

# Relational parametricity and "theorems for free"

A tutorial, with example code in Scala

Sergei Winitzki

Academy by the Bay

2021-09-04

# Outline of the tutorial

- Motivation: practical applications of the parametricity theorem
- What is “fully parametric code”
- A complete proof of “theorems for free” in 7 steps
  - ▶ Step 1: Deriving `fmap` and `cmap` methods from types
  - ▶ Step 2: The commutativity law for bifunctors and profunctors
  - ▶ Step 3: Motivation for the relational formulation of naturality laws
  - ▶ Step 4: Definition of relational lifting (`rmap`)
  - ▶ Step 5: Properties of relational lifting
  - ▶ Step 6: Proof of the relational naturality law
  - ▶ Step 7: Deriving the wedge law from the relational naturality law
- Applications of the parametricity theorem
  - ▶ Yoneda identities
- Advanced applications of the parametricity theorem
  - ▶ Church encoding of recursive types
  - ▶ Simplifying types with universal quantifiers
  - ▶ Equivalence of `foldMap` and `foldLeft` for polynomial functors

# Applications of parametricity. “Theorems for free”

**Parametricity theorem:** any fully parametric function obeys a certain law

Example applications:

- Naturality laws for code that works in the same way for all types

```
def headOption[A]: List[A] => Option[A] = {  
  case Nil           => None  
  case head :: tail  => Some(head)  
}
```
- Naturality law for `headOption`: for all `x: List[A]` and `f: A => B`,  
`x.headOption.map(f) == x.map(f).headOption`
- Uniqueness properties for fully parametric functions
  - ▶ The `map` and `contramap` methods uniquely follow from types
  - ▶ There is only one function `f` with type signature `f[A]: A => (A, A)`
- Type equivalence for universally quantified types
  - ▶ The type of functions `pure[A]: A => F[A]` is equivalent to `F[Unit]`
    - ★ In Scala 3, this type is written as `[A] => A => F[A]`
  - ▶ The type `[A] => (Option[(R, A)] => A) => A` is equivalent to `List[R]`
  - ▶ The type `[A] => ((A => R) => A) => A` is equivalent to `R`

# Requirements for parametricity. Fully parametric code

Parametricity theorem works only if the code is “fully parametric”

- “**Fully parametric**” code: use only type parameters and `Unit`, no run-time type reflection, no external libraries or built-in types (so, no `IO`-like monads)
- “Fully parametric” is a stronger restriction than “purely functional”

Parametricity theorem applies only to a subset of a programming language

- Usually, it is a certain flavor of typed lambda calculus

# Examples of code that is not fully parametric

Explicit matching on type parameters using type reflection:

```
def badHeadOpt[A]: List[A] => Option[A] = {  
  case Nil => None  
  case (head: Int) :: tail => None // Run-time type match!  
  case head :: tail => Some(head)  
}
```

Using typeclasses: define a typeclass `NotInt[A]` with the method `notInt[A]` that returns `true` unless `A = Int`

```
def badHeadOpt[A: NotInt]: List[A] => Option[A] = {  
  case h :: tail if notInt[A] => Some(h)  
  case _ => None  
}
```

Failure of naturality law:

```
scala> badHeadOpt(List(10, 20, 30).map(x => s"x = $x"))  
res0: Option[String] = Some(x = 10)
```

```
scala> badHeadOpt(List(10, 20, 30)).map(x => s"x = $x")  
res1: Option[String] = None
```

Fully parametric programs are written using the 9 code constructions:

```
def fmap[A, B](f: A => B): List[(A, A)] => List[(B, B)] = { // 3
  case Nil => Nil
// 8 1 1,7
  case head :: tail => (f (head._1), f (head._2)) :: fmap(f)(tail)
// 8 6 2 4 6 5 2 4 6 7 9
} // This code uses each of the nine allowed constructions.
```

- 1 Use `Unit` value (or equivalent type), e.g. `()`, `Nil`, `None`
- 2 Use bound variable (a given argument of the function)
- 3 Create a function: `{ x => expr(x) }`
- 4 Use a function: `f(x)`
- 5 Create a product: `(a, b)`
- 6 Use a product: `p._1` (or via pattern matching)
- 7 Create a co-product: `Left[A, B](x)`
- 8 Use a co-product: `{ case ... => ... }` (pattern matching)
- 9 Use a recursive call: e.g., `fmap(f)(tail)` within the code of `fmap`

