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Jarosław JAGIEŁA

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5025-0767X>

Jan Długosz University in Czestochowa

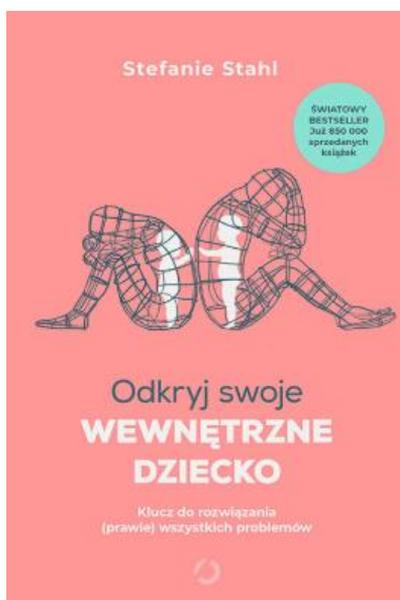
e-mail: jaroslaw.jagiela@ujd.edu.pl

**[rev.] Stahl, Stefanie (2019). *Odkryj swoje wewnętrzne dziecko. Klucz do rozwiązania (prawie) wszystkich problemów*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Otwarte, pp. 304**

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If there was a ranking showing interest in particular ego states in transactional analysis, the Child ego state would definitely take the first place. Tony White states that 60% of therapeutic interventions are focused on exactly this ego area (whereas only 20% concentrate on the Parent ego state and 20% belong to the Adult ego state)<sup>1</sup>. This mental structure was described, among others, by T. Kahler (1974), T.A. Parry (1979), J. Moses (1985), P. Clarkson, (1988), B.D. Clark (1991), E. Conning (1998), R. Little (2005), D.M. Poda (2007), L. Capaccione (1991), J. Bradshaw (2008), T. Luvaas, (1995), Łastik (2008), J. Jagieła (2003, 2007, 2008, 2015) and many other authors. Therefore, there must be something crucial in the fact that therapists' and researchers' attention is drawn to this area of human personality. Every book or article contributes something new to the knowledge about deeply held childhood experiences, which have a significant impact on a given adult's taken decisions and their behaviour.

Thus, it is impossible not to notice in our rich publishing market the next book devoted to this very issue. Sold in nearly a million copies, the book was hailed as a worldwide bestseller. If we take into account its subtitle which tells us that it is "The key to solving (almost) all problems," there is no denying the author's and the editor's marketing enthusiasm. Unfortunately, the character of many such guides resembles juggling which amuses the public with its magic, tricks and creates illusions, e.g. "How to easily and without any difficulties become a neurosurgeon" or "How to build a submarine during one weekend at your summer house." It resembles, Rzędzian, a character from "With Fire and Sword" by Sienkiewicz, who traded in fake relics of saints. Some expressions in bold strike with their banality, e.g. "There are neither ideal parents nor ideal childhood," or "Who has no support in oneself will not find it in the outside world," or "We aspire to satisfy our desires and avoid unpleasant things, that is we aim to fulfil our needs in some way". It resembles advice such as "One should be young, rich and healthy, not old, poor and sick".

Let us leave these slightly malicious remarks and refer to the book in question. As it has been already mentioned, it is devoted to the inner child. The author describes this structure in the following way: "The inner child is an accumulation of our experiences, both positive and negative, which had an impact on us in our childhood, the ones that we acquired in our relationships with our parents and other persons close and important to us" (p. 16). The author differentiates between the inner Sun Child, a bright and joyful part of ourselves, and the Shadow Child representing a dark, sad, pressurised and anxious part. The first part of the book is devoted to the search of the strategy to reach the latter structure. There are numerous exercises consisting mainly in identifying cognitive schemas and one's own feelings. There are interesting descriptions pertaining to defensive

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10157713007139637&set=pcb.10157713000354637&type=3&theater> [access: 15.10.2019].

strategies applied by the Shadow Child and mechanisms that strive to protect inner mental injuries. The tactics applied are, e.g. taking the role of a victim, striving to be perfect, powerful, occurring narcissism, not to mention the strategies of withdrawal and avoidance, etc. This part also presents a typical path to addiction. Treatment of the Shadow Child goes through strengthening one's adult part of personality.

Reading this part of the guide concerned, it is hard not to reflect on the fact that not much has changed in this area for the last ten or more years. It is the same mechanism that Sigmund Freud in his lectures on the introduction to psychoanalysis put in the well-known maxim: "Where *id* was there shall *ego* be" (Freud, 1993). A TA researcher would be willing to utter a seemingly similar phrase: "Where the Child ego state was there shall the Adult ego state be." Therefore, the author follows suit. And this is good as what else can one think of?

