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**Question: in not more than 2 pages, attempt a review of chapter 8 of “The History and Philosophy of Science”**

## **Philosophy of Social Science( and Applied Science)**

The people's positive response to science which include; trusting the words of the scientists and sought their opinion on matters unrelated to science(law and forensic evidence for example) started around 18th and 19th century when the success recorded in natural science was so enormous on the social and intellectual life of the then people of Europe.

This positive response to science happened as a result of a change in the social-cultural milieu of that time. Hence, the belief in science or application of science to any issue is called positivism. However, the socio-cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called the renaissance and enlightenment period because it marked 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 dark ages(aeon prior to the renaissance period).

Meanwhile, while the dark ages saw the words of the pope as the final authority on political, social or intellectual matters and diseases were said to be direct consequence of sin and idolatry, hence the church waged several wars to exterminate the heathens, the intellectual community at the time saw this as big threat to human happiness and survival. Therefore, they started infiltrating literature and looking into arts and music(where Greek worldviews were also hidden). This period became known as the classical period of romanticism.

Romanticism gave rise to humanism and naturalism, and works of art and literature produced at this time were also regarded as classic. Bertrand Russell puts this more clearly when he said that 'the period of history which is commonly called 'modern' has a mental outlook which differs from that of the medieval period in many ways'. He went further to say that of these many ways in which the 'modern' period differs from the medieval period, two are the most important: the diminishing authority of the church, and the increasing authority of science. Russell added that "emancipation from the authority of the church led to the growth of individualism,even to the point of anarchy. Discipline, intellectual, moral,and political, was associated in the minds of the men of Renaissance with the scholastic philosophy and ecclesiastical government'.

Moreover, scientific approach grew out of the philosophical approach to issues, but science was restricted to the study of natural phenomena because it was only the material that was believed to behave in a regular and predictable way. Not until a french philosopher called August Comte thought otherwise, holding that society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things, and behaviour can be studied and somewhat accurate predictions made. This marked the beginning of Social Science, and August Comte is being regarded as the father of sociology and social science in general.

However, positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge. Based on empirical science which provides positivism with a methodology, it 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, and one it problem is observation upon which the basic justification of positivism came is

laden with error. This is because; observation are concept-laden, observations are hypothesis-laden, observations are theory-laden, observations are value-laden, observations are interest-laden, observations are laden with culture-specific ontologies.

Although, positivism has its shortcomings but it birthed 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; including the institutions, norms and mores such interaction created. disciplines in the Social Science include; sociology, psychology, economics, political science, archaeology and anthropology. Although, the history of this discipline dates back to early philosopher such as St Augustine, Ibn khaldun, Karl marx, Thomas hobbes, John locke, Emile Durkheim and so on, but, it was Auguste Comte that is regarded as the father of Social Science.

However, Social Science seek to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena by; understanding humans in both historical and cultural development context and factors responsible for such development change, (2): being able to predict human behaviour 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): influencing human behaviour, grooming it towards a socially desirable conduct and channelling collective effort towards development, (4): discovering and manipulating if possible, the laws governing most of human behaviour, and lastly; advancing beyond armchair philosophy, the knowledge about the characteristics temperament and associated behaviour of a person or group, or that exhibited by those engaged in an activity.

Nevertheless, the philosophy of social science arouse out of the curiosity that the central focus and propelling motive of social science maybe impossible or unachievable due to the incongruity in using method of scientific enquiry to study human and his society because human beings do not behave in exact way objects of natural science behave.

However, the first step to solve the problem in Social Science is to understand one of the features of scientific explanation to provide a casual or correlational connection between an event and its cause, i.e to explain why event A is the cause of event B which is the effect. But what does the principle of cause and effect mean? According to Francis Offor, the principle states that for every event 'B' 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. He goes further to assert that ' by employing the scientific method in social investigation, social science seeks to explain the cause of action involving human agents'. However, the reason for a particular action can be many, for instance, the reason why a man could punch his friend at the gym could be because he is angry or his his brain activated the muscle of his arm to throw a punch because he could have punched his friend if he was happy or teasing his friend. Therefore, if the reason for something can be many but the cause of something cannot be, to what extent can we take reason as causes? One way to solve this problem is to accept that reasons are not causes but motives or intent. Another problem with the project of social science is that, according to Max Weber, the object of study in social science is man, a rational being with factors which are against the principle and laws of natural science.