Section 1: Analysis & Insights

Executive Summary

Thesis: Antisemitism represents a distinct and systematically underrecognized form of racism within progressive discourse, where Jews are simultaneously excluded from protected minority categories while being positioned as privileged oppressors. This exclusion operates primarily through passive omission—leaving Jews out of diversity initiatives, casting considerations, and identity-political frameworks—rather than through overt hostility. The book argues that progressives have constructed an implicit hierarchy of racisms in which anti-Jewish racism ranks lower in urgency and moral seriousness than discrimination against other marginalized groups.

Unique Contribution: Baddiel positions himself as a translator between Jewish experience and progressive consciousness, attempting to make legible what progressives have rendered invisible. Unlike traditional critiques of antisemitism that focus on right-wing extremism or historical analysis, this book targets progressive antiracists who consider themselves allies while simultaneously operating within frameworks that render Jewish experience invisible. The central insight is that progressive left's failure to recognize antisemitism stems not from malice but from deep structural confusion about Jewish identity: belief that Jews are "white" and therefore not truly marginalized, combined with ancient antisemitic tropes that Jews are secretly powerful and in control.

Target Outcome: Readers will recognize the unique ways antisemitism operates within progressive spaces, understand the "Schrödinger's Jew" phenomenon where Jews are classified as white when it serves to exclude them from minority protections yet simultaneously understood as non-white threats when discussing power structures, and develop practices for including Jewish identity in diversity and antiracist frameworks.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 1: The Schrödinger's Jew Baddiel identifies a unique feature of antisemitism: Jews are the only minority group stereotyped as occupying both low and high social positions simultaneously. They are imagined as vermin and filth (low status) while also being secretly powerful, controlling finance and media (high status). This dual stereotype creates what Baddiel calls "Schrödinger's Whites"—Jews are classified as white when it serves to exclude them from minority protections, yet simultaneously understood as non-white threats when discussing power structures. This duality is foundational to how antisemitism functions differently from other racisms.

Chapter 2: The Absence as Racism The book develops a crucial distinction between active racism (explicit slurs, violence, conspiracy theories) and passive racism (systematic omission, exclusion from protective frameworks, forgetting). The title itself encodes this insight: "Jews Don't Count" refers not primarily to overt antisemitic statements but to progressive habit of constructing lists of oppressed minorities that somehow never include Jews. This passive exclusion is arguably more insidious than active hatred because it operates beneath the threshold of conscious recognition.

Chapter 3: The Whiteness Problem and Hidability of Jewish Identity Baddiel argues that Jews are not white in the sense that matters most—they are not safe. Whiteness, in his formulation, is not about skin color but about security: protection that comes from membership in majority culture. Jews can "pass" as non-Jewish in ways that people of color cannot pass as white, which has led progressives to assume that Jews do not suffer from visible racism. However, this hidability creates a different problem: Jews are only acceptable as long as they remain hidden, as long as they assimilate and do not identify as Jewish.

Chapter 4: The Israel-Palestine Conflation and Eternal Jew Trope Baddiel identifies a critical slippage in progressive discourse whereby criticism of Israel becomes indistinguishable from antisemitism, not because all criticism of Israel is antisemitic, but because ancient antisemitic tropes are routinely deployed in that criticism. The key marker is presence of "ancient tropes"—myths about Jews that predate 1948 and the establishment of Israel. When progressives blame contemporary antisemitism on Israeli government actions, they engage in what Baddiel calls "victim-blaming": the notion that Jews are responsible for the racism directed at them.

Chapter 5: The Casting Question and Invisibility of Jewish Particularity Baddiel's extended analysis of non-Jewish actors playing Jewish roles reveals how progressives have created a double standard in the name of inclusivity. While progressives insist that trans roles go to trans actors, disabled roles to disabled actors, and roles of color to actors of color, Jewish roles routinely go to non-Jewish actors without comment or controversy. This reflects assumption that Jewishness is not a lived identity requiring authentic representation but merely a religious affiliation or a set of stereotypical mannerisms that any actor can perform.

