Looking Beyond: Towards a Renunciation of Secular Social Science
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What is an individual? What are the most important attributes of a human being? What shall we speak of when we define a human being and his relationships, his society? These are some of the questions I will address in this paper. I will contrast the writings of three prominent and influential secular social psychologists with the Catholic Church's teachings on social policies, in order to compare the rigor of the two approaches and to show how Catholicism, which does not purport to be scientific, is on better ground scientifically and logically than those who do.

Three secular writers who concern themselves with some of today's more conspicuous social ills are Philip Reiff, Christopher Lasch, and Erich Fromm. Respectively, they address alienation, self-centeredness, and materialism. Unlike Catholicism, they avoid the question of how to define mankind, and they leave out a crucial dimension: the transcendent.

In the absence of an identification of man derived from his vertical relationship with transcendent being, his identity is sought through his horizontal relationships with his fellows, with mundanity, with himself. This circularity denies that man has a life of the spirit that is separate from his ties to the world and that will endure forever. As evidenced in Reiff, Lasch and Fromm, this circle of mundanity seems to provide no escape from depression, anxiety and confusion.

What they have in common is an odd vacuum in their reasoning in which, though they discourse at length about individuals and society, they never define these terms, nor do they even raise the question of how to define them. This is strange scholarship, distinctly non-analytical, that overlooks the importance of descriptive boundaries around the subjects it discusses. Can a social scientist be scientific if he avoids asking such questions as, "What is our subject? How do we define, much less measure, it?" The secular definition of humanity is based on denial and is intrinsically negative, so much so that its negativity is taken for granted. Humanity is then known by what it lacks. By contrast, a transcendent perspective on humanity is full of presence. This permits definitions based on positive and existing things, like identity, with its sense of self and its sense of either hope or despair, and community, with its
sense of freedom and authority. The sense of self can be defined around such pivots as autonomy, dignity, and responsibility. Community can be defined operationally around the parameters of solidarity and isolation. While the secular world can only wring its hands and be so reductionistically scientific that it is unscientific, the Catholic Church has provided a century of inspired leadership on social issues. Starting with Pope Leo XIII's On the Condition of the Working Classes in 1891 and ending with Pope John Paul II's The Hundredth Year in 1991, the six popes who have held office in the last century have published more than twenty major encyclicals addressing modern problems of the individual and society. No other organization, either secular or religious, has produced such a large and cohesive body of thought on the relation of the individual to society. Truly, the Catholic Church deserves acknowledgment and respect for her religious social psychology.

**A Catholic Critique of Rieff**

Let us look first at Philip Rieff, the disappointed post-Freudian for whom all Absolutes have failed, even faith in Freud, as revealed in Freud: The Mind of the Moralist (1959) and The Triumph of the Therapeutic (1966). In spite of Rieff's disappointment with Freud, he still ties himself closely to Freud and in many ways views the world through a Freudian filter. Unlike Freud, who savagely attacked the idea of God as an "illusion," Rieff at least shows some longing for transcendence even as he laments its impossibility. Adrift in despair, and proud of it (as proof of his modernity), he pins what little hope he has for personal salvation on the possibility of equilibrium achieved by a well-psychoanalyzed ego as it rides the waves of unconscious surges. Similarly, Rieff's best hope for social cooperation is found in the empathy and communion of psychoanalyst and patient. His tone is sophisticated and bleak.

Rieff uses the term "religious man" to indicate a person whose values and aspirations are controlled externally by synagogue or church. If and when these institutions lose power, "religious man" disappears, according to Reiff. "Religious man" was preceded by the "political man" of the Greeks, who found his identity and honor in civic involvement and he was succeeded by the enlightened "economic man" of eighteenth century Europe. What we are left with now, as Rieff sees it, is a "psychological man" who is profoundly disturbed that the transcendent values of religious man are no longer available to him and that he is left on his own, with his human ability to reason about relationships having to take the place of ecstatic communion with God and other people. As a counter to Rieff's time-limited notion of "religious man," I would like to propose "imago man." Imago man, as defined here, is made the image and likeness of God, following the Biblical account of creation. Since God is immortal and unchanging, so is the part of man that is made in God's image. Man has been gifted with something that does not change with historical or sociological conditions. Thus, each individual has value, in and
of himself, apart from his social relations, materia' possess ons or state o^ mind. He has value because of who made him and because o^ the possibility of entering into a creative and eternal relationship with his Maker. To the Catholic Church, this transcendent and indestructible spiritual dimension is true even if the manifested power of Christianity is at low ebb—and in this she is very different from Rieff because he seems to use the appellation "religious man" to refer only to outward shows of spiritual interest. He describes a system that is about God in name, but not in substance, like an empty milk container sold as sufficient to satisfy hunger and thirst.

