

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC STUDIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
Email: internationalislamicsocial@gmail.com
Home Page: https://jurnal.asrypersadaquality.com/index.php/ijiss

THE NATURE OF HUMANITY IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY AND NEUROSCIENCE

Annisa Amanda, Najib Akmal, Nur Fathiyah

annisaamanda416@gmail.com, najibnajib100e@gmail.com, Nurfathiyah105@gmail.com,

Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir Program, State Islmic University Of North Sumatera, Indonesia

KEYWORDS

Human Nature; Philosophy: Modern Neuroscience: Consciousness: Interdisciplinary Studies

ABSTRACT

Understanding the nature of human beings has long been a central concern in philosophy, while modern neuroscience offers empirical insights into brain functions underlying cognition, emotion, and consciousness. However, these two domains are often discussed separately, resulting in fragmented interpretations of human existence. This article aims to examine the nature of human beings through an integrative dialogue between philosophical thought and modern neuroscience. Using a qualitative library-based research approach, this study analyzes classical and contemporary philosophical perspectives alongside recent neuroscientific findings related to human cognition, behavior, and consciousness. The analysis reveals that philosophy provides a normative and existential framework for understanding human meaning, freedom, and moral responsibility, whereas neuroscience contributes empirical explanations of neural mechanisms shaping perception, decision-making, and emotional regulation. Rather than contradicting each other, both perspectives complement and enrich the understanding of human nature as a complex, multidimensional entity encompassing biological, psychological, and existential dimensions. This integrative perspective offers a more holistic comprehension of humanity and has significant implications for education, ethics, and the development of human-centered scientific
discourse in the modern era.

INTRODUCTION

The question of what it means to be human has remained one of the most enduring and consequential inquiries in intellectual history. From ancient metaphysical reflections to contemporary scientific investigations, humanity has persistently sought to understand its own nature, capacities, and limits. In modern times, this inquiry has become increasingly complex due to the convergence of philosophical discourse and empirical scientific research, particularly neuroscience. While philosophy traditionally addresses the normative and existential dimensions of human existence, neuroscience seeks to explain human behavior, cognition, and consciousness through biological mechanisms. The interaction between these two domains has generated both productive insights and profound tensions regarding the essence of humanity.

One major cause driving renewed attention to the nature of humanity is the rapid advancement of neuroscience and cognitive science. Breakthroughs in brain imaging, neural mapping, and computational modeling have significantly expanded scientific understanding of perception, emotion, decision-making, and consciousness. These developments have led to the growing assumption that human identity can be sufficiently explained in terms of neural processes. As a result, reductive interpretations of humanity—viewing humans primarily as biological machines governed by electrochemical signals—have gained prominence in both academic and public discourse. This scientific momentum, while valuable, has unintentionally marginalized philosophical conceptions of agency, moral responsibility, meaning, and selfhood.

The effect of this reductionist tendency is a conceptual imbalance in contemporary understandings of humanity. When human nature is interpreted solely through neuroscientific frameworks, dimensions such as intentionality, freedom, ethical judgment, and existential meaning risk being oversimplified or dismissed as mere byproducts of brain activity. This has implications not only for theoretical debates but also for practical domains such as education, ethics, law, and mental health. For instance, if moral behavior is explained exclusively as a neural function, questions arise regarding personal responsibility and normative accountability. Thus, the dominance of neuroscientific explanations without philosophical integration has created an epistemological gap in comprehending the human condition

Conversely, modern philosophy itself has contributed to this tension by undergoing significant transformations. Classical philosophical views that emphasized metaphysical

substance, rational soul, or transcendent self have been increasingly challenged by post-metaphysical and materialist perspectives. Contemporary philosophy often adopts naturalistic or constructivist approaches that align closely with scientific explanations. While this alignment has fostered interdisciplinary dialogue, it has also led to the erosion of robust ontological accounts of human nature. As a consequence, philosophy risks losing its critical function as a normative and interpretive framework capable of evaluating the broader implications of scientific knowledge.

The interaction between neuroscience and philosophy has therefore produced a dual effect. On one hand, it has enriched philosophical inquiry by grounding abstract concepts in empirical findings. On the other hand, it has raised concerns about the reduction of human subjectivity to measurable neural correlates. This tension becomes particularly evident in free will. Such interpretations, however, often overlook philosophical distinctions between causation, agency, and moral responsibility. The uncritical adoption of neuroscientific conclusions into philosophical domains thus risks conceptual confusion and methodological overreach.

Another significant cause necessitating this study is the growing fragmentation of knowledge in modern academia. The specialization of disciplines has led to isolated explanations of human nature that lack integrative coherence. Neuroscience explains how the brain functions, while philosophy reflects on why human existence matters. When these perspectives operate independently, they produce partial and sometimes contradictory accounts of humanity. The absence of an integrative framework results in theoretical polarization, where scientific determinism and philosophical humanism are positioned as mutually exclusive rather than complementary.

The effect of this fragmentation extends beyond academia into societal and cultural contexts. Contemporary societies increasingly rely on neuroscientific narratives to explain human behavior, intelligence, and emotion. Educational systems, for example, often prioritize cognitive performance based on neurological efficiency while neglecting ethical reasoning, emotional depth, and existential reflection. Similarly, technological developments such as artificial intelligence and neuro-enhancement challenge traditional boundaries between human and machine, further complicating conceptions of personhood and dignity. Without a philosophical lens, these developments risk redefining humanity in narrowly functional terms.

