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THE PERSONALITY PROFILE OF CHINA'S EMPRESS WU ZETIAN

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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¹ Ruoyue Wang collected the data for this study as part of her graduate thesis in the Department of Psychology at Capital Normal University in Beijing, China (see Appendix A: Thesis Abstract) and wrote parts of the introductory and concluding sections of the paper.

² Yunyiyi Chen trained Ruoyue Wang in data collection procedures and assisted with data analysis.

³ Aubrey Immelman, to whom correspondence should be addressed, was the primary author of the research report.

Abstract

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An Exploratory Study

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This paper presents the results of an indirect assessment of the personality of Empress Wu Zetian, *de facto* ruler of China from 665 to 705, from the conceptual perspective of personologist Theodore Millon.

Psychodiagnostically relevant data about Empress Wu were collected from biographical sources and media reports and synthesized into a personality profile using the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC), which yields 34 normal and maladaptive personality classifications congruent with *DSM-III-R*, *DSM-IV*, and *DSM-5*.

The personality profile yielded by the MIDC was analyzed in accordance with interpretive guidelines provided in the MIDC and Millon Index of Personality Styles manuals. Wu's primary personality patterns were found to be Dominant/controlling (a measure of aggressiveness) and Ambitious/self-serving (a measure of narcissism), complemented by a secondary Dauntless/adventurous pattern (a measure of unconventionality or risk taking) and subsidiary Distrusting/suspicious features.

In summary, Wu's personality composite can be characterized as that of a *dominant, confident nonconformist*.

Dominant individuals enjoy the power to direct others and to evoke obedience and respect; they are tough and unsentimental and often make effective leaders. *Ambitious* individuals are bold, competitive, and self-assured; they easily assume leadership roles, expect others to recognize their special qualities, and sometimes act as though entitled. *Dauntless* individuals tend to flout tradition, dislike following routine, and sometimes act impulsively or irresponsibly.

Introduction

This paper reports the results of a psychodiagnostic case study of Empress Wu Zetian, *de facto* ruler of China from 665 to 705. The findings are preliminary in view of the exploratory nature of the study.

Wu Zetian is a unique figure in Chinese history — an exceptional female politician from the Tang Dynasty to the Wuzhou Dynasty and one of the most influential women in the history of China, if not the world. She married twice: first to Li Shimin, Emperor Taizong of Tang; and subsequently to his son Li Zhi, Emperor Gaozong of Tang. She proceeded step by step from “lady of talents” to empress consort to empress.

Wu Zetian’s position in the Tang Dynasty was critical, with remarkable political achievements. During her reign, many policies of the Tang Dynasty were continued and various systems were fully developed, laying a solid foundation for the vigorous development of the political, economic, and cultural advancement of the Tang Dynasty — for example, the imperial examination system, the rejuvenation of farming, the prosperity of the country’s economy and culture, the destruction of the Turks by the Tang army, suppressing the Khitans, and conquering Tibet, which expanded the territory of the Tang Dynasty to 12.41 million square kilometers — the largest Han Dynasty in history, with a sphere of influence reaching as far as the Caspian Sea (Liu, 2013). Wu Zetian promoted and put many talented and competent officials, including Yao Chong and Song Jing, in essential positions during the Kaiyuan heyday period of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang, Li Longji (Li, 1985).

Conceptually, the study is informed by Theodore Millon’s (1969, 1986a, 1986b, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1996, 2003; Millon & Davis, 2000; Millon & Everly, 1985) model of personality as adapted (Immelman, 1993, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2005) for the study of personality in politics.

Personality may be concisely defined as:

a complex pattern of deeply embedded psychological characteristics that are largely nonconscious and not easily altered, expressing themselves automatically in almost every facet of functioning. Intrinsic and pervasive, these traits emerge from a complicated matrix of biological dispositions and experiential learnings, and ultimately comprise the individual’s distinctive pattern of perceiving, feeling, thinking, coping, and behaving. (Millon, 1996, p. 4)

Greenstein (1992) makes a compelling case for studying personality in government and politics: “Political institutions and processes operate through human agency. It would be remarkable if they were *not* influenced by the properties that distinguish one individual from another” (p. 124).

That perspective provides the context for the current paper, which presents an analysis of the personality of Wu Zetian as perceived through the lens of biographical and historical reports.

The methodology employed in this study involves the construction of a theoretically grounded personality profile derived from empirical analysis of biographical source materials (see Immelman, 2003, 2005, 2014).

A comprehensive review of Millon's personological model and its applicability to political personality has been provided elsewhere (e.g., Immelman, 1993, 2003, 2005; Immelman & Millon, 2003). Briefly, Millon's model encompasses eight attribute domains: expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, mood/temperament, self-image, regulatory mechanisms, object representations, and morphologic organization (see Table 1).

Table 1
Millon's Eight Attribute Domains

Attribute	Description
Expressive behavior	The individual's characteristic behavior; how the individual typically appears to others; what the individual knowingly or unknowingly reveals about him- or herself; what the individual wishes others to think or to know about him or her.
Interpersonal conduct	How the individual typically interacts with others; the attitudes that underlie, prompt, and give shape to these actions; the methods by which the individual engages others to meet his or her needs; how the individual copes with social tensions and conflicts.
Cognitive style	How the individual focuses and allocates attention, encodes and processes information, organizes thoughts, makes attributions, and communicates reactions and ideas to others.
Mood/temperament	How the individual typically displays emotion; the predominant character of an individual's affect and the intensity and frequency with which he or she expresses it.
Self-image	The individual's perception of self-as-object or the manner in which the individual overtly describes him- or herself.
Regulatory mechanisms	The individual's characteristic mechanisms of self-protection, need gratification, and conflict resolution.
Object representations	The inner imprint left by the individual's significant early experiences with others; the structural residue of significant past experiences, composed of memories, attitudes, and affects that underlie the individual's perceptions of and reactions to ongoing events and serve as a substrate of dispositions for perceiving and reacting to life's ongoing events.
Morphologic organization	The overall architecture that serves as a framework for the individual's psychic interior; the structural strength, interior congruity, and functional efficacy of the personality system (i.e., ego strength).

Note. From *Disorders of Personality: DSM-IV and Beyond* (pp. 141–146) by T. Millon, 1996, New York: Wiley; *Toward a New Personology: An Evolutionary Model* (chapter 5) by T. Millon, 1990, New York: Wiley; and *Personality and Its Disorders: A Biosocial Learning Approach* (p. 32) by T. Millon and G. S. Everly, Jr., 1985, New York: Wiley. Copyright © 1996, © 1990, © 1985 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Adapted by permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and Theodore Millon.

Method

Materials

The materials consisted of biographical sources and the personality inventory employed to systematize and synthesize diagnostically relevant information collected from the literature on Wu Zetian.

Sources of Data

Diagnostic information pertaining to Wu was collected from a broad array of reports that offered diagnostically relevant psychobiographical information (Lei, 2008; Meng, 2008; Yuan & Tan, 2019; Xin, 2019; Wang, 1990; Zang, 2012).

Personality Inventory

The assessment instrument, the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC; Immelman, 2015), was compiled and adapted from Millon's (1969, 1986b; 1990, 1996; Millon & Everly, 1985) prototypal features and diagnostic criteria for normal personality styles and their pathological variants. Information concerning the construction, administration, scoring, and interpretation of the MIDC is provided in the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria manual (Immelman, 2014). The 12-scale (see Table 2) instrument taps the first five "noninferential" (Millon, 1990, p. 157) attribute domains previously listed in Table 1.

The 12 MIDC scales correspond to major personality patterns posited by Millon (1994, 1996), which are congruent with the syndromes described in the revised third edition, fourth edition, and fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III-R, DSM-IV, and DSM-5)* of the American Psychiatric Association (APA; 1987, 1994, 2013) and coordinated with the normal personality styles in which these disorders are rooted, as described by Millon and Everly (1985), Millon (1994), Oldham and Morris (1995), and Strack (1997). Scales 1 through 8 (comprising 10 scales and subscales) have three gradations (a, b, c) yielding 30 personality variants, whereas Scales 9 and 0 have two gradations (d, e) yielding four variants, for a total of 34 personality designations, or types. Table 2 displays the full taxonomy.

