

The opposite of a certainty is not an uncertain uncertainty...

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Donald Rumsfeld became better known for his known unknowns, and his unknown unknowns than he was ever known for his supposed knowns. Such is the perverseness of history. Contrary to neoliberal thinking that history is just a series of known facts, nothing could be further from the truth. It is all a matter of asking how we create facts, recall them and then of interpretation.

What I suggest that we do know now is that we live in an age of uncertainty.

We used to be certain that the USA was the enemy of Russia. Now Donald Trump is inviting Russia to attack Europe.

We used to be certain that the Conservatives upheld law and order. Now they are determined to undermine it.

We were told as certain fact that the Tories would always manage the economy prudently. We now know that is not true.

And, we were certain that the lessons of the 1930s with regard to pandering to fascism had been learned. That is clearly not the case.

This does, of course, create uncertainty. Is it any surprise that there is so much collective angst in the world when so little that was once supposedly relied upon is no longer true?

That angst is, however, compounded by something else. Rumsfeld might have thought that the opposite of a known was an unknown unknown, but an uncertain uncertainty is not the opposite of a certainty.

We are not living in a world where the opposite of our old certainty is unknown. We are living in a world where that opposite is most definitely known. The opposite of our old certainty is that the world is fast embracing fascism both nationally and internationally. The only thing that is unknown is how long it will take for us to accept the reality of this new certainty.