Individualism and the Western Liberal Tradition
Kevin MacDonald

How did evolution bring people of European descent to a pinnacle, then turn them against themselves

Evolution is the theme in MacDonald's very ambitious book. How did peoples of Western European descent come to be different from the other peoples of the world? How did we arrive where we are, and what are the evolutionary implications for our future?

MacDonald's dissertation examines the topic of why his theme – the evolutionary interests of white people – finds itself beyond the pale of respectable discussion. Readers of this review will certainly recognize that whereas the civil rights of Blacks, Muslims and Hispanics are a totally legitimate topic of discussion in Western Europe and North America, those of the indigenous white people are definitely not. It would be inconceivable to have a congressional white caucus, a university course in white studies, or a White history week.

MacDonald is an evolutionary psychologist, a scientist. He is primarily interested in explanations. Why? How did we arrive at this point? In his conclusion he discusses various alternative paths forward. He states – analytically, not as an advocate – that Western descended societies seem to be approaching a tipping point. The animus against white people – straight white males in particular – is reaching a crecendo. White people can no longer remain oblivious to the fact that most of their fellow citizens, and especially the media and their government, hate them. They cannot remain oblivious to the fact that they are destined to soon become a minority within the lands their ancestors have inhabited for centuries in the Americas and time immemorial in Europe.

McDonald's thesis offers a dispassionate scientific foundation, an explanatory basis in evolutionary terms to support other, more popular books that have recently appeared. Douglas Murray's [[ASIN:B07SLLRFDY The Madness of Crowds: Gender, Race and Identity]] examines the rise of an irrational, manufactured hatred of white people. Julian Langness' **[[ASIN:**B074JF5Z2W The Coming War in Europe]] and Guillaume Faye's [[ASIN:B07VCB3YYZ Ethnic Apocalypse: The Coming European Civil War]] offer comprehensive descriptions of the way the problem manifests itself in Europe and prognostications of alternative ways in which it will play out.

That's the nutshell review – five stars. MacDonald's table of contents is presented as comment one below. Here is a very short summary of the book.

The first couple of chapters examine the evolutionary history of Europeans starting in prehistoric times. MacDonald describes the development and migrations of several major groups, which he identifies with shorthand abbreviations. He devotes the most text to:
EFs Early Farmers from Anatolia
I-Es Indo-Europeans
WHGs Western Hunter-Gatherers
SHGs Scandinavian Hunter-Gatherers

Early farmers were dark eyed, dark haired tribes from the Levant who introduced agriculture to Europe by cultural transmission and replacement. They tended to be patriarchal, polygamous, endogamous, hierarchical and quite tribal.

Indo-Europeans tended to be pastoralist warriors. They were dominated by the Männerbünd – it translates as band of men – who maintained and egalitarian relationship among themselves but dominated the women, children, servants and slaves that made up the majority of the population. Leadership was not hereditary but rather by selection among

the Männerbünd. There was thus a reasonable degree of social mobility. A man with promise as a warrior could rise to be a leader. Honor was highly prized. Men fought for recognition for their prowess in war, their leadership and their generosity. Wealth was devalued. For a contemporary interpretation, and one prescription of what modern society needs and lacks, read [[ASIN:B007O0Y1ZE The Way of Men]].

Western Hunter gatherers, and to an even greater extent Scandinavian Hunter gatherers were fiercely egalitarian warrior societies. Though not agricultural, they nonetheless developed complex societies that were at least partially sedentary based around extraction of seafood and similar resources. They were even more egalitarian than the Indo-Europeans, in that they did not have an extensive servant/slave class. They tended to be monogamous and women tended to enjoy a fairly high status. See [[ASIN:B00U58Y4EA Why Did Europe Conquer the World?]] for an analysis of the warrior ethos.

Hunter gatherers throughout the world are usually egalitarian. I witnessed this myself among the Kayapó and Brazil. It is reported throughout the Americas and among the Kung people of Africa, and the natives of New Guinea and Australia. Individuals within hunter gatherer tribes own only objects for their personal use – clothes, pots and such. Their major resource is the land, which is held in common.

