

The grim probity of Arthur Schopenhauer and Ferdinand Tönnies

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Introduction

The influence of the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) on the sociology of its founder in Germany, Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936) has been addressed but not exhaustively explored.¹ Jürgen Zander points out that Tönnies was a link between Schopenhauerian philosophy and German sociology of the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century², without scrutinizing the seams between the metaphysics and the ethics of Schopenhauer, on the one hand, and the psychological sociology of Tönnies on the other. Cornelius Bickel notes that Tönnies had received elements of his concept of will from Schopenhauer which point to the philosophical anthropology of the 1920s³, but points above all to Tönnies' reservations regarding Schopenhauer, thus obscuring Schopenhauer's essential influence. We propose a broader and deeper exploration of the issues raised by those publications, considering the *fundamental* importance of Schopenhauer for Tönnies' intellectual development and scrutinizing the language of either philosopher to uncover their affinities. Tönnies had, after all, declared Schopenhauer to be the most important philosopher of the nineteenth century well before Tönnies engaged in the study of those authors who have been seen as seminal for his sociology – Thomas Hobbes, Baruch Spinoza, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Adam Smith and Karl Marx. Tönnies was demonstrably familiar with virtually all of Schopenhauer's work, and the inspiration he drew from Schopenhauer's reflections on ethics was equal to that from Schopenhauer's writing on the "will". We take note of a few shared biographical

1 My thanks to Professor Birnbacher for his support and Professor Koßler for his helpful comments.

2 Zander, Jürgen: Ferdinand Tönnies und seine Beziehung zu Arthur Schopenhauer und Max Weber. In: *Tönnies-Forum: Mitglieder-Rundbrief der Ferdinand-Tönnies-Gesellschaft e.V.*, H. 1 (2004), Jürgen Zander – eine Anthologie, 5–15.

3 Bickel, Cornelius: *Ferdinand Tönnies: Soziologie als skeptische Aufklärung zwischen Historismus und Rationalismus*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag 1991, 90.

singularities which illuminate the respective “pessimism” of either thinker, but also point to the vast differences of value preferences between the two authors.

An intellectual historian will be inclined to put a query to philosophers: Although Ferdinand Tönnies’ *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* is incontestably a philosophical work, indeed too philosophical a work for the standards of post-war sociology in Germany as presented by the Durkheimian, René König⁴, inspiring E. G. Jacoby’s retort that König was “anti-philosophical”⁵, why do present-day philosophers not count Tönnies among their own? Between the publication of the histories of philosophy by Ueberweg-Heinze⁶ and Vorländer⁷, which make mention of Tönnies and to which Tönnies alludes in the foreword to the second edition of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* of 1912⁸ and a dissertation recently submitted by Aurélian Berlan to the philosophers Axel Honneth of the Goethe University in Frankfurt and Catherine Colliot-Thélène at the University of Rennes⁹, Tönnies has received scant attention from academic philosophers, although the philosopher, Friedrich Paulsen, had written in the *Quarterly for scientific philosophy* as early as 1888 that *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*

[...] is not, as the title appears to indicate, a monograph about a couple of concepts of the social sciences, and even less, despite its orderly paragraphs, a textbook from a complete discipline; instead, it is a philosophical system in germination: a psychology, an ethic, an epistemology, and no less a body of social, state and legal theory, and finally and especially a philosophy of history in embryonic form. The book can be compared with Hobbes’ first work, *Elements of Law*, or with Schopenhauer’s *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* [...]. It includes subjects for long, subsequent intellectual sequences.¹⁰

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- 4 König, René: Zur Problematik und Anwendung der Begriffe Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Die Begriffe Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft bei Ferdinand Tönnies. In: *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* VII (1955), 348–420.
 - 5 Jacoby, E. G.: Zur reinen Soziologie. In: *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 20 (1968), 448–470.
 - 6 Ueberweg, Friedrich: *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie. T. 4., Das neunzehnte Jahrhundert und die Gegenwart*. 11. Aufl., mit einem Philosophen- und Literatoren-Register vers. Aufl. / neu bearb. und hrsg. von Konstantin Oesterreich. Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn 1916.
 - 7 Vorländer, Karl: *Geschichte der Philosophie*. Leipzig 1919.
 - 8 Tönnies, Ferdinand: *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1979.
 - 9 Berlan, Aurélian: *La critique culturelle et la constitution de la sociologie allemande*. Thèse de doctorat présenté à l’Université de Rennes 1, édité par l’ANRT, Lille, 2008. Cf. Berlan, Aurélian: La *kulturkritik* et la constitution de la sociologie allemande : Ferdinand Tönnies, Georg Simmel et Max Weber. In: *Labyrinthe*, 23 | 2006 (1), mis en ligne le 24 juillet 2008. URL: <http://labyrinthe.revues.org/index1168.html>. Consulted February 2, 2011.
 - 10 Paulsen, Friedrich: Tönnies, Ferdinand. *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. Abhandlung des Communismus und des Socialismus als empirische Culturformen. In: *Vierteljahresschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie* XII (1888). Leipzig: Fues’s Verlag 1887, 111–119.

The comparison with Schopenhauer is all the more remarkable inasmuch as Paulsen, Tönnies' philosophical mentor, was as great an admirer of Schopenhauer as Tönnies was. The discrediting of Tönnies by the Marxist philosopher, Georg Lukács as a "destroyer of reason"¹¹ may be one reason for a general decline in interest in Tönnies among philosophers, (such as those of the Frankfurt School, notwithstanding obvious debts) and another may lie in Tönnies' relegation to the specialised discipline of sociology after he played a leading role in its establishment in the early twentieth century Germany. Be that as it may, Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* was a work of nineteenth century philosophy, issuing from a *Habilitation* thesis that had been submitted at a philosophical faculty to the philosopher, Benno Erdmann. Tönnies found it irksome that his work was accorded so little interest by philosophers. Yet in his autobiographical sketch, he notes with apparent surprise that a perusal of his notes show that his interest at the time of the development of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* in the 1880s had been primarily focussed on ethics.¹² Tönnies, who had become a champion of a value neutral social science with Max Weber between 1905 and 1910, found it retrospectively curious to see to what extent his founding work of sociology had actually been one of normative philosophy. It need not surprise us that that if the philosophical aspects of the work had become obscure even to their author, they should also have escaped the attention of others. But is it not time that philosophers return to Tönnies?

It may be assumed that Tönnies was familiar with the greater part of Schopenhauer's philosophical production. In his brief autobiography, Tönnies mentions having read Schopenhauer's first major contribution to philosophy, *Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde*, written in 1813, early in his intellectual development. He directly draws from *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Schopenhauer's opus magnum, written between 1814 and 1818, which like Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, was for a fair length of time ignored prior to being celebrated. Given their historical intellectual status, both thinkers were also altogether underrated in the academic establishment at the prime of their lives; there is a poignant parallel in the length it took for them to obtain recognition for their thinking. After lecturing at the University of Berlin in 1820 at the age of thirty-two, Schopenhauer became despondent of academic philosophy, abandoning the university of Berlin in 1821, only to make a brief attempt to return in 1825, but moving to Frankfurt in 1833. Tönnies was also

11 Lukács, Georg: *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*, Berlin 1954.

12 Tönnies, Ferdinand: "Ferdinand Tönnies, Eutin (Holstein)". In: *Die deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellung*. Intro. and ed. Raymund Schneider. Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1922.

disdainful of academic philosophy¹³ and was not hired as an ordinary professor at the Christian-Albrechts University in Kiel in 1909 until the age of fifty-four. Notwithstanding the inauspicious initial reception of both opuses, their works were subsequently received far later by audiences of young intellectuals who became enamoured of both thinkers, Schopenhauer by a host of artists and authors in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and Tönnies by swathes of the *Jugendbewegung* or youth movement from the second decade of the twentieth century onward. In 1839, Schopenhauer produced his third influential work, *Über die Freiheit des menschlichen Willens*, which was rewarded the prize of the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences. In 1840, Schopenhauer's *Über das Fundament der Moral*, in contrast, was not awarded the prize of the Royal Danish Academy of the Sciences, and Schopenhauer showed a sort of defiant pride in alluding to this Danish shortsightedness. In 1841, Schopenhauer published both in a single volume entitled *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik*, and we see these ethical writings as of equal influence on young Tönnies. In 1844, Schopenhauer completed the second part of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, and Schopenhauer died at the age of 82 in 1860.

