

# **Constructing Jewish Bodies in Germany through Physical Culture and Racial Pseudo-Science**

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**Abstract** As industrialization heightened in Europe, so did science and technological innovation. The expanded focus on human biology, evolution and genetics coincided with the growth of racism in Europe. In Germany, one group of people who were subjugated, was the Jewish population. Since, Jewish racism was a phenomenon in Europe during the physical culture movement, scientific “findings” were used in Germany to suggest that the intellectual abilities and physical beauty of Jews were inferior to the Nordic race. As a result of social, political, economic, religious, and cultural factors, Jewish bodies were projected as being abnormal. Thus, pseudoscience was used as a tool for reinventing/protecting the German nation by preserving the blood of the glorious bodily conception of the German people.

**Keywords** History, racism, pseudoscience, phrenology, physiognomy, eugenics, Jews, and Germany.

During the physical culture movement in Europe (1850s-1920s), there was a desire to improve the health, strength, diet, athleticism, fitness, and appearance of the human body. The physical culture movement was centered on the natural living conditions of people (conditions of development and growth). In an effort to relieve human suffering caused by an increase in urbanization and industrialization and to heighten the prosperity and wellbeing of people, science and medicine were used by many Europeans, as instruments for improving health. The physical culture movement also inspired people to study and compare the physical beauty and intellectual attributes of the body to an individual's race, in an effort to maximize the potential of the body. In Europe, racial aesthetics (the stereotyping and demonization of bodies determined to be inferior) were used to determine the differences between the "European" population and the "non-European" population, thus, leading to exclusionary ethnic nationalism.<sup>1</sup> Race, a term used to classify a group of people by a certain identity, was used as a social function of discourse.<sup>2</sup>

Interlinked with the conceptual framework of racial superiority, racial aesthetics helped constitute and construct societies. Bodies considered "non-European" and/or bodies that did not meet the European norm of classical beauty (such as Greek-like antiquity statues) were considered abnormal. Racial constitutions were not only classified through judgment and/or intuition alone, but through "biological" findings. In Germany, particularly, pseudoscience "a system of theories, assumptions, and methods erroneously regarded as scientific, was used to identify the "dissimilarities" between individuals with "different" physical constitutions.<sup>3</sup> Using

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890- 1930* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> "Race," *Merriam- Webster* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, n.d), <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/race>.

<sup>3</sup> "Pseudoscience," *Merriam-Webster* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, n.d), <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pseudoscience>.

pseudoscience people were able to perpetuate the racial aesthetics of the nation, by identifying the ideal “perfect” body.

At the height of the physical culture movement, Western culture evoked Jewish hatred. Inherently, the environmental and hereditary markers of Jewish individuals were used to connote Jews as inferior, degenerate bodies. While, many people have researched the “othering” of Jewish bodies in Germany during the Holocaust, this paper explores the early stages of Jewish persecution and how it evolved under the physical culture movement. It is important to understand the development of the inferiority and the “othering” of the Jewish race before the implementation of Nazi ideology. Therefore, my paper discusses the origins of Jewish racism before Nazism, by keying in on various factors, including biological and scientific phenomenon’s used to denounce the Jews of Germany. Physicians, scientists, and many others blurred the line between the realities of the Jewish population and the various myths depicted of the Jewish population (these myths include Jewish bodies being deformed, Jews being corrupt businessmen, and religiously inferior bodies, etc.), which is what I explore.<sup>4</sup>

As expressed, the physical culture movement changed the perception of racial aesthetics in Europe. More specifically, the physical culture movement drastically influenced and shaped German racial ideology.<sup>5</sup> The birth of German national unity, ingrained in the biological evolution of racist impulses, was heightened by an expansion in utopian ideology (homogenous social transformation). As a result, there was a strong desire for Germany to return to a state of

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<sup>4</sup> Ritchie Robertson, *The ‘Jewish Question’ in German Literature 1749-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930*.

natural purity. Therefore, the Volk, the desired ethnic population of Germany, regarded the Nordic race as the exemplary race, as opposed to the undesirable Jewish race.<sup>6</sup> In constructing German racial parameters, science and medicine were used to harness the various social ills made about German Jewry in society. Much of the Jewish population in Germany was subjugated due to different scientific, anthropological and medical standings that facilitated the hatred of Jewishness and the spread of racial ideology. Eugenics encouraged selective breeding, phrenology determined the mental abilities of an individual based on their cranium, and physiognomy regarded the facial features of an individual, as the representation of their ethnic character.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, eugenics and the other pseudoscience mentioned: phrenology and physiognomy were used to support the claim that Jewish “behavior” and Jewish “physical” features (the nose size, blood group, and height etc.), were inferior to the Nordic German: tall, intelligent, blue- eyed, blond, who represented the ancient racial distinctness of the German people.<sup>8</sup>

Whereas Jewish bodies were often dehumanized due to their intellectual abilities and physical attributes, Nordic bodies represented the “ideal” type. The values, physical attributes, and performance of the Nordic people were characterized in terms of their greatness (members of the Nordic race in the eyes of the nation had immaculate: judgment, ability to defend themselves,

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<sup>6</sup> “Volk,” *English Oxford Dictionaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Philip K. Wilson, “Eugenics: Genetics” (N/A: Encyclopedia Britannica, inc., 2017), <https://www.britannica.com/science/eugenics-genetics>; The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Phrenology: Pseudoscientific Practice” (N/A: Encyclopedia Britannica, inc., 2018), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/phrenology>; “Physiognomy,” *Merriam- Webster* (Springfield: Merriam- Webster, n.d.), <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/physiognomy>.

<sup>8</sup> Sander Gilman, *The Jew’s Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

creativity, and physical beauty).<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the physical culture movement shifted the perception of the intellectual abilities and physical aesthetics of individuals in Germany through racial discourse, which deemed Jewish bodies as abnormal. The projection of racial aestheticism in Germany, as expressed in terms of German nationalism, pristine health, and bio politics, affected and led to the alienation and dehumanization of Jewish bodies, thereby socially constructing Jewish bodies as inferior. While the physical culture movement was positive in various ways in terms of health, fitness, healing etc., it also projected negative ideology that racialized and “othered” German Jewish bodies. Therefore, my paper explores and answers how and why Jewish bodies were “othered,” within the context of the physical culture movement.

### **Historiography:**

Many scholars who have written about the “othering” of Jewish bodies in Germany during the mid-19th-early 20th centuries have focused on why Jewish bodies were “othered.” Because of the physical culture movement, social, economic, cultural, and political positionalities, directly shaped the racial ideology and “othering” of Jewish bodies in Germany. Marion A. Kaplan, a Professor of Modern Jewish History, argues that:

Medieval and early modern rulers, supported by church and popular opinion, discriminated against Jews in politics, the economy and society. Jews could not live where they chose, had to pay extra taxes, and suffered a variety of both petty and significant discrimination depending on the will and whim of the local rulers and elites... In the modern era, religious intolerance burgeoned into racial hatred.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Gustav Jahoda, “Intra-European Racism in Nineteenth-Century Anthropology,” *History & Anthropology* 20, no.1: 37-56, Humanities Source, EBSCOhost.

<sup>10</sup> Marion A. Kaplan, *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945* (New York: University Press, 2005), 4.

Kaplan argues that anti-Semitism emerged in Germany long before its fame in the Holocaust. She notes that Jews lived a successful life and were accepted economically and politically in society (during the mid-nineteenth century up until the Weimar Republic).<sup>11</sup> However, with Jewish success, comes Jewish hatred.<sup>12</sup> Historian Michael A. Meyer breaks down Kaplan's argument and elaborates more on this concept of Jewish integration. Meyer argues that because of German Jewish success, Jews faced many integration disputes in regards to demographic positioning, social structure, occupational distribution, and community, legal and religious life.<sup>13</sup>

After emancipation, German Jews emerged as educated, middle class, predominately secularized individuals.<sup>14</sup> Meyer argues:

The rival claims of career ambition and conventionally expected domestic duties contained the potential for severe conflicts... Discrimination continued in both social and public life. Above all, antisemitism, far from disappearing, as Liberal optimists had expected, revived in both empires and became at times a considerable political force."<sup>15</sup>

Meyer suggests that the growth in political and economic success resulted in the cultural and social demise of the Jewish population. In this quote, Meyer reveals the continuity of the harsh conditions Jews experienced across time. As a community, imperial Germany brought about many opportunities for Jewish individuals. After emancipation, Jews, distinctly men, became active members in German public life.<sup>16</sup> Affectively, Jews were able to gain more responsibility

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<sup>11</sup> Marion A. Kaplan, *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Michael A. Meyer and et al., eds. *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Michael A. Meyer and et al., eds. *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

and opportunities in commerce and production.<sup>17</sup> German Jews even adapted to professions as doctors, lawyers, and teachers, etc.<sup>18</sup> Hence, the scholars suggest that the economic and political growth of Jewish members sparked a further increase in and return to anti-Semitic fervor in Germany.