The second part of the book focuses on discovering the Sun Child in oneself. It is looking for positive cognitive schemas deriving from one's childhood, one's strong sides and resources or deeply held values and strengthening them in oneself. Once we find this sunny child, all we have to do is to positively anchor in it. The undoubted advantage of this guide is its simple language, which is certainly the fruit of its skilful translation by Sylwia Miłkowska. This clear and lucid reading experience should be appreciated as it is not always to be found in other guides. We can also find excerpts proving the author's sense of humour, for instance the one concerning the so-called "cow meditation" (pp. 264–265). With this example, Stefanie Stahl shows that the cow's facial expression (cow's look) does not match experienced anger well. Moreover, the book's content is complemented by an interesting offer of "the Sun Child trance"<sup>2</sup> and "the Shadow Child trance"<sup>3</sup> meditations that can be downloaded free of charge in the mp3 format. They are worth referring to.

However, let us pay attention to the publication's characteristic feature. Apart from the inner child state category, the book contains many known concepts such as the Adult ego state, the inner parent, parental programming, autonomy, withdrawal, victim, "I'm OK" (the Sun Child) or "I'm not OK" (the Shadow Child), etc. These terms are well known in transactional analysis, though we shall not hear even a word about it. Some descriptions also sound familiar. Let us take this one: "People who suffer from the so-called helper syndrome protect their Shadow Child offering help to people who they perceive as those in need. Thanks to their good deeds they feel more appreciated and needed" (pp. 111–112). Further on, the author describes in which way such people get engaged into providing help they cannot share and which they think boosts their self-esteem. It sounds familiar for a transactional analysis researcher, does not it? It is the Rescuer in the Drama Triangle developed by S. Karpman. It is a pity it is not mentioned either, and the phenomenon itself is called "the helper syndrome." A classic simulacrum.

<sup>2</sup> [www.twojewewnentrznedziecko.pl/dzieckocienia](http://www.twojewewnentrznedziecko.pl/dzieckocienia)

<sup>3</sup> [www.twojewewnentrznedziecko.pl/dzieckoslonca](http://www.twojewewnentrznedziecko.pl/dzieckoslonca)

I do not think that everyone in the world is obliged to be familiar with TA, refer to it and cite it devoutly. I understand that the author is attached to the schema therapy which also uses that kind of terminology. However, I am not going to hide that what I miss here is the approach similar to John Bradshaw's, who, while writing about the inner child, was able to admit that "First of all, I got familiar with the works of Eric Berne, a genius founder of transactional analysis (TA), a psychological concept of interpersonal relations. His theory emphasizes *the child ego state* – a spontaneous, natural child all of us used to be. Transactional Analysis also describes the reasons why the natural child early gets used to pressure and family life influence" (Bradshaw, 2008, p. 14).

I shall address some other slip-ups. Let us take this one: "Sigmund Freud was the first one who divided personality into parts (was he? – it seems to me it was already done in antiquity, JJ.). What contemporary psychology calls the inner child or the Child ego state, he describes as id, the Adult is defined as ego. He also singled out the third part – superego. It is a type of moral authority which contemporary psychology calls the Parent or the inner parent or the inner critic" (p. 22). However, the case is not as simple as it seems to the author. I refer her to the article by Tony White (White, 1980) on this subject and Eric Berne's remarks on "psychoanalysis-like" concepts of transactional analysis (Berne, 2008, pp. 453–455). Further on, Stefanie Stahl writes that in her book she shall limit herself to the happy inner child, the hurt inner child and the Adult. "My experience shows me that working with these three structures is enough to solve one's problems" (p. 23). Imagine that my experience shows me it is not enough. Apparently, our experiences differ.

The same applies to the term "shadow." As it is known, this term is so characteristic and present in the works of Carl Gustav Jung that no one needs to be convinced of it. It occurs as the archetype of hidden and unconscious human sides, both good and bad, suppressed or never recognized by one's ego (Sharp, 1998, p. 43). However, the book does not give us any information about Jung's archetype. Similarly, "the Sun Child" term is borrowed from Julia Tomuschat's book (*Das Sonnenkind-Prinzip*). Fortunately, the author mentions this fact this time. Maybe it is more significant to her than Jung's heritage?

Writing scientific books for the general public has its rights. I understand and accept it. It is not, contrary to what one might think, too easy or worse than works described as "scientific". It is true, it does not require meticulous footnotes or exact quotes from sources or other authors. Nevertheless, to stay honest and consistent, some specific, formal rules need to be obeyed. And this consistency is lacking here. The book contains both footnotes and an index of key terms or bibliography, but authors whose names one might expect were omitted. For example, if I read such a definite statement as "It was scientifically proven that subconsciousness is an exceptionally powerful mental authority that directs out life and behaviour in 80–90 percent" (p. 17), I would like to know by whom, where and

when it was measured. It is an alarming tendency which, in the era of universal access to information (among all, thanks to the Internet), makes us irresponsibly formulate unequivocal theses without any empirical justifications. But it is a topic for a different article.

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