

## Patrick Pearse: Psychobiographical Reflections on an Enigmatic, Paradoxical Personality

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### Abstract

*To date historians have focused almost exclusively on Patrick Pearse's key role in the 1916 Easter Rising to the extent that there is much less information about his personality development and characteristics. They have portrayed the elusive, paradoxical Patrick as nationalist, revolutionary and martyr or as a flawed and failed human being. Moran, agreeing with comments made at an earlier time by F.S.L. Lyons, suggests that to have any real understanding of Patrick's role in the rebellion and the events that led up to it, historians need to focus more attention on understanding the man himself.<sup>1</sup> The approach used in this article is psychobiographical; this is a methodology that applies psychological theory to biographical information in order to more fully understand an individual's personality and achievements. In the case of Patrick Pearse the biographical information focuses on consensual aspects of his family background, his life experiences, his role as educator and his emergence as leader and hero. With regard to psychological theory, there are many empirically supported perspectives that could have been applied in this psychobiography. However, for the purposes of this particular article three perspectives have been selected. Drawing on some main tenets of the psychoanalytic, humanistic and trait approaches, the authors hope to provide a broader understanding of the influences and experiences that may have shaped Pearse as son, sibling, peer, educator and ultimately as a main instigator of the 1916 Rising and one of Ireland's most famous patriots.*

**Keywords:** Ireland--History--Easter Rising, 1916; Pearse, Padraig, 1879-1916; Biography—Psychology; Archetype (Psychology); Personality; Humanistic psychology; Jungian psychoanalysis; Freud, Sigmund, 1856-1939.

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<sup>1</sup> Sean Farrell Moran. *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption: The mind of the Easter Rising, 1916*, (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1997), 6.

## Introduction

Historians still ponder on how such an unlikely person as Patrick Pearse got caught up in the extraordinary events that spearheaded the Rising in 1916. Sean Farrell Moran suggests there was a synchrony between events taking place in Patrick's private life and his political career such that the resolution of his personal crises was ultimately mirrored in the events that changed Irish history.<sup>2</sup> He advocates for a methodology that is different from the rationalistic, historical approach that has been the norm.<sup>3</sup> Moran acknowledges that Ruth Dudley Edwards did adopt a more psychological perspective but suggests that she failed to fully explain the complex contradictions present in Patrick's personality.<sup>4</sup> He posits that a "different approach to the analysis of the individual and his relationship to events in history is required" in order to explain why Patrick, full of hopes, fears and aspirations, wanted and chose to die for Ireland.<sup>5</sup>

Consistent with his own suggestion, Moran draws on ego psychology and psychosocial theory in his attempt to understand the personality of Patrick Pearse.<sup>6</sup> However, Personality Psychology offers many other theoretical perspectives that are useful for understanding personality, a psychological construct commonly defined as "psychological qualities that contribute to an individual's enduring and distinctive patterns of feeling, thinking and behaving".<sup>7</sup> With regards to personality research, different methodologies are emerging; one of these is the psychobiography. In a psychobiography, personality theories are applied to biographical information in order to gain a better understanding of the factors that influence an individual's personality development. From an epistemological perspective the psychobiographical approach is post-positivist and hermeneutical in that it provides speculative suggestions about the way biographical and psychological influences interact to shape personality.

In this article, the authors reflect on some of the salient influences on Patrick's different social roles as son, brother, peer, educator and hero and speculate on how eminent psychologists might explain his personality and achievements. In its aim to provide additional insights into Patrick's enigmatic personality, this psychobiography draws on a greater number of theoretical perspectives than the mainly psychodynamic focus of Moran. Publication parameters forced the authors to limit the number of theories applied to three. The three selected perspectives, in the order in which they are applied in this article, include trait theory (HEXACO Model<sup>8</sup>), humanistic theory (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model<sup>9</sup>) and psychoanalytic theory (Freud and Jung<sup>10</sup>). Drawing on these perspectives, the authors hope to provide some additional insights into how Patrick Pearse's life experiences and personality

<sup>2</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 4-6.

<sup>4</sup> Ruth Dudley Edwards, *Patrick Pearse: The Triumph of Failure*, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1977).

<sup>5</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 14.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Cervone and Lawrence A. Pervin, *Personality: Theory and Research*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008), 8.

<sup>8</sup> Michael C. Ashton and Kibeom Lee. "The HEXACO-60: A Short Measure of the Major Dimensions of Personality." *Journal of Personality Assessment* 91, 4, (2009): 340-345. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00223890902935878>

<sup>9</sup> Michael W. Passer and Ronald E. Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 2008), 366.

<sup>10</sup> Passer and Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, 455-459.

characteristics shaped the enigmatic, paradoxical man who is best known for the pivotal role he played as a prominent leader in the Easter Rising of 1916.

## Patrick Pearse's Family Background

Patrick's father, James Pierce, was born in London into an artisan family. While still a child James was forced to seek employment, due to the poverty of his family. In spite of his upbringing and menial labour jobs, James was motivated to make something of himself and worked very hard to become well-educated. Around 1860 James moved to Ireland with his first wife Emily Fox and established himself as a stone carver and eminent ecclesiastical sculptor in Dublin.<sup>11</sup> Following his relocation, James changed the spelling of his surname to the Irish version 'Pearse' and both he and Emily converted to Roman Catholicism, mainly for business and financial reasons. Quite soon after Emily's early death in 1876, James, now 37 years of age, married Margaret Brady, an attractive 20-year old from an Irish speaking family from County Meath. Margaret's family had gone through hard times and was living in poverty in Dublin when they met. The marriage between James Pearse and Margaret Brady was mutually convenient; James needed a wife to help raise the two surviving children from his first marriage and Margaret wanted to escape from her disadvantaged situation. Margaret and James had four children, Margaret Mary in 1878, Patrick Henry in 1879, William James in 1881 and Mary Bridget in 1883.<sup>12</sup>

