

Unpublished

Erik Erikson in the San Francisco Bay Area

Daniel Benveniste

October 22, 1997

Mt. Zion Hospital

Psychiatric Grand Rounds

Windswept and tall, Erik Erikson scanned the conference hall, walked across the room, turned and sat down - right next to me. He greeted me cordially. I returned the greeting. And as I did, I looked into the eyes that had looked into the eyes of Sigmund Freud. I was sitting next to a man who had witnessed much of the 20th century. It was May 3rd 1987, and destined to be Erik Erikson's last public appearance. It was at the Laurel Heights Conference Center, in San Francisco, where he sat on a panel with his wife Joan Erikson, Robert Wallerstein and Morton Lieberman to discuss his last book, *Vital Involvement in Old Age* (co-authored with Joan Erikson and Helen Kivnick). He spoke for a brief while at the podium but too old and too tired to face the crowd he spent most of the afternoon sitting in the front row of the audience - and as good fate would have it, sitting right next to me. On that occasion Robert Wallerstein introduced Erikson as the second best known and most influential psychoanalyst in the world, second only to Sigmund Freud.

Erikson's picture was on the cover of *Newsweek* in December of 1970 and on the cover of *Psychology Today* in June of 1983. He had been described as The Dean of American Psychoanalysts, An Authentic Intellectual Hero, The Outstanding Psychoanalyst of Them All, A Genuine Guru and so on. He had to his credit over a hundred publications, including eleven books. He is perhaps best known for his first book *Childhood and Society* but other books such as *Young Man Luther*, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, *Ghandi's Truth*, and *Toys and Reasons* are regarded as classics. He is well known for his formulation of psychosocial development, for his landmark works in psychobiography, and for coining the term "Identity Crisis."

He was more successful than any other in introducing the social into the psychoanalytic world-view and, in doing so, he provided an important bridge from psychoanalysis to anthropology, education, clinical work, and social work. The centerpiece of his many contributions was his formulation of the psychosocial stages of development. He discussed these new ideas, probably for the first time, in 1945 in a class on the Emotional Development of Children which he taught at U.C. Berkeley in the School of Social Welfare.

He is most commonly associated with Vienna, where he received his psychoanalytic training, and Harvard University and The Austen Riggs Center in Massachusetts where he taught and wrote many of his important books. Curiously, however, few people seem to be aware that several of Erikson's most important works were completed while living in the San Francisco Bay Area. In this article, I will give an overview of Professor Erikson's life and work and bring into high relief the important work that he did during his twenty-seven years (1939-51; 1964-65; 1973-87) here in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Erik H. Erikson's biological parents were Danish. His mother and father separated before he was born. His mother left Denmark to settle in Karlsruhe Germany where her son Erik was born on June 15, 1902. At three years of age the young Erik fell ill and a pediatrician was called. Dr. Homburger arrived, cured the little boy, fell in love with the boy's mother, married her and gave the boy his name, making him Erik Homburger. The three of them took their honeymoon together which included a boat trip. Years later, as an artist, Erik Homburger made a block print inspired by memories of that trip and the conflict he felt between his mother and step father on one side and his search for and curiosity about some other mysterious father - represented in his picture as a ship's captain. His mother and stepfather were Jewish but the background of his biological father is something of a mystery. Thus, one can imagine the challenge the young Erik had to meet growing up as a Jewish boy who, unlike his Jewish friends, was tall, blond-haired, and blue-eyed. Though only partially related to his identity crisis he was not to change his name from Homburger to Erikson until well into adulthood.

Erik Homburger was not a particularly good student in school, and after he finished at the Gymnasium he took to wandering about Europe as an artist drawing, etching, and making woodcut blockprints.

In 1927, Peter Blos, a friend of his from the Gymnasium, who was also to become a psychoanalyst of international stature, invited Erik to come to Vienna to teach in an innovative little school.

