

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-53355

Date: 18/08/2025

Title: "Apophatic Rationalism in Anglophone Philosophical Theology: Historical Assessment and Theoretical Outcomes,"

Recommendation:

Accept after minor changes

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		√		
Techno. Quality			√	
Clarity			√	
Significance			√	

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir

Date: 18/08/2025

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

The article *"Apophatic Rationalism in Anglophone Philosophical Theology: Historical Assessment and Theoretical Outcomes"* is a scholarly attempt to map the development and significance of apophatic rationalism in contemporary Anglophone philosophical theology. The author carefully situates this discussion within the broader historical movement between analytic and continental philosophy, highlighting how the rapprochement of these traditions has influenced theological debates. A key strength of the paper is its detailed historical reconstruction, particularly its tracing of the roots of rationalist apophatic theology through figures such as Aquinas, Lonergan, McCabe, Burrell, and Turner. The study also usefully distinguishes between mystical or irrationalist forms of apophaticism and rationalist forms, thereby clarifying conceptual ambiguities. The discussion of theological implications—such as the defense of scientific autonomy, interreligious dialogue, and the prevention of theological distortions—is insightful and significant. However, the paper at times suffers from dense prose and could benefit from clearer structuring and sharper thematic divisions for accessibility. The referencing is thorough but somewhat uneven in style. With minor revisions to improve clarity, flow, and accessibility, the article makes an important contribution to philosophical theology and should be considered suitable for publication.

Detailed Reviewer's Report

International Journal of Advanced Research

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The submitted article explores the trajectory of apophatic rationalism in Anglophone philosophical theology by situating it within the historical context of the broader rapprochement between analytic and continental philosophy. The author begins by identifying how post-war divisions between the two philosophical traditions began to soften, particularly with the revival of Thomism and the growth of interest in critical theory. Against this backdrop, the paper highlights the unique role of rationalist apophatic theology, which balances philosophical rigor with theological humility in acknowledging the unknowability of God.

A major strength of the article lies in its historical mapping of intellectual figures who contributed to this tradition. The treatment of Bernard Lonergan, Victor White, Herbert McCabe, David Burrell, and Denys Turner provides a rich account of how Thomistic rationalism was adapted into a form of apophatic theology that is neither mystical nor irrational, but grounded in logical analysis. The author is particularly effective in showing how Turner's writings reframed apophaticism as a rational theological discourse rather than a purely mystical one. The distinction between irrationalist and rationalist apophatic theologies is another important contribution, as it helps clarify conceptual confusions that often arise in contemporary debates.

The article also engages with the theoretical implications of rationalist apophaticism. The emphasis on avoiding theological "nonsense," defending faith without conflating it with sociological fashions, and supporting interreligious dialogue is highly valuable. Particularly noteworthy is the discussion on how rationalist apophaticism can foster dialogue with atheists and agnostics by emphasizing the limits of human knowledge about God. This positions the study not only within theological scholarship but also within broader public intellectual debates.

Nevertheless, there are areas for improvement. The writing style is dense, with long and sometimes repetitive sentences that may reduce accessibility for readers unfamiliar with the topic. The argument could be better structured by breaking down sections more clearly into thematic units (historical development, key thinkers, theoretical implications, contemporary relevance). While the article is well-sourced, the referencing style could be standardized for consistency. Moreover, although the article situates apophatic rationalism well in a historical and theoretical sense, it could benefit from a stronger conclusion that explicitly summarizes its contributions and situates them within contemporary theological and philosophical discourse.

Overall, the article is a rigorous and original contribution to the study of philosophical theology. By highlighting a relatively underexplored strand of apophatic thought—rationalist apophaticism—the author makes a meaningful intervention in both theology and philosophy. With minor revisions aimed at improving clarity, accessibility, and organization, the paper is suitable for publication.

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Recommendation: Accept with minor revisions.

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