

# IS HEAVEN A ZOOPOLIS?

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The concept of service found in Christian theism and related religious perspectives offers robust support for a political defense of nonhuman animal rights, both in the eschaton and in the present state. By adapting the political theory defended by Donaldson and Kymlicka to contemporary theological models of the afterlife and of human agency, I defend a picture of heaven as a harmoniously structured society where humans are the functional leaders of a multifaceted, interspecies citizenry. Consequently, orthodox religious believers (concerned with promoting God's will "on Earth as it is in Heaven") have a duty to promote and protect the interests of nonhuman creatures in the present, premortem state.

*"For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity."* (Ecclesiastes 3:19, NRSV)

In August of 2018, a fifty-second video clip was posted on the website for the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission; hours later, after a spate of criticism from online accounts, the ERLC took the video down and replaced it with a written apology from its vice president.<sup>1</sup> In the video, Charles Camosy—a theology professor at Fordham University—responded to the question "What is the Christian's responsibility with respect to animals?" by briefly naming nonhuman creatures as appropriate targets of concern insofar as they are "vulnerable," "voiceless," and have interests that are frequently ignored by the human culture at large. Critics argued that Camosy's terminology (such as the clarification of "human" versus "nonhuman" animals) irresponsibly blurred the lines between two forms of life that must be kept distinct: humans made in the *imago Dei* and animals made without that image. In the apology from the ERLC, VP Daniel Darling reaffirmed the

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<sup>1</sup>Although no longer available from the ERLC's website, an account of the video and the ensuing controversy can be found at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2018/08/09/southern-baptists-posted-a-video-opposing-animal-cruelty-and-then-profusely-apologized-for-it/?utm\\_term=.80132f587505](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2018/08/09/southern-baptists-posted-a-video-opposing-animal-cruelty-and-then-profusely-apologized-for-it/?utm_term=.80132f587505). Blogger Grayson Gilbert has also linked to a mirrored copy of the original video here: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/chorusinthecaos/erlc-posts-bizarre-video-on-non-human-animals/>.



group's commitment to the "unique dignity of human life" grounded in humanity's unique position within the created order.<sup>2</sup>

This dispute depends on a perceived conflict between two propositions:

CARE: Humans are obligated to care for the interests of nonhuman creatures.

IMAGE: Humans are superior to nonhuman creatures in some sense.

Given that CARE has frequently been defended by denying IMAGE, the poor response by some Christians to Camosy's interview might be understandable.<sup>3</sup> However, not only did Camosy explicitly endorse both CARE and IMAGE in the controversial video (saying "Nonhuman animals, though obviously not as important as human animals, merit our serious attention"), but—as I will argue—the joint affirmation of both propositions fits comfortably within the overall Western theistic tradition of humanity's role within creation. Indeed, rather than being contradictory, one proposition explains the other if the following hypothesis is true:

SERVICE<sup>4</sup>: Humans are obligated to care for the interests of nonhuman creatures because humans are superior to nonhuman creatures in some sense.

In what follows, I develop and defend the SERVICE thesis by bringing its religious underpinnings into conversation with a contemporary trend in animal ethics. To be clear: I do not intend to defend speciesism itself. My point here is a dialectical one: even on the assumption that speciesism is justified, humans nevertheless have strong obligations towards nonhuman creatures.

In their 2011 book *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights*, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka propose what they call an "expanded" model of animal rights which adapts a theory of citizenship to argue that humans are obligated to care for nonhuman animals precisely because we among creatures are best capable of doing so. I contend that the standard

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<sup>2</sup>The full text of the apology can be located here: <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/a-note-about-a-recent-video>.

<sup>3</sup>The term "speciesism," for example, was coined by Richard Ryder in the early 1970s as an expression of the illogical preference of one kind of creature over another (just as racism or sexism entail a preference of certain subsets of humanity over others); see Ryder, "Speciesism Again." More recently, Berkman has defined speciesism as "the undue (and typically exclusive) intrinsic concern for human animals in comparison to all other animals" ("From Theological Speciesism to a Theological Ethology," 14). The opening line of Ryder's initial pamphlet read "Since Darwin, scientists have agreed that there is no 'magical' essential difference between human and other animals, biologically-speaking"—a clear rejection of at least some construals of IMAGE.

<sup>4</sup>With this terminology, I have in mind Norman Wirzba's defense of a "servanthood" model of environmentalism (over and above the stewardship and citizenship models he summarizes); as he describes, servanthood "shifts the orientation of our action away from ourselves to the well-being of others, to the work of "making room" for others to be, and finally to the praise of the creator. It takes our mind off the current obsession with the consumption of creation and redirects it to the work of enabling the continuity of creation. Servanthood, in short, introduces us to the long, patient labor of fitting ourselves within God's creative work" (*The Paradise of God*, 135–136). See also n. 51.

eschatological hope of western monotheism should be understood as a theological manifestation of Donaldson and Kymlicka's zoopolis.

I begin with a defense of CARE in Section 1 by summarizing and briefly contextualizing Donaldson and Kymlicka's political theory of animal rights before doing the same with the Christian doctrine of the *imago Dei* by defending IMAGE in Section 2. In Section 3, I make a case for SERVICE by considering several theological points about human duties to nonhuman animals before arguing for the zoopolitical organization of the heavenly community in Section 4. I conclude in Section 5.

### 1. Animal Rights and Dependent Agency

The CARE thesis claims that "Humans are obligated to care for the interests of nonhuman creatures." A prominent branch of animal rights theory interprets CARE's use of "obligation" as an ascription of both negative rights of non-interference and positive rights of beneficence for animals; accordingly, humans should care for both humans and nonhumans in roughly similar ways and for roughly similar reasons—because both kinds of creatures have lives of value. Perhaps most famously, Tom Regan defends the equal rights of moral patients and agents, arguing that a lack of "sophisticated abilities" does not entail a lack of moral status, so nonhuman creatures with interests are owed many of the same protections—including duties of care—as humans with interests.<sup>5</sup>

Some in this tradition have extended theories of animal rights to encompass a political, as well as moral, dimension. Deane Curtin, for example, argues that a "politicized ethic of caring for" is both the most rational and the most effective approach for promoting the interests of embodied creatures.<sup>6</sup> Jes Harfield uses the Nordic welfare state to illustrate what the demands of distributive justice might entail for all rights-bearers, regardless of their species.<sup>7</sup> Cheryl Abbate argues that even explicitly speciesist political frameworks (such as many grounded on a common interpretation of Aristotle) can nonetheless be adapted to incorporate the abilities of nonhuman animals to recognize and participate in communities of justice.<sup>8</sup>

The political approach of Donaldson and Kymlicka to animal ethics focuses on expanding the relational rights humans enjoy with each other to include nonhuman creatures by grounding interpersonal obligations not in biology (as speciesists might expect), but in public relationships; as they explain, "We are not just members of species. We are members of societies, and the two don't necessarily overlap."<sup>9</sup> Differentiating between inalienable rights possessed by all creatures (such as the right to live) and those rights afforded only to members of particular communities (like the right

<sup>5</sup>Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, 279–280.

