

Glibly Attractive?

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

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Annie Murphy Paul: *The Cult of Personality - How Personality Tests are leading us to miseducate our children, mismanage our companies and misunderstand ourselves.* Free Press NY 2004 ISBN 0-7432-4356-0

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
2004

Everything has been going to the dogs since the Pharaohs

but we never seem to arrive at the kennels.....Frank Devine
2005

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

Although these professions are not intended for the conventional, it would be a grave mistake to assess the quality of output on selected personal life events and peccadilloes. On that basis, there wouldn't be much to listen to at all, no matter the taste and inclination.

If the word "Personality" appears on the cover of a book or magazine, it's going to attract general interest irrespective of content or quality. If recent best-selling successes in this field are anything to go by, it seems that sometimes the topic can be so interesting *per se*, that a reader's critical faculties are dramatically lowered regarding acceptance or rejection of the material presented within.

This might seem strange, but an experience a few years ago teaching the MBTI might help explain.

It was a very large group, and what I was doing was complementary to other things going on simultaneously. At a general break, an enthusiastic group of young women came up to me and asked me questions regarding type preferences and successful relationships. I told them that personality was much more complex than that and that whilst there were over-representations of particular type couplings, you couldn't say ESTJs should be with ISFJs for instance, even though a lot of them were.

My response dimmed their enthusiasm somewhat, and one said "Oh well, back to astrology", 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. But they may have bought *Men are from Mars* etc., which came out not long after, in search of a quick answer to the hardest task of all.

There are others, of course, who claim that personality is too complex to be described, a broadly correct but curious position, as it often seems to lead to the denial of the utility of any information at all about people, particularly of the descriptive type.

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

The late historian Conrad Russell once offered advice to a student regarding reading books and taking notes by saying "When you are taking notes, take down the evidence the author presents, but never the argument itself" adding, "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 contentions or a view held by someone else?

In the last half of 2004, Annie Murphy Paul (identified on the flyleaf of her book as someone educated at Yale and a former senior editor at the popular magazine *Psychology Today*), gained considerable attention with her book *The Cult of Personality* (2004). In this book, she attacks the use of personality testing in the United States. In parts of one chapter in particular the MBTI is attacked, causing a few anxieties amongst type practitioners in the northern hemisphere as well as CPP Inc., its publisher.

Praise for Paul's work from several prominent or recent writers appears on the cover of her book, as well as in the media.

A website has also been established so she can further promote her views.

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

Theories have also been quantified, the best known being C.G. Jung's theory of psychological types by the Gray-Wheelwright Jungian Type Survey and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Other Jungian instruments have also appeared since these were developed, independently, in the 1940s.

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

The response by users of tests, particularly the MBTI, has also been interesting, with some unwilling to countenance the idea that they or the tool(s) they use may be complicit in harming people. Perhaps they are unaware of the mottled history of psychological testing and the failures, as well as the successes, of those involved in this activity, or psychology and psychiatry in general.

Paul's broad proposition seems to be the extreme view of personality being 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, Naomi Quenk, in a recent response to Paul, has started from the same perspective – personality is too complex to be covered by any test – 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 get a glimpse of toward the end of the book. Her book's chapters are arranged in a roughly chronological sequence, dealing with aspects of the lives of certain originators of personality tests. These tests are a mixture of projective (pictures) and objective (pencil and paper questionnaires) tests. Some search for pathologies, others, such as the MBTI seek to identify "normal" behaviour, as defined, an important distinction that's a little bit muddled in the text.

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

A *Boston Globe* journalist, Katharine A. Powers, wrote about *The Cult of Personality* in a brief column. After a brief swing at personality tests, she admits to opening Paul's book with "eager hands". It's a "serious book but it is also an entertainingly illuminating one". These tests Paul describes are "are bad, but if one may judge by the coverage this book is getting, their dominion is in jeopardy" (2004). She then went on to talk about personality from the life and environment of James Ellroy

Malcolm Gladwell took a longer view in the *New Yorker*, coupling together a war narrative with some observations, mostly about the MBTI. He liberally quotes from Paul's book without criticism regarding the MBTI and its authors. He's completed the MBTI (INTJ are his results), but from his questions, it seems no-one has explained it to him either theoretically or regarding the nature and purpose of the questions. So he asks good, but uninformed questions. Paul's "fascinating" book and her recommended narrative method, appeals in any case, essentially on the basis that it's something you can see and examine.

Powers and Gladwell are two journalists who agree with the proposition of Paul's book and report accordingly. Its comments are reported as facts, or at least appear unexamined. Curiosity doesn't extend beyond this point. Indeed, it seems that Paul has automatically been accepted as an authority in the area of personality testing simply because she's produced a book. The quality and veracity of the contents of the book seem to almost lie unexamined.

