

LIFE AND DEATH: REALITY OR MYTH IN EJAGHAM'S THOUGHT

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ABSTRACT

Life and death are universal and mysterious phenomena. These are realities with no cultural bias or exception. These dual concepts have continued to puzzle the philosophical minds of thinkers at every epoch in history. In this article, our attention shall be focused on a careful but critical examination of these concepts in Ejagham belief system. Our aim is to find out how the Ejaghams conceive and understand these concepts of life and death. Are these realities or myths? How does this pattern of belief shape their understanding of life? The method we shall deploy in this study is the critical method of analysis of the data available to us. A greater part of these data is drawn from the oral tradition of the Ejagham people through interviews as a result of the dearth of documentation in this area of study. The present study observes that there is life before death and life after death. Life pre-exist death and death regenerates life in a curb web that is a continuum.

Keywords: Life, Death, Existence, Ejegham, Philosophy

INTRODUCTION

Life and death are realities wrapped in myth in the mythology of Ejagham philosophy. Death is obvious. People experience it daily as they see others die. The explanation given to how these realities of life and death affect and influence the living is contained in the mythology that depicts the people's (Ejagham) contention with the issues. In these myths, the Ejaghams grapple with the questions of:

1. The origin of life and death.
2. The abode and havoc of death.
3. Is there death in the world of the dead?
4. Is there re-incarnation in Ejagham belief system?

These and similar enigmatic questions puzzled the minds of the pristine Ejaghams as they grappled with and braced up to deal with the everyday reality that life and death present and constitute. These shall form the substance of our investigation. It can be argued that, life and death are not myths in Ejagham cultural thought pattern. What can be seen as myth is the various ways of attempting an explanation in the context of seeking understanding that constitute the foundation of this myth.

In this article therefore, it is our desire to critically examine these myths that offer some explanations to the whole reality of life and death and how this understanding affects human

life on earth. In doing this the paper has taken for granted that the meaning of myth needs no definition as well as the concept of reality. What perhaps remains to be done is to properly situate the Ejagham people in this discussion.

THE EJAGHAMS: WHO ARE THEY?

The Ejagham people are a minority ethnic group in Nigeria. But they have a rich history that spots them out in the cross river where it appears they are in the majority. According to Onor:

The term, Ejagham, is used in reference to several groups including, the Qua of Calabar, Akpabuyo and Udukpani (Cluster 1), the Etung, Ofutop, Nde, Nta, Nselle, Abanyum, Nnam, Nkome, Olulumo, Akparabong, Balep and Bendeghe –Afi, all of whom comprise the Ejagham of Ikom (Cluster 11); the Nkim, Nkum, and Ekajuk of Ogoja (Cluster 111); and finally, the Ejagham of Akamkpa (Cluster 1 V).¹

From the clusterisation of Onor, it is very clear that the Ejagham are a conglomeration of many ethnic and tribal groups across the river cross river. What tends to unify them is the similarity in their language affinity but with very slight variations. Onor goes on to identify the territory that they occupy today in the Globe:

The aforementioned groups collectively occupy a contiguous expanse of territory stretching from most of Calabar Municipality, Akpabuyo and Udukpani local government areas; through Akamkpa and Ikom local government areas and upwards to a sizeable portion of Ogoja local government area. Obviously the most populous group in present cross river state, the Ejaghams are rich in mineral, soil, forest and water resources.²

What this shows is that the Ejagham people are mostly found in the Cross River State of Nigeria. But they are also found in the South West province of the Republic of Cameroon. The Ejaghams are spread apart and integrated into four clusters expanding across six local government areas of the eighteen that up make the Cross River state. They are the dominant group with a relatively similar language in the Cross River state. The Ejaghams speak a language that bears their identity in nomenclature; the Ejagham language. According to Tangban, “the term Ejagham is derived from Ijagham, a sacred lake believed to be the cradle of the Ejagham people.”³ Lake Ijagham is actually a sacred Lake that is profuse with mysterious and even mystifying events that demonstrate the portents of the Ejagham belief. This Lake is “located within Ejagham homeland in the present-day south-west Republic of Cameroon.”⁴ Tangban's description of 'within the Ejagham homeland' is very instructive here. By this he means that this Lake from which the name Ejagham was derived from is not located somewhere far removed from Ejagham ancestral soil but rather it is buried in the very heart of Ejagham land where even today The Ejaghams are still the only settlers and owners of the land. It therefore follows naturally that this history of the origin of the Ejagham people makes a lot of sense and deep connection as this historical connection is logical, rational and backed by cultural affinity and so is more tenable in accounting for the origin of the Ejaghams.

