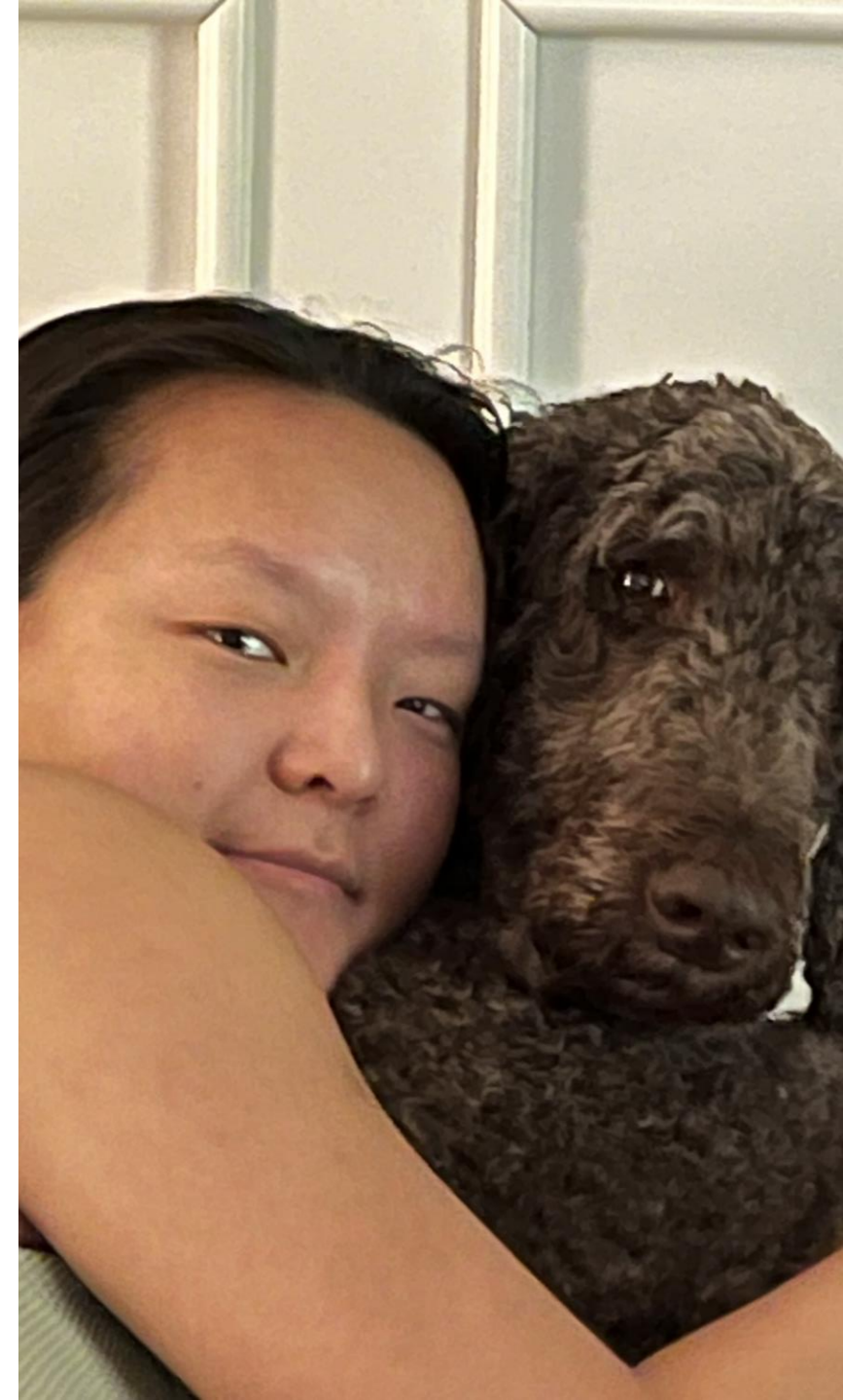


# SENTIENCE, COGNITION AND MORAL STATUS IN ANIMALS

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# INTEREST AND SENTIENCE

- Interest: something wanted, desired, preferred, or cared about
- Includes cognitive preferences, but also feelings
- Collectively, interests equal welfare
- The notion of interests presupposes consciousness; that is, sentience
- Sentience is defined as the ability of an animal to experience pain, pleasure, and other emotions
- It is different from cognition and self-awareness

# COGNITION

- “Cognition is often understood to be what permits flexible goal-oriented behavior through information processing.”
  - <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cognition-animal/>
- As example - Animals must find food, avoid predators, and seek shelter.
- The species-specific neurobiology “receives data from the world it inhabits”, the brain then processes (and acts) on the information received.

