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“To Give a Good *Cambio*”: Economic Affinity, Cheating and the Ambivalent Ethics of Barter in the Southern Andes

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« Donner un bon cambio *» : complicité économique, tromperie et éthique ambivalente du troc dans les Andes méridionales*

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"To Give a Good *Cambio*"

Economic Affinity, Cheating and the Ambivalent Ethics of Barter in the Southern Andes

Olivia Angé

In *The Wealth of Nations,* first published in 1776, Adam Smith posited a propensity to barter as a universal feature of human beings in search of personal benefit. With this argument, Smith established barter as a transaction emanating from a human egoistic nature that operates at the margins of society—a fantasy that has infused popular theories of exchange (Dodd 2014: 20), as well as scientific ones (Humphrey 1985: 49; Servet 1994: 107). The view of barter as merely ruled by self-interest also pervades classic anthropological scholarship. Taken as an asocial transaction driven by material benefits, barter is aligned with commodities in opposition to gift-giving intended for social reproduction (Appadurai 1986; Chapman 1980; Graeber 2011: 32; Gregory 1982: 42; Mauss 2004 [1923-1924]: 150; Polanyi 2001 [1944]; Sahlins 1972: 195). It was only in 1992 that the social import of barter was acknowledged in a ground-breaking collection by Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones. They drew on ethnographic

I am deeply grateful to my friends, neighbours and collaborators who hosted me in their homes, fields and fairs in the Argentinean Andes. My interest in *cambio* was sparked during a doctoral fellowship under the joint supervision of Anne-Marie Losonczy and Gilles Rivière. I remain indebted to them for their generous guidance and teaching. This early ethnography was revisited following Corinna Howland and Tom Powell Davies's invitation to consider the good and the bad of ethical life. I thank them for shedding new light on my ethnographic data. I also appreciate the significant contribution of the journal editors and anonymous reviewers. I of course claim sole responsibility for any remaining gaps in my appreciation of *cambio*. My current research work is graciously funded by a European Research Council Starting Grant (950220) as well as a Fonds national de la recherche scientifique research project (35282336).

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data from disparate cultural contexts to demonstrate that barter "creates social relationships in its own mode" (1992: 8). Yet, even after this important publication, the conceptualisation of barter relations as peripheral, if not agonistic, has remained significant in anthropological literature (Dodd 2014: 20; Graeber 2011: 29; Heady 2006: 262; Mayer 2002: 183).

This article follows the way paved by Humphrey and Hugh-Jones for the study of barter as socially creative, by exploring the practice of *cambio* in the Argentinean Andes. Literally meaning "exchange" in the Spanish spoken in this Southern region of the cordillera, *cambio* specifically refers to a direct exchange of agricultural produce from different ecological niches; typically, meat from the highland and maize from the lowland. In contrast to classic anthropological scholarship regarding barter as an asocial transaction, Andean scholarship has highlighted the circulation of produce between dwellers of different ecological zones as a cornerstone of social organisation (Lehmann 2007 [1982]; Masuda, Shimada and Morris 1985; Murra 1972). Likewise, idealised *cambio* follows the *medidas de los abuelos* (lit.: "the elders' measures"), which are regarded as the enactment of inter-ecological solidarity. Intriguingly, fairs where most *cambio* takes place are nonetheless also seen as the economic setting for *engaño*. Conveniently translated as cheating, *engaño* points to an array of practices whereby one of the partners intends to take material advantage of the transaction at the direct expense of the other. They resemble the practices reported in Humphrey's study of the ethics of barter in Nepal, where cheating happens in unusual transactions departing from the ideal of fairness (1992). Yet, in Andean fairs, fairness, harsh bargaining and possible cheating commonly condense within a single *cambio* interaction.

This ethnographic account challenges Sahlins' (1972) mapping of social distances and types of material transactions. Sahlins famously establishes a correlation between figures of reciprocity and the quality of the social relationship between the partners. In a classic article on Andean economy, Olivia Harris questioned the relevance of Sahlins' mapping of social relationship for understanding the circulation of agricultural produce in Bolivia: "While there is an analogy that close kin should show uncalculating generosity to one another, the reality is otherwise" (2000: 124). In the Laymi economy, she observed generosity between distant people from distinct ecological regions, and finely calculated monetary transactions between close kin. I argue that the study of *cambio* challenges Sahlins' social geography for yet another reason. As I demonstrate below, generosity and pursuit of personal interest do not necessarily constitute disjointed spheres of transactions each relating to particular social relationships, as Sahlins asserted. Humphrey has demonstrated that Lhomi barter can be seen " by particular

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transactors as simultaneously self-oriented *and* fair" because their interests are dissimilar (1992: 108). In cambio, self-interest is also seen morally appropriate, because the partners' self-interest converge in the transaction. Furthermore, instead of constituting disjointed spheres of exchange, fairness and cheating are commonly intertwined in a transaction. While cheating is morally condemned, its combination with practice of fairness shapes the sociability of *cambio* by creating two ecological entities, which are at the same time related through the circulation of agricultural produce and the life force that these encapsulate. I describe these groups as agricultural collectives with a Latourian concern to highlight "a project of assembling new entities not yet gathered together" (Latour 2005: 75). In this light, I explain how *cambio* brings forth situated associations between humans, and an array of other beings—including Mother Earth, domesticated plants and animals[1]—composing a collective with no overarching political institution nor delimited territory.

Exploring the practicalities and social effects of *engaño* demonstrates that deviant interactions cannot just be taken for granted as the exact opposite of ideal *cambio* following the elders' prescriptions. I will show that the former too participate in the mutual estimation enacted in barter transactions (Strathern 1992), and in the making of collectives through agricultural circulation. In order to grasp the sociability created through *cambio* encounters, one needs to conjunctly consider the ethics of the good and the bad, as advocated by the editors of this special issue. Studying the ambivalent ethics of barter in this Andean setting sheds light on the social effect of cheating in the operation of economic affinity, and on the making of ethical selfhood through instrumental transactions. With this purpose in mind, the paper starts with a discussion of the ethics of daily livelihood in the Argentinean cordillera, as well as the morality of agricultural exchanges. After a description of *cambio* principles, this exchange is situated within the broader conceptualisation of barter in anthropological literature. Finally, the paper explores the practical enactment of agricultural produce exchange during barter fairs by first outlining the enactment of fairness, before focusing on the unfolding of *engaño* and suspicion in this context of expected affinity.

1. Of course, to assemble the social in the Latourian vein would require bringing into the collective a much wider array of beings, including pesticides, worms, woven and plastic sacks, weighing scales, trucks and many other non-humans that I could not properly account for within the scope of this paper. In addition, as I finalised this paper, I discover that Annemarie Mol also uses the term "agricultural collective" to refer to a group of heterogenous beings related through eating and feeding (2021: 114).

