



Modern, Darwinian Antisemitism: The Racist Misuse of Evolutionary Pseudoscience

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Abstract

For hundreds of years, the large, gentile nations have been reacting to the Jewish communities within them as “hosts” would to “parasites.” In recent years, Kevin MacDonald (MacDonald, *A people that shall dwell alone: Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy*, Praeger, Westport, CT, 1994, MacDonald, *Separation and its discontents: Toward an evolutionary theory of anti-semitism*, Praeger, Westport, CT, 1998a, MacDonald, *The culture of critique: An evolutionary analysis of Jewish involvement in twentieth-century intellectual and political movements*, Praeger, Westport, CT, 1998b) put what appears to be a new twist on the host–parasite, gentile–Jew metaphor. In this version, Jews are portrayed as inherently superior beings, possessing traits that are actually considered admirable, e.g., diligence, high motivation for achievement, high levels of altruism to other members of the group, and a high level of investment in their children. However, this is merely a modernized, deceptive version of the host–parasite metaphor. The positive attributes MacDonald ascribes to Jews are used to bolster his claim to scientific objectivity, arguing that this theory cannot be racist antisemitism if it says positive things about Jews. In the end, MacDonald’s Jew is a superior competitor whose (unfair) success inevitably instigates an often violent, antisemitic reaction. Individualistic gentiles are out-competed by Jews who don’t play according to the same rules. In contrast to the individualistic gentile who plays fair, the Jews are more collectivistic, i.e., they are biologically more ingroup-identified, more strongly favor members of their own group, and are closed and hostile to non-Jews. The gentiles then react with violent hatred to prevent total domination by the superior, collectivistic Jew. Antisemitism—even in its ugliest, genocidal forms—is merely a natural, adaptive reaction of one group (white, European gentiles) to being unfairly beaten in the competition between groups over resources. Violent antisemitism is then seen as an ugly but extremely predictable and adaptive reaction to Jewish success based on unfair advantages. MacDonald’s misunderstanding and misrepresentation of evolutionary biology has been readily embraced by white nationalists and other antisemites. In this article MacDonald’s errors in logic and science are elucidated, revealing a pseudoscientific dressing on ancient antisemitism.

Extended author information available on the last page of the article

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Introduction

The *National Vanguard Magazine* is a publication of the National Alliance, an organization whose website announces that membership is open to “any White person (a non-Jewish person of wholly European ancestry) of good character.” The founder of the Alliance (Pierce 1997) wrote:

Kevin MacDonald ... put[s] forward a convincing explanation for the existence and survival of the Jews from the perspective of modern social and biological science. Most previous accounts of Jewish history must be dismissed as being distorted by extreme subjectivity. MacDonald’s book in contrast stands, in both intent and effect, as a successor to the late-19th-century effort of writers such as Houston Stewart Chamberlain... . MacDonald’s major theme is that ... Judaism was formulated as a weapon in a Jewish biological survival strategy which aimed to ensure the segregation of the Jewish gene pool from those of surrounding Gentile societies... .

MacDonald’s argument is that Jewish genetic separation has its origins in the proactive implementation of Jewish Old Testament racial ideology ... As described in the books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, Jews always have preferred to commit genocide rather than to permit intermarriage and genetic mixture with the host population. And the Jewish god is a specifically tribal god—rather than the universal deity of the Christians—designed first and foremost to maintain and promote Jewish racial integrity. ... The ferocity of the racial hatred which Jews have traditionally directed toward Gentiles thus has the evolutionary purpose of maintaining the separateness of the Jewish gene pool. ... MacDonald’s implication ... is clear: in seeking to implement their group evolutionary strategy, Jews have chosen to engage in certain activities and occupations which have naturally involved the exploitation of the non-Jewish population. This, in turn, has usually resulted in a natural, defensive reaction on the part of Gentile society. Jews themselves, therefore, have been responsible for developing “anti-Semitism,” which, in fact, already exists in the Jews’ imagination long before it exists in the hearts and minds of their Gentile hosts.

In 2021, a new article in the *National Vanguard* quotes from MacDonald’s most recent book (2019), where he wrote that “Wagner ... noted that even the parasite Jews had to have something dead or dying to feed on.” Based on MacDonald’s latest writing, the article’s author warns us about “everything that the Jews would unleash upon us” (Stuart 2021). In this paper, I will take a close look at how ideas supposedly based on modern evolutionary biology are being promoted to support of a new variant of pseudoscientific antisemitism.

Kevin MacDonald and the Jews

Kevin MacDonald is an antisemitic conspiracy theorist and a former professor of psychology at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), now retired. MacDonald is known for his promotion of the theory that Jews have biologically evolved to undermine the societies in which they live. In short, MacDonald argues that Jews have evolved to be highly ethnocentric, and hostile to the interests of white people (Beirich 2007).

MacDonald first achieved notoriety when he became the only academic to be called as a witness on behalf of David Irving in his Holocaust denier's libel suit against Deborah Lipstadt. MacDonald was asked to testify on behalf of Irving because of his evolutionary biological analysis of Judaism, antisemitism, and inter-group conflict. His controversial analysis concludes that Judaism is a "group evolutionary strategy," i.e., a set of ideological structures and behaviors, a eugenic Jewish program, that has made Jews different from the larger groups among whom they reside and with whom they are in conflict. Because of the conflict, Jews will tend to distort and bias public perception of issues that affect them—e.g., the truth or falsehood regarding the Holocaust—and will attempt to suppress opinions that are inimical to Jewish interests. The suppression of one of David Irving's books—supposedly brought about by the libelous claims of Professor Lipstadt—was considered by MacDonald to be an example of this type of Jewish influence and bias operating within the context of intergroup conflict.

MacDonald has become the favorite academic of many white nationalists who welcome the pseudoscientific veneer he provides for their racism. At the website for the Institute for Historical Review,¹ an antisemitic, white-nationalist organization, I found this recommendation:

Because it has always been a primary mission of the Institute to shed light on ... "blackened out" history, we are glad to make available Prof. MacDonald's new scholarly study on the Jewish role in society ... the most important examination of the persistent "Jewish question" to appear in many years. (This book's print run is not large, so there's no telling how long copies will remain available. Order now.)

MacDonald has been on the editorial board of *The Occidental Quarterly*, a pseudoscientific, racist publication of the white nationalist Charles Martel Society. *The Quarterly* is formatted to look like a peer-reviewed, scientific journal. MacDonald also started his own publication, the *Occidental Observer*, dedicated to the promotion of "white identity, white interests, and the culture of the West" (from MacDonald's editorial description). He is on the board of directors of the American Freedom Party, which states that it "exists to represent the political interests of White Americans."

¹ <http://www.ihr.org/>.

In the 1990s, MacDonald published a trilogy (1994, 1998a, b) promoting his pseudo evolutionary theory about Jews.

MacDonald's basic premise is that Jews engage in a "group evolutionary strategy" that serves to enhance their ability to out-compete non-Jews for resources. Although normally a tiny minority in their host countries, Jews, like viruses, destabilize their host societies to their own benefit, MacDonald argues. Because this Jewish "group behavior" is said to have produced much financial and intellectual success over the years, McDonald [sic] claims it also has produced understandable hatred for Jews by gentiles. That means that anti-semitism, rather than being an irrational hatred for Jews, is actually a logical reaction to Jewish success. In other words, the Nazis, like many other antisemites, were only anti-Semitic because they were countering a genuine Jewish threat to their wellbeing. To restore "parity" between Jews and other ethnic groups MacDonald has even called for systematic discrimination against Jews in college admissions and employment and special taxes "to counter the Jewish advantage in the possession of wealth."²

In 2000, at the Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES) annual conference, I presented a thoroughgoing critique of MacDonald's pseudoscientific theorizing (Beirich 2007). MacDonald, who was on the panel, was unable to muster a reasonable defense of his theory, complaining that he didn't have enough time to prepare a response, despite the fact that the entire critique was based solely on his writings. Shortly thereafter, a talk show host on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's student-run radio station presented "evolutionary antisemitism" as a newly established fact using MacDonald's "science." The show was shut down and the campus became embroiled in a debate about two evils: censorship and antisemitism. Steven Pinker tried to mediate a course between the two. In a deal worked out with the administration, the show was allowed to return to the air if it presented a guest who could offer a counterpoint. At Pinker's request, I presented the counterpoint.

Though MacDonald's theory has also been denounced by the majority of evolutionary theorists, it continues to have significant impact among hate groups who use his work to validate their racist beliefs (ibid.). Indeed, with the election of Donald Trump and a resurgence of white nationalism, there has been renewed interest in MacDonald's pseudoscience. In his 2016 "Normie's Guide to the Alt-Right," Andrew Anglin, the founder of the neo-Nazi, white supremacist, and Holocaust denial site, The Daily Stormer, wrote:

[T]he Alt-Right views the Jews as a separate race, with biological drives and behavior patterns which come into direct conflict with the goals and values of the White race. Dr. Kevin MacDonald's work examining the racial nature of Jews is considered crucial to understanding what the Alt-Right is about.

² <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/kevin-macdonald> Accessed 1 June 2021.

In November of 2016, the white supremacist think tank and lobbying group, the National Policy Institute, held a rally celebrating Donald Trump's election. Richard Spencer, a leader of the alt-right movement, introduced MacDonald, saying, "There is no man on the planet who has done more for the understanding of the pole around which the world revolves than Kevin MacDonald!" MacDonald then took the microphone and started his presentation by saying:

It's great to be here after such an exciting, inspiring victory for Donald Trump, and I mean, I don't think anybody really expected it, you know, ... [H]e could be a hero of our people. ... I really do think it's going to happen. But tonight, I'm going to talk about Jews. [Audience erupts in laughter and MacDonald joins in saying:] It's not that I relish doing this, but somebody's got to do it!

