

The History of Play

Keith Sawyer

Play and Development

<http://artsci.wustl.edu/~play>











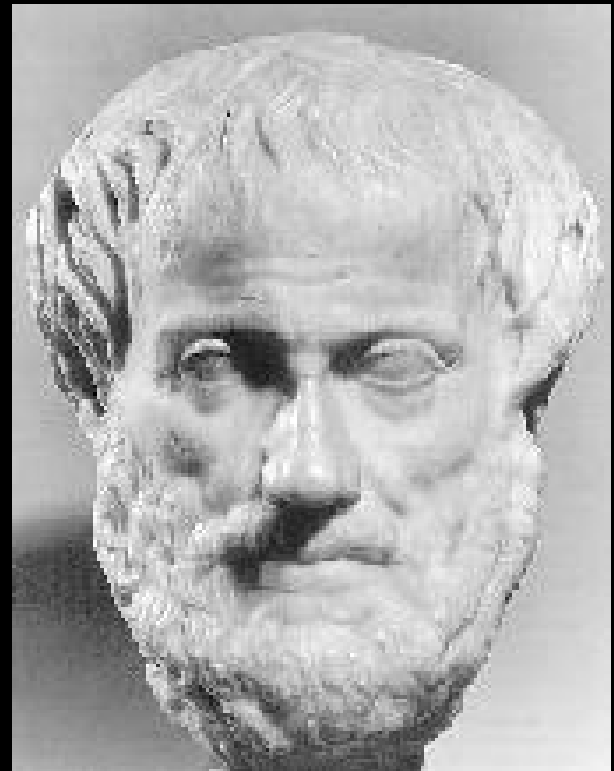


Conceptions of play

- Play as civilized and modern
- Play as educational
- Unstructured play

Aristotle

- Play as *mimesis*, or imitation





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The Enlightenment

- Play contributes to learning (Locke: 1632-1704, Kant: 1724-1804)
- Play is a *mental* activity



The Romantics: Schiller



- Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805): Play is surplus energy that we use to explore creativity
- Play is both mental/symbolic *and* physical
- Play is the route to higher-level, spiritual thought

