Prison and Freedom: Three Discourses of Prison Subculture in Soviet and Russian Literature

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Abstract

In this article three methods of prison interpretation in soviet and Russian literature in 20-21 centuries are analyzed using the basic standings of the theory of discourse analysis (van Dijk, Fairclough, Laclau, Mouffe, Foucault). Changes in perception of prison subculture connected with fundamental changes of culture in a whole are showed on the example of three types of discourses that correspond to three periods in literature. Prison evaluation as a social-legal institute is changing depending on the type of culture. Author's method of carrying out discourse-analysis of literary texts helps to reveal such changing. Literary texts are considered as discursive practices that are directly connected with social practices and express definite models of behavior, living priorities and so on. Conclusion is made that in modern interpretation such terms as prison and prison subculture are a valuable participators of economical strategies that express values and priorities of society of consumption.

Keywords: prison, literary text, discourse, prison subculture, struggle of discourses, lagernaja literature.
Introduction
A lot of investigators refer literary texts to the most powerful mechanisms of manipulation and characterize literature as “epidictic eloquence” which “influence is carried out secretly; the aim of a concrete work and its meaning are sometimes far from understanding; performativity is widely peculiar to literature; antonymous, self introducing are playing in literature a definite role on a level of form and content” (Hazagerov, 2006:39). Bookish culture makes a great influence on modern social and cultural practices and interprets text in direct connection with reality. Text is not a simple form of language. And moreover different forms of reality (legal, political, economical spheres and so on) are the specific forms of textuality (Augsberg, 2010: 370). Reality appears as an aggregate of numerous texts which have different levels of institutionalization and legitimacy in each concrete social structure. From our point of view the most acceptable method for solving the existing problems is the discourse analysis which is directed on the establishing the connection between discourse and reality, between statements and social practices, between value reference points and existential preferences (Phillips, Hardy, 2002: 49).

Discourse analysis represents a theoretical and methodological unity and includes philosophic (ontological and epistemological) prerequisites. Definite utilities toward the role of the language in social structures, the role of the language in culture system as a whole are typical for the investigators who apply discourse analysis. Language – is a symbolic structure and speech – is a material realization of separable, admitted a priori symbolic structure, i.e. language. Material realization of language can be expressed in spoken language (widespread turns of speech, statements and typical expressions) and also in written language (different forms of texts). In literature texts we deal with an artifact of culture, while language – is one of the most important cultural forms. Robert Redfield saw some “traditional community of understanding which was realized in action and artifact as its material result in culture” (Redfield, 1941:132). Taking into consideration his reflections that culture is a comprehensive structure which combines the elements of sacral, high customs and the elements reflecting everyday reality we can say that cultural form is an aggregate of values, directives, norms that combine individuals into separate social groups with definite composition of social practices. Philip K. Bock in his research of social practices in reservations of Indians on the territory of Canada also gives the similar determination of cultural forms: “Cultural form – is a set of interrelated and partly arbitrary expectations, understandings, beliefs and agreements peculiar to all members of social group and it influences or influenced on the behavior of some members of such group” (Bock, 1970: 382). Thus, we do not consider literary text as a subjective product of individual activity, but interpret it as a bearer of definite cultural form which has a direct connection with social practices.

Methodology of research and basic concepts
The theory of discourse-analytic research insists on critical approach to knowledge. From such approach the problem of knowledge verity is almost fully eliminated. Michel Foucault writes “the description of discourse events raises the question: why these statements appear exactly here, but not anywhere else?” (Foucault, 1972: 29). The question about the knowledge verity yields to the question about the features of knowledge formation. Knowledge differs only by forms of organization, but not by verity or falsity. The difference between knowledge formations is determined by the place where this or that knowledge was formulated. That is why one of the most fundamental theo-
retical problems in discourse-analysis is the problem of correlation the discourse and social spaces, actualization of discourses in the institutional system.