In the months leading up to the 2020 US election, the white supremacist website, American Renaissance, reposted a review of the third book in MacDonald's antisemitic trilogy. Earlier, there had been a schism at American Renaissance conferences between those racists who felt that their enemies were people of color and those who saw Jews as the root problem, attributing the problems facing white nationalists to Jewish manipulation of people of color; examples of the latter are David Duke and Don Black, the former Klan leader who runs the neo-Nazi Stormfront web forum. At the time, the Southern Poverty Law Center wondered what American Renaissance's founder, Jared Taylor, would do about the schism:

What is certain is that it will be painful for Taylor to definitively eject the anti-Semites -- Duke, Black and their neo-Nazi allies are among the most committed and serious workers in the American radical right. But he ... sees clearly that anti-Semitism will likely destroy any faint hope that American Renaissance has to gain mainstream respectability. Taylor could try to pursue a middle road -- espousing, for instance, the anti-Semitic teachings of Kevin MacDonald, which avoid neo-Nazi language in favor of the academic veneer of "evolutionary biology." ... The outcome may be critical to the future of the American radical right. American Renaissance has become increasingly important over the years, bringing a measure of intellectualism and seriousness to the typically thug-dominated world of white supremacy. Today, it may be the closest thing the extreme right has to a real think tank (Beirich and Potok 2006).

In the midst of the Trump-inspired resurgence of white nationalism, by reposting the review of MacDonald's book, Taylor appears to have taken the "high road" and decided to embrace MacDonald's sanitized veneer of academic, pseudoscientific antisemitism. MacDonald's sanitized, intellectualized antisemitism is acceptable to both sides of the schism; in his autobiography, *My Awakening*, David Duke cites MacDonald's trilogy as central to his thinking.

Reaction from Evolutionary Scientists

While MacDonald's work has been dismissed by almost all evolutionary biologists, for those outside the field, his antisemitism is carefully disguised in a seemingly sophisticated application of the Darwinian paradigm to the entire question of antisemitism. The majority of scholars who study modern antisemitism don't have a deep grounding in modern evolutionary biology. For those trying to understand and respond to MacDonald's type of pseudoscientific justifications of antisemitism, it may be helpful to know the astonishing extent to which they are based on violations of logic, faulty reasoning, poor understanding of evolutionary biology, and unscientific procedures.

Unfortunately, there has been an almost reflexive defense of MacDonald by some academics who saw the hostile rejection of his ideas at both the university and collegial level as a form of censorship. Though they did not defend his scholarship, their fears of censorship were then used by MacDonald to claim he was being persecuted by, yes, Jews. Note that his defenders have tended to admit that they've never actually read his work. In fact, MacDonald had been elected Secretary of HBES, as few members of the society were knowledgeable about his antisemitic works. Once his racist misuse of evolutionary theory became more well known, he was immediately denounced by leading evolutionists such as John Tooby, who was then the President of HBES.

In documenting the profound lack of any valid basis for MacDonald's theory, this article lays the groundwork for distinguishing between academic freedom and delusional antisemitism masquerading as science.

Judaism as a Group Evolutionary Strategy

MacDonald presents us with a conceptualization of Judaism as "a group evolutionary strategy." MacDonald presented a statement clarifying what such a strategy is when he testified for the Holocaust denier, David Irving, in his 2000 libel suit against Deborah Lipstadt:

The basic proposal is that Judaism can be interpreted as a set of ideological structures and behaviors that have resulted in the following features: (1) the segregation of the Jewish gene pool from surrounding gentile societies; (2) resource and reproductive competition with gentile host societies; (3) high levels of within-group cooperation and altruism among Jews; and (4) eugenic efforts directed at producing high intelligence, high investment parenting, and commitment to group, rather than individual, goals.

Earlier, MacDonald had written:

I have concluded that antisemitism will be a common characteristic of human societies for the following reasons: ... (1) *Jewish cultural separatism results in both Jews and gentiles* developing stereotypically negative attitudes toward

outgroup members and the culture of the outgroup; (2) resource and reproductive competition between groups has been a common component of Jewish/gentile relationships; (3) because of Jewish within-group cooperation and altruism, as well as eugenic and cultural practices tending to result in high levels of intelligence and resource acquisition abilities among Jews, Jews are highly adept in resource competition with gentiles. (1998a, p. 28)

In what follows, I will not attempt to determine the accuracy of MacDonald's non-evolutionary claims about actual Jewish history. Note, however, that he is a diligent scholar who, like Irving, has carefully studied a wide range of historical evidence including many Jewish sources. Some of his conclusions are quite well established, e.g., Jewish success in certain fields that is out of proportion to Jewish numbers. However, I am not questioning or affirming MacDonald's historical claims. Rather, this article shows how it is the misapplication of incoherent evolutionary biological notions to his reading of Jewish history that enables him to present his antisemitic theory as science.

For example, MacDonald explains that the Jewish "group evolutionary strategy" was to specialize for a particular niche in stratified societies. Leaving primary production (agriculture and manufacturing) to gentiles, Jews focused instead on business as middlemen and employers (p. 165; Note: All page and chapter references are to MacDonald 1994, the first book in his trilogy, unless otherwise stated), management, financial matters (banking, tax farming, moneylending), and related roles requiring similar skills, i.e., literacy, responsibility and attention to tasks (conscientiousness), high intelligence, especially a facility for manipulating words, ideas, and people. The Jewish group evolutionary strategy is essentially a eugenic strategy: By emphasizing scholarly ability and giving highest status within their group to those who demonstrate such ability—for example, by honoring and supporting those males who have mastered the arcane, extremely complex, intellectual task of studying the Talmud—those with the greatest verbal intelligence were given privileged reproductive status and had the largest families.

Jewish groups ... valued scholarship as the *summum bonum* and Jewish males who distinguished themselves as scholars would be able to make economically advantageous marriages to the daughters of wealthy merchants for whom it was a religious obligation to marry their daughters to scholars. These men would then be given opportunities in business and they would tend to have relatively large families. (MacDonald in an email discussion forum at CSULB)

Thus, according to MacDonald, in order to outcompete gentiles, the Jews essentially employed a eugenics breeding program for themselves in order to produce a race whose verbal intelligence is almost two standard deviations (p. 190) higher than that of gentiles.

In addition, through group selection—which was enabled to operate by an extreme emphasis on endogamy (maintaining a high level of Jewish genetic isolation as a group) as well as powerful cultural rules/mechanisms for punishing cheaters—the surviving Jewish groups were those that had a greater innate propensity for collectivism, religiosity, and ethnocentrism. MacDonald claims that through the

combination of this genetic ethnocentrism with the results of their eugenics program, Jews were able to use their high levels of innate conscientiousness, intelligence, and within-group cooperation to outcompete gentiles and rapidly generate wealth and influence in any society they entered at a level that far exceeded their numbers. They could then acquire resources and attain rapid reproductive success for themselves and fellow group members at the expense of the gentile members of the host society. Historically, MacDonald claims, it has been Jewish success in resource and reproductive competition with gentiles coupled with Jewish ethnocentrism that has led to the reactive racism—with all its distortions and exaggerations—that we call antisemitism.

Part of the Jewish group evolutionary strategy, according to MacDonald, has been to develop highly effective ways of managing and mitigating the risks associated with antisemitism. For example, Jews, with their wealth and influence garnered from outcompeting gentiles using their self-bred superior abilities, are able to support the development and promulgation of ideas that are congruent with their interests and suppress ideas that are inimical to those interests. MacDonald's thesis that this was occurring in the David Irving case is what led Irving to contact MacDonald and to his decision to testify on Irving's behalf.

MacDonald emphasizes that this Jewish influence had pernicious impact on the interests of white Christians. "I will describe Jewish efforts to shape United States immigration policy in opposition to the interests of the peoples of non-Jewish European descent, particularly the peoples of Northern and Western Europe" (MacDonald 1998b, p. vii; also see 1998c).

What are these interests that are shared by those of non-Jewish European descent? Are their interests that monolithic? MacDonald was suggesting that Jews—by helping to bring about a change in American demographics—were undermining the ability of white Europeans to maintain control over American politics at the expense of other ethnic groups. Is this bad? Who is he warning? Certainly, white racists have recently been heeding his alarm.

In any case, MacDonald claims that such influence serves Jewish interests by leading to changes in American demographics and to societal attitudes that prevent antisemitism. (The worst forms of virulent antisemitism that included large-scale, organized programs of violence have tended to occur in racially homogeneous societies within which Jews stood out as a minority.) But MacDonald then goes on to claim that through deception, Jews are able to frame such self-interested ideas as serving general interests or actualizing a higher moral principle, when, in fact, such demographic changes are carried out *at the expense of* the interests of Europeans who, for example, will—because of changes in immigration policy brought about by Jewish influence—eventually no longer be the majority group in the US.

MacDonald, however, is merely misusing evolutionary biology to provide a pseudoscientific veneer for an old Nazi claim:

As the Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg writes in a 1923 commentary on *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, "it is well known that Jews of all kinds pretend to fight for freedom and peace day after day; their speakers drip with humanity

and love of mankind, as long as Jewish interests are thereby promoted.” (Stanley 2018, p. 88)

Eventually, thanks to MacDonald’s groundbreaking work, Europeans will be able to see through the Jewish deception and come to understand how Jewish influence caused the demise of their hegemony; they will then turn on the Jews. Once again pointing the finger of blame for antisemitism at the Jews, MacDonald warns us that such a use of Jewish influence could produce a new wave of reactive antisemitism. Thanks to crackpot theories such as MacDonald’s, this may explain some of the new wave of antisemitism we are seeing today. So, let’s take a closer look at this pseudoscience.

