

A Theory of Creativity

By

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Preface

The locus of the mystery of the meaning of existence in general and human existence and destiny in particular is the fundamental yet incontrovertible fact that everything that exists, including the destiny of human beings, is essentially, irrevocably, a process-- a constantly changing reality. Everything that exists comes into being at a point in time, endures for a relatively short period, and then passes out of existence. Whether it is a physical, biological, or human reality, it is always a reality-in-process. It is appropriate to say that no object is given to the world as a ready-made or enduring reality but as a reality-in-the-making. However, unlike the existence of physical and biological objects, whose existence is governed by the laws of nature, the existence of human beings is an activity of self-creation. Like all natural objects, the human body is a natural object, a ready-made reality, and it is governed by the laws of nature; but the human being, as a human reality, which exists as a potentiality in the formative organization of the human body, is not given to the world as a ready-made reality, nor is it reducible to a kind of material reality. Accordingly, it is a reality to be made, and its making is an activity of creation by the human individual and no one else. The process of self-creation may be conscious, instinctual, or habitual, thoughtfully conceived and administered, or poorly conceived and administered. But no matter the conditions under which it takes place, as a human reality, the human being generically differs from any other kind of reality in the natural and human world in the mode of its existence and creation. She re-creates herself in every moment of her existence, and every next moment emerges from the preceding moment of her existence. This process continues until the possibility of

self-creation is exhausted. For example, the adult I am now has passed through immeasurable episodes of self-creation, each one of which is a moment of development, ever since I left the womb of my mother. The process of development takes place in the existential medium of meeting the conditions of human survival, namely, the social, professional, religious, aesthetic, moral, and intellectual domains of experience. Each action I perform is an activity of self-creation.

As I shall argue in this book, the basis of self-creation is the realization of the primary human values of truth, morality, beauty, religiosity, and freedom. I would not err if I say that not merely the life of the human being but her being as a concrete reality is an *individual achievement*: I am the self, or the individual, I create in the activity of conducting the business of human living daily; put differently, I choose who I am as well as the substance of my being in the kind of life-project I design and realize in the process of living. I may choose it wisely or foolishly, as a sheep or as a shepherd, but no one can choose it for me, and no one can live it for me. Self-creation, which is tantamount to saying human living, is a personal responsibility. Parents, teachers, priests, and social leaders create the conditions for young people and adults to choose their own lives, but they cannot make these decisions for them, nor can they live their lives.

Although it is not governed by the laws of nature, self-creation, which is the substance of human living, is not a fortuitous or casual activity. It is governed by laws that emanate from the human essence. This essence, as I shall argue, is a power, or an impulse to human survival, that is, to exist and thrive in the world as a human reality under the conditions of human individuality. These laws are inherent in the values that emerge with the emergence from the

human body from the cosmic processes as an existential response to the demands of human survival. They serve as guideposts in the human being's endeavor to grow and develop as an individual. What are these values? What is the nature of creativity as the foundation not only of natural reality but especially human reality? I raise these questions because the ultimate purpose, or destiny, of the human being is the realization of the greatest possible depth implicit in these values: I am an authentic, fulfilled, or complete human person inasmuch as my life is a concrete realization of these values: truth, beauty, morality, religiosity, and freedom.

The fundamental premise that underlies the purpose and structure of this book is that understanding creativity as a cosmic and individual phenomenon is a necessary condition for understanding the dynamics of human growth and development in the medium of institutions people create: family, school, profession, religion, art, science, philosophy, technology, and education. Accordingly, an inquiry into the nature of human creativity should proceed, as I do in this book, from, or on the basis of, a clear and plausible conception of the human mind, primarily because creativity is a function of the mind. The thesis I submit, elucidate, and defend in this book is that the human essence—mind, soul, spirit, reason, or psyche—is a *creative power*; it is a *burst of creation*, the way a plant that rises into the depth of the sky as a burst of life! This burst is revealed in all the manifestations of humanity as individuals, communities, and as the human race. Implied in this thesis is that, regardless of whether natural or human, the creative event or act is a *sui generis* phenomenon *qua* drop of power: every kind of emergent in the cosmic or human process is a creation *ex nihilo*, i.e., a creation from nothing into the realm of being. How can we understand this miraculous happening? Knowledge of its dynamics is a

necessary condition not only for the cultivation of human character but also for the creation of the institutions in which people thrive as human beings. I shall argue that an adequate response to this question should proceed from a reasonable account of the genesis of the human mind, or essence: how does this essence come into being? What is its essential structure? What is its mode of existence? Next, I shall consider in some detail the conditions under which the human essence, which inheres in the formal organization of the human body as a potentiality, emerges as a concrete being. This emergence is, as I shall argue, the locus of self-creation. Finally, I shall illustrate, by example, the dynamics of the creative event or act within the institutions of education and fine art.

