

TYPE & TRAIT THEORIES

IMP. TERMS

- ➡ **Personality:** A person's **unique and relatively stable behavior patterns**; the **consistency of** who you are, have been, and will become.
- ➡ **Character:** Personal characteristics that have been **judged or evaluated**.
- ➡ **Temperament:** **Hereditary aspects of personality**, including sensitivity, moods, irritability, and adaptability.
- ➡ **Personality Trait:** **Stable qualities that a person shows in most situations**.
- ➡ **Personality Type:** **People who have several traits in common**.

The 8 Characteristics of Traits

1. Do exist
2. Are more generalized than habits
3. May determine behaviour
4. Are established by systematic observation
5. Only relatively dependent of each other
6. Not to be confused with character as character is personality evaluated and personality is character devaluated
7. Consistencies are real
8. Considered in relation to the rest of the population or the possessor's personality




Sheldon's Somatotype (1940)	Character	Shape	Picture
Endomorph [viscerotonic]	relaxed, sociable, tolerant, comfort- loving, peaceful	plump, buxom, developed visceral structure	
Mesomorph [somatotonic]	active, assertive, vigorous, combative	muscular	
Ectomorph [cerebrotonic]	quiet, fragile, restrained, non- assertive, sensitive	lean, delicate, poor muscles	

FIGURE 7.1

The body types and personality characteristics proposed by Sheldon has not been supported by research, but his work shows another attempt to classify personality according to traits.

Endomorphic

Sociable,
relaxed,
affectionate,
even-tempered



Mesomorphic

Energetic,
competitive,
aggressive,
bold



Ectomorphic

Inhibited,
apprehensive,
intellectual,
introverted,
self-conscious



Traits: An enduring characteristic of a person's behaviour
e. g. sociable/unsociable

Types: A class of individuals with common characteristic
or pattern of characteristics (physical/psychological) e.
g. Sheldon (1942) *Varieties of Temperament*

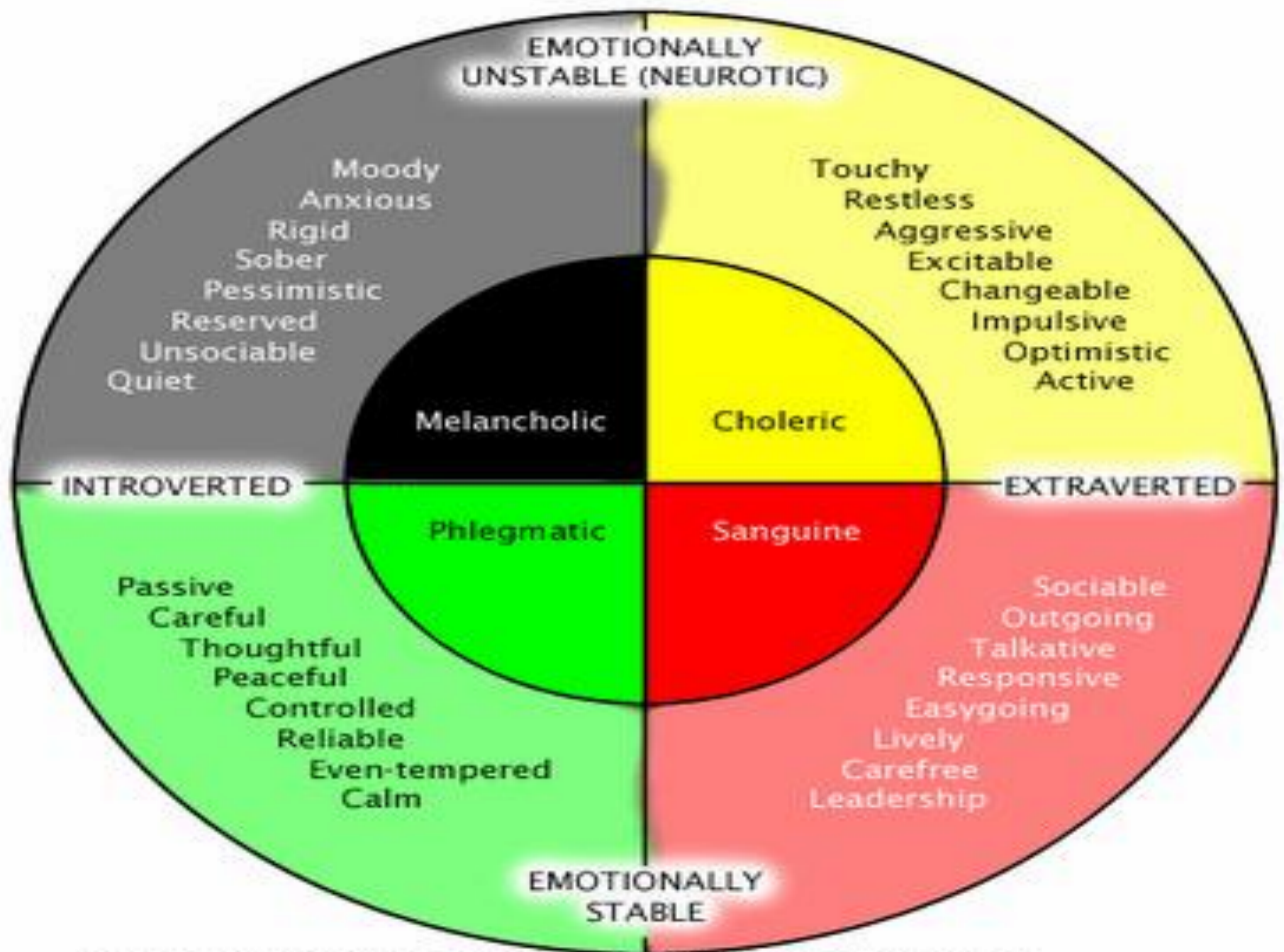
Personality based on *humors (Temperaments)*:

