

***Philosophy of Apologetics: A Post Smorgasbord Nuturing of Sylvanus  
Iniobong Udoidem's PHILOSOPoetry***

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*Abstract— Philosophy is primarily concerned with the clarification of concepts and terms in daily usage. However, the results are different when words are concealed or shrouded within the mysterious cocoon of poetry, or if they are enwrapped in poetical rendition. This is because poems generally don't only capture the opulent essence of existence, but utilizes the immanent tools and devices like simile, metonymy, synecdoche, metaphor, symbolisms and pun, which were lavishly utilised by Professor Sylvanus Udoidem, the PHILOSOPoet; and by which he sought to reveal the nature of GOD in his rhythmic renditions of poetry. In this work, we look at how he unleashed his philosophical defence of the authority and origin of Christianity – apologetics. The post prandial intuition portrayed by this work shows that even in retirement, the food the PHILOSOPoet prepared with his intellectual acumen/delectation has refused to whittle down, but rather continues to swell like a tidal flow, sometimes overflowing its banks, and at other times, simply cutting below the knee so that even a newt can wade across the vast acreage of his collections and philosophical sagacity. We will here seek to re-interpret and re-discover his PHILOSOPoetry in such coherent way that it would mandate GOD's existence, prompt and promote the whole essences of the Almighty, to whom he was a wholly dedicated and served eruditely and sedately for over four decades. We will drop sail by situating his works within his calling as a Priest, Erudite Reverend Father, a philosopher par excellence and an icon, whose faith and believe remains a shining beacon of hope in a dimly lit religious verandah. This work will serves to re-establish and spur us to like, Rev. Father Prof. Udoidem, reignite our love for the spiritual and seek to know GOD with increasing fervour and motivation.*

**Keywords:** Philosopoeetry, faith and reason, truth, science, food, peace, man and GOD..

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## INTRODUCTION

Leafing through the *PHILOSOPoetry*, one marvels at the relics and cut-off boulders of a unique and dynamic Emeritus Professor Sylvanus Iniobong Udoidem's trailing as a conundrum of discourses and philosophical versions of his avowed attempts at proving the existence of GOD Almighty, of a savvy, thoughtful and sober (sophisticated) arguments for Christian ethics, Christian metaphysics and Christian epistemology and of course, eschatology (Ogbujah, 2021). After an informed discernment, of how the revered father was able to derive in poetic formulations and rendition, the arguments on apologetics and eschatology, embedded in words and strings of marks, one is stunned and startled at the awesome entrapment and emancipation all at once (Nyarks, 2006, Nyarks, 2012). This is the height of logic, ordination and wisdom which the erudite Professor of Philosophy takes time out to lead its readers to join him on his trappings and in to treasuring what he christens, his "own unique dynamics." As a Priest of the Roman Catholic calling, he didn't hide his flair and stand on the existence of GOD. He played around this topic in such a way that a first time reader of his *PHILOSOPoetry* is drawn out of himself, and enticed to concur, or at most to indulge. This is why he has been called, "a multi-talented, multi-faceted and an iconic thinker, with his footprints solidly planted in virtually all the major areas of Philosophy" (Inoka 2002, p. 4), because he exudes knowledge, not only an in-depth knowledge in the field of Philosophy of Religion, though he seldom wrote about the topic, but of all other areas in the field of Philosophy. This lone incursion into Philosophy of Literature which produced the *PHILOSOPoetry* was like bequeathing conquest to the sense of direction and the pleasures of insight and self-discovery. Apologetics and studies of the nature and nurture of GOD is a surer pathway to enduring ideals and a critique of our flawed appreciation of GOD Almighty. And taking the route of a critique, we again reference Gouldner, (1980) remarked thus, "A critique, seeing a theory as a human product, can have no impulse to canonise it. A critique conceives of a theory as a doing and making by persons caught up in some specific historical era, and it searches for the limits no less than the achievements of a theory. A critique, therefore, is a lapidary act; it strives to discern and strike off from a theory its flawed, erroneous and irrational parts, so that it may rescue its productive and irrational side, polishing and resituating this in a new intellectual setting" (p. 9).

What we are doing in this is a mere critique, a lapidary act, striving to strike off misconceptions and misgivings about GOD and his attributes and nature as expressed in *PHILOSOPoetry*, and all the associated flawed erroneous and irrational associations and references, in our attempt to rescue its productive and irrational side, polish the notion and understanding of GOD, so that the end product will sound and resound and get situated as a worthwhile venture in our intellectual setting in our computer age. This is a mindset long recognized as an attribute of Prof Udoidem, when in his forward to *Pope John Paul II on Inculturation: theory and Practice*, the Most reverend Alexius Makozi wrote, "One can say, that, with a mind of a wayward genius, Father Udoidem has managed to treat a difficult and complex subject in such a way that it does not only

make for easy reading, but appeals to all Christians as a way of life.” (Emedolu 2002, p. 18).

This is how Prof Rev Monsignor Udoidem brought life into his new found love – “Eros”, when in the opening poem, “PHILOSOPoetry” contained in his collection, *PHILOSOPoetry*, Udoidem simply with a note of finality declared, “This is where it all began.” This declaration of his sort of sets everything in eddies, like the stirred surface of a grand rapids, set in the midst of a confluence of two great rivers. What is he referring to? This stirs in us a recall of the opening statement in Genesis Chapter 1:1, “In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth”, (KJV), the beginning of his creativity. This promises a great harvest of words, logic and ecstasy, which is why he asserts, “Indeed the silence is contumacious, if not contemptuous; it is ominous if not overwhelming.” In the creation story, the creation was followed by silence, “And the earth was without form and void, and the Spirit of GOD moved upon the face of the waters.” The silence here was devastating, hence the PHILOSOPoet surmises that the best option was to “end in silence”, all humanity to be confounded by science, and that, “The science of ominous silence” which are the aftermath of man’s inability to answer the “What?”, “Why?”, “When?”, “How?”, and the “What?” questions. The possible conclusion from this, the PHILOSOPoet takes it to be ultimate silence. For instance, why hasn’t man questioned why the earth that was made in Genesis 1: 1, and the earth that was described in Genesis 1: 2, suddenly turned to be one “without form and void?” Why hasn’t man philosophized and asked whether the earth that was made in verse 1 was formless and empty when it was created by GOD? Maybe, this would have explained to us the hidden mystery surrounding why our earth is that so old, why we have dinosaurs, antediluvian fossils, deposits of gold, crude oil, coal and such artefacts that shows our earth is billions of years older by simple reference to the Bible.

We turn now to the poem, “BEING” particularly, where the PHILOSOPoet says, “All is One and One is All”, and again “*Nemo dat quod non habet*” since “No one gives what he has not.” The pertinent point being made is that both being and nonbeing are all extensions of the ONE BEING – GOD. Building on this, the PHILOSOPoet contends that whatever is not connected or linked to the BEING cannot become, and not by philosophizing since “being and becoming (is) a form of distancing.” (Udoidem 2012, pp. 5-6). This in the Poet’s Priestly fashion is a recital of John 1: 3, that, “All things were made and came into existence through Him, and without him was not even one thing made that has come into Being” (AMP). To announce as he did here that, no one can give what he doesn’t have, is to escalate an anticlimax to the point of normalcy. No man has “being” in himself, so no man can donate beingness to other beings but GOD. This is a clarion call that no man can act GOD, therefore let man remain at the level of human beings and allow GOD to tower above all, distributing to the needs of every man as GOD has in Himself, likened to what Cleanthes says of GOD that if we contemplate what constitutes the world as a whole, we will find out that GOD is: One great Machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace

and explain all these various machines and even their most minute parts, are adjusted to each other with an accuracy which ravishes into admiration of all men who have ever contemplated them."