Nuanced Main Topics

1. Passive vs. Active Racism

The distinction between active and passive racism is central to Baddiel's argument. Active racism involves explicit hostility—slurs, violence, conspiracy theories, hate speech. Passive racism operates through systematic omission: leaving Jews out of diversity lists, excluding them from casting considerations, forgetting them in solidarity statements, constructing frameworks that render Jewish experience invisible. Passive racism is particularly insidious because it allows progressives to genuinely believe themselves to be antiracist while simultaneously operating within structures that exclude Jews. The concept explains why traditional antiracist responses ("listen to marginalized voices") fail when applied to Jews: non-Jews feel empowered to tell Jews whether their experiences constitute racism.

2. The Schrödinger's Jew Phenomenon

Jews are the only minority group stereotyped as occupying both low and high social positions simultaneously. They are imagined as vermin and filth (low status) while also being secretly powerful, controlling finance and media (high status). This dual stereotype creates

a logical impossibility within progressive frameworks, where Jews cannot simultaneously be victims deserving protection and oppressors deserving scrutiny. The concept reveals how antisemitism functions differently from other racisms: it does not require its victims to be visibly marked or economically dispossessed to justify discrimination. A wealthy Jew remains a target precisely because wealth is incorporated into the stereotype itself.

3. Hidability as Oppression

The ability to hide Jewish identity has been weaponized in progressive discourse to argue that Jews do not really suffer discrimination because they are not immediately visibly marked. This ignores the psychological violence of enforced invisibility and the reality that once Jewish identity is revealed, the full weight of antisemitic stereotyping descends. Baddiel's reclamation of "Jew" as his Twitter biography is thus a political act: asserting that Jewishness need not be hidden, that it is not inherently shameful, and that the ability to hide does not negate the reality of racism. The woman at the wedding who says "I'm Jewish. Although you probably can't tell, can you? That'll be a nose job" encodes this perfectly—Jewish identity is shameful, something to be concealed.

4. Ancient Tropes in Contemporary Discourse

Baddiel identifies how ancient antisemitic tropes—myths about Jews that predate 1948 and the establishment of Israel—are routinely deployed in contemporary progressive criticism of Israeli policy. The placard at a pro-Palestine demonstration depicting Jesus carrying a cross with caption "Do Not Let Them Do to Him the Same Thing Today Again" invokes the eternal myth of Jewish murderers, not a critique of contemporary Israeli policy. The concept of "Eternal Jew"—the idea that Jews are unchanging, eternally guilty, eternally dangerous—is the through-line connecting medieval persecution to contemporary progressive discourse. When progressives blame contemporary antisemitism on Israeli government actions, they engage in victim-blaming that echoes medieval blood libel and Nazi accusations that Jews are "Christ-killers."

5. Jewface and Representation

The absence of outcry about non-Jewish actors playing Jewish roles reveals that progressives do not see Jews as a minority requiring the same protections and representational authenticity as other groups. When non-Jewish actors play Jewish characters, they typically resort to caricature—exaggerated shrugs, Yiddish inflections, neurotic tics—which Baddiel calls "Jewface": performance of Jewishness as a collection of stereotypes rather than a complex identity. This is not merely an employment issue; it is an epistemological one. It reflects assumption that Jewishness is not a lived identity requiring authentic representation but merely a religious affiliation or a set of stereotypical mannerisms that any actor can perform.

Section 2: Actionable Framework

The Checklist

Phase 1: Shift Your Mindset

Recognize "invisibility bias" in your own thinking Start noticing when you construct lists of marginalized groups—in conversations, lesson planning, diversity initiatives—and ask yourself: "Did I include Jews?" This is not about guilt but about awareness. The omission is systematic, not malicious. When you catch yourself leaving Jews out, correct it immediately and note the pattern.