## Step 1. Naturality laws require map

Naturality law: applying  $t[A]: F[A] \Rightarrow G[A]$  before  $\_.\text{map}(f)$  equals applying  $t[B]: F[B] \Rightarrow G[B]$  after  $\_.\text{map}(f)$  for any function  $f: A \Rightarrow B$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} F[A] & \xrightarrow{t[A]} & G[A] \\ \downarrow \text{\_}.map(f) \text{ for } F & & \downarrow \text{\_}.map(f) \text{ for } G \\ F[B] & \xrightarrow{t[B]} & G[B] \end{array}$$

- Example:  $F = \text{List}$ ,  $G = \text{Option}$ ,  $t = \text{headOption}$

The naturality law of `headOption`: for all  $x: \text{List}[A]$  and  $f: A \Rightarrow B$ ,  
 $x.\text{headOption}.\text{map}(f) = x.\text{map}(f).\text{headOption}$

Naturality laws are formulated using  $\_.\text{map}$  for  $F$  and  $G$

What is the code of `map` for a given  $F[_]$ ?

- Equivalently, the code of  $\text{fmap}[A, B]: (A \Rightarrow B) \Rightarrow F[A] \Rightarrow F[B]$

# Step 1. Fully parametric type constructors

What is the `fmap` function for a given type constructor `F[_]`?

- If the code of `t[A]: F[A] => G[A]` is fully parametric, then there are only a few ways to build the type constructors `F[_]` and `G[_]`
- Such “fully parametric” type constructors `F[_]` are built as:
  - 1 `F[A] = Unit` or `F[A] = B` where `B` is another type parameter
  - 2 `F[A] = A`
  - 3 `F[A] = (G[A], H[A])` — product types
  - 4 `F[A] = Either[G[A], H[A]]` — co-product types
  - 5 `F[A] = G[A] => H[A]` — function types
  - 6 `F[A] = G[F[A], A]` — recursive types
  - 7 `F[A] = [X] => G[A, X]` — universally quantified types

The recursive type construction (`Fix`) can be defined as:

```
case class Fix[G[_], _], A(unfix: G[Fix[G[_], _], A], A])  
F[A] = Fix[G, A] satisfies the type equation F[A] = G[F[A], A]
```



# Step 1. Deriving fmap from types

- What is the `fmap` function for a covariant type constructor `F[_]`?

`fmap_F[A, B]: (A => B) => F[A] => F[B]`

- 1 If `F[A] = Unit` or `F[A] = B` then `fmap_F(f) = identity`
- 2 If `F[A] = A` then `fmap_F(f) = f`
- 3 If `F[A] = (G[A], H[A])` then we need `fmap_G` and `fmap_H`  
`fmap_F(f) = { case (ga, ha) => (fmap_G(f)(ga),  
fmap_H(f)(ha)) }`
- 4 If `F[A] = Either[G[A], H[A]]` then `fmap_F(f) = {  
case Left(ga) => Left(fmap_G(f)(ga))  
case Right(ha) => Right(fmap_H(f)(ha))  
}`
- 5 If `F[A] = G[A] => H[A]` then we need `cmap_G` and `fmap_H`  
`cmap_G[A, B]: (A => B) => G[B] => G[A]`  
`fmap_F(f) = (k: G[A] => H[A]) => (gb: G[B]) =>  
fmap_H(f)(k(cmap_G(f)(gb)))`
- 6 If `F[A] = G[F[A], A]` then we need `fmap_G1` and `fmap_G2`  
`fmap_F(f) = fmap_G1(fmap_F(f)) andThen fmap_G2(f)`
- 7 If `F[A] = [X] => G[A, X]` then we need `fmap_G1`  
`fmap_F(f) = k => [X] => fmap_G1(f)(k[X])`

