

Introduction. When Children Hold up a Mirror to Restitution. What Contributions for Anthropology?

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What Do Researchers Do With the Results of Their Studies?

Science aims to produce knowledge; this in turn leads to scientific publications – papers, books, conferences – and more recently to widely disseminating knowledge in lay terms (Vidal 2016): from specialized, inner circles, as encouraged for a long-time in academia, to the wider public, as now required by political and academic institutions and most funding bodies. All these different actors are pushing researchers towards learning a new trade, one which requires training: media communication (Gruénais 2016; Suremain 2016) – unless, of course, those targeted are activists themselves who have made dissemination and communication an essential aspect of their work. This trend is now so widespread that activities aimed at civil society take up considerable space in funded research projects or job applications.

These communication and dissemination actions are generally designated by the word “outreach”, an essential component of the current policy of “open science” concerning publications and, more recently, open access data. The latter notably encounters strong opposition among anthropologists for epistemological, ethical, and data privacy reasons. Outreach activities can take place throughout the different phases of research or at the end. In terms of “open science”, whether for publications or access to data, these activities have become a problem linked to restitution¹. However legitimate the desire for a citizen science is, the strong pressure or even the injunction to communicate everything to everyone does not agree well with the requirements of what Vidal (2010) calls “long-term research”.

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¹Restitution, return or feedback in English; *restitución* or *devolución* in Spanish; *restitution* or *retour* in French.

In this regard, one wonders whether the aim of communication is not only to publicize and share knowledge but also to shine a spotlight on institutions and publicize research organizations and/or funding bodies. Simultaneously, scientific productions continue to participate, mainly and above all, to the intellectual and career development of individual, sometimes even individualistic, researchers within their inner circle of peers, and among regulators and funding bodies. Furthermore, regulating and funding bodies are marked by a policy of constant evaluation.

In a context where there is competition – under cover of excellence – as well as a shortage of funds and jobs – a situation that has been condemned by many and has now been relatively well analyzed (Karpik 2012; Lits & Léonard 2013; Pérès 2015*a* & *b*) –, the commendable aim of most researchers to share the outcomes of their research with as many as possible must not be ignored. Notwithstanding, it is legitimate to ask where anthropologists stand in this (re)conquest of the larger public and if any differences come to light between countries or intellectual traditions. On this point, the individual character of career orientations, often privileged, necessarily goes hand in hand with the social and political history, as well as with the history of sciences – from their progressive institutionalization to their recognition – of the country where the researcher was formed or where he or she works.

In this regard, there are strong differences among the authors contributing to the present volume. In Mexico, anthropology has played a strong political role from its inception (Palerm 1973; Marion 1993-1994) and its voice weighs heavily in public and political spheres and debates. Conversely, it has remained marginal in Belgium, a country which however grants a certain prestige and recognition to its academics: the university is the preferred path for the training of public, political, and economic elites, but sociology and the human or political sciences dominate. In France, where the *Grandes Écoles* form the elites, it remains almost inaudible (Desjeux 1973; Bellier 1993). French university academics are not highly regarded, except for those rare and engaged personalities who directly or indirectly, occasionally or regularly, have weighed in on current societal issues.

In a context increasingly requiring the legitimation and justification of the use of public or private funds during periods of crisis (Albert 1995)², all these questions point to the historically or politically drawn boundary between “applied” and “fundamental research”, and to the now globalized debate of the social utility of research. Thus, progressively, fundamental research aligns itself with the principles of applied research: the types of subjects requested, its protocols and its tight deadlines, its underestimated budgets, its intense bureaucratic control, and the quasi-obligation of quantifiable results. These characteristics do not fit well with the social sciences and particularly with anthropology. The

²Though quite old in the United States, debates on the “false opposition” (Izard 1983) between fundamental and applied research only emerged in France in the 1970s through the work of Bastide (1971).

reverse alignment would have been more logical. After all, time, an assumed part of serendipity, and human resources are needed to deal with human problems, the so called “societal issues”, without mentioning freedom of research, the pillar of every democratic debate and an absolute necessity. Occasionally, these questions point to ethical problems which directly engage the anthropologist with the protagonists of research – individuals, collectives, or institutions –, more recently within the anthropologist’s own society, but previously within other societies (Suremain 2013).

In Mexico, as in the rest of Latin America, research outcomes under the name of “outreach” have contributed to reduce the divide between fundamental and applied sciences, becoming, partly, a “useful” research activity (Arellano *et al.* 2012: 25). Notwithstanding, appraising bodies ignore this, considering published articles as the only valid outcomes. They look at the bibliographic databases of fundamental science with strong international impact and ignore the scientific productions of countries in the South (Keim 2010; Krotz 1993). Applied or “useful” research and its results find themselves thus at the center of a paradox: the meeting point between fundamental and applied sciences is that they are not considered during appraisals. Bibliographic databases are thus both an indicator of marginality and an instrument of marginalization within the international scientific community. These inequalities have led to reflections on scientific dependence (Yoclevsky 2015), the “captive spirit”, decolonizing knowledge (Zevounou 2020) and knowledge ecology (De Sousa Santos 2010) in an attempt to challenge the “Great Divide”.

