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‘Duty and Virtue are Moral Introversions’: On Løgstrup’s Critique of Morality

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A central feature of post-Kantian ethical thought, since at least Hegel onwards, has been the critique of *moralistic* conceptions of ethical life, as involving duties, obligations, principles, rules, laws, and so on. This feature is now an important part of the contemporary landscape in ethical theory, reflected for example in Bernard Williams’s critiques of morality as a ‘peculiar institution’, and as involving ‘one thought too many’; in the renewed interest in virtue theory and Hegelian notions of *Sittlichkeit*; in the championing of various forms of particularism; and in the rise within feminist thought of an ‘ethics of care’.

One significant reason to be interested in Løgstrup’s work, and one significant reason why it has indeed attracted growing attention, is that his approach would appear to chime in with this turn away from an ethics of morality, while also having distinctive features of its own. In fact, it seems to me, in a central respect Løgstrup’s outlook on this matter is considerably more radical than that of the other ‘morality critics’ – to the extent that I fear it is rather *too* radical to be made acceptable as it stands. However, I will suggest, there is a more plausible alternative view that is close to Løgstrup’s, to which his is related, and which will do the work that he requires this critique of morality to achieve – and I will therefore suggest, in a spirit of friendly criticism and amendment, that this is the position he should adopt instead.

I will start by outlining Løgstrup’s objections to morality as I understand it, and discuss why it seems to go too far (section 1). I will then offer the alternative position which I think he could have adopted instead, and explain why it seems more acceptable (section 2), and suggest how this position can do most of the work that Løgstrup’s requires such a critique of morality achieve (section 3).

1. Løgstrup’s view of morality as a ‘substitute’

In his book *Controverting Kierkegaard*, Løgstrup uses the story of the Good Samaritan to highlight what he takes to be wrong with morality as an ethical

perspective. Løgstrup first presents the parable ‘as [it] comes down to us’,¹ wherein the Samaritan is portrayed as responding to the needs of the injured Jewish traveler and what he requires; he thus acts, Løgstrup suggests, in a way that *exemplifies* mercy, but not because he is *setting out* to behave in a merciful manner as such, as all he is focused on is the victim – so ‘it was not a question of the Good Samaritan engaging with his own mercifulness in his exercise of it as his duty; rather, in his mercifulness, he took charge of the man who has been set upon and wounded by the roadside’.² Løgstrup then contrasts this Good Samaritan with what he provocatively calls a *Kantian* Samaritan, who finds himself in the same situation, but who is tempted not to help, and who therefore needs to overcome this temptation. At this point, Løgstrup suggests, considerations of duty and virtue may arise for the Samaritan, and play an important role, as these can then motivate him to assist the victim and overcome his inclination to walk away: by telling himself he has a duty to act, or that he would be displaying the virtue of mercy if he did so, the Kantian Samaritan can conquer his temptations, and look after the traveler in the way that morality requires.³

Now, while Løgstrup allows that to behave in the manner of the Kantian Samaritan is ‘better than brutality or indifference’, he claims that it is nonetheless less good than the behaviour of the true Good Samaritan, being ‘inferior to the immediate realization of mercy’s sovereign expression of life’.⁴ For, he argues, moral considerations like duty and virtue have become involved because the spontaneous expression of mercy has failed and the suffering of the victim has lost its grip on the agent, who has instead become prey to other concerns. Løgstrup therefore thinks that the difference between these two cases shows that ‘[d]uty only enters when I am trying to wriggle out of the situation’, and that in so far as duty is central to morality, morality is a ‘substitute’ for the higher form of ethical existence exemplified by the

¹ BED, p. 76.

² BED, p. 76.

³ In his account of the Good Samaritan example, Løgstrup position and concerns resemble Schiller’s telling of the same story in his *Kallias Letters*: see REF

⁴ BED, p. 76.

Good Samaritan himself.⁵ Likewise, as he makes clear a little later, he thinks the same is true of virtue, where what matters to us is the rightness of what we are doing, which again is a ‘substitute’ for a more direct response to the suffering of the victim and what this involves.⁶ Moreover, not only can ideas of duty and virtue be seen as symptoms of an ethical failing in the agent; such ideas can threaten to *corrupt* an agent, as instead of being driven by the needs of the other person, she focuses on what duty or virtue requires, thus becoming preoccupied with her own moral standing and righteousness, and so acting in order to be merciful rather than acting in order to help the victim in what is in fact a merciful manner. Løgstrup’s position is therefore encapsulated in the claim that ‘[j]ust as duty is a substitute motive, virtue is a substitute disposition’, where both replace the kind of other-directed and immediate focus on the injured traveler that is displayed by the Good Samaritan.

Now, there is little doubt that taken as a critique of morality, Løgstrup’s position is extremely radical. For while other ‘morality critics’ have focused on duty, they have nonetheless mostly exonerated virtue, and indeed have often championed the latter against the former – but as we have seen, Løgstrup condemns them both. Likewise, whilst others have criticized duty as involving ‘one thought too many’ in some situations, they have generally not rejected it in all. And while for some critics the problem with morality is that it does not leave enough room for a concern with oneself and one’s own goals and projects, Løgstrup’s complaint is the opposite one – that in fact it is not other-regarding enough. As a critic of morality, therefore, Løgstrup would appear to put those holding similar views in the shade.

The question is, however, whether in this radicalism, Løgstrup in fact goes too far. Several commentators have argued that he does, and that as a result his position is problematic. So, for example, Kees van Kooten Niekerk has asked: ‘Is it not unambiguously positive when people do things that are right for the sake of their rightness, or when they act out of virtue?’⁷ Likewise, Alasdair MacIntyre and

⁵ BED, p. 76.

⁶ Cf. BED, p. 78. Cf. also BED, p. 105: ‘[I]f the motivating reason for my returning the book to John at the promised time is not one of consideration for John but my resolve to live in accordance with the general principle that promises should be kept, my act is not moral but moralistic’.

⁷ Kees van Kooten Niekerk, ‘The Genesis of K. E. Løgstrup’s View of Morality as a Substitute’, in Svend Andersen and Kees van Kooten Niekerk (eds), *Concern for the*

Stephen Darwall have accused Løgstrup of being mistaken here, in failing to identify anything ethically inferior or second-rate in acting in a dutiful or virtuous manner, at least in certain circumstances.⁸ It is this issue which I wish to consider further in this section, where I will argue that while Løgstrup has more to say against his critics than may at first sight appear, in the end those critics are correct and that Løgstrup has failed to identify anything inherently problematic and anti-ethical in morality.

