Book Review

Science in the Service of Human Rights by Richard Pierre Claude

Reviewed by Harvey M. Weinstein

Richard Claude, who has worked to make human rights a part of the agenda of the world community, offers *Science in the Service of Human Rights*, a far-reaching book that addresses such contemporary human rights concerns as the threats and opportunities of Internet technology, the explosive growth of biotechnology, and the profound effects of globalization.[1] His is a visionary perspective that grounds our rapidly changing world in the human rights framework that emerged from the ashes of World War II. Several themes undergird the book's focus on the linkages between human rights and science: the importance of human rights education, the empowerment of all people to attain the rights to which they are entitled, and the role nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) play in assuring that all public and private-sector institutions uphold human rights norms and standards as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and its subsequent conventions.[2-4] Claude responds to many of today's controversies—such as those about cloning and using DNA technology to identify missing or disappeared people—that have emerged from scientific laboratories and field investigation by examining the

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obligations that science has to benefit all. The author further emphasizes the importance of promoting a free but responsible scientific endeavor built on principles and values of human dignity. Thus, the book's value lies not only in giving conceptual clarity to the linkages between science and human rights but also in articulating the added value that scientific investigation can bring to a field often viewed primarily through a legal lens.

Science and the Development of Human Rights Standards

The book is divided into three sections. The first part, "International Standards," addresses the evolution of the relationship between science and human rights in the context of the United Nations, scientists' beliefs, and state obligations. Here, Claude discusses the values that underlie scientific inquiry, debunking the notion of "value-free" science and supporting those who insist that the work of scientists must reflect a set of moral principles that reflects a commitment to human rights.

Claude skillfully weaves the development of human rights into the political machinations of the Cold War by examining how eastern and western powers used science either as a tool of the state or as a discipline for discovering and expanding knowledge to the benefit of humankind. Much attention has been paid to civil and political rights whose clear codification in law allows for judicial intervention; however, economic, cultural, and social rights have faced an enormous challenge, partially because of the difficulty in operationalizing the concepts. The author also examines human rights with respect to scientific inquiry and its applications by defining science and conceptualizing its benefits within the framework of UN human rights documents. He identifies four prerequisites for the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress: an environment of freedom, protection from harm, equality among beneficiaries, and international cooperation. In doing so, Claude illustrates the interdependence of all rights, in that the right to scientific benefits cannot occur without civil and political rights, as well as other economic, cultural, and social rights.

Article 27 of the UDHR, articulates two critical components of the relationship between science and human rights—the right to "share in scientific advancement and its benefits" and the "right to protections of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary, or artistic productions of which he is the author."[5] Those principles are further articulated in Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.[6] Claude introduces a "Binary Theory of Science Rights" based on the protection of these two sets of principles that holds states accountable for ensuring that their people have information and access to scientific discovery and its applications while protecting scientists' rights to their intellectual property. As we have recently seen, the issue of intellectual-property rights has become a major issue regarding access to medication for the treatment of HIV/AIDS in lower-income countries.[7] Thus the question of science-related rights is important and timely.

The Rights to Health, Information, and an Ethical Science

The book's second part, "Issues," addresses areas identified at the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights as having "potentially adverse consequences for the integrity, dignity, and human rights of the individual:" medicine and health and computing and Internet technology.[8] Claude explores the roots of the right to health and to health care in the context of social factors, such as housing and food, both of which are critical to well-being. At the same time, the author addresses the need to hold scientists accountable for their investigations by looking at examples of how medical science under the guise of research can violate principles of bioethics and abuse human rights. Claude suggests that scientists have three obligations: to consider the human rights implications of their work, to act in an ethical manner, and to assure that scientific knowledge is shared. In return, scientists can expect that their work will be protected and that governments will support their freedom to travel and to disseminate knowledge.

Claude focuses this discussion on the ethics of medical

responsibility, including informed consent and state actions that would breach physician confidentiality. Here, the author also examines international humanitarian law and the concept of medical neutrality by looking at the issues of rights and responsibilities of medical neutrality that, in wartime, protect health professionals but also require them not to abuse their responsibilities. Physicians and other health professionals who deny medical care to members of opposing ethnic groups or who participate in torture are violating human rights.

The author explores a wide range of critical issues created by ongoing advances in technology, from how access to the Internet can empower organized groups to confront state violations to how the technological divide can further deprive those in lower-income countries of their human rights. Computers can enhance the ability to gather and analyze data for human rights monitoring. Claude argues elegantly for the importance of this kind of data collection. Although he touches on the sophisticated methods used to develop human rights databases as a new weapon in the fight against human rights abuses, his examples could have more fully developed these ideas by citing instances of how statistical methodologies have been used to reveal systematic patterns of abuse, thereby overcoming a limitation of the traditional human rights approach to documentation that focuses on individual testimonies.

