



**UNCERTAINTY - A NEW CHALLENGE OF SOCIAL REALITY IN THE TERMS OF  
PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE**

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**Abstract:** The article substantiates the thesis that the category of uncertainty, determining transformations in the system "nature-man-society-culture", becomes the core of the modern picture of the world. Arguments are given to substantiate the existential dimension of the phenomenon of uncertainty. Ethical, value-temporal characteristics of uncertainty are revealed. It is proved that uncertainty is a heterogeneous formation with the following levels: a) ontological; b) epistemological; c) anthropological; d) existential; d) psychological; e) ethical - aesthetic; g) communicative; h) social. The objective need for transformation of understanding and attitude to uncertainty as a new challenge to human existence is substantiated.

**Key words:** system "nature-man-culture", science, uncertainty, instability, existentialism, psychology, ethical and aesthetic values, postmodernism, determinism-indeterminism, picture of the world, bifurcation, synergetics, transcendence



## **Introduction**

The realities of the twenty-first century indicate that the problem of uncertainty, which affects humans and all spheres of their activity, is becoming increasingly relevant. In a dynamically developing world, radical changes are taking place in the “nature-human-society-culture” system. The changes are directly related to the acceleration of human development. In this situation, the role and significance of the uncertainty principle increases. For modern humans and society, this phenomenon acquires the status of an “uncertainty challenge” [14]. “Uncertainty is a defining element of culture. A condition for a person to create any product of activity, including creative activity.... Uncertainty is an integral condition for a free, productive and happy human life” [5. p. 6]. Social reality produces and aggravates the situation of uncertainty through such challenges as: “increasing... threats, ... radicalism, extremism, terrorism, human trafficking, drug addiction, unfortunately, do not bypass our country” [16]. In science, for a long time, there was a paradigm of the picture of the world built on the principles of: strength, stability, predictability, certainty, controllability and determinism. "The principle of determinism and certainty, established thanks to positivism, is being replaced by the principle of uncertainty, included in the scientific and methodological apparatus by W. Heisenberg," [10] bifurcation as one of the factors of development. The search for "equilibrium" forces researchers to seek a compromise in the description of the socio-cultural space and scientific and cognitive activity. Bifurcation mechanisms play an important role in the reproduction of uncertainty. At the same time, the role of bifurcation mechanisms and uncertainty as a product of their functioning is to ensure a tendency to change in a developing system during periods of abrupt changes and crises [15. p. 3-28]. Literature review and methods

The general methodological range of problems has been developed quite deeply in the world scientific and philosophical literature and research by scientists involved in cognitive – ontological-epistemological-anthropological-existential – ethical-aesthetic value aspects of science. The anthropological aspect of uncertainty has been studied by M.N. Kozhevnikova, who considers it important to include the uncertain in the sphere of humanitarian knowledge, since only human intelligence, not artificial intelligence processing big data, can understand a person [12. p. 7]. D.A. Leontiev focused on the psychological dimensions of uncertainty, the existential facets of the problem were considered by E.V. Zolotukhina-Abolina. The research interest of A.M. Dorozhkin, T.A. Pakina is focused on such a phenomenon as scientific uncertainty. The dissertation research of V.O. Faber



is devoted to the ontological, gnoseological, anthropological parameters of the uncertainty principle in the context of philosophical knowledge. A number of works by famous physicists are devoted to the interpretation of uncertainty in the space of quantum mechanics and philosophical discourse. The main figures are the founder of uncertainty W. Heisenberg, M. Born, V.P. Bransky, E. Schrödinger. An extraordinary approach to solving the problem of uncertainty was developed by synergetics and the theory of dissipative systems. Scientists have established that bifurcation points have such a feature as uncertainty arising in the process of self-organization. The scientific and theoretical foundation of synergetics as an interdisciplinary science and the theory of dissipative systems is laid by the works of I. Prigogine, G. Haken, I. Stengers. In this context, the studies of E.N.Knyazeva, S.P.Kurdyumov, M.N.Abdullaeva, B.O.Turaev, G.G.Gaffarova, A.R.Abdullaeva are of particular interest.

