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Deciphering Soviet philosophical forewords: an attentive reading of V.F. Asmus

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Abstract

The article investigates the issue and the mechanisms of censorship and self-censorship in Soviet philosophy. The major forms of censorship are described and analyzed together with their epistemological implications and the peculiar policy of truth. The philosophical problem of defining and describing "facts" and ideological judgments during the "double" technique of reading and re-reading was exposed in the articles of V.F. Asmus and V.V. Bibikhin, thinkers, who experienced the self-censorship and reflected upon this in their texts. Analyzing the complex relation between the "dogmatic" or "critical" foreword and the original word is important, as is reconstructing and deconstructing the way we can reread the ideologically biased foreword, which might be a certain reliquary or protective camouflage, acting as, potentially, either a deactivator or an inhibitor of the reader's own interpreting efforts. The given case of an attentive reading of V. Asmus' foreword to the *Tractatus Logicus-Philosophicus* can itself become an interesting philosophical language game. Interpretation of the foreword may reveal a hidden sense and references and encourage reflection based on the "common sense" assessments and perception of text. These hermeneutical exercises on reading forewords may paradoxically provoke starting the dialogue with the alternative foreword by B. Russell and the text of L. Wittgenstein himself, on one hand, and Marxism-Leninism and its variations in the form of historical materialism and Soviet dialectical materialism, on another. The situation of attentive reading with "a throat, strangled by ideology" is opposed to the power of imaginative "broadening of vocal ranges of the Others" thinking, whereas an inattentive reading of the text leaves a complete disability to object, or reply, to the censorship.

Keywords Asmus · Attentive reading · Bibikhin · Censorship · Facts · Fiction · Literature · Philosophical foreword · Soviet philosophy · Wittgenstein

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"I strongly advise you to re-read the preface written by V.F. Asmus to his Selected Philosophical Works*, published in the end of 1960s (. . .) in such times, when rules become exceptions, and anti-values replace values, when the scene of life is overflowing with anti-heroes, those people, who decisively and consistently assume and fulfill the role of guardians of simple, clear, immutable rules, are especially important"*
Nelly V. Motroshilova (2001, p. 53).

The revision of the methodology of deciphering ideologically framed or ideologically-censored Soviet publications, as well as to rethink the legacy of the Soviet tradition of peculiar Soviet-Marxist forewords, may seem quite trivial. Why would anyone need to return to the hermeneutic exercises of deciphering Soviet forewords, while they can be simply omitted, whereas censored and cut-out fragments can be restored? Reviews of the existing research on Soviet censorship show, that while there have been some significant works on literary works and translations of foreign literature, the issue of censorship in philosophical works remain in the shadow. Among the few publications, which shed light on the sidelines of Soviet philosophical censorship, I should name Vladimir V. Bibikhin's article "For Official Use (Dlya sluzhebnogo pol'zovaniya)" (Bibikhin 2003) and Merab K. Mamardashvili's commentaries on the Soviet context of philosophizing (Mamardachvili 1991).[1] Moreover, I could refer to the significant historical research of Emeljanov and Ionaitis, as well as Stelmakh on the history of the institutional forms of censorship in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union (Emeljanov and Ionaitis 2016; Stelmakh 2001).

There are several reasons why the situation in Soviet philosophy has not been addressed. Firstly, nowadays there still remain many witnesses of the Soviet censorship system. If the issue seems to be self-evident, it will not attract much attention or becomes the subject for special research. It looks as if there is a nonarticulated consensus about the condemned ephemeral clichés of Soviet Marxism. It is understandable why most researchers would prefer to put their efforts in overcoming the consequences of censorship first: providing the missing translations, searching for the undiscovered, introducing the banned names and return the legacy of Russian Religious philosophy. Censorship is often mentioned in memories or interviews in general, but it does not turn into a big issue for those who had to deal with it in person.

