# Homological Algebra

Original lectures notes by Baptiste Rognerud, but now typeset in LATEX

## 1 Introduction to category theory

## References:

- Emily Riehl, Category Theory in Context (chapter I)
- Saunders Mac Lane, Categories for the Working Mathematician
- Ibrahim Assem, Introduction au langage catégorique (chapters I, II)

▶ Near 1945 Eilenberg and Mac Lane gave the good formalism for a "natural isomorphism" (the general theory of natural transformations). For instance, if V is a finite-dimensional vector space,  $V \simeq V^*$  and  $V \simeq V^{**}$ , but the first isomorphism is not natural ("a choice needs to be made"), while the second is. But why?

It turns out solving this question gave a formalism, category theory, that unified already existing mathematical concepts, gave new links between different notions and also gave new questions!

⚠ Category theory is not a theory that trivializes mathematics. It is used today by (almost) everyone: algebraic geometry, algebra, representation theory, topology,

# 1.1 Categories and functors

**Definition 1.1.** A category C is the data of

- A collection of morphisms Mor(C)
- A collection of *objects* Ob(C)

such that

combinatorics, ...

- 1. Every morphism  $f \in \text{Mor}(\mathcal{C})$  has a specified domain  $X \in \text{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and codomain  $Y \in \text{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$ . We write  $f: X \to Y$ .
- 2. For every object  $X \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  there exists a morphism  $1_X : X \to X$  (the *identity* of X), also written  $\mathrm{id}_X$
- 3. For any three objects  $X,Y,Z\in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and morphism  $f:X\to Y$  and  $g:Y\to Z$  there exists a morphism  $g\circ f:X\to Z$  (we often omit  $\circ$  and just write gf)

satisfying

(Identity) 
$$\forall f: X \to Y, 1_Y f = f = f1_X$$

(Associativity)  $\forall f: W \to X, g: X \to Y, h: Y \to Z, h(gf) = (hg)f$ 

Remark.

- 1. We use the term "collection" because we don't want to worry about set-theoretical issues
- 2. If  $Mor(\mathcal{C})$  is a set, we say that  $\mathcal{C}$  is small
- 3. We denote by  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X,Y)$  (or  $\mathcal{C}(X,Y)$ ) the collection of  $f:X\to Y\in\operatorname{Mor}(\mathcal{C})$

## Examples 1.2 (Concrete categories).

- 1. The category **Set**, where objects are sets and morphisms are just maps.
- 2. **Top**, where objects are topological spaces and morphisms are continuous maps.
- 3. Groups together with group homomorphisms form a category called **Grp**. The same can be said about rings, fields...
- 4. k-vector spaces, or more generally left/right R-modules, together with linear maps, form a category denoted RMod or ModR (for left or right R-modules).

In these previous examples, objects are sets with additional structure, and morphisms between two objects are in particular maps between the two underlying sets. Such categories are called *concrete categories* (a rigorous definition will be given later). However, a category need not be concrete.

### Examples 1.3 (Abstract categories).

- 1. Let k be a field. There exists a category  $\mathbf{Mat}_k$  where objects are the natural numbers  $\mathbb{N}$  and morphisms are  $\mathrm{Hom}(m,n)=\mathrm{Mat}_{n,m}(k)$ , where composition is given by matrix multiplication.
- 2. If G is a group, there exists a category BG which has only one object  $\bullet$ , and morphisms  $\operatorname{Hom}(\bullet, \bullet) = G$ , where composition is multiplication in G.
- 3. If  $(P, \leq)$  is a poset (a partially ordered set, that is a set P together with a reflexive, transitive relation  $\leq$ ), then one can construct a category  $\hat{P}$  by setting  $\mathrm{Ob}(\hat{P}) = P$  and  $|\mathrm{Hom}(x,y)| = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } x \leq y \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$ , where composition is defined in the only possible way.
- 4. The homotopy category of topological spaces: objects are topological spaces, and  $\operatorname{Hom}(X,Y)$  is  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathbf{Top}}(X,Y)/\sim$  where  $\sim$  is homotopy of continuous maps.

Exercise. Check the categories defined above really are categories. In (2), what are the minimal hypotheses needed on G for BG to be a category? In (3), what are the minimal hypotheses needed on  $\subseteq$  for  $\widehat{P}$  to be a category?

## Examples 1.4 (Categories constructed from categories).

1. If  $\mathcal{C}$  is a category, one can construct its *opposite category*  $\mathcal{C}^{\text{op}}$ , defined by  $\text{Ob}(\mathcal{C}^{\text{op}}) = \text{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and  $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}^{\text{op}}}(X,Y) = \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(Y,X)$ , with composition described by the following diagram:

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
X & X \\
\downarrow f & f^{\text{op}} & \downarrow \\
Y & \leadsto & Y \\
\downarrow g & g^{\text{op}} & \downarrow \\
Z & Z
\end{array}$$

- 2. Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a category. A subcategory  $\mathcal{D}$  of  $\mathcal{C}$  is another category such that  $\mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{D}) \subset \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and  $\mathrm{Mor}(\mathcal{D}) \subset \mathrm{Mor}(\mathcal{C})$  and the composition in  $\mathcal{D}$  is induced by the one in  $\mathcal{C}$ . For instance,  $\mathbf{Ab}$ , the category of abelian groups and group homomorphisms, is a subcategory of  $\mathbf{Grp}$ .
- 3. Let  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  be categories. The *product category* of  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  is the category  $\mathcal{C} \times \mathcal{D}$  defined by  $\mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C} \times \mathcal{D}) = \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C}) \times \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{D})$  and  $\mathrm{Mor}(\mathcal{C} \times \mathcal{D}) = \mathrm{Mor}(\mathcal{C}) \times \mathrm{Mor}(\mathcal{D})$ , composition and identities being defined componentwise.

Exercise. Describe  $(BG)^{op}$  for G a group and  $\hat{P}^{op}$  for (P, <) a poset.

## ▲ Set<sup>op</sup> is not Set. TODO

*Remark.* In a category  $\mathcal{C}$  the objects can be anything, so saying  $x \in X$  for  $X \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  doesn't make sense. Hence, categorical notions are defined using arrows and not elements.

**Definition 1.5.** Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a category.

- 1.  $f: X \to Y$  is an isomorphism if there exists  $g: Y \to X$  such that  $gf = \mathrm{id}_X$  and  $fg = \mathrm{id}_Y$ .
- 2.  $f: X \to Y$  is a monomorphism if for all  $g, h: W \to X$  such that fg = fh, g = h (f is left-cancellable).
- 3.  $f: X \to Y$  is an *epimorphism* if for all  $g, h: Y \to Z$  such that gf = hf, g = h (f is right-cancellable).

A Being both a mono and an epi doesn't imply being an iso. TODO

**Definition 1.6.** Let  $\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}$  be two categories. A *(covariant) functor*  $F : \mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  is the data of

- An object  $F(X) \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{D})$  for all  $X \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$
- A morphism  $F(f) \in \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(F(X), F(Y))$  for all  $f \in \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X, Y)$

such that  $F(\mathrm{id}_X) = \mathrm{id}_{F(X)}$  for all  $X \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and F(gf) = F(g)F(f) whenever  $f, g \in \mathrm{Mor}(\mathcal{C})$  are composable.

**Definition 1.7.** A contravariant functor from  $\mathcal{C}$  to  $\mathcal{D}$  is a functor from  $\mathcal{C}^{\text{op}}$  to  $\mathcal{D}$  (so composition is reversed, i.e. F(gf) = F(f)F(g)).

## Examples 1.8.

1.  $U : \mathbf{Grp} \to \mathbf{Set}, U(G) = G, U(f) = f$  the functor that to a group assigns it its underlying set and to a homomorphism the underlying map. It is called the *forgetful functor* from groups to sets, because it forgets the group structure.

