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The Reportage Discourse on Post-memory: *Casus of Un Papa de sang* by Jean Hatzfeld

**Reportażowy dyskurs o postpamięci.
Casus Un Papa de sang Jeana Hatzfelda**

ABSTRACT

This article refers to post-memory, which is treated today as very important problem appearing in contemporary literary reportage. The reflection on the memory of the second generation gains a special dimension in journalistic texts: on the one hand, it stands in opposition to the mass media's postulate of covering the current news; on the other hand, it allows us to pay attention to the situation of communities that are still struggling with the consequences of trauma several years after a war. The purpose of the research outlined in this sketch is to analyse the reportage *Un Papa de sang* by the French reporter Jean Hatzfeld, which deals with the trauma of the genocide in Rwanda, recorded in the memory of the second generation.

KEYWORDS:

reportage, Jean Hatzfeld, genocide, Rwanda, post-memory

ABSTRAKT

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest namysł nad problematyką postpamięci, stanowiącą dzisiaj niezwykle istotny temat pojawiający się we współczesnym reportażu literackim. Refleksja nad pamięcią drugiego pokolenia zyskuje w tekstach dziennikarskich szczególnie wymiar: z jednej strony stoi bowiem w opozycji do właściwego mediom masowym postulatu aktualności, z drugiej zaś pozwala zwrócić uwagę na sytuację społeczności, które wciąż jeszcze, kilkanaście lat po wojnie, zmagają się z jej konsekwencjami. Przedmiotem analiz nakreślonych w niniejszym szkicu jest reportaż *Więzy krwi* francuskiego reportera Jeana Hatzfelda, traktujący o traumie ludobójstwa w Rwandzie, utrwalonego w pamięci drugiego pokolenia.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:

reportaż, Jean Hatzfeld, ludobójstwo, Rwanda, postpamięć

Groups of texts marked by clear memorative intentions¹ may be nowadays extended – alongside artistic works – with numerous journalistic publications, the authors of which present a particularly attentive attitude towards the

¹ This term is used by Magdalena Horodecka in relation to *Papusza* by Angelika Kuźniak (179).

problem of memory. This theme returns especially in works concentrating on war-related topics, which is one of the most important human experiences of the 20th century.²

The aim of reporters is both to save the memory of direct witnesses of breakthrough events and, more and more often, to preserve the memories of their children and grandchildren growing up among the stories about war of the older generation.

Even a superficial reading of contemporary literary reportage³ shows how often their authors today deal with topics related to recent history and its social perception: both direct witnesses and their descendants can share with the writer a subjective reflection on their own (real or mediated) experience of war.

According to Pierre Nora, 'there was one history and there were many memories'.⁴ This experience, which has been transferred to the journalistic field, is becoming one of the most important challenges for contemporary reporters wishing to describe an event in which they did not participate directly. In this situation, when deciding to adopt the method of 'collecting voices' in their work, the reporter is faced with the necessity of playing the role of a listener who sees the value not so much in an objective discourse about the event as in the possibility of recording many (often highly varied) narratives about it. This kind of creative method was used by French journalist Jean Hatzfeld, who returned many times in recent years to the subject of the genocide committed in Rwanda.

² Due to the number and brutality of wars, Bogusław Wołoszański called the 20th century the age of blood ("Wiek krwi").

³ I define literary reportage as a genre that combines factography with the literary essence of its representation.

⁴ As quoted in Żakowski (64).

This paper is dedicated to the discussion about his book, released in 2015⁵ and entitled *Un Papa de sang*, which was significantly different from the previous publications by the French author. This report is an attempt to reach not so much the direct witnesses of the 1994 genocide, but their descendants, who keep in their memories the trauma of their parents and grandparents. Hatzfeld's book is a record of the memory inherited by young people born in the 1990s in a country where the repercussions of the dramatic events of about twenty years ago are still clearly audible. When analysing Hatzfeld's work, it is worth considering first and foremost the function and ways in which the writer presents the individual and community memory of the second generation. It also seems important to place the statements of the individual protagonists against the background of Hatzfeld's earlier works, documenting the experiences of the direct participants of the Rwandan genocide – both victims and executioners.

