

## Kierkegaard and divine-command theory: replies to Quinn and Evans

R. ZACHARY MANIS

*The Courts Redford College of Theology and Ministry, Southwest Baptist University,  
1600 University Ave, Bolivar, MO 65613  
e-mail: zmanis@sbuniv.edu*

**Abstract:** One of the most important recent developments in the discussion of Kierkegaard's ethics is an interpretation defended, in different forms, by Philip Quinn and Stephen Evans. Both argue that a divine-command theory of moral obligation (DCT) is to be found in *Works of Love*. Against this view, I argue that, despite significant overlap between DCT and the view of moral obligation found in *Works of Love*, there is at least one essential difference between the two: the former, but not the latter, is committed to the claim that, necessarily, *p* is morally obligatory only if God commands that *p*.

### **Minimal requirements for a divine-command theory of moral obligation**

It is uncontroversial that Jesus' summary of the moral law in the Gospels as a two-part command to love is central to Christian ethics. It is no small detail of this teaching that love for God and neighbour is the object of a command. Kierkegaard certainly recognizes the importance of the commanded nature of Christian love, as the chapter from *Works of Love* entitled 'You shall love' clearly demonstrates.<sup>1</sup> What is unclear is what conclusions should be drawn from these observations. Philip L. Quinn<sup>2</sup> and C. Stephen Evans<sup>3</sup> both argue that we can find in this discussion evidence that Kierkegaard himself endorses a divine-command ethic of some sort. In order to assess their arguments, we first need to be clear about what, exactly, a divine-command theory is.

Quinn and Evans agree that a divine-command theory of moral obligation [henceforth: DCT] must hold, minimally, (1) that divine commands and moral requirements are coextensive, and (2) that there is a metaphysically asymmetrical relationship between the two, such that divine commands are in some sense prior to moral requirements and moral requirements in some

way depend on divine commands.<sup>4</sup> Evans formulates these two conditions as follows:

A divine command theory of moral obligation, as I shall understand the term, is therefore committed to the following two propositions: (1) Any action God (understood as a perfectly good, all-powerful, and all-knowing Creator) commands his human creatures to do is morally obligatory for them. (2) Any action that is morally obligatory for humans has the status of moral obligation because God commands it.<sup>5</sup>

Though Evans is right that a divine-command theorist is committed to these propositions, a minimal DCT must assert something stronger: it must hold that, *necessarily*, any action that God commands is morally obligatory and, *necessarily*, any action that is morally obligatory has this status because God commands it. Otherwise, the view will not entail counterfactual propositions of the form, *if God (counterfactually) had commanded p, then p would be obligatory* – a set of claims the divine-command theorist surely wants to endorse. The asymmetrical relation clause also needs to be strengthened as follows: *necessarily*, there is a metaphysically asymmetrical relationship between divine commands and moral obligations such that the latter depend on the former. This ensures both that the relation between divine commands and moral requirements is one of dependency of the latter on the former *and* that it could not be otherwise. Let us, then, strengthen the minimal version of DCT under discussion in these ways.

Thus modified, the co-extensiveness thesis expresses a necessary bi-conditional – a material equivalence between divine commands and moral obligations that holds in all possible worlds: necessarily, *p* is morally obligatory if and only if God commands that *p*. It will be helpful for our purposes to separate the bi-conditional into its constituent parts and to name each part for ease of reference. Let ‘the necessity clause’ refer to the proposition that, necessarily, *p* is morally obligatory only if God commands that *p*. The necessity clause expresses that, necessarily, only those things that God commands are morally required. This entails that nothing is morally required except what God commands, i.e. that any action that lacks the property of being divinely commanded also lacks the property of being morally obligatory. Thus, divine commands constitute the only ground of moral obligation that is possibly sufficient.<sup>6</sup> Let ‘the sufficiency clause’ refer to the proposition that, necessarily, *p* is morally obligatory if God commands that *p*. The sufficiency clause expresses that, necessarily, everything God commands is morally obligatory (in the world in which He commands it); nothing is required in addition to God’s commanding *p* to make *p* obligatory.<sup>7</sup> The difference between the two clauses is important because, I will argue, Kierkegaard’s writings provide support only for one of them.

### **Quinn on Kierkegaard and divine-command ethics**

Quinn’s argument for a divine-command ethic in *Works of Love* begins with the observation that, for Kierkegaard, Christian love for the neighbour – *agape*

love – is commanded by God, and its being commanded by God suffices to make it obligatory:

In the religious tradition of Jesus and his hearers, it is taken for granted that divine commands give rise to obligations, and so an obligatory love would in that tradition naturally be represented as commanded by a divine lawgiver. It is, then, no accident that the love of neighbor the Gospels propose to us is, as Soren [sic] Kierkegaard says, a “*commanded* love.”<sup>8</sup>

Quinn identifies three primary reasons why, according to Kierkegaard, love of neighbour must be commanded and thus made obligatory. First, ‘only love which is obligatory can be extensive enough in scope to embrace absolutely anyone without distinction’.<sup>9</sup> In the absence of the command, love is based on preference and thus extends only to those for whom we feel some affection or those to whom we have some special tie. Second, ‘only a love which is obligatory can be invulnerable to changes in its object’.<sup>10</sup> Loves based on preference are always subject to change: they can begin to wane or be extinguished completely if some change occurs in one (or both) of the lovers that makes him or her seem no longer lovely to the other. And finally, it is necessary for neighbour love to be commanded by God in order to provide us with ‘backup motivation’<sup>11</sup> – a constant and reliable source of motivation to love the neighbour when there is insufficient or no natural inclination to do so:

For most of us most of the time, love of neighbor is not an attractive goal, and, if it were optional or supererogatory, we simply would not pursue it. To get us to have such love, it must be presented to us as an obligatory love with the feel of something that represents a curb or check on our natural desires, inclinations, and predilections.<sup>12</sup>

