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Human Change Through Epistemology

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Contents

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Abstract

The consciousness that individuals experience from internal and external phenomena are constant throughout our lives. Even when we sleep our minds are continually working towards achieving some results, but how can we understand these conscious and subconscious processes? I remember my childhood and adolescent consciousness quite well, and in retrospect, I wish that I could have made better sense of the what, when and why of my conscious life. Especially in regards to making decisions that functioned towards improving the quality of my human life, i.e. my biological and psychological life, as both an individual and as a member of society.

Entering adulthood, I quickly came to realize that the type of knowledge that I needed to, first, understand my body's biological and psychological functioning, and second, how this functioning was correlated to the quality of my mental balance, contentment and happiness, had neither been taught throughout school nor supplied by my family or social environments. What I required was knowledge of how to be a human being correctly, but how can we come to understand what it means to exist correctly? This knowledge isn't readily available in the common stock of social knowledge, and since human evolution has quasi-cooperatively struggled to survive for two million years, where do we need to begin to understand correct and incorrect methods of existence? The characteristics of our evolutionary realities through continual wars, religious persecutions, genocide and the general struggle to survive are certainly relevant in understanding how our current consciousness, cognitive programing and rationalization methods are conditioned. There is also a central question concerning individuals' empathic abilities.

I suppose studying philosophy after high school rather than business administration may have been helpful in finding answers. However, in understanding the crucial difference between theoretical and practical knowledge, I don't believe that my consciousness, cognitive or rationalization abilities were developed enough to understand philosophy at eighteen. What did I know about human nature and the human condition? Not much.

After college, and working for two years, I began traveling around the world in search of something that was missing from my life. The simple of it was human epistemology, i.e. the knowledge to understand the nature of human existence. I truly believe that we can, not only

achieve, but come to understand what human balance, contentment and happiness are if we can comprehend our biological and psychological design structure cooperatively with philosophical theory, and becoming something of professional human beings.

This thesis paper attempts to identify the challenges that human beings face simply by being individuals in a world that doesn't forgive ignorance, but constantly tests our abilities to survive as balanced, content and happy people. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle have helped me to construct a method of existing through understanding what I am, biologically and psychologically, and how I should live according to philosophical doctrines in order to find out who I am as an individual.

1. Introduction

The theme of my bachelor thesis is how human beings can change through epistemology, i.e. knowledge. I describe change as the positive advancement of who we are, as individuals, and how we socially live our lives through increasing our knowledge-base. My thesis argument is how I've changed my intellectual abilities, i.e. my consciousness of internal and external phenomena, cognitive programing, rationalization methods and behaviors through epistemology. Epistemology is here defined as the conjoining of my pre-studies practical knowledge with the philosophical, sociological, psychological and psychiatric knowledge learned throughout my bachelor's. My major is general philosophy, my minor is sociology, and I've conjointly been reading psychology and psychiatry. The combination of these areas of study have increased my intellectual abilities to understand the maintaining of human, or biological and psychological, balance, contentment and happiness. Further, and in order to demonstrate the practical application of my learned abilities, I've chosen variant B of the assignment choices, and will present options for how my abilities can be applied outside of academia.

Part 2. Moral Evolution, will establish perspectives of human moral evolution. This isn't simply about individual or social right or wrong. It's about civilizations evolution of consciousness, cognitive programing, rational methodologies and behaviors in related to achieving human balance, contentment and happiness. In discoursing human existence and change, I believe we need to establish epistemological concepts that function cooperatively with human design, or biology and psychology, if we desire to increase internal and external qualities of life. Part 3. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle on Education, will demonstrate how

these philosopher's methods and theories have influenced my epistemological advancements. I believe they represent the beginning of epistemological understanding against human nature and the human condition. My evolution as a thinking individual are founded in the doctrines of these philosophers. Additionally, I'll infer viewpoints from Berger and Luckmann's socialization processes, and Searle's neurobiological perspectives on reason. Part 4. Practical Epistemological Applications in Society will discuss the practical applications of my epistemological abilities, first, in childhood and adolescent education, and second, in the rehabilitation of antisociality. Part 5. Concluding Remarks will briefly reiterate the importance of human change through epistemology. First in the contexts of my life going forward, and second, in relation to the challenges facing civilization in moving forward through a global pandemic. Third, in regards to you, my audience, in hopes of my thesis paper providing you with motivation and insight to examine your own life in terms of biological and psychological balance, contentment and happiness.

2. Moral Evolution

2.1. Two Million Years of Conditioning

In Tomasello's *A Natural History of Human Morality*, he writes, "The initial move in the direction of human morality was addition by subtraction. Specifically, what had to be subtracted was great apes' almost total reliance on dominance—either by individuals or by coalitions—to settle any and all disputes. Individuals had to become less aggressive and less bullying if they were going to forage together collaboratively and share the spoils peaceably at the end. The proposal is that this began happening soon after the emergence of the genus *Homo* some 2 million years ago in a transformation that may be thought of as a kind of self-domestication…" (Tomasello, 2016, p. 42).

This provides a time perspective for the beginning of morality in civilization. This is significant, because it reveals a point of change in individuals' consciousness, cognition, rationalization and behavior from previously brutish lifestyles to the lifestyles of modern society. However, I'm going to claim, and attempt to demonstrate, that this empirical progression hasn't been based on or been an evolution of intellect. Contrarily, I believe modern morality has evolved through social ordinances rather than based on intellectual understandings of morality; the connection between the types of lives we lead contrary to the biological and psychological balance, contentment and happiness we achieve. The empirical

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life qualities of most individuals have been inhumane struggles to achieve modicums of balance, contentment and happiness in their lives. Our history is barbarous and current states of affair continue revealing that human life is still marginally valued. Therefore, I ask the following question. What intellectual abilities, or epistemological advancements, have individuals' established in understanding the relationships between types of internal and external consciousness, cognitive programing, rationalization methodologies and behaviors contrary to individuals' biological and psychological balance, contentment and happiness? Let's examine moral evolution.

Firstly, morality established mechanisms for cooperative stability. It wasn't initially based on ideals of empathic care for each other, but was the most optimal method of survival. This was logical, and by all accounts, the correct strategy. However, in moral evolution, I believe that we've neglected to develop an epistemological understanding between morality and, quality of mental and physical life. My own intellectual evolution of consciousness, cognition and rationalization have only been possible, and made sense, through epistemologically understanding morality and quality of life.

Secondly, civilization is still struggling with behaviors intended to benefit others, i.e. prosociality and morality. We may also have become progressively more antisocial and immoral through evolution. That may be challenging to understand, but morality established social order and created benefits of cooperation. However, if morality <u>had</u> to be established, as opposed to naturally occurring, then, we need to ask if humans are innately moral and consciously driven towards morality? Our history doesn't exactly demonstrate excellence in moral virtue. Yes, modern society exhibits systematic advancements within education, health and poverty, because we've established premises for human rights. This, however, doesn't confirm that we've become more moral, or empathic. Moral existence was indirectly forced on individuals and noncompliance was punished, which doesn't demonstrate increased moral and empathic ability in society. If we examine modern society, such as (a) our increasing self-independence and less need of group transparency to survive, e.g. through gender-neutral financial independence. (b) Diminishing religious faithfulness to heaven and hell, which has reduced strict adherences, e.g. to religious doctrines. (c) Decreasing personal and group value placed on gossip and moral reputations. We're not as dependent on being accepted by the group. Our independence has allowed us freedoms to express ourselves, which is positive, but we also experience significant amounts of decadence and self-destruction in self-expressions,

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e.g. through sexualized photos and videos online. (d) We can exist behind closed doors, which often reveal abhorrent behaviors by individuals holding reputable positions. The Catholic Church and high-ranking politicians are prime examples of both moral facades and hypocrisy, often including deviant sexual practices.

