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Christoph Schrempf: The “Swabian Socrates” as Translator of Kierkegaard

Gerhard Schreiber

[Schrempf’s] main life’s work came to be his engagement with Søren Kierkegaard. The great German edition of Kierkegaard’s works is his handiwork, as is his great Kierkegaard monograph...Several writings by that most deeply tragic and convoluted Antichrist [i.e., Kierkegaard] came to be important to me. I read them in Schrempf’s masterful translations, and then I read his introductions to them as well; and once again I was disturbed and entranced by this wondrous and grand translator [i.e., Schrempf], whose modes of thought and writing seemed so different from mine, but who nonetheless gripped me so unsettlingly.¹

It is with these words that Hermann Hesse (1877-1962) fêted Christoph Schrempf (1860-1944) on the latter’s seventieth birthday.² In this elegy to the “Swabian Socrates,”³ as he would later call his longtime friend, Hesse describes both Kierkegaard’s significance for Schrempf and Schrempf’s importance for Kierkegaard reception.

This essay will revisit both subjects critically. In Section I, I will offer an overview of Schrempf’s life, with special focus on the role that Schrempf’s engagement with Kierkegaard played in his dramatic break with the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg—an event that came to be known as “the Schrempf affair” [*der Fall Schrempf*]. In Section II, I will take stock of Schrempf’s importance for Kierkegaard reception. For more than three decades following World War I, Schrempf’s translations and editions of Kierkegaard’s works were “*the authoritative voice*”⁴ for many Kierkegaard scholars, both within and outside the German-speaking world, who were unable to read Kierkegaard in Danish. Section III will address the problematic consequences of this

¹Hermann Hesse, “Über Christoph Schrempf,” in *Im Banne des Unbedingten. Christoph Schrempf zugeeignet*, ed. by Hermann Hesse et al., Stuttgart: Frommann 1930, pp. 5-13, here p. 8. Other important statements about Schrempf by Hesse can be found in Hesse, “Neue Kierkegaard-Ausgaben,” *Vivos voco. Zeitschrift für neues Deutschtum*, vol. 1, 1920 (no. 10, July), pp. 658f.; “Beim Einpacken,” *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, 1928, No. 182 (August 5); “Christoph Schrempf. Zu seinem 75. Geburtstage am 28. April 1935,” *Die neue Rundschau*, vol. 46, 1935, pp. 540-3; “Nachruf auf Christoph Schrempf,” *Neue Schweizer Rundschau*, vol. 11, 1944, pp. 717-26.

²In citing Schrempf’s secondary writings, I always quote and refer to the *original* editions; I also supply additional references, in brackets, to the corresponding loci in Christoph Schrempf, *Gesammelte Werke*, vols. 1-16 [vols. 14-16 ed. by Otto Engel], Stuttgart: Frommann 1930-40 (abbreviated as *SGW*). Schrempf’s *Gesammelte Werke* also contains previously unpublished material (especially in vols. 14-16); but it does not contain all of his published writings. It should be noted that Schrempf’s *Gesammelte Werke* contains slightly modified versions of the original texts.

³Hesse, “Nachruf auf Christoph Schrempf,” p. 723.

⁴Heiko Schulz, “Germany and Austria: A Modest Head Start: The German Reception of Kierkegaard,” in *Kierkegaard’s International Reception, Tome I, Northern and Western Europe*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Aldershot: Ashgate 2009 (*Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 8), pp. 307-419, here p. 316.

development—problematic because, by today’s philological standards, Schrempf’s translations can no longer be regarded as “masterful,” as Hesse put it. Rather, they are error-ridden—and in some cases deeply distorting. Section IV concludes with a final note on Schrempf’s influence as a Kierkegaard translator.

I. The Life of Schrempf and Kierkegaard’s Importance for “the Schrempf Affair”

A. Life

It is no easy task to write a biography of Christoph Schrempf.⁵ While he did publish a comprehensively documented autobiographical account of his 1891-92 clash with the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg,⁶ Schrempf left scarcely any *personal* information about his life behind him. This was a deliberate move, as he made clear in his 1918 “Bequest” to posterity: “If it were well told, my life story would yield a novel more interesting than all the novels that I have ever read. Precisely for this reason, the novel that is my life should die with me, should die in me. No one else should tell it either! That is why I burned my diaries. What I have lived is no mere conversation-piece for curious sensation-seekers.”⁷

⁵For a general introduction to Schrempf’s life and work, see Ernst Müller, “Christoph Schrempf (1871-1943 [sic!]). Der umgekehrte Pietist,” in his *Schwäbische Profile*, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer 1950, pp. 167-99; Hans Hohlwein, “Schrempf, Christoph,” in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vols. 1-6, ed. by Kurt Galling, 3rd ed., Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr 1957-62, vol. 5, 1961, columns 1511-3; Wolfdietrich von Kloeden, “Schrempf, Christoph,” in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vols. 1-32, ed. by Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz and Traugott Bautz, Nordhausen: Verlag Traugott Bautz 1975-2011, vol. 9, 1995, columns 974-6; Habib C. Malik, *Receiving Søren Kierkegaard. The Early Impact and Transmission of His Thought*, Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press 1997, pp. 311-5 and pp. 332-9; Wolfgang Tuffentsammer, “Leben und Werk von Christoph Schrempf,” in *Christoph Schrempf 1860-1944—Ein Sohn unserer Stadt*, ed. by Geschichtsverein Besigheim, Besigheim: Geschichtsverein Besigheim 2002 (*Besigheimer Geschichtsblätter*, vol. 21), pp. 35-46; Hans Martin Müller, “Schrempf, Christoph,” in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vols. 1-8, ed. by Hans Dieter Betz et al., 4th ed., Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr 1998-2005, vol. 7, 2004, columns 1003-4; and, above all, the first (and so far only) biography of Schrempf by Andreas Rössler, *Christoph Schrempf (1860-1944). Württembergischer Theologe, Kirchenrebell und Religionsphilosoph. Ein Leben in unerbittlicher Wahrhaftigkeit*, Stuttgart: Verein für württembergische Kirchengeschichte 2010 (*Kleine Schriften des Vereins für württembergische Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 7). I thank Dr. Rössler for his useful remarks!

⁶See Christoph Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung aus dem Württembergischen Kirchendienst*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1892 (2nd ed. 1892) [*SGW*, vol. 1, pp. 99-169]; *Eine Frage an die evangelische Landeskirche Württembergs*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1892 [*SGW*, vol. 1, pp. 171-228]; *Zur Pfarrersfrage. Zwei offene Briefe an die Herren C. B. in ... und Chr. R. in Tüb. Hochwürden, nebst einer Beilage*, Stuttgart: Frommann 1893 [*SGW*, vol. 1, pp. 229-85]; *Eine Nottaufe. Kirchliche Aktenstücke nebst einem Beibericht*, Stuttgart: Frommann 1894 [*SGW*, vol. 1, pp. 319-83].

⁷Christoph Schrempf, “Was mir das Leben zu verarbeiten gab” (1918), in *SGW*, vol. 7, pp. 287-308, here p. 288 [also in *SGW*, vol. 16, pp. 1-28, here p. 4]. Important remarks of a personal nature are also found in “Eine Berichtigung,” in *SGW*, vol. 7, pp. 309-13; “Einleitung,” in *Zur Theorie des Geisteskampfes*, ed. by Christoph Schrempf, Stuttgart: Frommann 1922 (*Frommanns philosophische Taschenbücher*, vol. 4), pp. 5-26 [“Ein

Christoph Schrempf was born in Besigheim, a small city to the north of Stuttgart, on April 28, 1860. His childhood was an unhappy one. His father Christian Schrempf (1831-89), a cobbler in Besigheim, was an incurable alcoholic who “made life difficult with all his might (and there was much might)” for his wife, Luise Margarethe Häusler (1829-98), and their five children.⁸ Starting at the age of ten, Christoph was dogged by the thought that it would have been better if he had never been born. As a young man Schrempf seriously contemplated suicide; thoughts of that sort would trouble him for much of his adult life, until after his fiftieth birthday.⁹

In 1879, a nineteen-year-old Schrempf—strongly influenced by his mother’s Pietism¹⁰—matriculated in theology at the University of Tübingen. But he soon suffered a crisis of faith, brought on mainly by exposure to the Bible criticism of Church historian Carl Heinrich Weizsäcker (1822-99), a student of Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860). “To me,” Schrempf wrote, “the Bible had changed from the Word of God into the word of man; dogma from a revealed truth into a debatable opinion.”¹¹ This crisis of faith notwithstanding, Schrempf passed his first theological examination with honors in July 1883.

A short time beforehand, Schrempf had read the 1881 German translation of *For Self-Examination*¹² by Christian Hansen (dates unknown), a candidate in theology from the region of Schleswig on the Prussian-Danish border, and had thus discovered Kierkegaard.¹³ After passing his first theological examination, Schrempf began a period of intensive Kierkegaard study. Here he drew both on existing German translations of Kierkegaard’s writings¹⁴ and on the original Danish edition of Kierkegaard’s *Posthumous Papers* (1869-81).¹⁵ Not surprisingly, Schrempf’s first publication, *Søren Kierkegaard and His Most*

Nekrolog,” in *SGW*, vol. 7, pp. 314-30]; “Durch Christentum hindurch zu Gott” (1937), in *SGW*, vol. 13, pp. 241-73; “Das Vermächtnis von 1939,” in *SGW*, vol. 16, pp. 275-81; “Das Vermächtnis von 1940,” in *SGW*, vol. 16, pp. 283-304; as well as Schrempf’s introductions in *SGW*, vol. 1, pp. vii-lxxi; vol. 2, pp. vii-lvi; vol. 3, pp. vii-xxxii, and vol. 5, pp. vii-xxxvi.

⁸Schrempf, “Einleitung,” in *Zur Theorie des Geisteskampfes*, p. 6 [“Ein Nekrolog,” in *SGW*, vol. 7, p. 315].

⁹Schrempf, “Was mir das Leben zu verarbeiten gab,” p. 289 [also in *SGW*, vol. 16, p. 6].

¹⁰See, e.g., Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung aus dem Württembergischen Kirchendienst*, p. [iii] [*SGW*, vol. 1, p. 101], in which Schrempf characterizes himself, in retrospect, as a “zealous Bibliocist and Pietist.”

¹¹Schrempf, “Einleitung,” in *Zur Theorie des Geisteskampfes*, p. 11 [“Ein Nekrolog,” in *SGW*, vol. 7, p. 318]; cf. also the introductions in *SGW*, vol. 1, pp. xli-xlii, and vol. 2, pp. xvii-xviii.

¹²Søren Kierkegaard, *Zur Selbstprüfung der Gegenwart empfohlen*, trans. and ed. by Christian Hansen, 3rd ed., Erlangen: Deichert 1881 [1862]. For evidence that this was the edition that Schrempf read, see, e.g., “Sören Kierkegaards Stellung zu Bibel und Dogma,” *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 1, 1891, no. 3, pp. 179-229, here p. 179 (note) [this footnote is omitted in *SGW*, vol. 12, p. 72].

¹³Christoph Schrempf, *Sören Kierkegaard. Eine Biographie*, vols. 1-2, Jena: Diederichs 1927-28, vol. 1, 1927, p. i [*SGW*, vol. 12, p. 436].

¹⁴For details on which texts Schrempf read during this period (approximately through 1890), see Schrempf, “Literatur,” in *Die Grundlage der Ethik* (1884), *SGW*, vol. 14, p. xv; *Sören Kierkegaard und sein neuester Beurteiler in der Theologischen Literaturzeitung (Herr Wetzel in Dornreichenbach). Ein Pamphlet*, Leipzig: Richter 1887, p. [3] [*SGW*, vol. 12, p. 3]; “Sören Kierkegaards Stellung zu Bibel und Dogma,” p. 179 (note) [this footnote is omitted in *SGW*, vol. 12, p. 72].

¹⁵Søren Kierkegaard, *Af Sören Kierkegaards Efterladte Papirer*, vols. 1-8, ed. by Hans Peter Barfod and Hermann Gottsched, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1869-81.

Recent Judge [Sören Kierkegaard und sein neuester Beurteiler] (1887),¹⁶ grew out of this ongoing engagement with Kierkegaard. In these early years, Schrempf's interest in Kierkegaard centered on his "individualist ethic"¹⁷ and his stance on the Bible and the Church's profession of faith.

In 1890 Schrempf published a translation of two works by Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety* and *Philosophical Fragments*, under the title *On the Psychology of Sin, Conversion, and Faith* [Zur Psychologie der Sünde, der Bekehrung und des Glaubens].¹⁸ For many years, this volume would remain the sole German translation of these two works (see Section II).

In the meantime, and despite his initial misgivings, Schrempf had begun a career in the pastorate.¹⁹ After short tenures as vicar in Michelbach an der Bilz and parochial administrator in Untergröningen, both small communities in northeast Württemberg, Schrempf worked as lecturer at the Blaubeuren seminary and at the Tübinger Stift in 1885 and 1886. In the spring of 1886, Schrempf passed his second theological examination, again with honors. That fall he became pastor in Leuzendorf, a small village on the Württembergian-Bavarian border that belonged to the deaconate of Blaufelden. It was here, in 1891, that a consequential rift developed between Schrempf and his congregation, and which came to be known as "the Schrempf Affair" (see Section I.B). This controversy, which led to Schrempf's summary dismissal from the pastorate in June 1892, plunged him and his family into deep financial straits, even though "all his life [he found] generous benefactors who protected him from outright poverty."²⁰

Schrempf's public suffering was compounded by difficulties of a more private kind. Schrempf did not relate easily to women, as he acknowledged openly: "In every woman I spied the shrew, however subtly—and, indeed, with 'antipathetic sympathy and sympathetic antipathy.' In that wobbling, wavering mood, antipathy readily won out."²¹ Schrempf's unhappy first marriage to Elisabeth Grunsky (1864-1907) yielded five children. In 1908, a year after Elisabeth's death, Schrempf married Elise Staub (1860-1935); starting in 1910, however, she was forced to come to terms with a passionate and long-lasting affair by Schrempf with a woman thirty years younger. The woman in question, Elisabet Werner (1890-1948), became Schrempf's third wife in 1936, shortly after Elise's death. Twelve years later Elisabet committed suicide.

¹⁶Christoph Schrempf, *Sören Kierkegaard und sein neuester Beurteiler in der Theologischen Literaturzeitung (Herr Wetzel in Dornreichenbach). Ein Pamphlet*, Leipzig: Richter 1887 [SGW, vol. 12, pp. 3-26].

¹⁷Christoph Schrempf, "Mein erstes Bekenntnis zu Kierkegaard—und zu mir" (1935), in *SGW*, vol. 12, pp. 1f., here p. 1 (in *SGW* "1884" is incorrectly listed as the date of origin).

¹⁸Christoph Schrempf, *Zur Psychologie der Sünde, der Bekehrung und des Glaubens. Zwei Schriften Sören Kierkegaards*, Leipzig: Richter 1890.

¹⁹See Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung*, p. [iii] [SGW, vol. 1, p. 101].

²⁰Theodor Reber, *Christoph Schrempf. Sein Kampf – sein Werk – seine Persönlichkeit. 1860-1944*, Zurich 1968 (typescript), p. 20 (cited from Rössler, *Christoph Schrempf (1860-1944)*, p. 32). See also Schrempf, "Was mir das Leben zu verarbeiten gab," p. 291 [also in *SGW*, vol. 16, p. 9]; "Eine Berichtigung," in *SGW*, vol. 7, pp. 309f.; "Einleitung," in *SGW*, vol. 2, p. xliii.

