LOUANN WURST

Internalizing Class in Historical Archaeology

ABSTRACT

Historical archaeologists have either ignored class or defined it as a category or objective entity. In this work, it is argued that viewing class as a formation provides a powerful tool for studying the past. Defining class in this way stems from a theory of internal relations that sees class as a relational, analytical concept that operates at more than one scale or level of abstraction. Two examples demonstrate the class dynamics in different social and historic contexts. The first focuses on class at the community level, while the second looks at the class structure within a single household. Only through the process of abstracting class in real historic contexts can we operationalize class as an analytical concept powerful enough to understand internal social relations.

Introduction

Many historical archaeologists recognize that our field is explicitly defined by capitalist social relations (Handsman 1983; Orser 1987; Leone and Potter 1988; Little 1994; Leone 1995). Others have defined historical archaeology in terms of modernity or colonialism (Schuyler 1970; Deetz 1977; Deagan 1991; Orser 1996). These terms do not deny connections to capitalism, although they effectively mask them. The irony of this emphasis on capitalism is that historical archaeologists have spent very little time addressing the issue of class— a concept that many believe is central to capitalism. A decade ago, Paynter (1988:409) wrote that "few analysts have attempted to make detailed use of class models of capitalism." This situation remains unchanged and class continues to be a "ghost" concept in historical archaeology.

Defining class is difficult since numerous controversial views abound. Part of the difficulty stems from three very different definitions of the term. Williams (1983:60-69) cogently presents a "classification" of these multiple meanings:

i) objective group: class as a discrete social or economic category;
ii) rank: class as relative social position by birth or mobility;
iii) formation: class based on perceived economic relationship; social political and cultural organization.

Williams argues that all three of these usages have been combined, often without clear distinction. The key difference among these definitions is that class has been used either as a category (either objective or relative, i and ii) or a relational formation (iii). This framework presents a useful way to organize the ways that historical archaeologists have used the class concept.

Perhaps the most obvious way historical archaeologists have dealt with class is avoidance. The post-modern focus on the subjective individual precludes inquiry into issues of class. Since much recent work places the autonomous individual on center stage (Thomas 1996), social formations, such as class, become blurred or invisible. Avoiding class can be found, however, in other, perhaps surprising, contexts. Orser (1996:86) "makes no explicit study" of class when discussing his "haunts" of colonialism, eurocentrism, capitalism, and modernity. In another example, Shackel (1996) studies the changing nature of work at Harpers Ferry, emphasizing the worker's loss of autonomy as a result of deskilling labor, yet the word "class" does not appear in the book's index and seldom in the text.

By far, the most common approach has been to link class with status, and these terms are often used interchangeably (Baugher and Venables 1987; Shepard 1987). Spencer-Wood and Heberling (1987:59) define status as "the location of the behavior of individuals or the social positions of individuals themselves in the structure of any group. It is a defined social position located in a defined social universe." They go on to suggest that although class and status are not synonymous, there is a high level of correlation between the two concepts; Spencer-Wood and Heberling do not provide a definition of class.

The categories used in these works typically divide society into three classes, upper, middle, and lower, although six classes have also been used: upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower, and lower-lower (LeeDecker et al. 1987). These class titles are all relative and affiliate these approaches with Williams' second definition—class as ranked social position. This relative social position is most often determined based on documentary evidence of wealth or occupation.

Another common approach has been to link class with what Eagleton (1996) calls the great triplet of gender, class, and race. This is clearly the case for Orser and Fagan's (1995) historical archaeology textbook, which devotes less then two pages to class; its discussion is followed by somewhat longer discussions of gender, ethnicity, and race. Most historical archaeologists recognize the complex intersections between class, race, gender, and ethnicity (Scott 1994; Orser and Fagan 1995; Orser 1996), yet continue to identify all of these aspects as objective traits or attributes that characterize individual identity.

Both of the major approaches to class in historical archaeology—class grouped with gender, ethnicity, and race, or class as status—define class as an objective category based on attributes of individuals (a combination of William's first and second definitions). The process of defining class as an objective category is also evident in the way historical archaeologists approach their work. A common scenario can be defined as follows: historical research is undertaken to identify the occupants of a property; these occupants are identified by class (i.e., occupation or income); this class is then "tested" archaeologically based on the cost of ceramics or sometimes meat cuts, assuming a direct relationship between cost and status (Miller 1980, 1991; Schultz and Gust 1983; Shepard 1987) while Levin (1985) presents a critique. Therefore, class is assumed to be an objective, unproblematic, and "real" category.

