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AN EVALUATION OF
MYSTICISM IN THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY
OF FRIEDRICH FROEBEL

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

AN EVALUATION OF
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OF FRIEDRICH FROEBEL

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Statement of the Problem.

In a cursory survey of the life and philosophy of Friedrich Froebel one finds a penetrating influence and a frequent recurrence of the element of "mysticism". A deeper, more thorough study of his educational philosophy with reference to this element and its implications promises to be most rewarding. The writer hopes in the present study not only to discover the place mysticism occupies in his educational theory but also to evaluate its significance.

B. The Importance of the Problem.

Our admiration for classical educators is such that we can build an evaluation of the significance of any one element of their educational philosophy on an already existing respect for them historically. Thus, Froebel was chosen because of his purely educational importance. Then the very prominence of "unity", "inner connection", "harmony" in his philosophy demanded a consideration of mysticism.

Historically, mysticism has been an interesting subject for those who have studied it objectively; it has been a powerful influence with those who have experienced it subjectively; and it has been a unifying influence for those who have projected subjective experience in

the formulation of a philosophy of education.

Thus one could be content to allow this research to establish an historical presence of mysticism in the educational philosophy of a significant educator of the early nineteenth century. The investigator should not need to attempt an analogy between Froebel's age and the present time to discover values in his emphases for our generation. Admittedly, the need of the world is for a stabilizing influence. All alike are searching for that "something" which shall unify our efforts and concepts. Educators and religionists are mutually concerned in the reconstruction of society. If Pestalozzi is right that through education society is to be regenerated, then probing into the educational philosophy of Friedrich Froebel, a contemporary of Pestalozzi, may reveal a secret as to the necessary content and emphasis in an educational philosophy - indeed, the underlying "Spirit" of education - to effect regeneration.

In discovering and evaluating this element of mysticism in Froebel's theory, it should be justified in the light of its educational significance. If mysticism, therefore, has any connection with the formulation of aims and objectives in education as it affects a life-centered curriculum; if it has any unifying influence on thought, feeling and will; if it has a universal power to change individuals, integrating them where they were disintegrated before; if it motivates a search for truth that ultimate and absolute truth might be found - then it is interested in the end result of education, the development of a harmonious and unified personality.

This subject, then, becomes as important as the highest devel-

opment of the individual, for which society, government, education, - the whole world order should exist. The importance of the considerations to follow goes further than this individual development when it is discovered whether the individual is the end, or whether the identification of that individual with a greater personality is the end. Here we find Realism and Mysticism meeting on a scarred battle ground from which a peace pact does not seem yet forthcoming.

C. Method of Procedure.

The plan of procedure will be first, to review the life and times of Friedrich Froebel to discover in them a natural basis for the philosophic concepts of the man and his definition of mysticism, in terms of its educational implications and influences; second, to discuss the elements of mysticism in its definition current today, and its place in a system of philosophy as a basis for the subsequent analysis and judging of Froebel's views; third, to discover the actual presence of mysticism in his writings; and fourth, to evaluate the inherent educational significance of his mysticism.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF FRIEDRICH FROEBEL

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A biographical and historical interest in a man is deeper than a literary taste for biographical and historical types of literature. When one is interested in an intense study of a man he wants to discover in his background an explanation for his philosophy of life. It is obvious that the whole philosophy of life is bound up with the experiences of life through which one has gone. Thus, in defining an individual at any period of his development or in relation to any historical event, he is the sum total of experiences through which he has passed up to and including that moment. Naturally, then, when one turns to the study of mysticism in the educational philosophy of Friedrich Froebel it behooves him to examine first his life, and second, the relation he bore to those outstanding men whose lives and views affected his philosophy.

A. The Life of Friedrich Froebel.

It may be anticipating too much at this stage of the study to take the vantage point which Alexander Hanschmann, a disciple of Froebel, takes in feeling that he could find no better way to analyze the theory of his master than through an analysis of his life, finding in the circumstances of that life an explanation of what he becomes through a gradual step-by-step development. However, this significant viewpoint may be used as a point of approach, and judgment of its validity withheld until the conclusion of this chapter.

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1. Cf. Warenholts-Bülow: Recollections of Friedrich Froebel, Appendix, p. 333.

Instead of a purely biographical approach to our problem, then, let us turn to this life and its historical setting to discover the promptings and the purposes which shaped its destiny, especially seeking to find those experiences which were a background for Froebel's educational theories.

The inclusion of a survey of the life of Froebel as a chapter in this study needs no justification in the light of Evelyn Underhill's ways of judging and evaluating mystics. She says that

"On the historical side every mystic is profoundly influenced by his environment, and cannot be understood in isolation from it. He is rooted in the religious past of his race, its religious present surrounds and penetrates him whether he will or no, and through this present and this past come, indeed much of his knowledge of God must come. However independent, however "direct" the revelation he has received, careful investigation shows how much, as a matter of fact, he owes to his spiritual ancestry, his reading, the influences that have shaped his early life."¹

Froebel was born April 21, 1782 in a small village, Oberweisbach, in the Thuringian forest. Before Friedrich was a year old his mother died, leaving him to the sole care of his father, a Lutheran pastor, whose personality attracted children, but whose treatment of Froebel, as he afterwards recalls it, was not as tender and gentle as it might have been. His father remarried in three years and this wife became a proverbial stepmother to the child, adding to his discomfort and neglect in the home, when a son of her own was born. Friedrich was made then to feel a perfect stranger. It is at this time that he recalls his first consciousness of self. He says, "In them (the circumstances of my childhood) I see the first cause of my early habit of introspection, my tend-

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1. Underhill: *Mystics of the Church*, p. 17.

ency to self examination and my early separation from companionship with other men".¹ So, like Comenius, Froebel could afterwards look back on those early years of his life and resolve that the children coming under his care should have better treatment and more affection than he had had as a child.

His father often took Friedrich with him in his parish calling in order to relieve his stepmother of worry over him. On these visits Friedrich found himself to be "again constantly attracted from the outer to the inner aspects of life. Life with its inmost motives laid bare, passed before my eyes, with my father's comments pronounced upon it; and thing and word, act and symbol were thus perceived by me in their most vivid relationship. I saw the disjointed, heavy-laden, torn, inharmonious life of man as it appeared in this community of five thousand souls."²

Impressed as he was with the human discord which he saw on these visits, he asked his brother, when the latter came home for vacation and took an affectionate interest in him, why God did not make all people so that they did not quarrel. His brother, thinking to turn his mind from the human problem, interested him in some of the processes of nature in which opposites or contrasts blended with ultimate harmony, evolving after gradual growth. Later he was able to say that

"to the Church was added the Nature-temple; to the religious Christian life the life of Nature; to the passionate discord of human life the tranquil peace of the life of plants . . . An intimate communion with Nature for more than thirty years has taught me that plants, especially trees, are the mirror, or rather a symbol, of human life in its highest

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1. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 4.
2. Ibid., p. 11.

spiritual relations."¹

When still under ten he heard the demands made on church members "to enter upon the service of Jesus, to show forth Christ in one's life, to follow Jesus".² Because of the frequent repetition of this statement, he attached due importance to it. Being of the tender years that he was and hearing the mystical and symbolic sermons which his father, belonging to the old orthodox church of theology as he did, preached, he found difficulty in knowing how this was to be done. Finally, however, he arrived at the conviction that "human nature is such that it is not impossible for man to live the life of Jesus in its purity, and to show it forth to the world, if he will only take the right way towards it".³

He was continually striving to establish outer and inner relationships - to explain the parts in terms of a whole as he thought of life in the past, present and future.

In the midst of this when he was ten, the brother of his mother sympathized so with the fate of the lad in his present and situation that he secured the care of the boy himself. All the affection which this uncle would have lavished on his wife and only son, who had both died, was now centered on Friedrich, who responded immediately. He recalls these five years with his uncle as very happy ones. One can imagine his blossoming out in his adolescent development, going to high school and enjoying human companionship.

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1. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 12
2. Ibid., p. 14.
3. Ibid., p. 14.

On the first day of school a significant thing happened when the schoolmaster chose to read this verse, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you".^{1.} Thus the thing which he had sought for in his brother's explanation of nature and its ultimate harmony came like a flash and developed into a key to human happiness through the law of harmonious development with Nature's law as a criterion.

His delights and desires of this period are largely found in his growing impression of the analogy of human beings in their development to other existing organisms. Nature became firmly established as the chief instructor for this earth life.^{2.} Here is the tap root of his looking to the course of nature for his principles of education, finding in her the inspiration for humanity.

He must have been a highly sensitive and emotional child for he speaks of his teacher at Stadt-Ilz in glowing terms. He recounts the effect of his teaching as a

"glow within me till my heart was completely melted, especially when it touched upon the life, the work and the character of Jesus. At this I would burst into tears, and the longings to lead in future a similar life took definite form, and wholly filled my soul."^{3.}

He was a delicate and dreamy child, and "from his earliest years manifested remarkable traits of character, and also mental tendencies which were a little singular. He was dreamy and wholly penetrated with a profound religious sentiment. Thus, the day when he believed that he was assured by preemptory reasoning that he was not doomed to eternal

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1. Matthew 6:33.

2. Cf. Marenholtz-Bülow: Reminiscences of Friedrich Froebel, Appendix, p. 338.

3. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 19.

flames was an event in his life."^{1.}

He became strongly introspective - the severe religious influence of his early training placing him in a morbid state of mind and attitude toward the present and future life. His school life did not attract him strongly and his mind was continually failing to see the connection between his studies and his own development. His educational philosophy in relation to his life becomes more significant when we find that he can be styled in many ways "self educated".^{2.} He felt strongly the lack of a connecting and binding thread in all his academic studies. He could not find the harmony and the purpose of them for him. Throughout these five years he was searching for a satisfying of his religious sentiment. His confirmation at the hands of his uncle impressed him deeply. It became a life long influence. He traces back to this experience the sense of union and repose of later years.^{3.}

At fifteen, his step-mother's dictum prevailed that he should follow the practical life rather than be allowed the advantages of further education which she believed was too expensive for him. The fact that Friedrich's elder brothers and his step-brother had been sent to the university to complete their education rankled in him when he was denied the same opportunity. However, if the father had not yielded to the boy's utter distaste for an office position which was available at the time, Froebel would not have found himself as happily as he did in the position of apprentice to a Thuringian forester for a term of three

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1. Compayré: History of Pedagogy, p. 447.

2. Cf. Warenholta-Bülow: Reminiscences of Friedrich Froebel, Appendix, p. 339.

3. Cf. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 23.

years. He found that such outdoor life gave him the opportunity of fellowship with nature which he craved.

Neglect on the part of the forester, however, forced Friedrich back on himself for study. He became interested in geometry, natural sciences and history in their practical relationship to the life of a farmer. Here his harmonious whole was conceived of as a completeness in itself - bringing everything learned or studied into relationship with a center. Truly

"He felt, though dimly, perhaps, even at that early period, that this or that kind of knowledge should never be merely an instrument requisite for a certain use, but the rounding off the human being's own development, the self culture for a purpose higher than any worldly purpose, for which he was responsible to God and his conscience."¹

As a forester, he said, "My church religion changed into a religious life in Nature, and in the last half-year I lived entirely in and with plants, which attracted me wonderfully, without however the meaning of the inner life of the plant world yet dawning on me."² He especially loved to indulge in his old habit of self-observation and introspection.