My central claim will be that, sympathetically viewed, both Løgstrup's Good Samaritan and Kant's dutiful Samaritan will end up being characterized in much the same manner, so that Løgstrup has failed to show that there is some ethical element missing in the latter that is present only in the former. I will start by characterizing ways of being a dutiful agent, where the difference between such an agent and Løgstrup's Good Samaritan is clear, but then argue that Kant did not conceive of the dutiful agent in these terms; in fact, I will suggest, when we take Kant's conception into account, it is hard to see how Løgstrup's Good Samaritan could be anything other than such an agent, so that the contrast Løgstrup has tried to set up collapses, and with it his critique of Kant's position.

The first model of the dutiful agent we can consider, where Løgstrup's objections would appear to have some force, is of an agent whose end in acting is to do her duty, and so where behaving dutifully is the aim or object of what she does. Here, for example, one might think of a soldier whose goal is to have done everything that has been required of him, or a conscientious child who wishes to have carried out all that has been asked of her – where the former might rescue a colleague not in order to save them, but in order to have performed his duty, while the latter might visit a sick relative for the same purpose, and not in order to cheer them up. This, then, is an agent whose primary concern is to do her duty – as opposed to Løgstrup's Good

Other: Perspectives on the Ethics of K. E. Løgstrup (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), pp. 55-84, p. 57.

⁸ Cf. Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Human Nature and Human Dependence: What Might a Thomist Learn from Reading Løgstrup?', in Svend Andersen and Kees van Kooten Niekerk (eds), *Concern for the Other: Perspectives on the Ethics of K. E. Løgstrup* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), pp. 147-66, and Stephen Darwall, review of *The Ethical Demand*, *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 33 (1999), pp. 267-72.

Samaritan, whose concern is to help the wounded traveler, and who thus acts *out of mercy*, rather than with the aim of *being* merciful. Clearly, if the ‘Kantian Samaritan’ contrasts with the Good Samaritan in this way, Løgstrup would be right to be suspicious of the former, precisely because this agent would not act with the end of helping others, but of being a dutiful person and thus with a view to her own righteousness.

However, Kantians have argued that Kant did not think of the dutiful agent in this manner, as someone who acts for the sake of duty rather than to help the other, or to treat her fairly, or whatever. To confuse the two, they have argued, is to confuse the *end* of an action with its *motivating reason*, where the crucial issue is the latter and not the former: namely, that the dutiful agent is motivated by duty, not that doing her duty is her end in acting. Thus, just as a merciful person does not act to help in order to be merciful as her aim, but because she is motivated by mercifulness, so it can be said of the dutiful person that he does not act in order to be dutiful, but because he is motivated by duty.⁹

⁹ Cf. Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 190-1: ‘[T]his puts us in a position to deal with the claim that the Kantian requirement to act from duty alone is equivalent to the (absurd) requirement to make the performance of duty itself, rather than the attainment of any determinate end, the goal of one’s action... Given the distinction between the end or purpose intended by an action and the ground or reason for adopting such an intention, it becomes clear that it simply does not follow that someone who is ostensibly interested in helping others because of the recognition of a moral obligation to do so is not really interested in helping others but merely in the doing of duty for duty’s sake. On the contrary, such a person is genuinely concerned to help others, just as much as another might be who behaves in a similar way from inclination. The difference between them is not the genuineness of the concern but rather its rational ground’. Cf. also Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 24-5, and Marcia W. Baron, *Kantian Ethics Almost Without Apology* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 12: ‘...one’s goal, in acting from duty, need not be to do one’s duty. Duty should be our motivating conception and need not be our end. The aim or end can be to save the child who has just darted into the street, or to show concern respectfully without seeming condescending or meddlesome, or to speak both truthfully and sensitively’. As Baron and Herman note, the picture of Kant they reject is unfortunately encouraged by H. J. Paton’s tendency to sometimes translate ‘aus Pflicht’ as ‘for the sake of duty’ instead of ‘from duty’ or ‘out of duty’. In Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, §133, he uses the phrase ‘um der Pflicht’ to characterize the Kantian position, which is correctly translated in Paton’s way as ‘for the sake of duty’; and in F. H. Bradley’s *Ethical Studies*, this becomes the basis of the slogan of ‘duty for duty’s sake’ which is used to describe the Kantian position discussed in chapter (or essay) IV. For a criticism of this Hegelian way of

Nonetheless, while this second model of the dutiful agent differs from the first, it may not be considered wholly satisfactory either. One difficulty concerns the idea of being motivated by duty: for surely, it can be said, this is also problematic for the sorts of reasons that Løgstrup gives, namely that the Samaritan should be motivated to act by the suffering of the traveler, not because he believes he has a duty to act in this way? The Kantian might think that the perceived suffering of the traveler cannot be enough to motivate, so the Samaritan must *either* be motivated by the distress he feels at the suffering as a result of his sympathetic temperament, *or* by the thought he has a duty to relieve it; but Løgstrup's point may precisely be that this dichotomy is not exhaustive, where the Good Samaritan case shows that the suffering itself can motivate, but without any sense that there is a duty here, and without feelings of distress in the agent playing a role either.¹⁰ A second difficulty, moreover, concerns the very idea of being motivated by duty: for, as some have argued, how *can* duty be a reason to act, simply as such? The thought here is this: if an action is a person's duty and hence ought to be done, then the motivating reasons for doing it should surely be the reasons that *make it a duty*, not the fact that it *is* a duty?¹¹ It thus looks as if, even when treated as a motive and not as an end, duty is still suspect and need not be present as a motivating force in the Good Samaritan, for whom the motivating ground for action could be said to be provided by the distress of the traveler and nothing more, much as Løgstrup suggests.

Now, again, Kantians have been sensitive to these concerns, but have denied that taking them seriously means that we must lose all grip on Kant's conception of the dutiful agent: for, they argue, duty can be a *secondary* motive, not just a primary one, where it is the presence of duty as a motive at *this* level that can be said to distinguish the dutiful agent from others. Authors who have appealed to this distinction include Herman, Baron and Stratton-Lake, though they all use the idea in

understanding Kant's position as confusing motive and end, see Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, pp. 184-91.

