

# Part III Category Theory

Based on lectures by Prof P.T. Johnstone

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University of Cambridge

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## 1 Definitions and Examples

**Definition 1.1** (Category). *A category  $\mathcal{C}$  consists of*

- a. a collection  $\text{ob } \mathcal{C}$  of **objects**  $A, B, C, \dots$*
- b. a collection  $\text{mor } \mathcal{C}$  of **morphisms**  $f, g, h, \dots$*
- c. two operations  $\text{dom}, \text{cod}$  from morphisms to objects. We write  $f : A \rightarrow B$  or  $A \xrightarrow{f} B$  to mean ' $f$  is a morphism and  $\text{dom } f = A$  and  $\text{cod } f = B$ '*
- d. an operation assigning to each object  $A$  a morphism  $1_A : A \rightarrow A$*
- e. a partial binary operation  $(f, g) \mapsto gf$ , s.t.  $gf$  is defined  $\iff \text{dom } g = \text{cod } f$ , and then  $gf : \text{dom } f \rightarrow \text{cod } g$*

*satisfying*

- f.  $f1_A = f$  and  $1_B f = f \ \forall f : A \rightarrow B$*
- g.  $h(fg) = (hg)f$  whenever  $gf$  and  $hg$  are defined*

**Definition 1.2** (Functor). *Let  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  be categories. A **functor**  $\mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$  consists of*

a. a mapping  $A \rightarrow FA$  from  $\text{ob } \mathcal{C}$  to  $\text{ob } \mathcal{D}$

b. a mapping  $f \rightarrow Ff$  from  $\text{mor } \mathcal{C}$  to  $\text{mor } \mathcal{D}$

satisfying  $\text{dom } Ff = F\text{dom } f$ ,  $\text{cod } Ff = F\text{cod } f$  for all  $f$ ,  $F(1_A) = 1_{FA}$  for all  $A$ , and  $F(gf) = (Fg)(Ff)$  whenever  $gf$  is defined.

**Definition 1.3.** By a **contravariant functor**  $\mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$  we mean a functor  $\mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}^{\text{op}}$  (or equivalently  $\mathcal{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$ ). A functor  $\mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$  is sometimes said to be **covariant**.

**Definition 1.4** (Natural transformation). Let  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  be two categories and  $F, G : \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$  two functors. A **natural transformation**  $\alpha : F \rightarrow G$  assigns to each  $A \in \text{ob } \mathcal{C}$  a morphism  $\alpha_A : FA \rightarrow GA$  in  $\mathcal{D}$ , such that

$$\begin{array}{ccc} FA & \xrightarrow{Ff} & FB \\ \downarrow \alpha_A & & \downarrow \alpha_B \\ GA & \xrightarrow{Gf} & GB \end{array}$$

commutes.

We can compose natural transformations: given  $\alpha : F \rightarrow G$  and  $\beta : G \rightarrow H$ , the mapping  $A \mapsto \beta_A \alpha_A$  is the  $A$ -component of a natural transformation  $\beta\alpha : F \rightarrow H$ .

**Definition 1.5.** Given categories  $\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}$ , we write  $[\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}]$  for the category of all functors  $\mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$  and natural transformations between them.

**Lemma 1.6.** Given  $F, G : \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$  and  $\alpha : F \rightarrow G$ ,  $\alpha$  is an isomorphism in  $[\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}] \iff$  each  $\alpha_A$  is an isomorphism in  $\mathcal{D}$ .

**Definition 1.7** (Faithful and full). Let  $F : \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$  be a functor.

- a. We say that  $F$  is **faithful** if, given  $f, g \in \text{mor } \mathcal{C}$ , the equations  $\text{dom } f = \text{dom } g$ ,  $\text{cod } f = \text{cod } g$  and  $Ff = Fg$  imply  $f = g$ .
- b.  $F$  is **full** if, given any  $g : FA \rightarrow FB$  in  $\mathcal{D}$ , there exists  $f : A \rightarrow B$  in  $\mathcal{C}$  with  $Ff = g$ .
- c. We say a subcategory  $\mathcal{C}'$  of  $\mathcal{C}$  is **full** if the inclusion  $\mathcal{C}' \hookrightarrow \mathcal{C}$  is a full functor.

For example, **Gp** is a full subcategory of the category **Mon** of monoids, but **Mon** is a non-full subcategory of the category **Sgp** of semigroups.

