

Investigating Research Plausibility

*Some Fundamental Principles
for Examining Type Research Claims*



Peter Geyer

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In my home of sand outside the City of Gold.....

I tried to buy myself an answer,



But the truth's already been sold.

Jack Bruce

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Truth

- ◆ A gold standard.....unachievable?
- ◆ ~~Models, systems, theories are not “true”~~
- ◆ How they came about has truth value
- ◆ There are *facts* about models, theories
- ◆ Investigations, assessments...plausibility

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Investigating Research

- ◆ Being published not a foolproof guide
- ◆ Contingent on other factors
- ◆ Cherry-picking, explanations, polemics
- ◆ Scientific method(s)
- ◆ Can write on type without Jung

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Looking for Clues

- ◆ Expertise (authors and readers)
- ◆ Basics
- ◆ References
- ◆ Measurement
- ◆ Validation, samples

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Key Questions

- ◆ Is it true? i.e. did it happen?
- ◆ Is it plausible – does it make sense?
- ◆ Does that fit with my experience? Why?
- ◆ Does that fit with my knowledge? How?
- ◆ Do I need to investigate further?

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Expertise

- ◆ Not everyone agrees on what's important
- ◆ ~~Statistical analysis~~ – history of ideas
- ◆ Film, fiction, as explanations
- ◆ Universality, diversity, relativism
- ◆ Ideas in context – history, culture

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Basics

- ◆ Read carefully, ask questions of the text
- ◆ Check references, terminology
- ◆ Author's background; their purpose
- ◆ A broadly-based personal library
- ◆ Know where to look, who to ask

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Customary Type References

- ◆ *MBTI Manuals* (the right one)
- ◆ *Gifts Differing*
- ◆ *Psychological Types*
- ◆ They may not be adequately consulted
- ◆ Other sources may be more relevant

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Type References – C.G. Jung

This thing we call personality

is a great and mysterious problem.

Everything that can be said about it,

is curiously unsatisfactory and inadequate

(CW 17 – para 312; p181)

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Type References – C.G. Jung

- ◆ *Psychological Types* a core reference
- ◆ Main source for Briggs and Myers
- ◆ Also seminars, letters, other publications
- ◆ Videos, interviews, documentaries
- ◆ “personality type” idea is not Jung’s

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Type References – C.G. Jung

True personality is always a vocation.....

an irrational factor that destines a man

to emancipate himself from the herd

and its well-worn paths

(CW 17 – para 300; p175)

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Type References – C.G. Jung

If we think of the psychological functions as arranged in a circle, then the most differentiated function is usually the carrier of the ego and, equally regularly has an auxiliary function attached to it.

(CW 12 – para 137; pp106-7)

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Type References – C.G. Jung

The “inferior” function,

— on the other hand, is unconscious, —

and for that reason is projected into a non-ego.

It too has an auxiliary function.

(CW 12 – para 137; pp106-7)

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Type References – Isabel Myers

We never aimed to measure



We wanted to identify

the direction of the preference – the either-or

*(The Myers–Briggs Type Indicator in Medical Education Conference.
University of Florida Gainesville May 31-June 2 1973. Transcript p16.)*

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Type References – Isabel Myers

[The MBTI] is not a test. It isn't testing anything.



*A test is something
that hopes to see if you can do something,
and it isn't at all that.*

(MBTI History audiotape October 6 1974 South Carolina)

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Type References – Isabel Myers

The content of a question

is only a stimulus to a type reaction...

The questions can be trivial and often are...

They can be asked without impertinence

(Construction of the Type Indicator: Forms Zero to F und. p2)

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Type References – Isabel Myers

How you come out on the Indicator can change,

but I don't nail my flag to the mast,

that how you come out on the Indicator

is necessarily your type.

(Conversations with Isabel transcript p19)

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Type References – Others

- ◆ Briggs, Myers sources e.g. Van Der Hoop
- ◆ Jungians e.g. Meier, Spoto, von Franz
- ◆ Non-Jung e.g. Keirsey, Berens
- ◆ Modellers e.g. Beebe; Grant
- ◆ Type Authors e.g. Pearman, Lawrence

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Type References – Others

- ◆ Read in context
- ◆ Examine presuppositions
- ◆ Models aren't truth
- ◆ Distinguish explication from research
- ◆ Check their references

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Measurement

- ◆ Jung, Keirsey, not measurement ideas
- ◆ MBTI an indicator, not standalone
- ◆ Type dynamics, development elsewhere
- ◆ Which MBTI Form? Why? How?
- ◆ Other type measurements

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Measurement

- ◆ Conventional measurement – traits
- ◆ ~~Type – traits an *outcome* of preferences~~
- ◆ No pure types, or extremes
- ◆ Sorting rather than “how much?”
- ◆ Mixed methods research e.g. Nardi

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Validation

- ◆ Method of administration important
- ◆ Correlation is not connection
- ◆ Most people poor observers
- ◆ Measurement constructs self-referential
- ◆ No instruments – reading, discussion

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Samples

- ◆ What do samples represent?
- ◆ Type distributions, “adults” etc.
- ◆ Students – esp. psychology
- ◆ Training courses, managers etc.
- ◆ National, international samples etc

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Concluding Thoughts

- ◆ See research for what it is
- ◆ Contributions can be narrow or broad
- ◆ Theoretical understanding crucial
- ◆ Using the relevant method crucial
- ◆ Commercial considerations & objectivity