Review essay

Beyond the problem of meaning: Robert Wuthnow's historical sociology of culture[1]

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The revival of historical sociology in the last twenty years has focused on class, state, revolution and political mobilization, family and demography. New attention to cultural factors – a central part of earlier historical sociology – is overdue. Robert Wuthnow's *Communities of Discourse* is a major effort to meet this need.[2] It reflects also the current rapid growth of the sociology of culture. Especially in America, however, sociology of culture suffers from a strange disciplinary deformation. For some reason, many sociologists think they must repress the interpretation of meaning in order to be rigorous. Sociologists of culture, therefore, often try to study cultural phenomena without attention to the substance or content of culture. Wuthnow is no exception.

Simply in terms of scale, Wuthnow's book is a major achievement. It reveals a prodigious amount of scholarly labor, not only in amassing historical detail, but in thinking through an analytic scheme broad enough to encompass the diversity of three great movements of cultural production: Reformation, Enlightenment, and European socialism. Wuthnow's book also offers numerous insights into specific historical developments and more general relationships between ideology and social structure. It is, thus, not a book to be dismissed or disregarded.

Nevertheless, *Communities of Discourse* is a book to be criticized as well as appreciated. Despite its impressive scope and massive contents, it is a highly selective, sometimes distorting, reading of key movements in Western culture. Its selectivity seems in some cases arbitrary, but in others reveals the emphases and blinders of the dominant sociological approach to culture.

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In the present essay, I first summarize Wuthnow's analytic approach and main overall argument. Then I comment briefly on his three empirical cases, raising methodological and conceptual issues throughout.

Approach and main argument

Wuthnow's accounts of Reformation, Enlightenment, and socialism figure first as important case studies in developing a model of ideological movements, and second as serially linked bases for examining the overall relationship between cultural and social change in the capitalist era. The latter use of the case studies is much less developed. Wuthnow does not ask many questions about cumulative change in Europe or the part played in it by the three movements he studies. But the case studies themselves are empirically rich, for the most part carefully constructed, and occasionally very insightful.

Wuthnow shows how economic expansion provided resources that had their main cultural effect by facilitating the growth of state agencies. These agencies transferred resources to cultural producers. They enlarged the size of potential audiences by providing education and employing many of those educated. They provided the focal point for new public spheres focused on issues raised by state policy (increasingly addressed in rationalized terms), and called forth contention among cultural producers for state favors and attention. New state elites, moreover, weakened the grip of longer established, especially landed, elites. Not least of all, the new state elites opened a space for the circulation and contention of new ideas by simultaneously differentiating state agencies from established elites and opening divisions among themselves. The competition for alliances that resulted both restricted repression and encouraged creativity.

> State structures channeled the results of economic expansion in ways that diversified the policy options that could be pursued, deflected resources away from established cultural elites, organized the conflict between segments of the ruling elite, and brought culture producers into this context of political conflict. (p. 574)

The first thing to note about this argument is that it is a single template into which all three movements are fit. This disguises variation among the three movements. Though Wuthnow brings out some of this variation in his case studies, the book as a whole emphasizes the commonal-

ities among the movements, implying that these exist because of a common set of causal relationships. In the last chapter, Wuthnow suggests that this has to do with the location of all three movements within the era of historic capitalism, but this theme is not developed and we do not learn what precisely Wuthnow thinks is distinctive to capitalism and thereby sets these cultural movements apart from, say, those of Ming China or earlier European history.[3] Nor does Wuthnow focus much on the impact of each movement on its successors, or on the overall course of European history.

Wuthnow's general argument is most persuasive for the Enlightenment case, partly because here the content of the intellectual movement (which Wuthnow does not examine) has a good deal in common with the structural foci he analyzes; that is, state power, economic growth, and public discourse were all manifest themes of Enlightenment debates. The argument works somewhat less well for the Reformation, partly because Wuthnow does not offer much discussion of the manifestly religious motivations of the Reformers, and accordingly leaves open a variety of questions about whether other factors besides state and economic changes might have inspired their work. There seems at least some surface plausibility, for example, to the claim that corruption and organizational decay within late medieval Catholicism played a crucial role. The argument works least well for socialism, where Wuthnow's insightful suggestion as to how Bismarck contributed to German socialism has to be greatly exaggerated to see the latter as basically a matter of elite production and competition.[4] In the socialism case, Wuthnow has added methodological difficulties because he focuses on a much more arbitrarily demarcated segment of a broad movement than in his other cases. He also shifts his attention away from cultural production as such and toward party politics.

One of Wuthnow's main questions is how certain, but not all, incipient waves of cultural innovation are able to escape from the social context of their origins and take on a quasi-independent existence, to become genuine movements with a major impact on the history of culture. Ideas, thus, "are shaped by their social situations and yet manage to disengage from these situations" (p. 5). In asking how this comes about, Wuthnow focuses on what he calls the problem of articulation:

> ...if cultural products do not articulate closely enough with their social settings, they are likely to be regarded by the potential audiences of which these settings are composed as irrelevant, unrealistic, artificial, and overly abstract,

> or worse, their producers will be unlikely to receive the support necessary to carry on their work; but if cultural products articulate too closely with the specific social environment in which they are produced, they are likely to be thought of as esoteric, parochial, time bound, and fail to attract a wider and more lasting audience. (p. 3)

This sounds plausible. But are those cultural products that go on to achieve lasting importance really those that achieved a balance between fitting too closely into their original contexts and not at all? This would seem to imply that works of enduring importance are seldom widely appreciated in the era of their creation. Obviously, cultural products rarely become "instant classics"; it is only later generations of schoolchildren who are required to study these canonized texts. But from Shakespeare through Goethe, not all poets died impoverished and not all playwrights failed to get their works produced in their lifetimes. More specifically in connection with Wuthnow's empirical cases, can we say that Martin Luther or John Locke achieved their enduring significance because of limits to how closely their products fit into their milieux? It seems to me that, on the contrary, the works of both were extremely closely articulated with their immediate social contexts. Of course, they were controversial; they did not simply blend unnoticed into the commonplace. Yet if this "disengagement" to which Wuthnow refers involves the challenges that so often embed great cultural products in struggle, it cannot be measured in terms of audience size, level of patronage, or other external attributes of their initial reception. It is a matter of content. The issue is at least in part how well the works of Luther or Locke, Marx or Rousseau, speak to issues and concerns that remain current long after their author's deaths. This does not mean that the external social factors affecting production, selection, and institutionalization are not important. It does mean (a) that they are not adequate to explain cultural outcomes by themselves, and (b) the question of what works take on importance outside their original contexts cannot be answered neatly in terms of a balancing act of articulation.[5]