Froebel was unusual enough at this time to impress strongly persons knowing him. Father Jahn, one of the German gymnasts, told a friend later of a "queer fellow" he had met. This "queer fellow" was Froebel; and the habit of saking out general truths from the observation of nature, especially of plants and trees, dated from his solitary rambles in the forest. No training could have been better suited to strengthen his inborn tendency to mysticism; and when he left the forest at the

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1. Quoted in Painter: Pedagogical Essays, p. 389.
2. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 25.

early age of seventeen, he seems to have been possessed by the main ideas which influenced him all of his life. The conception, which in him dominated all others, was the Unity of Nature; and he longed to study natural sciences that he might find in them various applications of nature's universal laws.

At the end of two years, his apprenticeship to the forester being completed, he returned to Oberweissbach. He obtained permission soon after to visit his brother at Jena, - the intellectual center of Germany at this period. What impressions he must have received to build into his recollections of his forestry experience! He got both a subjective and an objective viewpoint while here. He found unity in diversity, a correlation of forces, and an interconnection of all living things.¹ While there he made arrangements to stay to study for two terms, but his financial difficulties were his undoing. He contracted school debts which he could not cover. He had to relinquish claim on his paternal inheritance to receive money to pay his fine. He even had to spend some days in jail before he was released to return home.

As yet he had read little of Schiller and German literature. Unless whatever mental influence came into his life could be immediately interwoven with his inner life, he let it go immediately.

At home again he was sent to farming, but when his father's health failed he returned home to spend the last days with him. His father died, so that at the age of twenty, Froebel, with fond memories of his father and of the intimacy which had sprung up between them during the last days of his father's illness, was free and independent and was forced to shift for himself.

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1. Cf. Froebel: Autobiography, pp. 31-32.

For the next three and a half years he went here and there - first to one place and then to another, holding one position and another, from land surveying to accountancy. But in all this his outer life was far removed from his inner life. He carried his own world within himself and it was for this he cared and it was this he cherished.^{1.}

During this time he found himself a land surveyor in Bamberg, working with a young Ph. D., who leaned toward the new school of Schelling. This new found friend loaned him a copy of Schelling's "Concerning the Over Soul". This affected him deeply and interesting discussions with the owner followed on its reading. On the warning of his fellow companion he recognized two widely separated systems of thought - art and philosophy.

Another book which should be alluded to here in its effect on Froebel is Proschke's "Fragments on Anthropology". After reading this he found himself as a "connected whole . . . his life and himself as a single entity in contrast to the whole world outside".^{2.}

He desired self-completion rather than signal success or achievement in any field of work. To this end he sacrificed settling down. In writing to a friend in 1805 he is found to say, "To thee may Fate soon give a settled hearth and a loving wife; me let it keep wandering without rest, and allow only time to learn aright my true relation to the world and to my own inner being. Do thou give bread to men; be it my effort to give men to themselves".^{3.}

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1. Cf. Quick: Essays, p. 587.

2. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 46.

3. Quoted in Quick: Essays, p. 587 from K. Schmidt's Gesch d. Päd., 5rd edition by Lange, vol. iv, p. 277.

Interestingly enough in this same year he found himself at Frankfort working with an architect. Here the turning point of his life came, and with it the opportunity to begin giving men to themselves. While at Frankfort he wrote,

"I desire to educate men whose feet shall stand on God's earth, rooted fast in Nature, while their head towers up to heaven, and reads its secrets in steady gaze, whose heart shall embrace both earth and heaven, shall enjoy the life of earth and nature with all its wealth of forms, and at the same time shall recognize the purity and peace of heaven, that unites in its love God's earth and God's heaven."¹.

He could now ennoble humanity, an ideal which he had discovered rather fruitless of attaining in any other thing he had yet attempted. This was education's direct purpose. In speaking of his decision to teach he says,

"An accidental circumstance determined my decision (to teach). I received news that my certificates were lost (certificates he had sent to an architect to secure the position for him). I then concluded that Providence had intended, by this incident, to take from me the possibility of a return backward."².

However, in this very implicit trust in the guidance of Providence through circumstances one must be alert in the study of Froebel to heed the warning of Compayre when he says that Froebel regarded himself as almost infallible.³ His failure is never attributed to his own insufficiency, but he lays the blame directly on destiny or on the ill will of others. Conversely would he be guided by Providence for the positive elements of his life.

So at the age of twenty-three he accepted the position of teacher in the model school in Frankfort and remained there for two years. He

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1. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 63.
2. Quoted in Compayre: History of Pedagogy, p. 442.
3. Cf. Compayre: History of Pedagogy, p. 450.

felt that he had truly found himself and his calling for his life's contribution to mankind. A surer form of education according to nature would regenerate mankind.

But at the end of two years he left the model school and undertook the tutelage of three boys. He secured the permission of the parents to take these lads to Yverdon under Pestalozzi for two years. He found this educator's system to lack a unity for which he longed. Thus,

"Froebel, the pupil of Pestalozzi, and a genius like his master, completed the reformer's system; taking the results at which Pestalozzi had arrived through the necessities of his position, Froebel developed the ideas involved in them, not by further experience but by deduction from the nature of man, and thus he attained to the conception of true human development and to the requirements of true education."¹.

But even yet he wanted more nature science to answer his own questionings. He wanted more schooling. Thus he went first to Göttingen and thence to Berlin. Here

"the lectures for which I had so longed really came up to the needs of my mind and soul, and made me feel more fervently than ever the certainty of the demonstrable inner connection of the whole cosmical development of the universe. I saw also the possibility of man's becoming conscious of this absolute unity of the universe, as well as of the diversity of things and appearances which is perpetually unfolding itself within that unity; and then when I had made clear to myself and brought fully home to my consciousness the view that the infinitely varied phenomena in man's life - work, thought, feeling, and position were all summed up in the unity of his personal existence I felt myself able to turn my thoughts once more to educational problems."².

Then followed the war experience in 1813. Froebel, burning with patriotic fervor for the freedom of his country, enlisted and went to the battlefield. Here he had rare experiences and out of his associations developed a deep friendship and companionship with Langethal and Hiden-

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1. Quoted in Quick: Essays (from Schmidt's Gesch d. Päd), pp. 388-389
2. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 89.

dorff who later were to be working with Froebel in his school. Around the camp fires Froebel would discuss his philosophy and broach his questionings and uncertainties to these friends.

One pertinent incident is recounted on his way back from the campaign of 1812-13. He was seeking something, yet was unable to tell exactly what this was, save an unsatisfied longing on a quest for satisfaction.

"Wholly engrossed in this thought (trying to find something) I entered one day into a very beautiful garden, ornamented with plants the most various. I admired them, and yet none of them brought relief to my inmost feeling. Passing them in review, at a glance, in my soul, I suddenly discovered that among them was no lily. . . . Then I knew what was lacking in that garden, and what I was looking for. How could my inmost feeling have manifested itself to me in a more beautiful way? You seek, I said to myself, tranquil peace of heart, harmony of life, and purity of soul, in the image of the lily, that peaceful flower, simple and pure. The garden, with all its varied flowers, but without the blossoms of the lily, was for me like life agitated and variegated, but without harmony and without unity."¹

On his return from the war Froebel became curator of the Museum of Mineralogy at Berlin. This on the surface seems a side track from his work as an educator, yet the experiences there contributed richly in satisfying his inner thinking and his demand for logic in the universe. He writes, "Here was I at the central point of my life and strife, where inner working and law, where life, nature, and mathematics were united in the fixed crystalline form, where a world of symbols lay open to the inner eye."² The very stones he worked with became speaking forms. His crystal world opened up to him the life and laws of man's life. Their inarticulate forms taught him the true life of human kind.³ Through the study of geology and crystallography he came to know a higher circle and

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1. Compayre: History of Pedagogy, p. 451.
2. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 97.
3. Cf. Ibid, p. 97.

a higher goal. Nature and man now truly explained each other in their stages of developing. In nature lay the explanation of himself and life. The one thing man needed was unity of development - an evolution analogous to the evolution of forms in natural organisms.

But his periods in school and at the museum were only to fit him the better for his profession as teacher. In 1816 he set out for Greisheim and opened a school with his niece and nephews for pupils. Here Langethal and Middendorff joined him. Then the school was later moved to Keilhau. Smaller schools were started; teacher training classes supervised. In 1837 Froebel started the Kindergarten in Berlin. Soon his school at Blausenburg failed for lack of funds. More misfortune came in 1848 when he became involved with the government on account of his nephew's socialistic tendencies in publications which were attributed to Friedrich Froebel, the man whose religious beliefs were so orthodox! As a result of this trouble and misunderstanding he was ordered officially not to operate schools after his system in Prussia. This final decree was a blow to him and in 1852 on June 21, he died at Marienthal, having lived a full span of seventy years.

How truly we may feel in the presence of this man that to know him is to understand much about his philosophy, both of life and of educational aims and method. His life explains him. Only after we have discovered the actual elements of mysticism in his educational philosophy, however, can we judge the absence of academic concepts in favor of concepts become real to him through his own personal experiences. Suffice it to say now that

"In all religious experience a large part is and must be played by that which psychology calls 'apperception'. By apperception is meant the fact that there are in all of our experiences two distinct factors. There is first the apprehension, the message, which comes from the

outside world; secondly there are the ideas, images and memories already present in our minds, which we involuntarily combine with the message, and by which we develop, modify or explain it. Now this mixture of perceptions and memories obviously takes place in all mystical experience.¹

Let us press further in our study of his educational philosophy to distinguish and establish the presence of his perceptions growing out of these memories of his lifetime, for it is this contribution that his life story has to make to our present study.

B. His Times, with Special Reference to the History and Influence of Mysticism in Germany.

Having reviewed the life of Froebel, a further consideration of his times and of those men who must have influenced him should complete the background for an evaluation of mysticism in his educational philosophy.

Froebel does not tell us in his Autobiography, neither do the critics and students of his life tell us, of many specific men or specific thought systems that affected him deeply. We do know that Jena was the center of German thought at the time Froebel studied there. In addition, he built on a heritage of an historical past. Although his philosophy was an "attitude of mind rather than a clearly conceived system" he came out of a Germany, which though at its lowest ebb politically, struggling as it was for a united nation, yet had produced a Schelling, a Fichte, a Kant, and a Hegel. He came out of a Germany which had a rich background of mysticism. We must not attach undue

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1. Underhill: Mystics of the Church, p. 19.

influence or significance to his times, but Froebel was surely predisposed by his early life^{1.} to welcome current idealistic conceptions. A realization that Froebel actually derived more from a direct communion with nature than from a study of systems will constitute sufficient caution in a study of German mysticism.

Mysticism in Germany was the product of a philosophical spirit which was unsatisfied with the rationality of the day-scholasticism. It was the product of a religious spirit which demanded direct experience instead of theoretical creeds. It was, in short, the desire for reality. Naturally enough, mysticism throughout the ages has followed the curve of the intellectual life of the race.

The history of mysticism in Europe during the Christian era shows the high periods coming immediately after the great periods of art, material and intellectual civilization. Our attention is called to the three great waves of mystical activity: in the third century, following the Classical period; in the 14th century, following the Medieval period; and in the 17th century, following the Renaissance. Of these three, the 14th century rose the highest in influence, and in fact, in extent. It was the Golden Age of Mysticism.

