

## Research and Theory

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### I. Research and Theory, From Inside and Outside

It's an honour to be asked to undertake the role of APTi Interest Area Coordinator for Research and Theory, which really starts off with this article. What follows are some of my current thoughts

The MBTI, as a practical implementation of C.G.Jung's theory of psychological types, requires close attention to both research/theory and practice in order to work effectively. Sometimes this means attention to what aspect of theory works, what doesn't, and why. An old saw states "there's nothing so practical as a good theory." Isabel Myers once reflected on the natural tendency for intuitives to change aspects of her ideas and practice. This was naturally a good thing, but sometimes she wished that inquiry was made into why she did what she did, before changing things. This is a fundamental principle of research anywhere and involves investigation of present and past.

Sometimes we have to separate research and theory from practice in order to work out what the implications are of the theory or research results and its consistencies or otherwise of other ideas. MBTI and type-related conferences may therefore make an unintentional mistake if they require their presenters to provide practical hints in their presentations. I've seen this requirement regarding some recent events in various countries. Often the knowledge presented by a researcher or theoretician is practical in itself in terms of developing personal understanding; other times it can require a person other than the presenter of a well-developed idea or piece of theory to apply the learning.

Isabel Myers implemented Jung's theory; Jung had no interest in implementing it in the form of a questionnaire, or any other systematised way.

In order to be able to see what makes sense, a depth of knowledge of research/theory is required. This includes an ability to work out which ideas attached to the MBTI and psychological type are consistent with the broad scope of ideas both inside the type community and those outside it, particularly as a method of reinterpretation of relevant research

Inside issues involve the history and development of Jung's psychological types and the MBTI; research using the MBTI and theories of type dynamics and development, as well as typologies in general. In this environment, psychological type is taken as a given, and has an importance not replicated in the outside world, or in the Jungian world, for that matter. Research or inquiry in this field can revolve around what Jung really said, with an implication that if that were discovered then his theory would have a higher level of truth. It's compounded by the current availability of much more material regarding Jung than was available to Isabel Myers and Katharine Briggs.

For instance, Isabel Myers didn't know whether Jung thought that type was innate, but she'd come to her own conclusion that it was; you can now view Jung being interviewed and making this innate claim in the language of his time.

I use Jung's notion that personality is a calling as a way of explaining type, the conscious and unconscious. It doesn't come from Psychological Types, but it's a comment written elsewhere that gives context into his thinking about personality.

We also might want to investigate other approaches to Jung's typology (and others) in the past, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s and who was influenced by them. And there's always an intellectual biography of Isabel Myers for someone to write.

In recent times, there's been much to say about the 8 Jungian functions, how you identify them, what they mean, particularly regarding use and development. There's a certain amount of theory and practice already involved here, yet I think there's a lot more to investigate and reflect on what is a complex proposition.

None of what I've referred to so far requires the use of mathematics as an essential part of investigation. Research with the MBTI, however, involves the application and defence of psychometric methods. The unusual psychometric properties of the MBTI that follow from its underpinning theory make it controversial in the field. This is curious in some ways, and perhaps the controversy arises out of social and cultural issues more than anything else, although the presumption that data should only be continuous is obviously important, as well as emphasising the general over sometimes valuable differences.

This sort of research is both inside and outside the type community, in that there are alternative methods and perspectives to contend with, and presentation of MBTI research can occur in non-type related publications and professional conferences.

Here, I'll leave aside the question of how difficult going outside might be.

Research is also about conflict and contention.

Going outside is to engage in reflection and discussion in the language of the world in general, which doesn't really use the language of type or share many of its presumptions. This can include the history of psychology, the nature of personality, or personal identity, early childhood and adolescence, emotions, depression, culture, neuroscience, evolutionary biology and so on. It can also include areas of government policy and social change. In some respects, psychological type cannot be about the status quo; practice has to take that into account when using the theory.

In talking about type, both inside and outside and in research and practice we also have to be aware of the limitations of constructs, particularly in psychology, but in the hard sciences as well, where you can measure things that don't exist. On this view, C.G.Jung's psychological types don't have to literally exist in concrete form, but simply be plausible. Plausibility comes from being able to explain better than other frameworks something of the nature of human beings, including their behaviours.

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## 2. Seeking things out

One of the important things about research in general is that there are people doing interesting work all the time, but nobody hears about it. There's turgid stuff too, as well as half-baked or misinformed. With the latter two, you need to be informed and knowledgeable as well, so deficiencies and differences can be identified and pointed out.

For instance, Annie Paul's *The Cult of Personality*, which criticised the MBTI and Isabel Myers, amongst others, has recently been issued in paperback as *The Cult of Personality Testing*. A quick leaf through the paperback suggests that it's probably the same text, which would be disappointing, given the many flaws and inaccuracies in the hardcover edition (Geyer 2005).

Newspapers often provide some interesting information on personality. Recently, whilst visiting the United States for an APTi Leadership meeting, I came across an article in *USA Today* titled *Not all successful CEOs are extroverts* (Jones 2006). Initially, I wondered why anyone would presume that success, CEOs and extroversion went together in the first place, then how extroversion was defined and what the similarities and differences were with *extraversion*.

Historically, *extroversion* first appears in books and journal articles as a typographical error; C.G.Jung, the originator of the term, considered that this spelling was just bad Latin, but it's become the more common term, with a different definition to Jung's original idea. The two terms correlate well statistically, but my view is that they're better seen as separate constructs, as the underlying principles are quite different: Jung's to do with energy and the other to do with sociability.

Essentially, the article associates shyness to introverts and sociability to extroverts, with one person claiming that extroversion and sociability are almost the same thing. The CEOs, quite a disparate group in terms of the size of organisations they head are described in these terms with charisma and wisdom (both undefined) attached in some way to extroversion and introversion. The article also says introversion "might be partially explained by culture, genetics and upbringing." No rationale for extroversion is provided; perhaps it just is.

The MBTI features in the middle of the article, with an outline of unpublished research from CPP Inc. using generational terminology (*baby-boomers* and the like) that suggests the younger generations are "more extroverted" (sic).

It would be interesting to see the methodology for this research, as well as the rationale for using categories like baby-boomers, generation X and so on. These are essentially middle-class categories contentious in themselves with regard to the generalised attributes of each category particularly education, money, music and property.

My Australian observations of Generation Y/Millennials (the youngest generational categories) is that these people tend to express emotions more readily in certain contexts than older people, but seem less likely to have a personal identity, at least as far as Jung's ideas on consciousness are concerned.

Having said that, nothing may have changed at all.

The APTi meeting included a presentation by Allen Hammer on progress on MBTI Step III. The purpose of Step III is to operationalise Isabel Myers' work on impediments to type development i.e. finding a way to measure it effectively. The fascinating examples Allen presented were interspersed

with comments on Isabel Myers' acumen and originality as a psychometrician, parts of which I had heard elsewhere over the years, and all of which should be out there in the general domain in appropriate journals and texts.

The other aspect that came through was the development of a philosophy and theory of personality by Isabel Myers, which would be a significant publication in itself, outside the context of measurement and instrument development.

Another aspect of seeking things out has to do with parallels of theory and ideas. C.G. Jung and Isabel Myers both understood their work in evolutionary terms. It doesn't mean you can't use their ideas if you don't share that perspective, but you need to know that that's the perspective they took, as well as that evolution, like good history, doesn't presume progress.

The biologist Sean Carroll has recently written about how animals of all kinds grow from embryos to adults, by describing the development pattern and organisation, usually starting with a four-direction orientation of a cell and then the unfolding of the attributes of the animal concerned.

This process brought to mind Jung's comment that he reported the nature of his discoveries in quaternities, or fours, not because of a personal predilection, but because that was what he found. Psychological type, of course, is an unfolding and it seems much like Carroll's schema to me, in that it happens at a certain time of development and it's not necessarily the case that it can be physically observed.