Tönnies' admiration for Schopenhauer is documented in Tönnies' first published work, written when he was twenty and later dismissed by his author as "a somewhat inane defence of fraternities"¹⁴, in which Tönnies cites Schopenhauer as the "greatest philosopher of this non-philosophical century", because of Schopenhauer's recognition of "the power of the unconscious will over conscious knowledge".¹⁵ Schopenhauer was not a romantic, and was skeptical of the legacy left by Fichte, on the one hand, and by Hegel on the other, in short of idealism. To be Schopenhauerian comforted many nineteenth-century intellectuals in their decision not to be Hegelian. Tönnies' admiration was not uncritical. In a letter to Paulsen of March 26, 1882, Tönnies expresses irritation at Schopenhauer's "persistent metaphysical illusionism"¹⁶, as well as at Schopenhauer's indifference to the "empirical sciences" or *Erfahrungswissenschaften* that deal with human life, notably history, which had developed at the same time as Schopenhauer's own philosophy. He went so far as to complain of the "vague

13 Letter of June 29, 1876. In: Paulsen, Friedrich und Tönnies, Ferdinand: *Briefwechsel. 1876–1908*. Ed. by Klose, Jacoby and Fischer, Kiel: Ferdinand Hirt 1961, 98.

14 Tönnies, Ferdinand: *Die deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellung*. Leipzig: Meiner 1922.

15 Tönnies, Julius: *Eine höchst nötige Antwort auf die höchst unnötige Frage: „Was ist studentische Reform?“*. Jena: Verlag von Carl Döbereiner 1875, 4: "Weiß er denn nicht, was der größte Philosoph, den dies unphilosophische Jahrhundert gesehen hat, ich meine Schopenhauer, von der Macht des unbewußten Willens über die bewußte Erkenntnis gesagt hat?"

16 Paulsen, Friedrich und Tönnies, Ferdinand: *Briefwechsel. 1876–1908*. Ed. by Klose, Jacoby and Fischer, Kiel: Ferdinand Hirt 1961, 151.

tattle with which the philosopher regales us whenever he is confronted with tangible problems of human life.”¹⁷ However, Schopenhauer is an important link between three distinct fields: that which Tönnies describes as biology – and Tönnies will have taken due note of the fact that Schopenhauer, a polymath, had started studying medicine –, that which Tönnies refers to as “psychology”, or the study of human motives and their bases in volition, and finally sociology, the science of human interaction or living together.

The natural essence

Like other philosophers, such as John Locke, Schopenhauer had gained access to a specialized understanding of biology through medical training. When Tönnies embarked upon his own interdisciplinary exploration of social life as a complex variant of human life, he sought to catch up in biological references, and one of his most significant references for the link between the various levels of human existence, which he presents as the “vegetative”, the “animal” and the “mental”, was Arthur Schopenhauer. This is not the only somewhat surprising disciplinary point of convergence. Schopenhauer had also initially been trained for commerce, and more specifically for international commerce, having undertaken an apprenticeship in sales (*Kaufmannslehre*) from 1805 onwards. Ferdinand Tönnies was familiar with the world of international commerce primarily through his brother, a London merchant and his reading of economists, primarily Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Adolph Wagner, etc. Their speculation oscillated between the two extremes of biological drives and advanced purposive rationality. Both philosophers were preoccupied with the role of sex and sexuality in the human condition, and both left controversial statements regarding gender and gender roles, and although Tönnies’ understanding of femininity is rather different from Schopenhauer’s, both philosophers are now regarded as obnoxious on issues of gender. Both were cosmopolitan in their outlook and crossed national borders: Schopenhauer had spent part of his youth in Le Havre and Wimbledon, and Tönnies travelled to England in 1878 and later to work on Thomas Hobbes, frequenting British philosophers such as Herbert Spencer or the young Bertrand Russell, completed *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* in Switzerland and Merano, and later developed contacts to French-speaking sociologists such as Durkheim and René Worms.

In brief, these two philosophers shared a preoccupation with what is *essential* to human beings, which they both regarded as determined by a greater force described by both as “will”, which in turn was determined by material factors.

17 “[...] das vage Gerede, wie dieser Philosoph so oft es zum Besten gibt, wo er auf konkrete Probleme des menschlichen Lebens gerät.” Quoted Bickel, op. cit. 281.

They were also concerned with the *rationality* of human beings in the pursuit of their aims. The relationship of ends to the means chosen to attain them is a common philosophical concern, and is the effective nexus to such later sociological reflection on the means-end relation as that of Georg Simmel and Max Weber.

The first obvious concern Schopenhauer and Tönnies shared was with the will and its liberty or determined quality. Schopenhauer had written that while Spinoza and Descartes had posited that humans want what they know, he, Schopenhauer had recognized that man knows what he wants to know.¹⁸ This primacy of the will is ubiquitous in Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. And although the concept of will is found as readily in the work of Baruch Spinoza and Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Ritter von Schelling, Schopenhauer's reflections on will and its determinedness had taken the discussion into the nineteenth century, at which point Tönnies took it up. We propose to explore a few aspects of Schopenhauer's notion of the will, and its impact on Tönnies' own doctrines in this nineteenth century context.

The will

Schopenhauer affirms that our knowledge of our will cannot be divided from our knowledge of the body. In his discussion of the "objectivation of the will" in the second book of *The World as Will and Representation*, chapter 18, he asserts that "in the end, knowledge I have of my will, although immediate, cannot be separated from that of my body."¹⁹ He points out that one "can express this in various ways, and say 'my life and my will are one', or that I can refer to what I call my body in a visual representation as my will inasmuch as I am aware of it in a very different way which can be compared to no other, or that my body is the *objectivity* of my will."²⁰ In Tönnies, we find various expressions of the same equation of the body and the will. Tönnies opens *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* with the two sentences,

Human wills are in multifarious relationships to one another; every such relationship is a mutual effect inasmuch as when inflicted [*getan*] or given [*gegeben*] from one side are suffered [*erlitten*] or received [*empfangen*] by the others. These effects

18 "[...] *bei mir erkennt er was er will.*" Schopenhauer, Arthur: *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, § 55. Published in: Arthur Schopenhauer. *Sämtliche Werke*. Hrsg. v. Arthur Hübscher. 7 Bände. 4. Aufl. Mannheim: F. A. Brockhaus, 1988, volumes 2 and 3. Cf. the translation by Eric F. J. Payne: *The World as Will and Representation* (= WWR), New York 1966.

19 "*Endlich ist die Erkenntniß, welche ich von meinem Willen habe, obwohl eine unmittelbare, doch von der meines Leibes nicht zu trennen.*" W I, § 18, 121.

20 "Den Ausdruck derselben kann man verschiedentlich wenden, und sagen: mein Leib und mein Wille sind Eines; – oder was ich als anschauliche Vorstellung meinen Leib nenne, nenne ich, sofern ich desselben auf eine ganz verschiedene, keiner andern zu vergleichenden Weise mir bewußt bin, meinen Willen; – oder, mein Leib ist die *Objektivität* meines Willens; [...]" W I, 122.

are either of such a quality as to tend to preserve or to destroy the other will or body – effects of affirmation or of negation.²¹

If we are attentive to Tönnies' words, we see that the distinction Tönnies makes between giving and receiving and inflicting and suffering is also a borrowing from Schopenhauer, who writes in chapter 65 of *The World as Will and Representation* that “the pure *theory of law* [*Rechtslehre*] is thus a chapter of morality and refers directly only to inflicting [*tun*], not to suffering [*leiden*].”²² Furthermore, the notion of affirmation of a body or a will is also taken from Schopenhauer, who wrote that

[...] the first and simple affirmation of the will to life is only the affirmation of one's own body, i.e. representation of the will through acts in that time in which the body, in its form and its expediency, represent the same will in spatial terms and nothing else.²³

Tönnies again alludes to the physicality of the will when he presents the basis of community as lying in the “context of vegetative life through birth”, asserting that “human wills, inasmuch as every human will corresponds to a bodily constitution” (*einer leiblichen Konstitution*) are related or become necessarily bonded through ancestry and sex.²⁴ For both Tönnies and Schopenhauer, the will has primacy over specific motives. In chapter 20 of *World*, Schopenhauer writes that motives are mere expressions of the will at any given time. The “entire essence” of my “willing” cannot be explained from motives, but the latter are merely its expression at any point in time, are the mere occasion on which my will shows itself; the will, however, lies outside the dominion of the law of moti-

21 “Die menschlichen Willen stehen in vielfachen Beziehungen zu einander; jede solche Beziehung ist eine gegenseitige Wirkung, die insofern, als von der einen Seite getan oder gegeben, von der anderen erlitten oder empfangen wird. Diese Wirkungen sind aber entweder so beschaffen, daß sie zur Erhaltung, oder so, daß sie zur Zerstörung des anderen Willens oder Leibes tendieren: bejahende oder verneinende.” Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Thema § 1.

