“Mister Jeremy, This is a Mad House!”: Trauma, Narrative, Displacement

by

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For my Grandparents
Caroline and Walter Isard
1919-2010
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Glossary of Acronyms

ALIR………………………………………… Armée de Libération du Rwanda
AMISOM………………………………… African Union Mission in Somalia
AU………………………………………… African Union
DRC……………………………………… Democratic Republic of Congo
GUSCO………………………………… Gulu Support the Children Organization
GTZ……………………………………… German Development Agency
FARDC………………………………… Armed Forces of the DRC
LRA……………………………………… Lord’s Resistance Army
NGO……………………………………… Non-governmental Organization
OPM……………………………………… Office of the Prime Minister (Uganda)
RPF……………………………………… Rwandan Patriotic Front
RLP……………………………………… Refugee Law Project
SPLA…………………………………… Sudan People’s Liberation Army
UNHRC………………………………… UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UPDF (NRM)…………………………… Uganda Peoples Defense Force
TFG……………………………………… Transitional Federal Gov’t (Somalia)
Map # 1: See Gulu and Nakivale circled in Red
UNHCR.org (Accessed: September 2010)
Map # 2: Northern Uganda and the Phase-out of IDP Camps in Acholiland
UNHCR.org (Accessed: September 2010)
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Provided by UNHCR in Kampala, April 5, 2011
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Preface:

Florence has just killed her parents. She stands motionless. The torch is still in her hand. She turns on her heel and walks north.

Florence was abducted from Naam Okora town center at the age of twelve. But prior to that day she recalls, “I was having some nice life with my parents because my father was a doctor in Kitgum.” Naam Okora is a crossroads in Kitgum province and to continue North is to approach Uganda’s border with Southern Sudan. The road bisects the savannah and in every direction the plains encounter towering peaks that complete the horizon and mark the boundaries with surrounding territories. Fires rage in the night to refertilize the land. Late one evening about a year ago I was riding with a friend and our motorcycle broke down as we were approaching Naam Okora. A kind older gentleman offered us a room in his home for the night. He spoke of God’s plans.

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Yusef’s son crumples to the ground. He has been shot and he is dead. Yusef stands motionless. Then Yusef is smashed in the eye with the butt of a gun.

Yusef taught English and History to primary school students in Mogadishu, Somalia. As a boy, Yusef was the only Muslim student at Father Hoggard’s Catholic boarding school in Kenya. English was his best subject.

“The rebels came because they wanted money... and their target was developed areas. I was one of the English speakers in the capital city. I had three
cars, a nice house, and servants working.” But now that world is no longer. “Within
some seconds they destroyed. They killed my wife. As I went to assist my son, they hit
me with the back of the gun and I lost my eye. They killed my handsome son.” Yusef
returns momentarily to the present to emphasize landmarks along the path to being a
refugee.

“I had two eyes doing well and I was invested in Mogadishu…but can you see
my house now Mister Jeremy, this is a mad house!” We sit together where Yusef
sleeps but his real home would be impossible. “If only you could see the place I used
to live by the ocean. My Lord, you could like my style! I used to get the breeze from
the Indian Ocean and... we could have been discussing there.”

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Soon after being abducted, Florence came back to her village. Only this time
she was the abductor—charged along with the rest of her rebel contingent to capture
boys to be soldiers and girls to be wives of soldiers.

“That day they captured many people...including my mom and dad.” But for
the leaders of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), ravaging northern Uganda for
children and resources was nothing new and it was important, after nearly a decade
of active conflict, to inquire into any potential relations between recent abductees and
those remaining in the village:

“Who knows anyone who we have captured,” they asked Florence and her
fellow abductees.
“I raised up my hand and said, ‘Please, I know them, these two are my mother and father.’ And they said, ‘Are you ready to go back to Sudan or do you want to stay here with your mom?’” Florence knew this was a test and that failure meant death. She replied,

“‘I am ready to go back with you to Sudan.’ They said, ‘If you are ready to go back to Sudan, we want you to kill these two people.’”

“Well I refused to do that and so I said, ‘Instead...of killing my own parents...you better kill me.’” But such principle did not go over so well.

“‘Ok then, we will show you.’ The leaders started killing the people they had captured. And when they were about to reach my parents they said, ‘Why don’t you kill either your mom or your dad so that you will never think of them again and you will not want to come back home. Just kill at least one of them and then we shall help you kill the rest.’ [I responded:] ‘I cannot do that.’ They pushed [my parents along with] the remaining people into a [small thatched roof] hut and locked them inside.”

The leader of the rebels handed Florence a torch.

“‘If you don’t do it, we will do it but we will start with you.’ It reached a point where I could not refuse. I set the fire and started walking.”

—

Yusef left Mogadishu and returned to Mandera, a border town on the Somalia side of the boundary with Kenya that he had once crossed to meet Father Hoggard.
“But in 2007 there was no peace in Mogadishu...so I decided to come to Kenya as a refugee.” Yet, 2007 was not the time to be a newcomer in Kenya, the election violence was at its height, and Yusef recalls thinking:

“There was discrimination and demonstrations and more problems.” He continued west to Uganda and to a refugee settlement in the far southwest corner of the country called Nakivale.

Florence and her captors reached Sudan in a matter of days. The events in her village had taken place circa 1997. Upon her return to Sudan, Florence was given to a ranked soldier as a “wife” and by 2000 she had given birth to her first son. Florence stayed in the town of Jebalen. There was a serious attack on their encampment by the Ugandan government. Florence survived and some months later had another child. Relations soured between the LRA and Sudan’s Khartoum government. Florence became stuck between the warring factions of a foreign conflict: Khartoum and Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). One day after avoiding an SPLA ambush, Florence and her leader Joseph Kony were stuck together at the top of Mount Kinyeti in the Imatong Mountains along the Uganda border. But without support from al-Bashir and Khartoum, Florence could not stay in Sudan. Kony sent her among those headed home to Uganda. The father of her children was placed in a different group.

“The worst moment of my life in the bush [happened] when we returned to Uganda.”
In displacement, memories of before are a constant negotiation for Yusef.

“I always [try to] forget the past but...sometimes the life I used to live...and the way I used to share my problems with my wife...haunts me when sleep is not coming.” And since being displaced, Yusef has revised his strategy of confronting this “haunting.”

“[At first,] I would go for alcohol but...when you remember your past and go to get drunk...you wake up and you must confront the same problems...[Now] I go to the town and meet someone to talk to so these things...leave my mind...It is better to go for a football match and discuss football with the person who is near you [so] the thoughts perish away.” And Yusef has seen this strategy produce successful results, in fact he invited Mulamba, a refugee from Congo who served as a human rights lawyer and child-soldier reintegration specialist back in eastern Congo, to move in with him in Nakivale:

“Sometimes we go around and [discuss]...the news. We both have radios. I focus on Africa in English, he listens in French, then we compare and I forget about what is haunting me.” And again Yusef assumes the tone of a gentle elder imparting invaluable knowledge to a younger generation—reinforcing his words with a willingness to be vulnerable:

“The flashbacks come to me...and I become completely upset. But I try to be a very strong-hearted man. If you pour water here,” Yusef proclaims pointing at the mud floor, “can you put it back? No, my friend Jeremy, these things have happened, it is gone now and it will not come back. Pray to God and try to get another life.” We
pause and sit some moments in silence. Yusef has told me time and again that remaining busy and being engaged in the Nakivale communities allows him to forget about the deaths of his family. And yet for the past hour, I have asked deeply personal questions about memory, hardship, and displacement. What gives me the right to ask Yusef to remember?

Yusef breaks the silence,

“Tonight it will haunt me. It will come. Because we have talked about it. It will come. I am just doing this because of our friendship.”

Florence ran. When she and other fleeing rebels reached the Uganda border, all of a sudden, there were planes bombing and government troops in pursuit.

“You move tired, you cannot cook. Two days, three days, you cannot rest. That was the worst. [It made] Sudan [seem] ok.”

Still running. “The planes were [dropping] bombs. One happened to kill my friend, but her young child was not dead and the child went and slept on the dead body. I was there with my two children. I had pity. I said, ‘let me go and carry that child.’ As I was going to carry the child they shot us again from above and another bomb dropped. The smoke and other things covered us and people thought we were dead. One of my children ran away to another group. They were looking for the mother of a lost child but I thought the child was dead…I said, ‘I want to go home. Even if my parents and relatives are not there, even if there is no one to receive me, I
want to go home. Anywhere. If they hate me or despise me or want to kill me, I rather go and die there than stay [here].” The next time Florence found herself alone, she left the group and surrendered to government soldiers.

“I thought they might kill me. They said, ‘No, we will not kill you, we are going to take you to a rehabilitation center.’” The soldiers took Florence to World Vision rehabilitation center in Gulu, northern Uganda. World Vision is a Christian International NGO that administers a psychosocial reintegration program and vocational training for formerly abducted child-soldiers.

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Yusef enjoys navigating the social worlds of Nakivale and he describes how such active participation renders the past less absorbing. But for Yusef, not everyone can be a conversational compatriot.

“When I go to visit people we have different conversations and the memories [subside.] I look for people at base camp, the football playing ground, and the Congolese [zones], I do not like going to my community.” Indeed Yusef does not often go to his fellow Somalis to chat and get his mind off the past.

“Because they are very rough. I feel that other communities are better than them, in behavior. Most of the Somalis have not gone to school, they are illiterate, and they look after livestock.” But it is not simply socio-economic factors that put Yusef off.
“They ask me, ‘Why, Mzee, do you live alone? But they ask me in a rude way: ‘Why don’t you marry another women? What is wrong? Don’t you function?’ [The members of my] community are not bad people but they are rude. When they say, ‘Mzee are you out of the game?’ I get angry and it makes me remember my wife. You can ask me, ‘Why don’t you marry,’ but you cannot ask, ‘are you not functioning?’ We are men and it has nothing to do with you, that is between me and the woman.”

Yusef helps other Somalis in the settlement despite his frustrations; indeed he serves as Somali Zone’s primary community representative to German Development Agency (GTZ), an active International NGO in Nakivale.

“Honestly speaking Jeremy, I have met people in this camp who have past events worse than mine. There are [refugees] whose whole family has been destroyed, [persons] who have lost both eyes. So you have to look at those who are worse and say ‘God, thank you.’” And in his daily work, escorting the most vulnerable members of the Somali community to the health center, Yusef ensures that this empathetic impulse trumps his frustrations.

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World Vision asked Florence if she wanted to go back to her community in the village beyond Naam Okora.

“I said ‘I don’t know what is there. My mother and father are dead.’ I feared to go home.” World Vision accompanied Florence back to the village. But when she got there, the community reception was less than welcoming:
“[The people in the village] said, ‘We cannot keep this kind of person because of the kind of trauma she might have.’” World Vision brought Florence back to Gulu and found her a place to rent. One day a most unexpected thing happened. Florence was reunited with her son who had been lost in the smoke. A mzungu\(^1\) man who worked for World Vision volunteered to pay school fees for Florence’s children. The mzungu paid for both children to attend Grace Christian Academy for two years. But gradually the mzungu’s presence was less regular in Gulu until one day World Vision told Florence that the mzungu said he could no longer help. World Vision gave Florence a sewing machine. Now Florence sows dolls and sells them in the market.

I ask Florence about memory. I ask her if she often thinks about the events that happened while she was with the LRA. Florence takes a moment to reflect. When she responds, Florence notes that the frequency and emotional weight of the memories have changed since her return.

“Well, I used to think about [the past] so much and when I think about my parents I think about everything. I would get annoyed with everything and keep quiet. People would say, ‘What is wrong with you?’ I would remain quiet. But I got saved...and because of God’s help and the help of the church [things have become better].”

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The past leaves Yusef with many questions:

\(^1\) Swahili for “person of European descent.” It is commonly used throughout East Africa to refer to white people.
“How can someone, to whom I have done nothing, come and start shooting my wife and son? I don’t know him and he does not know me. How do you come and take my properties and kill my family. Even if there is a civil war, that is between the government [and the opposition]—the only weapon I had in my house was a pen! Do you think God will forgive these people? They are going to wait for his judgment. I have left it all to the almighty God. Those who came to my house and those who have hurt other people will one day pay.” Yusef asks me to imagine.

“Jeremy, you are doing well in university, and then you marry and start a new life. One day I come and start shooting you with your children and you have done nothing to me! Ah, they have left a big question mark.”

Violence, Yusef says, is irreversible for all involved.

“When someone kills it is easy to kill again. Violence turns humans into animals. I remember the 1960s...there were no terrorists or explosives... [Now] you meet someone with a veil and you don’t know what she is carrying, she says she is a Muslim but you do not trust. Look at Israel and Palestine: both sides come with explosives and kill Jeremy, me, and Mulamba and you do not even know them! I leave it in God’s hands.”

—

Despite being saved, Florence worried that her history with the LRA would affect her ability to sell dolls in the marketplace and to participate in the wider Gulu community. But to her surprise, it seemed, at least initially, that people were not
aware of her history in the LRA. One day, the past appeared from the most unexpected of sources:

“I was walking home [with my son] late one night from making dolls with some other women. My son said, ‘Mama, are you a rebel?’ I said, ‘Who told you?’ My son said, ‘I know you are a rebel.’ But the child did not know about the rebels...[and] if I continued with that conversation I would start crying. So I said to the child, ‘I may have been seen dancing a dance called, ‘rebel.’’”

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Near the end of our conversation, Yusef delineates the binds of refugeedom.

“You know, a prisoner who is imprisoned for ten years knows the date of his release. And he will count down from 2010 to 2020...But a refugee does not know the date of his release. A prisoner is better than a refugee because he knows the end of his sentence.” So I ask Yusef what he thinks should be done. What could mitigate the stagnation of refugeedom? But Yusef knows where I am headed—it is familiar territory—and he quickly interjects a proposed solution: “adult education.”

“So my suggestion to humanitarian organizations and UNHCR is...why don’t we come up with [plans] to bring teachers to teach carpentry and electricity and computers. I think the world can be changed by giving refugees skills. Tomorrow if they go back to their home, they will never think about getting a gun. If a Somali man here does not get skills but stays for a long time, he can go join those with guns, he has lost hope here and he has nothing. But if he has skills he will not.” But as an
insider in the humanitarian world, Yusef questions the motivations of the aid apparatus in Nakivale.

“The question is why are these organizations here. Are they here for our interests or their own? This is what I ask myself. I think it is for their own interests.” And Yusef ends with more questions, the hardest questions, questions for which together, on this day, Yusef and I have no answer.

“But Jeremy because we are refugees and we have faced a lot problems, what do you think is the best thing to do to finish the problems we have in this world today? Because people in America are not fighting. These things are happening in Africa. Why do you think we fight here? Is it because you people have gone farther in education and understand things better than us?”

—

Back in Gulu, Florence joined a group of other “bush-mothers” to “purposely rehabilitate us and to help us advise ourselves.” But while the past may unify Florence with other formerly abducted women, the group focuses its collective energies on confronting the problems of the present. They may have a common past but, according to Florence, it is rarely discussed.

“Before we were in the group we were engaging in sharing ideas that reminded us about what happened in the past. Now we have made up our mind to invite other people who may not have experienced the same problems because we hate most reminding ourselves...about what happened.” Again I think about my questions. Why do I ask them?
“You are lucky because we don’t want anybody to come and take ideas from us that remind us of the past. We have refused so many people. We want no one to remind us of what happened in the past.” Why did Florence and her group not refuse to speak with me? “As a group, we say, ‘If you are moving and you keep looking back, sometimes you will knock yourself and you will never achieve anything.’”

“We want our children to grow up and be somebody... We want only things that will make us go forward.”

Florence and Yusef² have never met and they probably never will. They live on opposite sides of the equator—415 kilometers apart.

Yusef is a 55 year-old refugee from Somalia; Florence is 27 and she is a former child soldier who has returned to the region of her birth.

Yusef’s family was killed by rebels; Florence was a rebel. Florence’s family was killed by rebels; Yusef became a refugee. Florence became an internally displaced person in need of refuge. Yusef assists severely disabled refugees seek medical attention; Florence sews cloth dolls.

Florence was abducted; Yusef was displaced.

And: Yusef tells me I am lucky. And so does Florence.

We are all in Uganda.

² All individuals interviewed for this project will be identified in the following pages by only their first name or a pseudonym
Introduction

Trauma and Narrative Flexibility

Yusef and Florence narrate the past. Historical moments intersect—the geopolitical and the personal—at landmarks of consequence: the day Florence was abducted and the day she ran back to Uganda, civil war in Mogadishu, the murder of Yusef’s family, the fallout of the LRA’s alliance with al-Bashir and Sudan’s Khartoum government. Listening to Florence and Yusef we might imagine the fear and determination, the strength and confusion. We try to imagine how we might have felt if forced to kill our parents.

“What are Yusef and Florence?” Are their lives indicative of greater global patterns? And if so, of what? Yusef and Florence are forced migrants: They are both geographically and socially displaced from their realms of familiarity; they must figure out how to live with new authority structures, and locate new networks of cooperation. Yusef lives in a refugee settlement in the southwest corner of Uganda. It is a rural settlement occupied by refugees from eight nations. Florence lives in Gulu, the largest town in the north of Uganda, that has become the epicenter of reconciliation and reintegration efforts following 26 years of violent conflict between the Lord’s Resistance Army and Uganda’s government. And they are both religious. Yusef is a Muslim and Florence is a Born-Again Christian. The religious threads in their respective narratives have a vital function. For Yusef, God is ultimately responsible for punishing the men that killed his family. For Florence, being “saved” renders the past less consuming and allows her to be an active social participant. We
hear from Florence and Yusef that thinking about the violence in the past is confusing and often undesirable. We hear from Florence and Yusef about journeys, children, schooling, friendship, contemporary struggles, cooperation; a reluctance to speak of violence, a willingness or desire to share the past, an interest in hearing about my past and why I have come this summer to Uganda to do research for my B.A. thesis project. Despite the extreme events that punctuate their pasts, there is more to Yusef and Florence than the violence they have experienced.

But the question “What are Yusef and Florence?” is not our central problematic. Rather, our purpose is to elucidate the process whereby Florence and Yusef themselves ask the question, “What are Florence and Yusef?” and the myriad pressures—international, local, and internal—that channel their responses. How is violence narrated alongside everything else in life? There is no single answer to this question. Our goal is to pay attention and reflect on how we—Florence and Yusef included—tell a story that involves violence and the re-telling of this story within circumstances of displacement. As we will witness, the experience of violence can reprioritize the landmarks in selfhood and the ground upon which we associate with others. Violence effects who we can be, violence shifts who counts for us and the worlds to which we may belong. When Florence and Yusef retell their stories of violence they do so within a pragmatic context, they shape the past while being mindful of how their stories will affect them in the present.

This is a thesis about the pragmatics of personal historical narratives that involve experiences of violence and the audiences for whom they function. The spaces in which this story takes place have been marked by radically disruptive
violence and forced migration. We will employ the discourses of trauma to attempt an understanding of such radically disruptive violence. Throughout our story, we will intermittently enlarge our scope of inquiry to encompass how the violence in these spaces is aggregated to the political level: the geopolitical circumstances, the political audiences, and the myriad explanatory logics—what we will call *narrative vehicles*—that reemplot the traumatic into the everyday. But our foremost concern is to call attention to the conversation in which a first-person account of violence is told and to the circumstances of this re-telling. Who tells the story of violence and to whom is it told? When there are multiple narrative options for how the disruptions of violence may be reframed, how does one choose and combine them? Might the decision depend on the audience? From the point of view of the displaced individual, why does one tell the story of violence? Is the story instrumental? And if so, toward what ends?

This project began with a question. I asked Yusef and Florence: “How does forced migration and the need for new networks of cooperation affect the scripts with which displaced individuals frame traumatic experience in the past?” We discussed *we groups*, religion, solidarity, violence, family, displacement, home, NGOs, trauma, poverty, and memory. Yusef and Florence answered this question. They did so sincerely. But then Yusef and Florence asked me a question. They said, “Why do you want to know?” “What story are you trying to tell about me?” And there it was, bolded on the top of my interview template, “my hypothesis.” I too have a stake in this story. I too have an audience that privileges certain discursive tropes, and I too choose to reify the story that I tell in categories that are valued by my audience. But
together, our two questions potentiate into a third possibility for inquiry. How do posttraumatic narratives in scenarios of displacement reframe radically disruptive violence in ways that work for both the storyteller and the audience, who both, in completely different ways, have a stake in the story? When we focus our inquiry on the conversation about violence, we see how violence is narrativized.

Traumatic experience disrupts the order and valance of categories we use to make the self. Very often we use common categories like gender, profession, and religious affiliation that are communicable so that we may parse our story to see and express the overlap in our I narratives—the foundations for who we can be. When you and I first meet, I tell myself a story about myself to myself to know myself and to know what categories you and I might share. I have a story for who you are. As we become closer, that story may change and become more nuanced and diverse. But some circumstances of shared-ness demand that certain categories be dominant—that there be one version of the story that links you and me that trumps the other possible stories. There are circumstances in which gender is the most important expression of our sameness, or perhaps university affiliation, or passion for jazz, or union membership. At the World Cup, my primary identity marker is different from at the Super Bowl and so is the size of the we group that stands behind me. In the library, the order of categories that comprise the narrative for who I am are different from when I travel to a new country. Trauma has the capacity to mess this order up.

As we will see, the radically disruptive violence that constitutes a trauma mandates a remaking or a reprioritizing of the landmarks in our personal histories. This reprioritization, in turn, reconstitutes the possibilities for solidarity and
**sameness**—the grounds upon which reprioritized *I narratives* can become a *we*. But do the circumstances after violence require a dominant category to tell the story of trauma? Is there something about trauma that requires one explanation instead of many? Is there something inherent in trauma that armors our narrative of the self or the possibility for fluid mobility between externalized versions of the self? Or might it depend on to whom the story of the traumatic is told? At this juncture we encounter *narrative flexibility*: the plausible transition between dominant categories in the *I narrative*. What determines *narrative flexibility* in the posttraumatic story of the self?

Before we can chart *narrative flexibility*, we must have the conversation. And so we begin. We begin by listening and participating and asking questions and becoming frustrated and spending time. I will disappear for a while. This is a project about how the narration of violence becomes instrumental, in considering memory and self and subjectionhood and displaced persons in a geopolitical region commonly labeled Uganda. But remember that I was there too; that I too narrate and lean on the instrumentality of my past. Thus as we go on, I will chime in when this reflexive past-making is particularly salient or requires explanation.

How do violence and displacement alter the circumstances for the definition of self and community? How do narrative vehicles guide the re-emplotment of the traumatic into the everyday? What categories of *sameness* and solidarity arise in the process? And what makes the transition between such categories—*narrative flexibility*—possible? We depart.
Chapter One

Nakivale: Displaced from the Past to a Place of Convergence

July 15th 2010 5:30PM: FOOTBALL PITCH, CENTRAL PLATEAU, NAKIVALE REFUGEE SETTLEMENT, SOUTHWESTERN UGANDA—^3

Here on the football pitch lives intersect. Teams from Somali Town and New Congo prepare to take the field. A man arrives from the nearby lake with two pails of water. He splashes the water around the 18-yard line in hope of minimizing the dust to be kicked up with shots on goal. It is a brisk afternoon and we appreciate the cold following a day of stifling dry-season sun. On New Congo Stage, passersby idle about, peripherally attuned to the preparations taking place across the path. Shopkeepers pause in their transactions and carry benches to their storefronts, laying claim to the preferred views of the football pitch. The bustle subsides as attention turns to the teams taking the field. The Somalis and Congolese are reputed to be among the best footballers in the camp. This game should be a good one.

Godfrey stands on the sidelines. He has just come from choir practice and is still wearing his brown dress shoes, slacks and go-to blue-collared shirt. “Come on, Alex!” Godfrey projects, pointing at his close friend, the right midfielder on the Congolese side, “control the ball like we worked on in practice.” A month earlier, somebody had given Godfrey a ball, and he had thus assumed the position of head coach. Despite being only 19 years old, Godfrey is known throughout the camp as

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^3 See maps # 3 and # 4 for the layout of Nakivale Refugee Settlement; see map # 1 for its location in Uganda
“Teacher.” Schooled in anglophone Kenya, Godfrey has a thorough command of English. When not in choir practice, Godfrey spends his weekdays teaching English in a small school which he started with Alex and his brother Etienne—they had collected funds from fellow church members to build a three-classroom structure. English is a scarce commodity in Nakivale and the market, with refugees hoping to be resettled, is far from saturated. On Saturdays Godfrey tutors Zainab, a tenured Somali refugee, who is anticipating resettlement to Ohio or Minnesota and wants to ensure the English capacities of her children prior to their journey. Godfrey has been anticipating this football match for the past few days. He is excited because it is a chance to demonstrate his leadership beyond the classroom. It is well recognized that preparations on the Congolese side have been extensive and friends approach Godfrey for a final scouting report.

Next to arrive is Yusef. Nicknamed “UK” for his infatuation with Manchester United, Yusef is a young Somali man in his early twenties. UK is Godfrey’s age. And like Godfrey, he is a self-proclaimed connoisseur of the English language. After months of Godfrey’s unofficial tutoring, UK was able to open “UK’s School of English,” with the small capital generated by his family’s restaurant in Somali Town. The restaurant, as one of the few buildings in Nakivale with an electricity generator, is a popular evening hangout for Godfrey and company; each night around 7pm, Somali refugees and their visitors crowd around the TV tuned to al-Jazeera, eager for news from home. While Godfrey teaches French, Kinyarwanda, and Swahili speakers, UK teaches his fellow Somalis. UK is proud to fill this niche, and he shares Godfrey’s exercise books on English teaching and lesson planning. He comes up
behind Godfrey, pats him on the back and says, “my friend,” intoning the “my” with pride, “how is the evening?”

Mzee Yusef (not to be confused with “UK” Yusef) approaches the group congregating on the sideline. He is addressed by the esteemed title “Mzee”—a signal of respect for an older gentleman. Yusef has just come from escorting a new arrival to the health center for an initial evaluation. Three days ago, on the evening of July 11th, al-Shabaab, a Somalia-based terrorist organization, bombed an Ethiopian restaurant and an ex-pat bar in Uganda’s capital city of Kampala during the final minutes of Spain’s World Cup Final victory. Since al-Shabaab claimed responsibility the following morning, Somalis have been targeted in numerous retribution attacks. For the past days Nakivale has received a considerable influx of Somali refugees who no longer feel safe residing in Kampala. Yusef, as the community representative of Nakivale’s Somali population to GTZ, has his hands full assisting new arrivals with ration cards and visits to the health center. At the moment Yusef is accompanied by his housemate Mulamba. Yusef is happy to see Godfrey; in the past they have shared intergenerational stories of anglophone education in Kenya.

Emmanuel walks by. En route from the health center, Emmanuel pauses briefly to take in the happenings on the pitch; he turns and continues down the path toward Sangano, the trading center of the Rwandan zone. It has been a tumultuous week for Emmanuel. Since the latest rumors of forced repatriation began to circulate some weeks ago, there has been considerable unrest in Nakivale’s Rwandan community. Yesterday trucks of Ugandan police arrived claiming to be conducting refugee status verification. When the rumors of force repatriation reached fruition,
refugees started to run, shots were fired, and according to Emmanuel’s count, a dozen were killed. Emmanuel considers himself an intellectual leader of the Rwandans and has taken it upon himself to report this event to the “international community and human rights humanitarian organizations.” Tomorrow he will go to Mbarara, the nearest town, to upload testimonies and pictures of the dead to Human Rights Watch (HRW). The following day, from their New York Headquarters, HRW will issue the following statement: “Uganda should immediately halt the forced repatriation of Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers from two camps on its southwestern border with Rwanda.” So for now Emmanuel is busy: he and Godfrey have never met, and he does not stop to watch the match.

And the match now is underway. The sidelines fill: Benjamin from Burundi, Teweldeb from Ethiopia, Mehdi from Iran, Damas and Gabriel and Etienne and Pastor, all from the Kivu regions of Congo. Others too. Various men, including Sudanese, Kenyans, Eritreans, and Rwandans stop by to witness the excitement. For in the evening hours, the football pitch is a place to associate, to discuss the day and any news that might have found its way from home. It is a place to satisfy and express curiosity and a place to think ahead to tomorrow. Or maybe it just feels like a much-needed break. After all, if you are a refugee, you are not at home, you are away from the normal, and you depend on governments, monies, ideologies, and motivations that are not your own. You are displaced and you must adapt. Rations are categorically insufficient, the water is murky, and odd-job employment is sporadic. The past may

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be impossible, but you must relate your past to a sympathetic listener so that it helps you. Of course it is complex and hard and frustrating, but you do these things to survive, so that you might cooperate and align yourself in ways that circumvent the stagnation of refugee status. And most of the time it fails: you are dependent, immobile and apolitical. But you can try and you can make allegiances and enemies and participate in groups and tell stories and draw lines of sameness, categories for alliance, because maybe something will happen, maybe you will get a chance, and maybe you will get placed. But it is a day-to-day struggle. And today you do have a say, a fight to fight. And so of course you show up and watch the football game, because it is at the football game that these lines are drawn and where sameness of experience and identity is expressed and where pasts are told. You stand there and you cheer, and you participate and you give a shit, so that people see that you give a shit, and so you see that you give a shit. Football is a fight that is tangible. And in its tangibility it picks teams for the less tangible.

To understand the social dynamics of Nakivale we have to understand what came before. How did the sidelines of the football pitch become populated? Why did people come here in the first place? What was the journey like? What was home like, and is it remembered? Did the group of refugees cheering on the sidelines of the football pitch expect this all to happen? Or did it come as a surprise? How can displacement be molded with self-perception? How are stories of displacement told? We leave the football pitch to better understand what really is at stake in attending the football match.
Sunday morning, July 15th, Day-Star Pentecostal Church, Old Congo Zone, Nakivale:  

The Church is overflowing. Outside, children squabble for the sightlines and peer in through the windows. A line to the nearby borehole wraps around the church and even the water-fetchers lean in to listen.

Inside we are packed in. When the service began at 7am, first arrivals must have sat quite comfortably on the low and uneven wooden benches. Now, at just after 11am, every last floor space is occupied. I am offered the tail end of a bench and I accept. The air is hot and it is sweaty. The plastic sheeting that is the roof has a way of impeding air flows from all directions. The heat stays with us.

On the stage in front stands a tall man, perhaps in his thirties. He has just arrived from Congo and this is his first Sunday at Daystar Pentecostal. With the choir and keyboard at his back the man convulses.

Beside me sit Godfrey and Etienne, brothers with whom I have become close friends. On the bench in front sit Damas and Alex. Damas has extraordinarily long legs and seems cramped by the shoulders of the man in front of him. I look up at Damas’ face, his eyes are closed; only I am restless. Together we sit as Pastor Ndahiro begins the morning’s Bible reading. This week the chosen passage is Colossians 3.12-3.17, and its relevance to this audience is not missed: “(12) As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. (13) Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you

5 See maps # 3 and # 4 for Nakivale Refugee Settlement
also must forgive. (14) Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (15) And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. "

“The way I used to be is not the way I am,” proclaims Godfrey as he pauses to equip his next words with exceptional sincerity, “I could never imagine that I could live in this kind of house. I could not know that I could even be a refugee or live in the camp. It is a very, very big change for me.” As for Yusef, the mud-based architecture of Nakivale’s buildings embodies the loss of status that Godfrey feels.

Back in the North Kivu region of Congo, Godfrey and Etienne lived with their two sisters, mother, and father. For most months of the year, Godfrey attended an anglophone boarding school in Kenya.

“I had a good life,” Godfrey recalls. “I had each and everything that I wanted. I felt that I was in good society. Everything I wanted I could get. That was because my dad was working and my mom was working too. I was in school in Kenya. I would just come back home for holidays.”

It was Christmas vacation in 2008 and Godfrey was out in the fields one afternoon with his brother Etienne tending to the family’s cattle. It was unusual for

6 And the passage continues, “(16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. (17) And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (The New Oxford Annotated Bible, New Revised Standard Version);
In the African Bible, a revision of the New American Bible, overseen by African bishops for African Catholics, this section is titled, “Profile of a Christian Community,” and the footnote reads, “The virtues that foster peace and growth in a Christian community are detailed…”
In the New revised Standard Version, the title of the section is, “Adopt virtues of the new life,” and the notes read, “A proper attitude toward oneself, genuine concern for others (12), gracious forgiveness (13), and sacrificial love (14) produce a harmonious and unified community (15) that can worship God rightly (16 &17).”
Godfrey to work in the fields, and Etienne was happy for the extra hand;
Banyamulenge primogeniture practices mandated that Etienne tend to the cattle rather
than joining Godfrey at school in Kenya. Cattle-rearing for the Banyamulenge was an
established and honored practice. Etienne explains, “I didn’t get time to go to school
because I am the first born and my dad had cattle… We were very far from the cities,
so I was the one who was taking care of the cows and the cows were very far from
where we were staying.” This was okay with Etienne. He felt proud to fill this role in
the family. But even still, Etienne dreamed about one day getting the opportunity to
go to school. “I [would have been] so happy to have the time and to go to school.”
Etienne was proud of Godfrey and his achievements in school. And when Godfrey
visited, Etienne would pick up the latest English phrases that Godfrey was learning.
Last November, when I first met Etienne, his words were interspersed with frequent
“by-the-way”s.’ Today his interjection of choice is, “for sure.”

The term Banyamulenge was created in 1976 to refer to a specific population
of ethnic Rwandan Tutsis living in South Kivu, but it has since lost much of its
specificity. It is now used to designate all Tutsis living in North and South Kivu. 7
Because of their Rwandan origins, their citizenship and belonging in Congo have
long been a point of contention. Indeed the perceived otherness of the Banyamulenge
compounded with resource scarcity was central to the fractionalization of the Kivu

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7 R Lemarchand, *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa* (Philadelphia: University of
Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 30-44

The original group to which the term applied now constitutes 3-4% of South Kivu’s population.
(Gerard Prunier, *Africa’s World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental
Catastrophe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 68-71
regions in the First and Second Congo Wars. But much of the animosity toward the Banyamulenge came when Mobutu consolidated power in the DRC in 1965 and rewarded the Banyamulenge’s military allegiance with highly coveted government positions in the regional capital of Bukavu. Godfrey’s father was one of these men.

Like many privileged sons of the political elite in Eastern Congo, Godfrey was sent to a missionary boarding school abroad. He looked forward to coming home for the holidays because it was on such occasions that Godfrey’s father, the household religious authority, would talk about God and play the trumpet. “Our father taught us that God is always in control,” Etienne remembers, “I always think about the songs my father would sing to us. Our father used to tell us that when you have a problem, then you play the trumpet…so [as to] relax.”

Godfrey too remembers their father’s lessons: “My father used to tell me to have discipline, love, faith and patience. I grew up in a Christian family and our parents taught us to be very kind to people. We spent much time praying and reading the Bible.”

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8 While the Banyarwanda—migrants from Rwanda (literally “people of Rwanda”) first arrived in Eastern Congo as early as the seventeenth century, there was a heightened influx of Tutsis from Rwanda in 1959-1960 when the Belgian colonial power abruptly ended support of the Tutsi dominated colonial hierarchy in favor of Grégoire Kayibanda’s Hutu “Social Revolution.” Anti-Tutsi sentiment in Rwanda during Kayibanda’s tenure, concentrated in 1964 and 1973, sent corresponding waves of Tutsi refugees into South Kivu. In the mid-1960s conflict erupted in Congo between anti-colonial rebels and the Belgian colonial forces backed by the United States. As a historically pastoral people, the Banyamulenge, the Tutsi contingent of the Banyarwanda, were victims of cattle raids conducted by the rebels who were desperate for resources in the conflict zone. Thus while initially in support of the anti-colonial forces, the Banyamulenge wound up supporting, the Belgium backed pro-Mobuto Sese Seko forces. Following Mobuto Sese Seko’s victory, parties in the anti-colonial struggle remained hostile toward the Tutsi Banyarwanda who not only fought against their fellow colonized, but who later received coveted political positions in Bukavu, the regional capital, because of their alignment with Mobuto. (Gerard Prunier, *Africa’s World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 68-71
But as Christmas was approaching in 2008, Godfrey’s father knew that trouble lay ahead. Violence in Eastern Congo was nothing new. The Congo Wars (1996-1997 and 1998-2003) failed to find lasting resolution. 5.4 million people were estimated to have died in the DRC between 1998 and 2007. The consequences of this violence had yet to personally affect Godfrey’s family. But Godfrey’s father knew it was only a matter of time.

“We were with the cattle and had gone for milking,” Godfrey remembers. “Then they came. Bullets were shot at my home and my parents were killed. Then we came back and the house was burning and our parents were inside.”

When Etienne recalls this day, he remembers an impulse of responsibility decided by his elder-status in the family. “For sure our dad knew that we were near… Our father saw us coming from the fields, he said: ‘My sons, you run! Run away!’ He saw the soldiers coming near to us. But I could not go and run away. Godfrey did so… I stood there waiting to see whether they were going to kill them, until they had

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9 As of 24 December 2010 according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (iDMC), there are over 1.68 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in eastern DRC. http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B%28httpCountries%29/554559DA500C8588802570A7004A96C7?opendocument (Accessed, April 2, 2011)

10 Dominant narratives of conflict in the region’s geopolitical history call attention to the influx of Tutsi Banyarwanda into the Masisi, Walikale, and Kalonge regions of Eastern DRC following the 1959 massacre of Tutsis in Rwanda at the onset of the independence movement. Tension arose between the Congolese Banyarwanda and the Hunde leading to “systematic massacres” in October 1965. While Godfrey’s father was given a position in Bukavu in the years of Mobuto’s rein, other Banyarwanda competed with the Hunde for land and access to Eastern Congo’s mineral reserves. In hopes of quelling this ethnically motivated violence, legislation was passed in 1971 and 1972 granting Congolese citizenship to Godfrey’s father and all Banyarwanda who had settled in Congo prior to independence. This legislation was repealed in 1981. And tensions sparked again, ten years later, when Banyarwanda representatives from North and South Kivu were banned from the 1992 National Sovereign Conference in Kinshasa. By 1993 ethnically motivated tensions in North Kivu sparked sporadic killings leaving only a tenuous regional peace. (Prunier, pp. 51-54; Lemarchand, pp. 7-15)
them in the house and burned the house. So I remember that voice and the way they pushed my parents into the house. The trumpet, I went with it.”

As Etienne recalled, Godfrey ran. Godfrey remembers, “My way from Congo to [Uganda] was very terrible. I didn’t know if I would make it…You are moving and then you hear bullets and people are saying this and that. And I thought I would die, and I was scared.” Godfrey might have run to the Ishasha border post where UNHCR was waiting to transport Godfrey and 31,000 other Congolese refugees who had fled North Kivu since August. Or he might just have crossed into Uganda through the forest.

That November day, Andrew Phillip, an employee of Amnesty International, was “blogging from the field:”

Since we were last at Nakivale two days ago 3,000 Congolese refugees have arrived and the humanitarian operations in the camp are stretched to the limit. The Ugandan government has confirmed that at least 10,000 people have crossed the border in the last two days at the Ishahsa border point. But many more thousands of refugees are believed to have crossed the border through the bush. All of them are now without

11 “United States Commission for Refugees and Immigrants,”
http://www.refugees.org/countryreports.aspx?__VIEWSTATE=dDwtOTMxNDcwOTk7O2w8Q291bnRyeUREOkdvQnV0dG9uOz4%2BUwqzXzIYL0SzgZcZue2XtA0UFEQ%3D&cid=2364&subm=&ssm=&map=&searchtext=&CountryDD%3ALocationList (Accessed: December 2010)
assistance although the Ugandan government and 

humanitarian agencies are trying to locate them.\(^\text{12}\)

Among these 10,000 refugees were Godfrey and Etienne. But because Etienne had stayed behind, he and Godfrey were not together. The week’s journey of running, and riding in the beds of trucks and \textit{boda bodas}, ended in the southwest corner of Uganda. They found each other while waiting in line for ration cards in Nakivale, Etienne was holding only his father’s trumpet. This morning they sit together listening to Pastor Ndahiro recite Colossians 3.12-3.17.

Etienne and I are sitting in the home he and Godfrey share. I ask him if he wants to forget that November day. After talking for a while there is a pause in our conversation. Etienne is thinking and he begins to cry. “I am sorry, brother.” We sit in silence for a while. Should I change the subject? With “visible emotional distress” my protocols require I shift the conversation to more pleasant matters. “I am sorry, brother; Jeremy, I am sorry, I am remembering my family.”

Some more silence. “Should we talk about other matters?” I ask after a while.

“You can continue, it’s your work, don’t worry about your questions. I will answer, it happened; I remember the way they were killed. Because you, Jeremy, are a friend, and since when you ask what happened, I go far.” I listen. Etienne continues, “I apologize for…[crying]. You are doing your work. Continue. It doesn’t always happen to me. I told you I had that in a dream, I had such memories again. I am not

someone who is sad and annoyed. But I was there, so I remember the voice of my father when he told us to run away. And he had no chance to run. So that voice and the way they were killed, that’s the voice I get in my mind.”

