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**LITERARY CHARACTER WITHIN THE SITUATION OF
UNCERTAINTY**

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of the phenomenon of uncertainty in artistic discourse. The problem of uncertainty is one of the most important problems in modern literature, since modern man is constantly faced with a choice in his life. The behavior of the characters of the literary works under study is a relay of the behavior of people in conditions of uncertainty in our reality. In this regard, the purpose of this work is to identify the causes of the person's personality destruction under the influence of uncertainty as well as to determine the degrees of acceptance of uncertainty. The authors of the article conclude that the reaction to the considered phenomenon of uncertainty is individual for each person. However, each individual goes through the levels of acceptance and non-acceptance. The level of non-acceptance is the same for all people. But the level of acceptance is characterized by an individual perception of uncertainty. The authors identify two models of the development of the perception of uncertainty: the creative model and the model of destruction, and the factors that affect the person's destruction in a state of uncertainty: physical performance, social support, environment, psyche, intelligence, socialization, adaptability.

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1. Introduction

The problem of a human being and uncertainty has often been referred to in fiction. Literature presents the models of uncertainty situations influenced by real life situations. Various authors tried to demonstrate that uncertainty may cause two opposing strategies of human behaviour – a destructive strategy and a creative one (Tyutelova et al., 2018). Human being and uncertainty are the main problems in the novel “Lord of the Flies”, written by William Golding. In the course of the plot, the children found themselves on a deserted island during the bombing of an airplane. At first, they were happy about this combination of circumstances. Then the uncertainty of their situation changed their behaviour and reaction to what is happening. From cheerful and carefree children, they turned into evil and bloodthirsty killers. The present paper analyzes the internal and external factors of the influence of uncertainty on the behaviour of the characters of the “Lord of the Flies”. The extreme situations of uncertainty and their influence on human behaviour are also analyzed on the basis of literary works by such Russian authors as Varlam Shalamov, Yury Dombrovsky and Sergei Dovlatov.

2. Problem Statement

The problem of human behaviour in uncertainty is presently an urgent problem, because people do not know how to behave in stressful situations (Andronnikova, 2021; Kocheulova, 2018; Tyutelova et al., 2019; Veresov, 2018). In the present study, the example of such a situation is the presence of children and adolescents on a remote island. It is necessary to determine the stages of children’s behaviour in uncertainty in order to study this phenomenon in more detail.

The paper also analyzes the behaviour of people in the extreme situations of uncertainty in prison camps. These situations are described in literary works, but are based on real life experiences, consequently, the extreme uncertainty situations can cause unpredictable behaviour, which can be positive, but mostly destructive and analysis of such types of behaviour can help deal with extreme uncertainty situations in real life (Tyutelova et al., 2020).

3. Research Questions

In this study, it is necessary to pay attention to the change of behaviour of adolescents and children under the constant influence of uncertainty: from creative to destructive. In addition, it is necessary to determine the external and internal factors that favourably affect the destruction of the personality in conditions of uncertainty.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify internal and external factors that lead to the destruction of personality under the influence of uncertainty as well as to determine the degrees of acceptance of uncertainty.

5. Research Methods

In this study, the following linguistic research methods were used: contextual description, structural and semantic analysis (Matsuda, 2015). As for the literary research methods, the following methods are used: description, comparative method, sociological method, psychological method and psychoanalytic method. Linguistic research methods allowed to identify language means that reflect the influence of uncertainty on the behaviour of adolescents and children (Petrova, 2017; Shakhovsky, 2008). Literary research methods made it possible to study the psychological nature of the behaviour of children and adolescents in certain trigger situations provoked by uncertainty.

6. Findings

The initial reaction of adolescents and children to uncertainty can be classified as a social deviation. This is due to the stormy joy and happiness of the children who found themselves on a remote island without their parents. The normal reaction for people of this age is fear and fright, because they are not capable of independent existence. Here is an example of the reaction of teenagers to the news that they are on a desert island: “Wacco”, “Wizard”, “Smashing” (Golding, 2015, p. 19). These are the tokens, which refer to British slang and denote the fever pitch. The use of these tokens to express the emotions of the children indicates that the uncertainty does not frighten the children, but on the contrary, gives them pleasure. We can call this degree of adoption of uncertainty as misunderstanding or non-acceptance.

