

**Asa Kasher**

# **COLLECTIVE IDENTITY**

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To the memory of my  
son, Yehoraz, my son,  
1966 - 1991.

Usually, each of us is a member of various groups: One plays a role in a family, is a member of some community and is a citizen of a certain state, to mention just a few examples.

In common parlance, views and actions, will and power are ascribed not only to individual human beings, but also to groups which these individuals belong to: families, communities and states, as well as councils, institutions and religious denominations. Thus, a royal family may be said to have resented criticism, a community to have overcome a problem it experienced, a religious denomination to have a boundless will to enforce its norms, and a court to have an authority, exercised when the court reaches a decision and defends it in the opinions.

What, actually, do we mean when we make such ascriptions? In other words, how do we defend ascriptions of a view to a family, of an action to a community, will to a religious denomination, or power to an institution?

On some occasions, the required defense rests on the instituting rules of the collective under discussion. The law institutes courts and determines their powers. The constitution of a university may infix its will to enhance knowledge and wisdom by exercising academic freedom. When the pope speaks *ex cathedra* on questions of faith, his decrees count as the view of the Catholic Church, by an authority lodged with the Bishop of Rome by a decree of the Ecumenical Council Vatican I, which in turn based itself "upon the decisions of numerous other councils."

On some other occasions, predicating views or actions of a collective is defended by alluding to views held or actions performed by the individuals who constitute the collective under discussion or by almost all of them. A royal family may be described as having resented criticism, if every member of it or almost every member of it has resented criticism. A claim that a certain community has moved from one region to another would be defended by showing that every member of it or almost every member of it has thus moved.

On such occasions, the required defense of a statement about a collective rests on a sufficiently clear notion of the nature of the collective under discussion, including an adequate delineation of the set of individuals who constitute it.

However, on occasions of still another type, a statement about a certain collective is made though there seems to be no unequivocal conception of this collective at the background of the statement. Such an apparently wanting background may lack even

a decent delineation of the related set of individuals. Most conspicuous among examples of statements that are often made under such circumstances are those that seem to refer to a people or a religion, or to predicate a national or a religious character. Consider, for instance, some remarks made by Wittgenstein:

I believe that one of the things Christianity says is that sound doctrines are all useless. That you have to change your life.(1) Tragedy is something un-Jewish.(2)

Indeed, these remarks were not made and similar remarks have not been defended on the background of any given system of rules instituting Christianity or instituting what is Jewish, or of any perspicuous delineation of the related sets of individuals, the Christians or the Jews. How, then, should one find out whether Christianity does say or does not say that sound doctrines are all useless? What should count as a successful defense and what should count as unsuccessful defense of a claim to the effect that something, say tragedy, is un-Jewish? To be sure, the same problems arise even when the remark under consideration is of an apparently simpler form, such as It is typical for a Jewish mind to understand someone else's work better than he understands it himself.(3)

Such remarks appear to be quite puzzling. On the one hand, it is not clear how one should go about pursuit of defense of such remarks, but on the other hand, one finds oneself under an impression that these remarks are meaningful, perhaps even deeply so. This is a genuine puzzle: it creates a distinct impression that it does not rest on some simple confusion. Such puzzles, one is inclined to assume, hide either a precious insight or a pernicious confusion.

Our present purpose is to make a step toward a relief of this philosophical tension. We will outline a general theory of collective identity. Such a theory would enable us to delineate the set of individuals related to a collective of a national, religious or cultural nature, and will show how it contributes to a solution of that philosophical problem. We will then apply our theory to the particular cases of Jewish identity.

This indirect way of tackling problems that have arisen within a Jewish context, namely by developing a general theory and then applying it to a particular Jewish case, is to our mind the most natural way of making a philosophical remark on any Jewish affair.

[II]

The neutral recursive theory of collective identity, which is the first part of our general theory of collective identity, will provide us with a method of responding to questions such as Who are the Jews? Who are the Christians? Who are the Sikhs? Who are the Europeans? by outlining delineations of the sets of individuals related to such collectives of a national, religious, cultural or similar nature(4).

There is, of course, an abundance of significantly different answers to each of these questions. Such a diversity of answers to the same question usually rests on some deep conceptual or ideological differences. Our purpose is not to offer some new grounds for taking sides in such disputes, but rather to put forward a free theory of collective identity. It is a free theory first of all in the sense that it is neutral: the offered method of responding to a "who are the..."-question about a collective will be

free of any commitment to some partisan view of the nature of the collective. This method will, however, be even freer: its application to the case of a certain collective may well result in an utterly new delineation of the related set of individuals, one that has so far been proposed, endorsed or defended by no party to a dispute about the nature of this collective.

Why should we be interested in a neutral theory of collective identity? A simple possible answer is that on some occasions we are interested in a neutral, particular theory that rests on general grounds. In other words, one might be interested in having a theory that is (a) a neutral view of the identity of a particular collective, for instance, the Jews or the Sikhs, but is also (b) an instance of a general view of collective identity, a view independent of any special assumption concerning Jews or Sikhs.

Why should one be interested in having a neutral theory of a particular collective? Aren't those who are interested in theories about a particular collective identity usually interested in taking sides in the debate on the identity of this collective? Aren't they actually interested in eventually forming a view as to "who are the...", by constructing or adopting some partisan answer to this question while rejecting the other ones?

If we imagine an educated, ultra-orthodox Jew, who has an answer to the question "who are the Jews?", then indeed, he is seldom if ever interested in a neutral view of Jewish collective identity. Imagine, however, a Sikh anthropologist who would like to know "who are the Jews," or a Jewish anthropologist who would like to know "who are the Sikhs." Should they take sides in such remote disputes, or rather, try to use some neutral views of their subject matter?

Consider also the hypothetical case of an alien person who has been given the task of charting a just constitution for a future state in which the Sikhs will exercise their collective right for democratic self-determination. Assume she has already realized that there are several incompatible answers to the question "who are the Sikhs?"(5). Had she been given the task of drafting a partisan constitution for a future province, in which a certain Sikh group, say - the Khalsa, will establish and run their own religious dominion, she would have been interested in the partisan, Khalsa characterization of the Sikh collective identity. However, being charged with the task of drafting a just constitution, it would be only natural for her to avoid taking sides in an ongoing, long-lasting and bitter struggle, and opt for a neutral view of the Sikh collective identity, a neutral answer to the question "who are the Sikhs?"(6)

The proposed theory of collective identity will be recursive in the ordinary sense of recursive specification. It will outline a process for delineating a set of individuals, be it the Christians, the Europeans, the Sikhs, the Jews, or what have you. The process starts at a certain initial approximation and continues by successive improvements of it. Each improved approximation is generated by performing certain operations on the previous one.

At each stage of this process we outline a set of individuals, related to the collective under consideration. These sets will be called "squares." For example, Square 0 of the Sikhs is the outlined set of individuals that forms the initial approximation to the Sikh collective. Square 1 of the Sikhs is another outlined set of individuals, the one

generated at the next stage of the process. Square 1 of the Sikhs forms a better approximation to the Sikh collective than Square 0 of the Sikhs.

