Defining antisemitism

Abstract I apply the apparatus of David Hitchcock's book *Definition* (2021) to the task of defining antisemitism. Hitchcock distinguishes three basic acts of defining: stipulating a meaning, reporting a meaning, and advocating a meaning. An initial stipulation introduced the word 'Semitismus' into the German language as a synonym for 'Judenthum' ('Jewishness'). The choice of term risked impact equivocation, and the stipulator's use of either name assumed falsely that all Jews share the described characteristics. To illustrate the task of reporting a meaning, I use a sample of 10 sentences using the term 'antisemitism' to evaluate 11 proposed reportive definitions. I rephrase the resulting tentative definition in the Natural Semantic Language developed by Goddard and Wierzbicka. Two documents advocate a meaning for 'antisemitism', in the sense that they take a position on what kinds of speech or action count as antisemitic. The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, issued by a group of researchers in 2021, is superior in many respects to the resolution on antisemitism adopted in May 2016 by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). Hence individuals and organizations concerned with monitoring antisemitism should use the Jerusalem Declaration as a guide rather than the IHRA resolution. Consideration of the declaration leads to a revised reportive definition: Antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice, hostility, or violence that targets people or institutions regarded as ethnically Jewish, just because they are Jewish.

[Note to reviewers: This article needs to be reduced in length by one-third if it is to fit the advertised general length of articles in *Topoi* of 8,000 to 10,000 words. I would welcome suggestions of what to cut out. – Author]

The book *Definition* (Hitchcock 2021) is, as its sub-title says, "a practical guide to constructing and evaluating definitions of terms". It seems reasonable, then, for a special issue on definition and conceptual engineering, to consider how one might apply the advice of this book to the task of defining a particular term and how well that advice stands up to the task.

The term 'antisemitism' (also spelled 'anti-Semitism' but not 'anti-semitism') seems appropriate for this purpose, since there is controversy about allegations of antisemitism, especially when levelled at critics of the policies of the state of Israel -- critics who typically deny that they or their criticisms are antisemitic. One might wonder what criticisms of Israeli policies (if any) are genuinely antisemitic and how (if at all) a definition of antisemitism could help to decide this question.

1. The task of defining antisemitism

The phrase 'defining antisemitism' suggests a task of characterizing some kind of thing, perhaps as the result of an investigation into the mind-set common to people who exhibit antisemitic behaviour. It is obviously questionable whether people who make derogatory remarks about Jews in casual conversation do so out of the same mind-set as the authors of (Islamic Resistance Movement "Hamas" 1988), whose Article 7 says that it aims to realize the divine promise reported in the following saying attributed to the prophet Mohamed:

> The Jews will fight against you and you will gain victory over them, till the stone says: 'O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me; so kill him'. (Salafiyyah 2024)

Even if there were a common mind-set responsible for all antisemitic behaviour, we are advised not to construe the task of defining antisemitism as one of describing the "essence" of this mind-set (Hitchcock 2021, 166-171). Rather, the task would be one of defining the term 'antisemitism' in a way that satisfies the criteria for a theoretical definition: concrete rather than abstract, with possibilities for a transition to a quantitative analysis and for deducing corollaries about the thing correctly labeled by the term being defined (Hitchcock 2021, 62). In fact, however, as the mentioned examples indicate, it is doubtful that there is a single mind-set common to all instances of antisemitism. What is to be defined is not the phenomenon of antisemitism but the term 'antisemitism'.

Defining a term can be construed as a kind of illocutionary act, something that the definer does in uttering or inscribing or typing the phrase, sentence, or sentences that the definer proposes as a definition of the term. Hitchcock distinguishes three basic acts of defining, each given a place in Searle's (1976) taxonomy of illocutionary acts. Reporting a term's meaning is a representative illocutionary act, to be evaluated for its truth or falsity by whether it accurately reports the term's meaning in one of its senses. Stipulating a term's meaning is a directive illocutionary act, a demand to interpret or use it in a specified context as the definition says; if the specified context includes the stipulator's own statements, it is at the same time a commissive illocutionary act, an undertaking by the stipulator to use the term in those statements in accordance with the definition. Stipulative definitions are neither true nor false, but may be wise or unwise, depending on how well they serve the goals of the stipulator. The third basic act of defining is advocating a meaning, whose product is a positional definition, so named because it takes a position on an issue. Advocating a term's meaning is (like stipulating a meaning) a kind of directive illocutionary act. It is a recommendation to use the term according to the definition.

2. The original stipulative introduction of the term 'Semitism'

The term 'antisemitism' is such a powerful emotionally negative epithet in contemporary discourse that no attempt now to give it a meaning different than its current one could be successful. Hence there is no occasion to consider a contemporary stipulative definition of the term. The term came

into use, however, as the result of an original act of stipulation: introduction of the term 'Semitismus' into the German language, with the contrast term 'anti-Semitismus' being adopted soon afterwards. The introduction occurred in a journalist's pamphlet whose title has been translated into English as '*The victory of Judaism over Germanism: Viewed from a nonreligious point of view*' (Marr 2009/1879; translation of Marr 1879). The word 'Judaism' in the translated title is however misleading, since Marr makes abundantly clear that he is not talking about the Jewish religion but about a culture that he ascribes to ethnic Jews, regardless of whether they practice the Jewish religion. A better translation of his word 'Judenthum' would be 'Jewishness', with a corresponding translation of his word 'Germanentum' as 'German-ness'. Marr represents his pamphlet as a description of cultural history, in which an alien and hostile culture, "Judenthum", has triumphed over its European host. He paints an unflattering picture of Jews as universally hated throughout history, because of their loathing for real work and their codified enmity to non-Jews. As the Jews dispersed by the Romans spread through Europe, "within the agricultural German lands the Semitic craftiness and its business sense provoked a reaction against the Jews. This foreign tribe and its practical business sense contrasted too much with the basic character of Germanism" (Marr 2009/1879, 12). Although Marr himself professes not to feel hatred himself toward Jews (2009/1879, 27), he clearly prefers "Germanentum" to "Judenthum" and laments the supposed victory of Jewishness, whose world domination he sees as having been the goal of Jews during their past 1,800 years of dispersal through the Occident. From time to time in this lament, Marr uses the word 'Semite', 'semitic', and 'Semitism' as substitutes for 'Jew', 'Jewish', and 'Jewishness', as illustrated by the following excerpts:

> An entire Semitic tribe is repeatedly and forcibly taken away from its native country Palestine, led into captivity and finally "dispersed"… The Roman world of the day as well as all of classical antiquity was in the throes of disintegration at the time the Jews were imported. Semitism therefore encountered fertile ground for its realistic approach… By the 19th century the amazing toughness and endurance of the Semites had made them the leading power within occidental society… Within the agricultural Germanic lands the Semitic craftiness and its practical business sense provoked a reaction against the Jews… As far as the actual modalities of business and trade are concerned, we Germans hardly differ any more from the Jews; what we don't have is the drive of the Semitic people… in Germany, who carried off the prize of raw, material advantage? Jewry, represented by a handful of Jewish bankers; Semitic brokers… Perhaps the time is not far away, when we the "Jew haters" par excellence, will have to protect the Semitic aliens, who have vanquished us, from the outrage of indignant popular passion… Yes, I am sure that I have said what millions of Jews are quietly thinking. World power belongs to Semitism… I may have erred. It might be that Semitism and Germanism will enter a political-social peace. I just don't believe in such a peace. (Marr 2009/1879)

In the first of these quoted excerpts, Marr identifies Jews, correctly, as a Semitic tribe, i.e. a tribe speaking a Semitic language (Hebrew) that linguists assign to the same language group as (for example) Arabic and Aramaic. Thereafter, except in a reference to "this Semitic people", he uses 'Semitic' as a synonym for 'Jewish', 'Semite' as a synonym for 'Jew', and 'Semitism' as a synonym for what we might call 'Jewishness'. The terms have an ethnic rather than a religious connotation; they refer to the ethnic group whom the Roman Empire dispersed, some of whose members found refuge in Europe. There is thus no distinct stipulative definition of the terms 'Semitic', 'Semite', and 'Semitism' – only a choice of these terms as a replacement for the terms already in use.

