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UNCLARITIES IN THE WITTGENSTEINIAN APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS FAITH

S u m m a r y

The author of “Lectures on Religious Belief” significantly influenced the development of analytic philosophy of religion. His conception of religious belief is regarded by many commentators as controversial and radical. In this article I try to demonstrate that his remarks being the basis for this negative appraisal, are often unclear and inconclusive. I discuss critically, i.a., premises of so-called “Wittgensteinian fideism,” which consists of the following claims: (1) a lack of understanding between a theist and an atheist, (2) the autonomy of religious discourse (independence from a scientific and a common sense world view), (3) non-referential language of religion (it does not depict metaphysical reality), (4) an inability to criticize religion. Regarding the question of the autonomy of religious beliefs, I try to inquire whether, according to Wittgenstein, there are semantic “family resemblance” between the empirical and religious concepts, and also, what is the role of rational arguments in the field of faith: historical evidence, claims of natural science, arguments for the existence of God. As regards the problem of the reference and function of religious beliefs, I explain reasons why Wittgenstein's position is classified as non-cognitivism.

Summarised and translated by Ewa Czesna

Słowa kluczowe: późny Wittgenstein, wiara religijna, fideizm, nonkognitywizm.

Key words: the later Wittgenstein, religious faith, fideism, non-cognitivism.

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