OPEN DISCUSSION

MARGENAU: Thank you. The door is open for questions and discussion.

TOWLE: One part of Harold Taylor's paper was about acquiring knowledge by creating it, and he gave a nice example of bringing people from all different countries and backgrounds, but I was wondering how useful that would be if there was a certain poverty in the background of all those people so that they wouldn't have enough background to be able to create the knowledge they perhaps needed.

MARGENAU: I had the same concern. I was wondering about the people who participated in these experiments—the students, who, according to the statement read, had a common conventional background—how much of the success was due to the conventional background, and how much to the rather loose procedures which followed thereafter. That, I think, is what's implied.

TOWLE: Just the fact of being together doesn't seem to have any real results. It becomes a nice tea-time in many cases.

MANGIONE: I'd like to introduce another aspect to this subject which Mr. Towle brings out, and that is that I have seen gatherings in Sicily among the peasants led by a man like Danilo Dolci, who believes in the ability of people who don't have much education, who believes in their innate wisdom, and he thinks that we can learn a great deal from people who don't have education. That is, whenever it seems intelligent to do so he puts the emphasis on the instinctual knowledge of these people. This doesn't mean, of course, that he ignores the opinions of the more educated persons, but I have encountered some of those peasants, and they are truly wise without education. We all know that such people exist. What I'm saying in effect is that it is possible, I think, to learn from people who haven't had the conventional learning.

SERVADIO: I wish to make only a few remarks about something that has been said in both papers concerning the relationships between artists on the one side and psychologists or psychoanalysts on the other side. In Dr. Taylor's paper it was said more or less that artists prefer to stay away from analysts because they don't want to be "changed." That was the expression, and in Mr. Jennings's paper, a sort of "protest" was quoted against psychologists, who, according to certain establishments, are not supposed to probe with their microscopes into the ineffable mysteries of artistic creation. Now, this is not only wrong, but is, in my opinion, a rationalization, as we call it, on the part of the artists.

First of all it has been demonstrated by many, many years of research and of clinical interventions that the nobler artist is not destroyed by analytic investigations, by analytic treatment, by psychological advice. On the contrary, if he is a real artist, his difficulties, his inhibitions are more or less solved and he becomes generally a better artist, whereas the false artist who thinks he will become a painter or a singer or whatever he wants because of neurotic reasons, the best an analyst or a psychologist could do is to take away his fantasies and make him a good businessman or something else where he can really do well. But why do artists even nowadays think often in this way? I think, along with Edmund Bergler, that an artist, because of his own exceptional gift, accepts many more burdens and difficulties than the average man. I've known personally, and have analyzed also a few artists and writers, and I've seen that at the bottom of them there was a great deal of masochism (if we can use that word). In other words, you will find that artists, more than average people, accept insomnia, anxiety, obsessions, etc., provided that they can go on with their production. The moment when they cannot write any more, or they are blocked in their artistic expressions, then they get into a panic and they think that the best thing they should do is to ask for help from a psychologist or a psychoanalyst. I've seen many of these cases, and I could quote a few cases of my own knowledge also.

There is one very well known writer in Italy who went to an analyst because of extreme neurotic difficulties, and he decided to go because he couldn't write any more. Now he has been analyzed to a certain extent. Now he can write, but his neurotic symptoms, phobias, obsessions, etc., are there. He accepts them because now he can write again. But then the artist rationalizes and doesn't know anything of these mechanisms and says in good faith, "Oh, no, I won't permit the analyst or psychologist to intervene and see through what I consider a gift from the gods." This is a romantic view of the whole situation which

I think after the progress that has been made in the last ten or twenty or thirty years in dynamic psychology should now be abandoned.

MARGENAU: Thank you very much. Dr. Chu?

CHU: I should like to go back to Dr. Taylor's paper and particularly to his description of the experiment with a world university. The very formulation of an experiment illustrates the topic he wants to speak on, and that is the cultural environment of creativity. I want to know how the Oriental students reacted to that experimental setup and process. I think, it seems to me, that the formulation of that experiment reflects a certain cultural viewpoint. It assumes that all the participants are equally active—in fact, aggressive—in expressing their views, in interaction with one another, in their eagerness to learn from one another. And secondly, that these processes could take place in fairly large groups with magnifying facilities, amplified facilities, and that these processes could take place at a fast pace, so that the period was only six weeks.

