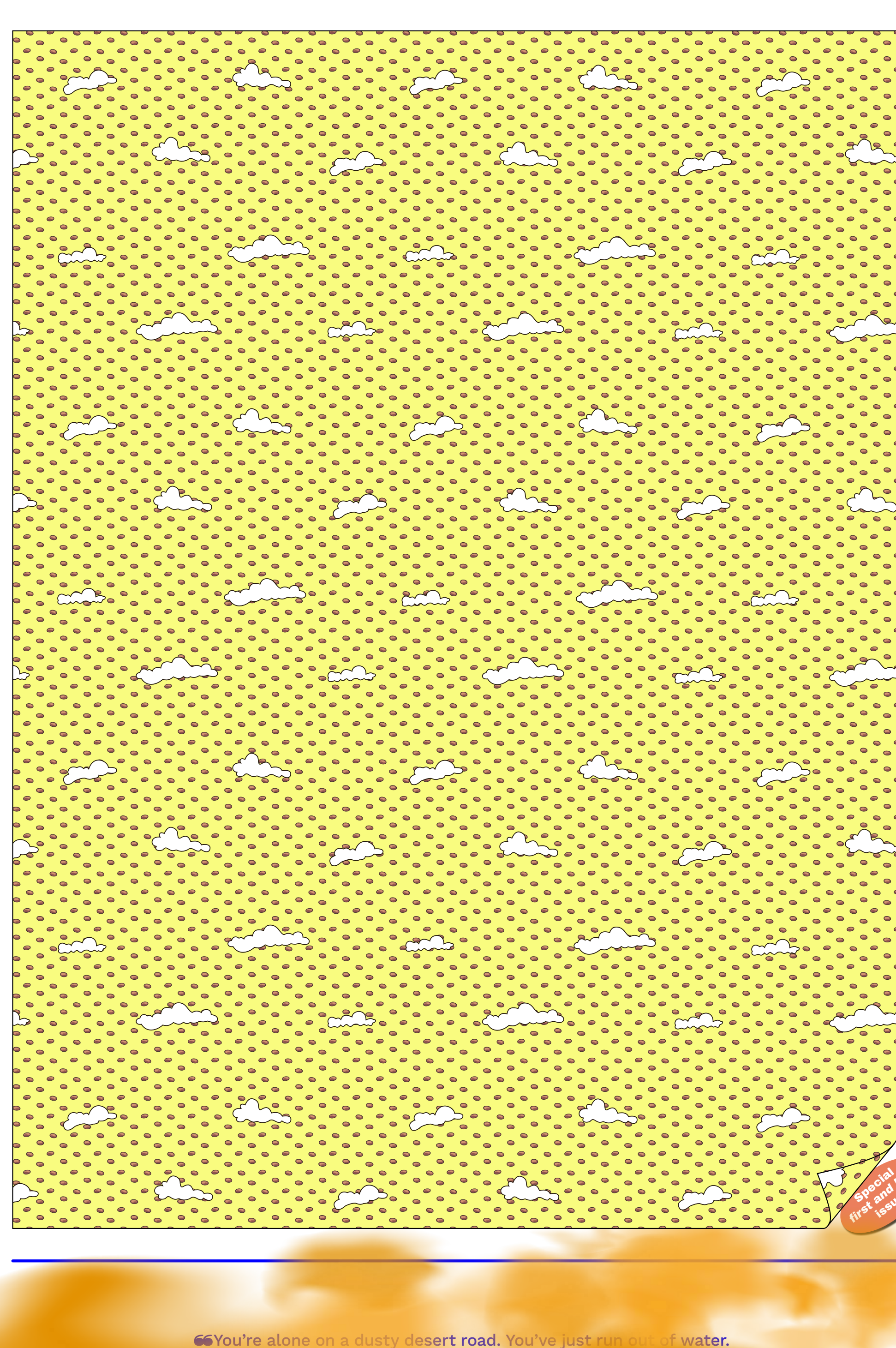
The offshore economist



Special first and last issue

> “You’re alone on a dusty desert road. You’ve just run out of water. A hot sun bakes down on you relentlessly from above. Your mouth is dry and you wonder how long you’ll be able to keep it up. The nearest town is a mirage on the horizon, ten miles away. It will be a long walk. You may not make it.
>
> In one hand, you have your car keys. Your car is parked right next to you. It’s a beauty. It works, is full of gas and everything about it runs like a dream, even the air conditioning. There is just one problem. The year is 2018 and eco-wackos have taken over this particular stretch of the desert. They don’t like technology, they don’t like money, and they don’t like cars.
>
> You’re facing a choice. Do you hop in your car and zip into town like a breeze? Or do you start the ten mile walk on foot, with no water and only the baking sun for a companion? If you walk, you may not make it. If you drive, the townspeople may label you a criminal. How to deal with it?”
>
> W. G. Hill, Finding freedom in an unfree world

