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What about Bambi?
An Examination of the Evidential Problem of Evil

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Does the existence of pointless or meaningless evils in the world provide us with enough evidence to conclude that it is improbable that God does not exist? This question posed by William Rowe is the basis for the evidential argument of evil. According to Rowe, there appears to be instances of pointless suffering—such as a fawn suffering horrible burns before death—which achieve no good or prevent no worse evil. From this he concludes that God does not exist. Stephen Wykstra, a skeptical theist, objects to Rowe's claim that God does not exist on the basis that we are in no position to know God's choices. In this paper, I aim to show that Wykstra's skeptical response to Rowe's evidential argument is valid; from this we can conclude that the alleged problem of evil is not a problem for the theist.

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A Note to the Reader

In this work, I present various responses to William Rowe's form of the evidential problem of evil and discuss the implications of these responses as they pertain to theism. Because there are a number of theistic traditions, it is important to note that in this paper I adopt the classical theist definition of God. According to classical theism, there is one God who is omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing), and omnibenevolent (wholly good). Christians, Jews, and Muslims uphold the classical notion of God. I chose to define God in accordance with classical theism to remain consistent with the definition of God used in Rowe's original argument.

The distinction between classical theism and other theistic traditions is crucial when discussing the problem of evil because the answers offered by one tradition may conflict with the core beliefs of another tradition. For example, proponents of open theism believe that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. However, they do not hold Him responsible for the existence of evil in the world because they maintain that God does not know the choices they will make before they are made. In classical theism, this sort of defense, which incorporates human free will, only exculpates God in instances of moral evils, not natural evils (an idea discussed in more detail in the first chapter).

Please note that this paper is written in the name of scholarship, independent of my personal values. The opinions I choose to include in the succeeding chapters are selected on the basis of their contributions to the argument as a whole.

Chapter I- The Problem of Evil

> We here treat of a question of the greatest difficulty and importance. It relates to the whole of human life. It would be of much greater consequence to find a remedy for our evils; but no remedy is to be discovered, and we are reduced to the sad necessity of tracing out their origin.
>
> -Voltaire[1]

Why do bad things happen to good people? Most of us have asked this question at one time or another. Some say everything happens for a reason. Others believe it is simply a matter of bad luck. In our search for an answer to this perplexing question, we begin to wonder if there is a Higher Being who determines our fate, a Being responsible for the misfortune of the good. Inevitably, the question takes on a far more disconcerting form: Why does God allow for bad things to happen to good people? With this question, we open Pandora's box and are faced with the problem of evil.

On its most basic level, the problem of evil can best be stated thusly: How can there be an omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), omnibenevolent (wholly good) God while there is still evil in the world? Although there are various degrees of evil, evil itself can be divided into two categories: moral evil and natural evil. Moral evil encompasses all evil acts that stem from human choice. Murder, for instance, is considered a moral evil. Similarly, a person who decides to torture an animal is guilty of committing a moral evil. With very few exceptions, such as someone suffering from a mental illness, moral evils are avoidable as they are brought about as a matter of human free will. In contrast to moral evils, natural evils are not the result of free choice. Natural

disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions are natural evils. Couldn't an all powerful, wholly good God prevent both moral and natural evils? If so, theists appear to be faced with a genuine problem.

Section I: A Timeless Problem- A History of Evil

Philosophers and theologians alike have been studying the problem of evil for thousands of years. The Enlightenment philosopher David Hume cites Epicurus (341-270 BC) as one of the first philosophers to state the problem clearly.[2] His formulation is a trilemma, commonly referred to by philosophers and theologians as the "Epicurean paradox." Although Epicurus' argument contains five rhetorical questions, the form of the argument is a trilemma because the truth of the final conclusion rests on the acceptance of the preceding premises. Epicurus' questions are as follows:

> Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent.
> Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent.
> Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil?
> Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?[3]

Epicurus presents this paradox to show that the notion that God is omnipotent and wholly good is inconsistent with the existence of evil. Because omnipotence is one of the fundamental characteristics attributed to God, the rejection of God's omnipotence challenges the existence of God Himself. Similarly, the second premise of the Epicurean paradox maintains that for God to exist, He must be wholly good. If God has the power to

prevent evil but chooses not to, then He is not omnibenevolent and the conclusion may be drawn that He does not exist.

About a century after Epicurus introduced his paradox, a new interpretation to the problem was proposed courtesy of Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD).[4] Unlike his predecessor's argument, Saint Augustine based his on Christian theology. He argued that humans were created in God's image such that they were given the gift of free will. Humans choose to use their freedom to do evil, thus God is not responsible for evil in the world. Furthermore, God creates everything in the world, but evil is not a thing in itself. According to Saint Augustine, evil is *privatio boni* or the privation of good.

Almost 1,200 years later, Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) offers one of the first skeptical responses to the debate and serves as an inspiration for prominent philosophers such as David Hume (1711-1776).[5] Much to the dismay of religious leaders at the time, Bayle maintained that no religious groups could solve the problem of evil because if there were an answer, there would be no way to verify that the answer is correct. Furthermore, he claimed that because evil cannot come from a wholly good God–evil cannot come from good–there must be two gods in existence: one good and one evil.

By contrast, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) develops an argument which is often incorporated into theistic responses to the problem of evil.[6] In order to fully comprehend the argument that Leibniz sets forth, it is essential to understand the principle of sufficient reason. The principle of sufficient reason (PSR) is the thesis that everything that occurs or exists has an explanation, everything has a cause, and everything is explainable.[7] In short, PSR can be thought of as a broader law of causation.

Leibniz holds that the existence of evil is not inconsistent with God's omnipotence or benevolence because, he claims, the world we live in is the best of all possible worlds. Leibniz's argument can be summarized thusly:

P1: God creates infinite universes.

P2: Only one of the universes can exist in reality or actuality.

P3: God's choices are subject to the principle of sufficient reason, that is, God has reason to choose one universe over another.

P4: God is wholly good.

C1: Therefore, the universe that God chose to exist is the best of all possible worlds.

Although the concept of infinite universes is disputable, the conclusion that Leibniz reaches in the above syllogism is extremely troublesome due to the fact that there is evil in the world. How can the best of all possible worlds contain evil? Leibniz answers this question by saying that moral evils come from humans, not God, and that natural evils are merely perceived to be evil by humans. Moreover, the world was not created specifically for humans and, therefore, the evils we identify in this world do not change the fact that this is the best of all possible worlds.

Leibniz's response can be understood through the following analogy: Suppose I am an adult hosting a Halloween party, which I will be inviting all of my friends to. I firmly believe that my party will be the best Halloween party because I planned it with

my guests in mind. As it happens, on the night of the party, one of my guests arrives with her younger sibling and her sibling's friend. Although I believed that my party was the best Halloween party, the two children in attendance thought that the party was terrible. The children hated the food I served, thought the movies I showed were too scary, and had no idea how to play with a Ouija board. Despite the feelings of the children, my friends thought that the party was the best Halloween party they have ever been to. The fact that the children hated the party does not mean that the party was not the best Halloween party on the basis that the children judged a party that was not made with them in mind. My Halloween party was planned according to my friends' interests and was suitable for their age. The success of my party is not based on views of the children who tagged along with my friend, but rather on the opinions of my friends who the party was planned around. Leibniz would say that we are like the children in the analogy. Just as the greatness of the Halloween party is not based on our views, our perception of the world does not mean that this world is not the best of all possible worlds.

Since the time of Epicurus, the debate over the problem of evil has grown in complexity and can be separated into two distinct arguments: the logical problem and the evidential problem. Before proceeding, please note that the names assigned to the aforementioned arguments are merely traditional labels used to differentiate between the two forms of the argument and are not reflective of the quality of the arguments themselves. Logical arguments rely on evidence, while evidential arguments depend on logic. Because the logical problem follows the form of Epicurus' original argument from evil, it will be discussed first.

Section II: The Logical Problem of Evil

The logical problem of evil, also known as the deductive argument from evil, and the *a priori* argument from evil, has been used to advance the claim that God's existence is logically inconsistent with the existence of evil. J.L. Mackie (1917-1981) is credited with developing the modern logical argument from evil:

P1: God is omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good.