Diagnostic Procedure

The diagnostic procedure, termed *psychodiagnostic meta-analysis*, can be conceptualized as a three-part process: first, an *analysis* phase (data collection) during which source materials are reviewed and analyzed to extract and code diagnostically relevant content; second, a *synthesis* phase (scoring and interpretation) during which the unifying framework provided by the MIDC prototypal features, keyed for attribute domain and personality pattern, is employed to classify the diagnostically relevant information extracted in phase 1; and finally, an *evaluation* phase (inference) during which theoretically grounded descriptions, explanations, inferences, and predictions are extrapolated from Millon's theory of personality based on the personality profile constructed in phase 2 (see Immelman, 2003, 2005, 2014 for a more detailed account of the procedure).

Table 2
Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria: Scales and Gradations

Scale 1A:	Dominant pattern a. Asserting b. Controlling c. Aggressive (Sadistic; <i>DSM-III-R</i> , Appendix A)
Scale 1B:	Dauntless pattern a. Adventurous b. Dissenting c. Aggrandizing (Antisocial; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.7)
Scale 2:	Ambitious pattern a. Confident b. Self-serving c. Exploitative (Narcissistic; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.81)
Scale 3:	Outgoing pattern a. Congenial b. Gregarious c. Impulsive (Histrionic; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.50)
Scale 4:	Accommodating pattern a. Cooperative b. Agreeable c. Submissive (Dependent; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.6)
Scale 5A:	Aggrieved pattern a. Unpresuming b. Self-denying c. Self-defeating (<i>DSM-III-R</i> , Appendix A)
Scale 5B:	Contentious pattern a. Resolute b. Oppositional c. Negativistic (Passive-aggressive; <i>DSM-III-R</i> , 301.84)
Scale 6:	Conscientious pattern a. Respectful b. Dutiful c. Compulsive (Obsessive-compulsive; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.4)
Scale 7:	Reticent pattern a. Circumspect b. Inhibited c. Withdrawn (Avoidant; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.82)
Scale 8:	Retiring pattern a. Reserved b. Aloof c. Solitary (Schizoid; <i>DSM-5</i> , 301.20)
Scale 9:	Distrusting pattern d. Suspicious e. Paranoid (<i>DSM-5</i> , 301.0)
Scale 0:	Erratic pattern d. Unstable e. Borderline (<i>DSM-5</i> , 301.83)

Note. Equivalent *DSM* terminology and codes are specified in parentheses.

Results

The analysis of the data includes a summary of descriptive statistics yielded by the MIDC scoring procedure, the MIDC profile for Wu Zetian, diagnostic classification of the subject, and the clinical interpretation of significant MIDC scale elevations derived from the diagnostic procedure.

Wu received 33 affirmative (and 14 equivocal/affirmative) endorsements on the 170-item MIDC (see Appendix B). Judging from endorsement-rate deviations from the mean (see Table 3), data on Wu's expressive behavior (10 endorsements) were most easily obtained and may be overrepresented in the data set, whereas data on her self-image (each with 5 endorsements) were most difficult to obtain and may be underrepresented in the data set.

Descriptive statistics for Wu's MIDC ratings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
MIDC Item Endorsement Rate by Attribute Domain for Wu Zetian

Attribute domain	Diagnostic criteria (Items)	
	Present	Possible
Expressive behavior	10	11
Interpersonal conduct	6	10
Cognitive style	6	9
Mood/temperament	6	9
Self-image	5	8
Sum	33	47
Mean	6.6	9.4
Standard deviation	1.7	1.0

Wu's MIDC scale scores are reported in Table 4. The MIDC profile yielded by Wu's raw scores is displayed in Figure 1.⁴

⁴ See Table 2 for scale names. Solid horizontal lines on the profile form signify cut-off scores between adjacent scale gradations. For Scales 1–8, scores of 5 through 9 signify the *presence* (gradation *a*) of the personality pattern in question; scores of 10 through 23 indicate a *prominent* (gradation *b*) variant; and scores of 24 to 30 indicate an exaggerated, *mildly dysfunctional* (gradation *c*) variation of the pattern. For Scales 9 and 0, scores of 20 through 35 indicate a *moderately disturbed* syndrome and scores of 36 through 45 a *markedly disturbed* syndrome.

Table 4
MIDC Scale Scores for Wu Zetian

Scale	Personality pattern	Lower	Upper
1A	Dominant: Asserting–Controlling–Aggressive (Sadistic)	15	21
1B	Dauntless: Adventurous–Dissenting–Aggrandizing (Antisocial)	6	11
2	Ambitious: Confident–Self-serving–Exploitative (Narcissistic)	13	15
3	Outgoing: Congenial–Gregarious–Impulsive (Histrionic)	1	7
4	Accommodating: Cooperative–Agreeable–Submissive (Dependent)	0	0
5A	Aggrieved: Unpresuming–Self-denying–Self-defeating (Masochistic)	0	0
5B	Contentious: Resolute–Oppositional–Negativistic (Passive-aggressive)	3	4
6	Conscientious: Respectful–Dutiful–Compulsive (Obsessive-compulsive)	3	3
7	Reticent: Circumspect–Inhibited–Withdrawn (Avoidant)	0	0
8	Retiring: Reserved–Aloof–Solitary (Schizoid)	0	0
	Subtotal for basic personality scales	41	61
9	Distrusting: Suspicious–Paranoid (Paranoid)	4	16
0	Erratic: Unstable–Borderline (Borderline)	4	4
	Full-scale total	49	81

Note. Table 4 depicts the 12 personality patterns along with their normal, exaggerated, and pathological scale gradations and equivalent *DSM* terminology (in parentheses). Interpretation of the data is based on scale scores derived from affirmative MIDC item endorsements only, specified in the column labeled *Lower*. (The column labeled *Upper* displays scale scores based on the sum of affirmative and equivocal/affirmative endorsements.)