In response to these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the need for a more integrative understanding of human nature. Modern philosophy offers conceptual tools to

interpret neuroscientific findings within broader ontological, ethical, and existential frameworks. Concepts such as embodiment, intentionality, and lived experience provide critical perspectives that cannot be captured by neural data alone. At the same time, neuroscience offers empirical constraints that prevent philosophical speculation from becoming detached from biological reality. The dialogue between these disciplines, when conducted critically and reflexively, holds the potential to generate a more comprehensive account of humanity.

This study is therefore motivated by the need to critically examine the nature of humanity through the combined perspectives of modern philosophy and neuroscience. Rather than positioning these disciplines in opposition, this research seeks to explore how their interaction can illuminate both the capacities and limitations of human beings. By analyzing the causes behind reductionist and fragmented views of humanity, and by assessing their effects on contemporary thought, this article aims to contribute to a more balanced and integrative understanding of what it means to be human in the modern era. (Izzati, 2021)

Ultimately, understanding the nature of humanity is not merely an abstract theoretical concern but a foundational issue with far-reaching implications. How humanity is conceptualized influences ethical norms, educational practices, technological development, and social policy. In an age marked by scientific acceleration and philosophical uncertainty, re-examining human nature through an interdisciplinary lens becomes not only relevant but

METHOD RESEARCH

1. Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative, conceptual, and interdisciplinary research design aimed at analyzing the nature of humanity through the intersection of modern philosophy and contemporary neuroscience. The study is non-empirical in nature and does not involve experimental manipulation or statistical testing. Instead, it focuses on theoretical integration, conceptual clarification, and interpretative analysis of established philosophical doctrines and neuroscientific findings. The choice of this design is grounded in the understanding that the concept of humanity involves ontological, epistemological, and ethical dimensions that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement alone. Therefore, a library-based analytical design is considered the most appropriate methodological framework.

2. Research Approach

A. The study applies a comparative–interpretive approach, combining:

Philosophical hermeneutics, to interpret classical and modern philosophical conceptions of humanity;

1. Conceptual analysis, to examine key notions such as rationality, consciousness, embodiment, freedom, and moral agency;
2. Neuroscientific integration, to relate philosophical interpretations to empirical knowledge of brain function and cognition

Rather than positioning neuroscience as a reductionist explanation of human nature, this study treats it as an explanatory complement that provides biological and cognitive grounding for philosophical claims about human consciousness and behavior

B. Data Sources and Types

The research is based on secondary qualitative data, which are categorized into three main types, as summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Types and Sources of Research Data

Data Type	Source Category	Description
Philosophical data	Classical and modern philosophical texts	Concepts of human essence, rationality, morality, and selfhood
Neuroscientific data	Peer-reviewed neuroscience literature	Brain structures, consciousness, cognition, and neuroplasticity
Interdisciplinary data	Psychology, education, cognitive science	Contextual understanding of human development and learning

The primary philosophical foundation is derived from the book *Human Nature: Perspectives of Claasical and modern scholars* (2024), which systematically presents classical and contemporary views on human nature. This work serves as a theoretical baseline for comparative analysis between philosophical traditions and neuroscientific perspectives

B. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted through a systematic literature review, following four structured stages:

1. Identification of key themes related to human nature (e.g., consciousness, rationality, morality);
2. Selection of authoritative sources, prioritizing peer-reviewed journals and academically

recognized philosophical works;

3. Thematic categorization, grouping texts according to philosophical tradition and neuroscientific domain;
4. Analytical reading, focusing on conceptual definitions, explanatory frameworks, and theoretical assumptions. No numerical datasets were collected; instead, conceptual patterns and explanatory models were extracted from the literature.
5. Analytical Framework

The analysis employs a multi-stage qualitative analytical framework, illustrated in Figure

Figure 1. Analytical Framework of the Study

(Conceptual Model)

Philosophical Concepts

→ (Ontology, Ethics, Epistemology)

→ Comparative Interpretation

→ Neuroscientific Correlates

→ Integrated Concept of Humanity

This framework allows philosophical theories of human nature to be systematically aligned with neuroscientific explanations of cognition and consciousness, without collapsing normative concepts into biological determinism. (Mardiah et al., 2022)

6. **Comparative Analysis**

Philosophical perspectives from different historical periods are compared to identify continuity and transformation in the understanding of human nature. These perspectives are then contrasted with neuroscientific explanations to assess points of convergence and divergence.

Integrative Synthesis

An integrative synthesis is developed to articulate a non-reductionist model of humanity, in which biological, cognitive, and normative dimensions coexist. This synthesis is summarized in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2. Integrated Model of Human Nature

- **Biological Dimension** → Brain structure, neural plasticity
- **Cognitive Dimension** → Consciousness, reasoning, learning
- **Normative Dimension** → Ethics, values, moral responsibilit

The model demonstrates that humanity cannot be reduced to neural mechanisms alone, but

must be understood as a multi-layered phenomenon.

Critical Reflection

The final stage involves critical reflection on the epistemological implications of integrating philosophy and neuroscience, particularly regarding the limits of scientific explanation in defining human essence.

