

Universal Property of Kernels & cokernels

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2026.

Given $X \xrightarrow{f} Y$, kernel is unique up to unique isomorphism universal obj satisfying

$$\text{Ker}(f) \xrightarrow{\text{ker}(f)} X \xrightarrow{f} Y, \text{ namely } \forall T \xrightarrow{\quad} X \xrightarrow{f} Y$$

brown highlight means 0

$\exists!$
 K

/// means diagram commuted

(UP)

Univ prop of mono & epi

$X \rightarrow Y$ is epi $(\rightarrow)$ $:\Leftrightarrow$

$$\left[\forall X \xrightarrow{\quad} Y \rightrightarrows T \text{ 2 yellow composition morphisms equal } \Rightarrow X \rightarrow Y \rightrightarrows T \text{ equal} \right]$$

Corollary:

this implication often annotated by "UP mono"

$$X \rightarrow Y \rightarrow Z \Rightarrow X \rightarrow Y \rightarrow Z$$

Dual for mono. E.g.:

Prop: $\text{Ker}(f) \hookrightarrow X \xrightarrow{f} Y$

Pf: $T \xrightarrow{\text{composition}} X \rightarrow Y$
 $T \rightrightarrows K \rightarrow X \rightarrow Y$
 all green morphisms are equal

$$T \rightrightarrows K \rightarrow X \rightarrow Y$$

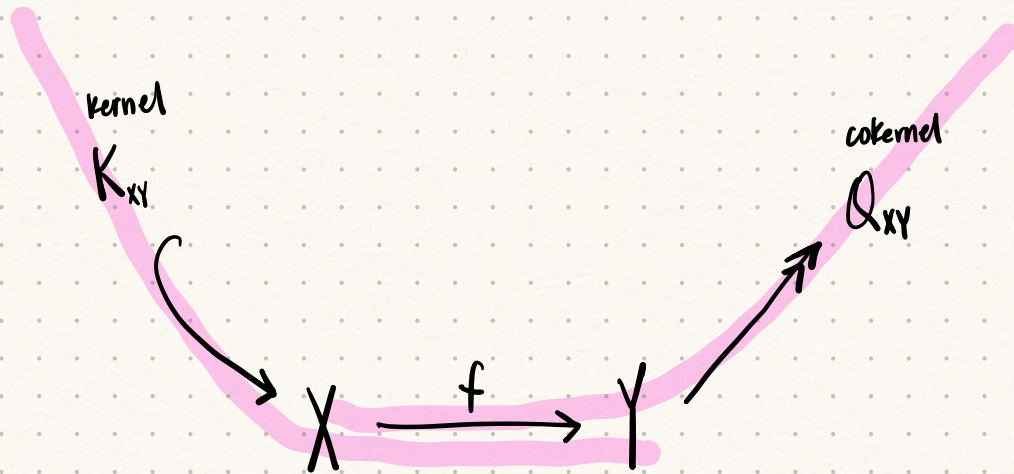
! uniqueness forces all 3 arrows $T \rightrightarrows K$ equal!

Dual for epi.

Key Iso for Abelian Categories

$$X \xrightarrow{f} Y$$

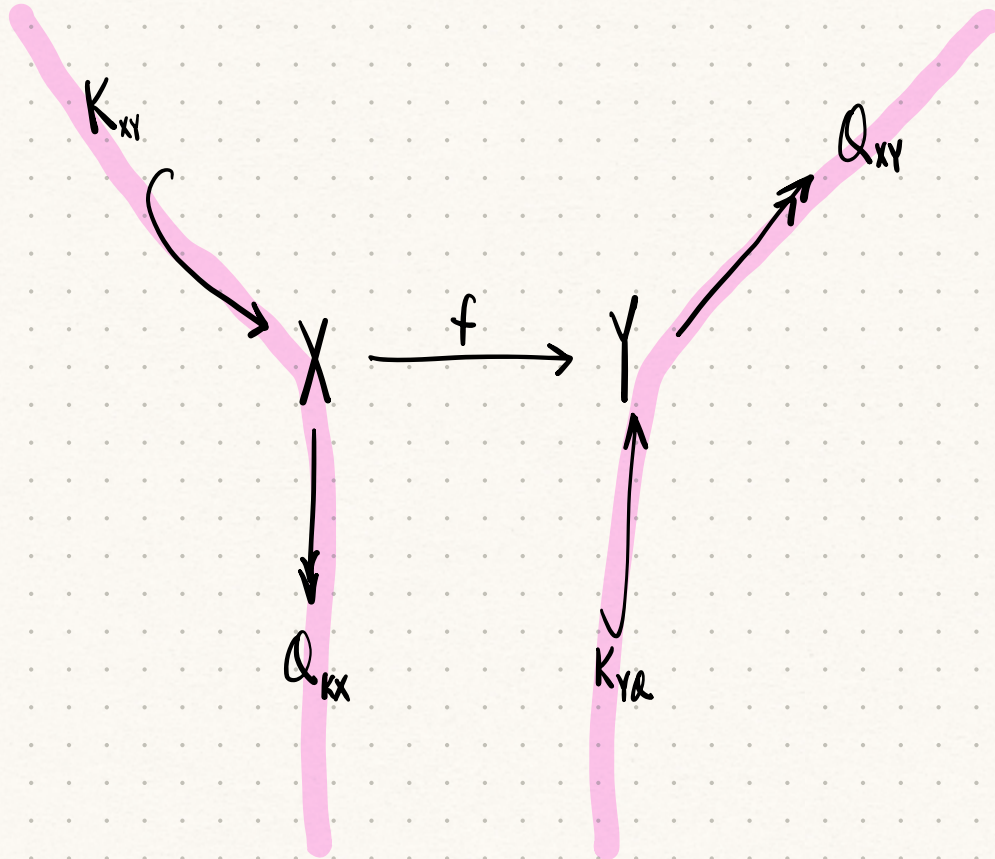
Key Iso for Abelian Categories



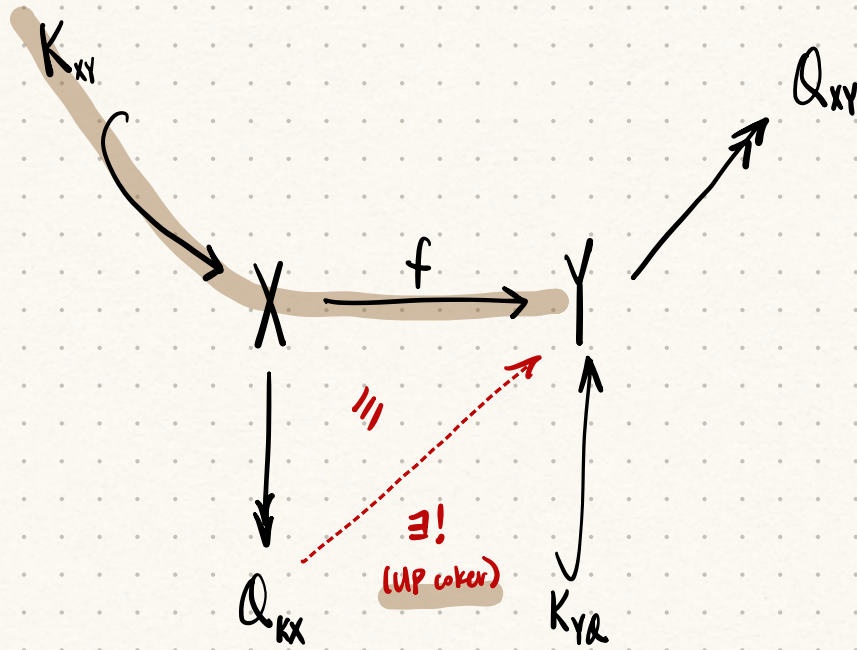
pink = "coming from $\ker/\text{coker}$ "

Later, we will understand pink = "exact"

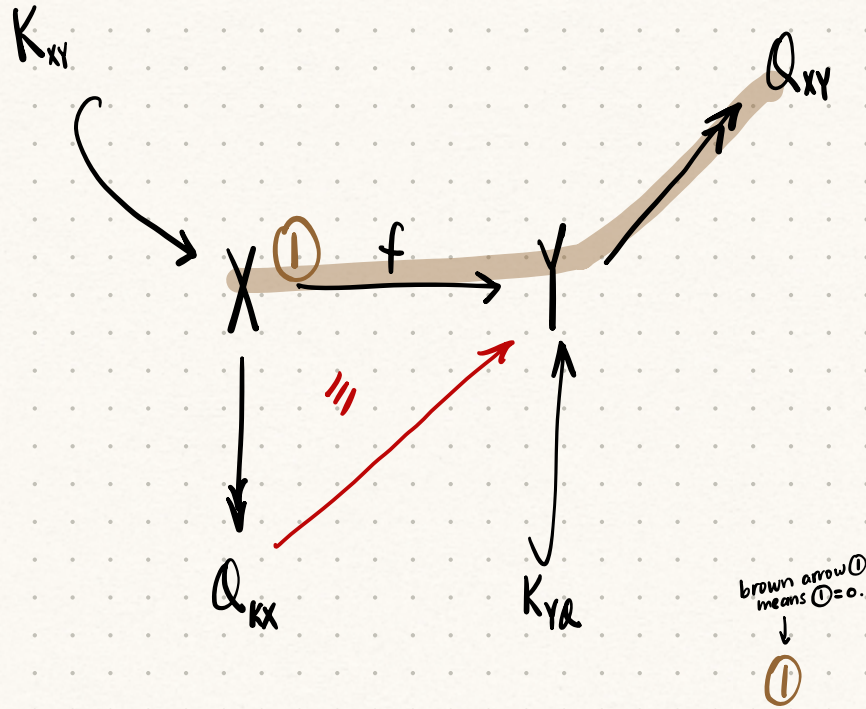
Key Iso for Abelian Categories



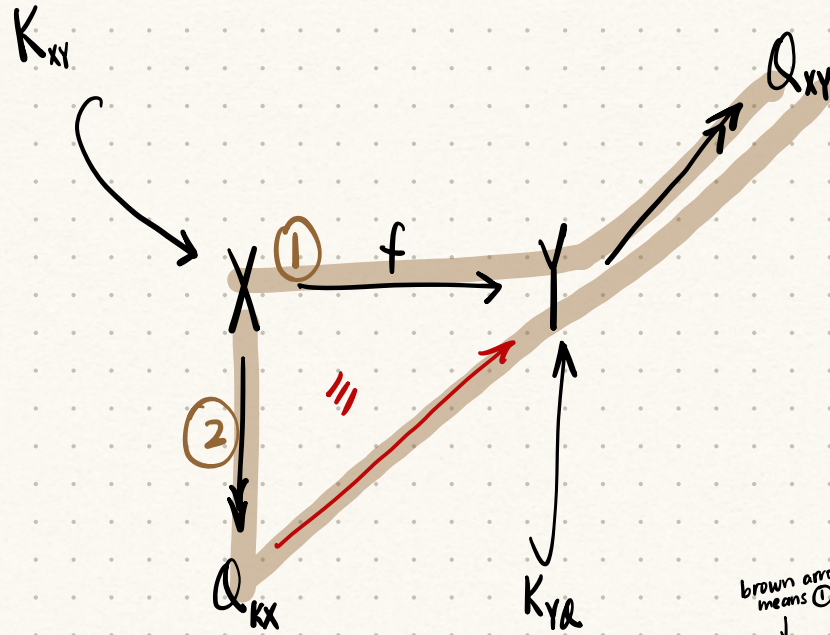
Key Iso for Abelian Categories



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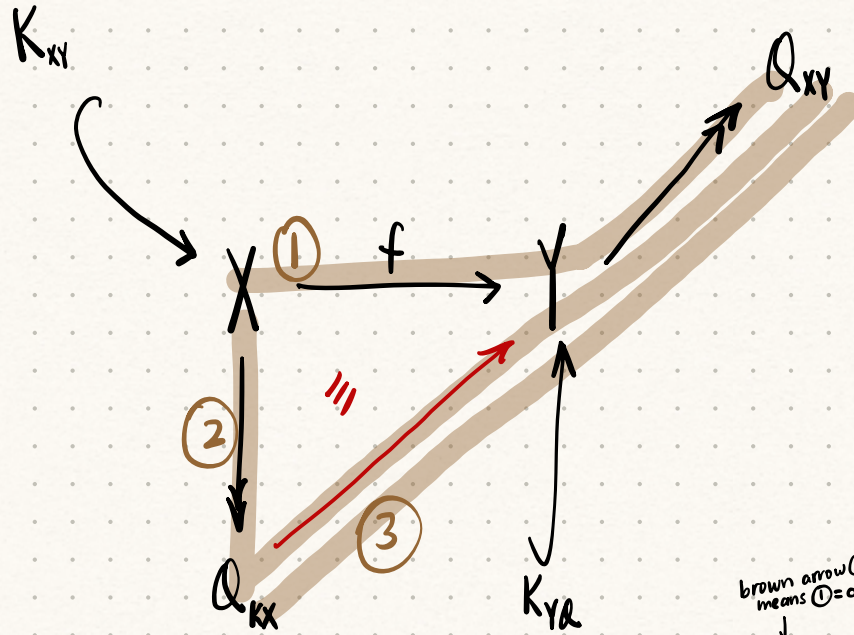


brown arrow ①
means ①=0.

$$\textcircled{1} \Rightarrow \textcircled{2}$$

$///$

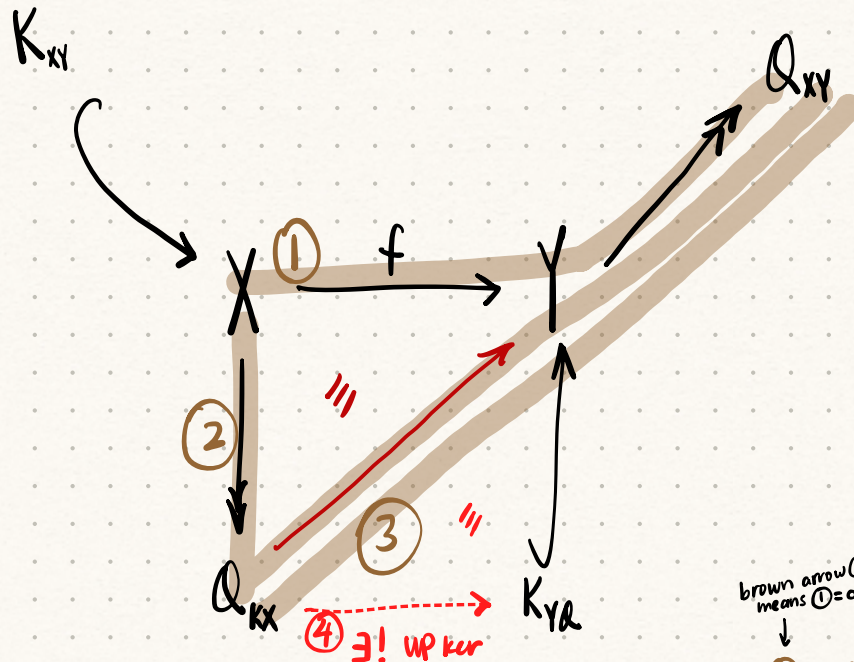
Key Iso for Abelian Categories



brown arrow ①
means ① = 0.