Quinn repeats his basic argument about Kierkegaard’s unique understanding of the radical demands of neighbour love in at least five articles,<sup>13</sup> and in each of these, the context implies that Quinn takes these arguments to be evidence of Kierkegaard’s divine-command ethic.<sup>14</sup> Each time, Quinn expresses his view that ‘no Christian thinker has seen with greater clarity than [Kierkegaard] just how radical the demands of love of neighbor really are’,<sup>15</sup> and, after making observations such as the ones above, he proceeds to unpack what the concept of neighbour love entails for Kierkegaard. His exposition of Kierkegaard’s concept of neighbour love seems to me successful for the most part. The problem, however, is that it is never clear why Quinn thinks that Kierkegaard’s claims about neighbour love add up to a divine-command ethic. The textual evidence Quinn cites supports only the conclusion that Kierkegaard endorses some view of moral obligation compatible with the claim that God’s commands are sufficient to impose moral obligations. Since there are a number of theistic ethical theories that are compatible with the sufficiency clause, this gives us no reason to think Kierkegaard favours DCT, in particular. The inference from such evidence to the conclusion that Kierkegaard advocates DCT is fallacious. In order to support the

DCT reading of *Works of Love*, Quinn would need to provide some textual evidence that Kierkegaard endorses the necessity clause, as well. He offers no evidence of this – and, a fortiori, no evidence that even a minimal version of DCT is advocated in *Works of Love*.<sup>16</sup>

This is, as far as I can tell, the most serious difficulty for Quinn's reading of Kierkegaard. But there are other difficulties as well. In much of his discussion of Kierkegaard, Quinn seems to confuse DCT with a theory of moral motivation. Quinn repeatedly emphasizes the need for neighbour love to be commanded in order to motivate the Christian to love the neighbour even when the neighbour is perceived to be unlovely. The command is a source of motivation that gives one a reason to love even when one's natural inclinations are to hate, ignore, or simply fail to love the neighbour as one ought. But even if it is true that we need the command for this purpose, taking this fact to support a divine-command reading of Kierkegaard conflates a thesis about moral motivation with a thesis about the ontological basis of moral obligation. It is one thing to claim that divine commands are needed to motivate us to fulfil our moral obligations; it is another to claim that the metaphysical basis of moral obligation is tied essentially to divine commands. The two claims are logically distinct, and neither obviously entails the other.

I see two reasonable ways of interpreting Quinn on this point, though on either reading, Quinn's view is problematic. On the one hand, Quinn might be claiming that, for any action A, a duty to A binds an agent S only if S feels some inclination not to A. On this view, duties exist only insofar as there is some conflict between what God wants us to do and what we naturally are inclined to do. Thus God issues commands – and thereby brings it about that we are morally obligated – whenever He wants to give us an overriding reason to act in some way that we otherwise would not. This is one way of understanding the following passage:

But the image of God, who is perfectly good, is presumably a mark that renders all who bear it lovable. If one can discern it in another, one can give the other loving care in virtue of and on account of the other's possession of it. ... [I]f Kierkegaard is right about there being an inner glory in each of us, loving care can be given to anyone, absolutely anyone, out of affection for it if one can but see it. ... It must be emphasized, however, that even if Kierkegaard is right about there being an inner glory in each of us, many will still be thrust back by the command to love the neighbor. Some will think it foolish to look for the image of God in all those they encounter; others are unlikely to see it no matter how hard they look ... Moreover, the image of God is often too faintly perceived to be motivationally sufficient for those works of love that demand great sacrifice. So ordinary Christians need to be able to trust to [*sic*] the 'Thou *shall*' of the command for backup motivation. They will have to appeal to the motive of duty on many occasions as a substitute for or a supplement to the motives provided by perceived inner glory.<sup>17</sup>

What Quinn seems to be saying in these passages is that once we come to see the image of God in the neighbour, we can come to love the neighbour ('give the

other loving care') on the basis of finding the neighbour lovely – in the deepest sense rather than a superficial sense – rather than having to rely on the 'backup motivation' of the command to love.

It might not be immediately obvious why this view is problematic. To make the difficulty clear, consider the following question: would we have a duty to love the neighbour if our natural inclination (at all times) were to love the neighbour? In the passage above, Quinn suggests that if we could see the image of God in the neighbour at all times – which, presumably, we always could do if not for the blinding effects of sin and our fallen nature – then there would be no *need*, motivationally speaking, to make loving the neighbour a duty, and thus no need for God to issue a command to love the neighbour. In such a case, God would not issue the command, so there would be no duty to love the neighbour. But this seems mistaken. There is a difference between (1) agent S not needing action A to be a duty in order for S to be motivated to A, and (2) A's not being a duty for S. While it is plausible that (1) could, in some circumstances, apply to loving the neighbour, it is not plausible, I think, that (2) could.

The argument for why loving the neighbour could not fail to be a duty is this: if, as Quinn's own claims about the neighbour's essential nature suggest, *agape* love is the only proper response to the neighbour as a fellow creature of God who bears His image, then it seems we have another source of duty to love the neighbour in addition to the divine command to do so. We have an obligation to love the neighbour because of *the kind of being the neighbour is*. We would have this duty even if, due to our moral and religious perception's being so acute and our character's being so virtuous that we always saw the neighbour as lovely and thus loved the neighbour without special moral effort, God had not issued a command to love the neighbour. Thus (1) and (2) are not equivalent. It may be that, in the actual world, because of our sinful natures, it is necessary for God to issue a divine command to love the neighbour in order for us to know that this is our duty, and it may be that divine commands are necessary to motivate us to uphold this duty, but the duty to love the neighbour exists prior to the command, in virtue of the fact that the neighbour is both a creation of God and a being who bears the *imago Dei*.<sup>18</sup>

In fact, on this first interpretation, the various claims Quinn makes about the relation between duty and motivation, when combined, lead to paradox. As previously discussed, what characterizes the first interpretation of Quinn is his endorsement of:

- (1) For any action A, an agent S has a duty to A only if S has some inclination not to A.

