

De-territorialized Listenings — An Archive of Collapsed Collective Memory

A plateau unoccupied, a space denied

Light. The four concrete pillars stretched like tall high-rises towards a horizon enrobed in a deep reddish twilight. Through their sheer size they made the fugitive surroundings drift around them in that augmented three-dimensional way skylines are rendered in cinematic computer games, producing an ongoing and ever so changing feeling of depth. But in a similar fashion as when trying to orient yourself listening to a Shepard tone you are never allowed to actually reach their starting point.¹ As if chasing the ends of two parallel rainbows we kept driving towards this geometrical chimera, co-creators of an immersive interpolated 3D composition passing outside the car windows. Contrast. Texture. Through the maze of industrial complexes, oil tanks, extended chains of parked train cars' dark silhouettes against a backdrop of white gasometers, equally corporate sounding no-names stamped on their corrugated or cylindrical side walls; they too seemed to outline a reality rendered according to a preconfigured purpose, with carefully laid out arbitrariness. Every car, every semi joining us from inside the maze felt like a designer's afterthought to remind us of their realistic aspirations of an ongoing simulation whose immersive qualities impress, but the underlying aesthetics give the story away before it even started.

¹ A Shepard tone is an audio illusion creating a feeling of a never-ending rising or falling pitch, where the different overtones/octaves seamlessly fade in and out of our auditory spectrum, tricking our brain to interpret it as one constant movement.

We had spent several days scouting locations for our artistic partaking in the upcoming festival *betweenEbbandFlow: interstitial spaces* — an expanded exhibition using the harbor of Hamburg as both its conceptual framework and its main stage.² Through twelve site-specific interventions in public spaces across the vast port area with a specific focus on alternative spaces, the festival sought to challenge clichés around the harbor's geographic and social milieu as a stronghold of colonial nostalgia and touristic attraction, with the notion of “denied travel” as a collective point of departure. The notion was reminiscent of the last outbreak of cholera in Hamburg and the Western world in general in 1892. Robert Koch, director of the Institute for Infectious Diseases was brought over from Berlin to contain the outbreak once it started to spread to the higher echelons of society, and immediately forbade all river transport to and from the main harbor.³ The festival painted an arch between the cholera outbreak and the fresh aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic, which put the city of Hamburg under similar lockdown and quarantine measures and also had considerable impact on both the local and global economy. In parallel the festival also wanted to highlight how the transformative processes of these measures enabled a more ephemeral production of spaces, where both previously empty and bustling sites were turned into interstitial spaces. This manifested itself in the consistent choice of decentralised public spaces for the artistic interventions throughout the festival. Additionally, the festival tried to emphasise how deterritorialisation and displacement of people contribute to the construction of a contemporary subjectivity, one where all journeys are either denied or imposed journeys.

Subtitled *An Archive of Collapsed Collective Memory*, our contribution was to become the second iteration of *De-territorialized Listenings*, an ongoing series of immersive, interactive and geolocated soundwalks.⁴ These artworks delve into points of friction related to belonging, heritage, history and materiality by rethinking and revaluing local knowledge and environments in the hope of re-establishing forgotten or lost (non-) places by staging speculative site-specific audio experiences in public space. With *De-territorialized Listenings* we inquire from discrete and site-specific starting points how and to what extent aspects of late capitalism and post-industrial societies actively displace communities when turning previously vibrant places

² *Between Ebb and Flow: Interstitial Spaces*, Hamburg, 26.06 – 12.11.2022. Curated by Giulia Busetti.

³ “Als die Cholera-Epidemie in Hamburg wütete” *NDR* (15.08.2022).

⁴ Soundwalks as a practice stem from composer and field recordist Murray Schaefer's research on acoustic ecology, brought to light through The World Soundscape Project during the 1970s. Its main immediate purpose was to establish a set of listening methods as well as a comprehensive classification of environmental sounds — the soundscape. On a deeper level it also propagated an awareness and dialogue around acoustic ecology and active/critical listening of our environment and our function within an ecosystem. In the early 2000s the term was expanded to incorporate a row of hybrid ambulatory practices, focused on augmented explorations of location and lived experience integrating an array of technological extensions.

into anonymous non-places. In all its different metaphors our work is often about movements and flows of capital, very often the driving force behind displacement and all its effects in so-called post-industrial settings. With this in mind, we interact with the historical contexts, events and symbols that manifest these transformations the strongest.

To facilitate a site-specific dialogue we chose the Kattwyk bridges as our site of research and presentation. *Die Kattwykbrücken* are two parallel lift bridges connecting Hamburg's eastern and western harbors by crossing the Südelbe river from Wilhelmsburg to Moorburg. The first bridge was finished in 1973, facilitating inter-harbor railroad cargo traffic without needing to put strain on the public railroad system around the larger Hamburg area. The single bridge soon became a bottleneck due to its singular enabling of either ships, freight trains and automotive traffic to cross. As if the bridge's functional limitations ironically were conditional to the transactional logic of the global contract they are subordinated to: "bring me the money and I'll hand over the goods—just in time." To improve matters a second bridge was commissioned and opened in 2020 to cover the train, bike and pedestrian traffic, freeing up the old bridge for automotive transports. On several occasions the original Kattwyk Bridge failed its most fundamental tasks, embodying the festival's key notion of denied travel in its most literal sense. In 1991, due to a container ship colliding with the bridge in the fog, parts of it collapsed into the water, and throughout the 2000s it was closed several times for longer stretches due to restoration and reparation needs, partly caused by premature wear as the overall traffic load was higher than expected. In our own direct interaction with it, it repeatedly jinxed the presentation of our artwork, due to unannounced construction work, followed by a complete and final closure of the pedestrian path on the old bridge. The notion of denied travel made itself clear as a stark reminder that art in public spaces will always remain a test of one's flexibility of thought and implementation, process and persistence.