Thus being is becoming, and becoming is Being is a remarkable draw on the attributes of GOD, as the One great machine, from which all other smaller machines, subdivided and subdivisions of machines arise. It can only be a reference to GOD as put forwards by Cleanthes and Le Compte De Nouy. GOD is the Being, the creator of all other beings, made in his own image. Genesis 1: 27 says, "In the image of GOD created He male and female" which means that it was because GOD gave to man what He (GOD) has, that man is like GOD. It is the PHILOSOPoet's appreciation of GOD's BEING that he extends he captures GOD's essences in the first line of the next poem, "NATURE." Here the poet says nature is "A Being that hides . . . by not letting itself to be known." He means by this that no man can understand GOD, hence GOD's ". . . hiddenness is critical to itself." (Udoidem 2012, p. 7). This has been in the centre of what the Medievalists posit about GOD which the PHILOSOPoet re-echoes that all that we can know is the unnatural, due to the fact that no man can have access to what GOD is. In pages 11 and 12, the PHILOSOPoet enriches his diatribe and satirical criticism of man's inability to know except what GOD gives to man. In the poem, "REALITY", the Poet asks, "So then what is real?" since what is rational may not be real and what is real may not be rational, it being one of the major problems of Philosophy. It was to hazard an answer that Immanuel Kant distinguished between *Phenomena* and the *Noumena*, arguing that no matter how man tries, appearance may be real, but it is not reality because the *Noumena* – the-thing-in-itself – "which is real" and remains largely "trans categorical and ineffable" and unknowable because it is the realm or reality as viewed by GOD. (Hinks, 2002).

Philosophy is made to stand tall, as Udoidem's intelligibly uses of poetry to colour and paint his efforts directed at proving that all "cleaned work of art, is re-echoed", so that the Socratic ignorance will continue to supplant itself. It informs why Udoidem (2012, p. 17), elucidates our knowing process in the poem, "KNOWLEDGE" – where he states, "I don't know what I don't know . . . but I know I don't know", therefore, if "I know everything because I know what I don't know"; the corollary is true that, "I know I don't know what I don't know." Simply stated, the PHILOSOPoet is saying that it is easy to know that I am the thinking being that doesn't know anything, and that this is what I come to know through poetry, quoting from Apostle Paul. This is in agreement with Eldridge, (2010), that these days, writers "have consciously (moved towards) balanc(ing) a sense of the particularities of their lives, experiences, and verbal art with the working out of a claim to general significance" (p. 390). This restatement of the obvious is echoed by a man that has lived, taught, preached and served the Almighty and the Philosophical calling all his life.

In Hegel's articulation, poet's in the mould of Prof Udoidem ought to paint the "sublime" because it is within the confines of poetry that man generally understands "phylogenetically" that poetry is, all things considered, "more original and primal

within the development of the human race” (Speight, 2016, p. 33). The art of writing poems has been known and taken to belong to a higher realms on man’s ability to know and speculate, one that is promoted beyond bland rhetorics, and equated with music. It is no surprise that today, music have been acknowledged as an agent to deliver basic truths that books and reading cannot immediately hand out to a non-reading public. In the words of Allan Speight (2016):

Hegel does praise the ability of the poetic imagination to sketch a world that has its own independence and coherence over against the prosaic reality of our this-worldly lives – and it is precisely this essentially creative function of the imagination that makes him think of poetry as the touchstone for art as a whole: imaginative poetry is thus not only the highest artistic genre, as we have seen, but in fact that genre which Hegel thinks can clarify what makes the other genres forms of art themselves. Yet however strong Hegel’s praise of the independent and creative imagination, he makes clear that two important facets of art’s historicity and cultural valence need to be part of the story as well: that (on the side of content) literature’s significance in terms of what Hegel calls the “deepest interests of mankind, and the most comprehensive truths of the spirit. (pp. 37-38).

The poem, “ONE” (Udoidem, 2012) when dissected with the tolls at our disposal demonstrates the dexterity of the PHILOSOPoet, who places it in a context it depicts and situates the Christian Monotheistic GOD within the realms of the “Truth”, another of his poems (Udoidem, 2012). It is our position that the “wayward genius” or the PHILOSOPoet allows his devotion to the priesthood o the Roman Catholic Church to rein in his philosophic sagacity. This poem show cases him as someone whose primary endeavour was to uninterruptedly and boldly proclaim the redemptive grace of Jesus Christ, and by that he courageously recaptured the prehistoric reality of human curiosity. It is in the “ONE” that the PHILOSOPoet beautifully reconnected to the Biblical Good, out of his obsession with analytic perceptiveness as the basic contrivance to beaming philosophic light on other aspects of life that he has come to terms with as a servant of the Most High GOD. (Inoka, 2002). It’s why we agree that in the poem, “ONE”, the poet successfully establishes a thriving relationship between his several life’s endeavours and his Philosophic underpinnings (Inoka, 2002). We see Udoidem here redefining GOD’s oneness, which B. E. Nwigwe (2002), calls “a phenomenological experience” and possessing a “cosmic dimension” (p. 9).

In the context of this work, we do not admit of Udoidem’s “ONE” merely as a “mathematical puzzle”, but based on the calling of the author, we are comfortable to use this poem, “ONE” to draw serious attention to the Trinity, an all embracing concept at the centre of Christendom. In the book of 1 John 5 verse 7, the Holy Bible says, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy ghost: and these three are ONE.” It therefore becomes obvious that the PHILOSOPoet is also using this mathematical category which has its origin in ancient Egypt “as formal tools, category theory and categorical” which are to function in this regard as a type of “logic that can be seen to be generalizations of first-order logic and set theory.” This is the best

the PHILOSOPoet can draw our attention to the fundamental frameworks to modelling, analysis and precision that draws on the Trinity. Interesting and to the credit of the “wayward genius”, he eventually “opens the door to unexpected connections and links between heretofore unrelated domains” where the ahungered inquire and seek for GOD, with the full understanding that GOD exists as the Father, the Word, the Son, (see John 1: 2), and the Holy Ghost (Marquis, 2018).

This translates to a perfect presentation of GOD when the PHILOSOPoet notes that, “Knowledge of ‘1’ is knowledge of all”, as the secret of all numbers, letter and arts is the number “1.” To firm up his argument here, the PHILOSOPoet contends, “there is no relationship between  $1 + 1$  and 2 (two)” but concludes that, “Therefore All is ‘1’ (One) and ‘1’ is all; the rest are make beliefs” (Udoidem, 2012, p. 10). It is obvious that this assertion cannot certainly be singled out as a reference to numbers per se, rather we see in it something recondite and mystique, one which refers to something beyond the natural, a phenomenological experience, a cosmic manifestation of GOD as revealed to the Priest and Philosopher in the PHILOSOPoet which has its basis in limitedness of our language. It is the further argument of the PHILOSOPoet that it is logically needless to embark upon the untoward variations and permutations of the “ONE” except we want to run to the conclusion that the logical relations to the “ONE” is an invitation to “chaos” in the same way that arguments about universals and particulars are perpetually perplexing (Lawhead, 2002, p. 49). Finally, we are drawn to acknowledge that the number “1” has value to defeat the despondency of the number “0.” He seeks to prompt us to acknowledge that while GOD is the same as his Poet’s numeric “1”, every human being is simply a void in a “zero” waiting to given value by being affixed with the Number “1.”

Further, this accounts for why the poet linked the number ONE to the Egyptian perception of the immortal “ONE”, a sacred number and the “only composition of number”. (Udoidem, 1992, p.27). The missing point the author seems to emphasize here is that the symbol which represents the number “1” was developed by the Egyptians as a mathematical and arithmetical symbol, but which was stolen by the West. For him therefore as a an astute thinker, he deliberately sought to bring up this as a sad reminder that any change from the traditional combinations of the figure “1” based on what it represented to the Egyptians and tending to give the same figure and other numbers which fell from it all such notions of the philosophy of the West fell as “one of the Western academic dishonesties of not wanting to give credit to Africans where they deserve it” (Udoidem, 1992, p. 30).

