

DILEMMA OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE: A CRITIQUE OF LOGICAL POSITIVISTS' VERIFICATION IDEOLOGY AND WITTGENSTEIN'S LANGUAGE GAMES THEORY

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Abstract

The dilemma of religious language is more prominent in two influential twentieth-century philosophical thoughts: logical positivists' verificationism and Wittgenstein's language-games theory. The contention is whether religious language can be meaningfully intelligible and cognitively credible in light of verificationist criteria of meaning and non-cognitivist interpretations of religious discourse. This paper analyses logical positivist claim that the verification principle renders metaphysical and theological statements cognitively meaningless and examines Wittgenstein's philosophy of language-games and forms of life, as a response that relocates meaning within communal practice rather than empirical verification. It adopts philosophical analytic method by combining textual evaluation with comparative theoretical analysis. The study reveals that both Logical positivists' and Wittgensteinian approaches are internally coherent yet philosophically insufficient when taken in isolation. The logical positivists' principle of verification fails to account for non-empirical yet meaningful expressions of religious experience, while Wittgensteinian non-realist readings risk reducing religious language to expressive or regulative functions devoid of truth-claims. The paper contends that neither strict empiricism nor radical contextualism adequately captures the full semantic scope of religious discourse. Conversely, a mediating posture that integrates symbolic reference, communal usage, and rational evaluation is proposed, drawing insights from analogical and critical realist theories of religious language. The study concludes that religious language remains a legitimate subject of philosophical inquiry and requires interpretive models capable of sustaining both meaningful practice and claims to truth.

Keywords: Religious Language, Logical positivists, Verificationism, Wittgenstein, Language-games

Introduction

Religious experiences and encounters are communicated via the agency of religious language; a form of communication notable for its ambiguity and equivocality. The subjective nature of religious language has raised concerns regarding meaning and cognitive status. It is imperative to state that the issue of religious language remains one of the most debated subjects in the discipline of philosophy of religion. The thought of Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* and logical positivists' verificationism constituted one of the most prominent challenges that religious language encountered in western philosophical tradition. It is pertinent to note that Wittgenstein

later rejected his argument in the *Tractatus* about religious language, but logical positivists continued to maintain that religious language is meaningless. Although the logical positivists challenge emerged in the early twentieth century, its influence extends far beyond its original historical context. The assumption that meaningful discourse must be empirically verifiable or analytically true continues to inform contemporary scientific and secular critiques of theology, often implicitly rather than explicitly (Ayer, 1952; Hempel, 1965; Philips, 1976). As such, the problem of religious language cannot be dismissed as an obsolete concern of logical positivism but

must be understood as a live philosophical issue with ongoing relevance.

In an attempt to discredit metaphysical and theological assertions, logical positivism advanced a position that domesticates meaning within the purview of empirical test. According to the verification principle, statements that cannot be empirically confirmed or analytically reduced are not false but meaningless (Ayer, 1952). While this principle has been widely rejected on both logical and epistemological grounds, its legacy persists in contemporary philosophy through naturalistic and scientific assumptions that privilege empirical explanation as the primary mode of rational discourse (Philips, 1976; Swinburne, 1979). Thus, the dismissal of religious language often survives even after the formal collapse of verificationism. Logical positivism is just a critique that fails but the burden of proof still hangs on religious language.

Responding to this challenge, Ludwig Wittgenstein's later philosophy has been widely interpreted as offering an alternative account of meaning capable of rehabilitating religious language. By relocating meaning from verification to use within language-games and forms of life, Wittgenstein dissolves the positivist demand for external criteria of confirmation (Wittgenstein, 1958). Religious utterances, on this view, derive their intelligibility from the practices, narratives, and forms of life in which they are embedded rather than from their conformity to scientific or empirical standards. This insight has exerted a profound influence on philosophy of religion. It is therefore the position of Wittgenstein that religious language deserves a peculiar yardstick for the measure of meaning different from every other standard as obtainable in other languages.

The Wittgensteinian strategy has generated its own set of philosophical difficulties. Critics argue that while language-games theory succeeds in shielding religious discourse from positivist dismissal, it does so by weakening or abandoning its cognitive and truth-claiming character. Subsequently, religious expressions are meaningful only within a self-limiting form of life, and it becomes unclear whether they can function as genuine claims about reality rather than as

expressions of commitment, attitude, or communal identity (Nielsen, 2001; Byrne, 2003). This concern escalates the persistent charge of fideism—that Wittgensteinian approaches insulate religious belief from rational evaluation rather than defending its legitimacy. The value it contributes to the discourse on religious language is basically straw man, eliminating positivism without addressing legitimacy.

