

1: “Category Theory.zip” and Simplicial Sets

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These notes roughly follow the contents of [Wag25, §1] and [Lan21, §1]

1 Adjunctions and equivalences

Definition 1.1. Let $L: C \rightleftarrows D : R$ be functors. Write $L \dashv R$ if there exists an iso

$$\mathrm{Hom}_D(L-, -) \cong \mathrm{Hom}_C(-, R-)$$

in $\mathrm{Fun}(C^{\mathrm{op}} \times D, \mathbf{Set})$.

Lemma 1.2. $L: C \longrightarrow D$ has a right adjoint \iff every presheaf

$$\mathrm{Hom}_D(L-, d): C^{\mathrm{op}} \longrightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

is representable. (A dual result holds for left adjoints.)

Proof. \Rightarrow is clear, so we show \Leftarrow . Identify $\mathrm{Hom}_D(L-, -): C^{\mathrm{op}} \times D \longrightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ with $F: D \longrightarrow \mathrm{PSh}(C)$. By assumption, all $Fd \in \mathrm{EssIm}(\mathfrak{y})$. Let $\mathfrak{y}^{-1}: \mathrm{EssIm}(\mathfrak{y}) \longrightarrow C$ be a quasi-inverse. The composite

$$\begin{array}{ccc} D & \xrightarrow{F} & \mathrm{EssIm}(\mathfrak{y}) \xrightarrow{\mathfrak{y}^{-1}} C \\ & \searrow \text{dashed} & \nearrow \\ & R & \end{array}$$

defines a right adjoint R . □

Remark 1.3. Let $L: C \rightleftarrows D : R$ be adjoints ($L \dashv R$). The iso

$$\mathrm{Hom}_D(Lc, Lc) \cong \mathrm{Hom}_C(c, RLc)$$

sends id_{Lc} to $\eta_c: c \rightarrow RLc$. This defines the unit $\eta: \text{id} \Rightarrow RL$. The iso

$$\text{Hom}_C(Rd, Rd) \cong \text{Hom}_D(LRd, d)$$

sends id_{Rd} to $\varepsilon_d: LRd \rightarrow d$. This defines the counit $\varepsilon: LR \Rightarrow \text{id}$. They satisfy the triangle identities.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} L & \xrightarrow{L\eta} & LRL \\ \text{id} \downarrow & \swarrow \varepsilon L & \\ L & & \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{ccc} R & \xleftarrow{R\varepsilon} & RLR \\ \text{id} \uparrow & \nwarrow \eta R & \\ R & & \end{array}$$

Exercise 1.4. Let $L: C \rightleftharpoons D: R$ be functors. TFAE:

1. $L \dashv R$
2. There exist $\eta: \text{id} \Rightarrow RL$ and $\varepsilon: LR \Rightarrow \text{id}$ that satisfy the triangle identities.

Corollary 1.5. Let $L: C \rightleftharpoons D: R$ be adjoints, \mathcal{J} any category. Then we have adjunctions

$$\begin{aligned} L_*: \text{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, C) &\rightleftharpoons \text{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, D): R_* \\ R^*: \text{Fun}(C, \mathcal{J}) &\rightleftharpoons \text{Fun}(D, \mathcal{J}): L^* \end{aligned}$$

Proof. It suffices to construct the unit and counit. These are inherited from $L \dashv R$. \square

Lemma 1.6. Let $L: C \rightleftharpoons D: R$ be an adjunction.

1. L is fully faithful $\iff \eta: \text{id} \Rightarrow RL$ is an iso.
2. If L is fully faithful and R reflects isos, then $L \dashv R$ is an adjoint equivalence.

