

Sets

The Clowder Project Authors

July 22, 2025

0000 This chapter (will eventually) contain material on axiomatic set theory, as well as a couple other things.

Contents

3.1 Sets and Functions.....	2
3.1.1 Functions.....	2
3.2 The Enrichment of Sets in Classical Truth Values.....	4
3.2.1 (-2) -Categories.....	4
3.2.2 (-1) -Categories.....	4
3.2.3 0-Categories.....	9
3.2.4 Tables of Analogies Between Set Theory and Category The- ory.....	9
A Other Chapters.....	13

0001 3.1 Sets and Functions

0002 3.1.1 Functions

0003 DEFINITION 3.1.1.1 ► FUNCTIONS

A **function** is a functional and total relation.

0004 NOTATION 3.1.1.1.2 ► ADDITIONAL NOTATION FOR FUNCTIONS

Throughout this work, we will sometimes denote a function $f: X \rightarrow Y$ by

$$f \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \llbracket x \mapsto f(x) \rrbracket.$$

- 01Y2 1. For example, given a function

$$\Phi: \text{Hom}_{\text{Sets}}(X, Y) \rightarrow K$$

taking values on a set of functions such as $\text{Hom}_{\text{Sets}}(X, Y)$, we will sometimes also write

$$\Phi(f) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \Phi(\llbracket x \mapsto f(x) \rrbracket).$$

- 01Y3 2. This notational choice is based on the lambda notation

$$f \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (\lambda x. f(x)),$$

but uses a “ \mapsto ” symbol for better spacing and double brackets instead of either:

- 01Y4 (a) Square brackets $[x \mapsto f(x)]$;

- 01Y5 (b) Parentheses $(x \mapsto f(x))$;

hoping to improve readability when dealing with e.g.:

- 01Y6 (a) Equivalence classes, cf.:

- 01Y7 i. $\llbracket [x] \mapsto f([x]) \rrbracket$

- 01Y8 ii. $\llbracket [x] \mapsto f([x]) \rrbracket$

01Y9

iii. $(\lambda[x]. f([x]))$

01YA

(b) Function evaluations, cf.:

01YB

i. $\Phi(\llbracket x \mapsto f(x) \rrbracket)$

01YC

ii. $\Phi((x \mapsto f(x)))$

01YD

iii. $\Phi((\lambda x. f(x)))$

01YE

3. We will also sometimes write $-$, $-_1$, $-_2$, etc. for the arguments of a function. Some examples include:

01YF

(a) Writing $f(-_1)$ for a function $f: A \rightarrow B$.

01YG

(b) Writing $f(-_1, -_2)$ for a function $f: A \times B \rightarrow C$.

01YH

(c) Given a function $f: A \times B \rightarrow C$, writing

$$f(a, -): B \rightarrow C$$

for the function $\llbracket b \mapsto f(a, b) \rrbracket$.

01YJ

(d) Denoting a composition of the form

$$A \times B \xrightarrow{\phi \times \text{id}_B} A' \times B \xrightarrow{f} C$$

by $f(\phi(-_1), -_2)$.

01YK

4. Finally, given a function $f: A \rightarrow B$, we will sometimes write

$$\text{ev}_a(f) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} f(a)$$

for the value of f at some $a \in A$.

For an example of the above notations being used in practice, see the proof of the adjunction

$$(A \times - \dashv \text{Hom}_{\text{Sets}}(A, -)): \text{Sets} \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{A \times -} \\ \perp \\ \xleftarrow{\text{Hom}_{\text{Sets}}(A, -)} \end{array} \text{Sets},$$

stated in **Constructions With Sets**, Item 2 of **Proposition 4.1.3.1.4**.

0005 3.2 The Enrichment of Sets in Classical Truth Values

0006 3.2.1 (-2) -Categories

0007 DEFINITION 3.2.1.1.1 ► (-2) -CATEGORIES

A (-2) -**category** is the “necessarily true” truth value.^{1,2,3}

¹Thus, there is only one (-2) -category.

²A $(-n)$ -category for $n = 3, 4, \dots$ is also the “necessarily true” truth value, coinciding with a (-2) -category.

