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PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ANTISOTSIAL (SOCIOPATHIC) PERSONALITY

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the psychological characteristics of the antisocial (sociopathic) personality type, which represents one of the most common forms of deviant behavior in modern society. The study highlights the impact of the family environment, childhood emotional instability, lack of social control, and deficiency of affection as the main factors contributing to the development of antisocial behavior. The article also proposes effective approaches for psychological intervention with sociopathic individuals, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, family psychotherapy, and programs aimed at developing social and emotional skills.

In modern society, behavior that deviates from social norms—namely, antisocial or sociopathic tendencies—has become a subject of significant focus in psychological research. Such behavior develops not only as a result of individual psychological processes but also through the interaction of social environment, family influence, and cultural values. This article examines the psychological traits, theoretical foundations, and determinants influencing the formation of antisocial (sociopathic) personality structures.

An antisocial (or sociopathic) personality is defined as an individual who violates socially accepted norms and values, disregards the feelings of others, demonstrates low empathy, and exhibits weak conscience and a poor sense of responsibility. In psychology, this is considered a personality disorder. Such individuals are typically impulsive, manipulative, aggressive, and emotionally detached. They fail to experience a sense of social responsibility but strive to assert dominance and power within the social system.

From a theoretical perspective, antisocial behavior is explained through several frameworks: biological, psychological, social, and integrative approaches. Biological theories emphasize innate characteristics of personality, whereas psychological approaches focus on internal conflicts and unconscious processes. The social approach highlights the role of social learning, environmental context, and family dynamics in shaping human behavior.

According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, human behavior is structured through three components: the Id, Ego, and Super-Ego. In sociopathic personalities, the Super-Ego is underdeveloped, leading to a weakened sense of conscience, moral regulation, and social responsibility. As a result, these individuals rarely experience guilt or remorse, and conformity to societal norms becomes an external obligation rather than an internal moral need.

August Aichhorn, in his work *Wayward Youth* (1925), emphasized that the roots of antisocial behavior lie in emotional coldness and lack of affection during childhood. According to him, a child who does not receive attention and warmth from parents grows indifferent to social values. Nancy McWilliams described such individuals as power- and control-seeking, yet emotionally hollow, shedding light on the deeper psychodynamic mechanisms underlying sociopathic behavior.

Biogenetic factors also play a significant role in the formation of antisocial behavior. Cesare Lombroso viewed criminality as an innate condition, asserting that certain individuals exhibit primitive physical and psychological traits. William Sheldon noted that mesomorphic (muscular) body types tend to display more aggressive tendencies. Although these theories have been criticized in modern psychology, they hold historical importance in understanding the biological roots of behavior.

From a social standpoint, Robert Merton's anomie theory interprets antisocial behavior as a result of the disjunction between culturally approved goals and the means available to achieve them. Instability within family, school, and peer systems—as well as lack of emotional support and supervision—creates fertile ground for sociopathic tendencies.

The family serves as the primary environment for socialization, where the foundational norms of a child's behavior are formed. Parental emotional coldness, neglect, or excessive punishment hinder the development of empathy and social responsibility. In single-parent families, the absence of a parental figure often heightens a child's sense of insecurity and anger, later manifesting as aggression or defiance.

Moreover, the psychological atmosphere in schools, teachers' attitudes, and adolescents' peer affiliations act as significant factors that may either intensify or mitigate antisocial tendencies. Therefore, cooperation between family and school is crucial in fostering positive socialization.

Working with antisocial individuals in psychocorrectional or therapeutic contexts is a complex process, as such individuals rarely perceive their actions as wrong and lack intrinsic motivation for change. Consequently, therapy should involve strict boundaries, clear rules, and consistent supervision.

In psychotherapy, cognitive-behavioral approaches, training in empathy, and exercises aimed at enhancing social responsibility have proven effective. Family psychotherapy also helps to restore the individual's social functioning within the broader system. Additionally, developing emotional awareness and affection from early childhood plays a preventive role in reducing antisocial tendencies.

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