Proof. Let $x, y \in C$. By definition of η (see Remark 1.3) we can factor $\eta(\eta_y)_x$ via

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \text{Hom}_C(x, y) & \xrightarrow{L} & \text{Hom}_D(Lx, Ly) & \xrightarrow[\cong]{\text{adjunction}} & \text{Hom}_C(x, RLy) \\ & & & \searrow \text{dashed} & \\ & & & \eta(\eta_y)_x & \end{array}$$

It follows that

$$\begin{aligned} L \text{ is fully faithful} &\iff \text{all } \eta(\eta_y)_x \text{ are bijections} \\ &\iff \text{all } \eta(\eta_y) \text{ are isos} \\ &\iff \eta \text{ is an iso.} \end{aligned}$$

This shows 1. To see 2. consider the triangle identity

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} R & \xrightarrow{\eta R} & RLR & \xrightarrow{R\varepsilon} & R \\ & \searrow & \text{id} & \nearrow & \end{array}$$

and note that if η is an iso, then so is ηR . Hence $R\varepsilon$ is an iso, and thus ε is an iso. \square

2 Limits and colimits

Definition 2.1. Let \mathcal{J} be a category. Denote by $\text{const}: \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \text{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{C})$ the functor that sends $c \in \mathcal{C}$ to the constant diagram.

A limit of $F: \mathcal{J} \rightarrow \mathcal{C}$ is an object $\lim F \in \mathcal{C}$ satisfying

$$\text{Hom}_{\text{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{C})}(\text{const}_{(-)}, F) \cong \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(-, \lim F).$$

A colimit of F is an object $\text{colim } F \in \mathcal{C}$ satisfying

$$\text{Hom}_{\text{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{C})}(F, \text{const}_{(-)}) \cong \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(\text{colim } F, -).$$

Remark 2.2. If all diagrams $F: \mathcal{J} \rightarrow \mathcal{C}$ admit (co)limits, applying Lemma 1.2 yields

$$\text{colim}_{\mathcal{J}} \dashv \text{const} \dashv \lim_{\mathcal{J}}$$

for free. In particular, taking (co)limits is functorial.

Lemma 2.3. Let $L: \mathcal{C} \rightleftarrows \mathcal{D}: R$ be adjoints.

1. L preserves colimits.
2. R preserves limits.

Proof. Suppose $F: \mathcal{J} \rightarrow \mathcal{C}$ has a colimit. Using $L_* \dashv R_*$ and Lemma 1.2 we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Hom}_{\text{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{D})}(LF, \text{const}_{(-)}) &\cong \text{Hom}_{\text{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{C})}(F, R \text{const}_{(-)}) \\ &\cong \text{Hom}_{\text{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{C})}(F, \text{const}_{R(-)}) \\ &\cong \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(\text{colim } F, R-) \\ &\cong \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{D}}(L \text{colim } F, -). \end{aligned}$$

The limit case is analogous. □

Lemma 2.4. Suppose all \mathcal{J} -shaped (co)limits exist in \mathcal{D} . Then the same holds for $\text{Fun}(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D})$ and (co)limits are computed pointwise.

Proof. We have a commutative diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \text{Fun}(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D}) & \xrightarrow{\text{const}^F} & \text{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \text{Fun}(\mathcal{C}, \mathcal{D})) & \xrightarrow{\cong} & \text{Fun}(\mathcal{C}, \text{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{D})) \\ & \searrow & \text{const}_*^C & \nearrow & \\ & & & & \end{array}$$

By Corollary 1.5 we have $\text{const}_*^C \dashv \lim_*$. Hence, const^F has a right adjoint. The pointwise condition comes from the top-right iso. The case for colimits is analogous. □

Corollary 2.5. *Hom-functors preserve limits.*

Proof. Suppose $F: \mathcal{J} \longrightarrow \mathcal{C}$ has a limit. For $c \in \mathcal{C}$ we have natural isos

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c, \lim F) &\cong \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathcal{C})}(\mathrm{const}_c, F) \\ &\cong \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathrm{PSh}(\mathcal{C}))}(\mathbb{Y} \mathrm{const}_c, \mathbb{Y} F) \\ &\cong \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Fun}(\mathcal{J}, \mathrm{PSh}(\mathcal{C}))}(\mathrm{const}_{\mathbb{Y}(c)}, \mathbb{Y} F) \\ &\cong \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{PSh}(\mathcal{C})}(\mathbb{Y}(c), \lim(\mathbb{Y} F)) \\ &\cong \lim \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(c, F-). \end{aligned}$$

where we use that **Set** is complete and limits in $\mathrm{PSh}(\mathcal{C})$ are pointwise. The $\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathcal{C}}(-, c)$ case is an exercise. \square

3 Kan extensions

Remark 3.1. We will now develop the machinery that provides the adjunctions

$$|\cdot|: \mathbf{sSet} \rightleftarrows \mathbf{Top} : \mathrm{Sing}, \quad h: \mathbf{sSet} \rightleftarrows \mathbf{Cat} : N, \quad (-) \times X: \mathbf{sSet} \rightleftarrows \mathbf{sSet} : F(X, -)$$

for free. To this end we have to study Kan extensions along \mathbb{Y} .

