AE's meditative poems are fashioned after a mystic awareness, accompanied by spiritual optimism regarding the ultimate redemption of mankind. The convictions he was born with and the confirmation of these philosophic ideals which he sought in scriptures and religions, as meaningfully projected in his poems, show the expression of philosophy through mysticism. His poems are philosophic in the sense that they contain the message of life, and they are mystic, for they expose the innermost delight of the seer-poet. The joy of attainment, the song of heart and the underlying faith in divinity, all these the mystic poet contrives to present in a compact and unitary mode of versification. Whereas the philosophic poem opens doors to the deeper values of life, mystic-poem opens to the rhythm of being, to the bliss of living. In his poetic structure mystic awareness always precedes the philosophic discernment. Thus, in the meditative poems of AE both philosophy and mysticism are suffused, or to put in other words, his philosophy finds way through his mysticism.
AE was very much a man of the world and his mystic-poems exhibit experiences that are based on inspiration drawn from things, most down to earth, in the sense that worldly people can comprehend them. Like a common man AE led a natural life, suffering from pain and grief, facing the adversities of living. With his concern for the economic and cultural plight of Ireland he became involved in the contemporary politics of his country. And, despite all this purely political and social activities, he had little hope for personal gain. He worked for his countrymen out of sheer love and devotion that promoted him to no political or pecuniary gain. He, on the other hand, expounded his philosophy of wisdom through the depths of suffering and agonies of life.

Mysticism in AE is a visionary truth which he perceived and understood with the inner eye. The inspiration for mystic-visions that flowed to him both from the objective and spiritual domain, awakened him to the numinous realities of life, establishing the faith that
there exists a greater truth beyond the comprehension of intellect. This is the truth which the pious priest tries to realise in his devotion to God through religion. But AE took it to be the spirit of life, the essence of man's being in the cosmic order, and therefore made it the source of his mystic philosophy.

Raynor Johnson thinks that the inner conviction which made AE realise his primary task as a spiritual teacher also inspired him to follow the light of the Higher Self, which he tried to bring out to the public in the form of poems or painting. It is true, as he comments, AE understood the spiritual void in the contemporary age and, seeking to revamp a slumbering spirit, made fruitful attempts through his poems and paintings that gave a concrete shape to his mystic vision. AE's mind was frequently enshrouded with mystic visions which he translated into the language of the common man to show the rapport between the material plane and the divine plane. In his
mystic ordeals he became a partaker of the divine bliss intending to assimilate it in common life, and in the poems he wanted to externalize that glory, that bliss, in which his mind reclined for an instant on moments of fleeting revelation. Taking note of the causal relationship between his inspiring vision and the engendering poems, AE wrote to a German friend:

In the poetry I have tried to make a record of moods which became transparencies into soul or spirit and I have written no poetry without this idea. I am rather elderly now but I still retain this ideal of writing nothing which has not some relation to the spiritual life.(1)

The spiritual potency is an unmistakable trait in AE's poems. This sublimating spirit of the spiritual self should, on no account, be confused with the chants of a fanciful mind, idling upon imaginary visions or with the sermons of a preacher. If his poetry preaches any idea or faith at all, it is always as natural and instinctive as the poem itself. Specifying the
objective of his own mystic poetry, he wrote:

You must not place me on any pedestal in your mind or look to me for any universal wisdom, or for insight into the constraints between Catholicism or Protestantism, or for any considered opinion about Christ.(2)

AE's mysticism was very much of an unorthodox tradition, based on personal experience which denied any interference of religious authority. The poet with his mystic sensitivity was like an independent agent in the universe to prove the transcendental link, often lost to man under the veil of illusory existence. He made it confirmed through his mystic-poems that the Unknown is easily known by what He has created. And this knowledge of the Unknown is but a mood, a comprehension and assimilation of truth which the heart sees and the soul dips in.

First and foremost, Nature is the prime motivator of Russell's mystic temper. He sees the personification of the divine imagination in the frame of Nature. The glow of the setting sun, the wallowing moon-beam on the river water,
the glittering stars and the babbling brooks
create a spasmodic sensation in the mystic's
heart which, like lightning in the cloud,
flashes and vanishes. The feeling it creates,
is highly exalting, filling the mind with awe
and wonder. Charging the mind momentarily with
the abundance of spiritual attainment, the
rapture again secedes, leaving upon the heart a
sublime calm, deep peace, worthy of preserving
for the rest of the life. The mystic element
in his poetry is thus an expression of the
mystic-opulence, whereas the philosophic element
in it is the post-meditation on the mystic
revelation. Hence, in the breadth of the poem,
lines presenting the mystic revelation are brief,
 instantaneous while the thought ensuing from, is
patiently contemplative. Taking this into account,
it is reasonable to presume that his philosophy
has a descendence from mystic vision through
mystic complacence.

Both AE's poetry and painting, have direct
connection with his mystic vision. Ever since
he showed tendency to painting in the art school,
his mind had been receiving messages from another world. To him they were rich with intuitive knowledge, though for the ordinary people they were nothing beyond reconstructed and refashioned memory of some remote past. Visions of sun-bathed valley, distant mountains, huge moss-lain boulders and strange figures occupied his mind with a reality as things, real and natural, passing before physical eyes. In their realistic impact they seemed to lose the remoteness of fantasies or mere fanciful imagination. Discussing the nature of such unexplainable visions of AE, Monk Gibbon in The Living Torch, wonders that they could very likely have taken form of some, earth memories retained in some etheric substance so that they became visible at certain times, or whether they were sudden glimpses into an interpenetrating spiritual world, or whether, Gibbon further continues, they were in the nature of waking dream, a projection of the mind of the same mysterious kind as we experience in sleep....(3)
But AE himself seems to have taken a strong conviction regarding the genuineness of his visions which he differentiates from the appearance or reappearance of crazy imagination. He takes these visions to be really existing in another plane that forbids physical access. Persons like poets and artists with fine sensibility (as AE himself was one) are alone allowed glimpses of such visionary or waking-dreams, so that they transfigure the dreams into a meaningful form. His mystic poems and symbolic paintings are, thus, bodies of reorganized and systematic representation of mental visions and emblematic dreams of spiritual perception.

Through these stunning visions AE came to know about the tenability of an ethereal world and an all-pervading spirit which he called the fountain of youth or El Dorado. The visions at first were like automatic pictures sliding before the eyes in sequence; but with time, he gained knowledge to decipher the visions and began to believe in the prophetic implications contained in them. Clifford Bax rates AE among the second
kind of spiritually inclined persons who, according to the classification he made in the prelude to *The Hero in Man*, take delight, not in the intellectual perseverance but in an exploration of the innerbeing, seeing it clearly in the light of imagination and intensified will. That imperceptible world within, if revealed, opens a gateway to unaccountable splendour and depthless grandeur. While people of a lesser spiritual evolution are happy to end their metaphysical excursion at some philosophic doctrine, the matured and the wiser men see into the depth of philosophies to unveil the mystery of being. Comparing the two classes of seers, Mr. Bax comes to the conclusion that

Their philosophies are lifeless, for imagination is to the intellect what breath is to the body. Thoughts that never glow with imagination, that are never applied to all that the sense perceives or the mind remembers—thoughts that remain quite abstract, are as empty husks of no value. (4)

And, very near to what Mr. Bax Says AE writes in 1911:
I think metaphysician, you have gone astray, you would seek within yourself for the fountain of life. Yes, there is the true, the only light.

AE himself is no metaphysician; he is a seeker of truth, the follower of the Light:

I am one of those who would bring back the old reverence for the Mother, the magic, the love. (5)

AE recognises the fiery spirit within to be the 'hero in man', exploration of whose history ought to be the objective of the will. The mind on normal condition, being in a frivolous state, is incapable of comprehending the quiescent spirit underlying. Exploration of the psyche necessitates a tranquillised mind, where the faculty of higher imagination, loosened of its restrictive bond, is at full play. In this meditative transparency the surface of the mind is perfectly still, bearing the stamp of the Supreme Spirit on it. Out of this unbroken silence, the voice of the Spirit rises, filling the quietude of mind with the muse of life and eternal love.
Much like his mystic character Paul in *The Avatars*, too is suffocated with the mechanistic superficiality of life. As his hero, in the novel, fled the undesirable world in search of the eternal, AE in his poem leaves the apparent in search of the permanent. He justifies the mystic's preference of the natural world compared to the human world which is extremely ego-centric and objective. There appears to be a parallelism between the mystic qualities presented in his poems and those in Paul.

*The Avatars*, in full length, gives an account of the spiritual excursion of Paul who leaves behind the drudgery of materialistic civilization to open doors upon spiritual enlightenment and joyous living. His decision to fall upon a life of natural sublimity and divine quest is indicative of the mystically inclined man's preference to let the body starve at the cost of the nourishment of the spirit. In revolt against the time's degenerating sensitivity due to fast industrialization and growing hostility, Paul thoughtfully considers the
possibility of a restoration of faith and return to nature. He, along with Michael Oonaire, makes up the void that lies between the fretting spirit of modern man and the soaring inclinations of a mystic. In course of a discussion between them there arises the chance of an aesthetic reformation in the world through a kind of divine representation — the appearance of an avatar. AE, in the text, makes allusion to various mythological figures and gods and goddesses of Indian scriptures like Radha and Krishna, in whose amorous playfulness he suggests ways of evoking divine grace in lovers. Such deities, according to AE, have power to change and shape the fate of mankind who, in return, ought to respond to their call. "Only a god", Paul thought "could arouse them from their stupor"(6) and in turn, man needs submission and surrender of will to recognise this master power working on his soul. The one-pointed devotion and humility of the Indians before the divine incarnations, time and again, has fascinated AE, in whose honour he has dedicated a number of poems.
AE's poems, if analysed, established the 'god' to be a mystic apprehension or an inclination towards it. Man can take heed of this hidden message in dreams and visions, making himself aware of the Divine Life. They are the Dana, Angus, Eros, and Sidhe who, casting their spell upon mankind, bring man closer to the divine mind. There runs a close parallelism between Radha and Krishna, deities of Indian mythology, and these supernatural Gaelic figures who, like their Indian counterparts, equally effect the temperament of the Irish people.

