Sigmund Freud

According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality, personality is composed of three elements. These three elements of personality--known as the id, the ego and the superego--work together to create complex human behaviors.

The Id

The id is the only component of personality that is present from birth. This aspect of personality is entirely unconscious and includes of the instinctive and primitive behaviors. According to Freud, the id is the source of all psychic energy, making it the primary component of personality.

The id is driven by the pleasure principle, which strives for immediate gratification of all desires, wants, and needs. If these needs are not satisfied immediately, the result is a state anxiety or tension. For example, an increase in hunger or thirst should produce an immediate attempt to eat or drink. The id is very important early in life, because it ensures that an infant's needs are met. If the infant is hungry or uncomfortable, he or she will cry until the demands of the id are met.

However, immediately satisfying these needs is not always realistic or even possible. If we were ruled entirely by the pleasure principle, we might find ourselves grabbing things we want out of other people's hands to satisfy our own cravings. This sort of behavior would be both disruptive and socially unacceptable. According to Freud, the id tries to resolve the tension created by the pleasure principle through the primary process, which involves forming a mental image of the desired object as a way of satisfying the need.

The Ego

The ego is the component of personality that is responsible for dealing with reality. According to Freud, the ego develops from the id and ensures that the impulses of the id can be expressed in a manner acceptable in the real world. The ego functions in both the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious mind.

The ego operates based on the reality principle, which strives to satisfy the id's desires in realistic and socially appropriate ways. The reality principle weighs the costs and benefits of an action before deciding to act upon or abandon impulses. In many cases, the id's impulses can be satisfied through a process of delayed gratification--the ego will eventually allow the behavior, but only in the appropriate time and place.

The ego also discharges tension created by unmet impulses through the secondary process, in which the ego tries to find an object in the real world that matches the mental image created by the id's primary process.

The Superego

The last component of personality to develop is the superego. The superego is the aspect of personality that holds all of our internalized moral standards and ideals that we acquire from both parents and society--our sense of right and wrong. The superego provides guidelines for making judgments. According to Freud, the superego begins to emerge at around age five.

There are two parts of the superego:

The ego ideal includes the rules and standards for good behaviors. These behaviors include those which are approved of by parental and other authority figures. Obeying these rules leads to feelings of pride, value and accomplishment.

The conscience includes information about things that are viewed as bad by parents and society. These behaviors are often forbidden and lead to bad consequences, punishments or feelings of guilt and remorse.
The superego acts to perfect and civilize our behavior. It works to suppress all unacceptable urges of the id and struggles to make the ego act upon idealistic standards rather that upon realistic principles. The superego is present in the conscious, preconscious and unconscious.

The Interaction of the Id, Ego and Superego

With so many competing forces, it is easy to see how conflict might arise between the id, ego and superego. Freud used the term ego strength to refer to the ego's ability to function despite these dueling forces. A person with good ego strength is able to effectively manage these pressures, while those with too much or too little ego strength can become too unyielding or too disrupting.

According to Freud, the key to a healthy personality is a balance between the id, the ego, and the superego.

Carl Jung

In 1907, Carl Jung met Sigmund Freud in Vienna. Jung had been interested in Freud's ideas regarding the interpretation of dreams. Likewise, Freud took an interest to Jung's word association task that he used to understand the unconscious processes of patients. In fact, Freud invited Jung along for his now-famous appearance at the Clark conference in 1909, Freud's first trip to America.

After some argument over the validity of psychoanalysis, Jung and Freud went their separate ways, and Jung went on to develop the analytical psychology, which differentiated the personal unconscious from the collective unconscious, which reflects the shared unconscious thoughts among humans. Another notable contribution to psychology involves Jung's personality theory, which was particularly notable due to its definitions of introversion and extroversion.

Jung's Introversion and Extroversion Attitudes

The first of Jung's general psychological types was the general attitude type. An attitude, according to Jung, is a person's predisposition to behave in a particular way. There are two opposing attitudes: introversion and extroversion. The two attitudes work as opposing, yet complementary forces and are often depicted as the classing yin and yang symbol.

The introvert is most aware of his or her inner world. While the external world is still perceived, it is not pondered as seriously as inward movement of psychic energy. The introverted attitude is more concerned with subjective appraisal and often gives more consideration to fantasies and dreams.

