that always already affect its conditions, that I am adopting a critical *and* dialectical point of view.

After these preliminaries, allow me now to indicate the three orientations that strike me as particularly significant from this point of view: The first has to do with the *dilemmas* or dichotomized utterances of universalism in philosophy; the second concerns the intrinsic ambivalence of the *institution* of the universal, or the universal as "truth"; and the third deals with what I would like to call, in quasi-Weberian terms, the *responsibility* (or responsibilities) involved in a politics of the universal that many of us support.

I will start by saying a few words about the dilemmas and dichotomies that, from the beginning, have informed our disputes over universalism. It is indeed intriguing as well as revealing that most of these disputes combine logical distinctions with ethical or political choices in order to construct symmetries, pairs of *notions*, *opposite conceptions* or *realizations* of universalism. One is tempted to say that in fact the content of the opposition always remains the same, at least in the modern era, but each time ends up reformulated according to the specific context. Yet this is not really satisfactory insofar as the question of conditions remains unaddressed. A dialectical approach, modeled on that followed by Hegel in his phenomenology of conflicting universalities,[5] would endeavor to describe these dilemmas in their own terms, to take them seriously, in order, each time, to discover what is at stake in their opposition. From there, it would also explain why debates about the opposition between the universal and the particular, and a fortiori between universalism and particularism, are much less interesting and decisive than debates opposing different conceptions of the universal or different universalities. Or, rather, it would explain why in reality the former merely conceal the strategic defense of a conception of the universal as the "negation" of its opposite, presented as the particular.

I am especially sensitive to this first approach because, some years ago, I myself forged a distinction between *intensive* universalism and *extensive* universalism.[6] I was interested in the figure of the citizen and in the history of the institution of citizenship, with its effects of exclusion and inclusion. In the modern era, citizenship has been closely associated, almost identified, with nationality. I explained that nationalism (*republican* nationalism, in any case)—but also other forms of universalism, such as the major religious discourses of redemption, which aim to suppress or neutralize natu-

ral and social differences—move in two directions: one seeking to establish equality or suppress distinctions, whether in real or symbolic terms, within a large or small community based specifically on this homogenization; the other tending to suppress every preestablished limit or boundary as part of the recognition and implementation of these principles, with the final goal of creating a cosmopolitical order that could be achieved either along revolutionary lines, *from below*, so to speak, or along imperialistic lines, *from above*. And I emphasized that these two orientations, while radically opposed and, indeed, incompatible, could both claim to exemplify the logic of universality or, better perhaps, of universalization. At around the same time, in 1989, Michael Walzer delivered his Tanner Lectures on the theme of "Nation and Universe," the first part of which was entitled "Two Kinds of Universalism." In it, he compares—with a distinct preference for the second term—"covering-law universalism," which brings together all claims to rights under one and the same law, all experiences of emancipation under the same narrative, and what he calls "reiterative universalism," whose immanent principle is differentiation or, rather, the virtual capacity of moral values and definitions of right to contest and communicate with one another in a process of mutual recognition.[7] Between these two dichotomies, between my *intensive-extensive* opposition and Walzer's *covering-reiterative* opposition, there were at once obvious affinities and striking divergences—the full import of which would be evident were I able to take up the concrete points of the debate here, such as the question of nationalism or messianism. But since we lack the time, allow me simply to point out, in a rather formal way, that such dichotomies, at once symmetrical and asymmetrical, or, if you prefer, descriptive and normative, become inevitable as soon as we actually engage in debates about universalism. They are a good sign that every speaker (and every discourse) of the universal is located *within* and not *outside* the field of discourses and ideologies that she or he wishes to explore.

It can't be by accident that many discourses on universalism and on the universal itself, perhaps even most of them, take a refutative form—what the Greeks called *elenchus*—which says not so much *what* the universal *is* as *what it is not* or *not only*. Indeed, no metalanguage of universality exists—in other words, the surest way to undermine the universality of a universalist discourse, as Hegel already knew, is to claim that it provides this metalanguage. But there are possibilities for displacement, for strategic

choice, among the categories that give a specific explanatory or injunctive value to the distinction between antithetical forms of universalism. To classify these categories and to show how they can be at once very old and periodically renewed would involve sketching a speculative history of universality and universalities, a task that is tempting to undertake, since it would enable us to clarify certain contemporary debates.

