**August Comte**

**August Comte Biography, law of Three Stages and Theory of Positivism.**

**Ans: Life and Times of August Comte**

**August Comte was the first social thinker who gave the name 'sociology' to a science of human behaviors.**

**Auguste Comte was born in Montpellier, Herault on ' 19 January 1798’. After attending the Lycee Joffre and the university of Montpellier, Comte was admitted to Ecole Politechnique in Paris the Ecole Politechnique was notable for its adherence the French Ideals of republicanism and progress. The Ecole closed in 1916 for reorganization, and Comte continued his studies at the medical School at Montpellier. When the Ecole Polytechnique reopened, he did not request for readmission.**

**Following his return to Montpellier, Comte soon came to see unbridgeable difference with his catholic and Monarchist family and set of again for Paris, earning money by small jobs. After 1822 he became a student and secretary to Henride Saint- Simon, who brought Comte into contact with intellectual society. During that time Comte Published his first eassay in the various publications. Headed by Saint- Simon, Le Industries , Le politique , and L'organisateur ( Charles Dunoyer and Charles Comte's Conseur European), although he would not published under his own name until 1819’s.**

**In 1824, Comte left Saint – Simon, again because of unbridgeable difference, Comte Published a plan de travaux scientific necessaires pour reorganiser la societe 1822 (plan of scientific studies necessary for the reorganization of society), but he failed to get an academic post. His day to day life depended on sponsors and financial help with friends.**

**Comte married ‘Caroline Masson' in 1825. In 1826 he was taken to mental hospital, but left without being cured. He would later attempt Suicide in 1827 by jumping off the pont des Art . In 1842, he published the six volume of his course.**

**Comte developed a close friendship with John Stuart Mill. From 1844 he falls deeply in love with the Catholic, Catholic Vaux, although because she was not divorced from her first husband their love never consummated. After her death in 1946 this love became quasi-religious.**

**He published four volume of system de politique positive (1851-1854). His final work, the first volume of La Synthese subjective (“ the subjective synthesis”), was published in 1856. Comte died in Paris on 5 September 1857 from stomach cancer. His apartment from 1841-1857 is now conserved as the Maison d’ August Comte and is located at 10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince, in Paris 6th arrondissement.**

**August Comte The law of three stages**

**The laws of three stages is developed by August Comte in his work. The course in Positive Philosophy. It states that society as a whole, and each particular science, develops through there mentally conceived stages:**

**(1) the theological stage,**

**(2) the metaphysical stages, and**

**(3) the positive stage.**

1. **The theological stage refers to explosion by personified deities. During the earlier stages, people believe that all the phenomena of nature are the creation the divine or supernatural adults and children failed to discover the natural causes of various phenomena and hence attributed them to a supernatural divine power. Comte broke this stage into three stages.**

**1A. Fetishism: Fetishism was the primary stage of the theological stage of thinking. Throughout this stage, primitive people believe that inanimate objects have living spirit in them, also known as animism people worship inanimate objects like trees, stones, a piece of wood, volcanic eruption, etc. Through this practice, people believe that all things root from a supernatural source.**

**1B. Polytheism: polytheism At one point, Fetishism began to bring about doubt in the minds of its believers. As a result, people turned towards polytheism the explanation of this things through the use of many Gods. Primitive people believe that all-natural forces are controlled by different Gods; a few examples would be God of water, God of rain etc.**

**1C. Monotheism: Monotheism means believing in one God or God in one; attributing all to a single supreme deity. Primitive people believe a single theistic entity is responsible for the existence of the universe.**

1. **The Metaphysical stage is the extension of the theological stage. Metaphysical thinking discards belief in a concrete God. The natural of inquiry was legal and rational in nature. Example, In classical Hindu Indian Society the Principle of the transmigration of the soul, the conception of rebirth, notions of pursuant were largely governed by metaphysical up hill.**
2. **The positivity stage, also known as the scientific stage, refers to scientific explanation based on observation, experiment, and comparison. Positivism is a purely intellectual way of looking at the world; as well, it emphasis observation and classification data and facts. This is the highest most evolved behaviour according to Comte.**

