and life in general. I advocate that this is one of the many reasons why fieldwork can be life-changing and attractive to undertake for those venturing into the study of expressive African art and culture.

Having the satisfaction of being in this field for a good number of years, I can personally attest to the stories and ways in which those involved in it have been deeply touched by the many individuals encountered in their research experiences, especially those they learned from in their fieldwork. Many of these individuals were directly responsible for our successes and, more often than not, became not only trusted mentors but lifelong friends. My focus here is not to speak only to what a researcher gains from the study of African expressive cultures or from their fieldwork experiences. I am rather interested in how self-reflective we are as scholars and how we ought to be more transparent with our fieldwork and the relationships that develop from such experiences.

With the growing awareness of the importance of being transparent, ethical, and self-reflexive in scholarship and reporting of research in all areas of the academy (from translation studies to the sciences), I argue that the study of African expression is well equipped to be a leading voice and example. Self-reflexivity has long been part of fieldwork in Africa. While personal reflection is indeed important, it alone is not enough. And perhaps this is another contribution the study of African expressive cultures could offer broader interests with personal reflection and transparency in academia: We ought to also strive to be mindful of how we should forge reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships that not only touch and change us, but also, and specifically in the case of fieldwork, positively impact the individuals from which we benefit. And if we are successful in exposing the next generation of students to the fruits of fieldwork, we, at the same time, provide guidance for how to be mindful of the ethics and reciprocity involved.

EARLY EXPOSURES TO PERSONALIZED REFLECTIONS ON FIELD RESEARCH

If I think back to my years of training in undergraduate and graduate school, I fondly recall stories Fred Smith, Robin Poynor, and others shared with me—mostly during informal discussions outside of class, stories which imparted a palpable level of humanity to their research and personal field experience that excited me to study African expressive cultures. So many stories and life lessons that teachers, mentors, and colleagues have shared over the years come to mind. However, a question I raise here is, beyond sharing these wonderful experiences with each other in informal ways, how well do we forefront the ways in which we have been touched and changed by the study of African expressive cultures and people who grant us access to their experiences in more formal ways?

In terms of the more formal outcomes of what we do, many of us first think of the publications resulting from fieldwork. I am not advocating, of course, that all articles, essays, catalogues, chapters in volumes, and books consist of merely of self-reflexive anecdotes. What I am suggesting here may not be entirely appropriate for every publishing venue. However, to support my point, especially for those who have done fieldwork, what I am encouraging already exists, albeit much more subtly: in the front matter of books by way of acknowledgments and/or buried in footnotes. The question can be raised: Are there more direct and tangible ways for us to weave into our scholarly writing what we have personally learned and gained in our attempts to explore and understand African expression? Such lessons may be discipline-specific; however, I suspect, even more of what we gained are the broader life lessons and the more nuanced ways in which we begin to understand and view this world and our place within it.

Personal anecdotes are shared in publications in several ways. Artists reflect on their own experience and researchers write their own fieldwork into their studies. Self-reflective artists often put their ideas, approaches, and expressive trajectories into print. Among these are Oche Okeke, Sokari Douglas Camp, and Ibrahim El-Salahi—just three among

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