Now if I read Orientals correctly, unless they are westernized, like myself, they tend to sit back and wait when something is discussed; let other people take the ball, play it, and roll it, and you have to urge them, "Come, come, come—join the game." How did the Oriental students in that world university participate? Were they as eager and as ready to participate in the process? Also, Orientals by cultural training hesitate to criticize people in public, but they don't hesitate to criticize people in private conversations, and in small groups of individual relationships; then they come out openly, but in public, very seldom do they do so.

And thirdly, they tend to do it very slowly. Even in private conversation, they will speak with you, size you up, know your views before they express themselves, and it would take a much longer time to draw the people out of themselves. So I wonder how much can be accomplished in six weeks time with a large number of students. In other words, the provision of the cultural environment for that experiment was theoretically a priori suited to people accustomed to western culture.

I'm not a racist. Orientals accustomed to western culture can react the same way as I am now doing, and there's nothing wrong with that, but if you transport Orientals directly from their societies, put them into this kind of society, they may or may not react that way. The significance is that the cultural environment has a good deal of influence on the creative process.

MARGENAU: Thank you. I believe Mr. Rochberg had a question.

ROCHBERG: I wanted to comment, as a layman, on Dr. Servadio's remarks about relationships between artists and psychologists or psychoanalysts. As he spoke, I recalled the little I know about the meeting that took place in Amsterdam, between Freud and Gustav Mahler. Gustav Mahler was what I understand as a very neurotic man. I think that people like myself have struggled for years to come to grips with Mahler and Bruckner. Because I was born in the twentieth century, I think I respond much more readily to the kind of controlled neuroses (if I may put it that way) in Mahler's music as against the more metaphysically inclined, almost placid kind of relationships that Bruckner produces.

When Mahler and Freud met, I understand the problem was not whether Mahler could or could not compose. It seems the only difficulties he ever experienced as a composer had to do with practical aspects of his life. Just simply that he was a conductor and that's the way he lived, and that only in the summer could he compose because (as he used to refer to himself) he was the slave of the Vienna Opera House. He was the director, but he preferred to think of himself as its slave.

I think that something Frank Jennings said in his paper appeals to me very much, and that is that the healthy artist, and I tend to believe that real artists are healthy, usually knows what he's doing or trying to do. That even if his life problems, such as they may be, induce in him enormous tensions and disturbances, somehow the fact that he is working keeps him in balance. So whether or not he needs a psychiatrist, let's say, when he goes over that particular line where he's no longer able to maintain a kind of integration, I don't know. All I can say is that I have only once been to a psychiatrist, and that was only on the advice of my medical doctor who said, "I think you need to ventilate," which is the term he used, and I just talked for two hours and the man listening to me didn't say a word, and then I went home and I felt better.

MARGENAU: Dr. Bleksley.

BLEKSLEY: There are two things I would like to say, Mr. Chairman. First of all with reference to Dr. Taylor's experiment, it seems to be somehow thought of as a new kind of experiment on investigating. Just the other day I had, for the first time, the privilege of seeing in the flesh, as it were, Raphael's "School of Athens." This seems to me to depict exactly the sort of thing this experiment was attempting to do. The School of Athens has the reputation of precisely this kind of university—Mark Hopkins at one end and a student at the other. This

is the sort of university that lots of people thought of as being the ideal way of getting growth from both sides. Not sitting and listening to lectures, but taking part in discussions. Surely the whole essence of the Greek educational system was that the students talked to teachers and teachers learned from students as well as the converse being true. So one has a feeling that something should come out of this kind of experiment, but I don't believe that it's fundamentally novel. A remark that I would like to make that I think is more important, arises out of what Mr. Jennings said. As I recall, he quoted a colleague of yours at Yale, saying ". . . the creative act can take years," and the example he gave was the history of Darwin and the development of the theory of evolution. If this is the act of creation, I personally would want a different definition of it.

