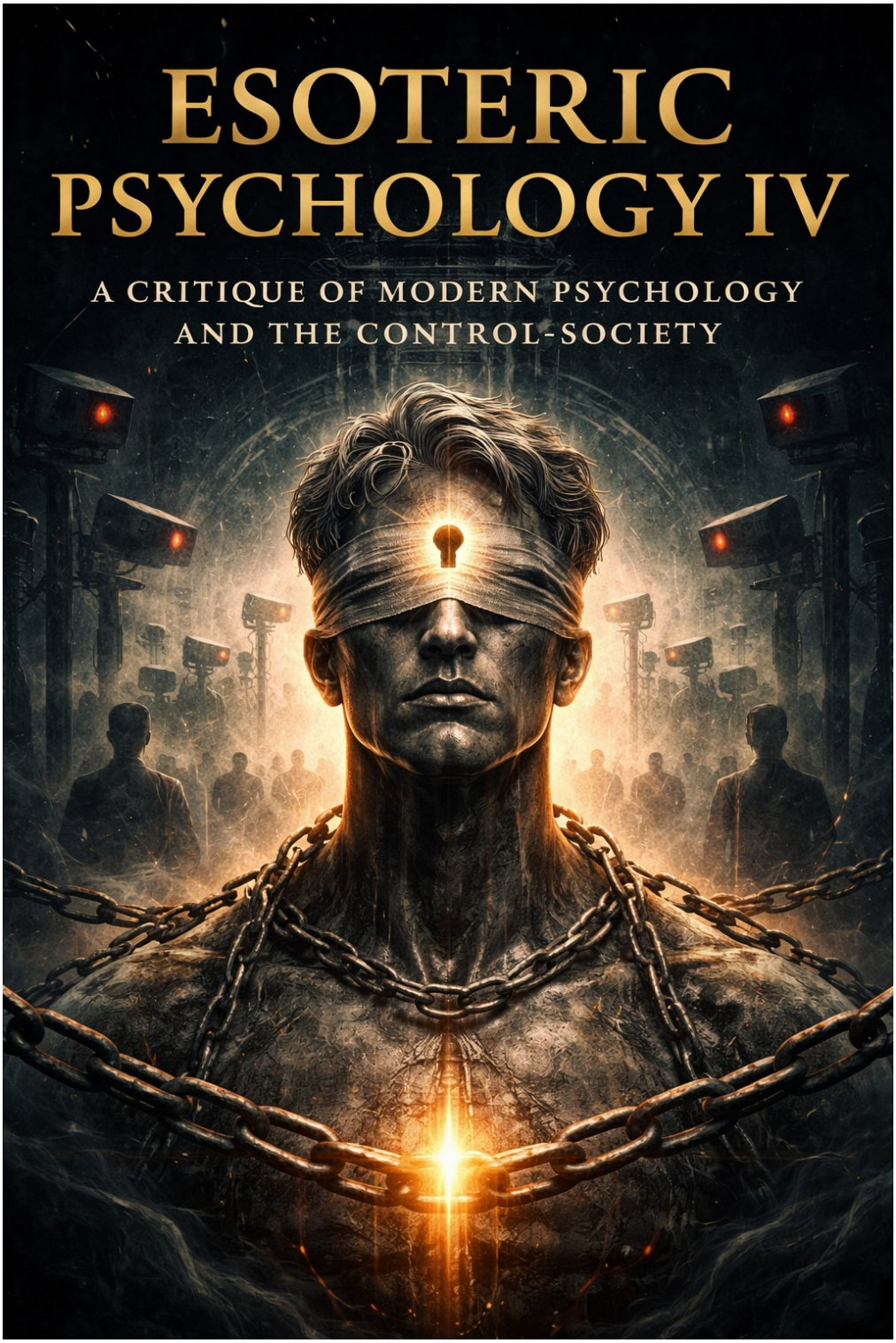
ESOTERIC PSYCHOLOGY IV

A CRITIQUE OF MODERN PSYCHOLOGY AND THE CONTROL-SOCIETY



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Index

Author's preface

The last man and the renunciation of life – The neutral zero-point of conformity in modern society

The newspeak of modern, medicinal psychology

Two comparative diagrams of traditional versus modern psychology

A critical analysis of the episteme of modern psychology

The simulacrum of power – The subjection of the psyche (soul) in the modern episteme

The possibility of resistance, transcendence and return

Abstract

Have tradition, truth, reality, and man been lost in the post-modern power projection of the materialist episteme, the medicinal psychology, and the psychiatric paradigm?