Like Meyer, historian Götz Aly, also addresses the economic progression of Jewish individuals after being emancipated in Germany. He argues that the economic progression of Jews contributed to the nation's growing belief of their dominance in Germany.<sup>19</sup> Because Jews were educated and talented individuals, Jews were regarded as threats. Like Aly, author Alfred D. Low, elaborates on the apparent talents of German Jewish individuals and their social and economic roles in Germany, at this time. Low states, "the German- Jewish middle class of the mid- nineteenth century, especially its upper echelons, lived in favorable economic circumstances."<sup>20</sup> Low insinuates that the economic circumstances of Jewish individuals contributed directly to the expansion of Judeophobia (anti-Semitism). Low claims that there was a fear of Jewish individuals succeeding the state.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, many Europeans (Germans specifically) believed in Jewish world domination, and held Jews to be religiously and culturally different. The Jews did not appeal to the "nationalistic ideals" of the German people (what these

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<sup>17</sup> Michael A. Meyer and et al., eds. *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>19</sup> Götz Aly, *Why the Germans? Why the Jews?: Envy, Race Hatred, and the Prehistory of the Holocaust*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Picador USA, 2011), 84.

<sup>20</sup> Alfred D. Low, *Jews in the Eyes of the Germans: From the Enlightenment to Imperial Germany* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues Philadelphia, 1979), 308.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

nationalistic ideals were varied from religious orientation to social structures of racial distinction).<sup>22</sup>

Although, Ritchie Robertson a Professor of German language does not dwell on the cultural influence that the Jewish population had on Germany, he does discuss the dissimilation of Jews in Germany as one that was estranged from the rest of the German population.<sup>23</sup> During WWI, Jewish individuals served a high percentage of the front line German service.<sup>24</sup> Since Jewish individuals consisted of a disproportionately high percentage of the German army, Jews were blamed by many for Germany's war efforts; "as the war became bogged down and the living conditions of civilians deteriorated, scapegoats were sought, and who better than the Jews to provide them?"<sup>25</sup> The once existing enthusiasm of WWI no longer existed. The Jewish population was held responsible for the tragedies of wartime, as the harsh realities of German loss were recognized.<sup>26</sup> After WWI, and entering into the years of the Weimar Republic, vocal anti-Semitism reached a peak, since Jews were deemed to be untrustworthy. Historian Donald L. Niewyk argues that the Jews were seen as economic threats, as "around a quarter of all wholesalers of agricultural products were Jewish... Jews were also important in the wholesale metal trades and the retail grocery business."<sup>27</sup> Although, the population of Jews in Germany

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<sup>22</sup> Alfred D. Low, *Jews in the Eyes of the Germans: From the Enlightenment to Imperial Germany* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues Philadelphia, 1979), 308.

<sup>23</sup> Ritchie Robertson, *The 'Jewish Question' in German Literature 1749-1939*, 380.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ritchie Robertson, *The 'Jewish Question' in German Literature 1749-1939*.

<sup>27</sup> Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 13.

totaled a small amount at this time, their economic impacts in Germany were significant (Jews were not prominent in the leadership of German industry, but they did maintain large roles as bankers).<sup>28</sup>

Politically, “Jewish Social Democrats were also instrumental in establishing revolutionary governments on the state level.”<sup>29</sup> Some Jewish members were considered radicals, since they promoted a worker’s democracy, in support against the German war effort.<sup>30</sup> Niewyk claims that this was considered an outrage too many Germans. Niewyk also claims that Germany wanted to prevent the rise of Communism and Marxism from spreading. However, Jews were/became interlinked to both parties, “Jewish individuals continued to hold prominent positions as Social Democratic and Communist parliamentary deputies, journalists, and party functionaries throughout the Weimar years.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, Niewyk attributes the political association of the Jews with their growing detest. Niewyk, like Meyer and Kaplan, note that Jewish individuals were outcasts due to their political positionalities, since communist and Marxist ideology was considered corrupt and erosive to German government leadership. Although, Niewyk does not present the economic and social positionalities of Jews that caused them to be “othered,” inevitably, as noted by other scholars, this happened.

Racist, radical appeals, also contributed to the dehumanization of Jewish bodies. Many scholars attribute the rise in colonialism and imperialism at the turn of the 19th century, as a

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<sup>28</sup> Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 13.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

factor contributing to the “othering” of Jewish bodies in Germany.<sup>32</sup> As mentioned, the physical culture movement (as defined by the growth in the modernization, urbanization, and increased industrialization within society) shaped the living conditions and accordance of health and beauty in Germany. The physical culture movement also spread theories affiliated with pseudoscience, which was used to “other” Jewish bodies. Historian, Christian S. Davis defends this idea, as he suggests that the building of Germany’s legacy was ignited by the perception that Jews were threats and racial aliens in society.<sup>33</sup> In a quest for racial domination and to overcome German domestic concerns of self-awareness and German culture, Jewish bodies were dehumanized.<sup>34</sup> Imperialism and colonialism were linked to the rise in racial anti-Semitism and patriotism in Germany.<sup>35</sup> However, German patriotism was not deemed biologically compatible with its Jewish counterparts.<sup>36</sup> Although, Jews were emancipated in Germany by 1871 and consisted of a large portion of the German middle class at this time, Davis argues that new anti-Semitism challenged the self-perception of Jewishness.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Christian S. Davis, *Colonialism, antisemitism, and Germans of Jewish descent in Imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012); Paul Weindling, *Health, race and German politics between national unification and Nazism, 1870-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Götz Aly, *Why the Germans? Why the Jews?: Envy, Race Hatred, and the Prehistory of the Holocaust*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Picador USA, 2011); Michael A. Meyer and et al., eds. *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

<sup>33</sup> Christian S. Davis, *Colonialism, antisemitism, and Germans of Jewish descent in Imperial Germany*, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Christian S. Davis, *Colonialism, antisemitism, and Germans of Jewish descent in Imperial Germany*, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

After the age of industrialization in Germany, society became more modernized and technologically advanced, resulting in the fear of biological degeneration in Germany. The rise in poor health from the age of industrialization in Europe, directly coincides with the rise in the physical culture movement, which in turn changed the perception of racial aestheticism and health in Germany. Weindling argues that politics administered through science, such as eugenics, were used to foster the population of Germany, “the close association of eugenics with ‘social hygiene’ shows how it was instrumental in bringing to light and offering solutions for the social problems that were perceived as manifest.”<sup>38</sup> Thus, this insinuated that the social problems that derived from society, led to the demise of the Jewish race given their scapegoating. Historian Richard Weikart argues that “the dreaded degeneration focused on two groups allegedly threatening the health and vitality of the human species: the disabled and those of non-European races.”<sup>39</sup> As exemplified in the scholarly literature Jews were considered to be different and not a part of the European race. Furthermore, Weindling argues “toward the end of the nineteenth century quite a few biological racists radicalized racial distinctions by stressing the supremacy of the German or ‘Aryan’ race and simultaneously denigrating the Jews.”<sup>40</sup> Ultimately both scholars, Weindling and Weikart, suggest that eugenics played an active role in German society, since eugenics provided answers of racial determinism, as well as the

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<sup>38</sup> Paul Weindling, *Health, race and German politics between national unification and Nazism, 1870-1945*, 17.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 3.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Weindling, *Health, race and German politics between national unification and Nazism, 1870-1945*, 117.

importance of maintaining the mental, physical, and moral traits of the German people.<sup>41</sup> Davis argues that German science contributed to the idea of Jewish difference: “the question of the location, origin, and character of Jewish difference fairly obsessed the German scientific community, and German ethnologists and physical anthropologists focused on Jews to a much greater extent than their counterparts in other countries.”<sup>42</sup> This leads directly to my research question on how Jewish bodies were “othered” during the physical culture movement.

While the scholars mentioned above provide incentives as to why Jewish bodies were “othered,” some scholars provide reasons as to how Jewish bodies were “othered.” Biomedicine historians: Marius Turda and Paul Weindling argue that the physical culture movement not only highlighted the desire to improve the nutrition and health of individuals, but it also motivated nations to perfect the physical and intellectual capabilities of the human body. Turda and Weindling suggest that social Darwinism and eugenics legitimized and strengthened the German national state, by encouraging healthy body politics through racial hygiene.<sup>43</sup> Turda and Weindling argue that pseudoscience, specifically eugenics, played a central role in improving the health of the German nation, by characterizing and determining the physical abnormalities of non-Aryan bodies.<sup>44</sup> As a result, racism and anti-Semitism heightened in Germany. Race

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<sup>41</sup> Paul Weindling, *Health, race and German politics between national unification and Nazism, 1870-1945*, 17; Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Christian S. Davis, *Colonialism, antisemitism, and Germans of Jewish descent in Imperial Germany*, 15.