Wuthnow bends over backward to avoid accepting the commonsense notions that works endure either because they are intrinsically great or because they were immediately recognized as important. In doing so, however, he completely loses sight of the importance of content (and also thereby obscures the endogenous sources of cultural production, argumentation, and change). For example, he tells us that

> the controversy concerning a proper interpretation of the Lord's Supper that broke into the open among Luther, Carlstadt, the Bohemian Brethren, Speratus, Zwingli, Schwenkfeld, Krautwald, and Oecolampadius in 1525 and 1526 consumed enormous energies on the part of all its major protagonists and produced most of the central interpretations that were to predominate among Protestant bodies for the next several centuries. (p. 129)

Yet, Wuthnow does not tell us anything further about the content of this controversy, the interpretations themselves, or about its protagonists. His main point, that controversy internal to an ideological movement both spurred cultural production and pushed it toward greater rationalization, is well taken and useful. But one is led to feel that the empirical details are just window-dressing, and that this is a pity, for the content of the discourses may be an important factor both in understanding them and in explaining their production, selection, and institutionalization. Even Wuthnow himself seems occasionally to acknowledge this, as when he remarks, regarding the Reformation, that "the degree to which specific doctrines were accepted depended mostly on differences in culture and language" (p. 118), though he doesn't tell us anything about what he takes significant differences in culture to be. Perhaps even more important, we do not learn from Wuthnow's account of the Enlightenment, for instance, why it matters so much to us, why it has had such a profound impact on our whole conception of modernity. Many of the "objective" features described would be characteristic of the Baroque, say, but that is a much less fundamental movement. Why so?[6]

Wuthnow's avoidance of content is not casual or idiosyncratic. It is a considered choice and part of a general tendency in the sociology of culture. Wuthnow identifies himself as, "epistemologically," an interpretative sociologist. He does not believe in the positivist goal of discovering facts untainted by observers' or analysts' interpretations. Yet, he refuses to address content, it seems, because he fears the loss of "objectivity." His reasoning seems to stem largely from the attempt of a practitioner of a beleaguered and suspect specialty (the sociology of culture) to find legitimacy in a basically positivist, empiricist discipline. But this puts Wuthnow in tension with his own material.

Wuthnow goes to great lengths to argue that the sociology of culture needs to abandon "the problem of meaning."[7] This means, first, the Weberian fear of meaninglessness, which Wuthnow suggests is historically and culturally specific.[8] From the fact that the problem of mean-

ing in this sense "turns out to be contingent on cultural constructions rather than being an inherent feature of culture itself," he concludes that "culture certainly can be studied without making meaning the central concern"[9] and that it should be. This is a much stronger claim and it is hard to see how it follows. Why can't a single study – let alone a discipline – combine attention to social structural determination and meaning?[10] Wuthnow seems to associate a focus on meaning with a radical subjectivism (necessarily individualistic) and a forsaking of all standards of scientific replicability. His concern is with moving toward a more objective treatment of culture, by adapting a mixture of structuralism/post-structuralism and established sociological research methods.

Wuthnow elects to move "beyond meaning," to study only the objective observable features of culture. "Culture is understood here not as some subjective or idealized world view that is to be distinguished from behavior but as a form of behavior itself and as the tangible results of that behavior" (p. 15). But what does "tangible" mean here? Are the sales figures for a book "tangible" while its contents are not? And what about the activity that makes culture? LeRoi Jones (now Amiru Baraka) says in an essay on writing that "hunting is not those heads on the wall." Would Wuthnow disagree?

Though resolutely social structural, Wuthnow is not a simplistic reductionist or determinist. His arguments about cultural determination are in a strong sense sociological. In each of his case studies, Wuthnow argues against attributing the new wave of cultural production to the rise of a new class, to the direct impact of market relations or other economic factors, or to the conversion of isolated individuals. Rather, he says, "the critical mediating connection between shifts in environmental conditions and changes in ideology appears in all three of the episodes examined to have been the specific institutional contexts in which ideologies were produced, disseminated and authorized" (p. 546). It is thus differences in institutional contexts – notably state power – that explain why the Reformation flourished in Germany and Britain, for example, and failed in Eastern Europe, France, and Spain. Broad environmental variables – economic growth, for example – are unable to differentiate adequately (p. 113).

Communities of Discourse thus is not a book about Reformation, Enlightenment, and European socialism as such (though one can learn a good deal about them from it). It is a book about social factors affecting the production, selection, and institutionalization of dominant or

enduring ideologies during these three movements. Within these limits, the empirical part of the book is persuasive and impressive. Abandoning meaning, however, drastically shrinks the place of action (and makes narrative accounts rather lifeless).

Wuthnow conceives of his approach as paying attention to human agency, and as rooted partially in a sociology of practice. It's not clear, however, what Wuthnow means by this. He praises and identifies himself with Ortner's account of recent cultural anthropology, in which practice is given pride of place.[11] Oddly, he does so only a few pages after his dismissive account of Pierre Bourdieu, and apparantly without recognizing that Bourdieu is Ortner's main exemplar of a "practice-oriented" anthropology![12] Wuthnow's declaration of an emphasis on action sits poorly with his generally structuralist position in which culture is treated as something produced collectively, but without subjects. It is almost as though he thinks of the discursive field as itself an actor, or of the discourse as "interpellating" subjects, in Althusser's sense.[13] Yet in his case studies, Wuthnow leaves very little room for creative action.

> In each case, the analysis proceeds from an initial consideration of the social environment at the start of the period to a comparative examination of the contexts in which the new ideology became or failed to become institutionalized, and concludes with a discussion of the internal structure of the resulting ideology and the degree to which this structure articulated with the social conditions under which it emerged. (p. 18)

Creativity, one imagines, like the quality of writing or the force of ideas themselves, is one of the subjective dimensions of culture which the sociologist must ignore in pursuit of objectivity. Wuthnow is more interested, perhaps, in cumulative patterns of activity or in the observable outcomes of "action sequences." Actions themselves are inaccessible to the sociologist, being "shrouded in the historical record," or

> ...too idiosyncratic to be amenable to systematization. Yet the very concept of action sequences serves as an important placeholder: it reminds us of the importance of human agency, even if that agency occurs within the constraints of institutional structures, and it reminds us that cultural innovations do not emerge full-blown all at once but are the result of years and decades, and for this reason have a sequential effect on their own development. (p. 7)

