

4 Luglio 1966

Eminenza Reverendissima,

nella preparazione del materiale annesso, da Lei richiesto, mi è stato di aiuto sostanziale il Dr. Germain Grisez, dell'Università di Georgetown, che Lei ha voluto gentilmente ricevere la settimana scorsa. Voglia scusare lo stato non elaborato del materiale. Speravo di prepararne la bella copia, tradotta in italiano; ma non mi è stato possibile per mancanza di tempo.

Le mie osservazioni consteranno di quattro parti:

Parte I : Memorandum relativo alla mentalità di coloro che approvano la contraccizione.

Parte II: Osservazioni generali sulla Relatio finalis e sullo Schema documenti de responsabilitate Paternitate.

Parte III: tredici analisi, di una pagina ognuna, di questioni scelte.

Parte IV: Osservazioni particolari sulla Relatio finalis e sullo Schema documenti.

Le presento con questa lettera le prime tre parti; la quarta sarà pronta (ma non in traduzione) per ^{Mercoledì} Venerdì sera.

E' mia sincera speranza, e del Dr. Grisez insieme con me, che questo materiale possa offrire un sussidio a Sua Eminenza e al Santo Padre.

Invocando la Sua benedizione,
mi professo Suo obbediente figlio in Cristo,

John C. Ford, S.J.

Pars Prima tractat (juxta suggestionem Em.mi Card. Ottaviani) mentalitatem eorum qui approbant contraceptionem, i.e. in quantum fieri posset in circumstantiis praesentibus, eorum mentalitatem philosophico-theologicam; -- ad explicandum aliquantulum quomodo ad talem conclusionem Episcopi et Theologi Catholici pervenire potuerint.

Estimare vel investigare mentalitatem singulorum membrorum in hac materia exigeret profunde studium ~~eorum~~ scriptorum eorumque orientationis theologico-philosophicae, quod est impossibile. Utilius visum est, ex studio documentationis, proponere generaliore analysim in qua exhibentur possibiles aliquae radices, praesertim philosophicae, ex quibus eorum approbatio contraceptionis intelligibilior evadit.

Ad hoc efficiendum Dr. Grisez, post brevem Introductionem tractat:

1. Occasiones (p. 2 sq) valde diversificatas ex quibus movimentum Catholicum contractivum originem suam duxit.
2. Relationem inter has occasiones et rationes sublatentes philosophicas quae videntur influere plus minusve in orientationem aliquorum membrorum majoritatis. Hic subjicitur analysi argumentatio majoritatis quatenus talibus rationibus fulciri videtur. (p 7-10).
3. Rationes ipsas sublatentes in quibus positio majoritatis ~~partialiter~~ saltem, sed notabiliter, videtur fundari; e.g. historicismus, humanismus, dualismus, situationismus et "Nova Moralitas". (p. 16 - 17).

Ex his omnibus expositis (sub lumine documentationis majoritatis) speratur mentalitas majoritatis aliquatenus illustrari ~~et~~ et clarius intelligi posse.

Mihi notabilis fuit deficientia theologorum dogmaticorum inter membra Commissionis. Res nostra prima facie videbatur questio simpliciter moralis. Sed in fine profundiores questiones ecclesiologiae, anthropologiae Christianae, Sacrae Scripturae, etc. tangere necesse fuit. In his disciplinis moralistae fuerunt ex magna parte incompetentes. Dogmatici vero, et alii qui vocabantur ut consultores, fere omnes fuerunt, nisi fallor, unius tendentiae.

Joannes C. Ford, S.J.

MEMORANDUM CONCERNING THE MENTALITY OF THOSE WHO WOULD APPROVE CONTRACEPTION

Submitted to: His Eminence, Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani

4 July, 1966

Submitted by: Prof. Germain G. Grisez

A person rendered unconscious by a sudden and unexpected blow awakens very often with a question on his lips: "What happened? What hit me?" In a similar way, one who reads the Rapport Final of the Pontifical Commission for the Study of Problems of Population, Family, and Birthrate will rub his head and wonder: "What is happening to the Church? What is hitting us?" One knows that the experts and members of this Commission are intelligent, sincere, and good men, and that they have worked long and devotedly in an effort to fulfill the Holy Father's request for advice. How could these persons, including the vast majority of the non-theological experts, a substantial majority of the theological section, and a solid majority of the Cardinals and Bishops—how could they have come to this conclusion? This memorandum tries to answer this question by supplying a sketch of the occasions and the underlying reasons for the conclusion.