**Definition 1.8** (Equivalence of categories). Let  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  be categories. An **equivalence** between  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  is a pair of functors  $F : \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$ ,  $G : \mathcal{D} \rightarrow \mathcal{C}$  together with natural isomorphisms  $\alpha : 1_{\mathcal{C}} \rightarrow GF$ ,  $\beta : FG \rightarrow 1_{\mathcal{D}}$ . We write  $\mathcal{C} \simeq \mathcal{D}$  to mean that  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  are equivalent.

We say a property  $P$  of categories is **categorical** if whenever  $\mathcal{C}$  has  $P$  and  $\mathcal{C} \simeq \mathcal{D}$  then  $\mathcal{D}$  has  $P$ .

For example, being a groupoid is a categorical property, but being a group is not.

**Definition 1.9** (Slice category). Given an object  $B$  of a category  $\mathcal{C}$ , define the **slice category**  $\mathcal{C}/B$  to have morphisms  $A \xrightarrow{f} B$  as objects, and morphisms  $(A \xrightarrow{f} B) \rightarrow (A' \xrightarrow{f'} B)$  are morphisms  $h : A \rightarrow A'$  making

$$\begin{array}{ccc} A & \xrightarrow{h} & A' \\ & \searrow f & \swarrow f' \\ & B & \end{array}$$

commute.

**Lemma 1.10.** Let  $F : \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$  be a functor. Then  $F$  is part of an equivalence  $\mathcal{C} \simeq \mathcal{D} \iff F$  is full, faithful and **essentially surjective**, i.e. for every  $B \in \text{ob } \mathcal{D}$ , there exists  $A \in \text{ob } \mathcal{C}$  s.t.  $FA \cong B$ .

**Definition 1.11.** a. A **skeleton** of a category  $\mathcal{C}$  is a full subcategory  $\mathcal{C}'$  containing exactly one object from each isomorphism class of objects of  $\mathcal{C}$ .

b. We say  $\mathcal{C}$  is **skeletal** if it's a skeleton of itself. Equivalently, any isomorphism  $f$  in  $\mathcal{C}$  satisfies  $\text{dom } f = \text{cod } f$ .

For example,  $\mathbf{Mat}_K$  is skeletal. The full subcategory of standard vector spaces  $K^n$  is a skeleton of  $\mathbf{fd Mod}_K$ .

**Remark 1.12.** The following statements are each equivalent to the Axiom of Choice:

1. Every small category has a skeleton
2. Any small category is equivalent to each of its skeletons
3. Any two skeletons of a given small category are isomorphic

**Definition 1.13.** Let  $f : A \rightarrow B$  be a morphism in a category  $\mathcal{C}$ .

- a.  $f$  is a **monomorphism** if, given  $g, h : D \rightrightarrows A$ , the equation  $fg = fh$  implies  $g = h$ . We write  $A \rightarrowtail B$  if  $f$  is monic.

- b. Dually,  $f$  is an **epimorphism** if, given  $k, l : B \rightrightarrows C$ ,  $kf = lf$  implies  $k = l$ . We write  $A \twoheadrightarrow B$  if  $f$  is epic.
- c.  $\mathcal{C}$  is a **balanced** category if every  $f \in \text{mor } \mathcal{C}$  which is both monic and epic is an isomorphism.

## 2 The Yoneda Lemma

**Definition 2.1.** A category  $\mathcal{C}$  is **locally small** if, for any two objects  $A, B$  of  $\mathcal{C}$ , the morphism  $A \rightarrow B$  are parametrised by a set  $\mathcal{C}(A, B)$ .

Given local smallness,  $B \mapsto \mathcal{C}(A, B)$  becomes a functor  $\mathcal{C}(A, -) : \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ : if  $g : B \rightarrow B'$ , the mapping  $f \mapsto gf : \mathcal{C}(A, B) \rightarrow \mathcal{C}(A, B')$  is functorial since  $h(gf) = (hg)f$  for any  $h : B' \rightarrow B''$ .

Similarly,  $A \mapsto \mathcal{C}(A, B)$  becomes a functor  $\mathcal{C}^{op} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ .

**Lemma 2.2** (Yoneda). Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a locally small category,  $A \in \text{ob } \mathcal{C}$  and  $F : \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ . Then

- i. There is a bijection between natural transformations  $\mathcal{C}(A, -) \rightarrow F$  and elements of  $FA$ .
- ii. Moreover, this bijection is natural in both  $A$  and  $F$ .