Hitchcock (2021, 42-44) proposes 10 questions to be asked in evaluating such stipulative introductions of new nomenclature:

1. What is the reason for this stipulation? Marr does not explain why he introduces the terms 'Semite', 'Semitic', and 'Semitism'. Therefore, we can only speculate on his reason or reasons for doing so, given that he already had and used interchangeably with the new terms the existing terms 'Jew', 'Jewish', and 'Jewishness'. One possible reason was to emphasize the alienness of Jews by using as their name the non-Indo-European language group to which their ancestral language (Hebrew) belongs. Another was to make clear that he was referring to the cultural traditions of Jews rather than to their religious beliefs and practices.

2. Is it a good reason? Emphasizing that Jews in Germany descend from a tribe speaking a non-European language is an illegitimate reason, given the integration of Jews into German society of which Marr's own pamphlet gives evidence, and in particular the fact that at the time many of them did not speak the Semitic language of their ancestors but rather spoke German or Yiddish. Nor was it necessary to replace the term 'Judenthum' by 'Semitismus', given that the word 'Judenthum' already signifies Jewishness rather than Judaism. Use of the words 'Semitic', 'Semite', and 'Semitismus' is thus gratuitous and derogatory.

3. Does the stipulator have the right to stipulate this meaning? As the author of the pamphlet, Marr had the right to introduce by stipulation his synonyms for 'Jewish', 'Jew' and 'Jewishness'.

4. Does the stipulator abide by the commitment implicit in the stipulation? Once he uses the terms in their new meaning, for an ethnic group and its supposed characteristics rather than for a group of languages, Marr sticks to this usage of the terms.

5. Is the definition precise? Marr does not make precise who counts as a Jew, e.g., whether a person with one parent who is Jewish and another who is not Jewish

counts as Jewish. For his purposes, it is not as important to define precisely who is Jewish as it is to describe clearly what he objects to and regards as an enemy of "Germanentum". It seems to be a combination of keeping themselves a distinct people and being successful in the business world. This description is clear enough, although of questionable accuracy in both components: many German Jews were assimilated, and many were not successful businesspeople.

6. Is the definition unambiguous? There is no ambiguity in Marr's use of the words 'Semitic', 'Semite', and 'Semitism'.

7. If the stipulation makes the meaning of an existing term precise for use by others, does the meaning specified serve well the purpose for which others are being asked to use this term? Since Marr was not make an existing but vague term precise, rather introducing a new term, the issue does not arise of whether a stipulative definition serves well the purpose for which boundaries of a term's application are sharpened.

8. If the stipulation is a proposed nomenclature for a theoretical concept, does the term chosen avoid impact equivocation? There is a clear risk of impact equivocation, since the pre-existing use of the word 'Semitic' for a group of languages that includes not just Hebrew but also (among others) Arabic and Aramaic could mislead a reader or listener into thinking that Marr's "Semitism" was a characteristic common to all people speaking a Semitic language. For this reason, Hitler's Third Reich eventually proscribed the use of the term 'antisemitism', using instead the term 'anti-Judaism' (Zimmerman 1986, 114-115).

9. If the stipulation is a proposed nomenclature for a theoretical concept, does the term chosen communicate accurately the concept being named? Since the term 'Semitism' runs a real risk of impact equivocation, *a fortiori* it does not clearly communicate what is meant.

10. Does the stipulation create a contradiction, either by itself or in combination with other components of a system (legal or theoretical) of which it is a part? As a purported description of the mind-set and characteristics of German Jews, Marr's term 'Semitism' has serious inaccuracies. In particular, his claim that millions of Jews are quietly thinking that world power belongs to Semitism is an anti-Semitic trope that is at odds with the factual history of a people trying to make their way in the world as best they can in the face of systematic persecution and exclusion. In this sense, the description associated with the new term gives rise to a contradiction.

As the mathematical logician Alfred Tarski points out in his *Introduction to logic and to the methodology of the deductive sciences* (Tarski 1965/1941/1937/1936, 181-183), one needs to be careful in introducing a symbol into a language by means of a description of the object or function

to which it refers. He illustrates the danger with the example of the introduction into a language for arithmetic of a symbol for the arithmetical function of division by means of the definition that $x = y : z$ (x equals y divided by z) if and only $y = z \times x$ (y equals z multiplied by x). If one replaces both 'y' and 'z' in this definition by '0' and 'x' successively by '1' and '2', then we get the absurdity that $1 = 2$. To avoid such absurdities, Tarski concludes, every definition that introduces by description a symbol that purports either to name an object or to refer to a function must be preceded by a proof in the language that at most one object satisfies the description or at most one object is the value of the supposed function for any tuple of inputs. In the case of the symbols 'Judenthum' and 'Semitismus' used by Marr, there would need to be a proof that at most one object satisfies his description of the culture of Jews in Germany. Marr's lengthy and unflattering description of what Jews are like may be regarded as an attempt at such a proof of uniqueness. One is however entitled to regard with scepticism his claims that all Jews in the Germany of his time were crafty and had practical business sense. The use of a proper name does not by itself show that there is at most one object that it names, nor does an elaborate description of the features of its putative referent. Given the history of diverse political convictions among German Jews, it reasonable to assume that in Marr's Germany of 1879 there were in fact many ways of being Jewish, not just one.

3. The contemporary meaning of the term 'antisemitism'

The term 'anti-Semitism', coined to express opposition to a supposed "Semitism" conjured into existence by Marr's pamphlet (Marr 1879), is misleading on its face, since the plain meaning of its components suggests opposition to something shared by all speakers of Semitic languages or to something somehow related to Semitic languages as a group (such as a thesis that all natural languages are descended from an original Semitic language). The term 'anti-Semitism' thus risks impact equivocation, a risk somewhat minimized by the spelling 'antisemitism'. Nevertheless, since the end of World War II it has become the standard label for prejudice against ethnic Jews. A definition that reports the meaning of the term in its contemporary usage is, according to Hitchcock (2021, 7-25), an empirical hypothesis, to be evaluated for accuracy on the basis of how well it fits the relevant data. The relevant data are the uses of the term when people communicate with one another, for which lexicographers nowadays use computerized corpora constructed to be representative of the usage of words in the full variety of contexts in which people use them (Atkins and Rundell 2008). Because of the cost of creating them, these corpora are proprietary and thus not openly accessible. We can however illustrate the process of constructing a term's reportive definition from a corpus by means of the following sentences given by dictionary.com as guidance for how to use 'antisemitism' in a sentence:

> The crime of antisemitism is an ageless one, an international one, and a heinous one… The antisemitism of the Middle East has its roots in the same place… One enduring lesson of the Holocaust is that antisemitism is not a parochial Jewish

interest… Until his death this year, Fred Phelps had been feeding antisemitism into the area since 1967 (Small 2014).

A convenient hatred: The history of antisemitism, an unparalleled education on discrimination against Jews (Crocker and Jones 2011).

The Christian-Socialist movement [in Austria-Hungary—AUTHOR] began with antisemitism as the corner-stone of its economic and social doctrines. Its opposition to the Jews and to capitalism was largely due to medieval prejudices in favor of the Christian-feudal state and the medieval industrial organization… One of these [forces preventing a gradual readjustment from the over-concentration of Jews in trade and industry—AUTHOR] was the economic antisemitism that rose partly from the competition of the middle classes of both [Christian and Jewish—AUTHOR] populations (Joseph 1914, 78 and 82).

To this rather short list of seven sentences taken from three sources, let us add three sentences using the word 'antisemitism' found in a Web search using the term 'antisemitism':

Antisemitism continues to persist in Canada, manifesting itself through:
- vandalism and graffiti
- circulation of hate propaganda
- intolerant and racist language in places like Twitter, in comments sections, web forums and blogs
- bomb threats to Jewish schools and community centers
- intimidation of Jewish university students; and
- the use of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement to delegitimize the State of Israel (Government of Canada 2023).

Henry Ford's anti-Semitic views echoed the fears and assumptions of many Americans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Anti-Semitism in America saw a change in expression and virulence when increased immigration from Europe brought millions of Jews to the U.S. during Ford's childhood in the latter half of the 19th century (PBS n.d.).

Stern, a lawyer and scholar who served for twenty-five years as the American Jewish Committee's in-house expert on antisemitism, had devoted much of his career to highlighting the hatred and intolerance that threatens Jews (Press 2024).

An initial question to be asked when reporting the meaning of a term is whether it is used in different senses, for each of which there should be a distinct definition. Atkins and Rundell (2008) describe this process as an intuitive one, guided according to Hitchcock (2021, 13-15) by such differences among occurrences of the term as the kinds of texts in which it occurs, its opposites, the kind of objects it labels, its collocations, its syntactic and lexicographical behaviour, its selectional restrictions and collocations, and preference for or against a given form or structure or

position. Intuitively, the term 'antisemitism' is used in the just-quoted sentences in just one sense, a sense that involves hostility and hatred to Jews.