**Comte proposed a hierarchy of the science based on historical sequence, with areas of knowledge passing through these stages in order of complexity. The simplest and most remote areas of knowledge- mechanical of physical- are the first to become scientific. These are followed by the more complex science, those considered closest to us.**

**The science, then , according to Comte's “law” developed in this order: mathematics, Astronomy, physics, chemistry, Biology, sociology. A science of society is thus the “ queen of science” in Comte hierarchy as it would be the most fundamentally complex. Since Comte saw social science as an observation of human behaviour and knowledge his definition of sociology included observing humanity development of science itself.**

**To Comte, the law of three stages made development of sociology inevitable and necessary. Comte saw the formation of his law as an active use of sociology, but this formation was dependent on other sciences reaching the positive stage; Comte’s three stage law would not have evidence for a positive stage without the observed progression of other sciences through these three stages. Thus, sociology and it’s first law of three stages would be developed after other sciences were developed out of the metaphysical stage with the observation of these science becoming the scientific evidence used in a positive stage of sociology. This special dependences on other sciences contributed to Comte’ views of sociology being the most complex. It also provided an explanation for Sociology being the last science to be developed.**

**Comte saw the results of his three-stage law and Sociology as not only inevitable, but good. In Comte’s eyes, the positive stage was not only the most evolved stage, but the stage best for mankind. Through a continuous development of positive science, Comte hoped that humans would perfect their knowledge of the welfare of humanity.**

**Positivism : in western philosophy, generally, any system that confines itself to the data of experience and excludes a priori or metaphysical speculations. More narrowly, the term designates the thought of the French Philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857).**

**As a philosophical ideology and movement, positivism first assumed its distinctive features in the work of Comte, who also named and systematized the science of sociology. It then developed through several stages known by various names, such as empiriocriticism, logical positivism, and logical empiricism, finally merging, in the mid-20th century, into the already existing tradition known as analytic philosophy.**

**The basic affirmations of positivism are (1) that all knowledge regarding matters of fact is based on the “positive” data of experience and (2) that beyond the realm of fact is that of pure logic and pure mathematics. Those two disciplines were already recognized by the 18th-century Scottish empiricist and skeptic David Hume as concerned merely with the “relations of deals” and, in a later phase of Positivism, they were classified as purely formal science. On the negative and critical side, the positivists became noted for their reputation of metaphysics of speculation regarding the nature of reality that radically goes beyond any possible evidence that could either support of refute such “transcendent” knowledge claims.**

**In its basic ideological posture, is thus worldly, secular, anti-metaphysical, and antimetaphysically. Street adherence to the testimony of observation and experience is the all-important imperative of Positivism. That imperative was reflected also in the contribution by Positivists to ethics and moral philosophy, where generally utilitarian to the extent that something like the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people was there ethical maxim. It is notable, in this connection, that Comte was the founder of short - lived religion, in which the object was not the deity of the monotheistic faiths but humanity.**

**Comte’s Positivism was posited on the assertion a so-called law of the Three chases (or stages) of intellectual development. There is a parallel, as Comte saw it, between the evolution of thought patterns in the entire history of humankind, on the one hand, and in the history of individuals development. In the first, or so-called Theological stage natural phenomena are explained as the results of supernatural or divine powers. It matters not whether the religion is polytheistic or monotheistic; In either case miraculous powers or will are believed to produce the observed event. This stage was criticized by Comte.**

**The second phase, called metaphysical, is in some cases merely a depersonalized theology: the observable process of nature is assumed to arise from impersonal power occurred qualities vital forces or entelechies. In other instances, the realm of observable facts is considered as an imperfect copy or imitation of external ideas, as in Plato’s metaphysics of pure forms. Again , Comte charged that no genuine explanations results; questions concerning ultimate reality, its causes, or absolute beginnings are thus declared the absolutely quest can lead only to the conclusion expressed by the German biologist and physiologist Emile du Bois Raymond: It is a deception through verbal device and the fruit less rendering of concepts as real things.**

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