Labor, Capital, and Class Struggle around the Built Environment in Advanced Capitalist Societies

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IN this paper I will seek to establish a theoretical framework for understanding a facet of class struggle under advanced capitalism. The conflicts that will be scrutinized are those that relate to the production and use of the built environment, by which I mean the totality of physical structures—houses, roads, factories, offices, sewage systems, parks, cultural institutions, educational facilities, and so on. In general I shall argue that capitalist society must of necessity create a physical landscape—a mass of humanly constructed physical resources—in its own image, broadly appropriate to the purposes of production and reproduction. But I shall also argue that this process of creating space is full of contradictions and tensions and that the class relations in capitalist society inevitably spawn strong cross-currents of conflict.

I shall assume for purposes of analytic convenience that a clear distinction exists between (1) a faction of capital seeking the appropriation of rent either directly (as landlords, property companies, and the like) or indirectly (as financial intermediaries or others who invest in property simply for a rate of return), (2) a faction of capital seeking interest and profit by building new elements in the built environment (the construction interests), (3) capital "in general," which looks upon the built environment as an outlet for surplus capital and as a bundle of use values for enhancing the production and accumulation of capital, and (4) labor, which uses the built environment as a means of consumption and as a means for its own reproduction. I shall also assume that the built environment can be divided conceptually into *fixed capital* items to be used in production (factories, highways, railroads, and so on) and *consumption fund* items to be used in

I am much indebted to Dick Walker for critical comments upon an earlier draft of this paper. I should also add that his thought and work have contributed in many ways (some of which I am sure I am unaware of) to my understanding of the issues raised in this paper.

consumption (houses, roads, parks, sidewalks, and the like).[1] Some items, such as roads and sewer systems, can function both as fixed capital and as part of the consumption fund depending on their use.

I will restrict attention in this paper to the structure of conflict as it arises in relation to labor's use of the consumption fund rather than its use of fixed capital in the immediate process of production. An analysis of this aspect of class struggle will do much to shed light, I believe, on the vexing questions that surround the relationship between community conflict and community organizing, on the one hand, and industrial conflict and work-based organizing on the other. In short, I hope to be able to shed some light on the position and experience of labor with respect to *living* as well as *working* in the historical development of those countries that are now generally considered to be in the advanced capitalist category. The examples will be taken from the United States and Great Britain. Some preparatory comments on the general theme to be pursued are in order.

The domination of capital over labor is basic to the capitalist mode of production—without it, after all, surplus value could not be extracted and accumulation would disappear. All kinds of consequences flow from this and the relation between labor and the built environment can be understood only in terms of it. Perhaps the single most important fact is that industrial capitalism, through the reorganization of the work process and the advent of the factory system, forced a separation between place of work and place of reproduction and consumption. The need to reproduce labor power is thus translated into a specific set of production and consumption activities within the household a domestic economy that requires use values in the form of a built environment if it is to function effectively.

The needs of labor have changed historically and they will in part be met by work within the household and in part be procured through market exchanges of wages earned against commodities produced. The commodity requirements of labor depend upon the balance between domestic economy products and market purchases as well as upon the environmental, historical, and moral considerations that fix the standard of living of labor.[2] In the commodity realm, labor can, by organization and class struggle, alter the definition of needs to include "reasonable" standards of nutrition, health care, housing, education, recreation, entertainment, and so on. From the standpoint of capital, accumulation requires a constant expansion of the market for com-

1. This distinction derives from Marx. See Karl Marx, *Capital* (New York: 1967), 2: 210; and idem, *The Grundrisse* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: 1973), pp. 681-7.

2. See Marx, *Capital*, 1: 171.

modities, which means the creation of new social wants and needs and the organization of "rational consumption" on the part of labor. This last condition suggests theoretically what is historically observable—that the domestic economy must steadily give way before the expansion of capitalist commodity production. "Accumulation for accumulation's sake, production for production's sake," which jointly drive the capitalist system onwards, therefore entail an increasing integration of labor's consumption into the capitalist system of production and exchange of commodities.[3]

The split between the place of work and the place of residence means that the struggle of labor to control the social conditions of its own existence splits into two seemingly independent struggles. The first, located in the work place, is over the wage rate, which provides the purchasing power for consumption goods, and the conditions of work. The second, fought in the place of residence, is against secondary forms of exploitation and appropriation represented by merchant capital, landed property, and the like. This is a fight over the costs and conditions of existence in the living place. And it is this second kind of struggle that we focus on here, recognizing, of course, that the dichotomy between *living* and *working* is itself an artificial division that the captialist system imposes.

LABOR VERSUS THE APPROPRIATORS OF RENT AND THE CONSTRUCTION INTEREST

Labor needs living space. Land is therefore a condition of living for labor in much the same way that it is a condition of production for capital. The system of private property that excludes labor from land as a condition of production also serves to exclude labor from the land as a condition of living. As Marx puts it, "the monstrous power wielded by landed property, when united hand in hand with industrial capital, enables it to be used against laborers engaged in their wage struggle as a means of practically expelling them from the earth as a dwelling place."[4] Apart from space as a basic condition of living we are concerned here with housing, transportation (to jobs and facilities), amenities, facilities, and a whole bundle of resources that contribute to the total living environment for labor. Some of these items can be privately appropriated (housing is the most important case) while others have to be used in common (sidewalks) and in some cases, such as the transportation system, even used jointly with capital.

3. This condition can be derived directly from Marxian theory by bringing together the analyses presented in Marx, *Capital*, 1: 591-640, 2: 437-48, 515-16.

4. Marx, *Capital*, 3: 773.

The need for these items pits labor against landed property and the appropriation of rent as well as against the construction interest, which seeks to profit from the production of these commodities. The cost and quality of these items affect the standard of living of labor. Labor, in seeking to protect and enhance its standard of living, engages in a series of running battles in the living place over a variety of issues that relate to the creation, management, and use of the built environment. Examples are not hard to find—community conflict over excessive appropriation of rent by landlords, over speculation in housing market, over the siting of "noxious" facilities, over inflation in housing construction costs, over inflation in the costs of servicing a deteriorating urban infrastructure, over congestion, over lack of accessibility to employment opportunities and services, over highway construction and urban renewal, over the "quality of life" and aesthetic issues—the list seems almost endless.

Conflicts that focus on the built environment exhibit certain peculiar characteristics because the monopoly power conferred by private property arrangements generates not only the power to appropriate rent but also yields to the owners command over a "natural monopoly" in space.[5] The fixed and immobile character of the built environment entails the production and use of commodities under conditions of spatial monopolistic competition with strong "neighborhood" or "externality" effects.[6] Many of the struggles that occur are over externality effects—the value of a particular house is in part determined by the condition of the houses surrounding it and each owner is therefore very interested in seeing to it that the neighborhood as a whole is well-maintained. In bourgeois theory, the appropriation of rent and the trading of titles to properties set price signals for new commodity production in such a way that a "rational" allocation of land to uses can be arrived at through a market process. But because of the pervasive externality effects and the sequential character of both development and occupancy, the price signals suffer from all manner of serious distortions. There are, as a consequence, all kinds of opportunities for both appropriators and the construction faction, for developers, speculators, and even private individuals, to reap windfall profits and monopoly rents. Internecine conflicts within a class and faction are therefore just as common as conflict between classes and factions.