FROM ROBERT  
NOZICK, WE  
HAVE  
“UTILITARIANISM  
FOR ANIMALS,  
KANTIANISM FOR  
PEOPLE”

“Humans are protected by rights, such as the  
right not to be killed”(deontology)

Principles/rules distinguish right from wrong

“..animals have only interests...”  
(consequentialism)

Action is judged solely by its consequences

# MORAL CONSIDERATION

- To be given moral consideration (moral status) means to have your interests protected to some degree, to have a certain amount of weight attached to those interests.



NONHUMAN  
ANIMALS:  
OPTIONS FOR  
MORAL  
CONSIDERATION

Their interests receive no  
consideration

Their interests receive the same  
amount of consideration as humans'  
interests (“equal moral consideration”)

Their interests receive some, but less,  
consideration than humans' interests  
(“unequal moral consideration”)

THE “NO  
CONSIDERATION”  
VIEW

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Nonhuman animals aren't  
sentient (Cartesian view)

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“Religious” beliefs of moral  
superiority of humans

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Rational capacity required for  
moral standing (Kantianism  
theory) (indirect duty)

## “EQUAL MORAL CONSIDERATION” VIEW

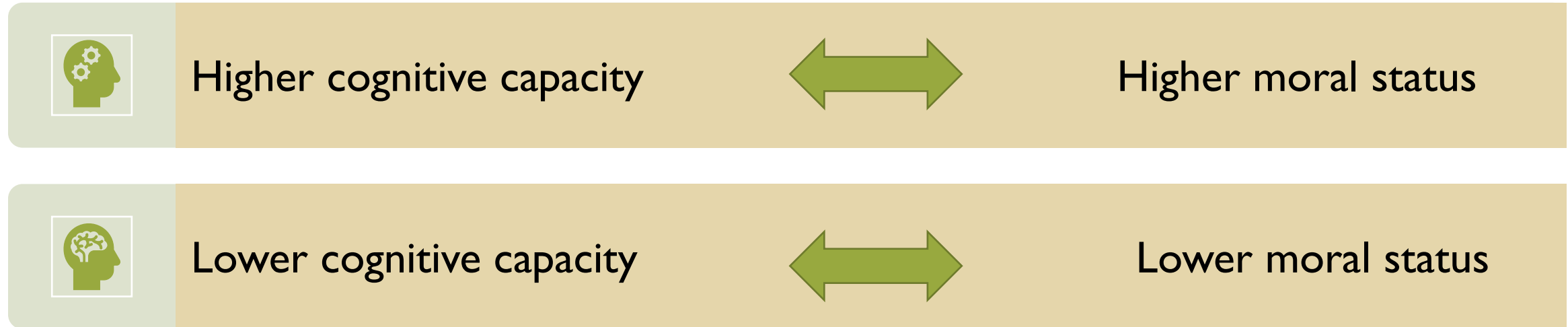
States that animals' interests deserve the same amount of moral weight or importance as humans' interests

