

Glibly attractive?

Reading in and around Annie Murphy Paul's *The Cult of Personality*



Peter Geyer

Annie Murphy Paul

The cult of personality:

How personality tests are leading us to miseducate our children, mismanage our companies, and misunderstand ourselves

New York: Free Press, 2004
ISBN 0-7432-4356-0

Peter Geyer (INTP) is a teacher, writer, researcher and PhD student, currently studying the ideas, history and practicality of the MBTI at the University of South Australia.

He conducts MBTI qualifying workshops and advanced seminars.

alchymia@ozemail.com.au
www.petergeyer.com.au

*I am trying to read your mind
We have stopped to smell the roses
I am trying not to lose mine
The roses or my mind*

Jonatha Brooke

*Everything has been going to the dogs since
the Pharaohs, but we never seem to arrive at
the kennels.*

Frank Devine

At the top of their craft, songwriters have the licence and ability to speak insightfully, if sometimes starkly, about life, as experienced by them and by others. Beauty and angst run together in their work.

It would be a grave mistake to assess the quality of their output on selected life events and personal peccadilloes. On that basis there would not be much to listen to at all, no matter what your taste and inclination.

The word *personality* on the cover of a book or magazine is going to attract interest, irrespective of its content or quality. And if recent best-selling successes in this field are anything to go by, sometimes the topic can be so interesting *per se* that the reader's critical faculties are dramatically lowered.

This might seem strange. An experience of mine a few years ago, while teaching the MBTI to a large group, might help to explain. At a break, an enthusiastic group of young women came up to ask about type preferences and successful relationships. I told them that personality was much more complex than that. While some type pairings were over-represented, you could not say, for instance, that ISFJs *should* be with ESTJs—even if a lot of them *are*.

That dimmed their enthusiasm somewhat. 'Oh well, back to astrology!' said one—leaving aside the notion (for a while, at least) that they might want to reflect on the attributes of an actual person, as well as their own proclivities. In their search for a quick answer to the hardest question of all they might have bought *Men are from Mars* etc, which came out not long after.

Others claim that personality is too complex to be described: a broadly correct but curious position, as it often seems to lead to a denial of the utility of *any* information at all about people, particularly descriptive information.

Neither of these perspectives seems to me all that helpful as a method of finding out about personality in general, or in looking at the views of researchers and others on what personality might entail. So we have to look elsewhere.

In offering advice to a student on reading and taking notes, the late historian Conrad Russell once said, 'Take down the evidence the author presents, but never the argument itself'—then added, 'unless, of course, if you disagree with it' (King 2004).

Either way, Russell asks you to check the facts presented, which involves more than writing them down. He also alerts us to a conundrum: what if the facts *don't* support the preferred argument, whether it be the author's own contentions, or a view held by someone else?

In the latter half of 2004 Annie Murphy Paul gained attention with her attack on personality testing in the USA, *The Cult of Personality*. The flyleaf of her book tells us that Paul was educated at Yale, and is a former senior editor at the popular magazine *Psychology Today*.

Paul's proposition is that personality is too complex to be covered by any test

This is the first problem with the Myers-Briggs. It assumes that we are either one thing or another – Intuitive or Sensing, Introverted or Extroverted.

But personality doesn't fit into neat binary categories: we fall somewhere along a continuum.

Malcolm Gladwell, 2004

Paul's attack on the MBTI in particular has caused anxiety for type practitioners, and for the MBTI publisher, CPP. Praise from prominent writers appears on the book's cover and in the media. A website has been established to promote Paul's views.

Such responses might seem a little incongruous, given that quantification has a close association with the American way of life (e.g. Banta 2004). From the Stanford Binet IQ test to the MMPI to the NEO-PI and beyond, the USA has led the world in the application of psychological instruments to many professions. It has also exported that approach—particularly in business, where the connection between testing and the workplace originated in the 1920s.

