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AN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION: HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY AND THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY NUNS

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In the 1960s, humanistic psychology changed the relationship between psychology and religion by actively asserting the value of individual experience and self-expression. This was particularly evident in the encounter group movement. Beginning in 1967, Carl Rogers conducted a series of encounter groups, in order to promote "self-directed change in an educational system," for the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a religious order in California running an educational system. William Coulson, one of Rogers's associates in the project, later charged that the encounter groups undermined the religious order and played a major contributing part in the breakup of the order in 1970. The article examines these charges, situating the incident within the context of the changes occurring in religious life and in psychology in the 1960s. The article concludes that an already existing conflict the nuns had with the conservative Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles led to the departure of some 300 nuns from the order, who began the Immaculate Heart Community, an organization existing today. Nevertheless, encounter groups proved to be a psychological technology that helped to infuse a modern psychological—specifically, a humanistic psychological—perspective into contemporary religious life. © 2005 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

Between 1967 and 1970, a revolution took place within a Roman Catholic religious order, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM), a teaching order that ran an extensive educational system, including Immaculate Heart College (IHC), eight high schools, and 50 elementary schools in California. There are several accounts of what happened, but the result can be stated simply. In 1970, the Los Angeles IHM nuns "became the largest single group of religious women in the history of the American Catholic Church to become 'laicized'—that is, formally released from their vows" (Massa, 1999, p. 189). While some of the women simply left, the majority founded a lay organization, the Immaculate Heart (IH) Community, which still exists. When the questions turn to why this revolution occurred and what the consequences were, accounts differ markedly. William Coulson, a former colleague of Carl Rogers, charges that the encounter groups he and Rogers facilitated with the order were a major contributing cause. In the 1970s, he saw their departure as a courageous step of personal growth; later on, he saw it as a rebellious self-centered act prompted by the seductions of humanistic psychology (Coulson, 1972, 1994). In fact, Coulson's confession about his own part in this affair, as he has depicted it in printed interviews and on audiotapes, got me interested in this incident. I teach at a Catholic university, and it was through students who wanted to convince me of the dangers of humanistic psychology that I initially learned about the IHM story.

Religion, Psychology, and Catholics in the United States, 1950–1970

Questions of the relationships between science and religion in the history of psychology must reckon with changes in both science and religion in time and culture. Brooke (1991) disputes the inevitability of any standard conceptions of their relationship and, indeed, of any

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standard conception of what science and religion are. The English word *science* does not include theology, but Latin *scientia* and German *Wissenschaft* do. When we say "religion," we refer to the personal beliefs of individuals about the Divine and to institutions built upon and justifying such beliefs. The notion that religion deals with beliefs is a fairly recent historical arrival in the West (Smith, 1963), coming during a change in which our bodies became subject to the state and our souls to the churches (Asad, 1993), to put the case broadly.

For much of the twentieth century, one of the major divides in the American cultural landscape was between Protestant and Catholic (Wuthnow, 1988). Beginning in the 1960s, this division gave way to a great extent, and a new conflict between liberal and conservative Christians, as much within denominations as among them, began to take form. Differences between liberal and conservative included attitudes about active involvement in the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements and about changes in theology and in church government (Wuthnow, 1988), with liberals advocating protest and change. By the end of the decade, "liberal" came "to include a wide range of not only Judeo-Christian theologies, but also the practices of . . . quasi-religious 'human potential' movements" (Wuthnow, 1988, p. 152). For their part, conservatives emphasized personal conversion and evangelization. Within the Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council had inaugurated changes in liturgy, reforms of religious orders, and increased participation of the laity. Opposition to the changes and to the extent of change that the Council mandated developed in places such as Southern California, where a long-brewing conflict between a conservative archbishop, Cardinal James Francis McIntyre (1886–1979), and a liberal order of nuns, the IHMs, came to a head.

Until the 1960s, the boundary lines in Catholic thought and practice between psychology and religion were clearly drawn along neoscholastic lines. This meant, in theory, that psychology had autonomy insofar as it investigated matters of fact, and it had autonomy in treatment, so long as it did not advocate behavior contrary to Church teaching. This autonomy existed within a hierarchical arrangement of the sciences, with philosophy having the last word on foundational issues, such as the soul, and the Church having the last word on spiritual and moral issues (Pope Pius XII, 1953). While Catholic psychologists, psychiatrists, philosophers, and Church officials challenged the boundaries between psychology and religion, especially where psychology touched upon moral issues (Gillespie, 2001; Misiak & Staudt, 1954), the boundaries were, in principle, clear enough, because of the Church's teaching authority on matters of faith and morals. Some Catholic officials recognized the value of psychological intervention into religious and spiritual matters, not only in the need for psychiatric treatment and psychotherapy for Catholics, but also a need for the psychological screening of candidates for the religious life and for psychological treatment for members of the clergy. While distrust of psychology existed within Catholic circles, Catholic psychologists and psychiatrists did form an alliance with the Church, founded on the principles of autonomy and hierarchical subordination.

Humanistic psychology questioned psychology's definition of science and its relation to religion. Most relevant to the present discussion, the humanists disputed the fact/value dichotomy that was essential to the partition between psychology as a natural science and religion. Religious and spiritual concerns are important to human life, so they are directly relevant to psychology, said the humanists. Taylor (1999) points to the mid-1960s as the time when the humanists' emphasis on self-actualization and the importance of deeply felt personal experience merged with what he calls the "shadow culture." This last phrase refers to a tradition of American spirituality existing largely outside established denominations and emphasizing personal experience of the transcendent. The boundaries between humanistic psychology as a new form of scientific psychology, however loosely defined, and as a "spiritual

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psychology" bowing to no authority other than personal experience, are unclear, to say the least. In places such as Esalen,[1] these strands were bound together in various permutations, making it difficult to generalize about "humanistic psychology." Nevertheless, humanistic psychologists such as Carl Rogers emphasized the individual's search for meaning and authenticity in relationships with self and other. Compared to the dominant behaviorist and psychoanalytic approaches of the time, humanistic psychology, the "third force" in American psychology, seemed a good fit for Catholic psychologists (Severin, 1965; Smet, 1954; Vaughan, 1969), because the humanists took spiritual concerns seriously and criticized the dominant psychologies in very much the same terms as had the neoscholastics.

With the appearance of humanistic psychologies, the alliance between psychology and the Church changed. The changes actually came from both directions, the Church and the psychologists, some of whom were members of religious orders (such as Adrian van Kaam, C.S.Sp., Charles A. Curran, S.J., Eugene Kennedy, M.M., and Frank Severin, S.J.). In considering the higher reaches of human nature, including spiritual ones, and in articulating philosophical dimensions of psychology, the humanists crossed into territory occupied by Catholic philosophers and theologians. By and large, they were welcomed, especially because the latter groups were questioning their own self-conceptions and abandoning the neoscholastic model of the sciences.

