

Recollections on K-theory
(OR: 50 years of math in 2 hours)

- §1 K_0 and K_1 of rings
- §2 K-theory space of a ring
- §3 K-theory spectrum of a ring
- §4 K_0 of stable ∞ -cats
- §5 K-thy spectrum of a stable ∞ -cat
- §6 A universal characterization of the K-thy spectrum of a stable ∞ -cat

Warning: almost no proofs in this talk. But we will be very careful where things live.

Note: all K-thy in this talk is connective.

§1 K_0 and K_1 of rings

Let R be a unital, associative ring.

Defⁿ: An R -module is finite projective iff it is a direct sum of R^n for some $n \geq 0$. Let $\text{Proj}(R)$ be the cat. of them. Let $K_0(R)$ be the group completion of the monoid

isom classes of objs of $\text{Proj}(R)$, 0 , \oplus .

(e) $K_0(R) :=$ free ab. group on isom classes of $\text{Proj}(R)$

$\langle [P] = [P_1] \oplus [P_2] \text{ whenever there is an isom } P \cong P_1 \oplus P_2 \rangle$

Eg 1) k a field. Then $\text{dim} : \text{Proj}(R) \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ induces
 $\text{dim} : K_0(R) \xrightarrow{\cong} \mathbb{Z}$

Eg 2) D Dedekind domain. Then any nonzero fractional ideal
 $I \subseteq \text{Frac} D$ is a fin proj D -module, so get $[I] \in K_0(D)$,
 and in fact a s.e.s. :

$$0 \rightarrow GL(\text{Frac} D) \rightarrow K_0(D) \xrightarrow{\text{rank}} \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow 0$$

Defⁿ:

$$GL_1(R) \subseteq GL_2(R) \subseteq GL_3(R) \subseteq \dots \subseteq \bigcup_{n \geq 1} GL_n(R) =: GL(R)$$

$$r \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} r & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} a & b & 0 \\ c & d & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$K_1(R) := \text{max}^e \text{abelian quotient of } GL(R)$$

$$= GL(R) / E(R) \quad \text{where } E(R) := [GL(R), GL(R)]$$

Lemma (Whitehead) (1) A matrix $\alpha \in GL(R)$ lies in $E(R)$
 iff it is equiv to 1 via row and column operations

(2) $E(R)$ is the max^e perfect subgroup of $GL(R)$
 i.e) equal to own commutator

i.e) $K_1(R)$ classifies normal forms of invertible matrices

Eg 1) k a field. Gaussian elimination implies
 $\text{det} : K_1(k) \xrightarrow{\cong} k^\times$

Eg 2) For the Dedekind domain $\mathcal{D} = \mathbb{R}[x, y] / (x^2 + y^2 - 1)$
 there is a ses

$$0 \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}/2 \rightarrow K_1(\mathcal{D}) \xrightarrow{\det} \mathcal{D}^* \rightarrow 0$$

$$1 \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} x & y \\ -y & x \end{pmatrix}$$

detect using
 real top K-thy
 of sphere.

Thm (Bass: Fundamental theorem of K_0): There is a natural exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow K_1(R) \rightarrow K_1(R[T]) \oplus K_1(R[T^{-1}]) \rightarrow K_1(R[T^{\pm 1}]) \rightarrow K_0(R) \rightarrow 0$$

In particular, $K_1: \text{Rngs} \rightarrow \text{Ab}$ refines $K_0: \text{Rngs} \rightarrow \text{Ab}$.

60s/70s: Does $\exists K_2: \text{Rngs} \rightarrow \text{Ab}$ refining K_1 in some way?

\vdots $K_3 \rightarrow K_2 \rightarrow \dots$?

1973 Quillen: Yes!

§2 K-thy space of a ring: Quillen's + -construction
 ω -categorical preliminaries on topological spaces:

(a) The ω -cat of spaces is

$\text{Spc} :=$ homotopy coherent nerve of
 simplicial cat. of Kan complexes

\cong ω -const freely generated under sifted \implies Quillen
 Lurie colimits by finite sets

(2b) Theorem (Kervaire, Quillen: +-construction): There is a unique functor

$$\text{Spc} \rightarrow \text{Spc} \quad X \mapsto X^+$$

with following properties:

- (1) $\pi_1(X^+)$ is hypoabelian (ie) it has no non-zero perfect subgroup
- (2) there is a nat. map $X \rightarrow X^+$, universal w.r.t property (1), and $X \rightarrow X^+$ is an equiv iff $\pi_1(X)$ is hypoabelian.