The Dana, as seen in the poem "Dana" (By Still Waters, p-8), having its power on trees and rocks, woods and waters, arouses the slumbering spirit to divine consciousness. The effect of the elementals and super-human entities on man, is perhaps best represented in the Gaelic figures of the Sidhe who, as per belief, living among mounds and hills, are earth-free spirits. Like the call of Dana, their summons to the Irish people are meant for spiritual awakening. The Sidhe belonging to a middle-world in between earth and heaven make the rapport possible. Though themselves not belonging to the Heaven, they are rich enough with the store of imagination and seership to induce lofty, elated vision in man.
Lost in their mystic-magnificence, though for a moment, man experiences an ineffable sensation at heart which he can neither express nor contain within. In the light of that understanding he can view the unreality of life which he has so far been merged in. This self-realised truth gives him the wisdom that no religious scripture or philosophic doctrine had furnished him yet.

AE got his first inspiration to mystic understanding from the manifestations of Nature. His attitude towards Nature had been, to a great extent, influenced by the Celtism he was born with. As the Celtic myth provided him with the vision of a Mother Deity in the natural surrounding, the legends of Ireland lay open before his mind, a vast store of unravelled faith of his ancestors. In 'The Legend of the Ancient Eire' AE, in evident protestation against the modern materialism of his contemporaries, seeks to churn out a meditative religion of the legendary history of the Eires.
Living in the 'Celtic Twilight' and striving to pierce backward into the dawn, reading romance, tradition and history, I have endeavoured to solve something of the mystery of the vast 'Celtic phantasmagoria'.

This is what he wrote in 1895, in an article in The Irish Theosophist. Russell, somehow, was convinced that the ancient Ireland had been a sacred island, the abode of fairies and sacred beings who raised themselves by means of Druidism and valour to be the conquerors of the evil powers on the island. He calls them gods and believes them still to be existing although the common man, because of his lack of sensivity, cannot see them. In fact, AE had been happy to be born in a land whose spiritual antecedents he held very high.

Both Celtic supernaturalism and visionary imagination are responsible in promoting an attitude to mystic poetry in him. In his view, poetry is an expression of the essence of reveries and visions that infest our mind, which may not necessarily be during the night only. The waking dreams, at times, carry more meaning in them than words of wisdom, and vanquishing the
mind of its thoughts, they instead, fill it with symbolic interpretations. Along with the divine visions AE awakened to the duty of a mystic, and explained it to have been preordained for him. To justify his mystic mission he wrote,

I was guided back to the path from which I had so often strayed. I came at last almost to believe that, like Ulysses in the Platonic myth, I had chosen before birth a life in which I was primarily to be mystic. (8)

This sort of awareness dawned upon AE ever since childhood, as he reposed on the grassy mounds of Kilmasheough, perceiving the blazing beauty of the Mother Earth before his eyes. There, lost in the profundities of the emblematic beauty of Nature he listened to the story of the great mystery, for which his mind imploringly cried:

While the yellow constellations shine
with pale and tender glory,
In the lilac-scented stillness let us listen to earth's story. (9)

In the sweetness of natural beauty, in the enlivened surrounding, he listens with rapt attention to the story of the earth. This is the
story of eternity, beauty and truth that holds the essence of the entire of human past. The 'Singing Silences,' a poem which happens to be one of AE's earliest, is not a mere illustration of natural beauty. The paradoxical title itself is a hint at the mystic note implicit in the poem. The poet can feel the living spirit in the earth and like a sincere mystic teacher he passes down the message to the world of readers. Ineffable and unique though his experiences be, he tries to invite the common people to share the rare splendour of the sensation through poems. With great difficulty he intends to project the consecrating feeling of the heart as it enjoys through mystic revelation, making him one with the twilight's dream. Coming from 'Singing Silences' to another mystical poem, 'By the margin of the Great Deep,' is to pass from the mysteries of creation to a mystic awareness. The wonder at the tradition of creation in the former poem here becomes a visionary reality as the poet undergoes the mystic experience. The twilight glaze, collecting the world into its dusty
silence under the 'misty skies', delivers a mood of a rapturous quiet among its children. And the mystic, surrounded by the natural glory, realizes his role in the creation, and sings from the depth of his heart:

When the trees and skies and fields are one in dusky mood,
Every heart of man is rapt within the Mother's breast:
Full of peace and sleep and dreams in the vasty quietude,
I am one with their hearts at rest. (10)

The mystic-revelation makes the seer-poet a part of the 'nebulous tradition' ('Singing Silences') which he feels in his veins. The mystery of the universe opens itself before him in resplendent shades of sapphire, violet and silver gleams that poise his mood, affecting him through visionary perception. The slowly transgressing impact of the natural beauty is brought about beautifully in the poem by use of some selective phrases like 'misty skies', 'vaporous sapphire', and 'dusky mood'. As these visionary impressions sip into the being, the psyche suddenly becomes aware of a delightful
unification with the Master of the creation. And, in sudden elevation of the spirit, the poet cries spontaneously.

"I am one with the twilights dream."

(By the Margin of the Great Deep)

This feeling is categorically mystic, for it ensues from a hint from the ethereal world. The suddenness of the realization, the obliviousness of material consciousness and a final merger in the spirit of earth, all together, endorse the mystic ordeal which, in essence, is distinguished from fanciful imagination. The mood of integrity, reflected on the earth and sky, packs the heart of man with such peace and quietude as is contained in the mother creation.

In 'By the Margin of the Great Deep' AE comes very near to one of the basic ideas inherent in the Chinese gospel, Tag Teh King. Return of the spirit to the roots or the origin is at the base of this Chinese scripture. This root, to some extent, is analogous to the 'great deeps' of AE in whose depth the poet registers both the creation and the fruition of human psyche. Mr. R.B. Blankey, translating
the ancient Chinese verse, thus puts the idea in the following words:

This, I say, is the stillness:

A retreat to one's roots.(11)

In AE's poem a similar stillness gathers the poet's heart as he breathes in divine bliss and enjoys a moment with the roots:

All its reach of soundless calm
can thrill me far above
Word or touch from the lips beside (12)

The 'soundless calm' or the tranquilled stillness essentially follows a mystic revelation. As at the time of revelation, the seer loses consciousness of the surrounding, seeing the diversified manifestations of Nature mingling into the Great Identity, so also, after the revelation subsides, the all-embracing love lingers in the mind. Exemplification of this can be noted in most of his short lyrics where the poet sings praises of the Mother Nature, who means much more than what she represents to the eye. Towards the end of 1897 (September) AE published his second collection of poems 'Earth Breath and Other Poems', which at first, he
thinks to be depressing and melancholic too. But later, in a letter to W. B. Yeats he confesses the sincerity of tone which he injected into the Poems in the collection. "I think in many things in it there is a more passionate human sincerity than in the Old Songs," he wrote as he went to prove the genuineness of the feelings portrayed. "I can honestly say that there is not a single insincere line in the book."(13)

The book abounds with poems which trace the living spirit in Nature. Whether it is a view from the mountain-top ('The Dawn Song'), the smiling moonlight on a rich night ('Alter Ego'), or the orange-tinted dawn ('Morning'), it is unquestionably the same spirit, the same beauty, which stimulates the heart of the seer to a mystic awakening. It lifts the veil of divine visibility, revealing thereby hidden splendours beyond the visible world.

AE's deity of Nature is a female character who has emerged from the unmanifested Logos, a male figure. In his depiction of the Mother Earth AE always takes special care to paint her in
minute details. Being an artist, AE had a great fascination for colours. But the verbal shades he attributes to his landscape, arise from a far deeper sensitivity which elevates the language of his poetry. In 'Enchantment', one of his finest poems of creative beauty, he writes:

On this fawn-coloured shore,
All delicately strewn,
Gold dust and gleaming shell,
White stone and blue stone,
Lie sweetly together whether
Eyes be to see them or none. (14)

These lines throw light on the attention AE gives in particular to each visionary image he creates. A synaesthetic impression induced in the 'gay air', above which the 'sun casts flowers of purple shadow'. Lost in the breath of tumultuous gaiety, man asks wonder-stricken:

What art invisible
Made all that airy wonder,
At what enchanter's will? (15)

Nature is both a puzzle and a guide to Russell. Much like his contemporary, Walter de la Mare, he paints Nature in all its
splendidly colourful features to re-establish its link with the origin of human wonder. But, whereas De la Mare, bordering on a dream-world of fairies and fantasies, awakens to a divine discontent, AE, beginning with the wonders of fairy-world moves deeper to seek wisdom from divine presence. In Nature he sees the magic of life, and through Nature, he secures a way to find out the Magician of the Beautiful. Bewildered with the synthesis of form and colour, he presents the magic of creation as, a scientist's much applauded invention:

To bring this liveliness to be, 
Even for an hour, the Builder must 
Have wrought in the laboratory 
Of many a star for its sweet dust. (16)

This is the land of his dream and ideation; this is the place where he sees the acme of divine manifestation. Coming into this land of truth and beauty, AE profusely merges in its serene tranquillity, and thus sings of his spiritual culmination in the poem, 'Hermit':

Now the quietude of earth 
Nestles deep my heart within ;
Friendships new and strange have birth
Since I left the city's din. (17)

The poem aptly glorifies the life of the hermit who denounces the weariness of materialistic living in order to wed in a life of desirelessness in the forest-dim. And, like a wise seer AE too, relishing the silvery dawn, amuses at the "ancient mystery" that "Holds its hands out day by day." Or, sitting contemplative, gazes at the chimney nook,

Where the old enchanter sits,
Smiles and waves and beakons me. (Hermit)

This is the call from the beyond, and the forthcoming journey is an expedition into the mystic realms. The great enchanter of the creation provides inspiration to undertake such mystic adventure. AE, happy to rejoin the fount of beauty, which he often sees in mystic visitations, merges in its depth, losing his identity in the ecstasy of the merger. He begins his poetic theory with a conviction that the earth is a living spirit and that it can influence the human mind even more than any philosophic dogma or religion. In apparent
disgust for the complexities of town-life with all its monstrous relationships, he turns nature-ward where he discovers the benevolence of the Nature-Spirit. It is typically romantic about Russell's poetic personality that he always regards the verdant bloom as having a definite role in moulding the spirit of man. To him, magic is contained in the breath of earth, magic is insipid in the voice of the stones, and there is an exuberant sensitivity in the air and water that fill the responsive heart of man with divine resplendence.

In AE's poetic theory, the finest of the aesthetic faculties are showered upon poets and artists who, by means of their acute imagination, give expression to the hidden truths of life. In The Avatars, describing the superiority of poets to the commoners, he ranks the former among half-gods who create and dwell in their own world of imagination. They see the face of immortality through visionary imagination and give it a concrete form in the world-picture.
As imagination is rudimentary to visionary perception, reverie is essential to the birth of a poem. Lost in the reverie, the mind is detached from earth as the heaven unfolds its lucent glory before him. This is a state when the psyche or the 'inner' receives message from the 'outer'; and, the clue to the mystic poem dawns upon consciousness, unawares. This sudden, unexpected birth of the poem is described by AE in Song and its Fountains as a bird rushing out of the hollows of the air, or as a blooming of the water-lily from the mountain-lake:

I would be as surprised at the arising within me of words which in their combination seemed beautiful to me as I would have been if a water-lily had bloomed suddenly from the bottom of a tarn to make a shining on its dark surfaces. The words often would rush swiftly from hidden depths of consciousness and be fashioned by an art with which the working brain had but little to do. (18)

A close study of the poems of AE, which are purely mystical in nature, would reveal that they
are conceived at a moment of heightened sensitivity. It is a state when the spirit is totally merged in divine imagination; it is the acme of spiritual aspiration. To co-relate AE's theory of poetic creativity to his view regarding the fulfilment of human incarnation, is to see how effectively he can make a practical use of mystic theory. This view of AE may be compared, with success, to the spiritual message inherent in the two master scriptures of ancient India — the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. Both these scriptures hold the union with the Absolute to be the goal of renewed manifestation on earth. And what AE presents in his mystic visions is nothing but occasional glimpses of that ultimate union with the Mother Spirit. From the poet's profuse allusions made to Indian scriptures and mythologies it is clearly indicated that these philosophical works had a definite role in developing the peculiarly mystic personality in AE.

These works are held in high esteem by the poet chiefly for two reasons: their spiritual
temper, and their ancientness. He always had an innate weakness for the old and beautiful, and many a time he has written poems to rejuvenate the old, or to create a new tradition out of the ancient set up. AE's endeavour to immortalise the ancient through poetry is perceptible in the preluding lines of *Voices of the Stones*. Elevating the old and the original, in these introducing lines, he says:

All things have changed
From primal nature save these stones:
All things
Since Eden, bird and beast
And fin, have strayed
Far from that shining garden of His thought:
We also. Only the humble stones have kept
Their morning starriness of purity
Immutable. (19)

Rocks and boulders, though the most unresilient of all the earth's creations, have a message for AE. Far from seeing the inflexibility in them, he regards the 'stones' as the least altered and the least affected thing since
creation. On these primeval forms of Nature he reads the magic of the Ancient in all its originality.

But, so far as the inherent message is concerned, it hardly matters whether it is the voice of the stones or the breath of the earth. As the bare stones unfastened the intrinsic music to the poet, similarly, many years ago the twilight glimmer had inflamed his heart with a living passion to visualise the aeonian dream:

When twilight over the mountains fluttered,
And night with its starry millions came,
I too had dreams; the songs I have uttered
Come from this heart that was touched by the flame.(20)

This is what AE wrote in the preface to Divine Vision and other Poems in 1903 to indicate the origin of his poetic inspiration. He shows the relation of his songs to the transparencies of dream by which he aspires to touch divine grace. Regarding the fabric of dream and its impact on mind, he gives an account of one of his personal experiences in Song and its Fountains. As the dream opened the gates of astral perception, one
by one, he "trembled on the verge of some infinite being; and the consciousness was blinded and melted into unconsciousness." (21)

And, in this waking dream are contained the seeds of a poem:

The dream, which was burdened with such intensities of emotion, when it departed left behind a slight lyric. (22)

In a number of shorter lyrics like 'Magic', 'The Secret' and 'On a Top-hill' he gives further elaboration to the unaccountable benediction that flows from the Mighty Mother to her ignorant children, influencing them only in a state of dream or waking vision. Dream is the clue to spiritual ascendance. It has that quality in it which makes a transformation of the 'will' possible; and, unless one rises to the transcending level of dream, he cannot comprehend the spirituality in it. Because, "Only from dream to dream our spirits pass". (23)

Dream is accessible only to the spirit that breathes in imagination. If anything has made AE's poetry obscure to the common man, it is only
a missing link of mystic apprehension. AE means what he says, he writes what he feels, but his readers fail to accept this as truth. Commenting on AE's concept of earth-spirit Johnson says:

Like Richard Jefferies he was a Nature mystic, but unlike Jefferies he added to the ecstasy an understanding of its origins. He believed that as the body of man was but the lowest of many levels of increasing reality, so behind the body of Nature were levels of higher reality inhabited by higher beings of which from time to time he became aware. At what point for him, actually merged into symbolic vision it is difficult to say. He believed that the Reality which lay behind Man and Nature was a Planetary Spirit to which he referred as 'a mightier Self of ours, and yet our slave for purposes of its own'. Sometimes he spoke of Man and Nature as the dreams of this august Being — by which he meant of course, its transient creation.(24)

AE treasured the dreams as a gateway to intuitive knowledge and prophetic insight, and never misused them by philosophizing. He prized
these visions so high that, once he wrote to his friend:

You see my life has been made up of a series of visions and intuitions, and each of these have appeared to me so precious that I never thought of making a system out of these intuitions. (25)

This attitude in AE is not a mere theoretical idealization. He does not postulate a dogmatic or moralistic theory in his poems. His visions in the poems are depicted in the most original and unadulterated grace from which the implicit relationship between the individual spirit and the Mother Spirit is easily discernible. His soul and spirit seem to be honest to the thoughts, revealed in the poems, for he says in one of his poems:

All my thoughts are throngs of living souls;
They breathe in me, heart unto heart allied; (26)

Nearly a month after AE's death, Constant Curran in his effort to discuss the great mystic's writings establishes that the sole design, the universe had made for him (AE), was that of a
mystic's role: Mysticism, according to AE, is an imitation of the Deity by transforming the finitude into infinitude. Describing the mystic-artist he writes in 'Art and Literature' (Imaginations and Reveries),

in so far as he can shape clay into beautiful and moving forms he is imitating Deity, when his eye has caught with delight some subtle relation between colour and colour there is mysticism in his vision.(27)

Thus, as long as AE imitates the Mother Deity in his poems and intends to convey her glory to others, he exhibits qualities of a true mystic.

AE's inner urge to explore the psyche has its roots in his belief that man now lives as an outcast. The spirit of man, being flung from the heavenly abode, is now undergoing degeneration. Hence man, in order to secure his place back, must strive to give the soul back its lost glory and youth. In this connection, intending to discuss the chances of reawakening the youth of humanity, he published an article in The Irish Theosophist (1985) captioned, 'The Renewal of Youth'. The article had a modified republication in 1911 by the Orpheus Press.
full length it discusses the possibilities of redemption of the soul which glances backward in nostalgic sweetness to conceive the happier times, it had spent in its original abode.

