

Describe and
evaluate jungs theory
concerning
personality types



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Carl Jung had many theories about the mind and humanity that have been widely used and taken forward by others, including his ideas regarding personality types. These ideas are outlined in work by Jung but are more clearly accessible from other secondary sources. Integral to many of Jung's theories is the 'principle of opposites'. I. e. Every thought or attribute that we have, produces and/or is balanced by its opposite. Jung believed that this reflected the dualism of the world we live in and that this pairing is required to allow each to exist. e. g. Male and female, God and devil, light and dark, i. e. if light is acknowledged this must allow for the existence of dark by implication. White (2009). This principle is reflected in Jung's idea of personality types as a series of opposing pairs on a continuum. A balanced personality has elements of both opposing attributes from the pair, though this balance is often not the case for many individuals.

Jung's initial differentiation of our habitual attitude to life is based on if a greater emphasis is placed on "outer objective events or inner subjective ones" Stevens (2001) p86 i. e. between extroversion and introversion. Jung considered this to be a fundamental difference. Sharp (1987) p27-30. Oxford Dictionaries state that an extrovert is "a person predominantly concerned with external things or objective considerations". The extroverted attitude being associated with looking outward, being enthusiastic, optimistic and socially active with a large number of people. Oxford Dictionaries state that an introvert is "a person predominantly concerned with their own thoughts and feelings". The introverted attitude being associated with looking inward, being thoughtful, cautious and socially active with few if any people.

In addition to the attitudes of introversion and extraversion Jung also considers four characteristic functions and how these direct our preferences for perceiving experience. This is well summarised by Jung in 'Man and his Symbols p61' as, " these four functional types correspond to the obvious means by which conscious obtains its orientation to experience. Sensation (i.e. sense perception) tells us that something exists; thinking tells you what it is, feeling tells you whether it is agreeable or not; and intuition tells you whence it comes and where it is going". Someone who has a strong preference for one of these functions and the associated filter of introversion or extraversion will have particular ways of viewing the world that will be identifiable from recognisable character traits.

Someone who has a strong combined preference for sensation and extroversion will be perceived as experiencing things as they are, and see facts in their immediate context. No theory or imagination will be evident as what arouses the sensation experienced and the sensations strength is what is important. Their time focus is present centred as they live ' in the moment'. Fordham (1957) p42, Stevens (2001) p90 & 91 & cognitiveprocesses (2010). Extraverted " sensation types are frequently easy, jolly people with a great capacity for enjoyment, but their danger lies in an over-valuation of the senses Fordham (1957) p42.

Someone who has a strong combined preference for sensation and introversion will be experiencing things as they are and no theory or imagination from this may occur though evaluation in comparison to other experienced sensing will be evident. Due to the preference for introversion little will be externally evident and the sensation experienced and its

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strength is what is important. Their time focus is present centred as they live 'in the moment' and the past as they can readily and accurately recall previous sensations. Fordham (1957) p42, Stevens (2001) p91 & 92 & cognitiveprocesses (2010). Introverted sensation type " are very difficult to understand. They are often overwhelmed by impressions and need time to assimilate them" Fordham (1957) p42.

Someone who has a strong combined preference for thinking and extroversion will be perceived as practical and problem solving, coming to conclusions based on the external conditions and 'objective facts'. Fact based principles and order are what is important. Their time focus is past, present and future centred. Fordham (1957) p37, Stevens (2001) p92 & cognitiveprocesses (2010). The extroverted thinking type " often has a strong sense of duty, and his formula for life may include much that is good, even noble, but his manner of putting it into practice will lack warmth, tolerance and those human qualities". Fordham (1957) p37.

Someone who has a strong combined preference for thinking and introversion will be perceived as liking theories and ideas and using these as a basis for understanding and problem solving. These personal internal theories and ideas, with the 'facts' that support them is what are important. Their time focus is vague. Fordham (1957) p38. Stevens (2001) p93 & cognitiveprocesses (2010). The introverted thinking type " because of his concern with inner realities gives little or no attention to his relationship with the world. He does not notice what is going on or understand how other people think or feel". Fordham (1957) p38. A stereotype for this would be the absent minded professor.

