

Levittown, New York: Suburban Dream or Nightmare?¹

George Sochan
Bowie State University

After the Second World War developers built suburbs throughout the United States, in part, to accommodate a booming population and to satisfy veterans' demands for housing. Levitt & Sons built the most famous of these suburbs, just outside of New York City, on Long Island. The suburb, however, predates the postwar boom by more than a century and, as an idealized way of life, the suburb embodies certain important attributes. This article considers the essence of the suburb in American history and examines whether Levittown, as a postwar suburb, has embodied those attributes to fulfill a dream or to create a nightmare.

Key Words: Levitt, Levittown, suburb

Introduction

One of the major events in U.S. history during the years after World War II is suburban development throughout the country. Generally this event is accorded

¹ I made a conference presentation on this topic, entitled "Levittown and the American Dream: Suburban Sprawl from Mall to Mall" at the Humanities and Technology Association (HTA) Conference in Terre Haute, Indiana on 6 October 2007.

Societal Values and Nuclear Power: A Case of Conflicting Priorities

Heinz C. Luegenbiehl
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

Value structures vary from culture to culture. A particular value hierarchy has the potential to govern priorities in relation to social policies. This paper examines the influence of Japan's social values on the development of its nuclear policy, in particular the importance of the changing relationship of physical safety to national security. In light of the historical experience of Japan with atomic weapons and the variety of accidents which have occurred in the Japanese civilian nuclear industry, one might expect that the Japanese would be firmly opposed to the use of nuclear energy. Yet, when seen in light of its value structure, the very significant use of nuclear power in Japan is a rational activity, as is the recent beginning of more widespread public opposition to the government's long-term plan to continue to increase dependence on nuclear energy. Based on the Japanese experience, the final part of the paper then briefly explores the potential for applying this analysis to examining the currently changing attitudes in the United States in favor of a reemphasis on the further deployment of nuclear power for the production of energy. At this critical juncture in the debate about whether the U.S. should expand the use of nuclear power, an understanding of how the underlying values influence the importance given to such societal goals as the reduction of global warming or lessening of dependence on foreign oil could add a valuable perspective to the debate.

Key words: Nuclear energy; Japan's nuclear policy; nuclear accidents; social values; value hierarchy; national security; safety.

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Toward an Historical Poetics of Digital Cinema¹

Ian Olney
York College of Pennsylvania

In this paper, I argue for a new approach to thinking about digital cinema that takes into account its aesthetic, as well as its technological and industrial, dimensions. This approach is rooted in the work of noted film scholar David Bordwell, who has developed a method for studying the evolution of film style over time—a method that produces what he calls an “historical poetics of cinema.” Bordwell is particularly interested in the way in which film style is affected during periods of technological overhaul in cinema; at such moments, filmmakers try to exploit the unique features of new technologies while still integrating them into standard work practices. Such has been the case, I suggest, with the digital technologies that have transformed most areas of American filmmaking over the past two decades. Tracing the impact of these technologies in the realm of cinematography, in particular, I begin the work of establishing a taxonomy of digital film style, paying special attention to recent movies like *Miami Vice* (2006) and *Inland Empire* (2006), which exploit the distinctive capabilities and limitations of digital video cameras to create new aesthetics. Ultimately, my goal is to make a small contribution toward the larger project of producing an historical poetics of digital cinema.

Key words: digital cinema; film look; film style; cinematography; Miami Vice; Inland Empire; David Bordwell.

¹ This article is based on a paper entitled 'Which Digital Cinema?: Notes on an Emerging Poetics of Digital Film Style,' which was delivered at the 2007 Modern Language Association conference in Chicago.

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