Whether linked with race, ethnicity, and gender, or with status, historical archaeologists almost exclusively ignore the concept of class as a formation. The full potentials of the relational aspects of class (Williams' third definition) have yet to be explored, however consult Paynter (1988). As a result of this emphasis, class as a dynamic concept has ossified into a reified category, a process that is revealing testimony to the efficacy of bourgeois ideology.

The relational aspects of the class concept are one of the most important theoretical and analytical tools an historical archaeologist can use. Operationalizing class in a relational context requires a theory of internal relations. In what follows, I present a summary of a theory of internal relations, then discusses the implications of this approach for the archaeology of class. There are three main points relevant to this discussion: class is a powerful relational concept; class is an analytical concept; and class operates, and thus must be studied, at more than one scale or level of abstraction.

Class as Internal Relations

A theory of internal relations is based on the concept of the dialectic, where the web of social relations makes up the whole, and the appearance of these relations are taken to be its parts (Ollman 1993:35). As McGuire (1992) notes, a theory of internal relations is not the only approach that uses the idea of relations. Relations are equally important within systems theory and other "common sense" approaches. The difference, however, is that these theories define concrete entities that interact as external relations. Using the dialectic implies that it is the relation that actually defines what the entity will be, and that the entity does not and cannot exist apart from that relation (Ollman 1971, 1993; Sayer 1987; McGuire 1992:94; Harvey 1996). One common example is husband-wife, neither of which exist without the other. If the relations between husband-wife are severed, as in divorce, both of these entities are transformed into ex-husband and ex-wife. In this simplified example, it is the relation that defines the entity.

Dialectical research focuses on the whole of real lived experience, recognizing, as McGuire (1993:15) expresses, the "complex tapestry of intricate design and exquisite manufacture" and then proceeds to an examination of the part to see where it fits and how it functions. The elements are defined through the process of abstraction, the simple recognition that all thinking about reality begins by breaking it down into manageable parts (Ollman 1993:24). According to Sayer (1987:147), this process begins with the use of concepts that are empirically open-ended and analytically capable of letting the real world in. This process eventually leads back to a fuller understanding of the whole we began with (Ollman 1993:12), defined not as universals, but as the way people live their own history (Thompson 1966).

Since the relations among people are not universally given, they can only be defined with reference to a particular historical context (Sayer 1987). Thus, the content of commonly named relations such as family, kinship, the forces and relations of production, class, or ideology can only be defined with reference to concrete empirical phenomena; we can make no assumptions about what structure these relations will take. Therefore, within a theory of internal relations, class is not an entity that changes or reacts to history, but a set of relations that are historically constituted, fluid and constantly changing.

It is also important to realize that Marx uses the dialectic in two ways: as a social theory to account for the way the world works and, equally important, as a method of inquiry (Marquardt 1992; Ollman 1993:12). This dual usage has implications for the dialectical use of class. In this context, class can be conceived in a general sense as both an analytical concept, and as a concrete reality (McGuire 1992). Real classes only exist in concrete historical contexts. Yet, class is also used as an analytical concept to classify, organize, and make sense of the complex web of social relations that forms human society. This process can be seen in Marx's general definition of class which focused on the

determinant role of the development of forces and relations of production in human history (Godelier 1986). For Marx, the relations of production and differential group membership formed the dynamic in any context. Thus, Marx and Engels' famous quote: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx and Engels 1955:9), refers to class in this general sense.

In the abstract, we can define class in terms of the bearers or agents of social relations, but cannot specify what form class will take in any particular context. As Sayer has suggested, "to define a class—or any other social phenomenon—is, in the final analysis, to write its history" (Sayer 1987:22). To define a class, we must realize that class is not a thing we can find by sifting dirt or identify by a badge or insignia. Many historical archaeologists have tried to create predictive models of class by relating economic wealth or occupation to material patterns. In effect, class is projected as a "universal," a single attribute of individuals or households rather than an analytical category. This process "defines class" without examining the social relations present, and thereby reifies those categories. Sayer (1987) refers to this process as the "violence of abstraction." As Thompson (1978:85) writes: "When, in discussing class, one finds oneself too frequently commencing sentences with 'it', it is time to place oneself under some historical control, or one is in danger of becoming the slave of one's own categories."