The Ejaghams and their World View

A people's world view is indispensable in understanding their core values and belief systems. These core values and belief systems are the sum total of their culture as a way of life. Without this cultural base, a people are lost in history with no identity of their own. These are the things that are a defining as well as determining factor that regulates a people's interaction with and in the world. The Ejaghams have a world view that is anthropocentric, cosmocentric and theocentric in a network of interrelationship, dependence and reverence. The anthropocentric is tied to the cosmocentric and the cosmocentric is equally tied to the theocentric, without which, the anthropocentric and the cosmocentric would be lacking the locale standing for existence and survival. The Ejaghams are not atheistic but polytheistic. They worship many gods while at the same time also acknowledging the existence and supremacy of the One and only True God, This true God is worshipped through His intermediaries- the gods. This world view displays an understanding of the existence of two worlds, not worlds apart but rather worlds that are connected in a relationship of reverence and dependence. The anthropocentric and the cosmocentric are of dependence whereas the theocentric is one of reverence. "The Ejaghams recognized a hierarchy of spiritual authority ending in the Great, Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent entity."⁵ The Ejaghams worshipped the Supreme Being whom they concretized in the created things of the earth. They believed in the God who dwells above, whose abode is so high and far removed from that of mortals. They call Him, *Obhasi Osor, obhasi ka osor*. When translated literally, it means, the God who is up, the God that is on high, in terms of and in the context of his abode living beyond the cloud and the sky. This God is worshipped by the Ejagham people through intermediaries of the things that this God has created. God is worshipped through *Obhasi Nsi, obhasi ka nsi*. This concept when translated also literally means god of the earth, the god who is below where mortals dwell. This god is the immediate god that the people encounter daily.⁶ It is also through this god that the Supreme God is worshipped and venerated by the Ejagham people who were also deeply religious. *Obhasi Nsi*, is concretized, expressed and articulated in things that are found in nature on the earth and sacrifices offered to them in the name of the Supreme Being. Such concretization include: *Agui*, (hills) *Atai*, (stones) *Ayip*, (water; rivers and streams) *Ati*, (trees), *Etim*, (bush).⁷ It is important to note here that Tangban's list is not exhaustive. There were other concrete things through which God was worshipped. These include also *onyam*, (animals). Certain animals were seen as sacred and with a lot of affinity with the collective beliefs of the Ejagham people. Animals were also venerated such as *Nqui*, (the tortoise) that is venerated for wisdom and *Mgbe*, (tiger) that is venerated for valour. From this it is abundantly clear that in Ejagham cosmology the ecology is conceived as a single unit with humanity in religion and worship.

We have situated the Ejaghams in the map of the world. We can now discuss their views on the issues at stake. We have also taken for granted that death is not a stranger to any culture. There is no such culture where people do not die. As people live so they die. Life and death are like the two sides of the same coin. One cannot be found without the other. One precedes the other while the other follows from behind. What tends to separate them is the difference arising time and duration.

THE ORIGIN OF LIFE AND DEATH IN EJAGHAM'S THOUGHT

We have stated that life and death are not myth in se in Ejagham ontology and cosmology. Myth only serves as the indispensable vehicle of the transmission of the understanding of their nature and mode of existence. It is through the medium of myth that these realities are known in all pristine cultures, Ejagham culture inclusive. Myth, because they are based on folktales, fairytales and other forms or stories that go back to ancient history, far into the time before time began, before the time of human habitation of the earth, are usually uncritical, irrational and illogical. These stories are told in the most ordinary manner that makes their philosophical comprehension difficult. Sometimes the stories are inconsistent with the ordinary laws of thinking. In most cases very important information can be put into the mouth of an animal, tree, stone and even hills as if they had the innate capacity to talk like human beings do. These stories, because they deal the religious and traditional beliefs of the people are not meant to be questioned, criticized or doubted. To do so may amount to sacrilege.

