

1968: A Global Perspective

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Even Uncertainty Is Oriented

This paper focuses on the concept of uncertainty as applied to 1968. Specifically, it debates about the uncertainty of the outcome in social revolts. For some scholars (Peter Starr for example), social revolts are destined to fail (see his “The Logic of Failed Revolts”). In criticizing Starr’s analysis, I propose a different perspective. The outcome of revolts is always uncertain, but I will argue that there are two kinds of uncertainty: one that is oriented toward possibility, the other towards antinomies and aporias. One in which the possibility of a positive outcome is always in potentiality, the other in which the positive is never there. The positive, in this instance, has to be considered from a historical materialist perspective. I will propose that the first kind of uncertainty has an ontological direction. In Lacanian terms, the subject in its own self-awareness (always under the necessary imposition of the Cartesian cogito) imposes the potentiality of a solution on a rupture in ‘meaning’ inside the Symbolic Order. This paper will try and debate that the social revolts in 1968 were under such uncertainty, and their positive outcome is still in potentiality.