<sup>43</sup> Marius Turda and Paul Weindling and et al., eds. *Blood and Homeland’: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940* (Herndon: Central European University Press, 2006), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

psychology, used to explain the characteristics and racial composition of individuals through their mental traits and cultural abilities, formed the core beliefs behind the scientific racism attributed to the intellectual and physical “othering” of Jewish bodies.<sup>45</sup>

As mentioned, the nationalization of racial programs in Germany resulted in the dehumanization of Jewish bodies. Psychologist William H. Tucker argues that during the physical culture movement, the term race became used as a way to categorize people.<sup>46</sup> In the nineteenth century, the term, race, was used to inform many scientists about racial investigations.<sup>47</sup> As expressed, “racial differences was claimed to be the key to social progress; public education, social harmony, national welfare, indeed the future of the species all said to depend on it... the necessity of racial segregation, the futility of education, the biological inevitability of vast socioeconomic disparities.”<sup>48</sup> Emotional and unscientific perceptions were attached to bodies. Thus, racial prejudice sparked social paranoia and discrimination against Jewish bodies.<sup>49</sup> Like Weindling and Turda, Tucker argues that Francis Galton’s approach of selective breeding, eugenics, played a large factor in providing proof of “Jewish difference.”<sup>50</sup> As Tucker explains, the Jews were not a part of the Aryan race, “‘blond, blue-eyed race’ was now faced with a tremendous influx of the ‘black-haired and black-eyed race,’ and the

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<sup>45</sup> Marius Turda and Paul Weindling and et al., eds. *Blood and Homeland’: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940.*

<sup>46</sup> William H. Tucker, *The Science and Politics of Racial Research* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 9.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>49</sup> Tucker, *The Science and Politics of Racial Research*, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 59.

eugenicists predicted ‘blood-chaos.’”<sup>51</sup> Turda suggests that eugenics provided an answer as to how and why it was necessary to eliminate the attempt of cross breeding between people of two different races. In the case of Germany, eugenics “protected” the “pure” Aryan blood from being contaminated by the impure Jewish blood.

In opposition to Tucker, Gustav Jahoda, an Austrian psychologist, argues that Jewish bodies were “othered” through the studies of physiognomy and phrenology (as mentioned before, physiognomy connects the physical features of an individual to their ethnic origins, whereas phrenology, connects the size of the cranium, to the intellectual abilities of an individual).<sup>52</sup> Jahoda states: “the development of ‘craniology’ was paralleled and reinforced through ideological writings about ‘Nordic’ superiority,” therefore, subjecting all other bodies.<sup>53</sup> As expressed, anatomical features and skull shapes were synonymous to a person’s race.<sup>54</sup> Jahoda argues, that as a member of the superior race, the Nordic cranium exemplified the ideal intellectual capabilities of an individual, which lowered the standards of Jewish intelligence. Physiognomy was also used to further this idea of Nordic racial superiority in Germany: “the typical Nordic; mean male height 1.7m, CI: 70-74; they were said to be enterprising, ambitious, energetic, courageous; figures for the latter were 1.60-1.65 m and 84-85.”<sup>55</sup> In Germany, human beings were categorized into different racial classifications, which determined the idealism of their ethnic origins, such as the Nordic body being deemed as excellent. However, this ideology

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<sup>51</sup> Tucker, *The Science and Politics of Racial Research*, 60.

<sup>52</sup> Jahoda, “Intra-European Racism in Nineteenth-Century Anthropology, 37.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Jahoda, “Intra-European Racism in Nineteenth-Century Anthropology, 37.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 50.

was not only prevalent in Germany, the belief of Nordic perfection stemmed from the physical culture movement, and was vividly demonstrated in imagery and literature. As a result, the bodies of other races were compared to the bodies of Nordic perfection. Therefore, Jahoda suggests that because of this ideology, Jewish bodies were “othered.” The physical nature of Jews and racist doctrines that emerged, categorized Jewish bodies as “physically” and “intellectually” inferior to Nordic bodies.

Similarly to Jahoda, historian: Efron, contends to how racial science was used to categorize the characteristics of Jewish bodies.<sup>56</sup> Efron argues that the scientific establishment of the “Jewish racial question,” contributed to the physical “othering” of Jewish bodies.<sup>57</sup> Like Jahoda, Efron claims that phrenology played an important role in providing the methodological basis for Jewish racial characteristics. Jacob, one of the most preeminent Austrian researchers of Jewish characteristics (during the physical culture movement) “addressed the crucial subject of skull shape, reporting that, based upon 120,000 craniometric measurements of Jews, they were predominately brachycephalic (round headed).”<sup>58</sup> Efron argues that social and environmental issues affected the cranium of Jews. Whereas he also claims that scientists such as Ripley, regarded the Jewish head as deviant from the Semitic head shape, due to the “abnormalities” of the Jews hair color and nose size.<sup>59</sup> Likewise, historian Sander Gilman, elaborates on Efron and

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<sup>56</sup> John M., Efron, "Commentary: Jewish genetic origins in the context of past historical and anthropological inquiries," *Human Biology* 85, no. 6 (December 2013): 901-918, *MEDLINE with Full Text*, EBSCOhost, 901.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 904.

<sup>58</sup> John M., Efron, "Commentary: Jewish genetic origins in the context of past historical and anthropological inquiries," 906.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 909.

Jahoda's argument of racial theories being used to "other" Jewish bodies, with discourse on the Jewish body. Gilman states that the Jewish foot, served as a sign of suffering.<sup>60</sup> If a Jew wanted to become an "ideal citizen," a Jew would need to overcome this abnormality, which made it difficult for Jews to become good citizens, since they were unable to physically alter their feet.<sup>61</sup> Gilman also maintains that the nose and feet of Jews, served as indicators of their Jewish bodies.<sup>62</sup> These indicators further convey the complications associated with Jewish bodies not being able/capable of serving in the army, due to Jews belonging to a separate "body politic."<sup>63</sup>

In connection to this idea of the Jewish foot serving as a sign of suffering, Gilman argues that "the shape of the Jew's foot is read in the context as the structure of the Jewish mind, the pathognomic status of the Jew's body as a sign of the Jew's inherent difference."<sup>64</sup> The inherited qualities of the Jewish body were tied to the social abnormalities of their body. Whereas the nose, was seen as an inferior biological type, "the Jew's nose could not be 'reformed.'" Interrelated with the meaning of skin was the meaning of the Jew's physiognomy, especially the Jew's nose."<sup>65</sup> Gilman claims that the shape of the nose: the "hawkness" and "sharpness," indicated a Jewish person's shrewdness and mannerisms.<sup>66</sup> Gilman also argues that by the end of the 19th century, Jews were considered to be the "quintessential city dwellers" that contaminated

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<sup>60</sup> Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 42.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 49.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

cities with disease.<sup>67</sup> As many of the scholars have noted, the pseudoscientific findings that developed during the physical culture movement, derived from racial theories, in which “othered” Jewish bodies. On the other hand, anthropologist Pat Shipman argues that after Darwin’s evolutionary theory was created, the theory not only affected the positionality of human beings, but also perceptions made about humanity. Darwin’s theory of evolution proposes that species change, and also that homogenous blends of cultures exist.<sup>68</sup> During the physical culture movement, Darwin’s theory was used to answer the political, social, and racial inequalities that derived in society. Furthermore, science became a means of commercialized leisure and Shipman argues that Herbert Spencer’s concept of society, and the survival of the fittest: social Darwinism, was reflective of Darwin’s evolutionary theory.<sup>69</sup> Shipman suggests that Spencer connected an individual’s race to their class, in order to achieve perfection.<sup>70</sup>

Similarly to Tucker, Shipman argues that Francis Galton related class and race to hereditary likeability. Shipman states: “eugenics was rooted in the nineteenth-century confusion of national identity with races and nourished by the unease provoked by the bewildering array of social and economic changes that occurred at the turn of the century.”<sup>71</sup> Shipman projects that industrialization not only enhanced social class separations, but it also separated people. Shipman argues that after the industrial revolution, the Jewish population gained many economic

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<sup>67</sup> Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*, 49.

<sup>68</sup> Pat Shipman, *The Evolution of Racism: Human Differences and the Use and Abuse of Science* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 107.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 116.

and social opportunities, which led to their detest. Shipman also claims that scientists bridged eugenics, social Darwinism and Darwinism together, to intellectually and physically “other” Jewish bodies. Tucker affirms that German biologist: Ernst Haeckel especially, bridged Darwinism, social Darwinism and eugenics together through various germ cell theories, in order to ensure the genetic purification of Aryan bodies.<sup>72</sup> Thus, the germ cell theories connoted Jewish bodies as inferior.

### **Argument:**

The physical culture movement led directly to the emergence of racial aesthetics and typologies in Germany. As evidenced in the previous section, the physical culture movement impacted the positionality of Jews socially, economically, politically, culturally, and religiously. Using aesthetic representations, Jewish bodies were “othered” due to the negative perceptions formed about their bodies. Therefore, pseudoscience and racial theories such as eugenics, phrenology, and physiognomy, were used to define the physical abnormalities and deviant intellectual abilities of Jewish bodies, resulting in the “othering” of their bodies.

### **Why were Jewish bodies “othered?”**

Prolific English writer Hilaire Belloc, in his book *The Jews*, writes about the overwhelming fear that permeated society regarding the Jewish population. Belloc, talks about the abhorred presence of Jews nationally.<sup>73</sup> He claims that, “as the Jews permeated the society of the West everywhere, as he everywhere intermarried with the Europeans of the wealthier class,

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<sup>72</sup> Pat Shipman, *The Evolution of Racism: Human Differences and the Use and Abuse of Science*, 132.