Notwithstanding these noble eccentric inroads into the metaphysics of the “ONE”, we are at a loss to decipher why the “wayward genius” failed to advert his mind to GOD’s injunction to the marriage institution which characteristically represents  $1 = 1 = 1$ . Maybe, he took it as given based on the extant provision of Section 35 of the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1970 which prohibits a person who is married under the Act, which includes marriages contracted under the Church to pursue any other marriage with anyone else save for the same person previously married under the Act. In Genesis

2:24, GOD after solemnizing the marriage contract had declared thus, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” What GOD said on that day simply translates into the mathematical formula, “ $1 + 1 = 1$ .” This make us ill at ease that despite having officiated in joining several couples in marriage for over five decades, both admit that “ $1 + 1 = 1 + 1$ ” and further hold that “One plus One is Two ( $1 + 1 = 11$ )” and that number “1” is “multipliable and addable” (Udoidem 2012: 9), without linking this mathematical formula with marriage upsets the marriage boat. Why would I agree that marriage as it is addable or multipliable, and again, keeps more in store if marriage is depicted to symbolize a “vertical motion, horizontal motion and a diagonal motion” at the same time? The notion of one representing the marriage union seeks to explain how it brings two persons together, who are mutually in love, are co-equal, and to share everything in common.

However, the flair of the “Wayward Genius” for analytic and retrospection, we see glimmers of hope when the PHILOSOPoet the poem conveys the note of finality that “One plus One is two is meaningless” and that “All is “1” and “1” is all” (Udoidem, 2012, p. 10), which we take to mean that he was trying to propose that what counts the most is the family, represented by the number, “ONE.” Or, maybe the PHILOSOPoet didn’t want to drag the sacred institution of Marriage into the strings of the seeming semantic confusion, “Now see how limited our language and symbols are”, which attend the philosophical enterprise. In page 2 of the *PHILOSOPoetry*, the PHILOSOPoet gives this insight:

And man is bewildered at his science . . .

Philosophy prides itself in raising questions

But those questions and indeed the question “what”

Are answers to nature’s silence . . .

Both poetry and philosophy give answers that are in themselves “questions”

But the advantage of Philosophy is

In knowing that its answers are questions

Whereas poetry only knows answers without knowing

That those answers are questions.

We gladly uncover an uncommon but ready fissure through which the reference to marriage was covered, for how shall a man of such a high standing reduce GOD’s most sacred institution to the tolls of morbid speculation. Would logic preserve it, or would logic desecrate it, or would logic arrest it? (See Ribeiro 2016: 98). But surely, we think differently, for we are firm that the inclusion of marriage would have helped in curing it of some misgivings in certain quarters, at least that any marriage between a man and a woman is akin to the mathematical equivalence, “ONE PLUS ONE EQUALS ONE” ( $1 + 1 = 1$ ), a fundamental mathematical framework that models the cosmic dimensions of GOD’s injunction, but which do not and would not operate for same sex marriages, where for instance, its of a man + man marriage, or a woman + woman marriage. This aberration according Biblical standards, and no one can alter or change GOD’s standard, takes the shape of “ $1 + 1 = 2$ ”, which I admit, as declared by the

PHILOSOPoet, remains, “1 + 1 = 2 (One plus One is Two is meaningless.” It is philosophically, meaningless.

The climax of the PHILOSOPoet’s ascent to GOD and commitment to his calling came alive in Chapter Six, where the PHILOSOPoet, now unable to hide his avowed preferences and zeal to his calling as Priest to the Almighty GOD recapped his zeal and allegiance with the poem, “GOD.” His build-up was an affirmation of GOD’s existence, which is why the PHILOSOPoet opened this poem with a barrage of questions, “Does GOD exist? How does He exist? Does He exist only in the mind? (Stanford Encyclopedia, Ontological Arguments). The Poet also wanted to know, “How do we go from (GOD’s) existence in the mind to (GOD’s) external existence?” The PHILOSOPoet is an experienced bird, who cannot be caught in a hunter’s snare at all, or at most, not with ease, hence these questions (Nbeta & Elechi 2014, p. 17). The PHILOSOPoet courted Descartes methodic doubt, as a *sine qua non* to establishing indubitable and infallible truths about GOD’s existence. Not satisfied with half-truths, the PHILOSOPoet proceeded to build upon the solid ground already erected by St. Anselm’s ontological proofs, (see Stanford Encyclopedia, Ontological Arguments), Rene Descartes “*Cogito Ergo Sum*” and St. Thomas Aquinas’ *Quinque Viae*, (Udoidem 2012, pp. 13-14).

Proceeding, we see the PHILOSOPoet frolicking with the “ontological”, “cosmological” and the argument from design which are integral to attempt a solution to the problem of religious knowledge, revelation wherein man will reach the ultimate conclusion that religious knowledge is radically different from all other fields of human experiences (Popkin & Stroll, 1993). According to Udoidem’s philosophical exposition of “GOD”, in his “Dialogues” found in his *PHILOSOPoetry*, he also tried to answer the question of the authenticity of the Holy Bible as the Word of GOD. This he sought by stating that somebody should first of all read the Holy Bible and understand it to judge whether or not it is the word of GOD. Going forward, Udoidem argues that the worship and notions of GOD and GOD’s existence are only affirmed, sustained and examined in terms of beliefs, revelation, faith and religious experience, and not through scientific experiments, but like some other forms of human endeavour, knowing GOD requires faith and believe in much the same way that we come to accept that there is anything called “gravity” (Popkin & Stroll 1993, pp. 179, 209).

The actual deal being devised by the PHILOSOPoet was to gravitate round the proof of GOD’s existence as part of his calculated effort to etch the reality of GOD’s existence and nature in our minds as it is held that “Questioning in Philosophy is aimed at seeking clarifications to reveal hidden or ignored dimensions of a problem” (Nbeta & Elechi, 2014, p. 17). In Udoidem (2012, p. 13), the Poet queries, “How do we go from existence in the mind to external existence?” Hence he proceeds to seek clarification whether, “Existence in thought or in the mind is sufficient grounds for existence.” It may be “a figment of a man’s imagination”, but this rather prepares man to come to grips with the unchangeable fact that GOD, “must be the most eminent, most beautiful, most magnificent.” This the Poet admits flows from the fact he further espoused that



“The thought in itself contains the reality of a conscious Being; because the idea of GOD is clear and distinct in my mind; Therefore GOD exists” (Udoidem 2012, p. 15). So does GOD’s existence depend on our perceiving His existence?

The PHILOSOPoet goes on to further demonstrate that George Berkeley, though with a novel idea of reality, but that he fails when his idea is applied to GOD’s existence, because on the heels of the question, “Does existence depend on human perception” and “No, GOD does not exist; If he existed, He is dead” in reference to Nietzsche, the PHILOSOPoet corrects that misguided flow of thought because “Everything in our experience has a purpose”, some warped and others principled and irreproachable. As earlier argued by Popkin and Stroll 1993: 178, to answer the problem of evil in the world, then man should better “Read the Book.” The Bible contains “historical facts which can be confirmed by a careful examination of ancient records and archeological findings.” This would eventually lead us to understand St, Augustine’s basis for evil in the world as “privation.” When Adam sinned, the exalted estate GOD kept man was taken away and man had to contend with the corruption that was the result of his rebellion. The poet uses this to re-enact the Christian ethics that, “the good life consists in the love of GOD, and that this good life can be attained by behaving in accordance with rules ordained by GOD.” (Popkin & Stroll 1993: 28). Relying on these inviolate proofs of a benevolent GOD, Udoidem outrightly knocked out Nietzsche’s and David Hume’s brash and uncouth remarks about GOD. According to the PHILOSOPoet-

What an untie-able knot.

Neither Nietzsche nor Hume had the solution

GOD cannot be done away with

His notion is so present

His presence is so real

Yet we know not what is real

All is a seeming presence

As if it is a seen through a film darkly So Saint Paul concluded.

Interestingly, we applaud the skill, dexterity and style of the PHILOSOPoet as we observe that he had already cleared ambiguities that may arise from our understanding what “Reality” means. In Chapter Five, the poet warns that any attempt to concede that “The real is rational and the rational is real” is an invitation to modern tyranny since reality is not what appears, and the “Noumena which is real . . . is unknowable.) (Udoidem 2012, p. 12). This explains our adopting Paul’s direction and opinion that “For now we see through a glass, darkly: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known.” (1 Cor. 13: 12 KJV). If the same man cannot know himself fully now, then how can that man claim to know who GOD is without fail?

