Chapter 2. One-Way, Two-Way, and Dead Ends in Ethnographic Restitution. The Example of Participatory Action Research "A Quest for Remembrance" (Paris, France)

Élodie Razy*

What is restitution? In this chapter, I intend to go beyond the still too often perceived image of restitution as sharing *a posteriori* an article, a book, or even giving an oral or written presentation on the "results" and focus on a diffuse and complex phenomenon that taints all anthropological fieldwork and productions, a phenomenon founded on commitment, the building of relations, intersubjectivity, participation, and long-term and daily interactions (Caratini 2004; Godelier 2007; Rivoal & Fogel 2009). The upheavals of the 1960s, with their criticisms and their questionings of anthropology, as well as the proposals that followed over the following decades (cf. Introduction), represent a fertile terrain for the questions asked. It is understood that restitution is intimately linked to ethical issues[10] and that its political dimension appears unavoidable. Nevertheless, contemplations on restitution cannot limit themselves to only those points.

I will apply a broad definition of restitution (cf. Introduction) that mobilizes the different actors involved in a project on the remembrance of migration entitled "A Quest for Remembrance": the anthropologist (myself), the children and the young people, their parents, the representatives of institutions, and the representatives of the different areas involved (organizations, politics, media, etc.). I view restitution as a process marked by exchange, the flow of gestures, words, acts, actions, but also a stance, a commitment. I also consider relevant to the analysis the weakness or the inexistence of all these "traits": silence and absence, for example. Thus, how can we define the limits of restitution? How is it different, for instance, during fieldwork with children and young people in collaborative or participatory action research which implies varying degrees of research co-production[11]? I shall also consider

*Professor of anthropology, FaSS, IRSS-LASC (University of Liège, Liège, Belgium), elodie.razy@uliege.be

[10]I identify two levels of questioning in ethics: firstly, a level that stems from a predefined setting (codes, questionnaires, committees, etc.) and, secondly, one that grows from a "pragmatic and processual" approach, enclosed within the researcher's own reflexivity during an anthropological approach based on participant observation (Razy 2014a).

[11]Cf. especially, Alderson & Morrow [1995] (2011); Boyden & Ennew (1997); Montgomery (2009); Veale (2010); Cheney (2011); Suremain (2013) on these research mechanisms.

whether the duration of the research circumscribes the process of restitution, and what is the role of the anthropologist in this process.

It is important in anthropology to focus on this question from the perspective of children and young people because restitution – or more often its avatars, which can take different forms without necessarily being named or assimilated to the indispensable benefit(s) gained by children from research – is often presented as vital, a "categorical imperative", in the sense of Kant, in *Childhood Studies*, as opposed to restitution in research with adults (Razy 2014*a*). Furthermore, this idea stems from a plethora of methods (mixed, mosaic, inspired by art, etc.) meant to guarantee the respect of ethics. These methods, often taken from psychology and educational science, aim to turn the children into participants, even co-researchers (Razy 2014*a*). If at first such an undertaking seems commendable, it is undeniable that considerations on the meaning, modes, and limitations of restitution, not to mention its epistemological assumptions, are rarely given further thought.

After presenting the background for the project "A Quest for Remembrance", which is central to the reflections in this paper, I will analyze the project's unwinding to reveal the traces and the mechanisms of the project's (micro-)processes of restitution. Finally, I will consider the role of temporality and the influence of the media and politics in the anthropological use of restitution.

The Project: "A Quest for Remembrance"

In 2005, I started a collaborative action research project on the remembrance of migration by children and young people whose parents had come from Africa, the Maghreb or Portugal[12]. These children and young people regularly attended or had attended activities run by a charity that helped with homework and alphabetization, the RETIF[13]. This charity had obtained funding for this project through a proposal I had myself submitted. I was recruited to conduct the project thanks to funding from the Acsé (the Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities National Agency; *Agence nationale pour la cohésion sociale et l'égalité des chances*), which was particularly interested in the intergenerational dimension of the proposal and its anthropological approach, which to date had been rarely applied in this area. A group of children aged 7 to 12 years old and another group of adolescents and young adults, between 13 and 21 years old, participated voluntarily in the project (approximately eight in each group). Most of the

---

[12]The title, "A Quest for Remembrance" ("*En quête de mémoire*" in French), was proposed to the participants because it highlighted the absence of dialogue between children and their parents on the subject of their parents' trajectory as migrants: that which the children and the young people did themselves ("going on a quest"; "*en quête*" in French) and the project itself ("an inquest"; "*enquête*" in French), which required that they actually conduct research among their family as well as researching the media, etc.

[13]http://retif.asso.chez-alice.fr/alpha.html

participants and their parents already knew me because I had volunteered for the charity (alphabetization, schoolwork tutoring) since 1988, continuously at first and then on occasion.