As AE goes deeper in his spiritual recollection of the past splendour of the soul, the hope for reascension is born, not in any outward struggle, but in the strengthening of mind and determination of will for the purpose. The first step in mystic ascension is the abrogation of personal identity in search of the source of identities. AE writes in the article:

The great teachers ignore the personal identity and speak to the eternal pilgrim(28)

To bring out fully the importance of the 'eternal pilgrim' in the article, attention may be drawn to a cluster of shorter lyrics like 'Dusk', 'Night', 'Dawn', and 'Day' where the topic of eternal pilgrimage is dealt with from an optimistic standpoint. In 'Day' he explores the mystery of creation to its very origin. As the poet talks of the origin of time and universe he moves to such
antiquity that is timeless and boundless. This he calls appropriately, the 'titanic past' before the Mighty One began his dreams, i.e., before the birth of sun and stars. Now, the poet's conviction regarding the 'dream' of the creator takes one back to the possibility of some Hindu doctrine lurking at the background. The entire pattern of the universe, according to the cosmogenic theory presented by AE, has ensued from the mighty dream of the Master. The sun, the stars, the moon and smaller deities have their origin and decay in this world of dream. Such concept of dream, to a great extent, is identical to that relating to Brahma, the Father of creation. The dream of Brahma in the Hindu doctrine, enwraps the creatures of the creation with an illusion that appears as real as the Creator Himself. Birth and death, beauty and vulgarity, love and hostility are all creations of an illusion and hence have no existence outside it, and therefore not real.

Taking human memory to precosmic past, the poet talks of the obliviousness of the soul that
is ignorant of its glorious antecedents. Now, despite the iron will of tough forgetfulness, a hope for escape is generated by the 'dreams of vision':

Each dream remembered is a burning-glass,
Where through to darkness from the Light of Lights
Its rays in splendour pass. (29)

For man, now seething with discontent in the human incarnation, all hope is not lost. As by means of dream he is allowed glimpses of the Mighty Mother so through visions he can aspire to touch the eternity. Whether the visionary dreams come from the darkness of night, when "The Spirit woke anew in nightly birth" ('Night') or from the mystical blending of the day and night at 'dawn', they are always capable of elevating the spirit to realms of meditative calm. Inspired by the mystic magnificence of Nature, the poet sings out rapturously in 'Benediction':

And the fire divine in all things burning
Seeks the mystic heart anew,
From its wanderings far again returning,
Child, to you. (30)
'Benediction' is a poem where he makes ample use of sense-impressions to absorb thought. Out of the singular visual shades of citron, green and blue, he makes a splendid combination of the 'rainbow', a conglomeration of colours that suggests not only a gaily colourful frame but also opens senses of visual perception to heavenly beauty. And slowly, from the 'jetting rainbow' he passes on to visions that are more dazzling than merely colourful, i.e. the diamond air, jewel glory, stars, sun and moon. Thus, moving from colours to radiance, AE indicates a gradual transformation at heart that gets at the hints inherent in the modes of Nature.

AE is firm in the belief that man, though wanders in ignorance, is always kept under the vigilant eye of the Mother Deity. She keeps watch on her children and affects their mind through occasional dreams and mystic visitations. Such visitations, at times symbolic and prophetic, are clues to spiritual ascendance. They make up for the gap between human consciousness and the divine realms where things are pre-ordained and determined. Sir Edwin Arnold, in The Light of Asia, referring
to the symbolic nature of dream describes the seven emblematic visions which the king Suddhodana saw in dreams that turned out to be futuristic. Russell too thinks that such dreams, impregnated with symbolic and mystical implications, are impressions on the mind from the spiritual sphere, and hence can promise to recover the long-lost youth to humanity. Through his own poems he makes effort to appeal to the human race for seeing the purpose of the soul through visionary imagination. The Hero in Man and The Renewal of Youth, taken together, unfold an integrated view of AE's interpretation of the identity of human self along with the story of its past and hope for an optimistic future.

The Hero in Man may be divided into three sub-parts, and in each of them he proceeds methodically to explain the constitution of the psyche. He views the entire world as a cosmic order in which 'good' and 'bad' are equalized. As per this assumption of harmonised noble and evil, each man, inclusive of the meanest of the human lot, has a benevolent spirit inside. This noble spirit, bearing the stamp of divinity, is the 'hero in man.' It is, therefore, up to the individual to recognize the good spirit within in order to raise it to the
benefit of the soul. To vindicate this he writes in *The Hero in Man*:

> The darkest of human spirits has still around him this first glory which shine from a deeper being within, whose history may be told as the legend of the Hero in man. (31)

AE displays no personal ill-feeling towards the evil-force operating in the human mind. Such indifference to dark qualities in man amounts to a patient forebearance, or to say more convincingly, to his philosophic bias that Christ and the Prometheus are one and the same.

Christ is incarnate in all humanity
Prometheus is bound forever within us.
They are the same. (32)

After being convinced about the fabric of the psyche, AE harps on the note of the purgation of soul. Aloneness and quietude of mind are rudimentary to spiritual realization. Unless mind is free of the bestirring thoughts and turbulent passions, it cannot see the light of the day. So he says, in *A Holy Hill*:
Be still: be still: nor dare
Unpack what you have brought,
Nor loosen on this air
Red gnomes of your thought.

Uncover: bend the head
And let the feet be bare;
This air that thou breathest
Is holly air. (33)

By this he means the perfect stillness of mind, when it is freed from all its fervid sensations, rising to a perfect calm. Assuming translucence, the soul is linked up with the Divine Soul where from the message or the higher plane reaches the lower. AE describes this to be a state preceding self-realisation of internal illumination viewing the Lamp of the World,

This light which I beheld I felt to be a human soul, and these perturbations which dimmed it were its struggles and passionate longings for something, and that was for a more brilliant shining of the light within itself. (34)

In the internal battle of man (i.e. between the desires of the lower body and the higher self) AE sees the victory of the spirit over the body. In vindicating his spiritual conquest he proceeds from "The Renewal of Youth" and "The Hero in Man" to a more
explicit explanation of his mystic philosophy in The Candle of Vision. In this spiritual autobiography he emerges distinctly as a seer who, besides narrating his own spiritual evolution, intends his readers to lay their mind open and alert to responded to the beckoning of Nature. He illustrates this motive very clearly at the preface of The Candle of Vision:

I have tried according to my capacity to report about the divine order and to discriminate between that which was self-begotten fantasy and that which came from a higher sphere. These retrospects and meditations are the efforts of an artist and poet to relate his own vision to the vision of the seers and writers of the sacred books, and to discover what element of truth lay in those imaginations. (35)

In The Candle of Vision AE begins with the rapturous feelings, he underwent at the time of mystic visitations. Those visitations from the higher plane affected his mind, creating a perennial stream of love and altruism in the heart. Bathed in the all-pervasive love of Nature, AE
felt a strange awareness inside, which told him that he was not different from the divine household and that was fastened to it by means of spiritual cords. The breeze, the mountain stretches, the gay earth, all seemed to have joined him with a mystic bond. Through contact with them AE perceived the Magician of the Beautiful. At a very early age AE came to take note of this slowly maturing spiritual attitude of the mind. With this awareness, the spiritual visitations, as they had appeared vague and ambiguous before, now seemed to reveal messages of great importance. "Soon they will awaken; soon will come to us again," (The Candle of Vision p. 5), they seemed to tell him of their impact upon the whole of human race.

Along with mystic interpretation of visions he also began to analyse the structure of human ego from a theosophical stand point. Although he claimed his departure from the Society as early as 1898 he forever remained loyal to Madame Blavatsky, and very probably took her occult writings as a key to his insight into the jargon of occult knowledge. His alignment to the theosophic belief can be detected in his faith in the relative existence of the individual and the ancestral self.
In this connection AE regards the individual self to be an imperfect and mortal form of ancestral self. And, though now perishable and transient, it (the ego) can rise to perfection and immortality through sincere spiritual appeal. In case of AE, this appeal is vitalized through the benevolence of Nature and natural sublimity on the one hand, and his responsive eagerness to it on the other. In his own words he describes it as, "a path all may travel but on which few do journey". (The Candle of Vision, p.19)

AE attributed the success of his spiritual journey to dream and visionary imagination. He differs from the common opinion of people regarding dream and imagination in respect that, unlike them, he considers dream to be a reality, perceived by the inner being of man at a sub-conscious level. The revelation, which is unfolded before the partly-waking self, is not transported to the waking self because of the missing link in the gross body, and that is why man, in waking state, cannot comprehend the real nature of what his inner self has perceived. Similarly, the vision, both mystic and symbolic, is not woven by a mind idling upon crazy fantasies.
They are of a much deeper significance, though they temporarily lift the veil of ignorance and forgetfulness, allowing man a glimpse of the Spirit which the waking consciousness fails to comprehend.

From The Candle of Vision (1918) AE moves on to a more technical analysis of the psyche in the Song and its Fountains, published in 1932. By then, his ability for self-analysis and personal philosophy were maturing with age and experience. The gap of fourteen years (between the publication of The Candle of Vision and Song and its Fountains) meant a lot to AE. In the former, he analyses those aspects of the mind and soul which furnish him with poetic skill and imagination; but, in the latter he turns backward, moving to see the home of poetic inspiration through poems. His analysis in the book is both introspective and retrospective. It deals in detail with the origin of inspiration in Russell’s poetry, and in retrospection, discusses how far he is sincere to his poetic expression. All through the book there are allusions to the merger of the outer in the inner being. To exemplify the mystic union the writer opens the book with a
comment which itself sounds strange and mystic. "When the inner and the outer first mingle," writes he, "it is the bridal night of soul and body. (36) And in the following pages of the book AE shows this union as feasible through personal experience.

The mingling of the inner and the outer nature is expressed by AE from time to time, in various poems and mystical writings. Out of this spiritual fusion, as he claims, there rises in the mind, an acute sensitivity to colour and music. He too had become a victim to this. His weakness for shades, especially 'blue' and 'silver' took birth partly from the response of the outer perception through eyes, and partly from the response of the soul to the aesthetic value which these colours possess. But at the root, however, there is the inevitable fusion of the body and the soul.