Describing this sense, according to Hitchcock, is an exercise in formulating an explanatory hypothesis. The definition must explain the data, in the sense that the data (the uses of the term quoted above) are what we would expect if the definition were accurate. It must be consistent with the evidence and background knowledge at one's disposal. And competing hypotheses must be inconsistent with facts; in this context, a competing hypothesis is one that would have different implications for how one would expect the term to be used. As an illustration of the exercise, let us suppose that we are reporting the meaning of the term 'antisemitism' as a guide to someone who does not know how the term is used and wants to be able to understand it when they hear or read it. For this purpose, a short formulaic definition of the sort found in dictionaries is sufficient. The following such definitions have been proposed:

1. being against Jews (AUTHOR, in response to the question "What's that?" by someone to whom the author had just mentioned antisemitism)
2. hostility or prejudice against Jewish people (Oxford Languages, accessed 20 March 2024)
3. prejudice against or hatred of Jews (https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/what-is-antisemitism, accessed 20 March 2024)
4. a mental or public connection between Jews and incorrect awful characteristics
5. hostility or prejudice against Jews
6. anti-Jew
7. prejudice against Jewish people
8. antipathy toward Jewish people
9. unjustified views against the existence of the state of Israel
10. false or questionable statements describing the Jewish population, with the intention of insulting or disvaluing that group or culture
11. hostile acts against Jewish people

Definitions 4 through 11 were proposed by listeners to an online talk about defining antisemitism, in response to the question, "Suppose someone who has never heard the word 'antisemitism' asks you, 'What is that?'. In five words or less, how would you answer the question?"

Each of these 11 reportive definitions takes the form of a synonym or extended synonym (Hitchcock 2021, 89-96 and 99-124), and in particular the form of a definition by genus and differentia (Hitchcock 2021, 102-124), with antisemitism being conceived as a species of a general kind (being against, hostility or prejudice against, etc.), distinguished from coordinate species (anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, etc.) by the differentia of being directed at Jews (or Jewish people or the Jewish population or the state of Israel). One test of the alleged synonymy of a definition by synonym or extended synonym is whether the allegedly synonymous expression is

interchangeable with the defined term in sentences where it occurs without changing the truth-value or grammaticality of the sentence (Hitchcock 2021, 89-90 and 95). This test must be applied only to sentences where the term occurs in a so-called "extensional" context, i.e., one where one would expect substitution of a synonymous expression to preserve the truth-value of the surrounding sentence. If we apply this test to the above-quoted 11 definitions, by substituting the proposed synonym for the term 'antisemitism' in the sentences of our sample of the term's usage, we discover that definition 6, 9, 10 and 11 are of the wrong grammatical form, as can be illustrated by substituting them for the word 'antisemitism' in the previously quoted sentence from (Government of Canada 2023):

> 6. Anti-Jew continues to persist in Canada, manifesting itself through …
> 9. Unjustified views against the existence of the state of Israel continues to persist in Canada, manifesting itself through …
> 10. False or questionable statements describing the Jewish population, with the intention of insulting or disvaluing that group or culture, continues to persist in Canada, manifesting itself through …
> 11. Hostile acts against Jewish people continues to persist in Canada, manifesting itself through …

In all four cases, the sentence becomes ungrammatical. The substitution of the alleged synonym of definition 6 produces a sentence with an adjective in the subject position; this flaw could be repaired by changing the adjective to a noun phrase, such as "being anti-Jewish" or "anti-Jewish sentiment". The substitution of the allegedly synonymous expression of definitions 9, 10 and 11 produces sentences with a plural subject and a singular predicate; however, making the expression singular rather than plural ("an unjustified view …", "a false or questionable statement …", "a hostile act …") only reveals more serious problems. Definition 9 singles out one form of antisemitism, a form alluded to at the end of the quotation from (Government of Canada 2023) but not even on the horizon in the statements quoted from (Joseph 1914), which was published more than 30 years before the state of Israel came into being. Definitions 10 and 11 single out manifestations of antisemitism (kinds of statements, kinds of acts) rather than the general phenomenon. The quotation from (Canada 2023) is particularly helpful in making obvious that antisemitism is postulated as the underlying cause of antisemitic acts and speech. This status of being something expressed by antisemitic acts and speech is implicit in the other sentences in our sample of usage.

Another test of the accuracy of allegedly synonymous expressions is to consider whether there are counterexamples (Hitchcock 2021, 93-95), which may be of either of two kinds. A case that is correctly labeled by the term being defined but not by the defining part of its definition shows that in this respect the definition is too narrow; its defining part should be broadened to accommodate the counterexample and other cases that are like it in this respect. A case that is correctly labeled by the defining part of the definition but not by the term being defined shows that

the definition is too broad; its defining part should be narrowed to accommodate the counterexample and other cases like it in this respect. A definition can be both too narrow in one respect and too broad in another respect, in which case its defining part should be broadened in the former respect and narrowed in the latter respect. Since definitions are meant to hold for future uses of the term being defined in the assumed sense, the cases chosen as counterexamples can be imaginary rather than actual. To illustrate the preceding points, consider the following proposed definition of the term 'triangle' as it is used in Euclidean geometry:

A triangle is a plane figure bounded by three sides of unequal length.

An equilateral triangle is a counterexample of the first-mentioned sort, since it is correctly labeled as a triangle but not correctly labeled as having sides of unequal length; to broaden the defining part of the definition to block such counterexamples, one can delete the phrase 'of unequal length'. A three-sided plane figure with curved sides of unequal length is a counterexample of the second-mentioned sort, since it is correctly labeled as a plane figure bounded by three sides of unequal length but is not correctly labeled as a triangle; to narrow the defining part of the definition to block such counterexamples, one can change the word 'sides' to 'straight lines'. The changes made to block the two counterexamples produce the following correct definition of the term 'triangle' as it is used in Euclidean geometry:

A triangle is a plane figure bounded by three straight lines.

Let us then apply the counter-exampling test to the previously quoted definitions that have not already been found inadequate (definitions 1-5 and 7-9). Since they are all definitions by genus and differentia, it is appropriate first to consider whether antisemitism belongs to the genus to which the definition assigns it. A counterexample that shows that one of the mentioned definitions is too narrow would show that there are cases of antisemitism that fall outside the genus singled out in the definition. A counterexample that shows that one of the mentioned definitions is too broad would show that there are cases which are not antisemitism that belong to the genus singled out in the definition but are not excluded by the differentia. To identify counterexamples of the first kind, we need to think of cases that our sample of uses of the term 'antisemitism' would count as antisemitism but that fall outside the genus of the definitions defining part – i.e., cases of antisemitism that are not cases of being against (1), hostility or prejudice against (2, 5), prejudice against or hatred of (3), prejudice against (7), antipathy toward (8), or a mental or public connection of incorrect awful characteristics to (4). It is in fact difficult to make such determinations, since it is more obvious that something is an antisemitic act than what is the state of mind that the act expresses. A casual derogatory remark about Jews is antisemitic speech, but it may reflect a mild prejudice rather than hostility or dislike. Exclusion of Jews from membership in a private golf club, from admission to a university, from membership of the board of directors of a bank, or the like is an antisemitic act, but the people who decided on such an exclusion may

harbour no dislike of Jews, still less hostility to them or hatred of them. Refusal to accept a person as a boarder because they are Jewish is an antisemitic act, but it may genuinely reflect the usual explanation given for such decisions that the person doing the refusing has nothing personally against a Jewish boarder but is concerned that the neighbours would object; such a refusal might also be required by a covenant attached to the deed to the house.[1] Considering these cases, along with the list in (Government of Canada 2023) of manifestations of antisemitism, one can characterize the genera of definitions 3, 4, 7, and 8 as too narrow: some antisemitic acts reflect hostility to Jews that does not rise to the intensity of hatred, some antisemitic speech is motivated by dislike of Jews but not by prejudice against them, some antisemitic acts reflect prejudice against Jews that is not accompanied by hostility to them or even the mildest dislike, and some antisemitic acts do not reflect a mental or public connection between Jews and awful characteristics that they do not possess. These definitions need to be broadened to match definitions 2 and 5: antisemitism is a kind of hostility or prejudice.