In the following pages, we will try to elaborate on selected aspects of the industrial and post-industrial developments of Moorburg, in order to position our artistic research and practice within the emerging discourse of *trans-industriality*. While the concept of post-industrial society has been embraced, appropriated but also highly criticised, we will often use it in this text as a springboard, since Moorburg in many ways embodies the result of what the proponents of the post-industrial society were forecasting enthusiastically. But at the same time these developments blatantly expose the post-industrial society's blind spots. With the above in mind, we will try to assess the validity of the post-industrial as apparent in our site research and then, guided specifically by the aforementioned Moorburg artwork, try to outline, suggest, discuss and speculate on trans-industrial

arches and overlaps, as well as socioeconomic and cultural influences.

When a term is in its relative infancy like trans-industriality is at the time of this writing, there is a literal myriad of thinkable points of departure; we hope it can add not only to the discussion around how to identify and address layers of industrial change, but an ongoing and important discussion around biases over how we view historical and societal change at large. We have chosen a row of stipulations to work along which has helped us deepen our understanding of our own practice and provided valuable tools for future interaction with the contexts we often are involved with:

- Trans-industriality depicts and deals with industrial development as *ongoing change, interaction and transition*. It describes and facilitates the co-existence and multiplicity of entry points, and acknowledges and actively looks for inter-paradigmatic reiterations and interactions within old and new historical contexts and epistemes. History has clearly shown that concepts or tendencies seldom just disappear, but get reiterated, improved upon, revamped within new contexts, and under new pretexts. We want to utilise trans-industriality to facilitate a better dialogue and coexistence between these layers in all their temporal forms and creations.
- Trans-industriality is interstitial and inquiring to its nature and acknowledges the need for a dialectic approach. It does not propose an ideology or a societal order, but rather the interactive impact between such. The inherent problem with many paradigms or indeed epistemes is that they often suggest not only new analytical models and approaches, but also something akin to a societal doctrine with it, which tends to create confirmation bias towards the new order suggested, or the new way of reading things.
- Given the above we see trans-industriality as multi-directional, multi-layered and thereby, given its ambition to expose previously overlooked undercurrents, remains or connections, also speculative to its nature.

Transnational capital under your feet

As we delved into the *raison d'être* of the twin Kattwyk bridges, more and more layers were uncovered over what had preceded this highly industrialised and depopulated area. During the first years in the immediate wake of the Second World War the US and the Soviet Union competed in persuading a splintered German population of the superiority of their respective and to a large extent opposing ideologies and societal orders.

In the following two post-war decades Europe engaged in heavy (re-)industrialisation, even if the post-war period in the West on both sides of the Atlantic at large was



Kattwyk bridge, Moorburg, Hamburg
Photograph courtesy of Anders Ehlin, The New Liquidity



Kattwyk bridge, entrance from the Moorburg Power Plant, Hamburg
Photograph courtesy of Selma Boskailo, The New Liquidity



Interactive binaural soundwalk, *De-territorialized Listeners – An Archive of Collapsed Collective Memory*
by The New Liquidity premiered at betweenEbbandFlow: interstitial spaces Festival, Hamburg, 2022
Photograph courtesy of Selma Boskailo, The New Liquidity



Interactive binaural soundwalk, *De-territorialized Listeners – An Archive of Collapsed Collective Memory*
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Photograph courtesy of Selma Boskailo, The New Liquidity

to be more associated with de-industrialisation,⁵ also referred to as the development towards *post-industrial societies*. Sociologist Daniel Bell brought the concept of the post-industrial society into the limelight of active debates within the fields of social sciences and economy, mainly through his 1973 book *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, but the liberal foundations of his thought were already formulated during the previous decades of economic upheaval following World War II, also propagated in parts in his 1960 book *The End of Ideology*.⁶ With this new paradigm Bell simultaneously envisioned, analysed and speculated on the direction taken by western societies. It was in other words meant both as a proposal for the definition of a new phase in societal and economic development, while also intended as a tool for analysis and redefinition of the stages preceding it. Utilising the post-industrial model Bell wanted to loosen up the predominant and, in his opinion, too dualistic and dichotomous Marxist end state, which he felt reduced societal development to the continuous clash of capitalists and the proletariat, stopping at an increasingly homogenous but terminal condition of industrialised societal structures as more and more countries reached an industrialised state.⁷ Bell and other proponents of the post-industrial society observed a paradigm shift, in which service and knowledge defined the economic order, replacing primary fabrication and property ownership as the fundament for social order.⁸ A more pronounced focus was laid on the rationalisation of social and political life through social planning reforms, enabling social mobility from the working class to a broad middle class with substantially increased consuming power. This would eventually lead to an “end of ideology”, as the traditional driving forces of class struggle, labor exploitation, and inequality would be rendered so insignificant that much of the rhetorical basis for the left would vaporise. Political radicalism would in fact vanish as a majority of the population would have more to lose on opposing a system which feeds them, serves their increasing material quality of life, and in which technological advances and automation means immensely better working conditions. Workers of all kinds could now, according to Bell, sustain themselves “not by becoming a revolutionary instrument against society but by accepting a place within

society”.⁹ The stealthy relabeling of capitalism into “industrial society” made the capitalist drive the de facto system and framework of existence, and helped enable the idea of the “soulful corporation” working for the good of society, i.e. *its* citizens, a claim we will have reason to return to further on in this essay.¹⁰

In West Germany, driven by the momentum of the post-war Economic Miracle (on the Rhine) or *Wirtschaftswunder*, ambitious plans were laid out in the 1960s to completely transform the “underdeveloped” lower Elbe delta, while further strengthening Hamburg’s seven-hundred-year-old trading position on the global market with a major port expansion scheme. The larger Elbe area would be turned into a global industrial corridor to maintain and expand Hamburg’s industrial relevance and turn the delta into a second *Ruhrgebiet*.¹¹ By providing for the settlement of heavy chemical industry along the river with outspoken demands for water for their production, cooling and transportation needs alike, a technocratic vision of growth-at-any-price incorporated infrastructural needs such as enlarged harbors and dikes, and several nuclear power plants to support the new industrial investments. This brought a considerable toil on the river environment and meant inhabited land needed to be expropriated and inhabitants bought out and/or evicted.

