George William Russell (1867-1935), whose works have enriched the treasure-trove of English meditative poetry, is one of the least discussed poets of the early twentieth century. The mystic elements of his poetry have injected a new note of awareness which has great significance in the context of materialistic attitude of the modern man. As it appears, the impact which mysticism and occultism have upon English literature is much less compared to that of any other literary trend. Notions like realism, romanticism and modernism reveal both the literary craze of the day as well as the poet's efficiency in propagating the current tradition in literature. In such literary cults the poet often acts as a part of the contemporary literary vogue, and his poetry becomes a form of co-ordination between the individual imagination and the demanding fashion of the era. His literary work is thus necessarily in tune with the socio-cultural background.

But mysticism in poetry is not a literary or social trend. A mystic is not an ordinary artist who fringes the onrushing thoughts of his mind into poetic language, keeping in view the taste of the public. He is the chosen one who apprehends the Almighty Creator not in any theoretical knowledge but in a direct experience of the Divine. This is why a mystic-poet shines as a
lonely star in the literary galaxy, distinguished from other poets of the time. He comes, not as per the wants of the age, but he is picked out of many poets to express the mystic wonders in language with a motive to fight the indolence with regard to the spirit.

Considered in this light, G. W. Russell may be taken for a genuine mystic poet who bedecked the literary matrix of the early decades of the twentieth century. Despite his birth in the politically ravished but unharvested literary field of Ireland, and his subsequent participation in the economic restabilization of the country, he remained primarily a mystic at heart. His interest in the various philosophic views of the world and his exploration into the human psyche established him as one of the leading mystic-poets of contemporary literature who brought in a new spiritual awareness to his readers all over the world.

Russell's literary background was closely connected with the Gaelic past and the subsequent Celtic revival. By the sixteenth century there were already four major languages in use in Ireland: they were the Irish, Norman-French, Latin and English. But the Bardic poetry, which the Irish literature preserved up to the beginning of the seventeenth century, had
served the primary function of presenting a national or racial record in verse. The spirit of the old Irish poetic-culture it portrayed was feeble and undynamic. It was only in the seventeenth century that the Gaelic culture began to thrive with revived Catholicism and fresh encouragement. The Franciscan College of St. Anthony in Louvain played a recognizable role in promoting a devotional and meditative spirit in the Irish literature. Antoin Gearnon, Florence Conty, Aodh Mac Aingil, Piaras Feirithear, Daibhi O Bruadair, and the eminent Geoffrey Keating were some of the pioneers who anchored the drowning Gaelic literary art safe to its haven. Keating, in his *Tri bior-ghasithe an bhais* (Three Shafts of Death), imploring to revive the spiritual potency among the Irishmen, opened doors to contemplative literature in the Gaelic Ireland.

Irish Literature, in its constant demand to be raised to universal standard, needed to be translated into English. And gradually, from the crude inflexible original English renderings from the Irish, which left the latter tough and uninteresting, a new literary trend began to emerge. This was the new tradition of Anglo-Irish literature. In literature the term refers to a tradition of literary productivity which has a distinct affinity to the Gaelic, Scottish, English and
European cultures, and at the same time reveals the taste of independence in the newly emerging literary fashion.

The Anglo-Irish writers, as most of them stayed away from their native country, had no occasion for looking back to their fatherland to derive poetic inspiration. Yet, with their priceless contribution, they have glorified English literature which would have otherwise remained impoverished. In this context it is noteworthy to mention the list of a long stream of Irish personalities like William Congreve, Dean Swift, Richard Steele, George Farquhar, Oliver Goldsmith, Oscar Wilde and G.B. Shaw, whose works have immensely helped to elevate the literature almost to perfection. These Irish literary figures, however, with their indifference to native culture, gave birth to a protective feeling among their nationalistic counterparts in Ireland as they felt the exigency of a Celtic revival. Consequently, the whole of the eighteenth and the earlier decades of the nineteenth century saw the desperate struggle of a national tone to rise to world wide eminence through the not-so-very popular works of Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849), William Carleton (1794-1869), Charles Lever (1806-1872), and later, of James Clarence Mangan (1803-1849) and
Thomas Davis (1814-1845). With the ceaseless effort of these Celtic revivalists there came into being the beginning of the Irish Literary Renaissance pioneered by Standish O'Grady. The followers of the new literary vogue, including Lady Gregory, John Millington Synge, Padraic Colum and Lennox Robinson, intended to enliven the past Celtism through present peasantry of the rural Ireland. Their endeavour is laudable, for they gained considerably in holding the Irish literature high up equating it to a universal standard.

