

## THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

### **An existential criterion for normal and abnormal personality in the works of Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler**

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This is the second in a series of four articles scheduled for publication in this journal. In the previous article I proposed a description of a new so-called existential criterion of normal and abnormal personality that is implicitly present in the works of Erich Fromm. According to this criterion, normal and abnormal personalities are determined, first, by special features of the content of their position regarding existential dichotomies that are natural to human beings and, second, by particular aspects of the formation of this position. Such dichotomies, entitatively existent in all human life, are inherent, two-alternative contradictions. The position of a normal personality in its content orients one toward a contradictory predetermination of life in the form of existential dichotomies and the necessity of searching for compromise in resolving these dichotomies. This position is created on a rational basis with the person's active participation. The position of an abnormal personality in its content subjectively denies a contradictory predetermination of life in the form of existential dichotomies and orients one toward a consistent, noncompetitive, and, as a consequence, one-sided way of life that doesn't include self-determination. This position is imposed by other people on an irrational basis. Abnormality of personality interpreted like that is one of the most important factors influencing the development of various kinds of psychological problems and mental disorders — primarily, neurosis. In this article I show that this criterion is implicitly present in the personality theories of Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler, although in more special cases. In the following articles I will show that this criterion is also implicitly present in the personality theories of Carl Jung, Carl Rogers, and Viktor Frankl.

**Keywords:** human nature, human essence, existential dichotomy, normal personality, abnormal personality

## **Introduction**

In the previous article in this series (Kapustin, 2015a) I described a so-called existential criterion of normal and abnormal personality implicitly present in the works of Erich Fromm (1942, 1947, 1977, 1947/2012), based on analysis of his works.

Fromm developed his theoretical understanding of personality based on the philosophical branch of so-called objective humanistic ethics, which proposes a certain point of view on how a human should live. The ultimate moral imperative of a human being who is following what should be considered a standard of life involves the self-determination on rational basis of values that facilitate living in accordance with human nature.

Based on this school of thought, Fromm proposed his own theoretical concept of human nature. This concept has two characteristics that Fromm considered essential. The first characteristic is that in human life there are existential dichotomies, which are inherent, two-alternative contradictions. They appear to a person as problems requiring solution. The second characteristic is that a human being has self-determination.

The most important concepts in the works of Fromm are the concepts of the productive and the nonproductive personality, which are characterized by particular features of content and the formation of the position of a personality in relation to these two characteristics. Fromm defines these positions as schemes of orientation and worship. If the position of a personality in its content and in its formation facilitates implementation of the two characteristics described above, such a personality is defined by Fromm as productive; if not, he defines it as nonproductive. From the point of view of objective humanistic ethics the way of life of a productive personality is a norm of human life because it corresponds to human nature. Thus a productive personality can be considered a normal personality; a nonproductive personality deviates from this norm and thus is abnormal.

Because Fromm considers the essence of human life to be characterized by existential dichotomies and self-determination, the position of a productive (normal) personality is compromising in its content, matching the contradictive structure of human life in the form of existential dichotomies, and is created by oneself, based on life experience and reason — that is, on a rational basis.

On the contrary, the position of a nonproductive (abnormal) personality denies the contradictive structure of human life in the form of existential dichotomies and orients the person toward a consistent, noncompetitive, and, as a consequence, one-sided way of life. A specific feature of this position is that it is imposed by others and is based on wishes and feelings toward them — that is, on an irrational basis. From the point of view of Fromm, abnormality of personality interpreted like that is one of the most important factors influencing the development of various kinds of psychological problems and other mental disorders — primarily, neurosis.

Given that in the works of Fromm the criterion for differentiating normal and abnormal personalities is specific features of their position toward existential dichotomies, I mark this criterion as existential. According to this criterion, normality and abnormality are determined first by special features of content and second by particular aspects of the formation of a position toward existential dichotomies that are entitatively existent in human life and are inherent, two-alternative contradictions that appear to a human being as problems requiring solution.

The essential attribute of a normal personality is a person's orientation toward the contradictory predetermination of life in the form of existential dichotomies and the need to search for compromise in their resolution. A distinct feature of the formation of this position is that it develops on a rational basis with the active participation of the person — that is, on the basis of knowledge, the source of which is the person's own experience and reason. The position of an abnormal personality subjectively denies the contradictory predetermination of life in the form of existential dichotomies and orients one toward a consistent, noncompetitive, and, as a consequence, one-sided way of life that doesn't include self-determination. It is imposed by other people on an irrational basis: on the basis of wishes and feelings toward them.