Theories have also been quantified, the best-known being Jung's theory of psychological types. The MBTI and the Gray-Wheelwright Jungian Type Survey were developed, independently, in the 1940s. Other Jungian instruments have appeared since then.

But the notion of testing *per se* has never had universal appeal. Hanson (1993) and Gould (1996) are two critics, as is Rogers (1994) in a standard student text on testing. Critiques from Hoffman (1964) and others led to acts of Congress on racial test bias. General critiques of psychotherapies and psychological methods, including testing itself, have also had an impact from inside and outside the profession (e.g. Gross 1978, Mischel 1968).

The response by users of tests, particularly the MBTI, has been interesting. Some are unwilling to countenance the idea that they or their tools may be complicit in harming people. Perhaps they are unaware of the mottled history of psychological testing and the failures, as well as successes, of those involved in that, or in psychology and psychiatry in general.

Paul's broad proposition seems to be an extreme view: personality is too complex to be covered by any test, and so tests are dangerous, and we should reject what tests may or may not tell us. This is a somewhat literal approach. Interestingly, in a response to Paul, Naomi Quenk starts from the same proposition to explain why the MBTI is as it is, and what it actually does (2004).

Paul, however, prefers a method she calls 'narrative', a process we glimpse towards the end of the book.

Paul's chapters, in roughly chronological sequence, deal with aspects of the lives of certain originators of personality tests. The tests are a mix of *projective* (pictures) and *objective* (pencil-and-paper questionnaire) tests. Some search for pathologies; others, such as the MBTI, seek to identify 'normal' behaviour, as defined—an important distinction that's a bit muddled in the text.

How should we take this book and its author? Here are two media responses.

Boston Globe journalist Katharine A Powers wrote about *The Cult of Personality* in a brief column. After a swing at personality tests, Powers admits to opening the book with 'eager hands': a 'serious book', but also 'an entertainingly illuminating one.' These tests Paul describes 'are bad, but if one may judge by the coverage this book is getting, their dominion is in jeopardy.' Powers goes on to talk about personality from the life of author James Ellroy.

In the *New Yorker* Malcolm Gladwell takes a longer view, coupling a war narrative with some observations, mostly about the MBTI. He quotes liberally from Paul, without criticism of the MBTI and its authors.

Gladwell has completed the MBTI (INTJ is his result), but it seems that no-one has explained its theory to him, nor the nature and purpose of the questions. So he asks good, but uninformed, questions. Paul's book is 'fascinating' to Gladwell, and her 'narrative' method appeals, essentially on the basis that it's something you can see.

Powers and Gladwell both agree with Paul's proposition and report accordingly. Paul's comments are reported as facts, or at least appear unexamined. Curiosity doesn't extend beyond this point. Authority, it seems, is in the fact that a person has written a book, rather than in its contents.

The retired editor, journalist and sometime reviewer Frank Devine would probably have a bit of difficulty with this approach. He recently (2005) reviewed the linguist John McWhorter's book on the decline of language (American language in this case). Devine has some sympathy with the writer,

at one stage writing that he ‘saw McWhorter as a possible soul mate.’ Ultimately that seems to be a false hope as, although ‘his examples are often entertaining and his distaste for populist sludge is refreshing’, the words ‘repetitious’ and ‘ramble’ also appear.

Devine’s final judgement is that ‘an important subject has been crippled by the very maladies the author seeks to cure: an obscurantist style, a want of discipline, an absence of perspective, and a dearth of comparative knowledge.’ Tough, perhaps, but at least you get the idea that Devine has grappled with what the book says.

So, what of Paul’s book? Does it do or say what it sets out to do? How is it written and argued, particularly regarding the MBTI?

The structure of this book makes it harder than expected to examine. Although the chapters are in some loose chronological sequence, their content is not organised in that way. There are jumps in time (forward and back), purpose, and topic. This is a confusing and, at times, misleading practice.

Curiously, there is no bibliography, simply endnotes organised by chapter, that refer to quotations made in the body of the text. Unfortunately, some of these are referenced incorrectly. There are also several factual errors in the book.

