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Nazis, Mythology, and Totalitarian Minds in Kurt Vonnegut's *Mother Night*

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Abstract

Discusses the Nazi appropriation and mythologization of Darwinian evolutionary theories in Kurt Vonnegut's *Mother Night*.

Additional Keywords

Evolution (scientific theory); Race and racism; Vonnegut, Kurt. *Mother Night*; World War II

NAZIS, MYTHOLOGY, AND TOTALITARIAN MINDS IN KURT VONNEGUT'S *MOTHER NIGHT*

GILBERT MCINNIS

THERE WERE MANY Darwinian eugenicists in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century and one, Fritz Lenz, justified his race eugenics by calling on Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton, and his science, to formulate Nazi race policy. This same policy is explored by Kurt Vonnegut's *Mother Night* (1961) in the context of totalitarianism, and his notion of the "totalitarian mind," a mind, as we discover, manufactured by a Nazi mythology based on the ideology of social Darwinism. In *Racial Hygiene*, Robert Proctor argues that Lenz's ideas were influenced by Galton's science, quoting Lenz thusly:

To those in Germany who find any mention of the word "race" unpleasant, and who wish to construct an opposition between racial hygiene and eugenics, it should be pointed out that the term "race" is important even in Galton's original [1883] definition of eugenics. Galton did not want to have the analysis of racial differences excluded from the science of eugenics. (29)

Proctor investigates two other Germans who advocated Darwinian eugenics: Edwin Baur and Eugen Fischer. They contributed to the Nazi eugenics program as well, but of the three, Lenz was the one most closely associated with Nazi race policy and whose works Hitler had read. Proctor claims that:

In 1933 [Lenz's] paper "The Renewal of Ethics" was republished with the title more in keeping with the times: "Race as a Principle of Value." In the preface, republished on the eve of the Nazi seizure of power, Lenz claimed that his article, first published in 1917, contained "all of the important features of National Socialist policy." Baur-Fischer-Lenz also continued to enjoy success. Lenz probably derived satisfaction from learning that Hitler himself had read the book while in Landsberg prison, serving time for his role in the misfired Munich Beer-Hall Putsch of 1923. (60)

Moreover, in *Hitler's Table Talk*, Hitler alludes to Darwin's theory when he attempts to justify his new type of war. Darwin's ideas are the basis for the Nazi mythology of "Racial Hygiene," and this mythology is known to have provided Hitler with a scientific rationale for his decision to exterminate millions

of Jews. On October 10, 1941, Hitler made his Darwinian views clear in a discussion about war. He said:

War has returned to its primitive form. [...] Originally war was nothing but a struggle for pasture-grounds. To-day war is nothing but a struggle for the riches of nature. By virtue of an inherent law, these riches belong to him who conquers them. [...] By means of the struggle, the élites are continually renewed. The law of selection justifies the incessant struggle, by allowing the survival of the fittest. (51)

The references “inherent law” and “By means of the struggle” are obviously an indication that Hitler knew of Darwin’s theory. In addition, his mention of the “law of selection” is evidence that Hitler knew specifically about Darwin’s idea of natural selection. Also, Hitler’s interest in social Darwinism is evident when he justifies his “Racial Hygiene” with the term survival of the fittest.¹

From the foregoing, then, we observe that the Nazi race policy had its scientific justifications. Nowadays, however, scholars like Clyde Kluckhohn assert that it was mere mythmaking. He states, “the case of Nazi Germany is an excellent illustration of the ideal patterns (‘the myth’) being provided from above almost whole cloth and of the state, through various organizations, exerting all its force to make the behavioral patterns conform to the standards of conduct laid down in the Nazi mythology” (37).

The Nazi mythology that Kluckhohn examines is portrayed in detail in Kurt Vonnegut’s *Mother Night*. *Mother Night* is about Howard Campbell, a Nazi propagandist and double agent, who writes his “Confessions” while waiting in a Jerusalem prison to be judged for his Nazi war crimes. Campbell’s story or confession is primarily concerned with his life as a spy, and to a lesser extent his involvement in the Nazi Holocaust, a Holocaust mainly justified, in Hitler’s view, by the idea of race eugenics, which was adapted from Darwin’s theory of evolution. Therefore, the Nazi Holocaust, and indirectly, the implications of social Darwinism, are central to understanding the narrative of *Mother Night*.