¹⁰ Cf. BED, p. 77: 'With a phenomenon such as mercy...the relevant disposition is triggered by the other's misfortune and consists simply in an effort to transform his situation. Kant could only arrive at his ethics of duty by disparaging all ethically descriptive phenomena as inclinations...'

¹¹ Cf. Philip Stratton-Lake, *Kant, Duty and Moral Worth* (London: Routledge, 2000), esp. Chaps 1 and 4.

slightly different ways.¹² But the basic idea is that at the primary level, the dutiful agent need not act from duty as a motive, perhaps because they are motivated to act by some feeling such as mercifulness (Herman, Baron), or because they are simply motivated by suffering of the victim (Stratton-Lake); nonetheless, they only treat this feeling or state of affairs as reason giving insofar as they take it to be in line with duty or what it is right for them to do, where therefore duty functions as a secondary motive, regulating the primary one. This approach may be said to answer William's well-known 'one thought too many' objection,¹³ because it allows the husband to be motivated by love for his wife at the primary level, while if he does not also concern himself with the moral status of such affective states at the secondary level, he may be said to have 'one thought too few'. And it may also be said to answer Løgstrup's worry that what makes the Good Samaritan good is that he simply sees the traveler's suffering as a reason to help, where this can now be said to correctly characterize his *primary* motivation – but where also a further reflective level is required, where the Samaritan must see this need as making the action right.

Using this distinction between primary and secondary motivation, therefore, the reply to Løgstrup is essentially that he has mischaracterized the supposed contrast between the Good Samaritan and the 'Kantian' Samaritan, where he has assumed that the latter must replace treating the suffering of the other as a reason to act with treating the rightness of helping others as reason; but, the Kantian can now respond, both forms of Samaritan can be the same at the primary level and so take the suffering of the other as providing the agent with a motivating reason to act, where the only difference is what happens at the secondary level, when one asks why the agent takes this suffering to be a reason, and whether they do so because they take themselves to have a duty to help others or because so helping is right, or rather on some other grounds – for example, that it will give them satisfaction, or serve their ends, or show them to be righteous. This then suggests that Løgstrup is wrong to think that in the dutiful agent, duty comes in as a 'substitute' at the primary level; rather, it operates in

¹² Cf. Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment*, pp. 13-17 and pp. 33-37; Baron, *Kantian Ethics*, pp. 129-133; Stratton-Lake, *Kant, Duty and Moral Worth*, pp. 53-57 and pp. 60-67.

¹³ Cf. Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 18.

a different way, instead of entering as a ‘replacement’ source of motivation when some other primary motivation (such as mercy) has failed.

There are, however, possible responses that Løgstrup might make to this third Kantian model of the dutiful agent.

The first might be that the Good Samaritan acts *without* this second reflective level, but more immediately and spontaneously – where Løgstrup always seems keen to stress this element of spontaneity in relation to ‘the sovereign expressions of life’, and to be concerned when it breaks down. But the Kantian can respond in a number of ways. First, if such immediacy is made too ‘automatic’, then there is some danger that the Good Samaritan should not be treated as an autonomous agent but more as a responsive automaton. Second, while such spontaneity is perhaps plausible in certain cases where the ethical need is obvious, there will be many other cases where this is not so, and reflective consideration will be called for, so making space for duty as a secondary motive. And thirdly, the kind of secondary motivation that the Kantian envisages here is a commitment to do what is right, which need not require constant monitoring of whether an action really *is* right on all occasions, particularly where that is clear, as it is in the Good Samaritan example.¹⁴

Now, in fact, despite his emphasis on immediacy and spontaneity, Løgstrup himself also still allows for the need for reflection in our ethical lives. For example, in his discussion of Joseph Conrad’s *The Nigger of the Narcissus* in his paper ‘Ethics and Ontology’ (printed as an appendix to the English translation of *The Ethical Demand*), Løgstrup distinguishes this immediacy and spontaneity from the more reflective position that is also sometimes required. Thus, he claims that when caught up in the drama of saving Jimmy, the sailors just act in response to the demands of the situation they are in, while more generally they just get on with their lives without much thinking about the principles that might underlie their actions: ‘They follow the moral law of the sea [‘do not abandon anyone in order to save oneself!]] without

¹⁴ Cf. Marcia Baron, ‘Morality as a Back-up System: Hume’s View?’, *Hume Studies*, 14 (1988), pp. 25-52, p. 29: ‘What is important...is duty as a secondary motive. The agent’s conduct is governed by a commitment to acting as she should. (This does not mean that she is always thinking about morality; but she is, perhaps without being conscious of it, on the alert for indications that the circumstances call for reconsideration, for reflection on whatever it is she is up to.)’.

reflecting on it. They do not give it the remotest thought. They are too preoccupied with the task at hand to do so. Presumably, during the entire time that they were at sea that did not give a single thought to the morality that commands them just as little as human beings pay attention to logic when they reason – even when they reason properly’.¹⁵ However, Løgstrup then asks: ‘But when do we reflect on morals then? What situation has arisen when we make ourselves aware of morals? At any rate, there are two possibilities: 1) when we are in doubt in a certain situation about what is correct and what is incorrect; in an extreme situation we can run into a conflict of duties; 2) when we are lured by temptation’.¹⁶ Løgstrup then goes on to claim that for Kant, only 2) applies, as for him ‘there is...little doubt about what is right and what is wrong and...there are no conflicts of duty... – there are only temptations’.¹⁷ Now, while of course Kant did worry greatly about the problem of temptations, Løgstrup’s position is surely an exaggeration. For, although Kant may indeed have thought that there are ultimately no moral dilemmas,¹⁸ in the sense of conflicts of obligations that could not be resolved, this doesn’t mean he did not think that we could *seem* to be faced with such conflicts which then need resolving, for which reflection is therefore required. Likewise, while Kant appears to have thought that our ‘common human understanding’ can operate pretty well without ‘science [*Wissenschaft*] and philosophy’, which is then only really needed in order to give us clear principles that can aid us in resisting temptation, nonetheless there is no suggestion in Kant that this ‘common human understanding’ involved no reflection *at all*, even if on its own it doesn’t quite get to the dizzying heights of the categorical imperative.¹⁹ It therefore

¹⁵ ED, p. 275.