The most notorious and infamous of the chemical conglomerates to settle along the Elbe was Kronos Titan, whose production of Titanium Dioxide, used to bleach toothpaste and laundry detergent, produced eight times the amount of chemical waste in relation to the finished product, and came in the form of diluted acid laden with numerous heavy metals.¹² The acid waste was pumped into large ships proudly bearing the firm’s logo which on a daily schedule sailed off to the river mouth and dumped it in the North Sea, right where many of the Elbe fishermen were most active. By the mid-1970s (the period when Germany officially reached its post-industrial state) the fishermen started to raise loud concerns that their already diminishing catch now also showed grave signs of toxic degeneration; meanwhile, independent scientists and investigative journalists sounded the alarm over a fully developed ecological disaster taking place along the entire river.¹³ Fueled by the formation of anti-nuclear power protests in Wyhl and Brokdorf further down the river during the first half of the decade, numerous initiatives, protests and activist groups started to form, responding not only

5 Donna Hirsch, “Industrialization, Mass Consumption, Post-Industrial Society”, in Helmut Walser Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

6 Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Cambridge, Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 1988).

7 Bell claimed he was “a socialist in economics, a liberal in politics, and a conservative in culture”, see Paul Starr and Julian E. Zelizer, *Defining the Age: Daniel Bell, His Time and Ours* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022), 3. There was something of a generational rupture within the left in the US at the time, where the younger generations were more focused on civil rights, free speech and anti-war activism, contrasting against the “old left” planted in more traditional leftist domains as class struggle and unionisation; see Chris Maisano, “The Making of Millennial Socialism”, *Jacobin*, no. 51 (season 3, 2023), 26–35.

8 Victor Ferkiss, “Daniel Bell’s Concept of Post-Industrial Society: Theory, Myth, and Ideology”, *The Political Science Reviewer* (July 1, 1979), 66.

9 Daniel Strand, *No Alternatives: The End of Ideology in the 1950s and the Post-Political World of the 1990s* (Stockholm: Departement of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University, 2016), 147–148.

10 George Ross, “The Second Coming of Daniel Bell”, in Ralph Milliband and John Saville, eds., *The Socialist Register*, vol. 11, no. 402 (January 1, 1974), 331–332.

11 Frank Zelko, “Fish instead of Fission: Industrial Expansion and Environmental Protest in Hamburg and the lower Elbe Region since the 1960s”, *Ekonomika I Ekohistorija*, vol. 8, no. 8 (October 7, 2012), 30.

12 Frank Zelko, “Fish instead of Fission [...]”, 33.

13 Frank Zelko, “Fish instead of Fission [...]”, 32.

to the expropriation of real estate along the riverbank, but also to the environmental impact of the industries, which many suspected were getting their backs covered by the government. The companies, backed by what turned out to be biased data and reports from the German Hydrographic Institute, blamed the ecological state on dirt originating from behind the Iron Curtain (undeniably also a part of the pollutive problem) further down the river, in order to cover up their own grime.¹⁴

In the immediate Hamburg area, the expansion scheme deemed that the fishing villages of Altenwerder, Moorburg and Francop needed to be evicted to provide space for larger and deeper basins as well as a new container terminal in Altenwerder.¹⁵ The city of Hamburg successively bought out the owners of the villages through carrot and stick coercion methods, combining generous offers with threats of forced eviction towards those who decided to stay and fight for their homes. Opposition grew and local legal battles played out while the expansion plans were put into action. As the expansion of the Hamburg port proceeded, known hallmarks of the villages continuously got overshadowed by yet more cranes of the new terminal. The machines and the low frequent hum of the gigantic container ships eventually overtook the familiar soundscapes that previously had dominated the sonic realms of the area.

Similarly to the climate activism of today, the different initiatives and groups which had formed during the 1970s struggled to balance fractions more prone to violent and property-damaging protests, with groups advocating strict non-violent practices. Getting the wider public opinion on their side had proven vital; the wild protests around the building of the Brokdorf nuclear power plant had failed in their purpose as the larger public could not identify with balaclavas and stone-throwing demonstrations. Fueled by the recent direct action of the new activist organisation Greenpeace engaging with a Kronos Titan dumping ship in the Rotterdam Harbor, the Altenwerder fishermen found the toolkit of civil disobedience needed to maintain a non-violent stance while still making headlines. In a row of coordinated actions mainly initiated by environmental activist Harald Zindler and notorious fishing boat protester Heinz Oestmann, the fisher activists copied the Rotterdam intervention and tied themselves via an inflatable rescue boat to the rudder of a Kronos Titan dumping ship at dawn.¹⁶

Simultaneously tons of malformed fish was dumped at the entrances of the Bayer chemical works and the German Hydrographic Institute. The events became the starting point of the German Greenpeace branch (initiated by Zindler), and brought to the broader public and the larger political spectrum of media outlets a

new level of ecological awareness. They also spurred with them an active critical dialogue around arguments of constant financial growth dictating society and the social web. In 1982 the Hamburg Senate — with the exception of the *Grün-Alternative Liste (GAL)*, later *Die Grünen/The Green Party* — shifted gears and took a unanimous decision across the political blocks to override any legal gray zones regarding property rights law and give full steam ahead with the expansion and eviction plans, in order to fulfill the plans to turn Hamburg into the “heart of a business metropolis.” In an interview with *Der Spiegel*, Thea Bock, the leader of GAL was highly critical and claimed “city officials [...] used methods of blackmailing through simple threats of expropriation from affected citizens, even though there was no legal basis for doing so.”¹⁷ Several still ongoing legal battles tied to the expansion also show the legal terrain for the evictions has been muddy from the start.¹⁸ The cruel symbolism is undeniable of the Altenwerder fishermen having to cave in and watch their homes being turned into a literal dumping ground for dredged toxic waste, the very same toxic waste which already severed their fishing livelihoods two decades earlier.