²¹Schrempf, "Was mir das Leben zu verarbeiten gab," p. 301 [also in *SGW*, vol. 16, p. 20].

Beyond his “clearly rather tense”²² relation to the women in his life, Schrempf suffered the early losses of his two youngest children, Edith und Gerhard, to suicide and war (World War I) respectively. Hilde, his eldest daughter, died young as well; and Erich, his eldest son, was killed in World War II in 1940. By this point Schrempf had outlived four of his five children as well as his first two wives. This tied him all the more closely to his sole surviving child, his daughter Gertrud, who was able to live nearby in his final years.

After his dismissal from the pastorate in 1892, Schrempf worked as an instructor in mathematics, literature, and German language at Stuttgart’s *Höhere Handelsschule*, a private commercial college, from 1895 until 1906. In 1900, Schrempf also became an official court interpreter of Danish. At the same time, Schrempf was remarkably active as a public lecturer. From 1892 until mid-1914, for example, he gave a lecture or speech in Stuttgart every Sunday, in the late morning following church services. These talks served as the basis for numerous published volumes of his *Religious Discourses* [*Religiöse Reden*].²³

Schrempf gave frequent public lectures in numerous contexts throughout the period from 1892 until 1939. These served both as important sources of income and as continual spurs to Schrempf’s intellectual productivity, which included the two major books *The Fate of Men* [*Menschenloos*] (1900)²⁴ and *Martin Luther* (1901).²⁵ In February and March 1906, Schrempf received a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Tübingen.²⁶ Only a few months later, he completed his habilitation in philosophy at Stuttgart’s *Technische Hochschule* (technical college),²⁷ where he worked from 1906 to 1921 as an unsalaried lecturer [*Privatdozent*] in philosophy (and, from 1919 on, as a titular professor [*Titularprofessor*], albeit still unsalaried).

It was only in 1909, almost seventeen years after his dismissal from the pastorate, that Schrempf formally resigned his membership in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Württemberg.²⁸ The following year, Schrempf gave a well-received speech titled “What We Want, a Confession, No Programme” [*Was unsereiner will, ein Bekenntnis, kein*

²²Rössler, *Christoph Schrempf (1860-1944)*, p. 38.

²³As, e.g., *Drei religiöse Reden*, Stuttgart: Frommann 1893 (2nd and 3rd ed. 1893) [*SGW*, vol. 2, pp. 1-84]; *Natürliches Christentum. Vier neue religiöse Reden*, Stuttgart: Frommann 1893 [*SGW*, vol. 2, pp. 85-202]; *Neue religiöse Reden*, 3 vols., Stuttgart: Frommann 1900-01 [*SGW*, vol. 15, pp. 253-351].

²⁴Christoph Schrempf, *Menschenloos. Hiob, Ödipus, Jesus, Homo sum*, Stuttgart: Frommann 1900 (2nd ed. 1905; 3rd ed. 1921) [*SGW*, vol. 4, pp. 1-128].

²⁵Christoph Schrempf, *Martin Luther. Aus dem Christlichen ins Menschliche übersetzt. Ein Versuch*, Stuttgart: Frommann 1901 (2nd ed. 1917) [*SGW*, vol. 4, pp. 129-299].

²⁶For the doctorate, Schrempf’s previously published *Goethes Lebensanschauung in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, vol. 1, *Der junge Goethe*, Stuttgart: Frommann 1905 [*SGW*, vol. 6, pp. 7-161] functioned as his dissertation. Vol. 2 of the two-volume work, *Lehrjahre in Weimar (1775-86)*, was published in 1907 [*SGW*, vol. 6, pp. 163-416].

²⁷The habilitation was granted for Schrempf’s previously published book *Lessing als Philosoph*, Stuttgart: Frommann 1906 (*Frommanns Klassiker der Philosophie*, vol. 19) (2nd ed. 1921) [*SGW*, vol. 5, 117-296].

²⁸See Schrempf, “Einleitung” (1931), in *SGW*, vol. 4, p. xxxii; “Der Ertrag meines Lebens—ein Vermächtnis” (1918), in *SGW*, vol. 16, p. 29; but compare “Ueber die Frage des Austritts aus der Kirche. (Nach einer Rede),” *Die Christliche Welt*, vol. 20, 1906 (no. 34, August 23), columns 793-802 [*SGW*, vol. 15, pp. 352-66], where Schrempf states: “Nor will I oblige [the Württemberg Church] by declaring my resignation from it” (columns 801f. [p. 366]).

Programm],²⁹ at the fifth *World Congress for Free Christianity and Religious Progress*. This convention, held from August 5-10, 1910 in Berlin, brought together freethinking theologians, philosophers, and others from across Germany and throughout the world.

In 1920, Schrempf published *On Life's Open Secret [Vom öffentlichen Geheimnis des Lebens]*.³⁰ This major work, which grew out of nine speeches that Schrempf delivered in 1919 and 1920, is his most comprehensive presentation of his fundamental views and methods in the philosophy of religion. Next, in 1922, Schrempf published a commissioned monograph on Nietzsche that had been ten years in the making.³¹

During these years of academic employment, Schrempf also began work on his monumental Kierkegaard translation. The first edition of Kierkegaard's *Collected Works [Gesammelte Werke]* in German appeared between 1909 and 1922, with Schrempf and Hermann Gottsched (1848-1916)³² as co-editors. In the second edition, which was published between 1922 and 1925, Schrempf was sole editor (see Section II). For Schrempf, translating Kierkegaard's writings was "an important side-pursuit until 1929...as it gave me occasion to wrestle with Kierkegaard's thought. For I did not want to reduce myself to a mere translator."³³ If the first literary products of this wrestling were the thoroughly critical afterwords that Schrempf appended to each translated text, the final and undoubtedly most important such literary product was his much-discussed two-volume Kierkegaard biography (1927-28).³⁴ After 1929, Schrempf produced only one brief piece on Kierkegaard, titled "The Kierkegaard Affair" ["Der Fall Kierkegaard"] (1935).³⁵ In January 1935, Schrempf declared his intention to produce a final, conclusive Kierkegaard monograph—a "theological interpretation of the Kierkegaard story"—in relation to which

²⁹Christoph Schrempf, "Was unsereiner will, ein Bekenntnis, kein Programm," in *Fünfter Weltkongress für freies Christentum und religiösen Fortschritt, Berlin 5. bis 10. August 1910. Protokoll der Verhandlungen*, vols. 1-2, ed. by Max Fischer and Friedrich Michael Schiele, Berlin-Schöneberg: Protestantischer Schriftenvertrieb 1910-11, vol. 2, pp. 615-26 [SGW, vol. 4, pp. 332-46]. See the English translation—the only translation of a work by Schrempf ever made in his lifetime: *What We Want, a Confession, No Programme. An Address delivered by Prof. Christof Schrempf*, London: Williams & Norgate 1911 (reprinted from *Fifth International Congress of Free Christianity and Religious Progress. Berlin, August 5-10, 1910. Proceedings and Papers*, ed. by Charles W. Wendte, Berlin-Schöneberg: Protestantischer Schriftenvertrieb 1911, and London: Williams & Norgate 1911, pp. 437-47).

³⁰Christoph Schrempf, *Vom öffentlichen Geheimnis des Lebens*, Stuttgart: Frommann 1920 (2nd ed. 1925; 3rd ed. 1948).

³¹Christoph Schrempf, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1922 (*Die Religion der Klassiker*, vol. 9) [SGW, vol. 9, 185-311].

³²For more on Gottsched, see Section II.A.

³³Schrempf, "Einleitung" (1931), in SGW, vol. 4, p. xxxviii.

³⁴Christoph Schrempf, *Sören Kierkegaard. Eine Biographie*, vols. 1-2, Jena: Diederichs 1927-28 [SGW, vols. 10-11]. For negative assessments of this biography, see, e.g., Emanuel Hirsch, "Schrempf, Christoph: Sören Kierkegaard. Eine Biographie. Bd. I. 1. u. 2. Tsd. Jena: E. Diederichs 1927," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, vol. 52, 1927, columns 548-9; Franz Josef Brecht, "Die Kierkegaardforschung im letzten Jahrfünft," *Literarische Berichte aus dem Gebiete der Philosophie*, no. 25, 1931, pp. 5-35, here pp. 18-20; Erich Przywara, *Humanitas. Der Mensch gestern und morgen*, Nürnberg: Glock und Lutz 1952, p. 428. For a largely positive assessment, see Hermann Diem, "Zur Psychologie der Kierkegaard-Renaissance," *Zwischen den Zeiten*, vol. 10, 1932, pp. 216-48, here pp. 245-7.

³⁵Christoph Schrempf, "Der Fall Kierkegaard" (1935), in SGW, vol. 12, pp. 453-63.

everything that he had written so far would be “mere preparatory work.”³⁶ This plan, however, went unrealized.

Fourteen years earlier, in July 1921, Schrempf had resigned from his teaching position at the Technical College of Stuttgart, partly out of disappointment that he still remained an unsalaried lecturer.³⁷ Schrempf did, however, continue his work as lecturer elsewhere, namely, at the adult education centers [*Volkshochschulen*] of Esslingen and Stuttgart. These lectures led to monographs on Paul (1926-27), Socrates (1927), Jesus (1929), and John (1933-34).³⁸ Schrempf’s monographs on Paul and Jesus were not published in book form, but as printed manuscripts serialized as *Dispatches To My Friends* [*Mitteilungen für meine Freunde*],³⁹ and available in bookstores as well. Next came, from April 1930 through the autumn of 1937, Schrempf’s thirteen-volume *Collected Works* [*Gesammelte Werke*]. These were supplemented in 1936-40 with three additional volumes [*Ergänzungsbände*] edited by Otto Engel (1888-1967), a longtime friend and colleague who proved indispensable for the distribution of Schrempf’s work.⁴⁰ Here it is worth noting that Schrempf dedicated volumes 10, 11, and 12 of his *Collected Works* to Kierkegaard—a testament to his continuous engagement with Kierkegaard throughout his writings from 1884 to 1935.⁴¹

The ensuing years were quiet for Schrempf. Shortly before Christmas 1943, he suffered a sudden fainting spell. He died on February 13, 1944 in Stuttgart-Degerloch.

B. Kierkegaard’s Importance for “the Schrempf Affair”

At its root, “the Schrempf Affair”⁴² was a conflict between professional duty and the call of conscience.⁴³ It began with a church service at Leuzendorf on July 5, 1891, during which

³⁶Schrempf, “Vorwort,” in *SGW*, vol. 10, p. viii.

³⁷See Schrempf, “Eine Berichtigung,” in *SGW*, vol. 7, p. 309 and pp. 312f.

³⁸Christoph Schrempf, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi* (1926/27) [*SGW*, vol. 9, pp. 313-449]; *Sokrates. Seine Persönlichkeit und sein Glaube*, Stuttgart: Frommann 1927 (2nd ed. 1934, 3rd ed. 1955) [*SGW*, vol. 9, pp. 5-184]; *Jesus* (1929) [*SGW*, vol. 13, pp. 1-118]; *Johannes*, in *SGW*, vol. 16, pp. 197-274 (as for why Schrempf decided not to publish this work, see his “Vorwort” (1934), in *SGW*, vol. 9, pp. 3f., as well as Otto Engel, “Nachwort des Herausgebers,” in *SGW*, vol. 16, pp. 329-39, here pp. 330-2).

³⁹Christoph Schrempf, *Mitteilungen für meine Freunde als Manuskript gedruckt*, Series 1, nos. 1-7, Stuttgart: Frommann 1926-8; Series 2, nos. 1-5, Stuttgart: Frommann 1929-30; on this form of publication see Schrempf’s remarks in *Mitteilungen für meine Freunde als Manuskript gedruckt*, Series 1, nos. 1-6 (in 1 vol.), Stuttgart: Frommann 1926, p. [ii] [*SGW*, vol. 8, p. 318].

⁴⁰Christoph Schrempf, *Gesammelte Werke*, vols. 1-16 [vols. 14-16 ed. by Otto Engel], Stuttgart: Frommann 1930-40.

⁴¹Vol. 12 of Schrempf’s *Gesammelte Werke*, which was published in 1935 (“Auseinandersetzung IV. Sören Kierkegaard. Dritter Teil”) contains a complete collection of Schrempf’s forewords and afterwords to each individual translation.

⁴²On “the Schrempf Affair” and the *Apostolikumstreit*, see Heinrich Hermelink, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Württemberg von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart*, Stuttgart and Tübingen: Wunderlich 1949, pp. 433-42; Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, *Der Apostolikumstreit des Jahres 1892 und seine Bedeutung für die Gegenwart*, Marburg: Elwert 1950; Heinrich Hermelink, *Das Christentum in der Menschheitsgeschichte*, vol. 3, *Nationalismus und Sozialismus: 1870-1914*, Stuttgart and Tübingen: Metzler & Wunderlich 1955, pp. 551-78; Hans-Martin Barth, “Apostolisches Glaubensbekenntnis II. Reformations- und Neuzeit,” in *Theologische*

Schrempf was supposed to deliver a sermon on Matthew 6:19-34, was then supposed to preside over a baptism.⁴⁴ Shortly before delivering the sermon, however, Schrempf began to doubt whether he could honestly profess the Apostles' Creed in its traditional form. Appealing to Mt 6:33 ("But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"), Schrempf resolved to omit the Apostles' Creed from the baptismal rite, even though it was included in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Württemberg's Baptismal Agenda [*Taufagende*]. Schrempf then did as he had resolved—and was astonished to discover that none of the congregants had noticed his omission.⁴⁵ That same day, Schrempf reported what he had done in a letter to the deaconate of Blafielden, and declared that he would repeat the omission in every future baptisms.⁴⁶ On August 6, 1891, Schrempf followed up with a letter to the Evangelical Consistory⁴⁷ setting forth his position in detail.⁴⁸

Schrempf did not, however, wait for the Consistory's response. During church services on August 9, Schrempf simply announced to his congregation that he would omit the Apostles' Creed in all future baptisms as well. He could no longer believe, he told them, in the virgin birth, in Christ's corporeal ascension, or in the bodily resurrection of the faithful. He then appealed to the principle that "obedience to Jesus most definitely overrides obedience to Church rules."⁴⁹

Realenzyklopädie, vols. 1-36, ed. by Gerhard Krause et al., Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter 1977-2004, vol. 3, 1978, pp. 554-66, especially pp. 560-2; Eginhard P. Meijering, "Apostolikumstreit," in *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon*, vols. 1-5, ed. by Erwin Fahlbusch et al., 3rd ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1986-97, vol. 1, 1986, columns 230-1; Sun-Ryol Kim, *Die Vorgeschichte der Trennung von Staat und Kirche in der Weimarer Verfassung von 1919*, Hamburg: Lit 1996 (*Hamburger Theologische Studien*, vol. 13), pp. 98-104; Hans Martin Müller, "Persönliches Glaubenszeugnis und das Bekenntnis der Kirche. 'Der Fall Schrempf'," in *Der deutsche Protestantismus um 1900*, ed. by Friedrich Wilhelm Graf and Hans Martin Müller, Gütersloh: Kaiser 1996 (*Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie*, vol. 9), pp. 223-37; Rössler, *Christoph Schrempf (1860-1944)*, 14-31. See also the documents reprinted in Ernst Rudolf Huber and Wolfgang Huber, *Staat und Kirche im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Staatskirchenrechts*, vol. 3, *Staat und Kirche von der Beilegung des Kulturkampfes bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkriegs*, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 1983, pp. 658-76 (no. 282-296), as well as in *Lehrfreiheit und Lehrbeanstandung*, vol. 1, *Theologische Texte*, ed. by Wilfried Härle and Heinrich Leipold, Gütersloh: Mohn 1985, pp. 93-106 (no. E12-15). Concerning the role of Adolf von Harnack in particular, see notes 55 and 56 below.

