

The Biographic and the Objective: A Reflection on the Historical and Metaphysical Perceptions of Elele Alimini People in Ikwerre Ethnic Nationality

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ABSTRACT

This paper meticulously examines the history, geographical location, socio-political structure as well as the metaphysical and axiological perceptions of the people of Elele Alimini in Ikwerre ethnic nationality, Rivers State, Nigeria. It also discusses the moral decadence of the society and its present state of degeneration and the need to prioritize societal values and norms in our society. Finally, some suggestions were made. Among others was that we as Africans must endeavor to decolonize some concepts in our society such as: education, morality, evil, and the mind. We must look inwardly to see the riches embedded in our cultural heritage and belief system, and see how we can harness indigenous resources available to us in order to inculcate our philosophical underpinnings so as to paint the correct picture and bring out the real interpretation of our African conceptual scheme. The paper further emphasizes the need to re-educate the minds of Africans towards holding fast our traditions and standards and not discard them in a bid to embrace the Eurocentric values.

Introduction

In Africa, culture and traditions stand for different ideologies and serve different purposes depending on the socio-philosophical underpinnings as well as the societal value systems. Some people view cultural values in terms of what it can offer. For instance, cultural values to some people, represent power, to some people, a way of life, while to others it is a means to an end, et cetera. By implication, cultural values and norms should be adopted to the mentality, aptitudes, occasions and traditions of various people, conserving as far as possible all sounds and healthy elements in the fabrics of their social lives, adapting where necessary to changed circumstances and progressive ideas.

According to Wordu, Joseph and Tariah (2022), "it is of utmost regret that the African society at large has fallen into the abyss of moral decadence as a result of miseducation of her citizens". Traditional religion and culture which were potent weapons for character training in African societies were discouraged from the schools because they were regarded as pagans and

uncivilized ways. Sense of communalism was set aside in favor of the individuality of the Euro-American culture. We live in a cultural flux characterized by a confused interplay between an indigenous cultural heritage and a foreign cultural legacy of colonial origin. The result of this cultural condition is the historical superimposition of foreign categories of thought upon African thought schools systems. Even after independence, critics maintained that the best students Nigerian schools could produce at that time was "Nigerian in blood but English in opinion, morals and intellects". In other words, such a Nigerian is like a fish out of water, one who has been brainwashed and alienated from his culture and one who saw nothing good in his cultural heritage (Enoh, 1996). It is clear that European conquests wanted to stamp their control without compromising. In Africa, Africans were forced to change their ways of life by being converted so that they can adopt the Western culture. According to Awolalu (1991), converts in some parts of Africa were encouraged to flout authority by burning their ritual objects and breaking the taboos. The encouragement of the destruction of traditional objects of worship was enforced. In these operations, the educated Christians, who were mostly teachers and pastors, were used. They condemned the traditional title systems, marriage, rituals, songs, arts, and labelled them things of Satan. The African dancing and music were banned from the curricula. Indigenous literatures in Africa's multitudinous tongues that had existed from time immemorial in the African continent were de-emphasized. It is crucial to allude to the fact that when colonialism became a fact on the continent, the use of indigenous literatures, especially in formal schools, was relegated to the background or completely abolished (Joseph, 2023). Before this destruction of African knowledge and its institutions, the colonial officials got knowledge about African languages, cultures and laws, which in many regions began to be compiled with the assistance of local intermediaries within the few years of occupation (Parker & Rathbone, 2007).

A Brief History of Elele Alimini Group of People

Elele Alimini is a town in Emohua Local Government of Rivers State (Ikwerre ethnic nationality), Nigeria. It comprises fourteen (14) autonomous communities and it is the 9th Ward in Emohua Legislative Assembly with over fifty thousand (50,000) population of rural dwellers. Elele Alimini is a town in Ishi Mbam clan of Ikwerre ethnic nationality of Rivers State, Nigeria. The town migrated from Elele Okiniali in the mid-17th century after a war between the indigenes of Elele Okiniali and Ekpeye/Ahoada group of people. The said war was as a result of land conquest and boundary encroachment by Ekpeye/Ahoada group of people. Before the war, the Ekpeye/Ahoada group of people were said to have been attacking and killing Elele Okiniali people who farmed on the areas where the present day Elele Alimini community is situated.

