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Jean Hatzfeld , Linda Coverdale (Translator)

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A powerful report on the aftereffects of the genocide in Rwanda--and on the near impossibility of reconciliation between survivors and killers

In two acclaimed previous works, the noted French journalist Jean Hatzfeld offered a profound, harrowing witness to the unimaginable pain and horror in the mass killings of one group of people by another. Combining his own analysis of the events with interviews from both the Hutu killers who carried out acts of unimaginable depravity and the Tutsi survivors who somehow managed to escape, in one, based mostly on interviews with Tutsi survivors, he explored in unprecedented depth the witnesses' understanding of the psychology of evil and their courage in survival; in the second, he probed further, in talks with a group of Hutu killers about their acts of unimaginable depravity.

Now, in "The Antelope's Strategy," he returns to Rwanda seven years later to talk with both the Hutus and Tutsis he'd come to know--some of the killers who had been released from prison or returned from Congolese exile, and the Tutsi escapees who must now tolerate them as neighbors. How are they managing with the process of reconciliation? Do you think in their hearts it is possible? The enormously varied and always surprising answers he gets suggest that the political ramifications of the international community's efforts to insist on resolution after these murderous episodes are incalculable. This is an astonishing exploration of the pain of memory, the nature of stoic hope, and the ineradicability of grief.

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From Reader Review The Antelope's Strategy: Living in Rwanda After the Genocide for online ebook

Regina Lindsey says

The Antelope Strategy by Jean Hatzfield
3 Stars

In 1994, within one month's time, approximately 59,000 Tutsi's were slaughtered by their Hutu neighbors. Hatzfield, a French reporter, has published a trilogy on the survivors and the murderers. The Antelope Strategy in the final installment. Hatzfield has returned to Rwanda after the government has released a number of Hutu's after serving only seven years in prison as part of a reconciliation plan. Since the Tutsi's are herdsman and the Hutu's are farmers the country was suffering from a lack of food. In its wisdom, the government's strategy is to release Hutu prisoners and return them to the fields. This means, however, they will live side by side with the survivors who watched the returning Hutu's who killed their entire family, in some cases, have the opportunity to lead a normal life when they themselves will never again do the same. Even though the returning prisoners are mandated to go through a renunciation camp and repercussions are threatened to both sides, the reconciliation plan causes a great deal of stress within the Rwandan communities.

In my opinion this was the weakest work of the three. While there are some interesting aspects to the book it is merely an extension of the two previous books. Hatzfield has reunited with characters from those works, retelling their stories to a degree and providing an update on where they are today. With the exception of the story of a Hutu-Tutsi marriage near the conclusion of the book, there is little in the way of how the two groups are interacting with each other or the impacts of the prisoners' release on the survivors. Further, Hatzfield alludes several times to the French role in the genocide but never goes into deep analysis.

I would recommend people read Life Lade Bare and Machete Season but skip this one.

Bouquiniste says

Ako odchovanky? a francúzskeho školstva som zvyknutá na to, že francúzski autori (áno, najmä autori muži) predvádzajú to, čo sa nazýva "pensée structurée" – štruktúrované myslenie –, a že ich texty sú vystavané na pevných základoch, dôsledne zdokumentované a zargumentované a predovšetkým, že pri ich čítaní už v poslednej tretine či štvrtine tušíme, kam budú smerovať. Splnené očakávanie (s prípadným prevapením) tak vlastne ešte umocní čitateľské kognitívne precitnutie esteticko-štylistickou katarziou.

Hatzfeld to v Stratégii antilop nerobí. Ba čo viac! Kniha vlastne nemá žiadnu pevnú štruktúru, je amorfná, prelieva sa od Tutsiov k Hutuom, prekrývajú sa v nej rôzne hlasy a len minimálne sa v nej objavuje čosi ako uvádzací komentár. Ak aj znie, je len jedným z týchto hlasov a je vlastne rovnocenný s ostatnými.