Abstraction

The process of abstraction is the key to operationalizing a relational view of class. Marx claimed, in his most explicit methodological statement, that his method started with the world as it presented itself and proceeded through abstraction, the intellectual process of breaking down the whole into component units (Marx and Engels 1970:42). Ollman (1993) suggests that Marx used abstraction in three different, but closely related, senses: abstraction of extension,

abstraction of levels of generality, and abstraction of vantage point. These three types of abstractions occur simultaneously rather than as separate moments, but it is useful to examine each of them in turn.

Abstractions of extension refer to delimiting both spatial and temporal boundaries, aspects that are necessary for all archaeological research. Unlike common temporal or periodization schemes, abstractions of extension within the framework of a theory of internal relations require abstracting relations or processes rather than simply events or results. Marquardt (1992) refers to this process as the dialectics of scale and notes that as individuals act on numerous different scales, our analyses must also be multi-scalar. The patterns of human interaction identified will vary depending on what scale is examined, or how the abstractions of extension are drawn. To be truly effective, Marquardt argues that multiple scales must be examined since different social relations come into focus at different scales (Crumley and Marquardt 1987; Marquardt 1992; Orser 1996).

This process of shifting scales can be seen in how Marx abstracted class. The class that any individual belonged to, in fact even the number of classes present in society, was effected by where Marx drew his abstractions of extension (Ollman 1993:47). Marx's well-known allusion to capitalism as a two-class society is based on abstracting all groups in society into either workers or capitalists. On other occasions, Marx abstracted more limited extensions which allowed him to refer to a variety of classes or class fractions based on many social and economic differences (Marx 1987).

Abstractions of levels of generality entail alternating the focus from the specifics of a particular context to more generalized levels. Moving from the most specific to the general, Ollman organizes Marx's abstractions of generality into seven levels: the first level contains all that is unique about a person or situation; level two deals with what is general to people in a particu-

lar context, in Marx's case, modern capitalism; level three entails all that is unique to people within capitalist society; level four is the level of class society; level five is human society and brings into focus all that humans have in common; level six deals with the commonalities of the animal world; and level seven brings into focus qualities relating to the material part of nature (Ollman 1993:55-56).

All of these levels are present simultaneously and they are all equally real. At each of these levels, however, different aspects of the social relations are made visible. This is clearly seen in terms of how Marx generalized class. Ollman (1993:58) suggests that Marx abstracted humans:

> as *a* class on level four, as one of the main classes that emerge from capitalist relations of production—workers, capitalists and sometimes landowners—on level three, and as one of the many classes and fragments of classes that exist in a particular country in the most recent period on level two.

This process is starkly different from most "common sense" ideas about class which move directly from level one (the unique individual) to level five (the human condition). As Ollman succinctly states, "in proceeding in their thinking directly from level one to level five, they may never even perceive, and hence have no difficulty in denying, the very existence of classes" (Ollman 1993:58).

Vantage point, or "point of view," refers to drawing abstractions from different sides of the same relation. Since dialectical relations represent a whole, both sides must be examined to understand that whole. For example, Marx claims that capital and labor were "expressions of the same relation, only seen from the opposite pole" (Marx 1971:491). Ollman argues that Marx's various class distinctions are discernable only from the vantage point of the qualities that serve as the defining criteria for a given classification (Ollman 1993:74). Thus, class divisions drawn from the vantage point of capital will be different from those perceived from the perspec-

tive of labor. For example, taking the vantage point of labor, the landowner can be seen as a capitalist in the sense that he owns commodities, while different qualities would be visible from the perspective of the capitalist (Marx 1963:51). Therefore, the class divisions of society will change as different vantage points are adopted.

Abstractions of vantage point are not limited to a theory of internal relations. Most common "point of view" abstractions, however, are not without their biases. Ollman claims that the isolated individual is the preferred vantage point for studying society and "society becomes what social relations look like when viewed from this angle" (Ollman 1993:71). Since most "common sense" approaches omit the social levels of generality, they cannot be seen as effective vantage points.