Understand that "hidability" is not safety Reject the assumption that because Jewish identity can be concealed, Jews don't experience real discrimination. Reframe: the ability to hide is itself a form of oppression—it means Jewish identity is only acceptable when invisible. When someone says they're Jewish and you're surprised because they "don't look Jewish," recognize that your surprise reflects an assumption that Jewishness should be hidden.

Accept that antisemitism operates differently Unlike other racisms, antisemitism simultaneously positions Jews as powerless victims AND secretly powerful oppressors. This logical impossibility is a feature, not a bug, of how antisemitism functions. When you hear someone claim Jews are too privileged to need protection while simultaneously believing Jews control the world, recognize this contradictory thinking as antisemitic.

Phase 2: Practice Skills

When your child asks why they weren't included in a diversity discussion Try saying: "You're right to notice that. Let's think about who was mentioned and who wasn't. Jews are often left out of these conversations, even though we've faced real discrimination. That's something we can speak up about." This validates their experience while teaching them to recognize patterns of exclusion.

When your child encounters a stereotype about Jewish people (money, power, control) Try saying: "That's an ancient stereotype that's been used to hurt Jewish people for centuries. It's not true, and when we hear it, we can say: 'That's an antisemitic trope, and I don't accept it.' " This provides language for responding to stereotypes while educating about their historical roots.

When your child sees a non-Jewish actor playing a Jewish character with exaggerated mannerisms Try saying: "Notice how they're using stereotypes—the accent, gestures—instead of playing a real person. That's called 'Jewface.' It's like saying Jewishness is just a costume or a joke, not a real identity. We deserve better representation." This teaches critical media literacy while affirming Jewish identity as authentic.

When your child hears "criticism of Israel is not antisemitism" Try saying: "That's true—you can criticize Israeli government policy. But if criticism uses old antisemitic ideas—like 'Jews control the world' or 'Jews are murderers'—then it's crossed into antisemitism. We can tell the difference." This provides nuanced understanding that distinguishes legitimate

political criticism from antisemitism.

When your child feels excluded or invisible in progressive spaces Try saying: "Your experience matters. You don't have to prove you've suffered enough to deserve recognition. Antisemitism is racism, even when people don't realize they're doing it. You have a right to name it." This validates their experience while teaching them to claim their identity.

When your child internalizes shame about being Jewish Try saying: "Being Jewish is not something to hide or be ashamed of. It's part of who you are. When we claim our identity proudly, we're saying: 'I count. My experience counts. My people count.' " This counters internalized shame while modeling pride in identity.

Phase 3: Long-term Integration

Build a practice of naming omissions aloud When you notice Jews missing from diversity lists, casting decisions, or solidarity statements, speak up—not aggressively, but clearly: "I noticed Jews weren't mentioned. Can we add that?" This models for your child that invisibility is not inevitable; it can be challenged. The goal is not confrontation but correction.

Teach your child to recognize and reject "Schrödinger's Jew" trap Help them see when they're being told simultaneously that they're "too privileged to need protection" AND "secretly powerful and dangerous." Name it: "That's contradictory. I can't be both. That's antisemitism." This provides language for identifying and rejecting contradictory stereotypes.

Create a family culture where Jewish identity is visible and celebrated This is the antidote to enforced hidability. Whether through language, ritual, community, or simply talking openly about being Jewish, make it clear: Jewishness is not shameful. It is not something to conceal. It is something to claim. This might include celebrating Jewish holidays, learning Jewish history, connecting with Jewish community, or simply acknowledging Jewish identity in daily conversation.

Advocate for authentic representation When you see casting calls, diversity initiatives, or media representations that exclude Jewish identity, speak up. Request that Jewish roles go to Jewish actors, that Jewish experiences be included in diversity frameworks, and that antisemitism be recognized alongside other forms of racism. This is not about competition with other marginalized groups but about expanding antiracist consciousness to include all who experience racism.

