

Postmodern Critique of Missionaries' Historiography (A Case Study of the Civilization of Southern Africa)

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Abstract:

Southern Africa is unique in its culture and civilization. Its history of last four centuries is the most important and interesting one for the historians of Africa as well as researchers. In colonial period identity, political consciousness and new social order of southern African people were based on the western colonialists and missionaries' representations and models. Both groups, missionaries and colonialists, view the region from the same angle because of their similar instrumental approach. They presented southern African people, uncultured, and barbarians, as a rationale of imperialism. Their understanding of the internal dynamics of southern African history primarily formed the perspectives of colonialism; it is demand of postcolonial era to cure the curse of the misperceptions and to understand nature of religious traditions, culture and civilization of southern Africa. After the demise of colonialism revisionist trend, among the historians of southern Africa, became popular to retell the story of the civilization of the region.

This study consists of postmodern critique of missionaries' historiography of southern Africa. In the light of revisionism it would be possible to draw the real picture of southern Africa and to formulate new principles of historiography of the continent.

Keywords: Postcolonial Theory, Revisionist Historiography, Southern African Civilization

Introduction

Colonial subject of southern Africa was mostly shaped by Christian missionaries' historiography under the rule of Western imperialists and colonialists of Africa from the 15th century to 1960s. The aftermath of the process of discovery concluded in the project of mission. The inner layer of the modernity is moisturized by Christianity seeking standard of civility and culture through its reformatory version. On the surface colonialist and missionaries had divergent interests but the satisfaction of their interest had been laid in the realization of the domination of West over others and the 'others' are inferior by their culture and thought. To satisfy their hegemonic ambitions it was compulsory for both groups to device their tools for social change. In missionaries' historiography their depiction of southern Africa shows that they ignored cultural

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diversity of the region or they had implicitly closed their eyes towards the southern African people's indigenous ways of living and folk wisdom. Whom they called barbarians they were, in fact, the communities that were not like them. During about four centuries Western colonialists gave them tough time to develop and to maintain their hegemony upon them.

Some missionary historians proposed 'City of God' and other saw the grandeur of Greek civilization to demonstrate the wisdom of Christianity and to propagate inferiority of Southern Africans, their society and religious traditions.

This article is intended to provide a postmodern critique of missionaries' representation of southern Africa in the light of postcolonial world. For better comprehension and understanding, it is divided into the following parts:

- Historical sketch of the civilization of Southern Africa.
- A postcolonial analysis of missionaries' representation of southern Africa and its impact on history.
- Current revisionism movement in the era of postcolonialism.
- Suggestions and future prospects.

Historical Sketch of The Civilization of Southern Africa

Africa is the second largest continent after Asia. The large extent of Africa, north and south of equator, gives a wide range of climatic conditions and variety of vegetation. Historically as well as physically, Africa north of the Sahara has a closer affinity with Mediterranean Europe than with the rest of Africa. Extensions of Phoenician, Greek, Roman and Muslim civilization flowered there in northern Africa, which provides a unique and rich field in the study of cultural contact and succession. South of Sahara, however, relatively little is as yet known of its early history.

Generally, southern Africa comprises the present Republic of South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland, Botswana, Lesotho, Angola and Mozambique. For the sake of completeness in terms both of history and of present day reality, however, it is clearly necessary to add Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Malawi, and Zambia to southern Africa. This thematic unity binding the history of the entire region is sufficiently strong to justify the adoption of this latter definition. From the iron age to the era of the African liberation movements there has been a marked continuity in the themes common to the history of this area.¹

Available archeological evidence, together with recent genetic and linguistic researches, points to Africa as the very cradle of humanity. *Homo Sapiens* is thought to have first appeared in Africa some 1, 50,000 to 2,00,000 years ago. About 1000,00 years ago modern humans appear to have swept out of Africa, quickly displacing archaic hominids in other parts of the world.