Suppose we are given functors F and K as follows.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{C} & \xrightarrow{F} & \mathcal{D} \\ K \downarrow & & \\ \mathcal{E} & & \end{array}$$

Our goal is to “fill this horn” in **Cat** universally by a 2-cell (not necessarily as a commutative triangle) that provides a weak extension of F . Since natural transformations are oriented, there are two approaches.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{C} & \xrightarrow{F} & \mathcal{D} \\ K \downarrow & \Downarrow & \nearrow \\ \mathcal{E} & & \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{C} & \xrightarrow{F} & \mathcal{D} \\ K \downarrow & \Uparrow & \nearrow \\ \mathcal{E} & & \end{array}$$

Definition 3.2. The left Kan extension of $F: C \longrightarrow D$ along $K: C \longrightarrow \mathcal{E}$ is defined via

$$\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Fun}(C,D)}(F, K^*(-)) \cong \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Fun}(\mathcal{E},D)}(\mathrm{Lan}_K F, -).$$

The right Kan extension of $F: C \longrightarrow D$ along $K: C \longrightarrow \mathcal{E}$ is defined via

$$\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Fun}(C,D)}(K^*(-), F) \cong \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{Fun}(\mathcal{E},D)}(-, \mathrm{Ran}_K F).$$

Remark 3.3. If every F admits Kan extensions, Lemma 1.2 provides adjunctions

$$\mathrm{Lan}_K(-) \dashv K^* \dashv \mathrm{Ran}_K(-).$$

Exercise 3.4. If D is cocomplete, then all $\mathrm{Lan}_K F$ exist and can be computed via

$$(\mathrm{Lan}_K F)(e) \cong \mathrm{colim}_{Kc \longrightarrow e} Fc \quad (\forall e \in \mathcal{E})$$

where the colimit is over $(K \downarrow \mathrm{const}_e)$.

Corollary 3.5. If D is cocomplete and K is fully faithful, then $\mathrm{Lan}_K(-)$ is fully faithful.

Proof. By Lemma 1.6 it suffices to show that each $\eta_F: F \Longrightarrow (\mathrm{Lan}_K F) \circ K$ is an iso. Since K is fully faithful, we have $(K \downarrow \mathrm{const}_{Kx}) \cong C_{/x}$. The latter has the terminal object id_x , so taking the colimit corresponds to evaluating at this object:

$$(\mathrm{Lan}_K F)(Kx) \cong \mathrm{colim}_{Kc \longrightarrow Kx} Fc \cong \mathrm{colim}_{c \longrightarrow x} Fc \cong Fx$$

□

Lemma 3.6. Every presheaf is a colimit of representables. Let $F \in \mathrm{PSh}(C)$. Then

$$F \cong \mathrm{colim}_{\mathfrak{J}(c) \longrightarrow F} \mathfrak{J}(c)$$

where we index over $(\mathfrak{J} \downarrow \mathrm{const}_F)$.

Proof. For every $G \in \mathrm{PSh}(C)$ we have

$$\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{PSh}(C)}(\mathrm{colim}_{\mathfrak{J}(c) \longrightarrow F} \mathfrak{J}(c), G) \cong \lim_{\mathfrak{J}(c) \longrightarrow F} \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{PSh}(C)}(\mathfrak{J}(c), G) \stackrel{(\star)}{\cong} \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{PSh}(C)}(F, G).$$

To see (\star) , note that $\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathrm{PSh}(C)}(F, G)$ has a canonical cone structure by precomposition:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathfrak{J}(x) & \xrightarrow{\mathfrak{J}(f)} & \mathfrak{J}(y) \\ \alpha \searrow & & \nearrow \beta \\ & F & \end{array} \quad \mapsto \quad \begin{array}{ccc} [\mathfrak{J}(x), G] & \xleftarrow{\mathfrak{J}(f)^*} & [\mathfrak{J}(y), G] \\ \alpha^* \searrow & & \nearrow \beta^* \\ & [F, G] & \end{array}$$