ARCANA IMPERII

THE OFFSHORE ECONOMIST
First and last issue, 2018
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WITH THE SUPPORT OF
transmediale and Vilém Flusser Archiv at the Universität der Künste Berlin
IN MEMORY OF
Lapo Berti, a free man
1940–2017

OFFSHORE: How To Deal With It
↘ an introduction to all things offshore by the Demystification Committee

Electro Bubbles
↘ a journey between offshore financial and electronic music, by Kibernetikos Kommando

Tactics
↘ a list of offshoring tactics by Brett Scott

More Tactics
↘ an appendix to the offshoring tactics by W. G. Hill

A day in the life of —
↘ a Professional Puppet. A series of short stories by the Demystification Committee

SWIM
↘ a poem in footnotes by Annelyse Gelman

> < Someone who isn’t me (SWIM) distributes but does not produce the product (P) which is produced elsewhere (E). SWIM has a body (B). >

> < Was it Ann Jäderlund who said Unfold the leaves / thrust into the core. There is no core. Well then there is no core. >

An introduction to the Offshore Investigation Vehicle by Demystification Committee

“He sells three shares by the seashore
The shares he sells are surely offshore.”

It’s estimated that as much as half of all global wealth is stacked in or routed through tax havens. These tax havens, or ‘secrecy jurisdictions’, are one part of the parallel legal and financial system known as offshore. Through the offshore system, trillions of dollars appear to flow amongst a multitude of businesses. This money seemingly traverses the globe, while truthfully remaining concentrated in the hands of a few powerful actors in a few powerful countries.

> < Say B is in the water (W). See how P like a simile (S) both generates and defers meaning (M). Say W is fecund with M and its subordinate clauses each by each absorbed into P. >

In many ways, offshore is a place of its own, made up of the balance sheets and tax returns of countless companies. A hive of secretive activity distributed across the globe. If it’s a place, can one visit? Where is it, and what can you do here? How might it feel to become part of it?

Throughout summer 2017, the Demystification Committee set out to model and explore the systems and structures of offshore finance, and the murky world of the jurisdictions that enable its existence, with the aim to open up opportunities for subversive, wasteful fun.

The Demystification Committee set up an international corporate structure across three jurisdictions, the Offshore Investigation Vehicle. This vehicle operates at once as a guide and a shield: not only does it provide access to a hidden world of knowledge and opportunities; it also guarantees the secrecy of the actions undertaken there.

Once set-up, the Offshore Investigation Vehicle was opened to others in an attempt to create a community of people interested in this effective and toxic parallel legal system. The community was formed through the norms of corporate law, playing with the company’s legal structure: shares were issued; meetings called; resolutions voted on. At the first general meeting of Empire Management, the UK limited company at the top of this structure, the Vehicle’s objectives were collectively set. A dozen new shareholders advanced and discussed a number of operations, with the aim to begin misusing the privileged Vehicle’s structure set-up both onshore and offshore.

The idea of producing a seditious mirror version of the Economist, to be known as the Offshore Economist, was advanced, discussed and approved. The publication focuses on those ruptures and cracks inherent to the practice and world of offshore, which are the qualifying loopholes for those invested, and investing, in it. Through fictional stories, marginal poetry, fragmented legalese and a shifting form and layout, this publication pursues an aesthetic of offshore — a world that is dual and slippery, real and beyond real, and — at times — surreal.

DEMYSTIFICATION COMMITTEE

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OFFSHORE SPRING/SUMMER 2018
“If you are going offshore, you should dress for it”
OFFSHORE SPRING/SUMMER 2018

> < See SWIM swim. SWIM sinks like a fat gold coin or floats like an oil spill. Current either way the currents. >

Electro Bubbles

Kyberneticos Kommando

> < P coheres in B the collateral B that occupies the horizon toward which SWIM may swim indefinitely without ever reaching the shore. S prime? E upon E forever. >

Nothing is more airy than a bubble. It is made of a viscous surface which divides the internal spheroid from external reality. The bubble’s internal spheroidal sack contains gas, or vapour, or another element which shelters itself from the outside thanks to a kind of membrane resistant to external pressures. The interval between the inner space, surrounded, absorbed, and the outer space, the out-of-the-sack, the out-of-the-bubble, is thin, slimy, almost tactile. However, what appears transparent and durable can collapse at any moment under outside pressure.

The bubble membrane is thus always penetrable and constantly on the verge of disintegration. When the sphere bursts, reality reaches the enclave with gratifying impetuosity. Domestication of separateness. The outside becomes the inside, and the inside is devoured by the outside. The unstable equilibrium which governs the floating of the bubble becomes a cliff edge, and everything decays in new abstract and chaotic lines.