## **Objectives**

The main objective of this article is to show that a new existential criterion for normal and abnormal personality that is based on the works of Fromm is implicitly present in the theories of personality of Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler, although in more special cases. In the following two articles I will show that this criterion is also implicitly present in the theories of personality by Carl Jung, Carl Rogers, and Viktor Frankl.

## **The existential criterion in Sigmund Freud's theory of personality**

### ***Theoretical discussion***

Analysis of Freud's theory of personality should begin with an overview of his general concept of personality structure. According to Freud, human personality consists of three main structural fields, or instances, which he specified as the superego, the id, and the ego.

The superego represents a system of moral and esthetic values that one is governed by in one's life. Freud developed the substantial characteristics of the superego more thoroughly through description of its three main functions: ideal, self-observation, and conscience. The superego performs an ideal function in the sense that one's system of moral and esthetic values dictates certain ideals that are to be placed against one's feelings, thoughts, and actions, and that one ought to be in congruence with. The superego performs the function of self-observation by constantly monitoring how much one's behavior meets these ideals. And the superego performs the function of conscience by constantly judging one's feelings, thoughts, and actions from the point of view of one's conformity to the ideals and by reacting to the degree of this conformity through the specific affective experience known as conscience. If one's feelings, thoughts, and actions comply with the ideals of the superego, one's conscience stays clear, and one may even experience moral satisfaction with one's own behavior. If a discrepancy appears, one starts to experience pangs of conscience, manifested in feelings of shame, guilt, and moral failure.

Freud defines instinctive drives, those related to the biological nature of a human, as the id. These drives stimulate human behavior aimed at satisfaction and

achievement of a related subjective purpose: a feeling of pleasure. Consequently Freud calls the main principle that guides id drives as the pleasure principle. Among many instinctive drives Freud emphasizes the sex drive as the one most directly related to the problem of normal and abnormal personality.

The ego is the part of personality that faces the outside world and has direct contact with it. This instance represents, primarily, the rational, sensible element of human beings. The leading psychic capabilities of the ego are perception and consciousness. The ego performs at least two main functions in human life: the cognitive and regulatory functions. The cognitive function of the ego operates to form a representation of the outside world relevant to its objective properties; it can form this representation because human beings possess perception and consciousness. The regulatory function adjusts the demands of the id drives and the moral and esthetic claims of the superego to the real-life conditions in the outside world. Giving a vivid description of the regulatory function, Freud writes:

We are warned by a proverb against serving two masters at the same time. The poor ego has things even worse: it serves three severe masters and does what it can to bring their claims and demands into harmony with one another. These claims are always divergent and often seem incompatible. No wonder that the ego so often fails in its task. Its three tyrannical masters are the external world, the super-ego and the id. ... Thus the ego, driven by the id, confined by the super-ego, repulsed by reality, struggles to master its economic task of bringing about harmony among the forces and influences working in and upon it; and we can understand how it is that so often we cannot suppress a cry: 'Life is not easy!' (Freud, 1933/1964, p. 97).

Freud called the main principle that the ego is governed by regulating behavior the reality principle.

The most important characteristic of human personality is the conflict between the superego and the id. This conflict is defined by Freud in the most general terms as a conflict between the natural and the cultural origins of human beings; in a more strict sense it is a conflict between instinctive sexual drives and the moral and esthetic limitations of the objects of these drives and the ways in which the satisfaction of these drives is imposed by the society. This conflict is objectively inherent and inevitable because, on the one hand, people are biological organisms, born with instinctive drives, and, on the other hand, they are members of society, and their behavior is regulated by social norms and rules. Freud emphasized this conflict because he considered that human society and human beings as its representative may exist only if humans can to a certain extent limit and control their biological drives. As he put it:

Society must undertake as one of its most important educative tasks to tame and restrict the sexual instinct when it breaks out as an urge to reproduction, and to subject it to an individual will which is identical with the bidding of society. It is also concerned to postpone the full development of the instinct till the child shall have reached a certain degree of intellectual maturity, for, with the complete irruption of the sexual instinct, educability is for practical purposes at an end. Otherwise, the instinct would break down every dam and wash away the laboriously erected work of civilization. Nor is the task of taming it ever an easy one; its success is sometimes too small, sometimes too

great. The motive of human society is in the last resort an economic one; since it does not possess enough provisions to keep its members alive unless they work, it must restrict the number of its members and divert their energies from sexual activity to work. It is faced, in short, by the eternal, primeval exigencies of life, which are with us to this day (Freud, 1917/1963b, p. 70).

