

LAUGHTER IN PROCESSING

A lecture given on 5 July 1954

Now I'm going to talk to you about a disrelated subject in the normal course of processing. I'm going to talk to you about some common denominators that may or may not fit, at this time, smoothly into Scientology. Now, I could talk to you very learnedly perhaps, per chance, mayhap, on some disrelated processes indeed but I'm not going to do this.

The first one is, and probably the name of this tape should be, the role of laughter in processing. And of course there's another one that we will talk about immediately after that which will have to do with dangerousness, it's use in processing.

If you know your history and your literature you will know that the Italian had a psychotherapy in the 15th Century. It is mirrored in the "Pantemeroni of Gamatista Basile" and in "The Decameron" by Boccaccio. The whole thing centered around ... this whole therapy centered around laughter. The entire effort on the part of the therapist, the sage, the seer, was to make the patient laugh. The one thing which was feared was melancholy. So much so that we have today many records of melancholia and melancholia itself is considered to be a type of insanity.

Well, this may or may not be a type of insanity but certainly this psychotherapy has progressed very markedly up from the fifteenth century. Now how much earlier this was is marked in the fact that it is occasionally cursorily mentioned with such brevity that one doesn't quite see it in passing at all in "The Arabian Nights", a collection of stories of Asia. Lord knows then exactly when this one was thought up but it is certain that it was conceived by a society which yet had not forgotten how to laugh and had been conceived then in a time and age when people could still be gallant and glorious and noble and other modernly despicable things.

If we look back at the Vedic Hymns we discover what would seem today to be a naivete. Which naivete was a level of simplicity which no one seems to be able to approach today. And declining from that period onward we find man uniformly progressing into deeper and deeper stratas of seriousness. Life is becoming far, far, far more serious but in the 15th Century we still had some of the tradition of knighthood. We still had somebody who was perfectly willing to go out and do or die for a lady's glove or a veil. We still had somebody who was perfectly willing to spend all his life doing something that would be obviously very trivial today. We find Omar Khayyam just before this period, by the way, an earlier period, dedicating his entire life not to poetry but to catching up with a slave girl he had once owned and trying to locate her again. In other words, this was a good adventure.

Simultaneously in these periods we had a tradition of spirit law, of ghosts, of magical healing, and so on, and gradually those became discredited and as man began to approach a

highly mechanistic level of existence he was less and less able to conceive of this sort of thing, until today when you went to the most ... if you were to go today to the most learned institution in western culture you would find immediately that there was no such thing as a human soul. This they know they know.

So much so that there is a State, the ... a negative one State of the Union – California – one of the smaller States, that has in it something they call a university which had a Chair founded in it to experiment with psychic research, and the person who occupied that chair, that's the University of California at Berkley, the person who occupied that chair decided that if anything had to be done with psychic research at all, it was simply to disprove or discredit any psychic researcher in the United States in any way he possibly could. And this is the Chair of psychic research of the University of California in Berkley.

That's as close as you would come to it except at Duke University where there's a little more sincere effort going on where someone is trying mechanistically to explain prediction and prescience. A fellow by the name of Rhine operating at Duke University. Now these... these efforts are peculiar. Rhine's work is so peculiar, he's every once in a while called down and racked around. But in no place in any of these Universities, although you might find in the university constitution and in its history that it had God and things like that in it, it's sort of a form people go through these days, and if you were to ask any of the people in the physics laboratories of any of these universities or at any government physics laboratory if there was such a thing as a human soul, you would be met in the teeth with a great deal of viscous ridicule. Oh, not laughter, not laughter, just viscous ridicule on the idea there that could be such a thing. The brain, obviously is a machine, after all can't they produce computers. Can't they produce these big electronic computers. Well that proves conclusively that man is then just a machine.

And what level of action or beauty do we find concurrent with this attitude. It should be very interesting to you if you wish to study cultures. What is their concept of beauty, glory, nobility? What is their concept of adventure? What is their general attitude toward courage? Well I don't mean to mess up your ears.