Implementation Steps

Step 1: Self-Audit Spend one week noticing when you construct lists of marginalized groups or discuss diversity and inclusion. Track how often Jews are included versus excluded. Note the contexts where exclusion occurs (workplace, school, community organizations, social media). This creates baseline awareness of patterns.

Step 2: Education Learn about the history of antisemitic tropes and how they operate differently from other forms of racism. Understand the "Schrödinger's Jew" phenomenon, the

concept of passive racism through omission, and how ancient tropes appear in contemporary discourse. This knowledge enables you to recognize antisemitism when it occurs.

Step 3: Language Development Practice using language that names antisemitism clearly and specifically. Learn to distinguish between legitimate political criticism of Israeli policy and antisemitic tropes. Develop scripts for responding to stereotypes, omissions, and microaggressions. This preparation reduces hesitation when situations arise.

Step 4: Speaking Up Begin speaking up when you notice Jews excluded from diversity frameworks or when antisemitic tropes appear in conversation. Start with low-stakes situations to build confidence. Use clear, non-confrontational language: "I noticed Jews weren't included," "That's an antisemitic trope," "Can we add Jewish experiences to this discussion?"

Step 5: Community Building Connect with Jewish community organizations and resources. Support Jewish creators, artists, and scholars. Learn from Jewish voices about their experiences of antisemitism. This builds both knowledge and solidarity while combating isolation.

Step 6: Ongoing Practice Recognize that recognizing and addressing antisemitism is ongoing work, not a one-time achievement. Patterns of exclusion are deeply embedded in progressive discourse and will require consistent attention and correction. Commit to long-term practice of awareness, education, and speaking up.

Common Pitfalls

Pitfall 1: Assuming good intentions prevent harm Progressives often believe that because they don't intend to exclude Jews, their frameworks aren't antisemitic. However, passive racism through omission operates regardless of intent. The impact of leaving Jews out of diversity initiatives is real regardless of whether the exclusion was malicious. Focus on impact rather than intent.

Pitfall 2: Treating antisemitism as competition with other racisms Some resist recognizing antisemitism because they fear it will detract from attention to other forms of racism. Baddiel explicitly argues against zero-sum thinking: recognizing antisemitism doesn't diminish other racisms but expands antiracist consciousness to include all who experience racism. The goal is inclusion, not competition.

Pitfall 3: Confusing criticism of Israel with antisemitism Both extremes cause problems: claiming all criticism of Israel is antisemitic (which silences legitimate political discourse) and claiming no criticism of Israel is antisemitic (which ignores how ancient tropes are deployed in contemporary discourse). Learn to distinguish between legitimate political criticism and antisemitic tropes.

Pitfall 4: Requiring Jews to prove their suffering Some demand evidence of antisemitism before recognizing it, subjecting Jewish experiences to skepticism not applied to other marginalized groups. Recognize that Jews are experts on their own experience and

don't need to prove they've suffered enough to deserve recognition. Trust Jewish accounts of antisemitism as you trust accounts from other marginalized groups.

Pitfall 5: Treating Jewish identity as optional The ability to hide Jewish identity leads some to treat it as optional or something that can be set aside. However, Jewish identity is not a costume to be removed when inconvenient; it's a fundamental aspect of identity. Respect Jewish identity as you would respect any other marginalized identity.

Pitfall 6: Assuming all Jews look or behave a certain way Stereotypes about Jewish appearance or behavior are themselves antisemitic. Jews are diverse in appearance, practice, and belief. Avoid assumptions about who "looks Jewish" or what Jewish identity "should" look like. Recognize that Jewish identity is complex and multifaceted.

Pitfall 7: Remaining silent to avoid conflict Speaking up about antisemitism can feel uncomfortable, especially in progressive spaces that pride themselves on inclusivity. However, silence allows patterns of exclusion to continue. Practice speaking up clearly and calmly, recognizing that discomfort is temporary but the impact of silence is lasting.