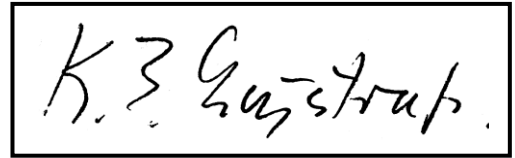


Newsletter

Edited by the Løgstrup Archive



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Editor

Kees van Kooten Niekerk
Faculty of Arts
Aarhus University
Taasingegade 3
DK – 8000 Aarhus C
Telephone: (+45) 89 42 22 72
E-mail: kkn@teo.au.dk

EDITORIAL

At the time of writing, radical organisational changes are taking place at Aarhus University. The former nine faculties have been reduced to four main academic areas, namely Arts, Science and Technology, Health, and Business and Social Sciences. This means that the Faculty of Theology has ceased to exist as a distinct faculty and will not even continue as a distinct department. It has become part of what is called the Department of Culture and Society at the Faculty of Arts. This department comprises, besides theology, as different fields of study as anthropology, Arab and Islamic studies, archaeology, area studies, classical studies, history, history of ideas, philosophy, and the study of religion.

One of the leading ideas behind the new structure is the promotion of cooperation across the borders of the established fields of study. At the moment, however, it is not clear what this is going to mean for teaching and research at the former Faculty of Theology. Much will be clarified in the autumn term when the structure has to be implemented in concrete assignments. For the time being, the Løgstrup Archive exists as it has done thus far: as an institution for promoting research in and acquaintance with

Løgstrup's thinking, which is backed up by and serves people from different academic fields, and which is physically situated in the building of the former Faculty of Theology. We hope that the gathering of philosophers, historians of ideas and theologians in one department will benefit the Løgstrup research and the work of the Løgstrup Archive.

This issue of the Newsletter opens with an article by Maria Møller, which gives an account of the Jesus-pictures in three of Løgstrup's central works, connecting these pictures with the main focus of Løgstrup's thinking in the periods when he wrote those works. Maria Møller is a PhD scholar in theology at Aarhus University and works on a project about Løgstrup and the historical Jesus. Next, this issue contains a story by Kees van Kooten Niekerk about the ups and downs of preparing a new edition of Løgstrup's doctoral dissertation. Moreover, you will find a report of the seminar at which this edition was presented together with a book about the relationship between Løgstrup and his younger colleague Johannes Sløk by Ole Morsing, Associate Professor of History of Ideas in Aarhus. This issue concludes with the announcement of a popular introduction to Løgstrup's thinking, which will be published by what could be designated now as Theology in Aarhus

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JESUS IN THE WRITINGS OF K.E. LØGSTRUP. A SHORT OUTLINE

by Maria Louise Odgaard Møller

None of K.E. Løgstrup's works focus on the Jesus figure *per se*. Nonetheless, it is possible to outline Løgstrup's understanding of Jesus from his works since an interpretation of Jesus is important to Løgstrup in order to support the main focus of his theological thinking in a given period of his work. In general, this main focus would be his understanding of what created life – or *life itself* – is, which to some extent can explain why Løgstrup's point of departure for talking about Jesus is always *the life and work of the human being* Jesus of Nazareth. Rather than having a specific interest in Jesus, Løgstrup focuses primarily on theology of creation. Løgstrup's seminal work on ethics, *Den etiske fordring* (*The Ethical Demand*), however, represents a substantial deviation from this focus on the characteristics of created life, now being fully engaged in outlining the understanding of the law (the ethical demand). But this deviation actually confirms that the picture of Jesus

is very dependent on the main focus of Løgstrup's thinking: as the understanding of created life is being shoved into the background, the highlighting of the *life* of Jesus suddenly fades while the role of Jesus seems fulfilled with his *proclamation of the demand* and the forgiveness on the behalf of God. In short: The purpose of Løgstrup's Jesus is to support and confirm the given main focus of Løgstrup's theology.

In this article, I will elaborate further on this. I will briefly sum up the content of three of Løgstrup's important works and their main purpose. The works chosen will cover Løgstrup's thinking from 1942 to 1968: Løgstrup's doctoral dissertation *Den erkendelsesteoretiske konflikt mellem den transcendentalfilosofiske idealisme og teologien* (*The Epistemological Conflict between Transcendental Idealism and Theology*) from 1942, *Den etiske fordring* (*The Ethical Demand*) from 1956, and his polemical book *Opgør med Kierkegaard* (*Controverting Kierkegaard*) from 1968.

