

# Theory of the Category of Sets

*The Heart and Soul of Modern Mathematics*

# Set Theory and Category Theory

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- Provides a different language for studying mathematical structures
- Can also serve as a foundational framework

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**Future videos:** Study other interesting categories, define abstract category-theoretic “structure”, build up the basics of category theory

# 0 The Universe of Sets





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To easily refer to & define functions, we'll make use of  **$\lambda$ -notation**:

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To easily refer to & define functions, we'll make use of  **$\lambda$ -notation**: if we define

$$f = (\lambda x.e(x)) : X \rightarrow Y$$

then, for any  $z \in X$ ,  $f(z)$  is obtained by “evaluating” the “expression”  $e(z)$ .

$$(\lambda x. x + x) : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$$

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$$(\lambda x. x + x)(4)$$

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$=$  if 4 is even then 1 else 0

$=$  1

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$= \text{if } 3 \text{ is even then } 1 \text{ else } 0$

$= 0$

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# Function Extensionality

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**Check Your Understanding** Prove:

- $f = \lambda x.f(x)$
- $(\lambda x.x + x) = (\lambda x.2x)$

## Composition

If  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  and  $g : Y \rightarrow Z$  (i.e.  $\text{cod}(f) = \text{dom}(g)$ ), we can **compose**  $g$  with  $f$ :

$$g \circ f = (\lambda x. g(f(x))) : X \rightarrow Z.$$

In words:  $g \circ f$  is the function which takes an input, “does  $f$ ” to it, and then “does  $g$ ” on the result.

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**Check Your Understanding** Verify:

- $h \circ (g \circ f) = (h \circ g) \circ f$  for any  $f, g, h$  with suitable (co)domains

- 

$$(\lambda x. x) = \left( \lambda x. \frac{x}{2} \right) \circ (\lambda x. 2x)$$



# Identities

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**Check Your Understanding** Verify:

- For all  $f : X \rightarrow Y$ ,  $f \circ \text{id}_X = f$
- For all  $f : X \rightarrow Y$ ,  $\text{id}_Y \circ f = f$
- (More difficult) Show that if  $e : Y \rightarrow Y$  is such that  $g \circ e = g$  for all  $g : Y \rightarrow Z$  and  $e \circ f = f$  for all  $f : X \rightarrow Y$ , then it must be the case that  $e = \text{id}_Y$ .

# **1 Some Basic Concepts of Set Theory**

# The Empty Set

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$\emptyset$  satisfies **UMP-Empty**:

- There is a function  $f : \emptyset \rightarrow A$  for any set  $A$ : the definition of “function” is vacuously satisfied.
- This function is unique: if  $f, g : \emptyset \rightarrow A$ , then it vacuously holds that  $f(x) = g(x)$  for all  $x \in \emptyset$ , so  $f = g$  by **FunExt**.



# Uniqueness of The Empty Set

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So, in conclusion,

$$E \text{ satisfies } \mathbf{UMP-Empty} \iff E = \emptyset.$$

# Singletons

A set  $T$  satisfies **UMP-Singleton** iff for every set  $A$ , there exists a unique function  $!_A : A \rightarrow T$ . Such a set  $T$  is called a **singleton**.

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**Prop. 2** If  $T$  is a singleton, then there's some  $t \in T$ .

I.e. every singleton  $T$  has exactly one element (hence the name).

# Singletons and Elements

# Elements

Let  $\mathbf{1}$  be the singleton  $\{0\}$ , and  $X$  any set. There is a correspondence between elements of  $X$  and functions  $\mathbf{1} \rightarrow X$ :

$$x_0 \in X \quad \longleftrightarrow \quad (\lambda 0. x_0) : \mathbf{1} \rightarrow X$$

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If  $T$  satisfies **UMP-Singleton**, then there exists a unique function  $!_1 : \mathbf{1} \rightarrow T$ , i.e. there is a unique element of  $T$ .