Among the postulates concerning the shape of literary reportage, Kazimierz Wolny-Zmorzyński and Andrzej Kaliszewski point out the topicality of the subject matter undertaken by the writer.⁶ In contrast to writers, limited only by their own imagination, journalists should concentrate on socially relevant and significant topics. It is therefore worth considering whether, and possibly to what extent, the issue of post-memory, and therefore memory inherited from direct witnesses of the Holocaust, is an important and interesting subject from a media point of view. Undoubtedly, the interest of reporters in this issue brings their work closer to that of a historian, but – and this should be stressed – it does not identify with it. Journalistic research on memory and post-memory above all activates a discourse marked by a subjective perspective, which usually does not fit into the traditional historical narrative. In this perspective, therefore, it comes much closer to literature, which repeatedly took up the subject of secondary witnesses in the 20th century.

POST-MEMORY, WAR, AND MEDIA

Research on post-memorial issues has been so far focussed mostly on the Holocaust and the history of World War II. However, Romana Kolarzowa suggests that

⁵ The publication was released in Polish bookstores in 2017.

⁶ Wolny-Zmorzyński, Kaliszewski, and Furman.

this issue should be looked at from a much broader perspective, also referring to other events related to the transmission of emotions evoked by 'eradication, disinheritance, dehumanisation, exploitation, and (sometimes) extermination'.⁷ Such an approach makes it possible to explore much more widely a subject which, for many reasons, attracts media attention today, with particular emphasis on the activities of reporters and war correspondents. According to Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, we are currently observing the phenomenon of the massification of post-memory,⁸ which is influenced by numerous exhibitions, literary or theatrical works, and films dedicated to this issue. Above all, the myth-creating and community-forming role of secondary memory is being activated, which seems to be particularly highlighted by the mass media in their narratives.

The issue of post-memory was introduced to the scientific discourse by American researcher Marianne Hirsch, who used it for the first time in an analysis of the comic book entitled *Maus* by Art Spiegelman.⁹ This term is defined by the literary scholar as

the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated. I have developed this notion in relation to children of Holocaust survivors, but I believe it may usefully describe other second-generation memories of cultural or collective traumatic events or experiences.¹⁰

In case of post-memory, we have to deal not so much with a record of the experience of witnesses as with their memories, filtered through the sensitivity of subsequent generations. The prefix 'post-' evokes the perspective of memories postponing; it connotes the fact of returning to past experiences that have not always been able to be fully resounded by the direct witnesses of events. In reportage, this issue seems to be of fundamental importance, since this genre – unlike literature – is not considered to have a primary artistic or therapeutic function, but serves primarily to document events. Dominic LaCapra has drawn attention

⁷ Kolarzowa 123.

⁸ Tokarska-Bakir.

⁹ These analyses were outlined in 1992.

¹⁰ Hirsch 22.

to this disruption in communication between successive generations, claiming that post-memorial narratives are often characterised by the elevation or suppression of certain issues, leading in fact to a distortion of the story.¹¹ As a result, the second-generation narratives are subject to strong aesthetic treatments, which pose a huge challenge for journalists.

These temptations – and it is worth stressing this – are visible not only in the case of stories kept by descendants of direct witnesses of events, but often also by an author (a researcher, historian, or reporter) trying to describe them.¹² Hirsch points out that memory is not based on facts, but on the creative work of imagination.¹³ It seeks to perpetuate the issues that have been silenced by the first generation, which does not find enough strength or motivation to share its history. The source of remembrance for the second generation is often therefore films and photographs or journalistic material and literature, which often seek to put the chaotic narrative of witnesses in order whilst simultaneously becoming its creative continuation. In the case of mass media, especially electronic media, it is not particularly common to reach for the reservoir of memories. The experiences of the second generation, although they are undoubtedly a valuable source of journalistic information, are concentrated around interpretation rather than facts. In a media dictionary, they are therefore defined as a kind of ‘anecdotal information’ that requires additional verification. A journalist’s analysis of a memory tells much more about those who maintain it than about real events.

