

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?


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 result 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 region architectural variation to dimension 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 Millenial?
• 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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