Problems with the Concept of Group Evolutionary Strategy

According to MacDonald, Judaism is a group evolutionary strategy or an “evolutionary ideology” (p. 6). But, “with no implication that Judaism is in some sense ecologically or genetically determined” (p. 6), what can an “evolutionary ideology” mean? When evolutionists speak of *evolved* strategies in various animal species, they are indeed saying there’s some genetic control (even if indirect and unspecified). So, if MacDonald specifically claims that Judaism is an *evolutionary* strategy and is *culturally* determined, what does the word “evolutionary” mean? He can’t have it both ways: either Judaism is “fundamentally [a] ... cultural invention” (p. 8) or it is indeed genetically determined, to a significant degree. The latter is, in fact, what he ends up arguing later on the same page and throughout his writings (e.g., pp. 31, 218, 236, Chapter 8).

Careful reading reveals that MacDonald is arguing for a genetic predisposition to form a Judaism-like religion/ingroup ideology and behavior that may be culturally (or accidentally) shaped in some of its details. For example, the following clearly says that, even if some of the specific details of Judaism were developed culturally, Jews are *biologically* different from gentiles and are predisposed to develop a “Jewish” group evolutionary strategy:

If indeed the type of group evolutionary strategy represented by Judaism “pulls” for certain psychological predispositions, then it is reasonable to suppose that there may be biological predispositions for engaging in the type of group evolutionary strategy represented by Judaism. (p. 227)

It may be that Judaism (like all religions) is, in part, a strategy for heightened within-group cohesion in the service of effective self-protection and competition with other groups that are using their own religious ideologies in this competition (Kriegman 2021). A *universal, innate human* tendency to form group identities around a religious ideology enables Jews (as well as other groups) to cooperate amongst themselves in order to promote their evolutionary self-interest (e.g., survival and ultimately reproductive success or RS), while the details of Jewish religious theology are not determined genetically.

MacDonald focuses on *Judaism* as “a group evolutionary strategy” (to which gentiles *react* with antisemitism). His claim that *Judaism* has eugenically and group-selected genetic underpinnings that make it an especially inimical group that others react to defensively with antisemitism (his essential theme) is based on false premises, unsound methodology, extensive (but highly selective and decontextualized) scholarship, and logical and theoretical confusion. The rest of this paper will attempt to document these conclusions focusing specifically on the notion that Judaism is a group evolutionary strategy.

Religion in Intergroup Competition

The analysis presented in this paper is based on the idea that the universal religious propensity found in our species is, indeed, genetically determined, i.e., that the propensity to form religious ideologies is an inherent part of the human psyche that was “designed” for a species in which coalitional aggression has historically provided powerful selective pressures. Religions and quasi-religious ideologies help bind a group together for offensive or defensive action in violent intergroup conflicts (Kriegman 2021).

However, the claim that specific religions are, to some degree, genetically determined—which, despite MacDonald’s qualifiers, is the essence of the claim he clearly is making about Judaism (e.g., pp. 8, 31, 218, 236, Chapter 8)—is a particularly problematic claim that requires comparative evidence that MacDonald fails to produce. He produces abundant evidence that Judaism (primarily focusing on Ashkenazi Judaism) has been as he describes, i.e., endogamous, discouraging marriage outside of the group, biased toward fellow group members, and focused on maintaining the group’s identity. But he presents no comparative evidence to show that under similar ecological conditions, gentiles (specifically European Christians) don’t behave in the same fashion. What he presents as *Jewish* traits are simply universal human tendencies.

Further, in a convoluted argument, he argues that gentiles *do* behave in the same way. For example, he claims that, in this regard (endogamy, bias toward group members, and strong emphasis on group identity), Nazism is a mirror image of Judaism, but only *in response* to Judaism. He presents examples of exceptions that supposedly prove the rule, e.g., highly collectivist “corporate Catholicism during the Western Middle Ages in France” (p. 243). He notes that this was a “gentile group strategy *in opposition to Judaism* [that] represented a *fundamental shift* from the individualism of Greco-Roman culture to a collectivist, authoritarian movement, which has historically been more typical of Judaism” (p. 262 n. 26, emphases added).

When the Jews do it, it’s genetically inherent in them; when the gentiles do it, it is a reaction to Judaism. Using their pernicious strategy, Jews were able to prevent the development of “a modern (i.e., individualist) European state ... in Spain” (p. 264 n. 33), i.e., the true European propensity for individualism was prevented from developing by the effects Jews had in that society.

Genetics for Jews; Ecology for Gentiles

All of a sudden, when it comes to analyzing gentile behavior, MacDonald switches away from a genetic to an ecological analysis of human culture in which one must primarily understand the *context* in which a cultural phenomenon occurs. He presents no evidence to support the notion that the Jewish strategy represents their biological being, while the gentile *response* is purely ecologically controlled (i.e., is a defensive *reaction* and, “in a fundamental shift,” operates, to some degree, *against* their truer nature, which is to be more individualistic and tolerant of otherness and more open to assimilation and exogamy). For MacDonald, Jews act, gentiles react. Because of this, MacDonald is able to ignore the data of gentile collectivism and ethnocentrism and conclude:

Whereas prototypical Western societies have shown strong tendencies toward assimilation and individualism, Judaism is at its essence exclusivist and collectivist... . The foregoing provides evidence that the Near Eastern peoples, and especially the Jews, tend in general toward racial exclusivity and collectivism compared to most Western societies.” (p. 245)

When gentiles adopt a “mirror-image, Jewish strategy,” it’s an aberration opposed to their true nature. When Jews become significantly exogamous (in Germany prior to WWII and in the US today)—which is the opposite of his claim that Jews are innately predisposed to endogamy—it’s an aberration. Any facts that undermine his theory are aberrations. The fact that the ecological conditions for both of these supposed aberrations are not the typical conditions for either group in question—i.e., that it is fairly unusual for a large, homogeneous gentile group to feel that its very existence is in danger or for a group of Jews to feel safe and largely free of dangerous antisemitism—is ignored, and only the gentile culture is considered truly ecologically (contextually) determined. Thus, he presents the evidence that under similar ecological conditions different people tend to behave the same way, but he then interprets the evidence (with no rationale or data to support the specific misinterpretation) as indicating that the behavior is inherent in Jews and reactive in gentiles.

After making another disclaimer that “Judaism is here considered fundamentally as a cultural invention that is underdetermined by evolutionary ecological theory”—i.e., after trying to minimize his emphasis on genetic determinism—MacDonald goes on to make his deterministic genetic claims clearer.

[I]t does not follow that there are no biological predispositions at all for developing the type of group evolutionary strategy represented by Judaism. In Chapter 8, I suggest that the ancient Israelites were genetically predisposed to be high on a cluster of psychological traits centered around group allegiance, cultural separatism, ethnocentrism, concern with endogamy, and a collectivist, authoritarian social structure.... these tendencies are very strong among widely dispersed Jewish groups ... and ... they appear to be more common among other Near Eastern peoples compared to prototypical Western societies. (p. 8)

Specialization for a “Strategy” and the Jewish Love of Diaspora Life

MacDonald’s notion of a group evolutionary strategy is based on the fact that different species exhibit behavior patterns that are adaptations for specific ecological contexts (p. 3). Likewise, human subgroups can segregate themselves genetically and engage in competitive behavior with other subgroups in an attempt to specialize for a specific strategy (ecological niche) within human groupings. If a species has a specialized adaptation (strategy) for a particular niche, then it wouldn’t try to leave that niche and, indeed, MacDonald claims that Jews—who have a specialized group evolutionary strategy for competition with host societies in a diaspora context—are drawn toward a diaspora lifestyle. Essentially, Jews like and seek such a niche (pp. 245, 248).

But the data doesn’t support the conclusion. Jews have left the diaspora by the millions—sometimes with great difficulty—to emigrate to Israel where they knew they would live in a nation where they don’t speak the language and where they will become part of an armed state perennially at or ready for war. American Jews, who are not suffering from the typical intergroup conflicts and who have a stable lifestyle with good opportunity, for the most part, don’t leave. But historically the conditions currently experienced by American Jews were atypical. Though the Jews in the diaspora were often an unwelcome minority, they *had no place to go*; so, the fact that *they didn’t go there* cannot indicate a “strategy” to stay immersed in a host society where they could engage in intergroup competition. Given the opportunity, Jews have left such contexts in droves.

The supposedly *innate* tendencies to engage in the Jewish group evolutionary strategy—tendencies for which Jews had to eugenically breed themselves and that required group selection to create, a process that would take hundreds if not thousands of years—are apparently possessed by other literate groups who engage in the same strategy when living among people who don’t possess the skills for certain tasks in a complex society. And the reaction is also similar:

For example, violence has erupted against overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and Indians in Uganda who have occupied similar middleman minority positions as Jews have in traditional European societies. I rather doubt we need to posit different psychological processes at work in these different examples. (MacDonald, from his website)

Thus, by his own data and reasoning, there is no need to posit different psychological processes nor any need for special innate adaptations to use them—e.g., adaptations supposedly created by a Chinese or Indian “self-eugenics” program—in order to understand the phenomena related to Jews in the diaspora, Chinese in Southeast Asia, or Indians in Uganda.

Group Selectionism

From the viewpoint of evolutionary *theory*, possibly the biggest problem with MacDonald's claim that his theory is based on evolutionary *science* is its reliance on group selectionism. The notion of a group evolutionary strategy is based on the idea that differential survival of groups can lead to moral, cooperative behavior that was shaped to operate *for the good of the group* (Wilson 1989, 1997; Sober and Wilson 1999), as opposed to operating for the good of the individual or for the good of the genetic material (Dawkins 1976) carried by the individual.

However, George Williams (1966) presented a devastating critique of group selectionism: A good-for-the-group genetic tendency would be rapidly outcompeted by good-for-me individuals whose selfishness allowed them to take advantage of the do-gooders' altruism. This has virtually eliminated group selectionism from contemporary evolutionary theory. MacDonald attempts to counter Williams by claiming that, with punishment for selfishness, the good-for-the-group genes would be able to gain ground. He further claims that Jews have such systems for controlling cheating and that, therefore, extreme ingroup altruism could have been shaped by group selection. There are several problems with this analysis.