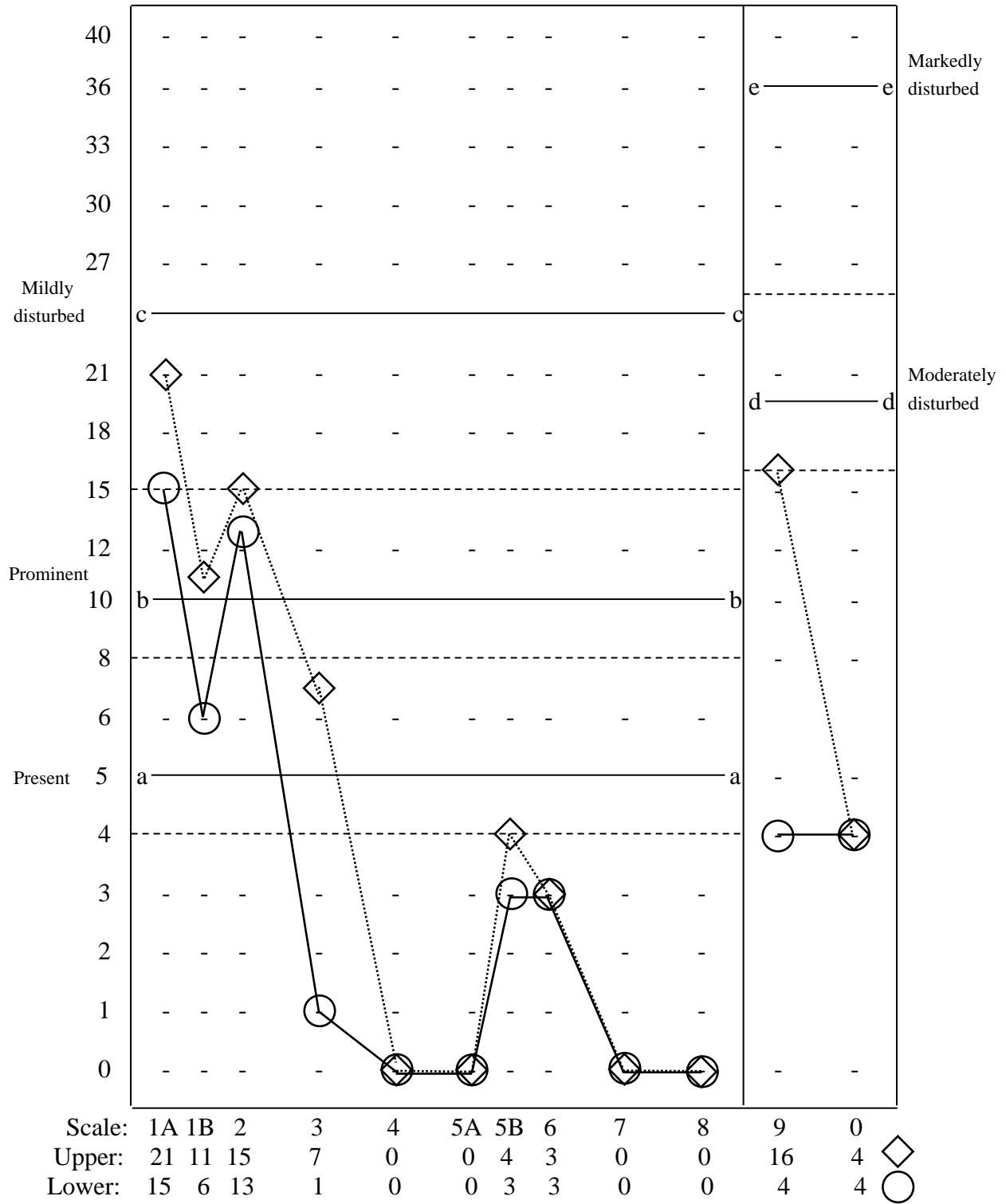
Wu's most elevated scales are Scale 1A (Dominant), with a score of 15, and Scale 2 (Ambitious), with a score of 13. In addition, Wu obtained a secondary elevation on Scale 1B (Dauntless), with a score of 6. In addition, there is equivocal evidence for minor subsidiary tendencies on Scale 5B (Contentious), Scale 9 (Distrusting) and possibly Scale 6 (Conscientious).

The primary Scale 1A and Scale 2 elevations are both within the *prominent* (10–23) range and the secondary Scale 1B elevation is within the *present* (5–9) range. The Scale 5B and Scale 6 scores failed to reach the lower threshold of the *present* (5–9) range, though the upper limit of the Scale 5B score is equivocally of diagnostic relevance, as is Scale 9. No other scale score is psychodiagnostically significant.

Based on the cut-off score guidelines in the MIDC manual, all of Wu's scale elevations (see Figure 1) are within normal limits, though the prominence of her Scale 1A and Scale 2 elevations may account for circumscribed difficulties in some areas of adaptive functioning. In terms of MIDC scale gradation (see Table 2 and Figure 1) criteria, supplemented by clinical judgment, Wu personality composite was classified as primarily Dominant/controlling and Ambitious/self-serving, complemented by secondary Dauntless/adventurous patterns and possible Contentious/resolute and Distrusting/suspicious tendencies.⁵

⁵ In each case, the label preceding the slash signifies the *categorical* personality pattern, whereas the label following the slash indicates the specific scale gradation, or personality type, on the *dimensional* continuum; see Table 2.

Figure 1. Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria: Profile for Zetian Wu



Discussion

The discussion of the results examines Zetian Wu's MIDC scale elevations from the perspective of Millon's (1994, 1996; Millon & Davis, 2000) model of personality, supplemented by the theoretically congruent portraits of Oldham and Morris (1995) and Strack (1997). The discussion concludes with a brief synthesis of the practical political implications of Wu's personality profile.

Few people exhibit personality patterns in "pure" or prototypical form; more often, individual personalities represent a blend of two or more primary and secondary orientations. With her moderately elevated Scale 1A, Wu emerged from the assessment as primarily a *controlling* type, a normal, adaptive variant of the Dominant pattern. Wu's secondary elevation on Scale 2 (Ambitious) and subsidiary elevation on Scale 1A (Dauntless) reflect adaptive levels of, respectively, self-confidence and adventurousness (or fearlessness).

Scale 1A: The Dominant Pattern

The Dominant pattern, as do all personality patterns, occurs on a continuum ranging from normal to maladaptive. At the well-adjusted pole⁶ are strong-willed, commanding, assertive personalities. Slightly exaggerated Dominant features⁷ occur in forceful, intimidating, controlling personalities. In its most deeply ingrained, inflexible form,⁸ the Dominant pattern displays itself in domineering, belligerent, aggressive behavior patterns that may be consistent with a clinical diagnosis of sadistic personality disorder.

Normal, adaptive variants of the Dominant pattern (i.e., asserting and controlling types) correspond to Oldham and Morris's (1995) *Aggressive* style, Strack's (1997) *forceful* style, Millon's (1994) *Controlling* pattern, and the *managerial* segment of Leary's (1957) managerial–autocratic continuum. Millon's Controlling pattern is positively correlated with the five-factor model's *Conscientiousness* factor, has a more modest positive correlation with its *Extraversion* factor, is negatively correlated with its *Agreeableness* and *Neuroticism* factors, and is uncorrelated with *Openness to Experience* (see Millon, 1994, p. 82). Thus, these individuals — though tending to be controlling and sometimes disagreeable — typically are emotionally stable and conscientious. According to Millon (1994), Controlling (i.e., Dominant) individuals

enjoy the power to direct and intimidate others, and to evoke obedience and respect from them. They tend to be tough and unsentimental, as well as gain satisfaction in actions that dictate and manipulate the lives of others. Although many sublimate their power-oriented tendencies in publicly approved roles and vocations, these inclinations become evident in occasional intransigence, stubbornness, and coercive behaviors. Despite these periodic negative expressions, controlling [Dominant] types typically make effective leaders, being talented in supervising and persuading others to work for the achievement of common goals. (p. 34)

Oldham and Morris (1995) supplement Millon's description with the following portrait of the normal (*Aggressive*) prototype of the Dominant pattern:

⁶ Relevant to Wu.

⁷ Relevant to Wu.

⁸ Not relevant to Wu.

Aggressive [Dominant] men and women.... [have] a strong, forceful personality style, more inherently powerful than any of the others. They can undertake huge responsibilities without fear of failure. They wield power with ease. They never back away from a fight. ... When put to the service of the greater good, the Aggressive [Dominant] personality style can inspire a man or woman to great leadership, especially in times of crisis. (p. 345)

Finally, Strack (1997) offers the following description of the normal (*forceful*) prototype of the Dominant pattern, based on Millon's theory, empirical findings from studies correlating his Personality Adjective Check List (PACL; 1991) scales with other measures, and clinical experience with the instrument:

[F]orceful [Dominant] people.... are characterized by an assertive, dominant, and tough-minded personal style. They tend to be strong-willed, ambitious, competitive, and self-determined. ... In work settings, these personalities are often driven to excel. They work hard to achieve their goals, are competitive, and do well where they can take control or work independently. In supervisory or leadership positions, these persons usually take charge and see to it that a job gets done. (From Strack, 1997, p. 490, with minor modifications)

Millon's personality patterns have predictable, reliable, observable psychological indicators (expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, mood/temperament, self-image, regulatory mechanisms, object representations, and morphologic organization). The diagnostic features of the *asserting* and *controlling* variants of the Dominant pattern with respect to each of Millon's eight attribute domains are summarized below. The maladaptive *aggressive* variant of the Dominant pattern is omitted because it does not apply to Wu.