# Function Extensionality, Revisited

$f : X \rightarrow Y, x \in X$  (i.e.  $x : \mathbf{1} \rightarrow X$ ).

$$f(x) \in Y \quad \longleftrightarrow \quad (f \circ x) : \mathbf{1} \rightarrow Y$$

# Function Extensionality, Revisited

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$$f(x) \in Y \quad \leftarrow \text{~~~~~} \rightarrow \quad (f \circ x) : \mathbf{1} \rightarrow Y$$

**FunExt** If  $f, f' : X \rightarrow Y$  are distinct functions (i.e.  $f \neq f'$ ), then there is some  $x : \mathbf{1} \rightarrow X$  such that

$$f \circ x \neq f' \circ x.$$



A function  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  of the form  $\lambda x.y_0$  for some fixed  $y_0 \in Y$  is called a **constant** function.

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**Prop. 3** A function  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  is constant if and only if  $f = h \circ g$  for some  $g : X \rightarrow \mathbf{1}$  and  $h : \mathbf{1} \rightarrow Y$ .

## Bijections

A function  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  is called a **bijection** if it is (left- and right-) *invertible*: there exists some  $f' : Y \rightarrow X$  such that

$$f \circ f' = \text{id}_Y \quad \text{and} \quad f' \circ f = \text{id}_X.$$

$f'$  is called the *inverse* of  $f$ .

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**Check Your Understanding** Verify:

- Compositions of bijections are bijections: if  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  and  $g : Y \rightarrow Z$  are bijections, so too is  $g \circ f$
- Identity functions are bijections

# Injectivity

# Injections

$f : X \rightarrow Y$  satisfies **UMP-Inj** iff for all  $d, e : W \rightarrow X$ ,  $f \circ d = f \circ e$  implies  $d = e$ . Such an  $f$  is called a **injection** (adjective: *injective*).

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Consider  $W = \mathbf{1}$ . Then **UMP-Inj** says  $f(x) = f(x')$  implies  $x = x'$  for all elements  $x, x'$  of  $X$ .



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Consider  $W = \mathbf{1}$ . Then **UMP-Inj** says  $f(x) = f(x')$  implies  $x = x'$  for all elements  $x, x'$  of  $X$ .

**Check Your Understanding** Prove that if  $f$  satisfies **UMP-Inj** for just  $W = \mathbf{1}$ , then  $f$  satisfies **UMP-Inj** for all  $W$ .

## Injectivity Implies Left-Invertibility

**Prop. 4**  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  is injective if and only if there exists  $f' : Y \rightarrow X$  such that  $f' \circ f = \text{id}_X$  ( $f'$  is a *left inverse* for  $f$ ).

## Injectivity Implies Left-Invertibility

**Prop. 4**  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  is injective if and only if there exists  $f' : Y \rightarrow X$  such that  $f' \circ f = \text{id}_X$  ( $f'$  is a *left inverse* for  $f$ ).

Equivalent definitions of “injective”:

- $f$  satisfies **UMP-Inj**
- $f(x) = f(x')$  implies  $x = x'$  for all  $x, x' \in X$
- $f$  has a *left inverse*  $f' : Y \rightarrow X$

# Left Invertibility Doesn't Imply Bijectivity

$f : X \rightarrow Y$  is **surjective**:

- For all  $y \in Y$ , there exists  $x \in X$  such that

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- $f$  has a *right inverse*: a function  $f' : Y \rightarrow X$  such that  $f \circ f' = \text{id}_Y$

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- $f$  has a *right inverse*: a function  $f' : Y \rightarrow X$  such that  $f \circ f' = \text{id}_Y$
- $f : X \rightarrow Y$  satisfies **UMP-Surj**: for all  $g, h : Y \rightarrow Z$ ,  $g \circ f = h \circ f$  implies  $g = h$



$f : X \rightarrow Y$  is **surjective**:

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**Thm. (Cantor-Bernstein)** If there exist injections  $X \rightarrow Y$  and  $Y \rightarrow X$ , then there exists a bijection  $X \xrightarrow{\sim} Y$

## Check Your Understanding

(Easier)

- Prove that  $T = \emptyset$  does not satisfy **UMP-Singleton**
- Use **UMP-Surj** to prove that the composition of two surjections is surjective
- Use **UMP-Inj** to prove that the composition of two injections is injective
- Prove that the unique function  $\emptyset \rightarrow X$  is always injective
- Find an  $X$  such that the unique function  $X \rightarrow \mathbf{1}$  is *not* surjective

## Check Your Understanding

(More difficult)

- Write out the full argument for the claim: if  $T$  satisfies **UMP-singleton**, then there is exactly one element  $t \in T$ .
- Prove **Prop. 4**: that  $f$  is injective in the sense of

$$f(x) = f(x') \quad \implies \quad x = x' \quad \text{for all } x, x' \in X$$

if and only if  $f$  has a left inverse.