But elsewhere Quinn endorses (what he takes to be) Kierkegaard's view that:

- (2) We are divinely commanded – and thus have a duty – to love 'affectionately'.<sup>19</sup>

(Here ‘affection’ is being used in the sense of ‘tender concern’, ‘attentive regard’, ‘affectionate sensitivity to the individual character of the recipient’.)<sup>20</sup> And yet, Quinn also claims that:

- (3) We are commanded to love the neighbour because loving the neighbour is an act that ‘does not spontaneously engage [our] affections’.<sup>21</sup>

and that,

- (4) A love that is motivated by duty is not ‘a matter of feelings’ and can ‘exist and persist independent of feelings, though it need not do so’.<sup>22</sup>

There are a number of ways in which these claims come into conflict with one another. First, (4) is in tension with (2), because a love that is not a matter of feelings, and can exist and persist independently of feelings, is not an affectionate love in the sense in question. Second, the combination of (1) and (2) apparently leads to the following paradoxical conclusion: we have a duty that, if perfectly upheld, renders the duty no longer a duty. (2) claims that we have a duty to love the neighbour affectionately, and (3) implies that the reason this is a duty is that we are not naturally inclined to do it. But it is plausible that one could uphold this duty perfectly – that one could perfectly love the neighbour affectionately in the sense of loving her with tender concern, attentive regard, and sensitivity to the individual character of the neighbour – only if one loved the neighbour out of a pure character. Presumably, an individual’s character would be pure (perfectly virtuous) only if she loved the other affectionately without inner conflict – that is, only if her natural inclinations were to love the neighbour. But if this is right, then if one perfectly upheld the duty cited in (2), it would cease to be a duty, because, according to (1), one cannot have a duty to do what one has no inclination not to do. This implies that one cannot fulfil one’s duty by perfectly loving the neighbour – a view that, while perhaps not logically contradictory, certainly is paradoxical. Moral requirements of this type ordinarily are not thought to be the sorts of things that cease to be requirements if they are perfectly upheld.

These problems suggest that we should look for another interpretation of Quinn on the issue of the relation between duty and moral motivation. A second reasonable interpretation is that Quinn thinks the duty to love the neighbour remains for an agent even when (ideally) that agent’s character has been perfected. On this reading, Quinn is claiming that in this perfected state, the agent no longer relies on the motivation of the duty to love the neighbour; instead, she loves the neighbour because she sees the ‘inner glory’ – the *imago Dei* – in the neighbour and thus recognizes that the neighbour is intrinsically worthy of being loved. The duty to love the neighbour remains even though it is motivationally

superfluous. The following passage provides some textual support for this interpretation:

Saintly exemplars such as Mother Teresa ... show us that we might, if we would but try, find something glorious in anyone and as a result might come to perform works of love *not merely* out of obedience to the divine command *but also* in affectionate response to the glory perceived in the one for whom the works are performed. This, I take it, would be the perfection of Christian love for the neighbor.<sup>23</sup>

This is, I think, a more reasonable view, and it avoids many of the problems just discussed. But on this reading, what is important for the issue of moral motivation is that neighbour love is obligatory, not that it is commanded. What is important is that we have a backup motivation to love the neighbour when we lack any natural inclination to do so. But if neighbour love is obligatory, and if we know it to be such, then we have this backup motivation; it does not matter *why* it is obligatory. Thus, the motivational importance of the duty to love provides no support whatsoever to DCT over other ethical theories on which neighbour love is obligatory. To claim otherwise is to beg the question in favour of DCT: it is to assume that, since neighbour love must be obligatory to provide us with sufficient motivation to practise it, it must be divinely commanded. This is simply to assume that the only source of duty is divine commands. Certainly, the proponent of DCT is committed to this view (the necessity clause), but simply to assume its truth is not to provide *evidence* for DCT. So, once again, even if Quinn is right in thinking that Kierkegaard sees that it is a practical necessity for fallen creatures that love of neighbour be a duty, this provides no evidence for thinking that Kierkegaard endorses DCT.

A final problem with Quinn's reading of Kierkegaard is that it seems at times to conflate DCT with what is sometimes called 'the weak dependency thesis': the thesis that, as Avi Sagi and Daniel Statman put it, 'human beings, because of their flaws, can neither attain moral knowledge nor behave in moral ways unless assisted by God'.<sup>24</sup> The weak dependency thesis resembles DCT in giving divine commands a central role; the crucial difference, however, is that the role is epistemological and/or motivational rather than ontological. Quinn writes,

Christians are, I take it, expected to be confident that there is something loveable about each human person, even if they do not see what it is, because God loves all his human creatures. But perhaps only those who are well advanced in the practice of works of love should hope to be blessed with a growth in the brightness of eternity's light that will enable them to see steadily what makes some of their neighbors worthy of love.<sup>25</sup>

Coming back to a point discussed earlier, if it is the image of God in the other that makes the other 'worthy of love', then this suggests that we have a duty to love the other in virtue of this feature of the other's essential nature, independent of any divine command to do so. Nevertheless, it may be necessary for God to command us to love the neighbour in order for us to recognize this duty – whether

because of our fallen nature, the noetic effects of sin, our own personal moral immaturity, or whatever. Divine commands are, on this model, an essential component of human moral development; without them, we would be blind to our obligations, or, at the very least, confused about the extent of our duties and about what it is that we are obliged to do in some cases. None of this, however, implies the stronger dependency thesis according to which all moral obligations owe their ontological status to God's activity of issuing commands. In fact, if the neighbour's essential nature as bearer of the *imago Dei* itself imposes the duty to love, then this stronger dependency thesis is false: at least some duties owe their status as duties to certain features of creation rather than to their being commanded by God.

### **Evans on Kierkegaard and divine-command theory**

Though Quinn initiated the discussion of Kierkegaard's relation to divine-command theory, the most nuanced and developed version of the divine-command reading of Kierkegaard, to date, is presented by C. Stephen Evans in *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*. Evans attempts to synthesize the motivational and metaphysical aspects of DCT by developing 'a divine command theory of ethics that can incorporate some of the insights of a human nature theory of moral obligation'.<sup>26</sup> By a 'human nature theory', Evans means a theory that accounts for the grounds of moral obligation in terms of a teleology of the natural order – one that focuses especially on the conditions for human flourishing. The ethic Evans finds in Kierkegaard's writings synthesizes DCT and certain aspects of a human nature theory by holding that moral obligations are grounded in divine commands, but God, being essentially loving, issues these commands not arbitrarily, but rather with the intent of promoting our own individual and/or collective flourishing.