Assume, then, that a certain collective is under consideration. Call it C. The Christians, the Europeans, the Jews, the Sikhs have been our examples of such Cs so far. The problem of characterizing the collective identity of C takes the form of the problem of answering the question "who are the Cs?". The neutral recursive theory of collective identity outlines the following process for answering such questions.

Square 0 (of the Cs) is the incontrovertible core of C, that is to say, the set of those individuals who are unquestionably Cs:

A person belongs to Square 0 (of the Cs) if, and only if, (i) one considers oneself to be a C, and (ii) one is considered by the others to be a C. To be sure, this is just a proximate specification of Square 0 and it is obviously in need of some clarification, though its major tenor is simple. Square 0 of the Christians includes a person, say - Adam, if he is considered by himself and by the others to be a Christian. Square 0 of the Jews does not include a person, say - Belinda, if she does not consider herself to be a Jew, and it does not include a person, say - Charles, if some of the others do not consider him to be a Jew. Adam is unquestionably a Christian and therefore he is a member of Square 0 of the Christians, whereas Belinda and Charles are not unquestionably Jews and therefore they are not members of Square 0 of the Jews.

Let us turn, now, to a clarification of conditions (i) and (ii) in our presentation of the notion of "Square 0 (of the Cs)."

First, what does it take for a person to consider oneself to be a member of a collective? We assume that if one does not have the faintest notion of who are the Cs, then one does not consider oneself to be a C and thereby does not satisfy condition (i). Consequently, a person who has no view of the collective C does not belong to Square C (of the Cs). If a person does have a notion of who are the Cs, whether an articulate notion, fully and clearly expressed and defended, or a notion that is only vaguely or implicitly held, we assume that one is in a position to tell whether one does or does not consider oneself to be a C, that is to say, whether one believes oneself to be a C according to one's own notion of who are the Cs. Hence, as to whether condition (i) obtains, for a certain person, with respect to a certain collective, there seems always to be a definitive answer.

Secondly, what does it take for a person, such as Adam, to be considered by "the others" one of the Cs, one of the Christians in the case of Adam? We distinguish all the other persons who do have a notion of who are the Cs from those who do not have such a notion. The latter need not be considered. Amongst the former we consider, first of all, those who know Adam to the extent that they are willing to apply to his case their notion of who are the Cs. In other words, we consider first those who have, in a sense, a ready answer to the question whether Adam is a C. If these ready answers are not all in the affirmative, then condition (ii) does not obtain. If Adam is in Square 0 of the Christians, it means condition (ii) is satisfied, that is to say, all these ready answers are in the affirmative.

Assume, then, that every person who has a notion of who are the Cs and knows Adam takes him to be one of the Cs. We still have to consider the views of those

persons who have their notions of who are the Cs but do not know Adam. If each of these persons did know Adam, would they all take him to be one of the Cs? Or, put more accurately, would it be the case, for any of these persons, say - Dorris, that if she did know about Adam whatever could have enabled her to apply to Adam her notion of who are the Cs, then she would have taken Adam to be one of the Cs? (7). If some of the answers to these questions are in the negative, condition (ii) does not obtain. If Adam is in Square 0 of the Cs, it means condition (ii) is satisfied, that is to say, the answers to these questions as well are all in the affirmative.

Hence, as to whether condition (ii) obtains, for a certain person, with respect to a certain collective, there also seems always to be a definitive answer. Furthermore, since the question as to whether both condition (i) and condition (ii) obtain, for a certain person, with respect to a certain collective, could thus always be properly answered, the question whether a certain person is or is not a member of Square 0 of a certain collective can also be thus answered. The notion of Square 0 (of a collective C) seems, therefore, to be well-defined.

Notice, that Square 0 of any collective is a neutrally defined set. When Square 0 of the Protestants, for example, is delineated, any view of the Protestants is treated on a par with any other view of the collective of Protestants. A person belongs to Square 0 of the Protestants, when one is considered a Protestant on every account of this collective: one is regarded as a Protestant by oneself and by the others, whatever one's or their views of "who is a Protestant" are.

Our present characterization of Square 0 bears some noticeable results, when we apply it to intriguing collectives.

Square 0 of the Jews does not include a person, say - Bruno, who, though admittedly of the same ethnic origin of many persons who are considered by themselves and by the others to be Jews, does not consider himself to be one of the Jews. He does not satisfy our condition (i). Similarly, Square 0 of the Jews does not include a person, say - Daniel, who considers himself to be one of the Jews, who is of the same ethnic origin of many persons who are considered by themselves and by the others to be Jews, but who is also considered by many Israelis not to be a Jew, because he has converted into Christianity. He does not satisfy our condition (ii). Consequently, Square 0 of the Jews, our initial approximation to the Jewish collective, delineates a set of Jews which is narrower than the set of individuals delineated by the strict orthodox notion of "who are the Jews." Bruno and Daniel may well be considered Jews according to that orthodox notion, but nevertheless, since their cases are not indubitable, they do not belong to Square 0 of the Jews, the incontrovertible core of the Jews, of the Jewish collective.

Square 0 of the Catholics does not include a person, say - Bertrand, who has published a book, entitled "Why I am not a Christian?", where he explains why he does not consider himself to be a Christian of any denomination. Nor will Square 0 of the Catholics include another person, say - Franz, whose "Old Catholic" community repudiated communion with and obedience to the See of Rome. Those who do not consider the members of the Orthodox churches of the East to be Catholics, won't consider Franz to be one either. Square 0 of the Christians does not include another person, say - Joseph, according to whose early Mormon views, Adam of Genesis is the supreme ruler of all beings, while Christ, Mohammed and some of Joseph's

contemporaries, including himself, just partake of divinity. Those who do not deem Christian a person who rejects the deity of Christ and excludes any worship of him, won't deem Joseph a Christian.

Similarly, Square 0 of the Sikhs does not include a person, say - Khatri, who considers himself to be not a Sikh but rather a Hindu. Nor will Square 0 of the Sikhs include another person, say - Namdhari, since some persons, who happen to consider themselves to be strictly orthodox Sikhs, place outside the circle of Sikhs everyone whose faith involves acknowledgement of a continuing line of Gurus, which Namdhari's faith does. For a similar reason, Square 0 of the Sikhs does not include still another person, say - Nirankari, whose denomination not only exalts their leader as Guru, but moreover, has its own system of scriptures, an extension of what is regarded as sacred scriptures by many other people who consider themselves to be Sikhs. Some of the latter place outside the circle of the Sikhs Nirankari and everyone else whose faith involves scriptures not included in their own compiled Adi Granth.

[III]

We turn now from Square 0 of a collective, which is an initial approximation to it, to Square 1 of the same collective, which will be an improved approximation.

A person belongs to Square 1 (of the Cs) if, and only if, one is considered to be a C, according to views held by some members of Square 0 (of the Cs). Again, this is just a proximate specification of Square 1, obviously in need of some clarification, but its major intent is simple. The above-mentioned Daniel, who considers himself to be one of the Jews, is not a member of Square 0 of the Jews, because he is not unquestionably a Jew. Although he is of the same ethnic origin of many members of Square 0 of the Jews, some of them do not consider him to be a Jew, because he has converted into Christianity. However, some other members of Square 0 of the Jews do consider Daniel to be a Jew. According to the view of orthodox Jews(8), Daniel is a Jew because of his presumed maternal descent, and hence, no matter what he does, as long as his presumed maternal descent is left intact, so is Daniel's status as a Jew, to their mind. Consequently, Daniel is a member of Square 1 of the Jews, though he is not a member of Square 0 of the Jewish collective.

