FAWN
AS AN INDIVIDUAL
RETHINKING GRATUITOUS EVIL AND EVOLUTIONARY THEODICIES

Atilla Akalın



LIVRE DE LYON
2025

Philosophy

Fawn as an Individual

Rethinking Gratuitous Evil and Evolutionary Theodicies

Atilla Akalın

LIVRE DE LYON

Lyon 2025

Fawn as an Individual

Rethinking Gratuitous Evil and Evolutionary Theodicies

Atilla Akalın

LIVRE DE LYON

Lyon 2025

Fawn as an Individual: Rethinking Gratuitous Evil and Evolutionary Theodicies

Author • Dr. Atilla Akalın • Orcid: 0000-0002-8385-5287

Cover Design • Motion Graphics
Book Layout • Motion Graphics
First Published • September 2025, Lyon

e-ISBN: 978-2-38236-898-5
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17193157

copyright © 2025 by Livre de Lyon
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission from the Publisher. The author or authors of the relevant section are responsible for any copyright infringement that may occur due to the images and graphics used in the book. The editor or publisher does not assume responsibility in this regard.



Publisher • Livre de Lyon
Address • 37 rue marietton, 69009, Lyon France
website • http://www.livredelyon.com
e-mail • livredelyon@gmail.com



CONTENTS

Preface..... III

Introduction..... 1
1. Evolutionary Theodicies, Greater Good & Cumulative Argument..... 11
   1.1. Beyond Evolutionary Narratives of Progress .. 17
2. Animal Suffering and the Ontological Status of Gratuitous Evil…..... 25
3. Individuality, Gratuitous Evil, and Wild Animal Suffering…. 35
4. Evolution, Better World and Idyllic View 45
   4.1. Against Infinite Process..... 47

Conclusion 55
References..... 59

PREFACE

This book sets out to explore one of the most pressing and difficult questions at the intersection of philosophy, theology, and evolutionary biology: the persistence of gratuitous evil in a world shaped by evolutionary processes. In recent decades, evolutionary theodicies have emerged as a popular attempt to reconcile the reality of natural history with belief in a benevolent God. These theodicies often portray evolution as a divinely granted form of autonomy—a space of freedom where creation is allowed to unfold in openness, unpredictability, and creativity. Within this framework, suffering, predation, and death are sometimes interpreted as unfortunate but necessary conditions for the flourishing of life as a whole, or even as instruments for the eventual enrichment and perfection of creatures. Yet this interpretive strategy, however sophisticated, raises serious philosophical difficulties. At the heart of the issue lies the distinction between suffering that can be explained or instrumentalized for some greater purpose and what may rightly be called gratuitous suffering: pain and loss that seem to serve no constructive end, that yield no compensatory good, and that, from the perspective of the creature undergoing them, remain irreducibly destructive. The experience of wild animals provides the most striking example.

Countless nonhuman creatures across evolutionary history have endured injury, starvation, parasitism, disease, and violent death without any possibility of their suffering being integrated into a narrative of growth, redemption, or moral development. To suggest that such suffering is justified merely because it contributes to the unfolding drama of evolution risks trivializing the phenomenological reality of pain. This book therefore argues that evolutionary theodicies, despite their appeal, fail to adequately account for the reality of gratuitous evil. To describe evolution as the "pathway" of creation is not, in itself, problematic; what is problematic is the attempt to treat every instance of suffering as somehow subsumed under a greater good. When theological reflection reduces the sheer weight of animal suffering to an abstract necessity of progress, it not only obscures the depth of the problem but also risks undermining the seriousness of moral and metaphysical inquiry. Gratuitous evil cannot simply be explained away as an inevitable byproduct of divine generosity in granting autonomy to creation. It remains ontologically distinct, resistant to justification, and haunting in its persistence. In examining these questions, this book invites the reader to consider what it truly means to confront the suffering of nonhuman creatures within an evolutionary cosmos. If theology is to remain intellectually honest, it must resist the temptation to gloss over the sheer gratuity of such suffering. Instead, it must grapple with the possibility that some forms of pain cannot be reconciled within the

framework of a neat teleology or a tidy narrative of greater goods. By doing so, we open the door not only to a more truthful account of evolution and evil but also to a deeper, more sober reflection on the mystery of creation itself. So I argue that evolutionary theodicies misunderstand gratuitous evil in the world and emphasizes that while evolution serves as a pathway for the development of creatures, it cannot justify gratuitous suffering within this process. Evolutionary theodicies interpret evolution as the autonomy granted by God, allowing for the openness of the universe and the enhancement of creatures. This work asserts that justifying the phenomenological suffering of animals based on a greater good is theoretically unsound. Therefore, the work maintains that evolutionary theodicies fail to adequately address the concept of gratuitous evil, which remains ontologically distinct, particularly when examining it through the lens of wild animal suffering.

This book is among the outcomes of the International Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program for Turkish Citizens, funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK). I would like to express my gratitude to TÜBİTAK for their support during the research process, to the Department of Philosophy at the University of Santiago de Compostela for enabling me to carry out this research, to my supervisor Dr. Oscar Horta, and to my colleagues Ivo Luciano da Assunção Rodrigues and Jenna Aarnio for their valuable support.

INTRODUCTION

For theistic philosophers thinking about the problem of evil, many arguments favor the idea that pain and suffering exist to make living beings better. These views are simply called greater good defenses[1] (Little, 2000). For contemporary theodicies, it is quite natural to consider pain and suffering in the world as a means for human beings to better themselves (Hick, 2007; Swinburne, 2008). Accordingly, human beings become more advantageous in certain respects as they experience pain and suffering. To the extent that these advantages provide a relatively good outcome for human beings in the long run, they are suffering that serves a divine cause. For theists, if evil in the world is somehow acknowledged, and if evil and God can exist in the same universe, then the cause of that evil usually points to a greater good outcome caused by God. Therefore, the existence of evil cannot conflict with God's absolute goodness as long as it leads to better outcomes for living beings. One of the most evident problems with such views is that they base theodicies entirely on concepts

1 The understanding of the greater good that Little underlines here is not the same as evolutionary theodicies. What is implied here is the situations encountered with the greater good in the human sense. We should be aware that the expectation of greater good is also valid for evolutionary theodicies, but it is different. I will discuss the types of greater good expectations in evolutionary theodicies later. See (Little, 2000).

such as free will defense, or soul-making and are often anthropocentric (Wahlberg, 2015).

One of the main problems of contemporary theodicies within the framework of problem of evil approaches is their inability to entirely explain the concept of gratuitous evil. In fact, contrary to the claims of the theodicies, horrendous and gratuitous evils are also observed in the world, which, contrary to the claims of the theodicies, do not cause any good outcome and are in any case too big in degree for the experience (van Inwagen, 2001). In many ways, it seems impossible that such great pain and suffering can have a long-term good effect on the creature experiencing it.

However, the position of skeptical theism approaches the problem of evil from an alternatively theistic perspective. It can be seen as humbler and more attractive than classical theodicies. Skeptical theism makes various inferences to reconcile the incompatibility of theodicies with the concept of gratuitous evil. (Dougherty, 2014; Speak, 2023). For skeptical theists, the point of doubt is not the existence of God. Instead, the point of doubt is whether evil exists. Events that involve horrendous evils that are extremely painful in quantity for those who experience them should not be interpreted literally as direct indicators of evil, for there is a vast difference between God's divine calculus and our human cognitive capacity[2]. We cannot

2 For this position, which recognizes the limitations of human cognitive capacities, it is natural that certain events are straightforward for people to interpret from the outside as gratuitous or horrendous evil. In this respect, skeptic theism can be seen as a philosophical approach that practices epistemic humility. This view does not emphasize absolute human freedom or the expectation of perfection (Wykstra, 2017).

find any justification for the gratuitous evils we witness or experience. Therefore, gratuitous evil is something that does not immanently exist. For a skeptical theist, since we cannot know God's overall plan and degree of intervention in the universe, our claims that the evils we experience, or witness seem truly gratuitous can be considered unsound (Wykstra & Chrzan, 1991).

Another perspective suggests that pain and suffering in the world have reasons and, at the same time, argues that this pain and suffering does not disprove the existence of God; this perspective is known as evolutionary theodicies[3] (Eikrem & Søvik, 2018). For these theodicies, natural evils, which appear to be gratuitous in certain respects, involve the suffering that living beings must experience to become more fit for nature. These sufferings are necessary for creatures to become more physically and mentally perfect. Therefore, evolution should be reinterpreted as a stage of perfection that includes pain and suffering within its immanent processes (Schoonmaker, 2017).

3 An evolutionary theodicy is a theodicy that attempts to reconcile the necessary inherent suffering inherent in evolution and evolutionary processes with the existence of God. Generally, evolutionary theodicies have presented some arguments and assumptions that such a theodicy will likely defend. We can summarize these views basically as follows:

1. Animal suffering observed worldwide is immanent in evolution and unavoidable.
2. This unavoidable pain and suffering in nature has played a major role in the diverse and complex form of the universe in terms of current living species.
3. God is not indifferent to this suffering in the natural world; God empathizes with the suffering of living beings.
4. There is another world where living beings' unfinished pleasures will be compensated.
5. Gratuitous evil does not exist in the world because every event that can be interpreted as gratuitous evil brings about a greater good. See, (Kropf, 2004; Southgate, 2008; Russell, 2018; Sollereder, 2018; Messer, 2018).

