

What is generic?

László Lovász

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

The “generic” meaning of the phrase “generic” is a choice of parameters so that they don’t satisfy any algebraic relation that they don’t have to, and which is important to avoid in the proof. This can be achieved by choosing them algebraically independent. (While this sounds very technical and impractical, a practical way of handling the genericity assumption is choosing independent random values for the parameters.) A generic choice of the parameters often turns geometric and algebraic questions into combinatorial ones. In this talk we illustrate this idea by some old and new applications of generic choice in graph theory and related areas.