

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Sidney Hinde's *The Fall of the Congo Arabs*_____

Robert C. Evans

By the time Joseph Conrad published his famous short novel *Heart of Darkness* in 1899, the issue of colonialism in the Congo region of central Africa had long been a topic of public discussion in England. Numerous books and articles had commented—sometimes at great length—about conditions there. These sources not only described many aspects of European colonialism and the cultures of the various indigenous tribes but also often commented on colonialism imposed from a different quarter altogether—the Arab world. In fact, one way Europeans tried to justify their various colonial ambitions in Africa was by alleging that their projects were superior to (and far less brutal than) those of the Arabs. In particular, Europeans alleged, with some justice, that powerful Arabs in Africa had long been among the main organizers and beneficiaries of the enslavement of African natives. Defenders of European colonialism often prided themselves (again, with some justice) on their efforts to abolish this sort of overt slavery. As Conrad suggests, however, they could sometimes be justly accused of having introduced slavery of another sort.¹

One especially interesting book about the Congo that preceded Conrad's novella was titled *The Fall of the Congo Arabs* (1897), by Sidney Langford Hinde. The title page identifies Hinde as a "Chevalier de L'Ordre Royal du Lion," a "Membre Honoraire de la Société Belge de la Géographie," a "Medical Officer of the Interior, British East Africa," and, most significantly, a "Late Captain, Congo Free State Forces." It was, of course, the so-called "Congo Free State" that Conrad and others satirized so stingingly. Therefore, Hinde (1863–1930) and men like him might fairly be regarded as implicated in that satire. It is worth wondering, in fact, whether Conrad might even have read Hinde's account of the latter's time in Africa as Conrad was working on his short novel. Hinde's book

does not seem to have been much discussed in commentary on Conrad's text. His name does not turn up in searches of the MLA International Bibliography, nor does it appear in the indexes of the two standard but early annotated bibliographies of criticism of Conrad (Teets, and Teets and Gerber). Searches in Google Books are a bit more productive, but there is little to indicate that Hinde's possible relevance to Conrad has been discussed in much detail.²

My purpose here, then, is mainly to outline the contents of Hinde's book. Almost everything he writes has at least some potential relevance to Conrad's novella. Hinde, in general, offered the kind of justification for European colonialism—by comparing it both with Arab colonialism and with conditions among indigenous tribes—that Conrad viewed from a far more skeptical perspective.

The Introduction, by “E.C.M.,” to Hinde's Account

Hinde's detailed report about his time in Africa would seem intriguing even if Conrad never read it. If nothing else, it might have affected the ways Conrad's own book was read. Hinde's narrative opens with an Introduction by a person identified only as “E.C.M.” This person states the basic issue with frank clarity: “The year 1892,” this person writes, “marks the crisis of a struggle in Central Africa between the conflicting forces of the East and the West. Between these forces, represented on the one hand by the Arabs from Zanzibar, and on the other by the Europeans from the mouth of the Congo, a collision had long been pending.” And, E.C.M. concludes, “since each was bent upon supremacy within the same area, it was evident that the extinction of one power or the other could alone solve the problem” (1). E.C.M. called the “Zanzibar Arabs the most noted slave-hunters and slave-dealers in the world” but reported that “despite their long occupation of the Zanzibar coast and neighbouring districts, it is only within recent times that the Arabs have advanced into the Interior” (2). The Introduction's emphasis on the penchant among some African Arabs for capturing, keeping, and selling slaves seems historically accurate, and, in fact, abundant testimony by black indigenous Africans supports these assertions (see, for example, Bellagamba et al.). Indeed, Africans of the mid-to-late nineteenth

century and the early twentieth century often gave Europeans (particularly the British) great credit for helping to eradicate slavery in Africa. E.C.M. clearly saw Hinde as part of this anti-slavery crusade; both E.C.M. and Hinde often take great pride in explaining how the Europeans in the Congo district helped free black Africans from enslavement by Arabs (who were often, partly or wholly black in skin color). Many of the “Arab” slave-traders had been born in Africa and/or had descended from people long resident in Africa. They were, in fact, part of a larger system of Africans-enslaving-Africans that had existed for many centuries. Often, when Hinde mentions “Arabs” he seems to mean “Muslims.”