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Livelihood and the Creation of Ethical Selves in the Argentinean Puna

Trueque is the usual word for barter in the official Spanish of Argentina. In contrast, *cambio* is used in the Andean region to refer specifically to a modality of exchange between highland herders and lowland cultivators. I observed these transactions in the northern part of the province of Jujuy, adjacent to the Bolivian border. From 2005 until 2010,[2] I lived in a village that was legally registered as a Kolla indigenous community.[3] However, in their daily lives, *cambio* partakers more spontaneously identify as members of collectives based on ecological specialisation, rather than as Kolla people. Shepherds living in the *puna* (high plateau) who tend to llama and sheep call themselves *"puneños"*, whereas in the warmer *quebrada* (lowland valley) the self-described *"quebradeños"* cultivate maize, a wide range of fruits, and other crops such as vegetables or aromatics. Highlanders also cultivate minor plots of quinoa, tubers and other crops resistant to the cold and dry climate of the *puna*, while some lowlanders rear goats for meat and cheese in the craggy slopes of the valley. Yet these secondary activities are blurred by their identification as *puneños* and *quebradeños*, which are associated with herding and cultivation, respectively. And so is the existence of an intermediate zone propitious to the cultivation of an array of potato varieties, *oca* (sweet potatoes), cereals and broad beans. To complement the crops that they are able to grow at this altitude, intermediate households also raise animals, mostly sheep. However, craggy slopes circumscribe their narrow pasture, making livestock-farming disadvantageous compared with the herders, who can graze flocks on the high open *puna*. As this oppositional identification suggests, agricultural production in this region is characterised by a typical Andean vertical economy (Murra 1972), whereby households specialise their productive activities according to the position of their plots within the multiple ecological niches of this mountainous environment. The distinction between lowland and highland dwellers is recurrent in Andean social life; played out many times in terms of livelihood (Harris 2000; Mayer 2002; Gose 1994) and thus encapsulated in the agricultural produce that humans are able to grow in a specific ecological milieu. Agricultural specialisation gives raise to mutual estimations gauging the fertility of soils and climatic conditions. It also plays out in competitive rhetoric of moral

2. Afterward, I moved to a town lower in the valley, before returning to Europe for professional and family reasons in 2011. Thereafter, I travelled to Argentina for sporadic fieldwork, the last trip being in 2018.

3. According to the 2001 population census, the latest to date, the Kolla number 70,500 citizens. They constitute the second largest of the thirty native ethnic groups whose existence was legally recognised in the 1994 amendment to the constitution.

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appreciation. In many places across the cordillera, highland herders are despised as wretched and uncivilised compared to more decent *quebradeños* (Gose 1994: 51; De la Cadena 2000). In Jujuy, such negative judgements alternate with an admiration for *puneños*, who are seen as better related to the powerful life force of mountainous ancestors.

The association between social belonging and agricultural activities also points to the land's existence as an incarnation of remote ancestors, among which Pachamama, or Mother Earth, is an overarching feature. She is regarded as the mother of every earthly being and as the vital force that keeps them alive. As an ancient llama herder from a highland community vividly told me, "The earth is like a mother's breast. The baby sucks it and that's how he grows." His insistence on nurturing as vital act fostering kinship with ancestors like Pachamama reflects a more general appreciation of food as a conveyor of relatedness (Salas Carreño 2016; Van Vleet 2008; Weismantel 1995). As is typical in much of the Andes, agricultural produce is the fruit of collaborative labour in family plots, and most of the harvest is used to feed the household. My neighbours and friends proudly insisted that they consumed food primarily from their own fields. Ingredients grown locally are evaluated as healthier and more nutritious than those from industries or extensive agriculture in the lowlands. This is in part because the latter are contaminated with chemicals, but also because a diet of llama or sheep meat with potato is lauded as healthier than the dishes of wheat and beef typical of the national cuisine. When eating their own meat and vegetables, Andean growers absorb the fruits of the energy that they have expended in their fields, thus cyclically accumulating *fuerza* (strength) to raise further plants and animals.

In addition to appreciating the superior quality of their food, agriculturalists are also very keen on insisting that they eat a lot. They especially comment on the huge meals that they ingest for breakfast, featuring dishes that urban people would typically eat for lunch. This rich diet is a requirement for being a good peasant, since the value-loaded activities of taking care of plants and animals all day long require expending much energy to hike the mountains and resist climatic instabilities. Eating abundantly potentially produces fat, which is seen as the prime sign of good health, while thin people are regarded as weak and prone to sickness, if not already ill. Plump women are qualified as *guapas* (lit.: "good looking" or "brave"), which encapsulates an aesthetic appreciation imbued with the moral value of hard work and productive potential (Harris 2007). The moral and physical values of herders and cultivators are indeed entangled with the *fuerza* that they are able to devote to the growth of other species. In fact, working to foster flourishing fields and flocks is not only an economic necessity: it is also a moral duty to other living organisms, in particular to their ancestral mother, Pachamama.

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Moreover, members of rural communities insist that life in the countryside is a sacrifice, because it requires daily painstaking effort to care for their plants and animals in the harsh ecological conditions of the cordillera. Both herders and cultivators agree on the virtue of their diet and physical exercise, which they compare against urban dwellers who eat industrial food and make a living *sentadito* (lit.: "just sitting on a chair").[4] In fact, such stereotyped rhetoric ignores the constant movement of agricultural produce from rural communities to cities; mainly to La Quiaca. This is where most of the produce that is not consumed within the household is sold. In the highlands, herders regularly travel to sell llama and sheep meat to butchers in the market, while, during the harvest season, cultivators bring their vegetables to the central market, where they set up makeshift stalls. Usually, the money earned is then immediately exchanged for the industrial foodstuffs that have become part of the rural diet over the course of the twentieth century, mainly dried pasta, rice, wheat flour, sugar, tea and oil. These products, collectively called *mercaderías* (merchandises) are purchased in the shops surrounding the market.

Morality of Agricultural Exchanges

Shepherds are highly critical of transactions in urban markets, considering these to be unfair because they must accept the prices dictated by the vendors. These are taken as fixed, with no room for bargaining, although they are highly unstable due to the vagaries of the tormented Argentinean economy. Cultivators also experience this value gap as they fix the price of their produce right below equivalent goods from the agroindustry. This is a strategy to attract urban clients who otherwise tend to despise their smaller organic produce, more subjected to pests or worms. In any case, herders and cultivators note that their meat and vegetables is worth less than industrial goods, because the money earn selling their produce is often not enough to cover the purchase of basic commodities needed to sustain their frugal life in the country. In a general sense, merchants are criticised for enriching themselves as they remain seated in the market while rural dwellers sacrifice themselves to produce highly nutritive food. Criticism of market exchanges is not only based on the structure of prices; it further draws on appreciation of food quality and the effort required for its production. In the Argentinean context, where the peso's instability is the usual situation, polemic over prices is not peculiar to momentary monetary volatility, as described by Boltanski and Esquerre (2016). Andean growers'

4. About the depreciation of working sitting down, see also De la Cadena (1995: 341).

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critiques hint at a wider disarticulation between the prices of industrially and locally produced goods; at odd with the qualitative values that these goods are assigned by their producers.