This ugly scenario led to the inevitable formation of powerful and corrosive warriors by the Elele Okiniali people. Each of the villages in Elele Okiniali was ordered to produce able bodied men who would go for the war. Some oral source has it that at the time of this formation, there was a group of Hausa settlers called "Hausa Igara" that were living in harmony with the Elele Okiniali people. Hausa Igara people were also asked to produce able bodied men that will join in the struggle. The war was led by a war lord called "Ogbo" who was a member of the royal family but resides outside the royal family (Oral source).

The warriors of Elele Okiniali went into battle with the Ekpeye/Ahoada group of people and

they eventually defeated and chased their enemies beyond Ekpeye/Ahoda river along the present East West high way. In order to prevent a reprisal attack and subsequent encroachments from their enemies or a retake/capture of the territory, the warriors of Elele Okiniali decided to settle in the battle field (the present day Elele Alimini). Although, their primary reason for settling there was because of the discovery of "Mini Ezi" the river along Elele/Ahoda express way; hence, the name "Alimini" which means "the land of water". To them, this was a good reason why they should settle in battle field because at that time, there was no water (stream/river) in Elele Okiniali their hometown. The warriors eventually settled and multiplied.

The offspring of the war lord "Ogbo" are the people of Omuogbo in Omuokpurikwu autonomous community of Elele Alimini, and they are the first settlers in Elele Alimini and consequently the oldest village in Elele Alimini. Generally, the warriors of Elele Okiniali who survived the war are the offspring of Elele Alimini community. The Hausa Igara warriors who survived the war also settled with the warriors of Elele Okiniali and they became one. Omuagara autonomous community of Elele Alimini are the descendants of Hausa Igara warriors.

After settling and becoming a full-fledged community, Elele Alimini continued with the same cultural practices and traditions of her motherland (Elele Okiniali). This included but not limited to language, marriage procedures and festivals. Some families who were not part of the war later left Elele Okiniali and migrated to the new found village (ukeh ali) to live with their brothers and friends. Eventually, they were received and portions of land were given to them for farming. Some families also migrated from Omerelu and Omudioga community in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State to permanently settle in Elele Alimini on getting the news of the new settlement with abundance of water. It is worthy of note that communities such as Omerelu, Elele Okiniali, Omudioga, Egbeda and Ubimini of Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State are all from the same ancestry and that explains why they belong to the same clan in the ancient Ikwerre kingdom which is known as "Ishi Mbam" (Ogbakor Elele Alimini, 2002). On the other hand, some sources claimed that the first settler in Elele Alimini was a great warrior and hunter called Ohna Umeka Wadan-Wonboni. This man is believed to have migrated from Ekpeye/Ahoda kingdom. This could have been true because "Umeka" is an Ahoda/Ekpeye name. Umeka, before the war was said to have been living in Elele Alimini and was believed to have been a part of the Ekpeye/Ahoda warriors terrorizing and killing the Elele Okiniali people. This source claimed that during the war, the warriors from Elele Okiniali could not get hold of this man because it was said that he was a demigod. According to oral history, he did not die like a human being. It was believed that he vanished into an age-long tree standing in his compound after witnessing his "Osusu Oku" (the last day of his burial rites). Ohna Umeka Wadan-Wonboni is the fore father of a family called "Mgbuodigwe" in Omuadi autonomous community of Elele Alimini. When Elele Alimini fully settled in the area, Ohna Umeka Wadan-Wonboni was forgiven but was denied of his position as the first settler in the land. This was because he was not from Elele Okiniali and eventually not have any ancestral link whatsoever with the people of Elele Alimini. More so, many families in Omuadi community, Omuohiaa community and Omuse community of Elele Alimini were said to have migrated from Ekpeye/Ahoda, and they still maintain their relationship with their relatives in Ekpeye/Ahoda respectively just like many other families still relate with their people in Elele Okiniali. However, there are other theories of the evolution of the community.

