Hochschild Response

Answer the following questions using Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston: Mariner Books, 1998), 6-18.

All responses must be typed and submitted on Blackboard on the date listed in the course calendar.

Respond in a thorough, detailed manner. Provide page numbers for all responses in the form of a parenthetical citation (11, 13-15).

1. How was the Kingdom of Kongo organized politically when Europeans arrived? What aspects of this organization would 15th century Europeans likely have recognized?

It was a small kingdom. The king was selected by elite group that are the leaders of clans. Portuguese disregarded the culture, but they recognized Kongo as an independent state (9).

1. Why are King Affonso’s letters written in Portuguese important? What did King Affonso’s letters detail?

The importance of the letter is that it shows how African state became Erupeanized. People of Kongo studied European culture, European tradings, and European weapons (12). The relationship was European-African, but it became European-European. Since Portugal was superior in power, Kongo was exploited like other European states those are inferior in power.

The letter was about request of stopping slave trade (13). Since Kongo lost significant amount of production power, slave trade became a big issue.

1. What other kinds of sources offer African perspectives on the slave trade aside from King Affonso’s letters? What do those sources reveal about African perspectives?

African thought whites are devils (15-16). They believed devils have white skin. In addition, the ships rose from the deep ocean (as they saw), so it was surely ominous. Europeans had firearms, so Africans were inferior in power. Therefore, it seems Africans were afraid of Europeans and the devil’s bargain (giving their family member as slave and taking European goods).

1. Why did Europeans remain relatively unknowledgeable about Congo (and sub-Saharan Africa more generally) by the 19th century despite at least three centuries of sustained contact? Despite or because of this lack of knowledge, how did Europeans view the “Dark continent”?

European exploration was based on sailing, so the explorations of inland area were not successful. The land was rough, and the explorers could not survive the local disease. (p.17-18)