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The Linguistic Impossibility of the Divine: Language as the Inherent Corruption of Absolute Being

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Abstract: This article investigates the tension between theological discourse and the concept of absolute being by examining the structural conditions of language itself. While traditional philosophy of religion has focused on logical paradoxes among divine attributes or on the epistemic limits of religious language, this study advances a different claim: the very possibility of linguistic engagement introduces limitations incompatible with absoluteness. Methodologically, the paper develops a conceptual and argumentative analysis grounded in philosophy of language and hermeneutic reflection. Drawing on dialogical theories of language, speech-act theory, and post-structuralist accounts of meaning, the argument examines how semantic determination, grammatical structure, temporality, and communicative interaction function as constitutive features of linguistic practice. Rather than treating language as a neutral medium that inadequately represents transcendence, the article argues that linguistic operations actively transform any purportedly absolute object into a finite and relational one. The central contribution of the paper consists in formulating the thesis of linguistic corruption: any being that can be meaningfully named, described, or communicated within language ceases to satisfy the conditions traditionally attributed to absolute perfection. This claim extends beyond theology, offering implications for negative theology, mystical discourse, religious language theories, and philosophical systems grounded in notions of the absolute. The article concludes that the incompatibility between language and absolute being is not merely epistemological but ontological, establishing structural limits for theological and philosophical discourse itself.

Keywords: philosophy of language; philosophy of religion; absolute being; theological discourse; linguistic limits.

Resumo: Este artigo investiga a tensão entre o discurso teológico e o conceito de ser absoluto a partir da análise das próprias condições estruturais da linguagem. Enquanto a filosofia da religião tradicional concentrou-se nos paradoxos lógicos entre atributos divinos ou nos limites epistemológicos da linguagem religiosa, o estudo sustenta uma tese distinta: a própria possibilidade de engajamento linguístico introduz limitações incompatíveis com a absolutidade. Metodologicamente, o trabalho desenvolve uma análise conceitual e argumentativa fundamentada na filosofia da linguagem e na reflexão hermenêutica. Mobilizando teorias dialógicas da linguagem, a teoria dos atos de fala e abordagens pós-estruturalistas do significado, o artigo examina como determinação semântica, estrutura gramatical, temporalidade e interação comunicativa constituem condições inevitáveis da prática linguística. Em vez de tratar a linguagem como um meio neutro que apenas falha em representar a transcendência, argumenta-se que as operações linguísticas transformam ativamente qualquer objeto supostamente absoluto em algo finito e relacional. A contribuição central do artigo consiste na formulação da tese da corrupção linguística: todo ente que pode ser significativamente nomeado, descrito ou comunicado deixa de satisfazer as condições tradicionalmente atribuídas à perfeição absoluta. A análise ultrapassa o âmbito teológico, apresentando implicações para a teologia negativa, o discurso místico, as teorias da linguagem religiosa e sistemas filosóficos fundamentados na noção de absoluto. Conclui-se que a incompatibilidade entre linguagem e ser absoluto não é apenas epistemológica, mas ontológica, estabelecendo limites estruturais para o discurso teológico e filosófico.

Palavras-chave: filosofia da linguagem; filosofia da religião; ser absoluto; discurso teológico; limites da linguagem.

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Introduction

The history of philosophical theology has been shaped by recurring attempts to reconcile the idea of absolute divine perfection with the necessity of speaking about such perfection through human language. From the apophatic tradition to contemporary philosophy of religion, thinkers have repeatedly confronted the tension between divine transcendence and conceptual articulation. Much of this debate has concentrated either on logical tensions among divine attributes — such as paradoxes involving *omnipotence* — or on epistemological questions concerning whether religious language can meaningfully refer to transcendent reality (MACKIE, 1955; PLANTINGA, 1974; HICK, 1989; ALSTON, 1991).

This article proposes a more fundamental line of inquiry. Rather than asking whether theological propositions are logically consistent or epistemically justified, it examines the status of language itself as the *unavoidable medium* of theological discourse. The central claim advanced here is that language does not merely fail to capture absolute being; it structurally subjects whatever it addresses to limitation, determination, and relationality. If theological discourse must proceed linguistically, then the very act of speaking about an absolute being introduces conditions incompatible with absoluteness.