22 W I, § 62, 404: “Die reine *Rechtslehre* ist also ein Kapitel der *Moral* und bezieht sich direkt bloß auf das *Thun*, nicht auf das *Leiden*.” These Schopenhauerian borrowings have unfortunately been obscured in previous translations into English, for instance Jose Harris' and Margaret Hollis' recent rendition in Cambridge University Press, in which “doing or giving”, “suffering or receiving” is replaced with “active or passive”. Tönnies, Ferdinand: *Community and Civil Society*. Translated by Margaret Hollis and edited by Jose Harris. Cambridge: CUP, 2001.

23 W I, § 62, 404: “[...] die erste und einfache Bejahung des Willens zum Leben nur Bejahung des eigenen Leibes ist, d. h. Darstellung des Willens durch Akte in der Zeit, in so weit schon der Leib, in seiner Form und Zweckmäßigkeit, den selben Willen räumlich darstellt, und nicht weiter.”

24 “Die allgemeine Wurzel dieser Verhältnisse ist der Zusammenhang des vegetativen Lebens durch die Geburt; die Tatsache, daß menschliche Willen, insofern als jeder einer leiblichen Konstitution entspricht, durch *Abstammung* und Geschlecht miteinander verbunden sind und bleiben, oder notwendiger Weise werden.” Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Buch 1, § 1.

vation; only its appearance at every point of time is necessarily determined by that law.”²⁵ Schopenhauer notes that although every single action necessarily follows from motives just as growth and organic changes follow in animal bodies from causes, the entire sequence of actions and the entire body itself is nothing other than a manifestation of the will, its presentation as an object.²⁶ In this respect, again, we will find that Tönnies remains faithful to Schopenhauer, continuing throughout his life to explore principally forms of volition, while Max Weber, for instance, differed from Tönnies in his primary interest for motives, introducing the notion of “*motivationsmässiges Verstehen*” or an understanding of motives. It is as a Schopenhauerian that Tönnies remained consistently indifferent to the problem of “understanding” (*Verstehen*) introduced into the epistemology of the human sciences by Droysen, furthered by Dilthey, and associated with the sociologies of Georg Simmel and Max Weber.

It is in a Schopenhauerian vein that Tönnies writes in his discussion of the development of essential will in organic life that

[...] if a will at every moment of time is another one, just as the body, its individual origin, according to this view of things, can itself be viewed as a succession of acts of volition of which each one requires all of the preceding ones which constitute the organic force to the extent that it has been generated as well as a certain quality of external stimuli.²⁷

Tönnies goes yet farther, using the concept of an “original will”, an *Urwille*, which had been anticipated by Schelling, although not used by Schopenhauer, (despite the title chosen for an anthology of his work).²⁸ Tönnies writes of

25 “Daher ist mein Wollen nicht seinem ganzen Wesen nach aus den Motiven zu erklären; sondern diese bestimmen bloß seine Aeußerung im gegebenen Zeitpunkt, sind bloß der Anlaß, bei dem sich mein Wille zeigt: dieser selbst hingegen liegt außerhalb des Gebietes des Gesetzes der Motivation: nur seine Erscheinung in jedem Zeitpunkt ist durch dieses nothwendig bestimmt.” W I, § 20, 127.

26 “Obgleich also jede einzelne Handlung, unter Voraussetzung des bestimmten Charakters, nothwendig bei dargebotenem Motiv erfolgt, und obgleich das Wachsthum, der Ernährungsproceß und sämtliche Veränderungen im thierischen Leibe nach nothwendig wirkenden Ursachen (Reizen) vor sich gehn; so ist dennoch die ganze Reihe der Handlungen, folglich auch jede einzelne, und eben so auch deren Bedingung, der ganze Leib selbst, der sie vollzieht, folglich auch der Proceß durch den und in dem er besteht – nichts Anderes, als die Erscheinung des Willens, die Sichtbarwerdung, *Objektivität des Willens*.” W I, 129.

27 Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Buch 2, § 4. Organisches Leben – Entwicklung des Wesenswillens: “Wenn also auch Wille in jedem Momente der Zeit ein anderer ist, gleichwie der Leib, so kann doch nach dieser Betrachtung seine individuelle Entstehung selber als eine Sukzession von Willensakten gedacht werden, deren jeder alle vorhergehenden – als welche zusammen die so weit fertige organische Kraft ausmachen – und eine gewisse Beschaffenheit äußerer Reize voraussetzt.”

28 Cf. Arthur Schopenhauer. *Urwille und Welterlösung. Ausgewählte Schriften*. Edited by Gerhard Stenzel, introduction by Anton Eigner. Gütersloh: Mohn 1958.

[...] all the preceding wills, which go back to the initial predisposition, the *Ur-wille*, which involve all the wills in this conditioned way – not as logical, but as real possibilities, indeed as high probabilities which under the remaining given circumstances grow to necessities and as such become realities.²⁹

Although we do not find the word *Urwille* in *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer elucidates what Tönnies means when Schopenhauer writes that

[...] intelligible character coincides with the idea, or more appropriately with the original act of will which is manifest in it; thus, not merely the empirical character of every human being, but also of every species of animal, indeed every species of plant, and even every original force of inorganic nature is to be viewed as a manifestation of intelligible character, i.e. an indivisible act of will which is out of time.³⁰

In the thinking of Schopenhauer and Tönnies, in contradistinction to all those who described a will as “free”, the will is subject to material determinants. Schopenhauer had expressed this radically when he wrote that Spinoza was correct in asserting that if it were conscious, a stone flying through the air would assume that it was flying out of its own free will, adding that the stone would be right: being thrown is merely the motive; Spinoza was referring only to the necessity which made the stone fly and correctly applied it to the necessity of any act of volition of a human being.³¹ His understanding of “the freedom of will” has been summarized as, “Man can do what he wants, but he cannot want what he wants.”³² In his *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will* of 1839, chosen as the

29 Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* Buch 2, § 4. Organisches Leben – Entwicklung des Wesenwillens: “Alle vorhergehenden – bis zurück auf die anfängliche Anlage, den Urwillen, welcher sie alle, in dieser bedingten Weise involviert, nicht als logische, sondern als *reale Möglichkeiten*, ja hohe Wahrscheinlichkeiten, die alsdann, unter gegebenen übrigen Bedingungen, zu Notwendigkeiten anwachsen und als solche zur Wirklichkeit gelangen.”

30 W I, § 27, 185f.: “Der intelligible Charakter fällt also mit der Idee, oder noch eigentlicher mit dem ursprünglichen Willensakt, der sich in ihr offenbart, zusammen: insofern ist also nicht nur der empirische Charakter jedes Menschen, sondern auch der jeder Thierspecies, ja jeder Pflanzenspecies und sogar jeder ursprünglichen Kraft der unorganischen Natur, als Erscheinung eines intelligibeln Charakters, d.h. eines außerzeitlichen untheilbaren Willensaktes anzusehn.”

31 W I, § 24, 150: “Spinoza sagt (*epist. 62*), daß der durch einen Stoß in die Luft fliegende Stein, wenn er Bewußtseyn hätte, meinen würde, aus seinem eigenen Willen zu fliegen. Ich setze nur noch hinzu, daß der Stein Recht hätte. Der Stoß ist für ihn, was für mich das Motiv, und was bei ihm als Kohäsion, Schwere, Beharrlichkeit im angenommenen Zustande erscheint, ist, dem innern Wesen nach, das Selbe, was ich in mir als Willen erkenne, und was, wenn auch bei ihm die Erkenntniß hinzuträte, auch er als Willen erkennen würde. Spinoza, an jener Stelle, hatte sein Augenmerk auf die Nothwendigkeit, mit welcher der Stein fliegt, gerichtet und will sie, mit Recht, übertragen auf die Nothwendigkeit des einzelnen Willensaktes einer Person.”