Seeking things out isn't about justifying type for its own sake. It is about two things. Firstly, looking for clear and accurate definitions and descriptions of psychological type categories. Secondly, how psychological type fits/doesn't fit with other ideas, particularly in the sciences.

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### 3. Theory in Practice: some present(ing) experiences

Recently, I presented at a university post-graduate research forum a brief fact-based paper on type and other distributions (gender, age etc) from a sample of MBTI Qualifying workshop participants, with some interpretation in mind on how best to teach the topic (e.g. small discussion groups).

The allocated 20 minutes didn't go as intended for a number of reasons, one of which was that the small group attending didn't really know anything much about type, but were curious, although not all that much about the data I was presenting, as it wasn't a group oriented to figures of any sort. So I found myself explaining the MBTI and type rather than an aspect of its application.

One person commented that a colleague had recently said to her that the MBTI was "unscientific." She acknowledged that she didn't know what that specifically meant. I couldn't ascertain how or why this comment was made to her: it could have been from a recent special edition of *Scientific American*, or another source entirely, academic or otherwise.

In my experience, MBTI critiques on scientific grounds (where one is explained, at any rate) usually have to do with it not using continuous scores, as though that's the only method available and appropriate for measurement, rather than using whatever statistical method is appropriate for the purpose required.

Notwithstanding their utility, continuous scores presume *tabula rasa* – the notion proposed by the philosopher, John Locke, that when born, an infant's mind is a blank slate upon which is written what that person experiences: nurture, rather than nature, if you like.

This view has been known to be scientifically false for a few decades. The interaction of nature and nurture is the current scientific position and is compatible with both Isabel Myers and C.G.Jung. Myers spoke of going against the grain as a way of explaining her view that type was innate in some way, whilst Jung thought that people were born with a predisposition to type; quite a subtle phrase, when you come to think of it.

Sometimes the use or even naming of statistics or statistical methods can be seductive to the musings and considerations of any human being, irrespective of type. It's quite amazing to me, for instance, how many people have presumed that because Form M is comprised of questions whose answers all have equal value (1 point), that the gender difference in preferring Thinking and Feeling Isabel Myers discovered 60 years ago is now extinguished. Everything is back to 50-50, which is admirably symmetrical.

This view ascribes a remarkable power to a pencil and paper test: that of changing the world, rather than reporting on it. Presenting T-F questions that have been found to be answered equally by males and females, says nothing about whether males will answer T and females will answer F. It also leaves aside research elsewhere on gender difference that has no interest in the MBTI, or Jung's claims.

Another part of the scientific jigsaw regarding the MBTI has to do with the prediction of behaviour. Taken literally, this implies behaviourism, a still-popular perspective, partly I think because it's uncomplicated: behaviours are easily identified. The origins of psychological instruments are here, involving a particular version of the scientific method. Extraverted thinking approaches like

rational-choice and economic theories, and some therapeutic methods leave little space for individual difference.

If you take “prediction” in its literal form as above, then the MBTI can't do that by definition, because it's not approaching personality or, more correctly, psychological orientation, in a behaviourist way, or a behavioural way, as one might interpret Keirseyan Temperament.

The MBTI is about explaining behaviour and its possible utility is in being able to do that in the broadest possible way, and hopefully better than other frameworks and models

This can be seen in Isabel Myers' MBTI Forms, where she writes "the questions are not important in themselves" and elsewhere that it didn't matter whether a person had ever done what a question was inquiring about. In that respect, the MBTI reports on what you prefer, which is not necessarily what you do as a matter of course. Step II feedback is often instructive here, where a client can prefer one facet of a preference, but enjoy using the opposite, and with some facility, notwithstanding it not being shown in the printed results.

For me, the preferences are better thought of as content-free as a basic principle, so that you get the idea of their orientation and keep that in mind. Type descriptions can often get in the way if you take them literally, or presume that a person's preferences mean they're actually good at what they prefer. INTPs that don't read, for instance, or dislike computers; or SFJs who don't go for the neat and tidy, but still exemplify the positive aspects of their preferences. There are many other examples.

The content of a person's preferences i.e. behaviours and the like, including cultural influences, will give you an idea as to how the person expresses their type, as well as other aspects of their orientation that aren't visible. Behaviours can be an indicator of what a person prefers to do, but it's not necessarily directly related to a specific type preference. In the same way, a learning doesn't have to be expressed in the outer world by a behaviour, or be labelled a skill. What matters here is that a person expresses their type in a way congruent with their situation and experience. Sometimes this involves understanding the basic principles and just something of what comes after.

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#### 4. Picking things up: research and theory as random encounter

Finding out about things in general isn't necessarily systematic or orderly. Sometimes you seek things out, other times something comes to you, either because you pick it up somewhere, or someone directs it your way. Here's how it can work.

A few weeks ago, I found in my library a previously unnoticed copy of Isabel Myers' keynote address to the first MBTI Conference(1975). Reading it, I was struck by the different use of language to today's words, by Isabel's ability to keep things fairly simple but insightful. Her topics were personal themes – understanding and use of the preferences, self-image, marriage, children, not the world of business where so much effort is expended these days.

At the same time as I discovered these words, I was in the middle of interviews and discussions for a summer article on the MBTI (Kissane 2007); other instruments were being addressed in other articles. The journalist involved, Karen Kissane, was enthusiastic and interested about type, although not well informed. Nonetheless, she knew her own type as well as that of her children, friends and work associates, and something of the meaning, although type dynamics and development were foreign.

I sent the Myers speech to her as a way of explaining type more clearly. She loved the article and had sent it on to friends before wondering whether this was appropriate. My view was that it was better that people receive accurate information than to worry about anything else. It was clear, at any rate, that this language from the past was appreciated, understandable and useful today, which is not surprising. In my work in organisations, it's the personal topics that arouse the most interest, or the real interest..

The final discussions for this article involved reviewing a draft. Several sources other than mine had been engaged, which was excellent. One of these was a very helpful, unspecified but authentic MBTI website, which unfortunately inferred that C.G. Jung was developed his theories based on insight and anecdote, which is simply untrue, particularly with respect to psychological types. Jung's empiricism wasn't American empiricism, but he was interested in facts, as was Isabel Myers. Deirdre Bair (2003) provides evidence here, but it's elsewhere as well, if you care to look.

Facts, their lack of pursuit, or the avoidance of them, can play out in different ways. The psychoanalyst and essayist Adam Phillips considers it's not important that psychoanalysis be scientific: it can be missing the point of a discussion in some way to think so (Naparstek 2006). Some of what Phillips says is relevant to type, particularly at an individual level. You can learn a lot about type theory when you limit your labels.

An outside label gaining some attention is *Asperger's Syndrome*. Part of the problem of being labelled; even if you label yourself, as in type, is that it can be a badge or a millstone, as various reports on ADHD indicate.

Robert G. Chester (2006) provides an interesting review of Asperger's suggesting an association with INT-s , and that it may be normal behaviour or undeveloped behaviour. He also infers that these people may be more likely be diagnosed this way if their mother prefers E-FJ because of natural presumptions about proper behaviour. The article, which was sent to me via a *Journal of*

*Psychological Type* subscription, is a mixture of facts and interpretation, which might unsettle many empiricists; this INTP understands the inferences all too well.

If you spread yourself too thin with facts, then inference is all you've got. Annie Paul has been criticised here and elsewhere for her opinion of the MBTI and Isabel Myers. Philip L. Kerr, editor of the *Australian Psychological Type Review* located a review of her book from a Rorschach perspective, in which Barry Ritzler systematically and objectively demolishes a few presumptions and contradictions in her work in (Ritzler 2006). Ritzler passes by the MBTI, saying he is "conflicted" by what she writes, because it's correct that "university based personality assessment psychologists do not regard the Myers-Briggs highly" (op.cit. p. 348). Given his considered approach here, I was curious to know more about his personal perspective.

