

On Adams' Moral Argument for God's Existence

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Abstract

Robert M. Adams (1979, 1987a, 1987b) defends a modified variant of the divine command theory (hereafter MDCT) to the effect that he proposes a moral argument for God's existence driven in the form of practical reasoning with respect to rational moral agents' beliefs in the adequacy of MDCT. For Adams, one's commitment to MDCT as the most adequate theory legitimately provides her a practical reason for why she ought to believe in God's existence which MDCT implies. In this paper, I criticize the viability of Adams' moral argument considering its argumentative structure and strategy. Adams' strategy behind his moral argument, i.e. mediating theistic beliefs with deontic ones, seeks out a non-decisive medium that might be used to ubiquitously generate equally plausible arguments for/against God's existence based on distinct sorts of allegedly adequate theories of some subject matter. Thus, his argument does not seem to distinctively ground God's existence in comparison with a myriad of practical arguments which might follow the same argumentative strategy on the same practical grounds. More significantly, there seems to be coherent no way for Adams to disambiguate his argument on theoretical grounds.

Keywords: Moral Argument for God's Existence, Divine Command Theory, Practical Reasoning, Moral Realism

Tanrı'nın Varlığına Dair Adams'ın Ahlak Argümanı Üzerine

Özet

Robert M. Adams (1979, 1987a, 1987b), ilahi buyruk teorisinin özgün bir yorumunu (MDCT) savunarak bu yorumun teorik yeterliliğinden kılışsal olarak hareket eden rasyonel teistik bir ispat öne sürer. Adams'a göre; MDCT'ye ahlaki diskuru en yetkin şekilde temellendiren teori olarak inanmak meşru olarak MDCT'nin varsayımı olan Tanrı'nın varlığına da inanılması gerektiğine dair kılışsal bir gerekçe sağlar. Bu makalede, Adams'ın ahlak argümanının altında yatan formel argüman yapısı ve kılışsal ispat yöntemini dikkate alarak bu argümanı belirgin bir ispat gücü taşımadığı için eleştireceğim. Buna göre Adams'ın kılışsal ispat stratejisi- yani teorik olarak güvenilir de-ontik inançlar vasıtasıyla bazı teistik inançların güvenilirliğini çıkarsamak- en iyi haliyle ayrıştırıcı bir ispat gücü taşımamaktır, çünkü mevcut argüman yapısı ve stratejisi kullanılarak sözde yetkin teoriler vasıtasıyla sınırsız sayıda ve türde kılışsal argüman Tanrı'nın varlığı adına ve hatta yokluğu adına sunulabilmektedir. Adams'ın argüman stratejisi ve yapısının bu geçirgenliği giderilmediği sürece Adams'ın ispatının ikna ediciliği benzer strateji ve yapıyı takip eden diğer ispatlar karşısında anlamsızlaşır. Bu noktada, Adams'ın savunduğu üzere bu ahlak argümanını MDCT'nin özgün teorik içerik ve açıklama gücü üzerinden ayrıştırmak mümkün görünse de bu manevra Adams'ın kendi kılışsal stratejisi ile çelişen başka sorunları beraberinde getirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tanrı'nın Varlığına Dair Ahlak Argümanları, İlahi Buyruk Teorisi, Kılışsal Uslamlama, Ahlaki Gerçekçilik

1. Preliminaries

As a reoccurring strategy, rational theistic arguments frequently appeal to a particular methodology in which a well-constructed theory of such-and-such feature of the

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universe hinges on some profound ground identified and/or affiliated with divinity. George Mavrodes (1986) eloquently captures this methodological pattern as follows:

Many arguments for the existence of God may be construed as claiming that there is some feature of the world that would somehow make no sense unless there was something else that had a stronger version of that feature or some analogue of it. So, for example, the cosmological line of argument may be thought of as centering upon the claim that the way in which the world exists (called "contingent" existence) would be incomprehensible unless there were something else—that is, God—that had a stronger grip upon existence (that is, 'necessary' existence') (p.213).