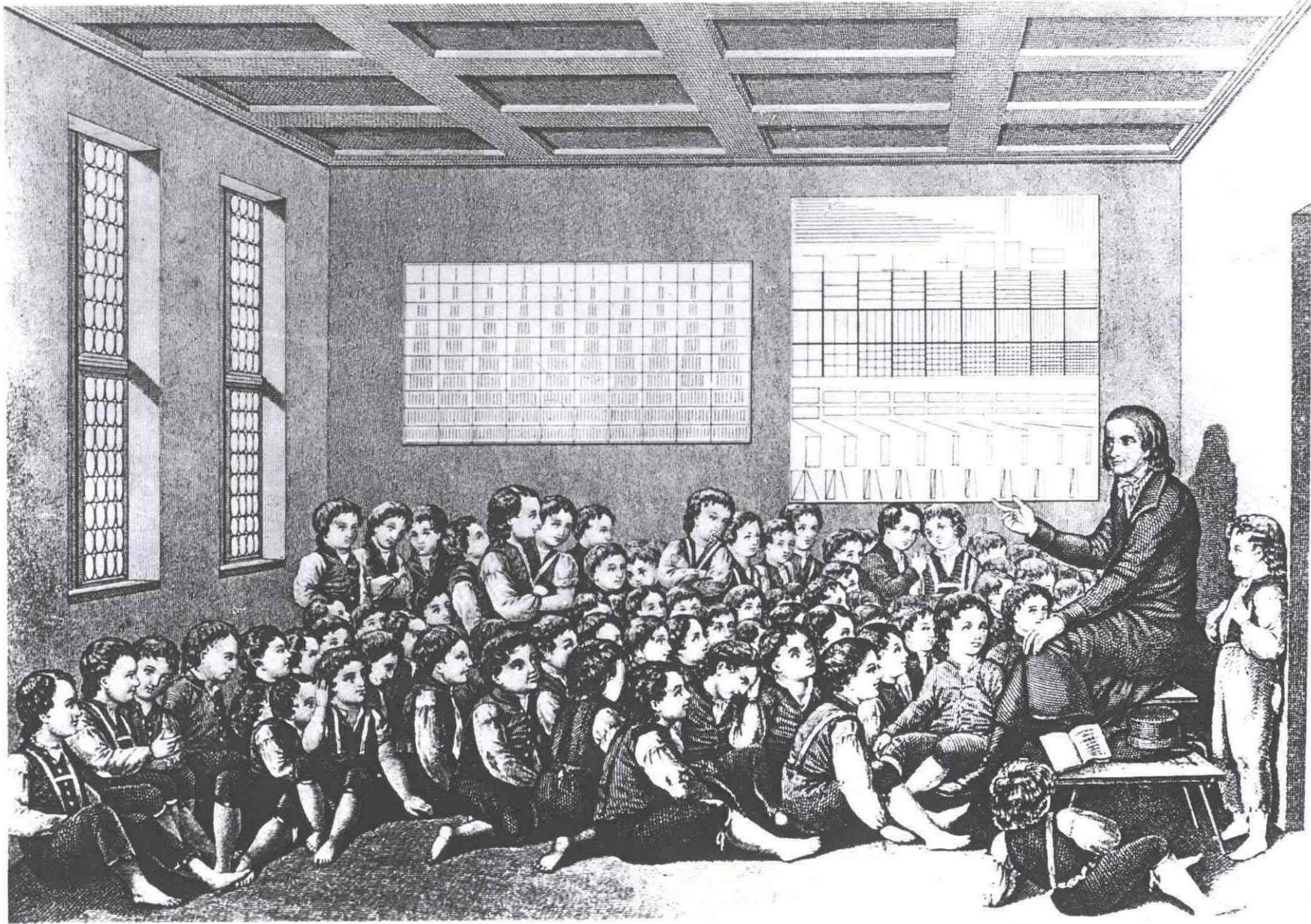
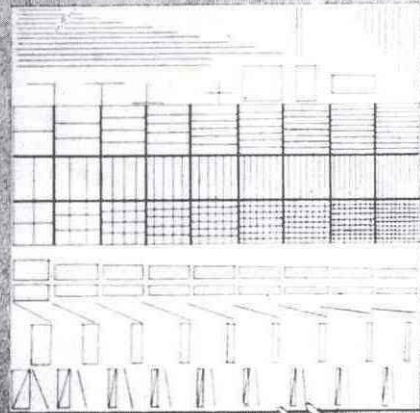
“But how can we speak of mere play, when we know that it is precisely play and play alone, which of all man’s states and conditions is the one which makes him whole and unfolds both sides of his nature at once?”

Friedrich von Shiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, p. 105

The Romantics: Pestalozzi

- Johan Pestalozzi, Swiss educator (1746-1827)
- Argued for a democratic commitment to universal education (following Rousseau)
- Focused on children
- Children are innately good and “natural”; society corrupts them
- Rather than rote memorization, children should learn by doing

