

250B: Commutative Algebra

Or, Eisenbud With Details

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Spring 2022

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	3
1.1	January 18	3
1.2	January 20	14
2	Local Study	31
2.1	January 25	31
2.2	January 27	43
2.3	February 1	61
2.4	February 3	74
2.5	February 8	83

THEME 1: INTRODUCTION

Hold tight to your geometric motivation as you learn the formal structures which have proved to be so effective in studying fundamental questions.

—Ravi Vakil

1.1 January 18

So it begins.

1.1.1 Logistics

Here are some logistic things.

- We are using Eisenbud's *Commutative Algebra: With a View Toward Algebraic Geometry*. We will follow it pretty closely.
- All exams will be open-book and at-home. The only restrictions are time constraints (1.5 hours, 1.5 hours, and 3 hours).
- The first homework will be posted on Monday, and it will be uploaded to bCourses.
- Supposedly there will be a reader for the course, but nothing is known about the reader.

1.1.2 Rings

Commutative algebra is about commutative rings.

Convention 1.1. All of our rings will have a 1_R element and be commutative, as God intended. We do permit the zero ring.

We are interested in particular kinds of rings. Here are some nice rings.

Integral domain

Definition 1.2 (Integral domain). An *integral domain* is a (nonzero) ring R such that, for $a, b \in R$, $ab = 0$ implies $a = 0$ or $b = 0$.

Units

Definition 1.3 (Units). Given a ring R , we define the group of *units* R^\times to be the set of elements of R which have multiplicative inverses.

Field

Definition 1.4 (Field). A *field* is a nonzero ring R for which $R = \{0\} \cup R^\times$.

Reduced

Definition 1.5 (Reduced). A ring R is *reduced* if and only if it has no nonzero nilpotent elements.

Local **Definition 1.6** (Local). A ring R is *local* if and only if it has a unique (proper) maximal ideal.

It might seem strange to have lots a unique maximal ideal; here are some examples.

Example 1.7. Any field is a local ring with maximal ideal $\{0\}$.

Example 1.8. The ring of p -adic integers \mathbb{Z}_p is a maximal ring with maximal ideal (p) .

Example 1.9. The ring $\mathbb{Z}/p^2\mathbb{Z}$ is a local ring with maximal ideal $p\mathbb{Z}/p^2\mathbb{Z}$.

1.1.3 Ideals

The following is our definition.

Ideal **Definition 1.10** (Ideal). Given a ring R , a subset $I \subseteq R$ is an *ideal* if it contains 0 and is closed under R -linear combination.

Given a ring R , we will write

$$(S) \subseteq R$$

to be the ideal generated by the set $S \subseteq R$.

Finitely generated **Definition 1.11** (Finitely generated). An ideal $I \subseteq R$ is said to be *finitely generated* if and only if there are finitely many elements $r_1, \dots, r_n \in R$ such that $I = (r_1, \dots, r_n)$.

Principal **Definition 1.12** (Principal). An ideal $I \subseteq R$ is *principal* if and only if there exists $r \in R$ such that $I = (r)$.

We mentioned maximal ideals above; here is that definition.

Maximal **Definition 1.13** (Maximal). An ideal $I \subseteq R$ is *maximal* if and only if $I \neq R$ and, for any ideal $J \subseteq R$, $I \subseteq J$ implies $I = J$ or $I = R$.

Alternatively, an ideal $I \subseteq R$ is maximal if and only if the quotient ring R/I is a field. We will not show this here.

Prime **Definition 1.14** (Prime). An ideal $I \subseteq R$ is *prime* if and only if $I \neq R$ and, for $a, b \in R$, $ab \in I$ implies $a \in I$ or $b \in I$.

Again, we can view prime ideals by quotient: I is prime if and only if R/I is a (nonzero) integral domain. With the above definitions in mind, we can define the following very nice class of rings.

Principal ideal **Definition 1.15** (Principal ideal). An integral domain R is a *principal ideal domain* if and only if all ideals of R are principal.

Example 1.16. The ring \mathbb{Z} is a principal ideal domain. The way this is showed is by showing \mathbb{Z} is Euclidean. Explicitly, fix $I \subseteq \mathbb{Z}$ an ideal. Then if $I \neq (0)$, find an element of $m \in I$ of smallest absolute value and use the division algorithm to write, for any $a \in I$,

$$a = mq + r$$

for $0 \leq r < m$. But then $r \in I$, so minimality of m forces $r = 0$, so $a \in (m)$, finishing.

Example 1.17. For a field k , the ring $k[x]$ is a principal ideal domain. Again, this is because $k[x]$ is a Euclidean domain, where we measure size by degree.

1.1.4 Unique Factorization

We have the following definition.

Irreducible,
prime

Definition 1.18 (Irreducible, prime). Fix R a ring and $r \in R$ an element.

- We say that $r \in R$ is *irreducible* if and only if r is not a unit, not zero, and $r = ab$ for $a, b \in R$ implies that one of a or b is a unit.
- We say that $r \in R$ is *prime* if and only if r is not a unit, not zero, and (r) is a prime ideal: $ab \in (r)$ implies $a \in (r)$ or $b \in (r)$.

This gives rise to the following important definition.

Unique
factorization
domain

Definition 1.19 (Unique factorization domain). Fix R an integral domain. Then R is a *unique factorization domain* if and only if all nonzero elements of R have a factorization into irreducible elements, unique up to permutation and multiplication by units.

Remark 1.20. Units have the “empty” factorization, consisting of no irreducibles.

Example 1.21. The ring \mathbb{Z} is a unique factorization domain. We will prove this later.

Note there are two things to check: that the factorization exists and that it is unique. Importantly, existence does not imply uniqueness.

Exercise 1.22. There exists an integral domain R such that every element has a factorization into irreducibles but that this factorization is unique.

Proof. Consider the subring $R := k[x^2, xy, y^2] \subseteq k[x, y]$. Here x^2, xy, y^2 are all irreducibles because the only way to factor a quadratic nontrivially would be into linear polynomials, but R has no linear polynomials.

However, these elements are not prime:

$$x^2 \mid xy \cdot xy$$

while x^2 does not divide xy . More concretely, $(xy)(xy) = x^2 \cdot y^2$ provides non-unique factorization into irreducibles. ■

The following condition will provide an easier check for the existence of factorizations.

Ascending
chain
condition

Definition 1.23 (Ascending chain condition). Given a collection of sets S , we say that S has the *ascending chain condition* (ACC) if and only every chain of sets in S must eventually stabilize.

Example 1.24 (ACC for principal ideals). A ring R has the ascending chain condition for principal ideals if and only if every ascending chain of principal ideals

$$(a_1) \subseteq (a_2) \subseteq (a_3) \subseteq \cdots$$

has some N such that $(a_N) = (a_n)$ for $n \geq N$.

Now, the fact that \mathbb{Z} is a unique factorization domain roughly comes from the fact that \mathbb{Z} is a principal ideal domain.

Theorem 1.25. Fix R a ring. Then R is a principal ideal domain implies that R is a unique factorization domain.

Proof. We start by showing that R has the ascending chain for principal ideals. Indeed, suppose that we have some ascending chain of principal ideals

$$(a_1) \subseteq (a_2) \subseteq (a_3) \subseteq \cdots$$

Then the key idea is to look at the union of all these ideals, which will be an ideal by following the chain condition. However, R is a principal ideal domain, so there exists $b \in R$ such that

$$\bigcup_{k=1}^{\infty} (a_k) = (b).$$

However, it follows $b \in (a_N)$ for some N , in which case $(a_n) = (a_N)$ for each $n \geq N$.

We can now show that every nonzero element in R has a factorization into irreducibles.

Lemma 1.26. Suppose that a ring R has the ascending chain condition for principal ideals. Then every nonzero element of R has a factorization into irreducibles.

Proof. Fix some $r \in R$. If $(r) = R$, then r is a unit and hence has the empty factorization.

Otherwise, note that every ideal can be placed inside of a maximal and hence prime ideal, so say that $(r) \subseteq \mathfrak{m}$ where \mathfrak{m}_1 is prime; because R is a principal ring, we can say that $\mathfrak{m} = (\pi_1)$ for some $\pi_1 \in R$, so $\pi_1 \mid r$. This π_1 should go into our factorization, and we have left to factor r/π_1 .

The above argument can then be repeated for r/π_1 , and if r/π_1 is not a unit, then we get an irreducible π_2 and consider $r/(\pi_1\pi_2)$. This process must terminate because it is giving us an ascending chain of principal ideals

$$(r) \subseteq \left(\frac{r}{\pi_1}\right) \subseteq \left(\frac{r}{\pi_1\pi_2}\right) \subseteq \cdots,$$

which must stabilize eventually and hence must be finite. Thus, there exists N so that

$$\left(\frac{r}{\pi_1\pi_2 \cdots \pi_N}\right) = R,$$

so $r = u\pi_1\pi_2 \cdots \pi_N$ for some unit $u \in R^\times$. ■

It remains to show uniqueness of the factorizations. The main idea is to show that all prime elements of R are the same as irreducible ones. One direction of the implication does not need the fact that R is a principal ring.

Lemma 1.27. Fix R an integral domain. Then any prime $r \in R$ is also irreducible.

Proof. Note that r is not a unit because it is prime. Now, suppose that $r = ab$ for $a, b \in R$; this implies that $r \mid ab$, so because r is prime, without loss of generality we force $r \mid a$. Then, dividing by r (which is legal because R is an integral domain), we see that

$$1 = (a/r)b,$$

so b is a unit. This finishes showing that r is irreducible. ■



Warning 1.28. The reverse implication of the above lemma is not true for arbitrary integral domains: in the ring $\mathbb{Z}[\sqrt{-5}]$, there is the factorization

$$(1 + \sqrt{-5})(1 - \sqrt{-5}) = 2 \cdot 3.$$

One can show that all elements above are irreducible, but none of them are prime.

The other side of this is harder. Pick up some $\pi \in R$ which is irreducible, and we show that π is prime. In fact, we will show stronger: we will show that (π) is a maximal ideal. Note $(\pi) \neq R$ because π is not a unit.

Indeed, suppose that $(\pi) \subseteq (r)$ for some ideal $(r) \subseteq R$. Then

$$\pi = rs$$

for some $s \in R$. Now, one of r or s must be a unit (π is irreducible). If s is a unit, then $(\pi) = (r)$; if r is a unit then $(r) = R$. This finishes showing that (π) is maximal.

From here we show the uniqueness of our factorizations. We proceed inductively, noting that two empty factorizations are of course the same up to permutation and units. Now suppose we have two factorizations of irreducibles

$$\prod_{k=1}^m p_k = \prod_{\ell=1}^n q_\ell,$$

where $k + \ell \geq 1$. Note that we cannot have exactly one side with no primes because this would make a product of irreducibles into 1, and irreducibles are not units.

Now, consider p_m . It is irreducible and hence prime and hence divides one of the right-hand factors; without loss of generality $p_m \mid q_n$. But (p_m) and (q_n) are both maximal ideals, so $(p_m) \subseteq (q_n)$ forces equality, so p_m/q_n is a unit. So we may cross off p_m and q_n and continue downwards by induction. ■

1.1.5 Digression on Gaussian Integers

As an aside, the study of unique factorization came from Gauss's study of the Gaussian integers.

Gaussian
integers

Definition 1.29 (Gaussian integers). The *Gaussian integers* are the ring

$$\mathbb{Z}[i] := \{a + bi : a, b \in \mathbb{Z}\}.$$

One can in fact check that $\mathbb{Z}[i]$ is a principal ideal domain, which implies that $\mathbb{Z}[i]$ is a unique factorization domain. The correct way to check that $\mathbb{Z}[i]$ is a principal ideal domain is to show that it is Euclidean.

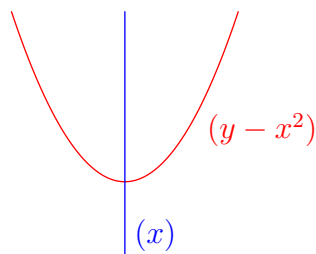
Lemma 1.30. The ring $\mathbb{Z}[i]$ is Euclidean, where our norm is $N(a + bi) := a^2 + b^2$. In other words, given $\alpha, \beta \in \mathbb{Z}[i]$, we need to show that there exists $q \in \mathbb{Z}[i]$ such that

$$a = bq + r$$

where $r = 0$ or $N(r) < N(\beta)$.

Proof. The main idea is to view $\mathbb{Z}[i] \subseteq \mathbb{C}$ geometrically as in \mathbb{R}^2 . We may assume that $|\beta| \leq |\alpha|$, and then it suffices to show that in this case we may find q so that $a - bq$ has smaller norm than a and induct.

Well, for this it suffices to look at $a + b, a - b, a + ib, a - ib$; the proof that one of these works essentially boils down to the following image.



Note that at least one of the endpoints here has norm smaller than a . ■

What about the primes? Well, there is the following theorem which will classify.

Theorem 1.31 (Primes in $\mathbb{Z}[i]$). An element $\pi := a + bi \in \mathbb{Z}[i]$ is *prime* if and only if $N(\pi)$ is a 1 (mod 4) prime, $(\pi) = (1 + i)$, or $(\pi) = (p)$ for some prime $p \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $p \equiv 3 \pmod{4}$.

We will not fully prove this; it turns out to be quite hard, but we can say small things: for example, 3 (mod 4) primes p remain prime in $\mathbb{Z}[i]$ because it is then impossible to solve

$$p = a^2 + b^2$$

by checking (mod 4).

Remark 1.32. This sort of analysis of “sums of squares” can be related to the much harder analysis of Fermat’s last theorem, which asserts that the Diophantine equation

$$x^n + y^n = z^n$$

for $xyz \neq 0$ integers such that $n > 2$.

1.1.6 Noetherian Rings

We have the following definition.

Noetherian
ring

Definition 1.33 (Noetherian ring). A ring R is said to be *Noetherian* if its ideals have the ascending chain condition.

There are some equivalent conditions to this.

Proposition 1.34. Fix R a ring. The following conditions are equivalent.

- R is Noetherian.
- Every ideal of R is finitely generated.

Proof. We show the directions one at a time.

- Suppos that R has an ideal which is not finitely generated, say $J \subseteq R$. Then we may pick up any $a_1 \in J$ and observe that $J \neq (a_1)$.

Then we can pick up $a_2 \in J \setminus (a_1)$ and observe that $J \neq (a_1, a_2)$. So then we pick up $a_3 \in J \setminus (a_1, a_2)$ and continue. This gives us a strictly ascending chain

$$(a_1) \subsetneq (a_1, a_2) \subsetneq (a_1, a_2, a_3) \subsetneq \cdots,$$

contadicting the ascending chain condition.

- Suppose that every ideal is finitely generated. Then, given any ascending chain of ideals

$$I_1 \subseteq I_2 \subseteq I_3 \subseteq \cdots,$$

we need this chain to stabilize. Well, the union

$$I := \bigcup_{k=1}^{\infty} I_k$$

is also an ideal, and it must be finitely generated, so suppose $I = (a_1, a_2, \dots, a_m)$. However, each a_k must appear in some I_\bullet (and then each I_\bullet after that one as well); choose N large enough so that $a_k \in I_N$ for each k . This implies that, for any $n \geq N$,

$$I_n \subseteq I = (a_1, a_2, \dots, a_m) \subseteq I_N \subseteq I_n$$

verifying that the chain has stabilized. ■

A large class of rings turn out to be Noetherian, and in fact oftentimes Noetherian rings can build more Noetherian rings.

Proposition 1.35. Fix R a Noetherian ring and $I \subseteq R$ an ideal. Then R/I is also Noetherian.

Proof. Any chain of ideals in R/I can be lifted to a chain in R by taking pre-images along $\varphi : R \twoheadrightarrow R/I$. Then the chain must stabilize in R , so they will stabilize back down in R/I as well. ■

The above works because quotienting is an algebraic operation. In contrast, merely being a subring is less algebraic, so it is not so surprising that $R_1 \subseteq R_2$ with R_2 Noetherian does not imply that R_1 is Noetherian.

Example 1.36. The ring $k[x_1, x_2, \dots]$ is not Noetherian because we have the infinite ascending chain

$$(x_1) \subseteq (x_1, x_2) \subseteq (x_1, x_2, x_3) \subseteq \cdots$$

However, $k[x_1, x_2, \dots] \subseteq k(x_1, x_2, \dots)$, and the latter ring is Noetherian because it is a field. (Fields are Noetherian because they have finitely many ideals and therefore satisfy the ascending chain condition automatically.)

Here is another way to generate Noetherian rings.

Theorem 1.37 (Hilbert basis). If R is a Noetherian ring, then $R[x]$ is also a Noetherian ring.

Corollary 1.38. By induction, if R is Noetherian, then $R[x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n]$ is Noetherian for any finite n .



Warning 1.39. Again, it is not true that $R[x_1, x_2, \dots]$ is Noetherian, even though “inducting” with the Hilbert basis theorem might suggest that it is.

Proof of Theorem 1.37. The idea is to use the degree of polynomials to measure size. Fix $I \subseteq R[x]$ an ideal, and we apply the following inductive process.

- Pick up $f_1 \in I$ of minimal degree in I .
- If $I = (f_1)$ then stop. Otherwise find $f_2 \in I \setminus (f_1)$ of minimal degree.
- In general, if $I \neq (f_1, \dots, f_n)$, then pick up $f_{n+1} \in I \setminus (f_1, \dots, f_n)$ of minimal degree.

Importantly, we do not know that there are only finitely many f_\bullet yet.

Now, look at the leading coefficients of the f_\bullet , which we name a_\bullet . However, the ideal

$$(a_1, a_2, \dots) \subseteq R$$

must be finitely generated, so there is some finite N such that

$$(a_1, a_2, \dots) = (a_1, a_2, \dots, a_N).$$

To finish, we claim that

$$I \stackrel{?}{=} (f_1, f_2, \dots, f_N).$$

Well, suppose for the sake of contradiction that we had some $f_{N+1} \in I \setminus (f_1, f_2, \dots, f_N)$ of least degree. We must have $\deg f_{N+1} \geq \deg f_\bullet$ for each f_\bullet , or else we contradict the construction of f_\bullet as being least degree.

To finish, we note $a_{N+1} \in (a_1, a_2, \dots, a_N)$, so we are promised constants c_1, c_2, \dots, c_N such that

$$a_{N+1} = \sum_{k=1}^N c_k a_k.$$

In particular, the polynomial

$$g(x) := f_{N+1}(x) - \sum_{k=1}^N c_k a_k x^{(\deg g) - (\deg f_k)} f_k(x),$$

will be guaranteed to kill the leading term of $f_{N+1}(x)$. But $g \equiv f_{N+1} \pmod{I}$, so g is suddenly a polynomial also not in I while of smaller degree than f_{N+1} , which is our needed contradiction. ■

1.1.7 Modules

To review, we pick up the following definition.

Module

Definition 1.40 (Module). Fix R a ring. Then M is an abelian group with an R -action. Explicitly, we have the following properties; fix any $a, b \in R$ and $m, n \in M$.

- $1_R m = m$.
- $a(bm) = (ab)m$.
- $(a + b)m = am + bm$.
- $a(m + n) = am + an$.

Example 1.41. Any ideal $I \subseteq R$ is an R -module. In fact, ideals exactly correspond to the R -submodules of R .

Example 1.42. Given any two R -module M with a submodule $N \subseteq M$, we can form the quotient M/N .

Modules also have a notion of being Noetherian.

Noetherian module

Definition 1.43 (Noetherian module). We say that an R -module M is *Noetherian* if and only if all R -submodules of M are finitely generated.

Remark 1.44. Equivalently, M is Noetherian if and only if the submodules of M have the ascending chain condition. The proof of the equivalence is essentially the same as Proposition 1.34.

Because modules are slightly better algebraic objects than rings, we have more ways to stitch modules together and hence more ways to make Noetherian modules. Here is one important way.

Proposition 1.45. Fix a short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow 0$$

of R -modules. Then B is Noetherian if and only if A and C are both Noetherian.

Proof. We will not show this here; it is on the homework. Nevertheless, let's sketch the forwards direction, which is easier. Take B Noetherian.

- To show that A is Noetherian, it suffices to note that any submodules $M \subseteq A$ will also be a submodule of B and hence be finitely generated because B is Noetherian.
- To show that C is Noetherian, we note that C is essentially a quotient of B , so we can proceed as we did in Proposition 1.35.¹ ■

Because we like Noetherian rings, the following will be a useful way to make Noetherian modules from them.

Proposition 1.46. Every finitely generated R -module over a Noetherian ring R is Noetherian.

Proof. If M is finitely generated, then there exists some $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and surjective morphism

$$\varphi : R^n \twoheadrightarrow M.$$

Now, because R is Noetherian, R^n will be Noetherian by an induction: there is nothing to say when $n = 1$. Then the inductive step looks at the short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow R \rightarrow R^n \rightarrow R^{n-1} \rightarrow 0.$$

Here, the fact that R and R^{n-1} are Noetherian implies that R^n is Noetherian by Proposition 1.45. Anyways, the point is that M is the quotient of a Noetherian ring and hence Noetherian by Proposition 1.45 (again). ■

Here is the analogous result for algebras.

Algebra

Definition 1.47 (Algebra). An R -algebra S is a ring equipped with a homomorphism $\iota : R \rightarrow S$. Equivalently, we may think of an R -algebra as a ring with an R action.

Proposition 1.48. Fix R a Noetherian ring. Then any finitely generated R -algebra is Noetherian.

Proof. Saying that S is a finitely generated R -algebra (with associated map $\iota : R \rightarrow S$) is the same as saying that there is a surjective morphism

$$\varphi : R[x_1, \dots, x_n] \twoheadrightarrow S$$

for some $n \in \mathbb{N}$. (Explicitly, $\varphi|_R = \iota$, and each x_k maps to one of the finitely many generating elements of S .) But then S is the quotient of a $R[x_1, \dots, x_n]$, which is Noetherian by Corollary 1.38, so S is Noetherian as well. ■

¹ In fact, Proposition 1.35 is exactly this in the case where $B = R$.

1.1.8 Invariant Theory

In our discussion, fix k a field of characteristic 0, and let G be a finite group or $\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{C})$ (say). Now, suppose that we have a map

$$G \rightarrow \mathrm{GL}_n(k).$$

Then this gives $k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ a G -action by writing $gf(\vec{x}) := f(g^{-1}\vec{x})$. The central question of invariant theory is then as follows.

Question 1.49 (Invariant theory). Fix everything as above. Then can we describe $k[x_1, \dots, x_n]^G$?

By checking the group action, it is not difficult to verify that $k[x_1, \dots, x_n]^G$ is a subring of $k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$. For brevity, we will write $R := k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$.

Here is a result of Hilbert which sheds some light on our question.

Theorem 1.50 (Hilbert's finiteness). Fix everything as above with G finite. Then $R^G = k[x_1, \dots, x_n]^G$ is a finitely generated k -algebra and hence Noetherian.

Proof. We follow Eisenbud's proof of this result. We pick up the following quick aside.

Lemma 1.51. Fix everything as above. If we write some $f \in R^G$ as

$$f = \sum_{d=0}^{\deg f} f_d$$

where f_d is homogeneous of degree d (i.e., f_d contains all terms of f of degree d), then $f_d \in R^G$ as well.

Proof. Indeed, multiplication by $\sigma \in G$ will not change the degree of any monomial (note G is acting as $\mathrm{GL}_n(k)$ on the variables themselves), so when we write

$$\sum_{d=0}^{\deg f} \sigma f_d = \sigma f = f = \sum_{d=0}^{\deg f} f_d,$$

we are forced to have $\sigma f_d = f_d$ by degree comparison arguments. ■

Remark 1.52. In other words, the above lemma asserts that R^G may be graded by degree.

The point of the above lemma is that decomposition of an element $f \in R^G$ into its homogeneous components still keeps the homogeneous components in R^G , which is a fact we will use repeatedly.

We now proceed with the proof. The main ingredients are the Hilbert basis theorem and the Reynolds operator. Here is the Reynolds operator.

Reynolds
operator

Definition 1.53 (Reynolds operator). Fix everything as above. Then, given $f \in R$, we define the *Reynolds operator* $\varphi : R \rightarrow R$ as

$$\varphi(f) := \frac{1}{\#G} \sum_{\sigma \in G} \sigma f.$$

Note that division by $\#G$ is legal because k has characteristic zero.