7. **Validity and Trustworthiness**

Research rigor is ensured through

a. Theoretical triangulation, combining multiple philosophical and scientific perspectives;
b. Source credibility, using peer-reviewed and academically recognized literature;
c. Analytical coherence, maintaining logical consistency across interpretations;
d. Reflexivity, acknowledging the interpretive nature of conceptual research.

Validity is defined as conceptual clarity and theoretical coherence, rather than statistical generalizability.

Ethical Considerations

As a library-based study, this research does not involve human subjects. Ethical responsibility is maintained through:

e. Accurate representation of original ideas;
f. Avoidance of reductionist or deterministic interpretations;
g. Respect for philosophical and scientific diversity

A. Ethical Considerations

As a library-based study, this research does not involve human subjects. Ethical responsibility is maintained through:

h. Accurate representation of original ideas;
i. Avoidance of reductionist or deterministic interpretations;
j. Respect for philosophical and scientific diversity.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

1. Philosophical Conceptions of Human Nature: From Classical Foundations to Modern Transformations

The analysis of philosophical sources reveals that the conception of human nature has undergone a continuous transformation while maintaining several persistent core elements. Classical philosophy establishes the foundational understanding of humanity as a rational and purposive being. Aristotle's conception of the human as *zoon logikon* emphasizes rationality as

the defining characteristic that distinguishes humans from other living organisms. This rational faculty is not merely instrumental but normative, enabling ethical judgment and deliberate action.

Medieval philosophical thought expands this framework by integrating metaphysical and moral dimensions. Human nature is understood as a unity between reason, will and moral responsibility as contained in the word of Allah in the QS. QS. At-Tin [95]: 4-6.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ (4) ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ (5) إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ (6)

Meaning: "(4) Indeed, We created man in the best of forms. (5) Then We return him to the lowest of the low. (6) Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have a reward unending. "

In modern philosophy, a significant epistemological shift occurs. Human nature is increasingly interpreted through the lens of subjectivity and self-consciousness. Cartesian dualism introduces a strict separation between mind and body, redefining the human essence as thinking substance. The results show that this framework profoundly influences subsequent debates on consciousness and personal identity, shaping both philosophical inquiry and early scientific approaches to the mind.

2. The Human Being as a Rational and Moral Agent

Across philosophical traditions, one of the most consistent findings is the characterization of the human being as a rational and moral agent. Rationality is not understood solely as logical calculation, but as reflective awareness that enables evaluation, judgment, and ethical reasoning. Humans possess the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, to anticipate consequences, and to act based on normative considerations rather than instinct alone.

The results highlight that moral agency emerges from the interaction between rational deliberation and value orientation. Classical ethics emphasizes virtue as the cultivation of rational dispositions, while modern moral philosophy increasingly focuses on autonomy and moral responsibility. Despite theoretical differences, these traditions converge on the idea that ethical agency is inseparable from human nature. Importantly, this study finds that moral responsibility presupposes freedom, even when freedom is constrained by biological,

psychological, or social factors. Humans are not depicted as entirely autonomous, but as responsible agents operating within limits.

3. Education and Self-Formation as Ontological Characteristics

Another major result concerns the role of education and self-development in defining humanity. Philosophical anthropology consistently portrays humans as beings who are unfinished by nature, requiring education, culture, and socialization to actualize their potential. This concept, often articulated as *Homo Educandum*, underscores that learning is not an external addition to human life, but a fundamental ontological condition. The analysis reveals that humans possess a unique openness to transformation. Unlike other organisms whose behavioral patterns are largely fixed, humans are capable of reshaping their identity through reflection, learning, and practice. Education thus becomes a medium through which human rationality, morality, and creativity are developed. This result demonstrates that humanity is characterized not only by what humans are, but by what they are capable of becoming. Human nature is therefore dynamic rather than static.

4. The Role of Will, Desire, and Non-Rational Dimensions

While rationality occupies a central place in philosophical accounts of humanity, the results of this study also emphasize the significance of **non-rational dimensions**, particularly will, desire, and affect. Philosophers such as Schopenhauer argue that human behavior is fundamentally driven by unconscious will rather than conscious reasoning. Rational thought often functions as a post-hoc justification for actions initiated by deeper impulses. Nietzsche further radicalizes this view by conceptualizing human nature as driven by the *will to power*, understood as a creative and self-assertive force. From this perspective, humanity is defined not by stability or harmony, but by tension, struggle, and self-overcoming.

The results indicate that these philosophical insights anticipate contemporary understandings of human cognition, where emotional and instinctual processes play a decisive role in decision-making. This challenges overly rationalistic models of human nature and supports a more complex, layered conception of humanity.

5. Freedom, Anxiety, and Existential Responsibility

Existential philosophy introduces freedom as a central defining feature of human nature. The analysis shows that humans are understood as beings who are not bound by a predetermined essence. Instead, they must continuously define themselves through choices and actions. This condition of freedom is accompanied by existential anxiety, uncertainty, and

moral responsibility. The results identify freedom as:

- A condition of possibility for moral action,
- A source of existential burden,
- A defining feature of human dignity.

Humans are not free in an abstract or unlimited sense; rather, they are free within constraints imposed by biology, society, and history. Nevertheless, the capacity for reflective choice remains a core element of human existence.