Money is the perpetual engine of relentless spherology which virtually belongs to it like darkness belongs to light. In other words, the circularity of money draws bubbles in the shadow of its own flow. The roundness of irregular geometry is the gift that money offers in exchange for subscribing to its shadow. Money’s disproportionate stride triggers the generation of spheres whose fate is that of vitalistic explosion, which incinerates everything. The final burst is an obscure euphoria of the swelled shadow.

The features that financial bubbles have in common with *electro* bubbles are the *data* membranes which perpetually flow in the two directions of the interface. The data flow innervates both sides, the inside and the outside, leaving internal and external pressures free to peak and destroy the bubble itself. Bubbles emerge everywhere, from cryptocurrencies to the darker products of offshore financial markets. But how was the latter confronted by a different kind of (electro) bubble: the artificial one of electronic music, the realm of synthetic beats?

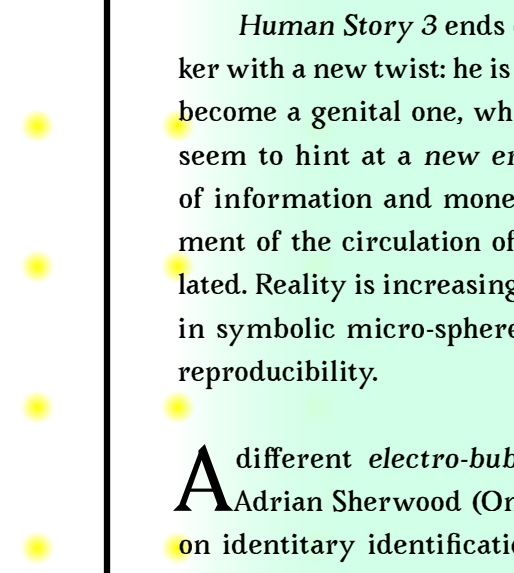
> < Was it Eileen Myles who said like taking your currency and making of yourself a coin. >

Let us then try to outline some unorthodox paths which electronic music culture innovatively drew at the beginning of the 21st century. The bold James Ferraro centres a first round of sarcastic ballads around the physical core of the money world: the New York hub where the many offshore streams of molecular chrematistics converge.

Ferraro’s conceptual album, *Human Story 3* (2016), features a track focusing on the spectacularisation of human types, wandering like “forgetful mammals” in the plastiglomerate of New York City, at the time of market collapse. Security Broker exalts the joy of the stroll in the inhospitable hyper-sphere of Wall Street’s charging bulls.

The video accompanying the music, directed by Eugene Kotlyarenko, sees the personification of a security broker – the universal and ubiquitous servant of accumulated money – inside the core of the ultimate bubble. It represents the apotheosis of hyper-real snapping, a kind of reality exaggerated and accelerated by secondary bubbles. That of the Snapchatters, whereby camera and communication collapse in the cloaca of the here-and-now. And that of the manipulated mobility resulting from the iPhonisation of cardinal points. In the realm of the ultimate corporate platform, the apple inside the Big Apple, an ever-updated geolocation strengthens the visual hyperbole while the music echoes the market through the intermittent sound of advertisement.

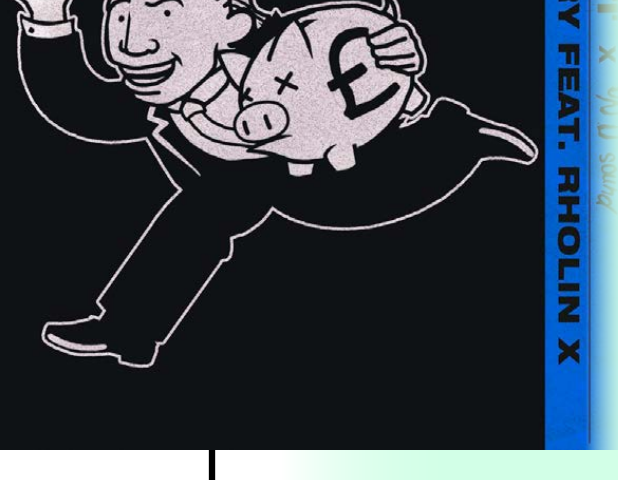
> < Insofar as SWIM acknowledges the liquidity of identity the cost of maintaining B may be written off excreted into the W or kicked up like S to some nebulous E where B moves in floes amphibious like desire (D) a D which need not be marshaled exactly but be capable of being marshaled at any time. >



Corporate spherology is fraught with myriads of secondary bubbles articulated in the creative overlap of a camera snap – the (sound-)engineered relationship with *the other* and with the space/time of this spherology. Ferraro and Kotlyarenko become hyper-real when portraying the distinctive features of the human type trapped inside the parasitic shell of an empty office, its interiors the bewitched place where technological wonders are modelled by those same forces that exhaust the capacity of human expression.