Most egalitarian groups are communitarian as well. This is especially true of those in which communities are tightly bound by kinship ties. Inasmuch as even the weakest members of the group still add to its collective strength, there is an attitude of share and share alike. Carle Zimmerman noted this almost a century ago in [[ASIN:1933859377 Family and Civilization]].

Agricultural peoples are usually richer than hunter-gatherers. They are sedentary and can amass stores of food and other assets that they gain in exchange for food. The major resource is initially land, which is held by families and is heritable. As a societies grow richer, other heritable resources such as businesses evolve. The distribution of wealth is uneven. Families strive to maintain control of their resources via matchmaking for their offspring. In most cases this has resulted in endogamy, including cousin marriage. Agricultural societies become increasingly hierarchical as they become more complex. There is wealth enough to support soldiers and administrators.

MacDonald argues that for some combination of reasons, including geography, Western and Scandinavian hunter gatherers developed highly communal societies without strong kinship bonds. They married exogenously. Thus, the communal group consisted of warriors who had proven themselves in leadership and combat rather than members of an extended family. This was true as well of the top ranks of the Indo-Europeans, the Männerbünd, though it did not apply to the more numerous lower ranks in those societies.

MacDonald further argues that the above-named traits led to individualism. The harsh northern European environment required a lot of intelligence to survive and leave offspring. Exogenous, monogamous mating created married couples matched in ability, each with considerable status within the family and community. Individuals rose within the community on the strength of their abilities rather than family connections. This emphasized individualism.

He posits that the northern European hunter gatherer society was so efficient, especially in warfare, that they withstood the advance of agriculture for a couple of millennia past the point at which it would have taken hold in less severe climes. This hunter gatherer society was an incubator for individualism and intelligence.

MacDonald has a number of observations on the monogamy that was characteristic of – and only of – European peoples. As mentioned above, lifetime bonding to a single person made the quality of the mate critical. Mate selection

in the harsh environment resulted in a great deal of evolutionary pressure for higher intelligence. Conversely, in agricultural societies in more benign climates a man would achieve reproductive success by controlling a large number of women – and the quality of the mate didn't matter as much.

Monogamy increased the odds that most men in a society would have a mate, and hence reduced competition and increased the cohesiveness of the group. Monogamy raised the status of women within the society. Their work was needed and valued. The society could simply not afford to wall them off by rules of purdah that would limit their productivity.

Monogamy led to a higher age of marriage for women, placing her age significantly closer to that of her husband. In an individualistic society, this atomic family was not held in the bosom of the larger kinship group but rather set off on its own as an independent economic entity. See James Q. Wilson [[ASIN:0066209838 The Marriage Problem]]. It could not happen until the husband was self-sufficient. This late marriage led to what MacDonald calls a "Low-Pressure Demographic Profile" of longer generations, fewer children, and higher parental investment.

The Christian church has no institutional parallel anywhere else in the world. The church was a powerful organization that existed alongside, and often in competition with secular governments. The church was generally successful in asserting its right to tell the nobility, including kings, how to order their sexual lives. The church strongly supported the institution of monogamy, though whether the church instituted monogamy or simply incorporated a pre-existing cultural standard is still an open question.

Romantic love is a uniquely Western trait that evolved alongside monogamy and high investment parenting. The marital union was more productive if the husband and wife actually had affection for one another. Wilson cites evidence of romantic love in English literature as far back as the Middle Ages. MacDonald describes the demonstrations of mutual affection between European parents and their children, and notes their absence especially in African cultures.

Altruism is a characteristic of an egalitarian society with weak kinship bonds that has had far-reaching consequences. The warrior ethos required personal bravery and dedication to the group, even at the cost of one's life. Such a spirit of self-sacrifice did not develop in more hierarchical societies. MacDonald remarks on the extremely high level of altruism in today's Scandinavian countries. In the face of widespread immigration from groups that do not whatsoever share this ethos it becomes evolutionary suicide – pathological altruism.

