

A Critical Review of PETER ATKINS (1995). HISTORY OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES: Science As Truth, SAGE Journal, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 97-102. Reviewed by Ng Jing Er.

Introduction

The article chosen is 'HISTORY OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES: Science As Truth (1995)'. And the author of this article is Peter Atkins. The dominant purpose of this article seems to highlight the role of "science as the best procedure" (p.97) to show a truth as it built on verifiable theory and explanations. In this article also frequently discussed about the features of "the universal competence of science" (p.97) showing the author is trying to emphasise the strongness and incredibility of science compare to any other mode of standpoints. Therefore, the article is mainly about how scientists go deep into the arms of nature and explore the truths with the enormous power of science. The article also expressed the thoughts and feelings of the author who loves science, and this kind of thoughts and expressions expressed is the central idea of the article.

Enormous power of Science

A fact that cannot be denied is that science is important and it shows the evolution of human intelligence in this field (Wilson,1999). Science talks about the nature and development of science and use and influence of science. The achievements of science and technology are obvious (p.101). The author also expressed the revolution of science in few terms such as honesty, rational, conservative, originality, cautious. Science is a procedure that need careful experimentation to prove the truths about the world. I am impressed the view of author that science has an open mind towards the acceptance of new paradigms (p.98). We should learn that is not about clinging to old ideas or focus on the authority, but overthrow current paradigms. The value of tolerance possessed in science making it free of prejudice to any nationality, cultural or race as there is no different in science.

The ways we interpret the paranormal strongly related with our cognitive style.

The way we understand about paranormal is depends on whether we are an intuitive or reflective thinker. A reflective thinker will try to be objective and make use of evidence from theories to prove a truth. (Linden, 2015) The author is one of the examples of reflective thinker. He proposed that science has distinct views with paranormal. I agree with him to a certain

extent as the authentication and reliability of purported paranormal phenomena are doubtful but it can be explained with science's principles. However, the author tried to express his idea in a very offensive way such as the line "...purported paranormal phenomena are isolated pimples of whimsical speculation ..." (p.99). The author does not support the idea of paranormal and he's using a highly derogatory contrast to compare science and paranormal, from the line "Real science is a regal application of the full power of human intellect; the paranormal is a prostitution of the brain." (p.100) and "..., all claims of authentic paranormal observations are hogwash." (p.100).

Undeniable relationship between science and philosophy

In this article, author came up with the idea that "there is no philosopher explain the nature at any point" (p.100). Here I have to propose my objection against this view. There is a strongly dependent relationship between philosophy and science. (Marxists.org) 'Philosophy' is the key of human civilisation and associated with the study of the realisation of knowledge, the investigation of experience and the summation of significance. While 'Science' is a practice that evolved from the work of philosophers concerned with the nature of knowledge. No matter human endeavour should be the branch of science or philosophy, it is the curiosity of mankind to explore wisdom and truths.

Conclusion

Through his words and opinions, it is obvious that the author is very persist to his own position and view and showing his strong engagement in science. The article provides trustworthy information and credible point of view on the effort of science to reach the achievements and benefits to the world. However, this article appears with some weakness due to the author's offensive language. Acknowledging his own opinions and comments about the power of science may persuade a doubtful reader to a certain level of agreement by offering some fact-based results. However, there might be a few readers deny to his arguments. And there are a few offensive statements showing his own frustration to other mode of standpoints. For example, "As in other forms of obscurantist pursuit, such as religion, it is so easy to make time-wasting speculations." (p.99). The reader might be resisting to his view of opinions and questioning about the objective and validity of his arguments in this article.

References

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