To identify counterexamples of the second kind, we need to think of cases that are not antisemitism but that belong to the genus of the definition's defining part and are not excluded by the differentia. For this exercise, let us consider on the one hand definition 1and the modified version 6′ of definition 6 (antisemitism is being against Jews) and on the other hand definitions 2 and 5 and the modified versions of definitions 3, 4, 7 and 8 (antisemitism is hostility or prejudice against Jews). Definitions 1 and 6′ leave it unclear what sort of opposition to Jews is meant. Perhaps there are cases of opposition to Jews that people would not count as antisemitic acts or speech. In this respect, then, definitions 1 and 6′ are too broad; the genus needs to be narrowed to clarify what sort of opposition to Jews counts as being antisemitic. The genus of hostility or prejudice seems to draw the boundary at just the right place.

Having identified the genus of antisemitism as hostility or prejudice, it remains to consider the accuracy of the description of the differentia. Here again, definitions are subject to counterexamples of two kinds. A differentia's description is too narrow if there are cases that the term being defined correctly labels and that belong to the genus named in the defining part of the definition but that do not possess all the features that constitute the differentia described in the definition's defining part. Conversely, the description of a differentia is too broad if there are cases that belong to the genus named in the definition's defining part and possess all the features named in the description of the differentia but that are not correctly labeled by the term being defined. The previously mentioned definition of a triangle as a plane figure bounded by three sides of unequal length illustrated both ways of going wrong: it was too narrow in excluding triangles with sides of equal length and too broad in including plane figures with curved sides. Of the 11 definitions under consideration, four make Jews the differentia, one "Jew" (which may be glossed as 'Jews'), four Jewish people, one the Jewish population, and one Israel. The last of these is clearly much too narrow, since there are cases of antisemitism that have nothing to do with Israel,

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[1] On a personal note, the deed to the author's home, built in 1938, originally had a covenant (later ruled illegal) barring sale or rental of the home to foreign-born Jews. Foreign-born Jews were in good company, joined by Negroes, Asiatics, Slavs, Bulgarians, Turks and foreign-born Greeks and Italians.

such as all but one of those mentioned in (Government of Canada 2023); the definition with Israel as the differentia also had the genus wrong, so need not be further considered. A difficulty with the other 10 descriptions of the differentia is that the words 'Jew' and 'Jewish' are ambiguous when said of individual human beings: they can refer either to someone's religious affiliation or to their ethnicity. As conjectured earlier in this article, the word 'Semitism' was apparently coined in 1879 to label an alleged set of characteristics of ethnically Jewish people, independently of whether they were religiously Jewish. Subsequently, although hostility to ethnic Jews and prejudice against them have roots historically in the hostility of Christians to practitioners of the Jewish religion (as alleged killers of Christ, people who refused to become Christians, and alleged users of the blood of Christians for ritual purposes [the "blood libel"]), antisemitism has primarily taken the form of hostility to ethnic Jews, even those who are fully assimilated in the larger non-Jewish society and have no association whatsoever with the Jewish religion. Hence it needs to be made clear that antisemitism is hostility or prejudice toward those who are ethnically Jewish. Hostility or prejudice toward the Jewish religion might better be called 'anti-Judaism'. The clarification that 'Jew' or 'Jewish' is an ethnic status rather than a religious affiliation resolves the ambiguity of these terms. But they remain vague. Who is ethnically Jewish? Historically, religion was used as a proxy for ethnicity. In the 1910s, the Ivy League universities Harvard, Yale and Princeton began to ask applicants for admission questions about their religion, their ancestors' religion, and whether their families had changed their last name; they used this information to keep the number of incoming students identified by this means as Jewish to 10 to 12 per cent of the total, until the 1960s (Karabel 2005). In 1935, the National Socialist (Nazi) government in Germany issued a regulation that counted someone as a Jew if at least three of their grandparents belonged to the Jewish religious community (Stackelberg and Noakes 2002, 188-189). Perhaps, however, it is not necessary for a definition of the term 'antisemitism' to specify in such a precise way who counts as a Jew, since the targets of the prejudice or hostility signified by the term are whoever and whatever the bigot or hater stigmatizes with the label 'Jewish'.

The 11 definitions under consideration differ in how they describe the differentia. Does it make a difference whether the targeted ethnic group is called 'Jews' or 'Jewish people' or 'the Jewish population'? Here the issue is not whether the boundaries of the group are correctly determined but what are the implications of characterizing it in a certain way. To characterize it as "the Jewish population" is not only inaccurate or at least misleading (since the target of an antisemitic act might be an individual Jew rather than all Jews) but also somewhat pejorative, since it echoes the tendency of anti-Semites to treat Jewish people as an organized collectivity rather than as individuals who differ among themselves in many ways and who are not conspiring together to dominate the world. To characterize the target of antisemitism as "Jews" is to treat the ethnicity of a Jewish person as a central identifying feature, in the same way as anti-Semites do. In contrast, the phrase 'Jewish people' makes clear that the targets of antisemitism are people first and foremost, whose Jewishness is one of their characteristics, not the feature that defines who they are.

Thus, of the 11 reportive definitions considered, the best is the Oxford Languages definition of antisemitism as hostility or prejudice against Jewish people. It could be glossed as hostility or prejudice against people regarded as ethnically Jewish. I will use this definition in the rest of this section, but will modify it in the next section, after consideration of two positional definitions of the term 'antisemitism'.

An additional constraint on definitions is that the words used in the defining part of the definition must be understandable to the intended audience (Hitchcock 2021, 82-83). For this purpose, for example, dictionaries meant for learners of a language use a "defining vocabulary" of high-frequency words in the defining parts of their definitions (Atkins and Rundell 2008, 449), on the assumption that learners will already have learned the meaning of these words. If we assume that the definition of antisemitism as hostility or prejudice directed against people regarded as ethnically Jewish is intended for a readership of native speakers of English who are educated enough to understand news reports in the mass media, then it is reasonable to suppose that these readers will understand the meaning of the content words in the defining part: hostility, prejudice, people, regarded, ethnically, Jewish. It is a useful exercise, however, to recast a definition so that it uses in its defining parts only the terms in a simple basic language or terms previously defined using terms of such a basic language. Theoretically, a definition is the introduction into a language of a term that the language did not previously possess. Hence one should start with a simple language and add terms sequentially by definition, using in the defining part of each definition only basic terms or terms that have already been defined in previous definitions. This procedure is particularly important when trying to understand the terms used by people of a different culture than one's own. For this purpose, Goddard and Wierzbicka (2014) have developed what they call a "natural semantic metalanguage" (NSM) consisting of 65 "semantic primes", concepts that they claim to be lexicalized in all natural languages. NSM has a simple grammar and punctuation. Goddard and Wierzbicka group the semantic primes into 17 categories, listed below with the English-language "exponents" of each category's primes:

Substantives: I, you, someone, something-thing, people, body
Relational substantives: kinds, parts
Determiners: this, the same, other-else
Quantifiers: one, two, some, all, much-many, little-few
Evaluators: good, bad
Descriptors: big, small
Mental predicates: know, think, want, don't want, feel, see, hear
Speech: say, words, true
Actions, events, movement: do, happen, move
Location, existence, specification: be (somewhere), there is, be (something)
Possession: (is) mine
Life and death: live, die

Time: when-time, now, before, after, a long time, a short time, for some time,
    moment
Place: where-place, above, below, far, near, side, inside, touch
Logical concepts: not, maybe, can, because, if
Augmenter, intensifier: very, more
Similarity: like (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014, 12)

As an exercise, let us try to put into the words of this simple language the defining part of the reportive definition of antisemitism as hostility or prejudice against people regarded as ethnically Jewish. Of the words in its defining part, only the word 'people' is already an exponent in the English language of an NSM semantic prime. The other words need to be rephrased or defined, perhaps through a series of definitions introducing a sequence of terms. As an example of how a term can be defined in NSM, consider the following definition of the German word 'Angst' by Wierzbicka:

Angst (e.g. X hatte Angst vor dem Hund/vor der Prüfung)
(a) X felt something
(b)   sometimes a person thinks for some time:
(c)   "I don't know what will happen
(d)   many bad things can happen to me
(e)   I don't want these things to happen
(f)   I want to do something because of this if I can
(g)   I don't know what I can do"
(h)   because of this this person feels something bad for some time
(i) X felt something like this (Wierzbicka 2009, 134)[2]