¹⁶ ED, p. 276.

¹⁷ ED, p. 277.

¹⁸ For the passage that famously suggests this, see Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:224 (pp. 378-9). As ever, however, Kant’s position may not be as simple as this makes it appear, but we cannot go into the issue further here.

¹⁹ Cf. *GMM* 4:404-405 (pp. 58-9), where on the one hand Kant writes that ‘there is, accordingly, no need of science and philosophy to know what one has to do in order to be honest and good, and even wise and virtuous’; but on the other hand, he makes clear that this is only because ‘common human reason’ has a ‘compass in hand’, and so ‘knows very well how to distinguish in every case that comes up what is good and what is evil, what is in conformity with duty or contrary to duty’, suggesting that Kant

seems simplistic of Løgstrup to think only 2) and not also 1) will generate a reflective turn to considerations of duty for the Kantian; and given that he is prepared to allow for 1), it is then hard to see how his position differs much from Kant's on this interpretation.²⁰

A second response that Løgstrup might make to the Kantian model proposed above, is to say that there is some awkwardness and unclarity in this talk of levels of motivation. For, one might wonder which level is the *real* motivator here, and how exactly these levels interact and relate to one another. In response to this sort of concern, however, Baron has argued that it only arises if one has an empiricist view of motivation, which is itself alien to the Kantian picture, of motivation consisting in some sort of 'impulse' – where it might then seem that only one motivating force can be in play, or be what is truly effective, either one's sense of duty, or one's concern for the other person.²¹ For Kant, however, to be a dutiful agent is not to come under a different sort of 'force' distinct from that which impels the non-dutiful agent, but to be someone who interrogates what appear to her to be reasons for action, and asks of them whether acting on them would make the action right, where this is needed before the putative reasons are allowed to exercise motivating force over her. Thus, the sympathetic, the prudent and the dutiful agent may all be led to act by the suffering of the victim, where this is what motivates them – but the sympathetic agent and the prudent agent allow this to happen for very different reasons from the dutiful one, which is why for the latter it is duty and not sympathy or prudence that operates as their secondary motive. In the end, then, for the Samaritan on Kant's model it is still the suffering of the victim which motivates him to act, but it is only permitted to do so

believed that some sort of reflective process involving considerations of duty is still involved.

²⁰ A further point could also be made against Løgstrup here: namely that his 1) and 2) are not exhaustive, so that other grounds for reflection can also be appealed to by the Kantian. For example, one may have reason to doubt the reliability of one's immediate and spontaneous responses (for example, I know myself to be a rather soft-hearted individual), so that some questioning of those responses may be required (for example, I may feel great concern not to hurt this student's feelings by telling him his essay is not up to standard, but perhaps it would be right if I were to do so, where it seems I then need to be governed by a concern to act as I should, not just as I am being drawn to by the situation in which I find myself, faced by an eager student).

²¹ Cf. Baron, *Kantian Ethics*, pp. 188-193.

once he has assured himself of the rightness of so acting, so that considerations of duty play a crucial role in the motivational story.

A third response Løgstrup could make, is to accept that there is indeed some distinction in motivational levels that can be intelligibly drawn, but to argue that for the Good Samaritan, this second level is not about duty, so that when he takes the suffering of the traveler to be a reason to act, it is not because he judges that he will thereby be doing what is right, but simply because he judges that he will have thereby served the interests of the traveler – so the focus is not on his success in meeting his obligations, but on whether the good of the other has been enhanced.²²

In fact, however, there might be two different worries behind this sort of point. The first could be that the Good Samaritan is someone who does not think about the right, but only the good – namely the consequences of his acts for the well-being of others; where by contrast, the ‘Kantian Samaritan’ thinks about the right, because Kant puts the right prior to the good. Now, of course, it is a complex issue in Kant’s ethics how these notions should be related; but even if Løgstrup were correct to characterize a difference between the two Samaritans in this way, I am not sure it would show what he wants – namely, that the Kantian Samaritan is therefore someone who is trying to ‘wiggle out of the situation’ and acting out of a concern for their own righteousness. It would seem, rather, that the two Samaritans just disagree about what really matters in ethics – the right or the good – much as a consequentialist or a Kantian might, where there is no reason simply on that basis to suspect the moral motives of the latter as against the former.

There could, however, be a second worry here, which is that when it come to the second level of motivation, the motivation of the Kantian Samaritan is ‘if I act in this way, I will have done what is right and thereby have acted in a righteous manner’, while that of the Good Samaritan is ‘if I act in this way, I will have realized the well-being of the person in need’. Thus, the thought might be, all that the Kantian has done is to transfer the concern with one’s own righteousness from the primary to the

²² Cf. BED, p. 77: ‘Mercifulness is elicited by the perception of another person being hampered in the realization of his life. It appeals to as elemental a hope as that of seeing every life realized. The other person’s lot is at odds with that hope, and from the dissonance inherent in that circumstance is born the mercifulness that seeks, through action, to vindicate the hope and remove what stands in the way of its fulfillment – whether the obstacles be poverty, need, oppression, or exploitation’.

secondary level, and so no real advance has been made. But, of course, the Kantian can equally reply that this objection merely repeats at the secondary level the confusion that was rejected at the primary level: namely, the confusion between duty as an end and duty as a motivating ground. Thus, the Kantian can claim, the dutiful agent is motivated by the thought that helping the traveler is the right thing to do and that at the secondary level they are committed to doing what is right, but not because by so acting they will achieve their aim of being a dutiful agent.

A fourth and final criticism from Løgstrup might be as follows: Whether duty operates at the primary or secondary levels, the fact remains that when Kant himself comes to consider the ‘interest’ that we take in acting morally, he treats concern with our own worth as what is fundamental, in a way that confirms the critique of Kant that he is offering. Thus, Løgstrup writes:

Why should I do my duty? Kant answers somewhere: in order not to come to despise myself in my own eyes...in order not to come to be ashamed about myself...in order not to be unworthy in my own eyes...in order not to sink in personal worth. ‘In my own eyes’ shows that duty sets a magic circle around human beings and traps them hopelessly in themselves.²³

In this way, Løgstrup could say, although he might want to avoid it, the Kantian in the end is compelled to admit that action from duty is far from the kind of selfless action that Kant himself would so like it to be.

