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“Invisible” and “unheard” children in fragile contexts – reflections from field research among the Ba’Aka in the Central African Republic

Summary

In the present article I outline the situation of children who belong to an indigenous community of Ba’Aka Pygmies, a group inhabiting the *Sangha-Mbaéré* region of rainforest in the Central African Republic. These children are inscribed in the categories of “invisible” and “unheard” children. They are also deprived of the right to be properly researched. This is due to a number of external and internal factors which shape the contemporary reality of the formerly colonised country. Despite the fact that the Central African Republic broke free from colonial oppression, since 1960s it has been experiencing internal colonisation and civilising missions by the countries of the Global North so as to be “fruitfully” written in the narrative of national development. Thus, referring to key categories, I discuss postcolonial representations: images and narratives perceived through the perspective of a female researcher who, since 2002, has conducted field research among excluded and marginalised children and young people in fragile (vulnerable) contexts in Central Africa.

Keywords: “invisible” children, “unheard” children, fragile contexts, field research, colonial and postcolonial representations

One sunny day in February 2012, while doing research¹ in the village of Monasao in the Central African Republic (CAR), inhabited predominantly by the Ba’Aka, a group of young Pygmies² rushed to me to announce that “two white men with cameras had ar-

¹ A study within research projects: „A child’s right to education as a condition and a chance of its social emancipation. A diagnosis of the state of ORA method education among the Bantu, Ba’Aka, and Mbororo in a culturally and ethnically heterogeneous region: Monasao and Beleboke in the Central African Republic”, „Everyday life of Ba’Aka children in the Central African Republic” 2002–2012.

² Ba’Aka is an ethnic name of a small group of Pygmies living in the Sangha Mbaéré region of the Central African Republic. The Ba’Aka are called “Pygmies” by biological and colonial anthropologists (ab. 1933 Paul Schebesta introduced the term officially in his academic publications, replacing an older designation: “Negrillo”. Earlier, in 1887 the term was used by H.M. Stanley – a Welsh-American journalist and explorer). “Numerous populations spread out across Central Africa have been named Pygmies by Western explorers, since the 19th century” (Verdu and Destro-Bisol, 2012: 1). The term “Pygmies” functions also in contemporary anthropological research and international socio-political discourse (more: Hawlett, 2014: xix). It is sometimes perceived as pejorative and as M. Kisliuk writes, “while awaiting a more neutral

rived". The "white men" were European journalists who had come searching for traces of "disappearing primitive cultures", as they hurried to stress and ask: "Can you show us the real Pygmies?". I was at a loss hearing the rather strange question, wondering at the same time how to answer without offending the autochthonous inhabitants of the land who had accepted me as their guest. I explained that they were in the right place: in a Ba'Aka "Pygmy" village, and suggested that if asked, the inhabitants would not mind showing the guests how they lived. How great was my astonishment when I heard the journalists say that they would not "'watch' [UMM: photograph] Pygmies with Bantu faces. These are not the real "Pygmies". These "Pygmies" – as I added in my thoughts – do not fit into the categories of colonial anthropology: of "primitive" people and "savages". After all, these "Pygmies" live in a village, they cultivate crops, send children to school and are trying to survive in new conditions which globalisation makes them face.

I can still hear these words inscribed in the modern rhetoric of power, the imperial rhetoric of words, and I find consolation in the fact that the Ba'Aka – not knowing English – did not understand the offence. These words made me think. They confirmed the belief that the colonial perception and usurpation of voices and images fitted into one true image, reflecting one truth, is still present on many layers of relations between the world of African and the world of European countries. What is conducive to the perception of Others, as a particular group, a particular unity which differs from "US" – as Henri Tajfel wrote – is social categorisation (Tajfel 1981: 144–167). Despite the fact that the conditions of human functioning on the earthly globe have changed since colonial times, the basic structures of knowledge about the social world (cognitive patterns, scripts, common knowledge), and more importantly, the matrix of stereotypical perceptions remain the same. Favouritism towards one's own group – "US" versus distancing oneself from and