³For motivation, see [BS10, p. 13].

0008 3.2.2 (-1) -Categories

0009 DEFINITION 3.2.2.1.1 ► (-1) -CATEGORIES

A (-1) -**category** is a classical truth value.

000A REMARK 3.2.2.1.2 ► MOTIVATION FOR (-1) -CATEGORIES

¹ (-1) -categories should be thought of as being “categories enriched in (-2) -categories”, having a collection of objects and, for each pair of objects, a Hom-object $\text{Hom}(x, y)$ that is a (-2) -category (i.e. trivial). As a result, a (-1) -category C is either:²

01D2 1. *Empty*, having no objects.

01D3 2. *Contractible*, having a collection of objects $\{a, b, c, \dots\}$, but with $\text{Hom}_C(a, b)$ being a (-2) -category (i.e. trivial) for all $a, b \in \text{Obj}(C)$, forcing all objects of C to be uniquely isomorphic to each other.

Thus there are only two (-1) -categories up to equivalence:

01D4 1. The (-1) -category false (the empty one);

01D5 2. The (-1) -category true (the contractible one).

¹For more motivation, see [BS10, p. 13].²See [BS10, pp. 33–34].

000B

DEFINITION 3.2.2.1.3 ► THE POSET OF TRUTH VALUES

The **poset of truth values**¹ is the poset $(\{\text{true}, \text{false}\}, \preceq)$ consisting of:

- *The Underlying Set.* The set $\{\text{true}, \text{false}\}$ whose elements are the truth values true and false.
- *The Partial Order.* The partial order

$$\preceq: \{\text{true}, \text{false}\} \times \{\text{true}, \text{false}\} \rightarrow \{\text{true}, \text{false}\}$$

on $\{\text{true}, \text{false}\}$ defined by²

$$\begin{aligned} \text{false} \preceq \text{false} &\stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{true}, \\ \text{true} \preceq \text{false} &\stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{false}, \\ \text{false} \preceq \text{true} &\stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{true}, \\ \text{true} \preceq \text{true} &\stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{true}. \end{aligned}$$

¹*Further Terminology:* Also called the **poset of (−1)-categories**.²This partial order coincides with logical implication.

000C

NOTATION 3.2.2.1.4 ► FURTHER NOTATION FOR THE POSET OF TRUTH VALUES

We also write $\{t, f\}$ for the poset $\{\text{true}, \text{false}\}$.

000D

PROPOSITION 3.2.2.1.5 ► CARTESIAN CLOSEDNESS OF THE POSET OF TRUTH VALUES

The poset of truth values $\{t, f\}$ is Cartesian closed with product given by¹

$$\begin{aligned} t \times t &= t, & f \times t &= f, \\ t \times f &= f, & f \times f &= f, \end{aligned}$$

\times	t	f
t	t	f
f	f	f

and internal Hom $\mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}$ given by the partial order of $\{t, f\}$, i.e. by

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, t) &= t, & \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, t) &= t, \\ \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, f) &= f, & \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, f) &= t, \end{aligned}$$

$\mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}$	t	f
t	t	t
f	t	f

¹Note that \times coincides with the “and” operator, while $\mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}$ coincides with the logical implication operator.

PROOF 3.2.2.1.6 ► PROOF OF PROPOSITION 3.2.2.1.5

Existence of Products

We claim that the products $t \times t$, $t \times f$, $f \times t$, and $f \times f$ satisfy the universal property of the product in $\{t, f\}$. Indeed, suppose we have diagrams of the form

$$\begin{array}{cccc} \begin{array}{c} p_1^1 \quad P_1 \quad p_2^1 \\ \downarrow \quad \quad \downarrow \\ t \leftarrow \text{pr}_1 \quad t \times t \quad \text{pr}_2 \rightarrow t \end{array} & \begin{array}{c} p_1^2 \quad P_2 \quad p_2^2 \\ \downarrow \quad \quad \downarrow \\ t \leftarrow \text{pr}_1 \quad t \times f \quad \text{pr}_2 \rightarrow f \end{array} & \begin{array}{c} p_1^3 \quad P_3 \quad p_2^3 \\ \downarrow \quad \quad \downarrow \\ f \leftarrow \text{pr}_1 \quad f \times t \quad \text{pr}_2 \rightarrow t \end{array} & \begin{array}{c} p_1^4 \quad P_4 \quad p_2^4 \\ \downarrow \quad \quad \downarrow \\ f \leftarrow \text{pr}_1 \quad f \times f \quad \text{pr}_2 \rightarrow f \end{array} \end{array}$$