⁴³See, e.g., Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung*, pp. 40f. (no. 16) [*SGW*, vol. 1, pp. 151f.], pp. 47f., p. 51 and pp. 54f. (no. 19) [p. 160, p. 163 and pp. 167f.], as well as "Einleitung," in *SGW*, vol. 1, p. lxx.

⁴⁴See Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung*, p. viii [*SGW*, vol. 1, p. 107].

⁴⁵See Schrempf, "Einleitung," in *Zur Theorie des Geisteskampfes*, p. 14 ["Ein Nekrolog," in *SGW*, vol. 7, p. 321].

⁴⁶Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung*, p. [1] (no. 1) [*SGW*, vol. 1, p. 108].

⁴⁷At the time, the Evangelical Consistory [*Konsistorium*] was the Supreme Church Authority [*Oberkirchenbehörde*] in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg, which in 1924 merged with the Synod into the Supreme Church Council [*Oberkirchenrat*].

⁴⁸See Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung*, pp. 2-22 (no. 5) [*SGW*, vol. 1, pp. 109-32], here especially the summary on p. 4 [pp. 111f.], together with Rössler, *Christoph Schrempf (1860-1944)*, pp. 16-8.

⁴⁹Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung*, p. 23 (no. 6) [*SGW*, vol. 1, p. 133]; see *ibid.* pp. 22f. (no. 6) and p. 25 (no. 10) [pp. 132f. and pp. 134f.].

The next day, the Leuzendorf parish council and town council wrote jointly to the Evangelical Consistory. They requested that Schrempf be dismissed as pastor.⁵⁰ Ultimately, however, it was Schrempf himself who provoked his dismissal, in a lively exchange of letters with the Consistory.⁵¹ On June 3, 1892, the Consistory fired Schrempf “for breach of his official duties.”⁵²

“The Schrempf Affair” brought the Apostles’ Creed Controversy [*Apostolikumstreit*] of 1892 to its climax. Yet it is important to note that Schrempf was not (as has sometimes been loosely asserted⁵³) *the* cause of *the* Controversy. There was no single Apostles’ Creed Controversy, but rather numerous disagreements throughout the history of the Church regarding the validity and binding character of the Creed. While the particular controversy that involved Schrempf was especially grave and consequential, Schrempf cannot even be said to have been its sole instigator. Since the 1817 union of Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Prussia, there had been numerous cases of conflict surrounding pastors who refused to use the Creed in their church services.⁵⁴ To be sure, “the Schrempf Affair” was the best-known conflict of this kind. It was discussed throughout Germany, and can be said to have led to a new phase in the Apostles’ Creed Controversy, namely, when Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930), Church historian at the University of Berlin, was asked by his students whether “the Schrempf Affair” had not shown that the traditional Apostles’ Creed was outmoded and needed to be replaced. The answer that Harnack gave his students was published on August 18, 1892 under the title “On the Matter of the Apostles’ Creed.”⁵⁵ It is a measured response. Harnack opposed complete abolition of the Apostles’ Creed, but called for it to be replaced with or complemented by a new, brief profession of faith. In the meantime, he recommended that the liturgical use of the existing Creed be made optional.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 25 (no. 10) [pp. 134f.]; see also ibid., p. 24 (no. 7) [p. 133].

⁵¹See ibid., pp. 27-30 (no. 13), p. 33 (no. 15), pp. 34-43 (no. 16), pp. 45-55 (no. 19) [pp. 136-40, pp. 143f., pp. 144-54, pp. 156-68]. That Schrempf brought the matter to a head *intentionally*—and, indeed, regarded himself as the conflict’s initiator—is evident from, e.g., his “Einleitung” to *Zur Theorie des Geisteskampfes*, p. 14 [“Ein Nekrolog,” in *SGW*, vol. 7, p. 321]; “Nachwort,” in Søren Kierkegaard, *Der Augenblick*, trans. by Christoph Schrempf, 2nd ed., Jena: Diederichs 1909 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 12), pp. 155-71, here p. 170 [*SGW*, vol. 12, pp. 164-80, here p. 179]; “Der Ertrag meines Lebens—ein Vermächtnis” (1918), in *SGW*, vol. 16, p. 29.

⁵²Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung*, p. 56 (no. 21) [*SGW*, vol. 1, p. 169]. See also Schrempf, “Einleitung,” in *Zur Theorie des Geisteskampfes*, p. 17 [“Ein Nekrolog,” in *SGW*, vol. 7, p. 323].

⁵³See, e.g., Heinrich M. Köster, “Die Jungfrauengeburt gestern und heute,” ed. by Hermann Joseph Brosch et al., Essen: Driewer 1969 (*Mariologische Studien*, vol. 4), pp. 35-87, here p. 44; Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1918*, vol. 1, *Arbeitswelt und Bürgergeist*, Munich: C.H. Beck 1992, p. 485; Cora Bartels, *Kierkegaard receptus I. Die theologiegeschichtliche Bedeutung der Kierkegaard-Rezeption Rudolf Bultmanns*, Göttingen: V&R unipress 2008, p. 59.

⁵⁴In the early 1870s the Berlin pastors Emil Gustav Lisco (1819-87) und Karl Leopold Adolf Sydow (1800-82) sparked a similar controversy when, in lectures delivered to the Berlin Unionsverein (1871 and 1872), they criticized certain formulations in the Apostles’ Creed.

⁵⁵Adolf von Harnack, “In Sachen des Apostolikums,” *Die Christliche Welt*, vol. 6, 1892, columns 768-70. Harnack then published an expanded, more thoroughly argued version in Harnack, *Das apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis. Ein geschichtlicher Bericht nebst einem Nachwort*, Berlin: Haack 1892 (26 [!] editions in 1892, 27nd revised ed., 1896).

Harnack's position unleashed a storm of protest⁵⁶ in whose wake "the Schrempf Affair" was quickly forgotten. Meantime, Schrempf's battle of words had no measurable effect on the Württemberg church or its clergy. It was only after twenty years of discussions and controversy that the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg began loosening its liturgical requirements little by little.⁵⁷

It should also be borne in mind that the key event in "the Schrempf Affair"—Schrempf's decision to omit the Creed on July 5, 1891—was no isolated bolt from the blue. It emerged naturally from the slow evolution in Schrempf's thinking that had begun as early as 1884, when he had first entered the pastorate. This evolution is best described as a *process* in which Schrempf's reservations regarding his church duties, and his difficulties with the church Creed, gradually got the upper hand.⁵⁸ The process was driven by Schrempf's assumption that he faced an exclusive choice between two alternatives: to believe in the literal truth of certain claims in the Bible and the Creed, or to disbelieve them. That a third alternative might be possible for him—in which the religious images and utterances in question could be regarded as fundamentally *symbolic*, or *representational*, in character—appears not to have been a possibility that Schrempf took seriously, even though the liberal theologians of his day were busily defending it.⁵⁹

There is no mention of Kierkegaard in the various position papers that Schrempf addressed to the deaconate of Blaufelden and to the Evangelical Consistory.⁶⁰ Later in his life, however, Schrempf would insist repeatedly that his early immersion in Kierkegaard had played a crucial role in his decision to provoke the Church to dismiss him from his post.⁶¹ In the preface to his 1927-28 biography of Kierkegaard, Schrempf explained that

⁵⁶See Hermann Cremer, *Zum Kampf um das Apostolikum. Eine Streitschrift wider D. Harnack*, Berlin: Wiegandt & Grieben 1892 (7th ed. 1893) together with Harnack's response, entitled *Antwort auf die Streitschrift D. Cremers: „Zum Kampf um das Apostolikum“*, Leipzig: Grunow 1892 (*Hefte zur Christlichen Welt*, vol. 3), and Cremer's reply *Warum können wir das apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis nicht aufgeben? Zweite Streitschrift zum Kampf um das Apostolikum*, Berlin: Wiegandt & Grieben 1893 (2nd ed. 1893). On the dispute between Harnack and Cremer, see Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, "Der erste Apostolikumstreit," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 86, 1975, pp. 86-9; Gottfried Hornig, "A. Harnacks Dogmenkritik, der Apostolikumstreit und das Wesen des undogmatischen Christentums," in *Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte*, vol. 3, *Die Lehrentwicklung im Rahmen der Ökumenizität*, ed. by Gustav Adolf Benrath et al., 2nd ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1998 (*UTB für Wissenschaft*, vol. 8160), pp. 210-4.

⁵⁷Compare Schrempf, "Noch ein Bekenntnisstreit" (1894), in *Die Wahrheit*, vol. 3, 1895, pp. 179-91 [*SGW*, vol. 2, 275-90]; *Zur Reform des evangelischen Pfarramts. Aufsätze und Reden*, Stuttgart: Frommann 1911 [not in *SGW*], together with Hermelink, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche*, pp. 435-8, and his *Nationalismus und Sozialismus: 1870-1914*, p. 560; Rössler, *Christoph Schrempf (1860-1944)*, pp. 27-31.

⁵⁸See Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung*, pp. iii-viii [*SGW*, vol. 1, pp. 101-7]. As early as the summer of 1889, Schrempf had unsuccessfully sought a position as teacher of religion. See also *ibid.* p. 4 and pp. 17-22 (no. 5) [p. 112 and pp. 126-31], together with p. 30 (no. 14) [p. 140].

⁵⁹See Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung*, p. 27 and p. 29 (no. 13) [*SGW*, vol. 1, p. 137 and p. 139]. See also Rössler, *Christoph Schrempf (1860-1944)*, p. 19, p. 36 and p. 49.

⁶⁰See Schrempf, *Akten zu meiner Entlassung*, *op. cit.*

⁶¹See, e.g., Schrempf, "Einleitung," in *Sören Kierkegaards agitatorische Schriften und Aufsätze. 1851-1855*, trans. by Albert Dorner and Christoph Schrempf, Stuttgart: Frommann 1896 (*Sören Kierkegaards Angriff auf die Christenheit*, ed. by Albert Dorner and Christoph Schrempf, vol. 1, *Die Akten*), pp. xiii-xxiv, here p. xvi [*SGW*, vol. 12, pp. 139-44, here p. 142]; "Nachwort," in Kierkegaard, *Der Augenblick* (2nd ed. 1909), pp.

Kierkegaard was the first to prick his conscience for living “in an unclear and untrue relationship”⁶² to the Church of which he was a member and servant. Kierkegaard, Schrempf wrote, demanded “that I purify *my own* relation to the Church *for my own sake*, as the only one, without regard for any other human beings.”⁶³ What is more, Kierkegaard taught Schrempf that he could accomplish that purification only by means of a *deed*, namely, “that I break and resign my official bonds of duty. So I did—and the result was that I was relieved of my pastorate.”⁶⁴

Schrempf could not say, of course, whether he would have arrived at the same resolution without Kierkegaard’s help, or whether Kierkegaard had merely accelerated this development. Nevertheless, he stated, “I am and remain grateful to him for his contribution to my decision.”⁶⁵ In the May 1909 afterword to his translation of *The Moment*, Schrempf went on to credit Kierkegaard with playing an important role in his decision, earlier that year, to resign his membership in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Württemberg. That formal procedure, Schrempf wrote, brought to fruition his effort to loosen his every tie to official Christianity, a process that

in all cost me over twenty years of deliberation. Now that I have finally finished disentangling myself from official Christianity both outwardly and inwardly, I am glad of it—and I thank Kierkegaard for having pressed me ever further in that direction. For I do not know whether I would have pursued my dispute with official Christianity all the way to the end without him.⁶⁶

It should be noted, however, that long before Schrempf wrote these lines, he had distanced himself from Kierkegaard considerably. In the preface to his biography of Kierkegaard, Schrempf remarked that precisely because he took Kierkegaard and his critique of official Christianity seriously, he was inexorably led to alter his relationship to Kierkegaard as well: “I changed as a result [of this process], and so did my position in relation to him.”⁶⁷

170f. [SGW, vol. 12, pp. 179f.]; “Einleitung,” in Schrempf, *Zur Theorie des Geisteskampfes*, p. 15 [“Ein Nekrolog,” in SGW, vol. 7, pp. 321f.]; *Sören Kierkegaard. Eine Biographie*, vol. 1, pp. ii-iii [SGW, vol. 12, pp. 437f.].

⁶²Schrempf, *Sören Kierkegaard. Eine Biographie*, vol. 1, p. ii [SGW, vol. 12, p. 437].

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. ii [pp. 437f.]

⁶⁵Ibid., p. iii [p. 438]. That Schrempf’s intensive engagement with Kierkegaard truly did play a role in this decision (and is not merely Schrempf’s retrospective view of the matter) is clear from his 1891 article “Sören Kierkegaards Stellung zu Bibel und Dogma,” which he had composed shortly *before* the pivotal Sunday morning on July 5, 1891. This article is found in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 1, no. 3; that issue can have appeared no later than June 1891, as is evident from the advertisements and announcements on pp. 273f. On this 1891 article, see Walter Ruttenbeck, *Sören Kierkegaard. Der christliche Denker und sein Werk*, Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn 1929 (*Neue Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche*, vol. 25), pp. 290-2; Bartels, *Kierkegaard receptus I*, pp. 30-2 and pp. 39-46.

⁶⁶Schrempf, “Nachwort,” in Kierkegaard, *Der Augenblick* (2nd ed. 1909), p. 170 [SGW, vol. 12, p. 179].

⁶⁷Schrempf, *Sören Kierkegaard. Eine Biographie*, vol. 1, p. iii [SGW, vol. 12, p. 438]; compare p. v [p. 440], as well as „Vorwort“, in Kierkegaard, *Der Augenblick* (2nd ed. 1909), pp. [I]-[II] [not in SGW], here p. [I] (note).

Schrempf here refers to his tendency to criticize Kierkegaard. This tendency strengthened all the more once Schrempf was forced to “think [Kierkegaard’s works] through sentence for sentence and word for word”⁶⁸ as he prepared them for translation. In so doing, Schrempf found that his admiration for Kierkegaard as both literary artist and dialectician “had cooled off sharply.” He now could not restrain himself from accompanying his “translations of Kierkegaard’s works (in which I sought only to let him speak) with afterwords in which I took a position of my own in relation to his thoughts.”⁶⁹ Nevertheless, despite Schrempf’s ever-growing reservations toward Kierkegaard, and despite his ongoing critique of Kierkegaard in the afterwords to his translations, Schrempf’s translations and editions of Kierkegaard’s work came to have decisive importance for the reception of Kierkegaard in and beyond the German-speaking world in the first half of the 20th century. We will now consider this development in some detail.