Second, some would reasonably refer to the works mentioned above, considering the commentary as fair and sufficient. Moreover, the situation was pretty much the same as it was with literary work. The latter was described in detail in the well-known PhD thesis *On the Beneficence of Censorship: Aesopian Language in Modern Russian Literature* by Lev Loseff (Loseff 1984). Finally, philosophical language has been often perceived as esoteric, and this made a special impact on the way censorship is reflected in the texts which were published—in most cases it does not reach the heart of the text, leaving the unavoidable embroidery, covering the preface and the commentaries, but not touching the essential parts.

[1] Both Mamardashvili and Bibikhin were those Soviet intellectuals who directly encountered censorship themselves, and most of their papers were published in 1990–2000s.

However, I assume the phenomenon of censorship was deeply rooted in epistemological policy, or the special politics of truth, which makes this investigation useful not only for historical purposes, but also developing a philosophical understanding for certain types of thinking and hermeneutics of reading. The forewords are valuable not only as texts that keep traces of misrepresentation; they represent a certain type of interpretation ideologically driven and comprehensive to all possible positions. The forewords appear to have their own universal scale of truth, but an attentive reader may discover an ironic encryption, a hidden cipher, a bureaucratic ridicule, which I would call the Soviet intelligentsia's *Shibboleth*.[2]

In this paper, first of all, I would like to name and outline the general forms, or types of censorship applicable to philosophical texts. Then I would like to focus on the case analysis of the way how more or less "ideologically correct and conventional" forewords were composed by Valentin Asmus, and how we can discover some hints or ironic notes in there. The attentive reading of Asmus' works on the history of philosophy might become a hard task for those contemporary readers, who are unaware of the peculiarities of the so-called Soviet "historical-materialist lingo." Nowadays simple ignorance of forewords has become the most typical way of reading those textbooks, which are "poisoned" with propaganda. Libraries are getting rid of old books, both because of the needs of the book market and the tendency towards digitalization. At the same time, the immense amount of old Soviet editions remains a paper memorial of a very unusual situation, when in one country there was a "state philosophy," which served as the true basis for all sciences and arts.

I assume that this strategy is counter-productive for both hermeneutic reasons and reasons of historical memory. Rejecting the layer of textual interpretation means the reduction of the context, in which this text was translated and interpreted. It is easy enough to repeat the same ideologically driven intellectual patterns without realizing it by ignoring the forewords and the textual interpretation of them. Therefore, I would like to reconstruct a hermeneutical reading of the Soviet forewords—first theoretically, from the works of V.F. Asmus and V.V. Bibikhin—by providing a case study of critical hermeneutics in Asmus' foreword to the first Russian translation of L. Wittgentstein's *Tractatus Logicus-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein 1958).

Forms of censorship in philosophical texts

Soviet academic publishing policy could censor philosophical works in different ways, from a complete ban on the higher level to the "mild" implied censorship, including the phenomenon of self-censorship. A brief period of liberalization in publishing policy in the 1920s was replaced shortly with the ideologically driven phi-

[2] Shibboleth here means a certain way of speaking, choice of phrasing or even a single word, which distinguishes one group of people from another: those who believe in the Soviet Marxist interpretation of the history of philosophy versus those who were forced to mimic this belief for censorship and security reasons. In its Soviet context, a Shibboleth would be hidden in a misprint in foreign word, ironic logical tautology or fallacy, list of names in footnotes, or ambiguous judgment, which tends to deny the significance of some ideologically "wrong" text, but it becomes evident that the criticism is a form of apology and appraisal.

losophy of the 1930s. As Yehoshua Yakhot wrote, "Stalin and his philosophical assistants turned philosophy into a bludgeon, which more than one scientist felt on his own back" (Yakhot 1991). Obviously, this philosophical "bludgeon" could hit its ideological targets only if it was made of solid and consistent material, intending to systematize and absorb any other thought in its totality. While the central institution of censorship was the institute of Glavlit (1922–1990), the key philosophical tools were "historical materialism" and "dialectical materialism." But the ubiquitous presence of Soviet materialistic concepts does not necessarily mean that the authors were satisfied with them.