We are primarily concerned here, however, with the structure of

5. Ibid., chap. 37.

6. See David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (London and Baltimore: Edward Arnold, 1973), chaps. 2, 5.

the three-way struggle between labor, the appropriators of rent, and the construction faction. Consider, as an example, the direct struggle between laborers and landlords over the cost and quality of housing. Landlords typically use whatever power they have to appropriate as much as they can from the housing stock they own and they will adjust their strategy to the conditions in such a way that they maximize the rate of return on their capital. If this rate of return is very high, then new capital will likely flow into landlordism, and, if the rate of return is very low, then we will likely witness disinvestment and abandonment. Labor will seek by a variety of strategies--for example, moving to where housing is cheaper or establishing rent controls and housing codes--to limit appropriation and to ensure a reasonable quality of shelter. How such a struggle is resolved depends very much upon the relative economic and political power of the two groups, the circumstances of supply and demand that exist at a particular place and time, and upon the options that each group has available to it.[7]

The struggle becomes three dimensional when we consider that the ability of appropriators to gain monopoly rents on the old housing is in part limited by the capacity of the construction interest to enter the market and create new housing at a lower cost. The price of old housing is, after all, strongly affected by the costs of production of new housing. If labor can use its political power to gain state subsidies for construction, then this artificially stimulated new development will force the rate of appropriation on existing resources downwards. If, on the other hand, appropriators can check new development (by, for example, escalating land costs), or if, for some reason, new development is inhibited (planning permission procedures in Britain have typically functioned in this way), then the rate of appropriation can rise. On the other hand, when labor manages to check the rate of appropriation through direct rent controls, then the price of rented housing falls, new development is discouraged, and scarcity is produced. These are the kinds of conflicts and strategies of coalition that we have to expect in such situations.

But the structure of conflict is made more complex by the "natural monopoly" inherent in space. For example, the monopoly power of the landlord is in part modified by the ability of labor to escape entrapment in the immediate environs of the work place. Appropriation from housing is very sensitive to changes in transportation. The

7. For a more detailed argument see David Harvey, "Class-Monopoly Rent, Finance Capital and the Urban Revolution," *Regional Studies* 8 (1974): 239-55.

ability to undertake a longer journey to work is in part dependent upon the wage rate (which allows the worker to pay for travel), in part dependent upon the length of the working day (which gives the worker time to travel), and in part dependent upon the cost and availability of transportation. The boom in the construction of working-class suburbs in late nineteenth-century London, for example, can in large degree be explained by the advent of the railways and the provision of cheap "workman's special" fares and a shortening of the working day, which freed at least some of the working class from the need to live within walking distance of the workplace.[8] The rate of rental appropriation on the housing close to the centers of employment had to fall as a consequence. The "streetcar" suburbs of American cities and the working-class suburbs of today (based on cheap energy and the automobile) are further examples of this phenomenon.[9] By pressing for new and cheap forms of transportation, labor can escape geographical entrapment and thereby reduce the capacity of landlords in advantageous locations to gain monopoly rents. The problems that attach to spatial entrapment are still with us, of course, in the contemporary ghettos of the poor, the aged, the oppressed minorities, and the like. Access is still, for these groups, a major issue.[10]

The struggle to fight off the immediate depredations of the landlord and the continuous battle to keep the cost of living down do much to explain the posture adopted by labor with respect to the distribution, quantities, and qualities of all elements in the built environment. Public facilities, recreational opportunities, amenities, transportation access, and so on, are all subjects of contention. But underlying these immediate concerns is a deeper struggle over the very meaning of the built environment as a set of use values for labor.

The producers of the built environment, both past and present, provide labor with a limited set of choices of living conditions. If labor has slender resources with which to exercise an effective demand, then it has to put up with whatever it can get—shoddily built, cramped, and poorly serviced tenement buildings, for example. With

8. John R. Kellet, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1969), chap. 11.

9. G. R. Taylor, "The Beginnings of Mass Transportation in Urban America," *The Smithsonian Journal of History* 1, nos. 1-2: 35-50, 31-54; J. Tarr, "From City to Suburb: The 'Moral' Influence of Transportation Technology," in *American Urban History*, ed. Alexander B. Callow (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); David R. Ward, *Cities and Immigrants* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

10. The McCone Commission Report on the Watts rebellion in Los Angeles in 1964 attributed much of the discontent to the sense of entrapment generated out of lack of access to transportation.

increasing effective demand, labor has the potential to choose over a wider range and, as a result, questions about the overall "quality of life" begin to arise. Capital in general, and that faction of it that produces the built environment, seek to define the quality of life for labor in terms of the commodities that they can profitably produce in certain locations. Labor, on the other hand, defines quality of life solely in use value terms and in the process may appeal to some underlying and very fundamental conception of what it is to be human. Production for profit and production for use are often inconsistent with each other. The survival of capitalism therefore requires that capital dominate labor, not simply in the work process, but with respect to the very definition of the quality of life in the consumption sphere. Production, Marx argued, not only produces consumption. it also produces the mode of consumption and that, of course, is what the consumption fund for labor is all about.[11] For this reason, capital in general cannot afford the outcome of struggles around the built environment to be determined simply by the relative powers of labor, the appropriators of rent, and the construction faction. It must, from time to time, throw its weight into the balance to effect outcomes that are favorable to the reproduction of the capitalist social order. It is to this aspect of matters that we must now turn.

THE INTERVENTIONS OF CAPITAL IN STRUGGLES OVER THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

When capital intervenes in struggles over the built environment it usually does so through the agency of state power. A cursory examination of the history of the advanced capitalist countries shows that the capitalist class sometimes throws its weight to the side of labor and sometimes on the side of other factions. But history also suggests a certain pattern and underlying rationale for these interventions. We can get at the pattern by assembling the interventions together under four broad headings—private property and homeownership for the working class, the cost of living and the value of labor power, managed collective consumption of workers in the interest of sustained capital accumulation, and a very complex, but very important, topic concerning the relation to nature, the imposition of work discipline, and the like. A discussion of the pattern will help us to identify the underlying rationale, and in this manner we can identify a much deeper meaning in the everyday struggles in which labor engages in the living place.

11. Marx, *Grundrisse*, Introduction.

Private Property and Homeownership for Labor

The struggle that labor wages in the living place against the appropriation of rent is a struggle against the monopoly power of private property. Labor's fight against the principle of private property cannot easily be confined to the housing arena, and "the vexed question of the relation between rent and wages. . . . easily slides into that of capital and labor."[12] For this reason the capitalist class as a whole cannot afford to ignore it; they have an interest in keeping the principle of private property sacrosanct. A well-developed struggle between tenants and landlords—with the former calling for public ownership, municipalization, and the like—calls the whole principle into question. Extended individualized homeownership is therefore seen as advantageous to the capitalist class because it promotes the allegiance of at least a segment of the working class to the principle of private property, promotes an ethic of "possessive individualism," and brings about a fragmentation of the working class into "housing classes" of homeowners and tenants.[13] This gives the capitalist class a handy ideological lever to use against public ownership and nationalization demands because it is easy to make such proposals sound as if the intent is to take workers' privately owned houses away from them.

