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## COMMENTARY

### In praise of my friend and co-writer Keith Tudor

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This commentary is based on Helena and Keith's article, 'The Irish Uprising of Easter 1916: A Psychopolitical Dialogue', published originally in 2016, which can be found here: <https://ojs.aut.ac.nz/psychotherapy-politics-international/article/view/497>.

It is over thirty years since I first met Keith Tudor when he joined the third year of training in transactional analysis psychotherapy at the Metanoia Institute in London, where we were tutored by Charlotte Sills. At the beginning of each weekend, the group began with each person checking in about how they were feeling and sharing their reflections. I recall sharing my ongoing anxieties and sorrows about the troubles in Northern Ireland and linking it to my own trans-generational trauma as the daughter of an Irish immigrant, as explained in the article 'The Irish Uprising of Easter 1916: A Psychopolitical Dialogue'. I was surprised by Keith's attuned and knowledgeable response about the history and complexity of Ireland because it was unusual in psychological circles to make political links with psychological trauma at that time. As I got to know Keith, we realised that we shared a background of involvement in left-wing politics. He was in Big Flame, a revolutionary socialist feminist organisation in which he was actively involved from 1979 to 1985. I had always admired Big Flame because they seemed so creative and fun! Following on from this he had spent two years in Italy where he was influenced by Democrazia Proletaria (Proletarian Democracy) but was more actively involved in disability politics. I had been involved in the International Marxist Group (IMG). Although Keith and I shared this youthful involvement with left-wing groups, we came from different perspectives. Keith's political knowledge was factual and theoretical, coming from a skilled intellectual understanding but was also with warmth and compassion. I was more emotionally disturbed by the troubles in Ireland at that time.

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I later traversed through a tricky, painful psychological journey with my Jungian analyst who was also a rabbi. This intense, journey changed my political views as I began to metabolise my sorrows into a more philosophically dialectical place. As time went on Keith and I found lots to disagree about but throughout we kept a strong bond that had begun during that long ago weekend when we met apparently from a similar political perspective. We have been connected and bonded ever since, in spite of Keith moving to the other side of the world—New Zealand—keeping up monthly Zoom meetings, even managing to see each other sometimes, and still discussing political perspectives that were becoming less meaningful for me. Nevertheless, when Keith suggested we write our article in 2016 to commemorate the 100 years since the Irish Revolution (Hargaden & Tudor, 2016), it was as though we returned to the beginning of our initial connection. Through Keith's warm and intellectual curiosity, I was enabled to return, yet again, to the psychological and political terrain of Ireland. It was through this process that I came to the paradoxical understanding of how 'independence' had not released the Irish into freedom, as promised by the revolutionaries, but instead into a dictatorship, presided over by the Taoichchóg Eamon De Valera. It was under his rule that the Catholic Church exercised an iron grip over the population. So, far from independence, it seemed to me, the Irish were delivered into the hands of a Catholic fascist regime that was essentially misogynistic and homophobic; a type of existential hatred of personal liberty that spawned a nation riddled with domestic abuse, parochial concerns, a deep-seated bitterness towards the English, and most dreadful of all, the separation of single mothers from their babies, often leading to many infant deaths. What price so-called 'independence'. When writing together I discovered Keith's ancestral connections with Ireland and realised that our bond had been linked to the unconscious—what I would now understand as a right-brain-right-brain connection (McGilchrist, 2019); that we had had an unconscious mental connection with the trials and tribulations of the Irish. Perhaps Annie Burns (2018) in her Nobel Prize-winning book, *Milkman*, reveals something of the type of unconscious connection we both had when she writes her excoriating critique of every organisation concerned with the troubles, referring to them all as Mr. McSomebody. She outed the virulently misogynistic attitudes shared by all sides, whether they be Catholics, Protestants, Republicans, Loyalists, or the British army. From this perspective Keith and I were on the same side!

Keith always held a 'political' perspective in transactional analysis (TA), supporting and developing the theory of radical psychiatry. In the special issue on TA and Politics he created the 'sixth driver' calling it 'Take It', which accounts, both in developmental and social terms, for the introjection by the child of Parental messages to take and own objects in an inappropriate, exploitative, and unsustainable way.

Despite our differences, or maybe because of them, Keith and I have had a very close bond over the years through our love of writing, talking, and politics. For many years we formed a vibrant intellectual group with Charlotte Sills and Graeme Summers, meeting several times a year to think about transactional analysis and how we could be part of contemporaneous changes. It was from this process that two books were eventually published: *Transactional*

*Analysis: A Relational Perspective* (Hargaden & Sills, 2002) and *Co-Creative Transactional Analysis* (Summers & Tudor, 2014). Keith is a passionate and devoted writer encouraging us to get our thoughts and ideas down on paper. Keith has always been so generous, knowledgeable, active, and determined in his way of being. I am eternally grateful for his wonderfulness, knowledgeable, determination, hard work, and generosity.

Sláinte Keith!

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



**Helena Hargaden**, MSc, D.Psych, TSTA (P), works in Sussex where she has her private practice. Drawing on her experience in Jungian analysis and various psychoanalytic supervisions she developed relational perspectives in transactional analysis in collaboration with others. Co-editor and author of a variety of papers, she has been widely published and translated into a number of languages including Japanese, French, Italian, Spanish, and Croatian. She was awarded the Eric Berne Memorial Award in 2007 for her work with Charlotte Sills on the 'domains of transference'. She is one of the original founders of the International Association of Relational Transactional Analysis and is an international speaker on relational psychotherapy and supervision. Her latest books are entitled *The Evolution of a Relational Perspective in Transactional Analysis: What's the Relationship got to do with it?* (with William F. Cornell; Routledge, 2019) and *Beyond Language in Relational Psychotherapy* (Routledge, 2023), which includes a reprise of articles and talks she has given over the last two decades, to be published in June 2023 (initially in hardback and ebook, with paperback to follow in 2024).