Philosophical reflections on language have long emphasized that meaning emerges through *use*, differentiation, and *contextual practice* rather than through direct correspondence with independent essences (WITTGENSTEIN, 1922; WITTGENSTEIN, 1953; DERRIDA, 1976). These insights suggest that linguistic reference operates through structures that presuppose finitude, opposition, and temporal unfolding. When applied to theological discourse, such structures generate

a tension that cannot be resolved by refining concepts or adopting alternative forms of predication.

Unlike negative theology, which seeks access to the divine through negation, or analogical theories of predication, which preserve theological meaning through proportional similarity, the argument developed here advances an *ontological* claim. Any linguistic engagement — whether affirmative, negative, symbolic, or analogical — transforms what is spoken of into something determined within linguistic systems. The problem is therefore not simply that human beings lack adequate concepts to describe the absolute, but that linguistic articulability itself is *incompatible* with absolute being.

The thesis defended throughout this paper is that the possibility of naming, describing, or predicating attributes of an allegedly infinite or perfect being entails the loss of absoluteness. The limitation arises not from cognitive deficiency but from the structural conditions that make language possible at all. Consequently, the impossibility of theological language should be understood not as an epistemic failure but as an ontological incompatibility between absolute being and discourse itself.

1. Language, Predication, and the Ontological Limits of Absolute Being

Language does not operate as a neutral instrument for describing reality. Rather, it *constitutes* a fundamentally dialogical practice structured by response, differentiation, and contestation. As emphasized by Mikhail Bakhtin, every utterance emerges within an ongoing chain of prior and anticipated speech acts, carrying traces

of disagreement, interpretation, and reinterpretation (BAKHTIN, 1981). Meaning is therefore never monological; it exists only within *relational exchange*.

This dialogical constitution immediately generates tension with the concept of absolute being. Dialogue presupposes difference, plurality of perspectives, and the possibility of misunderstanding. An absolute being, by definition, would *transcend* relational dependence. Yet linguistic engagement necessarily inserts any referent into networks of response and opposition, subjecting it to conditions incompatible with absoluteness.

A similar difficulty appears in Ludwig Wittgenstein's account of *language games*, according to which meaning arises from use within shared social practices (WITTGENSTEIN, 1953). Words acquire significance through public norms of correction, agreement, and negotiation. Consequently, theological predicates such as "perfect," "infinite," or "God" cannot escape the same pragmatic mechanisms governing ordinary language. Their meanings remain socially constituted rather than metaphysically fixed.

Medieval debates concerning divine predication already revealed this tension. Thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas (1981) and John Duns Scotus (2016) disputed whether language about God should be understood univocally, equivocally, or analogically. Yet each option entails structural limitation. *Univocal* predication reduces divine attributes to human conceptual categories; *equivocal* predication empties theological language of intelligible content; *analogical* predication preserves meaning only by maintaining relational comparison. In all cases, linguistic predication binds the absolute to conceptual structures that negate transcendence.

The limitation is not merely semantic but grammatical. Language unfolds temporally and relies on indexical distinctions such as speaker and addressee. Any statement presupposes tense, perspective, and differentiation between self and other.

An eternal or omnipresent being cannot coherently occupy these linguistic positions without implicitly accepting *temporal* succession and bounded identity. Thus, the grammatical architecture of language itself *presupposes finitude.*

Speech act theory deepens this problem. J. L. Austin demonstrated in 1962 that utterances do not merely describe reality but *perform actions* (AUSTIN, 1975), while John Searle systematized the illocutionary structures underlying meaningful discourse (SEARLE, 1969). Applied to theology, predications such as "God is infinite" perform finite linguistic acts that delimit the very infinity they claim to assert. Theological discourse therefore generates a *performative contradiction*: it attempts to affirm absoluteness through acts whose very structure imposes determination and limitation.