The idea for this book is inspired by a study I conducted a few years ago, "Creativity and Aesthetic Theory," in which I argued that creativity is a central task of aesthetic theory. In this book, I explore the nature of the creative event not only in the cosmic process but especially in the various spheres of human life. Creativity is the fountain from which natural and human existence flows. I tend to think that an understanding of the logic, structure, and telic thrust of this power will shed ample light on the fundamental question of the meaning of existence in general and human existence in particular.

In what follows, I shall advance a chapter-by-chapter summary of the book.

In the first chapter, I discuss three central issues whose analysis is requisite for an adequate understanding of the nature of creativity as a cosmic and human phenomenon. First, what method should we employ in constructing a reasonable concept of creativity? This phenomenon is not given to reflection or perception as a ready-

made reality: how can we observe and study it? Second, what is the genesis and essential structure of the mind? How does it come into being? Is it some kind of metaphysical, physical, biological, or religious entity? Third, I argue that the mind is not a kind of entity and does not exist in the world as a ready-made reality. It emerges from the cosmic process with the emergence of the human body as a species and as individual human beings and inheres as a potentiality in the formal organization of the human body. It comes to life in a state of self-consciousness and ceases to exist with the passage of this state.

The second chapter is devoted to the concept of creativity. Here, I argue that the mind is essentially a creative power; as such, it is an impulse to human survival or existence as a human reality. It emerges from the human body as an existential response to the demands of the survival impulse. The measure of this emergence is human values, which are also emergent. We may view them as peremptory desires, or urges, for existence. Human values are the foundation of human existence and human flourishing. Finally, what is the source of evil? Is it a human creation? Why do people act as if they are immortal if their essence is a thrust for human survival or existence?

Chapters three, four, and five are a detailed discussion and illustration of the concept of creativity developed in the first two chapters. In chapter three, I analyze the creative event in liberal arts education: its structure and essential features. Next, what are the traits of the creative learner and the creative teacher in liberal arts education? Here, I argue that the creative teacher is innovative, knowledgeable, artistic, and humble. She is the kind of human being who gives of herself exactly the way the artist, the philosopher, the saint, the scientist, or the mother gives of herself—insight, inspira-

tion, encouragement, illumination, and love of life. This chapter is concluded with a discussion of the constitutional structure of the educative event.

In chapter four, I explore the nature of the creative act in liberal arts education. This exploration begins with an analysis of the aim of this kind of education. The aim is the cultivation of character, and the means of its cultivation is a comprehension of the fundamental principles of the empirical sciences and the humanities. I assume that knowledge of nature and human nature is a necessary condition for coming to grips with the ultimate question of the meaning of existence in general and human existence in particular: how should I live, love, and die? The remainder of this chapter is devoted to the Socratic method as a model for creative teaching in the liberal arts. Three basic features of this method are spotlighted: recognition of ignorance, raising questions, and self-understanding. These features are requisite for self-creation and creative living.

The fifth chapter focuses on creativity in fine art. I have chosen this subject for analysis because, unlike creative teaching in the sciences and the humanities, where the teacher and the student are the locus of creativity, the locus of creativity in teaching fine art is creativity itself: can creativity be taught, and consequently, can art be taught? I argue that creativity, and concomitantly art, can be taught. The means of teaching it are (1) artistry, (2) eidetic thinking, (3) growth in knowledge of nature and human nature, (4) expression from within, and (5) illustration. This chapter is concluded with a discussion of the concept of genius.

Chapter One

The Need for a New Conception of Mind

Method of Inquiry

One of the phenomena that has intrigued, baffled, and fascinated the inquirer into the essential nature of the human mind is creative or genius power of the legislator who gives a rational constitution to his people, the artist who creates works of aesthetic beauty, the general who defeats a formidable enemy, the educator who cultivates a well-rounded character, the mystic who experiences union with the ultimate, the inventor who energizes the wheels of human progress, the scientist who fathoms the inner structure of matter, life, and consciousness, the theologian which translates the revealed divine truth into a meaningful way of life, the social reformer who strives for a better social existence, the lover who transforms a marriage into a garden of love, and the philosopher who sheds a ray of light on the meaning of existence in general and human existence in particular. Fascination with the mystery, inscrutability, and dynamics that distinguish the creative mind in general and the genius mind in particular in the different domains of human experience and endeavor derives from two sources: the first is theoretical, and the second is practical. The first can be expressed by the question, "What is the nature of creativity?" This question is a call to understand the nature of a particular reality, whether natural, human, or divine. The desire to inquire into the nature of creativity, and consequently, genius, is inspired by the fact that, as a type of activity, creativity exists and that it is a particular kind of reality on par with the various types of real-