It is not too hard to check that $\varphi : R \rightarrow R^G$ and $\varphi|_{R^G} = \text{id}_{R^G}$. Additionally, we see $\deg \varphi(f) \leq \deg f$.

Let $\mathfrak{m} \subseteq R^G$ be generated by the homogeneous elements of R^G of positive degree. The input by the Hilbert basis theorem is to say that $\mathfrak{m}R \subseteq R$ is an R -ideal, and R is Noetherian (by the Hilbert basis theorem!), so $\mathfrak{m}R$ is finitely generated. So set

$$\mathfrak{m}R = (f_1, \dots, f_n) = f_1R + \dots + f_nR.$$

By decomposing the f_\bullet into their (finitely many) homogeneous components, we may assume that the f_\bullet are homogeneous.

Now we claim that the f_\bullet generate R^G (as a k -algebra). Note that there is actually nontrivial difficulty turning the above finite generation of $\mathfrak{m}R$ as an R -module into finite of R^G as a k -algebra and that these notions are nontrivially different. I.e., we are claiming

$$R^G \stackrel{?}{=} k[f_1, \dots, f_n].$$

Certainly we have \supseteq here. For \subseteq , we show that any $f \in R^G$ lives in $k[f_1, \dots, f_n]$ by induction. By decomposing f into homogeneous parts, we may assume that f is homogeneous.

We now induct on $\deg f$. If $\deg f = 0$, then $f \in k \subseteq k[f_1, \dots, f_n]$. Otherwise, f is homogeneous of positive degree and hence lives in \mathfrak{m} . In fact, $f \in \mathfrak{m}R$, so we may write

$$f = \sum_{i=1}^n g_i f_i.$$

Note that, because f and f_i are all homogeneous, we may assume that the g_i is also homogeneous because all terms in g_i of degree not equal to

$$\deg f - \deg f_i$$

will have to cancel out in the summation and hence may as well be removed entirely. In particular, each g_i has $g_i = 0$ or is homogeneous of degree $\deg f - \deg f_i$, so $\deg g_i < \deg f$ always.

We would like to finish the proof by induction, noting that $g_i \in R^G$ and $\deg g_i < \deg f$ forces $g_i \in k[f_1, \dots, f_n]$, and hence $f \in k[f_1, \dots, f_n]$ by summation. However, we cannot do that because we don't actually know if $g_i \in R^G$! To fix this problem, we apply the Reynolds operator, noting

$$f = \varphi(f) = \sum_{i=1}^n \varphi(g_i) f_i.$$

So now we may say that $\varphi(g_i) \in R^G$ and $\deg \varphi(g_i) < \deg f$, so $\varphi(g_i) \in k[f_1, \dots, f_n]$, and hence $f \in k[f_1, \dots, f_n]$ by summation. This finishes. ■

The main example here is as follows.

Exercise 1.54. Let S_n act on $R := k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ as follows: $\sigma \in S_n$ acts by $\sigma x_m := x_{\sigma m}$. Then we want to describe R^G , the *homogeneous polynomials in n letters*.

Proof. We won't work this out in detail here, but the main point is that the fundamental theorem of symmetric polynomials tells us that

$$R^G = k[e_1, e_2, \dots, e_n],$$

where the e_\bullet are *elementary symmetric functions*. Namely,

$$e_m := \sum_{\substack{S \subseteq \{1, \dots, n\} \\ \#S=m}} \prod_{s \in S} x_s.$$

It is quite remarkable that R^G turned out to be a freely generated k -algebra, just like R . ■

Here is more esoteric example.

Exercise 1.55. Let $G = \{1, g\} \cong \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$ act on $R := k[x, y]$ by $g \cdot x = -x$ and $g \cdot y = -y$. Then we want to describe R^G .

Proof. Here, R^G consists of all polynomials $f(x, y)$ such that $f(x, y) = f(-x, -y)$. By checking coefficients of the various $x^m y^n$ terms, we see that $f(x, y) = f(-x, -y)$ is equivalent to forcing all terms of odd degree to have coefficient zero.

In other words, the terms of even degree are the only ones which can have nonzero coefficient. Each such term $x^a y^b$ (taking $a \geq b$ without loss of generality) can be written as

$$x^a y^b = x^{a-b} (xy)^b = (x^2)^{(a-b)/2} (xy)^b,$$

where $a - b \equiv a + b \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$ justifies the last equality. so in fact we can realize R^G as

$$R^G = k[x^2, xy, y^2].$$

To see that this ring is Noetherian, we note that there is a surjection

$$\varphi : k[u, v, w] \rightarrow k[x^2, xy, y^2]$$

taking $u \mapsto x^2$ and $v \mapsto xy$ and $w \mapsto y^2$. Thus, R is the quotient of a Noetherian ring and hence Noetherian itself. In fact, we can check that² $\ker \varphi = (uw - v^2)$ so that

$$R^G \cong \frac{k[u, v, w]}{(uw - v^2)}.$$

Even though R^G is Noetherian, it is not a freely generated k -algebra (i.e., a polynomial ring over k) because it is not a unique factorization domain! ■

Next class we will start talking about the Nullstellensatz, which has connections to algebraic geometry.

1.2 January 20

We continue following the Eisenbud machine.

1.2.1 Affine Space

To begin our discussion, we start with some geometry.

Affine space

Definition 1.56 (Affine space). Given a field k and positive integer n , we define n -dimensional *affine space* over k to be $\mathbb{A}^n(k) := k^n$.

Now, given affine space $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$, we are interested in studying subsets which are solutions to some set of polynomial equations

$$f_1, \dots, f_n \in k[x_1, \dots, x_d].$$

This gives rise to the following definition.

Algebraic

Definition 1.57 (Algebraic). A subset $X \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ is (affine) *algebraic* if and only if it is the set of solutions to some system of polynomials equations $f_1, \dots, f_n \in k[x_1, \dots, x_d]$.

² Certainly $uw - v^2 \in \ker \varphi$. In the other direction, any term $u^a v^b w^c$ can be written $(\text{mod } uw - v^2)$ as a term not having both u and w . However, each $x^d y^e$ has a unique representation in exactly one of the ways $u^a v^b \mapsto x^{2a+b} y^b$ ($a > 0$) or $v^b w^c \mapsto x^b y^{b+2c}$ ($c > 0$) or $v^b \mapsto x^b y^b$, so after applying the $(\text{mod } uw - v^2)$ movement, we see that the kernel is trivial.

Example 1.58. The hyperbola

$$\{(x, y) \in \mathbb{R}^2 : x^2 - y^2 - 1 = 0\}$$

is an algebraic set. Geometrically, it looks like the following.



Example 1.59. The set $\emptyset \subseteq \mathbb{A}^1(\mathbb{R})$ is algebraic because it is the set of solutions to the equation $x^2 + 1 = 0$ in \mathbb{R} .

The above example is a little disheartening because it feels like $x^2 + 1$ really ought to have a solution, namely $i \in \mathbb{C}$. More explicitly, there are no obvious algebraic obstructions that make $x^2 + 1$ not have a solution. So with this in mind, we make the following convention.

Convention 1.60. In the following discussion on the Nullstellensatz, k will always be an algebraically closed field.

1.2.2 Nullstellensatz

The Nullstellensatz is very important.

Remark 1.61. Because the Nullstellensatz is important, its name is in German (which was the language of Hilbert).

Now, the story so far is that we can take a set of polynomials and make algebraic sets as their solution set. We can in fact go in the opposite direction.

$I(X)$ **Definition 1.62** ($I(X)$). If $X \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ is an (affine) algebraic set, we define

$$I(X) := \{f \in k[x_1, \dots, x_n] : f(X) = 0\}.$$

It is not hard to check that $I(X) \subseteq k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ is in fact an ideal. Namely, if $f, g \in I(X)$ and $r, s \in k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$, then we need to know $rf + sg \in I(X)$ as well. Well, for any $x \in X$, we see

$$(rf + sg)(x) = rf(x) + sg(x) = 0,$$

so $rf + sg \in I(X)$ indeed.

One might hope that all ideals would be able to take the form $I(X)$, but this is not the case. For example, if $f^m(X) = 0$, then $f(X) = 0$ because k is a field. Thus, I will satisfy the property that $f^m \in I$ implies $f \in I$. To keep track of this obstruction, we have the following definition.

Radical

Definition 1.63 (Radical). Fix R a ring. Given an R -ideal I , we define the *radical of I* to be

$$\text{rad } I := \{x \in R : x^n \in I \text{ for some } n \geq 1\} \supseteq I.$$

If $I = \text{rad } I$, then we call I a *radical ideal*.

To make sense, this definition requires a few sanity checks.

- We check $\text{rad } I$ is in fact an ideal. Well, given $f, g \in \text{rad } I$, there exists positive integers m and n such that $f^m, g^n \in I$. Then, for any $r, s \in R$, we see

$$(rf + sg)^{m+n} = \sum_{k=0}^{m+n} \binom{m+n}{k} r^k s^{m+n-k} \cdot f^k g^{m+n-k}.$$

However, for any k , we see that either $k \geq m$ or $m+n-k \geq n$, so all terms of this sum contain an f^m or g^n factor, so the sum is in I . So indeed, $rf + sg \in \text{rad } I$.

- We check that $\text{rad } I$ is a radical ideal. Well, if $f^n \in \text{rad } I$ for some positive integer n , then $f^{mn} = (f^n)^m \in I$ for some positive integer m , from which $f \in \text{rad } I$ follows.

It is not too hard to generate examples where the radical is strictly larger than the original ideal.

Example 1.64. Fix $R := \mathbb{Z}[\sqrt{2}]$ and $I = (2) = 2\mathbb{Z}[\sqrt{2}] = \{2a + 2b\sqrt{2} : a, b \in \mathbb{Z}\}$. Then $(\sqrt{2})^2 = 2 \in I$ while $\sqrt{2} \notin I$, so $I \subsetneq \text{rad } I$.

Here is an alternative characterization of being radical.

Lemma 1.65. Fix R a ring. Then an ideal $I \subseteq R$ is radical if and only if R/I is reduced.

Proof. This proof is akin to the one showing $I \subseteq R$ is prime if and only if R/I is an integral domain.

Anyways, I is radical if and only if $x^n \in I$ for $x \in R$ and $n \geq 1$ implies $x \in I$. Translating this condition into R/I , we are saying that $[x]_I^n \in [0]_I$ for $[x]_I \in R/I$ and $n \geq 1$ implies that $[x]_I = [0]_I$. This is exactly the condition for R/I to be radical. ■

With all of the machinery we have in place, we can now state the idea of Hilbert's Nullstellensatz.

Theorem 1.66 (Nullstellensatz, I). Fix k an algebraically closed field. Then there is a bijection between radical ideals of $k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ and (affine) algebraic sets $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$.

So far we have defined a map from algebraic sets to radical ideals by $X \mapsto I(X)$. The reverse map is as follows.

 $Z(I)$

Definition 1.67 ($Z(I)$). Given a subset $S \subseteq k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$, we define the *zero set of S* by

$$Z(S) := \{x \in \mathbb{A}^n(k) : f(x) = 0 \text{ for all } f \in S\}.$$

Note that replacing S with the ideal it generates ($\langle S \rangle$) makes no difference to $Z(S)$ (i.e., linear combinations of the constraints do not make the problem harder), so we will focus on the case where S is an ideal.

With these maps in hand, we can restate the Nullstellensatz.

Theorem 1.68 (Nullstellensatz, II). Fix k an algebraically closed field. Then for ideals $I \subseteq k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$, we have

$$I(Z(I)) = \text{rad } I.$$

In particular, if I is radical, then $I(Z(I)) = I$.

Remark 1.69. Yes, it is important that k is algebraically closed here. Essentially this comes from Example 1.59: the ideal $(x^2 + 1)$ is not of the form $Z(X)$ for any subset $X \subseteq \mathbb{A}^1(\mathbb{R})$ because $x^2 + 1$ has no roots and would need $X = \emptyset$, but $Z(\emptyset) = \mathbb{R}[x]$.

Example 1.70. We have that $I(Z(R)) = R$ because $Z(R) = \emptyset$ (no points satisfy $1 = 0$) and $I(\emptyset) = R$ (all functions vanish on \emptyset).

Remark 1.71 (Nir). One might object that $I(Z(I)) = \text{rad } I$ only contains one direction of the bijection, but in fact it is not too hard to show directly that $Z(I(X)) = X$ for algebraic sets X . We argue as follows.

- Each $x \in X$ will cause all polynomials in $I(X)$ to vanish by construction of $I(X)$, so $X \subseteq Z(I(X))$.
- Now set $X = Z(S)$. Each $f \in S$ has $f(x) = 0$ for each $x \in S$, so $f \in I(X)$ as well. So $S \subseteq I(X)$, so $Z(I(X)) \subseteq Z(S) = X$.

1.2.3 More on Affine Space

Let's talk about $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$ a bit more. We mentioned that this should be a geometric object, so let's give it a topology.

Zariski
topology, I

Definition 1.72 (Zariski topology, I). Given affine space $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$, we define the *Zariski topology* as having closed sets which are the algebraic sets.

Remark 1.73 (Nir). Here is one reason why we might do this: without immediate access to better functions (the field k might have no easy geometry, like $k = \mathbb{F}_p(t)$) it makes sense to at least require polynomial functions to be continuous and k to be Hausdorff. In particular, given a polynomial f , we see that

$$Z(f) = f^{-1}(\{0\})$$

should be closed. In fact, for any subset $S \subseteq k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ of polynomials

$$Z(S) = \bigcap_{f \in S} Z(f)$$

will also have to be closed. In particular, all algebraic sets are closed. One can then check that polynomials do remain continuous in this topology also, as promised.

We have the following checks to make sure that the algebraic sets do actually form a topology (of closed sets).

- The empty set is closed: \emptyset is the set of solutions to the equation $1 = 0$.
- The full space is closed: $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$ is the set of solutions to the equation $0 = 0$.
- Arbitrary intersection of closed sets is closed: given algebraic sets $Z(S)$ for given subsets $S \subseteq \mathcal{S}$ of $k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$, we note

$$\bigcap_{S \in \mathcal{S}} Z(S) = Z\left(\bigcup_{S \in \mathcal{S}} S\right),$$

so the union is in fact an algebraic set.

- Finite unions of closed sets are closed: given algebraic sets $Z(S_1), \dots, Z(S_n)$, we note

$$\bigcup_{i=1}^n Z(S_i) = Z\left(\prod_{i=1}^n (S_i)\right),$$

where (S_i) is the ideal generated by S_i . In particular, $\prod_i (S_i)$ is generated by elements $s_1 \cdot \dots \cdot s_n$ such that $s_i \in S_i$ for each i , so any point in any of the $Z(S_i)$ will show up in the given algebraic set.

Now that we've checked we actually have a topology, we remark that it is a pretty strange topology.

Proposition 1.74. Let k be an algebraically closed field. Given affine space $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$ the Zariski topology.

- The space $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$ is not Hausdorff.
- The space $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$ is compact.

Proof. We take the claims individually.

- Because $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$ has more than one point, it suffices to show that there are no disjoint nonempty Zariski open subsets of $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$. In other words, given two Zariski open sets $\mathbb{A}^n(k) \setminus Z(I)$ and $\mathbb{A}^n(k) \setminus Z(J)$, we claim that

$$(\mathbb{A}^n(k) \setminus Z(I)) \cap (\mathbb{A}^n(k) \setminus Z(J)) = \emptyset$$

implies $\mathbb{A}^n(k) \setminus Z(I) = \emptyset$ or $\mathbb{A}^n(k) \setminus Z(J) = \emptyset$. Taking complements, we know that

$$Z(IJ) = Z(I) \cup Z(J) = \mathbb{A}^n(k) = Z((0)).$$

But now, by the Nullstellensatz (!), we see that $\text{rad}(IJ) = \text{rad}((0))$. But $k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ is an integral domain, so $\text{rad}((0)) = (0)$.

Now, this means $f^n \in IJ$ for some $n \in \mathbb{N}$ requires $f = 0$, which means that $IJ = (0)$, so because $k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ is an integral domain, $I = (0)$ or $J = (0)$. (Explicitly, I and J cannot both have nonzero terms.) Without loss of generality, take $I = (0)$.

So to finish, we see $Z(I) = Z((0)) = \mathbb{A}^n(k)$, so $\mathbb{A}^n(k) \setminus Z(I) = \emptyset$.

- Suppose we are given an open cover $\{\mathbb{A}^n(k) \setminus Z(I)\}_{I \in \mathcal{S}}$ indexed by some collection \mathcal{S} of ideals of $k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$. The fact that these sets form an open cover is equivalent to saying

$$Z\left(\sum_{I \in \mathcal{S}} I\right) = \bigcap_{I \in \mathcal{S}} Z(I) = \emptyset.$$

Now, by the Nullstellensatz (we will use this trick again later on!), it follows

$$1 \in R = I(\emptyset) = I\left(Z\left(\sum_{I \in \mathcal{S}} I\right)\right) = \text{rad} \sum_{I \in \mathcal{S}} I,$$

so it follows $1 \in \sum I$.

However, we can reduce this to a finite condition: $1 \in \sum_I$ merely means there are elements $\{f_i\}_{i=1}^N$ such that $f_i \in I_i$ for some $I_i \in \mathcal{S}$ such that $\sum_i f_i = 1$. This means that in fact $1 \in I_1 + \dots + I_N$, so

$$\emptyset = Z(I_1 + \dots + I_N) = \bigcap_{i=1}^N Z(I_i).$$

Thus, the finite number of sets $\mathbb{A}^n(k) \setminus Z(I_i)$ for each $1 \leq i \leq N$ provides us with a finite subcover of $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$. ■

In another direction, we note can also understand algebraic sets $X \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ by their ring of functions. Again, the only functions we have easy access to are polynomials, so we take the following definition.

Coordinate
ring

Definition 1.75 (Coordinate ring). Given an algebraic set $X \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$, we define the *coordinate ring* on X as

$$A(X) := k[x_1, \dots, x_n]/I(X).$$

In other words, we are looking at polynomials on $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$ and identifying them whenever they are equal on X .

Note that, because $I(X)$ is a radical ideal, the ring $A(X)$ will be reduced.

1.2.4 Corollaries of the Nullstellensatz

Let's return to talking about the Nullstellensatz. To convince us that the Nullstellensatz is important, here are some nice corollaries.

Criteria for Polynomial System Solutions

The following is the feature of this subsection.

Corollary 1.76. A system of polynomial equations

$$\begin{cases} f_1(x_1, \dots, x_n) = 0, \\ \vdots \\ f_r(x_1, \dots, x_n) = 0, \end{cases}$$

has no solutions if and only if there exists $p_1, \dots, p_r \in k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ such that

$$\sum_{i=1}^r p_i f_i = 1.$$

Proof. In the reverse direction, we proceed by contraposition: if there is a solution $x \in \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ such that $f_i(x) = 0$ for each f_i , then any set of polynomials $p_1, \dots, p_r \in k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ will give

$$\sum_{i=1}^r p_i(x) f_i(x) = 0 \neq 1,$$

so it follows $\sum_{i=1}^r p_i f_i \neq 1$. Observe that we did not use the Nullstellensatz here.

The forwards direction is harder. The main point is that we are given $Z((f_1, \dots, f_r)) = \emptyset$, so

$$\text{rad}(f_1, \dots, f_r) = I(Z((f_1, \dots, f_r))) = I(\emptyset) = R,$$

so the Nullstellensatz gives $1 \in \text{rad}(f_1, \dots, f_r)$. Then it follows $1 = 1^n \in (f_1, \dots, f_r)$ for some positive integer n , so there exists $p_1, \dots, p_r \in k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ such that

$$\sum_{i=1}^r p_i f_i = 1.$$

This is what we wanted. ■

Maximal Ideals Are Points

To set up the next corollary, we claim that any point $a = (a_1, \dots, a_n) \in \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ makes a closed set corresponding to the ideal

$$I(\{a\}) \stackrel{?}{=} (x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n) \subseteq k[x_1, \dots, x_n] = A(\mathbb{A}^n(k)).$$

Indeed, $I(\{a\})$ certainly contains $x_i - a_i$ for each i ; conversely, if $f \in I(\{a\})$, then

$$f(x_1, \dots, x_n) \equiv f(a_1, \dots, a_n) = 0 \pmod{x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n},$$

so $f \in (x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n)$.

Example 1.77. In fact, in the case of $\mathbb{C}[x]$, it is not too hard to see that such ideals are maximal: given $z \in \mathbb{C}$, suppose that $I \subseteq \mathbb{C}[x]$ had $(x - z) \subseteq I$. If each $f \in I$ has $f(z) = 0$, then we are done; otherwise if there is $f \in I$ with $f(z) \neq 0$, then $f(x)$ and $(x - z)$ are coprime in a principal ideal domain, so

$$1 \in (f) + (x - z) \subseteq I,$$

meaning $I = \mathbb{C}[x]$.

The above example gives us the hope that maximal ideals might turn out to all be of the above form. Indeed, this is true, with the help of the Nullstellensatz.

Corollary 1.78. Fix $X \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ an (affine) algebraic set. Then points $a = (a_1, \dots, a_n) \in X$ are in bijection with maximal ideals $\mathfrak{m}_a \subseteq A(X)$ by

$$a \mapsto \mathfrak{m}_a := I(\{a\})/I(X) = (x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n)/I(X).$$

Proof. The input from the Nullstellensatz will come from the following lemma.

Lemma 1.79. Suppose that $I \subseteq A(\mathbb{A}^n(k))$ has $Z(I) = \emptyset$. Then $I = A(\mathbb{A}^n(k))$.

Proof. By the Nullstellensatz,

$$1 \in A(\mathbb{A}^n(k)) = I(\emptyset) = I(Z(I)) = \text{rad } I,$$

so $1 \in I$ follows. ■

Now, we have already shown that $I(\{a\}) = (x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n)$. Additionally, for $x \in X$, we have $I(X) \subseteq I(\{a\})$, so $I(\{a\})/I(X)$ is an ideal which makes sense. Thus, we may write $I(\{a\})/I(X) = (x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n)/I(X)$.

Before continuing, we also check that $Z(I(\{a\})) = \{a\}$ as well. (This shows that $\{a\}$ is an algebraic set.) Well, set $a = (a_1, \dots, a_n)$, and we note that $x_i - a_i \in I(\{a\})$ for each i , so any $b = (b_1, \dots, b_n) \in Z(I(\{a\}))$ must vanish on each $x_i - a_i$, so

$$b_i - a_i = 0$$

for each i . Thus, $b = a$.

We now check that $a \mapsto \mathfrak{m}_a$ is a bijection.

- Well-defined: we show that \mathfrak{m}_a is a maximal ideal. It is proper because $1 \notin \mathfrak{m}_a$. Now suppose we have $I \subseteq A(X)$ such that $\mathfrak{m}_a \subseteq I$. So note that $I + I(X) \subseteq A(\mathbb{A}^n(k))$ is an ideal (namely, the pre-image) containing $I(\{a\})$.

Now, observe that $I(\{a\}) \subseteq I + I(X)$, so

$$Z(I + I(X)) \subseteq Z(I(\{a\})) = \{a\}.$$

We now have two cases.

- If $Z(I + I(X)) = \emptyset$, then Lemma 1.79 gives $I + I(X) = A(\mathbb{A}^n(k))$, so $I/I(X) = A(X)$.
- Otherwise if $Z(I + I(X)) = \{a\}$, then $I + I(X) \subseteq I(\{a\})$. Thus $I \subseteq \mathfrak{m}_a$, finishing.

- Injective: suppose $a, b \in X$ have $\mathfrak{m}_a = \mathfrak{m}_b$. But then

$$I(\{a\}) = \mathfrak{m}_a + I(X) = \mathfrak{m}_b + I(X) = I(\{b\}),$$

so $\{a\} = Z(I(\{a\})) = Z(I(\{b\})) = \{b\}$, so $a = b$ follows.

- Surjective: suppose that $\mathfrak{m} \subseteq A(X)$ is a maximal ideal. Then we look at the pre-image ideal $I := \mathfrak{m} + I(X) \subseteq A(\mathbb{A}^n(k))$. We claim that $Z(I)$ is a singleton.