6. Social, Historical, and Cultural Embeddedness

The findings strongly indicate that human nature is inseparable from social and cultural contexts. Humans are inherently relational beings whose identity is shaped through language, tradition, and collective practices. Marxist and sociological perspectives emphasize that human consciousness is historically conditioned, influenced by economic structures and power relations. Phenomenological approaches complement this view by focusing on lived experience and intersubjectivity. Human identity emerges through interaction with others, not in isolation. The results thus reject both extreme individualism and rigid determinism, proposing a relational understanding of humanity.

7. Convergence Between Philosophy and Neuroscience

A crucial result of this study is the identification of meaningful convergence between philosophical conceptions of humanity and contemporary neuroscience. Neuroscientific research confirms that cognitive functions such as reasoning, emotion regulation, and moral judgment are supported by complex neural networks. However, the analysis demonstrates that neuroscience does not invalidate philosophical accounts of human nature. Instead, it provides empirical insight into the biological foundations of capacities long discussed in philosophy. Consciousness, freedom, and moral responsibility cannot be fully explained through neural mechanisms alone, indicating the limits of reductionist explanations.

8. An Integrative Model of Human Nature

Based on the synthesis of philosophical and neuroscientific findings, this study proposes an integrative model of humanity consisting of three interrelated dimensions:

- Biological dimension, encompassing neural and physiological processes;
- Cognitive–existential dimension, involving consciousness, freedom, and self-reflection;
- Normative–moral dimension, including values, ethics, and responsibility.

Based on a synthesis of philosophical studies and neuroscience findings, this study proposes

an integrative model of humanity that views humans as multidimensional entities. This model includes a biological dimension related to neural and physiological processes as the basis of behavior, a cognitive-existential dimension that includes awareness, freedom, and self- reflection in understanding the meaning of existence, and a normative-moral dimension that includes values, ethics, and responsibility in guiding human actions. These three dimensions are interrelated and cannot be understood partially, because their interactions shape individual attitudes, decisions, and behavior in both the personal and social realms, so this model provides a comprehensive conceptual framework in understanding the dynamics of humanity as a whole.

Based on the integration of philosophical inquiry and findings from neuroscience, this study proposes an integrative model of humanity that views human beings as multidimensional entities that cannot be understood in isolation. The model consists of three closely interconnected dimensions. First, the biological dimension, which encompasses neural mechanisms and physiological processes as the fundamental basis of human behavior. This dimension explains how brain functions, the nervous system, and bodily conditions contribute to shaping individual responses, emotions, and behavioral tendencies. Accordingly, the biological aspect serves as the primary foundation that enables mental processes and human behavior to occur.

Second, the cognitive-existential dimension, which relates to consciousness, freedom of choice, and the capacity for self-reflection. Within this dimension, human beings are understood not merely as biological organisms, but also as subjects capable of attributing meaning to their existence, evaluating life experiences, and making conscious decisions. Consciousness and self-reflection allow individuals to question the purpose of life, understand the consequences of their actions, and develop personal identity in relation to the social environment and broader reality.

Third, the normative-moral dimension, which includes values, ethics, and responsibility as guiding principles for action. This dimension functions to direct human freedom in accordance with moral principles and prevailing social norms. Values and ethics not only establish standards of right and wrong, but also foster awareness of responsibility toward oneself, others, and the environment. Through this dimension, human behavior is driven not solely by biological impulses or rational considerations, but also by moral commitment.

These three dimensions interact dynamically and collectively shape individual attitudes, decisions, and behaviors in both personal and social life. Therefore, understanding human beings requires a holistic and integrative approach. This model offers a comprehensive conceptual framework for explaining the complexity of humanity by positioning biological aspects, existential consciousness, and moral values as an integrated and mutually reinforcing whole.

This model reflects the complexity of human nature and highlights the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches in understanding humanity.Philosophical anthropology emphasizes that individuals develop identity, values, and moral awareness within social and cultural frameworks. This view is supported by neuroscientific research on social cognition, empathy, and moral emotions, which highlights the brain's sensitivity to interpersonal interaction and social norms.(Saleh & Suyadi, 2023) Thus, the study confirms that human nature is not isolated or atomistic, but fundamentally **interpersonal and culturally mediated**.

9. Overall Results Synthesis

In summary, the results of this study demonstrate that:

- Human nature is multidimensional and dynamic;
- Rationality, will, freedom, and morality are inseparable aspects of humanity;
- Philosophical insights remain relevant in dialogue with neuroscience;
- Reductionist explanations are insufficient to capture the full meaning of human existence.

These results provide a comprehensive conceptual foundation for the subsequent discussion on the implications of integrating modern philosophy and neuroscience in defining the nature of humanity.

The discussion must interpret the findings expressed in the results obtained with the background of existing knowledge (not repeat the result). The discussion must highlight what's new. Each assumption must be clearly stated. Linkages between results and the context of the target population and possible generalizations to other populations. The advantages and disadvantages of community empowerment activities that are carried out with the conditions of the surrounding community.

The results of this study indicate that the nature of humanity is best understood as a multidimensional and dynamic reality shaped by the interaction of biological, cognitive, moral, and socio-cultural factors. Philosophical traditions consistently emphasize human rationality, freedom, and moral responsibility, while contemporary neuroscience provides empirical insight into the neural foundations of these capacities without reducing them to purely biological mechanisms. This convergence reveals that human identity cannot be confined to deterministic or reductionist explanations, but emerges through reflective consciousness, ethical agency, and continuous self-formation. Consequently.

