

## **A method for moral progress**

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My overall aim is to understand the character of moral progress, so that making moral progress may become more systematic and secure, less chancy and less bloody. Drawing on three historical examples—the abolition of chattel slavery, the expansion of opportunities for women, and the increasing acceptance of same-sex love—I ask how those changes were brought about and seek a methodology for streamlining the kinds of developments that occurred. Moral progress is conceived as pragmatic progress, progress from rather than progress to, achieved by overcoming the problems and limits of the current situation. Two kinds of problems are distinguished: problems of exclusion, found when the complaints of some people (the oppressed) are ignored; and problems of false consciousness, present when the oppressed adopt judgments from the ambient society and do not protest their condition. The proposed methodology advocates procedures for listening to voiced complaints and for systematically reviewing the way in which particular self-conceptions, ideals, and identities are taken to be appropriate for various groups of people. Through outlining a picture of moral practice, at both the individual and the societal levels, I seek to orient moral philosophy away from metaethical questions of realism and toward moral methodology.