How could we then start to apply trans-industrial arches — connection points, overlaps, re-iterations and interdependencies between paradigms of societal, industrial and economic development — on the dire events in Moorburg? To what extent could the trans-industrial term and framework provide a better understanding of past, present and future events, and to what degree would a trans-industrial framework remain in dialogue with the post-industrial context and logic clearly present? Having laid out the historical, social and post-industrial development of Moorburg, we can start applying examples of how events can be seen and put into different lights from a trans-industrial perspective.

With the post-industrial society Bell saw the need to define and devise a new paradigm, not only to better

17 “Hände Weg von Moorburg”, *Der Spiegel* (December 12, 1982).

18 Peter Badura and Eberhard Schmidt-Assmann, *Hafenentwicklung in Hamburg: Rechtsfragen der Planung und Enteignung nach dem hamburgischen Hafenentwicklungsgesetz* (R. Gremer, 1983), 39–40. Extract from expropriation clause, translated from German: “According to Art. 14 Para. 3, the expropriation must be necessary for the public good. It is not enough that it serves the public good. Expropriation for reasons of state expediency is excluded. A distinction must also be made here between the public interest in Article 14 (3) sentence 1 and the interests of the general public in accordance with Article 14 (3) sentence 3. In classic expropriation, there is a direct relationship between the state task, the “company” required to fulfill it and the use of state coercion required to carry it out. Expropriation is therefore not an instrument for solving the problems that arise between legal subjects. It does not serve to transfer assets between private individuals. The power of expropriation is not granted to the state to assert economic interests of one against the other. Expropriation is inadmissible as long as the public good can be taken into account without expropriation. Therefore, only plots of land that are required for public purposes may be included in the expropriation. The Federal Constitutional Court is not bound by the legislature’s assessment of what the good of the general public requires. Otherwise, the simple legislature would ultimately determine the content of the fundamental right within the meaning of Art. 14 (3) sentence 1. The means of complete confiscation of property is only justified in a company that is geared towards the long term.”

14 Frank Zelko, “Fish instead of Fission [...]”, 31–33.

15 Frank Zelko, “Fish instead of Fission [...]”, 32.

16 Frank Zelko, “Fish instead of Fission [...]”, 36–38.



Heinz Oestmann's Fishing Cutter HF 512 Nordstern with the banner
"Erst stirbt das Meer, dann der Mensch" (First the sea dies, then the people), during a sea protest campaign in Nordenham, 1984
Photograph courtesy of Hinrich Schultze/dokumentarfoto.de



Container ship One Honolulu docked at Altenwerder Container Terminal, Moorburg, Hamburg
Photograph courtesy of Anders Ehlin, The New Liquidity

describe the nature of the societal changes taking place, but also to defend a liberal viewpoint and understanding of them. Although Bell outspokenly saw the post-industrial society as an ongoing transformative and transitional socio-technical axis formulated partly as utopian speculations of the future, heavy criticism was immediately posited to several substantial omissions and blind spots. The concept was deemed too unidirectional, predetermined and Western-centric in its portrayal of change, and many of the idea's skeptics believed that what Bell had described were just different characteristics of an industrialised society.¹⁹ The omission of the fact that commodities remained a central, even increasing part also of post-industrial societies, only with the production of them conveniently outsourced to parts of the world "out of sight" and still rooted in an industrial (fabricating) or agrarian (mining/extraction) state, bore clear reminiscence of colonial or peripheral structures of old. Many contemporary critics to Bell and to the post-industrial term, observed not only a prevalence, but an increase of already existing dominance-dependence relationships as more and more dominant societies transferred into a post-industrial state.²⁰

Ironically, in what could perhaps best be summed up as a *dominance of the local*, the post-industrial development of the Moorburg area managed to imbue the typical role of the "periphery" into the local, during what appears like a post-war induced second wave of industrialisation in a Germany heavily lacerated from the Second World War. As previously outlined, much like how colonial powers throughout history have coerced peripheral colonies into dominant structures of extracting and/or fabricating for the material and financial gain of the coloniser, so were the people of Moorburg, Altenwerder and Francop ruthlessly displaced and put out of work due to the policies of the very city and societal structure in which they lived — all in the name of the public good, as the positive flow of capital now was the main denominator of a well-functioning society.²¹ The lengthy implementation process of turning the area from a vibrant and populated zone of fishing trade to one facilitating accelerated autonomous global trade, took place when practically all Western European countries had crossed the post-industrial threshold, including West Germany itself. So, while factory workers, due to post-industrial offshore schemes, were being laid off in increasing numbers in for example the United States,²²

19 Victor Ferkiss, "Daniel Bell's Concept of Post-Industrial Society: Theory, Myth, and Ideology", 65–68.

20 Harry Targ, "Global Dominance and Dependence, Post-Industrialism, and International Relations Theory: a Review", *International Studies Quarterly* vol. 20, no. 3 (September 1976), 466–70. Much according to the three major dimensions of dependency theory laid out by Chase-Dunn: "exploitation of the periphery by the core", "structural distortion of the periphery economy", and "the suppression of autonomous policies in the periphery."

21 And if it wouldn't be, the legal hurdles for expropriation would have been considerably higher.

22 Think of the demography and rhetoric that powered Trump to victory during the 2016 US election.

"pre-industrial" livelihoods were locked in a dragged-out "cease and desist" displacement process in Moorburg, due to what would appear to be both industrial and post-industrial mechanisms working in tandem. Here is a clear example of what we refer to as the multi-layered and multi-directional acknowledgement of a trans-industrial site; at the doorstep of the introduction of the post-industrial society, an arch of renewed industrialisation took place in response to the rebuilding of Germany after the Second World War, triggering another arch with the process of displacement of "pre-industrial" livelihoods, an arch which in turn was completed as the area was well under way to be transformed into a post-industrial zone, but one of ongoing industrialisation.