<sup>73</sup> Hilaire Belloc, *The Jews* (London: Constable, 1922), <https://archive.org/details/jewsbello00belluoft>.

to insist in his presence upon his separate nationality would have been odious; it would have been like making a guest feel out of place in one's home."<sup>74</sup> As expressed, the Jew appeared to be interfering in the regular activities of German life. Since they were culturally, socially, and religiously "different," the Jewish element was threatening. The problem with the Jewish German relationship was "the presence within one political organism of another political organism at friction with it: the strains set up by such an unnatural state of affairs; the risk of disaster to the lesser body and of hurt to both."<sup>75</sup> Depicted as the lesser body, the Jew was considered to be putting the European white man at risk. The physical culture movement confirmed the elitism of the white national body and the degeneracy of the Jewish body. Here, the Jew is considered abnormal and deviant, as they were perceived to be "dominating "community life, as well as the general populace of the international finance community."<sup>76</sup> Jews were also considered dominating in the Bolshevik movement, among other institutions, which contributed to their "othering" as evil beings.<sup>77</sup>

In Germany specifically, the "influence of the Jewish spirit" and the "Jewish entity" were considered to have negative impacts on humanity.<sup>78</sup> In his book *The Riddle of Jewish Success* by German journalist Theodor Fritsch, Fritsch examines the Jewish influence in different areas of

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<sup>74</sup> Hilaire Belloc, *The Jews*

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Theodor Fritsch, *The Riddle of Jewish Success*, trans. Capel Pownall (Leipzig: Hammer-Verlag, 1927), <https://archive.org/details/TheRiddleOfTheJewsSuccess>.

life. Not only does Fritsch examine and “identify peculiarities” of the Jewish type, but he observes the corrupt economic nature of Jews:

1. The Hebrew enhances and accelerates the circulation of Money [*sic*].
2. He mobilises [*sic*] slumbering values: lets loose balanced and reposing forces
3. He practices “Raubbau,” (Predatory Culture)\* at the extent of the stored-up forces of Nature and Mankind. At this junction must also be taken into consideration:
4. The “Playing into one another’s hands” (secret understanding) of the Hebrews.
5. The strange Morality.<sup>79</sup>

As depicted in this quote, Fritsch claims that the economic progression of the Jews was “threatening” to the German nation. He claims that Jews “came as a stranger into this kind of existence... whom nobody had summoned, and whom nobody desired to see. Moreover, he was not united to the native inhabitants of the land, either by tie of blood, or by a common history, or by patriotism, or by religious and social views.”<sup>80</sup> As conveyed here, the Jew was ridiculed for attempting to assimilate in society. As distinct foreign bodies, they were determined to be unworthy of obtaining any form of power. Therefore, it can be inferred that the physical culture movement aligned racial theories and economic ideology together, in order to create a social hierarchy in society and to achieve the desired Nordic Utopian German nation.

The alienation of the Jewish people is also evidenced in the Jew’s separation from the community, since they were considered to be dishonest and self-centered (as noted by German professor Ritchie Robertson).<sup>81</sup> The German perception of the cultural and economic terms of Jewish gain were perceived to be indicators of the Jews needing to be isolated from the rest of

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<sup>79</sup> Theodor Fritsch, *The Riddle of Jewish Success*

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Robertson, Ritchie, *The ‘Jewish Question’ in German Literature 1749-1939*, 160.

German life. Famous composer Richard Wagner notes in his book *Judaism in Music and Other Essays* that the Jew:

Stands in correlation with none but those who need his money: and never yet has money thriven to the point of knitting a goodly bond betwixt man and man. Alien and apathetic stands the educated Jew in a midst of a society he does not understand, with whose tastes and aspirations he does not sympathise (sic), whose history and evolution have always been indifferent to him.<sup>82</sup>

In this excerpt, Wagner conveys the idea of Jews being incapable of loving or caring about others in the community. It was understood that Jews strictly concentrated on their own economic gains. As a result, they were seen as money hungry individuals that were only interested in dominating the German financial sector. As mentioned, the physical culture movement derived from the increase in industrialization. The more technology Germany gained, the more opportunities the Jews were able to obtain in the German commercial sector. Despite their gain; however, Jews were labeled as conniving.

Hermann Ahlwardt, another anti-Semite and member of the Reichstag (parliament), petitioned to the national legislature in his speech on German border control, that Jews were a poison to Germany, and economically monstrous.<sup>83</sup> Due to the fleeing of Jews from Russian pogroms, many Jews came to Germany, in order to have a better life.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, he elaborates on the “corrupt” economic nature of the Jewish body in his speech, “wherever there are opportunities to make money, the Jews have established themselves, but not in order to work-no,

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<sup>82</sup> Robertson, Ritchie, *The ‘Jewish Question’ in German Literature 1749-1939*.

<sup>83</sup> Hermann Ahlwardt, “The Jews versus the Germans” in *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, eds. Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 110-111.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

they let others work for them and take what others have produced by their labor...”<sup>85</sup>

Economically, the Jews were seen as threats, since they were “stealing” the jobs of the German people and/or taking advantage of the labor produced by others. Although we often associate the physical culture movement with the desire to improve the physical body. The physical culture movement also encouraged the improvement of mental health. Corrupt in nature, the Jew was seen as undesirable mentally and physically. Therefore, Ahlwardt critiques the German Jewish culture, by denying the entry and citizenship of Jews, “the Jew is no German. If you say, the Jew was born in Germany, he was nursed by a German wet-nurse, he abides by German laws, he has to serve as a soldier-and what kind of soldier at that!”<sup>86</sup> Thus, he is relaying that the Jew does not represent the common life and/or identity of the German nation, but instead the Jew “schemes” against the German system and threatens their lives.

In connection to the “demoralizing” behavior of the Jewish population, the Jewish spirit was portrayed as being in direct contradiction with the Germanic spirit. Konstantin Von Gebattel, a retired general, wrote a proposal on German Jewish status. Although he was not anti-Semitic, his proposals served as the foundation for many “Aryanization” theories and commitments during and after the physical culture movement ended.<sup>87</sup> He states that the German nation’s “entire life is dominated and endangered by the Jewish spirit: internal affairs by the great banks directed by Jews, legal affairs by the huge number of Jewish lawyers in the big

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<sup>85</sup>Hermann Ahlwardt, “The Jews versus the Germans” in *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, 111-112.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>87</sup> Hermann Ahlwardt, “The Jewish Threat” in *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, eds. Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 116.

cities, cultural affairs by the many Jewish university professors and the most exclusively Jewish theatre directors and critics.”<sup>88</sup> Culturally, socially, politically, and economically, the Jew was portrayed to be a danger to the German nation. As expressed the physical culture movement placed a great emphasis on perfecting the racial and bodily aesthetic of the German nation. Since the Nordic bodies were deemed to be the “superior” bodies, Jews were lowered in the pedestal of perfection, since they were considered to be “inferior” bodies.<sup>89</sup> As a result, Konstantin Von Gebattel notes that the Jewish body should be alien under law.<sup>90</sup> As expressed, there was a desire to control the mixing of the Germanic and Jewish “races” by considering Jews as guests of the nation, but not as members of the nation.<sup>91</sup> Heinrich Class, a member of the Pan-German League also expresses his anti-Semitic views, as a means of protecting the German people. He believed that the moral, political, religious, cultural and economic branches of life were under Jewish spell, which was a concern to the German state.<sup>92</sup> As inferior bodies, the Jew was considered to be an enemy of the state.

The economic, social, cultural, religious, and political positionalities that contributed to why Jewish bodies were “othered” can be attributed to the growing movement surrounding the dehumanization of Jewish bodies within its dissemination. In the 1920s, Adolf Hitler, expressed his concerns with the Jewish population in his speech “Why Are We Antisemites?” and his book

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<sup>88</sup> Hermann Ahlwardt, “The Jewish Threat”

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>92</sup> Hermann Ahlwardt, “The Pan-German League” in *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, eds. Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 118.

*Mein Kampf*. In a speech from 1920 that he breaks up into categories, he notes that since the Jews are unable to live in a state of their own, they go to other states, and therefore, live as parasites.<sup>93</sup> Hitler proceeds to talk about the destruction of the state capital with the threat of the Jewish influence on the investment of money, as well as how Jewish culture and the racial quality of the Jews, directly threatens the lives of the German people.<sup>94</sup> This is significant to recognize since Jewish bodies were subjected not only because of their “physical abnormalities,” but also for the falsified public opinion surrounding them. The mentality of the Jewish people was deemed as being impure and full of deceit. In his book, *Mein Kampf*, written in 1925, Hitler explicitly connects the factors of Jewish life to their corrupt influence on the German people.<sup>95</sup> He notes that the Jew “batters the national economies... in politics he refuses to give the state the means for its self-preservation... in cultural affairs he pollutes art, literature, theatre... religion is made ridiculous, custom and morals are declared outdated...”<sup>96</sup> As conveyed in this passage, Jewish intelligence, tendencies, and thinking was ridiculed and exploited. Instead of the Jews being considered the subjects of victimization, the Nordic body was deemed as being the victim of the “bloodthirsty and money thirsty Jewish tyrants.”<sup>97</sup> The fear of Jewish expansion was in

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<sup>93</sup> Hermann Ahlwardt, “Why Are We Antisemites?” in *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, eds. Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 164.