In order to claim that group selection has played a significant role, one must be able to establish that (1) individual inclusive fitness explanations cannot adequately account for the data, (2) group controls exist that could counteract individualistic tendencies, and (3) there has been differential survival favoring the group with the hypothesized group altruistic tendencies and internal social controls. MacDonald's theory fails on all three counts.

First, individual inclusive fitness arguments can fully account for intense group commitment and altruism when one's group is in heightened conflict with an out-group that threatens a potentially high degree of violence (i.e., genocide). In such a situation, the individual's interests nearly coincide with the group's; the only safe place is deep within the herd which must be maintained if that safe place is to continue to exist. And we do see such behavior in virtually all ethnic groups when their group is threatened. As MacDonald himself notes, the evolutionist Richard Alexander (1979) had already hypothesized that this general group trait may have played an important role in human evolution: "external threats reduce internal divisions and maximize perception of common interest" (p. 218). Conversely, during war or coalitional aggression (when the group may feel all-powerful) individual's interests are also highly congruent with the group's, and we also find extremely high levels of ingroup altruism (Kriegman and Kriegman 1997; Kriegman 2021). So far, the theory fails the first test.

Second, if group tendencies to punish cheaters evolved, we should also assume that individualistic tendencies co-evolved in an arms race to avoid detection and/or punishment. We do see many cultural adaptations in all groups that are designed to punish cheaters, and at least some (if not most) of these have a demonstrable Darwinian algorithm guiding their operation (Cosmides and Tooby 1992). But in many species, we also see remarkable and effective efforts designed to avoid detection and cheat successfully. In humans, we even see such

Table 1 Relative reproductive success (RS) of Jews and gentiles

Population		
Year	Jews	World
1900	~11m ^{d,e}	1.65 billion ^b
2010	13.9m ^a	6.96 billion ^c
Increase	126%	422%
1950	11.3m ^a	2.54 billion ^c
2010	13.9m ^a	6.96 billion ^c
Increase	123%	274%

^aDellaPergola (2020), p. 14^bUnited Nations (2004), p. 5^cUnited Nations (2019)^dLos Angeles Times (1998)^eSinger (1906), p. 532

The 1900 estimate of Jewish population is the average of d (10.7 m) and e (11.3 m)

morality-violating tendencies among the clergy, the lawmakers, and the police, i.e., among the enforcers. This is an evolutionary arms race between detection and enforcement versus deception and cheating, and MacDonald presents no evidence to show that genetic Jewish predispositions have enabled one “side” of the arms race to triumph over the other. Without a clear advantage for social controls over individualistic tendencies, there is little reason to hypothesize the existence of sufficient social controls such that selfishness could be curtailed more for Jewish groups than for gentile groups so that Jews could outcompete gentiles and for group selection to have occurred.

And third, even if the first two problems were overcome, one would need to show that Judaism had greater survival and reproductive success (RS) than the groups with whom they were in competition. But as we know, the exact opposite is true: World population has grown dramatically faster than Jewish population. It is true that through exogamous mating and defections, there are Jewish descendants who wouldn’t be counted among “Jews” of today (John Hartung, personal communication 2000). However, MacDonald’s whole argument is based upon exogamous mating being minimal for Jews, Jewish defection being low, and the Jews most likely to defect being those who were likely to have poor prospects (pp. 159, 109, n. 38) and therefore fairly low reproductive success. So, either MacDonald is wrong to suggest that the genes from innately and highly endogamous Jews had a significant amount of hidden genetic success outside of the Jewish subgroup, or the rate of increase in Jewish population compared with world population growth over the same period is a reasonable estimate of relative RS.

So, if the number of Jews today relative to the past *isn’t* a reasonable estimate of reproductive success, it would still provide a fatal blow to group selectionist theorizing. First, that would mean that there would have been significant genetic movement between groups—which poses a problem for group selection as well as to

MacDonald's theory about heightened Jewish endogamy. But, more importantly, if we have to count those who converted from Judaism to reach the conclusion that Jews have had RS anywhere near that of gentiles, then we are looking at genetic material that abandoned the group evolutionary strategy, never to return. Group selection can't account for the differential RS of the genetic material underlying an evolved group strategy in which that genetic material doesn't participate. So, the Jewish group evolutionary strategy could not have been favored by group selection, as those with the tendency to participate in such a strategy (Jews) never achieved net RS over time that was anywhere near the RS of gentiles, even if, as we see in Table 1, we avoid the Holocaust years.

These numbers also show that defection, according to MacDonald's claim that gentile society was open to Jews who could easily assimilate, was far more adaptive than remaining in the group. If by assimilating, one could join the gentiles whose numbers were increasing at a much faster rate, defectors would achieve much greater RS by converting. So, either group selectionism is not operating or assimilation into the supposedly open gentile groups was not nearly as possible as MacDonald claims, or both.

Ecological Factors Versus Innate Propensities

The title of Chapter 7 begins "Judaism as an ecological strategy," which seems to indicate that MacDonald is about to consider the ecological context in understanding human behavior, a common way to try to understand the wide variety and plasticity of human cultures and behavior. However, despite acknowledging some contextual variation, in MacDonald's ecological analysis, he looks for *relatively* static, innate human behavioral propensities that are adaptations for expectable (i.e., stable) ecological niches.

In his analysis, (1) stratified modern societies have niches, (2) some of these niches can reliably be found in all stratified modern societies, and (3) a group can evolve for specialization in one of the niches. If a group of people, e.g., Jews, tend to occupy a particular niche, we then use our imagination to consider what innate endowments could have made them ideally suited for that niche. Of course, if our imagination is related to a realistic assessment of the challenges presented by the particular niche, then we shouldn't have too much trouble finding that those occupying the niche are capable of meeting the challenges. This, of course, is tautological: Those successfully occupying a particular niche obviously must possess the ability to do so and thus will always appear to be reasonably adapted for the niche.

If we can then propose a plausible evolutionary history for those endowments—without thorough consideration of cultural or contextual influences and with no compelling reason to discard competing plausible evolutionary histories that might have led to alternative adaptations suited for the particular niche—we can conclude that the niche-specific genetic adaptations we proposed actually exist and are innate. Such simplistic evolutionary histories have been referred to as "just-so stories" (Gould 1978) after Kipling's *Just So Stories for Little Children* (1902) in which he invented fantasies about how the leopard got its spots,

how the camel got its hump, how the elephant got its trunk, etc. Such evolutionary flights of imagination have been widely discredited and abandoned. MacDonald's theory is a regression to just-so storytelling.

Note that MacDonald is aware of the effects of culture and the ecological context on human behavior with its enormous plasticity. He even documents it and provides a great deal of evidence to support an ecological, cultural analysis of Judaism that is far stronger than his group evolutionary strategy, innate predisposition theory. He even notes "that Judaism has not everywhere been characterized by a similar level of eugenic practices" (p. 196) in order to explain *the lack* of the supposedly innate Jewish behavioral patterns in those Jewish populations that have lived in precisely those ecological conditions that would make context-sensitive individuals not behave in more "typically Jewish" ways. Somehow, he seems to ignore the fact that this strongly argues for no particular innate propensity toward the *specific* behavior. Rather, it argues for an innate, human *plasticity* that produces the specific behavior in the proper ecological context.

MacDonald's non-ecological theory of human behavior is applied only to Jews. With this model, he can eventually arrive at the remarkable conclusion that Judaism (with its supposed innate tendencies) created itself: "The Jews created Judaism, and Judaism created the Jews." (p. 259 n. 3). I will show that this is the entire *essence* of MacDonald's theory of Judaism: a self-contained (endogamous and consanguineous), closed group with innate behavioral propensities, a group that was only *secondarily* influenced by reactions to it (e.g., antisemitism).

Even more remarkably revealing of his commitment to his antisemitic conclusion is the fact that, in contrast to MacDonald's theory of Judaism, antisemitic *reactions* by gentiles were not influenced by any tendencies within them and were brought into being by *universal* human mechanisms as a rational response to the Jewish group evolutionary strategy. In MacDonald's history of the conflict between Jews and gentiles, Jewish behavior in conflict with gentiles is largely shaped by Jewish genes, and gentile behavior toward Jews is also largely shaped by Jewish genes. As with many antisemites, for MacDonald, Jews are all-powerful.

Note that MacDonald does acknowledge that *universal* selective pressures acted on Jews and that the resulting Jewish proclivities he describes are found in other peoples: e.g., self-interested action, a concern with sexuality and reproductive success, favoring the ingroup over outgroups, etc. Thus, it is surprising when, somehow, *Christian* Northern and Western Europeans somehow manage to slip out from under the influence of natural selection: "The Christian Church, despite its obvious Jewish origins, is from an evolutionary perspective fundamentally opposed to Judaism in matters of interest to an evolutionist" (p. 241). Is there really any evidence for the relative lack of Christian interest in "sexuality, reproduction, [and] genealogy" (p. 241)? He presents no evidence that Christians have been less racist than other people or have shown less concern than Jews over sexuality and reproduction, claims that sound strange, indeed.

Endogamous, Exclusionary, Isolationist, Separatist Jews

MacDonald does present evidence showing that, at times, Jewish leaders have expended significant effort to limit exogamy and to base status on one's lineage or pedigree. Though this is also a feature of almost all groups, put that caveat aside for a moment. MacDonald interprets the Jewish emphasis on lineage as part of a group evolutionary strategy designed for *intergroup* competition. Consider a much simpler explanation: this was an *intragroup* competitive strategy. Those with a better pedigree (usually the priestly class and those with higher status) could "justify" their position and weaken the position of potential challengers by questioning their lineage *if* they could maintain lineage as a prime cultural value in determining status. This is how the questioning of lineage was actually used in the Bible, i.e., in competition with clansmen (pp. 81–82).