The school was organized by Anna Freud, Dorothy Burlingham, and Eva Rosenfeld. Dorothy Burlingham came from the United States to have one of her children analyzed by Anna Freud and naturally needed someone to educate her four children as well. Peter Blos tutored them privately and when the school was expanded to include the children of other American and English analysts, Blos called his friend, Erik Homburger, to come join him. Between 1927-1933 Erik Homburger taught at the school with Peter Blos and entered into an analysis with Anna Freud.

He studied clinical psychoanalysis under August Aichhorn and also studied under Edward Bibring, Helene Deutsch, Heinz Hartmann and Ernst Kris. Adult psychoanalysis had been around for about 30 years at that time but the new field of child analysis was just emerging and Erik was there to see it happening and be a part of it.

In 1929 he met Joan Serson at a masquerade party. Joan wore a long blue dance costume, a half mask, and many beads. Erik wore a red fez and a dark red half mask. They danced all night and fell happily in love. Joan was Canadian. She was a dancer with a Bachelor's degree in education from Colombia and a Master's degree in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. Soon she too was hired on to teach at the little school with Erik and Peter. While working at the school Joan was psychoanalyzed by Ludwig Jekels.

Erik and Joan became a part of the psychoanalytic community and had social contact with the Freud family as well. Sigmund Freud was still very active during this period, writing and seeing patients, but he had stopped teaching and was not speaking much on account of pain from his cancer of the jaw. Consequently, Erik Homburger's direct association with Sigmund Freud was limited and social in nature, rather than didactic.

Erik and Joan were married on three occasions on and around April Fool's Day and only after their two boys were already born. Sigmund Freud nicknamed Joan "Die Schone," or "the Beauty" as she was a stunningly beautiful woman. In those early days it was not uncommon for analysts to go on vacation with their analysts so they could continue their analyses. When the Erikson's went on vacation with the Freud's, so that Erik could continue his analysis with Anna, he also had the job of looking after the Burlingham children.

In May of 1996 I visited with Joan Erikson at her home on Cape Cod, and she recalled an encounter with Sigmund Freud at their summer vacation spot. Joan, 93 years old at the time, said she had met the Professor in the garden where she showed him her newborn baby boy. Freud looked at Kai and said, "Sehr intelligent, sehr intelligent", which means "Very intelligent, very intelligent." Joan found his response to be humorous if not odd, as Kai was just an infant.

While Joan interpreted Freud's comment as some sort of intellectual assessment, it is quite likely that the comment had a very different meaning. Interestingly enough, the clue comes from the last paragraph of the Eriksons' article on the Hietzing School where they wrote:

"In this memorable little school the children, no doubt, did learn many things. The teachers, however, observed unforgettably what Freud called the "strahlende Intelligenz" (the "radiant intelligence") displayed by children who for some moments are permitted (by themselves and by circumstances) to function freely" (Erikson & Erikson, 1980, 1987,

p. 13).

Subsequently, Joan gave birth to a second son, Jon.

In 1933 the political situation in Germany and Austria was rapidly deteriorating, so the young couple, with their two young boys, Kai and Jon, decided it was time to emigrate. First they went to Denmark but Erik was unable to re-establish his citizenship there. So, in September of 1933, with the help of Joan's family, they emigrated to the United States. Before leaving Europe, Erik Homburger was made a full member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute trained in child and adult analysis. He was 31 years old.

Erik and Joan Homburger arrived in Boston toward the end of the year. Erik became Boston's first child analyst and was given a position at Harvard Medical School, and Massachusetts General Hospital. He also consulted at the Judge Baker Guidance Center.

He became associated with Hanns Sachs, whom he had met previously in Vienna, Henry Murray, Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, Ruth Benedict, Scudder Mekeel, Lawrence Frank, Kurt Lewin and R. Nevitt Sanford among others. He began his work on play configurations of children and young adults and conducted psycho-anthropological research into the child-rearing practices and personality formation of the Native American Sioux. During the latter portion of his stay on the East Coast, Homburger took a position at Yale University and moved his family to New Haven, Connecticut.