Thirdly, in examining modern lifestyles, I believe these systemically create stagnations in psychosocial development through digitalized i-lifestyles. We're increasingly dating online and communicating through apparatuses where our interactions with each other are often beginning without and lacking in direct human contact. How do you think this affects our abilities to understand sentiment, sympathy, empathy and morality? All, of which, I believe to be essential in understanding the functionality of our biology and psychology. It's difficult to develop healthy identities based on well-functioning moral and empathic abilities without the practice that provides knowledge.

Fourthly, and most importantly, is the availability or lacking thereof biological and psychological abilities, or human epistemology, in society. My abilities to identify, investigate and develop weaknesses and immorality into strengths and morality are dependent on understanding, first, the functioning of my biology and psychology, and second, philosophy, sociology and psychiatry. Regardless of our personalities, characters, temperaments, abilities or inabilities, acquiring mental balance, contentment and happiness requires knowledge of how our minds and bodies react to different states of consciousness, cognition and rationalization. What I'm concerned about are our abilities to identify and understand the connection between things in life that cause mental discontent such as fear, anxiety, depression, compulsive disorders and violence compared to things that cause balance, contentment and happiness.

The challenges are overcoming two million years of social conditioning may be based on moral ideology and idealism rather than moral intellectualism. This suggests that morality, empathy and altruism aren't primary human drives or abilities. Therefore, it's important to ask what we've consciously, cognitively, rationally and behaviorally become as intergenerational members of civilization. Maslow writes, "We tend to be afraid of any knowledge that could cause us to despise ourselves or to make us feel inferior, weak, worthless, evil, shameful. We protect ourselves and our ideal image of ourselves by repression and similar defenses, which are essentially techniques by which we avoid becoming conscious of unpleasant or dangerous truths" (Maslow, 2011, p. 54). Let's take a closer look.

2.2. Second-Personal Morality

Second-personal morality concerns the dynamics of interpersonal partnerships, e.g. spouses. I suggest that this concept can demonstrate how human change through epistemology can occur effectively within interpersonal partnerships. However, advancements in relationships require abilities in understanding how biological and psychological components function within relationships. We can characteristically describe relationships through dialectical and behavioral dynamics between two individuals who share life responsibilities. They further affect each other's consciousness and cognitive programing, and produce varying rationalization and behavioral responses.

Tomasello writes, "They came to understand that particular collaborate activities had role ideals—socially normative standards—that applied to either of them indifferently, which implied a kind of self-other equivalence…Based on the recognition of self-other equivalence, there arose a mutual respect between partners, and a sense of mutual deservingness of partner, this creating second-personal agents. Such second-personal agents had the standing to make joint commitments to collaborate and to jointly self-regulate their collaboration…The joint intentional activity was now what social theorists would call contractualist, since it was constituted by an actual agreement between second-personal agents. The outcome was what we may call second-personal morality: a dyadic morality of face-to-face interactions between second-personal agents "I" and "you" (perspectively defined) collaborating together, and feeling responsible to one another, as a jointly committed "we"" (Tomasello, 2016, pp. 40-41). However and here is a crucial point. This describes an epoch from 400.000 years ago, and today, we have an overabundance of societal challenges, which directly asks what type of intellectual evolution civilization has experienced during the last 400.000 years? We're aware of physical and technological developments, but have we been conscious of our cognitive, rationalization, moral and empathic development? Yes, parts of civilization are civil. However, morality shouldn't be measured through civil obedience, but rather through how well its individuals are balanced, content and happy moral agents.

Tomasello "…attempts to explain how early humans' natural second-personal morality, from around 400.000 years ago, became modern humans' group-minded "objective" morality, starting around 150.000 years ago. Analogous to our account of early humans' second-personal morality, we characterize modern humans' "objective" morality in terms of something like a morality of sympathy: how the individual's dependence on the cultural group

led to a special concern for and a loyalty to the group" (Tomasello, 2016, pp. 86-87). This is positive, but to effectuate cognitive and rationalization changes that can alter individuals' consciousness, then, these abilities would need to be held as true beliefs and practiced with intrinsic intent rather than as expected behavior. But what innate capacities do we have?

"The work by psychologists Allen Leslie…Henry Wellman…and others has documented that at roughly 3 years of age, children develop a "theory of mind." This entails inferences about the belief and desires of other individuals inhabiting each child's social world. Combining inferences about beliefs and desires enables people to predict the behavior of others…The ability to better predict other people's behavior from knowledge of their beliefs and desires helps solve adaptive problems such as anticipating hostile attacks, enlisting aid, pacifying conflicting parents, making threats more credible, and forming coalitions. A deep understanding of the beliefs, desires and motivations of others is also central to such critical human activities as intentionally communicating with others, repairing misunderstandings in communication, teaching others, persuading others, and even intentionally deceiving others" (Buss, 2019, p. 380). This suggests that capacities towards wide ranges of positive and negative interpersonal abilities. If we, then, view the *theory of mind* in relation to intimacy and empathy, I believe humanity struggles with intimacy and empathy. This is paradoxical, because empathy allows us to experience the value of intimacy, and intimacy allows us to understand the value of empathy, which is fundamentally necessary in effective and beneficial relationships.

If concern, loyalty and sympathy were intrinsically inherent and existence 400.000 years ago, intimacy and empathy should naturally have evolved into sophisticated cultural mechanisms. Modern divorce rates are around 50%, and as "The behavioral evidence also suggests that women in all but the most restrictive societies sometimes engage in extramarital sexual unions. In the United States, studies yield an affair rate ranging from 20 to 50 percent for married woman". Moreover, "…women are willing to accept sexual offers from men high in socioeconomic status and high in attractiveness if the context involves some level of emotional intimacy rather than just pure sex" (Buss, 2019, pp. 159,171). This suggests that civilization has neglected to develop, practice and educate cultural mechanisms of intimacy and empathy. "…small, but consistent sex differences emerge early in life suggesting a female superiority in empathizing" (Ibid, p. 381). Suggesting that male dominated history could be causal factors in explaining lacking social practices and abilities towards emapthy.