People generally try to increase the perceived value of something they possess. So, it is not surprising that these priests and other leaders expended energy emphasizing the importance of lineage. The importance of lineage in intragroup competition stands in marked contrast to MacDonald's theory that it is essentially a tool for intergroup competition; for MacDonald, the goal is to keep the group pure so that, in accordance with his erroneous group selectionism theory, the ingroup could be eugenically improved for the competitive struggle with the outgroup.

What seems somewhat surprising is that MacDonald clearly is aware of the alternative interpretation and even emphasizes the fact that the priests were a hereditary class, which would make them *extremely* invested in maintaining their status and the integrity of group boundaries (pp. 250–257). Not only was their high status secure only within a clearly delineated Jewish ingroup, but their offspring's status for generations to come could also be assured if the group identity was maintained. So, the high priests' behavior probably did have Darwinian algorithms guiding it (i.e., was in some way innate). But the only way this could say something unique about Jews and a particularly *Jewish* strategy is if Jews had an innate tendency (more than other people) to create a *hereditary* priestly, ruling class. No such data was presented.

MacDonald makes no attempt to compare Jewish lineage concerns with those of any other group. He simply finds references to show that Jews valued pedigrees and could sometimes tell who their ancestors were for seven generations (p. 185). Is this unusual? How about the Daughters of the American Revolution? Or those who trace their lineage back to the Mayflower? Or the Chinese classmate of mine who had a written family lineage going back 600 years? Yes, Jews, as MacDonald documents, show concern over lineage. And, such information was probably used in intragroup competition (in contrast to MacDonald's theory). But what does this say about Jews *per se*? Possibly nothing.

This is typical of MacDonald's theorizing, a normal human pattern—e.g., concerns about ancestry and attempting to maintain one's group's identity—when found among Jews, is taken to indicate that the *Jews* were characterized by unusual separatist tendencies. For example, during a period in Poland, MacDonald

claims that “when Jews converted to Christianity, they were able to rapidly intermarry with Poles” and thus the failure to do so indicates that “the barriers to intermarriage were mainly erected by the Jews” (p. 92). He notes that Jewish conservatives rejected the offer of economic freedom in Poland in exchange for giving up their identity and full assimilation. This is taken to indicate Jewish separatism in order to enable them to continue to engage as a group in resource competition with gentiles.

Of course, again there is a far more reasonable interpretation: a universal human reluctance to give up their group identity coupled with efforts by conservatives (read authorities or leaders in the community) to oppose assimilation that would cause them to lose their special status within the group. *If* Jews converted, they could intermarry. *If* they assimilated and gave up their religion and group identity, economic restrictions would be lifted. So, MacDonald argues, their failure to run and drop their religious group identity and convert is clearly an indication of heightened genetic, separatist tendencies among Jews. He provides no evidence that under similar circumstances, other groups’ members would eagerly shed their religions, convert, and intermarry. But then MacDonald apparently feels he needs to make no comparisons with other groups *under equivalent ecological conditions* in order to reach conclusions about specific Jewish attributes (and then to claim that these are innate differences). This isn’t science. It’s pure antisemitism disguised as science.

As another example, MacDonald presents Napoleon’s solution to gentile–Jew conflict: Jews and gentiles should intermarry until there is no longer an identifiable group known as “Jews.” That this was not well received by leaders of the Jewish community (p. 109 n. 42) indicates to MacDonald that Jewish separatism arose from separatist tendencies in the Jews (which, of course, in part it did as it does in all groups that value their identity) and was unusual in its *innate* intensity. We know this because, when Napoleon removed antisemitic barriers to full citizenship, the Jews did not rush to dissolve their group identity and fully assimilate with the French. In contrast, consider French separatism in Canada or the rather desperate linguistic measures by France to keep the English-dominated internet under control, even though there would be clear economic advantages to both groups if they embraced English wholeheartedly and gave up speaking French.

What Maintains the Barriers between Groups?

...although humans appear to be biologically predisposed toward ingroup-outgroup conflict, there is no reason whatever to suppose that group membership or group permeability itself is genetically determined; that is, there is no reason to suppose that there is a genetic imperative that societies *must* be organized around impermeable groups, and indeed, prototypical Western societies have not been organized in this manner... . The outstanding feature of Judaism has been that it has steadfastly raised barriers between Jews as an ingroup and the surrounding society as an outgroup. But ... the erection of cultural barriers between Jews and gentiles is a critical aspect of Judaism as a culture. (MacDonald 1998b, p. 44)

MacDonald repeatedly makes this claim: The outstanding feature of *Judaism* has been that it has steadfastly raised barriers between Jews as an ingroup and the surrounding society as an outgroup. In contrast:

To be sure, some Jews do prefer to remain among their own within a particular society, but here again, Jews are hardly unique. The prevalence of ethnic neighborhoods (or people of particular racial and ethnic groups socializing on campus) is evidence of this. But there is ample evidence to prove that Jews have often been segregated from the general population not of their choice, but as the result of official government policy. The Pale of Settlement in czarist Russia, the creation of Jewish ghettos in medieval Europe, forced expulsions in almost every European country, and the requirement of Jews to wear the Star of David in thirteenth-century England stand as examples of imposed segregation. (Donald Schwartz, one of MacDonald's fellow faculty at CSULB in an online discussion forum.)

Indeed, as we will see, MacDonald does not present any evidence that Jews erect such barriers to any greater degree than other groups. He responds to the evidence of forced segregation by claiming that "Even when the ghetto was imposed by the gentile authorities, 'many rabbis would have liked the walls of the ghetto higher' (Johnson 1987)" (p. 90). But segregation is usually in the interests of those with high status, as their status derives from their position within a clearly demarcated group.

If it is so that the outgroup (gentiles) were at least *as* responsible as Jews for maintaining Jewish isolation, then MacDonald acknowledges that the entire concept of a group evolutionary strategy breaks down (p. 10): An enslaved, segregated group, as an extreme example, cannot be considered to be utilizing a group evolutionary strategy. In a Jew-Gentile conflictual relationship, who is maintaining the segregation?

MacDonald argues that, if the segregation was not maintained primarily by the Jews, why haven't Jews assimilated and ceased to exist as a separate group? Again, I think the answer is that *people* don't behave like that. All groups resist assimilation, often violently. We might as well ask, why don't the Catholics just assimilate in Northern Ireland? Why does the Catholic Church abhor marriages of Catholics to Protestants? Why don't the Sikhs assimilate in India? The Basques in Spain? French Canadians? Of course, the list could go on and on. Assimilation is resisted almost universally. So, the fact that Jews resist assimilation indicates nothing special about them.

Contrary to MacDonald's facile claim (presented without evidence) that other groups assimilated without much ado, much "assimilation" has historically taken place after a group is conquered and genocidal acts decimate their population. Historically, often the males are killed, driven off, or enslaved, the women are raped, and they and some of their children are brought into the larger group, often as second-class citizens or even as slaves (Brown 2019). The Christianization of the New World was carried out with horrendous brutality that resulted in vicious subjugation of the native inhabitants (Diamond 1997). And they still didn't fully assimilate, as the remaining ethnic divisions throughout Latin America and the American

Indians still attest; for example, in Guatemala, 40% of the population still doesn't speak Spanish, and they maintain their ethnic identities with several distinct languages despite four centuries of persecution. Assimilation often requires the acceptance of suppression, discrimination, third-class status (and worse) until your past group membership is undetectable. All groups, Jews included, resist this.

Even when assimilation appears to be safe, it may not be. MacDonald argues that the newly assimilated Jews of early-twentieth-century Germany were, in fact, deceptively maintaining their group identity. Of course, they still had a group identity. Does MacDonald really believe that full assimilation occurs in one generation? In my direct line, the first immigrants of Jewish ancestry to arrive in America spoke fluent Yiddish. The first generation born here spoke a broken, limited Yiddish as a second language. The second generation born here knew a dozen Yiddish words, and one out of two married a gentile. The third generation born here knows only those Yiddish words that have entered the English language, and two out of three only consider themselves secondarily Jewish.

Full assimilation takes several generations *at a minimum*, often more. The fact is the early-twentieth-century German Jews were at the beginning of the process of relatively rapid, real assimilation. They abandoned outward signs of difference (dress, customs), and this was coupled with rapidly rising, high rates of intermarriage; nothing could be a stronger argument than the latter that the assimilation was real. Yet, what followed illustrates just how hard assimilation can be: "A higher percentage of German Jews fought to defend Germany in World War I than the percentage of non-Jewish Germans. And what was the fate of German Jews? Did willingness to be accepted by the general society save them? Hardly" (Donald Schwartz, one of MacDonald's fellow faculty at CSULB in an online discussion forum).

Animals of many species tend to herd together with their own kind. Humans are no different, as ethnic neighborhoods and the self-segregated lunch tables at integrated schools attest. The reason for the existence of this tendency is that predators attack from outside the herd, so those deep within are relatively safe. A wildebeest within a herd is surrounded by insulating layers of other wildebeests. Just so, Jews who assimilate leave the relative safety of their tribal group and enter into a community where they are exposed to ethnocentric suspicion and doubt. Animals don't voluntarily do this when predators are nearby.

And if you attempted to assimilate, there was always a high risk that among the gentiles there would be some who would act as predators—if for no other reason than the fact that your former Jewishness (as well as suspicions about the genuineness of your conversion and your loyalties) could easily be used against you by some in the ensuing dealings between individuals with inevitably conflicting interests. Furthermore, if you leave the safety of the herd you will no longer be trusted when you return, *if* you are allowed to return.