This question is also very important for us because in the research work we will speak about the methods of knowledge formation in such social space as penitential system. From one side isolation of this social space from other social systems, from the other side – forced location of the individual into such space determine the peculiarity of those discursive practices that are formed inside a prison system and compete with each other so as to offer the most adequate and full description of the social regime which we will name prison subculture. It is important to notice that where are outside discourses regarding the penitential system that interpret such phenomenon as prison and all statements connected with it (crime, prisoner, law, system of punishment and so on). There are discourses belonging to prison subculture that are formulated by different groups and there are also discourses about prison: liberal (“modifying prison”, “reducing punishments connected with incarceration in prison”), conservative (“toughening the measure of punishment”), totalitarian (“cancellation of moratorium on the death penalty”). They are so called general or political discourses. There are also professional discourses about prison: criminological, judicial, medical, human rights (rights of condemned people, status of political prisoner), sociology of a crime, sociology of imprisonment and other. We investigate discourses that are formed in a space of a prison but they definitely have certain connections and intersections with external discourses about prison.

Prison (in modern understanding is a correctional, penitential system) as an original social institute is an object of debates of many official, legalized discourses. Each of these discourses has its own history of appearance and development. They all have the same origin and they appeared because of: 1) the development of the wide liberal discourse which is correlated with concrete social practices (liberal politics, market economy); 2) the development of different sciences about a human being where a person has a lot of images and also has an image of a criminal. The peculiarity of these official discourses is the fact that no one of these discourses that over passed the threshold of formation and occupied its discipline niche is not admitted by representatives of prison subculture, i.e. convicted persons. We will not spread our conclusion on foreign penitential systems but the ways of statements and meanings that are typical for our native prison subculture are a very striking example of opposition and resistance against any official discourse about prison.

Also it is necessary to speak specially about the next important concept – «the subject of discourse-analysis». One of the most widespread positions in discourse-analytic researches is the idea about decentralization of the subject. The main ideologists of this point of view are Foucault and his predecessor Louis Althusser. Foucault declares: “Discourse is regarded not as an approaching mighty manifestation of the subject which can think, perceive and speak about it but as a whole thing in which dispersions and also discontinuities of the subject could be determined” (Foucault, 1972: 56). Subject as well as concepts: “nature”, “knowledge”, “god” or “freedom” is also a part of discourse structure. The conception of Althusser in which the subject is transformed into an actor and an active individual only with the help of such pure discourse structure as an ideology in many respects had a great influence on such point of view of Foucault. Althusser thought that each action even scientific effort should be examined as a response on discourse dares (Althusser, 2001: 80-85). There is another one vivid metaphor which illustrates such approach: “Person becomes a mediator for culture and language” (Kvale, 1992: 36). The paradox of discourse-analytic conception consists in such fact that discourse-analysis is trying to reveal and expose numerous strategies of subject construction and that is why it is forced to remove the subject outside the boarders of investigation. Individual is trying to save his uniqueness, he is always a participator of definite social practices and he always follows definite statements and interprets them as “he’s own point of view”. That is why in this research work we will not speak about definite authors-subjects (Aleksandr Solzheni-
tsyn, Varlam Shalamov, Anatolij Marchenko, Nikolaj Lopatin and others) but we will discuss three types of discourses that include definite structures, procedures of subjectivisation, definitions and systems of exclusion.

**Discourse-analysis of literary texts**

The analyzed material we divided into two groups: 1) literary works written by professional authors that had the experience of literary activity before imprisonment (literary man, journalists, scientists, publicists); 2) works written by amateur authors (authors that did not have experience of literature work before imprisonment and only because of imprisonment they began writing literary texts). Such differentiation is connected with the primary hypothesis of research work which affirms that «professional» and «not professional» authors are the participators of two different discourse constructions and they use different character, mythological systems that interpret conflicts, antagonisms, oppositions inside prison subculture in an opposite ways. But while analyzing the material it is turned out that the professional occupation in such field as literary activity is not determinative from the point of view of belonging to this or that type of discourse. Chronological separation of texts has a very great importance because the specific of the attitude of the official power toward the system of punishment and condemned people determines the peculiarities of response reaction in texts written in prisons. The sources of literature were divided into three periods. The first period (the thirties – the fifties of the 20th century) is the period of Stalin’s repressions and to this period lagernaja literature is devoted. The second period (the sixties – the eighties of the 20th century) is the time of dissident movement in USSR when a lot of literary people, journalists and public figures were condemned and put in colonies because of their anti-Soviet activity. In this moment new texts are created that principally differ from lagernaja literature. During the third period (the nineties of the 20th century) the main part of prison population was people condemned because of economical crimes. All these authors in their own literary works made a new image of prison life in USSR and in Russia.