Do we have any explicit criteria for such distinction? Indeed, contemporary researchers could try to find explanations from biographical material. But how to read the philosophical texts produced in the period of harsh censorship? As Leo Strauss once said, "if an able writer who has a clear mind and a perfect knowledge of the orthodox view and all its ramifications, contradicts surreptitiously and as it were in passing one of its necessary presuppositions or consequences which he explicitly recognizes and maintains everywhere else, we can reasonably suspect that he was opposed to the orthodox system as such and we must study his whole book all over again, with much greater care and much less naïvete than ever before" (Strauss 1952, p. 32). Following this principle, I assume that many Soviet-era papers and forewords, which happen to be reissued and reprinted, require special attention and probably even critical commentary, that would explain to the contemporary reader the context and hidden irony behind them. The most typical situation is when these parts of text are omitted and neglected, hiding a complex of shame and vindictive satisfaction, but the necessity to explain why the things were interpreted from the prejudiced perspective would probably require a more responsible attitude to writing such texts today. I assume, that this hermeneutical strategy could be applicable not solely to Soviet texts, but in other cases, where the harsh censorship was implied in other forms, rather than in the prohibition of publishing.

I propose to define five major types of censorship in philosophical texts, which were formed in the 1930s:

1) Official (Glavlit) prohibition (mostly applied to Russian immigrants' works, the "idealistic" or "religious" (reactionary) Russian philosophical texts, and those works which mention repressed people);[3]
2) Official (Glavlit) editing of the text (skipping some "dangerous" fragments, renaming or not mentioning the repressed translators, like G.G. Shpet).
3) Local censorship of publishing houses (printing with added special marking like "Not for sale," "For in-house only," "On the right of manuscript").
4) Local censorship of libraries (either limiting access by "politcontrollers" or sending some books to special archives called "*spetskhran*." See: (Stelmakh 2001, p. 144).
5) Author's or translator's self-censorship (demonstrating loyalty to the "canonic" authors, like Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, by making references and biased assessments; general criticism towards any sort of "idealism" or "bourgeois" think-

[3]The example of the latter is the ban of Bakhtin's literary work *Formal method in literature*, which by no means assaulted Soviet ideology, but mentioned L. Trotsky. See: (Emeljanov and Ionaitis 2016, p. 110).

ing; underlining the importance of class conflict behind the text or context of its creation).

Finally, after Khrushchev's *thaw*, the alternative versions of uncensored texts gradually appeared on the black market and in the form of samizdat[4] literature, which included both classics, rarely printed books, and contemporary, censored authors. At the same time, the narrow circle of translators and researchers in the Soviet academic world and some institutions, like the Institute of Scientific Information on Social Science noticed the trend of the ideological turn. It was evident, that while the theories and ideals of communistic societies were too difficult to achieve, Lenin's concept of the world revolution and social philosophical criticism was swept away by the geopolitical game of imperialist rules; the simplistic negation of "all past bourgeois philosophy" did not bear much fruit (this shift can be compared with the intention of medieval theologians to return and reappropriate the legacy of ancient philosophy, but on a smaller scale and in immature and unstable forms). Still, the policy of translation during the *thaw* at least became more open-minded. "For the generation of the [Kruschchev] thaw period, reality, as it appeared in the USSR, existed under the sign of at least some kind of reasonableness, albeit temporarily distorted by Stalin's repressions, [it] contained the possibility of its rational explanation, which they tried to find in the newly read Marxism" (Mezhuev 2013, p. 76).