The next stage in the developmental growth of adoption of uncertainty is associated with its acceptance. When the guys start realizing that there may not be any help, they begin to think about their existence on a remote island. At this level, the adoption of uncertainty bifurcates. On the one hand, we have a creative model, and on the other hand, we have a model of destruction (Shevchenko & Pisareva, 2020).

Jack is a proponent of the destruction model. Here is an example confirming our idea: “We’ll get food,” cried Jack. “Hunt. Catch things ... until they fetch us” (Golding, 2015, p. 22). Jack sees salvation in killing wild animals. This choice can be determined by psychology. If a teenager wants to kill someone, he has manic tendencies, which can be realized under certain circumstances. And Jack has these conditions, since there are no legal structures on the remote island.

The proponent of the creative model is Ralph. He sees salvation in the smoke from the fire, which should catch attention of a passing ship. He tries to build a community based on cooperation, mutual understanding and mutual support. Here is an example reflecting Ralph’s ideas about rescue of the guys: “We’ve got to have special people for looking after the fire. Any day there may be a ship out there” – he waved his arm at the taut wire of the horizon – “and if we have a signal going they’ll come and take us off...” (Golding, 2015, p. 34). According to the example, Ralph does not see salvation in the process of killing pigs, but in keeping the fire burning. The fire in this novel plays a symbolic role: it reflects the children’s faith in salvation at the beginning of the novel and rage and anger at the end of the novel. As a result, we can assume that Ralph encourages the guys and gives them faith in salvation.

Further on, the behavior in the state of uncertainty develops in two ways. Jack is getting more and more aggressive as the story progresses. First, he kills the pig with fear. Then he kills the pig with pride. Finally, he makes a performance out of killing a pig, in which there are dances, songs and a reenactment of

killing a pig. After killing a few pigs, he moves on to killing people. Killing the first person brings Jack fear, and killing the second person brings pleasure. Jack's cruelty is exemplified by the fact that killing Piggy by his tribe means nothing to him. His only concern is the destruction of the horn: "See? See? That's what you'll get! I meant that! There isn't a tribe for you anymore! The conch is gone" (Golding, 2015, p. 163). The absence of mentioning Piggy's murder and any reaction to it suggests that the human life for Jack has lost its value. As it has been mentioned above, these are traits inherent in people who have manic tendencies. When Jack becomes the rightful ruler of the island, his manic tendencies become the norm. Therefore, Piggy's murder is commonplace for all of his tribesmen. And Jack's desire to kill Ralph leads him to a manic personality disorder. He is ready to kill everyone for the sake of killing one person. If we highlight the external factors that contribute to the adoption of Jack's aggression in a state of uncertainty, we can name the following factors: physical superiority, children's fear, quantity advantage, the lack of legislative and regulatory authorities. The internal factors include mental superiority and instability, manic tendencies and lack of respect for Ralph.

Considering the behavior of Ralph, we come to the conclusion that he turns from a creative person into an apathetic person. This is due to the fact that no one listens to Ralph and does not follow his instructions. In this regard, his desire to do something goes down. The following example demonstrates that no one wants to work: "They're hopeless. The older ones aren't much better. D'you see? All day I've been working with Simon. No one else. They're off bathing, or eating, or playing" (Golding, 2015, p. 41). It is necessary to start with the fact that the lack of motivation could be the reason why no one works. A child needs a certain motivation to do something. If there is no motivation, then there is no action from a child either. Since Ralph only demands working, the guys gradually begin to dislike him. Jack skillfully uses this situation. Gradually, fewer and fewer kids listen to Ralph. As a result, Ralph's level of apathy increases. However, despite his apathy, Ralph keeps a clear mind. The mind keeps the teenager alive at the end of the novel. It allows him to act in a dangerous situation with a lightning speed. Consequently, Ralph is the only character who does not obey Jack, thereby preserving his identity. The example of Ralph's independence is situation, in which Ralph is not afraid to tell Jack what he thinks about him: "Don't you understand, you painted fools? Sam, Eric, Piggy and me – we aren't enough. We tried to keep the fire going, but we couldn't. And then you, playing at hunting ..." (Golding, 2015, p. 160). Despite Jack's quantity advantage, Ralph is trying to reach out to his mind. However, it is worth noting that Ralph classifies Simon's murder and killing pigs as a game. This is an indicator that Ralph is also beginning to lose his humanism. We suppose that if a little more time had passed, Ralph would have become the same as Jack. Jack understands this, so he tries to kill Ralph. As a result, it is necessary to identify the external and internal factors that cause Ralph's apathy. The external factors include lack of support, unwillingness to carry out Ralph's orders. The internal facts include self-doubt, fear, lack of intelligence.