- 2.  $U: \mathbf{Ass} \to \mathbf{Lie}$  the forgetful functor from the category of associative algebras to the category of Lie algebras. It forgets the "associative structure" but remembers the underlying abelian group.
- 3.  $F: \mathbf{Set} \to \mathbf{Ab}, X \mapsto \mathbb{Z}[X], f \mapsto \mathbb{Z}[f]$ , which to a set assigns the free abelian group with basis X (the group of finite linear combinations of elements of X). A map  $f: X \to Y$  can then be uniquely extended to a linear map  $\mathbb{Z}[f]: \mathbb{Z}[X] \to \mathbb{Z}[Y]$  that agrees with f on the bases of  $\mathbb{Z}[X]$  and  $\mathbb{Z}[Y]$ .
- 4. Suppose  $\mathcal{C}$  is locally small (i.e. for any X, Y,  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X, Y)$  is a set). For all  $X \in \mathcal{C}$ ,  $\operatorname{Hom}(X, -)$  is a functor  $\mathcal{C} \to \mathbf{Set}$ . Similarly,  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(-, X)$  is a contravariant functor  $\mathcal{C} \to \mathbf{Set}$ .  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(-, -)$  is a functor  $\mathcal{C} \times \mathcal{C}^{\operatorname{op}} \to \mathbf{Set}$ .
- 5. Functors  $\mathcal{C} \xrightarrow{F} \mathcal{D} \xrightarrow{G} \mathcal{E}$  can be composed in the obvious sense.

**TODO**: DRAW DIAGRAMS

**Definition 1.9.** Let  $\mathcal{C} \xrightarrow{F} \mathcal{D}$  be two functors. A natural transformation  $\eta$  from F to G is the data of morphisms  $\eta_X : F(X) \to G(X) \in \operatorname{Mor}(\mathcal{D})$  for all  $X \in \operatorname{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  such that for all

is the data of morphisms  $\eta_X : F(X) \to G(X) \in \operatorname{Mor}(\mathcal{D})$  for all  $X \in \operatorname{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  such that for all  $f: X \to Y \in \operatorname{Mor}(\mathcal{C})$ , the diagram

$$F(X) \xrightarrow{\eta_X} G(X)$$

$$\downarrow^{F(f)} \qquad \downarrow^{G(f)}$$

$$F(Y) \xrightarrow{\eta_Y} G(Y)$$

commutes, that is  $G(f)\eta_X = \eta_Y F(f)$ . We write  $\eta: F \Rightarrow G$  or draw  $\mathcal{C} \xrightarrow{F} \mathcal{D}$ 

**Example 1.10.** Let V be a k-vector space.  $\mathrm{id}_{\mathbf{Vect}_k}$  and  $D^2 = \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathbf{Vect}_k}(\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathbf{Vect}_k}(-,k),k)$  are two endofunctors of  $\mathbf{Vect}_k$ .  $\mathrm{ev}_-: V \to V^{**}$  defines a natural transforma-

$$\begin{array}{cccc} v & v \\ v & \mapsto & \operatorname{Hom}(V,k) & \to & k \\ \phi & \mapsto & \phi(v) \end{array}$$

tion between them:

$$V \xrightarrow{\text{ev}} V^{**}$$

$$f \downarrow \qquad \qquad \downarrow D^2(f)$$

$$W \xrightarrow{\text{ev}} W^{**}$$

For  $a \in V$ ,  $D^2(f) \circ \operatorname{ev}_a$ :  $W^* \to k$   $\phi \mapsto \phi(f(a))$   $\in W^{**}$  and in the other direction  $(\operatorname{ev} \circ f)(a) = \operatorname{ev}_{f(a)}$ .

However, there is no natural transformation from  $id_{\mathbf{Vect}_k}$  to D. For one, the first is covariant and the second is contravariant. To get a natural transformation from a covariant to a contravariant

functor, we can modify the definition of naturality to be that  $V \to V^*$  commutes, but even such  $W \to W^*$ 

natural transformations do not exist from  $id_{\mathbf{Vect}_k}$  to D.

**Definition 1.11.** A natural transformation  $\mathcal{C} \underbrace{\downarrow \eta}_{G} \mathcal{D}$  is a *natural isomorphism* if  $\eta_X$  is an isomorphism for all  $X \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$ .

Remark. One can compose natural transformations in two ways, "vertical composition":

$$C \xrightarrow{F} \mathcal{D} \xrightarrow{F} \mathcal{C} \xrightarrow{F} \mathcal{D} \text{ where } (\beta \circ \alpha)_X = \beta_X \circ \alpha_X$$

or "horizontal composition":

$$\mathcal{C} \underbrace{ \underbrace{ \int_{G_1}^{F_1}}_{G_1} \mathcal{D} \underbrace{ \int_{G_2}^{F_2}}_{G_2} \mathcal{E}}_{G_2} \mathcal{E} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{C}} \mathcal{C} \underbrace{ \underbrace{ \int_{\alpha_2 * \alpha_1}^{F_2 \circ F_1}}_{G_2 \circ G_1} \mathcal{E}}_{G_2 \circ G_1} \mathcal{E} \text{ where } (\alpha_2 * \alpha_1)_X = G_2((\alpha_1)_X) \circ (\alpha_2)_{F_1(X)}$$

Horizontal composition can also be defined in another equivalent way using commutativity of

$$F_{2}F_{1}(X) \xrightarrow{(\alpha_{2})_{F_{1}(X)}} G_{2}F_{1}(X)$$

$$F_{2}((\alpha_{1})_{X}) \downarrow \qquad \qquad \downarrow G_{2}((\alpha_{1})_{X})$$

$$F_{2}G_{1}(X) \xrightarrow{(\alpha_{2})_{G_{1}(X)}} G_{2}G_{1}(X)$$

The diagram commutes by naturality of  $\alpha_2$ , so  $(\alpha_2 * \alpha_1) = (\alpha_2)_{G_1(X)} \circ F_2((\alpha_1)_X)$ .

**Definition 1.12.** Let  $\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}$  be two categories. Then the functor category from  $\mathcal{C}$  to  $\mathcal{D}$  written  $\operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D})$  or  $\mathcal{D}^{\mathcal{C}}$  is the category whose objects are functors from  $\mathcal{C}$  to  $\mathcal{D}$  and morphisms are natural transformations.

*Remark.* Categories, together with functors and natural transformations between them is the prototypal example of a 2-category.

## 1.2 Equivalences of categories

**Definition 1.13.** Let  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  be two categories. An equivalence of categories from  $\mathcal{C}$  to  $\mathcal{D}$  is the data of

- 1.  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  and  $G: \mathcal{D} \to \mathcal{C}$  we functors
- 2. Natural isomorphisms  $\eta: 1_{\mathcal{C}} \Rightarrow GF$  and  $\varepsilon: FG \Rightarrow 1_{\mathcal{D}}$  where  $1_{\mathcal{C}}$  and  $1_{\mathcal{D}}$  are the identity functors of  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$ .

Remark.

- 1. G is called a quasi-inverse of F.
- 2. Most of the time we say that F is an equivalence if there exists G such that (F,G) is an equivalence.

- 3. If F, G are contravariant, we speak of duality between C and D.
- 4. If two categories are equivalent, every property that can be expressed "in terms of arrows" is preserved.

**Definition 1.14.** Let  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  be a functor. Then, we say

- 1. F is faithful if  $\forall X, Y \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C}), F : \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X,Y) \to \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(F(X),F(Y))$  is injective.  $f \mapsto F(f)$
- 2. F is full if the previous map is surjective.
- 3. F is essentially surjective if for all  $Y \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{D})$  there is  $X \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  such that  $F(X) \simeq Y$  in  $\mathcal{D}$ .

**Theorem 1.15.** Let  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  be a functor. Then F is an equivalence of categories if and only if it is fully faithful and essentially surjective.

