

Research Article

The Question of Evil in Philosophy: A Critical Reading of Leibniz's Thinking

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Abstract

Among the major themes that govern, the question of evil is one of the most troubling issues that many theologians and philosophers have been confronted with. Many thinkers have clearly admitted their dismay and uncertainties in the face of this problem, and others have complained of their inability to provide a satisfactory answer. Many atheists have tried to take advantage of this difficulty. They have then used this question to try to call into question the existence of God and thus arouse doubt in believers. More than a theme, it is a guiding idea although it changes value during the journey. Thus, the question of evil, which raises different types of questions, interests mythology, theology and philosophy. Evil is this transhistorical and inescapable pandemic, to which it is useless to add, is universal. It is indifferent to no one and the adiarphoras of the Stoics only concern what does not depend on us. In the very extension of the concept, several possible approaches must be taken into account: does evil come from our physical suffering, from the sensible; or is it moral in the sense that it touches on sin? Or finally, is it simply a metaphysical evil, this anguish of man in the face of his imperfection? Some philosophers, including Leibniz, have looked into the question. This article presents some reflections of philosophers and especially a critical reflection of the thought of the illustrious man of science Leibniz, on the subject.

Keywords

God, Evil, Responsible, Theodicy, Origin

1. Introduction

The concept of evil can only exist and be thought in relation to its opposite: good. Raising various types of questions, evil interests both mythology, theology and philosophy. It is that we must consider, in the very extension of the concept, several possible approaches: does the evil stem from our physical sufferings, from the sensitive; or is it moral in that it touches sin; or finally, is it simply a metaphysical evil, this anguish of man in the face of his imperfection? Solutions have been proposed to this problem. Some of them, for a time, seemed close to holding the unanimous vote of the

Church. But the agreement could never be established in a sustainable way because each area of investigation is obliged to have its position. The use When a snake bites and injects its venom, it hurts the individual and can lead to death: this is the case where evil leads to evil, death. When the same individual is given a vaccine, which also hurts him, it results in an immunization against a disease. This is the case where evil brings good, health. of the word 'mal' points out that this phenomenon manifests itself in various and distinct forms, but all have the same properties in common: divide

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and destroy. Evil could therefore be defined as the cause of separation, of breaking up a harmony either in one being or between beings; separation or rupture of which may arise the good or the bad (good or evil) what is to be said?

The evil defining itself as a rupture of harmony, it becomes relative. Harmony has no universally recognized value, it varies in space and time. Thus, if what is harmony in the east is disharmony in the west, what is evil in the east will be true in the west. We can therefore say that the notions of good and evil, harmony and disharmony are functions of place and time and do not constitute universally defined and immutable norms. If evil, as a notion and subjective and relative, in everyday life, it manifests itself in the human creature in various forms. The harm to the plant would be being transported in a climate that its physiology cannot accommodate and which leads it day by day to degeneration, sterility and rot. For the animal, the evil would be to be forced into a kind of life that contradicts the needs of its constitution, makes it weak, sick and causes it to die. For the human being, evil would be everything that opposes him to his being, which morally makes him descend back into animality, depriving him of spiritual communion with his god, his model, and reducing him to live as an orphan being, isolated, incomplete, missed and disappearing into the unknown. In these three cases, the same notion of evil manifests itself in different ways and, within the framework of human life, its forms are varied.

The fact that the notion of evil is relative and since evil is not always bad, can we talk about the problem of evil, when evil itself does not seem to be universally defined? In fact, that it is relative, that it has value only according to the abstract notion of good and, whether it defines itself or not, evil has the power to manifest itself and every being feels at least one of its various forms. This is what legitimizes our question to know: how to reconcile the notion of evil that afflicts creation and that of the infinitely good God? Is there any other possible reading?

2. Leibniz: Man, His Formation and Religious Path

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz is a philosopher and scholar, born in 1646 in Leipzig, son of a professor of morals at the University of that city. The study of Leibniz's thought forces us to look for its sources in the crucible where it was formed. One would have an incomplete and entirely distorted view of his thought if one forgot his early and deep orientation, the service of the general Christian good, the paternal house whose library served him as first field of investigation and intense theological activity. His city (Leipzig) capital of the Lutheran theology is not left because it is from there that triggers its school education. Thus, all of Leibniz's thoughts are guided from his early childhood by moral and religious requirements and a firm fundamental will for comfort and

optimism. This will justify that very soon, he will fix and coordinate the great directions of his thought. Let us say that Leibniz's childhood, his family and social environment, the university, his various experiences, have surrounded him mainly with religious men Catholic or Lutheran, attached to dogmas and dedicated to the service of the Christian religion. He was also influenced by certain schools and currents of thought such as the scholastic [1], the naturalism of the renaissance.