We understand uncertainty not just as a change in the environment in which a person exists, but rather as an individual's inability to formulate his own ideas about the reality around him (Sokolova, 2020). First of all, a person is faced with a state of uncertainty, when he finds himself in new conditions for himself, when he has to redefine his life and re-define himself, put himself in a new hierarchy and correlate with a new society (Tyutelova et al., 2021). The undertaken research has demonstrated that a human being can perceive uncertainty in two ways: creative and destructive. The first one helps to get out of the state of

uncertainty: a person tries to determine the rules according to which the new environment operates and how he can interact with it. The second model does not help to cope with uncertainty, but rather exacerbates it or replaces one uncertainty with another.

In the second part of the undertaken research we examined how the characters of the so-called Russian “prison camp prose” perceive uncertainty, using examples of the works by such authors as Varlam Shalamov, Yury Dombrovsky and Sergei Dovlatov. All of these authors were in prison camps: two as prisoners, and one as a guard. The writers described their experiences in their works and their characters, reflecting how a person perceives uncertainty, being placed in the conditions of a prison camp or similar conditions.

Although each of the three authors writes about the prison camp, they all place their characters into different conditions: Shalamov describes the horrors of prison camp life from the perspective of a prisoner; Dovlatov portrays the prison camp from the point of view of a guard, who is similar to prisoners; Dombrovsky concentrates on what a person has to go through before getting into the prison camp.

Shalamov very clearly describes the peculiarities of interaction between prisoners, the peculiarities of their hierarchy and other rules of the prison camp life. In “The Carpenters” story from “Kolyma Tales” collection, the narrator lists the ways of survival, and at the same time the ways of overcoming the uncertainty that the prisoners had, not initially associated with crime: you can become a foreman, a caretaker, or “stay near the kitchen”. The protagonist of the story, Potashnikov, who was already expecting death from hunger and frostbite, finds another way to survive by signing up as a carpenter in a carpentry workshop, and another person, Grigoriev, is called along with him. Both had nothing to do with carpentry outside the camp life, however, stating that: “In one day we will not have time to be transferred to the carpentry workshop. After all, it is necessary to submit information, lists. Then again to deduct ...” (Shalamov, 2013, p. 59), they realized that they could stay warm and with good food for two days. Thus, using a creative model of perception of uncertainty, the prisoners were able to find a way out of it, at least for a short period of time.

Otherwise, prisoners, who are ready to use more cruel methods, look at different ways to overcome uncertainty and find their place in the prison camp space. In the “Condensed Milk” story, Shalamov depicts how the camp system can accept and provide a prisoner with more comfortable conditions. In order for this system to accept a prisoner, it is necessary to serve it. In the story the prisoner Shestakov was placed in a geological exploration (“office”). In exchange for this, the prisoner must organize an escape of several convicts, who will eventually be overtaken by the convoy. The protagonist understands why Shestakov is inviting him to the company to escape: “He will gather us into the escape and surrender – this is quite clear. He will pay for his office work with our blood, my blood” (Shalamov, 2013, p. 110). In essence, Shestakov also applies a creative model of perceiving uncertainty, finding a way out of it, getting a job in an “office” and providing himself with a good, by camp standards, life. However, not everyone turned out to be as smart as the main character of the story, and Shestakov found those who could “pay off the debt” to the authorities, who arranged a good life for him: “Shestakov managed to persuade five of them. They fled a week later, two were shot near Chorniye Klyuchi, three were tried a month later. The Shestakov case was singled out ... He did not receive an additional term for the escape ...” (Shalamov, 2013, p. 112). We suppose that those who agreed have chosen a destructive model of uncertainty perception, and the point is not that

they went to certain death. In this case the destructiveness lies in the fact that they did not manage to overcome uncertainty, but only moved into a new space, in which another form of uncertainty simply awaited them. And this is confirmed by the dialogue between Shestakov and the main character of the story:

“– ... I will take workers, I will take you and go to Chorniye Klyuchi ... And we will go out to the sea.

– And what about the sea? Shall we sail?

– It doesn't matter” (Shalamov, 2013, p. 110).

If we assume that Shestakov outlined approximately the same escape plan to prisoners who escaped, it turns out that they chose to replace the camp's uncertainty with an escape, a part of which is not even defined.

