

1. Real-valued functions of one real variable in school mathematics.

Below is a typical ‘explanation’ of the notion of real valued functions of one real variable in school mathematics:

Let D be a subset of \mathbb{R} (very often \mathbb{R} itself or \mathbb{R} with a few points deleted).

A real-valued function defined on D is a ‘rule of assignment’ from D to \mathbb{R} , so that

each number in D is being assigned to exactly one element of \mathbb{R} .

When we refer to such a function by f , the set D will be referred to as the domain of this function f .

Whenever $x \in D$, $y \in \mathbb{R}$ and x is assigned to y , we write $y = f(x)$.

The set $G = \{(x, f(x)) \mid x \in D\}$ is called the graph of f . Note that $G \subset \mathbb{R}^2$.

How about 'general' functions?

Below is a typical 'explanation' of the notion of real valued functions of one real variable in school mathematics:

Let A, B be sets.

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A ~~real valued function defined on D~~ is a 'rule of assignment' from ~~\mathbb{R}~~ to ~~\mathbb{R}~~ , so that ~~each number in D~~ is being assigned to exactly one element of ~~\mathbb{R}~~ .

from A to B
each element of A

When we refer to such a function by f , the set ~~\mathbb{R}~~ will be referred to as the domain of this function f . *The set B is called the range of f .*

Whenever $x \in \del{\mathbb{R}}^A$, $y \in \del{\mathbb{R}}^B$ and x is assigned to y , we write $y = f(x)$.

The set $G = \{(x, f(x)) \mid x \in D\}$ is called the graph of f . Note that $G \subset \mathbb{R}^2$.

??? *A?* *???* *???*

2. In-formal definition of function.

Let A, B be sets.

A function from A to B is a ‘rule of assignment’ from A to B , so that

each element of A is being assigned to exactly one element of B .

Conventions and notations.

- When we denote such a function by f , we refer to it as $f : A \longrightarrow B$.
Whenever $x \in A$, $y \in B$ and x is assigned to y , we write $y = f(x)$ (or $x \xrightarrow[f]{}$ y).
- A is called the **domain** of f . B is called the **range** of f .

Remark. We postpone the generalization of the notion of graphs of functions.

3. 'Blobs-and-arrows diagrams'.

We may visualize a function by its 'blobs-and-arrows diagram'.

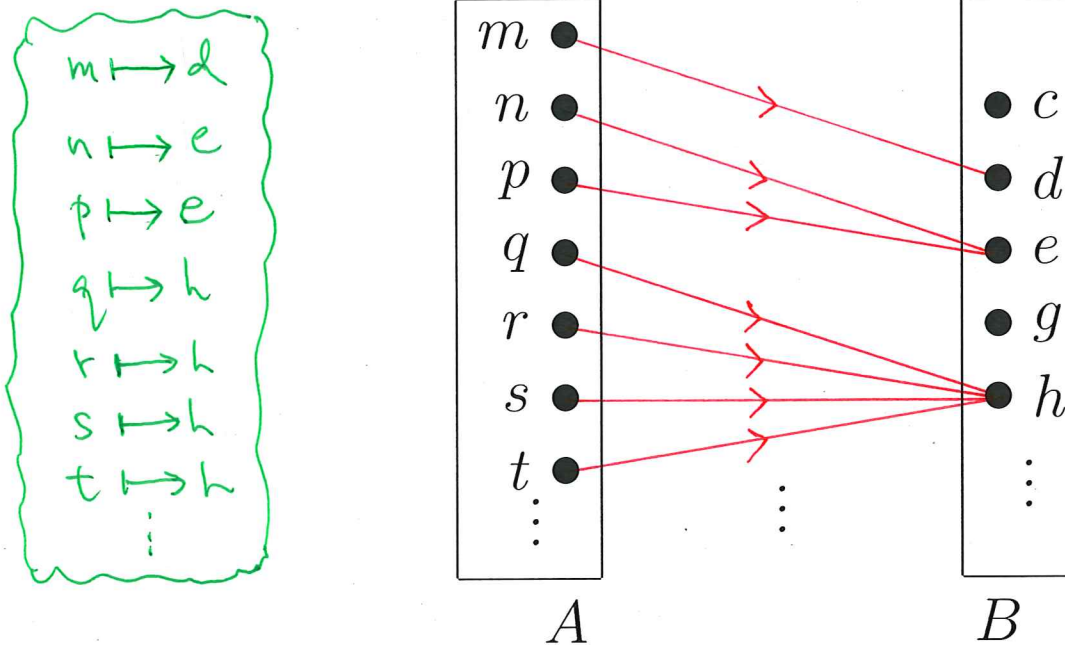
We illustrate the idea with the example below:

Let $A = \{m, n, p, q, r, s, t, \dots\}$, $B = \{c, d, e, g, h, \dots\}$, and $f : A \longrightarrow B$ be defined by

$$f(m) = d, f(n) = e, f(p) = e, f(q) = h, f(r) = h, f(s) = h, f(t) = h, \dots$$

By definition, f assigns m to d , n to e , p to e , q to h , r to h , s to h , t to h , \dots .

We draw the 'blobs-and-arrows diagram' of the function f as:



4. Notion of equality for functions.

We regard two functions to be the same as each other exactly when they 'determine the same assignment'.

Definition.

Let A_1, A_2, B_1, B_2 be sets, and $f_1 : A_1 \rightarrow B_1, f_2 : A_2 \rightarrow B_2$ be functions.

We agree to say that f_1 is **equal** to f_2 as functions, and to write $f_1 = f_2$, exactly when

$$A_1 = A_2 \text{ and } B_1 = B_2 \text{ and } f_1(x) = f_2(x) \text{ for any } x \in A_1.$$

Examples and non-examples.

① $f_1 : \mathbb{R} \setminus \{1\} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is given by
 $f_1(x) = x+1$ for any $x \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{1\}$;
 $f_2 : \mathbb{R} \setminus \{1\} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is given by
 $f_2(x) = \frac{x^2-1}{x-1}$ for any $x \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{1\}$.

