



# Psychoanalysis at the Margins

*Paul E. Stepansky*

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## **Psychoanalysis at the Margins** Paul E. Stepansky

Why has American psychoanalysis been relegated to the margins of American mental health care? In this masterful summing up of three decades of experience as a psychoanalytic editor and publisher, Paul Stepansky tells the story of a once cohesive discipline that has splintered into rivalrous “part-fields” and now struggles to survive in a postanalytic world of cognitive-behavioral interventions, brief therapy, psychopharmacology, and managed care. Simultaneously, it is a cautionary tale of the inevitable marginalization of any profession that resists integration into the scientific mainstream of its time and place.

Beyond its self-evident importance to psychoanalysts and other proponents of “talking” therapy, *Psychoanalysis at the Margins* provides an in-depth case study of the role of books, journals, and publishing in the rise and fall of a historically insular profession. For Stepansky, the near-demise of psychoanalytic publishing in America is a microcosm of the crisis of small scholarly and professional publishing in an era that has witnessed the ascendancy of internet chat groups, online seminars, Amazon.com, and electronic journal subscriptions.

Positioning present-day psychoanalysis as an alternative healing modality, Stepansky explores the initiatives that have enabled other alternative professions to survive and even thrive in the face of mainstream opposition. Is it possible, he asks, that the lessons of alternative medicine can guide psychoanalysis to an “optimal marginality” that draws the mainstream to it? Pursuing pathways to this goal, Stepansky enjoins analysts to undertake a host of initiatives in the public interest that bring analytic knowledge to bear in those contexts where it can do the most good.

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