

King Solomon's Mines – Revision Pack



ACADEMY
LANGLEY

Component 1 – US Film Comparative Study with *Indiana Jones:
Raiders of the Lost Ark*

Historical Context	Social Context
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Film is an adaptation of a Victorian novel of the same name written by H.R. Haggard in 1895.• The film was made in 1950 when American was fighting the Cold War and wanted to assert its dominance on the rest of the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commercial flying was rare during the 1950s. Films were a way to show people exotic locations.• Fascination with the Dark Continent.• Women in 1950s had traditional roles, though becoming more liberated due to WW2.• Same can be said of black people – certainly not equal in 1950s America, but attitudes slowly changing.

KSM Context

Film Context	Film Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response to popularity of other Jungle films like Tarzan and Trader Horn.• MGM wanted genuine footage, unlike films made in last decade which had relied on stock footage from Trader Horn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Film crew travelled 70,000 miles during filming.• The crew shot 20,000 feet worth of film.• It won two Academy Awards for Editing and Cinematography and was nominated for Best Picture.• It made \$6million profit at Box Office.

KSM – Conventions of the Adventure Genre

Adventure Genre Conventions:

- Exotic settings
- Settings that are both dangerous and beautiful (sublime)
- Set in the past or concerning a past civilisation
- The narrative is a quest, journey or hunt
- Strong male protagonist who leads the quest
- Weak female protagonist who is rescued or saved
- Villain is a foreigner and is easily recognisable (e.g. scar)
- A character (the 'helper') will support them with their quest
- Fast-paced scenes (similar to action genre)
- Use of stunts or chases (similar to action genre)
- Props; use of swords, torches, sidebags, guns, artefacts, maps
- Costume; khaki or cream costumes, hats
- Fast camera work
- Fast paced non-diegetic music (theme music or film score)
- Themes of exploration, greed, romance, good vs evil, respect for old civilisations, power of nature.

<u>Convention</u>	<u>Evidence in KSM</u>
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They go on a dangerous quest across perilous settings. • There is a goal for an object or place of historical significance (the lost mines). • Love story alongside main narrative.
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exotic but also dangerous settings (desert, jungle, mountains, mines) • Setting has obstacles that trap or form obstacles for the protagonist – e.g. escaping from the mine, journeying across the desert.
Characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong male protagonist in Q. • Weak female love interest as Elizabeth. • Van Brun could fit the conventional foreign villain.
Costume/Props	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khaki costumes used throughout – Elizabeth's change into this symbolises she is finally participating in the adventure element. • Flame torches in mines. • Guns as a weapon against tribesmen. When this is lost, they have to rely on their wits (eg. Pretending they aren't out of bullets at the end). • The map to the lost mines.
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This doesn't fit convention – KSM doesn't have many fast-paced action scenes, instead focusing on the setting (filmed on location). It also doesn't have non-diegetic sound which is unconventional. • Stampede scene fits this convention however.
Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration • Adventure – Quartermain rediscovers his lost sense of adventure ("I don't know about you; but I want to see how this turns out."). • Respect for the power of nature – Quartermain describes elephants at the start as 'gallant fools', birth of crocodile egg.

King Solomon's Mines – Film Form			
	Opening Scene	Waterfall Scene	Other notable examples
Cinematography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q leads the scene – he is framed at the front of the group to show power. Low angle shot of him shooting elephant demonstrates power and strength. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid shot of Elizabeth struggling to comb hair. Low angle of her reclining suggesting release. High key lighting contrasts to low-key lighting of tent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pans and wide shots used to show the African setting. Extreme close up on the gun pointed at Van Brun = change in tone. Aspect ratio favours setting over characters.
Mise-en-Scene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixture of African and Western elements in Q's hut (horns on wall and bookcase) show him as strong protagonist and comfortable in both settings. Kwali's necklace shows he is noble and has respect for African culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of waterfall as setting to show sublime elements of nature (power and beauty combined). Use of waterfall to represent Elizabeth's release from her Victorian values. Use of hatching crocodile egg to show her 'rebirth'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The settings they overcome on their quest represent the 4 elements (Fire = desert, Water = river, Air = mountain, Ground = mines).
Editing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match-on-Action cuts during elephant hunt to create the illusion that the actors and animals are inhabiting the same space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shot-reverse-shot of Quartermain when Umbopa approaches to show he is unafraid. Cut between waterfall and Elizabeth reclining to suggest connection – her 'release' from repression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cuts between wide shots featuring animals to close-ups of characters to suggest they are in the same space.
Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tribal drumming at the start gives an immediate sense of setting, informs the audience we are away from civilisation and creates a sense of pace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roaring of waterfall drowns out the dialogue between Q and Elizabeth. This shows how they are struggling to communicate verbally and instead start to communicate physically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quartermain speaks in tribal dialect to show not only that he fits in with his setting but a degree of respect for the tribes. No non-diegetic sound throughout the film to create immersion.