Beyond a general sense of the unfairness of the peso metric, stories about shopkeepers cheating constantly circulate in the village. Using an improperly weighted scale is a classic. Peasants are aware that they are seen as illiterate and simple-minded when they navigate the city market, and therefore believe that they are a target for the vendors' chicanery. With this reciprocal stigmatisation as a backdrop, interactions in shops are usually furtive, while verbal exchanges are restricted to quantitative information. When buying *mercaderías*, country people search for the best deal, usually without comparing the quality of different brands, in contrast with the manifold criteria used to assess the value of agricultural produce. Drawing on a contrast established by Michael Lambek in his study of the tension between value and virtue (2008), we could say that buying *mercaderías* is experienced as a "trivial choice" between relative values. This transpires in the interaction through a contraction of the verbal exchange: when the announced price seems too high, the potential buyer simply walks away without a word.

The broader discourse surrounding market exchange stands in notable contrast to *cambio*, a transaction between rural producers which is expected to yield equal benefits for both partners. In a region where inter-ecological exchanges have historically conditioned peasants' survival by ensuring access to foodstuffs that cannot be grown in the producer's home plots, the reciprocal transfer of agricultural produce is *a priori* imbued with positive moral value and appraised as such. The propensity to accept transactions solicited by counterparts from complementary ecozones asserts the personal ethical qualities of the *cambio* partners. "I'm a good person, people know it. I always welcome everybody—those who come to exchange, to harvest…" So boasted one cultivator of her well-known kindness toward herders from surrounding communities. I knew her well enough to know that she was part of an extensive network of exchanges and that her commitment to pleasing her partners was unanimously appreciated. She explained to me:

> People give me meat, cheese and money too. If I'm not at home, they leave the meat so I'll pick vegetables, maize, potatoes. I know who it is right away; I start preparing for him. It's because they are *conocidos* [acquaintances], *amigos* [friends].

As manifested in this quote, these material transfers enact relations of friendship, entailing enough trust for her partners to leave their produce in her absence, expecting that they will soon receive a satisfying counterpart for their prestation. Where the idea of friendship inherited from English

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enlightenment is premised on a separation from economic benefits and material interest (Carey 2017: 47), relations of *amistad* (friendship) in the Argentinean cordillera are enhanced by collaboration and exchange. When the flow of labour and produce increases, and thus the affinity between households, the parties involved may become *compadres*, a relationship of "voluntary kinship" (Angé 2018) sanctified by church rituals that is widespread in Latin America (Gudeman 1975). The manifestation of respect and trust prescribed between *compadres* contrasts with an overall climate of suspicion and envy pervading social life in the rural community, which is predominantly composed of blood kin and affines (Angé 2018).

While appreciated as a virtuous practice, the direct exchange of agricultural goods between entire villages of herders and cultivators no longer constitutes the cornerstone of the rural economy in the Argentinean region. The proportion of agricultural production invested in direct exchanges is residual. It hovers around ten percent of total production, depending on the household's composition, volume of production, connections with urban centres, and cooking habits, among other factors. As llama trains connecting entire communities no longer exist in this southern sector of the cordillera,[5] barter now primarily happens either through isolated inter-household transactions or during annual and seasonal fairs.

Modalities of *Cambio* at Fairs

Ferias (fairs) are a key component of the festivals through which the Andean communities celebrate their Catholic virgins and patron saints who are related to chthonic ancestors like Pachamama. In the Argentinean cordillera, *feria* and *fiesta* (party, celebration) are used synonymously. Composed of dancing, political speeches, competitive sports and church rituals, these festivals are designed to please and pacify Catholic and telluric entities, whose volatile moods can affect human livelihood. These dances, sport and speeches enact a modality of interaction combining agonism and communality, widely reported in Andean ethnography as a relation of duality generating cosmological flourishing (Allen 2002 [1988]; Gose 1994; Van Vleet 2008). We shall see that *cambio* provides another instance for enacting a combination of opposition and affinity.

Like the religious celebrations in which they are embedded, fairs usually last two to three days, although the most important ones continue for an entire week. During the two major festivals (Manka Fiesta in La Quiaca and

5. Such collective trade expeditions have been described in other Andean settings (Harris 2000; Mayer 2002).

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Easter fair in Abra Pampa), the whole of the southern Andes is involved: participants come south from La Paz, Bolivia, and north from Salta, Argentina. Thousands of people gather at these important meetings, whereas smaller ones more typically attract a few hundred participants. Besides agricultural produce, fairs also involve *mercaderías* coveted by rural people, such as shoes and clothes, batteries, candles and basic industrial foodstuffs. In contrast to agricultural produce, which is sold and bartered, these commodities are intended for sale. Peddlers trading *mercaderías* live in urban centres, where manufactured goods are readily available. They do not usually practise barter, and if they acquire maize, tubers or highland meat, it is only in minor quantities, for these are not part of their usual diet. In many fairs, market transactions involving *mercaderías* are overwhelming in terms of the volume of goods in circulation. However, fairs participants typically glossed their transactions with the refrain "barter for the *fiesta*", showing that the direct exchange of agricultural produce between highland and lowland cultivators also constitutes a significant feature of the celebration.

Barter at fairs centres on the produce brought by agriculturalists looking for goods that cannot be easily produced in their own fields. The herders from the highlands bring for the most part llama and sheep meat. When the meat is fresh, it is exchanged in pieces, cut up in the case of llama meat or *abierto* for mutton. *Abierto* designates the whole animal (with the wool still on) that

The Virgin participation to the fair
Pilgrims please the Virgin with the hustle and bustle of *cambio* interactions at the Santa Catalina fair. Santa Catalina (Argentina), 25 November 2009 (photo: Olivia Angé)

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has been "opened" in half and gutted. In its dried form, the *abierto* is called *chalona*, and individual pieces of dried meat are known as *charki*. Herders also bring cheese, fat, wool and medicinal plants to exchange. The cultivators from the *quebrada* arrive bearing a variety of maize and fruits (apples, pears, peaches, grapes, prickly pears, pomegranates and quinces). They also bring nuts, fresh aromatic and medicinal herbs, and flowers. Those who engage in craftmanship bring clay pots and wicker baskets. Intermediate cultivators provide fairs with the crops that best grow in their fields while tending to overlook their minor livestock farming activity. In so doing, they identify primarily with lowland cultivators, although they distinguish themselves by trading crops that do not thrive in the lower valley.