## Patrick's Early Life

Patrick Pearse was born in 182 Great Brunswick Street, Dublin on 10 November 1879.<sup>13</sup> His father James worked hard in his stone-masonry business, providing the family with a comfortable middle-class upbringing. James was a self-educated man and liberal enough in his views to embrace Irish nationalism and become a strong advocate of home rule.<sup>14</sup> Margaret was not James's intellectual equal and, being a warm, affectionate person, was quite different in temperament to James who was considered to be somewhat emotionally aloof, stubborn, impulsive and even aggressive.<sup>15</sup> There was little display of affection between James and Patrick; the emotional bond between them appears not to have been very close. Both father and son were highly creative - James with his monumental carvings and sculptures from blocks of stone and Patrick with his writings and his fantastical imagination. Patrick's behaviour as child and adolescent was very dependent on his father's approval. However, Margaret had different views about parenting and both she, and a maternal grand-aunt Margaret, to whom Patrick became very emotionally attached as a consequence of her nursing him through scarlatina, loved Patrick unconditionally. These two women had very traditional Irish values and, from them, Patrick learnt much about the Irish language, Irish historical and mythological figures as well as about the Roman Catholic faith.<sup>16</sup>

As a child Patrick seemed to emulate his father's reserved, domineering manner.<sup>17</sup> On the one hand he was shy, thoughtful and socially awkward, characteristics that do not

<sup>11</sup> David Thornley, "Patrick Pearse and the Pearse Family," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 60, no. 239/240 (1971): 332–46. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30088734>.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>14</sup> Joost Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 13-20.

<sup>15</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 13.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-32.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-41

intuitively link with his later role as a revolutionary leader. On the other hand he was quite domineering and compelled his siblings to take part in his plays, always giving them the less important roles. Most of his childhood was spent with his siblings indoors, as his mother did not want her children mixing with the poorer youths in the neighbourhood. From an early age, Patrick had a very imaginative mind and was frequently plagued by fears of the dark and nightmares. He enjoyed composing little plays and sketches and showed a high capacity for fantasy.<sup>18</sup> Patrick took his religious duties very seriously but his approach to his faith was somewhat unorthodox. Links between his fertile imagination and his religious devotion were evident in the plays he wrote, casting himself in the role of a priest, giving blessings and sacraments to his siblings.<sup>19</sup>

This intuitive, literal understanding of myth and fantasy, and simplistic belief in the power of symbols, is typical of the late childhood developmental stage.<sup>20</sup> However, as children mature, they begin to feel more emotionally secure and these psychological fixations usually recede. Patrick frequently imagined himself as a Gaelic hero. The impetus for this fantasy may have stemmed from listening to Irish folktales and romanticised mythological stories. Many of the stories recounted to Patrick by his mother and grand-aunt contained strong Irish and nationalist themes and focused on the heroism of people like Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet, John Mitchel and the Fenian leaders.<sup>21</sup> His idealising of heroism may have been informed by listening to these stories. Patrick's childhood fantasising went beyond religion and national patriotism. Even up until his teenage years he was known to dress up as a beggar or in female clothing and make-up before going out to roam the streets dressed in character.<sup>22</sup> He wrote many short plays and directed them with his siblings and cousins in acting roles. Some of the plays had sad or even violent endings.<sup>23</sup>

## Patrick's Post-childhood Years

Until he was 11 years of age Patrick attended a private school.<sup>24</sup> In 1891 he started at the Christian Brothers School, Westland Row. As an adolescent Patrick displayed paradoxical aspects of his personality.<sup>25</sup> He was described by his peers as a shy, introspective boy, lacking in self-assurance, who was more interested in intellectual pursuits than sporting activities. However, he also demonstrated strong social confidence when he confronted adults he thought were being unfair to him and especially when he thought they were being unfair to others. This earned him a good deal of respect from his peer group.<sup>26</sup>

The Christian Brothers School aimed to provide a quality education for young boys from disadvantaged backgrounds and had a nationalist ethos.<sup>27</sup> During his years there, Patrick became very interested in languages and, by the time he completed his secondary education

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 26-28.

<sup>19</sup> Thornley, "Patrick Pearse and the Pearse Family", 340.

<sup>20</sup> Kathleen Stassen Berger, *The Developing Person Through the Lifespan*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed (New York: Worth, 2011), 505.

<sup>21</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 28.

<sup>23</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 27.

<sup>24</sup> Brian Crowley, *Patrick Pearse: A Life in Picture*, (Cork: Mercer Press, 2013), 23.

<sup>25</sup> Thornley, "Patrick Pearse and the Pearse Family", 340.

<sup>26</sup> Crowley, *Patrick Pearse: A Life in Picture*, 16-30.

<sup>27</sup> Anne Markey, "Patrick Pearse, Boyish Spirituality and Irish National Identity". *Thymos: Journal of Boyhood Studies* 2, 2, 2008: 140-153. doi:10.3149/thy/0202.140.

in 1896, he had a good knowledge of English, French, Latin and Irish. By this time the 16-year-old Patrick had joined Conradh na Gaeilge and a little while later he set up the New Ireland Literary Society, which met on a weekly basis and actively engaged in debates.<sup>28</sup>

Ultimately Patrick proceeded to get a degree in languages and one in law. During his university years, Patrick was described as being generally reserved but, for those within his close circle, he was “talkative, amusing, and even caustically critical of people”.<sup>29</sup> He was an exceptional orator and demonstrated this ability by the ease with which he could convince and captivate an audience. By the age of 25 Patrick was a very accomplished young man; he was a barrister, an editor and an Irish lecturer in the Catholic University College.<sup>30</sup>

## Patrick the Educator

Patrick was critical of the Irish approach to education and felt there was too much focus on rote learning over reflective thinking. His avant-garde philosophy culminated in him establishing St Enda’s, a bilingual secondary school for boys, in Cullenswood House, Rathmines in 1908.<sup>31</sup> Seventy boys enrolled in the first year. Patrick favoured a more empathic, compassionate approach to his pupils than he himself had experienced under the Christian Brother regime. He also sought to empower his pupils and encouraged the setting up of a peer-elected school council for making decisions and interacting with school management over important school issues. As a cultural revivalist, Patrick sought to instil in his pupils a love of the Irish language, culture and traditions.<sup>32</sup> In 1910, Patrick decided to relocate St Enda’s to larger premises in the Hermitage, Rathfarnham and to open St Ita’s School for girls in the Cullenswood premises.<sup>33</sup> Rathfarnham was much further from the city centre, leading to a drop in enrolment and financial difficulties for the school.<sup>34</sup> Coincidentally, the family sculpture business, that his brother Willie had been managing, closed in 1910 and he and the rest of the family donated their possessions to St. Enda’s and took up roles there. This meant that the entire Pearse family was now dependent on profits from the two schools and, when enrolment dropped over the next couple of years, the family was facing financial ruin.

It was at this point in 1913 that Patrick went to America to gather funds for his schools.<sup>35</sup> The enthusiastic response he received there from nationalist sympathisers validated and empowered the young Patrick who returned from America not only with promises of money, but with an even stronger determination to commit himself to the nationalist cause.