Sanguine (blood): Warm-hearted, optimistic

Melancholic (black bile): Sad, depressed, anxious

Choleric (yellow bile): Quick tempered, angry, assertive

Phlegmatic (phlegm): Slow, lethargic, calm



Eysenck, H.J and Eysenck, M.W. *Personality and Individual Differences*. Plenum Publishing, 1958.

Gordon Allport's Personality Theory



- Rejected Psychoanalysis & Behaviorism. Known as Trait Psychologist

Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment. (pg. 48; Allport, 1937)

Dynamic Organization: According to Allport, personality involves active organization, which is **constantly evolving and changing, and which involves motivation and self-regulation**. Thus, it is dynamic, not static. Organization also brings with it the possibility of disorganization, and the resulting abnormalities associated with personality disorders and/or mental illness.

Psychophysical Systems: The term “psychophysical” is meant to remind us **that personality reflects both mind and body; the total organism**. The systems include **habits, attitudes, sentiments, and dispositions of various kinds. Most important, however, are the traits, which may be either latent or active.**

Determine: In Allport's view, “personality *is* something and *does* something.” Personality is not synonymous with behavior, but instead, **it underlies it and it comes from within the individual**. The systems mentioned above can be viewed as determining tendencies.

Unique: Naturally, each adjustment by an individual is unique in time, space, and quality. However, Allport mentioned this aspect in anticipation of his later discussion of individual vs. common traits (see below).

Adjustments to His Environment: Personality, according to Allport, is a mode of survival, and it has functional and evolutionary significance. We can, and do, seek mastery over our environment (both behavioral and geographic). Unfortunately, once again, the possibility exists for **maladaptive behavior that arises under abnormal conditions (such as an abusive home environment).**

In 1961, Allport wrote an updated and substantially revised version of his personality text entitled ***Pattern and Growth in Personality.*** He made only one significant change to his definition of personality, which reflected a greater emphasis **on cognitive processes.** He changed the phrase “unique adjustments to his environment” to **“characteristic behavior and thought”** (pg. 28; Allport, 1961). The phrase “behavior and thought” was intended to indicate that individuals do more than simply adjust to their environment; they also reflect on it. **Thus, the human intellect is an important factor in the manner in which we seek mastery over our environment and, indeed, over our lives.**

- ***Allport's Concept of Trait:** Consistent reaction patterns of an individual can be predicted from knowing person's personality traits.
- **Trait:** basic limited set of adjective dimensions which describe and scale individuals: **18,000 adjectives (Allport)**
- **-Individual traits VS Common traits :** Allport made a crucial distinction between two types of traits that exist in people:
- **Common traits** are those characteristics that are shared by many people and are used to compare individuals to each other. These include traits like “extroversion” or “neuroticism,” which may vary in intensity from person to person but are still present in most individuals. Common traits help psychologists categorize people in broad terms, making them useful in research and comparison.
- On the other hand, **personal traits are unique to an individual.** Personal traits are shaped by the individual's unique life experiences, making them crucial in understanding someone's deeper personality. For Allport, it was the combination of these personal traits that gave a person their distinctive personality profile.