The determinative factor between authors of different discourse formations is the juridical definition of the character of author’s actions that led them to prison. Political condemned people demonstrated absolutely different system of valuation of the situation unlike people who were condemned with the authority of items of the Criminal Code. As a rule people condemned because of economical crime wrote and published their own impressions about life in prison. Besides transformations of discourse constructions are connected with a mixture of a culture of political condemned people with a criminal subculture. Such mixture began in native prison system approximately in sixties years of XX century, and at the end of the century economical crimes became an organic part of political opposition. The researchers of native prison subculture and authors of texts that were put on discourse analysis are writing about the penetration of criminal subculture into the culture of political condemned people (Margolis, 1995: 132-147).

With the help of two types of sources of information we picked out three types of discourse. The first one is **metaphysical**. It is connected with intellectual native tradition in culture and its main aim is to «perceive the nature of things» and to determine the ways of finding the truth. To such type of discourse we consider the following works: Evgenija Ginzburg *Within the Whirlwind*, Anatolij Zhigulín *Black Stones*, Lev Kopelev *To Be Preserved Forever*, Lev Razgon *True Stories*, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn *The First Circle* and *The Gulag Archipelago*, Varlam Shalamov *Kolyma Tales*.

The second discourse – **reflexive** is connected with dissident motion in native culture and is directed on consolidation of existential, legal, social status of the personality. Such texts as: Yrij

The third type of discourse – *didactic* is connected with mass culture and its aim is to make recommendations, such «navigator» over prison subculture so to say. To the third type we refer such texts as: Vladimir Azhippo *Do Not Let the Vow*, Ivan Kostrov *And Indifferently Watching the Skies*, Nikolaj Lopatin *Notes Convict*, Leonid Gabychev *Odlyan*, or *Air of Freedom*, Aleksej Pavlov *Had to Be Wrong*, Vladimir Abramkin, Yrij Chigov et al. *How to survive in a Soviet prison. To help the prisoner*.

Traditionally the research workers take an interest in the first type of discourse and the corresponding *lagernaja literature*. But the analysis of Gulag’s discourse is presented rather single-type. First of all Andrea Gullotta correctly notices that usually Gulag Literature Studies do not examine literary texts of different authors devoted to Gulag in one united context (Gullotta, 2011: 95). Each literary text is associated with the author’s biography and is not considered in context of other literary works, political events and cultural tendencies and so on. A striking example of such analysis is the investigation of S. Richards (Richards, 1985: 145-163). Secondly even when the researchers are trying to draw up the perspective analysis of *lagernaja literature* they often cannot get rid of stereotyped view on the nature of these texts. The researchers discover in *lagernaja literature* the example of unequal struggle between an individual and totalitarian political machine (Toker, 2000: 27-30). Opposition between an individual and government is one of many aspects but not the key aspect of literature devoted to Gulag. *Lagernaja literature* is the unique example of forming the existential freedom in conditions of total unfreedom with the help of creative work.

Unfortunately texts related to the second discourse are used by the researchers as documentary illustrations of soviet penitential system (Applebaum, 2003: 348-350). But these texts contain not only the story about aggression and anti-humanism of soviet prison. They reveal a very important tendency for the epoch – the subject loses his individuality and also freedom. This loss is fully expressed by the third discourse which interprets principles of prison culture as a part of modern society of consumption.

All these three discourses are formed in a space of prison subculture and connected with different social practices, but at the same time they are opposed to widespread discourses about prison subculture such as: “administrative” (which is expressed in Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Criminal Executive Code), “liberal” (which is expressed for example in rhetoric of human rights organizations), “mass media” (which is presented by mass communication media where each information about prison is represented as “urgent news” and can provoke only mass fear and social intolerance) and others.

