of Robbins-esque 'anthropology of the good' (2013)? If so, this was an admirable aspiration, but I hoped it would not remove the ethnographically and theoretically salient notions of inequality, hierarchy, exclusion, dependency, and resistance from the mix.

My concerns were allayed by the second plenary which brought together a mixture of global health scholars from geography, anthropology and museology – Ian Harper, Steve Hinchliffe, Frederic Keck, and Christos Lynteris – to focus entirely on the notion of parasitism in a discussion of 'Geographies of contagion, logics of containment'. Interdisciplinary panels were a special feature of the conference, and this plenary used an original format by asking speakers to choose photographs speaking to themes of containment, contagion, transmission or prevention. A particularly striking image highlighted the construction of containment in the Ebola outbreak, depicting a man in full biosecurity suit sitting next to a woman in normal clothing, the two separated by hazard tape. However, the notion of contagion and containment as social constructions played out in relationships and through 'pathogenicity', as well as through sociocultural understandings of fear, risk and threat, sparked some audience discussion, with a counter-argument that the threat of contagion is often based on scientific evidence and not sociocultural imaginaries.

In the panel sessions I attended, presenters played with tensions between mobility and stasis, manipulating time and being regulated by time, crisis and the everyday, and resistance and complicity. The panel 'Resistance and complicity' summed up these tensions well, with speakers choosing to cast them as Hegelian dialectics rather than binaries. While conference presenters grappled with ethnographic accounts of crisis, despair, fear, deep poverty and austerity, dependence and abandonment, a hopeful spirit still shone through many papers. Katherine Smith, the discussant for the panel session in which I presented ('Righteous scroungers: Distribution, reciprocity and fairness after full employment') summed this up as 'the ways in which the question of fairness and its limits are dealt with and imposed creatively by people themselves when the state is perceived to fail in upholding its ethical and moral obligations to its citizens'. Here, whether it be European volunteers reappropriating neoliberal identities in the service of the social, as in my paper (also see Ferguson 2009), or Serbians performing and insisting upon 'mock-work' when their jobs are taken away from them (Ivan Rajkovic's paper), there is perhaps a hopeful prefiguration in the ways our informants often creatively negotiate and reappropriate the imposed circumstances in which they find themselves.

The last plenary brought us back to the question of what constitutes Tsing's 'something extra', by putting forward the motion: 'Anthropology needs to discard the distinction between life and non-life'. This was a deeply philosophical discussion in which speakers Edward Simpson, Petra Tjitske Kalshoven, Jamie Cross and Giovanni Da Col argued for

and against, taking positions on what constitutes life and non-life ranging from the human, the more than human, the biological, the environmental, and the ethnographic. Arguments to discard the distinction drew on the example of taxidermy as a 'second life' for a once living being (Kalshoven), and the notion of carbon as at the centre of all 'life' and 'non-life', binding them together and erasing the distinction (Cross). Simpson noted that both examples for discarding the distinction came from outside the discipline, and that to remove a distinction relevant and meaningful to even some of our informants (as it is to his informants in India) would be 'ethnographically irresponsible'. The motion was passed to keep the distinction, suggesting that in the end our deep sense of commitment to our informants' interpretations of their own realities is what sets us apart from other disciplines, and is indeed perhaps anthropology's most fundamental symbiosis – one in which we hope to achieve mutualism, rather than parasitism. ●

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TRAVERSING AND TRANSLATING HIGH FINANCE
Mapping the frontiers of high finance: Art, anthropology & the material culture of markets. RAI, 25 April 2015.

This workshop, held at the Royal Anthropological Institute, went beyond charting the frontiers of corporate investments by forming bridges between disparate terrains that might otherwise seem unconnected, and proposing new methodologies for exploring and communicating such links. Anthropologists, artists, accountants, hacktivists, economists, journalists, former brokers and educators traced their ideas and methods as they imaginatively and rigorously made links geared toward making visible the frequently invisible workings of finance. Presentations informed by conceptual and performative art and exhibits focused on themes of financial secrecy and transparency that arose throughout the workshop, entreating participants to focus on current global predicaments such as the economic crisis – not solely on its effects, but also importantly, its causes.

In 'Geographies of avoidance', graphic designer and artist Femke Herregraven created a virtual geopolitical map of financial offshore tax havens (many former British colonies), revealing a normally opaque map through a game she designed named 'Taxodus', which allows the user to make decisions about net investments based on tax treaties between countries and to better understand the fiscal warfare in which multinational companies and countries compete. Herregraven's art and research crafts material expression to convey abstract financial templates; her exposition

of business speculation that is betting on the melting of the Arctic so as to gain better access to the unexploited oil and gas fields and to lay underwater submarine lines for the possibility of increased data connections, forces us not to look away.

In his international exhibit, 'THE MARKET', Mark Curran described the theoretical underpinnings that shaped his focus on global collapse. The displays included blank documents or missing dialogue so as to reveal the absence of those who have retracted their names and words for fear of exposure. Paul Crosthwaite's exhibit 'Show me the money', explored how the fine arts have imagined financial markets over the last few centuries, showing how artists have historically struggled to make visible the nonfigurative aspects of money and how such a quest to make materiality out of abstractions continues to date.

In mapping out how financial structures work, Brett Scott, co-organizer of this event and author of *A hacker approach to demystifying global finance*, urged us to move beyond the interfaces – the seemingly shared technology boundaries – such as ATM machines or pay walls. For instance, the ATM displaces human contact and gives one the sense that the money is coming out of the bank's wall, disguising the underlying manoeuvrings that need to take place and the broader transactions and dependencies on international markets where profits are generated far away beyond such an interface. As a way to map concealment, conceptual artist Paolo Cirio, has taken the liberty of stealing the identity of over 200,000 companies that hide their money away from taxes in the Cayman Islands, only to offer them up for takers through his website and exhibit 'Loophole for all'. His exposé of the ensuing conversations between himself, the actual companies and prospective buyers discloses various types of secrecy that guide such complex financial arrangements.

At the same time, several scholars also warned of the dangers of mapping. Paul Gilbert, the co-organizer, in his sharp exposé of visual representational forms of markets, cautions on the need to be wary of cartographic imaginaries because no matter how compelling they are, they can also potentially limit the meanings of the multiple links they forge. Similarly, Paolo Quattrone, an accounting researcher, speaking of the semiotics and social power of numbers in relation to religious organizations, universities and multinational corporations, sketched out the rhetorical power of the visuality of numbers, emphasizing how accuracy is often extraneous to the effects that numbers produce.

The workshop successfully encouraged artists and anthropologists to explore investment banks and corporate finance strategies. Understanding the invisible operations of power, the sublimation of corruption through numbers, and the intentional distances placed between ideas and entities, are things that are of interest to all of us. ●

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