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Someone who has a strong combined preference for feeling and extroversion will be perceived as naturally fitting in with those around them wherever they are. Relationships and connection with others are of the greatest importance. Their time focus is past, present and future centred. Fordham (1957) p40 & 41, Stevens (2001) p93 & 94 & cognitive processes (2010). Of the extroverted feeling type "at best she is sympathetic, helpful and charming; at worst superficial and insincere". Fordham (1957) p41.

Someone who has a strong combined preference for feeling and introversion will be perceived as being inaccessible and hard to understand though harmonious with others. Personal ethics i. e. the internal basis of their relationships are of the greatest importance. Their time focus is vague. Fordham (1957) p40 & 41, Stevens (2001) p93 & 94. & cognitive processes (2010). The introverted feeling type "whilst appearing reserved, they have usually much sympathy for and understanding of intimate friends, or anyone suffering or in need". Fordham (1957) p41.

Someone who has a strong combined preference for intuition and extroversion will be perceived as being able to see future possibilities, innovative and easily bored with routine. Future possibilities are of the greatest importance and their time focus is future centred. Fordham (1957) p43 & 44, Stevens (2001) p95 & cognitive processes (2010). Many possibilities can be held simultaneously 'as if' they are true and the extroverted intuitive type "is no respecter of custom, and is ruthless about other people's feelings or convictions when he is hot on the scent of something new". Fordham (1957) p43.

Someone who has a strong combined preference for intuition and introversion will be perceived as being able to have completely new realizations and/or be absorbed in their own fantasy world and have difficulties in communicating simply with others. Their ideas or insights are of the greatest importance. Their time focus is vague. Fordham (1957) p44, Stevens (2001) p96 & cognitiveprocesses (2010). The introverted intuitive type may come "to experience themselves as belonging to the 'misunderstood genius' category". p44 Stevens (2001) p96.

Though in the above examples only one attitude and one function are considered these four functions are commonly expressed by Jung as the pair of thinking and feeling plus the pair of sensation and intuition. Thinking and feeling are described as 'rational' because they require evaluation based on previous experience, which Jung considered a rational process. Sensation and intuition are considered 'irrational' (or non-rational) because they are not reasoned as in the thinking/feeling pair. Stevens (2001) p86. Being able to naturally use effectively all of the functions is included in Jung's goal of 'Integration'. Fordham (1957) p46. However Jung's idea of these independent pairs of preferences reflecting a person's reality has not been proven by trials. McCrae et al (1989) p20.

As mentioned earlier Jung considered that each pair operates on a continuum with a personality having elements of both opposing attributes. If however an attribute is overly dominant in the pair e. g. thinking, the other attribute i. e. feeling, is proportionally unused. Sharp (1987) p21. A possible outcome is that when the recessive attribute is used, (often when the primary attribute is unable to meet a demand) the recessive attribute does <https://assignbuster.com/describe-and-evaluate-jungs-theory-concerning-personality-types/>

not give a good outcome, possibly due to lack of use. An example of this would be a person that is almost wholly of a 'thinking' type having 'feelings' how something will develop that a third party may not be considered realistic or probable and hence not lead to effective understanding or action. Sharp (1987) p22.

Jung also considered that one function in a pair is often primary with an auxiliary function in the other pair modifying the picture Stevens (2001) p86 and Fordham (1957) p45. This preference of either the 'rational' or 'irrational pair' affects how a personality views the world and this preference may be expressed as another pair. Katharine Cook Briggs and in later with her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers considered strength of preference of either the rational or the non rational to be another pair i. e. 'rational' preference in the pair to be described by 'judge' and the 'irrational' to be described by 'perceive' Wikipedia (2010). This pair plus Jung's original three pairs gave rise to what is widely known as the 'Myers-Briggs type indicator' and result in sixteen personality types. Kroeger (1988) p10-3 & Wikipedia (2010). Though this indicator is widely used some question how much Jung's original idea is distorted by the Myers-Briggs test. McCrae et al (1989) p19.

