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Integrating Body, Mind, and Soul with the Breath of Life: A Philosophical Discourse on Craniofacial Deformity and Humanistic Evolution

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ABSTRACT

To examine craniofacial deformity beyond anatomical impairment and to conceptualize how body, mind, and soul may be integrated within a humanistic framework of care. The article aims to show how scientific reconstruction, philosophical thought, and cultural meaning together shape the lived experience and human development of individuals born with severe craniofacial deformities. This article is a conceptual and philosophical analysis informed by narrative engagement with interdisciplinary literature in craniofacial surgery, psychology, embryogenesis, humanism, existentialism, noogenesis, and artificial intelligence. The discussion uses the composite figure of "Waaseyaa" as a reflective clinical-humanistic construct to synthesize biological, psychosocial, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of deformity and recovery. The analysis suggests that successful management of craniofacial deformity cannot be reduced to surgical correction alone. Although reconstructive science may restore anatomy and function, full rehabilitation also depends on psychosocial acceptance, cultural interpretation, moral agency, and existential self-formation. The paper argues that humanistic evolution occurs through the interaction among biological development, environmental influences, conscious thought, and value systems. This interaction reframes deformity not merely as a structural deficiency but as a challenge to human integration and dignity. Craniofacial deformity should be understood within a broader humanistic model that joins clinical science with philosophical reflection. Long-term restoration requires not only physical reconstruction but also attention to identity, belonging, meaning, and freedom of self-definition. Integrating body, mind, and soul provides a more comprehensive framework for care and for understanding human development in the context of deformity.

Keywords: Craniofacial deformity, humanism, existentialism, noogenesis; reconstructive surgery, psychosocial integration.

If ever that proud day of wondrous thought imagined the human defect through face and bone to base of skull; spirit depleted of self with blank visage that bespeak of despair; in place of humanity just vapor. Regardless, as a child, Waaseyaa (pseudonym)'s first light of the morning sun stood seamless, contemplating a time and place where her native people had abandoned hope in the task of life. Waaseyaa is an Aboriginal name and in this essay represents a composite of anonymized clinical cases who are born into the bright light with severe craniofacial deformity that subjects them to social isolation from family and community. This was the image for children existing in an ethereal world of rejection, the essence of their humanity yet to be defined. The depth of spiritual and physical emptiness overpowered my senses. Discarded at birth as an aberration of divine intervention. What purpose could there be to endure in a rejected, malformed state of being: Cerebral, yet without purpose; Reflexive to sensory input, yet without a nexus of soul to body; Contemplative, yet without direction or meaningful resolution?

The central question of this essay concerns the identification and application of missing elements in a philosophy of nature that evolves in response to forces, perhaps guided by a divine element. A cerebral and spiritual resolve, embedded in science, subject not only to discovery but also to manipulation; nurtured by the breath of life as the soul that integrates with body and mind. If these elements of divinity and science are intertwined to create a reality that cannot be resolved, Waaseyaa presents itself as a myth of creation, an incomplete tablet. Creation is the timeless synthesis of elements for the human entity designed to integrate body, mind, and soul. It can be argued that the state of human existence and evolution is subject to science and divinity. The task is complex: It is not enough to surgically repair a disarticulated anatomical system. The integration of body, mind, and soul provides the evolutionary pathway for humanity.

This essay presents the concepts of noogenesis, defined as the evolution of conscious thought on a universal level (De Chardin, 1959) (104 – 118), existentialism as expressed by Sartre (2007), and basic forms of humanism, outlined by Harari (2017) in his text Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow (222 – 279) are critical elements constituting 'the breath of life'. Embryogenesis and the concept of Nature vs. Nurture are presented as protective mechanisms for humanistic evolution. The concept of the cerebral cortex as the noogenic layer of the human brain and a possible precursor for Artificial Intelligence (AI) is introduced.

Main Arguments

The search for the elements that will bring Waaseyaa's mask into conformity with humanity requires cultural specificity. Integration of body, mind, and soul is an essential element in the humanistic evolution for Waaseyaa. In a study of the Yoruba and Hausa ethnic groups in Nigeria, Olasoji et al. (2007) found that cultural and religious factors play a strong role in shaping the experiences of children and adults with facial deformity. Whereas most of the Hausa group believed that "an act of God" determined the development of a physical deformity, most Yoruba attributed an "evil spirit" or "ancestors seeking revenge" as perpetrators of the deformities. Within various social environments of the Nigerian population, orofacial clefts were attributed to an "act of God", "evil spirits", or "wicked people". Spiritual elements are reported in this study to be factors, alongside physical development, in the essence of their evolving humanity. In a separate study by Oginni (2016), most of the study group (46%) did not admit to knowing the cause of the deformities, whereas 19% believed the deformities were an "act of God" and 13% attributed the cleft defects to the work of "evil spirits".