In the poem “GOD”, the PHILOSOPoet succeeds in building a formidable front for GOD’s existence, as the poet lavishly uses irony, paradox and metaphorical connotations to picture and capture the “indubitable” essence of GOD’s existence and thus drives home the facts which surround GOD’s existence being real to man. The

paradox, “So GOD at least exists in his mind as that which does not exist” serves to show how circuitry is man’s refusal to admit the existence of GOD. This is why the PHILOSOPoet readily draws on St. Anselm’s proof of GOD’s existence, which begins from the claim that it’s only a fool that would say in his heart that GOD does not exist because such a foolish mind has been corrupted by sin. The reference to Rene Descartes’ “Cogito ergo sum” served to re-emphasize that Philosophy has come to rescue the knowledge of GOD’s existence and to show in the same way the Rene Descartes showed, that GOD’s existence is indubitable, proved beyond all shadows of doubt. (Descartes, 2002, pp. 125-126).

In our analysis of the poem, “GOD”, we recognize that it is one of the most intriguing poems in Udoidem’s collections. In it Udoidem the PHILOSOPoet rallies support for the postulation that faith and belief in GOD is the first solution to the philosophical problem of knowledge. (Udoidem 1992: 102-103). His allusion is that by the nature and character of GOD, even if he is largely unknowable, but that GOD can be felt by the people. He poses some hard philosophical questions about the existence of GOD, thus rehearsing or restating one of the fundamental questions which has dogged human minds for ages. It is in rehearsing St. Augustine on the relationship between philosophy being the handmaid of religion and faith, that the author relates how the mind as he asks, “How do we go from existence in the mind to external existence?” Thus the PHILOSOPoet oscillates between whether GOD’s existence in the mind is supposedly sufficient in itself, whether the faculty of human reasoning plays any complimentary role, and that GOD existence in the mind and in reality is what makes GOD, “A Being than which nothing greater can be conceived.” For the poet, if GOD’s existence were a figment of man’s imagination, thus he adopts St. Thomas Aquinas’s five proofs of GOD’s existence, as it rested on motion, contingency, necessity, gradation, orderliness and efficient cause wherein, of necessity, all of creation owe their origin to one primary cause, hence there is GOD (Nyarks & Campus, 2022; Nyarks, 2022). Udoidem concedes to St. Aquinas that GOD is the necessary cause of all things; or one whose purpose is the Universe; and the “ONE” through whom order is imposed on all creation, even amidst so much chaos and pandemonium. Assuming that there is a large scale Tsunami or thunderstorm which would herald a large scale disorder and chaos, but it is still true that within this spate of disorder, there still could be found elements of orderliness, both before and after the storm. For example, a thunderstorm or Tsunami doesn’t just come, but it follows a pattern. Therefore, this intelligent mind that ensures that there is order to and in all things is GOD. The PHILOSOPoet also aligns with St Thomas Aquinas’ postulation that GOD is the most magnificent, most beautiful and most eminent; that GOD is Being which cannot be known perfectly and truly by man, hence all man’s knowledge of GOD terminates in addressing Him by way of “*via negativa*”, by what GOD is not.

Thinking along this flow of thought, the PHILOSOPoet says of GOD’s existence, that “*Cogito ergo sum*”, when collapsed onto GOD’s existence, combines the reality of a conscious being possessive of a clear and distinct idea of GOD in his mind, and makes it

difficult to prove GOD's existence otherwise than that He exists externally by implication. Udoidem similarly responds to the claim of George Berkeley that, "To be is to be perceived" (Berkeley in Huemer, 2005; Udoh & Umotong, 2013), wherein he argued beautifully that Berkeley's position when applied to GOD, is rather egoistic and self-contradictory. If GOD's existence is premised upon His being perceived, according to St. Anselm, its contradictoriness stems from imputing a probability since it is made to look like we're premising GOD existence on an, "if" clause. Human knowledge of the notion of GOD existence based on perception tries to use the same positive term univocally for man and for GOD, which ultimately leads to contradiction. This leads to the PHILOSOPoet's query, "Does existence depend on human knowledge? And further, "Does existence depend on human perception?"

The author proceeds to employ the tools of empathy when he delves into Nietzsche's contention wherein he breaks in with the query, "No! GOD does not exist, If He existed, He is Dead" because he is befuddled with the prevalence of evil in the world, which Nietzsche wrongly attributes to GOD (Lawhead, 2002). This is why the PHILOSOPoet merely repeats Nietzsche's question if GOD is wicked for allowing evil in a world which he created. To appeal to our sense of love and worship of GOD, the Poet relates us to why are there so much violence, wars, destruction, natural and manmade disasters like the Chernobyl disaster, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, typhoons, sickness, suffering, hunger and death, burdens which bear on man and which does not seem to abate at all? (Hicks 463, 472). The conclusion which we have drawn is that it is because of our fallen state that we cannot understand GOD as he is, hence all that we see of GOD are the imperfections that we attribute to Him. These are but in the form of puzzling reflections in a mirror, incomplete picture, incompletely known and quite like trying to solve a riddle, but which at the end of ages, cannot be known at all, remains "all too confusing" (Udoidem, 2012; p. 15). This lend credence to St. Augustine, who argued that we will know everything completely only when we see Jesus face to face. To this enigma, the poet relies on St. Paul vide what the poet gathers in this poem as the "authentic" reply to David Hume's and Nietzsche's dilemma (Lawhead, 2002; Udo & Udoh, 2023).

The poem concludes that no human being can prove either that GOD exists or does not exist if he doesn't believe, which explains why he accommodates St. Anselm that it takes only a fool to rush to such a conclusion that there is no GOD. (St. Anselm, 2002). In the light of the PHILOSOPoet's celebrated views on GOD, we are again led to revisit Soren Kierkegaard, who got himself preoccupied with trying to make sense of "what it means to be a Christian." Kierkegaard succeeded in explaining that knowing GOD is a "passionate, individual choice", a "leap of faith" against all "evidence, even against reason itself." It is herein noted that Soren Kierkegaard further contends that man's service to GOD comes by faith, that it is largely personal, and that it is not a matter of doctrine, denominations, social groupings or one achieved by ceremonial sways. It is obvious that through Kierkegaard, we are made to acknowledge that knowing GOD is guided by the act of trying to "understand myself, to see what GOD really wishes me to

do; the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die" (Solomon & Higgins 2010, p. 66). Although, Kierkegaard's idea of GOD could lead to extraneous results, but we allow ourselves to be guided by Udoiem's priestly and apologetic idea of GOD without reservations of any sort. Hence we wholeheartedly accept St. Anselm position that if we interpret Kierkegaard on the basis of the conveyed meanings of Udoiem's poem, "GOD", Kierkegaard's idea that "if the GOD does not exist it would of course be impossible to prove it" makes a lot of sense, and it actively re-echoes the PHILOSOPoet's idea of GOD like a distant "din" on the horizon (Solomon & Higgins 2010, p. 80).

In chapter eight, Udoiem delves into the field of Epistemology to inquire into one of the primary questions of epistemology, "What is Truth" and the unuttered question, "how will we know it when (or if) we find it?" (Solomon and Higgins, 2010, p. 147). We are convinced that the PHILOSOPoet wasn't only speculating about epistemology, but that fundamentally, he uses the poem "TRUTH", which he deliberately elaborately imbued with allegorical and philosophical innuendos to expand his idea of GOD. This explains the catchy opening the poet gives this poem, when it opens with the exclamation, "What is Truth?" This is not only a reproduction but a direct allusion to Pontius Pilate's question to Jesus Christ at his trial before he was condemned to death and crucified. John 18: 38 (KJV), but it introduces us to Pilates queer behaviour of not waiting to receive the reply from Jesus, who was the ultimate authority to have defined what the truth is. Pilate is being presented to us in one of three ways, as a learner, looking upon Jesus with respect and desiring to be informed of what new notions of truth Jesus advanced and what improvements to what he already knew but didn't stay a bit longer to uphold the discourse (Udoh, 2013; Udoh, 2014). Or, Pilate would have asked enquiringly as a Judge, what the truth of his offence was; or that Pilate asked jeeringly, to scoff at and mock at Jesus, "you talk of truth, but I am sure that you don't even know what the truth is?". So Jesus refused to answer Pilate knowing that it has been written in Proverbs 26: 4, "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him." However, Jesus has already at some time earlier told his disciples what the truth is in John 14: 6, and there this poem addresses also.