Proof. lacktriangle There is a little set-theoretic issue: an equivalence of categories is always fully faithful and essentially surjective, but the converse requires the axiom of choice for the class  $\mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$ . Suppose  $F:\mathcal{C}\to\mathcal{D}$  is an equivalence of categories, and let  $G:\mathcal{D}\to\mathcal{C}$  be a quasi-inverse of F, together with natural isomorphisms  $\eta:1_{\mathcal{C}}\to GF$  and  $\varepsilon:1_{\mathcal{D}}\to FG$ . If Y is an object of  $\mathcal{D}$ , then  $Y\simeq FG(Y)$ , so F is essentially surjective. Let X,Y be objects of  $\mathcal{C}$ . To show F is fully faithful we will construct an inverse to  $F:\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X,Y)\to\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(F(X),F(Y))$ . For any  $f\in\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(F(X),F(Y))$ , we have a commutative diagram

$$X \xrightarrow{\eta_X} GF(X)$$

$$f \downarrow \qquad \qquad \downarrow_{GF(f)}$$

$$Y \xrightarrow{\eta_Y} GF(Y)$$

which prompts us to define  $\phi: \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(F(X),F(Y)) \to \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X,Y)$ . We now check it is  $g \mapsto \eta_Y^{-1} \circ G(g) \circ \eta_X$  the map we're looking for. If  $f: X \to Y$ , since the above diagram commutes and  $\eta_Y$  is invertible, we

the map we're looking for. If  $f: X \to Y$ , since the above diagram commutes and  $\eta_Y$  is invertible, we get that  $\phi(F(f)) = f$ , so  $\phi \circ F = \mathrm{id}_{\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X,Y)}$ , which means F is faithful. We have two commutative diagrams, by definition of  $\phi$  and by naturality of  $\eta$ :

$$X \xrightarrow{\eta_X} GF(X) \qquad X \xrightarrow{\eta_X} GF(X)$$

$$\phi(g) \downarrow \qquad \qquad \qquad \qquad \qquad \downarrow G(g) \qquad \qquad \qquad \downarrow GF(\phi(g))$$

$$Y \xrightarrow{\eta_Y} GF(Y) \qquad \qquad \qquad \qquad Y \xrightarrow{\eta_Y} GF(Y)$$

therefore,  $G(g) \circ \eta_X = GF(\phi(g)) \circ \eta_X$ . Since  $\eta_X$  is invertible,  $G(g) = GF(\phi(g))$ . The previous point shows that G is faithful, so  $g = F(\phi(g))$ , hence F is full.

Now suppose F is fully faithful and essentially surjective. Our goal is to construct G. For any  $Y \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{D})$ , since F is essentially surjective, there exists  $X_Y \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and an isomorphism  $\varepsilon_Y : Y \to F(X_Y)$ . Therefore, for any  $Y, Z \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{D})$  and  $f: Y \to Z$ , we have a commutative diagram

$$Y \xrightarrow{f} Z$$

$$\downarrow^{\varepsilon_Y} \qquad \downarrow^{\varepsilon_Z}$$

$$F(X_Y) \xrightarrow[\varepsilon_Z \circ f \circ \varepsilon_Y^{-1}]{} F(X_Z)$$

Which leads us to define  $G(Y) = X_Y$  and G(f) to be the unique morphism  $m_f : X_Y \to X_Z$  such that  $F(m_f) = \varepsilon_Z \circ f \circ \varepsilon_Y^{-1}$  (this works because F is fully faithful). We have  $G(\mathrm{id}_Y) = \mathrm{id}_{X_Y}$  since  $\varepsilon_Y \circ \mathrm{id}_Y \circ \varepsilon_Y^{-1} = \mathrm{id}_Y$  and  $F(\mathrm{id}_{X_Y}) = \mathrm{id}_Y$ . The next diagram shows  $G(g \circ f) = G(g) \circ G(f)$ :

$$W \xrightarrow{f} Y \xrightarrow{g} Z$$

$$\downarrow \varepsilon_W \qquad \downarrow \varepsilon_Y \qquad \downarrow \varepsilon_Z$$

$$F(X_W) \xrightarrow{F(m_f)} F(X_Y) \xrightarrow{F(m_g) \circ F(m_f)} F(X_Z)$$

By this construction,  $\varepsilon$  is a natural isomorphism  $\mathrm{id}_{\mathcal{D}} \Rightarrow FG$  (look at the above diagrams). Now, pick  $Y,Z\in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and  $f:Y\to Z$ . We have  $GF(Y)=X_{F(Y)}$  and  $\varepsilon_Y:F(Y)\stackrel{\sim}{\to} F(X_{F(Y)})$ . Since F is fully faithful, there exists a unique  $\eta_Y:Y\to X_{F(Y)}=GF(Y)$  such that  $F(\eta_Y)=\varepsilon_Y$ . Here,  $\eta_Y=G(\varepsilon_Y)$ , which means that  $\eta_Y$  is an isomorphism since functors preserve isomorphisms. We obtain the diagram

$$Y \xrightarrow{\eta_Y} GF(Y)$$

$$\downarrow^f \qquad \qquad \downarrow^{GF(f)}$$

$$Z \xrightarrow{\eta_Z} GF(Z)$$

The diagram commutes because GF(f) is the unique morphism such that

$$F(GF(f)) = \varepsilon_Z \circ F(f) \circ \varepsilon_Y^{-1} = F(\eta_Z \circ f \circ \eta_Y^{-1})$$

and F is faithful.  $\eta$  is then a natural isomorphism  $id_{\mathcal{C}} \Rightarrow GF$ .

**Example 1.16.** Vect<sub>k</sub>  $\simeq$  Mat<sub>k</sub> through the functor  $n \mapsto k^n$  and  $(A : n \to m) \mapsto (f_A : k^n \to k^m)$ .

# 2 Universal properties

References:

- Riehl (Chapters II, III, IV)
- Mac Lane (Chapters III, IV, V)
- Assem (Chapters III, IV, V)

▶ Let S be a set together with an equivalence relation  $\sim$ . Let  $S/\sim$  be the quotient set, and  $\pi: S \to S/\sim$  be the projection. For any  $f: S \to X$  compatible with  $\sim$ , there exists a unique map  $\bar{f}: S/\sim \to X$  such that  $f=\bar{f}\circ\pi$ . This is represented by the following commutative diagram:

$$S \xrightarrow{f} X$$

$$\pi \downarrow \qquad \exists ! \bar{f}$$

$$S/\sim$$

We say that  $S \xrightarrow{\pi} S/\sim$  is a solution to the universal problem posed by the compatible maps. Such a solution is unique up to unique isomorphism: if  $S \xrightarrow{p} S'$  is another solution, then we get the three commutative diagrams

then  $abp = a\pi = p$ . The identity of S' also makes this diagram commute so by uniqueness  $ab = \mathrm{id}_{S'}$  and similarly  $ba = \mathrm{id}_{S/\sim}$ .

## 2.1 Initial and final objects

**Definition 2.1.** Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a category. An object  $c \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  is *initial* (*final*) if for all  $d \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  there exists a unique morphism  $c \to d$  (a unique morphism  $d \to c$ ).

**Proposition 2.2.** If an initial/final object exists, then it is unique up to unique isomorphism.

*Proof.* Let c, c' be two initial objects. Then there exists a unique morphism  $f: c \to c'$  and a unique morphism  $g: c' \to c$ . There also exists a unique morphism  $c \to c$ , that is  $\mathrm{id}_c$ . Therefore,  $gf = \mathrm{id}_c$ . In the same way,  $fg = \mathrm{id}_{c'}$ . Therefore, c and c' are isomorphic and the isomorphism is unique.  $\square$ 

#### Examples 2.3.

- 1.  $\emptyset$  is initial in **Set** and any singleton is final.
- 2.  $\{0\}$  is both initial and final in  $\mathbf{Vect}_k$  (or  $R\mathbf{Mod}$ ).
- 3. The category of fields does not have initial/final objects (reason on field characteristics).

We want to say a universal object is an initial or final object. A category has at most 2, so this may seem a little restrictive, but this is solved by thinking of a good category.

**Definition 2.4.** Let  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathbf{Set}$  be a functor. Let  $\int F$  be the category defined by

$$Ob(\int F) = \{(c, x) \mid c \in Ob(C) \text{ and } x \in F(c)\}$$
  
 $Hom((c, x), (c', x')) = \{f \in Hom(c, c') \mid F(f)(x) = x'\}$ 

where composition is composition in C, and  $\mathrm{id}_{(c,x)} = \mathrm{id}_c$  for all x. If F is contravariant, let  $\int F$  have the same objects and morphisms  $\mathrm{Hom}((c,x),(c',x')) = \{f \in \mathrm{Hom}(c,c') \mid F(f)(x') = x\}$ .

**Proposition 2.5.** There is a forgetful functor  $\pi: \int F \to \mathcal{C}$  defined by  $\pi(c, x) = c$  and  $\pi(f: (c, x) \to (c', x')) = f: c \to c'$ .

**Example 2.6.** Let S be a set, and  $\sim$  an equivalence relation on S. Let  $F : \mathbf{Set} \to \mathbf{Set}$  be defined by  $F(X) = \{f : S \to X \mid x \sim y \Rightarrow f(x) = f(y)\}$  and  $F(\alpha : X \to Y) = \alpha \circ -$ .