The existential criterion for distinguishing normal and abnormal personality is implicitly present in Freud's theoretical conceptualization of personality, respectively nonpredisposed and predisposed to neuroses, which is characterized by additional specific features of the three discussed instances and relations between them (Freud, 1916-1917/1963a, 1917/1963b, 1933/1964, 1916-1933/1989).

The specifics of normal and abnormal personality are determined by its three main features: the degree of tension in the conflict between the superego and the id, the position of the ego in relation to this conflict, and the particular features of the formation of this position.

Abnormal (predisposed to neuroses) personality is characterized by large-scale tension in the conflict between the superego and the id. This tension is determined by the strength of sexual drives, which depend on the person's biological traits and on the degree of moral and esthetic limitations the superego puts on possibilities to satisfy these drives.

The position of the ego in abnormal personality is that it consciously finds only demands of the superego fair, and as a result the objective conflict between the superego and the id is subjectively unilaterally resolved by the ego in favor of the superego. Freud called such a way of resolving the conflict between the superego and the id repression, which results in the disappearance of the conflict from one's consciousness only. According to Freud, although the conflict is objectively present, it continues its existence independently from the conscious position of the ego in another structure of the mind: the unconscious mind.

Such a one-sided position of the ego in an abnormal personality is formed in early childhood with the active participation of other people: primarily, the parents of the child, who, being society members, are interested in their child's forming this particular attitude. Given the fact that during the period of early childhood a child has a strong physical and psychological dependence on the parents, and the ego is not yet properly developed enough to take reasonable, independent decisions, the parents, using their power and the child's helplessness, impose their moral and esthetic ideals, relying on reward and punishment; this process results in the child's accepting such an ego attitude, usually irrationally, under the pressure of parental authority.

Specific features of abnormal personality were regarded by Freud as the most significant internal predispositions for neuroses. Neurosis appears when a human being with an abnormal personality gets into situations that inhibit the satisfaction of sexual drives. In such conditions the inner obstacles to satisfaction of sexual drives, such as particular traits of an abnormal personality, are compounded by outer obstacles; consequently the energy of sexual drives is suppressed and constrained on each side so that the human has no way to discharge it. Such accumulated and unused energy of the libido is, according to Freud, the main source of neurotic symptoms.

Freud's theoretical concept of a normal (nonpredisposed to neuroses) personality can be found, primarily, in his descriptions of the goal and process of psychoanalytic therapy, which is aimed at turning patients' abnormal personality toward the normal. In these descriptions characteristics of a normal personality are opposed to descriptions of an abnormal personality.

The main characteristic of a normal personality, which provides the backdrop for all others, is that the ego is conscious of the conflict between the superego and the id and considers the requirements of these two instances as vital, so that they both should be implemented in human life, and neither should profit at the expense of the other. Consciousness of this conflict causes that very change in a patient's personality that makes elimination of symptoms possible:

What we make use of must no doubt be the replacing of what is unconscious by what is conscious, the translation of what is unconscious into what is conscious. Yes, that is it. By carrying what is unconscious on into what is conscious, we lift the repressions, we remove the preconditions for the formation of symptoms, we transform the pathogenic conflict to a normal one for which it must be possible somehow to find a solution. All that we bring about in a patient is this single psychological change: the length to which it is carried is the measure of the help we provide (Freud, 1917/1963b, p. 193).

Being conscious of the conflict between the superego and the id and accepting the claims of both these instances as rightful, the ego of a normal personality, according to Freud, takes a compromise position toward these claims. Freud has to give a special explanation of this important characteristic of a normal personality because many opponents of psychoanalysis fall under the impression that psychoanalysis is opposed to moral limitations on human sexual drives and encourages their unrestrained satisfaction for the sake of mental health:

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, who has so seriously misinformed you? A recommendation to the patient to "live a full life" sexually could not possibly play a part in analytic therapy — if only because we ourselves have declared that an obstinate conflict is taking place in him [the patient] between a libidinal impulse and sexual repression, between a sensual and an ascetic trend. This conflict would not be solved by our helping one of these trends to victory over its opponent. We see, indeed, that in neurotics asceticism has the upper hand; and the consequence of this is precisely that the suppressed sexual tendency finds a way out in symptoms. If, on the contrary, we were to secure victory for sensuality, then the sexual repression that had been put on one side would necessarily be replaced by symptoms. Neither of these two alternative decisions could end the internal conflict; in either case one party to it would remain unsatisfied (Freud, 1917/1963b, p. 191).