Wierzbicka's definition of the German word 'Angst' is a contextual definition (Hitchcock 2021, 124-137) of the word as it occurs in contexts of the form 'X hatte Angst vor dem Hund' ('X had Angst about the dog'). The occurrences of the word 'antisemitism' in our small sample of its uses place it in the following contexts: '… is a crime', '… has roots in <a source>', '… is of interest to <a kind of people>', '… is fed by <a person> into <an area> for <a period of time>', '… is a hatred', '… has a history', '… is a doctrinal cornerstone', '… rose from <a source>, '… persists in <an area>', '… manifests itself through <an action>, '… changed in expression and virulence', and 'an expert in …'. A comprehensive contextual definition would permit replacement of the word 'antisemitism' in all these contexts (Hitchcock 2021, 129). To provide a context for such a comprehensive definition requires working out what sort of object can be a crime, have causes, be of interest, last over time, be an object of doctrinal adherence, be disseminated, have a history, manifest itself in action, change in virulence, and be the subject of expertise. What else besides

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[2] For ease of understanding, I have re-lettered the clauses and changed words that were printed in small capitals to ordinary type.

antisemitism could have such characteristics? Obviously other forms of racial or ethnic prejudice, such as anti-Black racism. More generally, all the contexts in our sample could be used in talking about any basis for human interaction that could be an object of doctrinal adherence and could have implications for people's speech and action: economic liberalism, Marxist communism, democratic socialism, public-spiritedness, volunteerism, individualism, communitarianism, selfishness, and so on. An appropriately general context would be one that makes 'antisemitism' the complement in an identity statement: "X is antisemitism":

> X is antisemitism
> (a) Some people are a kind of person that people say are "Jews"
> (b) If someone says that a person is bad because they are a person of this kind, that is X
> (c) If someone says that a person cannot do something if they are a person of this kind, that is X
> (d) If someone says that a person cannot not do something if they are a person of this kind, that is X
> (e) If someone says something else like these things, that is X
> (f) If someone does something bad to a person because they are a person of this kind, that is X
> (g) If someone does something else like this, that is X
> (h) If someone wants something bad to happen to all people of this kind, that is X
> (i) If someone feels something else like this, that is X
> (j) X is very bad

The first clause identifies the target of antisemitism as people that people identify as Jews; the reader is invited to think of alternative ways of identifying the target using just NSM. Clauses (b) through (i) cash out the concepts of prejudice and hostility in terms of what people say about, do to, and feel about Jews, in each case allowing extension by analogy to other cases (in clauses e, g, and i). The final clause makes explicit the negative connotations of the words 'prejudice' and 'hostility'.

4. Positional definitions of the term 'antisemitism'

As previously mentioned, a positional definition takes a position on an issue that the use of the term being defined raises. The main issue with the term 'antisemitism' is what criteria are to be used to determine whether a particular act or statement is a manifestation of antisemitism. In other words, according to the reportive definition just endorsed, does it express hostility or prejudice directed against people taken to be ethnically Jewish? A positional definition addressing this question can be revisionary, either narrowing the extension of the term 'antisemitism' or broadening it or doing both simultaneously, in different respects. An important general point about

definitions is that an accurate reportive definition of a term does not necessarily provide a criterion for determining what is correctly labeled by the term being defined. The mathematical logician Alfred Tarski makes this point about his famous definition of truth; he notes that his paradigm case of the definition of the term 'true sentence' for an axiomatized theory of class inclusion:

> … does not give by itself any general criterion for the truth of a sentence. This is not, by the way, at least from the methodological viewpoint, any defect of the definition under consideration and it does not differ, in this respect, from a significant portion of the definitions which can be encountered in the deductive sciences (Tarski 2006, 197; translation modified to fit the Polish original[3]).

A definition of antisemitism that provides a general criterion for determining whether a statement, action or feeling is antisemitic would address the issue of what counts as antisemitism. So would a definition that includes detailed scenarios illustrating antisemitism and illustrating non-antisemitism, and perhaps borderline scenarios. Since the point of labelling something as 'antisemitism' is to condemn it as morally reprehensible, any such provision of a criterion or of scenarios would ultimately require ethical justification, as Hitchcock (2021, 71-73) maintains with respect to so-called "persuasive definitions".

There are at least two elaborate widely endorsed positional definitions of the term 'antisemitism'. The first (AJC 2023, 8-9) was adopted in May 2016 at a plenary session of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which at the time consisted of 31 countries, including the United States, Canada, and most countries of western Europe. As of July 2023, 43 countries had formally adopted the IHRA definition (AJC 2023, 6-7). The second (Anziska et al. n.d.) was published in 2021 with the name 'The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism'. It was endorsed by 210 scholarly researchers on antisemitism or such related topics as Judaism, the Holocaust, Israel, Palestine, and the Middle East. As of April 2024, the number of such signatories had grown to about 350. The issuers of the Jerusalem Declaration proposed it as an improvement on the IHRA definition, to be adopted as an alternative to it or as an interpretive tool for institutions that had already adopted the IHRA definition. I shall discuss in turn the IHRA definition and the Jerusalem Declaration.

The resolution adopting the IHRA's definition describes it as a "non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism" (IHRA 2024). It describes its purpose as that of guiding the IHRA in its work; it is unclear however how the definition can guide that work, which focuses specifically on remembering the Holocaust (of Jews and Roma). However, the IHRA resolution is almost identical to a statement adopted in January 2005 by the European Monitoring Centre on

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[3] ... nie daje bowiem sama przez się żadnego ogólnego kryterjum prawdziwości zdania. Nie jest to zresztą, przynajmniej z metodologicznego punktu widzenia, żadną wadą rozważanej definicji i nie różni się ona pod tym względem od znacznej części definicyj, spotykanych w naukach dedukcyjnych.

Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), which began with the following more informative statement of its purpose:

> The purpose of this document is to provide a practical guide for identifying incidents, collecting data, and supporting the implementation and enforcement of legislation dealing with antisemitism (EUMC 2011).[4]

This statement of purpose did not fit the work of the IHRA, which does not monitor incidents of antisemitism. Hence it was dropped. Nevertheless, it provides a benchmark for evaluating the IHRA definition, namely, its suitability for identifying incidents of antisemitism. The "working definition" adopted by the EUMC in January 2005 and by the IHRA in May 2016 is as follows:

> Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities (EUMC 2011, IHRA 2024).

On its face, this definition is very peculiar. Whereas the reportive definitions of antisemitism discussed in section 3 typically classify antisemitism as a kind of racism involving hostility or prejudice directed against Jewish people, the IHRA definition classifies it as a kind of perception. This classification appears to be a reference to the assumed cause of antisemitic feeling ("hatred toward Jews") and antisemitic behaviour ("rhetorical and physical manifestations"). But it is far too vague. Exactly what perception of Jews does the author of the definition have in mind? In fact, anti-Semites may well differ among themselves in how they perceive Jews; some blame Jews for aggressive business practices, others for left-wing labour agitation. A further difficulty with the classification of antisemitism as a kind of perception is that it counts as guilty of antisemitism people who harbour this perception of Jews but never feel or express any hostility to Jewish people and are not prejudiced against them. Human beings tend to see individuals as members of the groups to which they belong (as men or women, for example, or as ethnically East Asian or European or South Asian or Amerindian, and so on) and to have stereotypes of what members of those groups are like (AUTHOR ***). If such a stereotype does not result in derogatory speech or

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[4] The EUMC was replaced in 2009 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), with a mandate to promote and protect fundamental rights across the European Union (AJC 2023, 3; FRA 2024). The new agency decided not to provide a definition of any form of prejudice or intolerance, including antisemitism, leaving it to individual victim groups to describe (AJC 2023, 3). The IHRA resolution of 2016 thus gave the EUMC document a home that it had lacked in the intervening seven years.

discriminatory behaviour, it is unreasonable to charge the person who holds it with being racist. The working definition of antisemitism acknowledges this concern by singling out its expression as hatred and its "rhetorical and physical manifestations" for attention, with a suggestion that other manifestations of the antisemitic perception of Jews are not of concern. The definition is helpful in identifying the range of targets of antisemitic speech and behaviour, although its inclusion of non-Jewish individuals and their property as targets needs explanation, since, in the common usage of the term described in section 3, the target of antisemitism is people thought to be ethnically Jewish. It is not clear whether the definition covers institutional antisemitism. The identification of hatred as the emotional expression of antisemitism fails to acknowledge that antisemitism may have a less extreme emotional manifestation, in the form of dislike, antipathy or hostility directed at people regarded as ethnically Jewish.