For evolutionary theodicies, the pain, suffering, and death immanent in the evolutionary process are essential ways for living beings to become perfect. In addition, suffering that is seen as gratuitous in the evolutionary process can coexist with the existence of God without any contradiction. At first glance, evolutionary theodicies seem incompatible with the idea of an absolute God considering the arbitrariness and naturalism evoked by evolutionary theory. However, evolutionary theodicies also interpret evolution as God's only way of allowing for the autonomous behavior of living beings (Southgate, 2008; Wahlberg, 2015). From this perspective, the world in which living things exist is open. This open world allows living things to develop their autonomous behavior. Some may see this universe as completely naturalistic. For evolutionary theodicies, however, this autonomous space given to living beings by the evolutionary process is interpreted as a God-given space of freedom (Hasker & Oord & Zimmerman, 2011). Evolution is a phenomenon caused by God. In discussing the problem of evil, evolutionary theodicies rely on evolution, which is more compatible with modern science. They take a more inclusive stance, arguing that God's existence does not conflict with the pain and suffering in the world.

In this book, I aim to demonstrate that evolutionary theodicies misunderstand and incorrectly interpret the concept of gratuitous evil in the world. My central claim is that while evolution can be understood as a process of

growth, diversification, and improvement within the natural order, it cannot in any coherent sense justify the existence of gratuitous evil in the universe. To put it differently, the pain, loss, and suffering that are immanent in the evolutionary process may often be framed as necessary conditions for the flourishing of life, yet for the creatures that actually endure them, such experiences can never cease to be felt or perceived as gratuitous evils. From the standpoint of those beings whose lives are cut short by predation, whose bodies are consumed by disease, or whose existences are marked by chronic deprivation, the supposed "greater good" of evolution offers no consolation. Their suffering retains its gratuitous character regardless of how it might be theorized from a broader or more abstract perspective.

This book unfolds as a sustained critique of that tendency within evolutionary theodicies to justify suffering by appealing to the overarching progress of creation. In the first section, I will evaluate the general arguments of evolutionary theodicies, paying particular attention to what I shall call the cumulative or evolutionary view. This perspective assumes that suffering must be seen as an unavoidable component of a long-term cosmic process aimed at bringing about more complex, more capable, and perhaps even morally or spiritually richer beings. I will argue that this cumulative view is fundamentally incompatible with the theme of gratuitous evil because it overlooks the irreducible particularity of suffering and the impossibility of retroactively transforming pain into

meaning for the one who suffers. In the second section, I will examine the errors embedded in the ontology of gratuitous evil that underpins evolutionary theodicies. Too often, such accounts treat evil as if it were merely an instrumental moment in a grand design, reducing its status to that of a "temporary setback" within a teleological narrative. I will argue that this is a category mistake: gratuitous evil is not an instrumental reality, but an ontological reality. It cannot be absorbed or neutralized within a broader calculus of goods and evils.

To attempt such absorption is to deny the independent reality of suffering as it is actually lived. The third section will turn to one of the most influential attempts to resolve this tension: the theme of God's co-suffering, proposed as part of the greater-good defense in the context of evolutionary theodicy (Southgate, 2008, p. 50). This approach suggests that divine solidarity with creation—God's willingness to share in the pain of living beings—redeems or justifies the presence of gratuitous evil. I will argue that, while emotionally appealing, this proposal fails to respect the individuality of suffering. God's co-suffering may demonstrate compassion, but it does not and cannot erase the gratuitousness of the suffering experienced by creatures. Each instance of pain remains particular, non-transferable, and beyond the reach of any external justification. In the fourth section, I will critically analyze one of the underlying assumptions of evolutionary theodicy:

that the world, as it evolves, becomes progressively better—not only in terms of physical complexity but also in terms of the balance between suffering and flourishing. According to this assumption, one might expect life in the wild to have become less brutal, more orderly, and less filled with agony as evolutionary history unfolded. I will argue that this assumption is false, and I will draw on recent scholarship in the field of wild animal suffering to show that the belief in a cumulative reduction of suffering is based on flawed and overly optimistic views of life in the wild. Evolution does not guarantee a decrease in suffering; on the contrary, it perpetuates cycles of predation, competition, disease, and death on a massive scale. Throughout this inquiry, my focus will remain on animal suffering, particularly within the wild. I take this focus deliberately in order to resist an anthropocentric approach that would make human experience the sole or primary measure of gratuitous evil. By shifting the lens to animal suffering, I aim to acknowledge the breadth of gratuitous evil across different species and to underscore the reality that gratuitousness is not confined to human moral life but is woven into the very fabric of evolutionary history. Animal suffering, I contend, is perhaps the most striking and undeniable example of gratuitous evil. It forces us to confront the reality that countless beings have lived and died in pain without ever being able to make sense of their experience, to redeem it through moral reflection,

or to integrate it into a narrative of personal growth. The phenomenological suffering of animals cannot be justified in terms of a greater good, because animals themselves lack the conceptual and moral frameworks that would allow such a justification to carry meaning. Their suffering remains simply and starkly gratuitous.

Thus, my broader claim is that some evils experienced in the world—especially those endured by animals—remain irreducibly gratuitous. They cannot be absorbed into a larger teleological narrative without distortion, nor can they be neutralized by appeals to divine solidarity or cosmic progress. For this reason, I argue that gratuitous evils occupy an ontological position independent of whatever goods may arise from the evolutionary process. They are not merely side effects of progress, but realities that stand apart from and in tension with any larger account of the world as "improved" or "perfected" through evolution. This book, then, is not only a critique of evolutionary theodicies but also an invitation to think more carefully about the reality of gratuitous evil, especially as it manifests in the lives of nonhuman creatures. By examining these themes, I hope to open a space for more honest theological and philosophical reflection—one that does not attempt to explain away the weight of suffering but instead takes it seriously as a fundamental aspect of our shared world.

In this book, I aim to demonstrate that evolutionary theodicies incorrectly interpret the concept of gratuitous evil in the world. It means that the pain and suffering

immanent in the process of evolution can always be experienced or observed as a gratuitous evil for the creatures that experience it. In this context, I will raise objections to the idea that the pain and suffering experienced by living beings during evolutionary change is necessary for them to become perfect.[4]

In the first section, I will evaluate the general arguments of evolutionary theodicies and focus on the incompatibility of what I will call the cumulative/evolutionary view with the theme of gratuitous evil. In the second section, I will look at the errors in the ontology of gratuitous evil that evolutionary theodicies are based on. In the third section, I will examine the theme of God's co-suffering, one of the greater good defenses that evolutionary theodicies put forward to justify the gratuitous evil in the world (Southgate, 2008, p. 50). I will try to show how this approach is incompatible with the individuality of suffering. In the fourth section, I will discuss the basic assumptions about the amount of suffering in a world that has become better

4 The fundamental error in evolutionary theodicies is not that they never problematize the individual suffering of animals. For instance, Southgate, when discussing living beings, is extremely inclusive of all species. The fault here is the constant disregard for the fact that animal suffering is experienced by ethically valuable beings. It may be species or families that gain from pain and suffering. But it is the animals who suffer and have equal moral value to humans. Throughout this work, I will not concern myself with addressing evolutionary theodicies' meaninglessness or logical errors. I will explain that the fundamental error of these theodicies is that they err on the ontology of suffering by ignoring the suffering of an ethically valuable individual animal in the context of general benefits. This ontological error is that the suffering is suffered by the individual, and the evolutionary benefit is gained by a species. Relating this gain to a cumulatively better outcome requires ignoring individual suffering. See, (Southgate, 2008, p. 48).

physically as one of the basic expectations of evolution. Accordingly, I will emphasize that the assumption that life in the wild would be more orderly and less painful in a world that has become better in evolutionary history is false. In doing so, I will draw on the work done so far in the field of wild animal suffering and argue that the assumption that suffering in the world has cumulatively decreased is due to our flawed beliefs about the conditions of life in the wild. When discussing this topic, I will focus on nonhuman animal (hereafter animal) suffering due to evolutionary processes, particularly in the wild. By doing so, I aim to avoid an anthropocentric view of gratuitous evil in the world and to acknowledge its presence across different species.

Animal suffering is a prime example of gratuitous evil that comes to mind when considering such situations. My claim is that it is challenging to justify the gratuitous evil that animals suffer because it leads to a greater good, as evolutionary theodicy would have it. Animals cannot justify their phenomenological suffering in terms of the greater good. In this case, some evils experienced in the world are still gratuitous. Therefore, gratuitous evils exist in an ontological position independent of the good outcome of the evolutionary process.

1. EVOLUTIONARY THEODICIES, GREATER GOOD & CUMULATIVE ARGUMENT

Arguments that God permits suffering to bring about a greater good can be found in all kinds of theodicies. In the context of contemporary philosophical debates, the most well-known of these are undoubtedly J. Hick's soul-making theodicy and R. Swinburne's libertarian free will defense (Hick, 2007; Swinburne, 2008; Little, 2000). These theodicies are fundamentally anthropocentric when you look at them.

In Hick's approach, our freedom to sin or engage in destructive behavior contributes to making us a morally better person. Similarly, in Swinburne's approach, God has limited knowledge of human actions, and the universe is open to this change.[5] Openness can accommodate decisions made through free will in human history. What both approaches have in common is that they argue that the freedom to sin and do evil to become a better or more accessible 'human being' is granted by God. This

5 Such an idea of an open world deliberately kept independent of the will of God is compatible with a position in the philosophy of religion often referred to as open theism. We are constantly reminded that such a conception of the world is fundamentally based on free human beings being on their own regarding the decisions they make, even if they are wrong. In such a world, when humans cause evil, open theism does not contradict the idea of a perfect god. However, the incompatibility remains when natural evils are considered. See (Hasker & Oord & Zimmerman, 2011).

understanding in contemporary theodicies is, therefore, often anthropocentric.