In media discourse, the memory of the second generation undoubtedly requires a special way of articulating. Literary reportage, situated between journalism and literature, seems to be the most appropriate form for this. As a result of its evolution, various narrative strategies have been developed within its framework to convey as faithfully as possible the experience of the trauma of war or genocide. One of them is the method of ‘collecting voices’, which is used by such reporters as Hatzfeld or Svetlana Aleksiyevich and consists in quoting the protagonists’ extensive statements in independent speech. The practice of polyphonic reportage seems particularly justified in the case of topics related to the work of

¹¹ LaCapra 185–246.

¹² Hatzfeld has repeatedly signalled that his father had to flee the Holocaust all the way to Madagascar. He pointed out that many of his relatives died in concentration camps during World War II.

¹³ Hirsch 22.

memory. This form makes it possible to limit the subjectivity of authorial assessments in favour of presenting the extended memories of protagonists, quoted in the reporter's book without additional comments from the author. In such a case, the writer's aim is not so much to reach the truth of the story as to recreate and present to the reader the work of human memory, often mediated by various cultural texts.

In addition to reportage polyphony, contemporary reportage also finds other narrative strategies to record and save the voice of the second generation. It is therefore worth quoting some their representative examples, such as the one proposed by Magdalena Grzebałkowska in her book entitled *1945: War and peace*,¹⁴ in which she returns to the history of World War II. The journalist, revealing to the reader in one of her interviews the backstage of her work on the text, said, 'this is a book written from the perspective of a child. My heroes are people who were children or teenagers during the war.'¹⁵ The wartime memories of many of the characters mentioned in the volume, who were already elderly during the conversations with the journalist, were shaped by the experiences of their parents and grandparents. The post-memorial discourse is also activated by Filip Springer in his book *Miedzianka*,¹⁶ where he writes about the collapse of a small town entangled in the history of the Polish-German borderland. Reconstructing its history, the journalist often uses seemingly dependent speech. He is primarily interested in the memories of the descendants of the former inhabitants, who passed on from generation to generation the war experiences and legends about the magical reasons for the disappearance of Miedzianka. Wojciech Tochman's book *Today we will draw death*, which like Hatzfeld's publications, is dedicated to the Rwandan genocide,¹⁷ also draws on inherited memory. Going to Rwanda a dozen or so years after the dramatic events of 1994, the Polish journalist listened not only to the voice of the survivors, but also to the statements of the young generation coming after them.

At present, a literary reportage, taking the issues related to war or genocide into consideration, explores new areas of interest. The perspective of a participant

¹⁴ Grzebałkowska.

¹⁵ Sowińska.

¹⁶ Springer.

¹⁷ Tochman.

or witness to events – so clearly valued by the classics of the genre: Melchior Wańkiewicz, Ksawery Pruszyński, or Ernest Hemingway – contemporary reporters often replace the perspective of the listener and the restorer of events with that of the listener.¹⁸ A decade or even several decades after the end of fighting, they come to the areas where war was waged, recalling the testimony of the memory of the direct participants and their descendants. Literary reportage becomes a medium that seeks to extract from the area of oblivion experiences about which one should not remain silent. Journalists therefore do not focus solely on describing *hic et nunc*, but successfully combine past, present, and future into a collage of an often mythologised common history.