<sup>6</sup>Curtin, "Toward an Ecological Ethic of Care," 68.

<sup>7</sup>Harfield, "Rights, Solidarity, and the Animal Welfare State," 166.

<sup>8</sup>Abbate, "'Higher' and 'Lower' Political Animals," 55.

<sup>9</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 99.

to vote), Donaldson and Kymlicka craft a simple taxonomy of interspecies political structures wherein domesticated creatures are owed the rights of citizens, wild animals deserve unhindered sovereignty, and liminal creatures are treated as autonomous denizens of interspecies environments.

This does require a reconceptualization of citizenship, but not in its entirety. To be a citizen is to be an active and engaged member of a community in at least some sense, both contributing to and enjoying the products of the public work; traditionally, citizens have been expected to shape and offer their contributions as a function of their cognitive abilities (speaking, debating, voting, etc.), but on that reading, Donaldson and Kymlicka (and the disability rights movement as a whole) point out that “children, the mentally disabled, people with dementia, and those who are temporarily incompetent due to illness or injury” would be ruled out from being recognized as political agents.<sup>10</sup> Instead, as Martha Nussbaum argues, “people with cognitive disabilities are equal citizens, and law ought to show respect for them as full equals”;<sup>11</sup> to this end, the disability human rights paradigm developed by Michael Stein defends “individual talent-development” as the goal of citizenship, requiring societies to acknowledge the inherent value of all persons, rather than basing value on an individual’s measurable ability to functionally contribute to society in particular ways.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly the *Zoopolis* framework assesses ability from the bottom up, embracing all individual creatures while accounting for their functional variations.

For Donaldson and Kymlicka, acknowledging the value of some citizens (including nonhuman ones) takes the form of a trust-based *dependent agency* wherein even the most severely disabled person possesses full-fledged political autonomy, “but it is agency that is exercised in and through relations with particular others in whom they trust, and who have the skills and knowledge needed to recognize and assist the expression of agency.”<sup>13</sup> This form of agency is similarly focused on the unique situations of individuals, but it is importantly not identical to wardship: wards properly benefit from society without contributing to it—citizens are “active co-authors of the community’s laws and institutions.”<sup>14</sup>

It is not clear that domesticated animals lack the ability to be dependent agents within human communities; indeed, many of their capacities for community-building are precisely the features that encouraged their domestication in the first place. Behavioral preadaptations and biological commonalities of domesticates demonstrate that a package of shared qualities amongst creatures like horses, dogs, cows, and more primed them to be absorbed into human communities; this comports well with Brett

<sup>10</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 104.

<sup>11</sup>Nussbaum, “The Capabilities of People with Cognitive Disabilities,” 350.

<sup>12</sup>Stein, “Disability Human Rights,” 77.

<sup>13</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 104.

<sup>14</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 102.

Walker's description of domesticated animals as "allied organisms" who historically threw their lot in with humanity in order to flourish alongside us hairless bipeds.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, if domesticated animals can communicate in some way with humans and can contribute to the common good, then they, too, can qualify as citizens under the dependent agency model.<sup>16</sup>

These two conditionals are easily demonstrated: not only can humans communicate basic concepts to domesticated animals (as to dogs, pigs, or horses who commonly respond to commands), but we can also receive information from animals based on "a vast repertoire of vocalizations, gestures, movements, and signals."<sup>17</sup> The late Donald Griffin catalogued numerous examples of communicative behavior in animals ranging from audible noise to physical movements that, in some cases, even exhibit multi-layered meanings in the form of deception or manipulation.<sup>18</sup> Learning to be attentive to such signals (and to translate them into language that the unattentive can understand) is not only the role of the dependent agent's advocate, but is familiar to any pet owner or animal trainer.

Furthermore, *Zoopolis* contends that animals make their contributions to the public good most readily through their "sheer presence" in society that "alters our conception of the political community and the institutions and structures of communal life."<sup>19</sup> In this way, animals do not need to cognitively contribute to political discussion at all, but can function as full participants in the political process nonetheless insofar as they direct attention to areas of social need, model ideal relational behaviors, and more simply by pursuing their own desired ends. For example, Donaldson and Kymlicka relate a story of dog owners reshaping a park from a rough area known for illegal activity into a popular space for families simply by persistently walking with their dogs regularly around the public space; it may be the case that humans are the "enablers," but the dogs are a necessary element of this improvement and "the fact that the dogs cannot reflect about the goals of the activism, or their role in it, doesn't change the fact that they are participants in the process."<sup>20</sup> Participants who, it should be noted, were simply doing what they wanted to do anyway: play in a park.

In short, dependent agency shares many important features with the broad sense of autonomy described in *Chimpanzee Rights: A Philosopher's Brief* as an example of moral standing possessed by creatures who are "the source of their own actions, and [who] act on behalf of themselves rather than because of some external force or internal compulsion."<sup>21</sup> The brief

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<sup>15</sup>Walker, "Animals and the Intimacy of History," 59. See also Zeder, "The Domestication of Animals."

<sup>16</sup>For more on the constitutive features of community membership for nonhuman animals, see Section 4.

<sup>17</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 109.

<sup>18</sup>Griffin, *Animal Minds*, 195–210.

<sup>19</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 113.

<sup>20</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 115.

<sup>21</sup>Andrews et al., *Chimpanzee Rights*, 82.

points out that many animals, from chimps to harvester ants, can “form preferences, set goals, and act so as to satisfy wants”—allowing them to do so within the context of a community to which they also contribute is the essence of citizenship theory.

Donaldson and Kymlicka admit that wild animals and liminal creatures (who exist on the border of the domestic/wild distinction) do not contribute in the same way to human communities and, therefore, cannot qualify as citizens of typical human societies. In the case of the former, they contend that wild animals should be treated as sovereign agents who have the right to govern themselves apart from the zoopolis without being invaded, colonized, or robbed. However, whereas some wild animal rights theorists defend a strong duty of non-interference that precludes even humanitarian interventions or a contextual model whereby intervention is merely permitted, but not required, Donaldson and Kymlicka defend a “duty of assistance” whereby humans and other members of a zoopolis could be obligated to help sovereign animals at risk from various external threats, such as natural disasters.<sup>22</sup> Following Goodin, Pateman, and Pateman, *Zoopolis* suggests that including human advocates mandated to defend the interests of wild animals in geopolitical conversations might be one way to operationalize such a political mechanism, but it leaves open that various zoopoleis might carry out their responsibilities to non-domesticated animals in different ways.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, creatures in the liminal space between domestication and the wild, such as raccoons, mice, and many insects, are not tamed, but still rely on humans for elements of their livelihood; *Zoopolis* suggests that such animals be treated as non-citizen denizens who are afforded certain protections by the citizenry, just as in the case of human migrants (like short-term tourists or long-term residents) and inhabitants who “opt-out” of citizenship (such as the Amish) are treated within exclusively human communities.<sup>24</sup> Such individuals cannot simply be exterminated (or even expelled or relocated) without careful consideration of their rights, but such obligations are less complex than those shared by co-equal citizens of the zoopolis (regardless of their species) given that the relationship between denizens and citizens is more contingent.