The retired editor, journalist and sometime reviewer Frank Devine would probably have a bit of difficulty with this approach. Recently, he reviewed the linguist John McWhorter's book on the decline of language, in this case American.

This is a topic in which Devine has some sympathy with the writer, and at one stage writes he "saw McWhorter as a possible soul mate." But that seems ultimately to be false hope as, although "his examples are often entertaining and his distaste for populist sludge is refreshing", the words "repetitious" and "ramble" also appear. His 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" (2005). Fairly tough perhaps, but at least you get the idea he's 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 chapters in the book are in some loose chronological sequence, their content is not organised in this way. There are several jumps in time (forward and back), purpose and topic. This is a somewhat 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 notes 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 surrounding these developments, but the developers themselves, 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, an obviously skilled writer 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 (TAT), for the 16PF it's Raymond Cattell's *Beyondism*, and the controlling Katharine Briggs and intense, pushy Isabel Myers, flavour the MBTI. There are others. Obviously none of these people are role model material, and it seems to me that the technique is something akin to becoming 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). She then reports a phrase Costa and McCrae take 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 the latter's contention. It's as if Freud is all cocaine and no insight.

One suspects that Harrison Gough (*California Psychological Inventory, 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 this book.

Nowhere in this book is there any presentation as to what personality might be and how the people profiled in it 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. There's further confusion because the nature and purpose of the personality assessments varies widely and it becomes fairly confusing when the author leaps from projective tests to pencil and paper instruments and back again in a few paragraphs. Nothing is presented about technical definitions about reliability and validity and what the purpose of a test might be

This is particularly a problem with the MBTI, the only theory-based pencil and paper and test assessed here. In one of her few real forays into theory of any sort, Paul makes reference to a paper by Barbuto (1997) in which the MBTI is criticised for not adhering to Jung's theory, but no explanation is given for the nature of the critique. My search was unsuccessful for the paper itself, but its abstract and other references to it indicate that the critique was regarding the MBTI's inability to measure how conscious or unconscious a preference might be, which isn't anything the MBTI claims to set out to do (Quenk 1999; 2004).

General errors of fact include Ernst Kretschmer being misrepresented as associated with Nazis because his ideas were apparently used to select military officers during that regime. I was unable to verify this claim, but Deirdre Bair points out that Kretschmer's "theories were so far at variance with National Socialist racial theory" that Goebbels banned one of his books (2003, p791). As a byline, two medical doctors qualified in Germany long after World War II have informed me that studying Kretschmer was part of their training. David Keirse is also incorrectly described as a follower of Isabel Myers (See Keirse, 1998), and William James' tough-minded - tender-hearted is miswritten. Jung's development of his idea of psychological types is described inaccurately. Paul reports a claim that Jung described Freud as an extravert, but it's one he did not make. A number of page references taken from *C.G. Jung Speaking* (Misreferenced as *C.G. Jung Speaks*) also seem incorrect and a search is still on for the correct pages. Paul's understanding of Jung's ideas, including an associated timeframe for them, is minimal at best and this is reflected in the few references given.

In the MBTI chapter, Paul starts off with a slightly more colourful description of its developers in Katharine Briggs and Isabel Myers and their families than what you might find in her text reference (Saunders 1991). There's a slight slip when Paul refers to Briggs' *alma mater* by its current designation, not what it was in the 19th century when she attended, nor is there reference to Briggs' academic family background. This and other data make it harder for Paul to use the term "housewives" as an adequate identifier for the two women, when the nature of their intellectual surroundings and activities (available in her reference) suggest a lifestyle quite different to kitchens and kids.

Paul's description of Jung's development of his theory of psychological types is cursory and incoherent. She uses the term "extrovert" for instance, rather than his "extravert", and, as I said earlier, misinterprets his description of Freud. "Extrovert"

is used continuously throughout this chapter, notwithstanding the lack of reference to that designation in any MBTI material. Her designation of Jung's three sets of opposites is also technically not correct, and she can't quite manage to get the classical Temperaments: Choleric, Melancholic, Sanguine, Phlegmatic, putting Bilious in instead of the latter. Paul also misidentifies Freud's stages of development as a typology per se, as well as Jung as a follower of Freud. As time goes by and more information is available, this claim becomes harder to sustain regarding these two men who both lived long lives, but were associated for 6 years at most.

There's also a certain undertone of cynicism to Paul's description of Isabel Myers' life as a crime novelist, particularly the latter's 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 theme, one might call it demonizing, actually continues throughout this section with respect to interpreting Myers' behaviour.

"People-sorting instruments" follow, and are treated with disdain, something to keep in mind when Myers and Briggs get to construct the MBTI. But any notion of how the questions might have been developed is jumbled: no explanation is given of "forced choice" questions as a conventional method for instruments or Myers' methods.

