

COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION
DIVISION OF MATHEMATICAL STATISTICS

University of Adelaide
Adelaide, S.A.

27th August, 1959.

Miss Carolyn S. Cartwright, D.V.M.,
3718, Hiawatha Blvd.,
FORT WAYNE, Indiana,
U.S.A.

Dear Miss Cartwright,

Thank you for your letter of 16th July which I have only just read. The problem of testing intelligence in cats has two aspects which should not be confused. For those who already accept the view that cats are capable of valid ratiocination, I believe a series of performance tests in which the rate of learning is measured on kittens and young cats acquiring a skill such as opening a gate with a latch, or in any way gratifying some recognizable urge, would be of interest. With such tests large numbers of young cats could be tested and only those with high performance retained for breeding.

On the other hand there are those who would be convinced by nothing except by a lengthy and elaborate process known as conditioning, in which a reliable response to a given stimulus may be induced by experience and this, of course, throws light on the sensory discrimination of the animals but, I think, much less light on their capacity to learn.

I mention this because some would imagine that you are doing one thing when in reality you are doing the other.

I am afraid I gave no lecture such as seems to have been suggested by the papers but was rash enough to talk on one occasion to a reporter.

Sincerely yours,