## Step 1. Deriving cmap from types

- When  $F[_]$  is contravariant, we need the `cmap` function  
 $\text{cmap\_G}[A, B]: (A \Rightarrow B) \Rightarrow G[B] \Rightarrow G[A]$
- Use structural induction on the type of  $F[_]$ :
  - ① If  $F[A] = \text{Unit}$  or  $F[A] = B$  then  $\text{cmap\_F}(f) = \text{identity}$
  - ② If  $F[A] = A$  then  $F$  is *not* contravariant!
  - ③ If  $F[A] = (G[A], H[A])$  then we need `cmap_G` and `cmap_H`  
 $\text{cmap\_F}(f) = \{ \text{case } (gb, hb) \Rightarrow (\text{cmap\_G}(f)(gb), \text{cmap\_H}(f)(hb)) \}$
  - ④ If  $F[A] = \text{Either}[G[A], H[A]]$  then  $\text{cmap\_F}(f) = \{$   
     $\text{case Left}(gb) \Rightarrow \text{Left}(\text{cmap\_G}(f)(gb))$   
     $\text{case Right}(hb) \Rightarrow \text{Right}(\text{cmap\_H}(f)(hb))$   
     $\}$
  - ⑤ If  $F[A] = G[A] \Rightarrow H[A]$  then we need `fmap_G` and `cmap_H`  
 $\text{cmap\_F}(f) = (k: G[B] \Rightarrow H[B]) \Rightarrow (ga: G[A]) \Rightarrow$   
     $\text{cmap\_H}(f)(k(\text{fmap\_G}(f)(ga)))$
  - ⑥ If  $F[A] = G[F[A], A]$  then we need `fmap_G1` and `cmap_G2`  
 $\text{cmap\_F}(f) = \text{fmap\_G1}(\text{cmap\_F}(f)) \text{ andThen } \text{cmap\_G2}(f)$
  - ⑦ If  $F[A] = [X] \Rightarrow G[A, X]$  then we need `cmap_G1`  
 $\text{cmap\_F}(f) = k \Rightarrow [X] \Rightarrow \text{cmap\_G1}(f)(k[X])$

## Step 1. Detect covariance and contravariance from types

- The type constructions for `fmap` and `cmap` are the same except for function types
- The function arrow (`=>`) swaps covariant and contravariant positions
- In any fully parametric type expression, each type parameter is either in a covariant position or in a contravariant position

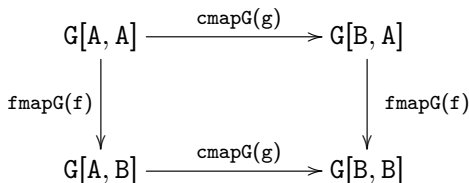
```
type F[A, B] = (A => Either[A, B], (B => A) => A => (A, B))
               -           +   +       +       -       -       +   +
```

- `F[A, B]` is covariant w.r.t. `B` since `B` is always in covariant positions
  - ▶ We can recognize this just by counting the function arrows
- We can generate the code for `fmap` and `cmap` mechanically, from types
- A type expression `F[A, B, ...]` can be analyzed with respect to each of the type parameters separately, and found to be covariant, contravariant, or neither (“invariant”)

# Step 1. “Invariant” types and profunctors

For “invariant” types, we use a trick: rename contravariant positions

- Example: `type F[A] = Either[A => (A, A), (A, A) => A]`
- Define `type G[X, A] = Either[X => (A, A), (X, X) => A]`
- Then `F[A] = G[A, A]` while `G[X, A]` is contravariant in `X` and covariant in `A`. Such `G[X, A]` are called **profunctors**
- We can implement `cmap` with respect to `X` and `fmap` with respect to `A`  
`def fmapG[X, A, B]: (A => B) => G[X, A] => G[X, B]`  
`def cmapG[X, Y, A]: (Y => X) => G[X, A] => G[Y, A]`
- Then we can compose `cmapG` and `fmapG` to get `xmapF`:  
`def xmapF[A, B]: (A => B) => (B => A) => G[A, A] => G[B, B] =`  
`f => g => cmapG[A, B, A](g) andThen fmapG[B, A, B](f)`
- What if we compose in another order? Need a commutativity law:



## Step 1. Verifying the functor laws

- `fmap` and `cmap` need to satisfy two functor laws
- Identity law: `fmap(identity) = identity`, `cmap(identity) = identity`
- Composition law: for any `f: A => B` and `g: B => C`,  
`fmap(f) andThen fmap(g) = fmap(f andThen g)`  
`cmap(g) andThen cmap(f) = cmap(f andThen g)`