Introductory Remarks

There is no single mentality common to all individuals in the majority group. To explain adequately the distinctive positions of each individual, one would have to study all of his contributions to the Commission as well as his other works very carefully, and then follow out the peculiar stages of his development. The theological and ethical theories accepted by various members of the majority group differ considerably, and sometimes are even in direct opposition with one another, on points other than the shared conclusion that contraception should be approved. Consequently, we shall only try to indicate some factors that are more or less generally operative.

The members of the majority group had a very difficult time finding a common ground on which they could agree in seeking the practical approval of contraception. At various times, the relationship between moral precepts and their pastoral application, the binding power of the moral teachings of the Church, and the problem of the ends of marriage were all examined by at least some of the theologians in the hope that a solution to the problem of contraception might be found in one of these areas. None of these problems, discussed at earlier sessions of the Commission, was resolved. Instead,

each was set aside when it was discovered that even some of those who felt that contraception should be approved could not accept the reasoning needed to solve the problem on that basis. A striking example is the protracted discussion of the ends of marriage. Several theologians argued, at various stages of the inquiry, that contraception could be approved because conjugal intercourse is directed to conjugal love, which is an essential good of marriage in some way equal with or even superior to the good of children.

One of the best moral theologians among the experts of the Commission was unable to accept this argument. Hence, in this spring's theological sessions the concept of "responsible procreative community" was developed, and the argument based on the ends of marriage was set aside. Thus for the first time a proximate theoretical ground was found acceptable to all who felt that contraception should be approved. This recently developed view is more plausible than many of the earlier ones. Moreover, it has the advantage that it does not obviously conflict with past Catholic teachings concerning the authority of the Magisterium in the field of morals, or the traditional view that certain species of moral acts are intrinsically evil.

Occasions for the Opinion that Contraception Should Be Approved

One must distinguish between occasions for holding a certain opinion and the principles that opinion presupposes. The principles would be identical with the underlying reasons for holding the opinion. The occasions that follow influenced every member of the majority group, though with some variation in emphasis.

It seems clear that the experts of the non-theological sections, and also many of the Cardinals and Bishops, were mainly influenced by these occasions, together with the fact that a substantial majority of the theological section came to agree that contraception is acceptable. Even within the theological section itself, some experts lacking advanced theological training undoubtedly were influenced more by the occasions and by the weight of theological opinion than by their personal grasp on the fundamental reasons. The occasions may be summarized as follows.

a) Sociological factors: Family limitation is necessary. The factors most often mentioned are the increase in birthrate and the decrease in mortality, urbanization, feminism, the need for advanced education.

b) Opinion of the multitude: Many Catholics feel contraception should be permitted. The practice is established among non-Catholics, and it is very difficult for Catholics to be different. Pastors have faced an increasing number of "difficult cases"; in many places, some contraception was tolerated because of compassion during and after World War II. Once the practice became established with at least tacit approval of pastors and bishops, the faithful felt that they had a right to practice contraception. This "sensus fidelium" has been extended and strengthened very greatly during the last few years, since it is widely felt that morality should be more a matter of personal responsibility, and less a matter of obedience to moral precepts. Some of the excesses in the application of the idea of personal responsibility are to be explained by a general revolt against authority, caused partly by disillusion with the civil authorities of the years 1935-1945, and partly by the unprecedented and extended period of post-war prosperity.

c) Emphasis on conjugal love and the sexual act: The need for sexual abstinence within marriage is felt to be unreasonable and harsh. Although Catholics always have held that conjugal love (fides) is a good of marriage that justifies the sexual act in marriage, recent years have seen an increasing emphasis on marital love. This is at least in part a legitimate development of the traditional teaching in the face of the individualism and loneliness of modern life. Many Catholics, however, erroneously restrict the authentic conjugal love of which the Church teaches to the act of sexual intercourse itself. Also, it is not easy to avoid the confusing effects of the romantic attitude toward marriage (an attitude common in America and becoming common in western Europe), and the sentimental eroticism that has had such a deep effect on contemporary trends in the whole field of sexual conduct. The developments of modern psychology have clarified the meaning and importance of human sexuality very greatly for those expert in the field. Unfortunately, those who are not themselves psychologists often too quickly accept the most extreme simplifications—e.g., the groundless notion that science has demonstrated sexual abstinence to be psychologically abnormal.

