rary mass society imposes on the poor and on blue-collar workers. It is up to progressive educators and other intellectuals, then, to maintain a critical consciousness of, and opposition to, the social forces perpetuating those restrictions and to seek means of enabling students and other citizens, whatever their class identity, to evolve from restricted to elaborated codes.

Gouldner, who came out of a Marxist background, takes account of Marx's theory of ideology, according to which the ideas that serve the interests of the ruling class are imposed on subordinate classes and assumed to be the natural, commonsensical way things are. "What's good for General Motors is good for America." While not denying an element of self-interest in the New Class's thinking, Gouldner argues that what is good for the New Class *is* good for everyone. CCD is intrinsically not only ideologically neutral but a defense against ideological domination by *anyone*. "It subverts all establishments, social limits, and privileges, including its own. The New Class bears a culture of critical and careful discourse which is an historically emancipatory rationality."

Thus, if the CCD were attainable through education and cultural media to everyone in society, the New Class would in effect become a "universal class," a new basis for Marx's classless society, facilitated through the common interests of the working class, middle class, and intellectuals, against capitalist hegemony, with the CCD as a lingua franca. As Gouldner acknowledges, his arguments are akin to those of Jürgen Habermas, who Gouldner says seeks "a new institutional framework—the 'ideal speech situation'—within which not only technical means might be chosen, but which would also revitalize morality."

Gouldner refutes leftists who depict universities as monolithically conservative: "To understand modern universities and colleges, we need an openness to contradiction. For universities both reproduce and subvert the larger society. . . . While the school is designed to teach what is adaptive for the society's master institutions, it is also often hospitable to a culture of critical discourse by which authority is unwittingly undermined, deviance fostered, the status quo challenged, and dissent systematically produced."

Neither Gouldner nor I go so far as to imagine academic intellectuals as a revolutionary vanguard, and both of us are fully aware of their political limitations. However, in this age of globalization, in which the working class and unions have largely been disarmed and in which millions of the middle class have been proletarianized, perhaps our overly modest class—as one of the last remaining guardians of cognitive and discursive alternatives to the new global order—is indeed, faute de mieux, "the best card history has dealt." And who knows, maybe we can even recuperate the New Critics' distinctive, aesthetic conception of the culture of critical discourse for progressive pedagogy.

Donald Lazere
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

To the Editor:

I have two questions for Stephen Schryer, whose "Fantasies of the New Class: The New Criticism, Harvard Sociology, and the Idea of the University" convincingly aligns the evolution of John Crowe Ransom's ideas about literary studies and those of Talcott Parsons about sociology.

First, to what extent does Schryer think these two shifts can stand for trouble in the professions as a whole and in the new class that they and some managers hoped to constitute? He proposes that "Parsons's sociology and the New Criticism" represented "disciplinary consensuses" that "lasted to the mid-1960s" (675). That's already a lot for them to represent, especially if Schryer sees that consensus in most or all academic disciplines. But if, as he further suggests, the failure of Alvin Gouldner's 1979 prediction—that the new elite would replace the "capital-owning bourgeoisie"—owes to an internal "logic of specialization," which, "instead of binding together the new class, atomized it into a concatenation of disciplines," then

Schryer's hypothesis would need to explain far more, including the weakening in recent decades of medicine, law, accounting, and most other professions.

Second, how does Schryer think this explanation articulates with what sounds like a more decisive one: the big bourgeoisie's regrouping, from around 1980, its power and its aggressiveness toward the liberal university? As he puts it, "the old class . . . survived and flourished in the decades after Gouldner's prophecy," and, through the New Right and the Republican party, "gutted what was left of the welfare state and launched an all-out attack on the educated liberal morality of the intellectuals" (664). Does Schryer think this episode of class warfare somehow followed or fed on the specialization of professionals? More than on our irritating critiques of white supremacy, the Vietnam War, corporate rule, and so on?

In my view, an economic project of the old class outweighs even that assault. Specifically, its unrelenting dispersal of the Fordist working class easily spread after 1970 into an invasion of professional-managerial class territory that many of us had thought secure. Look at the commercialized university—at its outsourcing, privatization, use of an increasingly contingent labor force, and other practices that sap new class strength and cohesion right smack in the middle of the university. I doubt that the logic of specialization did much to prepare the way for this reorganization of labor and class. I'd be glad to know what Schryer thinks.

Richard Ohmann
Wesleyan University

Reply:

I would like to thank Donald Lazere and Richard Ohmann for their thoughtful responses to my essay. To reply, first, to Lazere's comments, I agree that Gouldner's *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* does not fit into the tradition of Parsonian, "Harvard" sociology. Gouldner's earlier book, *The Coming Crisis of Sociology*, offered a devastating

critique of Parsons's work that put the final nail in the Parsonian coffin. In particular, Gouldner and other New Left sociologists argued that the Parsonian paradigm excluded social conflict and historical change. At the same time, insofar as Gouldner saw the new class as the universal class of the late twentieth century, he had much in common with consensus sociologists from the 1950s and 1960s. Gouldner's vision of the new class disseminating the culture of critical discourse from its home in the academy does not seem fundamentally different from Parsons's Durkheimian model of professional education. In both, the professional's job is to spread values and attitudes latent in the culture and practice of professionalism to a broader public.

Lazere admires this model of new class agency, which in his terms involves "progressive educators and other intellectuals" engaging in cultural politics to enable "students and other citizens, whatever their class identity, to evolve from restricted to elaborated codes." I am not particularly comfortable with Basil Bernstein's distinction between "restricted" and "elaborated" codes. This distinction came under fire from subsequent sociolinguists like William Labov for underestimating the complexity of lower-class speech and the extent to which professional discourse can itself function as a restricted code. However, I agree that the institutionalization and elaboration of the culture of critical discourse in the university scored significant successes in the United States. It contributed to many of the progressive changes that have taken place since the 1960s—in particular, the still-incomplete project of breaking down cultural prejudices against individuals and groups overlooked by the 1950s liberal consensus. However, this project has been markedly unsuccessful in addressing problems of class inequality and uninterested in eliciting enthusiasm for governmental efforts to regulate the free market. In this sense, humanistic intellectuals would benefit from reappraising the welfare state idealism of an earlier professional era.

Richard Ohmann takes issue with my article from another standpoint, arguing that my