- **Allport's Trait Theory of Personality:** Allport began developing this theory by going through a dictionary and noting every term he found that described a personality trait. After compiling a list of **4,504 different traits**, he organized **Personal Dispositions** into three different trait categories (Allport, 1937), including:
- **Cardinal traits:** These are traits that dominate an individual's entire personality. Cardinal traits are thought to be quite rare. 1-Master trait)
- **Central traits:** Common traits that make up our personalities. Traits such as kindness, honesty, and friendliness are all examples of central traits. (**Central** Dispositions ,5-10)
- **Secondary traits:** These are traits that are only present under certain conditions and circumstances. An example of a secondary trait would be getting nervous before delivering a speech to a large group of people. Traits that are less conspicuous, less generalized, less consistent, e.g. preferences, attitudes

**Gordon
Allport
(1897-1967)**

**Identified
1000's of
personality
traits
grouping
them into 3
categories**

Cardinal Traits

Central Traits

**Secondary
Traits**



Idiographic method vs. Nomothetic method

- **Idiographic methods** take into account each person's uniqueness e.g.: **interviews, behavioral observations, Q-sorts, flexible self-reports**-identifies the differences between people-takes into account each person's personal disposition.
- The **nomothetic approach** to personality looks at what people have in **common with each other**. It comes from the Greek word ***nomos***, which means 'law,' and the nomothetic approach is interested in **finding patterns or laws of human personality**.
- **Proprium:** The Proprium was a term coined by Allport which represents the **positive, creative, growth-seeking, and forward-moving quality of human Nature**.
- Core of the personality
- One's own or one's self
- Under the layers of our human psyche is an irreducible (complex) core that defines who we are.

- Allport (1937) believes that personality is **biologically determined at birth, and shaped by a person's environmental experience.**
- We must also consider the influence and interaction of nature **(biology, genetics, etc.) and nurture (the environment, upbringing)** with respect to personality development.
- Allport emphasized the importance of **studying individuals holistically** and understanding the complexity of human personality beyond mere trait labels.

Process of Becoming (Self/ Proprium Development)

1. **Sense of Bodily Self (1st year)** – distinguishing self from other objects.
2. **Sense of Self-Identity (2nd year)** – recognition of self as a distinct point of reference.
3. **Sense of Self-Esteem (3rd Year)** – feeling of pride from accomplishments.
4. **Sense of Self-Extension (4th Year)** – other people and possessions recognized as extensions of the self.
5. **Self-Image (5-6 year)** – sense of how others view him/her.
6. **Sense of Self as Rational Coper (6-12 year)** – solving problems through rational thought.
7. **Propriate Striving** (Twelfth year through adolescence) – making long-term plans and goals – a sense of purpose
8. **Emergence of self as knower** (adulthood): Transcends and synthesizes all the propriate functions.
 - **the subjective self** :The unique human capacity for **self-recognition and self-consciousness**

TABLE 7.1 The development of the *proprium*

STAGE	DEVELOPMENT
1. <i>Bodily self</i>	Stages 1–3 emerge during the first three years. In this stage, infants become aware of their own existence and distinguish their own bodies from objects in the environment.
2. <i>Self-identity</i>	Children realize that their identity remains intact despite the many changes that are taking place.
3. <i>Self-esteem</i>	Children learn to take pride in their accomplishments.
4. <i>Extension of self</i>	Stages 4 and 5 emerge during the fourth through sixth year. In this stage, children come to recognize the objects and people that are part of their own world.
5. <i>Self-image</i>	Children develop actual and idealized images of themselves and their behavior and become aware of satisfying (or failing to satisfy) parental expectations.
6. <i>Self as a rational copier</i>	Stage 6 develops during ages 6–12. Children begin to apply reason and logic to the solution of everyday problems.
7. <i>Propriate striving</i>	Stage 7 develops during adolescence. Young people begin to formulate long-range goals and plans.
<i>Adulthood</i>	Normal, mature adults are functionally autonomous, independent of childhood motives. They function rationally in the present and consciously create their own lifestyles.