The extrovert, by contrast, is characterized by the outward movement of psychic energy. This attitude places more importance on objectivity and gains more influence from the surrounding environment than by inner cognitive processes.

Clearly, it is not a case of one versus the other. Many people carry qualities of both attitudes, considering both subjective and objective information.

Jung's Four Functions of Personality

For Carl Jung, there were four functions that, when combined with one of his two attitudes, formed the eight different personality types. The first function — feeling — is the method by which a person understands the value of conscious activity. Another function — thinking — allows a person to understand the meanings of things. This process relies on logic and careful mental activity.

The final two functions — sensation and intuition — may seem very similar, but there is an important distinction. Sensation refers to the means by which a person knows something exists and intuition is knowing about something without conscious understanding of where that knowledge comes from.

The Eight Personality Types Defined by Carl Jung

Jung developed a theory of eight different personality types. Jung's personality types are as follows:

1. Extroverted Thinking – Jung theorized that people understand the world through a mix of concrete ideas and abstract ones, but the abstract concepts are ones passed down from other people. Extroverted thinkers are often found working in the research sciences and mathematics.

2. Introverted Thinking – These individuals interpret stimuli in the environment through a subjective and creative way. The interpretations are informed by internal knowledge and understanding. Philosophers and theoretical scientists are often introverted thinking-oriented people.
3. Extroverted Feeling – These people judge the value of things based on objective fact. Comfortable in social situations, they form their opinions based on socially accepted values and majority beliefs. They are often found working in business and politics.
4. Introverted Feeling – These people make judgments based on subjective ideas and on internally established beliefs. Oftentimes they ignore prevailing attitudes and defy social norms of thinking. Introverted feeling people thrive in careers as art critics.
5. Extroverted Sensing – These people perceive the world as it really exists. Their perceptions are not colored by any pre-existing beliefs. Jobs that require objective review, like wine tasters and proofreaders, are best filled by extroverted sensing people.
6. Introverted Sensing – These individuals interpret the world through the lens of subjective attitudes and rarely see something for only what it is. They make sense of the environment by giving it meaning based on internal reflection. Introverted sensing people often turn to various arts, including portrait painting and classical music.
7. Extroverted Intuitive – These people prefer to understand the meanings of things through subliminally perceived objective fact rather than incoming sensory information. They rely on hunches and often disregard what they perceive directly from their senses. Inventors that come upon their invention via a stroke of insight and some religious reformers are characterized by the extraverted intuitive type.
8. Introverted Intuitive – These individuals, Jung thought, are profoundly influenced by their internal motivations even though they do not completely understand them. They find meaning through unconscious, subjective ideas about the world. Introverted intuitive people comprise a significant portion of mystics, surrealistic artists, and religious fanatics.

Applying Jung's Orientations to a Complete Personality

A person is not usually defined by only one of the eight personality types. Instead, the different functions exist in a hierarchy. One function will take have a superior effect and another will have a secondary effect. Usually, according to Jung, a person only makes significant use of two functions. The other two take inferior positions.

In his 1921 work, Psychological Types, Jung compared his four functions of personality to the four points on a compass. While a person faces one direction, he or she still uses the other points as a guide. Most people keep one function as the dominant one although some people may develop two over a lifetime. It is only the person who achieves self-realization that has completely developed all four functions.

Karen Horney

Theories	Horney	Freud
Neurosis	- feelings and attitudes determined by culture - deal with problems - driven by emotional forces - compulsive drives but are neurotic	- instinctual drives or object relationships determined biologically - deny problems - ego concept without initintive or executive powers - convulsive drives but not driven to neurosis
Psychoanalysis	- seeking self-realization - help from analyst to cope with life	- avoids self-realization - love for the analyst
Inner Conflicts	- abilities to be a decent person - man can change	- repressed or repressing - disbelief in human goodness and growth