<sup>94</sup> Hermann Ahlwardt, “Why Are We Antisemites?” in *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, 168-170.

<sup>95</sup> Hermann Ahlwardt, *Mein Kampf* in *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, eds. Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 172.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

full fledge. The Jew was considered to be a parasite and a disgrace; an affliction to the purity of the pristine German people by “racially poisoning” individuals with their blood through intermarriage and propagation.<sup>98</sup> Ultimately, the physical culture movement projected racial ideology throughout Europe, and explicitly in Germany, which led to the “othering” of Jewish bodies.

### **How were Jewish bodies “othered?”**

How Jewish bodies were “othered” was projected through racial pseudoscience, theories, and myths, which deemed Jewish bodies as abnormal. Thus, it is important to understand the evolution of German racial discourse that constructed the ideal appearance and expression of individual’s in connection to Nordic perfection. This traces back to the physical culture movement, which inspired the study of racial pseudoscience as a tool used to perfect the health, physical appearance, and intellectual abilities of the body. The Jewish body was merely a secondary race, lower than the Nordic body, which exemplified the definitive, racially pure race of the German nation. In Hans F.K. Gunther’s book: *The Racial Elements of European History*, we are introduced to this perception of the Nordic body; the Nordic body is “tall, long-headed, narrow-faced, with prominent chin; narrow nose, with high bridge; soft, smooth, or wavy light (golden-fair) hair; deep-sunk light (blue or grey) eyes; rosy-white skin.”<sup>99</sup> Gunther’s book is an important source since it is conveying the relevance of pseudoscientific and anthropologic ideology in society that shaped and created racial discourse at the time. More specifically, Gunther’s book provides the foundation for and findings that were determined to identify the

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<sup>98</sup> Hermann Ahlwardt, *Mein Kampf*.

<sup>99</sup> Hans F.K. Gunther, *The Racial Elements of European History*, trans. G.C. Wheeler (London: Methuen and Company LTD, 1992), <http://www.resist.com/Onlinebooks/RacialEuropeanHistory-Gunther.pdf>, 7.

bodily, environmental, and intellectual characteristics of the European races, as well as the racial strand of others outside of Europe, such as the Jewish population.<sup>100</sup>

The Nordic race is described by Gunther as having derived from Germanic origins.<sup>101</sup> Gunther describes the Nordic race as being the ideal race of the German people, and the answer to maintaining the purity of Aryan blood.<sup>102</sup> This ties into the foundation of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, in which it was perceived that natural selection would provide a destiny for the German people.<sup>103</sup> The physical culture movement used various theories formed to racially construct people, by claiming the deviation of their bodies with the degeneracy of the norm. Thus, Charles Darwin's theories could be used to verify the ugliness and/or beauty of the body in terms of sexual selection. In this case, the normality of Jewish bodies could be delineated as weak. In contrast to Darwin, Francis Galton conveys that "it is not environment but the heredity which is the decisive factor for all living beings."<sup>104</sup> This is important to note because Galton structured the scientific theories of heritable breeding, whereas, Darwin believed that the environment in and or from which someone lives affects their ability to reproduce and survive. However, Galton's ideas triggered and influenced the Nordic movement in Germany. Since Nordic "blood" existed in Germany, Nordic birth was made possible: "thus German societies have been founded aiming at the propagation of the Nordic ideal."<sup>105</sup> As these works exemplify,

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<sup>100</sup> Hans F.K. Gunther, *The Racial Elements of European History*.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Hans F.K. Gunther, *The Racial Elements of European History*.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

the Nordic body became the symbol of German purity and identity. However, this was not only the case in Germany. As an international phenomenon, the physical culture movement deemed the Nordic body as the ideal race. These sources and theories served as a foundation upon which Jewish bodies would be cast out from supposedly perceptible normality's, and as "abnormal" bodies. The Jews, as Hans F.K. Gunther recalls, are a racial strand considered to be outside of the European races.<sup>106</sup>

Not only was the Jewish cranium determined to be different than the cranium of the Nordic body, but the Jewish nose, skin color, and height, etc. was also deemed to be different.<sup>107</sup> As a result of the difference in their cranium and other physical attributes, the inherited characteristics of the Jews were constructed as racially abnormal and strange, thus, making them a "secondary race."<sup>108</sup> Images employed in theoretical texts and in German and European representations are utilized to reinforce the notion that the Jewish body was seen as inferior. As exemplified in figure 1, these are facial images of Jewish boys.<sup>109</sup> These pictures that were published in the American *Photographic News* by Francis Galton, show the composites of the "Jewish type" on the right, and the components and profiles of the Jewish type on the left.<sup>110</sup> These images are important since they show how Jewish bodies were classified and "othered" due to their physical attributes. At this time, eugenics became a phenomenon internationally.

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<sup>106</sup> Hans F.K. Gunther, *The Racial Elements of European History*.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Francis Galton, "Illustrations of Composite Portraiture, The Jewish Type," Images in *The Photographic News*, Eugenics Archive, 1885, [http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view\\_image.pl?id=2217](http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=2217).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

This is a clear trajectory resulting from the physical culture movement. Although these images were published by Galton in America, in Germany, these images were also projected in the media due to the spread of this movement in America and in Europe. Thus, these images are being used to reflect the physical undesirability's of German Jews.

Although, the images of the Jewish children do not explicitly exemplify the intellectual abilities of Jews, it can be inferred in Galton's research that he would use the measurements of various Jewish profiles, to determine the intellectual abilities and characteristics of Jews by using their cranium structures.<sup>111</sup> In displaying their bodies as inferior, eugenicists, specifically Galton, used bodily measurements to compare the abnormalities and normality's of an individual to their race, in order to determine the prototype and genetic makeup of people. Figures 2 and 3 are images published by Francis Galton. However, these were produced in England, which shows the influence Galton's findings had on society. Additionally, it is important to note that these images were used to capture the physiognomy of the Jewish population. Using these images, Galton captured what he saw as the Jewish "essence."<sup>112</sup> Francis Galton believed that the Jewish essence was distinct.<sup>113</sup> He thought it would reveal the "cold, scanning gaze" of the Jewish population and their inferiority from the rest of society.<sup>114</sup> Based on these images, one can infer that these profile images were used to project the hooked Jewish nose and the dark complexion of the Jewish eyes. Thus, revealing to us that Jewish bodies were "othered" through various representations of pseudoscientific imagery.

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<sup>111</sup> Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 64.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

In connection to the “othering” of Jewish bodies using pseudoscientific imagery is the “othering” of the Jewish nose through physiognomy and eugenics. During the physical culture movement, forms of pseudoscience were used to project racial distinctions and body abnormalities, such as the nose. London pseudoscientist, George Jabet, determined the Jewish nose to be “very convex, and reserves its convexity like a bow, throughout the whole length from the eyes to the tip. It is thin and sharp... it indicates considerable shrewdness in worldly matters; a deep insight into character, and facility of turning that insight into profitable account.”<sup>115</sup> In this statement, Jabet is determining the ethnic features of a Jew (based on the perceived physical traits/features of the Jews) and then connecting it to their character traits. He is also comparing the intellectual abilities of the Jewish body to their physical qualities. Although Jabet is not German, “physicians” and “scientists” across the Western world drew insights from one another and influenced one another’s work. This is a direct result of the physical culture movement. The emphasis on the inherited traits of the body, such as the nose, derived from stereotypes that were used to determine the physical features of individuals in relation to their race, such as the case of the Jewish nose being an indicator of their bodies. This is another reason why German anthropologists studied the size of Jewish nostrils, as they were used to determine the undesirability’s of Jewish inheritance through interbreeding.<sup>116</sup>

In further elaboration on the physical “othering” of Jewish bodies, is the case of the Berlin Medical Academy, in which doctors practiced their first medical procedure on a Jewish nose (what we refer to today as plastic surgery). Figure 6 is an image of a Jewish person and

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<sup>115</sup> Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*, 179.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

their physical transformation both before and after their nose job.<sup>117</sup> In the upper left hand corner, the man in the picture has wide nostrils and a curved large nose.<sup>118</sup> In the bottom left hand corner, the individual's nose is straight and the nostril is smaller.<sup>119</sup> The person in this image received a nose job since "his nose was the source of considerable annoyance. Wherever he went, everybody stared at him; often, he was the target of remarks or ridiculing gestures."<sup>120</sup> Jacques Joseph, the doctor who conducted this procedure, was known for his contribution in fixing the "inferior" parts of the Jewish body: the foot, the protruding ear, and, in this instance, the nose.<sup>121</sup> The Jewish nose was portrayed as a degeneracy of the Jewish body. Therefore, after corrective measures, the visibility and likeability of the Jewish nose would increase (although, this would not eliminate the harshness associated with the "physical abnormalities" of the Jewish body). Furthermore, this aesthetic "correction" can be traced back to the physical culture movement, as the physical culture movement encouraged ways of altering the physical physique, in order to perfect and beautify the physical body.<sup>122</sup> Although, the altering of the physical body did not implicitly mean surgically altering the body, corsets, and other tools were used to improve and/or correct body "imperfections."<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 179.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 179.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930*.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