- Are f_1, f_2 equal to each other?
- Yes.

② $g_1 : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is given by
 $g_1(x) = x+1$ for any $x \in \mathbb{R}$;
 $g_2 : \mathbb{R} \setminus \{1\} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is given by
 $g_2(x) = \frac{x^2-1}{x-1}$ for any $x \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{1\}$.

- Are g_1, g_2 equal to each other?
- No. (Reason: Domains do not agree.)

$g_3 : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ is given by
 $g_3(x) = x+1$ for any $x \in \mathbb{R}$;

- Are g_1, g_3 equal to each other?
- No. (Reason: Ranges do not agree.)

③ $h_1 : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is given by
 $h_1(x) = \begin{cases} -1 & \text{if } x \leq 0 \\ 1 & \text{if } x > 0 \end{cases}$;
 $h_2 : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is given by
 $h_2(x) = \begin{cases} -1 & \text{if } x < 0 \\ 1 & \text{if } x \geq 0 \end{cases}$.

- Are h_1, h_2 equal to each other?
- No. (Reason: 'Formulae' do not agree, for instance, at 0.)

5. Compositions.

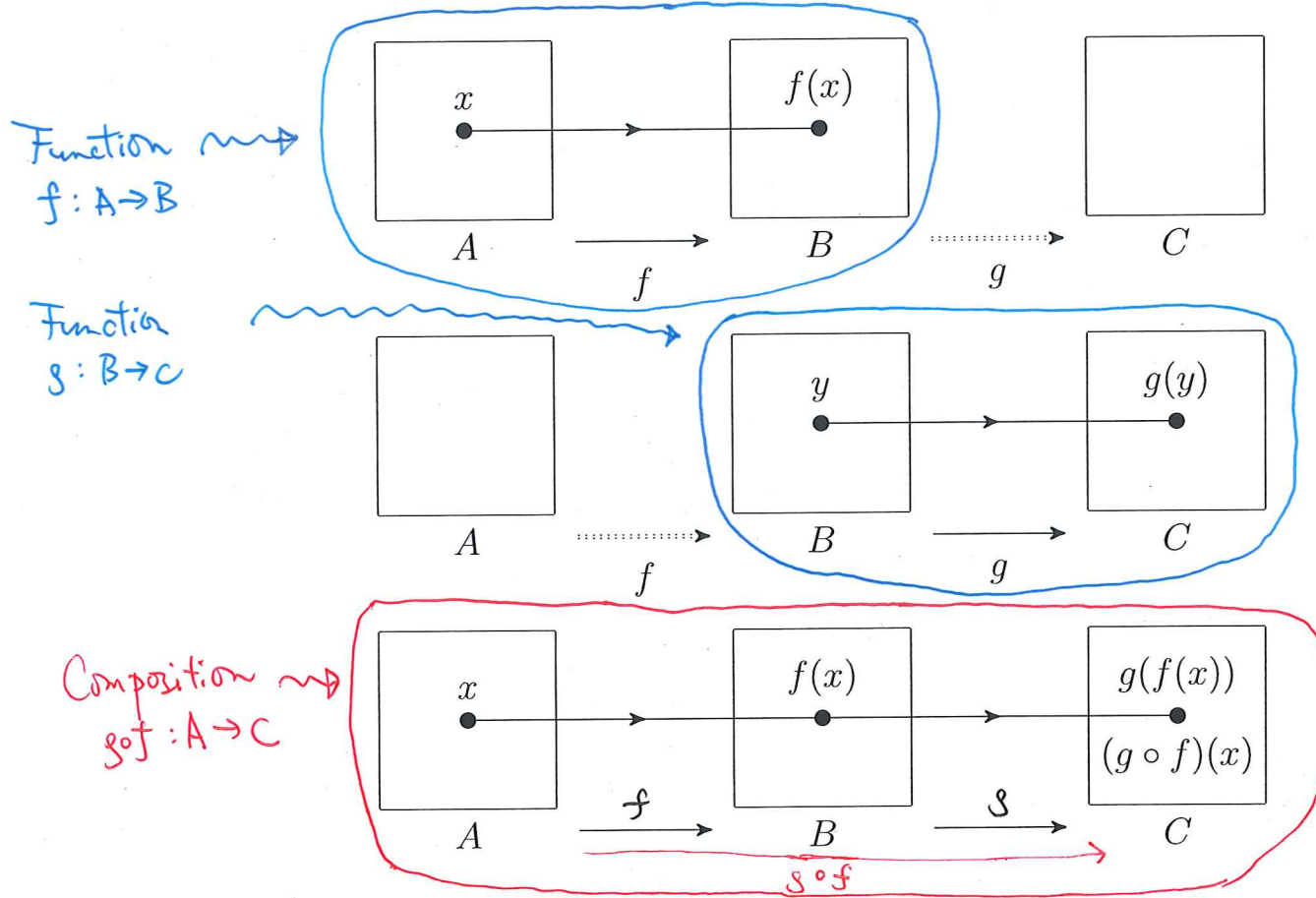
Out of two functions, the range of one being the same as the domain of the other, we may construct a third function

Definition.

Let A, B, C be sets, and $f : A \rightarrow B, g : B \rightarrow C$ be functions.

Define the function $g \circ f : A \rightarrow C$ by $(g \circ f)(x) = g(f(x))$ for any $x \in A$.

$g \circ f$ is called the **composition** of the functions f, g .



Example of composition.

The function $x \mapsto x^*$ for any $x \in (0, +\infty)$ with domain $(0, +\infty)$ and range \mathbb{R} is the composition $g \circ f$ in which:

- $f : (0, +\infty) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is the function given by $f(x) = x \ln(x)$ for any $x \in (0, +\infty)$, and
- $g : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is the function given by $g(y) = \exp(y)$ for any $y \in \mathbb{R}$.