"Placeholder" is an apt term for the role of "action sequences" in Wuthnow's account. Both in its narrative structure and in its conceptualiza-

tion as about a "movement," each of his case studies describes individual and collective actions. Calvin drew up ordinances in Geneva, Louis XIV resisted the parlements, German workers voted for the SPD. Wuthnow occasionally even interprets actors' intentions. But neither actions nor sequences are very central to his interests. None of the three movements is analyzed mainly in terms of its narrative unfolding, the impact of specific events and actions on what could and did follow, its "historicity."[14] Nor do the case studies work very much in terms of systematic analysis of differences among actors. Whether the actors are Reformation theologians, Enlightenment writers, or socialist trade unionists, Wuthnow is only concerned in passing with who said or did what. He constructs mainly aggregate accounts. For the most part, environmental conditions are the crucial determinants of ideology. Of course, preexisting ideological constructs also have an impact. The point of action sequences is mainly to show that what the members of a movement did also had an impact on what they thought and said. Socialism's discourse, thus, "interacted with its own activities and with its broader theoretical agenda" (p. 485).

More helpfully, Wuthnow does pay attention to the ways in which different ideologies included "figural actors," or characteristic subjects that might serve as models or standards for their followers. Thus, for example, Reformation ideologies provided models of "faith in practice," which posited a certain image of the responsible individual. Ironically, it was the publicly circulated texts instructing Protestants on their personal responsibilities and autonomy (under God) that helped to create the private individual (p. 143–144). This was revised and secularized by the Enlightenment (p. 579). In some of the book's most interesting (but tantalizingly underdeveloped) passages, Wuthnow considers the genres of autobiography and the novel, as they offered discursive means for portraying and exploring the figural actor of the bourgeois self (e.g., pp. 320ff, 334ff, 339ff, and chapter 10 generally). In socialism, the proletariat appeared as a figural actor (p. 498), though Wuthnow has difficulty pinning down the implications of this shift from individual to collective.[15] Indeed, though his sources in this section are very unclear (ranging temporally from early Marx to Althusser), Wuthnow winds up with the surprising conclusion that "socialism does not merely leave a great deal of discretion to the individual by default but explicitly calls on the individual to exercise discretion knowledgeably and responsibly" (p. 510).[16]

A subordinate theme in *Communities of Discourse* is the repeated redefinition of the individual in each of the three movements.[17] Though Wuthnow doesn't make the connection very explicitly, he seems to link this to a growing differentiation of society. This helps to create individuals in the modern sense (*pace* Simmel) by locating them at the intersection of multiple roles and groups, and problematizes identity because of the increasing indeterminacy of selfhood and selection of appropriate courses of action (cf. p. 320). The differentiation is also crucial, it would seem, to Wuthnow's theme of disengagement, the freeing of cultural production from immediate and complete situational determination. Thus an overall course of social development would seem to be "an increasing level of differentiation between other arenas of social activity and those in which ideology is produced" (p. 552; see also p. 3). Wuthnow does not spell out just what he means by so distinguishing the arenas in which ideology is produced from others (e.g., is the family not productive of ideology? What of markets?). More precisely, one might suggest (following Bourdieu) that a key characteristic of modernity – part of the process of institutionalization that Wuthnow makes central – is the segmentation of social and cultural life into a number of quasi-autonomous fields. Some of these specialize in ideological production. As the institutional organization of the aesthetic, political, economic, familial, legal, religious, or other fields becomes stronger, references to "culture" or "the social environment" in general become weaker explanations of behavior. Wuthnow's proposition that various background causes work mainly through institutional mediation, is thus not a constant, but a matter of historical change.

Cases

Wuthnow's accounts are written in considerable detail and reflect massive reading of the secondary literature. Though occasionally he lapses into over-generalized accounts of each movement – especially socialism – his description is generally strengthened by the construction and comparison of separate case studies of several European countries. One of the strengths of the book is Wuthnow's demonstration that similar factors were at work in different settings, but in different combinations and extents that can be related to different outcomes. We can see this readily in Wuthnow's account of the Reformation.

A relatively stable agrarian social order was disrupted by early capitalist economic expansion. This increased the autonomy of towns and

strengthened certain princes at the expense of other traditional rural elites. Where landlords had previously "struck a felicitous bargain with the church as the condition for their patronage" (p. 32), townsmen were now able to demand (or choose) reforms ranging from vernacular worship to access to the Sacraments, which had the general feature of increasing their participation in religious services. At the same time, central authorities in some cases supported the Reformation as part of their pursuit of autonomy. "It required the full resources of the central regime – or where that was lacking of territorial regimes, or of exceptionally strong municipal regimes – to bring the Reformation to fruition as an institutionalized ideology" (p. 45).

Having developed an account of the relation of state autonomy to Reformation in its successful centers of Northern and Central Europe and Britain, Wuthnow turns to negative cases – for example the failure of Reformation in France and Spain. He shows that economic expansion was present in France, Spain, and Eastern Europe, but that this expansion did more to strengthen traditional landed elites than to upset their power. The Reformation flourished only where it received support from dominant elites, and it in turn reinforced the decision-making power of the regimes that supported it. It was no accident that the largest purchaser of bibles was the state (p. 118).

> The much-debated effects of early capitalism on the Reformation, therefore, can be said to have operated strongly through the institutional mechanism of the state. ... Religion was not the prime concern of merchant capitalists, nor did they particularly need it to legitimate their endeavors, as some interpretations have argued. If they accepted religious teachings it was for personal reasons that undoubtedly bore as much relation to their spiritual interests as to any other part of their lives. But religion was always a central concern of those vested with formal power. (p. 117)[18]

Wuthnow's account of the Reformation is overwhelmingly focused on selection and institutionalization. He has relatively little to say about what led to the production of Reform movements, as distinct from their eventual success or failure. This would seem to be partly because that would necessarily take him into discussions of ideological content and of subjectivity that he wishes to avoid. In any case, Wuthnow operates throughout with a sort of "resource mobilization" approach to cultural change: there are always innovations (or potential innovations), he implies, just as there are always grievances and dissatisfactions. The important question is which are encouraged, selected for widespread adoption, and ultimately institutionalized. We can note in the above

quotation, for example, how marginal a role is ascribed to "spiritual" reasons for religious involvement or belief. Wuthnow is speaking not of the persons of rulers or merchants, but of the formal roles. In this connection, though, we might regard any intensification of religiosity among merchant capitalists as all the more remarkable, since it could not easily be said to follow from any external demand of the formal role.