The idea that our relation to God is a crucial part of human flourishing has a long history. Evans notes that within the Christian tradition, 'it has generally been taught that such a relation is the highest good that is possible for a human person. It follows very plausibly from this that a need for such a relationship is a constituent of human nature.'<sup>27</sup> As our just and loving Creator, God is owed our love, respect, gratitude, and obedience. But there is an important difference between the ethic Evans defends and a fully fledged human-nature theory, such as that often found in ethical theories inspired by Thomism:

God's commands can be understood as fitting our human nature and as being directed to our happiness. This divine command theory, however, differs from a human nature theory in claiming that moral obligations do not follow directly from human nature alone. On such a view morality fits our human nature, but one cannot deduce our moral duties simply from knowledge of human nature.<sup>28</sup>

For Evans's Kierkegaard, God's plan for each person is unique, and each individual's highest flourishing is attained by becoming the particular self that God



intends that person to be. An individual becomes the self God intends through a process of character-formation guided by obedience to the commands God issues to that person. What God commands of each of us, perhaps most fundamentally, is that we become more loving. By truly loving God and our neighbour, we become more like God, whose very nature is love.<sup>29</sup> This fundamental command is one that is issued to – and thus binding upon – all persons.

However, God also may impose *individual obligations* by issuing certain commands to an individual that He issues to no-one else. He may, for example, command me and only me to take some course of action; in this way, an action that might be morally neutral for anyone else becomes obligatory for me. This opens up the possibility that God has for each of us a particular vocation or calling.<sup>30</sup> Kierkegaard writes,

But this I do believe (and I will gladly listen to any objection, although I will not believe it) that at each man's birth there comes into being an eternal vocation [*evig Bestemmelse*] for him, expressly for him. To be true to himself in relation to this eternal vocation is the highest thing a man can practice.<sup>31</sup>

The concept of personal vocation is most at home in an ethic in which divine commands play a central role. God can, for example, give one certain abilities or talents and command one to develop these and use them in specific ways. He can command one to become one type of person (say, a teacher) rather than another (say, a missionary). In these and many other ways, God can issue commands that guide one toward an individual calling, ultimately aimed at the end of becoming the person God intends one to become.<sup>32</sup> By obeying God's commands, both universal and individual, one achieves the human *telos* and – as both the Kierkegaardian pseudonym, Anti-Climacus, and Kierkegaard himself put it – one 'becomes oneself'.<sup>33</sup>

Evans considers the ethic he finds in Kierkegaard to be 'a full-fledged divine command theory' in which '*all* truly moral obligations owe their status as moral duties to the fact that God commands them'.<sup>34</sup> He is much more explicit than Quinn in describing how he thinks divine commands give rise to moral obligations. Following Robert M. Adams, Evans endorses a social theory of the nature of obligation.<sup>35</sup> According to this theory, social relations 'carry with them obligations', and 'are in fact partly constituted by systems of obligation, even though these obligations may be "pre-moral" in character'.<sup>36</sup> Both Adams and Evans argue that our relation to God is properly described as a social relation that carries with it specific obligations; Evans claims further that it is an indispensable constituent of human flourishing.<sup>37</sup> However, a subset of the obligations generated by our relation to God is different from other socially-generated obligations in that they have the right characteristics to qualify them as *moral* obligations. Evans sums up his view as follows:

On this view we are creatures made by God for fellowship with God, and our deepest happiness depends on such a relation, one that requires love and gratitude to God on our

part. The relation with God, like other social relations, generates obligations. In this case the obligations to obey God's commands are of a character to merit the description 'moral.' I believe that this is the right perspective from which to view Kierkegaard's ethics.<sup>38</sup>

Evans cites three qualities that characterize moral obligations and distinguish them from other types of obligations.<sup>39</sup> First, they are *objective*: their binding power does not depend merely on the beliefs, practices, or customs of individuals, cultural groups, or societies. Second, they are *ultimate*: they give reasons for action that are overriding in relation to other, conflicting reasons, including those provided by other kinds of obligations. Finally, they are, in some cases at least, *universal*. Many divine commands are issued to all persons and thus impose moral obligations on everyone without exception. We can add to this that moral obligations are universal in another sense, as well: in any case in which one is obligated, anyone in relevantly similar circumstances would be similarly obligated. On a divine-command theory such as Evans's, however, this does not imply that moral properties must supervene on natural properties, where 'natural properties' are taken to refer (roughly) to those properties a naturalist metaphysic would allow. God can issue two individuals in similar 'natural' circumstances contrary commands, in which case they would be differently obligated. However, this is not to deny that moral obligations are universal, because being commanded by God is, for the divine-command theorist, a morally salient feature of any circumstance. Anyone similarly commanded by God will be similarly obligated.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the divine-command theorist still can allow that everyone who is *in all relevant ways* similarly circumstanced will have the same obligations.<sup>41</sup>

I have argued elsewhere that combining DCT with a social theory of obligation results in a view that faces a number of serious problems.<sup>42</sup> I will not repeat these objections here. At present, I wish only to address the interpretive issue of whether a divine-command ethic is to be found in Kierkegaard's writings. Although I find much of Evans's reading of Kierkegaard to be compelling, I will now argue that, like Quinn, the textual evidence to which Evans appeals to support the claim that the Kierkegaardian ethic in *Works of Love* is a divine-command theory in fact supports only the view that Kierkegaard endorses the sufficiency clause, not DCT as a whole. More specifically, I will try to demonstrate that the argument Evans gives to show that Kierkegaard endorses DCT is invalid, and the prospects for reconstructing the argument to make it sound are not promising.

Several passages of *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love* suggest that Evans believes it is obvious and even incontrovertible that Kierkegaard holds a version of DCT. He seems incredulous that M. Jamie Ferreira 'actually goes so far as to deny that [*Works of Love*] contains a divine command account of moral obligation at all',<sup>43</sup> and he later states explicitly, 'When measured by my test, it seems undeniable to me that Kierkegaard does hold a divine command theory of obligation.'<sup>44</sup> The 'test' to which Evans refers here is simply the minimal version of DCT discussed

in the first section of this chapter: namely, that divine commands are both necessary and sufficient for moral obligations and that moral obligations depend on divine commands (and not vice versa).