1942: Jesus in Løgstrup's doctoral dissertation

The aim of Løgstrup's doctoral dissertation is to show that there exist two conflicts between transcendental idealism, i.e. neo-Kantianism, and theology: regarding the understanding of life and regarding the notion of epistemology. Here, I will concentrate on the understanding of life. Løgstrup examines four different neo-Kantian analyses of the essence of cognition in order to characterise their implicit understanding of life. His conclusion is that neo-Kantianism paradoxically regards cognition as being both *based on* the thought of creation and *in opposition* to it: Cognition is described in terms of "producing", "shaping", and "creating" – concepts only understandable when knowing something about what creation is. But apart from that, cognition is also described as "spontaneous", which means that what cognition really creates is – itself. "(...) only Itself can the Cognition create while nothing else of Being has come into Existence by being recognised by the Subject" (Løgstrup 2011, 119). Thus, the underlying way of understanding life is that life itself is without shape and content. It is the purpose of the subject's cognition to give shape and form to an indeterminate and formless life. In this way, the subject, not God, is the creator of life. Hence, Løgstrup characterises this understanding of life as *profane*. In strong opposition to this way of understanding life, which dominates contemporary culture, stands the Jewish-Christian understanding of life. Life is created by God, and therefore it is something definite before and without the subject's shaping of it. In order to find out what the definiteness of life is, Løgstrup looks at the faith of Israel (Old Testament) and the life of Jesus (New Testament). His conclusion is that the characteristics of created life are mercy, forgiveness, to give, and to serve. Jesus

lives and proclaims this created life while all other human beings destroy and ruin it. By learning about the life of Jesus, we realise our sin: destruction of the created, given life which is an interpersonal life of mercy and giving. Jesus reveals to us, in his life and proclamation, what the original created life is like; Jesus does the “deeds of the moment”, namely mercy, forgiveness, to give, and to serve. Created life is synonymous with life in the kingdom of God. Thus, by living this life, Jesus has healed our broken lives so that we can again live a life of mercy and giving. Hence, Jesus’ act of salvation is solely linked to his way of living and proclaiming while any talk of the death on the cross and/or the resurrection is completely uninteresting and even unnecessary to Løgstrup in order to get his line of thinking in shape. Jesus reveals to us what created life is because Løgstrup needs to tell what this life is like in opposition to the profane understanding of life. Moreover, the redemptive role of Jesus is also seen in connection to this life style. This life style, though, includes *forgiveness* as one of “the deeds of the moment” which characterises the personal relationship both between God and man and between man and his fellow human being, which the life and proclamation of Jesus as the creating word of God creates. Still it must be said that compared to more traditional theological positions, this is a somewhat controversial way of formulating a Christology.

1956: Jesus in *The Ethical Demand*

The picture of Jesus in *The Ethical Demand* diverges from the picture drawn elsewhere by Løgstrup. The main focus of the book is not to characterise created life but to give a phenomenological analysis of *the law*, i.e. the ethical demand/the golden rule/the demand for neighbour love. Løgstrup now assumes that it is possible to distinguish between a content of universal validity of Christianity which can be formulated *in a strictly humane way* – by which Løgstrup means in a philosophical manner – and a specific Christian content. The law belongs to the universal content of Christianity; this is why it can be analysed by means of philosophy, i.e. phenomenology. We understand that we cannot fulfil the demand in confrontation with the ethical demand. Instead of taking care of our fellow human beings, we constantly ruin the interpersonal life by being selfish. The law, not the life of Jesus, discloses our sin. Therefore, the life of Jesus is neither necessary to reveal to us what created life is like nor to let us realise our sin.