Her theoretical approach to this is describing it towards people's personalities. The personality she gave is an example of children and how parents as well as other socializing factors influence their personality. For instance, a normal child goes through life having certain characteristics of themselves when relating experiences with school, hobbies, and home. However, when looking at a child that is neurotic the environmental factors isolates their true self. Also, older people can be described as neurotic, characterized by no self-worth, loss of decision making or interest, afraid or obsessive-compulsive, anxiety, and depressed. The goal of this analysis is to basically change the person's opinions and perception of life by seeking a person's potential of self-realization. This emphasizes that the neurotic should be aware of their environmental factors that surround them and their inner-self, knowing who they are. This means "striving toward a clearer and deeper experiencing" (Neurosis And Human Growth, 364) with the direction of their lives. This analysis "cannot solve the ills of the world" (Self-Analysis, 10) but it can explain the neurotic's problems and try to help them. Psychoanalysis therapy is "helping people toward their best possible further development" (Self-Analysis, 37). Freud suggests that this therapy involves the neurotic developing love for the analyst in addition to seeking help. However, Horney feels this is "not prompted by love for the analyst" (Self-Analysis, 20) but is the patients fear of people and their way of coping with life. The patient would feel helpless otherwise. Freud suggests that in order for people to overcome their resistance they need to deny them. Horney suggests differently. She thinks "the strength of the resisting forces and the strength of the self to deal with them" (Self-Analysis, 269).

Alfred Adler

Adler examined personality around the same time as Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud. They worked on some theories together until Adler rejected Freud's emphasis on sex, and maintained that personality difficulties are rooted in a feeling of inferiority deriving from restrictions on the individual's need for self-assertion.

His best-known work is The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology (1923). Adler had a tendency to change his theory on personality throughout his life but he ultimately believed that people are focused on maintaining control over their lives. He believed in single "drive" or motivating force behind our behavior, claiming that the desire we have to fulfill our potentials becomes closer and closer to our ideals.

Alder calls this theory Individual Psychology because he felt each person was unique and no previous theory applied to all people. Adler's theory included these four aspects: the development of personality, striving towards superiority, psychological health, and the unity of personality. Many psychologists excepted Alfred's popular idea of self-actualization.

In studying personality, Alfred came up with the term inferiority complex. He described this as feelings of lack of worth. He wrote, "We all wish to overcome difficulties. We all strive to reach a goal by the attainment of which we shall feel strong, superior, and complete" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Alder was known to use the word superiority complex. This complex developed when a person tried to conquer their inferiority complex by suppressing their existing feelings. He felt that people were constantly trying overcome their feelings of inferiority to reach superiority.

Along with the idea of trying to overcome inferiority, Adler claimed that every person had an idea about what their perfect self would be like (Cloninger, 1996). He named this image the fictional finalism. Fictional finalism applies clearer direction to decisions that are to be made concerning oneself. Although individuals may have an idea about their image, but they hardly ever understand it. Although the image may be altered, the common direction throughout one's life stays the same. Adler wrote, ". . .in every mental phenomenon we discover anew the characteristic of pursuit of a goal, and all our powers, faculties, experiences, wishes and fears, defects and capacities fall into line with this characteristic" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

Unlike Freud, Adler believed the conscious and unconscious worked in union with one another towards the fictional finalism (Cloninger, 1996). Adler declared that each individual has a incomparable way of life, some are negative and some are positive. Adler did not like to take big groups of people an put them into general categories but when describing basic lifestyles it was simpler to do so. He studied various types of people and he came to this conclusion. There are the four main types of people, three out of four are negative. The ruling type tries to control others. The getting type tends to be very passive and goes along with others ideas, rarely inventive. The avoiding types try to isolate themselves to avoid defeat, they are usually very cold. The socially useful type, values having control over their lives and strive to do good things for the sake of society.

"It is easier to fight for one's principles than to live up to them (Alfred Adler)." This statement sums up Alder's theory of personalty in a nutshell.

Abraham Maslow

He criticized behaviorism and later took the same approach with Freud and his writings. While he acknowledged the presence of the unconscious, he disagreed with Freud's belief that the vast majority of who we are is buried deep beyond our awareness. Maslow believed that we are aware of our motives and drives for the most part and that without the obstacles of life, we would all become psychologically healthy individuals with a deep understanding of ourselves and an acceptance of the world around us. Where Freud saw much negativity, Maslow focused his efforts on understanding the positives of mankind. It could be said that psychoanalytic thought is based on determinism, or aspects beyond our control, and humanistic thought is based on free will.