The initial observation was that children and young people from immigrant backgrounds were most often talked about in terms of academic failure or delinquency and that their voice on migration issues was absent from the public sphere. The French Museum for the History of Immigration (CNHI; *Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration*) was no exception in this respect. At the time, it was under construction at the Palais de la Porte Dorée (Paris, 12th arrondissement), formerly the *Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie* (the Museum of Oceanian and African Arts), which was transferred to the *Musée du Quai Branly* (Quai Branly Museum). Background information on this museum initiative is necessary. The project was conceived by historians and charity activists in the 1990s. Ten years later, Lionel Jospin, then Prime Minister (2001), appointed a commission. The project culminated with the creation of the CNHI under the Presidency of Jacques Chirac, which began in 2003. In this respect, the 2000s represent a particular period in France. The CNHI, which aimed to include migrants politically and publicly in the history of France, was about to come to fruition, after years of political and academic problems and debates. At the same time, President Sarkozy's political stance on immigration issues had led him to create the controversial Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development (Valluy 2008).

It was in this sensitive context that "A Quest for Remembrance" modestly aimed to rethink the history of migration on different levels, but always from the point of view of children and young people who were in part an outgrowth of immigration. The starting point was their family history, and the aim was an exhibition on migration that would place the children and the young people at the heart of the research process.

With this in mind, we tried to start a conversation with the parents of the participants who so wished to and with individuals and organizations not directly involved in the project, in particular the CNHI, which was easy to do because it was located in the same area as the RETIF and close to where most of the children and the young people who participated in the project lived. I took this initiative on the premise, certainly naive and idealistic, that young people's and children's points of view would be of interest to the adults concerned with the subject of remembrance and migration and that they would be ready to listen to the younger generation.

During the first sessions, I presented the young participants with an outline and some ideas for research activities. These were based on introductory teachings in anthropology adapted for children and young people and were meant to trigger the reflexive process. The sessions had specially been conceived for

them, and were meant to be appropriated, modified, and enriched during their two runs – 2005 and 2006 for the first, and 2006 and 2007 for the second – by those to whom they were destined.

At each step, the content of the sessions was negotiated accordingly with the children and the young people. This was possible because the project's content was intentionally vague. I was free to conceive and conduct the project as I saw fit, and the charity, the children, and the young people, as well as their parents, trusted me. Collaborative action research needs real freedom, and, to me, this aspect is non-negotiable except with those directly involved in the project. This type of research does not fit well with management, financially precarious charities, the research politics of Europe (cf. Introduction) or the conceptions of childhood and youth that prevail in our societies where actions are elaborated for children and young people. If, at the outset, I personally conceived the outline of the project and presented it to the children and youths, this was only a starting point. During the two years that followed, the project's outline was shaped by them and with them.

We met on Saturdays and the sessions consisted of a variety of recreational activities for the younger ones: critical visits to museums (Quai Branly, Guynemer Museum) and to the construction site of the CNHI, reading, drawing, and writing workshops on migration, the participation of parents, etc. The elder ones conducted research on the place of remembrance of migration in the public sphere and within their respective families. Notably, they produced analyses of museums around the world which dealt with the subject and revealed their strengths and their weaknesses. They also critically analyzed the Internet site of the CNHI and visited its construction site. Additionally, they entirely organized a trip to London to visit the "19 Princelet Street" charity museum[14], run by a charity and which had attracted their attention, as well as other sites in London (museums, neighborhoods). The participants in both groups then contributed to conceive, set up – scenographically – and organize an exhibition as well as the proposed final events.

A documentary filmmaker who was making a film about the birth of the CNHI, contacted us on the advice of the CNHI's communications officer. He partly followed the project, whose genesis he paralleled with that of the CNHI in his documentary entitled "(In)Quest on Remembrance" *("(En)quête de mémoire*", in French).

---

[14]https://www.19princeletstreet.org.uk/, now the "Princelet House's Museum of Immigration and Diversity": https://www.museumslondon.org/museum/75/museum-of-immigration-and-diversity

Materiality and Immateriality of Restitution

A Scientific Publication as the Trigger for Reflexivity

What first comes to mind when discussing restitution is the diffusion of research results in the academic world and to the funders, followed by sending or handing over something to the field participants. This is often the one and only act of restitution. A brief historical overview will contextualize how little by little my reflexivity on restitution took shape and will clarify the contributions of the analysis discussed in this chapter.

My first act of restitution, conceived as such *a posteriori*, was offering copies of my book, a modified version of my doctoral thesis on early childhood in Soninke country (Mali), to the families with whom I had worked (Razy 2007*a*). Unable to travel at the time, I decided to entrust the copies to the relatives of the families residing in the workers' house in Paris where the RETIF lessons took place. Two comments among the conversations held at the time triggered my queries on restitution.

After reading the acknowledgements section, one of the family members was unhappy because I had modified the name of the village and of the people involved. At the time, these issues were barely discussed in France, and I had not received any lessons or advice on methods or ethics during my training[15]. Like many others, fieldwork had over time led me to develop a standpoint. The only directive was to systematically anonymize people and places. I had therefore applied this rule … without questioning it, thinking this was the "right thing to do".

Shaken by this comment, I engaged in a reflection on what "to restitute" meant, without initially calling it so. Today, I wonder whether the first act of restitution is not to ethically consider the anonymization of the participants. From this point of view, would the naming of the participants in our scientific outcomes be restitution? If so, under what conditions? Can a differential anonymization policy exist alongside constraining data privacy protection rules and regulations and the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)[16]? With regards to children, this question is even more delicate because legal representatives and children may not have the same point of view and children can change their opinion as time goes by.