Among the stories that deal with the origin of life and death in Ejagham culture is the one that is put into the mouth of a dog and the tortoise⁸. In this story the dog and the tortoise are personified and made to play the role of sacred spiritual beings on an errand to mortals. The story goes. God had two things to offer man: life or death. He wanted man to choose for himself what he wanted. Anyone man chooses was to be granted him ip so facto by God. God in His wisdom gave the messages to two very trustworthy animals to bring to man. This time with an instruction that whoever reaches man first and delivers his message, that message was going to be binding upon man. God had good intention for man and wanted man to live forever. The message of life was given to the dog. The dog is a fast running animal, not just a moving animal, with a lot of resilience and stamina for all situations. The dog can run across hills and mountains, jump over storms and logs. It can also swim across rivers and oceans. It is the possession of all these qualities that made God to entrust the message of life to him. The reason is obvious. God had in mind the fact that the dog was going to be the first to reach the earth and so deliver the message to man. This message was for man to live forever and not to die anymore.

The other animal that God entrusted the message of death was the tortoise. It had the same mandate as the dog. If he reaches the earth first and delivers his message, man was to die. The tortoise, we must note is a very slow-moving animal, (not running), and with no speed to compare with the strength, stamina and resilience of the dog. To be noted here is the fact that these two animals have four legs. But many other features set them apart. The dog has longer legs, lighter hair and sensitive sense organs. These physical features are oriented towards what the dog is conditioned to do, to be smart, fast and sensitive. The tortoise on the other hand has shorter legs and a big heavy coat all over his body that encloses it. These physical features also in a way impede speed and hinder agility.

The dual set out on their journey from heaven where God is to the earth the natural habitation of man. What is also striking is the fact that they set out at the same time to deliver their messages to man who was anxiously waiting for them. The dog got midway when he stumbled over spilled oil. He got enticed and entangled by the flavour of the oil, devouring it and forgot

the urgency and the magnitude of the message he was carrying, epitomizing the fate of all mortals who needed final liberty. He spent days yielding up to months for the immediate satisfaction of the urges of the flesh.

The tortoise closed up and closed in the gap and over took the dog who was still too busy devouring his spoils as to observe what was happening. With the same paste, consistent, slow and steady, the tortoise, suddenly and finally arrived the habitation of men. He delivered his message to the embarrassment and utter frustration of man. The content of the message was that man was to die and that death had become the common fate of man from hence. It was not a decision that was going to be subject to review. It was a final and decisive decision. As man was digesting this hard truth of his new situation, the dog came gasping with breath only to discover that the tortoise had already reached the earth and delivered his own message. His own message became belated and irrelevant.

It is for this reason that till today man has remained a subject of death and subject to death in an irreversible circle of occurrence. It is the folly of the dog that threw man into that state that has sealed his fate.

This mythology as it is common to all ancient myth is not grounded in reason but sounds logical *secundum quit*. It is for this same reason that it is described as myth. A close and critical examination of this myth may reveal something striking. It is not directly related with the origin of life but deals more with the origin of death. As the story has it, man was already somewhere, implying therefore that there was life already before God sent the two animals. The story seems to dwell more on life forever and not life from the beginning at its beginning. The story is clear on the origin of death that has become the fate of man today. It is for this reason that the dog is domesticated and then killed in a brutal way and eaten with a lot of celebration in some cultures in Ejagham society. The tortoise on the other hand, though the bearer of the bad news, is highly revered for its wisdom, docility and tenacity in adhering to the call of duty as duty requires. The tortoise is among the sacred animals that are revered in Ejagham ontology, anthropology and cosmology.