Lemma (1). (Associativity of composition.)

Let A, B, C, D be sets, and

$$f : A \longrightarrow B, \quad g : B \longrightarrow C, \quad h : C \longrightarrow D$$

be functions.

$(h \circ g) \circ f = h \circ (g \circ f)$ as functions.

Remark. Hence there is no ambiguity when we refer to $(h \circ g) \circ f$ (and $h \circ (g \circ f)$) as $h \circ g \circ f$.

Proof of Lemma (1).

Let A, B, C, D be sets, and $f : A \longrightarrow B, g : B \longrightarrow C, h : C \longrightarrow D$ be functions.

Note that $(h \circ g) \circ f, h \circ (g \circ f)$ have the same domain, namely, A .

Also note that $(h \circ g) \circ f, h \circ (g \circ f)$ have the same range, namely, D .

[We want to verify: For any $x \in A, ((h \circ g) \circ f)(x) = (h \circ (g \circ f))(x).$]

Pick any $x \in A$.

$$((h \circ g) \circ f)(x) = (h \circ g)(f(x)) = h(g(f(x))).$$

$$(h \circ (g \circ f))(x) = h((g \circ f)(x)) = h(g(f(x))).$$

Then $((h \circ g) \circ f)(x) = (h \circ (g \circ f))(x)$.

It follows that $(h \circ g) \circ f = h \circ (g \circ f)$ as functions. \square

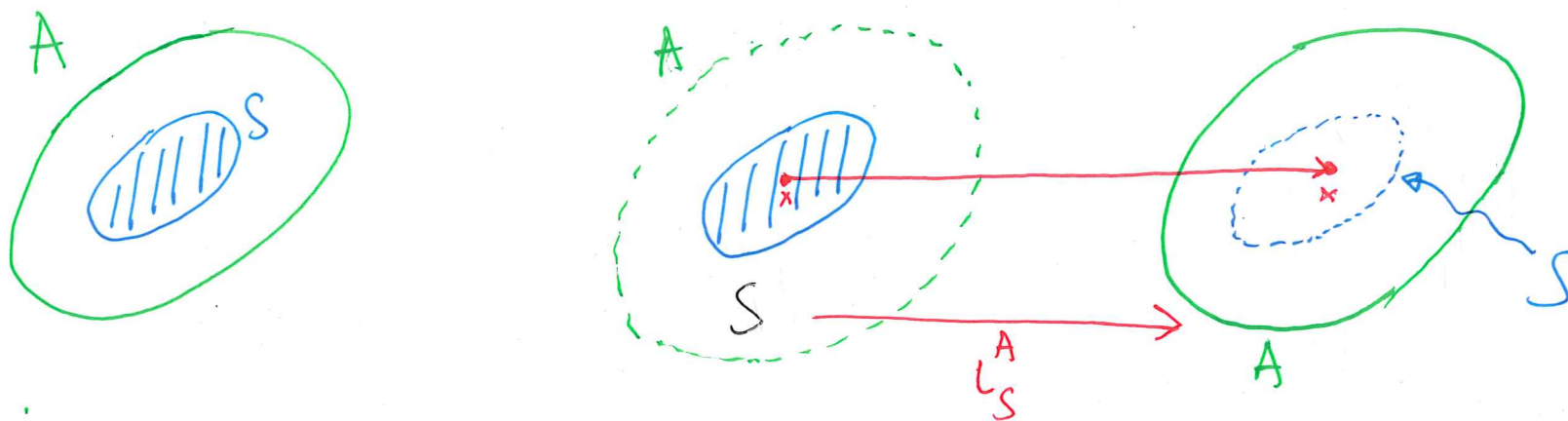
6. Identity function, inclusion function, restrictions and extensions.

Here are the formal definitions (in terms of set language) of several miscellaneous notions used in various occasions.

Definition.

Let A be a set.

- (a) Define the function $\text{id}_A : A \longrightarrow A$ by $\text{id}_A(x) = x$ for any $x \in A$. id_A is called **the identity function on A** .
- (b) Let S be a subset of A . Define the function $\iota_S^A : S \longrightarrow A$ by $\iota_S^A(x) = x$ for any $x \in S$. ι_S^A is called **the inclusion function of S into A** .



Reminder :

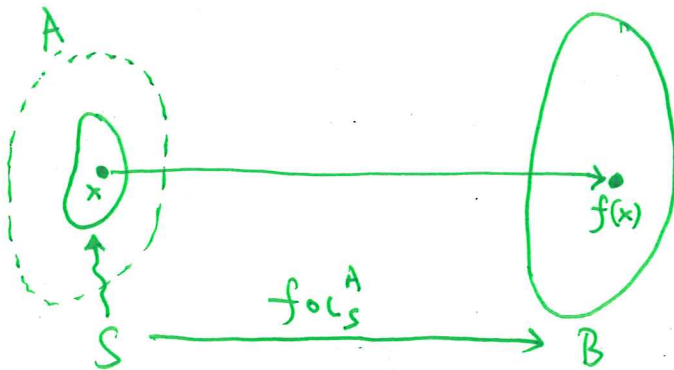
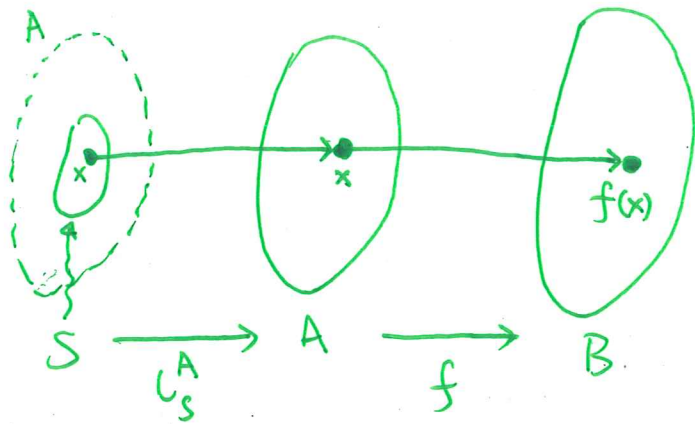
In general, ι_S^A is not the same as the identity function on A .