The second comment that set me on the path of these reflections was that of an elderly man who, like the other villagers, was proud of the publication and thanked me for having travelled so far to "name, meet, and raise awareness" (Williams *et al*. 2016) of the Soninke through my book. He suggested that

---

[15]From my Bachelor's degree to my Master's degree at the Université de Nanterre between 1994 and 1996.

[16]https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection_en

I should ship the copies destined to the village in a "rented container", a common practice used to cheaply send goods in large quantities (clothes, household appliances, agricultural or other commercial or personal goods). I explained, touched as I was by his enthusiasm, that printing books was very costly and that only a limited number of copies had been issued[17], as is usual for academic books. In terms of restitution, when I think back to this scene, I would think, and still do, that the meaning given to the physical traces of the outcomes and their reception (publications) by the participants should systematically be analyzed by the researcher, whether the individuals had participated directly or not in the production of the outcomes (Caratini 2004). There are discrepancies between the expectations of some and those of others. These differences can be somewhat obvious or spelled out. The anthropologist should question the participants' expectations in terms of what the researcher has written as well as inwardly considering his or her own expectations, which are, more often than not, academic or linked to research funding. And how does one manage children's expectations? Should we and can we envisage a specific document – an outgrowth of the publication – or some other form of restitution of the publication destined specially for children?

As for the project described in this chapter, this has never been an issue because nothing has been published on the project to date. The funders did not request such an outcome. A report and the final exhibition were the only "deliverables." Notwithstanding, I had a wealth of material and was very motivated. Moreover, I needed publications to apply for teaching and research positions and could have "used" the material to write a research paper. It is legitimate to ask why I did not do it, which my reflections on restitution will clarify, and vice versa. On the one hand, I wanted to take my time and get the participants further involved in the project, but I did not have additional funds. On the other hand, and that was the stumbling block, I had been taken aback by the disengagement of certain politicians and the documentary filmmaker, as well as by the fact that they did not uphold their word. I thought it was necessary to write on such a controversial and sensitive subject, without actually knowing how to do it. I will discuss this point further below.

Placing Children's Voices at the Heart of Research

What I consider to be exemplary in the process of restitution is intangible and refers to the perspective I attempted to maintain all throughout the project: to place the voice of the child[18], of the children, of

---

[17]I was able to take further copies to the village during a later fieldwork trip.

[18]I will not discuss here the injunctive nature – that reproduces adult/child dominance relationships without considering cultural systems of local communication, the status of the participants or the consequences of this choice – of the mechanisms in certain research projects that consist in "giving the floor" to the children, mechanisms which have sometimes not been carefully thought through. Attention is rarely given to the role and place of the researcher in the process,

the young people at the heart of the creations. By becoming a "simple" guide, I attempted to lead them towards taking control of the project. The exhibition and the associated events constitute the material evidence of this immaterial act of restitution with tangible effects.

The participants conceived, prepared, and set up, with my help, the exhibition and the associated events that took place in the premises of the charity RETIF at the end of the project. For five days, visitors, guided by the children and the young people, could visit the exhibition, join in debates and workshops facilitated by the children and the youths, and leave a vestige.

The exhibition comprised:

- artefacts as "departure and arrival objects", mentioned in the migrants' stories, relatives of the children encountered (a suitcase full of a married woman's boubous, a lettuce and a baguette – carriers of the tasteful, sensory, affectionate memory of their discovery –, a packet of Marlboros – so different from those smoked back home –, a bed sheet for all luggage);

- excerpts of interviews of relatives of group members, conducted by the children and the young people themselves;

- excerpts of videotaped images of the trip to London, notably aimed at visiting the "19 Princelet Street" charity museum;

- critical texts written by the participants themselves, which could be read or listened to: stories of the first trip to the "country of origin"; difficulties translating into their home languages words such as "remembrance", "family", "migration"; texts on family; excerpts from the travel journals of the trip to London or of the first visit to Mali for one of the participants; interview instructions written by the children and the young people themselves, etc.;

- critical texts and proposals written by the participants on the CNHI site's layout and its website;

- drawings and photographs.

Figure 1a. Examples of migrants' "departure and arrival objects" (suitcase with clothes for departure) and children and youth narratives presented during the exhibition,
© Razy.

---

the children involved, the use of their voice, etc. Elsewhere, I have already criticised this apparently ethical process which can easily be demonstrated to be a-ethical (Razy 2014a; Razy & Rodet 2016).

Figure 1b. Examples of migrants' "departure and arrival objects" (*baguette* and cigarettes for arrival) and children and youth narratives presented during the exhibition, © Razy.

Moreover, each visitor was invited to share on paper what first came to his or her mind when hearing the word "migration". It was a kind of free-association-of-ideas game, a record of which was kept by depositing each piece of paper in the "Sakamo"[19], a bag made of rice straw extremely popular with migrants when travelling. Secondly, each visitor did the same when hearing the phrase "remembrance of migration". He or she then had to attach his or her written note to a branch of "the remembrance tree of migration", a ginkgo, chosen for its resistance, its robustness, and its age. The tree was meant to be planted in front of the townhall of the 12th arrondissement of Paris during an official ceremony. I will later come back to this point.

