

Arthur Schopenhauer is famous for having reduced the 12 categories analysed by Kant (in his critique of our reason) to 1: namely, that of cause. (1) Given a cause an effect must necessarily follow. (2) If certain premises are given certain conclusions must follow. (3) The equality of the angles of a triangle, necessarily necessarily implies the equality of its angles [and vice versa]. (4) A definite course of action ensues on a given character or motive. The individual is placed at the centre of Schopenhauer's philosophy, but the unity of metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics is maintained (cf. [E.F.J. Payne](#)).

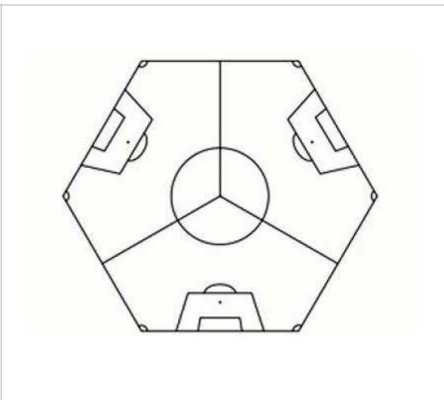
It is difficult to discuss WILLs without mentioning Schopenhauer. But one immediately confronts a language-problem, even as one enters the labours the author designed for his readers. The philosophy proper. This difficulty stems from the word *Vorstellung* in German. The most widespread English translation of the term is *representation*. In German *Vorstellung* includes 'spectacle' and 'performance'. Even in the sense closest to representation it features *agency* as partly an *effort of presentational nature*. It is the same with Wittgenstein's *Tatsach*: it is not fact, but *matters done*.

This I say as a speaker of Norwegian: here *Vorstellung* is *forestilling* and *Tatsach* is *kjennsgjerner*. There is a tacit foreclosure in English that removes agency from concepts, and a tendency to turn them into things. This has a certain number of consequences even as we approach Schopenhauer's *magnum opus*, the title of which is *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. Obviously, if *Vorstellung* is understood as **1**) 'what is placed before us' (which it can), alternatively **2**) what we conjure in our minds, or, **3**) what is immanent, we realise that *agency* is diversely implicated in *willing*.

So, discussing such topics in English translation appears to be insufficient—in the sense that joined to the *detail* of Schopenhauer's intention (which are *very* detailed), there are the *possibilities* of German/Germanic language. Should we accept language as placed before us? Consider it as a vehicle particularly apt to conjure philosophical exertions? Alternatively: does Schopenhauer's philosophy come through organically—as it were—as an underlying, immanent and connective system? It it all these at once, or does one of these takes gain preeminence as a mediator?

One will readily see that the same thing happens with *will*. Even though what is *willed* is imminent to what is *done*: mental and practical exertions. The unity between metaphysics, ethics and aesthetics—that is sustained throughout the 3 volumes of the *magnum opus*—is in that sense willed:

but is it willed in the sense of an *agent intellect*, the exertions of our *individual query*, or is it willed in the sense of a *collective mind*. Goalseeking will readily involve *all three*, in different ratios and patterns, pathfinding too. Three layers of differently embodied *will* and *mental exertion*. It is clearly *not* will and representation. In regard of foreign idioms, English can occasionally be drugged and sleepy.



If the mind is defied by its exertions and the will, what if we imagine the relation between 3 wills (collective, trans-individual and individual), in terms of Asger Jorn's 3-way football? The game is determined in the central circle in a ratio of the 3.

But can it be tooled to work otherwise and more efficiently succeed at moving *beyond* translation to transposition? If so, it is likely to require a tooling beyond language. The problem with mediations other than linguistic is that they are regularly co-opted as language: or, a "kind of language" which makes it vulnerable to linguistic emulation, substitution and erasure. Thereby removing the reflective affordances that are specific to the non-linguistic media. Like they are somehow considered being *added* to language, rather than themselves being vehicles of meaning: for instance, through their layered value.

