

I Think, Therefore, I Am...Confused?

Post-Postmodernism Deconstructed

(or putting Descartes before the horse manure)

Amongst the greatest labor saving inventions to come along in the latter part of the last century was the philosophy of Postmodernism. By way of a reminder, Postmodernism has been defined, loosely, as a ‘canceling of the metanarrative of western civilization’. Now to put that into plain language, Postmodernism was a rebellion against the values and traditions of western civilization, especially those supposedly embodied in “modernism”. It expressed itself as an all encompassing relativism that has seeped into every field of human thought – or lack thereof. After all, what intellectual effort does it take to accept as equal all religions, all ethics, all politics, achievements, arts, tastes, efforts, opinions, etc.

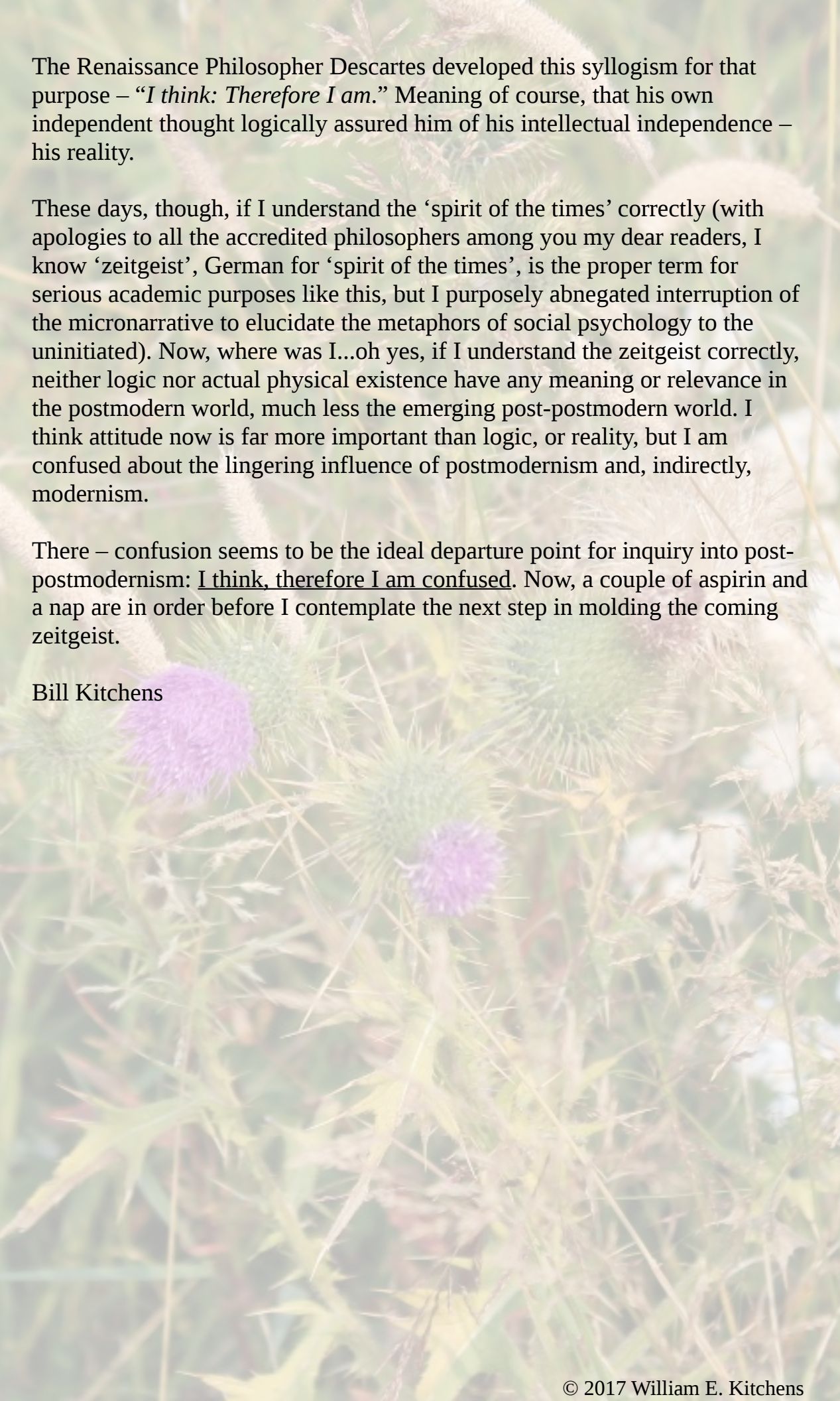
And if all choices are equal, why bother making them? Someone else surely will come along to make the choices for us, thus saving us the intellectual effort and providing us more time to enjoy the pleasures of life like entertainment and...um, entertainment. And so it transpired for many people.

Post-Modernism was a 20th Century happening though, and we are now well embarked into the 21st Century. What philosophical innovations will shape this century as Postmodernism shaped the past few generations? Will it morph into some hyper-Postmodernism, or be replaced by something entirely new? We are already hearing the term “Post-Postmodernism” thrown about, but does anyone really know what that means?

I read up on the subject, and from one prominent university website (an official .edu website no less) I gleaned the useful information that post-postmodernism was “*insistently gesturing toward the beyond...(beyond) the epistemological limits*” which are also the “*enunciative boundaries of dissonant...divisive voices*”. Just as I suspected!

I gathered from that dissertation that, although Post-Postmodernism was gestating, its final form was not assured. Now, I’ve always wanted to get in on the ground floor of some great transformational movement, so please allow me (an admitted amateur philosopher) to make some suggestions about the architecture of the emerging ‘metanarrative’ into which we all, willingly or not, will soon be plunged.

Now, where to begin? The traditional beginning point of philosophical inquiry was to establish one’s authenticity; that is, to establish by logic that one actually existed independently, not as a figment of someone else’s thought.



The Renaissance Philosopher Descartes developed this syllogism for that purpose – “*I think: Therefore I am.*” Meaning of course, that his own independent thought logically assured him of his intellectual independence – his reality.

These days, though, if I understand the ‘spirit of the times’ correctly (with apologies to all the accredited philosophers among you my dear readers, I know ‘zeitgeist’, German for ‘spirit of the times’, is the proper term for serious academic purposes like this, but I purposely abnegated interruption of the micronarrative to elucidate the metaphors of social psychology to the uninitiated). Now, where was I...oh yes, if I understand the zeitgeist correctly, neither logic nor actual physical existence have any meaning or relevance in the postmodern world, much less the emerging post-postmodern world. I think attitude now is far more important than logic, or reality, but I am confused about the lingering influence of postmodernism and, indirectly, modernism.

There – confusion seems to be the ideal departure point for inquiry into post-postmodernism: I think, therefore I am confused. Now, a couple of aspirin and a nap are in order before I contemplate the next step in molding the coming zeitgeist.

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