- Prove that the four definitions of ‘surjective’ are all equivalent
- Prove **Prop. 5**

## 2 Constructions of Sets

## Products

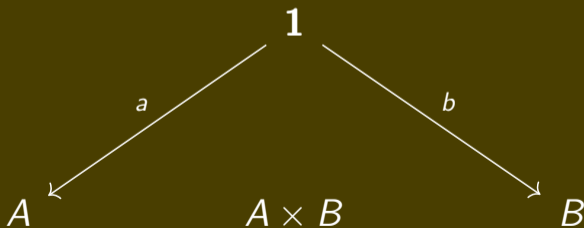
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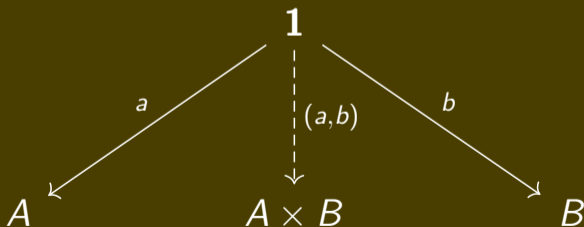
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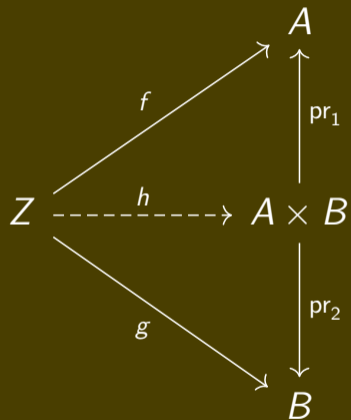
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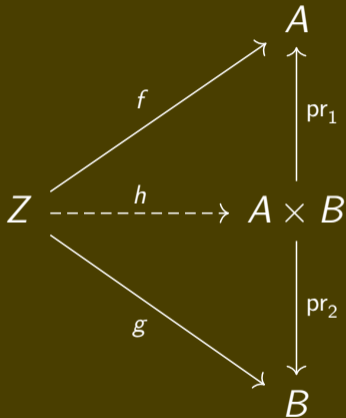
$$\text{pr}_2 \circ \langle f, g \rangle = g$$

- For all  $h : Z \rightarrow A \times B$ ,  
 $\langle \text{pr}_1 \circ h, \text{pr}_2 \circ h \rangle = h$
- $\text{pr}_1$  and  $\text{pr}_2$  are surjective  
(unless  $A$  or  $B$  is empty)

# UMP-Prod



# UMP-Prod



For each  $f : Z \rightarrow A$  and  $g : Z \rightarrow B$ , there exists a unique  $h : Z \rightarrow A \times B$  such that  $\text{pr}_1 \circ h = f$  and  $\text{pr}_2 \circ h = g$ .

# Exponentials

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$$w : B \rightarrow C \quad \left\langle \begin{array}{c} \longleftarrow \\ \text{~~~~~} \\ \longrightarrow \end{array} \right\rangle \quad w : \mathbf{1} \rightarrow C^B$$



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- For all  $u : A \times B \rightarrow C$ ,
 
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# Disjoint Union

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Given sets  $A, B$ , we can form their **disjoint union**  $A + B$ , whose elements are either elements of  $A$  or elements of  $B$ :

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For each  $f : A \rightarrow Z$  and  $g : B \rightarrow Z$ , we define a unique  $[f, g] : A + B \rightarrow Z$  by:

$$[f, g] = (\lambda \text{ inl}(a).f(a) \\ \text{inr}(b).g(b))$$

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For each finite set  $X$ , there is a unique natural number  $n$  (the *cardinality* of  $X$ ) such that  $X$  is in bijection with  $\mathbf{n}$

## Check Your Understanding

- Show a bijection

$$A \times A \cong A^2$$

for any set  $A$ .