In 1935 *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* published a historically important special edition devoted to Child Analysis. This, now famous, edition included papers by Siegfried Bernfeld, Edith Buxbaum and Erik Homburger, all of whom were to become members of the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society and Institute. His article in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* was a translation of his first German publication on *Psychoanalysis and the Future of Education*.

In 1938 Joan Homburger gave birth to a third child, their daughter, Sue. In 1939, at the age of 36, Homburger, the artist and lay analyst with no college degree at all, left his university position at Yale University and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area where he took a position at the University of California at Berkeley and became associated with the other San Francisco psychoanalysts, participating in study groups and establishing the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society.

At U.C Berkeley he worked as a Research Assistant in the Institute of Child Welfare, which is now the Institute of Human Development. There he conducted his famous play configuration studies in which children were found to construct play configurations with

blocks and other toys that were homologous to their own genital structure. In other words, the little girls tended to construct enclosures and circles that Erikson described as organized around the feminine modalities of the "open" and the "closed." And boys tended to erect tall structures and demonstrated an interest in tearing them down or allowing them to fall down. Erikson said these play configurations were organized around the masculine modality of the "high" and the "low."

Erikson also became closely associated with Alfred L. Kroeber, a U.C. Berkeley anthropologist, who introduced Erikson to the Yurok Native Americans of Northern California. Erikson met the Yurok, studied their culture and their child-rearing practices and made observations on the relationship between the two.

Erik Erikson was in U.C. Berkeley's Department of Psychology where he taught *Psychoanalysis of Childhood and Problems*, a *Seminar in Dynamic Psychology*, and another course called *Personality and Culture*. He was also a consultant in Psychological Medicine at the Student Health Service and a Lecturer in Psychiatry at UCSF. In the Department of Psychology, Erikson was able to renew his association with Nevitt Sanford, whom he had known in Boston. Nevitt Sanford was an American born psychologist-psychoanalyst who was analyzed by Hanns Sachs in Boston. He came to teach at U.C. Berkeley in 1940.

Sanford recalled that, at U.C., he and Erikson would often meet for lunch, get involved in a stimulating conversation and then walk back to campus at 5:00 just in time to go home. Sanford was researching anti-Semitism and racism at that time with Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Theodore Adorno and Daniel Levinson. Their work culminated in the now classic volume entitled *The Authoritarian Personality*.

As a Lecturer in the School of Social Welfare, from 1945-1948, Erikson taught a two unit course entitled *The Emotional Development of Children*. The content of the course was listed as: "Child development and family structure. The dynamics of the relationship between the social and cultural determinants of personality." This was, no doubt, where Erikson was first formulating and teaching his new schema of psychosocial development in which he formally situated Freud's stages of psychosexual development in a social context. Thus Freud's Oral Stage became correlated with Erikson's stage of Trust vs. Mistrust, the Anal Stage with Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, the Phallic Stage with Initiative vs. Guilt and so on. Furthermore, rather than stopping at adolescence, as Freud's psychosexual schema did, Erikson's psychosocial schema continued on to encompass the entire life-cycle. This psychosocial schema of development was a collaborative effort between he and his wife Joan, who taught him English, edited everything he ever wrote, and was his lifelong muse.

Erikson's schema of psychosocial development, observations of the Yurok, and play configuration research are featured prominently in his best known and most influential book *Childhood and Society*, which was written in the 1940s and published in 1950.

In Vienna, Erikson had been in seminars with the psychoanalytic luminaries of the time. One of his classmates was Anna Maenchen. Anna Maenchen, Ph.D. (1902-1991) began her analysis with Anna Freud in 1924 at the age of twenty-two. She was a psychologist by training, participated in Anna Freud's study group on *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, and attended seminars led by Bernfeld and other luminaries of the Vienna and Berlin Institutes in the 1920s and '30s.

Maenchen immigrated to San Francisco in 1938, participated in the founding of the SFPI, and was instrumental in the establishment and development of the Institute's Child Analysis Training program. She also taught for many years in U.C. Berkeley's School of Social Welfare. She was San Francisco's first child analyst.