To, čo na prvý pohľad vyzerá ako editorská nedôslednosť, ako koncepčný defekt knihy, je však dômyselná stratégia. Hatzfeld sa zrieka nadradenej autorskej pozície i práva veta, odmieta vykonávať na vypovedajúcich ďalšie násilie, ktorým by bola vnútená štruktúra. Francúzska štruktúra. Myslím, že to, čo robí Stratégiu antilop pozoruhodnou, je práve táto neochota knihu upratať podľa (karteziánskych alebo iných) šablón. Je to kniha v najlepšom slova zmysle poznačená postkoloniálnou antropológiou.

Hatzfeld nevytvára ani štruktúrovanú polyfóniu, akú nájdeme v knihách Svetlany Alexijevi?, témy a motívy v jeho knihe prichádzajú a odchádzajú, vypovedanie nie je chronologické (možno je chronológia daná návštevami autora v Rwande), hoci vidíme pokusy usporiadať motívy, napr. naratívnu analógiu s genocídou Židov – Hatzfeld tu však vždy poukazuje na svoj vlastný vklad, a čisto na v priebehu písania rezignuje, aby

dal väčší priestor subjektom svojej knihy.

Zvláštne plynutie textu, jeho ukončenie svedectvami, bez "voice overového" záverečného komentára autora ma však nabáda formulovať hypotézu, že sa nám Hatzfeld pokúša sprostredkovať fluidnejšie myslenie postavené na cyklickosti a variácii motívov. Neeurópske myslenie.

Skúsenosť, o ktorej kniha svedčí - skúsenosť genocídy a veľmi obmedzené možnosti vypovedania o tejto genocíde - sú však totožné s často veľmi bolestnými pokusmi tých, čo prežili šoa, vypovedať o tomto násilí, o stave ich pamäte, o obrazoch, ktoré sa im prehŕajú hlavou.

Iná štruktúra, no posolstvo univerzálne.

Hlboko ma zasiahli výpovede o (ne)cítení viny. O živote PO, bok po boku. O zvláštnom časopriestorovom záhybe, ktorý do krajiny vnáša politiku zmierenia a ktorý spôsobuje, že skúsenosť sa zakaždým bolestivo reaktualizuje (u Tutsiov), alebo sa otupuje do podoby ohosi veľmi bizarne "normálneho" (u Hutuov). Ako vôbec štruktúrovať myslenie genocídy v takomto časopriestorovom záhybe?

Dave says

Outstanding - told in the voices of the survivors and the genocidaires returning from prison after the gacaca process. very poignant, very eloquent, well worth reading

Emmkay says

I had not realized that this was the third of a series of oral histories related to the Rwandan genocide - Hatzfeld has also written an oral history based on accounts by survivors in the same region, and one based on accounts by the killers in the same region, given while they were imprisoned. I'd be very interested in reading those accounts as well. This volume focuses on the period of time, seven years after the genocide, when the killers, who had thought they would be imprisoned for life, are released back into the community, to live side by side with those whom they had hunted. It's primarily a collection of oral accounts, organized by theme, and connected by the author's thoughts. Such a valuable and thought-provoking read, that really probes the role and limits of 'reconciliation.'

Shane says

I have mixed feelings about this anthology of interviews from the Hutus who performed genocide in Rwanda and the Tutsis who survived it. On the one hand, the interview material is well presented and fascinating, documenting the attempted reconciliation following a mass release of nearly all of the Hutus involved in the genocide from prison into an uncomfortable coexistence. On the other, the author makes broad statements, such as those about 'Africa' (alluding to an entire continent through a single country's history), and seems to miss out on many of the important cultural and social points that are apparent in the interviews (the adjustment of attitudes of the guilty; the repeated importance of reconciliation by all sides; the foreign involvement that helped to cause this atrocity). As a documentation of characters and interviews this is worth a read, but as a literary exploration it becomes disappointing, particularly in the later chapters.

