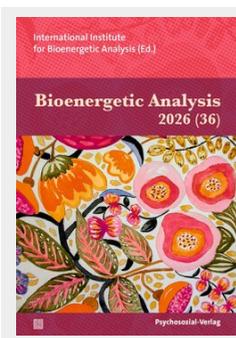


Sergey Kamratov

The Structure of Structure



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The Structure of Structure

A Functional-Structural Analysis of Character Patterns

Sergey Kamratov

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Abstracts

The article presents a functional-structural analysis of character patterns, integrating insights from psychoanalysis, body-oriented psychotherapy, and the Russian psychophysiological school. The author conceptualizes character as a multi-level dynamic system that combines cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and somatic components. Special emphasis is placed on the theories of Wilhelm Reich and Alexander Lowen, who link character to bodily manifestations and energy blocks, as well as the ideas of Russian scholars (Pavlov, Vygotsky, Anokhin, Bernstein), who offer a systemic perspective on behavioral regulation. The functional-structural approach (FSA) examines character through the “activity – action – movement” continuum, providing a holistic understanding of its organization. The article highlights the importance of interdisciplinary synthesis for developing diagnostic and corrective methods for characterological disorders. The practical relevance of the approach lies in its application in clinical and psychotherapeutic practice, including body-oriented techniques.

Keywords: character structure, systems psychophysiology, classical conditioning, mediation, functional-structural approach

A Estrutura da Estrutura

Uma Análise Funcional-Estrutural de Padrões de Caráter (Portuguese)

O artigo apresenta uma análise funcional-estrutural de padrões de caráter, integrando insights da psicanálise, da psicoterapia corporal e da escola psicofisiológica russa. O autor conceitua o caráter como um sistema dinâmico multinível que combina componentes cognitivos, emocionais, comportamentais e somáticos. Dá-se especial ênfase às teorias de Wilhelm Reich e Alexander Lowen, que relacionam

o caráter a manifestações corporais e bloqueios energéticos, bem como às ideias de estudiosos russos (Pavlov, Vygotsky, Anokhin, Bernstein), que oferecem uma perspectiva sistêmica sobre a regulação comportamental. A abordagem funcional-estrutural (AFE) examina o caráter através do continuum “atividade – ação – movimento”, proporcionando uma compreensão holística de sua organização. O artigo destaca a importância da síntese interdisciplinar para o desenvolvimento de métodos diagnósticos e corretivos para transtornos de caráter. A relevância prática da abordagem reside em sua aplicação na prática clínica e psicoterapêutica, incluindo técnicas corporais. O autor conceitua o caráter como um sistema dinâmico multinível que combina componentes cognitivos, emocionais, comportamentais e somáticos.

La structure de la structure

Une analyse fonctionnelle et structurale des schémas de personnalité (French)

Cet article présente une analyse fonctionnelle et structurale des schémas de personnalité, intégrant les apports de la psychanalyse, des psychothérapies corporelles et de l'école psychophysiologique russe. L'auteur conçoit la personnalité comme un système dynamique à plusieurs niveaux, combinant des composantes cognitives, émotionnelles, comportementales et somatiques. Une attention particulière est portée aux théories de Wilhelm Reich et Alexander Lowen, qui relient la personnalité aux manifestations corporelles et aux blocages énergétiques, ainsi qu'aux idées de chercheurs russes (Pavlov, Vygotsky, Anokhin, Bernstein), qui offrent une perspective systémique sur la régulation comportementale. L'approche fonctionnelle et structurale (AFS) examine la personnalité à travers le continuum “activité – action – mouvement”, offrant une compréhension holistique de son organisation. L'article souligne l'importance de la synthèse interdisciplinaire pour le développement de méthodes diagnostiques et correctives des troubles de la personnalité. La pertinence pratique de cette approche réside dans son application en pratique clinique et psychothérapeutique, notamment dans le cadre de techniques corporelles.

La struttura della struttura

Un'analisi funzionale-strutturale dei modelli caratteriali (Italian)

L'articolo presenta un'analisi funzionale-strutturale dei modelli caratteriali, integrando intuizioni provenienti dalla psicoanalisi, dalla psicoterapia ad orientamento corporeo e dalla scuola psicofisiologica russa. L'autore concettualizza il carattere come un sistema dinamico multilivello che combina componenti cognitive, emotive, comportamentali e somatiche. Particolare enfasi è posta sulle teorie

di Wilhelm Reich e Alexander Lowen, che collegano il carattere alle manifestazioni corporee e ai blocchi energetici, nonché sulle idee degli studiosi russi (Pavlov, Vygotskij, Anokhin, Bernstein), che offrono una prospettiva sistemica sulla regolazione comportamentale. L'approccio funzionale-strutturale (FSA) esamina il carattere attraverso il continuum "attività-azione-movimento", fornendo una comprensione olistica della sua organizzazione. L'articolo sottolinea l'importanza della sintesi interdisciplinare per lo sviluppo di metodi diagnostici e correttivi per i disturbi caratteriali. La rilevanza pratica dell'approccio risiede nella sua applicazione nella pratica clinica e psicoterapeutica, incluse le tecniche ad orientamento corporeo.