P2: Evil exists.

P3: A good thing always eliminates evil as far as it can.

P4: There are no limits to what an omnipotent thing can do.

C1: Therefore, there is no omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good God.[8]

According to Mackie, the problem of evil does not exist for people who believe "that God is not wholly good, or not quite omnipotent, or that evil does not exist, or that good is not opposed to the kind of evil that exists, or that there are limits to what an omnipotent thing can do."[9] Additionally, Mackie discusses four "fallacious solutions," which are centered on God's ability to break rules of logic such as creating a world where good exists without evil.[10]

Mackie outlines several what he calls "adequate solutions" meant to restrict the meaning of omnipotence, to say that evil is an illusion, to uphold Augustine's view of evil, and to say, "partial evil" is universally good.[11] The fourth and undeniably most significant solution explained by Mackie is based on the idea that, "Evil is due to human

free will."[12] Many theists believe God created humans with free will. However, Mackie asserts that free will cannot serve as an answer to the existence of moral evils in the world. Therefore, we are seemingly left with two scenarios: God created humans as automata without free will or God created humans with free will. Mackie chooses an option beyond the dichotomy that God created humans with free will such that we always choose to do good. Critics later question as to how this answer makes humans different than automata.

In his work, "The Free Will Defense," Alvin Plantinga responds to Mackie's criticisms of using free will as a solution to the problem of evil. He adopts Thomas Aquinas' view of divine omnipotence, which states that God can do all things so long as they are logically possible.[13] He uses this idea to show that it is logically impossible for God to have created us with free will such that we always choose to do good. If this were the case that we were created in a way that we had to choose to do good, we would not be free to do evil. Furthermore, Plantinga defends God's choice in creating a world containing evil by saying that God has a good reason for creating a world with evil. That is, to create humans with free will such that they could choose not to do evil. To this day, Plantinga's free will defense is generally accepted as a solution to the logical problem of evil mainly because free will is good in itself and thus outweighs evil.

Section III: The Evidential Problem of Evil

The evidential problem of evil, also called the inductive argument from evil, and the *a posteriori* argument from evil, centers around the question: Does the existence of pointless or meaningless evils in the world provide us with enough evidence to conclude

that it is improbable that God does not exist? First formulated by William Rowe, the evidential argument can be summed up in the following syllogism:

> P1: Pointless or meaningless evil exists.
> P2: An omnipotent and supremely good God would not allow pointless or meaningless evil to exist.
> C1: Therefore, an omnipotent and supremely good God does not exist.[14]

In his groundbreaking work, "The Inductive Argument from Evil against the Existence of God," Rowe sets out to show that because there are pointless or meaningless evils in the world, it is highly unlikely that there is an omnipotent and supremely good God in existence. Because omnipotence and omnibenevolence are two fundamental qualities of God, the conclusion of Rowe's argument can be further simplified to the statement: God does not exist.

In order to understand how he arrives at this highly controversial conclusion, Rowe reviews the premises he formulates to substantiate his conclusion. Because P2 is more intuitive, Rowe begins his explanation by analyzing God's reasons for allowing evil to occur:

> Let "s_1" refer to some instance of extreme human or animal suffering which an omnipotent, wholly good being, "OG," could prevent.
>
> Either:
> (i) there is some greater good, G, such that G is obtainable by OG only if OG permits s_1 ,

or

(ii) there is some greater good, G, such that G is obtainable by OG only if OG permits either s_1 or some evil equally bad or worse,

or

(iii) s_1 is such that it is preventable by OG only if OG permits some evil equally bad or worse. [15]

At a first glance, the above conditions appear to be conveying the same message. However, when these conditions are examined in greater depth, it is clear that the consequences of these conditions are strikingly different. In the first alternative (i), the greater good can only be obtained when God allows s_1 to occur. The second possibility (ii) is similar to the first in that a greater good can be achieved by s_1. However, the goods in this case (ii) are also achievable when some event worse than s_1 happens. In the last instance (iii), no greater good is achieved, but s_1 can be prevented by God if He allows something potentially worse to occur. Only in conditions one and two are greater goods achieved by some evil. No greater good is achieved in the third instance, which is God having the power to choose between two evils.

In order to make what Rowe has in mind clearer, let us work with a specific example. Let s_1 be the pain a child feels receiving a flu shot and and let OG be the child's parent. We would then have:

Either:

(i) there is some greater good, CHILD'S HEALTH, such that CHILD'S HEALTH is obtainable by the parent only if the parent permits the pain of the child,

> or
>
> (ii) there is some greater good, CHILD'S HEALTH, such that CHILD'S HEALTH is obtainable by the parent only if the parent permits either the pain of the child or some evil equally bad or worse,
>
> (iii) the pain of a child is such that it is preventable by the parent only if the parent permits some evil equally bad or worse.

In the first instance, the child attains good health by receiving the flu shot. However, the parent allows the child to experience pain to achieve good health. In the second instance, the child attains good health when the parent decides to allow the child to experience the pain of getting the shot or the parent decides to allow the child to not get the shot, but in doing so allows the child to contract the flu. In the third instance, the child does not experience the pain of the shot, but experiences similar pain or contracts the flu. The main point that Rowe tries to convey is that there are instances where a greater good can be achieved only through some necessary evil.

By treating our relationship with God analogously to the relationship between a child and his or her parent, we can come to understand that just as a good parent would not allow his or her child to experience unnecessary pain or suffering, a good God would not allow humans to experience unnecessary pain or suffering. The parent analogy appears to make the second premise acceptable to theists and atheists alike.

Because there is usually agreement on the second premise of Rowe's argument, we turn to P1, the major source of contention between theists and atheists. There are instances that do not appear to fall in line with the vaccination example, where evil must occur to bring about a greater good or prevent a worse evil from transpiring; we would

call these evils pointless or meaningless. Rowe's famous "Bambi" example illustrates one such instance of pointless or meaningless suffering:

> Suppose in some distant forest lighting strikes a dead tree, resulting in a forest fire. In the fire a fawn is trapped, horribly burned, and lies in terrible agony for several days before death relieves its suffering. So far as we can see, the fawn's intense suffering is pointless. For there does not appear to be any greater good such that the prevention of the fawn's suffering would require either the loss of that good or the occurrence of an evil equally bad or worse. Nor does there seem to be any equally bad or worse evil so connected to the fawn's suffering that it would have had to occur had the fawn's suffering been prevented. Could an omnipotent, omniscient being have prevented the fawn's apparently pointless suffering? The answer is obvious, as even the theist will insist. An omnipotent, omniscient being could have easily prevented the fawn from being horribly burned, or, given the burning, could have spared the fawn the intense suffering by quickly ending it's life, rather than allowing the fawn to lie in terrible agony for several days. [16]

As Rowe and many other proponents[17] argue, the fawn's suffering did not appear to serve any purpose and could have been easily prevented by God, leading them to conclude that the fawn's suffering is evidence that God does not exist. In contrast, many opponents of the evidential argument would say that the fawn's suffering must have served a greater purpose, because otherwise God would not have allowed it to happen. If an opponent were to deny that the fawn's suffering served a purpose, he or she would be saying that God allows for pointless or meaningless evils to occur, which is problematic since it

contradicts the second premise of the argument, which we have already found acceptable to both theists and their opponents. Unlike moral evils, natural evils such as the one described above cannot be solved by the free will defense. Therefore, we must hold God responsible for these evils.

Section IV: Thesis Paragraph

In this paper, I will discuss Stephen Wykstra's Condition of Reasonable Epistemic Access (CORNEA) principle and how he uses this principle to refute the first premise of Rowe's evidential argument. Additionally, I will provide an overview of Rowe's initial response to Wykstra's criticism, as well as Wykstra's rebuttal to Rowe. In the succeeding chapter, I will present Michael Bergmann's skeptical theist objection to Rowe's first premise and then explain William P. Alston's agnostic response to the evidential argument. Next, I will show how the criticism posed by Trent Dougherty and a linguistic principles discussed by Thomas Nagel can jeopardize Wykstra's position. Finally, I will defend Wykstra against a certain kind of objection that someone like Rowe might pose. I will use Nagel's bat case and Dougherty's criticism of Wykstra to challenge CORNEA, then incorporating ideas proposed by Aristotle, Maimonides, and St. Thomas Aquinas, I will show how Wykstra can respond to this challenge. Ultimately, in this paper, I aim to show that Wykstra's skeptical response to Rowe's evidential argument is valid; from this we can conclude that the alleged problem of evil is not a problem for the theist.