 $\int F$  has for objects  $(X, S \xrightarrow{f} X)$  where f is compatible with  $\sim$ , and for morphisms  $\alpha$  that makes

this diagram commute:  $\int_{1}^{S} \int_{\alpha}^{f'} X'$ 

 $(S/\sim, S \xrightarrow{\pi} S/\sim)$  is an initial object of  $\int F$ .

**Definition 2.7.** Let  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathbf{Set}$  be a functor. A universal element for F is an initial object of f, that is a pair (c, x) with  $c \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and  $x \in F(c)$  such that

$$\forall (d, y), d \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C}), y \in F(d), \exists ! \alpha : c \to d, y = F(\alpha)(x)$$

**Definition 2.8.** Let  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  be a functor and  $d \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{D})$ . A universal arrow from d to F is a pair (c, f) where  $c \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and  $f \in \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(d, F(c))$ , such that

$$\forall (c', f'), c' \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C}), f' : d \to F(c'), \exists ! \alpha \in \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c, c'), F(\alpha) \circ f = f'$$

$$f \not d$$

$$F(c) \xrightarrow{F(\alpha)} F(c')$$

$$c \xrightarrow{\exists ! \alpha} c'$$

Exercise. Define a category  $d \downarrow F$  such that a universal arrow is an initial object of  $d \downarrow F$ .

**Example 2.9.** Let  $U: \mathbf{Vect}_k \to \mathbf{Set}$  be the forgetful functor. Let  $X \in \mathbf{Set}$ . A universal arrow from X to U is the "best" k-vector space  $V_X$  with a map  $X \to V_X$ . Set  $V_X = k[X]$  the k-vector space with basis X, and  $i: X \to V_X$  that maps  $x \in X$  to the corresponding basis element. Then, for any vector space V and map  $f: X \to U(V)$ , f can be extended by linearity into a linear map  $\tilde{f}: k[X] \to V$ , which makes this diagram commute:



If  $\alpha$  is another map that makes the diagram commute then  $\alpha$  and  $\tilde{f}$  coincide on a basis of k[X] and therefore are equal.

**Proposition 2.10.** Universal elements and arrows are two equivalent notions.

*Proof.* Let  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathbf{Set}$  be a functor and (c,x) a universal element for F. Consider  $f_x: \{*\} \to F(c)$ . Then,  $(c,f_x)$  is a universal arrow  $*\to F$ , because  $F(\alpha)(x)=y$  iff  $F(\alpha)\circ f_x=f_y$ .

$$\begin{cases}
f_x \\
f_y
\end{cases}$$

$$F(c) \xrightarrow{F(\alpha)} F(c')$$

Conversely, if  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  is a functor and (c, f) is a universal arrow  $d \to F$ , then consider the functor  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(d, F(-)): \mathcal{C} \to \operatorname{\mathbf{Set}}$  (we need to assume  $\mathcal{D}$  is locally small so the  $x \mapsto \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(d, F(x))$ 

functor is set-valued). Then,  $f \in \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(d, F(c))$  is a universal element for this functor.

## 2.2 Representable functors

**Definition 2.11.** Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a (locally small) category, and  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathbf{Set}$  a functor.

- 1. We say that F is representable if there is some  $c \in \text{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  such that F and  $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c, -)$  are naturally isomorphic (if F is contravariant, use  $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(-, c)$  instead).
- 2. A representation of F is the data of  $c \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and a natural isomorphism  $\eta : \mathrm{Hom}(c, -) \Rightarrow F$ .

**Example 2.12.** The forgetful functor  $U: \mathbf{Grp} \to \mathbf{Set}$  is representable since  $\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathbf{Grp}}(\mathbb{Z}, -) \simeq U$ . The natural isomorphism is given by  $\alpha \in \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathbf{Grp}}(\mathbb{Z}, G) \mapsto \alpha(1) \in G$ .

The following theorem explains how to find the natural isomorphism  $\alpha: \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c, -) \Rightarrow F$  in general.

**Theorem 2.13** (Yoneda lemma). Let  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathbf{Set}$  be a functor with  $\mathcal{C}$  locally small, and  $c \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$ . Then.

$$\operatorname{Nat}(\operatorname{Hom}(c, -), F) \xrightarrow{\sim} F(c) 
\alpha \mapsto \alpha_c(\operatorname{id}_c)$$

and this isomorphism is natural in c and in F.

*Proof.* Let  $\alpha \in \text{Nat}(\text{Hom}(c, -), F)$ . Let  $d \in \mathcal{C}$  and  $f : c \to d$ . By naturality, we have a commutative diagram

$$\operatorname{Hom}(c,c) \xrightarrow{\alpha_c} F(c)$$

$$\downarrow^{f \circ -} \qquad \downarrow^{F(f)}$$

$$\operatorname{Hom}(c,d) \xrightarrow{\alpha_d} F(d)$$

This means that  $F(f) \circ \alpha_c = \alpha_d \circ (f \circ -)$ . Evaluating at  $\mathrm{id}_c$ , we get  $F(f) \circ \alpha_c(\mathrm{id}_c) = \alpha_d(f)$ . This shows that the natural transformation  $\alpha$  is entirely determined by the value of  $\alpha_c(\mathrm{id}_c)$ , which shows the map defined above is injective. Conversely, if  $e \in F(c)$ , then we define  $\alpha^e : \mathrm{Hom}(c, -) \Rightarrow F$  by  $\alpha_d^e : g \mapsto F(g)(e)$ . We check it is a natural transformation:

$$\operatorname{Hom}(c,c) \xrightarrow{g \mapsto F(g)(e)} F(c)$$

$$\downarrow^{f \circ -} \qquad \downarrow^{F(f)}$$

$$\operatorname{Hom}(c,d) \xrightarrow{h \mapsto F(h)(e)} F(d)$$

and this diagram commutes since for  $g: c \to c$  we have

$$F(f)(F(g)(e)) = F(f \circ g)(e) = F((f \circ -)(g))(e)$$

This shows the map in the theorem is surjective, therefore an isomorphism, and its inverse is given by  $e \in F(c) \mapsto \alpha^e$ . We now check naturality. We first need to understand what it means to say the isomorphism is natural in c. Let  $f: c \to d$ . Nat(Hom(c, -), F) is functorial in c, as it is the composition of two contravariant hom-functors. More concretely:

$$c \xrightarrow{f} d \leadsto \operatorname{Hom}(d,-) \xrightarrow{-\circ f} \operatorname{Hom}(c,-) \leadsto \operatorname{Nat}(\operatorname{Hom}(c,-),F) \xrightarrow{-\circ (-\circ f)} \operatorname{Nat}(\operatorname{Hom}(d,-),F)$$

(Nat is the hom-functor of the functor category  $C^{\mathbf{Set}}$ ). One thing to note is that the morphism  $f: c \to d$  induces a natural transformation  $\operatorname{Hom}(d,-) \xrightarrow{-\circ f} \operatorname{Hom}(c,-)$ , and this makes the whole thing work. This is in general a property of functors defined on a product category, see the remark below. Now, saying the isomorphism, which we'll write  $\Phi_{d,F}$ , is natural means that the square

$$\operatorname{Nat}(\operatorname{Hom}(c,-),F) \xrightarrow{\Phi_{c,F}} F(c)$$

$$\downarrow^{-\circ(-\circ f)} \qquad \downarrow^{F(f)}$$

$$\operatorname{Nat}(\operatorname{Hom}(d,-),F) \xrightarrow{\Phi_{d,F}} F(d)$$

commutes. And indeed, if  $\alpha: \text{Hom}(c, -) \Rightarrow F$  is a natural transformation,

$$\Phi_{d,F}(\alpha \circ (-\circ f)) = (\alpha \circ (-\circ f))_d(\mathrm{id}_d) = [\alpha_d \circ (-\circ f)](\mathrm{id}_d) = \alpha_d(f)$$
$$F(f)(\Phi_{c,F}(\alpha)) = F(f)(\alpha_c(\mathrm{id}_c)) = \alpha_d(f \circ \mathrm{id}_c) = \alpha_d(f)$$

The second to last equality comes from the naturality of  $\alpha$ .