While Dante's "Divina Commedia" was being written, Meister Eckhart (1260-1329) was "laying the foundations for German philosophy and German mysticism".^{2.} Here we find the roots of Teutonic mysticism in the desire for transcendent reality. German mysticism tended to theosophy and claimed direct knowledge of divine things gained in a mysterious way. It was postulated to oppose any theory of theology which depended solely on the authority of dogma or the Church. It was agreed that "the immediate experience of the presence of God was of greater value than the dialectic development

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1. Cf. Part I, chapter II.

2. Underhill: *Mysticism*, p. 551.

of ideas referring to God."¹ Eckhart, objective and dogmatic, dared to preach to the laity the gospel of immanence instead of exaltation. He personally feels that

"God is alike near in all creatures. I have a power in my soul which enables me to perceive God; I am certain as that I live that nothing is so near to me as God. He is nearer to me than I am to myself. It is a part of His very essence that He should be nigh and present to me. God is in all things and places alike, and is ever ready to give Himself to us in so far as we are ready to receive Him; he knows God aright who sees Him in all things."²

He saw in the Godhead a "Nameless thing" - in life a divine spark which was identified with the highest reason, - and "Reason presses ever upwards and must penetrate to the ground and my ground is God's ground".³ He summarizes his great idea when he says that "man's chief aim was union with God until the finite was blended with the essence of Deity".⁴

Eckhart was a learned mystic, a natural metaphysician and a great scholar. Although he suffered ecclesiastical condemnation, nevertheless, his influence was great. The German and Flemish mystics of the 14th and 15th centuries shared something apart from other schools, a unique "something" which they derived from Eckhart, either as his direct disciples or as friends of his pupils.

One of these pupils was John Tauler (1300-1361) who with Henry Suso (1300-1368) completed the group of the three Dominican friars, out of which grew the Friends of God. Tauler was utterly objective. He was a zealous missionary and very interested in social service. It is remarked of him that "the breadth of his humanity was only equalled by the depth of his spirituality."⁵ In his views he was less pantheistic than his

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1. Dresser: Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, p. 255.
 2. Riley: Meaning of Mysticism, p. 12.
 3. Ibid., p. 70.
 4. Remensnyder: Mysticism, p. 9.
 5. Underhill: Mysticism, p. 552.

predecessor and the founder of German mysticism, Eckhart. Suso, on the other hand, was subjective and romantic. He preferred to describe his own experiences and interpret everything in life in terms of his relationship to God. His distinct contribution came in his book on "Eternal Wisdom" in addition to his clarifying of Eckhart's views in an autobiography.

The group of Friends of God grew to include many. One of the number, remaining anonymous, produced the "Theologia Germanica" on the publication of which the mystical principles were successfully made available for popular use.

In the Reformation period, "Whatever deviations of the reformers who adopted literalism and formal systems of theology, it was the mysticism of German protestantism which held resolutely to the principle that inner experience involving regeneration is the test of religious realities."¹ Thus we pass through the transition period to modern philosophy. Mysticism had fulfilled its destiny in breaking down Scholasticism for the present.

Following the Reformation, protestant Germany produced Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) - a "giant of mysticism" who was commonly called the "inspired shoemaker". Boehme had a natural desire to realize the transcendent. He contributed to German philosophy as well as to German mysticism in his explanations of Man and the Universe and the Nature of God and of the Soul.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century we find a steep decline and downward movement of the mystic curve. Eckartshausen (1752-1803)

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1. Quoted in Dresser: History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, p. 325 from Falckenberg: History of Modern Philosophy, p. 51 ff.
2. Dresser: History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, p. 324.

wrote "The Cloud on the Sanctuary". However, in the development of outstanding mystics in other countries, France and England particularly, we find the influence of German mystics going on. Especially is this true in the life of William Blake who closes the history of European mysticism. He was profoundly affected by Boehme.

It is difficult to evaluate and appreciate properly the work of the Rhenish school of mysticism for "no part of the history of mysticism has been more changed by recent research (than that of this school) and the work is still but partly done".^{1.}

Moreover, we are interested in German mysticism as it influenced German philosophy and thus influenced Froebel. This philosophy can be examined biographically in times nearer Froebel than the mysticism just reviewed. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the birth of such idealistic philosophers as Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel brought significant characters into the stream of German thought life. Froebel, being professedly a philosopher and not a mystic may have been more significantly influenced by these philosophers than by the direct influence of mysticism as represented by the mystics aforementioned. We shall not attempt to study these separate systems thoroughly but shall only indicate their principle tenets in relation to mysticism.

Comprehending German philosophy, Saisset says that "this then is the beginning and the end of German philosophy: it begins with scepticism (Kant), it ends with pantheism (Hegel). And these are the two springs where the rising generations are to drink and be satisfied. Kant pours them out scepticism, Hegel pantheism, and these two currents of ideas meet in the doctrine of the impersonal God."^{2.} Again he says,

"The God of German philosophy is not at the commencement but at the

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1. Underhill: *Mysticism*, p. 553.

2. Saisset: *Essay on Religious Philosophy*, v. ii, p. 35.

end of things. This God is the human mind; or rather, God is at once at the origin, at the end, and in the middle; which is just tantamount to saying that there is no God distinct from things."¹

Kant wrote in his "Critique of Judgment" of a phenomenal world with mechanical laws and a noumenal world of spirit and freedom - the "two not different worlds but one world got through different forms of apprehension".² It is thus entirely within our power to believe that there is "one immanent spiritual Reality - an inner Life of things, binding all that is together into one organic Unity". Not that Kant proves this to be so, but he proceeds on the assumption that if it were so then our questionings and our problems would resolve themselves in the light of such. We are still left to explain the state of the beyond in which the whole is actually greater than the sum of its parts.

The approach of Fichte is unlike that of Kant. He comes to his metaphysical conclusions by way of the "Ego" as a starting point - a subjective approach. God is the sum total of Ego and Non-Ego. He says that "Ego alone is the principle, explaining, laying down, creating all; explaining, laying down, creating itself."³ Schelling at first adopts Fichte. He believes in the "sum total of things as progressive series of the varied forms of one identical principle". There is no being without thought, no thought without being - an absolute unity of subject and object. God is this absolute subject-object.

Throughout the German philosophy we find this identity of thought and being, - the history of which principle Germany is indeed proud of. For it is "born of Kant, developed in Fichte, transformed in

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1. Saissset: Essay on Religious Philosophy, v. ii, p. 32.
2. Jones: Fundamental Ends of Life, p. 81.
3. Saissset, op. cit., p. 4.

Schelling, and finally grown to its fullest maturity in the system of Hegel."¹

As we find Ego characterizing Fichte's philosophy so we find the Idea the center of Hegelian philosophy. God is the Idea - Infinite Mind. Reality is the development of the idea, and science is the knowledge of this development. Hegel's aim in his idealistic philosophy is to give an objective or an absolute knowledge, discovering a logical principle expressing the central life and power inherent in all things which exist.

Hegel goes so far as to prove the field of philosophy in relation to Christianity (which he has claimed explains and demonstrates that which religion could only assert) by a trinitarian explanation of the Idea in itself represented by the Father; the idea out of itself represented by the Son; and the idea in itself and for itself (a union reconciling the other two) represented by the Holy Spirit.

It is at the summit of this trinity and beyond it that absolute unity reigns. The German system of philosophy finds there the existence of absolute science for which rational speculation is the only method; contradictories are identified and man is made at one with God.

Freebel, in relation to all of this philosophic thought, representing in nebulous form as he did the doctrines of Schelling and Fichte, believed that matter is only an appearance while reality is spirit; all creation is one with itself as well as with its Creator. After all, everything in the world is spiritual - and the individual is ever craving to be satisfied in realizing and comprehending this essential unity.

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1. Gaisset: Essay on Religious Philosophy, Vol. 2, p. 13.

In establishing Froebel's relation to the mystics we must be content to see their influence as an indirect influence, furnishing a background for the idealistic philosophy of the century in which he lived and wrote.

Summary

Thus the times of Froebel contributed to his greatness of character in furnishing mysticism, which we can now proceed to study as a type. We have not established proof of the influence of these men and of the period in which he lived save as we can deduce from his writings his philosophic open mindedness and the similarities in his viewpoints and those of the mystics and of the idealistic philosophers affected by the mystics.

CHAPTER III

ELEMENTS OF MYSTICISM AS A BASIS FOR JUDGING FROMBEL

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One cannot go far in the literature of the world, among the classics, at any rate, which have stood the test of time and universal appeal, without encountering the subject of mysticism. In fact, Masterlinck says that mysticism is the "true antiseptic of literature - a book grows old in consequence of its anti-mysticism." Whether this judgment can be borne out entirely is beside the point. The observation is that it does exist in literature. It may have been directly written about or it may have been a more or less dominant note in the treatise of some other subject. Basically it strikes root in our tendencies of thought.

It will be valuable then to examine mysticism to define it; to discover its nature as a philosophy and as an experience; to evaluate its tenets in the light of its practicality and rationality; and to find its values for life finally. Having done this we shall then be in a position to evaluate and judge the mysticism in the educational philosophy of Friedrich Froebel, one of these significant contributors to the world's literature.

A. Definition of Mysticism

It is felt that an inductive approach to a definition will be the most valuable because of the various emphases and viewpoints assumed by competent writers and mystics, expressing themselves definitively. This introduction will give a background for the considerations of the entire chapter by virtue of the scope of the definitions now presented.

Emerson says that mysticism is "an influx of the divine mind

into our mind. It is the ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life."^{1.}

Schleiermacher, who according to Dean Inge, a modern practical mystic and critic of mystics, expresses a typical mystical teaching, says: "Mysticism is the contact of the universal life with the individual. It is immediate, raised above all error and misunderstanding. You lie directly on the bosom of the infinite world. In that moment you are its soul. Through one part of its nature you feel as your own all its powers and its endless life."^{2.}

Dean Inge himself expresses the essence of this, though adding a personal God and an immanence, when he says that "mysticism may be defined as the attempt to realize the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature, or more generally as the attempt to realize in thought and feeling the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal."^{3.}

Pratt, a psychologist and philosopher, says it is "the sense of the presence of a being or Reality through other means than ordinary perceptible processes or the reason!"^{4.}

Dr. Hocking, an idealistic philosopher, believes that "mysticism is a way of dealing with God, having cognitive and other fruit, affecting first the mystic's being, and then his thinking, affording him thereby answers to prayer which he can distinguish from the results of his own reflection".^{5.}

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1. Reamsnyder: Mysticism, p. 5.
2. Ibid., pp. 3-4.
3. Inge: Christian Mysticism, p. 5.
4. Pratt: The Religious Consciousness, p. 337.
5. Hocking: Meaning of God, p. 355.