<sup>28</sup> Crowley, *Patrick Pearse: A Life in Picture*, 16-30.

<sup>29</sup> Sean MacGiollarnáth, “Patrick H. Pearse: A Sketch of His Life”. *Journal of The Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, 57, 2005: 139–150.

<sup>30</sup> MacGiollarnáth, “Patrick H. Pearse: A Sketch of His Life”, 139–150.

<sup>31</sup> Norman Atkinson, “The Educational Ideas of Patrick Pearse, 1879-1916”, *Comparative Education Review*, 11 1, [University of Chicago Press, Comparative and International Education Society], 1967: 70, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/445275>.

<sup>32</sup> Atkinson, “The Educational Ideas of Patrick Pearse, 1879-1916”, 71.

<sup>33</sup> David Limond, “‘A Work for Other Hands’: Patrick Pearse and St. Ita's College”. *History Ireland*, 14, 2, 2006:8-9, Wordwell Ltd.: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27725413>.

<sup>34</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 159-205.

<sup>35</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 205.

## Patrick the Leader and Hero

As a young person Patrick was very familiar with Irish folklore. The mythical character that most impressed him was Cu Chulainn.<sup>36</sup> His fascination with Cu Chulainn later transpired in his teaching at St. Enda's School. Patrick enjoyed recounting stories of Cu Chulainn's exploits and he and Willie directed the pupils in school plays about this legendary hero who, in spite of the righteousness of the cause, perished on behalf of his homeland. This preoccupation with exalting the death of the hero who was fighting for a lost cause may have resulted in Patrick internalising a pessimistic view of the 'good' over an optimistic one.<sup>37</sup> In his vision for an Ireland whose culture would be distinct from its Anglo-Irish traditions he argued that dying for the freedom of Ireland would bring personal redemption for him and national redemption for the Irish people. His emphases on "blood sacrifice, redemptive violence...and Irish national identity constitute the ideological heart of the physical-force tradition".<sup>38</sup> Marsden highlights how this tendency of Pearse's to elevate the ideal of national freedom to religious heights had both positive and negative consequences.<sup>39</sup>

It was during the fundraising trip to the United States in 1914 that Pearse made contact with Fenian leaders who convinced him that a rebellion was necessary to combat British oppression and that he had a role to play in that rebellion. This validation provided fuel for Patrick's ambitions to be a leader and hero. Patrick's involvement in Conradh na Gaeilge gathered momentum and he also gained prominence within the Irish republican movement because of his speeches and writings which often had high emotional content. His efforts to outline his political stance, and to put forward his nationalist beliefs, resulted in an increase in societal aspirations for home rule which motivated and inspired many supporters. At a personal level, Patrick grew in confidence in his role as leader and hero. However, in spite of his growing confidence, Patrick appears to have been plagued by self-doubt and has been described as "a man full of deep conflict and unresolved contradictions".<sup>40</sup>

In April 1912, the British House of Commons committed to introducing a Bill in support of Home Rule for Ireland. Patrick initially activated in favour of this Bill. Its introduction was delayed by its failure to pass through the House of Lords but would have happened in 1914 were it not for the outbreak of World War I. The delay led to Patrick's involvement with the Irish Volunteers who were formed to enforce the implementation of the Third Home Rule Act. Afraid that the Irish Volunteers might conciliate, the impatient Patrick became very critical of previous leaders who had abandoned fighting for the nationalist cause at crucial times.<sup>41</sup>

In 1913, he joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), a republican group that supported the use of violence in order to overthrow British rule in Ireland and replace it with a republic. Patrick rose quickly through the ranks, becoming a member of the Supreme Council and the Military Council.<sup>42</sup> After a rousing oration at O'Donovan Rossa's graveside,

<sup>36</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 92.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>39</sup> John Marsden, "Religion and the Nationalist Cause in the Thought of Patrick Pearse". *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 84, 333, 1995: 29–31. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30091107>.

<sup>40</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 15.

<sup>41</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 229-256.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 281-288.

which famously ended with the words “Ireland unfree shall never be at peace”,<sup>43</sup> momentum towards a rebellion increased.<sup>44</sup> Patrick was hugely supportive of the idea of an uprising and believed that the only way to free Ireland was to organise a rebellion.<sup>45</sup> Seven men, most of whom were members of the Military Council of the IRB, covertly planned for a national rising to commence on Easter Sunday 1916.<sup>46</sup> The plans for the Rising were so secret that some high ranking leaders of the IRB were not aware of them. One of these was Eoin MacNeill, leader of the Irish Volunteers who supported the IRB. Connolly, Greenwood and Wallis recount how, in the week before Easter, MacNeill was presented with a forged document, claiming to be from the British authorities at Dublin Castle. It stated that the leaders of the Irish Volunteers were to be arrested and the group to be disarmed.<sup>47</sup> Some members of the Military Council forged this document, probably either MacDermott or Plunkett.<sup>48</sup> In any case Patrick, being a member of the Military Council, would most likely have been aware of the forgery.<sup>49</sup>

The day before the Rising was planned to commence, MacNeill discovered that the document was forged and tried to cancel the uprising, ordering the Irish Volunteers to stand down.<sup>50</sup> The IRB Military Council met and decided to postpone the Rising for one day only. The rebellion began with the reading of the Proclamation of the Republic of Ireland outside the General Post Office in Dublin on Easter Monday 1916.<sup>51</sup> The Proclamation had been mainly written by Patrick Pearse but had seven signatories. The Rising, originally intended to be the prequel to a national revolution, failed militarily and indeed there was never any real expectation of a military victory.<sup>52</sup> The main goal of the leaders was to heighten nationalist awareness while validating self-sacrifice as the ultimate act in rescuing the Irish nation from British domination.<sup>53</sup>

In signing the Proclamation, Patrick and the other six signatories knew they were signing their death warrants. However, they expected that they would become immortalised as heroes in Irish history. For Patrick, this acceptance of fate was probably a consummation of all his conscious and unconscious drives and motivations to be a hero and martyr.<sup>54</sup> He fervently believed that, in dying for Ireland, he and his contemporaries would re-energise the Irish people and revitalise their sense of national identity, their language and culture. He presupposed that the act of martyrdom would inspire the next generation to further the cause for freedom saying “You cannot conquer Ireland. You cannot extinguish the Irish passion for freedom. If our deed has not been sufficient to win freedom, then our children will win it by a

<sup>43</sup> Ucc.ie, CELT: *Chronology of Patrick Pearse, also known as Pádraig Pearse (Pádraig Mac Piarais)*, 2014, Retrieved 7 November, 2015 from <https://www.ucc.ie/celt/pearse.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 146.

