

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 as it isYES.....

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity			✓	
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: Khursheed Sultan

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

Premises I: Two Rapprochements

The text opens by situating its argument within the broader intellectual shifts in the Anglophone academy since the 1990s, highlighting the gradual convergence of analytical and continental philosophy. It emphasizes that the original distinction between the two was less about thematic or methodological differences and more about historical and institutional developments, particularly following the Second World War. The hostility of analytical philosophy toward the history of philosophy is presented as the primary barrier, though one that has diminished considerably in recent decades.

The discussion then turns to the scope of figures considered “continental,” noting a traditional confinement to thinkers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida, while advocating for the inclusion of earlier modern philosophers like Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel within this category. The boundary problem is extended further by raising the question of whether ancient and medieval philosophers—Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, among others—fit into the continental framework or occupy a distinct intellectual status as “classics” or theological figures.

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The text acknowledges the historical context of how ancient and medieval philosophers were classified in the Anglophone world: the ancients grouped among “classics” alongside literary figures like Homer and Virgil, while the medievals were primarily studied in Catholic seminaries. It underscores that throughout much of the twentieth century, philosophy was marginalized within theological curricula, only to witness a revival in the twenty-first century with a proliferation of philosophy chairs in theology departments. This premise closes with a probing question: if philosophy is once again viewed as *philosophia ancilla theologiae*, what form of philosophy and what theology are being invoked in contemporary discourse?

Premises II: Two Revivals

The second premise situates its analysis within two late-twentieth-century academic developments: the thematic revival of Thomism within major scholarly venues. It references *The Monist* (United States) and *New Blackfriars* (United Kingdom), both of which dedicated monographic issues to the intersection of Thomism and modern philosophy, particularly analytical philosophy. John Haldane's contribution is highlighted as an important synthesis of Thomism's seven-hundred-year history, demonstrating how neo-Thomism engages with and addresses central philosophical questions common to both continental and analytical traditions.

Clarity and Structure:

The argument unfolds through a dual framework: rapprochement (between analytic and continental philosophy, and between theology and philosophy) and revival (of Thomism within modern philosophical discourse). The narrative carefully situates its themes in institutional history, intellectual traditions, and disciplinary boundaries. The prose blends historical survey with theoretical framing, maintaining coherence while acknowledging the complexities of categorization within philosophy and theology.

Scholarly Contribution:

The text contributes to ongoing debates in philosophical theology by tracing the intellectual shifts that enabled philosophy to regain significance within theology departments in the Anglophone world. It draws attention to how Thomism, both historically and in its neo-Thomist revival, provides a unique bridge between traditions often treated as separate. By linking Thomism to the rationalist heritage of Western philosophy and highlighting its engagement with

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both continental and analytical strands, the text situates its central theme—apophatic rationalism—within a long trajectory of philosophical-theological interaction.

Overall Assessment:

The excerpt demonstrates a clear awareness of the historical, disciplinary, and conceptual dynamics that shape contemporary Anglophone philosophical theology. It frames its premises around the reconciliation of intellectual traditions and the revival of Thomism as a key interlocutor, offering both historical assessment and theoretical groundwork for further exploration of apophatic rationalism.
