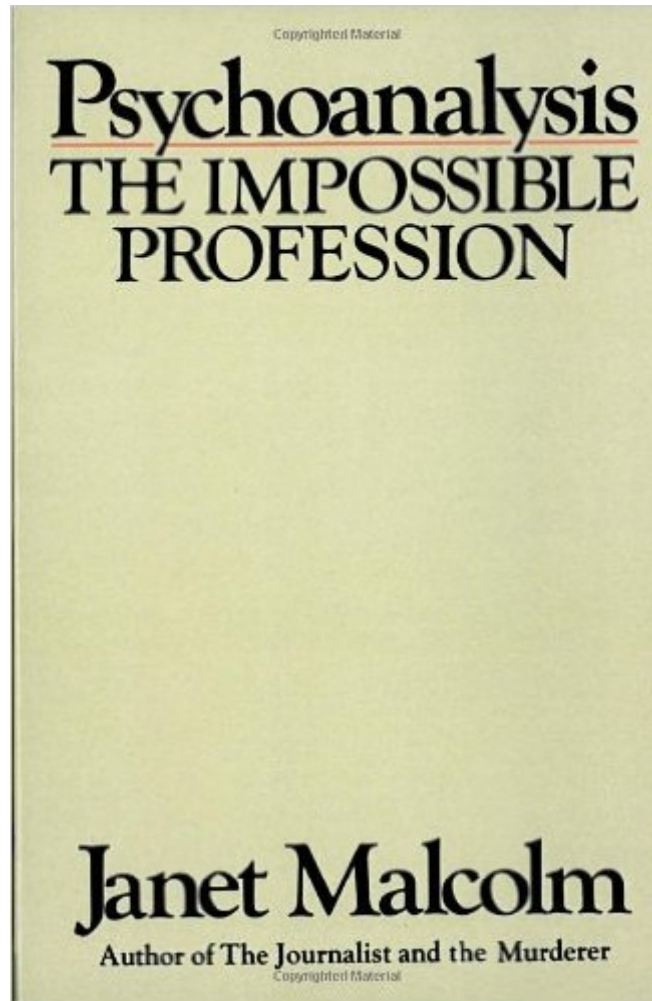


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Psychoanalysis: The Impossible Profession



Synopsis

Through an intensive study of "Aaron Green," a Freudian analyst in New York City, New Yorker writer Janet Malcolm reveals the inner workings of psychoanalysis.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I had the good fortune to discover this book a full seven years after I terminated my rather long term psychotherapy which culminated in a classical analysis of at least several years. My analyst shared offices with Dr. Brenner, who features as a central figure in this book, and having read this, I can only interpret my experience with him as thousands of hours of evidence that he was a true and worthy disciple of the cheerful yet austere doctor whom Malcolm refers to as the "intransigent purist." Joseph Adelson in The New York Times Review of Books goes a bit over the line in paraphrasing: "Dr. Brenner takes the hardest of lines. Psychoanalysis is based upon inducing and interpreting the transference reaction. Anything that interferes with or distracts from it must be eschewed. Strictly. The analyst must maintain the most stringent incognito. Under no circumstances can he make known to the patient his opinions, values, interest or foibles, nor can he offer advice, criticism, reassurance or sympathy. If the analyst is late to a session, he must neither apologize nor explain why. He must attend - and make the patient attend - only to the thoughts, fantasies and feelings produced by his lateness. If the patient's child is gravely ill, the analyst should not express concern or sympathy. His task is limited to evoking and understanding the patient's reactions." He goes on to say that "this is a grim doctrine." On the contrary, I found it kind and accepting, or at least

I found that my analyst was able to practice it that way. Frustrating, of course. But ultimately freeing in a way that a less austere approach might not be, leading to a clarity that might otherwise have been compromised.

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