Etienne protects these memories of what happened. He does not want to show Godfrey that he is sad: “I don’t want to think about it because my brother will see that I am truly sad and he will be sad too. I don’t want to show him.” Perhaps this is part of the protective impulse that made Etienne stay behind to double-check that his parents were indeed murdered. Or maybe it’s just because he feels sad. “I keep playing the trumpet…the best thing I like in my life when I remember what happened is music.” Etienne plays the trumpet alone; he plays the songs he learned from his father.13

The rebel faction that displaced Godfrey and Etienne began following the influx of between 1.5 and 2 million Rwandan refugees into eastern DRC in 1994. Following the Tutsi genocide, Hutu militias in the refugee camps of surrounding Goma took a large cut of $2.036 billion dollars of foreign aid to continue their

13 A major catalyst of the contemporary violence in Eastern Congo occurred 16 years ago. In 1994, following the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda, 1.5 to 2 million refugees, mostly Hutus, spilled over from Rwanda as the Tutsi-led RPF invaded from Uganda with their targets set on Hutu Power, Hutu extremism, and perpetrators of genocide. The success of the RPF invasion sent Hutus—both perpetrators and not—into Goma and the surrounding area in search of refugee status. Among them: the Interahamwe—a youth-dominated Hutu Power militia, and the orchestrators of the genocide. Retrospectively, this migration appears, in part, an organized political move to remobilize the fight for Rwanda: “The refugees settled in their camps in perfect order, under the authority of their former leaders, ready to be used for further aims. As Joel Boutroue wrote from his experience as a senior UNHCR staff member in the camps, ‘Discussions with refugee leaders showed that exile was the continuation of war by other means.’” (Prunier, p. 24.)
genocidal agenda.\textsuperscript{14} The United States and the U.N. had decided not to intervene in Rwanda at the onset of genocide, in part, because circumstances resembled the failure of good intentions in Somalia a year earlier. Mzee Yusef could tell us more. Yusef remembers quite clearly the arrival of international forces and aid to Mogadishu in 1993—it was the same year his wife and son were murdered.\textsuperscript{15} But when the U.N. considered intervention to Rwanda the following year, they had not heard Yusef’s story. And the story that they had heard was very different.

\textsuperscript{14} Gerard Prunier, \textit{Africa’s World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 30;

When the death counts and photos of roadblocks arrived in Washington and in the mailboxes of “likely” donors, “the international community rushed into humanitarian aid with guilty relief, never-too-late-to-do-good, thus greatly helping the perpetrators of the very crimes it had done nothing to stop.” (Prunier, p. 25.) Then came the aid to the displaced in the DRC. The camps housed both legitimate refugees and leaders of Hutu extremism and their militias who deliberately used this mass migration as a political tool. These perpetrators of genocide “gain[ed] control of the food supply, knowing it to be the key to their constituency’s fidelity. Through a system of ‘elected popular leaders’ who could front for the real, hidden political leadership, the former administrators gained control of humanitarian leadership without exposing themselves.” (Prunier p. 25.)

The ex-FAR (Armée de Libération du Rwanda, ALIR), the Hutu faction determined to take back Rwanda from the RPF, was in the camps and their presence was well known.\textsuperscript{14} And the dynamics of the humanitarian aid/genocidal belligerent relationship were readily apparent. Médecins Sans Frontières withdrew; others did not. Soon the entire situation would be narrated as an exemplary case of misinformed humanitarian aid gone wrong.


\textsuperscript{15} Concerning the distribution of humanitarian aid in particular, Michael Maren, a employee of USAID in Somalia, was so repulsed by the consequences of the aid in Somalia that he would soon pen a scathing indictment of the international aid apparatus: \textit{The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity}. (\textit{The Road to Hell} was published in 1997 following the Somalia crisis and amidst the refugee crisis in Rwanda.) He reports, “‘Somalia…made me see that aid could be worse than incompetent and inadvertently destructive. It could be positively evil.’” (Maren p. 12.) Prunier commends Maren’s “politically incorrect frankness,” and applies the history to the consequences for Rwanda: “The [failure of the] Somalia experiment…was a major cause of the weak international response to the Rwandan genocide, wrongly perceived as ‘another case of a failed state in Africa.’” But when the details arrived, the UN had already shaken hands with the devil.
Darkness fell on Freedom Road. In an adjacent alleyway, six U.S. soldiers struggled to free Chief Warrant Officer Clifton P. Wolcott from the helicopter cockpit. He was pinned underneath. The metal-cutting saws were no match for the armored cockpit. Wolcott was already dead. And the soldiers knew it. Minutes before, a Delta Force officer radioed in: “Hey, boss, I think we’ve got the guys you sent us in for.” The commander replied, “We’re ready to get out of Dodge.” But the Somalis’ designation for south Mogadishu was more fitting: “Bosnia.” Seconds elapsed. Then, out of an underestimated stockpile, came a rocket-propelled grenade. Another incoming message came on the radio, this time from Black Hawk Super 6-1. It was Wolcott and his men. “Six-One’s going down. Six-One’s going down.” And it was a message that would appall, and catalyze withdrawal.16 This was the story that

16 All taken from a series of two articles published in the Washington Post in January 1994; Somalia in the last two decades has served, in the classrooms of Western social scientists, as the favorite example of a failed state. Today it remains atop the list. (http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/21/2010_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings (Accessed March, 20 2010)

In 1991, the longstanding military dictatorship of President Barre was ousted by a coalition of clan-fiefdoms backed by Ethiopia. Civil war ensued. Factions splintered, Barre tried to hold on, the South was cut-off from previous sources of food and distribution. Americans entered with food and force in 1992 and were replaced in 1993 by the United Nations (UNOSOM II). There was a temporary relative stability. In June 1993, Mohamed Farrah Aidid, a military commander under the United Somali Congress (USC), felt that the U.N. presence threatened the authority the USC had acquired over the previous two years of fighting. He attacked a Pakistani contingent of UNOSOM II. 24 Pakistani U.N.-affiliated soldiers were killed. At 3:40 p.m. October 3, 1993 Delta Force was called in with their sights set on Aidid. Wolcott fell. Operation ‘Caustic Brimstone—’ the official name for Delta’s assault on ‘Bosnia’ lasted 15 hours. 19 American soldiers died, 80 wounded. There were over 1000 Somali casualties. Atkinson, The Washington Post, (January 30, 1994)

“Those 15 hours contained the most intense combat by U.S. infantrymen since Vietnam, with consequences that immediately altered U.S. policy toward Somalia and are likely to shape American involvement in foreign entanglements, either under a U.N. banner or otherwise.”

would be reported during the following weeks by *The Washington Post*. This was a story of violence that Bill Clinton and Madeleine Albright told when they decided not to intervene in Rwanda at the onset of genocide.

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*Sunday Evening, July 15th, UK’s Restaurant, Somali Town, Nakivale*

Damas, Alex, Benjamin and I sit at a table in the back of UK’s restaurant. It is a busy evening and the room is full of men. Women do not frequent the restaurant. Metal pans filled with beans and stacked with chapati are shuffled around the tables. “Professor,” a bespectacled man in charge of the restaurant’s nightly crowd, sells hard-boiled eggs, samosas and “beef bagels” to passersby through a small window out to Somali Town’s primary walkway. Kids line up after the evening call to prayer to bring home samosas to their families. In “Professor’s” samosas there are spices that are not from Uganda. Hot green pepper and garlic. The room is constructed of thin tree trunks that are stacked, packed with clay, coated with manure and covered with UNHCR plastic sheeting. It is loud and people move with second-helpings, conversations, and hand-rinsing. “Professor” calls to the back for more *beef bagels* and marks down in a composition notebook the amount he is owed by the customer of the moment. UK stands up and heads to the front of the room. He presses buttons on the TV and the channel changes from Nigerian music videos to al-Jazeera news network. The chattering subsides as patrons point to the headlines scrolling across


Both available through ProQuest Historical Newspapers The Washington Post (1987-1994)
the bottom simultaneously in Arabic and English: “Uganda vows to rein in al-Shabaab: President to deploy more [UPDF] troops to fight Somali group behind devastating attacks.”17 What is at stake for the 20 Somali men in the room? Is this more of the same? What do these men in UK’s restaurant think of the bombing? And is it connected to the situations that forced them to leave home?

Zainab’s home is different from Godfrey’s. She has lived in Nakivale since 1994 after fleeing Somalia following the First Battle of Mogadishu. Her home is built of cement; inside there is a television, a bed covered in mosquito netting, and light fixtures that presume a regular supply of power. Zainab also possesses an extensive perfume collection, and she offers me a spray. Godfrey teaches Zainab and her six young children English. They hold lessons in the portico of Zainab’s home using a small chalkboard. Today’s lesson, given my presence, is about life in America. But the children are shy and the eldest approaches Godfrey with his completed math homework from the previous week. This temporary validation (9 out of 10 on multiplication) almost inspires a question to the strange foreigner. But not quite. Instead it is time for supper. Zainab calls Godfrey and me into the bedroom. There are two trays of food laid out on the floor: bottled water, samosas, and fries. Zainab takes a bite from each tray and promptly leaves the room signaling us to begin.

Somalia remains without a stable government. Al-Shabaab, the radical Islamic youth militia, occupies the southern portion of the country and threatens the

Transitional Federal Government (TFG), a U.N.-backed coalition attempting to govern Somalia from the capital city of Mogadishu.\textsuperscript{18} “The government’s writ extends to no more than a few blocks of Mogadishu, and its survival depends entirely on the protection provided by a weak African Union (AU) peacekeeping force (AMISOM).”\textsuperscript{19} It was al-Shabaab that attacked Kampala on the night of Spain’s victory and it is no wonder that silence falls in UK’s restaurant when Uganda’s president—Yoweri Museveni—announces, “We are going to go on the offensive and go for all who did this in all areas, starting here…We [as a primary contributor to the A.U. contingent] were just in Mogadishu to guard the airport and the presidential palace - that was all. Now, they have mobilised us to look for them…It was a very big mistake on their side.”\textsuperscript{20} The next day there was a long line of Somalis at base camp,\textsuperscript{21} Yusef was busy escorting them to the health center for their initial evaluation as soldiers of the Uganda People’s Defense Force (UPDF) headed to Somalia.

\textsuperscript{19} Bruton, 3
\textsuperscript{20} http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/958308/-/x245yh/-/index.html (Accessed: November 2010);
\textsuperscript{21} I do not know how those in the restaurant tuned that evening to al-Jazeera felt about Museveni’s words. Most of the Somali population in Nakivale remains displaced because of al-Shabaab. But irrespective of political allegiances and perspectives on the ongoing conflict, I imagine that within the silence was a concern for Uganda’s Somali population—a large population even beyond those who are displaced and the possibility for misguided reprisal killings for the World Cup bombings.;

Museveni anticipated this concern: “I appeal to Ugandans not to be hostile to our African brothers from Somalia especially those who are living here. Because some people may misinterpret this to mean all Somalis are involved, which is not true. Many of [the] Somali[s] living here are very much involved in the systems of Uganda and they are living well. Many of them have no reason to involve themselves in this type of activities. Therefore don’t look at every Somali living here as if they are connected with this. There are those who are connected, we shall get their details, we already know their leaders in Somalia, they will obviously be indicted for these crimes. Therefore don’t blanket all Somalis in the category.” (http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/958556/-/x247mr/-/index.html) (Accessed: November 2010)
When we have finished eating, Zainab clears our dishes. Then she returns to the bedroom once again. “Islam tells me to welcome visitors and give what little I have to others,” Zainab remarks after we have been talking for a few minutes. She is practicing her English and Godfrey is ready with encouragement. When Godfrey and Etienne needed funds to buy materials for their new house, Zainab gave them what she could. Indeed Godfrey and Zainab’s relationship is a testament to the power of cooperation in Nakivale across nationality and religious ideology. But times have gotten harder for Zainab: her husband had passed away in January from high blood pressure, and he left behind the family shop in Somali Town. Godfrey, Alex, and I go to Zainab’s shop to charge our mobile phones and I recognize Zainab by the expanding smile behind her niqab. But back at home we keep talking. I complement Zainab on her English and she tells me, “The problem of Africa is war.” Zainab comes from Kismaayo Somalia, a city on the southern coast occupied by al-Shabaab. She relays a frequent household exchange: “Mom, why can’t we go back to Somalia?” ‘Because there is no peace.’”

When the Black Hawk came spiraling down, Beata had already left home.

Beata was born in Byumba district near Rwanda’s northern border. In 1990 Beata was 12. She distinctly remembers,

“We were the first ones to run.”
The Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) led by Paul Kagame invaded Rwanda from Southern Uganda, a short distance from Beata’s home. And so like many Hutu families in the region, Beata’s family fled to a nearby IDP camp for protection. But in the camps resources were scarce:

“Some of us were moving back home because of hunger. But when we did, RPF soldiers would take us and kill us, and [hang] us on trees.”

Beata remembers when it all became personal:

“There was a time when they took my father and put him inside the house. He tried to move away and hide in the bush but the RPF soldiers found him and killed him. [They also] took pregnant women and took out the children as if they were operating and put the children beside the mothers.”

Then came 1994.

“From the death of the ex-president Habyarimana, I stopped studying and they killed the rest of my family. I witnessed it.”

Like many Rwandans in the maelstrom of 1994, Beata headed to the border with Tanzania to seek refuge from the killings. It was chaotic. Hutu militias were killing Tutsis, the RPF was invading from Uganda and targeting Hutus. Civil war was turning into genocide.

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22 The President of Rwanda until the genocide. Habyarimana’s plane (in which he was accompanied by the President of Burundi) was shot down on April 6, 1994. The debris landed outside the presidential palace in Kigali.
“We didn’t know where to run, I was just following people. We got to the border with Tanzania but the RPF stopped us…There is a big river and only one bridge. The people were many—two provinces were waiting to cross the border. Others couldn’t pass over the bridge because of the number of people. The RPF soldiers came and started shooting. Many threw themselves into the river.”

This image is a pertinent one. Back in 1916, the Belgians crossed the Kagera River over a bridge at Rusumo Falls when they came to Rwanda. It was during the First World War, and they were fighting the Germans who were stationed on the Rwanda side. Even before that, when much of East Africa belonged to the Germans, Gustav Adolf von Gotzen crossed the Kagera in 1894, becoming the first European ever to enter Rwanda. He too crossed at Rusumo Falls.23

One hundred years later dead bodies flowed beneath the bridge drifting down the tumultuous Kagera river—bound for Lake Victoria. Up above stood Beata.24

Beata fled the killings in Rwanda, but when she finally made it to Tanzania she was suddenly accused of murder.

“When we crossed the border we found many Tutsis who were accusing us of killing their relatives. They would see somebody with a mattress and say, ‘Oh, this is the mattress from my house, you must have killed my family.’ But they were

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23 Philip Briggs & Janice Booth Rwanda: The Bradt Travel Guide. (Bradt Travel Guides Ltd. and The Globe Pequot Press Inc. 2001), 197
24 On May 21st 1994, the caption underneath the New York Times front-page photo read, “Bodies lying by Rusumo Falls on the Kagera River, at the Rwanda-Tanzania border, on May 2. (Jean-Marc Bouju/Associated Press.”
accusing us wrongly.” The RPF came two weeks later and took all the leaders of Hutu militias.

And so Beata lived and married as a refugee in Tanzania. After initially staying in Benaco Refugee camp—as one of 350,000 Rwandan refugees, Beata and her husband moved to a village on the Uganda border to avoid forced repatriation.

“Five months after marrying, they encouraged us to repatriate. [This was 1996/1997.] But because of what happened to me, and what I had seen, I was not willing to turn back. So we moved…and hid in a village…because they were hunting us…people were being killed so we tried to learn the local languages so we could survive… Then after they knew we were Rwandan, they started hating us.”

And so Beata moved once again.

“We decided to come to Uganda but we were fearful because we knew that the RPF had attacked our country from Uganda. But we were received in Nakivale.”

This was 1999.

Having witnessed the leaders of Hutu militias being forcibly repatriated from Benaco, Beata knew to be careful when she stood in line at base camp waiting to register:

“I couldn’t say that I had been to school. I had to say that I had never been to school or else they would have taken me back to Rwanda. This is because the leaders [of the genocidal Hutu militias were assumed to be]… educated.”

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Thirteen years after the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda, it was Gabe’s turn to run.

“Congo has never been stable since my birth,” says Gabe, who was born in Masisi, North Kivu in 1991. But it was not until the 3rd of April 2007 that things took a serious turn for the worse. He was fifteen years old.

“I was in one of our neighbors’ homes,” Gabe proclaims, as we sit together in his two-room clay home in New Congo, Nakivale. A poster of the “Most Beautiful Couple in America: Jay-Z & Beyonce,” hangs above his mattress. It competes with a poster of Eminem in the sitting room—vying for Gabe’s aspirations. “I heard the bullets come. I was brought up in a home where, Oh, what can I say, I loved my mom so much. And I heard the bullets being shot. And I said, ‘no no no no no no no!’ They were coming to our village! I had to tell one boy, and when I reached home that is when I found my dad already dead and I fainted.”

Before that day Gabe was in school. “However much I was born in a rural area...[and into] a cattle rearing family...I managed to go to school. I really liked to go to school. I completed my second A level.” Later we will discuss our educations and the time we spent in school, and Gabe will say, “by the way, Jeremy, I speak 8 languages and I would like to know more.” We both know the phrase “ni hao ma,” Chinese for “hello, how are you” and take great pleasure and amusement in the worldliness of the moment, and our matching claims to speak “a little” Chinese evidenced by a single phrase and no more.

For now, however, the past is preoccupying. And Gabe recalls the feeling of surprise when he realized that this time things were different, this time they were the
ones who were killed and displaced. “Well you know…[we are] war-experienced guys because Congo is never stable. When the war came in 2007 we just took it for something like a short-term war. But unfortunately we found that it was very serious. Unfortunately my parents died. My mom was abducted and taken away from the militias, and I cannot specify if they were rapers. Well I can say they were rapers because there was no government. So we had to run. I had to run up to Uganda…they had already picked me from where I had fainted. I regained my consciousness when we were already in Congo running through the jungle…we picked up others along the way.” Gabe arrived in Nakivale on the 15th of April 2007.

By October the conflict in the Congo reached the home of Pastor Ndahiro. At the time, Pastor had recently become a “servant for God.” He explains, “I was born into a Christian family but at first I was not a Christian. I was a person who used to drink and smoke…One day…when I was sleeping…a vision came. I saw I was holding a Bible and I heard a voice…I was so much afraid [my] mom told me I was being called by God and [that] I must start work.” Pastor’s mother told him, “If you go to talk with the pastor and [the] evangelists, they will pray for you.” And so Pastor did just that. “Afterwards, I went to learn the word of God…I studied for almost six years and then…they trusted me and gave me the work. Till now I feel that I am a servant to God from deep in my heart.” But after joining a church in Congo, the rebels came and Pastor fled.

Our conversation turns to memory. Pastor nods. “The first is my family. We had a lot of things, properties, cows. We lost 4000 cattle. They were taken by the soldiers in the war. The second is when I think about my family, they were educated
people who were working, and then they were killed.” Pastor was born in Fizi, South Kivu.26

Here in New Congo, Pastor lives with his wife and four children in the third row of houses west and downhill of the football pitch. Karimundongo is a 64-year-old man who arrived in Nakivale in 1998 following the First Congo War, and he too lives with Pastor. Godfrey interjects, “Being that they are all Banyamulenge, the pastor takes care of the man and gives him food.” We sit around a small table in the Pastor’s home. A lace curtain hangs from a doorway that presumably leads to the bedroom. I am offered, as always, a meal of posho and beans, and this time I gratefully decline. Pastor continues, Godfrey translates, and Karimundongo and I listen. “I didn’t see face to face killings of my family but you know in the war there are bombs and shooting and you go to hide in the bush and when you come back you find your dead and bury them.” The main problem, Pastor explains, as his tone shifts from recollection to explanation—the latter seemingly more practiced—is “segregation between Banyamulenge and other tribes…[that] were saying Banyamulenge are not Congolese and that they should go back to Rwanda.” Karimundongo nods in affirmation. Pastor reasons that such exclusion was the “major problem” in Congo. And it troubles Pastor that similar lines of exclusion still exist here in Nakivale.

In 2004, General Laurent Nkunda denounced the DRC government army and established the Congrès national pour la defense du peuple (CNDP) to protect the

26 See map #6 for Kivu Regions
Tutsi minority against the Hutu FDLR. Toward the end of August 2008, fighting escalated between the DRC government troops (FARDC), the FDLR, and Nkunda’s CNDP. 250,000 new IDPs, a cholera epidemic, and the death of Godfrey’s father were among the consequences. On the 29th of October, Laurent Nkunda’s CNDP rebels defeated the FARDC. Godfrey’s father was killed by a soldier in the FDLR militia.

Godfrey and Etienne, Alex and Pastor, fled to Nakivale. Just like Zainab, Yusef, and Beata years before.

Nakivale refugee settlement occupies 86 square miles of small ridges and dusty valleys in the Mbarara district of the Ankole region of southwestern Uganda. Established in 1960, in the wake of a massive influx of Rwandan Tutsis following a regime change in Rwanda to a Hutu administration, the Belgian colonial government agreed to exchange an area of land in the Nyavushozí area of Mbarara for land in Nakivale owned by Omugabe, the King of Ankole. Because Nakivale was close to the border with Rwanda and there were few Ugandan nationals residing within its borders owing to a Tsetse fly infestation, it was considered a viable location.

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27 The ex-FAR would become the Forces démocratiques pour la liberation du Rwanda (FDLR), a primary belligerent in the Kivu regions.
28 Godfrey does not say this. This statement follows the logic of the conflict and Godfrey’s father’s role as a Banyamulenge in the government.
29 See maps # 3 and # 4 for Nakivale Refugee Settlement.
30 This change was catalyzed, in part, by a switch in the Belgian government from a Walloon to a Flemish-run regime.
to accommodate refugees. The community was organized according to the colonial government’s local settlement policy: refugees were given small plots of land and an initial bundle of food and non-food commodities—including tools needed for small-scale farming. The goal of the program was to make refugee families progressively less dependent on humanitarian assistance and eventually self-sufficient. This policy kept refugees isolated from the Ugandan economic and political realms by mandating that refugees stay within Nakivale’s borders.

In the early 1990s, the demographics of Nakivale suddenly changed: Ethnic tension between the Kalenjin and the Bantu peoples in Western Kenya brought Kenyan refugees; Somali refugees were relocated to Nakivale, and most notably, the victory of Kagame’s Rwandan Patriotic Front led the vast majority of Rwandan Tutsis living in Nakivale to repatriate while simultaneously creating a large population of Rwandan Hutus in need of asylum. Today, in addition to Rwandan Hutus, Somalis and Kenyans, Nakivale is a semi-permanent home for refugees from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Southern Sudan, Eritrea, and a single Iranian called Mehdi. As of February 2003, Nakivale housed 14,666 refugees and 8,500 Hutu asylum-seekers, by August 2009 Nakivale’s total population soared beyond 49,392. The massive influx of Congolese refugees,

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33 Mehdi fled from Iran during the election violence of 2009 and was caught at Uganda’s Entebbe International Airport with a fake passport. He was sent to Jinja Road prison and from there transported, after many months, to Nakivale. Mehdi is also in Godfrey’s English class. Godfrey affectionately calls Mehdi, “Nakivale’s mzungu.”
35 See map # 1 for population of Nakivale and breakdown of population by nationality. (2009)
Godfrey included, largely accounts for this increase. Today there are rumors circulating Nakivale that OPM will soon close the camp making preoccupations about resettlement and repatriation all the more frequent.

The far sideline of Nakivale’s football pitch is a barbed wire fence. Its defensive integrity is supplemented by a row of trees that adds another restriction to curiosity and stray footballs. This other space, a restricted space, is called “base camp.” Inside, a series of small cement rooms enclose Christine’s canteen. Every morning at 8am the “field” staff of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), German Development Agency (GTZ), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHRC), joined by the occasional researcher, fill the open-air pavilion for sweet chai and chapati; those who do not expect to make it back in time for lunch take matoke and goat intestine as well. From here, the men who drill boreholes, administer cooperative goat sharing, and distribute rations disperse. And they all travel in white Toyota SUVs. Yesterday, while walking by base camp on his way to Sangano, Emmanuel pointed out holes in the barbed wire. Holes in which some of his Rwandan friends were stuck on the day the police came and forced repatriation. They had been called to base camp to register and were inside the fence when the shooting began. Emmanuel no longer goes inside the fence. It was inside the fence that Godfrey and Etienne were reunited after running and arriving. It was inside the fence

that Beata lied about being educated. And inside the fence is where refugees come every month to pick up 15 kilos of maize, 2 kilos of beans, and ½ liter of cooking oil.

When the Congolese began to arrive in large numbers shortly after the turn of the new millennium, they settled, with the permission of OPM, in a stretch of land to the east of Nakivale Lake and out beyond Somali Town and Nakivale Hospital. From base camp one might take 15 minutes to walk to this place, now called Old Congo. In Old Congo sits Daystar Pentecostal Church and the brick frame of another building that will soon be another Daystar Pentecostal Church. Alex and Godfrey both contributed some funds to the construction. Next door is Godfrey’s English school. In between the school and the church is a line to the borehole. But Old Congo was soon too small and with land disputes between refugees and Ugandan nationals a familiar nightmare for OPM, there was need for a New Congo. And thus, as refugees continued to arrive they were allotted land in increasing proximity to base camp. Today, only the football pitch separates New Congo from base camp. And so when Godfrey and Etienne and Gabe and Pastor and Karimundongo arrived in Nakivale they settled in New Congo.


Refugee Law Project was “established in November 1999 with the aim of protecting and promoting the rights of forced migrants in Uganda. The RLP operates as an autonomous project within the Faculty of Law of Makerere University, and focuses on three main areas: legal assistance, training and research and advocacy. The Refugee Law Project works towards ensuring that asylum seekers and refugees are, as specified under national and international law, treated with the fairness and consideration due [to] fellow human beings.”
The white SUVs divide responsibility: OPM allots land and staffs Nakivale’s health center; the Red Cross transfers emergency patients from the health center to Mbarara Hospital and trains teachers for Nakivale’s three primary schools; UNHCR and World Food Programme give out the monthly rations; GTZ sponsors economic cooperatives. They are at work here in Nakivale, as their mission statements and mandates decree, to provide assistance to “vulnerable” persons. But despite the paternalism and funding, the resources these organizations bring to Nakivale are not enough to sustain the population. There are informal commodity and labor markets at work. In the Rwandan and Somali nodes in particular, there are shops, small restaurants, and workers waiting and ready for hire. Rations must be supplemented and, for some, there is Ugandan currency to do so. Upon arrival many refugees are given farmland and are able to grow beans, tomatoes, sorghum, and groundnuts despite Nakivale’s semi-arid climate and short rainy season. Others raise goats. But some refugees in Nakivale do not know how to farm. Many of the Ethiopians and Eritreans, for example, came from cities; before becoming refugees they were urban entrepreneurs. The majority of Somalis, according to Yusef, were nomadic pastoralists, displaced into a sedentary lifestyle. And so within Nakivale’s informal economies, there is a division of labor based on a diversity of history.

40 Neuner, Onyut et al., "Nakivale Camp Mental Health Project: Building Local Competency for Psychological Assistance to Traumatised Refugees," (The Nakivale Camp Mental Health Project: building local competency for psychological assistance to traumatised refugees Intervention 2004) p. 91.

But how does this all work? If I am a new arrival, how do I find a community of individuals to count on? Having heard from Godfrey and company about the circumstances of departure we turn to life in Nakivale, life away from home, life in displacement. We arrive at the football pitch. We have just received our first bunch of rations. From the looks of it they will not last through the week. What should we do? Who should we talk to first? And what should we tell them? Should we tell them what why we are here? Should we tell them about the running and the day it all happened and the shooting and our parents? What will foster trust between us? Is it even possible to recount these memories? Should we seek out those who have experienced similar events or those with whom we share identity commitments? Solidarity or sameness? Common legacy or common category? Do I narrate the past? Or the self? Or both? But how?

How does Godfrey go about filling the vacuum left by the white SUVs?

He replies, “Well most of the people in the church are of our tribe, although we are having south and north. [Kivu provinces] But we speak the same language, and apart from that we are Christians, and that links us together, and we are living in the same situation, and we fled for the same reasons. That makes us be united together in this situation.”

Interdependent relationships require stories of the past, and in Nakivale, where individuals are displaced from their spheres of familiarity, stories of the past are not

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41 Neuner et al., p. 92
readily visible. Conversations about the past are molded to concentrate authority—sameness and solidarity, the connectors of I to we—in perceived historical commonality. Some identity categories are more readily evident: religious ideology, ethnic fraternity, and vocational solidarity. But in displacement there is a constant realignment of sameness. There is an adaptive strength to holding a multitude of identities and having the ability to express such multiple identities simultaneously.\textsuperscript{42} Godfrey is Congolese, Pentecostal, Banyamulenge, an English speaker, a football player, a refugee, and he is able to navigate among such categories for instrumental purposes. What allows him to do so?

Like Godfrey, many residents of Nakivale arrange their professed self-perceptions according to experiences they share with other refugees. What is shared is mobilized to create new boundaries of solidarity, as refugees are often geographically removed from the communities in their past.\textsuperscript{43} As we will see, collective economic endeavors in Nakivale often operate on the basis of shared religion or shared ethnicity. It can be advantageous, at times, for Godfrey to assert his Pentecostal faith, while in other scenarios it will more useful to declare his Banyamulenge-ness. Yet there are categories of sameness and solidarity that are less visible, categories at work in Nakivale that require the story of the self and the past to be re-told. It is here that we return to the importance of narrative and the pragmatics of past-making. What

\textsuperscript{43} Thus constituent individuals may express their identities in ways that engender favorable social outcomes. As Steven Vertovec notes in his discussion of diasporic consciousness among South Asian religions, “compounded by the awareness of multi-locality, the ‘fractured memories’ of diaspora consciousness produce a multiplicity of histories, ‘communities,” and selves. Yet instead of being represented as a kind of schizophrenic deficit, such multiplicity is being redefined by diasporic individuals as a source of adaptive strength.” (Vertovec, p. 6.)
permits such realignments of sameness? When cooperation is discussed in Nakivale, what categories dominate? What patterns occur in the storytelling of violence and displacement to mark sameness or opportunities for solidarity? And does it matter who is listening? We will return to Nakivale to take up such questions in chapter 4.

From Nakivale it is a day’s journey to Mbarara. I hire a cyclist to take me down off the base camp ridge and to the nearest road. At the intersection there is a cluster of buildings, some fruit sellers, and a tented billiard table. White sedans leave for Mbarara from the big tree. The driver waits to leave until each seat has two passengers. As we set off, the driver reaches around both my legs to switch gears. We barrel north and east. The next morning I take a coach bus to Uganda’s bustling metropolis, the capital city of Kampala. On the way, we pass over the equator. Then it is on to Gulu. 6 hours north, over the Nile, and into the savannah.
Chapter Two

Northern Uganda: Narrative Coercion and The Lord’s Resistance Army

August 22nd 1996.

Opiyo was asleep in the dormitories of Sam Baker Secondary School when the rebels approached. He awoke to chaos. Fifteen young soldiers of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and had come to pad their ranks with the boys of Sam Baker. But the abductors themselves were not experienced soldiers. Indeed they too had recently been abducted from villages across northern Uganda. And so they feared that Opiyo and his friends would try to resist. They tied Opiyo’s hands and waist to those of another boy. There were many of them: perhaps 39, or 120. Then the commander of the soldiers picked one boy at random and killed him so that everyone knew things were very serious.

Opiyo and his fellow abducted schoolmates were escorted north. They were each given a heavy bundle of beans and simsim to carry. Opiyo remembers, “Sometimes we didn’t get to eat for two days. Some died because of no food. We didn’t eat because we were not soldiers.” When Opiyo reached Kitgum he was trained: first in the Holy Spirit, then in military procedures.

By 1996 the war in northern Uganda was nothing new. Roughly ten years earlier, on 26 January 1986, Yoweri Museveni had led his National Resistance Army (NRM) through the streets of Kampala in victory. On 29 January, Museveni was

44 Recorded testimony of fellow abductee: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_rEhAMLm28
(Accessed 11/20/2010)
45 Opiyo’s count;
Among those abducted on 22 August 1996 with Opiyo was Moses, a major character in Matthew Green’s Wizard of the Nile: The Hunt for Africa’s Most Wanted. Green’s account of that day and the conflict in general is readable and adventurous. He tells that story of the LRA within his own journey to meet Joseph Kony face-to-face.
sworn in as president. The toppling of Tito Opiyo’s regime was not a surprise to Uganda’s population—Opiyo had been in power for only six months—one of many short-term presidents in the aftermath of the Idi Amin era. But Opiyo, like his predecessors, came from northern Uganda; they were ethnic Acholis, they spoke the Acholi language, and they were accustomed to Acholi dominance in Uganda’s military. Museveni was not Acholi nor was he from the north. He is an ethnic Nyankole and comes from Mbarara district down in the southern part of the country near Nakivale. As one approaches Mbarara Town from Kampala Road, the statue of a stoic bull stands proudly in the town’s central traffic circle, providing a sturdy welcome. Mbarara is a cattle town. In colonial times, development money to Uganda landed in Entebbe and traveled south. Farming and agriculture boomed. In the North the Acholi formed an “ethno-military identity.”⁴⁶ The prospect of Museveni’s reign threatened those in Acholiland who wanted the Acholi presence in the military to remain dominant. The LRA began with this preoccupation.

Acayo Milly was born in Pader District, one of four districts in the North that comprise ‘Acholiland.’ Like Opiyo, Milly was in school the day it all happened. It was 1995.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ According to the personal chronology Milly provides during our interview she was either abducted in 1995 or 1998. I have found, time and again, that age and date are often among the most difficult notions to translate. In this case, late 1994/1995 is derived because Milly returned in late 2002 and was in the bush for 8 years. Also it coincides with the start-up of allied relations with the Khartoum government that coincides with Milly’s narration. 1998 would be derived by the following logic: Milly is 25 in 2009 and she was abducted at the age of 14.
“I was at school…in Senior Two…and they just came and abducted five of us girls.” Milly recalls that on this day the rebels had a strict criterion for potential abductees. “According to them I was the only beautiful girl, the rest they sent back.” Her abductors commented, “We are taking her to our boss because she is beautiful.” Milly continues: “So they took me to Kony in Sudan. I was only 14, ah I cried! I cried so much but they would not leave me. I even told them. ‘If you take me, my mother is going to die.’ I am the only child.”

At the top of the LRA’s strictly hierarchical military authority structure sits a man by the name of Joseph Kony. At the time Milly was taken, in late 1994, the LRA leadership was stationed primarily in Juba, Sudan. 1992 and 1993 had been years of relative peace; peace talks led by Betty Bigombe—the Minister for the Pacification of the North—had neared fruition until Kony asked for a delay in implementation and Museveni responded, in February 1994, with a seven-day ultimatum for the LRA to turn in all their weapons.48 But the LRA found a new stockpile: Sudan’s Khartoum government. Khartoum provided the LRA with arms, ammunition, and foodstuffs. In return, the LRA promised to wage war with the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) while reorganizing their bid for Kampala. Kony even introduced some Islam-inspired regulations to the rituals that comprise his rule: “People raising pigs would be killed, and those working on Fridays would have an arm amputated”49 (neither of which is actually forbidden according to orthodox Islam.) And so Kony was stationed for the time being in Juba and with this state of relative permanence, he required a wife.

48 Doom & Vlassenroot, p. 25.
49 Doom & Vlassenroot, p. 25.
“They took me to him and introduced me, ‘This is the girl we brought for you.’ [Kony] said, ‘Now from here, you will be my wife, no going back.’ I told him, ‘I am a student and I want to go back and study.’ And he was like, ‘Ah no more studying, you are going to be here with me. From now on, you are my wife.’ So I could not do anything, because there, if you force things, they could even kill you, so I stayed with him.”

For 25 years, extreme violence would take its toll on Acholiland: Abductions and massacres were commonplace and the largely rural population was forced by Uganda’s government to gather in Internally Displaced Person’s (IDP) camps. But the persistence of such atrocities was puzzling to most observers including those in Uganda. When the LRA formed in the latter half of the 1980s, there was considerable unrest in the North following Museveni’s takeover. But as time went on, peace and relative stability fell upon the rest of Uganda. Kony professed to rule Uganda according to the Ten Commandments.50 “Possessed of a charisma bordering on the prophetic, Kony has forged a new vision of Acholi-hood, based on individual salvation and purity…. [a] ‘biblical’ vision of political redemption.”51 As the years progressed, the binding internal logic of the LRA became estranged from its original political endeavors in favor of spiritually-justified warfare. Moreover, now that there was little incentive for Acholi men and women to join the LRA, Kony and his followers turned to massive abduction campaigns—of the very Acholi people whose

50 Doom & Vlassenroot, p. 5.
51 Doom & Vlassenroot, p. 5.
interests they claimed to represent. Opiyo and Milly were among the 25,000\textsuperscript{52} to 80,000\textsuperscript{53} victims of abduction into the LRA between 1987 and 2011.

Opiyo continues: “I am still alive because I [encountered] a person who came from the place I came from,” Opiyo recalls, referring to a soldier in the LRA who recognized him when they reached Kitgum. “This man gave my some maize so I could survive. He helped me because we came from the same village.” The man had been abducted while Opiyo and he were still in primary school. And by the time they were reunited, he had become a respected soldier. Opiyo recognized that the limited resources in the LRA’s possession were afforded according to rank. Soon the man was killed. “This gentleman continued giving me water and maize [but] we entered into an ambush from the UPDF (Museveni’s government soldiers) on the way to Sudan and this man died. I saw him die. He was wounded in the ambush but not yet dead until two days.” Opiyo kept walking.

“We moved day and night. If they wanted to cook they put sand on someone’s back and they cooked while you are walking. Then you eat while you are moving.”

Some scholars place the origin of the LRA’s spiritual doctrine in 1985 with a woman named Alice. In 1987 German anthropologist Heiki Behrend was stationed in northern Uganda. She was studying what would become the Holy Spirit Movement. She recalls the Acholi reaction to Museveni’s coup in the capital, “In Acholi[and]…a


\textsuperscript{53} \url{http://iwpr.net/report-news/new-study-gives-huge-figure-lra-abductions} (Accessed: March 20, 2011)
series of prophets, possessed by various spirits, emerged to organize resistance against the government of the National Resistance Army of Yoweri Museveni.” Alice was one of these prophets. Possessed by the spirit Lakwena, Alice established the “Holy Spirit Mobile Forces” (HSMF)—an army that sought to take power from Museveni to fight against “witches and against impure soldiers.”

Following an initiation ceremony, purification rituals to free soldiers of evil spirits, and promises of magical protection against enemy bullets, Alice and her 7000-10000 Holy Spirit Mobile Force soldiers marched toward Kampala. In November 1987 the HSPM was defeated in the town of Jinja; Alice fled to Kenya and many of the remaining soldiers headed back to Acholiland. But the Acholi remained threatened by the Museveni coup—many even feared an Acholi genocide, and the resulting motivations would be channeled into justification for more violence.


55 Where did Alice get a religious discourse that would compel 7000 soldiers to attempt a coup on the state capital? Behrend attempts this explanation and she begins with the notion of jok—“any of a variety of forces, powers or spirits which can take possession of people, especially women, animals, and things, gifting them with a particular power of strength.” Yet crucially for Behrend’s subsequent explanation, the power of jok is inherently ambivalent: It can be used for purposes both good and bad. But when missionaries from the Church Missionary Society and the Catholic Comboni Mission arrived in Acholiland in the early 1900s, this ambivalence was parsed into a moral dualism. “The missionaries thus produced a hegemonic discourse in which a large number of evil spirits lost their ambiguity and were increasingly suspected of being used mainly for witchcraft and sorcery, or more precisely for killing.” This moral dualism was furthered rigidified by Balokole, a Christian fundamentalist reform movement that gained momentum in Uganda in the 1940s and that emphasized the Holy Spirit above God and Jesus in its religious discourse. Yet like the proliferating harmful jok spirits, the Holy Spirit was also severed into a “plurality of holy spirits.” It was a Holy Spirit called Lakwena—a Christian spirit, that possessed Alice on 2 January 1985 and “ordered her to heal the sick and the wounded with holy water.” (Behrend, pp. 23-24.)

56 Behrend, p. 24.

57 Regarding Kony, Doom & Vlassenroot write, “He is the bearer of an apocalyptic vision, a mouthpiece of a widely accepted view that the Acholi people is on the verge of genocide.” (Doom & Vlassenroot, p. 22.)
While Alice failed to take Kampala, the spiritual discourse that cohered her movement would translate to the LRA. Back in 1986, “The spirit Lakwena ordered his medium Alice to stop healing, which had become senseless anyway, and to build up the HSMF instead, in order to bring down the government, to purify the world of sin and to build up a new world in which humans and nature would be reconciled.” And thus, Alice obeyed Lakwena and mobilized this indigenized Christian discourse to discipline and integrate an army. Her disciplinary strategy remained purely spiritual. Behrend accounts for Alice’s response to battle fears, “Should a soldier die in battle, after a short purgatory, his spirit would rejoin the movement and continue fighting with living soldiers, thus, the HSM created a sort of ancestor cult, not based on descent but on membership of a corporate unit, the HSMF.” Refugee Law Project adds the political context: “The Acholi had been ousted from power and were facing what many of them at the time believed to be persecution and possible


59 Within the spirit realm, there was a clearly defined military hierarchy. Lakwena was chairman and commander-in-chief of the Holy Spirit Movement; he was an Italian spirit with jurisdiction over Christian morality. Second in command was Wrong Element—an American spirit in charge of military intelligence. But Wrong Element was also known as a trickster. He required the constant obedience of LRA recruits: “When the Holy Spirit Soldiers did not obey the Holy Spirit Safety Precautions’ some twenty rules governing Christian behavior, he would change sides and fight with the government troops to punish soldiers.” Then there was Frank from Zaire. He was called Mzee, because like Yusef down in Nakivale, he was an old man. Mzee was responsible for supplying food and other material necessities. Ching Poh was from Korea; his territory was weapons and transport. Jeremiah was the spirit nurse. And there were Islamic spirits too—Mohammad, Miriam, and Medina among them. They fought the battles. Nyaker was an indigenous spirit from Acholiland—she helped Jeremiah out with healing. And so within the realm of the spirits there existed division of labor comparable to the division of labor between the soldiers. Some kill; others heal. (Behrend, 20-25)

60 Behrend, p. 25.
extinction.”61 And so the spiritual discourse of the HSM molded itself to Acholi political preoccupations.