Chapter II-Skeptical Theism

Skeptical theism is the thesis that human beings are in no position to make arguments against the existence of God since those arguments depend on us accepting unknowable premises. For instance, William Rowe argues that pointless or meaningless evils exist. However, according to the principles of skeptical theism, he cannot prove this claim to be true. The position of the skeptical theist is summarized as follows:

> So according to the skeptical theist, we simply are in no position to reasonably judge that God could have prevented the fawn's five days of terrible suffering without losing some outweighing good or having to permit some equally bad or worse evil. Our limited minds are simply unable to think of the goods that the mind of God would know.[18]

For the sake of simplicity, the position of the skeptical theist can be regarded as one of optimistic agnosticism.

Section I: Wykstra's CORNEA

Unsurprisingly, Rowe's 1979 paper "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism" was met with much opposition. One of the most notable critics of Rowe's evidential argument is Stephen Wykstra. Even Rowe admits that his argument was "challenged by several philosophers; but no one [in his opinion] has raised such an important point (and clarifications) as has Wykstra."[19] Wykstra's Condition of

Reasonable Epistemic Access (CORNEA) was the first of many cogent skeptical solutions offered by philosophers studying Rowe's evidential argument.

Recall that Rowe's argument is based on the premise that there are instances of "apparently pointless suffering,"[20] such as was the case with the fawn in the burning forest. Despite the conclusion Rowe draws from these instances of "apparently pointless suffering," he acknowledges that without omniscience, we are unable to say with certainty if the suffering we see is truly pointless. Ultimately, Rowe ends his discussion of pointless suffering by admitting that "we are not in a position to prove [that pointless or meaningless evils exist] is true…But it is one thing to *know* or *prove* that [that pointless or meaningless evils exist] is true and quite another thing to have *rational grounds* for believing [that pointless or meaningless evils exist] to be true." [21] Wykstra's criticisms stem from this unverifiable epistemic claim.

In "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: On Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance,'" Wykstra argues "that the evidence of suffering, as Rowe adduces it, does not disconfirm theism (or confirm atheism) even in the weak sense."[22] After restating Rowe's original argument and discussing the shortcomings of Bruce Reichenbach and Richard Swinburne's objections to the evidential argument, Wykstra introduces CORNEA. According to Wykstra, CORNEA can be used as a guideline when making epistemic claims based on what appears to be the case. Wykstra maintains that a person can claim to have knowledge of p through some cognized situation "s:"

> On the basis of cognized situation s, human H is entitled to claim 'It appears that p' only if it is reasonable for H to believe that, given her

> cognitive faculties and the use she has made of them, if p were not the case, s would likely be different than it is in some way discernible by her.[23]

It must be noted that Wykstra does not expect us to be like the "Architect" in the movie the Matrix, sitting in a room full of televisions playing every possible outcome from a given situation, but rather holds that for an individual to make an epistemic claim, he or she must be able to know how a situation would be different if the claimed outcome was not the case. Consider the following example: A six year old named Tom walks outside and notices the sidewalk in front of his house is wet, which prompts him to tell his parents 'It appears to have been raining.' It is perfectly reasonable for Tom to believe that the sidewalk is wet because it was raining earlier, but when CORNEA is applied to this situation there are a number of subtle factors to take into account. For instance, the person making the epistemic claim here is a six year old, who by the very nature of his age is limited in his cognitive abilities. Perhaps the sidewalk is wet because it was sprayed by a sprinkler that Tom's parents turned on in the front yard. Conceivably a neighbor with a hose could have drenched the sidewalk. It is not unimaginable that an underground sewage pipe burst open near Tom's house, resulting in the wet sidewalk. There are a plethora of unstated possibilities as to why the sidewalk looked wet, but the main conclusion to be drawn from this example is that unless Tom can distinguish between a sidewalk that is wet from the rain and a sidewalk that is wet from sprinklers, he is not epistemically justified in claiming that 'It appears to have been raining.'

Before applying CORNEA to Rowe's evidential argument, Wykstra discusses an important consequence of CORNEA which is that if it is reasonable for a person to think that the epistemic access condition is not satisfied then it is not reasonable for that person to believe that there is an evidential connection between p, or what appears to be the case, and s, or the situation causing that which cannot be proved. This principle is utilized by Wykstra to highlight what he believes to be a lack of evidential support to Rowe's claim of "apparently pointless suffering." Wykstra begins his criticism by focusing on Rowe's fawn example. According to Rowe, the fawn's suffering seems to serve no outweighing good, therefore it is an instance of "apparently pointless suffering." Equipped with CORNEA, Wykstra asks the burning question: "if there were an outweighing good of the sort at issue, connected in the requisite way to instances of suffering like this, how likely is it that this should be apparent to us?" [24] It is in response to this question that Wykstra offers his parent analogy.

Wykstra did not conceive of the depiction of God as a Father as it is a feature in both Christianity and Judaism, but he uses this relationship to show how our intellect compares to God's. Wykstra begins by categorizing the outweighing good in this case as one that is created by God and thus grasped by His mind, which is far greater than the human mind. "How much greater? A modest proposal might be that his wisdom to ours, roughly as an adult human's is to a one-month old infant's."[25] If our understanding of the world, as Wykstra suggests, is that of a one-month old infant, then we are in no position to accurately judge God's actions in a situation where there seems to be pointless suffering because there may in fact be an outweighing good which our limited minds

prevent us from grasping. Interestingly, Rowe does mention this idea of limited cognition in his original paper when he states, "the theist's own religious tradition usually maintains that in this life it is not given to us to know God's purpose in allowing particular instances of suffering." [26] At the end of his paper, Wykstra cites the aforementioned statement, before concluding that:

> If CORNEA is correct, such a concession is fatal to Rowe's case: for by CORNEA, one is entitled to claim 'this suffering does not appear (i.e., appears not) to serve any Divinely-purposed outweighing good' only if it is reasonable to believe that if such a Divinely-purposed good exists, it would be within our ken.[27]

By including this notion of limited cognition in his argument, Rowe makes this epistemic claim subject to CORNEA and provides the theist with a means of escape. Wykstra asserts that the only way Rowe can rescue his position from CORNEA is if he shows that it is reasonable for a theist to believe that Divinely-purposed goods are within his or her understanding.

Section II: CORNEA Examined: Rowe's Criticism of Wykstra

In his "Evil and the Theistic Hypothesis: A Response to Wykstra," Rowe offers a reply to Wykstra. Rowe's stated goal from the outset of his paper was to determine if Wykstra's CORNEA "is in fact not satisfied when we make claims such as 'It appears that there are instances of suffering that do not serve outweighing goods otherwise unobtainable by an omnipotent, omniscient being.'"[28] Before focusing on CORNEA,

Rowe makes an important distinction about types of standard theism. Standard theism is "any view which holds that there exists an omnipotent, omniscient, omnigood being who created the world," abbreviated as "O."[29] Standard theism can be divided into two types, which are expanded standard theism (EST) and restricted standard theism (RST). "Expanded theism is the view O exists, conjoined with certain other significant religious claims, claims about sin, redemption, a future life, a last judgment, and the like," while "Restricted theism is the view that O exists, unaccompanied by other, independent religious claims."[30]

