

AUTISTIC PHENOMENA AND UNREPRESENTED STATES

Explorations in the
Emergence of Self

Edited by

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firing the mind

This book marks the first English language publication to originate from the seminars sponsored by the newly created Antonio Santamaría Foundation in Mexico City, Mexico. Antonio Santamaría Fernández was a passionate and devoted pioneer and leader of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic education in Mexico and Latin America. It is in his memory and spirit that we dedicate this volume.

Jani Santamaría and Howard B. Levine

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FOREWORD

Antonio Santamaría and the foundation in his name

Jani Santamaría

6 July 2013 was the date history chose for Antonio Santamaría Fernández to pay tribute to Mother Earth by returning to it at the age of eighty-three. On that day, he handed over his sacred heart and set out on his journey to the underworld.¹ His vitality was not at all affected by his disease—cancer. He faced agony and cancer with the integrity and strength that had always characterised him. Death was certainly not part of his plans.

It is difficult to summarise in a few pages the rich life of an outstanding analyst like my father. I will certainly not be able to encompass all that he is and was, but I will do my best to talk about his personal and professional life.

¹In the sacred book *Popol Vuh* of the Mayan culture, it is written that life is endless. Death was not a final destination. Man had a sacred heart made up of soul components that travelled through the spaces of the cosmos. At the time of death, some of these soul components would be destroyed with the body, some returned on All Souls' Day, and others travelled to the underworld together with the physical body, where they were cleansed of all transgression and personal history, and were reinserted in a different element or individual to begin a new life. Ximénez, F. (S. XVIII). *Popol Vuh*, translation from Quiché to Spanish. Mexico.

He was born on 17 January 1930. He lost his mother when he was six and his father died six months later. This double tragedy repeated itself several decades later when in 1996 my older brother, the first-born, died in an aeroplane accident, followed by my mother one month later—her heart could not bear the loss and shattered. Life sometimes insists on defeating us with one punch after another, but my father’s spirit, tempered by the heat of the crucible of psychoanalysis, was forged to assimilate and elaborate these tragedies.

He was born in Ciudad Altamirano, in the state of Guerrero. We are told that at five he could already read Latin; he read everything he could get his hands on at that age. He was the eldest of three children—and only boy. One of his sisters was three years younger than him and the other five years younger. They lived with their cousins and their paternal grandmother who became their guardian after the passing of their parents. The town priests wanted to adopt him but the family did not allow it. His paternal family owned a lot of land there and that enriched his life, along with the historical Mexican figures who visited his grandmother’s house frequently. He conquered them with the extensive knowledge that he was accumulating. This intellectual curiosity and intense yearning to learn led to him being sent to another city to live with a paternal aunt who was a teacher for the entire region where he grew up—to study primary, middle, and high school in a boarding school. Reading (culture) was vital for him; as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz would say, “I do not study to write, even less to teach ... but just to see if by studying I ignore less.”²

He shone, both with intelligence and erudition, at such a young age, and he conquered the town mayor after reciting several poems he had learned by heart when he was only eleven. The gift of a photographic memory and intellectual precociousness opened doors and windows to scholarships, awards, prizes. It was the beginning of a prolific academic career which brought him to Mexico City to study medicine, graduating from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). After that he showed qualities of a lively university student and walked a path of ethics that became a standard of life. His residency was in psychiatry

²Santamaría, A. (1981). *El Sueño Primero Sueño de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*. In: *Cuadernos de Psicoanálisis, XIV* (1-2-3-4): 230–248. Mexico: APM.

at the Military Hospital. He met Erich Fromm there, who was about to move to Cuernavaca, in the state of Morelos. Fromm offered to analyse my father, but my father declined and they became good friends. He was analyzed by Ramón Parres, one of the pioneers of the Mexican Psychoanalytic Association—also Frida Kahlo’s analyst. Dr Parres studied psychoanalysis in New York and was analysed by Sandor Rado.

These intellectual qualities were enhanced with other values like the love for his family. He married my mother, who also studied medicine, and had five children with whom he shared projects, trips, and congresses. He also had many friends, enjoyed practising sport, art, music, and tequila. The philosophy of sustaining life with love and work was deeply rooted in him.

