



# Encountering America: Humanistic Psychology, Sixties Culture, and the Shaping of the Modern Self

By Jessica Grogan

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A dramatic narrative history of the psychological movement that reshaped American culture

The expectation that our careers and personal lives should be expressions of our authentic selves, the belief that our relationships should be defined by openness and understanding, the idea that therapy can help us reach our fullest potential—these ideas have become so familiar that it's impossible to imagine our world without them.

In *Encountering America*, cultural historian Jessica Grogan reveals how these ideas stormed the barricades of our culture through the humanistic psychology movement—the work of a handful of maverick psychologists who revolutionized American culture in the 1960s and '70s. Profiling thought leaders including Abraham Maslow, Rollo May, and Timothy Leary, Grogan draws on untapped primary sources to explore how these minds and the changing cultural atmosphere combined to create a widely influential movement. From the group of ideas that became known as New Age to perennial American anxieties about wellness, identity, and purpose, Grogan traces how humanistic psychology continues to define the way we understand ourselves.

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### By Jessica Grogan Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #693384 in Books
- Published on: 2012-12-26
- Released on: 2012-12-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .97" w x 5.31" l, .68 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 432 pages

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#### Review

Spot-on reporting, an unbiased presentation, and an admirable attention to detail make this a valuable resource for psychologists and scholars of American counterculture movements. -**Publisher's Weekly**

*Encountering America* weaves together a tapestry and history of a humane ideal for living that continues to define our societal world view. It is a work of deep cultural understanding that breaks down complex issues in a coherent manner, bursting with oversized personalities and thought-provoking ideas. - **Shelf Awareness**

Jessica Grogan reveals the seminal, but frequently overlooked, influence of the postwar humanistic psychology movement in creating what is sometimes described as today's "therapy culture," which includes employee retreats, seminars on sensitivity training, the proliferation of support groups and more....

"Encountering America" is an illuminating cultural history.

- **Kirkus Review**

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"An illuminating cultural history." (**Kirkus Reviews**)

"Clear and insightful book...Grogan's well-written and well-researched book is as much a cultural study as it is a psychological one. While mapping the movement's rise and decline, she makes a case for its legacy." (**Pasatiempo**)

"[A] disciplined and persuasive defense of the movement... Grogan eloquently insists that humanistic psychology subtly revolutionized Americans' conception of the self and the role of therapy." (**New York Times Book Review**)

#### About the Author

Jessica Grogan has a PhD in American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. She has taught courses on American history, culture, and psychology at Southwestern University, the University of Texas, and Mount Holyoke College. This is her first book.

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