As a basis in investigating works devoted to prison we took the scheme suggested in works of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. The main advantage of this scheme is the fact that with the help of this scheme we can restore the whole line of discourse conflicts that appear while constructing this or that idea. Underlining a conflict of discourses this method shows us another contradiction in discourse-analytic methodology – the problem of “discourse struggle” in particular. Some investigators think that discourses are situated in constant movement, evolution and such evolution is directed on exclusion or discrediting of other discourse systems. That is why “discourse struggle” is internal structural discourse characteristic and without such characteristic a whole discourse construction cannot exist (Laclau, Mouffe, 2001: 105). The opponents of such point of view suggest that each discourse has its own discourse space, its own objects (those people who interpret the aim of such discourse as some datum), its own institutes that reproduce discourse (state, church, social institute and so on) (Fairclough, 1993: 133-168). In such case “discourse struggle” is an attempt to impose unusual strategies of functioning to discourses.
From our point of view the suggestion that discourses are stably co-exist with each other without imposing to each other their own concepts and are not trying to involve new objects into their structures is rather idealistic. But from the other side such suggestion simply destroys the conception of discourse-analytic theory in which the basic line is discourse – power – ideology – social practice. If discourse is not trying to spread its own concepts it means that such discourse is becoming a “history”, a part of symbolic “archive” and does not have an effect on no one sphere of knowledge and that is why does not reveal its main characteristic – “will to power”. Discourses realize “will to power” through submission of rhetoric of social and cultural institutes, social and cultural practices. Discourse actualization is its necessary state and without such actualization discourse becomes a part of historical archive. Discourses are always unstable – they are always trying to displace each other, to give a new definition to former ideas – prison, punishment, crime, law, freedom, responsibility, power, ideology. That is why the question about “discourse struggle” will be the most principal if we speak about discourses that were formed in prisons.

The struggle of different discourses so as to give the most exact, “truthful” interpretation of prison, prison subculture, life in prison determines the specific character of social practices that are formed regarding to such social space as penitential system. Another significant fact is that the ideas of “truthfulness”, “straightness” are used not only by the official discourses but also by the discourses that deny any officially admitted forms of expressions about prison. Here is the quotation from the editorial introduction to the book of Razgon’s True Stories (although the title of the text legibly indicates the attitude of the author towards his text): “All about the author Lev Razgon writes in his book is truth. In an ordinary lexical indication: “That really was, that really is”. There are no fabricated characters, episodes, dates” (Razgon, 2006: 4). The following statement from the text of Marchenko is also very similar to the above mentioned quotation in semantic and cognitive plans:

“I don’t think that I am a writer, these notes are not a literature. During six years I tried only to see and to remember. Here in these notes where is no one imaginary person, no one fabricated story. If there is a danger to injure another people, I don’t mention names and withhold about some circumstances and events. But I am ready to confirm the verity of each detail” (Marchenko, 1969: 7).

Here is another abstract reproducing the idea of “truthfulness”:

“I will write about all this if not on paper than in my mind; and when all written (“remembered”) will be published, no one could say that I wrote about something non-existent and no one could say that all written is an “awful fiction”” (Marchenko, 1969: 8).

Collisions and mutual denial of official and unofficial discourses about prison is the most striking example how in own society ideas, myths, legends about different objects are formed and translated, how the images of “heroes” and “antiheroes” appear depending on which of the discourses is the most sensitive and adequate to active social practices. Such struggle between discourses with denial of each other occurs not only regarding to social institutes but also regarding to historical facts. Nick Spearing on the example of Holocaust Denial in his investigation showed very obviously the struggle between discourses (Spearing, 2008: 318-342).

In our investigation it is necessary to speak about the peculiarities of using such concepts as “discursive” and “social practices. In discourse-analytic methodology where is no common opinion about the degree of coincidence of these two concepts. Laclau and Mouffe identify discursive and social realities (Laclau, Mouffe, 2001: 87), while Lilie Chouliaraki and Norman Fairclough legibly distinguish such concepts and even proposes he’s own scheme of interaction between discursive and social practices (Chouliaraki, Fairclough, 1999: p.113-114). Teun A. van Dijk is trying to overcome this theoretical difficulty using the original interpretation of the aim of each discourse-
analysis which consists in discovering methods and strategies of discursive practices with the help of which they promote and approve definite versions of reality (van Dijk, 2008: 43). Thus, the researcher of the methodology of discourse-analytic investigation is taking the problem of correlation between discourse and reality out of the borders of discussion and a priori thinks that discourses can be actual in social practice. We think that “ability to speak” and “ability to act” as two methods of organizing the social space are closely connected but do not fully coincide with each other. There are epistemological differences where discursive practices turned out to be outside the social world or social practice is minimally supported by discursive constructions. We hold on the following statements about social practice that proved themselves in literature:

1. Social practice has a dual structure because it is determined by social environment and at the same time makes an effect on social world by transforming its structure. Pierre Bourdieu very exactly expressed this paradox of social practice: “Practice – is all that the social agent makes himself and with what he meets in social world” (Bourdieu, 1998: 52);

2. With the help of such term as social practice a gap between macro and micro social levels can be over passed, because social reality appears as a combination of social practices or individual social actions and that is why only understood in such context social reality can be interpreted and forecasted (Giddens, 1984: 69-70).

