

Where Everyone Does Whatever They Want

“So you want a world where everyone just does whatever he wants?!?!”

Every once in a while I hear someone say this, in response to the idea of a society that doesn't recognize the “authority” of any ruling class. What makes this concern extra amusing is that “a world where everyone just does whatever he wants” is what has always been, and always will be. It's completely unavoidable.

Of course, what someone *wants* to do is influenced by his own moral code and conscience, by his desire for reward and fear of adverse consequences, by his plans and goals, by his belief system, and by many other things. Even the person who surrenders his car to a carjacker, *wants* to do so, more than he wants to be shot.

And once you understand that everyone already does “whatever he wants to do,” then the question becomes, does the presence of a ruling class make people *want* to do more good stuff, or *want* to do more bad stuff, than they would *want* to do otherwise? And if you run down the list, considering different categories of people-voters, cops, politicians, etc.-you will see that when people imagine that some people have an *exemption* from basic morality (which is all the belief in “authority” is: the notion that it's okay for some people to do stuff that would be *wrong* if others did it), it makes pretty much everyone *want* to be worse people than they would be otherwise. No, a ruling class doesn't make people behave better. It makes almost everyone behave worse. Or, as I've said before, the belief in “authority” does not serve as a check against the flaws and imperfections of man; it serves as an *amplifier* of them.