In terms of influences, it should be noted that very early on the young Leibniz set the guiding lines of his thought. He never seems to have been a hesitant and groping mind in search of a position. His contact with other currents of thought will serve him to dig and accumulate wealth and knowledge with scientific discoveries around primitive intuitions, in order to make a logical system. That is why in all the schools and systems he had to deal with, Leibniz found something good and each one, without being a mere disciple, he drew some of his ideas by becoming an eclectic; but his eclecticism was not ordinary because he transformed what he borrowed and made a harmonious whole. That is why a genius like Leibniz does not expect an invention from others, but holds its truths in itself. He waits for a solicitation to develop his virtualities, he meets texts and expresses himself.

3. The Problem of Evil Seen By Some Philosophers

The term bad is often used; pain, injustice, wickedness, affliction, bitterness, sorrow, desolation, distress, trial, misfortune, misery, suffering, torment, tribulations.... the sin. These are the forms, the manifestations of evil. As defined by the omniscience, goodness and omnipotence of God, the first source of humanity is at work with everything that happens in the world, including evil. For how can we justify that the future escapes from divine preknowledge? It is God who creates the future, which, if contingent for creatures, is certain and determined in all aspects. All the events of the past or present and future are emanations of the decrees of his will through the action of his power. The actions of men (see sin) are in line with the predictions of divine preknowledge. Where is human responsibility?

How is evil possible in a universe ruled by a supreme being that is both good and all-powerful? This is the problem of Christian theology, that of reconciling the reality of evil with the existence of a God of infinite goodness. The theses of Saint Augustine and those of Thomas Aquinas had a lasting influence on the resolution brought by Christianity to the problem of evil. Whereas in the Old Testament the Book of Job suggests that the undeserved suffering of the prophet is a mystery to human understanding, and that the ways of God are mysterious, Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas reconcile the Christian belief in a benevolent God with that of the omnipresence of evil. According to Augustine, evil was not

created by God.

How to excuse God who creates free men having previously chosen a range of contingency which God is (again!) the origin? We cannot accuse the human being because God who created him and who knows him perfectly had foreseen that he would choose evil. Unless God is totally ignorant of the consequences reserved for things emanating from his will and power; To admit it would be contradictory in relation to the first definition we had given: God is omniscient. It was to divert the difficulty that the *manicheans* [2] had opted for two principles: one source of good and the other, source of evil.

And if God had ceased to create men, and they were maintained as a species by reproduction, since the first couple at least, although created (without root of evil) bore in it the spur of evil that later arose, and, since God was at the base of the first couple, He cannot be exonerated when developing a sequel of which he laid the foundations. Can the Bible be considered from its texts as a basis for justification of God? In fact, for the reasons mentioned above and related to the attributes of God, the fall of angels should not escape God; so he knew it had to happen. God then creates man and leaves him in a medium whose center carries temptation. Man falls and puts the whole human race in a kind of necessity of sin that engages the world in a strange confusion made of misfortunes and misery.

3.1. Immanuel Kant and the Eternal Origin of Evil

According to this philosopher who lived between 1724 and 1804, one must seek the origin of evil in freedom alone. This freedom is not, in principle, subject to the determined order of time. For him, there is therefore no origin attributable or appreciable to evil; it must be imagined, as well as everything made free, as absolutely new. No matter the origin of moral evil in man, the most characteristic to evoke its transmission in all members of our species and in and also in all generations, passes as being imposed on us by our first parents this by heredity. Any wrong action, when its rational origin is sought, must be considered as if the man had arrived there directly, from the state of innocence; Whatever his previous conduct may have been and whatever natural causes may be at work in him or outside of him, it does not matter; however, his action is free and not determined by any of these causes; it can and must therefore always be judged as the original use of its arbiter. He should not have done it whatever the temporal circumstances and connections in which he may have been; For no cause in the world will ever stop him from being a freely acting being. We cannot therefore inquire into the temporal origin of this action, but simply into its rational origin in order to determine and if possible explain from it the inclination, that is to say the universal subjective foundation, which makes us admit a transgression in our maxim [3].