d) Development in the field of methods: Many are confused about the similarities and differences between the use of the infertile period, the use of new methods of contraception, and the use of the older methods. The

ordinary person has difficulty seeing that a contraceptive of which one is not conscious at the time one has intercourse is really a contraceptive, and that it destroys the integrity of the marital act as a human act. Such a person also has difficulty in seeing how the use of the infertile period differs from contraception. Thus, in virtue of this occasion, many reason: "Since the Church certainly approves the use of the infertile period, it must also accept at least some contraceptives." While theological explanations that adequately clarify these confusions are available, these explanations have not been widely taught or adequately grasped by most people. The widespread use of the infertile period also has called greater attention to a fact of female physiology well-known for at least a century: i.e., that a woman is only fertile at certain times, and that it is perfectly natural that most sexual acts are not effectively generative. This fact about female physiology has seemed to undermine the definition of a marital act as "actus per se aptus ad generationem." The theological point that the per se aptitude refers to the opus hominis rather than to the opus naturae is not easy to grasp for those accustomed to thinking more in terms of natural science than in terms of human meaning.

e) Spirit of the Council: Recent changes--e.g., in the liturgy--and the new freedom of theological discussion have created a feeling that everything is open to change. Theological ferment is very general. A great variety of moral and dogmatic questions, including some that are undoubtedly defined doctrines, are being subjected to renewed discussion--which is good--but also to questioning, doubt, and even revision--which are less and less good. From the point of view of experience, there have been very great changes in the Church in a very short time. Thus, judging by feeling, which follows experience, one has the impression that everything in the Church is unstable and subject to radical change.

f) Defects in the action of the People of God: There has not been a sufficiently effective effort to realize the Christian ideal of conjugal love and of conjugal chastity. Catholics have not been ready enough with substantial assistance for their brethren who encounter serious economic or other difficulties as they struggle to live according to the precepts of conjugal chastity. Instead of bearing one another's burdens, we have perhaps preferred to seek a way of setting the burdens aside. Moreover, the virtue of chastity

sometimes has not been taught in the proper way--as a positive good essential to Christian charity. Instead there has been too much emphasis on sin and too much resignation to the commission of sin. The contemporary demand for authenticity makes many Catholics more eager to fulfill what they accept as an ideal. Also, there is an excessive conviction that man is absolutely master of himself in every act. Hence many are unwilling to confess sins of weakness.

g) Inadequate arguments: Catholic theologians and philosophers gave support to the precept condemning contraception with unconvincing rational arguments. The root cause of the inadequacy of these arguments is that they were developed under the influence of modern rationalism when the individualism of modern philosophy and science had made it difficult to see why contraception is wrong. Before modern times, Catholics recognized the unity of mankind and the real continuity of human life as it is passed on from parents to children. Contraception was then easily seen as an attack on human life--i.e., as the prevention of the coming-to-be of a new human person. Under rationalistic influences, Catholics of the last two centuries have tried to explicate this truth by reference to "the perversion of the faculty" or by reference to action "against the common good of the species." As presented, these arguments were often unsound and almost always unconvincing. Unfortunately, the revival in scholastic theology and philosophy so strongly promoted since Leo XIII has hardly touched the theoretical parts of moral theology and ethics. Hence many working in these fields are now struggling with contemporary existentialism, phenomenology, and naturalism without having been braced by the best of the Catholic intellectual heritage--e.g., St. Thomas, St. Bonaventura, and John Duns Scotus. When Catholics were told that the precept condemning contraception is a matter of natural law, many tried to understand the arguments offered against it. Since these arguments proved unsound, they lost confidence in the teaching itself. In the course of the present controversy, considerably more plausible arguments have become available, but these have not yet received much attention because they run counter to the current trend.

h) The prolongation of the debate: Many Catholics, including some theologians, have taken occasion from the acts of the Magisterium itself to

think that contraception is about to be approved. The Holy See has judged it wise to conduct an extensive inquiry and to permit widespread discussion without reproof of the question whether contraception is immoral or not. Many have reasoned as follows. If such discussion is permitted, contraception could be approved. If contraception can be approved, it cannot be immoral. If it cannot be immoral, then it must be morally good. Even some members of the Commission have adopted this line of reasoning, although it is not logically sound, because the word "can" ("could," "cannot") is used equivocally. At the same time, Cardinals and Bishops who are firmly convinced that contraception is immoral have for the most part remained silent, because they wished to defer to the Holy Father, and because they were confident that this matter would be dealt with in a way best for the Church if they maintained a loyal silence.