For example, there is the opposition between *true* and *false universality*. A good recent illustration of this is provided by Alain Badiou himself. At the beginning of his essay on Saint Paul, Badiou contrasts a true humanism of equality, which erases or suppresses genealogical, anthropological, or social differences (Jewish/Greek, man/woman, master/slave), a universalism proceeding from Christianity and later secularized by modern republicanism, with a *false universalism*, a "simulacrum" of universalism (although certain problems may result from the fact that this simulacrum is in a sense much more real, or more effective, than its "true" counterpart)—namely, the universalism of the liberal world market (or perhaps the liberal representation of the world market), which is based not on *equality* but on *equivalence* and thus incorporates into its formal homogeneity the permanent reproduction of rival identities.[8] This second term pushes to the extreme the notion of "extensive universalism," making it an ontological product of *extension* or (de)territorialization as such. It has numerous philosophical antecedents, among which I would like to recall Rousseau's distinction between the "general will" and the "will of all," with which Badiou is quite familiar.[9] It would certainly have been challenged by Marx, who spent a good part of his intellectual life showing that the universality of the market is not only "real" but also "true"—that is, that it provides an ontological basis for the legal, moral, and political representation of equality—or by Foucault, who makes the market a fundamental form of "veridiction." We can also note with interest that another influential contribution to the current debate about universalism—I am thinking of Dipesh Chakrabarty's work, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*[10]—also describes what the author calls equivalence or commensurability, terms associated with the "metanarratives" of value (or labor-value) and progress, as a dominant form of universalism, the result of which ultimately contradicts its egalitarian claims. From this, he draws the opposite conclusions. In Chakrabarty's terminology, translation is a generic term for universality, which leads him to compare "two models of translation."

Relying heavily on a certain Romantic conception of the uniqueness of languages and cultures, he opposes the principle of equivalence with a model that is also a form of universalism or translation, but a form based on the recognition of the untranslatable, and which he describes as heterogeneous, "nonmodern" (rather than postmodern) and "antisociological."

More than the antithesis of true and false, the old categories of the One and the Multiple here take center stage, such that we might speak of a *universalism of the One* (or of unity) and a *universalism of the Multiple* (or of multiplicity), the essential characteristic of multiplicity thus being *to exceed every possibility of subsumption* and therefore of common denomination, or exclusively in the form of a "negative denomination." [Badiou's project in *Being and Event* is founded explicitly on the possibility of substituting *multiplicity* for *unity* as the ontologically primary category, which, following a line of thinking close to Neoplatonism but identified above all with Mallarmé's metaphysics, leads him to conceive as an "ultra-one" the type of truth that creates an "event" by separating itself from being.]

This is part of a long story that goes back to the conflict between polytheistic and monotheistic religions in the ancient Hellenic-Semitic world but that still dominates the antitheses of the modern Enlightenment, as exemplified in the "war of universals" that opposed, on the one hand, the disciples of Kant and his univocal (in fact monotheistic) concept of the universality of the categorical imperative, and, on the other, the partisans of Herder, with his simultaneously historicist and polytheistic concept of the history of the world, in which unity exists only as the absent cause of the harmonious multiplicity of cultures. Now, as I said before, such antitheses can be shifted theoretically and practically, which we can demonstrate here albeit only in a very schematic way. Indeed, both Kant and Herder were typical champions of cosmopolitanism, together embodying the two versions that have continued to dominate uses of the notion to this day.

But let us take the example of a more recent discussion such as the one between Derrida and Habermas.[11] In a profound sense, they are both Kantians, and both refer to the Kantian definition of "cosmopolitical right," although we could say that their dispute retrospectively highlights a rift within Kant's discourse itself, exemplified by the distance between his book on *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* (1793) and his *Doctrine of Right* (1797). Habermas would define cosmopolitanism as the limit or horizon of a line of progress that (whatever the obstacles and resistances encountered)

tends to replace international relations with a "global domestic policy" (*Weltinnenpolitik*)—that is, not so much global institutional integration as an institutional exclusion of exclusion. Derrida, for his part, would allow the cosmopolitical motto provided that it is combined, through such notions as "hospitality" and "justice" (more precisely, "unconditional," not to say "categorical," hospitality and justice), with a radical critique of the legal foundations of politics. This did not prevent the two philosophers from joining forces after 9/11, not only *against* a certain form of sovereign unilateralism and the spread of a martial conception of politics, but also *for* the construction of a global transnational and transcultural public sphere, in what I will venture to call a "politics of the universal." Old Spinoza would perhaps have seen here an illustration of his idea, developed in the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, that in certain circumstances and under certain conditions, opposite theoretical *premises* or antagonistic conceptions of the universal can in practice lead to the same *consequences*. Of course, the reverse is also true.

I would now like to say a word about another aspect of the dialectic of universality that has interested me in the past and again more recently. It has to do with the *institution* of the universal, or with the institution of the universal as *truth*, which involves the added difficulty that the universal can no longer be contradicted except *from the inside*—that is, on the basis of its own logic or premises. Not because the universal would be imposed by some authority *prohibiting* contradiction or refutation but because the contradiction is already contained in the definition of the universal itself. As we shall see, this situation is closely connected to the fact that certain forms of universality derive their power not from the absolute authority of the institutions in which they are embodied, but rather from their capacity to be continuously challenged on the basis of their own principles or discourses.