While these different kinds of abstraction have been discussed separately, they actually occur simultaneously. The abstractions Marx used in any particular case were determined by the social relations he was exploring; the part of the social whole he was trying to understand. Moving between different extensions, levels of generality, and vantage points, allowed him to define and explore, bring into and out of focus, different aspects of the social relations that make up the social whole. In this sense, it is not simply the classification that was important to Marx's understanding, but the movement between the abstractions that made visible the inherent contradictions in society. The implication of this process of abstraction is that creating a firm and final list of the classes in capitalist society is neither possible, nor desirable. Ollman (1993:47) argues that "arriving at a clear-cut, once-and-for-all classification of capitalist society into classes" was not Marx's goal:

> Rather than simply a way of registering social stratification as part of a flat description or as a prelude to rendering a moral judgement, which would require a stable unit, class helps Marx to analyze a changing situation in which it is itself an integral and changing part (Ollman 1993:48).

By far, archaeologists have the easiest time moving between abstractions of extension. Historical archaeologists, in the course of their work, are constantly shifting between various abstractions of extension; in one breath we talk about the organization of a single household, while in the next we refer to the development of capitalism. We have also recently become much more aware of the advantages of shifting vantage point. This process is clearly seen in terms of theorizing dominance and resistance (McGuire and Paynter 1991; Beaudry et al. 1991 Ferguson 1992) and feminist approaches (Little 1994; Scott 1994). There seems, however, to be little general awareness of abstractions of levels of generality. Focusing on class as an attribute of individuals, linked either with status or gender and race, shows that many historical archaeologists have fallen into the trap of the "common sense" approach, which proceeds directly from the individual level to that of the general human level. As Ollman noted, this approach completely bypasses class.

The relational definition of class advocated here requires us to examine the relations actually present in any historic context instead of assuming *a priori* that we already know what they are. Recognizing that class is a relational, analytical category that we, as researchers, create based on abstractions of extension, levels of generality, and vantage point, emancipates us to use class as a powerful tool. Even though historical archaeologists commonly move between different scales, the concept of "class" is seldom operationalized at various levels. Few of us have ever dealt with a situation like Boott Mills, where the class relations operating at the level of the site closely mirror those of a larger scale (Beaudry et al. 1991; Mrozowski et al. 1996).

Since class takes "place," that is, real classes do not exist in the abstract, two examples will be presented that demonstrate the class dynamics outlined in this theoretical discussion. Different social and historic contexts highlight the general applicability of this class concept. The first ex-

ample focuses on class at the community level, while the second looks at the class structure within a single household. Only through the process of abstracting class in real historic contexts can we begin to operationalize class as an analytical concept powerful enough to understand internal social relations.

Example: Class in a Rural Community

The small rural community of Upper Lisle in upstate New York provides an ideal example of how class, as an analytical category, "works" at the community scale in which most archaeologists operate (Wurst 1993). Class is seldom seen as an appropriate topic of study for 19th-century rural America, based on how this social context is typically abstracted. "Rural" is a set of vital images that have been redefined throughout American history, and still resonates with most Americans today. The popularity of the modern image can be found in the fluorescence of country decorating magazines, Christmas cards with Currier and Ives prints, federal subsidies for farmers, and advertising featuring rustic logos.

These images are based on an agrarian or pastoral ideal that defines "rural" social relations in contrast to urban—as simple, homogeneous, agricultural, and past, while urban is complex, stratified, industrial, and future (Johnstone 1938; Hofstadter 1955; L. Marx 1964; Burns 1989; Montmarquet 1989). These images have impacted historians and archaeologists dealing with rural America, since they have dealt almost exclusively with farmers and their families, focusing on the agricultural aspects of rural America (Bellamy et al. 1990).

Barron (1986:145) has suggested that class relations in the countryside are more elusive than in an urban context, since the ownership of property (particularly land) was more widespread. The widespread ownership of land has often led to the conclusion that northern rural society was composed of a homogeneous "middling" class of farmers (Gordon and McArther 1984; McMurry 1988). Since they stood structurally in the same

relation to the ownership of the means of production, class, from this vantage point, is thought not to have existed.