<sup>45</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 283-4.

<sup>46</sup> John Dorney, "The Easter Rising – A Brief Overview", *The Irish Story*, 2011.

<http://www.theirishstory.com/2011/04/22/the-easter-rising-%E2%80%93-a-brief-overview/#.VvAL0-KLTIV>

<sup>47</sup> Mark Connolly, Margaret Greenwood and Geoff Wallis. *The Rough Guide to Ireland*. (London: Rough Guides, 2003), 97.

<sup>48</sup> Edwards, *Patrick Pearse*, 267.

<sup>49</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 306-307.

<sup>50</sup> Connolly, Greenwood and Wallis, *The Rough Guide to Ireland*, 97.

<sup>51</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 309.

<sup>52</sup> Atkinson, “The Educational Ideas of Patrick Pearse”, 1879-1916”, 68.

<sup>53</sup> Marsden, “Religion and the Nationalist Cause in the Thought of Patrick Pearse”, 28–37.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30091107>.

<sup>54</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 151-153.

better deed”<sup>55</sup> The 1916 Rising appears to be a consummation of the self-actualising of Patrick’s religious and patriotic tendencies. The idea of a ‘nation’ appealed strongly to Patrick and may have been the catalyst that motivated him to consider violence and self-sacrifice as the only desirable options.<sup>56</sup>

The image of an Ireland besieged and the theme of sacrificial death are strong in the Irish national consciousness. The theme of self-sacrifice is epitomised in the myth of Cu Chulainn who died for his fatherland. It is also analogous to the Christian view of redemption, how, in sacrificing his own life, Jesus gains immortality and redeems those who learn from his example. Moran suggests that, due to their Roman Catholic heritage, “the Irish could spiritualise freedom and victory as an eternal and ultimate state attainable after death”.<sup>57</sup>

The authors posit that these influences from Patrick’s early family life, his identification with Irish culture and traditions and his extreme nationalism may have activated conscious and unconscious forces that ultimately manifested in his willingness to die for his country.

## **Application of Psychological Theories to the Personality of Patrick Pearse**

Moran posits that the personality of Patrick Pearse has not been openly and honestly examined enough in previous works. He even suggests that the emphasis has been overly positivistic, resulting in a failure to recognise the important role unconscious processes play in guiding human behaviours.<sup>58</sup> In his book ‘Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption’ (1997), Moran draws on the tenets of ego-psychology and Eriksonian theory to explain Patrick’s motivations and achievements. Several psychological theories could be applied in a more exhaustive attempt to profile Patrick Pearse. However, for this short psychobiography the three theories were chosen on the basis that they each represented a different theoretical paradigm in Personality Psychology. The HEXACO Model represents the trait perspective, the Hierarchy of Needs Model represents the humanistic perspective and the theories of Freud and Jung represent the psychoanalytic perspective. The three theories are used to theoretically support the suggestions being offered in an attempt to understand Patrick’s conflicted and paradoxical personality, his identification with the heroic and his obsession with sacrificial death and martyrdom. The order in which the theories could be presented here is largely arbitrary but the rationale for the sequence used is to facilitate the reader by moving from more simple concepts to more complex ones. There was also a view that the reference to archetypal influences might be best placed at the end of this section.

### **Trait approach - the HEXACO Model**

The underlying assumption of trait theory is that people possess broad dispositions or traits to behave in certain ways. Traits are defined as consistent patterns in the way in which individuals behave, feel and think, and they are generally expressed in behaviours.<sup>59</sup> Traits summarise a person’s typical behaviours and a trait taxonomy is a way of classifying a

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<sup>55</sup> “Easter 1916 | Pádraig Pearse,” accessed 28 March, 2016, <http://www.easter1916.ie/index.php/people/signatories/p-h-pearse/>

<sup>56</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 156-160.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>59</sup> Cervone and Pervin, *Personality: Theory and Research*, 238.



particular person. One of the most important trait theories was the OCEAN model put forward by Costa and McCrae.<sup>60</sup> More recently Lee and Ashton (2009) have extended this model to include another super-trait called Honesty-Humility. This new version is called the HEXACO model. The acronym stands for **H**onesty-humility, **E**motionality, **eX**traversion, **A**greeableness, **C**onscientiousness and **O**penness to experience.<sup>61</sup> All super-factors exist on a continuum that moves from positive to negative.

Characteristics represented by the **Honesty-humility** super-factor include sincerity, fairness, greed avoidance and modesty. In applying this super-factor to Patrick, there appears to be some ambiguity about where he might score on the continuum. On the one hand he was honest and outspoken about his political and religious beliefs and very earnest about pursuing his goals. He did not seek personal financial gain for what he did and, in fact, invested his wealth heavily in his educational institutes. On the other hand Patrick was not above using deceptive methods of manipulation to further his aims and achieve his goals. This is seen in his involvement in the forging of documents to ensure the Rising would go ahead, despite strong evidence it was doomed to failure. In terms of humility it appears that, in his dealings with his peer group, he was quite humble and did not display much arrogance. However, there is evidence of an inflated self-esteem and notions of grandeur in his self-comparisons with mythical heroes, Irish patriots and Christ. Augusteijn suggests that this envisaging of himself as hero and martyr indicates hubris rather than humility.<sup>62</sup>

Facets of the **Emotionality** super-factor include fearfulness, anxiety, emotional dependence and sentimentality. It is suggested that Patrick would probably score quite low on this super-trait. Signs of anxiety and fearfulness were present in him as a child. However, as he matured emotionally the childhood fears seemed to dissipate and, in his adult life, he did not display any obvious neurotic symptoms. Overall it seems that Patrick was very much in control of his emotions, as evidenced by his fearless pursuit of the nationalist cause, including the willingness to endanger his own life in a rebellion. The fact that he whistled while walking out for his execution demonstrates a great deal of emotional self-control and an ability to respond “robustly to life’s stresses and threats”.<sup>63</sup>

Characteristics subsumed in the **eXtraversion** super-trait include social self-esteem, social boldness, sociability and liveliness. Placing the enigmatic Patrick on the extraversion-introversion continuum is challenging. At first glance he appears to have been an introvert. Introverts are more concerned with their personal thoughts and feelings, are cautious and prefer to keep to themselves.<sup>64</sup> Whereas Patrick was socially engaged with his mother and sisters and had a lifelong friendship with his brother Willie, outside of the family circle he was shy, withdrawn and socially awkward, all of which indicate a more introverted personality. In school, he lacked self-confidence in socialising with some of his male classmates. However, in completely different contexts Patrick showed characteristics more typical of an extravert. Faced with unwarranted criticism regarding other people or ideologies he came across as argumentative and, even as an adolescent, challenged adults if he believed their actions or attitudes were unjust. In his social roles as leader and orator, inciting his listeners to join the fight for Irish freedom, the commanding and charismatic Patrick comes

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 270-271.