What is the support for the claim that Kierkegaard undeniably holds such a view? Evans is more deliberate than Quinn in arguing that Kierkegaard endorses both the sufficiency clause and the necessity clause, so his answer comes in two parts. The first part of his answer, in which he argues that Kierkegaard endorses the sufficiency clause, sounds much like Quinn:

For Kierkegaard, love for the neighbour is *commanded*, and its status as a serious moral duty depends on its being commanded. Furthermore, Kierkegaard believes that the concept of a command logically presupposes a commander with the authority to issue the command. God is the one who has this authority, and Kierkegaard does not flinch from the consequence of a divine command account of moral obligation that many people consider most offensive, which is that it implies that whatever God commands is obligatory.<sup>45</sup>

Immediately following this, Evans quotes the following passage from *Works of Love* to support his claim:

But you shall love God in unconditional obedience, even if what he requires of you might seem to you to be your own harm, indeed, harmful to his cause; for God's wisdom is beyond all comparison with yours, and God's governance has no obligation of responsibility in relation to your sagacity. All you have to do is obey in love.<sup>46</sup>

The first part of Evans's argument, then, is that Kierkegaard endorses the sufficiency clause.<sup>47</sup> Although I think that additional textual evidence from Kierkegaard's writings is needed to establish this conclusion,<sup>48</sup> I believe – for reasons I will not go into here – that Evans is right about Kierkegaard on this point. At any rate, I will not challenge this part of Evans's view. The problems arise, I believe, with Evans's argument that Kierkegaard endorses the necessity clause – an argument that, as far as I can tell, is contained entirely in the following passage:

It is not hard, I think, to show that Kierkegaard also accepts the claim that all our moral obligations are divine commands as well, and that there are no other adequate grounds for moral obligation. Kierkegaard holds that our moral duties to our fellow humans are both grounded in the command God gives us to love our neighbours as ourselves and are fulfilled by obeying this command. All our moral duties are therefore commanded by God or derived from such a command.<sup>49</sup>

The argument here appears to be composed of a single (albeit multi-part) premise, given in the second sentence, and a conclusion, stated in the third sentence. The premise claims that (all) our duties to the neighbour are grounded in the command to love the neighbour, so that, by loving the neighbour, we fulfil our (entire) obligation to the neighbour. If one obeys this divine command, then one loves the neighbour as oneself, and if one loves the neighbour as oneself, then

one fulfils one's obligation to the neighbour. Evans's argument, then, put a bit more formally, seems to be the following:

- (1) Kierkegaard holds that God commands us to love our neighbours as ourselves.
- (2) Kierkegaard holds that if we obey God's command to love our neighbours as ourselves, we will thereby fulfil our entire obligation to our neighbours.
- (3) Kierkegaard holds that the entirety of our obligation to our neighbours is grounded in the command to love our neighbours as ourselves.
- (4) Therefore, Kierkegaard endorses the necessity clause.

Premise (1) states an uncontroversial fact about *Works of Love*. Premise (2) states that, for Kierkegaard, obeying God's command to love the neighbour is sufficient for fulfilling one's obligation to the neighbour. The implication is that the command to love the neighbour entails all the moral obligations one has to the neighbour. Premise (3) claims that Kierkegaard endorses the asymmetrical dependency relation between the divine command to love the neighbour and the moral obligation(s) that this command brings about.

If I am right about this interpretation, then the argument can be restated more clearly and precisely as follows, where  $p$  is to be read as 'God commands us to love our neighbours as ourselves':

- (1) Kierkegaard holds that  $p$ .
- (2') Kierkegaard holds that, for all  $q$ , if  $q$  expresses a moral obligation that one to the neighbour, then  $p$  entails that  $q$ .
- (3') Kierkegaard holds that, for all  $q$ , if  $q$  expresses a moral obligation that one to the neighbour, then  $q$  because  $p$ .
- (4) Therefore, Kierkegaard endorses the necessity clause.

Again, roughly, (1) expresses a straightforward truth about *Works of Love*; (2') claims that all of one's obligations to the neighbour are entailed by the so-called royal law,<sup>50</sup> and (3') establishes the asymmetrical dependency relation between the royal law and the moral requirements in question.

The problem with this argument, however, is that it is invalid: (4) does not follow from (1), (2'), and (3'). There are at least two distinct reasons why this is the case. First, no combination of these premises is sufficient to establish the claim that no moral obligation to the neighbour could arise in any way other than God's commanding us – a crucial aspect of the necessity clause. As discussed in the first section, in order to make even a minimal version of DCT plausible, it must be strengthened to cover counterfactual claims about what we would be obligated to do in other possible worlds – for example, in worlds where God issues different commands. Each of the three parts of the minimal divine-command theory (the necessity clause, the sufficiency clause, and the asymmetrical relation clause)

must be modified to account for this. Even if it is true that in the actual world, all one's obligations to the neighbour are fulfilled by one's obeying God's command to love the neighbour as oneself, this is not enough to establish the claim that in every possible world, obeying God's commands is sufficient for upholding one's entire duty to the neighbour. If there is some world in which obeying God's commands is insufficient for upholding one's entire duty to the neighbour, then, in this world, there is some binding moral obligation that is not grounded in a divine command. This entails that divine commands are not logically necessary for moral obligations in this possible world, which entails that the necessity clause is false in this possible world. This, in turn, entails that the necessity clause is false in *every* world (since the necessity clause claims to express a necessary truth), which entails that DCT is false in every world, including the actual world.

In fact, however, the argument is invalid even if it were plausible to strengthen its second and third premises as follows:

- (1) Kierkegaard holds that *p*.
- (2'') Kierkegaard holds that, *necessarily*, for all *q*, if *q* expresses a moral obligation that one has to the neighbour, then *p* entails that *q*.
- (3'') Kierkegaard holds that, *necessarily*, for all *q*, if *q* expresses a moral obligation that one has to the neighbour, then *q because p*.
- (4) Therefore, Kierkegaard endorses the necessity clause.

This argument avoids the first difficulty: it implies that no obligation to the neighbour is sufficiently grounded in a source other than a divine command in any possible world. But it faces additional problems. It would be much more difficult, of course, to provide textual evidence that establishes (2'') and (3'') than it would be to provide textual evidence for (2') and (3'). But this is not the issue on which I will focus, because even if one could establish this, the argument still is invalid. The problem is that, according to (4), Kierkegaard endorses the claim that, necessarily, for all *q*, *q* expresses a moral obligation that one has (i.e. that is binding on one) only if God commands that *q* (or issues a command that entails that *q*). But what follows from (1), (2''), and (3'') is

- (4') Kierkegaard holds that, necessarily, for all *q*, *q* expresses a moral obligation that one has *to the neighbour* only if God issues a command that entails that *q*.