Human Story 3 ends on a snap of the security broker with a new twist: he is naked, his eye prosthesis has become a genital one, while Snapchat’s emoji tongues seem to hint at a *new erotica* where the circulation of information and money have merged to the detriment of the circulation of desire. Everything is simulated. Reality is increasingly fragmented and captured in symbolic micro-spheres opening up to an infinite reproducibility.

A different *electro-bubble* is that of Coldcut and Adrian Sherwood (On-U Sound), insisting instead on identitary identification. Their *Outside The Echo Chamber* (2017) features a track called *Robbery*, with Rholin X imprinting a profound ragga-dub feel to it.



Robbery exists both as a sound piece and a recreational game, which we shall focus on. The game’s well-defined topology is a social space where money, debt and institution come together. The defrauded subjects and the defrauding agent are but external creases: the outer-bubble of an irreconcilable space whereby the circulation of money and the accumulation of chrematistics form an immersive surface, an institutional body organic to fraud.

The recreational features float in an outdated and captivating iconography, where Gillray-like caricatures draw a bidimensional urban path. On this path is the robber, a *bankstr* carrying the loot, dodging traps, policemen and prison to reach the eagerly-awaited tax haven.

While the militant, political charge of this denunciation appears elementary, the game’s recreational apparatus overcomes the traditional sound/image duo of electronic music to both experiment with the formats of game/denunciation and break the false belief that no alternative to capitalism exists. When performed live, Coldcut’s improvised editing of sound, images and game offer the spectator a novel technique through which to discern the space freed by the dissent of this fictional entertainment.

> < SWIM sunbathes where the tips of the branches autograph the wind on the shore of the offshore. >

Robbery, the game, confronts the *bankstr* with prison and a court of justice – complete with the applauses of an imaginary crowd of victims – thus showing the perpetually unsatisfied desire for justice, which goes to indicate that the architecture of the System is built to deny the positive illusion of individuals’ independent action. When even the *bankstr* and ‘Mrs. Batcher’ represent the fluid coarseness of the market, then capital’s mundanity has absorbed all social structures.

The world is inside the market, money is outside Nomos. Cash is stacked offshore and its ad-hoc secretive jurisdiction changes its nature: it becomes xeno-money. A game of robbery is then the cheerful metaphor that Ninja Tune offers for the unspeakable labyrinth of offshore accumulation.

continued

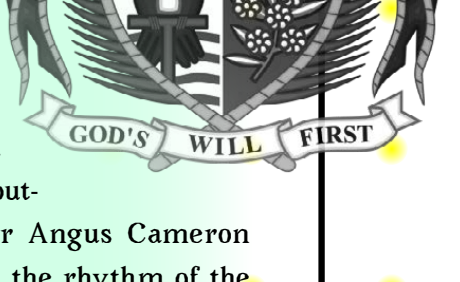
An elegy of those micro-states that form part of the engineered network of offshore accumulation is advanced by Dj Spooky in The Nauru Elegies: The Idea of an Island (2011). In the 90s the state of Nauru – an island located in Micronesia and formerly administered by Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom – became integral part of a global cartography of tax evasion. This was mainly due to the predictable end of the brutal exploitation of the sole industry in Nauru: phosphates extraction.

> < There exists natural B and legal B. Organic SWIM documentary SWIM. See how M tries to peel apart here but W is resilient adhesive resists tearing. P E -- kein field this void. >

Dj Spooky presents the elegiac dimension of the fate of a small island denaturalised by intensive mining first and then by capital injection: a money to clean and reinoculate into the dazzling circuit of global credit. *The Nauru Elegies* integrate sound and image through a string quartet mixed with electronic oscillations, and videos of Nauruan environmental collapse mixed with the digital topographies of GPS and nautical maps.

The sense of neglect – never has the desert appeared so green and thriving – of houses, villages, mines and plants sets off the distorted counter-nature of an island that was sabotaged first by Western powers and then by xeno-money. While 90% of Nauru’s 10,000 inhabitants is unemployed, this peripheral node of the offshore financial network is also involved in the flow of global migrations as a detention centre on behalf of the regional power, that is, Australia.

Once again, the pathologies of current times are discharged on a distant and unresolved point: such point will not collapse as long as the net-work holds. The nautical ecstasy of the silent flow of xeno-money is not frightened by the wounds of the environment. The spherical ecstasy of the financial bubble is the xenotopia of secrecy jurisdictions scattered around the accelerated network of the monetary circuit. An external space, a peculiar and outrageous entity, as the geographer Angus Cameron describes it, where both man and the rhythm of the environment become strangers, reckless. A geography altered by the xenobiosis of industry and finance, a disharmonic composition that evokes DJ Spooky’s elegiac tone: mining plants abandoned on the regretful beaches of the *inland expire*. Nauru, the virtual state of the hidden geometry of global commerce.



