

An example of a function where  $f_{xy}(0, 0) \neq f_{yx}(0, 0)$

Consider the continuous function defined piecewise by

$$f(x, y) = \begin{cases} \frac{xy(x^2 - y^2)}{x^2 + y^2} & \text{if } (x, y) \neq (0, 0) \\ 0 & \text{if } (x, y) = (0, 0) \end{cases}$$

(a) Find  $f_x$  and  $f_y$ . (This is easy for  $(x, y) \neq (0, 0)$ . At  $(0, 0)$ , show that  $f_x$  and  $f_y$  both exist and equal 0 by using the definition of the partial derivative.) The functions  $f_x$  and  $f_y$  are in fact continuous, and they are also differentiable! (see part (c))

(b) Find  $f_{xy}(0, 0)$  and  $f_{yx}(0, 0)$  (Use the definition of partial derivatives again!)

(c) Why doesn't this example contradict the theorem (2.124) in your book?