central to Critical Theory from its beginnings, when Frankfurt School thinkers sought to complicate orthodox Marxism by theorizing culture's relative autonomy. Today, however, they assume a new guise. On the one hand, globalizing capitalism has greatly heightened the salience of culture, speeding the flow not only of capital, but also of images, signs, and people across national borders. The effect is to intensify awareness of "difference" and encourage its politicization. On the other hand, Marxism is no longer a force to be reckoned with, having been supplanted by culturalist paradigms, both in politics and in the academy. In this situation, critical theorizing is less likely to succumb to orthodox economism than to the neoliberal amnesia that represses the critique of political economy. The result is a new set of challenges for Critical Theory: how should it understand the salience of culture in globalizing capitalist society? In particular, how should it assess the critical potential of the cultural turn?

Both Axel Honneth and I seek to rise to these challenges. Both of us believe that culture is no mere reflection of political economy, but a vehicle of social ordering in its own right. Both of us maintain, too, that culture often serves as a medium of domination, hence that society harbors injustices whose deepest roots lie not in political economy, but in institutionalized patterns of value. Finally, both Honneth and I theorize these matters in terms of recognition. Both of us employ that category to conceptualize the social weight and moral significance of culture in contemporary capitalism. Thus, each of us proposes a framework for Critical Theory that aims to incorporate the best insights of the cultural turn.

Nevertheless, we proceed in different ways. Honneth conceptualizes society as a network of recognition relations. Subordinating social theory to his moral psychology, he stipulates that the former's task is to identify the concrete way in which recognition expectations are institutionalized in a given society. Then, having parsed the society's "recognition order," Critical Theory should show how misrecognition arises within it and

grounds social conflict. Applying this method to capitalist society, Honneth discerns three institutionalized "recognition spheres," each governed by a different normative principle. In the sphere of "love," recognition should be governed by the principle of attentiveness to the specific needs of the unique individual. In that of law, by contrast, it should be governed by the principle of equal respect for the autonomy of persons. In the sphere of labor, finally, recognition should be regulated by the principle of achievement, which determines the level of one's wages according to the value of one's social contribution. From Honneth's perspective, therefore, struggles over distribution are really struggles over recognition, aimed at changing the cultural interpretation of achievement. For him, moreover, recognition goes all the way down. The primary medium of societal integration, recognition-interpretations govern social processes in every sphere, dictating not only the contours of intimacy and law, but even the distribution of income and wealth. It follows that there is nothing distinctive about market-mediated social interactions, which are regulated, like all interactions, by cultural schemas of evaluation. Thus, there is neither any point in, nor any possibility of, conceptualizing specifically economic mechanisms in capitalist society. Far from requiring a second, distribution-oriented level of analysis, capitalist society effectively *is* its recognition order.

In general, then, Honneth's social theory, like his moral psychology, is monistic. Viewing all social processes through the single lens of interpersonal psychology, it posits the "primacy of moral integration," in which social action is coordinated through shared understandings and interpretative schemas. The effect is to view capitalism exclusively from the perspective of recognition – hence to assume that all social processes in capitalist society are directly regulated by cultural schemas of evaluation; that all subordination derives from culturally rooted hierarchies of status; and that all can be remedied by cultural change. All of these assumptions, however, are problematic.

To begin with, it is doubtful that any society is simply a recognition order. Virtually all societies contain more than one kind of societal integration. Above and beyond the moral integration privileged by Honneth, virtually all include some form of system integration, in which interaction is coordinated by the functional interlacing of the unintended consequences of a myriad of individual strategies. To analyze any society exclusively as a recognition order is illegitimately to totalize one mode of integration, truncating the full range of social processes. The effect is to obscure a key question: in a given society, how precisely does the recognition order interact with other modes of social order to produce relations of subordination?

Moreover, what is true for any society holds especially for capitalist society. The latter's distinguishing feature, after all, is its creation of a quasi-objective, anonymous, impersonal market order that follows a logic of its own. This market order is culturally embedded, to be sure. But it is not directly governed by cultural schemas of evaluation. Rather, the economic logic of the market interacts in complex ways with the cultural logic of recognition, sometimes instrumentalizing existing status distinctions, sometimes dissolving or circumventing them, and sometimes creating new ones. As a result, market mechanisms give rise to economic class relations that are not mere reflections of status hierarchies. Neither those relations nor the mechanisms that generate them can be understood by recognition monism. An adequate approach must theorize both the distinctive dynamics of the capitalist economy and its interaction with the status order.