<sup>61</sup> Ashton and Lee, “The HEXACO-60: A Short Measure of the Major Dimensions of Personality”. 340-345.

<sup>62</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 43.

<sup>63</sup> Philip Banyard, Gayle Dillon, Christine Norman and Belinda Winder, *Essential Psychology*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 372-374.

<sup>64</sup> Ruth Snowden, *Jung- The Key Ideas: Teach Yourself*, (Blacklick, OH: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 118-120.

across as very extravert. One could argue that in relation to his sociability he displayed chameleon tendencies, changing his colours according to the different social situations.

Facets of the **Agreeableness** super-factor include forgivingness, gentleness, flexibility and patience. There is some ambiguity in applying this super-factor to Patrick. His loyalty and devotion as son and brother point to him being very agreeable. However, it is also reported that Patrick was very reluctant to allow his siblings to take the lead role in the plays he produced at home and was very critical of them if they did play in a leading role. Even though in school he came across as aloof, reclusive and had very few friends, he was liked and respected by his peers; this would probably not have been the case had he been very disagreeable. As a progressive educator with a real interest in fostering a positive, creative learning environment for his pupils, Patrick showed genuine commitment to the welfare of his pupils, not only at the academic level but also at the emotional level.<sup>65</sup> There are many stories about him dealing with pupils who, for various reasons, were emotionally upset. He also demonstrated high levels of Agreeableness when, in St Enda's, he encouraged the setting up of a peer-elected school council that liaised with the headmaster over important school issues.<sup>66</sup> The fact that Patrick became accepted by the other senior members of the IRB suggests that they found him agreeable enough, although his acceptance may have been due to their shared vision.<sup>67</sup> However, Patrick could also be stubborn and was not afraid to stand up for what he felt was right; he was quick to react when he felt an injustice was taking place, even if that would cause others to respond negatively towards him. He was intransigent and unwilling to accept alternative political views. He was also prepared to use manipulation and deception to further his plans for the Rising and ultimately achieve his goals.

In the HEXACO model, **Conscientiousness** combines organisation, diligence, perfectionism and prudence. High levels of Conscientiousness are evident throughout all stages in Patrick's short life. As a child he was very energetic, using this energy to write plays and produce them. In his teenage years he was the instigator of many adventures with his brother Willie. High levels of Conscientiousness are also evident in Patrick's setting up of the New Ireland Literary Society and joining Conradh na Gaeilge at the young age of 16.<sup>68</sup> As a young man his vision for a different type of education did not just remain an idea. He committed himself fully to the realisation of this vision and established St Enda's and St Ita's, donating all his assets, and those of his family, to ensure the survival of the schools. When the schools were facing financial ruin he went to America in order to source financial support there. His hard work, devotion to his teaching and writing, single-minded commitment to nationalism and preparedness to sacrifice his own life to achieve freedom for Ireland suggest exceptionally high levels of Conscientiousness.

Facets subsumed under **Openness to Experience** include aesthetic appreciation, inquisitiveness, creativity, unconventionality and altruism. All the evidence points to Patrick scoring very high on Openness to Experience. It is clear from biographies about his early life that he was an avid reader, had a very fertile imagination and fantasised a lot. He was also very creative. These talents played out in his writings and the different roles he composed for himself and his siblings to act. High levels of Openness to Experience are evident in his

<sup>65</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 175-186.

<sup>66</sup> "The Pearse Museum", 2016. *Pearsemuseum.Ie*. Accessed March 28. <http://pearsemuseum.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/St.-Endas-Prospectus-1908-1.pdf>.

<sup>67</sup> Banyard, Dillon, Norman and Winder, *Essential Psychology*, 373.

<sup>68</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 219.

cross-dressing as a youth and his escapades to ‘red light’ neighbourhoods in Dublin.<sup>69</sup> Patrick was not one to follow the rules laid down by society. At an intellectual level Patrick’s avant-garde views on education, his fund raising mission to the United States and the different themes he explored in his poetry, writings and orations also suggest that he was very open to new ideas and ideologies. Banyard, Dillon, Norman and Winder suggest that Patrick was unique and showed “preferences for novelty” in setting up schools and planning the Rising.<sup>70</sup> The fact that, when constitutional concessions were being thwarted, Patrick shifted his stance from campaigning for political reform to advocating for a military approach and a rebellion shows his ability to realign his priorities in the light of new experiences and challenges.<sup>71</sup>

### Humanistic approach - Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs model

Humanistic psychology is phenomenological in its ethos and emphasises the uniqueness of each human being.<sup>72</sup> Its proponents posit that humans are basically good and are motivated towards fulfilling their potential. Abraham Maslow, one of the best known humanistic psychologists, theorised that all humans have needs and that these needs can be organised into a hierarchy.<sup>73</sup> When lower order needs are satisfied a person’s focus shifts to satisfying the needs at the next level. Maslow’s original hierarchy of needs contained five levels. Later revisions of his hierarchy postulated seven<sup>74</sup> or eight levels.<sup>75</sup>

At the lowest level are the **physiological needs**. These are the basic survival needs e.g. hunger, thirst and shelter.<sup>76</sup> Coming from a relatively middle-class family, Patrick’s needs at this level were met during his childhood and adolescence.<sup>77</sup>

At the next level are the **safety needs**. Patrick’s needs to feel secure and safe in his environment were also met as a child. The fact that he chose to place himself in situations of danger later in life is hard to define within this theoretical framework but is likely to do with the drive for self-actualisation or ego transcendence.