The problem is that (4') does not entail that Kierkegaard endorses the necessity clause, because we have, *prima facie* at least, more moral obligations than we have just to our neighbours. Since there is nothing in (1), (2'') or (3'') that addresses these obligations, (4') does not follow from these premises.

Evans claims in the aforementioned passage that it follows from the fact that God has commanded us to love the neighbour that '*all our moral duties* are therefore either commanded by God or derived from such a command'.<sup>51</sup> In

context, the command to which Evans refers here is the royal law; thus, the claim seems to be that all our moral duties are entailed by the royal law. If this were true, it would solve the problem by collapsing the distinction between (4) and (4'). But the claim seems implausible, given that we also have at least some moral obligations to God, and very likely also some moral obligations to non-human animals, some moral obligations to creation (e.g. to the environment), and/or some moral obligations to ourselves. It is hard to see how these obligations are entailed by the command to love the neighbour. At the very least, an argument is needed to establish this, and Evans offers no such argument.

In fact, if it were true that all of our moral duties followed from the duty to love the neighbour, this would be problematic for Evans, because he defends the notions of individual obligation and individual calling (vocation). As previously discussed, Evans claims that God issues (or at least could issue) some commands to particular individuals in order to bind them in some way that He does not bind others. However, he also claims that the duty to love the neighbour is promulgated via *general revelation* as well as special revelation, so it is binding on all persons.<sup>52</sup> But if the obligation to love the neighbour applies to all persons, and every moral obligation is entailed by the obligation to love the neighbour, then there are no moral obligations unique to particular individuals, and thus no actual examples of an individual calling. This reveals a dilemma for Evans: either the command to love the neighbour entails all our moral duties or it does not. If it does, then the possibility of an individual calling is precluded. If it does not, then (4') does not entail that Kierkegaard endorses the necessity clause, in which case the divine command reading of Kierkegaard fails.

Furthermore, regardless of how the conclusion might be modified, another problem with this version of Evans's argument is that it follows from (1), (2''), and (3'') that Kierkegaard commits himself to the position that we have no moral obligations to the neighbour in any world in which God does not issue the royal law. Since (1) is only a claim about the actual world, it is consistent with the premises of the argument that there are such worlds. (And further, denying that there are any such worlds would amount to claiming that God issues the royal law necessarily – which implies that He does not issue it libertarianly freely.) (3'') implies that moral obligations to the neighbour only arise in worlds in which it is true that God issues the royal law ('... *q* [is true] *because p* [is true]'). This is implausible enough by itself, but it raises the following additional difficulty for the divine-command theorist: in some of the worlds in which God does not issue the royal law, He issues other commands (such as 'Do not steal from your neighbour'), and yet, such commands do not impose moral obligations in these worlds because, according to (3''), the royal law provides the grounds for all the moral obligations to the neighbour that hold in a world. If the royal law is not issued in a world, then there is no grounding available for any moral obligations to the neighbour in that world; a fortiori, there are no binding moral obligations

to the neighbour that are grounded in other divine commands. Obviously, this consequence is unacceptable for a divine-command theorist.<sup>53</sup>

In short, trying to deduce DCT from the command to love the neighbour is dubious at best. Even if one plausibly can deduce the sufficiency clause from it,<sup>54</sup> one can deduce the necessity clause from the command to love the neighbour only by first establishing *both* that, necessarily, the command to love the neighbour is necessary for the obligation to love the neighbour *and* that, necessarily, the obligation to love the neighbour entails the whole of the moral law. Both of these claims are contentious: it remains an open question whether the obligation to love the neighbour *must* arise from a divine command, and it seems clear that the obligation to love the neighbour does *not* entail the whole of the moral law. In addition, in order to construct such an argument, one would need to add some premise that ensures that moral obligations to the neighbour can exist in worlds in which God does not issue the royal law; but it is hard to see what plausible premise(s) could be added that would accomplish this.

As far as I can tell, then, the only way to construct valid arguments that begin with claims for which there is strong textual evidence (e.g. that Kierkegaard thinks love for the neighbour is morally obligatory because it is commanded by God) and that end with the thesis Quinn and Evans defend (that Kierkegaard endorses a minimal divine-command theory) is by adding further, highly contentious premises.<sup>55</sup> The burden of proof is on Quinn and Evans either to provide arguments for these premises or to construct alternative arguments for their reading of Kierkegaard that do not employ such premises. In the absence of such arguments, I see no reason to accept the claim that Kierkegaard either endorses or commits himself to a minimal divine-command theory of moral obligation.

A final point is worth noting. Despite the passage discussed earlier, Evans indicates at one point in the conclusion of *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love* that he thinks the command to love the neighbour extends only to interpersonal moral obligations, but that Kierkegaard's argument can be expanded to account for our other moral obligations. He claims that 'it would be relatively easy to develop this [Kierkegaard's] account of moral obligations towards humans into a broader account that recognizes moral obligations to other animals and to the natural world generally'.<sup>56</sup> This view is more plausible than the view (which seems to be expressed earlier in the book) that all our moral obligations can be derived from the royal law. Nevertheless, adopting this view would not resolve the problems for the divine-command reading of Kierkegaard. First, even if we accept that our obligation to the neighbour is grounded in a divine command, there is no reason to assume that these other moral obligations likewise are grounded in divine commands. The two issues are at least logically independent, and if our moral obligations to the rest of creation are grounded in something other than divine commands, then the necessity clause is not met, and DCT is false. Second, the fact that Kierkegaard's account of moral obligation can be *expanded into* a

divine-command theory does not provide evidence that Kierkegaard endorses a divine-command theory. In fact, it suggests the opposite: if a view has to be expanded in order to be made into a divine-command theory, then presumably it is not a divine-command theory prior to such modification. And finally, even if we can manage to account for our moral obligations to the rest of creation – including animals, the environment, and even ourselves (assuming we have such obligations) – this still does not account for our obligations to God. As I have discussed elsewhere, at least some of our moral obligations to God are such that grounding them in divine commands fails, so even if the ‘expansion’ strategy works for the rest of our moral obligations, it will not work for these.<sup>57</sup>

