

pulls back from making a blanket condemnation of Rwandan society and Rwandan men. In the last third, Daphrose visits the home of a family who hid her and others from the Interahamwe and reunited her with her surviving children. This remarkably brave family is headed by a formidable matriarch who risked her life to protect her Tutsi neighbors and emboldened her children to do the same. The profile of this family was absolutely necessary for humanizing Rwanda and for breaking down fruitless correlations between the idea of Hutus as villains and Tutsis as victims.

The closing scene of the film is a staging of a family portrait—Daphrose's family portrait. Since the end of the genocide she not only founded Duhozanye and reunited with her surviving birth children, but she also opened her home to other children who had lost their families. With twenty sons and daughters now in her care, Daphrose concludes that perhaps God let her live so that she could take care of all these children. Certainly, the Interahamwe let older women like Daphrose and Madeline live because they were past their childbearing years. This early comment on the intersection of ethnic and generational selection in the genocide raises interesting questions about the demographics of contemporary Rwanda, which yet may have to remain unanswered in Paul Kagame's postethnic nation.

Duhozanye is a powerfully moving tribute to the crucial role of women and feminist solidarities in reconstructing posttraumatic societies. It shows how even in the midst of absolute horror, and even as powerful nations turned a blind eye to the genocide, Rwandan women were able to forge new paths toward self-healing and communal healing. Indeed, the film argues that they had to. The widow's society members took up work they had never done before and articulated radically feminist ideas because forging a new world where they could hope to live with peace *and* justice demanded that old ways of doing things be left far behind.

Abosade George

Barnard College

New York, New York

ageorge@barnard.edu

doi:10.1017/asr.2014.132

Raymonde Provencher, director. *Grace, Milly, Lucy . . . Child Soldiers*. 2010. 52 minutes. Canada/Uganda. Women Make Movies. \$295.00.

Grace, Milly, Lucy . . . Child Soldiers is a portrait of three Ugandan women who were captives and girl soldiers in Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army. The Grace of the film's title is Grace Akallo, co-author of *Girl Soldier: A Story of Hope for Northern Uganda's Children* (Chosen Books, 2007), founder of the NGO United Africans for Women and Children's Rights, and an accomplished international speaker on the themes of gender, youth, and militarism in Africa. Milly is Milly Auma, one of the four founders of Empowering Hands, a Ugandan organization that offers community-based

counseling to former LRA abductees and displaced people. Lucy refers to Lucy Lanyero, a woman about whom little is known beyond what appears in the film.

The film opens on a dark field of tall grasses with Grace's voice-over narrating the night of her abduction. Underneath, the soundtrack carries the mournful tones of string instruments and scattered insect songs, punctuated by the click-clack of an automatic weapon being loaded. We are told that Grace was a student at St. Mary's College, Aboke, when LRA militants launched a late night raid and forced the schoolgirls to march barefoot into the bush, under threat of death by *panga*. Grace delivers a terrifying retelling of how the schoolgirls were sorted into two categories: the small girls and the big girls. The latter were allowed to leave following the desperate pleadings of one of the schoolteachers, while the small girls, Grace included, were fated to be left with the militants. Any thought of escape was vanquished with death threats against the would-be escapee or her friends. The schoolgirls were told that if one member of the group of twenty-nine attempted to escape, the other twenty-eight would immediately be killed. About two weeks after her abduction, Grace learned firsthand just how precarious life had become. Just when the band of captives and keepers was about to enter into Sudan, one girl tried to escape but was caught. The other girls were ordered to beat her to death and each picked up some small implement that she could use to put on a convincing performance of brutality. Impatient with these schoolgirls who had not been fully transformed into girl soldiers, Grace tells us simply, "The rebels hit her with an axe on the head. And she died."

On the film's website (macubainternational.com), the director describes the work as "a film on the fate of girl soldiers in Uganda." It would be more apt to say that it is a memoir of girl soldiers and their postcaptivity lives. The three girls stand in for three fates. In some ways, Grace, who was abducted as a teenager and spent seven months in captivity, can be said to have formed the most successful postcaptivity life of the three. It is one that has taken her far away from the site of her childhood horrors to the rarefied halls of the United Nations and liberal colleges in Massachusetts. On the other extreme we have Lucy, who was abducted at age nine and spent ten years in captivity. In the film Lucy always appears to be two steps away from a complete breakdown. She is tormented by mysterious sweats and evil spirits, requiring her to make numerous visits to the local herbalist. She is haunted by the actions of her past life, when she was known as Lance Corporal Lucy. But she seems to be also disturbed by a subtly nagging pull to return to the bush. She is distrusted and kept at some distance by other former abductees who remembered the notorious Lance Corporal Lucy as "mean" and "a hard person," as someone who took pleasure in discriminating between "original LRA" and those who were mere "recruits."