These considerations apply in spades to the labor markets of capitalist societies. In those arenas, work compensation is not determined by the principle of achievement. Granted, capitalist societies are permeated by ideologies about the extent to which various activities contribute to community well-being; about the supposed fit between various occupations, on one side, and various genders and "races," on the other; and even about what

counts as work at all. And granted, too, these ideologies have real effects. But they are hardly the only factors that affect wage rates. Also important are political-economic factors such as the supply of and demand for different types of labor; the balance of power between labor and capital; the stringency of social regulations, including the minimum wage; the availability and cost of productivity enhancing technologies; the ease with which firms can shift their operations to locations where wage rates are lower; the cost of credit; the terms of trade; and international currency exchange rates. In the broad mix of relevant considerations, ideologies of achievement are by no means paramount. Rather, their effects are mediated by the operation of impersonal system mechanisms, which prioritize maximization of corporate profits. Recognition monism, however, is congenitally blind to such system mechanisms, which cannot be reduced to cultural schemas of evaluation. As a result, it is disabled from understanding the processes that generate distributive injustice in capitalist societies. Only an approach that theorizes the imbrication of recognition and distribution can adequately theorize those processes.

It follows that not all struggles over distribution are in fact struggles over recognition, aimed at enhancing esteem for the claimants' labor. To be sure, *some* movements for redistribution do contest reigning interpretations of achievement – witness the struggles for "comparable worth" I discussed in chapter one.[10] But, *pace* Honneth, not all distributive struggles are like comparable worth. Consider today's struggles against neoliberal globalization. Targeting transnational trade and investment regimes that serve the interests of large corporate shareholders and currency speculators, such struggles aim to end systemic maldistribution that is rooted not in ideologies about achievement, but in the system imperatives and governance structures of globalizing capitalism. *Contra* Honneth, this sort of maldistribution is no less paradigmatic of contemporary capitalism than the sort fueled by nonrecognition of women's carework – witness the fate of much of sub-Saharan Africa, eastern

Germany, and the south Bronx. The vast deprivation in question here stems not from undervaluation of labor contributions, but from economic-system mechanisms that exclude many from labor markets altogether. This exclusion is facilitated by racism, to be sure, as profit-maximizing imperatives interact with status distinctions and with the legacies of past depredations. But it cannot be remedied simply by changing Eurocentric standards of achievement. What is required, rather, is wholesale restructuring of global systems of finance, trade, and production. Such matters escape the conceptual grid of recognition monism, however. They can only be captured by a two-dimensional framework that encompasses both the system dynamics and status dynamics of globalizing capitalism.

In general, then, Honneth vastly exaggerates the role of recognition in capitalist society. Focused exclusively on value-regulated interaction, he takes valid insights about the ubiquity and irreducibility of culture and inflates them beyond all recognition. He goes from the true premise that markets are always culturally embedded to the false conclusion that their behavior is wholly governed by the dynamics of recognition. Likewise, he goes from the valid insight that the capitalist economy is not a purely technical, culture-free system to the untenable proposition that it has no economic dynamics worth analyzing in their own right. Finally, he goes from the valid insight that all social struggles have a cultural dimension to the insupportable conclusion that all are cultural *simpliciter*, and in exactly the same way. Thus, far from successfully incorporating the best insights of the cultural turn, Honneth capitulates to the latter's worst excesses. Instead of passing beyond economism to arrive at a richer theory that encompasses both distribution and recognition, he has traded one truncated paradigm for another, a truncated economism for a truncated culturalism.