We grew up in an atmosphere of *hope in change* that my father conveyed every day at home, as my mother created the right environment for the great pioneers of Latin American psychoanalysis to sit at the table and enjoy Mexican dishes that she prepared, like a chef.

He continued his training as a didactic psychoanalyst and actively participated in institutional life. He was President and Institute Director of the Association (APM). In 2002, he obtained a doctorate in psychotherapy from Universidad Intercontinental (UIC). He was the first Chair of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) Standing Committee on Myths. I will also mention, from his extensive résumé, a nomination he received in 2010 from the American Institute of Biographers as one of the hundred most brilliant minds of the twenty-first century.

He actively contributed as Vice-President of COPAL (Coordinating Council of the Psychoanalytic Organizations of Latin America) in its transition to what is known today as FEPAL (Latin American Psychoanalytic Federation) in December of 1980, in Río de Janeiro, Brazil. He received numerous awards and worked relentlessly on creating the psychoanalytic banner that unified this federation.

My father was nurtured by his love for the pre-Hispanic peoples. He was very close to the history of Mexico from a very young age, and built a social network in every academic space he ever found. He travelled the world, and proudly claimed the infinite wealth of the land where we were born. He would give lectures, fought for causes, or delivered papers (always off the top of his head), then would always come back to his family, to enjoy his daily life. Close to my mother, proud to be

Mexican, committed to his work, he revived old traditions, like going with his students to visit the Pyramids of Teotihuacan and visiting many academic venues teaching psychoanalysis inside and outside the classroom.

I could go on writing about all the national and international positions he held, but I think it necessary to share what Antonio Santamaría represents in the psychoanalytic world.

As a professor

He always conveyed a firm conviction about the unconscious world. Likewise, his poetic ability and creative style facilitated his teaching tasks, which he carried out with great enthusiasm. He was devoted to psychoanalysis, passionate about culture and learning, and much loved and sought after as a supervisor and teacher.

He is the author of numerous articles published in Latin American journals. Having an unusually sharp photographic memory allowed him to give thousands of papers which he memorised—he wrote down very few of them. Some of his work was even published thanks to students recording his conferences. Many colleagues learned with him about the magnitude of Freud, the interpretation of dreams, his description of the legacy and psychology of the Mexican people standing in front of the Pyramid of the Sun, the songs in the myths. Without doubt, those who knew him hold him dear to their heart, remembering his love for psychoanalysis and for Mexico. He was a great social fighter and inspired many with his strength.

As a father

My father showed me a different world than the regular, day-to-day one. From when I was a little girl, he took me to many corners of the country to show with great purpose the infinite wealth of the Mexican land where I was born. With him I discovered the greatness of Teotihuacan, the song of the mockingbird, the legacy of integrity, and, of course, the passion for and commitment to psychoanalysis. He taught me that everybody is born with a mission, and the only way of being thankful for the gift of life is to fight for it with integrity. I am more and more

convinced that he gave me the wings that keep me flying. Sometimes I imagine him in heaven, drinking Mexican *cafe de olla*, eating a delicious *mole pan dulce* with my mother, supporting the dreams of those who fight for freedom and for a better world.

As a grandfather

When my son José Luis,³ was ten years old, he wrote a poem about a tree called Antonio in tribute to his grandfather:

Grandpa, so many ideas blossomed, and a family thrived
 You had years and years of experience; more years of experience,
 than your age
 You are a tree, because your trunk is hard, and no one can bring
 you down
 Your roots, like your heart, will be forever under the ground,
 beating every minute
 The rain will keep you fresh
 Your shade will sooth the pain, your branches will embrace love
 The birds will build nests on your leaves while they need to grow,
 until the time comes to go
 Thank you, for teaching us how to fly

As a colleague

Integrity, friendliness, rigour, and reflection are some of the traits that made Antonio Santamaría a very respected and beloved figure across the world. He was a pioneer and leading voice of psychoanalysis in Mexico and Latin America. He influenced many generations of analysts and many even named him “the sower of dreams” because he planted seeds of knowledge in as many institutions and cities as he could. These seeds flourished and became peers who today apply many of his academic traditions. He helped in the founding and development of many societies and associations in my country.

³Hinojosa, J. L. (Julio, 2015). Poem “Los Abuelitos.” In: *Revista Psicoanalítica Ania*, 8. Sociedad Psicoanalítica de Sonora. Sonora, Mexico: Ed. Obregón.