Unlike Daniel, some persons who consider themselves to be Jews are members of neither Square 0 nor Square 1 of the Jews. Consider a person, say - Gideon, whose only grounds for regarding himself as a Jew are that years ago, in a dream, an angel told him he is a descendent of the lost tribe of Dan. Taking it for granted that members of Square 0 of the Jews do not view such reports about dreams and angels as sufficient grounds for holding someone to be a Jew, it is clear Gideon belongs to neither Square 0 nor Square 1 of the Jews.

Notice that Square 1 is for many collectives broader and for no collective narrower than the preceding Square 0. Indeed, if a person is a member of Square 0 of some collective C, it means, by definition, one is considered both by oneself and by the others to be member of C, and therefore, one is considered by some members of Square 0 of C to be a C, that is to say, one is, by definition, a member of Square 1 of the Cs. Thus, Square 1 of a collective is never narrower than its Square 0. However, as we have just seen with respect to the collective of the Jews, Square 1 of a collective can be broader than its Square 0.

Having understood the nature of Square 1 of a collective is not tantamount to having grasped reasons for introducing it as part of a theory of collective identity. Why should a broader Square 1 of some collective be viewed better than its narrower Square 1?

Recall our examples of reasons for pursuit of a neutral theory of collective identity: first, the cases of a Sikh anthropologist who would like to know "who are the Jews" or a Jewish anthropologist who would like to know "who are the Sikhs," and secondly, an alien person who has to chart a just constitution for a future state in which, say, the Sikhs will exercise their collective right for democratic self-determination, given that there are several incompatible answers to the question "who are the Sikhs?"

Our alien anthropologist will soon realize that by delineating Square 0 of the collective under consideration, one depicts just the tip of the collective iceberg. For example, a person, say - Singh, is a member of Square 0 of the Sikhs not because of some coincidental, collective whim, as if her capricious self-portrayal as a Sikh serendipitously matches the equally capricious portrayals of Singh as a Sikh by the others. Singh is a member of Square 0 of the Sikhs, because she is a Sikh according to her own view of who is a Sikh and according to the others' conceptions of the Sikh collective. Membership in Square 0 of the Sikhs, our anthropologist will have to admit, rests on overlapping views of "who is a Sikh." Our anthropologist should, then, reach the conclusion that conceptions of the collective of the Sikhs, held by members of Square 0 of the Sikhs, are indispensable elements of one's understanding of the collective of the Sikhs.

Now, if from the anthropologist's point of view, the different views of "who is a Sikh," as held by members of the Sikh collective, are part and parcel of the subject matter of his project of understanding the Sikh collective identity, the resulting anthropological delineation of the collective of the Sikhs should reflect it. Square 0 of the Sikhs takes all these views into account, because membership in Square 0 depends on all the views of "who is a Sikh." What Square 0 does not reflect is a salient fact of prime importance: members of Square 0 of the Sikhs do not share their views of who is a Sikh. There is a variety of significantly different views of "who is a Sikh," held by persons who are unquestionably Sikh. As long as an anthropological portrayal of the collective of the Sikhs fails to reflect this fundamental fact, it is considerably flawed. Square 1 is meant to be a correction.

A view of "who is a Sikh" is now taken seriously in a new way. Whereas Square 0 of the Sikhs reflected such a view only to the extent that it is in agreement with all the other views of "who is a Sikh," Square 1 of the Sikhs reflects the same view, even where it is significantly at variance with the other views. If two persons, say - Ratan and Mehar, are Sikhs on all accounts, that is to say, members of Square 0 of the Sikhs, then whoever is a Sikh according to Ratan's view of "who is a Sikh" is a member of Square 1 of the Sikhs, whatever Mehar's view of it happens to be, and whoever is a Sikh according to Mehar's view of "who is a Sikh" is a member of Square 1 of the Sikhs, whatever Ratan's view of it happens to be. Whereas Square 0 of the Sikhs takes Ratan's and Mehar's views seriously, only where they are compatible with each other, Square 1 of the Sikhs takes these views seriously, whether they are compatible with each other or are not.

Clearly, Square 1 of the Sikhs, as well as Square 1 of any collective, is a neutrally defined set. Different members of a Square 1, say - Ratan and Mehar in the case of the Sikhs, play exactly parallel roles in delineating Square 1. If some members of a Square 0 of a collective C consider a person to be a member of the same collective, then whoever they are and whoever that person is, the former have successfully introduced the latter into Square 1 of their collective C.

Our characterization of Square 1 seems to yield some significant results, when certain familiar collectives are considered.

Square 1 of the Christians will include members of several denomination, which are, in a sense, "controversial." The history, creed or practice of some religious group has often given rise to a controversy as to whether members of this group should be regarded as Christians. Since some persons, who are even unquestionably Christians, do not consider, say - Unitarians, Mormons or Quakers to be Christians, ordinary members of these denominations do not belong to Square 0 of the Christians. However, since some persons who are unquestionably Christians (i.e., members of Square 0 of the Christians) do hold ordinary members of these denominations to be Christians, they all belong to Square 1 of the Christians. Indeed, an anthropological delineation of the collective of Christians that excludes ordinary members of these denominations (e.g., the delineation of Square 0 of the Christians) is obviously flawed. Clearly, Square 1 of the Christians fares better than their Square 0, from the present, deliberately neutral point of view.

Similarly, Square 1 of the Sikhs includes all ordinary members of the Nirankaris and the Namdharis. They do not belong to Square 0, because some orthodox Sikh of the Khalsa do not consider them as fellow Sikhs. However, since some members of Square 0 of the Sikhs do consider them to be Sikhs, the ordinary Nirankaris and Namdharis are members of Square 1. Again, any anthropological portrayal of the Sikhs that disregards these groups, would be manifestly inadequate. Square 1 of the Sikhs too fares better than their Square 0, from our present point of view.

Square 1 of the Jews will be mentioned in the sequel.

[IV]

So far, three ingredients of the proposed neutral recursive theory of collective identity have been presented: (a) a characterization of Square 0 of any collective C; (b) a characterization of Square 1 of any collective C; and (c) a defensible claim to the effect that, from a neutral point of view, the neutrally delineated Square 1 is a better approximation to the collective C than the neutrally delineated Square C. In the present section we briefly clarify certain aspects of the theory and add some ingredients, by way of outlining replies to several likely objections to the theory, as presented so far.(9)

Objection One: "The proposed process of approximation seems to start with Square C and end with Square 1. Why stop at Square 1 rather than go on and improve it by introducing some Square 2, Square 3 and so on and so forth?"