This tendency was described by Bibikhin in his brilliant article "For Official Use". It serves as significant documentary evidence of what was happening in the Soviet humanities at a certain period:

> Everything was spoiled by the fact that it was impossible to speak in the same undelivered voice as Western people. If the referent did not make a verbal gesture of dismissal from time to time ("but you understand, they say, not us"), he was in danger of not appearing to be his own person. But it was essentially impossible to express them with a strangled throat. (Bibikhin 2003, p. 60)

The situation of strangled philosophy implied harsh limitations and risks. Still, this risk made the power and value of words immense, and the phenomenon of "the reading Soviet people" was not an advertising image. This was the true and effective form of education, interlinked with self-cognition. It is important to note that the publishing policy was based on the ideals of mass education, universal literacy, and accessibility of texts in all the Soviet republics. Therefore, winning the game of "circumventing censorship" was worth a big prize—like an immense edition and even the possible inclusion in state educational programs. What a bitter delight: to serve the enlightenment of people, but feel yourself nonoriginal, being only a frame-holder, or an intellectual with a "crooked mirror" consciousness, dealing with reservations, limits and cliches, at the cost of repressions and penalties from the authorities. Nevertheless, the hope to grow like green grass through all fences, was the existential mood that made the sufferings meaningful. Instead of claiming to think of reality, the

[4]It is important to note that Samizdat publishing began only around 1966, when L. Brezhnev became the general secretary of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union; in the very same year in April, it was the first meeting of Pope Paul VI and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in the Vatican.
See: "*Samizdat*" (Green and Karolides 2014, pp. 491–492).

philosopher had to think of the appearance of the essential (not confusing it with the appearance of the nonessential).

It is important to add, that the writing and thinking of the Soviet intelligentsia often turned into translation. The philosopher had to write by borrowing other ideas and language to feel the freshness of another expressive form and style of thinking. The Shibboleth of Soviet intelligentsia was to hide irony and sorrow for the lack of freedom behind hypocritical praise for "materialism versus idealism" binary schemes. Therefore, the bet was on the originality of the translation and not on the academic commentary and critical interpretation. I assume that this psychological hypothetical motive of admitting some form of self-censorship should not be taken for an excuse, but it provides a certain explanation of the choice, which intellectuals in the twenty-first century would be lucky to not encounter.

Reading, writing, providing forewords: official use or creative use?

"Strictly speaking, a genuine first reading of a work, a genuine first listening to a symphony, can only be a secondary listening to them... the most creative reader is always inclined to reread an outstanding work of fiction" (Asmus 2015, p. 936). These words from Asmus' article "Reading as Labor and Creation" (1962) summarize only one of the dialectical conflicts in interpretation. The conflict between partial and whole meaning in the interplay of anticipation and understanding mean that one reading is never enough for interpretation. Another dialectical relationship is between author and reader (on one hand, the author should not be perceived as "hypnotizer," on the other hand, the author and the text still have their dynamic and charming power).

Finally, there is a mimetic dialectical conflict: on the imaginary level between modes of belief and fantasy, and on the epistemological level between reality and mere appearance. While some naive readers tend to take the imagined for depiction of reality, others simply underestimate art and do not perceive there "anything true." As one may guess, Asmus offers some sort of constant trustful shift of creative reading, whereas the reader is neither object nor the only subject, but is an enthusiastic and creative interpreter, who meets with both aspects of the perception of the work of art—the recognition and the projection.

The importance of underlining and nuances in our understanding of this conflict between reality and its appearance through its "as if" was perfectly and simply explained by Asmus in the following passage:

> This does not mean pure illusoriness, but still—a semblance of *reality*, a substitute for *reality*, then—with a certain cunning—you can use this word so that the semantic center of gravity would fall not on the component of "appearance," but on the component of "reality." For example, in the expression "X is as if he is a musicologist" might—with good will—be interpreted not in the way that X is merely an *appearance* of musicologist, but that X—is the appearance of *musicologist*, but not anything else. (Blauberg 2001, p. 28)

The key purpose of following the appearance can be seen in the mimetic model of education, whereas becoming someone means first an attempt to be someone and not

yet being that. This effort of "as if" being is definitely implemented in reading, which is neither leisure nor consumption. According to Asmus, the reader would not need "the death of the author" when the figure of the author has never been an undoubted authority.