Rieff shows his denial of transcendent experience by claiming a secular source for the ideal of religious man. "For it is from the self that the troublesome, world-rejecting ideal of the religious man came forth" (1959) [my emphasis]. From the vantage point of imago man, God proffers a spiritual reality that takes precedence over the material world and precedes it in origin. ("Seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33.) But for Rieff, the emptiness of the milk container is a given and it informs his entire view of reality. Man scrambles equally to avoid illusions and to avoid the extremes of emotional swells that could throw him off balance and cloud his insight. It is as if man is trapped inside the empty milk container and the only liquids he encounters are his own emotional storms, which could drown him.

Since the society based on religious man was a failure to Rieff and is canceled by history anyway, we will turn our attention to a term that holds greater currency for him: psychological man. This is a post-Freudian person who operates post-analytically, taking nothing for granted about the biological source of his own or other people's impulses or values. He lives in his mastery of his Oedipal complex and evaluates others on the basis of their understanding of their own Oedipal dilemma.

Rieff has a complex and ironic relationship with Freud, but he seems mostly to wear the Freudian outlook the way Latin stage actors wore masks as personae. In fact, he goes even further, referring to Freud as a prophet. Now, to call someone a "prophet" shows a very high degree of agreement and trust. "Prophet" comes from a Greek word meaning "spokesperson for God." The way the Old Testament uses the designation of prophet is to describe one who calls people to turn from waywardness and turn back to obedience to God, so they can receive his blessing and mercy. Usually, people were entreated to abjure idol worship and heartlessness towards their fellows, as in these verses from the book of Micah:

Woe to those who plan iniquity, and plan evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it. They covet fields and seize them, and houses and take them. They defraud a man of his home. (2:1.)
From Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall arbitrate between many peoples and impose terms on strong and distant nations; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks . . . and all war will end. (4: 2-3.)

Thus we see God's wrath at polytheism and social evil, two very specific wrongs, followed by His promise of mercy and universal peace once his errant nation returns to Him. Prophecy here (and throughout the Bible) means a clear statement of a willed and chosen evil, which can be reversed through human action and a clear statement of an ensuing good, if the right course is chosen. The expression "prophet of doom" refers fatalistically and unfairly to consequences of ill-doing, without mentioning the prophecy of blessing which always accompanies God's warnings of impending disasters.

But Rieff sees fit to call Freud a prophet in the sense of a foreteller of doom, as if total devastation has already happened. The contradiction he ignores is that if devastation happened by chance, then it would be an accident, not doom. The only way to have doom, is to have God. Rieff rejects God but arrogantly abrogates His language. It would be more accurate for him to call Freud a medium for an oracle. An oracle is "an utterance, often ambiguous or obscure, given by a priest or priestess at a shrine as the response of the god to an inquiry." Thus Freud's negative predictions would seem less implacable and infallible and more the voice of a small being, perhaps just one human being who is spokesman for another, Rieff. (Certainly Freud's antipathy to religion can be psychoanalyzed, as Paul Vitz demonstrates in Sigmund Freud's Catholic Unconscious [1988]). There is an incongruity in Rieff in that he does not seem to believe in God and yet he uses the language of God; and he does not believe in religion but he decries its passing.

Tossed between a new, post-Freudian man who has not yet come fully into existence and Freudian man, Rieff seems to rely on Freud for as much of an answer as he can accept to the question of what is man's identity as an individual and a social participant. But Rieff is not always uncritically glued to Freud: he points out that Freud's sense of time is influenced by Comtian positivism and by Darwinian evolution. That conception of time is radically different from that of the Catholic Church's, and I will comment more fully on that later. Rieff questions but does not stray far from Freud's biological determination of the sense of self and community: unconscious, irrational impulses from the id collide with similar impulses from the super-ego, or conscience, and are mediated, meagerly, through the reason of the ego. The highest, most mature, sense of self possible is to be found through the mediation of the ego with the rest of the personality and the world outside. But the building block of the self is the wish, and that can never honestly be transcended. Freud's way of identifying man to himself is that self = mind = wish. Transcendent states are found not in relationship to God or in com-
munion with one's fellows, but in oceanic feelings of sublimated sexuality that are replays of infantile states.

