

# Tar-heeled

## Seeking consilience in North Carolina



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**Peter Geyer** lives in Melbourne, but wanders from place to place looking for knowledge and insight, finding it in unexpected and typical ways.

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*Faith in the window, but not in the door ...*

Kip Hanrahan

### Some curiosities

‘**Personality type**’, the umbrella term for C G Jung’s psychological types, Keirseyan temperament and related ideas, is a collection of theories and associated research.

A reason why this approach to understanding human beings may not be as successful as one might expect, inside and outside certain environments, may be that more time is spent on *praxis* or practice than on engagement with theory, or even research. Theory informing practice, how practice can be explained compared to other ideas, why a particular practice is there in the first place, or even its situation in the marketplace of ideas outside practice.

Research using psychological type is predominantly research with psychological instruments, notwithstanding that neither Jung’s typology nor Keirseyan temperaments are measurement theories. Most people who have encountered type associate it with the MBTI, and many presume that it’s the questionnaire that gives them a type preference, not their own attributes interpreted *via* a theory.

The majority of type information is provided by type booklets. Type texts are essentially explanatory rather than investigatory, describing what something is, and providing a model or framework for interpretation and use. This can mean that some relevant theoretical information is not supplied.

For example, an informative booklet on the eight Jungian functions, replete with application suggestions, can contain a chart allocating archetypes to functions, without

explaining what an archetype is considered to be in theory, or the reasons for the names and allocation of these particular archetypes (2005). This may be an editorial decision, of course.

At type conferences the emphasis is on practice, for everyone is a type *practitioner*. This is a curiosity, in that these events are overwhelmingly attended by people who prefer intuition, yet are wishing to learn something practical, something to use. This may not be as paradoxical as it seems.

It’s worth recalling that Isabel Myers’s mantra was ‘the constructive *use* of differences’ (*emphasis added*)—demonstrating both her affinity with American culture and that she didn’t see herself as a theorist.

### Theoretical and other challenges

Attention to measurement and outcome, rather than to the theory or underlying principles of type, has always been problematic. Anna Funder, in a recent article in *The Monthly* (to which I contributed), tells a story which, amongst other things, illustrates how little understood the MBTI can be, let alone the theory it implements.

In the type community there has always been an emphasis on the measurement side, essentially because type associations were founded as a consequence of encountering and using the MBTI. The published type research is overwhelmingly quantitative, using instrumentation and statistics.

On the other hand, none of the versions of type dynamics and development claims a base in measurement: an appropriate stance, given the origins of psychological types. However, their plausibility and accuracy remain essentially unresearched.

A recent challenge to this situation came from **James Reynierse**. In a selection of articles in the *Journal of Psychological Type* he published research that used MBTI items and other measurement information to assert that there is no evidence for type dynamics. In doing so, he linked his work to the presumption that such information must be available in the MBTI and its items, without, in my view, examining the intent and purpose behind the MBTI and its components.

## Invitation to travel

*Remember when life was North Carolina?  
Two bits for Cokes and jokes at the diner*

Van Dyke Parks

**Roger Pearman** has been the person most concerned with these kinds of issues over the years. After establishing an email discussion group, which became problematic for a number of reasons, Roger decided to invite a select and limited number of people to participate in a forum at his office. I felt privileged to be asked to attend, and so I worked on getting to Winston–Salem in North Carolina, where the event was held in early June.

The other participants were **Linda Berens**, **Jane Kise**, **Bob McPeek**, **Mark Majors**, **Ray Moody** and **Elizabeth Murphy** from the USA, **Genevieve Cailloux** and **Pierre Cauvin** from France, and **Danielle Poirier** from Canada. **Sally Campbell** (UK) and **Dario Nardi** (USA) has also been invited, but were unable to attend.

Apart from brief stopovers on my way to CAPT in Florida, I'd never been to North Carolina, and so I looked forward to the trip with great interest. This was enhanced by an invitation from **Stephanie Rogers** to speak to her APT group in the Chapel Hill area. I'd known Stephanie as an associate of Linda Berens in the 1990s, but hadn't seen her since that time.

## Getting there

My United flight commenced normally in Melbourne, but there was a lengthy delay in Sydney due to a hole in the tarmac (!).