32 “*Der Mensch kann zwar tun, was er will, aber er kann nicht wollen, was er will*” has been attributed to Albert Einstein. Schopenhauer himself wrote that you can do what you want, but at any

winning entry in a competition organized by the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences, Schopenhauer presents his ideas on the determination of the will more pithily: will is a given, the product of determinants outside an individual's control, opening up a space only for freedom to act.

Schopenhauer makes distinctions with respect to the level of consciousness of acts of volition: while every human being can be seen as a particular manifestation of the will, in a sense as his or her own idea, such individuality is lacking among animals, since only the species is of particular significance, the trace of which vanishes the more remote we are from humans; finally plants have no other individual particularity apart from that explained by the favourable or unfavourable influences of soil and climate and other coincidences; thus, in the inorganic realm of nature, all individuality vanishes.³³ In *World*, Schopenhauer writes that

[...] the will, which in itself is without knowledge and a blind, inexorable drive as we see it appear in inorganic and vegetable nature and its laws as well as the vegetative part of our own life, receives through the world of representation, which develops in its service, the knowledge of its will and what it is, what it wants, i.e. that it is nothing other than the world and life itself, just as it exists.³⁴

Tönnies takes the category of will and develops his own distinction between *Wesenwille* or *essential will* and *Kürwille*, (initially *Willkür*) or *arbitrary will* principally upon the distinction between the ends in themselves and the means, but also upon the notion of freedom. Here, Tönnies shows himself to be a pupil of Schopenhauer with regards to any notion of "free will", however the distinction that Tönnies makes between *Wesenwille* and *Kürwille* is a response to Immanuel

moment of your life you can only want a determined thing, and nothing other than that one thing. "*Du kannst thun was du willst: aber du kannst, in jedem gegebenen Augenblick deines Lebens, nur ein Bestimmtes wollen und schlechterdings nichts Anderes, als dieses Eine.*" Hübscher edition, p. 24.

33 W I, § 26, 156f: "Während nun also jeder Mensch als eine besonders bestimmte und charakterisirte Erscheinung des Willens, sogar gewissermaßen als eine eigene Idee anzusehn ist, bei den Thieren aber dieser Individualcharakter im Ganzen fehlt, indem nur noch die Species eine eigenthümliche Bedeutung hat, und seine Spur immer mehr verschwindet, je weiter sie vom Menschen absteht, die Pflanzen endlich gar keine andere Eigenthümlichkeiten des Individuums mehr haben, als solche, die sich aus äußern günstigen oder ungünstigen Einflüssen des Bodens und Klimas und andern Zufälligkeiten vollkommen erklären lassen; so verschwindet endlich im unorganischen Reiche der Natur gänzlich alle Individualität."

34 W I, § 54, 323: "Der Wille, welcher rein an sich betrachtet, erkenntnißlos und nur ein blinder, unaufhaltsamer Drang ist, wie wir ihn noch in der unorganischen und vegetabilischen Natur und ihren Gesetzen, wie auch im vegetativen Theil unsers eigenen Lebens erscheinen sehn, erhält durch die hinzugetretene, zu seinem Dienst entwickelte Welt der Vorstellung die Erkenntniß von seinem Wollen und von dem was es sei, das er will, daß es nämlich nichts Anderes sei, als diese Welt, das Leben, gerade so wie es dasteht."

Kant's distinction between *Wille* or will and *Willkür* or free choice. Tönnies recognizes that the subject is not free to choose what he wants as an object, for what he wants is inscribed in his will. While Kant posited that human freedom in volition consisted in the *renunciation* of what one wants for the realization of *virtue* from a position of *individual moral autonomy*, Tönnies does not see human rationality as being applied to doing *good*, but only to realizing selfish advantage. "Will" is not, according to Kant, related to an action, but to the determining grounds of the capacity to act arbitrarily, and has no determining grounds per se; however, inasmuch as the will "can be determined by arbitrariness [*Willkür*]", it is "practical reason itself." A subject's awareness that he or she can yield to his or her inclinations on the one hand, or take rational and considered action on the other, is the basis of moral action. Kant distinguishes between that freedom of choice based upon inclination (*Neigung*) which he calls *tierische Willkür* (*arbitrium brutum*) or "animal arbitrariness" on the one hand, and *menschliche Willkür*, or "human arbitrariness" on the other, which in the absence of reason is impure but through reason allows for actions of "pure will". "The freedom of arbitrariness [*Willkür*] is the independence of its determination by sensual impulses; this is the concept defined negatively. Defined positively, the concept is the capacity of pure reason to become practical for itself." Pure reason can only become practical reason when the maxim for every action is subjected to the criterion as to whether it could be valid as a general law. We can establish that our action is moral by reflecting upon what the consequences would be if everyone were to act in a similar manner. Such general laws, "laws of freedom, in contrast to laws of nature, are called moral laws."³⁵

However, rationality in the world of Tönnies, following Schopenhauer, is not based upon moral values and considerations of virtue, but upon the ability to choose freely among those *means* which are best adapted to achieving an end. Not autonomous reflection on the categorical imperative, as in Kant, but empathy (*Mitgefühl*) or pity (*Mitleid*) forms the basis of ethical action in the ethics of Schopenhauer and Tönnies. Rationality as understood by Schopenhauer and Tönnies is not one of values, but merely purposive rationality, (later referred to by Max Weber as *Zweckrationalität*).

It is from here that Tönnies develops his own "psychology", using categories to be found in Schopenhauer, but in an original way. Schopenhauer's major work contains such concepts as *Gewissen* or moral conscience, *Bewusstheit* or awareness, *Bedacht* or deliberation and *Gedächtnis* or memory, which are subsequently worked over by Tönnies upon the basis of his distinction between *Wesenwille* and *Kürwille*. With a striking sensitivity for the use of the prefixes *ge-* and *be-* in

35 Kant, Immanuel: *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*. In: Immanuel Kant: *Werke in zwölf Bänden*. Herausgegeben von Wilhelm Weischedel. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1977, vol. 8, pp. 317ff.

German connected to identical roots (*Wissen* and *Denken*), Tönnies points to a distinction between the *passive* forms of knowledge (*Wissen*) or thought (*Denken*) in moral conscience (*Gewissen*) and memory (*Gedächtnis*), issuing from a backwards perspective of *past experience*, on the one hand, and on the other hand *active* thought in the form of awareness (*Bewusstheit*) and deliberation (*Bedacht*), directed forwards in the pursuit of *future aims*. According to Tönnies, the former are fundamental to the “essence” of a communion of individuals in a social order of harmony, called *Gemeinschaft* or community, while the latter are typical of the “concept” (*Begriff*) of *Gesellschaft* or society. Alienation occurs when the latter supplant the former. Tönnies recognizes in Schopenhauer a philosopher who rather than deducting moral maxims from man’s capacity to reason recognizes the moral propensity of humankind in sentiment, compassion or pity. Schopenhauer writes that

[...] after digressing on the identity of pure love with pity [...] I shall take up the thread of our interpretation of the ethical significance of action again, showing how that the same source from which kindness, love, duty and nobility spring forth also bears forth what I call the negation of life. Just as we saw that hate and evil are conditioned by egotism, which is based upon the subjection of knowledge to *principio individuationis*, we found that the origins and essence of justice, and beyond that, of love and nobility at the highest level implies looking through that *principio individuationis*, which alone by suspending the distinction between oneself and other individuals allows for and accounts for the most perfect kindness in outlook, which can extend to the most selfless love and the most generous self-sacrifice for others.³⁶

Tönnies’ outlook differs from Schopenhauer’s, however, in notable respects. For Tönnies, the intellect does not rise above the will to neutralize it in a gesture of supererogation; instead, Tönnies believes that essential will is in itself the force which will drive humans in community to altruistic action. As Cornelius Bickel has pointed out, the intellect is integrated in Tönnies’ category of essential will,

36 W I, § 68, 446f.: “Nach dieser Abschweifung über die Identität der reinen Liebe mit dem Mitleid, welches letzteren Zurückwendung auf das eigene Individuum das Phänomen des Weinsens zum Symptom hat, nehme ich den Faden unserer Auslegung der ethischen Bedeutung des Handelns wieder auf, um nunmehr zu zeigen, wie aus der selben Quelle, aus welcher alle Güte, Liebe, Tugend und Edelmuth entspringt, zuletzt auch dasjenige hervorgeht, was ich die Verneinung des Willens zum Leben nenne. Wie wir früher Haß und Bosheit bedingt sahen durch den Egoismus und diesen beruhen auf dem Befangenseyn der Erkenntniß im *principio individuationis*, so fanden wir als den Ursprung und das Wesen der Gerechtigkeit, sodann, wann es weiter geht, der Liebe und des Edelmuths, bis zu den höchsten Graden, die Durchschauung jenes *principii individuationis*, welche allein, indem sie den Unterschied zwischen dem eigenen und den fremden Individuen aufhebt, die vollkommene Güte der Gesinnung, bis zur uneigennützigsten Liebe und zur großmüthigsten Selbstaufopferung für Andere, möglich macht und erklärt.”

and the opposition of the intellect to the will lies beyond Tönnies “metaphysical premises”.³⁷ While Schopenhauer asserts that when an individual “loses himself” in contemplation, he becomes a “pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge”³⁸, Tönnies does not envisage such supererogation.