In the present context, it does for instance make sense to discern between *monetary* value, *use-value* and *intrinsic* value: and that this tripartite imputation of value works conjointly to hatch meanings that define autonomously from language. *Genius loci*—or, the will of the place—would suggest that [Norman Potter](#)'s injunction to always seek the *resident principles*, and find them where they belong (in the work itself), to reflect the intrinsic value of the site: what it *allows*, what it *demand*s and what it *forbids*. According to Adolf Loos it would for example forbid *add-ons*.

That is, in his notion, it would forbid [ornaments](#). Fundamentally, Baudrillard's [critique](#) (some 60 years later) is that the add-ons are winning: i.e., the logic of emulation, substitution and erasure of objects by signs. Though the logic of *signs*—as add-ons—resembles the logic of ornaments, *when* it robs reality of something. But it is also clear that ornaments and signs (though they may follow the same logic) are *different*: since ornaments are crafted and earned (such as tattoos and decorations), while signs are not... they are culturally available generic signifiers (as language).

In fact, a contemporary trend is for designers to question what ornaments may *hold* properties or values that are *not* added, but define affordances of objects, situations and spaces at a deeper level. Of course, they can be used add-ons—cf, Loos' critique of adding *wanton* ornaments to *designed* facades in historicist buildings—but they can also constitute receptacles of *natural patterns* with no design. And as such, act as cultural intermediaries within societies-natures. That is, that ornaments act like *pattern holders*: of which elegant mathematical scripts are an example.

In which case the function of design is to tie up with nature—and afford interception—rather than with the utility of the comfort zone, in which aesthetics become separated from the realm of natural causes (metaphysics), which implies a difficult (if not an impossible) ethical choice: namely, the choice between ethics as a reflective practice belonging to the human realm or, alternatively, the natural realm. In this perspective, the problem does not start with ornaments *per se*, but with add-ons. Given that ornaments *can* facilitate the human ability to partake of the *contact-zone*.

An indication that this analysis may already have earned its keep is that many people today are prone to have problems looking conjointly into *metaphysics* (of causes), *aesthetics* (of what can be learned through the senses) and *ethics* (of good life). But we must not forget that this conjunction was of the essence ever from Aristotle to Spinoza and Schopenhauer. Sealing off function by limiting aesthetics locked to the everyday practices of the human life-sphere, features a the potential of a lateral drift with a deadly im-pact of sealing off human beings from the world, in a *buffer zone* of comfort, surrounding us with an invisible *film*.



Side-board with shelves. Homage to Igory Mansotti by Bjørn Blikstad. The oldest elements in the room is the wall-panel, the brick wall and the drawers (from the hospital apothecary at Ullevål). The newest: the floor, the Kvik kitchen and the shelved side board (as the last joined in).

As long as it remained complex, the modern expressions in design retained the ornamental *function*, as one can see e.g. in Le Corbusier's [Modulor](#). But as soon as it became absorbed by industrial mercantilism this baggage was eroded, fragmented and erased. The current problem we are having with tracking and purposing developments in AI, directly reflects the problems we get into if the understanding of the world is cantered around the human body and the extension of its needs. Hence, if the ornamental function is to hold patterns other than human, then we are closer to *embodiment* in the sense of Merleau-Ponty.

Physical *bodies*, celestial *bodies*, bodies of *knowledge* that call for interception rather than identification: that the ornamental function is to screen for other bodies than our own, intercept their specific affordances, and frame these for interfacing. The problem of AI may not be that it out-smarts humans—which arguably is meaningless—but it requires a mindfulness of different levels and layers of the self. The consumerist mindset of mercantile industry makes us unprepared for this. While the inflections of the self from collective, trans-individual to individual will is sure to bring up mental exertions of a different kind than those we are presently defining. Bruno Latour states that modernism is *not* [sustainable](#). Its ailing joinery depletes the Earth.