After a somewhat dilatory response from pilot and crew, assurances were given that connecting flights were being arranged for our arrival, which was a relaxing thought. I was heading for Greensboro via Chicago and reasoned that it wouldn't be difficult to get another flight.

Unfortunately, the service at Los Angeles International Airport was fairly lax, to say the least. There were no support staff, and the airline didn't have any clear instructions to offer as to where to go and what to do. In a way this wasn't unexpected, as the United States is definitely another country. Its airlines have their own methods of operation, which don't seem to involve any obligations to customers in transit from overseas.

I was eventually given a seat on a 'red-eye' midnight flight to Washington, thence to Greensboro, arriving 12 hours late. 12 hours at LAX isn't the most thrilling place to be, particularly as I'd recently been diagnosed with type-2 diabetes and had to manage an appropriate diet. But I managed to find a quietish sports bar that served excellent, if basic, fresh food.

The flights were uneventful, and it was interesting to see the different kinds of people on each flight. A small commuter plane, filled with people dressed for business, took me to Greensboro.

## Arrival

*You got to give up what you don't want,  
to get what you do*

*(What will we ever do with you?)*

Paul Haines

Roger picked me up from the airport and I settled in briefly at the designated hotel, a quiet, leafy place with a spacious room. It was good to freshen up after two days in the same clothes. He then picked me up for a meal at a favourite place of his, the Olive Tree, which produced some agreeable Greek food. Roger explained that the area now supported a much more diverse population than in the past, which he felt was a good thing. This included a sizeable Greek population and many Hispanics.



Roger had invited a select group to a forum at his office

The Leadership Systems / Qualifying.org office is located in a small office park, in a stately white building occupied by various professionals. Roger's office area was smaller than I had thought—but then my experience on first entering Otto Kroeger Associates' offices in 1995 was similar. Distance fuels fantasy sometimes.

It was a fairly relaxed place. A feature that gained my attention was a coffee machine with a wide variety of coffees to choose from. I settled on Sumatran coffee, which I'd never had before. By the end of my time there I had exhausted the supply.

I was there to sit in on a presentation by **Danielle Poirier**. As a means of defraying our travel expenses, Roger had offered to promote one-day courses from any of us. Danielle, Linda and I took up his offer.

Danielle's topic was *The perception of immorality and other evils: The problem of type in encountering the other*. For the time I was there, the focus was on untangling projections. Projection is a difficult topic, as it's hard to tell where it begins and ends. Some people hold that everything is a projection, which I find to be extreme and unhelpful, depressing and frustrating even, although it may be true.

Danielle quoted Eduardo Casas, an influential type thinker and translator, in saying that you have to recognise the difference, understand its legitimacy, appreciate its contribution, and integrate the lesson and give in to the transformation.

She gave as an example of appreciation the indigenous culture of Hawai'i, where a person's physical size was considered attractive. I think there's an aspect of this for many African Americans. So, different notions of beauty and norms. I liked the notion and the example, but wondered what happens if you can't appreciate, or when appreciation doesn't help, a concern about relativism where everything may be tolerated and you may lose yourself.

Danielle suggested that triggers for these issues are:

- people without what you don't have
- people without what you have too much of

- people with too much of what you need
- situations of adversity
- images

There's a lot in that which I need to consider, even now recalling it from my notes, which have much more in them than what I'm presenting here. It was an interesting session, and Danielle was engaging.

After the session I returned to my hotel, where I lay down to relax. An incoming electrical storm arrived, cutting all power. I willingly succumbed to the quiet and dark.

The next day I presented my *MBTI (Step I): Interpretation in depth* to a small, interested group. We spent most of our time discussing the type theory component and issues of interpretation, so it was a fruitful day.

Linda's session, *An integral approach to individual differences: Pathways to increasing interpersonal agility*, was on at the same time. Roger had presented the day before on *Development and effectiveness*.

Linda, Elizabeth and Jane were staying in the same hotel, and that night we had an interesting discussion over an enjoyable meal at a Red Lobster restaurant just up the road.

## The meeting

The next day people congregated at the hotel to travel to the meeting. Bob and Mark had each driven up from Florida and provided extra transport.