We now turn to naturality in F. Let G be another functor  $\mathcal{C} \to \mathbf{Set}$  and  $\beta : F \Rightarrow G$  be a natural transformation. We check that

$$\operatorname{Nat}(\operatorname{Hom}(c,-),F) \xrightarrow{\Phi_{c,F}} F(c)$$

$$\downarrow^{\beta \circ -} \qquad \qquad \downarrow^{\beta_c}$$

$$\operatorname{Nat}(\operatorname{Hom}(c,-),G) \xrightarrow{\Phi_{c,G}} G(c)$$

commutes. For  $\alpha: \text{Hom}(c, -) \Rightarrow F$ , we have

$$\beta_c(\Phi_{c,F}(\alpha)) = \beta_c(\alpha_c(\mathrm{id}_c)) = (\beta \circ \alpha)_c(\mathrm{id}_c) = \Phi_{c,G}(\beta \circ \alpha)$$

which completes the proof of naturality.

Remark.

1. If  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathbf{Set}$ , then (c, x) is a universal element for F if and only if the natural transformation  $\alpha_x : \mathrm{Hom}(c, -) \Rightarrow F$  induced by x is an isomorphism. Indeed,  $\alpha_x$  is an isomorphism iff  $\forall c' \in \mathcal{C}$ ,  $(\alpha_x)_{c'} : \mathrm{Hom}(c, c') \to F(c')$  is bijective iff

$$\forall c' \in \mathcal{C}, \forall y \in F(c'), \exists ! f : c \to c', F(f)(x) = y$$

- 2. For universal arrows, use  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(d, F(-))$  as before.
- 3. Let  $\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}$  and  $\mathcal{E}$  be categories, and  $F: \mathcal{C} \times \mathcal{D} \to \mathcal{E}$  be a functor. Let  $c, d \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C}), x, y \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{D})$  and morphisms  $f: c \to d, g: x \to y$ . The morphism f induces a natural transformation  $F(f, \mathrm{id}_{-}): F(c, -) \Rightarrow F(d, -)$ , see the commutative square:

$$F(c,x) \xrightarrow{F(f,\mathrm{id}_x)} F(d,x)$$

$$\downarrow^{F(\mathrm{id}_c,g)} \qquad \downarrow^{F(\mathrm{id}_d,g)}$$

$$F(c,y) \xrightarrow{F(f,\mathrm{id}_y)} F(d,y)$$

## 2.3 Examples of objects defined by universal properties

## 2.3.1 Products, coproducts

Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a small category and  $X, Y \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$ . We define a category  $\mathcal{C}_{X,Y}$  whose objects are tuples (Z, f, g) where  $Z \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and  $f: Z \to X$ ,  $g: Z \to Y$  and morphisms are maps  $\alpha: Z \to Z'$  in  $\mathcal{C}$  such that the following diagram commutes:

$$\begin{array}{c|c}
 & Z \\
 & X \\
 & X \\
 & X \\
 & X \\
 & Y \\
 & X \\
 & Y \\$$

**Definition 2.14.** A product of X and Y is a final object in  $\mathcal{C}_{X,Y}$ . Concretely, it is an object  $X \times Y$  together with two maps  $\pi_X : X \times Y \to X$  and  $\pi_Y : X \times Y \to Y$  such that for any  $(Z, f, g) \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C}_{X,Y})$ , we have a commutative diagram

$$Z \\ \downarrow \exists ! \alpha \\ X \xleftarrow{} X \times Y \xrightarrow{} T_{Y} Y$$

Since it is defined as being a final object, if it exists, a product is unique up to unique isomorphism.

**Examples 2.15.** In **Set**, the product of X and Y is the cartesian product. In **Grp**, it is the product group. In **Top**, it is the cartesian product equipped with the product topology. In these examples, the maps in the definition are the canonical projections.

The notion dual to the one of a product is called a coproduct.

**Definition 2.16.** A coproduct of X and Y is a product in  $\mathcal{C}^{\text{op}}$ . Concretely, it satisfies the universal property expressed by this commutative diagram:

$$X \xrightarrow{i_X} X \sqcup Y \xleftarrow{i_Y} Y$$

$$\downarrow_{\exists ! \alpha} \qquad \forall g$$

**Examples 2.17.** In **Set**, the coproduct of X and Y is the disjoint union together with canonical inclusion. In **Top**, the coproduct of X and Y is their disjoint union equipped with the disjoint union topology. However, in **Grp**, the underlying set of the coproduct of two groups is not the disjoint union.

### 2.3.2 Equalizers and coequalizers

**Definition 2.18.** Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a category and  $X, Y \in \text{Ob}(\mathcal{C}), f, g : X \to Y$ . Consider the contravariant functor  $F : \mathcal{C} \to \mathbf{Set}$  defined by  $F(c) = \{\alpha : c \to X \mid f\alpha = g\alpha\}$  and  $F(\beta) = -\circ \beta$ . An equalizer in  $\mathcal{C}$  is a representation of the contravariant functor F.

By the Yoneda lemma, a natural transformation  $\operatorname{Hom}(-,c)\Rightarrow F$  is the same as an element of F(c), so a representation of F is a pair (c,e) with  $c\in\operatorname{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and  $e\in F(c)$  such that the natural transformation given by the Yoneda lemma is an isomorphism. Concretely, we want  $\eta_e:\operatorname{Hom}(d,c)\to F(d)$  to be an isomorphism for all  $d\in\operatorname{Ob}(c)$ . This translates into  $h\mapsto F(h)(e)$ 

the follwing diagram:

$$c \xrightarrow{\exists ! \alpha} d$$

$$\downarrow^{\forall h} \qquad \downarrow^{e} X \xrightarrow{f} Y$$

**Example 2.19.** In Set,  $E = \{x \in X \mid f(x) = g(x)\} \hookrightarrow X$  is an equalizer.

The dual notion is that of a coequalizer.

**Definition 2.20.** A coequalizer of  $X \xrightarrow{f} Y$  is an object  $Z \in \text{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  together with a morphism  $\pi: Y \to Z$  such that  $\pi f = \pi g$  and that universal to this property:

$$X \xrightarrow{f} Y \xrightarrow{\pi} Z$$

$$\downarrow^{\forall h} \qquad \exists ! \alpha$$

$$Z'$$

**Example 2.21.** In **Set**, consider the equivalence relation  $\sim$  on Y generated by  $f(x) \sim g(x)$  (the smallest equivalence relation on Y with this property). Then  $y \xrightarrow{\pi} Y/\sim$  is a coequalizer.

## 2.4 Adjoint functors

This notion was introduced by Kan in 1958.

**Definition 2.22.** An adjunction (G, D) is a pair of functors  $G : \mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  and  $D : \mathcal{D} \to \mathcal{C}$  together with an isomorphism  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(G(c), d) \simeq \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c, D(d))$  which is natural in both c and d. We write  $G \dashv D$  and say G is left adjoint to D and D is right adjoint to G.

If  $G \dashv D$  we have  $\forall c, d \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C}) \times \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{D})$ ,

$$\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(G(c),d) \xrightarrow{\sim \atop \alpha_{c,d}} \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c,D(d))$$

and in particular when d = G(c) we get  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(G(c), G(c)) \xrightarrow{\sim \atop \alpha_{c,G(c)}} \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c, DG(c)).$ 

Let  $\eta_c: c \to DG(c)$  be the image of  $\mathrm{id}_{G(c)}$ . This gives a collection of morphisms  $-\to DG(-)$ .

**Proposition 2.23.** These morphisms make up a natural transformation  $id_{\mathcal{C}} \Rightarrow DG$ .

*Proof.* Let  $f: c \to d$ . We want to show that

$$c \xrightarrow{\eta_c = \alpha_{c,G(c)}(\mathrm{id}_{G(c)})} DG(c)$$

$$\downarrow^f \qquad \qquad \downarrow^{DG(f)}$$

$$d \xrightarrow{\eta_d = \alpha_{d,G(d)}(\mathrm{id}_{G(d)})} DG(d)$$

commutes. By naturality of the isomorphism  $\alpha$  given by the adjunction, we get the following commutative diagram

which gives us these equations:

$$DG(f) \circ \eta_c = DG(f) \circ \alpha_{c,G(c)}(\mathrm{id}_{G(c)}) = \alpha_{c,G(d)}(G(f) \circ \mathrm{id}_{G(c)}) = \alpha_{c,G(d)}(G(f))$$
$$\eta_d \circ f = \alpha_{d,G(d)}(\mathrm{id}_{G(d)}) \circ f = \alpha_{c,G(d)}(\mathrm{id}_{G(c)} \circ G(f)) = \alpha_{c,G(d)}(G(f))$$

which completes the proof.