In another place, discussing the problem of bringing up a normal personality, Freud writes that "education has to find its way between the Scylla of non-interference and the Charybdis of frustration... It will therefore be a matter of deciding how much to forbid, at what times and by what means" (Freud, 1933/1964, p. 185).

A natural consequence of the conscious compromise position of the ego of a normal personality toward the conflict between the superego and the id is also re-

duction of the tension of conflict because of the reasonable softening of the reciprocal demands of these instances on each other.

The most important characteristic of a normal personality is that this compromise position of the ego is the person's own position — that is, it is the product of one's own experience and mind and is the result of self-determination. This characteristic becomes apparent mostly in the texts where Freud points out the main goal of the psychoanalytic treatment of neuroses. This goal is simply to help the patient realize the relationship between neurotic symptoms and the particular features of the patient's abnormal personality that caused the repression of the conflict between the superego and the id; the goal is not to resolve this conflict. The final resolution should be performed by the patient, who chooses a variant that is most acceptable for himself or herself. Freud gives a specific explanation of this important goal in psychoanalytic therapy:

Moreover, I can assure you that you are misinformed if you suppose that advice and guidance in the affairs of life play an integral part in analytic influence. On the contrary, so far as possible we avoid the role of a mentor such as this and there is nothing we would rather bring about than the patient should make his decisions for himself... If, having grown independent after the completion of their treatment, they [the patients] decide on their own judgement in favour of some midway position between living a full life and absolute asceticism, we feel our conscience clear whatever their choice (Freud, 1933/1964, pp. 191–192).

## **Results**

Based on a comparison between the theories of personality of Freud and Fromm, we may conclude that they are similar in two ways:

First, the most important postulate of Freud's theory is that a contradiction entitatively exists in human life: the contradiction between one's natural (id) and one's cultural (superego) origins. In general this contradiction can be characterized as follows: on one hand, people, being natural creatures, must live in accordance with their biological nature, complying with the natural demands of sexual drives; on the other hand, being members of society, people must live in accordance with their social nature, complying with the moral and esthetic demands imposed by society on the objects of these drives and the ways of their satisfaction. This contradiction inheres in the very nature of human life because, according to Freud, humans can exist as humans only if they can to a certain point put a social limit on their biological drives. The specific features of that contradiction allow us to consider it an existential dichotomy in Fromm's terms and to denominate it as the dichotomy of nature and culture.

Second, the existential criterion of normal and abnormal personality is implicitly set in Freud's theoretical conceptualization of personality, respectively nonpre-disposed and predisposed to neuroses, and is characterized, as in Fromm's theory of personality, by specific features of content and the formation of a position, in relation to this more specific dichotomy of nature and culture — in his terms, the position of the human ego in relation to the contradictory claims of the superego and the id.

The position of the ego of a normal (nonpredisposed to neuroses) personality in its content orients the human toward a contradictory predetermination of life in the form of a dichotomy between nature and culture. The ego is conscious of the objective contradiction between the id and the superego and admits the necessity of implementing the claims put by both instances. As a result, the position of the ego of a normal personality in resolving this contradiction is the position of reasonable compromise. This position is developed on a rational basis with the active participation of the human being in the process of self-cognition, primarily cognition of one's unconscious.

The position of the ego of an abnormal (predisposed to neuroses) personality unilaterally orients a person toward following the cultural taboo imposed by the superego on certain objects of the sexual drives of the id and on ways of its satisfaction, and at the same time the person represses prohibited demands of these drives. Such a one-sided position of the ego is imposed by other people, most often by the parents in early childhood, on an irrational basis, by using the child's physical and psychological dependence on them.

### **Conclusion**

The existential criterion of normal and abnormal personality based on the works of Fromm is also implicitly present in Freud's theory of personality, respectively nonpredisposed and predisposed to neuroses, but in relation to more specific existential dichotomy of nature and culture.

## **The existential criterion in Alfred Adler's theory of personality**

### ***Theoretical discussion***

Getting to know Adler's theory of personality should begin with one of its basic postulates, which characterizes human life as a whole as a teleological occurrence. In other words, the very nature of human life inheres in orientation toward a goal.