In fact, $\iota_S^A = \text{id}_A$ as functions iff $S = A$.

Definition.

Let A, B be sets, and $f : A \rightarrow B$ be a function.

- (a) Let S be a subset of A . The function $f \circ \iota_S^A : S \rightarrow B$ is called the **restriction of f to S** . It is denoted by $f|_S$.
- (b) Let H be a set which contains A as a subset, K be a set which contains B as a subset. Suppose $g : H \rightarrow K$ be a function which satisfies $g \circ \iota_A^H = \iota_B^K \circ f$. Then g is called an **extension of f** .



Examples of restrictions from one-variable calculus.

$$\textcircled{1} \tan \Big|_{(-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2})} : (-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$$

is the function obtained by 'restricting' the tangent function to the interval $(-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2})$.

$$\textcircled{2} \sin \Big|_{[-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}]} : [-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$$

is the function obtained by 'restricting' the sine function to the interval $[-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}]$.

Why relevant? Such 'restrictions' are useful when we want to introduce 'arctangent', 'arsine' respectively.

7. Graphs of functions.

To generalize the notion of graphs of functions, we need bring in the notion of cartesian products for two arbitrary sets.

Definition.

Let A, B be sets, and $f : A \longrightarrow B$ be a function. Define $G = \{(x, f(x)) \mid x \in A\}$. G is called the **graph of the function f** . Note that $G \subset A \times B$.

Lemma (2). (Equality of functions and equality of graphs.)

Let A, B be sets, and $f_1, f_2 : A \longrightarrow B$ be functions. Suppose G_1, G_2 are the respective graphs of f_1, f_2 . Then f_1 is equal to f_2 as functions iff $G_1 = G_2$.

Proof of Lemma (2). Exercise in set language.

8. 'Coordinate plane diagrams'.

We may visualize a function, displaying its graph, by its 'coordinate plane diagram'.

We illustrate the idea with the example below:

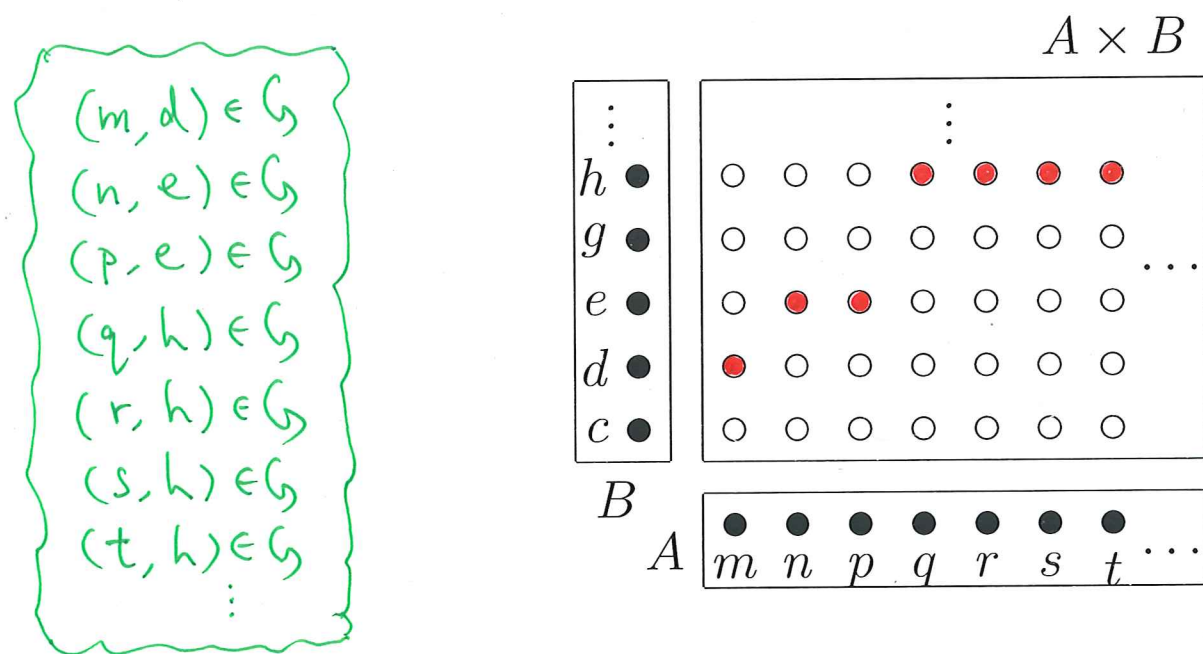
Let $A = \{m, n, p, q, r, s, t, \dots\}$, $B = \{c, d, e, g, h, \dots\}$, and $f : A \rightarrow B$ be defined by

$$f(m) = d, f(n) = e, f(p) = e, f(q) = h, f(r) = h, f(s) = h, f(t) = h, \dots$$

By definition, the graph of f is the set

$$G = \{(m, d), (n, e), (p, e), (q, h), (r, h), (s, h), (t, h), \dots\}$$

We draw the 'coordinate plane diagram' of the function f as:



9. 'Blobs-and-arrows diagram' versus 'coordinate plane diagram'.

Depending on how we like the 'information' concerned with a given function $f : A \rightarrow B$ is presented, we may draw its 'coordinate plane diagram' or its 'blobs-and-arrows diagram'.

Each has its own advantage.

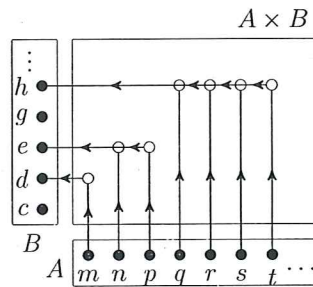
The two diagrams may be converted from one to the other in a systematic way.