The issues raised in the book's second section might have been further enhanced by elaborating on two other human rights concerns. The first concern is the importance of recasting ethical questions into a broader concept of human rights, such as discrimination in health research or health care that the author introduces in the first part of the book when he examines economic, cultural, and social rights. An ethics framework is limited in that it does not address issues at a population level. Important questions arising from the Tuskegee experiment are not merely, "How did public health doctors do this?" or "Why did they not follow the Hippocratic oath?" Larger questions would consider, "Why do African Americans continue to receive lesser-quality care?" and "What role does society play in this and how do

the health professions contribute to these human rights violations?" Claude's thoughts on the reframing of traditional ethics to address these concerns would have been valuable.

Another concern has to do with the susceptibility that the scientific and medical professions have to abuse human rights in the name of science. The push to expand scientific progress may jeopardize the rights of vulnerable populations. For example, the author notes the recent controversy over the ethical issues raised by HIV experimentation and treatment in Africa.[9] This is an important example that illustrates both the increasing globalization of scientific investigation as well as the potential for its misuse. Claude describes the issues thoroughly and notes international attempts to assure that human rights concerns will be incorporated into research and treatment. Although some in the scientific community have attempted to modify the right to treatment as articulated in the Declaration of Helsinki, those attempts have never been framed in human rights terms.[10,11] The tensions between these two camps illustrate clearly the schisms that confront the scientific enterprise when progress may compromise the dignity and well-being of vulnerable populations.

Additionally, the U.S. government's increasing involvement in funding research increases the threat of misuse of science in the name of patriotism. During the Cold War, American scientists and physicians colluded with government intelligence and security services in the abuse of medical and psychiatric patients, prisoners, mentally disabled children, military personnel, and others by experimenting with mind control and other techniques. In a drive to understand Chinese and Soviet interrogation methods, the U.S. government funded decades of research to break people down, rendering them vulnerable to thought reform in order to protect U.S. agents from brainwashing. This led to experiments on some of our most vulnerable populations for the sake of national security. Given the challenges to civil liberties that have arisen since the 9/11 attack, history reminds us of scientists' and health professionals' susceptibility not only to political manipulation but also to notions of science that diminish societal responsibility.

Science and Advocacy

The third part of the book, "Politics," examines the activism of scientists, NGOs, grassroots groups, and the emerging issue of transnational organizations in the context of globalization and human rights abuses. Many scientists have long fought for scientific freedom, scientific responsibility, and science in the public interest. Claude reminds us of such stalwarts as Sakharov, whose banishment provoked activism among physicists that resulted in SOS (Sakharov, Orlov, and Scharansky), a group that worked tirelessly to free these Russian scientists.

The work of NGOs and grassroots activists can be understood as extensions of Friere's concept of conscientization.[12] Claude's belief in individuals' ability to organize and address such dilemmas as access to and misuse of information are offered in this section as an important reminder that today NGOs do the most important work of monitoring human rights violations. This section also emphasizes that scientists' roles as distant and neutral participants cannot be sustained as people organize to make certain that their rights to, for example, a clean environment and a healthy life are preserved.

Finally, the author addresses the attempts by global corporations and professional societies to respond to their obligations to prevent human rights violations associated with their companies or groups. Globalization has exacerbated such ills as trafficking, child labor, environmental degradation, torture, and violence. The use of science in monitoring, communicating, and providing evidence can help to expose these violations. While not subject to states' obligations regarding human rights, multinational corporations have responded, for example, by participating in the UN Global Compact—a voluntary agreement without teeth.[13] More can be expected in this area as communities around the world mobilize. Professional and academic organizations have a responsibility to activism by using the skills that define their disciplines.

Claude defines science primarily in terms of physical or basic science and its applications. The author's points would have been enhanced if he had also scrutinized the

equally pressing issues related to the critical relation that behavioral and social sciences have to human rights. In addition, a greater distinction between the issues associated with basic scientific research and those associated with applications of science, such as in health care, might have elucidated opportunities for human rights education for scholars and professionals. Such interventions could address the vulnerabilities of the research enterprise and reframe the ethical responsibilities of health care professionals to consider the broader human rights of the people they serve.

Conclusion

This book will be a valuable resource for those who teach human rights as well as for those in the field who are building evidence of the inextricable link between promoting and protecting health and promoting and protecting human rights.[14] *Science in the Service of Human Rights* should be part of the core curriculum of any course on health and human rights. Furthermore, it will be an important reference for undergraduate and graduate students in the sciences, offering them an opportunity to reflect on the basic values that underlie scientific inquiry. Claude's examinations of how scientific knowledge and skills can help uncover rights violations and of how scientists in the broadest sense can bring their perspectives and methodologies to the human rights discourse have done a great service to the building of an interdisciplinary framework that is necessary to systematically confront those who believe that human rights belong to a few and not to all.

References

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6. See note 3, art. 15.
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