The idea of the marriage of the hell and heaven, body and soul, is common to all the mystics who advocate a life of eternity in unified personality by divine vision. Among AE's
contemporary Oriental mystics, one who seems to have come very near to him in exposition of mystic profundities, is the renowned sufi-poet Kahlil Gibran. Speaking of this Eastern mystic's versatile genius and his ennobling impact on mankind, Monk Gibbon in The Living Torch writes:

It is only when a voice comes from India or China or Arabia that we get the thrill of strangeness from the beauty, and we feel that it might inspire another of the great cultural passions of humanity. (37)

The melancholic strain in Gibran's poetry, much like that of AE's, has its original inspiration recorded in the love for natural enrichment. But, whereas AE's experience of nature is a direct communion with his country's natural beauty, Gibran's is chiefly a nostalgic impression of a land of dream and imagination. What AE saw or sensed in the real Ireland, Gibran wanted to visualize in his dream of Bashari in Lebanon. Both the poets extolled the nobility of natural beauty, showing their indebtedness to nature and forest-land. To AE, poetry comes from 'divine
visitation', when,

The heavens lay hold on us: the starry rays
Fumble with flickering fingers brow and eye:
A new enchantment lights the ancient skies. (38)

Echoing AE, Gibran sings in 'Earth':

I heard eternity speak through your ebb
And flow, and the ages echoing your songs
Among your hills.
I listened to life calling to life in your
Mountain passes and along your slopes. (39)

Though Gibran wrote these lines much after AE
wrote, the stream of thought and direction of mystic
expression are identical in both the mystic-poets.
In Song and its Fountains AE speaks of the innate
purity of human being which remains forever
sublime, carrying with it remembrances of the
ancient grandeur of the soul. He says that the
rays of divinity which illumine the core of human
heart, also consecrate the soul for an instant,
enabling it to have a vision of the Mother Deity
and its own original abode. It is only on rare
occasions that through portals of divinity, like
the cooling evening, the gray dusk and luminous
dawn, that the divinity discloses itself,
intending to hold its children in a mystic embrace.
Kahlil Gibran, in The Prophet, opines a similar
idea regarding the essence of divinity which the human personality still retains within. He writes:

that which is boundless in you abides in the mansion of the sky, whose door is the morning mist, and whose windows are the songs and the silences of night. (40)

The peculiar loneliness of Gibran in the wilderness of the Western civilization made him a seer-philosopher, whereas AE became a mystic, chiefly because he felt what he saw and experienced what he dreamt. His Arabic contemporary's mystic vision is confined to a nostalgic imagination, but his is liberated in a land of mythologic prolificity.

Poems, most fervently charged with mystic poignancy, in AE, arise out of the communion of the personal soul with the Universal Soul. This mystic fusion is comprehended in visions and waking dreams when the veil of material perception is withdrawn momentarily. Liberated from the workings of the thought, the poet wanders in vision in some bright, luminous valley, or in an ancient city built by the sea in a waking dream.
whose interruption, he describes, is like
the sudden flowing into a clody river
of crystal clear water from some tributary
descending from high hills. (41)

Through meditative practices AE had learnt
to hold on the moments of mystic illumination for
a considerable time. His visionary dreams ensured
his faith in past life, and he regarded some of
his dreams to be fragmented memories of past lives,
remembered by the psyche at a spiritual command.
They aroused in him feelings, first of immeasurable
joy followed by a thud of sorrow. As the joy was
born of the reveries of the soul's past glory, the
sorrow was born upon a realization that mankind
now has entered into the Iron age wherefrom, though
not impossible, it is difficult to look back.

AE intends to make Song and its Fountains
a deep study of his poetic tendency. He analyses,
discourses and elaborates the source and secret of
his poems, attributing all to his mystic visions
and poetic imagination. But his mystic revelations
and the poems, conveying the rapturous experience,
have always stood far beyond the theoretical
doctrines which he might have deduced from them.
His mystic revelations, as he relates them in poems, are the feelings of poignancy, reflected upon the mind in a mysterious manner. Their poise is so original of the kind that it is characterized by a sense of awe and wonder. With the divine manifestation, a shudder runs down the vein, telling tacitly of the inclination of the psyche to rise to the transcending visions of life. This is the holy or divine element in the mystic which is not subservient to any religion or deity. It is the realization of the very presence of the Great Creator by which man is awakened from material stupor. Such apprehension of the Holy comes with an obliteration of the material consciousness. Very aptly AE projects the divine illumination in 'The Unknown God', as,

Far up the dim twilight fluttered
Moth-wings of vapour and flame:
The lights danced over the mountains,
Star after star they came.
The Lights grew thicker unheeded,
For silent and still were we; (42)

This is a prelude to mystic attainment. Before the magic unfolds, the sense of perception is blurred and numbed. In a mind, void of objective
perception, there rises the tide of mystic exhilaration. It is a state where the numinous aspect of life comes forward and the transcendental message is made clearer. In this, the 'thought' is overwhelmed by 'feeling', the fragmented view of life is substituted by a unitary living, a wholeness of consciousness.

'The Unknown God' presents, very honestly, the feelings of a mystic who comprehends the Divine through Nature. The title of the poem is suggestive of the uncommonness of mystic apprehension. 'God' which is itself unknowable, here is described with an adjective, 'unknown', and thereby the poet emphasises the remoteness associated with the realisation of the Divine. His 'God', as depicted in the poem, is certainly not an incarnated figure which he many a time calls 'deity' in other works. Quite contrary to deities and avatars, it is the Spirit of Nature and source of the psyche, revealed to man only on rare occasions.
It is not unusual of AE to establish link with God through Nature. In the poem he writes of the twilight flame, dancing and fluttering over the mountain range and the gradual appearance of stars on the darkening firmament. Similarly 'twilight' — the meeting point of day and night — may successfully be compared to the meeting together of individual soul and the Mother Soul. The fading of the day light and the gathering darkness, when joined together, induce a meditative mood in the poet who, gazing quietly at the mountain folds, responds to the mystic hint. There is a strange rhythmic effect created by the words 'fluttered' and 'danced', supported by 'vapour' and 'flame'. Both flame and vapour, with their evanescent nature, curl up into the skies. Their transparency and buoyancy may be taken for an implicit allusion to the soul of man which tends to go higher to join the Almighty in the process of spiritual evolution. The skies assimilate the flame and vapour as the heavens enfold human soul through divine visitations. On such moments the heart, drunken with ecstasy, views the endless beauty through mind's eye.
In his mystic poems AE shows a gradual development of the soul from the apprehension of the Nature to apprehension of the Divine from the quietude of heart it steals a glance at the beauty that the eyes fail to catch. His mystic temperament recognises Nature as a manifestation of the Divine Being, and accordingly he sees in every mood of Nature, an image of the Divine Spirit, in all its majesty. The air, vibrant with the divine music, the water flowing in streams of eternities, the play of shadow and light at the dawn — all together unfold the mystery of the ancient glory before the mystic-poet. Such identification of Nature with the Almighty is a notion very often expressed in the Gita. Speaking of his manifestation in Nature, Lord Krishna says:

Earth, water, flame, air, ether, life, and mind,
And individuality — those eight,
Make up the showing of Me, Manifest. (43)

As mystic poetry comes from an interaction between the inner and the outer, so also the
mystic visions are born of a perception taking place in a double dimension. While the emblematic factor of the mystic vision appeals to the mind's eye, things in the phenomenal world serve as a medium to convey the message from one world to the other. This transportation is explicitly dealt with in the poem "Winter" (Earth Breath) where, tracing the growth of mystic awareness, AE moves from the phenomenal world to the numenal. The spell of winter on the earth and the flickering twilight on the West swathe the poet's mind with a drunken ecstasy. Lost in the 'phantasmal bloom', he forgets his own self and views the divine personality in Nature. But the rapture is too short-lived. It kindles spirituality, and in kindling so, it is gone, for, it is 'a transient beauty'.

If in our being then we know it not,  
Or, knowing, it is gone. (44)

In this spark of spirituality is captured the entire universe whose voice is the eternity.
Out of the vast the voice of the one replies
Whose words are clouds and stars and night and day,
When for the light the anguished spirit cries
Deep in its house of clay. (45)

Mysticism is often accompanied with a stunning thrust and a terrible agony at heart. The enlightening experience is registered in the heart that is bleeding with love and compassion and burning with divine glow. It is the voice of the silence that speaks of many truths, not accessible to the thought. It is the cessation of thought, sudden crumpling of intellect. Once the veil is lifted, the mystery unfolds itself before the seeking heart, opening doors to spiritual realities. Russell's 'Evanescence' (Vale and other Poems) is a poem totally mystical in its tone, rhythm and diction. In full length the poem depicts the origin of mystic wonder in the heart of the seer-poet who after its recession drowns himself in remorse for not being able to hold or analyse the feeling.
In the poem AE creates two separate worlds, the earth-world and the divine-world or the world of representative beauty of Nature and human imagination, in order to show how the two blend in perfect harmony at a mystic apprehension. In the earth-world human imagination is identified with a sub-conscious state where the spirit lingers between the material plane and the astral plane, and therefore, is contained in neither but accessible to both. Such state, when heightened and sublimated by some spiritual hint, begets profound stillness or quietude in the mind. And, 'Evanescence' opens with this image of 'stillness', which gathering intensity, rises to trance-like serenity. Trance, according to AE, is a state analogous to divine imagination where the individual spirit glimpses the Supreme Spirit, and individual consciousness becomes one with the Supreme Consciousness. As the wonders of Nature play before the mind in trance, the poet forgets his own existence in the world, becoming one with the spirit of the world. Peculiarly enough, there is no mention of time and place
in the poem other than a bed of 'daffodils' by which he stood as he underwent the mystic exhilaration. Even, the presence of his companion, indicated at the beginning, "We stood in stillness deep as trance", is not made clear in the remaining portion of the poem. From the collective experience of "we" there grows a strange aloneness as the mystic feels the magic flowing in his own being. Not till the spell withdraws and the poet is back in this material world that he is aware of his friend.