① $\Rightarrow$ ② $\Rightarrow$ ③
 $\Downarrow$ UPepi

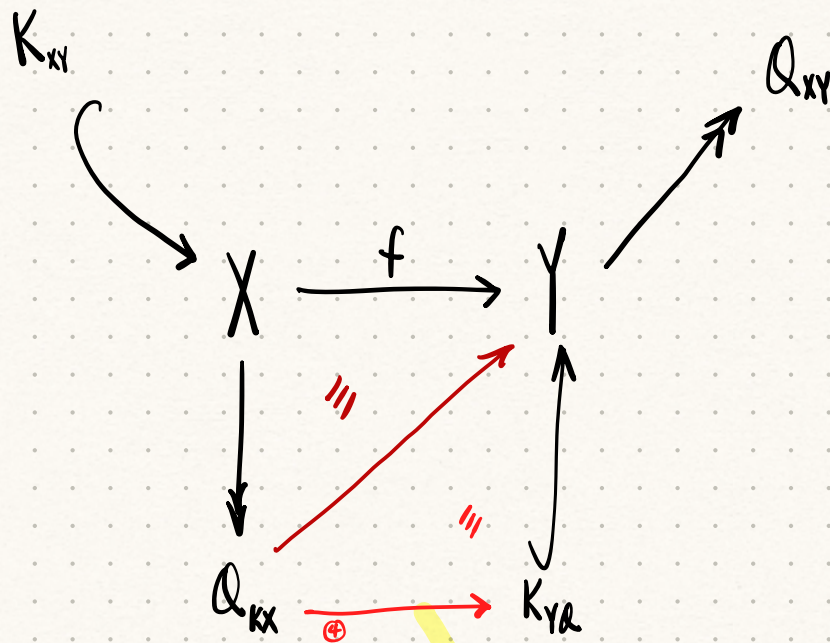
Key Iso for Abelian Categories



brown arrow 1
means $1=0$.

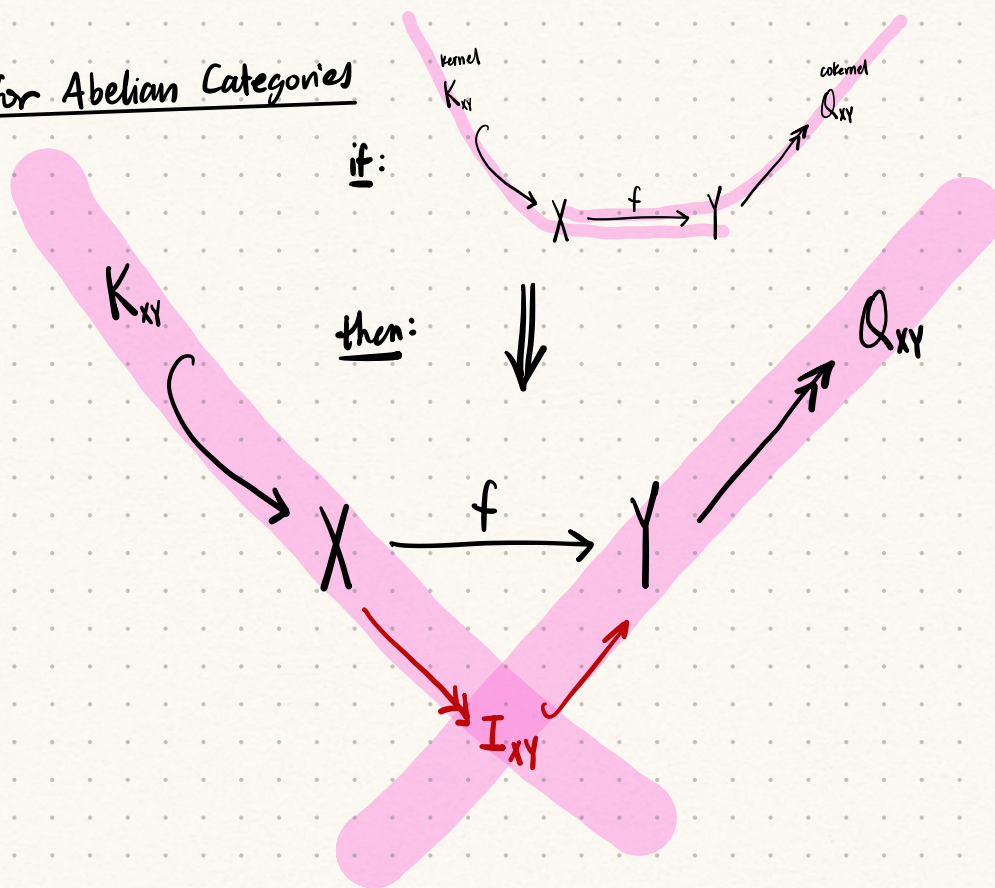


Key Iso for Abelian Categories



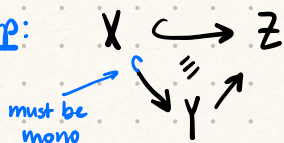
Axiom of Ab Cat, red arrow is isomorphism, can consider it one object (called image of $X \xrightarrow{f} Y$) w/ 2 canonical maps

Key Iso for Abelian Categories

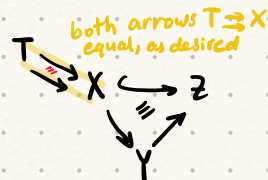
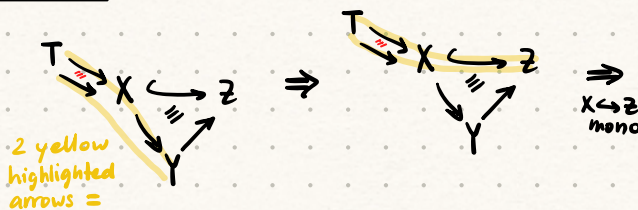


More on mono, epi, ker, coker

Prop:



Pf:



Prop: Kernel of mono is 0

Pf:



unique bic $\exists$ exactly 1 map to 0 obj.

so $0 \rightarrow X$ satisfies UP for $\text{Ker}(X \rightarrow Z)$

Converse:

$\text{Ker} = 0 \Rightarrow \text{mono}$

Pf:



difference



Then $f-g$ factors thru 0 $\Rightarrow f-g=0$

Prop: cokernel of $0 \rightarrow X$ is $X \xrightarrow{\text{id}} X$

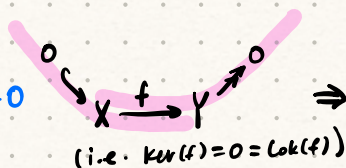
Pf:



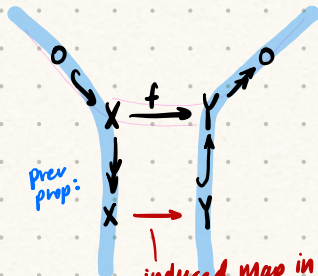
so by UP cok, id_X is cok.

Prop:

$\text{Ker} = \text{Cok} = 0 \Rightarrow \text{Iso.}$



prev prop:



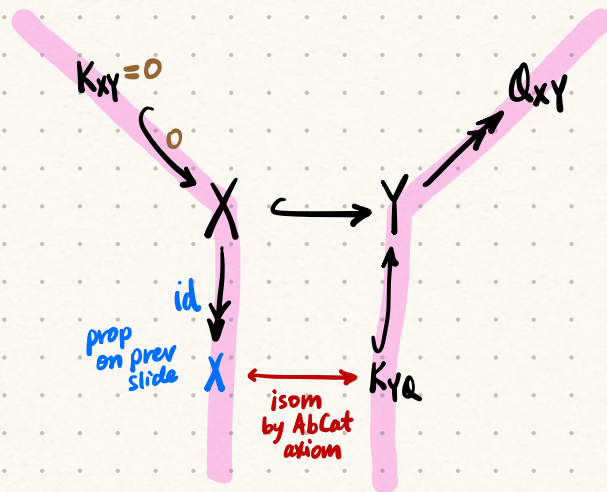
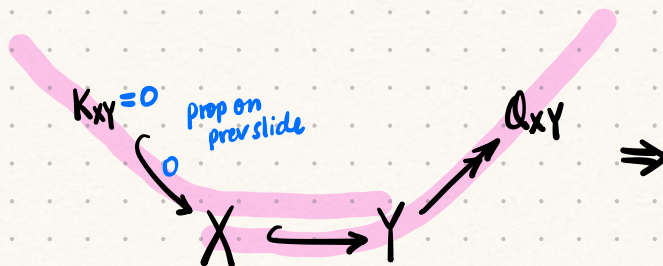
Exatnness

Thm: Given $X \hookrightarrow Y \twoheadrightarrow Z$.

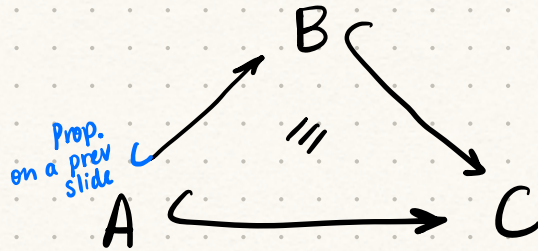
equal up to isom

$K_{YZ} \hookrightarrow \Leftrightarrow \twoheadrightarrow Q_{XY}$

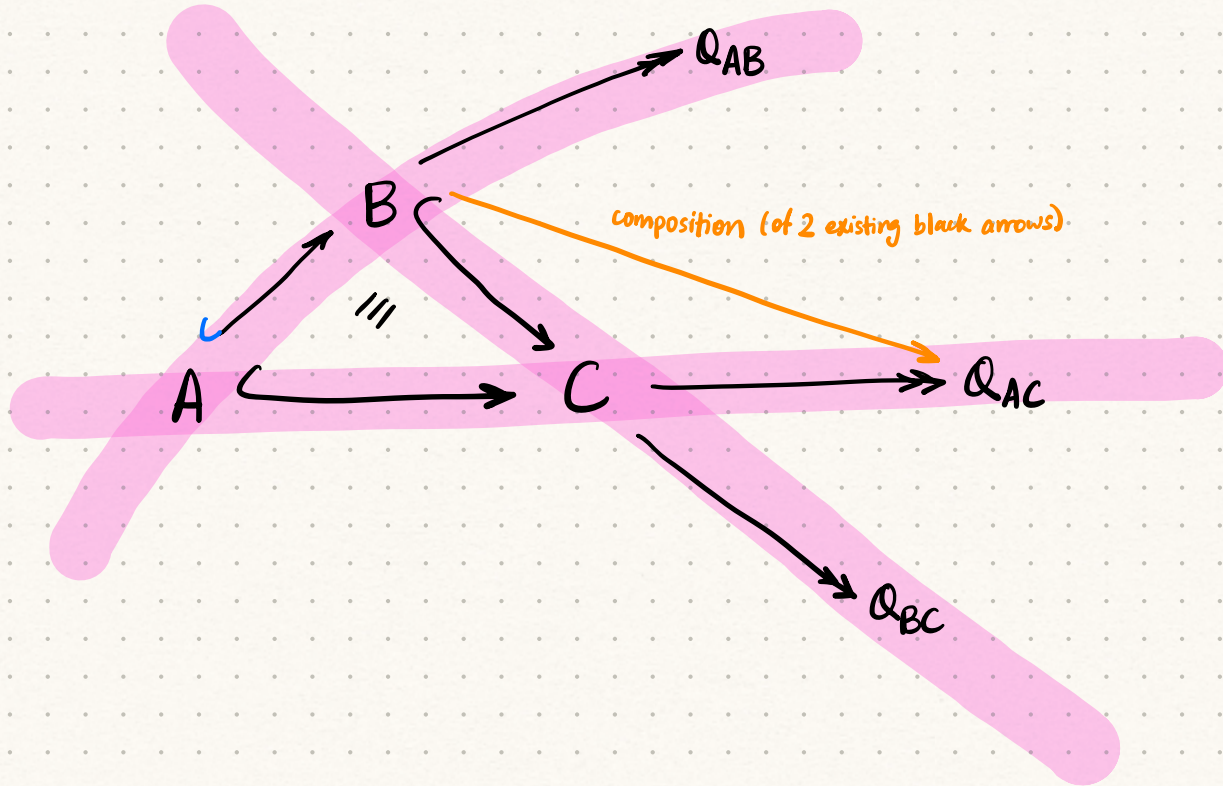
Pf:
($\Leftarrow$)



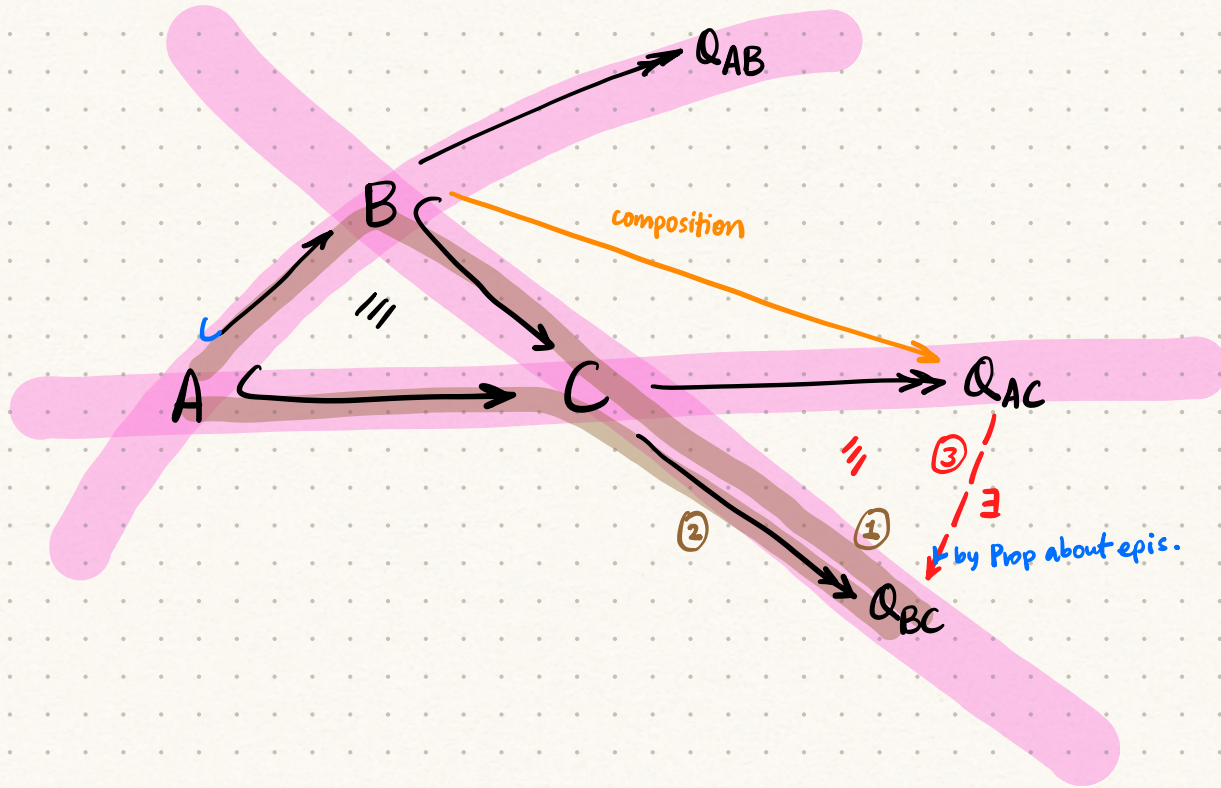
Noether Isomorphism. (cf. Theo Bühler Lemma 3.5)