Nearly all theistic arguments, from cosmological arguments to ontological ones, seek to justify God's existence based on how a certain feature of the world better fits into the such and such conceptualization of this feature. Thereby, such arguments sanction God's existence as the most profound ground for the legitimacy of a theory. Similarly, moral arguments for God's existence follow the same methodology holding that some or all aspects of moral discourse theoretically make sense only if the presumed conception of God exists.¹ Briefly, moral arguments typically conclude God's existence based on its presumed relevance to moral discourse.

In this context, the divine command theory (hereafter, DCT) stands for a family of meta-ethical theories which commonly seek to ground how our moral discourse and a given conception of God are relevant to one another. Typically, DCT argues for moral realism in the sense that moral properties (e.g. rightness, wrongness, permissibility, and being obligatory) are objective and non-natural qualities of actions, which ultimately entail divinity in one way or another (Fisher, 2011, pp.76-81). Forming a moral realist stance, DCT generically portrays the relevance between moral discourse and divinity based on the thesis that doing some action *A* is morally permissible (or impermissible) for moral agents if and only if God commands (or forbids) *A*. Therefore, moral properties, as DCT posits, entail God's relevant commands.

Accordingly, DCT, on the one hand, appeals to God's such and such deontic states in order to ground "how, if at all, ethical sentences have truth-values and how, if at all, objects (such as actions, persons, or practices) possess moral properties" (Maitzen, 2004, p.15). On the other hand, it appeals to such and such qualities of moral discourse to ground how the deontic states of God become relevant to our moral discourse. Hence, DCT seems to inherit a theoretical ground for construing an argument for God's existence since it already postulates a relevance between morality and divinity by claiming that moral properties of an action, which are real, entail God's commands on this action. Therefore, DCT might function to argue for God's existence in the sense that God exists only if there are objective moral properties to ascribe to actions. Nonetheless, such an argument, which directly stems from DCT, inherently gets into a vicious circle as to proving God's existence from such and such characteristics of moral discourse. After all, DCT already presumes the existence of an action-prescribing God for warranting the reality of moral discourse to the effect that it is circular to deduce God's existence from this presumed nature of moral

¹ Throughout the paper, I do not ascribe any specific meaning or role to the term 'moral discourse'; however, it can be tentatively regarded as a comprehensive domain including every element which are believed to have an extension in morality. Categorically speaking, this domain thoroughly inherits properties, facts, actions, agents, obligations, and language (of the deontic sort) if any such element takes a role in any conception of morality

discourse unless either God's existence or the nature of our moral discourse are warranted independently of the reciprocal relevance between them.

In this fashion, Robert M. Adams (1979, 1987a) avidly defends a modified variant of DCT to ground how God's commands are relevant to morality. He, thereby, posits that a deontic property of an action metaphysically "consists in being contrary to [or in conformity with] a loving God's commands or that the word 'wrong' means contrary to God's commands" (1987a, p.97). Adams' modified account (MDCT, in short) also adheres to the moral realist conviction that moral properties are "non-natural and objective" while metaphysically consisting in "facts about the will or commands of God" (1987a, p.105). For him, moral properties are "objective in the sense that whether they obtain or does not depend on whether any human being thinks they do" (Adams, 1987b, p.145). Particularly, deontic facts/properties entertained in agents' ethical statements are real irrespective of agents' cognitive or emotive attitudes towards putative facts/properties. Moreover, deontic properties, for Adams (1987b), are of non-natural kinds "in the sense that they cannot be stated entirely in the language of physics, chemistry, biology, and human or animal psychology" (p.145). Yet, MDCT significantly diverges from other accounts in virtue of its main thesis that an action *A* is morally permissible if and only if it is metaphysically necessary (due to the presumed divine nature) for a loving God to command *A*. Here, it is worth noticing the major respects in which MDCT differs from the other variants of DCT: (i) Adams interprets the given relation between rightness and divine commands as a metaphysical sort of constitutive relation, just like the relation between 'water' and 'H₂O', rather than taking these two notions as analytically synonymous with each other; (ii) Adams implements a special emphasis on God's loving nature for securing why and how the commands of a supreme being are relevant to deontic properties.