He was a pioneer in studying and transmitting Heinz Kohut's work, but also studied in depth all psychoanalytic schools of thought. He had a great didactic capacity to combine, integrate, and apply them in clinical and social fields alike.

One of his most important legacies is his teaching about dreams, notably the study of dreams in ancient Mexico.⁴ He looked for ideas in different sources, and thanks to his vast knowledge, he dialogued with experts in other fields because he was convinced that exchanging ideas fertilised and enriched the space of dreams and dreaming. He is an important reference in the field of myths and dreams.⁵

Another ever so present concern he had was the mental state in which analysts work. He wrote two important articles regarding this: one in the year 2000, *El mito personal en la contratransferencia* (The personal myth in countertransference)⁶ where he proposed the thesis that as well as the "personal myth" of Kris which spreads in the transference, the "personal myth" of the analyst also operates reciprocally in his countertransference and in his co-transference; the other, *La psique del analista, de la observación a la explicación empáticas* (The analyst's psyche, from empathetic observation to explanation)⁷ was published in 1993. In it he highlighted the importance of working at different levels of listening. The purpose was to contribute to the improvement of psychoanalytical clinical work.

He was committed to his country and his politics. He wrote various articles on historical figures. In his work titled *Usos y Abusos del poder en la Formación Psicoanalítica* (Uses and abuses of power in psychoanalytic training)⁸ presented in 1984, he raised questions about power

⁴Santamaría, A., & Duarte M. (2002). Los sueños en el México Antiguo a la luz del psicoanálisis. In: *La Interpretación de los sueños. Un siglo después* (Vives y Latirgue Comp.). Mexico: Plaza y Valdez.

⁵Santamaría, A. (1995). Los mitos, los sueños y la realidad en el psicoanálisis. *Cuadernos de Psicoanálisis*, 28(3-4): 225. Mexico: APM.

⁶Santamaría, A. (2001). El mito personal en la contratransferencia. In: *Cuadernos de Psicoanálisis*, 34(1-2) (January-June). Mexico: APM.

⁷Santamaría, A. (May, 1993). La psique del analista: De la observación a la explicación empáticas. Keynote speech given at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Mexican Psychoanalytic Association.

⁸Santamaría, A. (1984-1985). El uso y el abuso del poder en la formación psicoanalítica. *Cuadernos de Psicoanálisis*. México: Mexican Psychoanalytic Association.

in psychoanalysis and/or psychoanalysts in power. His phrase “we must give more life to analysis and not more analysis to life” is a testimony of an analyst committed to Eros and with respect for the candidate. A book soon to be published will include work written by Claudio Eizirik, Otto Kernberg, Charles Hanly, former IPA Presidents, and César Botella, among others. Horacio Etchegoyen,⁹ the first South American President of the IPA (1993–1997), described my father in the following way:

Antonio Santamaría was—and still is—one of the most prominent and loved psychoanalysts in Latin America. From his native Mexico, he influenced our psychoanalytic culture. Friendly, generous, and sincere, he was one of the most powerful psychoanalysts in Latin America. We became good friends in meetings and congresses. His passing was painful for all of us and a profound loss for psychoanalysis.

The editors of this volume believe that the best way to pay tribute to him is to take up his torch and keep the fire of curiosity and devotion alight. Following this effort, Howard Levine and I have established a foundation in his name with a group of colleagues.

The Antonio Santamaría Foundation was created as a non-profit free-standing, independent psychoanalytic educational foundation, in his memory to honour and continue his love of psychoanalytic learning, his dedication to the continuing education of practising clinicians, and his commitment to the future of psychoanalysis. Our goal is to create international opportunities for psychoanalytic study, learning, and discussion in an open, free-thinking milieu, outside of the context of organised psychoanalytic institutions and training centres. To that end, we have begun to offer seminars, conferences, and other learning and study opportunities with internationally prominent psychoanalysts, who are among the leading clinical and theoretical contributors to our field. This book is the product of one of our conferences: Autism, México 2020.

We invite you to visit our website (www.asfpsychoanalysis.org—info@asfpsychoanalysis.org) and we hope that you will join us in what we believe will be an exciting and worthwhile adventure!

⁹ Etchegoyen, H. (2013). Mi amigo Antonio Santamaría. Article to be published.