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Civilization has empirically practiced *quid pro quo*, which isn't about understanding each other, but getting what we want. "The theory of reciprocal altruism predicts that organisms can benefit through cooperative exchange" (Buss, 2019, p. 252), and this isn't negative. It's advantageous, but what I'm interested in is uncovering how human consciousness has cognitively and rationally evolved. If we predominantly evaluate the external world and our relationships as *quid pro quo*, then, intimacy, empathy and morality become deprioritized. Moreover, I don't believe our challenges facing intimacy, empathy and morality are based on deficient capacities, but due to the nature of our egocentric survival method. If we examine the emotional qualities in non-human animals, Dr. Mark Bekoff writes "…about their fascinating cognitive abilities, emotional capacities and moral lives"…"Pythagoras, an ancient philosopher and mathematician who lived until 490 BC, believed that animals possessed the full range of emotions" (UWA, 2019). However, "Man occupies a peculiar position in the animal kingdom. Unlike the other higher mammals, he has no species-specific environment, no environment firmly structured by his own instinctual organization" (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 65). In other words, we become the lifestyles we manifest.

My concerns are that civilization has empirically neglected to discuss consciousness, cognition, rationalization and behavior in terms of varying biological and psychological reactions, including how these components interdependently function. Therefore, we may universally lack the foundational knowledge required to begin discussing our qualities of life in relation to how we morally or immorally live our lives. Moreover, this is complicated, and requires intellectual insights into philosophy, sociology, psychology and psychiatry in order to achieve consciousness of *what* we biologically and psychologically are, of *how* our cognitive programing and rationalization methods are constructed, and of *who* we philosophically and socially are supposed to be. However, based on my own intellectual advancements, I believe the benefits of human change through epistemology provide qualities of life that are constantly balanced, content and happy. Let's discuss how this is possible.

3. Socrates, Plato & Aristotle on Education

The procedures of teaching, learning and practicing various capacities, information and knowledge of varied fields of study to prepare individuals with general and specific abilities for life is education. However, what capacities, information and knowledge do individuals objectively and subjectively require in life? Subjectively, individuals should educate themselves as they please. In terms of objective education, I believe that subjects such as

reading, writing, math, science and humanities aren't sufficient to prepare youths for the trials of life. I think we need to better understand the relationships between educational contents and subsequent abilities contrary to the biological and psychological demands that life challenges us with. In this part, we're going to examine what these educational differences are in relation to human nature and the human condition, i.e. the knowledge individuals require in order to achieve balanced, content and happy lives.

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle have reeducated me by teaching me improved methods of ontological investigation, discourse and analysis. Together with modern psychology and psychiatry, they've helped me understand my consciousness in terms of its relationship with itself and with external realities. I've also redefined my identity; *the self*, through moral philosophy. This has guided me towards understanding the relationships between my cognition, rationalization and behavior in relation to qualities of life. In other words, they've taught me to actualize human change through epistemology.

3.1. Socratic Method

Before I became knowledgeable about the Socratic Method, I learned through habitually referencing already established perspectives in my mind. However, the established positions were influenced by varying cognitive programming and rationalization methods. In other words, I was thinking in subjectivity, rather than objectivity, and ignoring ontological factors.

The most educational aspect of Socrates was that he never wrote any texts. That can initially seem confusing, and that might have been his intention, but the λόγος or method of Socrates was to abandon all consciousness of things and find answers anew. "Socrates does not know himself—he is ignorant (ἀγνοέω) of himself. Despite *being* himself, the precise character of that self remains withdrawn from him. Phrased otherwise: Socrates's self retreats from Socrates; it retreats from itself; it conceals itself from itself. Moreover, Socrates is *not able* (οὐ δύναμαί) to know himself—he lacks the ability, the power, the δύναμις, to have knowledge of himself. Owing to his ignorance of himself—an ignorance that belongs *to* that very self, on account of a certain powerlessness—Socrates looks (σκοπεῖν) into himself, making himself into a question or, rather, letting himself be the question that he, owing to the essentially withdrawn character of his self, always already was. By allowing his essential question-worthiness to come to light, Socrates makes manifest the manner in which his self essentially retreats from him—that is, it essentially retreats way from *itself*—and remains

withdrawn from his…grasp. By knowing that he does not know himself, Socrates admits—or, rather *insists* with fortitude and incessancy for which there is no earthly parallel—that the τρόπος of his self, its way, its manner, its mode of being, remains concealed from him. Moreover, insofar as it is the Delphic inscription that motivates him into this state of awareness regarding his essential question-worthiness, Socrates demonstrates an openness to the λόγος outside of himself—in this case, a λόγος belonging to Apollo, to the god whose χώρα (i.e. place) is the sun that lights the open expanse of the earth, to the god who gave Socrates to Athens in such a way that he might serve as a measure to the Athenians by leading them to call themselves and their lives into question. By receiving this λόγος and living in accordance with it, Socrates indicates that way—a way that remains elusive to him—is a way of deference, a way of yielding and submitting to a measure beyond himself, which, as such, effaces his self in the face of something other. It is because of such deference and such essential ignorance that Socrates's way remains withdrawn from him—and, of course, from those who seek to understand his way" (Ewegen, 2020, pp. 1-2). Socrates's way wasn't easy, and it took me much time and effort to, first, understand what this means, and second, actually being able to abandon everything I knew when investigating subjects and objects.

When I attempted to abandon my consciousness at the beginning of my studies contrary to now, I experience paradigmatic differences in how my mind procedurally investigates subjects and objects. My abilities have changed, and I've changed who I am in the manner of how I am. On one side, there are the obvious academic influences that have established epistemological foundations and subsequent abilities. On the other side, I'm able to achieve advancing introspections of subjects and objects through being able to separate emotions from logic.

I've also learned how to disassociate myself from the human condition in order to find my true human nature. We're products of our environments, and our environments are often psychologically unhealthy. This is why I describe individuals as biological and psychological, because like a plant, we respond to too much or too little metaphorical sunlight, water and toxic soil. If we can understand ourselves through our most basic functionality, then we can discover exactly what our biology and psychology need to achieve balance, contentment and happiness. We can, then, establish foundations for our own knowledge and work towards achieving an increasingly objective λόγος of intellectual abilities.

3.2. Plato on Education

3.2.1. Plato's Curriculum

Plato had envisioned education beginning at birth, and enduring throughout life, with the goal of progressively creating good individuals and good citizens. In the *Republic*, he presents a scholastic program up to the age of twenty, which included poetry, music, physical training, mathematics; arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and harmonics (Plato, 1886, pp. 60,83,93,237-246). At age twenty, "…the detached sciences in which they were educated as children must be brought within the compass of a single survey, to show co-relation which exists between them and the nature of real existence" (Ibid, p. 252). From thirty to thirty-five years, Plato focuses on dialectic training (Ibid, pp. 246-256). "After this you will have to send them down again into the cavern we described, and compel them to take commands in war, and to hold such offices as befit young men, that they may also keep up with their neighbours in practical address" (Ibid, p. 256). The practical experiences were to last fifteen years, and "…as soon as they are fifty years old, those who have passed safely through all temptation, and who have won every distinction in every branch whether of action or of science, must be forthwith introduced to their final task, and must be constrained to lift up the eye of the soul and fix it upon that which gives light to all things; and having surveyed the essence of good, they must take it as a pattern to be copied in that work of regulating their country and their fellow-citizens and themselves, which is to occupy each in turn during the rest of life; and though they are to pass most of their time in philosophical pursuits, yet each, when this turn comes, is to devote himself to the hard duties of public life…" (Ibid, p. 256). Let's discuss what it means to change.