Deep trust and fellowship are not possible because society originates in the primal horde, a band of sons who murder the father, symbolically now but Freud believed actually, back in antiquity. The sons are motivated by Oedipal jealousy and rage, which then becomes displaced onto each other and so they are never at ease with each other. Ambivalence afflicts all their emotional states, depriving them of contentment and leading to a "longing for the murdered father" which results in a sublimated longing for authority and political society. The leaders that emerge in these conditions are anti-empathic with their followers and destroy their will to remain separate. To be social is to be either a masochist or a sadist, but the alternative, isolation, is not viable, since "man is naturally sociable and has a permanent need for community" (Rieff, 1959). Society is defined here as "the bond of unequals" and a society of true equals is unimaginable, since there is nothing important in a human except the conflict and inequality.

To compare the world view of Rieff/Freud with the Roman Catholic Church is not so much like comparing apples and oranges as oranges and mansions. They are so profoundly different because of the centrality of the Church's dogma about the reality of God and the human spirit, created in God's image. God and the human spirit are not believed to be mere concepts, linguistic conventions or thought forms, but real and substantial. They are so real that they are the foundation for everything else the Catholic Church says about humanity and society. Man was created, according to the Church, to live in great joy and in perfect union with his God and with his mate for all eternity. But he became separated from his God, and then from his mate, through an act of disobedience. His way back to God is blocked by his new sin nature, although this can be overcome by the grace and love of God, most fully evidenced in the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This stand introduces a new substance: the holiness of God's spirit and its outpouring into individuals, which becomes human spirit, or the "imago," that which is made in the image of God. Because of the basic goodness of the initial substance, goodness is also attributed by the Church to the image-bearer in his other, more horizontal dimensions, such as his purpose in life, his relationship to authority, the nature of authority, and his relationship to his work and his fellows.

Since man's separation from goodness is the source of all his problems, his existence has a very clear, non-ambivalent purpose, which is totally unlike the conflict followed by Rieff/Freud. Man's purpose, as the Catholic Church teaches, is to live for God. As Pope John Paul II says in *Original Unity of Man and Woman* (1981), "Man is a 'partner of the Absolute' since he must consciously discern and choose between good and evil, between life and death." Man is ennobled by his free will, the exercise of which makes him powerful as he chooses either good or evil. The power to be able to make an
unequivocally bad choice actually adds to man's dignity and sense of importance, because his choice counts for something and has a value. Man's identity is that he is a spiritual being with the power to choose good over evil. However, in the Rieff/Freud system, no choice can be truly free because choices are biologically determined. And no choice can be clearly good or bad, because in the absence of transcendent and objective values, there is only man's subjectivity and that is hopelessly ambivalent.

One of the reasons secular social scientists avoid asking "What is man?" is that they run the risk of skidding off into the infinite, in the same way as when one asks, "What is God?", due to the reflected nature of God in man. This is a question they can not afford to ask. To ask it would make them collide with the limitations and arbitrariness of their premises. And by not asking and defining what a man is, they betray themselves as scholars. This is not so for believers. When the authors of *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (1965) ask "What is man?" they answer, in part, by pointing to conscience:

> Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man There he is alone with God...For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged.

The concept of the Trinity--Father, Son and Holy Spirit--three holy persons in one, becomes a model for individual and social psychology. The catechism teaches that there is a correspondence between the three divine persons and the three powers of the soul: memory, understanding and will. This comparison of human faculties to members of the Divine Trinity can be an asset to healthy self-esteem and a favorable sense of identity. In terms of social psychology, John Paul II teaches in *Original Unity* (1981) that "man became the 'image and likeness' of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons which man and woman formed right from the beginning." Man's identity is that he is social. Not just not anti-social but profoundly pro-social, because the person he is given as a companion is "flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone." This basic plurality of persons is a reflection of God's image, as seen in the first creation narrative:

> God created man in His image; in the divine image He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen. 1:27)

This partnership of man and woman constitutes the first form of communion between persons, and humanity is believed to be formed anew in the communion of persons. When Catholics take Holy Communion we believe we are receiving not only the real body and blood of the Lord, but that we are also coming into spiritual and mystical communion with all others who similarly receive Jesus in their bodies. The Catholic understanding of psychology is that
God, man and society are intrinsically interwoven. As the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (1965) says, "By his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential."

