Name: Ojo-Iyobosa Courage

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Course Title: History and Philosophy of Science

Course Lecturer: Mr. Noah Balogun

Assignment: **REVIEW CHAPTER 8:** In not more than 2 pages, do a review of Chapter 8 of Temidayo D. Oladipo and Noah O. Balogun, History and Philosophy of Science: A Brief Survey. Ibadan: Hope Publication. Page 86-95.

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCES (AND APPLIED SCIENCES)

Before Social science was introduced by Auguste Comte, there had been success recorded in natural science in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. It was so well trusted that they even sought their opinions on problems that didn’t relate to science, such as law and forensic evidence. This positive response to science happened as a result of a change in the socio-cultural milieu of the time and this explains why belief in science or application of science to any issue is called positivism from then on.

There was a time when religious belief reigned supreme, that is the aeon prior to the renaissance period. The words of the Pope was the final authority in any matter. But it got out of hand when things like diseases were said to be direct consequence of sin, so they called these people witches and killed them. However, the intellectual community at that time saw this as a great threat to human happiness and survival, so they started using reason to arrive at justified conclusion just a Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle used to do. So the modern period had a mental outlook which differs from the medieval period, which are mainly; the diminishing authority of the church and the increasing authority of science. The diminishing authority of the church led to the growth of individualism, even to the point of anarchy stated by Russell.

Science was restricted to study of natural phenomena because it was only the material that was believed to behave in a regular predictable way. Not until a French philosopher called Auguste Comte thought otherwise. This was the beginning of social sciences in general. There was also the short coming of positivism. The basic justification of positivism came with laden with error, which include: observations are concept-laden, observations are hypothesis-laden, observations are theory-laden, observations are value-laden, observations are interest-laden, and observations are laden with culture-specific ontologies.

**Social Science** is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behavior, interaction and manifestations, either as an individual in a society or collectively as a group; including institutions, norms, and more of such interactions created. Disciplines in social science include: sociology, psychology, economics, political science, archaeology, and anthropology. Auguste Comte is regarded as the father of social science as well as the Father of sociology. Social sciences seek to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study.

**The Problem of Reasons and Causes**

The essential features of science and scientific explanation is to provide a casual or correlational connection between an event and its cause. The principle of cause and effect mean that for anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must: have an invariable or constant relation, be spatially contiguous, be temporally related, and have an asymmetrical relation. Francis Offor explains this and goes further to assert that, “by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents.”

One way to solve this problem is to accept reasons are not causes but motive or intent. Thus some scholars like J.S. Mill, T.M. Newcomb and Auguste Comte have argued on whether it is not better to leave reason as motive, drive or intent and not to cause. Nonetheless, there are some other scholars who insist that reasons can be treated as causes. One of such scholar is Robin Colliwood who argues to the extreme that reasons are not only causes but they are the ultimate causal power which lies in human and that ascribing causal power to inanimate things and objects in the physical world may be too unsophisticated of us.

**The Problem of Human Person as Object of Study in Social Sciences**

According to Max Weber, methodology of science becomes inapplicable due to the fact that the object of study in social science is man, a rational being with freewill, desires, emotions and other sentient features that come into play in his action or reaction. All these factors undermine the notion of predictability of behavior with which natural science is known to deduce their principles and laws. Even with the law of demand and supply in economics which predicts that human as a rational being will buy less when the price is high and buy more when the price is low. But man does not behave rationally all the time, capitalists have been able to manipulate consumer behavior to the point that it is doubtful if these laws hold any longer. And this ends with a question; if a supposed scientific law is neither absolute nor hold quite often, should we continue to call it scientific laws of economics?thankyou.