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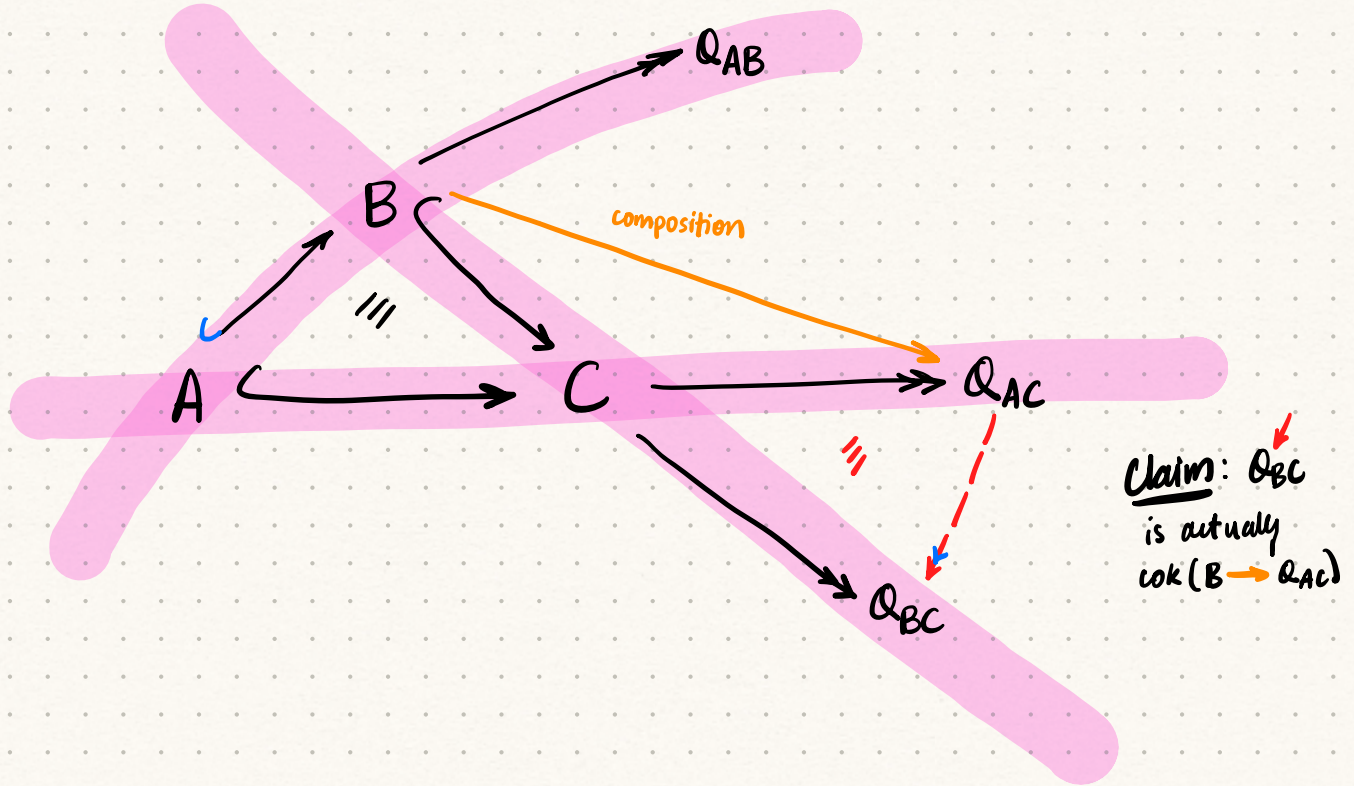
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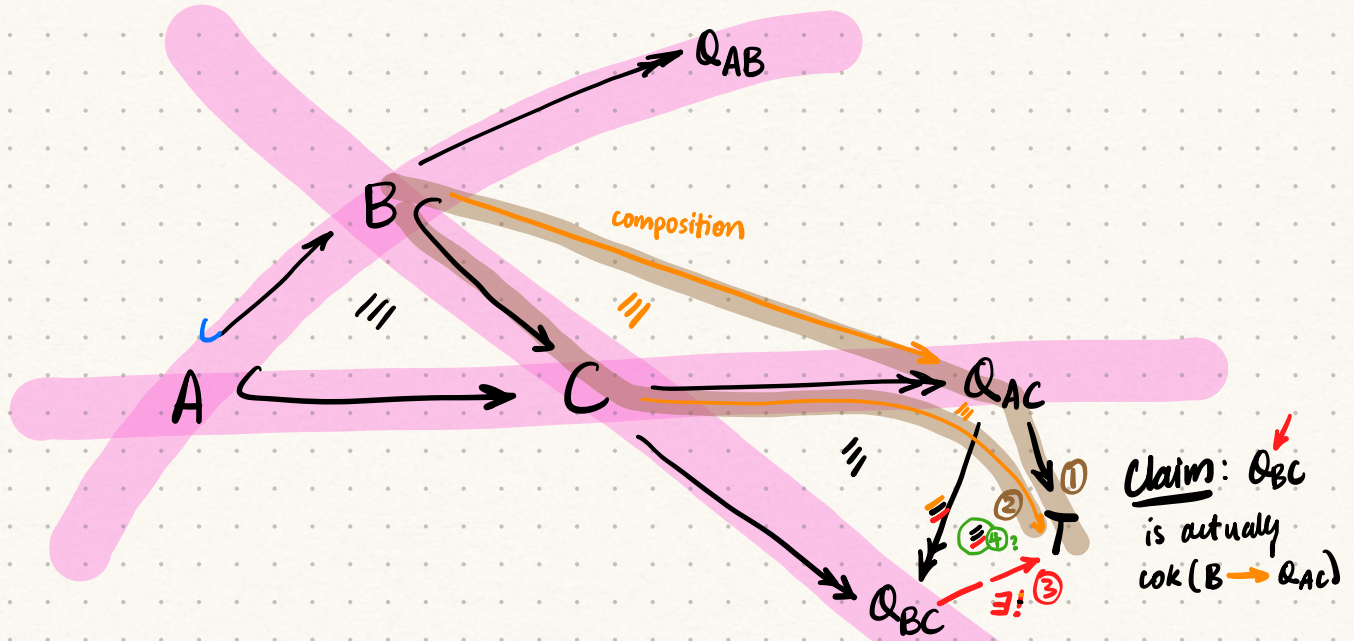
$$\textcircled{1} = \textcircled{2} \Rightarrow \textcircled{3}$$

up
wk

Noether Isomorphism. (cf. Theo Bühler Lemma 3.5)

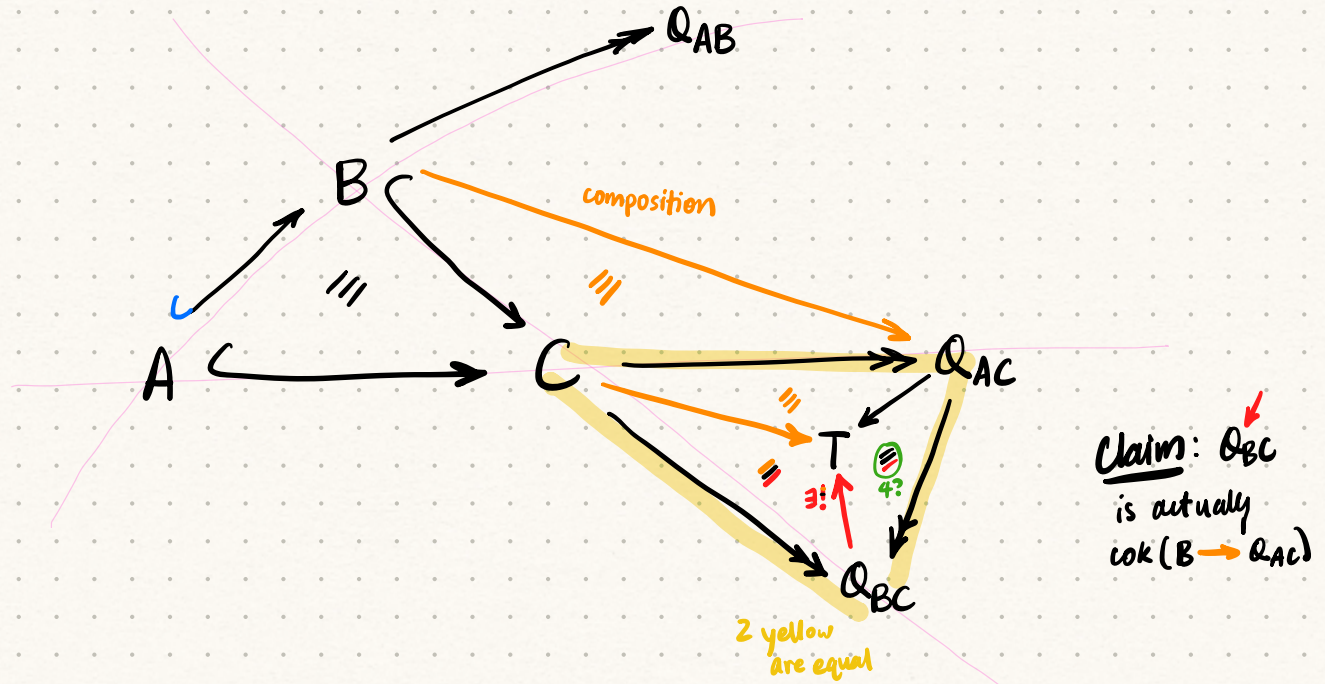


Noether Isomorphism. (cf. Theo Bühler Lemma 3.5)



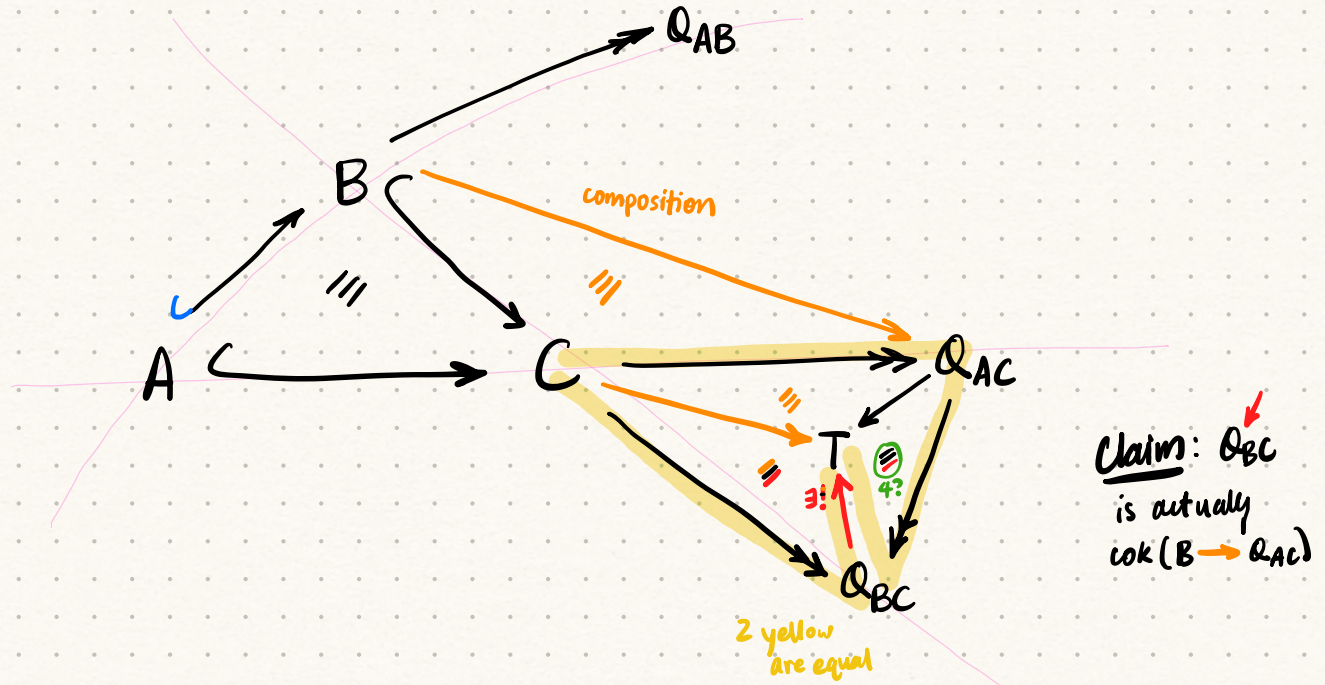
① = ② $\Rightarrow$ ③ $\Rightarrow$ ④
 up
 cok
 Remains to show ④

Noether Isomorphism. (cf. Theo Bühler Lemma 3.5)