THE MEDIA TOWARDS THE GENOCIDE IN RWANDA

Critics reviewing *Un Papa de sang* seem to suggest that Hatzfeld is actually writing one book in his life,¹⁹ gradually enriching it with further chapters.²⁰ It is difficult for a researcher to disagree with this statement. The volume analysed in this article is already the fifth report on the Rwandan genocide by the French author. For fifteen years, Hatzfeld has been exploring the subject from a variety of angles. What is undoubtedly missing from the journalist's work is the perspective of a direct witness to the events of 1994. His earlier books – *La stratégie des antilopes*, *Dans le nu de la vie*, *Une saison de machettes*, and *Englebert des collines* were written by an author who went to Rwanda after the genocide and focussed primarily on the memory of the survivors. In these books, Hatzfeld confronted the memories of the executioners with those of the victims, consistently avoiding the explicit expression of his own opinions. *Un Papa de sang* therefore has the character of a kind of appendage to earlier publications, which focussed on the re-relationship of those who managed to survive one hundred days of the Rwandan genocide.

According to Grzegorz Siwor, the key category in Hatzfeld's thinking on genocide is the motive for silence²¹ – which does not necessarily attract the attention

¹⁸ Wolny-Zmorzyński indicates four types of disclosure of a journalist in a reportage text: as a participant, a witness, a listener, or event restorer (50–62).

¹⁹ Unfortunately, the journalist's work on the war in the former Yugoslavia is unfairly overlooked here; Cf. Hatzfeld "L'air de la guerre."

²⁰ Hetman.

²¹ Siwor 267–276.

of the commercial media, but is extremely important for the creator of literary reportage. Hatzfeld's texts make it possible to highlight a special kind of silence, in which for several years now there have been both those unwilling to settle accounts with the Hutus' past and those unwilling to return to the brutal events, the Tutsi. The reportage *Un Papa de sang* is an attempt to allow those who are twenty years away from the bloody attacks to speak out. In an interview for the daily newspaper *Le Monde*, Hatzfeld points out that the new generation of Rwandans does not always want to return to the events of 1994, and even seems surprised by the attention paid to them by the Western media:

Les enfants sont obligés de nier pour survivre. Ils ont été surpris que je prête attention à leur histoire, à leur vécu. Ils ne pensaient pas que leur avis puisse avoir un quelconque intérêt, encore moins la parole d'enfants de tueurs. On ne les interroge pas là-dessus.²²

Many young people, like their parents, also choose to remain silent. It is becoming a strategy for them to live in a society that treats the memory of the genocide as a kind of taboo that is not reverted to in public space. As Katarzyna Głowacka writes, there is an unwritten obligation in the state to forget, but complying with it may have long-term consequences: 'the policy of ethnic amnesia, which is being pushed through by the authorities, is increasingly objectionable [...] – the fact that the existing social antagonisms are not spoken of publicly does not mean that the problem disappears.'²³

The genocide in Rwanda was a dramatic event of all kinds. In a hundred days, approximately one million people lost their lives in fratricidal attacks by the Hutus against the Tutsis. Less than forty years after the end of the Second World War, the scenario of a large-scale murder was re-activated in a small, African country which, as Ryszard Kapuściński stressed on the pages of *Ebony*,²⁴ was not particularly interesting for the European media and their audience: even when it faced the consequences of the genocide. The topic resounded with great force in

²² "Dzieci są zmuszone zaprzeczać, aby przeżyć. Były zaskoczone, że zwracam uwagę na ich historię, na ich doświadczenie. Nie sądziły, że ich opinia może mieć jakiegokolwiek znaczenie, tym bardziej zaś słowo dzieci zabójców. Nie pytamy ich o to" [translated by the author] J. Hatzfeld "Au Rwanda".

²³ Głowacka 46.

²⁴ Kapuściński 192.

a variety of artistic messages, ranging from films such as *Hotel Rwanda* in 2004 and *The Birds Are Singing in Kigali* in 2017 to music, e.g. the song *Cut the Tall Trees* [*Ściąć wysokie drzewa*] by the band Myslovitz.