Researchers with a notional interest in facts might also use the tools they possess in curious ways. Jamie Johnson of CAPT sent me *Discredited Psychological Treatments and Tests: A Delphi Poll* (Norcross et al., 2006) in which the MBTI, almost naturally, features. This article is similar to a reality television poll. Essentially it says something like: "we asked a number of well-known people what they thought about some things in their field, and statistically analysed the responses, even though we have no idea whether they know what they're talking about. But they're experts, anyway"

The article actually says this quite clearly, which is at least honest. One wonders how this got to be published, but perhaps the facts speak for themselves, even if they're not quite right. That's something to reflect on for researchers and practitioners alike.

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## 5. Spreading things out: future type directions

*My concepts are based on empirical findings and are nothing but names for certain areas of experience*  
C.G. Jung

*Within any school of thought, partial themes exert an attraction:  
disciples, students and other interested persons move in,  
attach themselves to the movement  
and take the parts they like best for the whole*  
Wolfgang Hochheimer

Psychological type presents a particular kind of knowledge base, whether it be in the writings of Jung and others, or data associated with the MBTI and a growing number of Jungian inventories, although these are often not interested in research per se. In all cases the knowledge base is dipped into in different ways and from a number of perspectives, some contradictory, others with varying degrees of plausibility.

Much of the MBTI work is applications writing, where an in-depth understanding of personality is useful, but not necessary, as the focus is on the application, the result, or what happened to people. Perhaps what should happen; what might be desirable,

How much does type engage with other disciplines?

Several years ago, I was listening to an APTi Conference audiotape in which the presenter mentioned a high correlation between possessing blue eyes and having an introverted orientation. Presumably this was data from the USA or similar place.

One of the participants responded with quiet concern, wondering if there was some way this data could be suppressed, presumably so people at large wouldn't know of it and so act against people with blue eyes. The free and unconstrained dissemination and examination of objective research seemed also at risk. You can't stop knowledge about people with blue eyes, and nor should you want to.

The world being as it is, I could appreciate this point, but at the same time I could look around me and see many successful introverts; in Australia introverts dominate the political process and senior leadership positions, for instance. So perhaps he meant specific types of introverts.

But if recent data from Australian secondary students is taken at face value, then introverts might be in trouble. Over 70% of a sample of convenience (n=2683) preferred extraversion with a modal type of ENFP which was also 26% of the sample. Researcher Ian Ball speculates whether "teenagers are validating their type in terms of how they would like to be" (Ball 2006). A similar, smaller, sample (n=162) recently given to me shows 67% preference for extraversion, the same modal type and ENFPs 29% of the sample. This is just the data, of course. Little is known of method, feedback, interpretation of slight scores etc..

Are these results indicative of the distribution of Australian types in the future? There's no golden rule (although some would like it so) that says type distributions are fixed over time, particularly as you have to take into account biological and cultural considerations, including immigration.

Young Australians express a lot more emotion than a similar group would have a couple of decades ago, but that's not necessarily type and development. It can simply be unconscious expression. The general expression of Australians, at whatever age group, doesn't seem to have all that much in common with ENFP. Then again, I'm not 16 years old and I'm an observer of life more than a participant.

This sort of thing might become more relevant for type users in the future, much as the success of a training session often depends on whether the participants know how to be trained, what to expect.

A questionnaire that asks you who you are in an environment that says "be like everyone else" requires a little extra in the age of post-modernism, mediated relationships and "you can be whoever you want to be." Quite a few people find it extremely difficult to locate that extra bit of themselves, which is independent of collective external expression, and they don't have to be all teenagers.

*You can always tell a liberal by his aversion to labels.*

*Yet some labels are surely admirable*

Terry Eagleton

It also depends on how precisely labels are applied. C.G.Jung (neither his friends nor colleagues applied the label Carl to him) didn't want to define his constructs too narrowly, although he did say what they meant, and that they were content-free, dependent on an individual's psyche and experience.

Empirical observations such as those undertaken by Jung, Isabel Myers, Katharine Briggs, and others since, form much of the content of generalised type descriptions. Measurement *via* the MBTI has provided a substantial remainder over half a century and more. If you take the time and expend the effort, you can infer a comprehensive generalised notion of any of the 16 types from published Step I and Step II data.

Are these becoming stereotypes in the general sense? Well, quite obviously people of the same types have to be similar in some ways and different to other types as well. And stereotypes are stereotypically seen as negative.

The philosopher and critic Terry Eagleton, reviewing a book concerned with any kind of labelling at all, wrote "*unless we can calculate the effects of our actions, which includes the way others might typically respond to them, we will be incapable of realising our projects effectively*" (2006). So we need to know something general about teenage Australians, as well as ENFPs, if we want to test out these research results, but be open to nuance and interpretation.

Here, much as with concerns about the dangers of having blue eyes, you have to be aware of non-type information, to spread things out a little, or look at other disciplines where psychological type has been used with some knowledge. This seems to be a fairly narrow field once you get past writers who come from a type background; in recent years I can recall only Doyle's work (1999) on money and property.

If we're looking at where type is going, one direction should be out of its community and into areas it hasn't been before, and not for training sessions on team-building or leadership or self-awareness, but as an explanatory framework for research.

APTi is currently associated with an organisation (FASEB) that assists several scientific organisations and this provides an interesting opportunity for type. But it's not about giving scientists and others the MBTI, but acquainting them with psychological type and Jungian ideas of the psyche as an interpretive model. Joseph LeDoux's seminal work *The Emotional Brain* (1998)

used Freud's ideas as an interpretive model; perhaps a properly-understood Jungian model might have given a better interpretation.

That of course includes knowledge of the past and present; the future doesn't come of itself without attachments.

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## 6. “Type’s not everything.” But what is it ? Some boundaries of knowing (or wanting to know)

*I bet you sometimes wondered what was standing right behind you –  
Keep looking over your shoulder to see if it’s there*  
Sonja Kristina

*True personality is always a vocation...  
an irrational factor that destines one  
to emancipate themselves from the herd and its well-worn paths*  
C.G. Jung

Wherever you go with type, its theory stands behind you, as *eminence grise* or friendly ghost perhaps, depending on your level of familiarity with what it is, what it has to suggest, and how agreeable that might be to your being, or doing.

The breadth and depth to which psychological type and the MBTI (two different, but overlapping, things) can be explained successfully to anyone is constrained by what’s known about theory i.e. what this idea or model is about, as well as what’s learned from reflection, practice, and other ideas.

Paradoxically, you can know little or a lot about something and make the same claims.

Type preferences, as principles, are content-free and it seems that the unfolding of preferences, rather than an acceding to a general description or skill expectation, is most pertinent. It’s like getting back to basics, in a way.

Are all people preferring Feeling empathetic? Well, no. There are other considerations; Feeling is about judgement, after all. Jung stated and Jung has made Jung makes clear in his seminar on dreams, It’s contingent for most and some don’t really get to it much at all. You can observe this at any type meeting, or anywhere, for that matter. That doesn’t stop it being an attribute of Feeling, but it’s unwise to presume the person in front of you who prefers it is going to empathise with you in a way you might expect, or have you included in their view of harmony. A person who prefers intuition isn’t necessarily driven to investigate theories or the big picture. It’s all about interest and focus.

Expecting objective logic from thinking types, or an interest in facts in general to those preferring sensing may actually lead to disappointment and disarray if the wrong topic or situation is present, or a person hasn’t developed those attributes sufficiently to have control over them. Skill is also a presumption I wouldn’t make; that’s something to be established.