Since psychology deals with emotions, let us examine the emotional nature of the God who gives man his identity. That nature is love. "God is love." (1 John 4:8) And as Pope Paul VI says in the *Constitution*, "Man would not exist were he not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it; and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to his Creator." Love, then, becomes the ideal not only for self-knowledge and intimate relationships, but for relationships with the whole world. It is for this reason that the Catholic Church holds up a vision of world peace through the shared development of individuals, societies and nations. She sees peace not so much as the suppression of war but as a progressive building up of well-being through wise cultivation of the resources of the earth and of human wisdom, an interlocking giving of goods on all levels: skills, labor and materials.

The mutual giving of self in married sexual love is meant to be a model for the giving of self in all relationships, according to Pope John Paul II in *The Original Unity of Man and Women*. He proclaims an underlying level of goodness beneath society's tatters and an ideal of goodness to aspire to, with God's grace. As declared in *The Pastoral Constitution*, "God wills . . . that all men be as one family. All men are called to the same goal--God Himself." He reasons that the union of the three divine persons is similar to the unity of God's children in "truth and charity." This encyclical calls for each social group to take account of the needs of other people and of the general welfare of the entire human family, in such specific ways as forgiving the debts of underdeveloped countries. Pope John Paul II wants to see the social order founded on truth, justice and love and believes that these spiritual goods will lead to economic justice. In fact, economic justice is defined as the measure of prosperity in Pope John XXIII's *Christianity and Social Progress* (1961):

\[\ldots\text{the economic prosperity of any people is to be assessed not so much from the sum total of goods and wealth possessed as from the distribution of goods according to norms of justice, so that everyone in the community can develop and perfect himself. For this, after all, is the end toward which all economic activity of a community is by God the Creator.}\]

Wherever man turns, he sees that he is standing on a gift, either one made by human hands or one made by God. As Pope John Paul II says in *On Human Work* (1981), "In every phase of the development of his work, man comes up against the leading role of the gift made by 'nature,' that is to say, in the final analysis, by the Creator." (emphases in original) In John Paul's theology of work, both labor and its materials are good, freely given and meant to be freely
shared for the good of all. Institutions, too, are called to have spiritual goals, for God created man with a "communitarian character" which is developed and consummated in the work of Jesus Christ, according to The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. The Catholic Church's commitment to social development can be seen as a wide net thrown over humanity, which then creates a network of interconnected helpfulness, a holy web pulling all souls towards Christ, the fisher of men.

How does the Catholic Church's positive vision of man, God and society compare with Reiff/Freud's? Is there, to begin with, an identity ascribed to man? This is not clear on either Reiff's part or Freud's. Reiff (1959) points out that Freud's theories draw on evolutionist and positivist arguments that were popular in the nineteenth century. "(They) habitually shrank from saying a thing is something, and instead preferred to report that it began in a certain way." (emphases in original). So man's collective history began with a crime, the murder of the father by the brothers in the primal horde, and his individual history begins with the "crime" of coveting the parent of the opposite sex. But as Rieff states, citing the origin of man is not the same as defining his nature. (There is a saying that just as every metaphysician is either a Platonist or an Aristotelian, so every moral philosopher is either an Augustinian or a Pelagian. Pelagius was a fifth century British monk who denied original sin and the need for redemption from God. Freud would probably be more of an Augustinian, following his emphasis on "crime" and conscience, and Rieff a Pelagian, judging by his detached skepticism about the "moral demand systems" of various cultures.)