Before issuing any military assignment, Alice would sit on a stool…wearing a white *kanzu*—a tunic-like male Islamic dress, and a rosary around her neck. Lakwena would take possession of Alice during morning and evening parade ceremonies and “The chief clerk of Lakwena, the secretary, stood beside her to translate and write down what the spirits said.” It was from such possession rituals that Alice justified her military authority.

When Milly arrived in Juba in 1995 she quickly learned that Kony already had ten other wives. “But when I was there, he started liking me among the best.” While the other wives learned to fight and loot, Kony made it clear that he wanted Milly to be exempt from such duties. Upon her arrival, Kony publically proclaimed, “For this girl, don’t teach her shooting and don’t take her to fight. No. She is totally my wife, she is not a soldier.” And so Milly became a stay-at-home rebel.

I ask Milly about Kony and what it was like to live with a man who is considered, in both local and international opinion, to be responsible for thousands of deaths and atrocities. She and I sit at a table in the garden of the Acholi Inn in Gulu. In is the fall of 2009. It is a beautiful day and a metronomic hammer in the adjacent construction site distracts us at first. We are in the NGO quarter and construction is everywhere. I have been in Gulu for some months now as a student with a “Study

Abroad” organization. And I will come back again to Uganda in six months to do research for my senior B.A. thesis. I will be institutionally reviewed, funded, debriefed and ready to debrief. But all that—short of the thesis part—is true now too. We were told what to expect and how it might feel to “interview former child-soldiers.” But this feels repulsive to me. I want to protect Milly from the people who think they know her by her categories, I feel closer to Milly than those on my “study abroad” trip. I hate the phrase “study abroad.” It makes me think I should not have asked Milly to speak with me today—like I do not have the right. The tape recorder feels oppressive and neocolonial. But we are sitting here and Milly is cheerful and I try to tell her how much I appreciate her willingness to tell me her story but it comes out wrong. Or insufficient, or at least that is how it feels. And Milly is still smiling and happy to be here, and I feel undeserving. I look up at her again and think, “of course Kony picked her for himself.” Did I really just have that thought! What if the IRB finds out?

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Kony is a “person, let me tell you, it is very difficult to know what he likes and what he doesn’t like…At times if he is free—because, you know—he is possessed by the evil spirit, but when he is free as a human being he is kind to people, he loves, he likes the children so much. But when the spirit comes, it orders him to do things. At times, you see him seated holding a pen and a book. [The spirit] comes in the form of a bad dream. At times the spirit comes and talks himself. Kony will not even know that it is saying but the people will…tell Kony what the spirits said… And
those spirits, at times they can talk in English, other times in Swahili, even sometimes they can talk in Arabic.”

I ask Milly what types of things the spirit talks about. Kony “has very many evil spirits…Like he could know that Museveni is planning to do this, and the evil spirit is the one who informs. Get prepared the soldiers are coming in this number and they are coming to fight from this direction.” But the spirits know more personal things too, like if a certain LRA abductee is planning to escape. “So they can get you and kill you before you escape.”

Milly cites her own experience. “I thought of…[escaping] when we were still in Uganda. I was not yet with… [Kony] so I hid under a tree but unfortunately in that very tree, a soldier was hiding. Since they were planning to take me to the boss, they did nothing to me. They just said, ‘You are planning to escape but you’re not going to escape.’ But if they were not planning to take me there, they could just kill me.”

Do you believe in the spirit?

“Ok,” Milly exhales to signal the start of a long explanation, “I didn’t believe in the spirit. What made me start believing was when we entered Sudan, they had just brought me to Kony in a certain place called Palotaka. But Kony forgot something so we came to come back to Atiak [on the Uganda side of the border]. When we were in Atiak we were surrounded by the NRM [Museveni’s UPDF] and we had nowhere to go. Kony…ordered somebody to bring him water. So he sprang the water in all directions. He was talking but we couldn’t understand. It was not in English. It was not in Acholi. We told everyone to sit down for ten minutes. Then he ordered everyone to start singing some song they used to sing while fighting. A gospel song.
They started to sing the chorus. Then he said, ‘As you sing, start moving.’ We started…After a mile we found [some] UPDF, they were there sleeping [and waiting to] ambush. They had [planned to] ambush…us but when we got there, we were just jumping over them. Jumping! All of us, they didn’t even wake up. We moved all and we were very many. Even 500 and we were singing…when the people behind reached the UPDF they thought they were the ones in front. So they got confused and started fight[ing] amongst themselves. And that day I started believing, ‘I think the spirit works…’ I said, ‘God is this you or what? I was really confused. Is this our God or a spirit? The thing was so strange.’

The spirit is particularly perplexing for those who attempt to make sense of the LRA within social scientific paradigms. Refugee Law Project (RLP) is a widely praised human rights organization run by the Faculty of Law at Makerere University in Kampala and publishes extensive reliable scholarship on the conflict in the North. In a 2004 paper entitled, “Behind the Violence: Causes, Consequences and the Search for Solutions to the War in northern Uganda,” RLP implies a connection between the LRA’s renowned brutality and its spiritual doctrine. The LRA forces, “young children to kill and torture soon after capture, making them massacre their own communities to create a ‘clean break’ with the past, and coercing abductees to walk for miles with their hands tied together with rope.”62 And subsequently, “Kony uses his spiritual and Biblical revelations to manipulate people much like a cult leader, but does not appear

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to brainwash them heavily: most LRA members end up believing in his spiritual power.” Milly, it seems, was one such believer.

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On the way to Sudan, Opiyo and the Sam Baker boys finally met the expert soldiers. The boys were immediately separated into groups of five to prevent any ideas about escape from circulating amongst them. It was then that Opiyo encountered the soldiers of Sudan’s Khartoum government.

“There we met the Arabs, they were bringing us guns and also some food. They took us to the barracks, and we attacked the SPLA because we were not experts.”

“I killed them,” Opiyo proclaims. And he quickly qualifies his decision not to hesitate: “Because you know war is war. Me, I also protect my life.” But the SPLA soldiers were also “crude,” non-expert soldiers. It was a battle between two rebel groups that were each compelled to fight by their respective interests in their domestic territories. The battle was relegated on both sides to the new recruits like Opiyo. If it were not for Uganda’s alliance with the SPLA, Khartoum would have had little interest in a charisma-bound Christian militia in a distant corner of Sudan. But this was not the case and in 1998, Opiyo and some of his fellow schoolmates from Sam Baker Secondary School were transported up to Khartoum to learn the specialized military operations. Some of Opiyo’s friends learned to be wartime doctors, others learned to transcribe Kony’s spirit—“But I was trained to put the landmines,” Opiyo recounts.

Opiyo’s first encounter with Joseph Kony came on different terms than Milly’s. As chief escort for Brigadier Odong, a high-ranking commander in the LRA, Opiyo was summoned one day, alongside Odong, to witness a possession ritual.

“You know this gentleman was working through spirits. If the government comes to attack, he knows they are coming. He would tell us before. For example, if the government is coming, Kony will say, ‘They are 200 in number, they are coming from this direction and in this way.’ And then it happens exactly as he said. This is why I believe that spirits are working.”

In the year 2000, after returning to Southern Sudan from landmine training in Khartoum, Opiyo was given rank and a wife. Now it was his turn to lead attacks from the LRA base in Sudan down into northern Uganda for supplies and manpower.

“After one year [with rank] I was made captain. I came to Uganda several times for attacks. You know in Uganda…you cannot rest because here there are very many soldiers and intelligence. We keep moving day and night. Every day people lose their lives. Every day we kill people. Every day we fight... We kill a lot of people.” Opiyo was the commander of a group of soldiers. It was important to him that he be successful according to the success-measures of those above him. It was because he had pleased his senior commanders in the past that he was given rank and a wife. One day Opiyo and his group were instructed to ambush a coach bus traveling from Kampala to Nebbi. This time, Opiyo was the man in charge.
After dancing and jumping over the UPDF ambush, Milly approached Kony with questions. “What happened?” she asked, referring to the ambush. “Why couldn’t the soldiers do anything?”

Kony replied, “Our God is great, our God is awake. But their God is asleep, that is why they are sleeping.” Milly laughed and said, “I cannot believe that, you just have a strong spirit.” And Kony said, “Yeah but the spirit works with God.” Milly remembers that other soldiers saw the God in Kony more literally than she did. By Milly’s account, many fellow ‘rebels’ “call Kony the son of God, they believe that the spirit which is in him is from God.” But Milly differentiates her own thoughts on the matter. “What I have realized is that the spirit is just using him…God cannot kill people anyhow, cannot order to abduct young children and rape them. I started realizing that it is a spirit from somewhere that is strong but not from God.”

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Opiyo ordered his group of soldiers to ambush the coach bus. He recounts the details: “In a place called Lamogi we started attacking the soldiers in the center. About five of our friends were killed. We carried them and left them to Alero. Then we continued on the road. We reached around 4 o’clock in the night. Not yet morning. We were sleeping on the road waiting for the bus. The first bus came and one of our soldiers tried to shoot the bus but the driver continued. The second bus…[Opiyo snaps his fingers to signal the sound of bullets] this time he shot the driver direct. We went to the bus and took all the passengers out of the bus and took everything from the bus. Then we lined them up and started shooting them with the
gun. All of them. Women, even children. One line. Shot them all. Before finishing shooting them we saw a car coming from Arua and we stopped the car and got a sister. We got a lot of money. They told us they were going to buy a car. A lot of millions.\textsuperscript{64} We took the money and left behind only the sister. Three of the gentlemen we abducted. We walked with them for two days but you know those people cannot walk. Their feet are swelling. After two days they are dying on the way. After attacking the bus we are coming back to a place called Alero. Where we met the group of Vincent Otti, the second commander.\textsuperscript{65} Then we dropped all the money to him. We divided again into small groups and continued to fight the government and continued abducting girls and boys. I have abducted very many, sometimes more than 20 at the same time although it depends.”

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Joseph Kony is Alice’s cousin (or so he claims).\textsuperscript{66} Before Alice marched toward Kampala in 1987, Kony had given her a proposition—namely, to join forces against Museveni. But Alice thought Kony to be “ridiculous.”\textsuperscript{67} Heike Behrend, details his reaction, “[Alice’s rejection, Kony] never forgot. To take revenge, he started cutting the food supply for Alice’s forces and killed some of her soldiers.”\textsuperscript{68}

With Alice’s defeat, Kony sat on the stool in a kanzu and claimed that he too was

\textsuperscript{64} I hesitate to bracket up this monologue. By millions, Opiyo means millions of Ugandan shillings: \$1USD = roughly 2000UGS

\textsuperscript{65} Along with Kony, Otti and two other LRA commanders were indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court. Rumors have it that Kony ordered the murder of Otti in 2007 after a disagreement over the Juba Peace talks; \texttt{http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7083311.stm} (Accessed: March 20, 2011)

\textsuperscript{66} Behrend, p. 25-29.

\textsuperscript{67} Behrend, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{68} Behrend, p. 29.
possessed by Holy Spirits. A few years later, he was joined by a boy from Sam Baker who had learned to transcribe the spirits.

Milly describes a day when the Holy Spirit and Kony had a disagreement. The disagreement was regarding her. “When we were in Sudan, Kony gathered the people and said the spirit wants to talk to everyone. So Kony himself was not himself but the spirit was using him. They told me that if you have a plan [for escape] the spirit can tell. That day, I had [such] a plan…when he finished, he told all those [who had been with the LRA in Sudan] for six months to stand up. I was among [them]. I had just finished six months. He told us to go in front one by one. When it was my turn he told me, ‘come.’ But I was fearing, I started shaking. I thought they were going to kill me. [Then they picked another girl. At this point Kony remained possessed so ‘they’ refers to either the spirit or fellow soldiers]…I was shaking!…I knew they were going to kill us. But then [the spirit] said he wanted us to be the leaders for girls. “From now on, I want these girls to be given respect as leaders…because they are going to address girls and how they should behave.” Then came the disagreement. “When we sat down after the spirit left they told Kony that I was elected to be lieutenant. But he disagreed. He said, ‘I don’t want the girl to do anything involving soldiers. He said he would tell the spirit that, ‘that girl is my wife, I don’t want her to do any work.’” Two weeks later, Milly conceived. Then the spirit returned and remarked, ‘now my girl is pregnant so I have to elect another one…’ Kony was very happy.”
Opiyo and I sit in the back room of Elephant Graceland Hotel in Gulu. It has been six months since Milly and I had that memorable conversation at the Acholi Inn. But the Elephant Graceland is not the Acholi Inn. Few mzungus would choose to stay here. There is no yard, no pool, no sauna. Outside there is plastic outdoor furniture arranged to facilitate relaxing afternoons with a view of one of Gulu’s primary pedestrian corridors. We sit inside.

Opiyo is a small man. His mannerisms are gentle and his smile is broad. He has just recounted, in a tone that appears unapologetic, how he lined up a busload of people and shot them in the back. Soon he will tell me how he forced the girl he was “given.” He also tells me about his church but for some reason it is the violence that is most salient. I find myself angry. I feel far away from reliable value-systems because I know that if a friend back home told me that he had ambushed a coach bus I would have reacted differently. I would have been more confident in my judgments. Before this moment, I had felt safe with Opiyo. Yesterday, when I first met Opiyo, we shared stories of our families. Yesterday, I happened to be carrying Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*, and Opiyo asked me about it. Yesterday, I had described the scene I had just read, just after Henry is shot and transported to the hospital. Yesterday, Opiyo and I had talked about Catherine’s love and loyalty. But today Opiyo tells me, “I forced her,” when he describes his first sexual encounter with his wife. Tomorrow he will introduce me to members of “Child-Mother’s Mixed Group”—a group of ex-combatant women who have started a loan-sharing cooperative.
How did you perform the killings?

“We kill using small trees, we beat them, we use an axe or panga. Mostly we use pangas and small fires…we don’t shoot civilians, the guns are [reserved] for [killing] soldiers.”

More.

“[Sometimes] we cut off their legs or arms because, you know…because they are taking reports to the government.” Seeing my reaction, Opiyo clarifies that he is not to be held responsible: “We did this in our group because it was an order from above. I cannot refuse.”

Our conversation turns to padlocks.

“You pin a knife through their lips and put the padlock. They know where we are going, that is why we put a padlock on their mouth. It means that when they remove it we will have gone far. Being a solider is difficult, anytime you can lose your life.”

And now the abductions.

“We abducted women to be soldiers and wives. They are distributed to those who had rank. I got a wife who is now 22 years old…she didn’t accept but I forced her because she was the lady they gave me….I had a baby in 2000. We are now together in Gulu. We stay together with people from the bush because those who stay here don’t like us. Because they are continuing to tell us, ‘you people from the bush—you killed my son, my husband, you killed my wife.’ But we did these things because we were

\[ Acholi for “machete” \]
following our boss.” Every soldier in the LRA was following a boss—every soldier except for Kony. And Kony was following the spirits.

In the mid 1990s things changed. The abductions, massacres, and padlocking became more frequent and widespread. Images of the LRA committing brutal atrocities began to circulate outside Uganda. It was around this time, and after the failure of Bigome’s peace initiative, that the abductions became more frequent.

In the trading center of Atiak, just months after Milly jumped over the sleeping UPDF soldiers, allegiances changed. Back in the late 1980s, in the beginning of the conflict, the villagers of Atiak willingly provided the LRA with food and youth. But as time went on, the reasons for such support were called into question. In Atiak, young men fought in both the UPDF and the LRA. Loyalties were divided; some civilians continued to aid the LRA, while others gave up on the LRA’s cause. The LRA perceived any collaboration with the government to be treasonous.70

“Violence was from the beginning a trademark of the movement, but now the people [the Acholi] as a whole seemed to be declared guilty.” The LRA came to Atiak for revenge.

5:00 am April 20, 1995. LRA soldiers enter Atiak. They attack government soldiers who have been posted in the trading center. By 10am the LRA overrun the UPDF. According to civilian witnesses, the LRA began to burn huts and loot local shops. The civilians were rounded up and sent into the forest. The secondary school was bombed. In the valley of Ayugi there is a stream called Kitang. When the

70 “Remembering the Atiak Massacre, April 20th, 1995” Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) Field Note No. 4, April 2007, p. 2.
civilians arrived at the stream they were separated into two groups: men and able-bodied boys, and women, young children, and the elderly. Vincent Otti, later to be indicted by the International Criminal Court, in part for his actions on this day, approached the gathered group of civilians.\textsuperscript{71} One survivor remembers, “Otti told us that we were undermining their power. He also said we people of Atiak were saying that LRA guns have rusted. He said he had come to show us that his guns were still functioning.” Another survivor added, “Otti ordered his soldiers to kill ‘anything that breathed.’”\textsuperscript{72} The final death count was around 300.

In 2002, Museveni attempted to end the conflict in the North once and for all. He called the intervention, “Operation Iron Fist.” UPDF soldiers went into Sudan to drive out the LRA. Since shortly before Milly’s arrival in 1995, most of the LRA’s activity had taken place in Southern Sudan from where abduction missions back into Uganda could be organized. When Museveni decided to cross into Sudan to fight the LRA, he “ended up worsening the humanitarian situation and dramatically increasing

\textsuperscript{71} “Remembering the Atiak Massacre, April 20th, 1995” Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) Field Note No. 4, April 2007, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{72} “Remembering the Atiak Massacre, April 20th, 1995” Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) Field Note No. 4, April 2007, p. 6;
This survivor continues: “They then commanded children below eleven years and pregnant women and breast-feeding women to stand aside. I had a sizable child I was carrying. I shifted with them to where they told us to stand. I could not reach my little boy who was seated with the students of Atiak Technical Institute. The remaining group of people was then commanded to lie down. Then they were showered in with bullets. Nobody got up to attempt running away. After the bullets were silent, the soldiers were ordered to fire a second time on the dead corpses, probably to make sure [they were dead]. Then they fired a third time to make sure all the people had been shot. Then they turned to us and asked us if we had seen what had happened. We accepted that we had seen. I was so scared because I had seen my boy being shot. I wept silently and my children told me not to cry…My boy had been shot in the leg and was still alive when the rebels came back. They finished him off with a bayonet.” (“Remembering the Atiak Massacre, April 20th, 1995” Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) Field Note No. 4, April 2007, p. 6) “Interview with Atiak massacre survivor, Atiak Camp, 27 February 2007.”
the number of IDPs across the north.”

But Operation Iron Fist brought revived international attention to the LRA conflict. In July 2005, the newly-inaugurated International Criminal Court put out its first warrants. They were for Joseph Kony and his Deputy Vincent Otti. Then, likely because of increased global attention to the matters taking place in Southern Sudan, Sudan’s Khartoum government quietly rescinded its alliance with the LRA.

Milly remembers the meetings Kony would have with the Arabs in Khartoum. “Kony and those Arabs, they attended…meetings [here in Juba]. I was the one to serve them. I cook for them everything.” But then relations between the LRA and Khartoum came to an end. “But after, the relationship with Sudan was not OK. So they started saying ‘no more coming to Juba.’”

But the timing of this shift in alliances was not ideal for Milly. She was pregnant with her second child. “So when I was now pregnant, [Kony] decided to leave me there [in Juba] because he knew that if I… [went] there in the bush there is no [place] where I can deliver it properly.” Soon they were gone, the soldiers, Kony, the soldiers who had been Milly’s protectors, even her two children. “They started fighting, they chased them out of Sudan. I remained there alone. The UPDF were raiding Juba, they knew about me because they announced over the radio that the wife of Kony is admitted in Juba hospital. When they came I told them the

truth…They told me ‘from now on we are going to take care of you. You are no longer going back to Kony, you are going back home.’ Ah! I was happy.”

Milly wanted to return to her family in Uganda.

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Opiyo wanted to stay. And in a telling rhetorical move he admits, “I was abducted by the government. They were shooting at me. I was down. Shot. The government came for me and took me to the Gulu hospital.” This was 2004.

Here in Gulu, Opiyo encounters three of the people he knew while in the bush. “I see them in Gulu…I go to him and apologize. I say these things I have done were an order and they were not my decision. ‘Do me a favor and leave these things behind.’ They are not happy, but one said they will forgive me.”

“You know life [in Gulu] is not easy. I have a wife and kids…sometimes trauma comes in dreams. I keep remembering most of the killings of people, such kind of things I cannot forget. As returnees, living in the community is not easy. Because sometimes if you go to a group of people they can start pointing at you and saying you are not a good person to stay with because of what you did in the bush…”

It seems that Opiyo drifts temporarily to memories of the bush. He recollects his words and says, “If the LRA were still in Uganda, I would think about going back. Because living here is not easy. You don’t have money to go to the hospital or get food. In the LRA it was easy. You went to the IDP camp and you could get medicine and food and clothes.” Furthermore, Opiyo explains, abducting means that others too, share the experience of life in the LRA.
“When I am abducting those other people, I feel good because me, I am also suffering. Now I feel that you are going to suffer. I feel good because I am taking you to suffer as I am already suffering.” I am not sure how to interpret this comment. Opiyo’s tone is not particularly vengeful; rather it is matter-of-fact. But irrespective of the nature of this comment, it appears to signal that Opiyo attributes responsibility for the atrocities he has committed to his forced conscription. He maintains a language of suffering and victimhood.

I ask Opiyo how he deals with the memories from the bush.

“Mostly I like praying in Christ Church. It’s Born-Again, I am Born-Again. I joined Born-Again when I was in GUSCO rehabilitation center…there they gave me counseling about how to be in the community. They advise us to forget what happened in the bush and to go to school or do vocational training.” For Opiyo joining Christ Church was a tool to reenter the community. Members of the church include both ex-combatants and former IDPs. Opiyo recalls, “The leader of Christ Church came to Gulu, he was telling us how to obey God and not destroy God’s image.”

Opiyo remembers the religious ceremonies from the bush—even those that did not involve Kony and possession. “In the bush we prayed to God. We had a priest [who] was working as a Born-Again. You know in the bush we work through the spirit. The spirit works through the Born-Agains.”

Today Opiyo manages a real-estate business in Gulu. As we walk Opiyo waves to friends. We stop to buy bananas. We are on our way to meet with the
members of the “Child-Mothers Mixed Group.” Opiyo is excited to introduce me, and I am excited to meet these women that I have heard so much about.

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Milly was happy to leave Juba but she was worried about the fate of her children. “I was worried about the children. Even if I produce them with rebels, it is my blood. I love them.” After delivering on March 28, 2002, Milly and her newborn son were taken to Save the Children Denmark—in Khartoum. “I was there for…two weeks in Khartoum. They arranged and gave me some forms…and told me ‘we are going to take you back home.’ I was happy.” Milly was flown to Nairobi and escorted by “a lady working with NGOs to Gulu. They took me up to GUSCO in Gulu. From there, I told them the name of my mother. They went looking for her and they brought my mother.”

“All of us started crying; she was crying, even me I was crying. I wanted even to throw the child I wanted to hug my mother so we cried she told me ‘my child come and let me carry you,’ so she carried me here in GUSCO. I couldn’t believe that I am back home even her, she couldn’t believe that ‘my daughter is here with me.’ We were very happy all the relatives came; they were crowded.”

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Kony and the LRA leaders would be forced westward into the border regions between Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Central African Republic. Kony and the LRA remain active there today.
Chapter Three

A Shifted Ground: The Discourses of Trauma and Selfhood

Nakivale Refugee Settlement and northern Uganda are confusing places. The streets and paths are populated with men, women, and children going about their daily business: There are epiphanies, football, boredom, first-dates, neighborly quarrels, gardens, sex; bouts of laughter, misery, elation, creative mischief, and others things too. Indeed there is everything. These worlds are full.

But very often, it seems, when we think of places like Nakivale and northern Uganda, the neighborhood characters, local music, the energy that is circulating in anticipation of tonight’s Arsenal v Manchester match, feel very much overshadowed. Overshadowed by something heavier. Something that makes these feelings and ideas and days in all their uniqueness insufficient for explaining reality. There is something that will not let us characterize these spaces by their local cuisine, contemporary artwork, or their contribution to the philosophical canon. Here, in Nakivale and northern Uganda, for Yusef and Florence, for Godfrey and Milly, there is a legacy of radically disruptive violence.

When entering Gulu from the Kitgum side one encounters a traffic circle. Three roads come together. From afar, layers of rectangular surfaces appear that comprise what looks like a wall encasing the circling traffic. The rectangles are like patchwork: different colors and different demands for attention. There are dozens. Upon closer inquiry one sees that each rectangle contains an arrow, painted and pointing in one of three possible directions. These are signs for the various organizations working in Gulu. Most are international humanitarian NGOs; others are
local charities. Some newer signs have been placed in front of older ones. They compete for attention but the format is standard: logo, name, arrow. There is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, World Vision Uganda, Save the Children, War Child, Refugee Law Project, CARITAS, Gulu University, United Nations Development Programme—and there are others too. There is overlap in their statements of purpose: “HIV,” “reconciliation,” “development,” “psycho-social support,” “peace,” “malaria.” Why are these organizations here?

This traffic circle resembles a frequent response to violence. Violence has happened and it is happening. Violence consumes our perceptions of the spaces in which it occurs—nations, neighborhoods, and city blocks are first marked by acts of violence above all else. In this way, violence must be what is most salient. It is totalizing. Violence makes us want to see it, to run from it, to ask more, to listen, to scream, to cry, to do something, to leave the room, to be violent, to put up a sign and seek peace. Violence requires a response—a response that is usually potent and confusing; a response that often aspires to alter violence. So what do we do? Pretend violence is not a reality? Go or stay to be present with violence? Observe it? Participate in it or against it? Suffer from it? Devote our lives to ending it? So far, we have witnessed it. Godfrey running from the bullets, Yusef losing his eye and his family, Beata running over the bridge to Tanzania, Opiyo forcing the woman he was “given,” Florence being forced by the man to whom she was “given.” But the violence that we have witnessed is violence that has been narrativized. It is violence that has been converted into language and performed, we might say, for an audience. That audience has been me. When we hear Opiyo’s story do we think of him as
merely a victim of larger circumstances? Or is he a perpetrator of violence? If we were to deem Opiyo a perpetrator, what marks the shift out of victimhood? Whatever the shift may be, it is located in how the story of violence is framed. Our exposure to violence is through the stories that are told about violence—stories that are told to particular people for particular purposes.

The categories we use to make the past, frame identity in the present.

I ask myself questions about me.

When I think about me, I tell a story about me to know the categories in the narrative of selfhood.

My hope, in the end, is that the narrative of I, fits into the story of me. And that the story of me is a story with which I am content.

I narrate while I live so that I might make sense of my relationship to my worlds.

I use familiar categories, employing learned landmarks in the narration, to join me to others.

And so together we may tell a story about who we are. A we to which we both belong; an us that is different from others.

The we too has a story, a story that is harmonious with the I narratives of its constituents but that also operates independently.
I care that my I fits into our we for many reasons: because it is fun, because defining we helps me define I, because it gives me worldly systems so that I can assign value in the I story.

I care so much in fact about how the I fits into our we that at times I am willing to revise my story to fit into our story. Although at other times I am unwilling to do so. And I certainly hope that I have the power to help define we.

But the feedback interactions between the I and the we are affected by the context in which they are drawn. As categories of selfhood arrange into communities, they do so pragmatically and with consideration for what is at stake. What it is that determines the we to which I belong?

Some of the categories that aggregate I into we resemble communities with exclusionary boundaries: family, nation, ethnic fraternity, vocational solidarity. Others are inclusionary but contractual: religious participation, political participation. Some such venues for social participation are institutionalized, others are historical; some are both, some are neither and simply transitory.

There are labels and externalized molds that exist outside the individual that govern how I fits with we and the development of the consciousness in-between. These common descriptors of selfhood regulate how I and we relate and how I and we co-evolve. As we invent and fashion our stories of self, the context of the worlds in which we live provides us with the set of categories we may choose from. But such option-sets of labels for self-definition are not static; they bend around the goals of our conversations and our perceptions of who we are talking to.
The purpose of this chapter—and a fundamental assertion behind this project—is to contend that the set of possible categories available to define the relationship between *I* and *we* is deeply altered by traumatic violence. It is on the basis of this claim that we can chart the ways in which radically disruptive violence alters the process of self-invention and, in doing so, mandates a realignment of the categories that connect *I* to *we*. This is not to say that violence is positive. Rather it is to call attention to the posttraumatic disruption in self-authorship and the process of narrative reclamation. Our goal, once we return to Nakivale and northern Uganda in later chapters, is to listen for this narrative reclamation and how the re-employment of radically disruptive violence into the stories of self depends on the context in which it occurs. Then we can ask, are there certain category-context combinations in the description of the self that are more narratively flexible than others? To put it differently, if alignments of sameness are conversation and context-specific, what enables one to legitimately and flexibly navigate between categories in identity? The ways in which traumatic violence has the potential to shift this ground of meaning about the self and the world is the central problematic of this chapter. We begin with the discourses of trauma.
Chapter Three: Part I

A Genealogy of Trauma-Talk

At the age of twenty-three, Irène was sent to the hospital. The year was 1904. A decade or so before, a young Pierre Janet had arrived at the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris to do his graduate work in “psychological studies” under Jean-Martin Charcot. By this time Charcot was already France’s most renowned physician, and Janet must have felt privileged to be awarded the opportunity to witness Charcot’s medical ingenuity firsthand (or perhaps more importantly his charismatic lecture style). Charcot was a founder of modern neurology, the first to describe multiple sclerosis, and a proponent of long-term psychological studies with patients. He would be remembered by his deep preoccupations with hypnosis and hysteria, having noticed that industrial accidents and warfare caused hysteria-like behavior. Previously, hysteria was a psychological state thought to be confined to women. In 1893 Janet received his medical degree, and by 1902 he too had achieved prominence, being appointed to a Chair of experimental and comparative psychology at Collège de France. It was here, or perhaps back in the Salpêtrière, that Janet first encountered Irène.

Irène couldn’t sleep. It was late at night and for the past fifty-nine nights she had slept very little. Her mother was deathly ill with tuberculosis; her father was

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75 1904 was the year her story was first cited; the visit, having taken place at the Salpêtrière most likely occurred in the 1890s.
76 Van der Kolk and ver der Hart, “The Intrusive Past.” (Caruth, Trauma: Explorations in Memory) p. 160-161; van der Kolk and van der Hart take their account of Irène from Janet (1904, 1919-1925, 1928, 1929, 1935); The account of Irène, originally observed by Janet, are taken from van der Kolk and van der Hart
drunk. So for the past months Irène had cared for her mother and for her fellow siblings. It was taxing and Irène was exhausted, but she knew someone had to do it.

The next night Irène’s mother died. But Irène did not seem to comprehend her mother’s demise. Instead, she stayed up all night trying to wake her mother’s corpse. She gave it medicine and cleaned its mouth—over and over. She yelled downstairs for her father. He was drunk. Irène straightened the body against the headboard and spoke with it. In the morning, she went over to her aunt’s house to ask for help. But she didn’t tell the aunt that her mother had passed away. The aunt accompanied Irène back home and quickly saw what had happened. The aunt arranged for the funeral. At the funeral, Irène laughed inappropriately. “Otherwise [an] intelligent young woman, [Irène] had absolutely no memory of the death of her mother and did not want to believe that her mother had died.”

A couple weeks later Irène’s memory of her mother’s death had still not improved. Her aunt decided it was time to go for help. Together, they went to Salpêtrière.

Janet insisted that Irène try to recount what had happened to her mother.

Defiant but ultimately willing, Irène remarked:

My Mother is dead. They tell me that it is so all day long, I simply agree with them to get them off my back.

But if you want my opinion, I don’t believe it. And I

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77 This quote and Irène’s entire story is taken, almost verbatim, from van der Kolk and van der Hart’s chapter in Caruth’s Trauma: Explorations in Memory; van der Kolk, van der Hart, “The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma,” in Trauma: Explorations in Memory, ed. Cathy Caruth 158-183 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 160-161
have excellent reasons for it. If my mother was really dead, she would have been dead in her room, on a specific date, and I, who never left her and took very good care of her, would have seen it. If she was dead, they would have buried her and taken me to the funeral. Well, there has been no funeral. Why do you want her to be dead?78

Then Irène said something else:

I love my mother, I adore her, I have never left her. If she were dead, I would despair, I would feel very sad, I would feel abandoned and alone. Well, I don’t feel anything; I am not sad at all, I don’t cry; thus she is not dead.

Six months later, after treatment and hypnosis, Janet prompted her once again. While hypnotized, Irène told the following story of her mother’s death.

Don’t remind me of those terrible things. It was a horrible thing that happened in our apartment that night in July. My mother was dead, my father completely

drunk, doing only horrible things to me. I had to take care of the deceased all night long and I did a lot of silly things in order to try to revive her, I talked to her, I wanted her to answer me, I tried to get her to drink, I tried to clean her mouth, to close her mouth and to stretch her legs. I managed to drop the corpse on the floor. I did everything to get her back on the bed and, in fact, in the morning I had more or less lost my mind.79

How could the chasm in Irène’s memory be explained? Janet had his theories but he was also compelled by a second odd symptom.

When Irène looked over at the bed from a certain angle, she froze. She did not move her eyes. A peculiar look washed over her face. She could not hear the proceedings going on around her. She moved toward the bed and tilted a glass of water as if to assist an imaginary figure. “But open your mouth, drink something, answer me.”80 Then: “The corpse has fallen on the ground and my father who is drunk, who vomits on the bed, cannot even help me.” The scene lasted for over three hours. Convulsion, sleep, back to reality. Irène could not narrate the story but she could reenact every detail. Janet called such recollections, “traumatic memories.”

Janet theorized that Irène’s traumatic memory was entirely separate from her narrative memory. Traumatic memory, while precise in detail, refused to be integrated with all other memories. It could not be told from the perspective of the

80 Janet, p. 208
present. Instead, it could only be accessed when triggered by cues associated with the original event. Irène’s three-hour reenactment, Janet insisted, was driven by traumatic memory. But in contrast to traumatic memory, Janet maintained, narrative memory was integrated and social. The event is assimilated within a larger narrative of events rendering it historical and intelligible to a listener. To explain their lack of integration, Janet described traumatic memories as dissociative and “subconscious fixed ideas.” Such memories, in other words, are encoded in a different area of consciousness and cannot be readily accessed or narrated. Almost a century later, neuroscience would throw most of its weight behind Janet’s observations.\textsuperscript{81}

In the fall of 1885, an aspiring neurologist named Sigmund Freud was awarded a fellowship to travel from his native Austria and come to Paris to study with the famous Charcot. Janet, already five years into his graduate work at the Salpêtrière, had already begun to formulate his theory of dissociation. Freud was impressed by Janet’s ideas and in his own writing on hysteria—those co-authored with Josef Breuer—used the theory prominently. “We consider it essential for the explanation of hysterical phenomena to assume the presence of a dissociation—a splitting of the content of consciousness.”\textsuperscript{82} But Freud remained confounded by the lack of concern patients exhibited regarding their inability to access traumatic memories. And at one point, as Freud was turning toward the repression of desires as his default explanatory logic for psychological phenomena, he remarked, “perhaps they are more concerned


with not thinking of it.” Janet and Freud agreed that traumatic memories remain unintegrated, but while Janet maintained that such memories are dissociative and subconscious—and thus can never be integrated—Freud had his mind set on repression. Rather than traumatic memories being sent to a part of the brain that lacked the capacity to translate trauma into language, traumatic memories, for Freud, were unintegrated because they are repressed by conflicts in our desires. But as two contemporary neuroscientists, van der Kolk and van der Hart argue when they revisit this landmark in the genealogy of trauma theory, “Traumatic memories cannot be both dissociated and repressed.” This was the beginning, back in the late 1890s, of a divergence in the discourse on trauma.

What caught the attention of these budding psychological scientists in turn-of-the-century France was the relationship between trauma and memory. As Allan Young writes in his ethnography of PTSD, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, “By connecting self-awareness with the past, memory provides the body with a subject and subjectivity. It is the source of the ‘I’ that initiates the body’s purposeful acts and the ‘me’ who experiences its pleasures and vicissitudes and must accept responsibility for its actions.” Michael S. Roth reiterates this foundational observation. In both *The Ironist’s Cage: Memory, Trauma, and the Construction of History* and the forthcoming *Memory, Trauma, and History: Essays on Living with the Past*, he precedes discussions of traumatic

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84 Ibid. 167.
85 Ibid. 169.
memory with the assertions that “in modernity memory is key to personal and collective identity,” and that “the sciences of memory developed as a socially legitimate way of having reasonable discourse about how one becomes a normal human being.” Memory, in other words, coheres the landmarks and categories in the narrative of the self. But in contrast, the extremely violent or emotionally disruptive event of a trauma, it seemed to Janet and his contemporaries, had the capacity to overwhelm the subject and to disturb the daily processes through which we narrate the present by making sense of the past. As Janet witnessed, traumatic memories lacked this ability to, in Young’s terms, connect “self-awareness with the past.”

The World Wars would bring such narrative failures into the forefront of public consciousness: There was “shell shock” and there was “battle fatigue.” Then, after the Vietnam War, there was “Vietnam syndrome.” Today, memory remains at the center of trauma discourse. Yet while the discourse diverged in fin-de-siècle France over explanations for trauma in narrative memory, it splintered in the post-Vietnam era. In 1980, this failure in narrative memory was officially recognized as a pathology. It was given the term, “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder” or “PTSD.”

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88 Michael S. Roth, Forthcoming in *Memory, Trauma and History: Essays on Living with the Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 9

89 Following the American Civil War, soldier who returned with PTSD-like symptoms were said to be suffering from “Soldier’s Heart.” In her book *Trauma: A Genealogy*, Ruth Leys lays out the development of trauma-talk from the first mention of ‘trauma’ by the British Physician John Erichsen in reference to railway accidents back in 1860 to the contemporary discourse. Ley’s project of intellectual history will become pertinent to our story. (Leys, Ruth. *Trauma: A Genealogy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.)
Following its recognition as a disease, studies of trauma proliferated greatly. And in response to this proliferation, postmodern and antifoundationalist thinkers would critique modes of representation of trauma and the epistemological biases behind its observation. Keeping the foundational questions about trauma and memory in mind and their origins back in the hallways of the Salpêtrière, we turn to the contemporary discourse on trauma.

The language of “trauma,” is a framework that endeavors to make sense out of persons and places that have experienced radically disruptive violence and to account for the social and personal consequences. In this way trauma is an explanatory logic that accounts for why certain experiences of violence disrupt narrative memory. But it is first necessary to explicate the term “trauma” itself, in order to understand its explanation for narrative disruption and its prescriptions for narrative reintegration. On the one hand, trauma refers to violence in the empirical sense. Violence is something that happens. It can be seen, heard, and felt. Let us call this traumatic

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90 Book titles that include the terms trauma and PTSD saw a sharp increase in the 1980s according to Google Ngram Viewer: http://ngrams.googlelabs.com/graph?content=PTSD%2Ctrauma&year_start=1800&year_end=2000&corpus=0&smoothing=3 (Accessed: February 2011)
experience. On the other hand, trauma refers to a professionalized and academic discourse surrounding violence and its consequences that, beginning back at the Salpêtrière, supposes to render traumatic experience in accordance with a system of rationality through which we can make sense of it. Let us call this trauma-talk. Depending on one’s epistemological beliefs, differentiating traumatic experience and trauma-talk may not be a clean theoretical move. But let us, at least momentarily, grant this distinction in order to situate ourselves at the juncture between traumatic experience and trauma-talk, the moment when the storytelling of violence has the potential to have deep personal and political consequences.

In the broadest sense, a traumatic experience is the occurrence of an event that is so violent or painful or distressing that it cannot be narrated along with other experiences of the world and the past. It has been described as a rift, a chasm, a break, a rupture, and a shattering of experience. In their edited volume, Disturbing Remains, Michael S. Roth and Charles Salas describe trauma as “a painful occurrence so intense that it exceeds one’s capacities to experience it in the usual way. A trauma breaks through the categories we use to take in the world, and thus it seems to be registered in our memories in ways that are unlike those used to register conventional experience.”91 It is from this point that trauma-talk splinters into myriad disciplinary channels—some devoted to measuring and treating trauma, while others are primarily concerned with charting the consequences of trauma on memory, historical consciousness, and the development of post-violence identity.

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Among the currents of trauma-talk is the formulation of traumatic experience as a “thing” in need of a solution. In the neurobiological and psychological literature in particular, traumatic experience is described as having a life outside its subject—symptoms of traumatic experience are separable from their victims, symptoms that, in an ideal world, would be eradicated. The logic is familiar: A refugee, for example, witnesses an act of violence, she becomes traumatized, and as time goes on, she continues to behave differently because of the effect of the trauma on her brain or psychological wellbeing. In Gulu and Nakivale, this is largely the set of discursive tropes concerning trauma that have been picked up by NGOs and trauma counselors administering support. And in certain epistemological domains this explanatory logic operates with an internally consistent and productive rationality. The symptoms of trauma really are problems in need of a solution. Other systems of thought however, submit that by thinking of all traumatic experience as perfectly resembling the most accredited trauma-talk, no possibility remains for anything other than the logical prescriptions of trauma talk. Put differently, trauma-talk requires a framing of traumatic experience such that it coincides with the logic of trauma-talk. Such critics would argue that trauma-talk inherently reduces traumatic experience to a prescribed narrative of violence leaving little narrative agency to the subject herself. The narrative telos is dictated by the discourse not the subject.