Illustration:

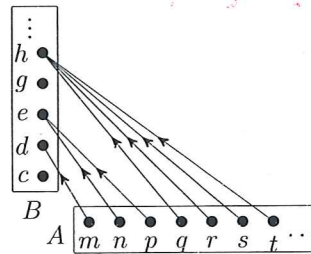
Let $A = \{m, n, p, q, r, s, t, \dots\}$, $B = \{c, d, e, g, h, \dots\}$, and $f : A \rightarrow B$ be defined by

$$f(m) = d, f(n) = e, f(p) = e, f(q) = h, f(r) = h, f(s) = h, f(t) = h, \dots$$

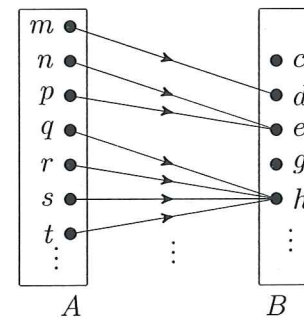
(a) 'Coordinate plane diagram' of f :



(b) In-between the two kinds of diagrams:



(c) 'Blobs-and-arrows diagram' of f :



Conceal the Venn diagram of $A \times B$ (but retain the 'information' provided by the graph of f).

Draw the respective Venn diagrams of A, B at the 'correct' positions.

'Reverse' the process.

'Reverse' the process.

10. **Basic examples of functions in school maths and beyond.**

We have encountered various examples of functions in school mathematics and in basic MATH courses.

- (a) **Polynomial functions with real coefficients.**
- (b) **Rational functions with real coefficients.**
- (c) **‘Algebraic functions’ in school maths.**
- (d) **Elementary transcendental functions.**
- (e) **‘Multivariable functions’ in multivariable calculus.**
- (f) **Functions of one complex variable.**
- (g) **Infinite sequences and families.**
- (h) **‘Algebraic operations’ for algebraic structures.**
- (i) **Linear transformations and ‘transformation for various algebraic structures’.**
- (j) **Various ‘operations’ in calculus and beyond.**

11. Families.

The notion of infinite sequences of real numbers can be generalized to the notion of families for collections of objects.

Definition.

Suppose I, B are sets, and $\varphi : I \longrightarrow B$ is a function.

Then we say φ is a **family in B , indexed by I** .

The set I is referred to as the **index set** for this family, and the set $\{x \in B : x = \varphi(t) \text{ for some } t \in I\}$ is called the **set of all terms** for this family.

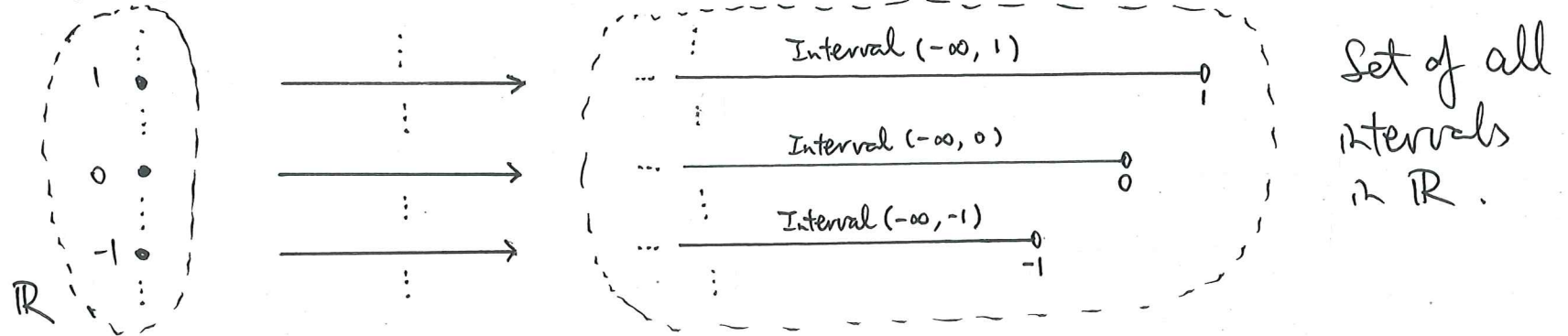
Remarks.

- (a) This definition generalizes the notion of infinite sequences of real numbers. When $I = \mathbf{N}$, a family in B is just an infinite sequence in B ; when furthermore $B = \mathbf{R}$, it is just an infinite sequence of real numbers.
- (b) We imitate the notations for infinite sequences when we regard the function φ from I to B as a family in B with index set I . We suppress the symbols φ, B , and present this family as, say, $\{x_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in I}$, in which the symbol x_α stands for $\varphi(\alpha)$ for each $\alpha \in I$.
- (c) What is the point of this definition?