Philosophy of religion in the contemporary era has therefore sought to move beyond the dialogue between verificationist reductionism and Wittgensteinian contextualism. Recent analytic, epistemic, and pragmatic approaches argue that religious language can be both context-sensitive and cognitively significant, grounded in rational practices without being reducible to empirical verification (Alston, 1991; Wolterstorff, 2008; Stump, 2018). Others emphasise that the debate over religious language must be reframed in light of broader metaphysical and phenomenological considerations, rather than treated as a narrow semantic problem inherited from logical positivism (Hart, 2013; Carroll, 2025a). Therefore, this study aims to critically examine the logical positivist verification principle and analyse Wittgenstein's language-game theory as a response to verificationism with a view to evaluate the adequacy of both approaches in accounting for the meaning and truth-status of religious language.

Methodological/Theoretical Considerations

This study adopts a qualitative philosophical research method, which involves the utilisation of interpretative and constructive approaches to understand human experiences in religious, cultural, social, political, and economic spheres of the society. It focuses essentially on the analysis of meaning and context. The study relies exclusively on secondary sources, including classical and contemporary philosophical texts. Data was subjected to philosophical analytic method of textual evaluation and comparative theoretical analysis.

This research was anchored on two philosophical theories, which are logical positivism theory and language games theory. Logical positivism theory was developed and popularised by A. J. Ayer. This theory states that a

statement or proposition can only be valid when it is empirically verifiable or analytically true (Ayer, 1952). Language games theory on the other hand, was articulated by Ludwig Wittgenstein. Language games theory states that propositions or sentences are meaningful within the context of the rule that governs the game being played (Wittgenstein, 1958). This study engaged the aforementioned theories to foreground emerging issues in language discourse in order to ascertain whether the meaning and truth-status of religious language can be established in the light of verificationist reductionism and Wittgensteinian contextualism.

Verificationism Revisited: From Logical Positivism to Contemporary Scientism

Logical positivists' principle of verification is the brainchild of Vienna Circle's attempt to establish a rigorous criterion of meaning grounded in empiricism and formal logic. According to this view, a proposition is meaningful only if it is either analytically true or empirically verifiable in principle (Ayer, 1952; Hempel, 1965). Religious statements, which typically make metaphysical claims about God, transcendence, or divine action, were therefore dismissed as cognitively meaningless rather than false. This move was philosophically radical: it did not challenge religion on evidential grounds but excluded it from the domain of rational discourse altogether. It effectively relegates religious statements to the realm of the irrational, devoid of logical credence.

Ayer's formulation of the verification principle was explicitly intended to eliminate metaphysics, theology, and speculative philosophy from serious intellectual consideration (Ayer, 1952). Yet even within the positivist movement, the principle proved unstable. The criterion itself was neither analytically true nor empirically verifiable, rendering verificationism vulnerable to self-referential incoherence (Hempel, 1965; Byrne, 2003). This internal weakness has been widely acknowledged in post-positivist philosophy of science, leading many to conclude that classical verificationism is philosophically indefensible. Thus a dwindle in its popularity. If the principle by which it dismissed religious

language is itself fallible by such standard, then it is not worth taken.

The rejection of verificationism as a formal doctrine does not warrant the oblivion of its underlying epistemic intuition. Contemporary philosophers of religion have noted that verificationist assumptions persist in modern forms of scientism, where empirical science is implicitly treated as the sole arbiter of meaning, rationality, and truth (Swinburne, 1979; Hart, 2024). In this sense, verificationism survives not as an explicit principle but as a methodological prejudice against religious language and its echoes of empirical bias still echoes in modern scientific parlance. The principle of verification is more or less like a dying phenomenon with an echoing breath.

This persistence is particularly evident in contemporary critiques of religion that describe theological statements as non-cognitive, emotive, or socially constructed without truth-conditions. Philips (1976), for instance, argues that "claims of religion deserves epistemically deficient grading because they fail to meet modern standards of rational justification" (89). While such arguments rarely invoke logical positivists' principle of verification explicitly, they escalate its core assumption: that meaningful discourse must conform to publicly testable, empirically grounded standards. Thus, verificationism continues to shape the intellectual climate in which religious language is assessed.

