The purpose of my talk is the analysis of some texts of the Argentine writer Luisa Valenzuela (Buenos Aires, 1939) focused on the notions of intimacy and sexuality. I will combine literary criticism and psychoanalysis, from Freud to Leo Bersani and other contemporary theorists, in order to explore not only the behavior of Valenzuela’s fictional characters but also the representation of her personal life narrated as auto-fiction (according to the definition of Serge Doubrovsly).

Intimacy is a fundamental human need but many factors inhibit this capacity. The capacity for intimacy develops from the matrix of the mother-infant relationship with its initial symbiotic phase to the subsequent separation-individuation process. Without proper passage through this process, fears of engulfment and abandonment will stifle intimacy. In Valenzuela’s narrative, especially in Black Novel with Argentines and in her Diaries of New York, personal conflicts are fictionalized and represented in her characters or in her fictionalized alter ego putting into evidence the thorny nature of human intimacy (as in Schopenhauer’s fable about porcupines often quoted by Freud).