Deconstructive philosophy radicalizes this insight. According to Jacques Derrida, in 1967, naming necessarily entails exclusion and *differentiation*; every sign functions through relations of difference rather than intrinsic presence (DERRIDA, 1976). To name "God" is already to delimit what falls inside and outside the term. Meaning arises through relational opposition, implying that the linguistic availability of the absolute depends structurally upon non-absolute conditions. The absolute appears only by entering a system that negates absoluteness.

The claim that divine reality exceeds language has long been recognized within apophatic theology and in debates within analytic philosophy of religion. Apophatic traditions emphasize *ineffability*, arguing that language fails because finite cognition cannot grasp infinite being. Analytic approaches, by contrast, seek *logical* or *semantic* conditions under which religious language may remain meaningful. Both perspectives, however, treat the difficulty primarily as epistemological.

The present argument advances a different thesis. The problem is not that human beings lack adequate concepts to describe the absolute; rather, linguistic

engagement itself transforms what it addresses. Language does not merely fail to capture absolute being — it structurally *converts* absoluteness into relational determination. If something can be linguistically predicated, referenced, or even negated, it has already entered systems of difference, temporality, and performative constraint.

This leads to a stronger conclusion: absoluteness and linguistic articulability are mutually *exclusive* conditions. The issue is therefore not ineffability but incompatibility. Absolute being cannot become an object of discourse without ceasing, in principle, to be absolute. The impossibility of theological language is thus ontological rather than epistemological. Language does not simply fall short of the absolute; it renders absoluteness impossible wherever discourse becomes possible.

2. Consequences for Theology, Mysticism, and Religious Discourse

If language structurally limits whatever it articulates, then the consequences extend beyond isolated theological arguments and affect nearly every major strategy historically employed to preserve divine transcendence. Approaches as diverse as negative theology, mystical experience, analytic philosophy of religion, and Wittgensteinian accounts of religious language all attempt, in different ways, to reconcile absolute being with linguistic expression. Each, however, ultimately remains bound to the same structural difficulty: language cannot engage the absolute without transforming it into something non-absolute.

Negative theology seeks to protect divine transcendence by denying predicates rather than affirming them. Instead of saying what God is, it attempts to say what God *is not*. Yet negation does not escape *linguistic determination*. To deny

that God is finite, temporal, or limited still presupposes the conceptual framework within which such predicates possess meaning. Negation remains a linguistic act governed by the same grammatical and logical structures as affirmation. The apophatic strategy therefore does not overcome linguistic limitation; it merely relocates theological discourse within another operation of language itself.

Mystical traditions appear to offer a more radical solution by appealing to immediate experience beyond conceptual mediation. Claims of union with absolute reality seek to bypass language altogether. However, the difficulty emerges at the moment such experiences are communicated. Mystical discourse inevitably translates immediacy into narrative, metaphor, doctrine, or testimony. The existence of mystical literature already reveals that experience must re-enter language in order to acquire shared significance. *Even when described as ineffable*, the experience becomes linguistically framed, interpreted, and contested. The attempt to escape language thus *confirms* rather than resolves the problem.

Similar limitations affect philosophical attempts to reinterpret religion through autonomous linguistic practices. Accounts inspired by later Wittgenstein argue that religious discourse functions according to its own internal grammar rather than referring to metaphysical entities. Yet linguistic practices remain inherently plural and contestable. Disagreement, reinterpretation, and authority disputes arise even within shared traditions. If religious language is treated merely as a self-contained practice, theology risks *losing its* claim to absolute reality; if it retains such claims, it re-enters precisely the linguistic structures that impose limitation. The tension therefore persists.

These difficulties reveal a broader feature of language itself. Communication presupposes difference between speakers, perspectives, and interpretations. Meaning emerges through contrast, correction, and response. Because linguistic interaction

always allows misunderstanding, disagreement, and reinterpretation, discourse inherently carries the possibility of *conflict*. Language does not simply transmit harmony; it creates a space in which *competing meanings* can arise.