3.2.2. What is Human Change?

When discussing human change, we're examining the improvement of "…craft knowledge, scientific knowledge, practical wisdom, theoretical wisdom, and understanding" (Aristotle, 2014, p. 100). "To start with, then, let's define education for the purposes of our discussion. What exactly is it, and what can it achieve" (Plato, 2017, p. 56)? On one side, this question has apparent answers towards employment related skills. But, on the other side, what have individuals empirically learned through parental, environmental and formal education? It seems that any learned ability is education, and this may be true, but we shouldn't forget our biological and psychological design, and that this may be the most relevant knowledge to learn. What I'm aiming to establish are *individual consciousness of educational perspectives*

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that can reveal how educated and proficient individuals are at being themselves. Math, science and humanities are necessary and very useful, but they don't teach us how to become moral and empathic individuals who can humanly function well for ourselves and society.

In understanding my own educational perspective, I applied the Socratic Method to examine (1) philosophy, sociology, psychology and psychiatry as isolated and theoretical studies free from social challenges, and (2), I isolated my theoretical and practical human strengths and weaknesses. Third, I combined (1) and (2) and created an educational perspective that revealed what I needed to practically (A) know to survive in society (employment, home, etc.), and (B) *knowhow* to biologically and psychologically function as a balanced, content and happy individual. This created a blueprint that helped me understand how I needed to change to become the best version of myself for the sake of itself, i.e. without other intentions. However, this takes time and effort. "I say that the man who is going to be good—at anything—must practice that same thing, right from his childhood, both in his games and in his work, in the surroundings which are appropriate, in any particular case, to that activity…And when it comes to what they are taught, they should have a preliminary grounding in all the skills in which they need a preliminary grounding…The key to education, we maintain, is correct upbringing, which will, more than anything else, lead the soul of a child at play to a passionate desire for what will be needed to make him perfect in the practice of the activity at its best when he becomes a man" (Plato, 2017, p. 57).

3.2.3. Challenges of Change
During my introspective process, I discovered that although I had very good parents who provided me with love, safety, empathy, generosity, morality and guidance. Society had provided me with ideologies of hate, precariousness, superficiality, greed, immorality and misguidance. The innocence and good heartedness I was born with and wanted to continue being, had progressively become products of civilizations battle between human nature and the human condition. This progression had increased throughout my life along with my nearness to civilization and its challenges.

Granted, I've sought after human nature in its raw form, because I desired to understand the ontology of human nature, and because I believe that individuals are defined by their weaknesses rather than their strengths. However, life presents challenges that we often don't have the acumen or aptitude to negotiate, or solve, based on categorical moral imperatives

that can safeguard our innate innocent and good heartedness. We're obviously susceptible to errors, which are how we can learn, but I'm concerned about the conditioning we experience while negotiating with society's challenge and immorality. We're often formed through negative psychological experiences rather than ideals, or even experiences, of morality. During my formative years, I've received no <u>direct</u> moral vs. human nature vs. human condition education that prepared me for society. There were indirect moral conditionings from my family and school. However, I believe that indirect moral education will achieve indirect moral ability, which will undoubtedly struggle to achieve categorical moral imperatives in the duel between human nature and the human condition.

I had to go back to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in order to understand the process of morality, not the concept of morality, but the dialectical procedure required to comprehend how to categorically exist according to moral virtues regardless of any situation or challenge. I believe morality are dialectical procedures, because life doesn't present itself as of one thing, situation or essence, but as of continuing things, situations and essences that always require dialectical procedures to understand and negotiate through. However, practicing dialectics that reach the nature of things requires abilities to understand and too alter our consciousness of things, situations and essences. Therefore, human education and change requires biological and psychological knowledge so that we can alter cognitive programing, rationalization methods and behavior if we need to. "…we say that this person among us is educated, whereas that person is uneducated—though sometimes it's a person who's extremely well educated for the business of retailing, or shipping, or that kind of thing. Our present discussion cannot be based on the belief that these are what education consists of—no, it's the education which is directed, from childhood, towards human goodness, producing a desire and a passion to become a complete citizen, one who knows how to rule and be ruled in accordance with justice. This is the upbringing, as it seems to me, which our discussion has singled out and is now proposing to call the only form of education, whereas the upbringing whose aim is money, or physical strength, or any form of cleverness which lacks justice, is vulgar, illiberal, and quite unfit to be described as an education at all" (Plato, 2017, pp. 57-58).

I studied Business Administration after high school, a bachelor program undoubtedly concerned with making money. Was it helpful in its goal? Yes, I learned how to administer businesses and have applied these skills many times. However, I'm inclined towards Plato's

educational perspectives, that without justice, the capacities of human nature to behave vulgarly and illiberally are vulnerable. We must also remember that being individually moral is only half the struggle. The other half is negotiating with other individuals' moral or immoral capacities.[1] Based on my life experiences, and from living in many different countries, I experience morality and immorality interchangeably, and without forewarning. There are seldom experiences where individuals' characteristics, values and desires are overtly presented as either moral or immoral. It therefore requires excellent abilities to decipher others' behaviors. The questions we perhaps should ask and consider are (1) if it's worth it to be virtuous, and (2) if yes, how do we learn to be practically and categorically virtuous individuals? Let's see if Aristotle can teach us.

3.3. Aristotle on Education

Aristotle has encouraged my capacities for understanding the human form, i.e. the nature of the human beast. "The principal idea with which Aristotle begins is that there are differences of opinion about what is best for human beings, and that to profit from ethical inquiry we must resolve this disagreement. He insists that ethics is not a theoretical discipline: we are asking what the good for human beings is not simply because we want to have knowledge, but because we will be better able to achieve our good if we develop a fuller understanding of what it is to flourish. In raising this question—what is the good" (Kraut, 2018)? This is an excellent question, and the *good* itself is a concept that I'm going to illuminate in this section. Moreover, the *good* plays a central role in my educational evolution, because my main philosophical interest is to establish an epistemological method of moral existence that aligns correctly and cooperates with our human form, or design. Therefore, Aristotle's goods and ends have been significant in my studies. Let's attempt to understand *what the good is*.

3.3.1. Aristotle's Goods & Ends

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* begins "Every craft and every method of inquiry and likewise |1094^{a}1| every action and deliberate choice seems to seek some good. That is why they correctly declare that the good is "that which all seek"…"A certain difference, however, appears to exist among ends. For some are activities while others are works of some sort beyond the activities themselves. |5| But wherever there are ends beyond the actions, in those cases, the works are naturally better than the activities"…"If, then, there is some end of things

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[1] Buss discusses the theory of strategic inference between the sexes where deception and manipulation are forms of strategy (Buss, 2019, pp. 305,341).

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doable in action that we wish for because of itself, and the others because of it, and we do not choose everything because of something else (since if *that* is the case, it will go on without limit |20| so that the desire will be empty and pointless), it is clear that this will be the good— that is, the best good" (Aristotle, 2014, p. 2). The *goods* that Aristotle describes are actualizations of individuals' abilities in deliberate action. It's a methodology of purposeful existence through virtuous states of mind that require abilities that willfully function towards aspiring good *ends*. The aspiring towards excellence in individual existence is at the heart of my thesis. However, the conceptuality becomes dysfunctional without the proper epistemological basis for understanding the components of the *soul*.[2]

What do you think the best goods are? How would you approach and, then, proceed to answer this question? Would you think of the best goods in terms of yourself or humanity, or both, and in which order of priority? These questions are difficult to, not only answer, but to truly understand. They aren't superficial ideas based on it being payday, having a good day or because you're going on vacation, which are of course, part of balanced, content and happy lives, but rather the essence of our lives, or what we represent in our existence, i.e. who we are and what we stand for.