It is the business of philosophy to give a rational foundation to these myths and their imports for the continuous search for knowledge and ultimate reality as man grapples with the everyday experiences of life. Philosophy is not strictly so to speak, the formulations of new philosophical propositions, but rather the clarification of those propositions. More insight is the philosophers aim, driven always by the curiosity for *philo-sophia*. If the dog had reached the earth first, then death couldn't have been the fate of man today. The cause of death according to this myth is traceable to the greed and lack of focus and dedication to duty that the dog displayed. If man must make any reasonable progress in life, then he must shun certain appetites and inculcate the virtues of discipline and purposefulness in the task that is placed before him. People of slower but steady and consistent characters are more prone to success than those of the opposite inclination.

The Greeks also have similar myths about the origin of death. For them, 'THANATOS' – translated roughly as death, was the son of NYX, the goddess of the night and his brother

hynops, the god of sleep. Thanatos appeared to humans to carry them off to the underworld when the time allotted them by the fates had expired. Orpheus the poet and musician went to the underworld to retrieve his beautiful and lovely wife, Eurydice, who died of snake bite¹⁰. Orpheus descended into the underworld, with his dexterity in poetry and music and fascinated the inhabitants of that world with his eloquence, erudition and melody. When he had sufficiently drawn their attention to himself, they asked him what brought him to the underworld. Seeing that he had already won their hearts, he did not hesitate to state in clear terms, his intention requiring their attention. He told them he came to take back his loving and charming wife whom death snatched away through snake bite. He was quickly granted his request but under one condition. That condition was that he will not turn back to admire his wife until they have crossed the threshold between life and death; between the world of mortals and immortals. He was delighted and admitted that that was no difficult deal. He was asked to turn and back his 'wife' and then to begin the journey while his wife followed him behind. He set out with an air of victory amidst singing and drumming like a conqueror would do upon a very successful expedition. But the unthinkable happened. At the edge of the threshold to crossover, he lost patience and self control. He turned back to look at his wife. She immediately fell back to the underworld. He was warned at the risk of loosing his life never to return to the underworld to take her back. He was mandated to go to the world of the living and play his music to entertain the birds, the oceans and the mountains. He returned back in anger and frustration.

This story drawn from Greek mythology, like the former one drawn from Ejagham mythology, deals more with the finality and irreversibility of death; than with the origin of life. It appears as these stories, amply demonstrate, there is life before death and life after death, in both Greek and Ejagham mythological explanation of life and death. There seems to be a place somewhere else (beyond the reach of man) where life exists in an endless and timeless notion. It is from here that this life comes to real life on earth and returns through thanatos (Greek word for death) and Equ (Ejagham word for death). In each of these, the process is completely unfathomable by rational man. The question remains enigmatic. Where life originates, and how it originates and what precedes its origin, are all philosophical questions. The process through which this life is also extinguished through death, is another enigmatic question. What man sees is the physical act of dying. He cannot explain how this process accomplishes itself.

In the two mythical stories we considered from Ejagham and Greek mythology, the questions that remained unanswered are: who created life? Where does life's beginning begins? Is it in the underworld or is there another world beyond or above the underworld? Those who have not come to life on earth before, where do they live? How is their life generated? Is it possible that there are people like that who have never come to life in this world and who will never come, but who control this movement that criss-cross between the living and the death? What appears to be possible in these myths is that the dead go to a place (whether up or down – above or below) called the other world or underworld. The possibility of their return back to the world of the living is also guaranteed under certain conditions. In Ejagham mythology, the good ones have automated qualification to return upon their discussion or to enjoy their

reward there¹¹. The not so good and not totally bad ones are given a second chance to prove themselves before a final sentence is passed against them. The process through which the prove is given is through reincarnation.

THE ABODE OF THE DEAD AND THEIR HAVOCS

The Etung (Ejaghams) have a very strong cultural and traditional belief about *Ngun akebhasi*. This expression, *Ngun akebhasi* translated as the world of the dead, the world of those buried in the earth, is so intrinsically and inextricably tied to *ngun anne* – the world of people and by people, it is implied the living. These two worlds are set apart only in distance and location; but related in a network of interdependence and interconnectivity.