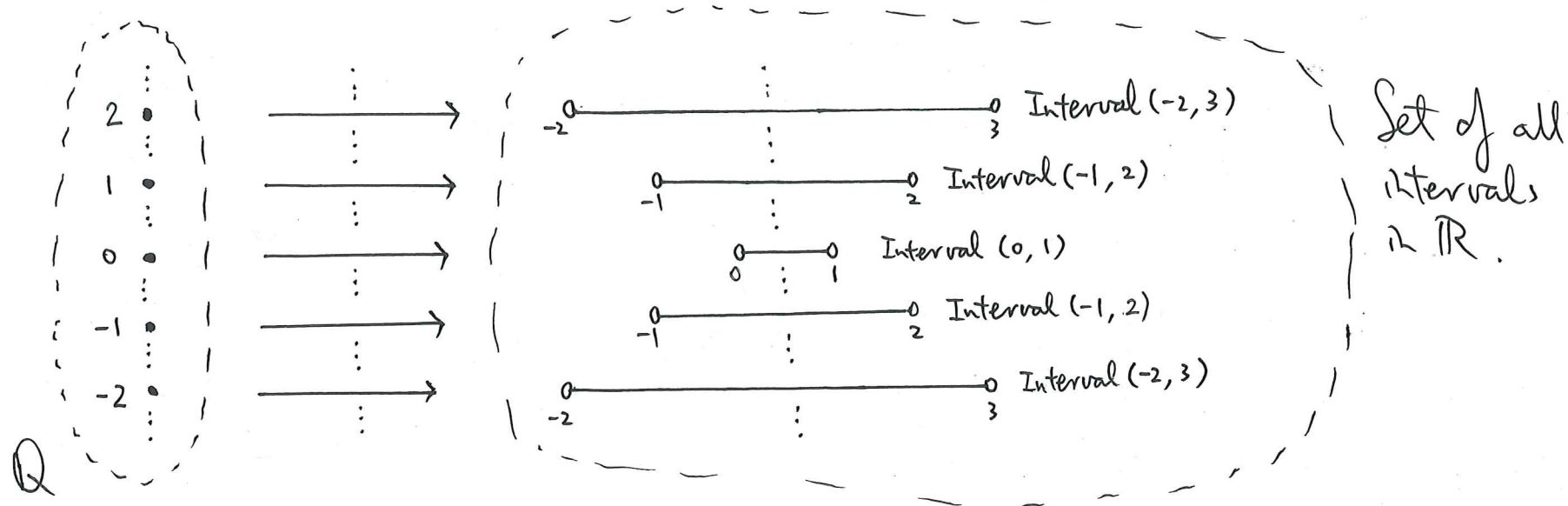
It gives us the flexibility to regard the same family in B , say, $\{x_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in I}$, as a family in C which contains B as a subset, whenever it is convenient for us to do so.

Examples.

- (a) $\{(-\infty, u)\}_{u \in \mathbb{R}}$ stands for the function with domain \mathbb{R} and range, say, the set of all intervals, assigning each real number u to the open interval $(-\infty, u)$.



- (b) $\{(-|a|, |a| + 1)\}_{a \in \mathbb{Q}}$ stands for the function with domain \mathbb{Q} and range, say, the set of all intervals, assigning each rational number a to the open interval $(-|a|, |a| + 1)$.



(c) Let p, q be real numbers.

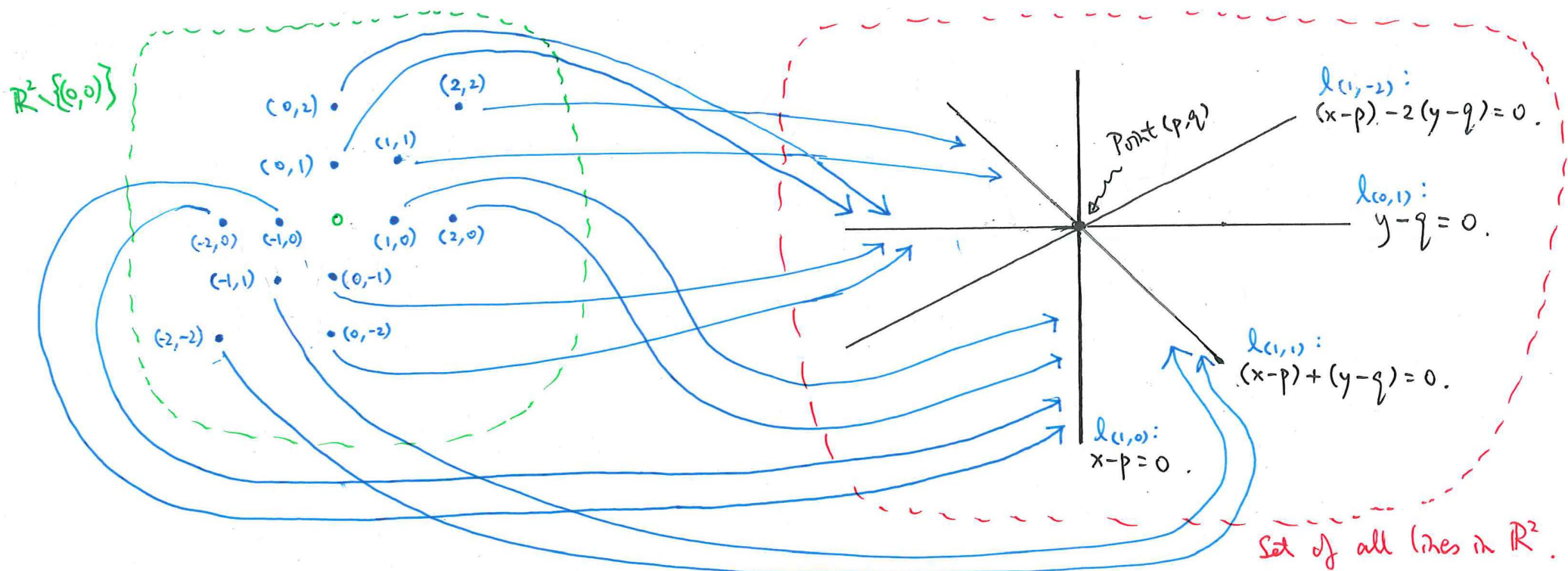
For any real numbers a, b , not both zero, define $\ell_{(a,b)}$ by $\ell_{(a,b)} = \{(x, y) \mid x, y \in \mathbb{R} \text{ and } a(x - p) + b(y - q) = 0\}$.

$\ell_{(a,b)}$ is the line in the infinite plane whose equation is given by $ax + by = ap + bq$.

$\{\ell_{(a,b)}\}_{(a,b) \in \mathbb{R}^2 \setminus \{(0,0)\}}$ stands for the function with domain $\mathbb{R}^2 \setminus \{(0,0)\}$ and range, say, the set of all lines in the infinite plane, assigning each $(a, b) \in \mathbb{R}^2 \setminus \{(0,0)\}$ to the line $\ell_{(a,b)}$.

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(The set of all terms of this family is the pencil of all lines passing through (p, q) .)