Figure 2. "Remembrance tree of migration", collecting memories during the exhibition,
© Razy.

[19]This neologism comes from a play on two homophone words in French, "*mots*" (words) and "*maux*" (problems): the Sakamo (sak/a/mo) is a bag (*sac*) in which one can place words that express, at times, problems.

Apart from the exhibition, three debates were open to the visitors, both children and adults, or to the participants. The debates were facilitated by the children and the youths who had contributed to the project and were on subjects they had chosen and written themselves: (i) "freedom of movement"; (ii) "what is a migrant?"; and (iii) "what is a museum of immigration?"

Figure 3. Poster advertising one of the debates moderated by children
and young people during the exhibition, © Razy.
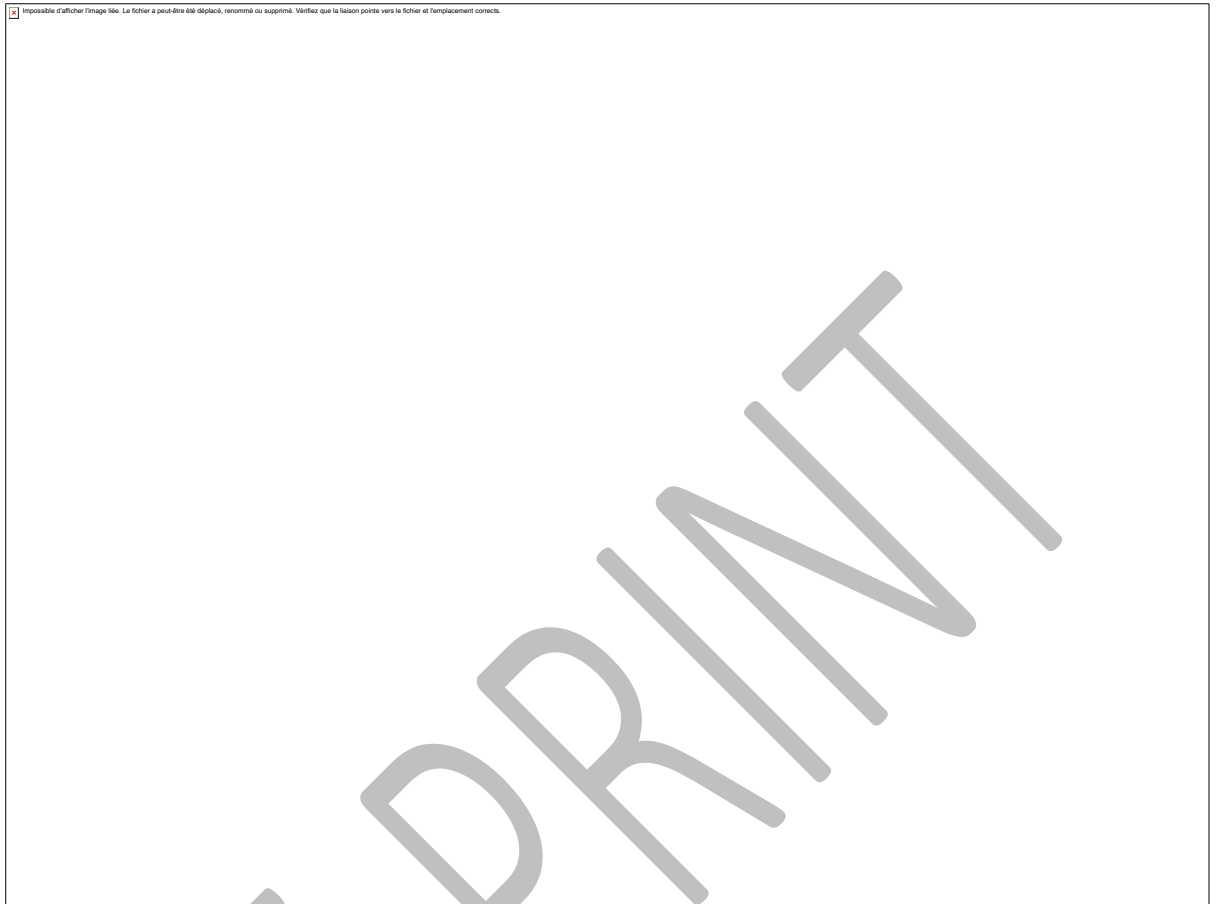
Finally, three drawing and writing workshops, facilitated by the older children and the young people, were addressed to the children visiting the exhibition:

- "Memory, my beautiful memory, tell me…"
- "When dad and mom had my age…"
- "My memory tree, your memory tree…"

Figure 4a. Workshops proposed during the exhibition, © Razy.

Figure 4b. Workshops proposed during the exhibition, © Razy.

Over the five days of the exhibition, there were many occasions to exchange, and the charity was able to welcome new families, people from outside the neighborhood, and adults following alphabetization lessons with the charity; this led to a dialogue between the different components of the charity and different generations. A father lent us objects he had brought with him from Mali during his first trip, among them a handmade musical instrument and an ear of wheat that "he had brought along to remember".

