

System-Bound

Nobody asked but ...

Like insects caught in amber, we are frequently relegated to the past at our own hands by the systems to which we have surrendered. Here are some examples:

- At first, our transportation systems followed where we had been going, but at some tipping point, our destinations began to be determined by transportation systems already in place. If you have a seaport, surface roads will be built to that port, where the jobs are. Then houses will begin to pop up along the routes to the jobs. Then new jobs will appear where residences are clustered. New destinations will evolve. Rinse and repeat. Density increases.
- In the middle history of modernity, much of our culture was shaped by railroads and urban rail. It was in the common interest to make sacrifices that favored the movement of people and goods in that fashion. Freedom was one of the sacrifices. Individual automobiles spent many hours waiting at crossings so the rail companies could move a maximum payload at a minimum cost. Nowadays, one has to wonder why we have evolved to where the dominant form of transportation — single vehicles and trucks — is still left waiting because our engineers haven't seen the crossing of trends. We still make it more easy on the rail industries by not making them upgrade their facilities. The rail industry runs public relations announcements, trying to convince motorists that they don't want to challenge the railroad's regime at ground level crossings. There are apparently 100's of fatalities a year because we don't have the political will to require that railroads make intersections more safe by eliminating the possibilities that automobiles and trains might try to occupy the same space at the same time.
- After the mass shootings at Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, I have frequently wondered aloud or in writing what was the purpose of a school of nearly 3,000 students? Doesn't that just compress potential victims into a tighter target-rich environment. When we have built a brick-and-mortar facility, within a mandatory attendance system, doesn't that militate toward mandating such a socialistic gathering until the society has amortized the infrastructure at the gathering place?

Decisions that are based on the greater good for the greater number are often made by jiggering the frame, not by examining what is the good for whom, and not by properly accounting for the effects.

— Kilgore Forelle