The evolutionary succession leading to modern mankind has been traced back to four million years. Considerable fossil evidence about these early hominids, the australopithecines, has been uncovered in South Africa.²

In the totality of human history, the agricultural revolution is a recent event, having first occurred in Mesopotamia approximately 10,000 B.C. The Agricultural revolution in Africa South of Sahara is even more recent, although the actual date remains a subject of debate. Rock paintings show that pastoralism, initially based on sheep and goat herding and later on cattle rearing, was well established in the central Sahara during the moist climatic phase between 8000 and 4000 B.C. As the climate became progressively drier, communities in the Savanna regions South of Sahara that had depended on fishing turned increasingly to crop cultivation and pastoralism to secure their food supply. Farming and pastoralism became widespread in this Savanna belt between 3000 and 1000 B.C.

Some 5,000 years ago, one of the most important migrations in human history began in central Nigeria, for reasons, which remain a mystery. The Bantu migrations occurred in stages over five millennia, eventually reaching the southern extremity of the continent. Archeologists and historians have used diverse evidence; linguistic, cultural and technological to determine the timing of migration and relationship among various Bantu peoples. By the third century A.D, the expansion of western Bantu peoples into all parts of the rain forest was complete.

The Bantus were agriculturists who used iron tools and weapons. Their migrations were cultural and technological as well as demographic. They brought agricultural, herding and iron-making technologies, introduced new forms of social organization, and established important empires, such as Zimbabwe and Congo.³ By Islamic times Kingdoms of marked sophistication, by contemporary European and Eastern standards existed in Africa. The sites of ancient mineral working-copper, gold and iron, widely spread over modern Zambia, Rhodesia and northern part of South Africa, provide the evidence of mysterious and splendid, stand ruins of southern African civilization in the form of stone-fortresses, temples and palaces. The most renowned of these are the Zimbabwe ruins, a few hundred miles north of the Limpopo River. They are believed to be built by a vanished people from the East, or even by Phoenicians, so improbable did it seem that the African people living primitive lives around them could ever have been craftsmen skilled enough to build so grandly.

The picture of that civilization, however, was filled in when a burial trove of fine golden objects was found in 1932 in an un-plundered hilltop fortress at Mapungubwe, south of the Limpopo in the Northern Transvaal. This seems to have been the home of people broadly contemporary with those of Zimbabwe and whose way of life was similar. This community reached its heyday in the fourteenth or fifteenth century and established a rich and varied culture there. The area seems also to have been an important religious and commercial center until it too was destroyed by Northward sweep of Ndebele warriors (a branch of the Nguni), early in the nineteenth century.⁴

The Bantu-speaking people of South Africa today speak two main language groups, the Sotho-Tswana and the Nguni, with difference of culture within their broad similarities.

The ancestors of the Sotho may have been the earliest Iron-Age inhabitants in South Africa, or they may have crossed the upper Limpopo, avoiding the Tsetse fly areas, between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, assimilating with earlier iron-Age people. They have probably occupied their present areas, Botswana (Tswana) Lesotho and the Free State (Southern Sotho) and the Northern and Eastern Transvaal, since before 1600.

The Nguni group includes the Swazi, Zulu, Pondo, Thembu and Xhosa people, living mostly east of the Drakensberg, through Natal to the Eastern Cape Province, and the Ndebele of the Transvaal.

Most Bantu people had some conception of a supreme being who controlled the natural order, which helped to make them receptive to Islamic and Christian teachings. But their religious beliefs and practice centered largely on the worship and propitiation, sometimes through powerful mediums, of the ancestors whose spirits, for better or worse, hung about the home and whose goodwill had to be kept.