### Conclusion

Throughout this essay, the evidence presented against Quinn’s and Evans’s divine-command reading of Kierkegaard has been primarily ‘negative’ evidence: the emphasis has been on the lack of textual evidence in Kierkegaard’s writings sufficient to establish that Kierkegaard endorses the necessity clause. Elsewhere, I have developed the case further with a presentation of ‘positive’ evidence: that is, textual evidence that Kierkegaard rejects the necessity clause, and, a fortiori, every meta-ethical divine-command theory of moral obligation.<sup>58</sup> In the present essay, I have alluded to such evidence in passing;<sup>59</sup> it consists in a number of interesting passages in which Kierkegaard suggests that the ultimate basis of moral obligation lies not in God’s commands, but rather in the nature of creation and in God’s relationship to it.<sup>60</sup> Since the necessity clause entails that there are no grounds that are possibly sufficient for moral obligations other than divine commands, this counts as positive evidence that Kierkegaard rejects the necessity clause. But a close examination and discussion of these passages must be saved for another time.<sup>61</sup>

### Notes

1. Søren Kierkegaard *Works of Love*, Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (ed. and tr.) (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). Note especially First Series, II, A. See also *Pap. X<sup>2</sup> A 396: JP I-188* for a clear example of Kierkegaard’s rejection of autonomist ethics.
2. Philip L. Quinn ‘The divine command ethics in Kierkegaard’s *Works of Love*’, in J. Jordan and D. Howard-Snyder (eds) *Faith, Freedom, and Rationality: Philosophy of Religion Today* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), 29–44; *idem* ‘Kierkegaard’s Christian ethics’ in A. Hannay and G. D. Marino (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 349–375; *idem* ‘The primacy of God’s will in Christian ethics’ in M. Beaty, C. Fisher, and M. Nelson (eds) *Christian Theism and Moral Philosophy* (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 261–285; *idem* ‘Divine command theory’ in H. LaFollette (ed.) *The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory* (Malden MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 53–73; *idem* ‘God and morality’ in J. Feinberg and R. Shafer-Landau (eds) *Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy* (Belmont CA & London: Wadsworth Group, 2002), 664–679.
3. C. Stephen Evans *Kierkegaard’s Ethic of Love: Divine Commands and Moral Obligations* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). See also *idem* ‘Authority and transcendence in *Works of Love*’, in



- N. J. Cappelørn and H. Deuser (eds) *Kierkegaard Studies 1998* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1998), 23–40; and *idem* 'A Kierkegaardian view of the foundations of morality', in Beatty, Fisher, and Nelson *Christian Theism and Moral Philosophy*, 63–76.
4. The sense in which divine commands are prior and the way in which moral obligations depend on divine commands varies among different versions of DCT. See Quinn 'Divine command theory', 53–55.
  5. Evans *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*, 120–121.
  6. It does not follow from the necessity clause that God's commands are a sufficient ground of moral obligation, but it does follow from it that nothing else (logically distinct from divine commands) is a sufficient ground of obligation. Thus, it follows from the necessity clause that divine commands are the only ground of moral obligation that is *possibly* sufficient – i.e. that *if* there is any ground of obligation that is solely sufficient, it is divine commands.
  7. That is, nothing logically distinct from God's commanding *p*.
  8. Quinn 'The divine command ethics in Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*', 30.
  9. *Idem* 'God and morality', 668.
  10. *Ibid.*
  11. Quinn 'Kierkegaard's Christian ethics', 368; *idem* 'The divine command ethics in Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*', 44.
  12. *Ibid.*, 30.
  13. See note 2.
  14. Quinn seems oddly cagey about stating outright that Kierkegaard endorses a divine-command ethic, though he implies it repeatedly. (One example: his essay on Kierkegaard's understanding of neighbour love is entitled, 'The divine command ethics in Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*' – though the phrase 'divine command ethics' appears nowhere in the body of the essay.) I take it that this is merely a strange oversight on Quinn's part and have proceeded under the assumption that it is indeed Quinn's view that a divine-command ethic is both found in *Works of Love* and advocated by Kierkegaard himself.
  15. Quinn 'The divine command ethics in Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*', 30.
  16. Quinn gives this same type of argument not only to support the conclusion that Kierkegaard endorses a version of DCT, but also to support the conclusion that Christians ought to endorse DCT: see Quinn 'The primacy of God's will in Christian ethics', 279. The argument fails for similar reasons.
  17. *Idem* 'The divine command ethics in Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*', 40–44.
  18. Nor is it plausible, I think, that moral duties are something that can be 'outgrown' by the perfecting of one's character. The (ideal) perfectly virtuous person is not outside the scope of moral obligation; rather, she simply is free of the internal tension the un-virtuous person experiences between willing in accordance with her inclination (the inclination determined by her character) and willing what is right. In claiming this, I am of course opposing a venerable tradition, epitomized in Kant's ethics. Evans appears to agree with Kant on this point (see *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*, 146). Against this view, I contend that if at some point – perhaps in heaven – our characters become so perfected that we no longer feel any inclination not to love the neighbour, this does not entail that we no longer have a duty to love the neighbour. It entails only that we have attained a state that ensures we will uphold our duty, because we lack any motivation not to uphold it. This is clear from the fact that *if* one suddenly ceased to love the neighbour in heaven, one thereby would act wrongly. The fact that behaving in this way might be psychologically impossible in heaven, due to our character's having been perfected, does not change the truth-value of this conditional. But if the conditional is true, then we still have a duty in heaven to love the neighbour.
  19. Quinn 'The divine command ethics in Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*', 37.
  20. *Ibid.*, 36.
  21. *Idem* 'Kierkegaard's Christian ethics', 353.
  22. *Ibid.*, 355.
  23. *Idem* 'The divine command ethics in Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*', 43, emphasis added.
  24. Avi Sagi and Daniel Statman 'Divine command morality and Jewish tradition', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 23 (1995), 41, quoted by John J. Davenport in 'Quinn's Kierkegaard: Some questions about neighbour-love and divine commands' (paper presented to the Kierkegaard Society at the Eastern Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Atlanta, GA, December 2001). I am indebted to Davenport's presentation for this section of my discussion.
  25. Quinn 'The divine command ethics in Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*', 42.