The Theory of Welekwe Assor

Another source from Wikipedia has it that a man called Welekwe Assor, also known as Oruma I (1830-1922) was an Ikwerre ruler and the first Warrant Chief and local representative of the British administration of the British colonial government in Elele Alimini, Rivers State, Nigeria. His reign and influence extended to all parts of the northern Ikwerre towns and villages. His ancestry goes back to the first set of settlers in Elele Alimini who migrated from Elele town (Elele Okiniali). He was the grandson of Odukeku Ogu a warlord and the founder and progenitor of the people of Mgbuanyim village in Elele Alimini, and one of the first settlers from Elele town (Elele Okiniali). According to oral traditions, when he was born, his parents took him out of the hut where he laid, through the roof of the house because of the believe that he would die if he passed through the door, and because he was the only son of his mother, he was highly pampered and had a privileged upbringing.

According to this source, Welekwe grew up to become a warrior, wealthy trader, and a powerful ruler. His commitment to the defense of the territorial integrity of his community put him in a long running supremacy battle with the people of Ekpeye led by their leader King Nworisa Odu. Welekwe Assor rallied and led his community and other southern Ikwerre neighbors such as Rumuekpe, Ndele, and Rumuji in several battles with the Ekpeye people until a mutual peace agreement was reached between them. The cordial relationship that ensued following the peace agreement continues to exist till date. As a mark of honour and respect, the descendants of Welekwe Assor are up till today accorded warm reception whenever they visit Obele community the home town of Nworisa, and vice versa.

Welekwe was also noted for driving away a band of Elephant hunting migrants from the northern part of Nigeria led by Mallam Dikko from his community. Trailing the foot path of British soldiers, these migrants traveled from Katsina down to the southern part of Nigeria. They traveled through the thick forests of the South where elephants were said to flourish and settled in Mgbuanyim village in Elele Alimini in the year 1890. However, uncomfortable with their presence in his community, Welekwe decided to drive them away from his community to their present location in Elele town. The place where they camped in Mgbuanyim village, Elele Alimini was called Oyi-gabo (meaning ground where northern migrants settled).

The strategic location of his community enabled him to profit from all kinds of trade which he managed to control throughout his lifetime. He was involved in internal slave trade before its abolishment was enforced by the British in old Eastern Nigeria. He also traded with Bonny, new Calabar (Kalabari), and British traders (collectively known as Royal Niger Company) in coral beads and palm produce. However, unknown to Welekwe, the Berlin Conference had taken place and his community was included in the area declared by the British as the Oil Rivers Protectorate (which was later renamed as Niger Coast Protectorate in 1893), within which they claimed control over trade, military defense and external affairs.

So in an attempt to resist a two-man British expedition under the command of Sir Ralph Moor that came to assert British control over his community where he ruled and held sway, he was captured and exiled to the British colonial administrative center in Degema for six months, between March and August in 1894. Welekwe eventually capitulated to the British authorities

while in exile in Degema, and signed the Treaty of Protection for Queen Victoria of England in 1894. He was one of the Ikwerre rulers who signed the Treaty of Protection of the Niger Coast Protectorate for Queen Victoria of England. A monument was erected in his honour at the European Quarters in Degema. Thereafter, he was made a Warrant Chief and was given a Staff of Office, two Royal Robes, and a Royal Helmet (Life Guards Officer's helmet) that has the emblem of the Chivalric Order of the Garter with the motto "Honi soit qui mal y pense" a French maxim translated as "Shame to him who thinks evil of it". The Staff and Helmet are among the colonial relics that have survived to date and have been passed on to the community rulers from one generation to another. In recognition of his status, leaders from neighboring communities of Ekpeye and Ikwerre paid him homage during annual festivals.

According to this source, Welekwe had many children and grandchildren. Prominent among his descendants was Chief James Welekwe, who was the last surviving grandson of Welekwe Assor (Wikipedia).