Taken as a whole, this political theory of animal rights can easily affirm both CARE and IMAGE: in the first case, humans are obligated to care for the interests of animals in the strongest sense by treating them as positive-rights holders who are full members of the political community, albeit in a modulated manner relative to their social function. In the second case, human superiority is a matter of general cognitive function that allows

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<sup>22</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 205–206. For a defense of strict non-interventionism, see Panagiotarakou, “Right to Place”; for a model that treats aid to wild animals as supererogatory, see Palmer, “The Laissez-Faire View.”

<sup>23</sup>See also Goodin, Pateman, and Pateman, “Simian Sovereignty.”

<sup>24</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 250–251.

for the most pragmatic accomplishment of CARE, but this does not entail a value claim about the human species beyond a certain functional reality, embodied as a care-giving responsibility. Importantly, Donaldson and Kymlicka ground the citizen-relations of the zoopolis on a theory of subjectivity which defines personhood as “not a capacity we can either ‘discover’ or ‘fail to find’ in another, but rather, a way of ‘being in relation’ with others.”<sup>25</sup> Adapting this point from Barbara Smuts, their notion of personhood is an active process in which we engage, not a property we possess; if we have the opportunity to engage in the process with another creature capable of experiencing a relationship and neglect to do so, then *we* are the ones whose personhood degrades.<sup>26</sup>

As discussed in the next section, the vision of *Zoopolis* meshes well with the theological presentation of animals and humans as contingent beings both pronounced to be “good” by God upon their creation, but socially ordered such that humans are called to a unique leadership role within the created community. Furthermore, if animals are present in heaven, and if we can enter into relationships with animals, then doing so in heaven is also a reasonable expectation.

## 2. *The Imago Dei and Animal Immortality*

The IMAGE thesis claims that “Humans are superior to nonhuman creatures in some sense.” Admittedly, it is possible to read this proposition as an explicitly speciesist proclamation and Christian tradition has often done so, opposing animal rights for centuries.<sup>27</sup> However, IMAGE’s final clause demands clarification. Often, theologically-motivated denials of animal rights (and, indeed, many Christian defenses of speciesism) are based on a particular interpretation of the biblical conception of “God’s Image”; in this section, I briefly outline two general models of the *imago Dei* and consider the implications of each for both the IMAGE thesis and the postmortem plight of nonhuman creatures.

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<sup>25</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 122.

<sup>26</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka quote Smuts at length: “In other words, when a human being relates to an individual nonhuman being as an anonymous object, rather than as a being with its own subjectivity, it is the human, and not the other animal, who relinquishes personhood” (*Zoopolis*, 112). This also helpfully delimits the scope of potential personhood degradation, restricting it only to conditional contingent relationships that are actualized; despite the fact that I have the opportunity to relate to many other people, my personhood does not thereby degrade simply if I choose not to pursue such relationships. Instead, it is only in cases where I *in fact* interact with others, but do so in ways that fail to treat them honorably that my personhood degrades in the fashion so described. My thanks to Blake Hereth for pushing me to clarify this point.

<sup>27</sup>For example, in Chapter 17 of *On the Morals of the Manicheans*, Augustine argues that if animals had rights, then Jesus would not have killed the herd of pigs in his exorcism of the Gadarene demoniac. Aquinas later argues in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* that “animals are ordered to man’s use in the natural course of things, according to divine providence. Consequently, man uses them without any injustice, either by killing them or by employing them in any other way” (III/2/Ch112/Sec.12–13).

Drawing from various scriptural sources, Christian anthropology frequently refers to the *imago Dei* as a unique element of human nature, but traditions disagree on the nature of this Image. One dominant view identifies the *imago Dei* as humanity's capacity for rational thought, thereby treating the Image as an ontological component of a human being: call this position the RATIONALITY model.<sup>28</sup> A separate tradition treats the *imago Dei* as a duty or calling uniquely expected of humans within God's ordered universe as a consequence of their functional capacities: call this teleological view the RESPONSIBILITY model.<sup>29</sup> Both views recognize that humanity's obligations follow from humanity's capabilities, but RESPONSIBILITY treats the *imago Dei* as a feature of the former, while RATIONALITY identifies it as (or as a crucial component of) the latter. So, both models offer, in different ways, a defense of IMAGE: on RATIONALITY, humans *qua* humans are essentially ontologically superior to nonhuman creatures, while RESPONSIBILITY treats humans *qua* humans as functionally superior at performing certain tasks necessary for accomplishing God's Creation-ordering goals, chief among them standing in loving relationships with other individuals.<sup>30</sup>

As demonstrated in Section 1, recognizing a pragmatic difference in social ordering based on functional capacities is not necessarily speciesist, so the political consequences of RESPONSIBILITY are not immediately ethically loaded. This cannot be said of RATIONALITY, given its clearly speciesist position. Historically, defenders of RATIONALITY have linked their ontological understanding of the *imago Dei* to their denial of animal rights *tout court*, thereby arguing that speciesism is not ethically problematic because animals do not possess infringeable rights (or, indeed, any rights).<sup>31</sup> In contrast, defenders of RESPONSIBILITY *might* deny rights to nonhuman animals for other reasons, but speciesism is not logically

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<sup>28</sup>Historical defenders of such a position include Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Palamas, Maximus the Confessor, Aquinas, Descartes, and Leibniz. For contemporary defenders, see Farris, "An Immaterial Substance View"; Vainio, "*Imago Dei* and Rationality"; and Visala, "*Imago Dei*, Dualism, and Evolution."

<sup>29</sup>Members of this tradition include Barth and Brunner, with Bolos, "A Functionalist Account of Human Uniqueness"; Churchouse, "Distinguishing the *Imago Dei* from the Soul"; Crisp, "A Christological Model of the *Imago Dei*"; Green, "Why the *Imago Dei* Should Not Be Identified with the Soul"; and Fergusson, "Humans Created According to the *Imago Dei*" extending the characterization into contemporary contexts.

<sup>30</sup>Certainly, this bipartite distinction is oversimplified: in addition to structural and functional pictures, many theologians and philosophers of religion offer a third, relational, model for the *imago Dei* (De Cruz and De Maeseneer, "The *Imago Dei*"; Erickson, *Christian Theology*), while Petrussek discusses no fewer than ten distinct heuristics for the doctrine in "The Image of God and Moral Action." In general, the nuances of these taxonomies are important, but tangential to the argument here, which needs to distinguish simply between an ontological and a non-ontological model of God's image in/for humanity.