Aristotle writes, "Let us return to the good we are looking for and |15| what it could possibly be. For it is apparently different in different actions and different crafts, since it is one thing in medicine, a different one in generalship, and likewise for the rest. What, then, is the good characteristic of each" (Aristotle, 2014, p. 8)? "Since there are evidently many |25| ends, and we choose some of them because of something else, as we do wealth, flutes, and instruments generally, it is clear that not all ends are completes. But the best one is apparently something complete"…"We say that |30| what is intrinsically worth pursuing is more complete than what is worth pursuing because of something else, that what is never choiceworthy because of something else is more complete than things that are both intrinsically choiceworthy and choiceworthy because of it, and that what is unconditionally complete, then, is what is always intrinsically choiceworthy and never choiceworthy because of something else. Happiness seems to be the most like this, since *it* we always choose because of itself and never because of something else"…"The same conclusion also apparently follows from self-sufficiency,

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[2] In *De Anima*, Aristotle writes, "…the soul is a substance as the form of a natural body which has life in potentiality. But substance is actuality; hence, the soul will be an actuality of a body of such a sort. Actuality is spoken of in two ways, first as knowledge is, and second as contemplating is. Evidently, then, the soul is actuality as knowledge is" (Aristotle, 2016, p. 22) .

since the complete good seems to be self-sufficient". "Happiness, then, is apparently something complete and self-sufficient, |20| since it is the end of what is doable in action. But to say that happiness is the best good is perhaps to say something that is apparently commonplace, and we still need a clearer statement of what it is. Maybe, then, this would come about if the function of a human being were grasped…and in general for whatever has some function and action, the good—the doing well—seems to lie in the function, the same also seems to hold of a human being, if indeed there is some function that is his" (Ibid, pp. 9-10).

The functionality of *the self* and *the individual* has been significant throughout my studies. Particularly, how we begin to understand philosophical and psychological functionality. Today, we measure functionality psychiatrically by examining individuals' abilities within social standards of affect, behavior, cognition, stress tolerance and learning from experience. Dysfunctional is when these capacities fall outside of social-norm-abilities.

Aristotle referred to functionality by virtuousness as products of reason. "If, then, the function of a human being is activity of the soul in accord with reason or not without reason, and the function of a sort of thing, we say, is the same in kind as the function of an excellent thing of that sort…and this is unconditionally so in all cases when we add to the function |10| the superiority that is in accord with the virtue…if all this is so, and a human being's function is supposed to be a sort of living, and this living is supposed to be activity of the soul and actions that involve reason, and it is characteristic of an excellent man to do these well and nobly, and each is completed well when it is in accord with the virtue that properly belongs to it |15| —if all this is so, the human good turns out to be activity of the soul in accord with virtue and, if there are more virtues than one, then in accord with the best and most complete" (Aristotle, 2014, p. 10).

"Virtue, then, is twofold, of thought and character. That of thought both comes about and grows mostly as a result of teaching, which is why it requires experience and time. That of character (*ethike*), on the other hand, results from habit (*ethos*)...From this it is also clear that none of the virtues of character comes about in us naturally…nor can anything else that is naturally one way be habituated into being another way. Hence the virtues come about in us neither by nature nor against nature, rather we are naturally receptive of them and are brought to completion through habit" (Aristotle, 2014, p. 21).

3.3.2. Aristotle's Influences on My Education

Aristotle helped me to understand the level of consciousness necessary to facilitate human change. He aided me in creating a strategy of assigning value descriptions to conscious phenomena. Phenomena are either internal manifestations in and of themselves without external stimuli, or reactions from external stimuli coming from life occurrences and interpersonal relationships. The value descriptions are demarcated in relation to generally positive or negative psychological effects in consciousness. These effects are, then, evaluated in terms of their characteristic qualities, and divided into categories of specific qualities of positive or negative, e.g. happy or unhappy. Moreover, through this process of identifying general and, then, classifying specific psychological effects in my consciousness, I've learned to increasingly understand my cognitive programming, rationalization methods and behaviors.

The process of increasingly coming to know my human nature, or my biological and psychological design, I'm able to understand the functioning relationships between different types of internal stimuli, e.g. states of mind or thinking patterns, and external stimuli, e.g. different individuals and activities, on my quality of life. The overall results are that I can willfully alter how my consciousness is conscious of things, and change my thinking and behavioral patterns. When this is possible, we can also select the contextual premises of our identities. I've chosen to construct my identity according to philosophical doctrine, sociological theory, and psychological and psychiatric knowledge, and thereby creating an ability to change through epistemology.

A curious question, however, is why it was necessary for me to spend an inordinate amount of time and effort to understand functional, as opposed to dysfunctional, human existence? Civilization has been working on morality, interpersonal relationships and social cooperation for 2 million years. Isn't it reasonable to expect that merely existing as products of nature and nurture would produce the epistemological abilities necessary to achieve balance, contentment and happiness? Let's examine a sociological perspective.

3.4. Berger & Luckmann's Sociology

Already having brought psychology and psychiatry into my studies through the application of specific literature on human functionality, sociology was the best choice for my minor. Berger and Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* became valuable in my areas of interest by offering insight into the socialization process. In this section, I'm going be discussing

"…'Society as Objective Reality' and 'Society as Subjective Reality'…the former containing our basic understanding of the problems of the sociology of knowledge, the latter applying this understanding to the level of subjective consciousness and thereby building a theoretical bridge to the problems of social psychology" (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 7).

3.4.1. Society as Objective Reality

"…man's relationship to his environment is characterized by world-openness. Not only has man succeeded in establishing himself over the greater part of the earth's surface, his relationship to the surrounding environment is everywhere very imperfectly structured by his own biological constitution…The peculiarity of man's biological constitution lies rather in its instinctual component. Man's instinctual organization may be described as underdeveloped, compared with that of the other higher mammals. Man does have drives, of course. But these drives are highly unspecialized and undirected. This means that the human organism is capable of applying its constitutionally given equipment to a very wide and, in addition, constantly variable range of activities" (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, pp. 65-66).

If we, then, ask about the typifications, or types, of empirical behavioral ranges of human activities, and their subsequent effects and conditioning upon society. How should we characterize these behaviors? Below, you will find Aristotle's "...chart of the virtues, with their associated excesses and deficiencies…

EXCESS		DEFICIENCY		MEAN		
irascibility		insensitivity to pain		mild-mannerdness		
rashness		cowardice		courage		
shamelessness		bashfulness		sense of shame		
intemperance		insensibility		temperance		
enviousness		nameless		indignation		
profit		loss		justice		
wastefullness		acquisitiveness		generosity		
boastfulness		self-deprecation		truthfulness		
flattery		surliness		friendliness		

The instruction in our text suggests that this…chart was available to Aristotle's audience, perhaps displayed on the wall of his lecture room" (Aristotle, 2014, p. 239). The question remains. How would you behaviorally characterize our world history up to modern day society? My impressions are that humanity has predominantly existed within Aristotle's excesses and deficiencies. I believe that society hopes and aspires for the mean, but my

personal experiences of individuals and global society's objective realities reveal more excesses and deficiencies than means.

