

Alain Badiou, *Manifest za filozofiju*,

Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk,

2018, 88 pp.

In the second edition of *Jesenski i Turk*, we encounter the work of the French philosopher Alain Badiou (born 1937.), the former chairman of Philosophy at the *École normale supérieure* (ENS) and the founder of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Paris VIII. The main purpose of his *Manifesto for Philosophy* (translated by Gordana V. Popović) is to establish four existing conditions for the emergence and development of philosophy that complement each other. The absence of one of these conditions leads to disintegration of philosophy, while their communion enables the emergence of philosophy. These four conditions are: the matheme, the poem, political invention and love. The work is divided into eleven chapters, each representing a type of critique of modern-day philosophy and possible solutions for future philosophies.

Badiou begins the *Manifesto* with a chapter titled “Possibility” (pp. 7–11), in which he looks back at the crimes of the 20th century and wonders what philosophy has to say in the face of these crimes? He assumes that some might say that “everything” is a product of some philosophy, *ergo* the crimes of the 20th century must have their roots in it. *De facto*, the question arises: looking back at the last century, is philosophy responsible for the nature of politics? Badiou starts from the assumption that Nazism is not a possible subject of philosophy. That is to say, philosophy is forced to think the

unthinkable — he says that the conditions for philosophy have not been met. If philosophy is not able to think about it — the author wonders — what are the conditions for philosophy in general? He claims that philosophy is not always possible and tries to reach an answer to the question of under which conditions is philosophy possible.

The second chapter titled “Conditions” (pp. 13–18) begins with Badiou’s thesis that philosophy must have started somewhere, and then it logically follows that it must also have favorable conditions in which it can live. Conditions set on the objective basis of “social formations” (ideological, religious, mythical discourses) are doomed to failure. Badiou, just like many other historians of philosophy, sees the beginning and the first favorable conditions for the emergence of philosophy in Ancient Greece, more precisely, already with Plato and the cessation of narration. Matheme, poem, political invention, and love are, as Badiou says, the conditions of philosophy he calls *generic procedures*, which were the product of Ancient Greece (cf. pp. 14,15). He concludes that the only question of philosophy is *de facto* the question of Truth, not because philosophy would produce the truth, but because it offers a way of approaching the uniqueness of the moment of Truth, a conceptual field that reflects the mentioned generic procedures (cf. p. 17). Great philosophical thoughts, the author concludes, are conditioned and carried out by the crises, breakthroughs and paradoxes of mathematics, then, the quaking of poetic language, the revolutions and provocations of inven-

tive politics and finally, the wavering of the relation between the two sexes.

Using the conclusions from the second chapter, in the third chapter “Modernity” (pp. 21–24) Badiou asks if there “is such a thing as *the modern* period of philosophy”. The first task would be to determine what we mean when we say *the modern* period of philosophy. The author lists various periods and divisions that try to solve one or more generic procedures. He concludes that “it is convenient to define philosophy’s modern period by the central organizational use to which the category of Subject is put” (p. 23).

In the next chapter, titled “Heidegger Viewed as Commonplace” (pp. 27–31), Badiou uses the character of Martin Heidegger to portray the category of the Subject as a universal objectification or “the reign of technology”. The reign of technology, Heidegger says, comes at the same time as the end of the metaphysical period of the Being. Thus, the reign of technology marks a kind of completion of metaphysics — metaphysics is completely exhausted. With the advent of technology, we encounter a non-thought and withdrawal of the Being, and finally to that point where the Being as such has been forgotten. Therefore, our time is imbued with nihilistic thoughts, and only in poetry is the Being spoken of as something open, while under the influence of technology the Being is something closed. He concludes that the return to the Being and the reinterpretation of philosophy are required under *the poets’ condition*.

While reading the fifth chapter, titled “Nihilism?” (pp. 33–38) we can easily come to the conclusion that Badiou does not accept technology as the essence of our time, nor

the nihilistic understanding that may arise from the aforementioned reign of technology. He states that technology is “still so mediocre, so timid” (p. 33). Badiou justifiably concludes that it is inappropriate to present technology as belonging to the same order of things as a thought. The author identifies the nihilism of the modern age with the way we think of the Being and the Truth, and sets desacralization as a *necessary condition* for such an approach to open thoughts. The modern age, Badiou concludes, is neither technological nor nihilistic, but rests on the local maintenance of the consecrated; the philosophy, he argues, is not yet complete.

The sixth chapter, titled “Sutures” (pp. 42–46), gives us an insight into how modern philosophy is obstructed by the procedures of truth that condition it, i.e. philosophy *transfers* its roles to some of its mentioned conditions — it shifts the totality of thought to a generic procedure. This type of situation Badiou calls *suture*. This process is most clearly manifested in positivist philosophy and the Anglo-Saxon philosophical tradition. In the case of political philosophy, Marx and his attempt to elevate politics to the level of science are mentioned, although the political system he proposed was more “utopian” socialism than “scientific”.

A further thesis presented by the author is that philosophy from Hegel onwards falls into a limited and distorted image — into a network of sutures of its conditions. As an example, he gives the philosophy of the 20th century, which was sutured on its political and scientific condition. Sutures can be avoided, as Badiou concludes in the end, only by systematic thinking. The author understands this

systematicity as a means of completely shaping the four generic conditions of philosophy and by presenting certain rules of his exposition.