The Ejaghams like the Greeks, believe in the underworld or the other world, where the spirits of the dead go to upon their exit from this world. They however differ in their belief of the actual location of this world. The Ejaghams affirm that is far away from the world of the living. Somehow, it is located below the earth or in the thick forest that no mortal can access. they refer to it as *Osere nsi*, understood as down the earth and *Ekui Onyoghe etim* – inside the thick forest. This world is situated in a place where the living cannot penetrate, no matter how deep they search and how far they travel. But if out of stubbornness, one who is still alive decides to go on that search and journey, he is warned along the road by fierce creatures and frightening occurrences. If he persists, he is devoured. It means he asked for his own death. His body will not be seen for a befitting funeral to formally usher and escort him to the world of the ancestors. This explains why in Etung (Ejagham) mythology, one should not travel alone too far and too deep into the forest, less he misses his way back and finds himself in the world of the spirits and ancestors. These spirits/ancestors do not allow anyone still alive to poke nose into what happens in their world. This is done at the risk of one's life.

The abode of the dead is in the world of the spirits and the ancestors. It is known as *ngun akebhasi*. These, though dead in this world, are alive in the other. They have access to the world of the living. But the world of the living does not have access to them except through divination, mediation and by the spiritual powers of the gods. In Ejagham cultural thought pattern, the concept of heaven and God as the place where the dead go to, is grossly lacking and so unsuitable in understanding Ejagham belief systems of life and death.

Belief in ancestor worship and communication is a defining principle of Ejagham belief about the dead. Necromantic rituals like libation explain this. According to Talbot, the worship of ancestors and belief in reincarnation also constitute an important component of Ejagham religion¹². This ancestor worship is expressed in these necromantic rituals. The living and the dead co-habit but at different levels of interactions. This explains why kinsmen will not allow their dead members, especially the good ones of reputable and respectable stature to be buried outside their kinsfolk. This is so that the relationship established here will not be cut off by death and through it: it is also so that when the dead awake into the other world. They will not find themselves lost in the midst of strangers. But rather they will see and recognize their kinsmen who have gone before and so re-unite with them. Omagu argues that failing to burry one's kinsmen in his ancestral home is akin to throwing them away¹³. The

concept of punishment of the dead for what they did not do is perhaps squarely pecked on their exclusivity, separation and total annihilation from the ancestral lineage. They are driven out to roam and wander about with no abode for respite or bliss. They become a *viator*- wanderer and *ntan*, one who is lost and is bound and destined to be lost.

This is why it is common to find ghosts of people of this nature wander about disturbing the living and unable to return to the ancestors until finally their spirits dissolve into ant hills and storms in the evil forest. The Ejaghams believe that dead comes once and no one can die twice. It is for this reason that they believe that the ghost of the dead, since they are not really real human beings, cannot and do not die, but rather turn into one lifeless thing or the other in the evil forest in the world of the spirits. The havoc that death unleashes is so terrible and so decisive that there is no remedy. Death deals a blow that is final to the fate of all mortals. Curious minds in all ages have tried to no avail to evade the havoc that death brings. Death remains the only force that no other force on earth can unravel, subdue or supersede. There is always a feeling of lament that accompanies it, each time it strikes. The helplessness with which man stands before it, defines the magnitude of the depth of this havoc. “Oh death, you are so unfair, so unjust, so brutal, so unmerciful,”¹⁴ man has always cried in his helplessness in the face of death. Death creates and leaves a pain that is indelible. When it strikes, life never remains the same.¹⁵

Death engenders a separation in which there is no re-union. It is a parting, a department that does not create room for a re-meeting. It is a lost that is final. Even though there is the likelihood of meeting again in the other world, it is only till then. As the Ejaghams put it, *nne-anok akpho ajak aro bha* – once anyone goes/dies, one cannot come back; at least not in this form to continue from where one left. But if a child is born with the physical qualities of a family member who has died, the Ejaghams believe that that dead person has come back to life. This is called *Ejimi*¹⁶ in the Ejagham culture. It is what is referred to as re-incarnation. The new born child is given in most cases, the same name that the dead person bore. He is equally treated and loved in the same way.