If disseminating research to the greater public is now an absolute requirement for the different institutional actors involved – from groups of researchers to funding bodies –, the same cannot be said for the restitution of research involving women, men, and children, in the flesh, who participated in “fieldwork”. Current news is influenced by longstanding and sensitive debates which have now become more intense and which find a political resonance in terms of the restitution of “museumified” objects and human remains originating from former colonies of Western states (Sarr Savoy 2018; Turnbull & Pickering 2010). The restitution of these items is clearly part of a Western policy of reparation, which adheres, or would like to adhere, to a rationale that recognizes past exactions and accepts that contemporary individuals value these past plundered civilizations and that the governments of the countries concerned should take charge of these memories. This question requires an impartial and interdisciplinary reflection. Moreover, historical contexts, actors, intentions and aims differ greatly if one calls upon the military of the beginning of the 20th century or anthropologists of the 21st century. New mediation mechanisms have developed that constitute stimulating examples. Since the end of the 1990s, different modes of data restitution by researchers to the autochthonous populations involved have developed. For example, research outcomes can be repatriated to local archives in the form of a

CD-ROM or the data can be accessed digitally (*cf.* Birth of French Ethnology³, ODSAS-Online Digital Sources and Annotation System⁴ or the sound archives of the CNRS-Musée de l'Homme⁵). The phrase “digital restitution” is thus employed to explore such practices in diverse indigenous American contexts (Vapnarsky 2020).

This volume does not explore specifically these issues because they were not raised in the field sites studied. Due to certain continuities within the processes at work in such projects – particularly those relating to work on power relations, the ethics of anthropological research and their redesign – the volume however deals with topics partly linked to the scientific trend mentioned above.

For a long time, when restitution and, more specifically, the handing over of research outcomes to the populations involved were discussed, the tip of the iceberg consisted, at best, of an after-the-fact, vertical sharing (from the anthropologist to the “informants”) of only the resulting scientific productions. This is still (too?) often the case, even if the social sciences, and in particular certain currents and subfields of anthropology, have taken up the issue and are now more actively involved in it. Following the end of the 1960s and the criticisms of anthropology, accused of being a “child of colonialism” (Copans 1974; Cough 1990), as well as the decline of the figure of the anthropologist as an “ethnographic authority” (Clifford 1983), a certain number of researchers have in fact turned towards the co-production of knowledge (Cunin & Hernandez 2007), participatory or collaborative action-research mechanisms (Lassiter 2005; Foley & Valenzuela 2005), or even activist research (Scheper-Hughes 1995) – for example, with children (Pollard 1987; Christensen 2004; Gallagher & Gallagher 2008; Harcourt & Einarsdóttir 2011; Cheney 2011) –, various forms of dialogism (Bohannan 1966; Kilani 1994; Gashé 2004), or the promotion of the “politics of intersubjectivity” (Fabian 1983; Caratini 2004; Bensa 2008*a* & *b*). Some of these orientations have been subject to strong criticism (Müller 2004). In the anthropology of aid and development, questions related to restitution have become unavoidable (Vidal 2011), especially in applied research (Lavigne Delville & Fresia 2018). This approach is also characteristic of “applied research” in the “North”, without necessarily leading to the same depth of thought. As a matter of fact, restitution to the participants and funders is an integral part of the “contract” signed between the interested parties without necessarily appearing under this term. Today, research on human individuals anywhere in the world already falls within the framework of protocols that must be validated by the ethics committees of the funders and the research institutions. All research participants should sign an informed consent form that sets in stone their collaboration, as

³<http://naissanceethnologie.fr/>

⁴<https://www.ehess.fr/fr/espace-num%C3%A9rique/odsas-plateforme-darchives-scientifiques-num%C3%A9riques>

⁵<https://lesc-cnrs.fr/fr/archives-sonores-cnrsmh>

well as the obligation of restitution. But does this compulsory step – going through a validation committee – constitute a guarantee of ethical restitution?

The thought and “paradigm” shift in the social sciences (Long 1994), and more particularly in anthropology, has become a reality on the current international scientific scene (Ribeiro & Escobar 2006; Tuhiwai Smith 1999). This shift is linked to the imperatives of post-modernism, the emergence of growing ethical concerns, the increasingly valued, if not heard and listened to, voice of minorities, and a potentially emancipatory post-colonial context. However, as a consequence of (i) neo-liberal economic and managerial constraints that increasingly take up more space and impose a temporality detached from research imperatives, (ii) not-always-coherent research policies and (iii) more or less institutionalized research groups, it becomes clear that academic traditions differ. To such an extent that the restitution of anthropological research in Latin America is no longer considered an optional step, contrary to the situation in Europe until recently. Restitution is now inseparable from the construction of any research protocol, imposed by the research institutions themselves from the outset, before the research takes place.

Consequently, between the two extremes that are the total absence of restitution and its contractual obligation, there is an infinite range of standpoints, mechanisms and processes tied to restitution, just as there are diverse forms of participatory action research (Desclaux 1992), and these are not explicitly defined or systematically named (Bouillon *et al.* 2006). These standpoints, mechanisms, and processes are inscribed in ethnographic situations that are marked by dynamics often difficult to discern and that until recently have hardly been in-depth and systematically studied in the social sciences, with few exceptions, notably, for example, in the field of health (Rossi *et al.* 2008; Fassin 2008), on issues of heritage (De Lary Healy 2011), or even of development. As such, Vidal (2011) studied the different dimensions of the phenomenon through three projects. He viewed restitution (i) as the field site (the place from where the data come), (ii) as a vector for a two-way reflection on the part of the anthropologist and, finally, (iii) as a source for epistemological and ethical questioning, a place to truly rethink anthropology and, in so doing, the “social sciences of development”.