In this regard, the author makes us understand that the worst way to imagine the origin of moral evil is to place it in an original sin contracted before us and which we could not bear without any form of trial other than the consequences. It is, indeed, forgetting that evil is only moral if the latter is deliberately chosen. In other words, desired by man, and not received from the first of them to be Adam. That is why, for Kant, it must be considered that the evil has its origin each time in the freedom of choice of the one who makes more precisely his «arbiter».

The major consequence of such apprehension is that, whatever happens in life can never help us to explain the evil committed by a person to a third party, much less to justify it. The evil is thus situated as that of freedom, and the man who and the subject is responsible for it as for himself. The origin of evil is therefore neither in God nor in time. In any case, according to Kant, man would not be freed for a fight against evil, because the latter would not be the true author. Indeed, to search for the origin of evil in time is to engage in a research at the level of nature, which we know is governed by determinism, which contradicts freedom. The reasonable origin of the evil would be in reality only the use of this freedom, which can not know anything because it is not in time, but which we just know exists and that it makes us responsible for all our intentions which must submit to the moral law.

3.2. History as the Field of Action of Evil According to HEGEL

For the philosopher G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831), the contemporary theodicy should not be limited only to the justification of God, but also and above all to the human world, that is to say to the History. Thus, he calls for acceptance of the evil necessary for the attainment of the good that he sees as freedom. To him, what our knowledge is seeking is a sort of idea that the end of eternal Wisdom has been accomplished on the natural field as well as on the field of the tangible and diligent mind in the world. He proposes that meditation should therefore be a theodicy, a justification of God that Leibniz had tried metaphysically and with criteria still undetermined to set up. Evil in the cosmos, including moral evil, must be admitted, and the thinking conscience must be reconciled with the negative. It is in universal history that the disease spread massively before our eyes, and in fact, nowhere is the need for such a conciliatory understanding felt more urgent than in history.

This accommodation, he argued, can be achieved only by understanding the affirmative, in which the negative boils down to something inferior and outmoded and eventually falters. It is therefore the realization, on the one hand, of the genuine ultimate goal of the world, and, on the other, of the realization of this goal in the world: in the face of this ultimate goal and its achievement in the world, evil can no longer exist and has no conformity of its own.

The theodicy according to him, admits to making intelligible the presence of evil in the face of the absolute power of Reason. This is the category of the negative that shows us how the most magnanimous and remarkable was sacrificed on the altar of history. Reason cannot linger over people's prescribed ruptures, because particular goals are lost in the universal goal.

It is easy to see from Hegel that if reason exists, and it must in order for philosophy to be exercised, it must prevail not only in nature, but even more so in the human world, which is essentially that of history. Our observation is that it is precisely this world that seems to be most influenced by the incongruity of the evil that men inflict on each other. In the face of this paradox Hegel wants to realize the authentic theodicy, that which will bring humans closer to the world as it expresses the divine power of reason. To achieve this, we need to distinguish between the ultimate end in history, which we view as the realization of freedom in the world, and the methods used by intelligence to achieve that end.

Whether it takes uprisings or revolutions, wars, or even massacres to bring people to freedom, this will not shock anyone who does not see history as an area of morality: the universal goal of freedom is achieved only through painful battles, and it is first and foremost a victory over the individual concern for self-preservation.

From this observation comes a reassessment of the negative. Evil is indeed the negative, but it is necessary for the affirmation of freedom in history. This is the essence of the dialectic developed by Hegel: to assert itself, the Spirit (whose essence is freedom) must first deny everything that opposes it. Human history may be a field of ruins; it is a graveyard of good intentions. What it announces and manifests through evil is the power and therefore also the violence of reason.

3.3. Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) or the Fight Against Evil

Faced with the phenomenon of evil, Paul Ricoeur believes that action does not require much, only that the evil be contingent, that is to say transversal. For action, evil is usually what should not be, but must be defended. Therefore, the action reverses the orientation of perception or gaze. Under the influence of myth, speculative thinking is pulled back toward the origin. On the question of the origin of evil, the answer and not the solution of the action lies in the logic of "What to do against evil?" This perspective is thus oriented towards the future, by the idea of a task to be carried out, which corresponds to that of an origin to be perceived.