Expressive Behavior

The core diagnostic feature of the expressive acts of Dominant individuals is *assertiveness*; they are tough, strong-willed, outspoken, competitive, and unsentimental. More exaggerated variants of the Dominant pattern are characteristically *forceful*; they are controlling, contentious, and at times overbearing, their power-oriented tendencies being evident in occasional intransigence, stubbornness, and coercive behaviors. When they feel strongly about something, these individuals can be quite blunt, brusque, and impatient, with sudden, abrupt outbursts of an unwarranted or precipitous nature. (Millon, 1996, p. 483)

Interpersonal Conduct

The core diagnostic feature of the interpersonal conduct of Dominant individuals is their *commanding* presence; they are powerful, authoritative, directive, and persuasive. More exaggerated variants of the Dominant pattern are characteristically *intimidating*; they tend to be abrasive, contentious, coercive, and combative, often dictate to others, and are willing and able to humiliate others to evoke compliance. Their strategy of assertion and dominance has an important instrumental purpose in interpersonal relations, as most people are intimidated by hostility, sarcasm, criticism, and threats. Thus, these personalities are adept at having their way by browbeating others into respect and submission. (Millon, 1996, p. 484; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 32)

Cognitive Style

The core diagnostic feature of the cognitive style of Dominant individuals is its *opinionated* nature; they are outspoken, emphatic, and adamant, holding strong beliefs that they vigorously defend. More exaggerated variants of the Dominant pattern tend to be *dogmatic*; they are inflexible and closed-minded, lacking objectivity and clinging obstinately to preconceived ideas, beliefs, and values. All variants of this pattern are finely attuned to the subtle elements of human interaction, keenly aware of the moods and feelings of others, and skilled at using others' foibles and sensitivities to manipulate them for their own purposes. (Millon, 1996, pp. 484–485)

Mood/Temperament

The core diagnostic feature of the characteristic mood and temperament of Dominant individuals is *irritability*; they have an excitable temper that they may at times find difficult to control. More exaggerated variants of the Dominant pattern tend to be *cold* and unfriendly; they are disinclined to experience and express tender feelings and have a volatile temper that readily flares into contentious argument and physical belligerence. All variants of this pattern are prone to anger and to a greater or lesser extent deficient in the capacity to share warm or tender feelings, to experience genuine affection and love for another, or to empathize with the needs of others. (Millon, 1996, p. 486; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 32)

Self-Image

The core diagnostic feature of the self-image of Dominant individuals is that they view themselves as *assertive*; they perceive themselves as forthright, unsentimental, and bold. More exaggerated variants of the Dominant pattern recognize their fundamentally *competitive* nature; they are strong-willed, energetic, and commanding, and may take pride in describing themselves as tough and realistically hardheaded. Though more extreme variants may enhance their sense of self by overvaluing aspects of themselves that present a pugnacious, domineering, and power-oriented image, it is rare for these personalities to acknowledge malicious or vindictive motives. Thus, hostile behavior on their part is typically framed in prosocial terms, which enhances their sense of self. (Millon, 1996, p. 485; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 32)

Regulatory Mechanisms

The core diagnostic feature of the regulatory (i.e., ego-defense) mechanisms of highly⁹ Dominant individuals is *isolation*; they are able to detach themselves emotionally from the impact of their aggressive acts upon others. In some situations — politics being a case in point — these personalities may have learned that there are times when it is best to restrain and transmute their more aggressive thoughts and feelings. Thus, they may soften and redirect their hostility, typically by employing the mechanisms of *rationalization*, *sublimation*, and *projection*, all of which lend themselves in some fashion to finding plausible and socially acceptable excuses for less than admirable impulses and actions. Thus, blunt directness may be rationalized as signifying frankness and honesty, a lack of hypocrisy, and a willingness to face issues head on. On the longer term, socially sanctioned resolution (i.e., sublimation) of hostile urges is seen in the competitive

⁹ Wu is moderately dominant, so this description is marginally applicable to her.

occupations to which these aggressive personalities gravitate. Finally, these personalities may preempt the disapproval they anticipate from others by projecting their hostility onto them, thereby justifying their aggressive actions as mere counteraction to unjust persecution. (Millon, 1996, pp. 485–486)

Object Representations

The core diagnostic feature of the internalized object representations of highly¹⁰ Dominant individuals is their *pernicious* nature. Characteristically, there is a marked paucity of tender and sentimental objects, and an underdevelopment of images that activate feelings of shame or guilt. (Millon, 1996, p. 485)

Morphologic Organization

The core diagnostic feature of the morphologic organization of highly¹¹ Dominant individuals is its *eruptiveness*; powerful energies are so forceful that they periodically overwhelm these personalities' otherwise adequate modulating controls, defense operations, and expressive channels, resulting in the harsh behavior commonly seen in these personalities. These personalities dread the thought of being vulnerable, of being deceived, and of being humiliated. Viewing people as basically ruthless, these personalities are driven to gain power over others, to dominate them and outmaneuver or outfox them at their own game. Personal feelings are regarded as a sign of weakness and dismissed as mere maudlin sentimentality. (Millon, 1996, p. 486)

Scale 2: The Ambitious Pattern

The Ambitious pattern, as do all personality patterns, occurs on a continuum ranging from normal to maladaptive. At the well-adjusted pole are confident, socially poised, assertive personalities.¹² Slightly exaggerated Ambitious features occur in personalities that are sometimes perceived as self-promoting, overconfident, or arrogant.¹³ In its most deeply ingrained, inflexible form, the Ambitious pattern manifests itself in extreme self-absorption or exploitative behavior patterns that may be consistent with a clinical diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder.¹⁴ In the case of Wu, only the normal variant — well-adjusted, confident, and socially poised — has any significance.

Normal, adaptive variants of the Ambitious pattern (i.e., confident and self-serving types) correspond to Oldham and Morris's (1995) *Self-Confident* style, Strack's (1997) *confident* style, and Millon's (1994) *Asserting* pattern. Millon's Asserting pattern is positively correlated with the five-factor model's *Extraversion* and *Conscientiousness* factors and negatively correlated with its *Neuroticism* factor (Millon, 1994, p. 82). It is associated with "social composure, or poise, self-possession, equanimity, and stability" (Millon, 1994, p. 32). In combination with an elevated

¹⁰ Wu is moderately dominant, so this description is marginally applicable to her.

¹¹ Wu is moderately dominant, so this description is marginally applicable to her.

¹² Relevant to Wu.

¹³ Relevant to Wu.

¹⁴ Not relevant to Wu.

Outgoing (Scale 3) pattern (as in the case of Wu), it bears some resemblance to Simonton's (1988) *charismatic* executive leadership style.

Millon (1994) summarizes the Asserting (i.e., Ambitious) pattern as follows:

An interpersonal boldness, stemming from a belief in themselves and their talents, characterize[s] those high on the ... Asserting [Ambitious] scale. Competitive, ambitious, and self-assured, they naturally assume positions of leadership, act in a decisive and unwavering manner, and expect others to recognize their special qualities and cater to them. Beyond being self-confident, those with an ... [Ambitious] profile often are audacious, clever, and persuasive, having sufficient charm to win others over to their own causes and purposes. Problematic in this regard may be their lack of social reciprocity and their sense of entitlement — their assumption that what they wish for is their due. (p. 32)

Strack (1997) provides the following description of the normal (*confident*) prototype of the Ambitious pattern, based on Millon's theory, empirical findings from studies correlating his Personality Adjective Check List (PACL; 1991) scales with other measures, and clinical experience with the instrument:

Aloof, calm, and confident, these personalities tend to be egocentric and self-reliant. ... In the workplace, confident [Ambitious] persons like to take charge in an emphatic manner, often doing so in a way that instills confidence in others. Their self-assurance, wit, and charm often win them supervisory and leadership positions. (Adapted from Strack, 1997, pp. 489–490, with minor modifications)

Oldham and Morris (1995) add the following observations to the portrait of the normal (*Self-Confident*) prototype of the Ambitious pattern:

Self-Confident [Ambitious] individuals stand out. ... [and are] leaders ... [and] attention-getters in their public or private spheres. ... Self-Confident [Ambitious] men and women know what they want, and they get it. Many of them have the charisma to attract plenty of others to their goals. They are extroverted and intensely political. They know how to work the crowd, how to motivate it, and how to lead it. (p. 85)

As noted earlier, Millon's personality patterns have well-established diagnostic indicators associated with each of the eight attribute domains of expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, mood/temperament, self-image, regulatory mechanisms, object-representations, and morphologic organization. The diagnostic features of the *confident* variant of the Ambitious pattern with respect to each of Millon's eight attribute domains are summarized below. The exaggerated *self-serving* and maladaptive *exploitative* variants of the Ambitious pattern are omitted because they do not apply to Wu.