While Schopenhauer presents the human condition in its permanence, Tönnies is convinced of the evolution of the human condition through material conditions and the very evolution of the human will itself, both individually and collectively, from essential to arbitrary will, from *Wesenwille* to *Kürwille*. Tönnies thus offers a *philosophy of history*, as Paulsen noted, according to which the rise of capitalism from medievalism corresponds broadly to the shift from life in *community*, based upon organic harmony, moral conscience and memory, to life in modern *society*, based upon calculation of self-interest, convention and the avoidance of outbreaks of ubiquitously latent conflict out of fear and the desire for individual enrichment. Schopenhauer was scathing about such historical constructs. In his devastating criticism of post-Hegelian philosophies of history in chapter 38 of *The World as Will and Representation*, entitled *On history*, Schopenhauer attributes attempts „to grasp the history of the world as a whole subject to a plan, or as they themselves say to ‘construct it’ organically” to a

[...] crude and shallow realism which takes appearances for the very essence of the world and assumes that everything depends on their forms and processes [...]. After all, since only the individual and not the human species disposes of a real, immediate unity of consciousness, the unity of the course of life of the human species is a mere fiction.³⁹

37 Bickel, op. cit. 282: “Während der Intellekt bei Schopenhauer seine beste Möglichkeit erfüllt, wenn er den Willen neutralisiert und zu einer Aufhebung durch Entsagung verhilft, bleibt er bei Tönnies – sofern er seine günstige Möglichkeit ausschöpft – dem Willen integriert (nämlich im Falle des Wesenwillens): Im ungünstigen Fall löst sich seine Integration in die problematische, äusserliche und artifizuell bleibende Relation der Zweckrationalität auf. Das ist beim Kürwillen der Fall. Niemals aber tritt der Intellekt dem Willen als Gegenstanz gegenüber. Es gibt keine kategoriale Kluft zwischen Willen und Intellekt. Dazu gestattet sich Tönnies nicht die metaphysischen Voraussetzungen.”

38 W I, § 34, 210f. Drittes Buch, Der Welt als Vorstellung zweite Betrachtung: “[...] denn das Individuum hat sich eben in solche Anschauung verloren: sondern er ist *reines*, willenloses, schmerzloses, zeitloses *Subjekt der Erkenntniß*.”

39 W II, 505, Ueber Geschichte: “Was endlich das, besonders durch die überall so geistesverderbliche und verdummende Hegelsche Afterphilosophie aufgekommene Bestreben, die Weltgeschichte als ein planmäßiges Ganzes zu fassen, oder, wie sie es nennen, »sie organisch zu konstruieren«, betrifft; so liegt demselben eigentlich ein roher und platter *Realismus* zum Grunde, der die *Erscheinung* für das *Wesen an sich* der Welt hält und vermeint, auf sie, auf ihre Gestalten und Vorgänge käme es an; wobei er noch im Stillen von gewissen mythologischen Grundansichten unterstützt wird, die er stillschweigend voraussetzt: sonst ließe sich fragen, für welchen Zuschauer denn eine dergleichen Komödie eigentlich aufgeführt würde? – Denn, da nur das In-

Schopenhauer would have found Tönnies' philosophy of history objectionable. More generally, Schopenhauer is not interested in external processes, for

[...] only the *internal* processes, inasmuch as they concern the *will*, have true reality and are real circumstances, for the will alone is the thing in itself [*Ding an sich*]. Each microcosm encompasses the whole macrocosm, and the latter contains no more than the former. Plurality is an appearance, and external processes are mere configurations of the world of appearance, and therefore have no immediate reality or significance, but only a mediated reality or significance through their relationship to the will of the individuals.⁴⁰

Tönnies' irritation at the loftiness of Schopenhauer is understandable in the light of such judgments.

This loftiness characterizes an ideological divide between the elitist Schopenhauer and the social democrat Tönnies. Schopenhauer, who noted that there were few "geniuses" among his roughly 250 million contemporaries⁴¹, was scornful of the "average person, the factory product of nature" who was able to consider anything only to the extent that it stood in "a very immediate relationship to his own will."⁴² Schopenhauer regarded the drives that constitute the individual will as generally selfish, surmountable only through the autonomy of the mind moved by pity:

[...] humans are both the furious and dark drive of will (represented by the pole of the genitals as its focus) and the eternal, free, cheerful subject of pure knowledge (represented by the pole of the brain).⁴³

Tönnies was convinced that such supererogation was unnecessary where there was a fusion of wills, i.e. in community, and where compassion reigned: Tönnies

dividuum, nicht aber das Menschengeschlecht wirkliche, unmittelbare Einheit des Bewußtseyns hat; so ist die Einheit des Lebenslaufes dieses eine bloße Fiktion."

40 W II, 506: "Nur die *innern* Vorgänge, sofern sie den *Willen* betreffen, haben wahre Realität und sind wirkliche Begebenheiten; weil der Wille allein das Ding an sich ist. In jedem Mikrokosmos liegt der ganze Makrokosmos, und dieser enthält nichts mehr als jener. Die Vielheit ist Erscheinung, und die äußern Vorgänge sind bloße Konfigurationen der Erscheinungswelt, haben daher unmittelbar weder Realität noch Bedeutung, sondern erst mittelbar, durch ihre Beziehung auf den Willen der Einzelnen."

41 W I, § 36.

42 W I, § 36, 220f.: "Der gewöhnliche Mensch, diese Fabrikwaare der Natur, wie sie solche täglich zu Tausenden hervorbringt, ist, wie gesagt, einer in jedem Sinn völlig uninteressirten Betrachtung, welches die eigentliche Beschaulichkeit ist, wenigstens durchaus nicht anhaltend fähig; er kann seine Aufmerksamkeit auf die Dinge nur insofern richten, als sie irgend eine, wenn auch nur sehr mittelbare Beziehung auf seinen Willen haben."

43 W I, § 39, 239: "Wie der Mensch zugleich ungestümer und finsterer Drang des Wollens (bezeichnet durch den Pol der Genitalien als seinen Brennpunkt) und ewiges, freies, heiteres Subjekt des reinen Erkennens (bezeichnet durch den Pol des Gehirns) ist [...]."

had taken on Schopenhauer's assumption that ethics issued from compassion or pity (*Mitleid*) – but taken the assumption a step further by presenting humans in community as not requiring the intellect as an instance to counter their wills, since under the conditions of community, humans will want the good of others: *Eigenwille* in the language of Böhme and Schelling or *Kürwille* in Tönnies' language played only a very subordinate role in community, where *Wesenwille*, for Tönnies the basis of community, did not need to be kept in check. (Schopenhauer does not qualify the will as being egotistical, but merely actions or purposes, since the will is per definition a self-absorbed unit).

In his theory of society or *Gesellschaft*, Tönnies developed an elaborate criticism of arrivistes (*Streber*), driven blindly by “aspiration” (*Bestrebung*) drawing from Schopenhauer. Tönnies' discussion of humans in capitalist society, which starts with Hobbes' affirmation that men strive for power after power, is reminiscent of what Schopenhauer wrote of humans in general:

If we find the inner essence of unknowing nature to be a constant aimless and restless striving, when we consider animals and humans, this is even clearer. Willing and striving is their entire essence, which can be altogether compared with an unquenchable thirst.⁴⁴

In his theory of society, Tönnies transposes Schopenhauer's reflections on the purpose-means dichotomy to the one area in which it is most tangible: money.