- For any natural number  $n$ , show a bijection between  $\mathbf{n}$  and  $\mathbf{n} + \mathbf{0}$
- For any natural number  $n$ , show a bijection between  $\mathbf{n}$  and  $\mathbf{n} \times \mathbf{1}$

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$$\text{recur } x_0 \ g \ (m + 1) = g(\text{recur } x_0 \ g \ m)$$

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$$X + Y = \sum_{i \in 2} A_i$$

where  $A_0 = X$  and  $A_1 = Y$

$$X \times Y = \sum_{x \in X} Y$$

## Check Your Understanding

- Formulate a Universal Mapping Property for the (binary) disjoint union operation
- For any set  $X$ , construct a bijection

$$X \cong \sum_{x \in X} \mathbf{1}.$$

- A *sequence* in a set  $X$  is a countably-infinite, ordered collection  $\{x_i\}_{i \in \mathbb{N}}$ . Describe the set of all such sequences in terms of functions.
- Prove for any sets  $A, B, C$  that there is a bijection

$$(A \times C) + (B \times C) \cong (A + B) \times C$$

## 3 Theory of Subsets

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**Check Your Understanding** Verify:

- For all  $A$ ,  $\emptyset \subseteq A$
- For all  $A$ ,  $A \subseteq A$
- If  $A \subseteq B$  and  $B \subseteq A$ , then  $A = B$ .

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$$\chi_A : B \rightarrow \mathbf{2}$$

given by

$$\chi_A = \lambda b. \text{if } b \in A \text{ then } 1 \text{ else } 0$$

i.e. it returns 1 on all elements of  $A$ , and 0 on all non-elements of  $A$ .

## Subset Classification

For any given subset  $A \subseteq B$ , these two functions are related. Notice that, for any  $a \in A$ ,  $\chi_A(i_A(a)) = 1$ ,

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$$\begin{array}{ccc} A & \xrightarrow{!_A} & \mathbf{1} \\ i_A \downarrow & & \downarrow \text{true} \\ B & \xrightarrow{\chi_A} & \mathbf{2} \end{array}$$

There's a (more complex) sense in which  $i_A$  and  $\chi_A$  are the *optimal* functions satisfying this equation

# Powersets

Since we have the correspondence identifying subsets with their characteristic functions.

$$A \subseteq B \quad \longleftrightarrow \quad \chi_A : B \rightarrow \mathbf{2}$$

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**Thm. (Cantor)** There are no surjections  $X \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(X)$  (for any set  $X$ ).

## Comprehension

Given a set  $B$  and a function  $\phi : B \rightarrow \mathbf{2}$ , we'll often write

$$\{b \in B \mid \phi(b)\}$$

to mean the subset of  $B$  whose characteristic function is  $\phi$ , i.e.  $\{b \in B \mid \phi(b)\}$  is the set of all those  $b \in B$  such that  $\phi(b) = 1$ .

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Example:

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(here,  $\phi$  is  $\lambda x. \text{if } x^2 = 2 \text{ then } 1 \text{ else } 0$ , and  $\pm\sqrt{2}$  are the only two values  $x \in \mathbb{R}$  that make  $\phi(x) = 1$ ).

# Fibers

Given a function  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  and an element  $y \in Y$ , we can form the **fiber** of  $y$ ,

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## Check Your Understanding

- For  $f = (\lambda x.x^2) : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ , calculate  $\text{fib}_f(y)$  for  $y = 2$ ,  $y = 0$ , and  $y = -1$
- For all  $f : X \rightarrow Y$ , construct a bijection  $X \rightleftharpoons \sum_{y \in Y} \text{fib}_f(y)$

Given a function  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  and some fixed  $y_0 \in Y$ , let  $W = \text{fib}_f(y_0)$ .

## UMP-Fib

Given a function  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  and some fixed  $y_0 \in Y$ , let  $W = \text{fib}_f(y_0)$ .  
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Moreover,  $W$  is the *largest subset of  $X$  with this property*: if there's any other  $W' \subseteq X$  such that  $f \circ i_{W'} = (\lambda x. y_0) \circ i_{W'}$ , then  $W' \subseteq W$

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## Generalization: Equalizers ( UMP-Eqlzr )

Given functions  $f, g : X \rightarrow Y$ , define the **equalizer** of  $f$  and  $g$  to be the set  $E = \{x \in X \mid f(x) = g(x)\}$ .