Today, researchers dealing with the Rwandan genocide place a strong emphasis on the involvement of local media, not so much in reporting the crimes as in calling for them to be committed. As Kofi Annan said, 'the media were used in Rwanda to spread hatred, to dehumanise people, and even to guide the *genocidaires* toward their victims.'²⁵ The Rwandan media, with particular reference to an extremely popular radio station, broadcast propaganda messages and openly exhorted the extermination of the Tutsi, with the metaphorical phrase 'tall trees should be felled'. The radio station RTLM and the newspaper *Kangua* played a significant role in this process, and in their messages they unambiguously indicated the enemy to be annihilated. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has precisely documented their actions to spread hatred:

The newspaper and the radio explicitly and repeatedly [...] targeted the Tutsi population for destruction. Demonising the Tutsi as having inherent evil qualities, equating the ethnic group with the 'enemy' and portraying its women as seductive enemy agents, the media called for the extermination of the Tutsi ethnic group.²⁶

Researchers and media professionals stress that in the 1990s European public opinion was much more interested in events in the Balkans than in the situation in Rwanda. The Americans, in turn, at that time, were following O. J. Simpson's trial with curiosity,²⁷ which then dominated the narrative conducted by the media. The media silence about Rwanda is also due to the absence of reporters from many leading Western media outlets in the country, motivated by the fear of losing their lives. The events of 1994 therefore lacked outside witnesses and observers. Paradoxically, the subject of this genocide only returned with increased force in media discourse a dozen or so years after the end of the war. The memories of direct witnesses are compared with the memory of the second generation, which, by actively following the materials published on the Internet, believes that the media are jointly responsible for shaping the memory of events.

²⁵ Annan IX.

²⁶ Thompson 2.

²⁷ Dallaire 14.

UN PAPA DE SANG TOWARDS EXPERIENCING POST-MEMORY

The motif of a saved and lost memory is undoubtedly the main compositional axis of Hatzfeld's book, which already reveals its motivation on the front pages: the desire to look at the Rwandan genocide from the perspective of young people. The journalist is aware of the strong entanglement in the history of the second generation; although he does not remember the events of 1994, for several years he still treats them as the main point of reference for constructing his own biography.

Nineteen years have passed: the time when man grows up. I have met many young people who have been accompanied by these returning phantoms since childhood. Everyone has dealt, as they could, with the story that has become part of their lives.²⁸

Un Papa de sang is a record of the independent statements made by young people – both Tutsi and Hutu – to whom the journalist gives the floor, preceded by information about their age, their parents' names, and their membership in either of the above-mentioned groups. Using the method of 'voice collection', the reporter – and this is worth emphasising – does not leave the quoted statements without his own commentary, although he prefers to replace evaluations and opinions with quoting important facts from the life of the hero. Each time, Hatzfeld presents the reader with a historical background that allows for a better understanding of the fate of individual characters and their relations. These statements are often a kind of intertextual reference to the journalist's earlier publications, trying to situate the history of young Rwandans in the context of their relations' experiences. Memory and post-memory, although often forming completely separate narratives, are complementary for the journalist.

Un Papa de sang was conceived as a volume of tripartite construction. The first part, entitled 'Memory', is a collection of statements made by young Rwandans who return in their memories to events before their birth or early childhood. The second part, 'Parents', presents a series of short stories about the same historical moment in history, recorded in the memory of the mothers and fathers of the main characters. In the third part, entitled 'The Future', the reporter once

²⁸ Hatzfeld, "Un Papa" 19.

again gives a voice to the young interviewees, but this time he directs his gaze to what is yet to happen. Hatzfeld, starting with wartime memories, asks the young people about their plans for the years to come. The use of the clamp construction allows the journalist to create a bridge between the Rwandan past and the future and to show how strongly the two spheres intertwine. The memory of the genocide is undoubtedly one of the main topics to which Rwandans return in talks with their families. By comparing the functioning of the post-memorial memory of young people with the memories of their parents, the reporter gains the opportunity to look at the issue from two perspectives. It turns out, however, that the two have more in common than in opposition. Both the first and second generation, despite the lapse of time, still struggle with the inexpressibility of human language. The genocide for parents and their children is becoming the most important element of intergenerational identification. The stories about it as well as the silence that surrounds it have a boundary-forming function.