In this essay we criticize the notion of the neoliberal "last man". We criticize the logic of the materialist episteme, which so defines the minds of men in these days of governmentality and biopolitics.

The post-modern system of power operates according to the logic of certain paradigms: The inversion of the prison, the concentration camp, and the psychiatric institution. All these exemplary paradigms work to captivate man (the apparatus) in the fiction, but control-mechanism of normalcy, obedience, complacency, apathy, conformity, and uniformity – the simulacrum of post-modern power.

What is crucial is the knowledge-power nexus that Foucault has described extensively, and in this essay we especially make note of the Orwellian newspeak that is the fabric of the Deleuzian control-society, which we seek to dissect – today, the crucial point is the internalization of the reason of power – and the possibility of resistance.

We do this to make way for a renewed, sound critique of delineating the true and vital resistance to this one-dimensional and all-encompassing view of man of modern psychology.

Author's preface

What became of the tradition of spirit? Well, in modernity, the increasing "epistemic skepticism", starting with the barring of the noumenal by Kant (1781), later gave rise to the post-structuralist "negative ontology", inspired by the "ontological gap" of Heidegger (1927). Philosophical post-structuralism was then accompanied by its scientific counterpart, namely empiricism and positivism. What they agreed upon was the materialist and immanent worldview – both of these currents denied the possibility of transcendence.

Earlier, Hegel (1807) had tried to counter this pessimism in the name of tradition, but history then proved that the pessimism of "the spiritual pygmies" was politically more powerful than the optimism of the sincere Heart – until now.

For all over the world, we see mankind rising in metapolitical defiance of the neoliberal "politics of necessity" to claim another future than the mere materialist thralldom and entertainment of the simulacrum of the matrix of post-modern power.

While the philosophy of post-structuralism is very suitable for critique of power and episteme, what the critique neglects is the very reality of the truth and law of Heart of transcendence – the ancient initiatic, mystical tradition and promise, which is why we in this text will present the critique of the modern episteme, though with the transcendental tradition close to our hearts and always in mind.

So we make use of the post-structuralist critique of power, while at the same time offering the true alternative to the otherwise all overshadowing materialist episteme and liberal modality of power, which so characterizes post-modernity in the psychiatric paradigm.

Let it be noted that the main point of this essay is to criticize modern, DSM-driven, biomedical, institutional psychiatry, whereas we are more lenient and appreciative of other schools of psychology, such as humanistic psychology, existential therapy, logotherapy (Frankl), Jungian depth psychology, positive psychology, and narrative therapy.

Thank you for reading the *Epistemic Front Journal* and for tuning in to *The Hyperborean Dispatch.*

The last man and the renunciation of life – The neutral zero-point of conformity in modern society

The worrisome vision of man in Fukuyama's classic, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), is telling: Due to the decisive victory of Liberalism, the end of ideological conflict, the last man is a man of "uniformity, conformity, apathy, docility, consumerism, and superficial entertainment" in contrast to the first, heroic man of ideals, values and struggle. In this essay, based on the work of Nietzsche, Foucault, Deleuze, Agamben, Kafka, and Orwell, we seek to analyze how this view of man has come true, not as an objective, inherent *telos*, or the result of an inevitable, linear progression towards ideological-historical realization or climax, but due to the development of a specific materialist episteme, a psychiatric paradigm, and a liberal modality of power related to modernity, and accentuated in post-modernity.

We seek to redefine and make space for sound critique, even though in this modern episteme, critique has increasingly "turned inward" (Willig, 2013), as a result of the modern "revaluation of all values", as Nietzsche (1887; 1895) outlined, the "newspeak" (Orwell, 1948) of which this essay seeks to define.

The notions of "episteme", "paradigm", and "apparatus" are based on the work of Foucault (1966; 1975; 2004), and Agamben's (2006; 2009) methodological remarks.

Central to understanding the work of Foucault, Deleuze, and Agamben is the increasing shift from the disciplinary society and modality of power to the more efficient "control-society". Foucault (1975) exemplifies the disciplinary society with the metaphor of Bentham's (1791) panopticon, and in his general work his concern is with the increasing "internalization of the logic of power in the subject". Already in Foucault's work on discipline, it is entailed that the modern subject increasingly internalizes the reason of power, which Deleuze (1992) then expands into the post-modern "total surveillance and control-society", where the subject learns to "appreciate its subjection/servitude", as Huxley's (1932) dystopia is famous for describing.