This exhibition was initially meant to be "given" to the CNHI. Even though the baguette and the lettuce are long gone, and the exhibition has been packed into boxes, I can remember the voices of the children and the young people, who are still looking for a place in which they can be heard.

Accompanying the Children's Voice: How Words Travel

There is a second act of intangible restitution, corollary to the first, that consists, for the anthropologist aware of the stakes, to play the role of mediator, to "facilitate" as Suremain (2014) put it. This act places the child's voice at the center of the project.

As already mentioned, the premise of the project "A Quest for Remembrance" was that the different contacts with whom we exchanged were interested in hearing what the children and the young people had to say. On the one hand, from a social perspective, this idea came from the fact that society

emphasized more and more the role and the agency of children in terms of the promotion of children's rights, but also, from a scientific perspective, because the social sciences (sociology, anthropology, childhood studies) were developing an approach far more centered on and inclusive of children's points of view. On the other hand, children are the first concerned by issues of immigration because of their parents' history and sometimes even their own – through their own ties to the country of origin of their parents and, from a distance or during holiday trips, to those family members who remained in the country, or through simple "memories" (Razy 2006, 2007*b* & 2014*b*) – or because of media coverage and discrimination.

This was challenged by what happened, but I attempted to create a space where the children and the youths could express themselves and share the outcomes of their work throughout the project and the exhibition with as broad as possible an audience. Giving the floor to the children is not an aim in and of itself but a means, and it requires its own space. This must be undertaken with precaution if we do not want it to be instrumentalized under the guise of showcasing the participants (Bluebond-Langner & Korbin 2007; Spyrou 2011). The process takes place in a specific location: that exists or is created for the occasion because most of the time this space is not available; where the voice can be heard, which means that interlocutors have to be present; and where this voice is heard and recognized, that is, it is attributed a value, which means that the interlocutors present are not the usual ones (in this case, the parents, the students in the alphabetization lessons, politicians, etc.).

I therefore attempted as well as I could to create the best conditions, as shall be discussed later, and at a micro-local level, so that the voice of the children and the young people could be heard, but also, and certainly most importantly, so that exchanges took place between different actors in society who, usually, converse little, or not at all, on the subject: within the family, between parents and children who usually do not discuss immigration issues; between children and adults of migrant origin (students registered in the alphabetization lessons of the RETIF) who spoke little of the subject and rarely spoke French; and between children and those adults in positions of responsibility (CNHI, local representatives).

A Complex, Difficult to Define Chemistry

Placing the children's voice at the heart of the project and enabling conversations was only possible under one condition: that the children reinvest the skills acquired outside the project, that is within their homes, at school or among their peers, and that they acquire new ones, such as those necessary to organize from start to finish a trip to London (searching for accommodation and transport on the Internet, comparing prices, establishing a budget, contacting people in English, etc.), or preparing the speech for the exhibition's opening. I assumed that this global dynamic, of reinvesting certain skills and

acquiring new ones, would enable, in turn, to give something (back) to the children and to the young people: a place, a voice, a certain self-confidence, freedom of speech, reflexivity, and hope for some. If, because of funding, the subject (memory and migration), though broad, had been imposed upon the children, it sprang from the observation that something was missing at several levels and from the interest of the children themselves. Moreover, work on this theme led to some activities or was a pretext for others that were not necessarily directly linked to the subject. However, except for their enthusiasm in participating, without any formal feedback from the children or the young people regarding that which I had made possible, it is difficult to define precisely what was part of restitution. Should we accept that the process of restitution, apart from being a complex phenomenon, also has grey areas that cannot completely disappear? When do the possibilities of restitution definitely come to an end? What temporalities are we dealing with when we deal with restitution?

Temporalities and Actors of Restitution: A Puzzle?

From Deferred Exchange to Deferred Restitution

Another aspect of restitution, rarely discussed, deserves all our attention: the fact that it can potentially be deferred. Just as it is difficult to know when fieldwork exactly begins and ends, it is difficult to completely close all possibility of restitution. Certainly, research by project, which is steadily becoming the norm, pushes towards definite closure so that researchers can move on to the next funded project. Yet, research, and in particular research in anthropology, needs time: time that lasts, time that goes back and forth, and time for absences. To avoid turning restitution into a gadget, a mere ethical ploy, one should certainly admit the possibility of stretching it throughout time, without warrantee. For the different reasons evoked earlier, the project "A Quest for Remembrance" is not finished. Apart from its unfinished aftertaste, over the past few years I have been thinking as to the type of publication that could come out of a reunion with the children and with the youths, as well as to how to put the project into perspective more than ten years later through the lens of their adult reflexivity. For some time now, I have also been thinking on an exhibition that would intersect this experience with that of other children and young people elsewhere. Finally, I have also been thinking on how to create a virtual exhibition of all the material from the 2007 exhibition.

The Anthropologist and the Question of Restitution: Lone Wolf or Knight in Shining Armor?