Interrelated with the physicality of the Jewish nose were the conditions perceived of the Jewish foot. While physiognomy “othered” Jewish bodies by focusing on the facial features of the Jews, other forms of pseudoscience also “othered” different parts of the Jewish body. The feet of the Jewish body were often portrayed and described in ill terms. As depicted in figure 4, the Jewish foot is flat; it looks peculiar in shape and the toenail is perhaps infected with fungi.<sup>124</sup> This image was culled from the German book *Handbuch der Kosmetik*, which was published in 1912.<sup>125</sup> As described in this book, the Jewish foot was determined to be diseased.<sup>126</sup> In further elaboration on the discourse of the Jewish foot, figure 5, compares the way Jewish people walk to a criminal and an epileptic.<sup>127</sup> A long standing stereotype is that Jews were merchants and because of their profession, their feet were deformed.<sup>128</sup> This traces back to the ideology that Jewish individuals dominated city life.<sup>129</sup> As a merchant, you travel, and it was assumed that as a Jewish merchant, a Jew would carry their disease.<sup>130</sup> Figuratively, the Jews were spreading illnesses from their diseased feet, and literally, they were spreading their undesirable heritable traits to the nation by breeding with other individuals.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Gustav Muskat, *Handbuch der Kosmetik* in *The Jew's Body*, Sander Gilman (New York: Routledge, 1991), 41.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 49.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

The concern of Jewish breeding, as well as concerns with the aesthetic representation and physical abnormalities of the Jewish body were also projected through mass media. The physical culture movement was commercialized in films, magazines, performances, advertisements, and literature, etc. These forms of media production, were used to project “idealistic” terms of healthy and beautiful bodies. Emerging from the age of industrialization and technological innovation, the corporeal industry in Europe was ambitious. Thus, body politics were highlighted in various photographic images and movies, to highlight the natural, pleasurable, and desirable body.<sup>132</sup> However, these forms of media also highlighted what was considered to be abnormal. Thus, the physical culture movement capitalized and facilitated the racial superiority and elitism of the Nordic body through the media. *Nosferatu* directed by F.W. Murnau explicitly exemplifies the stereotypes and physical depiction of Jews in Germany during the physical culture movement. F.W. Murnau was a German motion picture director who revolutionized cinematic expression through the emotionality of his characters, as portrayed in this film. In this adaptation of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, there are strong parallels between the main character Count Orlok to the various German stereotypes of Eastern European Jewry. A description of Dracula offered by Charlotte Hansen describes him as such: “hair growing scantily around the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl to its own profusion.”<sup>133</sup> Although not directly identified as a Jewish body in the text, Stoker was anti-Semitic, and many of the references made in his novel reflect

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<sup>132</sup> Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930*.

<sup>133</sup> Charlotte Hansen, “Anti-Semitism in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*,” *Methods of Literature and Cultural Studies*, 2015, <https://blogs.commonsgeorgetown.edu/engl-090-02-spring2015/2015/02/25/anti-semitism-in-bram-stokers-dracula/>.

the desire to construct the racial aesthetic of Jews.<sup>134</sup> Hence why Dracula is portrayed as an alien body in society, as is Count Orlok.

In *Nosferatu*, Count Orlok (the vampire like creature in the movie) has a pointed nose, is lacking a “normal” physical body, and has large ears, bushy eyebrows and a pale face (all of which were stereotypes of Eastern European Jewry and are in parallel to Bram Stoker’s: *Dracula*).<sup>135</sup> This film provides evidence of anti-Semitic overtones. Firstly, this film traces back to and connects to the concept of the blood libel in the Middle Ages, in which Jews were accused of murdering Christian children, in order to use their blood as part of their Jewish rituals. Furthermore, *Nosferatu*’s physical features are vermin/rat like, which exemplifies the myth that Jews were responsible for the spread of disease and killing masses during the plague.<sup>136</sup> In the film, there are also a number of rats that are transported with him in his coffin, which relays this concept of the spread of Jewish disease.<sup>137</sup> The film also suggests themes of sexuality and interbreeding. In the film, *Nosferatu* is trying to buy a home next to Thomas Hutter, and beckons Hutter to his home in Transylvania, and upon arrival Hutter notices the true evilness of *Nosferatu*.<sup>138</sup> *Nosferatu* finds an image of Nina (Hutter’s wife) and he desires to have a taste of her beautiful neck.<sup>139</sup> However, he is also made effeminate and demasculinized because of his

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<sup>134</sup> Charlotte Hansen, “Anti-Semitism in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.”

<sup>135</sup> F. W., Murnau et al., *Nosferatu*, [videorecording]: a symphony of horror. N.p.: Wiesbaden: Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung (New York: [Distributed by] Kino International, 2007) SUNY New Paltz Library Catalog, EBSCOhost.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

thin and gangly limbs and long fingernails.<sup>140</sup> Often, the physical culture movement highlighted the abnormalities of bodies, in order to shape and perfect them. In this film, *Nosferatu* is not only physically abnormal, but mentally, as he is seen as demonic. He is also dehumanized in terms of his sexual desire and breeding (since he would tamper the purity of the desirable Nordic race, as a Jew).

Another film that exhibits the stereotypes and abnormalities of the Jewish character is the movie *The Golem* directed by Paul Wegener and Henrik Galeen. Although, this movie was made in 1915, it takes place in Prague during the 16th Century.<sup>141</sup> Similar to *Nosferatu*, this film highlights not only the abnormalities of the Jewish body, but the spiritual, religious, cultural, and intellectual abnormalities of Jews. In the movie, the Golem, a large figure made out of clay is created by a Rabbi, in order to prevent Jewish persecution.<sup>142</sup> *The Golem* highlights the peculiarities of the Jewish Golem tradition and identifies the problematic character of the Jew. This Jewish folk tale infers anti-Semitism through the satanic depiction of wizardry attached to the Rabbi who created this creature.<sup>143</sup> In other words, the film resembles the aesthetic features and construction of the racialized Jewish body. In the film, the Golem commits a series of murders and falls in love with Jessica, the dealer's wife, which threatens the purity of the German woman.<sup>144</sup> Like Count Orlok, the Golem is a monster. Therefore, this movie projects the

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<sup>140</sup> F. W., Murnau et al., *Nosferatu*.

<sup>141</sup> Paul Wegener and Henrik Galeen, "Der Golem 1915-Paul Wegner and Henrik Galeen," Youtube, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4neORSuGU6A>.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

tensions that existed in German society, as the growth of the physical culture movement heightened the detest of the Jewish population in Germany, by emphasizing the abnormalities of Jewish bodies.

In relation to infiltrating the city, folktales and literature were two other forms of media used to “other” Jewish bodies. “The Legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin” is one such folktale that traces back to the 13th Century, when a rat plague infested the area of Hamelin, leaving the citizens of Hamelin in desperate need of help.<sup>145</sup> A stranger, who played the pipe claimed to be a rat catcher and could eliminate the rats and mice for a small fee.<sup>146</sup> Victorious in his affairs, he cleared up the rat situation, but his reward was not received, thus, he sought to seek revenge.<sup>147</sup> Figure 7 is a picture called the “Rat Catcher.”<sup>148</sup> This image appeared in an anti-Semitic pamphlet so as to connect the abnormalities of Jewish bodies to this German fairy tale. In the image, the Piper of Hamelin is luring the rats with his pipe.<sup>149</sup> These rats are supposed to represent the “Jewish Press.”<sup>150</sup> As depicted in this image, Jews were often physically viewed as vermin like. Thus, this picture dehumanizes the Jewish population.

Connected to this vermin like depiction of the Jewish population, is Franz Kafka's “The Metamorphosis.” Written from the perspective of an Austrian-Hungarian Jew, Franz Kafka

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<sup>145</sup> Helen Page, “The Legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin,” Travel sign posts: Germany, N/A, <http://www.travelsignposts.com/Germany/sightseeing/pied-piper-of-hamelin>.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Helen Page, “The Legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.”

<sup>148</sup> “Rat Catcher,” in “The Pied Piper of Hamelin,” (Dresden: N/A, 1899).

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

writes about the physical transformation of a traveling salesman, Gregor Samsa, who turns into a large vermin like creature.<sup>151</sup> In this short story, Samsa is the breadwinner of his family and provides long and grueling hours as a Salesman, despite his distaste for the position.<sup>152</sup> However, this is short lived, as one day Samsa wakes up and is physically transformed:

As Gregor Samsa awoke from unsettling dreams one morning, he found himself transformed in his bed into a monstrous vermin. He lay on his hard armorlike back and when he raised his head a little he saw his vaulted brown belly divided into sections by stiff arches from whose height the coverlet had already slipped and was about to slide off completely. His many legs, which were pathetically thin compared to the rest of his bulk, flickered helplessly before his eyes.<sup>153</sup>

Gregor Samsa, questions his transformation and new identity. He is no longer the breadwinner of his family, but the sight of detest. Even after his transformation, Gregor wants to provide for his family, and longs for acceptance, but he realizes that his family and others are repulsed by his condition.<sup>154</sup> As noted in the introduction to the text, “The Metamorphosis” is a fictional story that is based off of Kafka’s personal life, “in which he translated his experience as a family breadwinner into a parable of alienation, transformation, and ultimately death.”<sup>155</sup> Therefore, Kafka is writing about his experience as a Jewish individual and his perception as a foreign, deviant body. Gregor Samsa’s physical transformation and positionality, resembles the increase in anti-Semitism within society and its bodily impact. The physical culture movement was prevalent in various areas of Europe and although Kafka is not German, the various theories and

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<sup>151</sup> Franz Kafka, “The Metamorphosis,” in *The Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, trans. and ed. by Donna Freed (New York: Barnes & Nobles Books, 2003).