MacDonald's analysis of the Conversos in Spain supports this interpretation: Full, real assimilation wasn't an option. MacDonald claims that Conversos rose rapidly in Spanish society and were perceived by noblemen, middle class Old Christians, and the priestly class as competitors. At the encouragement of these groups, anti-semitism was fanned among the lower classes (who weren't in direct competition with the Jews), who were told that Jews were dangerous schemers who would take

over and enslave them all. MacDonald says this was a partially realistic perception, as Conversos favored one another in political and economic dealings. Yet, whether or not Conversos favored one another (and they may very well have, as members of most groups tend to favor other group members over outsiders), as MacDonald noted, exaggerated fears were intentionally aroused in the lower classes that were used by those in direct competition with the Jews to force the ruling elite to start the inquisition that led to extreme violence and expulsion.

So, according to MacDonald, the Jews had a closed, endogamous group evolutionary strategy if they didn't assimilate, and if significant numbers tried to assimilate—because some were faking it and because of resource competition between the Conversos and a small segment of Old Christians—even the *genuine* converts were severely discriminated against. This occurred even while many Conversos entered the Church itself and rose in the hierarchy—thus, competing directly with Old Christians in the Church who were subsequently able to use the inquisition to exclude them (p. 119) and reclaim the status the Conversos had usurped. And MacDonald presented no evidence to support his assertion that these priestly Conversos who entered the Church as their primary role/identification/vocation were any more likely to be faking it for personal gain than Old Christians.

The point is that, contrary to the claim that it was easy for Jews to assimilate, MacDonald documents the opposite: Conversos were *not* accepted for a variety of reasons, assimilation was *not* a simple process, and there was a great deal of discrimination directed against the new converts who had to give up the protection of their group (the protection of the herd) *before* they faced the inevitable discrimination awaiting them.

It takes many generations of intermarriage to finally blur the distinctions (as *may* be occurring with Jews in the US). However, if MacDonald is correct in his claim that Jews had atypical abilities to achieve success at the upper levels of society, then it is almost certain that there would be more intense competition and enmity beyond that usually expected when members of a group try to assimilate with another. MacDonald needs to paint assimilation as much easier than it was in order to conclude that the failure of the Jews to assimilate can be attributed to their genetic predisposition toward endogamy and closed group formation.

But MacDonald knows all this; he repeatedly mentions the fact that antisemitism has been and continues to be a major factor solidifying the Jewish group and Jewish identity. So, it is all the more striking when he seems to find it highly meaningful that “Jews have retained an intense commitment to their ingroup over a very long period of historical time and *despite* very high levels of hostility directed at them by surrounding peoples” (p. 229, emphasis added, also see p. 230). *Despite* high levels of hostility? Is MacDonald unaware of the abundant evidence that hostility toward one's group intensifies in group commitment? No, that can't be, because he made note of that very idea. Indeed, powerful outgroup hostility, as MacDonald repeatedly acknowledges elsewhere (e.g., pp. 160, 218, 259 n.6), is more than sufficient to create and maintain “intense commitment.” Again, this isn't science; it's antisemitism disguised as science.

I am not claiming that Jews were passive in response to antisemitism or that they have not actively attempted to maintain their separate group identity. Rather, as with

almost all groups, the forces that maintain separatism include the antagonism of outsiders that synergistically interacts with a hereditary, ruling class pursuing their self-interest that is dependent on a strong group identity that maintains the group's existing dominance hierarchy. It then becomes highly problematic to claim that the Jewish attempt to maintain their group's identity is an indication of a *Jewish* group evolutionary *strategy* that gave rise to different genetic predispositions in Jews.

The rapid rate of assimilation of Jews in America suggests that it was not something inherent in Jews that prevented assimilation elsewhere; when there is clear evidence that one need no longer huddle together for protection, almost 60% of Jews ignore the exhortations of the remnants of their priestly class and marry non-Jews (Goodstein 2013). This is a rather rapid rate of assimilation; rather than behaving as MacDonald says, that they are innately predisposed to and marrying endogamously, three times as many mixed-couple (Jew-gentile) marriages are being created.³

Those Nepotistic Jews

Another rather strange conclusion MacDonald reaches is that

Jews were often highly selective in their charity ... they favored the Jewish individual or group that was more closely related genetically. Thus, the idea that Judaism is simply a religion, rather than a national/ethnic movement, breaks down even when thinking about relationships within Judaism: Despite sharing the same religion, charity is preferentially directed to more closely related individuals. (p. 160)

The implication is that gentiles who “share the same religion” don’t “preferentially direct” charity toward relatives. This would certainly be a surprise to an evolutionist (or even a casual observer). And it contradicts enormous amount of data such as the fact that innumerable Christian-run, charitable operations are directed toward groups more closely related to the organizers. The selectivity of MacDonald’s anti-semitic reasoning and conclusions is quite striking.

The lack of a comparison group comparing Jews to gentiles makes conclusions about their genetic exclusiveness and ingroup bias particularly egregious, especially when such tendencies are almost universally observed.

Being non-Mormon also can be a drawback in the LDS-dominated business community. “I go into a business meeting and someone asks, ‘What ward are you in?’” says Claudia O’Grady, a housing executive in Salt Lake City. “As soon as they discover I’m not Mormon, a barrier goes up. I have to establish a level of trust that would be automatic if I were LDS” (Sheler 2000, p. 64).

³ The math works like this. Consider a Jewish community with a 60% rate of marrying gentiles in which 100 Jews get married. Sixty of these Jews marry non-Jews, creating 60 mixed marriages, and the other 40 marry one another, creating 20 Jewish marriages. The result is three times as many mixed marriages.

But, of course, when Jews engage in the same universal behavior, it is because of their greater *biological* disposition to form an unusually exclusive religious culture. Where is the evidence? Reaching such a conclusion without comparative evidence is striking when the much more obvious explanation for the behavior is readily at hand (i.e., the universality of such tendencies and their exaggeration when a group feels threatened or insecure). This is precisely the type of selective inattention to the obvious and an emphasis on the unlikely that characterizes the faulty reasoning of racists.

Jewish Intragroup Cooperation and Intergroup Competition and Exploitation

The Myth of Innate Jewish Collectivism

MacDonald defines a collectivist culture following Harry Triandis (1990, 1991) and then argues that Jews not only have a strong collectivist culture, they also have genetic dispositions to create one. The only reason he presents to conclude that Jews have greater *genetic* tendencies to create such a culture is that they do create one, and even that conclusion is reached without any comparison to collectivism in other groups (not to mention other groups under similar ecological conditions). The data suggesting Jewish individualism and *intragroup* conflict is seen by MacDonald as a limit on the inherent Jewish tendency toward much more extreme, within-group altruism (pp. 157–160).

Instead, antisemitism could be used to explain the data of high within-group altruism among Jews, and this is acknowledged and even illustrated by MacDonald (p. 160, also see pp. 218, 259 n. 6). But since that would not fit with his causal explanation—which is that the *success* of the Jewish group evolutionary strategy (with the innate propensities that shape it and were shaped by it) *causes* antisemitism in reaction—MacDonald ignores this possibility. This is very similar to the way in which psychoanalysts have ignored conflicting data or simply seen it as a sign of a reaction formation, essentially a denial, or a defense against the underlying motives crucial to their particular psychoanalytic theory (Kriegman 1988, 1990; Kriegman and Slavin 1989; Slavin and Kriegman 1992).

Indeed, if we were to step back for a moment and consider supposed “non-collectivists” (e.g., Western and Northern Europeans) immediately before and during wartime (as well as the US during WWII and in the immediate aftermath of 9/11), we see the same set of collectivist features that MacDonald ascribes to Jews. A simpler, non-genetic explanation is that Jews have always felt like they were under the pressures of war or facing an impending assault and have been trying to stave off or prepare for the expected onslaught. Only at various anomalous points in history (such as America today and mistakenly in Germany during the first third of the twentieth century) did Jews apparently feel they were safe enough to let down their guard. At these times intermarriage skyrocketed. Israelis of today are also an example of this phenomenon as—despite their chronic preparedness for war—fear of imminent annihilation or expulsion is no longer prevalent. In America and Israel,

we see large-scale religious defection (Goodstein 2013), though only in America, where Jews are surrounded by significant numbers of gentiles who are relatively unprejudiced, is it accompanied by high rates of intermarriage.

Surprisingly consistent with this thesis (and contradicting MacDonald's), in Israel, along with diminishing fear, the historical ethnocentric rhetoric for the next generation appears to be starting to disappear. Much of the focus on Zionism has very recently been eliminated from the middle school history curriculum.

Before 1995, all Jewish children in Israel had begun learning history by studying the origins of the Jewish people during the biblical period, with topics such as "From Tribes to a People," "The Kingdom of David," "Prophet versus King," and "Jerusalem as a Capital." In the new curriculum, however, the study of these decisive early centuries of Jewish history has been eliminated entirely. (Hazony 2000b)

Chaim Weizmann, the leading Jewish statesman in the decades leading up to the formation of the State of Israel, is mentioned only once in the new ninth-grade textbook. The fact that he was its first president is not mentioned at all. Imagine not mentioning George Washington's first presidency in an American history text. Note that not all Israelis agree with the new policies. In an earlier article, "Antisocial texts: Who removed Zionism from Israel's textbooks," Hazony (2000a) laments the fact that Zionism and the "collectivist" spirit in Israel—once highly touted for its creation of remarkably successful kibbutzim (collective farms and manufacturing cooperatives)—is on the decline. The curriculum for Israel's next generation is becoming universalist.

Despite their chronic military readiness, once they stopped feeling imminently threatened, the Israelis began leaving the collective kibbutzim in droves in order to go to the cities so they could throng the malls at the end of Shabbos for a few hours where they could dress up and display themselves just like Americans going to crowded discotheques. Removed from the typical ecological context in which MacDonald feels he found clear evidence for a Jewish *innate* predisposition toward creating and maintaining a strong collectivist, religious identity, the phenomena disappear.