The empiricist schools of trauma-talk seek to objectively measure the consequences of violence on the individual and society. PTSD, for example, is a tool commonly used to measure traumatic experience and its aftermath in a standardized way. Analogous in many ways to a physical disease, PTSD is medical construct that
includes a set of symptom criteria that profiles behavioral and physical consequences of disruptive violence. According to the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V Development) scheduled for publication in 2013, PTSD is an anxiety disorder characterized by the experience of a traumatic event, a fearful response, prolonged intrusion of symptoms resulting from the event, avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma, and increased arousal associated with the trauma. Further, the DSM criterion requires a subject to experience prolonged disturbances—at least one month—following the traumatic experience. There are dozens of measures for PTSD and related anxiety disorders that, while differing methodologically and in target population, use the DSM criterion as a referential constant and a means for ensuring research reliability. The Impact of Event Scale (IES) and the Posttraumatic Diagnostic Survey (PDS), for example, are self-reporting mechanisms that seek to measure the impact of a single traumatic event on the subject. The Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS), in contrast, asks the subject to begin by listing all events that might contribute to posttraumatic behavior change and then isolate three that are most severe. When I returned to East

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93 According to the DSM-IV there are three types of PTSD:

"Acute. This specifier should be used when the duration of symptoms is less than 3 months. Chronic. This specifier should be used when the symptoms last 3 months or longer. With Delayed Onset. This specifier indicates that at least 6 months have passed between the traumatic event and the onset of the symptoms."

94 For a list of such measures see: [http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/assessments/all_measures.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/assessments/all_measures.asp) (Accessed: February 2011)

Africa in the summer of 2010 to conduct research for this project, the CAPS survey was among my primary tools.96

Chapter Three: Part II

Labeling PTSD

The home of Pastor Ndahiro is divided by a lace curtain. In New Congo, Nakivale, the door to Pastor’s home opens onto a dirt pathway that weaves its way to the entrances of other homes. We are about twenty meters downhill of the football pitch and at the bottom of the hill, still 100 meters in the distance, is Nakivale Lake. In the first room are a small table and a bench and a carved three-legged wooden chair. Pastor sits upright in the chair and beckons Godfrey and me to enter. We have already been here. Pastor told us about the day he fled Congo and the antagonism he feels between the Banyamulenge and the Rwandans here in the camp. But this time our conversation is different.

“Life is not good because…the problem of war gave me some mental disturbances, because relatives were killed and property destroyed. [A person at Nakivale Hospital] gave me some medicine but there is no change, three years taking but no change. I don’t know what kind or what type, but the medicine does not help. They always write in the book, but I don’t know what it is.”

Pastor asks if I want to see the book. He parts the lace curtain and disappears into what is presumably the bedroom. Almost all homes in Nakivale consist of a single

96 See Appendix A for full version of CAPS Survey
room built out of red clay that is then partitioned into a sitting room and a sleeping room. After a moment, Pastor returns and hands me what appear to be medical records. I turn over the cover and under the header “diagnoses” are listed “PTSD,” “depression.”

I ask Pastor about PTSD and the medicines he has been prescribed. He replies that he is not sure what “PTSD” means. Then I ask him about the “mental disturbances” to which he referred. He kindly clarifies, “I normally get a mental problem when I think about what happened in the past. I only think about the past not for long…when it happens I remember I am a man of God and I go to read the Bible.”

Coming out of the neurobiological disciplines is an extensive and expanding literature on traumatic experience and its ramifications. The majority of such work concerns neuro-plasticity and alternations in the brain and brain chemistry that can arise because of traumatic experience. Much of this literature examines the amygdala, a primary component of our limbic systems that is responsible for encoding new memories based on the emotional valance of the event and adaptively storing memory inputs that are relevant to our survival for future recall. With traumatic experience however, the repeated influx of emotionally salient extreme events can alter the plasticity of the basolateral nucleus of the amygdala and the hippocampus—the corresponding memory storage facility for important memories. As a result, when

97 Paul J. Whalen, and Elizabeth A. Phelps, eds. The Human Amygdala. (The Guilford Press, 2009)
new memories arrive and need to be sorted and stored, the amygdala can maladaptively assign emotional valance (as Janet surmised a century ago). This can lead to behavioral responses to new memories that seem, to an outside observer, incongruent with the event.98 Other neurobiological literature on trauma concerns the stress-response system, constituted primarily by the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (HPA Axis), that serves to gather the energy needed to issue an acute stress response if the amygdala relays that the given stimulus is sufficiently stress-inducing. To function properly, the HPA Axis needs to reset to allostatic hormone secretion levels following an acute stress reaction in order to prepare for the next one. When an individual has chronic or extreme stress, perhaps facilitated by a histrionic amygdala, this reset may not be achieved, causing stress reactions that do not correspond to the severity of their stressors.99

The neuro-scientific realm of trauma-talk epitomizes that conception of traumatic experience as something foreign that enters the brain and alters the way we remember, behave, and feel. This notion multiplies as symptom-based definitions of traumatic experience proliferate throughout the psychological disciplines that endeavor to prescribe treatment mechanisms for the traumatized and to isolate more accurate symptom profiles. We remember Yusef saying, “Tonight [the memories] will haunt me. It will come.” The notion of trauma as a foreign agent that enters the


body through traumatic experience can be traced back to Freud and Breuer who, in their 1895 volume *Studies in Hysteria*, tried to account for the delayed onset of traumatic memories—what now stands as the DSM “Criterion E” for PTSD: “duration of the disturbance…is more than 1 month.”¹⁰⁰ Freud and Breuer write, “The psychical trauma, or more precisely, the memory of it, operates like a foreign body which must still be regarded as a present and effective agent long after it has penetrated.”¹⁰¹ In this way, they consider traumatic experience to be an impediment to functioning—an assessment that is shared by much of contemporary empiricist trauma-talk. Yet it would not be until almost a century after *Studies in Hysteria* that this facet of trauma-talk—concerned largely with the symptoms of trauma—would gain dominant status.

Aber was born in Gulu District. One Sunday in 1993, when she was ten years old, a group of LRA soldiers came to her village. As with the majority of interviews for this project, I “administered” a series of questions that resembled the Clinician Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS).¹⁰² One of my goals was to measure how exposure to trauma correlates to social adaptation in displacement. My approved Institutional Review Board submission read:

This research study will examine relations between war-related trauma exposure and adaptive social...
behavior in conditions of displacement and societal reintegration. How an individual contextualizes past traumatic experience may correspond to his or her ability to participate in productive social and economic groups...By assessing exposure to trauma, symptoms of post-traumatic behavioral change, and adaptive social behavior, this study aims to inform a larger discourse surrounding displacement, collective reactions to resource vulnerability, and resilience to the negative consequences of trauma.

As submitted by Jeremy Isard to Wesleyan University Institutional Review Board on July 7th, 2010 and approved on July 10th, 2010.

The full version of the "proposed goals sections continues, "Participants will be adults aged 18 or older and selected by convenience from four displaced communities in East Africa, each with differing characteristic trajectories of displacement, and variations in trauma exposure. It is predicted that exposure to trauma influences an individual’s options for participation in the social and economic spheres of society and that subsequently trauma impacts social adaptation and functioning.

The central aim of this research project is to investigate how individual and collective experiences of trauma influence the social mechanisms through which informal/non-state authority structures address sources of vulnerability and resource scarcity in displaced populations. Subsequent aims of the study seek to explore how common traumatic experience and legacies of oppression can be mobilized to produce social cohesion in displaced groups, how trauma is linked to social adaptation for the displaced individual, and how groups and authority structures in displaced communities collectively curate memory of a homeland.

There are four central hypotheses:
1. Social support will lessen impairment in functioning and the degree of expressed symptoms stemming from trauma exposure;
2. Trauma exposure will impact an individual’s adaptive social behavior in processes of societal reintegration or community participation;
3. Individual and collective experiences of trauma effect the response to social authority in displaced communities;
4. Selected expressions of traumatic memory and claims to a legacy of oppression can be used productively to bring individuals with a similar source of victimization under a common solidarity structure;
And so I asked Aber the questions on the CAPS survey. The interview was conducted through translation and at times I would articulate the questions differently from the CAPS script. After each question I would inquire about frequency and intensity. Let us get to know Aber through the lens of the CAPS.

“What happened? How did you respond emotionally?” (Criterion A, DSM-IV) 

“At first they abducted me when I was digging in the garden, uprooting the cassava…At home we found my younger brother. They told me to kill my younger brother and they gave me an axe to slaughter my younger brother. I refused, from

5. In transnational displaced communities, traumatic experience can be expressed opportunistically to emphasize commonality that may transcend national and ethnic categories of definition.

Semi-structured interviews with human participants will be the primary method of data collection for all hypotheses. In addition rating scales quantifying impairment and functioning were adapted from the Longitudinal Interval Follow-up Evaluation (LIFE) (Keller, M. et al. 1987) and the Clinician Administered Posttraumatic Stress Disorder survey (CAPS) (Blake, D.D. et al. 1997) and will be used to test hypotheses 1 and 2. On a sub-set of participants, inter-rater reliability and test retest reliability will be performed to test reliability of measures. Interviews will end with the Iowa Gambling Task (Bechara et al. 2005), a short game that measures an individual's risk-taking behavior. All subjects will be residents of refugee settlements, internationally displaced person's camps, urban slums, or communities of environmental refugees.”


Dudley D. Blake, Frank W. Weathers, Linda M. Nagy, Danny G. Kaloupek, Dennis S. Charney, & Terence M. Keane; National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Behavioral Science Division – Boston VA Medical Center, Neurosciences Division – West Haven VA Medical Center (Revised August 1996)

“Criterion A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both the following were present:

(1) the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others
(2) the person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror. Note: In children, this may be expressed instead by disorganized or agitated behavior”

The criteria delineated in the following footnotes can also be found at this web address.
there, they killed that younger brother. Then they took my father and hung him on a
tree with a rope and they started slaughtering him. Then they took me.”

“Have you ever had unwanted memories of this event? What were they like? How often have you had these memories in the past month? How much distress or discomfort did these memories cause you…?” (Criterion B-1)\(^{106}\)

“I still remember it. When I went back to the village I began thinking about that occasion.”

“Have you ever had unpleasant dreams about the event? Describe typical dream…?” (Criterion B-2)\(^{107}\) [I use the word “trauma” in my phrasing of the question]

“Yeah, I am having the trauma of killing people that we had in the bush. They used to…force us to kill. You have to do it to save your life.”

At this point it seems the subject has misunderstood the question. The question is reiterated. The subject responds,

“I still recall what was happening in the bush. Where we were staying and what we were doing. But not very much. At times you can even dream only once. It depends on the month, it can even be thrice.”

\(^{106}\)“Criterion B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways:
(B-1) recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts or perceptions.”

\(^{107}\)“(B-2) recurrent distressing dreams of the event”
“Have you ever suddenly acted or felt as if the event were happening again…?” (Criterion B-3)\(^{108}\)

“If the rebel leader Mr. Kony has not yet come back, I think maybe he will come again. I don’t have the mind to come back. But I fear, if they get me now they will kill me for escaping. Because they know us by faith.”

Earlier in the interview, Aber spoke in detail about her time in the bush. At one point she stopped abruptly and said, “There are many things that happened in the bush that if I say now, I will start crying so I will stop.” For this reason I do not ask Aber, “Have you ever gotten emotionally upset when something reminded you of the event…?” (Criterion B-4)\(^{109}\)

“Have you ever tried to avoid thoughts or feelings about the event…?” (Criterion C-1)\(^{110}\)

Aber responds, “I think about the friends that I was having in the bush. I wonder if they are still alive or if they are now dead. I think about the way of life we had when we stayed with the [LRA].”

\(^{108}\)“(B-3) acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated)”

\(^{109}\)“(B-4) intense psychological distress as exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event”;

I don’t ask (B-5) either, “B-5) physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.”

\(^{110}\)“Criterion C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:

C-1) efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma”
“Have you ever tried to avoid certain activities, places, or people that reminded you of the event…?” (Criterion C-2)<sup>111</sup>

“Yes it is like that. The people you see and the trees remind you, you branch [turn away]. Good friends that were abducted innocently, when we got there, we became friends, and I wonder whether they are still alive. Are they coming back home?”

“Have you ever had difficulty remembering some important parts of the event…?” (Criterion C-3)<sup>112</sup>

“A lot of things were happening but if I begin narrating, like I told you, I can begin shedding tears.”

“Have you felt distant or cut off from other people…?” (Criterion C-5)<sup>113</sup>

“Other people still fear us but others are now ok with us….I am now feeling like I am close to others, especially when I go to pray with people in the church.”

“Have there been times when you felt emotionally numb or had trouble experiencing feelings like love or happiness…?” (Criterion C-6)<sup>114</sup>

“My brain is now trying to settle.”

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<sup>111</sup> “(C-2) efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma.”

<sup>112</sup> “(C-3) inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma”

“(C-4) markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities” is skipped.

<sup>113</sup> “(C-5) feeling of detachment or estrangement from others”

<sup>114</sup> “(C-6) restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)”
“Have there been times when you felt there is no need to plan for the future, that somehow your future will be cut short…?" (Criterion C-7)\(^\text{115}\)

“If I can struggle now to let my children [go to] school, then my future will be good. But if I fail to pay the school fees, how can my future be good?”

“Have you had any problems falling or staying asleep…?” (Criterion D-1)\(^\text{116}\)

“I have difficulty sleeping. Now I am a single parent, I am forever thinking about my children. Who will bring them up?”

“Have there been times when you felt especially irritable or showed strong feelings of anger…?” (Criterion D-2)\(^\text{117}\)

Aber laughs. “That is what is happening. It happens when problems come.”

“Have you found it difficult to concentrate on what you were doing or on things going on around you…?” (Criterion D)\(^\text{118}\)

“When I am doing my business, my mind is just there.”

“Have you been especially alert or watchful, even when there was no real need to be?” (Criterion D-4)\(^\text{119}\)

\(^{115}\) (C-7) sense of a foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children or a normal life span)

\(^{116}\) “Criterion D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by two (or more) of the following:

(D-1) difficulty falling or staying asleep”

\(^{117}\) “(D-2) irritability or outbursts of anger”

\(^{118}\) “(D-3) difficulty concentrating”
“That one is not there.”

Here is where we stop. The CAPS goes on to measure duration of symptoms, “clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupation, or other important areas of functioning,” and “subjective stress.” If I were a clinician or if I required empirically validated data, there is an algorithm into which I could plug Aber’s responses to see if she qualifies for having PTSD. But I am not, and I do not.

Having just performed the CAPS survey, let us inventory what we know about Aber. According to the DSM categories, we know that she has experienced a traumatic event(s), we know that certain cues trigger her memories of the traumas, and we know about Aber’s level of “functioning.” Moreover, we know this information in detail. Typically, the CAPS survey would be accompanied by a treatment or research study that would require a standardized assessment of disruptive violence in order to be effective and methodologically sound. Unlike many DSM-based PTSD surveys, the CAPS is designed to accommodate individuals who might be impacted by multiple traumatic experiences. But while it can provide insight on traumatic experience and the ways such events linger in the present, the CAPS survey cannot address our scope of inquiry on its own.

How does Aber tell the story of her traumas and what are the narrative mechanisms she uses to re-emploot them next to the other landmarks in her life? While the CAPS can successfully measure the comparative emotional valence of traumatic

119 “(D-4) hypervigilance.”
memories by inquiring into her intrusive memories, it focuses the conversation away from how Aber makes sense of such comparisons. This is not to say that the CAPS survey is ineffective, it is rather to show that its domain of rationality, like the DSM’s, is intentionally designed to standardize the varieties of posttraumatic experience for a particular purpose—namely, to measure the need for certain kinds of treatment intervention. For the purpose of such a treatment intervention, the subjectivities in Aber’s posttraumatic experience that deviate or go beyond the checklist may not be of primary concern.

When Aber escaped from the LRA in 2002, she was taken to GUSCO for reintegration assistance and psychosocial rehabilitation. While research studies performed at GUSCO identify a 24.6% rate of PTSD among the former-abductee population, it is unclear whether empiricist ways of measuring trauma are actively explained to GUSCO’s inhabitants. But Aber found a different way of making sense of the past. “I have now joined the ‘savedists,’ the Born-Agains. Everyday I keep on praying ‘God God God’ I am now trying to forget what happened in the bush.” It appears that, for Aber, becoming “Born-Again” is a way to explain the traumatic experience in the past and to soften the symptoms in the present. As Aber attempts to move on from life in the LRA and take care of her son, who “is disturbed


This study was also cited in Rebecca Littman’s Honors Thesis at Wesleyan University.

by some sickness...[and] running mad...Maybe because he was born in the bush,”
becoming “Born-Again” is a way to forget and start again.

We can see in the CAPS-based conversation a number of telling patterns at work. First, many of Aber’s responses deviate from the types of answers that would be expected if we were trying to ascertain objective conformity to the DSM symptom profile: She answered dreams with memories of the bush, recurrence/hallucinations with realistic preoccupations about Kony’s return to Uganda, and avoidance with anxieties about missing friends. Second, and more importantly, why was Aber telling me this incredibly personal story in the first place? She knew I was conducting a “research project,” she knew that twenty-or-so other women from the “Child-Mother’s Mixed Group” group had come to talk with me, she knew that I would not compensate her for the time she spent talking to me. I do not know why Aber shared with me what she did. At the end of our time together, Aber asked me why I had come to Uganda. Why was I asking these questions?
Chapter Three: Part III

Postmodern Concerns and the Theoretical Discourses on Trauma

In 1995 postmodern deconstructionist theorist Cathy Caruth edited a seminal volume, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, in which she places the advent of PTSD and the rising dominance of empiricist trauma-talk within the larger discourse of traumatic memory. Epitomizing the post-modernist and poststructuralist approach to trauma-talk, the pathology of PTSD—Caruth argues—lies “solely in the *structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time.”¹²¹ She continues:

> If PTSD must be understood as a pathological symptom, then it is not so much a symptom of the unconscious, as it is a symptom of history. The traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess.¹²²

Caruth is picking up on what Janet saw in the case of Irène. Traumatic experience disrupts the making of the past. It is so intense that we must often wait to process it, “the history of trauma…can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence…—a past that encounters consciousness only through the very denial of

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¹²¹ Cathy Caruth, ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 5
¹²² ibid, p. 5.
active recollection.”123 The pathology is not the traumatic experience, per se. The pathology is the failure to integrate memory of the traumatic experience. The “cure” it thus seems, would be a mechanism for narrative integration.

But such integration comes at a cost. To integrate traumatic experience into language and narrative is to give it a quality of normality, of comprehensibility. Following her critique of PTSD and its status as pathology, Caruth writes:

On the one hand…trauma requires integration both for the sake of testimony and for the sake of cure. But on the other hand, the transformation of the trauma into a narrative memory that allows the story to be verbalized and communicated, to be integrated into one’s own, and others,’ knowledge of the past, may lose both the precision and the force that characterizes traumatic recall.124

The latter portion of this claim can be grounded in Elaine Scarry’s 1985 work, *The Body in Pain*. As a scholar concerned especially with representation, Scarry explains: “physical pain [like trauma]—unlike any other state of consciousness—has no referential constant. It is not *of* or *for* anything. It is precisely because it takes no object that it, more than any other phenomenon, resists objectification in

124 ibid, 153
language.”¹²⁵ But the prospect of integrating violence into the rest of life’s narrative, precisely because it will be inadequate, is threatening. Michael S. Roth argues, “Successful integration would…distill…the horrific past…through ‘existing mental schemes…[and] necessarily relativize this part of the past with reference to the rest of one’s life…Telling the story of the traumatic past makes it part of ordinary life…narrative memory is threatening because it can be forgotten.”¹²⁶ For Caruth, Scarry, and Roth, trauma, by definition, cannot be normalized nor adequately represented. If it were, it would no longer be a trauma. And so crucially, given the inadequacy of representation, the desires to integrate and communicate trauma, subject those who are traumatized to what Roth and Salas call a “black hole of sense and meaning.”¹²⁷ In this way, the role of trauma in the I narrative is double-bound and perpetually present: stuck between adequate representation and domestication into normality.

Scarry seconds this argument in her later work titled Resisting Representation; Also, for more on trauma as unrepresentable, see Cathy Caruth’s Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996)
¹²⁷ Following history theorist Jörn Rüsen’s observations that, “Historical events demand a place in...th[e] pattern, ‘within which we understand ourselves, express our hopes for and fears about the future, and develop our strategies for communicating with one another,’ Roth and Salas further explain the stagnation of the black hole. “While there have been attempts to find a place for traumatic events within historical consciousness, it is an open question whether this effort can ever be more than an aspiration. Paradoxically, the fact that a traumatic occurrence may be a black hole of experience may actually increase our efforts to remember and understand the effects of what happened in the occurrence” (Roth & Salas., eds. Disturbing Remains: Memory History, and Crisis in the Twentieth Century. (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2001), 3
In her intellectual history of trauma-talk, *Trauma: A Genealogy*\(^{128}\) (2000), Ruth Leys traces the unlikely alliance of the poststructuralists and Neo-Janetian neuroscientists concerning this double-bind. For van der Kolk and the empirical neuroscientific school of trauma-talk, the empirical claim that traumatic memories are incapable of integration fits well with the poststructural epistemological-ontological claim that because trauma memories are literal, iconic, and lack narrative, they cannot be represented. From both these perspectives, Leys explains,

Traumatic disorders are thus simultaneously disorders of remembering and of forgetting: the traumatic ‘stimulus’ seems to be recorded in the brain with unparalleled vividness and accuracy but, precisely because the traumatic event is so shattering, the memory of the trauma is radically dissociated from symbolization, meaning, and the usual processes of integration.\(^{129}\)

And yet, despite the inadequacy of representation, attempts at integration are imperative, according to van der Kolk and Caruth, for the symptoms of trauma to be cured.

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\(^{128}\) Leys opens her volume with an anecdote of extreme violence and widespread trauma. She chooses the LRA in northern Uganda. (2000, the year *Trauma: A Genealogy* was published, was before Operation Iron Fist and the widespread defection of Acholi from the LRA)

\(^{129}\) Ruth Leys. *Trauma: A Genealogy*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 239; van der Kolk reports, “Amnesia can occur when traumatic experiences are encoded in sensorimotor or iconic form and therefore cannot be easily translated into the symbolic language necessary for linguistic retrieval.” (Leys, 248)
Here a parallel discourse on “false-memory” and suggestion enter into trauma-talk. If therapy requires reliving victimization in order to bring about narrative congruence, what happens in cases where such memories have not been accessed for years or even decades? Van der Kolk once wrote with fellow empiricist Rita Disler, that symptoms of traumatic experience are “vulnerable to suggestion and to the construction for their trauma-related affects that may bear little relationship to the actual realities of their lives.”

But if it were possible that under the guise of “integrating memories” one could fabricate the past, than the validity of “reliving victimization” therapy and its supporting trauma-talkers would be completely undermined. As prominent feminist scholar Judith Herman recalls in her canonical book *Trauma and Recovery* (1997):

> When these arguments [about fabrication] were first proposed...I found them almost ludicrously implausible, and thought that their frank appeal to prejudice would be transparent at once. The women’s movement had just spent twenty years deconstructing the presumption that women and children are prone to lie, fantasize, or fabricate stories of sexual

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130 Leys reports that van der Kolk denies this claim elsewhere. (p. 239) She cites van der Kolk et al., “Dissociation and the Fragmentary Nature of Traumatic Memories: Overview and Exploratory Study,” *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1995

131 Herman is known largely for her work on PTSD and gender-based domestic abuse and an insistence on the addition of ‘complex-PTSD’ (CPTSD) as a construct similar to PTSD that specifies the symptom-profile for those with prolonged and repeated ‘trauma-experience.’
violence. If any principle has been established, surely it was that victims are competent to testify to their own experiences.\textsuperscript{132}

But for those, like van der Kolk, who consider the narration of traumatic experience necessary to cure a traumatized subject of PTSD, the doctrine of unrepresentability becomes paradoxical.\textsuperscript{133} If narrative memory of traumatic experience is inherently misrepresentational, “the narrative treatment,” Leys logically deduces, “is carried out at the cost of falsifying the traumatic origin.”\textsuperscript{134} Yet despite the contradiction in van der Kolk’s logic, Caruth maintains that victims of traumatic experience will never be able to fully represent the traumatic experience to themselves or others. Those with traumatic experience are left, if we recall Irène, looking over at the imaginary headboard with a startled look of terror.

It seems Caruth and van der Kolk advocate the attempt to narrate traumatic experience, despite its ultimate representational failure and yet, as Leys notes, this leaves their theory irrefutable.

\begin{quote}
If…testimony about the past is necessarily a misrepresentation, then any claim to discover in the traumatic repetition, including the traumatic nightmare and flashback, a content other than
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{132} Judith L. Herman, \textit{Trauma and Recovery}. (BasicBooks, 1992), 180, 245
\item \textsuperscript{133} Leys notes, “van der Kolk sometimes appears to propose, the narration of the traumatic memory is essential in order to cure PTSD.” (Leys, p. 251.)
\item \textsuperscript{134} Ruth Leys. \textit{Trauma: A Genealogy}, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 251.
\end{itemize}
that of the literal imprint, has to be viewed as
the falsifying effect of a desire to narrate or
represent the truth of a traumatic origin that is
inherently and constitutively exempt from all
such representation.\textsuperscript{135}

While this bind does not preoccupy van der Kolk and the empirical neuroscientists,
Caruth’s escape lies in her performative and deconstructionist theory of language
derived from Paul de Man and by extension Jacques Derrida. In her work \textit{Unclaimed
Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History}, (1996) Caruth argues, “language is
capable of bearing witness only by a \textit{failure} of witnessing or representation.”\textsuperscript{136} The
notion of a chasm in consciousness and representation thus signifies the presence of
traumatic experience by failing to represent it.\textsuperscript{137}

As an intellectual historian, Leys endeavors to navigate this aporia by sorting
these myriad historical strands of trauma-talk into two paradigms. \textit{Mimetic} trauma-
talk, she argues, signifies the discursive strands which describe traumatic experience
as involving a kind of hypnotic imitation or identification in which, precisely because
the victim cannot recall the original traumatogenic event, she is fated to act it out in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[137] “In Caruth’s deconstructive version of van der Kolk’s neurobiological account of trauma, the gap or
aporia in consciousness and representation that is held to characterize the individual traumatic
experience comes to stand for the materiality of the signifier in the sense given the concept by the critic
Paul de Lam, who theorized a ‘moment; of materiality that on the one hand belongs to language but on
the other is aporetically severed from the (speech) act of signification or meaning.”
\end{footnotes}
other ways to imitate it.” Janet and Freud, insofar as they consider identification with the traumatic event to be the source of narrative disintegration, fit into the mimetic camp. Furthermore, the mimetic school of thought maintains that traumatic experience shatters and affronts normality to the extent that it will never be fully integrated or narrated with the rest of the self.

Antimimetic trauma-talk by contrast, maintains, “Violence is purely an assault from without.” The rhetoric of contemporary neuroscience embodies this paradigm. Rather than the mimetic assertion that the subject of traumatic experience is hypnotically immersed in the event to the extent that they may even feel a moment of identification with the aggressor or hostility directed at themselves, antimimetic discourse understands the subject of traumatic experience to be entirely separable from the event of violence. Thus eventually, for the antimimetics, traumatic experience can acquire narrative integration and adequate representation. While his methodology for curing Irène fit into mimetic thought, Janet’s theory of trauma as an external body that prevents narrative integration fits into the antimimetic school. Caruth and van der Kolk oscillate between camps as well. They fit into the antimimetic school to the extent that they see trauma as a foreign entity, but they side with the mimetic school notion that trauma is never fully representable.

Other intellectual circles, especially those influenced by critical theory, explain the black hole in narrative by relegating trauma to the realm of the sublime. As intellectual historian Dominick LaCapra, reacting to Jean-François Lyotard’s

139 ibid.
theories of the sublime in aesthetics, writes “the sacralization of trauma and the traumatic experience may be interwoven with its figuration as sublime, since in both cases trauma becomes unrepresentable, awesome, beyond the ordinary, and somehow elevating—even redemptive—in its very excess.” In this way, traumatic experience cannot ever be adequately measured or represented. And thus, as Michael S. Roth emphasizes in his forthcoming work *Memory, Trauma, and History: Essays on Living with the Past*, the process of meaning-making about violence and endeavors to achieve narrative integration, must “circumvent an intensity that would otherwise disrupt all coherence.” But how does this circumvention work? How does life, stuck in the black hole between adequate representation and the domestification of trauma, happen anyway?

If we surface from trauma theory momentarily and think back to Opiyo and Milly, Godfrey and Yusef, there was something strangely productive about life in the

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He continues, “Trauma itself can be presented as accompanied by a sublime or ecstatic elation or exhilaration, however, ambivalent or even decidedly negative, only if it is affectively transfigured as an experience through some supplementary effect or perhaps ideological refashioning, which may misunderstand itself in terms of immediacy.” (LaCapra, p. 70.)

In an Interview with Professor Dominick LaCapra, Shoah Resource Center, Cornell University, June 9, 1998, Jerusalem, LaCapra states, [trauma is] “an excess that overwhelms the self, almost brings it to the point of death, but then leads to elation when the self escapes the threat of death.” LaCapra further explicates this idea in his work, *History and Its Limits: Human, Animal, Violence*, (2009) in which, citing Lyotard as a primary influence, he proclaims, “I have intimated that the sacralization of trauma and the traumatic experience may be interwoven with its figuration as sublime, since in both cases trauma becomes unrepresentable, awesome, beyond the ordinary, and somehow elevating—even redemptive—in its very excess. Trauma itself can be presented as accompanied by a sublime or ecstatic elation or exhilaration, however, ambivalent or even decidedly negative, only if it is affectively transfigured as an experience through some supplementary effect or perhaps ideological refashioning, which may misunderstand itself in terms of immediacy” (LaCapra, p. 70).

black hole. They described intrusive memories, and haunting dreams, and many of the symptoms we have come to associate with traumatic experience. But they also found ways to deal with such symptoms. Yusef walks to the football pitch, Pastor opens the Bible, Aber remembers that she is saved, Etienne plays the trumpet. The black hole, it seems is not totally vacant; instead there are myriad ways individuals figure out how, in Roth’s terms, to “circumvent the intensity” of radically disruptive violence. Thus while the symptoms of PTSD and the discourses on trauma, memory, and selfhood might leave subjects of traumatic experience without language and categories to narrativize their trauma, the black hole nonetheless becomes a venue for new meaning and association. Or in the words of feminist anthropologist Veena Das, traumatic experience “attach[s]…itself with its tentacles into the everyday life and folds itself into the recesses of the ordinary?”\textsuperscript{142} And so while trauma-talk, in all its variations, is concerned with posttraumatic narrative disruption, individuals find ways, within the context of their lives, to reclaim the posttraumatic narration of the self and lay the groundwork for the production of new meaning.

Ramech is the center of attention. There is authority in his step. As we walk together on New Congo Stage, Ramech pauses, his face flush with the recognition of an approaching friend.

Ramech was born in Burundi. In 1991, when he was five, his parents ran away. Then ten of the other family members living with his uncle were massacred and when

\textsuperscript{142} Veena Das, \textit{Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary}. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 1
Ramech walked in the door, he saw one of the dead hanging from a rope. A widow took him in, and together they fled to Rwanda. This was 1993. But then came 1994 and they had to turn back to Burundi. But in Burundi things were the same, and so Ramech and the widow continued on into Tanzania. In Tanzania, the widow put Ramech in school, but he had to start over again in Primary One. After Senior Three the money was no longer available for him to stay in school. This was unfortunate, but he found something new to occupy his time. He relays with pride, “I had a talent of singing.”

“So after stopping studying I had to review my talent as a singer. Because I had seen many things as a refugee, I could relate to problems of refugees. They were being killed, harassed, and massacred. These were the main points of my talent as a singer. And mainly, I sang about rape because many women were raped and the consequence was that in raping those women there occurred a disease: HIV/AIDS. And I was very disappointed to see that in war. Women are raped and they get contaminated. I saw this in Burundi.”

Ramech has been a refugee for the past seventeen years. After twelve years in Tanzania, Ramech came here to Nakivale. “Here in Uganda, I had to work hard. After working hard I got some money, and that money helped me enter some studios and review my talent as a singer. On the CD I have like 10 songs. This action of recording the music was done in Kampala and from that I have come back but I am not sitting around. I am trying to help my family and community. Just like counseling. They are lacking something in the mind. And when I am singing indeed people are comforted because there is a genuine message in what I am singing.” Ramech and I sit in the
backroom of a small building that will soon be a restaurant. It is on New Congo Stage, and he has just finished painting the door with red, green, and yellow stripes.

Our conversation turns to the music. Ramech does not speak English and the man who is translating from Ramech’s native Kirundi steps outside to take a phone call. At first Ramech and I are silent in the translators absence. But then Ramech fills this silence with an offer to sing. Still sitting at the table, Ramech takes a deep breath and begins his title track, “A Mio Moyo.” When the translator returns, Ramech relays more generally, the messages he tries to share through song. “Not calling little girls, not harass wife, to be patient, to get a good life in the future. Those are a few of my messages. So many people have come to like and love me. Because when I am singing I am not carrying out segregation. I am not saying this is Rwanda, this is Congo or whatever. I sing for everybody.”

Living in Nakivale poses a variety of challenges for Ramech. Upon his arrival the police beat him while he was walking from Sangano to New Congo, and while OPM relocated the officers to Kabingo following the incident, Ramech remains worried that these men are still after him. And then there are the memories of what came before: “I have memories still. Even if you are still young…but sometimes I would go to fetch water where they used to hide. And I found 100 people dead. Women, men, and children. They were being eaten by pigs and dogs.” Sometimes the memories are possessive, “Those events, when I think about them, I am disturbed. My brain is no longer thinking. Maybe if I can be far from Burundi and get a life a bit better than this life and some counselors, maybe my brain can settle.” There are times, often when he is sleeping, that Ramech becomes restless and utters things
about Burundi. But in the morning he does not remember. “I don’t know anything. But ones who see [me during these restless nights] tell me later what was happening yesterday. When I am with my wife, in the morning she will say, ‘Ramech what were you dreaming in the night?...’ I don’t know what was happening.” But even when the memories come in dreams, they hurt: “when I think about these events, I feel very bad because the picture of what happened comes back again, and I feel as if God is no longer with me, and as if I am no longer living and as if my future is forever damaged.” The empirical trauma-talker in me nods.

“To make myself feel at ease, I don’t spend a lot of time thinking about what happened because my land…house and family were destroyed…Even if I go back there I could be killed. So I take time to feel at ease, as if I am like a bird flying.” Ramech returns to song and memory. “In the last month, there was a refugee… [who asked me] to sing about real events that happened in Burundi, and that song brought me to think about bad events in Burundi.” “A mio moyo,” the song is called, “my heart is hard.” It happens to be Ramech’s most popular song and the one he shared with me some moments ago. “When I sing the song, and the song is most liked, I think about what happened in Burundi automatically.”

Near the conclusion of our conversation, Ramech shares his personal strategy for dealing with the past: “I forget, ignore, and praise God,” he says. “I start singing so that I avoid the thoughts.”

143 See attached Mp3 track for Ramech singing ‘A mio moyo.’
For Ramech, singing is a way to live with the past. There is a community in which his singing provides a common way to live with the past. Through singing, Ramech is, as philosopher Judith Butler puts it in “Violence, Mourning, and Politics,” “reimagining the possibility of community on the basis of vulnerability and loss. [Because loss after all] has made a tenuous ‘we’ of all of us.”\textsuperscript{144} We remember clearly Ramech’s explanation for his popularity, “Because when I am singing I am not carrying out segregation. I am not saying this is Rwand[an], this is Congo[lese] or whatever. I sing for everybody.”

Singing, for Ramech, is a narrative vehicle that aims to integrate trauma into the everyday. In my conversations with Aber and Ramech, I asked the same set of questions. With Aber I listened for the CAPS checklist; with Ramech I listened for how he makes sense of the violence in his past and the communities that form in the process.

Before we return to Nakivale and Gulu to consider the application of trauma-talk to radically disruptive violence, local ways of making sense of violence, and the we groups that form along the way, we turn to scholarship beyond trauma-talk that concerns social components of narrative integration.

Chapter Three: Part IV

Narrative, Selfhood, and the Pursuit of Reintegration

For Sonia Schreiber Weitz, a Polish Holocaust survivor, it does not matter whether traumatic experience is mimetic or antimimetic. What matters is that it is difficult, and confusing, and affects life in ways that are not readily understandable. In her book, *Trauma Culture*, E. Ann Kaplan introduces the notion of “‘translating’ trauma,—that is, of finding ways to make meaning out of, and to communicate, catastrophes that happen to others as well as to oneself.”¹⁴⁵ In other words, given all we know about the effect of trauma on memory and memory as a foundation of selfhood and subjectivity, trauma can be considered a disruption to one’s capacity to make meaning about the self and the world. But the process of translating trauma, Kaplan argues, reframes trauma in such a way as to lessen this disruption and offer a means through which to reassert subjectivity and the possibility for new meaning.

Weitz illuminates the frustrating complexity of such an endeavor. In 1990 she writes,

People have said that only survivors themselves understand what happened. I’ll go a step further. We don’t…I know I don’t…So there is a dilemma. What do we do? Do we not talk about it? Elie Wiesel has said many times that silence is the only proper response but

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¹⁴⁵ E. A. Kaplan, *Trauma Culture*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 19
then most of us, including him, feel that not to speak is impossible. To speak is impossible, and not to speak is impossible.\(^{146}\)

Weitz may or may not be well versed in trauma-talk. But she describes the confusing impulses to “translate” trauma even when the representation might be ultimately inadequate.

PTSD and empiricist trauma-talk is a script with which to tell the story of trauma experience. It is a way to give a name to the tension that binds posttraumatic narrative re-employment. Like singing for Ramech, PTSD is a narrative vehicle. It is a means of translating experience into a category of personhood. Ramech sings about life as a refugee and a certain tree in Gulu reactivates Aber’s memory of violence. This is their experience. But when Ramech says, “I am a singer” or if Aber were to say “I have PTSD” (although she would probably say “I am saved”) their experience is translated into categories of personhood.

In his essay titled, “Making Up People,” philosopher of science Ian Hacking explores this transition from experience into category and introduces the notion of dynamic nominalism. In contrast with the traditionally social constructionist static nominalism in which categories of personhood are created by humans rather than found in nature,\(^{147}\) dynamic nominalism, asserts, “a kind of person came into being at

\(^{146}\) Cathy Caruth, ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 154

\(^{147}\) This view is illuminated by social constructionist sociologist Peter L. Berger’s work *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion.* He writes, “It is possible to sum up the dialectic formation of identity (between labeling and identifying) by saying that the individual becomes that which he is addressed as by others.” (Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a*...
the same time as the kind itself was invented.” In other words, a dynamic set of feedback interactions exists in which people come to fit the categories used to describe them. In this essay, Hacking is primarily concerned with how the process of naming or labeling dictates the “spheres of possibility” for who we may be. PTSD is a label; so is salvation. If Aber is forced to pick between the two, her sphere of possibility is limited to two “kinds of selves.” But Hacking’s emphasis on naming mandates a focus on the audience. The possibilities for a productive and empathetic conversation about traumatic experience depend on the sphere of possible explanations that both parties in the conversation recognize as viable.¹⁴⁸

Hacking is not alone in trying to trace the impact of the categories we use to comprise our personal historical narratives and their translation of selfhood through time. Philosophical thinkers as disparate as Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, and Michel Foucault also discuss the translation of categories that we use to make the past into framers of identity in the present.¹⁴⁹ While some of these thinkers

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¹⁴⁸ In other words, this is to say that when I ask Aber the questions on the CAPS survey to determine if she is ‘traumatized,’ my own definition of what ‘trauma’ entails limits her possible responses that I consider to be legitimate. The way trauma is narrated is determined by the intersection of truth conditions between the storyteller and the audience. And the empiricists, some of poststructuralist critics would argue, have a truth condition that deprives Aber of authorship.

¹⁴⁹ The point here is not to delve into their respective theories but to show the diversity of thinkers across the continental-analytic spectrum that are concerned with categories of past-making. Heidegger writes, “In its factual being, [Being] is how and ‘what’ it already was. Whether explicitly or not, it is its past. It is its own past not only in such a way that its past, as it were, pushes itself along ‘behind’ it, and that it possesses what is past as a property that is still objectively present and at times has an effect on it…[Being] ‘is’ its past in the manner of its being which, roughly expressed, on each occasion ‘occurs; out of its future.” (Heidegger, Martin. Being and Time. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1953.)
are meta-physically oriented and others are ontologically or phenomenologically oriented, there is an overlap, even between the continental and analytic schools of philosophy, which commonly concerns the way meaning is produced through categories. At its heart however, it is a Foucauldian impulse to trace the genealogy of identity categories in order to ascertain when their adoption in the I narrative is liberating and when it is constricting. While Foucault is known for calling out when such categories in selfhood become constricting, the impulse to historicize categories in identity formation does not insist on making judgments over the authenticity of individuals who adopt them. When we return to Uganda and to expressions of posttraumatic categories of selfhood in conversation, it will be important to pay attention to the categories used to frame displacement and disruptive violence and from where they arise.

Hacking argues that the production of meaning occurs through the process of description. In characteristic analytic tone, following the philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe and by extension Ludwig Wittgenstein, he notes, “action is action under a description...Acting intentionally is acting with some intention—that is, performing an action under some description, such that one intends to act, under that description.”\(^{150}\) Put differently, an experience acquires its meaning and subsequently a label through the process of describing it. But as Judith Butler argues in her work of performativity, this process of description must have external points of reference beyond the self. In a more recent essay that “reimagine[s]…the possibility of

\[\text{In Derrida, such notions of past-making can be found in both Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning & the New International (1993) and Archive Fever (1995)}\]

community on the basis of vulnerability and loss” as a way to loosen the scripts for self-categorization—what we have so far called narrative flexibility—Butler writes, “The “I”… cannot come into being without a “you” [and] is also fundamentally dependent on a set of norms of recognition that originated neither with the “I” nor with the “you.””\(^{151}\) Thus, if we follow Butler’s logic, in addition to reshuffling the categories in selfhood, radically disruptive violence has the capacity to alter the “set of norms of recognition.”