Now, an obvious line of response open to Løgstrup’s opponent at this point is to insist that for Kant, motivation to do one’s duty is supposed to involve respect or reverence for the moral law, rather than concern for one’s personal worth, and that Løgstrup’s interpretation of Kant that has him saying otherwise is misconceived. However, this is perhaps too quick, as Løgstrup is in fact willing to acknowledge that Kant in fact hoped to offer an account of this kind; he doubts, nonetheless, whether he succeeded in doing so:

²³ ‘Pligt eller ansvar’, in *Kirken og Tiden*, 14 (1938), pp. 206-17, p. 213 (quotation translated by Niekerk).

But what, then, is the sentiment evoked by the thought of the rightness of the act? It is easy to imagine that it would be one of rapture at one's own righteousness. The question is whether it can be anything else. It can indeed, say Kant and Kierkegaard. Couched in Kantian terms, the relation to the noumenal world cancels out what is here referred to as moral introversion, and reverence for the law precludes self-righteousness from acting as the motivating sentiment. Couched in Kierkegaardian terms, the relation to infinity and eternity represents not introversion but interiorization, and duty and virtue are replaced by decision. To put it perspicuously, albeit crudely: once motivation has been decoupled from the intended outcomes of the action, Kant and Kierkegaard deem it susceptible of a religious determination, with the result that the will, to speak with Kant, or obedience, to speak with Kierkegaard, becomes the only thing that is good in itself.

But then Kant and Kierkegaard have forgotten that it is of the nature of morality to be a substitute. Their respective ethics amounts to a religious sublimation of the thinking that cleaves to the moral substitute.²⁴

The difficulty with Løgstrup's position here, however, is that it simply seems to beg the question against his Kantian opponent, by *assuming* that because morality must be a substitute, then the official Kantian view must fail. And again, he seems to have made this mistake because he has taken it for granted that the Kantian must have 'decoupled [motivation] from the intended outcomes of the action', such as relieving the suffering of the traveler; but as we have seen, the Kantian can keep this in place at the primary level, while at the secondary level, our motivation to do what is right or our duty can then be said to come for Kant from the reverence we feel for the moral law – i.e. for what it is that is right or our duty.

Nonetheless, it could be said that there is more force to Løgstrup's critique than this: for Kant himself poses the question of the 'interest' that we take in morality, and arguably seems to answer it in the way that so discomforts Løgstrup. Thus, on the one hand, it is true that Kant states clearly that the only correct motive for moral action is 'esteem for one's duty, [where] it is just this respect for the law that

²⁴ BED, p. 79.

straightaway has the greatest force on a spectator, and not, say, any pretension to inner magnanimity and a noble cast of mind'.²⁵ On the other hand, in the passages Løgstrup is presumably referring to in the quotation above,²⁶ Kant repeatedly points to the self-esteem that can be generated by doing one's duty and the deeply rooted fear of being unworthy in the eyes of others when one does not²⁷ - where in the context of this discussion, which is moral education, such considerations are given much weight. Løgstrup might therefore seem entirely justified in seeing here a covert motive for doing one's duty, where it precisely operates as a 'substitute', to overcome the temptations we feel to act otherwise.

However, Kant himself is of course sensitive to this worry, and offers his own way out of the difficulty, which is to allow that we do indeed take a great interest in acting morally insofar as we see great value in being moral agents – but at the same time he treats this as completely consistent with denying that we act morally *as a result of*, or *out of*, this interest, as what motivates to act at the secondary level is nothing more than 'esteem for our duty'. Thus, just as the virtue theorist can claim that the moral agent can gain greatly in well-being from acting morally, and thus take a great interest in so acting, without thinking that it is this interest that motivates her to be virtuous, similarly Kant can allow that the moral agent can recognize great value in having his 'higher' self realized through moral action, and so take great interest in it, without that interest being what motivates the dutiful agent to act – and thus without serving as a 'substitute' in the manner that Løgstrup suggests, and which he wrongly infers from the passage in Kant that he finds so striking.

2. Kant's critique of morality

We have seen, then, how there are problems with Løgstrup's view of morality as a 'substitute', as providing an alternative and less selfless set of motivations when the direct concern with others fails us; rather, as Niekerk and others have suggested, it

²⁵ Kant, CPrR, 5:157.

²⁶ Thanks to Niekerk and Svend Andersen for confirming this with me; Løgstrup himself doesn't provide any citation.

²⁷ Cf. Kant, CPrR, 5: 152 lines 11-12 and 27-32; 155 lines 4 to 6, 161 lines 16-24.

appears that an agent can be motivated by duty and virtue without this necessarily being a sign that anything has gone awry for them in this way, and thus when ‘the motive is no longer drawn from the consequences that the action will have for the lives of others and for society’, it must then be ‘sought in the individual himself’.²⁸ A dutiful agent acting out of a motive of duty, it seems, may no more be doing so in order to look good in his eyes and that of others, than an agent who acts in response to the ‘sovereign expressions of life’.

However, at this point, it may be helpful to Løgstrup if we turn for assistance to an unexpected quarter: namely Kant himself. For, it will now be argued, while Kant’s position on these questions is somewhat different from Løgstrup’s in certain respects, there is also a surprising amount of common ground – perhaps attributable to the common Lutheran inheritance on such matters that they both share.²⁹

This turn to Kant may be unexpected, not only because Løgstrup himself makes him a target, but also because it can appear that Kant himself is an unequivocal supporter of the ethics of duty as the highest form of morality³⁰ – which is of course why Løgstrup’s targeting of him seems to make perfect sense. Thus, at the start of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, where Kant famously argues that only the good will can be considered ‘good without limitation’, he then suggests that such a will is demonstrated in acting out of duty rather than inclination, thus seeming to make dutiful action paramount. Moreover, as we have seen, unlike Løgstrup, Kant held that what makes action in accordance with duty admirable is precisely that it is not self-directed or motivated by self-regarding concerns; rather, ‘*duty is the necessity*

²⁸ BED, p. 78.