Recalling the function of DCT in moral arguments, Adams (1987b) also employs MDCT to construe a moral argument for God's existence; nonetheless, he anticipates the circularity concern for DCT-based moral arguments which are directly formed around the main thesis of DCT. He, therefore, takes a different route in constructing a moral argument based on MDCT. Instead of deriving God's existence from what MDCT says, he entertains the theoretical viability of MDCT as a practical medium that motivates a rational agent to believe in the implication of MDCT, namely a loving God's existence. As Adams (1987b) argues, a rational agent's allegedly well-grounded commitment to the efficacy of MDCT provides her a somehow weighty reason to commit herself to what MDCT implicates.

In what follows, I will critically evaluate Adams' moral argument for God's existence by questioning its methodological coherence and integrity with respect to how he utilizes MDCT in the adopted argumentative schema. Accordingly, I will initially capture Adams' moral argument by structuring its premises in an argumentative schema so that I will carry out my criticisms against his entire argumentative methodology regarding a particular problem which I call the plurality concern.

2. Adams' Moral Argument for Theism

Considering the common methodological strategy behind moral arguments, Adams (1987b) embraces a particular interpretation of such a strategy that carries out the same ends but differs in means in terms of deducing God's existence from moral discourse. In particular, he constructs a practical sort of moral argument in which he seeks to deduce the plausibility of one's belief in God's existence from her confident commitment to the adequacy of MDCT implying God's existence. In this regard, Adams initially postulates that such moral arguments are manifested in two distinct ways, theoretical and practical. As he quotes:

By 'a theoretical moral argument for theistic belief' I mean an argument having an ethical premise and purporting to prove the truth, or enhance the probability, of theism. By 'a practical argument for theistic belief' I mean an argument purporting only to give ethical or other practical reasons for believing that God exists. The practical argument may have no direct bearing at all on the truth or probability of the belief whose practical advantage it extols (1987b, p.150)

Hereby, Adams (1987b) draws this distinction from Kant based on how he employs his distinction between theoretical and practical reasoning to generate distinct sorts of moral arguments (pp.150-151). As Evans (2010) underlines, the Kantian approach to moral argument rests on "the principle that *ought implies can*" in the sense that our obligatory formal maxim of acting morally appears "attainable only if God exists" and thereby we can fairly believe in God as a foundation of how we ought to follow (p.388).

In this context, practical reasons are considered to be rational agents' goal-oriented or desire-oriented considerations that count in favor of taking an action for achieving the given goal whereas theoretical reasons constitute explanatory or operative considerations that account for the way things (explananda) are or transpire (Scanlon, 1998, pp.18-23). In this regard, practical reasons induce rational agents to take an action related to the given goal to the effect that such a reason works as a goal-oriented means to achieve some action as an end for actualizing the given goal. So, practical reasoning basically follows from practical reasons in the sense that it is rational for an agent to take an action *A* only if the agent has a goal *G*, which cannot be trivially on par with taking *A* itself, and also taking *A* is a plausible means to actualize *G*.