If we, first, examine individuals in relation to their introduction to society, beginning with pre-school, primary and secondary education, we can suggest that the theoretical aim is to stimulate Aristotle's mean characteristics. However, if objective social realities experienced by developing individuals are predominantly within excesses and deficiencies, then, developing individuals will become conditioned by these characteristics. "The period during which the human organism develops towards its completion in interrelationship with its environment is also the period during which the human self is formed. The formation of the self, then, must also be understood in relation to both the ongoing organismic development and the social process in which the natural and the human environment are mediated through the significant others. The genetic presuppositions for the self are, of course, given at birth. But the self, as it is experienced later as a subjectively and objectively recognizable identity, is not." (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, pp. 67-68). This suggests that internalization, socialization, conditioning and institutionalization of behaviors[3] have been based on what Aristotle would consider virtue-less and unhappy existences.

3.4.2. Society as Subjective Reality

"The individual…is not born a member of society. He is born with a predisposition towards sociality, and he becomes a member of society. In the life of every individual, therefore, there is a temporal sequence, in the course of which he is inducted into participation in the societal dialectic. The beginning point of this process is internalization: the immediate apprehension or interpretation of an objective event as expressing meaning, that is, as a manifestation of another's subjective processes which thereby becomes subjectively meaningful to myself" (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 149). However, *meaningful to myself* doesn't necessarily describe biological and psychological criteria in attaining human balance, contentment or happiness. Without these evaluative criteria, it could increase the possibilities of destructive behavioral types becoming internalized as subjective realities, and further becoming destructive or antisocial presets for consciousness, cognition, rationalization and behavior. Let's briefly examine Searle on reason.

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[3] Individuals' behavioral developments are referred to as internalization, socialization, conditioning and institutionalization of behaviors that become sedimented in consciousness.

3.5. Searle's Equation of Reason

Searle offer an equation to explain reason. "They are of the form, a rational self S performed act A, and in performing A, S acted on reason R. That formulation requires the postulation of a self". Searle is claiming "…that the condition of possibility of the adequacy of rational explanations is the existence of an irreducible self, a rational agent, capable of acting on reasons"…However… "We saw, first, that the problem of free will arises because of a special feature of a certain type of human consciousness, and, we saw, second, that in order to explain our apparently free behavior, we have to postulate an irreducible notion of the self…We started with the problem of free will, and now we have the problems of free will, of consciousness, and of the self, and they all seem to hang together". Further, "In addition to a neurobiological account of mental causation one needs a neurobiological account of the rational, volitional self. How does the brain create a self, how is the self realized in the brain, how does it function in deliberation, how does it arrive at decision, and how does it initiate and sustain action" (Searle, 2007, pp. 57-58,72).

I suggest adding biological and psychological variables to Searle's equation. Without cooperation between reason R, and biological $_B$ and psychological $_P$, the compatibility between consciousness, cognition, rationalization and behavior that causally produce mental balance, contentment and happiness would, then, produce dysfunctional reason R. However, by adding $_{B+P}$ to rational self S and reason R having the form, a rational self S_{B+P} performed act A, and in performing A, S_{B+P} acted on reason R_{B+P}, and achieved act A_{B+P}. Thereby maintaining functional compatibility between consciousness, cognition, rationalization and behavior in alignment with genetic design-requirements needed for achieving biological and psychological balance, contentment and happiness, and thereby decreasing dysfunctional biological and psychological reactions on the mind and body.

4. Practical Epistemological Applications in Society

4.1. Child & Adolescent Education

"We live in a global economy that requires our students to be prepared to think both critically and creatively, evaluate massive amounts of information, solve complex problems, and communicate well. A strong foundation in reading, writing, math, and other core subjects is still as important as ever, yet by itself is insufficient for lifelong success…The demands of the 21st century require a new approach to education policy and practice—a whole child

approach to learning, teaching, and community engagement. Measuring academic achievement is important and necessary; no one is arguing otherwise. But if we fail to move beyond a narrow curriculum and accountability system, we will have failed to adequately prepare children for their futures" (ASCD, 2012, p. 2). The question, then, is how do we prepare children for the challenges of modern society?

My formal educations are by academic standards above average. However, they neglected the educational contents aimed at teaching, preparing and guiding me through the non-academic challenges of life. I believe these challenges are universal within formal education where they lack adequate educational acumen between *knowledge that* and *how*. The gaps between theory and practice can be determining in how proficiently, or inadequately, children and adolescence are able to negotiate their life-paths towards adulthood, and becoming healthy adults unscathed from e.g. bullying and developing insecurities, complexities, traumas and major depression. "Research shows that one of five children and adolescents experiences symptoms of a mental health illness…and as many as 80 percent may go untreated…Children and adolescents with mental disorders are at much greater risk for dropping out of school and suffering long-term impairments...." (ASCD, 2012, p. 4).

Further, if we examine the following statistical information, in Tables 1 and 2 from the 2018 article, *Epidemiology of Adult DSM-5 Major Depressive Disorder and Its Specifiers in the United States*, we can better understand civilization's mental health challenges. We also need to ask *what* is incorrect with modern existence, and *why* have we allowed the development of serious mental health issues.

In Table 1., you'll find sociodemographic overviews of Major Depressive Disorder; MDD, in adults within the United States. I've highligted the 12-month (10.4%) and lifetime (20.6%) prevalences of MDD. I also suggest that you examine the sociodemographic characteristics to better understand human vulnerability towards dysfunctionality.

Table 1. Prevalence and OR of 12-Month and Lifetime *DSM-5* MDD by Sociodemographic Characteristics[a]