Scene 1 – Quartermain's Hut

His house has a mixture of African and English elements to show he is comfortable in both.



Khaki shirt and hat is conventional outfit for an explorer.

Props

- Skulls on wall show he is a successful hunter, books show he is educated.
- The fact he takes necklace for the Kwali's wife shows he has respect and understanding for local customs.

Scene 2 - Waterfall

Long hair –
incongruous
within
African
Safari



Shorter hair
and body
language
suggests
liberation
from
repression.



Setting

- The raging waterfall represents her release from her repressed background – could also link to Quartermain and Elizabeth's relationship in general, which has previously been 'held back'.
- Waterfall represents the 'sublime' – the mixture of power and beauty within nature.

Props

- Lack of fear or disgust when observing the crocodile egg hatching shows her character development – she is more comfortable with elements of the safari now. It symbolises her 'rebirth'.

Costume

- Clear contrast to her dress from the start of the film – no more Victorian corsets. She is liberated.

Key moments - Cinematography



Wide shots and use of pan to show the African setting.

Low-angle shot of Q = strong protagonist.



Low angle shot and high-key lighting to represent her liberation from repression.

Quick pans and tracking shots during stampede = pace.



Aspect ratio favours setting –
1/3 characters, 2/3 setting

Characters framed closely together to show unity during quest, Wide shot of desert emphasises isolation and peril of setting.



At climax, characters framed very closely together to show they have all overcome their gender/racial differences.



Extreme close-up on gun emphasises the change in tone.

KSM – Characters and Narrative

<i>Propp's Character Types</i>		
Hero	Morally good; physically strong; often male.	Clearly Quartermain – he fulfils all of these criteria.
Villain	Morally corrupt; intellectually strong; physically weak.	Van Brun fits convention of a foreign villain.
Princess	Figure or object that requires saving by the Hero.	Elizabeth – she is presented as weak at start and Q saves her. He 'wins' her at the end.
Helper	Sidekick – supports the Hero	Khiva or John Goode.
Donor	Gives the Hero something – often older.	Umbopa
False Hero	Tries to be the Hero; often becomes Villain.	King Twala – tries to wrongfully usurp Umbopa.
Princess's Father	Often sets Hero on quest; rewards Hero with Princess.	N/A
Dispatcher	Sends the hero on their mission.	Elizabeth

Binary Oppositions – Levi-Strauss

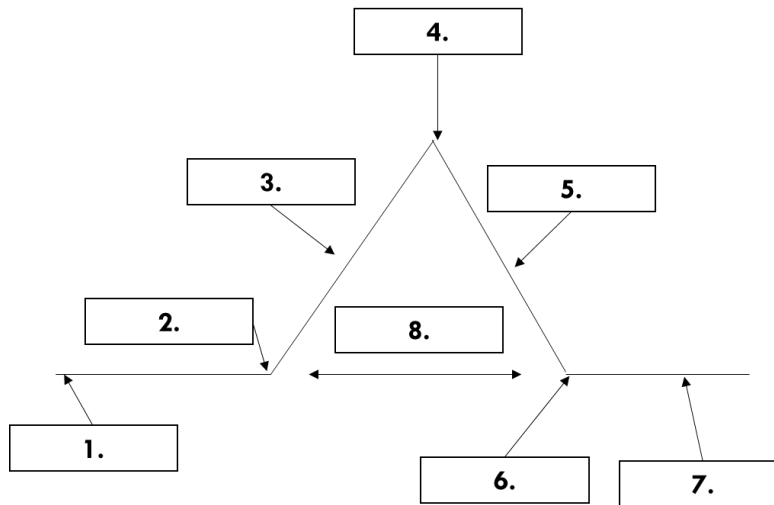
The theory that the presence of opposing themes causes conflict in a film which pushes the narrative along. A typical example in films is Good vs Evil.

Examples in King Solomon's Mines:

- Male vs Female (friction between Quartermain and Elizabeth; "A woman on safari?!")
- Strong vs Weak (also applies to their relationship – also, general idea of nature's rules; strong survive, weak die)
- Western vs Tribal (clash between cultures; White characters don't always understand tribal customs; Western technology outwits tribes).
- Human vs Nature (characters battle against nature).

KSM – Characters and Narrative

Freytag's Narrative Structure



1. Exposition	Setting the scene or a character's back story.	Hunting scene – we get a clear sense that Q is the protagonist.
2. Inciting Incident	Something that leads characters to conflict.	Elizabeth propositions Q to go on the dangerous quest.
3. Rising Action	After the Inciting Incident; movement to the Climax.	Journey to the tribe to get supplies; on the way they encounter many animals and obstacles.
4. Climax	Where the drama comes to its highest point.	Stampede scene – marketed as one of the selling points of the film.
5. Falling Action	After the Climax; story moves to Conclusion.	Group journey across the four elements.
6. Conclusion	The action in the narrative comes to an end.	They discover the lost tribe where Elizabeth's husband is.
7. Denouement	Different storylines are brought together and resolved.	They find the body of Elizabeth's husband – Umbopa fights to the death and becomes King.
8. Transformation	The change in characters or situations across the narrative.	Umbopa is King, Elizabeth has found love and Quartermain has rediscovered his sense of adventure.

