**Hermeneutics in African a Philosophy:**

**Is it Worth the Trouble? By Bruce B. Janz An Appraisal.**

Bruce B Janz is his work ‘Hermeneutics in African Philosophy:is it worth the problem?’ tries to decipher in his ways if actually Hermeneutics can be used as a tool for analyzing the African experience just a many thinkers within African have made attempts in relation to this.Bruce B Janz uses three of these attempts by *Theophlus Okere,Tsenay Serequeberan and Rapheal Okechukwu madu,* he discusses and criticizes the views of these three thinkers and also giving his own points and solutions to the afformentioned issues.Bruce puts it that Hermeneutics should be referred to be that our definitions are being rooted from a place and so refers to Hermeneutics to be responses to particular questions which in other hands do not undermine its universality.It is a mode of inquiry that allows truth to be manifest.For Bruce Hermeneutics isn’t just a method and it is not restricted to a particular place but rather for instance a western hermeneutics can be applied in a context in African and so also same happens to African hermeneutics. In all Bruce B Janz agrees that Hermeneutics is indeed worth the trouble and issues in the context of African philosophy.

Bruce in this his work mentions how Thoephlus Okere posited that Hermeneutic philosophy must come up from both philosophy and non-philosophical elements and features. These non philosophy is atimes the irrational while some other times is prerational or atimes transcendental.Okere is assumed to have put his explanation this way in order to ensure that African philosophy has a unique starting point , since it’s rooted in a particular tradition of non-philosophy.But Okere does not come in term with the fact that he assumes that hermeneutics is nothing more than a method for uncovering meanings that are latent within the patterns of objectification a culture employs.Bruce somewhat disagrees with him because this fact the leaves two important questions unattended to which are firstly: How does one find a method that can reflect on itself, so as to foreground its own prejudices and secondly: How does one deal

with meanings that are not simply there to be uncovered, but are the result of some violence that does not want itself to be named? Here I enjoin Bruce to go against Okere in this his view about hermeneutics because it does not follow so well to say that a culture must be pure in other for it to be one and therefore be a philosophy of a place say African philosophy for instance. The problematic category of non-philosophy of Okere’s philosophy renders the possibility of philosophy into little more than the sketch of existing conditions,with no theoretical apparatus for their critique, for the conceptualization of the possibility of alternate conditions, or for proposing a philosophy of action that both affirms what is important in the life world while working for change.For Bruce, Okere did not actually refer his work in relation to Africa in particular but rather it is universal.

Furthermore, while making references to the two works of Tsenay Serequerbehan *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy:*

*Horizon and Discourse*

and *Our Heritage: The Past in the Present of African -American and African Experience.*The approach of *Tsenay Serequerbehan* according to Bruce has more chances of bearing positive fruits as Africa tires to rethink meanings that have accrued to it over the past several hundred years. For Bruce Okere only succeeded in giving overview of hermeneutics in west but *Tsenay Serequerbehan* points out clearly the relevance of history to the nature of hermeneutics itself and this necessarily implies that we need to take the history of the kinds of questions that hermeneutics has been designed to address very seriously. This therefore making history so much of important to Tsenay, history must not be neglected and I personally agree to this fact which

*Tsenay Serequerbehan* tries to elaborate here but one of my problems here is the fact that Bruce didn’t actually exhausts every point he made in his work,according to him he only pointed out few of points in which he personally found to be important but nevertheless judging by the ones which Bruce was able to mention here, *Tsenay Serequerbehan’s* point of approach is broader than that of Okere. He went of the box and brought in a very important point which is so much of importance in relation to the African Hermeneutics.

Finally on the final philosopher in which Bruce did criticize on his work as *Raphael Okechukwu Madu;* with particular references to his work *African Symbols, Proverbs and Myths: The Hermeneutics of Destiny* Bruce mentions how *Raphael Okechukwu Madu;* posited Hermeneutics as a tool for knowledge. Here Hermeneutics is related to symbolic structure, that is an analytic strategy that gives access to symbolic structure. This principle of Hermeneutics is based of the new relevance it gives to culture through the provision of a way of interpreting symbols of religions and mythical languages. History was equally brought in here just as Okere but was more advanced than Okere’s.Nevertheless Madu s clearly interested in the relative disdain that

philosophers have had for symbols, the belief that symbols were pre-rational and thus not worthy of

philosophical attention. The fact that Madu did address a very important question which is, ‘what kind of hermeneutics is appropriate for African philosophy?’ gives a light edge over others.

Bruce equally points out the theme of destiny here as was also stated by Madu in his work, which did allow him to raise and move above the metaphysical question, because the theme of destiny so much matters to human it becomes very important for Madu to include this in his work taking good note of the fact that the work of Hermeneutics is to give access to what really matters and to those whom it is significant to and equally to those who maybe be interested in listening but all these becomes contradicting according to Bruce as Madu resists the phenomenological version of Ricouer which is about Chii and destiny.Bruce wishes that Madu attends to the question of ‘*what new forms of life become possible with our new understanding of Chi, or other concepts that become available*?’

Finally, Bruce considers the worthiness of the problem of African Hermeneutics in order to make us think from a place and a space. It also gives us the room to question and philosophize and personally this come up with so much development with regards to African philosophy because,Philosophy dealing more with questions, this problem has come to let us Africans just as seen in theses three thinkers to ponder more on the philosophy of Africa and ways to make it even more known and sound.