While Scandinavia has always been quite altruistic, there was a sea change in Great Britain during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries with the Reformation, the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution. MacDonald contends that the Indo-European warrior ethos gave way to the even more individualistic and altruistic Puritan ethos. The Puritans had Scandinavian roots, from the Jute resettlement from Denmark into East Anglia. They had always been a highly productive and monogamous people with large families. They were to play an outsized role in the Industrial Revolution and subsequent English history.

The Puritans were a highly moral group, and MacDonald contends that they were quite given as well to virtue signaling. They supported social programs such as England's Poor Laws, dating from 1601, and other measures to help down-and-outers. Their moral fervor against slavery was strong and unabating. MacDonald repeatedly says this was pure altruism – opponents of slavery very seldom received material benefits. They did, on the other hand, receive the praise of their own community and the world community for their tireless work on behalf of the downtrodden and mistreated slaves.

As in our own day, they reflexively and unanalytically projected their own character onto the victims whom they supported. MacDonald reports extensively on the 1865 Morant Bay incident in Jamaica. Blacks, who had been free for

30 years but had still not prospered very much in Jamaica, rose up against white businessmen and murdered quite a few. It turns out that they had little self-discipline or work ethic. Nonetheless, fueled by the Puritans, the sentiment back in Britain strongly favored the murderous rebellion by former slaves over the British businessmen.

There was a strong intellectual countercurrent, generally called social Darwinism, that supported the notion that the races had evolved to be different. It flourished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with figures such as Herbert Spencer, Lothrop Stoddard, Gustav Le Bon and Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Support for them was widespread in American society. A feeling that there was too much immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe that dated back to the 1880s led finally to the immigration act of 1924 which set quotas consistent with the current levels of representation within the American population.

Jews strongly opposed the immigration act of 1924 and worked continually to undo it, finally succeeding with the Hart Celler act of 1965. Starting with Franz Boaz at the turn-of-the-century, Jewish intellectuals had led efforts to paint evolutionary interpretations of human differences as immoral. There was no hard science to refute the findings of early intelligence researchers such as Fisher and Pearson that there are significant differences in average intelligence among the races. Rather, Jewish academics such as Stephen Jay Gould, Stephen Rose and Richard Lewontin wrote tracts that attacked the motives of intelligence researchers and muddied the waters by questioning their research methods. Especially after the Holocaust became widely publicized in the 1960s, discussions of differences among the races, most especially in intelligence but certainly also in other personality traits, became taboo.

As a result, after 1965 and continuing to accelerate even today, there is a deluge of nonwhite immigrants into the United States and Western Europe. Pro-immigration forces have seized the high moral ground, making it taboo even to question such immigration. Even to raise the question subjects a person to moral opprobrium, epitaphs of racism, xenophobia and the like.

The extent to which this happens differs from place to place. MacDonald claims that New Zealand has a more significantly Puritan background than the United States. As a result, social harmony is held in higher regard than free speech. The result is evident in the aftermath of the Christchurch shootings. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's protestations of non-racism, and violent suppression of free speech – dissent from government policies - is baffling to many in the United States but consistent with the sentiments in Scandinavia and much of northern Europe.

MacDonald concludes that the white people's own altruism has been turned against them. White people alone are forbidden to defend their own ethnic self-interest. And – those who most strongly enforce this injunction are white people themselves, of course with strong support from the Jews who find it in their own self-interest to disempower the whites.

MacDonald observes that white people are becoming more and more aware of their precarious position. Whites, and whites alone, are not allowed to recognize their ethnic self-interest. Whites are projected to become a minority in almost all of their historical lands by the end of this century. Whites are openly despised and persecuted in their own countries by Blacks and Muslims. The Jews in general openly side with the minorities attacking the whites. Other minorities are conspicuous in their reluctance to support the whites.

As a result, white support for the Republican party has increased by a couple of percentage points in each presidential election over the past half-century. The last Democratic presidential candidate to receive a majority of the white vote was Lyndon Johnson in 1964. Things seem to be reaching a tipping point, with the level of civil unrest in 2019 approximating that of the civil rights era half a century ago.

This is an overview of a few of the themes in the book. MacDonald's table of contents is extremely detailed and useful. It is included here as the first comment.

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