Because this distinction is key to Rowe's defense against CORNEA, attention must be drawn to two major assumptions made by Wykstra in his criticism of Rowe's argument. According to Rowe, the first assumption made by Wykstra is that the existence of O requires that outweighing goods come into existence far later than the instance of suffering we observe. Additionally, Wykstra assumes that if the outweighing goods do not occur in the future then the existence of O entails that once the goods come into existence, "we continue to be ignorant of them and their relation to the sufferings."[31] Rowe holds that these assumptions are not underlying beliefs of standard theism, but rather of EST. RST "gives us *no* reason to think that these goods, once they occur, remain beyond our ken. Nor does restricted standard theism give us any reason to think that the occurrence of the goods in question lies in the distant future of the occurrence of the sufferings that O must permit to obtain them."[32] Thus, in his criticism of Rowe under CORNEA, "the crucial proposition Wykstra claims to be implicit in theism," which is that outweighing goods are beyond our ken, "is in fact an added postulate that produces a

version of expanded theism…"[33] In short, Wykstra can use CORNEA to disprove Rowe's first premise only when the theistic hypothesis being called into question is EST, as RST does not assume that the outweighing goods are beyond our ken. Recall that towards the end of his paper, Wykstra states that the only way Rowe can save his argument from CORNEA is if it shows that outweighing goods can be within our ken. By showing that Wykstra's application of CORNEA only works when considering EST, Rowe proves that Wykstra failed to answer the question "whether the facts about suffering in our world tend to disconfirm the hypothesis that O exists."[34]

Section III: Wykstra's Response to Rowe's Criticism

The dialogue between Rowe and Wykstra continues in 1986 when Wykstra publishes a response to Rowe's criticisms. In "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments from Evil," Wykstra criticizes Rowe's use of the word "appears" on the basis that an inability to *see* an outweighing good is not an epistemic justification for concluding there *appears* to be no outweighing good. Additionally, Wykstra introduces his Adjunct Principle, a guideline he creates that is intended to be used with CORNEA.

In order to understand Wykstra's reasoning regarding the difference between see and appear, consider the following example: A friend of mine asks me if there is a dog in my garage and when I look into the garage, I clearly see a dog, allowing me to conclude that there appears to be a dog in my garage. Conversely, if I do not see a dog in my garage, I can conclude that there does not appear to be a dog in my garage. Now, if that same friend asks me if there are any fleas in my garage, I may look in and see no fleas,

prompting me to conclude there appears to be no fleas in my garage. In the dog scenario, I am justified in claiming that there appears to be or does not appear to be a dog in my garage because it is reasonable to believe that I am capable of seeing a dog if one is present. By contrast, I would not be justified in claiming either that fleas are present or not present in my garage simply by looking into the garage as I would when looking for the dog. Unlike a dog, fleas cannot be seen by the naked eye, therefore, without examining my entire garage with a microscope, I cannot accurately conclude whether or not there are fleas in my garage. [35]

As shown by the flea example, Wykstra argues that there is a major difference between seeing and appearing when making epistemic claims. "CORNEA, then, is a strategy for evaluating appears claims" and Wykstra's Adjunct Principle is "used to determine whether the reasonable seeability requirement of CORNEA itself is met."[36] Wykstra explains that Rowe is only justified in making his appearance claim if he can show that it is reasonable to believe that the outweighing good, attainable only by some instance of evil, would be "seeable." According to Wykstra's parent analogy, our minds are like those of one month old infants, while God's mind is that of an adult, therefore, it is not reasonable to believe that we would have the ability to see an outweighing good. Wykstra concludes that because Rowe's argument fails to meet the necessary seeability of the Adjunct Principle, his inference that there appears to be no outweighing good, fails under CORNEA.

Once Wykstra reassesses Rowe's appearance claim, he sets his sights to answering Rowe's major objection to CORNEA, which is that it can be applied only to

EST and not to RST. A crucial part of Wykstra's defense is his concept of Deep Universe Enhancement. The purpose of this concept is to facilitate a distinction between a "deep" universe and a "shallow" universe. A "deep" or "morally obscure" universe is a world where evil-justifying goods are inscrutable to humans. By contrast, a "shallow" or "morally transparent" universe is a world where evil-justifying goods can be comprehended or identified by humans. By making this distinction, Wykstra aims to show that given the fact that God, an omniscient Being, created the universe, it is more reasonable for us to believe that the world is morally obscure rather than morally transparent. Rowe rejects Wykstra's claim that the world is morally obscure, on the basis that an omnibenevolent God would favor a transparent universe. This idea will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Chapter III-Objections to Both Sides

Wykstra is one of the main critics of Rowe's evidential argument, but there are other responses to Rowe's evidential argument, particularly a skeptical theist objection from Michael Bergmann and an agnostic criticism made by William Alston. Although there have been many objections to Wykstra's CORNEA, some as early as three years after Wykstra's original paper was published,[37] one of the strongest criticisms against Wykstra is offered by Trent Dougherty.

Section I: Other Objections to Rowe's Argument

In "Skeptical Theism and Rowe's New Evidential Argument from Evil," Bergmann restates Rowe's syllogism, presents a probability objection to this argument, and defends the skeptical theist position against proponents of the evidential argument. In order to determine the probability of the existence of goods that are beyond our ken, Bergmann relies on Bayes' Theorem. Bayes' Theorem is a statistical method that is used to calculate the probability of an event after incorporating various conditions that relate to the event in question. Although Bayes' Theorem is included in numerous arguments on the problem of evil, the values assigned to each variable are arbitrary, thereby rendering the Theorem controversial in and of itself. Because Bayes' Theorem is disputable and highly complex in nature, it will not be discussed further. The main conclusions that Bergmann draws from Bayes' Theorem are that the probability of God's existence is not very high and that this value can only be achieved by rejecting one of the skeptical

theists' skeptical theses. There are countless skeptical theses, but for the purpose of his argument, Bergmann describes three theses which are outlined below:

> **ST1:** We have no good reason for thinking that the possible goods we know of are representative of the possible goods there are.
>
> **ST2:** We have no good reason for thinking that the possible evils we know of are representative of the possible evils there are.
>
> **ST3:** We have no good reason for thinking that the entailment relations we know of between possible goods and the permission of possible evils are representative of the entailment relations there are between possible goods and the permission of possible evils.[38]

These theses can be interpreted in a variety of ways, but Bergmann focuses largely on convincing his reader that "the sensible thing for both the theist and the nontheist to do is to accept these skeptical theses." [39] In order to understand how these theses are intended to help the theist, it is of the utmost importance to give an example of how they are supposed to work. Imagine the following scenario: I am going camping with a friend of mine and while we are roasting marshmallows by the fire my friend is bitten by a snake. She is in pain and complains that she is having trouble breathing so I rush her to the hospital, where she receives an antivenom shot. The shot helps to alleviate her symptoms,

but she is kept overnight for observation. During her stay, my friend meets a doctor and they begin dating. Almost a year after beginning their relationship, the doctor and my friend break up. Before the break up, my friend would tell me how glad she was that the snake bit her because if it didn't, she may never have met her boyfriend and been in the happiest relationship of her life. In this case, the goods we know about is how happy my friend was during her relationship, while the evil we know about is the pain my friend felt after the snake bit her. I may ask myself the question: Was the pain my friend endured from the snakebite worth the happiness she felt while in the relationship? By saying that the happiness was worth the pain, I am concluding that the good outweighed the evil. Conversely, if I decide that the pain was not worth the happiness, then I am concluding that the evil outweighs the good. According to Bergmann's second skeptical thesis (ST2), I have no grounds to believe that the evil outweighs the good in this case because I am assuming that I have all the facts when making my decision. I am assuming that the only evil in this case is the pain of the snakebite, but unbeknownst to me, if the snake did not bite my friend and we never went to the hospital, a mountain lion in the area would have eaten me and maimed my friend later that night. When considering these two possible evils, the vast majority of people would agree that experiencing some temporary pain caused by a snakebite is a far better alternative than being permanently scarred or eaten by a lion. Because my cognitive limits prevent me from ever knowing all the evils that can befall my friend or myself, I have to trust that God is doing what is in our best interest because he is omnibenevolent and omniscient. Ultimately, it is this idea and the aforementioned skeptical theses that Bergmann uses to support the theist.