Die Struktur der Struktur

Eine funktional-strukturelle Analyse von Charaktermustern (German)

Der Artikel präsentiert eine funktional-strukturelle Analyse von Charaktermustern und integriert Erkenntnisse aus der Psychoanalyse, der körperorientierten Psychotherapie und der russischen psychophysiologischen Schule. Der Autor konzeptualisiert den Charakter als ein mehrstufiges dynamisches System, das kognitive, emotionale, verhaltensbezogene und somatische Komponenten vereint. Besonderes Augenmerk liegt auf den Theorien von Wilhelm Reich und Alexander Lowen, die den Charakter mit körperlichen Manifestationen und Energieblockaden verknüpfen, sowie auf den Ideen russischer Gelehrter (Pawlow, Wygotski, Anochin, Bernstein), die eine systemische Perspektive auf die Verhaltensregulation bieten. Der funktional-strukturelle Ansatz (FSA) untersucht den Charakter entlang des Kontinuums „Aktivität – Handlung – Bewegung“ und ermöglicht so ein ganzheitliches Verständnis seiner Organisation. Der Artikel unterstreicht die Bedeutung der interdisziplinären Synthese für die Entwicklung diagnostischer und therapeutischer Methoden bei charakterologischen Störungen. Die praktische Relevanz des Ansatzes liegt in seiner Anwendung in der klinischen und psychotherapeutischen Praxis, einschließlich körperorientierter Techniken.

Структура структуры

функционально-структурный анализ характерологических паттернов (Russian)

В статье представлен функционально-структурный анализ паттернов характера, объединяющий идеи психоанализа, телесно-ориентированной психотерапии и российской психофизиологической школы. Автор рассматривает характер как многоуровневую динамическую систему, объединяющую когнитивные, эмоциональные, поведенческие и соматические компоненты. Особое

внимание уделяется теориям Вильгельма Райха и Александра Лоуэна, которые связывают характер с телесными проявлениями и энергетическими блоками, а также идеям отечественных ученых из России (Павлова, Выготского, Анохина, Бернштейна), которые предлагают системный взгляд на регуляцию поведения. Функционально-структурный подход (FSA) рассматривает характер через призму континуума “деятельность – действие – движение”, обеспечивая целостное понимание его организации. В статье подчеркивается важность междисциплинарного синтеза для разработки методов диагностики и коррекции характерологических расстройств. Практическая значимость подхода заключается в его применении в клинической и психотерапевтической практике, включая телесно-ориентированные техники.

La estructura de las estructuras

Un análisis funcional-estructural de los patrones de carácter (Spanish)

Este artículo presenta un análisis funcional-estructural de los patrones de carácter, integrando aportes del psicoanálisis, la psicoterapia corporal y la pedagogía psicofisiológica rusa. El autor concibe el carácter como un sistema dinámico y multinivel que articula componentes cognitivos, emocionales, conductuales y somáticos. Se destacan las teorías de Wilhelm Reich y Alexander Lowen, quienes vinculan la estructura de carácter con las manifestaciones corporales y los bloqueos energéticos, así como las contribuciones de los pensadores rusos Pavlov, Vygotsky, Anokhin y Bernstein, que aportan una visión sistémica de la autorregulación del comportamiento. El enfoque funcional-estructural (FSA, por sus siglas en inglés) examina el carácter a lo largo del continuo “actividad – acción – movimiento”, ofreciendo una comprensión holística de su organización interna. Asimismo, el artículo subraya la relevancia de la síntesis interdisciplinaria para el desarrollo de métodos diagnósticos y de intervención en los trastornos de la personalidad. La pertinencia práctica de este enfoque se manifiesta en su aplicación clínica y psicoterapéutica, especialmente en las técnicas de orientación corporal.

