



# The Analyst's Preconscious

*Victoria Hamilton*

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How do the analyst's consciously held theoretical commitments intersect with the actual conduct of analysis? Do commitments to notions like "psychic truth" or "analytic neutrality" affect interpretive style, the willingness to acknowledge treatment mistakes, and other pragmatic preferences? Does the commitment to certain concepts entail commitment to related ideas and practices to the exclusion of others?

This is the uncharted domain that Victoria Hamilton explores in *The Analyst's Preconscious*. At the heart of her endeavor is an imaginatively conceived empirical investigation revolving around in-depth interviews with 65 leading analysts in the United States and Britain. In these lively and free-ranging discussions, the reader encounters firsthand the thoughtfulness with which practitioners wrestle with the ambiguous relations between various theoretical positions, whether or not their own, and the exigencies of the therapeutic encounter.

The result is a uniquely detailed map of contemporary psychoanalysis. Hamilton documents the existence of different analytic cultures, each shaped by a need to maintain inner consistency among fundamental assumptions and also by extratheoretical factors, including geography, collegial experiences, and exposure to particular teachers and supervisors.

A major contribution to understanding the pluralism of contemporary psychoanalysis, *The Analyst's Preconscious* is also a celebration of the dedication and sensitivity with which contemporary analysts seek to organize their therapeutic practices amidst the welter of proliferating concepts and rival schools of thought. Coming at a critical juncture in the history of the field, this work is indispensable to all who care about psychoanalytic culture and psychoanalytic practice, and especially about the analyst's real-world adaptation to the theoretical turbulence of our time.

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