Expressive Behavior

The core diagnostic feature of the expressive acts of Ambitious individuals is their *confidence*; they are socially poised, self-assured, and self-confident, conveying an air of calm, untroubled self-assurance. More exaggerated variants of the Ambitious pattern tend to act in a *conceited* manner, their natural self-assurance shading into supreme self-confidence, hubris, immodesty, or presumptuousness. They are self-promoting and may display an inflated sense of self-importance.

They typically have a superior, supercilious, imperious, haughty, disdainful manner. Characteristically, though usually unwittingly, they exploit others, take them for granted, and frequently act as though entitled. All variants of this pattern are to some degree self-centered and lacking in generosity and social reciprocity. (Millon, 1996, p. 405; Millon & Everly, 1985, pp. 32, 39)

Interpersonal Conduct

The core diagnostic feature of the interpersonal conduct of Ambitious individuals is their *assertiveness*; they stand their ground and are tough, competitive, persuasive, hardnosed, and shrewd. More exaggerated variants of the Ambitious pattern are *entitled*; they lack genuine empathy and expect favors without assuming reciprocal responsibilities. (Millon, 1996, pp. 405–406; Millon & Everly, 1985, pp. 32, 39)

Cognitive Style

The core diagnostic feature of the cognitive style of Ambitious individuals is their *imaginativeness*; they are inventive, innovative, and resourceful, ardently believing in their own efficacy. More exaggerated variants of the Ambitious pattern are cognitively *expansive*; they display extraordinary confidence in their own ideas and potential for success and redeem themselves by taking liberty with facts or distorting the truth. All variants of this pattern to some degree harbor fantasies of success, rationalize their failures, or exaggerate their achievements. (Millon, 1996, p. 406; Millon & Everly, 1985, pp. 32, 39)

Mood/Temperament

The core diagnostic feature of the characteristic mood and temperament of Ambitious individuals is their social *poise*; they are self-composed, serene, and optimistic, and are typically imperturbable, unruffled, and cool and levelheaded under pressure. More exaggerated variants of the Ambitious pattern are *insouciant*; they manifest a general air of nonchalance, imperturbability, or feigned tranquility. They characteristically appear coolly unimpressible or buoyantly optimistic, except when their narcissistic confidence is shaken, at which time either rage, shame, or emptiness is briefly displayed. (Millon, 1996, p. 408; Millon & Everly, 1985, pp. 32, 39)

Self-Image

The core diagnostic feature of the self-perception of Ambitious individuals is their *certitude*; they have strong self-efficacy beliefs and considerable courage of conviction. More exaggerated variants of the Ambitious pattern have an *admirable* sense of self; they view themselves as extraordinarily meritorious and esteemed by others, and have a high degree of self-worth, though others may see them as egotistic, inconsiderate, cocksure, and arrogant. (Millon, 1996, p. 406)

Regulatory Mechanisms

The core diagnostic features of the unconscious regulatory (i.e., ego-defense) mechanisms of highly¹⁵ Ambitious individuals are *rationalization* and *fantasy*; when their subjectively admirable self-image is challenged or their confidence shaken, they maintain equilibrium with facile self-deceptions, devising plausible reasons to justify their self-centered and socially inconsiderate behaviors. (Millon, 1996, p. 407)

Object Representations

The core diagnostic feature of the internalized object representations of highly¹⁶ Ambitious individuals is their *contrived* nature; the inner imprint of significant early experiences that serves as a substrate of dispositions (i.e., templates) for perceiving and reacting to current life events consists of illusory and changing memories. Consequently, problematic experiences are refashioned to appear consonant with their high sense of self-worth, and unacceptable impulses and deprecatory evaluations are transmuted into more admirable images and percepts. (Millon, 1996, pp. 406–407)

Morphologic Organization

The core diagnostic feature of the morphological organization of highly¹⁷ Ambitious individuals is its *spuriousness*; the interior design of the personality system, so to speak, is essentially counterfeit, or bogus. Owing to the misleading nature of their early experiences — characterized by the ease with which good things came to them — these individuals may lack the inner skills necessary for regulating their impulses, channeling their needs, and resolving conflicts. (Millon, 1996, pp. 407–408)

Scale 1B: The Dauntless Pattern

The Dauntless pattern, as do all personality patterns, occurs on a continuum ranging from normal to maladaptive. At the well-adjusted pole are individualistic, daring, adventurous personalities.¹⁸ Exaggerated Dauntless features occur in somewhat unconscientious, risk-taking, dissenting personalities.¹⁹ In its most deeply ingrained, inflexible form, the Dauntless pattern displays itself in reckless, irresponsible, self-aggrandizing behavior patterns that may be consistent with a clinical diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder.²⁰

Normal, adaptive variants of the Dauntless pattern (i.e., adventurous and dissenting types) are congruent with Oldham and Morris's (1995) *Adventurous* style, and Millon's (1994) *Dissenting* pattern. Theoretically, the normal, adaptive variant of the Dauntless pattern incorporates facets of

¹⁵ Wu is moderately narcissistic, so this description is marginally applicable to her.

¹⁶ Wu is moderately narcissistic, so this description is marginally applicable to her.

¹⁷ Wu is moderately narcissistic, so this description is marginally applicable to her.

¹⁸ Relevant to Wu.

¹⁹ Not relevant to Wu.

²⁰ Not relevant to Wu.

the five-factor model's *Extraversion* factor and the low pole of its *Agreeableness* factor; however, the Dissenting scale of the Millon Index of Personality Styles (Millon, 1994) is uncorrelated with the NEO Personality Inventory's (Costa & McCrae, 1985) *Extraversion* factor, though — as expected — this scale is negatively correlated with its *Agreeableness* factor. In addition, the Dissenting pattern is moderately correlated with the NEO Personality Inventory's *Neuroticism* factor, has a small negative correlation with its *Conscientiousness* factor, and is uncorrelated with its *Openness to Experience* factor (see Millon, 1994, p. 82). The Dauntless pattern, as conceptualized in the MIDC, is congruent with the low poles of Simonton's (1988) *deliberative* and *interpersonal* leadership styles and incorporates elements of his *neurotic* and *charismatic* styles.

According to Oldham and Morris (1995, pp. 227–228), the following eight traits and behaviors are reliable clues to the presence of an Adventurous style:

1. *Nonconformity*. Live by their own internal code of values; not strongly influenced by the norms of society.
2. *Challenge*. Routinely engage in high-risk activities.
3. *Mutual independence*. Not overly concerned about others; expect each individual to be responsible for him- or herself.
4. *Persuasiveness*. “Silver-tongued” charmers talented in the art of social influence.
5. *Wanderlust*. Like to keep moving; live by their talents, skills, ingenuity, and wits.
6. *Wild oats*. History of childhood and adolescent mischief and hell-raising.
7. *True grit*. Courageous, physically bold, and tough.
8. *No regrets*. Live in the present; little guilt about the past or anxiety about the future.

Oldham and Morris (1995) provide the following description of the *Adventurous* style:

[People] with this personality style venture where most mortals fear to tread. ... They live on the edge, challenging boundaries and restrictions, pitting themselves for better or for worse in a thrilling game against their own mortality. No risk, no reward, they say. Indeed, for people with the Adventurous personality style, the risk is the reward. (p. 227)

Ultimately, adventurous types “are fundamentally out for themselves” (Oldham & Morris, 1995, p. 228); they “do not need others to fuel their self-esteem or to provide purpose to their lives, and they don't make sacrifices for other people, at least not easily” (p. 229). Furthermore, they believe in themselves and do not require anyone's approval; they have “a definite sense of what is right or wrong for them, and if something is important to them, they'll do it no matter what anyone thinks” (p. 229). Despite their self-orientation, adventurous people are capable of advancing a cause incidentally in the service of their personal desires or ambition (p. 229).