Location, Size and Population of Elele Alimini Community

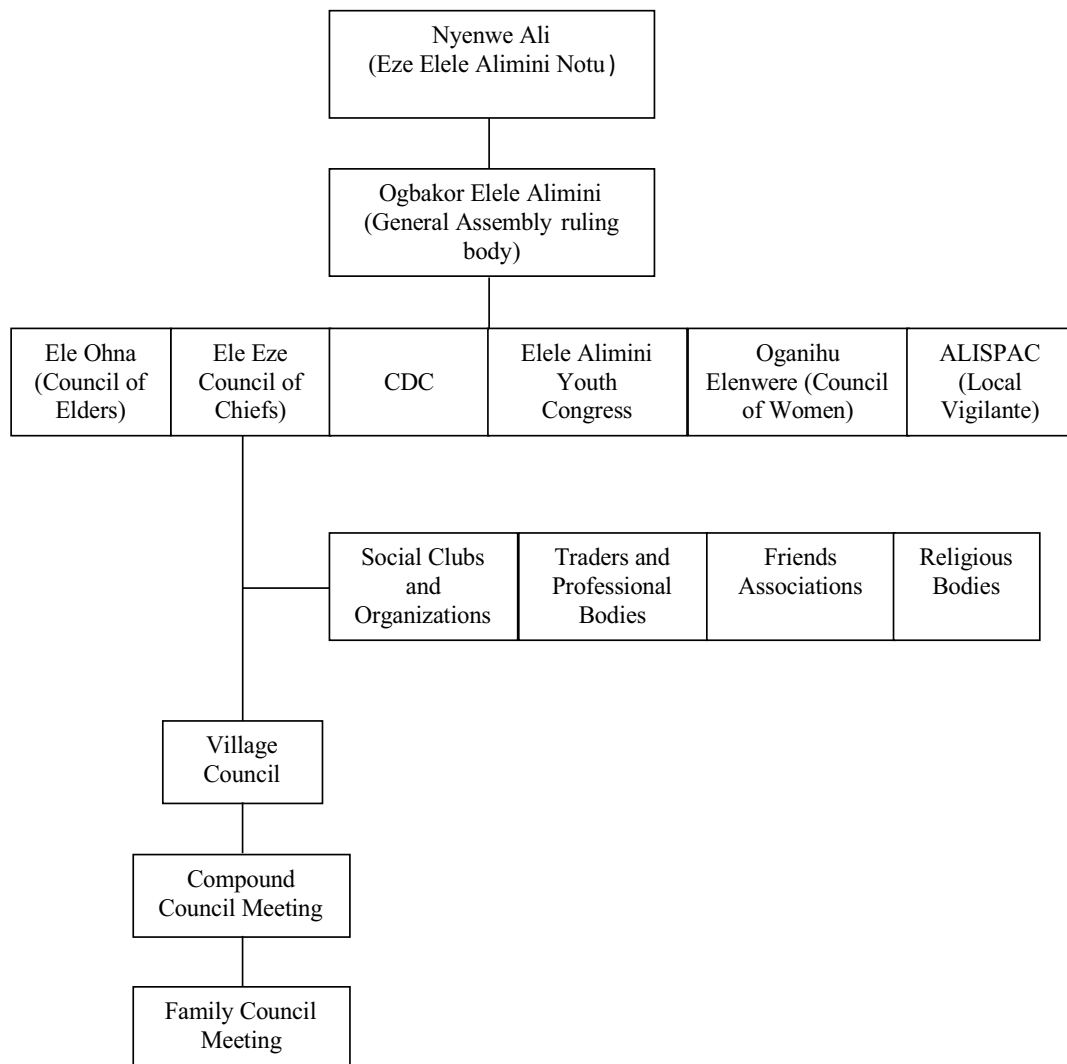
Elele Alimini community is on google map and it is located on latitude 5° 3' 0" north and longitude 6° 44' 0" east. It is bounded in

the East by Elele Okinali, West by Ahoada, North by Akpabu and South by Rundele and Rumuekpe. The town occupies a strategic position in Rivers State as it is the only town in the state crisscrossed by a network of federal, state and local government roads. It could best be described as a "Nodal Town" or "Link Town". The town lies about forty-five minutes drive from Port Harcourt city. The town is a major stopping point for East-West bound travelers. Elele Alimini occupies a total area of about one hundred and twenty-one square kilometers (121km²). The distance from East to West is about ten (10) kilometers, while that from North to South is about twelve (12) kilometers.