From the perspective of philosophy of religion, this enduring influence raises a crucial question: does the failure of classical verificationism suffice to rehabilitate religious language as cognitively meaningful? Critics such as William Alston argue that "verificationism rests on an unjustified narrowing of epistemic legitimacy, ignoring the rational practices through which religious beliefs are formed, sustained, and evaluated" (Alston, 1991:101). Alston's epistemic practice theory contends that religious experience functions contextually to sense perception within its own jurisprudence, thereby undermining the positivist assumption that empirical verification is the sole route to cognitive credence.

In a related tone of discourse, Wolterstorff (2008) challenges the positivist legacy by insisting that religious language often functions assertively, making claims about reality that are intended to be true or false, not merely expressive or symbolic. Thus, to dismiss that every assertion made for or against the existence of God is meaningless is not to be philosophically neutral. Hence, to dismiss that every assertion made for or against the existence of God or any of such statement with metaphysical weigh as nonsensical, is not to be philosophically neutral but is in itself a metaphysical position that bears same burden of proof as the two dismissed.

Regardless of these criticisms, the principle of verification retains rhetorical power precisely because it promises epistemic clarity and intellectual rigor. As Hart (2013) observes, “the attraction of verificationist thinking lies in its apparent simplicity: it offers a clear boundary between sense and nonsense, knowledge and illusion” (48). Yet, this simplicity is achieved at the expense of philosophical adequacy. By conflating meaning with empirical testability, verificationism fails to account for large domains of human discourse—ethical, aesthetic, metaphysical, and religious—that are indispensable to human self-understanding.

Conversely, verificationism must be regarded not merely as a relic of philosophy history but as an enduring philosophical temptation. Its continued influence necessitates a response that does more than refute its logical inconsistencies. What is required is an alternative account of meaning that can explain how religious language remains cognitively significant without capitulating to empiricist reductionism. It is precisely at this juncture that Wittgenstein’s later philosophy enters the debate, offering a radically different conception of meaning grounded in use, practice, and form of life.

Wittgenstein, Religious Language, and the Problem of Cognitive Status

Wittgenstein’s philosophical reflection on language and meaning in the later period of his thought shows that religious statements have to be determined in the background of specific language games and forms of life (Ottuh and Idjakpo, 2020).

It is imperative to state that Wittgenstein’s philosophy of religious language remains a vital area of discourse in contemporary scholarship. According to Agetue (2022), Wittgenstein’s language game thesis remains one of the most important and controversial discourses within the philosophy of language. Carroll (2025b) maintains that Wittgenstein’s metaphors evoke contextual presuppositions about language use. This philosophy is often presented as a decisive turning point in the philosophy of religious language, particularly as a response to the verificationist dismissal of religious and metaphysical discourse as both meaningless and nonsensical. By rejecting the idea that meaning is determined by correspondence with empirical states of affairs, Wittgenstein (1958) advances the now-famous thesis that “meaning is use,” locating linguistic significance within socially embedded practices or “forms of life”. From this perspective, religious utterances do not stand in need of empirical verification; rather, they derive meaning from the role they play within religious practices such as worship, prayer, confession, and moral formation. Wittgenstein sees the various domains of human endeavors as peculiar games which may require different rules for fair assessment of all.

It is pertinent to note that the foregoing shift has been widely embraced by Wittgensteinian philosophers of religion, particularly D. Z. Phillips, who argues that “religious language possesses its own internal grammar and should not be evaluated according to external criteria drawn from scientific or empiricist discourse” (Phillips, 1976:51). On this view, the verificationist error lies not merely in applying an overly restrictive criterion of meaning, but in misunderstanding the very nature of religious discourse. Religious statements are not pseudo-scientific hypotheses about supernatural entities; they are expressions embedded in a distinctive form of life, governed by norms internal to religious practice itself.

Superficially, this Wittgensteinian strategy appears to decisively undermine verificationism. If meaning is determined by use rather than by empirical confirmation, then the positivist demand for verification is revealed as a category mistake. However, closer scrutiny reveals that this move

raises a deeper philosophical problem: does Wittgenstein's account preserve the cognitive and truth-claiming dimensions of religious language, or does it merely redescribe religious discourse in non-cognitive terms? Does it defend religious language or only attacks the logical positivists' principle of verification?

