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**MATRIC NO: 19/LAW01/215**

**COURSE: HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE**

**COURSE CODE: GST 118**

**ASSIGNMENT**

In not more than 2 pages, do a review of Chapter 8 of Temidayo D. Oladipo and Noah O. Balogun, History and Philosophy of Science: A Brief Survey. Ibadan: Hope Publications. Pages 86-95.

The success recorded in natural science in the eighteenth century 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 on matters unrelated to science such as law and forensic evidence. The positive response to science happened as a result of a change in the socio-cultural milieu of the time and this explains why belief in science or application of science to any issue is called positivism from then on.

The socio- cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called the renaissance and the enlightenment period. It is called a renaissance period because it marked 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 that age prior to this time. Diseases were said to be direct consequence of sin and idolatry, so the church waged several wars to exterminate the heathens. However the intellectual community at the time saw this as a big threat to human happiness and survival. So they started infiltrating literature like Socrates Plato and Aristotle used to do. Bertrand Russell states ‘’the period of history which is commonly called ‘’modern’’ has a mental outlook which differs from that of the medieval period in so many ways. Of these, two are the most important: the diminishing authority of the church and the increasing authority of science.

Positivism is a theory which rejects the theoretical speculations of what is not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge. There are a lot of problems with this conception of ideal knowledge seeking enterprise. First of these problems is observation upon which the basic justification of positivism came is laden with error. These include the fact that: observations are; concept-laden, hypothesis-laden, theory-laden, and value-laden and are laden with culture-specific ontologies.

**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; associated behavior of a person or group or that exhibited by those engaged in an activity. However, the philosophy of social science arouse out of the curiosity that the central focus and the propelling motive of social science may be impossible or unachievable due to the methodological mismatch.

**The Problems of Reasons and Causes**

Ernest Nagel presents Hume’s exposition of the notion of causation in a bullet form which is endearing to our analysis. According to this account, for anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must; have an invariable relation, be spatially contiguous, be temporarily related and have an asymmetrical relation.

Francis Offor explains this point in the following words;

The principle of cause and effect states that for every event in the universe, there is a set of conditions such that if the conditions are all fulfilled, then the event invariably occurs. Put differently, 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 the event ‘A’. This is the principle that underlies the method of explanation in science.

Thus some scholars like J.S. Mill, T.M. Newcomb, and Auguste Comte have argued on whether it is not better to leave reason as motive, drive, or intent and not cause.

Nonetheless, there are some other scholars who insist that reasons can be treated as causes. One of such scholars is Robin Collingwood who argues to the extreme that reasons are not only causes but they are the ultimate casual power which lies in human and that ascribing casual power to inanimate things and objects in the physical world may be too naive to us.

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

Another problem with the project of social science is that 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 to 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.