where the pr_1 and pr_2 morphisms are the only possible ones (since $\{t, f\}$ is posetal). We claim that there are unique morphisms making the diagrams

$$\begin{array}{cccc} \begin{array}{c} p_1^1 \quad P_1 \quad p_2^1 \\ \downarrow \quad \quad \downarrow \\ t \leftarrow \text{pr}_1 \quad t \times t \quad \text{pr}_2 \rightarrow t \end{array} & \begin{array}{c} p_1^2 \quad P_2 \quad p_2^2 \\ \downarrow \quad \quad \downarrow \\ t \leftarrow \text{pr}_1 \quad t \times f \quad \text{pr}_2 \rightarrow f \end{array} & \begin{array}{c} p_1^3 \quad P_3 \quad p_2^3 \\ \downarrow \quad \quad \downarrow \\ f \leftarrow \text{pr}_1 \quad f \times t \quad \text{pr}_2 \rightarrow t \end{array} & \begin{array}{c} p_1^4 \quad P_4 \quad p_2^4 \\ \downarrow \quad \quad \downarrow \\ f \leftarrow \text{pr}_1 \quad f \times f \quad \text{pr}_2 \rightarrow f \end{array} \end{array}$$

commute. Indeed:

01YL

1. If $P_1 = t$, then $p_1^1 = p_2^1 = \text{id}_t$, so there's a unique morphism from P_1 to t making the diagram commute, namely id_t .

01YM

2. If $P_1 = f$, then $p_1^1 = p_2^1$ are given by the unique morphism from f to t , so there's a unique morphism from P_1 to t making the diagram commute, namely the unique morphism from f to t .

01YN

3. If $P_2 = t$, then there is no morphism p_2^2 .

01YP

4. If $P_2 = f$, then p_1^2 is the unique morphism from f to t while $p_2^2 = \text{id}_f$, so there's a unique morphism from P_2 to f making the diagram commute, namely id_f .

01YQ

5. The proof for P_3 is similar to the one for P_2 .

01YR

6. If $P_4 = t$, then there is no morphism p_1^4 or p_2^4 .

01YS

7. If $P_4 = f$, then $p_1^4 = p_2^4 = \text{id}_f$, so there's a unique morphism from P_4 to f making the diagram commute, namely id_f .

This finishes the existence of products part of the proof.

Cartesian Closedness

We claim there's a bijection

$$\text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(A \times B, C) \cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(A, \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(B, C)),$$

natural in $A, B, C \in \{t, f\}$. Indeed:

- For $(A, B, C) = (t, t, t)$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t \times t, t) &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, t) \\ &= \{\text{id}_{\text{true}}\} \\ &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, t) \\ &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, t)). \end{aligned}$$

- For $(A, B, C) = (t, t, f)$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t \times t, f) &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, f) \\ &= \emptyset \\ &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, f) \\ &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, f)). \end{aligned}$$

- For $(A, B, C) = (t, f, t)$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t \times f, t) &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, t) \\
 &\cong \text{pt} \\
 &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, t) \\
 &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, t)).
 \end{aligned}$$

- For $(A, B, C) = (t, f, f)$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t \times f, f) &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, f) \\
 &\cong \{\text{id}_{\text{false}}\} \\
 &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, f) \\
 &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, f)).
 \end{aligned}$$

- For $(A, B, C) = (f, t, t)$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f \times t, t) &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, t) \\
 &\cong \text{pt} \\
 &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, t) \\
 &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, t)).
 \end{aligned}$$