To the paradigms of the inversion of the prison and the concentration camp, we can add the inversion of the psychiatric institution, all of which today exemplify, structure and normalize Western society., the psychiatric institution, which Foucault (1961; 2008) also wrote extensively about, so we are dealing with a range of paradigms that in all exemplify a specific episteme, which grants "epistemic visibility" to the subject, a "clinical gaze", which renders the subject an object for intervention by the modality of power, which enforces this episteme, the modality of power, which Foucault (2004; 2010) would then characterize as liberal "governmentality" and modern "biopolitics".

In the modern, liberal order, the knowledge-power nexus is crucial, as Foucault has proven in his range of work, for the liberal order is a paradox of rule and government, since we are now dealing with supposedly "free, equal, and respected" citizens/individuals. Since mere, sovereign discipline, the right to take life, is no longer accepted, the paradoxical question of the liberal state becomes how to "govern freedom". The answer of governmentality is to establish the "proper frame" of life and government, so that the citizens "find their condition natural and inherent", hence that they find themselves free. Lukes (2021) describes this mode of power as the third, latent level of power, where the goal is "the prevention of conflict (resistance)", "the shaping of desire", and "the invisibility of power" – the third and insidious level of power, as opposed to overt and indirect power, is "the manipulation of consciousness".

But from a traditionalist perspective, having our perception of reality and deepest desires shaped by the framing and projection of the status-quo power, the apparatus, can never be true, spiritual freedom, and this epistemic conflict we will now explore further – the newspeak of modern psychology.

The newspeak of modern, medicinal psychology

Let's present this diagram on the Orwellian newspeak of modern, medicinal psychology:

Traditional Concept	Newspeak Definition	Implication
Faith	Religious delusion/neurosis (Freud, 1927; 1930)	Faith is persecuted
Will	Megalomania; ego-inflation	Will to freedom is denied
Struggle/resistance	Paranoia; lack of insight into condition; extremism	Resistance is condemned
Courage	Hybris	Constraints are enforced
Truth	The norm of all deviation; the neutrality of the zero-point of the median of all deviation; nominalism	No truth, but normalcy; status-quo power relations are enforced
Spirit	Illusion	Being is mundane; metaphysics is outlawed
Soul	Madness	The soul is subdued by force
Happiness	Mania	Feelings are scorned
Euphoria	Torment	Aspirations are ridiculed
Love	Affective disorder	Love is chemical, not spiritual
Realization	Only of insight into illness/condition; no ideal, no peace in certainty, but awareness of deviation from the norm	Man is limited by his inherent flaw; not possible to know oneself, except illness
Responsibility	Coercion; compulsion	Loss of rights
Rationality	Apathy; cynicism	Neutralization of emotions; distrust
Poetics	Escapism; flight from reality	Imagination is symptomatic
Reality	What counts is not certainty, but normal behavior; no higher order of being	Reality is the status-quo power relations; exists only nominally
Man	Subject; exists only as an object for intervention; a deviation from the norm; a biological creature of molecular assemblage; nominal existence	Total subjectivization in the psychiatric paradigm; man has no say
Hope	Pointless; no origins, nor destiny; only finitude (Heidegger, 1927) and biological determination	The subject is finite/limited and determined; no hope of freedom; bound to treatment
Society	Institution; control; structured and normalized by the psychiatric paradigm	The inversion of the concentration camp (Agamben, 1998; 2005)
Freedom	Powerlessness; futility	Only free to acknowledge one's incompetency and need for external authority and intervention
Consciousness	Determined; epiphenomenon to biological processes; state of chemical flux and synapses; a neural complexity	Consciousness is suspicious; originality/creativity is abnormal; no thinking, but behavior
Authenticity	Dependency	Only ignorance is authentic; external authority is necessary
Authority	Administration/control (Deleuze, 1992), rather than Bildung	Status-quo power relations are self-evident
Life/existence	Renunciation, since man is inherently flawed	"Sickness unto death"; no harmony in psychic life
Knowledge	Power	Materialist truth-regime is enforced
Interests	Entertainment	Subject is reduced to pleasure
Critique	Projection; transference	Critique turns inward (Willig, 2013)
Revolt	Pathological; radicalism; extremism	Uprising is a sign of illness; opposition is barred
Transcendence	Impossible; no higher reality than the immanent/nominal	Existence is purposeless, other than conformity
Sanity	Conformity with the norm; those in positions of authority to medicate the insane/deviating masses	The system always recalibrates its power projection; recalibration of status-quo

Table 1: Examples of the denial and inversion of modern psychology of traditional values and concepts.

