

<https://doi.org/10.16926/eat.2026.15.12.en>

eLocator/Article ID: eat-2026-rec-02

Jarosław JAGIEŁA

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

Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa

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

Book Review: Agata Ribay (2025). *Ku witalności i świadomości w pracy doradczej. Analiza transakcyjna w poradnictwie zawodowym*. Olsztyn: Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy, pp. 340

How to cite [jak cytować]: Jagieła, J. (2026). Book Review: Agata Ribay (2025). *Ku witalności i świadomości w pracy doradczej. Analiza transakcyjna w poradnictwie zawodowym*. Olsztyn: Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy, pp. 340. *Edukacyjna Analiza Transakcyjna*, 15, Article eat-2026-rec-02. <https://doi.org/10.16926/eat.2026.15.12.en>

It can be ventured that among all domains of transactional analysis, counseling, and particularly career counseling, is neither the most developed nor the most appreciated. Educational TA need not even be mentioned. From the outset, as is well known, psychotherapy has reigned supreme. Therefore, the appearance of this publication, which supplements and advocates for this underdeveloped area, should be acknowledged with appreciation. The motto of vitality and awareness contained in the title of the book under review indicates the direction of counseling work. I would add responsibility and freedom of choice. "This book," writes the author in the introduction, "is an invitation to a joint journey toward mindfulness, awareness, and competence, toward creativity, vital energy, and a positive vision of humans in counseling work. A vision focused on resources and the co-creation of realistic solutions filled with life energy." Not only the client remains at the center of the counseling process in this work, but the counselor themselves is also invited to engage in self-reflection on their personality, life history, and possessed competencies.

The book's structure is transparent and well-developed. Following a brief characterization of transactional analysis assumptions, Agata Ribay situates this conception within counseling theory and practice. She indicates the goals of career counseling from a TA perspective and reviews the understanding of the term "counseling" encountered in Polish literature.

Obviously, it is impossible to discuss all the issues that appear in this extensive work; let us therefore mention only selected matters. The first chapter is devoted to values and ethical foundations of practice utilizing transactional analysis. These are defined as: respect, self-determination, protection,



responsibility, and engagement in relationships. By placing such topics at the very beginning, the author, as one might surmise, indicates their particular importance. All the more so since all these values and ethical principles are subsequently discussed and justified in detail. The second chapter comprises an introduction to the theory and practice of transactional analysis. It is worth noting that the benefits of reading this section may extend not only to counselors but also to all those who wish to familiarize themselves with TA itself and its scope. A broad area of topics and models is presented therein, along with their practical application in counseling. However, I missed one issue here that I believe also deserves attention. It concerns the problematics of personality adaptation. It is difficult to deny that a career counseling client may frequently reveal certain traits indicative of their characterological orientation. A reflective and insightful counselor can (if able?) perceive this. For clients revealing avoiding, symbiotic, or indeed narcissistic or anankastic traits will approach their problems and career choices differently. This can perhaps be treated as marginal to counseling in this field, but I believe it is worthy of attention. The counselor need not be an accomplished clinical psychologist in this case to utilize such knowledge in a good and beneficial way for the client. The third chapter concerns client resources stemming inter alia from their Ego States and the counseling relationship itself. The counselor's own resources are also not without influence and significance here. Another extremely interesting chapter is devoted to the art of the counseling relationship. The word "art" appears not accidentally. The author is indeed aware that interpersonal relationships cannot be built even on the most insightful, yet rigid and formalized cognitive schemas. Even the best model cannot reflect the uniqueness, dynamics, and necessary flexibility of everything that truly happens between people in the moment of mutual relating.

The final chapter concerns the influence of personal history and life script on professional identity and career path. What a fascinating topic! No one who observes their fellows even slightly, and perhaps also themselves, can remain indifferent to the transgenerational script having significance for career choice and the course of personal life. In a manner far from perfect, I once attempted to examine this problem, which sociologists term the inheritance of social position (Jagięła, 2006/2007). To answer the question: how does it happen that often children of doctors become doctors, children of judges choose legal studies, and certain professions are continued through many successive generations? What ultimately decides this, what conscious and unconscious factors play a role here? Is the maxim saying that we are all to some degree entangled true? When does such a professional script reveal itself? How is it possible that several-year-old Stanisław Barańczak in a letter to his grandmother assures that he will be a poet in the future, or that Kamil Stoch in a brief television interview plans, as a small boy, a career as an Olympic ski jumper? Examples could be multiplied. Alongside the category of script itself, I would also take this opportunity to advocate for the concept of life course, which reflects the character of choices and professional career. Life script, as is known, is a plan initiated in early childhood, whereas life course may result from the script, but also from external events, heredity, or unexpected occurrences or autonomous decisions. Life course thus informs about what truly happened or is currently happening in the world of a given person. A helpful tool may be the so-called script matrix. This is a diagram enabling the counselor and client to trace the life scenario from historical and current perspectives, with particular emphasis on the survival route of the Little Professor in relation to the program, injunctions, or parental prohibitions. It may indicate, if nothing else, the causes and character of change of profession or workplace. It speaks to how the client sometimes moves along the established paths of their own script. Some of these may have arisen as a way of surviving or adapting to past experiences and influence current choices. Recognition of these paths allows for better understanding of where we come from, what professional path we are following, and whether we still wish to continue on it. It is worthwhile that this aspect also not escape the attention of the career counselor.