I believe that although at the end of many years of a long lifetime Darwin produced a complete work which was the theory of evolution with all sorts of details, he wasn't being creative throughout the whole of that process. I don't know just when the idea struck him, but possibly during the course of his visit to the Galapagos Islands. According to tradition, this was where something suddenly hit him. Now, to me, that is the moment that requires explanation. You come to the conclusion that there must be evidence for a conviction which you have received, and you spend the rest of your life collecting enormous masses of this kind of evidence. I don't believe that this is the creative process we're attempting to understand. I think this is obviously part of the process that ends in the final work that one regards as being what Darwin has created.

But I believe that our problem here is to understand that moment of insight, intuition, or whatever you like to call it, which at that stage makes this comparatively young man say, "I'm going to dedicate the rest of my life to proving that what I've said makes sense," or "what I've just felt or experienced makes sense."

In the same way a painter, an artist can find himself confronted with the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and saying, "Look, I've got to fill this. This is going to be an awful lot of hard, mechanical labor." Somewhere down the line he's going to get a picture of what he wants to do in his mind, and that is the thing that we have to explain. Where does this come from? Not the fact that he's ultimately lying on his back to fill this enormous area with stuff that hundreds of years later we still stand and gaze at with admiration. This is not, in my opinion, the act of creation that requires understanding. I believe that there is a sudden thing that happens. When I say "sudden," I'm not necessarily suggesting that it lasts seconds, but I don't believe that it lasts years, and

it's this moment which is the crucial point in creation, and I believe that this is the one that is going to cause us trouble. This is the thing that we have to try and explain.

MARGENAU: Yes, Kenneth Burke?

BURKE: Some take creativity as a good word per se, and I take creativity as a problematical word. That is, you can create under conditions that are to your advantage, and you can create under conditions that are to your disadvantage. Some very good artists have created under conditions that are to their disadvantage. I think that Mr. Jennings's statement that "creativity is not a pearl-producing illness" is an excellent statement of the one view that creativity equals good.

My notion there is that we should take the kind of secularization of the religious position. That if someone had a vision of God—that might be from heaven; it might be from hell. You can't tell just on its face. And in the same way, I think there's an analogue of that in this whole problem. With some creativity, it works out well. Fifty years ago I was a drop-out. I quit school after two years of college. I learned a lot in those two years. I find out now that people are sitting-in for the same reason that I dropped out. For better or for worse, I couldn't have done what I did other than by dropping out. The notion of running a school that is not bureaucratized, seems to me just a contradiction in terms. How are you going to keep a school going unless, for instance, you have a man who is guaranteed tenure? And tenure itself is enough to make it absolutely positive that a school is going to be too rigid for a change in conditions. You can set up an ideal—let's have pliancy along with rigidity—but you really don't have anything.

Herbert Reed has a book on philosophical anarchism. When he just talked about anarchism, it was wonderful, because in anarchism the lion and the lamb can lie down together, but after he got half way through the book, he began to talk about anarchal syndicalism, and once you got to that, you got into organizational problems that made a totally different kind of situation.

MARGENAU: I shall ask Frank Jennings to reply to the peripheral assaults that have been made upon his comments.

JENNINGS: It will be doubly difficult because I know a little bit about Harold Taylor's experiment, and I have a deep personal fondness for Harold Taylor and a respect for his energy in setting up enterprises. I think he had six weeks of a most pleasant kind of international, intramural kaffee-klatsch. A lot of people were rather happy with what

went on. It would be impossible for him to meet the conditions you suggested.

The notion of a social organism called a National University, seems to me always a contradiction in terms. There might be an occasion such as this that is a kind of international collegium. We meet as peers at a certain level and we meet as strangers at other levels and we can communicate.