A similar concept of dialectical hermeneutics is explicated by Asmus in one of his early papers, "In Defense of Fiction" (1929) (Asmus 2015, p. 936). This text is highly controversial. The key point of his criticism is the artistic group *LEF* (Left Front of Arts) and its first collective work, *Literature of fact*. Standing against formalism, Asmus shows that the facts, which are presented as the pure and raw reality, are themselves very fictitious, they are well-prepared, framed, and presented within a certain construction. This understanding of facts may probably give us a hint as to why Asmus will further ignore any claims to describe in the form of a fact any actual state of affairs; he, instead, recognizes the dialectical dynamics of the work of art, as well as the work of philosophy. This text was written long before Soviet censorship took its most severe forms, but, nevertheless, here we may strictly see the position of Asmus as a reasonable "in-between": he is neither with the new "realism," nor is he with the "idealism" of art with its reference to eternal ideas. His method only appears to be in opposition to the Hegelian principle of the beginning of the text, mentioned in the *Science of Logic* in the following manner: "With what should the beginning be made? remains of no importance in face of the need for a principle in which alone the interest of the matter in hand seems to lie, the interest as to what is the truth, the absolute ground" (Hegel 1969, p. 89). In fact, Asmus follows this model in the following way: the editor's foreword *must not be the beginning*. The figures of translator, editor or criticist must remain outside the text, and the constructed frame must not distract from the text's own truth—it must serve as a protective cover against the censor's scissors, and perhaps contain some ironic judgments on the stupidity of these scissors.

In fact, this position towards the truth—neither establishing the truth, nor contemplating the truth, but retelling and revealing the truth of the Other—appeared to be the safest strategy and took the form of two key disciplines: translation and didactics. While Bibikhin was a clear example of a translator's strategy of adaptation to Soviet censorship, Asmus preferred to take the didactic position. Nevertheless, both to a certain extent became the persons who gave voice to Ludwig Wittgenstein: Asmus as one of the editors and the author of the foreword to the first Russian translation of the *Tractatus Logicus-Philosophicus*, and Bibikhin; one of the later translators of Wittgenstein, who had to prepare the logical and persuasive narrative out of the number of excerpts from *Philosophical Investigations*. In this paper, I will focus more on the construction of the dialectically driven foreword, leaving aside the issue of the "slicing and gluing" policy of providing translation in excerpts, which is, nevertheless, a deep issue to think over.

Asmus' foreword to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

It is important to note, that Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was translated into Russian and published together with Bertrand Russell's introduction, and this introduction

is quoted twice, in the first and in the last footnote, which underlines the importance of the commentary of Russell. The second footnote mentions Alain of Lille and "especially Nicholas of Amiens" (his works were, by the way, falsely attributed to Alain of Lille). Why would anyone decide to, "according to historical objectivity," mention the idea of axiomatic system in medieval theology, while the whole foreword is only 5 pages long, and at least one page is dedicated exclusively to the retelling of G. Frege's ideas? While this overview on Frege at least mentions the key notions and distinctions of certain concepts, such as "sense and meaning," Wittgenstein's notions of "world," "object" or "facts" are never mentioned in the foreword. Why? Is it the continuation of the negation of "facts," as in the late 1920s, in the polemics with formalists? Or is it an attempt to create a contrast with Russell's foreword, who prefers to dive into this conceptual analysis?

