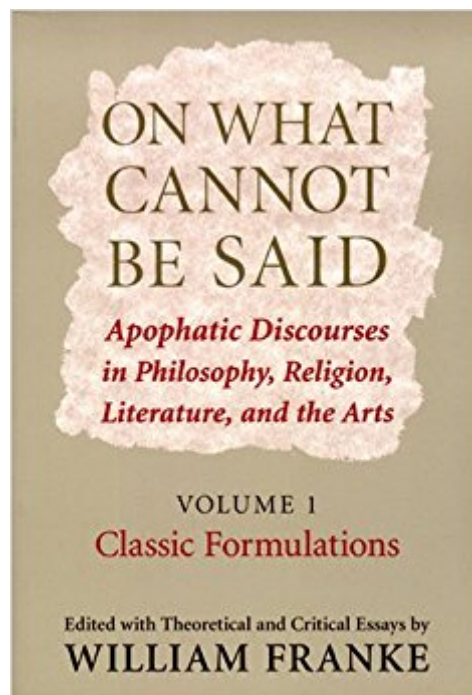


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# On What Cannot Be Said: Apophatic Discourses In Philosophy, Religion, Literature, And The Arts: Volume 1: Classic Formulations



## Synopsis

Any writer worth his salt knows that what cannot be spoken is ultimately the thing worth speaking about; yet most often this humbling awareness is unsaid or covered up. There are some who have made it their business, however, to court failure and acknowledge defeat, to explore the impasse of words before silence. William Franke has created an anthology of such explorations, undertaken in poetry and prose, that stretches from Plato to the present. Whether the subject of discourse is All or Nothing does not matter: the struggle of speech to name the unnameable is the same. This ambitious two-volume undertaking demonstrates a preoccupation as old as Western civilization itself: the limits of language and the virtue of being at a loss for words. How long we have been raiding the Inarticulate!

—Peter S. Hawkins, Boston University

Developments in critical theory during the past two decades have led to renewed interest in negative theology. Books like *Languages of the Unsayable* (1989), *Negation and Theology* (1992), *Derrida and Negative Theology* (1992), and *The Otherness of God* (1998) have signaled the resurgence of this ancient tradition. William Franke's distinctive contribution is to provide the background and texts from which these recent developments have emerged.

—Mark Taylor, Williams College

Apophasis has become a major topic in the humanities, particularly in philosophy, religion, and literature. This monumental two-volume anthology gathers together most of the important historical works on apophaticism and illustrates the diverse trajectories of apophatic discourse in ancient, modern, and postmodern times. William Franke provides a major introductory essay on apophaticism at the beginning of each volume, and shorter introductions to each anthology selection. The first volume, *Classic Formulations*, offers excerpts from Plato, Plotinus, Damascius, the Bible, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, Maimonides, Rumi, Thomas Aquinas, Marguerite Porete, Dante, Teresa of Ávila, John of the Cross, and more.

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