White Europeans, of course, had often benefitted financially, before the mid-nineteenth century, by purchasing African slaves from African slave-traders, including traders who were both “Arabs” (i.e., Muslims) and members of indigenous peoples following various non-Christian, non-Muslim religious beliefs. Native and “Arab” slave-traders then often sold slaves to European and American Christians. But by the latter half of the nineteenth century the British, in particular, had become known in Africa as well as throughout the world for their attempts to suppress the slave trade. Often they did so by active military means, particularly by capturing slave ships on the high seas and freeing the human cargo. Hinde and people like him saw themselves as part of this British effort to free enslaved peoples.

Both Hinde and E.C.M. attack slavery continuously throughout Hinde’s book. Typically they pin the blame for slavery on “the Arabs” (i.e., African Muslims). E.C.M. claims, for instance, that when disease destroyed most of the Arabs’ “beasts of burden . . . they found it necessary to employ the natives as porters; and thus, it arose that blacks were shipped to the Zanzibar slave-market.” According to E.C.M., the “supply of slaves ultimately became such as to permit of a large export across the seas to the Mohammedan countries of Asia.” But E.C.M.’s Introduction reports that “many of the ivory and slave hunters, failing to make their fortunes, or drawn by the spell of a nomadic life, remained in the Interior; and hence there grew up a system of Arab trade-routes and trade-centres,

controlled by certain well-known Arab chiefs” (3). One main focus of such trade, the Introduction stresses, was trade in slaves.

Despite these negative reports, however, both E.C.M. and Hinde sometimes showed a capacity to appreciate both the Arabs and the native Africans. This point seems worth stressing, lest one assume that both writers were completely prejudiced against non-whites and/or non-Christians. At one point, for instance, Hinde reported that “despite their slave-raiding propensities during the forty years of their domination, the Arabs have converted the Manyema and Malela country into one of the most prosperous in Central Africa” (7). Indeed, throughout his book, Hinde repeatedly admires various traits in the Africans he meets, as well as, sometimes, in the “Arabs,” even though he elsewhere often reports unattractive aspects of African and “Arab” culture in shocking detail.³

Hinde on Arab Slavery: I

When the Introduction by E.C.M. ends and the narrative by Hinde opens, it doesn’t take long before Hinde begins describing the behavior of “Arab” slave-raiders and slave-traders. He reports, for example, seven days of “marching through a district recently raided by Arab parties, in which it was impossible to find an atom of food of any kind, and during which time we saw no living thing, the natives having all been taken prisoners or destroyed” (34). Later, Hinde describes meeting “Commandant Dhanis,” a high-ranking officer in the army of the Congo Free State, who had “just finished a most successful little campaign against Tippu Tib’s slave-raiding agent, Gongo Lutete. [Dhanis] brought with him over two thousand prisoners of war and freed slaves” (61). The project of freeing slaves was, of course, one way the Belgians justified their own incursions into Africa. But Hinde soon asserts that it was not only the “Arabs” who were involved in taking slaves; the same was true, he claims, of various indigenous tribes themselves. And some of these tribes, he maintains, were interested in slaves less as sources of labor than as sources of food—a theme to which he returns repeatedly throughout his book:

It was during this time that the commissary of the district found that a regular human traffic was being carried on; the people on the upper river—the Basongo—themselves cannibals, being in the habit of selling slaves and children lower down the river to the Basongo Meno for food. He therefore ordered the sentries on the river to take, or fire on, any canoes descending the river with children on board, and, after catching a few, succeeded in stopping the traffic. (62)

In fact, according to Hinde, local European officials typically attempted to suppress cannibalism as well as slavery, but he claims that cannibalism was so widespread that efforts to eradicate it often failed. African cannibalism, along with slavery, is one of the main themes of his whole book. Indeed, often the two themes are combined, as when Hinde reports that after some indigenous “raiders had collected a sufficient number of people to fill their canoes, they returned to the Congo, and carried them up the Oubangi, where they were sold to the natives to serve as food” (67). Hinde also claimed that local boat captains had often assured him that “whenever they try to buy goats from the natives, slaves are demanded in exchange, and the natives often come on board with tusks of ivory or other money with the intention of buying a slave, complaining that meat is now scarce in their neighbourhood” (67).