Wuthnow's account of the Enlightenment is predictably similar. Economic expansion once again forms the starting point. Its biggest impact was felt through the resources it provided to cities and states. The rise of the bourgeoisie was indeed associated with this economic expansion, but it was not, according to Wuthnow, central to the Enlightenment. Rather, various cultural elites associated with the state formed the core of both producers and consumers of Enlightenment ideology. Already in the age of mercantilism, cultural production was valued as a source of ceremonial demonstration of strength (p. 165). Throughout the Enlightenment, patronage (dominated by state-connected elites) remained a more important source of income for writers than did the sale of their works as commodities (216 ff.). It was not just that governments supported ideologues to do their biddings; this was hardly novel. Rather, the key to the Enlightenment was that various different groups contended for influence and power within or in relation to the enlarged state bureaucratic apparatus (p. 178). Competition among these elites occasioned their expenditures on and interest in ideological production. Of course, the new policy problems posed by an expanded state role also provided the thematic focus for much of the ideological productivity of the Enlightenment and exerted selective pressures. The state was not just context for Enlightenment activity, thus, but in large part its focus. Wuthnow shows better in this case than in the others the importance of institutional mediation of economic and other broad social influences on ideological production.

Wuthnow's treatment is a useful corrective to overly simplistic economic determinisms, but it seems to let the pendulum swing a bit too far in the direction of a state-centered view. For example, Wuthnow follows many other writers in noting the importance of eighteenth-century London's coffee houses as gathering places for writers and settings for oral debate. But his account of the coffee houses (e.g., p. 224) portrays them as overwhelmingly focused on high politics, as virtually occasioned by the split between Whigs and Tories. Yet the coffee houses were in the first instance gathering places for men of commerce; it was

no accident that they were concentrated in or near the City of London.[19] The coffee houses, like newspapers, grew initially on the custom of merchants, elite artisans, and tradespeople as well as political elites.[20] To note the way in which commercial activity helped to produce both this literate culture and the settings for debate need not involve a simple economic reductionism.[21] Politics in the mid- to late eighteenth century began to show the influences of a popular voice that could on occasion overshadow the oppositions of Whigs and Tories. Think not just of Wilkes, but of Wesleyanism, opposition to slavery, the Lunar Society, and William Blake. Moreover, cultural producers who received support from state elites were not totally constrained nor were their works fully explained by that support. They might write political tracts, but also philosophical or literary works of broad ideological significance and little immediate concern to their patrons.

Wuthnow has one strong argument concerning the social identities of participants in the Enlightenment. He wishes to show that one cannot ascribe the character of the movement directly to the bourgeois origins of its members:

> The social stratum that contributed most directly to the Enlightenment consisted of public officials, administrators, parliamentary representatives, courtiers, lawyers, professionals, military officers, men and women of leisure, university faculty, and in some cases clergy associated with the hierarchies of state churches. (p. 312)

This seems plausible, but it is surprising that Wuthnow does not pursue the social organization of this discourse much further. Restricted membership was an essential feature of the construction of the Enlightenment public sphere (as of others). Certain identities were repressed despite the ideology of uniform individual entitlement to participate. Enlightenment public discourse, for example, was overwhelmingly male. Why, and with what implications? It is not enough to say that this movement (like both of the others Wuthnow studies) took place in an era when women had little public voice and thus was typical in this regard. That simply begs the question. And in fact the repression of women's voices was not uniform. Aristocratic salon culture of the early to mid-eighteenth century allowed women prominent voices, which they lost by exclusion from the more bourgeois coffee houses and formally organized societies. Similarly, Wuthnow pays little attention to the relation between the elite public sphere and the discourse of non-elites. Yet, particularly in the latter half of the eighteenth century, there was an

active discourse among people largely excluded from the formal institutions of high politics – artisans in particular.[22] To some extent, this was a discourse of the dominated that challenged the hegemony of the dominant public sphere – a characterization perhaps more true of nineteenth-century radical circles.[23] But one of the remarkable features of the late eighteenth century was the integration of elite and less-elite discourse – and the remarkable sophistication of many of those without formal educations and high social status.

In exploring this sort of issue we need not only to examine who was included in the discourse in question, and who was excluded or chose not to join. We also need to rethink the relationship between social identity and membership, for this is just what the creators of the Enlightenment public sphere did. Thus while the list of identities Wuthnow gives in the passage quoted in the last paragraph is plausible, its description as a stratum is not. Wuthnow seems simply to be saying "not bourgeoisie, this other group." But perhaps it is important to recognize the extent to which the Enlightenment involved the creation of a public discourse that within certain limits denied the salience of participants' social backgrounds, differing sharply from the earlier segmenting of discourse into more socially homogenous groups. Obviously this was still an exclusive, elite discourse, which did not incorporate the masses of any country. But equally importantly, it pioneered the idea of a *public* discourse by drawing people from the range of roles Wuthnow lists, as well as some merchants, artisans, and others, into a common discussion about the public good.

Here the most surprising feature of Wuthnow's account is his neglect of Habermas's (1962) account of the structural transformation of the public sphere (and the substantial literature following from it).[24] Wuthnow does discuss Habermas briefly in his theory section, but he never refers to this major early work in which Habermas takes up not only the Enlightenment generally, but two of the themes that Wuthnow himself makes central: the relationship of public to private and the construction of a public sphere. Wuthnow seems to have picked up the phrase, "public sphere," from Keith Baker's Habermas-influenced studies of eighteenth-century French public opinion. It figures prominently in each of his case studies, but without ever really being defined. Wuthnow seems to equate the public sphere with a realm of political discourse. But why so? Certainly the political public sphere was complemented in the Enlightenment era by an aesthetic one, and indeed the two were closely intertwined. It seems, moreover, problematic to regard

the state as in itself constituting a public sphere in the eighteenth century (p. 201). Certainly the state was central, but what made a public sphere possible was partly the incapacity of the state to contain its discourse. It was not only relative openness of access, but the acceptance of a range of viewpoints (not all identical with those of state elites) that defined the publicness of this discourse.