The community is estimated to have a population size of about fifty thousand (50,000) people. Out of this number, indigenes make up ninety percent (90%) while non-indigenes account for the rest ten percent (10%). The relative population density in Elele Alimini is about fifty persons per square kilometers. Although, there is dearth of vital statistics, the community's population growth rate is about 7.2%, birth rate is put at 2.2 percent and death rate at 0.5 percent. The town is the commercial melting pot and political heartbeat of Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State with a lot of small scale businesses and industrial outfits. The economy of Elele Alimini community is predominantly agrarian and it has the greatest potential for growth in Emohua and Ikwerre Local Government Areas of Rivers State, Nigeria.

The Socio-Political Structure of Elele Alimini Community

Below is the diagram of the socio-political structure of Elele Alimini.



In terms of the leadership structure of the Ikwerre people, the first settlers of every community are usually the head (Ishi Ali). Customarily, they are entitled to produce the Nyewe Ali which is ceremonially referred to as a "Paramount Ruler" after he must have been recognized by the state government. The Nyewe-Ali of some communities in Ikwerre came from the lineage of the founders of the communities. Example of such communities include: Elele Okiniali, Emohua. Isiokpo, Omerelu, Egbeda, Ibba, Ubima. Aluu, Akpabu, Rumuekini, Akpor, Rumuosi,

Rumuolumeni, Rebisi, Epara, Rumuepirikom, Choba, Ogbakiri, Igwuruta, Woji, Apani, etc. The general Assembly of Ikwerre (Ogbakor Ikwerre) is made up of the "Ohna nu Eze". The Ohna comes first because they are superior to the Eze (Chiefs). In Elele Alimini, the "Ohna" is as old as the community itself, while community Chieftaincy was introduced in 1971.

During the Military Regime when the Ngwele stool of Elele Okiniali was recognized by the Military Government. Elele Okiniali and Elele Alimini which is often referred to as "Omenele converged and signed a memorandum of understanding that the royal stool of Elele Okiniali should be hereditary by Ngwele family in Ogbakiri of Elele Okiniali, while the royal stool of Elele Alimini be hereditary by Omuokpirikwu autonomous community of Elele Alimini. This document was signed by high profiled community Chiefs and Ohnas.

Later in 1991 during the leadership tussle between Elele Alimini Council of Chiefs and Omuogbo people in Omuokpirikwu autonomous community of Elele Alimini, Late Chief James Welekwe came up with the theory of Welekwe Assor of the evolution of the community and presented a relic of Welekwe Assor's royal helmet; one he claimed to have been the only surviving inherited colonial relic. Late Chief James Welekwe further stated before the panel that his forefathers were the first settlers of Elele Alimini. His claims were however debunked by the panel led by Justice E.N.T (retired) of blessed memory, as there was not enough evidence to substantiate the claim.

However, Omuogbo people in Omuokprikwu of Elele Alimini upheld the theory that Elele Alimini migrated from Elele Okiniali in the mid-17th century after a war between Elele Okiniali people and Ekpeye/Ahoda group of people. There were other issues before the panel. In the contest of the Headship of Elele Alimini, the then Chairman, Elele Alimini Council of Chiefs in the person of Chief Boniface Asomeji contested but failed to change the headship of Alimini as the panel stipulated that Omuogbo in Omuokprikwu of Elele Alimini was the first settlers of Elele which should maintain and retain the ancestral home of Elele Alimini and the headship. The issue of Ohna was also resolved in favor of Omuogbo in Omuokprikwu of Elele Alimini. But the panel resolved that there should be a rotation of the chairmanship of Elele Alimini Council of Chiefs (during the time of Chief Boniface Asomeji led administration). Presently, the rotation is still obtainable in the community.