In the seventeenth century when the Dutch were making their first settlement in the extreme south-west, the Bantu-speaking people, contrary to popular belief, had been living in the northern, central and eastern parts for several hundred years.⁵

In the light of these realities, the view of Africa as the Dark Continent seems a parochial, and misleading. At the beginning of this modern period of history, Africa was far from the most backward of the continents. The Australian, for example, when the Europeans discovered them, were still living as hunters and living in 'Middle Stone Age'. In the 16th century, American Indians were Neolithic or 'New Stone Age' cultivators, using polished stone tools. But the Africans of the same period on the other hand with few exceptions, were farmers equipped with tools of iron and there were in consequence many more of them. Throughout Northern third of the continent most of them belonged to the urbanized civilization of Islam. Even in the southern two third of the continent, most of African people were organized into states and communities powerful enough to deter invaders and migrants from overseas until late in nineteenth century.⁶ With the geo-scientific and archeological discoveries, it is proved that Africans both north and south have a rich civilization.

A Postcolonial Analysis of Missionaries' Representation of Southern Africa

The missionaries' representation played a very important role for colonial understanding of the civilization of Southern Africa. Arrival of missionaries preceded colonial annexations by decade in many places. Therefore the diaries, survey reports and archives of missionaries are considered as a primary source for the study of their contemporary ages. Although it is a matter of fact that missionary traditions has not developed a complete and coherent form of historiography as compared to colonial, imperial, Africanistic and liberal revisionistic historiography of southern Africa. Anyhow the significance of missionary tradition is accepted and it demands a comprehensive

understanding and analysis of its nature, characteristics, basic elements and missionaries' perceptions.

For better examination of the missionaries' tradition, it is essential to evaluate the missionaries' perceptions and their understanding, particular about civilizational and social perspective. Because of geo-linguistic divergences, and difference in sects of missionaries and with the changing of the time and space, their representation of southern Africa seems in evolution so it is very hard to classify them in specific, exclusive and deterministic groups.

However, for easy understanding we can divide them into three main phases:

1. Catholic Missionaries/The Arrival of Portuguese and Dutch Settlement(1491-1750)
2. Protestant Missionaries / Cross-cultural Interaction (1750-1880)
3. Colonial/Commercial Missionaries 1880-1960)

Now these three phases will be discussed here briefly.

1. Catholic Missionaries/The Arrival of Portuguese and Dutch Settlement (1491-1750)

In southern Africa, the catholic missionary tradition was founded in last decade of fifteenth century, southward from the mouth of Congo to the inhospitable region of Damaraland. The Portuguese from 1491 onward-acquired influence over the Bantu-Negro inhabitants, and, in the early part of the sixteenth century, they enforced Christianity by compulsion in the native kingdom of Congo. An irruption of Cannibals from the interior, later in the same century, broke the power of this semi-Christian State and the Portuguese activity was transferred further south, Sao Palulo de Londa (Angola) being founded in 1576.

In 1652, the Dutch seized the Table Bay and made the first permanent white settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa and gradually spread in the interior and eastward. They held their control at the Cape till 1814.⁷ In this era most of missionaries who came into southern Africa, were associated with Catholic Church. They emphasized the sacramental and ritual aspects of religion, for instance, baptisms, confirmations, and communicants. They had their vested interest. So their tradition and analysis predicated upon particular assumptions and some sort of biases and prejudice, which were their pseudo-scientific racism, cultural chauvinism of Europe, Calvinism, and Capitalism.

With biased and colonial sense of superiority they studied this continent. They treated the region as "Dark Continent", "Beyond Civilization" and studied the people of this continent under the Hemitic theory, and considered the religions of this region as Paganism and Heathenism.

2. Protestant Missionaries/Cross-Cultural Interaction (1750-1880)

The missionaries started their extensive and comprehensive work in the 18th and 19th century. This period can be called also a period of cross-cultural interaction. The