In Jung's work and particularly the Myer's-Briggs developments there are several implicit and sometimes explicit assumptions. The idea assumes that people may perceive the world and think differently and that all types of perception are equally valuable and positive. Jung principle of opposing pairs do not consider a person's mental or emotional health, functionality, ability, effectiveness or emotional resilience, though this omission is partially

addressed in later work evolved from the Myers-Briggs tests. There appears <https://assignbuster.com/describe-and-evaluate-jungs-theory-concerning-personality-types/>

an assumption that each pair operates independently from each other not in conjunction and/or that a specific (non Jungian) trait may be exhibited in more than one Jungian attribute, McCrae (1989) p23-24 though this view is not supported by others, Boyle 1995).

Implicitly Jung assumes that there is a preference between the functions in the pair and the Myers-Briggs test differentiates to highlight this preference. A healthy individual may be equally effective with thinking or feeling and intuition or sensation and any slight differences will be overly highlighted by the mechanism of testing. Wikipedia (2010). This is also highlighted by in McCrae (1989) p20," The authors of the MBTI, however, have adopted the interpretation that types are mutually exclusive groups of people, and that the cutting point between them is not arbitrary, but a true zero point". In addition the Myer's-Briggs test also makes a comparison between the supposed pair and hence does not look how effective the person is at both attributes only the degree of difference in preference between the two attributes.

That either the rational or the non rational pair is dominant is important to the theory for Jung (and particularly Katherine Briggs) i. e. " according to theory, the dominant function will show a clearer preference than will the auxiliary" Myers & McCauley (1985) p58. However " scores for the dominant are greater than those for the auxiliary in only about half the types" Myers & McCauey (1985) p 60. As this reflects normal distribution the idea of a ' dominant function pair' is not supported. Hence a significant assumption of Jung and Myers-Brigg has been shown not to be supported upon investigation.

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Fordham (1957) p88 states that " In Jung's view every neurosis has an aim; it is an attempt to compensate for a one sided attitude to life ... drawing attention to a side of personality that has been neglected or repressed". Taking this view into account and extending the use of Jung's model it is likely that different expressions of psychological disturbance or mental health issues may be associated with particular character types. It is also possible however that a one-sided attitude to life causes an increased level of tension around the area of imbalance and this tension is a factor in psychological disturbance and/or mental illness. With this objective considering the Jungian ' shadow' associated with each character type and attitude is useful. This ' shadow' reflects the weakest functional aspects and hence these attributes may be expected to be found in the associated psychological illness. Stevens (2001)

Someone who has a strong combined preference for sensation and extroversion will have a shadow of intuition and introversion. The lack of development in these attitudes when they are used may cause inner events to elicit negative and often inaccurate intuitions. Hence this type may become hostile or paranoid for little obvious reason. Stevens (2001) p91. Because this belief may be expressed in an extroverted and sensation based manner this may lead to violent behaviour. Someone who has a strong combined preference for sensation and introversion will have a shadow of intuition and extroversion. The lack of development in these attitudes, mean that when they are used the person tends to a negative view and often see many dark possibilities. Hence this type may become paranoid. Stevens

(2001) p92. Because this may be expressed in an introverted and sensation based manner they may withdraw from the world around them.

Someone who has a strong combined preference for thinking and extroversion will have a shadow of feeling and introversion. The lack of development in these attitudes may lead to feelings being poorly selected and/or expressed. They are not aware of the feelings of others and personal relationships are taken for granted Stevens (2001) p92. Someone who has a strong combined preference for thinking and introversion will have a shadow of feeling and extroversion. Due to the lack of development in these attitudes the feelings are mainly unconscious. When these feelings are triggered they may be expressed unexpectedly and/or in an unexpected direction Stevens (2001) p 92

