NAME: FWA LINA FENNY MATRIC NUMBER: 19/SMS01/012

DEPARTMENT: ECONOMICS COURSE CODE: GST118

LEVEL: 100LEVEL

ASSIGNMENT

WRITE A TWO PAGE REVIEW ON CHAPTER EIGHT OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE; A BRIEF REVIEW

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE; A BRIEF SURVEY A BOOK WRITTEN BY TEMIDAYO DAVID AND NOAH OPEYEMI BALOGUN.

Philosophy of Social Science and Applied Science

This chapter of the book focuses on social science and problems associated in studying human beings, as they are not the same with objects but rather rational beings and also the problem associated with positivism in declaring all propositions that cannot be solved or verified by experience such as metaphysical statements false. This chapter goes on to talk about positivism and how it came about.

The success in the eighteenth and nineteenth century lead the people of Europe into trusting the world of scientist. This response to science happened as a result of a change in socio-cultural milieu of the time and this explains why belief in science or application in science to any issues is called positivism. The socio-cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called renaissance and the enlightenment period. Renaissance period was marked as a period when people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of public concern 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 religious belief reigned supreme. However, the intellectual community saw it as a threat to humans and they started infiltrating literature with the benefits of using reason to arrive at a justified conclusion such as Aristotle used to do. This became known as the classical period of romanticism. Romanticism gave rise to humanism and naturalism and classic. Bertrand puts this more succinctly when he said that,” the period of history which is commonly known as the “modern” period has a mental outlook which differs from that of the medieval period in many ways. Of these, two are the most Important; the diminishing authority of the church and the increasing authority of science. He further holds emancipation from the authority of the church led to the growth of individualism. At that time scientist was restricted to study of natural phenomena because it was only the material that was believed to behave in a predictable way. Until August Comte came of the opinion that society behaves in a regular pattern and the behaviours can be studied and somewhat accurate predictions can be made.

There are lots of problems associated with positivism rejecting the theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge. First, there is a problem of observation upon which the basic justification of positivism came is laden with error. These include the fact that; Observation is concept-laden, hypothesis-laden, theory-laden, value-laden, interest-laden and laden with culture-specific ontologies.

What is Social Science

Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behaviour, interaction and manifestations, either as an individual in a society or collectively as a group. Auguste Comte was regarded as the father of social science. Social science employs the method of science in investigation of social phenomena. The objective include; understanding humans, being able to predict human behaviour, influencing human behaviour, discovering and manipulating the laws governing most of human behaviour , and advancing beyond armchair philosophy, the knowledge about the characteristics temperament and associated behaviour of a person or group. However, there exist an incongruity in using method of scientific enquiry to study human and his society.

Other problems

* The problem of cause and effect; what does the principal of cause and effect mean? Although explication of causality goes back to David Hume, Ernest Nagel presents Hume’s exposition of the notion of causation in a bullet from which is endearing to our analysis here. According to this account, 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 asserts that,”by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents.” If the reason for something can be many but the cause of something cannot be, then to what extent can cause be considered as reason? One way to solve this problem is to accept reasons are not causes but motive or intent. Nonetheless, there are some other scholars who insist that reasons can be treated as causes. Robin Collingwood was one of the scholar who argued 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 naïve of us.
* The problem of human person as object of study in social sciences; Human beings are rational beings with freewill, desire and emotions( they can’t even control them ) even Max Weber said that the methodology of science becomes inapplicable due to the fact that the object of study in social science is man. This becomes a problem to the project of social science. Humans have sentient features that come into play in his action or reaction. All these factors undermine the notion of predictability of behaviour with which natural science is known to deduce their principles and laws. Take for instance the law of demand and supply, it has been observed that even economists themselves that these laws do not hold all the time since man does not behave rationally all the time. For example updates are being forced upon android and iphone users causing them to spend data on the update. The law of demand and supply doesn’t seem to work here as consumers have no choice. Now, if a supposed scientific law is neither absolute nor hold quite often, are we to continue to call it scientific laws of economics?