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**QUESTION**

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

CHAPTER VIII

The success recorded in natural science in the eighteenth 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 and even sought their opinion on matters unrelated to science such as law and forensic evidence. 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 a period when people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using religion as it was in the age prior to this time.

Scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach to issues, but science was restricted to study of natural phenomena because it was only the material that was believed to behave in a regular and predictable way. Positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are 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.

Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behavior, interaction and manifestations. Although, the history of the discipline dates back to early philosophers down to Karl Marx, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Emile Durkheim and a host of other social thinkers. However, it is Auguste Comte that is regarded as the father of social science. Social science seeks to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study. 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 methodological mismatch. In other words, there exists an incongruity in using method of scientific enquiry to study human and his society.

To understand the problem of reason and causes with social sciences better, we need to 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. According to Francis Offor, 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. Offor goes forward to assert that, “by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents”. 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 naïve of us.

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 and emotions and other sentient features that come into 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. Take for instance the law of demand and supply in economics which predicts that humans as a rational being will buy less when the price high and buy more when the price is low. However, it has been observed by even economists themselves that these laws do not hold all the time. Now, if a supposed scientific law is neither absolute nor hold quite often, should we continue to call it scientific laws of economics?