With regard to all of these occasions, it must be noticed that in concrete reality they have intersected with one another and reinforced one another. For example, the prolongation of the debate and the discussion among the theologians have greatly extended and amplified the so-called "sensus fidelium," since most Catholics believe that when a moral theologian in good standing makes a statement, they can follow it as if it were an expression of the Magisterium itself. Some even feel that discussion in the Council established as the practical norm the moral view expressed that would permit the greatest practical latitude--namely, the widely publicized statement of one bishop that probabilism already can be applied to the whole question of contraception. Again, the inadequate rational arguments have reinforced confusions about new methods, since it is difficult to know precisely what is excluded as contraceptive unless one understands clearly why contraception is wrong. Sociological factors that are often beyond the control of the individual family are much intensified in their effect by the lack of mutual helpfulness among the People of God. Many other examples could be given to illustrate how two or more of the occasions meet and reinforce one another.

One must also bear in mind that throughout the entire debate Catholics of all states ^{or here} loyal to the traditional precept have not for the most part felt called upon to confess their confidence in it and to defend it strongly.

On the contrary, those questioning the received precept have missed no opportunity to express their doubts and to act effectively in the direction of revision. When someone in the former group has at times felt bound in conscience to speak out, his words have been blown away in the howling wind of publicity. On the contrary, every statement by anyone in the latter group has received careful attention and been treated as important news.

Relationship Between the Occasions and the Underlying Reasons

In general, those who are not sufficiently adept in moral theory to follow the argument concerning the issue of intrinsic immorality have been inclined to form their opinion in accord with the occasions listed, as soon as they have felt free to do so. When asked by the Holy See to give their advice, all the experts and members of the Commission felt free--in fact, obliged in conscience--to form their own opinions. Most of the experts lack sufficient theological training to judge the issue on its intrinsic merits. Hence, they quite naturally examined the occasions and then judged in accord with the majority of the theologians.

Even among the Cardinals and Bishops there was a tendency--how strong it is hard to say--to defer with sincere intellectual humility to what was considered the superior competence of the theological experts. (It must be remembered, of course, that the Cardinals and Bishops did not have a very long time to study the matter independently. They had little time to debate among themselves and to question the theological opinion during their six-day meeting, much of which was devoted to hearing reports and to reviewing draft-statements.)

The confusion and the consequent tendency to judge on the occasions without looking too carefully at underlying reasons was much intensified by the manner in which the issues came to be formulated. To begin with, the precept traditionally promulgated was considered to be in question, and the authoritativeness of the pronouncements of the Magisterium--especially the solemn promulgation in Casti Connubii--was examined. The assumption seemed to be that if it cannot be demonstrated beyond doubt to the satisfaction of those who consider revision necessary that the teaching of the Church in this matter is infallible (irreformable), then one may proceed on the assumption that the precept can be set aside. Actually, the logical consequence

should be: If the irreformability of the precept cannot be demonstrated, then either (1) it is infallibly taught but this fact needs to be clarified; or (2) it is not infallibly taught, but it is true and it cannot be set aside; or (3) it is not true and must be set aside.

Once it had been shown sufficiently for the purpose that it is hard to demonstrate that the received precept has been infallibly promulgated, those most energetically promoting the new view changed ground and considered the intrinsic morality of contraception purely in the light of rational arguments. Unfortunately, it seems that no philosopher defending the traditional precept ever took part in any session of the Commission. Yet the theological experts proceeded on the assumption that there could be no intrinsic ground for the received precept other than rational argument. Toward the very end of the sessions of the theological experts it was realized that no effort had been made to investigate intrinsic theological grounds, and so two biblical scholars were consulted. However, by this time the majority had been formed and the scholars consulted simply reinforced the judgment that had already been made.

