Pathological Anarchist

A Case Study
Self-Definition in 3 Complexes

The Anarch

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Introduction

For a while now, I have been trying to understand the connections between my life history, character, values, and philosophical beliefs. Through fairly consistent self-analysis, I began to notice that there is a great deal of consistency or continuity running throughout my life history, relationships with others, social preferences, fears, dreams, values, and philosophy. I believe the following analysis to be the greatest step I have taken in understanding myself and my word-view.

Method of Analysis

What I am going to describe here is not by any means a formal method of analysis. Most of it has been non-verbal, intuitive, and compulsive. There are two areas of analysis that I can recount as contributing to my arrival at these conclusions. It is rather difficult for me to clearly remember all the thought and comprehension that took place; not just recently, but over the years. So the detail of these areas of analysis and how I went about working with them is a bit blurry.

World of Desire

Each of us has our own particular *World of Desire* that is different from one another both in the quality of the desires that fill it, the quantity of desires, and the way that we relate to them. In taking a look at my own World of Desire, I was able to recognize very specific similarities, interconnections, and origins in them. My World of Desire is very small in quantity but very deep in quality. On a daily basis, I infrequently "want": I don't have a desire to appropriate things very often, I don't have a desire to do things very often, I don't come up with daily or even weekly plans, and I don't often feel motivated by external rewards. At the same time, I feel very strong desires that I find difficult to compromise: I desire free time, solitude, good moods, regular contact with certain people, affection, care, and many other things. It is in understanding the nature of these sorts of desires that I was able to tease out their major underlying themes.

Life History

The other part of this method has been to relate these desires to my life history: to the recurring memories, behaviors, conflicts, and cycles that I know predominate my personal history (my existence). In juxtaposing my World of Desire and my Life History, I began to see the strong connections that I will outline below. These connections are significant because they demonstrate that my World of Desire (and even my personal values) have their own history originating in the psychological complexes that I am going to elaborate on. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of these connections is that they are not superficial. They are deeply burrowed in the fabric of my character and they account almost entirely for what I believe to be the basis of my *identity*.

Complex of Abuse

One of the first (but in no way most significant) connections that I was able to recognize – and that I will hereafter refer to as a "Complex" – surrounds a central attitude towards or relationship to Selfishness that was prevalent so frequently when I experienced abuse. What I mean by "Selfishness" is not simple egotism, but self-centered reasoning. An example of this sort of selfishness can be demonstrated in the hypothetical situation of a child misbehaving in school and the reasons that are given to her by her teacher for changing their behavior. The reasoning can be expressed in *if/then statements*. A selfish if/then statement would be the teacher telling the child that they should not misbehave because it will make the teacher look bad or have a hard time performing their role as teacher; the if/then statement is: if you misbehave, then I am burdened by this. Opposed to this reasoning would be if the teacher explained to the child that they should not misbehave because they won't be able to learn; the if/then statement is: if you misbehave, then you are burdened by this. The difference between these two forms of if/then statements is one of "if you, then I" as opposed to "if you, then you". The former presumes the child (in the example) to be a means to an end and it is fundamentally self-centered reasoning. The latter presumes that the child has her own goals, emotions, thoughts, and experiences that can be related to and presumes the child to be an end in herself.

Self and Others

Throughout my development, Selfishness of this sort affected me so deeply because of its association with abuse, that I learned to respond to advice, instruction, and other forms of consideration with distrust. In every area in my life that I had found it difficult to develop healthy habits of living, beneficial behaviors, a recognition of the implicit rewards in doing something, and value for certain things in general there is a direct relationship with attempts made to *teach* me them through selfish if/then statements (and manipulative rewards or punishments justified with those statements). This Selfishness of others became a personal selfishness: not through the internalization of their logic, but through an ironic response to it. I grew to lack any real concept of trust in others to think of me as an end in myself and came to expect that when I related to someone (for the first time or consistently), this would be the most common way in which I would be related to. What these expectations lead to was an ambivalent temperament, loneliness from distancing myself from those who I recognized this

Selfishness at work within, fears that I could not rely on anyone else, and contempt for objectification. In this way, I developed my own sort of selfishness that was solitary, generous without expectations of mutual generosity, emotionally distanced, guarded, and defensive. Many personal values came from this way that I had learned to relate to myself and others ...which I will elaborate on towards the end of this paper.