*Proof.* Bijection: given  $\alpha : \mathcal{C}(A, -) \rightarrow F$ , define  $\Phi(\alpha) = \alpha_A(1_A) \in FA$ .

Given  $x \in FA$ , define  $\Psi(x) : \mathcal{C}(A, -) \rightarrow F$  by

$$\Psi(x)_B(A \xrightarrow{f} B) = (Ff)(x) \in FB$$

$\Psi(x)$  is natural: given  $g : B \rightarrow C$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} \Psi(x)_C(\mathcal{C}(A, g)(f)) &= \Psi(x)_C(gf) \\ &= F(gf)(x) \\ &= (Fg)(Ff)(x) \\ &= (Fg)\Psi(x)_B(f) \end{aligned}$$

$\Phi\Psi(x) = x$  since  $F(1_A)(x) = x$ , and  $\Psi\Phi(\alpha) = \alpha$  since, for any  $f : A \rightarrow B$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \Psi\Phi(\alpha)_B(f) &= Ff(\Phi(\alpha)) \\ &= Ff(\alpha_A(1_A)) \\ &= \alpha_B(\mathcal{C}(A, f)(1_A)) \\ &= \alpha_B(f) \end{aligned}$$

□

**Corollary 2.3.** *The mapping  $A \rightarrow \mathcal{C}(A, -)$  is a full and faithful functor  $\mathcal{C}^{op} \rightarrow [\mathcal{C}, \mathbf{Set}]$ .*

*Proof.* Given two objects  $A, B$ , 2.2(i) gives us a bijection from  $\mathcal{C}(B, A)$  to the collection of natural transformations  $\mathcal{C}(A, -) \rightarrow \mathcal{C}(B, -)$  (by taking  $F : C \mapsto \mathcal{C}(B, C)$ ). We need to show this is functorial, but given  $f \in \mathcal{C}(B, A)$ ,  $\Psi(F)_A$  sends  $1_A$  to  $\mathcal{C}(B, f)(1_A) = f$ , so it's the natural transformation  $g \mapsto gf$ .

Hence, given  $e : C \rightarrow B$ ,  $\Psi(fe)(g) = g(fe) = (gf)(e) = \Psi(e)\Psi(f)g$   $\square$

We call this functor the **Yoneda embedding**. Hence any locally small category  $\mathcal{C}$  is equivalent to a full subcategory of  $[\mathcal{C}^{op}, \mathbf{Set}]$ .

**Definition 2.4.** *A functor  $\mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$  is **representable** if it's isomorphic to  $\mathcal{C}(A, -)$  for some  $A$ .*

*A **representation** of  $F : \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$  is a pair  $(A, x)$  where  $A \in \text{ob } \mathcal{C}$ ,  $x \in FA$  and  $\Psi(x) : \mathcal{C}(A, -) \rightarrow F$  is an isomorphism. We also call  $x$  a **universal element** of  $F$ .*

**Corollary 2.5** ('Representations are unique up to unique isomorphism'). *If  $(A, x)$  and  $(B, y)$  are both representations of  $F : \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ , then there's a unique isomorphism  $f : A \rightarrow B$  s.t.  $Ff(x) = y$ .*

**Definition 2.6** (Product and coproduct). *Given two objects  $A, B$  of a locally small category  $\mathcal{C}$ , we define their **product** to be a representation of the functor*

$$\mathcal{C}(-, A) \times \mathcal{C}(-, B) : \mathcal{C}^{op} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

*i.e. an object  $A \times B$  equipped with morphisms  $\pi_1 : A \times B \rightarrow A$ ,  $\pi_2 : A \times B \rightarrow B$  s.t. given any pair  $(f : C \rightarrow A, g : C \rightarrow B)$ , there exists a unique  $h : C \rightarrow A \times B$  s.t.  $\pi_1 h = f$  and  $\pi_2 h = g$ .*

*More generally, we can define the product  $\prod_{i \in I} A_i$  of a family  $\{A_i \mid i \in I\}$  of objects, or the product of the empty family, i.e. a **terminal object** 1 s.t. for every  $A$  there's a unique  $A \rightarrow 1$ .*