Hinde on Slavery: II

Later in his narrative, Hinde reports another and unexpected difficulty connected with African slavery. Sometimes, he claims, some slaves did not actually want to be freed. He recounts one European official’s dealing with a local chief who refused to free his slaves but said he would allow them to be purchased. The European official, therefore,

bought sixty-three men for two cups of white beads each. A few of these men afterwards ran away, but many of them were promoted, and became good soldiers when they recognised the advantages of freedom. The advantage to be derived from freedom is one of the hardest things it is possible to explain to the ordinary negro slave. His powers of reasoning never seem to get beyond this: “If I am free and don’t get work, who is going to feed me? Whereas, if I have a master,

he has to find me work, and when there is no work he has still to feed me.” (78–79)

Many freed slaves were willing (or perhaps had no other choice except) to work for the newly triumphant Europeans. In some cases, such work might itself have been a kind of slavery.

Hinde makes it clear that it was not only the Europeans who helped Africans escape slavery. Often this task was undertaken by Africans themselves, who sometimes fought pitched battles to resist the efforts of the Arab slavers. At one point, for instance, Hinde describes the fearsome qualities of certain pigmy-sized peoples:

The Arab slave-raiders and ivory-hunters have often sent expeditions into the great forest, which have suffered to such an extent at the hands of these small demons, that few, and sometimes none, have returned to tell the tale of how they died, without even seeing who smote them. (84–85)

The context makes it clear that by calling these people “small demons” Hinde was partly expressing admiration for their sheer skill and relentlessness as fighters, especially in their expert use of weapons. Thus, he notes their skill at “shooting of three, or even four, arrows so rapidly that the last is discharged before the first reaches its mark” (84). Any reader of Hinde’s book will quickly realize that, far from belittling the military skills of native Africans, he often had the deepest respect for (and personal dread of) those skills. Africans, although often both enslaved and enslavers, could be fierce and terrifying fighters. Many of them knew all the arts of successful guerrilla warfare, which Hinde sometimes describes in gruesome detail.

Despite some successful resistance against the “Arab” slave-traders, however, resisting them completely was impossible, at least until Europeans intervened and finally helped to suppress the trade (for the most part) by the early twentieth century. The difficulty of resistance before that period is suggested, for instance, when Hinde reports that soon after leaving the area of the little people, he and his comrades passed through an area “devastated by the slave-

raiders” commanded by a notoriously successful Arab leader named “Tippu Tib” (85). But in a passage that shows just how complicated the issue of slavery could sometimes be, Hinde also mentions the interesting case of one of Tippu Tib’s allies: “Gongo Lutete was born in Malela, and was by blood a Bakussu. He had himself been a slave, having as a child fallen into the hands of the Arabs. While still a youth, as a reward for his distinguished conduct and pluck on raiding expeditions, he was given his freedom” (86). Thus, a black youth captured and enslaved by Arabs eventually helped capture and enslave other blacks. (In his typical way of paying tribute to Africans who impressed him for one reason or another, Hinde describes Lutete as a “well-built intelligent-looking man” [87] whose “manners were extremely dignified” [88] and whose people had “the appearance of a splendid race” [89]). Hinde reports that eventually “Lutete announced that he would leave the Arabs and come over to us, providing we would keep faith with him, and, in the event of his being attacked by the Arabs, help him to defend himself” (92).

Hinde continually stresses that he and his forces had no plan to harm African blacks but were primarily interested in suppressing the Arab slave trade. At one point, for instance, after mentioning some “natives” he and his men encountered, he comments that “we had no intention of fighting with them, our quarrel being, of course, only with the Arab slave-raiders and their allies” (121). But even when describing his Muslim enemies, he sometimes pays them tribute, regarding them as, in many cases, brave and resourceful adversaries. Thus, he writes that “on the occasions on which they were practically cornered, the desperate valour generally attributed to the Arabs showed itself in full force” (125). But often the Arabs lost these battles, which frequently involved black troops who had been recruited by the whites. Hinde mentions, for example, that after one pitched battle, “when the Arabs were retreating,” they killed some white-allied blacks “and frightfully mutilated others without killing them, leaving them on the road. This was not a wise proceeding, as it did not tend to make our people more tender in their dealings

with the retreating perpetrators of these outrages” (135). Brutalities, clearly, were common on both sides.