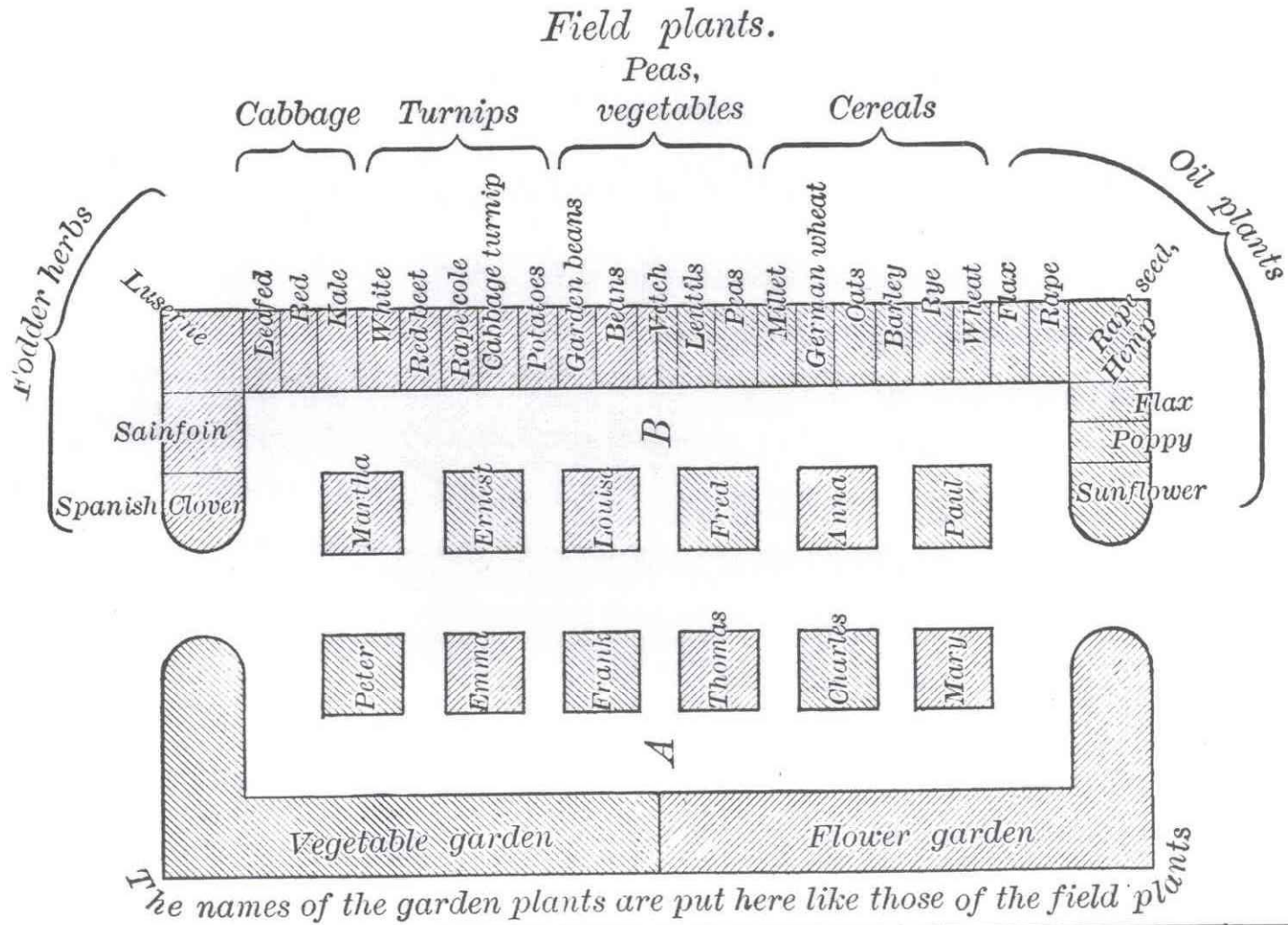
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The Romantics: Froebel