26. Evans *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*, 19. John E. Hare has argued for a similar version of DCT in the works of Scotus. See John E. Hare *God's Call: Moral Realism, God's Commands, and Human Autonomy* (Grand Rapids MI & Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001).
27. Evans *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*, 13. It seems there is a missing premise here, something to the effect that the highest possible good for a thing is a constituent of that thing's nature. I will pass over the question of whether such a premise is plausible.
28. *Ibid.*, 9.
29. *Ibid.*, 29.
30. *Ibid.*, 24–28.
31. Søren Kierkegaard *Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing*, Douglas V. Steere (tr.) (New York NY: Harper Torchbooks, 1948), 140.
32. On the issue of how God might issue these commands, see Evans *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*, 156–179.
33. For this reason, Evans identifies Kierkegaard's ethic as a kind of 'self-actualization' ethic, a term that is meant to indicate that the central ethical task lies in 'becoming oneself', understood as actualizing the potential self that God intends one to become. See *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*, 85–111.
34. *Ibid.*, 15, Evans's emphasis.
35. Robert M. Adams 'Divine commands and the social nature of obligation', in Beaty, Fisher, and Nelson *Christian Theism and Moral Philosophy*, 47–62; *idem Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 231–276.
36. Evans *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*, 13.
37. *Ibid.*, 13.
38. *Ibid.*, 19.
39. *Ibid.*, 15–16 and 119.
40. Adams argues that the concept of vocation enables one to reconcile the possibility of individual obligations with the universalizability principle. See *Finite and Infinite Goods*, 295.
41. There is, however, a problem here for the proponent of a reductive DCT, on which divine commands are held to be metaphysically identical to moral obligations. See Mark Murphy *An Essay on Divine Authority* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 82–92.
42. R. Zachary Manis 'On moral and religious obligations: some problems for metaethical divine command theories', *Southwest Philosophy Review*, 22 (2006), 51–59.
43. Evans *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*, 118.
44. *Ibid.*, 122.
45. *Ibid.*, 123.
46. Kierkegaard *Works of Love*, 20.
47. Evans also indicates, in the aforementioned passage, that he thinks Kierkegaard endorses the asymmetrical-relation clause, at least in the case of our obligation to love the neighbour. This is the significance of the claim that, for Kierkegaard, neighbour love's 'status as a serious moral duty depends on its being commanded'.
48. The view expressed in the quoted passage from *Works of Love*, by itself, does not entail a commitment to the sufficiency clause, because it is consistent with Kierkegaard's claim here that God simply reveals by His commands what is antecedently morally obligatory for us. One can read the passage as claiming that God must reveal (at least some of) our obligations to us in this way because we are unable to discern these obligations ourselves and that, in some cases at least, the obligations God reveals by His commands will even seem offensive to us.
49. Evans *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*, 123.
50. The term comes from the apostle James, who calls the command to love one's neighbour as oneself 'the royal law found in Scripture' (James 2.8).
51. Emphasis added. Evans also seems to use 'God's command to love the neighbour' and 'the moral law' interchangeably on 159 and 163–164.
52. Evans *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love*, 156–179.
53. In response to this objection, Evans has indicated to me in conversation that he takes God's issuing of the moral law to human persons (in every world in which humans exist) to be metaphysically necessitated by God's loving nature, which God possesses essentially. If Evans is right about this, then it is no problem (for his view or Kierkegaard's) that we have no moral obligations to the neighbour in any world in which God does not issue the royal law, because there are no such worlds. Against this view,

I hold that there *are* such worlds, because there are ways that God can impose moral requirements other than issuing commands – ways that are consistent with (i.e. meet the ‘requirements’ of) God’s essentially loving nature. But since this is just what the divine-command theorist denies, there may be no non-question-begging way to resolve this dispute. It does seem to me, however, that the divine-command theorist owes us some *argument* to the effect that every *seemingly* possible way that God could impose moral requirements other than issuing commands (e.g. ways suggested by natural-law theorists) is *in fact* metaphysically impossible. In the absence of such an argument, the insistence that there are no other ways seems suspect – and possibly ad hoc.

54. And, as noted above, there is reason to doubt even this.
55. The closest argument in the vicinity that I can see that would validly establish that Kierkegaard endorses a version of DCT is the following: (5) Kierkegaard holds that, necessarily, love for the neighbour is morally obligatory because it is commanded by God; (6) Kierkegaard holds that, necessarily, we are morally obligated to love the neighbour if God commands it; (7) Kierkegaard holds that, necessarily, we are morally obligated to love the neighbour only if God commands it; (8) Kierkegaard holds that, necessarily, the command to love the neighbour entails all the moral obligations we have; (9) therefore, Kierkegaard endorses a version of DCT. Unfortunately, every one of the premises that drives this argument, with the possible exception of (6), is contentious, at best. And several of the premises, if they *were* true, would imply that Kierkegaard endorses a view that is quite implausible. The premises that *are* plausible – namely, (10) Kierkegaard holds that love for the neighbour is both morally obligatory and commanded by God, and (11) Kierkegaard holds that love for the neighbour is morally obligatory because it is commanded by God – are both entailed by the premises of the above argument, but they cannot be substituted into the argument for any of its other premises without undermining the argument’s validity.
56. Evans *Kierkegaard’s Ethic of Love*, 300–301.
57. See Manis ‘On moral and religious obligations’, section III. I argue that the most difficult challenge for the divine-command theorist lies in accounting for our obligation to obey God’s commands.
58. I discuss this in my dissertation, ‘Virtues, divine commands, and the debt of creation: towards a Kierkegaardian Christian ethic’ (unpublished).
59. For example, at the end of the second section.
60. This idea is presented, though not much developed, by M. Jamie Ferreira in *Love’s Grateful Striving: A Commentary on Kierkegaard’s Works of Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 41.
61. I am grateful to Steve Evans, Bob Roberts, and John Hare for helpful critiques and stimulating discussion of the arguments presented in this essay.