But the sonification of the financial collapse ought to be attributed to Novi_sad and Ryoichi Kurokawa. In Sirens (2012) the transformation into sound of financial collapses crosses through several layers of parametric audio composition in which are involved artists such as Richard Chartier, Carl Michael von Hausswolff, Jacob Kirkegaard, Helge Sten and Rebecca Foon.

An initial scrape of raw data – which allowed the sonic reduction of the (in)finite number of non-linear possibilities – was followed by an analytic stage of accurate selection of “numerical and quantitative data from periods of economic panic and major stock market crashes in history”, to be sonified on “tracks commissioned from other sound artists and musicians.”

According to Thanasis Kaproulias (Novi_sad), globalised and interconnected economies are fundamentally unsound, insecure, infirm, dysfunctional. The vulnerabilities of markets become fruitful elements in a compositional environment. Their operation and function establishes a fertile ground, ideal for observing the notion and reliability of changes. After all, stock market crashes are as much social as economic phenomena. “External economic events are being combined with crowd behaviour and psychology in a positive feedback loop that drives investors to sell”, writes Kaproulias.

> < Observe the difference between ‘flammable’ and ‘inflammable’. Observe how SWIM can only displace the mass of SWIM. SWAM one might write by mistake on the dotted line. >

When combined with the behaviour and the psychology of market operators and other actors within the spherological ecstasy, the retroactive loop can also become negative and the vectorial entropy of disembodied circulation drives investors on a downward spiral. *“The stock markets have the kind of cybernetic properties of biological systems and other complex phenomena, which can be studied in the same way as biological systems. This tends to give rise to a sense that the market is somehow a natural expression of some fundamental forces.”*

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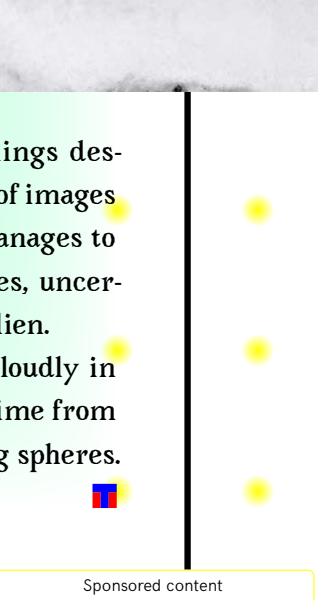
Natural forces which Kurokawa reworks in the sharp physiologies of animals represented as if exfoliating, in a continuous germination and deformation, in a metastasis rich with suggestions. The artificial injection of a large amount of data extrapolated from stock market crashes offered the challenge to electronic compositions found in Sirens. Kaproulias explains that: “*the core idea in Sirens was to produce a reverse movement between the stock market’s melting statistics/indexes/numbers and the development in each audio track. From the beginning, the aim was to make each piece denser and more dynamic as long as the numbers, percentages and values were collapsing.*”

The aesthetic of a crashing molar order in direct contrast with an expressive molecular disorder. The acoustic imprint of calls sung by Sirens on history’s greatest recessions. So as speculative bubbles are the virtual shadow drawn by the superior circling of money, their acoustic imprint is the ghost of the nominal value of human things destined to crash. Modulating the xenomorphosis of images in response to sounds and data, Kurokawa manages to translate into digital poetry these new bodies, uncertain natures whose mothers are distant, or alien.

And suddenly, the electro-bubbles burst loudly in algorithmic space, going back to the foam of time from which they had just emerged like pale floating spheres.

> < In the service of D the market ripples like a school of fish. >



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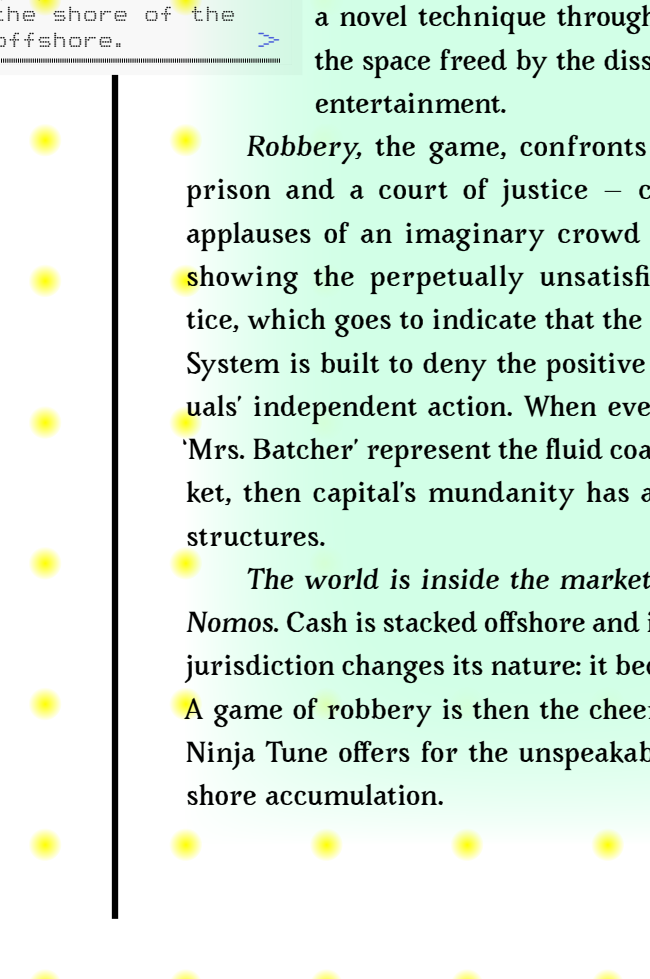