In a study reported by Tobiasen (1987), facial deformity is a social cue with consistently negative evaluative connotations. Children and adolescents, males and females aged 8 through 16 years, rated individuals with facial deformities as less popular, less friendly, less smart, and less likely to be chosen as a friend. Increased age did not significantly influence the negative evaluative connotations of facial deformity. Although psychosocial assimilation of these children can be achieved to an acceptable degree within their social environments (Bettens et al., 2025), multiple variables affect the outcomes of surgical intervention with respect to function and social integration (Wydick et al., 2022). Regardless of hidden existential threats to the recovery of mind, body, and soul, there are intrinsic biological defense systems that protect or redirect Waaseyaa's evolutionary pathways.

The scientific method, as taught by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.), employs logic and reason to analyze metaphysical elements that can lead to identifying

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processes beyond the molecular level that can be manipulated and integrated to weld the soul and body into a meaningful, functional unit. These elements must be identified, tested, and applied using the Socratic method of critical thinking and the analysis of tested hypotheses. Human manipulation of the evolutionary process can be redirected, and the tablet of Waaseyaa's humanity redefined. The newborn infant with a complete facial cleft deformity, initially rejected from the breast of the mother because of an anatomic inability to suckle, is reunited through regenerative surgery. The harsh integration of the child into society is softened. The evolutionary process of humanism, at both the individual and global levels, continues along an altered pathway. For Waaseyaa, multiple channels of physical, biological, and psychological evolution are sure to have dominated the existing laws of nature, with divine guidance through time and space.

The Evolutionary Layers of Humanism

Prehistoric inorganic elements calibrate the progression of time and space with biological evolutionary processes that, at first, seem mutually exclusive. However, these singular atomic components of a state evolve into molecules, ultimately forming single-celled to multicelled states and submicroscopic organisms. Throughout millennia, human forms have developed, and Homo sapiens, capable of reflective thought and consciousness, individually and within social environments, have been seen to demonstrate moral, spiritual, and ethical characteristics. Homo sapiens evolves within social networks. Reproduction occurs to stabilize the species (De Chardin, 1959) (104–118). The process of reproduction is a means of survival, self-defense, scientific progress, and societal conquest. The physical and spiritual elements of the mind converge into a single entity, forming a global, diverse social structure that demonstrates dynamic consciousness and an ethical and moral code. This process of complexification is enduring. Elements engaged in this convergent process of body, mind, and soul can be positive or negative forces.

Homo sapiens are capable of seeking human significance. De Chardin (1959) describes the cosmic embryogenesis as stages extending from the inorganic chemical barysphere, the rocky lithosphere, the fluid layers of the hydrosphere, and the organic fauna and flora of the biosphere (De Chardin, 1959). However, he continues to describe another layer encompassing the conscious psychological evolution of the mind as a rapidly evolving "thinking layer" lying above the biosphere. This cosmic layer is involved in the germination of thought titled "the noosphere" and was first described by Doherty (1864) in his book *Organic Philosophy or Man's True Place in Nature: Epicosmology*. "Noogenesis is a set of structural and functional rearrangements of elements that are regular and interrelated, follow a definite temporal order and affect the total hierarchy, and the total set of relatively elementary structures and processes, which interact with each other". De Chardin (1959) continues, (180-184), "It is in this realm of embryogenesis that the two elements of body and soul conjoin". According to De Chardin (1959), the term noogenesis refers to human consciousness and thought on a universal level.

The elements of human evolution introduce ethics and morality, placing humanism above animal consciousness. This process of human awareness and biological convergence occurs at individual and global levels, is increasingly complex, and rests on rational, scientific thought. This physical level of human evolution is tested under scientific scrutiny and is generally a subjective component of spiritual humanity. However, included in this evolutionary process of humanism is the existential philosophy that existence precedes essence, and that the elements of cultural identity and individual diversity have been embedded from the very beginning of cosmic embryogenesis. Given that the philosophical basis of consciousness, ethics, and morality is the distinguishing feature of Homo sapiens, embryogenic processes and the advent of artificial intelligence challenge the direction of evolutionary humanism. Included in the process of altering the pathways for human survival are the branches of science that deal with regenerative medicine, artificial intelligence (AI), and the intellectual "thinking layer" (noosphere) that envelops the biosphere.