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- For any other set  $Z$  and any function  $h : Z \rightarrow X$  such that  $f \circ h = g \circ h$ , there exists a unique function  $\langle h \rangle : Z \rightarrow E$  such that  $h = i_E \circ \langle h \rangle$ .



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$$\begin{array}{ccccc} E & \xrightarrow{i_E} & X & \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{f} \\ \xrightarrow{g} \end{array} & Y \\ \uparrow \langle h \rangle & & \nearrow h & & \\ Z & & & & \end{array}$$

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## Check Your Understanding

Given  $f, g, h$  as on the previous slide, verify:

- $f \circ i_E = g \circ i_E$

We'll define the function  $\langle h \rangle : Z \rightarrow E$  demanded by **UMP-Eqlzr** by

$$\langle h \rangle = \lambda z. h(z)$$

Verify:

- For every  $z \in Z$ ,  $\langle h \rangle (z) \in E$
- $i_E \circ \langle h \rangle = h$

## Generalization: Fiber Products

Suppose we have sets  $A, B, C$  and functions  $f : A \rightarrow C$  and  $g : B \rightarrow C$ . Define the **fiber product** of  $f$  and  $g$  (denoted  $A \times_C B$ ) to be the set

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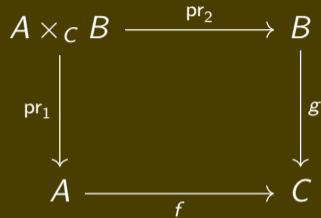
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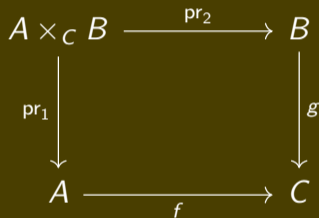
$$\begin{array}{ccc} A \times_C B & \xrightarrow{\text{pr}_2 = \lambda(a,b).b} & B \\ \text{pr}_1 = \lambda(a,b).a \downarrow & & \downarrow g \\ A & \xrightarrow{f} & C \end{array}$$

$$f \circ \text{pr}_1 = g \circ \text{pr}_2$$

# UMP-FibProd

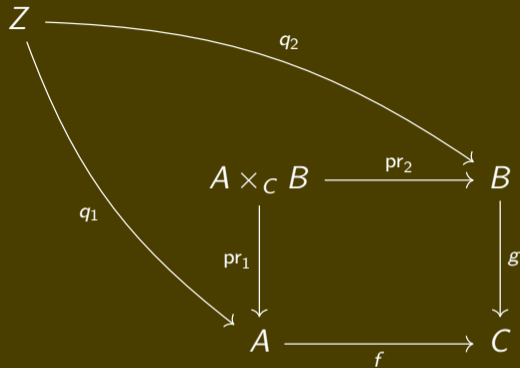


$Z$



For all sets  $Z$

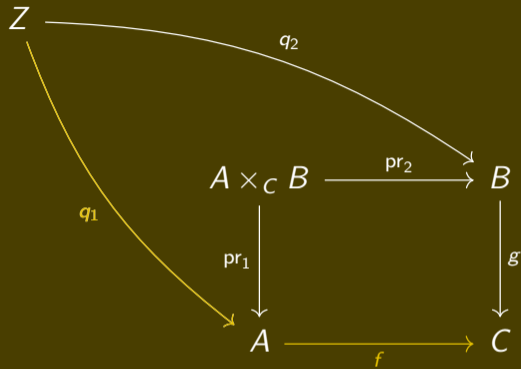
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For all sets  $Z$  and all functions  $q_1 : Z \rightarrow A$ ,  $q_2 : Z \rightarrow B$

