

1. Erikson was fundamentally a therapist: he saw patients in a variety of situations all his professional life. In his opening statement in this video, he talks about the hope that society can be improved so therapy is not so necessary.
 - a. What do you think he means by this?
 - b. Was he talking about how children are raised, since he trained as a child psychoanalyst?
 - c. An interesting conversation might be comparing Erikson's image of healthful childrearing with that of B.F. Skinner as elaborated in *Walden Two*. (Erikson would have highly approved of Skinner's parenting of his own children.)

2. World War I was a watershed event for the history of western civilization. The optimistic sense of the nineteenth century that science and technology could solve human problems was shattered by the realization that science and technology could create better weapons, in addition to vaccines and steam engines.

Humans were thrown back on their more social and psychological resources to make progress, something that is still a challenge almost a century later. It is not just coincidental that psychology as an organized endeavor was a product of the twentieth century. Discuss.

3. Erikson identified himself with the psychoanalytic tradition that in recent years has been disparaged. What messages from this tradition still seem valid?
4. What experiences do your students have with the project method of education that, in part, came out of John Dewey's work? In recent years, it was a central idea of the British Infant School work of the 1960's, and of the more recent work of Lillian Katz and Sylvia Chard. Katz and Chard would have disapproved of Erikson's Eskimo focus on the as they think that projects should be focused on local, current issues for the students.
5. Erikson's brief visit to the Sioux reservation had a profound impact on his work, enabling him to incorporate people's social situation into his understanding. Are there parallels in other theorists' work? Vygotsky's work for the Uzbekistanis (though he had to cancel his trip to Uzbekistan because of illness) might be one.
6. This video tries to emphasize that the life stages don't have "good" and "bad" outcomes, but rather that the two strands are always present and health is in the balance. (In the Davidson Films productions, *On Old Age I* and *On Old Age II*, the Joan Erikson designed a lifecycle-based weaving that illustrates this point well. Erikson was affected by Hegel's concept of the dialectic.)

Do your students have a tendency to see conflicts as in black and white? How does morality fit into Erikson's gray theory? Erikson's statement comparing Freud to Ghandi deals with this. What is the reaction of your students to this?

7. This video does not go into much depth about Erikson's later work. What is important for your students to know about it?

CINEFETE

info@cinefete.ca / www.cinefete.ca

1586, Fleury St East, suite 210,
Montreal (QC), H2C 1S6
1.800.858.2183

Related Films Also Available from Davidson Films

This is one of nine films in Davidson Films' "Giants of Psychology" series. The other titles are:

- *Mary Ainsworth: Attachment And The Growth Of Love* (2005) 38 Minutes
- *Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory: An Introduction* (2003) 38 Minutes
- *John Bowlby: Attachment Theory across Generations* (2007) 35 Minutes
- *John Dewey: An Introduction To His Life And Work* (2001) 40 Minutes
- *Maria Montessori: Her Life And Legacy* (2004) 35 Minutes
- *Piaget's Developmental Theory: An Overview* (1989) 25 Minutes
- *B. F. Skinner: A Fresh Appraisal* (1999) 41 Minutes
- *Vygotsky's Developmental Theory: An Introduction* (1994) 28 Minutes

Davidson Films, Inc. also produced two videos with Erik Erikson's wife, Joan Erikson, in which she discusses the eight stages of the life cycle, and her husband's and her experience with aging:

- *On Old Age I: A Conversation With Joan Erikson At 90* (1995) 39 Minutes
- *On Old Age II: A Conversation With Joan Erikson At 92* (1995) 30 Minutes

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