II. Schrempf’s importance for the (German) reception of Kierkegaard

A. Schrempf’s Editions and Translations of Kierkegaard

It is indisputable that, as Heiko Schulz has written, “Schrempf promoted German Kierkegaard scholarship tremendously through his translations and, though to a lesser degree, his secondary writings.”⁷⁰ The truth of Schulz’s claim is already evident in the fact that, for over half a century, Schrempf’s translation of *The Concept of Anxiety* and *Philosophical Fragments* (which he had first published in 1890, and then revised for reissue in his edition of Kierkegaard’s *Collected Works*)⁷¹ remained the sole German edition of either work.⁷² In 1896, Schrempf and Albert Dorner (dates unknown) published a translated collection of nearly all of Kierkegaard’s late writings and newspaper articles, together with the posthumously published *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (1859), all under the title *Søren Kierkegaard’s Polemical Writings and Essays* [*Sören Kierkegaards agitatorische Schriften und Aufsätze*].⁷³ Still more consequential for

⁶⁸Schrempf, *Sören Kierkegaard. Eine Biographie*, vol. 1, p. vi [SGW, vol. 12, p. 441].

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Schulz, “Germany and Austria,” pp. 316f.

⁷¹See note 18 above. Schrempf undertook his 1890 translation of *Philosophical Fragments* with the help of Reinhold Böltzig (dates unknown). No reference to this fact is made in the original 1890 edition, nor in Schrempf’s *Gesammelte Werke*; it appears first in his 1935 “Erstes Nachwort zu ‘Philosophische Brocken’ nebst ‘Nachschrift’,” in SGW, vol. 12, pp. 181-218, here p. 181.

⁷²It was not until 1952 that new translations of these works appeared, both by Emanuel Hirsch. See Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophische Brocken. De omnibus dubitandum est*, trans. by Emanuel Hirsch, Düsseldorf and Cologne: Diederichs 1952 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6), and *Der Begriff Angst. Vorworte*, trans. by Emanuel Hirsch, Düsseldorf and Cologne: Diederichs 1952 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7).

⁷³*Sören Kierkegaards agitatorische Schriften und Aufsätze. 1851-1855*, trans. by Albert Dorner and Christoph Schrempf, Stuttgart: Frommann 1896 (*Sören Kierkegaards Angriff auf die Christenheit*, ed. by Albert Dorner and Christoph Schrempf, vol. 1, *Die Akten*). This collection includes translations of all of Kierkegaard’s published writings from the period 1851-55 except for *Two Discourses at the Communion on Fridays* (1851).

Kierkegaard research was the first edition of Kierkegaard's *Collected Works* in German (1909-22), which Schrempf inaugurated with Hermann Gottsched (1848-1916)⁷⁴ as co-editor and Eugen Diederichs (1867-1930)⁷⁵ as publisher. In the preface to their joint "Structural Plan for an Edition of Søren Kierkegaard's Collected Works" (1909),⁷⁶ Diederichs, Gottsched, and Schrempf described the new edition's primary goal as follows. "Since 1856,"⁷⁷ they wrote, the majority of Kierkegaard's writings had already been translated into German. But those texts were published mainly as isolated pieces, and "in such a way that their place and meaning within the totality of [Kierkegaard's] authorial work never found proper expression. Several [writings] were abbreviated, indeed mangled, to a greater or lesser degree; and no translator or publisher has yet hazarded the attempt at one main work that contains the key to [Kierkegaard's] thought as a whole (the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*)."⁷⁸ As a result, the Germanophone reader is likely to "know" Kierkegaard only in terms of one of the numerous divergent sides of his total work—and this despite the fact that Kierkegaard, an "authorial individuality of the rarest opacity," insists that he "be understood as a totality. Unless one understands Kierkegaard as a unitary whole, one does not know *him* at all."⁷⁹ While the planned twelve-volume edition of Kierkegaard's *Collected Works* could not presume to provide the reader with just such a completely comprehensive view, it could and did aim, as a "complete edition," to "set forth all that is required for an understanding of Kierkegaard's authorial activity."⁸⁰

Between 1909 and 1912, two volumes of the *Collected Works* appeared each year. One volume each appeared in 1913 and 1914. World War I then intervened; but by that point ten of the planned twelve volumes were already in print, and the remaining two volumes followed in 1922. Schrempf's personal contribution to the edition was enormous. Beyond revising for inclusion his 1890 translations of *The Concept of Anxiety* and *Philosophical Fragments*,⁸¹ as well as his co-translations with Dorner of *The Point of View for My Work*

⁷⁴On Gottsched as an editor and publisher of Kierkegaard's works, see Malik, *Receiving Søren Kierkegaard*, pp. 271f., p. 277, p. 297, p. 313, p. 342, and p. 365.

⁷⁵See Irmgard Heidler, *Der Verleger Eugen Diederichs und seine Welt (1896-1930)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1998 (*Mainzer Studien zur Buchwissenschaft*, vol. 8), especially pp. 279-82. With regard to Schrempf's relation to Diederichs, with whom he frequently corresponded, cf. *ibid.*, p. 191 and pp. 280f., particularly Diederichs' remark about Schrempf in LA 196: "He always knew better than God himself, and quarreled too much with him, I thought" (quoted from *ibid.*, p. 280 (note)). Cf. also the letters from Schrempf to Diederichs reproduced in *SGW*, vol. 7, pp. viii-xxv, pp. 236-46 and pp. 309-13.

⁷⁶"Anlageplan einer Ausgabe von Søren Kierkegaards gesammelten Werken," in Kierkegaard, *Der Augenblick* (2nd ed. 1909), pp. [173]-[177] [partially reproduced in *SGW*, vol. 12, pp. 161-3, but dated 1908].

⁷⁷See Ryno Quehl, *Aus Dänemark. Bornholm und die Bornholmer. Dr. Søren Kierkegaard: Wider die dänische Staatskirche; mit einem Hinblick auf Preussen*, Berlin: Decker 1856, pp. 285-97.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. [177] [p. 162].

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. [177] [p. 163].

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophische Brocken / Abschließende unwissenschaftliche Nachschrift / Erster Teil*, trans. by Christoph Schrempf and Hermann Gottsched, Jena: Diederichs 1910 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6), pp. 1-100; *Der Begriff der Angst*, trans. by Christoph Schrempf, Jena: Diederichs 1912 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 5).

as an Author, *On My Work as an Author, For Self-Examination, Judge for Yourself!* and *The Moment*, all originally published in 1896,⁸² Schrempf also contributed new translations of *Two Ethical-Religious Essays* and, with Wolfgang Pfleiderer (1877-1971), of *Either/Or* and *Stages on Life's Way*.⁸³ During the same period, Gottsched completed the first German translations of *Repetition* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, as well as new translations of *The Sickness unto Death* and *Practice in Christianity*.⁸⁴ *Fear and Trembling*, finally, was translated by Hinrich Cornelius Ketels (1855-1940).⁸⁵

Both Gottsched and Schrempf wrote afterwords to accompany each translation. But whereas Gottsched took a consistently positive stance toward Kierkegaard, Schrempf did the very opposite. Schrempf's afterwords criticized the works that they were commenting on, and promoted his own approach to the topics dealt with in those works as truer than Kierkegaard's own.⁸⁶ This harshly critical approach brought Schrempf into conflict with Gottsched. At Gottsched's request, for example, Schrempf withdrew a strikingly critical afterword that he had initially penned to cover both *Philosophical Fragments*, which Schrempf himself had translated, and the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, which Gottsched had translated. Schrempf replaced that essay with a piece that was less polemical, but ultimately just as critical.⁸⁷ Gottsched soon withdrew from the translation project entirely. After Gottsched's 1916 death, Schrempf revised his and Ketels' translations according to his own principles for use in the second edition of the *Collected*

⁸²Kierkegaard, *Der Augenblick* (2nd ed. 1909), op. cit.; *Der Gesichtspunkt für meine Wirksamkeit als Schriftsteller. Zwei kleine ethisch-religiöse Abhandlungen. Über meine Wirksamkeit als Schriftsteller*, trans. by Albert Dorner and Christoph Schrempf, Jena: Diederichs 1922 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 10); *Zur Selbstprüfung der Gegenwart anbefohlen*, trans. by Albert Dorner and Christoph Schrempf, Jena: Diederichs 1922 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 11).

⁸³Søren Kierkegaard, *Entweder / Oder*, vols. 1-2, trans. by Wolfgang Pfleiderer and Christoph Schrempf, Jena: Diederichs 1911-13 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vols. 1-2); *Stadien auf dem Lebensweg*, trans. by Christoph Schrempf and Wolfgang Pfleiderer, Jena: Diederichs 1914 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4).

⁸⁴Søren Kierkegaard, *Furcht und Zittern / Wiederholung*, trans. by Hinrich Cornelius Ketels and Hermann Gottsched, 2nd revised ed., Jena: Diederichs 1909 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3), pp. 117-204; *Philosophische Brocken / Abschließende unwissenschaftliche Nachschrift / Erster Teil*, trans. by Christoph Schrempf and Hermann Gottsched, Jena: Diederichs 1910 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6), pp. 101-370; *Abschließende unwissenschaftliche Nachschrift / Zweiter Teil*, trans. by Hermann Gottsched, Jena: Diederichs 1910 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7); *Die Krankheit zum Tode*, trans. by Hermann Gottsched, Jena: Diederichs 1911 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 8); *Einübung im Christentum*, trans. by Hermann Gottsched, Jena: Diederichs 1912 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 9).

⁸⁵Søren Kierkegaard, *Furcht und Zittern / Wiederholung*, trans. by Hinrich Cornelius Ketels and Hermann Gottsched, 2nd revised ed., Jena: Diederichs 1909 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3), pp. 1-116. This translation of *Fear and Trembling* was Ketels' revision of his own *Furcht und Zittern. Dialektische Lyrik von Johannes de silentio (Søren Kierkegaard)*, Erlangen: Deichert 1882 (*Søren Kierkegaards Hauptschriften in Verbindung mit Johannes Biernatzki und Hinrich Cornelius Ketels*, ed. by Hugo Johannes Bestmann, vol. 1).

⁸⁶See, e.g., Schrempf, "Nachwort," in Kierkegaard, *Der Begriff der Angst* (1912), op. cit., pp. 164-73, especially pp. 165f. [*SGW*, vol. 12, pp. 228-37, here pp. 229f.]; "Nachwort," in Kierkegaard, *Abschließende unwissenschaftliche Nachschrift / Zweiter Teil* (1910), op. cit., pp. 305-14, especially pp. 313f. [*SGW*, vol. 12, pp. 219-27, here p. 226].

⁸⁷See Schrempf, "Nachwort," in Kierkegaard, *Abschließende unwissenschaftliche Nachschrift / Zweiter Teil* (1910); the original "Erstes Nachwort zu 'Philosophische Brocken' nebst 'Nachschrift'" appears in *SGW*, vol. 12, pp. 181-218.

Works, which he edited alone.⁸⁸ Here Schrempf added new afterwords of his own devising,⁸⁹ whose critical tone did not spare Gottsched's achievements as a translator: "To the extent that Gottsched tried, wherever possible, to reproduce every word of the original, what emerged was Danish in German words, which was often quite challenging to read (far more challenging than the original text, which is exhausting enough), and which I could often understand only with the aid of the original text."⁹⁰

Alongside the *Collected Works*, Schrempf also undertook to publish a four-volume edition of Kierkegaard's *Upbuilding Discourses*.⁹¹ In this edition, the sequence of volumes was meant to reflect an ascent from ethical-religious writings toward decidedly Christian texts, in keeping with Kierkegaard's method of leading the reader into Christianity. Thus the first volume was supposed to include "the general (ethical-religious, but not 'Christian') upbuilding discourses"⁹² of 1843-1845 (*Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*), the second volume would include a translation of *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*, whose third section, "The Gospel of Sufferings," Kierkegaard labeled "Christian Discourses." Nevertheless, "for internal reasons,"⁹³ Schrempf decided to publish the series' last two volumes first, namely, Schrempf's revision of Dorner's 1890 translation of *Works of Love*,⁹⁴ and Schrempf's joint translation, with Wilhelm Kütemeyer (1904-72), of *Christian Discourses* (1929).⁹⁵ Following Diederichs' death in 1930, however, Schrempf ceased work on the edition, leaving only volumes 3 and 4 in circulation.

⁸⁸Søren Kierkegaard, *Furcht und Zittern / Die Wiederholung*, trans. by Hinrich Cornelius Ketels, Hermann Gottsched and Christoph Schrempf, 3rd revised ed., Jena: Diederichs 1923 (*Gesammelte Werke*, 2nd ed., vol. 3); *Die Krankheit zum Tode*, trans. by Hermann Gottsched and Christoph Schrempf, 2nd revised ed., Jena: Diederichs 1924 (*Gesammelte Werke*, 2nd ed., vol. 8); *Einübung im Christentum*, trans. by Hermann Gottsched and Christoph Schrempf, 2nd revised ed., Jena: Diederichs 1924 (*Gesammelte Werke*, 2nd ed., vol. 9); *Philosophische Brocken / Abschließende unwissenschaftliche Nachschrift*, vols. 1-2, trans. by Hermann Gottsched and Christoph Schrempf, 2nd revised ed., Jena: Diederichs 1925 (*Gesammelte Werke*, 2nd ed., vols. 6-7).

⁸⁹See, e.g., Christoph Schrempf, "Nachwort," in *Einübung im Christentum*, trans. by Hermann Gottsched and Christoph Schrempf, 2nd revised ed., Jena: Diederichs 1924 (*Gesammelte Werke*, 2nd ed., vol. 9), pp. 232-46, especially p. 246 [*SGW*, vol. 12, pp. 397-410, here p. 410].

⁹⁰Christoph Schrempf, "Nachwort," in *Abschließende unwissenschaftliche Nachschrift / Zweiter Teil* (1925), op. cit., pp. 279-93, here p. 280 [*SGW*, vol. 12, pp. 422-35, here p. 422], see pp. 279-82 [pp. 422-4].

⁹¹The "Anlageplan" (see note 76 above), p. [174] [not in *SGW*], included plans, subject to fundraising constraints, for publication of a further volume of critical and satirical writings (*From the Papers of One Still Living, Prefaces and Writing Sampler*) as well as "a substantial excerpt of Kierkegaard's posthumous papers" to accompany the *Collected Works*. But those plans were never realized.

⁹²This according to the publisher's advertisement for the planned four-volume edition of Kierkegaard's *Upbuilding Discourses*, in Søren Kierkegaard, *Leben und Walten der Liebe*, trans. by Albert Dorner and Christoph Schrempf, Jena: Diederichs 1924 (*Erbauliche Reden*, vol. 3), p. [412].

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Søren Kierkegaard, *Leben und Walten der Liebe*, trans. by Albert Dorner and Christoph Schrempf, Jena: Diederichs 1924 (*Erbauliche Reden*, vol. 3); compare Søren Kierkegaard, *Leben und Walten der Liebe*, trans. by Albert Dorner, Leipzig: Richter 1890.

⁹⁵Søren Kierkegaard, *Christliche Reden*, trans. by Wilhelm Kütemeyer and Christoph Schrempf, Jena: Diederichs 1929 (*Erbauliche Reden*, vol. 4).