The focus of *The Cult of Personality* as a whole is not on the development of such instruments and the social and intellectual context of their development, but on the *developers*, particularly their personal lives. It would not be unkind to say that these stories are inclined to sensationalism. At times the material is simply salacious, a theme the author, obviously skilled in the journalistic style, enhances with cleverly placed personal comments that are fairly close to innuendo.

Some examples. For the MMPI, we have Starke Hathaway, and his colleague’s suicide. Henry Murray’s amorous liaisons colour the Thematic Apperception Test. For the 16PF, it’s Raymond Cattell’s *Beyondism*. The controlling Katharine Briggs and intense, pushy Isabel Myers flavour the MBTI. And there are others.

Obviously, none of these people are role model material. It seems to me that the technique is akin to being suspicious of Einstein because he avoided wearing socks or attending a proper hairdresser.

The implication is that these people as a group are eccentric, perhaps even unsavoury, although Paul has difficulty with the relatively benign Costa and McCrae of the 5 Factor model and the NEO–PI. Curiously, a quoting of McCrae regarding the fixity of personality comes from a secondary source on the MBTI (Bayne 1995), with the rest of the sentence providing an unreferenced age (the 20s).

Paul reports a phrase that Costa and McCrae took from psychological pioneer William James supporting their view, then elides to a less-than-progressive social view of James’, which presumably discounts the worth of latter’s contention. It’s as if Freud is all cocaine and no insight.

One suspects that Harrison Gough (of the California Psychological Inventory and Adjective Check List), Theodore Millon (Millon Index of Personality Styles) and others have led exemplary lives, at least as far as can be ascertained from this presentation. Otherwise, they might have appeared in the book.

Nowhere in this book is there any presentation as to what *personality* might be, and how the people profiled by Paul missed the boat. Apart from misuse of instruments in various situations (something not distinguished from other experiences), there’s simply a journalistic assertion (by this, I mean reporting in a similar vein to Powers and Gladwell) that testing activities don’t help people; and furthermore, given the sorts of people that have been involved, that’s not surprising. Given the contentious nature of the use of tests referred to earlier, this seems a trivialisation of an important issue.

The central assertion of the book, in fact, is not even thematically presented, other than loosely at the start and end. The nature and purpose of the personality assessments vary widely, and there’s further confusion when the author leaps from projective tests to pencil and paper instruments and back again in a few paragraphs.

Paul’s focus is not on the instruments, but on their developers

personality:

1. A cult.

Katharine and Isabel Briggs [sic] say there are 16 types of personality.

David Keirse says there are four ‘basic people patterns’ . . .

Don Watson, *Dictionary of Weasel Words* (2004)

A colourful description of Katharine Briggs, Isabel Myers and their families



C G Jung

Paul presents nothing about technical definitions, or reliability and validity, or what the purpose of a test might be.

This is a particular problem with the MBTI, the only theory-based, pencil-and-paper test assessed here. In one of her few real forays into theory, Paul cites a paper by John Barbuto (1997) that criticises the MBTI for not adhering to Jung's theory, but gives no explanation of the nature of the critique. My search for the paper itself was unsuccessful, but its abstract and other references indicate that the critique was of the MBTI's inability to measure how *conscious* or *unconscious* a preference might be—which is not something that the MBTI claims to do (Quenk 1999, 2004).

There are general errors of fact. Paul reports that Jung described Freud as an extravert, a claim he did not make. *C G Jung Speaking* is misreferenced as *C G Jung Speaks*, and a number of page references seem incorrect. David Keirse is described, incorrectly, as a follower of Isabel Myers (see Keirse, 1998). William James' 'tough-minded – tender-hearted' is miswritten.

Ernst Kretschmer is misrepresented as being associated with Nazis, apparently because his ideas were used to select military officers. I was unable to verify this claim, but Deirdre Bair points out that his 'theories were so far at variance with National Socialist racial theory' that Goebbels banned one of his books (2003).