Knowing where a boundary of a particular idea is, and why, is quite different to not wishing to venture beyond a particular point. Or turning in a particular direction because of other interests or beliefs, even business imperatives. People can stand in the same spot for different reasons.

Research and theory about anything is not “how to” but, rather, “what is it?” You need to have some knowledge or appreciation of other fields of enquiry and be able to see similarities and differences between these fields and type’s acreages.

This can present a dilemma for those primarily interested in helping people, or changing the world, rather than using their energies on uncovering facts about a theory that can help them more if such information is sought out.

Saying “type doesn’t mean everything” is a sensible caveat at one level, in that nothing really explains everything anyway, unless you take a particular religious point of view. But it also begs the question as to why it has to be mentioned, given that any idea or presentation has a defining context.

It can be experienced as a throwaway line at the end of a presentation; a kind of a get-out clause which perhaps invites tolerance for having to take this sort of thing seriously, let alone know more than a little about it.

Personality is fun, after all. But participants or audiences may wonder why they were there in the first place, if a suitable in-depth explanation of the limits, either way, of a typology or instrumentation isn’t provided.

For instance, in a recent professional type presentation, I acknowledged type didn’t explain everything. This came as obvious relief to one of those present, a likeable ENFP I had taught, and knew reasonably well. Regrettably, she didn’t trouble to ask me what I thought type did, or didn’t explain.

On the other hand, I didn’t offer an explication, partly because I didn’t think it’d be received well at a number of levels, one of which would have been that I think type explains quite a lot and more than she expected. It also included the issue of peer discussion, where we would have been in complete disagreement. A mutual interest in type doesn’t necessarily make for a discussion between peers, although that doesn’t mean you can’t learn something, because that can happen anywhere.

Saying “we’re all individuals” also puts people in the same spot. Denial of individual difference is a core issue for the postmodern world as Terry Eagleton observes (2004) and there seems to be some general wish that eventually we will all agree on the shape of things, becoming accordingly individually non-individual.

In type this is like hoping that people will come to their senses and become NF, or NT, or really just like me. There’s a bit of that about, which seems to miss the point about difference. It is just that – different – whether psychological, cultural or anything else and the recognition of that and what to do with it is what’s most important. Avoiding it doesn’t help anybody at all.

An “individuals” statement can also mean “I don’t know how to adequately explain this idea,” notwithstanding the easy availability of material providing words or phrases (e.g. Page 1983) that identify some boundaries, usually directed at the MBTI and type descriptions.

So what does type explain and what should I know and be aware of?

Type can’t explain everything, because if it did people would be automaton-like figures as presumed by behaviourist, and some management, views.

Perhaps it’s also about people looking for a simple answer, or check-list against which to assess anybody. Type’s not like that, although it may appear to be that way on the surface to some at least. You can find out a lot of things very quickly using type, and this can be deceptive.

Personality *per se* can also be a number of things.

There are strong reasons for contending that describing Jung’s typology as personality type is profoundly misleading, particularly as he identifies true personality as a calling (1971). We can have preferences, but not necessarily personality. That doesn’t mean that type isn’t a core component of

what personality might be. I would argue for a more central location for discussing personality if you use type with other models; all models are not equal in content and insight.

Except for aspects of associated instrumentation, you have to forget type as a tool if you're looking at its theory. You also have to access other information in order to arrive a good interpretation and explanation of type.

Examining biology, neurology, evolution, measurement might be a start, even critical theory. Recent articles in the evolutionary study of how culture develops provide a congenial framework for the unfolding of type (Runciman 2001; Wheeler et al 2004).

You have to get past labels, even those of Jung, to the principles behind them. The brain or body doesn't really have labels: we put them there. Various offerings of theory and interpretation can cloud the basics or core.

We can quote liberally from Jung, Isabel Myers and others, but we have to know something about why they're saying these things in order to interpret them. Both took an evolutionary perspective, for instance. That doesn't mean you can't use their ideas if that's not your perspective, because many do, but it's useful to know where the ideas are coming from, and why.

I recently encountered someone who was enamoured, as was Jung, of the *Tao te ching*, liberally quoting a litany of lines. However, *Yin* and *Yang*, a core of Taoist philosophy, key for Jung, and relevant to an appreciation of his typology, was closed to her, which regrettably wasn't of concern, even though she counted herself as a student of his work.

In typology this is about notions of the unconscious and archetypal considerations, as well as the topics of recent and valuable articles by Roger Pearman and Gordon Lawrence (2007), which focus more on the MBTI than my purpose here.

In closing, I'd also like to welcome the *Journal of Psychological Type* back to APTi. It's a compulsory read for me since and it's a key way of learning what's inside and outside type.

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## 7. Measured responses: what some say and do

*I cannot experience your experience*

Herbert Marcuse

One of the advantages of personality measurement is as a guide to someone else's experience. Notwithstanding various means of surveillance, or superlative empathetic skills associated with the feeling function, an individual's experience is their own. Results from the MBTI or similar instruments are a stimulus for gaining insight into how others experience their life.

Katharine Briggs and Isabel Myers started their work in finding out what psychological type was; following that, how it could be measured. The method of measurement followed understanding of what was to be measured.

When you understand something about what's being measured, then you can make appropriate adjustments to your research to ensure a better result than might otherwise occur. In presenting on her research with Ojibwe students at the recent type and culture research conference in Hawai'i, Sandra Chesborough stated that she had the students fill out the MBTI anonymously so they didn't think she used their results as an influence on their grades. In this way, she was more likely to get accurate responses.

This understanding can also lead to informed comments on theoretical outcomes. At the same conference, Charles Meisgeier observed that most school students' auxiliaries weren't developed, something I also saw when developing a Jungian questionnaire for high school students last year. Knowing this alters your approach in a positive, more realistic manner.

Sometimes understanding the measurement means knowing particular facts about developers and users. One involving respect, is spelling Isabel Myers' name correctly (e.g. not Isobel; Briggs–Myers; Meyers). Sandra Hirsh (Hirsch) is also someone whose name regularly defeats others.

Recently, someone asked me about “the Jung/Meyers scales” (sic) and Jungian “dimensions.” C.G. Jung had nothing to do with scales of any sort, except perhaps those used for medical purposes and was dismissive of the use of statistics in psychology altogether. For him they described the “average” person, which was never the person he was immediately treating. Nor did he call his constructs “dimensions”, a measurement term, like best–fit.

*I thought that if I ate the food of the area I was visiting*

*That I might assimilate the point of view of the people there*

*As if the point of view was somehow in the food*

David Byrne

You also have to use the right measurement. David Byrne's sociological satire illustrates the seduction of implausible methods through an idiosyncratic theory of mind (1984).

Mark Buchanan's account of a research study of altruism demonstrated that the researchers didn't really think much about what it meant: cultural variance, amongst other things, leading to some messy outcomes (2008).

I live in a windy part of the world, and recently, some local residents sought to prove that it wasn't really windy because other places on the same coast were windier, producing facts to support their case. But they selected the wrong sort of measurement; comparisons of wind speeds can show that a place may be more or less windy than another, but not whether it's windy in the first place.

This can also occur elsewhere. Nutritionists use standard measures which define a serving of food, or a standard drink. But these are laboratory measures and aren't reflected in the design and size of the containers generally used for food and drink.

So these standards have limited practical utility. Perhaps a presumption is that people will set up a habit of measuring their food and drink before consumption. Apart from taking away the joys of eating and drinking, type theory would suggest that wholesale use of measurement in this way would be improbable, perhaps impossible.

Theorising also has its limits. Michael Hanlon (2008) suggests that those speculating about the number of universes and different realities may not have all that much evidence to support their contentions. But maybe it's a theory or method that these people like, and nothing else really matters to them.

