

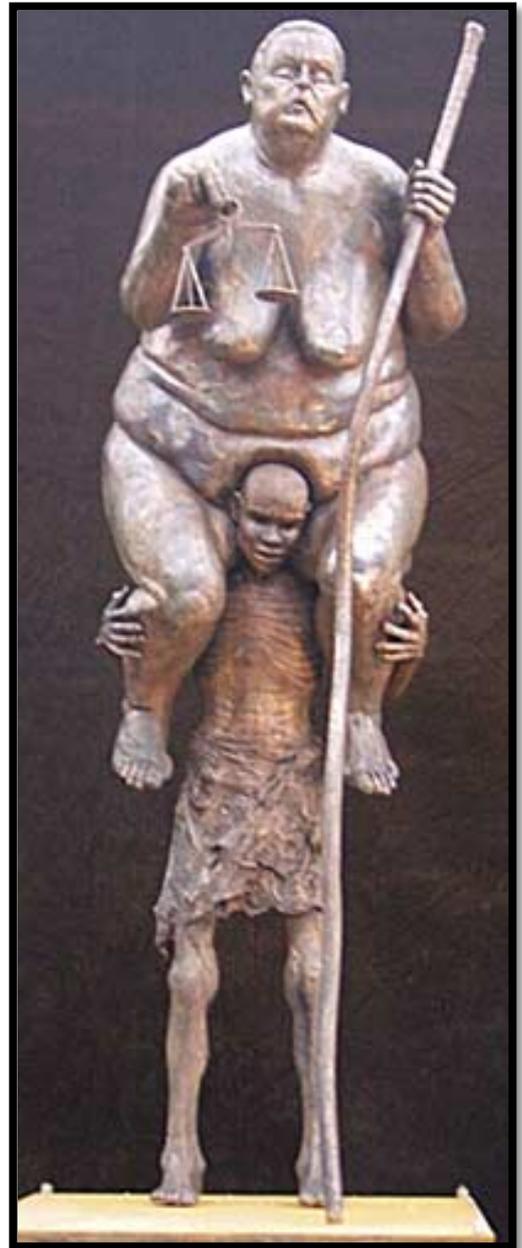
# SURVIVAL OF THE FATTEST

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Why is it that the sculpture **Survival of the Fattest** resonates, especially now, with people all around the world. Why is it that someone from the Dalit class in India sees the same thing as someone from Brazil? Because the face of global politics today looks the same no matter where you're standing. President Lyndon B. Johnson once said, "If you can convince the lowest white man he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice you're picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he'll empty his pockets for you." The past tends to repeat itself because people as a rule think they're getting smarter, they take solutions from the past, to the same problems in the present for granted, because they think we were already supposed to have learned that lesson.

I don't think the comparison to the rise of Nazism in the 1930s to today's social climate is an unreasonable one. The sanctions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, describing the reparations an already devastated Germany would have to pay back for their part in the war destroyed their chances of rebuilding the economy. And so the German people suffered, money was useless and whatever money they had went to the allies. Hitler saw an opportunity to revive Germany by playing on his desperate public's need to find someone to blame for their ruin. The Jews seemed okay in the aftermath of the war because in the Torah, unlike the Bible, lending money on principal is not unholy. So they were able to maintain their small businesses on interest alone, allowing for survival in a stagnant market. Instead of underlining the points in their smaller working economies to the people, Hitler demonized them as some evil cabal feeding off their misery, laughing while the rest went hungry. He used this wave to persecute the Jews, and the costs that came with it did revitalize Germany after seizing their assets and creating a new economy complete with a free workforce labouring towards their own encampment. His goal for restoration worked, and although the average German was raised from poverty the whole thing came crashing down after his real goal for



world domination failed. The curtain lifted, and the German people were sent back 15 years minus the cost of a few million lives.

It's this kind of heartstrings pandering that perpetuates the same problems today; it's not a question of man vs man, it's who's behind the megaphone telling them why the other side is responsible for their poverty. This model filtered through the arrogance of unhappy people and their unwillingness to believe that things are more complicated than they seem allows these demagogues to play partisan politics; they take advantage of society's general ignorance when it comes to the way the world works so the people keep looking at themselves for someone to blame, electing those who won't change anything, and pushing them further and further away from a system they're entitled to. The current state of political apathy among the common man, the most affected, and the people who need it most is no accident. In most places politics is a bad word, one you almost have to spit out of your mouth because what it represents is so far from what it's supposed to look like. People think of modern politics as backroom deals in some smoky bourbon bar, clinking glasses and greasy haired cronies leveraging their chips against someone else's. This is almost what it's become, instead of being what it's supposed to, an upward system of government where elected officials represent the voice of their constituents in stages, until everyone is represented at its highest levels. It's this removal from the process, and complete disdain for anyone involved with it that a Manhattan Billionaire with no political experience is considered *of* the people.