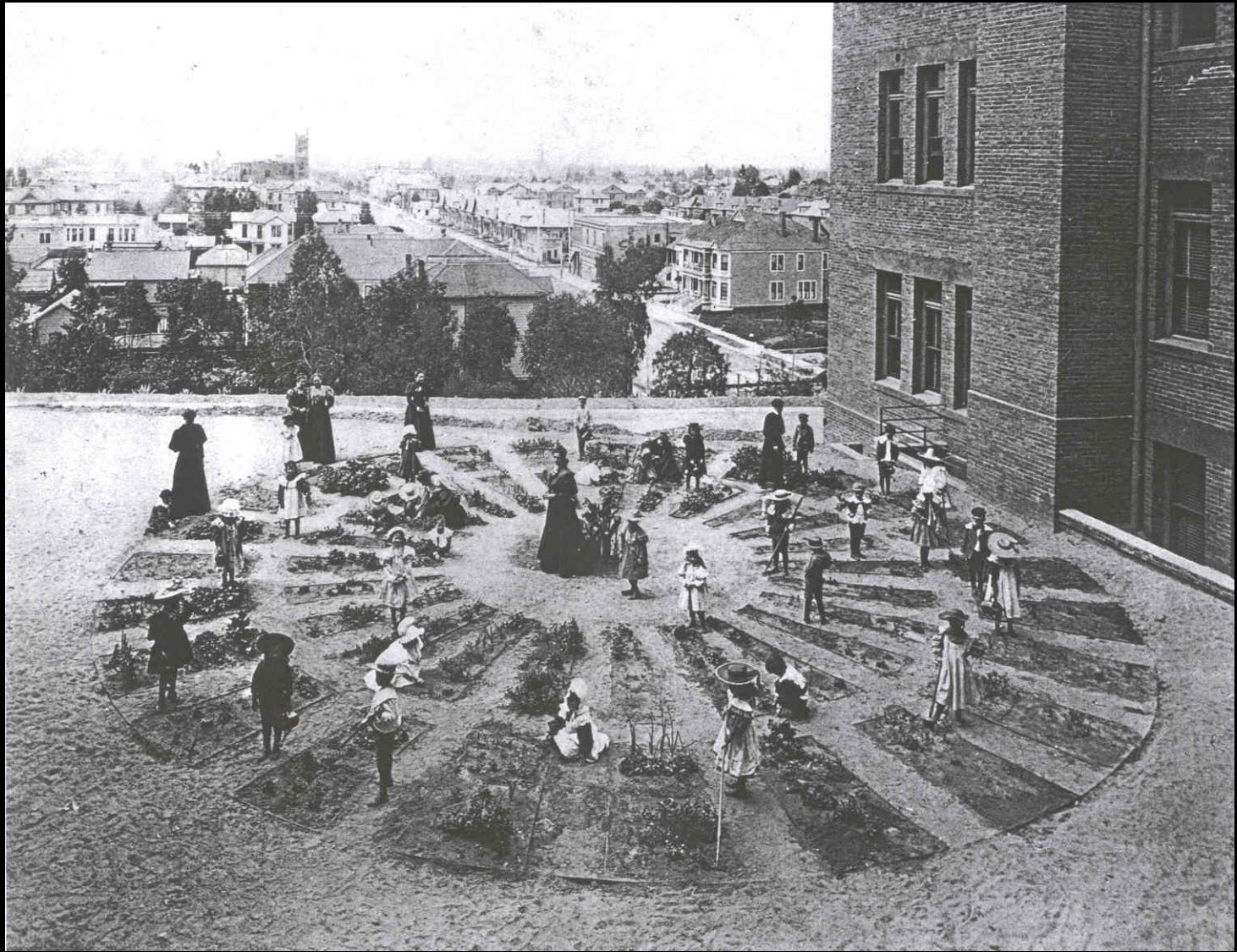
- Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) invented *kindergarten*
- Froebel studied Schiller and was a student of Pestalozzi
- Children are born natural and good
- The most natural child activity is *play*
- Froebel invented *building blocks* and *circle time*

The Garden for the Children is the Kindergarten.



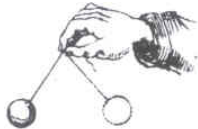





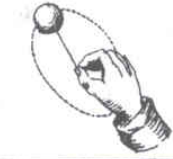

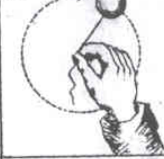

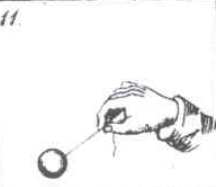
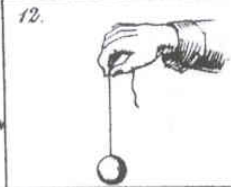


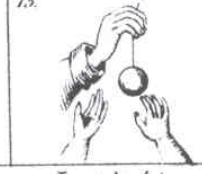
Kindergartner's Christian name


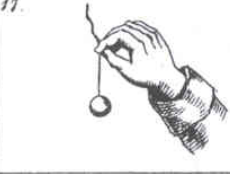

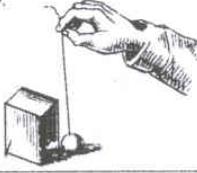
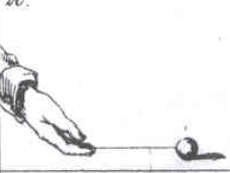
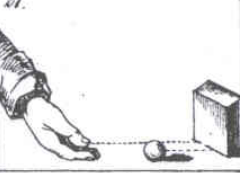