After a statement of the purpose of the examples to follow and two intrusive sentences about the state of Israel (to be discussed later), the IHRA resolution characterizes antisemitism in a general way as often charging Jews with conspiring to harm humanity and blaming Jews for "why things go wrong". It points out the forms in which antisemitism is expressed (speech, writing, visual forms, action) and the content of those expressions (sinister stereotypes, negative character traits). There then follows a highly qualified announcement of examples of antisemitism:

> Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:
>
> - calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion
> - making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions
> - accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews
> - denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust)
> - accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust

- accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations (EUMC 2011, IHRA 2024)

In the IHRA resolution, these six examples are followed immediately by five examples of speech that targets the state of Israel rather than Jewish people or Jewish institutions. This grouping gives a misleading emphasis to speech critical of Israel, whose status as being antisemitic or not antisemitic is controversial. The EUMC document, on the other hand, inserts a distinct introductory announcement before the examples of antisemitism regarding Israel. I postpone the discussion of that announcement and those examples until later.

As for the examples quoted above, they may or may not express the "certain perception of Jews" that the IHRA definition identifies with antisemitism. But they clearly express hostility or prejudice toward Jewish people: the first-mentioned statements call for harming Jews, and the other five are derogatory statements about Jews known to be false. Thus, there would be little dissent from classifying all six examples as antisemitism. In fact, it is hard to imagine a context in which such statements would not be antisemitic. A striking feature of the list is that, apart from the inclusion of aiding the killing or harming of Jews, all the examples are statements. The list would be more representative if it included non-speech behaviour, such as painting swastikas on synagogues. It would also be more helpful as a guide if it consisted of scenarios that definitely manifest antisemitism, like the scenarios of crimes in the "Green Book" of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI 2004), rather than statements that "could, taking into account the overall context," be examples of antisemitism.

A comprehensive definition of a term includes not only examples of things correctly labeled by the term but also examples of things not correctly labeled by the term, and perhaps examples of borderline cases (Hitchcock 2021, 2-3, 156-157, 164-166). The EUMC document and the IHRA resolution are remiss in not including examples of things that some people might take to be manifestations of antisemitism but that are not correctly labeled by the term 'antisemitism'. For example, criticism of the known bad behaviour of an individual Jewish person is on its face not antisemitic. Nor is careful scholarly inquiry into the details of the murders conducted and orchestrated by National Socialist Germany during World War II. As to borderline cases, someone's expression of their personal stereotypes about Jews may or may not be antisemitic, depending on whether such expressions are emotionally neutral or intended as derogatory.

Let us now consider the two intrusive statements concerning the state of Israel whose discussion I postponed. They say that manifestations of antisemitism could target the state of Israel, "conceived as a Jewish collectivity", but that criticism of the state of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. In the EUMC document (EUMC 2011), the latter statement followed the examples of antisemitism targeting Israel, and the examples were preceded by their own introductory framing of them as things that "taking into

account the overall context could" manifest antisemitism. In the IHRA resolution, as previously mentioned, they followed the six examples already quoted. The examples are as follows:

- denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor
- applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation
- using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis
- drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis
- holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel (EUMC 2011, IHRA 2024)

Again, it would be more helpful as a guide if the list consisted of context-rich scenarios that definitely manifest antisemitism. As with the previous list of examples, it is not clear whether statements of these kinds reflect the "certain perception of Jews" that the document identifies with antisemitism. However, the third and fifth examples on their face reflect prejudice against Jews and thus would be readily classified as manifestations of antisemitism according to the definition of 'antisemitism' tentatively endorsed in section 3 above. The other three examples are more questionable, in that there may be good reasons, not rooted in prejudice against Jews or hostility to them, for statements of the specified kinds. As to the first example, the right to self-determination that has become established in international law is qualified by the principle of respect for the territorial integrity and political independence of existing nation-states, is applied mainly to colonies obtaining political independence, and is rarely illustrated by the example of the Jewish people being entitled to their own state (Hannum 2024). As to the second example, Israel has a unique status among democratic countries in having emerged from a prospective recognition by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which in 1947 approved a plan to partition the mandate territory of Palestine into an Arab state, a Jewish state, and an international regime for Jerusalem (General Assembly of the United Nations 1947). This decision arguably gives Israel, as the *de facto* realization of the envisaged Jewish state, a unique special responsibility to enable the emergence of the envisaged Arab state in the remaining part of the Palestinian mandate. As to the fourth example, a general comparison of the only state with a Jewish majority to the regime responsible for the murder of six million Jews is unwarranted, odious, and inflammatory, and on its face reflects hostility towards Jews. On the other hand, if a given Israeli policy is intrinsically objectionable for the same reasons as a comparable Nazi policy, making the specific comparison is perfectly legitimate, and so not in itself a manifestation of antisemitism. Criticisms of Israeli policy that are truthful and rest on accepted international standards for the behaviour of nation

states are not in themselves antisemitic. Thus, the list of examples of statements that "taking into account the overall context could" manifest antisemitism is highly tendentious.

This tendentious character is compounded by the absence of examples of criticisms of Israel that are not in themselves antisemitic, apart from the very general remark that followed the five examples in (EUMC 2011) and was moved to an earlier position in the IHRA resolution (IHRA 2024). As pointed out with reference to the examples of antisemitism directed against Jews, a comprehensive account of the meaning of the term 'antisemitism' when applied to statements about the state of Israel would include not only examples of situations correctly labeled by the term but also examples of situations that might be thought to be correctly labeled by the term but in fact are not correctly labeled that way, as well as perhaps examples of borderline cases. In 2004, when the EUMC definition was drafted, such examples might have included objecting to the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem as contrary to international law, objecting to the application of Israel's Absentee Property Law to East Jerusalem (Norwegian Refugee Council 2017), and objecting to official recognition of illegal Israeli settler communities in the occupied West Bank. Even if one disagrees with those objections, they have enough foundation in facts and recognized legal principles that they are not rightly classed as in themselves antisemitic. Further, the general description of criticism of Israel as being non-antisemitic if it is similar to that leveled against any other country seems too broad in one respect and too narrow in another. Criticism of Israel should not be regarded as antisemitic if its author would level them against any other country acting in a relevantly similar way, even if such criticism is not leveled against any other country because no other country merits them. On the other hand, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country is on its face antisemitic if the criticism is obviously unjustified by the facts (as, for example, is the claim that Israel is an apartheid state, which was true of South Africa before 1990 and of Canada before 1951 but is highly tendentious and false of Israel proper).

The EUMC document and the IHRA resolution conclude with uncontroversial definitions of when antisemitic acts are criminal (when they are so defined by law), when criminal acts are antisemitic (when the targets are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews), and when discrimination is antisemitic (when it denies Jews opportunities or services available to others). The mention of antisemitic discrimination is a belated reference to institutional discrimination, which neither the initial formulaic definition nor the list of possible examples of antisemitism includes.

Before turning to the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, let us rephrase the identified inadequacies in the EUMC and IHRA working definition of antisemitism as desirable features of an improved definition:

- classification of antisemitism as a kind of ethnically directed prejudice or hostility (i.e., a kind of racism) rather than as a kind of perception
- precision rather than vagueness
- recognition of emotional manifestations of antisemitism that are less intense than hatred

- scenarios of cases that are definitely manifestations of antisemitism, as opposed to general descriptions of kinds of actions that could, depending on the context, be manifestations of antisemitism
- allegedly antisemitic statements about Israel that actually express hostility or prejudice against Jewish people
- parallel scenarios of cases that are definitely not manifestations of antisemitism, although some people might think they are
- perhaps scenarios of borderline cases

This list of desirable changes to the EUMC/IHRA definition of antisemitism can be used to evaluate the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, whose authors "propose our non-legally binding Declaration as an alternative to the IHRA Definition. Institutions that have already adopted the IHRA Definition can use our text as a tool for interpreting it" (Anziska et al. n.d.).

The Jerusalem Declaration describes itself as "a tool to identify, confront and raise awareness about antisemitism as it manifests in countries around the world today" (Anziska et al. n.d.). It consists of a preamble, a definition, five general guidelines for recognizing antisemitism, five examples of views or actions concerning Israel and Palestine that on their face are antisemitic, and five examples of views or actions concerning Israel and Palestine that on their face are not antisemitic. Let us consider each of these in turn.

In the preamble the authors describe themselves as scholars studying antisemitism or such related topics as Jews, Israel, Palestine, or the Middle East. Inspired by internationally adopted documents concerning human rights, racial discrimination, and the Holocaust, they "hold that while antisemitism has certain distinctive features, the fight against it is inseparable from the overall fight against all forms of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and gender discrimination". This statement clearly situates antisemitism as a form of unjust discrimination. The authors, aware of the historical persecution of Jews and "the universal lessons of the Holocaust", express alarm at the reassertion of antisemitism by groups that incite hatred and violence. They state as their aim "to provide a usable, concise, and historically informed core definition of antisemitism with a set of guidelines".