Views on gratuitous evil in the world through ideas such as the soul-making theodicy and the defense of free cannot fully explain natural evil and the gratuitous evil suffered by animals. However, evolutionary theodicies, developed in line with evolutionary theory, are more willing to explain the evils that occur in the natural world and the seemingly gratuitous animal suffering and to reconcile them with the existence of God. The primary claim of evolutionary theodicies is that evolution is compatible with the existence of God. It is treated as a possibility that God has unleashed on all animals, human and nonhuman, so they can become more complex and better. In this way, animals will either become extinct or avoid extinction through their suffering in the natural world, and the world in general will somehow move towards a better state (Southgate, 2008).

However, within this framework, individual animal suffering concerning the diversity and complexity of life is consistently dismissed in favor of the survival of species or ecosystems. Here, pain and suffering are redefined as mere means to an end. The idea of individual suffering to benefit the species seems to be very much in line with evolutionary development (Southgate, 2008: 48). It makes no sense to call some of the bad things that happen in the world gratuitous evil. Every suffering, great or small,

has the specific task of improving a certain species. The following table can be used to clearly illustrate the differences in moral focus among specific positions where individual suffering is disregarded in favor of the continuity of a species.

M. J. Almeida demonstrates the logical justification necessary for evolution to be God's means of making a perfect world possible. According to Almeida, gratuitous animal suffering is a serious problem confronting theodicies, and it is tough to explain this pain and suffering unless God must design an evolutionarily more perfect world (Almeida, 2012, p.194). In Almeida's approach, the seriousness of animal suffering is given due credit when discussing gratuitous evil. However, the logical necessity is attributed here to God's making the world more perfect. Suffering animals are not in the fundamental perspective.

The most common features that come to mind when referring to the concept of gratuitous evil are that they refer to natural or artificial situations that arise without reason. Gratuitous evils, roughly speaking, recall intrinsically evil situations that God could have prevented without a general moral cost. These are intrinsic evils that a morally perfect being could prevent without causing a general moral degradation of the world (Almeida, 2020). Therefore, the most crucial feature of gratuitous evil is its association with intrinsically evil events. When we talk

about intrinsically evil events, we need to consider that these evils do not arise for any self-interest or calculation. If the observed or experienced evil event does not occur in the name of any interest, calculation, or greater good, it is close to fundamentally gratuitous evil. In this respect, we can call to mind William Rowe's famous fawn argument for gratuitous evil (Rowe, 1979).

Accordingly, let us imagine that a fawn that dies in the forest after the fire by a lightning strike and suffering great pain on its own does not learn any lessons for the future from this pain and that this pain never leads to any positive outcome in the future. In this case, this event exemplifies a truly gratuitous evil. There are many such cases of gratuitous pain and suffering in the world. From this point of view, Rowe's use of a defenseless fawn in drawing the theoretical framework of gratuitous evil shows us that the intuitive connection of animal suffering with gratuitous evils is solid.

Thus, when dealing with gratuitous evil, we do not have to adopt an anthropocentric perspective like the libertarian defense of free will and soul-making theodicy. Instead, we can think in a way that rejects anthropocentrism and considers animal suffering in this case. I am not here trying to find an alternative argument to theodicies that try to justify how gratuitous evil, and God can exist in the same world. Instead, we are questioning whether suffering is indeed gratuitous.

We must recognize that Rowe's evidentialist[6] argument is compelling and exemplifies gratuitous evil in the universe. However, we may be unable to understand the divine reason behind the fawn's painful death due to our human cognitive limitations, similar to the skeptic theist view. From this perspective, the fawn's suffering is relatively meaningful.[7]

Evolutionary theodicies, like skeptic theism at first glance, come up with highly original ideas to justify the gratuitous evil in Rowe's argument. The approach that interests us the most is undoubtedly that seemingly suffering is somehow created to cause a greater good (MacGregor, 2012, p. 165). Evolution in this context is a temporal process in which species become perfect. All the suffering that is and will be experienced during evolutionary development is interpreted as an experience that makes living beings stronger than they were at a particular moment in history. According to Wahlberg's definition, evolutionary theodicies argue that suffering, premature death, and extinction in the process of evolution can be reconciled with the belief in a loving and omnipotent God and that specific valuable characteristics of creatures can

6 For those who argue that the existence of evil in general and gratuitous evil constitutes essential evidence for agreeing on the non-existence of God, evil need not necessarily be gratuitous evil. The existence of situations involving evil events directly calls the existence of God into question. See (Draper, 1989).

7 We may understand suffering theoretically but have limited empathy for practical experiences. Practical theodicy suggests that suffering has real-world effects, which theoretical understanding may not fully grasp. See (Culp, 2015; Sollereder, 2021).

only emerge through a random and uncontrolled process of evolution (Wahlberg, 2015, p. 37).

This process, which evolutionary theodicies describe as random and uncontrolled, is recognized as the only way for living beings to reveal specific characteristics that make them more valuable. For a theist, therefore, the conclusion is that evolution is a deliberate process created or allowed to take place by God so that living beings can realize their true potential. Any natural evil that may occur in this process is considered a necessity. God's justification for allowing these evil events is that, in the long run, the creatures exposed to this pain and suffering will gain new potential. As long as the world is left in this open-state, many events that can be considered random will occur. The world exists in a state of openness to various physically unpredictable events. Therefore, the pain and suffering caused by natural evils in the living world will benefit current or future species (Peacock, 1993). The explanation seems reasonable considering the history of evolutionary advancements in the natural world. From this standpoint, it is unlikely that there could be any gratuitous evil in the world. Gratuitous evils may result from events partly controlled by a God who has permitted living beings to exist in an open world.

Within the framework of evolutionary theodicies, events that cause pain and suffering to a sentient species for no reason are causally explicable to the extent that they provide them with new features and potentials at the end

of the evolutionary process. In other words, the suffering in the world provides a cumulative benefit to all species, as it provides them with the potential to create a stronger and more resilient form of life (Nanay, 2008). Therefore, we can call the argument that evolutionary theodicies claim that pain and suffering in the evolutionary process occur to bring about a greater good the cumulative/evolutionary argument. If pain and suffering experienced on an individual scale bring hereditarily better traits to future members of the same species, then on a large scale, it should not be considered evil, but the cumulative benefit to the species of the individual experiencing it. Based on this argument, there is no gratuitous evil in the universe at all.

When we consider that even an unnecessarily horrible event for the person experiencing it contributes to holistic evolutionary development, the nature of individual suffering is no longer significant to us. Therefore, categorizing evil would be insignificant, too. The suffering caused by individual horrendous experiences and the millions of members lost during a species' evolutionary development is enormous. Nevertheless, the cumulative benefit to the species may be much more significant (Clark, 1976).

1.1. Beyond Evolutionary Narratives of Progress

The general claim of evolutionary theodicy allows us to think of evolution as a process that God enables and initiates so that living beings gain the autonomy, they need

to create better versions of themselves. In this respect, I will refer to such views as cumulative/evolutionary positions, which only consider the evolutionary process by which a life form becomes perfect and claim that even gratuitous evils during this process are subject to evolutionary development. The primary claim of the cumulative/evolutionary position is as follows:

> **C/E Argument:** Evolution is a random and uncontrolled process necessary for living things to reach their full evolutionary potential. The hardships experienced during evolution are necessary for living things to become longer-lived, stronger, and more resilient. Natural conditions and hardships are an inevitable and necessary part of the evolutionary process. They should not be seen as individual sufferings but as challenges contributing to species' survival and improvement. Therefore, they should not be considered immanently evil. In this context, there cannot be gratuitous evil if the collective pain and struggle contribute to a greater good.

Cumulative/evolutionary views seem excellent ways to cope with the enormous suffering and evil in the first place. However, the main point that cumulative explanations that argue for the existence of a greater good in the universe miss when explaining the existence of gratuitous evil is the singularity and phenomenological structure of the sensibility of pain. We can get help from the table below to understand the fundamental distinctions

between goodness at the species level and evil at the individual level through Rowe and Southgate's solutions:

Table 1: Contrasting Perspectives on Evolutionary Goods and Individual Suffering

Dimension	**Species-Level Good**	**Individual-Level Evil**
Focus	Continuity of the species, adaptation, evolutionary benefit	The suffering, loss, and lived experience of the individual
Example	Disease eliminates weaker members → species strengthens over time	The intense pain of a bird dying from disease
Mode of Explanation	"Suffering is a necessary tool for the evolution of the species."	"Suffering is real, deep, and meaningful for the individual."
Ethical View	"Necessary for the greater good" → cumulative argument	"The individual's suffering cannot be ignored" → experienced reality

Adapted from Rowe (1979) and Southgate (2008). Table created by the author.