It was good to meet everyone after email exchanges over some months. I knew most of the people. I hadn't met Bob (director of research at CAPT) before. Pierre reminded me that I had previously met Genevieve and him.

The age range of our group, which Roger thought relevant to our task, was from 50s to early 70s, with a core group in mid- to late 50s. The atmosphere was quietly genial. Mark was the only person preferring extraversion.

Bob had brought me a box of documents and audiotapes from Jamie Johnson at CAPT, in exchange for a disk of articles



**Pierre Cauvin**  
reminded me that  
we'd met previously

I had downloaded, a contribution to the Isabel Briggs Myers Memorial Library. The standout pieces were Part I of the *Briggs–Myers Type Indicator Handbook* (1944) and Isabel Myers’s *Type as the Index to Personality* (1945).

Later in the meeting I shared part of what Isabel had written about type development in the latter document. *Index* also had a long paragraph (written before VE Day) about the governing of the soon-to-be-defeated Germans.

I like the particular way she wrote about type: clear, simple, and refreshingly free from the jargon (type and non-type) that features in the field these days. Funnily enough, I don’t experience that in *Gifts Differing* as much as in early editions of *Introduction To Type* and the wide range of her documents in my collection. I didn’t set out to be an admirer of Isabel Myers when I encountered type, partly because she was looked upon by many as a kind of saint. The biography *Katharine and Isabel* didn’t help either. I became an admirer after my own historical research.

We selected our seats around a large oval arrangement. The males ended up on one side, the females on another. Linda, next to Roger at the top, put Interaction Styles and Temperament charts on the flipchart.

Roger began by quoting from the foreword to the Argentinean edition of *Psychological Types*, contained in the Collected Works 6 compilation. Unsurprisingly, not everyone identified themselves as a Jungian. Linda, for instance, wanted to have ‘more than Jung’, without specifying at the time what that entailed. Being ‘Jungian’ was never closely defined, and it seemed to mean affinity with and interest in his general work. No-one claimed analyst status or anything like that.

After quiet and respectful discussion about ground rules and wants, the core activity began with a question from Roger: ‘What do we hold to be true about type?’ This was essentially a brainstorming session and took some time. Some interesting statements were placed on the butcher’s paper, and we all wandered around noting the ones we agreed with, those we were unsure of, and those we disagreed with.

I thought this was a little too public for some reason, and was uneasy about the prospect of any disagreement becoming a problem for the meeting. There were obvious disagreements within the group, some of them fundamental issues from a theoretical perspective. But there wouldn’t be much point in travelling halfway round the world to meet people who agreed on everything.

Some key statements were around innateness and predisposition, the difference between a preference and a skill, between a skill and development. The energetic nature of type was frequently mentioned, and the conscious–unconscious interplay. Elizabeth Murphy stated that you can see a type in children, but they don’t use it—a useful distinction that could be applied to adults, I thought. Measurement is not the same as type: type can be investigated, but not necessarily by the current typical methods.

Bob McPeck asked which audience we were addressing: the academic community, or just those interested, which led to an interesting discussion. We appeared to agree we weren’t interested in convincing anyone or proving a point, but in discovering and extending knowledge. Bob also queried the accuracy of our self-evaluations, pointing to a large body of research on this aspect of personality.

For me, some of the most interesting and incisive comments were made by Elizabeth Murphy and Jane Kise. Elizabeth was doing her own research, and I’d read Jane’s PhD thesis, which I found extremely interesting. Both are involved with children, an area significant for claims about type innateness and natural differences, and they could talk about what they’d seen and done. Although some of this was at times more pragmatic than I would have liked, I could relate my theoretical interests to what they were saying.

Elizabeth suggested that for a child, the ages 6 to 8 are more about ‘Do I get what you want me to do?’, whereas 11 to 13 is more about ‘truth to self’. She also pointed out that the dilemma in having a type different from the rest of your family is that even if the family provides support, they can’t model the type for you. I found that personally very insightful.