alternative, or at least a time when *pygmy* will be free of pejorative connotations, it is preferable to use the term each group uses for itself (Efe, Mbuti, Twa, BaAka, and others), reserving *pygmy* for general use" (Kisliuk, 2000: 298). In fact, many contemporary Pygmies (to use the terminology of biological, colonial, and many contemporary social anthropologists and NGO employees) in Central Africa express this preference for the use of their self-designated names. However, while "Survival International" – an NGO which conducts activities for the rights of tribal peoples around the globe – admits that "the term 'Pygmy' has gained negative connotations", it also adds that the name "has been reclaimed by some indigenous groups as a term of identity". Source: <http://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/pygmies>. The term is connected to a number of problematic questions discussed by researchers. I would like to draw attention to the strong diversification of the population referred to by researchers as "Pygmies", including its strong cultural diversification related to beliefs, the preservation of traditions, mythology, and dialects. As Verdu and Destro-Bisol write: "(...) cultural anthropologists observed that the various Pygmy populations do not share a common myth of origin. Most of them do not know each other and are unaware of a common designation as Pygmies from outsiders" (2012: 1). It must also be added that the term "Pygmies" is recognised in international political space and "widely recognised by the public" (Hawlett, 2014: xix). Using the term is connected with visibility, the presence of this group in various spheres of science and life. The difficulty related to the term lies in the fact that there is no single, common term which could replace it. Thus, in the text I will use the name of the Ba'Aka and refer to the self-designated names of other ethnic groups, while the term "Pygmies" will be used with reference to the context, literature, social, and historical aspects.

discrimination against other groups – the Others, is still one of the predominant patterns of social order. For the European discourse is based on the constant orientalisation of the Other³. A pejorative image present in the discourse referring to alien groups, recognised from colonial messages, can be found both in the aspect of internal integration practices and external communication codes.

The interactions taking place as a result of intercultural contacts redefine the meanings of relations between the observers and the observed. The substantial difference lies in the space of confrontation and interpretation as well as the deconstruction of relations between the observers and the observed connected with the position of power. It manifests itself in the postcolonial distortion of perceiving the inhabitants of the Global South (Bush 2007; Slater 2008; Mignolo 2014) as inferior, inadequate, failing to meet the criteria set by the inhabitants of the Global North who watch their lives exposed in the media: on tv, the Internet or the cinema, and bring humanitarian and developmental aid⁴ (aid, whose rules are conditioned by actors from the Global North). It also finds its reflection in the re-colonised images and voices of those who have not been granted freedom of speech nor the right to decide about how they are represented. Hunger, illness, extreme poverty, massacres, and war are the best selling and most eagerly bought images as is news in the world of western consumptionism (Markowska-Manista, 2012). Much of media news covering the conflict and civil war in Central African Republic, showing its victims, perpetrators and witnesses, emphasises the stereotypes which functioned before the appearance of direct contact and which are formed during aid interventions. To aggravate the misrepresentation of information, there are frequent cases of news articles which are merely translations from other Internet sites, shocking the readers with drastic photographs which, at times, do not have any connection to the situation being described. Such representations exemplify cultural inappropriateness and Europocentrism. They also demonstrate the approach of taking the

³ More: Wolff, Iskandar, Wilczura, Szulecki, Busza: *Kmicic je kebab... „Orientalizm” po polsku?*, „Kultura Liberalna” no 95 (45/2010) of 2 November 2010, <http://kulturaliberalna.pl/2010/11/02/wolff-iskandar-wilczura-szulecki-busza-kmicic-je-kebab%E2%80%A6-%E2%80%99Orientalizm%E2%80%9D-po-polsku/> [accessed: 18.11.2016].