In conclusion, while cumulative or evolutionary theodicies present themselves as sophisticated, and at times even elegant, frameworks for reconciling the overwhelming presence of suffering in the natural world with the belief in a benevolent and omnipotent God, they ultimately remain insufficient. Their insufficiency lies

in their persistent failure to account for the irreducible singularity of pain and the phenomenological immediacy of suffering. These theodicies, in their eagerness to defend the coherence of theism in an evolutionary cosmos, repeatedly appeal to a long-term, species-level narrative of progress, flourishing, and improvement. Yet in doing so, they inevitably abstract away from the lived and embodied reality of individual creatures. Their agony is reduced to a functional necessity, a mere mechanism within a grand evolutionary design. Such abstraction, however, is precisely what the very concept of gratuitous evil resists. Gratuitous evil, by its very nature, demands that we attend to what resists instrumentalization, what cannot be justified by reference to larger schemes, and what remains starkly destructive for the one who suffers.

Gratuitous evil, in this respect, confronts us with an unyielding truth: the brute fact that pain, when endured by a sentient being, is neither inherently instructive nor necessarily productive of any greater goods. Pain is not automatically redemptive; it does not necessarily contribute to growth, flourishing, or progress.

The fawn that burned in the fire caused by the lightning strike, in Rowe's thought experiment remains one of the clearest illustrations of this point. The suffering of the fawn, prolonged and pointless, is not transformed into meaning simply because evolutionary narratives can be constructed around it. Similarly, the countless animals

that perish daily from starvation, disease, predation, parasitism, or environmental disaster are not merely "steps" toward a more resilient species or "building blocks" of a stronger ecosystem. They are instances of profound and gratuitous loss—loss that is felt, lived, and irredeemable in the lives of those creatures. To interpret these events solely in terms of their contribution to the resilience of species or the continuity of ecosystems is to miss their essential character. It is to overlook that they are, first and foremost, phenomena of suffering that cannot be morally or metaphysically redeemed.

Therefore, the central weakness of the cumulative or evolutionary position becomes clear: it dissolves the moral weight of individual suffering into an impersonal narrative of progress. It assumes that no evil can be gratuitous, because every act of suffering contributes to the development of life as a whole. But this claim collapses under the recognition that suffering is not an abstract variable to be calculated but an experienced reality that weighs upon the concrete lives of sentient beings. To deny this reality is to fall into a kind of moral and metaphysical reductionism, where the lived pain of countless animals is reinterpreted as an illusion—or worse, as a necessary sacrifice offered on the altar of evolutionary progress. Such reductionism does not merely distort the truth of suffering; it trivializes it. It seeks to cover over the reality of gratuitous evil with abstract language about growth,

progress, and resilience, but in doing so, it fails to grasp the depth of the problem it seeks to address.

The problem of gratuitous evil cannot be neutralized so easily. It cannot be explained away by claiming that every agony contributes to a higher good. It persists as a stubborn reminder, an ever-present challenge, that any theodicy which fails to honor the individuality of suffering ultimately fails to engage with the true gravity of the issue. Gratuitous evil insists that not all pain can be justified, not all experiences of agony can be subsumed within cosmic teleology. Some pain remains, quite simply, pointless and devastating for the one who suffers it.

What emerges, then, is the need for a more honest and sobering acknowledgment of gratuitous evil's ontological distinctness. Gratuitous evil is not merely a temporary gap in our understanding that will one day be reconciled with divine goodness. It is an ontological reality that demands recognition in its own right. Suffering cannot always be subsumed into narratives of utility, progress, or cosmic harmony. Nor can it be reconciled too quickly with the idea of a benevolent divine order. Even if one grants that evolution has indeed produced remarkable diversity, resilience, and complexity in the natural world—even if one admits the grandeur of evolutionary history and its astonishing achievements—this acknowledgment does not erase the countless lives marked by meaningless pain. The evolutionary story of resilience and adaptation

does not undo the agony of the countless creatures whose lives have been cut short, whose experiences have been saturated with pain, and whose suffering has brought them no compensation.

Evolutionary theodicies may succeed in providing a broad explanation for why suffering exists at the macro level of history, but they cannot eliminate the reality that, for the individual who suffers, the experience is irreducibly gratuitous. To the fawn consumed by fire, to the prey animal torn apart by a predator, to the diseased bird slowly losing its strength, the suffering is not redeemed by future goods. It remains suffering, raw and devastating, experienced in the immediacy of the present. This recognition should not be seen as an obstacle to theological reflection but as an opportunity—a challenge to develop a more nuanced, more humble, and morally serious engagement with the problem of evil.

To confront gratuitous evil without seeking to explain it away is to respect the integrity of lived experience. It is to acknowledge the tragic dimensions of creation itself, rather than reducing them to functional necessities within a divine plan. Only by doing so can we resist the temptation of abstraction, the comfort of theoretical closure, and remain faithful to the reality of suffering in all its depth, particularity, and gratuity. This does not mean abandoning the search for meaning altogether but rather recognizing that meaning cannot always come in the form

of justification. Sometimes meaning must come through acknowledgment, through solidarity, and through moral seriousness in the face of what cannot be reconciled.

Thus, the enduring lesson of gratuitous evil is that creation, for all its grandeur and beauty, is also marked by loss, pain, and tragedy that cannot be neatly resolved. Any theological or philosophical framework that fails to honor this fact will ultimately remain inadequate. The task before us, then, is not to erase gratuitous evil but to confront it honestly, to integrate its reality into our reflections, and to cultivate a humility that resists easy answers. In this way, our engagement with the problem of evil can move beyond abstraction and toward a deeper recognition of the fragility and tragedy of life itself.

2. ANIMAL SUFFERING AND THE ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF GRATUITOUS EVIL

People generally approach the achievements of animals at the end of their evolutionary journey through the inclusive term of the animal's family, ecosystem, or super-individual base to which it belongs. The approach that evolutionary theodicies generally resort to in defense of the greater good is similar. The claim that gratuitous evil events occur in the world to somehow cause a greater good ignores the individual existence of sentient beings. In other words, interpreting pain and suffering defends the reality of certain reasons external to the individual who feels that pain (Aaltola, 2014). The essential point that needs to be reminded here can be easily deduced from Rowe's argument, so much so that the suffering experienced by the fawn that dies alone because of the lightning strike in the forest is a suffering that only he experiences and witnesses.

Let us try to reformulate the suffering of a fawn due to a lightning strike within the framework of the greater good view of evolutionary theodicy. Let us imagine two different deer species living in the forest. Since one of these forms of deer cannot make much progress in developing the ability to predict the lightning that constantly strikes the forest, it gradually becomes unable to survive and

becomes extinct. Let us assume that the other form of deer has existed for many years and has become more familiar with the lightning that strikes the forest. This familiarity gradually makes them much more resistant to sudden lightning strikes. Over many years, deers in this form gain the ability to predict the lightning that is likely to strike the forest a few seconds in advance and to escape from the environment they find dangerous to a safer area. They also become able to pass this ability on to future generations biologically. Thus, the first form of deer that we mentioned utterly disappears from the natural world. However, in the famous words of Darwinism, the form that is better fit to nature has survived and has ensured the continuity of its form, thus providing a causal justification for the suffering it has experienced due to lightning strikes over the years (Claeys, 2000).

Biological evolution, which includes many bad events, has led to a greater good in providing the animals in question with the ability to understand better, interpret, and take precautions for environmental conditions. Therefore, the argument of evolutionary theodicies towards a greater good is partially right here. However, the point ignored here is that the greater good mentioned is cumulative. In other words, the surviving deer form mentioned above has achieved a good that encompasses their form and the species to which they belong. When we refocus on the fawn in Rowe's argument, it seems extremely difficult to say that it is aware of the evolutionary developments that

will occur in the future and the cumulative outcomes that its own family will obtain.

Cumulative/evolutionary arguments provide a substantial justification for categorically discounting the individuality of the fawn's suffering in the face of a species' gains. These theodicies are also extremely useful in legitimizing God's indifference to gratuitous suffering because both forms of deer living in the forest still have sufficient autonomy to take precautions against the constant lightning strikes.

The fundamental problem with this perspective is that we are accustomed to constantly thinking of animals in terms of their own species and other biological categories, rather than as individuals. This habit leads us to think that evolutionary interests are essential for animals. Therefore, we tend to find the individual suffering experienced by animals as meaningless when we consider it in proportion to the future gains of a specific animal form. However, this human tendency does not eliminate the fact that many animals, including the fawn depicted in Rowe's argument, are subjected to great suffering brought on by natural and artificial evils (Horta, 2015; Southgate, 2018, p. 114).

Under today's scientific conditions, expecting animals to act in their species' evolutionary interests is not feasible. Moreover, the idea that animal suffering is acceptable because of evolutionary theodicies, which promise future benefits for their species, can be viewed as an intrusion on

the animals' subjective experience during their suffering, exceeding their lived reality.

One intuitive objection to this approach is to claim that animals may also be able to think about the future. Indeed, contrary to what was thought in ancient times, animals have a more complex capacity for thinking about the future. In other words, animals wouldn't understand the whole explanation for why their suffering is valuable, even if such an explanation made sense, which is highly contestable. However, no definitive finding has yet been reached about how far ahead in time animals can think about their future. Animals' future-oriented goals are generally limited to representations that include concrete personal benefits. In other words, it needs to be clarified how deep animals' insights into their future-oriented thinking processes are, and more research is required to understand the differences and similarities between these capacities of humans and animals (Redshaw & Bulley, 2018, p. 46).

Expecting animals to have a disposition over their species' evolutionary interests does not seem possible within today's scientific conditions. In addition, evolutionary theodicies' grounding of the existence of animal suffering in the greater good for their species in the future can be interpreted as an excess outside the phenomenological reality during the period in which the animal suffers and is imposed on this subjective experience from outside.

