

The Erik Erikson Reader

By Erik H. Erikson, Erik Erikson

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Erik H. Erikson is recognized as one of the world's leading figures in the field of psychoanalysis and human development. His ideas about the stages of development, the sources of identity, and the interdependence of individual growth and historical change revolutionized our understanding of the nature and course of psychological growth.

Erikson, whose work first described the now familiar concepts of "identity crisis" and "life cycle," provided an unprecedented framework for considering the individual psyche within society and culture. Unveiling a dynamic process of psychological development, he emphasized the tendency toward growth and the integration of multiple influences?the biological, social, psychological, cultural, and historical.

With writings from Erikson's entire career, including major work from *Childhood and Society*, *Insight and Responsibility*, *Young Man Luther*, and *Gandhi's Truth*, this invaluable reader charts the influence of Erikson's thinking in the areas of child psychology, development through the lifespan, leadership, and moral growth.

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Editorial Review

From Kirkus Reviews
A welcome collection of excerpts and essays from the work of the celebrated psychoanalyst (A Way of Looking at Things, 1987, etc.) who died in 1994. Coles, the eminent colleague and biographer of Erikson (Identity's Architect: A Biography of Erik H. Erikson, p. 506), divides this volume into five sections: Coless Introduction; On Children, Nearby and Far Away; On Psychoanalysis and Human Development; On Leaders; and On Moral Matters. The most extensive selections are from the now-classic Childhood and Society and Young Man Luther. For those who have never read Eriksonor have not read him in a while (his last book appeared a dozen years ago)the compilation vividly illustrates the vast scope of his thought, explains the elements of his theories of development, and displays the language of an author whose best writing was often as lyrical as it was instructive. Commenting on his own profession, for example, Erikson writes: ``A man, I will submit, could begin to study man's inner world only by appointing his own neurosis that angel with whom he must wrestle and whom he must not let go until his blessing, too, has been given." Erikson writes about a dazzling array of subjectsfrom the Lakota Sioux to Tom Sawyer (whose behavior at the fence-whitewashing Erikson playfully explores) to Martin Luther, Gandhi, and Jesus. He studies the small as well as the great, as in his account of a Yurok ``doctor," an aged woman of the tribe, who sucks from the navel of a disturbed child the pain that afflicts him. Eriksons achievement, as presented by Coles, readily justifies such occasional excesses as his occasional descent into psychobabble: ``A man should act in such a way that he actualizes both in himself and in the other such forces as are ready for a heightened mutuality. Edited with intelligence and visiona volume that confirms Erikson's honored place in the pantheon of psychological theorists. -- *Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review
This volume, ably assembled and introduced by Robert Coles, presents the Essential Erikson. -- *Howard Gardner*

About the Author
A winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, Erik H. Erikson was renowned worldwide as teacher, clinician, and theorist in the field of psychoanalysis and human development.

Robert Coles is a child psychiatrist and writer who has spent his life doing documentary work. He lives in Concord, Massachusetts.

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