ity that interest the scientist, philosopher, and theologian. I shall treat genius as a higher, more sophisticated, and more profound level of creativity. The second source of fascination in the nature of creativity, which is presupposed by the first, is that creativity, and especially genius, is an ideal and a formative power in the growth and development of human life; it plays a vital role in securing the conditions of human survival and progress. As I shall presently argue, it is the source of the passion, the light, and the vision that moves the wheels of human civilization (See, e.g., Sternberg, Piitro, Weisberg).

The inquiry into the nature of creativity is, in principle, different from the kind of inquiry the physicist, biologist, theologian, or social scientist employs in her endeavor to explore the nature of matter, life, God, or social reality primarily because it is not given to observation, perception, or reflection as a ready reality the way rocks, trees, institutions, animals, or human beings are given. How can we place the *creative* mind, much less the human mind, on the table of analysis or investigation, the way a physicist places a lump of matter, a biologist places a cell, or social scientists place a human community on a publicly observable table of analysis or investigation? I raise this question because our understanding of any object of human experience should proceed from a clear and reasonable idea or conception of the kind of reality it is: how can we investigate it if we cannot place it on a table of analysis, and how can we place it on a table of analysis if we do not know the kind of reality it is? As a way of distinguishing it from the realities that are given to reflection or observation as an object, I propose that we view the creative mind as a *human phenomenon*, that is, as an intelligible reality that comes to life as a concrete object in the sphere of consciousness. Its ontic locus is the human mind.

The word “phenomenon” comes from the Greek *phainomenon*, preposition of *phainesthai*, “to appear”, akin to “*phainein*, “to show, appear.” This definition expresses a primary mode of human experience of certain kinds of objects. It signifies “1) an event, circumstance, or experience that is apparent to the senses and that can be scientifically described or appraised as an ellipse; 2) in Kantian philosophy, a thing as it appears in perception as distinguished from a thing as it is in itself independent of sense experience” (WNWCD). This general definition of “phenomenon” has been examined in depth analytically, critically, and constructively by philosophers such as Hegel, Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre. Phenomenologically, that which appears or exists in the sphere of consciousness is not, contrary to Kant’s characterization of “phenomenon” as an appearance of noumenal reality—the thing-in-itself—but its very essence. The essence of an object of experience, regardless of whether it is sensual or intellectual, shines in and through its appearance in the event of perception or reflection. For example, “matter” is the unity of the qualities, relations, and dynamics that appear, and are intuited, in our experience of physical objects. “Life” is the unity of the qualities of growth, vigor, development, and vitality we experience in our perception of plants and animals. Similarly, “mind” is the unity of thoughts, emotions, feelings, images, desires, and drives we perceive indirectly, by inference, when we experience people, and directly through introspection of our inner selves. Broadly, its properties emanate from its perceptible properties, which emanate from the essence that underlies them. We perceive the properties in the essence, and the essence in the properties.

Treating creativity as a phenomenon that can be studied, first, as an object of reflection, and second, by the light of reason, is not

inconsistent with the empirical method of inquiry into the nature of the physical and social sciences. Indeed, it is the heart and soul of systematic inquiry in any major area of human experience. Let us consider, for a moment, the physicist's method of exploring the nature of matter. First, any discourse about matter is a discourse about the physical facts that make up the structure of the scheme of nature; and any discourse about these facts is a discourse about the stuff that bears the qualities we perceive when we experience these facts, that is, the qualities we can see, touch, hear, smell, and feel. These qualities are concrete manifestations of the underlying stuff. However, the qualities we perceive are not the matter the physicist seeks to understand, but the stuff that underlies them, although they are some of their essential manifestations. The ultimate purpose of the physicist is to articulate a comprehensive conception of the totality of reality that reveals itself in the various objects that make up the scheme of nature, so that a synoptic comprehension of the manifestations would express the essential structure of matter as the reality that underlies the scheme of nature as a cosmic process. We can focus on his relation by asking, what is the basis of, or source, of these qualities? By what method or kind of perception can we say that these physical facts are material?