<sup>31</sup>McLaughlin briefly traces a history of the sharp human/animal dichotomy in Christian tradition, referencing Augustine and Aquinas, as well as Kant, Descartes, Gregory of Nyssa, Irenaeus, and the writer of Genesis; see "Noblesse Oblige," 133–134. For more, see Linzey, *Why Animal Suffering Matters*, 28–29.

entailed by the view and those in this camp often argue for the potential ethical standing of nonhuman creatures in many ways.<sup>32</sup>

Clearly, the contrast between RATIONALITY and RESPONSIBILITY is vibrant and I don't mean to suggest that this debate about the *imago Dei* is without nuance; this brief overview is intended primarily to disambiguate how I will proceed with regards to the IMAGE thesis. However, one additional conclusion is noteworthy: many defenders of RATIONALITY, because of additional commitments they hold, must conclude that only human beings can go to heaven. If one adopts the RATIONALITY model of the *imago Dei* and, furthermore, identifies those same cognitive capacities as components of the *soul* (a separate contentious position), then it might follow inescapably that animals have neither the Image of God nor souls or spiritual natures and, therefore have no eschatological destiny (if possessing or being constituted by a soul is required to experience heaven).<sup>33</sup> Against this, philosophers and theologians have marshalled a bevy of arguments in defense of animal immortalism (and, indeed, universalism), many of which are grounded upon "the natural outflow of divine love and justice" towards all creatures whom God loves.<sup>34</sup>

Regardless, many Christian traditions affirm the presence of at least some animals in heaven and the Bible resounds with images of animals worshipping God alongside human beings, not only in the present state, but also in the future, where wolves, leopards, and lions will live in peace not only with lambs, goats, and calves, but with humans as well (Isaiah 11:6–9) as "every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them" proclaim God's glory (Revelation 5:13).<sup>35</sup> Defenders of RATIONALITY could argue that these token creatures never lived in a pre-mortem state; RESPONSIBILITY does not require a specific position here and, indeed, can recognize the potential continuity of individual creatures from Earth to heaven without much difficulty. But, whether these heavenly animals are numerically identical with particular animals who walked on Earth is an important, but distinct question to this one: if animals and humans co-exist peacefully in the eschaton, what

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<sup>32</sup>Clough, for example, characterizes the *imago Dei* christologically as a species-wide vessel of God's incarnation, rather than a ground of value for an individual image-bearer (*On Animals*, 100–102); see also, Crisp, "A Christological Model of the *Imago Dei*." Horan, "Deconstructing Anthropocentric Privilege," goes even further to include nonhuman creatures as bearers of God's image, a provocative thesis that reflects the zootheistic interests explained in Hereth, "Animal Gods."

<sup>33</sup>For a discussion (and critique) of such a position, see Horan, "Deconstructing Anthropocentric Privilege."

<sup>34</sup>Graves, Hereth, and John, "In Defense of Animal Universalism," 162. See also Crummett, "Eschatology for Creeping Things (and Other Animals)"; Hereth, "Two Arguments for Animal Immortality"; and Murray, *Nature Red in Tooth and Claw*, 122–129. On the possibility that nonhuman animals might be importantly morally distinct from humans in a manner that might bear on their eschatological destinies, see Abbate, "Nonhuman Animals."

<sup>35</sup>For an insightful argument concerning the extent of this, see Pawl, "Exploring Theological Zoology."

is the nature of that community?<sup>36</sup> Much like Donaldson and Kymlicka's ultimate hope, the eschatological image of the New Heavens and New Earth envisions a structured society with human beings functioning in leadership roles, but exercising that leadership not as the dominators of a morally neutral creation, but as enriched caretakers of a multifaceted, interspecies citizenry. Although such an outcome is explicable as contingent happenstance on the RATIONALITY thesis, the RESPONSIBILITY model of the *imago Dei* has far greater explanatory power for the biblical imagery of a zoopolitical afterlife.<sup>37</sup>

### 3. Theological Animal Rights and Dominion Constraints

Before considering zoopolitical eschatology, a defense of SERVICE is warranted. This thesis states that "Humans are obligated to care for the interests of nonhuman creatures because humans are superior to nonhuman creatures in some sense." In this section, I motivate the SERVICE thesis by way of a joint defense of CARE and IMAGE, linked with a basing relation grounded in philosophical reflections upon Christian scripture and tradition.

Many writers have pointed out how the biblical notion of "dominion" has shaped the arc of human-animal relations in Western culture.<sup>38</sup> Rooted in the latter part of Genesis 1, the teaching comes from the command God gives to humanity immediately following its creation:

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth *and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth* (Genesis 1:27–28, emphasis added).

This passage could be construed as a strong support of IMAGE—if humans *alone* bear the Image<sup>39</sup>—and a strong denial of CARE—since humans are called to "subdue" everything nonhuman. John Locke famously interpreted

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<sup>36</sup>For more on the numerical identity of nonhuman creatures in the postmortem state with creatures from the premortem state, see chapter nine of Dougherty, *The Problem of Animal Pain*.

<sup>37</sup>C.S. Lewis—who defended a variation of RATIONALITY and argued for the postmortem cognitive enhancement of nonhuman animals—argued that animals might themselves enter heaven *on the basis of* their premortem relationships with humans; "The theory I am suggesting . . . makes God the centre of the universe and man the subordinate centre of terrestrial nature: the beasts are not co-ordinate with man, but subordinate to him, and their destiny is through and through related to his. And the derivative immortality suggested for them is not a mere *amende* or compensation: It is part and parcel of the new heaven and new earth, organically related to the whole suffering process of the world's fall and redemption"; see *The Problem of Pain*, 145.

<sup>38</sup>For example, Peter Singer treats the beginning of Genesis—and, specifically, the dominion mandate—as a key impetus for the birth and spread of the speciesist oppression of nonhuman animals across the centuries; see *Animal Liberation*, 226.

<sup>39</sup>To be fair, the passage specifically claims only that humans bear the Image, *not* that humans *alone* bear the Image; for more on this, see Hereth, "Animal Gods" and Horan, "Deconstructing Anthropocentric Privilege."

this verse in precisely this manner, explaining in the Second Treatise how “God, who hath given the World to Men in common, hath also given them reason to make use of it to the best advantage of Life, and convenience,” ultimately concluding that “all inferior Creatures be common [property] to all Men.”<sup>40</sup> However, against this, it could well be the case that a strong defense of IMAGE entails a strong support of CARE, *in addition to* certain normative constraints on the human exercise of that dominion.