History isn't a strong spot either. Typologies in American psychology, 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 as a whole or their association with business. This may be partly because she doesn't refer to intelligence tests, but it may also be that she hasn't 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 ("surfing" rather than research).

Paul makes a diversion into the work of Ernst Kretschmer and William Sheldon, which is relevant to David Keirsey's *Please Understand Me* but has nothing to do with the MBTI or Isabel Myers. Keirsey's text appropriates Myers' nomenclature but not it's underpinning theory from Jung.

A strange interlude follows with the inventor of scientific management Frederick Taylor, whose life (he died in 1915) and work in organisations antedates the MBTI by some decades. 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" (p206).

By definition, the MBTI's 16 types, given that they presume individuality and idiosyncratic approaches to work, are the opposite of such views about workers and management, so it's difficult to see where the facts for this assertion come from. However, 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 it's not necessarily the aim of the instrument's developer.

No mention is made of Isabel Myers' researching gender differences in MBTI responses from the start, nor that her 1955 presentation to Educational Testing Service (ETS), a prominent researcher and publisher of tests, was clouded by the fact that she was female, in addition to her qualifications and her topic. Her "improvised vocabulary" is not explained. Presumably these are the questions/items and the scales, but it's hard to know from what Paul says.

The first dissertation of any kind using the MBTI (Laney, 1949), is also not mentioned, nor the use of the MBTI from 1948 at the respected Institute for Personality Research (IPAR) at the University of California (Berkeley).

Paul appears to imply that Myers did not write an MBTI *Manual* for ETS (this 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 (Form F, available in this way from 1958). Because she implies that the MBTI was for sale, it leads to some confused language when CPP Inc., the current publisher, come into the picture in 1975.

Incredibly, Paul's selected MBTI practitioner, Shoya Zichy, doesn't even use the instrument, but Keirsey's *Temperament Sorter*, which is 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't pick that Zichy's use of the *Sorter* immediately discounts her as an expert on the MBTI. 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 in any case seems to be more interested in the *Color Q* sort of thing rather than the MBTI itself. Tools of some sort called the *Omnia Profile* and the *Similarity Index*, or *Management by Strengths*, all seem to have their purpose and intent locked into the vision and aims of Isabel Myers, which seems strange to say the least.

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

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

Some of the quotes made in the book are genuinely bewildering. The comment "a Jungian horoscope" refers to a paper by T.G. Carskadon (1982) that in fact suggests the opposite, implying Paul actually hasn't read it. This paper is also presented erroneously in the endnotes as unpublished. Data on MBTI test-retest presented in the text is presented without reference anywhere.

Another quote from a text by Gregory "too slick and simple, possessing an almost horoscope-like quality" (p519 in my equivalent edition, but referenced by Paul as p536) doesn't 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" (2000).

Surprisingly, Gregory also suggests that Form F is "the most widely used form" (ibid., p519) thus pointing to a broader issue of misleading information on the MBTI in other texts. Hunsley, Lee and Wood, in one of Paul's main references *Science and Pseudoscience in Clinical Psychology* (2003) state "the standard version is a forced-choice 126-item test" (p61). This seems to be an excellent text, and one wonders why basic information on the MBTI is not up-to-date.

Two final references are intriguing. The first is to the report *In the Mind's Eye*, a 1991 US Government publication that, interestingly enough, caused a similar stir to Paul's book amongst MBTI users, until someone went and read it. The report actually supports the MBTI rather than what is claimed by Paul and others. But you have to read it closely in order to find that out.

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

The author seeks to illustrate this by taking one sentence from various brief type descriptions (INFP, INFJ, ISFJ, INTJ, ISFP) that are provided on one page of the booklet *Introduction to Type* (1998). The statements, part of much longer statements, are selective and taken out of context. It also means that she ignores longer descriptions of each of the 16 MBTI types that commence just over the page, let alone going elsewhere for longer descriptions.

All 5 of the examples provided prefer introversion and four of the five examples prefer intuition or feeling. No attempt has been made to give a variety of descriptions, nor go from this page (13) to the longer type descriptions that follow. As an INTP, I didn't feel inclined to agree with any of these statements; perhaps the author agreed with most of them in some way, and chose them because of that.

In my research on the MBTI, I became aware that the depth of knowledge expressed, particularly in critiques, but whether as articles or in books, is uneven to say the least. So a well-researched critique of personality testing in organisations and schools (including the MBTI) would have been welcome, from my point of view at least. Instead, there's just some more random accusations to wade through, poorly researched and largely *ad hominem* in approach. Perhaps the issue here is more self-promotion rather than addressing the topic itself.