   Every discursive practice supposes that its finite product will be the production of a system of institutionally organized presentations, knowledge which is realized in definite social practices. That is why in our investigation there is no identification of discursive and social practices, and we do not examine them as two principally different structures that can function independently. In a definite discursive space (administrative discourse, liberal, criminal) some ways of behavior become normalized and the others become unacceptable. That is why knowledge (of everyday life, abstract and scientific knowledge) has social consequences (Burr, 1995: 5). These social consequences are the binding unit between discursive and social practices.

   The procedure of discourse-analysis of literary texts consists of several stages.

   1. Determination of basic ideas in discourse structure. Basic ideas organize discourses. These ideas are more often reproduced by the original row of equivalents in each concrete discourse. All the texts were divided into thematic sections. Descriptions of all these thematic sections were made and all the common sections-descriptions were taken as basic concepts such as: 1) «prison»; 2) «authority»; 3) «knowledge»; 4) «life».

   2. Deciphering of basic ideas with the help of discourse-categories. Basic ideas represent an empty form and only a row of discourse-categories which use different types of discourses can give various meanings to such empty form. In liberal discourse the concept of «prison» will be filled with meaning through discourse-categories: legal system, limitation of freedom, the justice of punishment, enforcing authority, rights protection movement. Whereas administrative discourse does not accept the application of encompassing conception «prison» toward the places of confinement and will insist on distinct classification of the places of confinement, classification of crimes and condemned people, professional characteristics of collaborators of penitential system and so on. In our investigation discourse-categories were picked out that reveal the specificity of using the basic ideas in all three discourses.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of discourse</th>
<th>Basic concepts</th>
<th>Discourse-categories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metaphysical discourse</td>
<td>prison</td>
<td>«prison – the form of being»</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>authority</td>
<td>«authority as a form of elimination of the individual»</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td>«knowledge – deeply individual act which excludes the opportunity of translation and transmission»</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>life</td>
<td>«life as a resistance to authority»</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive discourse</td>
<td>prison</td>
<td>«prison – is another world»</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>authority</td>
<td>«authority as an uncontrollable structure»</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td>«official knowledge – production of visibility»</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>life</td>
<td>«life as a submission to administrative resource, and death – is an overcoming of submission»</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didactic discourse</td>
<td>prison</td>
<td>«prison is a part of everyday life»</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>authority</td>
<td>«authority as a way to derive benefit»</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td>«knowledge – is an adaptation to different norms»</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>life</td>
<td>«life – is a benefit for different forms of authority»</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Determination of specific myths for all three different discourses that construct social space of prison. First of all we will discuss myths that support social hierarchies in prison, myths that determine dispositions of different social groups in prison and myths that establish a system of social distinctions. Three discourses with the help of different myths construct social space of prison and often these myths turned out to be alternative.

For the metaphysical discourse myth about the superiority of spiritual strength, symbolic resources over physical strength and administrative resources is the fundamental. Space of prison becomes a place of spirit triumph over physical sufferings, pain and even death. According to this myth metaphysical discourse suggests its own original social hierarchy where all significant places will be given to persons who overcome a fear of pain, hunger and privations.

Reflexive discourse makes its own basic myth that in many respects intersects with metaphysical discourse. Such myth – is a myth about internal freedom that is possible even in conditions of isolation. Extremely realistic texts of A.V. Marchenko devoted to cases of suicide and self-maiming in soviet prison camps should be interpreted by means of this myth. Suicide is turned out to be the only possible way to demonstrate the internal freedom in conditions of total unfreedom.

Didactic discourse borrows the basic myth from social system which used to name the society of consumption. Therefore prison in interpretation of didactic discourse becomes an economical area where condemned people become an article of trade.