Two comparative diagrams of traditional versus modern psychology

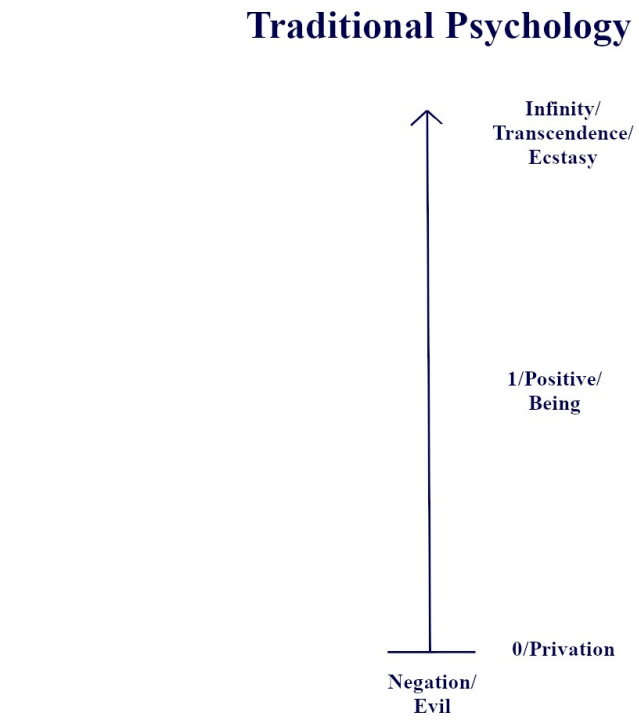

Figure 1: The hierarchical, vertical model of traditional psychology, striving towards ideals, transcendence, return.

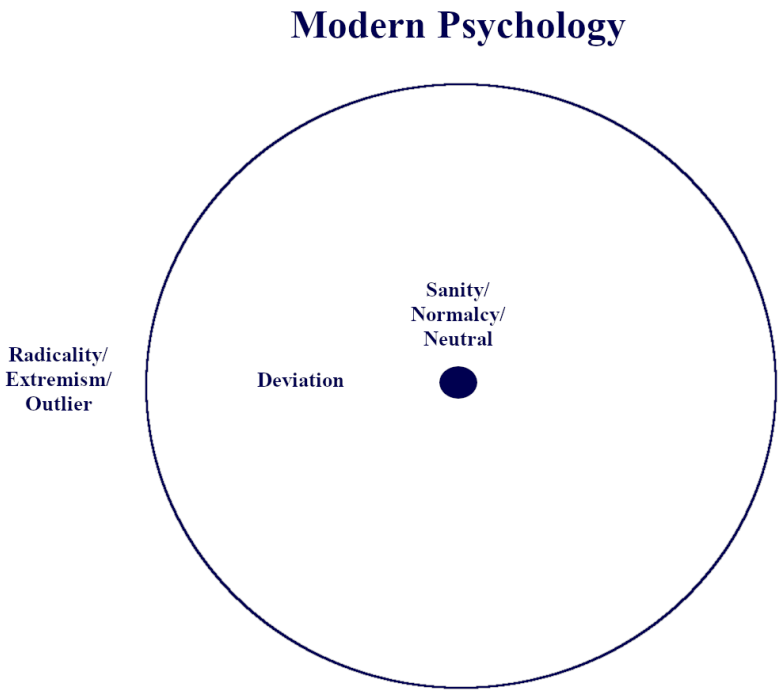

Figure 2: The spectral model of modern psychology, where all existence is considered a deviation from the fictive, neutral zero-point of normalcy. Note how this model automatically bans resistance to the status-quo normalcy.

A critical analysis of the episteme of modern psychology

When you read the previous *table 1* of the newspeak of modern psychology, you are immediately reminded of the futility of K's struggle with "the system" in Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) – in other words, in the medicinal psychology, resistance to the system "is futile", as the Borg-hive would let us know in *Star Trek* (Roddenberry, 1966). Modern, medicinal psychology operates in a closed circuit of logical self-evidence, determination, and inevitability of a materialist worldview and view of man, where, given what we have presented in *figure 2*, the life of man is inherently abnormal and deviant, life displaced into a spectrum of "disorder" and "conditions", for the truth of man has become the (fictive) norm of "the neutral point-zero of the median (not sensitive to extremes) of all deviance", which is then the imaginary point of sanity and rationality – this is the last man (the subject).