In the world depicted in *Mother Night*, characters struggle to adapt to their environment for the sake of survival; at the same time, the novel also relates the struggle of a totalitarian “will” to refashion the human conscience. Howard Campbell’s involvement in the Nazi mythology is central to understanding these conflicting forces, for as he succumbs to the State’s efforts to instill conformity to its “totalitarian mind,” his conscience, and therefore his character, is transformed. Therefore, the Nazi mythology is a logical extension of Darwin’s

¹ It is very interesting that Hitler in the context of his topic on war would allude to Thomas Robert Malthus’s term, because Malthus “coined” it after his extensive research on the subject of population control. See also Manenschijn, p. 90.

idea, applied to a social environment; and when the theory of evolution is applied to a social environment, a mythology is created, and grave human consequences ensue.

Central to understanding the "totalitarian mind" is Campbell's description of why and how the human mind is undergoing a transformation. Shortly after the arrest of the social Darwinist Dr. Jones and his "gang" of fascists for their subversive Nazi activities in America, Campbell says:

I have never seen a more sublime demonstration of the totalitarian mind, a mind which might be likened unto a system of gears whose teeth have been filed off at random. Such a snaggle-toothed thought machine, driven by a standard or even substandard libido, whirls with the jerky, noisy, gaudy pointlessness of a cuckoo clock in Hell.

The boss G-man concluded wrongly that there were no teeth on the gears in the mind of Jones. "You're completely crazy," he said.

Jones wasn't completely crazy. The dismaying thing about the classic totalitarian mind is that any given gear, though mutilated, will have at its circumference unbroken sequences of teeth that are immaculately, that are exquisitely machined.

Hence the cuckoo clock in Hell—keeping perfect time for eight minutes and thirty-three seconds, jumping ahead fourteen minutes, keeping perfect time for six seconds, jumping ahead two seconds, keeping perfect time for two hours and one second, then jumping ahead a year.

The missing teeth, of course, are simple, obvious truths, truths available and comprehensible even to ten-year-olds, in most cases.

The wilful filing off of gear teeth, the wilful doing without certain obvious pieces of information—

That was how a household as contradictory as one composed of Jones, Father Keeley, Vice-Bundesfuehrer Krapptaer, and the Black Fuehrer could exist in relative harmony—

That was how my father-in-law could contain in one mind an indifference toward slave women and love for a blue vase—

That was how Rudolf Hoess, Commandant of Auschwitz, could alternate over the loudspeakers of Auschwitz great music and calls for corpse-carriers—

That was how Nazi Germany could sense no important differences between civilization and hydrophobia—

That is the closest I can come to explaining the legions, the nations of lunatics I've seen in my time. (162-163)

First, it should be pointed out that Vonnegut's image of the totalitarian mind as "machine" is founded on the ideology of both René Descartes and modern science. For instance, in *Biology as Ideology*, Lewontin argues that:

All of modern biology and, indeed, all of modern science takes as its informing metaphor the clock mechanism described by René Descartes in Part V of his *Discourses*. Descartes, being religious, excluded the human soul from the *bête machine*, but that very soon became included as well to make the *homme machine* of the present view. Modern science sees the world, both living and dead, as a large and complicated system of gears and levers. (12)

Second, Campbell's repeated phrase, "That was how," explains how the characters are informed and conditioned by the mythology behind the totalitarian mind, and therefore it will be considered often throughout this paper. But before exploring that avenue, an investigation of totalitarianism is necessary.

Totalitarianism dominated twentieth-century politics to a horrific extent. The term, according to Khan, "entered common usage after Mussolini employed it as a description of the Italian fascist state in the late 1920s" (50). However, the notion of totalitarian power existed before Mussolini. But the twentieth-century version was far more ruthless than the totalitarianism of the past—Nero's or Robespierre's for example—because it was responsible for far more deaths (in the millions in fact) than any of its predecessors. In *The Theme of Totalitarianism in "English" Fiction*, Klawitter argues that modern totalitarianism adheres to an "official and exclusive ideology or set of convictions to which the society is to be committed and which will be the basis for a new type of political and social order *and for a new type of man*" (23; italics added). Peter Kreeft expands Klawitter's notion of a "new type of man" when he claims that "The New Man that seems to be emerging is not immoral but amoral. He is not the serial killer—they have always been around—but the killer of conscience" (104). Klawitter writes of Howard Campbell as an amoral character (117), and once we examine Campbell's role as a conditioner, the arguments of Kreeft and Klawitter above will be crucial to understanding Campbell as a "killer of conscience." Hence, Vonnegut implies that we should no longer fear the idea of a totalitarian state, but the notion of a totalitarian mind.