For Paul Ricoeur, we do not think that by focusing on the practical fight against evil we can lose sight of the suffering. Any evil committed by one and seen becomes evil suffered by the other. Thus, to do evil is to make others suffer. Brutality does not stop the link between moral evil and suffering. So any action, whether ethical or political, that reduces the

amount of violence, between men and women, reduces the rate of suffering in the world. Let us divert the suffering prescribed to men by others and see what will remain of suffering in the world. This practical response has had a speculative impact before one incriminates God or ponders the demonic origin of evil within God, one must act ethically and diplomatically against evil [4].

What Ricoeur's reflection shows is how easily evil is defined in terms of the problem of action, unlike Leibniz's. For him, evil is only a shameful reality because it is all that should not be and in this logic of understanding, a call to action becomes as what must be defended. In doing so, action breaks the vicious circle of theoretical and abstract thinking, which ideally raises the problem of the origin of evil, into something palpable and tangible. The question is no longer one of origin, but of end: action must be taken to stop the evil.

But the battle against evil normalizes in practice a number of conceptual problems. Let's say, first, that the harm should not be, that is, that it may not be, and thus that it is contingent or accidental. Moreover, the concept of suffering is first referred to the evil committed by other men. That this suffering remains incompletely incomprehensible does not detract from the fact that it is first and foremost the effect of the brutality that man inflicts on his fellow man. It is about acting on that violence to lessen the torment around the world. We understand through Ricoeur that the practical fight against evil is never a second best. On the contrary, action solves intractable theoretical problems by making them irrelevant.

4. Leibniz and the Problem of Evil

The Origin of the World

For Leibniz, God is defined from the reason of the existence of the world, above all; God is the substance that carries the reason of his existence within him; it is a necessary, eternal and intelligent substance because she has chosen from so many possible and contingent worlds, one that she has called to existence. In other words, "Power goes to be, wisdom or understanding to the true, and will to the good." [5] Hearing is the source of essences, and will is the origin of lives. The supreme divine wisdom joined with its infinite kindness and power could only choose and produce the best of all possible worlds. Simply put, the universe in which we live is one of a number of possible universes that God perceives by his understanding. Driven by his ever-present concern for the good, he decided to bring into existence a universe that he found to be the best possible. God acts this way by his power.

One might object that a world like ours is not the best possible, for it contains evil; but Leibniz thinks the opposite, because, in his view, it would have been otherwise, and God would not have chosen it. In fact, since God has chosen this world by his will, then he is the best; this world is the upper limit and the only majority of all possible worlds. So the

origin of the world has implications: first, any change in the world is predicted and justified its election, because any accident that changes the very essence of the world. Then, if a lesser evil that arrives in the world is missing, it will no longer be this world, which, all things considered, was found the best by the creator who chose it. Every creature is limited, and that is why it cannot know everything, that it can make mistakes and make mistakes.

Leibniz's philosophical system defines three different but related types of evil.

1. The metaphysical evil that is contained in the eternal truths that make up divine understanding. It counts in the imperfection of creatures and engenders spiritual and physical evil in all possible worlds.
2. Moral evil is that committed by all superior beings or creatures (man) and consists in sin. It is usually related and causes physical harm.
3. Physical evil: it is that felt by the creature and consists in the suffering of the flesh.

Thus, evil belongs to all possible worlds of divine understanding, and even the best of all possible worlds contains it. That is why there would have been no world without a derivative of metaphysical evil. In this context, the New Testament carries its revolutionary message of a life after it, but reserved only for elected officials. The criterion for election is the grace granted to those who believe in the message and the person of Jesus Christ. God seems to imply once again his manifest partiality: isn't he the one who predestined so much more than the other in listening to the gospel? Leibniz thought that God "gives faith and salvation to whomever he likes, without seeming any reason of his choice, which falls upon a very small number of men." [6]. This approach also poses the problem of those who die without hearing about Christ at all or not enough.

Did God allow evil?

According to Leibniz, God's will is of two kinds.

- 1) The antecedent is the will to do something commensurate with the good it contains. She looks at every property case apart. For example, through these kinds of will, God toward good and repels evil.
- 2) The consequence: It is the result of all the antecedents. It is final and decisive, its success is complete and infallible. Ultimately, it determines the total will of God. As a resultant, therefore, it has "passive" components compared to it, and therefore bad. This is how much God allows evil. But since he allows it through an act of prior will, we can also say that God "wants" evil (even on a tiny scale).