Someone who has a strong combined preference for feeling and extroversion will have a shadow of thinking and introversion. The lack of development in these attitudes may lead to a peculiarly negative and simplistic thinking. If ideologies are accepted they may be followed fanatically as alternative personal (introverted) ideas and critical thinking is not available. If a person of this type breaks down it may result in hysteria or mania Stevens (2001) p 94. This may be considered as an extroverted expression of their feelings Port (2010). Someone who has a strong combined preference for feeling and introversion will have a shadow of thinking and extroversion. The lack of development in these functions when they are used may also lead to a peculiarly negative thinking. As this is linked to an underdeveloped extroversion the focus is on external objective facts which they are unable to process as thinking is underdeveloped and so they get lost in the detail. If a <https://assignbuster.com/describe-and-evaluate-jungs-theory-concerning-personality-types/>

person of this type breaks down in may result in depression Stevens (2001) p 95 which may be considered as an internalised perception and expression of their feelings Port (2010).

Someone who has a strong combined preference for intuition and extroversion will have a shadow of sensation and introversion. The lack of development in these means that they have little awareness of their own body (introverted) and may misinterpret its messages (sensation). Hence this type may become hypochondriacs or follow 'new' exercise or diets which may be considered an extroverted and intuitive response. Stevens (2001) p95 &96. Someone who has a strong combined preference for intuition and introversion will have a shadow of sensation and extroversion. As these functions are underdeveloped they will exist mainly in the unconscious and the person will have little connection (sensation) with the world around them (extroversion). Hence this type may become schizoid Stevens (2001) p96... The schizoid view, with many and multiple responses may be considered as an intuitive and introverted response. Port (2010).

From the above and background reading it appears that psychological disturbance is particularly linked to introversion as a personality type. The definition of psychosis is " a severe mental disorder in which thought and emotions are so impaired that contact is lost with external reality" Oxford (2008). Hence the loss of external reality, this turning inward defines psychosis as an introverted trait. More general online search's also highlighted a link between introversion psychological illness e. g. " Schizophrenia may be associated with a high degree of introversion in the client" Eysenck (1997) p12 &14 and " Autism is introverted schizophrenia" <https://assignbuster.com/describe-and-evaluate-jungs-theory-concerning-personality-types/>

<http://www.pediatricservices.com/prof/prof-26.htm> . “ Introversion is indispensable to narcissism” and “ So although introversion per se is by definition not pathological, the use made of it can be pathological”.

<http://samvak.tripod.com/narcissismglance.html> . Interestingly the background reading did not similarly link extroversion to any specific psychological disturbance.

A persons attitude and functional preferences and hence the perceived personality type are not constant. They may change both due to the passage of time and in specific situations e. g. If the person is undertaking a series of tests for a job when they are asked the questions this may emphasise the thinking preference and the goal of creating a good impression to get a job invokes an extrovert preference. I. e. results can be highly situational and hence not constant over time and environment. This agrees with my personal experience as I have undertaken Myers-Briggs type tests on at least five occasions (some in close succession) and received varying answers relating to my personality type i. e. ISTJ, ESTJ, INFJ and INTJ. In my case the preference for a given temperament are quite low (e. g. 60/40 or less) with any but J/P which is around 73/27. This variation of outcome causes me to query the consistency and hence the effectiveness of the test either in the theoretical concept or in the mechanism of testing. This variance is in contrast with Boyle (1995) finds that over intervals from 5 weeks to 21 months the median tests re-test reliability for MBTI may be up to 78% depending on the test forms used.

I feel that the idea of personality types is useful to explain, without criticism, that different people experience the world differently and for introducing that <https://assignbuster.com/describe-and-evaluate-jungs-theory-concerning-personality-types/>

idea to people. The idea of character types also highlight what areas for important growth opportunities a person may have in their life. I feel this usage reflects how Jung expressed the idea of character types for insight within the boundaries of a therapy session and to determine areas for exploration and development with the client. Jung's idea that a particular pair of functions has a dominant affect appears incorrect and other important implicit assumptions e. g. the actual existence of a pair of opposing functions though theoretically useful appears untested.

From general reading there appears a casual though indeterminate link between introversion and psychological disturbance. I think that specific character types may be associated with displaying particular forms of psychological disturbance. I am not aware however of the differences in the quantity or degree of psychological disturbance being associated with a particular character type.

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