

Images and Relaxation

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(Text composed of excerpts from the book *Técnicas de Relaxamento ed. Vektor, 1974*)

Relaxation is a method of psycho - physiological reconditioning. It covers many techniques, of which we will present some that were used and tried by our study group. It has become an indispensable means to achieve relaxation, tranquility and recreation in patients. In addition, it provides other therapeutic possibilities, depending on the field in which it is used. It is also indicated as a restorative and reconstituting process in general medicine and its various specialties in psychotherapy, speech therapy, rehabilitation, occupational therapy and already has its place in pedagogy, social care, fine arts, theater, sports, in religious life and also in contemplative and meditative exercises. It begins its activity in the familiar means; the relaxation and relaxation applied to each other, give rise to dimensions of contacts and common experiences hitherto little experienced or experienced, between parents and children, couples, relatives and friends.

The images arising during the Calatonic process are characterized by a spontaneity, without any special conditioning in the emotional or intellectual sphere, unless one considers the bi-personal situation, reinforced by the skin stimuli already in itself a mental-affective motivation with reciprocal encouragement, also causing temporary or simultaneous accelerations or decelerations in both parties (patient therapist). The evocation of sensations, feelings, ideas or scenes is thus dispensed with, allowing ample freedom for them to arise or not, without claiming the free associations of psychoanalysis (FREUD), nor attempting the active imagination of complex psychology (JUNG) which, in addition to perfect command of the technique, demands a rare security on the part of the therapist, and this is not acquired in a few years only.

It belongs indisputably to human nature, that psychodynamic category where the conscious or unconscious psychic contents are constellated in images, sequence of images or already present as events, sometimes apparently logical or manifesting relationship and quite improbable consequences. Even so, they constitute a vital necessity such as dreaming, a psychic reality, but different from the uni-directive rational category, which thinks it can examine isolated processes and absolutize their conclusions. A lot of life needs recovery, reintegration or healing. The pressing need for a unilaterally oriented consciousness is the ability to deal with, develop, or even understand the images to ensure the interchange between the rational, irrational, pre-rational, and arrational "frequencies" of the total psyche.

Calatonia allows for the affirmation and presentation of problems, in the form of images, sequences of scenes or scenes, if the patient does not repress them and the therapist does not force them into interpretive schemes. They should be taken as information, conceptualizations or even as fantasies or dreams (without stimulating or encouraging their occurrence) simply allowing them to manifest themselves. Calatonic conditioning also never resorts to hallucinogenic drugs; for psychotropics, tries to reach the goal without the use of them, although often patients already use them for clinical indication. These are frequently those substances that act on the reticular formation, to which free access in our procedure is important. In these cases we do not have to advise against them, but we can always ask for a reasonable reduction without counting, however, with prompt service in all cases. In professional circles there is still a lack - to some extent understandable - of knowledge about the various forms of relaxation, their indications and their effects. In many experts the suspicion is raised that it is an illegitimate procedure and not scientifically proven. We hope that with the passage of time a clearer and broader vision will be of these techniques, which are now indispensable in carefully planned and multidimensional therapy, in cases where they should or may be indicated.

The above is valid especially when we work with mental images, which, from our point of view, always represent a psychic reality, even if they belong to the category, which is hardly accessible to quantitative research and its requirements.

We always ask that these images be annotated and, if necessary, drawn (only outline), we are not content with mere verbal description. The patient's reluctance to write is a diagnostic signal, as is the excessive use of written verbalization.

Calatonic images, in very general lines, are presented in two categories:

1) When the psychic content in process of manifestation has not yet reached the condensation and articulation necessary to emerge as spoken language or, what is already a more advanced step, as written communication.

2) When, especially in the form of configurations with abstract content, the meaning has to "blossom" into ideas, whose writing can best occur in written language and then be "unwounded" in a more concisely elaborated,.

In both cases - we generalize extensively - what emerges will be an image, understood in the broad sense. The observations in series support the idea that representations of all categories of images are actually the unconscious language, from both fotismas and acoasmas¹ to elaborate sequences of scenes or situations, of which some are soon translated into words, often before an understanding of their individual or global meaning.

¹ Images produced by bodily sensations. (Editor's note)

Parallel to the law of causality appear configurations of acoustical connections, meaning constituent components of a larger system that is not manifested in its totality in the conscious area, sometimes giving the idea of chance or coincidence, but observing better it is possible to verify certain peculiar interchange or category conglobation. This field is naturally very delicate and slippery for a less disciplined observer, if he does not concomitantly consider the neuropsychological or psychosomatic reactions that accompany the process.²

There is singular evidence regarding the participation of the various segments of the vegetative system in the formation of images, and the importance of the cerebellum in the coordination of the fragments. It seems that each viscerotome, neurotome, myotome or dermatome conditions a certain quality or a certain intensity of psychic dynamism that tends to manifest itself as an image in certain stages of afferent or efferent work. The individual variations are so numerous that only the prolonged follow-up and careful observation allow us to draw a habitual "profile" of images, in each case.

The interpretation must then consider, in addition to the rules known in the various schools of deep psychology, the area of bodily manifestation; somesthesia, synesthesia, thermoperceptive activations, etc., can provide meaningful information for an attempt to comprehend more integrated images of calatonic images.

Such experiences can be naturally made with any relaxation technique that allows the emergence of the intermediate state between wakefulness and sleep and does not attempt to constantly drive the exercise.

² Remember here the concept of synchronicity, of Jung as parallelism, correspondence between elements without a causal connection. (Editor's note)

The calatonic method, however, using cutaneous sensitivity with subtle and monotonous conditioning, by the mobilization of the epicritic and protopathic components³ already mentioned, and choosing as an area of stimulation the feet (which has a peculiar, ample and diversified functional task), precisely by the non-directive directive interference, will reach the most varied psychophysical spheres or layers, each of which has its unique forms of manifestation and projection, but also indicating the same content, that the image may be only a facet or aspect.

There is then a correspondence, or at least an analogy between them, without necessarily being derived from each other, each being realized within the very rules of existence. A future area of biopsychic research is opening up in these interrelated categories.

Experiencing the emergence of the calatonic images, their transformations, overlapping or merging with each other, one perceives its integrating dynamism and yet another quite peculiar fact: the inherent purpose, that is, they arise readily with that content that for the momentary problems of the patient is the most appropriate, covering the necessary areas and - as JUNG would say - "constellate" the respective living spheres, the potentialities.

To accompany and study the compensatory and complementary exchange between the conscious and the unconscious, together with the corresponding or analogous changes in the body schema, in the psychodynamic commutations and in the psychophysiological reconditioning, the calatonic process and its images, especially by the sequences of repeatable and controlled stimuli, can provide a conducive medium for broader research in the fields of psychology and experimental medicine.

³ Skin Sensitivity Levels. (Editor's note)

JASPERS teaches that all coming-to-be, living and acting, so that they can be realized, have to be built up in circular structures; there is, in truth, unilinear occurrence, but always reciprocal commutations, retroactions and a proceeding in circles that expand or contract. Thus, tension and dis - tension represent polarities that extend from the biological to the spiritual - spiritual category. They manifest themselves in muscular contraction, in the will, but also in the ideological worldview. What, as rhythmic interchange, in the psychic scale already appears as a task or task of synthesis that will serve as the starting point for a new phase of integrative effort.