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COURSE: GST 114

COURSE: PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (AND APPLIED SCIENCES)

ASSIGNMENT

Review chapter 8 of History and Philosophy of Science: A Brief Survey

This chapter examined and showed the development and success recorded of natural science in the 18th and 19th century and how enormous it was on the social and intellectual life of the medieval people of Europe how they started trusting words of scientists and even sought their opinion on matters unrelated to science such as law and forensic evidence. This positive response happened as a result of a change in the socio-cultural milieu of the time this showcased why application of science to any issue is called positivism from then on.

There was a period called Renaissance and enlightment period in which positivism grew. It is called a renaissance period because people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of reason and not the dictate of religion at that time the word of the pope was final authority all over Europe a lot of inhumane treatment were given by the church e.g people were burned at stake because of witchcraft or sorcery. However, intellectuals at the community that time saw it as a big threat to human happiness and survival. So, they started infiltrating literature with the benefits of using reasons to arrive at justified conclusion just as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle used to do. Scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach to issues, but science was restricted to the study of natural phenomena because it was only the material that was believe to behave in a regular and predictable way. Not until a French social philosopher called August Comte thought otherwise. He was of the opinion that society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and this behavior can be studied and somewhat accurate predictions made that was the beginning of social science in general.

What Is Social Science?

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, norms and mores such interactions created. Some disciplines in social science include: sociology, anthropology, Economics, Political science etc. Social sciences seek to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study. The objectives of such endeavor include:

1. Understanding humans in both historical and cultural development
2. Being able to predict human behavior’s based on the pattern of interaction
3. Influencing human behavior
4. Discovering and manipulating if possible
5. Advancing beyond armchair philosophy

However, the philosophy of social science arouses out of the curiosity that the central focus and the propelling motive of social science may be impossible or unachievable due to methodological mismatch.

The Problem of Reasons and Causes

This chapter also helps us understand problems with social sciences better, it made us understand that one of the essential features of science and scientific explanation is to provide a casual or correlational connection between an event and its cause. This chapter also showcased how Ernest Nagel presented Hume’s exposition of notion and he explains it. He explained the causes and effect he gave 4 points:

1. Have an asymmetrical relation
2. Be spatially contiguous
3. Be temporally related
4. Have an invariable or constant relation in the sense that whenever the alleged cause occurs, the effect must also occur

The Problems of Human Person as Object of Study in Social Sciences

Another problem with the project of social science according to Max Weber methodology of social science is that it 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 actions or reactions