- We show that $Z(I) \neq \emptyset$. Indeed, $Z(I) = \emptyset$ implies by Lemma 1.79 that $1 \in I$, so $[1]_{I(X)} \in \mathfrak{m}$, which violates the fact that $\mathfrak{m} \subseteq A(X)$ is proper.
- We show all elements of $Z(I)$ are equal. Suppose $a, b \in Z(I)$; because $I(X) \subseteq I$, we see $a, b \in X$ is forced by Remark 1.71. Then $\{a\}, \{b\} \subseteq Z(I)$, so

$$I \subseteq I(\{a\}) \cap I(\{b\}),$$

so $\mathfrak{m} = I/I(X)$ is contained in $\mathfrak{m}_a = I(\{a\})/I(X)$ and $\mathfrak{m}_b = I(\{b\})/I(X)$. But \mathfrak{m}_a and \mathfrak{m}_b are distinct maximal ideals, so we see $\mathfrak{m} \subseteq \mathfrak{m}_a \cap \mathfrak{m}_b \subsetneq \mathfrak{m}_a \subsetneq A(X)$, violating the fact that \mathfrak{m} is maximal.

Thus, set $Z(I) = \{a\}$; note $a \in X$ because $I(X) \subseteq I$ (by Remark 1.71 again). Now, $I \subseteq I(\{a\})$, so we see $\mathfrak{m} = I/I(X) \subseteq I(\{a\})/I(X) = \mathfrak{m}_a$, so the maximality of \mathfrak{m} forces $\mathfrak{m} = \mathfrak{m}_a$. ■

The reason the above is nice is because, instead of having to look at the geometry of X , it is now legal to study the algebra of $A(X)$.

1.2.5 The Spectrum of a Ring

We continue trying to move the geometry of affine sets $X \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ into the coordinate ring $A(X)$.

Later in life we will want to consider maps $\varphi : X \rightarrow Y$ between affine sets. In affine space, we again remark that really only the functions we have access to are polynomials, so our only morphisms will be functions which are polynomials in each coordinate.

Now let's move φ to geometry. Note that $A(X)$ and $A(Y)$ are intended to describe functions $X \rightarrow k$ and $Y \rightarrow k$ respectively, so a morphism $\varphi : X \rightarrow Y$ induces a ring homomorphism

$$\varphi : A(Y) \rightarrow A(X)$$

by $f \mapsto f \circ \varphi$. (This is a ring homomorphism because φ is made of polynomials.) So under the paradigm that points should become maximal ideals, we would like to recover φ as some kind of map of maximal ideals $A(X) \rightarrow A(Y)$. The natural way is to simply pull back along φ , writing

$$\mathfrak{m} \subseteq A(X) \mapsto \varphi^{-1}\mathfrak{m} \subseteq A(Y).$$

However, this is a problem: $\varphi^{-1}\mathfrak{m}$ need not be maximal!

Example 1.80. If $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq R$ is a prime but not maximal ideal (e.g., $(x) \subseteq k[x, y]$), we can define the composite

$$R \twoheadrightarrow R/\mathfrak{p} \hookrightarrow \text{Frac}(R/\mathfrak{p}).$$

Now, (0) is maximal in $\text{Frac}(R/\mathfrak{p})$, but its pre-image in R is \mathfrak{p} , which is not maximal by construction.

However, if we weaken requiring our points to be prime ideals \mathfrak{p} instead of maximal ideals, we do have that $\varphi^{-1}\mathfrak{p}$ is a prime ideal: $ab \in \varphi^{-1}\mathfrak{p}$ implies $\varphi(a)\varphi(b) = \varphi(ab) \in \mathfrak{p}$ implies $a \in \varphi^{-1}\mathfrak{p}$ or $b \in \varphi^{-1}\mathfrak{p}$.

So instead of making our geometry on $A(X)$ defined by maximal ideals, we use prime ideals. This gives the following definition.

Definition 1.81 (Spectrum of a ring). Given a ring R , we define *spectrum of R* by

$$\text{Spec } R := \{\mathfrak{p} \subseteq R : \mathfrak{p} \text{ is a prime ideal}\}.$$

In fact, $\text{Spec } R$ also has a Zariski topology as follows.

Spectrum of
a ring

Zariski
topology, II

Definition 1.82 (Zariski topology, II). Given a ring R , we define the *Zariski topology* to have closed sets

$$X(I) := \{\mathfrak{p} \in \operatorname{Spec} R : I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}\}$$

for R -ideals I .

Remark 1.83 (Nir). As for motivation for why we might define our topology like this, recall the case of affine varieties: we have $a \in X(I)$ if and only if $I \subseteq I(\{a\})$. So when we translate $X(I)$ into the algebraic side, we call the maximal ideal $\mathfrak{m}_a = I(\{a\})$ our "point" and see that

$$X(I) = \{\mathfrak{m}_a : I \subseteq \mathfrak{m}_a\}.$$

It is a different story why we use prime ideals instead of maximal ones, which we discussed above.

The checks that the $X(I)$ do actually define closed sets for a topology are essentially the same as for the first version of the Zariski topology. The main points are that

$$\bigcap_{I \in \mathcal{S}} X(I) = X\left(\sum_{I \in \mathcal{S}} I\right) \quad \text{and} \quad \bigcup_{k=1}^N X(I_k) = X\left(\prod_{k=1}^N I_k\right)$$

give that arbitrary intersection of closed sets is closed and finite union of closed sets is closed.³

Again, the Zariski topology is very weird, like with affine space.

Proposition 1.84. Fix R a ring. Given $\operatorname{Spec} R$ the Zariski topology.

- If R is an integral domain which is not a field, then $\operatorname{Spec} R$ is not Hausdorff.
- The space $\operatorname{Spec} R$ is compact.

Proof. We take the claims one at a time.

- The fact that R is a field means that $\operatorname{Spec} R$ has more than one point. So again, it suffices to show that there are no disjoint open subsets of $\operatorname{Spec} R$. Indeed, suppose

$$(\operatorname{Spec} R \setminus X(I)) \cap (\operatorname{Spec} R \setminus X(J)) = \emptyset,$$

and we claim $\operatorname{Spec} R \setminus X(I) = \emptyset$ or $\operatorname{Spec} R \setminus X(J) = \emptyset$.

Again, we know that $X(IJ) = X(I) \cup X(J) = \operatorname{Spec} R$, so by definition, we see $IJ \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ for each prime \mathfrak{p} , or

$$IJ \subseteq \bigcap_{\mathfrak{p}} \mathfrak{p}.$$

Now, because R is an integral domain, we see that (0) is a prime ideal, so $IJ = (0)$ follows. Thus, because R is an integral domain again, $I = (0)$ or $J = (0)$, so without loss of generality, we take $I = (0)$. But then

$$\operatorname{Spec} R \setminus X(I) = \operatorname{Spec} R \setminus \operatorname{Spec} R = \emptyset,$$

as desired.

- Suppose that the Zariski open sets $\{\operatorname{Spec} R \setminus X(I)\}_{I \in \mathcal{S}}$ cover $\operatorname{Spec} R$, for some collection \mathcal{S} of ideals. Now, the sets $\{\operatorname{Spec} R \setminus X(I)\}_{I \in \mathcal{S}}$ covering $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$ is equivalent to

$$X\left(\sum_{I \in \mathcal{S}} I\right) = \bigcap_{I \in \mathcal{S}} X(I) = \emptyset.$$

³ The second equality requires some care. The main point is to show, for \mathfrak{p} prime, $IJ \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ is equivalent to $I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ or $J \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$. The reverse is easy. For the forwards, suppose $IJ \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ and $J \not\subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ so that we have $j \in J \setminus \mathfrak{p}$. Then $jI \subseteq IJ \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ forces $I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$.

However, $X(\sum I) = \emptyset$ implies that there is no prime ideal \mathfrak{p} such that $\sum I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$, but any proper ideal is contained in some maximal and hence prime ideal. Thus, we must have that

$$\sum_{I \in \mathcal{S}} I = R.$$

In particular, 1 is in this ideal, so we can express 1 as the sum of some elements $x_i \in I_i$ for $\{I_i\}_{i=1}^N \subseteq \mathcal{S}$; i.e.,

$$1 = \sum_{i=1}^N x_i \in \sum_{i=1}^N I_i.$$

Thus, $\sum_{i=1}^N I_i = R$, meaning $X(\sum_{i=1}^N I_i) = \emptyset$, so reversing the argument we see that $\{\text{Spec } R \setminus X(I_i)\}_{i=1}^N$ will be a finite subcover. This finishes. ■

1.2.6 Projective Space

To define projective varieties, we need to define projective space first.

Projective
space

Definition 1.85 (Projective space). Fix k a field and n a positive integer. Then we define n -dimensional *projective space* $\mathbb{P}^n(k)$ to be the one-dimensional subspaces of k^{n+1} .

Concretely, we will think about lines in homogeneous coordinates, in the form

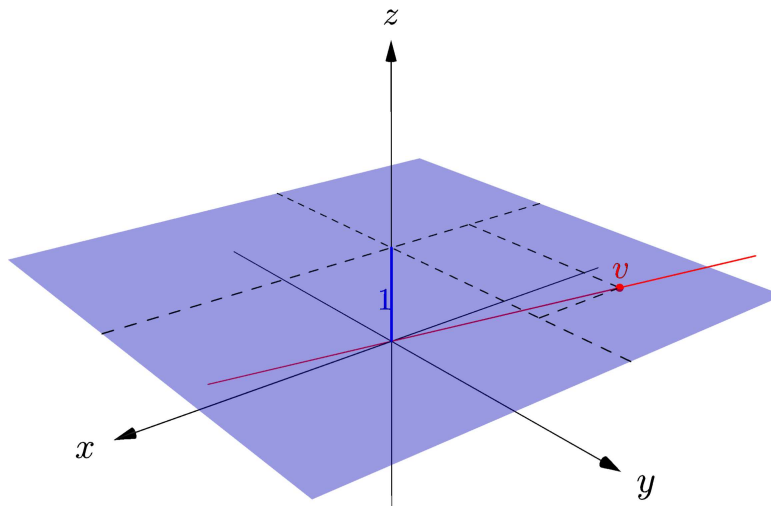
$$(a_0 : a_1 : \dots : a_n) \in \mathbb{P}^n(k)$$

to represent the subspace $k(a_0, a_1, \dots, a_n) \subseteq \mathbb{A}^{n+1}(k)$. As such multiplying the point $(a_0 : a_1 : \dots : a_n)$ by some constant $c \in k^\times$ will give the same line and should be the same point in $\mathbb{P}^n(k)$. Additionally, we will ban the point $(0 : 0 : \dots : 0)$ from projective space because it is not the basis for any line.

We would like to have a better geometry understanding of $\mathbb{P}^n(k)$. Note that we have a sort of embedding $\mathbb{A}^n(k) \hookrightarrow \mathbb{P}^n(k)$ by

$$(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) \mapsto (x_1 : x_2 : \dots : x_n : 1).$$

For geometric concreteness, we can imagine $\mathbb{A}^2(\mathbb{R}) \hookrightarrow \mathbb{P}^2(\mathbb{R})$ as the plane $z = 1$ in \mathbb{R}^3 , where each point on the plane gives rise to a unique line in \mathbb{R}^3 . Here is the image, with a chosen red line going through a point v on the $z = 1$ plane.



However, not all lines in $\mathbb{A}^3(\mathbb{R})$ can be described like this, for there are still lots of points of the form $(x : y : 0)$, which are “points at infinity.” Nevertheless, we can collect the remaining points into $\mathbb{P}^2(\mathbb{R})$, which visually just means the lines that live on the xy -plane in the above diagram.

In general, we see that we can decompose $\mathbb{P}^n(k)$ into an $\mathbb{A}^n(k)$ component as a “ $z = 1$ hyperplane” and then the points at infinity living on $\mathbb{P}^{n-1}(k)$. Namely,

$$\mathbb{P}^n(k) = \mathbb{A}^n(k) \sqcup \mathbb{P}^{n-1}(k).$$

Note that the above decomposition is not canonical: one has to choose which points to get to be infinity.

Anyways, as usual we are interested in studying the algebraic sets but this time of projective space, but because of the constant factors allowed to wiggle, we see that we really should only be looking at homogeneous equations. More concretely, if $f \in k[x_0, \dots, x_n]$, we want

$$f(a_0 : \dots : a_n) = 0$$

to be unambiguous, so $f(a_0, \dots, a_n) = 0$ should imply $f(ca_0, \dots, ca_n) = 0$ for any $c \in k^\times$. The easiest way to ensure this is to force all monomials of f to have some fixed degree, say d , so that

$$f(cx_0, \dots, cx_n) = c^d f(x_0, \dots, x_n).$$

These polynomials are the homogeneous ones, and they give the following definition.

Projective
variety

Definition 1.86 (Projective variety). A subset $X \subseteq \mathbb{P}^n(k)$ is a *projective variety* if and only if it is the solution set to some set of homogeneous (!) polynomial equations of $k[x_0, \dots, x_n]$.

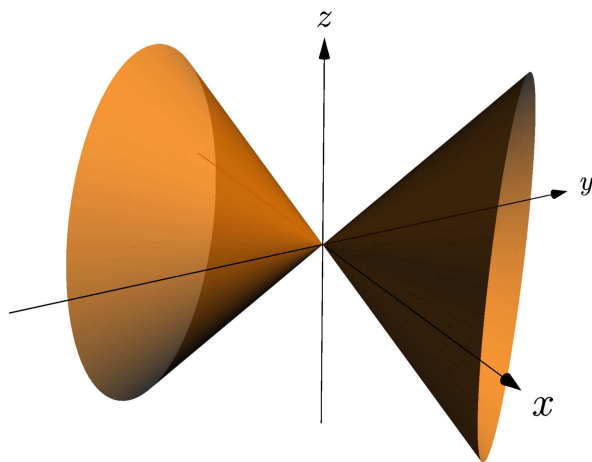
Here is an example.

Exercise 1.87. We view the solutions to $xy - 1 = 0$ in $\mathbb{A}^2(\mathbb{R}) \subseteq \mathbb{P}^2(\mathbb{R})$ in projective space.

Proof. More explicitly, we are viewing $\mathbb{A}^2(k) \subseteq \mathbb{P}^2(k)$ by sending $(x, y) \mapsto (x : y : 1)$. We can make the coordinates more familiar by setting $x, y \mapsto x/z, y/z$ so that we are looking for solutions $(x/z : y/z : 1) = (x : y : z)$ to the equation

$$xy = z^2.$$

In \mathbb{R}^3 , this curve looks like the following.



The hyperbola for $xy = 1$ comes from slicing the $z = 1$ plane from this cone. ■

1.2.7 Graded Rings

We have the following definition.

Graded ring

Definition 1.88 (Graded ring). A ring R is *graded* by the abelian groups R_0, R_1, \dots if and only if

$$R \cong \bigoplus_{d=0}^{\infty} R_d$$

as abelian groups and $R_i R_j \subseteq R_{i+j}$ for any $i, j \in \mathbb{N}$.

Remark 1.89 (Nir). In fact, R_0 turns out to be a subring of R . We can check this directly, as follows.

- Certainly $0 \in R_0$ and $R_0 + R_0 \subseteq R_0$ because $R_0 \subseteq R$ is an additive subgroup.
- If $1_R \in R_i$, then $R_i \subseteq R_i R_i \subseteq R_{2i}$, so $i = 0$ or $R_i = R_{2i} = \{0\}$ by disjointness. So either $1 \in R_0$ or $1 \in R_0 = \{0\}$ forces $R = \{0\}$, so $1 \in R_0$ anyways.
- We see $R_0 R_0 \subseteq R_0$, so R_0 is closed under multiplication.

Alternatively, we could set $I := \{0\} \oplus R_1 \oplus R_2 \dots$, remark that I is an ideal, and then we see $R_0 \cong R/I$.

Example 1.90. The ring $R = k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ is “graded by degree” by setting R_d to be the space of all homogeneous n -variable polynomials of degree d (united with $\{0\}$).

With graded rings, it is natural to ask what other ring-theoretic constructions we can grade.

Graded ideal

Definition 1.91 (Graded ideal). Fix R a graded ring. We say that an ideal I is *graded* if and only if

$$I \cong \bigoplus_{d=0}^{\infty} (R_d \cap I),$$

where the isomorphism is the natural one (i.e., $(x_0, x_1, \dots) \mapsto x_0 + x_1 + \dots$).

Example 1.92. Given the graded ring $R = R_0 \oplus R_1 \oplus R_2 \oplus \dots$, the ideal

$$I := R_1 \oplus R_2 \oplus R_3 \oplus \dots$$

is called the *irrelevant ideal*; it is graded because look at it. To check I is an ideal, it is closed under addition by construction; it is closed under multiplication by R because $R_i R_j \subseteq R_{i+j}$ for $i \geq 1$ implies $i + j \geq 1$.

Remark 1.93. The above ideal is called irrelevant because, in the case where $R = k[x_0, \dots, x_n]$,

$$Z(I) = \{(a_0 : \dots : a_n) \in \mathbb{P}^n(k) : f(a_0, \dots, a_n) = 0 \text{ for each homogeneous } f \in I\} = \emptyset.$$

Indeed, any element of $Z(I)$ would have to satisfy $x_i = 0$ for each x_i , which is illegal in projective space.

The point of the definition of a graded ideal is that, when $I \subseteq R$ is a graded ideal,

$$\frac{R}{I} \cong \bigoplus_{d=0}^{\infty} \frac{R_d}{R_d \cap I}$$

will also be a graded ring, with the given grading. This isomorphism comes from combining the isomorphisms $R \cong \bigoplus_d R_d$ and $I \cong \bigoplus_d (R_d \cap I)$.

Here is another ring-theoretic construction which we can grade.

Graded
module

Definition 1.94 (Graded module). Fix $R = R_0 \oplus R_1 \oplus \cdots$ a graded ring. Then an R -module M is *graded* if and only if we can write

$$M \cong \bigoplus_{d \in \mathbb{Z}} M_d$$

such that $R_i M_j \subseteq M_{i+j}$ for any $i \in \mathbb{N}$ and $j \in \mathbb{Z}$.

As a quick application, here is one reason to care about graded rings: they play nice with the Noetherian condition.

Proposition 1.95. A graded ring $R = R_0 \oplus R_1 \oplus \cdots$ is Noetherian if and only if R_0 is Noetherian and R is a finitely generated R_0 -algebra.

Proof. The backwards direction is Proposition 1.48. For the forwards direction, take $R = R_0 \oplus R_1 \oplus \cdots$ a Noetherian, graded ring. We note that quotienting R by the irrelevant ideal reveals that R_0 is a quotient of R , so R_0 is a Noetherian ring.

It remains to show that R is a finitely generated R_0 -algebra. The idea is to imitate the Hilbert's finiteness theorem. Before doing anything, we adopt the convention that, for an arbitrary element

$$f = f_0 + f_1 + \cdots \in R,$$

we let $\deg f$ equal the largest d for which $f_d \neq 0$.

We now proceed with the proof. Because R is Noetherian, the irrelevant ideal

$$I := R_1 \oplus R_2 \oplus \cdots$$

is finitely generated over R_0 , so fix $I = (r_1, \dots, r_N)$. We claim that

$$R \stackrel{?}{=} R_0[r_1, \dots, r_N].$$

For \supseteq , there is nothing to say. For \subseteq , pick up some $f \in R$, and we show that $f \in R_0[r_1, \dots, r_N]$. By decomposing f into its grading $f = f_0 + f_1 + \cdots$, we may assume that f lives in one of the R_d .

So now we induct on d . For $d = 0$, we have $f \in R_0 \subseteq R_0[r_1, \dots, r_N]$ and are done immediately. So take $d > 0$. Then $f \in I = (r_1, \dots, r_N)$, so we may write

$$f = \sum_{i=1}^N g_i r_i$$

for some $g_1, \dots, g_N \in R$. By decomposing the g_i into their gradings, we see that we may assume that only the $\deg f - \deg r_i$ component is nonzero because all other components will cancel anyways.

In particular, g_i is homogeneous with degree $\deg f - \deg r_i$, so $g_i \in R_i$ with $i < d$. So by our induction, $g_i \in R_0[r_1, \dots, r_N]$, and $f \in R_0[r_1, \dots, r_N]$ by the decomposition of f in I . This finishes the proof. ■

1.2.8 The Hilbert Function

For this subsection, let $R := k[x_0, \dots, x_n]$ (note the zero-indexing!) be a ring graded by degree, and let $M = \cdots \oplus M_{-1} \oplus M_0 \oplus M_1 \oplus \cdots$ be a finitely generated graded R -module. It follows that

$$\dim_k M_d < \infty$$

for each $d \in \mathbb{Z}$. Indeed, R is Noetherian, so M is Noetherian (M is finitely generated over R), so we note that the R -submodule

$$M'_d := \bigoplus_{e \geq d} M_e \subseteq M$$

is a finitely generated as an R -module. (This is an R -submodule because it is closed under addition, and $R_i M_j \subseteq M_{i+j}$ for $i \in \mathbb{N}$ and $j \in \mathbb{Z}$ gives closure under R -multiplication.) But the only way $rm \in M_d$ for $r \in R$ and $m \in M'_d$ is for $r \in R_0 = k$ and $m \in M_d$, so the (finite number of) generators of M'_d in M_d will generate M_d as a k -module.

This gives us the following definition.

Hilbert
function

Definition 1.96 (Hilbert function). Let M be a finitely generated module over $R := k[x_0, \dots, x_n]$, where R is graded by degree. Then we define the *Hilbert function* of M as

$$H_M(d) := \dim_k M_d.$$

Exercise 1.97. Let $M = R = k[x_0, \dots, x_n]$; i.e., view R as an R -module. Then we compute $H_M(d)$.

Proof. Here, M and R have the same grading (because $M = R$), so we are computing

$$H_M(d) = \dim_k R_d.$$

To see this, we note that we can expand any polynomial $f \in R_d$ as a unique k -linear combination of the degree- d monomials: after all, we can express generic polynomials in a unique k -linear combination of monomials, and R_d requires everything involved to have degree d .

Thus, $\dim_k R_d$ has basis consisting of the degree- d monomials in $k[x_0, \dots, x_n]$. Thus, we are counting tuples (a_0, \dots, a_n) of nonnegative integers (uniquely) associated to the monomial

$$x_0^{a_0} \cdots x_n^{a_n}$$

such that $a_0 + \cdots + a_n = d$. But this is now merely a combinatorics problem! We claim that that this is $\binom{n+d}{d}$.

Indeed, for any such tuple (a_0, \dots, a_n) , imagine placing (in a single row) a_0 stones, then a stick, then a_1 stones, then a stick, and so on, ending by placing the last a_n stones. In total, we are placing d stones and n sticks, and the arrangement of sticks and stones uniquely describes the tuples. So now we see there are

$$\binom{n+d}{d}$$

ways to put down d sticks among $n+d$ "slots" of either sticks or stones. So indeed, we find that

$$H_M(d) = \binom{n+d}{d},$$

as desired. ■

The above example found that $H_m(d)$ is a polynomial in d of degree r . This happens in general.

Theorem 1.98. Let M be a finitely generated graded module over the ring $R := k[x_0, \dots, x_n]$, where R is graded by degree. Then there exists a polynomial $P_M(d)$ of degree at most $n-1$ which agrees with $H_M(d)$ for sufficiently large d .

Proof. The proof is by induction on n , where we will apply dimension-shifting of the grading for the inductive step. Our base case is $n = -1$, which makes M into a graded $R = R_0 = k$ -vector space. But M is thus finite-dimensional, the summation

$$M = \bigoplus_{d \in \mathbb{Z}} M_d$$

of $R_0 = k$ -vector spaces M_d must have only finitely many nonzero terms, so $H_M(d) = 0$ for sufficiently large d . So indeed, H_M agrees with the polynomial $P_M \equiv 0$ of degree $-\infty \leq -1$ for sufficiently large inputs.

Now, we will need to dimension-shift our grading in the proof that follows, so we have the following definition.