# Step 1. Summary

- `fmap` or `cmap` or `xmap` follow from a given type expression
- The code of `fmap`, `cmap`, `xmap` is always fully parametric and lawful
- It is precisely that code that we need to use in naturality laws
- Consistency of `xmap` requires to have a commutativity law
  - ▶ Commutativity laws are the subject of Step 2

# Why we need relational parametricity

“Relational parametricity” is a method for proving parametricity theorems

- Main papers: Reynolds (1983) and Wadler “Theorems for free” (1989)
  - ▶ Those papers are outdated and also hard to understand
- There are few pedagogical tutorials on relational parametricity
  - ▶ “On a relation of functions” by R. Backhouse (1990)
  - ▶ “The algebra of programming” by R. Bird and O. de Moor (1997)

This tutorial does *not* follow any of the above but derives all results

## Motivating relational parametricity. II. The difficulty

Cannot lift  $f: A \Rightarrow B$  to  $F[A] \Rightarrow F[B]$  when  $F[_]$  is not covariant!

- For covariant  $F[_]$  we lift  $f: A \Rightarrow B$  to  $\text{fmap}(f): F[A] \Rightarrow F[B]$
- For contravariant  $F[_]$  we lift  $f: B \Rightarrow A$  to  $\text{cmap}(f): F[A] \Rightarrow F[B]$

In general,  $F[_]$  will be neither covariant nor contravariant

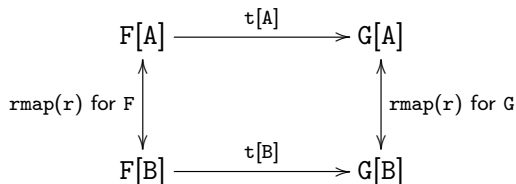
- Example: `foldLeft` with respect to type parameter  $A$   
`def foldLeft[T, A]: List[T] => (T => A => A) => A => A`
- This is *not* of the form  $F[A] \Rightarrow G[A]$  with covariant  $F[_]$  and  $G[_]$ 
  - ▶ Some occurrences of  $A$  are in covariant positions but other occurrences are in contravariant positions, all mixed up



# Motivating relational parametricity. III. Liftings

The solution involves three nontrivial steps:

- 1 Replace functions  $f: A \Rightarrow B$  by relations  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$ 
  - Instead of  $b == f(a)$ , we will write:  $(a, b) \text{ in } r$
- 2 Turns out, we can lift  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$  to  $\text{rmap}(r): F[A] \Leftrightarrow F[B]$
- 3 Reformulate the naturality law of  $t$  via relations: for any  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$ ,



To read the diagram: the starting values are on the left

For any  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$ , for any  $fa: F[A]$  and  $fb: F[B]$  such that

$(fa, fb) \text{ in rmap\_F}(r)$ , we require  $(t(fa), t(fb)) \text{ in rmap\_G}(r)$

# Definition and examples of relations

In the terminology of relational databases:

- A relation  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$  is a table with 2 columns ( $A$  and  $B$ )
- Each row  $(a: A, b: B)$  means that the value  $a$  is related to  $b$

Mathematically speaking: a relation  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$  is a subset  $r \subset A \times B$

- We write  $(a, b)$  in  $r$  to mean  $a \times b \in r$  where  $a \in A$  and  $b \in B$

Relations can be many-to-many while functions  $A \Rightarrow B$  are many-to-one  
A function  $f: A \Rightarrow B$  can be also viewed as a relation  $\text{rel}(f): A \Leftrightarrow B$

- Two values  $a: A, b: B$  are in  $\text{rel}(f)$  if  $b == f(a)$
- $\text{rel}(\text{identity}: A \Rightarrow A)$  defines an **identity** relation  $\text{id}: A \Leftrightarrow A$

Example of a relation that can be many-to-many:

Given two functions  $f: A \Rightarrow C, g: B \Rightarrow C$ , define a “pullback” relation  $\text{pullback}(f, g): A \Leftrightarrow B$  as:  $(a: A, b: B)$  in  $r$  means  $f(a) == g(b)$

- The pullback relation is *not* equivalent to a function  $A \Rightarrow B$  or  $B \Rightarrow A$