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> < M: like ice (I) you can drill down into it. >

> < SWIM has little information at hand -- even the sense of smell is dilute in such a distributed B. >

Tactics

Brett Scott

CORPORATE SUBSIDIARIES
A multinational corporation might have a single logo, but it is actually a federation of subsidiary companies linked together across the world under the control of a ‘mothership’ parent company. For example, BP PLC is a parent company that owns – directly or indirectly – over 1000 companies across the world.

INTRA-FIRM TRADE
A huge amount of international ‘trade’ actually takes place between subsidiaries owned by the same parent company. A BP subsidiary in Nigeria can ‘sell’ oil to a BP subsidiary in in Belize, who in turn can sell it to a BP refinery subsidiary in Brazil, even though all three part of the same corporation. The Belize subsidiary might not even take possession of the oil, but buy it and then resell it immediately, purely on paper.

TRANSFER PRICING
When subsidiaries owned by the same parent company ‘do business’ with each other, it is a bit like playing a board game where you control all the players. You can dictate the terms upon which they do business and what they’ll charge each other. ‘Transfer pricing’ is the term given to the prices charged by one subsidiary to another.

TAX ARBITRAGE AND TAX COMPETITION
A multinational corporation might control a network of subsidiary companies from London, but many of its subsidiaries will be located in countries that seek to tax the local subsidiary according to their local rules. Multinationals will try manipulate this situation, carefully selecting locations for subsidiaries, searching out the jurisdictions with the lowest tax rates and thereby creating competition between states to ‘race to the bottom’. They will also engage in ‘Base erosion and Profit shifting’ (see below).

TAX HAVEN
A key set of players that facilitating tax arbitrage are offshore tax havens or ‘secrecy jurisdictions’. The international principle of sovereignty means nations respect the rights of other nations to set local rules. Tax havens are nations that ‘rent out’ access to their sovereign territories for the explicit purpose of allowing multinationals to reduce tax or reduce the transparency of their operations.

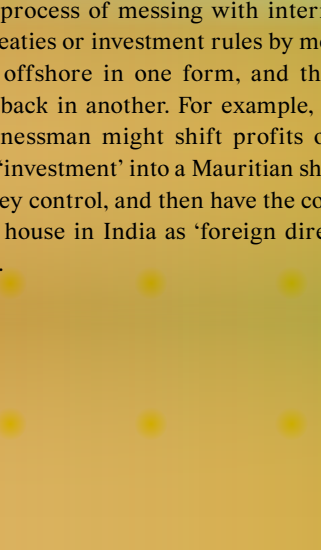
BASE EROSION AND PROFIT SHIFTING
When a corporation has established a network of subsidiary companies, the ideal scenario is to reduce the amount that can be taxed in high-tax jurisdictions by shifting it to low-tax jurisdictions. To do this, they must find ways to artificially reduce the profits from subsidiaries in high-tax jurisdictions by getting them to buy expensive or unnecessary services from subsidiaries in low-tax jurisdictions, thereby shifting the profit from one to another. Multinationals have many ways they can achieve this, from skewed transfer pricing to thin capitalisation through inter-company loans (see below). For example, they may make subsidiaries in high-tax areas pay for ‘consultancy services’ offered by a subsidiary based in a tax haven, or make them pay royalties for ‘intellectual property’ to them.

THIN CAPITALISATION
When a corporation sets up a foreign subsidiary they need to ‘capitalise’ it, transferring money to its bank account so it can operate. They can choose to give it this money in the form of equity or they can ‘lend’ it money as a loan. In both cases the subsidiary gets money to operate, but when it comes time to send money back to the parent company the ideal is to send it as ‘interest’ repayments, because local authorities tax local company profits, which is the amount left over after expenses and interest are paid. Thus, you can sneak money out from under the nose of the tax authority by taking it away from your subsidiary in the form of interest. Thus, a Canadian mining company might set up a subsidiary in a tax haven, give it money and then get it to ‘lend’ that on to a new mining subsidiary in Angola. When it comes time to bring money back they can extract it out of Angola as ‘repayment for a loan given by a Cayman Islands company’.