In such a context, the first challenge for this volume is to define restitution. This leads to a dialogue between different experiences that adhere to a variety of intellectual landscapes and anthropological pathways and that can be viewed reflexively from their ethnographical practice. The second challenge is to consider this question using as a starting point a population which in many respects is exemplary: children (and young people). Beyond the inherent interest to document and analyze the place of young individuals in research, this exercise acts as shines a light on issues linked to restitution and to other marginalized populations and facilitates questioning. The third challenge, connected to the first and consistent with the second, is to share a space for reflection with the younger generation of

anthropologists. Consequently, junior anthropologists (holders of a Master's degree or doctoral students), early career anthropologists (postdoctoral fellows), and senior researchers journey together in this volume.

What Does “To Restitute” Mean?

The common reflection of all contributors to this volume on the concept of restitution started in 2017⁶. Restitution is used here in its broadest, all-encompassing, and operational meaning. It designates an occasional mechanism as much as a continuous one, conceived from the start of fieldwork and aiming to share the products of the work carried out with the individual and collective participants, during and after the research, but also a dynamic mechanism, or even daily spontaneous exchanges, material and immaterial, apparently trivial, and often invisible, the “services” given and received by the anthropologist during and after fieldwork. These are relational processes that engage in epistemic and ethical standpoints, as well as in diverse epistemological or even political choices of the anthropologist, but which necessarily center around reflexivity (Leservoisier 2005; Fogel & Rivoal 2009). The relative homogeneity of the ensemble of contributions to this volume hinges on a challenging comparative collective thought process (Europe/Mexico) based on an operational concept and conducted on a little explored subject through the prism of children and young people. Another issue centers around the questioning of the *a priori* or the *a posteriori* of the restitution process, anchored to diverse ethnographic field sites which help show the extent of each contribution's uniqueness. Some of the concurrences among the chapters, which will be discussed, reflect the transversality and the generic character of some of the questions around anthropological practice; this will certainly resonate with other researchers. Finally, the national tradition of each contributor become apparent in the discrepancies uncovered by the emphasis given to certain themes or by the researcher's point of view, also reflecting how central to anthropology is personalizing fieldwork.

To delve further into these methods and the interest of the approach, it is necessary to dwell on the etymology of the word restitution, as has already been done by several authors (Zonabend 1994;

⁶The contributions in this volume grew out of a scientific event and a research project: (i) Methodology seminar series. Contributions of childhood anthropology (VIII) entitled: “Ethnographic Restitution and Children. Mechanisms, Processes and Standpoints” (*La restitución etnográfica y los niños. Dispositivos, procesos y posturas / La restitution ethnographique et les enfants. Dispositifs, processus et postures*”; ColSan-ULiège); and (ii) the JEA's (the IRD's junior team) project between 2017 and 2019 “ChildHerit. Childhood and children in heritagization. Transmission, participation, and development” (*ChildHerit. Enfance et enfants dans la patrimonialisation. Transmission, participation et développement*) (<https://childherit.hypotheses.org/>). Select seminar series presentations have been included. These have been extensively modified and transformed into chapters for the present publication thanks to comments and discussions within the ChildHerit project and to comments from reviewers and the editors.

Chauvier 2003; Vidal 2011; among others). Some of the contributors to this volume also do this in order to advance the reflections on the subject. This is the case of, **Valentina Glockner Fagetti**, **Élodie Razy**, **León García Lam**, and **Neyra Patricia Alvarado Solís**. These authors raise the issue of restitution within a broader framework by insisting that in anthropology the processes at work are more complex than the definition of the term suggests. They insist on the multiple political dimensions of restitution (from involvement, **Charles-Édouard de Suremain**, to forms of activism or militancy, **Glockner Fagetti** and **García Lam**, to commitment, **Razy**), both within social history and the history of science. **Glockner Fagetti** underlines the contradiction raised by the common meaning of the word – “to settle a debt by bringing things back to their original condition” – which appears contrary to the aim that some anthropologists pursue: to fight against inequalities and to contribute to social change.

Most of the contributors, rooted in a critical and reflexive anthropology, make the same observation: if at first everything that potentially falls under the heading of restitution in ethnographic immersive fieldwork seems obvious, the anecdotal, at face value character, and the absence of any in-depth analysis of restitution in the literature lead to questions. It is as if the “participatory” or “collaborative” methodological mechanisms of the social sciences – essentially inherent, in various ways and to varying degrees, to any contemporary anthropological undertaking due to its epistemology – had exhausted the debate on restitution. Highlighting this daily reality experienced through the prism of anthropology clarifies the specifics of how fieldwork and the discipline’s research object are constructed through ethnographic relations embedded in routine and the long term. The depth of the act of research is thus brought back into play to define restitution as a process with entangled temporalities and multiple forms, without any prior fixed goal or prescribed framework, and fully part of research. Thus, restitution appears to be the fruit of a perspective on which the researcher works, the product of his or her research approach and of the relationships established in the field. In a complementary manner, this reflection based on general anthropology can enable a certain “applied anthropology”, in charge of dealing with societal issues, to question the mechanisms implemented and the standpoints adopted in a more reflexive manner. Moreover, this reflection can also be carried over to other social sciences and interdisciplinary currents (Childhood Studies, for example) that practice participatory or collaborative research or respond to a targeted demand. Indeed, the collaborative production of data is not necessarily a guarantee of restitution, and restitution can take place outside any participatory or collaborative mechanism, as defined by a pre-existing protocol. Even though the links between restitution, participation, collaborative production of data, and the construction of ethnographic relations are not questioned, the authors explore these links in different ways based on their ethnography and/or their own definitions of these concepts. This raises the issue of restitution as an aspect of research or as a methodology for enquiry.