Even so, a considerable literature exists detailing rural social stratification. This stratification is typically based on age or gender, or defined as a temporary stage (Winters 1978; Jensen 1986; Atack and Bateman 1987; Atack 1988, 1989; Osterud 1991). Throughout the 19th century, agricultural class relations were commonly articulated through the metaphorical agricultural ladder of success. This metaphor likens agricultural stratification to the rungs of a ladder, with the laborer at the bottom, various levels of tenancy in the middle, and the landowning farmer at the top (Atack 1989:1). Even though this model of social mobility had a basis in reality, it also served to legitimate class differences by defining them as natural, as opposed to social and temporary.

Most researchers do not confront the fact that almost one third of the population in rural areas were involved in non-agricultural activities such as industries, service, and labor. When rural industries and services are addressed, the product and those who made it are seen as simply providing a necessary service to the local farmers (Barron 1984; Atack and Bateman 1987). Few scholars have studied how industries are integrated into rural communities, leaving a hollow and simplistic view of what rural life was like (Stott 1996). For most, "rural" is defined as a homogenous society of farmers where class does not exist.

In approaching Upper Lisle, analytical boundaries were drawn around the entire community, including both the hamlet and the surrounding township. This highlighted aspects of the social context that are otherwise missed; particularly the role of rural industry. Since the goal was to put industry back into our conceptions of rural, the Burghardts' tannery as an *entree* to the whole of the social relations operating in that community. This vantage point revealed that class not only existed in Upper Lisle, but was a vital structuring component of that community.

In order to highlight this context, the next boundary was drawn between agricultural and industrial production. By doing this, the tannery owners were defined as a separate class from the wealthy farmers. This brought into focus the reality that even though both of these groups controlled ownership of the means of production, they were distinguished at another level by differing social relations, particularly requirements of labor. The tannery relied on a permanent, though transitory, Irish immigrant wage labor force. In general, the farmers in the Upper Lisle area also used wage labor, but only on a sporadic and temporary basis. Taking the vantage point of the agricultural worker, however, makes it possible to define a class of agricultural laborers who was engaged in permanent wage relations. These agricultural laborers did not work exclusively for specific farmers but rather operated a circuit for whoever needed labor. This process did not make their wage labor any less real.

These different labor requirements created ideological constraints which resulted in very different material strategies between the tannery owner and other rural elites. The wealthy farmers were publicly conspicuous in their use of material culture. They occupied a highly visible place in the community through their presence in the local "vanity press" histories, the use of large ostentatious gravestones, and the construction of large, costly Greek Revival style homes. The wealthy farmers' material strategy of prominent display was shaped within the context of an ideology that naturalized the social structure by incorporating an element of social mobility, the agricultural ladder, which defined class differences as temporary.

In contrast, the Burghardts who owned the tannery were noticeably absent from the biographies included in the subscription histories, they had modest gravestones in an ambiguous location of the cemetery, employed Romantic Revival architectural features, and had relatively small and inexpensive houses. These differing material strategies could not be explained in terms of dis-

similar wealth holdings since the censuses showed comparable assets for both the wealthy farmers and the Burghardts. The Burghardts' material behavior actively minimized the differences between themselves and their workers, denying the existence of the class structure and the problematic nature their of class differences. In this context, emphasizing social mobility was not relevant since the immigrant laborers had very little hope of ever owning their own tannery.

The Burghatdts strategy of materially minimizing class differences should not, however, be taken as evidence that tannery workers did not experience those class differences. These class relations were played out within a physical landscape of control. John Burghardt's house stood on a glacial rise approximately 3 meters higher than the surrounding flood plain. Immediately to the east was John Burghardt, Jr.'s house. The tannery workers lived and worked within a landscape bounded by the Burghardts' houses on one side, and the tannery and river on the other. In essence, the workers were circumscribed between a foul smelling tannery and probably an equally foul river on one hand, and the bosses' residences on the other. The tannery and residential area of the workers were also located in the very center of Upper Lisle. In a community as small as Upper Lisle, all behavior that went on there would have been very visible, constituting a landscape of power and control, with the actions of the workers either being constrained or at least always observable.

