

Things in Motion

ALL THINGS ARE IN MOTION AND NOTHING IS AT REST ... YOU CANNOT GO
INTO THE SAME (RIVER) TWICE. --HERACLITUS (540?-480?)B.C.

Have you ever wondered?

WHAT would our country be like today if our efforts to take the land from its original inhabitants had failed? Would millions of buffalo still roam the vast prairies, protected for all time by those who had depended upon them for so many things? Would America's largest cities be made up of tepees, long houses and hogans? Would there still be Mayans Aztecs, and Incas and would the western hemisphere be living in peace with the rest of the world? Would there have been trade between East and West and could there exist a greater equality among all the world's inhabitants? Is it likely that nations would still practice strict isolationism such as did China and Japan in the past?

Or what if the tribal system was still the common denominator for societies? The tendency to compete, to expand boundaries and to use force rather than persuasion might well have resulted in far more warfare than is the case now. Might there not be pockets of advanced science where some technically superior nation enjoyed a much higher standard of living than its neighbors? While I am against war in general, I cannot deny a persistent sense that humankind has not yet reached a state of compassion that would bring about the same benefits that conflict has brought to the world.

Perhaps Shakespeare made a good point when he wrote, "Sweet are the uses of adversity ..." Still it begs the thoughts of what the world would be like today had history taken vastly different turns. A friend tells me that everything is relative—that we think of ourselves as being civilized beings. "Yet," he goes on, "consider whether we are civilized in the eyes of our cows, chickens, lambs, and all the creatures of the forests and seas." He made a valid point that seems to have been recognized by those original Americans who fostered a special kinship with all creatures. There is something honorable, I think, in our thanking that creature which we're about to devour—perhaps even in asking its forgiveness. In summary, of the limitless probabilities that the world's history could have evolved, it is perhaps not so bad after all.



Honoring my high
school teacher,
Byron King, a teacher
of the first order!

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