- For $(A, B, C) = (f, t, f)$, we have


$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f \times t, f) &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, f) \\
 &\cong \{\text{id}_{\text{false}}\} \\
 &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, f) \\
 &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(t, f)).
 \end{aligned}$$

- For $(A, B, C) = (f, f, t)$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f \times f, t) &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, t) \\
 &\cong \text{pt} \\
 &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, t) \\
 &\cong \text{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t,f\}}(f, t)).
 \end{aligned}$$

- For $(A, B, C) = (f, f, f)$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\mathrm{Hom}_{\{t, f\}}(f \times f, f) &\cong \mathrm{Hom}_{\{t, f\}}(f, f) \\ &= \{\mathrm{id}_{f_{\mathrm{false}}}\} \\ &\cong \mathrm{Hom}_{\{t, f\}}(f, f) \\ &\cong \mathrm{Hom}_{\{t, f\}}(f, \mathbf{Hom}_{\{t, f\}}(f, f)).\end{aligned}$$

Since $\{t, f\}$ is posetal, naturality is automatic ([Categories, Item 4](#) of [Proposition 11.2.7.1.2](#)). 

000E 3.2.3 0-Categories

000F DEFINITION 3.2.3.1.1 ► 0-CATEGORIES

A **0-category** is a poset.¹

¹*Motivation:* A 0-category is precisely a category enriched in the poset of (-1) -categories.

000G DEFINITION 3.2.3.1.2 ► 0-GROUPOIDS

A **0-groupoid** is a 0-category in which every morphism is invertible.¹

¹That is, a *set*.

000H 3.2.4 Tables of Analogies Between Set Theory and Category Theory

Here we record some analogies between notions in set theory and category theory. The analogies relating to presheaves relate equally well to copresheaves, as the opposite X^{op} of a set X is just X again.

01D6 REMARK 3.2.4.1.1 ► BASIC ANALOGIES BETWEEN SET THEORY AND CATEGORY THEORY

The basic analogies between set theory and category theory are summarised in the following table:

Set Theory	Category Theory
Enrichment in $\{\text{true}, \text{false}\}$	Enrichment in Sets
Set X	Category \mathcal{C}
Element $x \in X$	Object $X \in \text{Obj}(\mathcal{C})$
Function $f: X \rightarrow Y$	Functor $F: \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$
Function $X \rightarrow \{\text{true}, \text{false}\}$	Copresheaf $\mathcal{C} \rightarrow \text{Sets}$
Function $X \rightarrow \{\text{true}, \text{false}\}$	Presheaf $\mathcal{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \text{Sets}$

01D7

REMARK 3.2.4.1.2 ► ANALOGIES BETWEEN SET THEORY AND CATEGORY THEORY: POWERSSETS AND CATEGORIES OF PRESHEAVES

The category of presheaves $\text{PSh}(\mathcal{C})$ and the category of copresheaves $\text{CoPSh}(\mathcal{C})$ on a category \mathcal{C} are the 1-categorical counterparts to the powerset $\mathcal{P}(X)$ of subsets of a set X . The further analogies built upon this are summarised in the following table:

Set Theory	Category Theory
Powerset $\mathcal{P}(X)$	Presheaf category $\mathbf{PSh}(C)$
Characteristic function $\chi_{\{x\}}: X \rightarrow \{\mathbf{t}, \mathbf{f}\}$	Representable presheaf $h_X: C^{\text{op}} \hookrightarrow \mathbf{Sets}$
Characteristic embedding $\chi_{(-)}: X \hookrightarrow \mathcal{P}(X)$	Yoneda embedding $\mathfrak{J}: C^{\text{op}} \hookrightarrow \mathbf{PSh}(C)$
Characteristic relation $\chi_X(-, -): X \times X \rightarrow \{\mathbf{t}, \mathbf{f}\}$	Hom profunctor $\text{Hom}_C(-, -): C^{\text{op}} \times C \rightarrow \mathbf{Sets}$
The Yoneda lemma for sets $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{P}(X)}(\chi_x, \chi_U) = \chi_U(x)$	The Yoneda lemma for categories $\text{Nat}(h_X, \mathcal{F}) \cong \mathcal{F}(X)$
The characteristic embedding is fully faithful, $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{P}(X)}(\chi_x, \chi_y) = \chi_X(x, y)$	The Yoneda embedding is fully faithful, $\text{Nat}(h_X, h_Y) \cong \text{Hom}_C(X, Y)$
Subsets are unions of their elements $U = \bigcup_{x \in U} \{x\}$ or $\chi_U = \text{colim}_{\chi_x \in \mathcal{P}(U)} (\chi_x)$	Presheaves are colimits of representables, $\mathcal{F} \cong \text{colim}_{h_X \in \int_C \mathcal{F}} (h_X)$