This shifting formulation of the central issue and the ambiguity about the proper grounds for resolving it were so confusing that even one of the Bishops was convinced that he was not to make a judgment except in terms of non-theological considerations. He was in great distress, for he felt himself incapable of judging the issues in terms of purely philosophical moral theory.

The Argument of the Majority

The majority of the theologians, of course, propose a rational argument to justify their position. Setting aside the negative aspects of this argument--i.e., criticisms of the traditional position and examination of the value of the statements of the Magisterium--the positive parts of the argumentation of the majority reveal enough that one can conjecture some of the reasons underlying the view proposed. The positive argument can be summarized briefly in the following terms.

N.B.: The following summary is based both on the "Schema Documenti" and on "Documentum Syntheticum de Moralitate Regulationis Nativitatum"--the majority synthesis. The two documents must be studied together, because certain aspects of the argument are stated more clearly in the one, other aspects in the other.

a) For the majority, history is fundamental to man. Nothing human is immune to the effects of the current of time. God Himself has entered into history, and the Church similarly assumes the conditions of the world, in which She incarnates Herself. Therefore, doctrine must develop by way of a free exchange between the Church and the world. In this dialogue, the two are to be considered, as it were, on an equal footing.

b) In the present age, it has become evident to almost everyone that responsible parenthood is necessary and that sexual abstinence in marriage is impossible or undesirable. Since all agree that a problem exists, it is necessary to find a solution by examining the facts and making use of the techniques that are available. Therefore, efficient methods of contraception must be used. Since many people will not accept abstinence (even with the use of the infertile period) as satisfactory, other methods must be used.

c) If interference with nature were wrong as such, contraception would of course be wrong. However, interference is accepted in other areas. Man has dominion over nature, including the human body, its life, and the human process of generation. Contraception attacks no real value, but only a biological process. By this intervention of art, the physiological process is assumed into the life of the human person. Far from being immoral, contraception turns out to be humanizing--since art perfects nature for man.

d) Contraception can be reconciled with the values that have always been defended: the good of offspring and conjugal love, which promotes that good. The suppression of procreation without a good reason would be wrong; this is what the Church has always condemned. When the use of contraceptives contributes to the marital good on the whole, however, it becomes allowable. Not single acts, but the total orientation toward "responsible procreative community" is what determines the moral quality of contraceptive acts.

e) The approval of contraception need not lead to the approval of unnatural acts in or out of marriage (since these attack human dignity) nor to abortion (since this attacks innocent life). Such acts conflict with the one precept we are sure is unexceptionable: the precept to love. Contraception is not obviously against this precept; on the contrary, it seems harsh (i.e., not loving) to expect ordinary people to do what is heroic. Moreover, marital intercourse promotes love, dialogue, communion. Thus contraception is good, because it is in accord with love.

One realizes, of course, that some members of the majority group had serious reservations about various parts of the argument. However, most of them seem to have accepted the whole for the sake of achieving a common synthesis. Some theologians in the majority group are far more adept than others. Some who are less adept may well not have grasped the reasons underlying certain parts of the argument. In fact, at least part of these reasons fall more in the domain of dogmatic theology, metaphysics, and moral theory than in the field of moral theology in the restricted sense. Since the theological section was composed mainly of moralists and men experienced with marriage problems from a pastoral point of view (apart from a couple of non-theologians who were included in the section), there was a certain natural tendency to assume perhaps without much criticism some of the principles that are "in the air" at present. Unfortunately, a notion being discussed in one area of theology--e.g., in fundamental theology or in dogma--is likely to be adopted and put to work in another--e.g., in moral theology or in the pastoral field--without all the restrictions and qualifications its originators might wish, and without the care that the sensitive character of the question might deserve.

Underlying Reasons for the Majority's Argument

We come, now, to the sketch of the theoretical reasons that seem to underlie the argumentation of the majority. Unfortunately, it is necessary to indicate these views in a rather stark manner. And we must again emphasize that the members of the majority certainly would not agree with one another in these views. Perhaps no single member of the majority group of theologians accepts every one of these views. It is even fair to say that, as we shall state them here, these views might well be rejected by most of the majority. There is no question, then, of ascribing these views to anyone. Rather, it is a question of suggesting what theoretical notions appear more or less implicitly to underlie the argument of the majority, and so to give some light on their mentality. Each individual in the majority group would have his own, quite distinct, story to tell.