This exceptional paradigmatic mismatch or structural refusal to adhere to a somewhat more unified arch of societal development has in many ways lingered in Germany until present day, and outspokenly so in Moorburg. Over a decade after the Altenwerder container terminal was officially opened in 2002, another example which further adds to both the policy deafness and the implementational shortcomings of German post-industrial developments took place when the nearby and heavily opposed Moorburg coal power plant was finally completed and connected to the grid in 2015. This was at a time when a majority of the post-industrial world at least was trying to phase out fossil fueled power grids if not downright ban them, and a substantially greener mindset also had started to influence both government policy and larger corporations' branding strategies. The power plant was taken off the grid again in 2020 under the German coal phase-out scheme, essentially providing tax-paid shut-down premiums to the affected power providing conglomerates (in this case the privatised but state driven Swedish company Vattenfall).²³ In our view this too translates into an example of a trans-industrial entanglement of coexisting old and new industrial, economic and societal interests, realities and frictions in active negotiation and not really fully separable.

Yet another example of exposing the need for much wider temporal arches than the usual post-industrial scope, is Hamburg's historical focus on trade and transitioning goods, a fact one could assume made its infrastructure, its history and its corporate as well as collective local identity especially suited for a transition into the global economy where warehouses gradually got replaced with container ships and container terminals under the principle of "just-in-time". Political decisions within a democratic structure are clearly being the object of lobbyism and private interests of people in power, still one could imagine that for many Hamburg citizens the port expansion scheme was also a logical one given Hamburg's history of trade and commodity transition.

23 "Wetterextrem: das Kohlekraftwerk Moorburg", *NDR* (30.08.2019). Moorburg Power Plant was among the top thirty emitters of CO₂ in Europe during its short period of use.

In all these examples we can observe different indications of how events within a typical post-industrial shift get reduced to frustrating aberrations from a liberal utopian dream. Applying a trans-industrial viewpoint can better allow for a multi-layered multi-narrational temporality, by allowing different planes to be at work at a given time, and rather focus on their respective drifting, overlapping and interlocking processes than cursing them for not fulfilling a predefined model. Throughout the last couple of decades thinkers and writers have decried that the post-industrial promise never delivered on how increased productivity would generate income gains creating economic surpluses for everyone involved independent of social class.²⁴ Neither was there enough work in the lauded service sector, nor was it paid as well as the previous factory employments. Ironically, some of the decommissioned factories for advanced manufacturing which were supposed to reappear in low-wage areas across the globe were instead built from scratch a generation later in other post-industrial countries with similar wage claims as the original ones which were closed down.²⁵ In 2016 The World Economic Forum released its report on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, in many ways making similar societal gain claims as before the Third Industrial Revolution, the one eventually leading to the post-industrial society. It states that rationalisation and advances in technology and communication will boost productivity and open up new markets and further drive economic growth, while largely brushing off fears of unemployment for a huge number of people.²⁶ Much like the metaphorical Shepard tone mentioned in the introduction, historical, societal and technical events, paradigms and to some extent even epistemes tend to reappear in what could be described as a spiral fashion.²⁷

Here is liminal space, here is time adjourned

Having tried to outline the historical, ideological and socioeconomic background of Hamburg and Moorburg in order to “set the stage” for further discussion on the topic of trans-industriality, we will turn our focus back to our artistic framework and the site-specific context

24 Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, 11–15.

Lester C. Thurow, “The Post-Industrial Era is over”, *The New York Times* (September 4, 1989).

25 Eamonn Fingleton, “As the UK has discovered, there is no Postindustrial Promised Land”, *The Guardian* (May 18, 2015).

26 “The Fourth Industrial Revolution: What it Means and how to respond”, *World Economic Forum* (September 22, 2020).

Dan Shipper, “The Knowledge Economy is over, Welcome to the Allocation Economy”, *Every* (January 19, 2024). The “managerial revolution” observed in the 1970s is now projected to take on a new shape as the knowledge economy potentially is handed over to AI. Shipper writes that “we’ll go from makers to managers, from doing the work to learning how to allocate resources—choosing which work to be done, deciding whether work is good enough, and editing it when it’s not.”

27 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: 50th Anniversary Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012);

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1971).

of the Kattwyk Bridge as the *raison d’être* of our artwork and also our site of intervention. In the previous section, we have tried to highlight how a toxic combination of an aggressive German postwar re-industrialisation scheme and a profit and growth-driven post-industrial agenda first destroyed thousands of livelihoods through ruthless industrial pollution along the entire Elbe delta, then displaced the very same stricken communities from their homes. We will use the following chapter to further outline trans-industrial trajectories along with discussions about place and space and the political implications of these notions as platforms for a dialectical society. We will also try to highlight their importance as bearers of collective memory, and the interstitial role of the Kattwyk bridges specifically within these frameworks. This will be relevant not only given the between-EbbandFlow festival’s overall effort to engage with liminal and transitional urban spaces, but also in order to highlight our own conceptual framework and artistic practice dealing with notions of memory, belonging and deterritorialisation.

To this day bridges have been symbols and tools for connection, communication, facilitators for both travel and rooting, *zusammenleben*. A bridge overcomes elements, zooms over physical hurdles of nature to once again facilitate social fusion, and closes the gap both physically and metaphorically. It is much harder to reduce the other to *them* in relation to *us* when a bridge has been built towards that very entity. But with these symbolic connotations in mind, a bridge can also be a territorial manifestation, where the connecting connotation remains intact albeit abused for oppressive purposes. The Kattwyk bridges would to a certain degree serve a similar function as they merely facilitate industrial infrastructural movement — the flow of capital—not human connections, ideas, or ideals. Thereby they become a stark monument and enabler of human displacement under schemes of capitalism acting under a false pretense of the public greater good.

