**HEMENEUTICES IN AFRIAN TRADITION, IS IT WORTH THE TROUBLE BY BRUCE’**

As a case study, hermeneutics which could be simply understood as “interpretation” and is also the key word to it. Bruce highlighted the problem of hermeneutics, seeing it as a misunderstanding that has its roots in German thought, proving that African philosophy exists as a challenge to counter the western thought, he argued that hermeneutics is indeed worth the trouble in the context of Africa in which he analyzed the view of some philosophers such as Theophilus okere, Tsenay serequeberhan and Raphael Okechukuu madu.

Hermeneutics as cultural archeology: theophilius okere who appropriates hermeneutics by arguing that all philosophies most spring from and deal with non-philosophy. That hermeneutic philosophy is both the interpretative tool and the result of mediating and rationalizing lived experience. Bruce says that okere is unclear about the nature of non-philosophy which he defined as the interpretation of gadamer’s prejudgment: “non-philosophy must stand for the non-reflected, that non-reflected baggage of the of cultural background, and he criticized him saying that in okere’s case, the hermeneutic theory has been worked out in a relatively limited context highlighting two questions which are yet to be answered and they are 1. How does one find a method that can reflect on itself, so as to fore ground its own prejudice? 2. How does one deal with meaning which are not simply there to be uncovered, but are the results of some violence that does not want itself to be named? There for he disagrees with okere saying that with his ignorance and assumption that hermeneutics is nothing more than a method for uncovering meanings that are latent within the pattern of objectification culture employs.

Hermeneutics as emancipatory method: Tsenay Serequeberhan. He argues that tsenay serequeberhan referring to two of hios most recent books, “the hermeneutics of African philosophy: horizon and discourse. And other heritage: the past in the present of African- American and African experience”. Saying that both workout a version of of African hermeneutics that is more sophisticated and more ponted than okere’s. but he argues that his analisis is limited and there is room for a much wider hermeneutics that he allows. In as much as okere giving an overview of the development or hermeneutics in the west, serequerhan recognizes that history is relative to the nature of hermeneutics itself. He also goes further to say that setrequerhan also recognizes that failures of understanding must be defined in encounter not in some essentialzed manner.

He criticized and disagreed with serequeberhan saying that his work is not in his limitation of horizon, but rather in his relatively reflected use of hermeneutics. He objects that neo-colonialism is lived experience and that hermeneutics takes that as its starting place, merely puts a place holder in for a group of concrete realities. Which include such diverse things as political structures, economic rearrangement, social institutions, armed conflicts, corruption and grafts and a host of i=other phenomena. He ponts out that serequeberhan contributes something crucial to understanding how hermeneutics might be an African means of recognizing and constructing identity, and also recognizes that identity is earned not simply presumed: he criticized serequeberdhan who correctly resists the tendency to relative identity. His target is Appiah; who speaks of a useable identity, which serequeberhan takes to mean an arbitrary identity or one “which we use and put away”. He poist that there are other ways to accomplish the task in which the legitimate needs are not addressed by imposing arbitrary limits in the interpretative process, he arrived at, that the strength of our heritage is that it recognizes that hermeneutics is not a foreign methodology imposed from the outside, but can by a way of theorizing expression of life within Africa.

Hermeneutics as linguistic method: Raphael Okechukwu Madu. Raphael okechukwu madu treats hermeneutics as a tool of knowledge, following that of Heidegger or gadamer, hermeneutics is an analytic strategy that gives access to the symbolic structure and hence the life-world of African culture. The question as imposed that madu’s project which is accessing culture through symbolic structures is exactly what structuralism and functionalism have done for decades. What can hermeneutics add to this? Madu here is clearly interested in the relative disdain that philosophers have had for symbols, the belief that symbols are pre-rational and thus not worthy of philosophical attention, clearly he wants to rehabilitate symbolic, proverbial and mythological thought as relevant to philosophy by showing that it need not merely lead to anonymously held worldviews or deep structures. His goal to establish that symbols are philosophically relevant not simply culturally relevant, and that hermeneutics is the best method for extracting the philosophical content, he asked a crucial question, what kind of hermeneutics is appropriate for African philosophy? Which he represented Heidegger and gadamer as existential hermeneutics and ricoeur as methodological hermeneutics. He agrees with madu’s version of ricoeur in certain aspects but does not address the scope of his thought. He considers madu’s analysis which is that he seems to want to use hermeneutics as a tool for excavation of philosophical thought within culture, but he said it is not clear, that it is something which can be found in ricoeur, (which is the commitment to symbols and metaphors and the need to connect this with human existence, rather than simply an abstract structure or a set of functions. On madu’s interpretation on destiny as fate and as the issue of one’s state after death, and then briefly outlines the various metaphysical options in western thought, he delves into Igbo cultural life for another way of understanding destiny.

Bruce disagrees with Madu, saying that there is no practical way someone in the Igbo community can reframe his or her life. He asked the question, what practical value does this new understanding haveand by practical he means in what way might this open up new ways of being Igbo? Bruce highlights that practicality does not mean simple use-value but means the ability to show forth new set of possibilities within an already existing form of life. Finally, he left Madu with the question “what new form of life became possiblre with our new understanding of chi or other concepts that became available.

Clearly Bruce understands that okere recognizes that philosophy must fing ways of articulating non-philosophy, serequebehan recognizes that hermeneutics must deal with praxis and attend to emancipatory possibilities, Madu recognizes that hermeneutics must articulate and interpret symbolic structure but he criticized okere saying that he doesn’t actually seem to talk about African harmenutics at all. He also went further to say that okere and Madu focus their interpretation of symbols within a cultural context which he says it does not seem to be really hermeneutic, and then he criticized serequeberhan, in his first book which he says limits the range of hermeneutical conversation, so there is prescribed outcome.

He argues that hermeneutics can still be worth considering as an approach to African philosophy because it allows us to think about and from a place, and because it allows us to question. Finally it allows that philosophy can be a creative act, not simply an analytic act.

Bruce also talks about creativity and philosophy which he refers to as the same and alludes to his discussion of Madu. Saying that hermeneutics is not simply about translation but it is about the way in which the understanding of structure of meaning contribute to the creation of meaning. It is about life-world in the broadest sense of the word.

I tend to agree with Bruce where he said that on okere pointing out there is a need to mediate between non-philosophy and philosophy. Even though he isn’t very clear on how this should work. Saying that he is right at this indeed, it is not just that philosophy reflects on the stuff of the world. But I humbly dis agree with him on saying that hermeneutics allows that philosophy can be a creative art, not simply an analytic act coming from the point of view of okere who states that hermeneutics is a method of uncovering meaning that are latent within the pattern.