

Words Poorly Used #16 — Survival of the Fittest

So how do you determine fitness in an ever changing world? Unpacking the idea, I say there are two approaches, culling or creative neglect. The first method is adopted by authoritarians, in their conviction that humankind is destined to live forever, but must be herded toward that end. Individuals must be improved for doing their fair bit for the collective. Please note that authoritarians are both herders and sheep. But in the end, authoritarians also implicitly believe in the elimination of the unfit — those who do not fit in. Stragglers go to the wolves. Authoritarians will even emulate wolves if there is not enough natural attrition. On the other hand are the individualists, the voluntaryists, the anarchists, who recognize that life and continuity are not guaranteed and cannot be made so. These people recognize that collectivism is a last resort, but it is a false resort in any case. It is a circling of the wagons. It is a retreat from the adventure of life to avoid the risk of life. And it does not avoid attrition. Both approaches effectuate the two primary instincts, survival of self and survival of the species, but the one has an end product of crouching under shelter while the other encourages having done a few things worthwhile along the way.

Kilgore.