Obviously, Hinde paints a deliberately unattractive picture of the Arabs and certainly minimizes the bad behavior of the whites. This much can be taken for granted, and it would be interesting indeed to read Arab accounts of the conflicts Hinde describes. Typical of his commentary on his adversaries is this report:

One of the favourite ruses of the Arab chiefs was to ask for a few moments’ quiet in which to talk with one of the white officers; and on several occasions an officer—believing in the good faith of the enemy—while holding conversation with the chief, and thoroughly exposed, was, without warning, fired on simultaneously by a dozen or two of [the Arab’s] men. (155–56)

But even after recounting this sort of incident, Hinde spends the rest of the paragraph praising the Arabs’ impressive marksmanship while using inferior rifles at a considerable distance from their targets! (156). In fact, the tone of Hinde’s narrative is often one of amusement rather than outrage, as when he reports of certain natives that they “constantly brought us information about the doings of the Arabs (for which, of course, we paid them), and then went direct from us back to the town, and told the Arabs all about us. Though we knew this, and taunted them with double-dealing, they were quite unconcerned” (158–59).

Hinde typically comes across not as an inflamed partisan conquistador but as a military professional more interested in reporting facts than in constantly pressing an ideological case. He rarely if ever, for instance, denounces Arabs as anti-Christian heathens, as other writers might have done. To him, the Arabs were simply enemies whose habit of enslaving people had to be suppressed.

Hinde on Slavery: III

Much of Hinde’s book is given over to detailed accounts of various battles with the Arabs, including matters of strategy, tactics, fortifications, weaponry, size of forces, and so on. Rather than

constantly harping on the issue of slavery, he is more likely to spend paragraphs describing the arrangement of forces and methods of attack and defense. On several occasions he supplies maps of battlefields and defensive positions. He functions far more often as a military historian than as a champion of human rights. This fact, however, often makes his occasional comments about slavery and cannibalism seem more credible: he typically offers such comments in passing rather than trying to use them to emphasize some anti-Arab or anti-native point. He is a military man who often seems to be writing mostly for people interested in military affairs. Of course, by freeing slaves and seizing territory, Hinde and his comrades were weakening the power of the Arabs in central Africa and thus increasing the colonial power of the Europeans. But Hinde almost always gives credit to the Arabs when he thinks credit is due, as when he writes that during the time he spent at a place named Kasongo he “made a point of getting to know the surrounding country, and was constantly astonished by the splendid work which had been done in the neighbourhood by the Arabs” (187). Hinde could praise Arab colonizers when he thought they deserved it.

Ironically, the mission of freeing people enslaved by Arabs, when successful, could create its own problems. Thus, Hinde reports that during some months following victories over the Arabs

we had great difficulty in separating, arranging, and organising the enormous numbers of people—male and female—who considered themselves our slaves, and who, since the Arabs had been driven out, were like sheep without a shepherd. Thousands of Arab slaves, and native freemen and slaves with their herds of women, were daily coming to ask what they were to do. (203)

A bit later, however, he says that “we supplied these colonies with maize, rice, and other seeds; and so successful was this method that within three or four months they became self-supporting, and later on supplied our whole forces with food” (203–4). Hinde claims, in fact, that the local native people had little incentive to help the Arabs when Arab defeats seemed likely. This was due, Hinde maintains, to “the excellent policy which the [Belgian] Commandant Dhanis

had pursued throughout the whole campaign, in never allowing the natives to be interfered with or molested, unless they actually attacked us under the Arab flag” (245).

Having played his role in helping to defeat the Arabs, Hinde spent the remainder of his time in Africa exploring the Congo region, just as he spent the rest of his narrative commenting on his findings and experiences there. The narrative ends, however, with a “Note on Cannibalism”—a fact that indicates just how important a theme this practice is in his book. In fact, besides recounting battles with slave-holding Arabs, Hinde is especially concerned with describing the practices of native cannibals.