Dominion must be understood in connection with a view of God’s ultimate sovereignty in the manner described by David Clough as a “theocentric position” towards Creation, grounded on the maxim that “God creates for God’s own glory.”<sup>41</sup> As a part of God’s grand picture, humans—like all animals—have a particular role to play, but this does not entail that humans *alone* have a role to play; indeed, as Clough says, “not only creation, but every creature has a part in God’s creative and salvific purposes.”<sup>42</sup> Dominion, then, must be understood as a uniquely human contribution to a much more complicated—and ultimately God-focused—project; as, in John Jones’s words, “of giving thanks for, tending, and nurturing what is first and always God’s.”<sup>43</sup> Contra Locke, creation—including the animals—is not simply our property with which we can do as we will, but rather, in our dominion, we are duty-bound to care for and respect what ultimately and always belongs to its Creator. In the words of Stassen and Gushee, “the ‘dominion’ given to humans in Genesis 1:26–29 does imply a human preeminence, a theme echoed in such passages as Psalm 8, but it opposes a theology of domination.”<sup>44</sup> Although innumerable examples of historical dominion-language exist where the authority of God has been twisted towards attempted justifications for moral horrors, this is a tacit abdication of the theocentric teleology of Creation. Instead, considered properly:

The term dominion carries no insult to our fellow creatures. We were all sent forth into the world with different gifts and attributes. Their gifts, the one their Creator intended for them, are good for many things—governing just isn’t one of them. Someone has to assume dominion, and looking around the earth we seem to be the best candidates, exactly because we humans are infinitely superior in reason and alone capable of knowing justice under a dominion still greater than our own.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Locke, *Two Treatises on Government*, 286–287 (§26 and 27). For a contrary reading of Locke’s view, see Squadrito, “Locke’s View of Dominion.”

<sup>41</sup>Clough, *On Animals*, 20. In fact, the entirety of Clough’s first chapter traces the theological (as well as creedal) history of this fundamental claim in light of its frequently anthropocentric misinterpretation. For a congruent perspective, see Linzey, “The Place of Animals in Creation.”

<sup>42</sup>Clough, *On Animals*, 23.

<sup>43</sup>Jones, “Humans and Animals,” 269.

<sup>44</sup>Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 441.

<sup>45</sup>Scully, *Dominion*, 12.

Humanity's place at the pinnacle of Creation is not a license to brutally subjugate everything beneath us; it is a charge to shepherd and care for everything under our God-given responsibility.

Furthermore, Jones continues on to point out that placing such constraints on one's understanding of the dominion mandate, "ought yield to a more fundamental noninstrumental dominion of care, love, reason, and thought" for that which we are charged to protect.<sup>46</sup> By following our duty to care for the creatures under our watch, we should come to care for them in themselves since the whole of Creation is inherently valuable. The Bible does not simply give humanity an arbitrary command from God to care for the world, but offers an explanation as well: God declared the whole of Creation—not simply humanity—good (Genesis 1:25, 31) and delights in it (Psalms 104:31). As Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si* explains, "Every creature is thus the object of the Father's tenderness, who gives it its place in the world. Even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of his love, and in its few seconds of existence, God enfolds it with his affection."<sup>47</sup> Given that humanity bears God's image, and that nonhuman animals are consistently declared an inextricable part of Creation, it seems a sensible conclusion that we will more fully experience life as God intended it when we love animals to the best of our abilities, just as God does.

This understanding of dominion as being grounded in love comes into even sharper focus when we consider the role of Christ who has "first place in everything" (Colossians 1:18). Despite the fact that Christians are under the dominion of Jesus, we are not ourselves without value and worth. As Jones asks, "Are we who are dominated by Christ mere means to his ends? In his dominion of service and love, does he not rather make himself a means to our ends? He dies after all, *for the sake of* our salvation."<sup>48</sup> This is, as Andrew Linzey has described it, the expression of divine power as "*katabasis*, humility, self-sacrifice, powerlessness" exemplified best by the crucified God.<sup>49</sup> Put differently, if humanity's possession of the *imago Dei* makes IMAGE true, then, as Clough describes, "this makes the image of God a moral responsibility, rather than an indicator of moral status"—that is to say, it makes IMAGE entail the sort of responsibilities expected by CARE.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Jones, "Humans and Animals," 269.

<sup>47</sup>In the same section, Francis also cites the apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*, which prayerfully describes the love of God, saying "For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made, for you would not have made anything if you had hated it" (11:24).

<sup>48</sup>Jones, "Humans and Animals," 269.

<sup>49</sup>Linzey, *Animal Gospel*, 39.

<sup>50</sup>Clough, "The Problem with Human Equality," 86. Elsewhere, Clough similarly argues that prioritizing an ontological separation between humans and nonhuman animals (instead of a particular function for humans within the created order) is akin to a pre-Darwinian reading of Genesis 1: as he explains, "the attribution of a particular vocation for human beings is insufficient to ground the qualitative distinction that the human-separatist position requires. Our task and responsibility before God is no doubt particular to the place we find ourselves

If Christians are to truly participate in Creation as God intended, then they must stay properly focused on the servant-mindedness of the dominion mandate as exemplified in Christ's service to humanity.<sup>51</sup> Although many possibilities exist for how faithful people might conceptualize "the good life," if we take a cue from God's original benedictions over a prelapsarian universe (as well as the glimmers of humanity's position in the eschaton), we can see that Creation is not something to be twisted to whatever ends we desire, but has an inherent worth connected to its Creator's ultimate plan, whatever that may be; true dominion involves recognizing, appreciating, facilitating, and encouraging the realization of this reality, not simply substituting selfish, speciesist ends in its place.

Moreover, the Bible presents numerous pictures of humans obliged to treat animals as intrinsically valuable creatures—and perhaps even rights-bearers of some sort—such as in Levitical laws that promote animal-directed freedom (Exodus 23:11 and Leviticus 25:7), rest (Exodus 20:10), and compensation for labor (Deuteronomy 22:4, 25:4), as well as stories of God's love for nonhuman animals, such as that of Jonah, wherein God is hesitant to destroy Nineveh given that it is filled both with people "and also much cattle" (Jonah 4:11; see also Numbers 22, Matthew 10:29–31, et al.). Clough comprehensively summarizes the biblical data involving analogies between human and nonhuman animals, demonstrating the co-dependency of scriptural interspecies cultural relationships, indicating the irrelevance of species boundaries for divine instruction, praise, and judgment, and displaying the frequency with which Jesus, in particular, recognized the commonality amongst all creatures; each of these lines of argument demonstrate "good theological reasons for recognizing the ways in which humans and other animals stand in the same place before God."<sup>52</sup> Indeed, this sort of biblical material lies behind John Berkman's condemnation of "theological speciesism" which he describes as "a failure to see the variety of nonhuman animals the way God sees them; that is, failing to see them as creatures of God who manifest God's goodness and give praise to God in their flourishing as creatures of diverse natures."<sup>53</sup> Importantly, in contrast to simple speciesism, a rejection of theological speciesism does not entail a rejection of IMAGE.<sup>54</sup>

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within God's creation, but the Bible repeatedly affirms that all creation participates in the praise of God and each living thing has a part in God's purposes." For more, see Clough, "All God's Creatures," 153.

<sup>51</sup>As Linzey says, "if humans are to claim lordship over creation, then it can only be a lordship of service. There can be no lordship without service" (*Animal Gospel*, 39).

<sup>52</sup>Clough, *On Animals*, 31–44.

<sup>53</sup>Berkman, "From Theological Speciesism to a Theological Ethology," 14.