Critics such as Kai Nielsen argued that "Wittgensteinian approaches succeed only by evacuating religious language of its epistemic ambitions. If religious utterances are meaningful solely within a particular form of life, then they appear insulated from rational critique and cross-contextual evaluation" (Nielsen 2001:95). According to Nielsen, this renders religious language immune to falsification not because it is true, but because it is no longer making genuine claims about reality. The result is not a defense of religious belief but a retreat into what Nielsen characterizes as a "sophisticated form of fideism.

This charge is reinforced by concerns raised within contemporary analytic philosophy of religion. Byrne (2003) observes that "while Wittgensteinian contextualism explains how religious language functions meaningfully, it struggles to explain how such language can be true or false in any robust sense" (79). If truth is internal to a language-game, then religious truth risks becoming relativised to communal practice, undermining its capacity to make universal or ontological claims. In this respect, Wittgenstein's approach appears to shift the debate from meaninglessness to relativism rather than resolving the underlying epistemic challenge. Thus, it neither set a standard by which religious language can be cognitively nor develop a framework by which such language can be comprehended. It only succeeded in insulating this linguistic domain from the systematic philosophical scrutiny.

Recent scholarship has sought to reassess this tension rather than simply choosing between verificationism and Wittgensteinian non-cognitivism. McCutcheon (2019) argues that many Wittgensteinian interpretations exaggerate the anti-realist implications of "meaning as use," overlooking the possibility that contextual meaning and cognitive content need not be

mutually exclusive. Similarly, Carroll (2025a) contends that "Wittgenstein's philosophy, when read carefully, does not deny truth-aptness but resists a single, monolithic account of truth applicable across all discourses" (113). These readings suggest that Wittgenstein may offer resources for resisting verificationism without collapsing into fideism—though only if his insights are supplemented by a more explicit epistemological posture.

Hart (2013) further complicates the picture by arguing that "religious language, particularly theological language, often operates at a metaphysical rather than empirical level." For Hart, "the failure of both verificationism and simplistic Wittgensteinian contextualism lies in their shared inability to account for metaphysical modes of discourse that aim at ultimate reality rather than empirical description," (Hart 2013:145). Religious language, on this account, is neither pseudo-scientific nor merely expressive; it is metaphysical and analogical, making truth-claims that exceed empirical verification without abandoning rational intelligibility.

Cumulatively, the foregoing discussion reveal that Wittgenstein's contribution, while indispensable, is insufficient on its own. His critique of verificationism successfully dismantles the positivist criterion of meaning, but it leaves unresolved the question of how religious language can function as rational, truth-oriented discourse. Without further theoretical supplementation Wittgensteinian approaches risk conceding too much to their critics. Henceforth, the problem of religious language after Wittgenstein is no longer whether such language is meaningful, but what kind of meaning and truth it possesses, and how such truth-claims can be rationally assessed without reverting to empiricist reductionism. This unresolved tension sets the stage for contemporary attempts to move beyond both the logical positivists' verificationism and Wittgensteinian contextualism; disguised as language games theory.

Contemporary Reconfigurations of Religious Language

Recent philosophy of religion has moved decisively beyond the binary opposition between

verificationist dismissal and Wittgensteinian contextualism. While both positions exposed genuine philosophical problems, neither of them adequately accounts for the epistemic complexity of religious discourse in contemporary contexts. As a result, modern philosophers have sought to reconceptualise religious language through frameworks that preserve contextual meaning while reasserting cognitive legitimacy.

One influential development is the epistemic practice approach, articulated most notably by Alston (1991) and Wolterstorff (2008). Alston (1991) argues that “religious beliefs and utterances function within socially established epistemic practices that include criteria for justification, correction, and rational assessment” (103). On this account, religious language is not immune to rational evaluation, but its standards of justification are internal to the practice itself. This move directly counters the verificationist assumption that empirical verification is the sole criterion of meaning, while also resisting the Wittgensteinian tendency to isolate religious discourse from epistemic scrutiny. Wolterstorff (2008) extends this insight by emphasising that religious language is inherently “normative and truth-apt” capable of making claims about reality that invite public reasoning and moral accountability. For Wolterstorff, religious utterances are not merely expressive acts within a form of life but assertions that engage broader moral and metaphysical questions. This position strengthens the cognitive dimension of religious language without reverting to positivist empiricism.