4. Detecting the ways of identification which are typical for each discourse: assignment to group, self-representation. This group of concepts is closely connected with key symbols that construct identities in texts. What are the systems of identification in different texts? The specificity of such systems determines the ways of self-representation and the ways of perception those around you. The first type of identification will demonstrate the text where the system of personal roles is represented in the following way: religious person, specialist in German language, engineer, journalist and so on (reflexive discourse). And fundamentally different type of identification is formed in texts by means of such definitions as: «zek», «lepila», «smotrjshiy» and so on (didactic discourse).
All these discourses have fundamentally different systems of identification. In metaphysical and reflexive discourses appeal will always be applied to signs that form identity and are used outside the space of prison – engineer, philologist, doctor. In didactic discourse concentrated accent is made on slangy definitions, careful explanation is made concerning the meaning of each definition and with what group you can correlate yourself.

5. Selection of definitions to analyze conflicts in discourses. In each social space there is an aim that is shared by the majority of actors – achievement of professional results, material well-being, emotional self-expression and so on. Each discourse forms basic criterions, indicators of this aim. In socially approved spaces where culturally acceptable discursive practices are used actor’s position is determined by their position relative to a common aim. System of social statuses – is an original graphical distribution of actors relative to a main aim. Those who located maximum closely to a main aim possess larger social, cultural, symbolic resources. Connection between individuals inside one discursive space is rather conflict from functional point of view. The peculiarity of such social spaces as institutions of confinement is the absence of common binding aim. And incorporation between the participators of discursive space is not building with the help of conflict aim. Conflict towards prison has ontological character. Participators of discursive practices widely spread in prison are themselves conflict towards any legal discourse: political prisoners are conflict towards totalitarian ideology; criminals are conflict towards liberal values (life, freedom, property). Therefore participators of discursive prison practices do not contest with each other so as to achieve a common aim (for example, getting out of prison, because every prisoner has its own period of imprisonment depending on the item of punishment) because there is no common aim in institutions of confinement. It is the first reason why the institute of prison is absolutely ineffective social institute and why the societies that are organized using the principle of isolation are also ineffective, anti-productive. Struggle for symbolic row of social statuses in institutions of confinement is replaced by struggle for physical area, for a place in prison cell, on plank bed and so on. The main terms of prison discourses: detachment, distrust, silences and so on express the essence of the main opposition in institutions of confinement – conflict between person and isolation. In texts of metaphysical discourse such conflict is expressed in existential search of oneself and real understanding of one’s emotional, moral and physical opportunities. Therefore Solzhenitsyn will write: «It is awful to think about my writer’s abilities if they wouldn’t put me to prison at that time» (Solzhenitsyn, 2002: 167).

Reflexive discourse is seeing the conflict not in the internal world of a person but between a person and a totalitarian system.

6. Estimation and definition of a place and a role of discourse in forming a modern area of social meanings imply the comparison of discursive constructions with widely spread social practices.

From the point of view of discourse analysis society cannot exist as an objective datum: it is never finished because of discursive practices that are always open for transformations (Laclau, Mouffe, 2001: 113). In institutions of confinement «complete», objective project of society is artificially supported and every discourse development is supported. Professional or amateur literature is one of the ways to overcome closed state of discursive practices in prison.

Conclusions

The distinguishing feature of metaphysical and reflexive discourses is the tendency to resist official ways of subjectivisation in prisons. With such fact is also connected the use of concepts that construct identity and do not correlate with administrative system of punishment and norms of crim-
inal subculture. Authors formulate personal space for the individual in a system with is trying to erase the difference between private sphere and public life. It is interesting that the researchers reveal two tendencies in modern culture: cancellation the differences between private and public, and also cardinal modification of comprehension of these spheres. But such modifications are connected with the influence of mass communication media and are not interpreted as pernicious for the individual (Thompson, 2011: 49-70). From the other side metaphysical and reflexive discourses are forming their own field of identifications that differs from the official system of social roles and statuses. The main characteristic of such field of identifications is exaggeration of personal, individual unique features of a subject. Moreover exaggeration of individual is carried out regarding to a person about whom the story is carried on and regarding to a person who speaks:

“And to tell the truth I have to remind about Moskvin. Because there is no one who knew Ivan Mihailovich. And as for me, I was a member of his family during several years and acquired a lot of knowledge thanks to him. All this knowledge contains “a lot of sorrow…” But I could not force myself to go in “highest instances” so as to take trouble about the memory of such person because “highest instances” simply forgot not only about Ivan Mihailovich (they knew nothing about him) but also about the whole his time” (Razgon, 2006: 57).