Having grounded the dynamic process in which experience forms categories for self-making and subsequent opportunities for solidarity, we return to labels that are specifically constructed for traumatic experience. There is a significant body of literature located primarily on the periphery of bio-medical humanitarian psychiatry, that argues, because traumatic experience itself disrupts the process of self-labeling, that it is especially important for institutionalized responses to traumatic experience leave their subjects narratively flexible. Informed by Foucault, who might have called empirical trauma-talk a “regime of truth” or a “domain where the practices of the true and the false can be at once regulated and relevant,”\(^{152}\) there is an impulse within the humanities to locate confining categories in the genealogy of trauma-talk, and to

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\(^{151}\) Judith Butler, “Violence, Mourning, Politics,” *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 4:1 (2003), 32 And on the subject of “common loss” as a norms around which a global ‘we-group’ might coalesce, Butler continues, “For if I am confounded by you, then you are already of me, and I am nowhere without you. I cannot muster the ‘we’ except by finding the way in which I am tied to ‘you,’ by trying to translate but finding that my own language must break up and yield if I am to know you. You are what I gain through this disorientation and loss. This is how the human comes into being, again and again, as that which we have yet to know.” (p. 36.)

legitimize new “limits of acceptable speech”\textsuperscript{153}—new labels—to frame the posttraumatic experience.

Just as Foucault would prescribe, French medical anthropologists Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman chronicle the development of empiricist trauma-talk into a widely accepted discourse. In their \textit{The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood} (2009), Fassin and Rechtman contend that trauma-talk became a legitimate way of claiming victim status circa 1980, when, after a prolonged fight involving the psychiatric literature on Holocaust survivors, Vietnam veterans, and a proliferating feminist discourse on sexual abuse, culminated with the addition of the PTSD diagnosis to the DSM.\textsuperscript{154} “The victim [of violence]—who in fact was rarely thought of as a ‘victim’—was tarred as illegitimate; trauma was a suspect condition…Within a few years the course of history has changed: now the victim is recognized as such and trauma is a legitimate status…[this is a] new condition of victimhood, established though the concept of trauma.”\textsuperscript{155} Thus as Fassin and Rechtman imply, the social implication of using the label PTSD in conversation changed when it became a legitimate signal of victim status.

\textsuperscript{153} Judith Butler’s elaboration of Foucault’s “regimes of truth” in “Violence, Mourning, Politics”

\textsuperscript{154} Allan Young would most likely support of Fassin and Rechtman’s argument. He contends in his \textit{Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Posttraumatic Stress Disorder}, the empiricist trauma-talk route, while dominant, comes up short of its aspirations of objectivity. “PTSD is a historical construct that has been ‘glued together by the practices, technologies, and narratives with which it is diagnosed, studied, treated, and represented and by the various interests, institutions, and moral arguments that mobilize these efforts and resources” (Allan Young, \textit{The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder}. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.)

Fassin and Rechtman’s genealogy is troubling to those who problematize the discourse of victimization as a pretext for neocolonial power structures. In *Aversion and Erasure: The Fate of the Victim After the Holocaust*, cultural historian Carolyn J. Dean poses the question, “How do dominant Western cultural presumptions that suffering is central to shaping identity, that injury confers social recognition, and that we all have a narcissistic investment in trauma obscure victims’ suffering?”\(^{156}\) Dean employs feminist political scientist Wendy Brown, who, in her *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*, argues that “the appropriation of traumatized identity by victims themselves constitutes a misguided concession to dominant culture’s self-palliative efforts to feel in place of doing: the victim’s embrace of his wounds reveals an attachment to the recognition accorded his suffering.”\(^{157}\) Dean and Brown bemoan, in other words, that the concentration on labeling trauma that comes from the discourse on historicizing victimhood moves our focus away from the recovery from injury. By making claims about the authenticity of labels, Dean and Brown argue, we lose sight of the individuality and subjectivity in the experience of pain and injury and the self-fashioned ways in which individuals recover.

In their introduction to *Violence and Subjectivity*, Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman mandate this shift in inquiry. They instruct:

> It becomes necessary to consider how subjectivity—the felt interior experience of the person that includes his or her positions in a


\(^{157}\) Dean, p. 23. In the above passage, Dean is explicating Brown’s argument. The quote is from Dean.
field of relational power—is produced through the experience of violence and the manner in which global flows involving images, capital, and people become entangled with local logics in identity formation.\footnote{Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, Pamela Reynolds, eds. Violence and Subjectivity. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) 1}

In other words, if traumatic experience requires narrative integration and there are many labels and narrative vehicles available to facilitate re-embodiment, how do individuals choose a set of labels? As Hacking asserts, “one vector of labeling” comes from above experts “who create a ‘reality’ that some people make their own.” But “different from this is the vector of the autonomous behavior of the person so labeled, which presses from below creating a [new] reality.”\footnote{Ian Hacking, "Making up People," In Historical Ontology. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 111} From Das and Kleinman’s ethnographic anthropological perspective, this second vector is an opportunity for new “subjectivity” built upon shifted ground of posttraumatic meaning. This process of retrieving self-authorship in the face of objectifying discourses appears throughout the humanities. In his work on identity formation and the renaissance, Shakespeare scholar Stephen Greenblatt, labels this notion \textit{self-fashioning}.\footnote{Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005)} In the realm of postcolonial theory, Achille Mbembe enumerates the obstacles to African subject
formation, what he calls, *self-stylization*. Following Hacking and Butler on the labeling of selfhood, we reach a disciplinary crossroads that concerns, as Mbembe writes, “the process of subject formation.” But what is important for our purposes is to listen for how radically disruptive violence and traumatic experience alter the ground upon which subject formation can occur.

Whether mimetic or antimimetic, empiricist or poststructural, there is a consensus among the myriad epistemological approaches within trauma-talk that traumatic experience constitutes a disruption in narrative memory and the process of self-invention. Whether trauma is ultimately representable, stuck in the sublime, a foreign invasion, or a sub-conscious identification, it does not fit with the rest of life. But crucially, there is tension in trauma. It does not sit still. The chasm that trauma creates in personal narrative memory mandates a reshuffling of the landmark categories in the *I* narrative so that the intensity of trauma, its extreme emotional valance, and its irrepresentable tensions can be circumvented. This is the dynamic process of relabeling or translating traumatic experience; this is the process of transforming traumatic experience, as Hacking and Butler describe, into new categories of personhood. And these new categories, in their ability to recreate narrative integration by pulling trauma into the realm of the ordinary, refertilize the ground upon which new memory and new subjectivity can be emploted into the self.

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But how do these new categories of personhood depend on the audience and the context in which they are drawn? If such categories provide a community of people who count for us, do our needs for such a community affect which categories of personhood we adopt and express?

With these questions in mind, we return to our context: displacement in Uganda.
Chapter Four

Forged on New Ground: Finding the Pragmatic in the Posttraumatic

When Florence first returned to Gulu after escaping from the LRA, she was irritable and socially isolated. Townsfolk asked, “What is wrong with you?” Then she was saved and suddenly things took a turn for the better. Irène could not remember a thing about her mother’s death until, one day, Janet hypnotized her and she remembered every detail. What marks these sudden transitions? One way of reading such scenarios would be to say that something happened that granted Florence and Irène the narrative flexibility to employ new categories in their *I narratives* that rendered the past less threatening. Maybe salvation and hypnosis are so incomprehensible themselves that they provide the permission for other incomprehensibles.

In the preceding chapters, we have heard stories that involve violence. Violence is discussed in relation to its causes, its effects, and prescriptions for what to do next in its aftermath. This is the process of narrativizing. In trauma-talk, the metaphor of rupture and the bridge over which traumatic experience may be narrated, is often framed as a deeply personal experience. The gap is in the individual’s memory, the individual’s self-perception, the individual’s notions of the past. But the question remains, how do the labels that individuals use to describe themselves become capable of incorporating the violence they experience? How do displacement and the labels used to categorize selfhood in displacement co-evolve, as in Hacking’s *dynamic nominalism*, on the posttraumatic ground for the production of meaning? Are
there common narrative vehicles like PTSD or Ramech’s singing that are at work in Nakivale and northern Uganda that attempt to facilitate narrative integration?

Such vehicles offer ways to reconstruct and reintegrate the posttraumatic self by re-framing the past. More specifically, vehicles can pinpoint the fissures that traumatic experience produces in the I narrative and, if successful, offer a plausible and legitimate revision. By this juncture, we are familiar with the PTSD construct as an example of such a revision. When an individual who undergoes traumatic experience is diagnosed with PTSD, they are provided with an explanation—grounded in psychological and neurobiological research—that can explain traumatic experience and its aftermath. But to “have PTSD” an individual must have events in his or her past that fulfill Criterion A. If I am able to narrate the past in a way that fulfills Criterion A, then I can use the science about PTSD to explain traumatic experience and how to re-frame its role in my past. In this way, PTSD is a narrative vehicle that offers the eligible subscriber a toolkit for narrative integration—making a connection across the chasm of traumatic experience.

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Why pay attention to posttraumatic narrative vehicles and their mechanisms for re-emploi?mation?

Radically disruptive violence exists within the narratives we have for it. That is to say, the only way we have to remember and communicate radically disruptive violence is to contextualize it in relation to the other experiences we have had in the world. But the form violence takes in our story for the self and the world may not be
in language over which we have full command. It may feel more like a punch in the
gut or an impulse to just break down and cry. And maybe there are instances, like
Irène staring, transfixed at the headboard of her dead mother’s bed, where there is
truly no worldly narrative point of reference. The process of contextualization, when
it occurs, can take many forms.

All attempts at posttraumatic narrative integration have an audience, even if
that audience is only the self. When we try to put words to trauma, we must do so in a
way that is narratively viable to our audience. We want those who listen to us to
understand what we are saying. But the composition of our audience is dependent on
circumstance. What are we trying to do when we attempt to make sense of radically
disruptive violence? Whatever the answer to this question, our response will depend
on our motivations for telling the story. Is this Godfrey’s first evening standing on the
sidelines of Nakivale’s football pitch, or is it Milly’s first day back in Gulu from 8
years in Sudan? Godfrey and Milly might require a drink of water or re-acceptance
into community. Or maybe, like Mzee Yusef and Aber, dreaming about the killing
and the running is totally debilitating and all that matters is that such memories go
away. The ways we label and make sense of our experience depend on who we are
talking to, what we share with our audience, and what we want out of the
conversation. But in order to tell the story of the self and the traumatic through
audience-specific categories, one must be narratively flexible.

Another way to think about this uses the language of we-groups, sameness,
and ownership. If I own a problem with you, while the problem may not disappear,
we form a community that is motivated toward mitigating our common dilemma.
Following a massive earthquake, for example, if both of our families have disappeared, when we meet and share our experience, our relationship may be strengthened by the common loss—even though the magnitude of the earthquake does not change—it is recontextualized by our relationship. Such posttraumatic solidarity is grounded in this common experience and can occur in all spheres of human interaction—between two people or at the level of a nation. But what labels I use to articulate this common experience with you depends on the outcome I seek. Do I want a great friend in a time of particular trial? Perhaps. Do I want to foster national solidarity to augment relief efforts? Perhaps. The story I tell in each case is very different; the story I tell depends on my audience, and to what end I desire their solidarity. To be able to tell more than one story is to be pragmatically narratively flexible.

What we-group do I desire? If I am Godfrey and my goal is to petition for increased monthly rations in Nakivale, perhaps it would be advantageous to articulate refugee status as my label of choice. But if I am Pastor and I want to prove to OPM that the Banyamulenge in Nakivale feel targeted by the Rwandan Hutus, it would not be advantageous to emphasize common refugee status, which includes the Rwandans, as the boundaries of my like-minded community. The we-groups that we require and the labels that we use to participate in such communities, depend on what we are looking for, whether that is narrative integration or a meal; whether that is a detailed interview or to learn about the college student doing a research project. What we are looking for in turn, determines how we navigate between categories in selfhood to align ourselves with our audience.
Narrative flexibility exists on behalf of a goal. It develops as the conversation goes on and as together we come to understand how best to explain our togetherness. There are reasons for us to be here; there are reasons why Opiyo tells how he ambushed the bus. If there were not, the conversation would not happen. Having heard already the circumstances of Opiyo’s displacement, the purpose of the two final chapters is to locate narrative flexibility and some of the labels that are used to cohere we-groups that are formed on posttraumatic ground and within a pragmatic context.

What successful posttraumatic narrative vehicles are available in Nakivale and Gulu and how do they work? The goal here is not to call into question the authenticity of the ways individuals re-tell the past. It is rather to call attention to (1) the ways in which posttraumatic narrative vehicles expand and confine the sphere of possibility for we-groups after violence and (2) how through the dynamic process of labeling, the essential features such we-groups can become explanatory logics for the re-employment of the traumatic into the realm of the ordinary.

Yusef and I meet at Christine’s canteen in base camp at 11am on Sunday, July 25th. He has been given the day off. We wander over to New Congo Stage but the morning’s football match has long since dispersed. It is a cloudless day. And as we stand on the football pitch facing the opposite sideline from base camp, Yusef points toward Nakivale Lake way out in the distance. Assuming a regretfully realist tone, he remarks that the water is green and full of harmful bacteria. To our right and through
the goal posts is one of Nakivale’s Catholic churches. And because it is Sunday, the church has been overflowing since dawn. It is a sturdy mud-brick structure with an A-frame roof and a red cross painted on the front. We walk briefly toward the lake and bear left into Somali Town. The midday Call to Prayer has just ended, and the Somali Town mosque empties into its main pedestrian corridor. Men sit on three-legged stools in shaded storefronts and chew Khat. Days later when I visit the small coffee hut in the Ethiopian/Eritrean Zone, the loudest young man in the room will offer me some Khat and explain, “like coffee and good for sex.” Yusef and I circle back toward base camp and when we reach his home we find Mulamba.

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*We-Groups on New Ground: Lines of Cooperation, Locating Solidarity*

When Mulamba graduated from law school he decided to pursue humanitarian law. “I was trying to influence children to get [their] guns from them and make them go back to school…It was with CARITAS.”

CARITAS in an international Catholic NGO dedicated to providing “assistance to the most vulnerable on behalf of Catholics around the world.”

Mzee Yusef nods and says, “I came to know CARITAS in Somalia.”

Mulamba was born in 1968 in Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province, Democratic Republic of Congo. “In 1997, Mobutu was overturned, there was a coup,


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and [a] bomb was thrown into the house and my father was killed but my mother was outside the house.”

In November 2008 the rebels of Nkunda came and “killed my mother and…[two] children…Then I came to Nakivale.”

Nzanga-Rashidi also came to Nakivale. While neither he nor Mulamba was a soldier back in Congo, they were on different sides of the conflict. Rashidi and six friends supplied food to Nkunda’s forces. “It was a good business working with the rebels,” Rashidi reports, until the government found out and killed three of his friends. The next time Rashidi went to collect money from the rebels to purchase foodstuffs, he decided to take the money and run. The government learned where Rashidi lived and arrested his father. Rashidi came to Nakivale. He shows me an article in Uganda’s Independent, a popular weekly regional news source, about Nkunda, but the connection to personal matters is not immediately evident. In 1994, Rashidi gave up Christianity and converted to Islam. Here in Nakivale, he cooperates with others in Nakivale’s Muslim community. Rashidi does odd jobs for the Somalis like building houses and teaching Arabic and English. With his encouragement, Rashidi’s wife and brother also converted to Islam. When Rashidi discusses the past, he does so with his “brothers under Islam; you trust brothers in Islam.” He lives in New Congo. Today Rashidi and Mulamba both walk to the Somali zone to look for work.

Here in Nakivale Mulamba explains, “I am jobless. I wake up early in the morning and go to the Somali zone. They know me very well as a good workman. If
there is a place to dig, I am ready. To make beds, furniture, to cut the grass, to build toilets, these jobs I get one and two times a week, not daily. But I don’t get hungry. I live here with Mzee.”

Yusef agrees: “I found him as a…carpenter working for a Somali man building chairs and tables, and I made conversation with him and I found that he was educated, that he too went to school. I decided to help him. I just put him under my umbrella at times, even if I am struggling, I help him.”

And so Mulamba moved in. He and Yusef are both educated and they enjoy comparing the French and English radio broadcasts of world news. But Yusef notes that there are reasons beyond intellectual companionship for having Mulamba around. When he recounts his memories of Mogadishu and the death of his family, Yusef says, “I become completely upset when I have these memories but I try to be a strong-hearted man. Sometimes I talk alone when I am on the bed, and I don’t like talking alone. That is why I enjoy living with…my housemate. We talk a lot and discuss about our friends. If I lived alone, I am afraid I could be alone.”

Back in the DRC, Mulamba would travel to the territories from which Godfrey, Etienne, Gabe, Pastor, and Karimundongo were displaced, the Kivu regions beyond Goma where rebel factions remain active. His job was to seek the release of child-soldiers from both the government and rebel ranks.

“We worked…[for] CARITAS. The payment was good: $1000USD per mission because of the risk. If you died it is up to you. You leave the other amount with your wife and you go to where the rebels are. First you approach the rebel who is
in charge and say ‘please I want to take these children to school.’ [If successful] we take the children to Don Bosco [Ngangi, an orphanage on the outskirts of Goma]. Those who want to, go to school; those who want vocational training, we give them a certificate after six months of intense training."

Following Mulamba’s description of CARITAS and Don Bosco, Yusef comments, consistent with his ideas about adult education in refugee camps, “these people are good. These children are taught; then they leave the gun. You see what the Catholics are doing!” While Yusef is a Muslim, this comment conveys a strong appreciation for CARITAS’ work; after all the Catholics have played a major role in Yusef’s life ever since his aunt sent him to Father Hoggard’s primary school.

Mulamba continues. “And there are psychological programs. People coming from Italy to show the badness of war, even in cinemas, they convince the soldiers to stop.”

Yusef interjects once again, “You know one thing: people who have used guns, their minds are changed to be wild. I have been in Somalia, I have used a gun, I have never killed but I taught myself when they killed my family. They happen in Congo and Somalia, every place where there is civil war. Once you use a gun and pour blood, you are not the Jeremy we know, your heart changes. You become like a wild animal, you do not sympathize, you lose mercy, and you become bad.”

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Mulamba’s interjects and brings the conversation back to the child soldiers who enter Don Bosco.

“We tell them they don’t have to live by the gun. We teach them, and then the children can change their minds.”

I say to Mulamba, “Suppose I am a ‘wild boy’ and you take me in at Don Bosco. How do you help me?”

“Convince you through education,” Mulamba replies. “You used to sleep in the forest, now there is a bed. Now there are clothes. ‘Look at the other children, they were just like you. Those who have finished their vocational training, look at them, you too will look like this.’”

Mulamba and Yusef’s relationship crosses nationality and religious ideology. Yusef is a Muslim; Mulamba is a Catholic. Mulamba is Congolese; Yusef is Somali. Yusef speaks Somali and English; Mulamba speaks French and Kinyarwanda. Mulamba and Yusef both speak Swahili. And according to them both, their relationship is mutually beneficial. Yusef gives Mulamba a hand in times of particular need, and Mulamba’s presence supports Yusef when the past is particularly preoccupying. Together, they share and compare the daily news.

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Beata and Godfrey live on opposite sides of base camp.

Beata discusses the discrepancy between rations and subsistence in Nakivale. “We are living in this very complicated situation because we are given 15 kilos of
maize and 1 kilo of beans per head per month. We try to use [the rations] on Saturdays but we cannot fail to survive…So we work for those who have some things, Banyamulenge and Somalis. We go and work in their compounds and dig for them. But for the Somalis we wash their clothes.”

After discussing the link between his fellow Banyamulenge Christians, Godfrey explains, “I see in my life everybody from Nakivale is important. As long as you are a good person. Even if you are not Banyamulenge or not Christian you are important in my life. Even Muslims: UK is a friend to me. I helped him with his school to teach English. He is very important in my life. But Banyamulenge, being that we are the same tribe, they are the most important. If I have a big problem, I can go to the pastor and he can help me. We share minds and ideas…For example, when I am with Alex [the mid-fielder] we have to discuss about Congo. Even we have to discuss planning, how we behave in the camp, [and] what is going to be the solution for us.”

Then Godfrey inflates the scale of solidarity. “Not only Alex. The way I can talk about problems with Banyamulenge is the same as I can talk to Somalis because we are all refugees and this is not our country.”

When Alex discusses the possibilities for cooperation, he notes that there are certain practical restrictions. “For us we have different tribes, for me I can cooperate with those who speak the same language and those who have the same problems. For those with different problems, it is more difficult to cooperate…each and every problem, I speak with Godfrey and we share ideas.”
The population of Banyamulenge Congolese is among the most recent to arrival in Nakivale. As Pastor told us back during our discussion of displacement and its circumstances, there is an especially close-knit Banyamulenge community that belongs to the same Pentecostal church. If we listen carefully to Godfrey think out loud about the communities in which he belongs in Nakivale, the intersection of these three categories seems to take precedence in many conversations. While there are scenarios in which Godfrey’s impulse to say, “We are all refugees and this is not our country” may be pragmatic, it is to the Pastor and his fellow Banyamulenge Day-Star Pentecostals that Godfrey takes his “big problems.”

Godfrey admits that such an extension of solidarity to all refugees in Nakivale is not always possible. “We are different from others in the camp. I myself like to be social with other people. But according to my appearance…people in Sangano [the center of the Rwandan zone]…say I am a spy of Kagame. [The President of Rwanda. Kagame is a Tutsi]. I say, ‘no.’ I was so so mentally disturbed. Even now I cannot go to Sangano at night. When one is Tutsi and another is Hutu, I cannot go…There is discrimination.”

Beata tells the story of this discrimination from a Hutu perspective. “I used to like to move to the meeting places where there are many people but when they put people together and killed them, now I could not go to the meeting. [Beata is referring to the event the previous Wednesday in which 12 Rwandans were killed in and around base-camp]. [After] that last event when they killed Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers, I will not go anywhere there are fences because the fences prevented some from escaping. And I feel I don’t even want to live in the Rwandan group
because there are many many Rwandan spies here [who] can do bad things at
ingo for, if God will not allow it. Conclusively, I do not feel emotionally
upset. I believe in God. I always attend night prayers and I feel that God is the
almighty and will change everything and so I don’t feel emotional.” Beata was saved
in 2002 in Nakivale.

Godfrey and Beata do not know one another for the same reason that
Emmanuel did not stop at the football pitch on our first evening in Nakivale. The
antagonism between Nakivale’s Rwandan and Banyamulenge populations is a
frequent point of conversation in both Sangano and New Congo. As Beata mentions,
many Rwandans are suspicious that the Tutsi Banyamulenge are spies of Rwanda’s
Kagame government. In the years directly following the 1994 genocide, Paul
Kagame’s RPF crossed into the refugee settlements in eastern Congo that were
comprised primarily of Rwandan Hutus in order to capture the *genocidaires* who were hiding among displaced civilians. During this military advance and Rwanda’s ongoing presence in eastern Congo, it is recognized that the RPF undertook widespread reprisal killings against Hutu civilians.\(^{165}\) Beata and Emmanuel, like much of the Rwandan Hutu population who remain displaced, feel that the Rwandan government’s official post-genocide narrative of justice and reconciliation under-represents this part of the story, and excludes Hutus from victim status based on a one-sided narrative of the genocide. And thus Emmanuel and Beata refuse the mandate to repatriate.

The Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC), located in Rwanda’s capital city of Kigali, has a different explanation for Emmanuel and Beata’s refusal to repatriate. As an organization, they are responsible for “welcoming home” Hutu militants who decide to defect from the rebel factions still at large in Congo. They are also responsible for assisting the reintegration process of non-militant Hutu refugees when they return from Uganda and Tanzania.\(^{166}\) According to RDRC’s Communications Director, those who willingly return are met with a message of unity and the “right to live, express, and feel at home” and opportunities for vocational training and psychosocial support. The “die-hards” however, refuse to


repatriate and instead scare others with “propaganda and fear” and prevent voluntary repatriation. For repatriation to be successful, the Chairman of the RDRC clarifies, displaced Rwandan Hutus must disband with the reprisal narrative propagated by Emmanuel and other “die-hards” in the Hutu diaspora, and instead realize that they are welcome back in Rwanda.167

Emmanuel does not consider himself a “die-hard.” But when Ugandan police came to Nakivale on July 14th 2010, supposedly to update asylum claims, he was suspicious of their presence.168 When the shooting started and hundreds of Rwandans were forcibly loaded onto trucks to be taken back to Rwanda, Emmanuel leaped over the barbed wire fence at the back of base camp and disappeared from sight. Ever since, Emmanuel has remained especially vigilant and he remains convinced of reprisal killings against Hutus by the Rwandan government. It does not feel to Emmanuel that, should he voluntarily repatriate, he would be greeted with a “warm welcome.”

The Banyamulenge in Nakivale are aware of the forced Rwandan repatriation. But their perspective on the matter is motivated by a different insecurity. As Godfrey and Beata tell us, some of the tensions between Hutus and Tutsis that exploded in 1994 Rwanda and subsequently traveled to Congo have made it here to Nakivale. From the Banyamulenge perspective, Godfrey and company might feel that they too were indirectly displaced by turmoil that followed in the influx of Hutus into Congo after 1994 but, instead of articulating this common source of victimization, the

167 Visit to RDRC in Kigali, August 2010
Rwandans accuse the Banyamulenge of being government spies. Other Banyamulenge in the camp assume Nakivale’s Hutus to be perpetrators of genocide. Why else would they refuse to repatriate?

And so while Beata and Godfrey are both Pentecostal and “very social,” their conversation is prohibited by their subscription to categories that are narratively incompatible.

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Like Mulamba and Rashidi, Alex often finds work in Nakivale’s market for temporary labor. “[While] my sister washes Somali’s clothes, I can even go to places where there is small work for building and watching cows.” But most of the time, Alex is teaching.

When Godfrey and Etienne were reunited in the line for ration cards at base-camp on January 18th 2008, Alex was there too. And from that day Alex, Godfrey, and Etienne became inseparable. In January 2009, they started a school.

Alex explains, “We teach together. We began the school last year. First it was me and Godfrey teaching. We had 170 students. In the first term there were 156 [but some] left for Kampala and Mbarara... [Now that] the war has increased, many people have come and now we have 176.” Refugees pay 5000UGS (approximately $2 USD) to enroll each month.

Yvonne is one of the students at Alex’s school. She is in Godfrey’s English class. The school day has just ended and Yvonne and I sit down to talk. Godfrey has
arranged our meeting. Yvonne is shy. I have found it more difficult to find women in Nakivale to interview. Fewer women, it seems, regularly occupy the public spaces in Nakivale, the spaces where I have met most of my acquaintances. In addition, Godfrey and Emmanuel are my primary translators and they have introduced me almost exclusively to men. And there are other reasons too. Perhaps it is because I identify as male and thus other men are the first to approach me. It was only after asking Godfrey many times to help me arrange interviews with women that he asked if Yvonne would stay after school. And so we discuss. Etienne, exemplifying his preferred teaching method, is screaming about comma usage in the next room. Yvonne and I speak about the war, home, memory, and life here in Nakivale; the tone of our conversation is quiet and uncomfortably formal. Most of our exchange consists of me asking a question and Yvonne replying affirmatively by default and then clarifying.

We begin with cooperation. Yvonne laments, “Here is not good. No one comes to help. I am a girl, I have a lot of needs. But no one comes to help. No father, no mom. So that is the way I am here.”

“Do you think often, about life back in Congo?”

“Yes. I think about the war… I saw people being killed as we were running, people being raped. I cannot mention how we reached Nakivale. We just ran. I ran with my sister, but I do not know where my dad or mom is.”

“Is there anyone here in Nakivale with whom you discuss the past?”
“My fellow Christians. Living Hope Church. I am a choir member of the Church…the pastor and some others…give me advice that I should forget the past.” And then Yvonne tells of the youth group at Living Hope Church. “We discuss and give each other advice for the things that happen. We were all from Congo and faced the war. So we speak about the things that happen. These are the youth from Living Hope. Just Girls…They are from…South Kivu, we didn’t flee together but we met here. Some of the girls I knew in Congo. Some we met here…But being Congolese, we are here together.”

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Youth groups are common in Nakivale. Damas is the president of one. It is dusk and I can clearly make out his tall and slender silhouette on the other side of the football pitch. It looks as if he is speaking with a few others, perhaps with Godfrey and Alex. Damas came to Nakivale in 2005 and here in the camp he is president of Daystar Pentecostal’s youth group. “80% of Daystar Pentecostal is youth,” Damas reports, they are “mostly Congolese, but also Burundians and Rwandan.” Damas was a chapatti seller until some Rwandans burned down his house. He is hesitant to speak outside his native French and Kinyarwanda but agrees to do his best to speak English.

When the youth gather, “I try to make a union of Hutus and Tutsis. God is one; we are one. I pass along good things. Youth ask questions about why people want to kill us…Then I read a verse from the Bible to unify.” I ask Damas about the frequent topics of discussion and who can belong. “Anyone can join. We discuss with leaders of other churches to think about what we can share between youth. Youth
Pentecostal visit with [youth from Nakivale’s] Catholic, Methodist, Redeemed, [and] Solution [churches]. [We discuss] prostitution, life, love, and how to propose to a girl.”

Damas remembers his own displacement. “I fled into the forest, my house and cattle and family were killed in 2003.” He had just finished his first two years of Law School at the University of Bukavu. Our conversation turns to the present and we talk about memory. “I try to push away memories but I cannot, I want to make thinking easy. I feel sad but I remove that sadness by sharing and singing and debates. I go to church and gather youth to discuss love [and] sadness because it is a thing in me. How to rid sadness? Six persons we do theater to show that forgetting is easy. Even if parents die, life continues. You can build, work, [and become] empower[ed] to remove the bad things in your heart.”

For others too, forgetting and religious life are inexorably linked.

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When Alex and Godfrey discuss Congo, the war, and the problems they face here in Nakivale, Alex emphasizes the loss of opportunity that accompanies displacement. “In Congo, I had a good life. I had food, studies, and everything without suffering. Many things must be changed when you leave your country. Now I am suffering. I cannot get the life here that I had in Congo.”

Alex and I are together in the front room of the home he shares with his sister. Godfrey and Etienne are busy coating the walls of their newly constructed home with a manure-based concoction designed to prevent the mud walls from
crumbling. We decide to take a break from the work and to come here for an interview. I ask Alex if there are memories of Congo that he, Godfrey, and Etienne share. “We remember…our studies, our neighbors, the problems that we faced, even our president. [We remember] how we kept our cows, how we got to visit other countries on holiday, how we went to church. How we prayed in Congo was not like we pray here in Nakivale.” When our conversation turns to the future, Alex returns to the opportunities lost in displacement. “I have lost my parents to the war when I was still young. So I had to think about my life…For us, we have suffering and I have to think about my future and my children. How they will get a good life and have a better life than I have now…I think about my life and my future and I…even work. It means I have experience even though I have problems. Now when I get a problem, I can find solutions.”

Alex is decidedly optimistic. He, Etienne, and Godfrey share this optimism and frequently discuss life after Nakivale. Alex wants to pursue football (this morning, Alex and I went for a run and from the looks of it, he is well on his way to football stardom), Etienne wants to be a country music singer (so far it looks like Kenny Rogers’ “Blaze of Glory” will be his first cover), and Godfrey wants to be everything. (His most recently professed lifetime dedication is to teaching.) But not all refugees in Nakivale share this optimism. There are those who, like Alex and company, ground their grievances in lost potential, but for whom the logical extension of such memories is not plans for the future; instead, the relative loss of

\[169\] When I last spoke to Etienne on the phone on March 12th 2011, he was looking for someone to teach him to play the guitar.
displacement preserves the past in a way that is preoccupying—like a chronic and severe nostalgia. Like optimism for Godfrey, Alex, and Etienne, can such nostalgia also provide the grounds for new community?

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Karimundongo is an older gentleman and like Godfrey, Etienne, and Alex, he belongs to Day-Star Pentecostal. He is also a Banyamulenge man from Congo. We first met Karimundongo at the Pastor’s home. Like Alex, Karimundongo portrays the severity of suffering in displacement in relation to what came before. For 22 year-old Alex, leaving home entailed a loss of opportunity, but for Karimundongo, at age 64, it meant a loss of wealth and status. “Before the war, I had everything. I was a very big man. But now I feel like I am not a man because I cannot do anything on my own…” Karimundongo arrived in Nakivale in 1998. “But I came not OK, I have no children and no wife. I have no…child that can help so I will die in such kind of life…I dream that I am talking with my sons and relatives. Sometimes I feel the things that I experienced, the good life I had…[the] activities in Congo were so so different. I was a cattle keeper. I raised my cows. But here there is no activity I can do…When I think about the way I was and the way I am now, when I think about my sons which would have been very important to me now, who may have built me a house, I feel very sad.”

Unlike Alex, Karimundongo is too old to perform manual labor. He does not speak English and he does not wash clothing. Karimundongo spends most of his days sitting around and talking. “I mostly talk to those who I came with from Katanga
province…It is very important to me to be close to many people. When we come together we discuss. I am an old man. I need to talk to people. We always talk about the things that happened…The people that were killed, the property that was taken and all the things that happened. But talking does not make me feel better.”

On New Congo stage, Ernesto is ironing Godfrey’s blue shirt. Ernesto is soft-spoken and appears to be in his mid-thirties. Upon arriving in Nakivale, Ernesto farmed the land he was granted by OPM until he could afford to buy two Singer Sewing Machines. We are together in his tailoring shop on New Congo Stage. It is evening and Ernesto irons by candlelight. Ernesto too describes life in Nakivale by comparing it to what came before. And like Karimundongo, Ernesto expresses a loss of status.

“I was born in Congo. I had a very good life. I had everything. There were ten boys in the family… Out of the ten, I am the only one left. The life I had got spoiled…when I think about life, my mind becomes disturbed…When I go anywhere in the camp, I [see that I ] have no good life…My father left a mansion in Congo [but] I have no way to go back for it. When I think about the life I had in Congo, I cannot do anything. I can just sit back for a week and not work. When I think about the life I had and the mansions the family had and the brothers…I feel as though I have no life.”

Like other traumatic experiences, being displaced entails a “break with the past.” While the metaphor is more literal in the case of displacement, a frequent
sentiment compares the hardships of life in Nakivale to life before Nakivale. In contrast with Godfrey, Alex and Etienne’ optimism, Ernesto and Karimundongo seem to bridge this “break” with longing and nostalgia. Are optimism and nostalgia both framing devices for transposing the past into the future? If so, is optimism more narratively flexible than nostalgia? Are the goals of communities bound by optimism and those bound by nostalgia different? Both communities have entry-requirements. In order to participate in we-groups bounded by nostalgia in Nakivale, for example, one must be a refugee. Otherwise, nostalgia would not function as shared ground. So what happens when the audience in the posttraumatic conversation is not a fellow refugee? What happens when the audience is one of the white SUVs?

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*The White SUV*

In 2004, a team of expert psychiatric clinicians descended on Nakivale Refugee Settlement. They were employed by a German NGO called *Victim’s Voice* (vivo) and led by Frank Neuner, a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist from Bielefeld University in Germany.170 The team had two missions: first, to perform an epidemiological study in order to assess the frequency of PTSD in Nakivale’s Somali and Rwandan populations and second, “to train local people—refugees resident in the camp—as therapists to conduct treatments with identified patients in both Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) and Supportive Counselling.”171 [sic] For the first mission,  

171 Neuner, Onyut et al., “Nakivale Camp Mental Health Project: Building Local Competency for Psychological Assistance to Traumatised Refugees,” *The Nakivale Camp Mental Health Project:*
refugee participants administered the Posttraumatic Diagnostic Survey (PDS), a 49-items survey that measures adherence to the DSM-IV diagnostic criterion for PTSD\textsuperscript{172} and that takes between 10 and 15 minutes to complete.\textsuperscript{173} Notably, unlike the CAPS survey, the PDS is a self-report survey—checkboxes determined which participants would receive treatment.\textsuperscript{174} The second objective sought to measure whether trained “laypersons” could effectively treat traumatized refugees using NET. Before reporting on such findings however, Neuner et al. explain their own trauma-talk commitments, and in doing so reveal their methodological alignment with those we have been calling the empiricist trauma-talkers.

Neuner and his team begin by defining trauma in relation to psychosocial functioning. “Trauma is significant because it precludes normal functioning in its victims, such that even in the event that they do reach a safe refuge and have the basics for a more or less normal life, they are unable to consolidate their resources in order to rebuild their lives.”\textsuperscript{175} If we take “normal functioning” to mean “pre-trauma functioning,” and “consolidation of their resources” to mean “cognitive resources,” this definition resembles the standard starting block for much of theoretical trauma-

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\textsuperscript{173} http://www.pearsonassessments.com/HAIWEB/Cultures/en-us/Productdetail.htm?Pid=PAg510&Mode=summary.
\textsuperscript{174} Thank you to Charles Sanislow in the Wesleyan University department of Psychology for explaining this measure and its variance from CAPS.

\textsuperscript{175} Neuner, Onyut et al., "Nakivale Camp Mental Health Project: Building Local Competency for Psychological Assistance to Traumatised Refugees," The Nakivale Camp Mental Health Project: building local competency for psychological assistance to traumatised refugees Intervention 2004, vol. 2, no. 2 (2004), 91
talk—especially Roth and LaCapra’s presupposition that traumatic experience is a distorger and destroyer of the ordinary. Next, Neuner shows his commitment to the *mimetic* school of Leys’ dichotomous trauma-talk. On the next page he asserts:

Research into Psychotrauma has already long shown that the most effective (meaning leading to the most symptom reduction) therapies for PTSD include an exposure component. This means that the patient is exposed in a controlled way to the traumatic experience, usually through imagery and recollection, until the physiological arousal is habituated. In practice, the client is asked to recall the event within a safe therapeutic setting, in the supportive presence of a qualified therapist...\(^{176}\)

And so according to such theoretical assumptions, *Victim’s Voice* developed Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) “with the goal of addressing the needs and possibilities for mental health assistance in refugee camps.” Nakivale was the trial run.

In their preliminary epidemiological survey of Nakivale’s Rwandan and Somali populations, Neuner et al. found a high prevalence of PTSD. “31.1% in the

\(^{176}\) Neuner, p. 93.

The passage continues, “experience shows that the repeated retelling and correction of the testimony, as well as successive exploration and resolution of feelings, bodily sensations and images lead to habituation of the anxiety levels which the patient initially feels while being exposed to the traumatic event. This process is the key to symptom reduction.”
Rwandan population to 47% in the Somali population.” Importantly, because this study was conducted in 2004, the majority of Congolese now in Nakivale were yet to be displaced. Also, within the surveyed population “traumatic events had on average taken place more than 9 and 11 years earlier.” This makes sense if we remember that the events that catalyzed widespread displacement in Rwanda and Somalia occurred in the first years of the 1990s. Given the prevalence of PTSD, Neuner and his team thought it appropriate to train “laypersons” to administer NET. To become a therapist for the study, the applicant had to speak English, have an “adequate intellectual skill base,” and not be traumatized—because, Neuner insists, “It goes without saying that a traumatized individual would be in no position to facilitate the trauma resolution of another.”177 Therapists that passed such boundaries of inclusion were given 90 Euros a month as compensation. As a result of this study, Neuner and his team “proved that local interviewers with only basic skill, could…correctly diagnose a major mental disorder.” Thus Neuner concludes, training refugees in Nakivale to listen to other refugees about traumatic experience can help lessen the symptoms of PTSD.

Neuner et al.’s study, eventually titled “Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder by Trained Lay Counselors in an African Refugee Settlement: A Randomized Controlled Trial,” represents a psychosocial approach to traumatic experience that uses the PTSD construct as its primary explanatory logic. While the researchers chose to experiment with Narrative Exposure Therapy instead of biomedical treatments for PTSD, the PTSD construct remains the primary signifier of traumatic experience. In contrast to northern Uganda, few studies on traumatic

177 Neuner, p. 96.
experience have been performed in Nakivale and it is unclear the extent to which PTSD is a dominant way of understanding disruptive violence among the population. We remember that when Pastor Ndahiro went to Nakivale hospital, they gave him pills and recorded PTSD among other diagnoses. But Pastor does not know what “PTSD” means and thus while the pills may alleviate his symptoms (although he claims otherwise), the PTSD construct serves no explanatory function. Instead, when Pastor discusses his strategies for alleviating suffering, he talks almost exclusively about Day-Star Pentecostal church.

If Pastor had been a refugee at the time Neuner was conducting research in Nakivale, in order to be eligible to receive Narrative Exposure Therapy, he would have been required to check a certain combination of boxes of the PDS survey. This is not to say that Pastor would have necessarily adopted PTSD as a label for his personhood, rather it is to see that in the conversation between Pastor and Neuner, that it is Neuner’s way of making sense of radically disruptive violence as the audience, which determines whether Pastor is eligible for treatment. If we read this in light of Fassin and Rechtman’s critique of PTSD as a criterion for victimhood, Neuner et al.’s requirements for participation inadvertently trumps the ways Pastor has self-fashioned the traumatic experience in his past. This is a frequent double-bind in psychiatry: Labels that are restrictive enough to provide productive treatment end up narratively confining those they intend to help. And these binds are worsened in a humanitarian context in which Pastor really needs Neuner’s help.