This shared approach implies paying particular attention to the various actors involved in research. Some of the authors clearly show how thinking about restitution toward local populations or participants is inseparable from the restitution intended for other participants, whether institutional or civil, political or academic. The latter is generally artificially distinguished from the former under the term of outreach. The question of the anthropologist's responsibility then arises in a different way, as do the questions on subjects that are intimately linked to it, namely the political and social consequences of restitution or its potentially transformative power.

Most of the contributors deconstruct the concept of restitution through fieldwork, demonstrating its undeniable heuristic payoff. The authors also agree that restitution only makes sense when critiqued, analyzed alongside other concepts – extraction, ethnographic relationship, exchange, reciprocity, circulation, gift, counter-gift, ethics, commitment, new epistemologies, etc. –, or even when the idea is abandoned. Another condition for the use of the concept of restitution consists in also considering wider challenges, notably domination and recognition, as well as the effects (**Razy**), sometimes unexpected (**Élodie Willemsen**) or even potentially damaging (**Guadalupe Reyes Domínguez**), that may result from it.

Thus, at the heart of the definitions proposed by the authors in this volume lie different levels. The content and form – from the most trivial to the most elaborate (gestures, words, actions, practices, anthropological materials and analyses, the making of a documentary, etc.), from those aligned to everyday local practices to those most innovative, even creative proposals –, are part of an exchange, sometimes a co-construction, always localized and contextualized (**Éloïse Maréchal, Willemsen, Carmen C. Drăghici & Carmen María Sánchez Caro, Alvarado Solís, Razy**). It is worth mentioning that audio-visual methods, which occupy an important place in this array, are also analyzed (**Drăghici & Sánchez Caro, Alvarado Solís**).

Rachel Dobbels' contribution emphasizes that restitution is not solely produced by anthropologists, but that it also sometimes emanates from requests or proposals from the participants, right from the start of fieldwork. Conversely, **Glockner Fagetti** underlines the critical stance that community members can have towards restitution. It is therefore always necessary to consider the “complexity and diversity of the recipients” of the restitution process.

Nonetheless, restitution can also result from a certain viewpoint, as **Razy** or **Suremain** point out, whereas **Glockner Fagetti** sees in it the necessary “politicization of the ethnographic experience” aiming to fight against inequalities. **García Lam** pushes this logic even further by questioning the politics of research and funding, while **Mélissa Cornuel** sees it as a means of “deconstructing multiple forms of power relations, but also of negotiating and readjusting the status of the field actors and the

ethnographer". **Razy** downplays the importance of the anthropologist by reminding us that he or she is never the only "master on board". The anthropologist is him- or herself caught up in power struggles and domination relations that affect the dynamics of restitution. The contributors shine a light on restitution from an ethical, political, epistemic, and epistemological perspective (**Marie Campigotto**), but also a methodological one (**Cornuel, Willemsen, Reyes Domínguez**), emphasizing one or the other aspect, especially when they define the nature of the process: "translation" and "ordinary restitution" for **Campigotto**; "revealer" for **Maréchal**; "committed encounter" and "ethical restitution" for **Suremain**.

In terms of fieldwork with children, which is the focus of this volume, the issue of restitution rarely arises as such in the literature. Discussions focus mostly on the methodology and the potential benefits of the research for the children (Fine 1995; Alderson & Morrow 2011), through their active participation as "co-researchers" (Cheney 2011), without systematically analyzing the research process itself. While it is always the adult researcher who proposes or assigns this role to children, some Aboriginal communities, particularly in Australia, claim the status of "associate researchers" with, potentially, the support of researchers (De Laryg Healy 2011). In relation to children, a reflexive and critical epistemological approach is generally absent. This leads to overbearing postures on the part of the researcher, who implicitly presents her or himself as the sole person responsible for the benefits obtained. The researcher's relative self-effacement in front of the children or young people, who are then designated as "collaborators", or even "experts", is but an illusion. She or he is the one who grants them the status of "ethnographers" or "co-researchers", often in conformity with a certain a-critical and political correctness. In such a configuration, presented as symmetrical without critically distancing oneself, restitution no longer has any real reason to exist. It is an integral part of the research or action process and appears self-sufficient.

Now more than ever, it is necessary to go beyond this blatantly false methodology, often transformed *a posteriori* into a superficial ethical justification that dangerously sterilizes debates. Conversely, anthropologists should conduct an anthropology of their own anthropological practice at each stage of their research with children. The authors in this volume examine the concept of restitution in a variety of ways, reflexively combining literature and field experience in a large range of field sites (Mexico, Belgium, Bolivia, France, Peru, and Colombia) and in different settings (schools or extracurricular activities, marginalized populations, markets, blood drives). They analyze, through ethnographic situations in which children and/or young people are directly or indirectly involved, childhood and/or youth and what concretely constitutes restitution: its different modalities, its content, its temporalities, its limitations, and its long-term effects, both for the participants, but also for the anthropologist and the process of knowledge production. Building upon this, each contribution opens new perspectives

enabling us to rethink anthropology from the point of view of children by moving beyond the different declinations of the Great Divide (children/adults; North/South; urban/rural, etc.) and the artificial boundary between fundamental and applied anthropology in order to promote a “committed anthropology” (Suremain 2013).