Technically, Oldham and Morris's Adventurous style appears to be a more adaptive variant of Millon's “risk-taking psychopath,” a composite of his aggrandizing (antisocial) and gregarious (histrionic) personality patterns (see Millon, 1996, p. 452; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164; Millon & Davis, 2000, pp. 111–112).

Millon (1994), who uses the term *Dissenting* as a label for the normal, adaptive variant of the aggrandizing, antisocial pattern, asserts that these individuals tend to “flout tradition,” “act in a

notably autonomous fashion,” “are not social-minded,” and “are not inclined to adhere to conventional standards, cultural mores, and organizational regulations” (p. 32). They are

unconventional persons who seek to do things their own way and are willing to take the consequences for doing so. They act as they see fit regardless of how others judge them. Inclined at times to elaborate on or shade the truth, as well as ride close to the edge of the law, they are not conscientious — that is, they do not assume customary responsibilities. Rather, they frequently assert that too many rules stand in the way of people who wish to be free and inventive, and that they prefer to think and act in an independent and often creative way. Many believe that persons in authority are too hard on people who don’t conform. Dissenters dislike following the same routine day after day and, at times, act impulsively and irresponsibly. They will do what they want or believe to be best without much concern for the effects of their actions on others. Being skeptical about the motives of most people, and refusing to be fettered or coerced, they exhibit a strong need for autonomy and self-determination. (p. 33)

As noted earlier, Millon’s personality patterns have well-established diagnostic indicators associated with each of the eight attribute domains of expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, mood/temperament, self-image, regulatory mechanisms, object representations, and morphologic organization. The diagnostic features of the normal variant of the Dominant pattern with respect to each of Millon’s eight attribute domains are summarized below. The exaggerated and maladaptive, pathological variants of the Dauntless pattern are omitted because they do not apply to Wu.

Expressive Behavior

Dauntless personalities are typically adventurous, fearless, and daring, attracted to challenge and undeterred by personal risk. They do things their own way and are willing to accept the consequences for doing so. Not surprisingly, they often act hastily and spontaneously, failing to plan ahead or heed consequences, making spur-of-the-moment decisions without carefully considering alternatives. (Millon, 1996, pp. 444–445, 449–450; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164)

Interpersonal conduct

Dauntless personalities are rugged individualists, not compromisers or conciliators. They take clear stands on the issues that matter, backed up by the self-confidence and personal skills and talents to prevail. Though generally jovial and convivial, they may become confrontational and defiant when obstructed or crossed. (Millon, 1996, pp. 445–446, 449–450; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164)

Cognitive style

Dauntless personalities are original, independent-minded, and unconventional. At their best, these personalities are enterprising, innovative, and creative. They are nonconformists first and foremost, disdainful — even contemptuous — of traditional ideals and values. Moreover, Dauntless personalities shirk orthodoxy and typically believe that too many rules stand in the way of freedom. In politics, these individuals may be described as “mavericks.” (Millon, 1996, pp. 446–447, 449–450; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164)

Mood/temperament

Dauntless personalities are untroubled and easygoing, but quickly become irritable and aggressive when crossed. They are cool, calm, and collected under pressure, restless and disgruntled when restricted or confined. Tough-minded and unsentimental, they display their feelings openly and directly. (Millon, 1996, pp. 448–450; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164)

Self-image

Dauntless personalities are self-confident, with a corresponding view of themselves as self-sufficient and autonomous. They pride themselves on their independence, competence, strength, and their ability to prevail without social support. (Millon, 1996, pp. 447, 449–450; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164)

Regulatory mechanisms

Dauntless personalities are unconstrained. They express their impulses directly, often in rash and precipitous fashion, and generally without regret or remorse. They rarely refashion their thoughts and actions to fit a socially desirable mold. (Millon, 1996, p. 448)

Object representations

Dauntless personalities are driven by restive impulses to discredit established cultural ideals and mores, yet are skilled in arrogating for themselves what material spoils they can garner from society. Though fundamentally driven by self-serving motives, they are capable of incidentally advancing social causes in the service of their own ambition. (Millon, 1996, p. 447)

Morphologic organization

The inner drives and impulses of Dauntless personalities are unruly, recalcitrant, and rebellious, which gives rise to unfettered self-expression, a marked intolerance of delay or frustration, and low thresholds for emotional discharge, particularly those of a hostile nature. (Millon, 1996, p. 448)

Scale 5B: The Contentious Pattern

It is doubtful that Wu Zetian's equivocal subsidiary Contentious pattern (Scale 5B) plays a meaningful role in her overall personality functioning beyond accounting for a threshold level of resoluteness and dissention.

The Contentious pattern, as do all personality patterns, occurs on a continuum ranging from normal to maladaptive. At the well-adjusted pole are cynical, headstrong, resolute personalities.²¹ Exaggerated Contentious features occur in complaining, irksome, oppositional personalities.²² In its most deeply ingrained, inflexible form, the Contentious pattern displays itself in caustic,

²¹ Marginally relevant to Wu.

²² Not relevant to Wu.

contrary, negativistic behavior patterns that may be consistent with a clinical diagnosis of negativistic or passive-aggressive personality disorder.²³

Normal, adaptive variants of the Contentious pattern (i.e., resolute and oppositional types) correspond to Strack's (1997) *sensitive* style and Millon's (1994) *Complaining* pattern. Empirically, Millon's (1994) *Complaining* pattern has a high positive correlation with the five-factor model's *Neuroticism* factor, is negatively correlated with its *Agreeableness* factor, has a small negative correlation with its *Extraversion* factor, and is uncorrelated with the remaining two factors (Millon, 1994, p. 82). Millon (1994) describes the *Complaining* (i.e., *Contentious*) pattern as follows:

Those scoring high on the *Complaining* [*Contentious*] scale often assert that they have been treated unfairly, that little of what they have done has been appreciated, and that they have been blamed for things that they did not do. Opportunities seem not to have worked out well for them and they "know" that good things don't last. Often resentful of what they see as unfair demands placed on them, they may be disinclined to carry out responsibilities as well as they could. Ambivalent about their lives and relationships, they may get into problematic wrangles and disappointments as they vacillate between acceptance one time and resistance the next. When matters go well, they can be productive and constructively independent-minded, willing to speak out to remedy troublesome issues. (p. 34)

According to Millon (1996, p. 554), the normal, adaptive variant of the *Contentious* pattern corresponds to Oldham and Morris's (1995) *Mercurial* style; however, the case can be made that its normal, *discontented* variant has more in common with Oldham and Morris's (1995) *Leisurely* style. Moreover, the *Mercurial* style appears to be a better fit for the less maladaptive (*unstable*) variant of the *Erratic* pattern (Scale 0). Oldham and Morris (1995) describe the *Leisurely* style as follows:

These men and women play by the rules and fulfill their responsibilities and obligations. But once they've put in their time, they will let no person, institution, or even culture deprive them of their personal pursuit of happiness, for to the *Leisurely* person, this is what life is all about. ... If threatened, these normally easygoing individuals will vigorously defend their fundamental right to do their "own thing." (p. 203)

Strack (1997) provides the following portrait of the normal (*sensitive*) prototype of the *Contentious* pattern, based on Millon's theory, empirical findings from studies associating his Personality Adjective Check List (PACL; 1991) scales with other measures, and clinical experience with the test:

Sensitive [*Contentious*] personalities tend to be unconventional and individualistic in their response to the world. They march to the beat of a different drummer and are frequently unhappy with the status quo. They may be quick to challenge rules or authority deemed arbitrary and unjust. They may also harbor resentment without expressing it directly and may revert to passive-aggressive behavior to make their feelings known. Many sensitive people feel as if they don't fit in and view themselves as lacking in interpersonal skills. In fact, to others they often appear awkward, nervous, or distracted, and seem angry or dissatisfied with themselves and others. They can be indecisive and have fluctuating moods and interests. An air of uncertainty and general dissatisfaction may reflect an underlying dependency and sense of personal inadequacy. With their best side forward, sensitive persons can be spontaneous, creative, and willing to speak out for what they believe in. These

²³ Not relevant to Wu.

qualities make them especially suited to jobs that are not rule-bound, that give them a certain independence from supervision, and that require unusual duties or creative expression. (Adapted from Strack, 1997, pp. 490–491, with minor modifications)

As previously noted, Millon's personality patterns have predictable, reliable, observable psychological indicators associated with each of the eight attribute domains of expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, mood/temperament, self-image, regulatory mechanisms, object representations, and morphologic organization. The diagnostic features of the normal variant of the Contentious pattern with respect to each of these attribute domains are summarized below. The exaggerated and maladaptive, pathological variants of the Contentious pattern are omitted because they do not apply to Wu. In addition, it should be noted that the Contentious pattern plays only a subsidiary role in Wu's overall personality functioning — and equivocally so, at that.