## Elizabeth Murphy made some incisive comments

As key issues to consider regarding development, Jane mentioned:

- self and consciousness
- brain and organism
- culture and worldview
- social system

The discussion turned to stages of development, which led us at times into multiple model territory, not a favoured place for me. There were also occasional disputes on terminology, usually around the eight functions or the use of code letters. For myself, I struggle with the making of nouns into adverbs (e.g. *intuition* into *intuiting*), as I think that changes the meaning of the construct.

Turning to issues of ego development, I was a bit lost regarding Jungian definitions and those of others who use the same word for stage models and their own presumptions about what's appropriate. I read a bit of Jung, but 'understanding' what he means by many of his terms is more than simply being able to get the gist of the text.

There were some interesting insights for me, all of which I noted down. However, I thought that the discussion drifted into amorphous territory and was not really attending to the task at hand, which from a research perspective I saw a little differently. So I felt a little lost.

Not knowing how to make an appropriate comment, and perceiving that the group seemed satisfied with the current state of affairs, I took my leave for a while and engaged myself in a book on another topic, an approachable and interesting text on the philosophers Leibniz and Spinoza. It was a good decision to make.

The rest of the group continued with their discussions and came to some conclusions about the direction to go in regarding ego development and other ideas.

As time was drawing to a close, there were discussions on where we could go and what we could do. As part of this, we broke into small groups to discuss research projects of interest. I went to listen to Bob McPeck, who was working on an interesting idea and wanted some reflection and opinion.

We then reconvened to report back to the whole group. We resolved to continue as a group, to communicate via email and a LinkedIn site, and to meet before the next APTi conference. Then each person said something about their experience and what they had got out of it.

People started to take their leave earlier than I'd thought, but airline and other schedules have their limitations. It was a genial ending to a time of interesting discussions, with many things to learn from, and to pursue.

These events covered two and a half days. I've written about them as a continuous experience, as that seems the best way to explain what went on.

## Social events

The first day ended at one of Roger's favourite restaurants, where there was agreeable food and conversation. The large size of the group was a bit problematic, as you couldn't interact with the whole group, but there are times when you just want to sit and listen.

The second day ended in a visit to Roger's townhouse in a leafy, relaxing environment with many Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest names. Roger's wife and daughter welcomed us. It seemed a nice place to be and the evening was very pleasant. I had a lengthy discussion on religion with Mark's wife, Mary, whom I'd met at the Dallas conference. Our types and belief systems were quite different (she'd been a missionary at one time), but that didn't affect the exchange of ideas and experiences.

## Winston-Salem

I was the only person staying on. After the meeting, Roger took me to a favourite secondhand bookshop in another part of Winston-Salem. It was like a university campus bookshop from the early 1970s, with a coffee shop and the kind of notices that fit that scenario. It was an excellent bookshop with many titles I owned or had owned. I spent a lot of time just looking. Borders, over the road and not far from a Kangaroo gasoline station, took some of my money instead.



Bob McPeck wanted some reflection and opinion

We ate at a Japanese restaurant, before heading off to the Reynolda district and Reynolda Gardens, associated with the Reynolds tobacco family and company. No longer a tobacco area, we drove past many of the fine homes in the area, and walked through the gardens with plants from all over the world. Food grown in the gardens goes to those less privileged in the area. It was very interesting and relaxing, even in the steamy conditions.

I was also shown the impressive campus of Wake Forest University, Roger's alma mater, where he was also married.

In many ways it was hard to tell what Winston-Salem is like. The hotel was in what appeared to be an isolated pocket of the city near a major road, but in a pleasantly leafy environment with office-park professional medical buildings. A single railway line ran alongside the road, still in use apparently, and there was also a line near the Kangaroo gas station.

Roger's offices weren't all that far away, but there were no paths to take us there if we had wished to walk, which was what I would have liked. It was one of those places where the city is circled by various major roads, which you accessed in order to get somewhere.

## Chapel Hill and Stephanie Rogers

I was picked up by Stephanie Rogers the next day for the second part of my North Carolina experience. We drove to Chapel Hill, not far from her home, where we had a pleasant lunch in a rooftop restaurant that reminded me of another university town, Ann Arbor.

We then walked to the University of North Carolina. While Stephanie went on other business, I walked around the campus and examined the bookstore. The campus was leafy, with that familiarity that these places bring, so I felt right at home.