While there were many varieties of humanistic psychology, including Christian humanistic psychologies (Ellens & Sloat, 1999; Severin, 1967), the one most important for the present case was that of Rogers. Rogers was, by 1950, the most important psychologist for Protestant pastoral counselors and theologians (Holifield, 1983, pp. 295, 300). Holifield observes that the ascendance of Rogerian counseling resulted from its congruence with main trends in liberal Protestant thought after World War II: "the revolt against moralism and the critique of mass culture" (p. 277) on the one hand and Rogers's belief in the essential goodness of human nature on the other. In the Catholic world, the work of Charles A. Curran, S.J. (1913–1978), who had studied with Rogers, did much to show the compatibility of Rogerian psychotherapy with Thomistic thought (Curran, 1952). Catholic psychologists also recognized the limitation of Rogerian counseling, for it presupposed that the client had an informed understanding of what his or her goals in life should be and that the nondirective counselor could not supply that education (Arnold & Gasson, 1954, p. 457). Rogers (1964/1989) did not share this position. In what he called "the valuing process," he did not find that "what the ideal ought to be for all men" (Arnold & Gasson, 1954, p. 457) was easy to determine. He saw contemporary culture as becoming "increasingly scientific and relativistic, and the rigid, absolute views on values which come to us from the past appear anachronistic" to many modern individuals. With accelerating change being the norm in our lives, traditional values "appear to be in a state of disintegration or collapse. Men question whether there are, or can be, any universal values" (p. 169). Rogers (1964/1989) stated that psychotherapists should not provide a value orientation for clients, because a therapist should not be "a modern priest." While Arnold and Gasson saw a need for moral education, Rogers held that the client, based on his or her personal experience, must reckon with essentially irrational introjects (values transmitted by tradition in upbringing). In this way, the client could achieve a mature valuing process rooted in "the wisdom of the organism"—that is, on a realization that "his feelings and his intuitions may be wiser than his mind" (p. 179). With the decline of neoscholasticism,

1. Michael Murphy opened the Esalen Center in 1962, with seminars given by Alan Watts, Aldous Huxley, and others. By the mid-1960s, Esalen groups promoted "personal growth, expansion of human potentialities, and encounter" (Back, 1987, p. 66). It was one of the places where humanistic psychologists fused with the counterculture movement of the 1960s, with an emphasis on sensuality and spirituality.

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many Catholic psychologists affirmed Rogers's analysis of values. Kennedy (1971) sounded a note similar to Rogers: "Two of the least attractive but most powerful features of extrinsic religious faith are (1) a misperception and mistrust of human personality [and] (2) a willingness to settle for the hypocritical pursuit of an exterior style of so-called perfection" (p. 35). Those who implemented reforms within the Church in the 1960s found much to like in humanistic psychology, especially its emphasis on personal experience. Moreover, the calling into question of the "extrinsic" aspects of religion found resonance with reforms of liturgy and other matters, such as the clothing required of nuns.

Encounter Groups, Psychology, and Religion

When the leaders of the IHM sisters brought in Rogers, Coulson, and the other members of the team from the Western Behavioral Science Institute (WBSI) as consultants for the order's reform of its educational system, the psychologists organized a series of encounter groups as their main contribution. As encounter groups were a significant point of convergence for religion and psychology at the time, a brief look at this history is in order. The word *encounter* originally meant a face-to-face meeting between adversaries (the root word is *counter*) and it later developed the meaning of a chance meeting with someone (*Oxford English Dictionary*). By the early 1960s, *encounter* had acquired the theological meaning of an I-Thou meeting in which I discover oneness with the other and my own uniqueness (van Kaam, 1967). It was only in 1967 that the word took on the connotations that characterize "encounter groups," and the *Oxford English Dictionary* credits Rogers with this new meaning (see also Yalom, 1995, p. 486).[2] "Encounter group" is but one name given to various kinds of group interactions that appeared in sudden abundance in the late 1960s. The encounter-group phenomenon had various predecessors, including T-groups (which Kurt Lewin helped begin in the 1940s), group therapy, client-centered counseling, and, more broadly, American Protestant Revivals and existentialism, both of which emphasized personal commitment in the face-to-face meeting with others.

In the historical background of the encounter groups, then, was a mix of psychology and religion. As Yalom (1995) depicts typical encounter groups:

> They range in size from eight to twenty members—large enough to encourage face-to-face interactions, yet small enough to permit all members to interact. They are generally time-limited, often compressed into hours or days. They focus to a large extent on the here-and-now. They transcend etiquette and encourage the doffing of traditional social facades. Finally, these groups value interpersonal honesty, exploration, confrontation, heightened emotional expressiveness, and self-disclosure. The goals of a group are often vague. Occasionally they stress merely the provision of an experience: joy, self-awareness, entertainment. But more often, they implicitly or explicitly strive for some *change*—in behavior, in attitudes, in values, in life-style, in self-actualization. . . . [T]he experience is considered not therapy but "growth." (p. 486)

Encounter groups of all kinds proliferated during the late 1960s and 1970s. Back (1987), in a major social psychological study, observed that the encounter-group movement thrived in part because many people searching for spiritual connections in their lives but disaffected with established Judeo-Christian religions found meaning in the groups. By the 1980s, the movement as such faded. However, as Wuthnow (1994) indicates, the encounter-group movement has not died; it has mutated, becoming ubiquitous in American society in the form of small

2. Kurt Back (1987, p. 186) writes that "the terms encounter, self-actualizing, and creativity seem to be almost interchangeably used" among those involved in the encounter-group movement.

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groups, including self-help and prayer groups (p. 65). These groups exist within and without established religions, and many have spiritual interests. The biggest reason that people join small groups, according to the Wuthnow (1994) survey, is "the desire to grow as a person," which is an echo of the encounter-group movement. Yalom (1995) seconds this assessment: "Is it possible that remnants of the encounter group are to be found in these small, church-sponsored groups?. . . [B]eginning in the 1960s and 1970s, traditional religious institutions . . . made much explicit use of encounter technology" (pp. 482–483). A further attraction of encounter groups, binding together religious and humanistic psychological interests, was the encounter group as refuge from a world dominated by large-scale impersonal institutions and by technological relationships. Encounter groups promised intimacy, honesty, acceptance, and even transcendence. In an encounter group, the hope existed that one could really be one's true self. There were, needless to say, many variations in types of groups, some of which, such as nude marathon encounters, were not Rogerian except perhaps by dim inspiration, but the emphasis on personal growth and authentic self-expression was common to them all.

