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Introduction

- The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate the congruency between the work of philosopher Martin Heidegger and psychologist Carl Jung.
- Specifically, this presentation will focus on providing a phenomenological description of Jung’s complex theory with the use of Heidegger’s ontology.
- I argue that the meaning of a complex is phenomenologically disclosed when Dasein’s world is conspicuously experienced as unready to hand and “not-being-at-home”.
- In the experience of a complex, angst, conscience and guilt are saliently disclosed in a moment of conspicuous obstructiveness and obstinacy, which results in the ready to- hand losing its readiness-to-hand in a certain way

Complexes

- Jung presents his concept of a complex by saying that the ego is “frequently disturbed by strong feeling tones” (Jung, 1907, p.39)
- Jung says that “we have proven that complexes disturb association experiments in a characteristic and regular manner.” (Jung, 1907, p.42).
- Jung continues by saying “It would be expected that an educated subject would react easily, but indeed this is not the case. At the very simplest words there appear obstructions and other disturbances which can be explained only by the fact that the

- stimulus word has excited a complex. The emotional inhibition must be cited as the main hindering cause.” (Jung, 1907, p.43).

Heidegger and Complexes

- With these descriptions by Jung on his theory of the complex, Heidegger’s phenomenology can be integrated to explain and describe the ontological meaning and the lived experience of a complex
- When Dasein is concerned with something, entities which are ready-to-hand may be met as something unusable and not appropriately modified for the use that has been chosen. As a result, when unusability is discovered, equipment becomes conspicuous. “This conspicuousness presents the ready-to-hand equipment as in a certain un-readiness-to hand” (Heidegger, 1962, p.103).
- This explanation of Dasein’s being in the world is very informative to Jung’s concept of the complex since Jung recognises the similar disturbance a complex has on a person “At the very simplest words there appear obstructions and other disturbances which can be explained only by the fact that the stimulus word has excited a complex” (Jung, 1907, p.43).
- When Dasein notices the un-ready-to-hand, the world of entities ready-to-hand becomes obstructive, which means the world “cannot be budged without the thing that is missing” (Heidegger, 2000, p.103).
- The ontological meaning of the experience of a complex calls for Dasein’s attending to its obstinate obstructiveness to being in the world.
- The experience of an unconscious complex results in conscious understanding not knowing what the cause of the anxiety is.

- Conscience calls conspicuously and indefinitely to disclose that the world cannot be understood in the current familiar everydayness mode of being. The call of conscience’s indefiniteness positively shows that Dasein has been inauthentic in its understanding of the world and calls Dasein forth to understand the truth of the meaning of the world which it is anxious about.
- The experience of a complex points to conscience calling Dasein guilty for being the basis for its unfamiliar and obstructive “not being at home in the world” (Heidegger, 2000, p.233). As a result, the experience of a complex is argued to consist of anxiety, conscience and guilt which is authentically understood as a call of care from Dasein to itself.
- Importantly, the positive nature of the experience of a complex is that it brings Dasein face to face with the concealed authentic possibilities

References

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- Jung, C. G. (1907). The Psychology of Dementia Praecox. (Peterson, F, Trans). New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Publ. Co.