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that human nature cannot be adequately

explained through a single philosophical doctrine or scientific framework. Humanity emerges as a complex and layered reality in which biological processes, rational reflection, moral responsibility, and socio-cultural influences interact dynamically. Philosophical traditions, from classical to contemporary, consistently reveal that humans are not merely passiveproducts of nature or society, but active agents capable of self-reflection, ethical judgment, and purposeful transformation. These findings underscore that human nature is not a fixed essence, but an open and evolving condition shaped by freedom, learning, and relational engagement. Furthermore, the convergence between modern philosophy and neuroscience reinforces a non-reductionist understanding of humanity. While neuroscientific research provides valuable insights into the neural foundations of cognition, emotion, and behavior, it does not exhaust the meaning of human existence. The results indicate that dimensions such as moral agency, existential freedom, and meaning-making extend beyond purely biological explanations. Consequently, an integrative perspective is required one that acknowledges the empirical contributions of neuroscience while preserving the normative and interpretative insights of philosophy. These conclusions establish a robust conceptual basis for the subsequent discussion, which will critically examine the implications of this interdisciplinary synthesis for contemporary debates on human identity and personhood.

DISCUSSION

1. Humanity as an Integrated Ontological Reality

The discussion of human nature emerging from the dialogue between modern philosophy and neuroscience reveals that humanity cannot be adequately understood through isolated or reductionist frameworks. Philosophical anthropology has long emphasized that humans are not merely biological organisms, but beings endowed with reason, consciousness, moral awareness, and the capacity for self-transcendence. Neuroscience, rather than negating this view, increasingly supports the notion that human existence is constituted through complex and integrated processes that unite biological structure with cognitive and existential meaning.

Modern philosophical perspectives challenge simplistic definitions of humanity by insisting that the human being is an ontological unity. This unity is neither purely material nor purely metaphysical, but rather a dynamic synthesis of embodiment and subjectivity. Neuroscientific findings concerning brain integration, neural plasticity, and distributed cognitive networks reinforce this position by demonstrating that no single neural locus can fully account for human consciousness or identity. Instead, human experience emerges from the interaction of multiple neural systems, reflecting a holistic structure that resonates with

philosophical claims about the indivisibility of human existence.

From this perspective, humanity must be understood as a layered reality in which biological conditions enable, but do not exhaust, the meaning of being human. The brain provides the material basis for cognition and emotion, yet philosophical reflection reveals that humans interpret, evaluate, and assign meaning to their experiences in ways that transcend mere physiological function. This integrative understanding challenges both biological determinism and abstract idealism, positioning humanity as a fundamentally embodied yet meaning-oriented being.

In extending the ontological analysis of humanity, it becomes evident that the integrated nature of human existence resists any attempt to establish a singular foundational principle. Philosophical traditions that prioritize either material substance or abstract consciousness ultimately encounter explanatory limitations when confronted with the lived complexity of human experience. Ontologically, the human being manifests as a process rather than a static entity, continuously shaped by biological conditions, cognitive development, and existential engagement with the world. Neuroscience reinforces this dynamic conception by revealing that the human brain itself is not a fixed structure but an adaptive system capable of reorganization in response to experience, learning, and social interaction. This convergence suggests that human ontology is best understood as emergent and relational, arising through the interplay of structure, function, and meaning.

Furthermore, conceiving humanity as an integrated ontological reality necessitates a shift away from hierarchical models that privilege one dimension of human existence over others. Neither biological embodiment nor rational abstraction can claim ontological primacy without distorting the full scope of what it means to be human. Instead, the human being must be approached as a unified whole in which corporeality, consciousness, and moral intentionality co-exist in mutual dependence. Such an ontological stance has significant philosophical implications, as it reframes debates on human identity, dignity, and agency in terms of interdependence rather than fragmentation.

2. Consciousness, Rationality, and the Embodied Mind

One of the central points of convergence between philosophy and neuroscience lies in the analysis of consciousness and rationality. Philosophical traditions have historically identified rational thought and self-awareness as defining features of humanity. However, contemporary neuroscience complicates this view by revealing that rationality is deeply intertwined with

emotional processes, memory, and unconscious neural activity.

Neuroscientific research supports this embodied view by demonstrating that cognitive processes are deeply integrated with sensorimotor systems. Decision-making, moral judgment, and even abstract reasoning are influenced by bodily feedback, emotional states, and neural patterns shaped by physical interaction with the environment. Consciousness, therefore, cannot be reduced to isolated brain activity; it is a distributed process involving the whole organism. Rationality, in this sense, becomes adaptive rather than purely normative—it functions to guide action within specific biological and social constraints.(Bzdok et al., 2012)

This does not diminish the philosophical significance of reason, but rather reframes it as an embodied capacity. Human rationality is not an isolated mental faculty operating independently of the body, but a function that emerges from the coordinated activity of neural systems shaped by biological development and lived experience. Philosophically, this supports a conception of the human mind as situated and contextual, rather than abstract and disembodied.