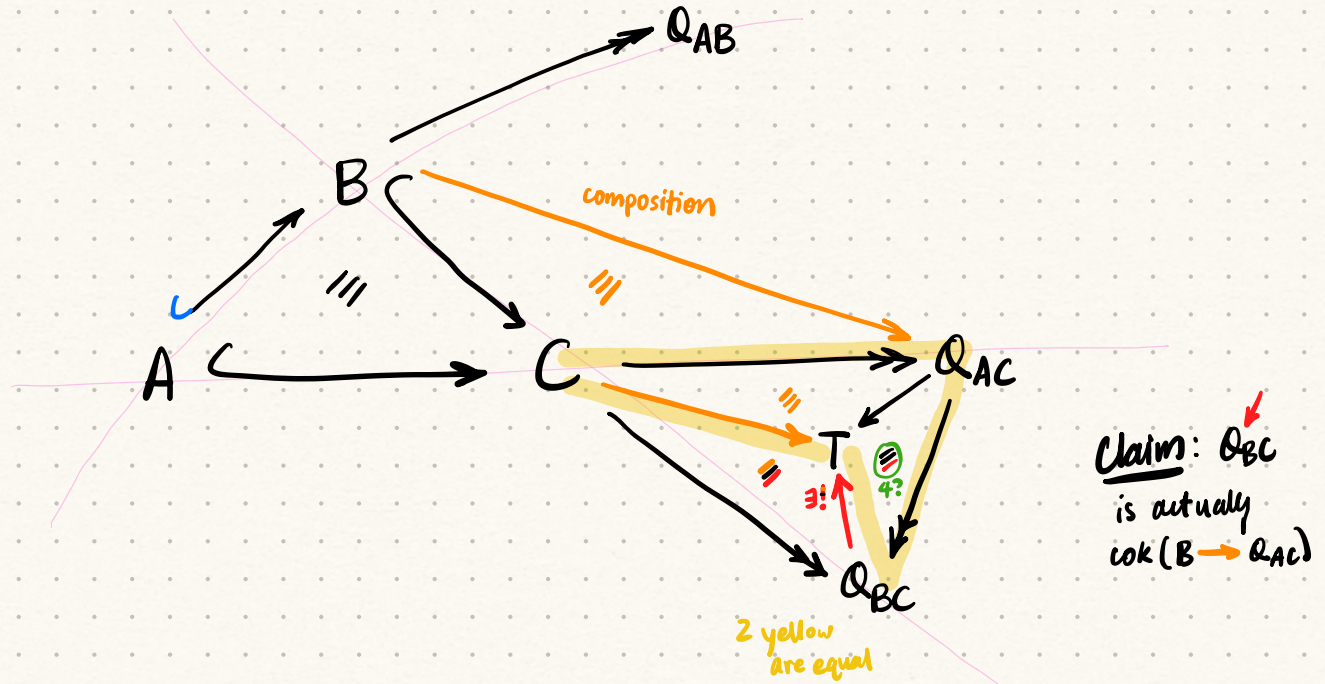
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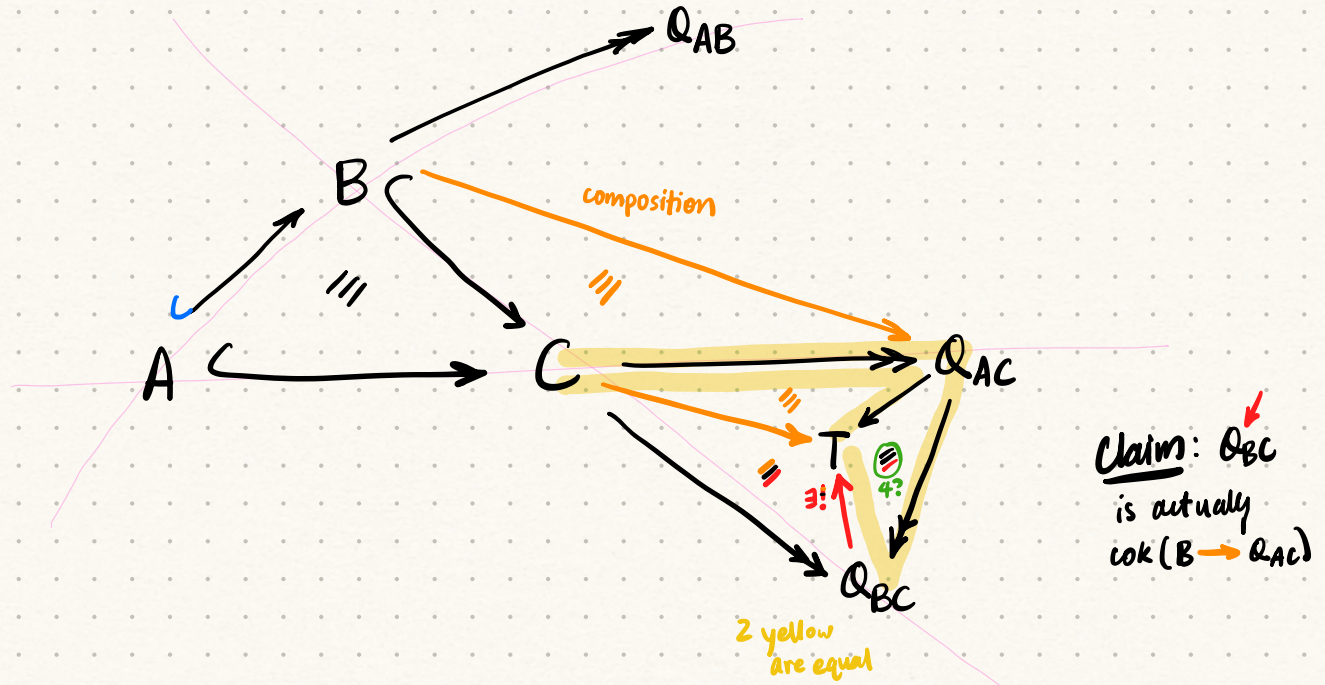
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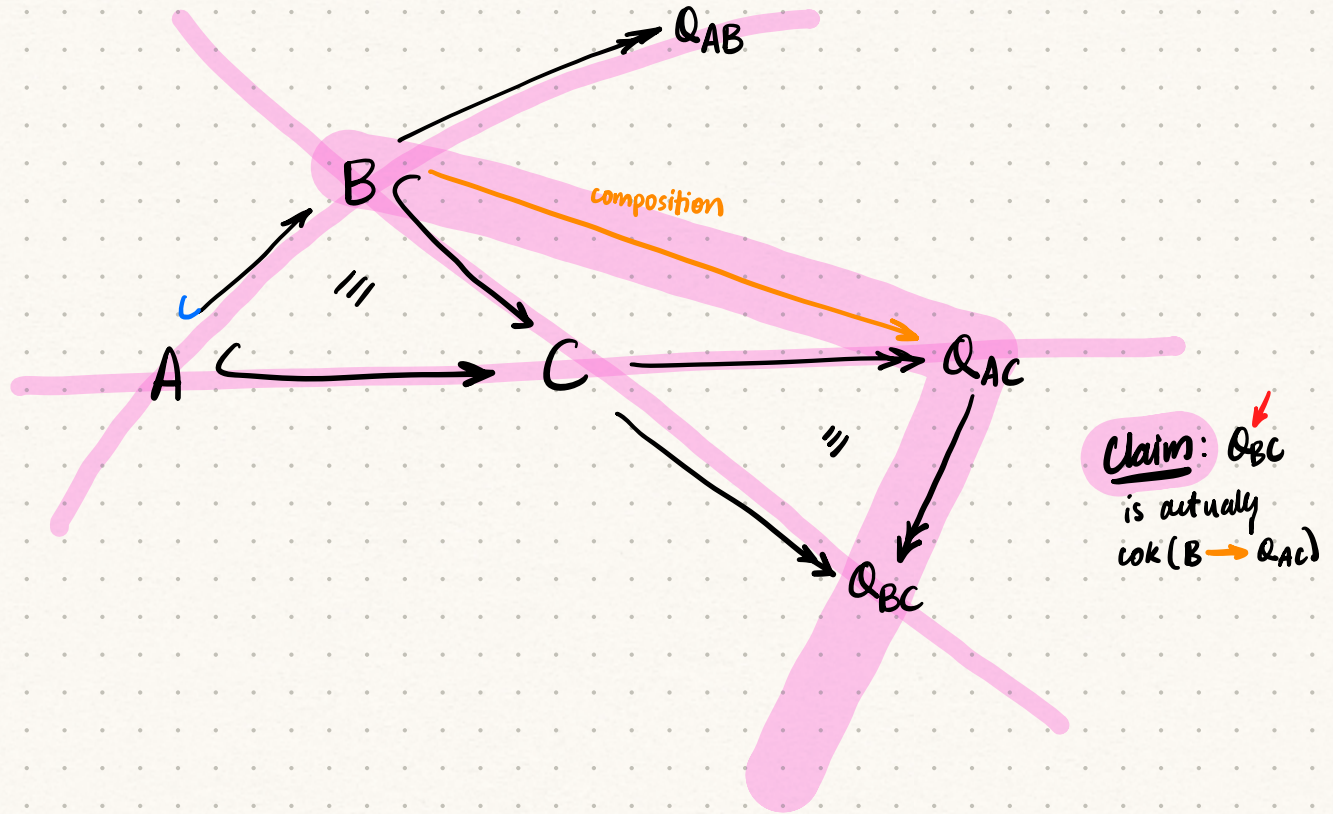
① = ② $\Rightarrow$ ③ up cok Remains to show ④

Noether Isomorphism. (cf. Theo Bühler Lemma 3.5)

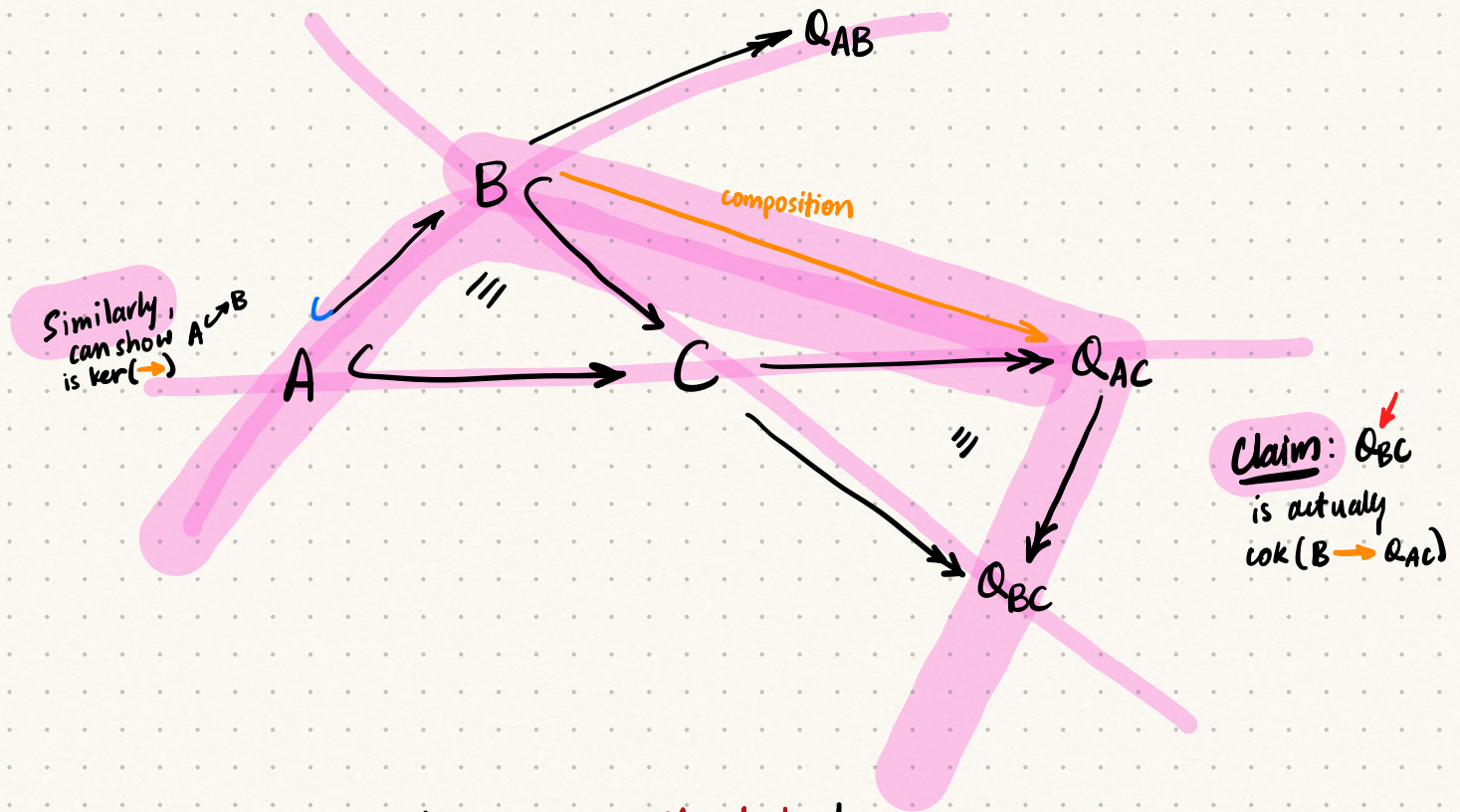


① = ② $\Rightarrow$ ③ up
cok Remains
to show ④

Noether Isomorphism. (cf. Theo Bühler Lemma 3.5)



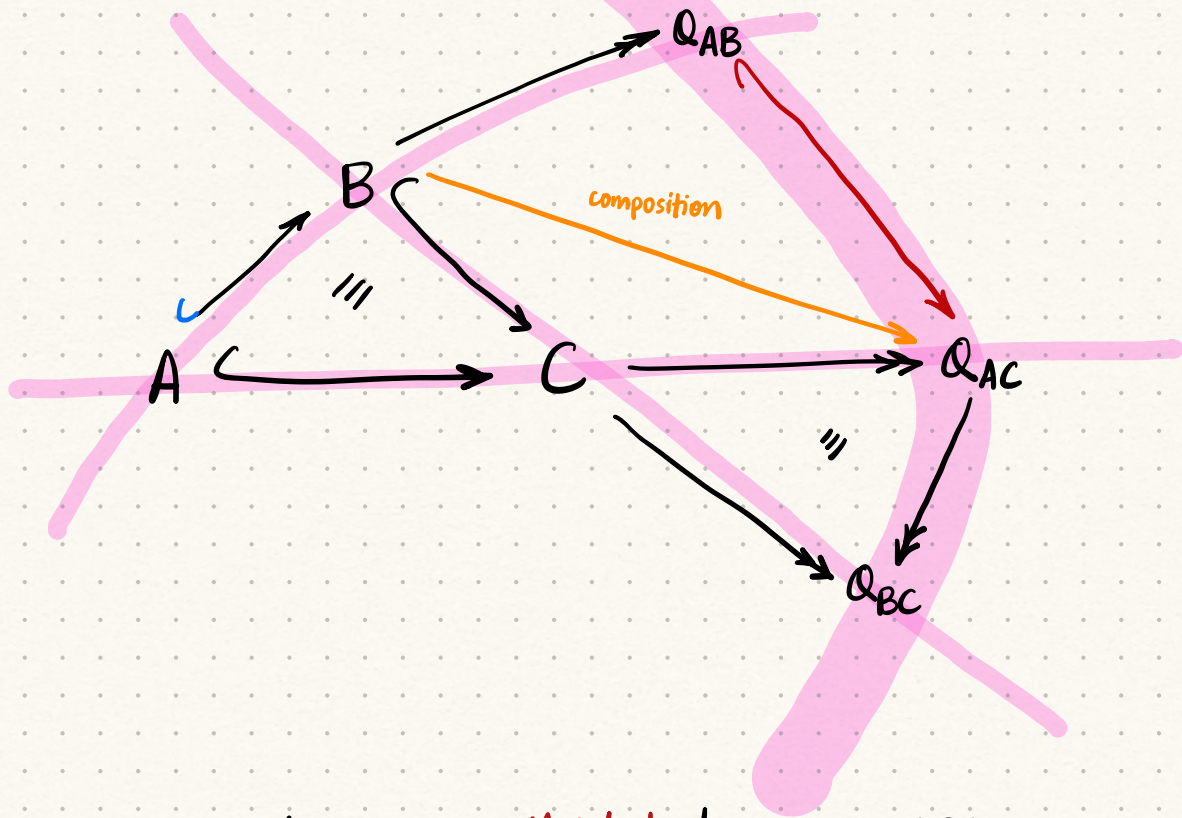
Noether Isomorphism. (cf. Theo Bühler Lemma 3.5)



Claim: Q_{BC}
is actually
 $\text{cok}(B \rightarrow Q_{AC})$

Then apply **Ab cat Iso!**
Axiom

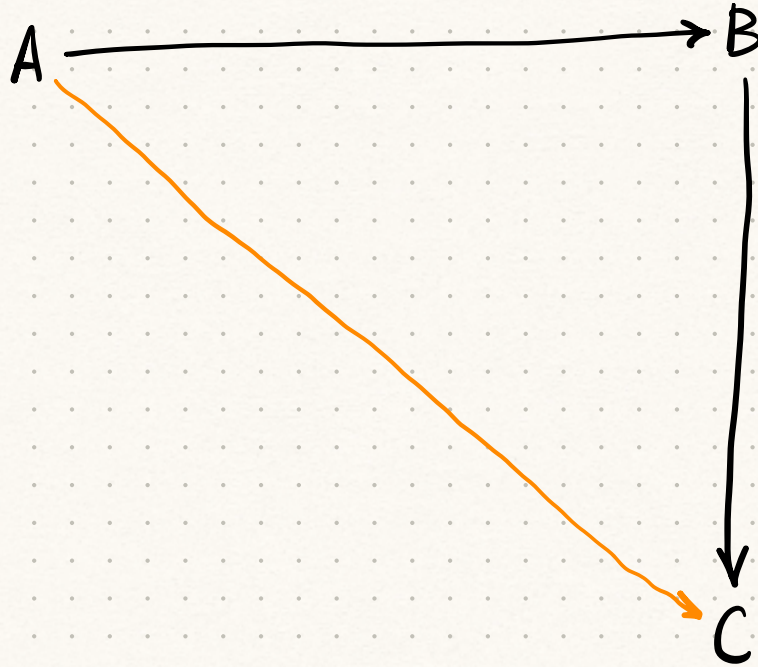
Noether Isomorphism. (cf. Theo Bühler Lemma 3.5)