Dr. Bleksley, as you were talking, I had an insight into how the pointillists must have gotten on to the handling of their medium. The busting up of their life experiences. I suspect most creative undertakings are made up of pointillistic acts of creation which are put together —that nice word of Whitehead's—"through concrescence." Not merely concretized, but they are formalized and manipulated; they themselves, the creative acts, the little ones—the hunches, the insights, the tiny plastic manipulations—they themselves become the material for the larger sustained act of creation. Thus, when Michaelangelo looks up at that empty ceiling and says, "I want something here, and there, etc.," what he begins to do is to grunt to himself. I think all artists spend a great deal of time grunting to themselves, trying to absent themselves from the felicity of language as they confront their material, whether it's a blank page or a hunk of granite. And they say, "Ah, on this corner of the square, I'm going to put this kind of a building," or "I think . . ." and then you stop yourself and say "I mustn't think! I must do." When the poet tries to commit a poem, he is the worst possible witness to his undertaking after the fact. But if there were some way of watching what he does, it might be discovered that he squeezes, as it were, out of a toothpaste tube, in a controlled sort of way, the kinds of experiences he wants to maintain as plastic as possible until that point where he can concretize them. Then the creativity has been consummated in something that you and I as critics can say is a creative act.

Now, I suspect it's always the critics who finally give the "appropriate" label here. "This is an act of creation." I'm reminded, whenever I get to this point in making this kind of remark, of that wonderful sentence of Joseph Warren Beech, in his little book on "The Romantic Vision in Poetry." He says, "Critics are caught in semantic traps and the poets are sued for the damages." And so help me, that answers an awful lot for me.

ROCHBERG: May I comment on both what Frank Jennings has just said and what Dr. Bleksley has said. I think we have to take into account here the peculiar relationship between the moment that some-

thing happens, which may be the beginning of a new direction for another story if you're a writer, and the fact of what I will call "self-replication." Mozart, for example, for some people, is probably one of the greatest self-replicators that we know in music. Mozart did not struggle with the problem of style, but when we speak about Beethoven, we talk about a man who struggled precisely with the problem of style, and some of the music critics speak of Beethoven as having essentially three general periods.

If I go to an art gallery and see the work of Mark Rotko, or Franz Klein, I see the work of people who are replicating themselves. They have essentially one gesture. They have what the Germans call, I believe, "Einfalt," whenever that happens. I believe that is very much like Darwin. They are either caught in the trap of their own personalities, that is, they are unable to renew themselves or they are, in fact, working out this problem or this "Einfalt" for the rest of their days. I make no pejorative reference to the idea of self-replication. I prefer the kind of an artist, let's say, like a Beethoven, who can continue to grow; who has more than one single gesture in him; who has two, or three or maybe four. I think an artist is damned lucky if he has two, and he's even luckier if he has three to sustain him over a lifetime. So I think that, in a sense, we can't criticize. We can't really criticize an artist for carrying out for the rest of his days what hit him once.

I think it would be much easier for me to talk about this in relation to music as it probably might be for Pat Mangione to talk about her relation to painting, but I think we have to include the idea of self-replication in the notion of this "Einfalt," or intuition, however it happens, whenever it happens. It takes a long time to work out the implications and the consequences of an idea. It's not something that just simply establishes itself immediately. It takes many, many years.

MARGENAU: I believe Dr. Gaddini has something to say. Would you like to take the floor?

GADDINI: Thank you. My impression is that we are talking more about creativity and less about the psi process. Still, there is the need to define creativity, and this is such a big task that you never get to an end, although we may agree, perhaps, on some special points which can help us to follow or to develop our discussion. The topics which are now brought up are very interesting because they may help in talking about the creative process. The creative process may imply the whole life of a person and be represented by naming single spots which may be called creative acts. But we can't conceive of creative acts without the individual, the creative person, who is of course an outcome in

itself of a developmental process. So I can't imagine Darwin making his discovery without a very long creative process, which finally brought him to his discovery, and a whole life may be employed just for one basic discovery. This can happen not only to scientists but, sometimes, also to artists as in the case of the Prince of Lampedusa. Artists, however, usually do not fit into this system. Usually an artist has the need to create continuously. His attitude to reality is such that reality has to be invented continuously.

MEERLOO: I don't believe that any creative artist has to be aware of his own creativity. My neighbor mentioned some composers. The priceless example is Schubert. Three weeks before he died he knew what he wanted to become in his life. He told a friend, "I want to become a composer," and he made some arrangements with some nincompoop to take lessons. At that moment, he had already created great music without awareness of his own greatness.