In 1939 Erik Homburger, changed his name to Erik Homburger Erikson. Some speculate, that the tall blond-haired blue-eyed Jew with a stepfather he knew and a mysterious birth father attempted to settle his own paternity by becoming Erik Erikson, that is Erik The-Son-of-Erik. This is partly true but his name change was also one of those family decisions that many immigrant families make when they arrive in a new country. In this case, it was a name suggested by Kai, who, reflecting on his mother's "maiden name," Serson as "Son of Ser," suggested that they take the name "Erikson," "Son of Erik."

In the Bay Area, Erikson joined a group of emigre psychoanalysts that had already arrived from Europe. They included Siegfried Bernfeld, Suzanne Bernfeld, Bernhard Berliner, Anna Maenchen, and Emanuel Windholz among others. Together they held seminars, discussed cases and, along with their Los Angeles colleagues, began to organize the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society and Institute. In accordance with the American Psychoanalytic Association's 1938 resolution against the future training of laymen for the therapeutic use of psychoanalysis, the San Francisco group organized a Society that did not accept "lay analysts" as full members. The lay analysts were those analysts without medical degrees.

Nonetheless Erikson and some of the other "lay analysts" were able to participate as supervisors, seminar leaders and training analysts. Among other courses at the Institute, Erikson taught seminars on *Neuroses in Childhood*; *Dream Interpretation*, and *Clinical Use of Play Observation*.

He led case conferences and delivered lectures on Hitler's "*Mein Kampf*," *Cultural Factor's and the Ego Ideal* and *Observations on a Russian Moving Picture*. In 1950 he served as President of the S.F. Psychoanalytic Society.

In the early 1940s the world was at war. People from all walks of life, including the San Francisco psychoanalysts, contributed to the war effort. One of the analysts, Jacob (Jasha) Kasanin, was Director of Mt. Zion Hospital's Veterans' Rehabilitation Clinic. This unique clinic was staffed by social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, quite a few of the psychoanalysts and two of the local Jungian analysts. The Jungians were Joseph Henderson and Joseph Wheelwright, both of whom had been analyzed by Carl Gustav Jung. Together this multidisciplinary team worked to aid the readjustment of returning veterans suffering the effects of war related traumas. They saw patients, discussed cases together, and came up with alternative treatment strategies to the traditional lengthy analyses that had been more common previously.

In Erikson's book *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968), he states, "The term "identity crisis" was first used, if I remember correctly, for a clinical purpose in the Mt. Zion Veteran's Rehabilitation Clinic during the Second World War, a national emergency which permitted psychiatric workers of different persuasions and denominations, among them Emanuel Windholz and Joseph Wheelwright, to work together harmoniously. Most of our patients, so we concluded at that time, had neither been "shellshocked" nor become malingerers, but had through the exigencies of war lost a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity. They were impaired in that central control over themselves for which, in the psychoanalytic scheme, only the "inner agency" of the ego could be held responsible. Therefore, I spoke of a loss of "ego identity.""

In examining this passage one may notice that the reference to Windholz and Wheelwright is really quite unnecessary for conveying Erikson's main point that personal sameness and cultural continuity had been disrupted by the experience of the war and impaired his patient's sense of inner agency, their identity. And yet if we look at it more closely, I think this passage may tell us a little more about Erikson's own identity crisis. While Erikson shared a theoretical orientation with Windholz, he shared a common spirit with Wheelwright and no two men could be more different than Windholz and Wheelwright. Windholz was a disciplined Czechoslovakian who studied in Berlin and Prague and trained under Otto Fenichel and Ernst Simmel. He adhered to the classical psychoanalytic position and was considered by many to be the upholder of the psychoanalytic orthodoxy.

Wheelwright, on the other hand was a New Englander, a Jungian, an irreverent raconteur and a flaming extravert. So I wonder if these competing allegiances and identifications

didn't also play a role in Erikson coining of the term "identity crisis" at Mt. Zion's Veteran's Rehabilitation Clinic. For it was there that, in addition to his clinical work, he was also attempting to create for himself a "sameness and historical continuity" in a clinic community characterized by "different persuasions and denominations." Incidentally, Erikson and Wheelwright were best friends and Erikson and Windholz were not.