Restitution, in its routine meaning, is often viewed as a series of standardized procedures under the sole responsibility of the anthropologist. In its usual form, restitution moves from the anthropologist to the "informants". This one-way picture portrays the anthropologist as a figure of authority and ignores

what flows the other way, from the field participants to the anthropologist. When focusing on fieldwork based on participant observation, on building relationships on the long-term, on the anthropologist's own reflexivity, and the emergence of reflexivity among the people studied, a two-way restitution seems obvious. The literature, however, hardly discusses this.

Through the example presented here, it becomes apparent that restitution can be understood in different ways and that it can take different forms: some planned from the onset, others predictable or elaborated along the way at the heart of interpersonal relationships, others still undefined because they cannot be defined at the time, and finally some others deferred. Moreover, it becomes clear that restitution can be viewed from different angles depending on the public: the participants directly involved – the children and the youths in question –, but also their parents, visitors to the exhibition external to the charity, students enrolled in alphabetization classes, etc. In terms of responsibility, it is obvious the anthropologist is not the only one concerned. Even if for ethical reasons and as much as he or she can, the anthropologist must be the guarantor of the process of restitution in terms of the interpersonal relationships established with the children and the young people, as well as the active guardian of the restitution process that involves other agents (institutional, political, media, etc.), his or her range of action is limited. He or she cannot do more. Interferences must be viewed as heuristic moments and movements. Restitution can be seen as a series of rather permeable and porous layers of sediment, deposited throughout the duration of the project. Their components, as well as those who "fed" them, are therefore multiple. The anthropologist does not master all aspects of restitution. Considering that the anthropologist, the children, and the young people are not the only ones involved, what role can media and political representatives play in the question of restitution?

Restitution and the Limits of the Politico-Media Sphere

Do the different worlds concerned by the question of migration – the world of the children and the young people, the political world, the world of media, the world of museums – carry the same memories of migration? Is promoting conversations enough for the voice of the children to be heard? Do adults want and are they capable of understanding the point of view of children and youths?

The intention to or even the affirmation of considering the children's voice is meaningless if ethics is absent from the actions of certain actors and/or if words are not followed by actions. An exchange with children and youths cannot become a constructive restitution that will imprint onto their personal story, onto a common memory, unless it is reciprocal. Furthermore, the anthropologist cannot solely assume responsibility for the clear completion of the project. These requirements are part of collaborative research, and not all actors participate in the same way as the anthropologist. Four examples will help illustrate this point.

The first example covers the relationships with certain members of the townhall who were interested in the work of the children and the young adults. They came to the inaugural ceremony and to certain events. The mayor suggested organizing a tea party-ceremony to plant the remembrance-tree in front of the townhall of the 12th arrondissement of Paris. During the municipal election that followed, for opaque political reasons, the charity within which the project had developed was threatened with eviction despite its vitality and the fact that it was recognized as being of "public interest" for the neighborhood. The remembrance-tree was shipped off to a municipal greenhouse before being eventually planted elsewhere and not in the initially proposed symbolic location in front of the townhall. Finally, the children and the youths were not invited to a tea party-ceremony as promised.

The second example concerns an event that took place during the inauguration of the exhibition by the children and the young people. The participants had written a booklet about the CNHI containing criticisms of the website, questions, suggestions, etc., which they handed over to the representative of Minister Toubon, the official director of the museum. They never received an answer despite the enthusiasm displayed by the future director and the communications officer. The children and the youths were merely invited to the CNHI's opening several months later.

The third example concerns the children's willingness to offer their interactive exhibition to CNHI, in particular the material collected during the exhibition, because they had witnessed the birth of the museum. The announced collaboration with the CNHI and the quick visit, on invitation, but on the quiet due to the political reasons evoked above, of the children and the young people to the CNHI during the inauguration were not followed through. The project finished and the exhibition was packed up in boxes. The work of two years became a sort of dormant memory of migration. The children and the young people had built the exhibition through exchange and donations because they were convinced they had their say in the construction of the CNHI. They had understood that this was meant as a participative and co-constructed museum where they would have their place. They had not dreamt up this idea. They felt the CNHI wanted to get the neighborhood residents involved and specially them. They thought that the memory of migration that would be displayed in the museum could not be built without them: children whose personal stories were linked to questions of migration. Who, better than them, could have played the part of multi-vocal mediator?

The fourth example is that of the documentary on the CNHI and the project "A Quest for Remembrance". The filmmaker, once his work done, showed us a draft version of the documentary we all approved. Everything had gone well during the two years of collaboration. Afterwards, despite our regular attempts to contact him and the production company, we did not hear back from them, nor were we given access to the final version. The children did not get a copy, the names were absent from the final credits or misspelt, the rare information on the project and the charity was erroneous, and, to

make matters worse, in French, the title of the film borrowed the title of our project, except for the additional parentheses…

These four examples show how uncertainty, the lack of continuity in responsibilities and of professional or civic ethics marked the future of the exchanges that had taken place during the exhibition. Beyond the clash of interests and political, media, museum, anthropological, and child temporalities, which seem to be in opposition in certain respects, several questions persist in terms of the failed encounter between the children/young people and notably the CNHI and the politicians. One can wonder if the reasons are an *ad hoc* instrumentalization of children and young people; the fact that the participants, as children and youths, are not considered full citizens; and/or their critical perspective in terms of the memory of migration is underestimated. Is it therefore that in the eyes of the actors mentioned, children and young people structurally lack legitimacy?