MacDonald claims that the priests of ancient Israel failed to keep their hyper-collectivist nation of Jews united during the monarchy (p. 252), as internal tribal divisions weakened the kingdom and contributed to its eventual subjugation. However, he notes that they were spectacularly successful maintaining cohesiveness using their diaspora strategy. Consider that within a kingdom, within well-established borders, people do not live under constant threat, constantly "rubbing up against" the "enemy." In contrast, when living in a small group surrounded by a larger outgroup in the diaspora, Jewish "collectivism" and identity was pronounced. This is actually consistent with the behavior of all groups that become extremely cohesive when in heightened conflict with a group, while internal divisions within a complacent empire are common and typically predate a collapse of shared identity.

As is typical of all groups, once the Jewish Kingdom stopped expanding—i.e., once they were no longer in heightened conflict with an outgroup—internal cohesiveness diminished as the focus became one of decadent enjoyment of great wealth

and power (Solomon's thousand wives and concubines). This leads to terrible divisiveness; the biblical prophets repeatedly warned that when power and wealth are hoarded by a few while the many suffer, the kingdom is in danger.

So again, the data MacDonald presents argue strongly for an ecological, contextual (not innate) understanding of Jewish cohesiveness, collectivism, and ethnocentrism. Instead, he concludes that, in diaspora, the Jews were banding together in order to return to their specifically Jewish "original strategy of competing for resources with the people they were sojourning among" (p. 253). MacDonald's Jews appear to have been specifically adapted for and to have *enjoyed* (pp. 245, 248) sojourning in order to take advantage of their unsuspecting hosts whom they were able to outcompete.

But none of the faulty logic and inconsistent reasoning stops MacDonald, who concludes that "Jews are biologically predisposed to be high on psychological traits predisposing them toward collectivist social structures and ethnocentrism" (pp. 8, 227–228, 236). Yet, MacDonald gives examples of harsh treatment (punishment) by Jews of fellow Jews who don't give their prescribed share of charity (p. 153): thorough shunning of the defector and the defector's children. Ostensibly, this is an example of the type of social control that would enable group selection to operate.

However, the contradiction is missed by MacDonald. If for Jews "there is a genetic basis for this powerful tendency toward collectivism" (p. 238), then they should not need such intense punishment in order to motivate within-group altruism. Since they do, we don't have evidence for heightened innate tendencies toward within-group altruism; rather, we have evidence for acquiescence under culturally regulated coercion coupled with the universal tendency toward cooperation and collectivism within threatened groups in high conflict with outgroups (which also heightens tendencies to use coercion to maximize within-group altruism, e.g., consider the military draft).

Jews Are Damned if They Do and Damned if They Don't

Within-group divisiveness is one of the signs of an individualist culture (p. 229) that MacDonald contrasts with innate Jewish collectivism. But he documents that the Jewish, non-divisive, collectivist group was, in fact, full of divisions (pp. 232–234). Jews emigrating to an area often would not mix with the Jews already present; they would form an independent separate community. So, a *lack of divisiveness* among Jews and within-group *divisiveness both* indicate a propensity toward collectivist separatism. This is simply not science; it's an antisemitic polemic in which Jews are damned if they do as well as if they don't.

Jewish within-group lack of agreement on a common prayer book in the US (p. 234) is somehow used to argue for inherent separatist (collectivist and endogamous) tendencies, not for individualist tendencies such as being ready to "disagree with ingroup policy" (p. 229), the latter being a propensity of supposedly more individualist and open European cultures. It simply makes no sense to claim that prayer book disagreement among Jews indicates Jewish collectivism, while being ready to

disagree with ingroup policy among Europeans indicates that they are “more likely to behave in a pro-social, altruistic manner toward strangers” (p. 229).

In MacDonald’s pseudoscience, we have comparative conclusions about Jews without any comparisons. What about the bloody struggles between Christian groups over whether or not God is a trinity, which writings comprise the canonical Bible, and whether Christians need intercessory priests and a Pope? If prayer book disagreements indicate inherent Jewish separatism, then Christian conflicts are evidence that gentiles are possibly far more separatist than Jews.

Zero-Sum Game Economics

MacDonald states that he will show that Jewish cooperation was maintained by Jews avoiding the exploitation of fellow Jews by focusing on economic dealings with gentiles (p. 14). Putting aside his zero-sum game outlook in which an economic interaction must yield a winner and a loser, MacDonald’s logic is simply absurdly, mathematically specious: Successful businesses in a state like Wisconsin with a small population make the great bulk of their wealth from selling cheese to outsiders. This cannot be used as evidence of a conspiratorial cooperation (non-competition) strategy amongst “cheeseheads” (a term Wisconsinites proudly use to refer to themselves) in order to exploit the rest of the country. The obvious logical conclusion is that the largest markets are, for the most part, simply external to the groups (Jews or cheeseheads) in question. This understanding makes far more sense when considered with the other data MacDonald presents that documents the exact opposite, an extensive Jewish (Jew-to-Jew) economy.

Indeed, at other points (e.g., p. 122), he claims that antisemitic reactions occur at times because Jews *don’t* do business with gentiles. If Jews are frequenting Jewish stores or making business deals among themselves—which is the source of his claim that Jews *don’t* do business with gentiles—are we to assume that Jews act altruistically when they are doing business with Jews? Not likely. At least it wasn’t apparent when I worked in New York’s diamond district, where I witnessed *intense*, competitive negotiations between Jews. Again, the damned if you do, damned if you don’t illogic destroys his façade of scientific objectivity. MacDonald claims that *Jews doing business with gentiles* is evidence of Jewish cooperation in the service of exploitation of gentiles and, at other points, *Jews not doing business with gentiles* is evidence of the same.

The Myth of the Individualistic Northern European

Relative to Jews, people who live in more Northern, cold climates (e.g., Northern Europeans) evidence less of a tendency toward collectivist cultures (p. 237) and presumably less ethnocentrism because “ethnocentrism would thus be of no importance in combating the physical environment” (ibid.). “Such a perspective would not imply that Northern Europeans lack collectivist mechanisms for group competition, but only that these mechanisms are relatively less elaborated and/or require a higher

level of group conflict to trigger their expression” (p. 260 n. 15). Northern Europeans having less collectivism than Jews tend toward the more individualist end of the individualism–collectivism spectrum. So, in comparison to Jews, Northern Europeans, like other

[p]eople in individualist cultures, on the other hand, show little emotional attachment to ingroups... . Individualists have more positive attitudes toward strangers and outgroup members and are more likely to behave in a pro-social, altruistic manner to strangers. People in individualist cultures are less aware of ingroup/outgroup boundaries and thus do not have highly negative attitudes toward outgroup members... . They ... show little emotional commitment or loyalty to ingroups ... Opposition to outgroups occurs ... but the opposition is more “rational” ... (p. 229)

MacDonald does acknowledge that Northern Europeans *can* be very collectivist, e.g., Nazism. However, he claims that this was a mirror image *reaction to Judaism* and an adoption of the *Jewish* strategy for intergroup competition. Maybe he ought to tell that to all the other peoples of the world who have been violently subjugated by the stranger-loving, outgroup-positive, individualistic Europeans. Where were the Jews they were reacting to there? This type of argument begins to feel like we are entering Alice’s Wonderland with the “Red Queen talking backward.”

Consider just a few examples of European behavior in the absence of Jews:

In the Third Crusade, after Richard the Lion-Hearted captured Acre in 1191, he ordered 3,000 captives—many of them women and children—taken outside the city and massacred ... [while] bishops intoned blessings. [A chronicler wrote] “They were slaughtered every one. For this be the Creator blessed!” ... As St. Bernard of Clairvaux had declared in launching the Second Crusade: “The Christian glories in the death of a pagan, because thereby Christ himself is glorified.” (Haught 1990, p. 26)

After the execution of King Charles, Oliver Cromwell went to Ireland to kill Catholics. According to an Irish historian:

[Cromwell’s force was] 17,000 of the flower of the Puritan army ... [they] were ... Bible-reading, psalm-singing soldiers of God—fearfully daring, fiercely fanatical, papist hating, looking on this land as being assigned to them, the chosen people, by their God. And looking on the inhabitants as idol worshipping Canaanites who were cursed of God, and to be extirpated by the sword. They came with minds aflame ... [Cromwell] knew that religious fervor could produce the fighting spirit that won battles. His soldiers, called “Ironsides,” carried bibles and sang hymns. He delayed battles to lead prayer or chant psalms—then sent his troops to kill with holy zeal. All his victories were attributed to the Lord. [After one victory] Cromwell ordered the execution of surrendered Catholics and their priests, calling it “a righteous judgement of God upon these barbarous wretches.” Then the same treatment was inflicted upon town after town ... Women and priests were massacred. (ibid., pp. 20–21) Does that sound like a reaction to *Jews*?

Hosts and Parasites

While avoiding stating it baldly, MacDonald clearly implies—and antisemites have taken him to be saying—that Jews specialized for a parasitic role vis-à-vis gentiles. How does he do this without saying it? First, he discusses specialization for specific roles in *interspecies* competition (p. 17). He notes that generalists are less likely to do anything really well, so specialization is in order. In this discussion of interspecies competition and specialization he delineates three roles: predator, parasite, and primary producer. He then immediately goes on to say that he will show how Jews used cultural practices for, as well as eugenics to breed themselves into,

a specialized role within human societies... . Moreover, another result of this specialization is that Jews in the diaspora have almost never been engaged in what ecologists term *primary production* ... Rather ... Jews have become specialized for occupational niches at the upper levels of the human energy pyramid. And in ecological terms, this implies that Jews as a group, like other high-status groups ... serve as consumers of energy produced by lower-status gentile members of society laboring in the area of primary production. (p. 18, emphasis in original)

Thus, we have role specialization into predator, parasite, and primary producer. Jews are then clearly seen as an alien other—a closed, “pseudo-speciated” group (p. 111)—who is *not* a primary producer, i.e., who is a consumer who doesn’t produce anything. This leaves Jews with only predator and parasite in his list of role specializations. This obvious implication cannot have escaped MacDonald’s notice, for he is well aware that the pioneers of IQ measurement “Galton and Pearson believed that Jews had developed into a parasitic race which used its superior intelligence to prey on gentiles” (p. 188).