Finally, concerning the issue of Nyewe-Ali Elele Alimini (the royal stool), the panel resolved that Elele Alimini community cannot pronounce ownership of a silent stool but that the Omuogbo people in Omuokprikwu of Elele Alimini must be consulted as the head of the town before anyone is installed as "Nyewe-Ali" of Elele Alimini. This judgment was later entered as a consent judgement before a High Court in Isiokpo in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State, and nobody has appealed this judgement till date. It was this judgement that the Omuogbo people in Omuokprikwu of Elele Alimini relied on to file a contempt proceeding against some members of the Ohnas, who refused to relinquish the Headship of Ohna to Omuogbo people in Omuokprikwu of Elele Alimini in 2022. That contempt proceedings were later resolved out of court and the Ohna returned to Omuogbo people in Omuokprikwu of Elele Alimini.

Nevertheless, the following Ohnas have ruled Elele Alimini from its foundation: Ohna Ogbo - being believed to have been the first settler of Elele Alimini, Ohna Waga. Ohna Anyia, Ohna

Awhua, Ohna Orisa Etchee, Ohna Okwuoma, Ohna Nda Waga. Ohna Yedibia Waga, Ohna Amadi Yedibia, Ohna Ofuru Amadi, Ohna Wonne Amadi, Ohna Ali Amadi, Ohna Assor Agumagu and Ohna John wonne - the 14th Nye Ohna Omuogbor. The Nye Isi Ohna Elele Alimini, is the Nyewe Ali Elele Alimini. In 2005 Ohna Moses Amadi of Ubeaba in Omuokpirikwu autonomous community of Elele Alimini became a "regent" ruler of Elele Alimini. During his reign, Chief Thomas Nguzo was the chairman Elele Alimini Council of Chiefs. It was during the reign of Ohna Moses Amadi that Late Sammy Egbua of Omuse autonomous community of Elele Alimini was appointed the Community Development Committee (CDC) chairman.

The Structure of Kingship in Ikwerre Ethnic Nationality

The implication of the royal stool in Ikwerre ethnicity is that being an Ohna is a prerequisite condition before one can be installed "Nyewe-Ali". This is why:

1. Eze Marcus Woyike - Nyewe Ali Elele Ni Alimini is an Ohna
2. Eze Blessing Wagor - Nyewe Ali Isiokpo is an Ohna
3. Eze Ben Ugo - Nyewe Ali omerelu is an Ohna
4. Eze Chukwuemeka Ordu - Nyewe Ali Akpabu is an Ohna
5. Ohna Sergeant Awuse -Nyewe Ali Emohua is an Ohna
6. Eze Jonah Wobodo Nyewe Ali Ibaa is an Ohna
7. Eze C.N Didia-Nyewe Ali Egbeda is an Ohna. et cetera.

In the case of Elele Alimini, the Nye Isi Ohna (the head of Ohna) is the Nyewe Ali (Royal Highness). Royal Highness is not the name of a stool, but rather a general title given to a government recognized traditional ruler, usually classified as 1st class or 3rd class traditional ruler depending to the size of the community he is superintending. In the same vain, His Royal Majesty is a title given to a government recognized traditional ruler who is classified as first class paramount ruler due to the size of the community he is ruling over or how long his kingdom has existed.

This is the reason why Gbenemene of Ogoni. Amayanabo of Kalabari, Amayanabo of Opobo. Amayanabo of Bonny, Amayanabo of Okrika, Eze Ekpeye Logbo of Ekpeye kingdom, Oba of Ogba Land. Onye Isi Etche, King of Port Harcourt, Nyewe Ali Omenele, Nyewe Ali Emohua. Nyewe Ali Isiokpo, Nyewe Ali Akpor, etc. are addressed as "His Royal Highness" or "His Royal Majesty" according to their classes. It is worthy of note that 60% of these stools are hereditary in accordance with their customs and traditions; it is called a "royal dynasty". In essence, it is the chronicles of rulers from the same lineage.

