The remorse that Germans felt after losing World War I culminating to Adolf Hitler becoming chancellor on January 30, 1933, gave rise to what is known as the Holocaust. During the six years prior to the start of the war, in addition to the six years that World War II took place, over six million Jews were murdered, leaving five thousand Jewish communities demolished (See Table A) (Levine). Ironically, both the National Socialist German Workers (Nazi) Party and European Jews were using Charles Darwin’s Evolutionary Theory. Adolf Hitler used propaganda incorporated within the media to promote this theory, and convince citizens that the Aryan race, more commonly described as the blue-eyed, blond-haired German Christian was a superior race; Jews blindly mirrored Evolutionary Theory through their actions to survive the inhumane conditions of the concentration camps (Levine). Adaptations demonstrated by finches on the Galapagos Island were to ensure species continuation; likewise, the survival techniques used by Holocaust victims in order to further their chances of survival can prelude similarities that can be further understood through the application of Foucault’s Theory of Power and Knowledge, which states through the application of Foucault’s Model of Knowledge and Power, specifically his Panopticon design, which established the concept of society, or in this case prisoners, always being watched by officials or those who hold more power.

Darwin’s The Origin of Species outlines in laymen terms his Theory of Evolution through natural selection. The material for this book was gathered during a voyage to the Galapagos Islands, where Darwin observed different species of finches. Darwin described that species evolve with each new generation, adapting traits that promote survival. He further explained that Natural Selection is the forefront reason for this modification. Adaptations, like enhanced beak size, more robust feathers, and longer wingspan cause the male finches with these adaptations to be more sexually desirable to the female finches, thus increasing the sexual reproduction of the successfully adapted finches. By having the enhanced, more desirable traits passed on to new generations of finches, in time, the less developed birds will become extinct. This onward continuation of improving genetics to better adapt to surroundings is what Darwin meant by natural selection. Moreover, natural selection and the concept of survival of the fittest are traits that can be seen in all living species, from finches on an island to humans fighting for their lives in a concentration camp during the Holocaust.

Actions and events brought forward during the Holocaust developed into two different versions of survival techniques: controlled and uncontrolled. Survival techniques that could be considered as controlled entailed actions that the person could do for him or herself, or they were attributes that that person already obtained. Knowing how to fluently speak multiple languages, having the skill set of different jobs, or having a deeper insight into how procedures were carried out in the concentration camps are all examples of controlled survival techniques. Spiegelman described characteristics that helped Vladek survive Auschwitz to include being fluent in Polish while understanding how to speak and read English (See Figure A). Moreover, being able to learn various job skills, like roofing, repairing boots, and being a tinsmith, quickly proved...
to be advantageous (Spiegelman, *Maus* 191, 207, 216, 220). Additionally, in the graphic novel *Auschwitz*, controlled survival techniques are shown by the main character gaining insight that the daily ration of soup was best for those towards the back of the line because by then there would be remnants of food in the soup, not just water (Croci 18).

Survival techniques that could be considered uncontrolled dealt with circumstances beyond the person’s ability to control. For instance, age, endurance, and physical strength were a few uncontrolled factors. Entering the concentration camps, Jews were immediately thinned out by age. On both ends of the spectrum, if a person was too old, or just a child or an infant, he or she would be sent to the gas chambers. Furthermore, any signs of sickness meant that the person with the sickness was already dead (Croci 19). In regards to endurance and physical strength, the two go hand-in-hand. In the eyes of the Germans, Jews at these concentration camps needed to serve a purpose in order to remain breathing. For most, this meant physical labor. A person needed the physical strength to complete heavy lifting and strenuous activities, in addition to needing the endurance to carry out the task for long hours, throughout the day, on barely anything to eat or drink, in various weather extremes. In *Night*, Elie Wiesel described an aspect of this pain and drive for food:

> I spent my days in total idleness. With only one desire: to eat. I no longer thought of my father or my mother. From time to time, I would dream. But only about soup, an extra ration of soup. (113)

A combination of both controlled and uncontrolled survival techniques were necessary to obtain any realistic chance of leaving the concentration camps alive. Furthermore, being considered a valuable commodity, or as close to it as possible during this time, proved beneficial due to the potential for the extra perks of food and insight (See Figure B).

Within aspects of *Maus, Auschwitz,* and *Night,* there are descriptions of physical anatomy and how certain anatomical traits like weight and build helped to elongate survival. Those with a stronger build, or those who maintained a healthier lifestyle before the events of the Holocaust, were able to maintain appearances longer and not deteriorate as quickly. This was very important when it came time for inspections because individuals who looked frail or sickly were segregated from the main group of prisoners and sent to a different holding location where there were showers or ovens (See Figure C).