²⁹ For discussions of Løgstrup’s relations to Luther, see Niekerk, ‘The Genesis of K. E. Løgstrup’s View of Morality as a Substitute’, pp. 57-9, and Svend Andersen, ‘In the Eyes of a Lutheran Philosopher: How Løgstrup Treated Moral Thinkers’, in Svend Andersen and Kees van Kooten Niekerk (eds), *Concern for the Other: Perspectives on the Ethics of K. E. Løgstrup* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), pp. 29-54.

³⁰ See, for example, Kant’s famous hymn in praise of duty in *CPrR*, 5:86 (p. 209):

Duty! Sublime and mighty name that embraces nothing charming or insinuating but requires submission... what origin is there worthy of you, where is to be found the root of your noble descent which proudly rejects all kinship with the inclinations, descent from which is the indispensable condition of that worth which human beings alone can give themselves?

of an action from respect for the law', whereby 'there is left for the will nothing that could determine it except objectively the *law* and subjectively *pure respect* for this practical law'.³¹ Far from being a 'substitute' for some higher form of more selfless engagement, it is clear that for Kant acting out of a sense of duty and of the authority of the moral law is the best way in which we can exemplify a good will and display moral excellence, where (as we have seen Løgstrup recognizes) Kant would deny that the person who acts from duty must do so from a rapturous admiration for their own righteousness, or because some other more direct ethical motivation that he might have felt initially has failed him so that duty as a motive 'has to leap into the breach and ensure that the act is still performed'.³² To this extent, therefore, Kant can deny that there is anything ethically inferior about the 'Kantian Samaritan', for though he might act out of duty, he may do so for Kant out of respect for the moral law rather than out of concern for his righteousness; and also without the motivation from duty 'substituting' for a different ethical motive he might have had instead had he been a better person, where for Kant the only alternative open to him might be an inclination (of the sort displayed by the good-hearted shopkeeper)³³ that is without the moral worth that is required to put his acting from duty in a bad light.

Nonetheless, despite not sharing these aspects of Løgstrup's view, it is still the case that Kant has his own grounds for treating the dutiful agent as less than ethically ideal in certain crucial respects: for, the fact that duty and obligation figure so centrally in our moral lives is for Kant the result of our ethical limitations and the ethical inadequacy of our natures, much as it is for Løgstrup. To this extent, therefore, both may be said to share in the Lutheran view that the law exists not for the righteous, but only for the unrighteous.³⁴

Kant's position here can be seen most clearly in the distinction that he draws between the human will on the one hand and the holy will on the other. The actual difference he points to is in essence a simple one, and obviously relates to standard theological conceptions of our 'fallen' state: whereas a divine will acts only in line

³¹ Kant, *GMM*, 4:400, pp. 55-6.

³² BED, p. 78.

³³ REF

³⁴ REF

with the good, and has no inclinations to do otherwise, we have immoral desires and inclinations, that mean we find ourselves drawn to adopt immoral courses of action. As Kant puts it: ‘The dispositions of the deity are morally good, and those of man are not. The dispositions or subjective morality of the divine are therefore coincident with objective morality’,³⁵ but ours are not.

While the contrast Kant draws is itself perhaps not unusual, the way he uses it is nonetheless considerably more distinctive. For, he deploys it in order to explain the way in which duty and obligation arise in ethics, which had been a long-standing matter of debate within philosophy and theology, and had played a central role in disputes between natural law theorists, divine command theorists, and others. The issue, put simply, was how to explain that the peculiar force morality has for us, which takes the form of duties and obligations – that is, of *commands* or *imperatives*, telling us that there are actions we *must* or *must not* perform. Kant calls this feature of morality ‘necessiation’ or ‘constraint’ (*Nötigung*), and he explains it not by recourse to a divine command, or to a kind of ‘fitness’ in things, but in terms of the distinction between the holy will and our own, arguing that it is because we have dispositions to do things other than what is right, that the right for us involves a moral ‘must’; but for

³⁵ Kant *LE* 27:263 (p. 56). Cf. also *LE* 27:1425 (p. 68): ‘[T]he divine will is in accordance with the moral law, and that is why His will is holiest and most perfect. . . God wills everything that is morally good and appropriate, and that is why His will is holy and most perfect’; and *ibid.*, 29:604 (p. 229): ‘In the Gospel we also find an ideal, namely that of holiness. It is that state of mind from which an evil desire never arises. God alone is holy, and man can never become so, but the ideal is good. The understanding often has to contend with the inclinations. We cannot prevent them, but we can prevent them from determining the will’; and *LR* 28:1075 (p. 409): ‘A holy being must not be affected by the least inclination contrary to morality. It must be *impossible* for it to will something that is contrary to the moral law. So understood, no being but God is holy. For every creature always has some needs, and if it wills to satisfy them, it also has inclinations which do not always agree with morality. Thus the human being can *never be holy, but of course* [he can be] *virtuous*. For virtue consists precisely in *self-overcoming*’. [References to all of Kant’s work are first given to the pagination of the Akademie edition. For Kant’s lectures on ethics, the second reference is to the following translation: *Lectures on Ethics*, edited by Peter Heath and J. B. Schneewind, translated by Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). For references to his published works on ethics, second references are to *Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For references to Kant’s work on religion, second references are to *Religion and Rational Theology*, translated and edited by Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).]

a holy will, which has no inclination to do anything other than what is right, no such ‘must’ applies. A typical statement of Kant’s view is the following from the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*:

A perfectly good will would, therefore, equally stand under objective laws (of the good), but it could not on this account be represented as *necessitated* to actions in conformity with law since of itself, by its subjective constitution, it can be determined only through the representation of the good. Hence no imperatives hold for the *divine* will and in general for a *holy* will: the ‘ought’ is out of place here, because volition is of itself necessarily in accord with the law. Therefore imperatives are only formulae expressing the relation of objective laws of volition in general to the subjective imperfection of the will of this or that rational being, for example, of the human will.³⁶

Thus, the principles that determine what it is good and bad to do apply to the holy will, where these principles are laws because they hold of all agents universally, and of such agents independently of the contingencies of their desires and goals, and thus necessarily.³⁷ However, because the holy will is morally perfect, these laws lack any necessitating force, whereas our lack of moral perfection means that they possess such force for us.³⁸

³⁶ *GMM*, 4:414 (p. 67).