Therefore, what Jesus does is proclaiming the ethical demand and forgiveness on behalf of God. We no longer get to know anything about the *life* of Jesus, and the content of his proclamation can apparently be summed up in: demand and forgiveness. Christian faith is to believe that God – unforeseen – will stand behind the words of demand and

forgiveness spoken by Jesus. However, no good reason is presented to make it plausible that God is a forgiving God; no explanation is given for the reality of forgiveness. Hence, the Jesus figure in *The Ethical Demand* is very lightweight, not only compared to Løgstrup's way of portraying Jesus elsewhere but also compared to what is said about Jesus in the Bible or in the theological tradition as such. Christology, even in a restricted version linked solely to the *life* of Jesus, not to his death and/or resurrection as in Løgstrup's doctoral dissertation, is now absolutely absent. Although *forgiveness* may be seen as a weak link to Løgstrup's Jesus figure in his doctoral dissertation, there is a big difference between the constructions of the notion in the two works of Løgstrup. In the doctoral dissertation, the notion of forgiveness seems well supported: Forgiveness is one of the "deeds of the moment" which characterises the life and proclamation of Jesus and hence both created life and life in the kingdom of God, together with mercy, to give, and to serve. In contrast, forgiveness in *The Ethical Demand* is nothing but a postulate of the content of the proclamation of Jesus. No good reason or analysis is offered to make the postulate valid or convincing.

1968: Jesus in *Controverting Kierkegaard*

Although the line of theological reasoning seems a bit more incoherent compared to Løgstrup's earlier works, the picture of Jesus drawn in this book is the most solid and convincing of this period. Løgstrup's main interest is to outline his understanding of the sovereign expressions of life. In this way, created life has found its way back into Løgstrup's thinking, being almost absent in *The Ethical Demand*: Only *speculatively* it was possible to talk of trust and mercy. But now, exactly mercy is one of the so-called sovereign expressions of life which shows that created life has definiteness. As in the doctoral dissertation, Jesus is here the human being who is capable of living created life without destruction: he lives in completion of the sovereign expressions of life whereas we live in destruction of them. Therefore, Jesus is the only human being who has ever lived an un-paradoxical life. It is our way of living, not Jesus', that is a paradox. Løgstrup says this in opposition to Kierkegaard's conception of the paradox of God in time. So again, Jesus shows us what original, created life is like. But before getting to know the life of Jesus, we already know – from our destruction of the interpersonal life – that we are sinners. Løgstrup is a bit unclear here: we just *know* of our sin, but neither the law nor the life of Jesus has revealed it to us. Besides *living* the only un-paradoxical life, Jesus also *proclaims* the demand and forgiveness on behalf of God, just as in *The Ethical Demand*. But in

Controverting Kierkegaard a new content is added to the proclamation of Jesus: His proclamation of the kingdom of God, to which Jesus considers himself as being part of.

But what exactly is the significance of his un-paradoxical life and his proclamation of the kingdom of God? For one thing, Jesus' suffering and crucifixion. He was crucified as a consequence of his way of living and proclaiming. For another, the crucifixion is the place of the provision for forgiveness. At this point, Løgstrup is almost classical theological in his thinking, and Jesus is actually endowed with a clear Christological profile.

Conclusion

The Jesus figure does not have Løgstrup's interest *per se*, and consequently the picture of Jesus is not the focal point of his theology. Instead, Løgstrup's portrayal of Jesus is depending deeply on the main focus of his theology in a given time of his writings. Jesus lives and proclaims in a way that can fully support Løgstrup's main interest. On the one hand, it can be claimed that due to the line in Løgstrup's *philosophical* thinking, his way of portraying Jesus is very consistent and convincing since Jesus fits his argumentation perfectly. On the other hand, Løgstrup's picture of Jesus raises the question: What does a convincing and valid way of presenting Jesus look like? Should the biblical texts and/or the theological tradition act as benchmark for what *must* be included in this picture and what *cannot* be left out? If so, it seems to me that *at least* an explicit consideration of the role of Jesus in restoring man's broken relationship to God must be included. However, Løgstrup fails to do that convincingly in his doctoral dissertation and in *The Ethical Demand* while he is more successful in this regard in *Controverting Kierkegaard*.

