

Naturalistic Assumptions in Modern Historiography: A Critical Review

K-S. Roy Tseng

Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to explore the naturalistic assumptions underlining modern mainstream historiography: (1) claiming the singularity of Human History and its objective existence so as to ensure the possibility of pursuing the only legitimate truth in our historical study; (2) seeing Human History as the actual course of successive events, governed by the notion of Natural Time as successiveness on which modern causality theory relies; (3) applying general laws to historical explanation so as to represent the causality of those historical events which actually and successively happened in the Past. In view of the fact that the pseudo-historical ideas as such arise from the Cartesian-Kantian paradigm of philosophy, the author thus concludes this paper by remarking that a search for a humanist conception of the historical not only needs a historiography reflecting the autonomous conditions of historical reasoning; also it needs a non-Enlightenment meaning of philosophizing itself.

Key Words: historiography, naturalism, historical realism, causality, positivism