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REFLECTING ON B.A.C. OBIEFUNA'S PHILOSOPHIC MAXIM, "Í NÉÉ ÁNYĀ, NÈÉ ÁNYĀ, Ì NÉÉ ÁNYĀ": BEYOND THE IMMEDIACY OF LIVING AND DECIDING

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Abstract

The work is a reflection on B.A.C. Obiefuna's maxim, "Í néé anyā, nèé anyā, ì néé anyā," casting a second three-fold look, a principled philosophy, for living and deciding. The method of hermeneutics is employed. The work premises Obiefuna's principled philosophy on the understanding that the realization and fulfilment of being is the fruit of decision. Yet this realization is as mitsein, a being-with in which the other is considered an essential component of the individual's being. The metaphor comes to the writer as reflective of the dynamism that is in sync with the nature of being and existence, namely the dynamics of the self and the other, the interplay of life as 'workfulness' and life as playfulness, the dynamics of life and valued principles; the dynamics of immediacy and future reference; the dynamics of the historical and the transcendental; the dynamics of fragmented existence and comprehensiveness. The work argues for the imperative of its application. In doing this, it considers the onto-existential conditions of man who decides. In many cases, these can limit, distort, depreciate, and vitiate human decisions. Among these conditions are prejudice as conditioning the direction of decision and interpretation; the grasp of reality as perspectival; the possibility of Pyrrhic victory and its dangers; and the alluring nature of instinct of self-preservation, which disposes one to self-interest as dominant canon. A critical consideration of all these highlights the necessity of Obiefuna's maxim for living and deciding. The work, while observing that the principled philosophy may come to some as simply 'looking the other way', insists that the principled philosophy in order not to degenerate to looking the other way in deceitful diplomacy, a consequence of obi aghugho (manipulative, deceitful mindset), must be grounded on muo eziokwu (truth-seeking) and obinwanne (vicarious fellow-feeling). In this way, the immediacy of living and deciding is framed within a totality that ensures ultimate and authentic legitimization.

Introduction

The idea of living and deciding immediately spells the nature of being of concern as intelligent and free. One of the basic acts of intelligent and free being is decision. Man's decision is tied to the nature of his being. The realization and fulfillment of being is the fruit of decision. This comes close to what Martin Heidegger (1962) refers to as existentiality as basic trait of Dasein. This highlights that man has a native ability to create himself or make himself what he wants to become. This is the ability to recreate or reconstitute the world as he deems fit and the ability to transcend the present state of affairs and project himself into the future. This is about choice that is predicated on freedom and knowledge. At every given time, this being decides. And even not to decide is also decision. Indecision is decision not to decide. Being becomes and what an intelligent being becomes is mainly the fruit of decision. To decide is a combination of the prefix "de" (off or down) and "caedere" (to cut or strike). This literally means 'to cut off', 'to strike down'. Thus, decision involves slicing through alternatives, lopping off the unwanted ones. It means killing one idea so another idea can live. That's literally what 'de-cide' means. Forgoing one alternative over another; choosing a path or the other. And because my decision is tied to the nature of being and its



realization, my decisions must be evaluated based on how they lead to fulfillment of being or away from it. But because the path to this fulfillment is not an isolated path, (human) being, being ontologically *mitsein*, being-with and being-in-the world, his decision cannot dismiss its implication for the world and other beings with whom he shares the world. The other is not incidental to the being of an individual but essential to his being and becoming, and realization of being. Every being serves as a missing link of reality. The evaluation of decision must hinge on the analysis of man to understand the nature of man's living and decisions. There are already the fruits of research of scholars in the existentialist and hermeneutical traditions to rely on in such analysis. Decision, as noted already, has to do with alternatives and choice of path. The question is what framework provides the grounds for the slicing off of some ideas, or combination of some ideas. What values, interests inform decision? These questions are some of the reasons life and decisions must go beyond the immediacy of the circumstance and require some level of cautious and dynamic reflectivity for the realization of being in which the individual, the other, the historical as well as the transcendental must be taken into account.