The protagonists of *Un Papa de sang* present the journalist with a scheme of constructing memories of the event: they inform how in recent years, out of half-truths, guesswork, and secretly heard utterances, they have recreated in their imagination an image of the year 1994. In the statements of young people, a clear pattern of memory work can be seen. The accumulation of extremely similar stories introduces a kind of thematic redundancy into the pages of this volume; in this case, however, it seems to be intentional and fully justified. This repetitiveness, so clearly highlighted by the reporter, makes it possible to put forward a thesis about the existence of a kind of social grammar of constructing the framework of memory: from total ignorance and unconsciousness, it gradually evolves (with human participation in the life of the community) towards ever clearer images, additionally marked by a strong emotional burden. The following statement by one of the heroines of the book could undoubtedly have been signed by her peers:

I think that when I was nine years old, the genocide really shook me up. What happened? I can't remember anymore. I think that one day I set my ears on what people say. My mother mentioned some details and explained something to the people who visited us. I could not understand it. I was confused. Can a child imagine the neighbours chasing Tutsi with machetes in their hands?²⁹

²⁹ Ibidem 113.

For the young Tutsis in particular, 1994 still remains an important reference year, although, as they themselves point out, many of them do not have any personal memories of that period. Despite this, they reconstruct the fate of their parents and loved ones with great precision, and with a cult of reportage and detail they look for information about the genocide on the Internet and watch films about it. Their memory is supposed to be a tool for preserving the testimonies of the survivors. The reactions of young Hutus seem to be much more varied. A frequent response to the deeds committed by their parents is still silence or embarrassment.

The memory of the second generation is often constructed on the basis of preserved photographs, which are a tool for recording and visualising social experiences. The role of photography in the process of commemorating breakthrough events was clearly stressed by Susan Sontag, who wrote that

photographs can be more memorable than films because they record separate units of time, not its flow. Television is a stream of carelessly selected images, each of which erases its predecessor from consciousness of the viewer. A motionless photograph is a moment endowed with the privilege of permanence.³⁰

For young Rwandans, photographs not only become important evidence in the case, but also serve as a memory guard. The protagonists of Hatzfeld's book emphasise that they play the role of a tool for restoring lost memory, reconstructing a coherent narrative about the event from individual memories. These two aspects are emphasised by Ange Uwase – a nineteen-year-old Tutsi:

I am interested in the photographs from the time of the genocide. I can see them forever, because I was a child then and I don't remember anything. It's a pity that people don't want to see them in order to explore the subject of massacres in this way. [...] The photographs save from oblivion more effectively than mourning ceremonies; they contradict the words of denialists or those who do not have a taste for the massacres.³¹

He treats the photographs from the period of genocide as a transparent, almost unquestionable document that mimics the reality of several years ago. They

³⁰ Sontag 23.

³¹ Hatzfeld, "Un Papa" 82–83.

function as a kind of substitute for individual memory, filling the gap generated by the silence of direct witnesses of events. They are also a tool for the temporary circulation of memories, because they transfer images that are important for a given community, offering access to them to future generations.³²