Man's Responsibility for Evil

We have seen that the world, like man, one of its components, comes from divine understanding, from which is the source of evil and good. We have shown that by the metaphysical evil which is inherent in the creature, it is always inclined or victim of evil. We have also just shown that God, in his previous wills, allows evil. The problem that arises is

therefore that of human responsibility in this process, in which he seems to be engaged despite his good will. Leibniz resolves the problem by using of the physical decomposition of the forces: i.e. two bodies C1 and C2 of respective weight \vec{P} and \vec{p} subjected to a force \vec{F} parallel to the inclined plane of slope (α) on which the two bodies are placed. Let us diagram the forces present:

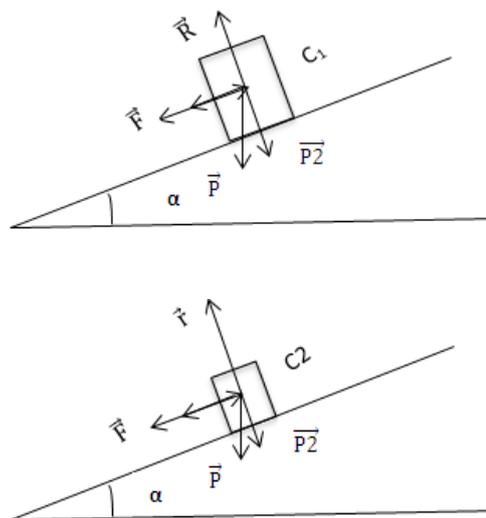


Figure 1. Schematization of man's responsibility for evil.

Given that the reactions of the ground are such that \vec{R} is greater than \vec{r} ($R > r$) and friction is not neglected, body C2 will slide more quickly than body C1. Let us return by identification to the problem of the responsibility of man and God in the face of the problem of sin (evil).

Let the strength \vec{F} , perfection of which God is the cause (consequent will) and let C1 and C2 be two men whose ideal natures are represented by the weights P and p. \vec{P} and \vec{p} give rise to modulus reactions with an angle of inclination, the resultant friction opposing \vec{F} and identify with sin. Thus, sin comes from the ideal nature of the creature as friction comes from the density of weight in a proportionality ratio.

In fact, friction can be likened to a force ($\vec{F}\vec{r}$) modulus less than ($\vec{F} + \vec{P1}$) and in the opposite direction.

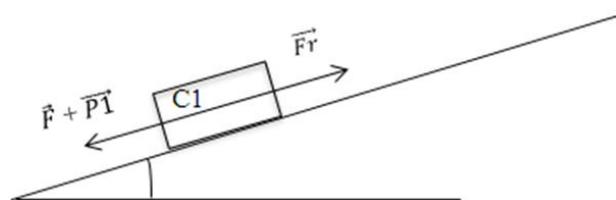


Figure 2. Diagram showing that God is the cause of material evil.

The C1 body as it appears with its weight is the ideal form

of the creature as it was produced by divine understanding. God is the cause and the opposite sense $\vec{F} + \vec{P1}$ (which is an action) while man causes with the other elements of nature force \vec{Fr} which is a passion and opposes action.

This leads us to believe that God is the cause of the material of evil (movement of the solid) which consists in the positive, and not of the formal which consists in deprivation (resistance to movement). God could not create man so that he would do nothing but deeds. If man produced only actions such as $\vec{P1}$, it would be identifiable to God. So, in the world, God is not the only actor, but the only one whose actions bear no traces of passion. Clearly, then, humans' evolution toward perfection is driven by the value of their passion (\vec{Fr}).

The evil for man is therefore deprivation, because it opposes this development and stems from the limitation due to the fact that we belong to the world. In clearer terms, by his previous will, God produces evil and good, but from them results the consequent will (\vec{F}) who yearns for the best. On the other hand, man produces actions and passions; his actions ($\vec{P1}$) are added to the actions of God for the greater good of the creature ($\vec{F} + \vec{P1}$). As for passions (\vec{Fr}), they oppose action and produce evil, deprivation. This kind of evil is part of the future contingents.

The problem of predestination and divine grace

From the above we might conclude that nothing is therefore more contingent in the future, since God has all foreseen. Likewise, we might ask why humans should use our agency when we know that our choices are destined for him. Leibniz disagrees, because he notes that "the will (of the men) is always inclined towards the party it is taking, but that it is never necessary to take it." [7]

In fact, Leibniz's position on predestination is twofold, but not contradictory in itself. He shares the opinion of the molists [8], and sometimes that of predeterminants. The former maintain that divine science has three objects: the possible, the current events and the conditional events of which the corresponding sciences are: the science of simple intelligences, the science of visions and the average science. The latter is the condition of events that arises as a result of a certain condition that free beings can transform into acts. Leibniz exploits this thesis by arguing that the truth of the future contingents is determined and yet remains contingent because, if God has foreseen that I will rise this morning with my left foot, I can rise with my right foot without anything being changed in the world. Thus, humans may be able to use their free will in circumstances that were not always predicted. Leibniz also shares the predeterminants' thesis for whom, actions [9].