The author willingly shares her own rich professional experiences and reflections, which emboldens me to recall one of my own distant memories reaching back to childhood. During a homeroom lesson in seventh or eighth grade of primary school (presumably as part of career pre-orientation), the teacher asked us students about our plans for the future. Leszek, my classmate from the school bench, declared: "I will be a lawyer." When I later asked him why he ultimately decided thus, he answered me

resignedly: "My father is a lawyer," and after a moment added somewhat resignedly: "...what choice do I have then?" Many years passed. It is easy to guess that the now well-known law firm of my school colleague is located near the court in my hometown. Did it have to happen thus? Is this an inevitable process? Critics of the script concept in transactional analysis accuse it of excessive determinism. They forget, however, that the remedy for the inevitability of fate in our lives lies in the awareness and freedom of choice of every human being and in the striving toward autonomy. This does not mean, however, that we ultimately and unequivocally decide about our own lives. Yet we sometimes decide more than we may think.

I am convinced that even certified transactional analysts will find something interesting, inspiring, and worth utilizing in this book. These will certainly be excellently developed exercise ideas relating to individual TA sections. I am somewhat envious of the wonderful ideas. But not only that. A given fragment sometimes surprises with astonishment that it escaped our attention. For example, I discovered for myself Raymond Hostie's Functional Ego States diagram, which I did not know, and which interestingly corresponds with the well-known FF (Functional Fluency) model of Susannah Temple. Let us add that the author of this excellently and knowledgeably written book is Agata Ribay. An experienced trainer, teacher, and supervisor of transactional analysis in the field of counseling (PTSTA). She utilizes TA for counseling work in France. She also serves as chair of the Ethics Commission of the Polish Transactional Analysis Association.

Let us also note the technical aspect of the work. Icons identifying content and orientation within a given section considerably facilitate reading the book. Thus, these are signs illustrating: definitions and theoretical descriptions, particularly important elements of theory or indications, examples and exercises, or finally encouragement to self-reflection. One cannot fail to notice the great publishing and graphic care of this publication. This is the merit of Marianna Witkowska, whose effort should be appreciated. It can be said that she has reached the heights of excellence in this field.

I would like to share one more reflection. The author limited the area of counseling to help provided by labor office employees in solving professional problems, career planning, choice or change of profession, or expanding one's competencies. This is how the goal and intention of the book were defined. However, as a representative of the educational TA trend, I cannot fail to advocate here for the career counseling system in Polish schools. Beginning with preschool, primary school, through high schools, technical schools, and vocational schools. Appropriate regulations specify curricular frameworks and precise the tasks of the career counselor in this field (Regulation of the Ministry of National Education, 2012). They inscribe this type of activity within the scope of psychological-pedagogical support. Reading carefully the individual points and curricular content of this regulation, it is easy to see them through the prism of TA and, of course, adapted to the perception and understanding of students. Let us mention only that alongside cooperation with external institutions, various forms and methods of classes also appear, such as: workshops, educational fairs, or individual consultations. Perhaps the book will inspire the author herself or other career counselors to undertake this topic.

Undoubtedly, a great value of the book is its practical dimension. Theory serves here only as a foundation and to show concrete situations occurring in client-career counselor relationships. It also provides knowledge to which TA trainees can reach. Let us hope that the work will meet with great interest from readers who will be inclined to incorporate transactional analysis into the scope of their competencies.

Excellent reading, which I recommend to all interested parties.

References

- Jagięła, J. (2006.2007). Znaczenie skryptu (script life) jako nieświadomego przekazu międzygeneracyjnego w kształtowaniu się tożsamości jednostki. In: K. Rędziński, I. Wagner (ed.), *Wielokulturowość w przestrzeni edukacyjnej* (pp. 365–374). Wydawnictwo Akademii im. Jana Długosza.
- Regulation of the Ministry of National Education of February 12, 2019 on career counseling.