Therefore, the belief that better versions of living beings will emerge through evolution is anthropocentric. The pain experienced by animals is an inseparable part of their lives and is meaningful on an individual level. The pain animals suffer is a part of their subjective experiences, and these experiences cannot be ignored when viewed from the outside. Making individual pain unimportant in the face of the evolutionary achievements of the species reflects an anthropocentric perspective and belittles the individual experiences of animals. The pain suffered by animals can be perceived as gratuitous evil when viewed from the perspective of individual beings, and it is difficult to justify this pain for the sake of the greater good. In this context, the phenomenology of animal suffering shows that individual suffering cannot be ignored in the face of the evolutionary achievements of the species and that each experience of pain is valuable and meaningful. Thus, all the reasons we can come up with to think that animal suffering is not perceived as gratuitous are anthropocentric. Accordingly,

1. Theodicies that attribute suffering to higher goods require interpretive capacities.

2. Animals lack such interpretive capacities; their suffering remains phenomenologically gratuitous.

3. Thus, at least some evils in the world appear gratuitous in ways theodicies cannot resolve.

4. Therefore, many traditional theodicies fail, especially in the case of animal suffering.

The tendency to legitimize God's indifference to individual animal suffering by making it unimportant in the face of the overall gains of the species stems from the habit of evaluating animals in terms of their species rather than individually. Individual animal suffering may seem meaningless when seen as unimportant in the face of evolutionary gains, but this does not change the fact that many animals suffer from natural and artificial evils. Animals may need more to think about the future as profoundly as humans do, making it impossible for them to have complete control over their evolutionary interests.

The attempt of evolutionary theodicies to legitimize animal suffering with the future well-being of the species reproduces the anthropocentric perspective that ignores the subjective experiences of animals that experience this suffering differently. Therefore, it is vital to question whether the explanations offered by evolutionary theodicies are sufficient. Explaining animal suffering solely in terms of future species gains neglects the current experiences of these creatures and presents an ethically problematic approach. In this context, sentience should be taken as the only characteristic to be considered a person at the essential level, encompassing all ethical theories, public policies, and research topics. When we base ourselves on sentience, issues such as animals' level of consciousness or their freedom to be agents will remain trivial, and interspecies inclusiveness will be fully achieved (Perry, 2024).

In this respect, gratuitous evil exists if the fawn in Rowe's argument experiences. The most fundamental reason why we ignore this gratuitous suffering in different ways is our strong intuition that the fawn is not conscious of the evolutionary story of which it is a part. Therefore, evolutionary theodicies claiming that gratuitous evil exists for the sake of a greater good are flawed in terms of the ontology of evil. They ignore the phenomenal pain that animals perceive or assume that this pain exists only for the benefit of a species, family, ecosystem, or biocenoses. Explaining this mistake as a deliberate oversight or indifference would be a straightforward attitude. This mistake stems from a highly systematic attitude that has spread throughout history. We can briefly call this attitude speciesism.[8]

In conclusion, the analysis of evolutionary theodicies in light of the phenomenology of animal suffering reveals a profound and enduring problem: the tendency to dissolve the individual experiences of pain into abstract, collective narratives of progress and survival. By interpreting suffering as an inevitable means toward the evolutionary advancement of species, ecosystems, or life in general, evolutionary theodicies reproduce an anthropocentric bias that privileges abstraction over lived experience.

8 Speciesism usually involves connotations of the privileging of one species over others. However, in the case of humans, we have no doubt that suffering is only individual. In the case of animal suffering, claiming that this suffering will contribute to that animal species in the future and subordinating animals only to their species also bears traces of speciesism due to its anthropocentrism. See (Horta & Albersmeier, 2020).

The countless prey animals torn apart in the wild, or the innumerable creatures who die from starvation or disease cannot be meaningfully consoled by appeals to the eventual resilience of their species. Their pain is their own, irreducible and inescapable, and cannot be translated into evolutionary gains without distorting its reality.

To insist otherwise is not simply a theological misstep but an ethical failure, one that risks legitimizing divine indifference by devaluing the subjectivity of nonhuman creatures. What is at stake here is not merely a philosophical disagreement about theodicies but a recognition of how speciesist assumptions shape our moral and theological frameworks. The persistent habit of valuing animals primarily as representatives of a species, rather than as individuals with their own sentient experiences, perpetuates a system of thought that discounts gratuitous evil wherever it appears in nonhuman life. Yet the very structure of gratuitous evil resists such reduction: it names precisely those instances of suffering that cannot be justified, instrumentalized, or rendered meaningful by appeals to some larger good. Evolutionary theodicies, by their very nature, seek to erase this irreducibility, but in doing so they expose their own inadequacy. If sentience is taken as the essential moral criterion, then the pain of each individual animal—regardless of its species, its evolutionary role, or its cognitive complexity—demands recognition as ethically significant. Once this is granted,

it follows that many forms of suffering in the natural world must be acknowledged as gratuitous, not because they lack evolutionary consequences, but because those consequences cannot redeem the lived agony of the one who suffers.

Thus, the existence of gratuitous evil stands as a challenge not only to evolutionary theodicies but to any theodicy that seeks to explain suffering by appealing to external goods. To confront this challenge honestly is to admit that there are dimensions of evil that remain unexplained, irreducible, and tragic—dimensions that call for humility rather than justification, acknowledgment rather than abstraction, and compassion rather than theoretical closure. In this sense, the critique of evolutionary theodicies is not merely a defense of the category of gratuitous evil; it is also an insistence on re-centering the moral and theological gaze upon the lived realities of individual creatures, whose suffering demands recognition in its own right, apart from any evolutionary story into which it might be subsumed.

3. INDIVIDUALITY, GRATUITOUS EVIL, AND WILD ANIMAL SUFFERING

In the wild, animals are constantly faced with various threats: predation, starvation, disease, natural disasters, and other environmental stressors can be included (Horta, 2023). These stressors cause animals to struggle constantly for survival and experience intense suffering. For example, disease and injury can cause long-term suffering and death for many animals. Individual animal suffering is a reality that C. Southgate, who defends the theoretical foundations of evolutionary theodicy, does not deny. Accordingly, whatever theistic defenses may be, the individuality and particularity of suffering must be reckoned with, and a theodicy compatible with the particularity of suffering must be put forward (Southgate, 2018, p. 125). From this perspective, the issue of individuality and suffering remains a debatable issue for all types of theodicies.

For theistic theodicies, one explanation for the existence of individual suffering is the claim that God has a fundamental empathy for all creatures and that he suffers along with the suffering creatures (Farley, 1996). In this view, when animals suffer, God suffers as well. Southgate argues that God has a love that encompasses not only humans but all creatures; therefore, he empathizes with the

suffering of animals. In this respect, God is not indifferent[9] to the suffering of creatures and actively participates in the act of suffering. This premise is a very valid move for philosophers who defend theistic evolutionary theodicies like Southgate to accept the immanent suffering in the world. Therefore, in a world where evolution exists, suffering is accepted as the only inevitable path (Southgate, 2008, p. 16).

However, this view is less meaningful even for a moderate atheist.[10] For an atheist who thinks that gratuitous evil is an evidential counterargument to theism, a theodicy that includes evolution is more tolerable. However, the idea that creatures in the world suffer as witnessed by God and that God empathizes with this pain experienced by creatures is more incomprehensible to atheists.

Because evolution involves an attitude more compatible with naturalism and physical reality than the

9 Indifference is a potent defense tool, especially for Draper and his defenders, regarding evidential evils. According to this view, the indifference of an all-powerful and all-good God to the evils that exist in the world constitutes one of the most fundamental problems against theism. From this perspective, if God is truly omnipotent and infinitely good, how can evils such as pain, suffering, and injustice be explained? Draper and those who think like him argue that the fact that God does not intervene or prevent these evils poses a severe challenge to theistic belief systems. This indifference suggests that God is either not omnipotent or does not have the quality of being all-good. Therefore, this argument stands out as a critical question of the logical consistency and truth of theistic belief. See (Howard-Snyder, 1994).

10 Generally, a theodicy may not mean much to a strong atheist. However, theodicies, by nature, claim to respond to atheistic arguments for evil that use evil as physical evidence. In other words, although theodicies, by their nature, do not necessarily have to convince an atheist, they always have a concern to respond to views that use evil as evidence for atheism. This is why atheists are important to theodicies.

idea of God's empathy and co-suffering, God's witnessing and empathizing with particular pains does not eliminate the physical justification for the individual suffering of pain.[11] God's empathy with the suffering of creatures does not explain the existence or causes of physical pain but rather expresses that God is not indifferent to this pain and shares the suffering of creatures. However, to atheists, the idea of such empathy is less convincing because it has no observable basis in the physical world (now or in the future for a greater good).

An evolutionary theodicy can be accepted as an explanation that does not deny the physical existence of large-scale suffering in the world. Because in evolutionary history, some species have survived until the new millennium. Of course, there are living forms that completely disappeared centuries ago, but the remaining forms bring greater good to the world by ensuring that more potent living forms will exist. It is possible to consider evolutionary development as an adventure of becoming perfect for living things in that it essentially reveals better forms of living things that may emerge in the future. However, basing the large-scale individual pain and suffering experienced during this time on a greater good that will emerge in the future still needs to solve the problem.

11 Here, the eschatological nature of pain stems from a belief that the unfinished and incomplete well-being of living beings due to suffering and death will be compensated after death. Accordingly, God is empathic towards the suffering of living beings and will compensate for this pain in heaven. See (Peters, 2019).