Horton also predicates God when he conceives of mysticism as being an "immediate experience of God as a transcendent and immanent Being . . . The mystical moments in the lives of men are those . . . in which the reality of God is put beyond question and some authentic and indubitable word of God comes to the soul . . ."^{1.}

Rufus Jones, outstanding and well-known American mystic of the present century says that "mysticism is a direct way of vital intercourse and correspondence between man and God . . . that type of experience in which a person feels an overmastering conviction that actual contact is attained with a divine, life-giving, joy-bringing Presence."^{2.}

Evelyn Underhill, whose signal works on mysticism have constituted a great contribution to the present day study of mysticism adds that "it is a direct intuition or experience of God. A Mystic is one whose life aims at union with God."^{3.} She goes on to speak more broadly in saying,

"I understand it to be the experience of the innate tendency of the human spirit toward complete harmony with the transcendental order, whatever be the theological formula under which that order is understood. . . . This tendency in some captures the whole field of consciousness to the state of a mystic union. Whether that end be called the God of Christianity, the World-Soul of Pantheism, the Absolute of Philosophy, the desire to attain it and movement towards it - so long as this is a genuine life process and not an intellectual speculation - is the proper subject of mysticism."^{4.}

Bennett, speaking from a philosophical viewpoint, states that "mysticism is a deliberate undertaking to recover the principle of value self consciously".^{5.}

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1. Horton: Mystical Quest of Christ, pp. 289-290.
2. Jones: Pathways to the Reality of God, pp. 23-24
3. Underhill: Mystics of the Church, pp. 9, 18.
4. Underhill: Mysticism, p. 3.
5. Bennett: Philosophical Study of Mysticism, p. 40.

James, an eminent psychologist, feels that "mystical states of consciousness are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect."^{1.}

Coventry Patmore in the "Red, the Root and the Flower" says that "whereas, that the world, which truly knows nothing, calls 'mysticism' is the science of ultimates . . . the science of self-evident Reality, which cannot be reasoned about because it is the object of pure reason or perception."^{2.}

Poetic form yields up a rich mine of mystic material. It will probably suffice to quote a Wordsworthian portion. Wordsworth was a born Platonist and the following quotation from him does not belie this.

"I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime,
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky and the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things." ^{3.}

These statements and concepts, coming as they do from philosophers, psychologists, poets, and theologians - all lead us into mysticism as a doctrine and as an experience. Professor Pringle-Patterson gives a workable distinction between these two aspects of mysticism in his statement that "mysticism appears in connection with the endeavor of the human mind to grasp the divine essence or the ultimate reality of things, and to enjoy the blessedness of actual communion with the highest".^{4.}

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1. James: Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 360.
2. Quoted in Underhill: Mysticism, p. 28 from Coventry Patmore: Aurea Dicta, CXXVIII.
3. Wordsworth: Tintern Abbey
4. Quoted by Dean Inge in Introduction to Lyra Mystica by Albertson, XIV-VI.

Here we find the first to concern itself with the philosophical side, that there is a "supreme, all-pervading and indwelling Power, in whom all things are one"¹; and the second to introduce the religious side, the experiential aspect, that there is a direct intercourse with this Being of beings and when such intercourse is established that Being ceases to be an object to become an experience.

Confusion often clouds these two aspects. The widespread use of the word 'mysticism' in the first sense has added to the confusion. For some of the purported mystics have been true mystics and some have not; and of the many definitions advanced, some of them have been true and some have not. Nevertheless, philosophically, we find in mysticism a system of metaphysics while psychologically it is analyzed as a human experience in connection with the stream of consciousness. The realization, however, that out of the tendency of thought has grown the metaphysical aspect, which in turn grows into experience again, defines our approach in any case. Growth into a doctrine and through that into more experience is but natural.

In no event is the use of the word "mysticism" to be understood as occultism, psychical research, a vagueness, or even a specific love for the mysterious for its own sake. Etymologically, the word carries us back to the Greek mysteries and a Greek root from which is derived the noun meaning "to shut the eyes", signifying thereby one initiated into the sacred "mysteries".²

Neither is mysticism intuitionism, even though the word sug-

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1. Quoted by Dean Inge in Introduction to *Lyra Mystica* by Albertson, XXV-VII
2. Cf. McClure: *Modern Substitutes of Traditional Christianity*, p. 37.

gests the ineffable and the indescribable, for the way of knowing of the mystic goes one step further than the intuitive. It is not nihilism, which is thought by some to be the logical conclusion of mystical experience. Plotinus, one of the few practical mystic philosophers, makes this point clear that

"all these other things in which the soul once took pleasure, power, strength, wealth, beauty, science, it now says it holds in contempt. It would not say this if it had not come upon something better than these."¹

Nor is the ineffability of the experience to lead one to believe it is agnosticism.² It is not neutral in the sense of indifference; it does believe "that" the One exists and does not concern itself primarily with finding out "what" that One is in its existence; it believes that the quality of the real, though indescribable, is still capable of being experienced, which experience leads to a greater satisfaction than more remote conceptual knowledge. Thus the One of the mystic is neither characterless nor neutral.

Mysticism further discovers a ground rather between atheism and theism in its postulate of this "that" without going into the "what" of God, or the One. The atheist says that there is no God while the theist says that a personal deity exists. The mystic can feel that the atheist is right in that the God of theistic imagination does not exist; but the theist is right that God is. Thus in the "that" of God's existence anyone not able to accept either atheism or theism finds shelter, temporary as it may be. Kant's regulative idea is built on this position - that this "this" gives us something to attain, and the meaning of it for us lies in

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1. Quoted in Bennett, *Philosophical Study of Mysticism*, p. 19 from Plotinus: *Ennead*, VI, vii, p. 34.
2. Cf. Hocking, *Types of Philosophy*, pp. 392-395.

its leading us to do something. This makes the mystic's way clearly more positive than the position of either the atheist or the agnostic. He has something to live by.

Wiesman¹ in discussing the methods of private religious living gives us further clarifying criteria for judging true mysticism in life. He classifies experience which is commonly called "mystical" into three divisions:

1. The worthless types:
 - a. Muddleheaded or confused thinking
 - b. Occultism
 - c. Very unusual state of consciousness
 - d. Hallucination
 - e. Inner conviction or inner light
 - f. Loss of volitional control
2. The better types:
 - a. Aftermath of belief or ideal held fixedly before the mind
 - b. An awareness of mystery
 - c. A sudden inflooding of a sense of peace and power
3. The best types:
 - a. Discernment of how things made for one another fit together
 - b. Method of solving problems

Thus mysticism is not to be interpreted in any sense save that of a doctrine and an experience - and that in the light of those definitions which make it an experience and an expression of a metaphysics outside of the world of sense, yet found within the individual. What the implications of this become shall be discovered in the treatment of the nature of mysticism, philosophically and experientially.

B. The Nature of Mysticism

1. As a Philosophy

In philosophy account must be taken of two essential elements

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1. Wiesman: Methods of Private Religious Living, p. 165 ff.

in life - on the one hand the human mind with its nature, its limitations, and its capacities; and on the other hand, the sum total of things, with their essence and relationships. Tendencies of thought have developed to establish these as related or unrelated. Every age has had outstanding types representing the various schools of thought from the time of Greek culture with Plato down to the present day with Dewey. All have been searching for reality and have found their quest carrying them to widely differing conclusions as to matter and spirit - separate, related, or unified.

a. Its Place in Philosophy

Three basic types of philosophy represent this variation, and for the purposes of this chapter distinction needs only to be drawn further between realism, idealism and mysticism, as we establish mysticism as a type of philosophy having a system of metaphysics and an epistemology. Dr. Hocking in his *Types of Philosophy*¹ indicates that Realism separates the object and the knower; Idealism holds that all objects belong to some knower; and Mysticism believes that the objects and the knowers belong to each other - are of the same reality, are one. Historically, mysticism existed much before either realism or idealism. It becomes the direct antithesis of realism.

b. Its Tenets

Mysticism was then one of the first tendencies of thought as man sought to explain and understand Reality, as he sought to see through the veil separating the seen from the unseen. He felt that the visible

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1. Cf. Hocking: *Types of Philosophy*, p. 381.

world but opened up a revelation of a vaster world of Reality behind and beyond it. To find "some kind of higher correlation and fundamental connection between our minds and the cosmic order"^{1.} became his goal. He felt that after the best efforts of the mind there still remained a mystery in reality.

As to the success of the mystic in finding reality, Evelyn Underhill makes bold to assert that in this quest for ultimate truth and reality all other searchers have failed, and the mystic alone has succeeded. One must not claim too much for mysticism however, by asserting more than it can prove in comparative philosophies, as all have searched for reality. It is true that "the mystic cannot find the whole of reality, but he may find its center; he may find the only handle by which the whole can be held in unity".^{2.}

Rationalism and reason can go so far, and then there lies beyond this a deeper spiritual universe underneath the world of fact and sense. For this the mystic seeks an explanation in an object of unity. He finds an objective Being, a consciousness of which leads one into the last stage of the mystical experience, into union with this Being. This according to Evelyn Underhill is the one essential of mysticism. Whenever an object less than God is proposed, then one may rightfully suspect that true mysticism is not the object of consideration.

It is in this objective God that the seeker of reality finds an explanation of transcendental unity. For "at the core of our being lies ultimate reality. This prompts us to seek and find rest in God, the

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1. Jones: New Studies in Mystical Religion, p. 38.

2. Hooking, Meaning of God, p. 354.

absolute spiritual reality, and to devote our quest to the imperishable realities of truth, goodness and beauty."¹ The definition of this Being, however, is not important - it is in the predicate of the Being itself that the importance for mysticism lies. As soon as this predicate is applied, all finite outlines fade away, a pure immediacy appears, and the whole experience becomes ineffable.

This union with a being demands a strict monistic view of reality. Though Realists also claim a monism, the distinguishing factor of mysticism is that the One of the universe "can never be independent of the insight that knows it";² that the only place that unity can be found is within one's self, in the very heart of life's experience, and not outside life, where the Realist finds Being.

The Upanishads contain an interesting account of the faith of the mystic. In truth, they may contain the entire story of that faith as regards its philosophical basis.³ The writers of the Upanishads intuitively sensed the unity of the world order and of Being. True, they became wholly animistic, falling into a pantheism in which God is all and all is God. Pure mysticism retains the relation of the created to the Creator.

In summary, the significance of mysticism as a doctrine lies in its assigning a higher place to faith as supra-rational and as transcending the realm of the intellect; in its insisting on a monistic view of the universe in which an objective Being is believed to be at the heart

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1. Remensnyder: *Mysticism*, p. 24.

2. Royce: *The World and the Individual*, p. 145.

3. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

of Reality unifying it; in its being ineffable and immediate; in its being interested in the ontological "that" of reality rather than the "what" descriptive phase; and in its being antithetically associated with Realism.

2. As an Experience

At times, we have connected mysticism with metaphysics solely as a solution in speculative thinking. We stop when we have used it to define the real, which paradoxically enough is the indefinable, to the mystic. But one can hold this doctrine of the abstract universal and never enter fully the class of mystics. There is an identification with that universal which is the necessary/correlate. Bennett clearly points out that "experience follows doctrine",¹ whether actually following or preceding in every single instance, one can easily agree that the two are mutually essential.

What is this experience, then, that lends validity to a metaphysical doctrine? How is this union with the Ultimate, the Absolute, the Abstract Universal, Objective Being, accomplished? What are its accompanying characteristics?

