

**Nongovernmentality: Designs, Cultures, Politics**

Arch 603/Slavic 471

Fall 2013

Prof. Andrew Herscher

September 3, 2013

ASSIGNMENT 1

NONGOVERNMENTALITY AND ARCHITECTURE: A CRITICAL LEXICON

In this assignment, you will work with a partner to define three terms from one of the following sets.

Your definitions should not be neutral or objective; rather, your definitions of these terms should be *critical*, which is to say that they should emerge from and manifest a critique.

Following Michel Foucault, we will understand “critique” as follows:

“Critique does not have the premises of a thinking that conclusively explains: and this is what is to be done now. It must be an instrument for those who fight, resist, and who no longer want what is. It must be used in processes of conflict, confrontation and resistance attempts. It must not be the law of the law. It is not a stage in a program. It is a challenge to the status quo.”

(Michel Foucault, “Table ronde du 20 mai 1978”, *Dits et Écrits II, 1976-1988*)

Your definitions, then, should implicitly or explicitly convey both the accepted meanings of the terms in question (“the status quo”) as well as your attempt to throw those meanings into question, challenge them, point out their limits, or explicate their political contexts. In essence, your definitions will provide an interpretive critique of terms that are used in both critical and uncritical ways.

Please include any references that you cite or use in your definitions; these references should follow your definitions and be formatted in Chicago style.

If you encounter other terms that fit within or complement your set, please include and define those terms, as well.

We will use the definitions that result from this assignment as the basis for a critical lexicon that we will accumulate over the course of the semester. The final part of this assignment will be the creation of a physical lexicon that we can disseminate to a larger audience.

For examples of critical lexicons, see:

Zbynek Baladrán and Vít Havránek, ed. *Atlas of Radical Transformation*. Prague: Tranzit, 2010.

Andrew Herscher, “Glossary,” in *The Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012.

Richard Misrach and Kate Orff, “Glossary of Terms & Solutions for a Post-Petrochemical Culture” in *Petrochemical America*. New York: Aperture, 2012.

Martin Parker, Valérie Fournier, and Patrick Reedy, *The Dictionary of Alternatives: Utopianism and Organization*. London: Zed Books, 2007.

Malkit Shoshan, “Lexicon,” in *Atlas of the Conflict: Israel-Palestine*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2010.

Terms:

1. Public Space, Commons, City
2. Everyday Urbanism, Insurgent Urbanism, Spontaneous Urbanism
3. Informality, Precarity, Spontaneity
4. Activism, Advocacy, Protest
5. Participation, Empowerment, Collaboration
6. Public, Collective, Society
7. Social Responsibility, Public Interest, Solidarity
8. Affinity group, NGO, Community
9. Liberalism, Neoliberalism, Radicalism

Submission:

Your definitions should be uploaded to the course website by 5pm on September 16, 2013. Between that time and 5pm on September 23, you should read through the terms and comment on three definitions. Your comments should not be simply assessments (good/bad), but constructive critique that assist in making the definitions more precise, polemical, interesting, relevant, or otherwise different and better!