"Self-Directed Change in an Educational System"

In 1967, Rogers published "A Plan for Self-Directed Change in an Educational System," a proposal to develop a type of education suited to a rapidly changing world. The idea was to foster "a climate conducive to personal growth, a climate in which innovation is not frightening, in which the creative capacities of administrators, teachers and students are nourished and expressed rather than stifled" (Rogers, 1967, p. 718). Intensive group experiences were to be the core of the plan, because these "basic encounter" groups can improve the leadership and communication skills of participants by providing a "climate of openness, risk-taking, and honesty" (p. 718). Groups for administrators, teachers, classes, parents, and also mixed groups with representatives from all constituencies would ensure that there is general commitment to the process: "this new tool for change cannot be used in the most effective manner unless the *whole system* is moving toward changingness"[3] (p. 719). The plan, then, proposed to alter the system such that institutional roles would be second to personal relations and creativity. He concluded by asking, "ANY TAKERS?" (p. 730).

The IHM nuns were. Dr. Bonnie Flynn McWhinney,[4] an IHM nun teaching in the IHC Education Department, already familiar with Rogers and encounter groups, contacted the WBSI, where Rogers and Coulson were located. McWhinney (1974) recounted having read Rogers's *On Becoming a Person* during graduate school in 1964 and having seen in Rogers's ideas much value for herself and her community. Then, after a workshop at Esalen, she organized an encounter group as part of her tertianship, a time of reflection on "the commitment of our lives to God through vows" (p. 191). She recalled that the encounter produced "openness, confrontation, honesty, trust, joy, love, community" (p. 192). She instigated a call to the WBSI, and Coulson came to the IHM center in Santa Barbara, bringing with him copies of "Self-Directed Change in an Educational System" (Rogers, 1967). She then convinced Anita Caspary (Mother Mary Humiliata at the time), the mother general, and Sister Helen

3. Rogers defined "changingness," apparently a neologism, as "a reliance on process rather than on static knowledge" (1983, p. 120).

4. In an introductory comment to McWhinney's (1974) account that suggests the extent to which the events implicated identity issues, Rogers recounted: "I first made contact with the author of this 'letter' when Sister Catherine John entered my office in the flowing robes of her floor-sweeping habit . . . . This was early in 1967. Later I knew her as Sister Veronica, then Dr. Veronica Flynn, then, after she left the Immaculate Heart Community, as Bonnie Flynn, and finally as Mrs. Will McWhinney" (p. 190). The first of the changes resulted from reforms in which the sisters reverted from the names they took upon entering the order to their given names.

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Kelley, the president of IHC, to meet with Rogers and Coulson, to see if they could be the "takers" Rogers asked for. Rogers, after some initial reluctance, agreed to work with the order on reforms of their educational system.

Just before the project began, "a special workshop was organized for the delegates to the ninth general chapter of 1967" (Caspary, 2003, p. 240). This chapter, a meeting of the governing members of the order, was to decide on how to implement reforms stemming from the Vatican Council. The Second Vatican Council had called for a renewal and updating of religious orders by means of a return to the orders' founding sources of inspiration. Without elaborating on the theological, ecclesiastic, and political details of this mandate for reform (see Caspary, 2003; Ebaugh, 1977), it is important to note that for the IHM sisters, their reflections included consideration of the order's educational system, its primary responsibility. The results of the chapter, the "Decrees of the Ninth General Chapter," expressed an approach to education congruent with Rogers's ideas: "The goal of education . . . is also, and more importantly, to develop flexible, adaptive individuals, open to change and willing to learn continuously. Accordingly, the process of learning must become an increasingly dynamic one in which teacher and student cooperate in inquiry, experimentation and discovery" ("Decrees," in Caspary, 2003, pp. 249–250). With this spirit of renewal and experimentation, the order proceeded in 1967. It was not as if the "old rules" were working, as there was already concern on the parts of the order and Cardinal McIntyre over the number of requests from IHM nuns for dispensations from their vows (Weber, 1997, p. 419). Reform of the order and of its educational system went hand-in-hand. Two of the main difficulties the sisters experienced in the schools were "sharply increased workloads due to higher enrollments and in many cases a lack of adequate preparation" (Caspary, 2003, p. 52) in teacher education. The plans for reform, however, intensified their ongoing difficulties with Cardinal McIntyre.

Did this "special workshop" influence deliberations? The chapter "had come close to finishing their proclamation by the time they first participated in an encounter-group workshop" (Kirschenbaum, 1979, p. 384). The consultants Rogers brought in to study the experiment with the IHM nuns concluded, "[I]t appears that the workshop with the Chapter delegates may have helped them in some degree to have the courage to map out new ways of life" (quoted in Kirschenbaum, 1979, p. 384). Caspary's (2003) account agrees with this assessment. She says Rogers's influence on the changes in the community and, ultimately, the decision to seek release from their vows was "indirect": "The decision . . . to write the decrees and embrace the process of experimentation was rooted in a deep commitment to the gospel, the directives of the Second Vatican Council, and the urgent need to educate the sisters in order to continue the IHM tradition" (p. 240). Clearly, the project to reform an educational system was caught up in a larger drama of change that determined the outcome of events. The form of the encounter group was, however, congruent with the direction of change.

The project with Rogers lasted until 1970, although his greatest involvement with the order was in the second half of 1967. This was how the project looked: After initial planning between Rogers's staff and the leaders of the IHM order, a series of encounter groups took place, involving IHC administrators and faculty, high school administrators and faculty, high school student leaders, and administrators and teachers from 22 of the elementary schools, a total of 301 participants. Twenty members of Rogers's staff were involved in the groups as well. Toward the end of the first year (1967–1968), the leading administrators asked for task-oriented (rather than growth-oriented) groups, already common in business settings, which Rogers helped to facilitate. There was internal opposition to the project, which in part accounts for the withdrawal of Rogers and his staff from the IHM system after the first year. In fact, Rogers (1974) reported that outside assessment of the program, the research aspect of

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the IHM project, indicated that by November 1967 "polarization" had begun, and that by the spring of 1968, a phase called "Beginning of the Formal Rejection Process" was under way. Encounter-group activity "sharply declined," and by the fall of 1968, the WBSI staff was not involved at the college or any of the schools, with one exception (Rogers, 1974, p. 186).

In his 1970 report (in Rogers, 1974), Rogers wrote there had been innovations at IHC, "in the direction of involving greater student participation, greater student initiative, more self-responsibility, self-discipline, and deeper cooperation between faculty and students" (p. 185). Rogers noted that the outside evaluators of the project observed that it was not possible to find a direct causal link between the program and the changes at the college; however, they did point to more self-direction among students and greater disruption in communication on campus as a result of the groups polarizing the community. Rogers concluded his 1970 report encouraged.

He remained encouraged (Rogers, 1974). His biographer Howard Kirschenbaum (1979) noted that the National Training Laboratory groups had developed more sophisticated strategies of intervening in organizational settings, and that the use of encounter groups in the IHM setting was naïve. Rogers did admit his own naïveté but felt that the results had been favorable. Kirschenbaum concluded by asking: "Who is right? Rogers says their project was effective; look at the Immaculate Heart system today. His critics say he was playing with fire . . . and it certainly could have been more effective" (p. 387). Kirschenbaum (1991) refuted Coulson's assertion that Rogers came to repudiate his educational philosophy. He never did so, even if he did come to think that the IHM intervention had not been wholly successful.