⁴ What I have in mind are, first of all, the unequal relations between the recipients (the inhabitants of the Global South) and providers (the inhabitants of the Global North) of support, which is sometimes characterised by disregard, arrogance, and a sense of superiority or indulgence towards the inhabitants of African countries. More on the subject: A. Leszczyński, *Zbawcy mórz oraz inne afrykańskie historie*, Warszawa 2013. Leszczyński, like L. Poltman in the book: *The Crisis Caravan: What's Wrong with Humanitarian Aid?* (2011), discusses the mindless, short-sighted aid activities, inappropriate for the reality of the local population's everyday life, by drawing attention to the multiple meaning of the term rationalism and the differences on understanding and translation of behaviour in a socially and culturally distinct reality. A similar perspective is presented by P. Gill in the book *Famine and Foreigners: Ethiopia since Live Aid* (2010). The author presents the history of Ethiopia's fight with hunger and poverty and its struggle with foreign agencies providing humanitarian aid. Gill raises a question about the sense of aid directed by the West at those in need and dependant on the permission of governments of the accepting countries. He asks if any of the great promises of the world have been fulfilled and whether aid experts are right. Have the countries – recipients of aid – been allowed to realise their own visions?

line of least resistance in shocking the recipients with words and images related to other people's problems. This pessimistic vision is further aggravated by frequent cases of inadequate representations of Central Africa and its inhabitants in media and educational space, worse still, ignoring this part of the world altogether. For many years the one-sided, exaggerated images of poor, suffering, anonymous people have been used by the media, missionaries and humanitarian organisations not only for the purpose of increasing sensitivity and building awareness of the scale of human suffering, but also for fundraising purposes. For a number of charity organisations, images of naked, starving and orphaned African children have become instruments to obtain funding, gain power, and realise additional agenda. This pornography of poverty is certainly effective in drawing the attention of potential donors, but, on the other end of the spectrum, it also reinforces the artificial divide between the rich North and the poor, supposedly powerless South.

Postcolonial representations of the African continent also exploit landscapes, exoticism, as well as sexuality and tribalism. Scarlett Cornelissen writes that Africa is represented as an "archetypal otherness", where Western tourists can renew their lost bond with nature (Cornelissen 2005: 779). In the news – both in its content and images – journalists and NGO employees focus on wars, conflicts, disasters, poverty, apathy, suffering, and despair. The views of Africans – the recipients of aid initiatives – are still cited very rarely. This one-sided representation forms misleading concepts of their everyday lives and perpetuates the sense of the power and superiority of Western societies.

Power is legitimised through visibility. Thus, power inequality affects most acutely those peoples and communities which have been anathemised, excluded, trapped in injustice, not permitted to decide about themselves, and are voiceless, yet not by choice. Zygmunt Bauman calls them useless, "redundant" people (2005; 2013) – a waste of the globalisation process, yet, waste which is constantly "reproduced". Among the most common groups included in the category of "waste people", "people destined for recycling", is homo sacer – an excluded person, a victim of the new global order. It is an individual outlawed "(...) from the authority of human law and, simultaneously, not subject to divine law. (...) Homo sacer is a person who is not defined by any set of established laws and who is not entitled to natural human rights preceding legal regulations" (Bauman 2005: 54).

One of such usurped groups, but also groups which consist of multiple homo sacer individuals and which are invisible for the majority of the world, is the indigenous children – Ba'Aka children from the Central African Republic living in the villages of Belemboke, Monasao, Mabondo and nearby settlements. It is the Ba'Aka that I would like to dedicate my text to.

Colonial and postcolonial images of the "Pygmies"

In the present text I would like to outline the situation of children who belong to the Ba'Aka, a group inhabiting the *Sangha-Mbaéré* region of the Central African Republic, and who are inscribed in the categories of "invisible" and "unheard" children. These are

also children who are deprived of the right to be properly researched (Beazley et al. 2009; Ennew et al. 2009). This is due to a number of external and internal factors shaping the contemporary reality of the formerly colonised country. The Central African Republic broke free from colonial oppression (Lomba 2011), however, since the 1960s it has been experiencing internal colonisation and civilising missions by the countries of the Global North so as to be “fruitfully” written in the narrative of national development.