Authority/Care

For me, Selfishness epitomized what "Authority" meant to me. Those in an authoritative or authoritarian role relied on this logic that I had come to despise. The antithesis of this was care (or love). Those who could express their motivations for trying to teach me something, correct me, or otherwise help me with if/then statements that were what I felt to be considerate (if you/then you statements) were not Authority: they were mentors, instructors, scientific thinkers, admirers, and most importantly their logic caused me to feel loved (or, cared for). So, I developed a deep loathing for Authority and a deep enthusiasm for those who "cared". Unfortunately, people are not that simple: someone who deeply cares about me may express that care with if you/then I statements, someone who doesn't care about me but instead wants to take advantage of me may know how to appeal to this complex, and abuse (or, domination) was what I wanted to avoid the most: not mere "selfishness".

Introversion/Extroversion

The sort of selfishness that I developed also pulled me towards an introverted way of *being-in-the-world*. Since I had a hard time trusting others, loathed being objectified, and all the rest detailed above, I formed a complicated relationship with myself and very few deep and meaningful relationships with others. This isn't to say that I was or am always introverted or that I don't have many relationships with others, but I do approach social life with an inward-facing perspective: putting feelers out for indications of Selfishness, inspecting my own thoughts and feelings (and the way I am affected by others), restraining my expressions of emotion (for related fears of vulnerability), and wearing a mask of superficial and easily displayed outward behaviors to mediate between the vulnerable life of my interior and the selfish world of my exterior.

Complex of Loss

Loss and difficulties coping with loss is an enormous part of my Life History and the center of a core complex of my character. There are innumerable examples in my development of great losses that affected me deeply and scarred me. The complex that has formed out of these experiences of loss is so pervasive that small losses of little consequence trigger the memories of these larger losses and their consequences. This has caused me to become very orderly with my things; for example, always keeping the same items in the same places. Though this is a superficial manifestation of this deeper complex of loss, it serves the purpose of generally pointing out the affect that greater loss has had on my development and the way that I am in-the-world.

Tragic Loss/Permanence

Tragic Loss is a well-defined and understood phenomena but it is usually framed in the context of death. I don't want to rehash the discourse that surrounds Tragic Loss: I don't want to rehearse the 5 phases of "coping with loss" and other popular psychological understandings. Tragic Loss has affected me in a very particular way due to the amount of it that I have coped with and the way that it has shaped my perceptions of the world, relationships, life, etc. What I want to address is how coping with Tragic Loss has contributed to a strong and compulsive desire for Permanence. This desire for Permanence is the basis for many of the desires that fill my World of Desire. Instead of desires rooted in accumulation, my desires are rooted in maintaining what I already have or getting what I had back. Instead of ambitious plans I have a stubborn commitment to free time. Instead of a desire for new experiences, I have desires for the experiences that I know I enjoy to be maintained for as long as possible. Instead of forming new relationships, I dedicate myself to the relationships that I have already. This desire for Permanence and its predication on the experience of tragic losses is more than something I simply cope with.