First of all there is an outstanding trinity readily noted in connection with any full account of a mystical experience. In terms of a way to God, it becomes classified as purification, illumination, and union. There has been a hunger for reality - a sense of sin - a desire for salvation - possibly a sense of defeat, and the individual reaches out for something outside of himself. Then there is the desire to identify one's self with reality - a losing of self in Self - an adoration of an objective Being. Finally, if the experience becomes a complete one,

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1. Cf. Bennett; A Philosophical Study of Mysticism, p. 19 ff.

there is the union of the being with Being, an utter surrender to this Being, a oneness with it, and a finding of one's place in the reality sought for.

This unitive state bears results in life, an integration results. To borrow Havelock Ellis' term, "the fruit of experience" is brought back into life. If one were to question a mystic after he had experienced this union, he would describe it in a wholly unsatisfactory manner. To him it becomes indescribable or ineffable. The fruit borne in life as a result proves the actual existence of such an experience. In fact, one of the oft-quoted mystics says that this inability to express the experience in a descriptive way proves a true access to and knowledge of God. "Who knows Him is silent."

If the mystical experience defies description it can be proved possible, then, by its marks. Evelyn Underhill summarily presents these as follows:

1. True mysticism is active and practical, not passive and theoretical. It is an organic life process, a something which the whole self does; not something as to which its intellect holds an opinion.
2. Its aims are wholly transcendental and spiritual. It is in no way concerned with adding to, exploring, re-arranging, or improving anything in the visible Universe. The heart and mind are set wholly on the changeless One.
3. This One is for the mystic, not merely the Reality of all that is, but also a living and personal Object of Love, not an object of exploration.
4. A living union with this One by the mystic way leads to the unitive state.

James adds two characteristics to the experience: a mistic quality, and a transiency which is explainable in the light of Hocking's

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1. Quoted in Royce: The World and the Individual, p. 148.
2. Underhill: Mysticism, p. 96.

law of alternation.

The experience then, aside from its characteristics of action in its three stages of purgative, illuminative and unitive experience, is ineffable, immediate, transcendent, transforming and oscillating.

The experience eventuates in new concepts and outlooks, going beyond metaphysical bounds. Albert Schweitzer becomes a valuable witness to this in his testimony that

"all problems of religion, ultimately, go back to this one; the experience I have of God within myself differs from the knowledge concerning Him which I derive from the world. In the world he appears to me as the mysterious and marvelous creative Force; within me He reveals Himself as ethical Will. In the world, He is impersonal Force; within me He reveals himself as Personality."¹.

This differentiates a mystical experience and philosophy from a pure pantheism, for the personality of God or Absolute Being safeguards it in this respect.

C. An Examination of Mysticism

Before proceeding to the establishment of the values of mysticism its practical and rational validity should be examined. Waterhouse, a psychologist, maintains that one can distinguish psychologically between the true mystics and the psycho-degenerates. So, given a true wholesome mystic, it should be valuable to level at him such questions as "What is the practicality of your belief?" and "What is the rationality of your doctrine?"

1. Its Practicality.

Pratt, in speaking of practical activity, states that the mystic sense is by no means incompatible with this activity. Minds will

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1. Schweitzer: Christianity and the Religions of the World, p. 76.

differ, of course, as to the fringe of consciousness of the Divine to the degree that there are varying types of minds.

Neither does the corporate life prove an insurmountable hurdle to the mystic as some may suppose. Nor indeed is it a hurdle from which the mystic shrinks. For the corporate life gives the mystic a favorable environment in which practise and vision may be joined. It furnishes restrictions and demands to which the mystic must submit, in order that unfettered extravagances might not result. Thus, the solitary experience of the mystic prepares him for the social experience which many times becomes his greatest experience.

Hocking epitomizes the activity of the mystic thoroughly when he says that

"the typical mystic is one to whom action in the world has become more rather than less engaging. What he has gained from his discipline is not disaffection but inner certainty, originality with stability of character, courage, a moral invulnerability which appears to be superior to the positive objects in behalf of which he is courageous."¹

2. Its Rationality.

Rufus Jones claims that mysticism is Christianity at its best. Saissset claims that Christianity, in contrast with the Oriental and Greek religions, is the "sole, complete, and true, self-evident religion".² In seeing the relationship between these two assertions one readily deduces the implication for mysticism. Thus it becomes worthwhile to challenge the rationality of mysticism.

Herman in treating the Meaning and Value of Mysticism makes a significant observation on this point historically. He says that the

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1. Hocking; Types of Philosophy, p. 408.

2. Saissset; Essay on Religious Philosophy, vol. II, p. 26.

best mystics always reflected on their visions and that the most truly inspired passages in mystical literature are the outcome of systematic thinking.^{1.}

The true mystic is not a non-thinker. He uses ideas to refute all mere ideas. He even uses the abstract weapons of Realism to repudiate Realism. To find biographical proof for this we have only to note a Spinoza, who was "a merciless foe of the illusions of common sense" and an Eckhart, "one of the most learned of trained scholastic disputants".^{2.}

D. Values of Mysticism.

A pure descriptive recital fails to satisfy a utilitarian-minded generation; therefore, a discussion of mysticism would be incomplete were it to omit some allusion to the values of mysticism as a creative power with teleological and epistemological contributions, and as a foundation of ethical systems.

As an antecedent of directed creativeness we see mysticism breaking "with ordinary thought, passing as it were to the limit . . . and insisting that the primal purpose of all our finite striving can be accomplished in the presence of a form of Being which is at once the Real and the Good; the final Fact and the absolute Perfection."^{3.}

Thus, the teleological contribution rather goes hand in hand with mysticism as a creative force. It can become a creative force by virtue of its being directed toward a purposive conclusion clearly realized. Significantly enough, the "great moral, religious and artistic insights of history have come in this way. The great founders and innovators of religion seem to have proceeded by this method of mysticism."^{4.}

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1. Cf. Herman: *Meaning and Value of Mysticism*, pp. 249-263.

2. Royce: *The World and the Individual*, p. 177.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

4. Wileman: *Methods of Private Religious Living*, p. 195.

Mysticism does not stop short of claiming a method of gaining knowledge through visions and new insights from which often come solutions to problems. Thus, it has an epistemological implication and inference.

The mystic has been a moral originator and reformer of laws and customs. Most, if not all, of the moral codes of the world have been propounded by mystics. The appreciation of the conscience of man which belongs rightfully to the mystic is a fine background for this.

Thus the mystic has been uncompromising in his assertion that there is an essential worth to life and that he has a contribution to make to it through a system which has been a creative force, has given an ultimate purpose to actions, has revealed a way of attaining knowledge and has aided in the formulation of ethical systems.

Summary

In conclusion, then, mysticism is found to deal with an experience with a personal God, an experience which transcends the human level. Out of this experience can be built a philosophy of life which recognizes the divine essence in man. As a philosophy it takes its place along with idealism as being opposed to realism, and finding the explanation of Reality.

In its experiential features, mysticism can bear the examination of its practicality and rationality as it produces certain life results which make it of value to individual life and corporate relationships.

CHAPTER IV

INDICATIONS OF MYSTICISM IN THE CHIEF EDUCATIONAL WRITINGS OF FROMBEL

CHAPTER IV

INDICATIONS OF MYSTICISM IN THE CHIEF EDUCATIONAL WRITINGS OF FROEBEL

With the intent of evaluating the contribution of Froebel's mysticism in his educational philosophy an analytical treatment of indications of mysticism in his outstanding writings on education will be attempted. It is not to be hoped that a pure type of mystic will be found in Froebel; great thinkers seldom are a true type, unless indeed they become the founders of that new type themselves. This chapter will present him as his chief writings reveal elements of his philosophy.

Although Froebel's works on education are not as extensive as those of many of the other authors of educational classics, his viewpoints and emphases are made sufficiently clear in his principal publications (The Education of Man, Education by Development, and The Mother Play) to furnish adequate source material for a survey of this type. A conscientious attempt will be made not to read meanings into passages or force Froebel into a view which he originally did not intend. To push the mystic too far in interpretation and to betray him into meanings which he did not intend is a constant temptation, and one frequently yielded to by critics.

Froebel's educational philosophy as it is represented in these three volumes is added to and corroborated by the impressions gathered from a reading of his Autobiography and the Reminiscences of Baroness von Marenholtz-Büllow. These five volumes are representative of his essential educational philosophy. They will constitute our reference material.

In order to direct our conception of the basic and underlying phases of Froebel's educational philosophy, two observations made by

Genevieve Watson in her study of the philosophy of Dewey and Froebel, published in thesis form, may be noted. Miss Watson concludes that "Froebel's underlying principles and treatment of human nature are valid and essential to a rich and full interpretation of human life."¹ Further, "it is evident that the whole structure of Froebel's philosophy of education is primarily based on a religious or spiritual conception of life."² With this as a point of attack it becomes our task to discover the indications of mysticism in this philosophy, if indeed there are any.

First of all, a consideration of the above mentioned sources reveals an emphasis in Froebel's works of a life unity, a whole which explains the relationships existing between the trinity of humanity, nature, and God. By a study of these relationships with both their background and projection in educational aims, it is hoped that this "life union" which is the outgrowth of his law of inner connection will be made plain.

A. In His Concept of a "Life Unity".

As Froebel sought from boyhood throughout life for the connection between God, nature, and himself, so he sought to interpret in his educational philosophy a unification of the universe. He determined that his educational doctrine should be such that the child taught by his theory should attain a harmonious development. He finally comprehended a life whole from which everything else could radiate. There was a unity for the trinity (humanity, nature, God) in the workings of an eternal law which states that "in all things there lives and reigns the Divine Unity, God. All things live and have their being in and through the Divine Unity, in and through God."³

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1. Watson: Philosophy of Dewey and Froebel, p. 11.
2. Ibid., p. 16.
3. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 2.

Thus the life unity is envisaged by this law on which the science, theory and practise of his education became wholly dependent.

In consequence of this basic perception Froebel went further than merely insisting that the nature of man found its true activity only when emphatic expression was given the spiritual. He insisted on specificity and concreteness of the spiritual in its essence - a unity in life, a correlating of all around one. Hughes in his volume Educational Laws says that "Froebel meant more by unity than any other writer either before or since his time."¹ To examine this whole which circumscribes his educational philosophy, will give an approach to the subsequent examination of the various relationships of life.

He felt that "each individual being as it is in appearance a whole in itself is also, in accordance with its nature, a part of the uniform life of creation, therefore at the same time a part and a whole - not only feels itself as a part-whole and lives as such, but also shows in its separate existence the life of the whole world and of all Nature."²

Thus, if his system of education was to serve its desired purpose he would have it enable the human mind to "bridge the gap between the material and the intellectual, between the real and the ideal, the universe and God".³ The mind would see the connection, the origination and the unity of things which would abolish dualistic confusion. He realized that life itself as seen everyday presents such contradictory aspects that to the mind not trained to find in all things a center around which

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1. Hughes: Educational Laws, p. 5.

2. Froebel: Education by Development, pp. 23-24.

3. Ehrenholz-Billow: Reminiscences of Froebel, p. 40.

all may revolve, everything seems disparate and disintegrating. Froebel thus started in his solution from the idealistic philosophy of Kant, Schelling, Hegel, and Fichte who had tried to find the explanation of reality and of life "in the fundamental unity of existence of nature and of man in the absolute spirit".^{1.} To Froebel, this spiritual reality became the source of all existing nature and humanity. Only through an inner connectedness such as this was the explanation and approximation to reality found. The realization of it in the individual life constituted the aim of education.