Todorov's Narrative Structure

Equilibrium	A state of peace or normality – what the world or situation is like.	Quartermain lives in Africa taking tourists on safari.
Disruption/ Disequilibrium	Something that happens to change the equilibrium.	Quartermain becomes bored or disillusioned with his life in Africa – he has lost his sense of adventure.
Recognition	Seeing that there is disequilibrium and deciding that something must be done.	Elizabeth propositions him to lead a dangerous mission.
Attempt	Trying to change the disequilibrium.	The quest itself.
Return to or New Equilibrium	Either going back to how things were, or a new state of peace or normality.	Umbopa is King, Elizabeth has found love and Quartermain has rediscovered his sense of adventure.

KSM – Model Answers

Analyse the narrative structure of KSM

KSM uses a linear narrative that fits with Todorov's narrative structure, in that his adventurous life in Africa is in equilibrium, until he embarks on the perilous quest to find a lost diamond mine. This disequilibrium is resolved as Quartermain rediscovers his lust for adventure and finds love. The narrative viewpoint employed is a restrictive one; we view the events alongside the main characters on their quest. This means that we are in suspense as they journey through their dangerous setting because we do not know what might happen to them. KSM uses ellipses frequently in order to add pace to the film. An ellipsis is when a narrative moves forward in time in order to purposefully omit information.

Explore how race or gender is represented in KSM

WAGOLL – What a Good One Looks Like

In King Solomon's Mines, the African tribesmen are presented as peaceful and vibrant. This is shown in the cinematography during the scene where Quartermain and the others encounter the first tribe. For example, low-angle shots are used of the villagers exiting their homes and a two-shot is used of Quartermain and the tribe leader. This shows a degree of mutual respect between the two groups and suggests that, during this exchange, Quartermain and the tribe are meeting as equals. This links to the context of the 1950s where attitudes towards black people in America were gradually becoming more progressive. Moreover, the vast range of tribes used in the film suggests a vibrancy in their culture. For example, towards the end of the film, the characters observe the dance of the Watusi tribe. Here, aerial shots are used to show the entire scene and there are no cutaways to the reactions of characters. This demonstrates that the scene is purely about watching the dance of the Watusi people and nothing else and suggests that, beyond any racial motivations, Bennet and Morton wanted to portray an authentic view of African culture. This links to 1950s America as audiences would have had a great fascination with the Dark Continent, but due to lack of commercial fights, would only have been able to access it through cinema and literature.

WAGOLL

What a Good One Looks Like.

KSM – Model Answers

Explore how Mise en Scene is used in your chosen film to present your key characters..

WAGOLL – What a Good One Looks Like

A key character in King Solomon's Mines is Elizabeth, who is a traditional Victorian woman searching for her missing husband. Mise-en-Scene is used effectively to show the transformation that she undergoes during the film. For example, at the beginning of the film, she is dressed in Victorian dresses and corsets, obviously unsuitable for an African Safari. The use of hot jungles as the setting provides contrast to her costume and makes her appear immediately incongruous. Her costume at the beginning of the film also contrasts to Quartermain. Levi-Strauss would argue that this is an example of Binary Oppositions; the clash in costumes amplifies the conflict between strong and weak, or male and female.

However, during the course of the film, Elizabeth undergoes a personal transformation where she becomes liberated. Again, Mise en Scene is used to demonstrate this as she cuts her long hair and adopts a shorter (more masculine) style. She also wears trousers and a loose blouse. During this scene, Elizabeth sees a baby crocodile hatch. The use of this prop indicates that she is now more comfortable with nature. This fits in with the context of the film, as women in the 1950s were gradually becoming more equal.

How does the cinematography in KSM make it more exciting?

WAGOLL – What a Good One Looks Like

The cinematography in KSM makes it more exciting because of the use of wide shots. This is where all of the scene is shown within a shot. This is used frequently throughout the film, in particular during the opening of the film (an establishing shot of gazelle on the African plains is used) and when the protagonists are on their quest against the four elements. In these shots, the setting dominates the aspect ratio of the shot, meaning the characters only make up the bottom third of the shot. This means that the sublime and terrifying settings are emphasised. This makes it more exciting because these settings would have been magnificent for contemporary audiences to see during an age where fascination in the Dark Continent was high and where commercial flying was limited to the wealthy classes. Moreover, the emphasis on the dangerous settings from the use of wide shots creates difficult obstacles for the protagonists to overcome, therefore making the narrative more exciting.

WAGOLL

What a Good One Looks Like.