After explaining the reasoning behind the aforementioned theses, Bergmann shifts his attention to analyzing several objections against ST1. The first objection he discusses is from Michael Tooley. According to Tooley, there are goods that transcend our understanding; he maintains that if we have not been able to grasp these goods in the past, then we are likely never going to understand them in the future. Bergmann asserts that Tooley's objection fails to disprove ST1 on the basis that it does not show that the goods we know of represent all possible goods. Next, Bergmann responds to the objection presented in Bruce Russell's "blue crow" argument. Russell's argument is grounded in the claim that if we were to carry out an extensive intellectual search for outweighing goods and could not find any, then we would be epistemically justified in concluding that these goods do not exist. Bergmann points out that in order for Russell's objection to be valid, we would have to make the assumption that these possible goods can be known by human investigation, an assumption that we have no reason to make.

The final objection Bergmann sets out to refute is the one raised by Russell and Richard Gale. Bergmann considers this the most difficult objection to refute because Russell and Gale make us doubt skepticism in general. The major question posed by these opponents of skeptical theism is: If we are skeptical about the nature of these possible goods we know of, how do we know these goods really exist? How do we know that there is no Cartesian demon tricking us into believing these goods exist? Bergmann argues that by responding to ST1 with excessive skepticism, Russell and Gale can know nothing with certainty and must declare themselves agnostics or rescind their skeptical objection.

Agnosticism is a doctrine of belief according to which an individual will suspend judgment on matters of faith due to lack of evidence. Agnostics differ from atheists in that agnostics neither deny nor accept the existence of God, whereas atheists believe God does not exist. This distinction is important because William P. Alston, another well-known opponent of Rowe, develops an agnostic criticism of the evidential argument. This agnostic criticism "claims that the magnitude or complexity of the question is such that our powers, access to data, and so on are radically insufficient to provide sufficient warrant for accepting [Rowe's first premise]."[40] In his paper, "The Inductive Argument from Evil," Alston identifies six categories of cognitive limits that permit us to adopt an agnostic position in regards to the first premise of the evidential argument. The first cognitive limit described by Alston is "lack of data" which constitutes "inter alia, the secrets of the human heart, the detailed constitution and structure of the universe, and the remote past and future, including the afterlife if any." [41]

A second limit is "complexity greater than we can handle" which is "the difficulty of holding enormous complexes of fact–different possible worlds or different systems of natural law–together in the mind sufficiently for comparative evolution." [42] Another cognitive limit outlined by Alston is the "difficulty of determining what is metaphysically possible or necessary," which like the preceding limit, concerns our inability to make metaphysical judgments because we do not know the nature of the metaphysical world. Next, Alston discusses "ignorance of the full range of possibilities" and "ignorance of the full range of values." The difference between these two limitations is that the former has to do with our ability to consider all possibilities (even those that are beyond our ken),

while the latter has to do with our ability to know the connection between evil and a justifying good. The sixth cognitive limitation described by Alston is "limits to our capacity to make well-considered value judgments" and an example of this can be seen by "the difficulty in making comparative evaluations of large complex wholes." [43]

Although there are subtle differences to the six categories described, Alston introduces these categories to convey one idea which is that we as humans are cognitively limited. Because we are cognitively limited, we are in no position to judge whether or not there are pointless evils in the world simply on the basis that there are inscrutable evils. A question that may arise from this is: How does Alston's position differ from that of Wykstra? The main difference between these two opinions is that Wykstra argues that evil justifying goods *must* exist, whereas Alston holds that these evil justifying goods *may* exist. Alston maintains that because of our limitations, we are not epistemically justified in concluding whether or not these justifying goods exist.

Section II: Other Criticisms of CORNEA and Skeptical Theism

Despite the many responses offered in favor of Rowe's evidential argument, it might be argued that Trent Dougherty's criticisms in, "Reconsidering the parent analogy: unfinished business for skeptical theists," deliver a crushing blow to Wykstra and other skeptical theists. Dougherty begins with a discussion of what he calls the "Russell-Rowe objection" to CORNEA. If God is like a parent and allows for evils to occur for the sake of attaining a greater good, why are we not told that these evils are meaningful? Rowe asserts "that any parent *with the ability* to make known to their suffering child, the

relevant goods for the sake of which suffering must be endured would surely *exercise* that ability." [44] A connection can be made between the evidential problem of evil and the problem of divine hiddenness. Just as the problem of evil is troublesome for theists, divine hiddenness or "silence," the idea that God does not respond to us when we need Him, challenges the existence of an omnibenevolent God because a wholly-good God would want His presence to be known during times of suffering.

To elucidate Rowe's criticism of the parent analogy, imagine the following: Sarah, a five-year-old, is being prepared for a bone marrow transplant. Because of her age, Sarah does not understand all the factors at play, such as the disease she is suffering from or her upcoming surgery. Sarah's parents stay with her the entire time she is in the hospital and do whatever is in their power to ease her pain. Most people would say that Sarah's parents are "good" parents because their primary concern is for their child. But what if Sarah's parents used her time in the hospital as an opportunity to take a romantic vacation? Would we still consider them "good" parents if they put their own desires before their daughter's needs? More often than not, we would chide them for their selfishness, maintaining that it is more important to comfort Sarah than to leave her confused and alone. If God is like a parent and we were to hold him to the same standards as we do any "good" parent, His silence during times of suffering should lead us to believe that God is not like a "good" parent, undermining Wykstra's analogy.

After discussing this criticism, Dougherty discusses the overarching theme of his (Dougherty's) paper, concerning the ways in which moral universes, CORNEA, and the parent analogy are related. Recall that in his "Noseeum" paper Wykstra briefly discusses

what he calls the "Deep Universe Enhancement," distinguishing a "morally deep" universe from a "morally shallow" universe. A morally deep or "obscure" universe "is one where these goods are hard to discover, maybe sometimes impossible for creatures like us. If they are found, they are discovered only after much effort and then only tenuously grasped."[45] Conversely, a morally shallow or "transparent" universe is "one where the goods for the sake of which God allows evils are 'near the surface,' easy to discern for anyone of moderate intelligence willing to see it."[46] CORNEA is not a valid principle in both types of universes.

Wykstra argues in favor of a morally deep universe on the basis that the universe created by God must be as complex as its creator. To support his claim Wykstra crafts an analogy designed to show how little mankind knows about the physical world. Wykstra's analogy suggests that "the great goods of inquiry and discovery give us reason to expect that God would, in general, not be prone to making things completely transparent." [47] Additionally, Wykstra contends that the concept of an obscure universe is substantiated by the parent analogy. In contrast, Russell and Rowe maintain that if God exists and is like a good parent, it is reasonable to believe that the universe is transparent.

Transparency is in accordance with a loving God because evil can be justifiable and suffering can be reduced when we know that there is a reason for the evil that plagues us. Dougherty briefly discusses how Russell highlights the difference between living in an obscure or transparent universe:

> "…if God is good, and cares about us, wouldn't he want us to be appraised of his game plan? Wouldn't he want the universe to be morally transparent

> [?"] Russell puts his finger on something very important here. One's not understanding why one's suffering is occurring is a constituent, perhaps the key constituent, of one's overall suffering which makes it almost unbearable at times. "If only God would make known to me his presence or his plan," one might think, "I can make it."[48]

Although Russell and Rowe both believe that the universe is transparent, Russell notes that if their thesis is wrong and "an *inscrutable world* is more likely, given theism, then Rowe's argument from evil fails."[49] It is important to know that Russell uses "inscrutable world" to refer to a morally deep or obscure universe. However, if "a *transparent world* is more likely, given theism, then the argument succeeds to some degree," suggesting, "that inscrutable evils relatively disconfirm theism." [50] According to Russell's conditional statements on the nature of the universe, CORNEA only succeeds in a morally deep world. In other words, Wykstra must commit to a morally shallow world, repudiate CORNEA, or expand on how the parent analogy can justify a morally deep world. Rather than altering his beliefs on his epistemic doctrine, Wykstra reinforces his parent analogy, a defense that Dougherty uses to develop his argument.

Before unraveling how Wykstra uses the parent analogy to support obscurity, it should be recognized that he uses the same argument to rebut Rowe's futurity objection. Wykstra maintains that theism does not *require* outweighing goods to be in the distant future, but rather that these God-purposed goods would be beyond our ken because we are infantile in our perception of the world. Regardless of whether these evils justify future or present goods, we must believe that God is like a parent when He plans for these future goods and the attributes that inspire Him to plan for the future prevent us from understanding His intended present goods.