Schopenhauer's ethics and Tönnies' sociology

A further point in which Schopenhauer's influence upon Tönnies was deep and seminal lies in Schopenhauer's discussion of ethics, which was translated by Tönnies into social categories. As Lore Hühn has pointed out, Schopenhauer's understanding of ethics was directly influenced by his reading of Schelling's essay on freedom, in which he recognized that the first enjoyment of freedom was not one that was indifferent in terms of value, but that instead man had, according to Schelling's reading of Genesis 3,3 abused freedom as soon as he had received it, thus bringing sin into the world.⁴⁵ According to Schelling, once evil

44 W I, § 57, 367: “Sahen wir schon in der erkenntnißlosen Natur das innere Wesen derselben als ein beständiges Streben, ohne Ziel und ohne Rast; so tritt uns bei der Betrachtung des Thieres und des Menschen dieses noch viel deutlicher entgegen. Wollen und Streben ist sein ganzes Wesen, einem unlöschbaren Durst gänzlich zu vergleichen.”

45 Hühn, Lore: Die intelligible Tat. Zu einer Gemeinsamkeit Schellings und Schopenhauers. In: *Selbstbesinnung der philosophischen Moderne: Beiträge zur kritischen Hermeneutik ihrer Grundbegriffe*. Edited by Christian Iber. Cuxhaven: Junghans 1998, 55–94; 59: “Wie kaum ein zweiter Leser der Freiheitsschrift macht Schopenhauer sich deren Befund zu eigen, wonach der ursprüngliche Vollzug der Freiheit nicht in einem wertmäßig indifferenten Selbstverhältnis liegt [...] Schel-

had in general been generated, man was seized by self-absorption and selfishness, and all those born afterwards were born with the concomitant dark principle of evil.⁴⁶ The notion of the fall from grace and the imposition of the selfish will among humans was one that had been transported from the mystical writings of Jakob Böhme in the early seventeenth century via Schelling during romanticism to Schopenhauer and then on to Ferdinand Tönnies. It is in the thought of Tönnies that the initially *religious* notion of the fall from grace is translated into a sort of positivist, biologically oriented social science, for Tönnies explains how through the rise of purposive rationality, humans become estranged from the original altruism which consists essentially of a simple unity or harmony of wills. Here, Tönnies is more influenced by the romantics, such as Novalis and Schelling, than by Schopenhauer, who does not imagine a plurality of individual wills having ever been merged into a single collective will, as the romantics envisaged medievalism⁴⁷; the willing unit, according to Schopenhauer, remains the individual.

The roots of Tönnies' sociology in Schopenhauer's ethics emerge clearly when we compare *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* with chapters 56ff (Book 4) of Schopenhauer's *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* and with his *Über die Grundlage der Moral*. It is here that Schopenhauer presents ethical motives. Motives as reasons for action are the last of the reasons Schopenhauer had presented in his *Die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde*, (which he later described as an introduction to his mature work). There, Schopenhauer had distinguished between four propositions 1) that of a reason for *becoming* (or causality), stipulating that all changes to objects in reality must have a cause, 2) that of a reason for *recognition* (or logic), stipulating that the connecting of concepts in the form of judgements requires a reason, 3) that of reason for *being*, (with regard to space and time) and 4) that of a reason for *action*, in which case the knowing subject becomes the object. It is here that we find the motivation (*Beweggrund*) of the will. Ethics are concerned with the last of these four reasons.

Having presented the general principles of the affirmation (*Bejahung*) or negation (*Verneinung*) of life, in chapter 56, Schopenhauer observes that knowledge can act either as a *motive* which enhances the will or of a tranquillizer (*Quietiv*) which diminishes the will. Generally, the wills strives without striving for

lings Lesart von Genesis 3,3: mit dem ersten Freiheitsvollzug habe der Mensch unweigerlich die schuldhaftige Verfehlung ebendieser Freiheit gesetzt und dadurch die Sünde in die Welt gebracht [...]."

46 Schelling, F. W. J.: *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit. Sämtliche Werke* VII. Hrsg. von K. F. A. Schelling, Stuttgart 1856ff., 388f.: "Nachdem einmal in der Schöpfung durch Reaktion des Grundes zur Offenbarung, das Böse allgemein erregt worden, so hat der Mensch sich von Ewigkeit in der Eigenheit und Selbstsucht ergriffen, und alle, die geboren werden, werden mit dem anhängenden finstern Prinzip des Bösen geboren."

47 Bond, Niall: Ferdinand Tönnies' romanticism. In: *The European Legacy*. ELEG 2011, in print.

some *ultimate* aim or purpose, since striving is the will's very essence and does not cease once any particular aim has been achieved. Its infinite drive can be impeded but not suppressed. Impediments to the striving will engender suffering (*Leiden*), while its accomplishment is called happiness (*Glück*). Consciousness intensifies suffering. Schopenhauer proposes that we "contemplate the inner and essential fate of the will [...] in human existence", since "all life is suffering", but the suffering of humans is the most intense because it is the most conscious.

Schopenhauer insists upon the *unconsciousness* of the affirmation of the will, as the "constant will, undisturbed by knowledge, that generally fills the life of men." The identification of life and body (*Leib*), allows us to use "affirmation of the will" and "affirmation of the body" interchangeably. (Tönnies adopts this identification when he announces that humans are inclined to wish to affirm or, on the contrary, to negate, i.e. destroy the other's "will or body" (*Wille oder Leib*)). Schopenhauer announces that the underlying theme of all acts of volition is to satisfy needs, inseparable from the body in its health: only indirectly the most varied of motives gain control over the will, producing the greatest variety of acts of will. The will can only becoming visible through motives, just as the eye's ability to see is only manifest through light. With the awakening of their individual consciences, humans perceive of themselves as having a will, and usually their knowledge is contingent upon their will. The survival of the body requires a minimal affirmation of life, while our consciousness of the virulence of the sex drive allows us to consider it the most decisive affirmation of the will to life.

In chapter 61, Schopenhauer reflects on the egotism of the human condition: every individual, however insignificant, regards himself as the centre of the universe. This "*egotism*" is "essential to everything in nature". Because everyone immediately perceives of himself as will, while those outside him are mere representations, everyone attaches priority to his own essence and its survival, regarding his own death as the end of the world. Schopenhauer refers to the readiness of certain individuals observed by Hobbes to destroy the happiness or the life of someone else to achieve merely the slightest increase of satisfaction. Egotism is the state that Tönnies sees as preponderant in modern society (*Gesellschaft*), but not in pre-modern community (*Gemeinschaft*), governed by empathy. This idea is also inspired by Schopenhauer.

In chapter 62, Schopenhauer reiterates that "the first and most simple affirmation of the will to life is merely the affirmation of one's own body [*Leib*]". Schopenhauer presents the consequence of egotism: inasmuch as the will in the body asserts itself in innumerable individuals, because everyone has the capacity of for egotism, individuals will often go beyond self-assertion or affirmation to the negation of the wills of other individuals. Trespassing beyond the limits of the assertion of the will of others is for Schopenhauer the basis of *Unrecht*, or injustice, the most extreme expression of which is cannibalism. Injustices of this

order essentially resemble murder, and differ only in degree. Tönnies accepts Schopenhauer's identification of wills and bodies as a given and observes that human wills will either be directed towards the preservation or the negation of the wills and bodies of others to the point of destruction.

The will encompasses not just the body, but also property. Schopenhauer's developments on justice related to property in chapter 62 of *World* help understand Tönnies' theory of property. For Schopenhauer, any property acquired through effort cannot be taken away without committing an injustice. Even when depriving someone of an animate object, the perpetrator of a theft has made an incursion into the sphere of the affirmation of the other's will because of the identification between the object and the original owner's body and will as their product. Tönnies makes a distinction between *Besitz* or possession on the one hand, an object produced through work by an individual in community and to which the subject's *essential will* is attached, and *Vermögen*, or fortune, which is property which can easily be disposed of or sacrificed by the individual: the *arbitrary will* of an individual will allow him to trade in fortune for an equivalent that yields an even greater profit⁴⁸

The justice of coercion and egotism

Justice, according to Schopenhauer, is but the negation of injustice, and originally emerged where injustice was warded off through violence. This is why justice is established through coercion. Contrary to Hobbes, Schopenhauer argues that property and thus injustice had existed prior to the social contract. Tönnies shares this view inasmuch as he shows in *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* that people were attached to their possessions in *Gemeinschaft*, prior to the rise of the contractual thinking of *Gesellschaft*.