It is important to note also that the fact that these notions are presented here as underlying the argument of the majority group of theologians by no means indicates that we intend to judge them false without distinction and without qualification. Some of these notions do seem false and inconsistent

with the Catholic faith. Others can be understood in an orthodox sense, and perhaps they have real merit. The purpose here is not to pass judgment one way or the other, but merely to clarify what appear to be some important notions affecting the thought of the majority.

N.B.: Each of the following sections corresponds letter for letter to a paragraph of the summary of the majority argument on page nine (above).

a) Historicism is the key notion that underlies the idea of man, the understanding of the relations of God to man and of the Church to the world, and the theory of the development of doctrine. The philosophical origins of this historicism are twofold: 1) Hegel's dialectic, which has influenced a great deal of the historical interpretation of twentieth-century scholars; 2) the naturalist theory of evolution, which recently has been joined with dialectic in some of the "new, dynamic, Christian world-views."

Contemporary historicism places a great deal of emphasis on human freedom, and on man's role in the formation of institutions and the development of culture. Thus it seems reasonable in the context of such historicism to think that man is at liberty to find a new meaning for the conjugal act by "mutatio obiecti" ("Documentum Syntheticum," II, 4; cf. II, 1), even if this changes the very definition of the institution of marriage itself.

Historicism views reality as dynamic--as consisting essentially in the process of development rather than in the form of what develops or the end to which the development is directed. Consequently, those influenced by this mode of thinking tend to shift attention from the eternal to the temporal, from the transcendent reality of God to His immanent presence. This shift need not be carried so far that it becomes an unorthodox immanentism. However, it does lead to some rather strange theological expressions.

Thus it is startling to read: "In Verbo suo Deus ipse tamquam prima causa efficiens omnis evolutionis mundi et hominis in historia praesens et efficax est." And it is also startling to read a few lines further on in the Introductio to the "Schema Documenti" that Christ entered into and assumed history, when we are used to saying that the Word assumed human nature. Then we are surprised to read that just as God became man, so the Church is really incarnated in the world--when we might have expected the thought to be completed by reference to the fact that by unity with Christ mankind is allowed to partake in His divinity. Again, we are given a Catholic transposition of

Hegel's theory that Absolute Spirit realizes itself and comes to self-consciousness through the very progress of history: "Ea de causa Ecclesia intelligentiam mysterii sui non tantum e practerito haurit, sed, in prae-senti stans et iam ad futurum prospiciens, totum progressum generis humani in se assumit." This sentence may admit of a perfectly orthodox interpretation, but it is not easy for a Catholic to understand, since it seems to place the prospects of mankind on a par with tradition in the Church's present understanding of Her own mystery.

In traditional theological frameworks, there was room for the development of doctrine, but such development always was predictable to this extent, at least, that one could be sure a new development would not contradict the former teaching. The reason for this assurance was that doctrine was seen as developing organically, using extrinsic materials and occasions, but bearing its own integral character within itself. In a theology more influenced by historicism, a dialectical pattern of development of doctrine is posited. (Anyone familiar with the manner in which Communist doctrine has developed can see in it an example of dialectical development.)

In a dialectical concept of the development of doctrine, the world to which the Church speaks is a principle co-equal with tradition in determining what doctrine is going to be. Because external factors are considered so vital, explanations of traditional teachings---e.g., the condemnation of contraception---are sought less within specifically Christian sources---e.g., the New Testament's teaching on chastity---and much more from outside sources (pagan philosophy, social context, and heretical doctrines to which orthodox Christianity is seen as constantly "reacting.")

In virtue of the fact that the historical situation of our day is so different from the situation of earlier centuries, a totally new and unexpected precept can be promulgated by the Church, even though it be incompatible with the one previously taught. In fact, from the point of view of historicism, the Church is true to herself only by reacting in this way. The tradition of the Church indeed remains constant, but it must combine with the different situations in which it finds itself to form a radically new synthesis. It is as if the Church's tradition were a chemical element, which can be combined with various other elements. Depending upon the combination which happens to occur at any given time, diverse compounds (i.e., doctrines) are formed, and these may have essentially diverse--even contrary--properties.

b) Humanism underlies the formulation of the problem as a conflict confronting married couples to which they have a right to expect a technical solution from the experts. The humanistic outlook is wholesome insofar as it bases itself upon the real facts of human nature and examines realistically the actual problems couples are facing. The deliverances of the modern sciences of man (e.g., psychology and sociology) can certainly be helpful in understanding the full human significance of moral and religious truth. However, humanism goes too far when it leaves out of serious account the reality of original sin and the necessity of grace. (An outlook that is at once historicist and humanist has difficulty seeing in original sin anything but the relative imperfection of the earlier stage of man's development. This is the reason why the doctrine of original sin is being so carefully examined and so energetically discussed.)