Impermanence/Regularity-Structure

We all eventually deal with loss and come to the realization that in general, life is fairly impermanent. For me, this conflicts my desire for Permanence and has contributed to the development of a desire for Structure or Regularity (and a like value for

such). Below I will demonstrate how this desire for Regularity-Structure is conflicted and modified by a third complex that makes it more nuanced, but for now we will leave it here. The way that this desire for Regularity-Structure expresses itself is in the systems that I create for the purposes of preventing loss as much as possible: the system for where I keep things, for instance. I crave a certain degree of regularity in my daily life as well. I become frustrated when I don't know what to expect: it can be someone's moods, changes at work, etc. Basically, it leads to a series of complications in the way that I adapt to the Impermanence of life. I create structures to stave off loss knowing all too well that eventually, everything is lost: Death. While I don't have a tremendous fear of death or much of a complex surrounding it (because coping with tragic loss is so familiar for me), the reality of Death epitomizes the temporary nature of any structures, regularities, or systems that I create. Oddly enough, the regularity of life and death cycles in nature (and the regularities of natural environments in general) appeal to me because even though the structure of these regularities is complex, they are consistent and comforting.

Change/Restructuring

A more superficial manifestation of Impermanence is Change. The fact of Change causes the sort of structures and regularities that I create to be intentionally temporary ones. Though Change and Loss can seem similar, for me they are very different. I enjoy a certain degree of change so long as I can Restructure. So while Structure and Regularity in response to Impermanence is a basic component of this Complex of Loss, the most consistent form of these structuring behaviors is as Restructuring. It is rare that such great changes take place that the fundamental structures that I have created for myself are effected by them. So, I am most often quite literally "playing" with ways to restructure my living conditions, relationships, etc. in response to small changes. This is quite enjoyable for me because it demonstrates to me over and over again the underlying dialectical process of Impermanence-Structure and it gives me confidence in my capacity to cope with losses. The joy I find in writing is a good example of this.

Complex of Creativity

Creativity makes it possible for me to embrace the former two complexes at the same time as it modifies them and becomes a complex of its own. In the way that my Complex of Abuse lead to a solitary, somewhat detached, introverted, and anti-authoritarian character and my Complex of Loss lead to a insecure, in the moment, day by day, and conservative character: my Complex of Creativity similarly lead to both deep and superficial characteristics and values. Creativity makes it possible for me to enjoy my solitary life and it makes it possible for me to Restructure. It has thus affected me deeply in a different way: not through trauma, but through relief. It is a complex by virtue of the other two and it modifies them in slight but significant ways. It shades the types of relationships I desire to maintain, it modifies the structures I desire to build, and it comes with its own demands.

Independence/Dependence

While my Complex of Abuse has taught me how to become self-reliant in many ways, it is my Complex of Creativity that has lead to the development of a preference for *Interdependence*. It is possible to be creative on ones own but the bottom line is usually that creativity of one depends on the creativity of many. In rejecting Dependence from my Complex of Abuse, my embrace of Independence was less significant. Instead, this Complex of Creativity lead to rejecting the dichotomy in favor of a particular sort of interdependence that is appropriate for co-creation. This opens up the possibilities for me to have relationships with others that are mutual (not offending my Complex of Abuse) and participatory in the creation of structures (reinforcing my Complex of Loss). Relationships based on this have thus been a recurring theme through-out my Life History and my World of Desire includes deeply rooted desires for being part of a mutually, co-creative community (or Commune): not because of ideology, but because of this system of complexes.

Spontaneity/Rigidity

This Complex of Creativity directly conflicts with my Complex of Loss where the desire for permanence is concerned. Creativity demands at least some degree of potential for spontaneity; so, the rigidity of the structures that come out of my Complex of

Loss is modified and I desire *flexible structure.* This is extremely problematic when I am expected to adapt to the rigid Regularity-Structure of others' systems: the School, the Academy, the Church, the Party, most jobs and all sorts of other, common, authoritarian social institutions.