*B. The Importance of Schrempf's Edition of Kierkegaard's Collected Works
for Kierkegaard Reception*

It is worth noting that only two of the texts included in the first edition of Kierkegaard's *Collected Works* needed to be translated into German for the first time. (These were *Repetition* and the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, which Gottsched translated.) By 1909, all of Kierkegaard's other main works had already been translated into German at least once.⁹⁶ This is due above all to the work of Albert Bärthold (1804-92), a Magdeburg-born pastor in Halberstadt, who published numerous Kierkegaard translations from 1872 to 1886, and thus was rightly characterized as "Kierkegaard's original and authentic German importer."⁹⁷

This is certainly not to say that these earlier Kierkegaard translations were widely available to the reading public. They were not. On the other hand, the enormous significance on German-language Kierkegaard reception that Schrempf's editions of Kierkegaard's *Collected Works* had in the first half of the twentieth century cannot simply be attributed to the fact that those editions made all of Kierkegaard's main works accessible to a broad audience for the first time. Far more significant was the peculiar context surrounding German-language Kierkegaard reception during the period just before and after World War I.⁹⁸

Schrempf's editions of the *Collected Works* could hardly have reached a wide audience at all had it not been for the influence of Theodor Haecker (1879-1945), who published numerous Kierkegaard translations from 1914 to 1923. Most significant, in this context, were those of Haecker's translations that appeared in Ludwig von Ficker's (1880-1967) *Der Brenner*, an Austrian periodical named after the famous Alpine pass along the Austro-Italian border, which was read by a large segment of the culturally interested public in Germany and Austria.⁹⁹ As Heiko Schulz states (following Walter Methlagl¹⁰⁰ and Habib

⁹⁶See *Søren Kierkegaard. International Bibliografi*, ed. by Jens Himmelstrup, Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag/Arnold Busck 1962, pp. 25-8 (nos. 765-891); Schulz, "Germany and Austria," p. 321 (note 69), together with the bibliography on pp. 389-91. The first portion of Part Two of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (see *SKS* 7, 65-120 / *CUP1*, 63-125) had already been translated by Bärthold in *Lessing und die objective Wahrheit aus Søren Kierkegaards Schriften zusammengestellt*, trans. and ed. by Albert Bärthold, Halle: Fricke 1877. Moreover, Dorner und Schrempf had included a translation of Kierkegaard's "A First and Last Explanation," appended to his *Postscript* (see *SKS* 7, 569-573 / *CUP1*, [625]-[630]), in their *Søren Kierkegaards agitatorische Schriften und Aufsätze. 1851-1855*, pp. 371-6.

⁹⁷Johannes Mumbauer, "Søren Kierkegaard," *Hochland*, 1913, vol. 10, issue 2, pp. 184-94, here p. 194; see also Ruttenbeck, *Søren Kierkegaard*, p. 3. On Bärthold as a translator of Kierkegaard, see Malik, *Receiving Søren Kierkegaard*, pp. 220f., pp. 225-8, pp. 231f., pp. 267-79, pp. 309-12, p. 326, pp. 332f. and p. 342.

⁹⁸On Kierkegaard reception in the first three decades of the twentieth century, see Ruttenbeck, *Søren Kierkegaard*, pp. 290-360; Brecht, "Die Kierkegaardforschung im letzten Jahrzehnt," pp. 5-35; Malik, *Receiving Søren Kierkegaard*, pp. 339-92; Schulz, "Germany and Austria," pp. 321-69.

⁹⁹To Haecker and the *Brenner* circle see Malik, *Receiving Søren Kierkegaard*, pp. 367-92, Schulz, "Germany and Austria," pp. 328-31, and especially Markus Kleinert, "Theodor Haecker: The Mobilization of a Total Author," in *Kierkegaard's Influence on Literature, Criticism, and Art*, Tome I, *The Germanophone World*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Aldershot: Ashgate 2011 (*Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 12).

C. Malik¹⁰¹): “It was not Schrempf, but the *Brenner* circle (Haecker, in particular) which proved instrumental for spreading the Kierkegaardian gospel to a wider German-speaking audience.”¹⁰² Indeed, it was Schrempf himself “who [had] first introduced Haecker to Kierkegaard’s works.”¹⁰³ When Haecker subsequently learned Danish in order to read Kierkegaard in the original, he quickly discovered that Schrempf’s translations bore only a loose relation to Kierkegaard’s actual phraseology. Haecker therefore resolved to produce translations of his own that would be as literal as possible.¹⁰⁴ He concentrated on the works of Kierkegaard that Schrempf had either overlooked or deliberately ignored—namely, the discourses, the journals, *Prefaces*, *A Literary Review* and the *Book on Adler*.¹⁰⁵

Many scholars have been initiated into the Kierkegaardian cosmos through Haecker’s translations. And paradoxically, despite the fact that Haecker dismissed Schrempf’s translations as full of flaws, it was Haecker’s own translations that made the intellectual ground fertile, so to speak, for the “Kierkegaard Renaissance”¹⁰⁶ (primarily in theology) that followed the First World War, in which Kierkegaard’s popularity grew rapidly¹⁰⁷—and which in turn ensured the success of Schrempf’s editions of the German *Collected Works*. Thus it is that Schrempf’s translations and editions became the basis for the exposure to

¹⁰⁰See Walter Methlagl, “Theodor Haecker und ‘Der Brenner,’” *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch*, vol. 19, 1978, pp. 199-216, here pp. 207f.

¹⁰¹See Malik, *Receiving Kierkegaard*, p. 371.

¹⁰²Schulz, “Germany and Austria,” p. 330.

¹⁰³Malik, *Receiving Kierkegaard*, p. 376.

¹⁰⁴Haecker translated according to the following principle: if Kierkegaard’s Danish was convoluted, he made his German equally convoluted. This method is, as Haecker put it, “a very superficial way to match an author’s style; but at least it is a way” (Søren Kierkegaard, *Die Tagebücher. 1834-1855*, trans. by Theodor Haecker, Munich: Kösel 1953, p. 11).

¹⁰⁵Between 1914 and 1923 Haecker published the following Kierkegaard translations: “Vorworte,” *Der Brenner*, 1914, vol. 4, issue 2, nos. 14/15, pp. 666-83; “Der Pfahl im Fleisch,” *Der Brenner*, 1914, vol. 4, issue 2, no. 16, pp. 691-712; nos. 17/18, pp. 797-814 (also as *Der Pfahl im Fleisch*, Innsbruck: Brenner-Verlag 1914 (2nd ed. 1922)); “Kritik der Gegenwart,” *Der Brenner*, 1914, vol. 4, issue 2, no. 19, pp. 815-49; no. 20, pp. 869-908 (also as *Kritik der Gegenwart*, Innsbruck: Brenner-Verlag 1914 (2nd ed. 1922)); “Søren Kierkegaard: Vom Tode,” *Brenner-Jahrbuch 1915* [= *Der Brenner*, 1915, vol. 5], pp. 15-55; *Der Begriff des Auserwählten*, Hellerau: Hegner 1917 (2nd ed. Innsbruck: Brenner-Verlag 1926); “Eine Möglichkeit,” *Der Brenner*, 1919, vol. 6, issue 1, no. 1, pp. 47-59; “Die Sünderin,” *Der Brenner*, 1919, vol. 6, issue 1, no. 2, pp. 133-40; “Tagebücher,” *Der Brenner*, 1920, vol. 6, issue 1, no. 3, pp. 225-9; no. 4, pp. 259-72; no. 5, pp. 336-41; 1921, vol. 6, issue 2, no. 8, pp. 590-4; “Die Kraft Gottes in der Schwachheit des Menschen,” *Der Brenner*, 1921, vol. 6, issue 2, no. 10, pp. 735-44; “Gottes Unveränderlichkeit,” *Der Brenner*, 1922, vol. 7, issue 1, pp. 26-40; “Tagebuchaufzeichnungen (1837),” *Der Brenner*, 1922, vol. 7, issue 2, pp. 63-71; *Die Krisis und eine Krisis im Leben einer Schauspielerin. Mit Tagebuchaufzeichnungen des Verfassers*, Innsbruck: Brenner-Verlag 1922; *Religiöse Reden*, Munich: Wiechmann 1922; “Aufzeichnungen (1849-1855),” *Der Brenner*, 1923, vol. 8, pp. 48-69; *Die Tagebücher*, vols. 1-2, Innsbruck: Brenner-Verlag 1923; *Am Fuße des Altars. Christliche Reden*, Munich: Beck 1923.

¹⁰⁶Werner Elert, *Der Kampf um das Christentum. Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen dem evangelischen Christentum in Deutschland und dem allgemeinen Denken seit Schleiermacher und Hegel*, Munich: Beck 1921, p. 430. When Elert spoke of a “Kierkegaard Renaissance,” he did *not* primarily mean (as others later would) the thinkers associated with “dialectical theology,” but rather such theologians as Bärthold, Haecker, and indeed Schrempf.

¹⁰⁷See Schulz, “Germany and Austria,” p. 311.

Kierkegaard of such leading twentieth-century theologians and philosophers as Karl Barth (1886-1968),¹⁰⁸ Emil Brunner (1889-1966),¹⁰⁹ Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976),¹¹⁰ Paul Tillich (1886-1965),¹¹¹ Martin Heidegger (1889-1976),¹¹² Karl Jaspers (1883-1969)¹¹³ and Theodor W. Adorno (1903-69).¹¹⁴ Even such famous twentieth-century literary figures as Franz Kafka (1883-1924)¹¹⁵ worked with Schrempf's translations and editions. Here, however, it should be emphasized that Kierkegaard's influence on the German *literary* world before 1930 was relatively modest compared with his deep influence on German theology and philosophy.¹¹⁶

Until 1950, when the Diederichs publishing house replaced Schrempf's edition of Kierkegaard's *Collected Works* with an edition prepared by Emanuel Hirsch (1888-1972)

¹⁰⁸See, e.g., Wolfdietrich von Kloeden, "Das Kierkegaard-Bild Karl Barths in seinen Briefen der 'Zwanziger Jahre.' Streiflichter aus der Karl Barth-Gesamtausgabe," *Kierkegaardiana*, vol. 12, 1982, pp. 93-102; Alastair McKinnon, "Barths Verhältnis zu Kierkegaard," *Evangelische Theologie*, vol. 30, 1970, pp. 57-69; Heiko Schulz, "Rezeptionsgeschichtliche Brocken oder die *Brocken* in der deutschen Rezeption. Umrisse einer vorläufigen Bestandsaufnahme," *Kierkegaard Studies. Yearbook*, 2004, pp. 375-451, here pp. 404-6, as well as his "Germany and Austria," pp. 335f.

¹⁰⁹See, e.g., Ruttenbeck, *Søren Kierkegaard*, pp. 314-8; Wolfdietrich von Kloeden, "Einfluß und Bedeutung im deutsch-sprachigen Denken," in *The Legacy and Interpretation of Kierkegaard*, ed. by Niels Thulstrup and Maria Mikulová Thulstrup, Copenhagen: Reitzel 1981 (*Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana*, vol. 8), pp. 54-101, here pp. 68-75; Schulz, "Rezeptionsgeschichtliche Brocken," pp. 406f., as well as his "Germany and Austria," pp. 337f.

¹¹⁰See, e.g., Cora Bartels, *Kierkegaard receptus I*, pp. 29-63, p. 414 and p. 421; Heiko Schulz, "Faith, Love and Self-Understanding. The Kierkegaard-Reception of Rudolf Bultmann," in his *Aneignung und Reflexion*, vol. 1, *Studien zur Rezeption Søren Kierkegaards*, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter 2011 (*Kierkegaard Studies. Monograph Series*, vol. 24), pp. 233-73.

¹¹¹See, e.g., Hermann Fischer, *Die Christologie des Paradoxes. Zur Herkunft und Bedeutung des Christusverständnisses Søren Kierkegaards*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1970, pp. 111-29; Kloeden, "Einfluß und Bedeutung," pp. 76-83; Kjeld Holm, "Lidenskab og livsmød—Søren Kierkegaard og Paul Tillich," *Kierkegaardiana*, vol. 14, 1988, pp. 29-37; Schulz, "Rezeptionsgeschichtliche Brocken," pp. 411-3, as well as his "Germany and Austria," pp. 341-4.

¹¹²See, e.g., Schulz, "Germany and Austria," pp. 354-8; Gerhard Thonhauser, *Das Konzept der Zeitlichkeit bei Søren Kierkegaard mit ständigem Hinblick auf Martin Heidegger*, Diploma Thesis, Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna 2010 (see note 167 below).

¹¹³See, e.g., Kloeden, "Einfluß und Bedeutung," pp. 87-90, and Schulz, "Germany and Austria," pp. 351-4.

¹¹⁴See, e.g., Hermann Deuser, "Kierkegaard und die kritische Theorie (Korreferat)," in *Die Rezeption Søren Kierkegaards in der deutschen und dänischen Philosophie und Theologie. Vorträge des Kolloquiums am 22. und 23. März 1982*, ed. by Heinrich Anz, Munich et al: Fink 1983 (*Text & Kontext*, Sonderreihe, vol. 15) (*Kopenhagener Kolloquien zur deutschen Literatur*, vol. 7), pp. 101-13; Schulz, "Germany and Austria," pp. 362-6.

¹¹⁵See, e.g., Wolfgang Lange, "Über Kafkas Kierkegaard-Lektüre und einige damit zusammenhängende Gegenstände," *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, vol. 60, 1986, pp. 286-308; Schulz, "Germany and Austria," pp. 331-3.

¹¹⁶See Helen M. Mustard, "Søren Kierkegaard in German Literary Periodicals, 1860-1930," *Germanic Review*, vol. 26, 1951, pp. 83-101, where Mustard on the basis of her examination of reviews and articles published in German literary journals from the 1860's to 1930 states that only very few German literary writers before 1930 "seem to have known Kierkegaard's works, and fewer still seem to have been really interested in them" (p. 83). This "indifference of the literary world is in sharp contrast to the keen interest of theological, philosophical, even of pedagogical circles, as shown by the number of articles in professional journals in those fields" (p. 95). To this compare Schulz, "Germany and Austria," pp. 325f. (note 94).

and Hayo Gerdes (1928-81),¹¹⁷ Schrempf's translations and editions remained the standard source of familiarity with Kierkegaard for many German and non-German Kierkegaard scholars, particularly those who lacked the language skills to draw on the original and thus had to rely on Schrempf.¹¹⁸ What is more: from the late 1920s through the early 1940s, many translations of Kierkegaard's works into other languages were based on Schrempf's German text, rather than the original languages. This was the case not only in Western Europe—as, for example, in Italy¹¹⁹—but also in the Far East, as in Korea¹²⁰ and Japan,¹²¹ and elsewhere. Because of his frequent and sometimes arbitrary omissions, Schrempf thereby provided “a sure criterion of identifying translations of S. K. into various languages which are actually translations of Schrempf's translation by writers who have no

¹¹⁷Søren Kierkegaard, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 1-27, trans. and ed. by Emanuel Hirsch, Hayo Gerdes and Hans Martin Junghans, Düsseldorf and Cologne: Diederichs 1950-69.

¹¹⁸As, e.g., in France, see Jon Stewart, “France: Kierkegaard as a Forerunner of Existentialism and Poststructuralism,” in *Kierkegaard's International Reception*, Tome I, *Northern and Western Europe*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Aldershot: Ashgate 2009 (*Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 8), pp. 421-74, here p. 427, where Stewart states that Schrempf's edition of Kierkegaard's *Collected Works* “was the text that most French scholars were working with until they received translations in their own language, which began to appear in the 1930s.”