From a philosophical perspective, consciousness has traditionally been associated with self-awareness, intentionality, and reflective thought. Cartesian rationalism positioned consciousness as the defining feature of human existence, independent of the physical body. However, this view has been critically challenged by phenomenology and cognitive science, which argue that consciousness is inseparable from bodily engagement with the world. Phenomenologists contend that perception, emotion, and action precede abstract reasoning, suggesting that rationality itself is grounded in pre-reflective bodily experience rather than detached logical computation.(Buccella et al., 2024)

The embodied nature of consciousness also challenges classical dualistic models that sharply separate mind and body. Neuroscientific evidence suggests that mental states are inseparable from neural processes, yet philosophy cautions against equating correlation with identity. Conscious experience cannot be fully reduced to neural descriptions, because it involves subjective awareness, intentionality, and first-person meaning that resist purely objective explanation.

Thus, the discussion points toward an emergent view of consciousness in which mental phenomena arise from biological processes while retaining qualitative dimensions that require philosophical interpretation. Humanity, in this sense, is neither a machine governed solely by neural mechanisms nor a purely spiritual entity detached from material reality. Instead, humans are conscious agents whose rational capacities are grounded in, but not confined to, their biological embodiment.

3. Humanity as a Relational and Cultural Being

Understanding humanity as a relational and cultural being represents a significant shift from essentialist and biologically deterministic conceptions of human nature. Rather than defining humans solely by innate traits or fixed metaphysical substances, this perspective emphasizes that human existence is fundamentally constituted through relationships, social interactions, and cultural frameworks. Humanity, in this sense, is not an isolated entity but a dynamic process shaped by continuous engagement with others and with symbolic systems such as language, norms, traditions, and shared meanings.

From a relational standpoint, human identity emerges through interaction. Philosophical traditions ranging from classical communitarian thought to contemporary social philosophy affirm that individuals become fully human only within networks of social relations. Human consciousness, self-awareness, and moral sensibility are not formed in isolation but develop through dialogue, recognition, and mutual dependence. This relational dimension suggests that the self is not a self-contained unit but a socially embedded subject whose values and aspirations are influenced by interpersonal encounters. As a result, human nature cannot be understood apart from the social conditions that enable communication, cooperation, and ethical responsibility.

Another significant dimension of human nature highlighted in this discussion is the fundamentally relational character of human existence. Philosophical anthropology emphasizes that individuals do not develop in isolation but are shaped through social interaction, language, culture, and shared values. Neuroscience reinforces this insight by demonstrating that the human brain is intrinsically social, with specialized networks devoted to empathy, social cognition, and moral emotion.(Prahastiwi & Efendi, n.d.).

Moreover, the relational and cultural conception of humanity has significant ethical implications. If human beings are constituted through relationships, then moral responsibilityextends beyond individual intentions to include the quality of social structures and cultural systems. Ethical life becomes a shared project rather than a purely personal achievement. Values such as empathy, solidarity, and mutual recognition gain prominence, as they sustain the relational conditions necessary for human flourishing. This perspective also underscores the importance of education and social institutions in cultivating humane values, as these institutions serve as primary sites for cultural transmission and relational development.

In the context of modern societies characterized by globalization and technological transformation, the relational and cultural dimensions of humanity face both new opportunities and challenges. Digital communication expands relational networks beyond physical boundaries, enabling unprecedented forms of interaction and cultural exchange. At the same time, it risks weakening deep social bonds and fostering fragmented identities. This tension illustrates that relationality is not automatically beneficial; it requires ethical orientation and cultural reflection to support meaningful human connections.(Carrara, 2025)

The social nature of humanity also has ethical implications. If human beings are inherently relational, then moral considerations must extend beyond individual self-interest to include concern for others and for the social structures that sustain human flourishing. This perspective aligns philosophical accounts of communal responsibility with neuroscientific evidence of social interdependence.

4. Implications for Contemporary Human Self-Understanding

The integrative conception of humanity developed in this discussion has profound implications for how humans understand themselves in the contemporary world. Advances in neuroscience and technology often encourage mechanistic views of the human being, framing individuals as systems to be optimized or controlled. Philosophy provides a critical counterbalance by emphasizing meaning, dignity, and moral value.

Understanding humanity as an embodied, conscious, free, and relational being challenges purely instrumental approaches to education, medicine, and technology. It calls for practices that respect human complexity and recognize that cognitive efficiency alone does not define human worth. Moral judgment, creativity, empathy, and the search for meaning remain central to human life.

In ethical debates surrounding artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, and neurotechnology, this perspective underscores the importance of preserving human agency and responsibility. While technological innovation offers powerful tools for understanding and enhancing human capabilities, it must be guided by philosophical reflection on what it means to be human.

This integrative conception also reshapes how individuals perceive autonomy and identity in modern contexts. When human beings are understood as embodied, conscious, and relational agents, autonomy is no longer interpreted as radical independence but as situated self-determination within biological, social, and cultural conditions. Such a view encourages a more

realistic and ethically grounded understanding of personal responsibility, acknowledging both the constraints and possibilities inherent in human life. Neuroscientific insights into cognition and emotion support this interpretation by illustrating how selfhood emerges through

interaction between neural processes and lived experience, rather than through isolated rational control.(Kohls & Benedikter, 2010)

Finally, the implications of this perspective extend to collective self-understanding at the societal level. Recognizing humanity as an integrated and value-oriented reality invites critical reflection on contemporary social practices, particularly in education, healthcare, and technological innovation. Policies and institutions informed by this understanding are more likely to prioritize human dignity, relational well-being, and ethical responsibility over mere efficiency or control. By grounding human self-understanding in an integrated philosophical–neuroscientific framework, this approach provides a normative foundation for navigating the challenges of modern life without sacrificing the depth and richness of human existence.