Next are the **belongingness and love needs** which are needs to feel accepted by others.<sup>78</sup> These needs were met through the close relationship Patrick had with his family, especially with his mother and his brother Willie.<sup>79</sup> Early friendships outside the family unit appear to be lacking.<sup>80</sup> As he matured it is likely that Patrick’s extra-familial belongingness needs were met through his various language groups and republican organisations rather than through romantic relationships. Belonging to the various groups could have given him a foundation of acceptance on which he was able to build attributes of his personality that became more pronounced in his later life.

<sup>69</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 28.

<sup>70</sup> Banyard, Dillon, Norman and Winder, *Essential Psychology*, 372.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 372-374.

<sup>72</sup> John Maltby, Liz Day and Ann Macaskill, *Personality, Individual Differences and Intelligence*, (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Ltd, 2007), 133.

<sup>73</sup> Cervone and Pervin, *Personality: Theory and Research*, 208.

<sup>74</sup> Passer and Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, 366.

<sup>75</sup> Ellen E. Pastorino and Susann M. Doyle-Portillo, *What Is Psychology? Essentials*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013), 287-288.

<sup>76</sup> Maltby, Day and Macaskill, *Personality, Individual Differences and Intelligence*, 134.

<sup>77</sup> Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, 24-34.

<sup>78</sup> Maltby, Day and Macaskill, *Personality, Individual Differences and Intelligence*, 135.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-26.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

At the next level are the **esteem needs**. Maslow describes the need for esteem as a growth need, one which humans seek out even when not deprived of it.<sup>81</sup> Esteem needs are satisfied through having a sense of self-competence as well as through receiving respect and admiration from others that is merited.<sup>82</sup> The unconditional love given to Patrick by his family would probably have fostered high self-esteem in him. Although not always liked, the extraordinary literary talents he showed as a youth earned respect from his peer groups and probably contributed to a positive sense of self and growing confidence as writer and orator.<sup>83</sup> Patrick's self-esteem was probably nourished by the recognition he got for his intellectual and creative pursuits from various social groups. As headmaster he earned much respect from his pupils. His appointment to the prestigious councils within the IRB and the public applause he got as orator might also have boosted his self-esteem. An important question to ask here is whether Patrick's self-esteem needs became overly inflated to the extent that he felt he was not receiving the recognition he deserved in this life which may explain his pursuit of martyrdom.

Priorities at the **cognitive needs** level include knowledge and understanding. Pearse was a prolific reader and a profound thinker who expressed his ideas in plays, poetry, writings and speeches. His superior talents led him to become recognised as a highly intelligent, original thinker; this recognition would have gone some way toward meeting his cognitive needs. The implementation of his vision for a different type of education system indicates that he was very focused at this level, making many sacrifices to ensure the survival of the educational establishments he founded.<sup>84</sup>

At the **aesthetic needs** level, important aspects include beauty and symmetry. From an early age Patrick's aesthetic awareness was evident in the deep appreciation he had for the natural beauty of Ireland. The mythical and religious symbolism that come through his later artistic works also point to him being very in touch with his aesthetic needs.

At the seventh level of the hierarchy are the **self-actualisation needs** which are the needs to fulfill one's potential, to strive for perfection mentally, artistically, emotionally and socially and to live a life that is dedicated primarily to the betterment of others.<sup>85</sup> Self-actualised individuals have an acceptance of their purpose but this sense of purpose differs greatly from one individual to another. With his lower order needs largely met Patrick was able to focus his energies on pursuing his main goals. Key personality traits of self-actualised individuals include a preference for solitude and privacy, they can sometimes be seen as spontaneous and hard to tie down and they are motivated by a sense of personal responsibility to a cause. All of these characteristics can clearly be seen in Patrick, especially the last one.

In the eight-stage model the highest level is **ego-transcendence**.<sup>86</sup> People operating at this level move beyond a focus on self to fully commit themselves to the welfare of others. They usually become committed to a cause higher than themselves. Examples include Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King. One could argue that Patrick reached this level. His focus moved beyond his own needs; his whole life became dedicated to reviving Irish culture, arousing a new sense of pride in the Irish people and engaging in the

<sup>81</sup> Passer and Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, 366.

<sup>82</sup> Maltby, Day and Macaskill, *Personality, Individual Differences and Intelligence*, 135.

<sup>83</sup> Passer and Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, 27.

<sup>84</sup> Augustejjn, *Patrick Pearse*, 147-211.

<sup>85</sup> Passer and Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, 366.

<sup>86</sup> Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo, *What Is Psychology? Essentials*, 287-288.

struggle to achieve freedom for Ireland. Patrick was prepared to pay the ultimate sacrifice for this cause; he expected that through death for his country he would self-transcend, be immortalised and reach mythic status.

### **Psychoanalytic approach - theories of Freud and Jung**

Psychoanalytic theory emphasises the role of unconscious motivating forces, conflicts amongst the various forces and the influence of these conflicts on behaviour and personality. People are construed as energy systems and innate instincts and drives are the motivating forces of the personality. Freud posited that each person has an instinct for life (**eros**) and death (**thanatos**) within their psyche.<sup>87</sup>

The **libido** constitutes eros energies that serve to combat or reduce the death drive; it does so by focusing the eros instincts and drives outward.<sup>88</sup> According to Freudian theory, blocked libidinal energies, manifesting as unacceptable impulses, can be channelled into socially desirable and admirable behaviour through the defence mechanism of sublimation.<sup>89</sup> The authors suggest that Patrick may have blocked the expression of his libidinal energies and unconsciously sublimated them. The extreme affection he showed towards the female members of his family and his various artistic pursuits may represent sublimation of these inhibited energies.<sup>90</sup> In Patrick's case these eros instincts may also have been unconsciously expressed through his vision of the birth of a different type of education system in Ireland, one that was visionary and inspirational with a focus on producing people who were broadly educated and cultured but who also displayed significant spirit and nobility. Sublimation of eros energies may also have been channelled into his vision of an Ireland free from foreign domination.

Freud also theorised that people have within them a death drive or 'thanatos'.<sup>91</sup> Thanatic forces appear to be very strong and prominent throughout Patrick's life. His preoccupations with failed heroes in his childhood indicate that he may have been drawn towards these pessimistic, defeatist forces. As he matured, these darker instincts appeared to dominate his personality. Manifestation of the increasing domination of the death drive can be seen in the shift from seeking a political solution to home rule to favouring military force as a way of achieving independence for Ireland. Thanatic forces are also implicit in his self-destructive ambition to die for the freedom of Ireland; Patrick was very aware that when he signed the Proclamation he was signing his own death warrant. In his theory about repetition compulsion, Freud posits that humans have a compulsion to repeat thanatically charged patterns. Patrick's fantasising about fallen heroes such as Macbeth and Cu Chulainn during childhood appears to be reflected in reality in his later life; his childhood fascination with these tragic characters appears to be mirrored in his desire to make the ultimate sacrifice and die for the freedom of Ireland and in so doing achieve success, fame and mythic status as a martyr.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Albert Ellis and Mike Abrams, *Personality Theories: Critical Perspectives*, (London: Sage Publications, 2009), 104.