With a special emphasis on offering a practical argument, Adams (1987b) seeks to promote practical reasoning in which one's commitment to the plausibility of MDCT works as a means to achieve the plausibility of believing in God's existence. For Adams, it is evidently reasonable for a rational proponent of MDCT to believe that MDCT most adequately accounts for deontic features of the world (e.g. deontic properties, normative authority, normative force of moral obligations, genuine moral experience, and the sensibility of moral language). Hence, he further claims that this proponent, in turn, acquires a practical reason for believing in God's existence due to her conviction that MDCT, which identifies a loving God's commands with deontic properties, already implies God's existence (Adams, 1987b, pp. 145-152). Thus, MDCT, as Adams argues, provides its proponent a practical but sufficient reason for believing in God's existence if there is a such and such moral discourse that MDCT is believed to portray most adequately. Hence, Adams (1987b) remarks,

I believe that the most adequate answer is provided by a theory that entails the existence of God—specifically, by the theory that moral rightness and wrongness consist in agreement and disagreement, respectively, with the will or commands of a loving God. One of the most generally accepted reasons for believing in the existence of anything is that its existence is implied by the theory that seems to account most adequately for some subject matter. I take it, therefore, that my metaethical views provide me with a reason of some weight for believing in the existence of God (p. 145).

Preserving its core tenets, Adams' moral argument (hereafter, AMG) can be structured as follows:

P1. MDCT accounts most adequately for moral discourse.

P2. MDCT implies God's existence.

P3. For any rational agent, it is acceptable to hold that there is a sufficient reason for her to believe in the existence of an entity if and only if the existence of that entity is implied by a theory that she believes to be the most adequate theory for some subject matter.

C1. Thus, it is acceptable for any rational agent to hold that there is a sufficient reason to believe in God's existence.

For having a better grasp on AMG, we need to sketch it in terms of its adopted strategy and premises in detail. First, Adams' adopted methodology aims to constitute a subsidiary argument for God's existence in the sense that it mediates one's belief in God's existence with one's preceding belief in a well-constructed theory implying God's existence. In this picture, morality does not directly play any explanatory or justificatory role in the sense that AMG does not follow from some deontic truths or it is simply inferred from the cogency of an alleged theory of deontic truths. However, it mediates one's beliefs in the cogency of MDCT as a means for an inference as to why she ought to believe in the plausibility of God's existence. Thereby, AMG employs deontic discourse only in some secondary sense to the effect it constructs "at most, subsidiary advantages of belief in God's existence" unlike any other theoretical argument for God's existence such as causal ones (Adams, 1987b, p.159). As Adams (1987b) displays, practical arguments bear a peculiarly contentious characteristic that they do not "give justifying reasons for believing anything at all..." but they only carry out "...practical advantages that are worthy to sway us in accepting or rejecting a belief..." which should not be characterized as a matter of agents' emotional dispositions or heuristic thinking (p. 153). Still, Adams considers his moral argument as a viable alternative in virtue of its practical benefits such as providing an urgent, non-trivial, and practically significant response to the question of God's existence (1987b, p.159). Following William James' analysis, Adams (1987b) believes that it is acceptable to adopt such arguments when the contention about the given question cannot be urgently settled down on theoretical grounds in the face of every available theory, evidence, and so on. As he goes on, such arguments turn out to be a viable option when they conform to our self-interest and our high degree of trust in some beliefs which need to be somehow warranted.

Apart from Adams' argumentative methodology, it is also worth indicating what particular claims his argument lays out by its premises. At this point, each of the premises depends on not only more basic assumptions but also some further implications. To begin with, the first premise assumes moral realism to be the case and thereby it implicates the existence of mind-independent and non-natural deontic properties. Again, the very same premise rests on the question of what makes some theory a well-constructed one in terms of what it means to ground. In other words, Adams ought to have in mind a solid and precise understanding of the adequacy conditions for any theory. Moreover, the second premise clings onto these closely related assumptions: (1) The thesis 'an action is right if and only if it is metaphysically necessary for a loving God to command this action' is true; (2) In some presumed sort of manner (i.e. truth-conditionally, metaphysically and so on), this thesis entails God's existence. Again, the third premise manifests a presumptive principle of practical rationality governing how one legitimately makes a practical inference from her theory-oriented beliefs relying on theoretical grounds. It simply presumes the idea that one's commitment to the theoretical viability of a theory motivates or prompts her to have a further commitment to the plausibility of what this theory implicates.