While Wuthnow touches on the relationship of public to private, Habermas argues much more clearly that there were crucial ways in which the public discourse of this era depended upon the demarcation of a certain realm of privacy. Thus it was key that people entered into the public sphere not, like aristocrats of earlier years, with an identity basically subsumed under a public role, but as private persons. The family gave them a basis outside public life; novels (Wuthnow notes) figured the challenges of individual existence, and thematized both the constitution of the self in private life and the demands of public involvement. And it was crucial that the public sphere was not just "an adjunct of the growth of bureaucracy and patronage" (p. 219). The ideology of this discourse included the crucial notion that participants could speak their personal or private views, not simply represent their public roles.[25]

Wuthnow makes an important contribution by showing how internal divisions within the state apparatus and elites helped to open a space for public discourse, but he overstates his case on the centrality of the state. When Wuthnow reports correctly, for example, that publishing markets did not provide for most of the livelihood of Enlightenment writers he errs in concluding that this demonstrates that the economy influenced public discourse only indirectly, through the mediation of the state. "Culture producers," Wuthnow writes, "generally remained in communication with one another and reacted to the criticisms of their colleagues not because of market relations but because of formal and informal networks of interaction and correspondence" (p. 565). Certainly writers did not get together mainly to exert market force. But markets helped to constitute public spheres in other ways. For example, as Habermas shows, the needs of dispersed businessmen active in increasingly far-flung markets helped to call forth the invention and institutionalization of the newspaper. This in turn came to play a crucial role in the public sphere. Mail services were developed and maintained for merchants as well as state elites, and put to use by intellectuals.

Despite this quibble, Wuthnow's account is about as persuasive as it can be without much attention to the content of Enlightenment ideas. Indeed, Wuthnow more often forgets his strictures against interpretation of content in this section (esp. ch. 10) than anywhere else – and where he turns to content he produces some of the most interesting parts of his book. Wuthnow's interpretations, however, are remarkably abstract and distant from the texts they address. He does not engage the texts very seriously, in a precise, sustained, or rigorous manner. This may be one reason why he regards attention to content as dangerous for science. In any case, Wuthnow's footing is occasionally unsure. He discusses Rousseau at some length, for example, but quotes him only once and that for only three words. As Wuthnow offers no citations to Rousseau's works and only two secondary sources, it is often unclear to which of Rousseau's texts he refers. He seems, indeed, to treat Rousseau's work as a simple unity, with no internal tensions (though he does note differences of style, p. 316). Thus Wuthnow places Rousseau, like other Enlighteners, on a continuum between tradition and freedom.[26] But Rousseau adds to this, he says, a second axis running from private self to collective good:

> The quest now becomes that of finding an appropriate location along this continuum at which self-fulfillment and social responsibility can both be maximized. At one end stands the artificial individual who is a product of history (tradition) and nature, and thereby unable to opt simply for one of these polarities over the other, and who is nevertheless in a state of unreflective, if not involuntary, dependence on fellow individuals. At the other end stand the political, the public, the general will, which calls forth from the individual a greater degree of self-conscious, voluntary participation. (p. 329)

This is much too simplistic a summary to capture Rousseau's ideas about individual and society, or history and freedom. Generally, for example, Rousseau sharply opposes the merely political to the general will. It is hard to imagine Rousseau thinking of the challenge before people as one of positioning themselves on continua; indeed, much of the power and difficulty of his thought comes from his refusal to accept some of the commonplace oppositions that inform these continua. One needs much more careful thought to deal with the tension between the isolated education of Emile (which prepares him for existence in a society from which he is in certain ways to remain sharply distinct) and the notion of the general will as supremely social and yet present in some indivisible sense in every individual.

One of the features that makes the Enlightenment section the best of Wuthnow's case studies is his strong use of comparisons. Comparison among France, England, Prussia, and Scotland – all core cases of Enlightenment – is left largely implicit. But comparison with countries where Enlightenment failed to flourish is careful and convincing. One chapter takes up those countries where weak bureaucracy undercut the development of a sufficiently centralized state to anchor the institutionalization of an Enlightenment discourse, notably the Netherlands, Sweden, and Austria. Decentralization, it should be said, refers mainly to a lesser level of political and economic resources, and impoverishes public discourse. At the opposite extreme, autocracy can crush any incipient public discourse just as readily. In Russia and Spain, for example, states were powerful and organized into a hierarchy that lacked the cross-cutting pressures that offered an opening to public discourses in the core Enlightenment countries.

Wuthnow's account of socialism is much less persuasive. The first oddity is his delimitation of subject matter. He limits himself to Marxist socialism, and for the most part to the years between 1864 and 1914. In both regards, his delimitations are somewhat arbitrary and distorting. Focusing only on Marxist socialism is a bit like studying the Reformation only through Lutheranism: it is obviously central but hardly the whole picture. It also begs the question of just what it means (or meant) to be Marxist, especially since Marxist ideas influenced cultural producers and political actors well beyond the core of the First and Second Internationals, and since within those movements the interpretation and significance of Marxism was widely divergent, ranging from mere rhetorical label to close adherence to Marx's textual guidance. What allows the socialism Wuthnow studies to be treated as one phenomenon is not really Marxism, or anything else about its ideology, but rather (as he recognizes at one point) its organizational structure (p. 363). Wuthnow follows this lead wholeheartedly. His section on socialism says little about production of ideology or even competition among variants. It is only marginally about culture, in fact, and mostly about electoral politics and the fortunes of social democratic parties.

Even granted the emphasis on party politics, Wuthnow's account is almost bizarrely selective. In discussing Germany, Ferdinand Lasalle receives extensive attention while Eduard Bernstein is scarcely mentioned. In the British case, William Morris gets but a passing mention and there is only a vague allusion to the centrally important cooperative tradition associated with Robert Owen. In a twenty-two page dis-

cussion of the Third Republic and the institutionalization of French socialism, Jean Guesde is the only socialist mentioned! The restriction to Marxist socialism is presumably Wuthnow's reason for not considering Proudhon or Sorel. Even so, one might think that the ideologies with which they were associated were at least as significant a part of the context of French Marxism as was liberalism, which gets extensive discussion. Indeed, Wuthnow implies that the French faced a binary political choice: "socialism was the only political alternative to a liberal republican tradition which seemed increasingly to have become identified with the privileged classes" (p. 428). This neglects the radical strand of republicanism (associated most famously with Proudhon) that was dominant in the 1871 Commune and still not insignificant in the early twentieth century. If syndicalism is mentioned, neither I nor the preparer of the index noticed; anarchism is discussed in passing and once dubbed "anarcho-syndicalism" in discussion of Spain.