Analysis of the problem of uncertainty in the context of philosophical and historical retrospective shows that the origins of the formulation and solution of this problem are found in the works of Anaximander, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, etc. Uncertainty as an indicator of socio-cultural reality through the prism of postmodernism was studied by J. Baudrillard, E.Toffler, M. Epstein. N. Viner, O. B. Soloviev, A. S. Krashennnikova, N. G. Zelets, E. Dunaeva, A. A. Gryakova, E. A. Belaya, and N. N. Taleb devoted their works to identifying the essence and features of the uncertainty principle in communication processes and social reality.

**The methodological basis of the study** was the conceptual and theoretical base, scientific and conceptual apparatus of alternative methods and principles of world and domestic philosophical thought, which opens up unique prospects for studying the scientific problem. To achieve the scientific goal and solve the tasks, the following methods and approaches were used: analysis - synthesis, descriptive, historical and cultural retrospective, hermeneutic, interdisciplinary, synergetic, as well as the principles of complementarity and systemicity.

### **Results and discussions**

In the studies of philosophers, the modern era is characterized as "the era of breakthroughs in science, social experiments, world wars, revolutions, world crises, global changes, where everything has become relative, fluid, changeable, unstable: time, space, values" [11. p. 78]. These processes become drivers of change not only in the world, but also in man himself. Accordingly, there is a tendency to transform the understanding of the world in its greater part, as uncontrollable,



unpredictable, undetermined, ambiguous, uncertain. This tendency is most clearly manifested in three leading spheres: a) change in the image of man; b) change in the image of science; c) change in the status of values. D.A. Leontiev gives the following interpretation of these phenomena [14]. The twentieth century compromised all previously known images of man. Is man by nature good (humane, merciful, hardworking, loves his homeland) or evil (self-seeking, egocentric, mercantile and untrustworthy)? In the cultural field, these two images were in confrontation for a long time. However, the twentieth century showed that neither one nor the other image can stand the test of reality. Outstanding thinkers came to the conclusion that human nature does not have a fixed feature [25. pp. 146-148]. Man is always different, he is not identical to himself and certainly not identical to another. The essence of his being lies in transcendence [6. pp. 422-438]. Therefore, what is meant here is the transformation of the image of man – this is, firstly.

The paradigm of science has changed radically during the 20th century. The outstanding methodologist of science I. Prigogine proved that science in previous periods described deterministic, equilibrium, stable, linear, stable processes. As the laws of nature were understood, classical science increasingly moved away from the real picture of the universe. In his discovery in the field of inorganic nature, he paid special attention to bifurcation processes, which are not completely deterministic [17]. He came to the conclusion that the universal and exhaustive determinism of the material world and human behavior turns out to be a delusion. The era of “certainty has ended and the era of... chaos, uncertainty, new laws of nature” has begun [18]. Unique, non-standard events are possible only in nonequilibrium systems, which are described by nonlinear equations with alternative solutions. Uncertainty, nonlinearity, nonequilibrium, bifurcation, [23. p. 76]. Indeterminism is the basis of the synergetic paradigm of the picture of the world. F. Bafoev believes that "the synergetic approach assumes a probabilistic view of the world, aimed at studying nonlinear systems. The worldview appears as a set of nonlinear processes" [2]. Accordingly, in this case we are talking about changing the image of science - secondly.

The general picture of the world that existed for centuries formulated all the questions of practical philosophy and ethics on the basis of traditional established values. This system of values historically developed in the context of this culture. Over time, the modernist picture of the world was replaced by the postmodernist picture of the world. Postmodernism provided a philosophical argumentative basis for the thesis that these value systems lack an objective foundation. The



followers of this movement popularized the ideas about the complete relativity of all value criteria.