Maslow's most well known contribution is the Hierarchy of Needs and this is often used to summarize the belief system of humanistic psychology. The basic premise behind this hierarchy is that we are born with certain needs. Without meeting these initial needs, we will not be able to continue our life and move upward on hierarchy. This first level consists of our *physiological needs*, or our basic needs for survival. Without food, water, sleep, and oxygen, nothing else in life matters.

Need for Self Actualization
Need to realize our fullest potential

Esteem Needs
Need for achievement, education, competence, and respect

Belonging and Love Needs
Need for love, acceptance, and belonging

Safety Needs
Need for safety and security

Physiological Needs
Need for food, water, shelter, oxygen, and sleep

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Once these needs are met, we can move to the next level, which consists of our *need for safety and security*. At this level we look seek out safety through other people and strive to find a world that will protect us and keep us free from harm. Without these goals being met, it is extremely difficult to think about higher level needs and therefore we can not continue to grow.

When we feel safe and secure in our world then we begin to seek out friendships in order to feel a sense of belonging. Maslow's third level, the *need for belonging and love*, focuses on our desire to be accepted, to fit in, and to feel like we have a place in the world. Getting these needs met propels us closer to the top of this pyramid and into the fourth level, called *esteem needs*. At this level we focus our energy on self-respect, respect from others, and feeling that we have made accomplishments on our

life. We strive to move upward in careers, to gain knowledge about the world, and to work toward a sense of high self-worth.

The final level in the hierarchy is called the *need for self-actualization*. According to Maslow, may people may be in this level but very few if anybody ever masters it. Self-actualization refers to a complete understanding of the self. To be self-actualized means to truly know who you are, where you belong in the greater society, and to feel like you have accomplished all that you have set out to accomplish. It means to no longer feel shame or guilt, or even hate, but to accept the world and see human nature as inherently good.

Carl Rogers

Was a humanistic psychologist agreed with most of what Maslow believed, but added that for a person to "grow", they need an environment that provides them with genuineness (openness and self-disclosure), acceptance (being seen with unconditional positive regard), and empathy (being listened to and understood).

Without these, relationships and healthy personalities will not develop as they should, much like a tree will not grow without sunlight and water.

Rogers believed that every person can achieve their goals, wishes and desires in life. When, or rather if they did so, self actualization took place. This was one of Carl Rogers most important contributions to psychology and for a person to reach their potential a number of factors must be satisfied.

Central to Rogers' personality theory is the notion of self or self-concept. This is defined as "the organized, consistent set of perceptions and beliefs about oneself".

The self is the humanistic term for who we really are as a person. The self is our inner personality, and can be likened to the soul, or Freud's psyche. The self is influenced by the experiences a person has in their life, and out interpretations of those experiences. Two primary sources that influence our self-concept are childhood experiences and evaluation by others.

According to Rogers (1959), we want to feel, experience and behave in ways which are consistent with our self-image and which reflect what we would like to be like, our ideal-self. The closer our self-image and ideal-self are to each other, the more consistent or congruent we are and the higher our sense of self-worth. A person is said to be in a state of incongruence if some of the totality of their experience is unacceptable to them and is denied or distorted in the self-image.

The humanistic approach states that the self is composed of concepts unique to ourselves. The self-concept includes three components:

1. Self worth (or self-esteem) – what we think about ourselves. Rogers believed feelings of self-worth developed in early childhood and were formed from the interaction of the child with the mother and father.

2. Self-image – How we see ourselves, which is important to good psychological health. Self-image includes the influence of our body image on inner personality. At a simple level, we might

perceive ourselves as a good or bad person, beautiful or ugly. Self-image has an affect on how a person thinks feels and behaves in the world.

3. Ideal self – This is the person who we would like to be. It consists of our goals and ambitions in life, and is dynamic – i.e. forever changing. The ideal self in childhood is not the ideal self in our teens or late twenties etc.