Wuthnow's chapters on socialism are organized largely around the theme "socialism or liberalism?". Yet this understates the importance of a variety of other ideological positions both in the overall political fields and among members of the working classes. Nationalism, for example, was a tremendously important ideology in this period. Often it was manipulated by elites to try to undermine socialism, which for most of the period was predominantly internationalist. But nationalisms of various sorts did have substantial currency in popular culture. It was, moreover, only in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that nationalism came to be unequivocally associated with the right.[27] In Britain, there was a strong tradition of working-class conservatism, especially in certain localities. There were also points of connection between old-style conservatives and socialists that Wuthnow completely misses (perhaps because he imagines anachronistically that liberalism is clearly closer to socialism on a political continuum). Wuthnow's overall summary of his argument on socialism reveals his working assumption that the key issue is how well the liberal bourgeoisie and the proletariat can join forces:

> Socialist ideology, it appears, became more fully institutionalized in party politics when rapid industrialization was accompanied by the presence of a conservative aristocratic regime that weakened the liberal bourgeoisie's capacity to forge an alliance with the proletariat. (p. 446)

This amounts to saying that socialist ideology became more fully institutionalized in Germany. So, perhaps, it did.

The decision to end the account at 1914 of course deprives the account of any opportunity to include a successful revolution. A bit more surprising is Wuthnow's declaration that:

> For all its talk about revolution, though, the socialist movement failed to make it the vehicle by which their ideals were realized. Not a single revolutionary episode broke out under socialist leadership in the decades before the First World War. Revolution served only as an important rhetorical device. (p. 371)

It is certainly true that most of the socialist parties became essentially reformist, though if this is Wuthnow's point, his way of saying it is curious (and one might have expected reference to the "evolutionary socialism" of Bernstein). But Wuthnow needs to remind himself that *he* chose the artificial demarcation of World War I, and thus ruled out the Russian Revolution. Moreover, elsewhere he endorses Skocpol's argument that revolution depended largely on structural crisis;[28] if it was going to take World War I to provide the crisis that would make for revolutionary success, perhaps the Marxists were not being disingenuous reformists, but accurate judges of the options open to them. Finally, Wuthnow might have analyzed the insurgencies of 1905 (not to mention 1871).

In general, the time frame for Wuthnow's treatment of socialism is ambiguous. He slips unannounced across the earlier and later boundaries he set for himself. And he makes generalizations about the whole period that at best fit only part of it. Consider this:

> Two methods of relating theory and practice appear with increasing regularity in the socialist discourse of this period. On the one hand, socialist ideology veers toward utopian formulations that cannot be expected to have practical ramifications. On the other hand, it is reduced to reformist programs that can be more readily implemented but which have little relation to abstract socialist ideals. (p. 482)

What is the time period? This fits the 1960s fairly well. It is plausible for the late nineteenth century (though utopianism really flowered earlier in the century – and not without "practical ramification"). But in the early twentieth century – in 1905, 1911, 1917 – it would seem that theory and practice converge in programs that were neither irrelevantly utopian nor so mildly reformist as to lose touch with socialism. The socialist discourse of this period was shaped not just by Bernstein, who perhaps fits the second pattern in Wuthnow's quote (though that is

judging by tactics more than ultimate ideals), but also by Lenin and Luxemburg.

As with any such works of synthesis, one can point to missing sources or carp about interpretations of fields one knows well. Nonetheless, Wuthnow has done an impressive job of assimilating the literature. It is a bit disconcerting, however, that he simply treats whatever historical works he cites as very strong authorities, saying little about their sources or the divergent views of other scholars. It is surprising, for example, to see Wuthnow confident that Britain was opening an ever-wider economic lead over France in the late nineteenth century (p. 430), without ever considering O'Brien's and Keydar's (1978) major challenge to that argument.[29] There are also minor inconsistencies. On p. 410, for example, Braudel and Labrousse are cited to show that between 1906 and 1911 "a sudden spurt" in the French economy brought the number of industrial workers from 3.4 million to 4.7 million – an unprecedented rate of growth. Then on p. 428, we learn that socialist party membership more than doubled between 1905 and 1913 and are told that "the surprising feature of this growth was that it occurred despite relatively little increase in the overall size of the industrial workforce."

More troubling than these lapses – and they are few – is one's uncertainty as to just what Wuthnow is doing with a large part of the detail he musters. He frequently gives absolute numbers, for example in considering population, national economies, or voting, without giving the reader any clear way to make sense of them. It's hard to know what to make of the information that Milan "already had an industrial work force of 134,000 in 1901, including almost 50,000 garment workers, 20,000 machine workers, and 15,000 textile workers" (p. 469) when Wuthnow provides no baseline either in terms of earlier or later Milanese figures, or through comparison to Milan's total population or to other cities' workforces. Wuthnow's approach to comparison is through the deployment of several national case studies in which broadly similar variables are examined – e.g., a look at the sorts of intellectual activity that shaped the Enlightenment (or its absence) in France, England, Prussia, Scotland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, and Russia. He almost never offers systematic comparisons of one variable or putative causal relationship at a time – e.g., a table in his socialism section putting rates of economic growth and voting patterns for different countries side by side.[30] Much of Wuthnow's empirical description, it seems, is in the book not so much to further his overall argument as to demon-

strate his rejection of approaches like Habermas's and Weber's in which "at this high level of generality, each manifestation of cultural change ceases to be important in its own right" (p. 531). Yet ultimately he can be convicted of the same charge.

Wuthnow's method is not so much systematic comparative historical analysis as it is exemplification of the relevance of a conceptual framework. His case studies are basically examples:

> It seems most useful, therefore, to specify the range of relevant considerations at a relatively abstract level of generality, and then with the benefit of empirical examples to suggest at a more concrete level the particular manifestations of these abstractions that are most likely to become operative. (p. 543)

Theda Skocpol is both thanked in the preface for her support and quoted on the dust jacket offering effusive praise for *Communities of Discourse*. This method of exemplification, however, seems more reminiscent of Smelser's "empty box" theory of social change, which Skocpol has sharply criticized, than of Skocpol's own comparative analyses.[31]

Despite his tendency to treat empirical cases as examples of a common process, Wuthnow is attentive to the limits of any general model (even though he does not attempt systematically to reveal where empirical reality has slipped from his model's grasp in any of the cases):

> The shaping of ideology is thus historically contingent. Certain relevant factors can be identified for bringing these contingencies into sharper relief, but no single overarching framework can be imposed apart from the specific historical conditions of cultural change themselves. (p. 558)

Conclusion

Should *Communities of Discourse* be an exemplar for future work in historical sociology? It has much to commend it, including a comparative approach that pays careful attention to cases where its cultural movements were weak or absent as well as those where they were strong, and an attempt to advance theory directly through empirical analysis of intrinsically important empirical cases. Yet, in a profound sense, it is ahistorical, drawing materials from the past but refusing the "discipline of historical context." Wuthnow fails to do justice to either

the embeddedness of these movements in webs of other events, activities, and patterns of organization specific to their historical (and cultural) settings, or their implication in a longer-term course of historical continuity and change. Despite historical detail, he approaches his case studies more as atemporal instances of the general phenomenon of cultural movement than as part of history.