¹¹⁹See, e.g., the Italian translation of *The Concept of Anxiety* (on the basis of Schrempf's translation in the second edition of Kierkegaard's *Collected Works*) *Il concetto dell'angoscia*, trans. by Michele Federico Sciacca, Milano: Bocca 1940; to this compare Ettore Rocca, “The Secondary Literature on *The Concept of Anxiety*: the Italian Contribution,” *Kierkegaard Studies. Yearbook*, 2001, pp. 330-4, here pp. 333f. See also Bianca Magnino, “Il problema religioso di Søren Kierkegaard,” *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana*, vol. 11, 1938, pp. 215-39, which contains several long quotations from works in the first and second edition of Schrempf's edition of Kierkegaard's *Collected Works*, see pp. 238-9); to this compare Ingrid Basso, “The Italian Reception of Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*,” *Kierkegaard Studies. Yearbook*, 2005, pp. 400-17, here p. 404, as well as her “Italy: From a Literary Curiosity to a Philosophical Comprehension,” *Kierkegaard's International Reception*, Tome II, *Southern, Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Aldershot: Ashgate 2009 (*Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 8), pp. 81-151, here p. 82, p. 85 and pp. 87-9.

¹²⁰See Pyo Jae-myeong, “Korea: The Korean Response to Kierkegaard,” in *Kierkegaard's International Reception*, Tome III, *The Near East, Asia, Australia and the Americas*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Aldershot: Ashgate 2009 (*Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 8), pp. 125-48, here p. 125 and p. 140.

¹²¹See Finn Hauberg Mortensen, *Kierkegaard Made in Japan*, Odense: Odense University Press 1996 (*Odense University Literary and Cultural Studies*, vol. 5), especially p. 286 (note 23) on the second phase of the Japanese reception of Kierkegaard (see pp. 46-61) from 1920 until 1945: “Like all the others, Miki [Kiyoshi] trans. from Schrempf's German edition.” See also the statements of Masugata Kinya (pp. 99-103, here p. 102), Mutō Kazuo (pp. 142-9, here p. 148), Kawamura Eiko (pp. 158-76, here p. 161) and Ogawa Keiji (pp. 184-203, here p. 189). Compare also Shoshu Kawakami, “The History of Japanese Reception of *Philosophical Fragments*,” *Kierkegaard Studies. Yearbook*, 2004, pp. 370-4, here p. 371; Satoshi Nakazato, “Japan: Varied Images though Western Waves,” in *Kierkegaard's International Reception*, Tome III, *The Near East, Asia, Australia and the Americas*, op. cit., pp. 149-73, here p. 151; Andrew Burgess, Masaru Otani, Takahiro Hirabayashi, “Kierkegaard in Japan,” in *Kierkegaard: East and West*, ed. by Roman Králik et al., Šafa: Kierkegaard Society of Slovakia, Toronto: Kierkegaard Circle, University of Toronto 2011 (*Acta Kierkegaardiana*, vol. 5), pp. 124-34, here pp. 125f.

knowledge of Danish.”¹²² This was true even of the first Kierkegaard translation into English, by Lee Milton Hollander (1880-1972), Professor of Germanic Languages at the University of Texas, published in July 1923. Hollander’s *Selections from the Writings of Kierkegaard*, which contained excerpts from the “Diapsalmata” of *Either/Or*, *Stages on Life’s Way*, *Fear and Trembling*, *Practice in Christianity*, and *The Moment*,¹²³ was based not on the original texts but on the Schrempf translation. This situation in the English-speaking world, however, was soon altered by the influence of David Ferdinand Swenson (1876-1940), Professor of Philosophy at the University of Minnesota, who provided numerous rather literal translations from the Danish—first of *Philosophical Fragments* in 1936,¹²⁴ and then through his subsequent translations, which were often prepared with the help of Lillian M. Swenson (died in 1961) and Walter Lowrie (1868-1959).¹²⁵

In general, it is difficult to overstate the influence Schrempf’s translations and editions of the *Collected Works* had on the reception of Kierkegaard in the German-speaking world and beyond. And this very fact makes the question of the quality and reliability of Schrempf’s translations all the more urgent. The next section will offer a critical examination, complete with examples, of Schrempf’s praxis as translator.

III. Schrempf as Translator of Kierkegaard

In translating Kierkegaard, Schrempf sought above all to transform him into an *actual* German communicator: “Our goal, as far as possible, is to allow him to speak as he would have done if German had been his mother tongue.”¹²⁶ To this end, Schrempf took

¹²²Walter Lowrie, “Translators and Interpreters of Søren Kierkegaard,” *Theology Today*, vol. 12, 1955, pp. 312-27, here p. 318; see also his “How Kierkegaard Got into English,” in *Repetition*, trans. and ed. by Walter Lowrie, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1941, pp. 175-212, especially pp. 184f. and p. 201.

¹²³Søren Kierkegaard, *Selections from the Writings of Kierkegaard*, ed. and trans. by Lee M. Hollander, Austin: University of Texas 1923 (*University of Texas Bulletin*, no. 2326; *Comparative Literature Series*, no. 3). Compare *Selections from the Writings of Kierkegaard*, pp. 43-5, together with SKS 2, 27,1-15 / EO1, 19; SKS 2, 29,1-5 / EO1, 20; SKS 2, 33,17-27 / EO1, 25; SKS 2, 36,21-35 / EO1, 27f.; SKS 2, 43,4-17 / EO1, 33f.; SKS 2, 51,30-52,9 / EO1, 42f.; *Selections from the Writings of Kierkegaard*, pp. 46-118, together with SKS 6, 27-84 / SLW, 21-86; *Selections from the Writings of Kierkegaard*, pp. 119-51, together with SKS 4, 101-47 / FT, 5-53; *Selections from the Writings of Kierkegaard*, pp. 152-213, together with SKS 12, 13-80 / PC, 11-68; *Selections from the Writings of Kierkegaard*, pp. 214-39, together with SKS 13, 129f. / M, 91f.; SKS 13, 157f. / M, 115f.; SKS 13, 163f. / M, 121f.; SKS 13, 205-7 / M, 157-9; SKS 13, 235f. / M, 185f.; SKS 13, 245-7 / M, 194-6; SKS 13, 271-4 / M, 217-20; SKS 13, 299-305 / M, 243-9; SKS 13, 353-6 / M, 296f.; SKS 13, 378f. / M, 316f.

¹²⁴Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments or A Fragment of Philosophy*, trans. by David Ferdinand Swenson, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1936.

¹²⁵See Lee C. Barrett, “From Neo-Orthodoxy to Plurality,” in *Kierkegaard’s International Reception*, Tome III, *The Near East, Asia, Australia and the Americas*, op. cit., pp. 229-68, here p. 230, together with Søren Kierkegaard. *International Bibliografi*, pp. 38-42 (nos. 1289-1483).

¹²⁶From the publisher’s advertisement for Schrempf’s edition of Kierkegaard’s *Erbauliche Reden* (see note 92 above), p. [412]. Schrempf outlined his methodology as translator in (among other places) his afterwords to *Entweder / Oder. Zweiter Teil* (1913), pp. 309-12 [SGW, vol. 12, pp. 267-70] and *Stadien auf dem Lebensweg* (1914), pp. 459f. [SGW, vol. 12, pp. 288f.]. That Schrempf had taken similar liberties in translations published

considerable liberties with the original text, not only when translating Kierkegaard's peculiarly Danish phrases and expressions, but also in altering (most frequently, in simplifying) the structure of Kierkegaard's more complex sentences. Then there are the innumerable glosses—and, in some cases, the entirely new sentences—that he inserted “in order to establish the context, or to make it more transparent.”¹²⁷ Finally, Schrempf deleted innumerable passages that he took to be superfluous repetitions on Kierkegaard's part, or mere parodies of Kierkegaard's contemporaries, or which struck him as inessential to the text (e.g., the dedication of *The Concept of Anxiety*¹²⁸), or whose meaning remained opaque to him.¹²⁹ Because Schrempf did not normally mark his alterations to the text as his own, his translation seems at certain points more of a paraphrase of Kierkegaard than a translation of him. There is thus a deep truth, if an unintentional one, to the claim made by Hermann Hesse, in his 1944 obituary of Schrempf, that when he read the latter's translations of Kierkegaard with the accompanying afterwords, he “could hardly tell, at the time, how to distinguish between Schrempf and Kierkegaard.”¹³⁰

There were those who lauded Schrempf's achievement as a translator.¹³¹ One supporter, Eberhard Harbsmeier, went so far as to claim that precisely because of the many liberties that Schrempf allowed himself to take with the text—precisely because he “did not

previously is evident in his comments in, e.g., “Vorrede des Uebersetzers,” in *Zur Psychologie der Sünde, der Bekehrung und des Glaubens*, p. ix [SGW, vol. 12, p. 29]; *Richtet selbst! Zur Selbstprüfung der Gegenwart anbefohlen*, trans. by Albert Dorner and Christoph Schrempf, Stuttgart: Frommann 1896, p. 3 [not in SGW]; “Einleitung,” in *Sören Kierkegaards agitatorische Schriften und Aufsätze. 1851-1855*, p. xx [not in SGW].

¹²⁷Schrempf, “Nachwort,” in Kierkegaard, *Entweder / Oder. Zweiter Teil* (1913), p. 310 [SGW, vol. 12, p. 268].

¹²⁸See SKS 4, 311 / CA, [5].

¹²⁹See, e.g., Schrempf's afterwords to Kierkegaard, *Der Begriff der Angst* (1912), p. 164 [SGW, vol. 12, p. 228]; *Stadien auf dem Lebensweg* (1914), p. 459 [SGW, vol. 12, p. 288]; *Furcht und Zittern / Die Wiederholung* (1923), p. 208 [SGW, vol. 12, p. 374]. As the example *instar omnium* for Schrempf's often grotesque justifications for his deletions, see Schrempf, “Nachwort,” in Kierkegaard, *Entweder / Oder. Zweiter Teil* (1913), pp. 309f. [SGW, vol. 12, pp. 267f.]. Schrempf's often massive cuts made a mockery of his edition's promise—at least as the publisher saw it—to reproduce Kierkegaard's writings “in good, unabridged translations” (p. [174] [not in SGW] (original italics)). When this promise was repeated in the promotional material on the last pages of each volume of the first edition, and was repeated to some extent in the second edition, the mockery grew into a complete farce (as will become clear below).

¹³⁰Hesse, “Nachruf auf Christoph Schrempf,” *Neue Schweizer Rundschau*, vol. 11, 1944, pp. 717-26, here p. 719.

¹³¹Without a doubt, the most determined defender of Schrempf's translations was his longtime friend Otto Engel. See, e.g., Engel's “Der Einzelne,” in *Im Banne des Unbedingten. Christoph Schrempf zugeeignet*, op. cit., pp. 14-32, here p. 26, as well as “Kierkegaard und seine deutschen Übersetzer,” *Stuttgarter Zeitung, Literaturblatt*, 1954, no. 260 (November 6). More or less positive verdicts were delivered by, for example, Brecht, “Die Kierkegaardforschung im letzten Jahrfünft,” pp. 6f.; Friedrich Hansen-Löve, “Der deutsche Sören Kierkegaard,” *Wort und Wahrheit*, vol. 7, 1952, pp. 624-6, here pp. 624f.; Hermann Diem, “Christoph Schrempf und Sören Kierkegaard,” *Die Zeichen der Zeit*, vol. 14, 1960, pp. 148f.; “Zur Psychologie der Kierkegaard-Renaissance,” pp. 237-9; Wilhelm Anz, “Zur Wirkungsgeschichte Kierkegaards in der deutschen Theologie und Philosophie,” in *Die Rezeption Sören Kierkegaards in der deutschen und dänischen Philosophie und Theologie*, op. cit., pp. 11-29, here p. 12; Eberhard Harbsmeier, “Von der ‘geheimen Freudigkeit des verborgnen Wohlstandes’. Zum Problem deutscher Kierkegaardübersetzungen,” *Kierkegaardiana*, vol. 17, 1994, pp. 130-41, especially p. 137 and p. 139.

translate word for word, but sentence for sentence”¹³²—his translation was at times more accurate and elegant than Bärthold’s, for example, which were often much too wordy, or the archaizing translations of Emanuel Hirsch. Despite Harbsmeier’s talk of “elegance,” however, others found Schrempf’s German far less enjoyable to read. This is not least because of Schrempf’s peculiar punctuation style, which mixed standard grammatical-syntactic punctuation with Schrempf’s own favored “rhetorical”¹³³ punctuation. The reaction of Thomas Mann (1875-1955) following his exposure to Schrempf’s Kierkegaard is telling: “His style, at least in German, is not good.”¹³⁴

The critical response to Schrempf’s work as translator was predominantly negative. The most prolific German detractor was Hirsch, who spared no opportunity to criticize his predecessor.¹³⁵ The harshest attack, however, is undoubtedly that leveled by the German literary critic and translator Walter Boehlich (1921-2006) in the following passage:

Schrempf has a variety of characteristic traits. First of all, he didn’t know Danish; he only thought he did....Even if one ignores the uncountable horde of sheer

¹³²Harbsmeier, “Von der ‘geheimen Freudigkeit des verborgnen Wohlstandes’,” p. 137.

¹³³See Schrempf, “Vorbemerkung (meine Interpunktion betreffend),” in *SGW*, vol. 3, p. vi. Schrempf’s idiosyncratic punctuation goes hand in hand with other, related peculiarities, such as his use of slashes (/) rather than dashes (—). Cf., e.g., the critique in Karl Bonhoff, “Die neue deutsche Kierkegaard-Ausgabe,” *Protestantische Monatshefte*, vol. 18, 1914, pp. 17-22, here p. 22.

¹³⁴Thomas Mann, “Die Entstehung des ‘Doktor Faustus’. Roman eines Romans,” *Die neue Rundschau*, vol. 60, 1949, pp. 18-74, here p. 66. Compare Walter Boehlich, “Kierkegaard als Verführer,” *Merkur*, vol. 7, 1953, pp. 1075-89, here p. 1077.

