

Private

AL/20976)
as from
Oriel College
Oxford

25.7.34

Dear Mrs Roberts

Archbishops Commission on the Ministry of Women

I am at the moment struggling with the psychological material in connection with this Commission, & have been re-reading your paper (sent, I fear, eighteen months ago) with very great interest. But I see that you asked to have back the letters of your psychological friends & I must apologise for not sending them sooner. Could you let me know whether you want them, & your paper itself? The latter I should like to keep at any rate until the autumn ~~of~~ after a meeting of the Committee which is to draft ^{part of} our report ~~of~~, though in fact it is as wholly outside their range, as it was, to judge by your letter, outside that of Miss Escreet.

I tried it on the Chairman, who was obviously completely nonplussed by it & kept it an unconscionable time before writing to say so.

I feel myself

(1) the extreme importance of the kind of considerations which you put, & the tremendous strength of the unconscious forces which can be set in motion - or, even more, oppose the most violent resistances to any upsetting of an adjustment, however imperfect which has come to be accepted

(2) the very great difficulty of checking the actual evidence - owing, in general, to the ambivalence of all psychological symbolism. It seems to me that this type of reconstruction could ~~be~~ be re-arranged & developed almost ad infinitum. What one of your correspondents says about the need of clinical controls

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is very relevant here. And one or two controls would be useless - just because they would be individual. You would need many hundred well attested cases before you could say what phases of orientation are those most likely to persist.

(3) that in this situation you might almost as early draw one conclusion as another from the argument. We do not in fact know nearly enough to say what would result from any line of action. There is at least a case for those who take the obvious empirical way of safety, & accept the practical adjustments which these forces have imposed upon society & religion alike. I am sure of this, at any rate, that any rapid re-arrangement might have very unforeseen & unforeseeable results, in a society where so

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few people are in any position to understand
& accept their own inner motivation.

Even members of a Commission ———
well, my impression is that I had better not try
to push psychological considerations too far!

Yours sincerely
W. Grested