The majority of owner-occupants do not own their housing outright, however. They make interest payments on a mortgage. This puts finance capital in a hegemonic position with respect to the functioning of the housing market—a position that it is in no way loath to make use of.[14] The apparent entrance of workers into the petit form of property ownership in housing is, to a large degree, its exact opposite in reality—the entry of money capital into a controlling position within the consumption fund. Finance capital not only controls the disposition and rate of new investment in housing, but controls labor as well through chronic debt-encumbrance. A worker mortgaged up to the hilt is, for the most part, a pillar of social stability, and schemes to promote homeownership within the working class have

12. Quoted in Counter Information Services, *The Recurrent Crisis of London* (CIS, 52 Shaftesbury Ave., London, W.1).

13. C. B. McPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962); J. Rex and T. Moore, *Race, Community and Conflict* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

14. M. Stone, "Housing and Class Struggle," *Antipode*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1975); David Harvey, "The Political Economy of Urbanization in Advanced Capitalist Societies: The Case of the United States," in *The Social Economy of Cities*, ed. G. Gappert and H. Rose (Beverley Hills: Urban Affairs Annual, no. 9 (1975).

long recognized this basic fact. And in return the worker may build up, very slowly, some equity in the property.

This last consideration has some important ramifications. Workers put their savings into the physical form of a property. Obviously, they will be concerned to preserve the value of those savings and if possible to enhance them. Ownership of housing can also lead to petty landlordism, which has been a traditional and very important means for individual workers to engage in the appropriation of values at the expense of other workers. But more importantly, every homeowner, whether he or she likes it or not, is caught in a struggle over the appropriation of values because of the shifting patterns of external costs and benefits within the built environment. A new road may destroy the value of some housing and enhance the value of others, and the same applies to all manner of new development, redevelopment, accelerated obsolescence, and so on.

The way in which labor relates to these externality effects is crucial if only because the housing market is in quantitative terms by far the most important market for any one particular element in the built environment. It would be very difficult to understand the political tension between suburbs and central cities in the United States without recognizing the fragmentation that occurs within the working class as one section of it moves into homeownership and becomes deeply concerned to preserve and if possible to enhance the value of its equity. The social tensions omnipresent within the "community structure" of American cities are similarly affected. Homeownership, in short, invites a faction of the working class to wage its inevitable fight over the appropriation of value in capitalist society in a very different way. It puts them on the side of the principle of private property and frequently leads them to appropriate values at the expense of other factions of the working class. With such a glorious tool to divide and rule at its disposal, it is hardly surprising that capital in general sides with labor in this regard against the landed interest. It is rather as if capital, having relied upon landed property to divorce labor from access to one of the basic conditions of production, preserves the principle of private property intact in the face of the class struggle by permitting labor to return to the face of the earth as a partial owner of land and property as a condition of consumption.

The Cost of Living and the Wage Rate

Marx argued that the value of labor power was determined by the value of the commodities required to reproduce that labor power. This

neat equivalence disappears in the pricing realm, but nevertheless there is a relation of some sort between wages and the cost of obtaining those commodities essential to the reproduction of the household.[15]

An excessive rate of appropriation of rent by landlords will increase the cost of living to labor and generate higher wage demands that, if won, may have the effect of lowering the rate of accumulation of capital. For this reason capital in general may side with labor in the struggle against excessive appropriation and attempt also to lower the costs of production of a basic commodity such as housing. Capitalists may themselves seek to provide cheap housing, as in the "model communities" typical of the early years of the industrial revolution, or they may even side with the demands of labor for cheap, subsidized housing under public ownership, provided that this permits the payment of lower wages. For the same reason the capitalist class may seek to promote, through the agency of the state, the industrialization of building production and the rationalization of production of the built environment through comprehensive land use planning policies, new town construction programs, and the like. Capitalists tend to become interested in such things, however, only when labor is in a position, through its organized collective power, to tie wages to the cost of living.

These considerations apply to all elements in the built environment (and to social services and social expenditures also) that are relevant to the reproduction of labor power. Those that are publicly provided (which means the bulk of them outside of housing and until recently transportation) can be monitored by a cost-conscious municipal government under the watchful eye of the local business community, and, perhaps, in an emergency situation such as that experienced in New York both in the 1930s and the 1970s, even under direct supervision by the institutions of finance capital. In the interests of keeping the costs of reproduction of labor power at a minimum, the capitalist class as a whole may seek collective means to intervene in the processes of investment and appropriation in the built environment. In much the same way that the proletariat frequently sided with the rising industrial bourgeoisie against the landed interest in the early years of capitalism, so we often find capital in general siding with labor in the advanced capitalist societies against excessive appropriation of rent and rising costs of new development. The coalition is

15. The relation between values and prices in Marxian theory is highly problematic and involves us in the celebrated "transformation problem." To avoid making silly mistakes it is important to bear in mind that the value of labor power is not automatically represented by the wage rate.

not forged altruistically but arises organically out of the relation between the wage rate and the costs of reproduction of labor power.

"Rational," Managed, and Collective Consumption

Workers mediate the circulation of commodities by using their wages to purchase means of consumption produced by capitalists. Any failure on the part of workers to use their purchasing power correctly and rationally from the standpoint of the capitalist production and realization system will disrupt the circulation of commodities. In the early years of capitalist development this problem was not so important because trade with noncapitalist societies could easily take up any slack in effective demand. But with the transition to advanced capitalism, the internal market provided by the wage-labor force becomes of greater and greater significance. Also, as standards of living rise, in the sense that workers have more and more commodities available to them, so the potential for a breakdown from "irrationalities" in consumption increases. The failure to exercise a proper effective demand can be a source of crisis. And it was, of course, Keynes's major contribution to demonstrate to the capitalist class that under certain conditions the way out of a crisis manifest as a falling profit rate was not to cut wages but to increase them and thereby to expand the market.

This presumes, however, that workers are willing to spend their wages "rationally." If we assume, with Adam Smith, that mankind has an infinite and insatiable appetite for "trinkets and baubles," then there is no problem, but Malthus voiced another worry when he observed that the history of human society "sufficiently demonstrates [that] an efficient taste for luxuries and conveniences, that is, such a taste as will properly stimulate industry, instead of being ready to appear the moment it is required is a plant of slow growth."[16] Production may, as Marx averred, produce consumption and the mode of consumption, but it does not do so automatically, and the manner in which it does so is the locus of continuous struggle and conflict.[17]

Consider, first of all, the relationship between capitalist production and the household economy. In the United States in 1810, for example, "the best figures available to historians show that . . . about two thirds of the clothing worn . . . was the product of household manufacture," but by 1860 the advent of industrial capitalism in the form of the New England textile industry had changed all that—"household manufactures had been eclipsed by the development of

16. T. R. Malthus, *Principles of Political Economy* (New York: Kelley Reprint, 1836), p. 321.

17. Marx, *Grundrisse*, Introduction.

industrial production and a market economy."[18] Step by step, activities traditionally associated with household work are brought within the capitalist market economy—baking, brewing, preserving, cooking, food preparation, washing, cleaning, and even child-rearing and child socialization. And with respect to the built environment, housebuilding and maintenance become integrated into the market economy. In the Unites States in the nineteenth century a substantial proportion of the population built their own homes with their own labor and local raw materials. Now almost all units are built through the market system.

The advent of the factory system was a double-edged sword with respect to the household economy. On the one hand it extracted the wage earner(s) from the home. In the early years of industrial capitalism it did so for 12 or 14 hours a day and, under particularly exploitative conditions, forced the whole household—women and children as well as men—into the wage labor force (in this manner the wages of the *household* could remain stable in the face of a falling wage rate). Of these early years E. P. Thompson writes: "Each stage in industrial differentiation and specialization struck also at the family economy, disturbing customary relations between man and wife, parents and children, and differentiating more sharply between 'work' and 'life.' It was to be a full hundred years before this differentiation was to bring returns, in the form of labour-saving devices, back into the working woman's home."[19]

This "return" of commodities to the household is the other edge of the sword. The factory system produced use values for consumption more cheaply and with less effort than the household. The use values may be in the form of standardized products, but there should at least be more of them and therefore a material basis for a rising standard of living of labor. In the early years of industrial capitalism this did not in general happen. Laborers certainly worked longer hours and probably received less in the way of use values (although the evidence on this latter point is both patchy and controversial).[20] But the rising productivity of labor that occurs with accumulation, the consequent need to establish an internal market, and a century or

18. Thomas Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth Century America* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1975), pp. 28-29; R. M. Tryon, *Household Manufactures in the United States, 1640-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917).

19. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: 1968), p. 455.

20. Ibid., chap. 10; E. J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), chap. 7.

more of class struggle have changed all of this. Consumer durables and consumption fund items (such as housing) have become very important growth sectors in the economy, and the political conditions and the material basis for a rising standard of living of labor have indeed been achieved.

The experience of labor in substituting work in the factory for work in the household has, therefore, both positive and negative aspects. But such substitutions are not easily achieved because they involve the nature and structure of the family, the role of women in society, culturally entrenched traditions, and the like. The substitutions are themselves a focus of struggle. The rational consumption of commodities in relation to the accumulation of capital implies a certain balance between market purchases and household work. The struggle to substitute the former for the latter is significant because its outcome defines the very meaning of use values and the standard of living for labor in its commodity aspects. The construction of the built environment has to be seen, therefore, in the context of a struggle over a whole way of living and being.

Techniques of persuasion are widely used in advanced capitalist societies to ensure rational consumption. Moral exhortation and philanthropic enterprise are often put to work "to raise the condition of the laborer by an improvement of his mental and moral powers and to make a rational consumer of him."[21] The church, the press, and the schools can be mobilized on behalf of rational consumption at the same time as they can be vehicles for genuinely autonomous working-class development. And then, of course, there are always the blandishments of the ad-men and the techniques of Madison Avenue.

It would be idle to pretend that "the standard of living of labor" has been unaffected by these techniques. But, again, we are dealing with a double-edged sword. They may in fact also exert what Marx called a "civilizing influence" on labor and be used by labor to raise itself to a new condition of material and mental well-being that, in turn, provides a new and more solid basis for class struggle.[22] Conversely, the drive by labor to improve its condition may be perverted by a variety of strategems into a definition of use values advantageous to accumulation rather than reflective of the real human needs of labor. The human demand for shelter is turned, for example, into a process of accumulation through housing production.

Rational consumption can also be ensured by the collectivization

21. Marx, *Capital*, 2: 516; Dickens satirized the role of bourgeois philanthropy in relation to workers' consumption in *Hard Times*.

22. Marx, *Capital*, p. 408.

of consumption, primarily, although not solely, through the agency of the state.[23] Working-class demands for health care, housing, education, and social services of all kinds are usually expressed through political channels, and government arbitrates these demands and seeks to reconcile them with the requirements of accumulation. Many of these demands are met by the collective provision of goods and services, which means that everyone consumes them whether he or she likes it or not. Capitalist systems have moved more and more towards the collectivization of consumption because of the need, clearly understood in Keynesian fiscal policies, to manage consumption in the interests of accumulation. By collectivization, consumer choice is translated from the uncontrolled anarchy of individual action to the seemingly more controllable field of state enterprise. This translation does not occur without a struggle over both the freedom of individual choice (which generates a strong antibureaucratic sentiment) and the definition of the use values involved (national defense versus subsidized housing for the poor, for example).

The built environment has a peculiar and important role in all of this. The bundle of resources that comprise it—streets and sidewalks, drains and sewer systems, parks and playgrounds—contains many elements that are collectively consumed. The public provision of such public goods is a "natural" form of collective consumption that capital can easily colonize through the agency of the state. Also, the sum of individual private decisions creates a public effect because of the pervasive externality effects that in themselves force certain forms of collective consumption through private action—if I fail to keep my yard neat then my neighbors cannot avoid seeing it. The built environment requires collective management and control, and it is therefore almost certain to be a primary field of struggle between capital and labor over what is good for accumulation and what is good for people.

The consumption fund has accounted for an increasing proportion of gross aggregate investment in the built environment since around 1890 in both Britain and the United States.[24] The housing sector in particular has become a major tool in macroeconomic policy for stabilizing economic growth, particularly in the United States where it has openly been used as a Keynesian regulator (not always, we should add,

23. The theme of collective consumption has been examined in some detail by the French urbanists. See E. Preteceille, *Equipements Collectifs, Structures Urbaines et Consommation Sociale* (Paris: Centre de Sociologie Urbaine, 1975); and M. Castells, "Collective Consumption and Urban Contradictions in Advanced Capitalist Societies," in *Patterns of Advanced Societies*, ed. L. Lindberg (New York: 1975).

24. S. Kuznets, *Capital in the American Economy: Its Formation and Financing* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961).

with success). And there are also strong multiplier effects to be taken into account. Housing construction, for example, requires complementary investments in other aspects of the built environment as well as in a wide range of consumer durables. The multipliers vary a great deal according to design and other considerations, but in all cases they are substantial.

These multipliers assume an added importance when we consider them in relation to the "coercive power" that the built environment can exercise over our daily lives. Its longevity and fixity in space, together with its method of financing and amortization, mean that once we have created it we must use it if the value that it represents is not to be lost. Under the social relations of capitalism, the built environment becomes an artifact of human labor that subsequently returns to dominate daily life. Capital seeks to mobilize it as a coercive force to help sustain accumulation. If our cities are built for driving, for example, then drive we must in order to live "normally" whether we like it or not. The highway lobby in the United States, the automobile, oil, and rubber industries and the construction interests, changed the face of America and used the coercive power of the built environment to ensure rational growth in the consumption of their products.[25] But labor is not oblivious to such pressures. The configurations of use values that capital urges upon labor may be resisted or transformed to suit labor's purposes and labor's needs—the automobile becomes, for example, a means of escape (we will consider from what very shortly).

Insofar as capitalism has survived, so we have to conclude that capital dominates labor not only in the place of work but in the living space by defining the standard of living of labor and the quality of life in part through the creation of built environments that conform to the requirements of accumulation and commodity production. To put it this strongly is not to say that labor cannot win on particular issues, nor does it imply that there is one and only one definition of use values for labor that fits the need for accumulation. There are innumerable possibilities, but the limits of tolerance of capital are nevertheless clearly defined. For labor to struggle within these limits is one thing; to seek to go beyond them is where the real struggle begins.

The Socialization of Labor and the Relation to Nature

Work and living cannot be entirely divorced from each other. What

25. See the accounts by J. Flink, *The Car Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1975); and H. Leavitt, *Superhighway—Super Hoax* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970).

happens in the work place cannot be forgotten in the living place. Yet, we have a very poor understanding of the relation between the two.[26] The definition of "a use value for labor in the built environment" cannot, therefore, be independent of the work experience. We will consider two very basic aspects of this in what follows.