We also get a natural transformation  $\varepsilon: GD \Rightarrow \mathrm{id}_{\mathcal{D}}$  when c = D(d) by setting  $\varepsilon_d = \alpha_{D(d),d}^{-1}(\mathrm{id}_{D(d)})$ .

**Definition 2.24.** The natural transformation  $\eta : \mathrm{id}_{\mathcal{C}} \Rightarrow DG$  is called the *unit* of the adjunction. The natural transformation  $\varepsilon : GD \Rightarrow \mathrm{id}_{\mathcal{D}}$  is called its *counit*.

**Proposition 2.25.** Let  $C \xrightarrow{G} \mathcal{D}$  be two functors. Then,  $G \dashv D$  if and only if there are natural transformations  $\eta : \mathrm{id}_{\mathcal{C}} \Rightarrow DG$  and  $\varepsilon : GD \Rightarrow \mathrm{id}_{\mathcal{D}}$  such that the following diagrams commute:

$$G \xrightarrow{G\eta} GDG \qquad D \xrightarrow{\eta D} DGD$$

$$\downarrow_{\varepsilon G} \qquad \downarrow_{D\varepsilon}$$

$$G \qquad D \xrightarrow{id_D} DGD$$

where  $G\eta$  is the natural transformation given by the morphisms  $G(\eta_c)$  and  $\varepsilon G$  is the one give by morphisms  $\varepsilon_{G(c)}$  (and similarly for  $\eta D$  and  $D\varepsilon$ ).

*Proof.* Suppose  $G \dashv D$ . Let  $\eta : \mathrm{id}_{\mathcal{C}} \Rightarrow DG$  and  $\varepsilon : GD \Rightarrow \mathrm{id}_{\mathcal{D}}$  be the unit and counit of the adjunction. Let  $c \in \mathcal{C}$ . We have

$$(\varepsilon G)_c \circ (G\eta)_c = \varepsilon_{G(c)} \circ G(\eta_c) = \alpha_{DG(c),G(c)}^{-1}(\mathrm{id}_{DG(c)}) \circ G(\alpha_{c,G(c)}(\mathrm{id}_{G(c)}))$$

and the naturality of  $\alpha$  gives the following commutative diagram

$$\begin{array}{c} \operatorname{Hom}(G(c),G(c)) \xleftarrow{\sim} & \operatorname{Hom}(c,DG(c)) \\ -\circ G(\alpha_{c,G(c)}(\operatorname{id}_{G(c)})) \uparrow & \uparrow^{-\circ\alpha_{c,G(c)}(\operatorname{id}_{G(c)})} \\ \operatorname{Hom}(GDG(c),G(c)) \xleftarrow{\sim} & \operatorname{Hom}(DG(c),DG(c)) \end{array}$$

which shows that  $(\varepsilon G)_c \circ (G\eta)_c = \mathrm{id}_{G(c)}$ , hence  $\varepsilon G \circ G\eta = \mathrm{id}_G$ . The commutativity of the other triangle is treated in a similar way.

Now assume that there are natural transformations  $\eta$  and  $\varepsilon$  that make both triangles commute. We define two maps

$$\alpha_{c,d}: \operatorname{Hom}(G(c),d) \to \operatorname{Hom}(c,D(d))$$

$$f \mapsto D(f) \circ \eta_{c}$$

$$\beta_{c,d}: \operatorname{Hom}(c,D(d)) \to \operatorname{Hom}(G(c),d)$$

$$g \mapsto \varepsilon_{d} \circ G(g)$$

and we show these are natural isomorphisms that give us the adjunction. First we check naturality of  $\alpha$ . Let  $f: c \to c' \in \operatorname{Mor}(\mathcal{C})$  and  $g: d \to d' \in \operatorname{Mor}(\mathcal{D})$ . We need to check that the diagrams

$$\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(G(c),d) \xrightarrow{\alpha_{c,d}} \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c,D(d)) \qquad \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(G(c),d) \xrightarrow{\alpha_{c,d}} \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c,D(d))$$

$$-\circ G(f) \uparrow \qquad -\circ f \uparrow \qquad \qquad \downarrow g \circ - \qquad \downarrow D(g) \circ -$$

$$\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(G(c'),d) \xrightarrow{\alpha_{c',d}} \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c',D(d)) \qquad \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(G(c),d') \xrightarrow{\alpha_{c,d'}} \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c,D(d'))$$

commute. We only check the left diagram and leave the right to the reader (sorry). We have

$$\alpha_{c,d} \circ (-\circ G(f)) = (D(-)\circ \eta_c) \circ (-\circ G(f)) = D(-\circ G(f)) \circ \eta_c = D(-)\circ DG(f) \circ \eta_c$$
$$(-\circ f) \circ \alpha_{c',d} = (-\circ f) \circ (D(-)\circ \eta_{c'}) = D(-)\circ \eta_{c'} \circ f = D(-)\circ DG(f) \circ \eta_c$$

One shows  $\beta$  is natural in c and d in a similar way. We leave it to the reader (sorry again). Now we need to check that  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are inverses of each other, and that's where the triangle diagrams come into play.

$$\alpha_{c,d} \circ \beta_{c,d} = D(\varepsilon_d \circ G(-)) \circ \eta_c = D(\varepsilon_d) \circ DG(-) \circ \eta_c = D(\varepsilon_d) \circ \eta_{D(d)} \circ - = -$$

We used the definitions of  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , the functoriality of D, the naturality of  $\eta$  and the second triangle diagram. We leave to the reader (sorry) to check that  $\beta_{c,d} \circ \alpha_{c,d}$  is also the identity.

### Examples 2.26.

- 1. The forgetful functor  $Ab \to Set$  is right adjoint to the free abelian group functor  $Set \to Ab$ .
- 2. The forgetful functor  $\mathbf{Ab} \to \mathbf{Grp}$  is right adjoint to the abelianization functor  $\mathbf{Grp} \to \mathbf{Ab}$  that sends a group G to its abelianization  $G^{ab} = G/[G,G]$  and a morphism  $f: G \to H$  to the induced morphism  $f^{ab}: G^{ab} \to H^{ab}$ .
- 3. The forgetful functor  $\mathbf{Top} \to \mathbf{Set}$  is right adjoint to the functor  $\mathbf{Set} \to \mathbf{Top}$  that takes a set and equips it with the coarse topology. The forgetful functor  $\mathbf{Top} \to \mathbf{Set}$  is also left adjoint to the functor  $\mathbf{Set} \to \mathbf{Top}$  that equips a set with the discrete topology.
- 4. Let G be a group, H one of its subgroups and k be a field. We have a functor from the category  $\mathbf{Rep}_k(G)$  of representations of G on k-vector spaces to the category  $\mathbf{Rep}_k(H)$  of representations of H on k-vector spaces. It is the restriction functor  $\mathbf{Res}_H^G$ . Its left adjoint is  $\mathbf{Ind}_H^G$ , the induced representation functor.

**Theorem 2.27.** Let  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  be a functor. The following are equivalent:

- 1. F admits a left adjoint
- 2. For all  $X \in \text{Ob}(\mathcal{D})$ ,  $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(X, F(-))$  is representable
- 3. For all  $X \in Ob(\mathcal{D})$ , there exists a universal arrow  $X \to F$

Corollary. If they exist, adjoints are unique up to isomorphism.