Unlike common myths which define rural social relations as simple, homogeneous, and agrarian, there was a complex class structure operating in Upper Lisle. This class structure incorporated both agricultural and industrial productive spheres and included laborers in both agriculture and industry, small commodity producers and farmers, merchants, wealthy farmers, and the Burghardts, who stood alone both in their substantial wealth and use of full-time wage labor. While many might object to defining the tanners as a class, even a class of one, in this context, this process has brought into focus aspects of the

social relations operating in Upper Lisle, and rural America in general, that would not be possible otherwise.

Example: Class Within the Household

Historical archaeology operates within a paradox: we excavate sites as the locus of household or family relations, yet generally utilize an individual scale of abstraction. This process obscures the fact that households are often a locus of class conflict. Viewing households simplistically also has serious implications for how material culture is perceived. Emphasizing the individual level requires the simplistic association of material goods with their owners. This mystifies the fact that a single artifact can be used in different ways, and therefore can have different meanings, for different classes within a single context. For example, Spencer-Wood and Heberling (1987) refer to the Green family of Vermont as having an elite socioeconomic status. All the artifacts recovered from the excavations of this house lot were associated with the Green family, and evaluated as an elite assemblage. In one passage, however, they reveal that "boarders and servants lived in the household" (Spencer-Wood and Heberling 1987:65). Obviously, the Green household was not without its class dynamics. The ceramics recovered from this household may well have been bought and used by the Green family, but they were also washed, dried, used, served, and broken by the domestics who lived and worked there. The Green household cannot be understood by ignoring these class relations.

Excavations performed by the Public Archaeology Facility in downtown Binghamton provide an opportunity to assess the nature of class at the household level (Wurst and Versaggi 1993). Archaeological research centered on a single block slated to be developed as a downtown mall. One advantage of this project area, referred to as Block 3, was that the properties themselves changed size and shape very little during the 19th century, reflecting their equally

stable ownership. All three of the household heads of the properties considered here were merchants in Binghamton. John T. Doubleday was a partner in a druggist firm, while Uriah Stowers and Richard Mather appear to have been partners in general mercantile firms. Mather was also involved in the manufacture of lime. All three of these individuals were early settlers in the area and were involved in local municipal government. Doubleday served as County Clerk, Stowers was actively involved in the establishment of the water works, and Mather served as County Treasurer for several years. These men all shared another interesting similarity; they all married daughters of Mason Whiting, a prominent lawyer who lived on the next block.

Even though the household heads of these properties can be characterized as elites, this in no way encompasses all the occupants of their households. Census records show that every one of the houses in the project area included domestic servants who lived in the homes of their employers. Less obvious from the documentary records are the day laborers, stable hands, and drivers who were probably hired to work for the households. The historic maps show that these properties all had carriage houses; the carriage house on the Mather lot was two stories tall and designated with a separate "house" number. This "residence" may have served as detached quarters for the servants listed in the censuses. No confirmation of servant's residence in the carriage house is available from the city directories, which is not surprising given the selective collection techniques expressed in the introduction to William's Binghamton City and Broome County Directory for 1881:

> In making our canvas, it will be observed that we have not invaded every kitchen and wash room in the city to swell the number of names with *servants* and *domestics*—transients here to-day and gone to-morrow—but have taken only those we consider permanent citizens [emphasis in original].

These individuals, often invisible in our histories, left an indelible mark on the archaeological

record and any interpretation of these properties must consider these social relations of class within the household. Even though the occupational distribution of household heads appears homogeneous, the individuals who occupied and used the block were not.

Common understandings derived from labor history see the social relations of production for women in general, and particularly for the female domestic servant, as anachronistic. Domestic servants did not experience the transformations in the "industrializing and modernizing society in which workplace and home had become separate and the daily hours of work were rapidly diminishing" (Katzman 1978:95). Work for the domestic servant was characterized by long hours, from morning to night, with no real time off because they were always "on call" (Katzman 1978; Sutherland 1981; Dudden 1983). The world of the domestic servant exhibited an almost total lack of personal freedom; in terms of clothing, room furnishings, diet, and time off, they had very little control. They spent most of their time isolated in their employers' households where "every distinction between the world of the family and that of the servant served as a reminder of her inability to control her own living conditions" (Katzman 1978:109).