Hinde on Cannibalism: I

Cannibalism was practiced by some—but by no means all—of the local tribes with whom Hinde had contact during his time in the Congo region. In fact, he often takes pains to indicate which tribes did *not* participate in cannibalism. Here as in other cases, he doesn’t paint with a broad brush; he doesn’t accuse all black Africans of being cannibals. Even more interesting is his tendency to distinguish between different *motives* for cannibalism. In particular, he differentiates between cannibalism that results from religious practices and cannibalism that results from a simple taste for human flesh. He finds the first sort of cannibalism more comprehensible than the second. And, sometimes, he indicates that cannibalism was practiced, in part, merely because other kinds of meat were simply not available.

Hinde’s first real emphasis on cannibalism occurs when he discusses the Bangala tribe, whom he describes as “a very intelligent useful people” who were “largely employed on the steamers” (51). But a bit later he adds that they “are, however, cannibals, and are constantly giving trouble in this respect” (52). He reports that “Leopoldville, as the chief port of the Upper Congo, has large numbers of these Bangala constantly coming and going, and has, as a consequence, to keep a guard on the cemetery, several cases of body-snatching having been proved against them” (53). In one

particularly memorable passage, he recounts a conversation with certain tribesmen

in which they explained that, when at home and about to prepare a feast, the prisoner or slave who was to form the pièce de résistance had always his arms and legs broken three days beforehand and was then placed in a stream, or pool of water, chin-deep, with his head tied to a stick to prevent him committing suicide, or perhaps falling asleep and thus getting drowned. On the third day he was taken out and killed, the meat then being very tender. Though I cannot vouch for the truth of this story, I have heard it from different men at different times, and it is curious that they always break the legs and wings, or arms, as the case might be, of birds and monkeys before killing them. (53–54)

Hinde expresses no outrage at this practice, as some other writers might have done. Instead, he simply reports it as an intriguing cultural fact. And he even raises the possibility that his account might be incorrect, although he immediately suggests reasons for thinking it accurate. In short, in this passage and in many others concerning cannibalism, Hinde adopts a genuinely multicultural perspective: he seems less interested in denouncing other cultures than in simply describing their ways of life. His tone, when describing other peoples, is generally matter-of-fact, as when he later notes, concerning some Bangala tribesmen, that they “brought with them a few prisoners, and the heads of those they had killed” (55).

Hinde on Cannibalism: II

Hinde’s ability to report incidents of cannibalism in a nonchalant tone is especially evident when he describes a Basongo tribesman who, while on sentry duty for the Belgians, had shot, from a distance, an African spy. When the body was brought into the camp, he

complained that the spy he had shot was his father, and that it was very hard lines, since he was unable to eat him. The Commandant ordered him to bury the body properly, but discovered afterwards that, though the man would not eat the body himself, he had given it to his friends to eat. That same week a young Basongo chief came to

the Commandant while at his dinner in his tent, and asked for the loan of his knife, which, without thinking, the Commandant lent him. He immediately disappeared behind the tent and cut the throat of a little girl-slave belonging to him, and was in the act of cooking her, when one of our soldiers saw him, and reported what he was doing. This cannibal was put in irons, but some two months later I found him in such a wretched condition that, fearing he would die, I took him out of the chains, and gave him his liberty with a warning. (63–64)

Hinde's willingness to free the man suggests an extraordinary degree of either compassion, multicultural understanding, or both. But then he continues:

Scarcely a fortnight had passed, when he was brought in by some of our Hausa soldiers, who said that he was eating the children in and about our cantonments. He had a bag slung round his neck, which on examining we found contained an arm and a leg of a young child. As three or four children had disappeared within the fortnight, and there had been no deaths amongst them in camp, this was at the trial considered sufficient evidence against him, and he was taken out and shot, as the only cure for such an incorrigible. (64)

Even here, however, Hinde does not pause to sermonize. He simply offers his report and then moves on to other matters. He notes, for instance, that a little later “a number of the prisoners of war took to deserting, and, finding out in which direction they went, we demanded of the great chief of the district that they should be given up to us.” But the chief replied that, “with the exception of one prisoner, they had all been eaten, and sent thirty-seven slaves in exchange” (64).