Mysticism, as revealed in the poem, is like a spark that rushes from Nature into human spirit. Like the lightning it is playful, "a play-thing ran through the sun-gilded air", and appears among the shining clouds. Through a chain of selective words: 'Fiery play-thing', 'Sun-gilded air', 'dazzling cloud', and 'long cataracts of light' the poet creates an imagery of brightness and luminousness, associated with the spiritual revelation. As he viewed this glorious sight, the soul suddenly grew aware of the abrupt illumination which at once kindles a fire in his heart:
It entered in, that magic thing
into your being flowed:
Through lips and eyes and fluttered
hair its precious substance
glowed. (46)

The luminous sight, upon entering the spirit
becomes a magic-thing. By 'magic', here, AE
perhaps hints at an occult phenomenon or
spiritual occurrence that bestirs the soul with
its grand effect. In the context, AE calls the
mystic encounter a 'magic' by which he suggests
its mysteriousness as well as its effect on the
spirit.

The mystic feeling is as short-lived as it
is sudden. It appears in the trance and
vanishes as soon as the trance dissolves into
material consciousness. As the 'senses',
benumbed by the visionary perception, quicken
into their power again, the vision dilutes.
And, in revived consciousness the poet cries,

But it was gone, fleeter than bird
upon a homing wing (Evanescence)

The original gaiety of the poet is now changed
into remorse and repentance, as he feels his
inability to hold on the feeling for long. In his efforts to see and analyse the experience, he writes:

"It was so nigh I broke the trance
to clutch that radiant thing.
'Clutch' is a word which signifies a complete resumption of consciousness and full action of the nerves. But, neither the mental power nor the physical strength can chain up the experience. Lost in bewilderment and perplexed by his failure, the poet laments in retrospection.

Could you and I whenever the light appears
Cry at the wonder "I am That", as did
the Vedic seers.?

This refers to a mystic union which the seers of the Vedic age enjoyed in the past, and connects the singularity of their experience with that of the poet. "I am that" is an equivalent expression of the "That Thou Art" of the Hindu philosophy, exemplifying the essence of the being in the Divine Being. There is evidently a gap between the mystic feeling felt at heart, and the poet's recapitulation of the ordeal. To make up the void he begins with the spiritual wonder:
How can we stay it? By what art? However swift desire —
It's gone!

In reality, these above-quoted lines seem to be more of a compromise with spirituality than a mere quest. There is a confirmed negation implied in the question which obviously means the impossibilities of retaining the mystic wonder as a wonder. For,

Its precious substance is unclutchable as fire.

From this there ensues the realisation regarding the futility of material living contrasted against the enlightenment of spiritual life. Hence, in every field of life he looks ahead for a union with the Absolute, and searches the source of those visions: 'Where is its home home?'

Association of identity is very often the result of mystic revelation, in which the poet recognises himself as an integral part of what he sees and feels around. He becomes one with the inspirer of the revelation as well as the revelation itself. The singularity of such
mystic experience is beautifully brought about by the idea of oneness which, in *The Prophet*, Almustafa conveys as a parting solace to the gathering crowd in Orphalese:

...beauty is life when life unveils here holy face. 

But you are life and you are the veil. 

Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a Mirror. 

But you are eternity and you are the mirror. (47)

Gibran's Almustafa is a mystic character who regards 'visions' to be the quintessence of the ascetic's life. Much like AE, he too shows inclination towards a perfect stillness of the heart which might induce a life of mystic visions. These mystic-dreams and visions are not fantasies but heavenly bodies that crowd the symbolic dreams, of which he says,

now you come in my awakening, which is my deeper dream. (48)

The spiritual glamour of Sufi-mysticism runs at par with Russell's mysticism. The house of dream is a store of mystic profundities both
for Russell and Gibran. Both of them alike intend to lift the veil of life to see the mysteries of being. When the Sufi-poet puts it in words, they are,

Even the masks of life are masks of deeper mystery. (49)

And the purpose of life is to look into the mystery,

We live only to discover beauty. All else is a form of waiting. (50)

AE too takes heed of the role that beauty works in shaping and reshaping human-life. He reaches at beauty through visionary dream which to take the expression of Gibran, is a form of waiting. In Song and its Fountains AE recollects his childhood mystic-ordeals as an inward journey which, as he grew up, drew him further and further away from the normal life. He recollects such childhood experience as,

In the house of dream I entered there was neither home nor love, but beyond me its labyrinths were intimations of primaeval being and profundities like the Pleroma. (51)
In these dreams AE sees a vast source of inspiration for divine poetry. Abinash Chandra Bose, discussing the nature of dream-visions of Russell, holds that all his dreams = waking and symbolic = are curtain-raisers to mystic-awakening. As Frueed gives an analysis of the nature of symbolism in dreams, says Mr. Bose, AE too intends to see the meaning of his dreams in some earlier manifestation of the spirit. AE thinks that many of his dreams have connection with events of some of his earlier births and in this respect they make the dreamer aware of his spiritual antecedents in a mystic manner. His poem, 'A Summer Night' is the residue of an enchanting vision, once he had gone through. In the vision, as he looked upon the warm, young valley beneath the 'nebulous silver veil', he was woefully reminded of the innocence of man's long-lost childhood by some whisperings words within:

I fall away in weariness of mind,
And think how far apart are I and you,
Beloved, from those spirit children who
Felt but one single Being long ago.(52)
The meditative tone, in these lines, rises in the poet as the scintillating beauty of the warm night awakens moods of spirituality. A sort of compromise between the sorrow of loss and hope for regeneration of the soul is indicated as the poet links up the graces of Nature to the glory of childhood through meditation. Juxtaposing the crudities of manhood with the innocent childhood: "how innocent our childhood was!"

(A Summer Night)

AE resumes the original fervour and divine inquisition in the modern man. He realises, though physically cast in an altogether alien circumstance man has full right to have glimpses of the infinitude, obscured by sordidness of coarse human experiences. Hence, dream is now the only medium which bridges the gap between materialism and mysticism. In a mood, highly pensive, AE cries out the agonies of his heart:

Only in clouds and dreams I felt those souls
In the abyss, each fire hid in its clod,
From which in clouds and dreams the
spirit rolls
Into the vast God. (53)

Dream contains the message of the Mighty Soul, and the magnificence of the divine life is unfolded only before the spirit that moves from dream to dream. In 'A call of the Sidhe', he bids the heart hush up,

Let your heart alone go dreaming.

Because,

depth in the heart alone
Murmurs the Mighty one his solemn undertone. (54)

Contrasted to human thought and action, the dreams are immortal, for they hold the mirror to our soul. Our inner being is made up of the 'high dreams' that guide our personality through incarnations, as said in the poem, 'How?':

For if our dreams
Be not immortal, the soul is not, the soul
Is but a congregation of high dreams. (55)

The dream-world is both an inspiration and fructification of philosophic doctrine for AE. As it unpacks the beauty that the eyes cannot see,
so also it assures him of the truth which he (AE) holds regarding the interdependence of the soul and the Spirit. Faces of beauty depicted in 'A Summer Night' is further elucidated in 'Mid Summer Eve' which adds a touch of tenderness to the sensuous appeals of the Nature. It is one of the finest of AE's mystic poems where he invokes the softer and gentler feelings in the spirit to welcome the divine munificence on man:

On this night of many days
Rocks shall give to your amaze,
They shall be hollow to your eyes,
Though now you may not tread the ways,
Star-lit, god-guarded, leading to
The City of the Mysteries.(56)

In the poem, the 'mid summer eve' is made an epitome of mystic manifestation as every part of nature unfolds its music before the poet's mind. There seems to be a wonder, a mystery in every form and every corner that glorifies the eye of the beholder. The poem opens with a cluster of words, arranged in a frame of magical sight. The 'clear ways', 'Wizard eye', 'enchanted hour' and the 'reeling moonlight on pearly toes'—all
together give impression of a magic kingdom in some fairy-land. The word 'Crystal' in the second lines of the poem, gives clue to the opulence, shown all around. 'Crystal', along with the 'wizard eye', somehow, creates the idea of crystal-gazing, an occult practice which was not new to AE. And, as in crystal-gazing the unseen is made perceptible, in the mid summer eve the picturesque earth promotes the hidden benignity of the earth.

The poet creates a Phantasmagoria of shadow and light as,

The tattered moonlight reels
Dancing on pearly toes and heels
Shall break into a lovelier dance.

(Mid Summer Eve)

And, a few lines later, an equivalent aural impression is created when, 'over that moon-coloured waste of crumbling foam',

Far off the noble Sirens pour —
The choristers of Heavenly Mind —
Their old misrepresented song,

The music that can work no wrong.

