

Chapter 5 – Political Inversion

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For this essay, I've decided to present my ideas half as a 'commentary' on the fifth chapter from Ivan Illich's, 'Tools for Conviviality' (1973). I believe this best represents the organic chronology of the way I engaged with the content and I will conclude with some ideas linking what I've surmised and how I wish to use the following aspects to further develop my critical theory regarding my chosen subject title, '(You)topia' or 'Woketopia'. (Please see the attached pages from the chapter and my notes via my hotglue page: <https://civicconviviality.hotglue.me/youtopia>)

What does a truly equal society look like?

I'm sure you've imagined people. Perhaps, a group of diverse people; various races, ages, young and old, different genders, non-gender conforming people...but now let's consider this question in the context of the built environment. What does an equal society look like? What is the materiality of the city? What can we see? What are the permanent aspects of this physical city? What shape does it form? What heights are the buildings? Can you see a pattern in the layout? What is liminal?

These are some of the questions I would like to investigate in my dissertation, of course I will tie this down with some precedents and case studies of utopias existing in documentaries and idealised in literature. (I.e.: certain rural villages and how they set up their small communities, what is at the heart of the village? Who lives in the exterior bounds of the village...in this sense I would like to investigate how various societies, rural and non-rural express architecture in a way that works in symbiosis with their politics)

I'd like to propose a Utopia, and I'd like to present this with the addition of some drawings (cartoon strips...or some kind of propaganda type poster designs?) which help tell the story of my ideal utopia. Hence the names suggested above '(You)topia' or 'Woketopia'. Some existing ideas which I have investigated in the past are surveillance architecture (the study of how cities are designed to maintain social order – while this in the past has had sinister connotations, and has been used to reinforce class divides within city structures and capitalism...I wonder how the idea of community self-surveillance could tie in with some of the re-emerging sentiments of today's socialist designers and thinkers...) Essentially, I'm curious to see how a modern-day socialist society's architecture could look like, who would own and live in which buildings etc...I believe that so far in our latter history, we've only seen the expressions of Imperialist and Capitalist architecture, so I'd like to investigate what could be if things were built with different values.