However, regardless of the method we employ in the exploration of matter or any of the dimensions in which it reveals itself—physical, botanical, or zoological—we cannot make any assertion on its nature or constitution if the referent, i.e., the quality or qualities that are its basis, does not come to life in the experience of the mind of the inquirer as *intelligible* or comprehensible reality. The color, smoothness, solidity, temperature, scent, and audibility we assert of the facts of our physical environment are not merely out there in the outer space, although their source is, but exist as

perceptions, as living or as intelligible mental entities in the mind of the perceiver; put differently, they are *noetic*, i.e., apprehensible, realities we can conceive and identify. In ordinary life, we do not usually perceive or experience the qualities that constitute the essential structure of a given fact, for example, the table on which I am now writing these words, even though one may casually refer to or interact with it as a table. This kind of reference or interaction is not actual perception but subsumption, in the sense that we subsume the object under the general concept, or category, of “table”, which already exists in our minds; that is, we identify this particular object as a “table” in terms of the concept “table” whose meaning we already know. I know what it means for an object to be a table; this object conforms to the essential structure of the table that already exists in my mind. The object to which I refer is an instantiation of the concept of “table”; therefore, I can assert that this object is a table. I can express the same point by saying that “table” denotes a class of objects; each member of the class exemplifies the essential features that comprise the structure of the concept of table.

However, actually perceiving the table as a particular object is an activity in which its essence *qua* table comes to life in and through the mind in the process of perceiving it. As a physical object that exists in a certain place at a certain point of time, it cannot jump into my mind because my mind is not, as I shall discuss in detail, a physical box or space but a noetic reality—a flare of power. I apprehend the constitutive qualities of the table by my mind as meaning. In this process, the object is passive, and the mind is active. An idea is what it means, and its meaning appears to me as an intuition or an apprehension of meaning, not as an object, but as an intellectual event. Accordingly, any assertion I make about the

table or any physical object comes to life in my mind as an apprehensible, intelligible reality.

Now, suppose we ask, what is matter, which is the centerpiece of physical inquiry? If we cast an investigative look at the history of physical theory from the days of Democritus to Newton, to Einstein, to the present, and focus our attention on the development of the concept of matter, we discover, with a reasonable degree of certainty, that every feature, element, or aspect of the concept of matter is verified empirically. The way it was conceived and explored is made possible by the qualities discovered and verified through the empirical method of observation and verification: experimentation, measurement, instrumentation, mathematical computation, and repeated testing. These qualities exist in the mind as concepts that translate into meaning in the activity of thinking them. Put differently, they exist in the mind as intelligible phenomena. For example, as a means of explaining the nature of subatomic particles that constitute the structure of the atom in the field of nuclear physics, the supercollider reveals new qualities of the essential structure of matter. Every new quality, which is verified and articulated into a concept, is incorporated into the existing concept of matter. Accordingly, our concept of matter, which is developing as the means of observation and verification develop, is in principle accumulative in character. However, no quality or aspect can be included in our conception of matter if it does not come to life as an intelligible phenomenon in the mind of the inquirer. The human mind is the power that certifies the existence or nonexistence of matter, as well as the truth or falsity of any statement we make about matter. By the same token, we can rhetorically ask, can we make any assertion about life, mind, beauty, time, space, or any object of experience if the referent of the

assertion does not appear in the mind as an intelligible phenomenon? The continual inquiry into the nature of matter is a process of articulating the newly discovered qualities or aspects of matter into concepts. I assume that, in itself, matter is an inexhaustible possibility of exploration and realization in the activity of inquiry. The more the means of observation are perfected, the more we can explore the depth of its essence.

Accordingly, we should ask, what kind of phenomenon is creativity? What are its *differentiae*? I raise this question for two reasons. First, the question is whether creativity is, as I have just remarked, mysterious and elusive, and resists facile explanation or understanding. This feature underlies the plethora of analyses and, consequently, conceptions of creativity and, especially, genius in the history of civilization. In science in general, once a hypothesis is verified, it becomes a theory. When this status is established, all the scientists espouse it because the method of its verification is established and universal. This feature of scientific inquiry undercuts the possibility of conflict about the truth or falsity of the theory. But this is not the case in the different domains of creative activity in art, social science, philosophy, technology, religion, social reform, and practical life, because the created object is, to some extent, indeterminate, unlike the object created by the scientist. This is why a definition or a clearly articulated conception of such a fact in the humanities is crucially important. Second, creativity is a power of the human mind; it is one of its essential elements or functions and the source of the light that illuminates human thinking and acting. Moreover, it is a value-laden phenomenon because its activities are founded in human values. Every event of creation entails a purpose, and every purpose entails a value; therefore, an

understanding of the genesis of human values is a requisite for an understanding of the nature of creativity.