This volume is largely embedded within the problematic of “pragmatic and processual ethics” (Razy 2014). It constantly links the ethnographic relationship with participation and the production of knowledge, and represents an indispensable dialogue between the anthropology of childhood and general anthropology. Thus, it offers a reflection at the theoretical, methodological, and epistemological levels, starting with children. The volume’s first ambition is to document and propose avenues of reflection that will feed the practices of researchers when working along these essential participants who have been subject to multiple, controversial, and even contradictory social and scientific investments over several decades (Razy 2014). The second ambition – justified by the presumed specificity of childhood, its relative marginality, and the invisibility of children’s often informal political participation (Zotian 2014) – is to stimulate debates on restitution in anthropology and, more broadly, in the social sciences. Indeed, the child population, the product of an always historically situated interpretation of a universal biological given and often marked by ambivalence and liminality, serves as an excellent example in more than one respect to discuss certain social and political issues of research, but also to address the ethical, methodological, and epistemological conditions of knowledge production in anthropology.

Intersecting several “childhood models” (Bonnet, Rollet & Suremain 2012), the “UN image of the child” – as presented by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Suremain & Bonnet 2014), based on a legal age (0-18 years old), globalized but always re-appropriated – meets heterogeneous local figures of childhood with specific social and cultural characteristics. These characteristics, which make childhood a specific stage of the life cycle with variable⁷ *emic* calendar limits, are eventually revisited in the form of a social group and are valued or demeaned according to situations and circumstances. The articulation between similarities and divergences is associated with the researcher’s social and intimate conception of childhood, coupled with that of the discipline. In the social sciences, interest in childhood developed later than in psychology, for example, leading this discipline to strongly influence

⁷There are plenty of ambiguous uses of the *etic* categories of “child” and “youth” in the scientific literature. This ambiguity is very damaging because it renders the younger individuals less visible (Rodet & Razy 2016). Moreover, more often than not, authors do not critically step back to examine the *emic* categories in action and the contradictions that these categories carry, and simply accept them at face value.

researchers. As informants who are thought to be more accessible but less receptive to the usual research techniques, there is an important methodological corpus focusing on children (Razy 2014).

The contributors to this volume focus on restitution through a population difficult to define and at the crossroads of several models and associated practices. Children and childhood ethnographic examples are the authors' starting point, and in some cases also young people and youth: present or absent, factored in or not by the participants during fieldwork. This broad conception of childhood and youth stems from the lability of the different stages of the life cycle and a certain, as mentioned, shared marginality, as well as from the local conditions. The convergences on the subject that appear in the contributions, coupled with the heterogeneity due to the diversity of field sites and objects as well as to the localized ethnographic approach, contribute to enrich the issue at hand. For all these reasons, subordinates among subordinates, children lead to questions and provoke answers in researchers, shedding light on and fueling contemporary social science controversies and debates in an often unprecedented and original manner.

This volume seeks to explore this complex phenomenon, mainly around the following questions: is there a "duty of restitution" and if so, at what cost? What does restitution with children look like? How can thinking on restitution with children contribute to deconstructing power relations? The different chapters also consider whether a reflection on restitution can help us rethink the production of ethnographic data, the anthropological approach, broadly speaking, and the specificity of this approach in the production of knowledge. The contributions have consequently been organized in two sections.

Restitution: Why and for Whom?

The first part is entitled "What Restitution Brings to Anthropology. Questioning the Worlds of Childhood and Politics". It deals specifically with the institutional and ordinary political dimensions of restitution from a definition of politics that attempts to articulate different perspectives from the anthropology of politics and politics itself (Balandier 1967; Vincent 2010). This allows for a holistic approach of the phenomenon and considers the contributions of various authors on the "politics of the field" (Olivier de Sardan 1995) and the "politics of enquiry" (Fassin & Bensa 2008).

For instance, restitution can be conceived as a process inherent to research – beyond a simple final research report – which can potentially influence public policies (Cruces 1998). According to Bonte, restitution and the multiple questions it raises (what to say? to whom? for whom?) are an ethical and political issue. Though not unique to anthropology, it is necessary to emphasize that for this discipline, restitution and ethics are tightly linked given the "ambiguous identity relationship that he or she [the anthropologist] has with his or her 'field site'" (Bonte 1991: 83). Restitution, again according to Bonte,

can even evaporate “within civic or moral choices” and would also not require “the intervention of professional bodies”. One wonders whether today the question can still be posed in these terms, especially when considering the control exercised by certain ethics committees over research, the ever-increasing budgetary and institutional constraints, and the push of the methodological paradigm that attempts to merge all the social sciences into an “a-disciplinary discipline”. This concern is shared with Fainzang (1994) who rightly expressed her concern about the use of the term “anthropology” to designate: “The science of humans and society *par excellence*, apt to oversee all others, in the greatest methodological and epistemological indecision.”⁸ Is this a purely personal, disciplinary, or methodological choice? Regardless, several authors in this volume highlight that pre-established protocols are meaningless in terms of restitution and insist on the importance of the researcher’s freedom, and even on his or her subversive role as an agitator of ideas and opponent, especially when restitution is counterproductive.