Although it is reasonable to undermine AMG simply by attacking its premises along with their accompanying presumptions, it is vehemently essential to take issue with

his entire argumentative strategy in the first place. Since his argument rests on a higher-order assumption that the adopted argumentative strategy is an appropriate model to build on a convincing moral argument for God's existence. I believe Adams fails to underpin this methodological assumption.

Adams' argumentative model does not exclusively form a distinctively viable moral argument in virtue of the given ends and means since it allows one to proliferate an indefinite number of practical arguments for/against God's existence, none of which at face value offers a substantial reason for choosing one to another. In other words, there seems to be no decisive reason for us to adopt Adams' argumentative strategy only for ethical or meta-ethical theories so that this strategy brings out a myriad of divergent sorts of arguments for/against God's existence each of which provides a well-constructed theory of any subject matter implying/excluding God's existence. The challenging hurdle about the plurality of such arguments lies in the question of how to substantially disambiguate AMG from the rest in terms of its explanatory significance. Thus, Adams must offer a substantial reason for why AMG outweighs any other alternative argument following the same argumentative model. In this regard, Adams inclines to promote AMG as a discernible proof of God's existence not only with respect to the peculiar practical advantages of adopting such a proof but also with respect to the theoretical viability of MDCT as the most adequate theory of moral discourse. Appealing to the latter respect exacerbates the perplexity for AMG in the face of the plurality concern. If the viability of AMG derives from the theoretical adequacy of MDCT, then this rationale does not satisfactorily work out for distinguishing AMG from the similarly constructed arguments. After all, if we appeal to the theoretical content and merits of some theories which are employed in similarly constructed arguments, then we once again shift back the question of God's existence onto theoretical grounds to the effect that Adams' entire argumentative strategy fails in virtue of its practical advantages.

3. Disambiguating Adams' Practical Argument

Recalling the structure of AMG, it is analytically important to ascertain whether the provided argumentative structure suffices to generate a cogent proof of God's existence. Holding AMG in the given structure, Adams' argumentative strategy first and foremost depends on a crucial premise about how well-grounded theories work as a practical medium, and Adams, thereby, makes use of this premise to practically account for why one ought to believe in God's existence. To be exact, the third premise in his argument stands for a presumptive principle of practical rationality and this premise plays an integral part in legitimizing how a rational agent's beliefs in the adequacy of MDCT compels her to believe in the plausibility of what MDCT implies. This crucial premise, which stands for a rationale behind offering a practical argument, can be topic-neutrally formulated as follows: (S) For any theory *T* on some explananda *D*, and for any theoretical indication *E*; if *T* accounts most adequately for *D* and *D* indicates that it is the case that *E* then it acceptable for a rational agent to believe that *E* is the case.

So, Adams' argumentative strategy can be traced back to this statement (S) above. After all, one's beliefs about the adequacy of a theory will be reasonably extended onto one's practically rational beliefs in the adequacy of whatever this theory further indicates if and only if the statement above is the case. Nevertheless, I believe this schematic statement (S) raises some important concerns about the plausibility of AMG, mainly because (S) does not suffice to distinctively establish a moral argument for God's existence in an exclusive manner.

First, any kind of theory which goes under the above statement (S) provides a practical reason for its proponent to construct an argument for/against God's existence if such a theory implying a loving God's existence/non-existence is the most adequate one

(for the sake of some putative explananda, some putative criteria and such). Therefore, it is plausible to generate infinitely many arguments for/against God's existence that may or may not vary from each other depending on their distinct explananda, the criterion of being adequate, and the ways of implying or excluding theism. After all, (S) is employed to produce all kinds of practical arguments (e.g. epistemological, psychological, nomological, mathematical and so on) in favor of God's existence/non-existence as long as such arguments entertain the most adequately theories somehow implying God's existence/non-existence. Let us imagine that a rational agent commits herself to a legitimate theory, called T, as the most adequate theory of some subject matter. In this case, a proponent of T adopting (S) might fairly argue that it is acceptable for a rational agent to believe or disbelieve in the existence of a loving God since the plausibility of such a theory, as in AMG, provides a practical reason for this rational agent depending on whatever T implies about God's existence. Thus, Adams' strategy in AMG seems to lead to the overabundance of practical arguments modeled after the same schematic conviction (S).