Young Tutsi and Hutu have a similar experience of rooting out. It is connected not only with the impossibility of faithfully recollecting the events of 1994, but also with the impossibility of connecting with the history of one's own family, which was taken away from the youngest generation with the death or imprisonment of the family. This feeling is expressed both by the descendants of the victims who died during the genocide and by the young generation of the Hutus whose fathers spent their last years in prison. The protagonists of *Un Papa de sang* repeatedly draw attention to the fact that they have been cut off from their roots and that the generational bond has been broken, denying the individual a sense of belonging to a particular community. In the statement of a Tutsi girl we read that

the ravages have harmed family relationships. Wisdom has suffered from the lack of older generations; we neglect daily celebrations. No-one is telling us how to behave towards other people, towards the elderly, and there is no-one to chastise us for our careless dress.³³

A similar experience was shared by many young Rwandans, many times in conversations with Hatzfeld, emphasising the shame, fear, or guilt inherited from their ancestors. Most of those questioned admit that 1994 is still a kind of taboo in school or private contacts, which neither the young Tutsis nor their Hutu peers want to break through. Hatzfeld's interlocutors agree that the relationship between the two groups is nowadays a sphere of understatement; many topics in public discourse are not addressed, even though they are one of the focal points of reflection not only of the older generation, but also of the younger generation.

As Maurice Halbwachs pointed out, the image of the past, as constituted by individual groups, is often distorted by various factors.

Facts – in general – are selected by individuals and communities according to their destiny of being forgotten or remembered. This process is initiated both by

³² Łaguna-Raszkievicz 155–163.

³³ Hatzfeld, op. cit. 28.

the sender and the recipient of the message.³⁴ This filter seems to function more strongly even in the case of post-memory, shaped not only by the stories heard from loved ones, but also by various media narratives taken from the press, radio, television, or the Internet. This last one is often referred to by the young protagonists of *Un Papa de sang*, stressing its role in informing about the genocide, but also helping to work out fears built mainly on the foundations of ignorance and silence. In his earlier books, Hatzfeld presented the Rwandan genocide against the background of events connected with the extermination of Jews during the World War II; this time he shows how much the development of the media, especially electronic media, has changed the way trauma is experienced. Thanks to them, information has become available at one's fingertips, which is what the individuals in *Un Papa de sang* say:

I started to watch television programmes and listen carefully in my social lessons. It was only later that I started to browse the Internet, looking for information. When I was feeling up to it. I got used to the genocide.³⁵

On the basis of the statements made by the witnesses and their descendants that Hatzfeld collected, a kind of topography of the post-mortem can be formed. In the statements of the Rwandans, certain places, which are extremely clearly marked by the memory of the genocide, play an equally important role as people do. This spatial dimension of memory returns in the statements of many representatives of the younger generation, for whom certain landscapes in a way automatically evoke a sense of pain and suffering, referring the viewer to events that took place in such scenery for several years. We are therefore talking about a space in which negative emotions are evoked not through a simple reminder, but through a kind of work of imagination. For the second generation, some places lose their ordinariness and neutrality; they are permanently marked by the stigma of history. In case of the Rwandan genocide, the role of *lieux de memoire* – to use the term of Pierre Nora³⁶ – They are filled, above all, with swamps and hills, generating sad memories of both young Tutsi and Hutu. Importantly, as we read in the Hatzfeld report, this space has an extremely strong community-forming

³⁴ Halbwachs.

³⁵ Hatzfeld, op. cit. 29.

³⁶ Nora 7–24.

potential. It evokes a sense of trauma, not only among the direct witnesses, but also among their descendants, who in their statements repeatedly declare fear and aversion to the places mentioned. In an excerpt from a representative of the Hutu, we read:

I never went to the swamp, I did not dare to offer it to any colleague. I did not have the opportunity to go there with someone who would tell me everything. I do not know enough about this to talk about it honestly with my friends.³⁷

An analogous attitude to the place of memory is presented by the Tutsi:

Did I go into the forest on Kayumba Hill, where my dad had to run away from the killers? No, I was not at our Arab neighbours' house in Kigali either. I do not visit these places, as I prefer not to go to the mausoleums.³⁸

The people in Hatzfeld's book treat the traumatised *lieux de memoire* as a kind of archive of memories, mediated mainly by photographs, historical documents, or media stories. They agree that confronting these emotions would only be possible with the help of a guide, the role of which could be played by someone close to them; in the face of silence, returning to the swamps or hills becomes emotionally too difficult or even impossible for young people.

