

Eras Journal - Adam Timmins

Abstract for "Normal and Extraordinary History? Thomas Kuhn and Historiography"

The works of Thomas Kuhn have been hugely influential in a wide variety of disciplines over the last 50 years or so; yet the discipline of history is missing from the list. With a general consensus emerging that the 'postmodernist' era in historiography is over, and that we now have the task of developing a 'post-postmodernist' theory of history, it seems to me that the work of Kuhn could be extremely useful in this task. In this article I examine the ideas of 'normal and extraordinary science' and ask whether there is an equivalent 'normal and extraordinary history' within our own discipline. Is it the case that there are Kuhnian cycles of relative calm punctuated by periods of crisis and confusion? Are there such things as 'extraordinary' works of history? Finally, I conclude by briefly examining the past and the future of historical theory.