The science of Individual Psychology developed out of the effort to understand that mysterious creative power of life... This power is *teleological* — it expresses itself in the striving after a goal, and in this striving every bodily and psychic movement is made to co-operate... In the author's own case the interest in psychology developed out of the practice of medicine. The practice of medicine provided the teleological or purposive viewpoint which is necessary for the understanding of psychological facts (Adler, 1930/2007, pp. 32–33).

From the point of view of Adler, two leading motives influence all human beings and determine the overall goal orientation of their lives, regardless of whether they are aware of it. Gaining superiority over other people is the first of these motives. Its specific content may vary: superiority in wealth, power, strength, beauty, popularity, fame, knowledge. This motive appears in the first years of human life as a compensatory reaction to the inevitable feeling of inferiority that a child experiences during this period. The imminence of this feeling is caused, according to

Adler, by the fact that children are objectively less perfect creatures compared with the adults around them: they are helpless and physically weak and have less expertise and knowledge and fewer skills, and thus they cannot escape feeling inferior when comparison with adults suggests itself. Originating in childhood this feeling never fully disappears throughout life.

Adler defined the second leading motive as a feeling of community. This motive incites human beings to unite with others and manifests itself in their striving to lead life in common, to carry out collective labor activities, to follow common norms and rules, to collaborate and cooperate, to search for concordance, to create families, to find friends. Adler regarded human beings as social by nature; they can live and develop normally only in society and by being involved in social relationships and cooperating with other humans. This feeling of community is, according to Adler, the most important psychological prerequisite and condition for human social life; without it life doesn't seem possible. For this reason he considered feelings of community as innate.

Adler directed our attention to the fact that these two motives are contradictory. The predominance of the orientation toward gaining superiority inhibits manifestation of the feeling of community in human life because such an orientation facilitates development of personal qualities that stimulate confrontation and struggle against other people. As Adler put it:

If everyone possesses within himself an ideal of superiority, such as we find to an exaggerated degree among the nervous, then we ought to encounter phenomena whose purpose is the oppression, the minimizing and undervaluation of others. Traits of character such as intolerance, dogmatism, envy, pleasure at the misfortune of others, conceit, boastfulness, mistrust, avarice — in short all those attitudes that are the substitutes for a struggle, force their way through to a far greater extent, in fact, than self-preservation demands and feeling of community orders (Adler, 1927/1993, p. 14).

On the contrary, dominance of the feeling of community stimulates development of the opposite personal qualities, which are oriented toward solidarity with others; they weaken the effect of the motive of gaining superiority.

Each of these motives in human life are realized in different ways. These ways are quite consistent for every person and at the same time are individual and unique because they are developed under the influence of the specific conditions of life: social environment, upbringing, daily routines, problems being faced. Adler defined such a consistent individual way of realizing the leading motives in life, characteristic for each human, as the "individual style of life." As his research shows, an individual style of life is formed in early childhood, approximately by the age of 5, and it is very hard to change later.

The existential criterion of normal and abnormal personality contains implicitly in Adler's theoretical conceptualization of personality not only nonpredisposed and predisposed to neuroses, as is found in the works of Freud, but also to developing various psychological problems and other mental diseases (Adler, 1927/1993, 1930/2007, 1927/2011, 1927/2014).

In Adler's theory normality and abnormality of personality are defined by one's orientation to life and particular features of the formation of this orientation.

The dominating life orientation of an abnormal personality (predisposed to developing psychological problems and other mental diseases) is the drive to gain superiority over other humans, which is so pronounced that it almost completely disrupts the manifestation of the feeling of community. The general orientation of such a personality is to achieve certain advantages in comparison with other people. In this case other people are seen as competitors or as the means for achieving these advantages.

This excessive drive for gaining superiority appears in people who experienced more than usually severe feelings of inferiority in childhood. Adler described two main factors that tend to amplify feelings of inferiority. The first factor is the presence of an organic defect, such as underdevelopment of a bodily organ, physiological functions, abilities. The second factor is the conditions of upbringing. Feelings of inferiority appear most often in children who have been raised in an atmosphere of effeminacy, muliebrity, or, on the contrary, in an atmosphere of emotional rejection and violence.

According to Adler, the consequences of abnormal development of personality may be different. A strong drive to gain superiority may indeed facilitate some real personal achievements: making scientific discoveries, creating works of art, achieving professional excellence, gaining power. More often, however, an abnormal personality causes suicide, crimes, neuroses, and serious mental diseases.