This insight has profound theological implications. Traditional religious visions of *perfect harmony* — whether conceived as divine communion, ultimate reconciliation, or paradisiacal unity — implicitly rely on forms of communication among perfected beings. Yet communicative interaction necessarily preserves the structural conditions of linguistic difference. A perfectly harmonious linguistic community would require eliminating precisely those features that make language possible: ambiguity, interpretation, and response. In this sense, a *fully speakable paradise* would *cease* to be perfectly harmonious, because language itself preserves the possibility of discord.

The same tension appears in narratives of divine speech. When theological traditions describe God speaking, revealing, or communicating, they attribute to the divine acts that unfold through temporal sequence, lexical selection, and audience particularity. Speech requires choosing specific words rather than others, addressing particular recipients, and unfolding meaning over time. These features introduce determination and limitation incompatible with absolute transcendence. Divine discourse therefore becomes conceptually unstable: the more intelligible divine speech becomes, the less absolute the speaker appears.

Contemporary philosophical defenses of religious belief do not ultimately escape this difficulty. Analytic approaches that refine divine attributes through logical clarification still operate within conceptual and linguistic frameworks that impose definitional boundaries. Continental attempts to describe transcendence beyond being likewise depend upon discursive articulation that reintroduces determination at the very moment transcendence is affirmed. Even anti-metaphysical

or pragmatic interpretations of religion remain linguistic enterprises and therefore inherit the same structural constraints.

Taken together, these considerations suggest that the problem is neither doctrinal nor methodological but structural. Theological discourse fails to secure absolute being not because particular theories are insufficiently sophisticated, but because linguistic engagement *itself* transforms what it addresses. The absolute cannot become an object of discourse without entering relations, distinctions, and determinations that negate absoluteness. What emerges from theology, mysticism, or philosophy of religion is therefore not the absolute itself, but a linguistically mediated construct shaped by the conditions of human discourse.

3. Linguistic Limitation and the Transformation of Theological Discourse

The preceding analysis allows a more precise formulation of the central claim developed throughout this study. Traditional discussions of divine ineffability typically maintain that language fails to express absolute reality adequately. The argument advanced here proposes a stronger conclusion: linguistic engagement does not merely fail to capture the absolute but necessarily transforms whatever it articulates into something conditioned by linguistic structures.

The issue is therefore not primarily epistemological — a limitation of human knowledge — but structural. Language functions through determination, differentiation, and contextualization. Any entity that becomes linguistically accessible must enter these structures and thereby lose the unrestricted character required of absolute being.

This transformation can be clarified through several interconnected features of linguistic operation. First, linguistic meaning arises through *exclusion*: words signify by distinguishing what they include from what they exclude. Any attempt to describe an absolute reality therefore imposes semantic boundaries incompatible with absoluteness. Second, grammatical articulation requires entities to occupy determinate roles within sentences — subject, predicate, or object — introducing relational structures foreign to an entity defined precisely by independence from relations.

Third, speech acts situate utterances within pragmatic contexts involving speakers, audiences, intentions, and conventions. The moment absolute being becomes the content of discourse, it becomes embedded within *finite* communicative situations. Fourth, language unfolds temporally, requiring sequential expression. Linguistic reference therefore introduces temporal ordering even when directed toward what is supposed to transcend time. Finally, language is intrinsically *dialogical*: every statement anticipates interpretation, response, or disagreement. Meaning remains open to negotiation among speakers, making any linguistically articulated absolute dependent upon finite interlocutors.

Taken together, these features suggest that discourse about absolute being inevitably introduces limitation through the very conditions that make discourse possible.

This conclusion carries significant implications for theology. Systematic theological reflection aims to articulate divine perfection in coherent conceptual form. Yet the more successfully theology renders its object intelligible, the more it subjects that object to linguistic determination. Theological discourse therefore exhibits a structural tension: intelligibility increases precisely as absoluteness diminishes.

The same difficulty affects claims of religious authority grounded in access to divine truth. Institutions, doctrines, and traditions necessarily communicate their claims through language. However, the communicability of divine authority simultaneously reveals its dependence on historically situated linguistic practices. Religious plurality may thus be understood not merely as divergent interpretations of a shared transcendent reality, but as an inevitable consequence of *attempting* to articulate what, by definition, *cannot enter* linguistic determination without alteration.