In the 1960s and '70s "identity crisis" became a common term in popular culture. And now, it is simply a part of our vocabulary.

From 1939-1947 Erikson saw patients in his office at 2235 Post Street in San Francisco. The office was owned by and shared with Drs. Ernst Wolff and Leona M. Bayer. Dr. Wolff was a pediatrician at Mt. Zion Hospital who had an interest in psychoanalysis and was instrumental in establishing the psychiatry department there. His wife, Dr. Bayer was an internist specializing in adolescents and worked at Stanford University Hospital. They were Erikson's landlords and also personal friends. Leona M. Bayer, incidentally, was also Erikson's patient in analysis. From about 1947 until 1950, Erikson saw his patients in his office at his home in Orinda.

Erikson also analyzed Hitler's speeches and German propaganda. In his papers on Adolf Hitler, he drew lines of correspondence between Hitler's early childhood experience and the typical early childhood experience of children in pre-Nazi Germany. In other words, he illuminated the lines of correspondence between childhood and society. This study was the first of Erikson's psychobiographical projects for which he was later to become very well known.

In *Childhood and Society*, Erikson introduced the theory of infantile sexuality in a manner that was illuminating to professionals, who were already familiar with the theory, and readily understandable to young students reading this kind of material for the first time. Discussing the child rearing practices of the Sioux and the Yurok he brought the subject of infantile sexuality to life and gave it a cultural reference and relevance. Amplifying the theme of psychology reflected in everyday life, Erikson discussed children's play configurations and their relation to infantile sexuality. Following his play configuration research he introduced his psychosocial theory, "The Eight Ages of Man," a schema of psychosocial development over the entire life cycle. It is an examination of the social relations that parallel Freud's theory of infantile sexuality but, unlike Freud's schema, Erikson also posits stages of development beyond adolescence, into early adulthood, middle adulthood and old age. This is the heart of the book but not its end. The final section of the book is where Erikson uses this psychosocial schema to examine individual lives psychobiographically and explore the vicissitudes of identity development.

In 1950, the same year that *Childhood and Society* was published, the United States was in the grip of the so-called "Red Scare" a nationwide fear of Communists that reached paranoid proportions. The University of California added to the oath of office, that all professors must sign, a clause stating "...I am not a member of the Communist Party or any other organization which advocates the overthrow of the government by force or violence..." This Loyalty Oath created quite a stir among the faculty as it was seen as a threat to freedom of thought, freedom of speech and freedom of association. Erik Erikson, Nevitt Sanford and others refused to sign the oath and left the University.

With the publication of *Childhood and Society*, in 1950, Erikson became famous just as he was headed back to the East Coast. Invited by Robert Knight, he went to work as a senior staff member at The Austen Riggs Center in Massachusetts. Austen Riggs is a residential treatment program for severely disturbed adults. At that time, under the direction of Robert Knight, Riggs was turning into a major psychoanalytic training center. Erikson did clinical work there with young adults, saw children at the University of Pittsburgh's Western Psychiatric Institute and observed the child-rearing practices of working class mother-child dyads in Pittsburgh.

Throughout the 1950s Erikson wrote creatively and voluminously. Much of his work pertained to his concept of "identity" which is formed on the threshold of the person and the society he or she inhabits. In 1958 he published his first major psychobiography, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*.

In 1960 he was appointed Professor at Harvard University where he taught his famous courses on the *Life Cycle*. Throughout the '60s he continued to develop his concept of "identity" and to explore it in the contexts of historical change, great personalities, child-rearing practices, and the volatile changes taking place in the youth movements of the '60s.

Throughout the 1960s Erikson did research on a biography of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1964-65 he spent a year researching and writing about Gandhi and his cultural context at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. During that year, his office was next door to psychoanalyst, Robert Wallerstein. Erikson had come back from India and was using his time at the Center to write chapters of his book on Gandhi. He and Wallerstein put together a seminar with six or seven other fellows at the Center and some of their spouses. They met every two weeks, or so, to listen to Erikson read drafts of chapters of the Gandhi book and to discuss and critique them.