DOUBLE-TAXATION TREATY
A legitimate concern for anyone doing business across borders is preventing being taxed twice in two different countries for the same business. Countries thus enter into an elaborate array of bilateral deals with each other to decide how to split tax or prevent double-taxation when their citizens do business. This can be exploited by multinationals however, who can set up their operations to explicitly to take advantage of loopholes or the interactions between the treaties. Much of the manipulation involves strategically setting up companies to minimise cross-border withholding taxes and capital gains taxes, which are both taxes on gains made from investments.

ROUND TRIPPING
This is the process of messing with international tax treaties or investment rules by moving money offshore in one form, and then bringing it back in another. For example, an Indian businessman might shift profits offshore as an ‘investment’ into a Mauritian shell company they control, and then have the company buy a house in India as ‘foreign direct investment’.

> < See how the W flows under the surface of I D M such that P may be diluted disrupted parceled out among various Es but cannot be destroyed -- after all how would one find P’s source in all that M or SWIM in all that W? >



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“In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes”
Dear old Ben might have been right about death, but taxes are most definitely far from certain in this life — with an offshore investment through Empire Management Limited.

> < Like the lacuna from which the bone blooms SWIM dwells in elision. Well then there is our core. >

> < See how SWIM finds the hole in the anonymous I. >

More Tactics

W. G. Hill

Some of the tactics outlined underneath have been reclassified as illegal activity in many countries. However, you never know what the future may bring. Questions of legality are of little concern. No one is more sovereign than yourself. Even if some fool shows up at your door calling himself “the state” while frantically waving papers at you, you should have the right to slam the door in his face. Unfortunately, the world ain’t so. If it were there would be no reason to write this Offshore Economist.

BANKING IN SILENCE
For a very brief period, the Seychelles offered what can only be thought of as a money launderers dream come true. Through its Economic Development Assistance Act of 1995, an investment of more than US $10 million guaranteed immediate citizenship, immunity from prosecution and freedom from investigation as to the source of funds.

SHE DOES THE WASH
She boards the plane carrying two suitcases, one packed with personal items, the other stuffed with money she wants to smuggle out of the country. When the plane lands, she makes her way through customs carrying only the suitcase filled with money. If stopped at the border, she acts mortified at the sight of the contents of her luggage and hastily makes her way back to the plane in the company of government officials. “See, this is my bag, my god they do look alike though, don’t they?” she says, opening the other suitcases and showing them her ID, clothing and make up stuffed inside. The money contained in the first suitcase is then written off as an expense of doing business.

HE DOES THE WASH
He places a call to the airport and provides an anonymous tip concerning what he is about to do: smuggle money out of the country in a fake cast. When he hobbles into line to board the plane, he – naturally – gets stopped and searched. Officials tell him that they would have to remove his cast. He screams and hollers, creating a scene, demanding that he be allowed to call his lawyer, treating to sue everyone in sight. During the commotion, his plane leaves without him. The lawyer finally arrives and the cast is removed to reveal – absolutely nothing but a pale leg.

The next day, he hobbles onto the same flight, the recipient of embraced smiles all around, his cast filled almost to breaking with tainted money.

A day in the life of—

M. A. D. Farmer, the puppet director

On paper a nominee director is the director of a company. In reality, however, they have signed a number of documents with the true – beneficial – owner of the company, agreeing to cede control. These documents include a Power of Attorney, giving the beneficial owner the power to control and make decisions on behalf of the company. There is also a declaration that the position is held as a nominee, and a resignation letter, signed but undated, to allow the beneficial owner to remove the nominee at any point.

Mark Andrew Derek Farmer is the nominee director for Invest. One Limited, the offshore company within the Offshore Investigation Vehicle. Mark sells his name and signature to the UK offshore service provider that set up Invest. One - Graham. Mark appears as the director of many companies, including a number in the UK and Ireland. Due to secrecy laws, it is not possible to see if he is the director of any other companies in the Seychelles.

As far as it is possible to know, Mark is a British Citizen living (or at least with access to an address) in Cyprus. He is in his late 50s. Beyond this, Mark could be anyone: a retired UK businessman, blackmailed, dead, underemployed and short on money, a farmer with a bad crop, or perhaps the alter ego of an opportunistic kid on the internet.

> < E (E´). Was it Anne Carson who said was it Ovid who said There is so much wind here stones go blank. >

A day in the life of—
M. A. D. Farmer, blackmailed

The phone on the cafe table buzzes. It’s Graham.

Mark sighs. Graham’s a prick, but he can’t risk ignoring him.

He sighs again and picks up the phone.

“Hello” — monotone.

“Mark, hi! How are you?” Graham is as gregarious as ever. Business must be good. His business is always good.