The result is not a dismissal of religion or theology, but a reconfiguration of their philosophical status. Theological language does not transparently disclose absolute being; rather, it produces structured interpretations shaped by the conditions of human discourse. Absolute being, if it exists, must therefore remain *beyond* linguistic engagement — not because language is imperfect, but because absoluteness and discursivity belong to fundamentally incompatible orders.

4. Objections and Philosophical Context

Several responses may be raised against the thesis defended in this article, particularly from traditions that seek to preserve meaningful theological discourse while maintaining divine transcendence.

One classical strategy appeals to analogical predication. According to this view, theological language avoids both univocal reduction and equivocal emptiness by establishing proportional similarities between human and divine attributes (AQUINAS, 1981). However, analogy does not escape linguistic determination. Analogical relations must themselves be conceptually and linguistically specified, requiring determinate structures of comparison grounded in *human* conceptual

schemes. Rather than preserving absoluteness, analogy reintroduces limitation through relational description.

A second objection appeals to mystical experience as a non-linguistic access to absolute reality. Mystical traditions frequently claim immediate union with the divine that transcends conceptual mediation. Yet the philosophical difficulty emerges at the level of articulation. The moment such experiences are communicated, interpreted, or even reflected upon, they become integrated into linguistic and conceptual structures. Moreover, experience itself appears to retain an intentional structure distinguishing experiencer and experienced, thereby preserving a minimal form of differentiation incompatible with absolute unity.

A more radical proposal recommends silence as the appropriate response to divine transcendence. While this position initially seems to reject linguistic engagement altogether, it ultimately *reinforces* the present argument. If silence is required, this indicates that language cannot accommodate absolute being without distortion. Even so, the recommendation of silence must itself be expressed linguistically, generating a performative tension in which discourse simultaneously denies and presupposes its own legitimacy.

These objections reveal that attempts to safeguard theological discourse tend either to remain within linguistic structures or to confirm their limits indirectly. Contemporary philosophy further illuminates this difficulty. Post-structuralist analyses emphasize that meaning arises through differential relations and discursive practices rather than immediate presence (DERRIDA, 1976; FOUCAULT, 1972). Such perspectives support the claim that linguistic articulation necessarily introduces mediation, exclusion, and power relations incompatible with absolute self-sufficiency.

Parallel tensions appear within analytic philosophy of language. Theories of reference that treat proper names as rigid designators require stable identity conditions capable of being tracked across possible contexts (KRIPKE, 1980). Applied to theology, this requirement imposes determinate criteria of *identification* upon what is supposed to exceed determination. Likewise, analyses of *indexical* expressions demonstrate that meaningful utterances depend upon contextual parameters such as speaker, place, and time (KAPLAN, 1989). Any divine discourse expressed through language would therefore presuppose contextual localization, again contradicting absolute transcendence[1].

Taken together, *both* continental and analytic traditions converge on an unexpected conclusion: linguistic meaning depends upon structures of differentiation, context, and interpretation that cannot be reconciled with an entity defined by unlimited or absolute being. The difficulties facing theological language are therefore not confined to a particular philosophical school but emerge from widely shared insights about how language itself operates.

[1] An objection may arise concerning religious traditions that do not worship absolutely infinite or metaphysically perfect beings but rather finite or localized supernatural agents. Certain forms of ancient polytheism, for instance, attribute limited powers and contingent characteristics to divine figures. However, if religious practice is directed toward entities lacking transcendence or ultimacy, two consequences follow. Either such a religion fails to function as an effective soteriological system—since it offers no reality exceeding the already available material world—or it must be interpreted primarily as a cultural or anthropological practice rather than as discourse about the divine itself. In the latter case, religion becomes a human symbolic activity, not a theological claim about ultimate reality, and therefore falls outside the conceptual scope of the present argument. As noted by Mircea Eliade, religious consciousness traditionally distinguishes the sacred precisely by its rupture with ordinary profane existence (ELIADE, 1959), reinforcing the expectation of transcendence as a constitutive feature of religion.