Rejoinder: To be sure, the approximation process is extendible beyond square 0 and

Square 1: A person belongs to Square 2 (of the Cs) if, and only if, one is considered to be a C, according to views held by some members of Square 1 (of the Cs). The formal relation between Square 2 and Square 1 is the one which holds between Square 1 and Square 0. Similarly, the rationale for introducing Square 2 as a neutral improvement of Square 1 is similar to the one we had for introducing Square 1 as a neutral improvement of Square 0. The idea is simple: Square 0 of the Arabs, for example, consists of persons considered by themselves and by the others to be Arabs. It does not reflect the differences in views of "who is an Arab" held by those who are unquestionably Arabs. Therefore, in order to improve the anthropological portrayal of the Arab collective, Square 1 is introduced, which includes persons who are not members of Square 0, since they are not unquestionably Arabs, but enter the anthropological picture, so to speak, at this stage, since some persons who are unquestionably Arabs do consider them to be Arabs as well. Thus, Square 1 captures the variety of views held by members of Square 0. However, since Square 1 includes persons who are not members of Square 0 of the Arabs, it may well be the case that these persons bring with them "new" (10) views of "who are the Arabs." If so, Square 1 includes persons who hold these "new" views, but does not reflect the differences between "new" views and "old" ones or among the "new" ones themselves. It is the task of Square 2 to capture these new differences and this is the rationale of its definition.

Since Square 2 may include "new" persons, holding "new" views of

"who are the Arabs," an additional step might be required, of

introducing Square 3, and so on and so forth. In general, the method of making a new step in the process, that is to say, introducing Square(n+1), given a process that extends from Square 0 to Square n, is the one we have used earlier, for extending the process beyond Square 0, by introducing Square 1, the one we have just used, for extending the process beyond Square 1, by introducing Square 2.

Hence, for any positive n: A person belongs to Square(n+1) (of the Cs) if, and only if,

one is considered to be a C, according to views held by some

members of Square n (of the Cs).

Now we can approximate a collective identity by as many steps of approximation as would seem required.

This general definition of Square (n+1) is an additional ingredient of the proposed neutral recursive theory of collective identity. Let us call it "the general recursive rule."

Objection Two: "Now that you have extended the approximation process indefinitely many times, where would you stop? How could one justify a decision to stop at one point and not at another one? Wouldn't it be rather an arbitrary decision to stop approximating, say - the collective of the Sikhs, at Square 1?"

Rejoinder: Assume that when Square 2 of the Sikhs is delineated, it includes no person who has not already been a member of Square 1. This is possible, if every

person who is considered by some members of Square 1 to be a Sikh is already a member of Square 1. This in turn is possible, if every person who is considered by some member of Square 1 to be a Sikh, is already considered by some member of Square 0 to be a Sikh. And this is possible, if all the views of "who is a Sikh" are already held by persons who are unquestionably Sikhs (members of Square 0): by extending the delineated set of persons under consideration from Square 0 of the Sikh collective to its Square 1 no new view of "who are the Sikhs" is encountered. Hence, if Square 2 of the Sikhs is not different from Square 1, the process of proximating the collective of the Sikhs has here come to an end. Extending the process beyond this point would be pointless. The decision to stop here is, therefore, well justified, not arbitrary at all.

Generally speaking, the proposed processes are not different from any other processes of approximation: they might sometimes converge, in the sense that from a certain stage on no significant improvement or no improvement at all is being made by extending such processes yet another time. When this happens, any attempt at improving the approximation by making another step is utterly futile. Therefore, we stop extending the approximation process when, for the first time, no improvement has been made by a step of introducing a new Square. A decision to stop here would not be arbitrary. On the contrary, it would be rationally justified.

Here too we have an additional ingredient of the proposed neutral recursive theory of collective identity. Let us call it "the end-point rule."

Objection Three: "How do we know that Square 0 is never a devastating end-point? Isn't it possible that Square 0 of a collective C would be simply empty, no person being considered a member of it both by oneself and by the others?"

Rejoinder: An empty Square 0 of a collective is a possibility we should be prepared to face. Indeed, one can imagine a group that holds there are no Europeans at all. This would mean that Square 0 of the Europeans is empty. Imagine, however, a more interesting case, that of a possible group, to be dubbed the "Caesareans." Their creed is almost that of Eusebius of Caesarea: They all believe in one God the Father, the creator, in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who for human salvation was incarnate, suffered, rose and ascended, and in one Holy Ghost. However, the Caesareans believe that Jesus Christ shall never come again, because he accomplished his mission on earth and could not play any significant role in human affairs anymore.

Now, assume that the Caesareans consider themselves to be the only Christians, while some members of the Catholic Church, some members of Eastern Churches and some members of Protestant denominations hold the Caesareans not to be Christians. Under such circumstances Square 0 of the Christians is empty. The Pope, for example, is not a member of Square 0 of the Christian collective, because the Caesareans do not regard him as Christian, and the Caesareans are not members of the same Square 0, because some people do not hold them to be Christians.(11)

How, then, would we onset an approximation process, under such circumstances, without an initial step, Square 0, at our disposal?(12) Our answer rests on the following observation. Assume we pose a question, such as "who are the generals?", requesting that the answers take the form of a complete list of names and

descriptions. Assume, moreover, that David and Jonathan each hands in a list and that upon inspection we amazingly discover that there is no person who is referred to both by David and by Jonathan. Barring practical jokes, attempted deception and the like, we would be inclined to believe that David understood the question one way, while Jonathan understood it another way. In other words, under such circumstances we would be inclined to conclude that the word "generals," as used to address a question to David and to Jonathan, is ambiguous. The explanation of the amazing discrepancy between David's answer and Jonathan's answer is that one of them answered the question "Who are the generals?", understanding "generals" in one sense, while the other answered a different question, namely "who are the generals?", understanding "generals" in another sense. No wonder their lists were so different. The list of what we call "banks," when understood in the sense of financial institutions, is not expected to refer to any of the shores that we call "banks."

Hence, the Caesareans could be taken to have introduced an ambiguity in the use of the term "Christians." Actually, there are two different collectives to which this term has been applied: The Christian a collective, that includes the archbishops of Athens and York, as well as many others, and the Christian b collective, that includes just the Caesareans. On such an account, our neutral anthropologist, interested in a portrayal of "the Christian collective," should know which of the two collectives is the subject matter of one's studies, on a par with a sociologist who is interested in "social portrayal of banks," who should know whether she is interested in social portrayal of financial institutions or rather of shores.

Some anthropologists might retort by refusing to restrict the subject matter of their project. Some might deny the ambiguity of the expression "Christian" in our Caesarean example and other ones might argue that even if this expression is ambiguous, it is their duty to discuss both collectives. Be it as it may, our main point here remains intact: When Square 0 of some studied collective C is empty, C should be divided into parts, say Ca and Cb, and our recursive procedure should then be separately applied to each of these parts.(13) We call this additional ingredient of the proposed neutral recursive theory of collective identity, "the first separation rule."

Objection Four: "Still, how do we know that Square 0 is never a devastating end-point, not because it is empty, but for other reasons? Isn't it possible that Square 1 of a collective C is the same as its Square 0?"