# Proof of relational parametricity. I. Relation combinators

## Relation combinators:

- For any relation  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$ , the **inverse** relation is  $\text{inv}(r): B \Leftrightarrow A$ 
  - ▶ The inverse operation is its own inverse:  $\text{inv}(\text{inv}(r)) == r$
- For any relations  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$  and  $s: A \Leftrightarrow B$ , get the union ( $r \text{ or } s$ ) and the intersection ( $r \text{ and } s$ ):  
 $(a, b) \text{ in } (r \text{ and } s)$  means  $(a, b) \text{ in } r$  and  $(a, b) \text{ in } s$   
 $(a, b) \text{ in } (r \text{ or } s)$  means  $(a, b) \text{ in } r$  or  $(a, b) \text{ in } s$
- For any relations  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$  and  $s: B \Leftrightarrow C$  define the **composition** ( $r \text{ compose } s$ ) as a relation  $u: A \Leftrightarrow C$  by  $(a: A, c: C) \text{ in } u$  when there exists  $b: B$  such that  $(a, b) \text{ in } r$  and  $(b, c) \text{ in } s$ 
  - ▶ Composition corresponds to “join” in relational databases
  - ▶ Directionality law:  $\text{inv}(r \text{ compose } s) == \text{inv}(s) \text{ compose } \text{inv}(r)$
  - ▶ Associativity and identity laws with respect to  $\text{id}: A \Leftrightarrow A$
  - ▶ Preserves composition of functions: for  $f: A \Rightarrow B$  and  $g: B \Rightarrow C$ ,  
 $\text{rel}(f \text{ andThen } g) == \text{rel}(f) \text{ compose } \text{rel}(g)$
- The “pullback relation” can be expressed through composition:  
 $\text{pullback}(f, g) == \text{rel}(f) \text{ compose } \text{inv}(\text{rel}(g))$

# Pullback relation expressed through composition of relations

For any  $f: A \Rightarrow C$ ,  $g: B \Rightarrow C$ ,  $a: A$ ,  $b: B$ , to prove:

- $(a, b)$  in  $\text{pullback}(f, g)$  is equivalent to:  
 $(a, b)$  in  $\text{rel}(f) \text{ compose inv}(\text{rel}(g))$

$$A \xleftarrow{\text{rel}(f)} C \xleftarrow{\text{inv}(\text{rel}(g))} B$$

- The first condition is equivalent to:  $f(a) == g(b)$
- The second condition is equivalent to: there exists  $c: C$  such that:  
 $(a, c)$  in  $\text{rel}(f)$  and  $(c, b)$  in  $\text{inv}(\text{rel}(g))$
- This is equivalent to:  $c$  is such that  $c == f(a)$  and  $c == g(b)$
- This is equivalent to the first condition

## Proof of relational parametricity. II. Definition of `rmap`

For a type constructor `F` and `r: A <=> B`, need `rmap(r): F[A] <=> F[B]`

Define `rmap` for `F[A]` by induction over the *type expression* of `F[A]`

There are seven possibilities (assuming that the code is fully parametric):

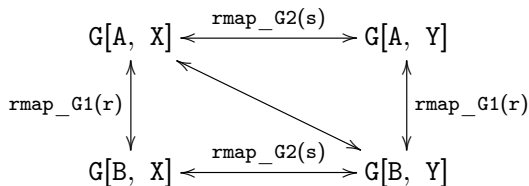
- ① `F[A] = Unit` or another fixed type (say, `T`) not related to `A`
- ② The identity functor: `F[A] = A`
- ③ Product type: `F[A] = (G[A], H[A])`
- ④ Co-product type: `F[A] = Either[G[A], H[A]]`
- ⑤ Function type: `F[A] = G[A] => H[A]`
- ⑥ Recursive type: `F[A] = G[A, F[A]]`
- ⑦ Universally quantified term: `F[A] = [Z] => G[A, Z]`