Twist

Definition 1.99 (Twist). Given a graded R -module M , we define the d th twist $M(d)$ of M to be the same underlying module but with grading given by

$$M(d)_e := M_{d+e}.$$

To sanity check, we remark that $M = \bigoplus_{e \in \mathbb{Z}} M(d)_e = \bigoplus_{e \in \mathbb{Z}} M_{d+e}$ and $R_i M(d)_e = R_i M_{d+e} \subseteq M_{i+d+e} = M(d)_{i+e}$ verifies that we have in fact graded M .

Note the Hilbert function is well-behaved by shifting: $H_{M(d)}(e) = \dim_k M(d)_e = \dim_k M_{d+e} = H_M(e + d)$.

For the inductive step, the main point is to kill the x_n coordinate in creative ways. Namely, M being finitely generated over $k[x_0, \dots, x_n]$ implies that $M/x_n M$ will be finitely generated over $k[x_0, \dots, x_{n-1}]$ because any summation involving the x_n letter got killed. So we start with exact sequence

$$M \rightarrow M/x_n M \rightarrow 0.$$

We do take a moment to remark $M/x_n M$ is in fact a graded module by

$$\frac{M}{x_n M} \cong \frac{\bigoplus_{d \in \mathbb{Z}} M_d}{\bigoplus_{d \in \mathbb{Z}} x_n M_d} = \frac{\bigoplus_{d \in \mathbb{Z}} M_d}{\bigoplus_{d \in \mathbb{Z}} x_n M_{d-1}} \cong \bigoplus_{d \in \mathbb{Z}} \frac{M_d}{x_n M_{d-1}},$$

so $M \rightarrow M/x_n M$ is a map of graded modules. In particular, by disjointness, the pre-image of M_d under multiplication by x_n lives in M_{d-1} ; note $x_n M_{d-1} \subseteq M_d$.

Now, to take our sequence backwards, we would like to prepend by $M \xrightarrow{x_n} M$, but this is not legal because multiplication by x_n map will change the grading: we have $x_n M_{d-1} \subseteq M_d$. So instead we have to write down

$$M(-1) \xrightarrow{x_n} M \rightarrow M/x_n M \rightarrow 0.$$

This is in fact exact as graded modules because $M(-1)_d = M_{d-1}$ goes to $x_n M_{d-1}$ goes to 0 in $M_d/x_n M_{d-1}$.

To finish our short exact sequence, we let $K(-1)$ be the (twisted) kernel of $M(-1) \xrightarrow{x_n} M$ multiplication by x_n , and we get to write

$$0 \rightarrow K(-1) \rightarrow M(-1) \xrightarrow{x_n} M \rightarrow M/x_n M \rightarrow 0. \quad (*)$$

We take a moment to recognize $K(-1) \subseteq M(-1)$ is finitely generated over $k[x_0, \dots, x_n]$ because it is a submodule of the Noetherian module $M(-1)$. But any generator of $K(-1)$ multiplied by x_n will simply vanish, so the same generators will finitely generate $K(-1)$ over $k[x_0, \dots, x_{n-1}]$.

Now, taking the Hilbert function everywhere in $(*)$, counting dimensions gives

$$H_{K(-1)}(d) - H_{M(-1)}(d) + H_M(d) - H_{M/x_n M}(d) = 0.$$

We can rewrite this as

$$H_M(d) - H_M(d-1) = H_{M/x_n M}(d) - H_K(d-1),$$

so we see that the first finite difference of H_M agrees with $H_{M/x_n M}(d) - H_K(d-1)$, and the latter agrees with a polynomial of degree at most $n-1$ for sufficiently large d by inductive hypothesis. So theory of finite differences tells us that $H_M(d)$ will agree with a polynomial of degree at most n , finishing the induction. ■

Remark 1.100 (Nir). At this point we can remark that we grade our modules M by \mathbb{Z} instead of \mathbb{N} so that we could write down $M(-1)$ in the above proof, which does not make sense when grading by \mathbb{N} .

Theorem 1.98 justifies the following definition.

Hilbert
polynomial

Definition 1.101 (Hilbert polynomial). Let M be a finitely generated graded module over the ring $R := k[x_0, \dots, x_n]$, where R is graded by degree. The polynomial promised by Theorem 1.98 is called the *Hilbert polynomial* of M .

Remark 1.102. Geometrically, most of the time M will end up being the coordinate ring of a projective variety, in which case the degree of the above Hilbert polynomial is the “degree” of the projective variety. So heuristically, most of the time the degree of the Hilbert polynomial will not achieve its maximum.

Let's do some examples.

Exercise 1.103. Take $M := k[x, y, z] / (x^2 + y^2 + z^2)$ as a $R := k[x, y, z]$ -submodule. We compute the Hilbert function for M .

Proof. For brevity, set $I := (x^2 + y^2 + z^2)$. Note that I is a graded ideal: if $f \in k[x, y, z]$ is divisible by $x^2 + y^2 + z^2$, then we can write $f(x, y, z) = (x^2 + y^2 + z^2) q(x, y, z)$. Expanding $q = q_0 + q_1 + \dots$ into its homogeneous parts, we see that

$$f(x, y, z) = \sum_{d=2}^{\infty} (x^2 + y^2 + z^2) q_{d-2}$$

provides a decomposition of f into homogeneous parts, and by uniqueness this must be the decomposition of f . But each of these parts is manifestly divisible by $(x^2 + y^2 + z^2)$, so we have decomposed f into $(I \cap R_0) \oplus (I \cap R_1) \oplus \dots$.

We have the following.

- We see $M_0 = R_0 / (I \cap R_0)$ is simply k , so $\dim M_0 = 1$.
- We see $M_1 = R_1 / (I \cap R_1)$ has basis $\{x, y, z\}$ because I hasn't killed anything yet, so it has dimension $\dim M_1 = 3$.
- We see R_2 has basis $\{xy, yz, zx, x^2, y^2, z^2\}$, but $z^2 \equiv -x^2 - y^2 \pmod{I}$ means that in $M_2 = R_2 / (I \cap R_2)$, we can kill z^2 . However, we can do this anywhere else (more rigorous justification below), so $\dim M_2 = 5$.

For the general case, fix a degree $d \geq 2$. We note that there is a short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow R_{d-2} \xrightarrow{x^2+y^2+z^2} R_d \rightarrow \frac{R_d}{(x^2+y^2+z^2)R_{d-2}} \rightarrow 0.$$

Note the first map is well-defined because $(x^2 + y^2 + z^2) R_{d-2} \subseteq R_2 R_{d-2} \subseteq R_d$. In fact, we claim that $(x^2 + y^2 + z^2) R_{d-2} = I \cap R_d$, for any $f \in I \cap R_d$ has $f(x, y, z) / (x^2 + y^2 + z^2)$ homogeneous of degree $d-2$. So this short exact sequence is actually

$$0 \rightarrow R_{d-2} \rightarrow R_d \rightarrow M_d \rightarrow 0.$$

Thus, the short exact sequence gives $\dim M_d = \dim R_d - \dim R_{d-2}$, which by Exercise 1.97 is $\binom{n+2}{2} - \binom{n}{2} = \frac{n^2+3n+2}{2} - \frac{n^2-n}{2} = 2n+1$. ■

Remark 1.104. Continuing with the previous remark, we see the degree of the Hilbert polynomial of M above is 1, so the associated projective variety $Z(x^2 + y^2 + z^2)$ ought have dimension 1. Well, $x^2 + y^2 + z^2 = 0$ defines a cone in affine 3-space (more or less), which is dimension one of projective 2-space upon recalling that lines becomes points.

Exercise 1.105 (Eisenbud 1.19). Define $M := k[x, y, z]/(xz - y^2, yx - z^2, xw - yz)$ as a $R := k[x, y, z]$ -module. We compute the Hilbert function for M .

Proof. We outline. For brevity, we set $I := (xz - y^2, yx - z^2, xw - yz)$. The key observation is that it happens that I is a free $k[x, w]$ -module, with basis $\{1, y, z\}$.

Thus, viewing M as a $T := k[x, w]$ -module, checking the basis, gives that $M = T \oplus T(-1) \oplus T(-1)$ corresponding to our basis elements $\{1, y, z\}$. (Multiplication by y or z will shift the grading, hence $T(-1)$.) It follows that the Hilbert function is $H_M(n) = 3n + 1$. ■

We will start with localization next class.

THEME 2: LOCAL STUDY

Loneliness is a type of grief, maybe.

—Ana Reyes Sanchez

2.1 January 25

Today we localize.

2.1.1 Geometric Motivation

Let's do an example from geometry.

Fix $X \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ an algebraic set and $U \subseteq X$ an open subset. We want to define functions on U .

Example 2.1. Concretely, we might take $X = \mathbb{A}^1(k)$ and $U = X \setminus \{0\}$. In this case, we have $A(X) = k[x]$, but we see that upon removing 0 allows $\frac{1}{x}$ to be a function, giving

$$A(U) = k[x, 1/x].$$

These turn out to be all the functions “we care about.”

An alternative way to do this construction is to simply add a new function y to $A(X)$ and then mod out in the freest possible way by the requirement $xy = 1$, giving

$$A(U) = \frac{k[x, y]}{(xy - 1)}.$$

Magically, these are the functions out of the hyperbola $xy = 1$ in the plane $\mathbb{A}^2(k)$, so amazingly localization has turned into functions from the open set $\mathbb{A}^1(k) \setminus \{0\}$ to functions from the closed subset $\{(x, y) \in \mathbb{A}^2(k) : xy = 1\}$. This magic, however, is special: it does not happen if we take $X = \mathbb{A}^2(k)$ and $U = X \setminus \{(0, 0)\}$.

Anyways, our point is that localization is one way we can talk about functions of spaces, especially of open sets. More generally, if we want to describe the space of functions out of the open set $\mathbb{A}^n(k) \setminus Z(I) \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ for some $I \subseteq k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$, then again “the only functions we care about” are

$$A(\mathbb{A}^n(k) \setminus Z(I)) = A(\mathbb{A}^n(k)) [1/f \text{ for each } f \in I].$$

In particular, we are allowed to append inverses of I because the points on which I vanishes are no longer in the space of interest. This process of appending inverses is “localization.”

2.1.2 Localization of Rings

Let's build towards the definition of localization.

Definition 2.2 (Multiplicatively closed). Fix R a ring. Then a subset $U \subseteq R$ is *multiplicatively closed* if any (finite) product of elements in U also lives in U .

Note that, by convention, the empty product 1 will need to live in U . So, by induction, U is multiplicatively closed if and only if $1 \in U$ and for $x, y \in U$ to imply $xy \in U$.

Multiplicatively closed

Remark 2.3. We do permit $0 \in U$ and more generally zero-divisors to live in U . This tends to not be very interesting for localization.

And here is our main character.

Definition 2.4 (Localization, rings). Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ multiplicatively closed. Then we define $R[U^{-1}]$ to be the set of ordered pairs $(r, u) \in R \times U$ notated $\frac{r}{u}$ (with $r \in R$ and $u \in U$) modded out by the equivalence relation

$$\frac{r_1}{u_1} = \frac{r_2}{u_2} \iff \text{there exists } v \in U \text{ such that } v(u_2r_1 - u_1r_2) = 0.$$

In the discussion that follows, R will be a ring and U will always be multiplicatively closed.

Remark 2.5 (Nir). One needs the v in the definition above to make \equiv transitive. We run the checks.

- Reflexive: $\frac{r}{u} \equiv \frac{r}{u}$ because $1(ur - ur) = 0$.
- Symmetric: $\frac{r_1}{u_1} \equiv \frac{r_2}{u_2}$ implies some $v \in U$ has $vu_2r_1 = vu_1r_2$ implies $vu_1r_2 = vu_2r_1$ implies $\frac{r_2}{u_2} \equiv \frac{r_1}{u_1}$.
- Transitive: $\frac{r_1}{u_1} \equiv \frac{r_2}{u_2}$ implies some $v_1 \in U$ has $v_1u_2r_1 = v_1u_1r_2$, and $\frac{r_2}{u_2} \equiv \frac{r_3}{u_3}$ implies some $v_2 \in U$ has $v_2u_3r_2 = v_2u_2r_3$. Thus,

$$(v_1v_2u_2)u_3r_1 = (v_2u_3)v_1u_2r_1 = (v_2u_3)v_1u_1r_2 = (v_1u_1)v_2u_3r_2 = (v_1u_1)v_2u_2r_3 = (v_1v_2u_2)u_1r_3,$$

$$\text{so } \frac{r_1}{u_1} \equiv \frac{r_3}{u_3}.$$

We can turn $R[U^{-1}]$ into a ring by using the standard addition and multiplication operations of these numbers. Namely, we define

$$\frac{r}{u} + \frac{s}{v} := \frac{vr + us}{uv} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{r}{u} \cdot \frac{s}{v} := \frac{rs}{uv}.$$

For completeness, we check that these operations do not depend the exact operation.

- Suppose $\frac{r_1}{u_1} = \frac{r_2}{u_2}$ and $\frac{s_1}{v_1} = \frac{s_2}{v_2}$ so that we are promised $u, v \in U$ such that $uu_2r_1 = uu_1r_2$ and $vv_2s_1 = vv_1s_2$. Now we observe that

$$\begin{aligned} (uv)(u_2v_2)(v_1r_1 + u_1s_1) &= (vv_1v_2)(uu_2r_1) + (uu_1u_2)(vv_2s_1) \\ &= (vv_1v_2)(uu_1r_2) + (uu_1u_2)(vv_1s_2) \\ &= (uv)(u_1v_1)(v_2r_2 + u_2s_2), \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{so it follows } \frac{r_1}{u_1} + \frac{s_1}{v_1} = \frac{v_1r_1 + u_1s_1}{u_1v_1} = \frac{v_2r_2 + u_2s_2}{u_2v_2} = \frac{r_1}{u_1} + \frac{s_1}{v_1}.$$

- Again suppose $\frac{r_1}{u_1} = \frac{r_2}{u_2}$ and $\frac{s_1}{v_1} = \frac{s_2}{v_2}$ so that we are promised $u, v \in U$ such that $uu_2r_1 = uu_1r_2$ and $vv_2s_1 = vv_1s_2$. But now we have

$$(uv)(u_2v_2)(r_1s_1) = (uu_2r_1)(vv_2s_1) = (uu_1r_2)(vv_1s_2) = (uv)(u_1v_1)(r_2s_2),$$

$$\text{so it follows } \frac{r_1}{u_1} \cdot \frac{s_1}{v_1} = \frac{r_1s_1}{u_1v_1} = \frac{r_2s_2}{u_2v_2} = \frac{r_2}{u_2} \cdot \frac{s_2}{v_2}.$$

Now, one can also show that by hand that these operations do in fact form a ring, but this is essentially by construction given how we already know how addition and multiplication of fractions should work. We will not do this check.

Remark 2.6. Observe that because $1 \in U$, there is a canonical map $R \rightarrow R[U^{-1}]$ by $r \mapsto r/1$. This need not be injective; e.g., take $U = \{0, 1\}$, in which case $\frac{r}{1} = \frac{0}{1}$ for each $r \in R$ because $0(1r - 0 \cdot 1) = 0$.

We might also want to localize by sets which are not multiplicatively closed.

Multiplicative closure

Definition 2.7 (Multiplicative closure). Fix R a ring. Then for any $U \subseteq R$, we define the *multiplicative closure* \overline{U} to be the set of all (finite) products of U .

We quickly note that, for any subset $U \subseteq R$, the multiplicative closure \overline{U} is multiplicatively closed. Indeed, any finite product in \overline{U} is a finite product of finite products of U , which can be strung together into just a very large finite product of U . It follows that finite products in \overline{U} stay in \overline{U} .

The multiplicative closure lets us adopt the following definition.

Localization, again

Definition 2.8 (Localization, again). Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ an arbitrary subset. Then we define $R[U^{-1}] := R[\overline{U}^{-1}]$.

2.1.3 Examples of Localization

Here are some standard examples of localization.

For our first example, we note that when R is an integral domain, the subset $U = R \setminus \{0\}$ is multiplicatively closed: $a \neq 0$ and $b \neq 0$ implies $ab \neq 0$ because R is an integral domain. So we have the following.

Field of fractions

Definition 2.9 (Field of fractions). If R is an integral domain, then $R \setminus \{0\}$ is multiplicatively closed. So we define the *field of fractions*

$$K(R) := R[(R \setminus \{0\})^{-1}].$$

Example 2.10. We have that $K(\mathbb{Z}) = \mathbb{Q}$.

Example 2.11. We have that $K(k[x]) = k(x)$.

What makes the above example work is that (0) is a prime ideal of R when R is an integral domain (indeed, $ab \in (0)$ implies $ab = 0$ implies $a = 0 \in (0)$ or $b = 0 \in (0)$).

More generally, for $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq R$ a prime ideal, we see that $a, b \notin \mathfrak{p}$ implies $ab \notin \mathfrak{p}$, so $R \setminus \mathfrak{p}$ is multiplicatively closed. So we have the following.

Localization at a prime

Definition 2.12 (Localization at a prime). Fix R a ring and $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq R$ a prime ideal. Then $R \setminus \mathfrak{p}$ is multiplicatively closed, so we define the *localization at a prime*

$$R_{\mathfrak{p}} := R[(R \setminus \mathfrak{p})^{-1}].$$

As mentioned above, we can realize the field of fractions from this construction.

Example 2.13. When R is an integral domain, (0) is prime, and $R_{(0)} = K(R)$.

Example 2.14. We have that

$$\mathbb{Z}_{(p)} := \left\{ \frac{a}{b} : a, b \in \mathbb{Z} \text{ and } p \nmid b \right\}.$$

Here are some basic properties of $R_{\mathfrak{p}}$.

Proposition 2.15. Fix R a ring and $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq R$ a prime ideal. Then $R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ is a local ring; in particular, $R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ has unique maximal ideal

$$\mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}} := \left\{ \frac{r}{u} : r \in \mathfrak{p} \text{ and } u \notin \mathfrak{p} \right\}.$$

Proof. Very quickly, we note that $\mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}} \neq R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ because $\frac{1}{1} \notin \mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}}$. Indeed, for any representative $\frac{1}{1} = \frac{r}{u}$, we see some $v \notin \mathfrak{p}$ has $vr = vu \notin \mathfrak{p}$, so $r \notin \mathfrak{p}$, implying $\frac{r}{u} \notin \mathfrak{p}$.

The main point is to show that all proper ideals are contained in $\mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}}$. Equivalently, suppose that $I \subseteq R$ is an ideal not contained in $\mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}}$, and we show that $I = R_{\mathfrak{p}}$. Well, we are promised some $\frac{x}{u} \in I \setminus \mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ where $x, u \notin \mathfrak{p}$. But then by closure if I under $R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ -multiplication, we see

$$\frac{1}{1} = \frac{u}{x} \cdot \frac{x}{u} \in I,$$

so indeed, $I = R_{\mathfrak{p}}$.

We already checked that $\mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ is a proper ideal, so it immediately follows that $\mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ is a maximal ideal: any ideal I with $\mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}} \subsetneq I \subseteq R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ will immediately force $I = R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ by the above. Further, $\mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ is the unique maximal ideal because any maximal ideal \mathfrak{m} is proper, so it follows

$$\mathfrak{m} \subseteq \mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}} \subseteq R_{\mathfrak{p}}.$$

This gives $\mathfrak{m} = \mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ by the maximality of \mathfrak{m} , so we are done. ■

Example 2.16. When R is an integral domain and $\mathfrak{p} = (0)$ is the (prime) zero ideal, we see that, indeed $\mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}} = (0)$ is the unique maximal ideal in the field of fractions $K(R) = R_{\mathfrak{p}}$.

The uniquely special maximal ideal $\mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ gives rise to the following definition for these local rings.

Residue
field

Definition 2.17 (Residue field). Fix R a local ring with unique maximal ideal \mathfrak{m} . Then we define the *residue field* to be $\kappa := R/\mathfrak{m}$.

Example 2.18. We have that $\mathbb{Z}_{(p)}/p\mathbb{Z}_{(p)} \cong \mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z}$. In particular, observe that the characteristic has changed.

Remark 2.19. Geometrically, we view primes \mathfrak{p} as living in the “space” $\text{Spec } R$. Then here $R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ is intended to look like a “neighborhood” or “germ” at the point \mathfrak{p} . Hence the name localization.

As we hoped for in the motivation, we note that the above examples tend to feature $R[U^{-1}]$ as the ring R where the elements of U have become invertible. In fact, this notion can be formalized into a universal property for localization.

Proposition 2.20. Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed subset. Let $\varphi : R \rightarrow R[U^{-1}]$ be the canonical map. Now, suppose we are given a ring map $\psi : R \rightarrow S$ such that $\psi(U) \subseteq R^{\times}$. Then there is a unique ring morphism γ making the diagram commute.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} R & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & R[U^{-1}] \\ & \searrow \psi & \downarrow \gamma \\ & & S \end{array}$$

Proof. We tackle uniqueness and existence separately.

- We show that the map γ is unique. For any $r \in R$, observe that we are forced into

$$\gamma(r/1) = \gamma(\varphi(r)) = \psi(r),$$

so γ is forced on elements of the form $\frac{r}{1}$. Further, for any $\frac{r}{u} \in R[U^{-1}]$, we see that

$$\psi(u)\gamma\left(\frac{r}{u}\right) = \gamma\left(\frac{u}{1}\right)\gamma\left(\frac{r}{u}\right) = \gamma\left(\frac{r}{1}\right) = \psi(r),$$

so we see $\gamma\left(\frac{r}{u}\right) = \psi(u)^{-1}\psi(r)$ forces everything in $R[U^{-1}]$.

- We now show that the map

$$\gamma\left(\frac{r}{u}\right) := \psi(u)^{-1}\psi(r)$$

is in fact a well-defined R -module homomorphism. Note that $\psi(u) \in S^\times$ by definition of ψ , so at the very least the above expression makes physical sense.

- We show γ is well-defined. Suppose that $\frac{r_1}{u_1} = \frac{r_2}{u_2}$ so that we need to show $\gamma\left(\frac{r_1}{u_1}\right) = \gamma\left(\frac{r_2}{u_2}\right)$. In other words, we need to show

$$\psi(u_1)^{-1}\psi(r_1) \stackrel{?}{=} \psi(u_2)^{-1}\psi(r_2).$$

This is equivalent to showing that

$$\psi(u_2 r_1) = \psi(u_2)\psi(r_1) \stackrel{?}{=} \psi(u_1)\psi(r_2) = \psi(u_1 r_2).$$

Now, we know $\frac{r_1}{u_1} = \frac{r_2}{u_2}$, so there is $u \in U$ such that $u u_2 r_1 = u u_1 r_2$, so it follows that

$$\psi(u)\psi(u_2 r_1) = \psi(u)\psi(u_1 r_2),$$

so multiplying both sides by $\psi(u)^{-1}$ finishes.

- We show γ is a ring homomorphism. Quickly, we see $\gamma\left(\frac{1}{1}\right) = \psi(1)^{-1}\psi(1) = 1$. Additionally, for any $\frac{r}{u}, \frac{s}{v} \in R[U^{-1}]$, we see

$$\begin{aligned} \gamma\left(\frac{r}{u} + \frac{s}{v}\right) &= \gamma\left(\frac{vr + us}{uv}\right) \\ &= \psi(uv)^{-1}\psi(vr + us) \\ &= \psi(v)^{-1}\psi(v)\psi(u)^{-1}\psi(r) + \psi(u)^{-1}\psi(u)\psi(v)^{-1}\psi(s) \\ &= \gamma\left(\frac{r}{u}\right) + \gamma\left(\frac{s}{v}\right). \end{aligned}$$

Similarly,

$$\begin{aligned} \gamma\left(\frac{r}{u} \cdot \frac{s}{v}\right) &= \gamma\left(\frac{rs}{uv}\right) \\ &= \psi(uv)^{-1}\psi(rs) \\ &= \psi(u)^{-1}\psi(r) \cdot \psi(v)^{-1}\psi(s) \\ &= \gamma\left(\frac{r}{u}\right) \cdot \gamma\left(\frac{s}{v}\right). \end{aligned}$$

This finishes our checks. ■

2.1.4 Localization of Modules

We can also localize modules, in essentially the same way.