Despite this broad variety of goods, *cambio* partakers tend to represent their transactions as an exchange of highland meat with lowland crops. "Mostly, it's an exchange of what we lack for what they lack. They don't have meat; we bring them meat. We have no flour, nor maize," said a young lady accompanying her grandmother to exchange her meat at the Easter fair in Yavi. The *medidas de los abuelos* fix exchange rates for pairs of agricultural products circulating in opposite directions: for example, a dried sheep is equivalent to an *arroba* (between 11 and 13 kilos) of maize; a bag of potatoes

Variety of tubers from the intermediate zone
The quality of the produce composing a stall indexes the agricultural virtue of their grower. Yavi (Argentina), April 2010 (photo: Olivia Angé)

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equals the same volume of corn on the cob; a clay pot equals its content in foodstuffs. Their identification as "elders' measures" does not point to any personally known antecedent. It alludes generally to forebears who have died and elders who were able to communicate with them while they were still alive. As an old shepherd told me: "The ancestors settled [the measures] like that. They used to talk with Pachamama." This filiation, with no clear-cut separation between elderly people, the recently dead and remote ancestors, sketches a lineage that ultimately goes back to Pachamama.

As elders' measures lack precision, they serve as "reference points for bargaining to take place" in practice (Mayer 2002: 144). One can easily imagine that there are no exact or universal criteria for deciding whether a bag of potatoes is full. The quality of the goods, the abundance of the harvest, the ecological zone in which the fair takes place, including the distance each partner has had to travel and the nature of the social relationship between the partners, are the main parameters mentioned in the course of *cambio* negotiation. When Eulogio,[6] a herder, met with Julio, an acquaintance from the valley, to exchange two lambs for fruit at the Yavi fair, he began the conversation by recalling previous events at which they had met. As they were chatting, the friends began to bargain over the measures of exchange. Pointing to the quality of his lamb, Eulogio launched the negotiation: "It's not skinny. No, it isn't. How do you want to exchange?" Julio replied: "I will exchange, Brother. I'll make up [to the elders' measures]." Eulogio mentioned that he needed many apples for his nine children waiting at home. He then dwelled on the long journey that he had to make to supply fresh meat to cultivators. Stressing that the fair's location was much closer to his partner's home, he asserted that his produce should be worth "almost double". When Julio stuffed some extra fruits into Eulogio's bag, Julio commented: "To friends, one must give different treatment." *Cambio* equivalences are thus adjusted according to the partners' family situation, their social relationship, and the context in which the transaction takes place.

Ideally, market prices should not influence *cambio* measures, or only ever as one among the many points of reference used in adjusting the elders' measures. Yet today, some *cambio* transactors decide to compare the products in light of their monetary value in the regional market—a different system of measurement regarded as newly adopted but widely used, nonetheless. My neighbour, who used to exchange her potatoes at fairs, commented:

> Of course, now they usually add up how much something is worth. Before, people didn't do such sums… Most people say, "How much does your kilo of potatoes cost?"

6. Names of my interlocutors have been changed to protect their anonymity.

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> "Meat costs that much." And then they add it up. Previously, they didn't. That's why, like I told you, they used to give 300 cobs of corn for a llama haunch, or 250. This wasn't a *negocio* [business]. It was an exchange left by our grandparents, our great-grandparents.

Her observations suggest that monetary evaluation edges the transaction toward *negocio*, by which traders aim to generate a quantitative profit from start-up capital in contrast to exchange norms transmitted by the *abuelos*. Although profit-making is not regarded as immoral in itself, it is deemed unfair when one of the partners engages in a *cambio* transaction on the assumption that the items exchanged will be consumed within the household; while the other acquires produce to do business, for instance, by selling it later for an increased amount of pesos. Contrary to market transactions, which are considered abusive for the buyer, *cambio* is expected to enliven the *fiesta* by triggering joy for both partners (Angé 2018).

"Barter" as an Anthropological Concept

As already mentioned, classic anthropological literature depicts barter as an asocial exchange between strangers and potential enemies. The silent trade in which two unknown persons swap their goods without exchanging a word encapsulates the Smithian idea of barter requiring no social foundation and just a coincidence of individual self-interest. While this type of transaction has come to epitomise the asocial aspect of barter, non-verbal barter is a rare exception. In fact, this stereotype is frequently empirically contested by ethnographic descriptions of intense bargaining preceding barter. Malinowski gave a detailed description of straightforward haggling in *gimwali*, in contrast to the more distinguished *kula*, where the exchange partners pretend to not even notice the counter-gift thrown on the ground with disregard (2002 [1922]: 145). But then, it is haggling that has been interpreted as an instantiation of the corrosive nature of barter, a proof of the partners' quest for self-interest.

In any case, Humphrey and Hugh-Jones' volume offered a notable exception to classic scholarship dismissing barter as an asocial transaction. They drew on ethnographic data from disparate cultural contexts to demonstrate that barter nurtures enduring relationships. When insisting on the social dimension of barter, Humphrey and Hugh-Jones not only acknowledge relations pre-existing the transaction; they argued that most of the time these transactions produce enduring ties between partners who tend to act fairly in the hope of repeating exchanges through time (1992: 8). Their argument very much fits with ethnographic accounts of agricultural produce circulation between ecological niches in the Andean cordillera, highlighted as a cornerstone of social organisation. Historian John Murra argued that

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regional exchanges at the end of the past century followed old relations of interdependence between scattered ecological niches (1996 [1992]: 134) at the margin of prices prevailing on the market. In Peru, ethnographer Cesar Fonseca Martel corroborated Murra's thesis. He noted that peasants, after being deprived of their maize fields in the lowlands when the government established new provincial boundaries in the nineteenth century, used barter to "materialize again the ideal of ecological complementarity" (1972: 327). In his famous account of household economy in central Peru, Enrique Mayer also described exchanges of maize for potato as an expression of solidarity between peasants form complementary ecological niches. He, however, analyses these transactions as departing from a model of "pure barter" (2002: 143), which he conceptualises as a transaction with no social entailment, "a sphere of exchange separate from that of reciprocity as well as buying and selling" *(Ibid.)*. By reciprocity, Mayer alludes to *ayni*, a widespread mode of transaction whereby kin exchange like for like, usually labour but not exclusively. This modality of exchange both entails explicit accounting and is embedded in enduring relationship bringing forth trust and moral commitment. It has been widely documented by ethnographers as a cornerstone of economic life in the *ayllu*, as rural communities are referred to in Andean scholarship (Allen 2002 [1988]; Gose 1994; Harris 2000; Van Vleet 2008; Walsh-Dilley 2017). Agricultural circulation between highland and lowland communities has been described with similar virtues of social engagement and moral commitment. They are reported as unfolding within long-term relationships, sometimes even described under the category of kinship (Ferraro 2011: 172; Harris 2000: 123; Larson and Léon 1995: 235). Some have also noticed that inter-ecological transactions engage relations beyond human sociability, highlighting their social and cosmological regenerative potential (Angé 2018; Harris 2000; Vindal Ødegaard 2010).