5. Original Contributions and Implications

The argument developed in this paper culminates in a general philosophical consequence concerning the relationship between language and absolute being. The analysis suggests that linguistic engagement is not merely an epistemic activity but an ontological operation: language does not simply represent entities but necessarily determines, differentiates, and limits them. From this follows what may be called the *Linguistic Corruption Principle*: for any entity X, if X admits linguistic engagement, then X is necessarily finite, limited, and imperfect.

To become linguistically accessible is already to enter a system of distinctions, references, and conceptual boundaries. Naming, describing, or characterizing an entity situates it within relations of difference that impose structure upon it. Absolute reality, however, would require the absence of limitation or determination. Consequently, linguistic accessibility entails ontological restriction. This principle extends beyond theological discourse to any philosophical conception of the absolute, the infinite, or the perfectly self-sufficient. Language functions as a universal mechanism through which finitude is introduced.

A further consequence emerges when communication itself is examined. Perfect communication proves logically impossible because communication presupposes imperfection. Perfect communication would require identical understanding between interlocutors; yet identical understanding would eliminate the informational function of communication altogether. Communication exists only where difference, uncertainty, or partial understanding remains. Rather than representing a failure to be overcome, misunderstanding appears as one of the structural conditions that make communication possible (difference has motivated

communication to exist). Communication therefore depends upon asymmetry and incompleteness, revealing that linguistic interaction cannot culminate in total transparency of meaning.

These considerations give rise to what may be formulated as the *Paradise Paradox*: if a domain possesses perfect harmony yet admits linguistic engagement, it ceases to be paradisiacal. Paradise, understood philosophically, implies total reconciliation and absence of conflict. Language, however, necessarily introduces plurality through interpretation, semantic variation, disagreement, and pragmatic negotiation. The *mere possibility of discourse* generates *divergence*. A paradise that can be spoken about becomes exposed to difference, whereas a paradise immune to difference must remain beyond language.

The implications of these conclusions extend directly to religious practice. Liturgical language attempts to establish sacred presence through repetition, formulaic utterance, and ritual speech. Yet linguistic repetition transforms transcendence into structured expression, subjecting the sacred to linguistic mediation. Liturgy thus embodies an internal contradiction: it seeks to preserve transcendence while simultaneously domesticating it within language.

Similarly, scriptural interpretation reveals an unavoidable limitation. Any interpretation of revelation determines it through human conceptual categories, stabilizing meanings and establishing doctrinal boundaries. The very need for interpretation demonstrates that the object interpreted cannot remain absolute, since absolute meaning would not admit competing readings.

Religious education intensifies this tension. The transmission of religious belief requires pedagogical clarity, conceptual simplification, and structured explanation. Infinite reality must therefore be translated into finite communicative forms. Education succeeds as communication only by reducing what it aims to

preserve as unlimited. Religious practice, interpretation, and teaching thereby illustrate a broader philosophical conclusion: linguistic engagement does not merely fail to capture the absolute; it actively transforms the absolute into something finite.

6. The Limits of Philosophical Discourse and the Impossibility of Absolute Authority

The consequences of linguistic corruption extend beyond theology into the broader history of philosophy. Systems of absolute idealism provide a particularly revealing case. Philosophical frameworks that posit ultimate principles capable of grounding reality as a whole attempt to articulate absolute foundations of being. However, any principle that can be linguistically formulated already enters a system of conceptual determination and differentiation. The articulation of an absolute principle therefore functions simultaneously as its limitation. Philosophical discourse demonstrates the non-absoluteness of what it seeks to establish as absolute (HEGEL, 1977; SPINOZA, 1996; SCHELLING, 2001).