Remarks (1) $\pi_1(X^+) = \pi_1(X) / \max^e$ perfect subgroup

(2) $H_n(X, \mathbb{Z}) \xrightarrow{\cong} H_n(X^+, \mathbb{Z}) \quad \forall n \geq 0$

(3) But $\pi_n(X) \rightarrow \pi_n(X^+)$ not usually isom for $n \geq 2$

Now we can define K-theory space of R by denoting K_1 :

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & \text{GL}(R) & \\ & \downarrow \cong & \\ \text{GL}(R) & \xleftarrow{\pi_1} \text{BGL}(R) & \xrightarrow{\pi_n, n \geq 2} 0 \\ & \downarrow \cong & \\ & \text{+ - const.} & \end{array}$$

$K_1(R) \xleftarrow{\pi_1} \text{BGL}(R)^+ \xrightarrow{\pi_n, n \geq 2} ?$ \leftarrow Quillen realized these are interesting groups.
 by Rmk(1) and Whitehead's Lemma(2)

Defⁿ (Quillen) The K-thy space of R is $\text{Spc} \ni K_0(R) \times \text{BGL}(R)^+$,
 and $K_n(R) := \pi_n$ of this space, for $n \geq 0$

$$= \begin{cases} K_0(R) \text{ from } \xi_1 & \text{if } n=0 \\ K_1(R) \text{ from } \xi_1 & \text{if } n=1 \\ \pi_n(\text{BGL}(R)^+) & \text{if } n \geq 1 \end{cases}$$

Remark: This is a useful def. for certain computations (eg) K-groups of finite field, of number field, ... but it is not very structured/categorical.

§3 K-thy spectrum of a ring: ∞ -group completions
 ∞ -cat preliminaries on monoids in spaces:

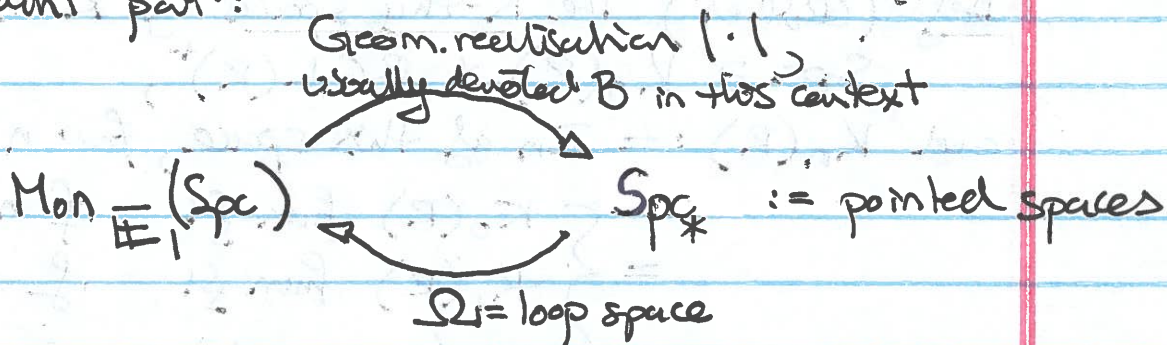
(3.1) $\text{Mon}_{\mathbb{E}_1}(\text{Spc}) := \mathbb{E}_1$ -monoids in Spc , x

an object here is a simplicial space M .
 s.t., for each $n \geq 0$, the n -maps $[n] \rightarrow [n] = \{0, \dots, n\}$
 induce
$$M_n \xrightarrow{\sim} \prod_{i=1}^n M_i$$

informally M is data of pointed space

$* \cong M_0 \rightarrow M_1$
 together with "multiplication" $M_1 \times M_1 \xrightarrow{\mu} M_1$
 which is coherently associative.

