emphasize certain points are really remarkable, adding valuable insight into the writings of Auden, in the light of the spiritual life revealed
unknowingly through them. *W.H.Auden: The Critical Heritage* edited by John Haffenden is a remarkable effort to compile Auden criticism throughout the years and classify them according to the poems and is presented with all the relevant information which makes it a must for all those who pursue studies on Auden. With an extensive introduction on the life and works of Auden, carefully tracing the different stages in his life, the editor has given importance to clarity avoiding confusion. Even to a common reader, the book becomes decipherable and highly useful. Lastly, the W.H.Auden Society’s Newsletter, especially of November 2001, that had published Stan Smith’s “Auden and the New York School Poets” is crucial in Auden criticism. Smith feels definitely that Auden did cast ‘an imposing shadow’ on John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Frank O’Hara, and James Schuyler who emerged in the 1950s and became known as the New York School of Poets. For them he was ‘an arbiter of poetic talent, an important gay literary model, and a social acquaintance’ (Smith 20). Such was the influence of Auden on young poets in America that the task of selecting the poet for the Yale Younger Poet for the year 1955 was on Auden, and Ashbery was selected and his first volume *Some Trees* effectively became the beginning of Ashbery’s career.

This thesis is partly an attempt at studying Auden’s philosophical and spiritual vision as envisioned in his poems.
Gokak

Compared to Auden, there is no formal criticism published on the works of Gokak in English. The few that are available are taken here for consideration. The only extensive criticism is by Raja Ram Mehrotra in his Introduction to Selected English Poems of Gokak in the New World Literature Series: 69. Mehrctra analyses his poems in a favourable manner and assesses the worth of Gokak’s writings to the literary publishing in India. He points out Gokak’s preoccupation with the use of idioms typical to India. Though not exactly on Gokak’s poetry, Eunice de Souza reviews in vitriolic terms the anthology of poetry that Gokak had edited, especially the introduction Gokak had written to the book The Golden Treasury of Indo-Anglican Poetry (1820-1965). Published by the Sahitya Akademi this book forms the first of its kind for a student of Indo-Anglian poetry. Sisir Ghosh of Santiniketan had reviewed The Concept of Indian Literature of Gokak and had brought out the effort of Gokak in the orientation of literary studies that is presented in the book.

J.M.Mohanty “In Remembrance” evaluates Gokak’s contribution to literature and emphasizes his ability to enter into ‘layers of consciousness,’ and gives equal importance to both his Kannada writings as well as English writings and this remains a very good assessment of Gokak’s literary career.
In the light of the few criticisms available on Gokak, a humble attempt is made in the following chapters, to study the philosophical and spiritual vision of Gokak’s poetry with that of Auden.

Witnessing and being part of a war can be a harrowing experience. Auden had gone through it and we find his experience of war in his poems. How his war experience turned him towards psychology, philosophy and later to spirituality is discussed in detail along with the people and places that had been of great influence in his writing. Gokak’s steady progress in spirituality with his faith in Lord Siva which in turn influenced his writing, along with people, places and events will be discussed in detail in this study. How far his philosophical learnings took him to the realization of his spirituality will also be the subject of discussion in this study.

Auden, with inborn talent started writing poems quite early in his life. But the poems of a mature Auden are more appreciated by the readers as well as critics. A host of persons and incidents shaped and helped to mature the poet. Various influences on Auden are examined and analysed in detail to know the reasons behind his thinking process. The contribution of philosophers, theologians, psychologists, geographically interesting places, paintings, etc., all find a place in Auden’s poems. The pathway to spirituality is traced through these influences in the first chapter.
Gokak’s place among the writers of Indian Writing in English is traced along with the formative influences in his life. Very much like Auden, Gokak was also indebted to many persons, who encouraged him, influenced him, inspired him and became a model for him to be copied. The influence of Vacanas and Vacanakaras are also examined and the special traits of his poetry are also given importance to in the second chapter.

In the third chapter the poems of Gokak and in the fourth, poems of Auden are taken and analysed tracing the gradual evolution of philosophical and spiritual thoughts in their poems. Since both poets had written voluminously, only a limited number of representative poems are taken here for study.

In the final chapter the poems of Auden and Gokak are taken in detail and juxtaposed to bring out the similarities as well as contrasts, bringing to the forefront the ideological similarities, though one belonged to the West and the other to the East. Common to them both is their philosophic and spiritual vision which is highlighted in the study.