

NATIONS & IMAGINATIONS • 1

NOW I SHALL tell of the sovereign state of Sealand, a phantom nation adrift at sea. There are two ways to reach Sealand—by sea or by air—but it is neither here nor there. Situated in the North Sea, six miles off the British coast, Sealand rises from the water on two hulking concrete pillars. Built as a fortress in the Second World War, it was later reborn as a pirate radio station and, finally, a nation all its own. Here stands a city—if a nation it may be called—an outpost floating on stilts, held above the tides like a piece of earth suspended between worlds.

Though resting on a tower of wartime steel and concrete, Sealand was reclaimed and crowned by Roy Bates, a man who declared himself king. Here he rules with his royal family: Prince Michael and Princess Joan, who share their father's claim to this imagined sovereignty. Besides them, an ex-guard named Colin and an ex-marine walk the narrow corridors, forming a population that defies the place's emptiness. Free from the grasp of British taxes, Sealand is an oasis of fiscal freedom—almost. It may offer liberty of land, but that land goes only as far as the platform's edge; beyond it, the sea swallows the horizon. Ironically, the tiniest nation could then provide unlimited freedom on the internet in its name.

Visitors to Sealand find it often lacks the luster they may have envisioned; indeed, a glimpse on Facebook may offer a far grander tour. Tales drift in from afar, like the story of the landlord accused of murdering fashion designer Gianni Versace, claiming diplomatic immunity as a Sealand delegate. Sealand is a strange theater of sovereignties and shadow plays, its name sought by those craving a stamp in a passport, or by cyberpunk hackers drawn to the liminal spaces where the unlawful and forbidden thrive. Sealand becomes what people think it is—a wasted celebrity, both utopia and dystopia, yet somehow neither.

REFLECTION

REFERENCE LIST:

Calvino, I. (1974) *Invisible Cities*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Vishmidt M. (ed.), Metahaven (ed). (2010) *Uncorporate Identity*. Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers.

I chose *Invisible cities* as a starting point for structure and I represented the arguments from *Uncorporate Identity* in Calvino's structure.

I describe Sealand as Calvino describes his imaginary cities. The tone of Sealand suddenly turned fictional and there was a lot of focus on its people and its structure along with poetically talking about Sealand's unincorporate nature. This takes away the timeline and factual information and many examples the author uses to talk about Sealand and its journey.

In my “re-presentation” Sealand is more fictional, poetic, thought provoking and imagination provoking than. In contrast to its original form as an example of an unincorporate identity. The criticality remains the same but in a more fictitious way.