Definition 2.21 (Localization, modules). Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed subset. Then, given an R -module M , we define $M[U^{-1}]$ to be the set of ordered pairs notated $\frac{m}{u}$ (with $m \in M$ and $u \in U$) modded out by the equivalence relation

$$\frac{m_1}{u_1} = \frac{m_2}{u_2} \iff \text{there exists } v \in U \text{ such that } v(u_2 m_1 - u_1 m_2) = 0.$$

Localization,
modules

Again, the extra v in the definition is to make \equiv an equivalence relation; this check is the same as the check in Remark 2.5 by replacing all rs with ms .

One can define addition by fractions in the same by-hand way, writing

$$\frac{m_1}{u_1} + \frac{m_2}{u_2} = \frac{u_1 m_2 + u_2 m_1}{u_1 u_2}.$$

Again, it is not too hard to check that this is well-defined (it is essentially the same as the check we did earlier) and gives an abelian group law (which we will actively choose to not write out). Further, $M[U^{-1}]$ even has an $R[U^{-1}]$ structure by

$$\frac{r}{v} \cdot \frac{m}{u} := \frac{rm}{vu}.$$

Thus, localizing at U will be able to define a functor from R -modules to $R[U^{-1}]$ -modules.

We remark that we still have a canonical R -module homomorphism $\varphi : M \rightarrow M[U^{-1}]$ by $\varphi : m \mapsto m/1$: to check this is an R -module homomorphism, pick up $r_1, r_2 \in R$ and $m_1, m_2 \in M$, and we see that

$$\varphi(r_1 m_1 + r_2 m_2) = \frac{r_1 m_1 + r_2 m_2}{1} = \frac{r_1}{1} \cdot \frac{m_1}{1} + \frac{r_2}{1} \cdot \frac{m_1}{1} = \frac{r_1}{1} \cdot \varphi(m_1) + \frac{r_2}{1} \cdot \varphi(m_2).$$

Again, the canonical map φ need not be injective, but we can describe its kernel.

Lemma 2.22. Fix an R -module M and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed subset. Then the kernel of the canonical map $\varphi : M \rightarrow M[U^{-1}]$ is

$$\ker \varphi = \{m \in M : um = 0 \text{ for some } u \in U\}.$$

Proof. We see $m \in \ker \varphi$ if and only if $\frac{m}{1} = \frac{0}{1}$ if and only if there exists $u \in U$ such that $um = 0$. ■

Concretely, viewing a ring R as an R -module, we see the kernel of the canonical map $R \rightarrow R[U^{-1}]$ consists of the $r \in R$ such that $ru = 0$ for some $u \in U$.

Example 2.23. If $0 \in U$, then all of R lives in the kernel of the canonical map $R \rightarrow R[U^{-1}]$.

Example 2.24. If R is an integral domain, then the map $R \rightarrow K(R)$ is injective because $ru = 0$ for $r \in R$ and $u \in R \setminus \{0\}$ implies $r = 0$.

2.1.5 Localization of Ideals

We would like to classify ideals under localization. Recall that, given a morphism $\varphi : R \rightarrow S$, the pre-image of an ideal $J \subseteq S$ will be an ideal $\varphi^{-1}(J) \subseteq R$.¹

Remark 2.25. In contrast, given an ideal $I \subseteq R$, we need not have $\varphi(I)$ an ideal of S . Indeed, in the inclusion $\mathbb{Z} \hookrightarrow \mathbb{Q}$, we have $\mathbb{Z} \subseteq \mathbb{Z}$ is an ideal, but the image $\mathbb{Z} \subseteq \mathbb{Q}$ is not an ideal because the image contains 1 but is not the full ring \mathbb{Q} .

In fact, we discussed above that prime ideals go to prime ideals. We can also show that this map of ideals preserves inclusions and unions and intersections, which holds on the level that φ is a function of sets.

¹ If r_1, r_2 and $x_1, x_2 \in \varphi^{-1}(J)$, then $\varphi(r_1 x_1 + r_2 x_2) = r_1 \varphi(x_1) + r_2 \varphi(x_2) \in J$ by closure, so $r_1 x_1 + r_2 x_2 \in \varphi^{-1}(J)$.

Lemma 2.26. Fix $f : A \rightarrow B$ a function and $S, T \subseteq B$. Then the following are true.

- $f^{-1}(S \cap T) = f^{-1}(S) \cap f^{-1}(T)$.
- $f^{-1}(S \cup T) = f^{-1}(S) \cup f^{-1}(T)$.
- If $S \subseteq T$, then $f^{-1}(S) \subseteq f^{-1}(T)$.

Proof. We take these one at a time.

- Note $x \in f^{-1}(S \cap T)$ if and only if $f(x) \in S \cap T$ if and only if $f(x) \in S$ and $f(x) \in T$ if and only if $x \in f^{-1}(S)$ and $x \in f^{-1}(T)$ if and only if $x \in f^{-1}(S) \cap f^{-1}(T)$.
- Rewrite the above argument replacing all \cap with \cup and all “and” with “or.”
- Note $S \subseteq T$ is equivalent to $S = S \cap T$, which gives

$$f^{-1}(S) = f^{-1}(S \cap T) = f^{-1}(S) \cap f^{-1}(T) \subseteq f^{-1}(T),$$

finishing. ■

Now, in our case, we are focusing on the canonical morphism $\varphi : R \rightarrow R[U^{-1}]$. We have the following sequence of propositions.

Lemma 2.27. Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed set, and let $\varphi : R \rightarrow R[U^{-1}]$ be the canonical map.

Then given any $R[U^{-1}]$ -ideal I , pre-image followed by localization does nothing:

$$I = \varphi^{-1}(I)[U^{-1}].$$

It follows that the map from $R[U^{-1}]$ -ideals to R -ideals by $I \mapsto \varphi^{-1}(I)$ is injective.

Proof. Fix $I \subseteq R[U^{-1}]$ an ideal. Formally, $\varphi^{-1}(I)$ is the set of elements $x \in R$ such that $\frac{x}{1} \in I$, so

$$\varphi^{-1}(I)[U^{-1}] = \left\{ \frac{x}{u} : \frac{x}{1} \in I \text{ and } u \in U \right\}.$$

We identify this with a subset of $R[U^{-1}]$ in the obvious way, and we note that this identification preserves the $R[U^{-1}]$ -module structure because we defined localization of modules with the same $R[U^{-1}]$ -action and addition law as the ring $R[U^{-1}]$ itself.

We now show $I = \varphi^{-1}(I)[U^{-1}]$ by taking the inclusions separately.

- We show that $\varphi^{-1}(I)[U^{-1}] \subseteq I$. Indeed, any $\frac{x}{u} \in \varphi^{-1}(I)[U^{-1}]$ will have $\frac{x}{1} \in I$, so $\frac{x}{u} = \frac{1}{u} \cdot \frac{x}{1} \in I$ because I is closed under $R[U^{-1}]$.
- It remains to show $I \subseteq \varphi^{-1}(I)[U^{-1}]$. Well, fix some $\frac{r}{u} \in I$. Then, because I is a $R[U^{-1}]$ -ideal, we see

$$\frac{r}{1} = \frac{u}{1} \cdot \frac{r}{u} \in I,$$

so it follows that $r \in \varphi^{-1}(I)$, and so $\frac{r}{u} \in \varphi^{-1}(I)[U^{-1}]$. This finishes.

We finish by showing that $I \mapsto \varphi^{-1}(I)$ is injective. Indeed, if $I, J \subseteq R[U^{-1}]$ are ideals such that $\varphi^{-1}(I) = \varphi^{-1}(J)$ implies that

$$I = \varphi^{-1}(I)[U^{-1}] = \varphi^{-1}(J)[U^{-1}] = J,$$

so we are done. ■

Lemma 2.28. Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed set, and let $\varphi : R \rightarrow R[U^{-1}]$ be the canonical map.

Further, fix an R -ideal J . The following are equivalent.

- (i) $J = \varphi^{-1}(I)$ for some $R[U^{-1}]$ -ideal I .
- (ii) $J = \varphi^{-1}(J[U^{-1}])$.
- (iii) If $ru \in J$ for some $r \in R$ and $u \in U$, then $r \in J$. In other words, $U \cap J = \emptyset$ and $U/J \subseteq R/J$ contains no zero-divisors.

Proof. We show our implications separately.

- We show that (ii) implies (i). For this, we only need to show that $J[U^{-1}]$ is an ideal of $R[U^{-1}]$. But this is true because $J[U^{-1}]$ is an $R[U^{-1}]$ -module, and we can see set-wise that it is a subset of $R[U^{-1}]$, and the operations match up by how $J[U^{-1}]$ is defined.

Thus, $J[U^{-1}]$ is a $R[U^{-1}]$ -submodule of $R[U^{-1}]$, which is exactly an $R[U^{-1}]$ -ideal.

- We show that (i) implies (ii). Fix $I \subseteq R[U^{-1}]$ an ideal, and let $J := \varphi^{-1}(I)$. Then we claim that $J = \varphi^{-1}(J[U^{-1}])$. Well, we see

$$J[U^{-1}] = \varphi^{-1}(I)[U^{-1}] = I$$

by Lemma 2.27, so it follows $J = \varphi^{-1}(U) = \varphi^{-1}(J[U^{-1}])$.

- We show that (ii) implies (iii). We are given an R -ideal J such that $J = \varphi^{-1}(J[U^{-1}])$. Now, given any $u \in U$, we show that $[u]_J \in R/J$ is not a zero-divisor.

Indeed, suppose that $ru \in J$ for any $r \in R$ and $u \in U$. But then

$$\frac{r}{1} = \frac{ru}{u} \in J[U^{-1}],$$

so it follows $r \in \varphi^{-1}(J[U^{-1}]) = J$. This finishes.

- We show that (iii) implies (ii). Fix an R -ideal J such that $ru \in J$ with $r \in R$ and $u \in U$ implies $r \in J$. We show that $J = \varphi^{-1}(J[U^{-1}])$.

We can show $J \subseteq \varphi^{-1}(J[U^{-1}])$ without the hypothesis: any $x \in J$ has $\frac{x}{1} \in J[U^{-1}]$, so $x \in \varphi^{-1}(J[U^{-1}])$.

The reverse inclusion is harder. Fix some $x \in \varphi^{-1}(J[U^{-1}])$, which implies $\frac{x}{1} \in J[U^{-1}]$. But then we can find some $\frac{y}{u} \in J[U^{-1}]$ such that

$$\frac{x}{1} = \frac{y}{u},$$

so it follows there is some $v \in U$ such that $v(ux - y) = 0 \in J$. So by hypothesis on J and U , we see that $ux - y \in J$ is forced, so $ux \in J$, so $x \in J$. This finishes. ■

And finally here is our classification of ideals under localization.

Theorem 2.29. Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed set, and let $\varphi : R \rightarrow R[U^{-1}]$ be the canonical map. Then φ^{-1} provides a bijection between the prime ideals of R which are disjoint from U and the prime ideals of $R[U^{-1}]$.

Proof. This will follow from the above properties. Observe that φ^{-1} will indeed send prime ideals of $R[U^{-1}]$ to prime ideals of R , and this mapping is injective.

Thus, it remains to show that the image of φ^{-1} on $\text{Spec } R[U^{-1}]$ is as described. Well, by Lemma 2.28, these are exactly the prime R -ideals \mathfrak{p} such that, if $ru \in \mathfrak{p}$ for some $r \in \mathfrak{p}$ and $u \in U$, then $r \in \mathfrak{p}$. Call these primes “good,” which we want to show is equivalent to being disjoint from U .

Certainly, if \mathfrak{p} is a prime disjoint from U , then $ru \in \mathfrak{p}$ for $r \in \mathfrak{p}$ and $u \in U$, then $u \notin \mathfrak{p}$ will force $r \in \mathfrak{p}$; thus, \mathfrak{p} is good. So conversely, if \mathfrak{p} is not disjoint from U , then set $u \in U \cap \mathfrak{p}$, and we see

$$1u \in \mathfrak{p}$$

while $1 \notin \mathfrak{p}$ (prime ideals are proper), so it follows that \mathfrak{p} is not good. ■

Here is a reason to care about the above our study of ideals under localization.

Corollary 2.30. Any localization of a Noetherian ring R is still a Noetherian ring.

Proof. Fix an ideal $I \subseteq R[U^{-1}]$, and we show that it is finitely generated. Well, $\varphi^{-1}(I) \subseteq R$ is an ideal, which is finitely generated because R is Noetherian, so fix generators

$$\varphi^{-1}(I) = (x_1, \dots, x_n).$$

Now we claim that

$$I = (x_1/1, \dots, x_n/1)$$

as an $R[U^{-1}]$ -ideal. Certainly $(x_1/1, \dots, x_n/1) \subseteq I$. In the other direction, given any $\frac{x}{u} \in I$, we see that $\frac{x}{1} = \frac{u}{1} \cdot \frac{x}{u} \in I$, so $x \in \varphi^{-1}(I)$. but then we can write

$$x = \sum_{k=1}^n r_k x_k$$

for some constants r_k . It follows

$$\frac{x}{u} = \sum_{k=1}^n \frac{r_k}{u} \cdot \frac{x_k}{1} \in (x_1/1, \dots, x_n/1),$$

finishing. ■

2.1.6 The Hom-Functor

Later in life we will discuss localization as a tensor product, but before then we must talk about the tensor product, so for now we will talk about the Hom-functor.



Warning 2.31. The following two subsections do not contain many proofs. This is mostly due to laziness; the interested are referred to my 250A notes or any other standard algebra reference.

Here is our definition.

Hom

Definition 2.32 (Hom). Fix R a ring. Then, for R -modules M and N , we define $\text{Hom}_R(M, N)$ to be the abelian group of R -module homomorphisms $M \rightarrow N$.

In fact, we can endow $\text{Hom}_R(M, N)$ with an R -module structure, essentially because our rings are commutative. Namely, we define

$$(r\varphi)(m) := r \cdot \varphi(m).$$

It is not too hard to verify that this does in fact define a ring action.

End

Definition 2.33 (End). Fix R a ring. Then we define the *endomorphisms* of an R -module M to be $\text{End}_R(M) := \text{Hom}_R(M, M)$.

Note that $\text{End}_R(M)$ is in fact a (non-commutative) R -algebra, where our multiplication is given by composition.

Here are some basic facts with short explanations as is necessary.

1. We have that $\text{Hom}_R(R, M) \cong M$ canonically by $\varphi \mapsto \varphi(1)$.
2. Given two morphisms $\alpha : M_2 \rightarrow M_1$ and $\beta : N_1 \rightarrow N_2$, then we have a map $\text{Hom}_R(M_1, N_1) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_R(M_2, N_2)$ by $\varphi \mapsto \beta \circ \varphi \circ \alpha$. In fact, this is an R -module homomorphism.
3. We have that

$$\text{Hom}_R\left(\bigoplus_{\alpha \in I} M_\alpha, N\right) \cong \prod_{\alpha \in I} \text{Hom}_R(M_\alpha, N)$$

for any collection of R -modules $\{M_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in I}$. The main point is that, to define a map $\bigoplus_{\alpha} M_\alpha \rightarrow N$, is exactly the same information as describing what to do with each $M_\beta \hookrightarrow \bigoplus_{\alpha} M_\alpha \rightarrow N$ copy.

4. In fact, Hom is a left-exact functor. Namely, exact sequences

$$0 \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$$

yields the exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow \text{Hom}_R(M, A) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_R(M, B) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_R(M, C).$$

Similarly,

$$0 \rightarrow \text{Hom}_R(C, M) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_R(B, M) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_R(A, M)$$

is exact. Note the reversed of direction of arrows here. The easiest way to see this is by the tensor-hom adjunction: hom is a right adjoint, so it preserves limits, so it preserves kernels, so it is left-exact.

Remark 2.34. However, Hom_R does not fully preserve short exact sequences. In the first, case we are saying that a morphism $\text{Hom}_R(M, C)$ might not be extendable to a map $\text{Hom}_R(M, B)$. By way of example, consider the short exact sequence of \mathbb{Z} -modules

$$0 \rightarrow 2\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow 0.$$

Then taking $\text{Hom}_{\mathbb{Z}}(\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}, -)$ gives

$$0 \rightarrow 0 \rightarrow 0 \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow 0,$$

which is not exact in the last term.

Remark 2.35 (Nir). Many of these isomorphisms are “functorial” in a suitable sense. For example, the isomorphism $\text{Hom}_R(R, M) \cong M$ is functorial as follows: given $\varphi : M \rightarrow N$, the following diagram commutes.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Hom}_R(R, M) & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & \text{Hom}_R(R, N) \\ \cong \downarrow & & \downarrow \cong \\ M & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & N \end{array}$$

Here the map $\varphi : \text{Hom}_R(R, M) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_R(R, N)$ is by $f \mapsto \varphi \circ f$. To see that this diagram commutes, note that some $f \in \text{Hom}_R(R, M)$ goes $f \mapsto \varphi f \mapsto (\varphi \circ f)(1)$ along the top; similarly it goes $f \mapsto f(1) \mapsto \varphi(f(1))$ along the bottom.

2.1.7 Tensor Product

We should probably start by defining tensor products, which requires defining bilinear maps.

Bilinear

Definition 2.36 (Bilinear). Fix A, B, C as R -modules for some ring R . Then a map $\varphi : A \times B \rightarrow C$ is R -bilinear if and only if it is R -linear in both arguments. Namely, we require

$$\varphi(r_1 a_1 + r_2 a_2, b) = r_1 \varphi(a_1, b) + r_2 \varphi(a_2, b)$$

and

$$\varphi(a, r_1 b_1 + r_2 b_2) = r_1 \varphi(a, b_1) + r_2 \varphi(a, b_2).$$

This lets us define the tensor product to more or less be the object universal with respect to giving bilinear maps.

Tensor product

Definition 2.37 (Tensor product). Fix R a ring and A and B as R -modules. Then we define $A \otimes_R B$ to be the free module generated by $a \otimes b$ for $a \in A$ and $b \in B$ modulo the relation

$$(a_1 m_1 + a_2 m_2) \otimes (b_1 n_1 + b_2 n_2) = a_1 b_1 (m_1 \otimes n_1) + a_1 b_2 (m_1 \otimes n_2) + a_2 b_1 (m_2 \otimes n_1) + a_2 b_2 (m_2 \otimes n_2).$$

Elements of the tensor product $A \otimes B$ are in general not very easy to understand and in general they can be described as being some finite sum of elements $a \otimes b$ for various $a \in A$ and $b \in B$. In the case where A and B are vector spaces over a field, then the tensor of two basis vectors will create a basis (we will prove this below), but this is essentially the only general example.

Nevertheless, let's do an example.

Example 2.38. We work in \mathbb{Z} -mod, and we compute $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/3\mathbb{Z}$. It will be enough to consider elements of the form $m \otimes n$. The main point is that

$$2(m \otimes n) = 2m \otimes n = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad 3(m \otimes n) = m \otimes 3n = 0,$$

so $m \otimes n = 0$ follows. Thus, $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/3\mathbb{Z} = 0$.

As with Hom_R , the tensor product \otimes_R has the following list of nice properties. Again, we provide short explanations as is necessary.

1. We have that $M \cong R \otimes_R M$ by $m \mapsto 1 \otimes m$. We can see that the inverse map is $r \otimes m \mapsto rm$.
2. Given morphisms $\alpha : M_1 \rightarrow M_2$ and $\beta : N_1 \rightarrow N_2$, we can define a map

$$\alpha \otimes \beta : M_1 \otimes_R N_1 \rightarrow M_2 \otimes_R N_2$$

by extending $m \otimes n \mapsto \alpha m \otimes \beta n$ linearly to the full tensor product. The map $\alpha \otimes \beta$ can be checked to be an R -module homomorphism.

3. We have that $M \otimes_R N \cong N \otimes_R M$ by $m \otimes n \mapsto n \otimes m$.
4. We have that

$$\left(\bigoplus_{\alpha \in I} M_{\alpha} \right) \otimes_R N \cong \bigoplus_{\alpha \in I} (M_{\alpha} \otimes_R N).$$

The most hands-free way to see this is the tensor-hom adjunction: tensoring is a left adjoint, so it preserves colimits, so it preserves coproducts.

5. The functor $- \otimes_R M$ is right-exact: given an exact sequence

$$A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow 0,$$

we have an exact sequence

$$A \otimes_R M \rightarrow B \otimes_R M \rightarrow C \otimes_R M \rightarrow 0.$$

Here the maps are the induced ones. The easiest way to see this is by the tensor-hom adjunction: tensoring is a left adjoint, so it preserves colimits, so it preserves cokernels, so it is right-exact.

Remark 2.39 (Nir). As in Remark 2.35, many of the above isomorphisms are functorial. For example, the isomorphism $R \otimes_R M \cong M$ is functorial as follows: given $\varphi : M \rightarrow N$, the following diagram commutes.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} M & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & N \\ \cong \downarrow & & \downarrow \cong \\ R \otimes_R M & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & R \otimes_R N \end{array}$$

Here the map $\varphi : R \otimes_R M \rightarrow R \otimes_R N$ is induced as $r \otimes m \mapsto r \otimes \varphi(m)$. To see the commutativity, note that some $m \in M$ will go $m \mapsto \varphi(m) \mapsto 1 \otimes \varphi(m)$ along the top, and similarly it will go $m \mapsto 1 \otimes m \mapsto 1 \otimes \varphi(m)$ along the bottom.

Here are some example applications.

Exercise 2.40. Fix a and b integers. Then

$$\mathbb{Z}/a\mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z} \cong \mathbb{Z}/\gcd(a, b)\mathbb{Z}.$$

Proof. Tensoring the right-exact sequence

$$\mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{\times a} \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}/a\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow 0$$

by $\mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z}$ gives the right-exact sequence

$$\mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{\times a} \mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}/a\mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow 0.$$

Using the canonical isomorphisms $\mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} M \cong M$ for abelian groups M and tracking our morphisms through, we get the right-exact sequence

$$\mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{\times a} \mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}/a\mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow 0.$$

It follows that

$$\mathbb{Z}/a\mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z} \cong \frac{\mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z}}{a\mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z}} = \frac{\mathbb{Z}/b\mathbb{Z}}{(a\mathbb{Z} + b\mathbb{Z})/b\mathbb{Z}} \cong \frac{\mathbb{Z}}{a\mathbb{Z} + b\mathbb{Z}}.$$

This finishes. ■

Remark 2.41. The above example also shows that the functor $- \otimes_R M$ need not be fully exact. For example, tensoring

$$0 \rightarrow \mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{\times 2} \mathbb{Z}$$

by $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$ gives the sequence of maps

$$0 \rightarrow \mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{\times 2} \mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}.$$

However, the map $\xrightarrow{\times 2}$ now takes $k \otimes \ell \mapsto 2k \otimes \ell = k \otimes 2\ell = 0$, so this sequence is not exact.

Example 2.42. Let V and W be two k -vector spaces with bases $\{v_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in I}$ and $\{w_\beta\}_{\beta \in J}$. This means that

$$V \cong \bigoplus_{\alpha \in I} kv_\alpha \quad \text{and} \quad W \cong \bigoplus_{\beta \in J} kw_\beta,$$

so the above facts let us write

$$V \otimes_k W \cong \bigoplus_{\alpha \in I, \beta \in J} (kv_\alpha \otimes_k kw_\beta).$$

Now, $kv_\alpha \otimes_k kw_\beta \cong kv_\alpha \cong k$ canonically by $xv_\alpha \otimes w_\beta \mapsto xv_\alpha \mapsto x$, so we can view each $kv_\alpha \otimes_k kw_\beta$ as a one-dimensional k -vector space. Tracking the above isomorphism forwards, we see that the elements $v_\alpha \otimes w_\beta \in V \otimes_k W$ are forming a k -basis.

Next time we will show $M[U^{-1}]$ is canonically isomorphic to $R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R M$ to continue our discussion of localization.

2.2 January 27

We localize more.

2.2.1 Flat Modules

Last time we left off with the right-exactness of the tensor product: a right-exact sequence of R -modules

$$A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow 0$$

becomes a right-exact sequence

$$M \otimes_R A \rightarrow M \otimes_R B \rightarrow M \otimes_R C \rightarrow 0$$

for any other R -module M . More formally, we have the following statement.

Proposition 2.43. Fix R a ring and M an R -module. Then the functor $M \otimes_R - : \text{Mod}_R \rightarrow \text{Mod}_R$ is right-exact.