According to Abrams and Harpham, postructuralism “designates a broad variety of critical perspectives and procedures that in the 1970s displaced structuralism from its prominence as the radically innovative way of dealing with language and other signifying systems” (308). One of the first poststructuralists was Michel Foucault, who explored and wrote about the similarities between knowledge and power (Parker 270). Before poststructuralism it was believed that people became accustomed to societal norms and expectations, be it from surrounding cultures or one’s own culture, to the point where it was taken for granted and felt as if those thoughts were being derived from the individual’s own thinking, therefore providing knowledge. The traditional model states that knowledge produces power. With this case, power can either suppress or coerce an outside factor where there is a deficiency of knowledge (Parker 270). Foucault found error in this theory and argued the opposite. He believed that “knowledge constructs what it purports to know. It is mediated by history, rather than being pure knowledge of unmediated raw truth” (Parker 270). Foucault then coined this as discourse, not knowledge. Discourse is the expectation that is already described. According to Foucault’s model, power produces knowledge as discourse. Power can regulate, discipline, police, or surveil an individual or a situation. Additionally, power can lead us to internalize it (Parker 270).

Foucault later elaborated his concept of discourse as he expanded off of Bentham’s Panopticon design (Parker 272). Bentham’s idea for Panopticon originated around prison cells (See Figure D). The idea was that as guards continually circled around a watch tower they would randomly choose which prisoners on whom to focus their attention. Prisoners, unsure if they were the selected inmates being watched at that moment, would remain on their best behavior the entire time, doing only what was expected of them. Due to this, Bentham concluded that the prisoners were policing themselves because of the uncertainty of being on a guard’s radar. It did not matter if there was a guard watching the prisoners or not, their behavior would still remain civil (Parker 272).

The same concept of always being watched by officials through this Panopticon design was used with precautionary measures against the plague in the sixteenth century (Foucault). Houses were closed off and people inside were subjected to constant inspection. People were told to stay in their homes and were given enough food and water to have their basic needs met. Citizens who tried to vacate their homes against protocol were at risk of being punished, or even the extreme of being killed. The combination of constant inspections, along with the drastic consequences if caught breaking the “rules,” convinced the infected plague carriers to remain indoors. As a result, a clean, plague-free area could be created.

Moreover, the concept of Panopticon is visible throughout *Maus* with different visual and artistic techniques used to depict scenes drawn within the panels. Some images are drawn with the intent to give an illusion that the reader is peering down on Vladek’s family or life (Spiegelman *MetaMaus* 167). This supports the idea that there was no escape for European Jews at this time. It did not matter if they were at home, out
within the community, or placed in a concentration camp; their day to day lives were being observed and examined closely.

Although there are many differences between concepts and theories brought forward by Spiegelman, Darwin, and Foucault, within Maus it is clear that these three individual ideas become interchangeable. Just like birds trying to live, European Jews who could adapt the quickest to the ever-changing conditions of the time displayed the highest chances of surviving the Holocaust. As shown in Maus, people like Vladek, who could be useful in many different situations, would enhance their chances of making it to the next day. Prisoners at the camps were under constant surveillance, which established a sense of fear, thus hindering the idea of rebelling against German guards. This replication of Foucault’s Panopticon theory could go a step beyond what was seen during the Holocaust, and be applied to Darwin’s study. One could say that the constant observation of the finches followed patterns of Panopticon. Stuck on the Galapagos Islands, those birds had no way of escaping the constant watch of Darwin as he gathered notes to support his study.

The contributions made by Spiegelman through the creation of Maus, Darwin with The Origin of Species, and Foucault through his theory of power and knowledge, in addition to the Panopticon design, are all valuable. The insight gained from these advancements can only be beneficial to future inquiries and studies.

Works Cited

Appendix

Table A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>Jews Killed</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Jews Killed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>305,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>24,387</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>135,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>277,000</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>106,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>83,000</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>3,001,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>364,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>71,301</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>67,122</td>
<td>TOTAL: 6,258,673</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Depiction of the number of Jews killed in each country during WWII.

Figure A.

* Comic strip showing Vladek teaching English to the block supervisor.
* Panopticon design originally created by Bentham, expanded upon by Foucault.

* Benefits of teaching English included insight on the S.S and food.

* Prisoners constantly examined to determine if they were healthy enough to work.