(3ii) adjoint pair:



(3iii) Ω actually lands in grouplike \mathbb{E}_1 -monoids:

$$\text{Mon}_{\mathbb{E}_1}(\text{Spc}) \cong \text{Grp}_{\mathbb{E}_1}(\text{Spc}) := \left\{ M \text{ s.t. the monoid } \pi_0(M) \text{ is a group} \right\}$$

(as $\pi_0(\Omega X) \cong \pi_1(X)$), and diagram restricts to these equivalences

$$\text{Grp}_{\mathbb{E}_1}(\text{Spc}) \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{B} \\ \xleftarrow{\Omega} \end{array} \text{Spc}_{*, \text{conn}}$$

"Corol": The inclusion $\text{Mon}_{\mathbb{E}_1}(\text{Spc}) \cong \text{Grp}_{\mathbb{E}_1}(\text{Spc})$ has a left adjoint

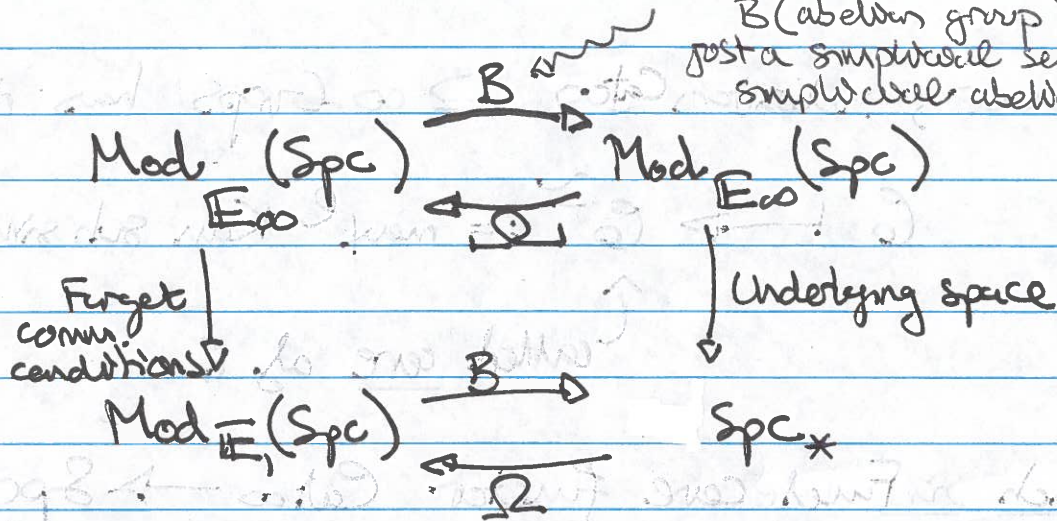
$$M \longmapsto M^{\infty\text{-grp}} := \Omega B(M)$$

called the ∞ -group completion of M .

Remark: The group $\pi_0(M^{\infty\text{-grp}})$ is the usual group completion of the monoid $\pi_0(M)$

(3iv) In fact we only require the commutative variant of above:

analyse of fact that B (abelian group) is not just a simplicial set, but a simplicial abelian group.



So again $\text{Mod}_{E_{\infty}}(\text{Spc}) \cong \text{Grp}_{E_{\infty}}(\text{Spc})$ has left adjoint $M \mapsto M^{\text{co-grp}} := \Omega B(M)$

Rmk : $\text{Grp}_{E_{\infty}}(\text{Spc}) \rightarrow \text{Sp} := \text{co-cat of spectra}$
 $:= \lim_{\leftarrow} (\text{Spc}_* \xrightarrow{\Omega} \text{Spc}_* \xrightarrow{\Omega} \dots)$

$$M \mapsto (M, BM, B^2M, \dots)$$

This induces $\text{Grp}_{E_{\infty}}(\text{Spc}) \cong \text{Sp}_{\text{conn}}$

So we tend to call objects here Spectra.

(Bv) From ∞ -cats to spaces:

Prop (Joyal): For an ∞ -cat \mathcal{C} , TFAE:

- all arrows in \mathcal{C} are eqvs
- $\text{Ho}(\mathcal{C})$ is a 1-groupoid (ie) all arrows isoms
- \mathcal{C} is a Kan complex

In this case we call \mathcal{C} an ∞ -groupoid, and so have equiv. of ∞ -cats

$$\infty\text{-Grps} \cong \text{Spc}.$$

Moreover, inclusion $\text{Cat} \supseteq \text{co-Grps}$ has right adjoint

$$\mathcal{C} \mapsto \mathcal{C}^{\sim} := \max^e \text{Kan sub simp. set of } \mathcal{C}$$

↑
called core of \mathcal{C}

Conclusion: Have core functor $\text{Cat} \rightarrow \text{Spc}$
 $\mathcal{C} \mapsto \mathcal{C}^{\sim}$

