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ASSIGNMENT: Do a review of chapter 8 of History and Philosophy of Science in not more than 2 pages.

PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND APPLIED SCIENCES

From what I read in chapter 8, the success recorded in natural science in the eighteen and nineteenth century was so enormous on the social and intellectual life of the then people of Europe that they started trusting the words of scientists and even sought their opinion on matters unrelated to science such as law and forensic evidence. Because of the success of scientist in the 18th and 19th century, people believed words and facts of science. They even sought their matters unrelated to science.

The renaissance and the enlightenment period was were positivism grew in the socio-cultural milieu. It was called a renaissance period because it marked a period when people started a revolution of return of their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of public opinion and not the dictate of religion as it was in the age prior to this time. The aeon prior to the renaissance period was called the dark ages because it was the time religion belief reigned supreme. The words of the pope was the final authority on any matter, be it political, social or intellectual.

There are a lot of problems with this conception of idle 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.

The other problem is the problem of reason and causes. To understand this problem with social sciences better, we need to understand that one of the essential features of science and scientific explanation is to provide a casual or correlational connection between and event and its cause.

Another problem is 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.