A Perpetual State of Almost – In-between Presence and Absence

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Abstract

Mr. B came to analysis describing what he called a perpetual state of almost, a feeling of almost living, both intrapsychically and intersubjectively. The perpetual state of Almost is a state in-between presence with the Other and absence from the Other. It is a state in-between a sense of self, and an absence of self. This paper proposes a deeper understanding of the defensive, insulating structure of this in-between gap, examining what enabled it to change from a static, inert state into a transient, fluid one, oscillating between states of presence and absence as a vehicle for transformation.

For Mr. B, “the only real thing is the gap” (Winnicott, 1971), to the void itself; possibility of presence only existed within the absence. As treatment developed, the room itself served as a physical in-between, a spatially and psychically unbound area in the interface between internal and external, subject and object, presence and absence. The mutual sharing of the in-between state within the analytic field became the catalyst for psychic movement and growth towards a new experience of being.