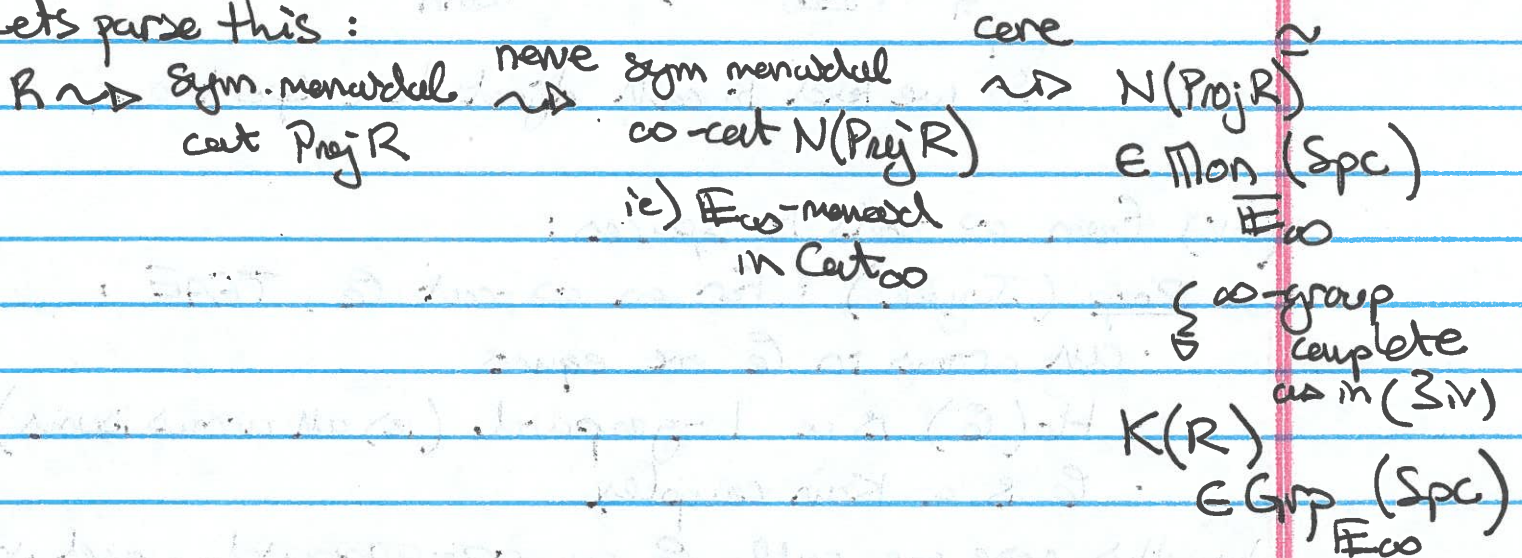
[End of co-cat preams]

We finally reach the goal of this section by "deriving K ":

Defⁿ: The K -theory spectrum of a ring R is

$$K(R) := \left(N(\text{Proj } R)^{\sim} \right)^{\text{co-grp}} \in \text{Grp}_{\mathbb{F}_{\infty}}(\text{Spc})$$

Lets parse this:



Relⁿ to K_0 of §1

As noted in (3iii), have

$$\pi_0 K(R) = \text{grp compl. of } \underbrace{\pi_0(N(\text{Proj } R))}_{\substack{\text{isom classes of} \\ \text{objs of Proj } R}}$$

$$= K_0(R)$$

Relⁿ to K -thy space of §2 (Sketch)

Let Free R be the subset $\{0, R, R^2, R^3, \dots\} \subseteq \text{Proj } R$.

So

$$N(\text{Proj } R) \cong N(\text{Free } R)$$

$$\coprod_{n \geq 0} \text{BGL}_n(R) =: G \in \text{Mod}(\text{Spec } \mathbb{Z})$$

Have $\pi_0(G) = \mathbb{N}$ as monoids, let $s \in \pi_0(G)$ be generator. The action $S \curvearrowright G \times$ is induced by

$$\text{GL}_n(R) \xrightarrow[\text{as in §1}]{\subset} \text{GL}_{n+1}(R)$$

$$\updownarrow \text{BGL}_n(R)$$

Since the image of s in $\pi_0 K(R)$ is invertible we see that the map of \mathbb{Z} -monoids $G \rightarrow K(R)^\times$ factors through a map

$$\text{colum } (G \xrightarrow{s} G \xrightarrow{s} G \rightarrow \dots) \rightarrow K(R) \\ \parallel \\ \text{BGL}(R)$$

Next, since $\pi_1 K(R)$ is abelian (true for π_1 of any E manifold), this induces a map of spaces

$$BGL(R)^+ \rightarrow K(R)$$

Two fits into an equiv of spaces
 This (Quillen, McDuff-Segal) : $K_0(R) \times BGL(R)^+ \xrightarrow{\sim} K(R)$.