What, then, represents a better approach? All the considerations marshaled here point in a single direction, to a *two-dimensional* framework that encompasses both recognition and distribution. Avoiding not only vulgar economism but also

reductive culturalism, such a framework would not reduce capitalist society to a network of recognition relations. To understand that society, rather, it would analyze the interplay of two distinct ordering dimensions, mutually irreducible but practically intertwined: an economic dimension, associated with marketized interaction, and a cultural dimension, associated with value-regulated interaction. Such an approach offers several advantages. Instead of focusing exclusively on moral integration, it attends also to system integration and then studies the interaction of the two. Moreover, far from assuming that recognition imperatives alone directly govern all social action, it allows for marketized interactions in which cultural schemas of evaluation are refracted through an economic logic. Likewise, instead of reducing all social subordination to misrecognition, rooted in hierarchies of cultural value, this approach allows for distributive injustices that do not simply reflect status hierarchies, even as they interact causally with the latter. Far from assuming, finally, that all injustices in capitalist society can be remedied by cultural change, it requires that struggles for recognition be joined to struggles for egalitarian redistribution.

This is precisely the sort of approach I have proposed. By calling it *perspectival dualism*, I have signaled a special, counter-intuitive way of understanding distribution and recognition. In lieu of spatial and substantial interpretations, which equate those categories with societal domains, I construe them perspectivally, as analytically distinct ordering dimensions which cut across institutional divisions. For me, accordingly, distribution and recognition do not occupy separate spheres. Rather, they interpenetrate, to produce complex patterns of subordination. Thus, institutionalized value patterns continue to permeate marketized interactions, even though they do not directly govern the latter; and instrumental considerations continue to suffuse value-regulated arenas, even though they do not enjoy a free hand. It follows that distribution and recognition can never be fully disentangled. All interactions partake simultaneously of both dimensions, albeit in different proportions.

Hence all must be analyzed bifocally and evaluated from both perspectives. *Pace* Honneth, therefore, perspectival dualism introduces no "unbridgeable chasm" between the material and the symbolic. Its guiding aim is, on the contrary, to investigate how precisely institutionalized patterns of cultural value interact with capitalist economic dynamics to generate maldistribution and misrecognition. Doing so, however, requires distinguishing distribution and recognition analytically and tracking their practical imbrication. It will not suffice to totalize culture, obliterate the economic, and negate the distinction by fiat.

The rationale for this approach lies in a two-dimensional conception of capitalist society. I assume that this society encompasses two analytically distinct orders of subordination: class stratification, rooted primarily in economic system mechanisms, and status hierarchy, based largely in institutionalized patterns of cultural value. These two orders do not map neatly onto one another, although they interact causally. Thus, in capitalist society there exist gaps between status and class. Moreover, each of these orders of subordination corresponds to an analytically distinct type of injustice. Whereas class stratification corresponds to maldistribution, status hierarchy corresponds to misrecognition. Morally speaking, however, the effect in both cases is the same: some members of society are prevented from participating on a par with others in social interaction. Thus, both orders of subordination violate a single overarching principle of justice, the principle of participatory parity. Yet each does so in a different way. Whereas class subordination denies some actors the resources needed to interact with others as peers, status subordination denies some the requisite standing. In both cases, therefore, redressing the injustice involves overcoming obstacles to participatory parity. Redressing maldistribution requires restructuring the economic system to eliminate resource disparities, while redressing misrecognition requires changing institutionalized patterns of cultural value. In both cases, too, the aim is to establish social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers.

Unlike Honneth's, therefore, my framework situates the recognition dimension of capitalist society in relation to the distributive dimension. In addition, it understands the recognition dimension in a different way. For me, that dimension concerns status equality, not intact identity; and its institutional expression is the *status order as a whole*. The status order is understood broadly, moreover, as spanning the full gamut of contemporary social institutions. A composite of the various value patterns that regulate interaction at different sites, it encompasses not only family and law, but also communications media and religion, to name just two more. Unlike Honneth, therefore, I do not divide the recognition dimension into three separate spheres, each associated with a different social institution, a different psychological injury, and a different normative principle. Rather, I assume that the status order of contemporary society is far too dynamic, pervasive, and plural to respect any such a priori division. At the same time, however, I also contend that beneath all the cultural complexity lies a single moral imperative: the principle of participatory parity.