Considered, by some, to be a non-speciesist view



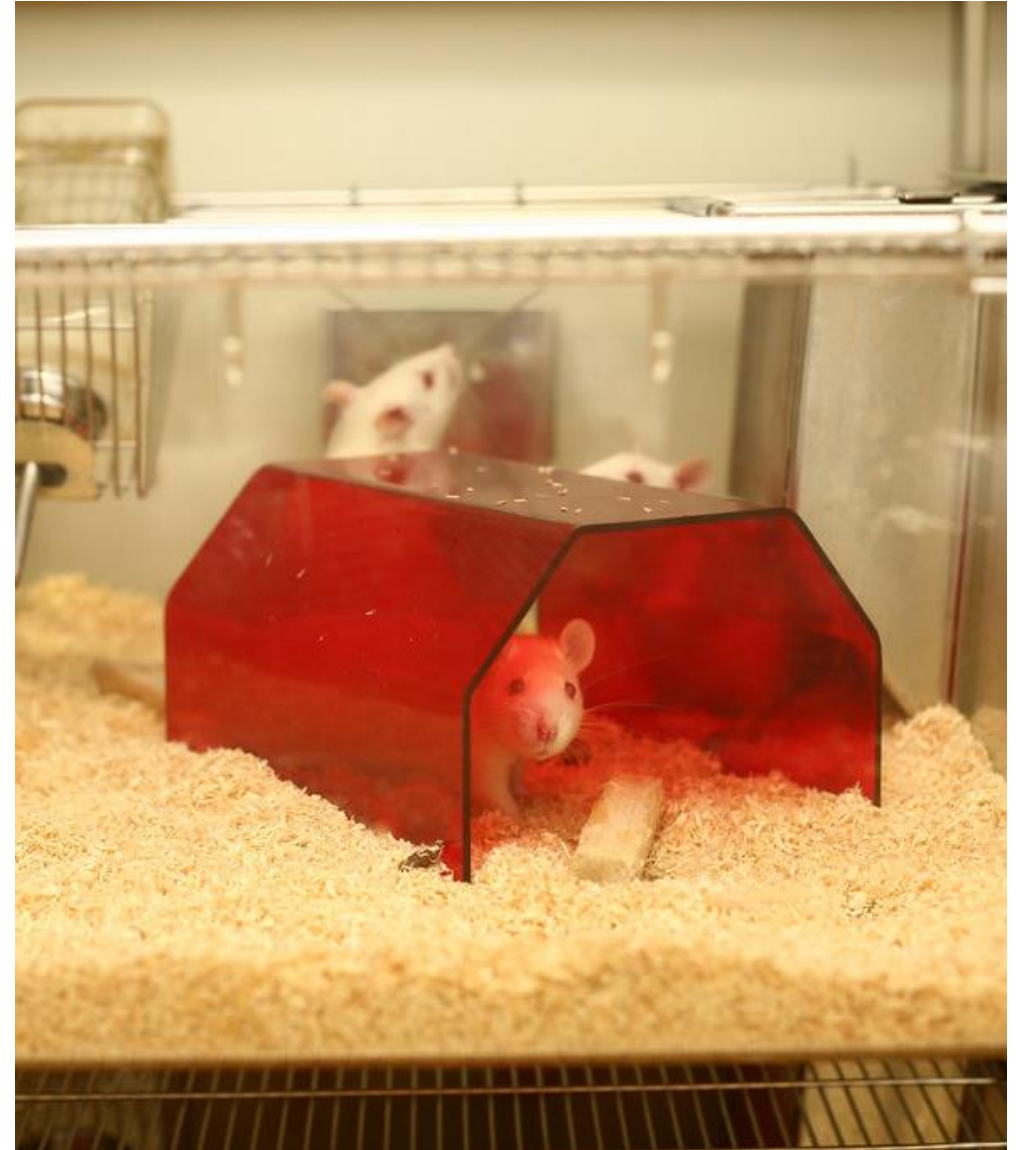
# UNEQUAL CONSIDERATION FOR MORAL STATUS

## SLIDING SCALE VIEW



“SENTIENT ANIMALS  
HAVE MORAL STATUS  
AND THEREFORE ARE  
NOT MERELY TOOLS  
OF RESEARCH”

THE CAMBRIDGE DECLARATION  
ON CONSCIOUSNESS MARKED  
AN OFFICIAL SCIENTIFIC  
RECOGNITION OF THE  
PRESENCE OF SENTIENCE IN  
MAMMALS, BIRDS, AND  
CEPHALOPODS. ANIMAL  
SENTIENCE HAS FURTHERMORE  
BEEN RECOGNIZED IN  
LEGISLATION IN THE EUROPEAN  
UNION, UK, NEW ZEALAND,  
AND PARTS OF AUSTRALIA



# SUMMARY THOUGHTS

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All mammals are sentient and cognitive and therefore have moral status

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“Any justification for harming (nonconsenting) beings w/moral status must have *substantial* social benefits”

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“Any permissible harming of animal subjects is limited by considerations of animal welfare”



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# DISCUSSION