Chapter IV-Nagel and CORNEA

Shortly before Rowe's published his first paper on the evidential argument, philosopher Thomas Nagel published a now-famous article "What is it like to be a bat?" Although it was not written about the problem of evil, two important principles discussed in this paper can be applied to the problem and are used in a "Rowe-like" objection to the parent analogy. Aristotle's pros hen equivocity, Maimonides *via negativa*, and Aquinas' analogies are all presented to defend Wykstra against the aforementioned objection.

Section I: Nagel's Consciousness Argument

As can be inferred by the title of his paper, Nagel discusses the problem of consciousness through a hypothetical example in which a human brain is placed in a bat's body. Nagel argues that even if a human brain is transplanted into the body of a bat, the human will not be able to to think like a bat. Similarly, if a bat's brain is transplanted into the body of a human, the bat will not be able to think like a human. Nagel asserts that regardless of the body housing the brain, both humans and bats will have the perception of the species they were before the transplant. For instance, a human can imagine what it is like for a bat to fly or what it is like for a bat to use echolocation, but because humans do not have the same subjective experiences that bats have, no person carrying a human brain can ever truly know what it is like for a bat to fly or for a bat to use echolocation. Just as a human can never have the subjective experiences of a bat, a bat can never have the subjective experiences of a human. Therefore, no matter what body an organism's

brain is held in, a human can only imagine what it is like to think like a bat and a bat can only imagine what it is like to think like a human.

Nagel uses this example, which is itself an analogy, primarily to show that although we can never have knowledge of how a bat thinks, we can use what we do know of bats to think *like* a bat. After arriving at this conclusion, Nagel poses his central question which is: Is a human thinking like a bat the same as a bat thinking? Nagel avers that thinking like a bat is not the same as a bat thinking on the basis that analogies are merely reductionist tools which people use to explain things they cannot understand. Moreover, he chooses this particular example because he wants to show that consciousness, which is a subjective component of any thinking being, can never be fully understood beyond the mind where these subjective thoughts occur. Nagel emphasizes that because the conscious mind is intangible and subjective, we must rely on what we know about bats to try and imagine what it is like to think like a bat, yet:

> …if extrapolation from our own case is involved in the idea of what it is like to be a bat, the extrapolation must be incompletable. We cannot form more than a schematic conception of what it *is* like. For example, we may ascribe general *types* of experience on the basis of the animal's structure and behavior. Thus we describe bat sonar as a form of three-dimensional forward perception; we believe that bats feel some versions of pain, fear, hunger, and lust, and that they have other, more familiar types of perception besides sonar. But we believe that these experiences also have in each case a specific subjective character, which it is beyond our ability to conceive. [51]

Despite humanity's many advances in science and technology, it is impossible for any person to ask a bat what it spends its time thinking about, so we must resort to guessing

what bats think about, but in doing so we unknowingly allow our human mindset to influence our idea of what it means to think like a bat. We may believe that bats think about flying, hunting, and resting; however, that does not mean that is what bats really think about since we are just thinking about what we'd think about it we were bat. If we could think the same as a bat thinking, we would not need an analogy to explain how a bat thinks, but because we do not understand how bats think we rely on an analogy. Therefore, analogies only serve to put the incomprehensible in human terms, but are not the same as the complex ideas they serve to explain.

Section II: Implications of Nagel's Argument

Now for the million dollar question: How does Nagel's bat case discussed above pertain to the evidential problem of evil? Recall that Wykstra's CORNEA principle is valid only if the universe is morally obscure, but fails if the world is morally transparent. Although Rowe and Russell argue that it is reasonable to believe that a wholly good God would create a transparent universe, Wykstra asserts that the parent analogy supports the idea of God creating an obscure universe, on the basis that His intellect and therefore His creation would always go beyond our cognitive reach. The logical conclusion of Wykstra's argument can be obtained as follows:

Take C to mean "CORNEA is valid," E represents "the evidential argument fails," O is "the universe is morally obscure," and P stands for "the parent analogy is valid."

Argument #1:

1. $C \supset E$
2. $C \equiv O$
3. $P \supset O$
4. P
5. $\therefore E$

Proof for Argument #1:

1. $P \supset O$
2. P
3. O 1,2 Modus Ponens
4. $C \equiv O$
   - 4.1. $(C \supset O) \bullet (O \supset C)$ 4, Equivalence
   - 4.2. $(O \supset C) \bullet (C \supset O)$ 4.1, Commutativity
   - 4.3. $O \supset C$ 4.2, Simplification
5. C 3,4.3 Modus Ponens
6. $C \supset E$
7. E 5, 6 Modus Ponens

Logical Name and Symbol	**Definition**
Horseshoe $\supset$	If _____, then _____.
Triple Bar $\equiv$	If and only if; propositions equivalent
Dot $\bullet$	And
Tilde $\sim$	Not (negation of proposition)
Therefore Sign $\therefore$	Therefore (indicates end of proof)

Thus, if the parent analogy is valid, the universe is morally obscure and CORNEA is valid, which means that the evidential argument fails. It is worth noting that in

proposition 2 of argument #1 shows CORNEA being equivalent to obscurity and the reason for this is because CORNEA only succeeds if the world is morally obscure, while obscurity was proposed to support CORNEA. From this it would seem as though Wykstra's argument against Rowe's position is irrefutable, but when his argument is posed in conjunction with Nagel's analogy principle, the result proves to be fatal to Wykstra.

If "A" is symbolic for "all analogies are exhaustive" and once again, "P" stands for "the parent analogy is valid," consider the following proof:

Argument #2:	Proof for Argument #2:
1. ~A	1. ~A ⊃ ~P
2. ~A ⊃ ~P	2. ~A
3. ∴ ~P	3. ~P 1,2 Modus Ponens

To uphold Nagel's principle that all analogies, such as the bat case, are "incompletable,"[52] it can be concluded that the parent analogy is incomplete as well. What consequences does this conclusion have for Wkystra's argument? To illustrate my point, picture Wykstra's argument like the Eiffel Tower. At the top of the tower is CORNEA, the level below that is obscurity, and the bottom level or foundation of the Tower is the parent analogy. When I apply Nagel's analogy principle to Wykstra's position, I am, in a manner of speaking, showing that the foundation of this tower is built on sand. If the foundation

of the Eiffel Tower was built on sand, the beloved monument would surely sink. Because Wykstra's entire argument is supported by the parent analogy and the parent analogy is built on sand, it can be concluded that once the parent analogy fails, the rest of Wykstra's argument fails as well.

The conclusion I arrive at—that the application of Nagel's analogy principle jeopardizes Wykstra's skeptical theist argument—is bound to be met with some opposition, presumably from those who support Wykstra, namely the theist. One objection that the theist may pose is as follows:

> What you need to do with Nagel is show how the implications of his essay, combined with the classical theistic claim that God is omniscient, undermines the evidential problem of evil. Omniscience is always predicated to God in the classical sources and it is seen in Mackie's formulation of the problem of evil that you discuss early in the thesis. If God is omniscient, then we cannot possibly think like God to such degree that that the parent analogy could be used to prove the nonexistence of God. Why? Because we could never hope to have the level of knowledge commanded by God that would allow us to draw any definite conclusions about the alleged evil of an act of God or allowance by God of something harmful to us (or anyone else). If it would be absurd to say that a baby could understand why her parents behave the way they do toward her, how more absurd would it be to claim that a finite human mind, however brilliant, could possibly grasp a divine infinite mind? True, Nagel's implications could not prove the existence of God but it does provide a serious blow to any attempts to use a parent analogy to show how God could not exist because there is evil in the world.[53]

The central question being raised in this objection is: When we apply Nagel's analogy principle to the evidential problem, how is Rowe justified in using the parent analogy to support his position? At first glance this objection may seem highly problematic for Rowe, but upon closer examination it would seem that this type of objection is raised

from some confusion about the argument itself. Recall that Wykstra uses the parent analogy to support the idea of a morally obscure universe and CORNEA is only valid when the world is morally obscure. Thus, Wykstra's position rests entirely on the parent analogy being valid. In contrast, Rowe's evidential argument relies on the existence of natural evils for which there appears to be no justifying reason. Rowe uses the parent analogy not to support his own position, but rather to show that Wykstra's use of the parent analogy is arbitrary. According to Wykstra, the parent analogy provides us with enough reason to believe that God created the world morally obscure; however, Rowe uses the same analogy to argue that it is reasonable to believe that if God is a parent, He would make the world morally transparent. By showing that the parent analogy can be used to support obscurity and transparency, that is, to show that God can act as good parent by creating a world where evil-justifying goods unknown to us and by creating a world where we can know the goods that justify our suffering, Rowe is highlighting the fact that the parent analogy is a weak foundation for an argument. Because Rowe's use of the parent analogy has no bearing on the validity of his argument, it does not follow that the parent analogy being invalid undermines the evidential problem proposed by Rowe.