As outlined earlier in the text, after several efforts trying to stage our artistic intervention on the old Kattwyk Bridge, we finally had to give in and reroute our artwork onto the new Kattwyk Bridge for our third and final effort to showcase the artwork. We initially mourned the fact that, during the soundwalk, we would miss out on the symbolism of the almost intimate proximity of the Moorburg power plant south of the old bridge, and its sci-fi light strips casting long shadows of the conveyor belts across the water at night. We stood and watched the dusk gradients across the water from the new bridge, our new path, now with the view towards north and the even taller Köhlbrand Bridge, elevated to the skies, frozen in a single elegant brush stroke to facilitate more smoothly the enormous ships passing underneath, instead of the cumbersome lifting mechanism of the Kattwyk bridges. Laid out before us in all their glory were the tools, the enablers, the receivers, the deliverers of the transnational capital of the world. The crane contours of the Altenwerder Container Terminal



Altenwerder Container Terminal as seen from The Kattwyk Bridge, Moorburg, Hamburg
Photograph courtesy of Selma Boskailo, The New Liquidity



Moorburg Power Plant, Hamburg.
Photograph courtesy of Anders Ehlin, The New Liquidity

embossed towards the pink gradient fading in front of us, and further ahead past the Köhlbrand Bridge, the Tollerort (ironically translates to “fantastic place”) Container Terminal, which we learned shortly before our artwork presentation the state driven Chinese trader company Cosco was trying to buy a substantial part of. In the summer of 2023, 25% of the ownership was sold to Cosco, now its largest shareholder after the city of Hamburg, following long and tiresome negotiations and loud protests from citizens and politicians in Hamburg.²⁸ Blas and Farchy write in *The World for Sale* how today’s trading companies have become geopolitical tiles and shadow enablers through their harnessing power of liquidity and commodities, especially of oil and grains. Vitol provided oil for the Libyan rebels during the Arab Spring, similarly trader money helped propel a referendum for Kurdish independence and to keep the government in Chad afloat, only to name a couple.²⁹ It felt like we saw it all play out there right in front of us, against the backdrop of the fading skies; trans-industrial trajectories forming above us like contrails, and below us in the form of crashing waves of transnational capital. New trans-industrial territories being sliced out of the soil imbued with trans-industrial memories and put up on the global market. This right here was Hansa 2.0, nomadic traders ready to intervene, invest, react to the fluctuations on commodities like brokers on Wall Street. Currents of transnational transactional opportunism by invisible enablers of the trans-industrial power shifts of the global economy.

De-territorialized Listeners aims to engage with sites which in different ways are scarred, forgotten, abandoned, harboring (histories of) active social and/or political friction. The aim is to re-establish chosen sites as places of reconnection for the local community through the use of our immersive interactive technological framework. Our custom-built mobile application developed specifically for this project facilitates site-specific interaction, where each participant gains individual control over the cadence of their experience, which in turn adapts to their respective location, steps and body movements. Through this we try to facilitate a re-engagement with a site people may have started to take for granted as a non-significant backdrop, but also to give each participant the agency to connect with the place in question through the act of walking at their own pace, and within a non-rigid narrative framework. These sites are often characterised by being devoid of something crucial, a local lack of human activity now only to be found in relative proximity to the site. This proximity even stronger amplifies the vacuous feeling of these places, as if they harbor an inverted presence, one of human absence, of the previously vital communities now dislocated.

The vacant feeling from the lack of human presence and activity in these sites resonates strongly with Henri Lefebvre’s tripartite construct outlined in his reflexion on *The Production of Space*.³⁰ Lefebvre here outlines (the need for) a triadic power balance between three versions of space he refers to as *conceived space*, *lived space* and *perceived space*. *Conceived* (also *abstract* or *representation of*) space is the space containing the “homogenizing forces of money, commodities, capital and the phallus.”³¹ *Lived* (also *representation-al*) space is the space of everyday life, a semiotic overlay putting into question and resisting the hegemonic codification of *conceived space*. *Perceived space* in turn can be seen as the *spatial practice* of the former two, the ongoing and chaotic implementation, the enabler of the power balance which through class and social struggle “prevents abstract space from taking over the whole planet and papering over all differences.”³² Conclusively, Lefebvre’s *place* could be seen as the synthesis of the three outlined spatial modes, the manifestation or solidification of the fluid social dynamic of space and its ongoing internal power relations. Through this solidification capitalist flows become tangible and can through this easier be halted, resisted and kept in check. Engaging with Lefebvre’s intertwined concept of space and place, and particularly Andrew Merrifield’s reading of it, a universe opens up, which corresponds and integrates with the dialectical viewpoint we have chosen to highlight as a characteristic of the trans-industrial concept.³³ Rather than criticising Marx like the post-industrial proponents in their respective ways did, Lefebvre rather uses Marx’s materialist dialectic as his very starting point when defining his space-place relationship, stipulating that commodities — *things* — must be seen not merely as the things they are, but as *processes* appearing in the form of things. Merrifield clarifies that “dialectics emphasises process, movement, flow, relations and, more particularly, contradiction,”³⁴ and that “each element within a relationship simultaneously supports and undermines the other.”³⁵ We believe Lefebvre’s approach to space and place resonates strongly with trans-industrial strategies through his simultaneous integration and ongoing confrontation of body and thing

30 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991).

31 Andrew Merrifield, “Place and Space — A Lefebvrian Reconciliation”, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 18, no. 4 (June 26, 1993), 523.

32 Henri Lefebvre, *The production of space*, 36–39, 55, 362–363.

33 Andrew Merrifield, “Place and Space — A Lefebvrian Reconciliation”, 525–527.

34 Andrew Merrifield, “Place and Space — A Lefebvrian Reconciliation”, 517.

35 Andrew Merrifield, “Place and Space — A Lefebvrian Reconciliation”. The whole can in other words only be understood through the mutual understanding of its parts, and how parts interact in turn becomes a fundamental characteristic of what they really are. With this dialectic in mind, Lefebvre’s production of space thus needs to be understood as both the process and outcome of the production process. Following a similar logic, space itself needs to be accounted for as more than a passive container/receiver but an integral part of the production of it, or it will be rendered a plain commodity in the process.

28 “Cosco darf am Hamburger Hafen einsteigen”, *Frankfurter Allgemeine* (10.05.2023).

29 Javier Blas and Jack Farchy, *The World for Sale: Money, Power and the Traders Who Barter the Earth’s Resources* (New York: Random House, 2021), 271, 276–277.

in the production of space, be they harmonious or dialectical. Seeking inter-paradigmatic interstitial positions, overlaps and residues, a trans-industrial viewpoint continuously also has to acknowledge the need for contradicting overlaps, as we shall observe also with certain current events in the area.