This can lead to some curious statements and a few, sometimes serious errors. The technical manual for the 15FQ+, a clone of sorts of the 16PF, insists that the MBTI has 8 scales. Bipolar scales are apparently too horrible to contemplate.

Girelli and Stape's *Bipolarity in Jungian Type Theory and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (1993), sent to me by a postgraduate student who I'd recently taught type, brought up several issues. The authors' research involved comparing MBTI Form G with a Likert scale version of the same instrument, which they had developed.

In doing this, they presumed:

- that item choices were of equal value (although the scoring method – 0,1 or 2 for answers – suggested this wasn't the case);
- that Jung's functions and their development were literally present in the MBTI; and
- that breaking up MBTI items into separate components wouldn't make any difference to meaning.

There was a serial inability to spell extraversion and intuition and a presumption that Jung described his categories as dimensions. There was a lot of enthusiasm leaping out of the text, and the authors must have had fun, but they didn't examine either type theory or the MBTI to sufficient depth. This article is published in a respected academic journal, so a reminder that it's content that matters, not where something is found.

In the more prosaic world of blogs, Emily Yoffe claimed to have used the MBTI to assess the type preferences of presidential candidates, Clinton, Obama and McCain but then said she read some biographies and type books, which is somewhat different (2008). Respondents included someone who said the MBTI was at [www.humanmetrics.com](http://www.humanmetrics.com) and another who considered being MBTI qualified gave certainty to her observations about the current president.

Andrew Keen contends that the internet, by promoting a curious version of equality regarding talent and its expression, was actually diminishing knowledge and understanding (2007).

It's an idea worth considering.



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## 8. Time and Place: Psychological type; global life

C.G. Jung's theory of psychological types presumes a universal pattern of human conscious orientation. As a predisposition, typological orientation may be subsumed under cultural situations or otherwise remain unconscious, no matter the culture or situation.

When questionnaires are applied in various countries there are a number of local considerations, including whether the American MBTI, a product of Western technology and thought, works well across cultures; it is what is taught and used in Australia, for instance. This occurs in part because American English is a *lingua franca* of business in particular and international communication in general.

This doesn't mean that all MBTI items are equally effective, particularly if it's not realised that you don't have to answer every question. For example, I taught Step II to a South African woman a couple of years ago. She had identified as ESFJ at my Qualifying Workshop, but came out ESTJ on the Step II. It turned out she viewed the word "sentimental" with some distaste (something many Australians would agree with) and so answered whatever was the opposite choice.

Notwithstanding Jung's presumptions about the universality of his typology, the empiricist Isabel Myers and her long-time collaborator Mary McCaulley sought to gather evidence that this was the case, at least in terms of psychological instrumentation. Myers' licensing of the MBTI to Takeshi Ohsawa of Japan in the late 1960s, the establishment of conferences exploring type and culture and linking with people from other countries on the development of type instruments are examples of this search.

Although theory and research into psychological type is a global consideration, it doesn't follow that there are links, solid or otherwise, between the various players, or researchers, or that the introduction of the MBTI into a culture resembles some kind of flow chart. It depends on what you experience, who you know – not necessarily what's available, and from whom.

Sometimes this process involves synchronicity, sometimes it's a little more prosaic.

Looking at the past can shed light on what some people did with Jung's ideas.

Several books using part or all of his typology appeared in the United States in the early 1930s for instance. Katharine Briggs and Isabel Myers were investigating type at this time but hadn't got to the point of deciding to develop a questionnaire.

One of these publications was part of a general course in psychology conducted by the Society for Adult Education in Chicago (Dorcus 1933) and comprehensively described the types. *American Types*, a somewhat racier tome, in the spirit of the times, was produced by James Oppenheim (1931). One wonders who went to the courses and read the books, and what they did, and thought.

A founding myth of the type community in Australia is that the MBTI was introduced by Catholic priests and nuns who had studied at the University of California at Berkeley in the late 1970s.

One of these people, Margaret Dwyer, in developing both her own questionnaire and later a book on type and spiritual direction (1988), contacted Isabel Myers by phone and asked her a few questions. Mary McCaulley consequently visited her in the hills on the outskirts of Melbourne on her visit in 1994 to the second conference of the Australian Association for Psychological Type (AAPT, now AusAPT).

This conference included a session, attended by key players, which discussed the establishment of an independent research facility. At the time, the Association had a broad aim of emulating what was understood to be the American experience.

It had established a publication (the *Australian Journal of Psychological Type*, later replaced by the *Australian Psychological Type Review*) and sought to model CAPT, albeit in a much smaller way.

A *Psychological Type Research Unit* (PTRU) was subsequently established as a joint venture between the Association and Deakin University in 1996, possessing a substantial donated library and type data base and providing regular reports in the Association's publication and at its conferences.

The recently published *Type and Culture* (2007) excellently presents information on using the MBTI internationally, including type tables of managers from several countries. Surprisingly, for me, there wasn't any Australian information. Apart from the work of the PTRU, I particularly thought of an article by Guthrie (1993) which had wide recognition at one time.

But interests and networks, type and otherwise, don't necessarily overlap. What's known in one part of the world, or in a particular discipline, can be lost to outsiders, who may not have the code, key, or the necessity.

Preference also comes into what research or information catches your eye. Being monolingual means that I can only read articles and books in the varieties of English that are available, which is personally disappointing. When looking for Jungian reading, I'm more inclined to seek out English and European authors, old and new. Susan Rowland, for instance has interpreted Jung as a writer and philosopher, using the methods of literary criticism (2004). It's an interesting reframing, particularly in the context of new scientific and intellectual insights.

This is important, because one of the questions to be asked about Jung's typology is whether it's time specific, belonging to a period where the mind developed in a particular way.

Jung's framework depends in part on whether it's important to be a personality, to psychologically distinguish oneself from others. The general use of the term "flexing", for instance, implies at one level that there's no core self, even perhaps that there shouldn't be one.

Susan Greenfield has recently speculated on the impact of technology on human identity in this way. Shorter attention spans in a "visual, literal, world of the screen" might lead to a preference for abandoning the idea of being "Somebody", thus wanting an identity, and being "Nobody" where the idea of an identity is given up altogether, or "Anybody" where identity is with the group (2008).

So, does the malleability of the human brain imply that types are ultimately ephemeral, or is type a natural consequence of particular development? As type preferences are content-free, we would at least expect behaviours to change, as happens between generations and across cultures.

Some of this speculation naturally has to do with consciousness. Humans are considered conscious beings, but that's not the same as being psychologically conscious, which seems a subset of overall consciousness and to my mind what Jung was concerned with.

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Peter Geyer is a co-founder of the PTRU

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## 9. Same words, different meaning: on interpretation

*I had a dream last night, what a lovely dream it was!  
I dreamed we were all alright, happy in a land of Oz...  
All of the players were playing together  
And all of the heavies were light as a feather*  
John Sebastian

I had a dream last night. Not in the sense of John Sebastian or, for that matter, Martin Luther King. In my dream, someone new appeared – a person I'd met in the world outside my dreaming and who I would appreciate meeting again.

What this might mean depends on what you think dreams are. From a scientific perspective, dreams are likely to spring from the mind reviewing the day and perhaps presenting some wish fulfillment. Another view has the characters in dreams as being aspects of your own psyche, sometimes identifiable as functions. In the past, the oracle at Delphi went into a trance dream-like state, uttering oblique phrases about future events.

A “dream” can be about something concrete or something abstract: the dream of owning your own home is important in Australia; various universities and organisations encourage you to “live your dream”. Australian Aboriginal people talk about the experience and importance of the Dreaming: a state where past, present and future are one. Being called a “dreamer” is not an Australian compliment: the culture values pragmatism, not fantasy.

