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"I Can Hear You Thinking: Listening and "Uncoiling" Through Aesthetic Contact in Teletherapy"

In this paper, I will offer my thoughts regarding telepsychotherapy (specifically psychotherapy conducted over the phone) as a paradoxical medium through which aesthetic contact between patient and therapist can be meaningfully enhanced. Drawing upon my recent teletherapeutic work with a young adult, I will argue that the transition of our work from in-person to phone-based sessions placed us in more immediate contact with one another's disturbing emotional experience, as our narrowed focus on the sound of one another's words, breathing, and silences inspired a degree of "aesthetic contact" between us that "uncoiled" us: an aesthetically-grounded "interruption" from which our work greatly benefited. Supporting this point, I will attempt to synthesize aspects of Levinas's ideas regarding "coiling" and the "sacred interruption" of the Other with British object relations theorists Bion and Meltzer and their thoughts regarding the therapeutic value of aesthetic contact between patient and analyst."