Í nées ányā, nées ányā, ì nées ányā: The Metaphor of the Triple Casting of the Eye

The questions raised already and the connection of decision to life and the fulfillment of being with its consequences for the other demand that living and deciding be critically approached. Of course, this is not in any way to be all too serious about life. Such disposition can rob life of its taste and attraction. Yet life itself is a serious endeavour even at the playful and light moments. Life consists in interplay between workfulness and playfulness. That's what makes for the richness of existence. Obiefuna's metaphor is a realization of this dynamics. It is both a realization of the 'give and take' in the play of life as it is a realization of the seriousness of life that demands a reflective approach. This dynamics keeps a balance between spineless complacency and morbid rigidity. It is also a realization of the dynamics of the self and the other, the dynamics of the praxis and valued principles, the dynamics of immediacy and future reference, the dynamics of independence and comprehensiveness.

This dynamism is evident in the manner in which Obiefuna draws the metaphor in speech. The poetic rendering and rhythmic manner of presentation speaks to this dynamism: *I nee anya, neee anya, I neeee anya*. The first phrase "*I nee ányā*" is such that it resonates with the normal Igbo rendering of 'looking' under normal circumstances. However, as part of the rhythmic flow, it looks like a suspension awaiting completion. This speaks of a certain need of especially important decisions to be thought through once again. The second "*neee ányā*" is not the usual rendering but it is known to be the same eye but it is done as to deliberately show casting a second look with some keen attention and particular considerations. The slow and measured cadence indicates this intentionality towards keenness. The third, "*I neeee ányā*" appears like the musical grand cadence especially given the slower flow of the rhythm. So the second and the last provide the completion of the suspension in the first and the slow and measured flow highlight that it is intentional and it is intentional because living and deciding can be complex and being can be concealing.

The last, should not be read to mean really the last in all circumstances. The three simply stand for taking a second look at life and our decision. It is only the last within the sequence of the phrases employed by Obiefuna. Thus, it must be read simply as invitation to retake a look without any attachment to any number. Living and deciding become richer when one goes beyond the moment and immediacy. Living and deciding are richer when

the dynamics of life as enunciated above is considered and appreciated; they are richer when it is geared toward comprehensiveness. They are richer because it considers more components and realities. It is richer because it is not left in the moment's immediacy; they are richer because it considers the future and transcendental. They are richer because of their openness to becoming and revision; They are richer because they recognise the dynamism between playfulness and 'workfulness', between self and the other in an intentional critical and understanding exchange that leads to the fulfilment and realisation of being.

The metaphor of the triple casting of the eye becomes expedient because of the condition of the being that decides and because of the issues around the decision itself and life. Among these conditions are the fact of prejudice as conditioning the direction of decision and interpretation; the fact that truth and falsehood can be found in unlikely places; the grasp of reality as perspectival, the possibility of Pyrrhic victory and its dangers, the alluring nature of instinct of self-preservation which disposes one to self-interest as dominant canon. These can sometimes becloud, distort and impoverish our judgments and, ultimately, the quality of decisions and life. These are highlighted and explained subsequently in the bid to justify the application of Obiefuna's metaphor and the need for the appreciation of dynamism and cautious reflectivity that the metaphor entails.

Prejudice and Cognitive Bias in the Approach to Reality

Martin Heidegger's temporal analysis of human existence led Hans-Georg Gadamer to argue for a historically affected consciousness embedded in the particular history and culture that shaped them. This way, Gadamer argues against modern approaches to humanities that modelled themselves on the natural sciences which lay claim to pure objectivity. According to Gadamer, every act of understanding betrays this historical consciousness. Thus, our approach to reality is always preceded by pre-understanding, prejudgment, prejudice established by this historical stream. These prejudices provide ground for further experience of reality. In practical terms, they shape our judgments of who we want to be and the type of society in which we want to thrive. Much as our prejudices provide ground for further experience, there is no doubt that they condition it as they limit our further engagement with reality. This is why the scope of our horizon must continually be expanded for a better appreciation of reality. We must, therefore, be wary of our prejudices and seek to widen our horizons. This is the whole intent of Obiefuna's principled philosophy of "*Í nées ányā, nées ányā, ì nées ányā.*" The danger in prejudice is the comfort it gives the subject as a conquered ambience. If we relax in it, we may find ourselves being limited all the more instead of questioning them and expanding the horizon. Moreover, Gadamer (1975, 263ff) distinguishes between productive and unproductive prejudices. While I do not follow such scholars as Descartes, Leibniz, and Locke in total rejection of prejudice, it is a thing to be worried about as unproductive prejudices can lead to errors in reasoning and judgment. These must be eliminated to allow efficient fusion of horizons. Cognitive psychology has identified some typology of cognitive biases that distort thinking, negatively influence decisions, impair decisions and sways our judgments (See Cherry, 2024). The danger is that they could sometimes be subtle. Part of this is that attention is a limited resource, and so we are given to relying on mental shortcuts for speedy decision-making and judgment. We, as a result, fall for these cognitive biases. I have taken time to list some of them, attaching minor explanations just for the purposes of drawing the reader's attention to them:



- Confirmation Bias highlights the tendency to listen and favour information and ideas that confirm and reinforce held beliefs.
- Hindsight Bias, which refers to the tendency and overestimation of our ability to decipher the predictability of events than they are, in common parlance it is an “I knew it all along” phenomenon
- Anchoring Bias is the tendency to be overly influenced by the first piece of information we hear.
- The Misinformation Effect is the tendency for memories to be heavily influenced by things that happened after the actual event itself, though people still believe that their recollection is crystal clear.
- False Consensus Effect, which refers to the tendency to overestimate how much people agree with one’s beliefs, behaviours, attitudes and values.
- Halo Effect, which is the tendency for an initial impression of a person to influence what we think of them overall
- Self-serving Bias, which refers to the tendency where people tend to give themselves credit for successes while failures are blamed on others such as people, circumstances, bad luck
- Availability Heuristic, which is the tendency to estimate the probability of something happening based on the many examples available to us, such as when one thinks that, given the several news reports about kidnapping, one can believe the crime as being more common than it is.
- Optimism Bias, which is the tendency to overestimate the likelihood that good things will happen while underestimating the impact that negative events will have on our lives.
- *Statusquo* Bias, which refers to the desire to keep things as they are
- Framing, which is the presentation of a situation in a way that gives a certain impression.

The call for the triple casting of the eye is thus a call towards critical consciousness into our world as we live and decide to come nearer to reality. It is a call to awareness of our ontological dependence on prejudices, which can also limit our experience of reality as well as cause error in judgment and decision, especially in the case of Gadamer’s unproductive prejudices and the likes of cognitive biases listed above. This may be part of the reason for Edmund Husserl’s (1965, 1982) position on phenomenological reduction in approach to the *lebenswelt* where in the transcendental ego makes possible the intuiting of essences as the mind goes to the thing without any hindrance, a move that is encapsulated in Husserl’s philosophical battle cry given apprehending reality, “to the things themselves.” Husserl’s advocacy of bracketing is about looking at a situation and refraining from judgment and biased opinions to wholly understand an experience. This is about stripping assumptions and connotations about an object. Well, it does seem that no matter how hard Husserl tries in his phenomenological *epoché*, this bias would always remain an ontological feature of man. This section highlights the need for self-revision in all spheres and always. This highlights the necessity of caution, criticality, and reflectivity that is geared unto comprehensiveness, all of which are the intendment of the metaphor of the present study.

Truth can be Found in Unlikely Places: Falsehood can also be found in Unlikely Places

That truth and falsehood can be found in unlikely places are one of the discoveries that can be made when one takes time to cast a second look at one's encounters and experiences: stories and tales one hears, the loud suggestions of those close by, testimonies given, accounts confidently given, miracles projected, a side of story of one of the pairs in a duel. Sometimes, truth could be found in silence, where it seems to have been covered by some insincere sycophantic shouts or malicious complaints. Sometimes, lies thrive under the apparel of trust. Sometimes, the truth can be buried because of hate. Those tears can be crocodile tears! This is the truth about human beings who can be ambivalent. They never cease to pull surprises. Hate can lurk in charming smiles, and love can also be unexpressed in that haggard and serious facial appearance; Pull him down syndrome can be nurtured in friendships. The bosom friend can be the architect of the Ides of March; Reality is not always in their appearance; glittering is not always the exclusive preserve of gold: the imitation can glitter also; that mouth-watering offer, the spectacular gain can be a Greek gift that can destroy you. All these call for vigilance: *Okukọ na-akpa nri, anya uhie akọkwana ya! Sometimes, anya mmanwụ anaghị adị ebe akpọpuru ya.*