Dreams are important in Jungian thought; indeed it could be said that Jung dreamed up his typology. The reverie between sleeping and waking can also be a time for insight: having ideas come and making sense of them: how to write them down, for instance.

### Film as psychological explanation

What's information for some people isn't necessarily information for others.

Many years ago, Anthony Moore offered at an APTi Conference a compelling Jungian interpretation of the movie *Field of Dreams* (1991). He also presented this at OKA MBTI® Qualifying Workshops, where I saw and appreciated it. Its theme of baseball appeared to resonate archetypally with Americans, although it wasn't really a sports movie: A prominent Australian football coach and academic has said he didn't understand it at all (Rocky etc. made more sense).

If you're like me, and you don't seek movies (or even television) out for entertainment (books and music are better), or see them as ways of gaining knowledge of personal interest, then certain information can't connect.

I've never seen *The Wizard of Oz*, for instance, and have no desire to do so. I've seen John Beebe's diagrams applying his 8-Functions model to this movie's characters and I know that he and many of

his followers use film as an interpretive framework, but it's not evidence that makes sense to me. Oz, of course, is also a shorthand for Australia. I can grasp that, even though I don't use the term.

### On "Personality"

When we think we're talking about type, or related ideas, we may be talking about quite different things: subtle differences or even radical ones in meaning. John Beebe calls one of his functions the opposing personality, for instance, but its meaning would have more to do with what can be described as "personalities," sometimes "sub-personalities" within a psyche, than with general definitions of personality, typological or otherwise.

Neuroscientists can also present at type conferences and provide some insight into the typological perspective without talking in type or even broad Jungian terms at all.

Recently, I was invited to present on the MBTI® at two events in Korea, at the Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) in Daejeong: the International Conference for the Integration of Science and Technology into Society (ICISTS) and the APCTP - KAIST Summer School for Brain Dynamics. These were fascinating and informative events.

One of the things I learned was that what neuroscientists were looking for and what psychological type indicated were two different things. A neuroscientific definition of intuition, for instance, involves the use of repeated patterns of behaviour more akin to Jungian sensation than the novelty associated with Jungian intuition.

Other aspects of neuroscientific investigation I observed (e.g. the selection a particular style of art (modernist) for investigating emotional response, or notions of beauty) had me wondering why there didn't seem to be experiments that looked at deeper considerations of personality, whether typological or not.

The type of empiricism outlined in Mary Harrington's informative book on neuroscientific experimental design gave me some clue why this was the case, although the prospect of designing typologically based experiments didn't seem excluded (Harrington 2008). The right questions and experiments would need to be asked and conducted primarily from theoretical definitions.

Harrington offers a useful distinction between a theory and a model:

*"A model is mechanistic, a description of a process or phenomenon. At a higher conceptual level, scientists form theories to explain a process. A theory incorporates diverse phenomena and describes general organising principles. A theory attempts a much more general explanation than a model does..."*

*...A theory that explains more is better than one that explains less. A simpler theory is preferred to a more complex theory if both have equal explanatory power (op.cit., p41)"*

The principles of Jung's typology fit in here as a theory, because at the core level they're content-free. Typological models occur as you get further into function and type code behaviour descriptions, as in John Beebe's work and the many others who produce things like leadership or career material. These can be and are valuable.

My preference is to be clear about the theory as lots of description can get in the way of understanding the core principles of a type preference

Within Jung's theory, there can be model confusion, depending on definition. This is one of the reasons Jung has been described by some as preferring INTJ, rather than INTP. At the model level, it would be very hard on any reading of Jung's life, including consulting the published records of his seminars, to consider him a J. He also describes himself as a thinking type and not an intuitive

type. To test this out at the theoretical level, you'd have to consider whether his inferior function is sensing or feeling given that in his seminars on Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, Jung describes Nietzsche's identified non-preferred functions as both being inferior (Jarrett ed.).

One of my students in teaching a Jungian questionnaire I'd developed and its typological interpretation for a European-based organisation recently was a Jungian analyst. He was trained in Zurich and identified his type as ESFJ. He also said that his Jungian colleagues identified him as "a Sensation type". This was at least partly because Sensation/Sensing was his highest score on the scales of whatever instrument he had completed (he was unclear whether it was the Gray-Wheelwright Jungian Type Survey, or the MBTI).

I took me quite a while to successfully explain to him the sorting nature of both the MBTI and the questionnaire I was teaching, which meant that individual scale scores were irrelevant for selecting a dominant function. And that a dominant function arose out of an interpretation of a type code, initially established for that purpose by Isabel Myers.

The different definition was firmly in his mind.

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## 10. Empiricism and other issues: a measured look at recent contentions

*Jung is above all an empiricist*

Jolan Jacobi

What happens when you read a research article?

What sort of questions, if any, come into your mind: are you looking for holes in an argument or simply for what an author is presenting? Is the fact that it's been published significant enough to accept its argument or findings? Is it empirical?

“Empirical” is a significant term attached to discourse on psychological type and other personality research. Presented as essential, but never really described – you're supposed to know what it means, even if you've never really thought about it.

An implication, also unstated, is that other research perspectives are inadequate or unacceptable, whatever they might be; whatever the research subject. Also, if I drift across to the language of object relations, there might be an anxiety about my research subject (e.g. C.G. Jung's typology) and think that if I use this accepted method, then psychological type will accordingly become acceptable to critics. I can also gain kudos for claiming my research as empirical, no matter its other attributes, which may be less convincing.

In other areas of enquiry, I might be impelled to utilise some sort of ethnomethodology or postmodern method, for similar reasons.

The social scientist Bruno Latour would call “empiricism” a “black box”, where something remains unexamined because of tacit agreement about what it contains. We all know what “empiricism” is, or at least we should, so it remains undiscussable and any limitations on its applications or appropriateness are uninvestigated.

The MBTI, for instance is continually re-examined because its methods of measurement are not conventional, can't be black-boxed and so are continually examined, at varying levels of expertise and understanding (Geyer 1995). This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it does produce difficulties in acceptance if you have a particular view of measurement.

Empirical research on personality has to be quantifiable in some way. This may not be useful with categories that aren't pure categories. If it's about generalised behaviours, something you can see, not something that might need inference or interpretation, then there might be difficulties or constraints or adaptation. This is a core reason why Jung was wary of measurement methods.

Part of the presumptions of “empirical” in this respect relate to a mechanistic, Skinnerian view of personality. What's important here is some method of statistically examining data, however gathered. Other forms of empiricism, like that claimed by Jung as a scientific observer of facts and consequent developer of a theory are excluded, notwithstanding Jung's methods being congenial to



20th century “New” science approaches. Jung used empirical thinking to describe the combination of sensing and thinking (Corrie 1927).

“Empirical” can also be used as a blunt instrument, as the research that some people do, and clearly others don’t. To put trust in their own numbers; meanings and presumptions behind what they do and say left unexamined

Several years ago, an article critiquing the MBTI was published in a respected Australian journal. It became quickly influential and is widely quoted, notwithstanding its uneven argument and several obvious inaccuracies, suggesting that those who liked the paper didn’t read it closely, or take the trouble to check claims and references (Boyle 1995).

Agreement without investigation.

David Pittenger is widely quoted in articles critiquing type, notwithstanding his intemperate style and his criticisms of the MBTI for not doing things it doesn’t claim to do, something easily checked out, if you’re so inclined (1993).

*Faith in the window,  
But not in the door...  
Faith in mathematics...  
Kip Hanrahan*

Sometimes people presume too much of measurement. Barbuto (1997) critiqued the MBTI for not identifying levels of consciousness, indicating that he didn’t understand the nature of Jungian consciousness, the measurement aim of the MBTI or his implicit presumption that its items had some sort of magical quality and could identify that attribute, along with preference.