Because of the pervasiveness of aggression, Freudian man finds little to trust. Not himself, because he will hurt either another or himself to meet his needs for sex, security and power; and not his fellows, because their dynamics are as mean as his; and not social authority, because he and they are inimically Oedipal enemies, fighting for the same female; and certainly not God, because he is an illusion made by man in the image of his father. Freudian man is left with a very shaky sense of self and community. In fact, his sense of self is threatened by community and one of his highest hopes is the emancipation of his "I" from community, a "weaning," as Rieff puts it, from masochism and sadism. Rieff remarks that Freud is definitely in the Nietzschean tradition of fearing that the self will be lost in the group. Rieff seems to see himself as stuck with a post-Freudian vision of an individual freed from repressive bondage to parts of self and others, yet unable to freely form new bonds that are satisfying. He presents this as an inevitable irony.

In The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud (1966), Rieff rummages through various attempts to find something to adhere to in order to find meaning or community. The "symbol systems" of Jung, Reich and Lawrence are all found lacking. Jung throws out the monotheism of Christianity and Freud's "deification" of the laws of sexuality, and brings in his own...
"pantheon of gods" derived from his fantasies. Reich preaches freedom from politics through the purity of orgone energy. Lawrence turns to the "gentle Jesus of the Unconscious" and to Eros in his protest against civilization, reason and abstract ideas. Why do these man-constructed beliefs leave Rieff dissatisfied? If they are subjective and man-made, why does he not say, "All the better!" and revel in man's creativity? He seems to be saying that psychological man is stuck in his internality, "By psychologizing about themselves interminably, Western men are learning to use their internality against the primacy of any particular organization of personality."

It is also worth noting that he uses the religious word "faith" when he could say meaning, or value, or commitment. Is he merely maintaining an alliteration with "Freud" that parallels the one used in *Triumph of the Therapeutic*? Or is he unwittingly sidling up to the Church's stand in his protest against the limited ability of moral subjectivity to answer the deeper questions of life, such as how to live. Wittingly, however, he does not come this far, and, insisting that ultimately it is the community that cures, he points sadly to the therapeutic community of two as a remnant of reason and intimacy. His "faith" in therapy as community can not be very strong, because, "The psychoanalytic movement can never become communal or passionate--can never help people get beyond themselves--because it is analytic." Disappointed in religion, he turns to rationality with the sort of hope one brings to religion: for transformation, community and salvation. But of course, he is disappointed again, as he expects to be, because "rational religion is a contradiction in terms." Another frustration for Reiff is that therapy is a remedial process meant to bring someone back to health. It would be reasonable, then, to expect someone employing this term to have a definition of health. But Rieff does not seem to have one. Although he criticizes Freud's ontological incompleteness in offering a Darwinian origin for man rather than a definition, he does not provide one himself.

Rieff speaks of "post Christian" man. There is no such thing, of course, to the Church, whose understanding is that once Christ came to Earth, His rule will last until the end of time, until He has collected unto Himself the souls who choose to be with Him. There are other ways that the Church differs from Rieff regarding time. She says that man's nature can not change with his era or his culture, that it is unchanging and timeless due to its ontology. The Church's definition of man's nature is that he is a being made of the same stuff as God, and so basically good, but marred by original sin and needing redemption through God. The Church differs from Freud in her views on time in that Freud, influenced as he is by euhemerism (the notion that belief in gods arises from idealization of heroic men) and Darwinian evolution, implies that man started low and incomplete and moved up to more of his true nature. Whereas the Church sees man as starting high at creation and de-evolving, morally, through original sin. (In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud tried to prove the universal and scientific validity of the Oedipus complex by finding
anthropological support for it. He speculated on the presence in primitive tribes of such primal horde activity as ceremonial killing and eating of totemic animals as symbolic fathers. His premise was opposed by a fellow Viennese professor, Rev. Wilhelm Schmidt, S.V.D., author of *The Origin and Growth of Religion*, in which he offers evidence of at least three primitive peoples, Pygmies, Arctic peoples and Algonkins, who do not practice any form of sacrificial banquet. As for those who do, it can just as easily be attributed to a holy offering up to a [monotheistic] God of the first fruits of harvest. So reasons Rev. Schmidt, whose book was published while Freud was still alive and who was never answered. This is used by E. Michael Jones, writing in *Fidelity* (1989), as evidence that Freud had no empirical basis for believing that society originated in a primal horde, and that such a belief could be psychoanalyzed to discover the root of its bizarreness.)