Schopenhauer makes a logical distinction between justice that is established through coercion, principally through the existence of the State, and justice that is dispensed voluntarily. From the above observation that justice is derived from injustice, which occurs when an individual trespasses on the sphere of the will of another individual, Schopenhauer concludes that justice lies in the *action* rather than in the *consequence*. Schopenhauer observes that "pure theory of right is a chapter of morality and relates directly only to doing [*tun*], not to suffering [*leiden*]."⁴⁹ Morality, according to Schopenhauer, considers how far an individual may go in asserting his will without transgressing the border of injustice, which

48 The notion of fortune, in contrast to possession is developed in Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Buch 1, § 25.

49 W I, § 62, 404: "Die reine *Rechtslehre* ist also ein Kapitel der *Moral* und bezieht sich direkt bloß auf das *Thun*, nicht auf das *Leiden*."

can be warded off without committing an injustice. This is determined by the State. Schopenhauer proceeds to explain how reason dictated that in order to attenuate the suffering of all and to distribute it as broadly as possible, the best and only way of sparing the suffering of injustice lay in depriving all of obtaining enjoyment through injustice: this means, conceived of methodically by reason and gradually perfected, was the social contract (*Staatsvertrag*) or law. In order to found a perfect State, one had to create beings prepared to accept the sacrifice of their private good for the public good. But the State's aim does not lie in extirpating the *proclivity* towards injustice, but in merely providing a greater motive for *omitting to commit* injustices. Schopenhauer thus presents the utilitarian argument for the creation of a State, an argument which squares with the teachings of Thomas Hobbes and the later utilitarian school. Schopenhauer stresses that the State is neither the product of pure morality nor invested with the vocation of promoting voluntary morality. The State is not opposed to egotism, but to the contrary is the result of the overall egotism of all of its members, and is founded upon the assumption that pure morality, i.e. just action out of moral grounds is not only *improbable*, but is also rendered *superfluous* through the existence of the State. The State is not opposed to egotism, but only to its nefarious consequences. The State is morally admissible and not per se amoral, apart from those cases in which it is the basis of injustice (Schopenhauer cites serfdom and Islamic regimes).

Nevertheless, moral categories and moral action had existed *prior* to the founding of the State. Schopenhauer disputes Kant's assertion that there were no property rights outside the State. Schopenhauer points out that in the state of nature, moral property rights had existed which could not be violated without perpetrating injustice and which could be defended without injustice. Thus, Schopenhauer anticipated Tönnies' declaration that it would be timely to create a new natural law of *Gemeinschaft*, i. e. a form of natural law applicable prior to the advent of social contract thinking.

The intuitive, voluntary justice of the noble-minded

In chapter 36 of *World*, Schopenhauer develops an alternative to utilitarian justice based upon general egotism: the voluntary justice of the noble-minded, which Tönnies adopts as the basis for action in *Gemeinschaft* or community. Schopenhauer declares that this true or pure morality is based upon intuition. He presents this as an observation rather than as a moral doctrine. Morals without justification will have no effect because they will not motivate, and motivation can only refer to self-love. However, anything resulting from self-love can have no specifically moral value. Thus, *morals* and generally speaking *abstract knowledge* will not produce true virtue, which can only be the result of *intuitive knowledge*, i.e. the recognition that another individual has the same essence as

oneself. Abstract dogmas will have no impact upon virtue, i. e. goodness, because false dogmas will not lead the good astray and true dogmas will little to promote good beyond what it achieves by itself. Schopenhauer wryly comments that it would be a bad thing if ethical, transcendental values, the most important thing in human life, were to depend upon something as coincidental as dogmas, doctrines or philosophies.

Dogmas, just like habits and example, may have a major impact upon *action*, but will have no impact upon the *ethical predisposition* Schopenhauer refers to as *Gesinnung*. Abstract knowledge provides motives; however, motives can only *redirect* but never *change* the will. Schopenhauer points to the fact that the philosophically unschooled may present motives which are only rationalisations of good deeds performed out of sheer goodness. However, it is difficult to distinguish between a spurious motive or rationalisation and the immediate expression of the will, because the truth lies within the innermost recesses of the mind, or *Gemüt*. True goodness, selfless virtue and pure noble-mindedness are not based upon abstract knowledge, but upon an immediate, intuitive knowledge which can neither be gained through reason nor lost by reason, and cannot be expressed in words, but rather in deeds, actions and conduct. Such voluntary justice – *freiwillige Gerechtigkeit* – can go so far as to induce heirs to sacrifice their inherited property for others and to live voluntarily in poverty. Such voluntary justice is intuitive, but also reposes upon the ability to see through the *principii individuationis*, the individual egotism in whose empire the unjust remains. Such voluntary justice leads to that affirmation of others which Schopenhauer calls *Menschenliebe*, which can mean love of other humans, human kindness or philanthropy. Such a human individual may be as moved by the suffering of others as by his own suffering, inducing him to make sacrifices to alleviate the suffering of others. While the egotist feels surrounded by foreign and hostile forces and is focused solely on his own well-being, the good person lives in a world of benevolence, in which the good of each is also his own. Schopenhauer sums up this pure morality with the formulation from the Veda, “*Tat twam asi*”, “This is you!”, which, if uttered to oneself when encountering any other entity, is a guarantee for virtue and beatitude and points to salvation. Thus, love, which sees through the *principii individuationis*, leads to salvation and to the renunciation of the will to life. Schopenhauer concludes this chapter with the statement that all love (*agape, caritas*) is compassion (*Mitleid*).

Schopenhauer continued to reflect upon the distinction between self-serving and voluntarily justice in *Über die Grundlage der Moral* of 1839, an extend essay he submitted to a competition held by the Royal Danish Society of the Sciences. The question put was “Is the source and basis of morality to be sought in an idea of morality which lies immediately in the consciousness (or conscience), and in the analysis of the remaining moral concepts which come from that idea, or in

some other foundation of knowledge?” Although he was the only contestant, Schopenhauer’s essay was rejected on the grounds that it did not address the question and was disrespectful to a number of modern philosophers.⁵⁰ Here, Schopenhauer offers a descriptive rather than a prescriptive philosophy of ethics: in contrast to Kant, he argues that the task of ethics is not to legislate precepts and proscriptions but instead to describe ethical behavior as it exists: “I say, in contrast to Kant, that the ethicist, just as the philosopher in general, has to content himself with explanations and interpretations of what exists, i. e. what really is and happens, so as to arrive at an *understanding* of it.”⁵¹ This draws him away from rationalist constructs,

[...] for morality deals with the *real* action of humans and not with card constructs of *a priori* considerations, the results of which would be of import to no one faced with the earnestness and the frenzy of life, and the effect of which on the storm of passions might be compared with that of a syringe to extinguish an inferno.⁵²

Schopenhauer’s critique of the “categorical imperative” that one should act according to maxims which one can wish would become a general law is one that may have inspired Tönnies: ultimately, egotistical calculation alone induces individuals to subscribe to such an ethos: “my egotism decides for justice and humanity not because it wishes to practice them, but because it wishes to receive them.”⁵³ Schopenhauer sees only

[...] three fundamental mainsprings of human action, and by stimulating only these three, one can trigger off every possible motive: a) egotism, which wants its own good (which is limitless); b) evil, which wants to inflict pain on others (which can go to outright cruelty), and c) compassion [*Mitleid*], which wants the good of the other (and can go to noble mindedness and magnanimity).⁵⁴

Let us now consider the opening of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*:

Human wills are in multifarious relationships to one another; every such relationship is a mutual effect inasmuch as when inflicted [*getan*] or given [*gegeben*] from one side are suffered [*erlitten*] or received [*empfangen*] by the others. These effects

50 Schopenhauer, Arthur: *Über die Grundlage der Moral*. Introduced and annotated by Peter Wil- sen. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 2007, footnote 174,1, p. 184.