As it happens, the one uneaten prisoner was a little boy whom Hinde knew personally. In repeating the boy's account of events, Hinde for once briefly expresses moral outrage, saying that the boy's “descriptions of what he had seen at the time were quite sickening.” Hinde then continued:

Prisoners or servants have often spoken to me in this manner: “We want meat; we know you have not enough goats and fowls to be

able to spare us some, but give us that man [indicating one of their number]; he is a lazy fellow, and you'll never get any good out of him, so you may as well give him to us to eat." (64)

Hinde soon returns, however, to his more typical scientific, reportorial tone. He usually writes as a nonjudgment anthropologist rather than as a revolted Christian preacher. He says, for example, that the

question of cannibalism in Africa has been very little discussed; the great travellers, such as Livingstone, Cameron, Stanley, and Wissmann, frequently refer in their works to the simple fact that the peoples they passed through were cannibals, but all details or statement of the causes that led to these references have usually been omitted. As travellers through an unknown continent, accompanied by an alien race or races, they were naturally not in touch with the people through whose countries they passed, who, when not actually hostile, remained in a state of armed neutrality. So far as I have been able to discover, nearly all the tribes in the Congo Basin either are, or have been, cannibals; and among some of them the practice is on the increase.

Ironically, he suggests that it was partly the intervention of Europeans into Africa that helped lead to this growth in cannibalism. Although the Europeans ostensibly came to help "civilize" the natives, they had helped make travel so easy that tribes now had much greater interaction with one another than in the past:

Races who until lately do not seem to have been cannibals, though situated in a country surrounded by cannibal races, have, from increased intercourse with their neighbours, learned to eat human flesh; for since the entry of Europeans into the country greater facilities for travelling and greater safety for travellers have come about. Formerly the people who wandered from their own neighbourhood among the surrounding tribes were killed and eaten, and so did not return among their people to enlighten them by showing that human flesh was useful as an article of food.

This increase in cannibalism (if Hinde is correct that it had, in fact, occurred) was just one of the many paradoxes resulting from European interference in Africa. For the most part, however, Hinde seems less interested in blaming anyone for cannibalism than in simply reporting, in some detail, how it was practiced. Thus, at one point he mentions that

judging from what I have seen of these people, they seem fond of eating human flesh; and though it may be an acquired taste, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that they prefer human flesh to any other. During all the time I lived among cannibal races I never came across a single case of their eating any kind of flesh raw; they invariably either boil, roast, or smoke it. This custom of smoking flesh to make it keep would have been very useful to us, as we were often without meat for long periods. We could, however, never buy smoked meat in the markets, it being impossible to be sure that it was not human flesh.

The preference of different tribes, more than different individuals of a tribe, for various parts of the human body, is interesting. Some cut long steaks from the flesh of the thighs, legs, or arms; others prefer the hands and feet; and though the great majority do not eat the head, I have come across more than one tribe which prefers the head to any other part. (68)

Once again, Hinde shows remarkable multicultural tolerance and understanding. He rarely pauses to castigate cannibalistic practices; he more typically simply describes them. And even when he *does* express a cultural bias, he manages to find a silver lining:

During the war in which we were engaged for two years, with our enormous crowds of camp followers we reaped perhaps the only advantages that could be claimed for this disgusting custom [of cannibalism]. In the night following a battle or the storming of a town, these human wolves disposed of all the dead, leaving nothing even for the jackals, and thus saved us, no doubt, from many an epidemic. (69)

Every so often Hinde will revert to his own cultural prejudices, as when he refers to “disgusting banquets” (69). However, his tone is mostly one of studied objectivity. A little later, for example, he notes that in some villages “all the sick who die, and some before they are dead, I fancy, are thrown into the river, which passes in front of the village. Those who die violent deaths are generally eaten” (71).

Hinde on Cannibalism: III

Despite the fact that Hinde’s book continues for another two hundred pages, only rarely does he later pause to comment anymore about the evidence he encountered of cannibalism (see, for example, 119, 124, 134–35, 174–75, 208), although at one point he does remark, in a tone which, thanks to one unfortunate and perhaps even racist word, seems more judgmental than usual, that what

struck me most in these expeditions was the number of partially cut-up bodies I found in every direction for miles around. Some of them were minus the hands and feet, and some with steaks cut from the thighs or elsewhere; others had the entrails or the head removed, according to the taste of the individual savage, though, as I afterwards discovered, this taste is more tribal than individual. Neither old nor young, women or children, are exempt from the possibility of serving as food for their conquerors or neighbours. (131)