In their literature review section, Neuner et al. cite Derek Summerfield, a prominent psychiatric clinician who after working for years with NGOs in war zones
and refugee camps, published a scathing indictment of PTSD as a medicalized Western construct that encourages “the emergence of a trauma industry that could be exported to any culture.”¹⁷⁸ This publication in a 1997 edition of *The Lancet* would catalyze a cascade of literature critical of the PTSD construct and would propel Allan Young’s earlier criticisms into the psychiatric and empiricist realm of trauma-talk. Neuner et al. cite Summerfield to show the potential merits of NET in place of biomedical treatment.¹⁷⁹ Yet while Summerfield illustrates the limits of PTSD as a universalizable narrative vehicle, the weight of his criticism concerns the exportation of the PTSD checklist to spaces where recovery from traumatic experience is part of a larger politics of victimhood, intervention, and dependency. The Neuner study embodies a link between trauma-talk and humanitarian psychiatry—a link that Fassin and Rechtman assert—perpetuates the dominance of PTSD over Pastors’ Bible.

In her recent work *Democratic Insecurities: Violence, Trauma, and Intervention in Haiti*, psychiatric anthropologist Erica Caple James connects the benefits that Pastor might receive from Neuner’s presence in Nakivale to the incentives for him to narrativize traumatic experience within the categories of the PTSD construct’s archetypal victim. Bemoaning the dominance of “checkbox”

¹⁷⁸ Fassin and Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood.* (Princeton, New Jersey Princeton University Press, 2009), 25

¹⁷⁹ They submit, we are critical of “mental health interventions among such populations have often been considered as a medicalisation of what is essentially a socio-economic consequence of conflict.” (Neuner et al., "Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder by Trained Lay Counselors in an African Refugee Settlement: A Randomized Controlled Trial," *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology* August 76, no. 4 686-694 (2008)), 688
trauma narratives and the resulting iconic representations of victimhood, James submits:

The effectiveness of trauma narratives in motivating intervention is an indicator of the global saturation of cultural forms of testimony and lamentation as a means of recognition and redress for sufferers. Thus the performance of trauma narratives has become a necessary transaction in order for sufferers to participate in local, national, and international compassion economies.180

James is primarily concerned with scenarios in which certain or “‘technologies of trauma’” (what we call narrative vehicles) confine the domain of authentic suffering and legitimate victimhood because of their dominant status in humanitarian rationalities.181 In the Neuner study, those who wanted the 90 Euros a month and those who desired treatment had to narrate the violence in the past in a certain way in order to be eligible. Adherence to the iconic representation of traumatic experience that PTSD provided, in this case, determined access to resources. But at what cost?

180 James, Erica Caple, Democratic Insecurities, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 29

She continues: “Whether authentic or false, trauma narratives are efficacious because of their ability to evoke horror and compassion. The combination of these two sentiments instills a desire to distance oneself from the unthinkable shock of violation at the same time that it inspires empathy and the feeling of identification with the victim. The contradiction in the two sentiments may be that which propels action or intervention regardless of the truth, if one recognizes the humanity or worth of the victim.” (James, p. 30.)

181 James writes, “well-intended professional practices to transform suffering into something productive contributed to the objectification and circulation of trauma narratives during the course of aid interventions…”“The aid apparatus employed ‘technologies of trauma’—rational, bureaucratic, scientific practices intended to diagnose and authenticate the suffering of victims” (James, p. 32).
Gabe is preoccupied about the violence that occurs here in Nakivale. He has just finished a set of 50 knuckle push-ups and challenges me to match him. Then he sprays some perfume in the air and I barely dodge a direct hit. Jay-Z and Beyoncé maintain their watchful gaze as we begin our conversation about life, insecurity, masculinity, and those we trust.

“This is my first refugee camp,” Gabe begins. His English is nearly fluent and he speaks in a fast high-pitched tone. He repeats phrases for emphasis and prefaces many of his most important sentences with the term, “unfortunately.” “I have never been a refugee. I have never experienced any hell like this. Me and the one I called my “cousin-brother” came to Nakivale…There were no more gunshots. [When] we were still new [arrivals] trying to have experience in the camp, we started having some insecurities. People were talking. It was incredible to be asked, ‘How come your parents died and you survived?’ It was surprising and very traumatizing. People were teasing and bullying. Afterwards we experienced a physical attack here at home.” Gabe remembers this day clearly and recounts what happened in detail.

“By then the camp was very hot and we had a very big problem of water. Apart from going to the lake and drinking the green water, you had to go to the borehole. There was a line from morning up to evening. Because we were two [Gabe and his cousin-brother]…it was my turn and I had to go and I waited for nine hours. Unfortunately, when I was gone my cousin-brother was attacked…He was not there
when I got home...at night...I inquired. I was horrified, someone told me my cousin-brother has been attacked. We were still new and didn’t know faces and voices.” This time Gabe’s cousin-brother came home.

Then, some days later, they came again. On this occasion it was Gabe who was at home. “When I refused to open the door, they pushed inside...a knife...When they got inside they asked where [my cousin-brother] was.” Gabe recognized the men who had come. They were “the Rwandans I had seen at school.” Gabe explains, “First of all, me and my cousin brother we belong to the Tutsi tribe. Here in the camp we have different clans. Some are Hutu and some are Tutsi.” And so “I relayed that...[the cousin brother] was not here...We got some security officials and they investigated...but they never followed up. I don’t know what the problem is in African countries. Corruption or something. But thank God nobody died.” Gabe’s comment about Africa follows a frequent pattern here in Nakivale. Africa seems to be an explanation. Local matters involving the police or OPM, for example, are often blamed on Africa as a whole. Perhaps this is because I am the audience and I am not African, or maybe it is indicative of something else. The other night in a bar on New Congo stage, a drunken quarrel broke out. When it had settled, one of the young men involved approached me and said, “I am so sorry. But you see, this is the problem of Africa.” His reason was that Africans are poor and that they drink too much.

Gabe continues. “In 2009...my brother was tired of this place. The assistance we receive from UNHCR is not sufficient. So he said, ‘let’s get some jobs.’ He left and said he was going to look for work in Mbarara...I have never heard from him since.” And so I ask Gabe with whom he spends most of his time. When he gathers
his response, Gabe is sure to tell me that, while he may indeed belong to certain communities, he aspires to be fully self-sufficient. “Here I trust the Somalis. While they try to assist me, I really like self-reliance. It doesn’t mean that Somalis give me free money. I have to be a hard-working guy. I just use my mental capacity.” Gabe was first in his class before losing his scholarship to secondary school in 2009. “Some of them cannot speak English,” Gabe goes on, “and nowadays there is this ongoing project of resettlement so everyone wants to learn English. And so I teach Somalis English and they give me some little money.” Then Gabe drives home his commitment to self-reliance. “I prefer being self-reliant. But there are many communities that are not hostile but welcoming to me. I mostly spend time with Somalis and some Banyamulenge and even some Ugandans when I get a chance to meet them.”

I tell Gabe that I too value self-reliance, although it is readily acknowledged that such a term means very different things given our circumstances. There have been some light-heartedly competitive moments in our morning together so far. Most obviously our push-ups contest but also when we compared our (in my case lacking) repertoire of foreign languages. We seem to be slowly establishing some shared ground.

Gabe admits that memories of Congo are not a frequent point of conversation. “Whenever I find that a person understands my past because some are idiots, I am not a drug addict and I am not a gangster or a robber. Whenever I find a person who has constructive ideas and is motivating, this is the person I want to share my problems with.” It is at this point that Gabe turns to me and says, just like Yusef and Florence,
“By the way, let me tell you: you are very lucky to have such a long talk with me. Most of the time, I do not talk, I never do. When it takes me back into memories, I find that my head is falling out.” I thank Gabe when he says this but “thank you” does not sound right. I nod. Then Gabe comments that contemporary problems here in Nakivale cause him to remember the hardship in the past. “I do have flashbacks of my country but it comes during emergencies, when I meet certain challenges.” I ask Gabe how he responds to such flashbacks. “For example if I get stressed and I start thinking about the past, I come immediately to bed and read books and listen to music. I prefer reading. There is a certain book of mine. Welcome to the United States: A Guide for Refugees. It is about the experience of Americans and how Americans live their lives.” As we finish our conversation, Gabe pauses and adds, “By the way, Jeremy, there is a proverb in my language. It translates to “sorrow doesn’t mean to keep crying.” Gabe explains the significance, ‘Being sorrowful does not mean that I am on the tip of the mountain and being traumatized.’” And finally he discloses, “This is why I am selfish…[with] my biography.”

For Gabe, experiences of violence and displacement are framed by a doctrine of self-reliance. His discussions of the war and the loss of his parents and the violence in Nakivale seem to be armored by a narrative commitment to self-reliance. The bullying and the threats Gabe faces are counter-balanced in his re-telling, by examples of self-development. It is as if, when Gabe states—“I trust the Somalis. While they try to assist me, I really like self-reliance. It doesn’t mean that Somalis give me free money. I have to be a hard-working guy. I just use my mental capacity”—that the prospect of being seen as a group member might detract from his
individuality. Perhaps for Gabe, this doctrine of self-reliance that leads him to the guidebook for refugees in America instead of the football pitch provides \textit{I narrative} guidance for daily life—much like a \textit{we-group} would for others. The push-ups are fitting.

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\textit{A Chairman’s Perspective}

Teweldeb was voted chairman of Nakivale’s Ethiopian and Eritrean zone. Teweldeb’s home is a five-minute walk beyond the west end of the football pitch. The paths are narrower in this part of the camp. I get lost looking for his home. When I finally reach it, I find it surrounded, like many homes in Nakivale, by \textit{imiyenz}, Kinyarwanda for the 8-foot-tall green bush with a blinding white paste that bleeds from the center of the stalks. The compound is gated too, and the door is comprised of flattened ribbed aluminum cans with “USA” stamped in red lettering. Teweldeb welcomes me inside. We sit together on a bench in an open-air porch area outside his home. Teweldeb appears to be in his late 40s or 50s. He is a fatherly gentleman, gentle in voice and demeanor. He speaks in English.

“I am born in a village countryside. My father and my family are farmers. [After secondary school] I was employed as a primary school teacher. Then…I went for higher education in India [from] 1991-1994…I returned back home and served in the church, the Seventh Day Adventist Church. I was employed as a minister in the Church then, for one year, I was a school headmaster for a mixed primary and
secondary school for the church. Then, [I spent] two years as an administrator. Then there were problems between Ethiopia and Eritrea.”

On 6 May 1998, a “minor border skirmish” broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia over disputed territory on the Badme plains and “escalated into a full-scale bilateral war.” Tewelde is Ethiopian and his wife is Eritrean. Together they lived on the Ethiopian side of the border. When the fighting began, 1000km of border region was militarized, forcing 350,000 Ethiopians and 250,000 Eritreans to leave their homes. Tewelde and his wife were among them. By this time Tewelde remembers, “I was employed again as a radio program producer for the church.” By June of 1998 there was a “de facto ceasefire” in place but both countries were busy stockpiling weapons. Then in February 1999, “the war flared up again…with even greater intensity.” Tewelde recalls, “Then the conflict was elevated to a maximum level and we were not safe in the country because my wife is an Eritrean and I am Ethiopian so we came to Uganda.”

“Life in Nakivale is not easy…I have four children: 3 boys and 1 girl. It is a hardship to feed them and send them to school…Life is getting harder and harder. So we are waiting for a better place to resettle but time is going beyond our control. We

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184 “The two parties used the lull in fighting to restock arms supplies left over from the Derg period. Both Eritrea and Ethiopia succumbed to an arms-shopping frenzy, purchasing everything from hand weapons and landmines to tanks and super-modern MIG 29 and Sukhoy 27 jet fighters…During the break in fighting, the two biggest armies in Africa were once again mobilized: it is estimated that Ethiopia currently has about 450,000 men under arms [of a total population of 60 million], while Eritrea has mobilized 350,000 men and women [of a total population of 3.2 million].” (Negash, p. 2)
are here now still waiting. When the current incident happened in Kampala, the bomb blasts [at the Ethiopian restaurant during the World Cup Finals] has affected our people. It increases our painship living in this country. We don’t know what is going to happen next.”

Our conversation switches to Teweldeb’s role as chairman, his attempts to foster community and his frustration at the shortcomings. “My role as the chairman is to bring people together as a community, to care for one another, to come together, to tackle life, but it is not working.” It is the people of the zone that elect the chairperson. “I cannot hide it. We have problems in this community because of certain people, particularly the Ethiopians. Maybe [it is] because they have been here for so long they are not friendly. It is making me feel bad. We are supposed to be a committee for the community: chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, etc, but it is not working and now I am alone.”

As chairman, Teweldeb is responsible for mediating conflicts that arise within the zone. “When there is a crucial issue, we call the community for a meeting but it does not help because of those guys that disturb the deliberations.” When individuals in the zone have major problems, they may go to Teweldeb for assistance. “People come to me so I try to handle it. If it is beyond my control, I report to the police of OPM. The people quarrel. It is baseless, just someone talks something and someone gets beaten. Most of the time, I handle it by calling some elders and reconcile…”
I ask Tewledeb if his constituents come to him for material assistance. “People do not come to me for resources. For resources, they go to GTZ. There is a social worker [for the zone] who takes their case to OPM.”

Tewledeb reports that there are about “800 Ethiopians and Eritreans registered here in Nakivale.” And when our conversation turns to religion he notes, “Only me and my family are Seventh Day Adventist out of this community.” On Saturday I will see Tewledeb walking to Nakivale’s Seventh Day Adventist Church in Old Congo Zone. “Most of the other [Ethiopians and Eritreans] are Coptic Orthodox. And some are Muslim of course and some Pentecostal.”

In the final stage of our conversation, I ask Tewledeb about the displacement histories of the Ethiopians and Eritreans in Nakivale, if political tensions from back home enter Nakivale, and whether cooperation between the two nationalities is frequent. And he replies, “No, we just talk about what is supposed to be here. We are refugees, we have left our identities at home. We are not meant to be called Ethiopians or Eritreans here. We have to be loyal to the rules and regulations under UNHCR. We are not supposed to mention those identities here. We have been told but I perceive that it is supposed to be [this way] also. I ran away from that…I have to abide by the rules and regulations of this land…”

Tewledeb pauses and then clarifies. “The Ethiopian and Eritrean governments are hostile, they are fighting but here we are the same. We have the same culture, the same language. But politics are different.”
Tewledeb’s wife comes out of the adjacent kitchen with coffee. It is Eritrean coffee, the portions are the size of an espresso and it is as sweet as molasses. It is delicious and a cherished break from Uganda’s Nescafe monopoly. Then she comes out with warm bread that resembles dabo kolo without the spices. Tewledeb and I sit for a while longer. I tell him about my project and my interest in the relationship between how people re-tell the past, posttraumatic experience, and realignment of community. I feel complimented by his interest because I know that Tewledeb has thought a lot about community identity and lines of cooperation and that he has come to a conclusion in which he is confident: “We have left our [national] identities at home.” Finally, after half an hour or so, we say our goodbyes.

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“An Intellectual Group”

Sangano is the primary Rwandan trading center in Nakivale. It is the place where Godfrey does not feel safe at night. It is the place outside of which Beata does not feel safe at night. About half a kilometer down the path from New Congo, past base camp and the fenced World Food Programme tents, is a bustling pedestrian intersection. To the left the path leads to the border of the settlement and eventually to the Ugandan town of Kabingo with the big tree and the cars to Mbarara. To the right the path descends into a brief ravine and subsequently climbs to Old Congo and Nakivale Hospital.185 Here in Sangano, slaughtered goats hang from the awnings, mattresses and school supplies are for sale; there is an active economy. It is clear that,

185 See map # 4 for Sangano located to the south and west of base camp
along with the Somalis, the Rwandans have been here the longest. The architecture of the homes assumes more permanence than in other zones and there are longstanding relations with Ugandan merchants whose imported commodities and foodstuffs stock Sangano’s shops. Emmanuel and I have arranged to meet at 8am. We met briefly on the path to Kabingo the previous afternoon. I had been looking for Emmanuel. It had been 6 months since I had seen him last.

When the genocide came, Emmanuel was 17. After two years as a refugee in Tanzania, Emmanuel returned to Rwanda to complete his studies in the Faculty of Law at the University of Butare—Rwanda’s most renowned university. In the months leading up to the 2003 Rwandan presidential election, Emmanuel went to work for the campaign of Kagame’s opposition. But as a newly anointed lawyer with influence at the university, Emmanuel’s political alignment was threatening to local Kagame supporters. He was forced to flee once again. “They invited me to a meeting and on the road they put a roadblock with armed men. The secretary informed me and I left the car and went on foot and I saw them with the arms. And they were running to try to kill me.” As a lawyer, Emmanuel has connections that are not available to most refugees in Nakivale. “I am connected to international and human rights organizations, in order to give reports and to give very real information to radio stations like BBC. I move to the Internet of international communities and give information.” But Emmanuel is not alone in trying to share the realities of Nakivale with those on the outside. “We have an intellectual group,” Emmanuel says, “We sit together and write papers and talk to reporters and the international community, the
Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, and even the U.N. We tell what we want to see changed.” And there are many things this group wants to see changed.

Havugirana is a member of Emmanuel’s intellectual group. Like most Rwandans in Nakivale he is a Hutu. In 1990, Havugirana was working as a driver in Rwanda’s government army. Soon after the war started, Havugirana stopped receiving his salary. When he asked for his payment he and a group of fellow drivers were taken for RPF soldiers and locked up in Amahoro Stadium in Kigali. When the genocide started in 1994, Havugirana stayed in Rwanda while his wife and kids fled to Goma in eastern DRC. In September 1994, he was arrested and taken to prison. After 10 years of confinement, Havugirana was found innocent but upon his release “genocide survivors…tried to accuse me of genocidal ideology. I didn’t want to go back so I crossed the border to Uganda.” Here in Nakivale he worked as a boda boda186 driver and managed to save 300,000UGS (about $150USD). With this capital, Havugirana was able to begin purchasing maize, beans, sugar, rice, and other commodities in Mbarara and transport them back to Nakivale to sell. Havugirana has found his way into a network of merchants from outside Nakivale, “I am associated with a group of businessmen. We are mixed. We are Rwandan and Ugandan. There is one Tanzanian who brings rice and a Kenyan who brings clothes. We buy and sell them in Sangano.” Havugirana seems perfectly content answering what are taken to be routine questions about life as a refugee. But when the conversation turns back to Rwanda, we slow down. Our exchange feels heavier.

186 Swahili for “Motorcycle taxi”
“It is not easy,” Havugirana responds when I ask if he shares a common past with other Rwandans, “We don’t talk much about life back in Rwanda because when we reach that point we get very emotional. We really want something that can make us forget. Even to call us Rwandese187 is an offense. We want to forget.” He mentions that each April forgetting is especially difficult. “In Rwanda during genocide commemorations, I feel very bad because I lost many people in my family.” On the one hand, Havugirana wants to forget about the violence he witnessed during the genocide and the time he spent in prison, but on the other hand, government-sponsored commemorations that emphasize the Tutsi as victim feel exclusionary to Havugirana in a way that makes this forgetting more difficult.

This feeling of exclusion is a common refrain among the Hutu population here in Nakivale. For Emmanuel, the explanation is almost purely political:

“It is really sad what we have undergone in the past and we do pray that it will never happen to any other person. And we are outside in exile where we have no hope for the future. We are just waiting for the international community to do anything to make the Rwandan government change their structure. I don’t think it is a problem anymore of Hutus and Tutsis killing each other. They are political problems…We need to get the International Community to put pressure on Kagame…to change the justice system…”

Pascal, a cheerful young man of 28 years with a practiced grin, a rounded belly, and a San Diego Chargers jersey agrees with Emmanuel and describes how the

187 Emmanuel’s term for the people of Rwanda is ‘Rwandese’ not Rwandan. Most likely, this is because he derives it from French.
political becomes personal. “I’ve stayed here for 10 years…My problem is not
genocide, it’s a problem of family…My wife is not the same tribe as me…She is a
Tutsi…[But] to go back, we cannot. You know the politics of Rwanda, if you were
out, [as a refugee], you were guilty. People are not educated. You know if someone is
your neighbor and you have a quarrel he will mention you in gacaca, and yet he did
not say anything for 14 years.” Here in Nakivale, Pascal works for GTZ in the
community development sector. He is in charge of overseeing poultry and goat
cooperatives.

Gacaca is a frequent concern for Hutus living abroad as refugees. With the
prisons full and the court system limited, the Kagame government was unable to
provide trials for all those accused of genocide in the aftermath of 1994. In 2001, a
plan was devised to mobilize traditional community-based judicial practices to
expedite the trial process; they called it gacaca. In the gacaca system, community
members gather and testify before a group of community leaders and elders. The
accused is present to give their account. Those who criticize the capacity of gacaca
to administer fair justice cite the variety of incentives community members might
have to indict individuals for reasons other than genocide. Gacaca is one of the
primary risks, Emmanuel notes—assuming his expertise as a lawyer—that impede
exiled Hutus from returning to Rwanda.

188 Simon Gabisirege & Stella Babalola, Perceptions about the Gacaca Law in Rwanda, (Baltimore:
Johns Hopkins University 2001)
I ask Emmanuel more about his group of intellectuals. What links them? What are their goals? What authority do they hold among the larger Rwandan population in Nakivale?

“If you are Rwandan and living in Uganda it is because you do not agree with Kagame. We are not allowed to make a political group as refugees so we call each other and write some documents to show Uganda, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch why we are not willing to repatriate.”

I ask Emmanuel if only Rwandans are included. “You know birds of a feather flock together,” Emmanuel proclaims. “When you are Rwandan it is so easy to group yourself together but maybe not so easy to group with Banyamulenge.”

“Many are the spies of Kagame,” Emmanuel adds.

Emmanuel details the solidarity that binds the group of intellectuals beyond common suspicion of the Banyamulenge. “We all have particularities but there are common points where we say we have undergone the same problems in the same way, we say we share that we are all Hutus and so we have undergone the same problems of being accused of genocide by the RPF…So we share about the past. We bring different pasts, problems, some are doctors, army, teachers, I am a justice lawyer; so we put together and get a picture of what was happening in the whole country in different sectors and then discuss what to do in the future.” One of these men is called K.L.

When K.L. was a younger man he worked as a medical assistant for a USAID project in Kibeho refugee camp near Rwanda’s southern border with Burundi. This
was in the early 1980s, when Milton Obote was the President of Uganda. At the time, Kibeho was populated by Ugandan refugees, many of whom had fled the tyrannical rule of Idi Amin and the war Obote led to take back power in Uganda. In 1985 K.L. was married and by 1994 he and his wife had three children.

“What makes me very sad is that my wife and children were killed. Not only killed, they were burned. And also a major event is that members of my family like my dad and grandfather were killed and put in a [latrine] toilet. And the one who killed them went to fight in Congo and was killed and buried in dignity and his name is on his grave.”

“I remember the killings done from 24th December 1997 to 8th January 1998 by the RPF. Those killings started some hours before Christmas. They came early in the morning and were killing and beating inhabitants. They put people into a very big grave and made a military camp above it. [They call it] Gabiro military camp…I witnessed it myself. If it were possible I could point to the common graves. There are five. Over one of the mass graves is a safe house.”


“I was accepting that there would be real reconciliation. That people who committed genocide would be punished equally or there would be a general amnesty, but nothing has been done to make me forget the past. If you visit prisons in Rwanda, many are Hutus. But Tutsi have also committed acts against humanity so it makes the problem not have a real solution. Something which is funny: Some soldiers who were in charge of killing have been given ranks while innocent people are suffering.” For
K.L. and Havugirana both, the perceived ongoing denial that Hutus can be victims impedes the process of forgetting or even—we may say—of narrative integration. Is social recognition of victimhood a way of legitimating the past? Or put differently, does a category or label acquire integrative capacity when it is socially recognized?

“I cannot forget any of these events or circumstances,” K.L. proclaims. “I just become a drunkard every night to avoid them.”

In the CAPS component of our conversation, K.L. notes that memories come more often when he is sick. “When I fall sick, I flashback as if there was a video in front of me. It could be more often but I get drunk every night. I become very emotional when I remember. I could stop eating and I feel extremely sad. I don’t even want to move to town. I could be [this way] every day but the only weapon I have is to become drunk.”

When K.L. mentions alcoholism, it is something he accepts without regret. K.L. is the chief unloader at the food distribution tents. When the WFP trucks come in once a month, K.L. is responsible for ensuring that all the maize is transferred safely to the storage facilities. And K.L. used to go to church. But not since the police trucks came last week to force repatriation.

Frank is 22. He does not remember his home in Rwanda. His father was the head of local defense under Rwandan President Habyarimana whose murder marked the onset of the genocide. In 1991, just after the RPF entered Rwanda, Frank and his family were forced to move to Tanzania. His father was a Hutu and his mother was a
Tutsi. In 1996 Frank was forced to repatriate. In 1999, Frank was again living in Tanzania. A white man came and bought the land on which Frank was living. The man said, “Now you are in a National Park so you must leave.” Frank remembers, “They came and burned the houses. Using that excuse, they forced out the Rwandans.” On August 3rd 1999, Frank reached Uganda. Here in Nakivale, Frank started school once again. He completed Primary 1 through Primary 6, but his father could not afford to send Frank to secondary school. Frank left Nakivale and traveled as a cattle boy to Masaka, a town in central Uganda. Then after three months, “a certain organization came from Australia. [It was called] World Vision. They took me in as an orphan and paid for me to go to secondary school.” But after only one term, a man at World Vision stole the 10 billion UGS operating budget. Frank convinced the headmaster at the school to let him stay through Senior 4. When he obtained his O-level certificate, Frank returned to Nakivale. By this time his father had come across enough money for Frank to complete Senior-6. Frank did so. Last Wednesday, on July 14th, Frank’s father was killed by the police at base camp.

As the Head Boy in Senior-6, Frank was the chairman of the debate club. His favorite topics of debate were “about politics and religions.” After graduation, Frank began working for Havugirana and Emmanuel. He sees the benefits of belonging to Emmanuel’s group of intellectuals. “I am trying to see that I can be a use to them and so they will trust me.”

Last week, Havugirana’s younger brother came to visit. He also happened to be at base camp on that Wednesday afternoon.
Emmanuel and I walk slowly down the largest path in Nakivale, from Sangano to New Congo via base-camp. Emmanuel turns and points out the bent barbed wire in which his friends were stuck. He says definitively, “I will never go back in there.”

Moments before, when I asked Emmanuel that CAPS question about hypervigilance, he had replied as I had expected. “I am obliged to be because of the circumstances. When I see policemen come to repatriate, I react quickly. If I did not, I would be dead. If someone comes here with a gun, I would react [so] quickly, you would find yourself alone.”

The narratives propagated among Emmanuel’s group of Hutu intellectuals and other Rwandans in Nakivale employ a common legacy of oppression as a primary mechanism of we-group cohesion. But listening to these various accounts of this oppression we can hear individual variation in the reasons for belonging. Frank wants to earn the trust of Havugirana and the older shopkeepers, while Emmanuel is devoted to whistle blowing to the “international community” to get them to pay attention to the Kagame regime’s oppression of Hutus. This is not to say that Frank and Emmanuel’s participation in the narratives is purely self-serving, it is rather to show that the adoption of the same narrative does not always occur for the same reasons.

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It is time to leave Nakivale once again. But as we depart we keep in mind the stories of the past and the way such stories are woven into the present and the
pragmatic. When Ramech is singing, what do he and his audience share? Emmanuel comments, “birds of a feather flock together.” What constitutes a feather and how is it useful? We just heard myriad stories involving violence that used all sorts of narrative vehicles to explain violence and to turn such explanations into new opportunities for community. Godfrey and Alex discuss the future almost every day, K.L. gets drunk, Beata raises a son and talks about salvation. Godfrey, Pastor, Karimundongo, Havugirana, and Etienne talk about salvation too. Yvonne and Damas discuss the importance of youth groups and of teaching narrative flexibility before the narrative rigidity of adulthood sets it. Karimundongo and Ernesto feel a sharp loss of status, Tewledeb refuses to mention the distinction between Ethiopian and Eritrean identity, Gabe reiterates that he is self-reliant, Havugirana says that being called Rwandan is an offense, Yusef humbly observes that others have it worse than he does, Mulamba and Yusef compare the French and English versions of the news. And in all of these cases, the struggle to live with the past reconfigures the grounds for pragmatic cooperation. This is the new grounds for sameness that arises after violence; these are the stories that exhibit the reprioritization of landmarks in the I narrative.

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In The Ironist’s Cage, Michael S. Roth introduces the consequence of the link between traumatic memory and we-group formation.

[On the one hand] the cultivation of traumatic memory can lead to a harvest of hatred and violence. On the other
hand, memory—even of the most painful kind—can be used to expand that group of people who count for us, those who we do not consider merely strangers. The difficulty lies in seeing how these two offspring of memory are related and have developed together over time, how the irresponsibility and violence that are legitimated by reference to the past are linked to the solidarity that a common past can be used to promote.\footnote{Michael S. Roth, \textit{The Ironist's Cage: Memory, Trauma, and the Construction of History}. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 12.}

If we view the Rwandan Hutu narratives in this light, the common distrust of Tutsis in Nakivale, the fears of forced repatriation, and the anti-Kagame rhetoric both foster solidarity and maintain narrative inflexibility toward Tutsis. What marks this coupling of solidarity and narrative inflexibility through traumatic memory? In what ways might violence and narrative rigidity be decoupled for a more inclusive posttraumatic solidarity or a solidarity that is not based on a common enemy?

In our chapter on trauma-talk, despite the myriad disagreements among thinkers regarding representation, language, and treatment, we arrived at the conclusion that traumatic experience alters the grounds on which meaning about the self and the world is produced. In the third volume of their series on anthropology and violence, \textit{Remaking the World}, Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman explain this process:
Finding one’s voice in the making of one’s history, the remaking of the world, though, is also a matter of being able to reconceptualize the narratives of devastation and generate new contexts through which everyday life may become possible.¹⁹⁰

This “reconceptualization” is what narrative vehicles have to offer. There is the possibility for “communities formed in suffering,” to partake in the “remaking of the world.” This “remaking” occurs on ground that has been shifted by traumatic experience and through categories that have been reprioritized by traumatic experience. This is what Das and Kleinman mean by “new contexts,” or elsewhere, “foundations of subjectivity.”¹⁹¹ But as we have seen in Nakivale, it is also necessary for “communities formed in displacement” to remake the world. And when displacement and traumatic experience coincide, we can chart the infiltration of traumatic experience into the formation of new collectivities and cooperative we-groups.

With the narrative vehicles of Nakivale in mind, we return to Gulu in northern Uganda. As in Nakivale the ways individuals make sense of the violence in the past depends, in part, on the desired consequence of the conversation. But in Gulu the set of audiences is very different. Unlike Nakivale which is diverse in nationality and


ethnicity, former child soldiers in northern Uganda are almost all ethnic Acholi and they are Ugandan. Moreover, because of the nature of the conflict with LRA and the strategies of abduction and forced killing, there are complex lines between victims and perpetrators—lines that reshuffle the mutual support networks of post-LRA Gulu.

What happens when the limbless man encounters Opiyo on the streets of Gulu? We do not know what narrative vehicle he uses nor do we know his audience. “There he is!” the man might think, “the one who took pleasure in chopping off my arm and padlocking my lips.” Or perhaps he thinks differently: “There goes Opiyo. What a horrible war this has been. He was forced to chop off my arm and padlock my lips, and he too is a victim. We must move on.” What determines which story the man tells? Is it the sphere of possible explanations for the fact that he has no limbs? And if so, how are such explanations connected to the network of individuals he needs to help him?

Prepared to listen for new circumstances in which violence is narrated we go once again to Sangano, down the ridge to Kabingo, past the fruit sellers, past the billiard table, over to the big tree, into the over-packed white sedan, to Mbarara, to Kampala, and up to Gulu.
Chapter Five

Home Again: Remaking the Traumatic Past in Northern Uganda

At 2 o’clock on Sunday afternoon, 38 women gather in a small building in the African Quarter side of Pece, about 3 kilometers southwest of Gulu Town. Inside there is a green couch with a lace cover and a matching chair. Still dressed in vibrantly-colored churchgoing katanges, most of the women sit comfortably on the floor, legs extended, torsos erect. And there are children too. The youngest are nursing while the older children run around outside. One boy in particular peeks his head around the doorway from outside. As soon as his mother notices him, he disappears from view only to reappear a moment later. His audience seems slightly less entertained than he does, but not so much as to warrant ruining all the fun. It is loud in here. There are sounds of nursing and conspicuous whispers about the outsider.

Today, like every Sunday, each woman has brought with her at least 1000 Ugandan Shillings (USH)—roughly equivalent to 50 cents in the United States. Aber Lucy is the treasurer and at the end of the meeting, deposits are compiled in the center. Every 1000USH receives the stamp of a purple ink elephant in a pocket-sized graph-paper composition booklet. Now it is my turn and Aber clarifies that I must add an additional 2500USH to my weekly amount because it is my first meeting and I must pay the annual membership fee. I put in 3500USH. When the circle is complete Aber stacks the shillings and slips the pile into a zipper pouch. She puts the pouch in a tin box and locks the box in a safe underneath a bureau in the corner. “Thank you
for joining us,” say Monica, the chairwoman. Moments before, she had told me, “We are together so that we can forget.”

The day before, at around 10 o’clock in the morning, I was walking down the main commercial street in Gulu Town on my way to the offices of Refugee Law Project. Along with Gulu Support the Children Organization (GUSCO), World Vision, Save the Children, War Child, and CARITAS, Refugee Law Project is one of the largest NGOs at work in Gulu. It was a weekday and the momentum of the business day was picking up rapidly. Boda bodas wove about with women sitting sideways and steady on their backs. As I passed the Kobil petrol station at the intersection with Kampala Road, rain clouds darkened the morning sky, as routine dictated, my fellow pedestrians moved quickly under the awnings of nearby storefronts. For some brief moments I decided that I would continue walking, “a little rain won’t harm anything” Soaked, I ran ahead to a small shop up on the left. Inside was a small man with a big grin. He invited me to take a seat. He asked if I was interested I purchasing any property here in Gulu. Then he introduced himself as Opiyo.

I had arrived in Gulu a day earlier having made the two-day journey from Nakivale with an overnight stop in Kampala. Life in Gulu seems busier than rural Nakivale. When Kony and the remaining soldiers in the LRA fled northern Uganda for the border region between Congo, Sudan and the Central African Republic in 2006, Gulu became the epicenter for reintegration and reconciliation efforts for those who returned. In Nakivale the people seemed to be waiting—discussions about the future began with repatriation or resettlement. But here in Gulu, new signposts—logo,
mission, arrow—are staked in the ground almost every week. Finally, after 26 years of conflict, Gulu and its surrounding territories are safe. The whole of northern Uganda, which three years ago was packed into Internally Displaced Persons camps, is headed home, back to the village, back to work; or perhaps to school for the first time, to Gulu Town to find employment opportunities, or to the grandparents’ farm. For those who have returned from the bush, it is back to life outside the bush, back to school, work, home, family, society. There is confusion, catharsis, pain, rediscovery, old friends reuniting, families finally together again, families who will never be together again. But more than anything here in Gulu there is a sense of urgency.

The next day I arrived at Opiyo’s real estate shop before the rains. He had told me that there were some people he wanted me to meet; “bush mothers,” he called them. The “bush” as Opiyo means it, refers to life within the ranks of the LRA. When one is abducted he or she enters life in the “bush.” Opiyo is the group’s secretary and that morning he and I walked to the Africa-Quarter side of Pece where I met the “Child-Mothers Mixed Group.” On that first day, Monica did most of the talking. She told me, speaking in English with the occasional appeal for translation assistance from Opiyo, that “Child-Mothers Mixed Group,” had formed back in 2005. It was started by a small group of women who had been abducted into the LRA, given birth to children while in the “bush,” and who have now returned. The majority of women in the group operate small businesses like vegetable selling and tailoring. According to Article 3 of the group constitution, the “aims and objectives” of the

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192 See map # 2 for Internally Displaced Person’s camps in Northern Uganda
group include, “to promote collective marketing for development in order to fight against poverty,” and “to create income-generating activity among the group.” Every Sunday, the women have the opportunity to ask for a loan from the collective pot. Withdrawals must be paid back with 10% interest by the week before Christmas. Then the profits are split evenly between all 39 members. But the Sunday meetings, Monica explains, often go for many hours. According to Monica, long before the financial matters on the agenda, the group discusses the children and their futures. The group is ‘mixed,’ Monica says. The women come from different regions, different religions, and even different generations. But they were all abducted into the LRA or displaced in IDP camps. “We compare life in the bush and life in the community [here in Gulu]. We want to forget life in the bush.”

The war in northern Uganda began, as most wars do, with narrative incompatibility. For many Acholi, Museveni’s rise to power threatened Acholi identity to the extent that it warranted military action. But as time went on and taking on the UPDF in a bid for Kampala no longer seemed plausible, Acholi enlistment receded. And so when abduction and forced conscription became the primary means of enlistment, there was a need for a new narrative to compel loyalty. This is one way of reading the forced killings and the doctrine of spiritual possession through which such violence was legitimized. Florence was forced to kill her parents so that she would never want to return to her village, and when she was forced to make this break with her past, the doctrine of spiritual possession, enforced by Kony’s charismatic leadership, was ready with an alternative explanatory logic for why she
had killed—one that was perhaps more easier to live with. As is the case for many abductees into the LRA, the process of narrative coercion began, for Florence, with the threat of being killed.

When Opiyo and the boys of Sam Baker were marched out of their dormitory, they had just witnessed the killing of their schoolmate. Maybe this is why they did not make a run for it. But when Opiyo massacred the busload of people, did he want to run away as badly as he did the day he was abducted? If not, what changed? Florence finally lit the thatched roof of her family’s home because if she had refused, she would have been killed. But when Florence became pregnant by an LRA soldier and produced a son, she loved her new family very much. Maybe life in the bush with her son seemed more bearable to Florence than returning to her village. We do not know; Florence does not say. What is important here, however, is that Kony and the leadership of the LRA organized an authority structure that forced abductees to adopt extreme narrative inflexibility.

Here in Gulu we have the opportunity to listen for narrative transitions in two directions: abduction into the LRA and the escape to back to life on the outside. Nakivale’s football pitch was outside familiar territory; Gulu is a return to a past that, if the LRA succeeded, is no longer familiar.
Amony, Acayo Betty, Atito, Laker Clara, Laker Edina, Adong Milly, Acan Agnes, and Aber Peninah were abducted into the Lord’s Resistance Army. Today they sit together in a small room in the Africa Quarter of Pece.

I sit with Grace or Patrick, my translators, and the women arrive periodically throughout the day. At some points it seems there is a large group waiting outside. Unlike our discussions in Nakivale, I do not know all of the women waiting outside before we sit down to talk. The secretary gives me a list of their names. And so before each interview, we talk for a bit. This often takes the form of me speaking some few words of Acholi. Perhaps, “copango,” or “ari maber.” Such attempts elicit a burst of laughter (Patrick was particularly fond of facilitating this response. He would start giggling before I could even finish). Other times we discuss the morning, or Ugandan geography, or New York, or the rains. It is important to establish this small room as a safe space.

The following stories are for the women of “Child-Mothers Mixed Group” to tell. But remember that these stories were told to me, and that I was there too, listening and asking questions. As in the previous chapter, I will step back for a few pages at a time so that we may hear how re-emploiting the traumatic past and mutual support we-groups intersect. I will chime in when I hear a particular posttraumatic mechanism of solidarity to be particularly salient. But listen carefully; I do not have all the answers here. Common ground is audience-specific and so to listen for

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193 As throughout this work, individuals are identifiable only one name or a pseudonym.
194 “Hello,” and “good morning” respectively.
articulations of sameness, even if the conversation has been filtered, is locate new intersections of between traumatic and the pragmatic.

Chronology in the following passages is especially difficult to follow. As we know, traumatic experience can alter how time is experienced and the temporal axis of memory formation. Most of these individuals were also away from home for many years and might not have measured time in consistent intervals. Dates were especially difficult to translate. For these reasons, I have not resolved the inconsistencies in chronology. Where I am confident of a certain explanation, I will say so.

We are in a small room in the African-Quarter of Pece. It is the middle of the day. The rains have just passed. I begin the interview section of the conversation by asking, “What are the main events that have occurred in your life and what about the past is important to who you are today?”

—

_Amony:_

“Me, I was born I had a happy life but afterwards the rebels abducted me and I started having a difficult life. I was abducted in 1992. I escaped in 2004. When I came back I went through GUSCO. I thought I was going to die because I am HIV+.”

GUSCO stands for Gulu Support the Children Organization. It “is an indigenous NGO working to promote the well-being of war affected children in northern Uganda
through provision of Psycho-Social Support, Capacity building of communities, education, advocacy and peace building.”

“One day I decided to commit suicide. I bought a lot of drugs. I was going to poison all the children together with me. Because the parents are…dead no one is there to help me. Then after buying the drugs I went and told one of my best friends and the friend counseled me not to do it. [This was] the friend I came back with from the bush. After testing that I was HIV+, I decided to go to the hospital. I stayed like that for two years. Afterward the sickness developed and I was serious. I could not walk, eat, or bathe.”

“Then a certain man came from World Vision and picked me from GUSCO and took me to the NGO hospital and put me on HIV drugs. Up to now, on the drugs, I have learned that very many people are now living with the disease and that if [you] follow the direction of the drugs you can stay for a longer period. And I am confident now.”

—

NGOs in Gulu are a venue, as Amony recalls of her experience at World Vision, for encountering others with similar vulnerabilities. When thousands of former-abductees escaped the ranks of the LRA and returned to life outside the bush there was widespread need for reintegration assistance. As we know from the traffic circle, there are many NGOs at work here in Gulu. While their mission statements are diverse, GUSCO, World Vision, CARITAS, and Refugee Law Project are among

those that offer reintegration support; some of their initiatives focus on vocational training while others provide psychosocial support.