It takes one intentional about casting a second look at their experience not to fall victim to these negative realities of life. One falls victim to these because of forgetfulness of the ambivalence of human reality and condition, because of cognitive biases already enunciated above, or maybe because of some level of ignorance of these conditions. Sometimes, one must listen to one's gut feelings to discover, or sometimes, the rational element may have to be activated to avoid the existential surprises these can pull on someone. Whatever, the watchword is vigilance, which is implicated in Obiefuna's principled philosophy. With this vigilance, one must meet one's experience of people and issues. This is even all the more when one is in a position of authority where one has many sycophants who could insulate him from the really real in such a way that reality for him is a sieved reality, reality from the point of view of the sycophants, from the point of view of the interest of his lieutenants. What has been shown above looks like casting a vote of no confidence on trust. It is not. One cannot even do without trusting the other, but trust makes the party concerned vulnerable. One has only to be aware of this while trusting. One has to be mindful of the ambivalence of the human condition. Thus, one has to have carefully weighed matters even before trusting. One cannot take for granted that the truism of appearance does not always convey reality. Both trust and this truism are part of the realities of life, and so must always be considered.

Grasping of Reality as Perspectival: The Metaphor of *Agwọ Otu Onye Hụrụ!*

The metaphor of triple casting of the eye operates on recognising that reality is rich and complex. It is always like the proverbial elephant and the blind men, which each describes in terms of the aspect of touch. This is in no way legitimising relativism or rejecting the absolute truth. The point is that our relation to reality can never be exhaustive. It is always from a standpoint, it is always perspectival. The danger is in being perspectival and exclusivist at the same time. That would be a degeneration to absolutism that closes itself to reality's richness. Man can thus be brutal in his decision. One can only recall the absoluteness with which Hegel posited his idea of absolute spirit and its negative impact on the world, the boomerang effect of the Nazi ideology, the failure of Nietzsche's superman, the Igbo proverbial '*eze onye agwana m*' all of which show the need for recognition of

perspectives and need to aspire towards comprehensiveness. In the refusal to submit to the comprehensiveness of its determination, insisting on the one singular approach to reality, the human mind becomes hegemonic, domineering as it rejects the principle of live and let live, a situation that sets the world on fire, decimates relations and ruins the integrity of the society. One also destroys oneself for “*Ijiji enweghi onye ndumọdu na-esọ ozu ana n’ini.*” (the fly without any counsel follows the corpse to the grave).

Obiefuna’s principled maxim seeks the integration of perspectives to consider reality from various points of view, angles, and standpoints. It is always a richer experience than from a perspective. Of course, a consideration of all perspectives could both be tiring and an impossible venture. Here, the theory of bounded rationality as a limiting factor in decision-making comes to mind. This theory is found more within the context of economics. Yet, it is indicative of the ontological and existential finitude of the human being. Bounded rationality is opposed to the perfect rationality thesis. It expresses the idea of the non-rational dimension of human decisions, which is engendered due to man’s existential limits, such as cognitive ability, time constraints, insufficient information, and information overload. Given all these, one lacks the capacity to understand all the information fully. Awareness of these constraints is essential, especially in matters of utmost importance and where they affect others. What is the critical thing here is openness to perspectives. Nietzsche, though it seems he speaks from the ethical stance instead of the epistemological stance in this sense, opines that all viewing is attached to some perspective and all viewers, in some sense, are limited to the perspectives at their command. In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche (1887, III:12) calls out what he refers to as dangerous old conceptual fiction of pure reason, absolute spirituality, and knowledge in itself; according to him, this would mean calling on an inexistent eye that turns in no particular direction as well as to demand of the eye an absurdity and nonsense. Accordingly, he writes, “There is only a perspective seeing, only a perspective knowing; and the more affects we allow to speak about one thing, the more eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our ‘concept’ of ...our ‘objectivity’ be.” Ortega (Kern, 2003, 151) shares this perspectival approach to reality and maintains that perspective is perfected by multiplying its viewpoints. According to him, a lack of perspective and failure to see the larger contexts of the actions have led to conflicts and wars among nations. This demands casting a second look and the need for consultation. This is all that the Igbo tries to conceptualise in the proverb, *agwo otu onye huru aghaghi igho eke*. This points to the limiting, yes, the distorting power of a point of view, a single story excluding the others. Such distortion occurs where there is no attempt to root fragmented existence within the wholeness of the totality.