Thus, an adequate understanding of creativity implies a plausibly articulated conception of the mind: how does it come into being, or what is its ontological status? What is its essential structure? Second, how do human values come into being? What kind of realities are they? Indeed, if we cast an investigative look at the mosaic of views and conceptions of creativity during the past three millennia in the different cultures of the world, we discover, as I shall momentarily discuss, that these views and conceptions are in some way tethered to a certain concept of mind. Let me express this point rhetorically: how can we theorize cogently about creativity, which is a function of the mind, if our theory is not based on an adequate understanding of the mind?

In what follows, I shall first advance a concept of the genesis and structure of the mind. This part of my discussion is based on the assumption that creativity is a function of the mind: What about the mind that performs not only creative action, but also genius? Under what conditions is this kind of function possible? Second, I shall advance a concept of the genesis of human values from the human mind. How do values function as the foundation not only of the different kinds of activities in the different kinds of human experience but also of creativity *qua* genius? If we view this activity as a pyramid, and it is, it would be critically important to explain how the creative mind can delve into one or more values, which exist as *schemas* in the mind and, as such, an inexhaustible number of possibilities for realization in different ways and forms, and then create something *ex nihilo*? For example, how does a mind like Sophocles' create a dramatic archetype such as *Oedipus the King* that delineates the tragic side of human life, a mind like Beethov-

en's create a masterwork such as the *Ninth Symphony* that speaks to the human soul across human cultures, a mind like Michelangelo's create an enduring masterpiece such as *David* that delights the lover of aesthetic beauty profoundly, a mind like Darwin's that comprehends the whole realm of biology and conceive the theory of evolution that explains the emergence of the species, or a mind like Plato's that climbed the mountain of ancient Greek civilization and conceived the theory of forms? Is creativity an autonomous or an inherent power of the human mind? Is genius a talent? Is it a gift of a supernatural power? Third, I shall advance a general concept of creativity on the basis of which I shall argue that genius is an exceptional and highly sophisticated development of the creative power of the human mind. Creativity is the intellectual soil from which genius grows.

A Concept of Mind

The mystery and elusiveness that surround the existence and nature of creativity derive from the mystery and elusiveness of the existence and nature of the human mind as a phenomenon. This phenomenon, which defines human nature and every human reality in the world, is not given as a ready-made object of perception or reflection, the way this tree, this river, or this horse is given: what kind of reality is it? What is its mode of existence? If I inspect myself in search of something I can identify as my mind, or as my "self", I cannot find it, even though it is the source of my ideas, emotions, desires, or moods, and even though I feel its existence in every activity I perform. I feel its presence acutely, especially when I make a serious decision or experience sharp pain or intense pleasure. I do not know of any scientist, philosopher, mystic, sage, theologian, or ordinary human being, now and in the past, who

was able to apprehend it as a concrete or definable object. For example, if I ask an ordinary person, a scientist, or a philosopher, "Do you have a mind?"

"What a silly question!" She would answer without hesitation, "Everybody has a mind. Don't you have one??"

"Are you sure you have one?"

"Do not insult me, please!" She would say with a feeling of surprise, if not anger.

"Can you, please, tell me what it is? What does it look like?" My interlocutor's facial complexion changes into one of puzzlement when she hears my question. She hesitates for a second and then stares me in the eyes, as if she thought that I was playing some kind of trick on her.

"What do you mean?" She asks.

"I mean, what kind of reality is your mind? Where does it exist? Can you describe it to me, or to you?" Her puzzlement lingers, then she says:

"Everybody can tell you that it is inside you and that it is what does the thinking, feeling, and desiring in us. We are all engaged in these kinds of activities."

"Fine!" I respond. "But what is that which does the thinking, feeling, and desiring in us?"

"I know that it is in me and it is authoring the conversation I am now having with you."

And yet, we do not only have a distinct notion of it as the author of our lives, as the preceding short conversation clearly shows, but also what it does and can do. Moreover, we know that it is the reality that distinguishes human beings from the rest of the animal and physical species and that it is the source of every activity—theoretical and practical—we perform in the course of our lives. The aspect that baffles any inquirer into its existence and identity is that the moment we think we have captured it in an act of perceptual reflection, it slips away from our fingers, just as an eel slips away from the fingers of a novice fisherman when he tries to capture it with his hands.