Bernard is the Director of Psychosocial Research for Refugee Law Project in Gulu. His job is to travel around northern Uganda to the remaining IDP camps and to counsel groups of displaced persons in order to identify individuals who need further psychosocial support. Bernard notes that it is his job to identify “mechanisms of addressing individual and collective trauma…and to ensure that the government takes responsibility.” I ask Bernard to elaborate on what he means by collective trauma and he describes incidents in which communities experience a common trauma that is associated with a certain place; perhaps a street or path for collecting firewood. When I ask Bernard for an example of collective trauma he notes that the recent bombings in Kampala during the World Cup “retraumatized people in Gulu; some failed to work.” Finally he notes that there are discussion topics and phrases that, if heard in public, trigger memories of “trauma in the community.” His examples are, “the terror of the LRA reduced me to an animal” or “I am not a human being.”

Bernard is Ugandan but he does not say whether he is Acholi or from the North. If he were, it would be implied that he too might have had contact with the LRA or experience living as an IDP. Instead our conversation moves to the dilemmas of asking those who have experienced trauma to recount such events. As a psychosocial counselor, Bernard has thought such dilemmas through carefully. The purpose of “reactivation activities,” he states, is to “challenge paranoia and self-

196 See map # 2 for Internally Displaced Person’s camps in Northern Uganda
destruction, to make people talk freely, trust and have confidence.” One of the ways in which this can be achieved, Bernard notes, is through riddles and stories that connect personal issues to larger issues. By sharing ownership and reframing the threatening components of individual traumatic memory as a common vulnerability, those who have experienced trauma are given a space and support system in which to negotiate narrative integration.

Bernard is critical of the reintegration initiatives in Gulu that prescribe pharmaceutical treatment for symptoms of posttraumatic behavioral change without providing patients with the opportunity for counseling. Fluoxetine, Chlorprozamine, and Haloperidol, he notes, are anti-depressants and anti-psychotic medications that are frequently prescribed at the hospitals and NGO medical centers in Gulu to address signs and symptoms of PTSD. But “people do not understand how the drugs must be taken… or their side-effects.” When a patient’s tongue swells from taking Haloperidol, Bernard notes, they might interrupt the treatment because, “there are no drugs available for side-effects in local hospitals.” He concludes, “follow-ups are needed” to determine the efficacy of the pharmaceutical approach to treating posttraumatic behavioral change. But the pharmaceutical approach is not what is of primary interest to Bernard, instead, he is concerned with spreading awareness that trauma is real and legitimate.

I met Bernard the day the rains subsided and allowed me to make it all the way across Gulu without getting drenched. I knocked on the gate of the RLP

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197 Otherwise known as Prozac
198 Known in the U.S. as Thorazine
compound on NGO Hill and found Bernard sitting on the stoop of the main building reading a newspaper. We arranged a time that worked for both of us and I returned one day the following week. I imagine that I am one of many visitors to RLP that Bernard must accommodate and in the beginning, our conversation felt like he was answering my questions in a routine and disinterested manner. But when I ask him why counseling is important, and why he feels justified in asking IDPs to reactivate their traumatic memories, our conversation takes on a more informal and invested tone. Bernard proclaims, “There is no way we can run away from trauma deliberately. Avoidance is a negative coping mechanism. We need to confirm trauma to see its impact. If we get an infection, [our] bodies send antibodies and then we develop weapons against the foreign invasion…By hearing about trauma, confirming trauma, and talking about trauma we generate new mechanisms.” Confirming trauma, Bernard seems to say, is necessary for individuals to adopt explanations for traumatic experience and to quell its disruptive nature.

_Laker Edina_

“I am 31 years old. I am from Pateko. I was abducted from there in 1993. So it did not take long, I got pregnant in 1994. As you know, a mother cannot survive well among soldiers. Running here and there and firing. The first battle [occurred] when we had first entered Sudan. That was a serious one and I got a bullet. It was still [in me] until I got back home. It was not easy to live in Sudan, but what annoyed me
most was that I was given to an older man who was also a government worker. But when I was given to him, he had already contracted HIV.”

“I gave birth to two children. In 1997, the second baby died. The same year the husband died. He was second in command to General Kony.”

“He was Komakech George. He was a Field Commander for all battles there in the bush,” Laker remembers with a hint of pride.

“So when he died we started experiencing more problems because he was somebody big and he took care of us. We were 25 wives with him.”

“After [Komakech] died, Kony decided to release those [wives] who had not yet had children. That was the moment when we started making up our mind to come back home. Escaping was the worst moment. There were two government soldiers from northern Sudan. The Arabs, they brought us to the other side of the Nile. We moved on foot…One at a time over the bridge. The others stayed covered until the first one reaches [the other side]. We were covered in a veil.”

—

_Amony Part II_


The ceasefire failed.
“And I am confident now.”

“When they abducted me, they came at night while we were sleeping…They picked two of us. Both girls. Then they said the younger sister should turn back home. They gave me a very heavy load: three basins of maize, 5 chickens, and two basins of g-nuts.”

“One [of the soldiers] asked me ‘Are you very tired with your heavy load?’ I said, ‘no,’ because I knew that they would kill me there…we moved for a [short] distance and then we rested…I looked around and I heard people talking in a certain way so I escaped. After they realized I escaped they wanted to kill me. That night they gave me a man as my husband. But I refused. I said, ‘This is not my choice.’ I was 13. They said, ‘for us, we will kill you…we are going to kill you under this big tree if you refuse this man.’ They told me to ask the fellow girls what will happen to me. The [girls]…responded, ‘They are going to kill you, these people will kill you.’”

“After some few minutes, the UPDF came in an ambush and began firing their guns. We moved to cross the border into Sudan but there was a very big river. But I had the knowledge of swimming…there was another ambush, for there again my leg became swollen and they gave me a stick to move with.”

“I escaped back home.”

You were in Sudan?

“All the twelve years, I spent in Juba. They were using us as slavery to carry loads and bullets.”
Amony has just skipped over twelve years in her story.

“IT traumatized me very much because at times your friend might be killed when you are sitting together. Or you are running and jumping over dead bodies…I still have some dreams. Maybe once a month, that I am moving with dead people or that they are telling me to carry a dead body…like when [I] see a vehicle accident or seeing a gun reminds me…I want to forget!...I cannot remember it all. But if I see someone with a swelling leg, I just remember what happened….people [here in Gulu] are social to me but others are not social. They say that hatred that ‘you are from the bush, you are the one killing people.’…[I go to] church, Baptist, Savedist-Born-Again. [I joined when] in GUSCO.”

As Amony recounts, upon their return to society outside the bush, many former abductees feel they are perceived as perpetrators. Amony expresses a feeling of being trapped. After trying everything in her power to escape alive and return to society, she is labeled as a killer. Meanwhile, the memories remain devastating and debilitating. How can this narrative entrapment be transcended? Are there ways to signal separation from the life with the LRA that might break the label confinement that Amony feels? She wants to forget. Is the process of forgetting itself a narrative vehicle? And if so, what sorts of labels assist forgetting?

—

Adong Milly

“When I was still young, I grew up with my mother…we were living well for nine years. One month into my tenth year, the rebels came and robbed me and took
me to the bush so I did not enjoy life with my mother...there were a lot of things I had never seen.”

“Just one year later, I was taken and given to a man as a wife. When I started living with a man, I could not tolerate that and I thought I would die.”

“It was in 1996 that I experienced the worst time of my life. That was a very serious battle between the rebels and the government soldiers. I survived because of God’s mercy...After the battle, they realized that so many people were missing and many scattered and gathering people took us three weeks...we thought we were going to die. There was nothing to eat or drink and people could not talk well.”

“[In] 2001...we ran back to Uganda again...From Uganda here [there was] no time for resting, soldiers attacking from the ground and the planes above. There was nothing we could do just a matter of prayer.”

Lilly begins to cry. I ask her about church.

—

_Laker Edina Part II_

“We were covered in a veil.”

“I was a bit unlucky...because one of the two guys that were trying to escape with us admired me and the rest were taken [across the bridge] and I was left for three days. He was insisting, ‘Please, I will take care of you’ I will take you to Khartoum so do not worry, just relax.’...At the same time, Kony wanted us. So they took a photo and the photo was distributed to all the [Khartoum] government officers.”
“We suffered but…we had some money we had gotten when our husband died. We were trying to get fireworks\textsuperscript{200} and other things…to sell. That money helped us with that person who was keeping us. It was not enough…they relocated us…The government of Juba thought they would take us back to Kony but instead tried to relocate us because they understood we…were being looked for.”

“Some people of Kony were selling charcoal nearby. But they did not discover us. We reached the vehicle and were taken to the airfield where the president normally lands. There was a room like a prison. We were locked inside. We realized. God, if you don’t help us, they will kill us. We didn’t know what was going on.”

—

\textit{Adong Milly Part II}

Lilly accepts the offer to discuss other matters and begins:

“There was nothing we could do, just a matter of prayer.”

“The life of our church is not bad. It is ok. When you are having a stress or some problem, they do some counseling. How you should be free, how you should relate to others, you should try to forget what has already past. Those are the things they counsel about.”

“I trust those friends…[who] I grew up with. I look at them as brothers and sisters. We have grown up together and they are ones who were giving me advice

\textsuperscript{200} “fireworks” refers here to ammunition.
instead of the parents so I trust them…most of them are from the bush. And I feel that those ones from the bush give good advice, more than those who were at home.”

“I have one example. Somebody who gives advice, who is not [from] the bush does not comply with the interest simply because we had a lot of experience where people despise those who come from the bush. They could say, “You killed us, you killed our family, you should not stay with us’…so that is why I trust those who are from the bush…the example is myself. I came from the bush. My real sister said, ‘You should have already died from there, you should not have come home.’”

Two motivations mark Lilly’s ongoing solidarity with other abductees. Like Among Florence before her, being perceived as a perpetrator of violence binds Lilly to those who also must live with such a reputation. But furthermore, Lilly notes, having been abducted at the age of ten and forced to remain in the bush for over five years, she matured alongside other abductees. Lilly and her fellow abductees figured out how to make sense of life in the bush and the “break with the past” that abduction entailed. And they did this, Lilly relays, together. Upon their return, when Lilly and her fellow abductees needed to “break with the past” again, it remained a shared pursuit.

“I am just trying to forget. But sometimes when I am telling a story about myself or maybe somebody has started reminding me of what happened…I will start shedding tears. In 2004 and 2005, [the memories]…came every two days. I could cry…that is human of course. It was in 2006 that I started realizing and forgetting things. God knows everything and [when] anybody says anything about me, let them
have their say. As long as I live, I don’t care. The church has come with guidance counseling and planted many things in my heart and right now it takes time to remind myself.”

—

_Acayo Betty_

“When I was eleven, I met these people who took me to the bush…They took me to…a very old man of 40 years and from there I couldn’t do anything. As a wife, I could not tolerate that thing. I was forced.”

“When I was 14, I got pregnant. I gave birth to a child who was weak and took only 2 or 3 months and died.”

“When we reached Sudan, there was no food, no nothing to eat so we were forced to go and loot from local people. But there [in Sudan] everyone is armed so for you to go and get something to eat, you must first fire at them. So you need soldiers but if you delay there you will die. That was really the worst moment for me.”

“It did not take long [after] my husband died [until]…I was again given to another man. That was a very serious man and one day he took me to the bush some distance from the barracks and beat me to death. I died there and I got my life just some hours later on. He left me there because he thought he killed me and people thought I was already dead. But luckily I got back my life and I tried to identify where to go. I could feel only with my hands until I reached a place near the barracks where they found me and took me back to the center.”
It is at times like these, as I listen and now as I write, that the intensity, sadness, and confusion of these stories feel to me like a punch in the gut. The interview will continue, I will continue to write, Acayo will continue to tell me about what happened in Sudan, and you, I hope, will continue to read. But it is important to recognize this punch in the gut. I do not know or claim to know all of what is going on here. We can talk about trauma and narrative and memory and politics and religion and psychosocial support and *we groups* and the role of the researcher and displacement and football and hopes for the future, but the punch in the gut somehow makes all these other reactions feel trivial or beside-the-point. The punch in the gut makes me feel like all the rest is on the surface. Here I am again in the Smith Reading Room of Olin Library writing my B.A. thesis. This is all well and good. But there is something about Acayo’s story that takes primacy over this project. It is as if Acayo’s story is not just one of 46 interviews that comprise this project. It is rather that this project is just 50 minutes on a Wednesday afternoon in the life of Acayo Betty.

Acayo continues. “When I reached there, another commander said, ‘Ok, why did he beat you?’ I started narrating everything...The commander sent a message to Kony. He disappeared until one week and sometime he came back and Kony was there and there was no problem.”
“Well by then Mr. Kony ordered us to go to Uganda…Unfortunately for me, I could not run well because the bullet hit my leg. At the same time, if you are left behind, the local people kill you.”

“It was decided that because I could not walk well…[that the commanders would] leave me…That they say when they have decided to kill you. But another said, ‘No, this lady has spent 10 years with us and we cannot just leave her like that. But God or the commander called for the release of 70 people…We met a group of government soldiers and they thought we were running for our lives. They did not realize we were just releases. Some said to tell the truth others did not. I said [to the government soldiers] ‘We are just releases so we need help if you can take us home that is good.’”

“Contrary to what we were thinking, they said ‘now you are back home and you are welcome.’ We were taken to the [government] barracks and given porridge but we feared it because we thought it was poison. But [the government soldiers said], ‘No we cannot kill you.’ They brought doctors. The [doctors] said, ‘This is matter of helping you.’ For us, we could not believe. We thought they were the people who were forced to die for our expense. So then they brought in more local people and said, ‘Now you take porridge with these people.’ Finally we took it. We were then transferred to Gulu. To World Vision.”

Memory, dreams, and community. “I have tried my best always to forget about it. These people in the centers, [like] World Vision, started giving us advice [and] counseling. Those things helped me…because when I just got home when
people would ask me, the best answer was just to shed tears.” I wonder if being asked about the past felt to Acayo like a punch in the gut.

“[The counseling we received was] how to live peacefully with the rest of the population. We joined the rest of the people we should now begin to stay with them as usual. We should forget everything that happened and share the Bible and share the love of God in churches.”

“When I just came back from the bush, it used to disturb me. But now there is nothing because I got saved and I think these kind of dreams fear saved people so I am not even experiencing anything [at] this time.”

“[At]…World Vision center, they asked us, ‘How many are you that we should save now?’ And I was among those that raised their hands up. So I accepted it and I was given a Bible and I was saved that very moment.”

—

*The White SUV in Gulu*

World Vision is an openly faith-based organization. But when researchers came to survey World Vision’s former-abductee population for mental health disorders, they did not ask Acayo to raise her hand to be saved; they asked her to raise her hand for PTSD.

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201 World Visions Religion-affiliation: [http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/about/who-we-are?OpenDocument&lpos=top_drp_AboutUs_WhoWeAre](http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/about/who-we-are?OpenDocument&lpos=top_drp_AboutUs_WhoWeAre) (Accessed: 3/29/2011);
74 children were selected at random. Their mean age was 13.8 years old. The children gathered at Gulu World Vision Trauma Centre (WVTC). They were all formerly abducted child-soldiers who had spent varying amounts of time within the ranks of the LRA. During their time in the bush, “the children were not only exposed to horrendous wartime events but were also forced to participate in heinous and ghastly activities while in rebel captivity.”

The children were given an 18-item ‘War Experiences Checklist.’ After completing this preliminary survey, they were given a “DSM-IV-based 30-item self-rated traumatic reactions questionnaire...aimed at recording the severity of traumatic reactions among the children.”

The author explains the context for the study:

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203 P’Olak, p. 27;

204 P’Olak, p. 27.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Walked very long distances without rest to avoid rebels</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw other people being abducted</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slept in the bush to avoid abduction by rebels</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnessed people being flogged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thought that you would be killed</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened with death</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had to hide sometimes to protect oneself</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw dead bodies or parts</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Saw killings and injuries with machetes, pangas or knives</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Saw someone shot</td>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
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<td>Heard people shouting or screaming for help</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escaped narrowly from rebel abduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Escaped narrowly from battles</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Witnessed village raids</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saw someone blown up in a landmine blast</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in killing their own relatives</td>
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<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participated in beating or killing a fellow child who tried to escape</td>
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<td>Saw your family members or close relatives being killed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In northern Uganda, children were abducted and coerced into warfare, and one of the strategies was to ‘burn the bridges’, that is, to completely cut, alienate, detach and destroy the bond between the children and their families and communities as a means of keeping the children in the rebel ranks and preventing them from escaping from rebel captivity. One way of doing this was to force the children to be part of a group that attacked and looted their own village and possibly killed their own families.²⁰⁵

The survey successfully yielded a range in the “severity of traumatic reactions” in the sample set. They ranged from 15% “almost normal,” 46% “mild reaction range,” 35% “moderate range,” and 4% severe range. After delineating what each of these categories represents, the study concludes, that in addition to “tension-relieving activities” and paying attention to the children’s “holistic” needs, “Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy, in which adolescents are taught how to identify their irrational beliefs and behaviours, question them and replace them with rational ones, can be very useful [to solving trauma.]”²⁰⁶

Like Neuner’s study in Nakivale, P’Olak’s study employs the empiricist trauma-talk here in Gulu. But so far, none of the women has mentioned PTSD.

²⁰⁶ P’Olak, p. 32.
Aber Peninah

“We started running when I was 7. One day I was taken. We were just sleeping in the bush and it happened that [the LRA soldiers] were passing. As much as we were young, they made us carry heavy loads.”

“The worst day…was when the government soldiers clashed…They put those abducted in front. [The ranking LRA soldiers] remained behind…As we were going, we heard gun shots. They were telling us, ‘lie down! Lie down!’ but being that we were young, we just ran…The [government] soldiers gathered us. In those days they were not bringing people back home like they are in 2-6 and 2-7. [2006, 2007]”

“I was in the bush for two days around 1992. I was very young.”

“I just try to forget…but what annoys me the most is about education. If it were not for this war, I could have gone far.”

“Around 1996, again the same thing happened. They took me and my sister, we are twins. Me, I was fearful. We were sexually abused. Not easy. And of that I even conceived but I missed that child. The child stayed for 6 days and passed away. I couldn’t tell what was the problem.”

Memories, dreams, and religion. “Like when I start dreaming, sometimes I also scream. People around say, ‘What is happening to you?’ They know that I am remembering in the form of dreams so I take my time to pray and just relax. I always go for fellowship. I don’t miss prayer because it is the thing that is helping me. I go to
Holy Rosary. I go every Saturday. I like going to Holy Rosary but my religion is Protestant.”

Communities of importance and the market. “The ones in the market are always dealing with business. Discussing about the prices outside other places [and] how they get the profit…So in the market we share just these petty petty things. [The] business people do not despise me because I’ve been in the bush, they treat me like any other person…I think [it is because] I am born a very calm person, I don’t talk much, I just do things. I always like following what people do. If it is bad, I tell them. If it is good, we continue…I know how to control myself, even if they provoke me.”

“The woman who is next to me [at the market]…thought I would be competition so she was not so friendly. Even if I was not around, she wouldn’t sell my things. [She] would also call [customers] to come to her [stand instead.] But I had just to look at her…[The woman must have thought] ‘even if I do something bad to her she just looks at me.’ Now we are good neighbors. Now we are good friends. If I am not there, she sells my things and I do it for her.” The neighbor in the market was never in the bush.”

Patrick asks Peninah whether she has plans for the future.

“My plan, that is a good question…Me, I want to go back to school. That is my first plan because I see that I am a person who is capable if I have the opportunity to go back and study.”
“Yes, my foundation is very good. But now, when we were abducted, the person taking care of us passed away…Running all the time, that ruined my future. I want to go back to school.”

“My favorite [subject] was English, History, and religious education, not mathematics. I feared sciences [like] chemistry and biology. I tried. I did not want to fail. Mathematics is difficult but I tried. I wanted to be someone. If again, it wasn’t spoiled, by now I could be a very good lawyer. That was my dream…If I could go back to school, I would study peace. For me even if people are fighting, I like to negotiate and mediate among the people. Even my older sister says ‘Why, Peninah, don’t you go for peace and reconciliation, every time you are settling problems here at home.’ That is my dream. I hope it goes well.”

Peninah speaks fluent English. She speaks softly and gratefully declines Patrick’s offer to translate. When we finish Peninah heads to the market “to buy some small small things like tomatoes and beans. Yesterday I came [to speak to you] but people are many. This program…even yours is very important. So now I must go to the market.”

— Adong Milly Part III

“It takes time to remind myself.”

“So it was February 2005. In May 2003, I was having a child of three months. We walked the whole day from morning up to sunset and we rested…[Then]
according to the system, the people are divided to get ready in case of an
attack….The government soldiers [were there] already…I was shot seriously. That is
where I lost memory. I fell there and my baby died. Three days I was there. Of
course, I resurrected around 3am…The idea of coming home increased in my mind. I
thought, ‘If I continue here, I will die for sure.’ So that is where God helped me and I
was taken to GUSCO.”

“[At the] rehabilitation center, they advised us about how we should come and
interact with the people here [in Gulu]. They asked the same questions that you were
asking and they gave some advice.”

Do they provide psychosocial support?

“Yeah they gave it….They would come and ask similar questions to what you
are asking. They wanted to know how we were living and they kept following up and
continuing advising us. Materially, they were giving us food to feed the young babies
we came with. I think this is where I can stop.”

Adong and I part ways. Adong is headed home to take care of some business.
“I have a lot of work at home. Just some domestic work. The children are also there.”

Last week Godfrey Binaisa passed away. He had once served as the President of
Uganda from June 1979 to 1980. And so today is a public holiday and a chance for
Adong to catch up on some errands and some work at home.

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Atito
Atito was born in Kitgum in 1988. “When I reached 12, my parents were all dead. My father died of malaria and my mother died of a certain sickness it is difficult to mention…it did not take long until the rebels came and abducted me at the age of 12.”

“We moved tirelessly. No time to rest. Without water for drinking plus some little luggage. We were moving in the desert.” All my legs were swelling.”

Traumatic experience. “When we reached Sudan they took us for training…There was a lady among us who tried to escape so they brought her to us and they said, ‘we want you to kill this one here.’ We were given rocks and wood and [were] told to beat her to death. But first we were threatened to be killed. They laid us down and pierced us with a knife at the end of the gun…bayoneted. So we accepted, we started beating that girl and some blood from the girl stains our clothes and that…so if I look at it…that was the worst thing I have seen.”

Memory. “When I came back home I got saved. I love to pray so this time, I don’t even feel it. I don’t even think about it.”

“When I came back home, I met my brother’s wife…I found out she was saved already and she started advising me. She said, ‘Atito. I know that you’ve been in that place with a lot of difficulties. I am sure these things will disturb you when

207 Most of the border territory between Uganda and Sudan is savannah land with isolated ridges. I assume that when Atito says ‘desert,’ she is referring to the vast stretches of savannah. The Saharan desert begins over 1000 kilometers north of the Sudan/Uganda border. (http://maps.google.com/maps?q=southern+sudan&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&hl=en&tab=wl) (Accessed: February 5, 2011) (Zoom out and select “terrain” on the right-hand side to survey the physical geography of Northern Uganda and the border region with Southern Sudan)
you are at home.’ (In our culture, there are certain things that should be done to you if you have some trauma or problem or memory. They need to slaughter some things, give those devils some things so they run away, [give them things] like goats. Sacrifice.) But that is impossible because my brother’s wife is saved….So I took her advice seriously and was saved.”

“The saved helped me forget and [not] remind myself about…all the problems that I underwent. Jesus has already lifted them up with him.

Hope for the future. “These notorious people should not come back again so the lives of my kids are good. I want my children to study…Right now I have not studied…[Patrick] is the one translating. I don’t want that for my children. They should be the ones translating.”

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*Pentecostalism and Born-Again Posttraumatic Logic*

Atito’s statement, “Being saved helped me forget and [not] remind myself about…all the problems that I underwent,” sounds familiar. As we have witnessed so far in both Nakivale and Gulu, religion is a particularly common vehicle through which traumatic experience can be explained.

The presence of religious logic in the posttraumatic story of the self seems to grant many individuals the narrative flexibility to demote traumatic experience legitimately. Acayo Betty is not alone when she says, “When I just came back from the bush, it used to disturb me. But now there is nothing because I got saved and I think these kind of dreams fear saved people so I am not even experiencing anything
Like traumatic experience, the adoption of religious explanatory logic can mandate a reprioritization of the landmarks in the ‘I’ narrative. While there are many religious logics at work in Nakivale and Gulu, we turn to Pentecostalism and Christian denominations that emphasize salvation as a posttraumatic narrative vehicle.\footnote{The religious pluralism in Nakivale extends from the largely Muslim Somali population to a variety of Protestant denominations among the Congolese, Rwandan, and Burundian communities. Pentecostalism and denominations that emphasize “salvation” are the most frequent among the 23 individual interviewed. The majority of Ethiopians and Eritreans in Nakivale are Coptic Orthodox. There is also a significant Catholic contingent in the Rwandan and Burundian population. There are no official data on religious identity in Nakivale; In northern Uganda the term “traditional religions” is frequently employed in reference to a pre-colonial spirit-based religious ideology. We saw glimpses of such rhetoric and belief-systems in the formation of the LRA and Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement. In colonial times, Catholicism predominated (often alongside traditional Acholi belief-systems) as the colonial religion of the North, while Ugandans in the southern regions of the country adopted a Protestant derivative of the Church of England, the Church of Uganda.}

Back in Nakivale, Pentecostalism is especially common among the Congolese, Rwandan, and Burundian communities. When Beata remembers the bodies floating under the bridge to Tanzania and the killings that she witnessed she asserts, “I see them as if it was a photo in front of me. It happens every time I cannot buy food for the children, every time I have nothing in my pocket…Because I am saved, [for] good or bad things, we have to thank God like the Bible says and nothing will happened…if God will not allow it. Conclusively, I do not feel emotionally upset. I believe in God. I always attend night prayers and I feel that God is the almighty and will change everything and so I don’t feel emotional.” Beata was saved in 2002 in Nakivale. For Havugira, salvation came with a social mandate, “As a saved person, the church has helped me a lot. I cannot abandon love…In church, we come as only one person…I am very close to people in church because even if there is
a conflict outside, you have to show love inside.” How does Pentecostalism and Born-Again Christianity adapt so readily to posttraumatic and displacement environments? What about being saved gives Beata the narrative flexibility to say that the memories of the killings and the massacres no longer hold emotional weight?

Asserting faith in salvation is a way to reclaim authorship over the *I* narrative. When selfhood is ruptured by traumatic-experience and its aftermath, subscribing to Born-Again Christianity for Acayo and Beata provides a mechanism to re-make the past. In her recent book *Political Spiritualities: Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*, Ruth Marshall observes the Pentecostal recipe for reshuffling. She writes,

> The Pentecostal evangelical program for conversion has at its heart a narrative imperative. Whether in the form of interpretations of the sacred text, discourse such as sermons, prophecies, testimonies, prayers, or songs, it’s a propagation and mode of self-invention proceed through the proliferation and multiplication of stories.  

We have called this process of self-invention in the posttraumatic context *narrative integration*. Marshall goes on to cite J.D.Y Peel and his work on missionaries, narrative, and social transformation in Yorubaland: “Narrative empowers because it

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enables its possessor to integrate his memories, experiences, and aspirations in a schema of long-term action."\textsuperscript{210} Crucially, like traumatic experience, "becoming Born-Again is an event of rupture" and "making a complete break with the past;" but necessarily unlike traumatic experience, "being Born-Again is an ongoing existential project, not a state acquired once and for all."\textsuperscript{211} It is in this way that we may explain the relationship between trauma and salvation. Not only does salvation reformulate the break with the past, it provides a logic whereby this reformulation must always be asserted.

How does Christian past-making logic permit a pragmatic rendering of the past? If we think back to Opiyo’s account of “being saved,” he framed religious conversation as part of learning to live, once again, outside the LRA. “Mostly I like praying in Christ Church,” Opiyo told us, “It’s Born-Again; I am Born-Again. I joined Born-Again when I was in GUSCO rehabilitation center… they gave me counseling about how to be in the community.” Shortly after being abducted, Opiyo

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{210}J.D.Y Peel, “For Who Hath Despised the Day of Small Things? Missionary Narratives and Historical Anthropology,” \textit{Comparative Studies in Society and History} 37, no. 3 (1995).
\item \textsuperscript{211} Ruth Marshall, “God’s Subjects,” in \textit{Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria}. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 131
\end{itemize}

In \textit{Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America}, André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani demonstrate the connection between salvation as an ongoing existential project and its need to be constantly asserted. They write, “Getting born-again is an event of rupture, but \textit{being} born-again is an ongoing existential project, not a state acquired once and for all. If the realization of the project of transformation that rupture announces does not occur as a rupture with or retreat from the ‘the world,’ then it must bring this rupture \textit{into} the world, elevating the private experience of transformation to the level of the public, by the elaboration of a project of transforming the world itself. Hence the creation of a ‘narrative imperative’ to testify and publicize personal transformation. Giving public evidence of suffering, dreams, miracles, of healing and prosperity not only confers social legitimacy and means on these highly individual experiences, but constitutes the central mode of passage between the sacred and the profane.” (Marshall-Fratani, Ruth and André Corten, “Introduction.” In \textit{Between Babel and the Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America}. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 8
was forced to reconceptualize himself as someone who could commit violence, someone who wanted to be a soldier, someone who was no longer a schoolboy. And upon his return, the past was once again in need of remaking. Only this time from a soldier to a returnee, to someone who—granted his reservations—wanted to be back in society. In Opiyo’s case, Christian past-making logic provided a widely used and socially legitimate way to distance the past and re-narrate his relationship to the violence of that past. This move is pragmatic in the sense that it discounts the ongoing characterization of Opiyo as a “rebel,” a “returnee,” or a “killer” and instead gives him the agency to reclaim authorship in the story of the self—to decide to be ‘saved.’

But beyond its reclamation of agency to narrate the self, the Christian past-making logic that accompanies salvation serves as a metanarrative for worldly existence. Allan Anderson writes in his *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, “far from being [an] expression of escapist behaviour…[Pentecostalism] proclaim[s] and celebrate[s] a salvation that encompasses all of life’s experiences and afflictions, and offer[s] a empowerment providing a sense of dignity and a coping mechanism for life.”

Because life, both pre-traumatic and posttraumatic, is absorbed into the logic of salvation, the specific beings and events in the world lose the meaning that is derived from intra-world points of reference. In other words, precisely because the entire world is the unit of analysis over which salvation claims authority, the specific beings in the world lose their narrative weight. And so Christian past-making logic leaves Opiyo, as one of the entities in the world, narratively spared from his violent past.

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At its heart this logic is the process of self-invention through storytelling. Pentecostalism manifests the importance of narrative in the post-traumatic. Pentecostalism is a way of gaining an accepting audience that counts for you. It does not matter how you articulate the past anymore, what matters is that you have self-invented into a category that is only comprehensible by others in that category. It is in this latter sense that salvation is just like trauma. Only in the case of the traumatic, entrance into the unspeakable is forced; salvation, on the other hand, reclaims the rights in the contract with the unspeakable; salvation reclaims authorship.

In Atito’s re-telling of the past, being forced to kill and being saved are in immediate narrative proximity. Perhaps, like for Opiyo, there is a “narrative imperative” that frees Atito from the memories of traumatic experience or the confusing lines of victim and perpetrator. “When I came back home I got saved. I love to pray so this time, I don’t even feel it.” But there is a distinctly social component of salvation too: Opiyo and Atito both report that being saved allows them to cooperate with those in Gulu community who have never been in the bush. It was the wife of her brother that convinced Atito to be saved. Salvation provided a conversation topic to bridge the possible antagonism between their respective status as former child soldier and townsperson. Salvation, for Atito and her brother’s wife, expanded the area for common ground.
“God, if you don’t help us, they will kill us, we didn’t know what was going on.”

“Luckily, the commander for Southern Sudan was a best friend to the late husband…. [The commander said] ‘Oh… I know your husband. He is somebody I like, hardworking. What can I do for you?’”

The women and children remained inside the locked room at the airfield.

“That is when we told the truth about Kony—that he doesn’t recruit people at their own will but he abducts. That is when Southern Sudan started knowing that Kony abducts people… We said…’We would like to go back [home]…. The commander…and the president of Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA)\(^\text{213}\) said, ‘We guarantee your safety.’

“We went with a vehicle to the airport. But unfortunately, some commanders of the LRA… are there checking who is going to the plane because they are hunting for us like nothing. Good enough, one of the workers at the field… saw us coming [and] stopped us from a distance and said, ‘Please do not go [in] yet, let us go clear the field.’ [Then the workers went to the LRA soldiers who were standing by and said,] ‘Now we are receiving a very big man. Whether you are government or not, we are going to bring other people for security.’ So we were brought to the airport and we boarded the plane to Khartoum.”

\(^{213}\) The governing body of Southern Sudan.
“[In] Khartoum we were taken to the president…[Omar] al Bashir. He was trying to interview us. We told the facts.”

“Kony was telling [the Khartoum government]…‘It is because of stupid things that the government is doing to Acholi people that make the children jump into the bush…and because [the Acholi] want their freedom, they are fighting for their freedom.’ We told the president, ‘Please, this is not the case. This man goes to our land and comes and grabs us by force. We want to reach our family, our mom, we want to go back to school.’ We stayed for one month [in Khartoum].”

“We boarded a plane and landed in Kenya. From Kenya to Kampala. That is when we finally reached Gulu.”

“We landed in the airport and that is where the people of GUSCO were already waiting for us. People were already waiting to welcome us…We spent five months in GUSCO center…They gave us 300,000UGS each to start life.”

— Laker Clara

“I was born into a family where my father was my mother. My mother left me and went to another man…When I was 10, I went to visit my mom where she was married. From there I was abducted.”

“I went and I spent two years with them. I made up my mind to stay with them. Because…I cannot go back [to my mother. But due to some punishments and difficulties of life…I decided to escape. They learned from my face that I was
interested in escape so they beat me and show that…’If you try to escape, we will kill you.’

“I was ten…when I escaped [and] I came back home, because the very person who abducted me made me his wife, I didn’t know that I was pregnant when I came home. But to my surprise, I realized that I got pregnant from there and that I was going to have a baby.”

“Well I gave birth to a son and up to now he is healthy. But that child has problems listening about advice. He does not study well even though he is in school. The child is not getting [the] proper way of life and giving a lot of headaches to me. Stress me so much.”

Trauma.214 “Well I was disturbed by trauma in the bush and even up to now that thing is still there. It comes when we quarrel. If we quarrel I will feel like killing you right now.”

“I was seeing a lot of people dying. I saw the method that they used to kill people and people crying…for help. That really entered into my mind and it is difficult to remove them.”

“I fought a certain lady who was pregnant. I ended up making her abort…They said they would chain me for that. I said, ‘Ok try and we shall see.’ And people…feared. And there was a second time…where I fought like nothing even. I

214 In most interviews I never used the word trauma. In my experience, it is not a common term in Gulu. In a few interviews however, I did ask questions like, “did your experience in the bush traumatize you?” This was partly to see if the term was recognized and what it was associated with. Yet because the majority of interviews were conducted through translation, no clear conclusion on this matter could be ascertained.
wanted to kill. I try to forget but the moment somebody provokes me—because you know, people say, ‘you from the bush.’ For me, I feel like killing.”

“When they say, ‘you people from the bush have killed a lot and you are getting a lot of help yet you should not even be in the community so stay away.’ These things make me feel that I am not worth being with people.”

Outside, it begins to rain.

Dreams. “I find myself in a very big forest. Exactly what was happening in the bush is what I dream. I dream that when we are in the forest we are not hidden well enough. I see government soldiers coming for us. There was a time in the night that I punched that wall many times and in the morning I found a lot of bruises and other things on me.”

The rain is over.

“I try my best to forget those things. When I realize they are coming, I try to say, ‘please leave me.’ The best that is helping me is being saved. When I pray very hard, that is when I feel relieved. But if they come and I stop praying, that thing will come back again.”

“I have now two years of salvation.”

The rain picks up again.

The story of being saved. “There was one time when these people who were saved moved around, door by door, singing gospels [and] spreading the gospel to those who were not saved. So they happen to come across me. And they advised me
to receive Jesus as a personal savior and if I receive Jesus, everything that is disturbing me, I will be lifted from. So after a long conversation with them I said, ‘Ok, let me try.’ And the results were OK. I started realizing that those bad things—dreams that were disturbing me—they ran to run away. And up to now, I feel that prayer is good.”

“Before my salvation, before I have given up my life to Jesus, I used to dream often. Anything when I get sleep they would came and disturb me. But now because of my salvation, because I am saved, last year it came once and this year two times.”

Memory, amnesty, and community. “It disturbed me…especially when I am alone. I begin reminding myself because I see people despising us…For me what is disturbing me the most is the amnesty certificate. Others they have already got theirs, but for me when I go to the office they deny me.215…Again, when I hear problems over the radio about us, it reminds me. It reminds we when I hear that people from the bush are going to pick amnesty from the government…The certificate qualifies you to get some help.”

215 The Amnesty Act was passed in 2000 giving amnesty to those who return from the LRA willingly. Refugee Law Project reports, “In response to numerous failed military attempts at resolving the conflict—with disastrous consequences for civilians—the government, under pressure from civil society, enacted an Amnesty Act in 2000, which allows rebels to receive amnesty if they voluntarily come out of the bush and renounce rebellion.” (Refugee Law Project Working Paper No. 17, “Peace First, Justice Later: Traditional Justice in Northern Uganda,” Refugee Law Project, 2005.)

When I ask Laker if she become angry without reason, she responds emphatically as if it is the question she has been waiting for to encapsulate her frustrations.

“Yes! I have that feeling because I am alone. I get annoyed just like that when I know that there is nothing I can do. Sometimes, I get angry to the point, ‘Why should you let me stay in the world, God?’”

Near the end of our discussion, I ask Laker if she has any questions or topics she would like to discuss further.

“Well I have one question: We know that you are a student when you say that you are a student. Now that you are a student, you are even recording our voice. What benefit are we going to get from it?”

I took a moment to think carefully about how I responded.

“Nothing,” I begin. “That is the honest answer.”

216 So far I have not written my answers to such questions. This is partially to show you, the reader, the tension that these moments hold. But in this instance I will share how I answered Laker’s question. I share it primarily so that we may see that I too have a set of interests and reasons why I want Laker to tell me about her past. And that these reasons factor into the questions I decided to ask, the people I decided to interview, and the way I justified my presence. I am not completely content with my response. Even over the course of being in Uganda, my response to this question changed significantly. Also:

Remember that at the outset of our conversation, in addition to the in-depth consent form, I had discussed with Laker four items:

1. Freedom to refuse any question or to stop the interview
2. The right to confidentiality and to be referred to by a pseudonym
3. Permission to be recorded
4. The understanding that no material compensation will be given
“I guess it depends on how you define benefit. I am not giving you money. I am not giving you resources. My goal when I go back [home] is to write a paper. The purpose of my paper is to call attention to the circumstances in which stories of violence are re-told and to think about how NGOs and researchers who intervene and produce knowledge about such violence can expand what they listen for. I suppose, Laker, that I do not think that I come from my home in New York all the way to your home in Gulu in order to take what information I can gather only to go home again. These are not your problems that I have come to fix. I do not have solutions that you can take from me. But I can ask you, ‘how can I own these problems with you?’ And together, we can acknowledge that in some sense, the war with the LRA has already framed the possible conversations that you and I can have. If we can call this out into the open, perhaps when other outsiders come to places like Gulu to assist reintegration efforts they might find common ground with the people they intend to help beyond what their checklists already say. But how will you benefit? I do not know. And so my first answer is my best answer.”

—

Like Atito, members of the Gulu community convinced Laker to be “saved.” Two years ago, prior to being “saved,” Laker reports that she would get uncontrollably angry when the townspeople remarked, “you people from the bush have killed a lot and you are getting a lot of help yet you should not even be in the community so stay away.” Currently, this anger can be consuming for Laker when she “stop[s] praying.” But in addition to her anger, being “saved” has helped Laker with other symptoms of posttraumatic behavioral change. She just told us, “Before
my salvation, before I have given up my life to Jesus, I used to dream often. Any time when I get sleep [the memories] would came and disturb me. But now because of my salvation, because I am saved, last year it came once and this year two times.” How does accepting “Jesus as a personal savior” lift away posttraumatic symptoms? How does Laker make sense of this process?

—

_Acan Agnes_

“I grew up to the age of twelve and by then I was not taken to school because I did not grow up with a father and no one decided to take me to school so I was just making some local brews, alcohols, and I was living with my grandmother.”

“It so happened one day when I was sent to get something from the market, in the course of coming back home in the evening, I met the rebels. They arrested me…and I spent really many years and I thought, ‘even if I come back home there is no one to stay with.’ These are the ways God can push you so I made up my mind to stay.”

Acan was 12 when she was abducted in 1990.

“It was not long until I gave birth to two children. So I thought [that] I could not come back home because no one could take care of the children.”

“One of my childs was shot and I was left with one.”

“[When] we came back to Uganda, that child of mine was already 12, my first born, a girl…There was a lot of fighting…That young child asked me, ‘Mom, don’t you have
a home?’ She was born with the rebels and she started asking, ‘Where…[do] you come from?’ So I started narrating everything back to her.”

“Sometimes I could…tell her that I live as if I don’t have a home…the pressures of [fleeing] may have raised some questions for that young girl.”

“Due to the pressures of war, we [did not have enough]…food. As much as I am big, I could give her milk from my breast to sustain her life. But it came to my mind that I should come back home because I heard rumors about the government coming to kill us. I said, ‘Please, the government can kill me. But please, I must take my daughter back home. It was the 3rd of April 2004. That is when I came back home.”