The preamble goes on to situate the declaration with respect to the IHRA definition, which it correctly characterizes as "unclear in key respects and widely open to different interpretations". The authors aim to offer a clearer core definition and a coherent set of guidelines. They characterize as undue emphasis the focus on Israel of seven (actually, six) of the 11 IHRA examples of possible antisemitism. Nevertheless, they propose to address a "widely felt need for clarity on the limits of legitimate political speech and action concerning Zionism, Israel, and Palestine", with the twofold aim of (1) clarifying what antisemitism is and how it is manifested and (2) protecting space for open debate about Zionism and the future of Israel and Palestine. The reader is invited to infer that the IHRA examples of possible antisemitism with Israel as its target unduly restrict speech and action concerning Zionism, Israel, and Palestine.

The declaration defines antisemitism as "discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish)". This definition uses a broader genus than that of the reportive definition proposed at the end of section 3, by including discrimination and violence as well as prejudice and hostility. In the light of the history of antisemitism, which includes discrimination against Jews and the violence of pogroms and the Holocaust, the broader genus is preferable, and in this respect the Jerusalem Declaration's definition is superior to that proposed at the end of section 3. Its choice of genus is also far preferable to the IHRA definition's choice of perception as the genus. Like the genus, the differentia in the Jerusalem Declaration's definition is broader than that of the reportive definition proposed at the end of section 3, by including as the target of antisemitism not only Jewish people but also Jewish institutions. The broader differentia is an improvement, since physical attacks on Jewish institutions as being Jewish are clearly manifestations of antisemitism. The qualifications "as Jews" and "as Jewish" are a useful narrowing of the differentia, particularly in the case of acts of violence, which although criminal are not antisemitic if it is merely an accidental fact that the target of such an act is Jewish. The definition can be faulted for failing to make clear that contemporary antisemitism is directed against people who are ethnically Jewish rather than against adherents of Judaism (the religion). It can also be faulted for failing to include cases where the target is mistakenly thought to be a Jewish person or a Jewish institution. These faults could be remedied by changing the identification of the targets of antisemitism from "Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish institutions)" to 'people or institutions regarded as ethnically Jewish, as Jewish'.

The "guidelines" that follow the formulaic definition are neither scenarios of antisemitic and non-antisemitic speech and actions nor examples of types of speech or action that could, depending on the context, be manifestations of antisemitism. Rather, they are an admirable concise synthesis of the perspective and findings of scholars who do research on antisemitism. Thus, they go beyond an account of the meaning of the word 'antisemitism' to a description of the history of the manifestations of the phenomenon to which it refers and an explicit calling out of what is wrong with it. The examples that they incorporate are presented as definitely antisemitic and not as possible antisemitism depending on the context.

The first guideline is a generic identification of the racism that antisemitism exemplifies: "It is racist to essentialize (treat a character trait as inherent) or to make sweeping negative generalizations about a given population. What is true of racism in general is true of antisemitism in particular". This guideline situates antisemitism correctly as a form of racism and brings out what is wrong with it: making false negative generalizations about a whole population that ignore individual differences.

The second guideline specifies the way in which antisemitism essentializes or makes sweeping negative statements about Jewish people: "What is particular in classic antisemitism is the idea that Jews are linked to the forces of evil". The guideline goes on to describe anti-Jewish fantasies of past and present, such as the fantasy that "the Jews" control government, own the banks, control the media, and are responsible for spreading disease. These are rightly presented as

definite manifestations of antisemitism without the qualifications of the IHRA definition's examples of being possible manifestations depending on the context.

The third guideline echoes the statement in the IHRA definition that antisemitism can be expressed in speech, writing, visual forms, or action: "Antisemitism can be manifested in words, visual images, and deeds". Whereas the IHRA statement is followed by a generic reference to caricatures and negative stereotypes, the Jerusalem Declaration gives specific examples of each of these modes of manifestation, labelling them without qualification (and rightly) as antisemitic:

> Examples of antisemitic words include utterances that all Jews are wealthy, inherently stingy, or unpatriotic. In antisemitic caricatures, Jews are often depicted as grotesque, with big noses and associated with wealth. Examples of antisemitic deeds are: assaulting someone because she or he is Jewish, attacking a synagogue, daubing swastikas on Jewish graves, or refusing to hire or promote people because they are Jewish (Anziska et al. n.d.)

The fourth guideline points out something missing in the IHRA definition, that antisemitism can be indirect and coded rather than direct and explicit. Here the authors rightly remark that identifying coded antisemitic speech is often "a matter of context and judgement, taking account of these guidelines".

The fifth and last general guideline singles out Holocaust denial as antisemitic, again without qualifying it as possible antisemitism depending on the context: "Denying or minimizing the Holocaust by claiming that the deliberate Nazi genocide of the Jews did not take place, or that there were no extermination camps or gas chambers, or that the number of victims was a fraction of the actual total, is antisemitic".

Thus, the Jerusalem Declaration's definition of antisemitism and its five general guidelines satisfy the first four desiderata extracted from the critique of the IHRA definition. (1) They classify antisemitism as a kind of racism. (2) They are precise rather than vague. (3) They allow its emotional manifestation to be hostility that falls short of hatred. (4) Their examples are said to be definitely antisemitic rather than said to be possibly antisemitic, depending on the context. They fail to satisfy the last two desiderata, in that they do not give examples of things that are not antisemitic (though they might be thought to be) and do not describe borderline cases (except in the reference to the need for judgment and attention to context in deciding whether someone's remarks are coded antisemitism). As for the fifth desideratum, to call a view or action about Israel antisemitic only if it expresses hostility or prejudice to people regarded as ethnically Jewish, the Jerusalem Declaration classifies the following five examples as on their face antisemitic:

- applying the symbols, images and negative stereotypes of classical antisemitism … to the State of Israel
- holding Jews collectively responsible for Israel's conduct or treating Jews, simply because they are Jewish, as agents of Israel
- requiring people, because they are Jewish, publicly to condemn Israel or Zionism (for example, at a political meeting)
- assuming that non-Israeli Jews, simply because they are Jews, are necessarily more loyal to Israel than to their own countries
- denying the right of Jews in the State of Israel to exist and flourish, collectively and individually, as Jews, in accordance with the principle of equality (Anziska et al.)

To evaluate the classification of these examples as on their face antisemitic, one should consider whether on their face they express hostility or prejudice against people regarded as ethnically Jewish. The middle three examples target Jewish people in general, in a way that is unjust and pejorative, and so clearly on their face express prejudice against Jewish people. The first and last concern the state of Israel in particular. The first one applies to Israel the tropes of classical antisemitism. Since using such tropes feeds off the historical roots of antisemitism and stirs up those associations, it is on its face hostile to Jewish people. So is denial of the right of Jews in the state of Israel to exist and flourish. It is noteworthy that the Jerusalem Declaration does not postulate a right of the Jewish people to self-determination, as does the IHRA definition, but instead rests the right of Jews in Israel to flourish on the principle of equality. The appeal to this principle is consistent with the declaration's situation of the fight against antisemitism as an instance of the fight against all forms of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and gender discrimination. To sum up, all five examples are indeed on their face antisemitic, since on their face they express prejudice or hostility against Jewish people. As to whether the list is complete, it is worth considering whether denial of the legitimacy of the state of Israel is on its face antisemitic, as the government of Canada's fact sheet on antisemitism seems to assume (Government of Canada 2023). Such a denial might be construed as an instance of the last example, a denial of the right of Jews in Israel to exist and flourish, individually and collectively. But the Jerusalem Declaration leaves it to the reader to make such an inference.

The declaration classifies the following five examples concerning Israel and Palestine as being on their face not antisemitic:

- supporting the Palestinian demand for justice …
- criticizing or opposing Zionism as a form of nationalism …
- evidence-based criticism of Israel as a state …
- boycott, divestment and sanctions [against Israel—author] …

- … criticism [of Israel—author] that some may see as excessive or contentious … (Anziska et al. n.d.)

The above quotation is truncated, to bring out the key feature of each example. The omitted details fulfill the declaration's stated aim:

> … to protect a space for an open debate about the vexed question of the future of Israel/Palestine. We do not all share the same political views and we are not seeking to promote a partisan political agenda. Determining that a controversial view or action is not antisemitic implies neither that we endorse it nor that we do not (Anziska et al. n.d.).