Proof. This is a restatement of the discussion above. ■

However, it is not true that a short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow 0$$

will always become a short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow M \otimes_R A \rightarrow M \otimes_R B \rightarrow M \otimes_R C \rightarrow 0.$$

In fact, this is rather rare! Explicitly, the problem is that $M \otimes_R A \rightarrow M \otimes_R B$ might not be injective ruining exactness at the front, and this is the only obstruction by right-exactness.

Example 2.44. We work in $\text{Mod}_{\mathbb{Z}}$, and let n be a positive integer. Then tensoring the short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow \mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{\times n} \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow 0$$

with $\mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z}$ will give the commutative diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} 0 & \longrightarrow & \mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z} & \xrightarrow{\times n} & \mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z} & \longrightarrow & \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z} \longrightarrow 0 \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ 0 & \longrightarrow & \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z} & \xrightarrow{f} & \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z} & \longrightarrow & \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z} \longrightarrow 0 \end{array}$$

after tracking through the canonical isomorphisms $\mathbb{Z} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} M \cong M$. But we can see that f here sends $[k]_n$ lifts to $1 \otimes [k]_n$, which goes to $n \otimes [k]_n = 1 \otimes [0]_n$ and therefore is $[0]_n$ downstairs. So f is the zero map and not injective for any $n > 1$.

But sometimes left-exactness will be preserved, and this is a property worthy of a name.

Flat

Definition 2.45 (Flat). Fix R a ring. Then an R -module M is *flat* if and only if the functor $M \otimes_R -$ is exact.

Remark 2.46. As above, we note that $M \otimes_R -$ will always be right-exact, so M will be flat if and only if it preserves the injectivity at the end of a short exact sequence. In other words, $A \hookrightarrow B$ induces $M \otimes_R A \hookrightarrow M \otimes_R B$.

Example 2.47. The ring R is a flat module because $R \otimes_R M \cong M$ (canonically). Explicitly, the following diagram commutes because the map $M \cong R \otimes_R M$ is $m \mapsto 1 \otimes m$.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} A & \longrightarrow & B \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ R \otimes_R A & \longrightarrow & R \otimes_R B \end{array}$$

It follows $R \otimes_R A \rightarrow R \otimes_R B$ is injective when $A \hookrightarrow B$ is injective because this map is the composite $R \otimes_R A \cong A \hookrightarrow B \cong R \otimes_R B$, which is injective as the composite of injective maps.

Example 2.48. Any free R -module R^n is also flat by using direct sums. In particular, if we have $A \rightarrow B$, then the following diagram commutes.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} R^n \otimes_R A & \longrightarrow & R^n \otimes_R B \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ (R \otimes_R A)^n & \longrightarrow & (R \otimes_R B)^n \end{array}$$

Indeed, the map $R^n \otimes_R A \rightarrow (R \otimes_R A)^n$ is by $(r_k)_{k=1}^n \otimes a \mapsto (r_k \otimes a)_{k=1}^n$, so the commutativity follows. But we see that $A \hookrightarrow B$ means the individual maps $R \otimes_R A \rightarrow R \otimes_R B$ are injective, so the bottom row is injective. Tracking the isomorphisms through, we see the top row is also forced to be injective.

2.2.2 Localization via Tensoring

Now let's return to discussing localization, which plays nicely with the tensor product and flatness.

Proposition 2.49. Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed subset. Then, for any R -module M , we have a canonical $R[U^{-1}]$ -module isomorphism

$$R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R M \cong M[U^{-1}]$$

by $r/u \otimes m \mapsto r/u \cdot m$. (Here, $R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R M$ is given $R[U^{-1}]$ by multiplication on the left coordinate.)

Proof. We define our maps in both directions explicitly. To go $\varphi : M[U^{-1}] \rightarrow R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R M$, we define

$$\boxed{\varphi : m/u \mapsto 1/u \otimes m}.$$

For now, we have to check that this is well-defined and an $R[U^{-1}]$ -module homomorphism.

- Well-defined: suppose that $\frac{m_1}{u_1} = \frac{m_2}{u_2}$. Then there is $u \in U$ so that $uu_2m_1 = uu_1m_2$. It follows that

$$\frac{1}{u_1} \otimes m_1 = \left(\frac{1}{uu_1u_2} \cdot uu_2 \right) \otimes m_1 = \frac{1}{uu_1u_2} \otimes uu_2m_1 = \frac{1}{uu_1u_2} \otimes uu_1m_2,$$

and now running this in reverse shows $\frac{1}{u_1} \otimes m_1 = \frac{1}{u_2} \otimes m_2$.

- Homomorphic: fix $\frac{m_1}{u_1}, \frac{m_2}{u_2} \in M[U^{-1}] \otimes_R M$ and $\frac{s_1}{v_1}, \frac{s_2}{v_2} \in R[U^{-1}]$. Then we compute

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi \left(\frac{s_1}{v_1} \cdot \frac{m_1}{u_1} + \frac{s_2}{v_2} \cdot \frac{m_2}{u_2} \right) &= \varphi \left(\frac{s_1m_1}{v_1u_1} + \frac{s_2m_2}{v_2u_2} \right) \\ &= \varphi \left(\frac{v_2u_2s_1m_1 + v_1u_1s_2m_2}{v_1u_1v_2u_2} \right) \\ &= \frac{1}{v_1u_1v_2u_2} \otimes (v_2u_2s_1m_1 + v_1u_1s_2m_2) \\ &= \frac{1}{v_1u_1v_2u_2} \otimes v_2u_2s_1m_1 + \frac{1}{v_1u_1v_2u_2} \otimes v_1u_1s_2m_2 \\ &= \frac{s_1}{v_1u_1} \otimes m_1 + \frac{s_2}{v_2u_2} \otimes m_2 \\ &= \frac{s_1}{v_1} \left(\frac{1}{u_1} \otimes m_1 \right) + \frac{s_2}{v_2} \left(\frac{1}{u_2} \otimes m_2 \right) \\ &= \frac{s_1}{v_1} \varphi \left(\frac{m_1}{u_1} \right) + \frac{s_2}{v_2} \varphi \left(\frac{m_2}{u_2} \right), \end{aligned}$$

which is what we wanted.

In the other direction, we note that we have a R -bilinear map $\psi : R[U^{-1}] \times M \rightarrow M[U^{-1}]$ by

$$(r/u, m) \mapsto rm/u.$$

Quickly, this is well-defined because $\frac{r_1}{u_1} = \frac{r_2}{u_2}$ promises u such that $uu_2r_1 = uu_1r_2$, so $uu_2r_1m = uu_1r_2m$, so $\frac{r_1m}{u_1} = \frac{r_2m}{u_2}$. Now, to check R -bilinearity, it suffices to check that

$$\psi(r/u, r_1m_1 + r_2m_2) = \frac{r(r_1m_1 + r_2m_2)}{u} = r_1 \cdot \frac{rm_1}{u} + r_2 \cdot \frac{rm_2}{u} = r_1\psi(r/u, m_1) + \psi(r/u, m_2),$$

and

$$\psi \left(s_1 \cdot \frac{r_1}{u_1} + s_2 \cdot \frac{r_2}{u_2}, m \right) = \psi \left(\frac{u_2s_1r_1 + u_1s_2r_2}{u_1u_2}, m \right) = s_1 \cdot \frac{r_1}{u_1} \cdot m + \frac{r_2}{u_2} \cdot m$$

after some moving around, which is what we needed.

The point is that we are promised an R -module homomorphism $\psi : R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R M \rightarrow M[U^{-1}]$ by

$$\boxed{\psi : r/u \otimes m \mapsto rm/u}$$

and extending linearly to the full tensor product. It suffices to show ψ is inverse to φ , which will show φ is an $R[U^{-1}]$ -module isomorphism, and the same will hold for ψ , finishing

- Given $m/u \in M[U^{-1}]$, we note that $(\psi \circ \varphi)(m/u) = \psi(1/u \otimes m) = 1m/u = m/u$, so $\psi \circ \varphi = \text{id}_{M[U^{-1}]}$.
- Given $\sum_{k=1}^n (r_k/u_k \otimes m_k) \in R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R M$, we see that

$$(\varphi \circ \psi) \left(\sum_{k=1}^n \frac{r_k}{u_k} \otimes m_k \right) = \varphi \left(\sum_{k=1}^n \frac{r_k m_k}{u_k} \right) = \sum_{k=1}^n \frac{1}{u_k} \otimes r_k m_k = \sum_{k=1}^n \frac{r_k}{u_k} \otimes m_k,$$

so $\varphi \circ \psi = \text{id}_{R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R M}$. ■

Remark 2.50. The above canonical isomorphism is functorial in the following sense. If we have a map $\varphi : A \rightarrow B$, then the following diagram commutes, where all arrows are the induced maps.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R A & \longrightarrow & R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R B \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ A[U^{-1}] & \longrightarrow & B[U^{-1}] \end{array}$$

Indeed, we take $\frac{r}{u} \otimes a \mapsto \frac{r}{u} \otimes \varphi(a) \mapsto \frac{r\varphi(a)}{u}$ along the top, and we take $\frac{r}{u} \otimes a \mapsto \frac{ra}{u} \mapsto \frac{\varphi(ra)}{u} = \frac{r\varphi(a)}{u}$ along the bottom.

The above is nice because it means we technically would only need to check that $R[U^{-1}]$ exists in order to define localization of general modules. In other words, we have a somewhat unified paradigm to think about localization by merely focusing on tensor products.

As a quick example, we can see that localization commutes with direct sums.

Proposition 2.51. Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed subset with \mathcal{M} a collection of R -modules. Then

$$\left(\bigoplus_{M \in \mathcal{M}} M \right) [U^{-1}] \cong \bigoplus_{M \in \mathcal{M}} M [U^{-1}]$$

by sending $\frac{1}{u}(m_M)_{M \in \mathcal{M}} \mapsto \left(\frac{m_M}{u} \right)_{M \in \mathcal{M}}$.

Proof. The main point is that tensor products commute with direct sums. Indeed, we have the canonical isomorphisms

$$\left(\bigoplus_{M \in \mathcal{M}} M \right) [U^{-1}] \cong \left(\bigoplus_{M \in \mathcal{M}} M \right) \otimes_R R[U^{-1}] \stackrel{*}{\cong} \bigoplus_{M \in \mathcal{M}} M \otimes_R R[U^{-1}] \cong \prod_{i=1}^n M [U^{-1}],$$

where in $\stackrel{*}{\cong}$ we used the fact that tensor products commute with arbitrary direct sums. Actually tracking these isomorphisms through, we see that $\frac{1}{u}(m_M)_{M \in \mathcal{M}}$ goes to $(m_M)_{M \in \mathcal{M}} \otimes 1/u$ goes to $(m_M \otimes 1/u)_{M \in \mathcal{M}}$ goes to $(m_M/u)_{M \in \mathcal{M}}$, which is what we wanted. ■

2.2.3 Localization via Flatness

The following result looks like it's about localization but is actually about flatness.

Proposition 2.52. Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed subset. Then localization is an exact functor: given a short exact sequence of R -modules

$$0 \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow 0,$$

then we have a short exact sequence of $R[U^{-1}]$ -modules

$$0 \rightarrow A[U^{-1}] \rightarrow B[U^{-1}] \rightarrow C[U^{-1}] \rightarrow 0.$$

Proof. For visual reasons, note that we have the following commutative diagram where the vertical arrows are $R[U^{-1}]$ -module isomorphisms. (The diagram commutes by Remark 2.50.)

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccc} 0 & \longrightarrow & A[U^{-1}] & \longrightarrow & B[U^{-1}] & \longrightarrow & C[U^{-1}] & \longrightarrow & 0 \\ & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ 0 & \longrightarrow & R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R A & \longrightarrow & R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R B & \longrightarrow & R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R C & \longrightarrow & 0 \end{array}$$

This is to say that it suffices to show that the bottom row is exact. The right-exactness of the bottom row follows from the fact that it is induced by the tensoring functor $R[U^{-1}] \otimes_R -$.

Thus, we only need to show that localization preserves embeddings. Letting $\varphi : A \hookrightarrow B$ be the original map and $\bar{\varphi} : A[U^{-1}] \rightarrow B[U^{-1}]$ be the induced map, then we need to check that $\ker \bar{\varphi}$ is trivial. Well, if $\bar{\varphi}\left(\frac{a}{u}\right) = 0$ for some $\frac{a}{u} \in A[U^{-1}]$, then

$$\varphi(a) = \bar{\varphi}(a) = \bar{\varphi}\left(u \cdot \frac{a}{u}\right) = u \cdot \bar{\varphi}\left(\frac{a}{u}\right) = 0.$$

Because $\ker \varphi$ is trivial, we are forced to $a = 0$, so $\frac{a}{u} = 0$, so indeed $\ker \bar{\varphi}$ is trivial. ■

Corollary 2.53. Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively subset. Then $R[U^{-1}]$ is flat as an R -module.

Proof. The commutative diagram in the proof of Proposition 2.52 has been shown to have exact rows (over the course of the entire proof). The exactness of the bottom row shows $R[U^{-1}]$ is flat. ■

Corollary 2.54. Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicative subset. Then let $\varphi : A \rightarrow B$ be an R -module homomorphism and $\bar{\varphi} : A[U^{-1}] \rightarrow B[U^{-1}]$ be the localized morphism. Then

$$(\ker \varphi)[U^{-1}] \cong \ker \bar{\varphi} \quad \text{and} \quad (\operatorname{coker} \varphi)[U^{-1}] \cong \operatorname{coker} \bar{\varphi}.$$

In particular, if φ is injective/surjective/isomorphic, then $\bar{\varphi}$ is injective/surjective/isomorphic.

Proof. We deal with the kernel and the cokernel separately.

- The main point is that we have the short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow \ker \varphi \rightarrow A \xrightarrow{\varphi} \operatorname{im} \varphi \rightarrow 0.$$

Localizing, we get the short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow (\ker \varphi)[U^{-1}] \rightarrow A[U^{-1}] \xrightarrow{\bar{\varphi}} (\operatorname{im} \varphi)[U^{-1}] \rightarrow 0.$$

By exactness, we see that $(\ker \varphi) [U^{-1}] \cong \ker \bar{\varphi}$.

Thus, φ being injective implies $\ker \varphi = 0$ implies $\ker \bar{\varphi} = 0$ implies $\bar{\varphi}$ is injective.

- The main point is that we have the short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow A / \ker \varphi \xrightarrow{\varphi} B \rightarrow \operatorname{coker} \varphi \rightarrow 0,$$

where $\xrightarrow{\varphi}$ is actually the induced map. Localizing, we get the short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow (A / \ker \varphi) [U^{-1}] \xrightarrow{\bar{\varphi}} B [U^{-1}] \rightarrow (\operatorname{coker} \varphi) [U^{-1}] \rightarrow 0.$$

By exactness again, we see that $(\operatorname{coker} \varphi) [U^{-1}] \cong \operatorname{coker} \bar{\varphi}$.

Thus, φ being surjective implies $\operatorname{coker} \varphi = 0$ implies $\operatorname{coker} \bar{\varphi} = 0$ implies $\bar{\varphi}$ is surjective.

Combining the two points implies that, if φ is isomorphic (namely, bijective), then $\bar{\varphi}$ will be as well. ■

Flatness also gives us the following result, which again looks like it's about localization but is really about flatness.

Corollary 2.55. Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed subset. Then, taking $M_1, \dots, M_n \subseteq M$ finitely many R -modules of some R -module M , we get

$$\bigcap_{i=1}^n M_i [U^{-1}] = \left(\bigcap_{i=1}^n M_i \right) [U^{-1}].$$

Note these intersections make sense because the M_i all live inside of M .

Proof. The main point is that intersections can be realized as a kernel. Namely, consider the left-exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow \bigcap_{i=1}^n M_i \rightarrow M \rightarrow \prod_{i=1}^n M/M_i. \quad (*)$$

It is not too hard to check manually that this sequence is in fact left-exact: the map $\bigcap M_i \rightarrow M$ is an embedding and hence injective, and $x \in \ker(M \rightarrow \prod M/M_i)$ if and only if $x \in M_i$ for each M_i if and only if $x \in \bigcap M_i$.

Now, we would like to localize $(*)$. Before doing so, we note that Proposition 2.51 gives us the canonical isomorphism

$$\left(\prod_{i=1}^n M/M_i \right) [U^{-1}] \cong \prod_{i=1}^n (M/M_i) [U^{-1}],$$

which is legal because finite products are in fact coproducts. (Here is where we use the finiteness condition!) As in Proposition 2.51, we can actually track through these isomorphisms as sending $\frac{1}{u}([x_k]_{M_i})_{i=1}^n$ to $(\frac{1}{u}[x_k]_{M_i})_{i=1}^n$.

Continuing, we note that we can compute $(M/M_i) [U^{-1}]$ by localizing the short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow M_i \rightarrow M \rightarrow M/M_i \rightarrow 0,$$

which will tell us that $\frac{M}{M_i} [U^{-1}] \cong \frac{M[U^{-1}]}{M_i[U^{-1}]}$ by $\frac{1}{u}[x]_{M_i} \mapsto [\frac{x}{u}]_{M_i[U^{-1}]}$. Stitching these isomorphisms together gives us an isomorphism

$$\left(\prod_{i=1}^n M/M_i \right) [U^{-1}] \cong \prod_{i=1}^n \frac{M [U^{-1}]}{M_i [U^{-1}]}$$

by taking $\frac{1}{u}([x_k]_{M_i})_{i=1}^n$ to $([\frac{x_k}{u}]_{M_i[U^{-1}]})_{i=1}^n$.

Only now we do localize (*). Upon localization, we get the left-exact sequence²

$$0 \rightarrow \left(\bigcap_{i=1}^n M_i \right) [U^{-1}] \rightarrow M [U^{-1}] \rightarrow \left(\prod_{i=1}^n M/M_i \right) [U^{-1}] \cong \prod_{i=1}^n \frac{M [U^{-1}]}{M_i [U^{-1}]},$$

By exactness, we see that to prove the result it remains to compute the kernel of the composite

$$M [U^{-1}] \rightarrow \left(\prod_{i=1}^n M/M_i \right) [U^{-1}] \cong \prod_{i=1}^n \frac{M [U^{-1}]}{M_i [U^{-1}]}.$$

Well, this map sends $\frac{x}{u}$ to $\frac{1}{u}([x]_{M_i})_{i=1}^n$ to $(\frac{[x]}{u})_{i=1}^n$, so the only way for to be in the kernel is for $\frac{x}{u} \in M_i [U^{-1}]$ for each M_i . It follows that the kernel is

$$\bigcap_{i=1}^n M_i [U^{-1}],$$

which is what we wanted. ■

We need to be careful because localization need not commute with infinite intersections.

Example 2.56. Set $R := k[x]$ and $U = R \setminus \{0\}$. The main issue is that

$$\bigcap_{a \in k} (x - a) = (0).$$

Now, on one hand, $(x - a) [U^{-1}] = k(x)$ because U is allowed to divide by $(x - a)$. On the other hand, $(0) [U^{-1}] = (0)$ because no amount of division can make 0 nonzero. Thus,

$$\left(\bigcap_{a \in k} (x - a) \right) [U^{-1}] = (0) [U^{-1}] = (0) \neq k(x) = \bigcap_{a \in k} (x - a) [U^{-1}].$$

2.2.4 Tensor–Restriction Adjunction

We start by discussing a particular adjunction. We have the following definition.

Restriction

Definition 2.57 (Restriction). Fix S an R -algebra, which means we are promised a ring homomorphism $\psi : R \rightarrow S$. Given an S -module M , we can give M an R -action by

$$r \cdot m := \psi(r)m.$$

The abelian group M with this R -action is the *restriction* $\text{Res}_R^S M$.

In other words, the S -action on M is equivalent to a ring map $S \rightarrow \text{End } M$, so we get an R -action by precomposition: $R \xrightarrow{\psi} S \rightarrow \text{End } M$.

Lemma 2.58. Fix S an R -algebra. Then the map $\text{Res}_R^S : \text{Mod}_S \rightarrow \text{Mod}_R$ is a functor.

Proof. For concreteness, fix our map $\psi : R \rightarrow S$. We start by discussing how to restrict morphisms. Given an S -module morphism $f : M \rightarrow N$, we claim that the “function data” of φ in fact makes an R -module morphism $\text{Res}_R^S(f) : \text{Res}_R^S M \rightarrow \text{Res}_R^S N$. In other words, we define

$$\text{Res}_R^S(f)(m) := f(m).$$

² Being exact implies being left-exact. If this causes discomfort, replace the left-exact sequence $0 \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$ with the short exact sequence $0 \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow \text{im}(B \rightarrow C) \rightarrow 0$.

Note this makes $\text{Res}_R^S(f)$ at least a morphism of abelian groups, so in particular it is additive. So to check that $\text{Res}_R^S(f)$ is an R -module morphism, we merely pick up $r \in R$ and $m \in M$ and note

$$\text{Res}_R^S(f)(rm)f(\psi(r)m) = \psi(r)f(m) = r \cdot \text{Res}_R^S(f)(m).$$

Now, to show functoriality, we note that $\text{Res}_R^S(\text{id}_M)(m) = m$ for any S -module M and $m \in M$. And for $f : A \rightarrow B$ and $g : B \rightarrow C$ morphisms of S -modules, we have $\text{Res}_R^S(g \circ f)(a) = (g \circ f)(a) = (\text{Res}_R^S(g) \circ \text{Res}_R^S(f))(a)$. ■

In the other direction, if N is an R -module, we can create an S -module the “induced” module $\text{Ind}_R^S N := S \otimes_R N$, where we get an S -action by multiplying on the left coordinate.

Because tensoring is functorial, we get that $S \otimes_R -$ is automatically a functor $\text{Mod}_R \rightarrow \text{Mod}_R$. So to check that $S \otimes_R -$ is a functor $\text{Mod}_R \rightarrow \text{Mod}_S$, it suffices to show $f : A \rightarrow B$ in Mod_R can actually be a lifted to an S -module morphism $S \otimes_R A \rightarrow S \otimes_R B$. Well, f is already additive, so we merely check

$$f(s(x \otimes a)) = f(sx \otimes a) = sx \otimes f(a) = s(x \otimes f(a)) = s \cdot f(x \otimes a).$$

Thus, we do indeed have a functor $\text{Mod}_R \rightarrow \text{Mod}_S$.

With functors going in both directions introduced like this, they had better form an adjoint pair.

Proposition 2.59. Let S be an R -algebra. Then, given an R -module M and an S -module N , we have a canonical isomorphism (of abelian groups)

$$\text{Hom}_R(M, \text{Res}_R^S N) \cong \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, N).$$

Proof. We construt forwards and backwards maps manually.

- Fix $f \in \text{Hom}_R(M, \text{Res}_R^S N)$. Then we define $\tilde{f} \in \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, N)$ by defining

$$\tilde{f}(s \otimes m) = sf(m).$$

Note the computation $sf(m)$ in the above is viewing $f(m) \in N$ as an S -module. We have the following checks on $f \mapsto \tilde{f}$.

