

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

SOCIETY: PROGRESS AND FORCE

Criteria and First Principles

Battler, Alex

CreateSpace (376 pp.)

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BOOK REVIEW

Battler defines progress, provides its interpretations and considers a new way of measuring it in his sequel to an earlier work.

What is progress? It may seem a simple question—after all, isn't today's society more progressive than, say, the Middle Ages? The entire concept of "progress" depends upon the parameters used to describe it. For example, Karl Marx thought that progress could be measured by comparing socio-economic systems. If the people were freer in each succeeding system, he thought, then that's progress. Battler (*The 21st Century: The World Without Russia*, 2004) rejects this premise and others in favor of linking the ideas of force and progress—not force as typically defined, as something to be wielded in conflict, but the force of collective change. Finally, he presents his theory of progress and momentum as a key contributor to humankind's gradually increasing life expectancy. The guide comprises three sections. The first—a historical look at how great thinkers defined progress—is the most readable. In the second section, the author contrasts the forces created by humans and by nature. This section is the most inaccessible; it contains opaque concepts, theories and formulas intended for the dedicated philosophy scholar. The third section, about progress, force and other concepts, is slightly more reader-friendly. Although well-written, this is an extremely dense book and not meant, as the author himself points out, for the casual philosophy fan. To his credit, the author tries to make the book more readable by frequently explaining concepts and summarizing conclusions. Still, the text remains out of reach for most. It's a pity. The ideas and theories presented here deserve greater exposure and debate.

Strictly for hard-core philosophy fans.