The Metaphysical and Axiological Assumptions of Elele Alimini Group of People

Our lord Jesus Christ said "my people perish for lack of knowledge" and I believe that. He also went on to say that most of what He was doing, like casting out demons et cetera, that people who had faith could also do that. But I have come to observe that whenever people do something that others cannot understand, they tend to ascribe such to the devil. For example, if a native doctor predicts that it will rain heavily in a week's time and it rains heavily, chances are that people are likely to say he obtained his powers from the devil. But when a meteorologist says it will rain heavily in a week's time, and it rains heavily, the conclusion is usually "oh! he studied it therefore, it is part of science". The question is "what then is the difference"?

The Jews believed in reincarnation, our Lord, Jesus Christ Himself was born in their midst. All the African countries believe in reincarnation. It is not a phenomenon that one can dismiss with a wave of the hand. However, it is difficult to establish whether it exist or not. Many people believe that what we don't understand are purely elevated forms of arts, but I prefer to refer to it as "the esoteric arts".

For example, there is something called "telekinesis" you concentrate on an object and you will make it to move in the direction you want. That is telekinesis. There is something called "psychometrics" you place your hand over an object, you pick up the vibrations left by the person who used it previously, and by that you can tell his character. There is another called "levitation"-To rise or make something rise to the air at a level of spiritual development. And if you are keen on communicating with the dead, it is called "necromancy". You can go to the graveyard and summon the spirit of the dead. You summon the spirit and it gets i into a medium and begins to communicate to all of you through that medium but with the voice of the dead person. We even have the "tarot card". You can look at the tarot card and tell whether two people can succeed as husband and wife if they are in love. There are so many things we don't understand which I would like us to take pains to study and understand so that we don't just dismiss them as being authored by the devil. This should be treated without compulsive profundity. Anything we do not understand must not be ascribed to the devil (Joseph. 2023).

Over the years, the religious philosophy and the belief of the people of Elele Alimini has been anchored on African Traditional Religion. Currently, it is not prevalent as it used to, due to the emergence or the introduction of Christianity by the Mongolians and Caucasians who still discriminate against black people in their respective countries till date. In those days in Elele Alimini, there was a cherry tree called "Oda Yegburu Nkposi". If anyone kilis any innocent soul in secret, the gods of the land will torment him/her until he or she will go and hang himself in that tree and be exposed. It was believed that this tree also protected the natives of the community from dying in any form of accident no matter how fatal it may be. The said tree was situated beside State School II field, Elele Alimini. It was however cut down during the construction of Ahoada/Elele express way in the 1977 (Oral source).

There was also a sword of Justice called "Akpajaja Obua Wor-Obeme" that prevented evil or calamity from befalling the people of Elele Alimini. That explained why Elele Alimini people have never experienced any form of communal war from her foundation till date. This sword appears once every 21 years at "Ahiaezi Nda Waka" (Elele Alimini Old Market Square) and only visible to virgins from the community. There used to be a tradition called "Honuri". This traditional ritual protects the natives from snake bites, scorpion sting and also prevents the people from being stung by bees. During this festival, a ritual is usually performed in the four corners of Elele Alimini, i.e. the boundaries between Elele Okiniali, Ndele, Ahoade/Ekpeye and Akpabu community and it is usually carried out by a woman from Omuokpirikwu Autonomous Community of Elele Alimini. There is another tradition called "Mkpakankpa" (local autopsy). This tradition or ritual settles issues arising from controversial deaths, and it is also a time when the innocence of a deceased is proven.

During this process, the corps is usually laid in state inside the house. The leaf base of a palm tree will be cut into two equal part of about 1.9 meters. They are tied up together with a wrapper of the

deceased. The tying of this object (Mkpakankpa) must be done outside the compound by experienced men. It must also be done on top of a locally made mat. After tying the object (Mkpakankpa), a woman from the deceased's family takes the object in and places it beside the dead body. After about an hour, it is believed that the spirit of the deceased is transferred into the object (Mkpakankpa). Two able bodied men will be stationed outside to carry the Mkpakankpa on their heads from both edge of the object. These men must be on bare foot and bare body before lifting the object (Mkpakankpa) to their heads. As soon as this is done, both of them become possessed by the spirit of the deceased and the one in the front become the actual reflection of the deceased. Philosophically, this act is called necromancy.