Values

Here is a short list of some fundamental values that are directly related to these complexes. Some of them have been briefly mentioned in the descriptive section of this paper, others will likely be obvious in how they developed in relation to the 3 complexes I outlined. The point of listing these values is to demonstrate their roots in psychological complexes and not in ideology. In my Life History, they were first to develop before I came to learn about anarchism (which I elaborate on at the end of this paper):

Nature
Mutuality
Art
Regularity
Autonomy
Co-Creation
Security
Flexible Structures
Community

Sketch of my Life World

-later-A pretty verbal picture that metaphorically describes my Life World in relation to these major complexes that shape it-later-

Anarchism

Anarchism for me may be a complex as well because it is intimately related to the deepest and most pervasive complexes of my character. Anarchism has played an interesting role in my Life History as a way to link these complexes to the social fabric. It has also played an interesting role in relation to my World of Desire as a justification for my desires and a history of others who have come to desire similar things. In this way, I identify as an Anarchist. Anarchist social theory has also opened me up to a vast range of topics, logics, behaviors, and desires that – although connected to the above complexes – go beyond them. Whether or not these complexes can be generalized to other anarchists is beside the point of this paper. What is important here is how anarchism as a framework so readily coincides with values I have already developed for very personal reasons. In this way, in being unable to practically separate the values that arise from my characteristic complexes, from the values that are elaborated on by anarchist thought; fighting to live an anarchist life (and to co-create an anarchist commune and revolution) and living my personal life are the same thing.

Therefore, I am pathologically anarchist...

Post-Script Reflections

Like most things I write, I didn't finish my last piece. The compulsion that drove me to explain did not carry me through to the part that one could assume would be much more interesting to write: the Sketch of a Life World or whatever. Maybe that is because I already wrote an autobiography and didn't want to summarize it (and am not driven by an imaginary audience I am writing for... because really, I have no clue who reads this).

The Origin of Values in Complexes and the Appeal of Ideology

On of the things I've been thinking about the most is the actual significance of connecting an analysis of my personality development with anarchism and how this relates to ideology in general (or anarchism in general). I feel stuck between two considerations. One is that I wonder: if I can recognize the strength of my values as a result of ideologically reinforced psychological complexes, what might this say about ideology generally? This suggests to me that ideology, in a way, hi-jacks subjective values that are formed through psychological development in a given context. That causes me to consider what may be an aspect of "outside" or "objectivity" to the phenomenon of ideology: its appeal as a phenomenon outside the subject that can justify the bias or prejudice of the subject by appearing to be more authoritative than ones personal values, prejudices, and bias'. So if a million people through-out history have formed similar values from their complexes and anarchism emerges from this (and all of the theory, study, analysis, research, etc.), anarchism is something that comes from a million people approaching or perceiving life through the same values (even if different complexes are the basis of conflict from which those values take on significance for the subject). So anarchism (and other ideologies) are not so much an "outside" in the sense that the topics it examines are examined by people with different value sets as it is an "outside" simply because there is a wealth of discourse, argument, and such that did not come from the individual subject embraced by it (and whom embraces it).

So a question of importance arises: are my specific complexes and the values that come from it more worthy of my focus, or is this heterogeneous ideology more worthy of my focus since when I plug into it ...my world-view is broadened? And, what does this say of other ideologies with their heterogeneous composition of ideas and hijacked subjectivities? Do I embrace the representation inherent in the ideology and attempt

to break away from the foundational complexes that specifically gave rise to the values that drew me to it to begin with? Or, do I embrace my complexes and the values that emerge from them?

Other Ideologies and Other People

So those questions are interesting to me... but they become more interesting to me when I begin to think about other ideologies that have hijacked my subjectivity in the past: punk, chaos magick, etc. What I recognize is a consistent attempt throughout my life to plug into and embrace a whole host of ideologies, trying to find that which conflicts the least with these neurotic values! Worse yet, I recognize this pattern in the life history of others I have known for a long time... and so have other writers, artists, whatever. The search for the symbol that represents to the world and to ones self the values that they hold (and hold them, apparently!). Then in many cases, that symbol doesn't work anymore and all that came with that symbol – that ideology – is moved beyond, rejected, or built on with the embrace of a new symbol, a better symbol for that particular individual.

My Symbol or No Symbol!?