In any case, one of the crucial paragraphs of Asmus' foreword ironically explained the historical and philosophical value of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. The subtle irony here is veiled well: the text basically creates an impression that Asmus would prefer to interpret Wittgenstein as the part of history of out-of-date bourgeois philosophy; he explicitly says that this book belongs to those writings, the content of which belongs only to history. But in fact, the translation of the *Tractatus* was published in 1958, whereas the original was published in 1921, and the English translation in 1922. So, there is an inevitable gap between these events and late introduction of Wittgenstein in the USSR (even though Wittgenstein himself managed to visit the USSR in 1935). By that time Wittgenstein himself had already reformulated his ideas on language, so the characteristics of being "out-of-date" is more relevant for the Soviet reception of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, rather than for his "bourgeois" philosophy.

> *Due to circumstances about which it is not possible to expand here,* Frege's logical ideas, substantiated and formulated by him mainly in his logical and mathematical works, *became familiar to logicians with a great delay*.
>
> The reproduction of these teachings in the philosophy of the twentieth century is not the return of the living to the circle of the living and not a proof of the vitality of what seemed to be dead, but *an attempt by the dead to grasp the living once again* [*emphasis mine*]. (Asmus 2015, p. 868)

Who are those dead, who try to grasp the living once again? We may assume that it is not the bourgeois philosophy and subjective idealism, which plays dead here, if we follow the effect of Russell's commentary on Wittgenstein's take on the "Sheffer stroke". Compare the following:

a) B. Russell: "It has been shown by Dr Sheffer (Trans. Am. Math. Soc., Vol. XIV, pp. 481–488) that all truth-functions of a given set of propositions can be *constructed out of either of the two functions 'not-p or not-q' or 'not-p and not-q'*" (Russell 1922, p. 12) and
b) V. Asmus: "He not only repeated Scheffer's result, but also Russell's result in *Principia Mathematica*, which showed that all the truth functions of a given sets of sentences can be *expressed both through the function 'not-p or not-q,' and via the function 'not-p and not-q'* [*emphasis mine*]" (Asmus 2015, p. 871).

Moreover, right after the denunciation of epistemological solipsism, modeled on Wittgenstein, Asmus joins Russell's criticism by quoting the following phrase:

> What causes hesitation is the fact that, after all, Mr Wittgenstein manages to say a good deal about what cannot be said, thus suggesting to the sceptical reader that possibly there may be some loophole through a hierarchy of languages, or by some other exit. (Russell 1922, p. 18)

Wittgenstein's ideas and quotes, mentioned by Asmus in this foreword, play an important role here, too. The third footnote includes the word "scientific" (written in italics), and it focuses on underlining the importance of semantics, even if it somehow goes along with "epistemological idealistic theories." Asmus firmly infers:

> The principal difference between semantics as the domain of science of logic and epistemological idealistic theories must not be ignored… The existence of semantics cannot really be swayed by criticism, which is based on the denial of semantics as the domain of science of logic. (Asmus 2015, p. 482)

The argument is simple and clear, and it is linked with the first two paragraphs and the conclusion in the last paragraph, which can be reconstructed as following:

(1) Formal logic is a special science, valuable for practical application.
(2) Even though formal logic distinguishes itself from philosophy further and further, it still cannot be divided from it.
(3) The connection between logic and philosophy can be either organic or occasional.
(4) The connection between semantics (part of semiotics, or a domain of logic) is occasional for semantics.
(5) Wittgenstein's philosophical *Tractatus* belongs to the type of epistemology that "completely belongs to the heritage of the history of bourgeois philosophy."
(6) Wittgenstein's work (at the same time marked as the new variation of neo-Machism, i.e., implicit "epistemological idealism," "solipsism," "radical nominalism"), "has an undeniably important place in the history of science of logic."