While the word *ayni* is not used in the Argentinean cordillera, other forms of economic relations characterised by a search for equivalence and a sense of solidarity shape rural livelihood. It is the case of *cambio*, which is acknowledged as a vestige of ancestral inter-ecological reciprocity (Angé 2018). Corroborating Humphrey and Hugh-Jones' argument about the social performativity of barter interactions, *cambio* practices are indeed conveyors of affinity between dwellers of disparate ecological niches. Yet they are also often antagonistic in practice. To understand the ambivalent ethics of *cambio* thus requires departing from existing literature positing barter as either an act of communality or as merely self-interested. The expression of material interest in *cambio* does not subvert social relationship (see also Humphrey 1992: 109). In contrast, it is an appreciation of others' capacity to produce goods of value. Ethnographic examination of *cambio* interactions

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further suggests that the expression of self-interest only becomes immoral when it is specifically looked for at the expense of the partner. And yet, even this conflictual aspect of *cambio*, which is morally condemned, is not just a perverted expression of social anomie but tolerated as a possibility within *cambio* practice. The next sections explore agonistic encounters at fairs to demonstrate that accusations of *engaño* (cheating) and confrontations around cheating participate in the creation of a particular form of relatedness. I argue that these rhetorical jousts both establish a relationship between exchange partners and enact an agricultural collective resulting from the emergence of two related yet distinct ecological communities. Grasping this social performativity requires us to unhook the negative ethics of barter from its presumed asocial character and instead view the negatively assessed behaviours as an integral part of social life.

Cambio Fairness and Idealised Affinity

Even though *cambio* partners originate from distant ecological settings, a close relationship is considered ideal. Partners like to repeat successful transactions, weaving ongoing social ties through repeated material and linguistic exchanges. In so doing, strangers become *conocidos* (acquaintances) who, in the course of further meetings, can become *amigos* or even *compadres*. While the latter is appraised as the ideal tie, once the prevailing form, it has become exceptional in contemporary practice. Still, *conocidos*, *amigos* and *compadres* are all regarded as preferential economic partners. From one tie to the next, the strength of the relationship increases, and so do the economic expectations. During fairs, regular partners manifest their satisfaction when meeting each other. They engage in personal conversation, into which economic exchange is blended. They ask about each other and compare ecological, political or festive features of their villages. In addition to linguistic communication, affinity can be expressed with smiles, laughter, handshakes and embraces. Convivial relations can also be generated through material circulation. In the course of the interaction, one partner may invite the other to taste ready-to-eat items, emphasising the strength of the relationship with a generosity exceeding *cambio* equivalence. And, at the end of the transaction, generosity can be enacted through the *yapa*, a small quantity of goods added on top of the agreed equivalence (Angé 2011). While not compulsory, *yapa* is a common end to a *cambio* interaction, sometimes glossed by the partner as a token of enduring affinity. The interaction above between Eulogio and Julio showed how a social tie is recreated by exceeding the elders' measures of exchange and verbalising the excess with a relationship of *amistad*.

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The repetition of *cambio* in successive fairs also entails an embodied intimacy between partners. The mutual transfer of part of the domestic produce implies that they will fill their larders with foodstuffs coming from the same fields and, eventually, cook with identical ingredients. As they provide one another with the food that they produce in their respective ecological zones, *amigos* feed one another with ingredients that are the objectification of bodily labour in their fields. In the Andes, where people are aware that eating the same food produces embodied similarity, daily ingestion of the same ingredients is further conceived as the point at which kinship is created (Angé 2018; Van Vleet 2008: 31; Weismantel 1995). The repeated exchange of food at fairs thus creates an embodied intimacy between the partners, who mutually ingest the fruit of the *fuerza* that they have spent in agricultural labour.

Puneños and *quebradeños* sometimes explicitly acknowledge the existence of their common filiation. We can see this in the case of two women unknown to each other, who, during a *cambio*, came to question the qualities

Fair stall after *cambio*
Meat obtained in *cambio* is expected to fill cultivators' larders and supply their households with the proteins that they are unable to produce in the valley.
Yavi (Argentina), April 2012 (photo: Olivia Angé)

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of their respective lands, separated by some one hundred kilometres. When they introduced their surname into the conversation, however, they inferred a shared genealogy: "My grandmother was an Abracaite. Therefore, all Abracaite are my *parientes* [kin]. Here, almost all of us are kin," one of them concluded. It is noteworthy that inferring kinship from a shared family name is unusual. Many patronyms are in fact widespread across the Andes and all Hispanic America, but their bearers do not usually acknowledge a shared kinship for that sole reason. Bolstered by the possible institution of *compadrazgo* between cherished partners, this "imagined community" gathers *cambio* partakers into a circle of relatives, whatever the specific tie by which they may be linked.

Furthermore, the very acceptance of the measures that the ancestors put in place with little or no regard for market prices casts the partners' relatedness within a broader genealogy. When they respect the elders' measures, the partners legitimise the authority of these ascendants and thereby assert the continuity of their lineage. When explaining their participation in the fair as an act of solidarity, *cambio* partakers acknowledge their obligation to an encompassing collective. "They also want to eat meat," noted a herder when I asked why she did not sell her meat for money, which at that time were worth more pesos than the quantity of maize that she would acquire following the elder's measure. This kind of collective morality was also documented by Mayer in Peru, where sheep herders offer support to maize cultivators by applying a "customary rate" for inter-ecological exchange, threading relations of solidarity between valley and highland people (2002: 154).

Consequently, using monetary prices instead of the elders' measures as a metric for agricultural produce exchange is despised as a moral failure infringing the ideal of complementarity between herders and cultivators. In contrast to the arbitrariness of monetary evaluations, the elders' measures are regarded as an enactment of fairness. This is attested to by several phrases commonly heard at fairs, such as: "After *cambio*, we all end up equal". *Cambio* is imbued with equity because it is deemed to gauge the effort required to produce the goods exchanged. As noted by one participant at the Santa Catalina festival: "Harvesting also requires *sacrificio* [sacrifice]. If it freezes, crops are damaged. If it snows in the countryside, lambs die of starvation. This relationship manifests itself between those who conduct *cambio*: everything is sacrifice." In this light, *cambio* comparison is drawn according to the meta-value of self-sacrifice (Lambek 2008), in a sense aligned with the Marxist idea of creative labour. Contrary to volatile prices in pesos, the metrics put forth by the elders' measures is based on concrete properties of things: the amount of *fuerza* encapsulated in their production. Where classic economists never came to agree on a metrics based on a labour theory of

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value (Boltanski and Esquerre 2016: 51), the elders' measures achieve it by comparing not quantitative measures of units of time, but daily experiences of physical dedication and embodied effort. In Bolivia, Harris also captures a theory of labour at play in agricultural produce barter, noting that the exchange rate of highland maize for lowland potato operates a comparison between the "relative merits of the two ecozones" (2000: 106).