Rejoinder: This is, indeed, another possibility we should be prepared to face, but it does not introduce any new difficulty. Imagine there are three groups of persons who call themselves "Puritarians": the "Guardians of Puritania," the "Conservative Puritarians" and the "Moderate Puritarians." The "Guardians" consider just themselves to be Puritarians. The "Conservative Puritanian" consider both themselves and the "Guardians" to be Puritarians, as well as some of the "Moderates," though not all of them, whereas the "Moderate Puritarians" consider all members of all three groups to be Puritarians. Clearly, Square 0 of the Puritarians consists just of the "Guardians of Puritania." Square 1 of this collective consists of those considered by some members of Square 0 to be Puritarians, that is to say, of those considered by some "Guardians" to be Puritarians, that is to say, of "Guardians" only. From our neutral anthropologist's point of view this is unfortunate, because such a process of approximation does not reflect the fact that the Puritanian collective is related not only to the "Guardians," but also to the two other groups of

persons who consider themselves uritanian.(14)

Our solution of this problem is similar to the one we used for the previous one. When Square 0 of some studied collective C consists of a "black hole" of C, that is to say, only of persons who consider just themselves to be members of C, the collective should be divided into parts, say Ca and Cb, where the former includes just the "black hole" of the collective and the latter all the rest. Our recursive procedure should then be applied just to Cb, disregarding members of Ca and their views. The end result of the anthropological project is, again, the combination of the excluded "black hole" (or "black holes") and the end result of the separate approximation process of delineating Cb, in our example. If we divide the Puritanians into Pa, which would include just the "Guardians," and Pb, which would include the "Conservatives" and the "Moderates," then Square 1 of Pa, which is also its Square 0, will include just the "Guardians," but Square 1 of Pb will include all the "Conservatives" and the "Moderates."

Objection Five: "Finally, even if the rules of the theory provide us with a pregnant starting point, a non-empty Square 0 which gives rise to a broader Square 1, couldn't the whole approximation process be rendered trivial by eventually reaching a Square m that includes every person?"

Rejoinder: This too is a possibility that we should consider. Square 0 of a collective C could, indeed, include a group, say - the "Missionaries," whose view of "who is a C" is simply that everyone is a C. On their view, the seeming distinction between those who are members of C and those who are not is a distorted form of the distinction between those who know they are members of C and those who still do not. If Square 0 of a collective includes such a group, Square 1 of it includes every person.

We obviate this difficulty by introducing another rule, the final ingredient of the delineation method of the proposed neutral recursive theory of collective Identity, "the second separation rule," which would complement the first separation rule. Groups whose views of a collective do not exclude from it anybody are separated from all the other ones and the recursive approximation procedure is applied just to the latter. If we call a set of persons who consider everyone to be a member of a collective C "a white cover of C," then the end result of the anthropological project is, once again, the combination of the excluded "white cover" (or "white covers") and the end result of the separate recursive approximation process of delineating the rest of the collective.

Generally speaking, then, the proposed delineation of a collective C consists of the combination of its "black holes," if it has any, its "white covers," if it has any, and the end result of the recursive process of approximation, that is to say - some Square m of C. Assuming that a collective C includes both a "black hole" and a "white cover" and that its Square 1 is the end point of the recursive process involved in delineating it, then crudely put, the end result of our neutral anthropologist's delineation project might take the following form:

"The Cs are: (i) those who are considered to be Cs by those who

are almost unquestionably Cs;(15) (ii) those who belong to a "black hole" of C and

consider themselves to be Cs; and (iii) those who belong to a "white cover" of C." If, however, our neutral anthropologists is of the view that the distinctions between a "black hole" and the rest as well as the distinction between a "white cover" and the rest involve ambiguities, the end result of his project might take the form of three separate delineations, each resting on just one of the three clauses, (i), (ii) or (iii).

[V]

The definitions and rules of the proposed neutral recursive theory are intended to provide a method of delineating collectives of a religious, national or cultural nature, taking it for granted that a "diversity condition" holds, viz. that for each common collective C of such a nature, the question "who is a C?" has a variety of significantly different answers, held by members of different groups, even within C itself. There is no consensus as to the collective identity of the Christians or the Sikhs and clearly no consensus could be reached as to who are the Jews. If this diversity condition does in fact hold for such collectives, it seems any general theory of collective identity is inadequate as long as it does not provide one with an explanation of this fundamental, intriguing fact. We turn, then, to an outline of such an explanation.

Collectives of a religious, national or cultural nature share two general traits: each of them involves a rich conceptual realm and has its own rich history. We will try to show why a collective of a rich conceptual realm and a rich history is bound to give rise to a whole gamut of significantly different solutions of the problem of its collective identity.

Familiar collectives of a religious nature have each a rich conceptual realm. If a religion has a creed, then the conceptual realm of the related collective includes the major concepts of the creed. Thus, the conceptual realms of the Christian, Muslim and Sikh collectives include concepts of deity. Underlying each notion of deity, be it a Christian notion of "Trinity," a Muslim notion of "Allah" or a Sikh notion of "Akal Purakh," is a whole system of concepts, such as the Christian concepts of God the Father, the Lord and the Holy Spirit, the Muslim concepts of God's magnificent attributes, or the Sikh concepts of the "Timeless One." These systems of concepts are also included in the conceptual realms of the respective religious collectives.

If a religion has a variety of rituals, then the conceptual realm of the related collective includes the major concepts of the prescribed rites. Thus, the conceptual realms of numerous religions underlie rituals related to certain dates, places, persons and actions: During certain periods, certain people should go to certain places and perform certain actions. Again, whole systems of concepts underlie the related notions, such as "high holidays," "temple," "pilgrim," "priest," "altar," "benediction," and numerous others. And again, each of these conceptual systems belongs to the conceptual realm of the respective religious collective.(16)

Similarly, other features of religion also introduce a variety of conceptual families into the conceptual realm of the related collectives. If a religion has Scriptures, these texts involve both a general concept underlying the notion of a "holy writ" as well as the particular concepts used in the texts themselves. If a religion venerates certain persons, say - prophets, saints or gurus, then once again, the conceptual realm of the related collective includes both general concepts that underlie the notions of "prophet," "saint," or "guru," as well as the particular concepts that these revered

persons are believed to use during their lives.

The conceptual realm of a national collective is similarly rich. Among the possible ingredients of any prevalent sense of national identity one finds notions of shared ethnicity and language, culture and religion, history and homeland. Obviously, such features of national identity could not play a significant role in the life of a national collective, without the underlying conceptual families forming part of its conceptual realm.(17)

Enters History. In the life of a newly established religion, for example, different major parts of the underlying conceptual realm could, perhaps, be all taken by members of the related collective to be on a par with each other. In the eyes of these persons, the new creed might be as important as the new rituals, each clause in the creed as important as any other clause of it, and each ritual as important as any other ritual.(18)

However, under various circumstances, members of a collective would be prone to draw distinctions between different major parts of the conceptual realm of their collective and deem certain parts more important than others. Members of one religious denomination who are being persecuted on grounds of their persistent performance of certain rituals could react by enhancing their persistence and convincing themselves that at least temporarily the endangered rituals are more important than other ones. If persecution continues for quite a while, then a new generation of members of the same collective might grow up in whose eyes the same rituals are ordinarily considered to be of greater importance. The status of these rituals and the underlying parts of the conceptual realm has thus been changed. However, other members of the same religious denomination, or members of another one, might adopt an utterly different policy when being persecuted because of their insistence on observing certain practices. They might convince themselves that at least temporarily these practices are less important than other ones and could therefore be ignored. Again, If persecution goes on for a decade or so, then a new generation of members of the same collective might emerge in whose eyes the same practices are ordinarily ignored. Again, the status of these practices and the underlying parts of the conceptual realm has thus been significantly changed. Hence, when external pressure is being exerted on a collective, its reaction might involve introduction of a new structure into its conceptual realm, some parts of it becoming more central than others or more peripheral than others.