REMARK 3.2.4.1.3 ► ANALOGIES BETWEEN SET THEORY AND CATEGORY THEORY: CATEGORIES OF ELEMENTS

01D8

We summarise the analogies between un/straightening in set theory and category theory in the following table:

Set Theory	Category Theory
Assignment $U \mapsto \chi_U$	Assignment $\mathcal{F} \mapsto \int_C \mathcal{F}$
Un/straightening isomorphism $\mathcal{P}(X) \cong \text{Sets}(X, \{t, f\})$	Un/straightening equivalence $\text{DFib}(C) \stackrel{\text{eq.}}{\cong} \text{PSh}(C)$

01D9

REMARK 3.2.4.1.4 ► ANALOGIES BETWEEN SET THEORY AND CATEGORY THEORY: FUNCTIONS BETWEEN POWERSETS AND FUNCTORS BETWEEN PRESHEAF CATEGORIES

We summarise the analogies between functions $\mathcal{P}(X) \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(Y)$ and functors $\text{PSh}(C) \rightarrow \text{PSh}(\mathcal{D})$ in the following table:

Set Theory	Category Theory
Direct image function $f_! : \mathcal{P}(X) \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(Y)$	Left Kan extension functor $F_! : \text{PSh}(C) \rightarrow \text{PSh}(\mathcal{D})$
Inverse image function $f^{-1} : \mathcal{P}(Y) \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(X)$	Precomposition functor $F^* : \text{PSh}(\mathcal{D}) \rightarrow \text{PSh}(C)$
Codirect image function $f_* : \mathcal{P}(X) \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(Y)$	Right Kan extension functor $F_* : \text{PSh}(C) \rightarrow \text{PSh}(\mathcal{D})$

01DA

REMARK 3.2.4.1.5 ► ANALOGIES BETWEEN SET THEORY AND CATEGORY THEORY: RELATIONS AND PROFUNCTORS

We summarise the analogies between functions, relations and profunctors in the following table:

Set Theory	Category Theory
Relation $R: X \times Y \rightarrow \{t, f\}$	Profunctor $p: \mathcal{D}^{\text{op}} \times C \rightarrow \text{Sets}$
Relation $R: X \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(Y)$	Profunctor $p: C \rightarrow \text{PSh}(\mathcal{D})$
Relation as a cocontinuous morphism of posets $R: (\mathcal{P}(X), \subset) \rightarrow (\mathcal{P}(Y), \subset)$	Profunctor as a colimit-preserving functor $p: \text{PSh}(C) \rightarrow \text{PSh}(\mathcal{D})$

Appendices

A Other Chapters

Preliminaries

1. Introduction
2. A Guide to the Literature

Sets

3. Sets
4. Constructions With Sets
5. Monoidal Structures on the Category of Sets
6. Pointed Sets
7. Tensor Products of Pointed Sets

Relations

8. Relations
9. Constructions With Relations

10. Conditions on Relations

Categories

11. Categories
12. Presheaves and the Yoneda Lemma

Monoidal Categories

13. Constructions With Monoidal Categories

Bicategories

14. Types of Morphisms in Bicategories

Extra Part

15. Notes

References

- [BS10] John C. Baez and Michael Shulman. “Lectures on n -Categories and Cohomology”. In: *Towards higher categories*. Vol. 152. IMA Vol. Math. Appl. Springer, New York, 2010, pp. 1–68. doi: [10.1007/978-1-4419-1524-5_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1524-5_1). url: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1524-5_1 (cit. on pp. 4, 5).