- Well-defined: to show there is a map $\tilde{f} : S \otimes_R M \rightarrow N$ as described, we need to show that $\tilde{f} : S \times R \rightarrow N$ defined by

$$\tilde{f}(s, m) := sf(m)$$

is R -bilinear. Given $r_1, r_2 \in R$ and $s_1, s_2 \in S$ and $m \in M$,

$$\tilde{f}(r_1 s_1 + r_2 s_2, m) = (r_1 s_1 + r_2 s_2)f(m) = r_1 \tilde{f}(s_1, m) + r_2 \tilde{f}(s_2, m).$$

Given $s \in S$ and $r_1, r_2 \in R$ and $m \in M$,

$$\tilde{f}(s, r_1 m_1 + r_2 m_2) = sf(r_1 m_1 + r_2 m_2) = r_1 \tilde{f}(s, m_1) + r_2 \tilde{f}(s, m_2).$$

Thus, we have an R -module map $\tilde{f} : S \otimes_R M \rightarrow N$. To check \tilde{f} is an S -module map, we note that \tilde{f} is already additive, so it suffices to pick up $s \in S$ and $x \otimes m \in S \otimes_R M$ and note

$$\tilde{f}(s(x \otimes m)) = \tilde{f}((sx) \otimes m) = (sx)f(m) = s\tilde{f}(x \otimes m).$$

- Homomorphic: we show that $f \mapsto \tilde{f}$ is a homomorphism of (abelian) groups. Indeed, fix $f, g \in \text{Hom}_R(M, \text{Res}_R^S N)$ and $s \otimes m \in S \otimes_R M$ so that

$$\widetilde{f+g}(s \otimes m) = s(f+g)(m) = sf(m) + sg(m) = (\tilde{f} + \tilde{g})(s \otimes m).$$

- Injective: we show $f \mapsto \tilde{f}$ has trivial kernel. Indeed, suppose $f \in \text{Hom}_R(M, \text{Res}_R^S N)$ has $\tilde{f} = 0$. Then, for any $m \in M$, we see

$$f(m) = 1_S f(m) = \tilde{f}(1_S \otimes m) = 0.$$

- In the other direction, motivated by the above injectivity check, we notice that we have an R -module map $\iota : M \rightarrow S \otimes_R M$ by $m \mapsto 1_S \otimes m$. Indeed, for $r_1, r_2 \in R$ and $m_1, m_2 \in M$, we see

$$\iota(r_1 m_1 + r_2 m_2) = 1_S \otimes (r_1 m_1 + r_2 m_2) = r_1 \iota(m_1) + r_2 \iota(m_2).$$

Now, suppose that we have some $g \in \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, N)$. Note that the same underlying function g is an R -module map as well: g is already additive, so we need to check that $r \in R$ and $s \otimes m \in S \otimes_R M$ has

$$r \cdot g(s \otimes m) = r 1_S \cdot g(s \otimes m) = g(r 1_S \cdot s \otimes m) = g(r(s \otimes m)).$$

Thus, we are granted the map $g \mapsto g \circ \iota$ from $\text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, N)$ to $\text{Hom}_R(M, \text{Res}_R^S N)$.

Note that it merely remains to check the surjectivity of $f \mapsto \tilde{f}$, so it suffices to show that, for any $g \in \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, N)$, we have

$$\widetilde{g \circ \iota} = g.$$

Indeed, given $m \in M$,

$$\widetilde{g \circ \iota}(s \otimes m) = s(g \circ \iota)(m) = sg(1 \otimes m) = g(s \otimes m),$$

where in the last step we are viewing g as an S -module map. This finishes. ■

Remark 2.60. One can in fact show that the exhibited isomorphism makes tensoring left-adjoint to restriction. We will not run the checks to form an adjoint pair.

2.2.5 Base Change

Next let's discuss base change. Again, fix S an R -algebra. Given two R -modules named M and N , we can form S -modules

$$S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(M, N) \quad \text{and} \quad \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, S \otimes_R N),$$

where the functor $S \otimes_R - : \text{Mod}_R \rightarrow \text{Mod}_S$ was described in the previous subsection. In general, there need not be an isomorphism between these S -modules, but there is a canonical map from the left to the right.

Lemma 2.61. Fix S an R -algebra with R -modules M and N . Then there is a canonical S -module map

$$\alpha : S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(M, N) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, S \otimes_R N).$$

Proof. The main idea is to use Proposition 2.59. To begin with, note that there is a function

$$\gamma : \text{Hom}_R(M, N) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, S \otimes_R N)$$

by using the fact $S \otimes_R -$ is a functor. In particular, $f : M \rightarrow N$ has $\gamma(f)(s \otimes m) = s \otimes f(m)$. Observe that γ in fact induces a function

$$\gamma : \text{Hom}_R(M, N) \rightarrow \text{Res}_R^S \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, S \otimes_R N)$$

because the underlying sets involved have not changed. We claim that γ is in fact an R -module morphism. Well, fix $r_1, r_2 \in R$ and $f_1, f_2 \in \text{Hom}_R(M, N)$ with $s \otimes m \in S \otimes_R M$, and we see

$$\gamma(r_1 f_1 + r_2 f_2)(s \otimes m) = s \otimes (r_1 f_1 + r_2 f_2)(m) = r_1(s \otimes f_1(m)) + r_2(s \otimes f_2(m)) = (r_1 \gamma(f_1) + r_2 \gamma(f_2))(s \otimes m).$$

Now, because γ is an R -module map, Proposition 2.59 promises a canonical map

$$\tilde{\gamma} : S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(M, N) \rightarrow \text{Hom}(S \otimes_R M, S \otimes_R N).$$

In fact, we can compute $\tilde{\gamma}$ by tracking Proposition 2.59 and γ through. Namely, given $s \otimes f \in S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(M, N)$ and $s_0 \otimes m_0 \in S \otimes_R M$, we have

$$\tilde{\gamma}(s \otimes f)(s_0 \otimes m_0) = s \cdot \gamma(f)(s_0 \otimes m_0) = s \cdot (s_0 \otimes f(m_0)) = (ss_0) \otimes f(m_0).$$

This finishes. ■

Remark 2.62 (Nir). We briefly remark that α is functorial in M : if we have a map $\varphi : M \rightarrow M'$, then the following diagram commutes, where the vertical maps are induced.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(M', N) & \xrightarrow{\alpha} & \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M', S \otimes_R N) \\ \varphi \downarrow & & \downarrow \varphi \\ S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(M, N) & \xrightarrow{\alpha} & \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, S \otimes_R N) \end{array}$$

To see this, track some $s \otimes f$ from the top-left.

- Moving along the top, $s \otimes f$ goes to $(s_0 \otimes m'_0) \mapsto (ss_0 \otimes f(m'_0))$ goes to $(s_0 \otimes m_0) \mapsto (ss_0 \otimes f(\varphi m_0))$.
- Moving along the bottom, $s \otimes f$ goes to $s_0 \otimes f \varphi$ goes to $(s_0 \otimes m_0) \mapsto (ss_0 \otimes f(\varphi m_0))$.

We would like the above α to be an isomorphism, but this requires some hypotheses. To start, here is a special case, which we will generalize shortly.

Lemma 2.63. Work in the set-up of Lemma 2.61. If $M = R^n$ for some positive integer n , then α is an isomorphism.

Proof. We proceed by brute force. We will just show directly that $S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(R^n, N) \cong \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R R^n, S \otimes_R N)$, and tracking the isomorphism through will reveal that it is α . Pick up some $s \otimes f \in S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(R^n, N)$ which we will track through.

- Note that $S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(R^n, N) \cong S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(R, N)^n \cong S \otimes_R N^n$ by sending $s \otimes f$ to $s \otimes (1_R \mapsto f(e_k))_{k=1}^n$ to $s \otimes (f(e_k))_{k=1}^n$.
(Here, the e_\bullet are the basis for R^n .)
- Note that $S \otimes_R N^n \cong (S \otimes_R N)^n$ by sending $s \otimes (f(e_k))_{k=1}^n$ to $(s \otimes f(e_k))_{k=1}^n$.
- Note that $(S \otimes_R N)^n \cong \text{Hom}_S(S^n, S \otimes_R N)$ by sending $(s \otimes f(e_k))_{k=1}^n$ to the morphism

$$(s_k)_{k=1}^n \mapsto \sum_{k=1}^n ss_k \otimes f(e_k).$$

- Note that $\text{Hom}_S(S^n, S \otimes_R N) \cong \text{Hom}_S((S \otimes_R R)^n, S \otimes_R N)$ by sending the morphism $(s_k)_{k=1}^n \mapsto \sum_k ss_k \otimes f(e_k)$ to the morphism defined by $(s_k \otimes 1)_{k=1}^n \mapsto \sum_k ss_k \otimes f(e_k)$.

In particular, the morphism in the codomain is

$$(s_k \otimes r_k)_{k=1}^n \mapsto \sum_{k=1}^n ss_k \otimes f(r_k e_k).$$

- Note that $\text{Hom}_S((S \otimes_R R)^n, S \otimes_R N) \cong \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes R^n, S \otimes_R N)$ by sending $(s_k \otimes r_k)_{k=1}^n \mapsto \sum_k s s_k \otimes r_k f(e_k)$ to

$$s_0 \otimes (r_k)_{k=1}^n \mapsto \sum_{k=1}^n s s_0 \otimes f(r_k e_k) = s s_0 \otimes f((r_k)_{k=1}^n).$$

So indeed, we have tracked our isomorphism, and we can see from the last point that $s \otimes f$ has gone to $s_0 \otimes m \mapsto s s_0 \otimes f(m)$, as needed by α . ■

We would like to extend the above argument to work more generally, but this will require some hypotheses. One condition will be that S is flat over R ; for the other condition we have the following definition.

Finitely
presented

Definition 2.64 (Finitely presented). An R -module M is *finitely presented* if and only if there are M is finitely generated, and we can find R^m and R^n making the following right-exact sequence

$$R^m \rightarrow R^n \rightarrow M \rightarrow 0.$$

In other words, we need to be able to find some R^m which can surject onto the kernel of $R^n \rightarrow M$; i.e., the kernel of our map $R^n \rightarrow M$ is finitely generated.

Example 2.65. The free R -module R^n is finitely presented due to the sequence $0 \rightarrow R^n \rightarrow R^n \rightarrow 0$.

Example 2.66. Fix R a Noetherian ring and M a finitely generated module. Then there is R^n with a map $\varphi : R^n \rightarrow M$. Now, because R is Noetherian, R^n will be a Noetherian module (see Proposition 1.46), so the R -submodule $\ker \varphi \subseteq R^n$ will be finitely generated over R . Thus, M is finitely presented.

Now, here is the culmination of base change.

Proposition 2.67. Work in the set-up of Lemma 2.61. Then if S is flat and M is finitely presented, then the α from Lemma 2.61 is an isomorphism.

Proof. We begin by writing down the finite presentation

$$R^m \rightarrow R^n \rightarrow M \rightarrow 0$$

of M . The idea is to M is “close enough” to being R^n , allowing us to reduce to Lemma 2.63.

We now create two left-exact sequences.

- Taking $\text{Hom}_R(-, N)$ gives us a left-exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow \text{Hom}_R(M, N) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_R(R^n, N) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_R(R^m, N),$$

and by flatness of S , we get another left-exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(M, N) \rightarrow S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(R^n, N) \rightarrow S \otimes_R \text{Hom}_R(R^m, N). \quad (1)$$

- Alternatively, note that we directly have a right-exact sequence

$$S \otimes_R R^m \rightarrow S \otimes_R R^n \rightarrow S \otimes_R M \rightarrow 0,$$

upon which $\text{Hom}_S(-, S \otimes_R N)$ gives the right-exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, S \otimes_R N) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R R^n, S \otimes_R N) \rightarrow \text{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R R^m, S \otimes_R N). \quad (2)$$

Now we can relate (1) and (2) by α : functoriality of α (see Remark 2.62) gives the following commutative diagram with exact rows.

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 0 & \longrightarrow & S \otimes_R \operatorname{Hom}_R(M, N) & \longrightarrow & S \otimes_R \operatorname{Hom}_R(R^n, N) & \longrightarrow & S \otimes_R \operatorname{Hom}_R(R^m, N) \\
 & & \downarrow \alpha & & \downarrow \alpha & & \downarrow \alpha \\
 0 & \longrightarrow & \operatorname{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R M, S \otimes_R N) & \longrightarrow & \operatorname{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R R^n, S \otimes_R N) & \longrightarrow & \operatorname{Hom}_S(S \otimes_R R^m, S \otimes_R N)
 \end{array}$$

But now the rightmost two vertical α s are isomorphisms by Lemma 2.63, so the leftmost α is also an isomorphism. This finishes. \blacksquare

Remark 2.68 (Nir). I am really proud of the working out of the discussion in this subsection. There are a lot of moving parts.

2.2.6 Support of a Module

We have the following definition.

Support

Definition 2.69 (Support). Fix R a ring and M an R -module. Then we define the *support* of M to be

$$\operatorname{Supp} M := \{\mathfrak{p} \in \operatorname{Spec} R : M_{\mathfrak{p}} \neq 0\}.$$

There is an analogous notion of maximal support using maximal ideals instead of prime ideals.

We can provide a more concrete condition for $M_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$. For this, we have the following definition.

Annihilator

Definition 2.70 (Annihilator). Fix R a ring and M an R -module. Then, given an element $m \in M$, we define the *annihilator* of R to be

$$\operatorname{Ann} m := \{r \in R : rm = 0\}.$$

Analogously, we define $\operatorname{Ann} M := \{r \in R : rm = 0 \text{ for all } m \in M\} = \bigcap_{m \in M} \operatorname{Ann} m$.

Remark 2.71. It is not hard to check that these are ideals. If $r_1, r_2 \in R$ and $x_1, x_2 \in \operatorname{Ann} m$, then

$$(r_1x_1 + r_2x_2)m = r_1(x_1m) + r_2(x_2m) = 0$$

verifies that $r_1x_1 + r_2x_2 \in \operatorname{Ann} m$, so $\operatorname{Ann} m$ is closed under R -linear combination. So $\operatorname{Ann} m$ is an ideal, and the fact $\operatorname{Ann} M$ is an ideal follows by taking the (arbitrary) intersection.

So here is a characterization of $\operatorname{Supp} M$.

Proposition 2.72. Fix R a ring and M an R -module. Then, given $\mathfrak{p} \in \operatorname{Spec} R$, we have $M_{\mathfrak{p}} \neq 0$ if and only if $\operatorname{Ann} m \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ for some $m \in M$. In other words,

$$\operatorname{Supp} M = \bigcup_{m \in M} \{\mathfrak{p} \in \operatorname{Spec} R : \operatorname{Ann} m \subseteq \mathfrak{p}\}.$$

Proof. We proceed by contraposition, showing that $M_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$ if and only if $\operatorname{Ann} m \not\subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ for each $m \in M$.

Note that $M_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$ if and only if $\frac{m}{u} = 0$ for each $m \in M$ and $u \in U$. But note that if $\frac{m}{1} = 0$ for each $m \in M$, then it follows

$$\frac{m}{u} = \frac{1}{u} \cdot \frac{1}{m} = 0$$

for any $u \in U$. Thus, it suffices to check that $\frac{m}{1} = 0$ for each $m \in M$.

Well, fixing any $m \in M$, we see that $\frac{m}{1} = \frac{0}{1}$ if and only if there is some $u \notin \mathfrak{p}$ such that $um = 0$. In other words, $\frac{m}{1} = \frac{0}{1}$ is equivalent to

$$(R \setminus \mathfrak{p}) \cap \text{Ann } m \neq \emptyset,$$

which is equivalent to $\text{Ann } m \not\subseteq \mathfrak{p}$. ■

The above characterization of the support is a bit annoying, geometrically speaking, because we are taking an arbitrary union of Zariski-closed sets $\{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Spec } R : \text{Ann } m \subseteq \mathfrak{p}\}$. In the case where M is finitely generated (which is essentially a size constraint on M), we can make this arbitrary union into a finite one.

Proposition 2.73. Fix R a ring and M a finitely generated R -module. Then

$$\text{Supp } M = \{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Spec } R : \text{Ann } M \subseteq \mathfrak{p}\}.$$

Proof. Of course, taking any $m \in M$, if $\text{Ann } m \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ for some $m \in M$, then $\text{Ann } M \subseteq \text{Ann } m \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$. So Proposition 2.72 tells us that

$$\text{Supp } M = \bigcup_{m \in M} \{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Spec } R : \text{Ann } m \subseteq \mathfrak{p}\} \subseteq \{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Spec } R : \text{Ann } M \subseteq \mathfrak{p}\}.$$

The other direction requires using that M is finitely generated.

Well, let $\mathfrak{p} \notin \text{Supp } M$, and we show that $\text{Ann } M \not\subseteq \mathfrak{p}$. The fact that $\mathfrak{p} \notin \text{Supp } M$ implies that $\text{Ann } m \not\subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ for each $m \in M$; in particular, letting M be generated by x_1, \dots, x_n , we see that each $x_k \in M$ promises u_k such that

$$u_k \in \text{Ann } x_k \setminus \mathfrak{p}.$$

In other words, $u_k \notin \mathfrak{p}$ and $u_k x_k = 0$. But now (by finiteness!) we can set

$$u := \prod_{k=1}^n u_k.$$

Because each of the factors is not in \mathfrak{p} , we conclude $u \notin \mathfrak{p}$. However, $u x_k = 0$ for each of the generators x_k , so for any $m = \sum a_k x_k \in M$, we see

$$um = \sum_{k=1}^n u a_k x_k = \sum_{k=1}^n a_k \cdot 0 = 0.$$

It follows that $u \in \text{Ann } M \setminus \mathfrak{p}$, so $\text{Ann } M \not\subseteq \mathfrak{p}$. ■

In particular, this is a Zariski-closed subset of $\text{Spec } R$!

We close this subsection with some examples.

Example 2.74. Consider the ring $M := R$ as an R -module. Certainly $0 \in \text{Ann } R$, but for $r \in R$ to kill 1, we need $r = 0$, so actually $\text{Ann } R = (0)$. But (0) is contained in every prime ideal of R , so $\text{Supp } R = \text{Spec } R$. (Yes, $M = R$ is finitely generated over R .)

Example 2.75. Fix R a ring and $M = (0)$ the zero module. Then everyone in R will kill 0, so $\text{Ann } 0 = R$. It follows from Proposition 2.72 that $\text{Supp}(0) = \emptyset$ because no prime contains R .

To set up our last example, we have the following definition and then statement.

Simple

Definition 2.76 (Simple). Fix R a ring. Then an R -module M is said to be *simple* if and only if all R -submodules of M are either (0) or M .

Exercise 2.77. Fix R a ring and M a simple nonzero R -module. Then the following are true.

- (a) We have that $M \cong R/\text{Ann } M$.
- (b) We have that $\text{Ann } M$ is a maximal ideal.
- (c) We have that $\text{Supp } M = \{\text{Ann } M\}$.

Proof. We take the claims more or less one at a time.

- (a) Because M is nonzero, we may find $x \in M \setminus \{0\}$. Now, x induces an R -module homomorphism map $R \rightarrow M$ by $r \mapsto rx$ (indeed, $rs \mapsto rsx$ and $r_1 + r_2 \mapsto r_1x + r_2x$), and the kernel of this map is $\{r \in R : rx = 0\} = \text{Ann } x$. Thus, we have the left-exact sequence of R -modules

$$0 \rightarrow \text{Ann } x \rightarrow R \rightarrow M.$$

However, M is simple! Thus, because the image of $R \rightarrow M$ will end up being an R -submodule of M —and nonzero because it contains $1x = x \neq 0$ —we see that the image of $R \rightarrow M$ must be all of M . So in fact we have the short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow \text{Ann } x \rightarrow R \rightarrow M \rightarrow 0.$$

In particular, we just showed that $M = \{rx : r \in R\} = Rx$. Of course, $\text{Ann } M \subseteq \text{Ann } x$, but in fact equality holds: each $a \in \text{Ann } x$ will have $a(rx) = r(ax) = 0$ for each $rx \in Rx = M$.

Anyways, the point is that $R/\text{Ann } M \cong M$ (non-canonically) by $r \mapsto rx$.

- (b) We show that $I := \text{Ann } M$ is a maximal ideal. Certainly $I \neq R$ because then $M \cong R/R = (0)$ would be zero. Thus, I is proper, so we can find a maximal ideal \mathfrak{m} such that $I \subseteq \mathfrak{m}$. But then we consider the composite map $\varphi : M \rightarrow R/\mathfrak{m}$ by

$$M \cong R/I \rightarrow R/\mathfrak{m}.$$

Consider $\ker \varphi$. On one hand, note that $\ker \varphi \neq M$ because φ is the composite of surjective maps and therefore surjective, and R/\mathfrak{m} is nonzero (M being nonzero forces R nonzero), so φ cannot send all of M to 0.

But $\ker \varphi$ is an R -submodule of M , so instead we must have $\ker \varphi = (0)$. So the composite φ is injective, so the map $R/I \rightarrow R/\mathfrak{m}$ is injective. But then $x \in \mathfrak{m}$ implies $[x]_I \mapsto [x]_{\mathfrak{m}} = [0]_{\mathfrak{m}}$, so $x \in I$ by injectivity. Thus, $\mathfrak{m} = I$, and so I is in fact maximal.

- (c) Because $R \twoheadrightarrow R/\text{Ann } M \cong M$, we see that M is finitely generated, so Proposition 2.73 tells us that

$$\text{Supp } M = \{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Spec } R : \text{Ann } M \subseteq \mathfrak{p}\}.$$

Now, $\text{Ann } M$ is maximal, so $\text{Ann } M \in \text{Supp } M$, but any prime ideal containing $\text{Ann } M$ must equal $\text{Ann } M$ by maximality. So $\text{Supp } M = \{\text{Ann } M\}$. ■

Remark 2.78. We can complete our classification of simple R -modules: for each maximal ideal $\mathfrak{m} \subseteq R$, we can see R/\mathfrak{m} is a simple R -module. Indeed, any R -submodule $M \subseteq R/\mathfrak{m}$ is in fact an R/\mathfrak{m} -module, for each $x \in \mathfrak{m}$ and $m \in M$ has $xm = [0]_{\mathfrak{m}} = 0$. Thus, M is an (R/\mathfrak{m}) -subspace of R/\mathfrak{m} , so for dimension reasons, $M = (0)$ or $M = R/\mathfrak{m}$.

2.2.7 New Supports from Old

Let's see how the support behaves with some of our module constructions. For example, the support behaves well in short exact sequences.

Proposition 2.79. Fix R a ring. Suppose we have a short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow 0$$

of R -modules. Then $\text{Supp } B = \text{Supp } A \cup \text{Supp } C$.

Proof. The main point is that localization is an exact functor. Namely, if \mathfrak{p} is any prime of R , then we get a short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow A_{\mathfrak{p}} \rightarrow B_{\mathfrak{p}} \rightarrow C_{\mathfrak{p}} \rightarrow 0.$$

In particular, $A_{\mathfrak{p}} = C_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$ implies $B_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$; and conversely, $B_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$ implies $A_{\mathfrak{p}} = C_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$. Thus, $B_{\mathfrak{p}} \neq 0$ if and only if $A_{\mathfrak{p}} \neq 0$ or $C_{\mathfrak{p}} \neq 0$, which is exactly the claim that $\text{Supp } B = \text{Supp } A \cup \text{Supp } C$. ■

And here we can see that supports behave with (arbitrary!) direct sums.

Proposition 2.80. Fix R a ring and \mathcal{M} a collection of R -modules. Then

$$\text{Supp } \bigoplus_{M \in \mathcal{M}} M = \bigcup_{M \in \mathcal{M}} \text{Supp } M.$$

Proof. Fix a prime \mathfrak{p} . By Proposition 2.51, we see that

$$\left(\bigoplus_{M \in \mathcal{M}} M \right)_{\mathfrak{p}} \cong \bigoplus_{M \in \mathcal{M}} M_{\mathfrak{p}}.$$

In particular, $(\bigoplus_{M \in \mathcal{M}} M)_{\mathfrak{p}}$ will be nonzero if and only if at least one of the individual $M_{\mathfrak{p}}$ are nonzero. This is exactly the claim. ■

Additionally, we can learn something from the module itself by studying the support.

Proposition 2.81. Fix an R -module M . Then $M = 0$ if and only if $M_{\mathfrak{m}} = 0$ for all maximal ideals $\mathfrak{m} \subseteq R$. In particular,

Proof. We have already discussed the forwards direction in Example 2.75. In the other direction, suppose that the R -module M has $M_{\mathfrak{m}} = 0$ for every maximal ideal $\mathfrak{m} \subseteq R$.

Well, pick up any $m \in M$. Then $\text{Ann } m$ is an R -ideal. Using the proof of Proposition 2.72, we see that each maximal ideal \mathfrak{m} has $\text{Ann } m \not\subseteq \mathfrak{m}$, so $\text{Ann } m$ is not contained in any maximal ideal! Thus, we must have

$$\text{Ann } m = R,$$

so $1 \in \text{Ann } m$, so $m = 1m = 0$. So all elements of M are zero, so $M = 0$. ■

Remark 2.82. In fact, the above implies $M = 0$ if and only if $\text{Supp } M = \emptyset$. Indeed, we note that $\text{Supp } M = \emptyset$ will directly imply that $M_{\mathfrak{m}} = 0$ for each maximal ideal \mathfrak{m} , from which $M = 0$ follows by the above argument.