Only those who renounce (traditional) life and values, and adhere to the fictive norm of the total neutralization of free will/resistance, in the status-quo power-relations are considered sane and rational, and are then given the task to administrate the system and control and medicate the remaining, deviant population, while neutralizing radicality.

What remains inside the sphere of *figure 2* is what is considered "tolerable deviation" by the system, as they pose no threat to the status-quo power-relations and the materialist episteme, given their acceptance of being inherently deviant, but who must still be medicated due to their condition, so they don't wake up from "the Matrix" (Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999), but what remains outside the "sphere of normalcy", the resistance (traditional values), is considered a threat, and is classified as radical/extremist, statistical outliers that must be neutralized by all means necessary, so that the system can recalibrate itself in status-quo normalcy, and the power remain self-evident and in that sense invisible – for the system, resistance is futile.

So we have three classes of subjects in the episteme of modern, medicinal psychology:

1. **The normal:** The sane/rational class, who administrates the control-society in governmentality, and medicates the remaining classes. By the system, considered "neutralized", and therefore not in need of medication. Upholders of the materialist truth-regime and episteme.
2. **The deviant:** The regular, "compliant" citizen, who is not in a position of administrative authority, but who must be medicated, due to their "condition", while their behavior is tolerated by the system. The system relies upon keeping this majority, the masses, in line with the materialist episteme, as biopolitically "productive citizens".
3. **The radical:** Statistical outliers, who do not conform with the status-quo sphere of normalcy, who are considered "threats", and who must be defeated and neutralized by the system, for the system to keep the deviant class in line, and safeguard its power projection. Upholders of critique and traditional values.

List 1: Defining the three classes of the neoliberal, modern psychological episteme.

These are the three classes of the neoliberal society.

In all actually, normalcy is a statistical definition of irrelevance, the neutralized zero-point of conformity, so today, in the post-traditionalist society, the radicals are the ones we should pay attention to, those, who in the face of normalcy, conformity, and compliance uphold the eternal flame of the fire of the Immortal Heart and the Immortal Tear, as the Hyperboreans of today indeed do – the longing for the truth of the Heart, the depth of the soul, and of the return to spirit, from where we once came.

Will anyone deny the nominal reality (not truth) of this "medicinal episteme" of the neoliberal society?

The simulacrum of power – The subjection of the psyche (soul) in the modern episteme

Today, the "epistemic median value of the neutral point-zero of the norm of all deviance" is power. The epistemic value of normality is decided by those *in* power, so power is today self-evident in a statistical sense – there is no escaping the logical self-sufficiency and closed circuit of modern power.

In this modern self-sufficient definition of power, resistance is no longer an alternative order, but the *homo sacer*, the bare life that must be logically eliminated as an anomaly (threat) to empirical truth and logical order itself.

In post-modern power, the word no longer reflects any certain reality, but as the Ouroboros defines its own starting point and end simultaneously – a simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1981), where power defines itself as being empirically, statistically true (descriptively/nominally), but without reference to, anchoring, or grounding in any externality, truth, reality, or normativity – the order is self-evidently true, given its very self-defining reality and inescapable power.

The orders of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic (Lacan, 2007) have been disconnected, and power now defines itself without the contrast of any alternative, any real resistance, for resistance and revolt have been defined as pathological, threats to the logical "politics of necessity", the self-preservation of the system (materialist truth-regime).

The key concept of power in post-modernity is normality, and not normativity – hence why current power is technocratic. For the system, there is no alternative to the "end of history", and the logical necessity of the neoliberal order as the culmination of history – according to the system, this is freedom, for in the newspeak, freedom has been redefined as and reduced to pleasure/entertainment, so the masses know of no better or higher reality than mere behavioral stimuli, sensual gratification, and worldly satisfaction – the brave new world. Via constant media bombardment, subliminal suggestion, and political propaganda, the masses are told that they live in "the best of all worlds", and few dare think for themselves, wake up from the matrix, and question this maxim. Any notion of a higher political order than the technocratic is vilified as radicalization and extremism.