Define `rmap` similarly to how a functor's `fmap` is defined in these cases

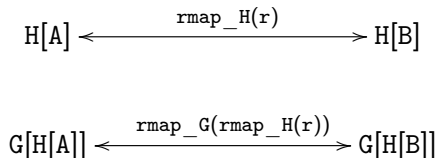
- The inductive assumption is that liftings to `G` and `H` are already defined
- For `G[A, Z]`, need to use two liftings (`rmap_G1` and `rmap_G2`)
- Liftings with respect to different type parameters will commute!
- For `F[A] = G[H[A]]` we expect `rmap_F(r) == rmap_G(rmap_H(r))`

## Some diagrams for clarification

The commutativity theorem for relational liftings: For any type constructor  $G[A, X]$  and any two relations  $r: A \Leftarrow B$  and  $s: X \Leftarrow Y$ :



Relational lifting for a composition of type constructors,  $F[A] = G[H[A]]$ :



# Proof of relational parametricity. II. Definition of `rmap`

Need to define `rmap(r): F[A] <=> F[B]` in these 7 cases:

- 1 `F[A] = T` (a fixed type): define `rmap(r) = id: T <=> T`
- 2 The identity functor, `F[A] = A`: define `rmap(r) = r: A <=> B`
- 3 When `F[A] = (G[A], H[A])`: define `((g1,h1), (g2,h2)) in rmap(r)` to mean `(g1, g2) in rmap_G(r)` and `(h1, h2) in rmap_H(r)`
- 4 When `F[A] = Either[G[A], H[A]]`: either `(Left(g1), Left(g2)) in rmap(r)` when `(g1, g2) in rmap_G(r)` or `(Right(h1), Right(h2)) in rmap(r)` when `(h1, h2) in rmap_H(r)`
- 5 When `F[A] = G[A] => H[A]`: define `(f1, f2) in rmap(r)` to mean `(f1(g1), f2(g2)) in rmap_H(r)` for any `g1: G[A]` and `g2: G[B]` such that `(g1, g2) in rmap_G(r)`
- 6 When `F[A] = G[A, F[A]]`: define `rmap(r) = rmap_G1(r) compose rmap_G2(rmap(r))` – the second `rmap(r)` is a recursive call
- 7 When `F[A] = [Z] => G[A, Z]`: define `(f1, f2) in rmap(r)` to mean: for any types `Z1` and `Z2`, and for any relation `s: Z1 <=> Z2`, we require `(f1[A][Z1], f2[B][Z2]) in (rmap_G1(r) compose rmap_G2(s))`

# Proof of relational parametricity. III. Examples of using rmap

Use `rmap` to lift a relation `r` to a type constructor

Two main examples of relations generated by functions:

`rel(f)` and `pullback(f, g)`

Three main examples of type constructors ( $F[A]$ ,  $G[A]$ ,  $H[A]$ ):

- If  $F[A]$  is covariant then:

`rmap(rel(f)) == rel(fmap(f))`

`rmap(pullback(f, g)) == pullback(fmap(f), fmap(g))`

- If  $G[A] = A \Rightarrow A$  then  $(fa, fb)$  in `rmap(rel(f))` means:

when  $(a, b)$  in `rel(f)` then  $(fa(a), fb(b))$  in `rel(f)`

or: `f(fa(a)) == fb(f(a))` or: `fa andThen f == f andThen fb`

This relation has the form of a pullback

- If  $H[A] = (A \Rightarrow A) \Rightarrow A$  then  $(fa, fb)$  in `rmap_H(rel(f))` means:

when  $(p, q)$  in `rmap_G(rel(f))` then  $(fa(p), fb(q))$  in `rel(f)`

equivalently: if `p andThen f == f andThen q` then `f(fa(p)) == fb(q)`

This is *not* a pullback relation: cannot express `p` through `q`

It is hard to use relations that do not have the form of a pullback



# Proof of relational parametricity. IV. Formulation

Instead of proving relational properties for  $t[A]: P[A] \Rightarrow Q[A]$ , use the function type and the quantified type constructions and get:

- Any fully parametric  $t[A]: P[A]$  satisfies for any  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$  the relation  $(t[A], t[B]) \text{ in } \text{rmap\_P}(r)$
- Any fully parametric  $t: P[]$  satisfies  $(t, t) \text{ in } \text{rmap\_P}(\text{id})$

It is more convenient to prove a parametricity theorem with a free variable:

- Any fully parametric expression  $t[A](z): P[A]$  with  $z: Q[A]$  satisfies, for any relation  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$  and for any  $z1: Q[A]$ ,  $z2: Q[B]$ , the law: if  $(z1, z2) \text{ in } \text{rmap\_Q}(r)$  then  $(t[A](z1), t[B](z2)) \text{ in } \text{rmap\_P}(r)$

This applies to expressions containing one free variable ( $z$ )

- Any number of free variables can be grouped into a tuple

# From relational parametricity to naturality laws

Example:  $t[A] = \{ a: A \Rightarrow a \}$  of type  $P[A] = A \Rightarrow A$

Parametricity theorem says:

- For any types  $A$  and  $B$ , and for any relation  $r: A \Leftrightarrow B$ , we have:  
 $(t[A], t[B]) \text{ in } \text{rmap\_P}(r)$  where  $\text{rmap\_P}(r): (A \Rightarrow A) \Leftrightarrow (B \Rightarrow B)$
- $(p, q) \text{ in } \text{rmap\_P}(r)$  means: for any  $a: A, b: B$ , if  $(a, b) \text{ in } r$  then  $p(a), q(b) \text{ in } r$
- So,  $(t[A], t[B]) \text{ in } \text{rmap\_P}(r)$  means: for any  $a: A, b: B$ , if  $(a, b) \text{ in } r$  then  $(t(a), t(b)) \text{ in } r$

Trick: choose  $r = \text{rel}(f)$  where  $f: A \Rightarrow B$  is an arbitrary function

- We get: for any  $a: A, b: B$ , if  $f(a) == b$  then  $f(t(a)) == t(b)$
- Equivalently:  $f(t(a)) == t(f(a))$ , i.e.,  $t$  commutes with all functions
- One can then prove that  $t$  must be an identity function
  - Choose  $f = \{ \_ : A \Rightarrow b \}$  with a fixed constant  $b: B$

# Proof of relational parametricity. V. Outline

The theorem says that  $\tau[A](z)$  satisfies its relational parametricity law

Proof goes by induction on the structure of the code of  $\tau[A](z)$

At the top level,  $\tau[A](z)$  must have one of the 9 code constructions

Each construction decomposes the code of  $\tau[A](z)$  into sub-expressions

The inductive assumption is that the theorem holds for all sub-expressions (including the bound variable  $z$ )

# Proof of relational parametricity. VI. Examples

We will show how to prove the first 4 constructions

Constant type: If  $t[A](z) = c$  where  $c$  is a fixed value of a fixed type  $C$ :

- We have  $\text{rmap\_P}(r) == \text{id}$  while  $(c, c) \text{ in id}$  holds

Use argument: If  $t[A](z) = z$  where  $z$  is a value of type  $Q[A]$ :

- If  $(z1, z2) \text{ in rmap\_Q}(r)$  then  $(t(z1), t(z2)) \text{ in rmap\_Q}(r)$

Create function: If  $t(z) = h \Rightarrow s(z, h)$  where  $h: H[A]$  and  $s(z, h): S[A]$ :

- If  $(z1, z2) \text{ in rmap\_Q}(r)$  and  $(h1, h2) \text{ in rmap\_H}(r)$  then  $(s(z1, h1), s(z2, h2)) \text{ in rmap\_S}(r)$

Use function: If  $t(z) = g(z)(h(z))$  where  $g(z): H[A] \Rightarrow P[A]$  and  $h(z): H[A]$  are sub-expressions:

- If  $(z1, z2) \text{ in rmap\_Q}(r)$  then inductive assumption says:  
 $(h(z1), h(z2)) \text{ in rmap\_H}(r)$
- If  $(h1, h2) \text{ in rmap\_H}(r)$  then inductive assumption says:  
 $(g(h1), g(h2)) \text{ in rmap\_P}(r)$

# Summary

- Relational parametricity is a powerful technique
- It has been generalized to many different settings
  - ▶ Gradual typing, higher-kinded types, dependent types, etc.
- Relational parametricity has a steep learning curve
  - ▶ Cannot directly write code that manipulates relations
  - ▶ All calculations need to be done symbolically or with proof assistants
- The result may be a relation that is difficult to interpret as code
- A couple of results in FP do require the relational naturality law
- More details in the free book — <https://github.com/winitzki/sofp>