During his remaining years at Harvard, Erikson published *Identity: Youth and Crisis*

(1968) and Ghandi's *Truth* (1969). At this time, Erikson was at his peak in popularity. He had become a voice for a generation searching for its identity and an interpreter for the same generation, historically and psychologically contextualizing their lives and their struggles.

With *Childhood and Society* as a standard college text for a wide range of courses, Erikson became the psychoanalyst who introduced several generations of students to the world of psychoanalytic thinking. His work on play configurations, identity, psychosocial theory and psychobiography made him one of the most famous psychoanalysts in the world. In 1970 he retired from Harvard University and moved to Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Erikson was in his late sixties, and had written his major works but was still vital, creative and involved.

In 1973, three years after his retirement from Harvard University, Erikson was invited by Robert Wallerstein, to return to Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco. Prof. and Mrs. Erikson accepted the invitation, came back to the Bay Area and found a home in Tiburon. Erikson resumed his clinical practice and his writing. In 1974 he began participating in the innovative Doctorate of Mental Health (DMH) program at the University of California under the direction of Robert Wallerstein at Mt. Zion Hospital and Medical Center. He spent ten hours a week at Mt. Zion attending and leading conferences, supervising students, conducting a seminar for the adolescent program and working on his writing projects.

In Susan Kolodony's account of her experience as a student in the DMH program, she describes Erikson as open to others, modest, humorous, fully present, dignified and playful. (Kolodony, 1991)

At Austen Riggs, Joan Erikson, as a craftswoman, jewelry maker, dancer and writer had facilitated art workshops in which patients were invited to express themselves creatively without any suggestion that this activity was an "art therapy" or in any way vulnerable to being interpreted or psychologized. It was an opportunity to express oneself creatively and use the media to connect with oneself, the group, and the world. When the Eriksons returned to the Bay Area, Joan Erikson continued this work as a Senior Consultant on the Adolescent In-patient Unit at Mt. Zion. In 1976 she published *Activity, Recovery, Growth: The Communal Role of Planned Activities* in which she described her work at Austen Riggs. It is co-written with David and Joan Loveless. Joan Erikson had previously published three other books, *Mata Ni Pachedi: The Temple Cloth of the Mother Goddess* (1968), *The Universal Bead* (1969) and *St. Francis and his Four Ladies* (1970). She subsequently co-authored *Vital Involvement in Old Age* (1986) with Erik H. Erikson and Helen Q. Kivnick and then authored *Wisdom and the Senses* (1988) *Legacies:*

Prometheus, Orpheus and Socrates (1993) and *Poems* (1996). She also translated and published *20 Poems from the Book of Hours* by Rilke (1988). In the spring of 1997 Erik Erikson's book *The Life Cycle Completed* was republished with three new chapters written by Joan Erikson including a courageous new chapter entitled *The Ninth Stage*. In the Ninth Stage Joan extended the epigenetic chart to include some bold reflections on her own life experience as an octogenarian and nonagenarian. In this chapter she wrote that for many who live on into their 80s and 90s, the dystonic or negative poles of the psychosocial stages increasingly come into ascendance so that one increasingly mistrusts one's body, falls victim to shame and doubt, suffers increasing feelings of inferiority and guilt, forgets one's identity and so on.

Erik H. Erikson's involvement with the S.F. Psychoanalytic Society during 1970s and '80s was minimal but he occasionally led or participated in seminars and supervised cases. He was in a seminar on Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Reality with a few friends and worked on a project with Neil Smelser, which resulted in their editing a book entitled *Themes of Work and Love in Adulthood* (1980). In 1989 the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute honored Erikson by naming its library the Erik H. Erikson Library.

Though he had no formal college education beyond the gymnasium he received many awards including at least six honorary doctorates. I know there were at least six because when Joan and I were rummaging around in her basement, we found six doctoral hoods.