Thus, an impetus was given to the destruction of the regulation of onto-epistemological activity, socio-cultural life. In the field of postmodern culture, the "uncertainty principle" turns into the main tool for the destruction of ontology. "The philosophy of postmodernism proclaims the method of meditation on chaos as a technique for understanding the semiotic sphere of culture, the process of cognition is described as fractal wandering, and in social philosophy the concepts of "fractality" and "uncertainty" acquire enormous significance for describing modern society" [24]. According to M. Epstein, "the world is not just becoming more complex. The world is becoming more complex at such a rapid pace that an individual is no longer able to keep up with it or assimilate the universal human experience that is growing ever faster. The gap between the collective experience of all of humanity and the individual experience of each individual is growing exponentially. This often causes modern people to experience experiences reminiscent of the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder [27. pp. 45-51]. In Epstein's language, such a disorder is called "postmodern trauma" [27. pp. 45-51]. This description pertains to the third sphere of value status transformation. Scientific literature substantiates the position that the level of "uncertainty will increase sharply and unpredictably, followed by a relative decrease. The vector of social uncertainty will make itself known to "the economic and social environment, individual social groups and processes, public consciousness and human thinking" [4. p. 8]. The main attribute of life in an unstable, unsustainable world is uncertainty. We can say that it is an existential component of human and social existence. Uncertainty in human existence becomes even more vivid and clear if we notice its existential component. "The position of man, his very existence is in many ways uncertain, open, unresolved and unfinished. Existence is, in fact, what, with its processuality, always-incompleteness, transcendence beyond its own limits, brings uncertainty into the list of primary philosophical problems" [24]. The existential path is not only difficult, but also devoid of an alternative. There is a lot of uncertainty in life, and it is absolute, and segments of certainty are relative. This phenomenon, of course, is tense, alarming, disturbing, disturbing and gives rise to the desire to protect oneself from uncertainty, in connection with which the need for protection from the "existential threat" increases [8. p.27].

A comprehensive analysis of the manifestation of the uncertainty factor in specific situations was carried out by N.L. Smakotina. Firstly, it is associated with the choice and formation of value



positions, value attitudes of perception, motivation. Secondly, it is determined by the emergence of value-oriented structures of the "existential world" of man and society. Thirdly, the dynamics of the activity of the uncertainty factor is manifested in the formation of temporal-value structures of the identity of personal consciousness and public consciousness, as well as the destruction of identity during conflicts, stress, spiritual crises, etc. [10].

**Uncertainty is not a homogeneous formation.** As a result of the analysis, we came to the conclusion that uncertainty is a heterogeneous phenomenon. Researchers distinguish various aspects and levels in it: a) ontological; b) epistemological; c) anthropological; d) existential; d) psychological; e) ethical - aesthetic; g) communicative; h) social. In particular, V.O. Faber interprets uncertainty as a philosophical category that reflects a non-existent order of any type: material or ideal. He writes that "ontologically, uncertainty is the absence, the blurring of the boundaries of the existing, gnoseologically – the ambiguity, doubtfulness, incompleteness of knowledge" [24]. All the variety of existing definitions of uncertainty in any case comes down to the analysis of its epistemological component. In this case, it is meant to understand it primarily as the unknown, unreliability, unpredictability, non-linearity of human existence and the imperfection of his cognitive abilities.

Uncertainty is associated with doubt in the possibility of relevant, accurate, complete reflection and forecasting of objective reality in the process of cognition. We agree with the position of A.S. Krasheninnikova, who believes that "the predictability and readability of the world turned out to be only an illusion of scientific minds. And the discoveries of modern physics of the 20th century clearly confirmed this. The general theory of relativity of A. Einstein was discovered, as well as the uncertainty principle of Heisenberg and N. Bohr, which substantiate the idea that the world is always in a state of uncertainty and instability" [13. p. 53]. Uncertainty is an inevitable attribute of any society and any human activity. This phenomenon manifests itself in an open probabilistic future and becomes maximal in a situation of cultural crisis, alternative development paths, difficulties in the formation and strengthening of moral and ethical values. The position of a person in such a culture is also marginal, ambiguous, uncertain" [9. p. 105]. It is worth paying attention to the psychological aspect of uncertainty, which is manifested through the attitude towards it. The psychological problem of the attitude towards uncertainty is that the concept itself is difficult to fit into the picture of the world for most people. N. Taleb in his book "The Black Swan" identified many mechanisms by which