(As a by-line, two doctors who qualified in Germany long after World War II have told me that Kretschmer was part of their training.)

Paul opens her MBTI chapter with a slightly more colourful description of Katharine Briggs, Isabel Myers and their families than what you'll find in her reference text (Saunders 1991). There's a slight slip when Paul refers to Briggs' alma mater by its current name, not what it was in the 19th century, and there is no reference to Briggs' academic family background.

This and other data make it harder for Paul to use the term 'housewives' for the two women, when the nature of their intellectual surroundings (available in her reference) and activities belie that sort of label.

Paul's understanding of Jung's ideas and their timeframe is minimal at best, reflected in the few references given. Her description of Jung's development of his theory of psychological types is cursory and incoherent. For instance, Paul uses the term 'extrovert', rather than Jung's 'extravert', and misinterprets his description of Freud.

'Extrovert' is used repeatedly through this chapter, notwithstanding the lack of reference to that term in any MBTI material. Paul's designation of Jung's three sets of opposites is technically incorrect, and she can't quite get the classical temperaments right, citing *Bilious* instead of *Phlegmatic*.

As well as misidentifying Freud's stages of development as a typology *per se*, Paul misidentifies Jung as a follower of Freud. As time goes by and more information is available, this claim becomes harder to sustain. These men both lived long lives, but were associated for six years at most.

There's also an undertone of cynicism to Paul's description of Isabel Myers' life as a crime novelist, particularly her spirited defence of a murder technique in one of her works. One is left with the idea of a crazed woman who could willingly kill, rather than a benign author defending her work. This approach—one might call it 'demonising'—continues throughout this section with respect to Myers' behaviour.

'People-sorting instruments' follow, and are treated with disdain: something to keep in mind when we get to the construction of the MBTI. Notions of how the questions might have been developed are jumbled: no explanation is given of forced-choice questions as a conventional technique, or of Isabel Briggs' methods.

History isn't Paul's strong suit, either. In American psychology, typologies were in little favour from the 1920s at the latest, not World War II; 'scientific' psychology antedated World War I. Paul shows little knowledge of either the development of instruments or their association with business. This may be partly because she does not refer to intelligence tests. It may also be that Paul has not read a couple of the references she provides, which actually deal with this topic. Most of the references seem to be more of a quick Internet cruise.

Paul's diversion into Ernst Kretschmer and William Sheldon has nothing to do with the MBTI or Isabel Myers—more with David Keirsey. *Please Understand Me* had much to do with Kretschmer's and Sheldon's ideas, notwithstanding Keirsey's appropriation of Myers' nomenclature (but not Jung's dynamics and development).

This is followed by a strange interlude with Frederick Taylor, the inventor of 'scientific management', whose life and work in organisations antedates the MBTI by some decades (he died in 1915). An implication here, and one strongly made, is that Isabel Myers was interested in orderly workplaces in the same way as Taylor, the promoter of the 'one best way':

Isabel Myers and her many imitators obliged [corporate and government bureaucrats] with tests that treated the individual like an interchangeable part, a cog that could be fit neatly into the general assembly. (p 206)

It's difficult to see where the 'facts' for this assertion come from. The MBTI's 16 types presume individuality and idiosyncratic approaches to work—by definition, the *opposite* of such views about workers and management. To be fair to Paul, it's not all that difficult to run into people who use such tools for the purpose she describes; but that's not necessarily the aim of the instrument's developer.

Paul makes no mention of Isabel Myers' research into gender differences in MBTI responses from the start, nor that her 1955 presentation to Educational Testing Service, a prominent researcher and tests publisher, was clouded by the fact that Myers was female, as well as her topic and her lack of qualifications. Nor is Myers' 'improvised vocabulary' explained: presumably these are the questions and the scales, but it's hard to know.