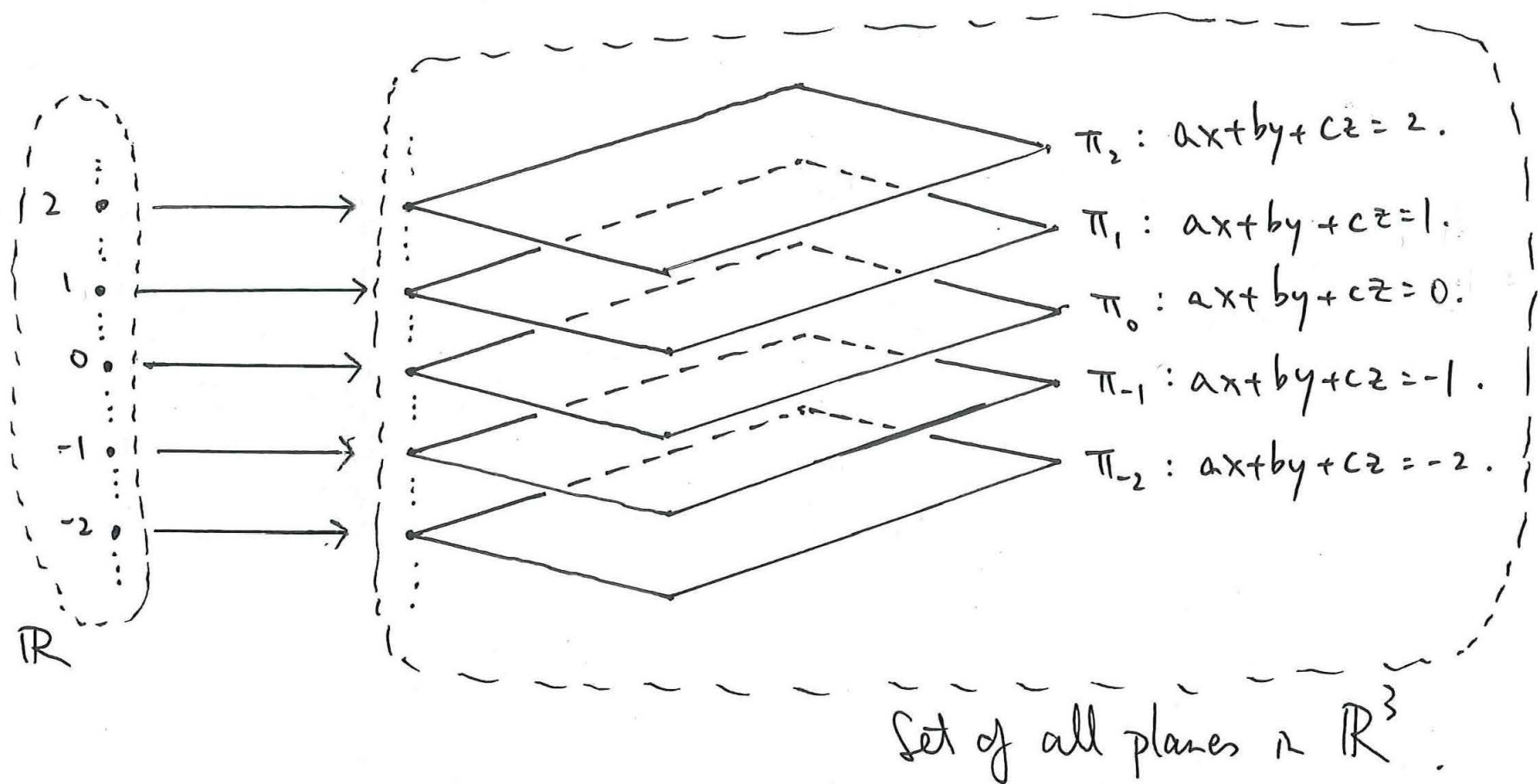
(d) Let a, b, c be real numbers, not all zero.

For any real number d , define π_d by $\pi_d = \{(x, y, z) \mid x, y, z \in \mathbb{R} \text{ and } ax + by + cz = d\}$.

π_d is the plane in the infinite space whose equation is given by $ax + by + cz = d$.

$\{\pi_d\}_{d \in \mathbb{R}}$ stands for the function with domain \mathbb{R} and range, say, the set of all planes in the infinite space, assigning each $d \in \mathbb{R}$ to the plane π_d .

(The set of all terms of this family is the pencil of planes all parallel to the plane $ax + by + cz = 0$.)



(e) For each complex number p , for each positive real number r , define

$$C(\zeta, r) = \{z \in \mathbb{C} : |z - p| = r\}.$$

($C(\zeta, r)$ is the circle in the Argand plane with centre p and radius r .)

Let $p \in \mathbb{C}$.

$\{C(p, r)\}_{r \in (0, +\infty)}$ stands for the function with domain $(0, +\infty)$ and range, say, the set of all circles in the Argand plane, assigning each positive real number to the circle $C(p, r)$.

(The set of all terms of this family is the pencil of circles concentric at p .)

(f) For each complex number p , for each positive real number r , define

$$D(\zeta, r) = \{z \in \mathbb{C} : |z - p| < r\}.$$

($D(\zeta, r)$ is the ‘open disc’ in the Argand plane with centre p and radius r .)

$\{D(r, r)\}_{r \in (0, +\infty)}$ stands for the function with domain $(0, +\infty)$ and range, say, the set of all open discs in the Argand plane, assigning each positive real number to the open disc $D(r, r)$.

(g) For each real number α , define the polynomial function $f_\alpha : \mathbb{R} \longrightarrow \mathbb{R}$ by $f_\alpha(x) = x^2 + \alpha x + 1$ for any $x \in \mathbb{R}$.

$\{f_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in \mathbb{R}}$ stands for the function with domain \mathbb{R} and range, say, the set of all polynomial functions, assigning each real number α to f_α .