Human rights are dictated before their accomplishments. He says that everything is therefore certain and determined in advance in man, as everywhere else, and the human soul is a kind of spiritual automaton, although special, is not necessary for this, of an absolute necessity, which would be truly incompatible with contingency.

We have seen that God's action is sustained and His will is consistent. It is by his previous inclinations that God wants to save all men. But the resulting inclination that determines one's full and decreitory will, and that never fails, can save only a few. This raises the problem of its questionable impartiality and lack of justice. Speaking of the relationship between soul and body, soul is understood as the active monad (the basic, substantial unit of the body that makes up the real and is endowed with appetite, perception, and sometimes reason). The reasons for everything that happens to the body can be found in the soul. So, if there is a judgment to be made on a creature, it should be directed to its soul.

For Leibniz, men's souls come from their parents, who had them in them as merely positive souls devoid of reason. By integrating the animal body, these sentient souls receive reason but, they were already corrupted physically and animally by the sin of Adam [10]. Leibniz maintains that God, the sole giver of grace, is the sole master of his judgment and mercy. He finds enough grace for those who are not guilty by their own reason (victim of the original sin). God gives his grace according to a rule that escapes human reason. For Leibniz, it's the man and his *sitz im leben* [11]; God's grace is present in proportions whose value is solely determined by God and solely known to him.

5. The Questioning of the Creation of the World

Was it so necessary for God to create this world when he could create a world free from evil? For Leibniz, was it not the best thing for God to avoid creating a world where evil would produce great good; for example, he argued that an army general would be better off having a great victory with a slight wound. St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine also argue that God allowed evil to gain the greatest good from it; Adam's fall is a happy sin. Evil could not have been a sufficient reason to prevent the creation of the world, for it is not an end in itself. Moreover, God and good are infinite, while evil and devil, albeit pervasive, are limited. Moreover, for reasons based on the pre-established harmony of the universe, Leibniz finds that it would have been God's unreason to try to prevent evil from taking place in the world. In order to call this world into existence, God has enjoyed complete freedom, for Leibniz believes that there is true freedom only if one inclines one's will toward good.

6. Another Look at Leibniz's Concept of Evil

Of all the above, no one can be struck by the richness of the arguments of Leibniz's thought. His philosophy has gradually evolved into a process of intense concentration that will last for about 20 years. Leibniz's field of inquiry was very broad (mathematics, religion, philosophy, history, politics...)

and all his work often seems to be supported by the intertwining of the different contributions of all his activities. Theologically, there is more than one objection to his approach to the problem of evil.

First, in Leibniz's philosophical system, God's role in relation to the world and to man is to look at his work, the evolution of which cannot be disturbed. God is therefore not directly responsible for any transformation, and man cannot and must not therefore rely on his creator; man has to act as his conscience deems fit; even God's help was already provided for and is in fact God's contribution to the success of his own plan to maintain perfection. The God thus depicted is not the one of the Bible. The latter presents us with a God engaged and present with his people with whom he is bound. Man in the Bible is far from a machine. It has value in itself because it is in the image of God. He is free and able to revolt. His rebellion is not a farce, but a responsible act that can blame him. Man was not predestined to do evil; he enjoyed his freedom which, together with his revolt, led him to fall, to evil. So there has been a rupture between man as he was created and man as he is now presented. Man's fall was that of his body, soul, spirit, and all other parts of it.

Leibniz also links finitude to sin. Finitude, as a characteristic that distinguishes the creator from the creature, is the very status of creation; hence of man. Finitude can never be separated from man. Sin comes from what man does with his freedom. The mythical text of Gn3 expresses a constant and even supernatural reality. Its role is to enable man to escape from the present moment and to go back in time to the origin of the cosmos, with the aim of restarting a new life more in accordance with the spirit of the beginning. We believe that the text of Gn3 does not purport to rationalize evil, making Adam, the result of his choice, the trigger of the evils of this world. Man was not the creator of evil; it precedes the life of every man and in this text it is present in the form of a snake with a mellow language and in the form of a fruit good for the sight. Gn3 should therefore be read not as a descriptive account of the origin of evil, but as an update of the sinful structures of the man of forever.

