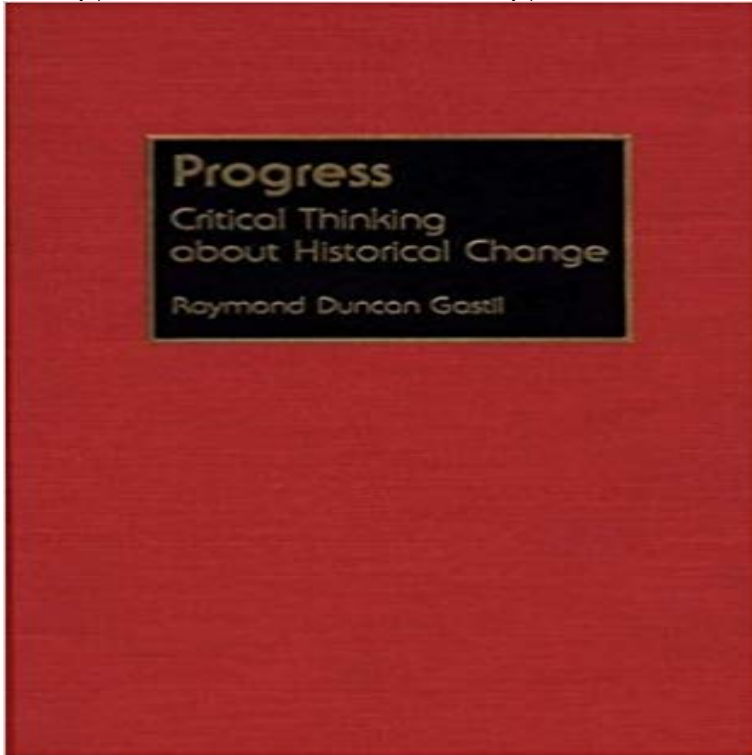


Progress: Critical Thinking about Historical Change



Today, we are bombarded with calls for change, as if all change was an improvement over the status quo. Dr. Gastil challenges this view in a thorough examination of concepts of change and progress. He asserts that our cultural world is divided between those who believe in one version of the 19th-century vision of progress, and those who see progress as a failed concept--either because they view change as regressive or believe that all values are relative. Gastil insists that we need to overcome this cleavage by developing an analysis that incorporates the widest variety of positions on the subject. Until we do, it will be impossible to make any sense of policy debate. To reconstruct the debate, the author believes the first requirement is one or more proper definitions of progress so that we can better understand which meaning is being addressed. Then we need to construct a broad, humanistic basis or framework that incorporates values identified with utility, justice, achievement, and reverence. After proposing definitions and a framework for analysis, Gastil considers cultural change across a wide variety of fields, including art and literature, violence, political organizations, and the significance of human life. In doing so, he provides a stimulating volume of value to all concerned with economic, social, cultural, and political development or change.

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