What makes Moorburg into what Henri Lefebvre called *conceived space*, and sets it apart from other sites we have engaged with in this artwork series is its (within the framework of typical post-industrial settings) inverse transformation *from* a traditionally forgotten or peripheral rural site *into* a hyperactive, non-human, non-living zone in constant mechanical flux. It is not a de-industrialised area left to rot and decay, but an automated non-place, CCTV-equipped from all thinkable angles in order to keep its asset safe from harm (i.e. further or other human intervention). Referring back to Lefebvre this is not only a fully completed commodified space, but an outspokenly commodity-enabling space. A space where the Lefebvrian power balance has collapsed, where the active production of space has ceased, since the physical components of the area constitute a different, parallel universe of which humans are not an integrated or intended part, more than as shielded-off operators of relayed controls, and as co-enablers of the commodification of life the area empowers. The cranes, bridges and automated terminals feel like intruders of a different species in a different physical reality-space, one not bothered with the living more than as potential faceless recipients of the goods and material gains facilitated there. Simultaneously impressive, awe-inspiring, intimidating, territorial and obsolete in their still so mechanised functionality — they are kinetic reminders of how an entire area was turned into a non-place, but one not even bothered by the anonymous transfer of people, doomed to a life behind the curtains and hidden from the commodified reality it is conceived to provide for. This is the trans-industrial entanglement and dialectic at work. As outlined earlier, it follows the *logic of industrialisation* as it keeps expanding, accelerating (the industrial harbor expansion scheme is still ongoing) along the industrial axes of both the Third and the Fourth Industrial Revolution,³⁶ including the facilitation and integration of current technological and communicational novelties such as artificial intelligence, drone development and testing,

36 Klaus Schwab, "The Fourth Industrial Revolution: what it means, how to respond", *The World Economic Forum* (14 January 2016). The Third Industrial Revolution started during the middle of the last century and was distinguished by an increased automation of industrial production, enabled through the use of electronics and information technology. The Fourth Industrial Revolution in turn is characterised by a merging of both existing and new technologies dissolving borders between the physical, the digital and the biological. What sets it apart as a distinct and discrete event is the exponential speed of its development, its effect on practically all industries across the world and the worldwide societal and structural challenges its transformations will bring as a result. As outlined in Donna Hirsch's essay on German post-industrialism, Germany has since its rebuilding after the second world war been characterised by pronounced parallel industrial and post-industrial developments and logics until today, in Moorburg, but also in areas such as the Ruhrgebiet.

and the production of green hydrogen.³⁷ All of this happens on the soil of, and enabled by the displacement of, thousands of pre-industrial livelihoods, all propelled by a *post-industrial rhetoric* and general thrust forward. To commodify the land, the nation-state eviction practices will use coercive power often heavily violating basic human rights. In all discussions about the effects of gentrification or dispossession, many effects of eviction practices will often pass unnoticed, perhaps because they linger long after the physical removal of material property, long after the disappearance or loss of homes or entire neighborhoods. The effect and affect of displacement are both material and immaterial because what one is dealing with in the aftermath is the trauma of displacement.

With this in mind, what kind of impact can a re-engagement with this 24/7 active mechanised non-place then tell us about our own sense of place as a carrier of collective memory, specifically in a place like Moorburg with a recent and deep-rooted history of community displacement? French historian Pierre Nora pioneered connecting memory to physical territory, and observed how there to a lesser and lesser extent exist any *milieux de mémoire* (real *environments* of memory), but merely *lieux de mémoire* (*sites* of memory). Memory *environments* he predominantly ties to societal settings more akin to pre-industrial settings, where the acceleration of consumption, time, sociality and (importantly) of *history* has not reached any of the frenzy of the post-industrial world yet, and where there is more time and space for remembrance, rituals and collective sharing. The acceleration of history in industrial and (even more so) post-industrial societies have ruptured the previous equilibrium in the memory-history bond, and by this, history today threatens to dwarf memory by its ambition to capture and archive everything, which leads to a condition where memories can only be called upon non-spontaneously and through chains of relations, as if they were an archive — or, indeed simply history. (Modern) history Nora means, is an "intellectual and secular production, [which] calls for analysis and criticism",³⁸ which is the antithesis to memory's ephemeral but emotive, connective trajectories.³⁹

With Nora's terminology in mind, we can more easily observe how the increasing reduction of the past into history, often written to enable the present of choice, simply will not leave us be. This ability of the past to "haunt" the present in spatial and temporal relationships between memories and landscapes is best described by Jacques Derrida's notion of spectrality.⁴⁰ According to Derrida, there is always a ghostly trace left

37 "Future Port: The Whole Interview with Jens Meier", *YouTube Channel Hamburg Port Authority* (23 June 2022).

38 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire", *Représentations* no. 26 (January 1, 1989), 7–12.

39 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire", 9.

40 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (London: Routledge, 2006).



Screengrab from video documentation of artwork
De-territorialized Listeners – An Archive of Collapsed Collective Memory by The New Liquidity, 2022
 Photograph courtesy of Nazgol Kashani / The New Liquidity

behind as a sign of difference between past and present meanings.⁴¹ These “haunted” encounters are places where spatial and temporal relationships between past and the present can coincide, something we in our artistic practice have come to refer to as spectral memories. In our artwork iteration *An Archive of Collapsed Collective Memory*, we tried to create a unique space that would allow for a spectral presence of trans-industriality within the post-industrial landscape.

In order to address this “dialectic of past-present relations”, we created memoryscapes⁴² — using the memories of former inhabitants of Moorburg in order

41 Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 60–61, 70.