Proof. 2  $\iff$  3 was the subject of a previous remark right after the Yoneda lemma. We prove  $1 \iff 2$ . Suppose F admits a left adjoint G. Let  $X \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{D})$ . Then for all  $Y \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  we have a bijection  $\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(X, F(Y)) \simeq \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(G(X), Y)$  which is natural in Y, so G(X) represents  $\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(X, F(-))$ . For the converse, suppose all functors  $\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(X, F(-))$  are representable. We define G(X) to be an object of  $\mathcal{C}$  that represents  $\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(X, F(-))$ . Now choose  $X, Y \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{D})$  and  $f: X \to Y$ . We need to define G(f). We wish to have a commuting square

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \operatorname{Hom}(G(X),-) & \stackrel{\sim}{\longrightarrow} & \operatorname{Hom}(X,F(-)) \\ & & & & & -\circ f \\ \operatorname{Hom}(G(Y),-) & \stackrel{\sim}{\longrightarrow} & \operatorname{Hom}(Y,F(-)) \end{array}$$

We need to recover a map  $G(X) \to G(Y)$  such that composing with it gives us  $\gamma$ . This works by the Yoneda lemma, which tells us that the natural transformation  $\gamma$  comes from an element  $\operatorname{Hom}(G(X),G(Y))$ . Call it G(f). It remains to check this does define a functor. Using this diagram with X=Y and  $f=\operatorname{id}_X$  shows that  $G(\operatorname{id}_X)=\operatorname{id}_{G(X)}$ . Let  $X\xrightarrow{f} Y\xrightarrow{g} Z$  in C. Then we draw

$$\operatorname{Hom}(G(Z),-) \xrightarrow[-\circ G(g)]{} \operatorname{Hom}(G(Y),-) \xrightarrow[-\circ G(f)]{} \operatorname{Hom}(G(X),-)$$

$$\downarrow^{\wr} \qquad \qquad \downarrow^{\wr} \qquad \qquad \downarrow^{\wr}$$

$$\operatorname{Hom}(Z,F(-)) \xrightarrow[-\circ (g\circ f)]{} \operatorname{Hom}(X,F(-))$$

and this diagram shows that  $G(g \circ f) = G(g) \circ G(f)$  (because the map  $\gamma$  above is unique).

This theorem shows there is a deep link between universal properties and adjoint functors.

#### 2.5 Limits and colimits

(This subsection may be skipped on a first reading.) Let us recall the definition of a functor category.

**Definition 2.28.** Let  $\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}$  be two categories. Then  $\operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D})$ , also written  $\mathcal{D}^{\mathcal{C}}$ , is the category whose objects are functors  $\mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  and morphisms are natural transformations between such functors, with composition given by vertical composition. It is called the *functor category category from*  $\mathcal{C}$  to  $\mathcal{D}$ . When  $\mathcal{J}$  is a small category we also say that  $\operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D})$  is the category of diagrams of shape  $\mathcal{J}$  in  $\mathcal{C}$ .

## Examples 2.29.

1. Let **2** be the category • → • which has two objects 1 and 2 and three morphisms (two of them being identities).

Then  $\mathbf{2} \times \mathbf{2}$  is the category  $\downarrow$  which has 4 objects and 9 morphisms (4 of them being  $\bullet$   $\longrightarrow$   $\bullet$ 

identities). Then, a functor from  $2 \times 2$  to  $\mathcal{C}$  is a commutative diagram of this shape in  $\mathcal{C}$ .

2. If  $\mathcal{J}$  is a small category, there is a functor  $\Delta : \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C}) \to \mathrm{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{C})$  where  $\Delta(c)$  is the constant functor at c, that is the functor that sends all objects to c and all morphisms to  $\mathrm{id}_c$ , and  $\Delta(f) = f$ , which works since a natural transformation  $\Delta(c) \Rightarrow \Delta(d)$  is just the data of one morphism  $c \to d$ .

**Definition 2.30.** A cone above a diagram  $F: \mathcal{J} \to \mathcal{C}$  with summit  $c \in \mathcal{C}$  is a natural transformation  $\lambda: \Delta(c) \Rightarrow F$ . Dually, a cone under F with summit c, also called a *cocone*, is a natural transformation  $\lambda: F \Rightarrow \Delta(c)$ .

Let us unwrap this definition. A cone is a collection of maps  $\lambda_j : c \to F(j)$  for all  $j \in \text{Ob}(\mathcal{J})$ , such that for any morphism  $f : i \to j \in \text{Mor}(\mathcal{J})$ , this diagram commutes:

$$F(i) \xrightarrow{F(f)}^{c} F(j)$$

**Definition 2.31.** Let  $F: \mathcal{J} \to \mathcal{C}$  be a diagram. A *limit* (or *projective limit* or *inverse limit*) of F is a universal cone above F, in the sense that it is a final object in the category of cones above F. Dually, a *colimit* (or *inductive limite* or *direct limit*) is a universal cocone, that is an initial object in the category of cones under F.

Concretely, a limit of  $F: \mathcal{J} \to \mathcal{C}$  is a pair  $(\lim F, \phi)$  with  $\lim F \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  and  $\phi: \Delta(\lim F) \Rightarrow F$  is such that for any cone  $\lambda: \Delta(c) \Rightarrow F$ , there exists a unique morphism  $f: X \to \lim F \in \mathrm{Mor}(\mathcal{C})$ , such that the diagram on the left commutes:

$$\Delta(c) \xrightarrow{\Delta(f)} \Delta(\lim F)$$

$$\downarrow \qquad \qquad \text{which is equivalent to} \qquad c \xrightarrow{f} \lim F$$

$$\forall j \in \mathcal{J}, \qquad \downarrow \phi_j$$

$$F(j)$$

In compact form,  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(-, \lim F) \simeq \operatorname{Hom}_{\operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{J},\mathcal{C})}(\Delta(-), F)$ .

Exercise. Do the same for colimits.

Remark.

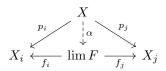
- 1. If a limit exists it is unique up to isomorphism (unique isomorphism that commutes with the legs of the cone)
- 2. If all limits exist, then lim becomes a functor  $\lim : \operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{J},\mathcal{C}) \to \mathcal{C}$  in the following way. Recall that theorem 2.27 says a functor D admits a left adjoint iff for all objects X in its codomain,  $\operatorname{Hom}(X,D(-))$  is representable. The compact form of the definition of a limit says that the functor  $\operatorname{Hom}(\Delta(-),F)$  is representable for all F (since we assume all limits exist). A dual version of the theorem gives that  $\Delta$  admits a right adjoint, which is  $\limsup \operatorname{Hom}(c,\lim F) \simeq \operatorname{Hom}(\Delta(c),F)$ . If  $\eta:F\Rightarrow G$  is a natural transformation, then  $\lim(\eta)$  can be constructed in the following way:  $\lim F\Rightarrow F\Rightarrow G$  is a cone above G, and  $\lim(\eta):\lim F\to\lim G$  comes from the universality of  $\lim G$ .

## Corollary.

- 1. If C has all  $\mathcal{J}$ -limits, then  $\lim : \operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, C) \to C$  is a right adjoint to  $\Delta$ .
- 2. If C has all  $\mathcal{J}$ -colimits, then colim:  $\operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{J},C) \to C$  is a left adjoint to  $\Delta$ .

#### Example 2.32.

1. If  $\mathcal{J}$  is discrete, that is has no morphisms other than identities, then a functor  $F: \mathcal{J} \to \mathcal{C}$  is the same as a collection  $(X_i)_{i \in \mathcal{J}}$  of objects of  $\mathcal{C}$ . Then, a limit of F is an object  $\lim F \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  with morphisms  $f_i: \lim F \to X_i$  such that for all objects  $X \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  with morphisms  $p_i: X \to X_i$ , we have a unique map  $\alpha: X \to \lim F$  that makes this diagram commute for all  $i, j \in \mathcal{J}$ :



We write  $\lim F = \prod_{j \in \mathcal{J}} F(j)$  and call it the *product of the* F(j)s. Morphisms  $f_i$  are written  $\pi_i$  and called *canonical projections*.

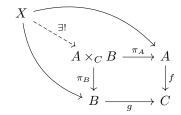
Dually, the colimit of F is called a coproduct and written  $\bigsqcup_{j \in \mathcal{I}} F(j)$ .

2. If  $\mathcal{J} = \bullet \rightrightarrows \bullet$ , then a functor  $F : \mathcal{J} \to \mathcal{C}$  is the data of two parallel morphisms in  $\mathcal{C}$ . A limit is an equalizer and a colimit is a coequalizer.