<sup>88</sup> Kenneth Carter and Colleen M. Seifert, *Learn Psychology*, (Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2013), 509.

<sup>89</sup> Passer and Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, 458.

<sup>90</sup> Albert Ellis and Mike Abrams, *Personality Theories: Critical Perspectives*, 103.

<sup>91</sup> Carter and Seifert, *Learn Psychology*, 509.

<sup>92</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 198-199.

Freud theorised that the human psyche contained a tripartite structure involving the **id, ego and superego**.<sup>93</sup> The id is the source of all psychic energy and comprises an individual's needs, wants and desires. The id exists within the unconscious mind and functions in relation to the pleasure principle.<sup>94</sup> Strong id forces were manifest in Patrick's atypical choices in life and his unwavering commitment to the cause to which he was committed in spite of many criticisms and obstacles. They appear to have been especially strong during the final days before the Rising when he sought immediate gratification of his ultimate desire to free Ireland from British rule and become a hero.

The second element in the tripartite structure is the ego. It has direct contact with reality and functions largely at the conscious level.<sup>95</sup> It operates according to the reality principle and tries to mediate between the id and the external world or environment.<sup>96</sup> In Patrick's case it seems the ego may have been somewhat underdeveloped and may have struggled to control the forces of the id. The setting up of St Enda's school might suggest a well-functioning ego but the relocation of the school that ultimately contributed to its financial problems could have been driven by overly extravagant id impulses. The overpowering of the ego by the id may also explain his preoccupation with the fantasy of becoming a hero rather than choosing a normative life trajectory based more on reality.

The third element in the tripartite structure is the superego. It develops during the first few years of life and constitutes a person's moral code and conscience.<sup>97</sup> From his family background, and the emphasis placed by his mother Margaret on faith and religion, one would expect Patrick to develop a strong, even harsh, superego. His devotion and loyalty to his mother, and his desire to win the approval of his father, also suggest Patrick had a strongly developed superego. Further support for this view comes from the fact that, following the death of his father, Patrick was very intent on winning his mother's approval through his involvement in the republican movement. His strict moral code and preoccupation with sexual and ideological purity also show evidence of a strong superego. From a sexuality perspective it may be that a harsh superego prevented him from forming any lasting intimate relationships.<sup>98</sup> From an ideological perspective, evidence of a harsh superego comes across in Patrick's unwavering commitment to the vision he had for a free Ireland.

Freud emphasised how the personality develops during childhood as a result of the resolution or non-resolution of the various tensions that arise during a number of psychosexual stages. These include the oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital stages.<sup>99</sup> Patrick displays aspects of fixation particularly during the oral and phallic stages. Some amount of fixation is suggested by his love of talking and acting and in setting up a debating society in which he was actively involved. Evidence of oral receptiveness may also be seen in his famous speeches that aroused his listeners, especially the oration commemorating Wolfe Tone, his eulogy at the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa and perhaps most significantly his reading of the Proclamation outside the GPO on Easter Monday 1916. Evidence of fixation at the phallic stage appears to be linked to Patrick's relationship with his parents. According to Freudian theory, it is during the phallic stage that Oedipal strivings emerge. Patrick as a

<sup>93</sup> Passer and Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, 456.

<sup>94</sup> Albert Ellis and Mike Abrams, *Personality Theories: Critical Perspectives*, 88.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>96</sup> Barbara Engler, *Personality Theories*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2014), 43-44.

<sup>97</sup> Barbara Engler, *Personality Theories*, 43-44.

<sup>98</sup> Passer and Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, 457.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 458.

young boy appeared to idolise his mother and over-identified with her but it is normal for boys to resolve the Oedipal fixations on the mother during the phallic stage by re-identifying with the father figure.<sup>100</sup> It is suggested that, since James was physically and emotionally absent from Patrick's life, Oedipal strivings were not resolved and Patrick remained somewhat fixated on his mother throughout his life. Fixation at this stage in a male has also been linked with attraction to countercultural movements, support for radical causes and advocacy for social change.<sup>101</sup> All of these characteristics are evident in Pearse's efforts to revive the Irish language and culture, his avant-garde views on education and his commitment to freeing Ireland from British rule.

### Jungian Theory

Jung extended the Freudian understanding of the unconscious to include the collective unconscious which consists of memories of cumulative experiences of past generations of the human race.<sup>102</sup> He posited that memories in the collective unconscious are represented by universal images or symbols known as **archetypes**. Archetypes are inherited tendencies to interpret experience in specific ways.<sup>103</sup> They constitute "universal thoughts, symbols or images having a large amount of emotion attached to them".<sup>104</sup> Archetypes find expression in "symbols, myths and beliefs that appear across many cultures such as the image of a god, an evil force, the hero, the good mother and the quest for self-unity and completeness".<sup>105</sup> Another important aspect of Jungian theory is its emphasis on how people strive to reconcile opposing forces within the personality. He represents them archetypically as the **persona**, the **animus/anima**, the **shadow** and the **self**.

The word 'persona' is the Latin word for mask. In framing this as an archetype, Jung suggested that people can show several aspects of themselves in different social roles and in different situations. However, when an individual over-identifies with a persona it leads to instability in the personality due to a loss of a sense of self and doubts about who one really is.<sup>106</sup> There appears to be lots of paradoxical elements within Patrick's personality. His public persona appears to be somewhat at odds with his private one. As alluded to earlier, Patrick could be extremely introverted or extremely extraverted depending on the role and context. It may be that he was adopting a completely different persona while giving his speeches to the public and that this persona was the public face of his personality rather than a representation of the man he really was.<sup>107</sup> Patrick may have used this persona in the public sphere to convince people to believe in his propaganda and convert them to his way of thinking. This public persona, full of confidence, power and charisma was at odds with the polite, reserved person Patrick was when not on the public stage.

Given the adulation he received from his listeners, it is possible that he began to completely identify with his public persona, losing touch with his authentic self. The authors suggest that the tendency to show two different personas, one in a private setting and the other in a public one, may help to explain Patrick's paradoxical personality. The synonymous

<sup>100</sup> Passer and Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, 458.