It is important to note that the concept of subjectivity discussed in Nagel's bat case is traditionally used to support theism. The theists have used the bat case to argue that just as the subjective mind of a bat is inaccessible to humans, the mind of God is inscrutable to all living creatures. Although there is merit to this interpretation of Nagel's bat case, I have a different take on this analogy. I believe that Nagel uses the bat case to show that as convenient as analogies may be, they are not exhaustive.

Section III: Wykstra Saved

My concern with the importance of analogies is nothing new; the study of language in philosophy has been around since the time of Aristotle (384-322 BCE). In the most general terms, an analogy can be understood to mean a comparison between two similar things. In his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle shows that a word can be equivocal or univocal in meaning depending on how it is used. According to Aristotle, 'Things are said to be named 'equivocally' when, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each," and are named univocally when they "have both the name and the definition answering to the name in common." [54]Consider the two pairs of statements below labeled "A" and "B":

Example A:
Jack and Harrison are humans.
All humans are rational.

Example B:
Max swung the bat.
Dracula is a bat.

The word "humans" has the same meaning in both sentences shown in Example A, so it can be regarded as a univocal word. Although the word "bat" appears in both sentences of Example B, the meaning of the word is not the same because bat in the first statement is referring to a piece of athletic equipment used in baseball, whereas in the second

statement bat is used to describe the nocturnal animal which Nagel includes in his analogy. Thus, in this instance, 'bat' is equivocal in meaning.

Because not all words fit perfectly into the univocal category or the equivocal category, Aristotle describes a third category of words, pros hen equivocity, which incorporates aspects of univocity and equivocity. Words that are denoted as pros hen—*pros* translating to "related to" and *hen* translating to "one"—are placed in this separate category because they are used equivocally with one common meaning. To illustrate his point, Aristotle uses the word "healthy" pros hen equivocally: Complexion is healthy. Broccoli is healthy. Exercising is healthy. A patient is healthy.

Unlike the word "humans" in the previous set of examples, healthy is not used the same way in the four sentences listed above. A question that arises from this is: How do can healthy relate to one meaning when it is used four different ways? Aristotle answers this by explaining that complexion is a sign of health, broccoli produces health, exercising preserves health, and a patient is capable of health. Thus, "[e]verything which is healthy is related to health,"[55] mainly because in every context, healthy is used to describe what makes a healthy person.

Aristotle's development of pros hen equivocity laid the groundwork for the use of analogies in philosophical debate, but, Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) was one of the earliest philosophers to discuss religious language. In his *Guide for the Perplexed*, Maimonides argues that the only way a theist can talk about God is through the use of negative attributes in their description. It is important to note that by negative attributes Maimonides does not mean that we should speak poorly of God, but rather that we ought

to describe God through negations of attributes. For instance, if I wanted to explain God's omnipotence to a friend it would be wrong to say "God is the most powerful Being in existence" since I would be comparing His power to the power of other beings in existence. In this statement I am defining God and because He is unlike any other being in the universe, I am in no position to define what cannot be defined. Rather, the correct way to explain God's omnipotence would be to say something to the effect of: "There exists no being more powerful than God." The aforementioned statement is the correct way to talk about God's power because it does not define God, but allows us (through negative attributes) to deduce that the power of others is less than God's power.

Maimonides asserts that the main reason why a person must talk about God in the negative way or *via negativa* is because "He has no positive attribute whatever."[56] Moreover, the advantages of speaking about God through negation are that "they do not imply any plurality" and that "they convey to man the highest possible knowledge of God."[57]

Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) is undeniably one of the most notable Christian philosophers in history and this is partially due to his work in combining Aristotle's pros hen equivocally with Maimonides religious-linguistic tradition. [58] In the thirteenth question of his *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas discusses how he thinks we should talk about God. He begins by rejecting Maimonides' *via negativa* on the basis that in speaking by negation we lose the meaning of what we are trying to say about God. Instead of referring to God in this negative way suggested by Maimonides, Aquinas claims instead that "we must hold a different doctrine–viz., that these names signify the

divine substance, and are predicated substantially of God, although they fall short of a full representation of Him." [59] Essentially, what Aquinas means by this is that the names or attributes that we ascribe to God can never fully describe His being. It should be noted that Aquinas' view was different than Maimonides' in that Maimonides believed that if we spoke about God through positive attributes, then we would be defining Him, whereas Aquinas held that we could describe God any way we wanted, but that by our very nature of being humans, we do not possess the words or understanding to describe Him as He truly is. Aquinas explains this idea further when he says:

> For these names express God, so far as our intellects know Him. Now it was shown above (Q.4, A.2) that God prepossess in Himself all the perfections of creatures, being Himself simply and universally perfect. Hence every creature represents Him, and is like Him so far as it possesses some perfection: yet it represents Him not as something of the same species or genus, but as the excelling principle of whose form the effects fall short, although they derive some kind of likeness thereto, even as the forms of inferior bodies represent the power of the sun. This was explained above (Q.4, A. 3), in treating of the divine perfection. Therefore the aforesaid names signify the divine substance, but in an imperfect manner, even as creatures represent it imperfectly. So when we say, *God is good*, the meaning is not, *God is the cause of goodness*, or, *God is not evil*; but the meaning is, *Whatever good we attribute to creatures, preexists in God*, and in a more excellent and higher way. Hence it does not follow that God is good, because He causes goodness; but rather, on the contrary, He causes goodness in things because He is good…[60]

Although we are created in God's image, we are not perfect like Him, and therefore, any name which we give Him is based on what we know of perfection, which is not fully God's perfection. A question that may arise from this is: If we can never fully describe God as He is, is there any meaning to the words we use to name or describe Him?

According to Aquinas, "no name is predicated univocally of God and of creatures," but at the same time, names are not "applied to God and creatures in a purely equivocal sense." [61] For instance, I can use the word "good" to describe my friend Alex or to describe God, but the meaning of the word is not exactly the same in both cases. Alex is good because he exhibits the best qualities that he can possess and God is good because He exhibits the best qualities that He can possess. Undeniably, the goodness that God exhibits is far greater than the goodness that Alex exhibits so the word differs in that respect. Initially, this may seem problematic because how can Aquinas say that names applied to God and creatures not be purely equivocal or purely univocal? What else is there? Analogies.

Aquinas refers to analogies as "a mean between pure equivocation and simple univocation." [62] He goes on to say that, "in analogies the idea is not, as in univocal, one and the same, yet it is not totally diverse as in equivocals; but a term which is thus used in a multiple sense signifies various proportions to some one thing." [63] Recall that Aristotle refers to words that are used equivocally with one common meeting as being pros hen equivocal and that his example of a word being used pros hen equivocally is "healthy." In his discussion of analogies, Aquinas explains how Aristotle's healthy example can be used to draw the connection between pros hen equivocity and analogies; pros hen equivocity to Aristotle is analogy to Aquinas.

From Aquinas' explanation of analogies, we can conclude that analogies are not "incompletable" as suggested by Nagel, but rather that using analogies are a means by which humans can bridge the gap between ourselves and God. Ultimately, in the context of the evidential argument, this conclusion can be used to validate Wykstra's parent

analogy. Because the argument proposed by Aquinas allows us to use analogies, we are justified in projecting our own views on what qualities make a parent "good," onto God. I By this admission, the parent analogy can be regarded as complete and the idea of a morally obscure universe is adequately supported. Because we have grounds for believing that the universe is morally obscure, we can consider CORNEA when making epistemic judgments. Finally, if CORNEA is valid, then the evidential argument proposed by Rowe fails.