Interestingly, Jesus Christ was crucified by being nailed to the cross, buried and resurrected from the dead on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, according to the Holy Bible witnesses. But, by the philosophical nature of this question, the PHILOSOPoet reminds us by this poem that this question has continued to tug at the foundation of human knowledge and what man knows and can claim to know to this day. To address Matthew Henry's Commentary on John 18: 38 (KJV),

Truth is that "pearl of great price" which the human understanding has a desire for and is in quest of, for it cannot rest but in that which is, or at least is apprehended to be, truth. When we "search the scriptures" and attend the Ministry of the Word, it must be with this inquiry, "What is truth?" and with this prayer, "Lead me in thy truth, into all truth." But many put this question that have not the patience and constancy enough to

persevere in their search after truth, or not humility and sincerity enough to receive it when they have found it. (Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Holy Bible).

The PHILOSOPoet based on the above background was thus observed to proceed to ask, "What then is the truth?" The PHILOSOPoet's poetic rendition thus cast a blanket doubt over how Jones, 2019 conceived of "Truth" when he addressed that "truths are illusions of which we have forgotten that they are illusions." Are truths illusions, a fleeting image created by the figment of one's imagination, mythical, by sophistry, fictitious, and therefore, without any objective relation to reality? But this does not reflect the notion of truth being promoted by the PHILOSOPoet. Jones only endorsed and nurtured Nietzsche's notions that beneath the fleeting world of phenomena, there exists an absolute truth, and that he vigorously contended that the world is in a flux, therefore, man has the bounden duty to impose order upon it. Nietzsche contended that when man disguises the historical origin of language, he is able to shape his thoughts into a passive acceptance of the unchanging nature of truth and value. Does this imply that "TRUTH" is constantly changing, ephemeral and relative? All these bring us to the obvious position adopted by the PHILOSOPoet that, "Truth so available, but so inaccessible . . . sought by all, but told by few." The Poet uses this poem to draw our attention to the fact that our language, the labels that serve as the conveyors of "truth statements" which do not correspond to the original entities in the factual world, and that hence, not all sentences that we utter express truth values. The author's idea here can be dressed up in Leibniz's statement that "Always, in every true affirmative proposition, whether necessary or contingent, universal or particular, the notion of the predicate is in some way included in that of the subject. . . . Otherwise, I know not what truth is" (Lawhead, 2002, p. 261).

It is our contention that the poem "TRUTH" is the other way by which the erudite PHILOSOPoet has successfully led us to a dispassionate analysis and overhaul of Plato's definition of truth as the "conformity of reality with intellect" and its strategic variance with Aristotle's definition that truth is the conformity of "intellect with reality." The PHILOSOPoet therefore uses this poem to paint a consummate metaphysical and epistemological notion of truth, wherein he goes on to explain how man in his effort to know has to deploy his human intellectual resource in evaluating opinions and beliefs in order to know the "Truth" (Nbeté & Elechi, 2014).

The poem "TRUTH" proceeds to explore what philosophically makes up for the truth by locating it within the known theories of truth which includes the correspondence theory, the coherence theory, the Semantic theory of truth, the deflationary theory of truth and the pragmatic theory of truth when he remarks, "The distinction was then made; Between epistemological truth and metaphysical truth" (Udoiem 2012, p. 21). He goes on to assert. "Between ontological truth and pragmatic truth; is truth one or Many?" This truth therefore captures and promotes the philosophical enterprise, which the poet represents when he declares thus, "So the way one acts, what one says and how one lives must be in tandem. . . . And the unity of the acts, speech and life is the Moral Truth" (Udoiem 2012, p. 22). It is through the

normative utility of the truth that the Poet seeks to capture the essences of objective truth, which is said to exist and populate the physical world; and on the opposite, the subjective truth which depends on how an individual sees the states of affairs, as distinct from the normative truth is that which pictures how a group of people see reality (Aumann and Brandenburger, 2016; Udoh & Udo, 2022).

The PHILOSOPoet further uses this poem to restate the models in epistemology when he declares thus, "Between ontological truth and pragmatic truth; is truth one or many", and lashing out at dogmatism, the Poet argues that man can have certain knowledge. That aside, the Poet acknowledges but goes on to hold that skepticism's painting a note of opposition that man cannot have knowledge only succeeds to relativise the truth to the detriment of man's knowing. If as the poem questions, "It is a letting to be seen as it is", then everything will become knowledge to the extent that it is let to be seen. This builds up towards our putting up with the allegorical paradox that this situation conjures up, wherein we imagine that if "the truth will set you free; but in a court of law, if one tells the truth, he goes to jail" what is the truth's real value? This note gives birth to the normative verdict, should a man necessarily ask, "Should man always say the truth?" (Ramsey, 2016, pp. 20 - 45).

The philosophical relationship the PHILOSOPoet wants us to note in this case is one that would continue to point to the fact that the truth is not subjective, although it can be thought to be relative, which merely lodges in how much of it is concealed, how one observes the facts which are evident and the way it is interpreted and understood at different times, which if admitted would largely contradict the laws of thought (Nbeta & Elechi 2014). Facts only bend towards the truth, but definitely, not contrariwise, hence the truth ought to appear the same for everyone. This, the PHILOSOPoet, now putting on the garb of a Priest and Reverend Father points out, is incontrovertibly realized in the definition of truth as offered by the Master, Jesus Christ when he said, "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE" (John 14:6, KJV). This poem upholds this by admitting in the following passage, "The Divine Master offered a new dimension; He said, "I am the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE; So the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE become synonymous, if not identical" (Udoiem 2012, p. 22). This is how Udoiem helps to reinforce the fact that the life one lives and truth are synonymous; that how one acts, what one says and how one lives one's life are intricately connected and ought to be morally agreeable.

Moral responsibility purpose one unassailable truth, that "The unity of acts, speech and life is the Moral Truth," wherein that truth produces a workable combination of the epistemological and ontological notion of "TRUTH." It is this agreement which achieves the moral truth, which on the other hand, suffices as the basis for the salvation of the human soul and the ultimate reply to and answer to Pilate's rhetorical question, "What is Truth?" The PHILOSOPoet's answer, which re-echoes Jesus Christ's words were that He is the Truth, the way and the life, which remains the three aspects or qualities of the same thing, acts of the Divine intervention in human affairs. We are here to note that "It is the light that shows the way, it is the way that leads to the truth" and "It is

because it is the truth that is why it is the way.” What an ingenuous combination of words that convey so much of linguistic exposition that we find here. This push by the Poet is amply complimented by Halliwell’s “Ancient Beginnings” (in Hagberg and Jost, p. 2010, p. 4) where he pointed out that, Plato, in his *Poetics* did not hesitate “to invite them (poets) to explain or interpret their own poems”, asking them “what they meant” but finding them unable to do so. The context shows that he is not seeking domain-specific knowledge (e.g. mastery of poetic language or metres) but a general, life-guiding wisdom of the kind he had earlier called knowledge of “human and political excellence” and will later equate with knowledge of “the most important things.” We will terminate our submission by drawing on Halliwell’s conclusion inherent in his observation that the goal of poetry is “the pleasure of a certain kind of intensely emotional response. . . . The experience of poetry entails, therefore, a kind of emotionally inflected understanding which cannot be dissociated from ethical value.” This is where the PHILOSOPoet’s poem, “TRUTH” finds its landing within ethical understanding of the Poets taking and calling as a Roman Catholic Priest and the PHILOSOPoet’s intention to build an infallible castle for the subject of his admiration, priestly ordination and calling, “GOD.”