To see why, consider the gender injustices associated with marriage. Included here are wives' vulnerability to marital rape and domestic violence; primary carework responsibilities that prevent them from participating in paid work and politics on the same terms as men; inferior social welfare entitlements; diminished rights of asylum and naturalization; and a host of other legal disabilities. *Contra* Honneth, these injustices are not best conceived psychologically, as violations of personal identity rooted in a lack of sensitivity to individual need in the sphere of intimacy, which is governed by the principle of care. Rather, they are better conceived socially, as forms of subordination rooted in an androcentric status order, which pervades society and is imbricated with its economic structure, systematically disadvantaging women in *every* sphere. *Contra* Honneth, moreover, marriage has never been regulated by the principle of care. For most of history, rather, it has been a legally regulated

economic relation, concerned more with property accumulation, labor organization, and resource distribution than with care.[11] In fact, what Honneth calls affective care is actually women's labor, ideologically mystified and rendered invisible. It follows that the status subordination of wives in marriage cannot be remedied by further individualizing care. What is required, rather, is deinstitutionalizing androcentric value patterns throughout society in favor of alternatives that promote gender parity. Participatory parity, not care, is the key to reforming the institution of marriage.

Consider, too, the injustices that have occasioned today's struggles over cultural difference: for example, the display of the Christian cross in Bavarian schools, the US police practice of racial profiling, and a built environment that disadvantages people with disabilities.[12] *Contra* Honneth, such injustices are not best understood as belonging to "the sphere of law." They have no more intrinsic relation to law than does any other kind of status subordination, including the marital injustices just discussed.[13] Like the latter, these derive from a status order that cannot be localized in any one sphere – in this case an ethnocentric status order that institutionalizes majority cultural norms, denying participatory parity to minority-group members. Like marital injustices, too, these can only be redressed by deinstitutionalizing those value patterns throughout society, not only in and through law. As with marital injustices, finally, the guiding principle here is participatory parity, which gives concrete democratic substance to the ideal of equal autonomy, a point I shall elaborate in the final section.

The point about law is worth pursuing, given Honneth's claim that my approach overlooks struggles for legal equality. In fact, perspectival dualism *does* account for such struggles, albeit not by treating law as a sphere. Rather, it conceives law as pertaining to both dimensions of justice, distribution and recognition, where it is liable to serve at once as a vehicle of, and a remedy for, subordination. On the recognition side, some legal struggles aim to undo expressly juridified status

subordination – witness campaigns to legalize gay marriage; others resort to law to redress *nonjuridified* status subordination – witness campaigns to outlaw racial profiling or to mandate handicapped access. Far from being localized in a special sphere, such struggles target parity-impeding norms wherever they appear, across the whole of the status order, from family to occupational practice to the built environment. On the distribution side, meanwhile, efforts to change class-biased tax and inheritance laws seek to mitigate legally sanctioned economic inequality, while struggles to enact new laws that would curtail corporate property rights, control international currency speculation, and establish a universal, unconditional Basic Income seek a more fundamental transformation. Aimed at restructuring the political economy, these struggles, too, confound efforts to compartmentalize law.

Law aside, the chief conclusion here is this: not only does perspectival dualism situate the recognition dimension of capitalist society vis-à-vis the distribution dimension; it also illuminates the recognition dimension better than Honneth does. Whereas he analyzes misrecognition psychologically, my approach foregrounds its *social* character as a matter of *status subordination*. Thus, instead of distinguishing kinds of misrecognition according to types of identity injury, I underscore the societal consequence common to them all: the constitution of some classes of persons as less than full members of society in a way that prevents them from participating as peers. The result is a critical sociology of recognition that is appropriate for contemporary globalizing capitalism: instead of dividing the cultural order into three recognition spheres, I theorize the cross-cutting *status orders* that run throughout every sphere. At the same time, perspectival dualism also affords a socially pertinent moral theory: instead of designating a different normative principle for each category of psychical damage, it establishes that all types that merit the title of injustice do so because they violate a *single* principle: the principle of *participatory parity*. Finally, this approach entails a politically responsible

practical conclusion: instead of proposing to remedy each type of misrecognition by fine-tuning its designated principle, it discloses the social redress that is common to all: deinstitutionalizing patterns of cultural value that impede parity of participation and replacing them with patterns that foster it.