The authors reinforce their neutrality as a group on the merits of the five examples by preceding them with the parenthetical remark "(whether or not one approves of the view or action)". To judge the correctness of the declaration's classification of these five examples as on their face not antisemitic, one should consider whether on their face they express hostility or prejudice against Jewish people, as Jewish. Readers will make their own judgment on this question; the author's judgment is that on their face they do not express such hostility and thus are rightly classified as not antisemitic. It remains to consider whether this list of non-examples is incomplete. The list does not mention denial of the legitimacy of Israel as a state. The second non-example of antisemitism, opposing Zionism as a form of nationalism, may include denial of the legitimacy of Israel as a state, provided that the denial rests on an opposition to nationalism. But the declaration leaves it to the reader to make such an inference.

Is denial of the legitimacy of the state of Israel on its face antisemitic? That is, does it on its face express hostility or prejudice against people who are regarded as ethnically Jewish? Since in 2022 almost half the world's people who regard themselves as ethnically Jewish lived in Israel (Dashefsky and Sheskin 2023) and on the eve of 2024 73.2% of the population of Israel was Jewish (Central Bureau of Statistics 2024), to deny the legitimacy of the state of Israel would understandably be perceived as threatening by many Jews. If the state of Israel is illegitimate, what is to replace it and how will that replacement come about? As the Jerusalem Declaration says:

> The guidelines that focus on Israel-Palestine … should be taken together. In general, when applying the guidelines each should be read in the light of the others and always with a view to context. Context can include the intention behind an utterance, or a pattern of speech over time, or even the identity of the speaker, especially when the subject is Israel or Zionism. So, for example, hostility to Israel

could be an expression of an antisemitic animus, or it could be a reaction to a human rights violation, or it could be the emotion that a Palestinian person feels on account of their experience at the hands of the State. In short, judgement and sensitivity are needed in applying these guidelines to concrete situations (Anziska et al n.d.).

To sum up: The Jerusalem Declaration's formulaic definition of antisemitism is far superior to that adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Unlike the IHRA definition, it gets the genus right: antisemitism is a kind of racism (in the form of discrimination or prejudice or hostility or violence), not a kind of perception. And it gets the differentia right: the targets of antisemitism are not only Jews but also Jewish institutions, with the important qualification that they are targeted as Jews or as Jewish. The five general guidelines of the Jerusalem Declaration that follow its formulaic definition give examples of antisemitism that are rightly stigmatized without qualification as manifestations of antisemitism and that include all its historic and contemporary manifestations. In contrast, the IHRA examples are characterized as things that could be antisemitic, depending on the context, thus leaving the reader uncertain whether and on what basis to call a particular occurrence antisemitic. Because of this manifest superiority, the Jerusalem Declaration's core definition of antisemitism and its five general guidelines for applying this definition deserve to be adopted as a guide by individuals and organizations concerned with identifying manifestations of antisemitism, in preference to the IHRA definition. A second-best decision, for those already committed to the IHRA definition, is to adopt the Jerusalem Declaration's definition and general guidelines as a guide to interpreting the IHRA definition.

It is often disputed whether some view or action about Israel is antisemitic. The fact that almost half the world's Jews live in Israel and that most residents of Israel are Jewish does not in itself make a criticism of Israel antisemitic, any more than the analogous fact about Poland makes a criticism of Poland an expression of anti-Polish racism. It makes sense, therefore, in giving examples of antisemitism, to separate policies, actions and statements that target, as Jewish, people or institutions regarded as Jewish from those that target Israel. The Jerusalem Declaration does this, but the IHRA definition does not, and so in this respect too the Jerusalem Declaration is better. It is also better in identifying not only Israeli-targeted views or actions that are on their face antisemitic but also such views or actions that are on their face not antisemitic. And it rightly emphasizes the need to consider context and exercise judgment in working out whether a particular statement or action concerning Israel and Palestine is antisemitic. In short, the Jerusalem Declaration does a better job than the IHRA definition of providing guidance on whether a view or action about Israel and Palestine is antisemitic.

5. Summary

According to the approach to definition in (Hitchcock 2021), the task of defining antisemitism is not that of describing some real essence, such as the underlying mind-set responsible for

antisemitic speech and action. Rather, it is the task of defining the term 'antisemitism'. Hitchcock identifies three basic acts of defining, which are not mutually exclusive: stipulating a term's meaning, reporting its meaning, and advocating a meaning for it.

The introduction into the German language in 1879 of the term 'Semitismus' was an act of stipulation, coining it as a synonym of 'Judenthum' ('Jewishness'), perhaps to register that the term names the supposed characteristics of an ethnic group rather than of a religion, perhaps to emphasize the alien character of its referent in comparison to the referent of its contrast term 'Germanismus' ('Germanness'). Applying Hitchcock's criteria for evaluating stipulative definitions and introductions of new nomenclature, we discover that the term 'Semitismus' risks impact equivocation, because those unfamiliar with the word can easily take it to refer to some position about Semitic languages or some characteristic common to those who speak a Semitic language, including Arabic as well as Hebrew and Aramaic. Further, the pamphlet introducing the term into the German language (Marr 1879) does not meet the requirement that it prove that at most one object satisfies the description of the term's referent. In fact, there is more than one way of being Jewish, so the names 'Judenthum' and 'Semitismus' are both unsatisfactory, since their use implies falsely that there is just one such way.

Reporting a term's meaning is best done by first collecting a representative sample of its use in spoken and written communication, possibly assigning the sentences in the sample to different senses of the term, then describing each sense. Each such description of a sense of a term is an empirical hypothesis, to be judged according to whether the data (the sentences in the sample taken to use the term in a single sense) are what one would expect given this description, whether the description is consistent with one's evidence and background knowledge, and whether rival hypotheses (i.e. other proposed definitions with different implications about expected usage) are inconsistent with facts. The process of constructing and evaluating a reportive definition of the term 'antisemitism' was illustrated by using a sample of 10 sentences using the term 'antisemitism' as a basis for evaluating 11 definitions reporting the term's meaning. The evaluation resulted in a tentative endorsement of the definition of 'antisemitism' as meaning hostility or prejudice directed against people regarded as ethnically Jewish. Although the terms used in the defining part of this definition would be understandable to most educated native speakers of English, they might not be understandable to others. To illustrate the process of choosing words in the defining part of a definition that are understandable to an intended audience, I rephrased the just-mentioned reportive definition in the simple "Natural Semantic Metalanguage" (NSM) developed by Goddard and Wierzbicka (2014). Both the endorsed reportive definition and its rephrasing in NSM turned out to be incomplete and in need of supplementation, when compared to the definition in the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism.

To advocate a meaning is to take a position on an issue that a term's use raises. The result is a positional definition, to be judged by how well the position is justified. The use of the term 'antisemitism' raises the issue of what speech and behaviour deserves to be stigmatized with the label 'antisemitic'. Two widely endorsed positional definitions address this issue: a resolution adopted in May 2016 by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA 2024) and the

Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism published in 2021 (Anziska et al. n.d.). Each proposes a formulaic definition of antisemitism and offers guidelines on deciding whether a particular statement or action is antisemitic. The Jerusalem Declaration turns out to be superior to the IHRA resolution in many respects. Its formulaic definition gets the genus right: racism rather than perception. It gets the differentia right: Jews as Jews or Jewish institutions as Jewish, rather than Jews. Its five general guidelines for deciding whether a statement or action is antisemitic include examples that are rightly said without qualification to be antisemitic rather than examples that in the IHRA resolution are only said to be possibly antisemitic, depending on the context. The Jerusalem Declaration, unlike the IHRA resolution, separates the discussion of when statements about Israel and Palestine are antisemitic from the general guidelines for applying its definition of antisemitism. It includes not only examples of statements about Israel that are on their face antisemitic but also examples that are on their face not antisemitic. And it makes explicit the importance of considering context and exercising judgment when deciding whether a statement about Israel is antisemitic. For these reasons, individuals and organizations concerned with monitoring antisemitism should use the definition and general guidelines of the Jerusalem Declaration in preference to the definition and examples of the IHRA resolution. Those already committed to the IHRA resolution can as a second-best use the Jerusalem Declaration as an interpretive device.

So, after all that, what does the term 'antisemitism' mean as people use it when they communicate with each other? It means discrimination, prejudice, hostility, or violence that targets people or institutions regarded as ethnically Jewish, just because they are Jewish.

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