Another such leading literary figure of Irish Renaissance is George William Russell (AE) whose role in the upliftment of Irish literature was overshadowed and thereby neglected by some of the eminent contemporaries like W.B. Yeats, Synge, Joyce and others. AE, who was born and brought up amidst the cultural and patriotic poverty of a land he held in high esteem, soon gave himself to the reviviscence of the drooping national spirit. Commenting on AE's deep concern for his own nation, Earnest Boyd refers to The National Being where AE has worked out ideas far beyond that of any average politician of the world.

Apart from politics, a temperament which made him known all over the world was that of a mystic. With the Hermetic and the Theosophical Society Russell's Dublin, in the later half of the nineteenth century,
had been a centre for spiritual and occult development. The Theosophical Movement in Dublin was another landmark in the way of the nation's literary renaissance. It steered the literary movement towards an artistic development stuffed with intellectualism. The two occult institutes provided ample scope and opportunity for the spiritually inclined young Dubliners to explore a field, which so far, only a few had gone into. AE, with his friends W.B. Yeats, Charles Johnston and John Eglinton was lucky to get access into the occult domain. In this respect AE was doubly benefitted to be accompanied by mystic visions which came upon his mind unawares, since a very young age. These mystic apprehensions or visionary dreams, he experienced directly, and at the same time discovered their symbolic implications to have been contained in the books he came across in the libraries of both the Societies.

A deep study of occult sciences and the accompanying mystic visions offered the prospects of a bilateral personality in AE. On the one hand he saw the glamours of an unconceivably powerful occult life and on the other, there lay the spiritually sublimated path of mysticism. Unlike his friend Yeats, he chose the latter. Mysticism
became a pattern not only of his poetic personality but of his life too. This, however, does not prove that opting for a mystic career AE abstained from probing into the religious philosophies of the world. On the contrary, these analytical expeditions were rather vivified and they presented a solution to AE's quest for the nature and structure of the mystery of being.

By the time spiritual consciousness dawned upon AE, he had already been exposed to a vast world of occult and spiritual knowledge. In the libraries of the Theosophical Society the two volumes of The Secret Doctrine (Mme. H.P. Blavatsky) had been treasured along with many other Theosophical and mystical writings. There is record that AE had been particularly attracted by The Secret Doctrine and Isis Unveiled (Mme. Blavatsky) and Charles Johnston's English translation of From The Upanishads (1896) -- a book which played a key role in creating in him a taste for the Eastern lands and their solutions to spiritual problems.

The chief purpose of the present thesis is an attempt to discover and throw light on some of the neglected or hidden aspects of Russell's mysticism with the justification that this great mystic of Ireland, though miles away from the Eastern civilization and culture, has much to share with them.
The project makes an objective and analytical study of some of the selected Oriental Philosophies and mystical writings to draw parallelism between the Orientalists and the Irish poet in the spiritual field.