The first dissertation of any kind on the MBTI, by A R Laney in 1949, is also not mentioned, nor is the use of the MBTI from 1948 at the respected Institute for Personality Research at the University of California, Berkeley. Paul appears to imply that Myers did not write an MBTI *Manual* for ETS (one was published in

1962), and also seems to think that ETS had published the MBTI for sale, when it was only ever a research instrument. So 1962 is associated with ETS' publication of the MBTI, whereas Form F, the subject of the *Manual*, was published in 1958. Paul's implication that the MBTI was for sale leads to some confused language when the current publisher, CPP Inc, comes into the picture in 1975.

Incredibly, Paul's selected MBTI practitioner doesn't even use the instrument: Shoya Zichy uses Keirsey's Temperament Sorter, an entirely different questionnaire initially made up for different reasons—namely, so that Keirsey could get his book published.

Paul is unaware of this, and in any case can not pick that Zichy's use of Keirsey's Sorter immediately discounts her as an MBTI expert. At any rate, Zichy seems oblivious to the MBTI's complexities (see, e.g., Quenk 1999). This is later confirmed by Paul's outline of Zichy's Color Q development.

Paul seems more interested in the Color Q sort of thing than in the MBTI. Something called the Omnia Profile and the Similarity Index, or Management by Strengths, seem to have their purpose and intent locked into Isabel Myers' vision and aims, which seems strange, to say the least.

There's an opportunity here for Paul to launch a substantial critique of the adaptation, and perhaps the trivialisation, of Jung's and Myers' ideas in the use of such tools in organisations. This would, in my view, have been a worthwhile enterprise, but Paul's lack of knowledge and acumen allows this opportunity to pass.

Regrettably, a prominent American MBTI user, Lynne Baab, makes an inappropriate comment regarding assigning volunteers in church work via their types. Paul appears surprised that the MBTI is used in a religious area, possibly indicating that she had formed a conclusion about an unholy liaison with corporations and the like, and set out to find the data to prove it.

(She might be discomfited to know that the MBTI was brought to Australia by Roman Catholic priests and nuns, and that there are several books on religion and type.)

Incredibly, Paul's selected practitioner does not even use the MBTI!



Isabel Myers

I didn't agree with any of the statements about these five types

Some of the quotes presented in the book are genuinely bewildering. The phrase 'a Jungian horoscope' refers to a 1982 paper by T G Carskadon that in fact suggests the *opposite*, implying that Paul hasn't read it. (This paper is also listed in the endnotes, erroneously, as 'unpublished.')

And MBTI test-retest data is presented without any reference.

Another quote, from Robert Gregory (2000), 'too slick and simple, possessing an almost horoscope-like quality' (p 519 in my equivalent edition, but referenced by Paul as p 536), fails to tell you that the following sentence says:

In fairness to the MBTI, there are more sophisticated ways to interpret the instrument, as revealed by an explosion of recent research.

Intriguingly, Gregory also suggests that Form F is 'the most widely used form' (p 519), thus pointing to a broader issue of misleading information on the MBTI in other texts. One of Paul's main references, *Science and Pseudoscience in Clinical Psychology* (2003), appears, overall, to be an excellent text—but, in an otherwise fairly objective assessment, Hunsley, Lee and Wood state that 'the standard version is a forced-choice 126-item test' (p 61).

Two final references are intriguing. The first is to the 1991 US government report *In the Mind's Eye* which, interestingly, caused a similar stir to Paul's book amongst MBTI users—until someone read it. Contrary to what Paul and others claim, the report actually *supports* the MBTI, but you have to read it closely to find that out.

The second reference is to the well-known Barnum Effect, which proposes that if you say something nice or positive to someone, they will probably agree that it's an attribute of theirs, whether or not that is the case.

Paul seeks to illustrate this by taking one sentence from brief type descriptions of ISFP, INFP, ISFJ, INFJ and INTJ on one page of the booklet *Introduction to Type* (1998). The quotes, part of much longer statements, are selective and taken out of context. Paul ignores longer descriptions

of each of the types that commence just over the page, let alone going elsewhere for longer descriptions.