Moreover, we know that (1) the mind is real, (2) what it does, and (3) what it can do, mostly *inferentially* from what it does or produces. This inference is based on the principle of causation, according to which we know about a cause from knowing its effect, and we know about an effect from knowing its cause. Here, it is assumed that the effect derives its being and nature, or its essential structure, from its cause. For example, we know the soul of an artist by a careful analysis of her works, the character of a human being by analysis of her deeds or achievements, or the nature of the sun by an analysis of the rays of light it emits and the kind of impact these rays have on physical and biological objects. But although this kind of knowledge is useful, to some extent reliable, and functions as the basis of designing and implementing our life-projects individually and to some extent communally, it is not sufficient, at least for two reasons: the first is theoretical, and the second is practical. The first is intrinsic, and the second is instrumental. The first aims at understanding and serves as an existential response to the call of curiosity, and the second aims at advantage and serves as an existential response to the call of the impulse for human survival. The

more we know the nature of an object, the more we can manipulate it or use it in the activity of pursuing personal and social ends. Broadly, the primary aspiration of the scientist and the philosopher is to grasp the nature and meaning of human and natural reality. I do not exaggerate if I say that this aspiration has been the centerpiece of scientific, philosophical, and theological inquiry during the past three millennia. Does the scientist not aim to know the nature of matter, life, and consciousness? Does the philosopher not aim to know the nature of the meaning of existence in general and human existence in particular? Does the theologian not aim to know the truth of God's will?

However, knowledge of the essential structure of the human mind, that is, of its capacities, which perform the activities of thinking, feeling, and willing, is not merely intrinsically and instrumentally valuable, but also an essential demand of the impulse to human survival. This demand is a constitutive impetus of this impulse. As I shall presently explain, it reveals the nature of the fundamental drive in human nature *to be, i.e.,* to exist and fulfill its destiny. It is rooted in the biological and physical nature of the human being. Does the apple tree not inherently aim to produce apples, thereby asserting the substance of its destiny as a particular object and as a species? Does the mountain, or any physical object, not resist the destructive forces of nature, thereby asserting its existence as an object and as a species? Does the lion not strive for survival as both an individual and a species? By the same token, the fundamental drive of human beings is to assert their existence as human individuals and as a species. Human existence in the world is neither a gift nor a privilege. As I shall explain, it is an individual achievement; it is an existential expression of the essential powers of the mind. This assertion is corroborated by the fact that the spectacle

of human civilization is one of the achievements of human civilization in science, philosophy, religion, technology, art, social organization, and individual life. The history of these achievements is a history of expanding the horizons of the constitutive capacities of the human mind in its endeavor to exist and realize the potentialities inherent in its structure. I assume that adequate knowledge of the human mind is a necessary condition for human growth and development.

The landscape of the concept of mind, which may be viewed as the pillars of the table of analysis of its structure, contains an impressive array of theories, discussions, and conceptions of its nature. It is not my intention in this study to present and evaluate their insights and contributions to our understanding of the mind as a cosmic phenomenon, because this task is beyond the aim of this book; nevertheless, it is critically important to spotlight their basic ideas and assumptions insofar as they shed light on its nature. No inquirer into the nature of the mind can theorize about it without taking seriously into account their fundamental insight into its structure and dynamics. Our knowledge of the vast domain of human experience is always accumulative, regardless of whether it is scientific, philosophical, artistic, theological, technological, or practical. For example, can we fully understand the general theory of relativity in physics, the theory of evolution in biology, or the theory of democracy in the sphere of social organization without a general knowledge of the history of their development from the earliest days of civilization to the present? Is the growth of wisdom in the life of the human individual or society not the outcome of accumulative theoretical and practical knowledge, of self-understanding, and understanding the meaning of existence in general? I have underlined “fundamental insight” to emphasize that, as a

conceptual framework whose building blocks are a multitude of ideas, arguments, and assumptions, the frame of a theory always emanates from a fundamental insight, which exists in the mind of the inquirer as a wealth of intuitive, or pre-reflective, knowledge. We penetrate the depth of insight that permeates an essay, a novel, a scientific or philosophical book, an artwork, or a conversation through the details that make up its structure.