Among some Catholics, perhaps too much influenced by humanism, there is a tendency not to take very seriously certain Christian ideals--e.g., the ideal of chastity--that happen not to be in consonance with contemporary humanist values. Perhaps the clearest sign that humanism has become excessive, however, is the simple assumption that there must exist some technical solution for every human problem that arises, and that the most effective technical solution available is shown to be moral by its very efficiency. This attitude does not simply recognize the due place of human providence; it even tends to displace divine providence altogether. A more traditional view leaves room for the possibility that there may be no morally licit way out of certain situations, so that sometimes man must restrain his hand out of respect for moral law. In such cases, where full use is not made of technical possibilities, it was traditionally thought that the restraint would be justified by the wise ordering of divine providence.

In these documents, the influence of excessive humanism is more evident by what is omitted than by what is explicitly asserted. The "Documentum Syntheticum. . ." finds it unnecessary to mention that marriage is a divine institution and a sacrament, that the human soul is individually created by God for an eternal destiny, and that the human body and sexuality have a special sacredness for Christians in virtue of our incorporation in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within us. The document even denies explicitly that God is in a special sense the Lord of human life. The "Schema Documenti" has been supplied with quotations from Gaudium et Spes

and with references to Holy Writ at the suggestion of one of the Bishops who felt that such references would be fitting in a Pontifical statement.

c) Dualism seems to underlie the theory of the relationship between the human person and sexuality presented in the "Documentum Syntheticum" and summarized in the "Schema Documenti." This dualism regards the essence of the human person as residing in the conscious and self-determining ego. Nature is opposed to the self as object is opposed to subject. The human body and the physiological aspects of sexuality are included in nature, rather than being included in the personal self. The philosophical origins of this dualism are in Descartes, Kant, and (in its dynamic form) Hegel. A somewhat similar dualism also is present in the empiricist tradition of British and American philosophy, and has received a dynamic form in the evolutionistic naturalism of the last hundred years. However, ~~the~~ dualism seems to have come to the present debate chiefly by way of phenomenology.

Since the human body and sexuality are considered as belonging to nature, and since nature is considered alien to the person (because personality is limited to subjectivity), there is no objection to intervening in what is regarded as a merely biological process to prevent the beginning of the life of a new person. Those affected by dualism have little sense of the real community and objective continuity of mankind that is grounded in biological relationships, because they are much more impressed by the fact that each self-conscious subject is isolated within his own consciousness.

In this dualism, there is even a certain tendency to regard nature and intelligence as if they were opposing forces, locked in strife with one another. The dominance of man over nature must be established by technology; otherwise, the opposing forces of nature threaten man's freedom. This mentality is illustrated in expressions such as "the population explosion," "excessive fertility." When this attitude comes to the surface, modern dualism takes on some additional features of the ancient dualistic heresies such as gnosticism, manichaeism, and catharism. (One must recall the Victorian period for examples of the negative attitude toward sexuality as a whole that marks one phase of such a dualism; the emphasis of our century has been on the complementary aspect: "since sex is merely a biological process, man may use it in any way he wishes.")

In the documents we are examining, there is some evidence of this dualism

in the notion that man's sexuality really is not humanized and integrated in the personality until it is assumed and contraceptively regulated. The assumption is that of itself sexuality is merely natural, that nature is alien to man, but that artificial intervention transforms nature into the reality of culture, which has human meaning.

