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Abstract

Technology has us all connected. We are in touch with friends and family from afar and organize and mobilize local groups through our social media pages. Our use of these technological platforms have become a fixture in our cultural dialogue, normalizing our capacity to exist in multiple spaces, between physical and technological or what is referred by some as the “life-mix” (Turkle 2012). What has taken shape by our use of technology and social media is something we as clinicians should take seriously. It is not the use of technology alone that is dramatically shifting how we experience our subjectivity, but rather a combination of that and something deeply human. I will use my personal experience as well as the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas as a framework in understanding this deeply human element in the context of technology and social media. In *Totality and Infinity*, Emmanuel Levinas uses the Myth of Gyges to point to the Western Philosophical values of Rationality, which encourages invisibility, non-exposure, and invulnerability. The myth of Gyges is a story of the self rationally constructing its world and making it visible, while remaining invulnerable to the gaze of others--a “myth of the I and interiority, which exist non-recognized” (Levinas 61). In the personal experience I will share I learned that it was not the technology in itself (text messaging and online interaction) that led to such relational pain, but the vulnerability I was able to hide until I was face-to-face with the other who was the object of my desire. As a clinician I wonder how we hold our client’s fantasies while they are played out in the contemporary technological landscape that has become our social reality? What is the discrepancy between who we know to be our intimate other and the person we construct through our digital interactions?