

JAMES A. GREEN

The Vicissitudes of Analytic Love

This presentation is about a 17-year analytic course of treatment with a patient who came to treatment having an HIV positive diagnosis. His partner at that time was dying of AIDS. He dealt with the grief and loss, and began to seek another partner after the death of his first partner. This man soon became his second partner and after a few years together, he also died of AIDS.

The paper covers this course of treatment with particular emphasis on the shifting dynamics between me and my patient with regard to a number of factors. Primarily, the analytic love revealed itself in his wanting to take care of me versus his deepening longing to be taken care of by me. I remained steadfast in my position and he wavered back and forth, enacting a repetitive traumatic attachment pattern which seemed difficult to unpack for him.

Issues about dependency, to resisting any attempt from me to be a caretaker for me were acted out. Disruptions as a result of feeling betrayed by both the analyst and patient became the foreground for a large part of treatment. From love to betrayal, to hope and to despair is presented with an articulation of the struggles of the analyst and the patient. Often, I found myself walking a tight rope between life and death and struggling to provide some hope to the patient.

I hope to illuminate the themes of this conference with my work with this patient whose material highlights the meaning of analytic love.

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