Campbell's radio propaganda illuminates his role in creating the totalitarian mind. At an American fascist "Iron Guard of the White Sons of the American Constitution" meeting after the war, the leader of the group, Dr. Jones, replays one of Campbell's radio broadcasts, and it is from this broadcast that we understand Campbell's support for Hitler's eugenics policy more concretely. The broadcast says: "There is a fine article in the current Reader's Digest with the title, 'There are No Atheists in Foxholes.' I should like to expand this theme a little and tell you that, even though this is a war inspired by the Jews, a war that only the Jews can win, there are no Jews in foxholes, either" (132). As Tanner argues, Campbell's radio broadcasts were dangerous because "they strengthened

the fantasies of the types who run the concentration camps" (303). Also, his broadcasts excupated not only "the types" who operated the camps, but those who worked for the German bureaucracy as well; for example, Campbell's father-in-law, Werner Noth, who served Hitler as Berlin's chief of police. Near the very end of the war, Noth says to Campbell: "I realized that almost *all the ideas* that I hold now, that make me unashamed of anything I may have felt or done as a Nazi, came from not Hitler, not from Goebbels, not from Himmler—but from you [...]. You alone kept me from concluding that Germany had gone insane" (80-81; italics added). In Noth's confession, we could very well have added, "That was how" you "kept me from concluding that Germany had gone insane."

Campbell's truth was broadcast not only to the camps and to the bureaucracy, but also to the whole German nation. We observe his sphere of influence as well as his implicit self-condemnation when he affirms that all of Germany was guilty for believing in Hitler's Final Solution, for it was primarily through his broadcasts that the German people were led to believe Hitler's mythology. This is noticeable indirectly in a comment Campbell makes about Adolf Eichmann: "This man actually believed that he had invented his own trite defense, though a whole nation of ninety some-odd million had made the same defense before him" (123). Like Campbell's father-in-law, a "whole nation of ninety some-odd million" were conditioned to believe in Hitler's mythology of inferior races.

In addition, the Nazi mythology relied on social Darwinism to achieve its Final Solution. Curt Stern outlines how Darwinism opened the door to Nazi race eugenics. "When Charles Darwin pointed out the role that natural selection of certain genetic types has played in the evolution of animal and plant species, it was soon realized that modern man may be subjected to similar selective influences" (201). He adds: "Darwin had stressed the ruthless struggle, in which the genetically less fit has a poorer chance of reproducing his kind than the more fit" (201). The application of Darwin's theory to genetics led Stern to a question that is pertinent to our study of Vonnegut's *Mother Night*: "Had not an ominous situation been created which would lead to an increase in undesirable genetic constitutions?" (201). Likewise, Jerry Bergman supports Stern's claim that the field of eugenics originated from the social Darwinists' desire to correct these "undesirable genetic constitutions," and that Francis Galton was one such scientist who did pioneering work for the Nazi eugenics program. As stated earlier, Galton's scientific principles were justified by Darwin's theory, and read by Hitler. Bergman argues that Galton's ideas, unfortunately, led to biological racism under Nazism when he states, "Especially influential in the development of biological racism, and the tragedy that it brought civilization, was the theory of eugenics developed by Charles Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton" (164). Moreover, Darwin, in the *Descent*, agreed with Galton's view on "inferior"

marriages, and both Darwin's and Galton's views were later turned into laws against the Jews by the Nazis. "On the other hand, as Mr. Galton has remarked, if the prudent avoid marriage, whilst the reckless marry, the inferior members will tend to supplant the better members of society"(618). Stanley Hyman explains what happened when Darwin's theory was adapted by the likes of Galton, and applied to a social context:

When Darwin concluded his *The Origin of the Species* (1859) with a call for evolutionary treatment in the sciences of man, he opened the door to a variety of genetic studies of culture, and when he showed in *The Descent of Man* (1871) that human evolution was insignificant organically although vastly speeded up culturally (we might not be so quick to say "ethically" as he was), he made cultural studies the legitimate heirs of evolutionary biology. (47)

Accordingly, because Darwin "opened the door to a variety of genetic studies of culture," Northrop Frye highlights these "mythical analogies to evolution," especially when "myth develops an ideology: certain aspects of what is called social Darwinism, for instance, tried to *rationalize the authority of European societies over 'inferior' ones*. Such ideology had a very pervasive influence in popular mythology" (174; italics added).