Rogers's final self-evaluation of the IHM project appeared in his revised edition of *Freedom to Learn* (Rogers, 1983), in a chapter entitled "A Pattern of Failure." Rogers claimed that the project successfully aided the educators in instituting egalitarian and self-directed forms of learning, and that it increased polarization within the community, most noticeably among the IHC faculty. The failure occurred not because of the encounter groups, but because of outside interventions: Cardinal McIntyre's opposition and later, in 1980, the financially driven decision to close IHC. Rogers concluded that the IHM project, like some others, suffered above all from an unwillingness of those in power to endure the empowering of the individual. He saw his approach to education as "profoundly revolutionary" (Rogers, 1983, p. 250).

The congruence of Rogers's plan and the order's goals was evident in an article by the president of IHC, Sister Helen Kelley (1968), to describe "structuring an institution for the development of persons" (p. 77). Kelley did not mince words in her concluding remarks, where, after describing how faculty and students should be nurtured to be creative, she criticized the "academic piety" that "endorses and even welcomes administrative obstacles to profound institutional criticism and change," resulting in "choices against human development" (p. 79). She concluded with an admonition that made a less than subtle reference to the opposition she was facing from Cardinal McIntyre:

> To the extent that these leaders indulge in occasional public acknowledgements of a credibility gap between the official doctrine of the college and the pedestrian, provincial and parochial private pieties which determine so much of institutional practice—to that extent at least the college is trying to stretch the minds, hearts and souls of the community of persons which constitute it, and to that extent it states in a demonstrable way that, however it may be structured, it is *for* human development. (p. 79)

The structure and purposes of encounter groups thus mirrored much of the desired reform efforts of the order.

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The Order's Final Encounter with the Cardinal

The college and the order had had encounters—in the older meaning of that term—with Cardinal McIntyre for over a decade. McIntyre in particular objected to Sister Corita Kent's art and to certain speakers, such as Hans Küng, being brought to campus, well before his objection to the 1967 plans to reform the order.[5] Turk (1971) reports that numerous reform efforts on the part of the order, before, during, and after the Vatican Council, caused conflict with Cardinal McIntyre: involvement in civil rights activities, simplification of their habit in 1960, and the teaching of Joyce's *Ulysses* at IHC.[6] It is not my intention to give the complete history of the events that led to the formation of the IH Community in 1970, as there are ample accounts already (Caspary, 2003; Massa, 1999; Weber, 1997). I simply want to highlight two aspects of the conflict. First, it came to a head at the same time that the encounter groups were occurring, in the academic year 1967–1968. Second, the issues at stake in the conflict did not include encounter groups.

The IHM chapter met from July to August 1967. After Cardinal McIntyre's receipt of the Decrees, he called the leaders of the order to his office. (In the terms of Church law, the order was not under the direct authority of the Cardinal, although—his point—all Catholics in the diocese were under his authority.) One main issue at the 16 October meeting, according to Caspary, was the nuns' efforts to reform their habit, the clothing they wore (Caspary, 2003, p. 120). If they did not agree to wear the traditional habits, they would no longer be teaching in these schools after June 1968. He also objected to the Decrees' calls for experimentation in the form of religious life (more flexibility in the routines of convent life) and in the sisters' occupational choices. The Decrees "epitomized a philosophy he would not permit in his archdiocese" (Caspary, 2003, p. 124), as he accused the order of disobedience over the years. The nuns insisted that they had the authority to write and carry out the Decrees. The dispute went public, and both the order and the cardinal found support across the nation.

What followed was a series of visitations by apostolic delegates sent by the Vatican to inquire into the situation, the first in November 1967. Around that time, sisters who dissented from the Decrees (about 10 percent of the order) became an identifiable group. The formal separation of the two groups of nuns proceeded during the latter part of 1968–1969. The Vatican compelled the larger group in 1969 to apply for dispensations from their vows. Some 350 of the sisters left to form the IH Community in 1970, with about 50 rejecting the Decrees and remaining a religious order (Caspary, 2003, p. 210; Wittberg, 1994, p. 216). After McIntyre retired in January 1970, the IH Community was invited back to teach in the parochial schools.[7] In 2000, Cardinal Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles apologized for the dispute to the IH Community (Caspary, 2003, p. 220).

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5. Corita Kent (1918–1986) entered the IHM order in 1936; she earned a master's from the University of Southern California in 1951. She taught at IHC, becoming well known for her silk screens. Among other accomplishments, she designed the first U.S. "love" stamp. She left the IHM order in 1968. The IH Community has a museum with much of her artwork. Küng was an official theologian at the Second Vatican Council. In the late 1970s, he came into conflict with the Vatican and resigned his official teaching position.

6. Midge Turk entered the IHM order around 1950 and remained a nun until released from her vows in 1966. Her autobiographical account depicts the events that preceded the arrival of Rogers and his team and the final denouement of the conflict between the nuns and the cardinal.

7. McIntyre announced his resignation, at age 83, in mid-January 1970, two months after the smaller group of nuns were accepted by McIntyre and granted official status with the Vatican. McIntyre was facing other opposition at the time, including a 1969 Christmas Eve demonstration against him by members of Catolicos por la Raza. The establishment of the Immaculate Heart Community came February 2, 1970. Archbishop Timothy Manning, McIntyre's successor, offered a conciliatory message on the occasion.

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The restructuring of the IHM order was a pronounced but not unusual occurrence among religious men and women at the time.[8] Beginning in 1967, there was a mass exodus of women from religious orders; between 1965 and 1990, there was a 43 percent decrease in the number of American nuns (Ebaugh, Lorence, & Chafetz, 1996, p. 175). Explanations for the departures are numerous, including educational level of women (Ebaugh, 1977, p. 122) and increasing employment opportunities for women (Ebaugh et al., 1996). Wittberg (1994) points to loss of "role clarity" in a context of hostility from the Church hierarchy over reform efforts as an additional factor. Caspary (2003) emphasizes the latter, concluding that sexism played an important role (p. 220). In this regard, the IHM events were part of the emergence of a Catholic feminism (Rader, 1989, p, 184). These explanations overlap, and it is beyond the scope of this article to evaluate them. The question that remains is, What was the role of humanistic psychology in this transformation?

Coulson's Assessments of the Effects of the Encounter Groups

The history of the IHM sisters has intrinsic interest, although probably little for the history of psychology. It has become a topic for the history of psychology, mainly because of Coulson's charge that the Rogerian encounter groups seduced the nuns away from their vows into rebellion against the Church by enticing them to follow their feelings and impulses. Coulson's specific charge has been repeated by some (Kilpatrick, 1983; Weber, 1997) and his more extensive critiques along the same line by still others (Vitz, 1994).