Such internal modifications of the conceptual realm are not confined to cases of external oppression. Other kinds of external influence might also result in a structural modification of the conceptual realm. For example, when members of a collective are continually exposed to an alien way of life, they might be apt to import into their conceptual realm seemingly innocuous elements of the alien conceptual realm and adapt them for their own purposes. For instance, members of a religion which, at a certain stage, does not have a written systematic code of practice, might draw a lesson from a successful attempt which members of another religion made at introducing a written systematic code of practice and introduce a code of their own practices. If this code turns out to be successful, it might eventually play a central role within the conceptual realm of the collective, because it renders the collective a highly important service: for the first time in the history of the collective, written answers to a vast number of questions are readily available and even easily

accessible. Generally speaking, religious and cultural interface could cause structural modifications within the conceptual realm of a collective.

Furthermore, such modifications can be the effects of internal processes, rather than external pressures or influences. Members of a collective sometimes face problems which they are unable to solve, under the constraints imposed by their conceptual realm in its current form. Consider, for instance, members of a religious collective whose code of practice requires them to act in a certain way. The related practical precepts of the code were introduced into it, by a due process, in order to solve some problem when certain conditions prevailed. However, these conditions do not prevail anymore and the practical precepts are far from providing an appropriate solution of the same problem, under the new conditions. If the code of practice is conservative, to the extent that it does not allow the replacement of one of its practices by a new one, then members of the collective are unable to solve their problem. Under such conditions, some members might make daring suggestions, set up new principles and apply them to the problem at hand. For instance, a suggested principle might render all practices hypothetical: a practice is a solution of a problem under certain conditions and it is a living part of the code as long as these conditions obtain; if they don't, another solution may be sought and instituted, replacing the previous one. Of course, the moment such a principle is incorporated into a conceptual realm of a religious collective, the whole structure of this realm may well undergo a radical modification.

The history of a collective is, therefore, an arena of modification and the richer the history of this collective is, that is to say, the more internal and external problems its members encounter, tackle and solve, the more significant are the modifications its conceptual realm sustains. In the history of any living collective, members of the collective, whether all of them at once, most of them, or just some of them first, are bound to view the conceptual realm of their collective as highly structured, some of its parts being conspicuously considered more central than others.

Such a stage in the life of a collective does not bring to an end all processes of structural modification of its conceptual realm. First, new pressures, whether external or internal, as well as additional periods of inter-collective interface might result in new modifications. Secondly, and not less interestingly, a collective of a long and rich history will naturally develop a viable sense of a tradition, directly related to the underlying conceptual realm. A sense of tradition makes a member of the collective believe and feel that the role one plays in the life of the collective at the present stage is parallel to the role played by members of previous generations of the same collective, under parallel circumstances. For instance, within a tradition of pilgrimage, present day pilgrims will consider themselves not only as observing the practice of pilgrimage, but also as following their fathers and forefathers, who observed the same practice in the same way.

Within a long tradition one often knows what one's forefathers did, but seldom does one know why they did what they did. One may assume that they held their activities to be meaningful and that meanings were couched in terms of the underlying conceptual realm, but the precise meaning itself may still remain unexaminable. Meaning is, therefore, going to be sought by concerned members of a collective, for obscure elements of their tradition. If possible, meanings will be couched in terms of the conceptual realm, in its present form, but if this turns out to

be impossible, a modification of that conceptual realm might take place in order to save the obscure elements of the tradition by rendering them meaningful. Such a structural modification could be of a local nature, being confined to a few elements of the conceptual realm. Moreover, the longer a tradition is alive, the more obscure some of its elements might appear and the more elements of it might appear obscure. Modifications of a local nature might be rather ineffective, leaving still meaningless a significant share of the tradition. This is how recurrent processes of global modification might emerge in the life of a collective, processes of self reinterpretation of one's whole collective life, tradition and conceptual realm.

Reinterpretations are at the roots of the views members of a collective C have of "who is a C." Many different interpretations of a rich tradition are indeed possible and it comes as no surprise to find numerous different reinterpretations emerge during the history of a familiar collective.

A view of "who is a C" can emanate as a personal one, put forward by a member of the collective, endorsed by few, disregarded or rejected by others, but under appropriate conditions it might form the official view of an organized group within the collective, or at least crystallize as the dominant view among members of some circles. Further developments might involve not only additional structural modifications of the conceptual realm, but also the eventual emergence of different conceptual realms, ones that are distinct from each other in both substance and structure. For instance, a view of "who is a Jew" which rests on Aristotelean philosophy will share a significant part of its underlying conceptual realm with a mystical view of "who is a Jew," but the two views do not share with each other much, perhaps most of their conceptual foundations. Consequently, since the emergence of such disparate views of "who is a Jew," the collective of the Jews has not had a unique conceptual realm anymore, underlying its rituals, liturgy and scriptures as well as other elements of its tradition. The emergence of different traditions within the confines of a single collective is a natural ensuing result.

A collective of an original(19) rich conceptual realm and of a rich history could, then, resist any attempt at capturing its nature in terms of some conditions shared by all its members and none but them. To use an apt, celebrated notion, a collective C of an original rich conceptual realm and of a rich history is a family of groups, sub-collectives, each of its own view of "who is C," its own sense of tradition and its own underlying conceptual realm, but it each bearing some resemblance to the other ones(20). Members of a certain group within such a family could share with each other their view of "who is a C," their sense of tradition and their underlying conceptual realm, but they share with members of other groups only parts of their view of "who is a C," sense of tradition and conceptual realm.

A full portrayal of such a family of groups will include a specification of family-features. Features are shared by different members of C, though not by all of them, and plays an essential role in characterizing groups within C. For example, the conception of the Trinity is a feature of the collective of Christians: it is shared by many Christians, though not by all of them, and it is an essential element of the characterization of several groups within the Christian collective. The practices of refraining from cutting one's hair and from smoking are features of the collective of the Sikhs: they are observed by many Sikhs, though not by all of them, and they are essential elements of the characterization of certain groups within the Sikh collective.

The project of specifying the features of a collective that consists of a family of groups is, however, only the final stage of a general project of portraying such a collective. It could not be carried out without a preceding delineation of the set of members of the collective. The application of the definitions and rules of the proposed neutral recursive theory will, therefore, serve as the starting point of such a portrayal project. An outlined delineation of the set of members of the collective (in terms of, say, Square 1 and some "black hole") will be an intermediate product, to be used in the ensuing project of specifying the features of the collective.