Literature

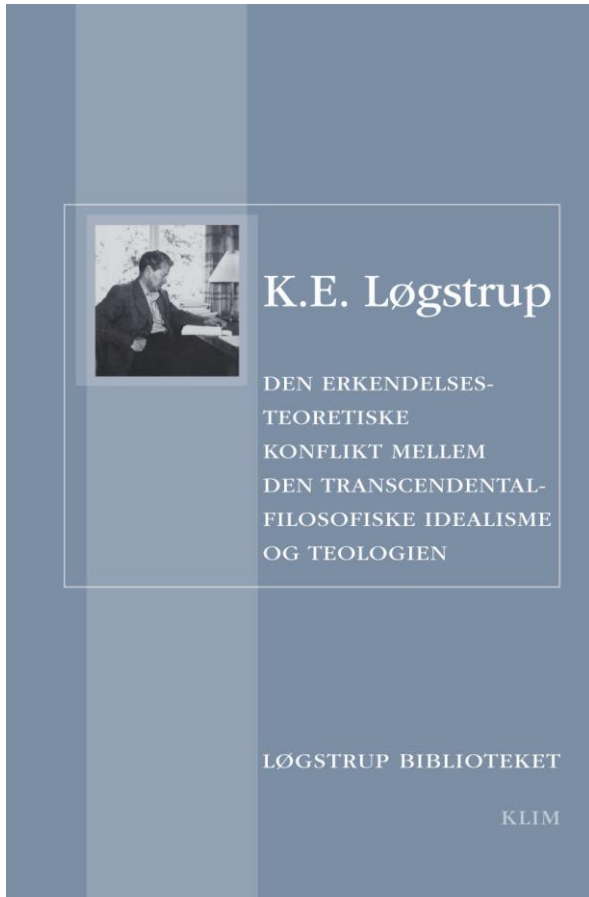
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EDITING LØGSTRUP'S DISSERTATION

by Kees van Kooten Niekerk



When I visited Løgstrup's widow, Rosemarie Løgstrup, about ten years ago, she showed me a copy of her husband's dissertation, with many remarks added in pencil by him. Moreover, the copy contained several sheets with handwritten additions. Rosemarie explained that her husband had been preparing a new, revised edition, but that this edition had never appeared.

I immediately understood that this document was an important source for studying the development of Løgstrup's thinking. Therefore, I asked Rosemarie for permission to borrow it to take a photocopy, for the Løgstrup Archive. I got the permission, took the book with me, copied the revised pages and the additional sheets, and returned the book to her.

After Rosemarie's death in 2005, the question arose as to what should happen to the books and documents that were left in the house. Most of Løgstrup's posthumous papers had already been copied to microfilm, in which form they were accessible at the Løgstrup Archive. Similarly, the major part of Rosemarie and Knud E. Løgstrup's library had already been moved to the archive. Yet there were many books and documents left which could be of interest for the Løgstrup research. I was therefore invited, with two of my colleagues, by Løgstrup's children to visit their parents' house to select the books and documents relevant to the Løgstrup Archive. We found many, but to our surprise Løgstrup's revised dissertation was not among them. We wondered what could have happened to it. At that moment I was glad that I had kept a photocopy.

In 2008 the Publishing House KLIM founded the Løgstrup Library, which is to comprise new editions of Løgstrup's main works and a number of commentaries, monographs and anthologies. When the editorial board asked me to prepare a new edition of Løgstrup's dissertation, I suggested to include Løgstrup's planned revision. My

suggestion was accepted, and I spent the summer of 2010 studying Løgstrup's revisions and additions. It was a pity, of course, that I did not have the original copy, but fortunately the photocopy was of good quality. Moreover, Løgstrup had a beautiful, distinct hand, and it turned out that he had worked meticulously. In by far the most cases it was therefore easy to retrieve his intentions.

There were cases, however, where it was difficult to find out what Løgstrup had had in mind. Some comments were hard to read, sometimes the editorial directions were ambiguous, a few times they contradicted one another, and once or twice they resulted in an incoherent text. Such cases called for a great deal of consideration, which more often than not did not lead to a conclusive result. In these cases, Løgstrup's intentions were a matter of conjecture.