In 1974 the Freud-Jung correspondence was published. In celebration of this important event, two old friends, Erik Erikson and Joseph Wheelwright, were brought together in a conference to discuss the relationship of the leaders of their respective theoretical orientations. They were the perfect pair to discuss Freud and Jung. Erikson had been in the Freud home, was analyzed by Anna Freud in the late 1920s and early '30s and was a leader in the international psychoanalytic community.

Wheelwright, on the other hand, had been analyzed by Jung in the 1930s, had made original contributions to the analytical psychology literature and was a leader in the international Jungian community. Erikson's contribution to this conference, on the themes of adulthood in the Freud-Jung correspondence, was subsequently published and Wheelwright's marvelous and enigmatic performance has to be seen on videotape to be believed.

From 1974-1987 Erikson continued to write and publish voluminously. He published *Dimensions of a New Identity* in 1974, *Life History and the Historical Moment* in 1975, *Toys and Reasons: Stages in the Ritualization of Experience* in 1977, and *The Life Cycle*

Completed in 1982. In addition to these books, a conversation between Erik H. Erikson and Huey P. Newton was published in 1973. It was entitled *In Search of Common Ground* and was co-authored by Erikson, Huey Newton and sociologist, Kai Erikson. Huey Newton was one of the founders of the Black Panthers - a Black power organization founded in the 1960s. Erikson demonstrated in this forum, and many others, his interest in society and his on-going commitment to civil rights. In Erikson's copy of Martin Luther King's *Stride Toward Freedom* we find Coretta Scott King's signature and a school photo of a girl whom I presume is their daughter.

In 1981 Erik Erikson returned to the Institute of Human Development at U.C. Berkeley along with his wife Joan and their colleague, Helen Q. Kivnick. Together they launched a research project to study the Eriksons' last stage of psychosocial development. To do this they interviewed the septuagenarian and octogenarian parents of the children in the Institute's longitudinal Guidance Study, which had been initiated in 1929. They talked with them about their lives and their changing views of the world. They subsequently published their findings in their book *Vital Involvement in Old Age*. In it they discussed the reworking of the last stage of the life cycle - the stage of Ego Integrity vs. Despair. On May 3, 1987 Joan and Erik Erikson gave a joint presentation in San Francisco in which they talked about their newly published book, *Vital Involvement in Old Age*. It was Professor Erikson's last public appearance. He was 84 years old.

Shortly thereafter, the Eriksons moved back to Cambridge, Massachusetts where Joan Erikson continued her writing projects at the newly established Erik and Joan Erikson Center and Professor Erikson sat in on seminars and served as an inspiration to others working at the Erikson Center. His health was on the decline so the Eriksons moved to Harwich, on Cape Cod. On May 12, 1994 Professor Erikson died at the age of 91. He'd witnessed most of the twentieth century, served as its commentator and interpreter and influenced generations who, through their work, are now setting the course for clinical work and political action that is taking us into the 21st century. Joan his wife, editor, collaborator and muse carried on writing poetry, watching the birds and playing on Cape Cod until her death on August 3rd 1997. Her last article was a piece on *The Importance of Play in Adulthood* published in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*.

It is difficult to write about Erik Erikson without reference to words and phrases like "original thinker," "international psychoanalytic leader," "pioneer," "creative genius," "one of a kind," "giant in the field," "unique," "major contributor," and so on. But it is important to remember that Erik Erikson was not only "a great man," he was also a "mensch." A "mensch," is a Yiddish term, for a man in the best and most regular sense of the word. A "mensch" is a man who dares to be himself - nothing more and nothing less. To those who only met Erikson briefly he was unassuming, direct, modest, interested,

engaging and kind. To those who knew him better he was all that and more. He was down to earth, playful and friendly. He could be bold in one circumstance and curiously unsure of himself in another, and yet engaging and endearing in both. He enjoyed being with people but also needed his solitude for introspection and to write. He loved nature, art, the theater and he swam daily. He was wonderful with children and loved being with them. He was a man who dared to be himself.

Daniel Benveniste, Ph.D. now lives and works in Bellevue, Washington.
Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to:

E-MAIL – daniel.benveniste@gmail.com