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PHILOSOPHY ASSIGNMENT

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CHAPTER 18

PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES(AND APPLIED SCIENCES)

The impact of the enormity of the success of natural sciences in the 19th century was such that people began to seek the face of scientists when faced with problems that were not even remotely related to the sciences such as law and forensic evidence.

The application of science to any field was regarded to as “positivism” at the time. Positivism grew largely in the renaissance and the enlightenment era.

The time before this was referred to as the dark ages because the major influencing factor to the reasoning of the society at then was religion. This was so much that the words of the pope was capable of condemning people to death for sorcery or witchcraft. The positivists saw this as a threat to human happiness and so they began penetrating literature with the benefits of applying reason to solve ones problems as Plato and Socrates used to do.

Russell holds that "emancipation from the authority of the Church led to the growth of individualism.

This, even to the point of anarchy. Discipline, intellectual, moral and political, was associated in the minds of the men of the Renaissance with the scholastic philosophy and ecclesiastical government."

The nature of science was strictly directed towards natural phenomena as they were easily predictable and only occurred in a regular manner. Not until a french social scientist called August Comte thought the opposite. He believed that the society and the people in it behaved in a regular pattern of behaviour and it can be studied and somewhat accurate predictions can be made.

As a result, Comte is being regarded till date as the father of social sciences especially sociology.

 Positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge. Modeled on empirical sciences which provides it with a methodology, positivism declares false, all propositions that could not be solved or verified by experience such as metaphysical statements due to a high degree of abstract nature.

There are a lot of problems with this conception of ideal knowledge seeking enterprise. First of these problems is observation upon which the basic justification of positivism came is laden with error . These include the facts that:

1. Observations are concept-laden
2. Observations are hypothesis-laden
3. Observations are theory-laden
4. Observations are value-laden
5. Observations are interest-laden
6. Observations are laden with culture-specific ontologies.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL SCIENCE?

Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behaviour, interaction and manifestation, either as an individual or as a group including the institutions, norms and mores such interactions created.

Disciplines in the social sciences include: sociology, psychology, economics, political science, archeology and anthropology. Social sciences seeks to employ the method of science the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study. The objective of such endeavor include:

1. Understanding humans in both historical and cultural development context and factors responsible for such development.
2. Being able to predict human behavior based on the pattern of interaction, belief system, social norms and other factors influencing human behaviour, especially in relation to economic and political activities.
3. Grooming human behaviour towards a socially desirable conduct and channeling collective effort towards development.
4. These, among many others.

Although there may be a difficulty in the carrying out of a detailed scientific study of humans in a society because unlike objects, humans posses a consciousness and do not behave the same way at all times.

THE PROBLEM OF REASON AND CAUSES

According to David Hume’s account, for anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must:

- Have a constant relation that whenever the effect occurs the cause must also be present

- Be spatially contiguous,meaning the two events must occur in the same place or be related by a chain of events that are spatially linked.

- Be temporarily related such that the cause precedes the effect in time just as the effect must follow continuously from the cause.

- have an asymmetrical revolution in that the occurrence of the alleged cause mist be actual event, which brings about the effect, such that the effect must not be part of the original conditions that are necessary and sufficient for its own occurrence.

Francis Offor explains this point in the following words:

The principle of cause and effect states that for

every event in the universe. there is a set of

conditions such that if the conditions are all

fulfilled, then the event invariably occurs. Put

differently, the principle sites that for every event

in the universe there is always a cause "A,

such that "B' can always be explained by

reference to the activities of event A This is the

principle that underlies the method of explanation

in science.