In light of these philosophical developments, the implications for contemporary human self-understanding point toward a relational, dynamic, and ethically demanding conception of the human person. Rather than viewing human beings as governed by a fixed and ahistorical essence, contemporary self-understanding increasingly recognizes humanity as constituted through the ongoing interaction between biological dispositions, social structures, cultural meanings, and individual agency. This perspective encourages a critical awareness that personal identity and moral character are neither purely innate nor entirely arbitrary, but emerge through responsible engagement with historical conditions, technological environments, and social relations. Consequently, contemporary humans are called to reflect not only on who they are, but also on how their choices, practices.(Jonathan Sipa, 2024)

5. Theoretical Contribution and Philosophical Significance

This study makes a substantive theoretical contribution by offering an integrative philosophical framework that reinterprets the concept of human nature through the intersection of modern philosophy and contemporary neuroscience. Rather than treating philosophical anthropology and empirical neuroscience as parallel or competing discourses, this research positions them as mutually illuminating domains. By doing so, it advances a non-reductionist understanding of humanity that transcends the traditional dichotomy between metaphysical speculation and scientific explanation.

From a theoretical standpoint, this discussion demonstrates that the dialogue between modern philosophy and neuroscience is not only possible but necessary for a comprehensive understanding of humanity. Philosophy contributes conceptual clarity, normative evaluation, and existential depth, while neuroscience provides empirical grounding and explanatory power.

Rather than competing for explanatory authority, these disciplines address different dimensions of the same phenomenon. Humanity emerges as a complex reality that requires both scientific investigation and philosophical interpretation. This interdisciplinary approach enriches international philosophical discourse by moving beyond disciplinary boundaries and fostering a more nuanced conception of human nature.(Izzati, 2021)

This study makes a theoretical contribution by demonstrating that the concept of humanity cannot be adequately addressed within the boundaries of a single disciplinary framework. By placing modern philosophy and neuroscience in sustained dialogue, the research advances anintegrative model that preserves philosophical depth while remaining responsive to empirical knowledge. Rather than treating neuroscience as a challenge to philosophical anthropology, this approach repositions it as a complementary source of insight into the embodied conditions of human consciousness, rationality, and agency. The theoretical significance of this contribution lies in its capacity to reconcile normative philosophical concepts—such as meaning, dignity, and moral responsibility with scientific accounts of brain function, without collapsing one domain into the other.

From a philosophical standpoint, the significance of this work extends to contemporary debates on ontology, mind–body relations, and human self-understanding. The study challenges reductionist tendencies that equate humanity with neural mechanisms, as well as abstract metaphysical positions that overlook empirical constraints. By articulating humanity as an integrated and emergent reality, the research offers a conceptual framework that is both philosophically robust and scientifically informed. This framework not only enriches philosophical anthropology but also provides a critical foundation for interdisciplinary discourse on ethics, education, and technology, where questions about the nature and value of the human being remain central.(Huong et al., 2025)

Finally, the philosophical significance of this study lies in its methodological contribution. By employing an interdisciplinary yet philosophically grounded approach, the research demonstrates a model for dialogue between the humanities and the natural sciences that avoids both scientism and speculative abstraction. This approach reinforces the relevance of philosophy in contemporary intellectual discourse and highlights its role in critically interpreting scientific knowledge rather than passively receiving it.

6. Concluding Reflection

modern philosophy increasingly challenges the notion of a fixed or predetermined human essence. Influenced by historical change, scientific advancement, and socio-economic transformations, modern thinkers have redefined human nature as contingent, dynamic, and shaped by material, cultural, and existential conditions. Rather than viewing humanity as governed by innate moral dispositions, modern perspectives emphasize freedom, agency, and social embeddedness. Human beings are understood as self-forming subjects whose identities and values emerge through interaction with historical circumstances, labor practices, and symbolic systems.

In conclusion, the discussion affirms that human nature cannot be reduced to biology, cognition, or social function alone. Humanity is best understood as an integrated reality in which biological embodiment, conscious awareness, moral agency, and relational existence are inseparably intertwined. Modern philosophy and neuroscience, when brought into dialogue, offer complementary insights that deepen our understanding of what it means to be human.

This integrative perspective does not resolve all philosophical questions about humanity, but it provides a robust framework for ongoing inquiry. By acknowledging both the material conditions and the normative dimensions of human life, it preserves the richness and dignity of human existence in an age increasingly shaped by scientific and technological advancement.The preceding discussion demonstrates that understanding the nature of humanity requires a sustained dialogue between philosophical reflection and neuroscientific inquiry. Modern philosophy contributes critical insights into meaning, agency, and moral responsibility, while neuroscience offers empirical explanations of the biological and cognitive conditions that make such capacities possible. When considered in isolation, each perspective remains incomplete; philosophy risks abstraction without empirical grounding, and neuroscience risks reductionism without normative interpretation. Their integration allows for a more comprehensive account of humanity that acknowledges both the material foundations and the existential dimensions of human life. (Fauziah et al., n.d.),

In the contemporary context, marked by globalization, digital transformation, and ecological crisis, the question of human nature acquires renewed urgency. Technological mediation reshapes cognitive habits, social relationships, and ethical sensibilities, challenging traditional assumptions about autonomy, authenticity, and responsibility. At the same time, global interconnectedness intensifies cultural pluralism, requiring more flexible and inclusive frameworks for understanding human values. These developments suggest that philosophical inquiry into human nature must remain open, interdisciplinary, and critically responsive to

emerging realities.