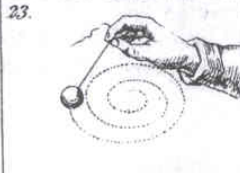
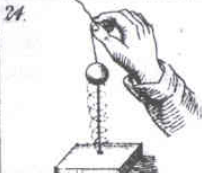
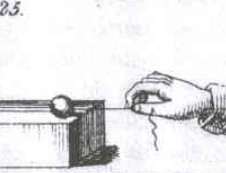
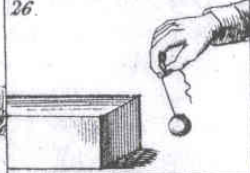
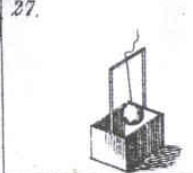
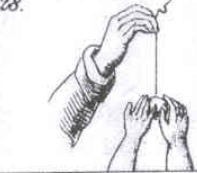
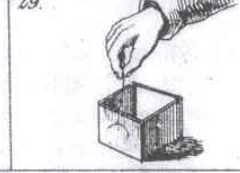
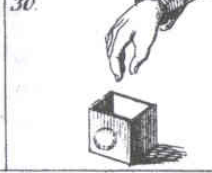
Kindergartner's surname

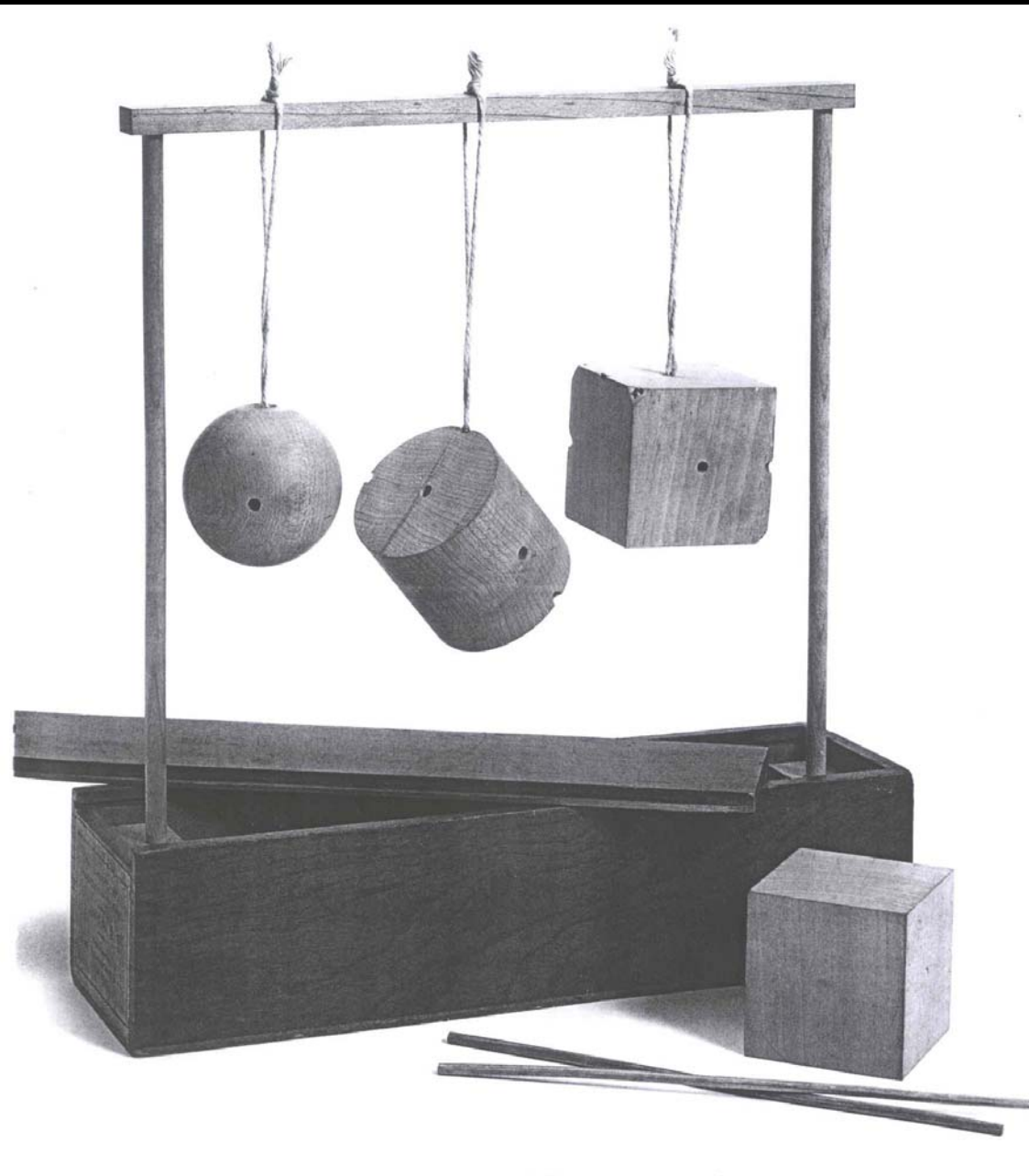






1. 	2. 	3. 
<i>There Here.</i>	<i>Here There</i>	<i>Over.</i>
4. 	5. 	6. 
<i>Tip tap tap.</i>	<i>Up, up, up.</i>	<i>Jump, jump, jump.</i>
7. 	8. 	9. 
<i>Turn round.</i>	<i>To the left.</i>	<i>To the right.</i>
10. 	11. 	12. 
<i>Lower.</i>	<i>Circle round.</i>	<i>Always quicker</i>
13. 	14. 	15. 
<i>Now he's gone.</i>	<i>There he is.</i>	<i>I catch him.</i>

16. 	17. 	18. 
<i>Back again.</i>	<i>Wind up.</i>	<i>Wind down.</i>
19. 	20. 	21. 
<i>Jump over.</i>	<i>Roll on.</i>	<i>Roll back.</i>
22. 	23. 	24. 
<i>Always smaller.</i>	<i>Always larger.</i>	<i>Higher</i>
25. 	26. 	27. 
<i>Draw, draw, draw.</i>	<i>There he falls.</i>	<i>Ding dong.</i>