<sup>101</sup> Albert Ellis and Mike Abrams, *Personality Theories: Critical Perspectives*, 115.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>103</sup> Passer and Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, 459.

<sup>104</sup> Bernardo J. Carducci, *The Psychology of Personality*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 137.

<sup>105</sup> Passer and Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, 459.

<sup>106</sup> Cervone and Pervin, *Personality: Theory and Research*, 139.

<sup>107</sup> Edward Kardas, *History of Psychology: The Making of a Science*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2014), 383

denial of the authentic self is likely to have caused psychological tensions and fixations within his personality and provides a possible explanation for his extreme single-mindedness and fanaticism for the cause in which he was engaged.

Other Jungian archetypes include the animus and the anima. These represent the masculine and feminine tendencies within the personality. Jung theorises that in the course of maturation males need to embrace their anima or feminine side.<sup>108</sup> Reports of Patrick being viewed as quite effeminate by his fellow school boys and his exploits at cross-dressing indicate that he may have been intensely aware of his anima at an earlier age than is usual in the developmental process. In displaying a nurturing role, both in his family and in the schools he established, Patrick shows further evidence of anima characteristics.

Jung writes also about the shadow archetype and how people need to be aware of shadow material. Failure to acknowledge this darker side of the personality leads to psychological disturbance. It could be argued that Patrick's negativity and pessimism were the result of shadow material that he was not acknowledging. Failure to admit to one's imperfections may play out in preoccupation with perfectionism and might explain Patrick's emphasis on moral and ideological purity. In his later years Patrick seems to identify with some of this shadow material. His use of the expression 'strange thing that I am'<sup>109</sup> in relation to how very different maternal and paternal origins shaped his personality, suggests that he did recognise, to some extent, the darkness and conflict within himself.

For Jung, the search for the self is a never-ending quest. He says humans are continuously attempting to reconcile all the different forces within the psyche in order to find unity in the self.<sup>110</sup> It may well be that Patrick struggled to reconcile these different tensions and that this may explain the use of terms such as enigmatic and paradoxical in relation to his personality.

Especially relevant in this psychobiography is the hero archetype. In mythical stories heroes are connected with self-sacrifice. Patrick's mother and grand-aunt told him many stories about heroic characters that were destined to fail but were subsequently remembered as glorious and noble heroes.<sup>111</sup> In his youth, Patrick strongly identified with the heroic characters of Macbeth and Cu Chulainn and frequently visualised himself as a Gaelic hero going forward to meet his fate. These stories of doomed heroes are inconsistent with the fairy-tales and myths more commonly read to young children that focus on the heroic figure triumphing over an evil villain or force and surviving to assume a status of power and adulation. The emphasis on a positive outcome, with good always triumphing over evil, is misrepresented in the archetypal heroes with which the impressionable young Patrick was familiar. This misrepresentation possibly primed Patrick to unconsciously respond to cues in his own life and environment which ultimately led to his preoccupation with self-sacrifice and martyrdom. He appears to have tapped into the Irish collective unconscious of Gaelic myths, heroes and folktales. Expressions relating to these archetypal figures feature predominantly in Patrick's artistic works. He merges these archetypal myths with religious symbols in order to appeal to the collective unconscious of the Irish people, all the while inciting the listeners to join the nationalist cause. In his speeches Patrick glorifies the

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<sup>108</sup> Cervone and Pervin, *Personality: Theory and Research*, 139.

<sup>109</sup> Brian Crowley, "The Strange Thing I Am: His Father's Son?". *History Ireland*, 14, 2, 2006: Wordwell Ltd.: 12–13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27725415>.

<sup>110</sup> Cervone and Pervin, *Personality: Theory and Research*, 139.

<sup>111</sup> Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption*, 91-92.



sacrifices made by these fallen heroes and by Jesus, suggesting that their deaths were necessary to restore peace and harmony. It is argued here that Patrick's over-identification with the hero archetype was pivotal in shaping his personality, his career path and ultimately his self-sacrifice and martyrdom.

## Summary

The psychobiographical reflections on the factors that shaped Pearse's personality, summarised in this article, are by no means exhaustive. They are, however, indicative of the fact that there can be many plausible psychological explanations as to how interactions between Pearse's family influences, his life experiences and personality characteristics culminated in his paradoxical and enigmatic personality. The authors' reflections, outlined in this article, derived from their knowledge of the HEXACO Model, Maslow's 8-level Hierarchy of Needs Model and key tenets of Freudian and Jungian theory. Some interesting themes emerged and are summarised here.

On the HEXACO Patrick could be described as ambivalent on Honesty-humility, low on Emotionality, ambivalent on eXtraversion, low on Agreeableness, high on Conscientiousness and very high on Openness to Experience.

With regards to Maslow's Hierarchy, Patrick appears to have had his lower order needs met quite early in his life and, as a young adult, may have been functioning at the self-actualisation and ego-transcendence levels. His preference for solitude, dedication to the nationalist cause and self-sacrificial tendencies appear to be consistent with patterns of behaviour typical of someone functioning at the self-actualisation and ego-transcendence levels.

With regards to Freudian theory it is possible that Pearse's unreleased libidinal energies may have been sublimated and become manifest in the extreme affection he felt towards his family and his various artistic pursuits. Non-resolution of the Oedipal strivings during the phallic stage may explain Patrick's lack of identification with his father and over-identification with his mother. With maturation, thanatic forces appear to have become more dominant in his personality. Supporting evidence includes his shift from seeking a political solution to Irish independence to spearheading a military one as well as his self-destructive ambition to die for his country.

From the Jungian perspective, the tendency to display very different private and public personas is likely to have led to a confused authentic self; the ensuing tensions may provide an explanation for why terms such as enigmatic and paradoxical are frequently used in describing Pearse's personality. The authors posit that these influences from Patrick's early family life, his early exposure to mythical and historically factual stories about Gaelic heroes and his extreme nationalism may have primed him to over-identify with the hero archetypal framework that ultimately manifested in his willingness to die for his country and become a hero and martyr.

A more extensive psychobiography might consider all of the aforementioned theoretical perspectives in more detail as well as other theoretical perspectives in Personality Psychology that emphasise biological, socio-cultural and socio-contextual influences. However, within the confines of this article, the authors hope to have provided some alternative, theoretically supported explanations as to why a young boy from an ordinary background became such an iconic figure in the minds of the Irish today.

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