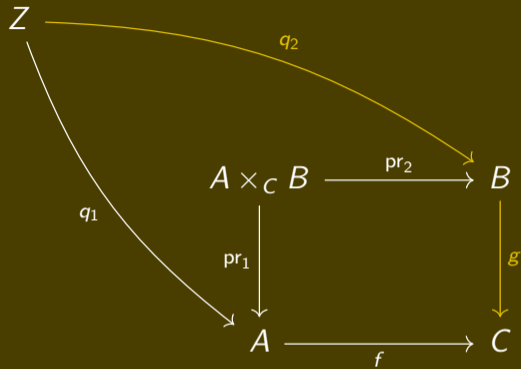


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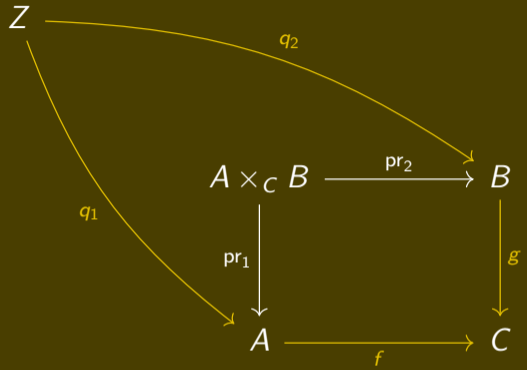
For all sets  $Z$  and all functions  $q_1 : Z \rightarrow A$ ,  $q_2 : Z \rightarrow B$  such that  $f \circ q_1$

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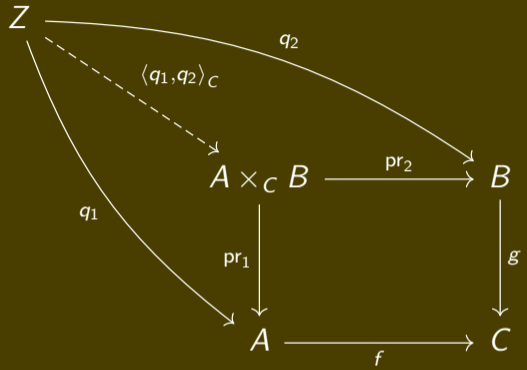
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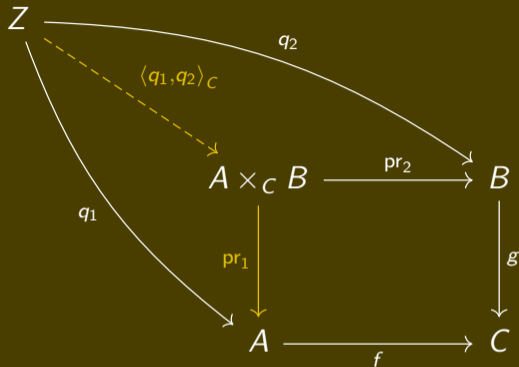
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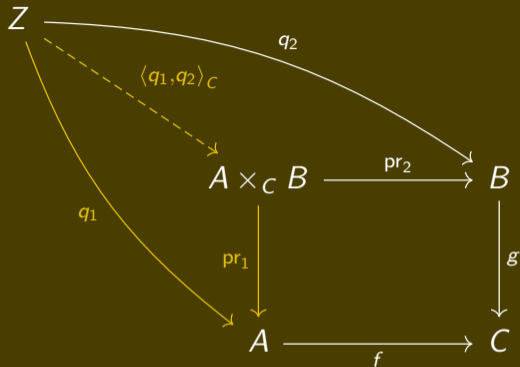
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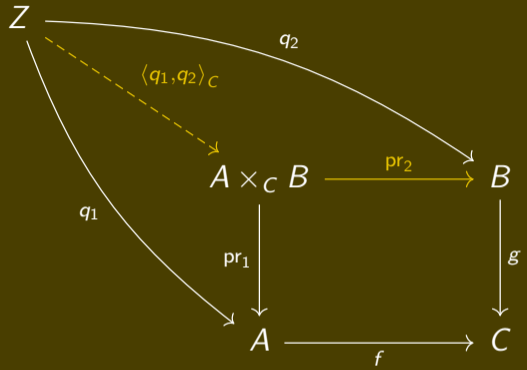
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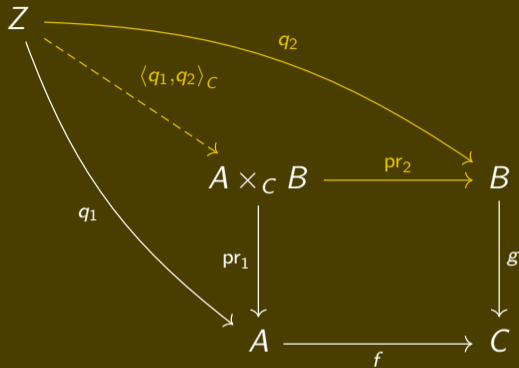
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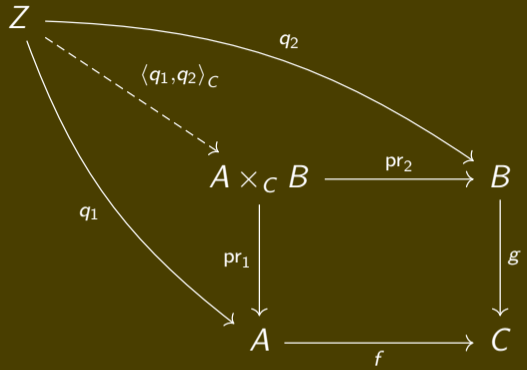
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## Check Your Understanding