As a work of theory, *Communities of Discourse* must be seen as fundamentally impoverished by an arbitrary and violently reductive presentation of other work in this field, a failure to develop and analyze critically some of its own key conceptual categories, and its unfortunately narrow, objectivistic conception of the sociological task.

Classical social theory, Wuthnow suggests, conceived of culture in a very subjectivist way. "The basic orientation has derived from a variant of the subject-object dualism in which ideas are associated with the subjective while behavior and social structure are conceived of as objective realities" (p. 527). Durkheim, Parsons, Marx, Weber, and Mannheim all shared in this failing. But what about Wuthnow? Isn't his whole attempt to put the sociology of culture on a more "objective" footing organized around the same dualism? The only difference is that he does not want to treat all culture as subjective, but to rescue some of it for objective, social structural analysis. At no point does Wuthnow really attempt to find a way out of subject-object dualism, or even wrestle with it. It appears simply as a fashionable phrase by which to relegate exhausted classics to the dustbin.

Though united by their unfortunate subjectivism, their entrapment in the problem of meaning, scholars up to now have fallen, Wuthnow suggests, into two basic groups: those who study "cultural adaptation," and those who emphasize "class legitimation." Sociologists, it would thus appear, (a) have looked too much at cultural content, and (b) have believed either that cultural change is entirely the result of increased societal complexity, or that it reflects the need of new classes to legitimate their social participation.

Narrower even than a simple opposition between functionalism and "conflict theory," this latter opposition obscures as much as it reveals. Note, for example, that the entire Marxist tradition is held to be about class legitimation rather than class struggle. Or consider that Pierre Bourdieu is placed unambiguously among the adaptationists (p. 520).[32] Wuthnow's discussions of existing theory are simply careless and mis-

leading. The reader would do better to stick to his historical case studies, which are much stronger.

Though Wuthnow draws a great deal from Weber, he does not accept the view that sociological explanation has to be "adequate at the level of meaning." This is strange for a sociologist of culture, but the contradiction lies fundamentally in the field, not the individual scholar. Wuthnow has been all but incapacitated by the tensions within the sociology of culture. Trying to pursue disciplinary legitimacy through resolute objectivism and emphasis on social structure puts Wuthnow deeply at odds with his chosen subject matter. His book, thus, is neither about communities (dense webs of relationships among interlocutors), nor discourse (the interlocution itself). It is about some underlying structural factors. Yet his knowledge of both hermeneutic critiques of positivism and the complexity of history makes Wuthnow shy away from making a strong causal argument about any particular movement. Instead, he simply illustrates a framework. A large book and an enormous effort, thus caught within the "hyperinstitutionalist" box of American sociology of culture, offer only a modest gain.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this article was presented to the American Sociological Association, August 1990. I am grateful for comments there, and especially for helpful readings of the earlier version by Peter Bearman, Judith Bennett, Philip O'Connell, Loic Wacquant, and the Editors of *Theory and Society*.
2. *Communities of Discourse: Ideology and Social Structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), cited hereafter by page numbers.
3. In fact, the capitalist epoch goes undefined in Wuthnow's account (cf. p. 559). We learn neither just how he conceptualizes it nor when it began. Would the same model be expected to fit the Renaissance? The Baroque? The spread of medieval heresies? Nonetheless, Wuthnow seems to me to be on the right track in stressing the expansionist tendencies that are a key characteristic of capitalism.
4. "In each case the new ideology that became institutionalized was but one of a number of competing alternatives. It was the one that succeeded in gaining support from the state" (p. 577).
5. Part of the issue is that Wuthnow does not look beyond institutionalization to impact – or more precisely, does not ask what impact the institutionalization of one ideology or another had – a question precluded by his avoidance of content.
6. Perhaps the answer is that the Baroque did not matter as much politically (being largely a creature of the more old-fashioned monarchies of Central and Southern Europe). All three of Wuthnow's cases are substantially and manifestly political (though his treatment may in fact exaggerate how completely they are so; we hear

little of Luther's hymns and not much more of the intertwining of art and literature in Enlightenment discourse). It would be interesting to compare less manifestly political "ideologies" – say, those in which music, graphic arts, and architecture play a larger role – and see whether their production, selection, and institutionalization turn equally on states and the patronage of state-related elites. Even within Wuthnow's own cases, though, it would seem vital to ask (as he does not) why the political forces behind ideological change should have been worked out overwhelming within the discourse of religion in the sixteenth century and not in the eighteenth.

7. R. Wuthnow, *Meaning and Moral Order: Explorations in Cultural Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), esp. 60–65.
8. Ibid., 25. The problem of meaning in this sense would, however, seem to be central to the cases discussed in *Communities of Discourse*. They were important phases in the process by which the modern "self" was so constituted as to suffer chronically the Weberian challenge of establishing meaning in life. See C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).
9. Wuthnow, *Meaning*, 65.
10. This formulation is modest, leaving the basic dualism untouched. Within some traditions, a good deal more is attempted. Georg Lukács (*History and Class Consciousness* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1922]) followed by much of the Frankfurt school, conceives of capitalism not as an external structural force acting on culture, but as a categorial construction that is at once social structure and meaningful culture. It would be misleading to speak of "content," here, since Lukács's understanding employs a form/content contrast out of the "idealist" tradition in which both are part and parcel of culture, rather than the common sociological usage in which form (or structure) refers to external material or social organizational attributes while content refers to the internal, meaningful nature of culture.
11. S. Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties," *Comparative Studies of Society and History* 26 (1984): 126–166.
12. Wuthnow's discussion of Bourdieu is a good example of his cavalier way with theory. He accuses Bourdieu of neglecting "process and competition" (p. 535), but both are central themes in Bourdieu's work (see P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* [Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1977], *The Logic of Practice* [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990] and "Social Space and the Genesis of Groups," *Theory and Society* 14 [1985]: 723–744). He claims falsely that Bourdieu has not examined the particular circumstances under which the field of cultural production might have gained autonomy (p. 535, but see P. Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, of the Economic World Reversed" [*Poetics* 12 (1983): 311–356], and "The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetics" [*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 2 (1987): 201–210]). He doesn't notice that Bourdieu rejects the separation of society and culture that is integral to Wuthnow's and much other sociology of culture. Bourdieu insists that these are part of a common process, he addresses them together in his accounts of practice. Why does Wuthnow misrepresent Bourdieu? Largely, perhaps, because he dismisses Bourdieu on the basis of a single, relatively minor article. It is not as though Wuthnow has handled this adequately elsewhere. Bourdieu is completely missing from Wuthnow's 1987 book.
13. Wuthnow's structuralism is also apparent in his suggestion for where to look for ways to link "the experienced social horizons of culture producers" to "the internal composition of texts themselves" (a topic he does not really pursue). Answer: "They

come from structuralist and formalist methods of literary analysis: from Bakhtin, Todorov, Althusser[!], Jameson, and others" (p. 554).

