

Fluid Sounds Storyboard

An Atmospheric Attunement of Amager; from Odesk to ASMR

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Act One – The Atmosphere and Amager

(5 mins)

Methodology and setting.

Sample text + Sound: We don't know very much about Amager. It is a little hard to find out about these days. There are very few external links from the Wikipedia page. When I first arrived in Copenhagen, almost every Danish person I talked to about Amager, was excited to tell me that it used to be called the shit island, *lorteøen*. Especially those who now live there.

We have lots of different sounds that could be used to represent Amager;

[quick edit sound clips e.g. airport, factory, mall, beach, university, From Youtube?]

but together they don't necessarily say much about Amager.

[all played at once]

So we think we need to try something else. In her 2011 paper *Atmospheric Attunements*, Kathleen Stewart makes the case for an approach to cultural analysis that incorporates the experience of atmospheric phenomena as a way to access the ephemeral affective experience of a particular moment. From Stewart's perspective, these seemingly disparate elements could be said to constitute an atmosphere, from which a more coherent understanding can emerge through a process of attunement. Rather than using tuning as a musical metaphor

[tuning sound]

for finding the frequency of a radio station, —

[analogue radio tuning sound]

where the information already exists, it just has to be found,

[Wikipedia article about Amager – computer voice]

Atmospheric attunement is a reflexive and responsive process that takes into account the particularities of a specific place and time with a wide subjective context. The goal is not

uncover a single “truth” but to chronicle ‘how incommensurate elements hang together in a scene’. This is what we are going to try and do with Amager.

Act Two – The Grand Narrative

(2mins)

Situating the changes that have taken place in Amager over the last 50 years in a historical, political and social context.

Sample Text + Sound:

[factory sound]

Fordism is the term given to a society whose main economic driver is industrial production. The name was derived from the Henry Ford, founder of the Ford motor company. His factories pioneered the techniques of the division of labour, where workers would perform the same small task thousands of times a day. This was an incredibly productive but also physically demanding and monotonous hard work.

Post-fordism

[office sounds]

is the contentious term used to describe the move away from this kind of work towards white collar and plaid collar professions that require more creative and independent input. This seems to have come at the expense of concepts such as job security and moving fordist labour to parts of the world with less regulation regarding working conditions.

[no sound]

French sociologists Boltanski and Chiapello give a compelling account of the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism. By May 1968, the height of the post war anti-capitalist movement, two strands of western leftism could be distinguished.

[archive recording from '68]

Simplifying for time, Boltanski and Chiapello call these the social critique of capitalism, i.e. the desire for decent pay and conditions with hours that allowed for a full life outside work and a comprehensive welfare state — **and** the cultural critique

[cultural sounds]

which is based on an aesthetic distaste for industrial capitalism along with the lack of autonomy the workers had over the course of their lives and the alienation they suffered at the labour.

[no sound]

After the uproar of May '68, Boltanski and Chiapello argue that Western capitalism adjusted to incorporate elements of the cultural critique while slowly working to dismantle some the gains of the social critique.

Act Three – Dutch Farmers to Odesk

(3mins)

Exemplifying these changes in a subjective and grounded way.

Sample Text + Sound:

Coming up

Act Four – The Non-places and The Non-Workers.

(2mins)

Evaluating these changes with respect to contemporary cultural theory. In particular the notion of the Non-place of Marc Agué and the shift from workers being paid a wage to live on to knowledge workers selling time, to which the employers have not social responsibility.

Sample Text + Sound:

[Music: Music for airports, Brian Eno]

The anthropologist Marc Agué coined the term non-place to refer to the organisation of space within neoliberal capitalism that works to remove any idiosyncratic characteristics and replicate an aesthetic experience that could be anywhere. Places like malls, metro stations and even university campus could be said to have this quality of non-place. The piece of music we are listening to right now is Brian Eno's Music for Airport, a location that for Agué is the non-place par excellence and indeed there is something of this captured in Eno's music. Music he had written with the intention of evoking the weightless relaxing grace of flight but also to remind you that you might die – but that is ok. This is part of the dynamic at play in a non-place. They are both a symptom of and a way by which commerce looks to disenchant the world. The networks of exchange are what is praised above all else and the non-place gives the network a frictionless setting, while the atomised nodes, formerly people, are rewarded so long as they are useful to the maintenance of the network.

[Music: Carbon Prevails, Trent Reznor & Atticus Ross]

Related to this would be the notion that Franco 'Bifo' Berardi advanced in his latest book that the way in which labour is purchased has changed. Previously when someone was hired as labour the norm was that they would be paid whatever amount of money would be necessary for them to come in the next day. To reproduce their life. In the precarious labour of post-fordism, particularly in digital work, it is time rather than labour power which is purchased. When an employer becomes a purchaser of time instead of renter of labour the social responsibility for the reproduction of life shifts. Thousands of nodes (or

non-workers) in the network of a non-place can fulfil the tasks presented to them, you can purchase the time of one today and a different one the next day. In this dynamic, Berardi argues, there is no need to pay for social reproduction. The time of a node is paid for not the energy of a person. The disenchantment of the world, a process that Max Weber argued began as enlightenment ideas paved the way for industrial capitalism, has been accelerated in the non-places of neoliberalism. On a personal level, the world around you begins to take on the appearance of one forged by and for capital — and this is a world that you are a part of.

Act Five – Our Workers Bedroom and ASMR

(3mins)

Speculations on the implications of these changes using two specific and empirical audio examples.

Sample Text + Sound:

We bought some time from a digital worker. You can hear some of it now.

[Odesk clip]

This is, we assume, his room

coming up ...