The PHILOSOPoet in Chapter Twelve showcases the poem he termed, the “WORD” which is how the author or poet wishes to on the one hand restate and reiterate the analytic tradition of Philosophy as propounded by Rudolph Carnap and others (Warnock, 2002). The PHILOSOPoet in this poem opens up his attempt to inquire into how we were able to say or mean anything with signs, labels, symbols and sounds; and hence to articulate how and what translates to the meanings ascribed to signs, labels, symbols and sounds that make up human language. According to George Wrisley, (2006), we locate this poem within the centrality of language; and its relationship to the lack of understanding, misunderstanding and improper understanding of facts and its centrality to other philosophical issues in language and meanings. The PHILOSOPoet in declaring that, “The word that makes and the word that unmakes; the word is at the core of all Being. Because of the word, everything is a said thing”, he was merely stressing the binding relationship between the subjective consciousness of the human agent, and the objective world outside man’s consciousness. This fully expresses a Kantian position by how it pictures categories/concepts perceived by man (Soy, & Anna, 2016). Here the PHILOSOPoet further lays emphasis on the role of language, on how it mediates between man, the human mind and his experiences of the world, and thus, how it tries to “solve puzzles.” (Jost, 2010, p. 43). This is further seen when the PHILOSOPoet declares thus, “The names we bear are word; and the words we hear are said things” (Udoidem 2012, p. 30), which is the poet’s creating in-roads into the heart of Philosophy of Literature. This enarmours and restates Kant, who according to Shusterman (2010), contended that the categories, which are but names, are nothing but words and by which man aims to solve some problems. In the words of Richard Shusterman (2010), “If philosophy is supposed to assert truths about the world, it must do so in some literary form, through some discursive linguistic expression”, which

means the said engagement of Philosophical inquiry only operates or makes good meaning within a world of words. (p.8)

However, driving back to our course and reliving the landmark, that is, ensuring that we analyse this poem within the light of Professor Udoidem's attempt to locate his poems within how he sought to reveal the nature of GOD in his rhythmic renditions of poetry and by it, also unravel how he situated his Philosophy of apologetics. Here, the poem is pictured in how it anticipates and tries to situate the philosophical analysis of language as propounded by Frege, Russel, Moore and Wittgenstein on meaning and reference as a direct reference to GOD. This is the best way to explain the stanza, "Creation is a said thing by GOD; Evolution is a said thing my man." This antithesis commits one to contemplate whether the PHILOSOPoet accepts evolution, but this uncertainty soon dissipates underneath the seeming contradiction that he keeps hidden beneath the teleology of nature. In this, we observe that within the PHILOSOPoet's remarks that it is GOD who creates, man, being a creature uses what GOD has made to create, evolve and not otherwise. This is how the PHILOSOPoet captured the fact that words are the key to unlocking the depths of the unknown, both to GOD and for man, also. Hence he continues, "The word of man is the measure of all names", the author brings into focus the fact that name calling is simply a kind of "a taking to be" (Udoidem 2012, p. 30). He agrees that good poetry is bound to engage, indeed enthrall the mind by a fusion of language and thought, and that in the long run, "that poetic 'thought' is inseparable from its verbal expression." Udoidem's Aristotelian roots further exposes us to a denial of "cognitively or ethically serious value" to poems, insisting rather that the aim of poetic works is the delivery of the truth, of an enrichment of moral life, the "manipulation of expressive language" and how that poems should also "'resemble', language that communicates in an instructive manner." (Hagberg and Jost, p. 2010, p. 8).

We have not lost out on the fact that the PHILOSOPoet made good allusion to the fact that "words", the primary ingredients for a good writing, are the primary substances with which to create and "manufacture" or make poems (Shusterman, 2010). "Words" in form of poetry enable "us to know what we know, including our illusions and desires, by giving us the language in which to acknowledge it. . . . a successful poem enables us to acknowledge . . . our own emotions and attitudes toward incidents, attractions, aversions, scenes, or persons that were initially confusing and troubling." (Eldridge, 2010, p. 395). Thus guided in our contemplation, we are minded to review and critique the poem, "WORD" in terms of how it was used by the poet to discuss his personal inclination, emotional leaning, attractions to and excitement to the attributes of GOD.

The poem "WORD" was used by the PHILOSOPoet to question the what and the how words are used to regulate the meaningfulness of linguistic signs, symbols and sounds so that properties like colour and shape, objects like a tree or a pot, and relations such as the cat is on a mat is able to convey meaning to users of language. Some have argued that words are fictional entities, or at best, that they are pictures, sounds,



images, portraits or that words should be taken to be mirrors. The PHILOSOPoet takes this as given, but questions, if words are paradoxical, how then do “words” reveal “the depths of the unknown?” This he locates within what he calls, “a taking to be”, by which words mimic the futility of the scientific enterprise which altogether feel comfortable seating on “make belief” and arbitrariness. The metaphysical postulations of science which are built around “words” are fictional, “taking to be” or simply put, metaphysical abstractions. But the end of all this as we can see sharpened in the mind of the PHILOSOPoet is encapsulated in his terse comments, GOD spoke the Word and things came to be; without word, nothing can be” (Udoidem 2012, p. 29). The poet uses this poem to reiterate his rich understanding of GOD, and by that he became an “Interpreter . . . one who makes known how to bring to consciousness, the past whose existence is extinguished, but, only lodged in the mind, to facilitate our understanding of that past in the present” (Ugiomoh in Inoka 2002, p. 92).

The central role given to GOD is what the PHILOSOPoet uses to create a nexus between the power in “name calling” and the “WORD.” The poet pictures it as being allegorical, for the same power which GOD ceded to Adam, was passed from Adam to all mankind so that the way Adam named things that were made has also been shared among all cultures of the world, so that the name chosen for things in our various languages today, is what name that they bore. That is to say that man became co-creators together with GOD and the created things were made totally dependent upon human language, which is why the PHILOSOPoet taunted us, “Things are what they are said to be; things that are and things that are not; All is a said thing.” The PHILOSOPoet from our vantage point allows his lucid thoughts to proceed from climax, to anticlimax; passing from naming, to non-name calling, and this he uses to expose the unexpressed ideas that without words and language, the world would be damned directionless, shapeless, formless as captured in Genesis Chapter 1: 2, 3; “And the earth was without form and void, and the Spirit of GOD moved upon the face of the waters.” It is a leading that makes us see the “vertical relationship between GOD the maker, and man, whom GOD made. Man is made concrete in a mutual yearning – GOD for man and man for GOD” (Ugiomoh in Inoka 2002: 96). This vertical relationship between GOD and Man was what came to be when GOD broke the pervading silence epitomized by the void and spoke – “And GOD said, “Let there be Light, And there was light.” Achieved by the spoken word.

Further, we are actuated by Ogiomoh’s remarks that, “Any hermeneutic act remains in itself another act that awaits further reconstruction in the ongoing dialectics in the act of understanding.” We are bound to move beyond the limits in our acts of continuous regeneration, in pour determined efforts to make the PHILOSOPoet’s poetic philosophical rendition, much like dialogues, relevant in “successive layering.” (Ugiomoh in Inoka 2002, pp. 100-101). This serves as a basis for turning around to ask, “Is name calling using mere “words” to be done arbitrarily? Is language constrained by human physiology, human needs and the human environment?” in Genesis 1: 2 & 3, it was informed by the void, to call forth light and bring order. On the Cross, Jesus cried

out, "It Is Finished" (John 19: 30 – KJV); which was Jesus' spoken word upon his having known "that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled", spoken to herald or bring salvation to humanity. This, is as argued by Nwigwe, (2002) contended signaled "that which has been initiated by GOD the father and carried (out) by Jesus Christ" to its ultimate conclusion (p. 10). In the understanding of the PHILOSOPoet, he observes it to be, "The Word that makes and the Word that unmakes; The Word is at the core of all Being."

Indeed, the notable fact here is that, by this poem, we come to know that language through "words", is a very useful tool, depending on how and where we use it. No object or human perception escapes the influence of a man's "word." To this end, the Poet says, "everything is a said thing", "things are what they are said to be"; and "All is a said thing." It is thus expressive of the PHILOSOPoet's expressing a general cautionary note to speakers of language to be wary of the words they utter, which should be carefully chosen and managed before voicing it out because "Word, once spoken, cannot be retrieved" in the same fashion that GOD spoke and things came to be, so also we should be careful with words because, GOD's word spoken before the world began is become and is, "The source of eternity, everlasting and forever." The Poet means to say that the basic problem with poor management of "words" is that the resultant damage or rift that ensues becomes a source of implacable annoyance or displeasure, since what someone hears cannot be unheard, it goes on for "everlasting and forever." We experience GOD at the center of the PHILOSOPoet's poem, "Word" as it echoes and reverberates the mandate and calling he had as a Priest, which is why he concluded this poem by declaring, "And GOD spoke and things came to be; Creation is a said thing by GOD." What a perfect way to celebrate GOD in poetic disputations and contrasts by the wayward genius, Reverend Father Professor Udoidem!