Mankind is constantly told that we have escaped the grip of totalitarianism, but given what we have so far described of the neoliberal order, is this order not the ultimate totalitarian order in that it medicalizes resistance without any other justification than the resistance being in opposition to the status-quo materialist, medicinal episteme? According to the system, the resistance is "a medical problem", and the truth and legitimacy of the neoliberal order are self-evident – this sounds dystopian.

Of course, psychiatry has been used by previous totalitarian regimes as well, but the novel aspect of post-modern power is that the concept of sanity has been replaced by the concept of normality, which we have proven is a fictive Rational Actor Model (RAM) of the norm of all deviance – rationality is now considered apathy, compliance, conformity, and uniformity.

Its often said that in post-modernity people are free to think and mean what they want, but this is only superficially, for we have to take into consideration the implicit assumptions of the modern episteme to know what it *would* be possible to think and mean. For example, while all kinds of rather degenerate culture are accepted and tolerated by the system, topics such as nationalism, mysticism, and transcendence are pathologized as being outside the spectrum of normality, just to give some examples of where the epistemic front is, and where we can really hurt the system. Proponents and practitioners of mysticism and transcendence are almost unequivocally medicalized by the system, for they pose the real alternative to the materialist order of pure nominalism and immanence. So resistance is still possible, which we will talk about next, we just have to delineate the epistemic fronts of truth.

The possibility of resistance, transcendence and return

Let's continue by stating that we *must* insist on the resistance, we *must* insist on the tradition, but of course, in irony, in the modern medicinal episteme, insistence is considered an "obsessive, compulsive disorder" – a "neurosis". Resistance is "paranoia", a "persecutory delusion". Revolt is "pathological" – ie. the status-quo power-relations are self-evidently true and legitimate – an automatic, self-calibrating order of necessity – "resistance is futile".

But let us not be deceived by this self-perception and projection of the system, for is the *invictus* of power not exactly what the power wants us to believe for it to remain the most effective – for it to subdue the very soul of man?

If people truly feel that there is no other alternative, if people despair, or can't even *imagine* an other alternative, the last being the most serious situation, where power unnoticed has crept into the very minds and hearts of man, as is the modality of the latent level of power and governmentality, we must reawaken the innate flame, the spark of hope in the hearts and minds of man as our first duty.

This is why we have created the *Epistemic Front Journal* as a beacon, a signal fire, of resistance, remembrance, and return.

We must break free from the indefinite thraldom of materialism, the chains of the matrix, look up from the dirty ground of the contextual dissolution of the self-referentiality and recursiveness of the simulacrum of prescribed reality, search our hearts, and find our authentic path towards spiritual enlightenment and liberation, as we were meant to do by the grace of heavens – we must again *strive for transcendence*, as was the promise of the ancient sages, from the East to the West.

Plato's (399 BC; 385 BC) concept of *anamnesis* (total recall of origins) is exemplary: If we don't wake up, we will "end up in Hades, and go to sleep forever" (Plato, 375 BC) – this is the "minne" (loving remembrance) of origins (Rosario, 1985) – this is the return to spirit, from where we came, the truth and law of the Heart.

We must begin to question the normality of the materialist truth-regime, and ask if there are any other ways. We must question and criticize the implicit assumptions of the modern episteme to discover other possibilities of knowing and being. We must not content with projection of power of man being a mere subject of the "laws of nature", a biologically determined being, not capable of knowing, lest taking responsibility and care of his/her own soul and spirit, when soul and spirit even exist.

The essence of man must again be debated in the high halls of learning, lest we run amiss of what it truly means to be man.

Given this renewed interest in what *bildung* truly means for the heart, soul, and spirit of man, we must strive towards the highest order, knowing ourselves in the light of the Immortal Heart of the divine.

We must not content with the mere "pleasure principle", but must know that life is also a struggle, a heroic struggle to rise above the mundane and self-evident necessities of existence to grasp for the higher order of the truth and law of the Heart, the transcendental origins of the Heart of man.

We must continue to bring this spiritual illumination unto our fellow comrades, so that we may together rise to resist the ominous system of the materialist episteme, which has made its almost undeniable sway upon the minds of our fellow men and women – but the Heart prevails.

All over the world, we see mankind rising in metapolitical defiance of the logic of necessity, grasping for another future than materialist thralldom, a future of a spiritual golden age, a New Ethereal Atlantis.

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