

The Regular Column - Self & Society - 39.3

Two weeks ago I've finished writing the first draft of my book, *A therapeutic Anatomy*, and sent it to the publishers for the long process of editing which awaits it. A short translated excerpt from the book is published in this issue of self & Society. Writing it was an intense process. Although the majority of the book was already written in some form or another, making it into a cohesive piece was a challenge and delight. And it is in Hebrew, which – although my native tongue, is not my natural professional writing language. I wrote the book in a frenzy, over ten weeks, got up every morning between three and four and writing until six or seven before taking my daughter to kindergarten and then to work.

Two interesting processes have happened since. The first was my withdrawal symptoms. I've been edgy and impatient, searching to fill in the void in any possible way. Every night I'd wake up at three and get ready to go to my computer, only to start an interesting internal dialogue. "There's nothing to do now," I'd say to myself "the book is at the editors." "But I can at least... [count the references / prepare the index / search for someone to write a preface]", I would reply. Most nights I managed to stay in bed, and wake up every half-an-hour only to have the very same exhausting inner dialogue.

Then Zohar, my daughter, got a throat infection and I had to attend to her, and gratefully my sleeping is now back to its normal dysfunctional and disturbed self.

The second process concerns my clinical work. Many of my clients were angry with me these last two weeks. I felt a deep desire to share myself with them, and they were (how dare they?) miserable, hopeless and helpless. It took me four days to realise that I wasn't fully present over the last two-and-a-half months. Now that I came back, wanting to engage, they feel they can finally be angry with me for my absence.

And it hurts. It's unpleasant to sense how I've objectified my clients. But it hurts also since I really want to share my new baby (my book) – my subjectivity, and they – having had to hold something for me for the last ten weeks, are now reluctant to allow me my subjectivity – and insist on reclaiming their space. I'm proud of my clients for claiming their space, but feel slightly embarrassed and ashamed with my need to take space. Perhaps this column is a more appropriate platform? What a strange experience.

Incidentally, Zohar's illness might speak of a similar process. I didn't realise how distant I have been, and in my return she wants a piece of me. It makes me think of the paradoxical tension of intersubjectivity, and I wish Jessica

Benjamin were here to stroke my wounded ego and comfort my need for acknowledgement...