A normal personality (nonpredisposed to developing psychological problems and mental diseases) is totally different from the abnormal one. The feeling of inferiority and, consequently, the compensatory drive to gain superiority over other people are not pronounced in a normal personality strongly enough to hinder realization of the innate feeling of community.

In addition, a person develops a normal personality through active, conscious, and meaningful participation. In order to achieve such a balance of drives, people must recognize their leading motives and become involved in the work of correcting them. The importance of active participation in forming one's own normal personality was strongly emphasized by Adler in his description of the purpose and process of psychotherapy of patients with neuroses. Characterizing the main goal of psychotherapy, he pointed out that cure is impossible without the active and conscious participation of the patient. The purpose is "to gain a reinforced sense of reality, the development of a feeling of responsibility and [as] a substitution for latent hatred ... a feeling of mutual goodwill, all of which can be gained only by the conscious evolution of a feeling for the common weal and the conscious destruction of the will-to-power" (Adler, 1927/2011, p. 15). He also emphasized that "the bringing about of a change in the nature of the patient can emanate from him alone" (1927/2011, p. 46). In another place, describing the process of psychotherapy, he pointed out that "from the individual-psychologist the patient learns for the first time in his life to know himself and to control his over-tense instincts" (1927/2011, p. 152).

## **Results**

Based on a comparison of the theories of personality of Adler and Fromm one may conclude that they are similar in two ways.

First, one of the most important parts of Adler's theory is the intrapersonal contradiction between the two leading motives that determine the orientation of one's life: the motive of gaining superiority over other people and the feeling of community. This contradiction is as follows: according to one of the motives, humans should live in confrontation with others, attempting to gain superiority over them and to obtain advantages of various kinds; according to the other motive, one should live in accord with other people, subordinating personal interests to the interests of society. This contradiction inheres in the very nature of human life because the feeling of community is innate, and the drive to gain superiority inevitably is aroused in early childhood as a compensatory reaction to the feeling of inferiority that is experienced during this period. Based on the presented description the above-mentioned contradiction can be regarded as an existential dichotomy in the same sense as was determined by Fromm but as a dichotomy of superiority and community.

Second, the existential criterion of normal and abnormal personality is implicitly present in Adler's theoretical concept of personality, respectively nonpredisposed and predisposed to developing psychological problems and other mental diseases. This criterion is characterized by the same particular features of the content and formation of the position as in Fromm's theory of personality, but in relation to this more specific existential dichotomy.

The position of a normal personality (nonpredisposed to developing psychological problems and other mental diseases) in its content orients a person toward a contradictory predetermination of life in the form of the existential dichotomy of superiority and community. By taking this position, a person becomes conscious of the two contradictory motives and finds a way of compromising their realization so that the drive to gain superiority over other people doesn't hinder manifestation of a feeling of community. Such a position is developed on a rational basis with the active participation of the person through the process of self-cognition.

The position of an abnormal personality (predisposed to developing psychological problems and other mental diseases) one-sidedly orients a person toward gaining superiority over other people and thus hinders realization of a feeling of community. Such a one-sided position is imposed in early childhood on an irrational basis under the influence of an overestimated feeling of inferiority.

### **Conclusion**

The existential criterion of normal and abnormal personality based on the works of Fromm is also implicitly present in Adler's theory of personality respectively the nonpredisposed and predisposed toward developing various, psychological problems and other mental diseases, but in relation to more specific existential dichotomy of superiority and community.

### **Application of the results**

I have shown in a number of empirical studies (Kapustin, 2014, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d) that the key factor leading to child-parent problems in families of psychological-consultation clients is the abnormality of the parents personality, identified

through a so-called existential criterion that is displayed in their parenting styles. These parenting styles contribute to the formation of children with abnormal personality types, also identified through existential criteria, that are designated as “oriented on external help,” “oriented on compliance of one’s own behavior with other people’s requirements,” and “oriented on protest against compliance of one’s own behavior with other people requirements.” Children with such personality types are faced with requirements from their closest social environment that are appropriate for children with normal personal development but are not appropriate for those with abnormal personal abilities, and so they start having problems. As these problems are connected with troubles of adjustment to social-environment requirements, they can be classified as problems of social adaptation. There is a similarity of the personality type “oriented on compliance of one’s own behavior with other people’s requirements” and theoretical concepts in the works of Fromm, Freud, Adler, Jung, Rogers, and Frankl about people with abnormal personalities being predisposed to the emergence of various psychological problems and mental disorders. This fact suggests that such a personality can be regarded as a classic type that all these authors faced in their psychotherapeutic practice at different times.

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