Becky says

The final piece of the puzzle in Hatzfeld's trilogy. I recommend reading the other two books first, or this won't make as much sense. He succeeds in making us question what it must be like to be forced to live in the same community as those you previously tried to escape, and may have even watched murder several members of your family. Fascinating.

Lidia Radzio says

Po masakrze powinna zapanować wielka cisza i rzeczywiście jest cisza, którą naruszają tylko ptaki. A co mówią ptaki? To co można powiedzieć na temat masakry: "It-it?" - kiedy czytałam księżkę, ten fragment "Rzeźni numer 5" cięgle pląta mi się po głowie.

Cisza nie może jednak trwać w nieskończoność. Hatzfeld odwiedza Rwandę po raz trzeci, ponad dekadę po czyszczeniach, rozmawia z ocalałymi i z ich oprawcami, próbuje zrozumieć, w jaki sposób układa się ich stosunki. Życie po masakrze bywa trudniejsze niż ucieczka z życiem spod maczet, niż odbudowanie splądrowanych domów i opiekowanie bliskich, których cię nigdy nie udało się pochować. Czy polityka, działania społeczno-międzynarodowych, w końcu sami Hutu i Tutsi mogą zrobić cokolwiek, by sytuacja stała się nieco znośniejsza?

Polecam, jedynie tym, którzy nie boją się po skończonej lekturze zmierzyć się z przerażającymi pytaniami, również tymi o rolę, jaką w tej masakrze odegrała cywilizowana Europa.

Davehbo says

Very interesting learning experience about the genocide in Rwanda.

Nmdb22 says

Outstanding - told in the voices of the survivors and the genocidaires returning from prison after the gacaca process. very poignant, very eloquent, well worth reading

Shivane Ramlochan says

Recommended by Almah Rice.

Lakshmi says

Needless to say this last book from Hatzfeld on the Rwandan genocide made me cringe, wonder and be depressed about human depravity. By this book, the author has given up the pretense of wanting to be impartial and candidly admits his disgust at having to interact with the killers. He does however maintain this professional equanimity through the book.

It did also make me question some elements of the current policy of reconciliation. While, it is admirable that Rwanda is trying to put a stop to what would otherwise be an endless cycle of violent retribution. It feels like it is coming at an enormous cost to the survivors....

However, how else can you end this violence? Who pays the price for the country to move on and re-build? Are there acceptable solutions because there are no easy answers?

Tomas Bella says

Toto by asi nemala by? prvá kniha, ktorú budete čítať o Rwande, lebo fakty a vysvetlenia genocídy tu nie sú žiadne, je to čistá oral history. Je to ale asi jedna z najlepších kníh o Rwande, lebo sa dostáva oveľa hlbšie ako väčšina iných k podstate toho, čo sa v ňuoch zmení, keď bojujú o život, a aké to je snažiť sa znova vybudovať spoločnosť, kde majú vrahovia zasa žiť vedľa príbuzných svojich obetí.

Peter says

Note: This review is for the full four-part series.

French reporter and longtime resident of the African continent, Jean Hatzfeld, documents the Rwandan Genocide in more detail than any other historian or journalist. But don't look to his series for a complete historical context or a full examination of the motives of the killers or the previous crimes of the Tutsi people and the colonialists. Other books, like *Philip Gourevitch's* excellent *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families* informs and educates the reader more thoroughly on context, motivation, and history.

Hatzfeld instead offers direct contact with the killers and the survivors. He tracks life in one small village as it progresses over 24 years from the 100 days of the "cuttings" of the genocide, through the forced return and imprisonment of the escaped Hutu killers, to the killers' pardon in 2003 to live side by side with the survivors, and finally to the legacy of the genocide for the next generation of children, the children of both the killers and the survivors. Hatzfeld's series of four poignant and well-written books focus on the lives of the people of the Bugesera, a modest-sized district in the southeast of Rwanda--a place where Hutus slaughtered an estimated 100,000 Tutsis. Hatzfeld is detailed in his dispatches, following the same small group of people, gaining their trust by breaking through a haze of trauma and for the killers by passing through prison walls. It's doubtful any other reporter or historian will even gain similar access and intimacy with all the players. What is missing, for the most part, is the role the government of long-time President Paul Kagame plays in their lives.

Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak introduced us to the Rwandan voices, the survivors of the Bugesera, men, women, children, all who ran from the blades for 100 days until the Tutsi army-- led by Paul Kagame, refugee turned General turned President--could reach the marshes and the hillside of the district. It is here that Hatzfeld first introduces the reader to the victims and survivors of evil.

Hatzfeld's second installment, *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak* is a short and dark tome offering up direct testimony and confessions of one small group of "cutters" who terrorized their small community for 100 days, they a part of a larger group that murdered thousands using mostly machetes, killing more efficiently than the Nazi death camp apparatus killed Jews. Reading Hatzfeld's commentary on his meetings in the crowded Rilima Prison, I detect little joy in his work and note his reticence during

interviews of genocidaires.

The Antelope's Strategy: Living in Rwanda After the Genocide, book three, titled because the victims of the genocide, when they could run, ran like the Antelope, staying in their herd, knowing that the Hutus would "cut" the slow, the old, the infirm, and those who carried their babies first. On the hilltops of the Bugesera in 1994, the comfort of the pack helped Innocent Rwigyira only so much. Out of the thousands that sought safety above the village, just a few dozens survived--the rest cut down by their Hutu neighbors and the Interahamwe. If it was possible to report a more dark and horrifying version of the genocide than that provided in books one and two, Hatzfeld finds it, as he documents Innocent's Rwigyira's story of survival.

In Blood Papa: Rwanda's New Generation, Jean Hatzfeld introduces readers to the children of the genocidaires and the survivors. While much of the book is spent with the children, Hatzfeld researches the community or Gacaca courts organized in Rwanda to free up the enormous backlog in the traditional court system. He tells the story of one particular case, a "cutter," a man whose confession Hatzfeld documented in Machete Season, a man who served seven years in prison and was then pardoned by President Kagame along with many other second-tier offenders in 2003, and a man who committed a crime so atrocious and evil that in 2010 his community's Gacaca court immediately dispatched the offender to life in prison.

Mike Hobbins says

The final part of Jean Hatzfeld's devastating trilogy - 'Into the Quick of Life' & 'A Time for Machetes' being the previous volumes - 'The Strategy of Antelopes' describes a country, Rwanda, coming to terms with life over ten years after the genocide: the voices of the Tutsi survivors as well as those of their killers, the Hutus. It is hard to see these three books ever being surpassed as the definitive account of this woeful event; one that brings eternal shame upon the international community especially, in the first instance, the United Nations.

Only a journalist such as Hatzfeld -one who has a deep, sincere love for the country - could track down the 'legitimate' testimonies of these warring communities, the Tutsis and the Hutus. The largest truth, the most damning indictment of the Rwandan genocide is the simple, incontrovertible fact that nearly one million Tutsis were slaughtered by their fellow countrymen, the Hutus.

It is to his eternal credit that Hatzfeld was able to listen to each side's stories; for these people to speak about such horrors on numerous occasions is an achievement in itself. Their accounts may not present the whole truth; he may not uncover the ultimate driving force behind this unbelievable evil act; but, he does paint the systematic planning behind the genocide as well as the overwhelming fear the survivors encountered.

As Susan Sontag points out in the Preface to 'A Time for Machetes' we should all make the effort to understand what happened in Rwanda.....'a painful task we have no right to shirk'. I can only echo her sentiment that 'Everyone should read Hatzfeld's book'.

Dana says

Nope. Editorok potrebuješ, ?love?e. Štylistika fuj, objavujú sa postavy, ktoré nepredstaviš, miesta, ktoré asi máme pozna?... hrozne otravné, namáhavé ?ítanie.