Every act of creative thinking, feeling, and willing springs from such a cognitive insight. We climb on the pyramid of the elements that constitute the structure of its frame in order to apprehend the meaning implicit in the insight. For example, a person listens to a lecturer discussing the question of immortality or to a conversation about why there is evil in the world. At the end of any one of these events, she may say, "This lecture or conversation makes sense; it is truthful or meaningful." What is the basis of such a statement? Again, a student listens to a poor teacher's lessons for a semester. When asked to evaluate this teacher's teaching quality, the student may justifiably say, "This teacher is for the birds!" In situations like this, which are frequent in our theoretical and practical lives, we can always justifiably ask about the basis of our evaluative judgments. The truth, meaningfulness, or meaninglessness of its wisdom is uniformly based not merely on its ideas, arguments, or explanations but on the insight that underlies them. We comprehend the significance of these elements in terms of the insight that underlies them.

The Idea of the Mind

An investigative look at the landscape of discourse on the concept of mind reveals four approaches to explaining the ontological

structure of the human mind: the first is metaphysical, the second is theological, the third is physical, and the fourth is neurophysiological. The first argues that the mind is a metaphysical entity; the second, that it is a divine reality; the third, that it is the body viewed as a machine controlled by the brain; and the fourth, that it is a function of the brain's neurophysiological system. The first approach holds that we know the nature of the mind by reason or the intellect, the second holds that we know its nature by an interpretation of the soul as a divine reality, and the third holds that we know its nature by an empirical analysis of the brain as a neurological system composed of particular command centers. Although these approaches differ in their interpretation of the origin and ontological status of the mind, they explain its structure similarly, mainly because this structure is generally observable psychologically, commonsensically, and philosophically, that is, by direct reflection on the domain of subjectivity, inferentially by observing the kind of functions the mind performs, and philosophically by reflecting on it as a human phenomenon. The essential structure of the mind, first conceived by Plato, has been generally recognized by philosophers and psychologists. It is composed of three capacities and functions: *intellect, affection, and volition*. They differ in their accounts of the dynamics of these three capacities, but they recognize that these capacities are the primary powers of the mind underlying various human activities.

However, these approaches fail to provide an adequate explanation of the essential structure of these three capacities. Such an explanation is crucially significant, indeed urgently needed, not only to meet the demand of curiosity, viz., the desire to know, but also the demand to discover the best possible methods and means required for human survival. For example, the metaphys-

ical and theological approaches, which dominated the discourse on the origin and nature of the mind from Plato to Aquinas, to Descartes, and finally to the first part of the twentieth century, viewed the mind as a given, non-material, or ready-made entity. The philosophers who upheld this approach argued that this kind of entity performs the function of thinking, feeling, and willing. But the question the critics raised was: how? How *can* a given entity, even though it is non-material, act? First, how can an entity, one that does not undergo change, initiate a change, namely, the three functions of the capacities that constitute the structure of the mind? Second, how can it create any kind of reality *ex nihilo*? Or, how can that which is essentially inert be the source of active and constructive activity? In their attempt to explain the nature and dynamics of the mind, the advocates of these approaches committed the mistake of *supervenience*, that is, of unjustifiably attributing, or investing, the mind with powers without explaining how it possesses them. Again, how does a ready-made reality transcend the givenness of its nature, which resists change or creative activity? Furthermore, how can they explain the possibility of growth, education, or invention? Is it an accident that this general conception of the mind implicitly, but not explicitly, justified the existence of a classified society, according to which people are created bright or dull, intelligent or stupid, or great or mediocre? Is it an accident that many parents, educators, and ordinary people used to believe that humans are born with given natures, for example, as soldiers, merchants, teachers, thieves, farmers, or locksmiths?

Although it has been critically evaluated *ad nauseam* during the past 2500 years, especially during the past two centuries, the question of the relation between mind, which is an immaterial reality, and the body, which is a material reality, remains inexplicable to

a large number of philosophers of mind as well as to scientists: how can that which is given as a ready made entity, accordingly as a an inert or passive reality in the human species think, feel, and will in and through the body whose make-up varies from one human being to another? How can the human being utter "I" in and through her body? If the "I" is the subject that presides over the activities of the human individual, how can it utter "my" or "mine"? In what se sense does she say "my body"? Does this "I" perish with the perishing of the body? Is every particular mind designed for every particular body? There is no need for me to prolong this list of rhetorical questions to the first and second approaches to the ontic status of the mind and its nature. I spotlight them to accentuate the charge that they fail to explain, on the one hand, the dynamics and creative powers of the mind, and, on the other, the relation between the mind and the body.