In spite of the many dissimilarities mentioned, there are some similarities between the position of the Church and that of Rieff/Freud. Rieff states that civilization begins when "the paternal taboos are self-imposed, when repressions are implemented in the interest of the group." The Church believes civilization began with the gift of self between Adam and Eve, before the Fall, and later flourishes through conscious self-renunciation, dying to self and selfishness. The Rieff/Freud method of control is mostly unconscious and the Christian way is mostly conscious, but they are similar in that part of the self is relinquished as a means of socialization. Another similarity is in achieving unity through love, or libido. Rule by taboo has an echo in the Judaic-Christian heritage of the Ten Commandments and, even more so, in the six hundred and thirteen rules of the Mishna which were designed to be a fence around the Ten Commandments. Freud's definition of mental health as the ability "to love and to work" is something that the Church would heartily endorse. Still another similarity is found in the conflict between id and superego and the flesh and the spirit. "For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." (Romans 7:15) Ironically, even those who most spurn the Gospel must come around to it in the end because of the inevitability of its truth.

A Catholic Critique of Lasch

Christians can find some parallel beliefs in the work of Christopher Lasch, a social conservative who does not seem to profess himself as a religious believer. He is similar to Christians in his insistence on the importance of authority and values, but he appears disinterested in divine grace, and his outlook is despairing.

Whereas it would be hard to imagine Philip Rieff feeling unambivalently comfortable with any authority, Lasch favors strong authority, particularly in the family, and is very critical of those who misrepresent authority as either "incompetent or malevolent." In *Haven in a Heartless World* (1977), he lauds parental authority as an efficient way to transmit social values to children and
as a help to them in developing a character that can integrate love and discipline. He objects to the way parental authority is displaced onto helping professionals and peer groups, because it breaks down family boundaries and moral standards. For example, he objects to some recent child rearing techniques, such as Parent Effectiveness Training, because they avoid the moral issues that sometimes underlie parent-child conflicts.

(They) rationalize the retreat from painful confrontation by urging parents and children to talk about feelings instead of arguing about the rules and principles that provoke confrontations.

Lasch is concerned that the "erosion" of parental responsibility will hurt child development by creating character disorders. He says that children need parents who model responsibility in order to internalize the rules of society and make them their own, lest their response to authority become defiance or passive non-compliance. Even more importantly, children need parents who model both affection and discipline, and who provide both love and frustration, so that they can "work through" their Oedipal feelings and have a realistic notion of who they and their parents are. (Oedipal feelings are sexual strivings for the parent of the opposite sex, accompanied by jealousy and resentment of the same sex parent. "Working through" means accepting the defeat of these sexual ambitions and transforming anger at the same sex parent into identification with him or her.) In the absence of such acceptance, as Lasch elaborates in *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979), children project their Oedipal rage onto their parents and then internalize those projections as their representations of authority. Faced with internalized parents who seem persecutory and seductive, children do not grow up and successfully pass through the Oedipal stage. Rather, they stay fixated at the earlier, narcissistic stage in order to avoid the perils of sexual warfare. Even as adults, they lead terribly circumscribed lives in order to avoid situations or even feelings that could remind them of the developmental challenge they backed down from. He defines narcissism as "essentially a defense against aggressive impulses rather than self-love."

In *The Minimal Self* (1984), Lasch repeats and refines his definition of narcissism: it is not egotism, but rather a "beleaguered" shrinking of the self away from reality, back to the "undifferentiated contentment of the womb," with an accompanying confusion of the self with its surroundings and difficulty in distinguishing reality from fantasy. This shrinking of the self from the world, according to Lasch, leads to a survivalist mentality, expressed in seeking mountain hideaways and fallout shelters rather than world peace.

Lasch insists upon the dignity of man and portrays him as in charge of his choices, with the capacity to have a life that is a "product of human agency" rather than one at the mercy of abstract "forces." One of the forces that he thinks victimizes man is capitalism, which he believes has outlived its
usefulness. (The Catholic Church addresses this issue in a way that is similar to Lasch's, and I will present her stand shortly.)

When Lasch rues the "collapse of communal tradition and civic order," he seems to believe that shared moral values are possible. In Haven in a Heartless World, he notes that the center of society has moved its locus from the Church, to the legislation hall, and then to the hospital, and that the concept of sickness now replaces sin. He protests this overuse of the therapeutic conception of "sickness" rather than wrongdoing and he counters with a religious model in which one is "either possessed or willfully sinning."