a person simplifies the picture of the real world. For example, when following Heraclitus, it is permissible to reduce uncertainty to certainty, doubt to the undoubted. "Our mind is an excellent explanatory machine that is able to find meaning in almost anything, to interpret any phenomenon, but is completely unable to accept the idea of unpredictability" [22. p. 41]. For a deeper understanding of the state of the modern world, he reveals the significance of psychological characteristics, for this purpose he introduces the concept of "antifragility". The nature of antifragility, its originality, non-standardness "consists in the fact that it allows us to work with the unknown, to do something in conditions when we do not understand what exactly we are doing - and achieve success" [22. p. 20]. Researcher A.A.Gryakalov [7] examines the ethical and aesthetic aspect. He believes that it is here that the greatest opportunities for reflection and prognostication of reality development are laid down and revealed. "Fluidity and vitality (humanity) are undoubted advantages, but this is also a certain - indefinite - relaxation of the mind, its instability and unsteadiness, dependence on accompanying circumstances, vulnerability to theatricality, instability in the face of the charm of feeling, word or idea, excessive publicity" [7. p. 16].

Through the prism of the communication approach, uncertainty is analyzed by O.B.Soloviev. In this context, the researcher interprets uncertainty as a violation of the system of communication interaction. "The complexity of building communication directly depends on the fact that understanding as a phenomenon is "on the border between the external (exteriorized) world and the internal (interiorized) world. This is the point of penetration of the internal, subjective world into the external, objective world. But this is also the point of the reverse transition, when the external world becomes internal, is built in the phenomenal, symbolic space of the thinking "I". The first transition is carried out as an objectification of the subjective content of mental activity, the second - as the identification of the subject with the semantic content of objective activity and communication objectively given to him by culture" [19. p. 63].

In the real situation of the destruction of the communication link between the subjects of a dialogue - polylogue, the "effect of uncertainty" arises. "Uncertainty can be overcome as a result of the subject of communication's access to social codes, "the socio-cultural plan of objective predetermined understanding of individual human consciousness and the mental plan of subjective interpretation of meaning" [19. p. 66]. This means that uncertainty is interpreted as a violation of communication and the result of misunderstanding.





Researchers E. Dunaeva, E.A. Belaya focused their scientific interest on social uncertainty. Social uncertainty, according to E.A. Belaya, is the format that characterizes the conditions of human life in the post-information space. This special phenomenon was a consequence of the dynamics of the transformation of all spheres of social existence. "Social uncertainty is a consequence of the acceleration of the pace of scientific, technical, and social development and reflects new approaches to human interaction with the environment, based on the principles of openness and constant novelty" [3]. It should be noted that artificial intelligence as the latest innovative tool, service contributes to the dynamics of chaos in social reality. Leads to an aggravation of the state of uncertainty, "puts before a person a vector of alternative possibilities, puts before the choice to think or not to think, to act or not to act, to study or not to study. Choice is the gift of a freedom-loving person ... he chooses between development or lack of development ... "[1. p. 334]. E. Dunaeva reveals the causes of the emergence and spread of uncertainty in society. "Underdevelopment of social differentiation and integration, as well as the "insufficiency" of the adaptive resources of social subjects, disrupt the stability of the social system, shifting it towards chaos, i.e. uncertainty, covers society and its elements" [10]. In science, there is no unambiguous definition of the category "social uncertainty". The descriptive approach characterizes it as "an unstable state in which society or a social group finds itself in conditions of crises, social reforms, characterized by the deformation of all familiar structures and moral and ethical foundations" [20. p. 42].

### Conclusions

The category of uncertainty is by its nature a heterogeneous phenomenon with its own structure, having various aspects and types. Uncertainty in the concept of post-non-classical indeterminism is considered as an integral characteristic of the nonlinear development of systems of different nature. This phenomenon localizes unspecified and unpredictable chaotic states and movements that exclude the possibility of precise predictions, are natural and inevitable in a wide range of systems. The world in all the diversity of its phenomena turns out to be uncertain, unstable, subject to various types of risks that are subject to chance in the functioning of systems rather than to clear deterministic laws of development. A modern person must change his understanding and attitude to uncertainty and instability. He must realize that uncertainty is becoming the norm of life. The uncertain and unstable should be considered as new challenges of social reality.





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