

Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1987. ISBN: 978-0195049831.

Chapter 9, "The New Age of Automobility." pp. 157 - 171.

This reading is about the rise of American "Carism": the way Americans are obsessed with and pervasively use the car. This development in culture resulted from both organic social perceptions and the work of specific companies.

- What are the primary characteristics of American "Carism" and how do they relate to Fordism?
- What were the perceptions of the road in 1930?
- How did the car cause suburbanization to such a greater extent than the streetcar or train?
- How did public perception result in the demise of the streetcar?
- How does the perception of the car in the first half of the 20th century differ from ours?

Chapter 10, "Suburban Development between the Wars." pp. 172 - 189.

Suburbanization changed the way of life for everyone in America. It made the car a necessity for essentially everyone, gave people more space, but in so doing fundamentally changed the nature of the city. However, this kind of suburbanization is different from post-WWII suburbanization, both because of the societal situation, and because of the perceptions active at that time.

- Defend or refute Lewis Mumford's claim that "the automobile is antithetical to the very meaning of the city."
- Who profited from suburbanization, and who paid?
- Why did it take so long for the car to be accepted as a commuter vehicle?
- What effects did decentralization have on working-class families?
- How is decentralization changing today, with increasing gas prices?
- Without the car, would suburbanization have happened?
- How did the car alter the home?

Chapter 13, "The Baby Boom and the Age of Subdivision." pp. 231 - 245.

The post-war housing crisis resulted in another culture-changing development: the prototypical American suburb. This phenomenon is a result of the social uses of technology and latent cultural possibilities, and has ramifications throughout America. Among other things, this class-homogeneity produced the Jones in everyone's perception.

- What is the Age of Subdivision?
- Do you know any Levittowns? What is your experience of this kind of cookie-cutter lifestyle (and is that description of it too harsh)?
- What factors caused regional architectural variation to diminish in the post-war era?
- What aspects of the FHA and VA's response to the housing crisis resulted in the uniformity of Levittowns? Could they have done it differently?

- How did the American Dream change in the post-war era?
- Why were Levittowns such a huge success?
- What caused the social homogeneity of Levittowns?
- Describe the "Organization Man." How does it differ from the Millennial?
- Why did the Levittown houses have so many appliances?
- How did the Levittown change the American family?
- Defend or refute the claim that Levittowns are a "cultural, economic, and emotional wasteland."
- How important were public subsidies in the shaping of the post-war world?

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ES.272 Culture Tech
Spring 2003

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