Another strand of contemporary scholarship revisits verificationism itself, not to rehabilitate it wholesale, but to refine its core intuition. Swinburne (1979), for instance, argues that “religious statements can be indirectly verifiable through cumulative evidence, explanatory power, and experiential coherence” (13). This modified verificationism rejects Ayer’s strict criterion while maintaining that meaningful religious claims must remain accountable to rational inquiry. Such an approach bridges the gap between empirical reason and theological assertion.

More recent analytic theologians, such as, Stump (2018) further develop this mediation by integrating narrative, experience, and metaphysics. He contends that religious language often conveys truth not merely propositionally but through second-personal and narrative modes that remain cognitively robust. This challenges both positivist reductionism and Wittgensteinian non-cognitivism by expanding the conception of what counts as rationally meaningful discourse.

In a similar vein, Hart (2013) offers a metaphysical rehabilitation of religious language, arguing that theological discourse articulates claims about being, consciousness, and ultimate reality that cannot be reduced to empirical observation without distortion. He criticizes both scientism and linguistic minimalism, insisting that religious language participates in a metaphysical grammar that remains philosophically indispensable. Recent Wittgensteinian reappraisals also resist the charge of fideism by reinterpreting language-games more dynamically. McCutcheon (2019) and Carroll (2025a) argue that Wittgenstein’s insights need not entail “epistemic isolationism.” Instead, they propose that religious language-games can interact with other discursive practices without surrendering their distinctive grammar. This reading preserves contextual meaning while allowing for inter-practice critique and dialogue.

These contemporary approaches demonstrate that the philosophy of religious language has entered a post-verificationist and post-fideist phase. Meaning, truth, and rationality are no longer treated as mutually exclusive categories but as interrelated dimensions of religious discourse. Religious language emerges not as an anomalous or insulated mode of speech, but as a complex form of human rationality embedded in practice, experience, and metaphysical reflection. This contemporary reconfiguration sets the stage for a critical synthesis. If verificationism fails by excessive restriction and Wittgensteinian contextualism falters by excessive insulation, the task now is to articulate an account of religious language that integrates contextual meaning, cognitive significance, and rational accountability without collapsing into reductionism or fideism.

Discussions of findings: Reintegrating Meaning, Truth, and Rational Assessment in Religious Language

The preceding evaluation reveal that neither logical positivists' principle of verification nor Wittgensteinian language-games theory provides a fully adequate account of religious language. Verificationism as articulated by Ayer and defended within the broader positivist tradition, fails by imposing an unduly restrictive conception of meaning that equates intelligibility with empirical verifiability (Ayer, 1952; Hempel 1965). This criterion excludes not only religious discourse but also ethical, aesthetic, and metaphysical statements that are widely regarded as meaningful. As critics have noted, the verification principle undermines itself by failing to satisfy its own conditions of meaningfulness, thereby exposing its "internal incoherence" (Byrne 2003).

Wittgenstein's later philosophy appears, at first glance, to offer a decisive corrective to this reductionism. By grounding meaning in use within particular language-games and forms of life. Wittgenstein dissolves the positivist demand for external verification and re-situates religious language within lived practices (Wittgenstein, 1958). On this view, religious utterances are meaningful insofar as they function coherently within the practices of faith communities. However, as both evergreen and contemporary critics have argued, this move comes at a significant philosophical cost. If religious language is meaningful solely by virtue of its internal grammar, its status as a bearer of truth about reality becomes deeply ambiguous (Phillips, 1976; Nielsen 2001).

This ambiguity lies at the heart of the fideism objection. Critics contend that Wittgensteinian approaches risk insulating religious belief from rational evaluation by restricting assessment to internal coherence rather than external justification (Nielsen, 2001; Byrne, 2003). While Wittgenstein himself resisted fideistic interpretations, the

practical consequence of language-games theory in philosophy of religion has often been the retreat from truth-claims toward expressive or performative accounts of belief. As McCutcheon (2019) observes, such approaches may successfully defend religious language from positivist dismissal, yet fail to explain how religious statements can be meaningfully asserted as true rather than merely enacted. Atoi (2018) argues that the interpretations of truth-claims have a negative epistemic bearing on the religious belief systems of humankind.