For theists, the plurality of arguments for God's existence might be regarded as a trivial concern once this issue is taken as the infinite ways to deduce God's existence. In the same fashion, the plurality of such arguments does not seem to immediately disprove AMG since even Adams admits his practical argument as subsidiary support in comparison with theoretical arguments (1987b, p.159). Nonetheless, the plurality concern certainly does not posit a minor hurdle to neglect. For one thing, (S) is also employed to lead the plurality of some arguments which directly conflict with Judeo-Christian understanding of theism. For instance, the putative theory T might either imply polytheism or a non-loving God to the effect that T, as an allegedly competing theory with MDCT, equally results in a practical argument for polytheism or a non-loving God. To elaborate, T might even be a polytheistic variant of MDCT depending on the thesis that an action is right if and only if it is metaphysically necessary for loving deities to command the action. In that case, AMG seems to be methodologically non-conclusive for answering the question of God's existence if some arguments sharing the same practical means are held as equally acceptable in spite of their divergent ends. Therefore, this concern leads us to the question of whether there is any philosophically or cognitively significant reason for us to accept AMG rather than any other. Once we exclude arbitrary or psychological reasons for endorsing such theistic arguments modeled after the statement (S) above, then it is really important to seek out what cognitively or philosophically significant content AMG contributes to the question of God's existence. Therefore, Adams has to explain away how AMG substantially differentiates from this myriad of practical arguments in terms of its plausibility. Otherwise, providing an argument for God's existence under the given schematic (S) becomes an arbitrary matter, simply because one can pick out any theory amongst allegedly the best theories implying God's existence by which she can construct an equally plausible argument for a loving God's existence or non-existence.

At this point, one might naturally consider that the divergent practical arguments which derive from some theories of some subject matter might be distinguished from each other solely based on the theoretical soundness and integrity of the theories embedded in them. Relatedly, AMG seems to make its significant contribution through the particular meta-ethical theory, MDCT, which most adequately accounts for a particular subject matter in a particular fashion. It is fair enough to defend AMG by holding that MDCT as allegedly the best theory of our moral discourse seems to be theoretically distinct from other well-constructed theories which might go under (S) to construe any practical argument. To explicate how such a defense works, let us take the putative theory T to stand for a meta-ethical theory with which MDCT shares the same explananda and the supposed adequacy conditions. In this case, the question of what makes an MDCT-based argument more substantial than a T-based argument can be resolved on theoretical grounds in the sense

that the former and the latter still differ from each other based on how distinctively MDCT and T account for the given explananda in their own terms of justification. Needless to doubt, these theories entertain their own premises, analyses, and deductions which cover distinct constituents playing distinct roles in grounding the common subject matter. Thus, one may claim that MDCT would be more adequate than T when its theoretical merits would be more plausible than the theoretical merits of T. So, it is fair to believe that one of these theories becomes a more plausible candidate if one of them, on theoretical grounds, posits more plausible justification in one way or another.

Nonetheless, such a maneuver for dodging away from the plurality concern brings about a further concern on the methodological consistency of AMG since this line of defense points out that rational agents' commitments to the distinctive viability of AMG ultimately rest back on the plausibility of MDCT. If AMG decisively diverges from the rest of such practical arguments based on the theoretical content and merits of MDCT, then it means that the viability of AMG, endorsed on practical grounds, eventually depends on how substantially MDCT accounts for moral realism on theoretical grounds. If we, in order to believe in God's existence in a substantial manner, eventually end up assessing the efficacy of MDCT on theoretical grounds, then the entire argumentative strategy behind offering a practical argument loses its methodological import. Thereby, the question of how to single out Adams' moral argument falls back into the question of whether MDCT is indeed the most adequate theory. Thus, such a maneuver for disambiguating AMG on some theoretical grounds about MDCT makes Adams' entire argumentative strategy subsidiary or derivative at best. In this regard, it is intriguing if we have any robust reason for holding such a subsidiary argument for God's existence that ultimately collapses back into the discussions concerning the theoretical soundness of some other theory implying God's existence.