This isn't new thinking for me but the clarity of the personal context is. What is new is the realization that the values (because they stem from deep complexes) persist. I tend to build on, instead of reject my past symbols (there's that loss complex again) and think about this as an aesthetic of self, technology of self, life as art, or whatever the whatever of whatever you want to fucking call it. But, the chief point remains that these values are persist through a whole variety of expansions, alterations, articulations, clarifications, and shit. The ideologies can take me into worlds of knowledge, discourse, life style, social practices, goals, and such: they can refine me because of an identification with them but they don't have the power to destroy the complexes and values themselves since they reinforce, nurture, open up space for, and elaborate on them. So I can do that myself (and I do) and come up with my own personal little philosophy and cease to relate with any more symbols through a sort of attachment. On the other hand...

Embrace my values or challenge them mercilessly?

The problem with this is that should my complexes have lead to authoritarian values, liberal values, or some other sort of values that I am disgusted by ...well, I would be the subject of very different ideologies that as of now are anathema to me (as well as the subjects of those ideologies). So that is the real tension! ...But!

The Context of my Complexes

The origin of my complexes is my environment with its history and my life history in that greater context. They are the result of my responses to events and situations first, reflective thinking second. My personal development has been flayed by the hand of circumstance and these complexes are the open wounds bleeding out value and meaning. Anarchism has clarified the hands behind these circumstances, shown me the blades in them, and inspired a hope in my ability to heal through a sort of subjective or poetic justice. I bare the marks of the abuses, losses, dispossession, subjugation, prejudice, scorn, and attempts made at my dignity, my life, and my liberty. I also bare the burden of these marks and the responsibility that comes with being marked (in so many god damned ways). As only one subject of the cruel conditions of this society and of human existence, these wounds may have been inflicted upon me but they spray pus into the eyes of those who have created these conditions (or that which has created these conditions): it is a social as much as a personal situation. Such justice is then a social justice as much as it is a personal justice. A personal responsibility and a social responsibility. And these symbols, these ideologies that "hijack" my values are an ocean of pus and blood from a world history of violence that I gaze at my reflection on the surface of.

Resignation to Determinism

At the same time, to take the long view and place the marker of Origin for my values in a historical context of material and social conditions is to resign my ethics to a determinism. The poetic justice of conflicting values, originating in wounds (and the complexes protecting them), resulting in social conflict that reconciles the damage is nothing more than the description of a war that can only be controlled through a disciplined deconstruction of ones complexes and values accompanied by a refusal to adopt merely antithetical values or look for the absurdity of objective values. Though, such a deconstruction (if possible or practicable) runs the risk of annihilating the capacity to rationally value at all... This effectively eliminates one from the world of conflicts of interest.

Life Without Value?

I can only think of an endless list of what would not be possible without Value (in the form of ethical values, value judgments, economic value, and such) ...I'm not sure what would be possible if a human being could indeed do so. This would include not valuing ones own survival enough to eat and such. But, the gap between very specific values from very specific psychological complexes and no values what-so-ever is fucking huge. The real question is of method: how to get from values rooted in complexes determined

by one's psycho-social development in specific contexts ...to some other sort of values that are any more worthwhile.

Fixation and Fluidity

Complexes are fixations with snow-ball-rolling-downhill behavior: a few good blows, the memories associated with them, the way those associations generalize to other experiences and evaluations, and then one can find the qualities they have become fixated upon in situation after situation. They are like magnets attracting ever more experience to them. A new experience isn't so much a new situation as it is an experience that is not pulled into the familiarity of our complexes: it is fluid, it is absurd, it is not yet categorized for analysis, we have trouble picking out what is important about it (valuable) to begin reflectively thinking about it, but it can still have specifiable affect. It can hurt, it can tickle, it can elude the pallet. It is the unknown. Complexes can become distracted, ignored, or otherwise lose power and the unnoticed or not strongly valued phenomena can come to the fore as the New. Some call that, "living in the Now" or "Ultimate Reality" or "Zen". It is possible to learn how to strongly identify with such a mode of perception through meditation (duh). Such an identification is sometimes believed to be an identification with a "Higher Self" – the Self beyond Value... and is it Beyond Good and Evil too?

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