In addition to the uncertainty in the camp in the “power vs. prisoner” hierarchy, Shalamov also depicts how a prisoner can overcome uncertainty and fit into the hierarchy of prisoners.

In the “The Snake Charmer” story Shalamov describes how the screenwriter Platonov, transferred to another camp, finds himself in conditions, in which there's literally no place for him (in this case for sleep): there is no respect for him on behalf of the criminal chief Fedechka, there is no role for him in the hierarchy. Throughout the story, the prisoner first tries to find a place for himself, then Fedechka tries to determine his place and occupation within the prison camp hierarchy. After a short mockery, Fedechka asks if Platonov can “squeeze” (retell) a novel as entertainment. Here Platonov has a choice – whether to agree to such a position or not: “To become a jester at the court of the Duke of Milan, a jester who was fed for a good joke and beaten for a bad one? There is also another side to this matter. He will introduce them to real literature. He will be an enlightener” (Shalamov, 2013, p. 122). By changing his attitude to what is happening around him, Platonov finds a way to overcome uncertainty, gaining a certain position within the prison camp hierarchy.

Finally, it becomes clear to us that Platonov, due to his efforts, found his place in a new hierarchy for himself. When leaving the barracks for work, Platonov is pushed and insulted by a stranger, and after the stranger was told who Platonov was, he turns to the scriptwriter with a request: “Please, don't tell Fedya I hit you” (Shalamov, 2013, p. 123). Here the contrast of the possibilities of human interaction with the environment before and after overcoming the uncertainty in the space of the prison camp, becomes most obvious.

Although the works by Yury Dombrovsky are also referred to as the “prison camp prose”, yet his characters often find themselves outside the prison camp (Dombrovsky, 1993). Dombrovsky's characters often go through the hell of pre-trial procedures (for example, interrogations) or are under pressure from a legal threat hanging over them. In fact, quite often Dombrovsky's characters are held back not so much by a specific space, but by the conviction of imminent punishment.

This is not surprising, because Dombrovsky himself went through four arrests, and his formation as a writer fell on the years of the Great Terror when legal tension and uncertainty were felt stronger than ever.

And in such a situation, subjective uncertainty can be set with the help of such internal factors as incomplete knowledge (in this case, legal) that interact with external ones (censorship, repression, propaganda etc.) (Kornilova, 2015).

The similar model of uncertainty was transferred by Dombrovsky into his works and in addition he also described the mechanism for creating such legal uncertainty in a person.

Sergei Dovlatov (2016) had to perceive the prison camp life from the other side, unlike the two previous authors, he was not a prisoner, but a guard.

Dovlatov's guards are often characterized by a destructive model of perception of reality. This is not surprising, because most of the guards who appear in his book are soldiers on a temporary military service who were placed in the prison camp accidentally and had neither time nor desire to understand this place better than prisoners who could not live otherwise.

One of the striking examples of how destructively young guards perceive the uncertainty of the prison camp space can be found in the extract, in which Fidel and Bob got drunk and walked in search of alcohol around the prison camp, then they fought with their Georgian colleague Andzor over a bottle of chacha.

Thus, the destructive model contributed only to the transition from one state of uncertainty to another: from injustice to loneliness, and from loneliness to a drunken fight, after which the main character of the story Bob was left tied on the floor.

The creative model of perceiving uncertainty in Dovlatov's prose is often more characteristic of prisoners than warders. The prisoners feel like more organic inhabitants of the prison camp who either have lived such a life for a long time and understand it well, or are able to adapt to it faster. The prisoners' ways of overcoming uncertainty seem quite cruel and correspond rather to their perverse logic than to adequate ways of interacting with reality.

7. Conclusion

To sum up, we would like to say that each person perceives uncertainty individually. However, there are two levels that everyone experiences in the same way: the level of non-acceptance and acceptance. At the level of non-acceptance, people's behavior does not change in any way. Therefore, it is impossible to initially understand whether a person is under the influence of uncertainty. At the level of acceptance, the individual perception of uncertainty begins. We have identified two ways of developing the perception of uncertainty described in the works by W. Golding, V. Shalamov, Y. Dombrovsky and S. Dovlatov: the creative model and the model of destruction. The choice of the model depends on psycho-emotional factors: character, behavior, deviations etc. In addition, there are also external and internal factors that affect the individual's perception of uncertainty. External factors include physical performance, social support and the environment. Internal factors include psyche, intelligence, level of socialization, and adaptability.

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