In the seventh chapter “The Age of Poets” (pp. 49–56), the author notes that philosophies today are sutured in their scientific or political condition and that only poetry continues as philosophical thought, i.e. takes on the role of philosophy. The author calls this period *the Age of the Poets* and describes it as a time of openness to the Being and the Truth. *The Age of the Poets* consists of seven poets: the German writer Friedrich Hölderlin, the French poets Stéphane Mallarmé and Arthur Rimbaud, Austrian Georg Trakl, Portuguese Fernando Pessoa, Osip Mandelstam from Poland and Paul Celan from Romania. The main characteristic of these poets is that their poetry is *dis-objectifying*, that is, there is an experience directly deprived of both objectivity and subjectivity.

The eighth chapter “Events” (pp. 60–67) states that philosophy *de-sutured* is still possible despite its delays (positivism, Marxism, etc.). It is possible starting with all four conditions as well as giving up talking about the “end of philosophy”. In this chapter, Badiou lists the events that caused the four generic procedures.

The chapter titled “Questions” (pp. 69–75) is the ninth in a row and it brings us questions that arose under the influence of the events from the eighth chapter. The first question is the question of “the Two”. The author gives examples of political class struggles, gender duality, and good and evil. The second question is the question of object and objectivity. It is necessary to abolish the categories of object as an organic form of representation in or-

der to cognize the truth and the Being (as the above-mentioned poets of *the Age of Poets* also portrayed). The third question concerns the indiscernible, namely, language. Badiou disagrees with Wittgenstein, who at the end of the *Tractatus* wrote that “whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent” and says that what cannot be talked about should be understood from the indiscernible. In conclusion, the author argues that philosophy “must withdraw from the form of objectivity to the benefit of the sole subject, maintain the Two as the fortuitous and tenacious descendant of the event, and identify Truth with the nondescript, the nameless, the generic” (p. 75). Only then will philosophy be possible, the author sees this form only in the Platonic Gesture.

The penultimate chapter titled “Platonic Gesture” (pp. 78–81) denotes the form that Badiou derives from the previous chapter. He calls this form the anti-Sophistic formulation of matheme, poem, politics, and love. Badiou proposes a return to Plato and his philosophy, which bore the marks of all the conditions of philosophy. Future philosophy, if it is to be philosophy, must be freed from anti-Platonism.

Finally, the last chapter, titled “Generic” (pp. 83–88), is the path to *the Platonism of the multiple* that the previous chapters produced. Badiou states that we must accept the multiplicity and indicate what language can be established, yet the author wonders what happens with the truth in terms of this multiplicity? The answer is that multiplicity must be accepted as something *generic*. Namely, the multiplicity is compatible with the four conditions we have already listed. This multiplicity manifests itself as something im-

personal. Badiou concludes: “Poem, matheme, inventive politics and love are quite precisely the different possible types of generic procedures. What they produce in variable situations is never but a truth of these situations under species of generic multiple,

onto which no knowledge can ‘pin’ its name, or discern beforehand its status”. Only in this multiplicity — concludes Alain Badiou — is philosophy possible.

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Romain Rolland, *Naš Gandhi*,

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When we mention the names of two great personalities, Mahatma Gandhi and Stjepan Radić, we may wonder what connects them. One comes from the great and distant India, the other from small Croatia — seemingly incompatible “worlds” that have little in common. However, the reprint of Romain Rolland’s book *Our Gandhi* proves just the opposite. Mahatma Gandhi and Stjepan Radić are closely related, and the social situations in India and Croatia at the time are much more similar than one might think. It is crucial to mention some facts related to the publication of this reprint that indicate the importance of this work. This significance is reflected in the list of patrons of this edition, which includes some of the most important institutions of the Republic of Croatia, such as the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia, the President of the Republic of Croatia, Zoran Milanović, the City of Zagreb, the Embassy of India, etc. An impressive list of institutions have recognized the importance of this edition, for which the Croatian–Indian

Society, which is also the publisher of this reprint, is most deserving.

First of all, it should be mentioned that the book was published on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, which was celebrated in 2019, and Stjepan Radić, which was honored in the year 2021 when this reprint was published. This edition begins with “The Prologue — Mahatma Gandhi and Stjepan Radić” (2021), an exceptional contribution of Academician Mislav Ježić, who on 108 pages analyses Rolland’s *Our Gandhi*, and its translation and first edition in Croatian. Moreover, Ježić introduces us to the biography of the author, but also to the work of Stjepan Radić and the inspiration he drew from the character and work of Mahatma Gandhi. In the epilogue of this prologue, we find a kind of supplement to Rolland’s book itself. Rolland, in fact, wrote the book in 1922, but it was published in 1924, and more than two decades passed from then until Gandhi’s death. For this reason, Academician Ježić titled the first part of his epilogue “Gandhi and India after the period in which the book ‘Our Gandhi’ was written — Comparative Events in Croatia.” The second part of this epilogue is titled “India and Croatia from World War II to the present.” In this part, Ježić analyses what happened in India and Croatia after the lives of Mahatma Gandhi