Now where it comes then to the decline of a society or the approach of a society to an entirely mechanistic, soulless level, we find it sliding further and further into a sort of a neurosis of some sort or another. We find its sanitariums getting very full and we find it sliding further and further from anything like a technique – make them laugh! That technique would be utterly inconceivable in any institution that you approach today. Inconceivable as a therapy. Utterly inconceivable. What! Make a patient laugh and he would become sane? Oh no. And yet that was the only existing psychotherapy of fifteen hundred – pardon me .. the 15th century. Those years had only this psychotherapy. So much so that many a king, it was said, would give half his kingdom away when his daughter or son was afflicted with melancholia, to the first clown that came along that could make this melancholic person laugh.

Well there must be something in this if this was the totality of therapy and if we discover in this modern age that these universities I have been slandering and libeling because actually they are sincere institutions run by sincere and honest and serious men who have only

the best possible goals at heart for their country and so forth, such as blow 'em all up. These organizations are on a level of seriousness which is incredible indeed. Their materialism and their seriousness are comparable with their lack of beauty and lack of adventure. All of these things are a parody.

Where you discover one of these things setting in to an educational institution, or a culture, or a preclear, you find them all going hand in glove. You find one of them present, you will find others present and of course nothing figures harder and looks less than a department in a modern university. Figure, figure, figure, figure, high generalities, generalities, generalities. No adventure, it's all very serious. There's nothing gallant about any of this. The soul does not exist. Fairy tales – well, we'll make a study out of fairy tales and actually we discover, as Freud did, that they're all based on sex. And we find the story of the fairy godmother was actually lesbianism setting in on the part of Cinderella. We discover these things and we'll discover them on these various dynamics.

All right! Must be some sort of a parity here. So it tells this that somewhere on the line people took life sufficiently unseriously – get this though – that all they had to do was laugh and they would recover. We go back in Dianetics and discover that over the years I tried to get auditors to produce line charges on the part of the preclear. Anybody who is quite familiar with Dianetics is familiar with this mechanism of line charge. Well now we don't know if it does a lot of good or not on the part of the preclear since it's spotty. There seems to be one type of laughter which is an hysteria. It's a sort of an other determined nervous reaction. So there's several kinds of laughter involved here. Many kinds, as a matter of fact. But we discover that each one of these kinds adds up to this – rejection.

The ability to put something away from one and much worse than this – to make nothing out of something... Aah! An individual who can easily make nothing out of something, laughs easily. And a person who cannot make nothing out of something but has to make something, something, something, something out of something, does not laugh easily. Aah- we find the body in the university not laughing. We find them being very serious and we find them trying to make something out of something that something goes into the something, the something, something, and I don't know of a single place in a modern university where you would suddenly be confronted with a sign saying, "There's nothing to it!"

Now, there is a coordination here. And so there is a coordination with laughter and a thetan. An individual can laugh as long as he feels he has some freedom to make nothing out of it. What do you think your preclear is doing as he sits there and chews and chews and chews on a lock or a secondary or something of the sort, and he doesn't digest it even if he can swallow it. He's unable to make nothing out of it. Well, isn't there a simpler mechanism to make nothing out of things than to run this arduous seriousness. Yes, indeed there is – indeed so.

To cure him of not laughing – now supposing we just use this as an overall process and we just cured our preclear of this condition – not laughing. We cured him of not laughingness. We reassessed our cases we confront on this basis – melancholia versus jovialovia. Today, jovialovia is the most horrible disease known to man. Do you realize that fellow laughs – hmpf. Give him the place of the president of the university? Oh no – no, no,

we need somebody who can drag his chin across, across thresholds. That's obviously that. That's somebody we need. He just wouldn't get very far if he insisted on laughing at life. Would he?

Can you imagine anybody in any bank or university or any place in the society today being promoted to the top because he had a good solid hearty laugh and could laugh at anything and everything and didn't care what he laughed at. Can you imagine this? Can you imagine an honorary and mythical post – president of the United States – being filled by somebody who could laugh a great deal and honestly and sincerely – mmhm? I said it was mythical and legendary because as far as I can find out, today why the United States is in the interesting condition of sort of a going round and round on the subject of who is governing what and the post of president is mainly trying to find out, if he possibly can, where his mail is coming from or something of the sort.

I notice in more recent times he's having greater and greater difficulty with his briefing. He, he .. that's right, he has an awful time these days with communication lines. He doesn't know whether they go to McCarthy or go to Stevens or whether the proper route is to the secretary of the communist party in order to reach the Chief of Staff or just exactly what his route is, see. Did you notice that? He had to put out a directive saying that none of his people could testify, and so forth. It's an interesting state of affairs and yet this individual is really higher toned than anybody else around him but I don't see him laughing very much. It's all very serious, isn't it? Real serious! So is the whole society today – real serious.