While not apparently interested in religion as an interior mental experience, he does seem to make reference to it and to rely on religion's sense of morality and tradition as underpinnings to a workable society. He seems to assume the existence of an objective social reality in a way that Rieff would not, but that Christians most likely would agree with. Finally, the definition he gives of selfhood in The Minimal Self (1984), reflects religious feeling and language. "Selfhood is the painful awareness of the tension between our unlimited aspirations and our limited understanding, between our original intimations of immortality and our fallen state, between oneness and separation."

To a Christian, such a definition might seem like an acceptable description of one's relationship to goodness ("For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23) Lasch's endorsement of authority is echoed in the Church which is founded on one believed to be the ultimate authority, truth itself: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" John 14: 6. Jesus combines love and justice, as a good Laschian parent would. The Catholic Church He founded is definitely authoritarian. She is structured on ecclesiastical hierarchy, and that hierarchy is undergirded by a succession of apostolic authority in which the original disciples personally handed down their holy charge of leadership to subsequent leaders. In the Church, leadership is believed to be good, even when personally frustrating, because of the ideal of godliness and holy love that leaders are supposed to embody. And so, Church leaders can also be seen as Laschian good parents bringing together love and necessary frustration.

As Lasch does, the Catholic Church has always made criticisms of capitalism. Pope Leo XIII's On the Condition of the Working Classes, published in 1891, expresses concern for the plight of wage laborers, the men who make up the masses of the industrial era, and who are at the mercy of their capitalist overlords. The Pope insists that they be treated fairly and receive a just and livable wage. In fact, the concept of a "just wage" goes back to at least the Middle Ages in Catholic history, and it says that employers must not take advantage of another's need. The Pope also insists that time be made for worship and rest and that women and children not be worked beyond their capacity. At a time when capitalism was entirely unregulated and exploitation

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of workers was very severe, these admonitions were daring and sorely needed. Concerning alienation, this Pope says that labor and capital are not inherently at odds with each other. Rather, they complement each other as do parts of the body. He bases this on the concept of the mystical unity of the body of Christ's believers:

Now the body is not made up of one part but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body . . . If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (1 Corinthians 12: 12 and 26)

Moreover, he addresses a point made by Lasch, that the individual and the family must be protected against domination and incursions by the State:

It is not right, as We have said, for either the citizen or the family to be absorbed by the State; it is proper that the individual and the family should be permitted to retain their freedom. . . .

And also,

. . . In the case of the worker, there are many things which the power of the State should protect; and, first of all, the goods of his soul.

The Church has always maintained that God is the true owner of all goods and that private possession of goods, while a right, must be balanced by charity and the idea of using them for the good of all people. John XXIII, writing in Christianity and Social Progress (1961), proclaims that wage setting must be regulated to protect working people. While communism is repudiated because it scorns man's spiritual dimension, capitalism is not to be made into a god. It is preferred for now because it allows freedom of religious expression and self expression through the private ownership of property. Capitalism's form is seen as fluid and changeable. Christianity and Social Progress says that skills and knowledge become like capital goods but are even greater than the wealth of external goods, because they proceed directly from the human person and the person is always worth more than an external good because, for one thing, he is the cause of it, in the Aristotelian sense of material and teleological causation. Lasch's social values approach the Church's and yet he seems to remain outside, singular and subjective, unwilling to be included in the transcendental or to include it.

_A Catholic Critique of Fromm_

Erich Fromm exalts humanism above all else, even the transcendent, and this effects his approach to the problem of materialism in _To Have or to Be_ (1976). He contrasts materialism with humanist spirituality by juxtaposing
different ways to live: through the acquisition of such externals as objects, information, approval, even knowledge about God, or in celebration of intrinsic goods, such as the gift of one's life. Fromm is referring to a choice between worship and idolatry, although he does not use these terms. As an example of idolatrous acquisition, he refers to the forty-year trek through the desert that God took the Hebrews on to teach them the difference between what they needed and what they wanted, and that even though He met their needs with many miracles, they still longed for the "fleshpots of Egypt," the food they had grown accustomed to. An example of worshipful being that Fromm offers is the enjoyment of a full Shabbat rest, in which "one lives as if one has nothing, pursuing no aim except being, that is, expressing one's essential powers: praying, studying, eating, drinking, singing, making love." He says this is a day on which property and money are taboo. Yet in his example, property is present and in use, or else there would be no books, food or drink. Since he has these things and uses these things, property is obviously not taboo, even on the Sabbath; if property were taboo, one would refrain from food, water and touching any objects.