Vonnegut's choice to transform Campbell from a playwright to a broadcaster is an attempt to portray how the mass media refashions the human mind to believe in this "popular mythology." Moreover, according to *Mother Night*, Hitler could not have achieved his political goals to the degree he did if it were not for communications technology, operated by the likes of Howard Campbell. Unlike American radio technology, which was used mainly for entertainment purposes in the 1930s, its German counterpart was used by Hitler to propagate his "Racial Hygiene" agenda. Huxley argues this point as well when he states:

At his trial after the Second World War, Hitler's Minister for Armaments, Albert Speer, delivered a long speech in which, with remarkable acuteness, he described the Nazi tyranny and analysed its methods. "Hitler's dictatorship," he said, "differed in one fundamental point from all its predecessors in history. It was the first dictatorship in the present period of modern technical development, a dictatorship which made complete use of all technical means for the domination of its own country. Through technical devices like the radio and the loud-speaker, eighty million people were deprived of independent thought. (65)

Khan, examining twentieth-century totalitarianism, supports Huxley's observation. He notes that, "Modern communications give organized people an advantage over masses of disorganized people and provide the means for the political leadership to manipulate the thoughts of the population" (50). Therefore, by means of mass communication, Hitler, via Campbell, was able to condition Germany into believing the Nazi mythology. Campbell uses the mass media to condition the thoughts of the population, but more specifically, he uses them to promote Hitler's Racial Hygiene. And according to the great geneticist, Theodosius Dobzhansky, Campbell's role is typical of how the ideas of evolution are disseminated throughout a culture because its "potency is due to its being transmitted by teaching and learning" (43). As Campbell "transmits by teaching" the ideology of social Darwinism, he makes "cultural studies the legitimate heirs of evolutionary biology."

However, Campbell defends himself against such a proposition while writing his "Confessions." He believes that a double agent must, like Hamlet, be "cruel, only to be kind." Therefore, he argues that he is "privately" innocent and "publicly" guilty for his Nazi war crimes because his role as a double agent for the Americans justifies the evil he did while acting as a broadcaster for Hitler. Tanner summarizes Campbell's role as a radio propagandist and a double agent when he states:

At the same time, following secret instructions, he inserts coughs, pauses, mannerisms, etc., which form the coded answers to questions the Americans want answered. Any speech, then, was two speeches: the surface message, mongering to the vilest German fixations and justifying their cruellest acts; and a hidden message to the Allies, conveying accurate information which was necessary if the German evil was to be defeated. (301)

It is true that Campbell supplied the Americans with valuable information that apparently led to Germany's defeat; yet he also provided the German people with a "popular mythology" that justified the killing of millions of Jews. Even after the war, Campbell admits, "I do not know to this day what information went out through me" (1) and he confesses that "The part of me that wanted to tell the truth got turned into an expert liar!" (150). Campbell's claims are to an extent true, but the roles he plays are also symbolic of the totalitarian mind, a "mind which might be likened unto a system of gears whose teeth have been filed off at random" (162). In this way, his dual roles symbolize how the Nazi mythology operates within the human mind. His conditioning allows him to serve Hitler truthfully on the radio while at the same time ensuring his survival by serving the Americans secretly.