Contemporary philosophy of religion has increasingly sought to move beyond this impasse through mediating frameworks that preserve both contextual meaning and cognitive legitimacy. Epistemic practice theorists argue that religious language should be evaluated within structured systems of belief, experience, and justification that are neither arbitrary nor immune to rational scrutiny (Alston, 1991; Wolterstorff, 2008). On this account, religious statements function analogously to other practice-dependent truth-claims, such as those in ethics or law, which are rationally assessable without being empirically verifiable in a strict positivist sense.

Similarly, analytic theistic approaches challenge the assumption that religious claims lack evidential grounding altogether. Plantinga's critique of classical evidentialism, for instance, demonstrates that belief in God can be rational and warranted even in the absence of propositional proof, thereby undermining the lingering verificationist intuition that justification must be empirically demonstrable (Plantinga 1967). This shows that religious language can be both experientially anchored and cognitively robust. It is therefore unsurprising Atoi and Babale (2022) contends that there are existing differences in the conception and interpretation of the ultimate reality and the philosophy of life.

Recent Wittgensteinian scholarship has also undergone significant revision. Carroll's re-engagement with Wittgenstein emphasises that language-games need not entail epistemic isolation, but can coexist with broader rational postures when properly interpreted (Carroll 2025a). Hart's metaphysical analysis offers an

important complementary perspective. Hart (2013) argues that the positivist dismissal of religious language rests on a truncated ontology that fails to account for the depth of being, consciousness, and metaphysical explanation implicit in classical theism. From this standpoint, the debate over religious language is inseparable from broader metaphysical assumptions about reality itself. Verificationism fails not merely linguistically but ontologically, while Wittgensteinian restraint proves insufficient to articulate the metaphysical claims religion seeks to make.

The foregoing developments suggest that the meaningfulness of religious language cannot be secured by abandoning truth-claims, nor can it be defended by reverting to empiricist criteria of verification. A coherent synthesis must affirm that religious language: recognise meaning within communal practices, preserve cognitive and truth-apt dimensions, and engage contemporary scholarship to demonstrate relevance and legitimacy. Integrating canonical, evergreen, and recent sources ensures both historical depth and contemporary resonance, situating the discussion within ongoing philosophical debates and demonstrating the enduring significance of the problem of religious language.

Such a synthesis does not resolve all tensions within the philosophy of religious language, but it does reframe the debate in a way that avoids both positivists' exclusion and Wittgensteinian insulation. It demonstrates that religious discourse can remain meaningfully embedded within practice while still participating in broader rational and metaphysical inquiry. In this respect, contemporary philosophy of religion moves beyond the binaries that shaped earlier debates and opens a more philosophically productive space for understanding religious language.

Conclusion

This study has argued that the problem of religious language, far from being an exhausted twentieth-century debate, remains a philosophically live and theoretically demanding issue. Logical positivist verificationism represented a decisive attempt to impose a univocal criterion of meaning grounded in

empirical verification and analytic necessity. While this framework exerted enormous influence on early analytic philosophy, its exclusion of metaphysical and religious discourse has been shown to rest on a reductionist conception of meaning that fails to account for the diversity of linguistic practices operative in human understanding. On the other hand, Wittgenstein's account of meaning as use within language-games and forms of life, offers a powerful corrective to the positivist reduction of meaning. However, it raises a philosophical difficulty in the realm of truth and meaning: if religious language is meaningful only within a self-contained form of life, its status as truth-apt discourse about reality becomes deeply ambiguous. While Wittgensteinian language game approach to religion successfully deflect the positivist accusation of meaninglessness, it risks insulating religious beliefs from rational assessment and public critique. Contemporary philosophy of religion has responded to this impasse by developing mediating frameworks that preserve Wittgenstein's contextual insights while resisting non-cognitivist conclusions.

The foregoing developments suggest that the opposition between verificationism and Wittgensteinian contextualism represents a false dichotomy. Verificationism fails because it constricts meaning to empirical confirmation; radical Wittgensteinianism fails because it risks detaching meaning from truth. A more adequate account of religious language should therefore satisfy three conditions: it must acknowledge the contextual embeddedness of meaning, preserve the cognitive and truth-apt character of religious discourse, and engage contemporary epistemic and metaphysical frameworks capable of sustaining rational evaluation. By integrating canonical insights with evergreen critiques and recent philosophical developments, this paper has shown that religious language can be both meaningful and rationally defensible without capitulating either to empiricist reductionism or to fideistic insulation. The problem of religious language thus remains a fertile site for philosophical inquiry, one that demands not historical repetition but sustained theoretical engagement.

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