India has a rich mystical and philosophical heritage that has attracted seekers of truth from the four corners of the world. Starting from the ancient times, when the Vedas, Upanishads and other undocumented philosophies were verbally passed down to disciples, to the twentieth century, the history of Indian literature has been adorned with the writings of great religious personalities whose wise and mystic philosophy has drawn considerable attention from the rest of the world. Besides Hinduism it has also cradled Buddhism -- the religion of love and compassion. But, philosophy and religion were not all that India had to offer to the West. It also hails a tradition of rich mystic apprehension through its meditative poets, old and new alike. Starting from Kabir (1440 A.D) to the modern mystic Rabindranath Tagore, India has maintained a tradition of pantheistic philosophy where the mystic poets dissolve the apparent duality between the observer and the observed. It was this trend of mystical perception which fascinated AE from a far off land to seek philosophic knowledge from the Orient.
Apart from these, he also turned to the Islamic mysticism of the Sufi Poets and the mystic philosophers of the Chinese Kingdom, whose teachings opened to him the light of a new ideology, known as the Taoism. Lao Tzu's Tao Teh Ching (pronounced as Dow Duh Jing) pronounces 'Tao' or the Progressive Intelligence to be the ultimate reality which creates as well as consumes the whole of creation. It is identical to the unmanifested Logos or the Brahman of the Hinduism.

Through Taoism AE comprehends the oneness of the being and matter on the one hand, and of the Creator and the created on the other.

In the unorthodox philosophy of the Moslems AE perceived the same kind of intimacy with the Fount of life which he had found in its sister theological systems of the world. Besides its urge for the merger with the Godhead, if anything attracted AE more definitely, it was the song of impassionate love contained in Sufi-mysticism. In the Sufi's love he discovered an elevated altruism which discarded selfhood to congregate the lover of God with God.

The thesis, in its full length aims at exploring these mystical elements of the Orient, as reflected in the writings of AE. If mysticism of the Oriental poets be taken for comparison, AE's may be called a sort of experimental knowledge of God — a transcendental
awareness where the mystic loses his personal identity in the symbolic presence of the Creator. AE's mysticism is the heightening of material consciousness to an oblivious state where it could view only the Divine instead of the mundane. This divine consciousness is a mystic awareness and, for AE, it relied greatly on the stimulation from the world of Nature.

In AE's mystic philosophy the Oriental features are more perceptible than the Occidental. This could possibly be owing to the fact that in the Western religions he discovered little of the charm and hidden message which he found the Eastern theological systems to be enriched in. He turned to Celtism instead of the Western religion. It served to supply him with inspiration for patriotism as well as spiritual encouragement. Celtism, in AE's hand, is not commercialized. It is rather upgraded in the cultural yard-stick and promoted to the dignity of being able to encourage divinity in poet-philosophers. It is characteristic of AE always to consecrate the ancient and to search the stamp of the Origin on it. For instance, through poetic imagination he sought to revive Celtism, which he found ancient enough to be considered sacred. He identified the ancient with the divine and intended to redeem the ignoble present by appeal to the noble past.
As AE saw a kind of cultural beauty in Celtism so also he cast a searching look towards the Eastern philosophic past for a spiritual dignity. Both Celtism and Oriental philosophies helped to develop a spiritual personality in him. In his mystic poems he sang the glory of the Master whose enchanting artifice has created the world. But the mystic revelations, as expressed in his chants are often projected in language highly cryptic and tacit with overwhelming exclamations. It was only on occasions when the mystic veil is lifted that the poet sees the transcending opulence unfolding unto him.

The project, tracing the mystical background of Medieval English literature upto the nineteenth century, attempts to analyse the pattern of mysticism as revealed in the poetry of G.W. Russell. It also makes a study of the various religious doctrines and allied mystical books that had their impact on the poet's mind to strengthen his quest for looking into the mystery of life. Above all, it aims at determining AE's position in mystic literature which had hitherto remained untouched. Finally the thesis, while making a modest but systematic and objective study of the basic factors that led AE to embrace mystic-search into life, attempts at throwing new
light on the poetry of AE from this particular angle laying bare thereby a fresh avenue for further research on an important aspect of an important Irish poet's achievement on a subject which had unfortunately remained hidden and undiscovered till the present time.