Domestic servants were not powerless, however, and their behavior often exhibited elements of personal rebellion. Employers complained of servants' independent, haughty bearing, copying middle-class modes of dress, repugnance of livery or other uniform dress requirements, and the use of euphemisms for servant including help or domestic (Sutherland 1981). By far their most effective means of rebellion, and the most annoying to their employers, was their "habit of perpetual motion" (Sutherland 1981:130). The notorious transiency of domestic servants was attributed to many complex reasons, but an important factor was the domestic servants' ability to calculate their own best interests. The promise of higher pay, lighter work, or a family with higher status were all common reasons for shifting positions. This pattern of mobility can easily be seen in the Binghamton Mall project area, since the names of the domestics in each household were different for each census year.

Archaeologically investigating these class relations within the household does not necessarily require separating those deposits that result from the elite occupants from those related to servants; these social relations structured the entire archaeological deposit. Even though these deposits do not necessarily *need* to be separated, there are some situations where this is useful. There was one deposit from the Mather property (sampled with Unit N50) that was radically different from the remainder of the assemblages, and these differences are important for interpreting class within this household.

The Sanborn maps show that N50 was located along the interior foundation wall of a lean-to addition on the stable/carriage house. The deposit on the inside of this foundation contained a privy-like fill with a high density of historic artifacts. Botanical analysis has identified large amounts of grass seeds, indicating stable cleaning, as well as seeds associated with human foods, such as raspberry, blackberry, and strawberry. The two chamber pots found in this fill suggest the origin of these latter seeds. This midden deposit seems to have accumulated through the combined processes of stable cleaning and refuse disposal.

The N50 assemblage contained a large assemblage of ceramics and glass with dates ranging from 1850 to 1870. The ceramic assemblage recovered from this deposit contrasts starkly with the remainder of the Mather property. Of the 56 vessels recovered from N50, 45% were whitewares and 27% were the cheaper common creamwares. This contrasts with 72% whitewares and only 8% creamwares from the contemporary collection of 379 vessels recovered from the rest of the property. Equally conspicuous differences exist in the decoration found on the white and cream bodied wares from these areas. The percentage of undecorated vessels from the Mather property is 13%, and 15.5% if molded wares are included. In contrast, 54% of the vessels from

N50 were undecorated. This figure increases to 80% if we include molded edge ironstones. The decorated wares from N50 (20%) were transfer printed. The rest of the Mather collection contained 56% transfer printed vessels, more than double the percentage found in N50.

The faunal assemblage recovered from N50 is also starkly different from the rest of the Mather property. Of the four major domesticates recovered from the block, N50 had a similar percentage of cow to the rest of the Mather property, but about half the pig, sheep, and lamb and over three times the percentage of chicken. The chicken bones recovered from N50 alone represent almost 40% of all the chicken identifications for the entire property. It appears that chicken and beef were more important in the diet of N50 refuse producers while elsewhere mutton or lamb and pork were of greater importance than chicken. Rothschild (1990:164) has found a similar pattern in Manhattan, where people of lower socio-economic rank ate more poultry and less mammal than those of higher social position. It is impossible to control for the role of differential faunal preservation in this patterning. Like the differences in the ceramics, however, the faunal assemblage seems to indicate that the N50 assemblage was created by a very different social group occupying the property.

These differences in the ceramic and faunal assemblages suggest that N50 may represent an assemblage that originated with the servants employed by the household, who probably lived in separate quarters on the second floor of the carriage house. It is significant that when the N50 ceramic assemblage is combined with the rest of the property, the patterns in both ware type and decoration mirror those of the Doubleday and Stower properties. This indicates that what we can identify as a separate assemblage on the Mather lot, may be merged with other materials to form a single assemblage on the other properties. These ceramic collections are the combination of elite homeowners and working class servants and not a simple reflection of the elite status of the homeowner at all.

We should not be surprised that servants experienced a different material existence than their employers. Goodholme, in his 1878 Domestic Cyclopedia states that "everything and everyplace designed for [servants] use is generally not only inferior to, but in marked contrast with the rest of the house. Their rooms are nearly always ill-furnished, incommodious, and neglected." Living quarters for servants were generally located in the remotest corners of the houses and were ill-lighted and heated, poorly ventilated, cramped, and furnished only with the bare essentials (Sutherland 1981).