Even while operating as a double agent, Campbell is responsible for conditioning the German people into believing in Hitler's political goal of Racial Hygiene. Tanner notes that "the surface messages, even though they were only simulated speeches to enable Campbell to do the brave work of helping the Allies, did reach the German listeners as real information" (301). Tanner's argument is illustrated by Vonnegut's character, Werner Noth, in *Mother Night*. "I realized that almost all the ideas that I hold now, that make me unashamed of anything I may have felt or done as a Nazi, came not from Hitler, not from Goebbels, not from Himmler—but from you [Campbell]" (80-81). Indeed, Noth declares that Campbell alone kept him from "concluding that Germany had gone insane" (80/81). Campbell's "real information," or truth "that goes marching on," is, of course, founded on the belief espoused by Hitler: "By virtue of an inherent law, these riches belong to him who conquers them. [...] By means of the struggle, the élites are continually renewed. The law of selection justifies the incessant struggle, by allowing the survival of the fittest" (51). Another character in *Mother Night*, Dr. Jones, exposes Campbell's guilt in his fascist newspaper, *The White Christian Minuteman*. After the war, in New York, Campbell reads an article about himself written by Dr. Jones. Jones claims that during the war, Campbell was brave enough to "tell the truth about the conspiracy of international Jewish banking and international Jewish Communists who will not rest until the bloodstream of every American is hopelessly polluted with Negro and/or Oriental blood" (56). As Bergman concluded above, this type of biological racism "was developed from the theory of eugenics developed by Charles Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton" (164), and was, according to Proctor, taken up later by the German social Darwinist, Fritz Lenz, whose works Hitler read in Landsberg Prison. Therefore, according to Vonnegut's *Mother Night*, as Hyman argues, social Darwinism makes "cultural studies the legitimate heirs of evolutionary biology," in applying Darwin's ideas to the human race. We observe this misapplication first-hand when Campbell disseminates the Nazi's social-Darwinist program in Germany.

In the cultural context of World War II, C.S. Lewis foresaw the implications of Darwinian eugenics, and of a reliance on a scientific technique to condition people to believe in this mythology. "The man-moulders of the new age will be armed with the powers of an omniscient state and an irresistible scientific technique" (43). Lewis's "omniscient state" is represented in *Mother Night* by Campbell's sphere of influence, aided, of course, by the mass media and totalitarianism. We see that Campbell fosters the establishment of an omniscient state when we consider his ability to imbue "totalitarian minds" with a mythology shaped by the ideas of social Darwinism.

Likewise, the Nazi mythology, or the Third Reich's "scientific technique," affected the beliefs of many Germans, but it also affected the beliefs

of many Americans, and that sphere of influence is mainly due to modern mass communication. First, Dr. Jones's Black American assistant August Krapptauer is typical of those who are influenced by Campbell's propagation of Nazi mythology. When August escorts Resi, disguised as Campbell's wife Helga, to be reunited with him back in New York, he says: "It is an honor to risk my life [...] for the wife of a man who served Adolf Hitler as well as Howard Campbell did" (71). Although August has not yet met Campbell, Hitler's ideology entices this Black American so much that he is blind to the irony his faith in it implies. August is willing to risk his life for a man who propagates the social Darwinist idea that "the bloodstream of every American is hopelessly polluted with Negro and/or Oriental blood" (56). Second, in *John Brown*, W.E.B. Du Bois traces Jones's type of American racism, against "yellow and black people," to the ideology of Darwinism.

It is because the splendid scientific work of Darwin, Weissman, Galton and others has been widely interpreted as meaning that there is essential and inevitable inequality among men and races of men [...] whereby the weaker nations and individuals will gradually succumb, and the strong will inherit the earth. With this interpretation has gone the silent assumption that the white European stock represents the strong surviving peoples, and that the swarthy, yellow and black peoples are the ones rightly doomed to eventual extinction (375-6)

Lastly, at the "Iron Guard of the White Sons of the American Constitution" meeting, Jones makes it clear that Campbell's message, which August has accepted, reached America by the aid of technology. Jones says, "If a man was fortunate enough to have a short-wave radio," he said, "there was still one fountainhead of truth—just one" (131).

Vonnegut's character Dr. Jones is perhaps the finest example of how social Darwinism of the World War II period increases the sphere of influence of the Nazi mythology in America. Campbell's description of Jones leads us to conclude that Jones's mind, too, has been re-created "totally." "I have never seen," Campbell notes, "a more sublime demonstration of the totalitarian mind, a mind which might be likened unto a system of gears whose teeth have been filed off at random" (162). Campbell also informs us that while Jones was studying at dental college, he developed his own American version of Hitler's Racial Hygiene, and his mythology is similar to that of Francis Galton's mythology of eugenics. Commenting on Jones's academic background, Campbell says: "Jones managed to go from it [his dental observations] to a theory that was all his own—that the teeth of Jews and Negroes proved beyond question that both groups were degenerate" (58). Bruce Lincoln's claim leads us to question the sincerity of Jones's academics. Lincoln proposes that "If myth is ideology in

narrative form, then scholarship is myth with footnotes" (209). Jones's academic science is similar to the type described by Lincoln's analysis of scholarship, or "myth with footnotes"; Jones transforms his ideology into narrative form, and justifies it by research.