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Franz Kafka, “The Metamorphosis,” 7.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 5.

findings of pseudoscientists were spread massively. As already exemplified in “The Rat Catcher” image and even in *Nosferatu*, Jews were revered as vermin-like creatures. There is a metaphorical depiction of decay and decline that permeates these works, which suggests the limited mobility and the hatred enacted toward the Jewish body. However, both the Germans and German Jews were thematizing Jewish bodies in literature as a response to the physical culture movement. This, however, was only one approach taken.

### **Counter Argument:**

Although, I argue that the intellectual abilities and physical physiques of Jews bodies were “othered” in Germany during the physical culture movement, many scholars counter this argument. Some scholars claim that Jewish bodies were not deviated, since a lot of Jew’s were physically fit.<sup>156</sup> Other scholars suggest that Jews had to fight their projected body “deviancy” by joining Jewish athletic institutions, in order to better their bodies and to prove that the construct created about their bodies were false.<sup>157</sup> Lastly, other scholars argue that Jewish organizations, such as the Zionist Movement contributed to the “othering” of their own Jewish bodies. As expressed, the physical culture movement centered on the physical health and improvement of bodies. In direct response to this movement, Jewish individuals established athletic institutions, to help perfect and strengthen their bodies. Established in 1898 was the first Jewish gymnastic society in Berlin, as well as a Jewish periodical in 1900.<sup>158</sup> Figure 8 is an image of the Jewish

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<sup>156</sup> Meyer, Michael A. et al., eds. *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, 143.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 144.

athletic association Bar Kochba in Berlin.<sup>159</sup> In this image, the Jewish individual is not dehumanized and weak, but is muscular.<sup>160</sup> Compared to the imagery in the film *Nosferatu* where Count Orlok's body is slim and looks peculiar, in this image, the Jewish bodies are strong, fit, and healthy, proving that not every Jewish body was deemed as abnormal. Turning away from confinement, this image portrays signs of Jewish strength and physical growth.<sup>161</sup> However, as scholar Michael A. Meyer notes, Jewish organizational life and athletic associations sparked from anti-Semitic reactions.<sup>162</sup>

Other scholars argue that Jewish organizations centered on occupational redistribution, led to the establishment of Jewish gymnastic societies as being the “centers of nationalist activity.”<sup>163</sup> Jews were able to better their bodies through these athletic institutions. However, these gyms were founded since Jews were excluded from gym societies with “Aryan paragraphs,” in which outlawed Jews from using their vicinities.<sup>164</sup> Meyer argues that “... Jewish associations, mostly founded by Zionists, intended to increase Jewish pride and national identity. Specific to the Jewish societies was the desire to refute the anti-Semitic stereotype of the Jewish

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<sup>159</sup> Michael A. Meyer and et al., eds. “The Jewish athletic association Bar Kochba in Berlin” *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 145.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Michael A. Meyer and et al., eds. “The Jewish athletic association Bar Kochba in Berlin” *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, 145.

<sup>162</sup> Meyer, Michael, *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, 143.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

bookworm by creating a new generation of Muskeljuden (muscular Jews).”<sup>165</sup> Jewish organizations were created to not only enhance the image of the Jewish body, but to seek acceptance from German society. However, it is important to note that in order for the Jewish population to try to gain acceptance, most of the time they had to establish their own institutions in order to improve their health and physical appearance. Although, many Jews were affectively able to improve their health through these athletic associations, the creation of these centers had little to no effect on improving the German opinion of their physical abnormalities. Regardless of these establishments, the Jewish muscular movement was not as recognized as they would have liked it to be.

In addition to the new Jewish sports groups that were established, new Jewish cultural organizations were created. These organizations “freshly awakened feelings of pride in the Jewish heritage with attempts to fight antisemitism. Hostility from the outside induced acculturated Jews to find out more about their heritage, both to refute anti-Jewish slurs and to clarify their own sense of identity.”<sup>166</sup> As depicted, the physical culture movement encouraged Jews to rebel against societal norms, which they did to some extent, as the growth in Jewish national organizations became a sign of greater Jewish involvement.<sup>167</sup> Thus, Jewish libraries and museums that focused on Jewish culture were also established, which notarized Jewish involvement within society.<sup>168</sup> In parallel to the changes in the German nation, Jewish societies

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<sup>165</sup> Meyer, Michael, *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, 143-144.

<sup>166</sup> Meyer, Michael A. et al., eds. *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, 144.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

developed more youth-oriented activities.<sup>169</sup> No longer catering to the exclusivity of adults, Jewish societies integrated cultural orientations that focused on the youth.<sup>170</sup> Although these organizations and societies were enriching and beneficial, the establishment of such organizations were “threatening” to the German population. As mentioned social, cultural, political, economic, and religious factors contributed to why Jewish bodies were “othered.” Thus, the establishment of these Jewish cultural and social institutions, contributed to the abnormalization of their bodies even more so.

The Zionist movement and Zionist organizations (groups that focus on the protection and development of the Jewish nation) were also created at this time. The Zionist movement strongly contributed to the development of Jewish progression. However, it also led to their “othering.” Blau-Weiss states “for us being Jewish is an ideal to which we aspire, not memory we want to overcome... Because we are Jewish, we aren’t afraid to learn Hebrew, to cultivate Jewish songs along with German ones.”<sup>171</sup> Blau-Weiss, among others, stressed the authenticity of Jewish intellectuality and Jewish life.<sup>172</sup> Jews believed they could and were able to integrate their beliefs into their German life and traditions.<sup>173</sup> Even after acknowledging that they might be dissimilar to other German’s religiously, many Jews believed they were neither physically nor intellectually

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<sup>169</sup> Meyer, Michael A. et al., eds. *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, 146.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Meyer, Michael A. et al., eds. *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, 148.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

different from anyone else.<sup>174</sup> Loyal to the land of Germany and Israel, Jews were patriotic and desired to seek acceptance from the German government and society. However, as I argue, and as Meyer points out, separate Jewish organizations and other “Jewish sports groups only reinforced Jewish segregation... they both copied and aided anti-Semitic exclusion based on ethnic origin.”<sup>175</sup> Therefore, I argue that Zionism and muscular Judaism only “othered” Jewish bodies more, even though it attempted to do the opposite. Thus, the challenges presented here, discouraged the assimilation of the Jewish population. Although, the growth in these Jewish institutions can be portrayed as a sign of Jewish activism, it did not lead to the abolishment of the “othering” of their bodies. Instead, it is evident that in some instances, the efforts of the Jewish population (through these institutions and movements) contributed to existing anti-Semitic fervor in Germany.

### **Conclusion:**

Although, the physical culture movement was short lived (it only spanned from the 1850s into the 1920s), it had a great impact on society. In Europe, particularly Germany, the physical culture movement was deeply engrained into the culture and mentality of the German people. As a result, this drastically changed and shaped the viewpoint of the German population in regards to the “othering” of the physical body and intellectual abilities of the Jewish population. Due to expansion of industrialization, modernization and urbanization, breakthroughs in the realm of health and healing became of major interests to many. In their quest to perfect the health and beauty standards, particularly in German society, aesthetic representations and ideals were used