³⁷ On universality, see: *GMM* 4:412 (p. 65): ‘moral laws are to hold for every rational being as such’. On necessity, cf. Kant’s distinction between *principles* and *laws*, where the former are what govern ‘what it is necessary to do merely for achieving a discretionary purpose’, and so can be ‘regard as in [themselves] contingent and we can always be released from the precept if we give up the purpose’, whereas a moral law ‘leaves the will no discretion with respect to the opposite, so that it alone brings with it that necessity which we require of a law’ (*GMM*, 4:420 (p. 72)). Cf. also *GMM* 4:389 (pp. 44-5).

³⁸ Cf. *MM*, 6:222 (p. 377): ‘An imperative is a practical rule by which an action in itself contingent is *made* necessary. An imperative differs from a practical law in that a law indeed represents an action as necessary but takes no account of whether this action already inheres by *inner* necessity in the acting subject (as in a holy being) or whether it is contingent (as in a human being); for where the former is the case there is no imperative. Hence an imperative is a rule the representation of which *makes* necessary an action that is subjectively contingent and this represents the subject as one that must be *constrained* (necessitated) to conform with the rule’.

It can therefore be seen how Kant's distinction between the holy will and ours is designed to resolve the problem of obligation, by appeal to the fact that our will is divided between reason and inclination in a way that the will of the divine being is not. Kant characterizes this division in the terms of his transcendental idealism as mapping onto the distinction between the noumenal and phenomenal realms (or the 'intelligible world' and 'the world of sense'):

And so categorical imperatives are possible by this: that the idea of freedom makes me a member of an intelligible world and consequently, if I were only this, all my actions *would* always be in conformity with the autonomy of the will; but since at the same time I intuit myself as a member of the world of sense, they *ought* to be in conformity with it; and this *categorical* ought represents a synthetic proposition a priori, since to my will affected by sensible desires there is added the idea of the same will but belonging to the world of the understanding – a will pure and practical of itself, which contains the supreme condition, in accordance with reason, of the former will.³⁹

Kant thus uses his transcendental idealism, and his dualistic picture of the will, to offer a solution to the transcendental question he raises concerning the imperatival nature of morality, of 'how the necessitation of the will, which the imperative expresses...can be thought'.⁴⁰ Kant's distinction between the holy will and ours therefore forms a crucial part of his answer to the problem of accounting for the moral 'must', in a way that explains its possibility (unlike a view that simply treats the 'must' as a feature of the world), but without recourse to the problematic notion of a divine legislator as the source of that 'must' (thus avoiding any need to adopt a divine command theory).

Now, leaving aside various complexities which Kant's view involves,⁴¹ it can I think be seen how far Kant's position may in fact be said to resemble Løgstrup's: for, Kant takes a morality of duty to be ethically inferior in important respects to that

³⁹ Kant, *GMM*, 4:454 (pp. 100-101).

⁴⁰ *GMM* 4:417 (pp. 69-70).

⁴¹ REF other papers

of the holy will, to whom no such moral ‘must’ applies. In fact, Kant’s perspective on this is made evident at the very outset of the *Groundwork*, where he first introduces the idea of duty after his discussion of the good will: for, he makes clear there that duty pertains not to the good will *as such*, but to ‘that of a good will though under *certain subjective limitations and hindrances*’,⁴² which is clearly a reference to the non-moral aspects of our nature that turn goodness into a matter of duty for us. Kant allows that these aspects do not entirely obscure the goodness in us, and in acting from duty this goodness is revealed in a way that in some respects makes it ‘shine forth all the more brightly’⁴³ because of the contrast with what it has overcome – but nonetheless, the fact remains that the holy will represents a form of ethical life that is higher than the ethics of duty which is our lot.

To this important extent, therefore, Kant can be counted as a critic of morality alongside Løgstrup, where for both, acting from duty is to be seen as a kind of ‘second best’ and a departure from the ideal. At the same time, however, the differences of detail between them may enable Kant to make this critique more convincing than (we argued) Løgstrup was able to do. Let me explore this in further detail.

At the heart of Løgstrup’s objections to morality, it seemed, was the following basic idea:

when we treat *A* as a duty, we are trying to make *A* in our interests and thus provide a fresh motive to do it, as by conceiving it as a duty, we are then able to take self-righteous pleasure in doing *A*

Now, this idea was said to be problematic in two related central respects: first, agents can take it that they have duties to act, where it seems implausible to suppose that they are thinking in this way in order to give themselves an interest in doing these actions; and secondly, in doing an act because it is a duty, an agent may not be reflecting on how doing it makes them look, and so may not get self-righteous satisfaction from it at all.

⁴² *GMM* 4:397, p. 52 (my emphasis).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

However, an advantage of Kant's position from this perspective is that he does not have to characterize things in quite this way, while still reflecting the spirit of Løgstrup's view. For, on the one hand, Kant does not treat duty as providing us with a 'substitute motive'; on the other hand, he does treat the imperatival force of duty as a sign that the agent is not a holy will, but rather plagued with desires that are not in alignment with what it is good or right to do. To this extent, therefore, Kant's position has echoes of the 'backsliding objection'. Likewise, Kant holds that we can be motivated to act from duty out of respect, and not from the sense of self-righteousness that so acting give us; on the other hand, this respect comes about only because we are fallen creatures, forced to look up to the moral law. Thus again, to this extent Kant's position has echoes of the 'self-righteousness objection'.

Rather surprisingly, perhaps, a case can therefore be made that rather than being at odds with one another here, to a large degree Kant and Løgstrup share a common outlook on the relative merits of morality.

3. 'Our life is, ethically speaking, a contradiction': Duty and the unfulfillability of the ethical demand

Having shown how Løgstrup's critique of morality might be modified along Kantian lines, I now finally want to suggest that this modification need not prevent Løgstrup holding on to a central claim that he wants to make concerning the radical nature of the ethical demand that we care for the other, and particularly its unfulfillability.

Løgstrup's insistence that the ethical demand is unfulfillable has not surprisingly caused a degree of consternation, where the basis for this is often some sort of appeal to the principle that 'ought implies can'. While this principle is not without its ambiguities and complexities, and is not as obviously true as is sometimes supposed,⁴⁴ to many it will appear to cast doubt on the coherence of Løgstrup's position here. So, for example, MacIntyre writes:

⁴⁴ For further discussion see my paper 'Does "Ought" Imply "Can"? And Did Kant Think It Does?', *Utilitas*, 16 (2004), pp. 42-61.