On the campus were self-standing notice-boards. One, entitled 'In memory of Eve', comprised messages, thoughts and feelings from students about a young woman who had recently been murdered on campus.

I read some of the messages. They were heartfelt and well thought out, and so I reflected about Eve as well.

The bookstore was impressive and I found a few things of interest, including souvenir clothing. North Carolina is known as 'the Tar-Heeled State', from a comment made about its troops by the British during the Revolutionary War. I presume it means they stuck around and were hard to dislodge.

Wandering around, I saw the sportsground at a distance, some nice gardens, and an attractive bell tower replete with names of past students. I learned something of local culture when I mentioned to Stephanie that a man had greeted me as we walked past each other, and I'd thought that perhaps he thought I taught there. She said that if you look someone in the eyes, they will greet you that way.

The publications I picked up around campus were well put together. *The Hill* had a few interesting articles, all provided by students, including an incisive piece on Haiti which acknowledges the USA's unhelpful interventions over 200 years. *The Carolina Review* provided a more conservative perspective.

Chapel Hill is apparently 70% liberal, in the American terminology, quite different from other parts of the state. That statistic was a key reason for Stephanie settling near here with her husband Jeremy, a New Zealander who has never been to Australia.

North Carolina apparently has an excellent tertiary education system, with universities that attract people from all over the USA and the world. The other parts of their schooling system, however, are not really all that good, which doesn't make much sense to me.

On the way to her home, Stephanie drove me through the nearby Duke University campus, a larger place and much more impersonal than UNC Chapel Hill. It was hidden by trees and demarcated by roads, apparently the only way to traverse the campus. You could drive past and not notice that anything was there.

Stephanie and Jeremy's home is a short distance outside Chapel Hill. It is one of



The campus had the familiarity that these places bring

several houses spaced around a circuit, the centre of which is a well surrounded by a vegetation version of the labyrinth at Chartres cathedral. The area has an entrance blessed by both a native American and a Buddhist monk.

Stephanie's and Jeremy's environmental interests are reflected in the design of their home. The water supply is from the well; clear, pure water that reminded me of the mountain water I drank in Switzerland a couple of years ago.

The view is quiet and serene. Woodland more or less surrounds the circuit behind the houses and there's an agreeable stream to walk to and around. I saw deer come out at dusk and we had to be quiet, as they could hear us if we made sudden noise in the house. Waking up in the morning is an extremely peaceful way to enter the day.

Their eight-year-old daughter, Asha, is an extraverted girl, and was preparing for a talent quest for her school. This included finding and editing the music for her tap-dancing piece, Stevie Wonder's 'Sir Duke'. It was impressive to see.

## Hillsborough

The next day, before my presentation, Stephanie took me to Hillsborough. The town had been considered for the capital of North Carolina, but the proposition was rejected by the townspeople, who wanted things not to change. Stephanie pointed out that this made the provision and maintenance of services problematic.

We sat outside a cafe to sample the local food and drink, including green tomatoes. I'd heard of them, but didn't know that they were naturally green in colour, not those that hadn't ripened.

Hillsborough is a centre for writers, many apparently well-known in various fields. We went into a bookshop that featured the work of some of them. I bought a biography of the jazz musician Chet Baker and one of William James, so admired by Jung, as well as a book on local reminiscences.

The women running the bookstore were affable, and we had a nice chat about Australia and the Hillsborough locality.

## APT event, Durham

The APT event I was to speak at was in the nearby town of Durham, in a building adjacent to the Durham Bulls' baseball stadium, site of the movie *Bull Durham*. The stadium and surrounds had recently been redeveloped, with the warehouses (an American Tobacco historic area) converted to restaurants and other places of entertainment. A surviving water tower proclaimed 'Lucky Strike'.

The rooms that the Research Triangle APT group were using offered access to the stadium, and I got permission to walk around there for a few minutes. The players were training, probably a warm-up for a game that evening. Everything looked pristine in the evening sunshine.