All five of the type examples quoted prefer *introversion*, four of the five prefer *feeling*; three of the five prefer *intuition*. Paul makes no attempt to give a variety of descriptions. As an INTP, I didn't feel inclined to agree with *any* of the selected statements about these five types. Perhaps Paul agreed with most of them in some way, and chose them because of that.

In my research on the MBTI, I've become aware that the depth of knowledge expressed as articles or in books, and particularly in critiques, is uneven to say the least.

From my point of view, a well-researched critique of personality testing (including the MBTI) in organisations and schools would have been welcome. Instead, there's just some more random accusations to wade through, poorly researched and largely *ad hominem* in approach. Perhaps the issue here is self-promotion rather than the topic itself.

Paul's final chapter presents *her* preferred method of looking at personality through life story: notably, the approach of Dan McAdams. For Paul, this is

in many ways, the un-test. It has no norms; subjects are not assigned numbers or types. The model acknowledges that people change, and their stories develop along with them. (p 219)

Well, yes; but this seems to be fairly much observation and evaluation of external behaviour only. Perhaps that's the point. Gladwell, for instance, struggles to get past the subjective experience in terms of understanding himself. Students of philosophical issues of personal identity might raise an eyebrow at the implied suggestion of discontinuous personalities (see, e.g., Perry 1975, Baillie 1993).

Paul's narrative example is an individual called Dodge Morgan. Aspects of his life story are interwoven with an exposé on Gordon Allport, the man who first scoured the dictionary for words that could identify personality traits.

	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
	ISFP	INFP	

Paul describes Morgan as a self-made man: practical, colloquial in language, not averse to a prank, and with a penchant for sailing the coasts and seas alone, from time to time. Intimacy and solitude seem opposites; he acknowledges that he does not naturally take much notice of what other people want, but he doesn't want to die alone.

The core of the narrative is a solo round-the-world ocean voyage, accompanied by food and tools—and psychological tests that Morgan has agreed to fill out daily. (The MBTI is not mentioned.)

In times of stress he appears maudlin and emotional, dealing with this with practical, sometimes showy, responses, and a cynical approach to both civilisation and to the tests. One result on an unspecified test (presumably prior to the start of his voyage) seems to describe him quite well, if unacceptably to Morgan himself.

Perhaps because we jump regularly between the worlds of Allport and Morgan, I found this section a little incoherent in its point and direction. I was unable to see the point of the exercise, nor that this was in some way enlightening, or confounding of testing of any sort. The difficulties of this sort of narrative or biography have been well pointed out by Ludwig (1997).

From an MBTI perspective, Morgan seems clearly an ISTP. Not one who fits the type description exactly: but then, no-one really does, anyway. Of course, from Paul's point of view, it could have been anyone.

Annie Murphy Paul doesn't seem to know enough about her topic. Certainly the errors presented here (and there are more) indicate that. The archaeologist Kenneth L Feder has said that if he finds errors relating to his area of expertise in a publication, then there are likely to be more errors of fact in areas in which he is not an expert (1995).

Furthermore, a demonisation of generalisations or stereotypes, on the basis that they *are* stereotypes, isn't good scholarship or writing. Frederick Schauer has recently outlined how profiling and stereotypes are drawn up, mostly in the legal area (2003). He explains the complexities that make a collection of attributes or facts, when linked together, a fairly accurate description of

who a person might be and what they might be doing. The successes and failures of stereotypes about people in various parts of the legal system, particularly relating to social justice, for want of a better term, are revealing.

Rather than seeking to eliminate stereotypes, Schauer points out the need for *better* stereotypes. Society is held together at all levels by general definitions and opinions of this kind. Changing one leads to not the elimination of stereotypes, but to their replacement by others.

It would be unwise, however, to dismiss Paul's book outright. The 'cult' of personality is not an illusion. Some of the enthusiasms of the MBTI community described by Paul come to mind. Here in Australia Don Watson (2004) has recently defined 'personality' as a cult, proceeding directly to type and Keirseyan language, albeit with a lack of precision.