Furthermore, the many questions raised by “informed consent” lead us to reflect on the conditions for the implementation of restitution and, consequently, on various problems that have, for the most part, already been discussed in the literature for several decades (Scheper-Hughes 1995; Brettel 1996; Bell 2014). De Lary Healy (2011) discusses the right to control use of one’s image and Murphy and Dingwall (2008: 341-343) point out that the use of codes does not absolutely guarantee anonymity due to the very nature of most field sites which are circumscribed, situated, and identifiable, even in the case of multi-site studies. According to these authors, these codes are primarily meant to protect the institutions and/or the researcher in case of conflict with his or her “informants” and/or the political authorities of the country in question. On this point at least, informed consent is directly linked to the after-fieldwork and therefore to publication, dissemination, restitution, or even co-production, the issues and limitations of which Murphy and Dingwall (2008: 341) review.

It is therefore impossible, and indeed unrealistic, to ignore the dark side of informed consent that restitution embodies, which Rossi *et al.* (2008) point out and which poses just as many problems in its implementation because it has not been systematically and clearly defined. Indeed, codes of professional ethics “merely” recall the formal obligation of a “fair return” (Kobelinsky 2008: 199). As such, Kobelinsky questions restitution as an obligation when anthropologists work among their own society. The resulting ambiguity, mentioned by Bensa, is based on a presupposed “theft”: “The word ‘return’ seems more relevant when including the reception and restitution of research results” (Kobelinsky 2008: 186-187). On another level, as suggested by Hancart-Petit (2008: 12), the question is whether non-return might not be more ethical in certain cases. One might even add: is it more ethical

⁸ Authors’ translation.

than “failed restitution” (Rosselli 2013)? Hancart-Petit points out, however, that the situation is delicate in cases of applied research. Finally, much has been written on the question of the intellectual property rights of participants on the research data – mainly indigenous minorities in the United States, South America, and Australia (Jerôme 2014, specifically on objects in museums; Isnart 2016, on different types of heritage artefacts).

The dissemination of research results, how the texts are received by the public at large and their possible use, also poses various ethical dilemmas that are delicate and difficult to resolve. Dousset (2014: 256-257), for example, mentions an Australian case in which “the anthropologist’s work was used by the authorities to deny the status of indigenous society to a community”. As to the question of restitution, Hancart-Petit (2008: 12) puts forward the idea that it is ultimately preferable to “consider this process not as a final stage but as a continuous part of the act of research”⁹, documented and analyzed during the investigation. Guffanti (2011) also advocates this point of view. Hancart-Petit even wonders whether the fact of having adopted this posture from the beginning enabled her to better cope with and find solutions to the ethical dilemmas she encountered once in the field.

In terms of obtaining children’s consent, seeking their views, and involving them in the work, it is necessary to highlight the paradigm shift in research that took place from the 1990s onward (Razy 2014). Notwithstanding, the gap between what happens in a research context and what happens in society, where changes have not yet been appropriated in a sustainable way, remains significant: “A review of participation projects with children and young people found that very few of their imaginative and creative ideas were implemented (Willow *et al.* 2004; Percy-Smith & Thomas 2009)” (Alderson & Morrow 2011: 135). Zotian (2014) emphasizes the need to look at childlike modes of political participation and move beyond those proposed by adults to children.

The first six chapters explore the multiple links between restitution and politics at the different scales identified in the field, thus underscoring the different spaces and possible roles occupied by children in research as well as the exemplary nature of children and young people for anthropology in general.

Glockner Fagetti seeks to problematize the concept of restitution as a fundamental part of the process of enquiry with children by proposing different interpretations of this concept. The author draws on different ethnographic studies conducted in Mexico to defend the idea that, rather than considering restitution as a phase of research, it is a consubstantial part of the process of enquiry. This choice implies considering restitution as an ethical and political commitment to academic and disciplinary practice, which not only recognizes the importance of children’s voices and knowledge, but also leads

⁹Authors’ translation.

to questioning power relations, methodologies, and commitments acquired throughout and within the study in order to propose “new epistemologies”.

The analysis of the collaborative action research project “A Quest for Remembrance”, conducted by **Razy** in France (Paris), leads to a reflection on restitution as a process, the result of a standpoint and a commitment in anthropology. Starting from a broad definition of the concept, she approaches reflexively, and in connection with ethics, the mechanisms at work, as well as the role of the different actors involved, including the agency of the children. As the guarantor, but not the only one responsible for the process of providing a space in which the “voice of the child” on migration issues can be acknowledged, the anthropologist is at the mercy of different temporalities and interests, between research and the world of politics and media. What are the limitations of the described approach and of restitution itself? Finally, the author wonders whether the concept of restitution, fraught with contradictions that go beyond the mere etymology of the term, should not be replaced by that of “feedback” (with additional concepts) which better conveys the complex and central dynamics, often invisible and with no real defined beginning or end.