Likewise, biological death should not be considered as the result of sin but rather, it should be taken from the finitude of creation. There will be only a false christology associated with a misleading soteriology that can promise pseudo mortality and an elevation of man to divine status.

In Leibniz's view of man and his destiny, it is very difficult to introduce the new birth that is so dear to Christianity. For what does "being born again" mean for a man who is inexorably following his destiny? For Christianity, man has been denatured, and for him to cease to do evil, a transformation that God can make only through Jesus Christ. Hence man, in the Christian vision, is predestined, not to act, in accordance with the evil in which he has deliberately committed himself, but rather to be the true image of God: man therefore has no destiny, but rather a destination. He must share the love of God who remains faithful.

This is where the notion of grace comes into being; we define it as the free and sovereign act by which God's merciful goodness has decided to redeem the lost man by turning away from him. In the context of Christian destiny, the grace of God manifested in Jesus Christ is irreplaceable because it is the only solution to the fall of man; it is the only command capable of bringing man back to the trajectory of his destination. But, as Leibniz famously observed, God's grace is free. But we prefer to say that it is on sale because no one could buy it for its true price; not even a thousandth of its price. However, we believe that there is still a need for an infinite and negligible scale to deserve this gift from God. Let us make two points here: first of all, the gratuitousness of the divine grace manifested in Jesus Christ requires for man participation in order for it to be effective. The salvation bestowed calls for a life in conformity with the latter and the election because the election is for a mission.

Leibniz argues that evil is "mere deprivation." While some have viewed this definition as minimizing evil and its multiple manifestations, we seem to detect Christian thinking in it. Leibniz distinguished the sin of man and evil in the world very clearly. The world out of God's hands is good, but the best that can be achieved is not yet perfect. It must go through the process of perfection, which will consist in the successive elimination of evil. Evil in the world must not be linked to the sin of man; indeed, there are misfortunes that are sinful. Hiroshima yesterday, Syria or several African countries today are some proof of that. So the unfinished world opens up a possibility for wrong doing. The world will be over when man, committed to the mission of mastering it, has done so through science and technology led by God's will. Sin can only end with repentance.

Leibniz, in his expression of faith, went through a conceptual scheme by which he could better grasp the data, only he did not keep the entire biblical thesis on the problem of evil because in fact "if we choose the biblical answer, we must keep it whole." When confronted with the problem of evil, Leibniz placed man before a predestination that means a line drawn in advance by an authoritarian and capricious God; but returning to the fundamental reason that caused the world's creation, i.e., the unequalled love of God, one understands that predestination is only the fulfillment of the covenant or the fulfillment of God's purpose. Christ's death is proof of God's love and irreplaceable will to combine His existence with human existence through reciprocal love. Leibniz, who had not given this central place which deserved to Christ, could not achieve this liberating result.

How can we assume, as some thinkers such as Kant assume, that evil is simultaneously the sole act of freedom, given that it is his choice, and practically imposes itself on the will, as a kind of second nature? This contradiction lies at the heart of Kantian thinking about radical evil. We know that is radical, everything that is at the basis of the will, more precisely at its source without it being able to be circumscribed in time because, what comes from freedom automati-

cally escapes time as from pure and natural determinism.

So we must grasp how freedom, which at its core is independence - choosing the right that reason dictates - is being laid back and subjected to evil in its manipulation. To this end, the philosopher Kant uses the concept of "free will," which means not autonomy or freedom in the positive sense, but human capacity to make a choice to take action or take a decision without being subject to restrictions imposed by previous causes, necessity or predetermination.

So, at the root of our behavior is a kind of supreme aphorism that defines our way of life. Human beings are thus forced to make an indispensable choice: whether to obey the moral law. In other words, man must always be in relation to good and evil, there is no intention here that is more or less good or more or less bad. Free will, as defined above, makes a radical choice between what reason prescribes and what desires indicate. And evil, in the end, is subordinate to moral law and certain sensitive inclinations. It is not really our desires that are evil, for they are necessary and have nothing to do with freedom, but above all it is the fact of choosing them methodically against the moral law.