Coulson received a PhD in philosophy in 1964 from Notre Dame, with a dissertation entitled "Client-Centered Therapy and the Nature of Man." In 1963, he contacted Rogers and came to work with Rogers as a research fellow, first at the University of Wisconsin, and later at the WBSI in La Jolla. In 1965, he completed a dissertation for an EdD in counseling psychology, "The Impact of Openness to Experience of Small-Group Problem Solving," from the University of California at Berkeley. He edited a book with Rogers (*Man and the Science of Man*) in 1968 and a series, "Studies of the Person," with Rogers between 1968 and 1974. At some point in the 1970s, Coulson became disaffected with the use of a client-centered approach outside the confines of psychotherapy, in areas such as education. Coulson became an activist, speaking out against what he saw as value relativism in drug and sex education curricula and affective education, and warning religious groups about the dangers of psychotherapy. In what follows, I present the varying accounts Coulson has given of the IHM project. The first were glowing; later they were ominous.

Coulson (1972) addressed what happened when "the free encounter group is made a fact of organization life" (p. 100). Many of the participants from the IHM educational system were enthusiastic about the groups, according to Coulson, appreciative of the ways that the groups stripped away institutional roles and personas for a time and allowed for free, open, honest, and deeply emotional exchanges. Others in the community felt the groups were simply disruptive and thought it a mistake to have agreed to three years of such activity. Coulson (1972) pointed to an intrinsic conflict between the dynamics of encounter groups and those of established institutions: they do not seek the same ends. According to Coulson, the nondirective approach as applied in an institutional setting was disruptive by opposing individual aspirations and institutional purposes, leading to group participants "to act above all else on the basis of their individual perceptions" (p. 152). The encounter groups had an "anti-institu-

8. In 1965, "Archbishop Karl Alter legislated for the lives of the Glenmary Sisters and caused half of them to leave their community and form a lay group" (Ewens, 1989, p. 43).

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tional" effect, in that successful encounters will encourage people to leave their institution, except those "whose lack of hope for personally satisfying lives causes them to be content to manage the spiritual wasteland that the bureaucratic school eventually becomes" (pp. 155–156). The encounter group made private and intimate relationships the norm for public and civic relationships.

Coulson further developed his interpretation of encounter groups in *A Sense of Community* (1973), where he made his case for organizations based on openness and individual autonomy. He described the nuns' break in positive terms:

> "Are we doing what we want to do," they had asked, "when we let Cardinal McIntyre tell us when to get up in the morning and what clothes to wear and how to say our prayers?" When their answer was a near-unanimous "No," they stopped doing it, and then eventually the Cardinal didn't want them teaching in his schools. Eventually he retired from office, and now the nuns are back. Except they aren't nuns any more. They are members of the Immaculate Heart *Community*. They are experimenting with new forms of freedom and self-determination within institutional life. (p. 75)

After "the concentrated doses of community which they experienced in their encounter groups" (Coulson, 1973, p. 76), the sisters could no longer tolerate restrictions on their self-determination. Coulson's chief complaint about the encounter-group movement was that it was institutionalizing openness and the expression of feelings, replacing "a benign anarchy" (Coulson, 1971, p. 152) of early encounter groups with coercion, "the demand to suspend judgment, to suspend critical awareness" (p. 145). Hence, his repeated complaint that "gimmicks"—techniques, structured exercises, goal setting by group leaders—subverted what good the groups might accomplish. Structure and routine are the death of authentic encounter and self-expression.

Coulson never rejected the client-centered approach in psychotherapy, although he concluded that the encounter movement, unmoored from any traditional background, went astray. Coulson (1994) later concluded that the encounter groups promoted a distorted view of authority and that, because of the groups, the sisters "did not want to be under anyone's authority, except the authority of their imperial inner selves" (p. 13). According to Coulson (1994), the encounter groups directly influenced the proceedings of the IHM chapter: "They had been called, as all religious orders were, to reevaluate their mode of living, and to bring it more in line with the charisms [i.e., charisma] of their founder. So they were ready for us. They were ready for an intensive look at themselves with the help of humanistic psychologists. We overcame their traditions, we overcame their faith" (p. 14). His revised conclusion was that when individuals are alienated from traditions, they are tempted "into abandoning their responsibilities to one another" (Coulson, 1989, p. 5). Moreover, before and after his reassessment of the WBSI intervention with the order, Coulson distrusted the transformation of psychotherapy into a technology. In place of a rootless approach, Coulson (1989) called for an "embodied client-centered therapy," one rooted in tradition and rejecting the "aggressively abstract quality of what humanistic psychology has become in the United States" (p. 5). The encounter-group movement, in his assessment, mirrored the technological order that it protested.

A Religious Order and Psychology

Caspary's account includes a direct reply to Coulson's charge that the encounter groups led to the decision to stand up to Cardinal McIntyre. Given that Rogers and his staff conducted a workshop for the delegates to the 1967 chapter, she concludes, "[I]t is accurate to say that the 1967 chapter of renewal proceedings were affected by Rogers and his staff"

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(Caspary, 2003, p. 240). The decisions of the chapter, however, had their basis in the ongoing reflections of the community relating to their mission and in light of the Vatican Council. Her reply to Coulson's claim that Rogers's team "destroyed" the order is that his charge is "blatantly false." What Coulson saw as demise, Caspary calls a "healthy and growing religious community" (Caspary, 2003, p. 241).

The IHM sisters had already had considerable experience with psychology before they encountered Rogers and Coulson in 1967. From the late 1950s, the order actively pursued understanding and guidance on mental health issues from many, including Noël Mailloux, O.P. (Caspary, 2003, pp. 49–50). Mailloux (1909–1997) was a leading Thomistic thinker and prominent Canadian psychologist (Bélanger & Sabourin, 1997), who had been involved in the St. John's Summer Institute for pastoral psychology during the 1950s. In addition to Mailloux, other psychologists addressed the sisters, including van Kaam and Kennedy, priest-psychologists. All were concerned in varying ways with the renewal of religious life.