The individual cannot survive alone in a state of diffusion. Intellectual humanism must evolve into a global state of awareness to enhance the brain's biological characteristics (Harari, 2017). This process involves the application of various biophysical parameters, such as the energetics of intelligence and the volumes of experiential and enlightened information, to accelerate quantitative data and to transmit conscious

distance of specific neuronal components working in parallel within a coherent global society. In the not-too-distant future, the human brain will have evolved trillions of pathways and biological data-collection systems for communication to resolve sources and patterns of disease that could lead to functional disability or the dissolution of humanity.

The origin of thought and invention may be the interaction of forces that resonate within specialized tissue encased in biological or otherwise formed entities, and exposed to temporal fasciculations transmitted throughout infinite constellations. Biological mechanisms within the medical sciences, in an unconnected world of consciousness, can be identified and challenged for meaningful application. Evidence from Liu et al. (1997) indicates that the mother's systemic defense mechanisms can be mobilized and delivered to the fetus via the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis in response to existential threats to the fetus.

The existential synthesis that holds that existence precedes essence in humanism, however, is contradicted by Nijhout's (1990) findings. The concept of 'Nature' as the genetic blueprint of both human physiology and behavior coexists with the 'Nurturing' maternal influences on fetal development and preservation (Lipton, 1998). Therefore, "Nature and Nurture' coexist throughout fetal development but are subject to recalibration based on external influences.

The concept of 'Nature vs. Nurture' is further exemplified by cell culture studies demonstrating that environmental signals select the combination of genes expressed by a living organ system in response to these signals. According to Nijhout (1990), environmental signals regulate gene expression, enabling organ systems to respond to environmental challenges. Experimental results reported by Cairns et al. (1988) have led to the concept of "adaptive mutations". These environmental influences on organisms in culture can rewrite gene programs through a process structured similarly, eventually mirroring AI and leading to human self-preservation, perhaps in constellations that exist beyond Mother Earth. Coll et al. (2014) emphasize the interaction of genetic programming and the influence of the environment (Coll et al., 2014). The molecular signaling pathways from the mother can result in genetic reprogramming within the fetus in response to stress. These maternal biological defense systems are structured to nurture fetal growth and development.

The hidden laws and reality of Waaseyaa's existence extend beyond the visible and face existential threats. In his book "*Homo Deus, A Brief History of Tomorrow*" (Harari, 2017), Yuval Noah Harari describes relevant concepts related to the progression of Humanism: First, 'Liberal Humanism' considers the human condition on an individual level. In this humanistic format, the individual's status in society is the driving force for development, not only for Waaseyaa as an individual but also for the evolution of cultural mores. Liberal Humanism teaches that the individual has the responsibility for self-determination. 'Evolutionary Humanism' in the past has presented a more aggressive assertion that the solutions to conflicting human experiences are based on survival of the fittest as the resolution to conflicting opinions and biological systems. These findings provide scientific support for nurture as a primary force in the evolution of humanism. A third pathway to humanistic evolution is found in the concept of 'Religious Humanism'. Harari (2017) describes the most important concept of Humanism, based on Religion as the principal savior of humanity. However, within this third category, he shifts the principal responsibility of survival and enlightenment of Homo sapiens from divine entities to the individual human being.

Existentialism and Humanistic Evolution

The scientific method can be applied to explore the universe and to investigate hypothetical physical pathways that may exist beyond its known bounds. However, the concept of religious Faith limits thought to a divine process. Which side of the equation, designed to provide the elements of humanity, dominates the process of creation, resulting in deformity, disease, or imperfection of mental, spiritual, and physical humanity? Is existentialism truly a form of humanism, as Jean-Paul Sartre asserts (Sartre, 2007)? The concept of existentialism holds that existence precedes essence. Beyond the existence of Homo sapiens, an evolutionary process encompasses free will and ultimately defines each individual's essence. In this scenario, the existence of the human precedes the ultimate essence of nature or the expression of that individual. Further, with this understanding of existentialism, Waaseyaa exists in a deformed state of physical and mental uncertainty. However, the essence of her existence is still to be

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manifested according to her free will and in line with societal values. There is a certain subjectivity to Waaseyaa's ultimate essence, since her conscious projection into the future will now define her existence. She not only conceives herself to be, based on her existence, but also that which she wills herself to be along the subjective pathway of her existence. Waaseyaa is now solely responsible for the conscious decisions that will define her essence.

