

THE PROGRESS REPORT

Liberty as Determined by My Cat

By Fred E. Foldvary

My cat knows more about liberty than most people. If I want to know which activities should be prohibited and which ones should not be restricted in a free society, I just consult my cat.

For example, should we make theft illegal? Is stealing a moral wrong that should be a crime, and penalized? To test this, I try taking away my cat's food when she is eating. My cat hisses. So stealing is morally wrong, and should be illegal.

If somebody tried to kill a cat, the cat would yowl and scratch at the perpetrator. So it looks like murder is morally evil and should be prohibited.

If anyone tries to hurt a cat, the cat will yowl, hiss, scratch, and make it very clear this is wrong.

What if you put a cat in a cage? She would be unhappy, and meow loudly to tell us she wants out. So confining somebody or restricting his freedom of movement should be prohibited. Likewise if someone tried to kidnap my cat, she would object. Kidnapping should be illegal.

What if I called my cat and said her breakfast was ready, but when she came to me, I had no breakfast? She would be confused and unhappy. Fraud should be a crime.

If a friend and I play a game where the winner wins money, my cat would not care. So long as I have enough money to feed her, she has no objection if I gamble. Gambling should not be a crime.

If I take off my clothes, my cat has never objected. My cat does not care what I wear. Nudity should not be a crime.

Also, my cat does not care what I read. So there should be no censorship or restriction on what people write or read. According to my cat, there should be freedom of expression.

My cat does not seem to care what my religion is. I can pray or not pray; my cat is indifferent. There should be freedom of religion, according to my cat.

My cat is very territorial. If another cat enters our yard, she confronts it, hisses, and makes it clear that she has rights of possession. My cat is telling me that property rights should be respected, and that we have the right to possess land. But my cat does not invoke some authority to defend her property at other's expense. She bears the cost of protecting her own territory.

I have never witnessed my cat letting another cat stay in our yard in exchange for food or toys. If one cat abandons her territory, another just cat moves in. The previous cat does not claim

continued ownership and charge rent. Evidently, for cats, land is common property, but the one actually occupying and using a territory has rights of possession.

I have never witnessed one cat forcing another cat to pay taxes on what she catches. If she catches a mouse, no other cat will come and demand a share. If some other cat did make such a demand, my cat would hiss and tell that cat to scat. It looks like it is morally wrong to tax the fruit of our labor.

Mother cats take good care of their kittens. They feed them and teach them hunting and survival skills. Cats are telling us that we have a moral obligation to take care of our children.

When I come home, my cat greets me and sniffs my nose. My cat says friendship and love are good, and she never criticizes me or interferes in what I want to do.

It looks like my cat has a lot of wisdom about what freedom means and how we should organize society. If human beings did things the cat way, we would have a happier society.

So if you want to know about freedom, just consult a cat.