Modalities of Cheating and Cheating Accusations

The economic affinity and relatedness created through *cambio* does not mean, however, that these transactions unfold through pure courtesy. While the social bonds that convey moral consideration and fairness compose the normative framework for swapping agricultural goods, even between long-term preferential partners kindness alternates with a straightforward quest for material interest. As well as friendship and merrymaking, fairs are also experienced as scenes of conflict and deceit. *Cambio* dialogues thus usually also include bitter comments that are sometimes tinged with mistrust or irony. When attending fairs, I have been struck many times by the harshness of people's conversations, and especially so between *amigos* and *compadres* whom I personally expected to negotiate kindly. Opposition takes its most salient expression when enacted through practices and accusations of *engaño*. This can take two main forms, faulting either the quantity or the quality of the goods. For example, filling a bag with defective items, then covering them with good pieces to give the appearance of high-quality produce is commonly reported. At Easter fairs, grapes were usually transported in handmade wicker baskets to protect them during their journey. A friend of mine no longer accepted such baskets in exchange for her meat because she feared finding only damaged bunches at the bottom.

Besides the quality of the goods, enacting equivalences also gives rise to accusations of *engaño*.[7] Giving short measures is another well-known cheating strategy. Such was the case at the Santa Catalina fair, when a cultivator asked a herder if she could put a *chalona* aside for him while he went to retrieve his maize flour:

Cultivator, presenting his flour: "—Here, for my *chalona*.
Herder, without using a scale: —This isn't a full *arroba*. As if such a small quantity was an *arroba*!
Cultivator: —Let's exchange, Doñita, come on.
Herder: —That's not even ten kilos.
Cultivator: —But for this [meat], Doñita, it's fine. […] These are only small bones.

7. In comparison, practices of cheating reported by Humphrey do not entail exchange rates since these rates are specific to every transaction (1992: 123).

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Herder: —This is all meat. Or is it not meat, perhaps? This, empty it here and bring the missing kilo. Come on. Don't cry".

In this exchange, the disagreement on the equivalence of the exchange is combined with a provocative accusation about the poor quality of the goods. Accusations of cheating in the form of poor quality can in fact be a bargaining strategy for gaining more out of the transaction. We see in this dialogue that the contours of *engaño*'s practical manifestation is unclear. Instead of apologising, the cultivator put forth an argument to legitimate his failure by the poor quality of his partner's goods. Rather than establishing a judgement with possible sanction, accusations foster verbal jousts enmeshed in the transaction and the ideal enactment of *amistad*.

This polemical aspect becomes all the more evident when noticing that depreciative comments during *cambio* transactions do not in fact necessarily reflect on the material qualities of the goods at stake. When embedded in a transaction, material denigration does indeed stand in surprising contradiction with the desire to acquire the produce at stake. Let us take the following as an illustration:

Cultivator: —"You want peeled corn?
Herder: —An *arroba*, a *chalona*.
[The cultivator opens her sack to show the quality of her husked maize.]
Herder: —It's ugly.
Cultivator: —What do you mean, ugly?
Herder: —It's not going to cook.
Cultivator: —What do you mean it's not going to cook! It's peeled with ashes and not lime.
Herder: —It smells. It's not washed.
Cultivator: —I let it soak a whole night. [The cultivator holds out her maize.] Here. Too much, good weight".
[The herder gives her *chalona*. They part without saying goodbye.]

Harsh depreciation of the other's goods is not necessarily an accurate evaluation. In this case, the realisation of the transaction proves that the maize was indeed desired despite the criticisms voiced. This was also the case in the transaction when the cultivator wanted to obtain the pieces of meat that he disparaged as "small bones". Because there are no fixed criteria to estimate the quality of the goods, judgement of *engaño* is left at the partners' discretion. How skinny can a lamb be before it is immoral to offer it for exchange? How many rotten grapes can a basket contain for its exchange to be considered *engaño*? In such contexts, *engaño* can take the form of an arbitrary accusation with no objective criteria to assert moral failure.

While it is hard to gauge the actual extent of fraud, and the veracity of material depreciation, I was nonetheless struck by the pervasive accusations

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of cheating in the rhetoric of *cambio* interactions. So pervasive, in fact, that even *amigos* are not necessarily immune. Having surprised her friend Ines by covering the latter's eyes playfully and allowing herself to be recognised only by the sound of her voice, Sofia lost no more time before delivering her complaint: "You tricked me [last time]. The apples are sour. Sour and full of worms. The two crates are still there. The children haven't even touched them. They didn't like [them]. You have to admit it." Arguing that the darkness was responsible for this mishap, Ines obtained forgiveness by promising to hand over two new crates of fruit at the next harvest. Thus, while enduring bonds do not necessarily protect people from the possibility of *engaño*, they do however offer a possibility for recourse in the event of dissatisfaction. This is significant in an economic context where there is no institution entitled with authority to sanction misbehaviour. Hence, the possibility of *engaño* haunts every transaction, even those conducted between the closest friends, though it does not usually put friendships at risk. Nor does it jeopardise the realisation of inter-ecological exchange. Rather, mistrust and suspicion of *engaño* form a constitutive part of *cambio* transactions.

In the Moroccan high Atlas, Matthew Carey reports on the unfolding of mistrust as a general and pervasive attitude, severed from any strategic purpose. Carey's fine-grained ethnography of daily linguistic exchanges subtly demonstrates how pointless lies and epistemological opacity shape social life in the Atlas by maintaining individual freedom and liberal autonomy in enduring relations of friendship and kinship (2017: 27, 59). In Andean barter fairs, cheating and accusation can exert an "idiom of rationality and opportunism" (Boltanski and Esquerre 2016: 52, my translation) through which a partner strives to take advantage of a transaction. Yet the obvious gap between discursive depreciations and material qualities suggests that there is more to such disparaging remarks than merely opportunistic strategy.

Cheating and the Making of an Agricultural Collective

It is very common to hear *cambio* partakers voicing acerbic depreciations when commenting on other's goods. If indeed they were only small bones, or ugly maize, who would have been interested in acquiring them? Yet, in a context when material values and subjective virtue are entangled, depreciation of the other's produce is not only an argument about material qualities, it also is an offence to the partner's self.[8] The size of agricultural

8. This entanglement between subjective virtues and material qualities contrasts with transactions of goods that are not produced by the exchange partners, as is typically the case in the trade of industrial items.