There is a conscious wistfulness in the child life for a share in this part-whole. Froebel could trace even in the child's desire to learn to write and read an effort to identify itself with the great life-whole. The child feels itself a "self-poised whole and a part depending on the great whole or totality of life which it perceives around it, and which it divines in itself."^{2.}

Froebel felt justified in basing his entire educational system on this feeling on the part of the child. He found in it the "foundation, the starting point . . . the germinating point, the heart and fountain of true, developing educating civilization of man in general."^{3.}

There are observable results of such a system. He found that "joyful and unfettered work springs from the conception of things as one whole, and forms a life and a lifework in harmony with the constitution of the universe and resting firmly upon it."^{4.} Speaking even more broadly

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1. Monroe: History of Education, p. 382.

2. Froebel: Education by Development, p. 4.

3. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

4. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 70.

and comprehensively he says that

"the good results of all true education depend on the careful notice, fostering, development, strengthening, and cultivation of this feeling on the part of the child that he is a whole, and yet also a part of all life; and on the avoidance of every violation, clouding, disturbance of it. It is the point of union of all things, and of each thing which is to be attained through education. Indeed it, singly and alone, first makes possible a true human, all-sided, life-limited education."¹

However, our attention need not simply be drawn to the positive values of unity but also to the minus or negative values in the lack of unity. While at Yverdon with Pestalozzi, Froebel found this lack of unity in his educational system. He remarked about it in this fashion:

"Where there is the germ of disunion, where the whole is split up, even sometimes into contradictory parts, and where an absolute reconciling unity is wanting, where what connection there may be is derived rather from outward casual ties than from inner necessary union, the whole system must of necessity dig its own grave, and become its own murderer."²

A belief in the positive value of unity - oneness - in the whole as uniting the parts is thereby forced on one by this indictment.

Now let us turn to the specific concepts involved in and virtually verifying this life-unity or life-whole as it finds itself articulated in the relation of

God to Nature



Nature to Man



Man to God

God becomes in this scheme of things the true Alpha and Omega; and as 3.
God is absolute unity, everything therefore becomes relatively a unity.

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1. Froebel: Education by Development, p. 5.
2. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 60.
3. Cf. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 152

B. In his Aims of Education.

All of these relationships found themselves synthesized in the aims of education and of life which Froebel set up. A parenthetical inquiry into these aims should precede the treatment of the relationships themselves. Froebel shared Pestalozzi's view that education had a distinct regenerative function in society, yet for what end specifically in terms of the individual one must discover in his statement of aims.

"The destiny and life work of all things," says Froebel, "is to unfold their essence, hence their divine being, and therefore, the Divine Unity itself, to reveal God in their external and transient being."¹

There is an imperative here for man to become conscious of his essence and to reveal it. The educative process unfolds this essence, for the aim of instruction is to give the pupil an insight into the unity of things; into the central place of God in being and life; into an insight, in short, that gives him an understanding of how to act and live in accord with the consciousness of his destiny. Education as a whole through instruction and training makes clear the fact that "man and nature proceed from God and are conditioned by him, that both have their being in God."² The divine essence in man would have little meaning apart from that origin of man and nature. Having established this origin one can validate man's destiny of representing the inner law of Divine Unity.

Education should lead the individual to a clear conception of himself; to a peace with nature and to a unity with God; it should eventuate in a faithful, pure, inviolate and hence holy life.³

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1. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 2.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

3. Ibid., p. 4.

The responsibility of the school as the institutionalized guardian of these aims unmistakably lies in "giving prominence to the ever living unity that is in all things"¹ rather than teaching and communicating to the pupils a fund of knowledge of things. It is to the educator that the privilege and duty comes of "seeing and perceiving" the divine essence in whatever is human, tracing the nature of man to God and seeking to exhibit both within one another in life."²

In visioning the end result in human life, Froebel has pithily expressed the position the schools and instruction are to assume when he says that

"as spiritual and material beings, we are to become thinking, conscious, intelligent (self consciously feeling and perceiving) efficient human beings. We should first seek to cultivate our powers, our spirit, as received from God; to represent the divine in our lives, knowing that thereby all that is earthly will, too, have its claims satisfied. We are to grow in wisdom and understanding with God and men, in human and divine things. We should know that we are and ought to be and to live in that which is our Father's. We should know that we in our earthly being and all earthly things are a temple of the living God. We should know that we are to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect; and in accordance with this knowledge we should act and live. To this knowledge the school is to lead us; for this the school and instruction are needed; in accordance with this aim they should be constituted."³

This knowledge though one, is threefold in its character; a knowledge of self in all of its relationships; a knowledge of God, the cause, condition and source of all being; and the knowledge of nature and the material world as originating and depending on the Eternal Spirit.⁴

C. In the Basic Life Relationships.

Behind this knowledge must lie concepts of relationships, however.

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1. Froebel: Education of Man, pp. 134-135.

2. Ibid., p. 18.

3. Ibid., pp. 136-137.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 133.

A discussion of just what these are may be undertaken in the following order:

First, Nature and Man, since the cosmological relationship is one of the first of which man is conscious and with which he is concerned;

Second, Nature and God, since the very character of creation must be known in relation to its Creator;

Third, Man and Man, since the human social relationship is later found to form the basis of the relationship of

God and Man in the fourth place - which constitutes the highest relationship to be effected.

It is manifestly impossible to compartmentalize these four relationships completely. But for the purpose of analysis a division is made and any consequent redundancy and repetition in treatment can be understood in the light of this difficulty.

1. Man and Nature

a. Character of Nature

In order to understand a relationship, close or distant, between man and nature, the character of the physical universe, its function, and its government should be analyzed before an attempt is made to discover the implications of its relationship to man.

In the first place, then, what concept of nature exists in man's mind as to its character? There are two possible aspects: its inherent goodness and its unity. As to the first, man's reasoning can follow the logical order of recognizing behind creation a Creator whose nature is good. If all created things bear within themselves the Creator's nature,

then the character of nature must also be good.^{1.} The very fact that God chose to reveal Himself in the finite, necessitated using finite and transitory material. Our attitude toward the character of nature must be carefully wrought out, for "whoever, then, considers that which is finite, material, physical, as in itself bad, thereby expresses contempt for creation, nature, as such - nay, he actually blasphemes God."^{2.}

This first characteristic of goodness is further borne out by the second concept that nature possesses unity within itself. We find that the same law operates in nature as operates in life in that "all stands in constant, inner coherence, in the highest vital coherence which leads to God, indeed even unites with God."^{3.} This is proven by the facts that every natural phenomenon has its necessary foundation and consequence and that nature itself is the manifestation of God by fact and deed.^{4.}

b. Function of Nature

Nature may be said to function in a three-fold capacity: as a revelation of a Creator, as a revelation of the character of the Creator, and as a foundation of human education.

(1) To reveal the Creator.

Fundamentally, nature fulfills its purpose of existence, the identical purpose of all creation, that of manifesting and revealing God, its Creator.^{5.} Creation makes necessary a creator. This relationship is one of the necessary ones to make early with the child. From the very bounty of God's revelation of Himself this is not difficult for

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1. Froebel; Education of Man, p. 23.

2. Ibid., p. 120.

3. Froebel; Education by Development, p. 242.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 242.

5. Cf. Ibid., p. 242 and Froebel; Education of Man, p. 151.

"The child full early may perceive,
In everything that lives,
The inner presence of a power,
That for existence strives.
Be it in color or in form,
Or fragrance of the flower,
All are to existence called,
By one directing power."¹.

(2) To Reveal the Character of the Creator.

Not only is there a revelation of the Creator himself as the fact behind the universe, but there is the manifestation of His nature. One attempts now to prove by the character of the universe the character of God, just as in the previous section the character of God proved the character of the universe. Nature interpreted in the large proclaims itself to be "good",

"but good, in its completeness and perfection as it appears in the universe, as the harmony of the world, includes in itself the beautiful, the true and the right. Therefore, goodness in itself, and, as it were, complete in itself, must necessarily be the nature of the Creator of the world and of the universe. Nature, therefore, makes known the being of God; it renders his nature clear and perceptible to us. Thus Nature, being in itself single and also living by its own power, shows and testifies that, in all its rest, it is living; with all its changing existence it is existing; with all its manifoldness, it is, in itself, single, and is thus the complete expression of the goodness of its Creator."².

(3) To Constitute a Foundation of Education.

The phrase "education by nature" should be construed to mean in Froebelian terminology making "nature in its eternal laws of unfolding and life, placed in it by God Himself, the foundation of human and childhood education."³. More will be said about this subsequently. The main

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1. Froebel: The Mother Play, p. 5.
2. Froebel: Education by Development, pp. 21-22.
3. Froebel: Education by Development, p. 287.

emphasis here is that

"as the world of art is the invisibly-visible revelation and expression of the spirit of man, and thus becomes an invisibly-visible kingdom of the human spirit, so, too, nature is the invisibly-visible revelation of the spirit of God, and becomes an invisibly-visible kingdom of God",^{1.}

reflecting Himself and His character.

c. Government of Nature.

When original sources are pondered over, relationships of varying degrees of significance and emphasis are discovered. Our educator found that "Nature and man have their origin in One and the same eternal Being, and their development takes place in accordance with the same laws, only at different stages".^{2.} Froebel feels that this identity in law lies in the identity in Creator and source. He expresses this viewpoint clearly in his Education by Development in saying that

"both the laws of Nature and the spirit's laws of thought reciprocally explain, confirm, and complete one another because they have their common final cause in the original nature and original life in the eternal and single goodness - God."^{3.}

Whenever two things not only originate from the same source, but also are subject to the same laws of government, a relationship springs up by virtue of this very thing.

d. Results of Relationship of Man and Nature.

(1) Imitation of Nature in Development.

Man goes beyond a passive observation of nature's forms to the effectiveness of her workings. Thus he finds himself following nature's methods for his own development and culture. In the child's play this

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1. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 162.

2. Ibid., p. 161.

3. Froebel: Education by Development, pp. 27-28.

is first evident, as he realizes that "the earliest natural formations, the fixed forms of crystals seem as if driven together by some secret power external to themselves".^{1.} The first activities of nature are imitated gladly and naturally by the boy in his first games. In the one he learns to understand the other.

The very life-unity, life-whole development of the individual means a development according to all of life. Thus, the life pattern of Nature, treating the smallest seed and the smallest plant like the whole world-process, is exemplary.^{2.}

(2) Internal Effects.

This identification with nature through observation of her laws of unfolding and development leads to effects in the individual life which are worthy of note at this point. These are given expression as specific traits and as general results. In one section of Education by Development living

"unrestrained and undisturbed in this high coherence of Nature and life gives to each created thing in its degree the finest fruits of life; it gives to man the highest goods of the soul - serenity of spirit, peace of heart, and joyousness of life."^{3.}

With the background of his own love for and communion with Nature, Froebel writes, "Every contact with nature elevates, strengthens and purifies."^{4.}

As far as the education of the child is concerned, "to view the child as united to nature gives security, conformity to law, recognition and insight, firmness, applicability, dexterity and extent."^{5.}

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1. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 78.
2. Cf. Froebel: Education by Development, p. 9.
3. Ibid., p. 245.
4. Froebel: Autobiography, p. 83.
5. Froebel: Education by Development; p. 56.