IS THERE DEATH IN THE WORLD OF THE DEAD?

The question, is there death in the world of the dead? is as intriguing as it is enigmatic. According to Omagu:

To the African, death is not the final end to human life rather it is a transition from earth to the abode of the ancestors. Indeed, death is perceived as the beginning of a person's deeper relationship with all of creation, the complementing of life and the beginning of the communion between the visible and invisible worlds.¹⁷

What Omagu says of the African applies in toto to the Ejaghams who are also Africans by virtue of their colour and geographical location on the globe. Omagu's opinion on this issue reflects only the aspect of death as a transition from this world, but not total annihilation or destruction; for there is a place where life continues. It is against this background that Africans (Ejaghams) see life as a cyclic continuum, of going and coming, of transformation from one

state to another. This also explains why such very elaborate rites are conducted to usher the dead back to the ancestral home. Sometimes some of these are lavishly carried out. It is seen in that context of sending forth the person to join the other world. The Ejaghams believe that the dead do not die again. In the world of the dead, there is endless life. The dead enjoy a new form of life that does not end.

After dead, the spirits of the wicked and malevolent are not united with the ancestors. They are cast away and allowed to roam and wander as ghosts on the face of the earth. They eventually diffuse and evaporate into other lifeless forms in the evil forest in the world of the spirits.

IS THERE RE-INCARNATION IN EJAGHAM BELIEF SYSTEM?

The concept of re-incarnation is an indispensable component in the understanding of Ejagham belief in life and death. It is clearly captured in their world view that life is a continuum with series and circles that rotate and regenerate. This is the Ejagham version of eternal life, understood in the context of a life that never ends *ka otum otum*, which means for ever and ever. Makinde's views about the Yorubas, fits in perfectly into the Ejagham beliefs system. He says:

The Yorubas believe that, apart from the disappearance of ARA (body) into dust, the soul, as the indestructible element of a person must continue to exist either in the form of spirit or re-incarnated in a different body in a different place, or born again into the same family. It is this kind of beliefs that makes the continual of life after death,¹⁸

This belief is common to all traditional societies. It is against the background of the love Africans (Ejagham) have for life and their desire to preserve it that makes this belief striking and tenable. Onor concludes that “in fact, it was commonly held that most people after death come back to earth as children to begin another circle of life”¹⁹. It is this coming back to life that defines this concept of re-incarnation. Onor argues that it constitutes an important component of traditional Ejagham religion.²⁰

We do not agree with Dewhurst in his submission that “majority of the ghost are re-incarnated on the earth”²¹. Our point of departure with him is not on the issue of re-incarnation, but rather in his qualification of the dead as ghost. Dewhurst perhaps did not do a thorough research to understand the difference between a ghost and the dead. The dead becomes a ghost only when he re-appears in the form of a body while at the same time in hiding upon contact with the living, causing havoc and harm to them. Otherwise if the dead returns to the ancestral world, he cannot be described as a ghost and it is from there that he can re-incarnate, and not while still roaming the earth. We can therefore see the ghost as the dead who has not finally arrived at his destination as a result of a multiplicity of variables. He is so to speak a wander, a lost spirit with no above and respite. It shows clearly that such dead did not graduate in their earthly course and so cannot proceed to any where what remains as their fate is to varnish into the air or be transformed into ant hills and logs in the evil forest. Ghosts are not the subject of re-

incarnation unless through malevolence and malediction.

This belief in re-incarnation is very strong among the Ejaghams. What remains to be done is a proper articulation of how this takes place. This may not be the subject of this paper. The most common ways the Ejagham have recognized and identified re-incarnation is on the possession of those features and qualities, overt or covert of the dead person in physique and character (appearance and behavior), being manifested by the one who has been born again to earthly life. There is a big philosophical question hanging on this position that, deserve more investigation to give an insight that can add clarity to the subject matter.