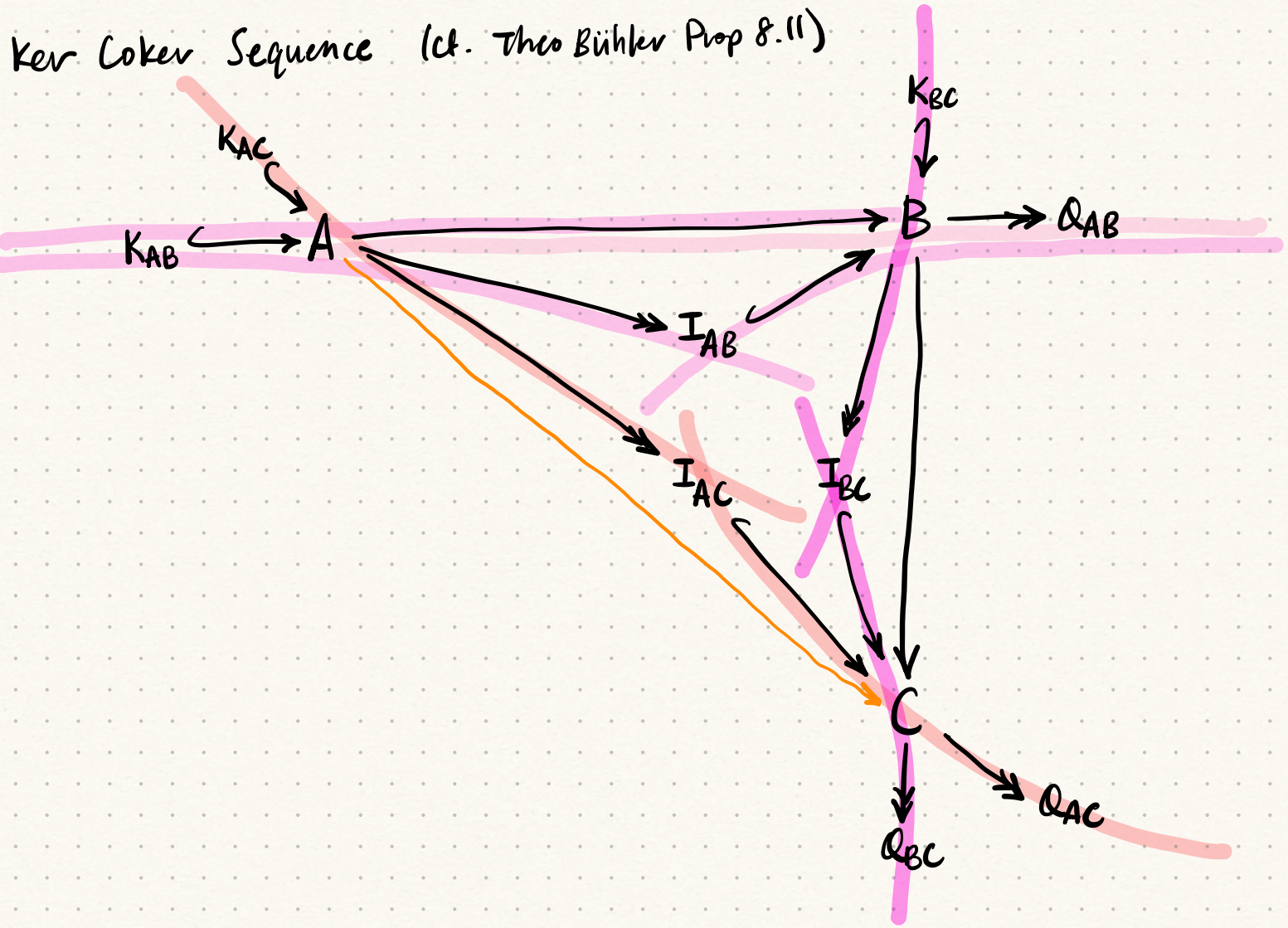
Then apply Ab cat Iso!
Axiom

QED.

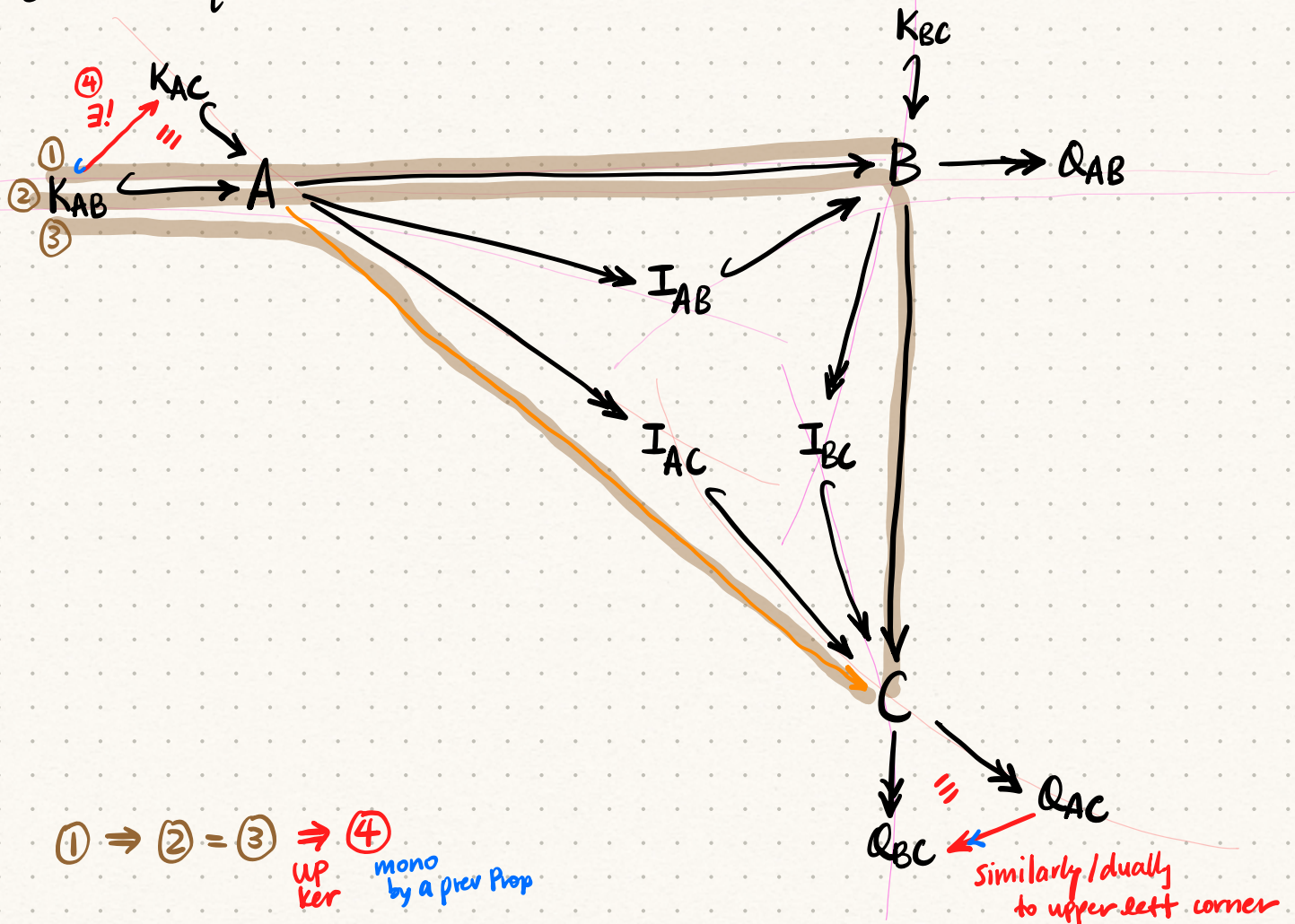
Ker Coker Sequence (cf. Theo Bühler Prop 8.11)



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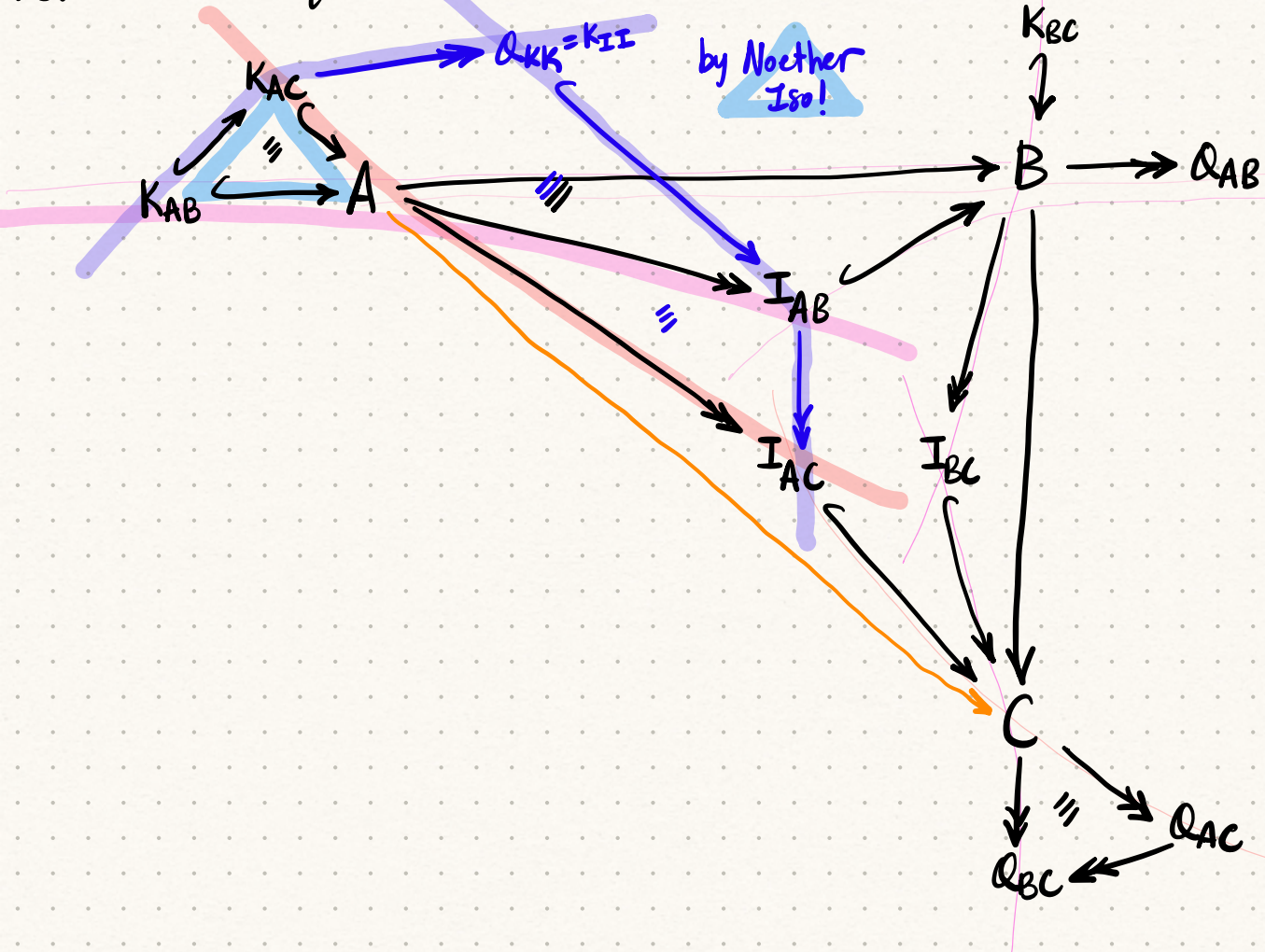
$$\textcircled{1} \Rightarrow \textcircled{2} = \textcircled{3} \Rightarrow \textcircled{4}$$