It's also not helpful that Paul's major biographical source on Isabel Myers, Saunders, is both hagiographic, and made available by the MBTI's publisher. A low level of interest in history, both biographical and of ideas, doesn't help the serious study of this approach to personality, either.

The issue of testing and associations with business and so on is also an important one, and should be discussed. The few decent examples provided by Paul (and, from an MBTI perspective, Shoya Zichy's cameo) present a number of problems in that respect regarding training and use, and more particularly, understanding.

To start with, an understanding of Form G clusters or Step II facets, their development and use, would make a clear distinction between MBTI items and Keirsey's Sorter. Perhaps one way to limit this sort of thing would be to limit the MBTI accreditation qualification for a specific time—say, 3 or 5 years—and require people who wish to continue using the MBTI to take refresher courses on theory and practice. This could also be applied to registered psychologists.

Important in other ways is Paul's presumption that the MBTI is used for selection. Although it's well known that the MBTI is used to select staff in many organisations

It would be unwise to dismiss Paul outright: the cult of personality is not an illusion

There is a surreal color to thoughts of sailing in the void of social contact: 'Don't say it, just do it.'

Dodge Morgan, solo sailor

and by many people, it is *not* recommended for that use. Some practitioners are surprised when told of that. A suggestion here would be to print a clear statement on MBTI booklets that it is not recommended for selection. One local distributor has a warning against photocopying on their Form M, so it's not impossible.

Making copies of Naomi Quenk's article (2004) available might also be helpful, as it's clear and succinct, and from an expert in the field. To be candid, none of what she says should be new to anyone MBTI-accredited or qualified: the topic should have been a natural part of such training.

Another serious concern is the inaccurate information about the MBTI in texts on psychological testing, and on psychology in general. The point is not whether authors and editors *like* or *endorse* the MBTI; simply that the basic facts are right so that a meaningful critique can be presented. This may be an issue for the publisher in terms of providing the facts.

Those suggestions aside, this book is not a serious contribution to a serious topic. That may not have been its intention: only others know that. The focus of the text appears to be popularity and deadlines, not validating content. Critiques of tests are accepted as factual, without argument or broad references to show that the topic has actually been researched in depth. Individuals are castigated for their irregular lives, and the meaning of their work is denigrated.

I am also concerned at the lack of attention to detail, and the poor editing of quotes and chapter organisation, from someone with editing experience.

Personality Today may impress many, but in my view it is hardly an intellectual publication—a psychologist friend recently described it as more a *New Idea* type of magazine—but it should be a *professional* one, and one presumes a person with senior experience there to display the requisite standard.

Certainly, Annie Murphy Paul doesn't seem to have much self-doubt. But as far as I'm concerned, you need more than a belief to be convincing. ❖

