

## Abstract

For those who write academic history, the historical film has often been viewed as suspect, fake and even an enemy. It is because the medium of film is accused of stealing history's audiences and distorting historical 'truths' that should be told objectively without metaphorical and fictional embellishments. The aim of this article is to explore the filmic and historical representations of the revolutionary icon—Patrice Emery Lumumba and the political contradictions of postcolonial Congo [1925-1961]. This article does not seek to confirm whether or not what the film '*Lumumba*' depicts correspond point for point with written historical narratives about Lumumba. Rather, the article seeks to analyse the film '*Lumumba*' on its own terms, and in the process explicate what its filmic representations say about the history of Lumumba; how that history reflect, refract, relate to, intersect with, comment on, contest or even elaborate on the historical data about Lumumba. Using the oxymoron 'History on film and film on history' created by Rosenstone (2012: p xiii) the article probes us to think about the relationship between history dramatized on the screen and history as factual information captured on a page. The idea is to question the filmmaker's [Raul Peck] rules of engagement with the past in his quest to "unbury" the "truths" about the history of Lumumba and that of postcolonial Congo.