I'm reminded of the Ouroboros, the snake eating its own tail. Time, like the snake, is cyclical, and Trump's tactics, including those from the rest of the far right aren't unfamiliar. Trump and the rest of them run on a platform of xenophobia disguised as Nationalism; society's poor and undocumented, created and nurtured by money politics, become a so called expense for those living so far from reality they can't see what it really looks like. Que the wall. Undocumented migrants from Mexico coming in to the United States allegedly bringing drugs and crime need to be kept back by a giant, multibillion dollar concrete wall to protect America's sovereignty from outside threats. The people who elected Trump on this platform, mostly middle Americans whose only contact with anyone not white is almost non-existent, were so swept up by the promise of a "better America" that they'd rather spend their tax dollars on a wall than reinvest in education and public programs for themselves, because that would stink of socialism. They support a travel ban from Middle Eastern countries under a temporary guise of increased security to keep supposed terrorists out, while the only people being kept out are naturalized citizens, doctors, PHD students, well integrated people America needs to better itself. Out of the 6 countries banned under the order, the two countries whose nationals account for almost all of the terrorism committed on American soil, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, aren't on the list. Coincidentally Trump owns properties in both countries. These are the same people who voted against releasing Donald Trump's tax forms because the wall needs to be built immediately, never mind who gets the contract.

It's no surprise that most of the people who voted for BREXIT in Britain came from the middle of the country, farmers, labourers, working class people whose idea of the situation is based on

what their figurehead feeds them. People with an actual knowledge of the situation, especially those in the financial sectors, voted against because of the adverse effects they knew it would have on their economy with the rest of Europe. Instead the common man was told how parasitic the rest of the EU is, how they leech their resources bailing out their failing economies instead of reinvesting that money back into Britain. They need to stop Immigrants from coming in and taking British jobs, despite the fact that UK is a free market economy, and the reason they get the jobs is because they do them better for less money. So who will Brexit benefit? The working man, who now has to pay more for import/export goods, the business man whose deals now have to bypass a wall of bureaucracy to trade with the rest of the continent, or the politician, who will be in high demand when the British economy suffers, and they need to look for someone new to blame. This is what modern governments do; defend the free market like a sieve that catches the wealth for those with the initiative to deserve it, while the rest do their best to navigate their lives with the small wealth diverted to them. John Steinbeck described the American middle class as temporarily embarrassed millionaires, people defending the laws that insulate wealth in the highest tiers of society in the hopes that they will one day get there, instead of redistributing it and allowing everyone equal footing in society, even if it means achieving a disgusting personal fortune is next to impossible. As it stands now, 80 people in the world own as much as the other 7 billion, and the rest defend their right to do so in the hopes that they will one day be able to join them.

The drastic state of wealth inequality in the world today isn't a problem that exists on a political spectrum, it's not a question of right or left, it's a question of responsibility. While the far right preys on voter ignorance to stay rich and keep the rest where they are, all the left does is maintain the status quo. While people like Donald Trump's and Theresa May's policies look regressive to those on the left who consider themselves informed, under Obama no bankers responsible for the 2008 financial crisis in America were prosecuted for bundling bad loans and defrauding the American public because of the negative impact they thought it would have on the economy; instead they were bailed out by taxpayer money only to raise interests on the same public to pay the government back at a profit.

This is why Populism is more important today now more than ever, because we need to realize that a choice between lesser evils isn't good enough anymore. The common man needs to be ready to educate himself and get involved, to give credence to their voice and millions of others like them, but they also need to be ready to sacrifice their comforts to give them life, instead of battling a system they pay into because they're too jaded by the current state of politics. This is why the statue, **Survival of the Fattest**, resonates regardless of where it's being seen, because we're all hypocrites. We're not in rags because the greater good is more important than peace of mind; we're not okay with dismantling the way things are because toppling the foundation of society to bring the bloated elites down to earth means we land on equal ground. We are the fat lady, telling those we stand on to move this or that way in order to feel like they're comfortable supporting us, instead of hopping off their shoulders and cooperating face to face as humans on a vision of the future that would make us as equal as the bodies we live in.