It must be real serious if you have to develop a bomb that will wipe out an awful lot of pleasant things to look at. Must be, must be serious if you have such horrible enemies that you can only settle with them by settling the world. That's quite obvious, isn't it? Well, I tell you, the order of magnitude is really up there in the stars these days. Well, this is wandering a little bit from the subject – or is it? It would take a man who couldn't laugh to invent – a man who couldn't laugh to launch and explode an atom bomb.

I've never seen anybody quite as serious as some of the dictators. I've known quite a few of them by second hand situations and these boys take it awfully seriously. That's very, very, very serious. Everything is on an emergency basis. They're running at about 1.5. That is when they're good they're running at 1.5 and then they go down tone scale and lose the war. What's this amount to for a psychotherapist? A lot.

There must be something deadly and horrible in laughter if it must be avoided to that degree. That's what we must conclude. You want to turn up some somatics on a preclear?

Have him mock up people laughing and duplicate whatever he gets and just keep on having him mock up people laughing and mocking up himself laughing, seeing if you can get anywhere in the direction of a hearty unrestrained laughter. See if you could do that? It is an interesting process because it is a tremendously workable process. It will turn on somatics on many of a preclear that you will process, the like of which he's never heard of before, and it will quite often turn off serious chronic somatics. Just mocking up people laughing.

What is laughter? Laughter is ridicule. Laughter is something that makes nothing of things, isn't it? Well a person who then is terribly fascinated with having to be something and

has fallen entirely away from the right to be nothing, cannot tolerate laughter because that makes nothing of things. So that is just a little short circuited sort of a look at the whole thing and it gives you a process. And it gives you a very good process. There has been no better process since the days of the Renaissance.

Take a general process – the amount of psychotherapy which a fellow like Hope, or somebody like that, throws out is tremendous. It's very good. Right up until Dianetics and Scientology, in any year more cases were cured by having something they could laugh at than were ever cured by all the theories and machinery of all the scientists on earth.

Remember now, what is basically wrong with your preclear is he can't make nothing out of something and the human emotion of making nothing out of something of course is laughter. Not embarrassed laughter, just good, hearty, unrestrained laughter. You'll find your preclear stuck in periods where someone was laughing hysterically, psychotically, or laughing out of pain and you will discover that this is very, very painful to the preclear indeed. This is actually very interesting stuff in processing – laughter.

All right! There's another principle in processing. The principle of dangerousness. We find that an individual declines at length into a state of mind whereby he believes that the only way he can occupy a space or continue to occupy a space or be permitted to go out of a space that he is occupying is by the passport of his own dangerousness. And when an individual is no longer dangerous, when he is no longer dangerous he then conceives the environment to be dangerous to him to such a degree that he has to stay where he's put and that he can't be where he wants to be.

Things are too dangerous and therefore he cannot move himself around freely and as the definition of self determinism is moving things around at will, we of course find this individual intimately overcome because he cannot move himself around at will. Why? He isn't sufficiently dangerous to guarantee an open passage on the courses he would like to take. On the other hand, the environment itself is sufficiently dangerous to him that he can be stopped or chased out. So we have this ratio in progress as almost a total therapy in itself. See, we talked about laughter as a total therapy.

All right. Now something a little more serious, a little more down scale, you see, than laughter is this item of dangerousness. So if the sanity of your preclear could be said to depend upon any self determinism, could be said to depend upon the ratio of his own dangerousness compared to the dangerousness of his environment. When the environment is total danger, and an individual is no danger, you have somebody who is in very bad shape indeed. A badness of shape which is impossible to conceive, even to an auditor. Simply because it's never totally existed. It's an absolute.

And let's get the other extreme – an individual who is totally dangerous to his environment and where nothing in his environment is dangerous to him. Also a totality which an auditor would find very difficult indeed to see. In the first place he would go out of the band of dangerousness before he would achieve that level. It would go on a 50-50 basis. He's just as dangerous to the environment as the environment is to him and then he would go up to being able to reject the environment at will. And so we would have him passing out of the band of dangerousness. Just like that – he'd go right on out of it. You see that?