It is therefore reasonable to assume—as antisemites, in fact, do—that he is claiming that Jews have a parasitic or predatory role in stratified societies. He is unmistakably concluding that gentiles in comparison to Jews are primary producers, even if some gentiles *at times* (i.e., *not* as an innately, specialized disposition) are parasitic and or predatory on the production of other, lower-status gentiles.

The same line of thinking is presented earlier:

... human societies are seen as ecosystems in which different human groups are analogous to species occupying a common ecosystem and engaging in competition and/or reciprocity with each other. Thus, in the natural world, an ecosystem may comprise producer species as well as several levels of predator species and parasitic (and hyperparasitic) species... . The analogy with humans would be that stratified human societies offer the possibility of complex intra-societal ecological strategies. (p. 3)

It is clear in MacDonald’s writing that if one were to place Jew and gentile into these roles, gentiles would play the role of the producer species and—though he does *not* specifically state the following, the conclusion follows directly from the foregoing—this leaves the Jews as parasites or predators. This is the essential condition

when the groups display their true nature. While MacDonald does acknowledge the ugly reality of antisemitic violence (e.g., Nazism), based on this analysis about the inherent, innate nature of the two groups, antisemitism is seen to be a predatory *overreaction* by gentiles to being, essentially, successfully parasitized. Hitler could not have agreed more:

Was there any shady undertaking, any form of foulness especially in cultural life, in which at least one Jew did not participate? On putting the probing knife carefully to that kind of abscess, one immediately discovered, like a maggot in a putrescent body, a little Jew who was often blinded by the sudden light. ... Should the Jew ... triumph over the people of this world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of mankind and this planet will once again follow its orbit through ether without any human life on its surface, as it did millions of years ago. (Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*)

Of course, the whole analogy of *human* ethnic conflict to role specialization *between species* is unsound. Clearly, some species do specialize as predator or parasite. But no species specializes for the role of “primary producer” in relation to predators or parasites. In fact, modern economic theory does not contrast “primary producer” with those at “the upper levels of the human pyramid” who “serve as consumers of energy” to use MacDonald’s terminology. In modern economic theory of highly complex economies, the “upper levels” (management, sales, banking, investing, marketing, etc.) are seen as providing functions as necessary as agriculture, i.e., as providing a net productive *enhancement* that is *necessary* for the functioning of the entire complex economic system. (The idle rich, criminals, and welfare cheats could be seen in such an analysis to be metaphorically parasitic or predatory, but nowhere does MacDonald claim that Jews have historically been in any of those roles.) To even phrase the analysis in a way that allows—and I would argue, encourages—the distinction of innate differences between groups with tendencies toward the existence of gentile-producer-hosts and Jew-consumer-parasites is obviously antisemitic.

Conclusions

The danger that concerns Kevin MacDonald is that people will start thinking like Kevin MacDonald. Let me explain. What MacDonald claims to be most concerned about is the splintering of society into multicultural groups—which he further claims is being brought about by Jewish actions—with the result that there will be increased balkanized group conflict and violence.

The prediction, both on theoretical grounds and on the basis of social identity research, is that as other groups become increasingly powerful and salient in a multicultural society, the European-derived peoples of the United States will become increasingly unified; among these peoples, contemporary divisive influences, such as issues related to gender and sexual orientation, social class differences, or religious differences, will be increasingly perceived as unim-

portant. Eventually these groups will develop a united front and a collectivist political orientation vis-à-vis the other ethnic groups. Other groups will be expelled if possible or partitions will be created, and Western societies will undergo another period of medievalism. (MacDonald 1998b, p. 323)

MacDonald's predictions may come true: for example, Jewish and other minorities' success in America may lead to reactive racism *especially* when ideas such as MacDonald's are promulgated that foster such racism. We apparently witnessed such a reaction by white nationalists including two of MacDonald's admirers, Richard Spencer and David Duke, when they marched and chanted, "Jews will not replace us!"

Somewhat paradoxically, as a reviewer of this article noted, MacDonald appears to want white gentiles to behave more like he thinks Jews behave. That is, MacDonald's evolutionarily enlightened, New Antisemite is someone who envies the Jews more or less openly. MacDonald is essentially criticizing gentiles for being naive and failing to tend to their group's interests as the Jews supposedly do.

Furthermore, multiculturalism on a planet-wide basis is an unavoidable fact. While to the chagrin of many, the trend within the US is increasingly toward multiculturalism, even more profound multiculturalism comprises our world. If multiculturalism cannot be managed in the US—which may be the society in the forefront of testing out how tolerant and peaceful a multicultural society can be—then there may be little hope for our multicultural planet.

The definition of a territory that can be defended may have once been limited by how far group members could travel in one day (Wrangham 1999). Thanks to ballistic missiles and modern transportation, the Earth is now one territory; we can, or shortly will be able to move to attack or defend anywhere within one day. We are, indeed, on Spaceship Earth, as Buckminster Fuller referred to our planet. We either learn to live together, or we won't get to live at all.

In this light, I wonder about MacDonald's fear of a "Jewish deception":

Jews attempting to appeal to gentiles have often framed their interests in universalist terms and/or recruited prominent gentiles to publicly back the cause. From an evolutionary perspective the intent is to make the Jewish cause appear to be one which is in the interests of others as well. ... The traditional hopes for the restoration of Jewish political power were replaced by the hope of a world of peace and justice for all of humanity. (MacDonald 1999, p. 9)

What MacDonald misses is that even if Jews (a historically persecuted minority group) are trying to arrange things so that they, a minority, are unlikely to be persecuted—even if they are acting in their own self-interest—the solution may be highly consistent with what our multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial world needs.

Despite strong attempts to assert conflicting ethnic identities, there are also trends toward a worldwide human culture and economy in which ethnicity may be diminishing as our common humanity emerges (Pinker 2011). What is not clear is whether we will be able to maintain sufficient stability to get to the point where enlightenment values and ideas attain supremacy over primitive superstition and racism.

Are human groups different? Of course they are. If selectively shaped by somewhat different environments, they are almost sure to be culturally and genetically different, to some degree. But what are these differences? Are we in a position to develop an evolutionary science about subtle differences between such diverse groups as Jew and gentile? Doesn't a focus on differences dangerously belie the far more meaningful similarity between all members of our species?

Concerns about innate group differences are certainly the focus of racists, who eagerly embrace any supposed genetic differences between groups. But, given the state of our knowledge of personality traits, group differences, the limited usefulness of the concept of race, and the enormous amount of error—factual, logical, and theoretical—that characterizes such work, it is important to understand that theories such as MacDonald's theory are simply not *scientific*. They are no more explanations derived from evolutionary psychological *science*, than the attempt in the 1930s to explain, of all things, why Jews dominated the sport of basketball:

The predominance of Jewish players became the subject of "learned" scientific treatises, not unlike those that have followed black athletic successes. Writers opined that Jews were genetically and culturally built to stand up under the strain and stamina of the hoop game. It was suggested that they had an advantage because short men have better balance and more foot speed. They were also thought to have sharper eyes, which of course cut against the other stereotype that they suffered from myopia and had to wear glasses. And it was said that they were clever. "The reason, I suspect, that basketball appeals to the Hebrew with his Oriental background," wrote Paul Gallico, sports editor of the *New York Daily News* and one of the premier sports writers of the 1930s, "is that the game places a premium on an alert, scheming mind, flashy trickiness, artful dodging and general smart aleckness." (Entine 1999, pp. 202–3)

MacDonald was an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin, where he fell into the campus counterculture and became a radical in the antiwar movement.

"I got involved in the movement, really, because I had these Jewish roommates. I just tried to fit in," he says.

In a footnote to one of his books, MacDonald recounts ... "I was recruited to give a talk in which I was to explain how an ex-Catholic from a small town in Wisconsin had come to be converted to the cause."

Thirty years after feeling like a token non-Jew in a purportedly Jewish political movement, MacDonald cited his experience as proof that Jews in general are compelled to challenge traditional American ideals by taking over political and cultural movements fronted by token non-Jews. (Ortega 2000)

As an undergraduate, MacDonald may have felt like an outsider who wasn't fully accepted into a Jewish group. That's understandable. Contrary to MacDonald's claims, assimilation is not always immediate or easy. Had he been able to reflect upon that difficult experience, he might have had something valid to say about relationships between identity groups. But instead, he felt his lack of full

acceptance meant that he and his intellectual talents weren't given the admiration they clearly deserved. In this, he was not the first person to avoid the narcissistic injury of having his ideas rejected by concluding that there was a conspiracy against him rather than becoming aware of the substandard nature of his thinking. Pseudoscience just isn't science.

In defending himself against such criticisms, on his personal website, MacDonald wrote:

But the deeper point is that, whatever my motivations and biases, I would like to suppose that my work on Judaism at least meets the criteria of good social science, even if I have come to the point of seeing my subjects [Jews] in a less than flattering light. In the end, does it really matter if my motivation at this point is less than pristine?⁴

Based on the quality of his academic, pseudoscientific work, apparently, it does.

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⁴ "Replies to My Critics," from MacDonald's personal website <http://www.kevinmacdonald.net/Beirich.htm>. Accessed 1 June 2021.

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