Expressive behavior

The core diagnostic feature of the expressive acts of Contentious individuals is *nonconformity*; they are individualistic and independent, tend to be outspoken or unconventional, and are frequently unhappy with the status quo. Thus, they are quick to challenge rules or authority deemed arbitrary and unjust. (Millon, 1996, pp. 549–550; Strack, 1997, pp. 490–491)

Interpersonal conduct

The core diagnostic feature of the interpersonal conduct of Contentious individuals is their *unyielding* manner; they are superficially acquiescent but fundamentally determined and resolute, even willful, in their independence strivings. (Millon, 1996, pp. 550–551)

Cognitive style

The core diagnostic feature of the cognitive style of Contentious individuals is its *freethinking* nature; they are inherently critical, skeptical, cynical, and doubting, with a seemingly ingrained tendency to question authority. Their preference for indirect expression of aggressive intent may be reflected in a propensity for sarcasm or barbed humor. (Millon, 1996, pp. 551–552)

Mood/temperament

The core diagnostic feature of the characteristic mood and temperament of Contentious individuals is *moodiness*; they are typically sensitive or discontented, with a tendency to be testy or irritable. (Millon, 1996, pp. 551–552; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 33)

Self-image

The core diagnostic feature of the self-perception of Contentious individuals is *dissatisfaction*; they recognize themselves as being generally discontented or cynical about life, with a predisposition to feeling disillusioned, misunderstood, or unappreciated, with a sense of having been wronged or cheated. (Millon, 1994, p. 33; Millon, 1996, p. 552)

Regulatory mechanisms

The core diagnostic feature of the unconscious regulatory (i.e., ego-defense) mechanisms of more extreme variants²⁴ of the Contentious pattern is *displacement*; they discharge anger and other troublesome emotions either precipitously or by employing unconscious maneuvers to shift them from their instigator to settings or persons of lesser significance. (Millon, 1996, pp. 552–553)

Object representations

The core diagnostic feature of the internalized object representations of more extreme variants²⁵ of the Contentious pattern is *vacillation*; the inner imprint of significant early experiences that serves as a substrate of dispositions (i.e., templates) for perceiving and reacting to current life events comprise a complex of countervailing relationships, setting in motion contradictory feelings, conflicting inclinations, and incompatible memories that are driven by the desire to degrade the achievements and pleasures of others, without necessarily appearing so. (Millon, 1996, p. 552)

Morphologic organization

The core diagnostic feature of the morphological organization of more extreme variants²⁶ of the Contentious pattern is its *divergence*; there is a clear division in the pattern of morphologic structures such that coping and defensive maneuvers are often directed toward incompatible goals, leaving major conflicts unresolved and full psychic cohesion often impossible because fulfillment of one drive or need inevitably nullifies or reverses another. (Millon, 1996, pp. 553)

Scale 9: The Distrusting Pattern

Wu Zetian's scale elevation on Scale 9 is below the threshold for clinical diagnostic significance, yet merits note because it equivocally approaches significance.

Oldham and Morris (1995) offer the following portrait of the *Vigilant* (i.e., Distrusting) style:

Nothing escapes the notice of ... [people who have a] Vigilant [Distrusting] personality style. These individuals possess an exceptional awareness of their environment. ... Their sensory antennae, continuously scanning the people and situations around them, alert them immediately to what is awry, out of place, dissonant, or dangerous, especially in their dealings with other people. ... [Distrusting types] are immediately aware of mixed messages, the hidden motivations, the evasions, and the subtlest distortions of the truth that elude or delude less gifted observers. (p. 157)

Summary and Formulation

With her primary elevations on Scale 1A (Dominant) and Scale 2 (Ambitious) and her secondary elevation on Scale 1B (Dauntless) Zetian Wu may be classified as Composite Type 1A-2-1B, which points to a *dominant, confident nonconformist* personality composite.

²⁴ Inapplicable to Wu.

²⁵ Inapplicable to Wu.

²⁶ Inapplicable to Wu.

Leadership Implications

The present study offers an empirically based personological framework for postdicting Wu's leadership performance as emperor. Following is a brief outline of leadership traits associated with Wu's personality profile, inferred from theoretical coherence between the present findings and Dean Keith Simonton's (1988) model of political leadership.

Simonton's (1988) empirically derived framework of five presidential styles (charismatic, interpersonal, deliberative, neurotic, and creative) offers a promising frame of reference. Given the fidelity with which Simonton's leadership styles mirror the currently popular five-factor model (FFM), whose correlates with Millon's personality patterns have been empirically established (Millon, 1994, p. 82), Simonton's stylistic dimensions may have considerable heuristic value for establishing links between personality and political leadership.

The transposition of Wu's Dominant personality pattern to Simonton's stylistic dimensions is somewhat problematic. Millon's (1994) Controlling pattern is positively correlated with the "Big Five" Conscientiousness factor and negatively correlated with its Agreeableness and Neuroticism factors (see Millon, 1994, p. 82). Wu obtained a very low score on the MIDC Accommodating scale (i.e., FFM Agreeableness) and a relatively high score on the Ambitious scale (i.e., low FFM Neuroticism, or high emotional stability), which fits the model; however, she scored relatively low on the Conscientious scale, which is not a good fit for the model. Thus, it is hypothesized that a leader with Wu's personality configuration would, at best, display only some of the leadership traits associated with Simonton's "deliberative" style, which is associated with conscientiousness and dominance. According to Simonton (1988), the *deliberative* leader

commonly "understands [the] implications of his [or her] decisions; exhibits depth of comprehension" ..., is "able to visualize alternatives and weigh long term consequences" ..., "keeps himself [or herself] thoroughly informed; reads briefings [and] background reports" ..., is "cautious, conservative in action" ..., and only infrequently "indulges in emotional outbursts." (p. 931)

Considering her relatively low scores on extraversion and agreeableness — respectively MIDC Scale 3 (Outgoing) and Scale 4 (Accommodating) — a better fit for Wu's personality profile appears to be the low pole of Simonton's (1988) "interpersonal" style. A leader *low on interpersonal* characteristically

"accepts recommendations of others only under protest" ..., "believes he [or she] knows what is best for the people" ..., "is emphatic in asserting his judgments" ..., is "suspicious of reformers" ..., is "impatient, abrupt in conference" ..., "bases decisions on willfulness, nervousness, and egotism" ... [and] "tends to force decisions to be made prematurely." (p. 931)

In addition, leaders *low on interpersonal* tend *not* to

"[encourage] the exercise of independent judgment by aides" ..., "[give] credit to others for work done" ..., "[endear himself] to staff through his courtesy and consideration" ..., "[be] flexible" ..., "[emphasize] teamwork" ..., "[be frequently] in contact with his advisers" ..., "[maintain] close relationships with a wide circle of associates" ..., "[be] willing to make compromises" ..., "[rely] on working in a staff system, deciding among options formulated by advisers." (Simonton, 1988, pp. 929, 931)

Conclusion

The present study offers an empirically based personological framework for inferring Wu Zetian's personality traits. Dominance (scale 1A) was identified as Wu's most prominent personality pattern, which is in line with the general public sentiment; she demonstrated a fervent desire to conquer — a resolute, decisive heart under a good-looking face and a self-confident, self-reliant, self-respecting character (Gao, 1997). Wu's dominant personality was particularly evident after entering the palace; she would constantly control, threaten, and attack others to seize and maintain power. Her self-confidence and strength were manifested in many ways: she used harsh and even cruel means when taming horses; to fight over the empress status, she accused Empress Wang of performing witchcraft on her, demoting and exiling the aristocratic forces that supported Empress Wang one by one; and as Lü Zhi treated Lady Qi, Wu Zetian turned Empress Wang and Pure Consort Xiao into human pigs after defeating them, ripping them all out, root and stem. Even when it came to her flesh and blood she showed no mercy. To wipe out all the people from the Tang imperial family, clearing all the obstacles, she employed tough political approaches and acted indifferently and ruthlessly. She would use high-pressure political tactics against officials that opposed her when her political position was threatened, such as killing Pei Yan, the regent who supported Li Dan's ascension to the throne, and General Cheng Wuting. She put her authority and interests first and eliminated anyone and anything that hindered her political ambition.