I would like to outline the problem in question from the perspective of a white, European female researcher who, since 2002, has conducted field research among the Ba’Aka – excluded and marginalised children and young people in the Central African Republic in contexts which are fragile (vulnerable). Their fragility is a consequence of the unstable political situation in this part of the world (upheavals, coup d’états, civil wars) and difficult socio-economic conditions (one of the poorest countries despite the rich reserves of natural resources). It is also an aftermath of the diverse cultural conditioning which generates the escalation of religious violence as well as the increasing disparities between the population belonging to traditional cultures (defined as forest population), remaining on the peripheries of villages, and the population of dominant ethnic groups inhabiting villages and towns.

What is more, the problems of adults’ and children’s everyday reality in fragile contexts are overlapped by the colonial and postcolonial dimensions of hunter-gatherers⁵ entanglement, which seem to be particularly accentuated in research, literary, and media discourse. Using the term “research through imperial eyes”, Tuhiwai Smith points to the power which is resident not only in conducting research but first and foremost, in representations of Others (more: Wilson 2001). Western research and ways of representing Others are also encoded in imperial and colonial discourses and written in colonial languages. In contemporary popular science publications, guidebooks and travel books one can still find examples of an imperial perception of autochthonous populations, including hunter-gatherers from the former French colony of Ubangui and Shari (more: Cordell 1988: 150–170) (presently the Central African Republic). The entanglement in question refers to the entrapment which the Ba’Aka experienced and still experience in three dimensions: systemic, interactional (referring to interethnic relations in the phase of the transformation from a semi-nomadic to sedentary and village mode of living) as well as in the dimension of foreign representations, thus, representations of the “Ba’Aka”, but not by the “Ba’Aka” (more: Markowska-Manista 2014). As early as in the colonial period the “Pygmies” were recognised as communities which were immaterial to the dominant political order (Ahluwalia 2000: 11) and as redundant relics of the past, left on the margins of modernisation. Since the 1970s, in the independent countries of Central Africa, hunter-gatherers have attempted to maintain their social integrity and the peculiar identity systems based on traditional beliefs. This approach is linked to a struggle with authoritarian representations of the ethnocentric focal point of “the only appropriate knowledge” (as Western culture de-

⁵ It must be indicated that the term “forest people, while at first preferable to pygmy, inadvisedly attaches to a people an essentialised place” (Kisliuk 2000: 298).

fined itself) which shape a wider discourse and the attitude to indigenous populations. For decades, authors and travellers accepted the Pygmies and their life in the equatorial forest as an excellent subject of adventure stories for children. Infantilisation was an instrument of the colonisers' imperial leadership and referred to all indigenous inhabitants of Africa, both those remaining in the conquered territories and "objects" transported to exhibitions on the European and American continent. An example of an infantilised "child of humanity", a precious "exhibit" in the scientific demonstrations of the stages of human evolution displayed at exhibitions in American cities was a Pygmy Ota Benga. Benga, born in 1881 in Congo, was captured and transported to America where he was caged along with a parrot and an orangutang and turned into an exhibit in the Bronx Zoo in New York. In the dimension of ideological perceptions, his subsequent release and placement in an orphanage (Benga was reported to be 23) levelled Pygmies with children.

The stereotypical images and narratives of indigenous people which are present in public discourse – both the European and Central African – and which present them as "backward" and "primitive", are still a source of a number of problems and contribute to the perpetuation of their negative images (more about negative images and prejudice: Fusco 1994: 143–167; Jahoda 1999; Robinson, Picard 2009). Additionally, we are faced with media descriptions and advertisements of globalised tourism encouraging people to visit the last virgin places of planet Earth (national parks, nature reserves), with "disappearing cultures" as their highlights. Despite the fact that on a certain level such tourism refers to an ethnographic idea of learning about Others in their everyday life environments, in the dimension of perception it recalls the 19th and 20th century observations of "objects" exhibited for public view – the human zoos (more: Blanchard et al. 2008). It also illustrates the commercialisation of tradition. Contemporary tourist expeditions to unspoilt territories⁶ colonised by Western powers, with the purpose of searching for primeval cultures and meeting the "primitive inhabitants of the jungle", are burdened with a (conscious and unconscious) recreation of elements of their own culture by autochthonous populations, treated as commodity. Colonial ideology has become rooted in mass culture and, according to researchers from *Association pour la Connaissance de l'Histoire de l'Afrique Contemporaine*⁷, has not been reworked in the postcolonial societies of former colonisers and those formerly colonised (more: Markowska-Manista 2014). After all, colonial and postcolonial identities are not permanent, but change constantly and influence each other.

