

## **'Re-Anchoring After the Crisis: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on War, Memory, and Innovation'**

4 December 2015

### **'Thinking about the politics of uncertainty'**

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#### Introduction

- My position does not arise from the discipline of International Relations and is certainly not representative of it. It is the result of reflecting about how ideas of power, governance and order relate to contingent understandings of the uncertain. My contribution is merely a reflection on the sense it makes to think about uncertainty, how could uncertainty be thought about, and the stakes of doing so. I conclude with two observations that might be of use to scholars involved in this project.

#### Talking points

1. Does it make sense to think the uncertain? Or to think about uncertainty?
  - Any understanding of uncertainty relies on a perception of certainty.
  - A perception of certainty is grounded on an understanding of an order of the real.
  - An order of the real is never a natural given. It is the combination of what Foucault referred to as 'an already encoded eye' and 'reflexive knowledge', and I would add, the resourcefulness and creativity of those who think of it.
  - If the encoding of the eye and reflexions on knowledge are a continuous process, if creativity and resourcefulness are contingent attributes, it makes no sense to think about orders of the real as stable realities. They are fragile formulations that relate to complex questions such as the meaning of life, its governance and its protection.
  - To reflect upon uncertainty, therefore, must be an engagement with thinking about order, power and governance as the effects of practices.
2. How would one think about the uncertain?

- It must involve questions such as: why is an order of the real thought of in a particular way? What sets of ideas, beliefs, knowledges, practices, and imaginaries make it possible? What makes the perception of the certainty of an order possible?
  - It must consider the precariousness character and the vulnerability of the imaginaries on which orders of the real are supported. If solid and unmovable, why would it be possible to think from them that which makes them 'un-certain'?
  - It should also ask, what is it that an idea of order is expected to promote and protect? What forms of life, ways of being in the world, is a perception of certainty expected to secure?
3. What is at stake in thinking the uncertain?
- It follows that thinking the uncertain legitimises the certainty of the perceived order. Uncertainty in relation to an order is thought of as a way to promote, protect, and preserve it. The fact that the uncertain is thought about opens up the possibility of knowing about the order object of protection, the way of life presented as certain or to be ascertained.
  - Mythology, spirituality, prophesy, prognosis are all forms of thinking the uncertain.
4. Contribution to the project 'Anchoring after the Crisis'
- Recovery, resilience, crisis, three themes at the core of this research initiative, speak as much about the order at stake as about the foundations of the new emerging order.
  - Thinking about the form and the details with which uncertainty is presented in the source material can provide elements through which to think about the challenged order and the emerging one.