Suremain analyzes the way in which restitution was forged between the various actors and the anthropologist through a reading of a voluntary collaborative project carried out in a “rehabilitation center” for street children in Bolivia, which became ethnographic fieldwork. In particular, he demonstrates how restitution was closely associated with the process of collaborative action research anchored in the constructivist paradigm, in which the anthropologist plays the role of “facilitator”, and how this process in turn underwent various inflections as a result of the children’s reactions, explanations, analyses, and proposals for enhancement, including the production of a book of photographs and testimonies aimed at leaving “a trace”. After defining the contours of the concept of “committed encounter”, a necessary condition for restitution, the author highlights some more general methodological lessons on the ways of doing anthropology with children, from knowledge to action.

Focusing on an ethnography of the markets of Liege (Belgium) and Leeds (United Kingdom), **Dobbels** considers the question of restitution with young vendors through the *a priori* banal and anodyne “acts of return” in ethnographic situations which are marked by the anthropologist’s posture as learner, but also by avoidance and by “discomfort” in the interaction. The analysis of these two ethnographic cases reveals how, from the very beginning of the research process, these acts, initially intended as milestones in the construction of ethnographic relations, have the particularity of helping deconstruct the power relations within the ethnographic relations of the researcher and her contacts and lead to the co-construction of knowledge.

Maréchal writes on an ethnographic study on the professional practice of employees of the Belgian Red Cross blood donation services during blood drives and with donors in the region of Liege. Looking back on her study, particularly certain observations concerning blood donation, she tackles methodological and ethical questions in order to show how the issue of formal and informal restitution viewed in terms of the “usefulness” of the research by the participants actually relates to various expectations throughout fieldwork. More specifically, she looks at “informal micro-restitutions” that took place and at the reasons why some actors, including children, were excluded. Beyond the originality and the heuristic character of this approach to restitution given its absence, this reflection on concealment leads to rethinking the place and the role of the figure of the child in blood donation.

García Lam takes a critical look at an approach that attempts to place children at the center of research and that, consequently, develops methods, techniques, tools, and proposals to facilitate the inclusion of the children’s views and opinions. From this reading, emerges a critical analysis on the discussion of empowerment in relation to the rights of indigenous peoples that is at the heart of current events. The author argues that this theoretical frame is likely to have a lasting impact on research for years to come. Pragmatically, many projects superficially appropriate this discourse to justify their objectives, which are sometimes simply lucrative and applied. Faced with this potential abuse, the author advocates other ways of restitution, founded on investigative techniques that lead the researcher to modify his or her status in relation to the children who actively collaborate in the project. From the perspective of the “child researcher”, the process of restitution can become much more complex because children share and express their views often in a discrete or concealed manner. In situations where there is no traditional “institutional channel” for consulting children, it is essential for the anthropologist to do so during research.

How To Restitute

The second part of this volume, entitled “Tools and Modalities of Everyday Restitution. Reinventing the Ethnographic Relationship”, addresses in context the issue around the modalities and tools of restitution to children without neglecting the political aspects dealt with in the first part. It questions the status of children and the effects of the research’s context, its norms, and the ideology at work on restitution. In so doing, the reflection contributes to critically enhance the dialogue on methodological and epistemological issues.

The aim of this section is to get to the heart of restitution. The tools and modalities of restitution are not taken for granted just because a participatory method was implemented or because a material substrate or the media were used to retribute almost in and of themselves (photo, video, music), due to their presumed intrinsic communicative nature, without the need for intervention or any thought on

the part of the researcher, especially with children. The anthropological approach based on ethnographic relationships (Fogel & Rivoal 2009) built during shared daily activities raises the question of restitution in terms that allow for a broader reflection on the construction of knowledge and the transformative power of anthropology.

Several authors believe that restitution is becoming more effective thanks to the use of new technologies (Pourchez 2004), such as videos and photographs. In Australia, this type of restitution has been implemented by sharing collected data with Aboriginal communities and depositing them in museum and university archives (Glowczewski 1999), and through video archives of rituals of the Aboriginal society of Yolngu (De Lary Healy 2016). Nevertheless, as De Lary Healy (2011) points out, the perceptions conveyed by museums about local people (photos, videos, objects, among others) have not really been analyzed: they are simply claimed to be “effective”. This so-called effectiveness is problematic not only because we do not know how these populations view these materials, but also because a universal meaning is attributed to the media used. Another difficulty arises from the fact that the different temporalities underlying the items exhibited are ignored: the recording methods, the unfolding of the events themselves, the editing, the presentation, and the subsequent screenings, by the population in question as well as by the researcher and the general public, have not been well studied. The various contents and temporalities, as well as how they are compressed during the complex process of restitution expressed by these technical tools, are often neglected because they are not considered a part of the restitution process, an idea which is quite debatable. Cohn’s (2020) recent article attempts to remedy this by analyzing in context the process of restitution of old analogic photographs during her fieldwork among the Xikrin in Brazil. The reception of this material activated different social and cultural domains, linked in particular to secrecy and death, which led to questions about the foundations and the dynamics of the society as much as to querying the anthropologist’s viewpoint.

Regarding children, who, as discussed above, are rarely considered in terms of the restitution process, some authors speak about gifts and counter-gifts between researchers and children (Danic *et al.* 2006: 112-114). Yet, in line with Alderson’s proposals (2008: 279-280), one way of rendering them more visible and meeting their expectations is to directly involve the children in the restitution and dissemination process of the research outcomes. Nevertheless, this involvement is difficult to implement, nor does it solve all the problems mentioned above. Moreover, it does not excuse the anthropologist from questioning the process at work in context: from the field to the different domains and actors involved, and the consequences of the work carried out. The contributors in this section attempt to do so, initially questioning the methodology to then focus, for most of them, on the different

ethical, epistemic, and epistemological levels of the anthropology of childhood within general anthropology.