Sociodemographic Characteristic	12-mo MDD (n = 3963)		Lifetime MDD (n = 7432)	
	Prevalence, % (SE)	OR (95% CI)	Prevalence, % (SE)	OR (95% CI)
Total	10.4 (0.25)	NA	20.6 (0.37)	NA
Sex				
Male	7.2 (0.26)	0.5 (0.46-0.55)	14.7 (0.40)	0.5 (0.46-0.53)
Female	13.4 (0.37)	1 [Reference]	26.1 (0.50)	1 [Reference]
Race/ethnicity				
White	10.8 (0.35)	1 [Reference]	23.1 (0.47)	1 [Reference]
African American	9.3 (0.42)	0.6 (0.54-0.68)	15.2 (0.49)	0.5 (0.46-0.55)
Native American	15.9 (1.86)	1.2 (0.87-1.63)	28.2 (2.12)	1.1 (0.89-1.35)
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.8 (0.53)	0.6 (0.45-0.67)	12.2 (0.83)	0.4 (0.36-0.50)
Hispanic	10.0 (0.40)	0.7 (0.62-0.78)	16.2 (0.55)	0.6 (0.52-0.64)
Age, y				
18-29	12.9 (0.47)	3.0 (2.48-3.55)	20.2 (0.55)	1.9 (1.65-2.10)
30-44	11.2 (0.40)	3.0 (2.54-3.54)	22.0 (0.61)	2.2 (1.92-2.44)
45-64	10.7 (0.39)	2.7 (2.30-3.10)	22.9 (0.54)	2.1 (1.91-2.33)
≥65	5.4 (0.33)	1 [Reference]	14.4 (0.56)	1 [Reference]
Marital status				
Married or cohabiting	8.2 (0.30)	1 [Reference]	18.7 (0.40)	1 [Reference]
Widowed, separated, or divorced	13.8 (0.49)	1.7 (1.49-1.84)	25.9 (0.65)	1.5 (1.38-1.59)
Never married	13.2 (0.47)	1.4 (1.21-1.60)	20.7 (0.57)	1.2 (1.07-1.30)
Educational level				
<High school	11.4 (0.54)	1.2 (1.01-1.32)	17.8 (0.65)	0.9 (0.79-0.97)
High school	11.0 (0.47)	1.1 (0.98-1.20)	19.3 (0.60)	0.9 (0.82-0.96)
≥Some college	9.9 (0.28)	1 [Reference]	21.8 (0.44)	1 [Reference]
Family income, $				
0-19 999	14.1 (0.49)	1.7 (1.49-2.04)	22.5 (0.61)	1.3 (1.13-1.39)
20 000-34 999	11.4 (0.39)	1.5 (1.30-1.72)	20.8 (0.61)	1.2 (1.06-1.28)
35 000-69 999	9.9 (0.38)	1.3 (1.16-1.50)	20.1 (0.55)	1.1 (0.98-1.18)
≥70 000	7.5 (0.41)	1 [Reference]	19.6 (0.58)	1 [Reference]
Urbanicity				
Urban	10.5 (0.29)	1.1 (0.95-1.28)	20.5 (0.42)	1.1 (0.93-1.21)
Rural	9.9 (0.54)	1 [Reference]	21.1 (0.98)	1 [Reference]
Region				
Northeast	10.7 (0.67)	1.0 (0.85-1.17)	21.8 (0.81)	1.0 (0.89-1.16)
Midwest	9.9 (0.51)	0.9 (0.75-0.99)	20.6 (0.90)	0.9 (0.78-1.01)
South	10.4 (0.47)	0.9 (0.82-1.06)	20.1 (0.62)	0.9 (0.84-1.04)
West	10.6 (0.35)	1 [Reference]	20.5 (0.65)	1 [Reference]

Table 1. (Hasin, et al., 2018, p. 339).

In Table 2, you'll find comorbidity, or associated mental disorders, with Major Depressive Disorder.

Table 2. Twelve-Month and Lifetime Prevalence of Other Psychiatric Disorders Among Those With *DSM-5* MDD[a]

Comorbid Psychiatric Disorder	12 mo			Lifetime		
	Prevalence (SD)[b]	aOR (95% CI)[c]	Adjusted aOR (95% CI)[d]	Prevalence (SD)[b]	aOR (95% CI)[c]	Adjusted aOR (95% CI)[d]
Any substance use disorder	45.3 (0.86)	2.0 (1.84-2.16)	1.4 (1.24-1.52)	57.9 (0.75)	2.2 (2.02-2.31)	1.5 (1.35-1.57)
Alcohol use disorder	22.2 (0.86)	1.8 (1.63-2.01)	1.2 (1.06-1.33)	40.8 (0.86)	2.0 (1.88-2.20)	1.3 (1.16-1.40)
Any drug use disorder	10.1 (0.57)	3.0 (2.57-3.55)	1.5 (1.20-1.79)	17.6 (0.65)	2.5 (2.21-2.78)	1.3 (1.14-1.49)
Nicotine use disorder	32.8 (0.94)	1.9 (1.69-2.07)	1.3 (1.12-1.41)	38.9 (0.83)	1.9 (1.75-2.02)	1.2 (1.12-1.34)
Any anxiety disorder	36.4 (0.96)	4.2 (3.81-4.57)	2.2 (1.94-2.44)	37.3 (0.70)	3.9 (3.57-4.17)	2.2 (2.05-2.43)
Panic	11.4 (0.59)	4.4 (3.73-5.25)	1.8 (1.45-2.21)	12.8 (0.53)	3.4 (3.05-3.89)	1.6 (1.40-1.86)
Agoraphobia	05.6 (0.44)	4.2 (3.28-5.27)	1.3 (1.05-1.70)	05.0 (0.33)	3.7 (3.04-4.54)	1.3 (1.07-1.64)
Social phobia	09.4 (0.64)	3.9 (3.32-4.66)	1.5 (1.19-1.76)	08.7 (0.46)	3.4 (2.95-3.86)	1.4 (1.22-1.61)
Specific phobia	11.6 (0.59)	2.1 (1.84-2.35)	1.0 (0.86-1.15)	12.2 (0.40)	2.3 (2.10-2.57)	1.3 (1.10-1.41)
Generalized anxiety disorder	19.9 (0.76)	5.7 (4.98-6.50)	2.4 (2.10-2.83)	20.5 (0.57)	4.9 (4.39-5.47)	2.5 (2.18-2.78)
Posttraumatic stress disorder	16.3 (0.85)	4.4 (3.92-5.03)	1.8 (1.54-2.12)	15.6 (0.64)	4.1 (3.70-4.63)	1.9 (1.67-2.23)
Any personality disorder[e]	40.9 (1.13)	4.6 (4.12-5.03)	2.4 (2.10-2.70)	31.9 (0.86)	3.9 (3.58-4.29)	2.0 (1.83-2.25)
Schizotypal	18.4 (0.94)	3.8 (3.33-4.30)	1.2 (1.04-1.46)	13.6 (0.68)	3.4 (2.90-3.88)	1.2 (1.03-1.47)
Borderline	35.7 (1.06)	5.2 (4.70-5.74)	2.6 (2.28-2.94)	26.6 (0.73)	4.4 (4.02-4.81)	2.2 (1.94-2.43)
Antisocial	08.4 (0.56)	2.3 (1.92-2.72)	0.9 (0.76-1.15)	07.4 (0.39)	2.5 (2.15-2.84)	1.2 (0.97-1.35)

Table 2. (Hasin, et al., 2018, p. 340).

My suggestion is the additions of human knowledge, i.e. biological and psychological epistemology, to current curriculums that would better establish and systematically developing rigid young identities that can understand and mentally tolerate their developing and challenging lives. We can argue that this is overly complicated, and that's not illogical, but children and adolescence understand contextual subjects perhaps better than we know. I recall my consciousness from my formative years, and wish I could have better formulated or been asked questions helping me to understand life better.

I have a 5 year old niece, and I challenge her with philosophical and psychological themes that aim at establishing epistemological foundations that can advance as she becomes older. Sometimes she's attentive and other times she's not, but it's a process. Children and adolescence exist in different realities than adults, but they do exist within their respective and complex consciousness that we can epistemologically influence.

The challenges of reaching children, adolescence, and even adults, is in creating safe environments where they reveal and we can access their emotions and intellect, and perhaps entice their epistemological curiosities. In effect, we would be widening the educational spectrum through proactive dialectic aimed at stimulating questions and self-examination.