Three recent *Journal of Psychological Type* articles seem to possess some of this magical allure. Over some years, James Reynierse, often in collaboration with James Harker, has presented several articles examining and critiquing the MBTI from a measurement viewpoint, in particular the associated notion of type dynamics. These latest articles are self-avowedly empirical and the requisite charts proliferate (2008a; 2008b; 2009).

Because they are a continuation of research published in the same journal (as well as the *Bulletin*) many claims are restated, some less clearly than in earlier material. The authors prefer a preference pairs hypothesis to a type dynamics explanation for MBTI results because it’s statistically verifiable i.e. you can get it from questionnaires.

The first two articles focus more on the preferred notion of preference pairs “ordinal relationships prescribed by their MBTI content” (2008a p93). One wonders how this fits with Isabel Myers’ view that “the questions mean nothing in themselves,” particularly as the MBTI Forms used in the research are her items. In so doing, they alter the purpose of the MBTI to fit it into what seems a Cattellian oriented process, a natural endpoint for a particular form of empiricism.

The idea here is that you should be able to get type dynamics “effects” out of the MBTI (as defined – particular Forms are used) and if you can’t get it, then type dynamics is questionable at the very least. An important part of this presumption is that the J–P scale should have specific content other than the items being a stimulus to a type response, an idea that isn’t canvassed. An underlying presumption is also that type dynamics effects are consistent, visible and measurable across the various psyches that might prefer extraverted thinking, for example.

The research sample is slightly larger than previous reports, indicating it’s cumulative. Sample members have completed MBTI Forms F, K, or J and have been rated by observers, using an observer ratings questionnaire. These raters are reputed to know their subject well, whatever that

means; no other indication is given of observation attributes – it’s openly presumed that this is a good idea.

The rating questionnaire is comprised of descriptors from a number of sources: Type and MBTI related literature including relevant words arriving from Adjective Check List correlations and the DiSC–oriented *Individual Talent Survey*, a curious addition for which a measurement reason is given.

Given in particular that a couple of these sources aren’t type related, as far as intent of language goes, this seems a dubious method, unless you think that words are pure constructs and have the same meaning everywhere and that everyone has the same dictionary in their heads, although the latter might be plausible, depending on the cultural nature of the sample. Given that a focus is on the socially acceptable.

This problem with words comes out clearly in Table 3, where lists of S, N, T, F descriptors analysed for type dynamics “effects” are provided. Several of these in each column appear incorrectly allocated or inappropriate. I think this anomaly is sufficient to question the research results.

One of the key presumptions in this research is that the MBTI is the core artifact of psychological type and type dynamics: as though the theory in all its manifestations is in the questionnaire – not only that but particular Forms. No other Jungian forms are considered, Steve Myers’ MTRI, for instance, or the Golden, or the Majors, nor is any MBTI Form less than 20 years old part of the research.

The notion that the MBTI is not the origin of the typology but a way of accessing it, and so therefore to access the dynamics of type is closed to the authors.

The final article, which argues against type dynamics as a construct, suffers from the implausibility of the related research in the previous papers. A critique of type dynamics is relevant though, even if associated research isn’t particularly robust, because there really hasn’t been much published on the topic at all, empirical or otherwise. Much of the information I’ve encountered seems to be simple statements and description, sometimes dogma, although dogma can come from many fronts, including the empirical.

Reynierse describes the various models fairly well, although he’s unable to bring himself to say that the “Manual” model appears that of Jung, something easily verifiable. John Beebe’s approach is correctly identified as explicitly a therapeutic model, yet still examined in the context of the MBTI. However, not enough attention is paid to available material from a broader Jungian perspective or from Jungian commentators.

The most startling aspect of the paper is the claim that type dynamics isn’t even Jungian. Dominant/ Superior and Inferior are clearly Jungian terms, as are discussions or explanations about which is developed, which is conscious or unconscious and so on. (e.g. Jung, Corrie, Jacobi).

Reynierse seems convinced that type dynamics didn’t exist until Isabel Myers produced her *Manual* in 1962. Perhaps it’s because he thinks it has to do with Myers’ J–P scale and so was invented there. This scale of course was developed in the 1940s as a means of trying to access Jung’s idea. Laney (1949) provides a Report Form from 1946 that clearly indicates that,

Katharine Briggs mentioned function dynamics in her 1928 *New Republic* article (1928/1981) well before any questionnaire; papers and the manual itself from those associated with the *Gray–Wheelwright Jungian Type Survey* talk about the functions in a dynamical way (Wheelwright et al 1946; und; und)

The author quotes C.A. Meier to support his contention that type dynamics isn't even Jungian. Unfortunately, C.A. doesn't really help, as the quoted passage is clearly talking type dynamics of some sort. Walter Lowen (1992) is also dragged in. Lowen doesn't think J-P is bipolar, further along from the given quote he launches into his own view of type dynamics.

However complex or simple you get, you can't use Jung's typology as intended without at least dominant and inferior. It's actually what it's about, not an interpretation of what the MBTI should be like. At some stage you have to ask what the rationale for this kind of research is empirical or otherwise.

Opening the black box of empiricism might be a start, for theoretically inclined researchers at least.

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## 11. Type and the world: some research questions

*What colour is that?*

*What word can we invent?*

*What word can we both understand?*

Kip Hanrahan

Retinas, like fingerprints, are all different, indicating that individuals see the world in different ways. And in seeking to communicate experiences like colour, a compatible word, or even a language, has to be developed.

Coming to an agreement about colour and understanding another's perspective appears clearly compatible with a typological orientation; but one might say much the same about a trait-oriented point of view.

The same information can be interpreted differently, depending on where you stand, and it can be an ideological preference, either way in this case, which determines a group or individual position.

One of the most exciting and important research events in the type world has been initiated by Roger Pearman. A Research Forum – “Examining the Evidence” is scheduled for June 3–6, 2010. Its purpose is to “take up the question of the empirical evidence of the dynamics of the types and the efficacy of type development...Is there sound evidence for the validity of type theory, especially type dynamics and development?” (2009).

This event is an opportunity to investigate every aspect of psychological type and re-examine personal perspectives – to open up a debate as far as possible.

A false consensus also needs to be avoided. Charles Freeman's recent book *AD381* (2009) investigates the imposition of the Nicene Creed on the Christian Church in that year by the Roman Emperor Theodosius and its consequences, including acceptance without investigation. Type is a strongly held belief system in more than a few quarters, and the components of that belief system vary. Otherwise we may be left with competing models and questions that are undiscussable, and won't be able to meet the challenges for researching psychological type and making it relevant.

Here are some questions that come to mind:

### 1. C.G.Jung

What did Jung say and write? *Psychological Types* as now presented (CW6) contains some material not readily available to Isabel Myers. *The Tavistock Lectures* (1935); *Analytical Psychology* (1989) are amongst other texts that demand consideration.

What did people think Jung said about his idea of personality, particularly consciousness?

How should we be listening to what Jung said?

Has science and other new knowledge passed him by? Richardson's work on intelligence is instructive as a perspective, particularly in comments regarding measurement (2000).

## 2. Terminology

Are there better words available for what Jung observed?

Are there more appropriate words for function, or process? Jung also used the term mental activity

Should type preferences be identified as cognitive processes?

What does "innate" mean? (Jung initially followed Konrad Lorenz here)

Is *personality types* correct, when Jung had a specific definition of personality and used the term *psychological types*?

Is a type preference related to specific behaviours notwithstanding cultural influences?

How does this fit into mainstream views and research about cognition?

What is meant by *conscious* and *unconscious* in the type community at large?

## 3. Research

*The questions to which we subject evidence are rarely the same ones the evidence was written to answer*  
David Rooney

How should type be researched? Research is quite different from teaching and presenting a model, for instance.