UP
ker

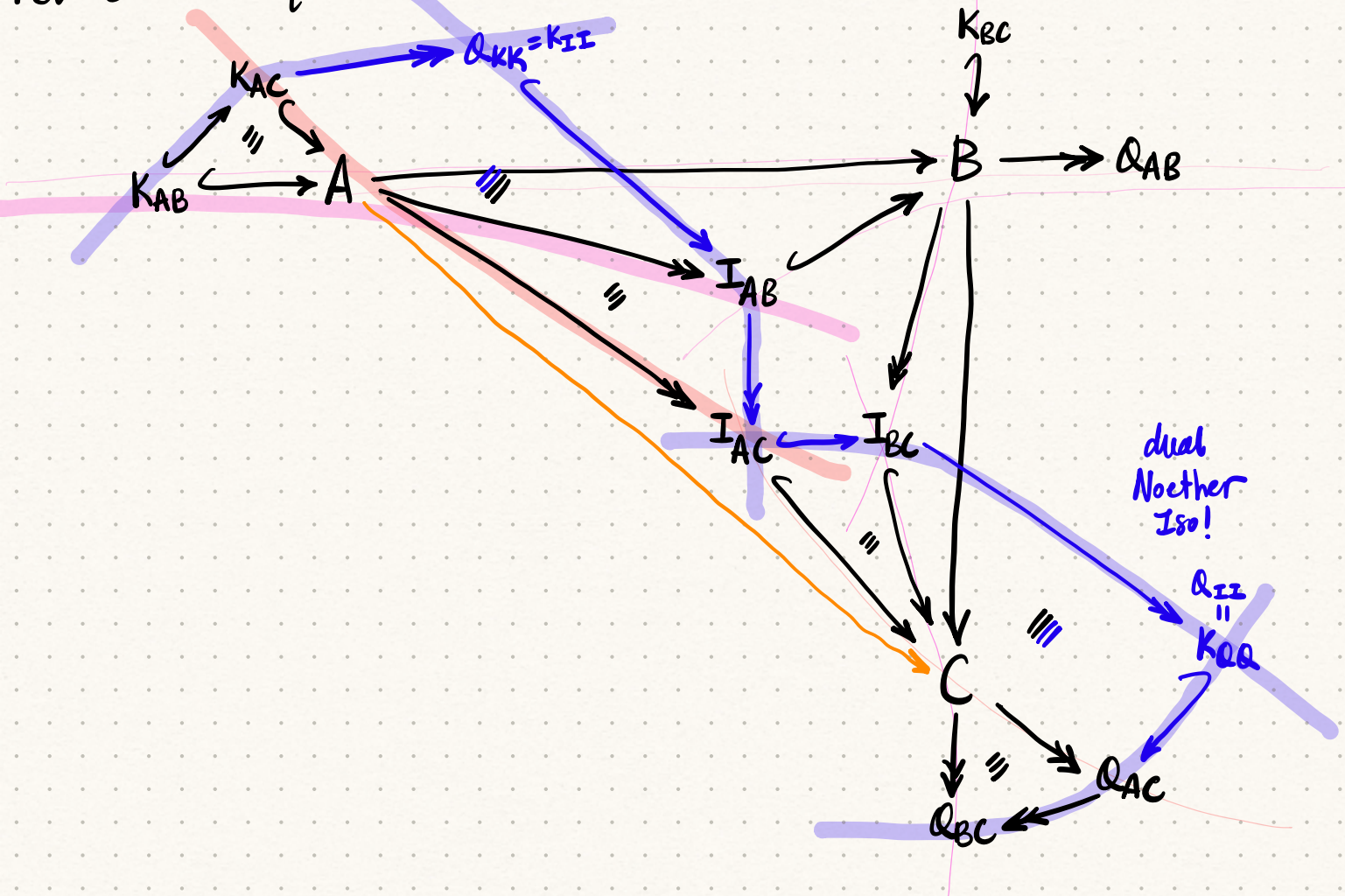
mono
by a prev Prop

Similarly / dually
to upper left corner

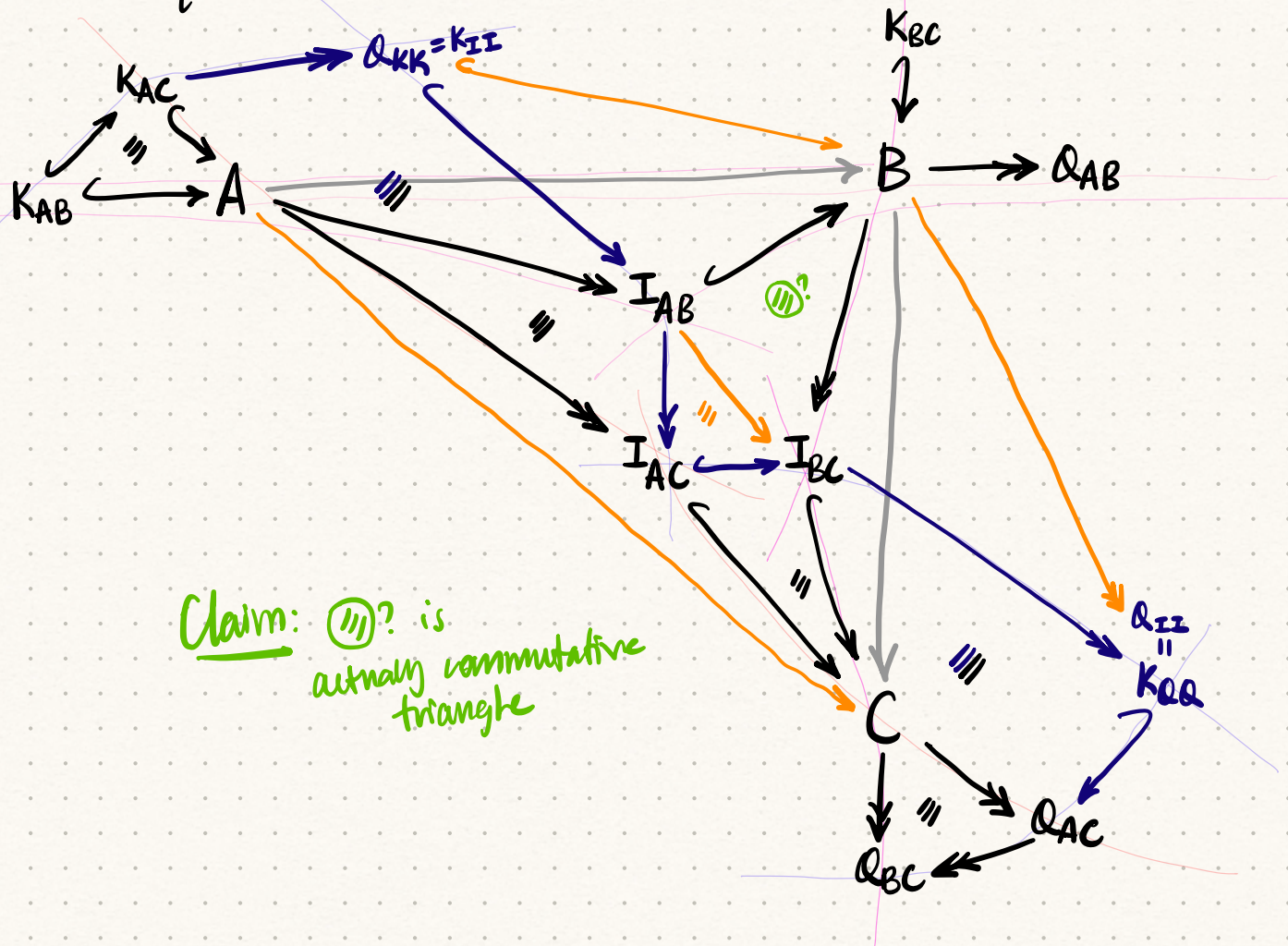
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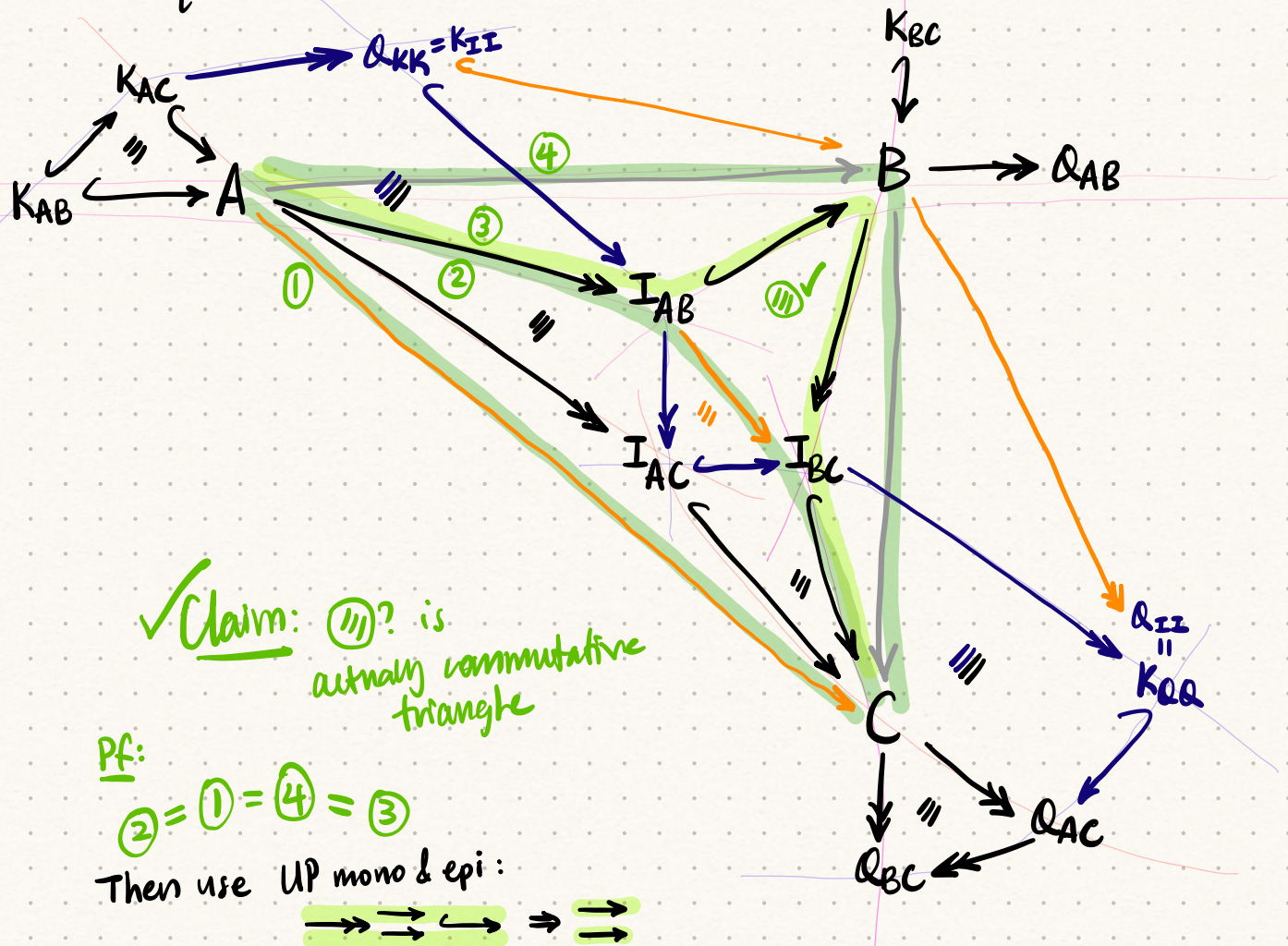
Ker Coker Sequence (cf. Theo Bühler Prop 8.11)



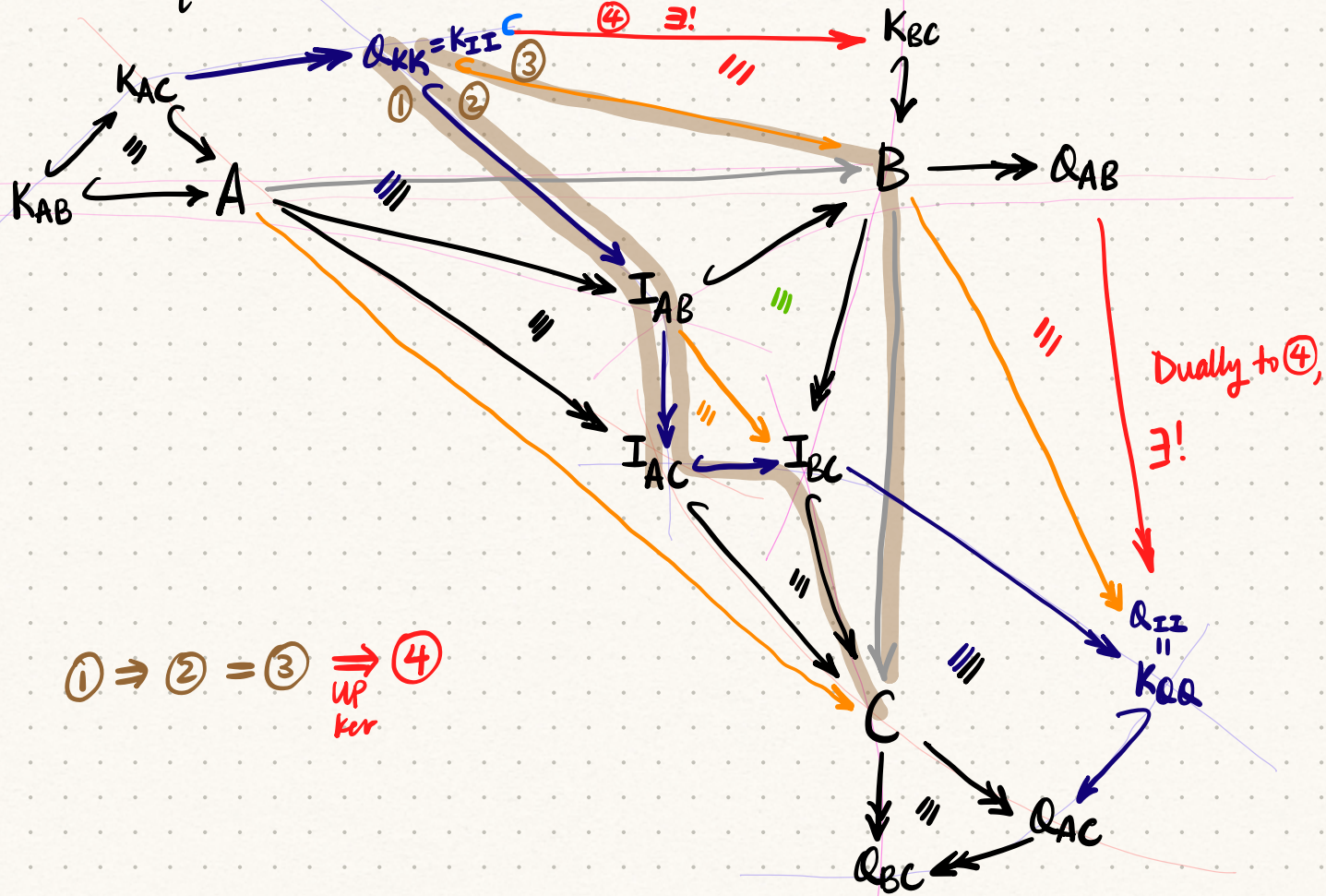
Ker Coker Sequence (cf. Theo Bühler Prop 8.11)



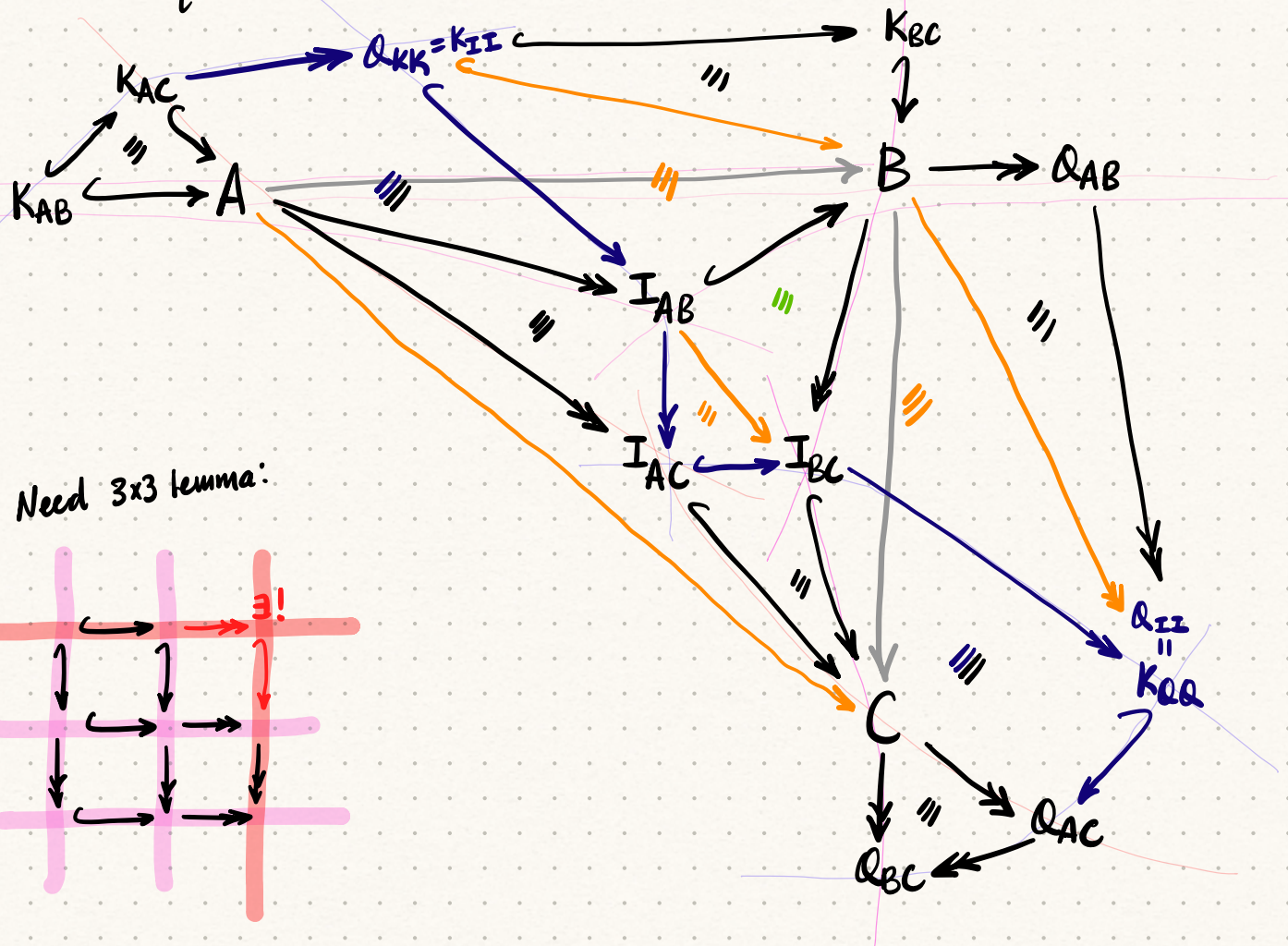
Ker Coker Sequence (cf. Theo Bühler Prop 8.11)