12. Set operations for families of sets.

The notion of intersection and union for infinite sequences of sets, introduced in the Handout *Universal quantifier and existential quantifier*, can be immediately generalized to families of sets.

Definition.

Let M, I be sets, and $\{S_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in I}$ be a family of subsets of the set M , indexed by I . (For any $\alpha \in I$, S_α is a subset of M .)

- (1) The **intersection of the family of subsets $\{S_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in I}$ of the set M** is defined to be the set $\{x \in M : x \in S_\alpha \text{ for any } \alpha \in I\}$. It is denoted by $\bigcap_{\alpha \in I} S_\alpha$.
- (2) The **union of the family of subsets $\{S_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in I}$ of the set M** is defined to be the set $\{x \in M : x \in S_\alpha \text{ for some } \alpha \in I\}$. It is denoted by $\bigcup_{\alpha \in I} S_\alpha$.

Remark. Suppose C is a subset of $\mathfrak{P}(M)$, and we ‘index’ C by its elements to obtain the family $\{S\}_{S \in C}$. Then the intersection of the set C of subsets of the set M is the intersection of the family $\{S\}_{S \in C}$, and the union of the set C of subsets of the set M is the union of the family $\{S\}_{S \in C}$.

13. Recall this result in the Handout *Universal quantifier and existential quantifier*:

Theorem (\star).

Let M be a set and $\{A_n\}_{n=0}^{\infty}$ be an infinite sequence of subsets of M .

(1) Let S be a subset of M . Suppose $S \subset A_n$ for any $n \in \mathbf{N}$. Then $S \subset \bigcap_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n$.

(2) Let S be a subset of M . Suppose $S \subset A_n$ for some $n \in \mathbf{N}$. Then $S \subset \bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n$.

(3) Let T be a subset of M . Suppose $A_n \subset T$ for any $n \in \mathbf{N}$. Then $\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n \subset T$.

(4) Let T be a subset of M . Suppose $A_n \subset T$ for some $n \in \mathbf{N}$. Then $\bigcap_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n \subset T$.

(5) Let C be a subset of M . ($\{A_n \cup C\}_{n=0}^{\infty}, \{A_n \cap C\}_{n=0}^{\infty}, \{A_n \setminus C\}_{n=0}^{\infty}, \{C \setminus A_n\}_{n=0}^{\infty}$ are infinite sequences of subsets of M .) The equalities below hold:

$$(5a) \left(\bigcap_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n \right) \cap C = \bigcap_{n=0}^{\infty} (A_n \cap C).$$

$$(5e) \left(\bigcap_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n \right) \setminus C = \bigcap_{n=0}^{\infty} (A_n \setminus C).$$

$$(5b) \left(\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n \right) \cup C = \bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} (A_n \cup C).$$

$$(5f) \left(\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n \right) \setminus C = \bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} (A_n \setminus C).$$

$$(5c) \left(\bigcap_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n \right) \cup C = \bigcap_{n=0}^{\infty} (A_n \cup C).$$

$$(5g) C \setminus \left(\bigcap_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n \right) = \bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} (C \setminus A_n).$$

$$(5d) \left(\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n \right) \cap C = \bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} (A_n \cap C).$$

$$(5h) C \setminus \left(\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n \right) = \bigcap_{n=0}^{\infty} (C \setminus A_n).$$

Theorem (\star) can be generalized immediately to Theorem (\star') . The proofs of the respective statements are similar.

Theorem (\star') .

Let M, I be sets and $\{A_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in I}$ be a family of subsets of M , indexed by I .

(0) Suppose $I = \emptyset$. Then $\bigcap_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha = M$ and $\bigcup_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha = \emptyset$.

(1) Let S be a subset of M . Suppose $S \subset A_\alpha$ for any $\alpha \in I$. Then $S \subset \bigcap_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha$.

(2) Let S be a subset of M . Suppose $S \subset A_\alpha$ for some $\alpha \in I$. Then $S \subset \bigcup_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha$.

(3) Let T be a subset of M . Suppose $A_\alpha \subset T$ for any $\alpha \in I$. Then $\bigcup_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha \subset T$.

(4) Let T be a subset of M . Suppose $A_\alpha \subset T$ for some $\alpha \in I$. Then $\bigcap_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha \subset T$.

(5) ...

Theorem (\star) can be generalized immediately to Theorem (\star') . The proofs of the respective statements are similar.

Theorem (\star') .

Let M, I be sets and $\{A_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in I}$ be a family of subsets of M , indexed by I

(5) Let C be a subset of M . ($\{A_\alpha \cup C\}_{\alpha \in I}, \{A_\alpha \cap C\}_{\alpha \in I}, \{A_\alpha \setminus C\}_{\alpha \in I}, \{C \setminus A_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in I}$ are families of subsets of M .) The equalities below hold:

$$(5a) \quad \left(\bigcap_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha \right) \cap C = \bigcap_{\alpha \in I} (A_\alpha \cap C). \quad (5e) \quad \left(\bigcap_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha \right) \setminus C = \bigcap_{\alpha \in I} (A_\alpha \setminus C).$$

$$(5b) \quad \left(\bigcup_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha \right) \cup C = \bigcup_{\alpha \in I} (A_\alpha \cup C). \quad (5f) \quad \left(\bigcup_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha \right) \setminus C = \bigcup_{\alpha \in I} (A_\alpha \setminus C).$$

$$(5c) \quad \left(\bigcap_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha \right) \cup C = \bigcap_{\alpha \in I} (A_\alpha \cup C). \quad (5g) \quad C \setminus \left(\bigcap_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha \right) = \bigcup_{\alpha \in I} (C \setminus A_\alpha).$$

$$(5d) \quad \left(\bigcup_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha \right) \cap C = \bigcup_{\alpha \in I} (A_\alpha \cap C). \quad (5h) \quad C \setminus \left(\bigcup_{\alpha \in I} A_\alpha \right) = \bigcap_{\alpha \in I} (C \setminus A_\alpha).$$