B.F. Skinner

Well known for describing the principles of operant conditioning. Skinner believed that the environment determines behavior. According to his view, people have consistent behavior patterns because they have particular kinds of response tendencies. This means that over time, people learn to behave in particular ways. Behaviors that have positive consequences tend to increase, while behaviors that have negative consequences tend to decrease.

Skinner didn't think that childhood played an especially important role in shaping personality. Instead, he thought that personality develops over the whole life span. People's responses change as they encounter new situations.

Example: When Jeff was young, he lived in the suburbs. He developed a liking for fast driving because his friends enjoyed riding with him and he never got speeding tickets. After he left college, though, he moved to the city. Whenever he drove fast, he got a speeding ticket. Also, his new friends were much more cautious about driving in fast cars. Now Jeff doesn't like to drive fast and considers himself to be a cautious person.

Skinner's work influenced thinking in many different fields of psychology and his views in two principal areas will now be briefly highlighted:

On language: - Skinner assumed that children were born as 'blank slates' or 'tabula rasae' and that they learn language via shaping the sounds they hear from their caregivers into words and eventually sentences through selective reinforcement. This viewpoint was most avidly criticized by Noam Chomsky (1968, 1980), who found evidence for an innate 'Language Acquisition Device' or 'LAD', where newborns are biologically programmed for language learning.

On Personality: - Skinner said (1977, p10): "I see no evidence for an inner world of mental life relative either to an analysis of behavior as a function of environmental forces or to the physiology of the nervous system". So, once again it was the external environment, plus the past learning history of the individual, which was said to 'shape' their personality. New research has shown this line of thought to be flawed - children are born with certain temperamental characteristics and it is both genetics and environment that shape personality.

Alfred Bandura

Basic Social Learning Concepts

There are three core concepts at the heart of social learning theory. First is the idea that people can learn through observation. Next is the idea that internal mental states are an essential part of this process. Finally, this theory recognizes that just because something has been learned, it does not mean that it will result in a change in behavior.

Let's explore each of these concepts in greater depth.

1. People can learn through observation.

Observational Learning
In his famous Bobo doll experiment, Bandura demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviors they have observed in other people. The children in Bandura's studies observed an adult acting violently toward a Bobo doll. When the children were later allowed to play in a room with the Bobo doll, they began to imitate the aggressive actions they had previously observed.

Bandura identified three basic models of observational learning:

- A live model, which involves an actual individual demonstrating or acting out a behavior.
- A verbal instructional model, which involves descriptions and explanations of a behavior.
- A symbolic model, which involves real or fictional characters displaying behaviors in books, films, television programs, or online media.

2. Mental states are important to learning.

Intrinsic Reinforcement

Bandura noted that external, environmental reinforcement was not the only factor to influence learning and behavior. He described intrinsic reinforcement as a form of internal reward, such as pride, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment. This emphasis on internal thoughts and cognitions helps connect learning theories to cognitive developmental theories. While many textbooks place social learning theory with behavioral theories, Bandura himself describes his approach as a 'social cognitive theory.'

3. Learning does not necessarily lead to a change in behavior.

While behaviorists believed that learning led to a permanent change in behavior, observational learning demonstrates that people can learn new information without demonstrating new behaviors.

The Modeling Process

Not all observed behaviors are effectively learned. Factors involving both the model and the learner can play a role in whether social learning is successful. Certain requirements and steps must also be followed. The following steps are involved in the observational learning and modeling process:

- Attention:
In order to learn, you need to be paying attention. Anything that detracts your attention is going to have a negative effect on observational learning. If the model interesting or there is a novel aspect to the situation, you are far more likely to dedicate your full attention to learning.

- Retention:
The ability to store information is also an important part of the learning process. Retention can be affected by a number of factors, but the ability to pull up information later and act on it is vital to observational learning.

- Reproduction:

Once you have paid attention to the model and retained the information, it is time to actually perform the behavior you observed. Further practice of the learned behavior leads to improvement and skill advancement.

- Motivation:

Finally, in order for observational learning to be successful, you have to be motivated to imitate the behavior that has been modeled. Reinforcement and punishment play an important role in motivation. While experiencing these motivators can be highly effective, so can observing other experience some type of reinforcement or punishment. For example, if you see another student rewarded with extra credit for being to class on time, you might start to show up a few minutes early each day.