Axel Honneth has suggested that my categorial distinction between redistribution and recognition remains arbitrary and ungrounded for want of a theory of societal reproduction. This, it should now be clear, is not the case. Premised, rather, on a bilevel conception, perspectival dualism assumes that capitalist societies differentiate a systemically integrated market order from value-regulated social orders. As a result, both system integration and social integration are essential to those societies. Unlike Honneth's approach, accordingly, mine attends to both those dimensions and elucidates their mutual interaction.[14] In this way, perspectival dualism accords due significance to moral integration without construing the latter, implausibly, as "primary" and inflating it beyond all recognition. The result is a social-theoretical framework that appropriates the best insights of the cultural turn. Taking some distance from current culturalist fashions, this approach makes possible a *critical* theory of the place of culture, and of recognition, in contemporary capitalism.

III. On Liberal Equality: Against the Reduction of Justice to an Ethics of Intact Identity

The third focus of this debate is the normative component of Critical Theory – its understanding of justice and its moral criteria for adjudicating claims. Although such matters have long constituted the core concerns of moral philosophy, they assume a new urgency today. Now, as globalization is accelerating flows of people and communication across borders, divergent value horizons are colliding with startling results. Everyone experiences a new proximity of "the other" and a new salience

of identity and difference. The effect is to fracture all self-enclosed status orders and to unleash intensified struggles for recognition. Such struggles, to be sure, are not new. But they assume a new prominence in this context as they burst through the national frames that prioritized distributive politics in the preceding era of Keynesian Fordism. Today, accordingly, struggles for recognition are decreasingly bounded by country or region and increasingly decoupled from struggles for redistribution, despite worldwide exacerbation of economic inequality. The result is renewed pressure on our normative judgments. Buffeted by competing claims for recognition, from amid conflicting schemas of value, we are called on to decide: which claims are genuinely emancipatory and which are not? Which recognition struggles foster justice and which do not? Which merit our support and which do not?

The problem is to secure a standpoint for making such judgments. In the present context, it is hardly possible to regard society as a culturally homogeneous, bounded whole, in which recognition claims can be adjudicated ethically, by appeal to a single shared value horizon. Rather, we must evaluate claims across divergent value horizons, no single one of which can reasonably claim to trump all the others. The result is that Critical Theory needs a *nonsectarian* theory of justice. Far from simply assuming a particular scheme of ethical value, such a theory must be compatible with a diversity of reasonable visions of the good life. At the same time, however, it is equally implausible to assume that all *prima facie* meritorious claims will automatically converge. Rather, we must be prepared to encounter hard cases – as, for example, when claims for cultural recognition conflict with claims for gender equality. The upshot is that Critical Theory needs a *determinate* theory of justice. Far from simply counseling live-and-let-live, such a theory must provide criteria for adjudicating conflicts and resolving dilemmas.

In general, then, what is needed is clear. Critical Theory must incorporate a theory of justice that meets two conditions

simultaneously. On the one hand, it must be sufficiently *general* to avoid sectarianism. On the other hand, it must be sufficiently *determinate* to adjudicate conflicts. Only a theory of justice that is simultaneously general and determinate can meet the challenges of globalization.

Both Axel Honneth and I have sought to develop such a theory. In so doing, both of us have returned to the core concepts of the liberal tradition, namely, the equal autonomy and moral worth of human beings. And both of us have sought to rearticulate those ideals in forms that are sufficiently general and determinate to meet current challenges. For both of us, finally, the category of recognition plays a major role in explicating both the meaning of equal moral worth and the requirements of justice.

Once again, however, we proceed in different ways. Honneth contends that it is impossible adequately to articulate liberal ideals in the absence of a theory of the good life. Thus, he grounds his theory of justice in a conception of human flourishing. The conception he advances is psychological, moreover, in keeping with his prioritization of moral psychology. For Honneth, accordingly, the chief ingredient of human flourishing is an "intact identity."[15] It follows in his reconstruction of liberalism that a society is just if and only if it permits its members to develop intact identities. This in turn requires three types of healthy self-relation, grounded in three different kinds recognition: self-confidence assured via loving care, self-respect based in legal rights, and self-esteem rooted in social appreciation of the value of one's labor. For Honneth, therefore, justice requires a recognition order that provides individuals with the care, respect, and esteem that a good life requires.[16] As we saw, moreover, he maintains that this tripartite understanding of recognition exhausts the entire meaning of justice. Thus every bonafide justice claim is a claim for recognition, aimed at consolidating an intact identity. And every recognition claim is justified teleologically, as a means to the good life as Honneth understands it.