⁶ This refers to contemporary forms of ecotourism. In its original form, ecotourism aimed at maintaining the long-lasting, sustainable development of resources and tourist attractions of a particular region or place through: integrating tourist activities with the goals of environmental care and socio-economic life, shaping new attitudes and behaviour patterns in tourists and organisers of tourist activities which sensitise them to the living situation of local populations, and the sustainable use of cultural, social and economic potential of a particular area. In the case of tourist locations leased or bought by foreign companies and foreign investors, it may often be difficult to speak of the sustainable development of resources and respect for the rights of autochthonous populations. More on the subject of ecotourism: M. Honey, *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?*, 2nd ed., Washington, DC: Island Press, 2008.

⁷ <http://www.achac.com/> [accessed: 18.11.2016].

The systemic and beyond systemic dimensions of entanglement in stereotypes and the prejudice referring to the Pygmies which is passed on from one generation to the next, seem to be deeply rooted in Central African societies. At times, the rooting is so deep that many Pygmies do not even question the social practices of stratification, marginalisation or discrimination which they face. The era of colonialism in Central Africa has left its traces in further – postcolonial relations based on the conditions of coercion and oppression. They are seen in inequalities and socio-economic relations which are difficult to overcome and which were constructed between African Pygmy and Bantu populations (to use the terms functioning in, among others, biological and colonial anthropology). The consequence of colonialism is also evident in Western, stereotypical representations of the Pygmies. These were formed on the basis of colonial relations (from a European perspective), and not on attempts to understand or accept information from the representatives of hunter-gatherer cultures, including a recognition of the perspective of children.

“Pygmies” – the contemporary “avatars” – accompany tourists in their apparent explorations of the rainforest. As actors playing their custom-written roles in “ethnological exhibitions”, with a park or a savannah in the background, they still reinforce the folksiness and the idyllic primitivity of “forest people” untouched by civilisation. Being constantly photographed, carrying the newcomers’ equipment and clearing their way through the rainforest, they complete the folklore, the adventure images of hunter-gatherers, the relics. And, for the most part, standing no chances of commenting or reflecting on their own fate, they do not have the right to interfere in the visual representations which, as trophies from Central African voyages, feed the virtual spaces of social networks, blogs and travel websites.

Ba’Aka children – invisible, unheard in colonised peripheries

Recognising the old forms of “Pygmy” populations’ multifaceted entanglement makes it possible to explain the contemporary problems of indigenous people’s lack of a voice – both adults’ and children’s. It explains their lack of social and political participation at the local, national and international level as well as the disappearance of their culture and identity. It also exposes a range of civilisational practices which include the territorial and mental dispossession of indigenous populations of their ancestral land, depriving them of their resources and effecting the globalisation of their cultural heritage based on oral transmission (more on the subject, among others: Cernea, Schmidt-Soltau 2006: 1808–1830; Colchester 1997: 97–130).

Clearly, it must be stressed that the group of children who experience colonial and postcolonial entanglement, who presently live in “fragile” (“vulnerable”) contexts (thus, in vulnerable conditions, created and controlled in the system by adults) is considerably wider. It includes, among others, children who do not have a childhood in the sense understood by the West: they work and enter the roles of wives, mothers, men, and fathers at a very early age (procreation function which ensures the continuity and unity of a group).