Moreover, there are further concerns peculiar to Adams' MDCT-based argument, i.e. AMG, regarding the conviction that the theoretical viability of MDCT constitutes a rationale for preferring AMG as a distinctively viable option amongst the similarly constructed arguments following (S). First, if the theoretical soundness of MDCT acceptably plays an explanatory role in why rational agents are to endorse the distinctive viability of AMG, then MDCT, indeed, must be the most adequate theory for moral discourse so that a rational agent reasonably acquires a compelling motivation for believing in God's existence. Additionally, rational agents reasonably hold MDCT as the most adequate theory on theoretical grounds so long as they are already in a position to theoretically warrant, or at least reasonably favor, what MDCT argues for such as the relevance between morality and divinity. Otherwise, it would be theoretically vacuous to believe in MDCT as the most adequate theory. So, being the most adequate theory of some subject matter common sensibly necessitates providing the most convincing reasons for grounding what is said about the given subject matter.

Hence, MDCT must theoretically provide warranting reasons for endorsing what it says of our moral discourse including the relevance between a loving God's commands and deontic properties if it is reasonably held as the most adequate theory for our moral discourse to construe an MDCT-based argument as a distinctively viable option amongst the alternatives derived from (S). If this is the case, then it poses a threat to Adams' overall argumentative strategy embodied in (S). As AMG trivially seeks to make use of one's theory-oriented beliefs about MDCT as practical grounds for believing the plausibility of God's existence which a proponent of MDCT must already warrant on theoretical grounds prior to establishing a practical argument on it. Provided that MDCT is the most adequate theory, any rational proponent must be apt to warrant the defining components of MDCT on theoretical grounds. Otherwise, one's support for MDCT becomes vacuous due to

lacking an explanatory reason for why MDCT is the most adequate theory. Therefore, any proponent of MDCT does not seem to require any practical reason to endorse God's existence since she must already have a theoretical reason for endorsing God's existence if he theoretically favors MDCT as the most adequate theory in the first place. Shortly, AMG seems to obtain a trivial conclusion that says nothing other than what a proponent of MDCT is supposed to believe on theoretical grounds. In short, AMG becomes a trivial enterprise if one's theoretically oriented beliefs (about the plausibility of God's existence) practically prompt her to believe in the plausibility of what she must already commit herself theoretically through favoring the most adequate theory.²

In addition to the above concerns about how to sort out the plurality concern in favor of AMG, a further discrepancy between the first two premises and the third premise, a token of the statement (S), complicates the task of defending AMG as a distinctively viable proof for God's existence. To simply put, Adams' argument seems to be vague as to whether the beliefs about the viability of MDCT somehow compel someone to believe in the plausibility of God's existence or the other way around.

Initially, a loving God's commands, as MDCT posits, metaphysically constitute rightness so that MDCT entails God's existence in virtue of its relevance to moral properties. Hereby, it is worth underlining that MDCT, by itself, does not warrant God's existence independently of its relevance with such and such moral discourse. Needless to say, MDCT brings along God's existence as a working assumption without providing an independent ground. In this context, a rational agent ends up with this theoretically unwarranted assumption when she embraces MDCT. Nonetheless, this unwarranted assumption as a working assumption in MDCT might be feasible to keep tentatively if and only if MDCT most adequately accounts for moral discourse in one way or another. Yet, counting MDCT as the best theory seems to put a question mark about its viability inasmuch as endorsing this theory inherits an unwarranted assumption without any independent ground. It is worrisome for Adams' argumentative strategy concerning the question of how a rational agent coherently holds MDCT to be the most adequate theory. After all, MDCT lacks a theoretically significant warrant for an implication that seems to be theoretically essential for its viability in question.