<sup>54</sup>Clough makes the interesting observation that "In striking contrast to Peter Singer's slogan that 'all animals are equal,' it is notable that New Testament teaching on God's care of sparrows and obligations to pull sheep out of wells uses the animal examples to show how much more God must care for humans," suggesting once again that the recognition of theological animal rights does not require rejecting IMAGE; see "Consuming Animal Creatures," 40.

And though it is true that animal sacrifice is a central element of the biblical story, God's love for those sacrificial animals serves both to underline the significance of their deaths (beyond functioning simply as a ritualistic tool) and to further symbolize the culmination of those sacrifices in the horror and the beauty of the Cross. Kimberley Patton has persuasively argued on hermeneutical grounds that, given religious themes commonly interwoven with sacrificial practices (such as perfection, beautification, cooperation, and consecration), "far from objectifying animal victims, 'the logic of sacrifice,' *on the terms of its own self-presentation*, hallows and empowers them."<sup>55</sup> In a similar way, Clough's hamartiological analysis of nonhuman creatures in light of Christ's incarnation *as* a human animal concludes that "For Israel, therefore, nonhuman animals were sacrificed for the sake of humans; in Christ, a human animal was sacrificed not for humans but for the sake of all creatures."<sup>56</sup> For all of its problematic ethical implications, the ritual system of animal slaughter in the Bible, emically speaking, might well operate with a surprisingly honorific perspective towards those creatures being sacrificed.<sup>57</sup>

Therefore, the religious call for humans to exert themselves as servants of God's creation entails not simply avoiding certain harms, but positively caring for all creatures loved by God; not only is this the essence of the SERVICE hypothesis, but it aligns well with the *Zoopolis* model.

#### 4. *Is Heaven a Zoopolis?*

The preceding characterization of the *Zoopolis* political model, in conjunction with the presented defense of the SERVICE thesis, provides good reasons to affirm a zoopolitical eschatological community, insofar as SERVICE can also be thought to hold even in the afterlife. In this section, I respond to potential criticisms of this eschatological application to demonstrate the following theses:

- (1) SERVICE applies in the eschaton,
- (2) The *Zoopolis* model explains how (1) could operate.

Furthermore, in Section 5, I will offer a rough exegetical gloss to contextualize this view within popularly-accepted theological perspectives that take the imagery of Christian scripture to describe heaven as a zoopolis.

- (1) SERVICE Applies in the Eschaton

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<sup>55</sup>Patton, "Animal Sacrifice," 402 (emphasis in original). This line of thinking fits well with Linzey's point that "Christian sacrifice . . . involves the sacrifice of the higher for the lower and not the reverse"; see Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, 43 (cf. 40–46).

<sup>56</sup>Clough, *On Animals*, 129, Jonathan Klawans similarly discusses the connection of ritualistic slaughter with the penitent believer's desire to emulate God, arguing ultimately that the biblical model of animal sacrifice honorably recapitulates the relationship between God and humanity: "as God is to Israel, so is Israel to their domesticated animals" (*Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 72). On Klawans's analysis, this also means that the "spiritualization" of sacrifice in the New Testament—such as in the form of the Eucharistic meal—likewise promotes the same kind of ritualistic purity (221–222).

<sup>57</sup>For a contrary position, see Kasperbauer, *Subhuman*, 35–38.

Both theological and philosophical motivations could undergird a denial of (1). For example, on the view that God's presence in heaven provides for the needs of all creatures therein, SERVICE might well be rendered unnecessary in the afterlife: what need would there be for humans to care for the interests of nonhuman creatures if those interests are already protected by God? Such theology questions humanity's eschatological purpose as caretakers without necessarily staking out a position on theological anthropology or doctrines like the *imago Dei*. However, it is important to note that the story of the dominion mandate indicates its conferral within the Edenic paradise, a context of perfect creaturely provision akin to the heavenly state; *if* the dominion mandate applied in the initial, prelapsarian case, *then* there is no immediate theological reason to deny its applicability in the postmortem case simply by dint of God's sustaining presence.

Philosophically, (1) could be denied on the grounds that heaven's perfect goodness entails the complete freedom of nonhuman animals from the influence of human agents, perhaps even excluding the possibility that nonhuman creatures could depend on humans in an infinitely good afterlife.<sup>58</sup> This objection fails for at least two reasons: firstly, interaction between humans and nonhumans is not necessarily problematic (so a perfect state would not necessarily dispense with such encounters) and, secondly, the key form of interspecies interaction prescribed by the *Zoopolis* model—agent-dependency—is not necessarily harmful, nor is it precluded, in principle, from heaven.

Regarding the first point, although it is clearly not difficult to produce examples of cross-species interactions involving humans that do harm both to domesticated and to non-domesticated nonhuman creatures, this is not a necessary feature of such relationships—particularly when such interactions are bounded within the constraints of the dominion mandate as explained in Section 3. In addition to the theologically-informed circumscriptions laid out above, the contextualist view of animal rights proposed by Palmer similarly constrains moral action towards other species insofar as humans, for example, cannot wrongfully interfere with the interests of other creatures.<sup>59</sup> While such a view *could* be extended to preclude human/nonhuman interaction altogether, in the absence of such additional arguments the position here defended can easily endorse human actions designed to support the interests of nonhuman creatures. Furthermore, on a view that strongly condemns human interference in nonhuman affairs, a key reason for precluding even humanitarian aid is the unavoidable lack of certainty regarding unintended consequences; presumably, such worries would be allayed by the otherwise-heavenly

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<sup>58</sup>My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this issue.

<sup>59</sup>Palmer, "What (If Anything) Do We Owe to Wild Animals?," 28. Elsewhere, Palmer explicitly positions her project as a development of Regan's position; for more, see Palmer, *Animal Ethics in Context*, 38–39.

conditions of the eschaton entailed by (1) without falling prey to paternalistic “zoo-ification” concerns about nonhuman autonomy.<sup>60</sup>

Particularly within the morally perfect state of heaven, it is feasible for cross-species relationships to further the welfare-interests of nonhuman creatures (even from within exceedingly thin relationships which respect the sovereignty of animals in the wild), so we cannot conclude that an infinitely good afterlife must preclude the fostering of such relationships. Importantly, this is true for each category outlined by the model: in different ways, defined by the needs of the creatures in question, the *Zoopolis* model aims to preserve the interests of domesticated, wild, and liminal creatures *qua* each kind of creature—a fact made all the more salient by the notion that the violence and fear at the core of many cross-species relationships seems unlikely to obtain in heaven. This could be argued on theological grounds, with reference to the loving, and love-promoting, beatific vision, or philosophically, given that there would be no *reason* for species to fear each other in heaven.