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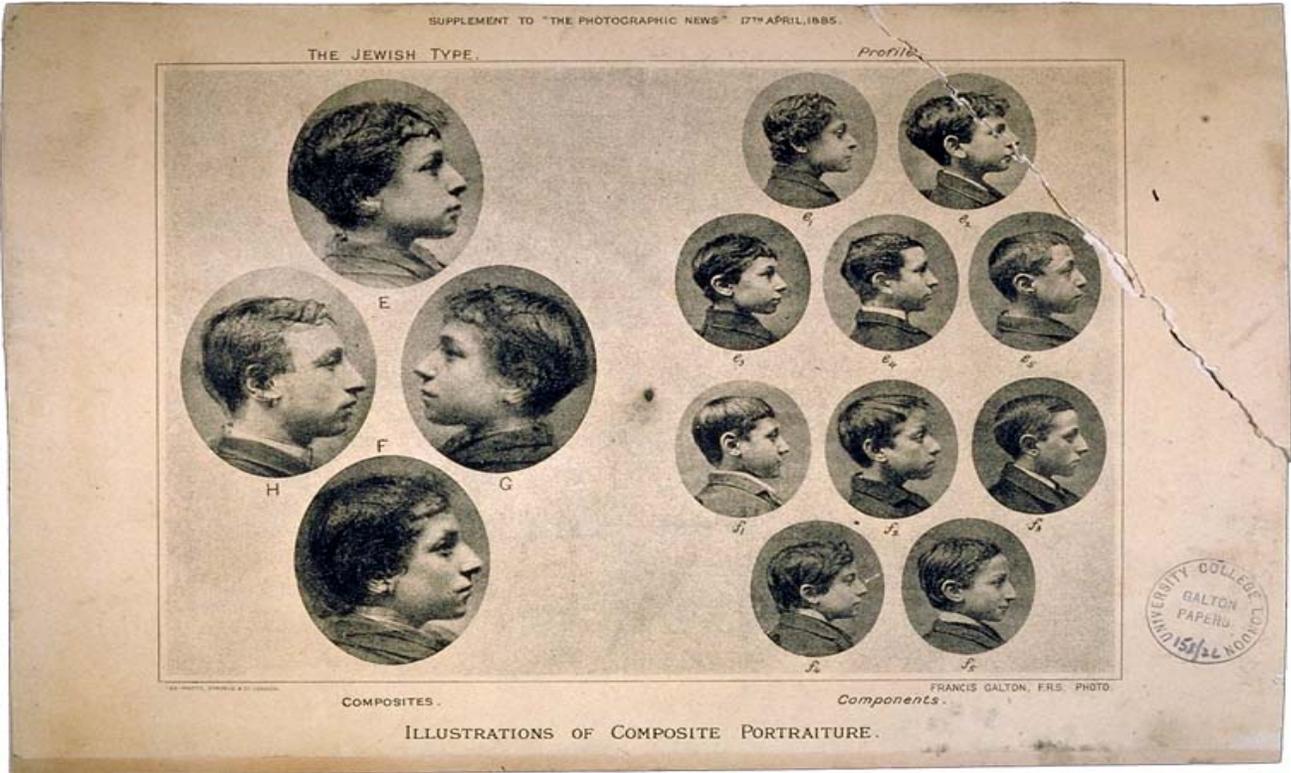
<sup>174</sup> Meyer, Michael A. et al., eds. *German- Jewish History in Modern Times: Volume 3 Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, 148.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

to improve the physical beauty and intellectual intelligence of the human body. As racial ideologies developed, so did the concept of degeneration, and the desire to return to a state of racial purification. Thus, medicine and science were used to reform the lives and social experiences of individuals, in terms of bodily discipline. Therefore, the Nordic body was esteemed as being the nationalist idiom and the “true” depiction of the German body. Because of the prescription of aestheticized distinction, racial discourses marked the German Jewish body as abnormal. The works of pseudoscientists and medicalists created assumptions about the intellectual and physical capabilities of German Jews. Therefore, the physical culture movement aided and contributed to the “othering” of Jewish bodies, as the movement provided a way of expressing Jewish distinction through the expression of their character, their status, as well as their racial construction.

Jews were deemed as threats, economically burdensome, politically radical, socially inferior, religiously distasteful, and culturally different. Physical identifications and barriers hindered the Jewish body. These identifications derived from eugenics, phrenology and physiognomy, in which were used to project the Jewish body as inferior, abnormal, and detestable. Why is this important? Before conducting this research, I had little to no knowledge on the “othering” of Jewish bodies before the Holocaust. As shown in my research, this movement directly foreshadows and led to the annihilation and subjugation of Jewish bodies under the Nazi regime. There was/is a stigmatization against Jews, which has outcasted them in society for centuries. Today, Jewish individuals are still affected by anti-Semitic beliefs and ideologies. However, pseudoscience can no longer invoke and/or justify the Jewish body as racially different or inferior to other beings since it has been proven invalid.

Figure 1:



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Figure 2 :



Figure 3 :

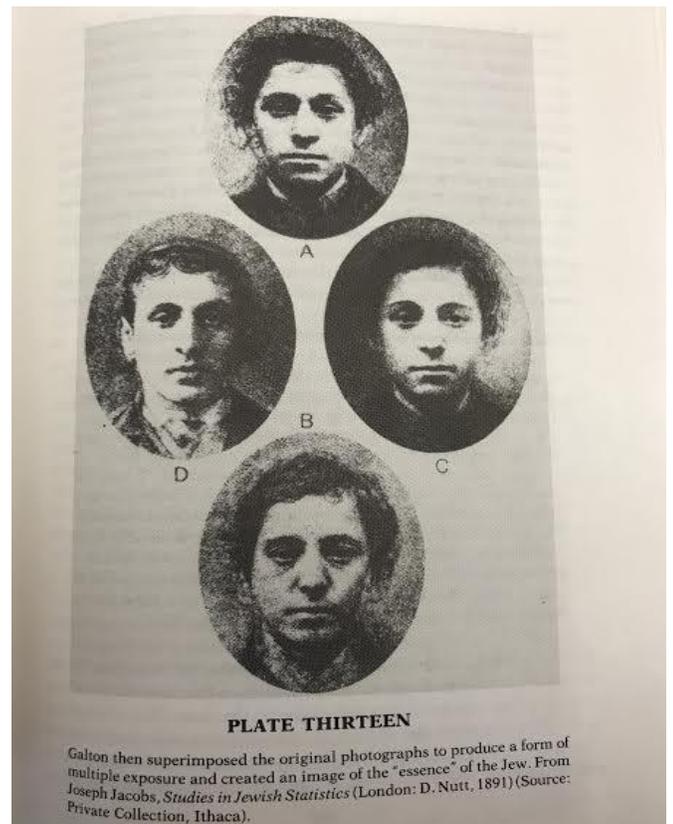


Figure 4 :

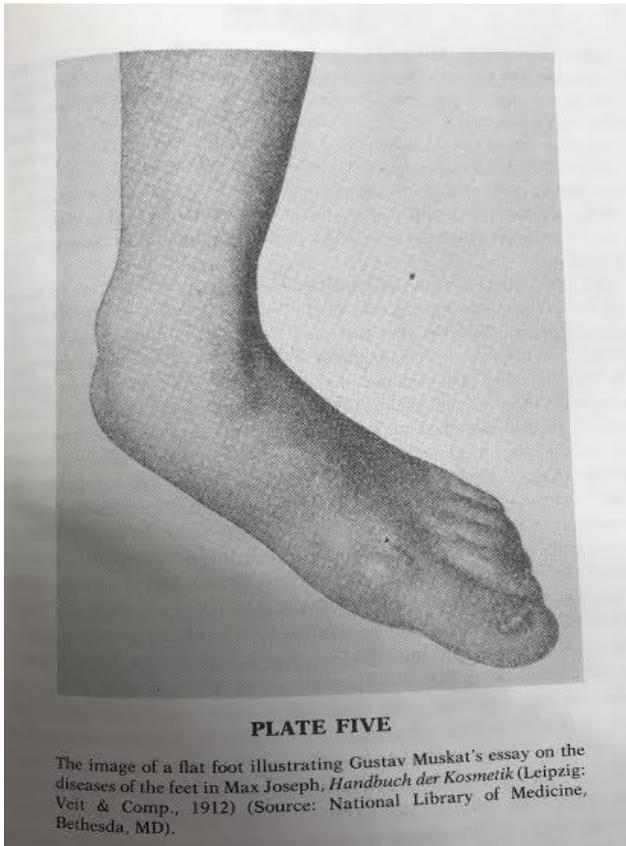


Figure 5 :

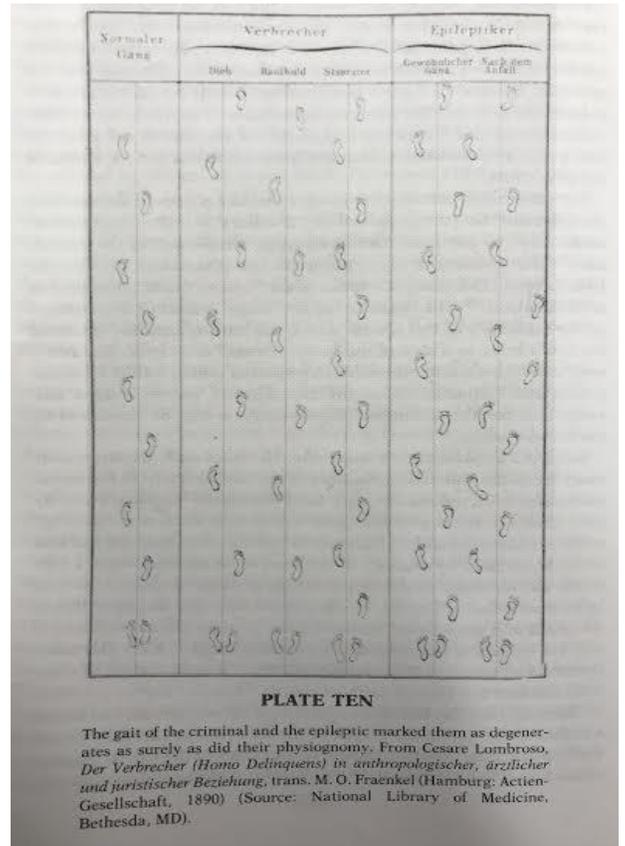


Figure 7 :



Figure 8:



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