Hinde’s book is not at all obsessed with cannibalism. Instead, it spends some thirty pages (and then only intermittently) describing customs that he thought others before him had not sufficiently described. His book does, to be sure, begin and end with an Introduction and concluding note by “E.C.M.” discussing cannibalism, but the difference in tone between the judgmental E.C.M. and the objective Hinde is itself revealing. There can be little doubt that English readers and other Europeans, given their own cultural prejudices and general lack of familiarity with cannibalism in their own cultures, would have found the discussions of this practice especially intriguing. But Hinde did not market his book (as some others did) by referring to cannibalism in the title. His main interest, as his title does suggest, was in European efforts to suppress Arab

power and Arab slavery. This anti-slavery obsession was, of course, simply another manifestation of European cultural prejudices of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Conclusion

Unlike Hinde's book and other works written by persons who had spent considerable time in the Congo region of Africa, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* never uses the words "slave," "slavery," or "Arab[s]" and uses the word "cannibals" only twice. Surely Conrad must have known that other European visitors to the region were very much concerned with all three of these topics and had written about them extensively. It seems likely, then, that he deliberately underemphasized or even ignored the ideas that slavery was widespread in the Congo area, that so-called "Arabs" were partly (but not entirely) responsible for it, and that cannibalism was equally widespread and would have sickened many of his European readers. Conrad, in other words, seems to have downplayed or intentionally overlooked two issues that had been used by various other writers to justify European colonialism in Africa. His book could easily have been much more "prejudiced," "xenophobic," and "racist" than it allegedly is, and it could easily have made a much stronger attempt to justify imperialism than it supposedly does.

Notes

1. One of the very best books on slavery in Africa, especially in the evidence it provides about "Arabs" as slave-traders and European (especially English) efforts to disrupt the slave trade in the second half of the nineteenth century, is the collection edited by Bellagamba et al. This book is particularly valuable because most of the testimonies quoted are from Africans, who often emphasize "Arab" slavery and how it was typically ended by European intervention. See especially volume 1.
2. Among the Conrad scholars who mention or briefly discuss Hinde's book, see Firchow (71); Griffith (29 and 166–67); Jasanoff (346); Mahood (12); Miller (33); and Peters (197).
3. Among the complimentary comments Hinde offers about Africans and Arabs are these:

- “The Balubas are a fine, healthy, industrious race, the products of whose industries are to be found immense distances outside their own district” (79).
- “The Baluba women are graceful, lively, gay, and industrious. . . . Their many good qualities and high moral standard make them very valuable, and they are much sought after by Arab and even native chiefs for their harems” (80–81).
- “Another point that struck me among the Balubas within the Arab sphere of influence was their extreme personal cleanliness. A thorough bath half a dozen times a day was the rule rather than the exception” (81).
- “. . . it is an indisputable fact that the negroes are both a healthy and prolific race” (81).
- The Batwa people “are both sturdy and independent” (82).
- The Arabs promoted cleanliness by “introducing soap-making” (201).
- When the children of one African leader arrived from a journey and were presented to him “his transports of delight were quite affecting to everyone present” (212).
- The carving done by one native tribe “in wood and ivory is really beautiful” (261).

Works Cited

- Bellagamba, Alice, Sandra E. Greene, and Martin A. Klein, editors. *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade*. 2 vols. Cambridge UP, 2013.
- Firchow, Peter Edgerly. *Envisioning Africa: Racism and Imperialism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*. U of Kentucky P, 2015.
- Griffith, John Wylie. *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma: Bewildered Traveller*. Oxford UP, 1995.
- Jasanoff, Maya. *The Dawn Watch: Joseph Conrad in a Global World*. Penguin, 2018.
- Mahood, M. M. *A Reading of Six Novels*. Rowman and Littlefield, 1977.
- Miller, Marlowe A. *Masterpieces of British Modernism*. Greenwood, 2006.
- Peters, John G., editor. *Heart of Darkness*, by Joseph Conrad. Broadview, 2019.

Teets, Bruce E. *Joseph Conrad: An Annotated Bibliography*. Garland, 1990.

_____, and Helmut Gerber. *Joseph Conrad An Annotated Bibliography of Writings about Him*. Northern Illinois UP, 1971.