7. Conclusion

Faced with misery, calamities, war, and death, the rational has always wondered where this labyrinth comes from, in which he finds himself caught in spite of himself. This problem of the origin of the cosmos and its content, throughout the ages, has divided thinkers. At Paul Ricoeur, meditating on evil means saying something is wrong. For the freedom of man is summoned to exist before evil. Some opted for an impersonal creation, others saw the basis of the existence of the cosmos as a personal cause to which they almost all gave a color of divination. The philosopher-metaphysicist-mathematician and theologian Leibniz joined this second group, whose thinking on the specific problem of evil was the subject of our reflection; after briefly introducing man, his philosophical thought was exposed and we can remember, among other things: Leibniz's thinking on the problem of evil is his abandonment of Christ. He wanted you to use only his logic to explain scriptural dogmas. But if he had made the Bible the focus of his inquiry, he would have stayed in the field of Christian theology. Leibniz wanted to link man's finitude to sin; man is finished because he is not God, while sin is caused by man's free choice to refuse his place as God's creature in order to gain that of autonomy, of self-appointment. If finitude allows sin, it does not cause it. But we could identify Leibniz's metaphysical evil with the form of evil that has always existed in creation, and that represented the snake and the fruit tree defended.

The other notable difference between Leibniz's thought and Christianity is that guilt is a predestination. For Leibniz, it is in an absolute programmed majority; it is programmed only for so-called contingent actions; Christianity maintains that man, despite his finality, is an image of God, an echo of

his creative word, and thus a free and responsible being for his acts. This freedom gives him the power to revolt and the fall must be seen as a real act which in its place in space and time. Man's freedom makes him guilty before God's law, and thus liable to just punishment. In asserting that the cause of man is in God, Christianity argues that man's acts have not only meaning in the contingency of birth (finitude). Man is the image of god and thus free and responsible.

Evil is the deprivation or absence of good, just as darkness is the absence of light. But it is possible that something created that was good in the first place gradually loses its goodness, and that evil may arise when creatures with free will, such as angels and inferior spirits like demons and humans, turn away from perfect goodness and choose a lesser degree of goodness. Moreover, what appears at first to be evil can be compared to good from the point of view of eternity, for all things are good from the point of view of eternity, which is that of God. This "exoneration" of God is found in Leibniz (Theodicea), which makes it the motive for the harmony of the world: without evil, the world would be "too perfect"; and, this perfection, God alone is capable of it. So he can tolerate a few discordant notes, and something is missing from the harmony of this world that He wanted as such: Leibniz argues that God's creative power is limited to the worlds that are logically possible, and that evil is a logically necessary element of the "best of all possible worlds."

Abbreviations

EBT	Ecumenical Bible Translation
UPF	University Press of France

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Herve Djilo Kuate is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

- [1] Scholasticism is a philosophical teaching which was given in Europe from the 10th to the 16th century. and which consisted of linking Christian dogmas and Revelation to traditional philosophy in a complete formalism on the level of discourse. (This teaching was based on grammatical, logical, syllogistic and ontological concepts from Aristotle.)
- [2] Manichaeism is, in its contemporary meaning, in the figurative and literary sense, an attitude consisting of simplifying the relationships of the world, reduced to a simple opposition of good and evil.

- [3] Emmanuel Kant, *Religion within the limits of simple reason*, 1, 4, Éd. Vrin, trad. J. Gibelin review by M. Naar, 1983, pp. 82-83.
- [4] Paul Ricœur, *Evil: a challenge to philosophy and theology*, in *Lectures 3*, Ed. Seuil, 1994, pp. 229-230.
- [5] Leibniz, citing the mentality of certain philosophers. *Theodicy at Garnier*, Flam-marion-France, 1969, § 7.
- [6] Leibniz, citing the mentality of certain philosophers. *Theodicy at Garnier*, Flam-marion-France, 1969, § 18.
- [7] Leibniz, citing the mentality of certain philosophers. *Theodicy at Garnier*, Flam-marion-France, 1969, § 20.
- [8] The Molists share the theory of Luis de Molina, born on September 29, 1535 in Cuenca (Spain) and died on October 12, 1600 in Madrid. He was one of the most famous Spanish Jesuit theologians of the 16th century. It is at the origin of a particular theory of the relations between divine grace and human freedom which has since been called molinism.
- [9] Action in the ordinary sense and not the opposite of passion.
- [10] Leibniz, citing the mentality of certain philosophers. *Theodicy at Garnier*, Flam-marion-France, 1969, § 91.
- [11] German expression meaning literally: "situation in life"; can also be the cultural background, social background or historical context in which a work is produced.