Briefly, on what grounds one might coherently persist in MDCT as the most adequate theory while having an unwarranted assumption on which the adequacy of MDCT essentially hinges? In the face of this question, Adams' argumentative strategy embodied in (S) displays a discrepancy with the consideration that MDCT falls short of a warranted thesis in terms of theoretical adequacy. If one's beliefs in the adequacy of MDCT, as the statement (S) suggests, legitimately leads to one's beliefs in the plausibility of its implication then AMG erroneously and regressively seeks to warrant one's theoretically unwarranted belief through the adequacy of the same unwarranted belief which corresponds to the very question in dispute. After all, Adams' entire strategy aims to offer a practical reason for the plausibility of believing in God's existence based on the adequacy of MDCT which implies God's existence. Yet, it gets entangled if one's beliefs about the alleged plausibility of MDCT turn out unwarranted without grounding the plausibility of

² Certainly, there are some other aspects to ascertain whether MDCT is theoretically adequate regardless of taking its unwarranted assumptions into consideration. To explicate, it can be assessed in virtue of its explanatory efficacy against the disputes offered by some competing meta-ethical stances such as anti-realism, naturalism and quasi-realism. Again, MDCT can also be evaluated in the face of some standard challenges to DCT such as the Euthyphro dilemma. It is worth noticing that MDCT is not divorced from some other theoretical concerns which might also cast a doubt on its theoretical viability. Yet, I, for the sake of argument, merely focus on the unwarranted assumption about God's existence considering the theoretical viability of MDCT.

God's existence in the first place. In this respect, Adams' argument appears to obscure whether the adequacy of MDCT compels us to endorse AMG as a viable argument or the viability of AMG compels us to accept the adequacy of MDCT. If MDCT centers around an unwarranted assumption, AMG seems to implicate either what MDCT implies becomes plausible to believe because MDCT is adequate to endorse, or MDCT becomes adequate to endorse because what MDCT implies is plausible to believe so. If the first horn is the case, the so-called plausibility of the MDCT implying God's existence without a warrant provides a reason for endorsing God's existence as a conclusion from the unwarranted commitment to the plausibility of MDCT itself. Hereby, Adams' moral argument becomes vague about how the plausibility of MDCT can be legitimate to endorse while leaving an essential presumption unwarranted. If the second horn holds, then it means that MDCT provides a plausible reason for God's existence by itself, and Adams' moral argument, thereby, comes out as a redundant enterprise. Thereby, appealing to the theoretical soundness of MDCT for eliminating the plurality concern fails once again.

4. Conclusion

Drawing on the long tradition of rational theistic arguments for God's existence, Adams (1987b) offers a practical argument for God's existence that bridges one's commitment to the theoretical viability of MDCT with one's commitment to the plausibility of God's existence. This argument comes with critical drawbacks mainly related to its argumentative structure and strategy. As discussed, Adams' argument rests on an indecisive strategy for providing a compelling reason for believing in God's existence through an allegedly adequate theory of some subject matter implying God's existence. As the adopted argumentative schema might reasonably be employed to proliferate indefinitely many practical arguments to the effect that we end up with equally defensible arguments for or against a loving God's existence which rest on distinct theories on diverse subject matters. For accentuating Adams' enterprise as a distinctively significant option, referring back to the theoretical soundness of Adams' modified divine command theory jeopardizes the methodological import of Adams' moral argument so that Adams' moral argument turns out either redundant or vague depending on how this divine command theory achieves to be the most adequate theory of our moral discourse on theoretical grounds. Therefore, Adams' argument does not decisively come out as a viably compelling interpretation of the given argumentative schema amongst every alternative interpretation.

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