The Luring Nature of Instinct of Self-Preservation and Self-Interest

The mind tends to exclude and polarise between those closer to me and those not close. This is most often founded on the natural instinct of self-preservation. Unfortunately, this instinct could become untamed, destroying most of our decisions. How the mind manages this instinct has an effect on the quality of decisions a person makes. The instinct of self-preservation is practically embodied in our desire to excel over others, in various instantiations of existential oedipal complex, securing private interests. There is nothing inherently problematic about these. But it certainly becomes problematic when polarisation sets in, resulting in the total exclusion of others. How the mind manages this instinct with respect to differences is most often influenced by the kind of ontology that informs the

education that one has and the nature of socialisation available to the person. For instance, the Hegelian theory of absolute Spirit reinforces this polarisation between those at the lower rung of evolution and those at the higher rung. This bifurcation of reality was already seen in the Aristotelian hierarchical distinction between substance and accident, which must be thought of about substance to which they are, of course, accident. The problem of this form of ontology is its “inherently dualistic, intolerant, and elitist polarizing tendencies.” This model of conceptualizing reality could elicit some form of mindset in which the self is assumed to be self-sufficient while the other is placed at the periphery where those different from us are considered as merely accidents whose interests can be marginally attended to. In this way our decisions would focus excessively on ourselves and those close to us, creating more living space for ourselves sometimes even to the extent of having almost everything for ourselves.

A cautionary reflectivity advocated by Obiefuna’s principled maxim would discover that such way of life supposing it is brought into the Kantian categorical imperative will certainly be the undoing of private interests and the self which one strives to instinctively preserve. When the canon of self-interest is the dominant canon for all, it will be an unfortunate invitation to survival of the fittest and a fall back to the Hobbesian state of nature which is nasty, brutish and short. Innocent Asouzu (2003,p.5) writing on the ambivalence of human interest notes that sometimes the eagerness to secure our interest can be misleading because many a time, we are made to believe that they are what they are not. This unmitigated pursuit to secure our interest has the potency to distort our perception of reality and could lead to the eclipse of natural justice and fair play especially when one finds oneself in asymmetrical position of power. When a decision is made from this unrestricted self-interest, which because of its appeal and inclination more to our instinct we could get blinded and the consequences could be tragic. The thought of limited resources we have got to share with others as well as the thought of our limitations, added to the thought that our wellbeing and survival are in many cases dependent on our ability to secure our interest with the uncertainties that surround our existence may make us to be blinded to the fact that our pursuit of self-interest is faulty while leading to jettisoning the age-old of demand of live and let live. Yet, it is this just demand that makes possible peaceful co-existence and survival within any human society. It is what common sense orders.

For my personal interest to be fully secure, it must take care of the collective interest. The instinct must open itself to this logic otherwise everything including the self crumbles. So the question for the deciding being is whether the interest in the decision considers the collective interests, genuine we-feeling and ultimately the common good. The Igbo name “*sọ mụ adịna*” captures this because the canon of “*ka sọ mụ dī*” is inimical to the existence and wellbeing of “mụ” unless it yields itself to the ontological precondition, the common good which provides the ultimate legitimizing and authenticating foundation for all personal interests. (Asouzu, 2007, p.8) Besides, being does not know itself only in its particularity, it is known as *mitsein* and so the self must be factored in its connection with other beings. The being that is man is always being in communication, being in community. Heidegger (1962)’s way of characterizing Dasein is that it is being in the world. And here man discovers that he is not a lone ranger but that his being is inextricably connected with the world. One of the things he discovers is that the world is a world of beings with whom he shares the world. If the world is basic and primary to his existence and if his existence is

intertwined with other existents, which are not incidental to his being, then his being and his acts must take these into consideration because his realization of being is tied to these.