However, the editorial work also had its highlights. There was, for example, one page on which Løgstrup had three times added a certain word. It was obviously the same word, but no matter how much I considered the context and looked at the cryptic handwriting, I was not able to identify the word. I showed the page to a colleague who is familiar with Løgstrup's handwriting, but he could not decipher the word either. I was about to give up when suddenly the penny dropped. The word was 'pilgrimsmytisk' (in English: 'pilgrim-mythical', which refers to the myth that human beings are pilgrims on earth). Of course! Once identified there could be no doubt that this was the word. The reason why it was so difficult to identify must have been that it is a very unusual word (it does not figure in my Danish dictionary). Now I remembered that I had read it once in another text of Løgstrup's. My subconscious mind had established the connection that my conscious thinking could not procure.

Another highlight was the spotting of an important change in Løgstrup's thinking. Løgstrup states in his dissertation that we are not able to know God's law by ourselves. Therefore, God has revealed it to Israel. For those familiar with Løgstrup's ethics, this sounds strange because his conception of the ethical demand involves the claim that God's demand to love one's neighbour is accessible to all, Christians and non-Christians alike. But Løgstrup's revision shows that soon after the publication of his dissertation he changed his mind. This is evidenced by the fact that his references to the revealed law are consistently substituted with references to *lex naturae*, natural moral law. The change can even be localised more precisely in a distinct passage. On page 93 Løgstrup writes that the created goodness of human life "does not mean that humanity in an immanent process has become aware of what God's laws are" (my translation). But now, in his revision, he vigorously crosses out the "not" and substitutes the passage with: "means that humanity itself can become aware of what God's laws are". This is quite a difference! It is as if we are allowed to look over Løgstrup's shoulder at a moment where he controverts himself.

Ejendommelig for Israels Ret i Modsætning til de antike Kulturer er det ogsaa, at den ikke er nogen Klasseret (W. Eichrodt op. cit. p. 31). — Hvad der er indlysende nok, naar Loven er Udtryk for det skabte Menneskeliv, thi Mennesket er jo ikke skabt som fornem eller Præst eller læg, men som Menneske.

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1 b. Denne Identitet af Menneskelivets skabte »saaledes« — og Guds Love for Menneskelivet i Tiden betyder nu ~~ikke~~, at Mennesket i en immanent *selv kan blive* Proces er blevet klar over, hvilke Guds Love er. Det betyder ikke, at Nedbrydelsen af Livet i dets Menneskeligheds Bestemthed »automatisk« gør os

1) Walther Eichrodt henleder i det citerede Værk p. 30 Opmærksomheden paa en Bemærkning i E. Ring, Israels Rechtsleben im Licht der neuentdeckten assyrischen und hethitischen Gesetzesurkunden 1926 p. 60 ff. i Anledning af Forskellen i Synspunktet for Ejendomsbeskyttelsen henholdsvis i Israel og i de store Kulturfolk: In Israel Erhaltung des Besitzes zu Gunsten der Familie und des Geschlechtes, in Assur Schutz des Eigentums als der Grundlage der staatlichen Vermögenskultur.

Part of the page discussed above. Note the thick stroke over 'ikke' (= 'not')

In the new edition of Løgstrup's dissertation, which appeared in April this year, Løgstrup's revision has been included by way of editorial notes and alternative versions of some paragraphs. However, the story does not end here. This summer, when I was clearing out my desk, I pulled out a drawer which I had only opened halfway during many years. To my surprise, a big envelope appeared at the back of the drawer. On the envelope was written, in Rosemarie Løgstrup's neat hand, "Retur fra [back from] Kees van Kooten Niekerk", and inside the envelope was the revised copy of Løgstrup's dissertation. At least this is proof that I *had* returned the book to Rosemarie. But she must have given it to me once more – probably because she thought that it would be kept most safely at the Løgstrup Archive. Back at my office I must have put it into the back of my drawer, perhaps to have a closer look at it before transferring it to the archive – just to forget that I had put it there. Whatever the explanations, I am happy that the book has finally turned up again. Now it lies safely in a drawer at the Løgstrup Archive.

A SEMINAR ON LØGSTRUP AND SLØK

by Kees van Kooten Niekerk

Since 2007 the Publishing House KLIM, in cooperation with Aarhus University and the Løgstrup Archive, has organised public seminars in connection with new publications in the Løgstrup Library series (on the Løgstrup Library, see the last issue of this *Newsletter*). This praiseworthy tradition was continued on Friday 29 April 2011 on the occasion of the republication of Løgstrup's dissertation and the publication of Ole Morsing's monograph *Løgstrup & Sløk*. As was the case with earlier seminars, this one also attracted many people (about 100).