The existential philosopher Nietzsche pronounced "God is dead," and the concept of human morality attributed to a god inhibits any potential for redemption or synthesis of body, mind, and soul (Nietzsche, 2020). However, Nietzsche did not say, "God does not exist." The negativity inherent in the philosophy expressed by Nietzsche in his book "Beyond Good and Evil" (2020) is his profound disappointment expressed by the individual who relies on a deity to resolve problems of war, famine, plague, disease, pain, and suffering, but retreats and disparages the human ability to engage difficult issues. In fact, to retreat into a less-than-human state of mind without effort to engage in a scientific assault to contribute to a meaningful battle with science and philosophy. Self-determination is the search for knowledge and is the principal responsibility of humanity. Waaseyaa is equally responsible for the evolution of her culture and social evolution.

The Human Neocortex As a Preface To Artificial Intelligence

Isolation from the culture and mores of society is a reality Waaseyaa faces that will inhibit the intellectual evolution of her humanity. Intellectual systems develop within the brain's neural tissue. It is possible to use principles of biophysics and mathematical analysis to determine various physical properties of nerve impulse transmission, such as speed, velocity, number of component neurons, and number of synapses (Eryomin, 2022), *"Biophysics of Evolution of Intellectual Systems"*, (320 – 326). Eryomin estimates that a single human brain contains approximately 86 billion neurons. Given a population estimate of fourteen billion people inhabiting the global population in the twenty-second century, based on mathematical models, the importance of the synthesis of the biological neocortex, specifically elements of conscious neural pathways, with machine-based elements is critical for the ontogenesis, on both a biological, material science, and computer science basis for Artificial Intelligence. Further, issues of consciousness, ethics, and morality are necessary elements of evolutionary humanism. What will be the coordinate interactions of human neural pathways with non-human or otherwise biologically and mathematically manipulated AI?

An alternate and future pathway for the evolution of humanism can be applied to the development of Artificial Intelligence—the scientist Herbert A. Simon (1916-2001) initially developed a computer program he described as EPAM (elementary perceiver and memorizer) (Kurzweil, 2013, 38). Simon's computer program was essentially a machine-language iteration that ultimately generated the concept of AI and could perform functions at the level of 300 million pattern recognizers related to the human neocortex. The neocortex is the brain's functional component that enables logical thinking and exhibits profound structural uniformity, with a columnar organization. Kurzweil (2013) contends that each cortical column forms the basic unit of a pattern reorganizer that enables signal and pattern development over a lifetime and does not depend on a genetic code; rather, it reflects patterns observed over many years. He estimates that the human neocortex has a total capacity of hundreds of millions of neuronal columns that support functional activity, memory, and learning over an average lifetime. Although evolution lacks directionality and the stochastic nature of evolutionary change does not necessarily amplify intelligence within societies, at least one direction of humanistic evolution is toward greater intelligence (Ibid, 2012, 77-78). The biological evolution of the neocortex also enables acute, rapid learning, allowing individuals to learn and copy within a hierarchical system. Neurons have been shown to induce enduring cellular plasticity and stability. According to the Canadian psychologist Hebb (2005), the concept of 'Hebbian learning' holds that a neuron repeatedly excites another neuron, with metabolic changes, including growth, within a neural network-type complex based on Hebb's model of neuronal learning. Hebb's theory contends that the basic unit of learning in the neocortex is the neuron, resulting in an assembly of neurons. The web-like patterns of the neurons are genetically determined (Kurzweil, 2013). The neocortex, according to scientific studies, is the foundation of the evolution of neurobiological humanism.

The Human Tablet of Plato's Forms

Within the nature of humankind, there is an inherent drive to identify and redirect the human being caged in a defined social network. There is a mental force, perhaps spiritual, that demands action to correct a disarticulated evolutionary process and reestablish physical, mental, and spiritual integration. The existential forces that define the essence of human nature are powerful and, according to some philosophers, resonate with inclusion in a divine plan. The spiritual and physical elements within our being not only guide human involvement but demand participation in the search for knowledge and application of these elements to the omega boundaries of infinity.

The human tablet remains unresolved, painted with the interconnections of spiritual and scientific reality. Plato's "Theory of Forms" describes the world in which humans exist as a subjective world of shadows. The world of objective reality that represents perfect forms exists beyond this caged ethereal world of shadows. The objective world of appearances is inhabited with a complex of perfect forms: perfect justice, perfect beauty, perfect goodness, perfect truth. Only by escaping this caged encampment of appearances can the true, perfect forms be realized as representative objects of knowledge. However, according to Aristotle, substance must be present within the concept of perfect forms' objective display. (Cohen & Reeve, 2000) ("Aristotle's Metaphysics").