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_Laker Edina Part IV_

“We spent five months in GUSCO center…They gave us 300,000UGS each to start life.”

Memory. “[Because I was married to a commander] I have not seen so many bad things…Only when we were going to the border when I was shot. I saw people die.”

“The…thing that made me fear is that they did not inform us before [the husband] that this man [was] infect[ed]. Kony himself called us and relayed the story. It bothered my mind to the point where I decided to kill myself. Because of my child I said, ‘I cannot leave this child to suffer.’”
“Due to some guidance counseling from the church, I have started losing my memory of the past. Of course what is now in me is HIV. It is still in me.

Community. “When we had just come back, we felt a lot of difficulties of life just within the community. They singleized us. Even the children. Naturally, they don’t let them play or mix themselves.”

“More recently, some other programs over the radios and NGOs came to give us some help and vocational training…As I talk, I am making dolls. I started making some money. I am in a new location. No one knows that I am from the bush so I am not affected.”

“Something that disturbs me is when I am sick. I remind myself of what has happened to us. Now that I am infected, it disorganizes me. Where I got injured, the bullet, these things remind me of what happened.”

Laker laughs and is cheerful. I say. “Aphoyo matek, Laker,” and she continues to laugh. It is lunchtime.

—

Acan Agnes Part II

“It was the 3rd of April 2004. That is when I came back home.”

“The day [we returned]…we walked the whole night. When we reached Kitgum, there was a pole that fell across the road. People were crossing. We decided

217 ‘Thank you very much’ in Acholi
to hide under the pole and we hid until 6am, until daylight. That is when I decided to come out.”

“Somebody was traveling from Gulu to Kitgum on the road….I started pleading to the man. I said, ‘please, help me, help me.’ But the man said, ‘what are you doing in the worst area where no one moves on foot?’ So I told the truth. I said, ‘I am from the bush. Just take me with you.’ The man was merciful enough and said, ‘You first sit and we go.’…I said, ‘First wait, I must go get my child.’ So he took us.”

In town the man dropped Acan and her daughter with a group of government soldiers.

“I was thinking…they did not kill us! Instead they welcomed us and took us to their leader [who]…started interviewing us. ‘Were you abducted with this child? How long have you been there?’ So I started narrating everything. I told every fact to them.”

“Other questions were about where the rebels keep their guns and fighting materials. I said, ‘Please, most of my life was in Sudan. I was no fighting so I don’t know so much about that.’ They said, ‘There is no problem. We thank you for coming back home. We want you to feel at home because we know of the rumors about us killing you.”

“Unfortunately, my husband [from the bush] was near that place when he learned that we had escaped. He sent 70 troops to go for [us]. He was a commander
Achellem Caesar...⁵¹⁸ They could [have] killed me and take[n] the child for him. But actually, they came, 70 of them, and they surrendered and started to narrate the story. They asked us why we had decided to escape after so long and we told the story and they decided to come back too.”

“Not long after, [Achellem] sent another group to find out what had happened to these 70…Again these people came and surrendered…They said, ‘If the wife of the big commander [is safe], then we will be safe.’ And the government was so happy and said, ‘If this is the lady who can get for us all these combatants let us keep her here.’”

“I stayed there for 6 months… [then] I was taken to CARITAS and started learning tailoring.”

“Right now, as I talk, I am living on tailoring…I found the children of my brothers who have been killed so they are also with me.”

Memory. “It used to affect my life when I would remind myself of what has happened. But when I was receiving some counseling, I started to make up my mind to stay a normal life. Because I know it is not only me that was affected, we are many.”

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“From the CARITAS counseling center, they were telling me, now you are back home. Don’t think anymore; don’t remind yourself of what is gone. Begin your new life.’ Now I ignore, right now as we talk, I don’t think of anything.”

“When I just came back home, I was living a normal life. I did not dream anything…But for the last two weeks, and just last night, I had a very serious dream. They brought me a dead body but the head was [gone]…The body is out of the ground. I was praying that they would go away. I started to pray Jesus and it went away.”

Why do you think this dream came last night?

“That was when I went to Kitgum. I came back and you had just come to meet this group and I was told so I came and met you. I went back to see my mother in the hospital. But there I saw three dead bodies…so I think maybe that is why I had the dream.”

Community. “When I was in the bush, I was really friendly to everyone. Everyone loved me so much because I was a wife to a very big commander. Sometimes when they wanted to kill somebody, I could say, ‘no.’ That is why when people learned that I had escaped they followed. Everybody loved me so much…even the commanders like Brigadier Odong.

“I don’t think they loved me because I was the commander’s wife. I think it was because of the way I was living. When I was first abducted, I found few others there. So sometimes when a sick person comes and somebody gets injured…I could
go and help and nurse their wounds. So maybe [it was] because of those things that people have seen that…they love me.”

Future. “For me I know my future has already gone and now what I am planning is the future of my children.”

*Collective Forgetting and Loan-Sharing*

We have heard many strategies for traumatic experience re-employment. Religious past-making logics, tensions with townsfolk, and optimism for future generations have been among the landmarks in selfhood next to which traumatic experience can be described. But as Monica told us that first morning in Pece, the women of Mix-Mother’s Group are joined by something else in common—namely, a determination to forget. And like many of the mutual support we-groups of Nakivale, a focus on pragmatic needs in the present simultaneously creates distance from traumatic experience in the past.

*Amony*

“I decided to join [Mixed-Mother’s] group because we always discuss among ourselves. We discuss how we should develop, how businesses should progress, not about the past.”

*Aber Peninah*

“You can borrow some money and after raising something little you pay back. [Alone] I could not make it. We are…advising ourselves to forget. Because we are
now in a different world. We pray we will not go back anymore. So as much as we talk, we say, ‘Let’s forget about that and continue with the new life.’ And we also have children, and if they keep hearing the same story, you don’t know what will come out of their mind…So we always advise ourselves to not go back to those stories.”

Adong Milly

“[Back in Gulu] I started renting…but sometimes I could not even get the money. So I had a friend who was connected to this group and she said, ‘Lilly, you come and join our group.’ We have a group where we give some little coins. Even if you have some 50 shillings, you go and put it. It is like a bank. You give it back with interest. So I made up my mind and came and joined the group and I started experiencing some good conditions of life.”

Atito

“I am a tailor. [There is] some group of ours of tailoring. I am not alone…Most of us are the same categories. We all have the same problems and had the same experience. The category is people who came from the bush and the experience is what they have seen in the bush…We were in the bush together and we have decided to be together here as well and to be tailors.”

Acayo Betty

“I belong to this group here and to church groups. I stay with them well. They know me as I am. What I am doing right now is…sewing clothes so that…I
[can]…pay for my child in school…In this group here, we do not discuss anything about the past because we are integrated with those who were not in the bush. And if we did talk about the past, it would segregate us from those who were not in the bush.”

_Laker Clara_

“I feel that I am isolated because if others are working on their things, I am left alone. Even in this group here [Mix-Mothers], I come but I am not in a full mood. I know people think they are more special than I, so I feel that I am alone. Others…are getting help from the government. They feel that they are special. I feel that [not having amnesty] is the source of my problems. It is like I am not from the bush…[while] others are from the bush so they are giving them help and…I don’t get anything.”

_Acan Agnes_

“I like this group more than any other—the Child-Mothers Mixed Group—…I met a lot of people I was with…[when I was] in the bush. I can even share with them. They are organized compared to the other groups in the market. Here we share ideas.”

“I trust this group. I like them because I grew with them in the bush and we stayed like a family from there. I don’t even like people in my family anymore. These people are like my sister. I grew up with [them] and I have spent most of my life with them.”

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219 4 of 19 women from the group that I spoke with had never been abducted. During the height of the conflict all four lived in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps.
Laker Edina

“IT is this group that helps so much, the mixed-mothers. We decided to form the group [back in 2005]. When you are alone at your place at home, before the group, you cannot share your problems. You keep on reminding yourself. But now that we are here we share the problems with the rest every Sunday when we meet and at least we are feeling somehow good.”

The goal of this section has been to listen to eight women tell a part of their story. When we pay close attention to the ways in which stories of displacement are framed by pragmatism, we come upon the use-value of narrative flexibility. The ability to emplot traumatic experience—even if that re-employment is a determination to forget—next to a wider range of landmarks in selfhood increases opportunities for common ground.

The women explain their participation in the “Child-Mothers Mixed Group” differently. For Amony and Peninah, the group offers a space in which to work on forgetting through focus on economic betterment. As Peninah remarks, Gulu is a different world from life in the bush: there are children to worry about and rents to pay. And to tell stories of the past is considered in violation of the will to move on. For Adong Milly and Acan Agnes, the “Child-Mothers Mixed Group” is a way of staying connected to those they grew up with in the bush. As Adong mentioned earlier, this common legacy can be an important foundation of trust. For Atito too, the solidarity of the bush translates to Gulu and the “Child-Mothers Mixed Group” is a
designated space in which to feel this common ground. Acayo notes, like the
counseling she received from World Vision, the Child-Mothers Mixed Group” aids
relations with those who have not been abducted by providing space in which to
associate under a shared pursuit. Laker Clara says that she does not benefit from the
group, except, presumably, from the loans that are available. Not having amnesty
remains an overriding marker of difference for her. And finally for Laker Edina, the
Child-Mothers Mixed Group” is a place to share the weight of the problems she faces.

This is narrative flexibility first-hand. While their rationales for participating
may vary, the women of “Child-Mothers Mixed Group,” can nonetheless articulate
their togetherness under a common label. Some are “saved,” most want to “forget,”
many have gone through GUSCO and World Vision; but they are all “Child-
Mothers.”
Conclusion

Listening for Realignments of Posttraumatic Common Ground

Godfrey is a traumatized, displaced, impoverished, sub-Saharan African whose life is in need of intervention. Godfrey is a motivated young man who wants to be a strong English teacher; he is a devout Pentecostal who loves to coach football, to listen to Chris Brown sing, and to wear his go-to blue-collared shirt.

—

On Tuesday July 13\textsuperscript{th} 2010, between 12:46am – 1:05am, I wrote the following note. I folded it away and decided that it would be useful to read in the later stages of my thesis project.

“\textit{I am lying here on the lower bunk of a bed in a Nairobi hostel.}"

\textit{Yesterday Kampala was bombed, scores of World-Cup fans were dismembered during their celebrations, and a man named Sheik Yusuf Sheik Issa proudly took responsibility. He remarked, “Whatever makes [Uganda] cry, makes us happy. May Allah’s anger be upon those who are against us.”}\textsuperscript{220}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{220} I took this quote from an article I read in a Kenyan daily newspaper. When I searched it in Google, in order to find the proper citation, I came across an article with the title: “Uganda: Where Watching Football was a Matter of Life and Death.” http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/worldhaveyoursay/2010/07/uganda_where_watching_the_foot.html (Accessed: April 5, 2011)}
And here I am about to write 100 or so pages claiming that by calming our impulse to default to assumptions of difference and to instead listen for narrative common ground, we may share ownership of our problems more effectively.

While I know parts of Uganda well and tomorrow morning I will board a bus for Kampala, there is something about the bombing that makes the whole country feel outside the realm of familiarity.

I have yet to begin the interviews for my research, but, for the past weeks, I have quite frequently pondered the reasons that compel me to undertake this project. Yesterday’s events seem to have made such reflections less clear.

I think through the genealogy of influences in my life that have combined with circumstance to motivate this project. I have not come here with pretensions that there is something about my presence or my life-experience or my nationality that will improve the lives of refugees in Uganda. In fact, when I witness such pretensions in others, they appear ego-driven, neocolonial, and false. Perhaps my response to such dispositions is so strong because, despite my denial, I see glimpses of this attitude in myself.

I choose to go tomorrow morning to board the bus to Uganda and I choose to ask questions.”

That night in Nairobi, the myriad labels and stories that comprise my images and understandings of Godfrey were reshuffled. There was something about the bombing that momentarily narrowed the area of possible common ground on which Godfrey and I could stand. The uncertainty I felt that night in the Nairobi hostel, and
that led me to question the ethics of my research, is telling. I felt suddenly that the story I had for Godfrey was one marked by difference. I had not yet heard about the day Godfrey and Etienne returned from milking the cattle to find their parents murdered or about Godfrey’s blue-collared shirt. But on that night, the bombing made Uganda and everything in it—Godfrey included—feel foreign and unknown. As I tried to resist this new distance, I wrote down my frustrations with those who appear satisfied with such a distance—those who are unwilling to be influenced by their surroundings in places like Nakivale and Gulu because they hold on to a story that is too inflexible to yield common ground. But when the bombing happened, it suddenly felt like my story was also uncomfortably rigid. Uganda was no longer ordinary to me. Is Uganda ordinary for Godfrey?

In the context of displacement, to ask “How do Yusef and Florence live with their past?” is also to ask, “With whom do they associate in the present?” Outside the realm of familiarity, Nakivale’s football pitch is a landmark for what we have called *I narrative* reprioritization. After years with the LRA, the “Child-Mothers Mixed Group” meeting room in the African-Quarter of Pece in Gulu, is a space for reprioritization. Individuals on both sides of displacement look for others to share an explanation for the past. But these processes of past-making and self-re-narrativizing take on a new urgency and consequence when they are situated in a context of severe resource scarcity. Not only does a new arrival at Nakivale’s football pitch require an explanation for how they came to be displaced, he or she requires a new mutual support network. Not only does a former “bush mother” in Gulu require a new “break
with the past” in order to relativize her experience in the LRA with the rest of life, she requires start-up capital for her sewing venture. As we have heard, emploting displacement into the past and locating networks of pragmatic cooperation are deeply intertwined endeavors.

Charting the genealogy of the ways refugees understand and categorize the past illuminates the dynamics of narrative flexibility. Historicizing the categories that allow Yusef and Mulamba to enter into a pragmatic and mutually beneficial relationship, but that prevent Emmanuel and Godfrey from speaking to one another, brings to light the we groups that are at the origins of such (in)flexibility. Our stories of the self can be parsed at many levels, and on that night in Nairobi, when I saw Godfrey as a refugee in Uganda, I saw Godfrey as different from me. But when I arrived at the football pitch and talked with him, the possibilities for our common ground were deepened—and with this deepening came narrative flexibility. I chose to let the sameness found in conversation exist alongside the story of difference. To listen for how Godfrey makes sense of the past is also to listen for the individuals who count for him in the present and for the labels that bind them.

Radically disruptive violence shifts the confluence of I narrative reprioritization and pragmatic we group cooperation. Trauma changes the space that is ordinary. Traumatic experience looms and lingers in ways that can bring about narrative chaos; it can be the most salient of landmarks, it can refuse domestication into everydayness, it can inhibit narrative flexibility, it can be new territory of potential common ground. Whether traumatic experience is ultimately representable or subject to empathy, by changing the space that is ordinary, traumatic experience
changes who is ordinary and how their everydayness is expressed. We have witnessed the processes of re-creating the ordinary in northern Uganda and Nakivale. On the football pitch, refugees have been displaced from home; in the “Child-Mothers Mixed Group,” former abductees have returned home. But in both spaces, we witness the ongoing project of re-narrativizing the violence in the past as ordinary. This is a process that occurs through what we have called narrative vehicles.

When Florence and her son were walking home from the market late one evening, her son paused and asked, “Mama, are you a rebel?” We remember Florence’s most incredible response: “I may have been seen dancing a dance called rebel.”

It was a distant leap. But Florence managed, in conversation with her young son, to pull the rebel in her past into the realm of the ordinary.

For Acayo Betty and many like her in Nakivale and northern Uganda, being “Born-Again” is a successful way of resetting the posttraumatic ground for meaning-making.

“When I just came back from the bush, [the dreams of violence] used to disturb me. But now there is nothing because I got saved and I think these kind of dreams fear saved people so I am not even experiencing anything [at] this time.”
How do we make sense of the way Acayo Betty makes sense of her traumatic experience? To make this moment in her story ordinary and familiar perhaps we say, “Given the scholarship on Pentecostal conversation, it appears as if a ‘narrative imperative’ accompanies salvation leaving converts narratively spared from the hardship in their pasts.” Or maybe we say, “Of course things became better when Acayo was ‘saved,’ giving your life to Jesus leads to worldly happiness.” Or, “It is really the pills Acayo Betty received from GUSCO that account for her shift if of symptoms.” What is crucial here is that as Acayo’s audience, we too require an explanation for her story that is ordinary—that makes sense and follows logics with which we are familiar. And if we contextualize the dynamic process through which Acayo and her audience attempt to find an overlap in the ordinary, we come to see the pragmatic nature of narrative flexibility.

For Yusef, recalling that the men who killed his wife and son that day in Mogadishu were complete strangers is a particularly excruciating memory. “How can someone, to whom I have done nothing, come and start shooting my wife and son?”

Yusef burned the photos of his wife; Yusef walks to the football pitch when the memories come; Yusef listens to the news on the radio with Mulamba.

Like so many refugees in Nakivale and formerly abducted child soldiers in northern Uganda, Yusef uses the language of “forgetting.” Unlike the terms “re-emplot,” “narrative integration,” and “reprioritization,” to be constantly trying “to forget” part of the past, acknowledges that the process of pulling traumatic violence
into the realm of the ordinary is rarely a completed endeavor. Burning photos, being “saved,” mutual support networks, and creative spontaneous ways of describing the violence in the past as ordinary may work, but there is always a risk that the haunting or the distractions or the dreams will return.

The academic discourses that reflect on traumatic experience as a disruption in the continuity of selfhood or as an altered grounds for subjectivity call into question this process of “making ordinary.” Viewed in this light, the empiricist trauma-talkers offer PTSD as a label to make trauma ordinary—or at least to explain its lack of ordinariness. But amidst the lines of discourse that react against this attempt at explanation, two major critiques come to the surface. First, there are those who argue that PTSD does not sufficiently encompass the varieties of posttraumatic experience. Second, there is a literature, often informed by poststructuralist impulses, that concerns the achievement of ordinariness through labeling. How do the posttraumatic spheres of possible explanation determine how individuals cope? Conscious of their genealogies, it is at the intersection of these two discursive strands that we can listen for the pragmatic.

This project has been an experiment in listening. To ask both, “What labels do encompass the posttraumatic experience?” and, “Where do these labels come from?”

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221 Although this has not been our primary inquiry, there are movements in the psychological sciences to introduce “complex PTSD” as an official diagnostic category for individuals who have experienced repeated traumas. (For many years Judith Herman was at the helm of this endeavor). There is also a literature concerned with co-morbidity of PTSD with depression, Acute Stress disorder and other labels that fit under the bigger label, “Anxiety Disorders,” in the DSM.
is to focus on the process of label-adoption in conversation. What are the contexts in which these questions find answers? Who is taking part in the conversation? To open up this intersection for inquiry we have needed to disband with our pre-conversation presumptions of what is ordinary. We have needed to be narratively flexible, and to acknowledge that our narrative flexibility exists on behalf of a goal. No narratives are entirely flexible, and we adopt them, in part, because of the borders they create and maintain. In Uganda, we have called attention to this border-making.

How does listening for the labels that Florence and Yusef use to re-tell the story of violence, enable us to interact with them differently? Very often, violence is warranted by extreme narrative rigidity. The charismatic authority of Joseph Kony and the LRA, the legacy of antagonism between Hutu and Tutsi, and the hatred al-Shabaab professes toward all Ugandans, leave little room for alternative perspectives among their constituents. One way of coping with the violence that stems from this inflexibility would be to form a comparably rigid opposing narrative. But Florence and Yusef do not seem to do this. Instead, they have found ways of coping that are framed around the pragmatic. As an interlocutor, to be open to possibilities for mutual influence is to recognize the flexible ways individuals cope with traumatic experience and displacement. To listen with flexibility for this flexibility is to leave open the possibility for new common ground, for new explanations for togetherness, for new ways to live after violence. And so this is why we listen. We listen so that, together, we may hear something new.
Epilogue:

Benjamin begins before we are seated. We carry a bench from Christine’s Canteen to a shaded corner of base camp. It has been a few days since Benjamin and I first arranged to meet and he seems eager to start.

I ask him to “Wait just a moment.” When the consent form is out of the way, Benjamin picks up where he left off.

“As I have told you, in Burundi, we got a very serious matter. I fled...because of insecurity...My parents were killed one month ago. My father was in the political party but not the ruling party. Politicians came and they killed my father, my mother, and my brothers.”

Benjamin and I are around the same age. We arrived in Nakivale only two weeks apart.

“So I left the country. I passed Rwanda on foot. Then I came here to be helped with settlement...I arrived in Nakivale on 29 June.”

—

Opiyo and I walk to the southwestern corner of Gulu town. We pass NGO Hill and reach a cluster of Acholi houses a kilometer later. Opiyo leads and I follow.

When we reach our destination, Opiyo points to one of the thatched roof homes and we knock.
Mike Acellem Odong\textsuperscript{222} is missing his right eye. He holds a cloth in his hand and every few minutes, he dabs the leakage from the fleshy socket. He sits on the couch. His daughter has just come home from school and she reports to her father the results of last week’s math exam.

In Gulu, Mike is known as Brigadier Odong. On the tier below Kony and Otti in the LRA leadership, Odong was in charge of Kony’s security. He is the commander who Opiyo and Acan Agnes both mentioned in passing. One morning in January 2005, Brigadier Odong and his undercommand were ambushed by UPDF soldiers. Odong was shot and wounded. He was taken immediately to the Red Cross and then to Lacor hospital in Gulu\textsuperscript{223}. Soon after, he was granted amnesty. But Odong starts from the beginning.

“I was abducted in January 1987 from Anaka.” Odong was quickly trained to fight. First however, “training was about the Holy Bible and the Ten Commandments.” When Odong started leading counter-attacks against the government, it was during a time when the LRA enjoyed widespread civilian support. Odong would collect the foodstuffs that civilians hid and deliver them to Kony and the high command. In 1993 however, “Most of the fighters went to Southern Sudan [to be] supplied by the government of Sudan—Khartoum.” Near Juba, they “made a big base to recruit other soldiers.”

\textsuperscript{222} Not a pseudonym
\textsuperscript{223} Brigadier Michael Acellem Odong was an LRA commander in charge of Kony’s security. 
\url{http://www.mail-archive.com/ugandanet@kym.net/msg17709.html} (Accessed April 8, 2011)
“My life in Burundi was good. I was a student of communications at university. My parents were helping me. But my life [in Nakivale] has not gone well. I called some of my friends back in Burundi but I did not tell them where I am. I told them, ‘I am surviving.’”

“I met Burundians [in Nakivale] like me. They tried to help in any way they could, but they failed. When I arrived, another Burundian found me a lodge where I could stay for free.” But this offer has since run out.

I ask Benjamin how he finds food and basic resources.

“People know me as someone one speaks English. I try to help people with English and they give me a little money. Then, people told me about UK. They said, ‘UK is the headmaster and he is looking for a new teacher.’ I met UK and he hired me. I teach 180 students in four different classes. All my students are Somalis. Me and UK are working together but he gets money and gives me only a little. I asked for more but he didn’t give me an answer. I work there morning, afternoon, and night.”

—I

I ask Odong about his role in the recruiting, but our conversation stays in the third-person. “Kony would convince abductees about the cause, he talked about war, and gave abductees the history of Uganda. Once you are abducted and sensitized and convinced, orders come immediately. Those who attempt to escape will be punished. People stayed because they feared the punishment.”
Odong relays that life in the LRA worsened when the SPLA and UPDF joined forces. “We were mobile again towards Uganda. All fighters, women and children. I have 13 children and 4 wives.” In 2003, Odong sent his family back to Gulu to confirm the amnesty law.

In 2004, Odong was ambushed when he was traveling to Anaka as “part of a peace team” for talks with the government. “I was resettled in Gulu. Now I am saved.”

“I knew what was taking place was not anybody’s fault except Kony and Otii.”

“I still feel the pain of the battlefield and work is now impossible.”

“I always believe in God up to now.”

I ask Odong to say more about his responsibilities as a high-ranking soldier in the LRA.

He replies, “Maybe another time.”

“For a long time in Burundi, I was insecure.”

“It was at night. I was at school. After the campaign...people came to shoot us at home. When I came home I found everyone dead.”

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224 According to Odong’s recollection. The reported cited above claims Odong’s capture to have taken place in January 2005.
“I think about it every day. Some staff ask me but I do not talk about what happened with other refugees. I trust nobody here because nobody knows me. I trust someone who is a pacifist, serious, well-educated, full of advice, and well mannered.”

“When I am teaching, I think about my mom...she loved me a lot.”

It is almost time for our discussion to end. Benjamin and I carry the bench back to Christine’s Canteen and sit down for some beans and goat. As we begin to eat, I say to Benjamin, “Suppose in a few years from now you have children. And suppose that you and your family decide to live somewhere other than Burundi. What would you tell them about your life back home with your parents?”

“I would tell them what happened to our family. The reasons and the consequences [of] why they were killed. Burundi is where I come from. I will tell them about my past. My parents were killed because of their opinions of the ruling party. This is what I would tell my children.”

“Benjamin, do you think very often about the future?”

“I do, I do! One hundred percent, I do! When I cannot sleep I read Genesis and try to forget and forgive people.”
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Appendix A

The CAPS Survey

CAPS
Cognitive · Affective · Personality · Science

Date: ___ - ___ - ___  Time: _______  #: ___ ___ ___ ___
___ - ___ ___

National Center for PTSD

CLINICIAN-ADMINISTERED PTSD SCALE FOR DSM-IV

Current and Lifetime Diagnostic Version

(CAPS-DX)

Interviewer: __________________________
Criterion A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both the following were present:

1. The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.
2. The person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror. Note: In children, this may be expressed instead by disorganized or agitated behavior.

I’m going to be asking you about some difficult or stressful thing that sometimes happen to people. Some examples of this are being in some type of serious accident; being in a fire, a hurricane, or an earthquake; being mugged or beaten up or attacked with a weapon; or being forced to have sex when you didn’t want to. I’ll start by asking you to look over a list of experiences like this and check any that apply to you. Then, if any of them do apply to you, I’ll ask you to briefly describe what happened and how you felt at the time.

Some of these experiences may be hard to remember or may bring back uncomfortable memories or feelings. People often find that talking about them can be helpful, but it’s up to you to decide how much you want to tell me. As we go along, if you find yourself becoming upset, let me know and we can slow down and talk about it. Also, if you have any questions or you don’t understand something, please let me know. Do you have any questions before we start?

ADMINISTER CHECKLIST, THEN REVIEW AND INQUIRE UP TO THE THREE EVENTS. IF MORE THAN THREE EVENTS ARE ENDORSED, DETERMINE WHICH THREE EVENTS TO INQUIRE (E.G., FIRST, WORST, AND MOST RECENT EVENTS; THREE WORST EVENTS; TRAUMA OF INTEREST PLUS TWO OTHER WORST EVENTS, ETC.)
IF NO EVENTS ENDORSED ON CHECKLIST: (Has there ever been a time when your life was in danger or you were seriously injured or harmed?)

IF NO: (What about a time when you were threatened with death or serious injury, even if you weren’t actually injured or harmed?)

IF NO: (What about witnessing something like this happen to someone else or finding out that it happened to someone close to you?)

IF NO: (What would you say are some of the most stressful experiences you have had over your life?)

Event #1

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. I.?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>[self___ other___]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P. T.?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>[self___ other___]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. (2)</td>
<td>I. F./H./H.?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>[during___ after___]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A met?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>PROBABLE</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Event #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. I.?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>[self___ other___]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P. T.?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>[self___ other___]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. (2)</td>
<td>I. F./H./H.?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>[during___ after___]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A met?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>PROBABLE</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Event #3
What happened? How did you respond emotionally?

A. (1)
L. T.? NO YES [self___ other___]
S. I.? NO YES [self___ other___]
P. T.? NO YES [self___ other___]
A. (2)
I. F./H./H.? NO YES [during___ after___]
A met? NO PROBABLE YES

For the rest of the interview, I want you to keep (EVENTS) in mind as I ask you some questions about how they may have affected you.

I'm going to ask you about twenty-five questions altogether. Most of them have two parts. First, I'll ask if you ever had a particular problem, and if so, about how often in the past month. Then I'll ask you how much distress or discomfort that problem may have caused you.

Criterion B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways:

1. (B-1) recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts or perceptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Never</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Once or twice</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Once or twice/week</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Several times/week</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Daily/Almost daily</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description/ Examples QV (specify) ______________________________
2. (B-2) recurrent distressing dreams of the event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever had unpleasant dreams about (EVENT)? Describe typical dream. How often have you had these dreams in the past month?</td>
<td>How much distress or discomfort did these dreams cause you? Did they ever wake you up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Never</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Once or twice</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Once or twice/week</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Several times/week</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Daily/Almost daily</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description/Examples: QV (specify) ______________________________

3. (B-3) acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you even suddenly acted or felt as if (EVENT) were happening again? What was that like? How often has that happened in the past month?</td>
<td>How much did it seem as if (EVENT) were happening again? How long did it last? What did you do while this was happening?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Never</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Once or twice</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Once or twice/week</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Several times/week</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Daily/Almost daily</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description/Examples: QV (specify) ______________________________

4. (B-4) intense psychological distress as exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever gotten emotionally upset when something reminded you of (EVENT)? What kind of reminders made you upset? How often in the past month?</td>
<td>How much distress or discomfort did [REMINDERS] cause you? How long did it last? How much did it interfere with your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Never</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Once or twice</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Once or twice/week</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Several times/week</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Daily/Almost daily</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description/Examples: QV (specify) ______________________________
5. (B-5) physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever had any physical reactions when something reminded you of (EVENT)? Can you give me some examples? What kind of reminders triggered these reactions? How often in the past month?</td>
<td>How strong were (PHYSICAL REACTIONS)? How long did they last?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Never</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Once or twice</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Once or twice/week</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Several times/week</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Daily/Almost daily</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description/ Examples

Criterion C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:

6. (C-1) efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever tried to avoid thoughts or feelings about (EVENT)? What about trying to avoid talking with other people about it? How often in the past month?</td>
<td>How much effort did you make to avoid (THOUGHTS/ FEELINGS/ CONVERSATIONS)? How much did that interfere with your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Never</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Once or twice</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Once or twice/week</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Several times/week</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Daily/Almost daily</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description/ Examples

7. (C-2) efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever tried to avoid certain activities, places, or people that reminded you of (EVENT)? How often in the past month?</td>
<td>How much effort did you make to avoid (ACTIVITIES/ PLACES/ PEOPLE)? How much did that interfere with your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Never</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Once or twice</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Once or twice/week</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Several times/week</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 8. (C-3) inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever had difficulty remembering some important parts of (EVENT)? Tell me more about that. In the past month, how much of the important parts of (EVENT) have you had difficulty remembering?</td>
<td>How much difficulty did you have recalling important parts of (EVENT)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0  Never</td>
<td>0  None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  Once or twice</td>
<td>1  Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Once or twice/week</td>
<td>2  Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Several times/week</td>
<td>3  Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Daily/Almost daily</td>
<td>4  Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description/Examples**

QV (specify)

---

## 9. (C-4) markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you been less interested in activities that you used to enjoy? In the past month, how many activities have you been less interested in? When did you first start to feel that way?</td>
<td>How strong was your loss of interest?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0  Never</td>
<td>0  None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  Few activities</td>
<td>1  Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Some activities</td>
<td>2  Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Many activities</td>
<td>3  Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Most or all activities</td>
<td>4  Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description/Examples**

QV (specify)

---

## 10. (C-5) feeling of detachment or estrangement from others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you felt distant or cut off from other people? What was that like? How much of the time in the past month have you felt that way? When did you first start to feel that way? (After the [EVENT]?)</td>
<td>How strong were your feelings of being distant or cut off from others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0  None of the time</td>
<td>0  None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. (C-6) restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Have there been times when you felt emotionally numb or had trouble experiencing feelings like love or happiness? What was that like? How often in the past month have you felt that way? When did you first start having trouble experiencing [EMOTIONS]? (After the [EVENT]?) | How much trouble did you have experiencing [EMOTIONS]?
| 0 None of the time | 0 None |
| 1 Little of the time | 1 Mild |
| 2 Some of the time | 2 Moderate |
| 3 Much of the time | 3 Severe |
| 4 Most or all of the time | 4 Extreme |

Description/Examples

QV (specify)

Trauma-related? definite probable unlikely

12. (C-7) sense of a foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children or a normal life span)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have there been times when you felt there is no need to plan for the future, that somehow your future will be cut short? Why is that? How much of the time in the past month have you felt that way? When did you first start to feel that way? (After the [EVENT]?)</td>
<td>How strong was this feeling that your future will be cut short?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 None of the time</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Little of the time</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Some of the time</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Much of the time</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Most or all of the time</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Criterion D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by two (or more) of the following:

#### 13. (D-1) difficulty falling or staying asleep

**Frequency**
Have you had any problems falling or staying asleep? How often in the past month? When did you first start having problems sleeping? (After the [EVENT]?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None of the time</th>
<th>Little of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Much of the time</th>
<th>Most or all of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>Little of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Much of the time</td>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>Little of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Much of the time</td>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>Little of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Much of the time</td>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>Little of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Much of the time</td>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>Little of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Much of the time</td>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description/ Examples**
QV (specify)

---

**Trauma-related?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>definite</th>
<th>probable</th>
<th>unlikely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Intensity**
How much of a problem did you have with your sleep?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Mild</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Extreme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### 14. (D-2) irritability or outbursts of anger

**Frequency**
Have there been times when you felt especially irritable or showed strong feelings of anger? Can you give me some examples? How often in the past month? When did you first start feeling that way? (After the [EVENT]?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None of the time</th>
<th>Little of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Much of the time</th>
<th>Most or all of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>Little of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Much of the time</td>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>Little of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Much of the time</td>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>Little of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Much of the time</td>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>Little of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Much of the time</td>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>Little of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Much of the time</td>
<td>Most or all of the time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description/ Examples**
QV (specify)

---

**Trauma-related?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>definite</th>
<th>probable</th>
<th>unlikely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. (D-3) difficulty concentrating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you found it difficult to concentrate on what you were doing or on things going on around you? What was that like? How much of the time in the past month? When did you first start having trouble concentrating? (After the [EVENT]?)</td>
<td>How difficult was it for you to concentrate? How much did that interfere with your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 None of the time</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Very little of the time (&lt;10%)</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Some of the time (20-30%)</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Much of the time (50-60%)</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Most or all of the time (more than 80%)</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description/ Examples
QV (specify)

Trauma-related?  definite  probable  unlikely

16. (D-4) hypervigilance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you been especially alert or watchful, even when there was no real need to be? Why is that? How much of the time in the past month? When did you first start acting that way? (After the [EVENT]?)</td>
<td>How hard did you try to be watchful of things going on around you? Did you (HYPERVIGILANCE) cause you any problems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 None of the time</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Little of the time</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Some of the time</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Much of the time</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Most or all of the time</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description/ Examples
QV (specify)

Trauma-related?  definite  probable  unlikely

17. (D-5) exaggerated startle response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you had any strong startle reactions? When did that happen? How often in the past month? When did you first have these reactions? (After the [EVENT]?)</td>
<td>How strong were these startle reactions? How long did they last?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Never</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once or twice
Once or twice/week
Several times/week
Daily or almost daily

Mild
Moderate
Severe
Extreme

Trauma-related?

Criterion E. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in Criteria B, C, and D) is more than 1 month.

18. Onset of symptoms

[IF NOT ALREADY CLEAR:] When did you first start having (PTSD SYMPTOMS) you’ve told me about? (How long after the trauma did they start? More than 6 months?)

With delayed onset (≥ 6 months)?

NO YES

19. Duration of symptoms

Current

Lifet ime

NO YES NO

Acute (< 3 months) or chronic (≥ 3 months)?

Acute Chronic

Criterion F. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupation, or other important areas of functioning.

20. Subjective distress
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CURRENT</th>
<th>LIFETIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, how much have you been bothered by these symptoms you’ve told me about?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, how much were you bothered by these symptoms you’ve told me about?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. impairment in social functioning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CURRENT</th>
<th>LIFETIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have these symptoms affected your relationships with other people? How so?</td>
<td>No adverse impact</td>
<td>No adverse impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did these symptoms affect your social life? How so?</td>
<td>Mild impact</td>
<td>Moderate impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. impairment in occupational or other important area of functioning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CURRENT – IF NOT ALREADY CLEAR</th>
<th>LIFETIME – IF NOT ALREADY CLEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you working now?</td>
<td>No adverse impact</td>
<td>Were you working then?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have these symptoms affected your work or your ability to work? How so?</td>
<td>Mild impact</td>
<td>No adverse impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have these symptoms affected any other important part of your life? How so?</td>
<td>Moderate impact</td>
<td>Moderate impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did these symptoms affect your work or your ability to work? How so?</td>
<td>Severe impact</td>
<td>Severe impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did these symptoms affect any other important part of your life? How so?</td>
<td>Extreme impact</td>
<td>Extreme impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Global Ratings

23. **global validity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESTIMATE THE OVERALL VALIDITY OF RESPONSES. CONSIDER COMPLIANCE WITH INTERVIEW, MENTAL STATUS, AND EVIDENCE OF EFFORTS TO EXAGGERATE OR MINIMIZE SYMPTOMS.</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Invalid responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

24. **global severity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESTIMATE THE OVERALL SEVERITY OF PTSD SYMPTOMS. CONSIDER DEGREE OF SUBJECTIVE DISTRESS, DEGREE OF FUNCTIONAL IMPAIRMENT, OBSERVATIONS OF BEHAVIORS IN INTERVIEW, AND JUDGEMENT REGARDING REPORTING STYLE.</th>
<th>No clinically significant symptoms</th>
<th>Mild</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Extreme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

25. **global improvement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RATE TOTAL OVERALL IMPROVEMENT. ASK HOW THE SYMPTOMS ENDORSED HAVE CHANGED OVER THE PAST 6 MONTHS. RATE THE DEGREE OF CHANGE, WHETHER OR NOT, IN YOUR JUDGEMENT, IT IS DUE TO TREATMENT.</th>
<th>a. Asymptomatic</th>
<th>b. Considerable improvement</th>
<th>c. Moderate improvement</th>
<th>d. Slight improvement</th>
<th>e. No improvement</th>
<th>f. Insufficient information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Current PTSD Symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion A met (traumatic event)?</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>#</strong> Criterion B sx (≥1)?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>#</strong> Criterion C sx (≥3)?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>#</strong> Criterion D sx (≥2)?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion E met (duration ≥1 month)?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion F met (distress/impairment)?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CURRENT PTSD (Criterion A-F met)? | NO | YES |

IF CURRENT PTSD CRITERIA ARE MET, SKIP TO ASSOCIATED FEATURES.
IF CURRENT CRITERIA ARE NOT MET, ASSESS FOR LIFETIME PTSD. IDENTIFY A PERIOD OF AT LEAST A MONTH SINCE THE TRAUMATIC EVENT IN WHICH THE SYMPTOMS WERE WORSE.

Since the (EVENT), has there been a time when these (PTSD SYMPTOMS) were a lot worse than they been in the past month? When was that? How long did it last?

IF MULTIPLE PERIODS IN THE PAST: When were you bothered the most by these (PTSD SYMPTOMS)?

IF AT LEAST ONE PERIOD, INQUIRE ITEMS 1-17, CHANGING FREQUENCY PROMPTS TO REFER TO WORST PERIOD: During that time, did you (EXPERIENCE SYMPTOM)? How often?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lifetime PTSD Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criterion A met (traumatic event)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ # Criterion B sx (≥1)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ # Criterion C sx (≥3)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ # Criterion D sx (≥2)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion E met (duration ≥1 month)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion F met (distress/impairment)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| CURRENT PTSD (Criterion A-F met)? | NO  YES |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. guilt over acts of commission or omission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you felt guilty about anything you did or didn’t do during (EVENT)? Tell me more about that. How much of the time have you felt that way in the past month?</td>
<td>How strong were these feelings of guilt? How much distress or discomfort did they cause?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 None of the time</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Very little of the time (&lt;10%)</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Some of the time (20-30%)</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Much of the time (50-60%)</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Most or all of the time (more than 80%)</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
27. **survivor guilt [APPLICABLE ONLY IF MULTIPLE VICTIMS]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you felt guilty about surviving (EVENT) when others did not? Tell me more about that. How much of the time have you felt that way in the past month?</td>
<td>How strong were these feelings of guilt? How much distress or discomfort did they cause?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 None of the time</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Very little of the time (&lt;10%)</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Most or all of the time (more than 80%)</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description/ Examples**

QV (specify)

28. **a reduction in awareness of her surroundings (e.g., “being in a daze”)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have there been times when you felt out of touch with the things going on around you, like you were in a daze? What was that like? How often has that happened in the past month? When did you first start feeling that way?</td>
<td>How strong was this feeling of being out of touch or in a daze? How long did it last? What did you do while this was happening?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Never</td>
<td>0 None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Once or twice</td>
<td>1 Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Once or twice/week</td>
<td>2 Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Several times/week</td>
<td>3 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Daily or almost daily</td>
<td>4 Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description/ Examples**

QV (specify)

29. **derealization**
### Frequency
Have there been times when things going on around you seemed unreal or very strange and unfamiliar? What was that like? How often has that happened in the past month? When did you first start feeling that way?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Once or twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Once or twice/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Several times/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Daily or almost daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Intensity
How strong was (DEREALIZATION)? How long did it last? What did you do while this was happening?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Description/ Examples
QV (specify)

### Trauma-related?

---

30. depersonalization

### Frequency
Have there been times when you felt as if you were outside of your body, watching yourself as if you were another person? What was that like? How often has that happened in the past month? When did you first start feeling that way?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Several times/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Daily or almost daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Intensity
How strong was (DEPERSONALIZATION)? How long did it last? What did you do while this was happening?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Description/ Examples
QV (specify)

### Trauma-related?

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