Didactic discourse rejects from development of its own system of identification. And vice versa in works written by amateur authors the system of criminal and administrative identification is fully described so the individual in prison could orientate himself in specificity of criminal subcultures and could profitably correlate himself with this or that group. Even the structure of the texts of such authors as Kostrov, Pavlov, Lopatin corresponds with the stages that passes the individual in places of deprivation of liberty: arrest, imprisonment before trial, trial and so on. While trying to explain the norms and the rules of prison culture authors finally come to its full admission and justification:

«A lot of things in correct ideas at liberty can seem wild, cruel and absurd. But I have passed all these things and I can say that the way of life which follows correct ideas is rather easy and reasonable than the other one which is prescribed by the authorities» (Abramkin, Chigov et al., 1992: 125).

From the point of view of the authors of literary works written in prisons their texts are first of all an attempt to make its own individual, private space which is physically impossible in prisons, secondly constructing such type of discourse which at the same time not only compromises and shows all drawbacks of power discourse and discourse of criminal world, but also forms the original image of the isolation system. It is typical that each author of the text about prison - political prisoner, criminal, system of punishment officer – they all are trying to oppose their text to all the other statements and promise that all readers would be devoted to the most secret details which are always concealed and make up the basis of not only prison subculture but all human being in general. The most demonstrative is the phrase from the preface to the work of Azhippo’s Do Not Let the Vow:

“If we will examine his book we can see that it is about life but not about prison. I hope that this book will help a lot of people confidently orientate in the surrounding world, learn to see something good, fearlessly resist the disaster, protect honor and keep self-respect” (Azhippo, 2005: 4).

Unofficial discourse interprets prison as a special social space where the individual gets an access to understanding of existential truth which is inaccessible in routine of everyday life in other social spaces. Interpretation of prison as a space of comprehension of the truth is typical in artistic texts for the representatives of “prose of prison genre” and for the professional authors. Famous phrase of A. Solzhenitsyn: “Bless you – prison, because you were in my life! And there was an answer from graves – It is good to speak so when you are alive!” designates to a prison a status of a
space where a problem of survival is examined in several hypostasis – physical, moral, sacral (Solzhenitsyn, 2002: 324). Independently of what the author thinks about himself (is he guilty and deserves punishment) he perceives prison as a space located on the verge of social and extra-social. Prison is a border zone and paradoxically its status causes some trembling, respect and sincere gratitude. In another Solzhenitsyn’s book the phrase of Gleb Nerzhin is also similar with the above mentioned quotation: “Bless to prison!! It makes me think so as to understand the nature of happiness” (Solzhenitsyn, 2009: 46). Such insistent repetition of one and the same turn of speech confirms how this boundary, sacral status of prison is important. Here is another quotation from the text of Svetov which is also similar with the above mentioned statements: “And I feel myself so freely, reach and I was so happy when I was alone with my head under mattress face to face with God, with His holy prayers! Read very attentively, think about it”. As a result prison becomes a space where conclusions are made about the whole previous being, where the meaning of all deeds, thoughts, feelings of the individual is revealed: “Each person that is put in prison as a rule finds himself on a place which he deserves by all his previous life” (Svetov, 1992: 174).

If schematically imagine the changes from metaphysical and reflexive discourses to didactic discourse we can see the movement from confession to commerce in discourse about prison, from existential directives to practicalness and functionalism, from the search of authenticity of being to creation of text simulations, from scientific-research discourse to discourse of the society of mass consumption.
References


Biography
Natalia V. Tishchenko – is Lecturer in Culture Studies at State Technical University of Saratov (Russia). Her article in this journal is a part of a comprehensive investigation devoted to the influence of prison subculture on Russian culture. In her works she carries out an examination of Russian legislation, art culture (literature and cinematography) and political discourse so as to discover the influence of prison subculture values. She holds a PhD in Culture Studies from State Technical University of Saratov. Her studies were supported by international and Russian foundations: Open Society Institute (2003), Russian Foundation for Humanities (2007), ACLS (2008).

I, Natalia Tishchenko, have agreed to the submission and that the article (Prison and Freedom: Three Discourses of Prison Subculture in Soviet and Russian Literature) is not currently being considered for publication by any other journal.

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