The community not only brought in these psychologists, but also contained psychologists itself, including Sisters Aloyse and Margaret-Rose Welch. With a doctorate in psychology from the University of Southern California (Turk, 1971, p. 150), Sister Aloyse (1959/1960, 1961, 1964) wrote about the psychological screening of candidates for religious life and on mental illness among members of religious communities.[9] Sister Margaret-Rose Welch followed the pioneering lead of Sister Aloyse, obtained an MA in psychology at the University of Montreal in 1964, and did doctoral work at Duquesne University between 1964–1966, when Duquesne was developing a phenomenological psychology program under van Kaam, Amedeo Giorgi, and others. As an example of further involvement, Sister M. William (Helen Kelley) had participated in a mental health institute in 1959 as a staff member, along with Mailloux, Leo Bartemeier, and Sister Annette Walters.[10]

Early in the 1960s, van Kaam and Charles Maes from Duquesne came to California at the invitation of the Reverend Mother Regina, the head of the order, to conduct a group workshop at the meeting of the superiors of the order (Turk, 1971, p. 150–151). Van Kaam returned a few years later, in the mid-1960s, where he taught a class and worked on a book on the psychology of religion, with Sister Agnes Marie (Midge Turk) taking dictation and typing (Turk, 1971, p. 163). What was van Kaam's approach to the reform of religious life? Van Kaam (1968) claimed that alienation from our own experience, a humanistic psychological theme, was pervasive in contemporary society and that an "authentic spirituality" is possible only for a person with a maturing personality, characterized by a freedom to be open to what and whom calls to him or her. He was most concerned about the formation of young people entering religious life, and so his workshop with superiors of the order probably reflected these concerns. He did not advocate abandoning traditional forms as if they were merely husks: "Rather, the answer is to try to experience the great truths of religious living in accordance with my situation of unique commitment to this life form in this specific time and place" (p.

9. Turk (1971) wrote that Sister Aloyse "startled American sisterhoods by becoming a psychologist" (pp. 149–150).

10. Welch's dissertation, "Religious Obedience as a Value: An Analysis of the Experience," was completed in 1983. She notes, "This research was commenced in the late 1960's in the midst of the post-Vatican II renewal efforts of religious congregations. The writing of this dissertation was interrupted in order to return to California to assume a leadership role in the renewal efforts of my own congregation. The changes that were initiated included some that attempted to address problems that surfaced in the present research in the manner in which religious values are experienced" (Welch, 1983, p. viii). Bartemeier (1895–1982) was a leading Catholic psychiatrist of the postwar period. Sister Annette Walters (1910–1978), a PhD psychologist (in experimental psychology in 1941 from the University of Minnesota), entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1929. She published widely, became a clinical psychologist, and led the Sisters Formation Conference from 1960–1964, advocating the types of reform that the IHM order supported. See Gillespie (2001) for further details.

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251). For this, psychological insight is necessary but insufficient in order to develop one's personality within religious life. For van Kaam, those in the religious life had to steer between the Scylla of rigid forms and the Charybdis of lack of structure.

Caspary (2003) writes that van Kaam's understandings, especially in *Religion and Personality* (van Kaam, 1964) "became for the IHMs an important underlying philosophy in the formulation of their 1967 decrees" (p. 51). The "stress on the sacredness of the human person and his fulfillment within community seeks to avoid both the extreme of isolating individualism and that of repressive collectivism" ("Decrees," in Caspary, 2003, p. 251). Community and individuality were two goods to be sought, the community supporting "unique personal talents" and the person understanding "that her talents are to be used for the larger good" (p. 252) of the Christian vocation. The statements there relating to individuality and community are closer to van Kaam of 1968 than to Coulson of 1973, where community exists for the purpose of personal growth.

Perhaps the decisive psychological issue separating the order and the cardinal was obedience. McIntyre may have been an autocrat, but a theological tradition supported him. Turk (1971) relates that when she entered the IHM order in the late 1940s, one of the few books in her room was "Tanquerey," referring to the writing of Adolphe Tanquerey (1854–1932), an authority on spirituality in the Catholic Church in the first half of the twentieth century. Tanquerey was especially important for the formation of those in the religious life, and it would have been a part of the thinking for someone as traditional as Cardinal McIntyre. Tanquerey (1930) defined obedience as "a supernatural, moral virtue which inclines us to submit our will to that of our lawful superiors, insofar as they are the representatives of God" (Section 1057). While there are limits to obedience, the thrust of Tanquerey is that obedience requires that we submit "that which we cling to most tenaciously, our own will" (Section 371). When souls are perfect, "they submit their *judgment* to that of their superior, without even considering the reasons for his command" (Section 1064). No doubt, this is what the cardinal expected from the sisters, for their sakes as much as his.

If Tanquerey stressed self-submission, Rogers championed self-assertion. In a book review published around the time he was beginning the encounter groups with the IHM order, Rogers wrote how in the Catholic Church "the individual has no right to think or search" (p. 13). The book under review was James Kavanaugh's (1967) *A Modern Priest Looks at His Outmoded Church*. Rogers wrote that the Church is "legalistic, inhuman, with no place for love or for persons, only a place for laws and rules and orders" (p. 13). Rogers here simply affirmed the self-expression of an individual, Kavanaugh, without critique, although with judgment. Elsewhere, Rogers was less confrontational but as assertive. In an article published toward the end of the IHM project, Rogers (1969) concluded: "In a climate of freedom and facilitation, group members become more spontaneous and flexible, more closely related to their feelings—open to their experience, and closer and more expressively intimate in their interpersonal relationships. . . . Yet such a model violates many religious and cultural points of view" (p. 61). Rogers's emphasis was on the individual and the validating of the experience of the individual. Institutions would have to change to accommodate them.

By contrast, the Duquesne psychologists had a much more irenic conception of tradition and obedience. There is no real individuality without tradition for van Kaam. Indeed, true obedience in the religious life requires a mature personality, so that insofar as obedience means surrender of one's own judgment, it means surrender of one's self (van Kaam, 1964). Such an act is a gift of oneself, and only a mature person can do so freely, without undue anxiety. Van Kaam, like Rogers, assumed that alienation from self is a common feature of modern society, so that much in the way of personality development and therapy is a prerequisite for maturity in the religious life. Along these lines, Maes (1984), drawing on van Kaam, included in the truly obedi-

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ent mode of existence that "we must listen reverentially and appreciatively to the messages of our bodies, of our emotions" (p. 215), as part of listening to how God speaks to us in daily life. Van Kaam and Maes stressed self-understanding and self-love as integral to the possibility of authentic obedience, whereas for Tanquerey the accent fell on the dangers of self-love.

Welch, a superior in the order and leader in the IH Community (she served as president of the IH Community from 1973–1981), addressed obedience among religious in her dissertation, a qualitative study based on accounts drawn from members of the IHM order in the 1960s. She summarized her findings in these words:

> Obedience is a co-constituted relationship, linking the individual and the community, the individual and religious meaning. The absence of direct dialogue between authority and the individual about the meaning of obedience is a major cause of felt discrepancies between the ideals taught and the actual experience. Obedience practiced in a manner that destroys its nature results in experiences of alienation, meaninglessness, and subjugation. Authentic obedience will provide experiences where personal autonomy is linked to a sense of community. (Welch, 1983, p. xi)

Welch shared with van Kaam his "diagnosis" of alienation from self and the crisis of authority in technological societies, where "the uniqueness of persons, spontaneity, and growth have been suppressed by concern for the values of the common, the routine, the standardized" (p. 8). Among the difficulties Welch found was that often there was "an absence of dialogue" between the superior giving commands and the religious who was to obey, thus undermining authentic obedience as a co-constituted reality (p. 113), leaving the religious to experience herself as "unfree, incapable of self-transcendence" (p. 115). Welch concluded by stating that while the older conception of obedience proved in the contemporary world detrimental to the spiritual life, the present danger (in the 1980s) is an overemphasis on "isolating individualism" (p. 127). Given the dialogical nature of obedience, she stated:

> The style and practices of authority prior to the 1970's often communicated an implicit denial of the individual's dignity and freedom. A present-day condition in which some individuals place their own needs above those of the community and justify this attitude in the name of their own freedom and dignity continues to be a distortion. . . . The goals of autonomy within community should not be confused with individualism and domination. (pp. 126–127)

That is, the humanistic psychological critique of institutions and traditions as alienating individuals from their own vitality was an important contribution. But given the historicity of human existence, it is insufficient, and hence the reassertion of the place of community and tradition in human life. Welch's position, like van Kaam's, represented a dialectical synthesis of Tanquerey's thesis of self-submission and Rogers's antithesis of self-expression. Coulson's reassessment, too, resembles Welch's: "No one suggests turning the clock back to the pre-modern era. But try as we might, we cannot deny the necessity of living within a framework of tradition" (Coulson, 1982, p. 5). This psychological discourse on individuality and tradition has had widely different applications, serving both to legitimize and criticize changes in the modern Church.

Psychologizing Religion

The specific effects of Rogers's intervention with the IHM community are difficult to determine. The record indicates that the project did succeed in helping some members improve communication and articulate their aspirations, while increasing conflict for others, probably exacerbating a division among those in favor of and those opposed to reform, espe-

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cially as the groups occurred at the very moment when the order's reform efforts met Cardinal McIntyre's heavy-handed opposition. As Rogers acknowledged, the project gathered its own momentum and did not proceed according to initial plans. Were all the groups of equal value, staffed by sufficiently competent facilitators? Did controversies over the groups provide a source of needless distraction? If the groups did increase polarization within the community, was that because the project was poorly designed or because the encounter group is a powerful tool for change? If nothing else, the groups' purpose, to provide a nonjudgmental nurturing context for the expression of hopes and fears, for the laying aside of "habits" and roles, must have accentuated, for the leaders of the order, the formality and judgment they experienced during meetings with the cardinal and his staff.[11] Whatever the specific effects of the encounter groups, the larger dynamics among the order, the archdiocese, and the Vatican clearly dominated the course of events.[12]

Ironically, humanistic psychology's role in the IHM story was technological, in the words of Rogers's collaborator, Richard Farson (1978), a point made also by Coulson (1982). The encounter group was a technology in the sense that it was a planned procedure stemming from scientific research into group processes and client-centered therapy.[13] Admittedly, the group was a paradoxical type of technique, in that it sought spontaneity and intimacy. But the idea behind the groups did include the goal, as Rogers made clear, of reform of an educational system. The encounter group was a social technology designed to break down social barriers and to replace hierarchical relationships with egalitarian ones. In a delightful but perhaps unintended oxymoron, Rogers (1969) stated that "the group demands that the individual be himself" (p. 31). Sigmund Koch (1971) deplored the overvaluation of self-exposure in the encounter-group movement as demeaning to human dignity, making charges against the movement that resemble those of Coulson. Koch charged that encounter groups tended to simulations of human relationships based on a faulty and demeaning conception of interpersonal relationships. Given this assessment, Coulson's charges against the WBSI intervention may be correct in that the groups could have introduced potential confusions in an already volatile situation.

This history points to the role of humanistic psychology in the changing religious practices in American society in the 1960s. In a review contemporary with the events in Los Angeles, Gottschalk and Davidson (1971) saw encounter groups becoming popular because of a need for "communion" in a society where many experience isolation, loneliness, and alienation, and they linked the T-group phenomenon with the counterculture. Moreover, "earlier sources of communion—the church, fraternal organizations, and the family—have lost some of their ascendancy as means of proving collaborative experiences. Many churches have

11. Judith Glass was on the faculty of IHC from 1967–1980 and briefly described her experience with humanistic education. Glass and Glass (1981) wrote that while "the campus was divided" over the WBSI project, which began the semester she arrived on campus, the project was "indicative of a spirit of openness and experimentation which characterized" IHC (p. 74). The college "eventually moved from a fairly conventional departmental major-minor system to a mentor system where students developed individualized programs with a faculty advisor" (p. 74). The college succeeded in "actualizing many of the values of humanistic education" (p. 75) but for financial reasons closed in 1980. The Glasses conclude that "we underestimated the challenges humanistic education presented to established cultural values" (p. 77).

12. Back (1987, p. 234) concludes that self-selection of participants accounts for whatever changes occur in encounter groups.

13. The relationships between encounter groups and social science are complex, and as Back (1987) writes, ironic: "The basic irony lies in the discrepancy between ends and means. Sensitivity training basically aims at the regeneration of man through a deep, almost spiritual, experience, the kind of effort that has traditionally been part of the field of religion. It uses, however, the methods, the language, and some of the rituals of scientific work. One could almost say that, here, science is used to overcome the scientific view of man" (p. 202).

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now incorporated sensitivity training in an effort to regain their original communion function" (p. 439). Gottschalk and Davidson also pointed to potential deleterious effects of poorly organized groups that tyrannize individual members and that foster "personal narcissism" (p. 451). Andrew Greeley (1970), a Catholic sociologist, as part of a debate on encounter groups in the pages of the *National Catholic Reporter*, deplored the fact that "substantial segments of the elite groups in American Catholicism are hooked on an extraordinary collection of group experiences" (p. 10). There was considerable discussion in religious circles about the benefits and risks of encounter groups, with a predictable division of opinion. Frank X. Sheehan (1969), who had been conducting sensitivity training with religious communities for two years, described how the training made community a reality, because it promoted self-growth in openness, trust, and acceptance. Others, such as the psychologist Frank Severin, S.J. (1973), and Joseph J. Reidy, a psychoanalyst who had worked with some religious orders, were more cautious. For Reidy (1969), some in the encounter-group movement had a simplified view of openness and communication, equating the release of pent-up feeling with intimacy and lasting psychological change. Like Greeley, he saw a danger in the efforts to break down ego defenses and inhibitions for the psychologically fragile. More important, however, was his sense that there was a confusion of ends: "The reasonable goals of sensitivity training . . . are indeed worthwhile, and are not incompatible with the goals of dedicated religious. But we cannot say that emotional closeness, intimacy, and authentic encounters are necessary parts of religious love. . . . Many persons are not psychologically capable of being open and authentic. Can we therefore say that they cannot possess genuine religious love" (p. 75)? Formality and distance and clear ego boundaries are not incompatible with community, according to Reidy. Van Kaam (1967) sounded a similar cautionary note, stressing that the type of situation in which we encounter others sometimes necessitates the priority of the functional over the personal. In any event, critics emphasized the need for trained facilitators and a clear statement of purpose for the groups.