References

- Ash, Mitchell G, and Woodward, William R (editors) (1987) *Psychology in twentieth-century thought and society*, New York: Cambridge.
- Baillie, James (1993) *Problems in personal identity*, New York: Paragon House.
- Bair, Deirdre (2003) *Jung: A biography*, Little, Brown.
- Banta, Martha (1993) *Taylored lives: Narrative productions in the Age of Taylor, Veblen, and Ford*, Chicago.
- Barbuto, John E (1997) 'A critique of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and its operationalization of Carl Jung's psychological types', *Psychological Reports*, April 1997.
- Bayne, Rowan (1995) *The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: A critical review and practical guide*, London: Chapman & Hall.
- Brooke, Jonatha (2004) 'Better after all' (Jonatha Brooke Naughty Puppy Music), from CD *Back in the circus*, Bad Dog Records.
- Bjork, R A, and Druckman D (1991) *In the mind's eye*, National Academy Press.
- Carskadon, T G (1982) 'Myers-Briggs Type Indicator characterizations: A Jungian horoscope?', *Journal of Psychological Type*, 5, 52.
- Cohen, David (1977) *Psychologists on psychology: Modern innovators talk about their work*, New York: Taplinger .
- Devine, Frank (2005) 'So why should we, like, listen?', *The Weekend Australian Review*, 15-16 January 2005, 10-11.
- Fancher, Raymond E (1979) *Pioneers of psychology*, New York: W W Norton.
- Feder, Kenneth L (1995) *Frauds, myths, and mysteries: Science and pseudoscience in archaeology*, Mayfield Mountain View.
- Geyer, Peter (1995) *Quantifying Jung: The origin and development of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, MSc thesis, University of Melbourne, <www.petergeyer.com.au>.
- Gladwell, Malcolm (2004) 'Personality plus', *The New Yorker*, 20 September 2004, 80:27, p 042.
- Gould, Stephen Jay (1996) *The mismeasure of man* (revised and expanded edition), New York: W W Norton.
- Gregory, Robert J (2000) [1992] *Psychological testing: History, principles, and applications* (3rd edition), Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Gross, Martin L (1978) *The psychological society*, New York: Random House.
- Hanson, F Allan (1993) *Testing testing: Social consequences of the examined life*, Berkeley: University of California.
- Hoffman, Banesh (1964) [1962] *The tyranny of testing*, New York: Collier.
- Keirse, David (1998) *Please understand me II*, Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis.
- King, Benedict (2004) 'Remembering Conrad Russell', *History Today* 55:1, January 2005, 5-6
- Krawiec, T S (editor) (1972) *The psychologists: Volume 1*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Krawiec, T S (editor) (1974) *The psychologists: Volume 2*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lilienfeld, Scott O, Lynn, Steven Jay and Lohr, Jeffrey M (editors) (2003) *Science and pseudoscience in clinical psychology*, New York: Guilford.
- Ludwig, Arnold M (1997) *How do we know who we are? A biography of the Self*, New York: Oxford.
- McGuire, William, and Hull R F C (1978) *C G Jung speaking: Interviews and encounters*, London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mischel, Walter (1968) *Personality and assessment*, New York: Wiley.
- Morawski, Jill G (1988) *The rise of experimentation in American psychology*, Yale.
- Morgan, Dodge (2004) 'Rational thought can be over-rated', *Points East* magazine, May 2004, <<http://www.pointseast.com/thegulf/040501morgan-mo.shtml>>, accessed 30 January 2005.
- Myers, Isabel Briggs (1998) *Introduction to Type* (6th edition) Palo Alto, CA: CPP / Melbourne: ACER.
- Myers, Isabel Briggs, with Myers, Peter Briggs (1991) *Gifts differing* (10th anniversary edition) Palo Alto, CA: CPP.
- Perry, John (editor) (1975) *Personal identity*, Berkeley: University of California.
- Powers, Katharine A (2004) 'Misplaced faith in ink-blots, idols', *The Boston Globe*, 26 September 2004.
- Quenk, Naomi L (1999) *Essentials of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment*, New York: Wiley.
- Quenk, Naomi L (2004) 'Benefits of using the MBTI—and what it cannot do', *Bulletin of Psychological Type* 27:4 (Fall 2004), 36-37.
- Rogers, Tim B (1994) *The psychological testing enterprise: An introduction*, Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole.
- Ruitenbeek, Hendrik M (editor) (1964), *Varieties of personality theory*, New York: E P Dutton.
- Saunders, Frances (1991) *Katharine and Isabel: Mother's light, daughter's journey*, Palo Alto, CA: Davies Black.
- Sokal, Michael M (editor) (1990) *Psychological testing and American society 1890-1930*, Rutgers.
- Sargent, S Stansfeld (1944) *The basic teachings of the great psychologists*, New York: Perma Giants.
- Schauer, Frederick (2003) *Profiles, probabilities and stereotypes* (uncorrected page proofs), Cambridge, MA: Belknap.
- Watson, Don (2004) *Dictionary of weasel words, contemporary clichés, cant and management jargon*, Sydney: Knopf.