Not natural in R . What is natural is $BGL(R)^+ \xrightarrow{\sim}$ connected comp of $1 \in K(R)$

§4 K_0 of stable ∞ -categories

∞ -cats preliminaries: an

(4i) An ∞ -cat \mathcal{C} is stable if it has all finite limits + colimits, and pushout and pullback squares coincide

$\rightarrow \mathcal{C}$ has zero object $0 \in \mathcal{C}$ and there are inverse eqns

$$X \rightarrow \text{cofib}(X \rightarrow 0) = \text{pushout} \left(\begin{array}{ccc} X & \rightarrow & 0 \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ 0 & & 0 \end{array} \right)$$

$$\mathcal{C} \xrightarrow{\Sigma} \mathcal{C}$$

$$\mathcal{C} \xrightarrow{\Omega} \mathcal{C}$$

pullback $\left(\begin{array}{ccc} 0 & & \\ \downarrow & & \\ 0 & \rightarrow & Y \end{array} \right) = \text{fib}(0 \rightarrow Y) \leftarrow \rightarrow Y$

Eg) $R \text{ mod } \sim \rightarrow \text{Perf } R$

A functor $F: \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$ between stable ∞ -cats is exact if it preserves finite limits and colimits.

Let $\text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex}} := \infty\text{-cat of stable } \infty\text{-cats and exact functors between them}$

Defⁿ: $K_0(\mathcal{G}) := \underbrace{\pi_0(\mathcal{G}^{\sim})}_{\text{equiv rel}^n \text{ gen by } Y = X \oplus Z \text{ whenever } \exists \text{ fib seq } X \rightarrow Y \rightarrow Z}$

- objs. of \mathcal{G} up to equiv.
- monoid under \oplus

Note: $K_0(\mathcal{G})$ is an abelian group: inverse of $X \in \mathcal{G}$ is ΣX since $X \rightarrow 0 \rightarrow \Sigma X$ implies $0 = X + \Sigma X$ in $K_0(\mathcal{G})$

Relⁿ to K_0 of §1:

For a ring R , it is easy to check that

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{fm proj} \\ R\text{-mods} \end{array} \right\} \longrightarrow K_0(\text{Perf } R)$$

$$P \longmapsto P$$

induces

$$K_0(R) \xrightarrow{\cong} K_0(\text{Perf } R)$$

(inverse is induced by)

$$0 \rightarrow P_a \rightarrow \dots \rightarrow P_b \rightarrow 0 \longmapsto \sum_{i=a}^b (-1)^i P_i$$

§5 R -thy of stable co-certs: Waldhausen's S_0 construction

Two cert. prelims:

• $[n] := 1\text{-cert } \{0 < 1 < \dots < n\}$

• $\text{Ar}[n] := \text{arrow cert. of } [n]$

$= \{ \text{objs } (i,i) \text{ for } 0 \leq i \leq n \}$

Unique morphisms $(i,j) \rightarrow (i',j')$
iff $i \leq i'$ and $j \leq j'$

Waldhausen's construction:

\mathcal{C} a stable ∞ -category. Let

$$S_n(\mathcal{C}) \subseteq \text{Fun}(\text{Ar}[n], \mathcal{C})$$

be full subset of functors F s.t

- (i) $F(i,i) = 0$ for $i=0, \dots, n$
- (ii) For all $0 \leq i \leq j < n$, the square

$$F(i,j) \rightarrow F(i,j+1)$$



$$F(i+1,j) \rightarrow F(i+1,j+1)$$

is a pushout.