In Chapter Nineteen, the PHILOSOPoet's poem is tagged, "PEACE", a topic that has been severally discussed, used and abused by society, politics and sundry peoples depending on their particular and peculiar leanings. But in this poem, we show interest in how the poet reproduced Jesus Christ's benediction when He said to his disciples, "My Peace I leave with you." It is one tendency common to every good poet, to have the proclivity to, even as the PHILOSOPoet manifestly did in his poems so far. The PHILOSOPoet was adept at displaying the ability to skillfully "link words directly with the world; to make distinctions naturally, usefully and consistently; to articulate standards for setting boundary cases; and, thereby, to develop a shared fix on the questions under discussion and the ways we might resolve them" (Lepore & Stone, 2016, p. 330) as evidenced in how the subject of GOD and Jesus Christ was shown to be the central theme of his poems. In this poem, the PHILOSOPoet, has again shown like St. Paul, that he also "bear(s) on (him) the marks of Christ", which is how we can explain how the PHILOSOPoet skillfully linked this poem with GOD. As a Roman Catholic Priest/Father, he uses this poem to examine the illusory nature of world peace and the philosophical formulation of its self-contradictory and self-defeating properties in international diplomacy. This informs the query, "Is peace one or many?" The

conceptual clarification of “peace” to elicit the *defineindum* (the meaning of the term) and the *definiens* (the terminology and its meaning) (Nbeté & Elechi 2014) is here stressed. The rhetorical question that follows, “How do you understand it?” has a sense of resignation to fate, but also the instigation of reaction by all concerned, affected or interested with peace. The problem, the PHILOSOPoet asserts, is with the relativity and multiplicity of its definitions, which is based on how each individual understands the concept, “PEACE” – either as a fleeting illusion, or as a concrete practical term informs its application to concrete situations.

The Poet envisages that the problem that arises from conceptual clarification of the word “peace” does not abate because the term has been grossly misunderstood. The problem actually lies in action directed to peace; how to advance it, attend to it, maintain it and apply it. The most pertinent issue here is that, if you want peace, is it necessary to stop fighting? But, the corollary is also germane, is it that if you want peace, you should prepare for war? In what way is this antinomy useful in our analysis of peace or war and how does peace arise from war? This the PHILOSOPoet means to express within the context of the Roman Latin cliché, “Igitur qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum” also rewritten as “Si Vis Pacem Para Bellum” which in English means, “If you want peace prepare for war” (Ogbujah 2021, p. 34) would explain how far away from peace we are because we are not in the least prepared for “War.”

The real problem confronting all of humanity therefore is that if war is to be anticipated in our preparations for peace, then would the ensuing peace end poverty, defend life and conquer sin as prescribed by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, or would it enhance war, violence and scathing hostilities? Would it not be an exercise in futility to both prepare for peace and war at the same time? If war drums must seize, the PHILOSOPoet goes on to prescribe that we ought to “conquer sin” which is intricately woven with the commission of believers of “bringing to fulfilment of that which has been initiated by GOD the Father and carried on by Jesus Christ” in promotion of Evangelisation (Wigwe in Inoka 2002, p. 10). Which sin is it that if we conquer, we would establish peace in the world since “Wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be construed” (Ogbujah. 2021, p. 35). Is it the sin of political expansion, annexation, marginalization, bribery, corruption, avarice, ambition, envy, anger and pride? In what way would one work for peace and “maintain it” (Udoidem, 2012, p. 45); should it be by stopping to fight, or by arguing that lives are an absolute good; then what of the “incongruity of absolute pacifism with pacifist creeds” (Ogbujah 2021: 34).

The reference therein to Prophet Jeremiah that “Peace, peace they say though there is no peace” (Jeremiah 6:14 and Jeremiah 8:11; KJV) in Udoidem (2012, p. 46), dwell on the abominations of Nigerians, nay Israelites who have bisected and sectioned the nation into being in harmony with those we love and live with in the various communities; and those we hate and would wish wiped off the face of the map of Nigeria. This re-echoes the face of the security challenges and the Boko Haram insurgency then rocking parts of Northern Nigeria, but which has continued unabated

to this day. The greed, avarice, ambition and pride had begotten covetousness and lawlessness, which in the time of Jeremiah made the Israelites to cause the women folks to suffer so much abomination, injustice and degradation is being replicated and re-enacted in Nigeria today. The PHILOSOPoet is being cautious by issuing warnings to the people that the superficial treatments we give to "Peace" only end on our lips as superficial coatings rubbed all over "Peace" as he expressed in the poem. We also see a relationship between the Poet's recap of Jean Jacques Rousseau's outburst that although, "Man is free, but everywhere he is in chains." Rousseau

The PHILOSOPoet advances his argument that St. Augustine's definition of "Peace" as "The calm that comes from order" would be too tall to be attainable in Nigeria because even the "War" that should be fought to bring about peace is yet to be thought about. So guided by supervening circumstances, the poet goes on to differentiate between peace as peace of mind and absence of civil war; and of peace as absence of unrest, tranquility of the social order; and peace that is the calm that comes from strife or rebellion, that none of these does guarantee lasting peace if it is examined from St. Augustine's analysis of same because Nigerian polity is void of "tranquility of the order" hence, how can we achieve "Peace is the calm that comes from order" when there doesn't exist any such Nigerian society that can boast of "Peace of mind and order in the community" (Udiodem 2012, p. 46). To the question, "How do we understand it (peace)?" the PHILOSOPoet lends a helping hand relying on his roots and training, when he conclusively asserts - "The Divine Master has this to say; Peace I leave with you, my own peace I give you; Peace the world cannot give." This resurrects the statements of Jesus Christ to His disciples, which is the final solution to world peace contained in John 14: 27 (KJV) which says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The above line of the poem, "PEACE" had a perfect timing and effect on the PHILOSOPoet's elaboration of the concept, peace. This is why he proceeded to remark thus, "Peace of the world and peace of the Master" is the only true source of world peace, one that would conquer community, locality, nationality and cultural barriers, sink into the souls of men and give rise to the much needed "Peace of mind and order in the community." According to the PHILOSOPoet, peace from the Master Jesus Christ is the one ultimate source of what St. Augustine declared - "Peace is the calm of that comes from order" since this peace from Jesus Christ is that peace which emphasizes the kind of "Peace which wells from within the souls of men, from the inner recesses of their hearts, free from the appurtenances of human contingencies. It is inner peace, transformative, invigorating and foundational to other forms of peace. At this level, peaceful behaviours are just, kind, thoughtful, respectful and tolerant of others' views and conducts" (Ogbujah 2021, p. 15).

Therefore, it is only the peace that comes from "The Divine master" that is one that touches on the attitude, behavior and context of real peace, on the sort of peace that modifies and alters one's primordial tendencies and clannishness, prepares and restores

man to a life of making peace with GOD, his Maker before the final bell would announce, "Peace perfect peace, the call to eternity" which call is final and inevitable call to all men rest in peace (RIP). It is the PHILOSOPoet's euphemistical reference to death, a passing to a fuller and richer understanding of real "equanimity and tranquility; sought after by all" (Udoidem 2012, p. 45), but which as St. Augustine contends, would only be understood after one dies and stands before the judgment seat of Christ and is judged, to enter GOD's eternal peace or to enter GOD's eternal damnation. (St. Augustine' *City of GOD*).