Chapter V-Conclusion

Questions regarding the existence of evil have been asked since the time of the ancient Greeks. Why does evil exist? Why does God allow it? Does He cause evil to occur? Philosophers have been studying these questions for thousands of years and are still trying to decode this mystery. The earliest form of the problem of evil is called the "logical" or "deductive" argument from evil. J.L. Mackie is responsible for formulating the logical argument which challenges the existence of God on the basis that an omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent being would not allow for evil to exist. Mackie believed that the existence of God was logically inconsistent with the existence of evil. Alvin Plantinga develops the Free Will Defense as a response to Mackie's logical argument. As the name implies, Plantinga's Free Will Defense is based on the idea that evil exists in the world as a result of people's choices. Plantinga maintains that God does not intervene in the world to prevent evil because if He did then we would not truly have free will.

Although the earliest arguments regarding the problem of evil were logical in form, many philosophers today study the evidential form of the argument. The "evidential" or "inductive" argument from evil, created by William Rowe, is based on the premise that there appears to be pointless evil in the world and that God would not allow for this type of evil to exist. Similar to the logical argument, the conclusion of the evidential argument is that God does not exist.

There have been a plethora of objections to Rowe's evidential argument, but one of the strongest objections was presented by a skeptical theist named Stephen Wykstra. Wkystra is credited with developing the Condition of Reasonable Epistemic Access (CORNEA), a principle which can be used to make or judge appearance claims. Wykstra uses CORNEA to invalidate the first premise of Rowe's argument, which is that it appears that pointless or meaningless evils exist. In this paper, Wykstra proposes his parent analogy, which states that God is like our parent in many respects, but most importantly, that God's intellect is far beyond our own. The same year that Wykstra criticized Rowe's argument, Rowe publishes a response to Wykstra where he asserts that CORNEA only works when considering Extended Standard Theism (EST), but is not applicable under Restricted Standard Theism (RST). Wykstra answers to Rowe's rebuttal by claiming that the validity of CORNEA does not depend on theism types, but rather on the type of universe we live in. According to Wykstra, CORNEA is valid if the world is morally obscure and because God is omniscient, we have reason to believe that the world is morally obscure.

Cognitive limitations and living in a morally obscure world prevent us from knowing all the goods or evils that exist. Michael Bergmann criticizes Rowe on the basis that the first premise of his evidential argument does not take any skeptical theses into account. William P. Alston describes six categories of limitations which prevent us from knowing whether or not evil justifying goods exist. Unlike Bergmann and Alston, Trent Dougherty defends Rowe's argument. In his paper, Dougherty discusses how CORNEA cannot be valid if the world is morally transparent and presents Rowe's rationale for why

theism favors transparency. Once again, Wykstra bases his premise on the parent analogy, but this time he uses it to support a morally obscure universe. By doing this, Wykstra makes himself vulnerable since his argument could be defeated by invalidating the parent analogy which he uses as its foundation.

Thomas Nagel's paper "What is it like to be a bat?" focuses on subjectivity and provides evidence against the completeness of analogies. After considering Nagel's bat case it would seem as though the parent analogy fails to fully describe God as a parent since no analogy is exhaustive. Because the parent analogy fails, Wykstra is not justified in claiming that the world is morally obscure and if the world is world is not morally obscure then CORNEA is not valid. Wykstra's position is saved by the linguistic-religious work of Aristotle, Moses Maimonides, and Saint Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas provides support for the use of analogies when describing God, which allows us to conclude that the parent analogy is valid. Because the parent analogy is valid, Wykstra is justified in claiming that the world is morally obscure and if the world is morally obscure then CORNEA is valid.

Despite the conclusion reached in this paper, there are still a plethora of avenues to be explored in terms of future work on the evidential problem of evil. One possible area of future study is to determine if CORNEA can be compatible with any theodicies. Alternately, someone could reevaluate Wykstra's Deep Universe Enhancement and decide if it really answers Rowe's EST/RST objection to CORNEA.

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[2] Hickson, "A Brief History of Problems of Evil." Ed. Justin P. McBrayer and Daniel Howard-Snyder. *The Blackwell Companion to The Problem of Evil*. (Oxford, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.) p. 8.
[3] Ibid. p. 8.
[4] Ibid. p. 10.
[5] Ibid. p. 16.
[6] Ibid. p. 17.
[7] Rowe, "An Examination of the Cosmological Argument." Ed. Michael Rea and Louis Pojman. *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*. (Stamford, C.T.: Cengage Learning, 2015.) p. 170.
[8] Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence." Ed. Michael Rea and Louis Pojman. *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*. (Stamford, C.T.: Cengage Learning, 2015.) p. 256.
[9] Ibid. p. 257.
[10] Ibid. p. 257-263.
[11] Ibid. p. 257.
[12] Ibid. p. 261.
[13] Plantinga, "The Free Will Defense." Ed. Michael Rea and Louis Pojman. *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*. (Stamford, C.T.: Cengage Learning, 2015.) p. 300-318.
[14] Peterson, Hasker, Reichenbach, and Basinger, "The Problem of Evil: The Case Against God's Existence." *Reason & Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2003.) p. 133-137.
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[16] Ibid. p. 266.
[17] Russell, "Defenseless." Ed. Daniel Howard-Snyder. *The Evidential Argument from Evil*. (Indianapolis, I.N.: Indiana University Press, 1996.) p. 193-205.
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[19] Rowe, "Evil and the Theistic Hypothesis: A Response to Wykstra." Ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams. *Oxford Readings in Philosophy: The Problem of Evil*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.) p. 162.
[20] Rowe, "The Inductive Argument from Evil against the Existence of God." Ed. Michael Rea and Louis Pojman. *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*. (Stamford, C.T.: Cengage Learning, 2015.) p. 266.
[21] Ibid. p. 267.
[22] Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: On Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance.'" Ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew

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[23] Ibid. p. 152.
[24] Ibid. p. 155.
[25] Ibid. p. 156.
[26] Rowe, "The Inductive Argument from Evil against the Existence of God." Ed. Michael Rea and Louis Pojman. *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*. (Stamford, C.T.: Cengage Learning, 2015.) p. 268.
[27] Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: On Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance.'" Ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams. *Oxford Readings in Philosophy: The Problem of Evil.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.) p. 157.
[28] Rowe, "Evil and the Theistic Hypothesis: A Response to Wykstra." Ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams. *Oxford Readings in Philosophy: The Problem of Evil.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.) p. 161.
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[30] Ibid. p. 161.
[31] Ibid. p. 165.
[32] Ibid. p. 165.
[33] Ibid. p. 166.
[34] Ibid. p. 167.
[35] Ibid. p. 122.
[36] Wykstra, "Rowe's Noseeum Arguments from Evil." Ed. Daniel Howard-Snyder. *The Evidential Argument from Evil.* (Indianapolis, I.N.: Indiana University Press, 1996.) p. 128-129.
[37] Chrzan, "Debunking Cornea." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* (1987) 21: 171-177.
[38] Bergmann, "Skeptical Theism and Rowe's New Argument." *Nous* (2001) 35: 278-296. p. 279.
[39] Ibid. p. 286.
[40] Alston, "The Inductive Argument from Evil." Ed. Daniel Howard-Snyder. *The Evidential Argument from Evil.* (Indianapolis, I.N.: Indiana University Press, 1996.) p. 98.
[41] Ibid. p. 120.
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[45] Ibid. p. 20.
[46] Ibid. p. 20.
[47] Ibid. p. 21.
[48] Ibid. p. 21.
[49] Ibid. p. 20.
[50] Ibid. p. 20.

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[58] Baird, "Thomas Aquinas." Ed. Forrest E. Baird. *Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy*. 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2011). p. 307.
[59] Aquinas, "Summa Theologica." Ed. Forrest E. Baird. *Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy*. 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2011). p. 329.
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[62] Ibid. p. 331.
[63] Ibid. p. 331-332.