In any case, the anthropologist is not the sole master of restitution. For some elements of restitution to take place, he or she depends on other actors and spheres of responsibility. Beside the political and media spheres, there are public and private funders, the authorities, academics, and others. I think that at the heart of these obstacles lies the crucial question of temporality.

Conclusion

Through the project "A Quest for Remembrance", I have demonstrated that restitution is both a process and a stance – tightly linked to ethical questions in research – that consists in placing the children's voice at the heart of research while at the same time guaranteeing open spaces where this voice can move from these inaudible agents to others. Throughout this analysis, material and immaterial elements appeared, the components of restitution, which in essence cannot be measured and are sometimes invisible. Finally, I have pointed to the importance of temporality and the role of the anthropologist in restitution, moving beyond a simple "categorical imperative" without any actual reflection from researchers, as is often the case in the literature. Temporality points to the complex nature of restitution. Do this process and point of view have a beginning and an end? As for the anthropologist, he or she is never solely responsible, and the "failures" in restitution, linked notably to the politico-media sphere, appear to be heuristic in terms of issues pertaining to the memory of migration and in its treatment in relation to the place of children and young people.

Finally, I would like to come back to the concept of restitution itself. Consecrated term in writings on the subject, its use in anthropology deserves, however, to be questioned from the perspective of its etymology as it places the act, on the one hand, at a crossroads between a positivist ideal that seems to have been abandoned and, on the other hand, a post-colonial and post-modern ethical engagement

– or at least is presented as such – with sometimes adverse effects. Is everything that has been said here about the project "A Quest for Remembrance" a part of restitution?

The meanings of the term "restitution" are indeed open to misinterpretation and shroud a complex phenomenon. Etymologically[20], in French, it is about "giving back that which has been unduly owned", a "judgement that releases someone from a contracted agreement", the "action of returning something to its original state", or even, borrowed from the Latin *restitutio,* it is a "reinstatement, reparation, restoration"[21] (Rey ed. 2000). From this perspective, the anthropologist becomes a predator, a thief that "takes", even deteriorates that which he or she has acquired illegitimately from an original environment thought of implicitly as untouched and natural. The anthropologist's duty would be to give back in its original condition that which she or he took or to somehow pay his or her debt. This would somehow clear the anthropologist. No longer owing anything to his or her hosts, he or she can go back home.

If this somewhat cynical and grotesque definition undoubtedly still applies to certain researchers and research, it does not cover entirely the reality of the complex and often invisible processes of restitution at work in anthropology. In the same way that fieldwork begins before arriving in the field and continues well afterwards, thinking about restitution engages the researcher before, during, and after fieldwork. From this perspective, the idea of feedback (Kobelinsky 2008) seems more appropriate, although vaguer but, precisely, because it is so. For there to be feedback, however, one first needs to visit and, potentially, travel and exchange. Used in the plural (visits, travels, exchanges), these additional concepts allow us to go deep into a feedback process that is part of research and has a real heuristic and ethical value at the heart of the human and scientific undertaking that is anthropology, between relativism and universalism.

With children and young people, this thought process takes on its full meaning as new people and new subjects gradually emerge over time. Exploring restitution through their lens allows us to learn about restitution in general and to extend it to other structurally marginalized populations.

I dedicate this publication to all the children and the young people, as well as their parents, whom I thank for their participation in the project "A Quest for Remembrance", to all the visitors who attended the exhibit that grew out of the research project and to the memory of one of my field companions in Soninke country (Mali) who appears in the cover of my book (Razy 2007a) and whose passing I recently

---

[20]Vidal (2011) performs this exercise somewhat differently.

[21]Author's translation.

learnt from one of her sons, three years old at the time of my research. He tracked me down after finding my book among his mother's belongings, a trace of restitution.

Bibliography

ALDERSON P. & MORROW V. 2011 [1995] *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: a Practical Handbook*. Los Angeles-London-New Delhi-Singapore-Washington DC : Sage.

BENSA A. 2008*a* « Père de Pwädé. Retour sur une ethnologie au long cours » (19-39), *In* D. Fassin & A. Bensa (dir.) *Les politiques de l'enquête. Épreuves ethnographiques*. Paris : La Découverte.

BENSA A. 2008*b* « Remarques sur les politiques de l'intersubjectivité » (323-328), *In* D. Fassin & A. Bensa (dir.) *Les politiques de l'enquête. Épreuves ethnographiques*. Paris : La Découverte.

BENSA A. & Fassin D. (dir.) 2008 *Les politiques de l'enquête. Épreuves ethnographiques*. Paris : La Découverte.

BLUEBOND-LANGNER M. & KORBIN J.E. 2007 « Challenges and Opportunities in the Anthropology of Childhoods: An Introduction to 'Children, Childhoods, and Childhood Studies' » *American Anthropologist* 109(2) : 241-246.

BOHANNAN L. 1966 « Shakespeare in the Bush » *Natural History* 75(7) : 28-33.