Jones exploits other media to transmit his social Darwinism, thereby exemplifying Hyman's claim that social Darwinism made "cultural studies the legitimate heirs of evolutionary biology." Campbell tells us that after college, Jones had published a book wherein science, religion, fine art, and the art of propaganda combined to form his "myth with footnotes." "And he wrote and published at his own expense a book that combined not only dentistry and theology, but the fine arts as well. The name of the book was *Christ Was Not a Jew*. He proved his point by reproducing in the book fifty famous paintings of Jesus. According to Jones, not one painting showed Jewish jaws or teeth" (59-60). While Vonnegut's invention of the book is used for satirical ends, it is also a parody of social Darwinist theories of cranial indices of race. In addition, Jones used the media, namely his own newspaper, *The White Christian Minuteman*, to recruit young people into his movement. We observe his recruitment method when Campbell, at "The Iron Guard of the White Sons of the American Constitution" meeting, asks him how the youth were recruited. Jones replies: "Through my paper [...], but they really recruited themselves. Worried, conscientious parents were writing to *The White Christian Minuteman* all the time, asking me if there wasn't some youth movement that wanted to keep the American bloodstream pure" (130).

Similarly, Jones's ideology is transmitted into the culture when it is expressed throughout the pages of his newspaper. Campbell informs us that "issues had been mailed free to every person in *Who's Who*. The only illustrations were photographs and diagrams of teeth, and every article was an explanation of some current events in terms of Jones's theories about dentition and race" (59). It is important to emphasize that every article "was an explanation of some current events in terms of Jones's theories." Thus, his theory or mythology wins credibility when it is applied to cultural events, especially if we consider that myth must infiltrate culture by "teaching and learning" in order to transform it, and this is what Dobzhansky asserted above. His claim leads us to reflect on Jones's role in spreading the gospel of social Darwinism. Thus, Jones's newspaper is essential to constructing the Nazi mythology because it provides a vehicle to transmit Darwin's theory into the culture. Also, in the form of news stories, Jones's ideology is received as fact by a reading culture. Yet behind the mask of his newspaper is a mythology created by him and justified because it, according to W.E.B. Du Bois, is sanctioned by Darwin's theory.

Like Campbell, Dr. Jones is eventually recruited by the Nazis as a propagandist to condition Americans into believing in the Nazi mythology.

When Jones accepts the offer, his newspaper is transformed into a German propaganda machine for the German eugenics program. We observe the beginning phase of this evolution when Jones ends up bankrupt shortly after the stock market crash in 1929. However, his newspaper resumes publication with the financial help of the Nazi party. Campbell tells us:

The first issues in the new series of *The White Christian Minuteman* were as unreadable as those of the old series. But then a miracle happened. *The Minuteman* jumped from four pages to eight. The make-up, the typography and the paper became snappy and handsome. Dental diagrams were replaced by newsy photographs, and the pages crackled with datelines and bylines from all over the world.

The explanation was simple—and obvious. Jones had been recruited and financed as a propaganda agent for Hitler's then-rising Third German Reich. Jones's news, photographs, cartoons and editorials were coming straight from the Nazi propaganda mills in Erfurt, Germany. (60)

At the time when Jones's newspaper was revived, Darwinian eugenics began to have a worldwide influence, because, according to Campbell, the revived newspaper "crackled with datelines and bylines from all over the world," and was financed by "Hitler's then-rising Third German Reich." Moreover, the articles were "coming straight from Nazi propaganda mills," and Campbell even confesses that it "is quite possible, incidentally, that much of his more scurrilous material was written by me" (60).

However, eventually Jones is caught and indicted by the American government. Campbell's description of his indictment reveals the far-reaching effects of Jones's mythology on the American public.

