



Second Manifesto for Philosophy

Alain Badiou

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Twenty years ago, Alain Badiou's first Manifesto for Philosophy rose up against the all-pervasive proclamation of the "end" of philosophy. In lieu of this problematic of the end, he put forward the watchword: "one more step".

The situation has considerably changed since then. Philosophy was threatened with obliteration at the time, whereas today it finds itself under threat for the diametrically opposed reason: it is endowed with an excessive, artificial existence. "Philosophy" is everywhere. It serves as a trademark for various media pundits. It livens up cafés and health clubs. It has its magazines and its gurus. It is universally called upon, by everything from banks to major state commissions, to pronounce on ethics, law and duty. In essence, "philosophy" has now come to stand for nothing other than its most ancient enemy: conservative ethics.

Badiou's second manifesto therefore seeks to demoralize philosophy and to separate it from all those "philosophies" that are as servile as they are ubiquitous. It demonstrates the power of certain eternal truths to illuminate action and, as such, to transport philosophy far beyond the figure of "the human" and its "rights". There, well beyond all moralism, in the clear expanse of the idea, life becomes something radically other than survival.

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