- State **UMP-FibProd** for the case  $Z = \mathbf{1}$  and interpret it as a statement describing the elements of  $A \times_C B$
- For any sets  $A, B$ , find a set  $C$  and functions  $f : A \rightarrow C, g : B \rightarrow C$  such that  $A \times_C B$  is the cartesian product  $A \times B$

## Check Your Understanding

A square of sets and functions

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \xrightarrow{p_2} & B \\ p_1 \downarrow & & \downarrow g \\ A & \xrightarrow{f} & C \end{array}$$

is called a **pullback square**

if  $f \circ p_1 = g \circ p_2$  and it satisfies **UMP-FibProd**: for any  $Z$  and any  $q_1 : Z \rightarrow A$  and  $q_2 : Z \rightarrow B$  such that  $f \circ q_1 = g \circ q_2$ , there exists a unique  $h : Z \rightarrow P$  such that  $q_1 = p_1 \circ h$  and  $q_2 = p_2 \circ h$ .  
For any subset  $X \subseteq Y$ , show that the square

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & \xrightarrow{!_X} & \mathbf{1} \\ i_X \downarrow & & \downarrow \text{true} \\ Y & \xrightarrow{\chi_X} & \mathbf{2} \end{array}$$

is a pullback square.

# Kernels

Consider the fiber product of  $f : A \rightarrow C$  with itself:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} K = A \times_C A & \xrightarrow{k_2 = \lambda(a, a').a'} & A \\ \downarrow k_1 = \lambda(a, a').a & & \downarrow f \\ A & \xrightarrow{f} & C \end{array}$$

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# Equivalence Relations

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A subset of  $A \times A$  satisfying these three conditions is called an **equivalence relation** on  $A$ .

## Check Your Understanding

Verify:

- $R = A \times A$  is an equivalence relation on  $A$
- $R = \Delta_A = \{(a, a) \mid a \in A\}$  is an equivalence relation on  $A$
- The set  $R \subseteq \mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{Z}$  given by

$$\{(p, q) \in \mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{Z} \mid (p - q) \text{ is a multiple of } 2\}$$

is an equivalence relation.

# Quotients

Given an equivalence relation  $R$  on  $A$  and an element  $a \in A$ , define the **equivalence class** of  $a$  to be the set

$$[a]_R = \{a' \in A \mid (a, a') \in R\} \subseteq A$$

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And write  $\pi_R$  for the function  $(\lambda a.[a]_R) : A \rightarrow A/R$ .



## Quotients

Given an equivalence relation  $R$  on  $A$  and an element  $a \in A$ , define the **equivalence class** of  $a$  to be the set

$$[a]_R = \{a' \in A \mid (a, a') \in R\} \subseteq A$$

Notice that  $(a, a') \in R$  iff  $[a]_R = [a']_R$ .

Then put

$$A/R = \{[a]_R \mid a \in A\}.$$

And write  $\pi_R$  for the function  $(\lambda a.[a]_R) : A \rightarrow A/R$ .

### Check Your Understanding

Prove that  $\pi_R$  is a surjection for any  $A$  and  $R$ .

