

King Leopold's Ghost

A Discussion

- 1. Who were the following people? Had you heard about them before watching this film and in what context? Does the documentary’s depiction of them reflect your own previous knowledge of them?:
 - King Leopold II; Henry Morton Stanley; Patrice Lumumba; Mobutu Sese Seko
- 2. The documentary King Leopold’s Ghost (Dir. Pippa Scott 2006) is based on a book with a similar title by Adam Hochschild: King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa (1998).
 - What is the theme (are the themes) of the documentary?
 - How does the director communicate the theme(s) of the documentary?
 - Comment on the title of the documentary: King Leopold’s Ghost. What does it say about the theme or themes of the film?
- 3. One of the narrators in the documentary says the following “The coveted treasure of the era. Exotic and expensive. Leopold smelled profit and demanded quantities of it.” What was that “coveted treasure” and how did Leopold acquire it?
- 4. According to one of the narrators, “This is the time [the turn of the century] when electricity spreads throughout the western world.” What impact did this spread of electricity in Europe and the United states have on Indigenous people in the Congo and on their natural environment?
- 4b. According to the documentary what impact did the World Wars have on the Indigenous people in the Congo and why?
- 5. Are there any “coveted treasure(s)” in our contemporary era? How are they impacting the relationships between nations and between humans and their environment?
- 6. In professor Kolapo’s guest lecture last week, he mentioned that European colonizers always found a justification for their colonial enterprise. What was King Leopold’s justification and how did he convince the rest of the world to support him?
- 7. Who was Edmund Dene Morel and how did he discover the fraud and atrocities that were taking place in the Congo?
- 8. Who was George Washington Williams and what role did he play in bringing the attention to what was happening in the Congo under Leopold?
- 9. What is your own opinion of the documentary? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
- 10. How would communicate a history of exploitation and destruction through colonization differently from the approach used in the documentary.