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History And Philosophy Of Science

**In not more than two pages, do a review of chapter 8 of Temidayo.D.Oladipo and Noah.O.Balogun: “History and Philosophy of Science” Pg 86-95**

**PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES(AND APPLIED SCIENCE)**

In the 18th and 19th century, success was recorded in the natural science was largely on the social and intellectual life of the then **“Europeans”** that they began to trust the words of (Various) scientists and also sought for their opinions on issues that were not related to science such as **“Law and Forensic evidence”.** The change in the socio-cultural milieu of that time led to the positive response to science by the Europeans and that explains why belief in science or application of science to any issue is called **“Positivism”.**

The socio-cultural milieu in which Positivism grew is called “the renaissance and enlightenment period”. It was during this time when period started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of public concern and not the dictate of the religion thus the name ‘renaissance period’. The aeon(a long period of time)prior to the renaissance period was also called **“the dark ages”** due to the fact that during that time, religious beliefs were supreme. The words of the Pope were believed to be final words or authority on any matter, whether it was based on politics, social or intellectual aspects.

During this time, men and women were burned on stakes if they were found guilty by the church, diseases were seen as direct consequences of one’s sin or idolatry committed and the church waged wars to kill the heathens. This was however a huge threat to the members of the intellectual community because it could hinder human happiness and survival. Because of this, they introduced literature to gain access to the community with the reason of arriving at justified conclusions just as **“Socrates, Plato and Aristotle”** used to do. In arts and music were hidden Greek world views also. This period became known as the **“classical period of Romanticism”.**

However, Romanticism is said to give rise to ‘humanism and naturalism’ and works of art and literature produced during this time was classical. A philosopher of this period was **“Bertrand Russell’** who established the fact that ‘the period of history which was called **modern** has a mental outlook which differs from that of the medieval period in many ways’ and the two most important were the diminishing authority of the church and the increasing authority of science. Scientific approach to things however grew out of the philosophical approach to issues, although science was restricted to the study of natural phenomenon because it was only the material that was believed to behave in a regular and predictable way. This did not go well with the French social philosopher **“August Comte”** who was of the opinion that the society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and this behavior can be studied and somewhat accurate predictions made. This was the beginning of social sciences especially **“Sociology”** and why Comte is being regarded till date as the ‘father of sociology and social sciences in general’. Despite the shortcomings of positivism, the idea of social science was explicated on.

Social science can be defined as an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behavior, interactions and manifestations, either individually or collectively which includes institutions, norms and more such as interactions created. The disciplines that can be in social sciences are: Sociology, psychology, economics, political science e.t.c. Though, the history of the disciplines can be dated back to the early philosophers such as **“St Augustine and the 14th-century historian Ibn Kahldun; going down to Karl Marx, Thomas Hobbes, and a host of other social thinkers”** who actually wanted to study how the society works. Social science attempt to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomenon taking human person as an object of study. However there are various objectives which include:

* Understanding humans in historical and cultural development
* Able to predict human behavior based on their pattern of interaction, belief system etc and also factors that influence these behaviors
* Influencing these human behaviors and grooming it towards a socially desirable conduct
* Discoverability
* Advancing beyond the armchair philosophy

However, it can be said that social science emerged as a result of curiosity (that is, wanting to know more about the behavior of humans).

**UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM OF REASON AND CAUSE**

To understand the problems with social sciences better, one needs to know that one of the basic features of science and scientific explanation is to “provide a casual or correlational connection between an **event** and **it’s** cause”. By so doing, the cause and effect must:

1. Have an invariable or constant relation
2. Be spatially contagious, that is, they must occur in approximately the same location or a relation by a chain of events that are spatially linked
3. Be temporary related
4. Have an asymmetrical relation in its occurrence(that is, the alleged cause must be actual event which brings about the effect).

This point was further asserted by **‘Francis Offor'** who claimed that “by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seeks to explain the cause of the action involving human agents”. For instance, in a situation where a man is demanded to give his reason for punching someone. The man says: “I punched him because I was angry”. It is understandable and agreed by everyone the main reason why the man had punched his friend. Simply put, **“Anger”** is the cause for punching his friend. However, this illustration shows that the words ‘reason and cause’ can be substituted for one another without any loss of meaning. Applying this illustration to human activities makes the problem deeper because if the reason for something can be many but the cause for it is not, can one say or to what extent can reasons be taken as causes?

To solve this problem or to answer this question is to accept that reasons are not causes but motives and intents. Nonetheless, there are some other scholars who insist that reasons could also be treated as causes. One of them include: **“Robin Collingswood”** who argued that reasons are not only causes but ultimate casual power which lies in human……….

**THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN PERSON AS OBJECT OF STUDY IN SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Another problem with the study of social science is that according to Max Weber, the methodology of science becomes inapplicable due to the fact that the object if study is ‘man’s who is a rational being with freewill, desires , emotions and other sentiment features that comes into play in his actions or reactions