Bearing in mind life's entanglement in the "fragile" ("vulnerable") contexts of "liquid modernity"⁸ (among others, poverty, hunger and violence caused by political, social, cultural conflicts), I draw attention to the situation of children who are "unheard" in the majority discourse, do not participate in the decisions of the majority world, and their access to human rights is limited and problematic. This disadvantaged position results from their place of living: in peripheries, distanced from the centres, on the territory of a country which, until recently, was referred to as a "developing" country and since 2014 – a failed state. It is also a consequence of their lower social status and an inherited stigma of the "inferior", which frequently entails being subjected to inherited discrimination and marginalisation. These factors as well as inhibited access to education, place them [children] in the categories of a "lost generation" and in the space of a crossroads – existing between tradition and modernity. These lost generations also comprise refugee or displaced children and young people, often referred to as "invisible" children, children "out of place" and children without "childhood"⁹. Publications devoted to these categories frequently revolve around difficult and inconvenient subjects which are rarely addressed in in-depth empirical studies. In the rich anthropological literature on hunter-gatherer people in Central Africa, relatively little attention is paid to childhood and children's problems, or their place in autochthonous communities in the face of ongoing civilisational transformations caused by global processes. Traditional hunter-gatherers' children often constitute 40 per cent of these populations, thus, nearly a half of the population remains invisible and functions as *invisible children*, on the margin of ethnographic research conducted on the territories of Central African countries (Hewlett, Lamb 2005).

Hence, the world of children's everyday life remains invisible or appears as a life unworthy of attention and co-perception. It is a life deprived of the voice of the youngest – the excluded, marginalised autochthons in Central Africa. Incidentally, the problem has been included in recent years in wider anthropological, psychological, and politological research on developmental transformations, conflicts, health, migration, and mobility, Cross-Cultural and African Studies (for instance: B. Hewlett's research at the Washington State University Vancouver devoted to the anthropology of childhood in a cultural perspective¹⁰, A. Wrzesińska's research on children and childhood in Cameroon¹¹). However, it frequently happens that researchers originating from a distant cultural context do not stand a chance of conducting such studies in fragile contexts. Their cultural distinctness, their being labelled as a symbol of a better world, a reminder of colonial oppressors, hinder the complex process of "building relations". Moreover, there is a growing number of borderline (difficult) situations in the research on invisible and unheard children liv-

⁸ More on the subject of liquid modernity in: Z. Bauman (2013), *Liquid modernity*. John Wiley & Sons.

⁹ More on the subject, among others: Penn 2005: 1–44; Ennew, Hastadewi, Plateau 2007; Invernizzi, Liebel Milne, Budde 2016.

¹⁰ An author of *Intimate Fathers: The Nature and Context of Aka Pygmy Paternal Infant Care* (1993) and *Hunter-Gatherer Childhoods* (edited with M. Lamb 2005).

¹¹ Her research is presented in the book: *MWANA znaczy dziecko*, DIALOG, Wyd. Akademickie, Warsaw 2005.

ing in fragile contexts which I explore. This type of exploration opens one’s eyes and terrifies, entails danger to life and health, and causes an awareness of dangers which the researched (particularly children) are exposed to in their everyday lives¹². This means that eliciting children’s voices and the realisation of research with children on their everyday reality is not an easy task for either side of the process. Nevertheless, as bell hooks (Gloria Jean Watkins) – an author, feminist, social activist and a critical pedagogue argues, “it is only through the act of listening and recognising the narrations of the silenced, oppressed groups: minorities, women, the poor, [UMM: children] that we can overcome social inequalities” (bell hooks 2009). Only through exploring the “socially fragile” places and spaces can one turn to the perspective of children themselves, children who do not have a voice, who are voiceless, who – as Judith Ennew writes – are “seen but not heard”¹³ (See: e.g. Ennew, Hastadewi, Plateau 2007) and allow them to become “visible”.