It would follow, based on observation and application of the Scientific Method, that substance must coexist with form, not only to identify the object of the perfect form but also to illuminate the function attributed to the objective reality of the perfect form and the foundation of truth and knowledge. Waaseyaa presents as a shadow of imperfect form due to an altered structural complex, a deficiency in the substance of the face and the bone to the base of the skull, and, most significantly, a compromised functional system. (Ibid, 2025).

Waaseyaa's major physical deformity was successfully resolved using the biological and physiological knowledge advanced by generations of clinical scientists. These elements of scientific humanism significantly shaped the essence of Waaseyaa's being. However, the mental and spiritual aspects of her being remain to be defined, and it is conceivable that Waaseyaa continues to exist as a shadow unable to escape from Plato's cave into a perfect world of objective reality (Adeyemo et al., 2016).

Recalibration of The Human Defect

The rationale for the existence of good and evil exists within the natural and spiritual laws of science and divinity. The forces that drive the evolutionary interdependence of spiritual and physical realities across time and space will determine the dominance of good and evil and the ultimate existence of humanity beyond distant constellations. The human defect, from the face and bone to the base of the skull, has been recalibrated for Waaseyaa, and the existential essence of her being evolves (Sartre, 2007). But what supernatural entity intervened for this transubstantiation to conjoin with body and soul? Was divinity involved in the deliberate application of known physical science and regenerative medicine to guide the hand of the surgeon by the intervention of a supernatural being? A simplistic response cannot be directed solely at a divine source. However, surgical success cannot be measured by medical outcomes alone.

Perhaps it is reasonable to suggest that Pope (1900) would have been moderately dismayed at the possible "conjunction of science and religion" as noted by Teilhard de Chardin ("The Phenomenon of Man" pp 283). Alexander Pope wrote in his Essay on Man, "Epistle II. Of the Nature and State of Man With Respect to Himself, as an Individual." Know then thyself, presume not God to scan; The proper study of humanity is Man. Placed on this isthmus of a middle state, A being darkly wise, and rudely great: With too much knowledge for the skeptic side, With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride, He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest, In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast; In doubt his mind or body to prefer, Born but to die, and reasoning but to err; Alike in ignorance, his reason such, Whether he thinks too little, or too much: Chaos of thought and passion, all confused; Still by himself abused, or disabused; Created half to rise, and half to fall; Great lord of all things yet prey to all: Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled: The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!"

Pope recognized the complexity of God's creation and the duality of humanity's existence. However, freedom of choice defines the potential evolutionary pathways available to this being "darkly wise, and rudely great" and is for the human being to discover and apply. Pope assumes that God exists, but it is the responsibility of

man to undertake the rational, moral, and purposeful understanding of this creation. What degree of knowledge could account for and resolve the physical and mental deficiencies of this being; "With too much knowledge for the skeptic side, With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride." Pope was an ethical and philosophical poet. He espoused that there was an inner force within the human being to identify and redirect humanity within a defined social environment to correct a misdirected ethical, mental, and spiritual pathway to damnation; "Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled".

Conclusion

The central question of this essay concerns the identification and application of elements for the humanistic evolution of individuals with craniofacial deformity. The dualistic nature of science and philosophy is shown to dominate the key pathways for integrating body, mind, and soul. The process involved the deliberate application of discovered physical elements from past scientific exploration and methodologies, as well as concepts embedded within the laws of nature. The physical and mental elements have been recalibrated for Waaseyaa's deformed facial structure. However, the essence of Waaseyaa's being is now determined by decisions made based on 'free will'.

The structural and biologic process for this reconstruction occurred as an event in time and space based on a search and revelation of the laws of physical science and with spiritual enlightenment. as initiated by Aristotle, 3rd - 4th BC., in his treatise "The Prior and Posterior Analytics", and the spiritual reliance on the integration of divine and scientific reality as taught by Aquinas (1912) in his "Summa Theologica", integrate the breath of life. However, the physical and spiritual resolution for Waaseyaa will extend metaphorically beyond the surgeon's hands, beyond philosophers and theologians, beyond generations, beyond constellations, and perhaps to the boundaries of infinity as determined by a divine entity.

Experiments in cellular biology have come to support philosophical concepts of the evolution of biological systems. The conjunction of clinical science and philosophy is the foundation of humanistic evolution and the essence of humanity. The elements of humanity remain to be exposed. Generations of clinicians, scientists, and philosophers will seek the truth to expose and dismantle existential threats and resolve conditions of disease, war, famine, plague, and disarticulated biological and philosophical systems. This process must be implemented globally. Divine guidance will infuse the integration of body, mind, and soul with the breath of life.

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