

Every Grothendieck topos  $T$  (over some site  $W$ ) has a canonical geometric morphism  $f^* \dashv f_* : T \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$  and  $N = f^*\mathbb{N}$  is a natural number object of  $T$  for the the natural number object  $\mathbb{N}$  of  $\mathbf{Set}$ . The question is: is it possible to have  $PNN \sim N$  or more generally can there be a mono  $m : PN \rightarrow N$  in a Grothendieck topos ? We could reframe this question: what are the conditions that we need to impose on an elementary topos  $T$  so that we can generalize Cantor's diagonal argument ? Does Cantor's argument carry over to any Boolean topos ? Consider  $N \sim f^*\mathbb{N}$  in the case of a category of sheaves over a topological space  $X$ . Now  $f^*$  (part of the canonical geometric morphism to  $\mathbf{Set}$ ) arises as the composition of the functor yielding the constant presheaf and the sheafification functor.  $f_*$  on the other hand corresponds to taking global sections. Thus there is an open subset  $U \subset X$  such that  $N(U) \sim \mathbb{N}$ . So that if we had a mono  $m : PN \rightarrow N$  then  $PN$  would be isomorphic to a subsheaf of  $N$  ([1][p.72]) and so taking sections we would have, for a suitable  $U$ , a set theoretic inclusion  $PN(U) \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ . Now let's look at  $PN(U) \sim \Omega^N(U)$ . According to [1][pp. 97-98] we have that  $\Omega^N(U)$  can be identified with the set of natural transformations i.e. morphisms of presheaves  $\mathbf{Hom}(N|_U, \Omega|_U)$ . But by our choice of  $U$   $N|_U$  is just the constant presheaf with stalk  $\mathbb{N}$ . So these natural transformations  $f$  correspond to families of maps  $f_W : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \{V : V \subseteq W\}$  satisfying the condition : if  $W_1 \subset W_2$  then  $f_{W_2}(n) \cap W_1 = f_{W_1}(n)$  for any  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ . So clearly the cardinality of  $\mathbf{Hom}(N|_U, \Omega|_U)$  is at least  $\mathcal{P}\mathbb{N}$  so we obtain a contradiction. It seems likely that this result extends to Grothendieck toposes...

## References

- [1] S. MacLane, I. Moerdijk, *Sheaves in Geometry and Logic: A First Introduction To Topos Theory*, Springer, 1992.