All right. This ratio of dangerousness is an interesting principle. It was first written up in Excalibur in 1938 and the rule which was written up and which underlies this observation is: – a man's ability is dependent upon his belief in his dangerousness to his environment.

Might have better been expressed as capability but that was the way it was expressed in Excalibur in 1938. Says many, many workable principles. One of the earliest times you will run into it is when you have somebody who is out of communication and you're trying to get them to strike at your hand. We can administer to a cat, to a dog, to a horse, psychotherapy in this degree. And what do you know, it's very workable, very certain, sure fire psychotherapy. We get the animal to take a push or a little movement forward toward us at which moment taking great care not to be too rapid and so frighten this beast, we withdraw and we find the next time the person or beast is more willing to move overtly and then we withdraw more rapidly.

We can do this with a hand. We can put our hand down alongside of a sick person who is almost totally out of communication, and they move their hand as though to push against our fingers and we retreat a little bit with our fingers. We find out they get a little bit more overt – this is curious to them and they'll get a little bit more overt and we retreat again a little harder. And the first thing you know, we find them picking up in consciousness and picking up in general activity and they then begin to conceive themselves as being at least slightly dangerous to their environment.

I have brought children out of tantrums and cats out of neurosis and preclears into communication with this type of an activity. Get them to make a slight forward move at which moment I permit my hand to retreat. To give you some idea how early this can be worked. It worked on my little boy when he was about a month and a half old. He was not doing well. He was having a lot of stomach upset. He was in the hospital three days in the hands of the medicos and it was almost too much for him. They were trying to feed him condensed milk and he had an allergy to it and I ... the doctor said he'd have to stay there ten days and I said ... I asked him if he didn't think he was being very adventurous and they didn't keep him there ten days.

I brought him home and mixed up a formula closely approximating something he could eat and he went on his way. But a month and a half later he was still suffering from the effects of the amount of noise, confusion, upset and so forth at the hospital. So, I was a little bit concerned with him and started to think about I wonder what the dickens I could do. All of a sudden it occurred to me – this fact of dangerousness and so I let my hand retreat – this is the youngest I ever worked, I worked it on other babies older than this but not on a month and a half for heaven sakes and I let my hand retreat from him a few times and he all of a sudden found out this was happening and this little boy hadn't done much in the way of laughing, he'd been very serious indeed, you see, and all of a sudden he broke out into a smile and we did this a few more times and I acted very terrified indeed and he broke out into a roaring laughter through the whole thing. It was the finest thing he ever saw and so on and then he became, as they quite ordinarily do, very affectionate and so on. It just raises them up unbelievably and that was the end of his real stomach trouble. There was no further stomach

trouble after that. This was about 15 minutes of processing. The results are fast and they're good.

It is only when an army man or a part of a military unit is convinced that he is no longer dangerous to the enemy that he falls apart. Beware having anything to do with a company, regiment, or division that has had any part in a rout. They will steal you blind and cut your throat in the dark no matter who you are or what. Their pride in self is gone. It's the most fantastic deterioration which you've ever witnessed in your life. Troops, they say, have to be seasoned but let's say it better than that. Troops have to have watched the enemy run under fire before they are really cocky troops. Now that's seasoning and they found out that they didn't run under fire. They have to find out these things before they are good. But there is dangerousness to the environment and you will find out any preclear that comes to you who's case is hard to handle has this as a basic factor in the case. This case believes the entire environment to be dangerous and no part of it to be safe. And a little higher on the tone scale than that believes that laughter is very dangerous, deadly and impossible.

So we have a new route out, which is a very old route, very old. We get 'em to believe that the environment is slightly dangerous ... I mean, pardon me... that they're slightly dangerous to the environment and the environment itself is slightly less dangerous to them and then by mock ups, or any other fashion, we could demonstrate to them that laughter wasn't going to kill them. If we could do those two things with a case, we would do some wonderful and remarkable things in psychotherapy. These are two levels of case actually. After the person departs from dangerousness, he begins to laugh. It's a very healthy thing, to be able to laugh, very, very healthy thing. Even an hysterical kind of laughter is healthier than a solemnity. People have heard hysterical laughter and have heard other kinds of laughter and they've conceived it to be very dangerous. There's only one thing dangerous about laughing and that's not laughing.

(end of lecture)