It is a favourite technique with AE to present the mystic enlightenment either through an
alternating sensory impression or through a device of splitting up images and joining them again into a harmonious rhythm. In *Mid Summer Eve*, he makes use of both the techniques to bring congruence in matter and Spirit. The 'tattered moonlight', tossing of the dice, 'Shadowy heaving hill', 'Crumbling foam' 'bubbles' of breath — are all images of fragmentation. Even the 'pathway', leading to the seer, is windingly zigzag. But, the broken up images, when viewed in their totality, form a smooth, delicate world, governed by a kind of organic unity. It is the world's gentleness of which the poet makes his passers by cautious:

Look you gravely where you pass;
Fear to scar the delicate grass.

Of the various sensory images created in the poem, the visual images are the most profound. With every turn of thought and every way of expression he creates strong visionaries to fascinate the viewers. The colours, with their heightened shades, as 'ebon shade', 'silver bubble' 'gold candle', 'red dust', and 'bright star', speak of the particular attention AE gives to project his images in exactitude. Gradually, from
the images of brightness and tenderness, he proceeds to a realm of supernatural beings and imaginary entities.

Dryad and hamadryad there
Shall awaken from their trance,
Moving with the high, innocent air
And manner of lost Paradise.

Regaining access to the paradise is the inherent message of almost all the contemplative poems of AE. Whether it is assured through divine vision, or through the overpowering love at heart, or through the middle-world elements, it necessarily means to rejuvenate the spiritual inclination in man. "Dana," the mother of gods, encouraging mystic-aspiration in her suffering children, calls in for a break-away from the pain of the world:

I weave
My spells at evening, folding with dim caress,
Aerial arms and twilight dropping hair.(57)

The tender voice of Dana, calling men away from materialism, speaks of her divinity which has the power to

enchant the trees and rocks, and fill
The dumb brown lips of earth with mystery,
Make them reveal or hide the god.(58)

*Dana was the mother of gods, like Brian, Luchar and Lucharba who were made to suffer by Lugh.
(Literary History of Ireland, Doughlas Hyde, p-47)
The power of 'Dana' as it sips through the human psyche, pervades the entire being with sublimity. Each fascinating moment of mystic-awareness becomes a 'burning glass' by means of which man comprehends the vision of the totality. Mysticism, as revealed in the poems of AE, is at the end of a journey which consists of visionary imagination and dream. Moving from 'A Summer Night' and 'Midsummer Eve', 'Dream' is the third poem which speaks of a new development in the spirit on account of the mystic awareness. Like the two other poems, this one too begins with a wonder and ends up in a serene calm. The oft-quoted images of shadow and light, melody and their echoes, are blended in a synthesis in the body of the dream. The poet is bewildered at the soft, cooling effect of the dream, as it transports the spirit across the wide leagues of land.

I did not deem it half so sweet
To feel thy gentle hand,
As in a dream thy soul to greet
Across wide leagues of land.(59)

There is an image of rhythmic movement in almost all the poems of AE that tend to be mystic.
The 'Bird of paradise' on its homing wings builds up an image of rhythm and motion through the "plumes of iris hue". It is a concoction of shade and movement, as the 'Bird' beats its feathers of 'iris hue' on a homebound flight. The harmonious combination of motion and vision add to the symbolic message contained in the poem. The idea of the 'Bird', which in the poem is an emissary of divinity, may well be compared to 'fairies', the tiny pinioned creatures whom AE fancied to have seen on the lonely mountains and deserted valleys. The brightness of its wings, and its association with the paradise, make the bird a spiritual emblem, capable of transforming a vision into reality.

What gives mobility to the poem is an inherent picture of journey. Though never made explicit, a long travel is indicated at the background, whose hints are there at every mode of the lyric. "Wide leagues of land" in the opening stanza, if connected with the "motion", mentioned in the last, brings forth the idea of a long-way journey. The image of the travel is further elucidated by the suggestion of 'rest' at the end, which normally succeeds a long-distance travel.
I shall not in thy beauty rest,
But Beauty's ray in you. (The Dream)

This journey in the poem could represent the journey of the soul from illusion to wisdom, from impermanence to eternities, or from bondage to freedom. The 'Bird' is a symbol of the emanated human spirit that leaves behind the precincts of earth to soar unto the heavens. Therefore the poet rightly registers all his hope and faith in the flight of the Bird, crying spontaneously,

"Let me dream only with my heart."

As the poet drowns himself in the anticipated mystic grandeur, he hardly sees any barrier between the 'dream' and its fulfilment and looks into the depth of the mystery of creation,

So in thy motions all expressed
Thy angel I may view: (The Dream)

This exemplifies both the hope and optimism in the heart of the poet. With the rise of an optimistic faith regarding the ultimate redemption of the soul from physical bondage and assimilation in the Godhead, he comes closer to the divine grace. His entire self is merged in the overpowering love, the cardinal principle to mystic revelation.
Love first, and after see:
Know thy diviner counterpart
Before I kneel to thee. (The Dream)

This is an instance of true mystic spirit, which
is not subordinate to devotion or religious dogma,
but only to self-realisation by means of spiritual
evolution. As the spirit is sublimated in the
trance or dream, the doors to divine opulence is
suddenly opened. In 'A vision of Beauty'
(The Nuts of Knowledge) AE describes the
suddenness of mystic visitation and its
encompassing silence:

We were weaving dreams in silence,
Suddenly the veil was lifted. (60)

Beyond the veil is the land of unbeaten glory,
girdled with a pearly glow. The mystic is
obsessed with its beauty which fills the heart
with all-embracing love. It is a feeling analogous
to the one he recapitulates in The Candle of Vision:

I longed to throw my arms about the hills,
to meet with kisses the lips of the seraph
wind. I felt the gaiety of childhood
springing up through weariness and age,
for to come into contact with that which
is eternally young is to have that childhood
of the spirit it must attain ere
it can be moulded by the Magician
of the Beautiful and enter the
House of Many Mansions. (61)

In 'A vision of Beauty' he opens casements
to the magic world wherefrom the enchantment
flows in to grip his poetic self. The vision of
beauty is actually a vision of divinity and is
born of trance or reverie. The entire poem
concentrates on the "wondrous vision" whose
multi-coloured rays and "pearly glows" "flare and
flaunt the monstrous highlands". It is one of the
most extra-ordinary combination of colours that
AE has ever made use of in his poetry. He
attaches a colour-impression to each of the
objects he paints in the body of the poem. The
ocean, the vapours, the night, and the twilight
are all radiant in their individual glow, which
far from being mere shades and hues, are connected
with the brilliance of precious stones and gems
and fire:

Many coloured shine the vapours
  to the morn-eye far away
'Tis the fairy ring of twilight,
  mid the spheres of night and day,
Girdling with a rainbow cincture 
round the planet where we go,
We and it together fleeting, poised 
upon the pearly glow; (62)

Lost in the splendour, the poet forgets himself 
and remembers only the 'vision of beauty' of 
which he writes

    Half our eyes behold the glory: 
    half within the Spirits glow 
    Echoes of the noisless revels and 
    the will of beauty go. (A Vision of Beauty)

As the 'beauty' descends upon the earth, the 
and sky join in a heavenly marriage. The marriage 
is further celebrated in the poem through the 
visual images of 'dancing', merry-making, 
'flowers', 'roses', 'sapphires', and 'pearls'. 
Through an alternating and spiral rhythm of dance 
the poet creates a replica of some ancient 
folk-dance of the romantic past:

    And the feet of earth go dancing 
    in the way that beauty goes, 
    And the souls of earth are kindled 
    by the incense of her breath, 
    As her light alternate lures them 
    through the gates of birth and death. 
    (A Vision of Beauty)
The dance of earth, as pictured in the above-quoted lines, is a circular movement in harmony. Many a time in the poem AE has tried to create images of circular figures like "the fairy ring of twilight", "Spheres of night and day", "girdling with a rainbow cincture round the planet where we go", "spires of beauty", and "round and round the planets whirling". Forms of this over-projected image is perhaps a hint at the repeated occurrence of birth and death of the human soul, or even more fruitfully, it may suggest the ultimate return of the soul to the roots after a rotund process. Through the mystic revelation the poet looks beyond the physical and mental plane to see this motion leading to evolution of the soul.

But, all the benign glory is lost as the vision evanesces, and the mind plunges in a meditative calm, ached by the loss of the tranquilled experience,

So the vision flamed and fled,
And before the glory fallen every other dream lay dead. (A Vision of Beauty)

It needs only to awaken sensitivity to view the divine grandeur in order to be aware of the
vast store of mystic profundities. Then all the visionary dreams would intertwine in a mystic frame to join the finite and the infinite together. The feeling is ineffable, except in terms of sighs and exclamations, as for instance, when he says in 'Desire' (The Nuts of Knowledge)

With Thee a moment! Then what dreams have play!

and,

Ah, in the soul what memories arise!(63)

Despite the effort, no verbal symbol can equate the depth and intensity of the feeling which charges the heart with spiritual transcendence. In 'Desire' the poet shows his inability to comprehend the tumultuous joy he experiences at heart. His mind is not potent enough to contain its limitless abundance. It affects the mind and departs, leaving behind a deep longing to regain the ecstasy back. It is only on such occasions that the finite in man expands and elevates itself to touch the Infinite. It makes him conscious of the hidden higher self to which
it is linked up in a manner, not explainable to the intellect. It is regarded as the blossoming of the self, opening of the doors of wisdom.