51 Ibid, 18.

52 Ibid, 49.

53 Ibid, 54.

54 Ibid, 108.

are either of such a quality as to tend to preserve or to destroy the other will or body – effects of affirmation or of negation.⁵⁵

Here, Tönnies has indicated on the one hand the desire to destroy, i. e. the evil that one can wish upon another human being. Inasmuch as Tönnies precludes conflict and the inflicting of pain from his sociology, which focuses on relationships of mutual affirmation, actions aimed at destruction are not dealt with in the remainder of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. On the other hand, he deals with those relationships which are conducive to preserving others, and here he sees two possibilities: egotism, which is the basis of a social peace of people who are latently indifferent or even hostile to one another, a social peace pursued purely for the benefit of each individual engaged in society and anticipated by Thomas Hobbes in his specific form of contract theory; and compassion, the basis of human harmony and community. It is here that we realize that Tönnies' forms of volition, *Wesenwille* and *Kürwille* translate Schopenhauerian notions of compassion on the one hand, egotism on the other, as bases for human interaction. Schopenhauer had taken the decisive step in drawing moral philosophy out of the realm of the "ought" and resituating it in the realm of the "is". Ferdinand Tönnies took this essentially ethical concern and anchored a new science of sociology in Schopenhauerian ethics.

And in doing so, Tönnies constructed a system of thoughts which certainly meets the standards Schopenhauer set in his preface to *The World as Will and Representation*:

A *system of thoughts* must at any rate have an architectonic cohesion, i.e. one in which one part always bears the other, without the latter bearing the former, and finally the cornerstone must bear all of them without being borne by them, and that the summit must be borne without bearing. However, in a *single thought*, no matter how comprehensive it may be, the most perfect unity must be maintained.⁵⁶

Tönnies' work should again be contemplated for its value to philosophers.

55 Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Thema § 1: "Die menschlichen Willen stehen in vielfachen Beziehungen zu einander; jede solche Beziehung ist eine gegenseitige Wirkung, die insofern, als von der einen Seite getan oder gegeben, von der anderen erlitten oder empfangen wird. Diese Wirkungen sind aber entweder so beschaffen, daß sie zur Erhaltung, oder so, daß sie zur Zerstörung des anderen Willens oder Leibes tendieren: bejahende oder verneinende."

56 W I, foreword first edition, VII f.: "Ein *System von Gedanken* muß allemal einen architektonischen Zusammenhang haben, d. h. einen solchen, in welchem immer ein Theil den andern trägt, nicht aber dieser auch jenen, der Grundstein endlich alle, ohne von ihnen getragen zu werden, der Gipfel getragen wird, ohne zu tragen. Hingegen *ein einziger Gedanke* muß, so umfassend er auch seyn mag, die vollkommenste Einheit bewahren."

Conclusions

Although both Schopenhauer and Tönnies are seen as examples of the grim probability of nineteenth century German thought, their views on man and society differ substantially. Although both make a distinction between the ethos of a peaceable kingdom based upon genuine benevolence on the one hand, and self-interest on the other, Tönnies sets these two in a historic relationship to one another, based upon a putative construct of psychological development from empathy to egotism which Schopenhauer would have found absurd as the basis for a historical projection. Schopenhauer's artistic sensibilities allowed him to develop a sophisticated philosophy of aesthetics, whereas Tönnies merely relegated aesthetics as a social phenomenon to community. We have also referred to Schopenhauer's elitism – whence his sympathy for marginal phenomena of humanity and his indifference to prevailing value judgments. He is absorbed by outstanding intellects and notes, for instance, an affinity between the insane and geniuses. Tönnies' impatience with Schopenhauer's indifference to the normal, the average, whom Schopenhauer refers to as the factory goods of humanity, stems from Tönnies' own concern with alleviating the suffering of the masses through socialist reform.⁵⁷ Tönnies' absorption with the normal must have made many of Schopenhauer's thoughts appear simply bizarre. Schopenhauer considers suicide as the ultimate realization of an ascetic ideal, the negation of life issuing from "knowledge of the essence of the world that mirrors the will", so that the "will freely suspends itself".⁵⁸ Schopenhauer wrote of suicide that "far from being a negation of the will, the phenomenon is a strong affirmation of the will. For the essence of negation does not lie in avoiding suffering but avoiding the pleasures of life."⁵⁹ Tönnies was also absorbed by the phenomenon of suicide; however his "socio-graphic" work on the subject shows that he considered the phenomenon not as a philosophical option or evidence of achieved supererogation, but simply as the translation of a social ill or mental illness. Tönnies' normative judgments are ultimately far more mainstream than those of Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer's indifference to the normal and to the masses is related to

57 Bond, Niall: Tönnies and academic socialism. In: *History of the Human Sciences* 24, issue 3, July 2011, pp. 23–46.

58 W I, § 54, 336: "Das Gegentheil hievon, die *Verneinung des Willens zum Leben*, zeigt sich, wenn auf jene Erkenntniß das Wollen endet, indem sodann nicht mehr die erkannten einzelnen Erscheinungen als *Motive* des Wollens wirken, sondern die ganze, durch Auffassung der *Ideen* erwachsene Erkenntniß des Wesens der Welt, die den Willen spiegelt, zum *Quietiv* des Willens wird und so der Wille frei sich selbst aufhebt."

59 W I, § 69, 471: "*Selbstmord*. Weit entfernt Verneinung des Willens zu seyn, ist dieser ein Phänomen starker Bejahung des Willens. Denn die Verneinung hat ihr Wesen nicht darin, daß man die Leiden, sondern daß man die Genüsse des Lebens verabscheut."

related to Tönnies' comment that Schopenhauer had excessively isolated himself from the empirical human and historical sciences of his age.⁶⁰

While Tönnies follows Schopenhauer in seeking out general truths about the propensities and predispositions of the sexes and the ages, their assertions differ: While for instance Schopenhauer argues that youth are good for lyrical poetry, adult men for dramatic poetry and the elderly for epic works⁶¹, Tönnies writes that youth are good for piety, adult men for autonomous criticism, and the elderly for philosophy.⁶² The authors are as "essentialist" over the issue of gender as over that of age: while both were anything but feminists, Schopenhauer is an undisguised misogynist, while Tönnies unsparingly praises those women who conform to traditional roles.⁶³

Finally, although Schopenhauer and Tönnies have both been declared symptomatically pessimistic for their age, their pessimisms differ. Schopenhauer is presented as a pessimist primarily because of his general conclusions on the inexorability of suffering and the idea that man rises morally the greater his readiness to extinguish his own will and life. Tönnies was described by his friend, the Danish philosopher, Harald Høffding, by contrast, as a "cultural pessimist": Tönnies assumes that genuine virtue existed in pre-modern communities but was obscured and supplanted by the egotism of those who only accept justice out of self-interest. Community is transformed into society, and Tönnies rules out the opposite development, which is precluded by his own evolutionist theory. But their temperaments differed as well: while Schopenhauer contented himself with the isolation of the philosophical posture, Tönnies surmounted the pessimism imposed by his own philosophy of history to go out into the *vita activa* as a political activist on behalf of the downtrodden, presenting an example of voluntary justice.

60 Bickel, op. cit. p. 281.

61 W I, § 51, 296: "Eben daher haftet der Jüngling so sehr an der anschaulichen Außenseite der Dinge; eben daher taugt er nur zur lyrischen Poesie, und erst der Mann zur dramatischen. Den Greis kann man sich höchstens noch als Epiker denken, wie Ossian, Homer: denn Erzählen gehört zum Charakter des Greises."

62 Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Buch 1, § 38.: "Ist doch Frömmigkeit kindlich und bleibt auch dem anschaulichen, poetischen Natursinne des Jünglings durchaus innewohnend; dagegen wird ein höheres Mannesalter zu selbständigem Zweifel, zu wissenschaftlichem Denken tüchtiger und geneigt; wenn auch der beschauliche philosophierende Greis zuweilen in die Heiterkeit und das hingebende Vertrauen der Kindheit zurückkehrt; wo er sein Herz in Enkeln erneuert findet. Und wie der Greis für die Jugend, so sind in einem organischen Zusammenleben Männer für Weiber, also die Wissenden und Weisen für das Volk, solange sie ihm nicht als fremde *gegenüberstehen*, ehrwürdig und bedeutend. Des Greises ist die Weisheit in bezug auf die Jugend, des Mannes in bezug auf das Weib, und die volkstümlichen Lehrer und Gelehrten wandeln als alte und gescheute Leute zwischen bauerlicher Einfalt und Frömmigkeit."

63 Bond, Niall: Sexus und Tönnies. In: *tr@jectoires*. – *La revue électronique des jeunes chercheurs du CIERA*, 2007, 48–59.