

Does improved technology mean progress

Literature



The Number 14 September Does Improved Technology Mean Progress?

Questions and 5 Since the times of Enlightenment the notion of progress has been inseparably linked to that of “ technology”. Specifically, technology has been considered “ the driving force” of the former (Marx 16). Progress has been thought of as a kind of advance towards perfection of human life through gaining mastery over nature with the help of mechanical arts. Yet, numerous technological disasters and tragic events in the history of the 20th century have made people realize that technology has nothing to do with progress. I agree that the very understanding notion of progress should be questioned with the emphasis on social purposes. Thus, “ progress” appears to be some movement to perfection of humanity through the advancement of spirit rather than technology (material world).

Question 2 It seems progress should be measured through its serving the social purpose. In this case, the matter of improvement of life quality should be considered. The happier the people in a society are, the bigger the real progress is. Interestingly, this appears to be not related to technological advancement. For example, many people living in the West have faced the deterioration of life quality due to technological progress.

Questions 3 and 4 In no way do I support the view that technical improvements are a primary basis for progress. More than 200 years of pursuing the technological path have almost led the humanity to the state of extinction. Chernobyl and Three Mile Island disaster, the Exxon Oil Spill in the Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the Fukushima nuclear disaster and other shortcomings of the technological progress threaten the existence of all living beings, including people. These clearly indicate the humanity needs to come out of the mousetrap which is called “ technological progress”. I fully
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agree with Lewis Mumford's view (quoted by Leo Marx) that "the belief of mechanical progress is an end to itself" (Smith and Marx 253).

Question 6 The technocratic view of the progress relates the latter to knowledge advancement in the spheres of engineering and technology (Marx 11). According to the technocratic theories, engineers and scientists should possess the highest power in a society (instead of politicians, as well as property owners).

Question 7 The fact that improved technology increased efficiency, but resulted in job loss, has negatively affected the social progress. World history knows a lot of examples that support the idea. One of the most evident is the Luddite movement in 19th century England. At that time people started breaking industrial machines since they felt the latter deprived them of workplaces and influenced their lives in a negative way. To measure the social progress, special polls may be conducted. For example, the 2009 Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) report on happiest world places used data obtained as a result of Gallup World Poll. Below are a few sample questions: "Did you enjoy something you did yesterday? Were you proud of something you did yesterday? Did you learn something yesterday? Were you treated with respect yesterday?" (Sherman, "World's Happiest Places"). As for technological progress, it can be measured through its impact on the planet Earth. High disaster levels mean the technological progress is high.

Works Cited

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