influence of the reformation movement appeared in this period. Mostly missionaries of this era were Protestant, Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican. They emphasized an interior transformation of the soul rather than the sacramental and ritual aspects of religion. Protestant missions, in the middle of nineteenth century were carrying on active Christian propaganda on the Guinea coast, in South Africa, and in the Zanzibar dominions of the East African coast. In many instances, these Christian missionaries turned explorers and became pioneers of trade and empire-building. One of the first to attempt to fill up the remaining blank spaces in the map was David Livingstone, who had been engaged, since 1840, in missionary work north of the Orange. In 1840, Livingstone crossed the Kalahari Desert from south to north and reached Lake Ngami, and, between 1851 and 1856, he traversed the Continent from west to east, making known the great waterways of the upper Zambezi. During these travels, Livingstone discovered (November 1855) the famous Victoria Falls, so named after the Queen of Britain. In 1858-64, Livingstone explored the lower Zambezi, Shire, and Lake Nyasa. In 1866, Livingstone began his last great journey in which he made known lakes Mweru and Bangweulu and discovered the Lualaba (the upper part of the Congo), but died (1873) before he had been able to demonstrate its ultimate course.⁸

The missionaries not only endorsed imperialism but also perceived it in theological terms as a vindication of biblical prophecy. They saw God in the history or more explicitly, history as God. In *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa*, Moffat claimed that ‘the Gospel of Christ is the only instrument which can civilize and save all kindreds and nations of the earth.’⁹ By theological deduction, the missionaries concluded that African had no history because they had ‘no concept of God’ and thus sanctified imperialism with divine justification.¹⁰

According to Norman Etherington, “Missionaries are white European laboring among the dark ‘heathen’ obscures a complex reality. In the eighteenth century the overriding objective of British missionary societies was to provide for white settlers overseas settlers then to preach to the unconverted. Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist missions in the nineteenth century devoted a considerable portion of their income to providing for white settlers in British colonial”.¹¹

Francois Coillard supported imperialism in his preaching and writings. He wrote, “In this great European struggle for central Africa, England is taking energetic measure to assure herself of the lion’s share. Should we blame her? Ought we to be glad or sorry for it? Who can read the future? The great is to remember that, aimed the surging of the nations, God reigns.”¹²

On the other hand they degraded the native civilization and studied it under the Hametic Theory. For instance Rev. Thomas Morgan Thomas lived for eleven years in South Africa. His autobiography shows that he studied the civilization of southern Africa under the Hametic Theory. He strongly criticized the social behavior of black people and considered Ndebele were degraded descendants of Ham.¹³ Rev. D. Fred Ellenberger described in his history that the Sotho had ‘for many centuries groaned

under the Yoke of witchcraft and the San were utterly irresponsible savages.¹⁴

Robert Moffat (Livingstone's Father-in-Law) was a prominent missionary scholar, established a remarkable personal friendship with Mzilkazi who was the most formidable leader in the Transvaal and this was the later to give the missionary entry to Matabeleland.¹⁵ But when he wrote his diary he commented about Mzilkazi that he was 'a savage who is on the summit of power and a bloody and merciless tyrant'.¹⁶

On the other hand, native people reacted and they took serious steps against new comers not only in the battlefield but on the intellectual basis also. About this time a Prophet, Makanda, appeared among the Xhosa, perhaps the first black South African nationalist to stand out with clarity. He established a hybrid religion of his own in reaction to Christianity this pantheon of gods commanded that the whites be driven into the sea:

"To chase the white men from the earth
And drive them to the sea
The sea that cast them up at first,
For Ama Xhosa's curse and bane
Howls for the progeny she nursed
To swallow them again."¹⁷

Mutual understanding and cross-cultural interaction was common feature of this era. African and European both were observing each other. And from the both sides there were individual personalities who tried to understand the psychology, motives and civilization of others with some kind of tolerance positively. For instance Van Der Kemp, who founded the famous institution for Hottentots at Bethelsdrop, near Port Elizabeth in 1830, was a remarkable man with a gift of being able totally to identify himself with the people among whom he worked. He dressed and lived as the Khoikhoi, ate their food and married 'a woman of Madagaseas extraction', the daughter of slave women, and an example, which was followed by his colleague, James Read, who married a recently baptized Khoikhoi girl. His influence among the khoikhoi was great and for long after his death they regarded all missionaries as 'Jankannas' children.¹⁸

Similarly, John Philip, a Scottish missionary in 1819 at Cape where he was to dominate politics for the next thirty years to be hated by contemporary white South Africans as a meddling person, a racial and negrophile and to become for later generation a symbol of all these things and the arch enemy of the Afrikanes people.