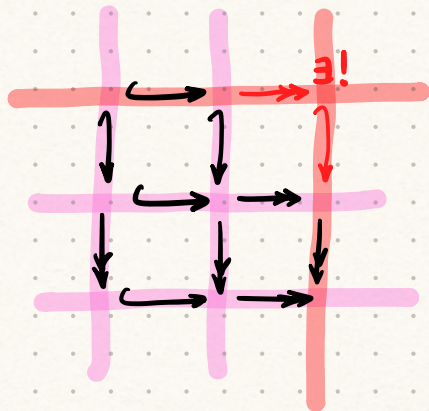
Ker Coker Sequence (cf. Theo Bühler Prop 8.11)



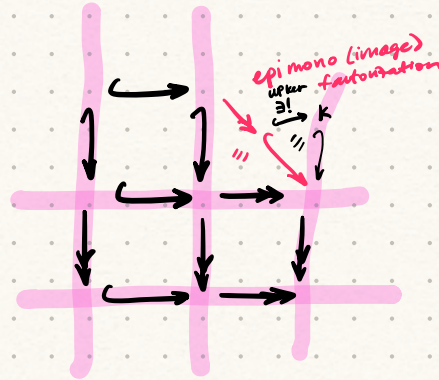
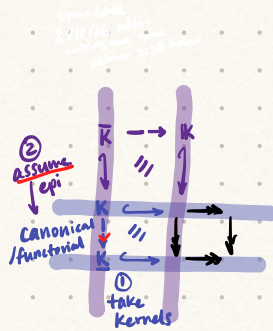
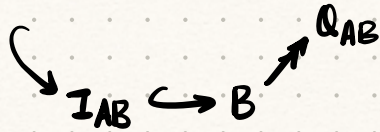
Ker Coker Sequence (cf. Theo Bühler Prop 8.11)



Need 3×3 lemma:



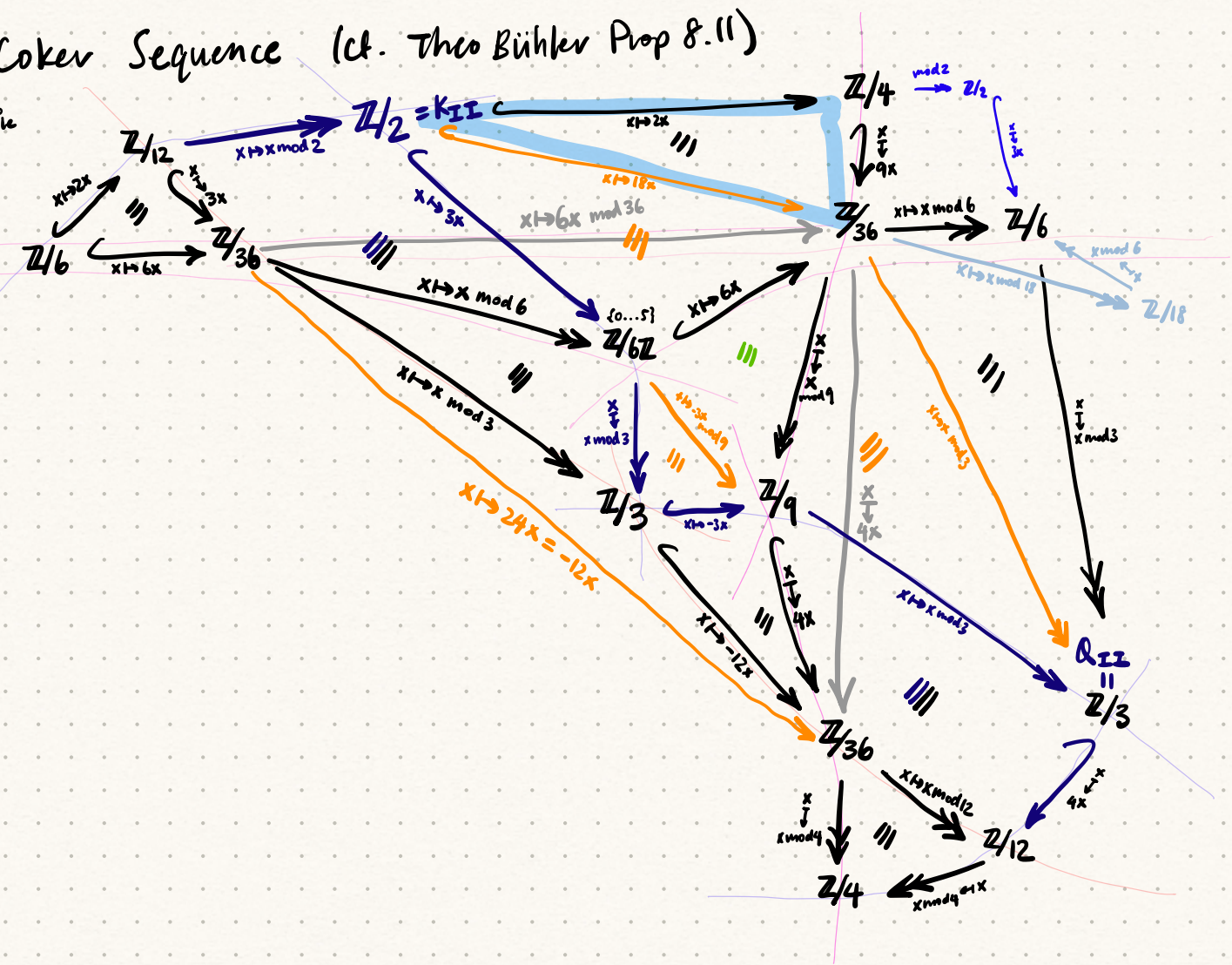
But this follows from **Ab Cat Axiom**:



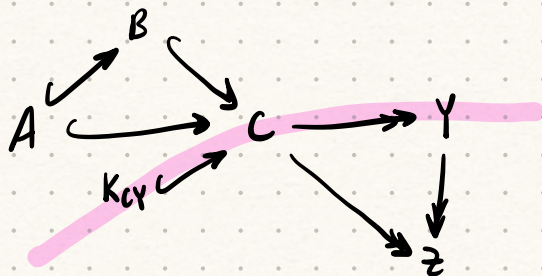
give up, continue
copying Balmer below
ZBC / hexagon then

Ker Coker Sequence (cf. Theo Bühler Prop 8.11)

Claude
3/17/16
example



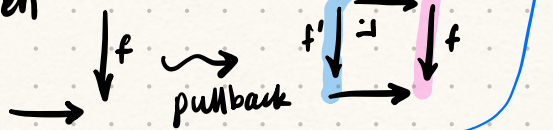
Junk.



To apply Noether Iso
 one last time,
 need $\ker \rightarrow B = \ker(B \rightarrow \mathbb{A}B)$

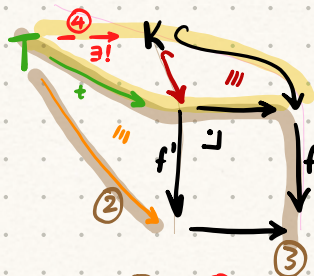
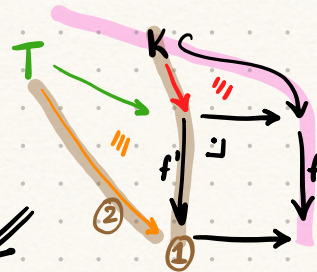
Li's notes on
Balmer 212A (Lem 1.2.7)
"Cartesian $\Rightarrow$ "

Prop: Given



consider test object

T s.t. $\longrightarrow$:



$\textcircled{2} \Rightarrow \textcircled{3} \Rightarrow \textcircled{4}$
UP ker satisfying commutativity properties

Lemma:

Given $\downarrow = \downarrow$,
then

Pf: $T \rightrightarrows X \rightrightarrows Y$

$\downarrow$
 $T \rightrightarrows X \rightrightarrows Y$

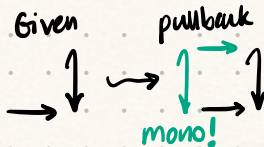
$\downarrow$
 $T \rightrightarrows X \rightrightarrows Y$

$\downarrow$ UP mono
 $T \rightrightarrows X \rightrightarrows Y$

Pf:

by UP $\downarrow$

Cor:



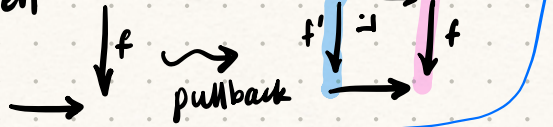
(Liu pg 13 footnote 2, says this ("pullback of mono is mono")
holds $\forall$ category, not just Abelian)

Cor: dual to prev cor (above pf)
pullback of epi is epi

Liv's notes on Balmer 212 A

Prop:

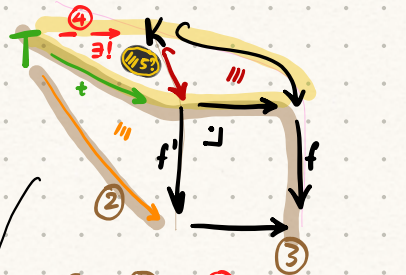
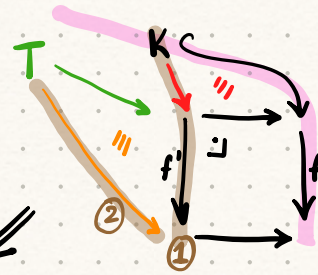
Given



pullback

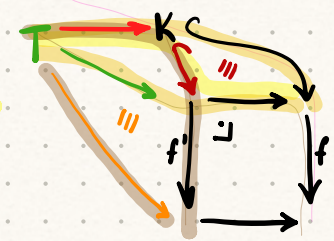
consider test object

T s.t. $\xrightarrow{\quad} :$



② $\Rightarrow$ ③ $\Rightarrow$ ④
 UP ker satisfying commutativity properties

inptclr, this diagram says



But also



so by uniqueness in $\perp$ UP,

Finally, $\hookrightarrow$ unique s.t. $T \xrightarrow{\quad} \hookrightarrow$ b/c $\hookrightarrow$ mono!

Lemma:

Given $\downarrow = \downarrow$,
 then

Pf: $T \rightrightarrows X \rightrightarrows Y$

$\downarrow$
 $T \rightrightarrows X \rightrightarrows Y$

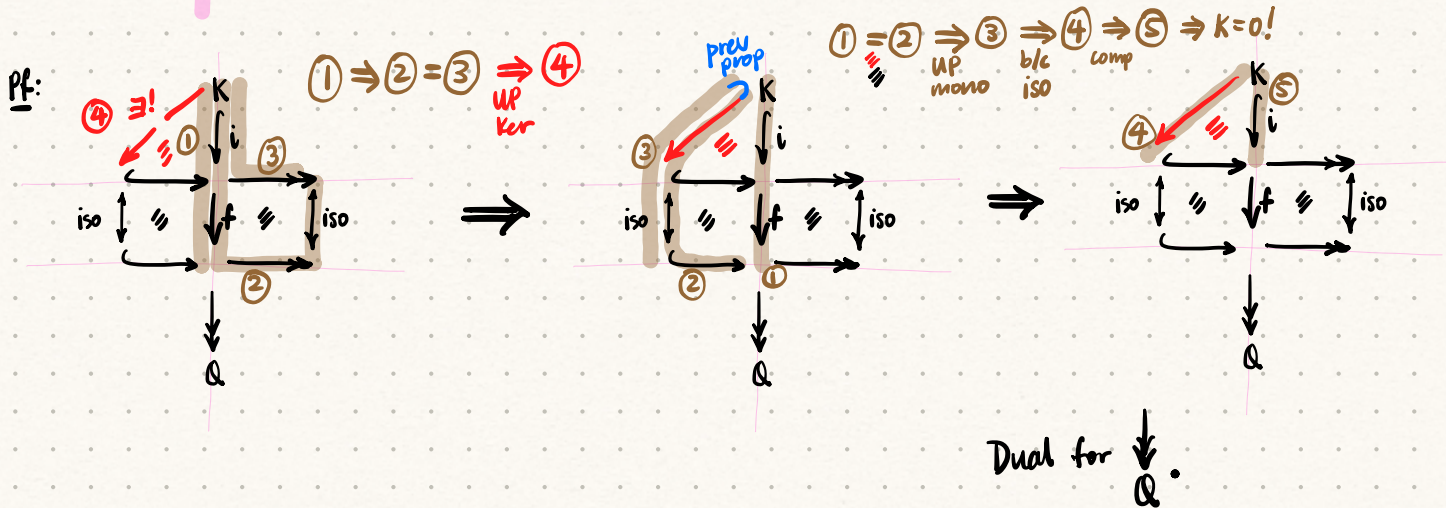
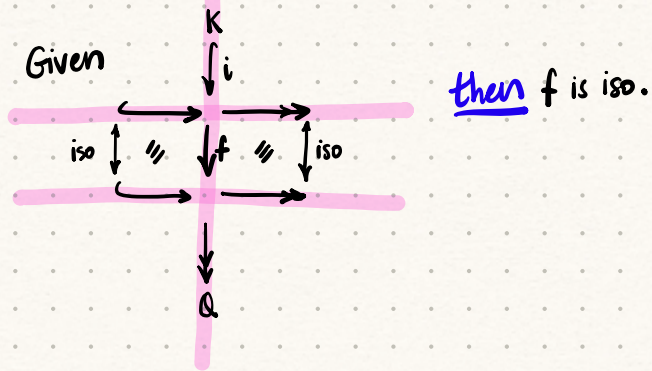
$\downarrow$
 $T \rightrightarrows X \rightrightarrows Y$

$\downarrow$ UP mono
 $T \rightrightarrows X \rightrightarrows Y$

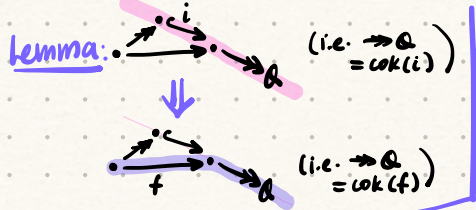
Pf:

by UP $\perp$

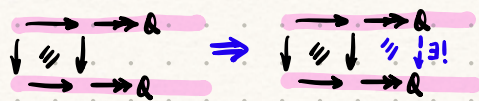
Balmer 212A Liu notes Thm 1.4.5 Five Lemma special case