This approach is faithful to Honneth's project in both its monism and its stress on psychology. But it is deficient as a theory of justice. In particular, it fails to satisfy the requirements of nonsectarianism and determinacy. Or rather, it can succeed in satisfying one of those requirements only by failing to meet the other.

Consider that to avoid sectarianism, Honneth must deny that his conception of human flourishing has any substantive content. For if he were to supply content to that notion, it would effectively become one concrete ethical ideal among others. In that case, his theory of justice would not be able to justify binding obligations on those who subscribe to alternative ethical ideals, as to do so would violate their autonomy. Analogous strictures against substance apply to all of Honneth's key normative categories, including recognition and identity-intactness, as well as care, respect, and esteem. Because all of these notions are construed as ingredients of human flourishing they, too, must be kept free of content. For, again, if any of them acquired concrete substance, the entire conceptual structure would devolve into one sectarian view of the good life among others. In that case, Honneth's theory of justice would be fatally compromised. It would not be able fairly to mediate conflicts across different value horizons.

To meet the requirement of nonsectarianism, therefore, Honneth must construe his normative categories as purely *formal*. He must maintain that care, respect, and esteem are formal requirements of *any* life that could reasonably be considered good from within *any* reasonable ethical horizon. But this creates difficulties of another sort. Once its recognition principles are emptied of content, Honneth's theory of justice lacks sufficient determinacy to adjudicate conflicting claims.

Take the principle of achievement. As we saw, Honneth invokes that principle to adjudicate claims for redistribution, which he construes as demands for a proper valuation of the claimant's labor. The principle of achievement cannot be construed concretely, however, as implying a substantive ethical

horizon for assessing labor's social value. For if it were, it would not be able to fairly adjudicate distributive conflicts in contexts of ethical pluralism, where social actors do not subscribe to a single shared value horizon. So the principle of achievement must be understood formally. But in that case what does it require? Honneth tells us that justice enjoins a proper estimation of everyone's social contribution. But he does not tell us how, in the absence of any agreed upon substantive yardstick, we are to arrive at such an estimation. Nor does he tell us how we are to know when and whether any proposed estimation is just. Nor, finally, does he tell us how we should answer neoliberals, who insist that the correct estimations are precisely those assigned by unregulated markets. Frustratingly silent on these matters, Honneth's "achievement principle" provides no basis for distinguishing warranted from unwarranted claims. A normative standard in appearance only, it avoids sectarianism only by forfeiting determinacy.

Analogous problems plague Honneth's principle of care. Assigned to an "intimate sphere" whose constitution is as politically contested as it is culturally variable, that principle, too, must be construed formally in order to escape ethical sectarianism. In that case, however, it, too, lacks sufficient determinacy to adjudicate conflicting claims. How, after all, can a purely formal understanding of care tell us how to assess the relative merits of traditional full-time mothering, on the one hand, and feminist models of degendered parenting, on the other?

To be sure, achievement and care are especially vulnerable to the dilemma of sectarianism and indeterminacy. But even the venerable principle of equal respect runs into difficulties on Honneth's account. As we saw, he associates that principle with the "sphere of law" and invokes it to adjudicate struggles for legal equality. It is under this rubric, moreover, that he locates cultural and religious disputes, such as the controversy over the *foulard* discussed in chapter one. For Honneth, accordingly, such controversies should be resolved by appeal to the principle

of equal respect for autonomous personhood. This approach promises to avoid sectarianism by eschewing ethical evaluation of the disputed practices. But its capacity to determine a clear resolution remains in doubt. Recall that for Honneth respect is justified as a vital ingredient of an intact identity. Thus, one might suppose that he means to interpret this principle psychologically, as requiring that the law license whatever practices are essential to claimants' subjective sense of their dignity. In that case, however, the principle would be unable to adjudicate conflicts in which one group's experienced dignity is tied to another's experienced humiliation. Let us assume, therefore, that equal respect, too, must be understood formally. But then what precisely does it require? Does equal respect require only that law manifest formal equality and facial neutrality, as conservatives insist? Or does it entail the more demanding principle of equality of opportunity, as liberals maintain? Or, finally, does it require a still more stringent, result-oriented standard, such as the principle of participatory parity, as I contend? Once again, Honneth is silent on the crucial issue.[17] As a result, his recognition principle of equal respect is insufficiently determinate to distinguish warranted from unwarranted claims. Unable to adjudicate conflicts that pit one group's recognition demands against another's, it too avoids sectarianism only to sacrifice determinacy.