Philip formed a high opinion of the capabilities of both Khoikhoi and African and believed that, giving equal opportunity, they were the equal European; but he also believed that until they were sufficiently advanced in Western civilization they should be separated from whites and protected from white rapacity. He demanded the abolition of vagrancy and pass laws which put the Khoikhoi at the mercy of white officials. He asserted for them, he said, 'nothing but the power of bringing their labour to a fair market'. Then secretary of state commented, 'includes everything else'. He demanded

that they should have the economic basis necessary to improve them. The abettors of the present system seem never to have contemplated the aborigines of the colony as consumers.¹⁹

In this era three elements changed or affected the minds of missionaries towards Southern African Civilization; Reformation movement, local indigenous clergies & churches and theory of affinities by Max Muller. These elements played very important role in the formation missionaries' representation of southern Africa.

Missionaries in previous eras who had tried to adapt the Christian message to local circumstances were rediscovered and celebrated. Edwin William Smith provides a good example of the connection between the new spirit of cultural tolerance and revisionist history. In 1950 he edited a landmark collection of *Essays on African Ideas of God: A symposium* (London), Just after publication of the biography of the American missionary Daniel Lindley, in which he had shown some tolerance for Zulu customary practices.²⁰

In fact the non-European clergy also called attention to the enormous resentment caused by white racism and cultural arrogance.²¹ the reaction of these messages were profound and pervasive in the inter-war years.

The ecumenical impulse and the need to build indigenous churches are central themes in Kenneth Scott Latourette's seven-volume *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, London (1938-47), which still stands alone as a global survey. Another consequence of the rising indigenous Christian churches was the slow but steady growth of clerical revulsions against Eurocentric thinking about race and culture. Paradoxically, the roots of this reappraisal can be traced to the Late-Victorian linguist Friedrich Max Muller and his linguistic theories of affinities between Aryan languages. Anglican missionaries working in India took up Max Muller's idea that Hinduism contained elements of spiritual truth which Christianity shared and fulfilled.²² In the first instance, this misleading strategy reflected a typically nineteenth century European belief in a hierarchy of civilizations, but the reasoning could be extended to produce an opposite result. As in region after region missionaries began to discover previously unsuspected points of contact between Christian doctrine and traditional religions, the old overweening self-confidence ebbed.²²

3. Colonial/Commercial Missionaries

Ninety percent of Africa south of Sahara was ruled by native rulers before 1880 and European control did not extend beyond a few footholds along the coast. But two decades later, Ethiopia and Liberia were only two uncolonialized states in Africa.

Small European enclaves along the coast had existed for centuries, starting with the establishment of slaving castles in the late 15th century. The French were well established in Senegal and Dahomey, the British in Gambia, Sierra Leone and South Africa and the Portuguese were in Angola and Mozambique.

In southern Africa, Cecil Rhodes was the driving force behind British imperialist expansion, sending a military unit north to occupy territory and to obtain mining concessions in Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe and Zambia). Rhodes was responsible for the powerful "Cape to Cairo" metaphor, which envisaged the establishment of continuous British rule and a rail line between Africa's southern and northern extremities. British control of southern Africa was consolidated as a result of Boer War of 1899 to 1902, in which the formerly separate Boer republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State were defeated and later incorporated into the union of South Africa.

During the 19th century, there was a growing interest in the establishment of Christian mission in Africa. The new missions like the explorers and commercial agents, helped to pave the way for the establishment of formal colonial rule by heightening public interest in Africa and the fate of Africans. Missionaries most notably David Livingstone, returned to Europe after visiting the African interior and talked passionately about the importance of the 'civilizing mission' which involved combating the slave trade, starting schools, and encouraging the developments of commerce in conjunction with the primary objective of spreading the gospel. The missionary project was fundamental to the European conviction that colonialism was a charitable undertaking by a morally and technologically superior race.²³

The colonizers of Africa saw themselves as benign interloper, carrying the torch of civilization to a primitive, Dark Continent. They emphasized the imposition of peace among warring rivals; the introduction of western medicine and education; the construction of cities, parts and rail system; the transformation of African economies through the development of mining and commerce and agriculture and the creation of legal and administrative system. Therefore they did not allow any body to disturb their "civilizing mission" of Africa. Missionaries endorsed colonial policies and exploitations because they actually perceived colonialism as an ultimate success of Gospel.