This conclusion also reveals limits internal to philosophy itself. Philosophy traditionally aims at universality, systematic coherence, and final justification. Yet philosophical reasoning unfolds through language, argumentation, and conceptual distinction—processes governed by temporality, interpretation, and disagreement. Rather than accidental obstacles, these features belong to the very medium through which philosophy operates. Philosophical discourse cannot fully achieve the totality it seeks because its linguistic structure necessarily introduces contestability and revision.

Important implications follow for political theology and theories of sovereignty. Conceptions of sovereign authority grounded in ultimate decision-making power presuppose a form of linguistic stabilization capable of securing unquestionable legitimacy. However, any sovereignty that can be linguistically articulated becomes open to interpretation, dispute, and reinterpretation. Authority expressed through language becomes structurally *contestable*, undermining the absoluteness political theology attempts to secure (SCHMITT, 2005).

These conclusions invite a series of anticipated objections. A first objection claims that the argument is self-refuting because it employs language in order to criticize linguistic access to the absolute. This criticism misunderstands the scope of the thesis. The argument does not deny that language can successfully describe finite realities, logical relations, or empirical phenomena. Its target is specifically the claim that language can engage absolute being *without* limitation. The argument operates at a *meta-theoretical level*, analyzing the logical conditions of linguistic engagement rather than attempting to describe absolute reality itself.

A second objection proposes that divine communication might occur through a private language accessible only to the divine. However, arguments concerning the impossibility of genuinely private language undermine this proposal. Language requires rule-governed use and public criteria of correctness; a purely private linguistic system would lack the conditions necessary for meaningful linguistic practice (WITTGENSTEIN, 1953). Even if one imagined an exclusively divine linguistic system, it would still confront internal differentiation, rule application, and structural limitation analogous to those identified throughout this analysis.

A final objection suggests that divine communication might avoid linguistic limitation by operating through non-propositional media such as symbols, music,

art, or pure feeling. Yet these forms do not escape the underlying problem. Symbolic systems require interpretation; music unfolds temporally through structured relations; artistic representation depends upon meaning-making practices. Each involves differentiation, structure, and interpretive possibility, confirming that linguistic limitation extends to all communicative forms.

Taken together, these reflections reinforce the general conclusion of the paper: linguistic engagement constitutes not merely a tool for expressing reality but a structural condition that transforms whatever enters it. Absolute being, if genuinely absolute, cannot survive linguistic articulation without forfeiting its absoluteness. Language does not simply fail to capture the absolute; it necessarily converts it into something finite.

Conclusion

This article has argued that the problem of theological discourse is not primarily epistemic but linguistic. Traditional strategies developed to preserve divine transcendence—negative theology, mystical immediacy, and religious language games—attempt to protect the absolute from conceptual limitation, yet all remain dependent on linguistic structures. The central claim advanced here is stronger than classical ineffability theses: language does not merely fail to express the absolute; it necessarily transforms whatever it articulates into something finite, determinate, and contestable.

From this perspective, theological difficulty arises not from human cognitive weakness but from the structural conditions of language itself. Linguistic engagement introduces differentiation, temporality, interpretation, and the

possibility of disagreement. These features make meaningful communication possible, yet simultaneously render absolute perfection linguistically unstable. A reality that fully admits discourse can no longer remain absolute.

The proposed Linguistic Corruption Theory therefore reframes longstanding debates in philosophy of religion. The tension between transcendence and discourse is not an unresolved theological puzzle but a structural consequence of linguistic practice. Religious doctrines, mystical testimonies, and philosophical systems alike reveal the same pattern: the attempt to speak the absolute inevitably converts it into an object within language.

The implications extend beyond theology. Philosophy, political authority, and any discourse claiming ultimate foundations encounter analogous limits. Language enables rational inquiry while simultaneously preventing final closure. Rather than eliminating meaning, this conclusion clarifies the conditions under which meaning operates: human discourse belongs irreducibly to finitude.

The result is not skepticism but reorientation. Theology and philosophy may continue to speak, argue, and interpret, but with the recognition that linguistic articulation cannot secure absoluteness. What remains is a post-absolutist understanding of discourse—one that acknowledges language as productive, powerful, and unavoidable, yet intrinsically incapable of preserving the infinite it seeks to name.

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