These types of discussions are pointless or incomprehensible unless we turn, at least allusively, to a concrete case, although I admit that the one I am thinking of is both ideologically determined and politically tendentious—perhaps what I have to say here applies solely to this specific case. That may mean that the history of universality is composed only of singularities. The singular universality in which I am interested is not the Pauline affirmation of the equality of the faithful, later transferred to all of humankind, which, in Alain Badiou's view, is the prototype for a charismatic founda-

tion of universalism.[12] It is something quite different: the civic principle or proposition of "equal liberty" (which I have suggested be read as a single word: equaliberty). In English, the formula appears in certain "tracts" from the seventeenth-century English Levellers, which indicates the close connection uniting it to the ideals of what is conventionally called the "bourgeois revolution."[13] But its philological roots extend to a much older tradition, to the legal and moral philosophy of the Romans (who practically identify *aequum ius* with *aequa libertas*) as well as, in perhaps a more significant way (although this point raises translation problems for terms like *isonomia* and *parrhēsia*), to the democratic ideals and discourses of the Greek *polis*. It will go on to generate continual effects, *reiterated* up to the present day in the discourses of democratic institutions and social movements of liberals and socialists alike. I will leave all this aside because it would indeed make for a very long story. Let us merely recall the twin formulations of the American and French Declarations of 1776 and 1789, which by themselves represent an interesting *iteration* from within the original event and inscribe the bond of reciprocity constitutive of *equality* and *freedom* (or *independence*) in partially convergent and partially divergent contexts. Although my understanding of the *act* of this proposition follows in large measure from what Hannah Arendt says about its significance for the institution of the political, I would not say, as she does, that we have, in one instance, a "revolution (or a constitution) of freedom" and, in the other, a revolution of equality (or "happiness") (*On Revolution*). In both, we have instead a strong and absolute expression of the necessary link between the concepts of freedom and equality, with, however, a permanent tension between them that reveals their impossible equilibrium. From my previous discussions of this expression,[14] I will mention three ideas here.

(1) The first concerns the *refutative structure* of the proposition or, if you prefer, its realization within an *elenchus*, a "negation of negation." In constitutional texts, this proposition appears in a positive form, affirming that "men are born free and equal" or are such by nature, by birthright, etc. In other words, only institutional violence can deprive them of these rights. But such formulas spring from revolutions or insurrections, in the broad sense, and they encapsulate their effect. They are based on the theoretical critique and the practical rejection of established inequalities or privileges. More specifically, they are based on the conviction—to my mind, totally vindicated by history—that discrimination goes hand in hand with subjection

(what is traditionally called *tyranny*), and vice versa, that subjection and tyranny go hand in hand with discrimination and inequalities. Consequently, political institutions, *citizenship*, if you will, must be founded on a *double rejection* of tyranny and privileges and not on a single, or rather unilateral, rejection. More profoundly, political institutions embody the *negative link* between the two core values of citizenship. This has been demonstrated many times in the history of emancipatory movements, and particularly in the labor movement, the feminist movement, and anticolonial struggles. I would like to connect this logical negation with a crucial political fact concerning the power and effectiveness of this form of universalism: Real states or societies, including those we call democratic, are composed of inequalities and authoritarian relationships. But far from its practical failures and limitations destroying the democratic principle, the practical contradiction itself reveals the reason for the principle's durability. Individuals and groups that are subjected to or victims of discrimination rebel in the name or in defense of principles that are recognized officially and denied in practice. It is the possibility of rebellion inscribed in their very principle, when the principle "has gripped the masses," as Marx puts it, that accounts for democracies' capacity to survive, be it at the risk of conflicts or civil wars.

(2) I would now like to recall a second idea: Although it must (always again) be instituted, equaliberty is not simply one institution among others. We might say that in modern democracies it represents the *archi-institution*, the institution that precedes and conditions all the others. It is in this context that Hannah Arendt's profound reflection on "the right to have rights" assumes its full significance—and it is no accident that it appears within the framework of her analysis of the most extreme forms of totalitarian destruction of human life, those rooted in the negation of the individual rights instituted by universalist nation-states.[15] Equaliberty therefore refers to the preeminent right to have rights but it emphasizes the active side of the notion. In practice, this means that a right to rights can exist only in contexts where individuals and groups *do not receive them* from an external sovereign power or transcendent revelation but instead *confer this right upon themselves* or *grant themselves rights reciprocally*. It would be worthwhile to develop this idea of a limit-institution, or of an institution of the institution itself, in order to address its gradual transition from a classical naturalistic form of discourse on human rights (men, or humans, are *free*