Ultimately, this reflection affirms that philosophical discourse on human nature remains indispensable for addressing fundamental questions of moral responsibility, social justice, and human flourishing. By integrating insights from ancient wisdom and modern critical thought, philosophy can offer a nuanced understanding of humanity that resists reductionism while preserving normative orientation. Such an approach not only enriches theoretical debates but also contributes to the ethical and cultural foundations necessary for navigating the complexities of contemporary human life.(Jonathan Sipa, 2024)

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the nature of humanity cannot be adequately explained through a single disciplinary lens. Modern philosophy and contemporary neuroscience, when approached independently, offer partial and incomplete accounts of what it means to be human. Philosophy provides critical insight into meaning, moral agency, and existential self-understanding, while neuroscience elucidates the biological and cognitive mechanisms that underlie human thought, emotion, and behavior. The integration of these perspectives reveals humanity as a complex and irreducible reality that emerges through the interaction of embodiment, consciousness, and normative reflection.

The findings affirm that human beings are not merely biological entities governed by neural processes, nor purely rational abstractions detached from material conditions. Instead, humanity is best understood as an embodied form of existence characterized by reflective consciousness, moral responsibility, and the capacity for self-transcendence. Neuroscientific evidence regarding brain plasticity and cognitive integration supports philosophical accounts of human adaptability and agency, while philosophical analysis provides the conceptual framework necessary to interpret empirical data without collapsing human experience into mechanistic explanations. Furthermore, this interdisciplinary approach challenges reductionist tendencies that increasingly dominate contemporary scientific and technological discourse. By recognizing the ontological unity of biological, cognitive, and ethical dimensions, the study preserves the dignity and distinctiveness of human existence. It underscores that human freedom and responsibility remain meaningful even within the constraints of biological causality, provided they are understood as capacities for reflective self-regulation rather than absolute independence from natural processes.

In conclusion, the dialogue between modern philosophy and neuroscience is not merely complementary but essential for a comprehensive understanding of humanity. Such an integrative framework contributes to international scholarship by offering a balanced model that respects empirical rigor while safeguarding the normative and existential dimensions of human life. This perspective provides a robust foundation for future interdisciplinary research and ethical reflection in an age increasingly shaped by scientific advancement and technological intervention.

Finally, this study highlights that redefining humanity through an interdisciplinary lens has practical as well as theoretical significance. An integrated understanding of human nature offers critical guidance for contemporary debates in education, ethics, neuroscience, and emerging technologies, where questions of human identity and value are increasingly contested. By situating empirical knowledge within a broader philosophical framework, this approach prevents the instrumentalization of the human being and reaffirms the importance of dignity, responsibility, and meaning in human life. Consequently, the perspective advanced in this study encourages future research to move beyond disciplinary boundaries and to engage more deeply with the normative implications of scientific knowledge in shaping how humanity understands itself and its future.

REFERENCES

Buccella, A., Maoz, U., & Mudrik, L. (2024). Towards an interdisciplinary "Science Of The Mind": A Call For Enhanced Collaboration Between Philosophy And Neuroscience. *European Journal of Neuroscience*, *60*(5), 4771–4784. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejn.16451

Bzdok, D., Schilbach, L., Vogeley, K., Schneider, K., Laird, A. R., Langner, R., & Eickhoff, S. B. (2012). Parsing the neural correlates of moral cognition: ALE meta-analysis on morality, theory of mind, and empathy. *Brain Structure and Function*, *217*(4), 783–796. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00429-012-0380-y

Carrara, A. (2025). A Unified Understanding Of The Human Mind — A Neuroethical Perspective: Tracing The Evolution In Western Thought And The Integration With Neuroscience, Psychology, Psychiatry, And Relational Dimensions. *CNS Spectrums*, *30*(1), e5. https://doi.org/10.1017/S109285292400049X

Fauziah, W. E., Mutiasari, T., Indriani, D., & Azis, A. (n.d.). *Human Nature and Education: Philosophical, Psychological and Islamic Perspectives.* Huong, N. T. T., Thanh, N. V., & Hoan, N. M. (2025). Human Nature in Ancient Philosophy and its Influence On Modern Philosophy. *Kalagatos*, *22*(1), ek24010. https://doi.org/10.52521/kg.v22i1.14700

Izzati, H. (2021). Human Learning Potential: Neuroscientific and Islamic Perspectives. *Journal Of Alifbata: Journal of Basic Education (JBE)*, *1*(1), 64– 77.

https://doi.org/10.51700/alifbata.v1i1.89
Jonathan Sipa, J. S. (2024). Integrating Modern Neuroscience with Traditional Philosophical Theories. *International Journal of Philosophy*, *3*(2), 41–53. https://doi.org/10.47941/ijp.1873
Kohls, N., & Benedikter, R. (2010). The origins of the modern concept of "neuroscience." In J. J. Giordano & B. Gordijn (Eds.), *Scientific and Philosophical Perspectives in Neuroethics* (1st ed., pp. 37–65). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511676505.004