Missionaries opened schools and designed the curriculum in which they portrayed European as a superior race and without gospel education and Europeanization the process of civilization could not be completed. Political developments after Second World War accelerated the trend towards missionary rapprochements with local cultures and religions. In this new geopolitical climate, Africa which had often been viewed in the nineteenth century as a dumping-ground for big-hearted missionaries of limited intellectual capacity, now seemed the best hope for future expansion. At the same time it was clear that the churches must come to terms with insurgent nationalism. That meant coming to terms with their own historic relationship with colonialism.²⁴

And the movement did not stop there. As early as the 1850s the missionary Bishop of Natal had argued that the Zulu people acknowledged a God Greater. A century later the high God of African traditional religion was being discovered all over the continent. After a conference on the subject in Nigeria in clerical studies of traditional religion proliferated.²⁵ The word 'paganism' itself was shunned by progressive clergy.

It became important to know precisely where to draw the line between traditional beliefs which could and those which could not be accommodated to Christianity. Some clergy looked again at their scriptures and discovered approval in magic, divination, healing and other practices of traditional religion.

So it can be concluded that in the beginning, missionary perception was based on their self-acclaimed, racism and Chauvinism. They treated African history as simple civilization and used the same set of terminology (savages, barbarians, primitives, etc). They saw superstition instead of religion, and tribes instead of kingdoms. In fact, one gets the impression that they were portraying African history to prove that the African had no civilization and that it needs Christianity and Europeanization. They rarely perceived individual distinctions among Africans-only a mass of heathens. Africans kings, soldiers, midwives, craftsmen and witches were all lumped together as agent of historic darkness, stemming way back from the 'Curse of Ham'.²⁶

But sometime a facile analogy is made between the trajectories of empire and mission. Firstly an invasion began, then a period of arrogant hegemony, followed by retreat and the devolution of power. However the aftermath of Christian missions in most parts of the Empire is very different from the postcolonial political relationship between new nations and their former masters. Christianity continues to make new converts in Africa and Asia. Most churches in the former colonies remain in full communion with the 'mother' denominations. While imperial over rule is an increasingly distant memory, mission history is absorbed into an ongoing church history. There are few ex-colonies where mission history can be neatly segregated from the history of religion in general.²⁷

Current Revisionism Movement in The Era of Postcolonialism

The year 1960 was an important watershed in the history of Africa South of Sahara. The number of independent countries increased from 5 to 22. Nevertheless, it is important to put 1960 into perspective. It was only a beginning. However countries like Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia took a long time to achieve their independence and in South Africa the struggle for majority rule was not completed until 1994.²⁸

Post-colonial era is the era of reinterpretation of history and analysis of missionaries' historical record. Its typical phenomenon is revisionist school of thought influenced by postcolonial theory. In the discipline of history revisionism proclaims to rewrite history from non-western (or national) viewpoint in that it believes epistemic roots of history were based on imperial/colonial standards in virtue of colonialists' self-interest. Several studies of 1960s carried this kind of historical analysis further. To a greater or lesser extent, all of them castigated missionaries for promoting imperial expansion, assuming racial superiority and inhibiting the development of indigenous clergy. Jacob F. Ade Ajaji's *Christian Mission in Nigeria, 1841-1891* and Emmanuel A. Ayandele's *the Missionary impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914* lent to this interpretation the growing reputations of two of west African's prominent historians. A devastating aspect of their critique was the evidence they adduced to show that the attitudes of British missionaries had actually grown more racist,

more colonialist, in the course of nineteenth century. Robert L. Rotberg's study, *Christian mission and the creation of Northern Rhodesia 1880-1924* provided corroborating evidence of ecclesiastical high-handedness on the other side of the continent. These three books influentially published and widely reviewed, soon achieved the status of a new orthodoxy.²⁹

