

**Visible Wars and Invisible Women:¹
Interrogating Women's Roles During
Wartime in Goretti Kyomuhendo's *Waiting*:
*A Novel of Uganda at War*²**

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The public and private worlds are inseparably connected [...] the tyrannies and servilities of one are the traumas of the other. It is now apparent that the traumas of one are the traumas of the other.

—Virginia Woolf³

ABSTRACT

Goretti Kyomuhendo's *Waiting: A Novel of Uganda at War* explores the atrocities that ordinary people experience during wartime by placing emphasis on the private suffering and humiliation inflicted on women in the domestic space of the home. This article argues that even if women do not actively feature on the battlefield, they are still inadvertently drawn into the war, which has an adverse impact on their lives. Kyomuhendo draws on the experiences of different female characters to problematize the inherently ambiguous symbolic image of the mother, and shows that the violence performed on women's bodies is a result of the interplay between two hegemonic forces, patriarchal authority and state power. This article addresses the following questions: how does Kyomuhendo's *Waiting* reflect on the lived experiences of the individual, the family unit and the community during times of conflict? As a female writer, how does she represent the experience of violence and the disintegration of the home? Does this narrative reveal how and why women construct new forms of