What are compatible methods for investigating type dynamics and development, given they are presumed to be experienced differently and at different times by individuals?

Do we research in a particular way because it's the only way we know e.g. use of undergraduate students, traditional empirical methods?

What is the place, and the limitations of measurement? Measurement has always been a major research focus because of Isabel Myers' work and APTi itself for obvious reasons of history and cultural presumptions.

Does type fit in with the logical positivist or rational choice perspectives that are associated with measurement research? Would a narrative approach be more appropriate, for instance?

Do we need to find the best method of measuring for the purpose at hand, not what others do for different purposes? This is more or less what Isabel Myers did.

What happens with other research: biology, consciousness studies. emotion, how similar and different are they to investigating type?

Is type better used as a set of overarching or underpinning principles, used to interpret other perspectives or models?

How much of research is culturally bound, and is it helpful?

Is type a psychotherapeutic model at heart and should it be researched that way?

Is type essentially a middle class theory with regard to its applications and presumptions?

## 4. Personality and Research Outside Type

Over the past months, I've had access to research journals in various disciplines, under the Sage umbrella. Many of the journals associated with personality appeared to have themes compatible with psychological type or Jung, but nothing of that nature appeared in the articles I studied.

I don't know whether anyone has ever submitted a type-related article, or whether the Journals themselves exclude such work, but it seems to me that some research with type or an application could be acceptable as social psychology, for instance.

Unsurprisingly, many of the articles discussed similar issues regarding personality and research to those facing Jungian typology. Here are some examples.

Bruce Mazlish (2001) gave his approach to the nature of science and scientific method from an historical perspective.

Craig (1999) and Kvale (2003) separately discussed the nature of psychology and personality in different ways, the latter suggesting cheekily and postmodernistically that the best theories are those that are well-marketed.

Friere (2006) and Houston (2005) wrote about limitations to a strictly empirically-based research process, particularly in resultant average generalisations rather than attending to the individual.

Kruglanski (2004) and Osbeck (2005) made observations about the difficulties in taking a theoretical perspective; Conn (2009) questioned whether theory-driven interventions in the field of nursing were theory-driven at all.

There's a lot of debate out there, and type research can both learn from it, and contribute to it.

### **The Type Reporter**

Research and evidence can be presented in different ways. *The Type Reporter*, which has recently ceased publication, provides an example of how varied and eclectic information about psychological type can be. Susan Scanlon presented accessible material over many years on a variety of topics, from Walter Lowen's *Dichotomies of the Mind* to how different types go about day-to-day experiences, like parenting.

In regular issues comprising a few leaflet-style pages, people of all types, including many acknowledged type experts explained briefly how they approached various tasks and situations. In other disciplines, this would be called ethnographic research, or oral history.

I've always found something to learn from each issue that arrived in the mail and greatly appreciate Susan's work. I have the complete set of issues and recommend you go to [www.typereporter.com](http://www.typereporter.com) and see what gems you can find

A final question.

Are or should there be public intellectuals speaking on type, or using it?

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## 12. Knowing about type: sources, associations, evaluations

Researching psychological type often entails scrabbling about in the dark, particularly if you're looking for links and associations with other psychological ideas.

Many issues in psychology are problematic, or "persistent" as Joseph Notterman has it (2004); resolution remains uncertain, except for those who claim "the" answer. These solutions can appear as "fads," other methods cast aside only to return later, a process visible across other fields of human endeavour (Best 2006).

Having your own point of view is an admirable quality, although it's useful to remain open to other perspectives. Vicki Jo Varner's perspective of the online type community is that it appears to value personal insight over professional and other knowledge (2009), a kind of virtual reality, in which she is a participant.

The internet also provides mainstream thinkers with an opportunity to promote their ideas, albeit in 10 minute video clips, reductionist by necessity and so problematic in another way. The skeptic Michael Shermer and psychologist Philip Zimbardo have recently separately appeared this way (2010). Shermer has "the" answer (at least neuroscientifically), which makes for good stand-up comedy (his mode of presentation).

Zimbardo spins a pleasant cartoon tale about different personality approaches to time, its ultimate focus an important educational/technological issue. Some questionable historical, cultural and political presuppositions shore up his line of talk. Both of these sights enable you to receive information without really being informed.

Like certain aspects of C.G. Jung's work that stay hidden for various reasons, Isabel Myers' work appears remarkably separate from that of others who might be considered her peers in time and space, whether it be measurement, or the general subject of personality. Her core material essentially appears in MBTI Manuals as part of the explication for various Forms (these days, Steps).

But general texts on personality or personality measurement may not mention her at all, even though at various times MBTI researchers have intriguingly commented on her separate development of particular statistical methods, a model of individual development akin to self-efficacy, and an affinity with "positive psychology," the latter link apparently made without investigating the content and intention of the current movement of that name.

There's no indication that these interpretations of Myers' output are part of a relevant discourse, or even the public domain. Whilst this situation can be explained through the history of both Jung's

typology and the MBTI, the isolation of Isabel Myers' thought and deed from similar enterprises makes it hard, if not impossible, to identify her as a pioneer or originator of ideas or processes, simply because very few people were aware of her work and thought.

The Isabel Briggs Myers Memorial Library at CAPT in Florida provides access to a wide range of documentation from 1944 onwards produced by Isabel Myers. It's worth investigating.

How much the label "positive psychology" applies to this work is questionable. At a basic level, type can claim to be a positive psychology because it attests that the differences it identifies are good, by definition. It doesn't operate from a presumption of pathology or personality deficiency.

I doubt whether this perspective is sufficient to align type with the "positive psychology" movement of Martin Seligman and others, and I wonder whether it would be a good idea to do so in any case.

Like emotional intelligence, positivity is "a highly contested construct." Farnborough and Hart observe "we could be blindsided by enlarging the positive and diminishing the negative as EI seems to encourage us to do" (2008).

Being positive is considered a good thing, particularly in the United States. At the Dallas APTi Conference, I engaged in my usual practice of reading local newspapers, with the enthusiastic help of one hotel staff member, who proclaimed *USA Today* "America's paper – because it's positive!" – a criterion I had never considered relevant to a good newspaper.

Barbara Ehrenreich attests that cultural promotion of positive thinking hasn't helped the United States much at all, particularly in considering it the only perspective to take in life with the only alternative to be negative (2009).

Relentlessly taking one perspective on life can blind you to important and relevant facts and other, more viable alternatives.

Lest her position be considered as aggrieved polemic, it is bolstered by others. Daniel Nettle writes that, whatever "happiness" is, it isn't the same for everyone, and a positive outlook isn't necessarily a prerequisite (2005). Barbara Held has criticised positive psychology promoters for denigrating the gifts of critique and the seeking of social change, as well as the importance of complaint in everyday life (2002/2004).

Accepting the current system and succeeding within it goes with these positive ideas.

This response to the positive psychology movement has something to do with overarching claims made by Seligman in particular and his disparaging of other perspectives such as humanistic psychology. This is a position not universal in his group (e.g. Peterson 2004).

Eugene Taylor's response is a history lesson on positive psychology antecedents, which calls to attention Seligman's consistent inability in his body of writing to address this subject (2001), a theme also taken up by Rathunde (2001). To be fair, Seligman's not the only psychologist who appears to find it difficult to walk across a campus and have a chat with history or sociology faculty members.

In all these cases, it's an idea to look beyond the attractiveness of a title or label to see what it contains, before claiming an association. Personality is a complex business.

This is the last article from me as IAC Theory and Research. I've enjoyed my time and space and aimed to give a different perspective to type research and theory, learning quite a lot on the way. I have no idea what my successor will contribute, but it's sure to be interesting and different and I welcome them to the post.

See you at the next APTi Conference.

Peter

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