¹³⁵See Emanuel Hirsch, “Das ethische Stadium bei Sören Kierkegaard. Von Prof. Eduard Geismar. Aus dem Dänischen übersetzt und für deutsche Leser in den Anmerkungen ergänzt von E. Hirsch,” *Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie*, vol. 1, 1923, pp. 227-300, here p. 228; “Sören Kierkegaard, Leben und Walten der Liebe. Übersetzt von A. Dorner und Chr. Schrempf, 1924,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, vol. 49, 1924, column 405; “Zum Verständnis von Kierkegaards Verlobungszeit,” *Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie*, vol. 5, 1928, pp. 55-75, here p. 55 (note); “Christoph Schrempf, Sören Kierkegaard. Eine Biographie. 2. Bd., Jena 1928,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, vol. 54, 1929, columns 260-2; “Wie ich zu Kierkegaard kam. Aus einem Brief von E. Hirsch an den Verlag C. Bertelsmann in Gütersloh,” in *Mitteilungen aus dem Verlag C. Bertelsmann in Gütersloh*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann 1930, pp. 3-5; “Sören Kierkegaard, Christliche Reden. Übersetzt von W. Küttemeyer und Chr. Schrempf, 1929,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, vol. 56, 1931, columns 450-2; *Kierkegaard-Studien*, vols. 1-2, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann 1930-33 (*Studien des apologetischen Seminars*, no. 29, 31, 32, 36), vol. 1, pp. 26f. [154f.] (note 2), p. 30 [158] (note 1), p. 80 [208] (note 3); vol. 2, p. 95 [697] (note 1), p. 266 [868] (note 4), p. 357 [959]. According to Brecht, “Die Kierkegaardforschung im letzten Jahrzehnt,” p. 6, Hirsch felt forced to learn Danish because of his conviction that Schrempf’s translations were insufficient. For a contrasting view, see Jens Holger Schjørring, *Theologische Gewissensethik und politische Wirklichkeit. Das Beispiel Eduard Geismars und Emanuel Hirschs*, trans. by Eberhard Harbsmeier, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht and Århus: Forlaget Aros 1979 (*Arbeiten zur kirchlichen Zeitgeschichte*, Reihe B, vol. 7), p. 145. Further critical remarks on Schrempf as translator are found in Heinrich Barth, “Kierkegaard, der Denker,” *Zwischen den Zeiten*, vol. 4, 1926, pp. 194-234, here p. 197 (note); Eduard Geismar, *Sören Kierkegaard. Seine Lebensentwicklung und seine Wirksamkeit als Schriftsteller*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1929, pp. 544f.; Boehlich, “Kierkegaard als Verführer,” op. cit.; Peter Christian Baumann, “Das Genie auf der Schulbank. Kann Kierkegaard ins Deutsche übersetzt werden?,” *Die Zeit*, 1949, no. 23 (June 9); Wolfdietrich von Kloeden, “Die deutschsprachige Forschung,” in *Kierkegaard Research*, ed. by Niels Thulstrup and Marie Mikulová Thulstrup, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1987 (*Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana*, vol. 15), pp. 37-108, especially pp. 41-3.

translation mistakes—which for the most part also involved serious mistakes in meaning—an enormous number of other problems remain. Schrempf seems to have regarded a whole series of Kierkegaard’s works as ingenious *concepts*.¹³⁶ He then sought to transform those concepts into readable books; for he aimed to conquer Kierkegaard for Germany,¹³⁷ to make a German author out of him. Now, if “German” means “incomprehensible,” then Schrempf’s work was a rousing success. He purged Kierkegaard of practically all his peculiarities of style; he shifted and modified things, dropped some words and added others; he weeded out allusions, and replaced literary images with completely different ones; he distorted, distorted, distorted.¹³⁸

With regard to pure mistakes in translation, Schrempf was himself the first to concede that “this or that expression may well be inaccurate, or even false.” Yet this concession did not stop him from indulging the hope that “the meaning of the whole will not be affected (I believe I can vouch for this).”¹³⁹

I will now argue that this expression of hope on Schrempf’s part was almost recklessly Pollyannaish—and that for all its polemical stridency, Boehlich’s critique is by and large justified. I will illustrate this by citing two admittedly extreme examples from the second edition of the *Collected Works*, in which Schrempf, in the course of reworking earlier translations by Gottsched and Ketels, undertook massive textual interventions, to the point where Schrempf garbled and distorted the original and its meaning almost beyond recognition.¹⁴⁰ I will begin with a passage from “Problema III” in *Fear and Trembling* (1843), just prior to where Johannes de silentio introduces the legend of Agnete and the Merman into his argument. In the English-language translation by Alastair Hannay, this passage reads as follows:

One only wishes that aesthetics might try to start where for so many years it has ended, with the illusion of high-mindedness. As soon as it did so it would work hand in hand with religion, for that is the only power capable of rescuing the aesthetic from its conflict with the ethical. Queen Elizabeth sacrifices to the State her love for Essex by signing his death-warrant. That was a deed of heroism, even

¹³⁶Compare Schrempf, “Nachwort,” in Kierkegaard, *Entweder / Oder. Zweiter Teil* (1913), p. 309 [SGW, vol. 12, p. 267].

¹³⁷Compare Schrempf, “Nachwort des Herausgebers,” in Kierkegaard, *Der Gesichtspunkt für meine Wirksamkeit als Schriftsteller* (1922), op. cit., pp. 171-82, here p. 171 [this page is omitted in SGW, vol. 12, pp. 364-73].

¹³⁸Boehlich, “Kierkegaard als Verführer,” pp. 1077f.

¹³⁹Schrempf, “Nachwort,” in Kierkegaard, *Zur Selbstprüfung der Gegenwart anbefohlen* (1922), op. cit, pp. 191-9, here p. 191 [SGW, vol. 12, pp. 355-63, here p. 355].

¹⁴⁰In defending his textual interventions, Schrempf ascribed their necessity at least in part to Kierkegaard himself. Thus the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, for example, is written in such “an unbelievably careless way” that it would have been “not merely superfluous, but also inappropriate,” for Schrempf to have marked each of the departures from the original phrasing that he deemed necessary (Schrempf, “Nachwort,” in *Abschließende unwissenschaftliche Nachschrift / Zweiter Teil* (1925), p. 280 [SGW, vol. 12, p. 423]).

if some private resentment had a hand in it because he hadn't sent her the ring. We know that he did send it, but it was held back through the malice of some lady-in-waiting. Elizabeth is said, *ni fallor* [if I am not mistaken], to have been informed of this, and sat for ten days with one finger in her mouth, biting it without saying a word, and then she died. That would be something for a poet who knew how to wrench open that mouth: otherwise it would be of use at best to a ballet master, with whom nowadays the poet no doubt too often confuses himself.¹⁴¹

In his 1923 reworking of Ketels' translation, Schrempf simply deleted the reference to Queen Elizabeth. He made no note of this deletion in either the translation itself or the accompanying afterword. What is more, he converted the lines immediately preceding the reference into a footnote (!) with the following content:

One only wishes that aesthetics might try to start where, for quite some time now, it has preferred to end: with illusory high-mindedness. This is, after all, only an illusory reconciliation of the aesthetic and the ethical. The aesthetic can only actually save itself from the ethical by means of the leap of faith. To that extent, the aesthetic is susceptible to the religious.¹⁴²

Hirsch, who later translated *Fear and Trembling* himself,¹⁴³ describes this portion of Schrempf's translation as "self-fabricated nonsense" guilty of "adulterating" Kierkegaard's meaning: "I conclude that only the first of these four sentences can qualify as an expression of Kierkegaard's meaning. The three others belong under the category of adulteration. As to where Schrempf found the audacity to do such a thing—that is incomprehensible to me."¹⁴⁴ In my view, Hirsch's charge of "adulteration" is entirely justified in the case. For even if we leave aside the changes Schrempf made to the content of Kierkegaard's argumentation, there remains the fact that Schrempf attributes to Kierkegaard an expression that is quite problematic in relation to Kierkegaard's understanding of faith, namely, "the leap of faith." This expression is a familiar, widely used slogan commonly ascribed to Kierkegaard. Yet as Alastair McKinnon rightly points out,¹⁴⁵ "leap of faith" does not occur even once in Kierkegaard's published writings—nor even, I dare to add, in Kierkegaard's

¹⁴¹SKS 4, 183,14-28 / FTP, 119f. (compare FT, 93).

¹⁴²Kierkegaard, *Furcht und Zittern / Die Wiederholung* (1923), p. 88 (note): "Es wäre überhaupt zu wünschen, daß die Ästhetik einmal da zu beginnen versuchte, wo sie nicht erst seit heute aufzuhören liebt: bei dem illusorischen Edelmut. Der ist ja doch nur eine illusorische Versöhnung des Ästhetischen mit dem Ethischen. Wirklich retten kann sich das Ästhetische vor der Ethik nur durch den Sprung des Glaubens. Insofern prädisponiert das Ästhetische für das Religiöse." Compare Ketels' literal and unabridged translation in Kierkegaard, *Furcht und Zittern / Wiederholung* (1909), pp. 86f.

¹⁴³Søren Kierkegaard, *Furcht und Zittern*, trans. by Emanuel Hirsch, Düsseldorf and Cologne: Diederichs 1950 (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3), see pp. 105f.

¹⁴⁴Hirsch, *Kierkegaard-Studien*, vol. 1, p. 80 [208] (note 3).

¹⁴⁵Alastair McKinnon, "Kierkegaard and 'The Leap of Faith'," *Kierkegaardiana*, vol. 16, 1993, pp. 107-25. The only possible counterpart of "leap of faith" in the Danish language is *Troens Sprung* (in German: *Sprung des Glaubens*, not "*Glaubens Sprung*," as McKinnon, p. 116, assumes).

Journals and Notebooks.¹⁴⁶ And this is a serious problem. For if “leap of faith” is understood as a leap which is itself an act of faith (not a leap *into* a state of faith, as the phrases “leap to faith” or “leap into faith” would suggest) is, as McKinnon puts it, “in and of itself, incoherent and meaningless,” since it “assumes that one can use faith before one has it or, put another way, in order to achieve it, both of which notions are patent nonsense.”¹⁴⁷

The second example we will here consider is Schrempf’s drastic revision of Gottsched’s translation of the difficult opening section of *The Sickness unto Death* (1849),¹⁴⁸ in which Kierkegaard provides the structural definition of the self that is foundational not only to that book as a whole, but his anthropology in general. In Schrempf’s 1924 translation, the beginning and end of this section read as follows:

The human being is spirit. What is spirit? Spirit is the self. What is the self? The self is a relation which relates to itself, or is that in the relation which is its relating to itself; hence not the relation but the relation’s relating to itself.

A relation which relates to itself, a self, must either have established itself or been established by something else.

If the relation which relates to itself has been established by something else, then the relation stands *qua* relation to itself also in relation to the third term that has established the whole relation.... This then is the formula which describes the state of the self when despair is completely eradicated: inasmuch as, in relating to itself, it wants to be itself, the self grounds itself transparently in the power that established it.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶With regard to the “leap” as a “qualitative” or “pathos-laden transition” (*to* or *into* faith)—i.e., *not* in the sense of a continuous, gradual transition, but in the sense of a *discontinuous* transition—as opposed to an “immediate” or “dialectical transition”—see *SKS* 19, 375, Not12:4 / *KJN* 3, 373; *SKS* 19, 386, Not13:8.a.c / *KJN* 3, 384; *SKS* 27, 275-277, *Papir* 283:1-2 / *JP* 3, 2345-2351; *SKS* 18, 241, JJ:318 / *KJN* 2, 221; *Pap.* VI B 13 / *JP* 5, 5787; *SKS* 7, 21-24 / *CUP1*, 11-14; *SKS* 7, 92-103 / *CUP1*, 93-106; *Pap.* VIII 2 B 81,34 / *JP* 1, 649:34; *Pap.* VIII 2 B 85,5 / *JP* 1, 653:5; *SKS* 20, 73, NB:87 / *JP* 3, 2820; *SKS* 21, 326f., NB10:138 / *JP* 1, 762.

¹⁴⁷McKinnon, “Kierkegaard and ‘The Leap of Faith,’” p. 115. In Schrempf’s defense—who had attributed this expression to Kierkegaard as early as 1896 (!) (see his “Vorwort,” in Harald Høffding, *Sören Kierkegaard als Philosoph*, trans. by August Dorner and Christoph Schrempf, Stuttgart: Frommann 1896, pp. III-X, here p. VI), and thus long before the 1945 Swenson/Lowrie translation of *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* into English (see *Kierkegaard’s Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. by David F. Swenson, completed by Walter Lowrie, London: Oxford University Press 1945, p. 15), which McKinnon described as the earliest example of this phrase’s ascription to Kierkegaard in any language (see, however, David Ferdinand Swenson, “Translator’s Introduction,” in *Philosophical Fragments or A Fragment of Philosophy*, trans. by David Ferdinand Swenson, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1936, pp. ix-xxx, here p. xxii)—it can be pointed out that Schrempf consistently used the phrase “leap of faith” in the sense of “leap *to* faith,” as, e.g., in his Kierkegaard biography. See Schrempf, *Sören Kierkegaard. Eine Biographie*, vol. 1, p. ii [*SGW*, vol. 12, p. 437].

¹⁴⁸See *SKS* 11, 129f. / *SUDP*, 43f. (compare *SUD*, 13f.).

¹⁴⁹Kierkegaard, *Die Krankheit zum Tode* (1924), pp. 10f.: “*Der Mensch ist Geist. Was ist Geist? Geist ist das Selbst. Was ist das Selbst? Das Selbst ist ein Verhältnis, das sich zu sich selbst verhält; oder ist das im Verhältnis, daß das Verhältnis sich zu sich selbst verhält; also nicht das Verhältnis, sondern daß das*

Whereas Gottsched had translated this section more or less literally and without abbreviation,¹⁵⁰ Schrempf made drastic and distorting cuts, once again without explicit indication in the translation.¹⁵¹ He also introduced a highly consequential translation mistake into the final sentence. To give a sense of the extent of Schrempf's deletions, I here present, for purposes of comparison, the English translation of the relevant section by (once again) Alastair Hannay, with *italics* marking all of the passages that Schrempf *omitted* from his translation:

The human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation which relates to itself, or that in the relation which is its relating to itself. *The self is not the relation but the relation's relating to itself. A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity. In short a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two terms. Looked at in this way a human being is not yet a self.*

In a relation between two things the relation is the third term in the form of a negative unity, and the two relate to the relation, and in the relation to that relation; this is what it is from the point of view of soul for soul and body to be in relation. If, on the other hand, the relation relates to itself, then this relation is the positive third, and this is the self.

Such a relation which relates to itself, a self, must either have established itself or been established by something else.

If the relation which relates to itself has been established by something else, *then of course the relation is the third term, but* then this relation, the third term, is a relation which relates in turn to that which has established the whole relation....This then is the formula which describes the state of the self when despair is completely eradicated: in relating to itself and in wanting to be itself, the self is grounded transparently in the power that established it.¹⁵²

Schrempf's translation ultimately defies comparison to Kierkegaard's original. In the words of Walter Rest: "Seeking to obtain a formula for the philosophy of identity, [Schrempf]

Verhältnis sich zu sich selbst verhält. Ein Verhältnis, das sich zu sich selbst verhält, ein Selbst, muß sich entweder selbst gesetzt haben oder durch ein anderes gesetzt sein. Ist das Verhältnis, das sich zu sich selbst verhält, durch ein anderes gesetzt, so steht es als Verhältnis zu sich selbst außerdem in einem Verhältnis zu dem Dritten, das das ganze Verhältnis gesetzt hat....Dies ist nämlich die Formel, die den Zustand des Selbst beschreibt, wenn die Verzweigung ganz ausgerottet ist: indem es zu sich selbst sich verhaltend es selbst sein will, gründet sich das Selbst sich selbst durchsichtig in der Macht, die es setzte."

¹⁵⁰Compare Kierkegaard, *Die Krankheit zum Tode* (1911), pp. 10f.

¹⁵¹Schrempf does, however, offer general remarks on these changes in his "Nachwort," in Kierkegaard, *Die Krankheit zum Tode* (1924), pp. 125-38, here p. 126 [*SGW*, vol. 12, pp. 384-96, here p. 385].

¹⁵²*SKS* 11, 129,9-25 and 130,26-28 / *SUDP*, 43f. (compare *SUD*, 13f.).

deletes everything that is existentially significant... *What* the human being is and *who* he is, that is expressed precisely in the sentences that Schrempf thought fit for deletion.”¹⁵³

Aside from Schrempf’s distorting cuts, the most devastating problem with this excerpt is the appalling translation error in the final sentence. In the original text of *The Sickness Unto Death*, Kierkegaard offers the following formula for the state in which despair, the sickness unto death, is completely eradicated: the human being, as the self, in relating to itself and in wanting to be itself “is grounded transparently in [*grunder...i*] the power that established it”¹⁵⁴—in God. This formula describes not only the cure for the sickness unto death, but also its precondition, since the very possibility of despair can be derived only from the original constitution of the self as established by God.¹⁵⁵ The Danish verb *at grunde*, when it occurs together with the preposition *i*, means “to have its ground or origin in” the noun that follows the preposition.¹⁵⁶ Hence Kierkegaard’s phrase in no way describes, as Schrempf would have it, a self that has the power to ground *itself* in God, and so to ground itself. Rather, the self’s proper relation to God as ground is to *let itself be grounded*. The self must receive from God, and adopt from God, its being as its own.