BOYDEN J. & ENNEW J. (dir.) *1997 Children in Focus: A Manual for Experiential Learning in Participatory Research with Children*. Stockholm : Rädda Barnen.

CARATINI S. 2004 *Les non-dits de l'anthropologie.* Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.

CHENEY K. 2011 « Children as Ethnographers: Reflections on the Importance of Participatory Research in Assessing Orphan's Needs » *Childhood: A Journal of Global Child Research* 18(2) : 166-179.

CLIFFORD J. 1983 « On ethnographic authority » *Representations* 2 : 118-146.

FABIAN J. 1983 *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York : Columbia University Press.

FOGEL F. & RIVOAL I. 2009 « Introduction » *Ateliers du LESC* 33 URL : http://ateliers.revues.org/8192

GODELIER M. 2007 *Au fondement des sociétés humaines. Ce que nous apprend l'anthropologie*. Paris : Albin Michel.

HANCART-PETITET P. 2008 « Dimension éthique de la recherche en Inde du Sud. À propos d'une étude anthropologique d'un programme de prévention de la transmission mère-enfant du VIH » *ethnographiques.org* « L'éthique en anthropologie de la santé: conflits, pratiques, valeur heuristique » 17 : 1-15 (special issue) URL : http://www.ethnographiques.org/2008/ Hancart-Petitet

KOBELINSKI C. 2008 « Les situations de retour. Restituer sa recherche à ses enquêtés » (185-204), *In* D. Fassin & A. Bensa (dir.) *Les politiques de l'enquête. Épreuves ethnographiques.* Paris : La Découverte.

MONTGOMERY H. 2009 *An Introduction to Childhood. Anthropological Perspectives on Children's Lives*. Singapour : Wiley-Blackwell

MÜLLER, J.-C. 2004 « Du monologue au dialogue ou de l'ambiguïté d'écrire des deux mains » *Anthropologie et sociétés* 28(3) : 147-163.

RAZY É. 2006 « De quelques 'retours soninké' aux différents âges de la vie. Circulations entre la France et le Mali » *Journal des Anthropologues* 106-107 : 337-354.

RAZY É. 2007a *Naître et devenir. Anthropologie de la petite enfance en pays soninké (Mali)*. Nanterre : Société d'Ethnologie.

RAZY É. 2007b « Les 'sens contraires' de la migration. La circulation des jeunes filles d'origine soninké entre la France et le Mali » *Journal des Africanistes* 77(2) : 19-43.

RAZY É. 2014a « La pratique de l'éthique: de l'anthropologie générale à l'anthropologie de l'enfance et retour » *AnthropoChildren* 4 URL : http://popups.ulg.ac.be/2034-8517/index.php?id=2046

RAZY É. 2014b « Ways of Being a Child in a Dispersed Family: Multi-Parenthood and Migratory Debt Between France and Mali (Soninke Homeland) » (186-212), *In* A. Veale & G. Dona (dir.) *Children, Migration & Globalization: New Mobilities*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan.

RODET M. & RAZY É. 2016 « Introduction. Child Migration in Africa: Key Issues & New Perspectives » (1-19), *In* É. Razy, & M. Rodet (dir.) *Children on the Move in Africa. Past & Present Experiences of Migration.* Oxford : James Currey.

ROSSI I., KAECH F., FOLEY R.-A., PAPADANIEL Y. 2008 « L'éthique à l'épreuve d'une anthropologie en milieu palliatif de l'insertion à la restitution » *ethnographiques.org* URL : http://www.ethnographiques.org/2008/Rossi,et-al.html

SPYROU S. 2011 « The Limits of Children's voices: From Authenticity to Critical, Reflexive Representation » *Childhood : a Journal of Global Child Research* 18(2) : 151-165.

SUREMAIN (DE) C.-É. 2013 « Des corps à la rue. Petite histoire d'une recherche-action participative auprès d'une bande d'enfants de la rue à La Paz (Bolivie) » *Corps* 11 : 213-224.

SUREMAIN (DE) C.-É. 2014 « Ethics in Ethnography. Anthropology Confronted by Its 'Little Demons' (Examples From Latin America) » *AnthropoChildren* 4 URL : https://popups.uliege.be:443/2034-8517/index.php?id=2037

REY A. (dir.) 2000 *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*. Paris : Le Robert

VALLUY J. 2008 « Quelles sont les origines du ministère de l'Identité nationale et de l'Immigration ? » *Cultures & Conflits* 69 URL : http://journals.openedition.org/conflits/10293

VEALE A. [2005]2010 « Creative Methodologies in Participatory Research With Children » (253-272), *In* S. Greene & D. Hogan (dir.) *Researching Children's Experience*. Los Angeles-Londres-New Delhi-Singapore-Washington D : Sage.

VIDAL L. 2011 « Rendre compte. La restitution comme lieu de refondation des sciences sociales en contexte de développement » *Cahiers d'études africaines* 202-203(2) : 591-607.

WILLIAMS P., OLIVERA M. & STOICHITA V.A. 2016 *Roms en Europe, sous le regard de trois ethnologues*. Nanterre : Société d'ethnologie.