



The Dynamics of Progress: Time, Method, and Measure

Samuel L. Macey

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The development of increasingly precise measurements is an essential part of what Samuel L. Macey identifies as the West's wide-ranging effort to rationalize human activity--to simplify and standardize the way we work and communicate with one another. In "The Dynamics of Progress," Macey examines the history of such rationalizations as they have manifested themselves. He identifies a symbiotic relationship among these different types of rationalization, demonstrating that without the rationalizing of time, weights and measures, numbers, and language, the scientific, technological, and industrial advances of the past three hundred years would have been inconceivable.

In addition to discussing rationalization in its various forms, Macey also addresses reactions against it, and closes with some observations on the future. Increasing demands for material goods have the potential for spreading wealth, but such demands strain the earth's limited resources. How we address the challenge posed by this depletion of resources, Macey suggests, will be the ultimate test of our rationalizing powers.

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