However, some might argue that at least certain interspecies relationships necessarily include some level of enmity; Elizabeth Anderson, for example, has described that, for many non-domesticated creatures, humans are “in a permanent state of war with them, without possibility of negotiating for peace.”<sup>61</sup> To Anderson, this state of perpetual conflict is rooted in two facts: “the essential opposition of their interests to ours and their incapacity for reciprocal accommodation with us.”<sup>62</sup> The first of Anderson’s conditions is clearly not problematic for the paradisaical state: whether via a hyper-literalized reading of Matthew 6:19–21 or as a corollary to passages like Revelation 21:4, such interspecies conflict appears to cease after death; this makes sense if the current “war” stems from resources which are finite on Earth, but will be unlimited in the eschaton.<sup>63</sup> Anderson’s second condition seems met by the understanding that the Final State is comparable to the Primal State (as in the Garden); if this is so, then the fear divinely inserted into the human-animal relationship in Genesis 9:2 should likely be removed—in the heavenly absence of reasons for animals to fear us (or, as Isaiah 11 depicts, for us to fear animals)

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<sup>60</sup>On this, see Panagiotarakou, “Right to Place,” 124.

<sup>61</sup>Anderson, “Animal Rights and the Value of Nonhuman Life,” 288. In this specific case, Anderson was discussing a variety of liminal creatures, but I take it that roughly identical arguments could be made for the relevant interests of wild creatures.

<sup>62</sup>Anderson, “Animal Rights and the Value of Nonhuman Life,” 289.

<sup>63</sup>On the different problem of predation in the eschaton, Clough argues that all creatures will be substantially changed in the eschaton such that predation is “no longer a possibility”; see *On Animals*, 158–162. Against this, Southgate advances an intentionally mysterious model of heaven that “preserves the characteristics of species, but without pain or death or destruction,” wherein predators are able to somehow remain predatory; see *The Groaning of Creation*, 85–90. Either way, the moral questions pertinent to such interspecies relationships are orthogonal to those raised by the *Zoopolis* model which focuses specifically on human interactions with nonhuman creatures.

then there would be no reason why healthy, positive relationships could not develop.

A rejection of (1), then, might require one to assert that specifically dependent animals are nevertheless wronged *qua* their status as dependent creatures. But, as discussed in Section 1, there is no good reason to think that dependent agents are any less politically empowered or more morally disadvantaged than independent agents.

Furthermore, the conditions which precipitate dependent agency—namely, the fostering of loving, trusting, attentive relationships—are not only good, but often significantly ground our personalities and character insofar as, in the words of Kevin Timpe, they become “folded into [the] self-understanding and identities” of people who cultivate such experiences.<sup>64</sup> While different (and differently-abled) body types possess “mere-differences,” this category is distinct from “bad-differences” that negatively affect a person’s welfare; following Timpe, the inherent goods of social practices undergirding dependent agency might be sufficient for their continuation in a heavenly state, even if such practices often manifest merely functionally in our premortem state to prevent mere-differences from becoming bad-differences.<sup>65</sup> In a different manner, humanity’s social nature might itself qualify as what Timpe calls a potential antecedent good of “beatified disability” insofar as it is a “general feature of creation that make at least some kinds of disability possible”; that is to say, it might not be possible for human society to be genuinely realized—either in this life or the next—without simultaneously manifesting at least some dependent agents.<sup>66</sup> Altogether, both humans and nonhuman creatures can be dependent agents in different ways—there is no good reason to think that such beings will not be present in an infinitely good afterlife *while remaining* the same beings they were before they died.<sup>67</sup>

In short, we have both theological reasons (based in a story of God’s creative intentions) and philosophical reasons (grounded in a recognition

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<sup>64</sup>Timpe, “Disabled Beatitude,” 247.

<sup>65</sup>Note that this position is in direct contrast with Swinburne’s notion that God could allow the suffering of one person instrumentally for the good of some other person; on this, see *Providence and the Problem of Evil*, 235. My point is not only that the person does not suffer *qua* a dependent agent, but that the person, furthermore, experiences the goodness of the loving relationship which manifests their agency.

<sup>66</sup>Timpe, “Disabled Beatitude,” 254; as Timpe puts it “disability is an inherent part of actual human embodiment.”

<sup>67</sup>For more, see Timpe, “Defiant Afterlife,” and Yong, *The Bible, Disability, and the Church*. For a contrary position, which suggests that nonhuman animals might be “enhanced” in such a way as to make their cognitive function apparently similar to humans, thereby precipitating *independent* agency for postmortem humans, see Dougherty, *The Problem of Animal Pain*, 3. Dougherty thinks that this sort of cognitive enhancement naturally entails nonhuman animals gaining the ability to speak with humans; even if this is not the case, the presence of God and other spiritual beings could presumably serve as human-nonhuman translators, should the need arise. For a critique of heavenly cognitive enhancements for animals, see Hereth, “Two Arguments for Animal Immortality,” 188–190.

of the potential goodness of cross-species relationships and the inherent goodness of dependent-agency-manifesting relationships) to affirm (1): SERVICE applies in the eschaton.

(2) The *Zoopolis* Model Explains How (1) Could Operate

To deny (2) is to argue that there is at least one good reason to think that the *Zoopolis* model could *not* promote SERVICE in the eschaton, perhaps by highlighting some distinction between premortem and postmortem existence that could establish how the model justifiably applies to only one state. Clearly, Donaldson and Kymlicka's motivations for outlining the model in the first place are *not* eschatologically oriented; they explain in the first paragraph of the book that their concern is to create "new possibilities, conceptually and politically, for *overcoming current roadblocks to progressive change*."<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, if it can be demonstrated that the *Zoopolis* model not only applies to the non-ideal (or, in theological terms, "fallen") earthly state, but to the idealized heavenly state as well, then theists who regularly pray for God's will to be done "on Earth as it is in Heaven" will have even more reason to consider the progressive changes Donaldson and Kymlicka are concerned to promote.<sup>69</sup>

Briefly, Donaldson and Kymlicka identify nine rights and duties entailed by community membership which can be extended to countenance equal consideration for domesticated animals (D):

- D1. Basic socialization
- D2. Mobility and the sharing of public space
- D3. Duties of protection
- D4. Use of animal products
- D5. Use of animal labor
- D6. Medical care
- D7. Sex and reproduction
- D8. Predation/diet
- D9. Political representation<sup>70</sup>

Each of these elements either fits well with the peaceful picture of the New Heavens and New Earth for *both* humans and animals or for *neither* humans *nor* animals. For example, (D3) and (D6) are ruled out for both humans and nonhuman animals in the next world, for if there is truly "neither death, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain" (Revelation 21:4) then

<sup>68</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 1, emphasis added.

<sup>69</sup>This is the essence of Linzey's overall theological project: to defend the care of animals now on the basis of God's original intention and ultimate plan.

<sup>70</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 123.

concerns about protection from harm or the provision of medical care become likewise absent.