□

Corollary 3.7. *Let $F: C \longrightarrow D$. If D is cocomplete, then $\text{Lan}_{\mathfrak{y}} F$ has a right adjoint.*

Proof. By Lemma 1.2 it suffices to show that each

$$\text{Hom}_D(\text{Lan}_{\mathfrak{y}} F -, d): \text{PSh}(C)^{\text{op}} \longrightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

is representable. Using the Kan extension formula, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Hom}_D((\text{Lan}_{\mathfrak{y}} F)(X), d) &\cong \text{Hom}_D(\text{colim}_{\mathfrak{y}(c) \longrightarrow X} Fc, d) \\ &\cong \lim_{\mathfrak{y}(c) \longrightarrow X} \text{Hom}_D(Fc, d) \\ &\cong \text{Hom}_{\text{PSh}(C)}(X, \text{Hom}_D(F-, d)) \end{aligned}$$

so the right adjoint is given by the functor

$$R: D \longrightarrow \text{PSh}(C), \quad d \longmapsto \text{Hom}_D(F-, d).$$

□

Theorem 3.8. *Suppose D is cocomplete. The Yoneda embedding $\mathfrak{y}: C \longrightarrow \text{PSh}(C)$ induces a weak equivalence by restriction*

$$\mathfrak{y}^*: \text{Fun}^{\text{colim}}(\text{PSh}(C), D) \xrightarrow{\simeq} \text{Fun}(C, D)$$

where $\text{Fun}^{\text{colim}}(\text{PSh}(C), D)$ is the full subcategory of $\text{Fun}(\text{PSh}(C), D)$ spanned by the colimit preserving functors. Furthermore, every such colimit preserving functor admits a right adjoint.

Proof. Since each $\text{Lan}_{\mathfrak{y}} F$ has a right adjoint, $\text{Lan}_{\mathfrak{y}} \dashv \mathfrak{y}^*$ restricts to

$$\text{Lan}_{\mathfrak{y}}: \text{Fun}(C, D) \rightleftarrows \text{Fun}^{\text{colim}}(\text{PSh}(C), D) : \mathfrak{y}^*.$$

Since \mathfrak{y} is fully faithful, so is $\text{Lan}_{\mathfrak{y}}$ by Corollary 3.5. Finally, \mathfrak{y}^* reflects isos on colimit preserving functors since every presheaf is a colimit of representables by Lemma 3.6. □

4 Simplicial sets

Definition 4.1. The simplex category Δ has the following data.

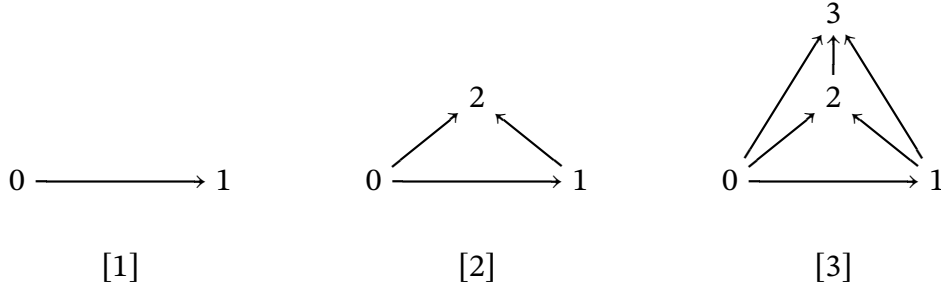
- Objects: totally ordered sets $[n] := \{0 < 1 < \dots < n\}$ (where $n \in \mathbb{N}_{\geq 0}$)

- Morphisms: monotone (i.e. weakly increasing) maps.

A simplicial set is a presheaf on Δ , i.e. a functor $X: \Delta^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$. The category of simplicial sets is defined as $\mathbf{sSet} := \text{PSh}(\Delta)$.

Remark 4.2. We can view Δ as a full subcategory of \mathbf{Cat} by identifying $[n]$ with its posetal category.

Remark 4.3. The category $[n]$ gives a combinatorial description of an n -simplex with labeled vertices.



- For each $i \in [n]$ there is a unique injective morphism

$$d^i: [n-1] \hookrightarrow [n]$$

that does not hit i , called the i -th coface map.