As Sløk may not be as well known as Løgstrup outside Denmark, let me give some basic information about him. Johannes Sløk (1916-2001) was a Danish philosopher and theologian who, like Løgstrup, worked as a professor at Aarhus University – first at the Faculty of Theology (1959-1967), then at the Institute of History of Ideas (1967-1977), and finally taking over Løgstrup's chair at the Faculty of Theology (1977-1986). Although both Løgstrup and Sløk had their roots in existentialist theology, their views gradually diverged. Whilst Løgstrup increasingly emphasised that human life, thanks to its creatureliness, is meaningful, Sløk insisted on the absurdity of human existence. This and other differences resulted in a polemic relationship between them. Morsing's book deals with the ideological as well as personal aspects of that relationship.

Whereas the controversy between Løgstrup and Sløk focussed on the meaning of life, Løgstrup's dissertation dealt with epistemology, more precisely "the epistemological conflict between transcendental idealism and theology", as the English translation of the Danish title goes. Against this background, the organisers aptly called the seminar *Eksistens og erkendelse – Løgstrup og Sløk* (existence and cognition – Løgstrup and Sløk). Different though these subjects may be, the programme succeeded in combining them in a meaningful way.

In his introduction to the seminar, Peter Aaboe Sørensen (historian of ideas) touched on both subjects by situating Løgstrup between Kant and Heidegger. Next, Kees van Kooten Niekerk (theologian), who had been responsible for the new edition of Løgstrup's dissertation, lectured on Løgstrup's struggle with Kantianism up to, in and after the dissertation. The morning session was concluded by Svend Andersen (theologian), who lectured on "the pre-cultural in Løgstrup's dissertation and his 'discussion' with Sløk", thus making a transition to the Løgstrup-Sløk controversy, which was the subject of the afternoon.

The afternoon session began with a presentation by Ole Morsing (historian of ideas) on some issues from his book. Next, Niels Grønkjær (pastor) discussed Løgstrup's and Sløk's views of time and eternity. Then Kjeld Holm (bishop), who had known both antagonists, shed light on their complex personal relationship. The seminar concluded with a lecture by David Bugge (theologian) entitled with a quotation: "Self-forgetful spontaneity and the self-abrogation of the demand". Interestingly, this apparently Løgstrupian passage turned out to stem from Sløk. So the seminar ended with the suggestion that the conflict might not have been as deep as it looked like in the heat of the battle.

NEW LØGSTRUP INTRODUCTION FOR FREE

By Bjørn Rabjerg

August 2011 will see the release of a new Løgstrup introduction aimed at Danish upper secondary schools and organised study groups. The book will be richly illustrated and will be printed in approx. 5000 copies. Its publication is funded by Theology in Aarhus, and it will be distributed for free to Danish upper secondary schools and parishes. The book's principal purpose is to make Løgstrup known to the broader public, but we hope that it will also increase the visibility of Theology in Aarhus among people in general and potential future students in particular.

The book will contain short articles by 13 different contributors, ten of which are part of the Løgstrup research community at Aarhus University. The main topics are ethics and metaphysics, but some articles focus on cultural issues such as literature, multiculturalism, the church, and the discussion between Løgstrup and Hal Koch concerning the Danish cooperation policy during World War II.

The ethics section focuses on the ethical demand and the discussion whether there should or should not be such a thing as a particularly Christian ethics, but we also bring a contribution about bioethics viewed from a Løgstrupian perspective. The metaphysics section focuses on the sovereign expressions of life, religion as interpretation (Danish: 'tydning'), and Løgstrup's discussion of theodicy (justification of God as beneficent *and* omnipotent in spite of the existence of evil) and nihilodicy (justification of nothingness in spite of the existence of beneficent phenomena). The book also features a lengthier introduction to Løgstrup's life and thinking as well as a shorter introduction to each section.

The book can be obtained by contacting René Dybdal Pedersen (rdp@teo.au.dk) or Bjørn Rabjerg (bjr@au.teo.dk), and it will also be made available as an e-book.