Living, Deciding and Pyrrhic (Hollow) Victory: *Anaghị aghọcha ukpaka ihe o mịrị*

In the military mental model, Pyrrhic victory refers to winning a battle but losing the war. It is about sustaining a larger defeat while trying to achieve a minor victory or gaining a small tactical advantage corresponding to a broader and catastrophic disadvantage. The Igbo adage that *onye ghotachaa ukpaka ya ihe o mịrị, O bughị ụzọ o siri rigo ka o ga-esi ritu*. Thus, sometimes “*Í nées ányā, nées ányà, ì nées ányà*” may demand from us “*enebe aghara*” It is a grand strategy to use Robert Greene (2000)’s expression of looking beyond the present battle and calculating ahead without losing focus on the larger picture. This simply means that we cannot pick fights over everything, and at every instance otherwise, we become dissipated and crash. Sometimes, we can deliberately lose, given a greater picture. We must know when to stop and when to retreat, avoid the sunk cost fallacy, which is about the idea that the more we invest in something, the harder it is to let go.

The name Pyrrhic victory is named after the Greek king Pyrrhus of Epirus. Pyrrhus’ army defeated the Romans in two major battles between 280 and 279 BC. Pyrrhus went into Italy with 25000 men and 20 elephants, confident of extending his empire. The number of lives lost unfortunately made the victory hollow and meaningless. He had no potential recruits to replenish his army; he had lost most of his men, including the majority of his friends and commanders. Meanwhile the Romans who were enraged vowed to continue fighting. Pyrrhus was forced to sail back to Greece with his remaining troops. Pyrrhic victory is said to be a victory that “inflicts such a devastating toll on the victor that it is tantamount to defeat.” This comes in the form of an enormous number of casualties, wasting of resources, high financial costs. In the recent times, Vietnam War, Gulf war, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq for instance can be considered a Pyrrhic victory for the United States and the psychological impact of the war remains even till today. These led to the destabilization of the entire region and the rise of more extremist groups, like ISIS. Besides the psychological impact of the war on United States remain today as it questions their claim to supremacy of power.

The point is that Pyrrhic victories in living and deciding must be avoided. It is not cowardice; it is rather wisdom. Thus, it must be in terms of opportunity cost, measured in the light of the hierarchy of values. For instance, being engulfed in one’s business to the detriment of quality time with family could make one feel alienated from the family and distanced. That would be to win the business battle, but it seems it will take a toll on the war of life. Thus as one wars in life, one must endeavor to go beyond the minutiae to seeing the big picture, this will help to know when to give up, to surrender, to withdraw as well as to insist. We might win an argument with a partner over a minor infraction only to come across as hostile and damage the relationship. Short-term professional goals may be achieved by working overtime to harm one’s health and reduce long-term productivity; one may pursue a particular career for money only to feel unfulfilled and miserable. Thus, while Pyrrhic victory can be attractive, it is only for the short term, for it has long-lasting negative consequences, gross collateral damage, human costs, resource costs, and psychological costs, all of which damage morale. Pyrrhic victories can be avoided, especially when one begins to prioritise one’s values and consider alternatives, reframing one’s definition of success in a more meaningful and sustainable way. One must consider the trade-offs in every



decision to avoid the unwholesome experience. This consideration must go beyond the canon of self-interest to include the other who also constitute my world and who is an end itself, not a means.

What has been said here may seem a choice of consequentialist or teleological ethics, which tinkers with the result over deontology, which considers the action itself. This is far from a choice; instead, it is a caution to overhaul an action by looking at the action, its consequences, and the opportunity cost. There could be occasions when the action warrants that all may be lost because it is premised on higher values and morals: “*A gaghi eji mgbagbu wee ghara ogu.*” (the possibility of being killed should not make one shy away from a fight). The point about Pyrrhic victory is that the action itself is not worth the collateral damage. If it is worth the damage, why not? It is not a straitjacket thing that can be exhaustively handled in a short piece like this. It is nevertheless a consideration of the dynamics of principled values and context.

Í nées ányā, nées ányà, ì nées ányà: Looking the other way?