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produce indexes[9] the moral value of its producer: it instantiates his or her *fuerza* and his or her propensity to nurture other than human beings (Angé 2018). Sometimes, the interweaving of objective devaluation and subjective offence is explicitly enacted in the course of the transaction. When we went to the Abra Pampa Easter fair to exchange fruits and vegetables, a friend from the valley argued with a herder who refused to barter. Influenced by prices on the formal market, he deemed his meat worth more than the quantity of fruits offered by the cultivators following the elders' measures. Her reply clearly relates the denigration of the value of her produce to a lack of appreciation for her physical effort and her quality as a diligent grower: "We are required to provide effort. For you, it doesn't cost anything. You say we only gather [fruit] from the ground, as if God was doing everything while we do nothing." The herder retorted: "We also suffer. Bye!" Surrounded by crates of fruits, my friend concluded ironically: "Yes, see you next time. We'll continue gathering what's on the ground." In this exchange, the cultivator articulates the herder's presumption as to the lesser worth of her fruits with the suspicion that little effort is required to produce them, and that she therefore is a lazy person who distributes the fruits of others' efforts, that is, God or Pachamama. Imposing low exchange rates devalues both the goods and the bodily effort necessary to produce them. Hence, while drawing on self-sacrifice as an overarching axis of comparison, *cambio* assessment nonetheless condenses an array of disparate values (material, ecological or social) that are related to both people and the objects that they exchange. Challenging the distinction between utilitarian choice and ethical judgement advocated by Lambek for the study of value assessment under capitalism (2008), *cambio* estimation involves material comparison as well as intersubjective ethical esteem.

Interestingly, however, my friend voiced her reply using a plural pronoun encompassing the all-valley cultivators, rather than referencing her individual efforts. This kind of economic community also emerged in stereotypical accusations in which the partners identify deviance with a broader collectivity. The following is an example of a vegetable grower blaming a herder: "You must bring fat meat, not like that one." The latter replied: "You too. Sometimes you provide maize that's tough, spoiled, eaten by rats." With such formulations, *cambio* participants mark a distinction between what is constructed as a community of herders and a community of cultivators. Such recurrent formulas are also voiced in the absence of *cambio* partners, as accusations toward a generic agricultural other. Likewise, the herder

9. I use this terms in the Peircean sense developed by Nancy Munn in her study of value creation in Gawa (1986).

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who received an incomplete *arroba* at the Santa Catalina fair was critical of her partner's behaviour. Yet, she also assessed it as typical practice, and extended her moral judgement to encompass all *quebradeños*. "They cheat a lot," she warned me when her partner had left. "They buy and resell at twice the price; they don't work like we do. Before, it wasn't like that: they used to tend their fields and we tended our flock. Foodstuff for foodstuff. Now, it's a business." Rather than the actions of an aberrant single cultivator, she denounced *all* maize providers as abusing herders' productive efforts for their own economic gain. In so doing, she enacted the existence of two specialised ecological entities emerging in the *cambio* encounter: lowland maize growers and highland herders. As long as the confrontation closes with the circulation of goods between *puneños'* and *quebradeños'* respective larders, the rhetoric of mistrust outlines the existence of an agricultural collective made of two socially discrete, yet intimately complementary, communities.

While mistrust and suspicion enact separate and distinctive parties, accusations of *engaño* nonetheless also allude to an infringed etiquette of exchange that relates the partners within a broader collective. The case of the maize provider who intended to deliver an incomplete *arroba* can be further analysed in this sense. While failing to provide the agreed-upon equivalences is an immoral act that could not be legitimised by depreciating the quality of the goods, the herder did not blame the cultivator for offending her. She alluded instead to the ancestors' dissatisfaction at his behaviour by predicting their retaliation: "Why is this ten kilos when you should give me twelve?" she asked, before adding: "God Tata will get upset and he will thunder." The Quechua name "Tata" refers respectfully to a paternal authoritative ancestor, who would be angered by the poor practice of the *cambio* partners. Thus, the herder's moral castigation also outlined a filiation from shared ancestors; suggesting that cheating unfolds within the scope of a shared *cambio* sociability. This was confirmed when the cultivator did indeed add the missing kilo, topped up with some ready-to-eat roasted corn. He then proposed a second exchange. The interest manifested by the herder in the subsequent exchange attested that her partner's initial attempt at cheating had not excluded the possibility of further transactions. This speaks to an ongoing "mistrust tolerance", as Carey beautifully puts it, to highlight a context in which deceit is accepted as a possibility, albeit one which is considered ethically problematic. This openness to deceit, he argues, is "radically liberal in its acceptance of the other's right not to be predictable" (2017: 40). Perhaps the transactional opacity of the elders' measures acknowledges individual freedom for a circulation of agricultural produce in the absence of legislation or market standard. Accusations of cheating acknowledge the legitimacy of the elders when drawing a shared

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ethical horizon with which wayward *cambio* partners are summoned to align. Indeed, the statement of *engaño* alludes to an etiquette from which deviance can be evaluated. Insofar as this code of conduct is inherited from shared ancestors, accusations outline the partners' common filiation as well as asserting their opposition.

Thus, rather than just being opportunistic or self-interested rhetoric, accusation of *engaño* encapsulated in *cambio* appears as a peculiar way of relating, which simultaneously emphasises intimacy and alterity between transacting partners. In this light, mistrust tolerance participates in the operation of economic complementarity between ecological communities in the absence of a centralised political institution. Keith Hart famously stated that barter requires the existence of an overarching political order to hold back its conflictive drift (Hart 1987). Disputing his point, Humphrey observes that Himalayan ethnic communities sharpens their identity through exchange patterns (1992: 113), in a regional context of economic disintegration (1985). As an encounter between produce and people that are both different and mutually dependent, *cambio* in turn, gives existence to an agricultural collective made of two ecological entities related by flows of food and embodied vital strength. In this regard, *cambio* relations are similar to those of nurturing documented by Marisol de la Cadena, where entities "emerge *being*" in the making of the *ayllus* (2015: 101, emphasis in original). Like nurturing relations from which *ayllu* and its partakers come to live in the Cuzco highland, *cambio* relations do not merely represent pre-existing entities, nor do they exacerbate identity of established communities (Humphrey 1992: 128). *Puneños* and *quebradeños* constitute one another, as well as an encompassing agricultural collective, in the opposition and affinity brought forth by food circulation through *cambio*.

By stating that gifts are both generous and interested, Marcel Mauss' *Essai sur le don* (2004 [1923-1924]) notably settled a century-long disciplinary controversy on the relation between gifts and commodities. Less discussed has been his acceptation of the prevailing view of barter as "natural economy", exclusively on the side of plain utility and self-interest, and hence disengaged from the making of ancient societies (*Ibid.*: 193, 266).[10] The ethnography of *cambio* in Argentinean fairs highlights the ethical ambivalence of barter as neither simply self-interested nor chiefly altruistic. Like the Maussian gift, *cambio* challenges the polarisation between self-interest

10. With his notion of gift as total prestation, Mauss' intention was to challenge the accepted idea that primitive economies were based on barter (2004 [1923-1924]: 199), understood as an interested exchange deprived of ethical consideration.