Animal suffering in nature is a real issue, even when animals might benefit in the future. Let us consider the example of Rowe's fawn again. If we imagine ourselves in that situation, the knowledge that our suffering may lead to significant scientific discoveries in the future will not lessen our pain. Although it might offer some psychological comfort, it would not change the fact that we are experiencing agony in the present moment.

Most people may not want their deaths to be justified by their contribution to humanity or by solving a critical problem. However, when it comes to animals, we tend to be more courageous in thinking that evolutionary processes justify their deaths. This unequal treatment is based on speciesism.

The suffering experienced by animals raised for human needs, should not be justified by prioritizing the benefits to a species over the welfare of individuals. This perspective is called speciesism, and it leads to viewing animal life through a human-centered lens (Horta, 2022). Speciesism often legitimizes the use of animals for human needs. However, it is essential to recognize that the suffering animals endure in farming is significant and cannot be overlooked. This suffering is different from the suffering caused by natural events. It results from human activities and is counted as an artificial evil (McKenna, 2018).

If humans do not remove themselves from the natural selection process, the sufferings experienced by

animals produced for farming can be legitimized from this perspective. The reason for this is to see the living species that reached the peak in the natural selection process as humans and to normalize the enslavement of other species. However, this ethical understanding may not always be valid for those with an evolutionary perspective.

The theory of evolution can help define the true nature of animals and may require humans to position themselves outside the process of natural selection. This approach begins with recognizing that animals, like humans, have emotional and cognitive capacities that can suffer. Thus, an evolutionary perspective can also advocate not exploiting animals for human interests but instead living by their nature (Criscuolo & Sueur, 2020). In contrast, animal suffering in the wild largely involves natural evils, not artificial ones. Of course, when it comes to the damage that humans have inflicted on nature and ecosystems over the years, it should not be overlooked that seemingly natural evils may have anthropogenic causes (Horta, 2023, p. 143). On the other hand, when we return to Rowe's fawn, it is difficult to claim that a lightning strike in the forest is an artificial evil. Events involving great pain experienced by animals exposed to similar natural evils can be called singular wild animal suffering.

The discussion of evolutionary theodicies, divine empathy, and the problem of animal suffering reveals a persistent and unsettling truth: no theological strategy has yet managed to dissolve the irreducible singularity of pain

endured by nonhuman creatures. The examples drawn from wild animal suffering, highlight that the problem cannot be explained away by appealing to cumulative goods, evolutionary benefits, or divine co-suffering. To reduce suffering to its potential evolutionary outcomes, or to claim that God's empathy transforms its meaning, fails to respect the lived and phenomenological reality of agony. The animal that suffers does not experience its pain as a contribution to species-level progress, nor does it find consolation in the notion of divine companionship. Its pain remains immediate, raw, and personal—an undeniable reality that no abstraction can erase. For defenders of evolutionary theodicy, the claim that suffering is "the only inevitable path" in a world shaped by natural selection and ecological pressures is indeed coherent from a macro perspective. Species evolve, adapt, and sometimes flourish precisely because harsh conditions have selected for resilience. Yet this macro-level coherence does not touch the micro-level experience of the suffering creature. The fawn consumed by flames in the forest, or the bird slowly dying from a viral disease, cannot access the narrative of evolutionary progress. From their standpoint, there is no consolation in the thought that their agony may eventually lead to a stronger lineage of deer or birds. To accept evolutionary theodicy uncritically, then, is to adopt an impersonal stance that erases the moral gravity of individual suffering in favor of species-level abstraction.

Moreover, the notion of divine co-suffering, while emotionally appealing, encounters serious limitations when scrutinized from both theistic and atheistic perspectives. To believers, the idea that God shares in the suffering of creatures may provide reassurance that God is not indifferent. Yet such reassurance does not eliminate or explain the physical fact of suffering—it merely reframes it as something witnessed in solidarity. In this respect, evolutionary theodicy appears more palatable to naturalists, since it frames suffering as a byproduct of physical processes rather than divine mystery. Yet even here, the explanatory gap remains: why must gratuitous evil exist at all, if not simply because nature is indifferent? The concept of speciesism offers a further critique of evolutionary theodicies. Human beings, when evaluating their own suffering, rarely find consolation in the claim that their pain contributes to a future good for the species. Most of us do not want our deaths justified by their evolutionary or scientific value. Yet when it comes to animals, we are much quicker to accept precisely this reasoning—that their deaths and agonies are permissible because they fuel evolutionary progress. This double standard exposes the anthropocentric bias at the heart of many theodicies: human suffering is treated as morally weighty, while animal suffering is discounted as expendable. To normalize such inequality is to reinforce a speciesist framework, one that devalues the subjective

experiences of nonhuman creatures simply because they do not belong to the human family.

This recognition becomes even more urgent when considering the distinction between natural and artificial evils. The suffering endured by animals in the wild is often categorized as "natural"—lightning strikes, predation, disease, starvation. Yet many of these evils are now entangled with anthropogenic causes, from climate change to ecosystem destruction. Meanwhile, the suffering of animals in industrial agriculture is clearly artificial, created by human choices and structures of exploitation. Both categories of suffering illustrate the limits of evolutionary theodicies. To justify animal suffering as part of "natural selection" is ethically incoherent since it arises from deliberate human intervention rather than natural processes. And to interpret wild suffering as a necessary instrument of evolutionary progress disregards the phenomenological individuality of pain. The implications are clear: any theodicy that explains animal suffering solely in terms of future goods—whether evolutionary resilience or divine empathy—fails to capture the reality of gratuitous evil. Sentience itself must become the foundation for moral recognition. If an animal can feel pain, that pain is ethically significant, regardless of species membership, evolutionary role, or divine purpose. When evaluated from this standpoint, the suffering of Rowe's fawn, or of any animal enduring natural or artificial evil, is gratuitous

insofar as it lacks justification within the horizon of the one who suffers. To dismiss or reinterpret this suffering through abstraction is not only a philosophical error but also a moral one.

Thus, the broader lesson is that gratuitous evil persists as a category resistant to evolutionary and theological reduction. It forces us to confront the tragic dimensions of existence without attempting to rationalize them away. For theology, this means resisting the temptation to claim that all suffering serves a hidden good; for philosophy, it means acknowledging the ontological distinctness of evil as irreducible. For ethics, it requires rejecting speciesism and embracing a sentience-centered framework that honors the reality of individual suffering, human and nonhuman alike. Only by doing so can we begin to take seriously the depth of the problem of gratuitous evil and the moral weight of animal suffering in the evolutionary cosmos.

4. EVOLUTION, BETTER WORLD AND IDYLLIC VIEW

Although it is not easy to ignore the suffering of wild animals, humans have a very effective habit of avoiding problematizing this type of suffering. This is sometimes based on the belief that animals live happily in nature. This assumption, which has been called the idyllic view of nature (Horta 2010) is wrong because, in nature, animals often suffer greatly due to hunger, disease, injury, predation, and other natural evils.[1]

Humans tend to romanticize nature, which is already harsh and cruel, and this tendency makes it easier to ignore the gratuitous evil that animals suffer in nature. Such suffering does not really have any good consequences for animals' lives; there is no lesson that animals individually learn from this suffering, and this suffering does not seem to lead to any greater good. Therefore, it is intuitively very easy to consider wild animal suffering that occurs naturally as gratuitous evil.

The claim that evolutionary processes will achieve more incredible benefits for species through pain and suffering also provides a humane relief from wild animal suffering. Because this is the working principle of evolution, and living beings can only develop physically and mentally through painful actions. Considering the evolutionary history that has progressed since the world

[1] Beyond disregarding the flaws inherent in evolutionary development, the idyllic view also undermines key arguments in theistic debates, such as fine-tuning and appeals to natural order. For a study that reinterprets the idyllic view in these terms, see (Akalın, 2025).

came into being, the cumulative benefit acquired for animals should have reduced this suffering in this respect. Therefore, from the perspective of evolutionary theodicies, this evolutionary adventure spanning millions of years must have positively impacted gratuitous animal suffering.

According to Murray, indicators of the universe's transition from its chaotic state to a more orderly state are essential for a theistic theodicy approach that does not exclude evolution. The theme of the greater good eases the expectation of the world evolving from a chaotic state to a more orderly and less painful state. In this respect, the chaotic state of the universe should transform for the better (within nomic regularity) through evolutionary developments over time. (Murray, 2008: 192). This assumption is highly compatible with the evolutionary theodicy perspective. If change from a chaotic world to a more orderly world is possible, then the order that the greater good will bring in the future should somehow reduce animal suffering. Therefore, it would not be strange to argue that the pain and suffering in animal life are less than in the past.

The idea that evolution leads to a more orderly and less chaotic state, resulting in decreased animal suffering, is flawed. This perspective overlooks the subjective experience of individual animals facing suffering. While it is true that animals may be in better conditions than millions of years ago and may suffer less overall, this does not diminish the significance of an individual animal's

suffering. This view can lead us to perceive animals as being in a better state overall, continuing to increase in nature, and passing on their lineage to future generations. However, arguments defending the greater good from an evolutionary perspective inherently reflect an overly optimistic viewpoint.

4.1. Against Infinite Process

One of the most fundamental defenses against this view is that evolution is not a finite process; therefore, development and the greater good have not yet come to the world. However, it is still expected that individual animal suffering will be affected for the better in the temporal framework in which the universe moves from chaos to order and that there will be an observable decrease in gratuitous animal suffering.