ie) F is following data:

$$F(0,0) \rightarrow F(0,1) \rightarrow F(0,2) \rightarrow \dots \rightarrow F(0,n)$$

$$\cong 0$$



$$F(1,1) \rightarrow F(1,2) \rightarrow \dots$$

$$F(1,n)$$



⋮

$$F(n,n)$$

$$= 0$$

∴ Easy to see that $n \mapsto S_n(\mathbb{C})$ defines a simplicial co-cell, and so get simplicial space by taking cores:

$$S_0(\mathbb{C}) \xrightarrow{\sim} S_n(\mathbb{C}) \xrightarrow{\sim} S_{n+1}(\mathbb{C}) \in \text{Spc}$$

Defⁿ: The K-theory of \mathbb{C} is

$$K(\mathbb{C}) := \Omega | S_0(\mathbb{C}) \xrightarrow{\sim} |$$

We unpack where $K(\mathbb{C})$ lives:
- The functors

$$\text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex}} \rightarrow \text{Spc}$$

$$\mathbb{C} \mapsto S_n(\mathbb{C}) \xrightarrow{\sim}, | S_0(\mathbb{C}) \xrightarrow{\sim} |$$

naturally upgrade, using \oplus in \mathbb{C} , to functors

$$\text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex}} \rightarrow \text{Mod}_{\mathbb{F}_{\infty}}(\text{Spc})$$

which we denote in same way.

(Formal proof: semiadditivity of $\text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex}}$ implies)

$$\text{Mod}_{\mathbb{F}_{\infty}}(\text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex}}) \xrightarrow{\sim} \text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex}} \quad \text{undressing}$$

Now apply Ω as in (3iv) to get that

$$K(\mathbb{C}) = \Omega | S_0(\mathbb{C}) \xrightarrow{\sim} | \in \text{Grp}_{\mathbb{F}_{\infty}}(\text{Spc})$$

re) we have defined the K-theory spectrum $K(\mathbb{C})$!

To apply this argument need to know that $|S_0(-)|$ and $S_n(-)$ preserve products. Use $S_n(\mathbb{C}) \cong \text{Fun}([n-1], \mathbb{C})$ to prove this.

Comparison with K_0 of §4 : We first build a natural map of spectra $\mathcal{C}^{\sim} \rightarrow K(\mathcal{C})$.
 For any simplicial space X_* there is a pushout in Spec :

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X_1 \sqcup X_1 & \longrightarrow & |sk_0(X_*)| \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X_1 & \longrightarrow & |sk_1(X_*)| \end{array}$$

In case of $X_* = S_*(\mathcal{C}^{\sim})$ we have $X_0 = \{\text{iso objs of } \mathcal{C}\} \simeq *$ and $X_1 \simeq \mathcal{C}^{\sim}$, so get pushout

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{C}^{\sim} \sqcup \mathcal{C}^{\sim} & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ \mathcal{C}^{\sim} & \longrightarrow & |sk_1(S_*(\mathcal{C}^{\sim}))| \end{array}$$

Take fibs of vertical arrows to get maps of \mathbb{E}_{∞} -monoids

$$\mathcal{C}^{\sim} \rightarrow \Omega |sk_1| \rightarrow K(\mathcal{C})$$

Lemma (by direct calc.): For any stable ω -cat \mathcal{C} , the induced map $\pi_0(\mathcal{C}^{\sim}) \rightarrow \pi_0 K(\mathcal{C})$ descends to an ism $K_0(\mathcal{C}) \xrightarrow{\cong} \pi_0 K(\mathcal{C})$.
 = ism classes of objs of \mathcal{C} = ism $K_0(\mathcal{C}) \xrightarrow{\cong} \pi_0 K(\mathcal{C})$

Comparison to $K(R)$ from §3

R maps \leadsto stable ∞ -cat $\text{Perf } R$, and map
of ∞ -cats $N(\text{Proj } R) \rightarrow \text{Perf } R$

$$\leadsto N(\text{Proj } R) \xrightarrow{\sim} (\text{Perf } R) \xrightarrow{\sim} K(\text{Perf } R)$$

maps of E_{∞} -modules in Spc as above

∞ -grp
 \leadsto maps of spectra
compl.

$$\left(N(\text{Proj } R) \right) \xrightarrow{\sim, \infty\text{-grp}} (\text{Perf } R) \xrightarrow{\sim, \infty\text{-grp}} K(\text{Perf } R)$$

||
 $K(R)$ in §3

Thm (Gillet-Waldhausen resolution): The
composition $K(R) \rightarrow K(\text{Perf } R)$ is an equiv.
of spectra.