42 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 33. Memoryscapes represent dynamic relationships between memory and landscape. Appadurai introduces five concepts built on the suffix -scape from an anthropological entrypoint: ethnoscapescapes, mediascapescapes, technoscapescapes, financiescapescapes and ideoscapescapes. He means the suffix “allows us to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes” and importantly points out that “these are not objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision but, rather, that they are deeply perspectival constructs.” Memoryscapes have been used throughout the past fifteen years in different site-specific practices more or less speculatively; we use the term very much in tandem with our response to Murray Schafer’s decidedly site-specific “soundscape”, where we put existing environmental soundscapes in dialogue with the ones we compose, to create a field of speculative exploration.

to offer new imaginations and interpretations of the landscape. The ability of these oral history recordings, or spoken memories is to make connections between many histories and places, to create tools to re-activate the production of space, the interstice. By doing so it embodies memory into an act of ongoing nomadic process, much like Michel de Certeau’s performative comparisons of walking and writing, suggesting that “[t]he act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language.”⁴³ Similarly to how we appropriate linguistic structures and grammar to our own liking, we take ourselves the right to appropriate and activate the pathways of the urban topology through our acts of walking, and thereby also allowing for a coincidental interaction between our own as well as the place’s present and past.

A lot of research conducted on post-industrial memory mainly refers to the collective memory of workers in de-industrialised landscapes and places where industries were closed down. By this it would seem apparent that the notion of post-industrial memory is not applicable in the Moorburg memoryscape since this area, as previously outlined, was largely marked by pre-industrial

43 Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1984), 97–99.

livelihoods being subjected to aggressive and immediate re-industrialisation. The continuous industrial development of the Moorburg area only allows for a space of fragmented snapshots of collective memory through material residues, landscapes and imaginations which all form complex ways of relating to our past and re-situate memory into an interstitial space between ruination and development. These trans-industrial memories rather seem to evoke a haunting presence of an absence of any remains of Moorburg's pre-industrial livelihoods introducing a layer of spectral geographies into the Moorburg landscape. Unlike commodified memoryscapes of post-industrial memory, the chaotic, disordered, or simply evaporated ruins of Moorburg's pre-industrial memory are more indications of "capitalism's creative destruction."⁴⁴ Here traces of the collective memory of the past linger in the present within cracks in the industrial facades, in the grass breaking through the asphalt pavement, or frozen into the church tower left alone in a jungle of containers and cranes.

De-territorialized Listeners tries to open up these trans-industrial crevices on several levels; to allow memories to seep into cracks and in-between puzzle pieces not fitting or simply missing, but also (if only momentarily) to facilitate the re-establishment of a Lefebvrian power relations. On a site where the balance has shifted so one-sidedly, any re-engagement of the said site would have to have an element of intervention, some form of resistance to the inevitable homogenisation of the local, national and transnational landscape. While this was an outspoken ambition when conceiving our artwork, more spontaneous processes of reclaiming active trajectories have also taken place and made their impact. Due to the political and environmental impact of the previously mentioned and now retired Moorburg coal power plant, a row of demonstrations, actions and protests have been staged during the past fifteen years, notably on the Kattwyk bridges and the railroad tracks leading up to them.⁴⁵ By staging political interventions in this highly industrialised and depopulated area, characterised by a one-sided rhetoric around industrial growth, profit and commodification they actively re-establish the area as a site of human-capital confrontation. It is significant that these interventions happen on a site largely devoid of human activity, mechanised and automated for the purpose of commodifying the land. These demonstrations in an even more confrontational manner reopen a Lefebvrian *space-place* power relations as the activists manage to hijack and "slipstream" on the binary symbolics of a place (which by the look of things should be forever lost to its unchallenged *conceived* state) and thereby make their voices and their message stand out even clearer. By using the one-dimensional non-questionable logic so thoroughly implemented into the ac-

tual site, as a projection screen for their opposition, the message comes across in starker contrast than if blasted out in a more neutral place. Hence one can argue that the Lefebvrian *place*, albeit momentarily, is reactivated as a dialectic container and practice of positions-in-negotiation and frictional co-existence.

As we delved deeper into the historical layers of the Moorburg area it became clear to us that the appliance of the notion of "denied travel" in this context immediately leads to the question "for whom?". The entire area of Moorburg is now, ironically, a manifestation of constant transition, facilitated by bridges and multiple means of transportation, but of goods, not people, their memories or their dreams. The bridges are poignant with the symbolism of their territorial power, and the now fugitive landscapes they connect oscillate between states of appropriation and blurry ties of belonging, suspended in time between rooted nostalgia and a post-industrial present. In *De-territorialized Listeners* — *an Archive of Collapsed Collective Memory* micro-narratives and emotive echoes of the displaced communities lingering in this landscape serve as a platform for an alternative continuation of the so-important socio-political projection and confrontation starting to reshape in the wake of a dying protest. Just as seafarers were bringing stories to port cities, and by doing so re-interpreted territories, we wanted to create a transitory space on the Kattwyk bridges for the memories and emotive landscapes of the former inhabitants of Moorburg and Altenwerder. But the voices of these people are not engaging our imaginary libraries of myths and legends of old, but rather fractured recollections of intimate and recent histories; an archive of collapsed collective memory. **T**

The New Liquidity is a transdisciplinary research platform and collective for artistic and curatorial practices, launched by artist, curator and researcher Selma Boskailo and sound artist, composer and researcher Anders Ehlin. Since 2021 the duo has mainly focused on producing numerous iterations of the sound-walk project *De-territorialized Listeners*, combining research from sound art and media art, art in public space, the fields of locative media and technology, sensory studies and emotional geographies. The project centers on the transformation of familiar soundscapes, while addressing deterritorialisation in the context of cultural globalisation and distancing from the locality through mediatisation, migration and commodification of life under the global capital.

The New Liquidity is engaged in parallel ongoing research projects using participatory soundwalks, audio guides and installations, mainly investigating the future of freshwater and marine ecosystems, as well as the fluid heritage of water as a repository of geo-cultural and human-non-human memory.

www.thenewliquidity.com

www.thenewliquidity.com/archiveofcollapsed



Scan or use the link to listen to the artwork, headphones recommended.

44 Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, (Part II) Chapters 7–8 (New York: Harper Collins, 1950).

45 "Gegenstrom08: Besetzung Kraftwerksbaustelle Hamburg Mooburg". YouTube Channel [graswurzel.tv](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgraswurzel), (23. 08. 2008)