The clearest difference between N50 and the rest of the block entails that form of material culture most associated with working class and/or immigrant behavior—drink. Alcohol consumption became the archetype of immigrant and working class behavior, and was used by the upper classes to define and degrade the lower classes, and alternatively has provided a forum for working class resistance, and the insistence on a counter-culture (Beaudry et al. 1991; Mrozowski et al. 1996; Reckner and Brighton this volume). It has been argued that the temperance crusade was integrally linked to the social control required for an effective, disciplined work force under the dictates of industrial production (Gusfield 1963; Rorabaugh 1979; Levin 1985). Domestic servants lacked freedom and occupied a restrictive role within the family, thus they were no doubt kept on tighter reins than other industrial workers. According to Sutherland (1981:77):

> Employers seldom allowed servants to partake of spirits in the household, but they could hardly prevent their smuggling a bottle onto the premises or liberating a portion of the household's private stock.

Of the 13 identifiable liquor bottles recovered from the entire block, 12 or 92% were recovered from the N50 deposit. N50 also contained a much higher percentage of bottle glass that was not identifiable as to function. The relatively large number of liquor bottles recovered from the N50 assemblage suggests that this was more than

simply a servant deposit. The location of this deposit in a separate structure indicates that these individuals may have taken advantage of the fact that much of their daily life occurred away from the prying eyes of their employer. These servants may have had more freedom in personal behavior than domestics who lived under the roof of their employer.

To summarize, what appears to be a separate servant deposit was identified on the Mather property at the Binghamton Mall Site. When this deposit is combined with artifacts from the remainder of the property, the patterning is almost identical to the other properties investigated. This implies that all other so-called elite deposits are in reality the product of the complex relations of master-servant and employer-employee. These relations were an essential component to the creation of these assemblages and must be considered whether the deposits can be separated or not. When assemblages are not spatially separable it would be facile to simply assume that undecorated creamwares belonged to the servants while transfer-printed vessels belonged to the elite. Social relations cannot be reduced to simple indices or formulas. The concentration of liquor bottles found in the N50 deposit indicates that servants living in the separate structure of the carriage house may have had and exercised more personal freedom than those who lived under the roof of their employers. An archaeological approach that focuses on class and conflict within the household will by necessity give historically invisible individuals an active role in the creation of that history.

Conclusions

The examples presented here have focused on particular abstractions, but it is important to emphasize that these are not the only appropriate scales of analysis. The community class structure defined for the Upper Lisle area does not exist independently of the Burghardts's daily existence and has real implications for interpreting class relations at the household level (Wurst 1993). Likewise, focusing on the class dynamics within the households who lived on Block 3 in Binghamton is not the only appropriate scale to evaluate class on this block. We have also dealt with class in the community by examining the spatial residential patterns of different elite classes and the formation of neighborhoods (Wurst and Versaggi 1993).

This selection process does not reflect a weak or ill-defined concept of class, but rather the recognition that with a dialectical concept of class, we can draw our analytical class boundaries at many levels. In essence, the key to understanding class is not simply the act of defining the structure, but rather the movement between different levels. As Marquardt (1992:108) notes, this involves "suspension, preservation, and transcendence;" suspending the patterns visible at one level while preserving its understanding in order to transcend any single level "to reach a broad understanding of the dynamics of past social formations". The analytical concept of class, through the process of abstraction, gives us the freedom to move between these levels and redefine a different class structure at each.

In a post-modern context, it is ironic that historical archaeologists have argued for a proliferation of genders, races, and ethnicities, yet typically constrain class to an overarching triad of upper, middle and working, or a duality of workers and capitalists, elite and non-elite, or bourgeoisie and proletariat, however they are named. To quote Eagleton (1996:127):

> we seem stuck with far too few social classes, whereas if the post-modern imperative to multiply differences were to be taken literally we should strive to breed as many more of them as we could, say two or three new bourgeoisies and a fresh clutch of landowning aristocracies.

The goal of an archaeology of class based on internal relations is not to define as many classes as possible, but rather to understand the lived experience of the past. By defining different class structures through abstractions of extension, levels of generality, and vantage point, we bring

into focus aspects of the totality of social rela-
tions that would otherwise be invisible. Instead
of using objective definitions of class that pi-
geon-hole individuals into a narrow range of
classes, we have to recognize that class is a re-
lational, analytical, multiscalar category; a power-
ful tool that we can use to study the past.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LOUANN WURST
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT
BROCKPORT, NY 14420