Our previous discussion shows that the metaphor of triple casting of the eye sometimes encourages compromise. Compromise is a concept consisting of differing and often conflicting definitions and value valences depending on contexts and settings. This is why the ethics of compromise considers when it is good to compromise and when it is wrong to compromise. It may be necessary for relationships to compromise while considering the needs and interests of the other. We give up something for the sake of something else we value which is beyond the issue or dispute at present, such as the relationship which one shares with another. The recognition of the other as “a sentient, rights-bearing human being who should be listened to, respected, and from whom we might learn something and have our views and, yes, principles, modified” has been adjudged as a justification for compromise. (Carrie, 2016) This marks reciprocity and fellow feeling as the basic feature of the ethics of compromise with the concerns of sharing, consent and fairness, especially in the instance of scarce resources lacking a clear, fair, just or accurate allocation formula. Some scholars would insist that when interests or conflicts are not equally legitimate, compromise is impossible, unethical, or immoral. Thus, an effort to bring at par incommensurables in order to forge an agreement is considered an unethical compromise. In the same vein, compromises that occasion grave harm, cruelty, and inhumane consequences have been evaluated as wrong. It may, however, be added that expediency may demand that one concede to some level of damage and discomfort. One has to be alive first before fighting on. Every situation may require some unique response and concessions. Conversely, giving up pure principle and commitment to truth that connotes moral weakness or lack of integrity are considered wrong philosophically and ethically. These define what one believes in, and these constitute who we are. They touch on integrity: *Ezi afa ka ego!* (Integrity is of higher value than wealth). Some may, however, argue that sometimes, for the sake of expediency and given that there is no choice in some cases, one may have to live with an unethical compromise. It may be essential to point out that those who live and die by principle are valued and respected rather than those who live because of unethical compromising of valued principles.

The element of compromise may, however, come to some as looking the other way, which is marked by deliberately overlooking wrongdoing by others even when one ought to speak up. Sometimes, it is done because of what one intends to gain or for fear of favour

one might lose for speaking up. This would mean pitching a tent with values in the lower rung over higher values such as justice, fairness, etc. To do so would be to live against the Igbo moral demand to the effect that ‘*okenye anaghị anọ n’ụlọ ewu amụọ n’ogbiri.*’ For a goat to give birth while tethered is *alụ* (abomination) in Igbo traditional culture. This immediately deviates from the motif of the metaphor of triple casting of the eye, which is done in recognition of the truth, what the Igbo refer to as *mụọ eziokwu*. If this is not the motivating force, then it becomes looking the other way in treachery, *obi aghugho*, which having no transcendental reference, lacking in fellow-feeling while treating the other in the form of Martin Buber’s I-It relationship, is ruled by canon of self-interest and instinct of self-preservation. Couched in the sophistry of smartness and craftiness, it is simply about propensity to cheat, exploit, denigrate and subjugate all in the interest of the self. It lacks fellow feeling. For Asouzu (2007), this mindset is countered by what he refers to as *mụọ eziokwu*, a totalising mindset emblematic in *obi oha*, which is a complementary mindset that operates in “the region of the mutual experience of transcendent complementary unity of consciousness. This experience is concretely felt in *obinwanne* (vicarious feeling of compassion) that does not look the other way in matters that affect the other: *Onurū ube nwanne agbala ọsọ* (One should not pay deaf ear to the cry of one’s brother). Thus, a person with such kind of *obi oha* that manifests in *obinwanne* guided by *mụọ eziokwu* cannot read into Obiefuna’s “*inee anya, nee anya, inee anya*” the degenerate form of ‘looking the other way.’

Conclusion

The metaphor of triple cast of the eye remains therefore a principled philosophy of living and deciding. The onto-existential limits of a man marked by the facticity of prejudice, the perspectival character of man’s grasp of reality, the tendency of the instinct of self-preservation and self-interest to be transformed into the dominant canon for action, the lurking danger of Pyrrhic victory and its lurking danger, all make it imperative for the application of the triple casting of the eye. The dynamism which Obiefuna’s principled philosophy of living and deciding projects and the comprehensiveness which it aims at marks it out as something other than looking the other way. In the principle of “*Í néé ányā, néé ányā, ì néé ányā,*” fragmented moments of existence and the immediacy of living and deciding are framed within a totality that makes for ultimate and authentic legitimization.

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