28. 	29. 	30. 
<i>I keep him.</i>	<i>He sinks deep.</i>	<i>Look for it.</i>





The Scientific Era

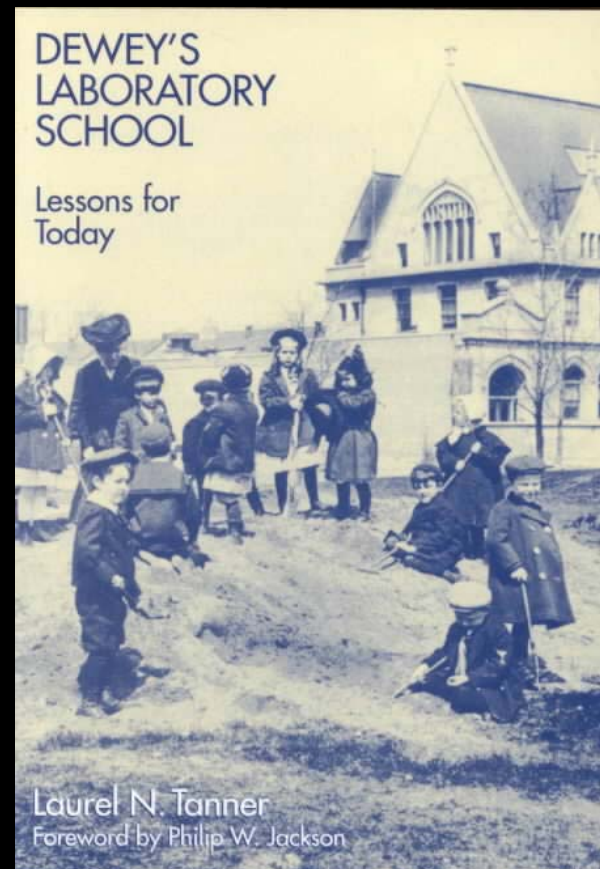
- Darwin's influence: Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) updates Schiller's "surplus energy" theory
- G. Stanley Hall (1846-1924) and *recapitulation theory*

Groos and Practice Play

- Karl Groos (1861-1946) applied Darwinian theory to animal and human play
- More advanced species play more and longer; thus play must be adaptive
- Play's adaptive purpose is *practice*

John Dewey

- Dewey (1859-1952): philosopher, educator
- Founded the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago
- Dewey's emphasis: Inquiry based, child-centered, hands-on experiential learning
- Play is a form of thought for children, which then becomes internalized
- Play allows children to explore society and nature



The 20th Century

- Modern psychological approaches to the study of play:
- Behaviorism
- Psychoanalysis
- Constructivism
- Cognitive psychology