We tend to forget that the advent of the factory system required a quite extraordinary adaptation in social life. It transformed the rural peasant and the independent artisan into a mere cog in a system designed to produce surplus value. The laborer became a "thing"—a mere "factor of production" to be used in the production process as the capitalist desired. But the new economic order also required that "men who were non-accumulative, non-acquisitive, accustomed to work for subsistence, not for maximization of income, had to be made obedient to the cash stimulus and obedient in such a way as to react precisely to the stimuli provided." The habituation of the worker to the new mode of production, the inculcation of the work discipline and all that went with it, was and is still no easy matter. Consequently, "the modern industrial proletariat was introduced to its role not so much by attraction or monetary reward, but by compulsion, force, and fear. It was not allowed to grow as in a sunny garden; it was forged, over a fire, by the powerful blows of a hammer."[27] The consequences of this for the manner and forms of subsequent class struggle were legion. And, as Braverman points out, "the habituation of workers to the capitalist mode of production must be renewed with each generation."[28]

The inculcation of work discipline could in part be accomplished by training, threats, incentives, and cajolery in the work place. These were effective, but not in themselves sufficient. In the early years of industrial capitalism the problems were particularly severe because capitalism had not yet woven the "net of modern capitalist life that finally makes all other modes of living impossible."[29] And so originated the drive on the part of capital to inculcate the working class with the "work ethic" and "bourgeois values" of honesty, reliability, respect for authority, obedience to laws and rules, respect for property

26. An interesting attempt to look at this is J. E. Vance, "Housing the Worker: The Employment Linkage as a Force in Urban Structure," *Economic Geography* 42 (1966): 294-325.

27. S. Pollard, *The Genesis of Modern Management* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 161, 207.

28. Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), p. 139.

29. Ibid., p. 151.

and contractual agreements, and the like. The assault on the values of the working class was in part conducted through religious, educational, and philanthropic channels, with the paternalism of the industrialist often thrown into the balance. But there is another component to this that is of particular interest to us here. The early industrialists in particular had to deal with workers both inside the factory and outside of it:

> The efforts to reform the whole man were, therefore, particularly marked in factory towns and villages in which the total environment was under the control of a single employer. Here some of the main developments of the industrial revolution were epitomized: these settlements were founded by the industrialist, their whole raison d'être his quest for profit, their politics and laws in his pocket, the quality of their life under his whim, their ultimate aims in his image. . . . Great though the outward difference was between the flogging masters and the model community builders, "from the standpoint of control of labour both types of factory management display a concern with the enforcement of discipline."[30]

This need to socialize labor to a work process through control in the living place is endemic to capitalism, but it is particularly noticeable when new kinds of work processes are introduced. Henry Ford's five-dollar, eight-hour day for assembly-line workers introduced in 1914 was accompanied with much puritanical rhetoric and a "philanthropic" control system that affected nearly every facet of the workers' lives:

> A staff of over thirty investigators . . . visited workers' homes gathering information and giving advice on the intimate details of the family budget, diet, living arrangements, recreation, social outlook and morality. . . . The worker who refused to learn English, rejected the advice of the investigator, gambled, drank excessively, or was found guilty of "any malicious practice derogatory to good physical manhood or moral character" was disqualified from the five dollar wage. . . .[31]

Gramsci's comments on "Fordism" are perceptive.[32] There arose at that point in the history of capitalist accumulation a "need to elaborate a new type of man suited to the new type of work and productive process." This transformation, Gramsci argued, could only be accomplished by a skillful combination of force and persuasion—the latter including high wages, "various social benefits, extremely subtle ideological propaganda." Ford's puritanical and social control initiatives had the purpose of "preserving, outside of work, a certain

30. Pollard, *Modern Management*, p. 115.

31. Flink, *Car Culture*, p. 89.

32. All of the quotes that follow are to be found in Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: 1971), pp. 285-318.

psychophysical equilibrium which prevents the physiological collapse of the workers, exhausted by the new method of production." Workers had to spend their money "rationally, to maintain, renew and if possible to increase (their) muscular nervous efficiency." The fierce attack on alcohol and sexual activities was also a part of the comprehensive effort to inculcate "the habits and customs necessary for the new systems of living and working." The events that surrounded the introduction of Fordism are a classic example of the attempt by capital to shape the person in the living place to fit the requirements of the work place.

Our interest here is, of course, to understand the manner in which industrialists in general, and the community builders in particular, defined the quality of life for their workers and used the built environment as part of a general strategy for inculcating bourgeois values and a "responsible" industrial work discipline. We have already noted a modern version of this in the promotion of working class homeownership as a means to ensure respect for property rights and social stability—a connection that was recognized early in the nineteenth century in the United States.[33] But we are here concerned with the more direct forms of control of the living space. Bender suggests, for example, that the boardinghouses constructed to house the mill girls of Lowell in the 1820s "served as a functional equivalent of the rural family" and operated as "an effective adaptive mechanism" for the girls being drawn off the New England farms into the factories.[34] This same point was made most effectively in the design and functioning of those institutions concerned to deal with those who could not or would not adapt to the new style of life. As early as Elizabethan times, for example, madness and unemployment were regarded as the same thing, while the advent of industrial capitalism had the effect of defining physical sickness as inability to go to work. Both Pollard, in the British context, and Rothman, in the American, point out the connection between major social institutions—asylums, workhouses, penitentiaries, hospitals, and even schools—and the factory systems, which they closely resembled in layout and in internal disciplinary organization. The rehabilitation of the convict in Jacksonian America, for example, meant the socialization of the convict to something akin to an industrial work discipline.[35]

33. Bender, *Urban Vision*, p. 197.

34. Ibid., p. 63.

35. See Michael Foucault, *Madness and Civilization* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965); Pollard, *Modern Management*, p. 162; David Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971); and Samuel Bowles and H. Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (New York: Basic Books, 1975). The relation between school and factory is portrayed with extraordinary insight in Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*.

That there is a relationship of some sort between working and living, and that by manipulating the latter a leverage can be exerted on the former, has not escaped the notice of the capitalist class. A persistent theme in the history of the advanced capitalist countries has been to look for those improvements in the living place that will enhance the happiness, docility, and efficiency of labor. In the model communities, this kind of program is quite explicit. George Pullman, in his ill-fated experiment, built the town that bears his name in 1880 in order to

> attract and retain a superior type of workingman, who would in turn be "elevated and refined" by the physical setting. This would mean contented employees and a consequent reduction in absenteeism, drinking and shirking on the job. Furthermore, such workers were expected to be less susceptible to the exhortation of "agitators" than the demoralized laborers of the city slums. His town would protect his company from labor unrest and strikes.[36]

And, we should add, the whole enterprise was supposed to make 6 percent on the capital invested. The Pullman strike of 1894 was a fitting epitaph to such a dream, demonstrating that direct unified control by the capitalists over the lives of labor in both the work place and the living place is an explosive issue.

The Pullman strike merely confirmed what had in any case been slowly dawning upon the capitalist producers throughout the nineteenth century. The direct confrontation between capital and labor in the living place exacerbates class tensions and conflict markedly because labor can easily identify the enemy—whether it be in company housing, the company store, company social services, or in the work place itself. It was no accident that some of the fiercest strikes and confrontations—such as Homestead in 1892 and Pullman in 1894—occurred in company towns. Under such conditions it is advantageous for the capitalist producers to seek out mediating influences that diffuse the target of labor's discontent. The privatization of housing provision, the creation of a separate housing landlord class, the creation of innumerable intermediaries in the retail and wholesale sector, and government provision of social services and public goods, all help to accomplish this. These measures also serve to socialize part of the costs of the reproduction of labor power and to facilitate the mobility of labor. For all of these reasons, the industrial capitalists seek to withdraw entirely from any direct involvement in the provision or management of the built environment.

