Review

From Commodification to the Common Good: Reconstructing Science, Technology, and Society. By **Hans Radder**. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019. 309 pages. $45.00 (hardcover).

Let me start with a declaration of interest: I have been interested in Hans Radder's work since I was a student of his nearly three decades ago; I went back to write a doctoral dissertation under his guidance in 1999. Still, our paths have hardly crossed in the period in which Radder was working on the present book, and I briefly review the book here given its relevance to the readership of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*.

Radder is a philosopher of science and technology, who has always had a wide interest in the links among science, technology, and society. The philosophical argument for "public interest science" that he lays out in this book—as a potential alternative to "commodified science"—involves reflection on the normativity and value-ladenness of science and technology and a deep dive into the conceptualization of public interests, which he subsequently applies to science and technology. Radder's analysis is relevant for "science, religion, and public policy," so I argue.

The book contains eight chapters, which are clustered around three themes. The first two chapters belong to a cluster on how science, technology, and society are related, with chapter 1 ("Science, Technology, and the Science–Technology Relationship") detailing the relationship between science and technology, bringing to the fore not only the epistemic but also the social dimensions of science and technology. Chapter 2 ("Why Technologies Are Inherently Normative") argues for the inherent normativity of technologies and brings home that message by addressing (1) the political nature of technological artifacts, (2) the material and social control needed to realize stable and reproducible technological systems, (3) technological design, and (4) the role of use plans in designing and realizing technological artifacts.

The second cluster analyzes and evaluates a major pattern in the relationship among science, technology, and society, that is, the phenomenon of commodification. Chapter 3 ("Commodifying Science and Technology: The Theory and Practice of Patenting") shows what philosophy of science and technology has to add to existing sociopolitical, legal, and ethical discussions of patenting. Chapter 4 ("Mertonian Values, Scientific Norms, and the Patenting of Academic Research") then zooms in on the question of whether academic patenting can be compatible with a "Mertonian" ethos of science (an ethos that was captured by sociologist Robert K. Merton in his 1942 article entitled "A Note on Science and Democracy"). Radder's answer is "No"; he couches that, however, in terms of what he calls a "deflationary, neo-Mertonian" critique of commodified science and he calls for a constructive engagement in the crafting and implementing of science policies that implement (neo-)Mertonian values.

The third and final cluster proposes science and technology for the common good, which may sound to many like a "no-brainer," but this is not as

straightforward as it seems. In chapter 5 ("Which Scientific Knowledge Is a Common Good?"), Radder discusses the notion of a common (or public) good, contrasting received economic and sociopolitical interpretations with his proposed alternative, which is that knowledge constitutes a common good if and only if it is both nonexhaustible and in the public interest. Such an interpretation leads to a fundamental critique of privatizing nonexhaustible scientific concepts, for instance by patenting. Chapter 6 ("Genuine Public Interests: What They Are and How They May Be Advanced") demonstrates the existence and importance of supraindividual interests, and claims that the best argument for the existence of genuine public interests derives from the nature and role of large technological systems. According to Radder, democracy has a central role to play in determining what may count as public interests. In chapter 7 ("The Public Interest of Science and Technology"), he goes on to examine in detail what this may mean in the case of science and technology. The cases he analyzes are environmental research, basic science, diversity in science, public funding of science, open access of scientific publications, and the Dutch National Research Agenda (presented as a form of citizen science).

This book gives very useful insight into the enterprises of science and technology, and especially into some concrete ways in which they are value-laden. It will assist scholars working on "Science, Religion, and Public Policy" in reaching informed judgments on some crucial practices of science and technology that interface with religion and public policy.

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