Kierkegaard thus does not write, as Schrempf suggests (quite apart from his grammatically ungainly phrase *gründet sich...sich selbst*), that the human being can *ground itself* in God. Instead, he writes that the human being, inasmuch as he wants to be himself, is grounded transparently in God—in whom he is *always already* grounded as God’s creation. The various forms of *sin*—of despair that takes place *before God*—arise in deformations of that fundamental relation, i.e., when the self’s relation to itself fails to coincide with its relation to the other that is its ground. These deformations can take two forms. Either the self, despairing *of its ground*, wants to be itself (alone); or the self, despairing *of itself*, does *not* want to be itself. In relating to itself and in wanting to be itself, however, the self “is grounded transparently in the power that established it.” Kierkegaard elsewhere calls this formula “the definition of faith”: namely, in the crucial last sentence of *The Sickness unto Death*, which is simply omitted in Schrempf’s translation.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³Walter Rest, “Die kontroverstheologische Relevanz Sören Kierkegaards,” in *Sören Kierkegaard*, ed. by Heinz Horst Schrey, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1971, pp. 155-72, here p. 164. See also Rest’s doctoral dissertation, *Indirekte Mitteilung als bildendes Verfahren dargestellt am Leben und Werk Sören Kierkegaard’s*, Emsdetten in Westfalen: Lechte 1937, pp. 5-9.

¹⁵⁴SKS 11, 130,27f. / SUDP, 44 (see also *Pap.* VIII-2 B 170:2, where Kierkegaard adds at the end of this sentence: “(in God:)”) Compare the parallel formulations in SKS 11, 146,29f. / SUDP, 60 (SUD, 30); SKS 11, 161,5f. / SUDP, 76 (SUD, 46); SKS 11, 164,10-2 / SUDP, 79 (SUD, 49); SKS 11, 196,16f. / SUDP, 114 (SUD, 82); SKS 11, 242,22f. / SUDP, 165 (SUD, 131). With regard to the last of these passages, see note 157 below.

¹⁵⁵See Joachim Ringleben, *Die Krankheit zum Tode von Sören Kierkegaard. Erklärung und Kommentar*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1995, pp. 88-95, here p. 89.

¹⁵⁶Compare “I. grunde,” in *Ordbog over det danske Sprog*, vols. 1-28, established by Verner Dahlerup, ed. by Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1919-56, vol. 7, 1925, columns 166-9, here column 167 (5.1).

¹⁵⁷See SKS 11, 242,22f. / SUDP, 165 (SUD, 131). Schrempf’s translation of *The Sickness unto Death* ends abruptly with the sentence: “This form of offense [scil. which declares Christianity to be untruth and a lie] is sin against the Holy Ghost.” (SKS 11, 242,14 / SUDP, 165; see *Die Krankheit zum Tode* (1924), p. 124). This entirely omits the conclusion crucial to an understanding of the work as a whole, the conclusion in which Kierkegaard closes the parenthesis that spans the entire book: “This way of being offended is the highest

To add insult to injury, Schrempf does not merely misconceive Kierkegaard's position on this decisive matter; he goes so far as to *criticize* Kierkegaard for holding the position that he falsely attributes to him, and to defend, against Kierkegaard, the very position that Kierkegaard actually held—and this not only in the afterword to his translation of *The Sickness Unto Death*,¹⁵⁸ but also in his 1927-28 Kierkegaard biography.¹⁵⁹ As Schrempf wrote in the afterword: “How am I supposed to execute this ‘grounding’ of myself in God?...I do not need to ground myself in God at all, for I *am* grounded in God.”¹⁶⁰

The worst aspect of this is not the fact that Schrempf criticizes Kierkegaard's supposed position on behalf of Kierkegaard's (unrecognized) actual position. The worst aspect is the overall effect: the fact that, in the course of the “Kierkegaard Renaissance,” Schrempf's extremely problematic translation of *The Sickness Unto Death* came to influence numerous leading twentieth-century theologians and philosophers. Bultmann, for example, integrated Kierkegaardian ideas and resources into his own exegetical and systematical thinking in a “substantial and overall consistent way,”¹⁶¹ mainly in the period from 1923 to 1926.¹⁶² And apart from a single mention of *The Concept of Irony*, which was not included in Schrempf's editions of Kierkegaard's *Collected Works*, Bultmann's explicit Kierkegaard references point exclusively to the second edition of the *Collected Works* (1922-25),¹⁶³ including *The Sickness until Death* of 1924.¹⁶⁴ Nor can it be ruled out that even *Being and Time*, Heidegger's 1927 *magnum opus*, which is influenced by Kierkegaard's *The Sickness until Death* at numerous essential points¹⁶⁵ (and even more broadly, as the book's three explicit

intensification of sin, which one usually overlooks because one does not make the opposition, Christianly, between sin and faith. On the other hand, that opposition has been effective throughout this work, which laid down straight away (Part One, A.A) the formula for that state in which there is no despair at all: in relating itself to itself and in wanting to be itself, the self is grounded transparently in the power which established it. Which formula in turn, as has frequently been remarked, is the definition of faith” (SKS 11, 242,17-24 / SUDP, 165). On the other hand, Schrempf did include (erroneous) versions of SKS 11, 164,10-2 / SUDP, 79 (SUD, 49) and SKS 11, 196,16f. / SUDP, 114 (SUD, 82)—in which Kierkegaard equates the formula for the state of freedom from despair with his formula for (or “definition of”) faith—in *Die Krankheit zum Tode* (1924), namely, at p. 46 and p. 77.

¹⁵⁸See Schrempf, “Nachwort,” in Kierkegaard, *Die Krankheit zum Tode* (1924), pp. 132-4 [SGW, vol. 12, pp. 390-2].

¹⁵⁹See Schrempf, *Søren Kierkegaard. Eine Biographie*, vol. 2, pp. 47-59, especially pp. 47-50 [SGW, vol. 11, pp. 47-59, here pp. 47-50].

¹⁶⁰Schrempf, “Nachwort,” in Kierkegaard, *Die Krankheit zum Tode* (1924), p. 132 [SGW, vol. 12, p. 390].

¹⁶¹Schulz, “Germany and Austria,” p. 339.

¹⁶²See Bartels, *Kierkegaard receptus I*, pp. 220f., and Schulz, “Faith, Love and Self-Understanding,” p. 236.

¹⁶³Compare the complete, chronologically ordered matrix of the Bultmann's references to Kierkegaard in Schulz, “Faith, Love and Self-Understanding,” pp. 240-9. According to Schulz “it seems safe to infer that he [Bultmann] possessed, at least exclusively relied on, this edition, instead of, at least in later years, switching to other translations/editions” (p. 250).

¹⁶⁴See Bultmann's article against Erik Peterson, “Die Frage der ‘dialektischen Theologie’,” *Zwischen den Zeiten*, vol. 4, 1926, pp. 40-59, in which Bultmann on pp. 47-9 cites *Die Krankheit zum Tode* (1924), p. 3 (SKS 11, 117f. / SUD, 5f.), p. 63 (SKS 11, 182 / SUD, 67f.), pp. 113f. (SKS 11, 231 / SUD, 119f.) and p. 123 (SKS 11, 241 / SUD, 130), albeit with marked alterations.

¹⁶⁵See Michael Theunissen and Wilfried Greve, “Einleitung: Kierkegaards Werk und Wirkung,” in *Materialien zur Philosophie Søren Kierkegaards*, ed. by Michael Theunissen and Wilfried Greve, Frankfurt

references to Kierkegaard make clear¹⁶⁶), may have relied on Schrempf's 1924 translation of that text.¹⁶⁷

IV. A Concluding Note

The two examples cited in Section III, drawn from Schrempf's translations of *Fear and Trembling* and *The Sickness unto Death*, make amply clear the problematic consequences of Schrempf's success—of the fact that, for more than three decades, Schrempf's translations and editions were the standard sources from which numerous important theologians, philosophers, and writers obtained their knowledge of Kierkegaard. In Boehlich's words, “whole systems have been built around a Kierkegaard who, for long stretches, has barely anything to do with Kierkegaard at all.”¹⁶⁸

This fact does not warrant simply dismissing Schrempf's enormous achievements or his intellectual probity. In judging Schrempf, it is crucial to distinguish between his work as Kierkegaard interpreter and his work as Kierkegaard translator. With regard to his interpretive work, Schrempf certainly had every right to insist that “no one is master of the consequences that attach themselves to his work; nor can any thinker demand that his thoughts only be used in the manner that he intended.”¹⁶⁹ Yet this insistence cannot justify Schrempf's massive textual interventions, particularly those found in the second edition of Kierkegaard's *Collected Works*. For a reader who knows no Danish, and so must rely on the aid of as accurate a translation as possible, it does little good when Schrempf declares, in the afterword to his revision of Gottsched's translation of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1925), and with matchless condescension toward the Danish language:

am Main: Suhrkamp 1979 (*Suhrkamp-Taschenbücher Wissenschaft*, vol. 241), pp. 9-104, here pp. 66-73, and Schulz, “Germany and Austria,” pp. 356-8.

¹⁶⁶Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 14th ed., Tübingen: Niemeyer 1977 [1927], p. 189, p. 235, p. 338.

¹⁶⁷In my view, the fact that Heidegger's critical encounter with Kierkegaard began during his student years in Freiburg (1909-13), as Thonhauser emphasizes in *Das Konzept der Zeitlichkeit*, pp. 36-43, does not make it implausible that, starting in the mid-1920s (after initially making use of Haecker's translations and the first edition of Schrempf's *Collected Works* of Kierkegaard), Heidegger began drawing on the second edition of the *Collected Works*. For evidence that Heidegger was familiar with, and used, the second edition of the *Collected Works*, see, e.g., his Freiburg lectures from the 1941 summer semester, reproduced in Martin Heidegger, *Die Metaphysik des deutschen Idealismus. Zur erneuten Auslegung von Schelling: Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände (1809)*, ed. by Günter Seubold, 2nd revised ed., Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann 2006 [1991] (*Heidegger Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 49), here pp. 19-22, where he repeatedly refers to and cites the 1925 translation of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* in the second edition of the *Collected Works*; compare also *ibid.*, pp. 22-30, pp. 45-8, p. 67, p. 73, p. 75, p. 102, p. 110 and pp. 151-3. Full clarification of the matter would require comparison and analysis of all the various manuscripts and drafts involved in the production of *Sein und Zeit*.

¹⁶⁸Boehlich, “Kierkegaard als Verführer,” p. 1078.

¹⁶⁹Christoph Schrempf, *Sören Kierkegaard. Ein unfreier Pionier der Freiheit*, Frankfurt am Main: Neuer Frankfurter Verlag 1907, p. 5.

If one wishes to know *exactly* what Kierkegaard said and thought, then he ought to learn enough Danish (as I did) to be able to read his writings in the original. But if one is not able, or does not wish, to go to that (not especially arduous) trouble, then he must refrain from expecting an exact and independent knowledge of Kierkegaard. He must instead entrust himself to an interpreter who he trusts will communicate Kierkegaard's thoughts to him as well as he understands them himself, and as well as they are capable of being expressed in another language.¹⁷⁰

Schrempf's own interpretive translation, however, is hardly trustworthy in this sense. He freely revised the contents of many passages, and sometimes entire paragraphs or sections, simply in order to bring them into harmony with his own views. With regard to this practice, Schrempf explained himself as follows (here from the 1924 afterword to his revision of Gottsched's translation of *Practice in Christianity*): "Because I do not share Kierkegaard's dogmatic presuppositions, I have here tried all the harder simply to let Kierkegaard say what he could have said, or should have."¹⁷¹ Especially problematic here is Schrempf's readiness to detach Kierkegaard from his historical context,¹⁷² as for example by deleting his allusions to his contemporaries. For Kierkegaard's position simply cannot be properly understood or interpreted without taking his historical context into account.¹⁷³

This leaves us to ask to what extent, and precisely how, this error-ridden and distorting translation of Kierkegaard's works affected the numerous theologians, philosophers, and writers who were influenced by Kierkegaard in the first half of the twentieth century. To what degree was it Kierkegaard whom these thinkers so productively received,¹⁷⁴ and to

¹⁷⁰Schrempf, "Nachwort," in Kierkegaard, *Abschließende unwissenschaftliche Nachschrift / Zweiter Teil* (1925), p. 280 [SGW, vol. 12, pp. 422f.]; see also "Nachwort," in Kierkegaard, *Entweder / Oder. Zweiter Teil* (1913), p. 312 [SGW, vol. 12, p. 270].

¹⁷¹Schrempf, "Nachwort," in Kierkegaard, *Einübung im Christentum* (1924), p. 232 [SGW, vol. 12, p. 397]; see also "Nachwort," in Kierkegaard, *Stadien auf dem Lebensweg* (1914), p. 459 [SGW, vol. 12, p. 288]. This explicit declaration on Schrempf's part decidedly contradicts Diem's claim that "it [must] definitely be recognized that Schrempf labored, with the greatest conscientiousness, exclusively to transmit Kierkegaard's meaning" (Diem, "Zur Psychologie der Kierkegaard-Renaissance," p. 238 (note)).

¹⁷²See, e.g., Schrempf, "Einleitung," in *Sören Kierkegaards agitatorische Schriften und Aufsätze. 1851-1855*, p. xiv [SGW, vol. 12, p. 140]. Cf. also Schrempf, *Sören Kierkegaard. Eine Biographie*, vol. 1, p. x [SGW, vol. 12, p. 445], where Schrempf freely concedes that Kierkegaard was "a man of his times far more limited by his time than he himself, it seems, was aware." Schrempf nonetheless declined "to commemorate [Kierkegaard] historically," as he was "indifferent" to "the extent to which Kierkegaard overcame Hegel, or remained dependent on him." What is more, Schrempf personally found Hegel "unappealing," and "simply had no desire" to undertake a detailed study with his philosophy merely for Kierkegaard's sake.

¹⁷³Elsewhere I have tried to show this importance of understanding Kierkegaard's immediate context for assessing his position with regard to his critique of characterizing faith as "the immediate"—a critique that is found in nearly all of Kierkegaard's pseudonymously published works. See Gerhard Schreiber, "The Real Targets of Kierkegaard's Critique of Characterizing Faith as 'the Immediate'," in *Kierkegaard: East and West*, op. cit., pp. 137-67.

¹⁷⁴On the distinctions among productive reception, receptive production and their mixed types or borderline cases as different types of Kierkegaard reception, see Heiko Schulz, "Die Welt bleibt immer dieselbe. Typologisch orientierende Bemerkungen zur Rezeptionsgeschichte Sören Kierkegaards," in his *Aneignung*

what degree was it merely Schrempf's Kierkegaard? To investigate this in detail would be an intriguing and important task—a task that deserves, but remains, to be undertaken.

Translated by David D. Possen

und Reflexion, vol. 1, *Studien zur Rezeption Søren Kierkegaards*, op. cit., pp. 3-26, here pp. 8-22. See also the schema of types of reflection in Schulz, "Germany and Austria," pp. 308f.

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