On the other hand, (D1) and (D2) entail “learning how to live with the animals in our midst” in an uncoercive manner and promoting the positive right of mobility (beyond the negative right of “freedom from restraint”); as described previously, removal of the fear which functionally divides many humans and animals—and the fostering of interspecies agential relationships—could easily accommodate the desires inherent to Donaldson and Kymlicka’s first two areas.<sup>71</sup> Notably, (D4) and (D5) are not absolute prohibitions on the use of animal products or labor, but simply restrictions that we might use such means only “under conditions that are consistent with their agency and their membership status” within the community.<sup>72</sup> Because an egalitarian picture of heaven, wherein all members experience full equality before God, could easily accommodate a variety of potential exchange systems free of exploitation, this element could easily obtain in the relevant way.<sup>73</sup>

While (D7) and (D8) raise interesting questions about the nature of embodiment in the eschaton, there is no good reason to differentiate between humans and nonhuman animals in this regard either: whatever sort of sexual relationships and dietary habits (including a potential complete lack of both) are enjoyed by humans in heaven could also be enjoyed by animals. Finally, (D9) is also equally applicable to humans and animals: on the specifically Christian belief that Jesus is the leader of all Creation for “all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:15–20)—that is to say, given that Jesus is *Christ*—then no matter what the political community amounts to in heaven, it is commanded by the Lord of both humans and animals. In other words, the biblical refrain that one day “every knee shall bow and every tongue confess” (Rom. 14:11, Phil. 2:10) is best understood as a cross-species prophecy.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Importantly, this is not to say that individuals carry a responsibility for building relationships with each other; just as, presumably, humans will not be obligated to be close friends with every other individual in Paradise, particular humans will carry no obligation to form relationships with particular animals. The constraint here is on a structural, not personal, level. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this concern. See also n. 26.

<sup>72</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 135.

<sup>73</sup>Although space constraints prevent a full development of my thinking on this point here, I’m inclined to follow Elizabeth Anderson’s critique of luck egalitarianism as especially relevant to considerations of the afterlife; *relational* equality is the relevant paradigm for any ethical political framework and could rightly be expected to obtain in heaven—if this is true, then even capitalistic exchange between morally perfected creatures may be possible, since the social structures between them would likewise be perfected (though I admit I have, at this point, simply posited, rather than defended, this suggestion). For more on luck-vs-relational egalitarianism, see Anderson, “The Fundamental Disagreement between Luck Egalitarians and Relational Egalitarians” and “What is the Point of Equality?” For more on heaven as a state of perfect equality, see Blomberg, “Degrees of Reward in the Kingdom of Heaven?”

<sup>74</sup>On this, again, see Pawl, “Exploring Theological Zoology.”

Regarding wild animals (W), the *Zoopolis* model argues for two main duties for humans:

- W1. Respect for sovereign territory
- W2. Non-exploitative cooperation as needed<sup>75</sup>

As discussed previously, particularly within both the constraints of the dominion mandate (properly construed) and the loving presence of the beatific vision, there is little reason to worry that both (W1) and (W2) could be honored in the afterlife.

Finally, Donaldson and Kymlicka point out that the rights and responsibilities relevant to denizenship are, by nature, difficult to concretely define (since most such conversations are concerned with either full citizens or full non-citizens), but a variety of good reasons often lead humans to nevertheless negotiate politically-liminal relationships.<sup>76</sup> In roughly the same way, the difficulties of drafting a model for liminal animal (L) denizenship for those creatures who span the domesticated/wild boundary is tricky, but three basic areas of concern (with associated duties for humans to respect) can be highlighted within the *Zoopolis* model that respectfully treats liminal animals as the distinct kinds of creatures that they are:

- L1. Security of residency
- L2. Reciprocity of denizenship
- L3. Anti-stigma safeguards<sup>77</sup>

As with the cases of domesticated and wild creatures, many of the reasons why humans and animals conflict over earthly space seem unlikely to be problematic in a heavenly space, making (L1) a non-issue for the present argument. The concern for respect at the core of both (L2) and (L3) is similarly easily accommodated within the loving context of beatified space; at its core, a heavenly theory of denizenship would simply allow creatures to be what they are, promoting interspecies relationships insofar as they do not interfere with these other concerns.

Notably, the larger number of obligations on human relationships with domesticated animals does not entail an axiological claim about the value of such creatures; it is simply a recognition of the thicker duties that come naturally from living in community together and relying on each other. Altogether, each of (D1)–(D9), (W1)–(W2), and (L1)–(L3) are fully compatible with standard pictures of embodied eschatology, particularly from a Christian perspective. That is to say, the critique of (2) here considered is undercut.

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<sup>75</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 205–209.

<sup>76</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 239.

<sup>77</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 239–240.

### 5. *Heaven Is a Zoopolis*

Finally, consider the picture of the Final State often derived from Christian scripture which sees humans and animals living together in harmonious community within the ever-present love of God. The Bible is clear that God cares for animals (Psalms 50:10–11), interacts with animals (Job 12:7–10), and receives worship from animals (Psalms 148; Revelation 5:13), not only in this life, but in the next (Isaiah 65:17–25). Just as God declared the Edenic paradise filled with animals to be “good” in the first pages of Genesis, so too does God declare in Revelation 21:5 “Behold, I am making all things new!”—a line which has led centuries of interpreters to see the Final State as a restored recapitulation of the Primal State. Edward Quinn has pointed out that it is impossible to understand the continuity between the Old and the New Creation unless the animal inhabitants of the former continue into the latter;<sup>78</sup> a point echoed by John Wesley in his sermon “The General Deliverance,” which contains the following passage worth quoting at length:

The whole brute creation will then, undoubtedly, be restored, not only to the vigour, strength, and swiftness which they had at their creation, but to a far higher degree of each than they ever enjoyed. They will be restored, not only to that measure of understanding which they had in paradise, but to a degree of it as much higher than that, as the understanding of an elephant is beyond that of a worm. And whatever affections they had in the garden of God, will be restored with vast increase; being exalted and refined in a manner which we ourselves are not now able to comprehend.<sup>79</sup>

If humans are likewise present in the New Heavens and New Earth then, just as in the beginning, it is reasonable to expect that humans and animals interact.<sup>80</sup> The arguments provided here suggest that *Zoopolis* offers a promising avenue for conceptualizing how that interaction might look.

Donaldson and Kymlicka suggest that a taste of the zoopolis might now be found in the example of the animal sanctuary;<sup>81</sup> for theists, the eschatological vision of interspecies harmony found in the Biblical depiction of the New Heavens and New Earth offers a similar, undoubtedly more preferable, study. To return to where this paper began, in both the animal sanctuary and the heavenly zoopolis, the concern to best accomplish CARE is predicated on a functional appreciation of IMAGE as described jointly in SERVICE. Also, in both cases, humans and nonhuman animals mutually benefit from the development of interspecies relationships, best exemplifying the sort of trust and love that grounds our most utopic conceptions of political life. If this is indeed what heaven looks like, then

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<sup>78</sup>Quinn, “Animals in Heaven?,” 224.

<sup>79</sup>Wesley, “Sermon 60.”

<sup>80</sup>Notably, Genesis 2:19 presents animal-human interaction as not only the immediate consequence of, but a key justification for, the creation of animals.

<sup>81</sup>Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 121.

theists—particularly theists who pray for God’s will to be done “on Earth as it is in Heaven”—should strongly consider what moves we can make as servants in this world that will best represent all of our lives in the next.<sup>82</sup>

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