Compositional $K(R)$ for \mathbb{Z}

R is a subring of \mathbb{Z} iff $1 \in R$ and R is closed under addition and subtraction.

$$\mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{f} \mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{g} \mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{h} \mathbb{Z}$$

Let $f(x) = 2x$, $g(x) = x+1$, $h(x) = x-1$

Let $R = \mathbb{Z}$

$$f: \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}, g: \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}, h: \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$$

$$K(R) = \mathbb{Z}$$

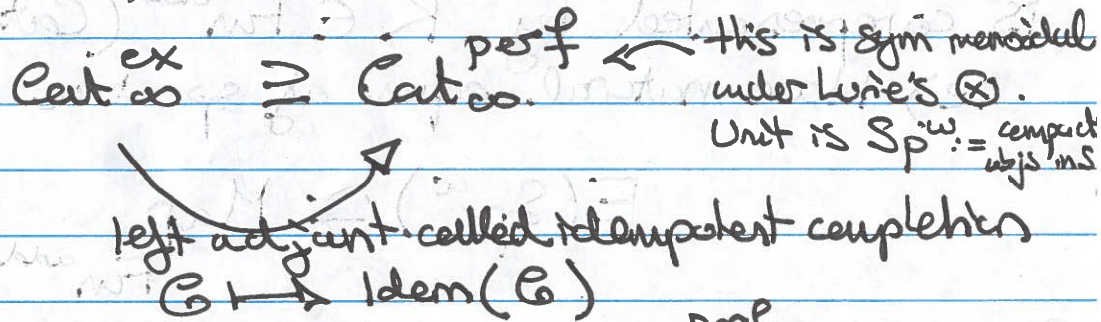
The (left) annihilator of R is $\{0\}$

Compositional $K(R) = \mathbb{Z}$ for \mathbb{Z}

§6 A universal characterisation of $\mathcal{O} \mapsto K(\mathcal{O})$.

Defⁿs

- A stable ∞ -cat \mathcal{O} is idempotent complete if $\text{Ho}(\mathcal{O})$ is idem. complete in 1-categorical sense.
- Let $\text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{perf}}$:= idem. complete stable ∞ -cats:



- A sequence $\mathcal{O} \xrightarrow{f} \mathcal{D} \xrightarrow{g} \mathcal{E}$ is split exact if
 - it is both a fibre & cofibre seq in $\text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{perf}}$
 - and f, g admit right adjoints
- $\mathcal{O} \xleftarrow{i} \mathcal{D} \xleftarrow{j} \mathcal{E}$
 s.t. $i \circ f \simeq \text{id}_{\mathcal{O}}$ and $g \circ j \simeq \text{id}_{\mathcal{E}}$

- A functor $F : \text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{perf}} \rightarrow \text{Sp}$ is additive if
 - for every split exact seq, the map $f \oplus j : F(\mathcal{O}) \oplus F(\mathcal{E}) \rightarrow F(\mathcal{D})$ is an equiv of spectra.
 - F commutes with filtered colimits
 - for \mathcal{O} any stable ∞ -cat, $F(\mathcal{O}) \xrightarrow{\sim} F(\text{Idem}(\mathcal{O}))$

Non-trivial eg) $K : \text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex}} \rightarrow \text{Sp}$, as defined in §5, is additive.

Theorem (Blumberg - Gepner - Tabuada): The functor

$$\text{Fun}^{\text{add}}(\text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex}}, \text{Sp}) \rightarrow \text{Sp}$$

$$E \longmapsto E(\text{Sp}^{\omega})$$

is corepresented by $K \in \text{Fun}^{\text{add}}(\text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex}}, \text{Sp})$

ie) Have natural equiv of spectra

$$E(\text{Sp}^{\omega}) \simeq \text{Map}_{\text{Fun}^{\text{add}}}(K, E)$$

In fact, BGT prove more. There is an equiv in Fun^{add} :

$$K(-) \simeq \text{Maps}_{\text{Fun}^{\text{add}}}(\text{U}(\text{Sp}^{\omega}), \text{U}(-))$$

as functors $\text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex}} \rightarrow \text{Sp}$ (where $\text{U}: \text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex,op}} \rightarrow \text{Fun}^{\text{add}}(\text{Cat}_{\infty}^{\text{ex}}, \text{Sp})$ is Yoneda.)