In the PHILOSOPoet's most avid balancing act, he counter's his notions of peace with his ideas of "WAR" in Chapter Eighteen (18). The relevant verses of this poem are those that speak to the necessity for peace as enacted and created "War" as captured when he declares of war, "The more you export the richer you become" (Udoidem 2012, p. 43) because "Peace", is "a non-commodious product" since the "The more war that is exported; The more peace at home be generated." On how this would be, the PHILOSOPoet wittily calls, it, "an irony" because in times of peace, men engage themselves in warfare, and in times of war, men "fight" for peace knowing that both war and peace are connected by an intricate web that is so tiny one sometimes doesn't know when it has passed over to the other side of the divide (Udoidem 2012, p. 44). This sets the stage for his next poem on "PEACE" in which he came out to launch the ultimate catholicon for world peace and world war, which remedy he situates in John 14: 27 (KJV), Jesus Christ's assurance that, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Thus, we now examine the PHILOSOPoet's ideas of GOD as infused into his fourteenth poem, "FAITH & REASON" in which he alludes to the disjunctive and conjunctive relations that exist between faith and reason. He argues that Faith or Reason conduces to "Myth or Logos", but that this further translates to "All is Word." In the alternative, he equates "Faith and Reason" to "Myth and Logos" then to, "All is Word." In order to log into Biblical attribute that subsumes faith under reason, the Poet both concepts are akin to "Esau" and "Jacob", who were "always at the other's heels." Then to draw a parallel, he introduces the use of "trickery" as was used by Jacob to supplant Esau in the same way that he ingeniously addresses how Reason, whom he argues was given birth to later, supplanted and uprooted Faith and Myth to receive the blessing of the scientific revolution. Although "FAITH AND REASON" depict the medieval state of man's interpretation of the knowing process wherein Philosophy was seen and taken as the "Handmaid" of faith, but of special interest is that the PHILOSOPoet takes this poem to another different level where it is allowed to illumine the Poet's believe and calling as a Roman Catholic Priest. If reason cannot do without myth and faith, then it is settled that should it "take only faith to believe in it 'reason'" then, this serves to clarify why the "wayward genius" simplified this truth for us, breaking it into and ensuring that reason is equated with "items of religious information (which) can only be

discussed and examined in terms of certain beliefs, faith or religious experience.” (Popkin & Stroll 1993: 179).

The next poem did not pose any serious difficulty in assigning to it a direct relation to the happenings in the Holy Bible in how the PHILOSOPoet tackled the topic “FOOD.” The point to note is that the angle in this poem that speaks of GOD was introduced so that one need not be meticulous to pick it out. There is no way one could interpret the poem away without imputing to it the GOD angle based on the events of genesis chapter 25. In stanza 5, the lines go thus: “Isau the son of Jacob exclaimed; Look I am at the point of dying; What good will birth-right do if I have no food; For Food, Isau sold his birthright.” shows how keen the writer is about making copious references to GOD in all his poetic renditions. In Genesis 25: 32 (KJV), the Bible clearly states, “And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me?” This is what was incorporated into the poem so that God is seen playing a central role in the poetic message it delivers. (Udoidem 2012: 35).

Closely following this stanza, we see the linkage with Adam in the Garden of Eden, where the Poet says, “O! Food, you caused the first disobedience” as contained in Genesis 3 : 1 (KJV), which is how the PHILOSOPoet successfully rounded up his masterpiece, which linked how Eve large appetite and yearning to eat the very food which had been outlawed by GOD in the Garden of Eden, caused her to rebelliously gormandize the food, which led to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. In this way the PHILOSOPoet uses the logic of the Biblical story to point us to the tool that man uses in accepting religious truths, faith.

## CONCLUSION

In this article, we have taken a critical look at Udoidem’s *PHILOSOPoetry*, and have pitched tent with his deep and unseverable bond with GOD demonstrable on the pages of this little book, and for the explication of the Church’s doctrine, for which he devoted all his active life based on his priestly vow to serve in GOD’s vineyard. We have contended seemed to coat GOD as seen in the entire poems in this collection with “the bitter herbs of philosophy” not just to make it “easy for swallowing” (Udoidem 2012: 1), but to paint a real picture of reality of who GOD really is. It was his way of putting the rich knowledge that he is endowed with about GOD “into verse precisely to make it memorable for the average folk.” (Soy & Anna, 2016, p. 99). This was followed by how he ingeniously and skillfully crafts his words about GOD in the poems therein.

This explains why the Poet in *PHILOSOPoetry* engaged in encoding popular stories found in the Holy Bible, scripted with a flair for Philosophical principles, but with such dexterity that one seems to be reading the Holy Scriptures within each line of the carefully laid out stanzas, which is what is common to such an accomplished scholar. We are reminded of the words of Confucius who cautioned, “My young friends, why don’t you study the *Songs*? Reciting the *Songs* can arouse your sensibilities, strengthen your powers of observation, enhance your abilities to get on with others, sharpen your critical skills” (Shusterman, 2010). The *PHILOSOPoetry*, enralls all who can catch a glimpse of this concise piece of poetic literature. The Poet sought to do away with the

Socratic ignorance which stands at the depth of human predicament (Udoidem 2014), because it was central to his arguments on Godliness and holiness which he finds as one easy way to cultivating right moral values. Godliness and holiness, are integral to how one “enhances the development of self reliance, ingenuity, resourcefulness, endurance, pioneering spirits, personal skills and capabilities” (Essien in Inoka (Ed.), 2002, p. 64).

Wherever one turns, be it the poems titled “Being”, “One”, “GOD”, “Truth”, “Man”, “Faith & Reason” “Food”, “Peace” or “Violence”, the central message he sought to convey is that one “needs not weep any more. Christianity is not meant to be strange to you, it is not meant to make you regret giving up some of your cultural practices, no, rather Christianity is part of your culture, Christ Jesus was born as a man as you are” (Essien in Inoka (Ed.) 2002, p. 68). In this direction, these poems seek to support Udoidem’s idea on inculturation, that is, that we are not to discard those aspects of our culture that are not antithetical to the Christian faith and which best expresses their religious sensibilities. This is also an aspect of what Eresia-Eke refers to as a process of “the enlightened enlighten the unenlightened.” (Eresia-Eke in Inoka (Ed.) 2002, p. 77). It was indeed a hallmark of or an assemblage of methodologies – conceptual analysis, linguistics analysis, logical analysis and existential analysis all thrown into one. This is how the PHILOSOPoet was able to avoid complexities and semantic confusions that befuddle people who approach GOD.

The PHILOSOPoet concludes that Philosophy would be directionless and futile, like wagging war against illicit drug trafficking, since the use of the word, “war” portends danger, something evil, to be avoided and rejected by all, which is why he cautions that we ought to rally around and imbibe “original intent” (Eresia-Eke in Inoka (Ed.) 2002:, p. 77) because of the moral change it is programmed to achieve. In the same way no Philosophical training or training in the doctrines of the Church would engender a good character, but it requires the taming of the appetites and passions and the cooperation of the will. This is in view of the onerous fact that “Reason”, later invented by “Faith” invented science gained recognition when it created science and decreed that “Everything must be rational even when reason and the rational are not reasonable” (Udoidem, 2012, p. 33). Even science and reason become myth without convincing explanation just as religion is sometimes flaunted as being unreasonable, because like religion and metaphysics, the myths of science also “Takes only Faith to believe it.” (Udoidem 2012, p. 34). Therefore, the PHILOSOPoet lays its last confessions at the feet of reasoning, for although it is “the candle of the Lord that deserves perennial respect and cherishing” and remains Philosophy’s greatest pride cannot be isolated (Eresia-Eke in Inoka (Ed.) 2002, p. 87), since without faith drawn from one good relationship with GOD, it withers, droops and dries up like flowers of flamboyant in haramatan. “GOD cannot be done away with. His notion is so real. His presence is so real” (Udoidem, 2012, p. 33), for Descartes was right to confer with himself, “I think therefore I am”, otherwise, it is befuddling that only a fool that would dare think in his heart that there is no GOD as aptly captured in Anselm’s proslogion, that “When the

foolbears the words, ‘that which no greater can be conceived’ he understands those words.” (Stanford, St. Anselm 405; Psalms 14:1 and 53:1, KJV).

The results having been achieved by the PHILOSOPoet, he truly succeeded in unravelling the nature of GOD in his rhythmic renditions of poetry, and beautifully unleashing his philosophical defence of the authority and origin of Christianity – apologetics in this work under review. This means that we are bound to down our tools upon being confronted with the words of Harold Bloom that – “One mark of originality that can win canonical status for a literary work is strangeness that we either never altogether assimilate, or that becomes such a given that we are blinded to its idiosyncrasies.” The PHILOSOPoet’s poetic rendition of his idea of GOD is certainly one that is germane, unique, canonical, and above all, world class.

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