14. On this sense of "historicity," see W. Sewell, Jr., "Toward a Sociology of the Event," in T. McDonald, editor, *The Historical Turn in the Social Sciences* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming).
15. Wuthnow treats the relationship between individual competitive self-interest and solidary class struggle as one of moral obligation (pp. 503–513). This is, of course, foreign to Marxism. Wuthnow confuses the Weberian opposition of instrumental to value rationality with the Marxian themes of relating theory to practice and overcoming false consciousness. Theory thus appears as utopian, and destined to be progressively subordinated to practice, and also "practice" is seen as a form of strategizing that necessarily loses sight of broader goals (see esp. pp. 482, 504). This section almost abandons the putative empirical object of Wuthnow's case study (socialism in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) as it slips off into a general discussion of class consciousness and related themes. Throughout, Wuthnow shifts uneasily from speaking of "the proletariat" to "the socialist," and from the class to the individual. When he uses phrases like "the proletariat suffers from inauthenticity," it is not clear whether Wuthnow wishes to speak (following certain Marxists) of the proletariat as a collective subject, or whether he really means to contrast the *proletarian* with his or her false consciousness to the *proletariat* with its unassailable historical mission.
16. This comes in a paragraph citing no socialist in particular but apparently discussing Marxism. Wuthnow's observation may broadly be true (it accords with my experience as a socialist) but it is hardly typical of Marxist ideology. It was Marx, after all, who wrote that "It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat at the moment regards as its aim. It is a question of *what the proletariat is*, and what, in accordance with this being, it will historically be compelled to do" (*The Holy Family*, in *Collected Works* 4: 5–211 [London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975; orig. 1845], 37; Marx's emphasis).
17. Compare C. Taylor (*Sources of the Self*) where this is a central theme, and the same historical period is covered with wonderful richness. Taylor's study is, however, the mirror image of Wuthnow's inasmuch as it neglects the social institutional dimension on which Wuthnow focuses (see C. Calhoun, "Morality, Identity and Historical Explanation: Charles Taylor on the Sources of the Self," *Sociological Theory*, forthcoming).
18. One of Wuthnow's unaddressed questions – basic to the transformation of ideology and social structure in the modern era – is why religion ceased to be so central to "those vested with formal power" as it had been for millennia.
19. D. George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965).
20. The philosophical and scientific societies and similar groups were also more often outside the directly political orbit than Wuthnow's account implies. Indeed, his account is surprising in its neglect of science (and to a lesser extent of religion and the arts). The pursuit of knowledge popularly identified with the Enlightenment was a significant activity among cultural elites, and the various Royal Societies and similar groups helped to pave the way for the more political Enlightenment.
21. This is shown by Jürgen Habermas's analysis of the bourgeois public sphere [*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989; orig. 1962)]. See also C. Calhoun, editor, *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

22. This was not altogether new; it was characteristic also of the Reformation era and especially of the Civil War period in Britain. The Civil War falls outside Wuthnow's core time frame for the Reformation; in any case he doesn't really consider it, though he does mention in passing the Lollards who anticipated it.
23. O. Negt and A. Kluge (*Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972]), for example, speak of a "proletarian public sphere," but I think that for any early period this is even more misleading than describing the dominant discourse narrowly as the "bourgeois" public sphere. Relatedly, it is disappointing that one doesn't learn more about the anti-Enlightenment (or, in the first case, the counter-Reformation). Though Wuthnow presents ideological change as a matter of politics, he does not directly take up the nature of the struggle between sharply opposed positions, or ask very systematically questions such as why they were concentrated in certain areas or among certain groups – even within primarily hospitable states (though in fairness Wuthnow does note the former issue briefly on p. 333).
24. See Calhoun, editor, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Wuthnow also neglects the quirky but fascinating study by R. Sennett (*The Fall of Public Man* [New York: Knopf, 1976]). Neither Sennett nor Habermas has all right answers, but Wuthnow might have learned a good deal from each, and his readers would have learned from seeing him sort out his arguments in direct relationship to theirs. Wuthnow could, for example, have challenged the idea of bourgeois foundations for the Enlightenment in the sophisticated version of Habermas's account rather than in the more simplistic Marxist determinisms he sets up as straw men.
25. Wuthnow (pp. 316–317) helpfully notes the contribution geographical concentration in major cities and ease of transportation made to facilitating private communication among Enlighteners. The issue is not just the possibility of private (confidential) communication, however, but the emphasis on the idea that public discourse might represent the views of the person rather than the position from which he or she spoke.
26. Wuthnow is engaged partly in an argument about "action sequences." He observes, rightly, that Rousseau's position was more complex than Voltaire's. He ascribes this to Rousseau's writing later, and thus being able to consider and comment on earlier Enlighteners. This may indeed have had an effect. But Montesquieu did not write later, and was also more complex than Voltaire on the very subjects Wuthnow takes up. Wuthnow completely ignores such obvious candidate explanations as the intrinsic strength of intellectual contributions or the question of whether the authors tried to write systematic theory or not.
27. E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). On Germany specifically, see G. Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).
28. Wuthnow, *Meaning*, 61–62.
29. P. O'Brien and C. Keyder, *Economic Growth in Britain and France, 1780–1914: Two Paths to the Twentieth Century* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978).
30. Wuthnow also compares growth rates, for the most part, neglecting economic baselines, in both his Enlightenment and socialism sections. This is in line with his general argument that economic expansion provided crucial resources for all the cultural movements he studies, but it makes it hard to arrive at one's own interpretations of the cases.
31. N. Smelser, *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution* (London: Routledge and

Kegan Paul, 1959). T. Skocpol, *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* (New York: Cambridge, 1984): T. Skocpol and M. Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22. 2 (1980): 174–197.

32. Certainly Bourdieu's work does suggest an increasing sociocultural differentiation, but (a) he hardly makes that the motor of history, and (b) he never treats "culture" as a something, a quasi-organism, that "adapts." The construction and proliferation of social fields are not just adaptations to prior complexity; they are part of the process by which society becomes more complex. And if anything is a prime mover in Bourdieu's theory, it is struggle – for distinction, recognition, power, capital.