(3) Leading to Union with God.

Possibly the greatest value for our subject, however, is the religious preparation for union with God which nature study affords.

"It leads the child to himself, to the development and use of the totality of his capacities and powers, to the recognition and fostering of his nature, to the connection and union of the great whole of the universe and of life, to God who is by and in Himself good, as well as to the history of the inner and outer development of humanity."¹

Without this preparation in childhood Froebel is certain there is no true religion and no union with God possible.

As nature study leads one into the presence of the Creator and of the "three-fold kingdom of God" (the visible, the invisible, and the invisibly-visible) to an acknowledgment of the kingdom and an opening up of life to it, one finds a "peace which we seek within and without, which from the first moment of self-consciousness we are driven to seek and pursue, even at the expense of our own life, of our external possessions, of our external welfare, whatever its name".² This checks accurately with Pratt, a psychologist, in his remarks about the feeling of unification and of the inner peace which follows this conception, if acted upon.

Union with nature leads to union with God, and is possibly one of the chief requisites or aids to this union experience. Clearly one need only mention the value of such, without urging the importance of early union with nature that the child may establish the most intimate connection with the Original Cause, the Creator of all things in His creative nature, particularly.

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1. Froebel: Education by Development, p. 299.

2. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 182.

2. Nature and God.

It seems natural to turn for our next analysis to nature and God, inasmuch as man is the mediating union between these two. There was also the positive assertion of the revealing of God through Nature, and of the divine essence in nature. What then is the relation between these two? Are they separate, unified, of the same essence, of the same nature? Having answered these questions we shall be in a position to continue further about man, inhabiting nature as he does in an environmental relation as well as being led to union with God through nature.

It is on the point of the relationship of nature and God that Froebel's philosophy approximates a near-panteism. In speaking of the relation of the heavenly constellations to law and of man's acts to law, he finds a single law of God - though expressing itself in a thousand ways, yet it is one, for God is Himself the law.¹ However, he does not yield in this to the accusation of panteism, stating that he feels a trinity has displaced the outward inseparable unity.

Moreover, to him the world is not God's body, dwelt in by Him as a house. Rather

"the spirit of God dwells and lives in nature, produces, fosters, and unfolds everything, as the common life principle. In like manner the spirit of God dwells in His work, produces, fosters and preserves it. As the spirit of the artist is found again in his masterpieces, so must we find God's spirit in His works."²

In carrying the artist figure still further, he says

"all things that the living spirit creates, produces, and represents must have impressed and implanted in them the nature of this spirit, must bear the imprint of the seal of this spirit in every part of the product."³

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1. Cf. Ehrenholtz-Bulow: Reminiscences of Friedrich Froebel, pp. 28-29.

2. Ibid., p. 29.

3. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 165.

3. Man and Man.

It will be desirable to think of this section as an interpolation between our consideration of Nature and Man, and Man and God. Even the conception of man will be reserved for the following section, the limits of this relationship being reached for our purposes when the man-man relation is seen to be the basis on which the God-man relation can be built and experienced.

Placing man between nature and God symbolizes the position he occupies as mediator between these two. As a human being his body connects him with Nature and his spirit with God. Both his spirit and his body unite him with humanity. Thus positionally man is closely connected with the now familiar trinity.

And building on this, Froebel establishes the importance of the human relation as an open door to the spiritual union and the spiritual apprehension of God. He unqualifiedly says that

"only in the measure in which we fully comprehend the purely spiritual, intrinsically human relations, and are faithful to them in life, even in the smallest details, can we attain a full knowledge and conception of the relations between God and man, apprehending them so deeply, vividly, and truly that every yearning of our whole being is thereby gratified, or at least clearly interpreted, and is transformed from an ever-ungratified longing into a steadily fruitful aspiration."¹

But not only for our own harmonious development individually do we bear human responsibilities. We as individuals become a part of a group - a corporate body which must fully reveal God. We must realize

"how important it is early to plant the germ of both inner and outward harmony in every child; for earthly existence cannot be long enough to develop our life in all its manifold aspects; yet we may in a certain measure do so, when we contemplate and admire in others what in

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1. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 145.

their circumstances we might have realized in ourselves. No man can manifest all diversities of gifts in himself; but all men, each unfolding some of them, and appreciating, recognizing himself in others, shall exhibit them in a harmonious whole. It takes the whole race of mankind, loving each other, to make the image of God in its fulness."¹.

A parallel is drawn in our earthly relations with an earthly father. A true relationship with a true father presupposes on the part of the son a progressively developing nature like that of the father, all of which implies much as the son makes a harmonious life with his esteemed father his chief concern. It goes one step further than this again in entailing a spiritual accord between father and son as a result of shared views and hopes.

The success with which this earthly relation is met does more for the individuals involved than furnishing them merely with vitalized relationships. They become the very fiber of our God-man relationships. They are the only key for the "recognition and apprehension of the relations of God to man and of man to God".² Froebel would express it thus:

"We would be children of God, and are not yet children of our fathers, of our parents. God is to be our Father, and we are so far from being true fathers to our children. We would have an insight into the divine, and we leave unheeded the human relations that lead to such insight."³.

In a like vein he again says,

"We are ignorant of our nature and of the nature of humanity, and yet we would know God and Jesus. We imagine that we already know our own nature and the nature of humanity, and therefore, fail to know God and Jesus. We separate God and man, man and Jesus, and yet would come to God and Jesus."⁴.

4. Man and God.

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1. Froebel: The Mother Play, pp. 177-178.

2. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 145.

3. Ibid., p. 146.

4. Ibid., p. 146.

a. Character of Man.

Having an approach through an adequate conception of the human relationship, it is now fitting to discuss man's rapport with God. What is the nature of this human being whom we have treated thus far as comprehending within himself diversity (nature), and individuality (humanity), and now unity (God)? Primarily, he is a manifestation and revelation of the Divine Spirit in human form. He comes to earth with an essence of the divine in him (his innermost being) and with a potential nature (that into which he will grow to be).

Man in his early boyhood feels a spiritual self of his own within him; he feels vaguely that this spiritual self has its origin in a higher, Supreme Being, on whom he is dependent even now. He conceives of the whole world order, as far as his knowledge goes concerning this order, as being originated and sustained by this Supreme Being. The outer manifestations of the boy life indicate the presence of this inner Spirit. During his school years the boy feels vaguely and wistfully the power of his inner nature, wishing to find the true key to the spiritual nature of things, to experience God in reality. He is anticipating something, with a desire to understand things clearly.¹

This feeling and longing on the part of the boy impinges closely on the first stage of the mystic experience in the longing for something. He is a "spiritual unity", a "spark of the divine". Froebel describes the situation in these words:

"For the boy at this age who been led naturally, however feebly and
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1. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 137:

unconsciously, seeks, in fact, only the unity that unites all things, the absolute living Unity, the source of all things - God; not a God made and fashioned by human wit, but Him who is ever near the heart and mind, near the living spirit, and who, therefore, may be known in spirit and in truth, and who alone can be thus approached. In his maturity the boy is satisfied only when he has found Him to whom he has been drawn by indefinable yearning, because only then will he have found himself.⁵¹

b. Nature of the Life-Unity.

Thus, a child naturally reared has within himself his own spiritual being which reaches out and yearns for the unity of life without; he also possesses an early presentiment of the existence of this unity. One is curious to know what sort of a God, an Absolute, or a Life Unity Froebel wished his children to come to know as He integrated and unified their lives. An examination of this point reveals him to be both Theocentric and Christocentric, believing in God as the center of life; and believing in Jesus as the mediation between man and God. Some of the noun forms and adjectives used by Froebel in describing and postulating this Supreme Being would be illuminating on this point. He is described as Life's eternal source, the heavenly power, ultimate source of all life, God our Father, one directing power, Giver of life directing power, - in short, He is the center, the only center of reality in life, a personal God.

c. Results of Man-God Relationship.

Just as we inquired concerning the exact relationship between nature and God, so we can ask Froebel to define the relation here between man and God.

(1) Recognition of God as Father.

For the sake of clearness and precision of expression we quote

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1. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 137.

him directly in respect to the thing man must recognize in this relation:

"If man consciously and clearly recognizes that his spiritual self proceeds from God, that it is born in God and from God, that it is originally one with God, and that consequently he is in a state of continuous dependence on God, as well as in a state of continuous and uninterrupted community with God; if he finds his salvation, his peace, his joy, his destiny, his life (which is the genuine and only true life as such) and the source of his being in this eternally necessary dependence of his self on God, in the clearness of this knowledge, in living and constant obedience to this knowledge, in all he does, in a life, indeed, fully unified with this knowledge and conviction - he truly, and in the full sense of the words, recognizes in God his Father. If he acknowledges himself to be a child of God, and lives in accordance with this, he has the Christian religion, the religion of Jesus."¹.

(2) Union with God.

Now when unification with God is spoken of it does not mean a material union as far as space and time are concerned. Humanly, we experience the feeling of kinship and unitive moments with friends or family who are miles away. So the human spirit is to God what the thought is to the thinker. Originally the two are unified and one. But the man is not God any more than the thought is the thinker, although they are basically united and one.² When the time of union occurs man feels that "through God and in God, by whom all is which exists, I also live and abide in the manifoldness of the phenomena of my life".³

(a) Through Creativity.

There is one impulse or ability in man which links him definitely and closely with God. I refer to his creative ability. Not only does this link him with God, but it is so important that it is the necessary means of identification with God. This phenomenon in a child is known as activity. We find the child when young

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1. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 144.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 145.

3. Froebel: Education by Development, p. 267.

"proving himself by his creative activity, which is conditioned in the innermost parts of his being, as it originates in the inscrutable Eternal, in the Original Cause and Creator of all things, to be like his Original Cause in that he is a creating, creative thing."¹.

True creativity on the part of man is not motivated by any utilitarian purposes. He expresses his inner, spiritual, divine essence outwardly in order that he may the more clearly recognize his inward nature. This very instinct on the part of the child indeed requires careful fostering. The more he creates and develops this side of his nature the more readily and correctly will he later be able to interpret himself, nature and God - life in the whole, in fact.

Educators must recognize that they by

"early, continuously and symmetrically developing and cultivating man's creative power in conformity to law, raise him to the true dignity of human nature, to fitness for life, to accordance with Nature, to genuine all-sided union of life, consequently union with God - therefore, to true peace, to pure joy and to constant freedom."².

(b) Resulting in a "godlikeness".

This union with God approaches a "godlikeness", for when God created things in his own image, He meant that man should bring forth like God. This goes so far as to imply that

"His spirit, the spirit of man should hover over the shapeless and move it that it may take shape and form, a distinct being and life of its own . . . we become truly godlike in diligence and industry, . . . thereby we represent the inner in the outer, that we give body to spirit, and form to thought, visible becomes invisible."³.

This godlikeness should be the highest aim of the individual. As God Himself develops things in ever-increasing spirals in His world, so the individual strives toward this goal. It becomes for the true mystic the unitive stage, the highest ecstasy.

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1. Froebel: Education by Development, p. 58.
2. Froebel: Education by Development, p. 65.
3. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 31.

It means the union with reality. It all can be summed up in Froebel's emphasis on the "law of connection". Because man is created and a creator he is asked to act as God acts in his creative activity.