CONCLUSION

The discussion and the discourse we have been engaged, in bordering on life and death; myths or reality in Ejagham cultural thought pattern, has deep bearing on the people's ways of life and world view. Life is dear and precious to the Ejaghams. As a result of this, it should not and cannot be extinguished or lost just like that at death. There has to be a way of sustaining and perpetuating it in existence. It is this kind of thinking that perhaps gave rise to the concept of ancestor's worship and life after death. Uya's point supports this position thus:

The conception of reality of the African (Ejagham) is that there is really no past, no present, no future. There is a continuing stream of reality that ties a man to the past, present and the future... The past itself ties the living community into another new world, which is what some people call the world of ancestors.²¹

This world of the ancestors is what sustains and preserves life in Ejagham culture and thought. It is worthy of note to remark that life and death are realities in Ejagham cultural thought pattern. But these realities are shrouded in myths through which an explanation of their understanding is achieved. Life and death are obvious realities. The way to their understanding in traditional Ejagham society, is through the medium of myths. The use of myths to understand the mystery of life and death, do not and should not in any way discredit the credibility of the knowledge derived there from.

In Ejagham ontology, there is life before death and life after death. Life pre-exist death and death regenerates life in a curb web that is a continuum.

End Notes:

1. S O. Onor, *The Ejagham in the Cross River State of Nigeria*, (Ibadan: Aboki Publishers,1994.) p.1
2. Ibid.P.2
3. E. O. Tangban, *The Ejagham Under Colonial Rule:A Study Of The Socio-Economic And Political Changes,1891-1961*, (Kaduna:Prudent Publishers,2008) p.3
4. Ibid
5. Ibid.P.44
6. Ibid

7. Ibid
8. S A. Enagu, Oral interview.(20/7/2018). S.A.Enagu is one of the leading atu ofam, (atufam) in the Aya Osor, (Ajassor) clan of Etung local government area of cross river state. He is a retired school administrator and director. He is equally well grounded in Ejagham culture because his own father was also a chief. He took amply time to share with us his views bearing on the subject matter
9. Internet sources ([http:// en.m.wikipedia>wiki,lost...](http://en.m.wikipedia>wiki,lost...))
10. Albinus, pg 105-<http://en.m.wikipedia.org>.
11. Plato: *The Republic*- translated by Paul Shorey, in Plato: collected dialogues (including letters) edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntinton Cairus, New York: Bollegen foundation (Bolligen series LXXI) in Tabot Third impression 1964 pp 843-844
12. . Talbot, *In The Shadow of the Bush*, pp.13-22. (cited by S.O.Onor, Ibid.p.140
13. D.O.Omagu, *A Wind Of Change: Bekwarra in an age of globalization*, (Ibadan: Aboki publishers, 2012.) p.222.
14. N.V. Ntui, unpublished paper.
15. Bayo Adebowale, *Lonely Days*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Book limited, 2006,) pp52-54. In this little book, the author dwelt extensively on the havoc that death brings. In death, life is never the same for those left behind. In this book the author narrates what widows go through when their husbands die. The story is pathetic. It is what death brings.
16. P.M. Eno, Oral interview-ejimi Ka ojimi mbhi anne (7/5/17).Ejagham (re-incarnation in the belief of the Ejagham people is a well articulate article of fate and faith in Ejagham cultural thought pattern.
17. D.O. Omagu, Ibid. pp.193-194.
18. M.A. Makinde, *African Philosophy: The Demise of a controversy*, (2nd ed) (Ile ife: Obafemi Awolowo University press, 2007), p 148.
19. S.O. Onor, Ibid.p.140.
20. Ibid
21. Dewhurst, Assessment Report on Etung Clan, Ikom Division, Ogoja province (1930-44) p21. (cited by Ibid, p.141)
22. O.H. Uya, *some problems of mythology and perspectives*, cornell University presss, 1973, p.7 (cited by Ibid. p.141.)