Book Review

Binoy Pichalakkattu SJ Bridging Mathematics, Philosophy, and Theology Fuzzy Logical Thinking for Science-Religion Dialogue. Christian World Imprints, New Delhi. ISBN 9789351482116 (HB) pp. 128+xiv Rs 400.

More and more people, both at the popular and academic levels, are convinced today of the need for creative and critical dialogue between science and religion. Such a dialogue is essential for the future of humanity. This recent book by Dr Binoy Pichalakkatt SJ is an attempt to place such a dialogue in the framework of fuzzy logic.

The book argues that a fuzzy model of critical realism will provide a mathematical base to overcome the binary thinking without indulging in reductionism and relativism. The author believes the model offered by fuzzy logic will offer an inclusive epistemological framework for science-theology dialogue where multiple referential claims reinforce one another. possibilities of fuzzy logic in comparison with binary, relativist and probabilistic thinking. It also brings to light the limits of fuzzy logic and thereby the limits of a fuzzy model of critical realism. The study ends by suggesting a few possibilities for exploring fuzzy thinking in religions and developing a fuzzy language for talking about God and religions. Such an attempt enables a deeper and creative way of dealing with science, religion, theology and philosophy.
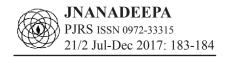
After explaining the insights of fuzziness in a way understandable to the popular audience, he explores the significance of critical realism as a starting point to encounter reality. Then he explores the rich mathematical insights from fuzzy logic and provides a new and dynamic model for science-theology interaction. Such an attempt, we are convinced, is essential for developing a fertile womb for meaningful science-religion dialogue.

The author explores the insights of "critical realism" in the first part of the book. Then he asks the pertinent question: What is critical about critical realism? This takes him to study fuzzy models of critical realism. Finally, he applies his findings of critical realism and fuzzy models to issues like time, eternity and truth. In the conclusion, he probes the limits and possibilities of fuzzy thinking and models for science-religion dialogue.

The work is significant from the point of view of method of dialoguing between science and religion. According to the Second Vatican Council, "Methodological research in all branches of knowledge provided it is carried on in a truly scientific manner and in accordance with moral norms, can never conflict with faith, because the things of the world and things of faith derive from the same God." (GS 36).

The suggestion in the next reprint of the book is have elaborate more on both the basic concepts of "critical realism" and "fuzzy logic." Without hesitation, I shall recommend this book for all those who are interested in philosophical, theological or scientific research.

Our Contributors

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