It is estimated that in Rwanda between 2,000 and even 5,000 children were born as a consequence of the rape of Tutsi women; today they are described in publicistic discourse as '*les enfants mauvais souvenir*'³⁹ ['children of bad memories']. Their birth is burdened with a bad memory, which is kept not only by the women harmed by the Hutus, but also by their sons and daughters. Although these children do not remember 1994, it has fundamentally affected the way their identity is formed. Born of a Tutsi mother and a Hutu father, young people often experience rejection, even from their loved ones. They become a kind of hostage to memory; on the one hand, they enjoy not having memories of the genocide, but on the other hand they are stigmatised by those close to them. The subject of *les enfants mauvais souvenir* is often raised in contemporary media discourse, just to

³⁷ Hatzfeld, op. cit. 47.

³⁸ Ibidem 85.

³⁹ Mukangendo 50.

mention the famous photojournalism of Jonathan Torgovnik, who as a Newsweek employee came to Rwanda to photograph AIDS victims. However, he returned from his visit there with a series of photographs depicting mothers with children conceived in an act of war violence.

Hatzfeld also writes extensively about the 'children of bad memories', quoting the statements of seventeen-year-old Nadine Umutesi. The heroine of his text, although she lives with the burden of war experiences, is lucky to grow up in a family that loves her. She is only told about her biological father by outsiders: neighbours, friends, and classmates. In the reporter's memoirs, interestingly enough, there are no negative comments about her biological father. As a particularly difficult task, Nadine instead mentions the social stigma which she is unable to resist effectively:

In fact, I feel trapped, I have already told you. Sometimes, I would like to get sick of the words in which my story is contained in order to put away my sadness. I do not want to remain in melancholy, I do not want to hear about it.⁴⁰

She based her memories of genocide on the basis of stories she heard (often even against her will). As a consequence, she experiences the burden of memory in an extremely painful way, which becomes not only a burden but also a stigma for her. In public opinion, the father's transgression is transferred to the child. The girl declares that she is understandingly looking at the suffering of the Tutsis, who want to talk about the enormity of their tragedy. For her, however, the only desired state seems to be silence, which can suppress painful memories.

SUMMARY

The issue of memory has been returning with particular force in contemporary literary reportage in recent years. An explanation for this should be sought in the conviction of journalists that it is necessary to document the testimonies of slowly departing generations, whose generational experience was that of war in the last century.

⁴⁰ Hatzfeld, *op. cit.* 61.

The turn of reportage work towards the problem of post-memory is an attempt to expand the view of wartime events to include the view of those who have been instilled with a sense of trauma in various stories passed on from generation to generation.

For journalistic texts that (unlike literature) value facts over interpretations, opening up to the voice of the second generation may seem as difficult as it seems surprising. It is a great challenge for a reporter to separate pure description from commentary.

Basing the journalistic narrative on inherited memory entails various consequences that Hatzfeld tried to overcome in *Un Papa de sang* by confronting the post-memorial narratives of the young protagonists with the stories of their relatives – direct witnesses of the events. This book, in a layer of meta-textual comments, is above all a reflection on the limitations of human language, the problem of its inexpressibility, which both the people Hatzfeld interviewed and he himself face. In the narrative of the French reporter, the memory is presented as a kind of stigma that young Rwandans want to get rid of at all costs. Against the backdrop of his dramatic stories, Hatzfeld draws a picture of their ‘normal’, as it might seem, life: young people enjoy watching European music videos on the Internet, going to the cinema, cheering on their favourite sports teams, and gaining an education. *Un Papa de sang* should therefore be read not so much as a journalistic story about an event, but rather as a reportage text on its social perception.

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