In general, then, none of Honneth's three principles satisfies both those requirements simultaneously. When the three principles are considered together, moreover, additional difficulties arise. As we saw, Honneth assigns each recognition principle to its own social sphere, as if to ensure that the principles won't conflict. In fact, however, the recognition spheres do not, and cannot, remain separate, as the example of income distribution attests. I just noted that Honneth submits disputes in this area to the merit-based principle of achievement. Yet he also remarks, with apparent approval, that the democratic welfare state generated another standard, derived from the principle of equal respect. This second, "social-citizenship" standard pre-

cludes income disparities that endanger some people's standing as equal citizens.[18] Here, then, are two different norms of distributive justice, which are liable to conflict: whereas the achievement norm privileges individual desert, the respect norm prioritizes social solidarity.[19] Thus, a theory of distributive justice cannot encompass both unless it ranks the principles in order of priority. This, however, Honneth fails to do. Speaking, rather, of three "equally important" principles of recognition, he neglects to tells us what we should do in cases where esteeming the labor contributions of some entails denying equal citizenship to others. Absent a method for resolving such conflicts, his tripartite recognition monism falls prey to another dimension of indeterminacy.

The upshot is that Honneth fails to provide a practicable theory of justice. The root problem, I contend, is his teleological starting point. By grounding his account of justice in a theory of the good life, he is forced to take extraordinary steps to avoid capitulating to ethical sectarianism. Constrained to construe his normative principles formally, he must drain them of substantive content – hence, of normative force. In seeking to resist teleology's built-in temptation to sectarianism, he ends up succumbing to indeterminacy. Ironically, then, an ethical starting point designed to overcome empty formalism itself descends into moral vacuity.

What, then, represents a viable approach? What sort of theory of justice can satisfy the requirements of nonsectarianism and determinacy simultaneously? The approach I have proposed begins not with a theory of the good life, but with the central moral ideal of modern liberalism: the equal autonomy and moral worth of human beings. In my understanding, this ideal needs no grounding in an ethic of self-realization, as its basic point is to enable the subjects of morality to formulate such ethics for themselves. But its full meaning needs to be explicated and its normative implications spelled out. For me, the implications of equal autonomy can only be articulated deontologically, via a theory of justice that is compatible with

a plurality of reasonable views of the good life. Nonsectarian from the outset, the normative principles comprising such a theory need not be emptied of content. On the contrary, as I shall show, they can be sufficiently rich in moral substance to adjudicate conflicting claims.

In my approach, the implications of equal autonomy are spelled out in a theory of justice whose core principle is *parity of participation*. Deontological and nonsectarian, this principle assumes both the reasonableness of ethical disagreement and the equal moral worth of human beings. It is compatible in principle with all those understandings of the good life that themselves respect equal autonomy – of both those who subscribe to a given understanding and those who do not. At the same time, however, the principle of participatory parity articulates a specific interpretation of what such respect requires. Rejecting formal notions of equality as insufficient, it maintains that to respect the equal autonomy and moral worth of others one must accord them the status of full partners in social interaction. That, moreover, means assuring that all have access to the institutional prerequisites of participatory parity – above all, to the economic resources and the social standing needed to participate on a par with others. On this view, anything short of participatory parity constitutes a failure of equal respect. And denial of access to parity's social prerequisites makes a mockery of a society's professed commitment to equal autonomy.

Participatory parity constitutes *a radical democratic interpretation* of equal autonomy. Far more demanding than standard liberal interpretations, this principle is not only deontological but also substantive. On the one hand, it enjoins removal of economic obstacles to full social participation, thus supplying a standard for adjudicating claims for redistribution: only claims that diminish economic disparities are warranted. On the other hand, it also enjoins dismantling of institutionalized cultural obstacles, thereby supplying as well a standard for adjudicating claims for recognition: only claims that promote status equality