Conspiring to destroy the morale and faith and confidence of the members of the military and naval forces of the United States and the people of the United States in their public officials and republican form of government; conspiring to seize upon and use and misuse the right of freedom of speech and of the press to spread their disloyal doctrines, intending and believing that any nation allowing its people the right of freedom of speech is powerless to defend itself against enemies *masquerading as patriotic*; and seeking to obstruct, impede, break down and destroy the proper functioning of its republican form of government *under the guise of honest criticism*; conspiring to render the Government of the United States bereft of *the faith* and confidence of the members of the military and naval forces and of the people, and thereby render that government powerless to defend the nation or the people against armed attack from without or treachery from within. (60; italics added)

In place of “masquerading as patriotic,” the indictment could very well have read, “masquerading as American,” or adapting the mythology to the American culture. Moreover, in place of “under the guise of honest criticism,” the indictment could have read “under the guise of honest academic science,” because, as mentioned above, Jones formed his ideas from the research he completed while attending college as a medical student, and those ideas, as already discussed, are nothing more than myth with footnotes. Moreover, this “myth with footnotes” had, as it did in Germany, a wide appeal in America since the nineteenth-century. In *Darwinism and Its Relationship to Realism and Naturalism in American Fiction, 1860 to 1900*, Arthur E. Jones illustrates this point as well:

one of the reasons for suggesting in such detail the ramifications of the reception of Darwinism in the United States has been to show the tremendous extent to which Darwinian evolutionary ideas *had permeated the thinking* and writing of scientists, theologians, sociologists, and even industrialists, reaching all the way down into almost all levels of American life. (12; italics added)

Furthermore, Klawitter argues that Jones’s indictment reveals the power of propaganda to influence “American life” when he states: “It clearly shows considerable concern about the subversive power of propaganda, and perhaps, by suggestion, not too much trust in the democratic imperviousness of U.S. citizens” (121). Klawitter’s point about the “power of propaganda” and “imperviousness of U.S. citizens” recalls to mind Huxley’s claim in *Brave New World Revised* regarding the German people and Hitler’s effective propaganda strategy:

The first principle from which he started was a value judgment: the masses are utterly contemptible. They are incapable of abstract thinking and uninterested in any fact outside the circle of their immediate experience. Their behaviour is determined, not by knowledge and reason, but by feelings and unconscious drives. It is in these drives and feelings that “the roots of their positive as well as their negative attitudes are implanted.” To be successful a propagandist must learn how to manipulate these instincts and emotions. (69)

Hitler recognized that the masses were for the most part apathetic, and that they were, according to Huxley, manipulated by their unconscious drives. For his part, Howard Campbell manipulates his audiences by “feelings and unconscious drives.” Similar to Campbell’s father-in-law, and masses of Germans like him, “all levels of American life” have been conditioned to believe in a mythology derived from the ideas of Darwin. Furthermore, as the mythology had infiltrated

German culture through propaganda and under the guise of academic science, it was also assimilated into American culture by the "writings of scientists, theologians, sociologists, and even industrialists."

Darwin's theory of evolution has had an impact on how we approach our understanding of culture, and according to B.F. Skinner, humans can even create an evolutionary culture through operant conditioning. Skinner argues that humans can take part in the evolution of culture. He states, "The man *that man has made* is the product of the culture *man has devised*. He has emerged from two quite different processes of evolution: the biological evolution responsible for the human species and the cultural evolution carried out by that species" (*Beyond* 198; italics added). The cultural evolution "that man has made" is "carried out by" conditioners like Campbell and Jones in *Mother Night*, and as I have already argued it conditions the minds of many people who adapt their lives according to what this evolutionary mythology² demands of them. Moreover, Kurt Vonnegut in *Mother Night* has revealed how powerful our culture can be in forming the human mind. He wants us to consider that we are no longer dealing with the traditional notion of a totalitarian attempt to control the political landscape by military force, but a new attempt to control the human mind. Vonnegut's *Mother Night* is principally about how the Nazi mythology has conditioned the human mind, as we see in the character of Campbell. As stated at the beginning of the paper, that Nazi mythology was based on the ideas of racial hygiene that Hitler took from such social Darwinists as Lenz and Francis Galton.

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² For a further study on how Americans have been conditioned to believe in an evolutionary mythology derived from the ideas of Darwin see my article "Evolutionary Mythology in the Writings of Kurt Vonnegut Jr."

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