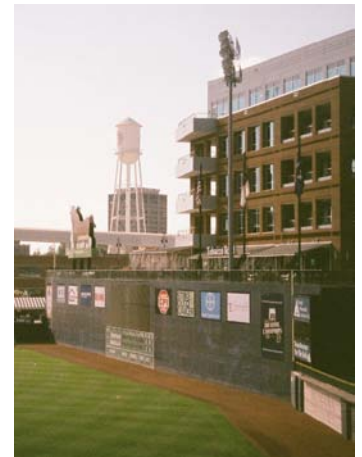
I was pleased to be there, and the group was pleased that I could come. **Karen Ridout** and **Mary-Anne Chesborough** were people I knew of but had never met. I'd met **Carol Linden** before and **Sondra van Sant** a few times. I was made to feel very welcome. After some random chat and food and wine, I spoke with the dozen or so people on a loose theme of *Current thoughts on type and personality*.

I didn't have a presentation in mind, and really it was an engaging and informed discussion that went on for a couple of hours. My highlight of the trip, really.

## Going home?

The next morning Stephanie drove me to Greensboro airport, where I was to meet Roger again, as I'd left my passport and items of clothing in my hotel. It's not the first time I've done something like that when overseas, which raises the question of whether I really want to return—but I always do.

Difficulties can get in the way, though. On checking in, I discovered I was not booked on any flight out of Greensboro, and the United staff had to work hard to get me on to a flight connecting with my homeward flights. Hurrying to the gate as my flight was about to depart, I was halted by security staff, who proceeded to apply a complete search to my bags and to me.



The Durham Bulls' stadium adjoined the APT venue

As a former customs officer, I know that being in a hurry is one of the reasons for stopping someone for a check, and a beard doesn't help either. This was a demeaning experience, to say nothing of my rising stress levels. And because I complained, it went on and on. It was a very military style check as well. I was interrogated aggressively about why I was late for my flight and so on. I really couldn't respond, just stutter.

Eventually they let me go, and the plane was still there: I have no idea why. But it was extremely embarrassing to enter so publicly, particularly as I was the reason why the flight hadn't departed.

At Chicago airport I sought an explanation for my troubles from United staff, but I couldn't locate anyone within reasonable walking distance. Eventually I spoke to a supervisor who was sympathetic and helpful, while telling me she could do nothing about my immediate issues and encouraged me to complain. She was not allowed to sit down during our discussion.

I did come to some resolution with United regarding compensation, but it took a while and they only give you what they're allowed to give, not what might be appropriate for the experience, and don't address specific issues. Still, they're not unusual in this kind of thing, where customer service appears to be defined without considering the customer. The people I spoke to and emailed were as helpful as they could be, but something's missing.

Not long ago I read an interview with an expatriate Australian who was asked when he knew he was home. He mentioned the differences in airport security staff—the Americans were bullying and aggressive, the Australians not so. It's a reasonable comment to make.

I think Americans may not realise how militarised their country appears to outsiders. You can be bullied, shouted at and dressed down aggressively, for no reason, by someone in uniform who will call you 'Sir' at the same time. Many years ago I experienced a policeman dressing down Otto Kroeger in an extremely belittling manner, leaning into the car window and simply shouting at him, as though it was a military parade.

This may be a broader cultural issue. A Fox Business advertisement in *The Wall Street Journal* announced that *The Willis Report* presenter, Gerri Willis, 'fights for you!' and is 'smart, aggressive & trusted' (2010). I don't see being 'aggressive' as an attribute to shout about. I would think that if you are aggressive, you might not be focusing on what you should be doing or thinking about.

And yet, for all the noise and commands, the security process at American airports is usually a shambles, slow, inefficient. (At LAX you're often in a queue that stretches outside into the street.) It disappoints me how much security and police training here in Australia, Tasers and the like, is based on paramilitary American methods, when we're really a quite different culture—or, at least, we were.

So, on that basis, seeing home is a more than welcome experience, even after an interesting adventure. ❖

*It's bad for the soul to depend on certain things happening.*

John Cale

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Thanks to everyone involved, particularly Roger Pearman, Danielle Poirier and Jane Kise, who helped me process my experiences of the event as participants, and Stephanie Rogers, Meredith Fuller, Trudy McCutcheon and Bronwyn Rachor, who listened as interested outsiders.  
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## How militarised the country appears to outsiders