- A special type of psychological maturity (as opposed to genetic/biological maturity) takes place, which Allport termed **functional autonomy**. Functional autonomy regards adult motives as varied, and as self-sustaining systems that are unique to the individual. They may have arisen out of **developmental processes and experiences**, but they are independent of them.
- Allport settled on a list of six ideal characteristics of the mature personality. (Allport, 1961).
- **Extension of the Sense of Self:** The mature person focuses on more than simple needs or drive-reduction; they develop strong interests outside of themselves. By truly participating in life, they give direction to their life.
- **Warm Relating of Self to Others:** The mature person is marked by two kinds of warmth. On one hand, through self-extension they are capable of great intimacy in their capacity for love, whether it involves

family members or friends. On the other hand, they avoid gossipy, intrusive, or possessive relationships with other people. They respect other persons as persons, they express tolerance and the so-called “**democratic character structure.**”

- **Emotional Security (Self-Acceptance):** Mature individuals demonstrate emotional poise; they have the ability to avoid overreacting. Especially important, according to Allport, is that they possess the quality of “**frustration tolerance.**”
- **Realistic Perception, Skills, and Assignments:** Generally speaking, the mature person is in close contact with what we call the “real world.” They see things, including people, for what they really are.
- **Self-Objectification – Insight and Humor:** In describing this characteristic, Allport quoted Socrates: “know thyself.” In Allport’s psychology classes, 96 percent of his students thought they had average or better than average insight (by definition, only 50 percent can be above the average). **So people think they have good insight, but this is often not the case.** There does appear to be a high correlation between insight and humor. **People who truly know themselves are able to look at themselves objectively, and to laugh at their own failings and mistakes.**
- **The Unifying Philosophy of Life:** According to Allport, humor may be essential, but it is never sufficient. Maturity **requires a sense of life’s purpose. This sense of purpose can be found in having a clear direction to one’s life, in a strong orientation to values, within one’s religious sentiment, or through a generic conscience.** Allport found it quite interesting that many people consider their desire to serve society was a more important generic motive than the fulfillment of any sense of religious or spiritual duty. He concluded that an integrated sense of moral obligation can provide a unifying philosophy of life regardless of whether or not it is tied to one’s religious sentiments.

In Summary:

The Healthy, Mature Adult Personality

- Capacity for self- extension
- Capacity for warm human interaction
- Demonstration of emotional security and self-acceptance
- Demonstration of realistic perception
- Demonstration of self-objectifications
- Demonstration of unifying philosophy of life
(may be religion, or anything that gives meaning to one's life)

Conscience and Religion

- Must Conscience:
- Ought Conscience:

Religion was very important to Allport as he believed that it characterizes a healthy personality.

Intrinsic Religion- healthy religion
Extrinsic Religion- unhealthy religion

Prejudice and Discrimination

- Prejudice is an *attitude* that is faulty
- Discrimination is a *behaviors* associated with negative thoughts and feelings

Stereotyping

- The belief that peoples from a certain group posses a certain trait
- natural flow of cognitive processes
- Remnant of slavery and legacy of oppression

The Study of Values

Allport and two colleagues developed an objective self-report assessment test called the Study of Values (Allport, Vernon, & Lindzey, 1960). They proposed that our personal values are the basis of our unifying philosophy of life, which is one of the six criteria for a mature, healthy personality.

Our values are personality traits and represent strongly held interests and motivations. Allport believed that everyone possesses some degree of each type of value, but one or two of these will be more dominant in the personality. The categories of values are as follows.

1. *Theoretical values* are concerned with the discovery of truth and are characterized by an empirical, intellectual, and rational approach to life.
2. *Economic values* are concerned with the useful and practical.
3. *Aesthetic values* relate to artistic experiences and to form, harmony, and grace.
4. *Social values* reflect human relationships, altruism, and philanthropy.
5. *Political values* deal with personal power, influence, and prestige in all endeavors, not just in political activities.
6. *Religious values* are concerned with the mystical and with understanding the universe as a whole.

Assessment in Allport's Theory

Allport wrote more about personality assessment techniques than most other theorists did. In his popular book *Pattern and Growth in Personality* (1961), he noted that, despite the existence of many approaches to assessment, there was no single best technique.

Personality is so complex that to evaluate it we must employ many techniques. He listed 11 major methods:

- Constitutional and physiological diagnosis
- Cultural setting, membership, role
- Personal documents and case studies
- Self-appraisal
- Conduct analysis
- Ratings
- Tests and scales
- Projective techniques
- Depth analysis
- Expressive behavior
- Synoptic procedures (combining information from several sources in a synopsis)

Allport relied heavily on the personal-document technique and the Study of Values. He also observed expressive behavior, which we will discuss in the section on research.

The Personal-Document Technique

The **personal-document technique** involves examining diaries, autobiographies, letters, literary compositions, and other samples of a person's written or spoken records to determine the number and kinds of personality traits.

*Evaluation

- Empirical research

*Criticism

- Lack of scientific rigor

- Circularity

- Absence of theory

*Contributions

- Original concepts and Methodologies

- Refreshingly new way of viewing personality

As the individual matures, the bond with past is broken.