Since  $R \subseteq A \times A$ , we have  $\text{pr}_1 = (\lambda(a, a').a) : R \rightarrow A$  and  $\text{pr}_2 = (\lambda(a, a').a') : R \rightarrow A$ .

$$R \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{\text{pr}_1} \\ \xrightarrow{\text{pr}_2} \end{array} A \xrightarrow{\pi_R} A/R$$

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By **UMP-Quot**, every function  $g : A/R \rightarrow Z$  is of the form  $[h]$  for some  $h : A \rightarrow Z$  such that  $h \circ \text{pr}_1 = h \circ \text{pr}_2$ .

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**REQUIRES**: if  $[a]_R = [a']_R$  (i.e.  $(a, a') \in R$ ), then  $h(a) = h(a')$ .

## Quotienting by the Kernel

Given a function  $f : A \rightarrow C$  with kernel pair  $K \begin{matrix} \xrightarrow{k_1} \\ \xrightarrow{k_2} \end{matrix} A$ , construct the quotient diagram

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**Check Your Understanding** Verify that the lambda function  $\lambda[a]_K . f(a)$  satisfies the requirements from the previous slide, and verify  $f = (\lambda[a]_K . f(a)) \circ \pi_K$ .

## Images

Given  $f : A \rightarrow C$  as before, define the **image** of  $f$  to be the set

$$\text{im}(f) = \{c \in C \mid c = f(a) \text{ for some } a \in A\} = \{c \in C \mid \text{fib}_f(c) \neq \emptyset\}$$

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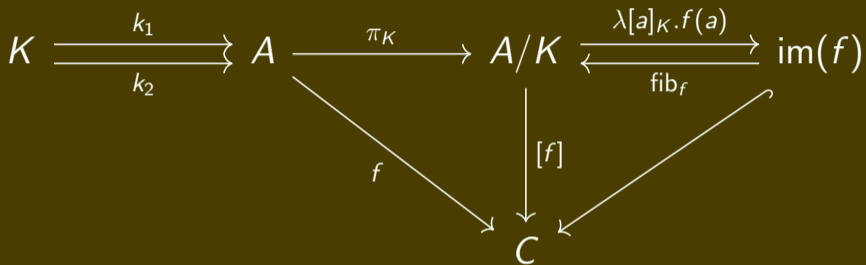
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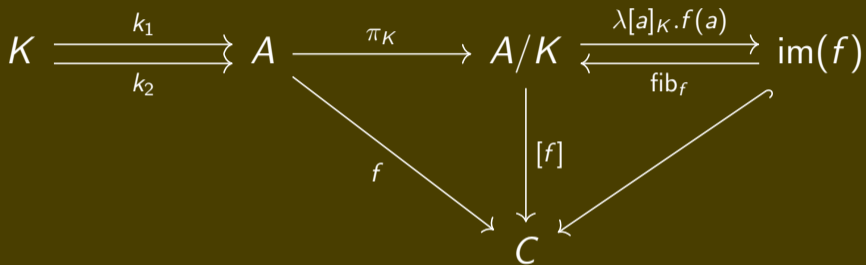
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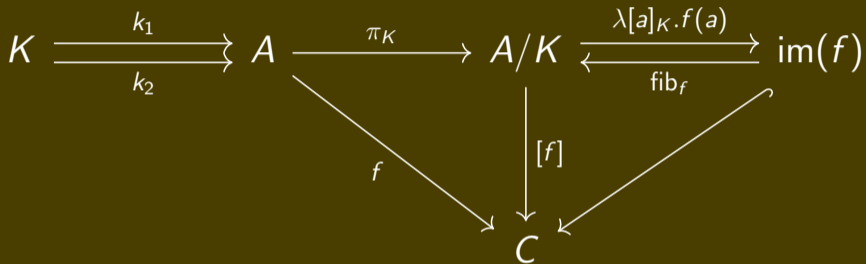
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## Check Your Understanding

- Prove Prop. 6
- Prove Prop. 7
- Prove that  $[f] \circ \text{fib}_f$  is equal to the inclusion of  $\text{im}(f)$  into  $C$
- Prove that  $[f]$  is injective

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Next Time...

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Thanks for watching!