This dualism, that has been entering Catholic theology by way of phenomenology, has also had a considerable influence on dogmatic speculation. Because the phenomenological approach tends toward idealism and deprecates the importance of nature except insofar as it is given meaning by man, some ^(who are) thinking within the phenomenological framework have been having difficulty with doctrines such as the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. That Christ should be substantially--i.e., bodily--present in a manner that is not relative to human experience, and yet that this very presence also must be considered a matter of fundamental importance to Christian life--the simultaneous accommodation of both requirements of the mystery is very nearly impossible on phenomenological principles.

d) Situationism seems to be the key notion underlying the view that single acts do not have moral significance except from their context. Undoubtedly the tendency toward situationism among Catholic moralists is more subtle and more qualified than it was fifteen or twenty years ago. Nevertheless, the theory is widely influential. One reason for the influence is that a serious and valuable effort is being made to shift emphasis from precepts and mere external conformity, to values and inner responsibility. Lacking adequate theoretical foundations--which might have been drawn from the best authors of the Catholic theological heritage--contemporary Catholics who are trying to accomplish this shift of emphasis tend to fall into modes of moral theory that are common in non-Christian, contemporary philosophy.

Now, every humanistic, non-Christian philosophy must set up some finite good as the ultimate end for man. The judgment of what is right is then made by seeing which action is likely to produce the most good results and the least bad results--measuring good and bad by the end that has been set up. Christian ethics, on the contrary, must regard the end of man as transcendent--divine goodness to be attained in heaven. For the Christian, several fundamental human goods demand respect, and one acts rightly not by succeeding in accomplishing what is good, but in willing what is right from the love of God.

For this reason, the concept of intrinsically evil acts is essential to Christian morals, while it has no place in a non-Christian humanism.

In short, many moralists, including some on the Commission, are having serious difficulty in understanding how any act can be wrong if on the whole it is done with the expectation that it will do more good than harm. In effect, this is to admit that a sufficiently good end justifies an evil means. Of course, no one is willing to go that far in an unqualified way. The existence of the trend can be discerned, however, in the fact that at least three different theologians on the Commission have more or less openly raised questions about divorce, masturbation, therapeutic abortion, and suicide. It would be completely mistaken to imagine that because contraception is obviously different from these acts, the principles which justify contraception might not justify these acts as well. One must ask if what the Church faces here could be anything like a Trojan horse.

e) The New Morality is a key factor in the thinking of some of the Commission, although it has been eliminated from the final report, because the majority could not find common ground in any theories of this type. By "New Morality" is meant a morality in which only love is recognized as an absolute requirement. Of course, if the love in question were authentic Christian charity, there would be no question that it is the first and the greatest requirement. But authentic charity never excludes other specifying requirements. A sure sign of the mentality of the "New Morality" is the notion that other virtues--e.g., chastity--either may conflict with love or else must be loosely defined in terms of love (as in the "Schema Documenti") so that one can be sure there will be no possibility of conflict.

Traditional Catholic thought considers charity as a perfection of human nature, which retains its own integrity. The "New Morality" tends to look upon nature as something displaced by love. This view has its roots in Protestant theologies. This is not to say that in some respects the view may not be sound. It may, in fact, have a good deal to contribute to the renewal of Catholic moral thought. However, some of these Protestant influences are perhaps being absorbed too quickly and without sufficient discrimination. (At least one of the theologians of the Commission shows a remarkable resemblance in his thinking to the Lutheran, Emil Brunner; another has proposed a morality of growth which rather resembles the reformed tradition of

Protestant thought.)

One of the chief marks of Protestant influence is the suggestion that acts which have traditionally been regarded as evil must be accepted as the best possible for fallen man in his present state. Grace is looked upon not as an efficacious remedy for sin, but more as a divine acceptance of sinful man even in his very sinfulness. The redemption is not considered an effective renewal of human nature for this life. Hence natural law--which is thought to pertain to the first state of man--is considered to be largely irrelevant. Thus, for example, in Protestant thought divorce is justified now just as it was under the mosaic law, not because it is good, but because it is less evil.

The "New Morality" emphasizes individual conscience ("responsibility") and deemphasizes general precepts and binding obligations imposed by authority. At the same time, the concept of love propounded by supporters of the "New Morality" is a naturalization of charity. Consequently, the only significant values are felt to be in human consciousness and human community. Traditional Catholic morality of course recognizes the importance of social virtues, especially charity toward one's neighbor. However, love of God was given the first place, and certain virtues (e.g., chastity, temperance, fortitude, and humility) that do not immediately bear upon interpersonal relationships were also considered essential.

Undoubtedly, the influence of the "New Morality" has had something to do with the confusions concerning conjugal love that have clouded the thinking of some ^{experts} ~~members~~ of the theological section of the Commission.