

One thing I have always enjoyed writing about is a sense of an “underground” – in terms of culture, arts, taboos, and illegalities. After all, my character has a past of being a brawler in underground fighting rings in Eden City. I also know that in major cities, black markets, drug rings, and criminal groups are a-plenty. Therefore, I was thinking one part of Aliso could be dedicated to a sort of underground culture – not even just necessarily based in criminal activities, but also in terms of a *counterculture*, or even a protest movement. I would imagine that, similar to East Germany during the Soviet Union, there are things citizens can and cannot say, or can and cannot do, while under the control of the Pinnacle.

I don’t know if you’ve seen Wim Wenders’ *Wings of Desire*, but two of my favorite scenes happened to be a small circus group doing its last show, and a concert space where people drink and dance as musicians sing out plaintive stories of what it’s like to live under the regime and the shadow of the Berlin Wall. I thought it’d be really interesting to introduce the concept of an underground arts syndicate or cell in Aliso City, most likely situated in one of the dingiest boroughs. Warehouses, abandoned industrial buildings, and other gutted skeletons of past headquarters and hangar bays could be where this counterculture convenes. One more tangible example can be a building strictly dedicated to mural work and graffiti – on the outside, it looks pristine in its abandoned glory, but inside are the screaming artistic values of the art group working inside. The entire inside of the warehouse could be a studio space that could also be converted into a music venue – where certain musical groups could “stick it to the man” with their primal anthems and complaints.

Another idea could be a small theater group situated on the outskirts of Aliso, struggling to survive in the harsh military climate at the Pinnacle. After all, theater was somewhat addressed in *Revenge of the Sith*, but it’s not something that was really expanded or detailed. Perhaps this theater group is expected to put on shows praising the Brotherhood and the remnants of the Empire, but they secretly also travel around the city to put on smaller shows or pantomimes expressing their real emotional perspective. The tiny theater itself could be a former barracks outfitted with all the clumsy and poor makings of a floundering troupe – wood put together as a makeshift stage, a curtain made out of tarp, rickety seats and benches – where the bored masses convene and cry out for more gladiatorial-like entertainment (which could also be a part of the underground). In the end, you can add a bit of personality and soul to a city not just in terms of its physical geography, but also in terms of its cultural geography.

Obviously, there’s a lot to look over and specify, but I hope some of these tangible answers are worth something. Aliso may as well be an interesting city, not just a ball pit for the Dark Jedi to play in. Ooh, a ball pit! Anyone up for a pizza place called Pizza the Hut? I know, it’s a *Spaceballs* joke. But still!