The encounter-group movement was part of a major shift in Catholic spirituality following the Second Vatican Council, from a neoscholastic form, which, for many at the time, was a formulaic system of propositions, to a more psychologized form of spiritual self-understanding accentuating personal appropriation and, thus, stressing feelings, personal relationships, and individual experiences. In particular, there was a profound difference in the forms of self-reflection accomplished in neoscholastic (Brennan, 1941) and Rogerian terms. It is worthwhile to consider the two together, because people like Cardinal McIntyre and, indeed, most Catholics who had had a Catholic education in the first half of the twentieth century would have studied neoscholastic psychology, and neoscholastic concepts dominated pre-Vatican II Catholic spirituality. I will use what the older psychology called the "estimative power" to illustrate the differences. This inner sense is the ability we have to perceive particular things and events as good or bad for us. This inner sense deals only with particulars in a kind of psychological activity called "experience." For animals, this estimative ability has an instinctual basis, whereas for humans, it is perfected through reason—that is, through an intellectual grasp of what is truly beneficial and harmful. Thus, for example, I swallow a foul-tasting medicine because I am convinced that it will restore me to health. This inner sense reckons with ethical goods and evils, and the appraisals of this sense participate in all our practical activities and decisions, which will be prudent if and only if we are virtuous or self-actualized in the Thomistic meaning of the term. Rogers (1983) addressed a phenomenon like that of the estimative sense when he spoke of "openness to experience." The infant, not yet tarnished by parental and social malformations, is wholly open to experience and therefore values things (perceives them as good or bad for me) solely on the basis of the "wisdom of

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the body." Then comes child rearing and education, during which the child "introjects" the norms of others and thus becomes alienated from the organismic basis of valuing. The normal adult, burdened by shoulds and oughts, is the outcome, no longer knowing what he or she really values. The really mature person returns to the openness of infancy, although now able to reckon with antecedents and consequences, and makes decisions on this basis, too. It was not, for Rogers, "If it feels good, do it!", but at the same time, the mature person would not deny the "it feels good," even if for other reasons, "doing it" is not valued. The decisive difference between the two theories is that the neoscholastics incorporated objectively given ethical goods and evils, as rationally grasped, as an integral part of the estimative process. Rogers's view, by contrast, rejected such incorporation as an introjection of external norms, thereby yielding an essentially, if not practically, asocial conception of appraisal. For Rogers, there is no universal court of appeal; from "within" means uninfluenced by society or tradition. A praxis of self-reflection based on Rogerian principles could lead in an anti-institutional direction, whereas a neoscholastic form of self-appraisal would tend to strengthen ties to sources of authority. The point here is that psychological theories and practices do come equipped with vectors of possibilities, even granting that they may be taken up by individuals and groups in creative and unpredictable ways. The switch from neoscholastic to Rogerian conceptions of this inner sense did point in an anti-authoritarian direction.

Attention to the spiritual aspects of human life has been one of the strong points of humanistic psychology. By the late 1960s, Catholic spirituality was incorporating psychological discourses and practices influenced by humanistic psychology. As one indication of what this meant, Back (1987) reports that around 1970, "in [Rogers's] Center for the Study of the Person, an unorthodox Mass is celebrated which employs some features of encounter groups as well as some features of the Catholic ritual" (pp. 124–125). The new psychological orientation aided in further rejection of formalism other than in liturgy. Wittberg (1994) and Nygren and Ukeritis (1992) see the shift from theological to psychological justifications for religious life as undermining the ideological framework of religious orders, in that psychological discourse worked against the boundary maintenance needed for a distinctive and demanding commitment to religious life.

Humanistic psychology, in theory and in praxis then, affirmed personal experience as authoritative and interpersonal relationships as essentially those among equals. These were two of the goods of encounter groups, as described by Rogers and others at the time. It is thus fair to say that humanistic psychology did have disruptive potential in Catholic communities at the time. Disruptive means neither destructive nor transformative. It means that the field of possibilities for thinking, speaking, and acting had altered or, rather, that they had already altered, and the inclusion of humanistic psychology was part of that change. Above all, it meant that protest against institutions and traditions would from that point forward find psychological form for its articulation.

Conclusions

Ebaugh (1977) argues that, sociologically speaking, pre-Vatican II religious orders were "utopian societies," not in the sense of being unrealistic, but in that they were complete ways of life separated from the world and devoted to a spiritual purpose. They were to model perfected human relationships with God, others, and self, filled with faith, hope, and charity. These utopian societies have physical, social, and psychological boundaries (Ebaugh, 1977, p. 40), such as convents, dress, structured routines, and vows, which identify the members as pursuing an ideal. The encounter-group movement presented a rival utopian society, a psy-

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chological utopia, described by Rogers (1969) as "a potent new cultural development" (p. 27), perhaps not suited for the "average man" (p. 61), but one in which there would be true selves, honest and open communications, no roles or masks, and equal treatment and status for all. While the 1967 aspirations of the IHM community were not simply or only psychological, they included an important psychological dimension: they sought to cultivate the unique talents and potential of each member. However, they also reckoned with the "reciprocity of person and community" (Caspary, 2003, p. 252), and redefinitions of obedience and a common life taking into account the uniqueness of each individual member. In keeping with the ideals of the humanistic movement, Caspary (2003) states that "moving from canonical to noncanonical status was not a destruction of our community. On the contrary, it gave us a new life and freedom" (p. 211, n. 2). The IH Community sought, in its forced exodus and new foundation, to continue the utopian impulse that lies behind the religious way of life.

Coulson's criticisms do point out that a humanistic psychological understanding of the religious life opened up possibilities and justifications for action that ran counter to the ecclesiastic status quo, further polarizing the Catholic community, a division that continues to this day. Humanistic psychology disrupted hierarchical conceptions of religious life, replacing them with egalitarian conceptions of social relationships. Caspary's account, however, indicates that taking up humanistic discourse and practices did not necessarily mean a wholesale embrace of its vision. In stressing community and individuality, she suggests that a psychological discourse, disruptive as it may be, can be contained within a more encompassing theological vision.

Beyond the specifics of the incident, however, we see in it a particular encounter between psychology and religion at a critical moment in the lives of both organized psychology and organized religion. The encounter-group movement was not only an instrument for religious organizations to use as they would; it asserted its own values into spiritual and religious practices. Whether the encounter groups had any substantial effect or not, they were part of what George A. Miller (1969) announced as the revolutionary potential of psychology: it changes our image of human nature. In this respect, encounter groups had, directly or indirectly, a significant cultural effect. They were part of the broader movement in contemporary North American society that demanded greater intimacy and informality in all relationships, and that served to make us increasingly skeptical of institutions and authorities of all types. Richard Farson (1974) was correct, then, in seeing "a new definition of relationship" (p. 201) as Rogers's most revolutionary idea. As psychology influenced the way we viewed relationships, it played a role in defining relationships with peers, authorities, and other higher powers.

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