

Imagine putting several books into a box, closing it, and then labeling it "books." You put the box away somewhere, say in the back of a closet. A year later, you stumble onto it again—you haven't looked at it, even thought about it, in a year. You can't remember what's in it. Without opening it, you know only what's written on the label.¹ *In fact, from the perspective of your present self it's possible that your past self mislabeled it.*

Interestingly, putting things into boxes, especially closed and labeled boxes, is analogous to categorizing phenomena. For example, the grouping of individuals "Jew," the [category](#) "Jew," is like a closed box labeled "Jew"—the metaphor is almost perfect. Without opening the box, you know only what's written on the label. That is, without looking through the category, the [stereotype](#), at the actual individual, without treating the unique individual in front of you as a unique individual, you know only what's possibly misleadingly associated with the label "Jew."²

The logic is the same too:

1. *Boxes.* If box A is in box B, and box B is in box C, then box A is in box C.
2. *Categories.* If category A is in category B, and category B is in category C, then category A is in category C. For example, if John is a doctor, and doctors are smart, then John is smart.

To pin down the analogy/metaphor:

1. *Categorization of individuals.* If you categorize individuals A and B as white, then you put individuals A and B into a box labeled "white." And if you categorize individuals C and D as black, then you put individuals C and D into a box labeled "black."
2. *Categorization of groupings of individuals.* Whites are people, and blacks are people. Thus, the boxes labeled "white" and "black" in turn go into the box labeled "people."
3. *Physical segregation.* If you physically segregate whites and blacks, say in all-white schools and all-black schools, then you put the boxes labeled "white" and "black" in *different* rooms.
4. *Physical integration.* You put the boxes in the *same* room.
5. *Mental segregation.* If you mentally segregate whites and blacks, if you put them into different mental compartments, then whether you put the boxes labeled "white" and "black" in different rooms or the same room, you don't think about them at the same time. You don't let your associations with whites change your associations with blacks and vice versa.
6. *Mental integration.* If you mentally integrate whites and blacks, then you do the opposite. You let your associations with whites change your associations with blacks and vice versa.

¹ Assuming that the box isn't transparent.

² The realist pays more attention to the grouping of individuals, to the category, and the nominalist pays more attention to the individuals. The realist is thus a rightist force, and the nominalist is thus the opposite: a leftist force.