Gordon Allport

Gordon Allport was born in Indiana, the youngest of four boys. As a child he felt different from others, both in his childhood play and his interests. After high school followed his older brother Floyd through the same educational path. They went to the same undergraduate program, both attended Harvard for graduate school, and both majored in psychology. Floyd made a name for himself in social psychology, but Gordon felt like an outsider in this arena.

Gordon was interested in personality, and at the time, personality was not a formal sub-discipline of psychology and it certainly was not as fashionable as social psychology. It is likely that Gordon followed his brother through school in an attempt to find himself. He reported feeling different from others, including his older brother. This feeling, however, might have helped him succeed in his chosen profession.

He completed his doctorate, began studying personality. It is said that he was the first professor to teach a college level course on personality theory, a course that today is required by nearly all undergraduate psychology majors.

Prior to graduation, Allport secured a meeting with Sigmund Freud due to his writing on the unconscious and its effect on personality. It was during this meeting, after being probed by Freud for unconscious motives, that Allport wrote that psychologists should give full recognition to manifest motives before delving into the unconscious.

Allport is considered a trait theorist as he believed that every person has a small number of specific traits that predominate in his or her personality. He called these a person's central traits. While these central traits share in the make-up of personality, he also argued that occasionally one of them becomes an apparent dominant force. He called this a person's cardinal trait.

Both the central traits and the occasional cardinal trait are environmentally influenced. As a child develops, specific behaviors and interactions become a part of the individual's personality. As the person grows, these traits become functionally autonomous. In other words, they become so much a part of the person that they no longer require whatever it was that caused it to develop.

The OCEAN of Personality

If you look at the theories we've discussed so far, not only within the trait theory camp, but also those of Hans Eysenck and even Sigmund Freud, you may start to notice some commonalities. Many different

researchers, from different schools of thought have studied the aspects of personality and several interesting similarities have evolved. While different theorists may use different terminology, five factors or personality traits have shown up in a rather consistent pattern.

These traits, now known as the Big Five are Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extroversion/introversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. These five traits, according to many, make up the OCEAN of human personality, as the acronym goes, and are often considered to be the basic traits under which all other aspects of personality fall.

Openness to experience refers to the dimension ranging from outgoing, liberal, interested in new things, and imaginative to reserved, conservative, traditional, and conforming. Like all of these five traits, people will fall somewhere on a continuum, with most falling somewhere in the middle.

Conscientiousness refers to the continuum ranging from organized, careful, and determined to careless, and weak willed. Those on the high end of this factor may be seen as stoic, cold, and methodical. Those on the low end may be seen as gullible, followers, or may see the needs of others as always superceding their own.

Extroversion refers to a person who prefers group activities, group sports, large gatherings, lots of friends and acquaintances, loud music, and social endeavors. An introvert prefers more solitude, quiet music, small groups or individual sports and would rather stay at home or engage in a small group activity than attend a party or large social gathering. We've even found that extroverts tend to get bored more easily and may be followers who seek out others to avoid this boredom. Introverts, on the other hand, tend to become anxious more easily, especially in larger groups, and prefer the individual activity to avoid this anxiety, and as more of an individualist, may be seen as more of a leader.

Agreeableness represents the extremes of stubborn versus easy going or suspicious versus trusting. Those high in agreeableness are helpful, sympathetic to others, and understanding. Those low on this trait are seen as argumentative, skeptical, and strong-willed.

Finally, neuroticism refers to the dimension of emotional stability. Someone high on neuroticism would exhibit an instability in his or her emotions, interactions, and relationships. They may have frequent and wide mood swings, be difficult to understand, and become more upset over daily stressors and interactions. The person low on neuroticism may be seen as reserved, calm, and perhaps even unemotional.

Application of Trait Theory

One of the most obvious applications of understanding human traits is our ability to then measure these traits. We've discussed some of the assessment devices based on trait theory: The Thematic Apperception Test, 16PF, and tests designed to measure the Big Five. Most of the assessment devices that result from trait theory are self-report type tests. In other words, the person being tested responds to questions and these responses may or may not be accurate. People can lie on a test, they can fake bad or fake good, or they can purposefully try to manipulate the results.

