

Seminar Proposal
NYU Post-Doctoral Program

Erotic Transferences, Countertransferences and Erotic Perversions

Andrea Celenza, PhD

The desexualization of psychoanalytic theorizing and consequent lack of clear guidelines for clinical technique, are well known. Because of this desexualization, practitioners are ill-equipped to address sexual concerns in clinical practice. This seminar aims to address this gap in theorizing and technical considerations by reviewing the common clinical manifestations of erotic and erotically perverse phenomena that arise in everyday clinical practice.

This seminar aims to 'put sexuality back in psychoanalytic theorizing' in both early formulations (as in the maternal erotic) and to delineate a place for pure erotic longing, along with the illustration of the variety of forms of homo-erotic and hetero-erotic desires. The framework of felt-experience (embodiment), multiplicity, and contradictory gender theory will be employed to propose ways in which binarial constraints (e.g. feminine and masculine) may be transcended.

This seminar also reconceptualizes and restores the term perversion into the clinical lexicon. By viewing perversion as a quality of relating rather than a specific action or behavior, the term is both narrowed and reformulated so that it may be (paradoxically) more broadly applied. The problem of sexual boundary violations will be included in the more general class of perversions and will be discussed in detail, especially in terms of risk factors, preventive measures, and appropriate handling of erotic pressures.

Case illustrations of erotic material will be used from the instructor's and participant's practices to examine phases in treatment as well as moments of defensive impasse. Clinical material will be examined from both classical and contemporary perspectives in terms of theoretical understanding and technical considerations. Countertransference difficulties, including the handling of erotic countertransferences will be central in discerning the meaning of various erotic transferences and their clinical implications.

Course Outline, Readings and Objectives

This 1-credit course (12.5 hours) will be offered in 2 parts over 2 consecutive Saturdays.

Part I of the course will focus on Erotic Transferences and Countertransferences, especially in relation to how the awareness of countertransference experiences (in the body, reverie and defensive processes) illuminate the underlying form and structure of the erotic transference.

Readings will be chosen from the following:

Benjamin, J. (1998). *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis*. New York, Routledge.

Celenza, A. (2006). The threat of male to female erotic transference. *JAPA*, 54:1207-1232.

Fonagy, P. (2008). A genuinely developmental theory of sexual enjoyment and its implications for psychoanalytic technique. *JAPA*, 56:11-36.

Hirsch, I. (2008). The influence of situational factors, in analysts' lives and analysts' preferred relational states, on analytic participation. In *Coasting in the Countertransference*, pp. 27-51, NY: The Analytic Press.

Kuchuck, S. (2015). On the therapeutic action of love and desire. In *The Legacy of Sandor Ferenczi: From Ghost to Ancestor*, A. Harris and S. Kuchuck (Eds), NY: Routledge.

Wrye, H.K. & Welles, J.K. (1994). The maternal erotic transference. In The Narration of Desire: Erotic Transferences and Countertransferences, pp. 33-60, Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the program the student will be able to:

- 1) Identify and explore aspects of erotic transferences and countertransferences, especially as these relate to the multiple meanings underlying erotic transferences.
- 2) Explore the ways in which the analyst's countertransference can foster or inhibit the emergence of the full intensity of erotic transferences at different phases of the treatment.

Part II of the seminar will focus on erotic perversions and the subjective experience, unconscious meanings and clinical implications of these. A schematic will be used to delineate 'Positions of Subjectivity' that illustrates the ways in which perverse modes rely on dissociated mental processes. Case examples will be offered from the instructor's practice and participants will be encouraged to share their own clinical experiences as well. There will be a special focus on sexual boundary violations as a special category of perversion.

Readings will be selected from the following:

Celenza, A. (2012). VIDEO RECORDING: Sexual Boundary Violations: How Do They Happen?

Parsons, M. (2000). Sexuality and perversion a hundred years on: Discovering what Freud discovered. *Int J Psa*, 81:37-49.

Stoller, R.J. (1975). Hostility and mystery in perversion. In Stoller, R.J. (1975). *Perversion: The Erotic Form of Hatred*. NY: Karnac, pp. 92-113.

Kaplan, L. (1997). *Female perversions: The temptations of Emma Bovary*. [FILM]

Chassageut-Smirgel, J. (1983). Perversion and the universal law. *Int Rev Psa*, 10:293-301.

Celenza, A. (2014). *Erotic Revelations: Clinical Applications and Perverse Scenarios*. London: Routledge.

D'Ercole, A. (2014). Be careful what you wish for! The surrender of gender. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 83:249-279.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the program the student will be able to:

- 1) Participants will be able to identify the eight risk factors associated with sexual boundary violations and discuss how these are relevant for their clinical practice.
- 2) Differentiate various meanings of perversion and delineate useful definitions that include sadomasochistic dynamics.
- 3) Identify common sequellae of trauma that may be reenacted in the clinical setting, especially as these relate to binarial ways of organizing gendered experience.