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3. If  $\mathcal{J} = \bigcup_{\bullet \to \bullet}^{\bullet}$  then  $F : \mathcal{J} \to \mathcal{C}$  is the data of  $A, B, C \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{C})$  with two morphisms

 $f:A\to C$  and  $g:B\to C$ . The limit  $\lim F$  is called a *pullback* of f and g, with universal property depicted here:



4. If  $\mathcal{J} = \omega^{\text{op}}$ , that is  $\mathcal{J} = \cdots \to 2 \to 1 \to 0$ , then  $\lim F$  is often called the "inverse limit" of F. Concretely, F is the data of  $\cdots \to F(2) \xrightarrow{\alpha_2} F(1) \xrightarrow{\alpha_1} F(0)$ , and a cone above F looks like

we have 
$$(\alpha_i \circ \cdots \circ \alpha_n) \circ \lambda_n = \lambda_i$$
.
$$\cdots \longrightarrow F(2) \xrightarrow{\alpha_2} F(1) \xrightarrow{\alpha_1} F(0)$$

The typical example of an inverse limit is the one given by  $F(n) = \mathbb{Z}/p^n\mathbb{Z}$  in **Ring** with morphisms  $\mathbb{Z}/p^{n+1}\mathbb{Z} \to \mathbb{Z}/p^n\mathbb{Z}$  being reduction mod  $p^n$ . The inverse limit  $\varprojlim \mathbb{Z}/p^n\mathbb{Z}$  is the ring of p-adic integers. Concretely,  $a \in \varprojlim \mathbb{Z}/p^n\mathbb{Z}$  iff  $a = (a_i)_{i \in \mathbb{N}}$  such that  $a_i \equiv a_j \mod p^i \forall i \leq j$ .

5. The dual notion, given by  $\mathcal{J} = 0 \to 1 \to 2 \to \cdots$ , is obtained by taking the colimit. It is called a *direct limit*. The typical example here is the Prüfer *p*-group  $\lim_{n \to \infty} \mathbb{Z}/p^n \mathbb{Z} = \mathbb{Z}(p^{\infty})$ .

**Definition 2.33.** Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a category. We say  $\mathcal{C}$  is (co) complete if it has all small (co) limits i.e. if for all diagrams  $F: \mathcal{J} \to \mathcal{C}$  with  $\mathcal{J}$  small, F has a (co) limit.

**Theorem 2.34.** A category C is (co)complete if and only if it has all small (co)products and (co)equalizers.

$$Proof.$$
 TODO

**Definition 2.35.**  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathcal{D}$  preserves (co)limits if for every diagram  $D: \mathcal{J} \to \mathcal{C}$  and any (co)limit cone  $(c, \phi)$  of D, the image  $(F(c), F\phi)$  is a (co)limit cone over  $FD: \mathcal{J} \to \mathcal{D}$ .

Remark. Preserving limits is like having  $F(\lim D) \simeq \lim FD$ , but stronger:

$$\lim_{i \to \infty} D \qquad F(\lim_{i \to \infty} D) \xrightarrow{-\exists ! \alpha} \lim_{i \to \infty} FD$$

$$\downarrow_{\phi_i} \qquad \leadsto \qquad FD(\phi_i) \downarrow \qquad \qquad \lambda_i$$

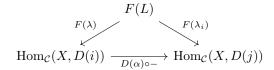
$$D(i) \qquad FD(i)$$

and  $\alpha$  is an isomorphism since  $(F(\lim D), F\phi)$  is a limit cone.

**Proposition 2.36.** Let C be a locally small category and  $X \in Ob(C)$ . Then

- 1.  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X,-)$  preserves all limits that exist in  $\mathcal{C}$
- 2. The contravariant functor  $\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(-,X)$  transforms colimits in  $\mathcal{C}$  into limits in Set.

*Proof.* Let  $\mathcal{J}$  be a small category and  $D: \mathcal{J} \to \mathcal{C}$  be a diagram. Let  $F: \mathcal{C} \to \mathbf{Set}$  be te hom-functor  $\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X,-)$ . Let  $(L,\lambda)$  be a limit cone for D. Then,  $(F(L),F(\lambda))$  is a cone in  $\mathbf{Set}$  over FD, since for any  $\alpha: i \to j \in \mathrm{Mor}(\mathcal{J})$  we have the commutative diagram



It remains to show that  $(F(L), F(\lambda))$  is a limit cone for FD. Let  $S \Rightarrow FD$  be another cone. We have  $f(i): S \to \operatorname{Hom}(X, D(i))$  (we work in **Set** so morphisms are actual maps here). Fixing  $s \mapsto f_i(s)$ S, we get commutative diagrams:

$$\begin{array}{c|c}
X \\
f_i(s) \\
\downarrow & \downarrow \\
D(i) \xrightarrow[D(\alpha)\circ -]{} D(j)
\end{array}$$

so  $(X, f_i(s))$  is a cone over D hence there exists a unique morphism  $u_s: X \to L$  such that  $\lambda_i \circ u_s = f_i(s)$  for all  $i \in \text{Ob}(\mathcal{J})$ . Now set  $u: S \to \text{Hom}(X, L)$  and we have  $(F\lambda \circ u)(s) = (F\lambda)(u_s) = f_s \mapsto u_s$ 

so  $u: S \to F(L)$  is a morphism of cones. We need to check it is unique. If v is another one then  $\lambda_i \circ v(s) = f_i(s)$  so  $v(s) = u_s$  by uniqueness of  $u_s$ , which shows v = u. Another proof is given here:

$$\operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X, \lim D) \simeq \operatorname{Hom}_{\operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{C})}(\Delta X, D)$$

$$\simeq \operatorname{Hom}_{\operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathbf{Set})}(\Delta 1, \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X, D(-)))$$

$$\simeq \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathbf{Set}}(1, \lim \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X, D(-)))$$

$$\simeq \lim \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(X, D(-))$$

(1 is a singleton.) The first and third isomorphisms are by definition of a limit. The last isomorphism comes from the fact that for any set A, maps  $1 \to A$  correspond to elements of A. The second isomorphism works since a natural transformation  $\Delta X \Rightarrow D$  is the same as a collection of morphisms  $f_i: X \to D(i)$  indexed by  $\mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{J})$ .

**Theorem 2.37.** Right adjoints preserve limits. Left adjoints preserve colimits.

*Proof.* We only need to prove the statement about right adjoints and then use opposite categories for left adjoints. Let  $\mathcal{C} \xrightarrow{F} \mathcal{D}$  be two functors with  $F \dashv G$  and  $D : \mathcal{J} \to \mathcal{D}$  be a diagram,

with  $\eta: \Delta(\lim D) \Rightarrow D$  its limit cone. Our goal is to show that  $(G \lim D, G\eta)$  is a limit cone for  $G \circ D$ . The fact that it is a cone above  $G \circ D$  is clear. Now let  $\mu: \Delta(c) \Rightarrow GD$  be another cone. For any  $j \in \mathrm{Ob}(\mathcal{J})$ , we have  $\mu_j \in \mathrm{Hom}(c, GD(j))$ . By adjunction, it corresponds to a morphism  $\mu_j^* \in \mathrm{Hom}(F(c), D(j))$ . We claim these morphisms make up a natural transformation  $\mu^*: \Delta(F(c)) \Rightarrow D$ . Indeed, for any morphism  $f: i \to j \in \mathrm{Mor}(\mathcal{J})$ , we have by naturality of the adjunction a commutative diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \operatorname{Hom}(F(c),D(i)) & \stackrel{\sim}{\longrightarrow} & \operatorname{Hom}(c,GD(i)) \\ & & & \downarrow^{D(f)\circ-} & & \downarrow^{GD(f)\circ-} \\ \operatorname{Hom}(F(c),D(j)) & \stackrel{\sim}{\longrightarrow} & \operatorname{Hom}(c,GD(j)) \end{array}$$

so  $D(f) \circ \mu_i^* = (GD(f) \circ \mu_i)^* = \mu_j^*$ . By universality of  $\lim D$ , there exists a unique morphism  $\tau : F(c) \to \lim D$  that makes the appropriate diagram commute. Using the adjunction, we get a morphism  $\tau^* : c \to G(\lim D)$ , which is the morphism we are looking for. The commutativity of the appropriate diagram comes from naturality of the adjunction. Uniqueness comes from the uniqueness of  $\tau$ .

In compact form:

$$\begin{aligned} \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c, \lim GD) &\simeq \operatorname{Hom}_{\operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{C})}(\Delta c, GD) \\ &\simeq \operatorname{Hom}_{\operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{D})}(F\Delta c, D) \\ &\simeq \operatorname{Hom}_{\operatorname{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{D})}(\Delta Fc, D) \\ &\simeq \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(Fc, \lim D) \\ &\simeq \operatorname{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(C, G \lim D) \end{aligned}$$

# 3 Tensor products