This is an outline of our explanation of the fact that the diversity condition holds for familiar collectives, the fundamental fact that for each common collective C of such a nature, the question "who is a C?" has a variety of significantly different answers, held by members of different groups, even within C itself. The familiar collectives are each a family of groups, which have emerged and evolved during a significant period of time - millennia or at least a number of centuries. A rich conceptual realm and a rich history are at the root of the ubiquitous diversity of collective identities.

[VI]

The time has come for drawing from our discussion some lessons specifically pertaining to the collective of the Jews. In conclusion, we outline two applications of the proposed theory of collective identity to issues which have drawn much attention in the life of the Jewish collective.

The first issue is the nature of puzzling remarks about the collective of the Jews, such as those we quoted from Wittgenstein, in the first section of this paper, or as:

(F1) To be Jewish is to be honest, idealist and ambitious. (F2) The Jewish people is arrogant, condescending and stubborn. (F3) The Jews form a religion, not a nation.

How should one interpret such remarks? The proposed theory of collective identity provides us with several alternative directions:

1. One possible direction is that of Square 0 of the collective: A remark about a collective C could be interpreted as one about Square 0 of C, about its members, the incontrovertible Cs, or about their properties. (F1) would, thus, be interpreted as (F1.1) A person who is incontrovertibly a Jew, is also an honest, idealist and ambitious person.

2. Another possible direction is related to the best delineation of the collective, say - its Square 1: A remark about a collective C could be interpreted as one about Square 1 of C, about its members, or about their properties. Remark (F2) could now be interpreted as (F2.2)The group of persons who are considered Jews by some persons who are incontrovertibly Jews, is arrogant, condescending and stubborn. Or perhaps as (F2.2')A person who is considered a Jew by some persons who are incontrovertibly Jews, is also an arrogant, condescending and stubborn person.(21)

3. A different possible direction is related to the features of the collective: A remark about a collective C could be interpreted as a remark about the set of features of C, about one of them, its nature, history or value. Accordingly, remark (F3) could be

interpreted as (F3.3) The features of the collective of the Jews are features of a religion, not features of a nation.

#### 4. Finally, there is a possible direction of interpreting a remark

about a collective as a suggestion that a reinterpretation be introduced, of the collective or of some of its facets. Remarks (F1)-(F3) could here be taken to mean (F1.4) The tradition of some groups of Jews should be reinterpreted as one which has fostered, first and foremost, honesty, idealism and ambition. (F2.4) The history of all Jewish groups should be reinterpreted as one which nurtured mainly arrogance, condescendence and stubbornness. (F3.4) The conceptual realm of almost all Jewish groups, whether of religious, national or cultural self-identity, should be reinterpreted as one which consists of mostly religious rather than national elements.

It seems we are now in a position to understand why remarks such as (F1), (F2) and (F3), or Wittgenstein's (W1) Tragedy is something un-Jewish (W2) It is typical for a Jewish mind to understand someone else's work better than he understands it himself seem to be puzzling. On the one hand, if one tries to take them seriously and interpret them as pertaining to the collective of the Jews, then one often encounters either falsehoods, such as (F1.1), (F2.2'), which are obviously untrue, or (F3.3), which is less blatantly so, or obscurities, such as (F2.2), which seem to be readily interpretable only in terms of some glaring falsehood such as (F2.2').

On the other hand, all these remarks could be read as suggestions rather than as assertions. Each of them suggests that the Jewish collective or some of its elements be reinterpreted in a certain way.

Still, suggestions are not more self-evident than assertions. Why should one adopt, say, any of the suggestions made in (F1.4), (F2.4) or (F3.4)? (22) If we do not see any reason for following any of these suggestions, we simply do not follow them. And here is where the puzzle starts emerging: not following a suggestion is not tantamount to rejecting it. Sometimes, a suggestion for reinterpretation seems to be neither obviously worthwhile nor plainly worthless and we are inclined to opt for a middle course of neither following it nor rejecting it, but rather pondering it.

This is, then, why remarks about the Jews (or any other familiar collective) seem to be puzzling. On the one hand, whether they are read as assertions about the collective or suggestions for reinterpreting it, there seems to be no reason for accepting them. On the other hand, rejecting offhand what could be read as a suggested reinterpretation might also seem to be unwarranted. Such a combination of attitudes seems puzzling, because these attitudes seem to be in conflict, but actually they are not. By putting a suggestion to a thorough scrutiny still without following it, we express both of the attitudes.

Notice that we have said nothing about motivations persons may have had for making remarks such as (W1) and (W2), (F1) or (F2), (F3) or numerous similar ones. We are not interested in hidden agendas or ulterior motives. We have shown how one could try taking such remarks seriously, without resort to any practice of marking their authors as anti-Semites, as Jewish self-enlargers, or as anything in between.

Two pleas seem warranted at this stage. One is a plea for restraint in interpreting remarks about the Jews as straightforward truths or falsehoods. More often than not, such remarks are related to features of the Jewish collective rather than to every single Jew or group of Jews. An important insight is sometimes gained, by properly understanding a remark that is not most general in nature. Similarly, quite often remarks about the Jews are related to suggested reinterpretations of the Jewish collective, or elements thereof, and again, insights into the nature of some facets of the Jewish collective could be acquired through a scrutiny of such a suggestion, even if it is not followed, even if it eventually turns out not be defensible.

Our second plea is for restraint in making remarks about the Jews. Simple remarks about the Jews are liable to be oversimple, "in a nutshell"-claims about the Jews do not hold much water. It is very difficult to make a general and accurate observation about a collective, as conceptually rich and historically rich as that of the Jews. It is impossible to make a simple, general and accurate comment about it. Moreover, more often than not, what is presented by some Jew or Jewish group as a general statement about the Jews, is in fact just one view in vain disguise, futilely struggling for unachievable hegemony, as if major modifications of conceptual realms, alternative traditions and articulate views of "who is a Jew" could simply be vanquished by pretentiously disregarding their very existence. Finally, suggestions for reinterpreting the collective of the Jews, or any of its facets, also should not be disguised as innocent aphorisms of the descriptive mode, as if it does not take more than a twinkle of one's eye to introduce a new perspective and show that new light could be shed from it on conceptually and historically rich facets of the collective of the Jews.

The last issue to be briefly addressed in this paper, by way of applying the proposed theory of collective identity to some current affairs, is the problem of "who is a Jew" as tackled in the State of Israel.

We take it for granted that a constitution of a state is unjust if it introduces discrimination against citizens of the state on grounds of their views. All the more so, if citizens are discriminated on grounds of their fundamental views of their own identity, whether personal or collective. Hence, a just constitution of a state which counts among its citizens persons who hold extremely different views of religion in general or of some denominations in particular, does not introduce a discrimination neither against staunch atheists nor against ardent theists, on grounds of their views, nor, indeed, against anyone else, in between.(23)

We also take it for granted that the State of Israel is the state of the Jews, in the following minimal sense: (a) It has been proclaimed and internationally recognized as the state in which the Jews exercise their collective right of sovereignty in their homeland. (b) A vast majority of its citizens are Jews. (c) Jews who are persecuted because they are Jewish are entitled to residence in it.