The great Persian mystic Jalaluddin Rumi, whose god-intoxicated poetry is taken to be the finest of Sufi-mysticism, explores a similar view in his poems regarding the unified consciousness of being. What a mystic enjoys and realises on rare moments of mystic apprehension is philosophised by Rumi as,

The thread has become single. Do not now fall into error if thou seest that the letters K and N are two. (64)

In Jalaluddin's philosophy, man is abided by the force which has created him as well as the rest of the world. But a layman, on account of his spiritual blindness, misses the vision of the Almighty, having perception only of the transient form. He is, thus, bewildered in a world where,

Reality was hidden and phantasy visible. (65)

Intending to reveal the mystery behind God's purpose in setting up such a misleading world
around, Rumi asks in bewilderment,

(Wondering) why He (God) set up this non-existence in (Full) view and why He caused that Reality to be hidden from sight.(66)

The problem of the palpable and the real had affected AE in a like manner too. He had always been fascinated by the solutions to such problems, as presented in the Eastern mystics' outlook. In this respect, he takes special cognance of the Sufi-mystics of whom he writes to Clifford Bax,

Myself, I prefer the Sufi Poetry to any because of its intoxication with divine things.(67)

As he had been practical mysticism in Sir Edwin Arnold's The Light of Asia and The Song Celestial, he detected the sparks of divinity in Sufi-mysticism too. His contemporary Sufi-poet Kahlil Gibran's poetry and mystic prose meant a lot to him. On reading Gibran's The Prophet, he made a candid declaration of his fascination for the mystic underthought explored in the book.

After reading The Prophet, he wrote:

I do not think the East has spoken with so beautiful a voice since the Gitanjali of Rabindranath Tagore as in The Prophet.
of Kahlil Gibran, who is artist as well as poet, I could quote from every page, and from every page I could find some beautiful and liberating thought. (68)

Gibran's poetry was interesting to AE, particularly because, in his poems he found that the enchantment of feeling had taken over the form of beauty. From the lines of his poems there flows a mystic beauty which no manifesting form can project appropriately. Even in his own poems, AE upholds the realization of beauty to its manifestation. So, in 1913, while editing poems from Homeward Songs by the Way, The Earth Breath and The Divine Vision for the Collected Poems, he deliberately omitted poems which in colder hours seemed to him to have failed to preserve some heat of the imagination.

In a good deal of his mystic poems AE estimates the inward perception of the mystic magnificence to be higher, if compared to the object of perception. He sees his god through the mind's eye: in a silent encounter the soul views its creator. And, that is the Unknown God
descending upon man at the twilight dim. The dancing of light over the mountain-folds, the stately procession of stars and the gathering darkness — all these project the manifested beauty. But, the heart only drinks the essence of such beauty:

Our hearts were drunk with a beauty
Our eyes could never see. (69)

Mystic enchantment of the beauty comes as unawares as it vanishes unheeded.

But never visible to sense or thought
The flower of Beauty blooms after withdrawn (70)

In this ecstatic experience lies the great truth that leads not to illusion but to illumination:

Nearer to Thee, not by delusion led,
Though there no house fires burn nor bright eyes gaze:
We wise, but by the symbol charioted,
Through loved things rising up to Love's own ways. (71)

The way of love, for AE, is one of spiritual contentment. He speaks of his love in terms of passionate intensity in abrogation of self-hood. All the great poets of mystic literature have
Lao Tzu sees the entire plan of the heavenly Tao being manifested in love. He says,

It slowly is made manifest, yet its plans are laid in Love. (72)

Sir Edwin Arnold in The Light of Asia, depicts love as the gateway to righteous living,

The heart of it is Love, the end of it Is Peace andConsilation sweet. (73)

And, the Sufi-mystic declares love to be a rapturous ecstasy which defaces desire and ambition. Exhausting the heart of the thoughts of seperateness, it exhilarates itself. This love is bounteous, unlimited, an ever-flowing ecstasy. It is, to bleed willingly and joyfully. (74)

For,

Love which is not always springing is always dying. (75)

A probe into the jargon of mystic literature of the world lands AE in the state of perpetual love and freedom of mind. In his philosophy, the Mighty Mother, an embodiment of love and sympathy, casts an affectionate watch
upon her cursed children on the earth. Through Her spiritual nourishment and loving care the black soul of man assumes purity and rises to divine vision.

Treatment of love in Russell is manifold. Speaking of human-love through physical attraction, he refers to 'the burning glass of Womanhood', which, strangely enough, he thinks of enduring in order to rise above it. The poem (The Burning Glass, Collected Poems), is one of most out of the way in Russell's creation in vindicating passionate love to secure the impassionate. But his temperament, as revealed in other love-poems, shows that in essence, he denounces desire of all kinds including feminine beauty. AE regards woman's love to be a symbol of worldly desire which binds instead of letting loose. Her beauty seduces man, for hers is different from the Beauty which is real and permanent. In 'The Symbol Seduces' AE shows a distinct admiration for the Love which is Truth and Beauty — two in one.

Love is the cardinal principle in AE's philosophy. He knows, as man's spirituality is
necessarily joined to the internal purity, so also his mystic awareness is subjugated to the love at heart. Considering it to be a precious virtue, AE implores it to be restored to man.

Let it dwell there, let it rest there, at home in your heart:
Wafted on winds of gold, it is Love itself, the Dove. (76)

AE’s vision of life is one of profound love and altruism. By means of love he gets over egoism, that separates man from the life of love and compassion, and reaches the state of permanency. Despite the poem being full of allusions to diurnal changes, he hardly takes note of the passage of time while undergoing spiritual excursion. Both time and space dilute in his consciousness and he cannot see them differently from eternity and immortality. Through the oft-quoted twilights, dawns, mornings and nights the poet finds access into the divine continuity.

Along with natural beauty AE idealizes human pain and sorrow too. Pain, in its most acute form draws the poet nearer to the fount of
Beauty. Through pain and suffering he visualizes man's proximity to God. It burns the heart with its agonizing flame, making him each time aware of the impermanence of the things of desire. Through physical suffering and mental agony AE validates the theory of karma and consequently comes upon the understanding that suffering induces in man a mystic brotherhood to the Almighty. Pain elevates him in his spiritual aspiration on account of which the human being is placed much higher than his celestial counterpart, the angel. In pride and self-dignity thus cries out the voice of the terrestrial,

I am myriad years of pain
Nearer to the fount of life.(77)

Pain opens door to the realization of man's true existence as distinguished from the elusive existence in this unreal world. In one of his shorter poems, AE deifies pain, saying,

I have made a god of pain,
and worships it in order to purge through its sufferings sweet:

Though there's anguish in his touch,
Yet his soul within is sweet.(78)
Like a practical-mystic AE let the mystic wisdom he gathered, sip into his psyche. His spirituality is unique in the sense that it appeals to no god, no religion, but to the heart and the soul. Though it is not raised to any philosophic doctrine, it engenders a great source of wisdom that enlightens the soul. In his mystic poems AE explores the innermost regions of the heart and exposes them to the benevolence of the Mother Nature. The wonder he experiences in mystic revelation sits at the root of his heart, and, on a second thought, he conveys the wonder, in all its possible intactness, in poetic language. Comparing the mystic undertone of Russell's poetry to the sensuous appreciation of Nature in Dante Gabriel Rossetti, R.B. Davis is of the opinion that in case of Russell,

The intuitive feeling for nature came first, and the philosophical implications came later. (79)

In fact, Russell's mysticism gives vent to a philosophic interpretation that has emerged
from the depths of personal experience. In his
effort to search the course of the spirit in
Nature he is encountered with the divinity in
being which guards and guides the soul. In
this respect he is perhaps the rarest of modern
English mystics who feels the mystic pangs in an
intensity that he keeps up unbroken in his poetry.
He becomes one with fiery spirit and divine calm,
feeling its source in the soul:

O mystic fire!
Stillness of earth and air!
That burning silence I
For an instant share.
In the crystal of quiet I gaze
And the god is there. (80)

With his deep love and ardour for the land
of the Absolute he creates a new tradition of
mystical literature in poetry. In the body of his
poetical works he thus creates a first-hand
experience of the Divine through presentation of
the "visions" in their most possible innateness.
Thus as perceived earlier the most characteristic
feature of his meditative poetry is its
identification with the mystic self of the poet
himself.
NOTES

2. Ibid, p-199
5. AE, The Renewal of Youth, p-16.
11. Tzu, Lao, R.B. Blaney (tr), The Way of Life, p-68.
15. Ibid, p-12.
17. AE, 'Hermit', Homeward Songs by the Way, p-43.
27. AE, Imaginations and Reveries, p-51.
44. AE, 'Winter', *The Earth Breath and Other Poems*, p-69.
46. AE, 'Evanescence', *Vale and Other Poems*, p-45.
52. AE, 'A Summer Night', *By Still Waters*, p-4.
54. AE, 'A Call of the Sidhe', The Nuts of Knowledge, p-22.
56. AE, 'Misummer Eve', Ibid,
57. AE, 'Dana', By Still Waters, p-8.
66. Ibid, p-64.
68. Gibran, Kahlil, The Prophet, cover page.
70. AE, 'Winter', Earth Breath and other Poems, p-69.
72. Tzu Lao, Isabella Mears(tr), Tao Teh King, p-96.
73. Arnold, Sir Edwin, The Light of Asia, p-141.
75. Gibran, Kahlil, Sand and Foam, p-55.
76. AE, 'The Message', The Divine Vision, p-26
77. AE, 'The Man to the Angel', The Earth Breath, p-52.
78. AE, 'Pain', Homeward Songs, p-34.
80. AE, 'A Mountain Tarn', The House of Titans, p-41.