By declaring property taboo as a way to arrive at holiness he seems to be drifting in the direction of asceticism, which can lead to isolation, self-involvement, and self-manipulation. Perhaps he has trouble arriving at a yardstick of holiness and a radical separation of being from having because his definition of God is that He is a symbol, rather than truly transcendent, "God, originally a symbol for the highest value that we can experience."

The Catholic Church has also used the phrase "being versus having." In the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (1965), the authors write on the relationship of avarice and culture to the problem. With greed, one becomes a "slave of possessions" and becomes a victim of "pure consumerism." Possessions have their place, and that is to help people achieve their vocation, their work in this world, as well as to maintain physical life. What redeems man and even matter is the God who made both. In the fullness of the Church's understanding of Incarnation, God who is holy makes all things holy. As John Paul II explains in Original Unity, God's work is a giving, a radical giving, because the gift comes into being from nothingness. All work is to be treasured. It is an expression of the person giving it. It is either God's gift or man's gift. We always stand, existentially, on gifts. So possession of things need not be avoided, as Fromm misguidedly suggests, because gratitude for the gift and the proper management of it for the happiness of human beings, always lead one back to God.

Culture, as the Church uses the word, means the realization of the goods and values of nature and the perfecting of bodily and spiritual qualities. She believes that culture flowers best under the full cooperation of individuals, societies and nations and that true development is tied to the development...
of the masses. In *On Social Concern* (1987), Pope John Paul II says that culture and development are not just an accumulation of wealth. "Development is a new name for peace."

In the Catholic vision, people already are united in the spirit. Living people on earth are linked to those in Purgatory and Heaven through a common identity, mutual love and active prayer. One does not necessarily need to move away from material things in order to find God's being, as Fromm proposes, risking ascetic self-involvement and isolation. Rather, one's relationship to material things can be positive, appreciating them as a gift that one wants to share with those who have less. This avoids both avarice, which Pope John Paul II roundly criticizes in *The Hundredth Year* and a reaction against avarice, which still keeps a person's attention unduly focused on himself, instead of on God and his fellows.

**Conclusion**

Indeed, the nub of the problems addressed by Rieff, Lasch and Fromm is that the individual can not *be* an individual while still *having* a life that is fully involved with his society. This is based on an unacknowledged assumption that the stuff of individuality is hopelessly imperiled by the impingement of other people and material things. The source of their *angst* is that, tragically, the very sources of support and enjoyment that people seek will destroy them psychologically. In the absence of an eternal spirit and the resoluteness resulting from a free will made in the image of God, non-imago man is terribly weak, too weak to really live before he must die. Although Christians sometimes fear people and material things as temptations, they know that their will protects them from poor choices. Other people need not be avoided because of a feared depletion of one's inner stuff. Rather, because Christians believe that God's being is inside one and that one can find God in others as well as in oneself, the door is left open for acts of altruism and communal well-being. In fact, one's inner substance grows by mingling it in selfless communion with others who share the same God substance.

This ideal of the Church, in which imago man seeks a God-filled expansion of self, both his own and others, is the remedy for Lasch's minimal man, who shrinks from involvement. And it is the only alternative to Rieff's psychological man, who, in trying to maintain his equilibrium, consigns himself to non-communion.

As Pope John Paul II states in *The Hundredth Year*, "Outside of the Gospel, there is no solution to social issues." Apart from the Gospel, there is no substantive way for man to be defined by the social sciences. This is immensely tragic. Secular psychologists reject God because of their logic and their science, but because of the correct demands of their logic, they have no reason for believing in their science either. So they have nothing and from their position of leadership proclaim to the world that the most it can have is the knowledge that it has nothing.
We are living in an empirical age. Our scientists say that the job of science is to measure and define. But in the human sciences, unless science knows who and what it is defining, it fails miserably as science. The branch cut off from the vine withers and dies and is fit only to be thrown into the fire. The person or science that cuts itself off from the holy net of grace offered by God and His only Church, will also wither and die. What is needed for adequate human science is a psychological yardstick suitable for imago man: a Trinitarian ruler.

References