“Listen,” Graham doesn’t wait for an answer, “I’ve got a favour to ask.”

Mark cringes at ‘favour’. Graham has a friendly tone, but the power’s his.

“Remember how I sent you those documents a few months back? I need a few more. Think you can do that for me?”

“Sure, Graham. No problem”

“Great! I sent them yesterday, they should be with you in the morning.”

> < A consultation merely excludes the mouth (molten thinly capitalized) all that foaming meaning. To become unbundled. >

A day in the life of—
M. A. D. Farmer, dead

“Ah, Mrs Farmer, is your husband there?”

“Graham, good to hear from you. I’m afraid not — he’s just popped out. Can I give him a message?”

Graham explains that he needs Mark to sign and send a pack of documents that are in the post. He’s detailed & thorough about the steps. Mark needs to sign the documents, have them notarised and verified by the apostille so they’re legal across jurisdictions, and them ship them to an address in the UK.

Mrs Farmer doesn’t bother writing anything except the address down — she knows the process.

“Got it, thanks Graham. I’ll pass that on — he shouldn’t be long.”

She picks up the phone. “Dina, hi. Have you got any free slots this week? Mark’s away on business again and has asked if I could pop by and see you with some documents?”

It works. It had always annoyed Mrs. Farmer that Mark would visit the notary while they were out together but — in hindsight — it had paid off.

And it was always nice to see Dina.

A day in the life of—
M. A. D. Farmer, the UK business Man

“I’m here for these.” Mark slides a stack of slips across the post-clerk’s counter.

“Good Morning Mr Farmer”, the clerk’s clearly used to Mark’s curt attitude. “can I see your ID please?”

Mark looks as if he’s about to argue, but after a quick calculation of the time that would take hands over his passport — British.

The clerk takes only the most cursory glance before handing it back and heading through an open door into the back room.

Mark checks his watch, repeatedly, and after some time the clerk returns

“Here you go Mr Farmer, two items. From Milton Keynes in the UK.”

Mark grunts his assent, takes the packages and leaves.

A day in the life of—
M. A. D. Farmer, nuts farmer

Mark rubs his forehead. Picking up the document again, he supposes he shouldn’t worry too much about the specifics. Graham had said he was covered by everything, that he would always have a way out for as long as he kept copies, that no one would come looking anyway.

It’s quick money but, still, it’s complicated. Legal documents always remind him of signing the lease on the farm. And look how that turned out... Is this a mistake? Can one mistake cancel another?

Mark rubs his forehead. Picks up the pen.

> < D slides away from M; D´ gets away with M E´ site of legal B tugging on a bikini string like a child ringing a bell while B´ lounges on wave-shaped chunk of polystyrene to watch M flux. >

A day in the life of—
M. A. D. Farmer, coerced

Dina knew the signs. Mark, the grey haired gentleman sliding a pack of documents and a passport across her desk was clearly uncomfortable with what he was about to do.

Most likely he was a little down on his luck, probably worked for the same company the last 40 years. Didn’t know what to do when they shut down.

“And you’d like me to...”, she softly prompts her silent visitor. She knows what he needs, but requires that he asks.

“um, er ... ”, he mumbles something. No need to push him, she can make out the word ’notarize’.

“Ok, so I can verify this Power of Attorney for you.”

“Thank you”

“The letter isn’t complete — I guess you don’t need me to do that one?”

“Ah, no — thanks. Thank you”

Dina pulls out the document. Glancing at the signatures briefly she deftly flips through the pages, stamping each one. On the last page she briefly compares Mark’s face to his passport before stamping & signing the document.

“Right, that’s sorted” she smiles warmly at him. His, in return, is weak but relieved.

“You’ll need to take this to be apostilled, of course?”

Mark’s face falls. She wants to reassure him, but it’s not her place.

A day in the life of—
M. A. D. Farmer, alter ego

’ping’

Jamie sees Graham’s email, instantly deleting it without breaking from Photoshop. She knows what the boilerplate says, mimics it mockingly. “Dear Mark, You should have received the documents, blah blah, please have them certified and send them, blah blah”.

Those guys are amateurs.The passport she bought off of AlphaBay is shoddy at best — it wouldn’t fool her kid-brother. Photoshopping those documents was too easy — do they even look at them?

Whatever. If they want to sell companies to idiots, she’s happy to pose as an old man called Mark and take their money. What difference does it make to them if she’s in Birkenhead not Cyprus?

She shuts her laptop. Picks up the already sealed, addressed envelope and heads downstairs.

“Mum, I’m just going out to meet Tim.”

> < SWIM meanwhile E´ some unenforceable haven blastomas and canaliculi a pocked and stretchmarked proxy. >

The offshore economist

> < There exists E´ a director a shareholder a power of attorney but one hesitates to expand the alphabet and besides I is cold. >