Conclusion

Field research on “invisible” and “unheard” children in fragile contexts is frequently connected with transcending borders, experiencing difficult research situations, reading the reality of children’s place of living and functioning from a number of perspectives and with the drama of situationality (some consequences of such dramatic experiences during research influence the state of mind, including fear, loneliness, sleep disorders, apathy, lack of trust and stress). Field research is and should be perceived through the duality of the term field, as it becomes not only a “peculiar space of a researcher’s experiences” (Kaniowska 1999: 74), but a temporary “home” of a female researcher-nomad, and is strictly connected with nomadic thinking and a researcher’s attributes. All these attributes (age, sex, appearance, social status, origin, affiliation, behaviour, knowledge of the language, (non)adjustment) can shape the studies on many levels of interpretation. Realising that as a researcher “you will be as people in the field will define you. And you don’t have much control over it as it is you who enter their cultural identity – they don’t enter yours”¹⁴, allows one to prepare for the unknown. Doing research in the environment of excluded, marginalised, indigenous people, I attempted to listen to the voices of the researched. Through the undertaken research activities I attempted to capture – in the context of the social and cultural transformations of the ethnically diversified and culturally distinct environment of Sangha-Mbaéré – the changes in children’s and young people’s socialisation and education. These are changes which are currently taking place as a result

¹² What I have in mind is malaria and other tropical illnesses, lack of access to medicines and medical help, exposure to being bitten by wild animals and vermin, limited access to clean drinking water, and limited access to food and in effect – malnutrition.

¹³ This refers to a number of perspectives, including legal, participatory, and emancipatory, as well as the context and situation in which we – adults can speak about various dimensions of children being visible and heard.

¹⁴ K. Halasa, Annotated Bibliography. Ethics in Educational Research: <http://www.aare.edu.au/pages/annotated-bibliography.html> [accessed: 10.11.2015].

of interdependencies between nature and culture (more: Lévi-Strauss 1969) as well as the dynamics of transformations brought on by global phenomena. The participatory observation constantly taking place during research allowed me to discern the ongoing transformations and fractures which have emerged in the traditional world of Ba'Aka Pygmies. The studies revealed Ba'Aka adults' and children's inclusion in modernisation processes fitted in the modern trends of globalisation. They also exposed the sudden transformations on all levels of this population's functioning between two worlds: the world of the forest and the realm of civilisation. This has significantly accelerated the process of "dismantling" their traditional culture and endemic education. In theories referring to social order and economic development, humanity is divided into two categories: those who are worthy of concern and attention, and the categories defined as *unwertes Leben* – beings not worthy to live (Bauman, *Liquid Fear*, Cambridge, 2006). The Ba'Aka – a community at the stage of "dismantling" their traditional culture, have been written in the second category of humanity – one which is unworthy of attention and deprived of the right to speak. The oppressive character of systems, life, environment, and the fossilised image of the Ba'Aka as "savage and primitive" appear as obstacles to their development and social integration. They also contribute to the fact that, unknown to the majority of the world, the "Pygmies" are gradually "leaving the scene" of the history of life of the oldest inhabitants of Central Africa. This means the cultural extinction of a population whose traditional concepts of education and childcare are a phenomenon of emancipation and respect towards the unwritten rights of children on a global scale. Despite the transformations taking place on the equator, the former world of meanings inherent in the relationship between man and nature and the cosmology still preserves a certain persistency. However, the everyday life and the fate of the Ba'Aka children which cannot be (and are not) isolated from the globalising world, show – from the perspective of the Global North – the loneliness of castaways and draw a vision of a silent "today" without a "tomorrow". A copy of a scene from the everyday life of Pygmies in the rainforest prepared for future generations, entitled "The Mbuti pygmy exhibit", can be observed at the Museum of Natural History in New York City. It was created by an anthropologist, an explorer of Central Africa, and a pioneer of research on ethnomusicology – Colin Macmillan Turnbull. This scene, frozen in stillness, can become one of very few tangible reminders of hunter-gatherers' – Ba'Aka's life in the rainforest whose ecosystem they are being excluded from in the 21st century.

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