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and social relatedness framing economic morality in Western thought. Not only is barter socially embedded as well as materially interested (Humphrey and Hugh Jones 1992), but, as I have demonstrated, even the interested dimensions of barter create relatedness. In *cambio* interactions, manifesting interest for another's goods is also an appreciation of his or her personal value. Commensurability between people and their products through barter interactions is not unique to this ethnographic context. Analysing women exchanging *sago* and fish at a market in Melanesia, Marilyn Strathern noted: "The kinds of computations that turn on amount and quality—how many *sago* lumps for how many fish, how large a pig in return for how large a pig—signify how the person appears in the other's eyes" (1992: 179). In this light, barter haggling is a comparison of the partner's subjective values, and the material transaction enacts their mutual esteem.

Yet inter-ecological exchanges at barter fairs are also persistently pervaded by depreciative comments about agricultural produce and accusations of *engaño* between transacting parties. At fairs, the verbalisation of mistrust through accusation of *engaño* or material depreciation publicly asserts that *cambio* partners are never entirely predictable. The point is not simply that *cambio* can involve immoral expressions of cunning and deceit, but more interestingly that such cunning is both negatively evaluated and tolerated. Not intended to castigate a culprit, nor merely opportunistic, accusations of cheating set out a specific mode of relation peculiar to these Andean agriculturalists.

Longstanding ethnographic interest in *ayni* with focus on equivalence and complementarity has overshadowed the agonistic dimension of economic affinities in Andean agricultural livelihoods. Attending the good and the bad is conditional to the understanding an economic life where combination of conflict and communality is a widespread feature, many times associated with cosmological regeneration (Allen 2002 [1988]; Gose 1994; Harris 2000: 153; Molinié-Fioravanti 1988; Van Vleet 2008). Paying attention to accusations and depreciations alongside kindness and affinity sheds new light on the making of duality, a mode of relatedness emerging from a combination of opposition and complementarity, widely documented in Andean scholarship. Existing ethnographies describe how the household is structured by the complementary opposition between feminine and masculine elements, or the *ayllu* composed by lower and higher moieties (Allen 2002 [1988]; Platt 1978; Wachtel 1990). Attending ethics of the good and the bad in the study of Andean barter sheds light on the making of another kind of collective through the encounter between economically specialised ecological entities; where duality is not a social structure or a symbolic representation, but a mode of relationality emerging in material exchange and embodied diet.

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Hence, while many studies suggest that barter is either socially embedded or agonistic, *cambio* partakers teach us that even deviant practices, like mistrust or cheating, participate in the sociality of instrumental relations. Paradoxically, this potential of unfair appropriation posits *cambio* as an ethical practice. “Giving a good *cambio*” crafts ethical selfhood because it does not simply require applying a set of normative prescriptions (*i.e.*, those inherited from the elders) or accepting fixed prices. Providing bountiful equivalences participates in ethical self-crafting, insofar as this is a free decision by actors who might equally opt for confrontation and cheating (Laidlaw 2014). This observation extends an argument developed by Humphrey in her seminal study in Nepal where she argued that “it is because barter is essentially a voluntary, ungoverned agreement between individuals, a choice to agree […] that it becomes a crucial arena for ethical action” (1992: 107).

In a more general sense, this vantage point challenges an established opposition inherited from Aristotelian philosophy between instrumental acts and purportedly more noble autotelic acts, entailing ethical self-crafting. In his important contribution to the anthropology of ethics, Lambek (2008) argues that ethical and economic values should be examined separately, notably to avoid utilitarian analysis of virtues distribution. My exploration of a non-capitalist form of instrumental transaction points to another direction, where the joint analysis of material values and ethical virtues do have theoretical and ethical relevance. In *cambio*, evaluating agricultural produce is not merely a trivial choice comparing metrics or utility; it also entails a moral estimation about people. A material choice enacting moral judgement, *cambio* produces ethical subjectivities as well as economic benefits. Contrary to Aristotelian dichotomy, *cambio* participates in the crafting of ethical subjects, insofar as it is instrumental. Giving a good *cambio* requires premium produce and plentiful measures. This ethnographic account of overtly instrumental interactions that are guided by both antagonism and kindness, self-interest and communality, highlights the necessity of attending to the bad, in correlation with the good, to understand the sociality of barter. This is a crucial stance to inherit from Mauss’ legacy in the elaboration of an anthropology of economic ethics unfettered from Western dichotomies between instrumental and autotelic action, material values and subjective virtues.

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Olivia Angé, *"To Give a Good* Cambio*": Economic Affinity, Cheating and the Ambivalent Ethics of Barter in the Southern Andes*. — In classic anthropological literature, barter epitomises materially interested transactions, in contrast with the gift, which is chiefly intended to create relatedness. Conversely, Andean scholarship has posited the direct exchange of agricultural produce as a benevolent act at the cornerstone of social organisation. This paper challenges both perspectives by exploring the ambivalent ethics of *cambio*, a direct transaction of produce from highland herders and lowland cultivators in the Argentinean Andes. Reportedly inherited from the ancestors, *cambio* equivalences are posited as an enactment of fairness between dwellers of complementary ecological niches. Yet what counts as the "elders' measures" is often subject to controversy, and accusations of cheating abound. This paper argues that cheating, as both discursive regime and material transfer, is not only an economic abuse or a social failure but a constitutive part of *cambio* interactions. Both decried and normalised, practices and discourses of cheating bring forth identity and alterity between *cambio* partners, enacting an agricultural "collective" in the encounter of complementary ecological communities. Hence, considering the complex interplays between conceptions of good and bad invites us to rethink the polarised ethics of barter and to acknowledge the importance of instrumental exchange in the making of ethical self.

Olivia Angé, *"Donner un bon* cambio*": complicité économique, tromperie et éthique ambivalente du troc dans les Andes méridionales*. — Les textes classiques en anthropologie conceptualisent le troc comme une transaction matériellement intéressée, à la différence du don essentiellement destiné à créer des liens entre les partenaires. Par contraste, les études andines reconnaissent l'échange direct de produits agricoles comme un engagement réciproque, pilier de l'organisation sociale. Cet article revisite ces deux approches en examinant l'éthique ambivalente du *cambio*, une modalité de troc par laquelle les éleveurs des hautes terres et les cultivateurs des basses terres s'échangent leurs denrées dans les Andes argentines. Transmises depuis les ancêtres, les équivalences du *cambio* sont appréciées comme un geste d'équité entre les habitants de niches écologiques complémentaires. Pourtant, les « équivalences des ancêtres » font l'objet de polémiques et les accusations de tromperie abondent. L'ethnographie du *cambio* montre que la tromperie, en tant que régime discursif et pratique d'échange, n'est pas seulement un abus économique ou un affront interpersonnel, mais bien une dimension constitutive des interactions de *cambio*. À la fois réprimées et normalisées, les pratiques et rhétoriques de tromperie tissent des relations d'identité et d'altérité qui composent un collectif agricole par la rencontre de deux communautés écologiques complémentaires. Ainsi, considérer conjointement l'expression du vice et de la vertu apporte un nouvel éclairage sur l'éthique du troc et souligne l'importance de l'échange utilitaire dans la composition des subjectivités éthiques.

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