Indeed, close critical attention to this universe shows forces at play that undermine any narrative of victimization that Livingstone might try to impose.

These forces take the form of active and sustained resistance by the local African populations to the Arab traders, their followers, and, ultimately, Livingstone himself.

Most obviously, this occurs at the level of interpersonal and intercultural interaction.

It is no secret that the local populations in Manyema resent the arrival of the Arabs, as in the case of the Bira ethnic group who, notes Livingstone, “are now enraged at seeing Ujijians pass into their ivory field” (1870a:[69]).

This anger translates into multiple skirmishes with the Arab traders.

One example gives a sense of the whole: “Moenemokia killed 2 Arab agents & took their guns […] Elsewhere they made regular preparation to have a fight with Dugumbe's people just to see who was strongest. They with their spears & wooden shields or the Arabs with what in derision they called tobacco pipes (guns)[.] They killed eight or nine Arabs” (1870a:[59], [61]-[62]; cf. 1870i:XXXVIII).

The local populations not only resist the Arab traders, but kill them and their followers, and, notably, capture their firearms.

Elsewhere the locals also apply more subtle warfare tactics, such as setting Arab camps on fire at night (1870i:XXXI).

Later history would show such tactics to be ineffective in the face of the growing and ever more aggressive Arab trade plus the organizational skills of Tippu Tip.

However, the 1870 Field Diary captures the effects of the resistance strategies at a moment when the future remains undecided.

On one hand, the local populations succeeds in evoking fear and drawing respect from the traders: “The Mamohela horde is becoming terrified [-] Every party going to trade has lost three or four men and the last foray lost ten and saw that the Manyema can fight” (1870i:XXXIV, cf. XXXI).

On the other, Livingstone’s diary tracks the increasing skill of the local populations in engaging in a different kind of warfare, as in the case of the Merere, a local headman and descendant of Charura.

In a brief narrative included near the end of the 1870 Field Diary, Merere first turns against the Arabs, killing one and robbing several others “of all they had,” but then apparently repents of his behavior and indicates that he will “repay all loses” (1871b:LXXX).

More interesting, however, is Livingstone’s representation of Merere’s personal disposition in these proceedings: “He looks as if insane & probably is so” (1871b:LXXX).

Livingstone describes Merere as a cipher, an individual whose actions exceed Livingstone’s abilities to assess and definitively characterize them from a putatively rational perspective.