- For each $j \in [n-1]$ there is a unique surjective morphism

$$s^j: [n] \twoheadrightarrow [n-1]$$

that hits j twice, called the j -th codegeneracy map.

For $X \in \mathbf{sSet}$ we introduce the following notation.

- $X_n := X([n]) \in \mathbf{Set}$ are called the n -simplices of X .
- $d_i := X(d^i): X_n \rightarrow X_{n-1}$ are called the face maps of X .
- $s_j := X(s^j): X_{n-1} \rightarrow X_n$ are called the degeneracy maps of X .

$x \in X_n$ is called degenerate, if $x \in \text{im}(s_j)$ for some j .

Definition 4.4. The (standard) n -simplex is defined as $\Delta^n := \mathcal{Y}([n]) = \text{Hom}_{\Delta}(-, [n]) \in \mathbf{sSet}$. We introduce the following sub-simplicial sets.

- $\partial\Delta^n := \bigcup_{i=0}^n \text{im}(\jmath(d^i): \Delta^{n-1} \longrightarrow \Delta^n)$, the boundary of Δ^n ,
- $\Lambda_j^n := \bigcup_{\substack{i=0 \\ i \neq j}}^n \text{im}(\jmath(d^i): \Delta^{n-1} \longrightarrow \Delta^n)$, the j -horn in Δ^n

Furthermore, we call Λ_j^n an

- inner horn, if $0 < j < n$,
- outer horn, if $j = 0$ or $j = n$.

Definition 4.5. Let $|\Delta^n| \in \mathbf{Top}$ be the geometric standard simplex, given by the convex hull of the standard basis vectors $e_0, e_1, \dots, e_n \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1}$. Given $f: [m] \longrightarrow [n]$, we obtain

$$|f|: |\Delta^m| \longrightarrow |\Delta^n|$$

by linearly extending $e_i \mapsto e_{f(i)}$. This defines a functor $\Delta \longrightarrow \mathbf{Top}$. By Theorem 3.8 this has a unique colimit-preserving extension, the *geometric realization*

$$|\cdot|: \mathbf{sSet} \longrightarrow \mathbf{Top}, \quad |X| \cong \text{colim}_{\Delta^n \longrightarrow X} |\Delta^n|$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Delta & \xrightarrow{\quad} & \mathbf{Top} \\ \downarrow \jmath & \nearrow |\cdot| & \nearrow \text{Sing} \\ \mathbf{sSet} & & \end{array}$$

whose right adjoint must be the *singular complex* functor

$$\text{Sing}: \mathbf{Top} \longrightarrow \mathbf{sSet}, \quad \text{Sing}(X) = \text{Hom}_{\mathbf{Top}}(|\Delta^{(-)}|, X).$$

Exercise 4.6. Show that the geometric realization of a simplicial set has a canonical CW-complex structure.

Definition 4.7. Every (small) category \mathcal{C} defines a simplicial set

$$\mathbf{N}(\mathcal{C}): \Delta^{\text{op}} \hookrightarrow \mathbf{Cat}^{\text{op}} \xrightarrow{\text{Hom}_{\mathbf{Cat}}(-, \mathcal{C})} \mathbf{Set}$$

called the *nerve* of \mathcal{C} . By Theorem 3.8 we get an adjunction

$$h: \mathbf{sSet} \rightleftarrows \mathbf{Cat} : \mathbf{N}$$

where h is the unique colimit preserving extension of $\Delta \hookrightarrow \mathbf{Cat}$. We call h the homotopy category functor.

Definition 4.8. For each $X \in \mathbf{sSet}$, the functor $(-) \times X: \mathbf{sSet} \rightarrow \mathbf{sSet}$ preserves colimits (because it does so pointwise). By Theorem 3.8 it must be the extension of

$$\Delta \rightarrow \mathbf{sSet}, \quad [n] \mapsto \Delta^n \times X.$$

We obtain an adjunction

$$(-) \times X: \mathbf{sSet} \rightleftarrows \mathbf{sSet} : F(X, -)$$

where $F(X, Y)_n \cong \mathrm{Hom}_{\mathbf{sSet}}(\Delta^n \times X, Y)$ defines the internal hom in \mathbf{sSet} , also called the function complex.

References

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