and equal by nature) to a modern historical form, in which universality is grounded in the *contingency of insurrection*, or, if you prefer, of struggle, rather than in essence. It would also be worthwhile to link this limit situation, which essentially appears in the form and context of the negation, to the contradictions that eventually affect every *positive institution* of equaliberty or democracy. The entire modern history of democratic regimes and struggles attests to the difficulty—the internal obstacle—that hinders *real institutions*, or real political regimes, from advancing both toward equality and toward freedom, or of protecting one from the other. There is hardly a single case where we see the two principles realized simultaneously, or if they are, then merely as a tendency, an exigency. From this I conclude not that civic universality is an absurd myth, but on the contrary that it exists as an *effort*, a *conatus*. The mainspring of this tendency remains the force of the negative, magnificently expressed in certain philosophical formulas like "the part of those who have no part" ["*la part des sans-parts*"], in Jacques Rancière's work, and "the power of the powerless" ["*le pouvoir des sans-pouvoir*"], in Merleau-Ponty's.[16]

(3) Finally, I would like to return to a third idea, perhaps the most troublesome of all, but one without which every discourse on universalism is, in my opinion, futile: It concerns the *violence* inherent in the institution of the universal. I stress that this violence is intrinsic and not additional, not something that we could blame on the ill will, weakness, or constraints weighing on the bearers of the universalist institution, because it is the institution itself, or its historical movement, that designates them as its bearers. I said when I began that neither the gap between theory and practice, especially when it comes to realizing the former in a historical and political form, nor the perverse effects of exclusions caused by the very principles of inclusion are mere accidents. We can't simply say: Let's just give it another try, this time everything will work out and we will avoid the dark side of universality. The intrinsic violence of the universal, which is among its conditions of possibility, is also among its conditions of *impossibility* or self-destruction—it is a "quasi transcendental," as Derrida would say. The dark side thus belongs to the dialectic itself; it belongs to the *politics of the universal* (an expression that, unlike certain contemporary authors like Charles Taylor, I do not identify with a *politics of universality*, as opposed to a "politics of difference," because a politics of difference is *also* logically a politics of the universal).[17]

The violent exclusion inherent in the institution or in the realization of the universal can take numerous forms, which are not equivalent and do not call for the same politics. A sociological or anthropological approach would emphasize that opposing discrimination and modes of subjection through a civic universality expressed in legal, educational, and moral forms entails that we define *models of humanity* or *social norms*. Foucault and others have drawn our attention to the fact that the Human excludes the nonhuman or inhuman, that the Social excludes the "nonsocial" or "asocial." These are forms of *internal exclusion* that affect intensive universalism, as I have called it, more than extensive universalism. They do not have to do with territory or *imperium*, but rather with the fact that the universality of citizens, of citizens as human subjects, is indexed to a community that claims to be homogenous, or endowed with a specific and normative "collective identity." But a political and ethical approach, which we can connect with the idea or formula of a "community without community"—or without an *already existing* community—must envision still another form of violence intrinsically tied to universality: the violence perpetrated by its representatives and supporters against its adversaries, in particular its internal adversaries—that is, potentially any "heretic" within the revolutionary movement. Many philosophers—whether or not they are themselves adversaries or instead fervent advocates of universalist programs and discourses, such as Hegel in his chapter on the Terror in the *Phenomenology* or, inversely, Sartre in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* with respect to "fraternity-terror"—have emphasized this relation, which is clearly bound up with the fact that certain forms of universalism embody the logical characteristic of "truth"—in other words, they suffer no exception. Badiou himself has referred to this in certain of his political writings, revealing himself to be closer to Sartre than to Hegel on the point. If we had the time (or perhaps later in the discussion), we would have to examine the consequences that follow from such a position. I spoke earlier about a "quasi-Weberian" conception of responsibility, obviously thinking of the famous lecture on *Politik als Beruf* in 1919.[18] Responsibility, in this case, would not merely oppose "conviction" (*Gesinnung*) but, more generally, the ideals themselves, or the ideologies that include a universalist principle and objective. In this regard, a politics of human rights is typically a politics that aims to institutionalize a universalist ideology, and prior to that: to ideologize the principle that disturbs and defies existing ideologies. Universalist ideologies are not the only ones

that can become absolutes, but they are certainly the ones whose realization implies the possibility of radical intolerance and internal violence. This is not a risk that we should avoid, for it is, in fact, inevitable. But it is a risk that must be recognized, and that charges the representatives, spokespeople, and agents of universalism—among whom Badiou and myself, as philosophers and perhaps as unrepentant "communists"—with a responsibility that, in the end, is no small thing.