The essence of the mysticism in Froebel's writings is well expressed in two stanzas of his Mother Play in which the Inner life is felt and a divine union is desired.

I

"There lurks within the child a hidden feeling,
That he lives not in this life alone.
He fancies forms and voices round him stealing
That are strange and foreign to his own.
A new degree of life he has begun,
The genuine call of life his ear has won.
Have care, then, for the little child so bright
Let him not follow a delusive light,
And not entirely in the outward live,
But let the inner life its impulse give."¹

II

"We all thy children are: oh, let one love
Unite us all with thee in realms above."²

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1. Froebel: The Mother Play, p. 129.
2. Ibid., p. 11.

CHAPTER V

AN EVALUATION OF FROEBEL'S MYSTICISM

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Findings become valueless unless interpreted. This interpretation of Froebel's mysticism does not claim to be a complete one for his philosophy, even in its mystical elements. The evaluations and comments presented in this chapter are to be considered part of the whole study only, being based particularly on the findings of the preceding chapter, in the light of Chapter III, especially.

In general one can place Froebel in his mysticism by a classification. Further than that it will be desirable to evaluate first the dangers of his system and then the values.

A. Classification of Froebel's Mysticism.

One of the first things noted about a mystic is his degree of belief and experience - whether he be of the mild, medium, or radical type. Froebel will surely have to be classed as one of the mild mystics. Of these Pratt says that

"the expressions of the milder type of mystics when analyzed often seem to be hardly more than affirmations of their belief in the intercourse between God and man, or in some other theological or philosophical position."¹

Surely Froebel presents no one single experience of his own in mystical insight to which he relates his whole life history. His sense of unity with God became one of philosophical interconnection rather than experiential ecstasy which yielded to the "law of alternation" of which Hocking speaks which seems to be operative in the case of true, radical mystics. Neither has he made his Autobiography sufficiently full of mystic states

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1. Pratt: Religious Consciousness, p. 341.

aside from his consciousness of nature and of God within him as a divine essence, being lifted out of himself in worship of a personal God, to be classed as a moderate mystic. One feels justified in the light of his emphasis on a doctrine or metaphysical explanation as over against a true experiential ineffability in classifying him as a mild type of mystic.

He is also Theocentric and Christocentric, allying himself definitely with the Christian point of view and accepting Jesus Christ as a life ideal and standard. He takes Christianity and gives it the mystical interpretation of a unified whole.

Probably one of the outstanding characteristics of a mystic is his practicality. The true fourteenth century mystic was of the ethereal type, a reality-shrinking personality, one finding in his mystical experience an escape from life. With Froebel his religious experience, interpreted mystically, becomes an attack on life. This is borne out by his coupling his religious tenets with an institution. It is said of George Fox that his Inner Light might have burned more brightly and with a truer light had it been subject to the limitations of a lamp. One has the feeling about Froebel that his constant practical activity kept him from going off on a tangent as the result of any particular religious experience. He was seeking in his religious experience only the solution to the problems of the universe and of all mankind. He found the working out of these in an educational system. Furthermore, Froebel, to my knowledge, never labeled himself as a mystic. But he did spiritualize all of his work. Jones says that "God

"God reveals himself in many ways and any way that lets His life break through and form the atmosphere and spirit of a village, a church, a school, a college, a Sunday School or a home is a revelation of God, and the person, who is in the same sense the fresh,

present day organ of the Life of God, is just so far a practical mystic."¹. One cannot read the "Reminiscences" of his friend, Baroness Marenholtz-Bulow, without feeling that Froebel was this type of a man in his work and with his friends.

To Froebel, the satisfaction of an experience with the Divine Unity was not enough. He found therein a challenge to go out and to give to the world his contribution, to "give men to themselves." To quote directly on this point will serve to establish him as a practical mystic. He says,

"Religion without industry, without work, is liable to be lost in empty dreams, worthless visions, idle fancies. Similarly, work without religion degrades man into a beast of burden, a machine. Work and religion must be simultaneous; for God the eternal, has been creating from all eternity."².

As to the question of subjective or objective mysticism we can conveniently compare him with Tauler and Suso, the former a philosopher intensely interested in others social welfare, while the latter was entirely taken up with his own revelation of and relation to God. Froebel, though introspective, would follow Tauler more completely, to become an objective type.

Before turning to the values and weaknesses of his system more specifically, mention should be made of some of the outstanding points of the true mystic experience. Some of these are answerable by the explanation that Froebel was promulgating a metaphysical doctrine and educational method in his Education of Man and Education by Development as well as the Mother Plays more particularly than he was speaking of an experience which the child or the man must have. He would set the stage for such by an underlying philosophy of life. However, mention can properly be made here of his not suggesting the "Via Negativa," one of the salient marks of the mystic experience. Froebel dwells on the positive angle more than the negative one.

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1. Jones: New Studies in Mystical Religion, p.202.
2. Froebel: Education of Man, p.35.

The person is searching after God as he attempts to realize the divine essence within him in unity with the Divine Unity of the whole. Thus Froebel does not have the child begin in a moment of defeat to perceive this reality, though there is this indefinable longing for something, even in the young boy.

Thus, we do not find Froebel suggesting a transiency to his unitive experience with God, since it becomes something different than the ecstatic experience of the contemplative mystic. For Froebel it becomes a full realization, albeit an ever-progressive and developing realization, of the individual's place in the whole of life - and a continuous unity with the Eternal when there is that realization that the will of the Eternal is being worked out through the individual. Froebel's own moments of aesthetic delight in nature are insights rather than ends in themselves. Psychologically this yields to healthy analysis.

Philosophically, Froebel has presented a system coming directly out of life itself; he has so inscribed it on life that it does not become something extraneous to life, but a unification of life through the application of an eternal law, the law of connection.

It seems that Froebel, then, can safely be called a mild, practical mystic who was not only Theocentric but also Christocentric. His experience was of the objective type in general, in distinction from a subjective type. He does not yield to classification under any of the apparently essential elements of the ~~pure~~ mystic's experience of transiency and of ineffability concerning the third stage of an experience in which the individual feels himself united with God. Finally he has addressed himself to a system which is life-centered.

B. The Dangers of Froebel's System.

Along with the popularity of the concept of the "law of connection" as far as Froebel is concerned goes the concept of "unfolding". His tenet of a passive education in the light of this unfolding development could easily be carried to a dangerous extreme. Doubtless, Froebel in his own theory and practice struck a happy medium, but for the modern educator it requires the stimulating diversity of opinions of modern theories to counterbalance the extreme.

Because Froebel has been termed a "mystical pantheist" it would seem necessary to mention this as one of the weak points of his system. He has explained the position he holds to be one divorced from pure pantheism, explaining reality rather in terms of a trinity. This accusation of pantheism will always be leveled at those trying to establish a pure monistic philosophy. Some mystics embrace a pantheistic view in order to approximate a unity more completely. Froebel felt he had satisfactorily explained and solved the problem for himself, however.

Compayré criticizes the "metaphysical divagations" of this educator and philosopher.¹ With this is connected his use of symbolism which is surely carried further than it need be carried. One is reminded of Kingsley's attitude that all "symmetrical natural objects are types of some spiritual truth or existence".² R. L. Hettleship of Oxford concurs in this that "everything we experience is an element, and only an element, in fact . . . that in being what it is it is symbolic of something

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1. Compayré: History of Pedagogy, p. 447.

2. Quoted by Dean Inge in Introduction to Lyra Mystica by Albertson, XXVIII.

more."¹. For Froebel this carries him off into realms of fantasy. Some of his interpretations become obscure and very hard to understand. There is a place for symbols in the world, assuredly, for this material universe without symbols would be a cold, barren place. But in the interpretation, and in the creation of symbols a sane, sensible use should be made of them.

The method of unity might be considered by some to be wrong in that the essence of the divine in the individual seeks the Divine Unity rather than the Divine Unity seeking out the individual in a more thorough revelation of Divine grace. Ruysbroeck, a Flemish mystic, would take issue with Froebel in this aspect of his belief. It leaves the impression that man is searching after God, that haply he might find Him; while to some theological tendencies, notably the Barthian movement in modern Germany, would be credited the emphasis on divine revelation to man, and an entrance into reality from above down, rather than from below striving up. The mention of these two viewpoints will suffice to make the criticism clear as a warning against unanalysed acceptance of the doctrine of Divine Unity and individual divine essence, unified in this way.

Care should thus be exercised in the acceptance of some of the doctrines of Froebel without serious reflection and consideration of their implications. Among these are his theory of "unfolding", his leanings toward a pantheistic viewpoint, his wide spread use of symbolism and his method of securing unity with the Divine.

C. Values of Froebel's Mysticism with Special

Reference to its Educational Significance.

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1. Quoted by Dean Inge in Introduction to *Lyra Mystica* by Albertson, XXVI.

Mysticism is rich in educational significance because of its inherent nature, that of the worth of the individual. The statement and restatement of aims of education take this primary concept into consideration, and the longevity of the aim depends in large part on the value placed on the individual, his original nature, potential of development, and end result visioned.

It will only be necessary to list a set of propositions in which the value of mysticism in its educational significance is pointed out to furnish proof of this.

1. In the light of the definition of education as being the "increasing realization of the temporal and eternal values of life"¹, mysticism postulates an Absolute, an Ultimate, an Eternal Being around which all else of creation moves, from whom they originate, and in whom they live.
2. The knowledge of the individual revealing and conducting himself "in and as unity, in and as individuality, in and as manifoldness in ever continuing diversity"² gives a distinct and unmistakable purpose to life. The teleological contribution of mysticism is one of its outstanding values. In education this will set a goal so that the process does not eclipse the end in view.
3. Just as Froebel clearly felt his mission in life, so do other mystics feel the destiny of their lives. The great leaders of history have been men of destiny.

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1. Horne: Democratic Philosophy of Education, p. 101.
2. Froebel: Education of Man, p. 160.

4. Just as a monistic system of philosophy (which mysticism is) destroys dualism and contradictories, so an integrating center for life unifies personality.
5. It is in the creative activity of the individual that life is most nearly unified with that of the Creator's. The recognition of creativity in modern education indicates the current trend.
6. God becomes the ultimate rather than man, causing a revolt against humanism and naturalism.
7. The idealistic aim of mysticism is to unfold the divine essence in the individual.
8. For the individual, mysticism means the following:
 - a. An understanding of self,
 - b. A peace with nature,
 - c. A union with God.
9. Religion is made one of the realities of life, freeing itself from unfortunate and limiting dogmas and creeds, raising itself to a level of any subject that needs to be thought through from a philosophical background.
10. The external and the internal are harmonized, leading to complete integration.
11. Practical activity is recognized as an integral part of one's experience.
12. The efficiency of life tends to be increased.
13. A broad world view is furnished.
14. A complete human life is the unit of consideration throughout.
15. Confidence that the divine principle is identical with one's self and that direct access to truth is possible challenges the best that is in one.

Mysticism has not had a chance to exert its full educational influence yet. The present day with its desire for action, naturalism and secularism sometimes spurns mysticism. But if the proper interpretation were given to a practical, workable, real system of mystical monotheism, a new education might become a reality for this generation. One would want to heed the dangers of Froebel's system, but at the same time give his theories due credit for their rationality and practicality, being willing to recognize and utilize their educational significance.

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