But the physical and neurophysiological approaches do not fare any better in their attempts to explain how the mind performs the activities of thinking, feeling, and willing, especially how it can create, design, and implement those activities. These two approaches are not based on a direct analysis of the sources of the capacities of intellect, affection, and volition, much less on the essential nature of the mind or its origin. This is why the principles of their explanation are at best *reductive* in character. While the physical approach reduces the mind to the way the body functions, viz., as a machine, the neurophysiological approach reduces it to the way the brain functions, which is tantamount to reducing the body's activities to a biological automaton. But these major modes of reduction, which abound in the history of philosophy, undercut the possibility of placing the mind as a phenomenon on the table of examination and analyzing it objectively. Is it an accident that

we encounter a multitude of (1) interpretations and views of the nature of mind and (2) arguments in support of these interpretations and arguments in the history of philosophy?

The deficiencies of the four approaches to the study of the human mind stem from their failure to explain its ontological status, its relation to the human body, and its essential structure. The world of the mind, which has been unfolding gradually in the history of civilization, cannot be reduced to a function of neurological or physical activity. Everything about this world cries against this kind of reduction, which is so supervenient in its mode of explanation. Moreover, reducing the mind to brain shocks or events undermines the possibility of directly analyzing its structure or explaining the dynamics of the way its capacities function. The basis of this line of reasoning, which may be treated as an assumption, is that the mind, which *transforms* the body into a human reality, is uniquely different from the body viewed as a mechanical system or the brain as a neurological system. I have underlined “transform” to emphasize that the mind is a transformative power, a dynamic reality, and that the laws governing its activities arise from its dynamical structure rather than from the body’s physical or neurological dimensions.

Emergence of the Human Mind

If the mind is not a metaphysical or theological entity, and if it is not reducible to physical or neurological functions, we can justifiably ask, what is its essential structure or nature? How did it come into being? What is its mode of existence? What is its mode of existence? These three questions imply one another because we cannot explain how it comes into being or how it exists unless we proceed

from a reasonable understanding of its identity, at least as we can comprehend it or as it functions in human life. How can we place in the table of analysis if we do not know what we are placing on it? The inability of the advocates of the four approaches to advance a satisfactory account of the nature of the mind stems from the fact that, although they were able to analyze what the mind does or can do, they fail to provide an adequate explanation of its essential nature, its relation to the body, and its creative powers.

The concept of mind I shall now examine is based on the most recent findings of physical cosmology and philosophical cosmology, according to which the mind is an emergent from the cosmic process, first, as a species, and second, as a particular mind. This thesis is based on the fact, first recognized and articulated as a metaphysical principle around the 5th century B.C. by Heraclitus, namely that, in all its manifestations, reality is essentially process: everything that exists is constantly changing. Change is king. This idea is clearly expressed by the widely known analogy, which is also coined by Heraclitus, namely, one cannot step into the same river twice, and we can add: one cannot step in the same river even once, because the water is constantly changing, or flowing.

Implied in this metaphysical principle, which is a corollary to the fundamental principle of the general theory of relativity and concomitantly with that of the theory of evolution, is that, as a reality, the mind is an emergent from the cosmic process as a species and as particular human beings. Every species or object that exists, and will exist, comes into being at a certain point in time and will pass out of being at a later point in time. Regardless of its kind, the endurance of an object is always relative to its nature or kind. The basis of the endurance is the transmission of the essential qualities, or elements, of the object from its preceding to its succeeding

state of being, which implies that the essence of the object is always changing. This characterization of essence is a clear rejection of the Platonic concept of *eidos*, or essence, according to which the essence of an object is both universal and permanent.

Moreover, that which emerges is always a concrete reality. If I take the most recent findings of both physical and metaphysical cosmologies into serious consideration, I can say that, in themselves, the objects that emerge from the cosmic process differ from how human beings perceive or experience them. The physicist or philosopher perceives them in terms of the conceptual categories that constitute the mind's basal structure. However, in itself as an endless river of time, i.e., as an endless process, it transcends the means and categories of human perception and conception. *This process is a creative advance.* Human existence is a concrete manifestation of this advance. Our knowledge of the cosmic process is always *anthropocentric*, that is, it is based on the way the inquiring mind observes the objects of its experience and articulates the meaning of its observation into a conception or a conceptual framework. This view forms the basis of the limits of human knowledge, reminiscent of Protagoras's dictum, *homo mensura*: man is the measure of all things — of what we know and what we do not know. The cognitive powers of the human cannot transcend its capacities of observation and conception; otherwise, it ceases to be a human reality that derives its being from the cosmic process. The history of scientific theory is a history of delving deeper and deeper into the essential features of the primordial stuff of the cosmic process. The point that merits special emphasis here is that the objects that emerge from the cosmic process are concrete realities. Accordingly, they are not qualities. Regardless of their kind, all qualities emerge with the emergence of objects, and they exist in the world