Løgstrup's account is flawed. The notion that we can be required to respond to a demand that is always and inevitably unfulfillable is incoherent. If I say to you "This cannot be done; do it," you will necessarily be baffled.⁴⁵

MacIntyre is clearly appealing here to the oddity of someone ordering someone else to act in a way that is also said by them to be unachievable, where he is assuming that a command of this sort forms the basis for the demand. In raising this objection, MacIntyre's is clearly interpreting the demand in what might be called a 'straight' manner, as something that we are told to do, while at the same time it is held that doing it is impossible. Although even taken in this manner MacIntyre's concerns may not be insuperable,⁴⁶ they are certainly understandable and will doubtless appear plausible to many.

However, it is questionable whether MacIntyre is correct to understand Løgstrup's position in the way that he does, as if what makes the demand into a demand is a commander telling you that something must be done, even while he thinks you are incapable of doing it. For, if we take the Kantian perspective outlined in the previous section into account, I think we can see Løgstrup's position differently, and as offering instead what might be called a 'self-effacing' conception of the unfulfillability of the ethical demand, based on the following idea: Care for the other will only appear *as* a demand or as something *required* of them to agents who lack a holy will, and who thus to some degree *resist* caring for others by virtue of their inclinations to do otherwise. As a result, such an agent cannot fulfill the demand to care for the other, because if this demand were properly met, then they would become like holy wills, in which case it would not seem to the agent to *be* a demand at all, as the inclinations that make it so would be lacking – so *qua* demand it is unfulfillable. Thus, if the demand arises at all, it is already too late, as the truly good individual would not experience or be conscious of any such demand in the first place, and nor could the idea be applied to them; on the other hand, if we did in fact manage to achieve the right relation to the other, as a holy will could, we would not be under any demand, so it could not be met this way either. So, it appears, the ethical

⁴⁵ MacIntyre, 'Human Nature and Human Dependence', p. 164.

⁴⁶ REF Wayne Martin

demand is unfulfillable, because if it comes into play at all we already lost, whereas if we are not lost, it does not come into play, so that either way it is radically unfulfillable in the way Løgstrup suggests:

[E]very attempt to obey the demand turns out to be an attempt at obedience *within the framework* of a more fundamental disobedience... what is demanded is that the demand should not have been necessary. That is the demand's radical character.⁴⁷

Or, as Løgstrup puts it elsewhere: 'The demand demands that it be itself superfluous'.⁴⁸ Thus, Kant's conception of the human will/holy will distinction, and how this explains the moral imperative or demand as it applies to us, can be used to show how Løgstrup's claim concerning the unfulfillability of the ethical demand can be made coherent, when this is treated not as a command from a commander who knows you cannot do what he says, but as a felt 'must' that arises for a will that has already gone wrong from the moment it has experienced it.

This approach may also help resolve something else which puzzles MacIntyre about Løgstrup's position. Thinking that Løgstrup is troubled by the idea of a command that cannot be met,⁴⁹ MacIntyre notes that Løgstrup says that it is *also* fulfillable, but in a way that MacIntyre regards as hopelessly contradictory.⁵⁰ Again, puzzlement here is understandable, but in a way that can now perhaps be resolved. For, on the reading I have suggested, while the demand *qua* demand cannot be fulfilled, what the demand asks us to *do* can still be done, so it can be fulfilled in this sense: that is, at least on many occasions, I can do what is demanded, namely 'care for

⁴⁷ ED, p. 146.

⁴⁸ BED, p. 69.

⁴⁹ Cf. ED, p. 165:

But is not the demand canceled by the fact of its impossibility? Can the demand abide its own impossibility?

The assumption is that every demand, whatever its content, presupposes that it is fulfillable; otherwise it is not a demand but a meaningless pretense.

⁵⁰ See MacIntyre, 'Human Nature and Human Dependence', p. 164.

the other person in a way that best serves his or her interest'.⁵¹ And this would seem to meet Løgstrup's central concern in this discussion of the contradictory nature of our moral lives, which is that on the one hand we should not fool ourselves into thinking we are better than is the case (where the sense in which the demand is unfulfillable will always remind us that we are not holy wills),⁵² while on the other hand we need to avoid letting ourselves off the hook with the idea that we are unable to do what is required⁵³ (where the sense in which it is fulfillable reminds us that we can at least do the action that is demanded of us, even if this cannot ever be sufficient for us to claim that we are wholly good, as the action would not then *be* a demand at all).

Finally, if I am right to claim a shared perspective between Løgstrup and Kant here, this can be made less surprising despite their apparent disagreements, given their common Lutheran heritage. One important aspect of that heritage is Luther's focus on the Pauline claim that 'The law is not given for the righteous, but for the unrighteous' (I Timothy 1.9). One way to understand Luther's view of this claim, is that the law belongs to those who are not completely good; for those who are there is no such law, so for such beings, the law is not so much fulfilled as effaced:

To fulfill the law, we must meet its requirements gladly and lovingly; live virtuous and upright lives without the constraint of the law, as if neither the law nor its penalties existed.⁵⁴

⁵¹ ED, p. 55.

⁵² Cf. ED, p. 166: 'But it must be added that we cannot concede life's claim that the demand can be fulfilled by giving up our own claim that it cannot. Why not? Because this would be the same as to entertain illusions about ourselves. To give up our claim that the demand is impossible of fulfillment is to become entangled in the pious fraud that self-assertion and will to aggrandizement are not products of our nature, and that we would therefore be able to overcome them without dying. The result would be a life of pretense and a feigned unselfishness'.

⁵³ Cf. ED, p. 166: 'On the other hand, the impossibility of fulfillment of the demand... is the impossibility of fulfillment for which we refuse to accept blame. We refuse to accept blame by maintaining that we cannot help it if we do not obey the demand'.

⁵⁴ Martin Luther, 'Preface to the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans', in *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings*, edited by John Dillenberger (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1961), pp. 19-34, p. 21.

4. Conclusion

My aim in this paper has been to consider Løgstrup's critique of the Kantian conception of morality as involving duty. While I have argued that as it stands that critique fails, I have also argued that some of Løgstrup's central points in making that critique can be saved – ironically by turning to Kant himself, and seeing how his account of duty also sees it as a 'substitute' for the very different moral life of the holy will.