Another important movement of post-colonial era is liberal revisionist movement. It is based on humanitarian culture, elimination of racial discrimination, equal rights, and socio-political racism. David Chanaiwa stated that as a group, the liberals adopted problem-oriented and interdisciplinary approaches to provide historical outlines and academic analysis or contemporary issues, controversies and conventions. Given their Euro-centric cultural orientation they were not interested in pre-European native culture, *per se*, nor in African tradition and points of view. They applied European social science theories to explain an African based historical process, while relegating the Africans to the role of 'natives' and objects of European 'civilizing process'. Thus, cultural contact became one way process of 'Westernization' in which the African was either civilized or tribal, educated or raw, urban or rural, Christian or Pagan, without an exchanges, let alone Africanization. African responses to colonialism that had no known precedents in European culture and theories to explain them (e.g. Ethiopianism) often were treated as deviant, primitive, millenarian and irrational.³⁰

However the revisionists, as compared to liberal revisionists, are more balanced in analyzing the historiography of southern Africa. Revisionists are basically a group of intellectuals of all over the world, beyond region and religion. They are university professors and historians taking interest in African historiography. They try to maintain equilibrium between colonialist chauvinism and nationalist emotionalism. They changed the colonialist terminology from native to Africans, from blacks to non-European, from tribes to groups or societies, from Pagans or Savages or primitive to traditionalist or peasant, from dark civilization to simple civilization.

Revisionists usually avoid discussing controversial issues and discourage to discuss like Pan-African, liberation movements and encourage objective studies. This is a good thing but sometime cold-blood objectivity, particular like southern Africa region where record was arranged with some bias, is not enough. Therefore revisionist should study the history with keen observation and rationality and should not avoid discussing controversial issues. Reality must be appeared. A comprehensive scholarly history of southern Africa must be compiled which is more reliable realistic, deterministic and neither Euro-centric nor Africo-centric.

Suggestions and Future Prospects

African historiography consisted of divergent sources and conflictive perceptions. There are a lot of misconceptions and ambiguities in the tradition. The revisionist movement is very positive step to reinterpret the historiography of southern Africa. They should maintain the scholarly standard and should do justice between colonialist, imperialist and missionary perceptions about southern Africa and the real story of this region.

For the better understanding of southern African civilization and to restore the real picture of this region, it is suggested to take following steps seriously.

1. It is time to analyze the historical tradition of southern Africa therefore it is very important to endorse and activate the revisionists movement and their finding must be exposed to every walks of life.
2. The colonist, imperialist and missionaries compiled southern Africa history according to their own interest, requirement and perceptions. Now after independence southern Africa has its own future prospects. So it is very important to reinterpret and understand the history in the light of indigenous culture. For this purpose the method of subaltern studies is very useful. The most significant outcome of this revision or shift in perspective is that the agency of change is located in the insurgent or the 'subaltern' and the results must be circulated not only among the intellectuals but in students and laymen also.
3. To arrange more national and international symposium, seminars and conferences on the southern African tradition should be held. The findings and proceedings on a large scale should be published.
4. Because of modern mass-communication, world has become a global village. With the help of modern means of communication, the unique and divergent civilization of southern Africa should be presented.
5. To collect complete data of western and local scholars and for the collection of oral traditions, manuscripts, archives both in the interior and on the periphery of the southern Africa, an active programme should be launched and findings should be widely circulated. Museums of history literature based upon existing collections should be established.
6. A coherent programme should be introduced for archeological excavation containing work already done.
7. To introduce revisionist and subaltern historiography of southern Africa in the curriculum of schools, colleges and universities.
8. Comprehensive research projects based on comparative study of missionary, imperialist and colonialist historiography should be introduced at universities and higher education institutions level.

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