However, a highly relative perspective is needed to support the argument that the immanent suffering in the ecosystem or biocenosis in which humans and animals are located has decreased over time or that living conditions there have become more bearable. It is possible to talk about the existence of environmentalist views that the holistic value of an ecosystem or biocenosis is more important than the value of individual animals. For these holistic views, the individual value of animals is less important than that of an entire species. Horta argues that ecosystems and biocenoses do not have experiences or feel pain like sentient beings. Therefore, they are not directly affected by

actions in terms of intrinsic value, unlike sentient animals, who experience well-being and suffering (Singer, 1979; Horta, 2015, p. 28).

From this perspective, the concept that evolution, supported by the cumulative argument of evolutionary theodicies, somehow results in a greater good for the entire living space aligns with the environmentalist viewpoint. However, improvements in the overall condition of the ecosystem or biocenosis do not diminish the suffering of individual animals, as ecosystems or biocenoses cannot experience it collectively. Therefore, from this standpoint, evolution does not result in a greater good in the historical context concerning the individual suffering of animals (Horta, 2010a, p. 253).

When we think of suffering and evil, we focus on large animals (such as fawns), which skews our perception of the scale of suffering in nature. However, when we look at invertebrates and their reproductive strategies, only a small number of the thousands or even millions of eggs they produce survive, resulting in widespread suffering. It is essential to consider that the pain experienced by invertebrates may differ due to differences in sentience, affecting our perspective on suffering.

Additionally, we do not have to see pain solely as the pain of death. Because suffering also results from the loss of the possibility of having more positive experiences with death. Suppose we consider evil here as a bundle of negative experiences of sentient beings. From this point

of view, it can be said that invertebrate animals, which lay many eggs in nature and only a few of which survive, are exposed to evil because of the potential to have a good experience they have lost, even though they cannot reach adulthood to experience pain within their ecosystems. In contrast, vertebrates, and large-scale animals such as Rowe's fawn suffer significantly from physically harrowing experiences and the loss of the possibility of gaining positive experiences. This individual suffering evokes a gratuitous evil independent of the greater good that evolution provides to the entire ecosystem or biocenosis.

The examination of evolutionary theodicies in relation to wild animal suffering ultimately underscores a profound philosophical and ethical tension: the tendency to conflate the overall improvement of ecosystems or species with the experiential reality of individual sentient beings. The idyllic view of nature, as Horta criticizes, obscures the harshness of the natural world and romanticizes what is, in fact, a domain of constant predation, disease, and death. When evolutionary theodicies claim that suffering contributes to a future greater good by facilitating adaptation or the emergence of stronger species, they disregard the phenomenological reality that every individual animal endures suffering in its own right.

From the perspective of the one who suffers, the future benefits of evolution do not matter. Pain is lived in the present, and it is precisely this immediacy that

renders much animal suffering gratuitous. The claim that evolution reduces suffering over time by moving the world from chaos toward order, as argued by Murray, provides a narrative of progress that is both comforting and dangerously optimistic. Even if the world as a whole is less chaotic than it once was, the reality remains that countless animals continue to experience intense suffering daily. To emphasize only the macro-level improvements is to overlook the moral significance of micro-level suffering. The diseased bird, or the countless invertebrates that perish prematurely in reproductive cycles each exemplify the persistence of pain that is not alleviated by appeals to evolutionary order. Their agony is not negated simply because species as a whole have survived or ecosystems appear more stable. Holistic environmentalist perspectives, which value ecosystems or species above individual lives, may seem to resonate with the evolutionary theodicy's cumulative argument. Yet, as Horta and Singer rightly emphasize, ecosystems cannot feel pain, nor can biocenoses suffer. It is only sentient individuals that experience well-being or its negation. Therefore, to justify suffering in the name of ecosystemic or species-level flourishing is to impose a value system foreign to the beings actually experiencing pain.

This shift in perspective from individuals to collectives risks erasing the lived reality of gratuitous evil, which by its nature cannot be subsumed under narratives of cumulative goods or systemic balance. Moreover, the scale

of animal suffering becomes even more staggering when one broadens the focus beyond large vertebrates to include invertebrates. Their reproductive strategies, involving the production of vast numbers of offspring with only a tiny fraction surviving, entail the loss of immense potential for well-being. Even if these beings experience suffering differently due to variations in sentience, the fact remains that their lives involve widespread premature death and the forfeiture of positive experiences. When understood as the deprivation of future goods, this too constitutes a form of evil—one that magnifies the pervasiveness of gratuitous suffering in nature.

Whether in the acute pain of Rowe's fawn or the lost opportunities of countless invertebrates, suffering resists reduction to evolutionary narratives of resilience or adaptation. Thus, the final lesson to be drawn is that gratuitous evil cannot be erased by evolutionary progress, divine empathy, or systemic justifications. To accept evolutionary theodicies as adequate is to ignore the phenomenological particularity of suffering and to underestimate the ethical significance of sentience. A more honest acknowledgment of gratuitous evil requires us to move away from anthropocentric and speciesist frameworks that treat individual pain as expendable. Instead, it requires a sentience-centered ethic that recognizes the intrinsic value of every suffering creature, regardless of its role in evolutionary history. Only then can we confront the reality of gratuitous evil without distortion

and recognize the tragic depth of suffering in the natural world.

In sum, the examination of evolutionary theodicies in relation to wild animal suffering uncovers a persistent and unresolved ethical as well as philosophical tension. On the surface, these theodicies present themselves as coherent explanatory frameworks that seek to reconcile the apparent contradiction between the existence of a benevolent and omnipotent God and the undeniable reality of extensive animal suffering in nature. Yet, when examined closely, they tend to collapse the immediacy and rawness of lived pain into abstract, system-level narratives of resilience, adaptation, and evolutionary progress. Within such accounts, the experience of suffering ceases to be understood as an existential reality for the individual creature; instead, it becomes reframed as an impersonal contribution to the overarching drama of species survival and ecological balance. Pain and loss are thus reduced to mere functions within a grand design, interpreted as unfortunate but necessary ingredients in the supposed perfection of life. However, this interpretive strategy comes at a heavy moral cost. To argue that suffering is justified because it contributes to adaptation, survival, or the eventual flourishing of species is to overlook the phenomenological reality of suffering as it is experienced by concrete individuals. For the fawn that burned in the fire caused by the lightning strike, in Rowe's thought experiment, for the countless prey animals torn apart by

predators, for the diseased bird slowly dying in solitude, or for the invertebrates that perish by the millions before reaching maturity, the narrative of long-term species-level benefit has no relevance. From the standpoint of the one who suffers, the future gains of evolution are utterly meaningless. What matters is the immediacy of agony—the raw, embodied, and temporally inescapable reality of pain. And it is precisely this immediacy that renders so much animal suffering gratuitous, incapable of being retroactively redeemed by appeals to larger goods. Therefore, the central lesson that emerges is strikingly clear: gratuitous evil cannot be erased or neutralized by appeals to evolutionary progress, by theological assertions of divine empathy, or by systemic justifications that privilege collectives over individuals.

To accept evolutionary theodicies as sufficient responses to the problem of suffering is to risk underestimating, or worse, outright dismissing, the ethical significance of sentience itself. It is to disregard the intrinsic moral value of individual lives and to interpret beings capable of suffering as expendable instruments in a larger cosmic narrative. Such an approach not only weakens the credibility of theological reflection but also perpetuates a subtle form of speciesism, in which non-human suffering is treated as morally negligible when compared to supposed higher goods. A more honest, sober, and morally serious engagement with the problem requires us to abandon these anthropocentric and speciesist tendencies. Instead, it calls

for a radical shift toward a sentience-centered ethic, one that recognizes that the capacity to feel pain is, in itself, a sufficient ground for moral consideration. Every creature capable of suffering, regardless of its species membership, evolutionary role, or ecological function, possesses moral significance that cannot be overridden by appeals to collective flourishing. To recognize this is to affirm that the pain of each individual matters in its own right—that suffering is not an abstract datum to be weighed in cosmic balances but a lived experience that demands acknowledgment and respect. Only through this ethical reorientation can we begin to confront the tragic depth of gratuitous evil in the natural world without distortion, without abstraction, and without denial. This recognition does not provide a neat solution to the problem of evil; rather, it underscores the limits of theodicy itself and the necessity of humility in the face of suffering. By resisting the temptation to explain away pain and by acknowledging the irreducible gratuity of much animal suffering, we cultivate a more truthful and ethically responsible perspective—one that honors the lived experiences of creatures in all their fragility and vulnerability. In this way, the critique of evolutionary theodicies becomes more than a theological exercise; it becomes a call for deeper moral seriousness, urging us to move beyond abstractions and to remain faithful to the reality of suffering in all its depth, particularity, and gratuity.

CONCLUSION

Evolutionary theodicies' attempts to explain the concept of gratuitous evil in the world face serious difficulties, especially in the context of individual animal suffering. Arguments that the pain and suffering inherent in evolutionary processes are necessary for the long-term perfection of species ignore the fact that individual suffering is a deep and real suffering for the experience. In this context, the greater good argument offered by evolutionary theodicies falls short because it needs to consider the importance of individual suffering sufficiently.

The individual and phenomenological experience of animal suffering appears as a reality in which gratuitous evils persist, regardless of the possible good that evolutionary processes might bring. Arguing that this suffering is acceptable for the sake of the species' evolutionary gains creates a great ethical and theological gap. Evolutionary theodicies fail to deal with the concept of gratuitous evil because they cannot satisfactorily explain the intense and persistent suffering that animals are subjected to. Therefore, gratuitous evil continues to be an essential ground for weakening theodicies.

The fundamental criticism of the cumulative/evolutionary position presented by theodicies is that it ignores the phenomenological dimension of pain and the

clarity of individual experiences. Although it is argued that the suffering suffered by animals and other creatures benefits their species in the long term, the fact that this suffering is a natural and deep source of suffering for the creatures experiencing it does not change.

However, this suffering is accepted as an inevitable part of the evolutionary process, the particularity and intensity of the suffering experienced by individual animals cannot be ignored. Although evolutionary and theistic theodicies try to explain the meaning of this suffering by arguing that God empathizes with the suffering of creatures, this empathy does not eliminate the existence and causes of physical suffering.

Ultimately, the problem of gratuitous evil remains unresolved within the framework of evolutionary theodicies. The claim that suffering is justified by its contribution to the perfection of species cannot erase the immediacy of pain as it is lived by individual animals. For the bird consumed by disease, or the countless invertebrates that perish before reaching maturity, the notion of a future greater good provides no relief, no meaning, and no redemption. Their suffering is what it is—painful, isolating, and irreducibly personal. This recognition forces us to admit that evolutionary theodicies, despite their intellectual sophistication, cannot adequately bridge the gap between abstract teleology and concrete lived experience. By attempting to subsume individual suffering

under the category of evolutionary progress, they risk trivializing the reality of gratuitous evil and undermining the seriousness of the ethical challenge it poses. What is needed instead is an acknowledgment that some evils remain gratuitous evils that cannot be justified by appeal to progress, divine empathy, or systemic harmony. Thus, gratuitous evil continues to stand as a critical counterpoint to theodicies. It exposes the limitations of attempts to reconcile suffering with divine goodness and challenges us to take more seriously the moral weight of individual pain. A more honest engagement with this problem requires shifting the focus from species-level abstractions and theological justifications to the phenomenology of suffering itself. Only by doing so can we begin to face the tragic dimensions of existence without distortion and recognize the full ethical implications of gratuitous evil in the natural world.

REFERENCES

Aaltola, E. (2014). Animal suffering: Representations and the act of looking. *Anthrozoös, 27*(1), 19–31. https://doi.org/10.2752/175303714X13837396326297.

Akalın, A. (2025). Pastoral Görüşün Felsefi Temelleri: Doğal Düzen ve Hayvan Istırabı. FLSF: Journal of Philosophy and Social Sciences, 40, 329–347. https://doi.org/10.53844/flsf.1590689.

Almeida, M. (2012). *Freedom, God and Worlds*. Oxford University Press.

Almeida, M. (2020). On necessary gratuitous evils. *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*.

Almeida, M. (2022). Evil is not evidence. *Religious Studies, 1*(1), 1-9.

Clark, S. R. (1976, January). God, good and evil. In *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (pp. 247-264). Compton Russell Ltd.

Claeys, G. (2000). The "survival of the fittest" and the origins of social Darwinism. *Journal of the History of Ideas, 61*(2), 223-240. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhi.2000.0014

Criscuolo, F., & Sueur, C. (2020). An evolutionary point of view of animal ethics. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 528735. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00403

Culp, J. (2015). Overcoming the limits of theodicy: An interactive reciprocal response to evil. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, 78*, 263–276. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-015-9525-2

Dougherty, T. (2014). *The Problem of Animal Pain: A Theodicy for All Creatures Great and Small* (1st ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Draper, P. (1989). Pain and pleasure: An evidential problem for theists. *Noûs, 23*(3), 331–350. https://doi.org/10.2307/2215486

Eikrem, A., & Ottesen Søvik, A. (2018). Evolutionary theodicies – An attempt to overcome some impasses. *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie, 60*(3), 428-434. https://doi.org/10.1515/nzsth-2018-0024

Elder, M. (2018). Gratuitous animal suffering and the evidential problem of evil. In A. Linzey & C. Linzey (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Religion and Animal Ethics* (pp. 1-20). Routledge.

Farley, E. (1996). Divine empathy: A theology of God. Augsburg Fortress Publishers.

Hasker, W. (1992). The necessity of gratuitous evil. *Faith and Philosophy, 9*(1), 23-44.

Hasker, W., Oord, T. J., & Zimmerman, D. (Eds.). (2011). *God in an Open Universe: Science, Metaphysics, and Open Theism*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Hick, J. (2007). *Evil and the God of Love*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Horta, O. (2010). Debunking the idyllic view of natural processes: Population dynamics and suffering in the wild. *Telos, 17*, 73-88.

Horta, O. (2010a). What is speciesism?. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics, 23*(3), 243-266. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-009-9205-2

Horta, O. (2015). The problem of evil in nature: Evolutionary bases of the prevalence of disvalue. *Relations: Beyond Anthropocentrism, 3*(1), 17-32.

Horta, O. (2017). Why the concept of moral status should be abandoned. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice, 20*(5), 899-910.

Horta, O. & Albersmeier, F. (2020). Defining speciesism. *Philosophy Compass, 15*(1), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12708

Horta, O. (2022). *Making a Stand for Animals* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Horta, O. (2023). Wild animal suffering. In F. Burgat & E. Dardenne (Eds.), *Animal Suffering: The Ethics and Politics of Animal Lives* (pp. 141-160).

Howard-Snyder, D. (1994). Theism, the hypothesis of indifference, and the biological role of pain and pleasure. *Faith and Philosophy, 11*(3), 452-466.

Kropf, R. W. (2004). Evil and evolution: A theodicy. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Little, B. A. (2000). *A critical analysis of contemporary 'greater-good' theodicies with special attention given to gratuitous evil* (Order No. 9964714). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (304675348).

MacGregor, K. R. (2012). The existence and irrelevance of gratuitous evil. *Philosophia Christi, 14*(1), 165-180.

Messer, N. (2018). Evolution and theodicy: How (not) to do science and theology. *Zygon: Journal of Religion*

and Science, 53(3), 821-835. https://doi.org/10.1111/zygo.12438

McKenna, E. (2018). *Livestock: Food, fiber, and friends*. University of Georgia Press.

McMullin, I. (2004). Horrendous evils and the goodness of God. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, 55*(1), 1-16.

Murray, M. J. (2008). *Nature Red in Tooth and Claw: Theism and the Problem of Animal Suffering*. Oxford University Press.

Nanay, B. (2005). Can cumulative selection explain adaptation? *Philosophy of Science, 72*(5), 1099-1112.

Peacocke, A. R. (1993). *Theology for a scientific age: Being and becoming – natural, divine, and human* (1st Fortress Press ed., original publication: 1990). Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Perry, M. W. (2024). Why sentience should be the only basis of moral status. *Journal of Ethics*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10892-024-09487-4

Peters, T. (2019). Evolution, suffering, and eschatological redemption: Sollereder, Southgate, and Russell on theodicy. *Theology and Science, 17*(2), 195–208. https://doi.org/10.1080/14746700.2019.1596253

Redshaw, J., & Bulley, A. (2018). Future thinking in animals: Capacities and limits. In G. Oettingen, A. T. Sevincer, & P. M. Gollwitzer (Eds.), *The psychology of thinking about the future* (pp. 31–51). Guilford Press.

Rowe, W. L. (1979). The problem of evil and some varieties of atheism. *American Philosophical Quarterly, 16*(4), 335-341.

Russell, R. J. (2018). Southgate's compound only-way evolutionary theodicy: Deep appreciation and further directions. Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science, 53(3), 711–726. https://doi.org/10.1111/zygo.12438

Schoonmaker, H. (2017). The evolutionary theodicy problem. *Dialogue & Nexus, 4*(3).

Schrynemakers, M. (2014). *God and Gratuitous Evil*. CUNY Academic Works.

Singer, P. (1979). Killing humans and killing animals. *Inquiry, 22*(1-4), 145-156.

Sollereder, B. N. (2018). God, evolution, and animal suffering: Theodicy without a fall. Routledge.

Sollereder, B. N. (2021). Compassionate theodicy: A suggested truce between intellectual and practical theodicy. *Modern Theology, 37*(3), 382-395. https://doi.org/10.1111/moth.12688

Speak, D. (2023). Skeptical theism. In *T&T Clark Handbook of Suffering and the Problem of Evil*.

Southgate, C. (2008). *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil* (1st ed.). Westminster John Knox Press.

Southgate, C. (2018). *Theology in a Suffering World*. Cambridge University Press.

Swinburne, R. (2008). The argument from laws of nature reassessed. In M. Stone (Ed.), *Reason, Faith and*

History: Essays in Honour of Paul Helm (pp. 1-20). Ashgate.

Van Inwagen, P. (2001). The argument from particular horrendous evils. *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, 74*, 65-80.

Wahlberg, M. (2015). Was evolution the only possible way for God to make autonomous creatures? Examination of an argument in evolutionary theodicy. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, 77*(1), 37-51. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-014-9486-x

Wykstra, S. (2017). A skeptical theist view. In C. Meister & J. Dew Jr. (Eds.), *God and the problem of evil: Five views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Wykstra, S. J., & Chrzan, K. (1991). When is gratuitous evil really gratuitous? *Sophia, 30*(2), 23-29.

ISBN 978-2-38236-898-5



livredelyon.com
livredelyon
livredelyon
livredelyon