Milly was one of Lucy's "co-wives" in the harem of an LRA fighter. She too was abducted at age nine and held in captivity for ten years. Her outcome or fate lies somewhere in the middle of the three. Like Lucy, she

remains in Northern Uganda where she has to face the accusations and condemnations of those who were left behind—people like her new mother-in-law. But like Grace she is able to reconstruct a new life in advocacy and peace-building work. Much of Milly's time in captivity was spent as an LRA "wife" and mother and she gained a reputation among her fellow captives for being nurturing and sympathetic. In her postcaptivity life she found a loving and empathetic man who defied convention by marrying a former "recruit," and she was empowered by her organization and other Northern Uganda NGOs to extend her care-giving talents to a wider community of former abductees.

The film has much to recommend it. One of the strengths of the film is that it is organized through the memoirs of Grace, Milly, and Lucy; thus we get to hear their firsthand reflections on all they saw, both during and after their years of captivity. We hear their stories, their pauses, the recollections that they rush through and those that are told haltingly. And the catch in their throats. One scene profiles Lucy and her mother, who was interviewed about their reunion and how she felt about her long lost daughter. We hear Lucy's mother talk about her joy at recovering her child and her conviction that Lucy never killed anyone in all her years away. "She is too kindhearted," she says. The camera pulls back and catches Lucy adjusting ever so slightly to turn her back toward her mother. "Things happened in the bush," she says in the next scene. "I decided not to tell my mother. It would bring her pain." In moments like this, we find another of the film's strengths: its willingness to get into the complexities of what life in postcaptivity can actually be like. We are not given any point-to-point progression from captivity to freedom, sadness to joy. Normal life for the former girl soldiers maintains a tinge of unreality; yet they must continue to march forward through it.

The film sets out with the humble goal of highlighting the experiences of female soldiers—girls who were made to bear arms while simultaneously bearing babies—and to add their experiences to the larger picture of traumatized childhoods in Northern Uganda. But it surpasses this goal by pulling out the variations of experience between girls like Grace, who was abducted as an adolescent and escaped within a year, and those like Lucy and Milly, who were abducted as small children and effectively raised within the LRA. How, the film implicitly asks, does the trauma of abduction express itself differently for different girls? How does the trauma of being reinserted into normal society with the mark of the girl soldier upon your being manifest itself differently for different girls? These are questions that are not usually broached.

The film also deals with more frequently explored issues, like the vexed question of how to deal with the children of posttraumatic episodes. It addresses this issue on two levels. One is by looking at how Milly and Lucy's own mothers deal with their returned daughters: whether they are able to accept them, and on what terms. When Lucy says that there were things that happened in the bush that she could not tell her mother, the viewer infers that not only would these revelations bring her mother pain, but they could also bring Lucy the pain of fundamental parental rejection. Her mother

needs to believe that Lucy never killed anyone in order to welcome her back. The other level of analysis centers on the children of the LRA rebels whom the girls bring back with them. How will they be regarded? What types of family histories will they be saddled with? How will the community, the nation, and most immediately their own mothers relate to them—and vice versa? The film explores this issue in various segments in which we see Milly and Lucy interacting with their children and at least one segment in which Lucy voices her ambivalence about her oldest son.

The film is great on the micropolitics of the afterlives of girl soldiers, but much weaker on the larger context of the history of the LRA or Joseph Kony's war against the Ugandan government. We are told through flashes of text on the screen that within a twenty-year period thirty thousand children were kidnapped and pressed into Joseph Kony's armies where they formed 80 percent of LRA troops. Of that number, over 30 percent were girls. Delivering an in-depth political history of modern Uganda was clearly not one of the filmmakers' goals. But as Mahmood Mamdani, Sara Wechsler, and the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars all noted in their critiques of Invisible Children's KONY2012 campaign, by not fleshing out the political history of the LRA and its relationship to the Ugandan state, one runs the risk of detaching the dynamics in Northern Uganda from the larger nation, and of reproducing an idea of mindless African violence (in this case, violence against girls). Furthermore, there is an odd timelessness to the film, which also infected the KONY2012 video. A novice to Ugandan history may wonder which twenty-year period we are talking about exactly. Are the abductions of girls and boys still going on? The film does not adequately address these details of political history.

Finally, the one-sided focus on LRA atrocities may be the film's greatest shortcoming. As many commentators have noted, the Ugandan government was hardly viewed as a protector of the people in the northern part of the country. Government forces are recorded to have acted with the same kind of impunity and disregard for human rights as the LRA rebels themselves. To make greatest use of the film, one would want to put it in dialogue with work that records both LRA and government atrocities against the communities of Northern Uganda. The U.K. *Guardian* recently (January 12, 2014) profiled an important oral research project by Deo Komachek, a massacre scoper for Uganda's National Memory and Peace Documentation Center. Komachek's work involves traveling throughout the region of Northern Uganda and collecting and archiving people's memories of atrocities committed by the LRA and Ugandan government forces. Coupling Komachek's recordings with this film, which innovatively casts a critical feminist lens on dominant narratives of war and its aftermaths in Northern Uganda, would be useful for an advanced undergraduate course.

Abosede George
 Barnard College
 New York, New York
 ageorge@barnard.edu

doi:10.1017/asr.2014.133