

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.

LONG LIVE CURIOSITY!

Curiosity is the thirst of the soul, according to Samuel Johnson—yet it killed the cat, if you believe the American saying. Whether we praise or condemn it, curiosity has been one force behind civilization's rise and progression from pre-history to the present. It would be difficult to determine where civilization would be today without the effects of curiosity. How many of our greatest inventions might never have been made? What if weapons of war had never exceeded the destructive capability of a stone club? Might not the world's population be significantly greater today? Perhaps not, if our curiosity about the human body and the means of curing its diseases had never existed.

Without the urge to see what lies over the horizon, isn't it likely that much of the world's population would be unaware that other lands existed along with other populations? How far would science have advanced without a drive for knowledge on the part of scientists? Given the unlikely probability of significant accidental knowledge falling into concerned hands, what would lead us away from the caves of early man?

Studying the universe is likely to awaken in us the awareness that we cannot comprehend the incredible distances and magnitudes of power that exist in limitless array beyond our atmosphere, yet to realize that the world as we know it might never have come to exist if we had no curiosity is awesome in itself. How did man first exercise curiosity? Was it an inborn instinct—and are animals also gifted with the same desire to know as is man? Given that a cat, for instance, is unlikely to take any kind of action after satisfying its curiosity, it would seem to me that man's curiosity is unique in that

as history has proven, man is most apt to take advantage of what his curiosity has unveiled. There are those who would say that curiosity is a God-given quality. Some would argue that it is simply a part of the nature of man. Others would point out that curiosity is proof of man's evolution and put no hint of divine intention in the mix. I would be curious to know how a group of chimpanzees would react—or if they would react at all to define curiosity. Perhaps the chimps, like the wildebeest, would merely ignore anything outside of food, procreation, and survival.

To say the least, our curiosity has lead us far beyond our time of savagery. The search for knowledge may well someday take us beyond our solar system; let us hope that the wisdom we have accumulated will suffice to save us from the fate of the curious cat. #



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