The general proposition that Pullman had in mind, divorced from its paternalism and its tight, unified, and direct control aspects, is still important. The breakdown of the binding links of the old social order

36. S. Buder, *Pullman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 44.

was clearly necessary if the new industrial work disicpline was to be imposed upon the reluctant peasant or artisan. But this breakdown posed its own problems for social control and threatened the economic and social stability of the new order in a variety of ways. Bourgeois reformers sought to counter such threats and have long argued that proper housing, health care, education, and the like, are essential if workers are to become satisfied, virtuous, and solid citizens capable and willing to perform work tasks efficiently and thereby to do their bit to enhance the accumulation of capital.[37] Conversely, the typical industrial city, with its slums and overcrowding, its war of all against all, its signs of "moral degeneration" and vice, its dirt and grime and disease, was regarded as unconducive to the formation of a respectable working-class citizenry. Sometimes the reform strategy rests on a rather simple-minded environmental determinism—the idea that good housing creates good workers periodically appears on the stage of bourgeois reform thought, usually with not very effective consequences. But in its more sophisticated form, bourgeois reform proved capable of tapping and organizing the relation between working and living in a manner that indeed did contribute to the reestablishment of social stability and to the creation of a relatively well-satisfied work force. And in the course of this effort, the reformers defined the meaning of a use value in the built environment for labor in a certain way. Capital seeks to intervene—this time indirectly through bourgeois reform and by means of ideological and political mechanisms—because to do so serves its own purposes and strengthens its hand in its historic struggle with labor. But as the Pullman strike epitomizes, labor is not always a willing and docile partner in such manipulations.

This brings us to the second aspect of the connection between working and living in capitalist society. Marx's materialist posture led him to regard the relationship to nature as perhaps the most fundamental relation ordering human affairs. This relationship is itself expressed primarily through the work process that transforms the raw materials of nature into use values. The mode of organizing this work process—the mode of production—is therefore the basis upon which Marx builds his investigations. To put it this way is not to engage in a simplistic economic determinism; it merely advances the thesis that the relation to nature is the most fundamental aspect to human affairs. Industrial capitalism, armed with the factory system, organized the work process in a manner that transformed the relation between the

37. Much of this material as well as the argument are drawn from R. A. Walker, "The Suburban Solution" (Ph.D. diss., Department of Geography and Environmental Engineering, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1976).

worker and nature into a travesty of even its former very limited self. Because the worker was reduced to a "thing," the worker became alienated from his or her product, from the manner of producing it, and, ultimately, from nature itself.[38]

That there was something degrading and "unnatural" about such a work process was apparent even to bourgeois consciousness. Indeed, the organization of the factory system appeared just as unnatural to the bourgeoisie as it felt to those who had to live out their daily lives under its regimen. This understanding, as Raymond Williams points out, was achieved by landed capital well before the industrial revolution:

> The clearing of parks as "Arcadian" prospects depended on the completed system of exploitation of the agricultural and genuinely pastoral lands beyond the park boundaries. . . . [These] are related parts of the same process—superficially opposed in taste but only because in the one case the land is being organized for production, where tenants and labourers will work, while in the other case it is being organized for consumption. . . . Indeed it can be said of these eighteenth century arranged landscapes not only, as is just, that this was the high point of agrarian bourgeois art, but that they succeeded in creating in the land below their windows and terraces . . . a rural landscape . . . from which the facts of production had been banished.[39]

With the advent of industrial capitalism the penchant for actively countering in their own consumption sphere what they were organizing for others in the production sphere became even more emphatic for the bourgeoisie. The Romantic poets in Britain—led by Wordsworth and Coleridge—and writers like Emerson and Thoreau in the United States epitomized this reaction to the new industrial order. And the reaction did not remain confined to the realms of the ideologists. It was put into practice in the building of rural estates by the bourgeoisie, the establishment of the country mansion, the flight from the industrial city, and, ultimately, in the design of what Walker calls "the suburban solution."[40] The attempt to "bring nature back into the city" by writers and designers such as Olmstead and Ebenezer Howard in the nineteenth century, and Ian McHarg and Lewis Mumford in the twentieth, attests to the continuity of this theme in bourgeois thought and practice.[41]

38. Karl Marx, "The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *Karl Marx-Frederich Engels Collected Works*, vol. 3 (New York: 1975). See also A. Schmidt, *Marx's Concept of Nature* (London: 1971).

39. R. Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 124.

40. Walker, "The Suburban Solution."

41. Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (London: 1955), wrote, for example, of "so laying out a Garden City that, as it grows, the free gifts of Nature—fresh air, sunlight,

But if the bourgoisie felt it, the artisan and displaced peasant experienced the alienation from nature very concretely, and they reacted no less vigorously whenever they could. William Blake, the spokesman for the artisan class, complained bitterly of those "dark satanic mills" and swore with his usual revolutionary fervor that we would "build Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land." Faced with the brutalizing and degrading routine of the work process in the factory, the workers themselves sought ways to ameliorate it. In part they did so by resorting to the same mystifications as the bourgeoisie, and thus came to share a common romantic image of nature. When asked why the Lowell mill girls wrote so much about the beauties of nature, for example, the editor of their paper responded: "Why is it that the desert-traveller looks forward upon the burning, boundless waste, and sees pictured before his aching eyes, some verdant oasis?"[42] But merely to dream of some romantic idealized nature in the midst of the desert of the factory was scarcely enough, no matter how much it did to help the laborer through the long and tedious day. Consequently, as Bender reports: "Residents of Lowell made their periodic and appreciative contact with the natural landscape in a variety of ways. Besides using the cemetery and the public park, they sought nature through flights of fancy, through views from their windows, by walking out of the city (despite the no-trespassing signs . . .), and through summer visits to the country."[43]

The response rested on a mystification, of course, for it reduced "nature" to a leisure time concept, as something to be "consumed" in the course of restful recuperation from what was in fact a degrading relation to nature in the most fundamental of all human activities—work. But the mystification had bitten deep into the consciousness of all elements in society. To talk now of the relation to nature is to conjure up images of mountains and streams and seas and lakes and trees and green grass, far from the coal-face, the assembly line, and the factory, where the real transformation of nature is continuously being wrought.

But there is a sense in which this is a necessary and unavoidable mystification under capitalism. Without it, life would be scarcely bearable. And progressive elements within the bourgeoisie knew this to be as true for their workers as for themselves. Hardly surprisingly,

breathing room and playing room—shall be retained in all needed abundance, and so employing the resources of modern science that Art may supplement Nature, and life may become an abiding joy and delight," p. 127.

42. Bender, *Urban Vision*, p. 90.

43. Ibid.

therefore, the bourgeois reformers, often under the guise of moral universals and a romantic imagery, frequently sought to procure for their workers reasonable access to "nature." Olmsted, perhaps the most spectacular of these reformers in nineteenth-century America, saw that "the spontaneous interest of the worker was a more effective stimulus to work than any artificially imposed regimen," and it was a short step from this to proposing parks and sylvan suburbs as an antidote to the usual daily harrassments of urban industrial life.[44] Turned into practice, in Olmsted's day primarily for the middle classes, but increasingly in modern times for the "respectalbe" working class, this solution to the problems of urban-industrial life has had a powerful effect upon the physical landscapes of our cities. The counterpoint between nature—represented by pastoral images of the country—and a work process represented by the urban and the industrial, is central to the history of the capitalist mode of production. And the counterpoint contains a tension between what Raymond Williams calls "a necessary materialism and a necessary humanity," adding:

> Often we try to resolve it by dividing work and leisure, or society and the individual, or city and country, not only in our minds but in suburbs and garden cities, town houses and country cottages, the week and the weekend. But we then usually find that the . . . captains of the change, have arrived earlier and settled deeper; have made, in fact, a more successful self-division. The country house . . . was one of the first forms of this temporary resolution, and in the nineteenth century as many were built by the new lords of capitalist production as survived, improved, from the old lords. . . . It remains remarkable that so much of this settlement has been physically imitated, down to details of semi-detached villas and styles of leisure and weekends. An immensely productive capitalism, in all its stages, has extended both the resources and the modes which, however unevenly, provide and contain forms of response to its effects.[45]

These "forms of response" serve to define in part the meaning of use values in the built environment for labor. The residents of the contemporary suburbs, whether workers or bourgeois, are no less anxious, for example, to banish "the facts of production" from their purview than were the eighteenth-century landlords because those facts are, for the most part, unbearable. And insofar as workers in conjunction with the capitalists have found ways to do just this, they have created an urban landscape and a way of life that is founded on what Williams calls "an effective and imposing mystification"—but a mystification that combines elements of necessity and cruel hoax. Hanging onto some sense of an unalienated relation to nature makes life bearable for the worker if only because it leads to a realistic

44. Bender discusses this aspect of Olmsted's thought in detail.
45. Williams, *Country and the City*, p. 294.

appraisal of what has been lost and what potentially can be gained. But the romantic mystification of nature conceals rather than reveals the actual source of the sense of loss and alienation that pervades capitalist society. Bourgeois art, literature, urban design, and "designs for urban living," offer certain conditions in the living place as compensation for what can never truly be compensated for in the work place. Capital, in short, seeks to draw labor into a Faustian bargain: accept a packaged relation to nature in the living place as just and adequate compensation for an alienating and degrading relation to nature in the work place. And if labor refuses to be drawn in spite of all manner of seductions, blandishments, and a dominant ideology mobilized by the bourgoisie, then capital must impose it because the landscape of capitalist society must in the final analysis respond to the accumulation needs of capital, rather than to the very real human requirements of labor.

The Interventions of Capital: A Conclusion

Capital seeks to discipline labor as much in the home as in the factory because it is only in terms of an all-embracing domination of labor in every facet of its life that the "work ethic" and the "bourgeois values" necessarily demanded by the capitalist work process can be created and secured. The promotion of homeownership for workers establishes the workers' allegiance to the principle of private property and therefore fits with this general strategem. Sometimes conflicting with this drive we see that capital also needs to organize the consumption of the workers to ensure that it is cheap and rational from the standpoint of accumulation. The collectivization of consumption tends to take away the sense of individual responsibility and thereby undercuts the notion of bourgeois individualism if pushed too far. And running as a counterthread in all of this we see the need on the part of capital to promote in the workforce a sense of satisfaction and contentment that will lead spontaneous cooperation and efficiency in the work place. This condition cannot be cultivated without giving the worker at least the illusion of freedom of choice in the living place and of healthy and satisfying relation to nature in the consumption sphere. Such illusions are pervasive but not always easy to sustain in the face of the realities enforced by the necessities of accumulation for accumulation's sake, production for production's sake. And the conditions in the work place can never be that easily concealed, no matter how mountainous the mystifications.

Nevertheless, the response of labor to its own condition is constantly subjected to the interventions and mediations of capital. As

labor seeks to reorganize its mode of living to compensate for the degradations and disciplines of factory work, so capital seeks to colonize and pervert these efforts for its own purposes, sometimes to be turned cruelly against labor in the course of class struggle. Labor strives to raise its living standards by reducing the cost of living and increasing the use values it can command, but capital constantly seeks to subvert this drive, often through the agency of the state, into a reduction in the value of labor power and into "rational" modes of consumption understood from the standpoint of accumulation. As labor seeks relief from a degrading relation to nature in the work place, so capital seeks to parlay that into a mystified relation to nature in the consumption sphere. As labor seeks more control over the collective conditions of its existence, so capital seeks to establish collectivized forms of consumption and individual homeownership. The power of capital is omnipresent in the very definition of "a use value in the built environment for labor."

Conflicts in the living place are, we can conclude, mere reflections of the underlying tension between capital and labor. Appropriators and the construction faction mediate the forms of conflict—they stand between capital and labor and thereby shield the real source of tension from view. The surface appearance of conflicts around the built environment—the struggles against the landlord or against urban renewal— conceals a hidden essence that is nothing more than the struggle between capital and labor.

Capital may be omnipresent in such struggles, but it is neither omniscient nor omnipotent. The dynamics of accumulation require periodic rationalizations through crises that affect the working class in the form of bouts of widespread unemployment. At such moments the plans to coopt labor by the provision of "healthful and satisfying" living environments, by a contented relation to nature in the living place, go awry. In using the built environment as a coercive tool over consumption, capital ultimately coerces itself because it sets the conditions for the realization of values quite literally in a sea of concrete. And once committed, capital cannot go back. Pullman discovered this elemental fact in his ill-fated model town. When conditions of overaccumulation become apparent in the economy at large it became necessary to lay off workers, but Pullman could not do so because the profit to be had from the town were contingent upon full employment in the factory. The solution for the individual capitalist is to withdraw from the production of consumption fund items for the workers he or she employs. But the problem remains for the capitalist system as a whole. As problems of overaccumulation arise in capitalist

societies—and arise they must—so the most well-laid plans of the capitalist fall by the wayside and the mechanisms for mystification, cooptation, disciplining labor, and inculcating the work ethic and bourgeois virtues, begin to crumble. And it is at just such times that labor recognizes that the bargain that it has struck with capital is no bargain at all but founded on an idealized mystification. The promises of capital are seen to be just that and incapable of fulfullment. And it also becomes evident that the needs of labor for use values in the built environment are incapable of being met by the captains of the system who promise so much but who can deliver so little.

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS, COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS, AND COMPETITION

The phrase, "the standard of living of labor," plainly cannot be understood outside of the context of actual class struggles fought over a long period in particular places around the organization of both work and living. This continuously shifting standard defines the needs of labor with respect to use values—consumption fund items—in the built environment. Individual workers have different needs, of course, according to their position in the labor force, their familial situation, and their individual requirements. At the same time, the processes of wage rate determination in the work place yield different quantities of exchange value to workers in different occupational categories. The social power that this money represents can be used to procure control over certain use values in the built environment. The way this money is used affects the appropriation of rent and the functioning of the price signals that induce the flow of capital into the production of new consumption fund items. We can envisage three general situations.

Consider, first, a situation in which each worker seeks independently to command for his or her own private use the best bundle of resources in the best location. We envisage a competitive war of all against all, a society in which the ethic of "possessive individualism" has taken root in the consciousness of workers in a very fundamental way. If the use values available in the built environment are limited, which is usually the case, then individuals make use of their market power and bid for scarce resources in the most advantageous locations. At its most elemental level this competition is for survival chances, for each worker knows that the ability to survive is dependent upon the ability to secure access to a particular bundle of resources in a reasonably healthy location. There is also competition to acquire "market capacity"—that bundle of attitudes, understandings, and skills that permits the worker to sell his or her labor power at a higher wage rate

than the average.[46] Symbols of status, prestige, rank, and importance (even self-respect) may also be acquired by procuring command over particular resources in prestigious locations. These symbols may be useful in that they help a worker gain an easier entry into a particularly privileged stratum within the wage labor force. And finally we can note that if the relation to nature in the work place is felt to be as degrading as it truly is, then there is a positive incentive to seek a location far enough away that the "facts of production" are in no way represented in the landscape. In other words, workers may compete to get as far as possible away from the work place (the automobile proves particularly useful for this purpose).

