Trait and Factor Theory

Gordon Allport

- Traits describe the particular way a person responds to the environment and the consistency of that response.

cardinal trait – A personal quality that is so strong a part of a person’s personality that behavior may be identified with that trait (i.e., Scrooge)

central traits – traits we would mention when writing a letter of recommendation (i.e., decisive, competitive)

Raymond Cattell

surface Traits – Observable qualities of personality, such as those used to describe a friend (i.e., same as Allport’s central traits)

source trait – Traits that underlie surface traits, make up the most basic personality structure, and cause behavior (i.e., intelligence)