If you are taking a test for a sales job and asked questions regarding your level of extroversion/introversion, is it likely that you might lie or stretch the truth a little to get the job? If you

are an introvert, you may feel this would hinder your chances. So instead, you respond positively to the extrovert questions such as "I prefer social activities to solitary activities, " or "I enjoy being the center of attention."

One assessment device that has attempted to address these issues is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. The MMPI-2 (now in it's second addition) consists of 567 item to which a test taker responds either true or false. The response styles or factors have been determined based on statistics and depending on how you respond, you will fall on a continuum of an increasing number of traits. The main traits include disorder related categories such as depression, psychotic, histrionic (neurotic), introversion, masculinity/femininity (gender role), and hypochondriasis. This test is so well researched that there are literally over a hundred of these scales now represented.

The MMPI-2 utilizes several techniques that attempt to catch a person who is attempting to alter the results. It asks questions in a specific way as to determine what's called a response style. A response style is a person's tendency to be honest, fake good, or fake bad. And, research suggests that it does a fairly good job of this, especially with people who are less knowledgeable about psychological testing.

Another application of trait theory has been in the workplace. A great deal of research has gone into the determination of traits that are helpful in specific types of jobs. For example, a sales person would likely do better if she is an extrovert, a teacher more likely to succeed if he is conscientious, or a navy seal more likely to get the job done if he is confident and open to new experiences.

Many career type assessment measures look at personality traits and compare you traits with those who are successful in a specific career. If most successful and happy psychologists are conscientious, agreeable, understanding introverts and you have these same traits, we could say that you are likely to succeed as a psychologist. Based on your traits, we could use assessment to determine careers or college majors that fit your personality and therefore offer you a greater chance of success.

Strengths and Criticisms of Trait Theory

While trait theory may seem logical and strait forward, like any theory on personality, it has both its good points and its criticisms.

Strengths

1. Objectivity. Perhaps the biggest strength of trait theory is it's reliance on statistical or objective data. Unlike many other theories, the subjectivity or personal experience of the theorists play no role in trait theory. Freud's relationship with his mother, Adler's childhood illness, or Jung's belief in mythology could be said to have influenced their theories. In that sense, subjectivity may have biased their ideas. Trait theory has no bias.

2. Ease of Use and Understanding. Trait theory has been used to develop a number of assessment devices. It provides an easy to understand continuum that provides a good deal of information regarding a person's personality, interaction, and beliefs about the self and the world. Understanding traits allows us to compare people, to determine which traits allow a person to

do better in college, in relationships, or in a specific career. We can help guide people toward a more agreeable future by knowing how they interact with the world.

Criticisms

1. **Poor Predictor of Future Behavior.** While we may be able to say, in general that a person falls on the high end or low end of a specific trait, trait theory fails to address a person's state. A state is a temporary way of interacting and dealing with the self and others. For example, an introvert may be quiet, reserved, intellectual, and calm in most situations. When around close friends, however, he may seem quite outgoing, fun-loving, and excitable.   The same could be said for the extrovert who, when presented with a job interview, may act more introverted, shy, reserved, and intellectual.

2. **Does not Address Development.** While statistics may be a strength of trait theory, it may also be it's biggest criticism. Because it is based on statistics rather than theory, it provides no explanation of personality development. Where most theories argue for the development (past), the current personality (present) and provide a means for change (future), trait theory is stuck in the present.

3. **No Means of Change.** Perhaps because trait theory does little to offer ideas about trait development, it also provides little or no guidance in the changing of negative aspects of a trait. Without understanding how a trait develops, how do we then change that trait? Many argue that the application of trait theory is significantly reduced because it lacks a means for change. What good is to measure something or to know something if we can do nothing about it?

Raymond Cattell

Trait theorist Raymond Cattell reduced the number of main personality traits from Allport's initial list of over 4,000 down to 171 mostly by eliminating uncommon traits and combining common characteristics. Next, Cattell rated a large sample of individuals for these 171 different traits. Then, using a statistical technique known as factor analysis, he identified closely related terms and eventually reduced his list to just 16 key personality traits. According to Cattell, these 16 traits are the source of all human personality. He also developed one of the most widely used personality assessments known as the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire .