

Leibniz's Theodicy "the Best Possible World" in the Context of Insurgency, Kidnapping and Banditry in Nigeria

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Abstract

The problem of evil is a major philosophical issue that faces all humans irrespective of their religious persuasions and nationalities. In recent times some tragic happenings in Nigeria such as insurgency, kidnapping, banditry, and armed robbery has befallen the nation which are perceived as evil. This paper sets out to answer the question of why a good God will permit such evil in Nigeria. Leibniz's theodicy of the "The best possible world" is analysed and contextualized as a template of perceived solution. Therefore, the methods adopted in this paper are contextual and phenomenological analysis. The findings show that Leibniz's theodicy of "the best possible world" is logically applicable to Nigeria; God optimizes a world between simplicity, harmony, and productivity and has given human beings a world that is the best for them among many other possible worlds. Evil and Good are products of God's sovereignty. The paper concludes and suggests that the evil and the good of Nigeria make the nation the best of all possible nations for Nigerians. A thorough philosophizing is recommended as a way forward. Nigerians should therefore adopt a philosophical attitude in the face of challenges (evil) confronting the nation.

Keywords: Theodicy, banditry, kidnapping, Leibniz, best possible world

Introduction

The epistemic question posed by evil is whether the world contains undesirable states of affairs that provide the basis for an argument that makes it unreasonable for anyone to believe in the existence of God. According to Perkins (2007) the problem of evil is certainly the greatest obstacle to the belief in the existence of God. Recent happenings in Nigeria such as insurgency, kidnapping, corruption, banditry, "unknown gun men", flooding and many other perplexing issues have led to many questioning the existence of God. Theodicy in its most common form is the attempt to answer questions of why a good God permits the manifestation of evil. Putting into perspective the Nigeria context, it is the question of why a good God will permit the manifestation of things believed to be bad in a highly religious nation like Nigeria.

Notably, the problem of evil vexed Leibniz as much as any of the problems that he engaged in the course of his philosophical career. This is manifest in the fact that the first and the last book-length works that he authored, the "Philosopher's Confession" (written at age 26 in 1672) and the "Theodicy" (written in 1709, seven years before his death) were both devoted to this problem. The works of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), one of the greatest thinkers and contributors to the concept of theodicy, will be used as a template for a possible solution to the question of evil in Nigeria. He was the first to use the term "theodicy" in his 1710 work *Essais de theodicée sur la bonté de dieu la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal* (Theodicic Essays on the Benevolence of God, the Free will of Man, and the Origin of Evil). Leibniz's theodicy regards evil as provisionally permitted within God's comprehensive providence that optimises maximum perfections for the world. Evil undeniably exists but this does not undermine Leibniz's affirmation that this world is the best of all possible worlds (Honderich, 2005).

The concept of contextualization involves setting an idea, statement, or event within a larger or a particular setting in which it acquires its true and complete meaning. Contextualization is very important because it aids comprehension (Osaghae, 2012). Hence in this paper the theodicy of

Leibniz; “The Best Possible World” is analysed and contextualized in the Nigeria context for easy comprehension. Current perplexing issues in Nigeria such as insurgency, kidnapping, banditry, and corruption are examined. The interrogation is to ascertain if Leibniz's claim can be used to explain recent happenings in Nigeria. The aim is to analyse Leibniz's idea of “the Best Possible World” in the Nigeria situation as a solution to the problem of evil in Nigeria. It is believed, that at the end of this paper, readers will not only be exposed to the solutions of Leibniz in his theodicy but also find relief and succour in the midst of some current challenges and dilemma facing the Nigeria state in contemporary times.

The Problem of Evil

Kunhiyop (2005) rightly opines that ‘this is man's greatest problem because every human being born on the face of the earth is always confronted with some form of evil’ (p.127). Michael (1982) states that,

The perennial problem of evil haunts those areas of inquiry which deal primarily with the nature and destiny of man; philosophy, theology, literature, art and history. Neither is it surprisingly that every major worldview, whether religious, ethical or political proposes insight into vexing problem (p.11)

Evil is here understood in terms of human crisis of pain, sickness, death and anything that causes discomfort to the human beings. When confronted with pain or sorrow, one is forced to square his experience with his religious belief and understanding. Kushner (1999) a Jewish writer, dealing with this problem said,

None of us can avoid the problem of why bad things happen to good people. Sooner or later each of us finds himself playing one of the roles in the story of Job, whether as a victim of tragedy, as a member of the family, or as a friend/comforter. The questions never change, the search for a satisfying answer continues. (p.143)

The real question that faces the religious devotee is whether or not his ultimate focus of devotion gives a satisfactory explanation to the evil he is experiencing. Hick (1967), who has written extensively on the topic, expands on the problem as it affects the three major religions observes that,

Christianity, like Judaism and Islam, is committed to a monotheistic doctrine of God as absolute in goodness and power and as the creator of the universe ex nihilo. If God is all-powerful, then he must be able to prevent evil. If he is all good, he must want to prevent evil, but evil exists. Therefore, God is either not all-powerful, or not all-good? (p.136)

Another version of this problem is well stated by David Hume:

Is he [God] willing to prevent evil but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil? (Hume, 1967. p.88)

He goes on to elaborate on the problem by asking,

Why is there misery at all in the world? Not by chance, surely from another cause. Is it from the intention of the deity? But he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? But he is Almighty. Nothing can shake the solidity of this reasoning, so short, so clear, and so decisive. (p.91)

The understanding of what kind of God one believes in will affect how he understands evil. For example, a loving God but not a powerful God, though he wants to help but cannot help

his children. Evil, therefore, comes upon his children because God cannot protect them from it. Kushner states this position very succinctly,

I believe in God. But I do not believe the same things about Him that I did years ago when I was a theological student. I can worship a God who hates suffering but cannot eliminate it, more easily than I can worship a God who chooses to make children suffer and die for whatever exalted reason (Kushner, 134).

From the above assertions it is crystal clear that evil indeed is a problem. The problem of evil is something that has been there, and it is still a major challenge in contemporary time.

Types of Evil

According to Pecorino (2001), "evil" has a wider range of definitions than that for which human or supernatural agents are responsible. There are two main types of evil:

Moral evil - This covers the willful acts of human beings (such as murder, rape, banditry, kidnapping, insurgency and so on.)

Natural evil - This refers to natural disasters (such as famines, floods, earthquake and so on.)

Of these two types, we may further divide both of them into the following two classes:

Physical evil - This means bodily pain or mental anguish (fear, illness, grief, war, and so on.)

Metaphysical evil - This refers to such things as imperfection and chance (criminals going unpunished, deformities, and the likes)

The Theodicy of Leibniz

Consideration of any present-day introductory textbook of philosophy reveals that the problem of evil in contemporary philosophy is standardly regarded as an argument for atheism. The atheist contends that God and evil are incompatible, and given that evil clearly exists, God cannot exist. Some philosophers, conceding that the claimed incompatibility in the foregoing argument is too strong, contend, nevertheless, that even if the existence of God and the existence of evil should prove to be compatible, the existence (or duration, or amount, or pervasiveness) of evil provides at the very least with compelling circumstantial evidence that God does not exist (Ottuh & Idjakpo, 2020)

In his *Dictionnaire Historique et critique*, the sceptic Pierre Bayle denied the goodness and omnipotence of God on account of the sufferings experienced in this earthly life. Gottfried Leibniz introduced the term "theodicy" in his 1710 work, he argued that this is the best of all possible worlds that God could have created (Rengger, 2005). Following the examples of Leibniz, other philosophers also called their treatises on the problem of evil; 'Theodicy'. Voltaire's popular novel *Candied* mocked Leibnizian optimism through the fictional tale of a naïve youth; saying that it does not hold water. It is pertinent at this juncture to dissect the theodicy of Leibniz for the sake of clarity.

Leibniz's theodicy is based on two fundamental ideas. First, the principle of sufficient reasons- Leibniz put it like this;

by virtue of which we consider that we can find no true or existent fact, no assertion, without there being a sufficient reason why thus not otherwise, although most of the time these reasons cannot be known to us (Duignan,2022)

By the above assertion, it is believed that whatever exists must have a sufficient reason or every effect must have a cause. More significantly, regardless of how far back one seeks to offer explanation for any phenomenon, such explanations eventually will involve the inter-connected relations of everything in the whole universe, however remote some of these relations may be. Leibniz believes that God has a reason for everything including evil, although these reasons cannot be known to human beings.

Second, Leibniz proposed that there are two kinds of truth; Necessary truths and contingent truths. Necessary truths are truths whose contraries are impossible and contingent truths are those whose contraries are possible. The corollary is that an object is said to have contingent existence if it may or may not exist (Kekes, 1990). This sets the stage for the fundamental question, “is the existence of this world necessary or contingent?” in other words, are there other possible worlds? Leibniz’s central thesis is that there are other possible worlds.

Leibniz argues in numerous texts that it is parochial to think that human happiness is the standard whereby the goodness of worlds is to be judged. A more reasonable standard, according to Leibniz, would be the happiness of all sentient beings. But once we admit this, it may turn out that the amount of unhappiness in the created realm is quite small, given that for all we know, the sentient beings on Earth might constitute a very small percentage of the sentient beings created by God. Here Leibniz includes not only preternatural beings such as angels, but also the possibility of extraterrestrial rational beings [Theodicy 19 (H 134–5; G VI 113–4)].

Leibniz actually opts for middle positions between one that asserts that this world exists necessarily (Spinoza) and another that says this world exists by an arbitrary decision made by God (Malabranche). Leibniz suggests that this world, including its set of physical laws is contingent as one could envisage worlds based on different physical laws. But God made this world based on one that would produce the most order, harmony and fecundity (Beebe, 2000). Therefore the world irrespective of what we think, is the best possible world for us.

The Best Possible World

The best of all possible worlds and Leibniz’s theodicy explains that Leibniz’s claim that the world we live in is ‘the best of all possible worlds’ is deceptively simple, but based on complex logical and metaphysical machinery. It is an a priori claim in that it does not follow from an observation and evaluation of the balance of good and evil in experience to the conclusion that this is the best one can reasonably expect. It follows instead, independently of whatever experience we may have of the quantity and quality of evil mixed with good, from consideration of the attributes of God, whose existence Leibniz regards as a demonstrable truth (Antognazza, 2022)

Specifically, Leibniz explains that the eventual creation of this world arising from all possible worlds is based on the criterion of compossibility (Hick, 1967) that is, a possible world may then be defined as a maximum set of compossible individuals. For Spinoza, whatever could possibly exist must exist (exists necessarily). For Leibniz possible existence does not entail necessary existence. There are many possible configurations for creating worlds but while one may envisage various possible worlds, the fact is, there are many things that cannot exist together. For example as Nigerians our existence as blacks rather than whites is the result of a world configured in such a way that we are blacks, rather than whites. The two possible World orders, one that makes it possible for us to be blacks, and another that makes it possible for us to be whites cannot exist together. Ultimately, this specific world that includes Nigerians as blacks, and Americans as whites, results from a choice made by the creator (hence, this is a contingent world) rests on principle of sufficient reason.

Leibniz developed view is that this world provides the best optimization between conflicting goods of moral and physical perfection. In his theodicy, Leibniz stresses that God’s goals in creation are not confined to moral perfections but include physical perfections as well, although sometimes there may be a conflict between choosing physical and moral perfections. But still there is no presumption that God would for the sake of lessening moral evil reverse the whole order of nature (Leibniz, 188).

Leibniz points to the random nature of the weather to press his case. Not every place receives the most appropriate weather at all times. For examples the southern part of Nigeria has more rains than the northern part of Nigeria.

Leibniz opines thus:

Shall God not give rain, because there are low-lying places which will be thereby incommoded?
Shall this sun not shine as much as it should for the world in general, because there are places
which will be too much dried up in consequences? (Leibniz, 206)

We wonder why God did not opt for another world with less physical perfections and therefore less disasters and human tragedies than this present world. Leibniz's answer would be that somehow these worlds do not comport to being about optimal happiness for all of God's creatures, especially if we bear in mind not just the welfare of human beings but all living creatures (Tennant, 1995). God being perfect will create an existence or a world in harmony. The final choice of the created world is based on one that provides the greatest variety and the greatest order. Leibniz offers various descriptions of this optimized order- "perfection is obtaining as much variety as possible, but with the greatest order possible. (Duignan, 2022), or perfection is at the same time the simplest in hypotheses and the richest in phenomena (Gamber, 1986). If the assertion of Leibniz is accepted, it means God optimises a world between simplicity, harmony and productivity or richness.

Nicholas (2005) elucidates that localised evil cannot be excluded in the overall scheme of things; they contribute to the optimisation or maximization of goods of a particular space-time order. Leibniz's final view is that the actual world achieves the best balance between the conflicting goods of moral and physical perfection.

God's omniscience includes perfect understanding of all possible worlds. In the end are simply impossible as they contain intrinsic contradictions (Strickland, 2006). In Leibniz's thoughts, imperfection is included in the creation of this world because God does only what is logically possible. God will not because of evil do that which is logically impossible, even if he has the power to do so. One may argue that such a God is limited in power, but it should be understood that such limitation is not imposed upon God by external forces or circumstances but arises from the very nature of God. God is omnipotent, but this does not mean he can act arbitrary or override contradictions. According to Aquinas (2022), whatever does not involve a contradiction is in the realm of the possible and God is called Omnipotent. Notably, Leibniz confronts the problem of evil not by denying the imperfections of this world, these imperfections do constitute decisive evidence against the theist's affirmation of the goodness of God. In this regards, Leibniz working principle is inherited from Augustine, that is, evil is not a positive evil; but a limitation or absence of good. For Leibniz the phenomenon of evil is what God permits rather than what God wills (Tennant, 137). Hence, despite the presence of evil he still concludes that our world has to be "the best of all possible worlds" (Aquinas, 2022).

The Nigeria Context

The Nigeria of today is a nation connected to history. The amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 is seen by many as "evil". The Federal Republic of Nigeria is about ten degrees north of the equator just close to the Western Coast. The Federal Republic of Nigeria is the most populous country in all Africa and the eighth most populous country in the world (Agha, 2012). Nigeria has a total land area of about 923, 76859.km (about 1.570 of which is covered by water) with about 853km of coastline. Just about 33.02% of this total land remains arable, that is, land good for farming (Agha, 2012). It is pertinent to mention that Nigeria is a very rich country in terms of human and natural resources (including natural gas, petroleum, tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium, lead, zinc and arable land).

On the other hand, despite the abundance of human and natural resources, Nigeria remains one of the poor countries in the world today. According to World Health Organisation (2009) in Nigeria today about 3 to 5 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, about 220,000 HIV/AIDS

deaths were recorded in 2009 alone. Ethnic and religious crisis worsen the situation in certain parts of the country today, terrorists group such as the notorious Boko Haram (which means Western education is evil) continue to terrorize several innocent people especially in the Northern parts of the country (Channels (2021).

Besides the deadly HIV/AIDS, the deadly malaria, bacterial and protozoa diarrhoea, yellow fever, sleeping sickness, Ebola (Nigeria is now Ebola-Free), continue to threaten several lives in Nigeria today. The COVID 19 pandemic led to a total shutdown and lockdowns in many Nations. According to the World Health Organization (2008), more than 26.7% of Nigerian children under the age of 5 were underweight in 2008. Environmental degradation, especially in the Niger Delta areas, oil spillage, rapid deforestation, air and water pollution, desertification, rapid urbanization are some of the major environmental issues facing Nigeria today. In recent time corruption, Boko-Haram insurgency in the North-East, kidnapping and baby factory in the East, Militancy in the South-South, armed robbery in the South-West, communal clashes in the North-central, and Fulani invasion in the North-west, banditry, unknown gun men in the East, are some of the current perplexing tragedies engulfing the nation. These challenges have increased theodicy tendency among Nigerians, and the question of why a good God will permit evil to bedevil the nation.

According to Nwankwo and Ibegunam (1993) living in Nigeria is turning nightmarish with each passing day. There is high rate of unemployment, inflation and poor living conditions. Hunger, disappointments, anxieties and hopelessness has been the lot of a great many. The bombardment of Nigerian with idealised scenes of ease and material comfort of the Northern Nations through the media, and the extravagance of the few oases in a vast desert of dryness and want, has raised the expectation and intensified the desperate efforts made by individuals and groups to escape the strangle-hold of deprivation (Nwankwo, 1993). Criminality such as armed robbery, kidnapping and terrorism are on the increase. There is a lot of insecurity and many people have been stretched beyond the limits of their endurance and only naturally, the result is a little of broken persons; broken business; broken relationships, broken homes; all in need of restoration. Some of the major issues confronting the nation at the moment are highlighted below:

- i. **Corruption:** According to Diara (2014) corruption is the most endemic pathological challenge to national development and survival in Nigeria. It has eaten deep into the marrow of public offices, civil services politics and even religious leadership in the country. It is now difficult to know who to trust in the Nigerian society. The allotments from treasury are eroded by the corruption of project administration at every level (Agha, 2012). Diara posits that corruption is an illegal immoral or dishonest behaviour, especially by people in positions of authority. Thus, corruption generally refers to any act of illegality, immorality and dishonesty. Conventionally it implies acts of financial and material dishonesty (Diara, 2)
- ii. **Boko Haram Insurgency:** Boko Haram (Western education is forbidden) officially called *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Liada' Aw ati wal-Jihad* (People committed to the Prophet's Teaching for propagation of Jihad), is a militant Islamist movement based in North-East Nigeria (Osaghae, 2012). The group was designated by the United States as a terrorist organisation in November 2013; membership has been estimated to number between a few hundred and a few thousand (Otu, 2010).

It is reported that Boko Haram killed more than 5,000 civilians between July 2009 and June 2014 including at least 2,000 in the first half of 2014, in attacks occurring mainly in the North-East, North-central and Central states of Nigeria (Osaghae, 2). Since 2009, Boko Haram has abducted more than 500 women and children including the kidnapping of 276 school girls from Chibok in April 2014 (Maier, 2002). According to the Department of Public Information New York, more than 650,000 have fled the conflict zone by August

2014, an increased of 200,000 since May 2014. From 2015, more damages have been done by the group that is now believed to have regroup into other forms and names. In recent times, they have been involved in more damaging activities which has left many dead.

- iii. **Kidnapping:** The kidnapping of all manner of persons has gained ascendancy in Nigeria (Ngwama, 2014). A malady previously unknown to the people has rapidly become domesticated. In the last 10 years, the volatile oil rich regions of the Niger Delta witnessed this phenomenon on a large scale with the largest being mostly expatriates and Nigerians in the oil business. Davidson (2010) points out that it has spread throughout the country extending to places as far as Kano and Kaduna, in the far Northern part of Nigeria. However, South-East and South-South Nigeria have become known as the kidnapper's playgrounds of Nigeria. In most part of the country, the menace has become a daily occurrence.
- iv. **Armed Robbery:** Smart Otu, a lecturer at the University of Ebonyi, opines that in terms of numbers, the crime problem in contemporary Nigeria is primarily a problem of armed robbery (Otu 2010, p.1). Going by media reports on crime situation in Nigeria and the public outcomes, armed type is a common phenomenon: it is a daily occurrence in Nigeria and remains among the top three most serious crimes reported to the Nigeria police (Annual Report of the Nigeria Police Force for 2006, 2007 and 2008)
- v. **Niger Delta Militancy:** Strategically located along the Gulf of Guinea and atop enormous high quality oil reserves, these three Nigerian states of Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers-commonly referred to as the Niger Delta have been plagued with armed groups and insurgents for decades (Chuta, 2004). Although its tremendous resource wealth should make the Delta one of Western African most prosperous regions, decades of neglect by the Nigerian Government, widespread corruption, and the environmental damage, has alienated and marginalized the local population and allow armed groups to proliferate. This has made life more difficult for the people.
- vi. **Banditry, Herdsmen/Farmer clashes.**
Somewhat, a hybrid of banditry, and Herders/Farmer crisis has become a common occurrence in Nigeria. Many lives and properties have been lost as a result of this bedevilment. Just recently over 50 people were killed by bandits in a Catholic church at Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria (Seun, 2022). The fact that this took place in a church raises the issue of why will God allow such an illnious crime to be committed in his house?

Other challenges facing the Nigeria State include incessant plane crash, social injustice, nepotism, elitism, inequality, flooding, erosion, epileptic power supply and many more (Jaileep, 2006). It is worth noting that some of these challenges are not peculiar to Nigeria alone, however these glaring facts raises the question of why a good God will permit evil in his good world. No doubt, the first challenge for the Nigerian theist is the logical problem of evil since these events highlighted above are perceived as evil by many. On the other hand, who does one ascribe the good happenings in Nigeria to? It is pertinent to take a cursory look at the theodicy of Leibniz of 'the Best Possible World' in the Nigeria context at this juncture.

"The Best Possible World" in the Nigeria Context

It has been affirmed that Leibniz's theodicy is based on two fundamental ideas. First is the principle of sufficient reason, Secondly, the preposition of necessary truth and contingent truth. In the Nigerian context, it should be noted from Leibniz assertions that God made us Nigerians for a purpose. In other words, the creator wants the best for his creation, hence he has given humans "the best possible world", in which Nigeria is included.

To Leibniz, this is the best possible world because the world is conflicting good and moral perfection (Keeling, 1973). One wonders why God did not opt for a Nigeria were there will be no

Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping, armed robbery, flooding, plane crash, epileptic power supply, erosion, communal clash corruption and so on? Leibniz answer will be that somehow that such a country do not comport to bring about optimal happiness for all God's creatures, especially if you bear in mind not first the welfare of ourselves but of others and all living creatures. The challenges we face as a nation is not to break us, but to make us, and God has sufficient reasons best known to him for making them happen. As humans we may not understand as a result of epistemic distance (Hick, p.137) but we must know that God wants the best for all creatures. As a result of our finiteness there certain things we can't understand, however if the infinite God says this is the best possible country for us, then it is.

In the view of Leibniz, the best possible World is a world of harmony. Nigeria as a nation is a combination of various ethnic groups, who were brought under one umbrella-Nigeria. God being perfect will create a world that has the most things that can exist in harmony. The final choice of God permitting Nigeria to be formed via imperial powers of the colonial era is based on one that provides the greatest variety and the greatest order. The North, South, East, and West together provides variety and the challenges we face as a nation should puts us on our toes to do the right things.

Leibniz's final view is that the actual world achieves the best balance between the conflicting goods of moral and physical perfection (Hick, p.17). God's omniscience includes perfect understanding of all possible nations. In the end he chose Nigeria for us because other nations which we may choose to admire may be worse than ours. For Leibniz, the phenomenon of evil is what God permits rather than what God wills. God may choose to permit some of the challenges we face as a nation to achieve a greater good. We may not fully grasp the ultimate rationale why some undesirable things, such as Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping, communal clashes and many more exists, but we rest their explanations in God's goodness and sovereignty (Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason). Despite the presence of evil, Leibniz still concludes that this has to be "the best of all possible worlds". Hence one can affirm that irrespective of the presence of evil in Nigeria, this is the best possible country for us.

However, it should be noted that Leibniz's theodicy is not one of naïve optimism. In contrast, Leibniz's affirmation is that this is God's best of all possible worlds (Nations). This is a celebration of the goodness of this world (Nation) regardless of the evils of this world (nation); Life has more pleasure than pain. It is worth noting however, that knowing that this is God's best of all possible worlds does not exonerate the believer, and the government from doing their best to redress their shortcomings (addressing the insurgency, injustice and alienating suffering). This is because human beings have a responsibility to eradicate evil, especially moral evil that can be attributed to human depravity. Many of what we call evil are as a result of human failures, moral decadence, lack of responsibility, and inactions of government and citizens of the Nigerian State. In Nigeria today, several evils are as a result of the attitude of Nigerians. Simply put, it is Nigerians that determine to a large extent the current state of Nigeria. If the Nation must experience less evil, citizens and leaders of the Nation cannot be removed from the equation. Like Hackett (1989) opines: "in the end for Leibniz, life for all its troubles is still worth living" (p.23). Nigeria may not be where she ought to be as a nation but definitely we are not were we used to be. Therefore, we have to be thankful to God because, our situations could have been worse, while we redress these issues that confront us as a nation.

Conclusion

The Nigerian nation is in a very precarious state, tensions are high, questions are begging for answers. An interrogation of Leibniz's theodicy raises the following questions; Can the tragic challenges of the Nigeria state be traced to God? Can Nigerians be exonerated from the evil of the nation? If God exists why is there evil: sufferings, poverty, corruption, Boko Haram

insurgency, kidnapping armed robbery and so on? It is the view of this paper that Leibniz's theodicy of 'the Best Possible World' cum sufficient reasoning, the preposition of necessary truth and contingent truth can be accepted as answers to the problem of evil in Nigeria. God optimises a world between simplicity, harmony, and productivity or richness. The evil and good are products of God's Sovereignty. However evil is what God permits rather than what God wills.

Arguably, it should be noted that most evil in Nigeria can be classified as moral evil because they are humanly originated. Issues, such as insurgency, kidnapping, corruption, armed robbery and so on are a product of human actions and inactions. This notwithstanding, it is safe to conclude that probably Nigeria is part of the best possible world that Leibniz talked about. . The evil and the good of Nigeria make the nation the best of all possible nations for Nigerians. This, however, requires a philosophical attitude for all Nigerians because, even if this is the best possible world for us, humans have a role to play in the eradication of evil in our world to make it so indeed.

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