What are you? Who are you? How do you answer these questions? How do you understand these questions? How do you see the other students, your parents and the world? The

questions are endless, and the epistemology is available. The Socratic Method of abandoning everything I knew created questions, reflections and dialectics that helped me advance my epistemic abilities. They led me to philosophers, sociologists, psychologists and psychiatrists that increased my knowledge-base for further discourse *ad infinitum*. The institutionalization of dialectic methods is perhaps more important than any particular epistemology. Establishing this ability in children and adolescence is itself an ability that I've learned through epistemology. Let's examine an antisocial personality disorder.

4.2. Rehabilitating Antisociality

In this section, I'm going to discuss practical applications of accessing individuals' antisocial consciousness, cognitive programing and rationalization methodologies that can alter consciousness and behavioral presets towards prosociality.

I've spent time in prison, and my experiences with criminality are among my most profound learning experiences that have provided me with insightful comprehensions. These experiences consist of 3 years while living with and as a criminal in society. It's not criminality that I found profound, quite the contrary, but the level of introspection into raw, or pre-socialized, human nature. This knowledge can further be described as, first, establishing a philosophical consciousness of pre-socialized human nature, and second, providing ontological insight into raw human nature.

To begin with, how would you characterize modern society? If you recall Tomasello's description, "The initial move in the direction of human morality was addition by subtraction. Specifically, what had to be subtracted was great apes' almost total reliance on dominance— either by individuals or by coalitions—to settle any and all disputes. Individuals had to become less aggressive and less bullying if they were going to forage together collaboratively and share the spoils peaceably at the end" (Tomasello, 2016, p. 42). Now, do you think modern society is more, less or similar to Tomasello's description? I would suggest that we're similar in human nature, but demonstrate an evolved social practice. My experiences don't suggest that antisociality is rare or confined to criminals, but rather defined as survival capacities[4] apparent in all socioeconomic classes. Antisociality is predominantly applied to antisocial personality disorders and criminality. However, we can generally observe

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[4] Modern survival isn't categorically described as life or death, but as desirous attaining of things; many times without regard for others.

antisociality in society with the key component of deficient empathic ability (which also differs from capacity).

Further, "There is a growing concern for the apparent decline of empathy in society today. A study by the University of Michigan found that college students today are showing less empathy than previous decades, a 40% decline in fact. That is an alarming number" (Smith, 2012), and suggestive of continuing decline, as suggested in Part I. Therefore, I believe antisociality are social problems, and not primarily criminal problems. However, for antisociality to be identified in non-criminals, this would require individual or close-relation initiatives towards cognitive therapy. That being said, where we can practically apply methods of cognitive and rationalization modification, and work towards altering consciousness and behaviors towards prosociality, is with prison inmates.

4.2.1. Rehabilitation through Epistemology: Case Study

The case study is a two year period in prison where I became friends with an inmate who was diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder.[5] I could initially observe intellectual capacities and goodness beneath layers of antisocial conditioning. I, then, began dialoguing with him about philosophical, sociological, psychological and psychiatric theory in hopes of educating and prosocially conditioning him. I was also curious about the practical transference value of my epistemological abilities.

He was twenty five, and had been to prison eleven times since he was sixteen. During childhood, he had fallen out of school very early due to behavioral problems caused from severe Attention-Deficit-Hyperactivity-Disorder (ADHD). By all accounts he was quite disagreeable to social norms. His socialization had occurred in antisocial environments based on aggression and dominance. This had institutionalized a consciousness and cognition towards antisocial rationality and behavior. The court appointed psychiatrist who had examined him for his criminal-case made particular mention to his lacking empathic abilities, and recommended learning the fundamentals of emotions. It took six months before I could convince his consciousness that criminality was dysfunctional behavior, and thereby gaining access to and beginning rebuilding his cognition based on my areas of study. During the following eighteen months, he developed into a new man through epistemology.

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[5] "Linda Mealy…proposed a theory of psychopathy based on frequent-dependent selection. Psychopathy (sometimes called sociopathy or antisocial personality disorder) represents a cluster of traits marked by irresponsible and unreliable behavior, egocentrism, impulsivity, inability to form lasting relationships, superficial social charm, and deficit of social emotions such as love, shame, guilt, and empathy" (Buss, 2019, p. 386).

Plato's dialectics guided me forward in this process. "For Glaucon, with that eminent courage which he displays on all occasions, would not acquiesce in the retreat of Thrasymachus, and began thus: Socrates, do you wish really to convince us that it is on every account better to be just than to be unjust, or only to seem to have convinced us? If it were in my power, I replied, I should prefer convincing you really" (Plato, 1886, p. 37). The challenges of convincing other minds that they've misunderstood something as essential as their perception of reality is difficult. It's not simply about teaching new knowledge, but about convincing individuals that this new knowledge, which is by nature frightening, is something they desire. I very much relate to the above dialectic from Plato's *Republic*, when Glaucon and Adeimantus were arguing with Socrates about values of justice and injustice. Plato was teaching the significance of individual (1) moral virtue and (2) comprehensions of social responsibility as guardians of society.

Plato asks, "How are these guardians to be selected, and what qualities must they possess? They must be strong, swift and brave, high-spirited but gentle, and endowed with a taste for philosophy. But how must they be educated? In the first place, we must be very scrupulous about the *substance* of the stories which they are taught in their childhood. Nothing derogatory to the dignity of the gods must be admitted in these tales. They must not be taught that the gods wage war against one another, or that they break treaties, or that they afflict men with misfortunes, or that they appear in a variety of shapes on earth, or that they mislead us by falsehood. Neither must they be encouraged to fear death, by being told that the future life is a gloomy one: nor must the character of great men be represented to them in an unworthy, or ludicrous, or sensual light. On the contrary, truth, courage and self-control must be inculcated by all the stories that are employed in their education" (Plato, 1886, pp. 360-361).

Almost two years have passed since my friend and I parted ways, but he writes me long letters overabundant with both terrible grammar and penmanship. However, they're completed with individual and prosocial insights and contemplations that are revealing of progressively moral growth.

5. Concluding Remarks

I believe that neither Plato's nor Aristotle's teachings have become indoctrinated into the nature of existence during the past 2400 years. The challenges are, first, how we can understand how we think. Second, how we can identify immoral and self-destructive presets

to behavior. Thirdly, how we may educate individuals' in achieving human balance, contentment and happiness through biologically and psychologically correct existence. My suggestion is to facilitate human change through epistemology.

Going forward, I have four years remaining on my prison sentence, and my plans are to complete my masters and begin my doctoral studies in philosophy. I will continue the work of attempting to change how individuals think about and live their lives through epistemology, primarily the rehabilitation of antisociality. On society going forward, I believe that when the Covid-19 vaccinations are complete, we should examine the challenges of Covid-19's secondary challenges causally on our lives, e.g. interpersonal relationships and mental health. If we take advantage of the available information, we may be able to create useful overviews of many *status quo* challenges facing modern society. In regards to you, my audience, I hope that my educational experience has left you something to consider about your own life. I believe that humanity has many problems, and many misunderstandings, about what it means to be human. However, I also believe that there are many initiatives that we can begin both individually and socially to make the future progressively better in terms of biological and psychological balance, contentment and happiness for the coming generations and ourselves.

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