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Q # 5 Auguste Comte gives three evolutionary dimensions of society; theologian, metaphysics and positivist. Explain each step with cogent examples.

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Who? <sup>what? → Explain each stage.</sup>
  - (a) Yuvnl Noah Harrari
  - (b) Michael
3. How?
  - (a) Causes of such thought
  - (b) Evolution to the next stage
4. When.
  - (a) Time periods.
5. Where?
  - (a) Examples from periods as explained by Comte
  - (b) Examples from today's world.
  - (c) What was the impact of this research
7. Conclusion
  - link line to intro
  - wayforward.
  - opinion.

## 2) Introduction

Auguste Comte, a French philosopher and mathematician, also known as the father of sociology gave his "3 Phases of Society" theory in 1822.

The three stages were theologian, metaphysical and positivist. The theologian stage refers to the days of cavemen in which humans had recently ~~are~~ started exploring the causes of natural phenomena and often explained them using myths and stories.

As humanity progressed, it started using abstract ideas to explain the laws of nature. These 'intellectual amphibians' characterized the stage of metaphysics.

The last stage is called positivism. This stage was a shift from ~~more~~ abstract to empirical thought. ~~If you need to know what is to observe it~~ The empirical thought characterized the process of creating laws using the scientific method of research. The scientific method requires one to observe ~~items~~ nature. In order to derive laws of sciences, the causes follow the observations.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is largely characterized by the stage of positivism, however in some arenas traces of evolution of human thought can be found.

## 2) What was the Theologian stage?

In his book 'Sapiens', Yuval Noah Harari explains that 70,000 years ago, humans had a cognitive shift. They started exploring the mysteries of the universe. These answers were often attributed to folklore, myths, belief and shared fiction. The theological phase of a society also goes through

stages. According to Dr. Michael Surge, Comete described these stages as fetishism, polytheism and lastly monotheism. It is ultimately monotheistic thought that paves way for the metaphysical stage.

The explanation of science through supernatural beings can be seen from the engraving and painting on caves and even buildings. Ancient civilizations often used the pleasure of gods and wrath of gods as the cause for earthquakes, flood and droughts. Ancient Egyptians used to sacrifice the most beautiful woman of Egypt into river Nile to make sure that it did not go dry. In ancient Hindu civilization it was believed that earth was balanced on a horn of a cow and when the cow switched horns, earthquakes occurred. The Hindu ideas of polytheism can also said to be derived from this era.

3) What impacts does Theological stage have today?

Today, the impact of theology varies from society to society. In certain societies, myths and theological thought has been limited to traditions only while in other societies, this thought has major impact of laws, society and policies of a country.

India, is an ancient society, entrenched into traditions and cultures. Hindus worship dieties and perform various rituals to seek the

pleasure of their gods. For example, Hindu ritual of worshipping cows and certain trees stems from such ideas. However, the state follows secular values.

Iran is a country which largely follows Islamic principles and theological ideas to form laws. The society is governed by these thoughts and ideas. The Western world has gone to explain Iran as theological state.

#### 4) What was the Metaphysical stage?

After humans embraced theological thought of monotheism and starting shifting to agricultural societies instead of hunter communities they started developing abstract ideas to explain the laws of nature. This time started from Plato and ended on French Revolution.

Intellectuals prior to French Revolution engaged in deep thinking and debates to understand the nature and 'essence' of things.

The ideas of natural rights and concepts of personal will were brought forward during this time. New ideas of social structure, religious <sup>and</sup> belief system also emerged. Furthermore people started to conceptualize new ideas and ownership, social hierarchies and gods associated with agriculture. This stage set the foundation for transition to positivity by pushing mind to a new target.

#### 5) What impacts of metaphysical stage can

be seen today?

Multiple post-colonial societies are going through a form of metaphysical stage. These societies are trying to complete the puzzle of time with their own beliefs and the science brought by the ~~British~~ and colonizers and globalization.

Pakistani society is an example. The rural areas of Pakistan are largely characterized by theologian ideologies till date. Religious and cultural laws dictate the social structure and some times even the justice system. The urban areas, on the other hand have developed scientific research centres and universities. The method of research through science is taught of to a secondary school student in Pakistan. Therefore, the social fabric and social conversation largely hinges on metaphysical stage.

Q6) What is the positivist stage?

Positivism, quite literally, means, to not posit ideas. It is a system of thought that considers scientific observations and descriptions as the highest form of knowledge.

Positivism says that if one wants to understand universe they should observe it and then synthesize the information to create laws.

For example, you experiment ~~force~~ with different masses and acceleration to understand

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the link called force.

The scientific process is based on the steps below:

- (1) observation of different phenomena.
- (2) hypothesis creation
- (3) Experimentation.
- (4) Law creation

The six volume work of Auguste Comte further goes on to say that every science has a different method but leads to another, for examples Maths → geometry → astronomy → galaxies → physics → chemistry → biology → psychology. He says that the end of this change will be on sociology. Hence, human behavior can also be studied like science and can be used to create sociology. The current research method of sociology comes from positivism theory.

7) What impacts did positivist stage have on the modern world?

Arguably, positivism or third stage has had the greatest impact on humans. It was the forerunner of many future ideas, such as the works of Herbert Spencer, Social Darwinism, Philosophy of human history and concepts of Vienna Convention. Any technocratic capacities in the policy making can be owed to the ideas of positivism.

Most societies today are on the positivist stage. The East Asian countries, including China,

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Japan, Korea, are have to moved towards industrialization and ~~socialization~~ technological advancements. They are focusing on science and innovation. The Scandinavian countries, including Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland, have also developed their policies according to laws of science. There universities and research centres (CERN Switzerland) are working on understanding the world from the realm of science.

### Conclusion

Most countries and societies in the world have move towards science and others are following suit. However, certain elements of <sup>metaphysics</sup> religion and theology have emotional ties with humans. In the modern world, efforts to understand religion from the lens of science are also being done. Since the 16-century the process of scientific thinking and laws has been dominating the world and sciences much more advanced than those in Comte's times have ~~so~~ been brought forward but this evolution of societies can be felt till date. This law can safely be said to transcend eras. It can used in the future as well. Certain additions to the law have made it more applicable but the original credit goes to Comte.