*Dualizing, we get the notion of **coproduct** or **sum**.*

**Definition 2.7** (Equaliser and coequaliser). *Given a parallel pair  $f, g : A \rightrightarrows B$  in a locally small category  $\mathcal{C}$ , the assignment  $C \mapsto FC = \{h : C \rightarrow A \mid fh = gh\}$  is a subfunctor  $F$  of  $\mathcal{C}(-, A)$ . A representation of  $F$  is called an **equaliser** of  $(f, g)$ .*

*In elementary terms, it's an object  $E$  equipped with  $e : E \rightarrow A$  s.t.  $fe = ge$ , s.t. any  $h$  with  $fh = gh$  factors uniquely as  $h = ek$*

*Dually, we have the notion of **coequaliser**, i.e. a morphism  $q : B \rightarrow Q$  satisfying  $qf = qg$ , and universal among such.*

**Definition 2.8.** a. We say a monomorphism is **regular** if it occurs as an equaliser (dually, regular epimorphism).

b. We say  $f : A \rightarrow B$  is a **split monomorphism** if there exists  $g : B \rightarrow A$  with  $gf = 1_A$ .

Every split monomorphism is regular: if  $gf = 1_A$ ,  $f$  is an equaliser of  $(1_B, fg)$  [see sheet 1, q2].

**Definition 2.9.** Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be a (locally small) category,  $\mathcal{G}$  a collection of objects of  $\mathcal{C}$ .

a. Say  $\mathcal{G}$  is a **separating family** if the functors  $\mathcal{C}(G, -)$ ,  $G \in \mathcal{G}$  are jointly faithful, i.e. if given  $f, g : A \rightrightarrows B$  with  $f \neq g$ , there exists  $G \in \mathcal{G}$  and  $h : G \rightarrow A$  with  $fh \neq gh$ .

b. Say  $\mathcal{G}$  is a **detecting family** if the  $\mathcal{C}(G, -)$ ,  $G \in \mathcal{G}$  jointly reflect isomorphisms, i.e. if given  $f : A \rightarrow B$  s.t. every  $g : G \rightarrow B$  with  $G \in \mathcal{G}$  factors uniquely through  $f$ ,  $f$  is an isomorphism.

**Lemma 2.10.** i. If  $\mathcal{C}$  is balanced, then any separating family is detecting

ii. If  $\mathcal{C}$  has equalisers, then every detecting family is separating

**Definition 2.11.** An object  $P$  is **projective** if  $\mathcal{C}(P, -)$  preserves epimorphisms, i.e. if given

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & P & \\ & \downarrow f & \\ A & \xrightarrow{e} & B \end{array}$$

there exists  $g : P \rightarrow A$  with  $eg = f$ .

Dually,  $P$  is **injective** in  $\mathcal{C}$  if it's projective in  $\mathcal{C}^{\text{op}}$ .

If  $P$  satisfies this property  $\forall e$  in some class  $\mathcal{E}$  of epimorphisms, we call it  $\mathcal{E}$ -projective.

**Corollary 2.12.** Representable functors are (pointwise) projective in  $[\mathcal{C}, \mathbf{Set}]$

*Proof.* Given

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & \mathcal{C}(A, -) & \\ & \downarrow \beta & \\ F & \xrightarrow{\alpha} & G \end{array}$$

$\beta$  corresponds to some  $y \in GA$ .  $\alpha_A$  is surjective, so  $\exists x \in FA$  with  $\alpha_A(x) = y$ .  $x$  corresponds to  $\gamma : \mathcal{C}(A, -) \rightarrow F$  with  $\alpha\gamma = \beta$ .  $\square$

### 3 Adjunctions

**Definition 3.1** (D.M. Khan, 1958). *Let  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  be categories and  $F : \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$ ,  $G : \mathcal{D} \rightarrow \mathcal{C}$  be two functors. An **adjunction** between  $F$  and  $G$  is a bijection between morphisms  $FA \rightarrow B$  in  $\mathcal{D}$  and morphisms  $A \rightarrow GB$  in  $\mathcal{C}$ , which is natural in  $A$  and  $B$ .*

*(If  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{D}$  are locally small, this says that  $(A, B) \rightarrow \mathcal{D}(FA, B)$  and  $(A, B) \rightarrow \mathcal{C}(A, GB)$  are naturally isomorphic functors  $\mathcal{C}^{op} \times \mathcal{D} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ ).*

*We say  $F$  is **left adjoint** to  $G$ , or  $G$  is **right adjoint** to  $F$ , and write  $F \dashv G$ .*