The inference could be valid only if Wittgenstein's logic was connected with philosophy "occasionally," and if the role of logic as a special science is far more important than epistemology and the history of philosophy. The first condition is only implied—as Wittgenstein definitely was a philosopher and a logician. The second condition in a certain way crookedly reflects Lenin's critique of Mach and Avenarius, and the situation in the rehabilitation of logic in the Soviet Union by Stalin in 1946–1947. This should also be interpreted in the context of V. Asmus' academic career: being a specialist in Classical Greek Aesthetic theory and the history of German philosophy, right after World War II, he was admitted working only in the chair of Logic. Moreover, in 1947 his book *Logic* was furiously attacked by E.K. Voishvillo for the lack of the author's criticism of the idealistic perversions in logic (Biryukov 2015, p. 795). Asmus truly tended to focus on the historical aspects of logic, and it is significant that in his lectures on the history of logic, as well as in his *Teaching of Logic about Proof and Refutation*, he never mentions Wittgenstein and his contribution to the history of logic.

The reading of the foreword appears to produce a double effect: on one hand, it insists on turning it as soon as possible to at least Russell's foreword (thanks to the footnotes), and on the other hand, it contains the unexpected names, such as Nicholas

of Amiens, or the hints of the "dialectical" relationship of logic and philosophy, or history and practice. Still, the most intriguing part is the focus on Wittgenstein's mysticism, rather than logicism (except for the mention of his truth tables). The hidden irony can also be read in reference to 4.27–4.45 and the conditions of truth for tautology and logical contradiction, as in 4.461 the reader may surprisingly find: "The tautology has no truth-conditions, for it is unconditionally true; and the contradiction is on no condition true," accompanied by 4.462: "Tautology and contradiction are not pictures of reality. They present no possible state of affairs." If we return to the argument, constructed on the base of the Asmus' foreword, we might recognize certain artificial contradictions and tautologies (representing important and vivid thinking, or dead and out-of-date thought, or the fact that logic is still connected with philosophy as it is inseparable from philosophy. Therefore, the text is valuable for the purposes of logic; it is valuable, no matter how "dogmatic" or "bourgeois" some of its parts are, etc.). Finally, this forward reminds one of the attempt to organize a library after a tornado, in which some books were flung far away, some pages were damaged, some exemplaries lost, and the head librarian is a Soviet bureaucrat. The experience of searching for the right order, as well as the experience of reading, has the potential to become a never-ending detective story:

> Imagine we had to arrange the books of a library. When we begin the books lie higgledy-piggledy on the floor. Now there would be many ways of sorting them and putting them in their places… to see that when we have put two books together in their right order, we have not thereby put them in their final places. (Wittgenstein 2016, Ts-309,73)

In conclusion, I would like to summarize the main techniques of the indirect circumvention of Soviet censorship. These are: 1) the reference to limitations, which marks omitted or censorable points and arguments; 2) ironic inversions of "us" against "them" arguments, which contains hidden criticism of "our" position; 3) misleading attempts to classify the relevance and significance of the given text in different branches of philosophy in the body text (which is in fact a typical red herring fallacy); 4) the importance of the footnotes, quotations and references, which may conceal "clues" to the text (shibboleth for intellectuals); 5) Soviet Marxist "canonic formulas," which work as Shibboleth for censorship. It is important to pay attention to this significant information, which could not become the part of the body text.

An attempt of an attentive reading of the accusatory judgments on "bourgeoisie thinking" in Soviet historiography shows that its research could be far more productive, rather than its ignorance or ban. Sometimes accusatory pathos remains the only permitted form of the Other's acknowledgment, while neglection simply deprives us from thinking.

Even though Soviet forewords and such could be reduced to one of the examples of Aesopian language, this case has particular significance to understand the intellectual culture and find the possibility of maintaining dialogue even under restrictions. Rhetorical techniques are not only propaganda tools for persuasion, but they might also become the defensive tools for the restoration of common sense and tolerance. Asmus is a shining example: the clue to his true position is hidden in his article "On the great capture of Russian culture," first published in Kyiv in 1918, where he

harshly criticizes materialism and Marxism (Asmus 2005). This bitter critical attitude was buried deep inside together with his religious belief and personal sympathies, nevertheless, briefly manifested in 1960 in his ardent friendly speech at the funeral of Boris Pasternak. The literature, and not the censorship, always has the last word.

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