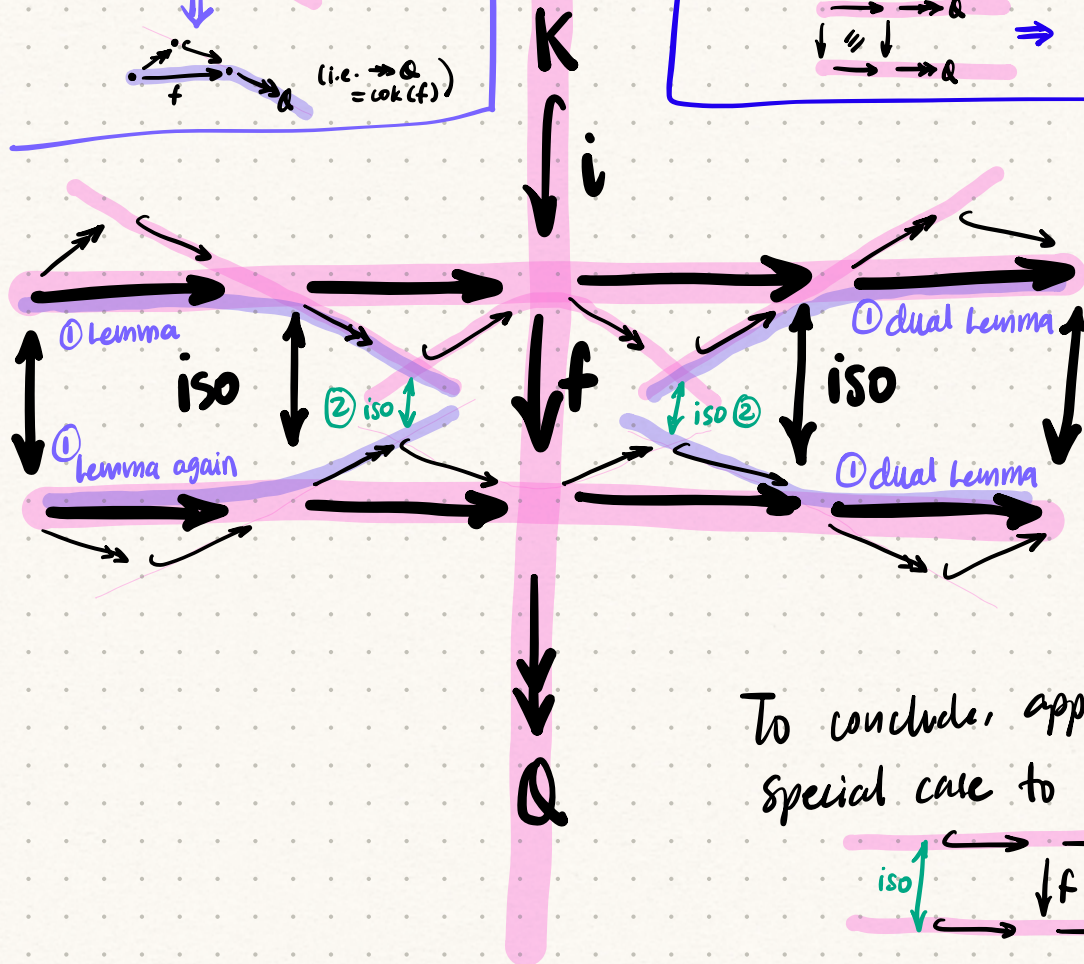
Next slide: Five Lemma General Case.



Thm: functionality of cok



Cor: $\begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{\quad} \rightarrow Q \\ \uparrow \text{iso} \quad \downarrow \text{iso} \\ \xrightarrow{\quad} \rightarrow Q \end{array} \Rightarrow \begin{array}{c} \downarrow \exists! \\ \text{is iso.} \end{array}$



To conclude, apply Five Lemma
special case to



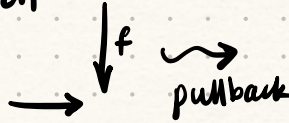
QED.

Balmer (Liu notes Lem 1.4.8)

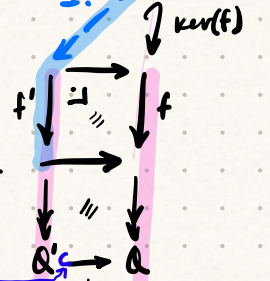
Thm "Cartesian $\Leftrightarrow$ " (extending "Cartesian $\Rightarrow$ " Prop. above)

Thm ($\Rightarrow$)⁺:

Given



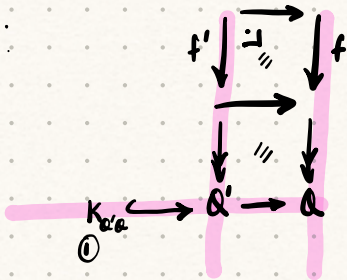
Then,
 $\exists!$



mono!

canonical map (see Functoriality of $\ker$ on prev. slide)

Pf:



Balmer (Liu notes Lem 1.4.8)

Thm "Cartesian $\Leftrightarrow$ " (extending "Cartesian $\Rightarrow$ " Prop. above)

Thm ($\Rightarrow$):

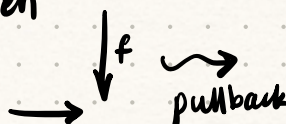
Cor: (1.4.11)

biCartesian $\Leftrightarrow$

2 vertical arrows same ker & coker

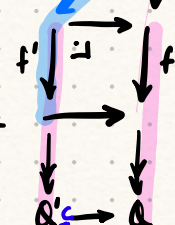
$\Leftrightarrow$ 2 horiz have same ker & cok.

Given



Then, $\exists!$

$K = \text{Ker}(f)$
 $\downarrow \text{Ker}(f)$

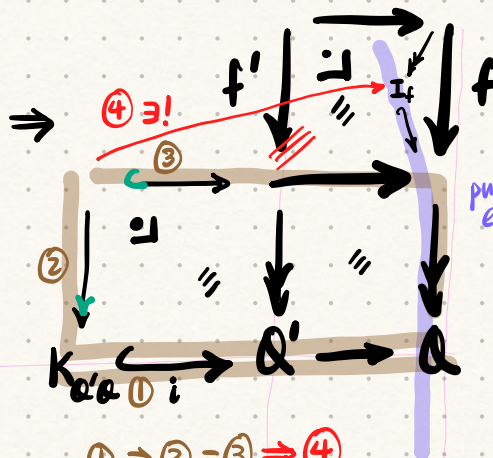
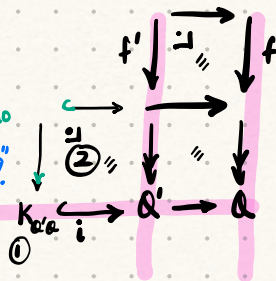


mono!

canonical map (see Functoriality of cok on prev. slide)

Pr:

bonus Epi & mono from Cor of "Cart $\Rightarrow$ Prop."



$\textcircled{1} \Rightarrow \textcircled{2} = \textcircled{3} \Rightarrow \textcircled{4}$

up ker

purple exactness from Lemma from Five Lem. slides.

Balmer (Liu notes Lem 1.4.8)

Thm "Cartesian $\Leftrightarrow$ " (extending "Cartesian $\Rightarrow$ " Prop. above)

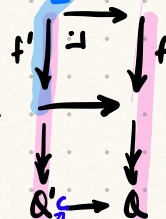
Thm ($\Rightarrow$):

Then, $\exists!$

$K = \text{Ker}(f)$
 $\downarrow \text{ker}(f)$

Given

$\downarrow f$
pullback

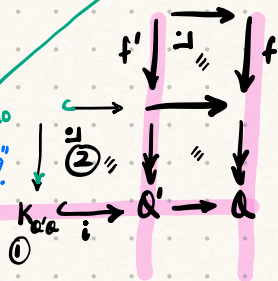


mono!

canonical map (see Functionality of cok on prev. slide)

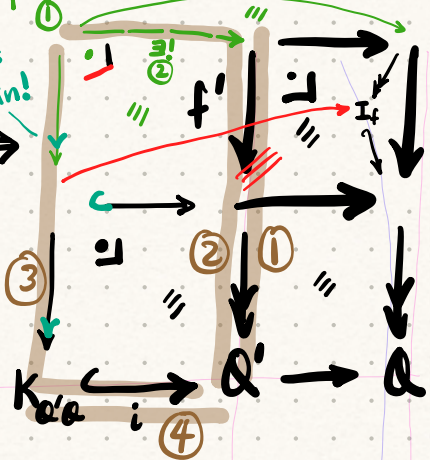
Pr.

bonus epi & mono from Cor of "Cart $\Rightarrow$ Prop."



bonus epi again!

take pullback



purple exactness from Lemma from Five Lem. slides.

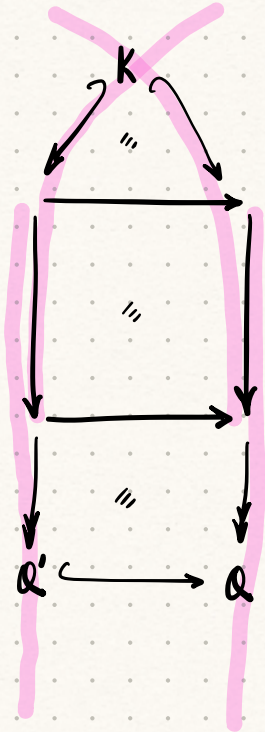
$\textcircled{1} \Rightarrow \textcircled{2} = \textcircled{3} \Rightarrow \textcircled{4}$
up epi!

Thus $K \hookrightarrow Q' \rightarrow Q$
 $\Rightarrow$ a previous prop
mono!

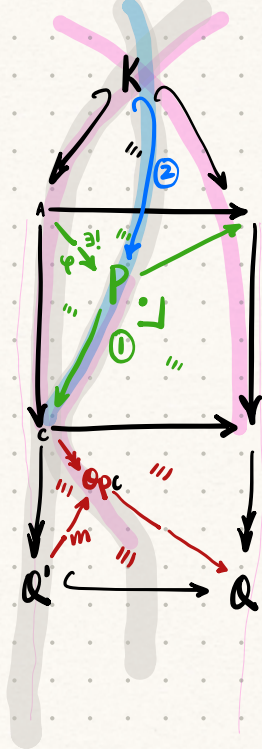
QED ($\Rightarrow$) dir of Cart $\Leftrightarrow$ Thm

Thm ($\Leftarrow$):

Start w/:



$\Rightarrow$



① take pullback

② "Cart $\Rightarrow$ " Prop ^(1.2.7) says kernels of 2 cols of $\downarrow$ are $\cong$.

③ take cok $\downarrow^P$. Dashed red arrows and $\cong$ follow from functionality of cok.

But $\begin{array}{ccc} c & & \\ \downarrow & \searrow & \phi_{Pc} \\ a' & \xrightarrow{m} & Q \end{array}$ ^(prev. props) implies m is epi

and $\begin{array}{ccc} & \phi_{Pc} & \\ & \nearrow & \\ a' & \xrightarrow{m} & Q \end{array}$ implies m is mono.

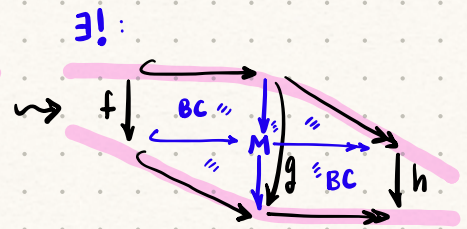
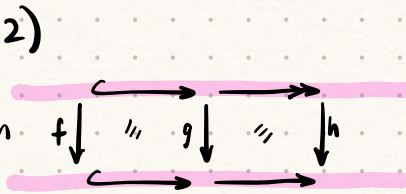
By prev. propositions, $\text{mono} \Rightarrow \text{Ker} = 0$
 $\text{epi} \Rightarrow \text{Cok} = 0$
 $\downarrow$
 iso.

To conclude $\begin{array}{ccc} \wedge & & \\ \psi & \xrightarrow{P} & \end{array}$ is iso, apply Five Lemma.

Balmer (Liu note Lem 1.4.12)

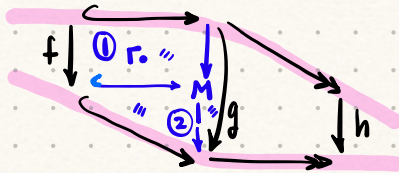
2 BC / hexagon thm:
 biCartesian
 (SES morphism factorization)

Given
 (morphism
 b/t 2
 SES)



Pf: ① take pushout of top left square. ② by UP Γ .

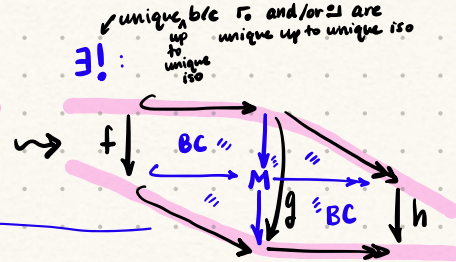
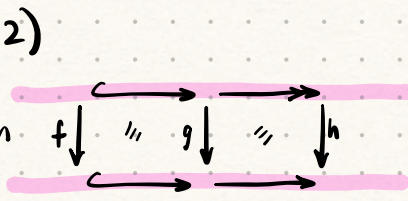
(prev. Prop Γ . of mono is mono)



Balmer (Liu note Lem 1.4.12)

2 BC / hexagon Thm:
biCartesian
(SES morphism factorization)

Given
(morphism
blt 2
SES)

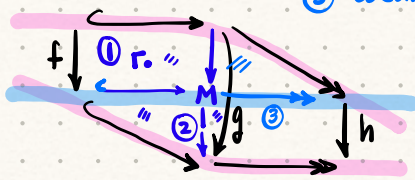


Pf: ① take pushout of top left square. ② by UP r.

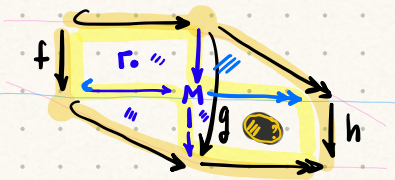
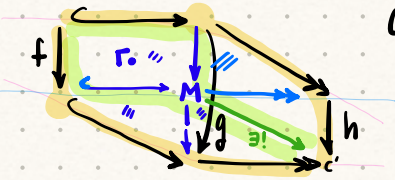
(prev. Prop r. of mono is mono)

(1.2.7) (2 horiz arrs $\rightleftarrows$ have...)

③ coCartesian $\rightsquigarrow$ same cokernels



But now 2 horiz arrs $\rightleftarrows$
have same cok & ker (= 0)
so by "Cart $\Leftrightarrow$ Thm, BC $\checkmark$ "



Consider the 2 yellow morphisms.

By UP r., get ^{unique!} green $M \xrightarrow{c'} c'$
so that 2 green highlighted are equal (and =),
"commutativity prop"

all 4 yellow highlighted paths are equal

UP r. Uniqueness of $M \xrightarrow{c'} c'$ satisfying "commutativity prop"

implied $\checkmark$ commutative!

To conclude, look at bottom right comm. square. same ker so by "Cart $\Leftrightarrow$ Thm, BC $\checkmark$
2 horiz: $\rightleftarrows$ same cok = 0.

Li's notes on
Balmer 212A

Thank

Prop:

Given

Then,
 $\exists!$

$$K = \text{Ker}(f)$$

pullback

Pf:

consider test object

T s.t. $\rightarrow$:

by UP: 1

equiv
to
2 yellow
highlight
equal

② $\Rightarrow$ ③ $\Rightarrow$ ④
UP
Ker