To be sure, this minimal sense, in which Israel is the state of the Jews, is clearly compatible with a significant number, though still a minority of its citizens being non-Jews, and more generally, with its ability to have a truly democratic regime.(24)

Within this framework, the problem of "who is a Jew" is of major significance. The two most fundamental elements of the nature of the State of Israel are that it is

meant to be a democracy and that it is meant to be the state of the Jews. Who, then, are those referred to as "the Jews" in the expression "the state of the Jews," which plays such a major role in the rationale of the state and its collective self-image?

The sporadic political struggles for adoption of a more orthodox answer to this question, within the framework of Israel's Law of Return, indicate a divergence of views, a lasting dispute, a permanent disunity. No partisan view of "who is a Jew," as held by numerous citizens of Israel, could be used in the fundamental Law of Return, without thereby rendering that view constitutionally superior to all the other partisan views of "who is a Jew," also held by numerous citizens of the state. In other words, a strictly Orthodox view of "who is a Jew," or any other similarly partisan view, could not be formally adopted by the State of Israel, even for the sake of a single fundamental law, as long as the State of Israel does not introduce into its constitutional foundations a fundamental discrimination, a blatant violation of the most basic principle of justice and democracy, and commits thereby a flagrant desertion of one of the two most fundamental elements of its intended nature.

Under circumstances of a permanent variance of views on fundamental issues, constitutional decisions should be made from a neutral point of view.(25) Therefore, under the lasting conditions of disunity, the just constitutional delineation of the Jews that the State of Israel should use for its Law of Return, is a delineation drawn from a neutral point of view. Our proposed general process of delineating a collective is a neutral one, as we argued earlier, and it can provide us with the required just constitutional delineation of the Jews. Moreover, since there seem to be neither "black holes" nor "white covers" in the collective of the Jews, we suggest that Square 1 of the Jews be used as the constitutional delineation of the Jews, within the framework of the Law of Return.(26)

Accordingly, the State of Israel would be the state of those who are incontrovertibly Jews, but also, and to exactly the same extent, of all those who are held to be Jews by some, though not by all, incontrovertible Jews. Hence, Israel is also the state of the Ethiopian Jews, of the persons who went through Reform or Conservative procedures and rituals of conversion, of the persons who used to be considered incontrovertible Jews but converted into Christianity, Islam or another non-Jewish religion, as well as of the spouses and offsprings of incontrovertible Jews who have joined an incontrovertible community of Jews without going through any ritual of conversion at all. Thus delineated, the State of Israel will be the State of all those who are held to be Jews by some incontrovertible Jews.(27)

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## Notes

1 Wittgenstein, 53e.

2 Wittgenstein, 1e.

3 Wittgenstein, 19e.

4 The same theory seems to be applicable to collective of different types as well, including professions, for example. We won't discuss such applications in the present paper, however.

5 See, for example, W.H. McLeod.

6 A similar hypothetical case involves a hypothetical constitution of the state in which the Jews exercise their collective right for democratic self-determination. We will return to this case later on.

7 What information about one person, say - Emil, would enable another person to answer the question whether Emil is one of the Cs depends, of course, on the latter's notion of who are the Cs. One person would need information about Emil's views, a second person's answer might depend on information about Emil's behavior, and a third person's criterion of being a  $\text{C}$  might require information about Emil's mother.

8 Strictly speaking, at this point we need to assume that Square 0 of the Jews includes some orthodox persons. We see no reason for casting any doubt on this assumption.

9 The discussion in the sequel will be confined to objections that might arise when "natural" collectives of national, religious or cultural kinds are considered. General combinatorial problems, that might arise when collectives are considered as merely formal set-theoretical objects of some type, will be discussed on another occasion, in a forthcoming paper with Ariel Rubinstein.

10 These views are "new" only from the point of view of the process. They were not present in its previous stages and now they are.

11 To be sure, this is just an example of possible circumstances under which Square 0 of a collective could be empty, but any attempt to delimit all the possible causes of a Square 0 being empty would take us beyond the scope of the present paper.

12 Notice, that by our definition of Square 1, as well as by the general recursive rule, if Square 0 is empty, so is Square 1, and so is every other Square  $n$  in the series.

13 How exactly should we go about dividing a collective into two or more parts, when its Square 0 seems to be empty? Generally speaking, the idea is to trace those parts of the collective that cause Square 0 to be empty and then apply the recursive procedure to these and to the rest of the collective in separate processes. An empty Square 0 of a collective  $C$  indicates that the collective is too heterogeneous and dividing it into several parts is meant to introduce appropriate homogeneity. Under natural conditions, such a reduction is gained by excluding from the process of delineating Square 0 all the "black holes (of  $C$ )" and proceeding to create it and then Square 1 of the same collective without considering them or their views. Roughly speaking, a "black hole" of a collective is a group of persons according to whose view of "who is a  $C$ ", if a person is not a member of their group, then one is not a  $C$ . The end result of an anthropological project of delineating the  $C$ s will, then, be the combination of the excluded "black holes" and the end result of the approximation process. Notice that our method applies both to the case of the Caesareans and to the case of those whose view is that there are no Europeans at all.

14 The role played in our example by the "Guardians" is sometimes played by those who consider their group to be the only one of "real  $C$ s". For example, in a Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews in 1839 the authors say they had "explained the difference between nominal and real Christians" (Bonar and M'cheyne, 79).

15 "Almost unquestionably", because the view held by members of the "black hole" is disregarded.

16 On the conceptual background of rituals, see Apostel and Kasher, Ritual.

17 The same holds for cultural collectives, which involve systems of meaning, attitude and value.

18 A Newly established nation is a much less common phenomenon than a newly established religion or religious denomination. However, one may assume that in the eyes of the citizens of a new nation-state, the constitution, that governs their internal civil affairs, and the organs of sovereignty, that govern their foreign affairs, are of exactly the same importance.

19 By "original" we do not mean at the historical stage of inception of  $C$ , but rather at any historical stage in the history of  $C$  which serves as a starting point of the outlined development.

20 On the notion of "family resemblance", commonly associated with Wittgenstein's later philosophy, see Baker and Hacker, 320-343.

21 It is not our view that when a human property, such as being arrogant, is ascribed to a human collective it is meant to be applied to each member of that

collective. However, on some occasions this is exactly what is being implied.

22 Notice that before one starts evaluating the merits or demerits of (F1.4), (F2.4) or (F3.4), one has to clarify the reference to "groups of Jews" or "Jewish groups" in terms of some appropriate Square n of the Jews.

23 Where a state, such as Israel, does not have a constitution, but only laws of some fundamental status, what we have just assumed about the just constitution of a state would be assumed about its fundamental laws. In the sequel, we use the notion of "constitution" in this broad sense.

24 On the seeming paradox of a nation-state that has a significant national minority and its solution in terms of affirmative action in international relationships, see Kasher, Justice.

25 For the most elaborated philosophical presentation of this position, see Rawls.

26 We take it that Square 2 of the Jews is not different from Square 1 of the Jews, but we do not have the space for a detailed demonstration of this point.

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