There are other rigorous and inexplicable rituals that are performed during this exercise that may not be discussed in this paper. However, when these men are fully possessed by the spirit of the deceased, they will be placed under oath by the custodian of the traditional staff of authority (Ohwor). Thereafter the medium for communicating with the deceased is set. A member of the diseased family or his friend can now begin to communicate with the deceased by asking him leading questions about his death through the medium (Mkpakankpa). The completion of this ritual rite determines whether the deceased will be buried in the evil forest or in his/her compound. Usually, those who are guilty are buried in the evil forest, while the innocent ones are buried in their compound. This tradition is still prevalent even in most communities in Emohua and Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

There is also a yearly festival called "Hozuzu" (new yam festival). In Elele Alimini, this tradition is proclaimed, fixed and announced by the following families according to seniority: Omuogbo in Omuokpirikwu Autonomous Community of Elele Alimini and Omuorluma in Omuorihuru Autonomous Community of Elele Alimini. The festival usually lasts for 3 weeks, between the month of August and September. This festival comes with other ritual rites such as "Ishi Ehi" (test of manhood), "Ute" (wrestling context) and "Otiti Aka". Otiti Aka is usually done in the community's various "Nkwata" (mini shrine).

Today, most of these traditions have been neglected, rebelled and desecrated by some prominent sons and daughters of the community who claim to be religious bigots but still welcome and enjoy the invitations of their friends outside the community for their various traditional festivals across the country. It is easy to damage but difficult to repair. It is quite regrettable that parents no longer teach their children their history that would have enabled them reflect on the philosophy of their community. Children are no longer encouraged to reflect on the effort of their heroes who fought for the existence and settlement of their own community (Wahab, 2011).

Conclusion

Centuries before civilization, the people of Elele Alimini have lived their lives based upon their traditional values. Their entire life was governed by the conviction that it is right to be honest, straightforward and sympathetic to the plight of others. They believed that people are respected by the wealth of their virtue and not by virtue of their wealth. Today, these values that were once held dear have been set aside in preference for things that are foreign and inimical to the tenets of the society. Those desirable behaviors and attitudes which were treasured in the past are no longer treasured nowadays. People are no more custodians of moral virtues, in fact, the few individuals who attempt to keep strictly to our moral virtues are seen as oddity. Values have

changed and the yardsticks for measuring these values have also changed.

Generally speaking, moral virtues are greatly diminishing among youths and adults in Nigeria and Africa at large. Today, vices have come to replace virtues (moral virtues), that is, they are taken to be the principles and standards desirable. These social vices which have eaten deep into the morals as of our society and threatened her very foundations and unity include dishonesty, intolerance, stealing, corruption, armed robbery, murder, rape, disrespect for other people's lives and opinions, assassination, kidnapping, ritual killings, adultery, fornication, creeping incidence of homosexuality and lesbianism, to mention but a few. There is however, a tenacious call for a revival of our morals, values and culture. Parents should also endeavor to teach their children their history to enable them appreciate the efforts of their ancestors instead of demonizing them. Culture is one's identity and it makes a set of people unique. It is senseless to destroy what ones' forefathers have fought for and kept sacred for over 300 years or more. It is also worthy of note that it is not only Christians that will see the Almighty God. There are Traditionalists, Muslims, Judaists, Hindus, Shintos and the rest of them and they all serve their God in their own way.

Way forward

What then is the way forward? For us as Africans to produce a modern African Philosophy that reflects African worldview, the task of conceptual decolonization is imperative. Therefore:

1. We must endeavor to decolonize some concepts in our society such as: education, morality, evil and the mind.
2. Parents/Teachers should tell their children the true stories of their people in their native language using African forms, as this will help the future generation to learn and know more about their history, and the true traditions that existed.
3. We must direct our developmental searchlight to our own philosophy, if not the Western worldview will continue to subsume our worldview.
4. We must look inwards to see the riches embedded in our cultural heritage and belief system, and see how we can harness indigenous resources available to us in cultivating our philosophical underpinnings so as to paint the correct picture and bring out the real interpretation of African conceptual scheme.

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