

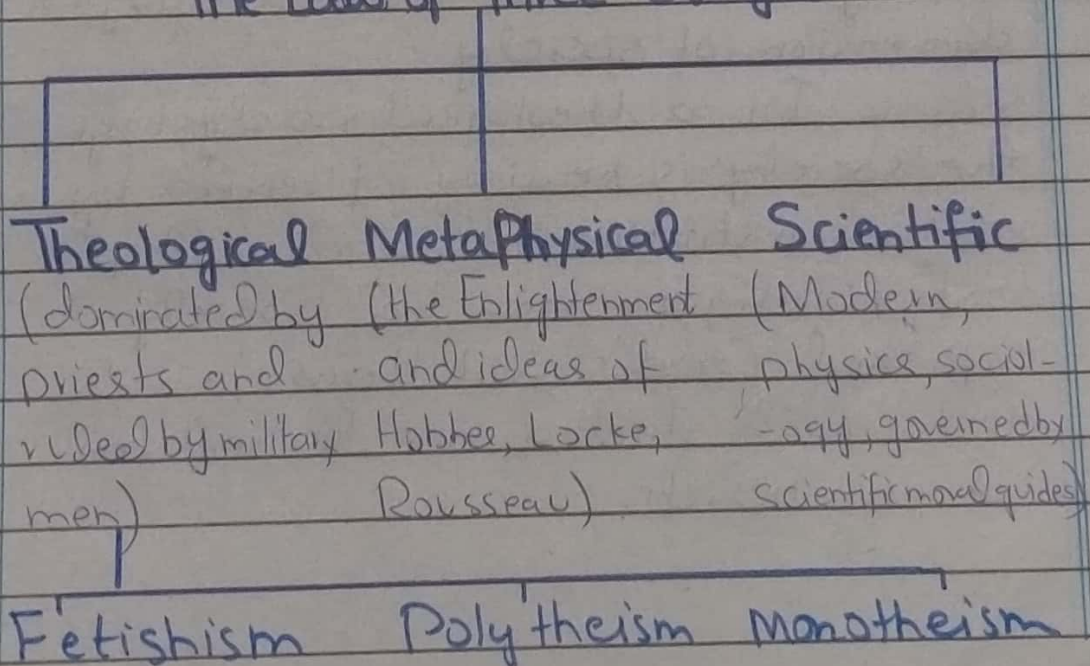
Auguste Comte gives three evolutionary dimensions of ~~sociology~~ society; Theological, Metaphysical and Positivistic. Explain each step with cogent examples. (SS 2019)

1. INTRODUCTION

Auguste Comte, a French philosopher and sociologist, presented the theory of the three evolutionary dimensions of societal development. According to Comte, the theological stage is the earliest, the theological stage gave way to a metaphysical stage of history, followed by the positive or scientific stage.

2. THE THREE EVOLUTIONARY DIMENSIONS OF SOCIETY BY AUGUSTE COMTE

The Law of Three Stages



2-1 THEOLOGIAN DIMENSION OF SOCIETY

2-1.1 Theologian dimension of society relies on supernatural explanations of the phenomena of human behavior.

During the theological stage, in order to comprehend the primary and secondary causes of different phenomena, humans used to rely on supernatural explanations. This is because the apparent anomalies in the universe were not comprehensible to them in any other way, such as scientific ~~rea~~ research. Hence, humans regarded them as interventions of supernatural agents.

2-1.2 Religion dominates in the theologian dimension of society

In a theological ~~society~~ stage, the society is heavily influenced by religious institutions and leaders. People took a religious view that society expressed God's will. Laws, morals, and social structures are derived from religious beliefs.

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2.1.3 Comte's view of the theological dimension of society.

Comte disapproved this stage due to absence of human reasoning and experience. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that theological conceptions, which provided less complicated explanations to human life, were necessary in the beginning of the developing primitive mind.

2.1.4 Examples of the theologian dimension of society.

•) Dark Ages of Europe

In the pre-enlightenment era, human's ~~let~~ had accepted the doctrines of the church rather than relying on its rational powers to explore basic questions about existence.

• Ancient Egyptian Civilization

In ancient Egypt, the Pharaoh was considered a god on earth; similarly, natural events, such as flooding of the Nile was attributed to the will of the gods.

2.2 METAPHYSIC DIMENSION OF SOCIETY

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2-2-1 Metaphysical dimension of society replaces the supernatural explanations with abstract principles

In this stage, people saw society as a natural rather than a supernatural system. They believed, it is the abstract forces controlling the behavior of human beings, as well as determining the other events in the world. Metaphysical thinking discards belief in concrete God.

2-2-2 Metaphysic dimension of society is dominated by philosophy.

In the metaphysical stage, intellectual endeavours focus on understanding the essence of being ^{and} the nature of reality. Philosophical speculation become a primary method of inquiry. Thomas Hobbes, for example, suggested that society reflected not the perfection of God so much as the failings of a selfish human nature. Rationalism, stating that God doesn't stand behind every phenomenon, began to emerge.

2-2-3 Comte's view of the metaphysic dimension as a transitional stage

Comte viewed the metaphysic stage as the transitional stage

because "Theology and Rationality are so profoundly incompatible," and their "conceptions are so opposed in character," human intelligence must have a gradual transition.

2.3.4 Example: Renaissance and Early Enlightenment

The Renaissance marked a revival of classical learning and a shift towards humanism, emphasizing the potential of human reason. Thinkers like Leonardo da Vinci and Galileo Galilei started to explore the world through observation and experimentation, moving away from theological explanations.

The Early Enlightenment philosophers like John Locke further pushed this shift by seeking to understand human nature and physical world through reason and empirical inquiry.

2.3 POSITIVISTIC DIMENSION OF SOCIETY

2.3.1 Positivistic dimension of society is based on the scientific explanations for phenomena

In this final stage, explanations for phenomena are based on empirical observation, experimentation, and

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scientific reasoning. Supernatural and abstract concepts are replaced by factual knowledge derived from the scientific method.

2.3.2 Dominance of Science and Technological advancement in the positivistic dimension of society

In the positivistic stage, society is organized around scientific principles and technological progress. The scientific method, emphasizing empirical evidence and rational analysis, replaces religious and speculative approaches. This shift leads to data-driven decision making in social structures, like institutions. Technological advancement drives industrial growth, and enhance quality of life, as seen during the Industrial Revolution.

2.3.3 Comte's, being a positivist, view of positivistic dimension of society

Comte, being a positivist, approved of this stage and believed that this stage will fix the problems facing humanity, allowing progression and peace. He also stated that the idea of humanity's ability to govern itself makes this stage inherently different from the rest.

According to Comte, there is

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no higher power governing the masses and the intrigue of any one person can achieve anything based on that individual's free will

2-3-4 Example: Modern Industrial Society

The development of modern industrial societies in the 19th and 20th centuries exemplifies the Positivistic stage. The Industrial Revolution brought about significant technological advancements and scientific discoveries became the basis for understanding and manipulating the natural world. For instance, the germ theory of disease replaced supernatural explanations for illness, leading to advancements in public health.

3. CONCLUSION

Auguste Comte's three evolutionary dimensions of society - Theologian, metaphysic and positivistic - illustrate the progression of intellectual development and the transformation of social organization based on the dominant paradigms of each era. Comte's framework highlights the importance of scientific knowledge in advancing human societies and shaping modern civilization.