Campigotto approaches the theme of restitution through the prism of events, some out of the ordinary and others, on the contrary, routine and at first sight trivial, which occurred during fieldwork carried out with children (5-8 years old) in the city of Liege (Belgium). The exchanges analyzed constitute translations, understood as crossings and bridges in a relationship, that enable the sharing of distinct universes of meaning—that of the ethnographer and those of the ethnographees. The author considers these translations as a commonplace mechanism of reciprocity and therefore as “ordinary restitution”. She questions the way in which this reciprocity is ethically exercised, and what makes it possible, thus overturning the usual interpretations based on the asymmetrical relationship between adults and children. Issues of confrontation, translation, and reciprocity appear here as essential constitutive aspects of restitution. Developing this idea through detailed ethnographic descriptions, **Campigotto** offers a reflection on the conditions of possibility in the ethnographic relationship when it is inscribed in the long term.

Alvarado Solís draws on her anthropological research with adults and children among various populations from Mexico to reflect on the different forms that restitution can take from the most classical, called “handing over the research outcomes”, to everyday forms. The analysis of restitution – as an exchange – for adults and children, through documentaries, audio recordings, photographs, a visit to an aquarium, an outing to the circus or the making of a video clip among children, reveals the different temporalities that underlie it, reflecting its intrinsic complexity. Restitution is also made up of moments and processes that display the tensions in adult-child relationships, but where the children intervene by transforming their surroundings. Adults, on their part, question the audio-visual media, claiming that they do not respect their temporalities or, conversely, that they represent a medium through which to support their social demands. These examples demonstrate that each case must be analyzed specifically. The chapter highlights that restitution goes hand in hand with participation, collaboration, ethics, political standpoints, and epistemology in anthropology.

Cornuel looks at restitution through an ethnographic study of school meals and the processes of food heritage construction in Cuzco (Peru) in order to better understand how the dynamics of restitution contribute to questioning adult/child relationships in a context where the latter are constantly under the control of the former. Focusing on the analysis of micro-events and of a restitution workshop conducted within the school, the author shows the possible, albeit temporary, reversal of adult/child power relations thanks to a space for dialogue created by the anthropologist, as well as the role of invisible and mundane acts in the construction of ethnographic relations with children.

Drăghici and **Sánchez Caro** offer a reflection on visual tools as essential forms of restitution in research with young children in educational sciences. Through data collected during two ethnographic studies on children's experiences in early childhood centers in France and Colombia, a reflexive approach is adopted to question visual methodologies as restitution mechanisms of varying scope: "restitution-gift" and "restitution as a small window". The thought process focuses on the cultural dimension of visual restitution, considering fieldwork conducted in different contexts, with variations specific to these contexts and the participants. The results allow the authors to think (i) of forms of visual restitution as situated practices to be negotiated according to expectations and (ii) of the need for ethical and epistemological reflection on the exchanges with the participants.

Willemsen focuses on the transmission of anthropological analyses to young children within an ethnographic project conducted in an alternative pedagogical pre-school center in Belgium. Restitution on naptime was done in the form of a children's story, inspired by the pedagogical methods of the center itself, as well as through "rhyming" and photo-language. As for the content of the restitution itself, it leads to several essential reflections for the field of childhood anthropology, such as: the contradiction between the value given to children's freedom and to the promotion of their agency and the actual effective power granted them over the choices that concern them; or the consensus between the different actors that are necessary to the upkeep of an institution such as a pre-school. The reflection on the often-unexpected consequences of restitution on reality leads to a more global questioning of anthropology as a discipline, of the responsibility of the anthropologist in the co-production of knowledge and of social change.

Reyes Domínguez examines the restitution processes implemented in a "university social service" project in Mexico. From simple participation through to daily support at the outset, restitution to children gradually took on different forms marked by attention to local knowledge, redefining interaction dynamics, acknowledging children's rights to represent themselves, questioning initial conceptions of the world of childhood, making children's knowledge, skills, and emotions more visible in the public sphere, and considering their voices when questioning dominant discourses on childhood. The author argues that restitution to children requires carefully listening to what they have to say and creating spaces of self-representation for them. For researchers, it is essential they question and rethink conventional frameworks of interpretation. This viewpoint implies a willingness to commit to struggles and actions that go beyond the short term, arise from historical situations, and require researchers' commitment to building a world that is more just and more accepting of diversity.

Finally, **Anne-Gaël Bilhaut** offers an afterword that puts into perspective the debates on restitution developed in the book and opens up avenues for reflection based on her own experiences as an anthropologist.

By bringing together several generations of scholars from different institutions, academic traditions, and countries of origin engaged in research with and for and young people in different field sites and on different subjects, this volume leads to a fertile and hitherto unexplored path along which to think about anthropology differently, following avenues that are as rich as they are varied. We hope that this attempt leads to a better understanding of the importance of both the question of restitution and that of the subfield of anthropology of childhood in the epistemology of general anthropology, and that it initiates a dialogue in the social sciences breaking down the artificial boundary between fundamental and applied research.

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