结构的结构

人格模式的功能结构性分析 (Chinese)

本文对人格模式展开功能结构分析，整合精神分析、身体取向心理治疗及俄罗斯心理生理学派的理论的见解。作者将人格概念化为一个多层次动力系统，整合了认知、情感、行为与躯体等要素。特别聚焦于威廉·赖希和亚历山大·勒温的理论，他们将人格与身体表现及能量阻滞相联系；同时借鉴了俄罗斯学者（巴甫洛夫、维果茨基、阿诺欣、伯恩斯坦）的思想，他们提供了行为调节的系统性视角。功能-结

构方法 (FSA) 通过「活动-行动-运动」连续体来研究人格特征, 从而全面理解其组织结构。本文强调跨学科综合研究对于开发人格障碍诊断和矫正方法的重要性。该方法的实践价值体现在临床与心理治疗实践中, 包括身体取向技术的应用。

Struktura struktury

Funkcjonalno-strukturalna analiza wzorców charakteru (Polish)

Artykuł przedstawia funkcjonalno-strukturalną analizę wzorców charakteru, integrując wglądy z psychoanalizy, psychoterapii zorientowanej na ciało oraz rosyjskiej szkoły psychofizjologicznej. Autor konceptualizuje charakter jako wielopoziomowy, dynamiczny system łączący komponenty poznawcze, emocjonalne, behawioralne i somatyczne. Szczególny nacisk położono na teorie Wilhelma Reicha i Alexandra Lowena, którzy wiążą charakter z przejawami cielesnymi i blokadami energetycznymi, a także na idee rosyjskich badaczy (Pawłow, Wygotski, Anochin, Bernstein), oferujących systemowe spojrzenie na regulację zachowania. Podejście funkcjonalno-strukturalne (FSA) analizuje charakter wzdłuż kontinuum “aktywność – działanie – ruch”, dostarczając całościowego rozumienia jego organizacji. Artykuł podkreśla znaczenie interdyscyplinarnej syntezy dla opracowywania metod diagnostycznych i korekcyjnych dotyczących zaburzeń charakterologicznych. Praktyczna wartość tego podejścia polega na jego zastosowaniu w praktyce klinicznej i psychoterapeutycznej, w tym w technikach zorientowanych na ciało.

Introduction

The International Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis of Alexander Lowen, founded in 1956, plays a pivotal role in advancing and disseminating contemporary knowledge and practices in the field of bioenergetic analysis. One of the institute's primary objectives is the integration of theoretical and practical contributions from related disciplines, such as psychoanalysis, psychophysiology, body-oriented psychotherapy, and neuroscience, into a unified framework accessible to professionals. This approach not only deepens the understanding of the human psyche and body but also facilitates the development of more effective psychotherapeutic methods.

Moscow Association of Bioenergetic Analysis, established in 2024, continues this mission within Russia. Its activities are focused on promoting Alexander Lowen's method, supporting scientific research, and strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration. The association actively engages with

physicians, psychologists, rehabilitation specialists, and other professionals, thereby fostering the integration of bioenergetic analysis into clinical and psychotherapeutic practice.

In the context of this work, the comprehensive study of character assumes particular significance. The current trend toward specialization and the fragmentation of knowledge about human personality pose significant challenges for interdisciplinary collaboration across various domains of psychology, psychotherapy, and neuroscience. In this context, the search for integrative conceptual frameworks capable of overcoming the traditional mind-body dualism and providing a methodological foundation for productive dialogue among diverse scientific schools becomes especially important.

This study proposes to examine character through the lens of systemic psychophysiology, presenting it as a multilevel functional system that integrates cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and somatic components. Such an approach opens new possibilities for synthesizing insights from a wide range of scientific traditions, from classical psychoanalysis to contemporary neurophysiological research.

The theoretical foundation of the proposed functional-structural approach lies in the seminal works of Russian scholars who have made significant contributions to the systemic understanding of human psychology and behavior. These include Ivan Pavlov's research on types of higher nervous activity and dynamic stereotypes, Lev Vygotsky's concept of mediated action, Pyotr Anokhin's theory of functional systems, Alexei Leontiev's activity theory, and Nikolai Bernstein's model of hierarchical movement organization. These theoretical developments provide a robust methodological basis for analyzing character as a complex self-regulating system that manifests across various levels of organization – from basic neurophysiological mechanisms to higher forms of meaning-driven behavioral regulation.

The practical significance of this approach lies in its potential to develop effective methods for psychological assessment and intervention that account for the interconnectedness of various aspects of personality functioning. Furthermore, it establishes a conceptual foundation for productive collaboration among professionals from diverse fields – psychologists, psychotherapists, physiologists, neurologists, and rehabilitation specialists – which is particularly critical in light of contemporary demands for a holistic approach to studying and addressing personality traits.

Thus, the proposed functional-structural approach to the study of character not only helps bridge artificial divides between different scientific disciplines but also opens new avenues for advancing both theoretical research and practical work with personality across various domains of psychology and related fields.

The Formation of the Concept of Character in Classical and Contemporary Psychoanalysis

In psychoanalytic theory, the concept of character has undergone a complex evolution, reflecting the development of various schools and approaches. The original concepts formulated by Freud were significantly transformed in the works of subsequent authors, each contributing to the understanding of this phenomenon while employing different terminology and methodological approaches.

Within classical psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud's concept of character developed gradually. In his early work "Character and Anal Erotism", Freud described characterological traits through the lens of psychosexual development, identifying specific features associated with fixation at various stages. The anal character, for example, was viewed as the result of a particular resolution of conflicts arising during toilet training and was manifested in traits such as stubbornness, orderliness, and parsimony. In later works, after developing the structural model of the psyche, Freud began to consider character as the outcome of a dynamic interplay between the Id, Ego, and Superego, with particular emphasis on defense mechanisms. Although Freud himself did not develop a systematic theory of character, his ideas laid the foundation for subsequent research in this field.

Ego psychology, represented in the works of Otto Fenichel and Anna Freud, significantly deepened the understanding of character. Fenichel, in "The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis", proposed viewing character as a stable organization of the Ego's defense mechanisms, emphasizing its adaptive function. In his view, character was formed as a means of balancing the demands of external reality, internal drives, and moral constraints. Anna Freud, in "The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense", expanded on these ideas, detailing various defensive strategies and their role in shaping characterological traits. In ego psychology, character was understood primarily as a

structure ensuring psychic stability and adaptation, with particular attention paid to the processes of integration and synthesis carried out by the Ego.

Alfred Adler, the founder of individual psychology, employed the concept of “lifestyle”, which largely corresponded to the traditional understanding of character. In his theory, lifestyle was formed as a unique way of compensating for feelings of inferiority and striving for superiority. Adler emphasized the unity of personality and the goal-directedness of behavior, considering characterological traits as manifestations of an individual’s adaptive strategy in facing life’s challenges. Unlike Freud, he placed greater emphasis on social factors and the conscious aspects of personality functioning.

Carl Gustav Jung, within the framework of analytical psychology, developed the concept of psychological types, which included both innate predispositions (extraversion/introversion) and developed psychic functions (thinking, feeling, sensation, intuition). Although Jung did not use the term “character” in a strict sense, his typology significantly influenced modern conceptions of individual differences. The concept of individuation, central to the Jungian approach, also touched upon the formation of stable personality traits in the course of psychological development.

The school of object relations made a substantial contribution to the understanding of character through the lens of early interpersonal interactions. Melanie Klein, though she did not explicitly develop a theory of character, described important mechanisms of psychic structuring through the concepts of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. Ronald Fairbairn proposed the concept of “endopsychic structure”, which largely corresponded to the traditional understanding of character, emphasizing the role of internalized object relations. Donald Winnicott introduced the distinction between the “true self” and the “false self”, which became an important contribution to understanding the authenticity of characterological manifestations and their connection to early environment.

Contemporary psychoanalytic approaches continue to refine the concept of character, integrating various theoretical perspectives. Otto Kernberg developed a theory of personality organization that includes characterological aspects, particularly in the context of borderline and narcissistic structures. Jacques Lacan, in his theory, did not use the concept of character in the traditional sense, focusing instead on the structure of the subject and its relation to the symbolic order. Wilfred Bion primarily engaged with the theory of thinking and containment without specifically elaborating a

concept of character. Proponents of relational psychoanalysis, such as Stephen Mitchell, Robert Stolorow, and Jessica Benjamin, regard character as relational patterns formed within the intersubjective field, though they do not always use the term “character” explicitly.

Thus, the psychoanalytic theory of character constitutes a complex and multifaceted construct that has evolved and transformed alongside the development of psychoanalytic thought. From Freud’s initial ideas rooted in psychosexual development to contemporary intersubjective and relational models, the concept of character remains a crucial category in psychoanalytic theory and practice, integrating the contributions of various schools and approaches.

The Ideas of Reich and Lowen on the Bodily Nature of Character

Wilhelm Reich’s Concept of Character

Wilhelm Reich made a fundamental contribution to the development of the concept of character by integrating a bodily-somatic dimension into its theoretical framework. In his early works, particularly in the monograph “Character Analysis,” he proposed that character should not be understood merely as a set of stable personality traits but as a specific form of chronic defensive organization that manifests both psychologically and somatically.

Unlike orthodox psychoanalysis, which primarily focused on analyzing unconscious content, Reich emphasized that persistent patterns of behavior and affective reactions inherent in an individual constitute “characterological defenses” – automatized, rigid, and stable patterns serving to avoid conflicts between the Id and the demands of external reality. He viewed character as a defensive armor performing the same function as individual defense mechanisms but at a deeper and more organizing level. Thus, Reich’s concept of character acquires a functional interpretation – as a system of defensive formations that stabilize internal conflict.

A key element of his theory is the concept of “character armor,” which refers to a stable structure of psychic and muscular defense formed as a result of chronic repression of affects and libidinal impulses. According to Reich, armor manifests both as “psychic rigidity” (persistent interpersonal patterns, emotional suppression, repetitive behaviors) and as “muscular

tension” – the somatic substrate of repression. In this way, Reich was the first in psychoanalysis to assert that character has a bodily foundation.

Character analysis in Reich’s framework involves not only interpreting unconscious content but also diagnosing personality structure as expressed in configurations of muscle tone, bodily mobility, and breathing patterns. In this regard, Reich expanded Freud’s understanding of transference: for him, the entire characterological organization of the subject is directly observable in the analytic interaction and accessible through bodily observation. Thus, in Reich’s theory, character is not merely the result of psychosexual development but a concrete psychosomatic structure that can be empirically verified through somatic examination.

Alexander Lowen and the Bioenergetic Theory of Character

Alexander Lowen, a student and follower of Reich, significantly deepened and systematized the understanding of character as a psychosomatic organization within his framework of bioenergetic analysis. In his seminal works – “The Language of the Body”, “Physical Dynamics of Character Structure”, and “The Spirit in the Body” – he presented a comprehensive typology of character structures based on clinical-empirical observation of patients’ bodily organization and psychodynamic analysis of their development.

The central thesis of bioenergetic theory is that character constitutes an energetic and bodily form of adaptation to early emotional trauma. Lowen developed Reich’s idea of character as “armor” and expanded it with the concept of “energetic blocking”, according to which emotional traumas lead to chronic muscular tension that restricts the free flow of vital energy and the authentic expression of feelings. Thus, in Lowen’s view, character emerges as a stable bodily-energetic configuration shaped through the subject’s interaction with the environment, particularly in early childhood.

Based on decades of therapeutic practice, Lowen identified five primary characterological types, each reflecting a distinct mode of adaptation to traumatic experiences arising at specific developmental stages:

1. Schizoid Structure – Arises from early rejection or insufficient contact. Characterized by dissociation between body and emotions, detachment, and autistic tendencies. Bodily expression includes weak overall muscle tone, lack of grounding, and tension in the head and neck.

2. Oral Structure – Forms due to a lack of emotional support and frustration of reciprocal needs. Manifests in dependent behavior, feelings of deficiency, and self-deprecation. Bodily signs include a constricted chest, weak lower-body muscles, and restricted breathing.
3. Psychopathic Structure – Develops as a defense against manipulation, emotional deceit, or unreliable caregivers. Characterized by control-seeking tendencies, denial of vulnerability, and suppressed empathy. Bodily expression includes an overdeveloped chest, tension in the neck and upper back, and restricted pelvic mobility.
4. Masochistic Structure – Forms under oppressive, controlling parenting that enforces submission. Exhibits impulse suppression, self-sacrifice, and latent aggression. Bodily signs include excessive muscular density, limited mobility, and tension in the pelvis and abdomen.
5. Rigid Structure – Results from trauma related to sexual or social rejection. Characterized by perfectionism, control needs, and suppressed sensitivity. Bodily expression includes a symmetrical, tense posture with highly controlled movement and breathing.

These types are not strict diagnostic categories but rather integrative models that describe character as a system of emotional, cognitive, and somatic traits. Lowen emphasizes that character cannot be understood solely in terms of psychological defenses: it represents a structure in which the psychic and the somatic are inextricably linked in the processes of adaptation and protection from pain.

Functional-structural analysis of character through the prism of the Russian psychophysiological school

The question of character structure has remained one of the central topics in psychoanalytic and clinical psychology since the late 19th century. Throughout the 20th century, however, a discernible trend emerged toward abandoning the concept of “character” in favor of more neutral and formally structural categories such as “personality organization”, “ego structure”, “self-style”, “level of integration”, or “attachment patterns”. Nevertheless, the essential characteristics of these concepts retain the descriptive and explanatory functions of the classical understanding of character as a stable organization of personality.

Within the context of interdisciplinary synthesis, particularly at the intersection of psychoanalysis and the Russian psychophysiological school, there arises a need to conceptualize character as a psychosomatic structure integrating behavioral, regulatory, and motivational components. Further development of psychotherapeutic theory necessitates moving beyond descriptive psychopathology and incorporating concepts and models from general psychology, neurophysiology, activity theory, and systems analysis. This synthesis is embodied in the functional-structural approach (FSA), which is grounded in the analysis of personality as a dynamic psychosomatic organization of subjective activity.

This approach enables the examination of character structure as a stable mode of organizing human activity, manifested across somatic, behavioral, and motivational dimensions. Character, in this framework, is not a mere collection of traits but rather a functional structure that determines a specific style of engagement with the world. It manifests through stable regulatory patterns encompassing neurodynamics, somatic manifestations, behavioral elements, and forms of meaning-oriented directionality. Of particular significance in the functional-structural analysis are the “activity-action-movement” continuum and the four-level model of psychophysiological activity structure. These conceptual tools facilitate not only the description of character manifestations but also the diagnosis of its underlying structure through the examination of disruptions or rigidity in transitions between levels of activity organization.

To elucidate the methodological foundations of the FSA, it is essential to consider the fundamental concepts of the Russian psychophysiological school, including the works of I. P. Pavlov, L. S. Vygotsky, P. K. Anokhin, A. N. Leontiev, and N. A. Bernstein. Their theoretical contributions form the basis for a multilayered description of human activity as a system that integrates brain, body, behavior, and consciousness into a functionally organized structure.

Pavlovian Conditioning as the Physiological Basis of Stable Behavioral Patterns

I. P. Pavlov, the founder of the physiology of higher nervous activity, developed one of the first systemic models of behavior that established the foundation for understanding stable individual differences determined by nervous system types. Although Pavlov did not employ the term “character” in

its clinical sense, his conceptualization of types of higher nervous activity – strong/weak, mobile/inert, balanced/unbalanced – essentially constitutes a prototype of the typological approach to personality organization.

Pavlov's theory of three levels of reflex activity, encompassing unconditioned reflexes along with conditioned reflexes of the first and second signal systems formed upon them, provided an explanation for the development of stable reactive patterns, particularly under conditions of chronic frustration or trauma. Furthermore, the Pavlovian model established fundamental understanding of how behavioral stereotypes become consolidated at the level of neurodynamic and biochemical reactions, especially when stimuli and responses are repeatedly reinforced (classical Pavlovian conditioning). This framework enables interpretation of certain characterological features as outcomes of pathologically reinforced functional conditioned connections, particularly when accompanied by neurophysiological fixation of emotional excitation.

Of particular significance is the concept of the “dynamic stereotype” – a stable pattern of responses to recurring situations. Within the functional-structural approach, this phenomenon may be interpreted as the neurophysiological foundation of character, while disturbances or rigidity in its reorganization may be viewed as manifestations of character structure rigidity. The Pavlovian approach thus permits understanding character as encompassing not merely psychological but also somatic – neurophysiological – foundations of stable response patterns.

L. S. Vygotsky's Concept of Mediation and the Semiotic Level of Activity

L. S. Vygotsky made a fundamental contribution to the understanding of the relationship between the physical and mental in personality development. His concept of higher mental functions, which emerge through the internalization of cultural forms of behavior, allowed character to be viewed not as an innate formation but as a product of social and activity-based organization of experience.

Of particular importance to the Functional-Structural Approach is the concept of “mediated action” – the idea that mental functions develop not directly, but through the incorporation of external means (language, tools, cultural symbols) into the structure of behavior. In the context of

character analysis, this implies that individual styles of response and action result from sociocultural assimilation but are subsequently internalized and become functional components of personality as a structured entity.

Vygotsky emphasized that mental development occurs through the mediation of lower, biologically rooted functions. In other words, higher forms of behavior (including characteristic regulatory patterns, volition, and morality) are grounded in psychophysiological mechanisms but are modified through socialization. Within the FSA framework, this enables the construction of a hierarchical model of character: from motor patterns (movements) to behavioral templates (actions) and further to meaning-driven structures (activity), all based on the cultural-historical development of the subject. This approach also facilitates the application of a model of psychophysiological activity structure encompassing: unconditioned reflex activity, conditioned reflex activity of the first and second signal systems, and semiotic activity.

P. K. Anokhin and the Theory of Functional Systems

P. K. Anokhin proposed a fundamentally new model for understanding behavior, abandoning the localization of mental functions in specific brain areas in favor of the concept of a functional system. In this theory, any behavioral activity is considered as the result of coordinated work among multiple components – receptors, effectors, motivational, cognitive, and integrative elements – functioning as a unified system.

Within the context of character analysis, the concept of the “action acceptor” becomes particularly significant. This anticipatory mechanism enables the organism to correlate expected outcomes with current activity. Deficits or distortions in this function may lead to the reinforcement of ineffective behavioral patterns, which from a psychotherapeutic perspective can be viewed as manifestations of rigid character structure.

Anokhin conceptualized behavior as a continuously adaptive system responding to environmental changes. However, under conditions of persistent pathological reinforcement of maladaptive patterns (such as through recurring traumatic experiences or excessive defensive strategies), a rigid functional system may emerge that consistently reproduces the same behavioral pattern regardless of outcome. Such rigidity may be interpreted as characterological fixation.

Thus, a functional system represents not merely an isolated act, but rather an organizational framework for the interaction of all levels of the subject with reality. Consequently, according to the Functional-Structural Approach, character constitutes a stably reproducible system of behavioral regulation encompassing neurophysiological, motivational, affective, and behavioral components.

A. N. Leontiev and the Theory of Activity

A. N. Leontiev expanded upon Vygotsky's ideas and proposed an understanding of the structure of the psyche as a hierarchy of activity, action, and operations. His concept of activity was understood as the foundation of personality formation – an individual becomes a subject by engaging in a system of socially significant activity. This has a direct bearing on the Functional Systems Approach, in which the continuum of “activity – action – movement” is based on Leontiev's logical framework.

According to Leontiev, activity is a system aimed at satisfying a need, while an action is an act subordinated to a goal. Operations, in turn, are the specific methods of executing an action, dependent on conditions. Applying this to the analysis of character, it can be argued that character is expressed in a stable style of coordinating activity and action, as well as in a preference for certain forms of regulation. For example, avoidance may be understood as the repression of certain forms of action from the context of meaningful activity.

The FSA interprets elements of character as deformations in the relationship between levels: when actions lose their connection with activity (life goals) or when movements become inappropriately dominant (impulsivity, motor disinhibition). Thus, Leontiev's model serves as a theoretical framework through which character is analyzed as a structure of activity.

N. A. Bernstein and the Biomechanics of Movement

N. A. Bernstein developed a multilevel system of movement organization, in which each level – from elementary to symbolic and semantic – is integrated into a motor act. His key idea was that movement is not merely biomechanics but also mental regulation, reflecting goals, perception, motivation, and experience.

For the FSA, Bernstein's concept of sensorimotor coordination as a form of individual engagement in action is particularly important. According to Bernstein, it is in motor activity that the integral nature of the psychophysiological system first manifests. From this perspective, character can be described as a motor-emotional style, consistently expressed in bodily expression: gait, breathing, muscle tone, and movement fluidity.

Bernstein's system of movement construction levels – from Level A (reflexes) to Level E (value-semantic regulation) – serves as the foundation for studying motor activity within the FSA. Disruptions in the integration of these levels can be interpreted as bodily expressions of characterological deformations. For instance, “fixation” at Level B or C may manifest as rigid motor patterns, tension, or a lack of adaptive plasticity in behavior.

Character as a Functional System

Integrating the theoretical foundations of the Functional Systems Approach, it can be argued that character is a form of systemic integration of all levels of human psychophysiological activity. Its structure is manifested in how the subject regulates movements, organizes actions, and shapes the meaningful orientation of their activity. At the same time, character is not a morphological entity but rather a functionally organized structure.

The functional-structural approach provides a theoretical and methodological framework in which the concept of character can be redefined as a dynamic organization of the subject's activity, embodied in bodily and mental forms of self-regulation. In this context, character does not appear as a set of traits or fixed reactions but as a complex functional structure expressed through the unity of psychophysiological activity levels and forms of active realization – from movement to action, from action to activity.

In the FSA, the basic unit of analysis is not a structure as a morphological or substantive formation but rather a functionally organized act realized at different levels – neurophysiological, sensorimotor, behavioral, and motivational-axiological. This organization manifests through specific forms of behavior, mental functioning, and bodily expression. From this perspective, character represents an integral form of the subject's stable mode of being in a situation, reflecting their methods of regulating tension, affect, motivation, and contact with reality.

One of the central concepts of the FSA is the “level of psychophysiological activity”, which allows describing character as a stable configuration of interactions between the nervous system, body, and psyche in the process of adaptation. Importantly, this does not refer to a “temperament type” in a biological sense but rather to a dynamic mode of the subject’s engagement in activity, expressed in stable sensorimotor response patterns, bodily mobility, emotional expression, and behavioral regulation styles. At this level, character emerges as a bodily-encoded structure of interaction with the world, preserved in the subject’s everyday behavior regardless of the specific situation.

A key methodological foundation of the FSA is the functional continuum of “activity – action – movement”. This triad describes the levels of organization of the subject’s psychophysiological activity, in which meaning, purpose, and motor realization of behavior are sequentially embodied. In this context, character can be described as a system of stable transitions between the levels of the continuum, reflecting typical modes of meaning-making, behavioral realization, and bodily expression. From this perspective, character disturbances may be viewed as deformations or blockages at the boundaries between levels – for example, when movement does not convert into goal-directed action, or action does not integrate into personally meaningful activity.

This understanding allows reinterpreting classical psychoanalytic concepts of character (such as Freud’s “anal character”, Reich’s “armor”, or Winnicott’s “false self”) as various forms of disrupted or rigid functional organization at the boundaries of activity levels. For instance, the rigidity of the anal character type can be understood as a fixation on action that does not transition into flexible activity, while Reich’s somatic blocks can be seen as bodily barriers preventing free movement and thus obstructing the entire functional continuum. Here, it becomes particularly important to consider character not only in terms of motivation or defense but also as a phenomenon of disrupted transitions between levels of bodily and mental regulation.

In this aspect, the FSA’s concept of character acquires a systemic-functional dimension: it is a form of stable and holistic interaction between different levels of the subject, a mode of engagement with the world, a typical style of being represented in the bodily-psychic profile of activity. Such an interpretation allows explaining and diagnosing character not by the content of attitudes but by the principle of action organization, enabling the integration of psychodynamic and neurophysiological descriptions.

Let us examine in more detail how character can be described through the prism of each level of the functional continuum. At the level of movement, character manifests in motor style: gestures, gait, posture, and breathing. This is the level of basic bodily expression, reflecting fundamental features of the bodily self. For example, anxious patients often exhibit high muscle tone, irregular breathing, and constrained movements – these parameters may be interpreted as bodily fixation at the movement level, hindering the transition to flexible action. At the level of action, character is expressed in stable behavioral patterns: response styles, interaction strategies, ways of expressing needs, and defenses against affect. It is here that typical psychoanalytic descriptions emerge – perfectionism, rigidity, avoidance, controlling behavior. At the level of activity, the axiological and semantic layer of character is revealed: the systemic organization of life goals, directionality, ideological or moral attitudes that shape behavioral vectors.

It is important to note that within the FSA, these levels do not exist in isolation: they form a continuous vector – the functional continuum. Disruptions or distortions of this continuum become the basis for characterological deviations. For instance, a situation where action becomes an end in itself and does not transition into activity leads to a loss of behavioral meaning (manifesting as compensatory control, perfectionism, or obsessiveness). Conversely, when movement is not supported by directed action, the subject becomes stuck in impulsive, fragmented behavior that does not yield stable results (typical of some borderline or hysterical structures).

The bodily aspect of character analysis in the FSA enables not only behavioral observation but also the diagnosis of deep regulation – through typical motor strategies, breathing patterns, and sensorimotor coordination. This aligns the functional-structural approach with the methods of Reich and Lowen while distinguishing it through greater methodological rigor and integration with the broader framework of Russian neuropsychology and the theory of functional systems. Specifically, the FSA builds upon Bernstein's ideas on movement biomechanics, Vygotsky's theories on the relationship between external action and internal regulation, and Anokhin's concept of the functional system as a holistic structure of adaptive acts.

Thus, character can be described as an integrative functional system that encapsulates the subject's mode of adaptation to the environment through the unity of movement, action, and activity. Unlike classical psychoanalytic typology, the FSA does not seek to identify fixed character types but instead offers a coordinate system in which any individual organization can be de-

scribed in terms of the coherence and plasticity of activity levels. This allows diagnosing not only “what a person does” but also how they structure their activity, at which levels blockages, fixations, or deformations occur.

The FSA also enables the description of character dynamics as a restructuring of interactions between levels. For example, therapeutic work may focus on releasing bodily fixations (movement level), teaching new forms of action (behavioral correction), or redefining life goals (activity level). Such an approach facilitates both in-depth character analysis and its gradual transformation.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that integrating psychoanalytic character theory with functional-structural analysis opens new perspectives for understanding character as a dynamic, bodily-embodied regulatory system. This moves beyond descriptive psychopathology toward structural and processual descriptions of the subject. In the FSA paradigm, character is a mode of organizing activity within a three-dimensional framework: bodily expression, behavioral realization, and meaningful directionality. This model allows not only precise diagnostics but also targeted interventions at different levels of subjective reality, making it particularly valuable for body-oriented and integrative psychotherapy.

Conclusion

This article presents the functional-structural approach as a methodological tool for overcoming the fragmentation of knowledge about human personality and developing an integrative concept of character capable of unifying advancements from various scientific disciplines. The functional-structural analysis of character provides a holistic model that conceptualizes character as a dynamic system manifesting across all levels of human existence – from neurophysiological processes to higher forms of behavioral meaning regulation.

By examining the interrelations between activity, action, and movement levels, practitioners can identify the underlying causes of characterological disturbances and develop targeted correction methods. This is particularly crucial in the context of modern demands for a comprehensive approach to psychotherapy, where all aspects of human existence must be considered.

Regarding future directions for the development of the functional-structural approach, research efforts should focus on the following areas:

1. Development of standardized diagnostic tools to operationalize the model's key constructs for research and clinical purposes. This entails creating valid assessment methods for characterological structures that account for their multilevel organization.
2. Implementation of longitudinal studies examining the ontogenetic dynamics of characterological formation. Special attention should be given to critical developmental periods and factors determining their transformation.
3. Systematic investigation of the neurophysiological foundations of characterological manifestations using modern neuroimaging techniques (fMRI, EEG) and psychophysiological measurements.
4. Design of experimental paradigms for empirical verification of the model's key postulates under controlled conditions, including research in psychosomatics and neuropsychology.
5. Adaptation of the proposed approach for applied clinical tasks, including the development of novel psychotherapeutic techniques and correction programs.

The implementation of these directions will contribute to both a deeper theoretical understanding of the nature of character and the expanded practical application of the functional-structural approach across various domains of psychological science and practice.

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