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It is a curious paradox that we think of the physical sciences as “hard”, the social sciences as “soft,” and the biological sciences as somewhere in between. This is interpreted to mean that our knowledge of physical system is more certain than our knowledge of biological systems, and these in turn are more certain than our knowledge of social systems. In terms of our capacity of sample the relevant universes, however, and the probability that our images of these universes are at least approximately correct, one suspects that a reverse order is more reasonable. We are able to sample earth’s social systems with some degree of confidence that we have a reasonable sample of the total universe being investigated. Our knowledge of social systems, therefore, while it is in many ways extremely inaccurate, is not likely to be seriously overturned by new discoveries. Even the folk knowledge in social systems on which ordinary life is based in earning, spending, organizing, marrying, taking part in political activities, fighting and so on, is not very dissimilar from the more sophisticated images of the social system derived from the social sciences, even though it is built upon the very imperfect samples of personal experience. In contrast, our image of the astronomical universe, or even if earth’s geological history, can easily be subject to revolutionary changes as new data come in and new theories are worked out. If we define the “security” of our

image of various parts of the total system as the probability of their suffering significant changes, then we would reverse the order for hardness and as the most secure, the physical sciences as the least secure, and again the biological sciences as somewhere in between. Our image of the astronomical universe is the least secure of all simply because we observe such a fantastically small sample of it and its record-keeping is trivial records of biological systems. Records of the astronomical universe, despite the fact that we learnt things as they were long ago, are limited in the extreme.来源：考试大的美女编辑们

Even in regard to such a close neighbor as the moon, which we have actually visited, theories about its origin and history are extremely different, contradictory, and hard to choose among. Our knowledge of physical evolution is incomplete and insecure.

1. The word “ paradox ” (Line 1, Para. 1) means “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” .

A. implication B. contradiction C. interpretation D. confusion

2. According to the author, we should reverse our classification of the physical sciences as “ hard ” and the social sciences as “ soft ” because \_\_\_\_\_.

A. a reverse ordering will help promote the development of the physical sciences B. our knowledge of physical systems is more reliable than that of social systems C. our understanding of the social systems is approximately correct D. we are better able to investigate social phenomena than physical phenomena

3. The author believes that our knowledge of social systems is more secure than that of physical systems because \_\_\_\_\_.

A. it is not based on personal experience B. new discoveries are less likely to occur in social sciences C. it is based on a fairly

representative quantity of data D.the records of social systems are more reliable 4.The chances of the physical sciences being subject to great changes are the biggest because \_\_\_\_\_. A.contradictory theories keep emerging all the time B.new information is constantly coming in C.the direction of their development is difficult to predict D.our knowledge of the physical world is inaccurate 5.We know less about the astronomical universe than we don about any social system because \_\_\_\_\_. A.theories of its origin and history are varied B.our knowledge of it is highly insecure C.only a very small sample of it has been observed D.few scientists are involved in the study of

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