

teacher preparation included only a superficial acquaintance with Froebel. Those who were assigned to teach kindergarten did depend upon didactic use of these mass manufactured materials and their accompanying manuals, but this was not the authentic kindergarten (ED 299031 PS 01749—"Kindergarten Teacher Training in the United States from 1870 to 1920").

To give but one example of how misunderstandings have come about, the Snail Game was developed by Froebel as a transition technique to calm children down after vigorous outdoor play. They joined hands and coiled the line around the teacher, then uncoiled and went indoors. It was in the Jarvis translation of *Pedagogics of the Kindergarten* that the mystical symbolism of a circle was added. Archival collections and museums in the former East Germany show clearly that up to his death in 1852 Froebel was still experimenting with innovations like the sand-box, the zither, and the playthings that later became known as the Gifts and Occupations. His underlying belief in joyous self-learning and self-realization, with teachers becoming facilitators instead of disciplinarians, was announced in 1863 and never wavered. It is a philosophy that seems to elude most contemporary educators and historians.

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To the editor:

I would like to thank Dorothy W. Hewes for her comments on a portion of my article, "Avoiding a 'Hothouse System of Education': Nineteenth-Century Early Childhood Education from the Infant Schools to the Kindergartens" (Fall 1992). She reminds us that Froebel's system was often distorted as it entered the American mainstream, and that Elizabeth Peabody, usually portrayed as the patron saint of the American kindergarten, was in some ways responsible for this distortion. Most educators and physicians, as I demonstrated in the article, adopted the Peabodian version of Froebel, and upon it based their endorsements of the kindergarten's salutary effects on mind, body, and spirit. Nevertheless, it is worth making the distinction between the pure and diluted Froebelianisms that competed for a place in America's kindergartens.

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Editorial note: Letters are printed verbatim.