The competitive situation that we have here outlined is in most respects identical to that assumed in neoclassical models of land use determination in urban areas.[47] Individual households, such models assume, attempt to maximize their utility by competing with each other for particular bundles of goods in particular locations subject to a budget constraint. If it is assumed that the two most important "goods" being competed for are locations with lower aggregate transportation costs and housing space, then it can be shown with relative ease that individuals will distribute themselves in space according to (1) the distribution of employment opportunities, usually assumed to be collected together in one central location, and (2) the relative marginal propensities to consume transportation services and living space in the context of the overall budget constraint. Competitive bidding under these conditions will generate a differential rent surface that, in the case of a single employment center, declines with distance from the center at the same time as it distributes individuals by income in space. In this case the ability to appropriate differential rent is entirely created by competitive behavior within the working class. Also, if new development is typically distributed in response to the pricing signals set by such differential rents, then it is easy to show that a spatial structure to the built environment will be created that reflects, to large degree, social and wage stratifications within the labor force.

The second situation that we wish to consider is one in which collective action in space—community action—is important. The pervasive externality effects and the collective use of many items in the

46. See Anthony Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* (London: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 103.

47. See, for example, W. Alonso, *Location and Land Use* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964); and E. S. Mills, *Studies in the Structure of the Urban Economy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1972).

built environment mean that it is in the self-interest of individuals to pursue modest levels of collective action.[48] Workers who are homeowners know that the value of the savings tied up in the house depends on the actions of others. It is in their common interest to collectively curb "deviant" behaviors, bar "noxious" facilities, and to ensure high standards of public service. This collectivization of action may go well beyond that required out of pure individual self-interest. A consciousness of place, "community consciousness," may emerge as a powerful force that spawns competition between communities for scarce public investment funds, and the like. Community competition becomes the order of the day.

This process relates to the appropriation of rent in an interesting way. Community control enables those in control to erect barriers to investment in the built environment. The barriers may be selective—the exclusion of low-income housing, for example—or more or less across the board, a ban on all forms of future growth. Actions of this sort have been common in suburban jurisdictions in the United States in recent years. The cartel powers of local government are in effect being mobilized to control investment through a variety of legal and planning devices. Homeowners may use these controls to maintain or enhance the value of their properties. Developers may seek to use such controls for rather different purposes. But "community consciousness" typically creates small legal "islands" within which monopoly rents are appropriatable, often by one faction of labor at the expense of another faction. This latter situation gives rise to internecine conflicts within the working class along parochialist community-based lines. The spatial structure of the city is very different under these conditions compared to the product of individual competition.

The third kind of situation we can envisage is that of a fully class-conscious proletariat struggling against all forms of exploitation, whether they be in the work place or in the living place. Workers do not use their social power as individuals to seek individual solutions; they do not compete with each other for survival chances, for ability to acquire market capacity, for symbols of status and prestige. They fight collectively to improve the lot of all workers everywhere and eschew those parochialist forms of community action that typically lead one faction of labor to benefit at the expense of another (usually the poor and underprivileged).

Under such conditions the appropriation of rent cannot be attrib-

48. The theory of self-interested collective action is laid out in Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), but the theory of community is a mess that will require a good deal of sorting out.

uted to the competitive behavior of individual workers or of whole communities. It has to be interpreted, rather, as something forced upon labor in the course of class struggle. A differential rent surface may arise in an urban area, but it does so not because labor automatically engages in competitive bidding, but because the class power of the appropriators is used to extract a rent to the maximum possible, given that resources are scarce and that they exist in a relative space. Because we witness a consequent social stratification (according to income) in space, and a development process that exacerbates this social ordering, we cannot infer that this is simply a reflection of individual workers expressing their "subjective utilities" through the market. Indeed, it may express the exact opposite—the power of the appropriators to force certain choices on workers no matter what the individual worker may think or believe. The power to appropriate rent is a class relation and we have to understand it that way if we are to understand how residential differentiation emerges within cities and the degree to which this phenomenon is the outcome of free or forced choices.[49]

The three situations we have examined—competitive individualism, community action, and class struggle—are points on a continuum of possibilities. We cannot automatically assume labor to be at any particular point on this continuum. This is something to be discovered by concrete investigations of particular situations. The United States, for example, appears to be more strongly dominated by competitive individualism and community consciousness compared to the more class-conscious working class in Europe. From the standpoint of capital, individual and community competition is advantageous because it then seems as if the appropriation of rent results from labor's own actions rather than from the actions of the appropriators themselves. The overt forms of conflict around the built environment depend, therefore, upon the outcome of a deeper and often hidden ideological struggle for the consciousness of those doing the struggling. This deeper struggle between individual, community, and class alignments and consciousness, provides the context in which daily struggles over everyday issues occur.

A CONCLUSION

The capitalist mode of production forces a separation between working and living at the same time as it reintegrates them in complex

49. I have attempted a preliminary analysis on this theme in David Harvey, "Class Structure in a Capitalist Society and the Theory of Residential Differentiation," in *Processes in Physical and Human Geography*, ed. M. Chisholm, P. Hagget, and R. F. Peel (London, 1975).

ways. The superficial appearance of conflict in contemporary urban-industrial society suggests that there is indeed a dichotomy between struggles in the work place and in the living place and that each kind of struggle is fought according to different principles and rules. Struggles around the consumption fund for labor, which have been the focus of attention in this paper, seemingly arise out of the inevitable tensions between appropriators seeking rent, builders seeking profit, financiers seeking interest, and labor seeking to counter the secondary forms of exploitation that occur in the living place. All of this seems self-evident enough.

But the manner and form of such everyday overt conflicts are a reflection of a much deeper tension with less easily identifiable manifestations—a struggle over the definition and meaning of use values, of the standard of living of labor, of the quality of life, of consciousness, and even of human nature itself. From this standpoint, the overt struggles between landlord-appropriators, builders, and labor, which we began by examining, are to be seen as mediated manifestations of the deep underlying conflict between capital and labor. Capital seeks definitions, seeks to impose meanings, conducive to the productivity of labor and to the consumption of the commodities that capitalists can profitably produce. Like Dickens's *Dombey and Son*, capital deals "in hides but never in hearts." But labor seeks its own meanings, partly derived out of a rapidly fading memory of artisan and peasant life, but also out of the ineluctable imperative to learn what it is to be human. "Human nature" has, then, no universal meaning, but is being perpetually recast in the fires of restless struggle. And even though capital may dominate and impose upon us a predominantly *capitalist* sense of human nature, the resistances are always there, and the internal tensions within the capitalist order—between private appropriation and socialized production, between individualism and social interdependency—are so dramatic that we, each of us, internalize a veritable maelstrom of hopes and fears into our present conduct. The human nature that results, with all of its complex ambiguities of desire, need, creativity, estrangement, selfishness, and sheer human concern, forms the very stuff out of which the overt struggles of daily life are woven. The manner in which these struggles are fought likewise depends upon a deeper determination of consciousness—individual, community, or class-based as the case may be—of those who do the struggling. From this standpoint it must surely be plain that the separation between working and living is at best a superficial estrangement, an apparent breaking assunder of what can never be kept apart. And it is at this deeper level, too, that we can more clearly see the

underlying unity between work-based and "community"-based conflicts. They are not mere mirror images of each other, but distorted representations, mediated by many intervening forces and circumstances, which mystify and render opaque the fundamental underlying class antagonism upon which the capitalist mode of production is founded. And it is, of course, the task of science to render clear through analysis what is mystified and opaque in daily life.