The present study identified ambition (scale 2) as another prominent political personality pattern in Wu Zetian's personality profile. She has been described as “the hen crowing in the morning” (Wang, 1996). Wu was selected to enter the palace as an ordinary imperial court lady at 14. As her mom was bidding farewell tearfully when Wu was leaving home for the palace, Wu calmly said to her mother: “How do you know seeing the emperor is not a blessing?” When she sensed forces threatening her regime, she executed the three leading figures immediately and said to all other officials in the court, “If you believe you are more capable than the three, you could try go against me. Otherwise, adjust your attitude to serve me wholeheartedly. Don't do something that makes you ridiculed by the world.” In short, Wu exhibit uncommon political ambition in the rigid patriarchy of her era.

Fearlessness (scale 1B) also emerged as a significant aspect of Wu Zetian political personality in the present study. Her father deeply influenced her fearlessness, shaping a philosophy of not fearing unknown risks and creating opportunities amid risk and danger. After becoming a nun, she disregarded the feudal moral restraints to show love to Tang Gaozong and find the opportunity to return to the palace to consolidate her position. She broke the traditional idea and etiquette that women should not step outside the house or participate in government and political affairs. To pave the road to her goals, she found evidence supporting women holding power from the Dayun Sutra. She constructed the “All-Encompassing Palace” after ascending the throne as empress, which was full of innovation and courage in creating a new world. These events demonstrate Wu's autonomy and independence, adventurousness and enterprise, creativity, and daring to break through tradition in her political life.

In summary, Wu Zetian's personality composite can be characterized as that of a *dominant, confident nonconformist*, which predisposed her to a leadership style relatively low on *interpersonality* and moderate in *deliberativeness*.

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Appendix A

Thesis Abstract

Wu Zetian was the first and only female emperor in Chinese history. She rose from humble beginnings to the pinnacle of power. Opinions of Wu Zetian have varied throughout history, but she undoubtedly left an indelible mark on the Tang Dynasty, establishing her crucial position in Chinese history. Political personality, which influences political behavior and decision making, has been an important topic in political psychology research. The study of personality in politics typically focuses on figures who have a major impact on history. Therefore, studying Wu Zetian's political personality can shed light on her political behavior and leadership style, thereby explaining her achievements and their impact on the country. In the past, most research on Wu Zetian was conducted from the perspective of history, literature, philosophy, and sociology, but few scholars discussed Wu Zetian's personality from a psychological perspective. Moreover, existing research on Wu Zetian's personality faces problems of lacking systemic scientific methods and theoretical support, leading to subjective and partial research results.

First, this paper employs a combination of descriptive and empirical research from the perspective of psychology; I used the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria to analyze biographical materials as a basis for assessing Wu Zetian's political personality and empirically determining her political personality profile. Second, I carried out a qualitative psychobiographical study, using life script theory to examine Wu Zetian's life course from the perspective of family environment, interpersonal relations, and the culture of her time, and so forth, to analyze the origins of her political personality comprehensively and objectively.

I concluded that Wu Zetian's primary political personality patterns were Dominant/controlling (aggressive) and Ambitious/selfish (narcissistic), with secondary Dauntless/adventurous (risk-taking) and Distrusting/suspicious patterns. Important causal variables in Wu Zetian's political personality formation were genetics and family environment, the Shizicong incident and identity crisis, imperial harem struggle, interpersonal encounters and the formation and development of political goals, Tang Dynasty cultural scripts, and the social status of women.

Keywords: Wu Zetian, political personality, Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria, psychobiography, life script

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摘要

武则天是中国历史上第一位且是唯一的女性皇帝，她从一名籍籍无名的女子走向权利的巅峰，后世对武则天的评价众说纷纭，她的故事为唐代谱写了绚烂瑰丽的一笔，奠定了她在中国历史上至关重要的地位。政治人格一直是政治心理学研究的热点，能够影响人物的政治行为及政治决策，政治人格的研究通常聚焦于对历史有重大影响的人物。因此研究武则天的政治人格与成因能够推测出其领导行为及领导风格，从而解释她的成就以及对国家产生的影响。以往针对武则天的研究大多从历史学、文学、哲学、社会学角度出发，很少有人从心理学角度探讨武则天的人格，已有武则天人格相关研究存在缺乏严谨科学的方法及理论支持，研究结果主观、片面等问题。

本文首先从心理学的角度用描述性研究与实证性研究相结合的方法，采用米伦人格诊断标准量表对传记材料进行分析来探索武则天的政治人格，总结其政治人格模式。其次进行质性研究，采用心理传记学的方法，基于武则天的人生历程，从家庭环境、人际际遇及时代文化等角度，结合人生脚本理论分析其政治人格的成因，对武则天的政治人格及成因进行全面立体的研究。

得到研究结论，武则天的主要的政治人格模式为强势型/控制型、雄心勃勃型/自私型，并具有次要政治人格模式无畏型/冒险型、不信任型/多疑型。武则天政治人格形成的影响因素为遗传与家庭环境、狮子骢事件与同一性危机、后宫斗争、人际际遇与政治目标的形成与发展、唐朝文化脚本与女性社会地位。

关键词：武则天；政治人格；米伦人格诊断标准量表；心理传记学；人生脚本

王若月. (2022). *武则天政治人格及其成因分析* [硕士学位论文]. 首都师范大学, 中国北京.

Appendix B

MIDC Score Sheet for Wu Zetian

Subject: 武则天

Date: 2022年3月8日

米伦人格诊断标准量表评分表

属性域	维度																								属性域分数											
	1A			1B			2			3			4			5A			5B			6			7			8			9		10		最低值	最高值
	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	d	e	d	e					
A	①	②	[3]	①	②	×	①	②	✓	①	✓	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	①	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	④	×	✓	10	11	
B	①	②	[3]	①	✓	×	①	[2]	×	✓	[2]	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	①	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	[4]	×	④	6	10	
C	①	②	×	①	[2]	×	①	②	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	[1]	×	×	①	×	×	×	×	×	[4]	✓	✓	6	9	
D	①	②	✓	①	[2]	×	①	②	✓	[1]	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	①	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	[4]	×	×	6	9	
E	①	②	✓	[1]	×	×	①	②	✓	[1]	[2]	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	①	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	5	8	
维度分数 (低分)	5	10	0	4	2	0	5	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4			
	15			6			13			1			0			0			3			3			0			0			4		4			
维度分数 (高分)	5	10	6	5	6	0	5	10	0	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	4	0		
	21			11			15			7			0			0			4			3			0			0			16		4			
F	3			3			3			3			3			3			3			3			3			4			4					
G	3			3			3			3			3			3			3			3			3			4			4					
H	3			3			3			3			3			3			3			3			3			4			4					

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○ = 存在 Affirmative

× = 不存在 Negative

[] = 保留/存在 Equivocal/Affirmative

/ = 保留/不存在 Equivocal/Negative