The final chapter presents the author's preferred method of looking at personality through life story, notably the approach of Dan McAdams. This is for the author "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" (p219). 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 also raise an eyebrow (see e.g. Perry (ed.) 1975; Baillie 1993) at the implied suggestion of discontinuous personalities.

Paul's narrative example is someone called Dodge Morgan, aspects of whose life story is segmented between an expose on Gordon Allport, the man who first scoured the dictionary for words that could identify personality traits. Morgan is described by Paul as a self-made man, practical, colloquial in language, not averse to a prank, and a penchant for sailing the coasts and seas, alone, from time to time. Intimacy and solitude seem opposites, as he acknowledges he doesn't naturally take much notice of what other people want, but 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 (the MBTI is not mentioned). In times of stress, he appears maudlin and emotional, dealing with it with practical, sometimes showy responses and a cynical approach to both civilisation and the tests he's agreed to fill out daily. One result on an unspecified test (presumably prior to the commencement of the solo journey) seems to describe him quite well, although unacceptably to Morgan.

Perhaps because the book jumps regularly between the worlds of Allport and Morgan, I found it a little incoherent in terms of point and direction. I was unable to ascertain the point of the exercise, or that this was in some way enlightening or confounding of testing of any sort, although it may have defeated the abilities of the researchers.

The difficulties of this sort of narrative, or biography, have been well pointed out by Ludwig (1997). From an MBTI perspective, Morgan seemed clearly an ISTP (SP) to me. Not one who would have exactly fitted that description, but then no-one really does anyway. Of course it probably could have been anyone from the author's point of view, given her assertion that personality is too complex for descriptive labels, arrived at through testing of some sort.

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 special 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 demonization 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 success or failure of stereotypes about people in various aspects of the legal system, particularly relating to social justice, (for want of a better term) are revealing.

With regard to failures in profiling (in type terms, whether someone is ISTP or not, for example) he points out the need for better stereotypes, rather than seeking their elimination. Our society is actually held together at all levels by general definitions

and opinions of this kind; changing one leads not to elimination of stereotypes, but replacement of one by another.

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 in her book come to mind readily as examples. It's also not helpful that the major biographical source for Isabel Myers, Saunders, is both hagiographically oriented and made available by the MBTI publisher.

A low level of interest in history, both biographical and of ideas, also doesn't help the serious study of this approach to personality. Here in Australia, Don Watson has recently defined personality as a cult, proceeding directly to type and Keirseyan language, albeit with a lack of precision (2004).

The issue of testing and associations with business and so on is also an important issue, and should be discussed. The few decent examples provided and, from the MBTI perspective, Zichy's cameo, point to a number of problems in that respect regarding training and use, more particularly, understanding. An understanding of Form G clusters or Step II facets, their development and use makes a clear distinction between MBTI items and Keirsey's sorter to start with.

Perhaps one way to limit this sort of thing would be to limit the MBTI qualification for a specific time, say 3 to 5 years, requiring people who wish to continue using the MBTI to undertake refresher courses involving theory and practice. This practice would also be applied to registered psychologists.

Important in other ways is Paul's presumption that one of the purposes of the MBTI is for staff selection. The reality is that although the MBTI is not recommended for staff selection, it is well known that it is used in this way in many organisations and by many people.

A suggestion here would be to print MBTI question booklets with a clear statement that it is not recommended for selection. An Australian distributor currently has a statement regarding illegal photocopying on its Form M, so it's not impossible, although both of the suggestions here imply the possibility of revenue loss.

Arranging for copies of Quenk's recent article (2004) to be made available to MBTI users and others might also be helpful as it's quite clear and succinct and from an expert in the field. To be quite candid, none of what Quenk says should in principle be new to anyone MBTI qualified or accredited; certainly the topic should have been a natural part of such training.

Another issue is a serious concern about the accuracy of information about the MBTI provided by texts on psychological testing or psychology in general. The point here is not whether the authors or editors of such publications 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; I'm not sure about other avenues.

These suggestions aside, this book is not a serious contribution to a serious topic. It appears to be a text in which popularity and deadlines are the focus, not validated

content. Critiquers of the various projective or objective tests are accepted as being factual without argument, or broad references showing the topic has actually been researched in some depth. Individuals are castigated for their irregular lives and the meaning of their work is denigrated.

I am also extremely concerned at the lack of attention to detail and the poor editing of both quotes and chapter organisation from someone with claims to editing experience in a well-known publication. True, *Personality Today* is simply a topical magazine and hardly an intellectual publication. A psychologist friend of mine recently described it as more a *New Idea* type of magazine than anything else, although the publication seems to impress many). But it should be a professional one with regard to competence and standards.

Certainly the author doesn't seem to have much self-doubt; but you need more than a belief to be convincing as far as I'm concerned.

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- Earlier versions of this article were placed on www.petergeyer.com.au and www.personalitypathways.com.
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