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Dear Doctor Jekl,

I am very appreciative of your careful consideration of my paper. I am troubled by my inability to convince you of my main contention that regression is not only a primary defense against anxiety; but that that defense itself can become a source of anxiety to the ego. My concern is not primarily because it is my idea and I cannot bear to part with it. I had no such difficulty when you pointed out my lack of precision regarding my formulations about the superego. Nor do I have any real objections to discard the the formulation "the wish to regress". I can see this may become quite speculative; and even if it could be demonstrated theoretically, its significance to my main thesis is questionable; and therefore, little would be gained by introducing a controversial conception.

Even the question of calling regression the major source of anxiety to the ego, I can accept as perhaps giving the appearance of challenging accepted conceptions (which I have no intention whatever of suggesting); and therefore, I can accept the suggestion to be more careful about over-emphasis and exaggeration.

No, I do not think it is because I am so opposed to giving up my ideas; but I am troubled because of another factor, which you also helped me recognize only too often--- my deference to the opinions and judgements of those I hold in high esteem. I am aware of your knowledge and objectivity; and therefore, when I am unable to convince you of the logic of my position I am compelled to have some misgivings.

I must admit, in this circumstance however, I am as yet unable to shake my conviction that regression is a real danger to the integrity of the ego, despite the fact that it originates as a defense against anxiety. Surgery, too, has the function to protect and cure disease; but the realistic ego rightly fears surgery because sometimes the cure kills; and not the disease.

Similarly, of course it is true that regression is originally the ego's attempt to cope with the trauma of psychic helplessness; but it seems to me that by definition, regression of ego function creates psychic helplessness. How can the rational ego not perceive and react with anxiety to such a threat to its, the ego's very existence as an organized psychic structure whose very function is the more effective gratification of instinctive need? We say the symptom expresses the instinctual need, the anxiety and the defense. Yet there can be no doubt that people do dread their symptoms and rightly so.

I have sent a copy to George Gero and Francie also has a copy. I shall have to wait for other opinions; and if they all agree with you I shall have to look further for my blind spot. I wrote Remie while Anna Freud was here, asking for her opinion regarding two questions I wrote out. He agreed to do so, rather reluctantly I thought, but so far I have had no word from him.

Again, I am most thankful,

Charles Sarlin