In the other direction, if $\text{Supp } M \neq \emptyset$, then there is a prime $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Supp } M$. Thus, by Proposition 2.72, there is some m so that

$$\text{Ann } m \subseteq \mathfrak{p}.$$

Placing \mathfrak{p} inside of a maximal ideal \mathfrak{m} , we see $\text{Ann } m \subseteq \mathfrak{m}$, so $M_{\mathfrak{m}} \neq 0$ as well. So indeed, $M \neq 0$.

Corollary 2.83. Fix $\varphi : M \rightarrow N$ an R -module homomorphism and $\mathfrak{m} \subseteq R$ a maximal ideal. Then we are promised a localized map $\varphi_{\mathfrak{m}} : M_{\mathfrak{m}} \rightarrow N_{\mathfrak{p}}$. Then $\varphi_{\mathfrak{m}}$ is injective/surjective/isomorphic for all maximal ideals \mathfrak{m} if and only if φ is as well.

Proof. The main point is to repeatedly use Corollary 2.54. Note φ is injective if and only if $\ker \varphi = 0$ if and only if $\ker \varphi_{\mathfrak{m}} = (\ker \varphi)_{\mathfrak{m}} = 0$ for all maximal ideals $\mathfrak{m} \subseteq R$ if and only if $\varphi_{\mathfrak{m}}$ is injective for all \mathfrak{m} .

Repeatig the same argument with coker gives the analogous result for surjectivity. Combining the results for injectivity and surjectivity gives the result for being an isomorphism. This finishes. ■

We continue our fact-collection.

Proposition 2.84. Fix R a ring and R -modules M and N . Then

$$\text{Supp}(M \otimes_R N) \subseteq \text{Supp } M \cap \text{Supp } N.$$

Proof. We take $\mathfrak{p} \notin \text{Supp } M \cup \text{Supp } N$ and show that $\mathfrak{p} \notin \text{Supp}(M \otimes_R N)$. Without loss of generality, we can actually take $\mathfrak{p} \notin \text{Supp } M$.

Well, we are given that $M_{\mathfrak{p}} = N_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$, so for each $m \in M$, there exists $u \notin \mathfrak{p}$ such that $um = 0$ (using Proposition 2.72). But then each $m \otimes n$ has

$$u \cdot (m \otimes n) = (um) \otimes n = 0,$$

each $m \otimes n$ has some $u_{m \otimes n} \notin \mathfrak{p}$ such that $u(m \otimes n) = 0$. Extending linearly, any element $\sum_{k=1}^n m_k \otimes n_k$ in $M \otimes_R N$ will have

$$u := \prod_{k=1}^n u_{m_k \otimes n_k}$$

with $u \notin \mathfrak{p}$ (because \mathfrak{p} is prime) while

$$u \cdot \sum_{k=1}^n m_k \otimes n_k = \sum_{k=1}^n (um_k) \otimes n_k = 0.$$

So we have indeed checked by Proposition 2.72 that $\mathfrak{p} \notin \text{Supp}(M \otimes_R N)$. ■

Remark 2.85. In fact, in fact, if M and N are finitely generated, then $\text{Supp}(M \otimes_R N) = \text{Supp } M \cap \text{Supp } N$. We do not prove this here because I am under the impression that it is difficult.

Example 2.86. Consider the \mathbb{Z} -modules \mathbb{Q} and $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$. Note $\mathbb{Q} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} = 0$, so

$$\text{Supp}(\mathbb{Q} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}) = \emptyset.$$

However, \mathbb{Q} is an integral domain, so $\text{Ann } 1 = (0)$, implying by Proposition 2.72 that $\text{Supp } \mathbb{Q} = \text{Spec } R$. On the other hand, $\text{Ann } \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} = (2)$, so Proposition 2.73 gives $\text{Supp } \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} = \{(2)\}$. Thus,

$$\text{Supp}(\mathbb{Q} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}) = \emptyset \subsetneq \{(2)\} = \text{Supp } \mathbb{Q} \cap \text{Supp } \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}.$$

2.2.8 Tensoring Algebras

For the next construction, we note that if S and T are R -algebras, then $S \otimes_R T$ is an R -algebra, where our multiplication is defined by

$$(s_1 \otimes t_1)(s_2 \otimes t_2) = (s_1 s_2) \otimes (t_1 t_2).$$

One can run through the checks that this will be an R -algebra, but because I am actively avoiding proving that anything is a ring, we will not do this here.

We mention this to talk about the tensor product of coordinate rings. Here's a first example.

Exercise 2.87. If we have two free k -algebras $k[x_1, \dots, x_m]$ and $k[y_1, \dots, y_n]$, then we claim that

$$k[x_1, \dots, x_m] \otimes_k k[y_1, \dots, y_n]$$

is freely generated by the elements of the form $x_\bullet \otimes 1$ and $1 \otimes y_\bullet$; i.e., this tensor product is a polynomial ring over k with $m + n$ letters.

Proof. Note that any polynomial $f \in k[x_1, \dots, x_m]$ has a unique representation as

$$f(x_1, \dots, x_m) = \sum_{d_1, \dots, d_m=0}^{\infty} a_{d_1, \dots, d_m} (x_1^{d_1} \cdots x_m^{d_m}),$$

where all but finitely many of the a coefficients vanish. In other words, this is really saying that the terms $x_1^{d_1} \cdots x_m^{d_m}$ form a k -basis of $k[x_1, \dots, x_m]$; similarly, the terms $y_1^{e_1} \cdots y_n^{e_n}$ form a k -basis of $k[y_1, \dots, y_n]$.

Now, by Example 2.42, it follows that the terms of the form

$$x_1^{d_1} \cdots x_m^{d_m} \otimes y_1^{e_1} \cdots y_n^{e_n}$$

will form a k -basis of $k[x_1, \dots, x_m] \otimes_k k[y_1, \dots, y_n]$.

We are now ready to attack the statement directly. Indeed, note that the terms of the form $x_\bullet \otimes 1$ and $1 \otimes y_\bullet$ will indeed generate $k[x_1, \dots, x_m] \otimes_k k[y_1, \dots, y_n]$ because we can write

$$x_1^{d_1} \cdots x_m^{d_m} \otimes y_1^{e_1} \cdots y_n^{e_n} = \left(\prod_{i=1}^m (x_i \otimes 1)^{d_i} \right) \left(\prod_{j=1}^n (1 \otimes y_j)^{e_j} \right),$$

meaning that we can generate any basis element and hence any element by linear combination.

It remains to show that the generation is free. Well, suppose that we can find some algebraic equation

$$\sum_{\substack{d_1, \dots, d_m \in \mathbb{N} \\ e_1, \dots, e_n \in \mathbb{N}}} a_{d_1, \dots, d_m, e_1, \dots, e_n} \left(\prod_{i=1}^m (x_i \otimes 1)^{d_i} \right) \left(\prod_{j=1}^n (1 \otimes y_j)^{e_j} \right) = 0,$$

where all but finitely many of the a coefficients vanish. We claim that all of the a coefficients must vanish. Indeed, we can expand out the monomials as

$$\sum_{\substack{d_1, \dots, d_m \in \mathbb{N} \\ e_1, \dots, e_n \in \mathbb{N}}} a_{d_1, \dots, d_m, e_1, \dots, e_n} (x_1^{d_1} \cdots x_m^{d_m} \otimes y_1^{e_1} \cdots y_n^{e_n}) = 0.$$

However, this means that a k -linear combination of $x_1^{d_1} \cdots x_m^{d_m} \otimes y_1^{e_1} \cdots y_n^{e_n}$ elements is vanishing, so all coefficients must be 0 because we already established that these elements form a basis. ■

Remark 2.88. Geometrically, we can write this as $A(\mathbb{A}^n(k)) \otimes_k A(\mathbb{A}^m(k)) \cong A(\mathbb{A}^n(k) \times \mathbb{A}^m(k))$, which makes more immediate sense.

As suggested by the remark, in fact the following more general statement is true.

Proposition 2.89. Fix affine algebraic sets X and Y . Then $A(X \times Y) \cong A(X) \otimes_k A(Y)$ canonically as k -algebras.

Proof. A lot of this problem is finding exactly what statement we want to prove. Let $X = Z(I)$ for an ideal $I \subseteq k[x_1, \dots, x_m]$ and $Y = Z(J)$ for an ideal $J \subseteq k[y_1, \dots, y_n]$.

We now describe $X \times Y$. We see that $(x, y) \in \mathbb{A}^m(k) \times \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ if and only if $x \in X$ and $y \in Y$ if and only if $f(x) = 0$ for each $f \in I$ and $g(y) = 0$ for each $g \in J$. Embedding the f and g into $k[x_1, \dots, x_m, y_1, \dots, y_n] = A(\mathbb{A}^m(k) \times \mathbb{A}^n(k))$ in the natural way, we see that $f(x) = f(x, y)$ so that $f(x) = 0$ is equivalent to $f(x, y) = 0$, and $g(x, y) = g(y)$ so that $g(y) = 0$ is equivalent to $g(x, y) = 0$.

Thus, $(x, y) \in X \times Y$ if and only if $f(x, y) = g(x, y) = 0$ for each $f \in I$ and $g \in J$, implying we see that

$$X \times Y = Z(I \cup J).$$

Note that the ideal generated by $I \cup J$ is $(I \cup J) = I + J$. Thus, the claim that $A(X \times Y) \cong A(X) \otimes_k A(Y)$ canonically is the same as saying

$$\frac{k[x_1, \dots, x_m, y_1, \dots, y_n]}{I + J} \cong \frac{k[x_1, \dots, x_m]}{I} \otimes_k \frac{k[y_1, \dots, y_n]}{J}.$$

canonically.

We have now transformed the desired result into an algebra problem. To exhibit the required isomorphism, we provide maps in both directions.

- Note that we can construct a k -bilinear map

$$\psi : \frac{k[x_1, \dots, x_m]}{I} \times \frac{k[y_1, \dots, y_n]}{J} \rightarrow \frac{k[x_1, \dots, x_m, y_1, \dots, y_n]}{I + J}$$

by $\psi : ([f], [g]) \mapsto [fg]$. We show that ψ is well-defined and k -bilinear separately.

- Well-defined: if $[f]_I = [f']_I$ and $[g]_J = [g']_J$, then $f - f' \in I$ and $g - g' \in J$. Then

$$(f - f')g, f'(g - g') \in I + J \subseteq k[x_1, \dots, x_m, y_1, \dots, y_n],$$

so $fg - f'g' \in I + J$, so $[fg] = [f'g']$ in $A(X \times Y)$.

- Bilinear: given $c, c' \in k$ and $[f], [f'] \in A(X)$ and $[g] \in A(Y)$, we find

$$\psi(c[f] + c'[f'], [g]) = \psi([cf + c'f'], [g]) = [(cf + c'f')g] = c[fg] + c'[f'g] = c\psi(f, g) + c'\psi(f', g).$$

Similarly, given $c, c' \in k$ and $[f] \in A(X)$ and $[g], [g'] \in A(Y)$, we find

$$\psi([f], c[g] + c'[g']) = \psi([f], [cg + c'g']) = [f(cg + c'g')] = c[fg] + c'[fg'] = c\psi([f], [g]) + c'\psi([f], [g']).$$

So ψ is a k -bilinear map and therefore will induce a k -module morphism

$$\bar{\psi} : \frac{k[x_1, \dots, x_m]}{I} \otimes_k \frac{k[y_1, \dots, y_n]}{J} \rightarrow \frac{k[x_1, \dots, x_m, y_1, \dots, y_n]}{I + J}$$

by $f \otimes g \mapsto fg$.

- We cheat by appealing to Exercise 2.87, which provides a canonical k -algebra isomorphism

$$k[x_1, \dots, x_m, y_1, \dots, y_n] \cong k[x_1, \dots, x_m] \otimes_k k[y_1, \dots, y_n]$$

by $x_\bullet \mapsto x_\bullet \otimes 1$ and $y_\bullet \mapsto 1 \otimes y_\bullet$. Now, modding out by I and J in the left and right coordinates, we get a k -algebra morphism

$$\varphi : k[x_1, \dots, x_m, y_1, \dots, y_n] \rightarrow \frac{k[x_1, \dots, x_m]}{I} \otimes_k \frac{k[y_1, \dots, y_n]}{J}.$$

Further, note that each $f(x, y) \in I$ will go to $f(x) \otimes 1 = 0 \otimes 1$ (using the fact that φ is a k -algebra morphism), so $f \in \ker \varphi$. Similarly, each $g \in J$ has $g \in \ker \varphi$, so $I \cup J \subseteq \ker \varphi$, so $I + J \subseteq \ker \varphi$, so we get an induced k -algebra morphism

$$\bar{\varphi} : \frac{k[x_1, \dots, x_m, y_1, \dots, y_n]}{I + J} \rightarrow \frac{k[x_1, \dots, x_m]}{I} \otimes_k \frac{k[y_1, \dots, y_n]}{J}.$$

Now, we claim that $\bar{\varphi}$ is our desired canonical k -algebra isomorphism. By construction, we know $\bar{\varphi}$ is a k -algebra homomorphism, and because $\bar{\varphi}$ is induced by the projection of an isomorphism, we know $\bar{\varphi}$ is surjective.

Thus, it remains to show that $\bar{\varphi}$ is injective. It suffices to provide $\bar{\varphi}$ with a right inverse, which we claim is $\bar{\psi}$. Namely, we show $\bar{\psi} \circ \bar{\varphi} = \text{id}$. Indeed, we see that, for any x_\bullet and y_\bullet ,

$$(\bar{\psi} \circ \bar{\varphi})([x_\bullet]) = \bar{\psi}([x_\bullet] \otimes [1]) = [x_\bullet] \quad \text{and} \quad (\bar{\psi} \circ \bar{\varphi})([y_\bullet]) = \bar{\psi}([1] \otimes [y_\bullet]) = [y_\bullet],$$

so it follows that $\bar{\psi} \circ \bar{\varphi}$ induces the identity on all of $A(X \times Y)$. This finishes. ■

Remark 2.90 (Nir). I am under the impression that some trickery is required to show that (the more natural map) $\bar{\psi}$ is bijective. At a high level, we can view the above proof as requiring the creation of $\bar{\varphi}$ to prove the bijectivity and $\bar{\psi}$, where the “hard work” of this proof was in the appeal to Exercise 2.87 to show that $\bar{\varphi}$ is well-defined.

Remark 2.91. One can generalize this construction to fiber products.

Next class we will finish up localization by discussing modules of finite length.

2.3 February 1

Hopefully we finish localizing today.

2.3.1 A Little On Tensor Products

Let's start with some review exercises.

Proposition 2.92. Fix R a ring and M an R -module and $I \subseteq R$ an R -ideal. This gives the R -module R/I , and we claim that we have a canonical isomorphism

$$(R/I) \otimes_R M \cong M/IM$$

by $[r]_I \otimes m \mapsto [rm]_{IM}$.

Proof. We will use a few facts about the tensor product here. To start off, we use the short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow I \rightarrow R \rightarrow R/I \rightarrow 0$$

and then tensor by $\otimes_R M$. This gives the right-exact sequence

$$I \otimes_R M \rightarrow R \otimes_R M \rightarrow (R/I) \otimes_R M \rightarrow 0.$$

We know that $R \otimes_R M \cong M$ (canonically) by $r \otimes m \mapsto rm$, and then tracking the image of $I \otimes_R M$ through the isomorphism $R \otimes_R M \cong M$, we see that

$$I \otimes_R M = \{r \otimes m : r \in R \text{ and } m \in M\} \cong \{rm : r \in I \text{ and } m \in M\} = IM.$$

So we are promised the following commutative diagram with (right) exact rows, where the dashed arrow is induced by the rest of the diagram.

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 I \otimes_R M & \longrightarrow & R \otimes_R M & \longrightarrow & (R/I) \otimes_R M & \longrightarrow & 0 \\
 \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\
 IM & \longrightarrow & M & \longrightarrow & M/IM & \longrightarrow & 0
 \end{array}$$

To be explicit, the induced arrow is created by pulling back $(R/I) \otimes_R M$ to $R \otimes_R M$, then pushing forward through to M and then M/IM . Explicitly, we take

$$[r]_I \otimes m \mapsto r \otimes m \mapsto rm \mapsto [rm]_{IM}.$$

Well-definedness is by the commutativity and exactness of the diagram: if $r \equiv s \pmod{I}$, then $r \otimes m$ and $s \otimes m$, but $(r-s) \otimes m$ is in the kernel of $R \otimes_R M \rightarrow (R/I) \otimes_R M$, so $(r-s)m$ is in the kernel of $M \rightarrow M/IM$, so $[rm]_{IM} = [sm]_{IM}$.

The fact that the left two vertical morphisms are isomorphisms forces the rightmost induced morphism to be an isomorphism. Formally, we should replace $I \otimes_R M$ and IM with their images in $R \otimes_R M$ and M to ensure that we have short exact sequences, and then we can finish by applying the snake lemma. ■

Remark 2.93 (Nir). As usual, this isomorphism is functorial in M in the following sense: if we have $\varphi : M \rightarrow N$, then the following diagram commutes.

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 (R/I) \otimes_R M & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & (R/I) \otimes_R N \\
 \cong \downarrow & & \downarrow \cong \\
 M/IM & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & N/IN
 \end{array}$$

Here, the φ arrows are all induced. To see the commutativity, we track $[r]_I \otimes m \mapsto [r]_I \otimes \varphi(n) \mapsto [r\varphi(n)]_{IM}$ along the top, and similarly $[r]_I \otimes m \mapsto [r]_I \otimes \varphi(m) \mapsto [r\varphi(m)]_{IM}$ along the bottom. ■

Corollary 2.94. Fix R a ring and $I, J \subseteq R$ ideals. Then $(R/I) \otimes_R (R/J) \cong R/(I+J)$.

Proof. From the above we can compute

$$(R/I) \otimes_R (R/J) \cong \frac{R/J}{I(R/J)} = \frac{R/J}{(I+J)/J} \cong \frac{R}{I+J}.$$

Here, $I(R/J) = (I+J)/J$ is set-theoretic: $I(R/J)$ is $\{[x]_J : x \in I\}$, but in fact $[x]_J = [x+y]_J$ for any $y \in J$, so we can write this as $\{[x]_J : x \in I+J\}$. Additionally, $R/(I+J) \cong (R/J)/((I+J)/J)$ is by tracking the kernel of the (surjective) composite $R \twoheadrightarrow R/J \twoheadrightarrow (R/J)/((I+J)/J)$. ■

The above result could be used for fun and profit on the homework.

Remark 2.95. Professor Serganova does not care too much about noncommutative rings in this class.

We also have the following “change of constants” results.

Proposition 2.96. Fix S an R -algebra. Then, given an R -module A as well as S -modules B and C , we have

$$(A \otimes_R B) \otimes_S C \cong A \otimes_R (B \otimes_S C).$$

Proof. The isomorphism is by $(a \otimes b) \otimes c \mapsto a \otimes (b \otimes c)$. Doing this proof rigorously would induce a lot of pain, so we won’t bother. ■

Proposition 2.97. Fix S an R -algebra. Then, given R -modules M and N , we have

$$S \otimes_R (M \otimes_R N) \cong (S \otimes_R M) \otimes_S (S \otimes_R N),$$

where $S \otimes_R M$ is given an S -module structure by multiplying the left coordinate.

Proof. The trick is to use associativity in clever ways. Indeed,

$$\begin{aligned} (S \otimes_R M) \otimes_S (S \otimes_R N) &\cong (M \otimes_R S) \otimes_S (S \otimes_R N) \\ &\stackrel{*}{\cong} (M \otimes_R (S \otimes_S (S \otimes_R N))) \\ &\stackrel{*}{\cong} (M \otimes_R ((S \otimes_S S) \otimes_R N)) \\ &\cong (M \otimes_R (S \otimes_R N)), \end{aligned}$$

which becomes $S \otimes_R (M \otimes_R N)$ after more association. Note we have used Proposition 2.96 (carefully!) on the isomorphisms denoted $\stackrel{*}{\cong}$. ■

Corollary 2.98. Fix R a ring and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed subset. Then, given R -modules M and N , we have

$$(M \otimes_R N) [U^{-1}] \cong M [U^{-1}] \cong_{R[U^{-1}]} N [U^{-1}].$$

Proof. After noting that $M [U^{-1}] \cong M \otimes_R R [U^{-1}]$, we see that we are trying to show

$$(M \otimes_R N) \otimes_R R [U^{-1}] \cong (M \otimes_R R [U^{-1}]) \otimes_R [U^{-1}] (N \otimes_R R [U^{-1}]),$$

which is exactly Proposition 2.97. ■

2.3.2 Artinian Rings

We have the following definition, dual to the ascending chain condition for Noetherian modules.

Artinian
module

Definition 2.99 (Artinian module). An R -module M is *Artinian* if and only if any descending chain of R -submodules

$$M \supseteq M_1 \supseteq M_2 \supseteq \cdots$$

will stabilize.

Definition 2.100. The ring R is *Artinian* if and only if R is an Artinian as an R -module.

In other words, after recalling that R -submodules of R are ideals, we see that being an Artinian ring is the same as having the descending chain on ideals.

Example 2.101. Fix k a field and $p(x) \in k[x] \setminus \{0\}$. Then $k[x]/p(x)$ is a finite-dimensional k -vector space (in fact, of dimension $\deg p$), which means that it is both Noetherian and Artinian because a chain of k -subspaces can be measured to stabilize by dimension.

Example 2.102. More generally, any finite-dimensional k -algebra is an Artinian ring.

Example 2.103. The ring $\mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z}$ is finite and hence Artinian (and Noetherian).

Observe that all of our examples of Artinian rings are in fact Noetherian. In fact, we will show that all Artinian rings are Noetherian; in the process, we will be able to describe all Artinian rings.

Here is a technical result which we will want to use later; it is dual to the Noetherian case in Proposition 1.45.

Proposition 2.104. Fix a short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow 0$$

of R -modules. Then B is Artinian if and only if A and C are Artinian.

Proof. We omit this proof; one can essentially copy the proof of the Noetherian case in Proposition 1.45. ■

2.3.3 Composition Series

The main character in our story on Artinian rings will be the “module of finite length.”

Composi-
tion series

Definition 2.105 (Composition series). Fix an R -module M . Then a *composition series* (or *Jordan–Hölder series*) is a chain of distinct R -submodules

$$M := M_0 \supsetneq M_1 \supsetneq \cdots \supsetneq M_N := (0)$$

such that each quotient M_i/M_{i+1} is a nonzero simple R -module. The M_i/M_{i+1} are the *composition factors*.

Composition series give rise to the notion of length.

Length

Definition 2.106 (Length). An R -module M with a composition series is said to have *length* n if and only if the shortest composition series (of which there might be many) have n factors.

Finite length

Definition 2.107 (Finite length). An R -module M is of *finite length* if and only if M has a composition series.

Note that we can already see the Artinian condition playing with being of finite length.

Lemma 2.108. If an R -module M is both Artinian and Noetherian, then M is of finite length.

Proof. If $M = (0)$, we can use the composition series made of only M . Otherwise, because M is Noetherian, the set of all proper ideals will have a maximal element, which we call M_1 .

If $M_1 = (0)$, then we have a finite composition series made of $M \supsetneq M_0$. Otherwise, observe that M_1 will then be both Artinian and Noetherian (as a submodule of M), so we can repeat the process to get a maximal submodule $M_2 \subsetneq M_1$.

We can continue this process inductively, which gives us the descending chain

$$M \supsetneq M_1 \supsetneq M_2 \supsetneq \cdots,$$

where the quotients are simple modules. But this process must stop eventually because M is Artinian, and the only way to stop is when $M_n = (0)$ for some n , so indeed, this is a composition series. So M is of finite length. ■

Non-Example 2.109. This process does not work when M is not Artinian. For example,

$$\mathbb{Z} \supsetneq 2\mathbb{Z} \supsetneq 4\mathbb{Z} \supsetneq 8\mathbb{Z} \supsetneq \cdots$$

creates an infinite descending chain.

In fact, we can build composition series in short exact sequences, just like how the Noetherian and Artinian conditions build in short exact sequences.

Proposition 2.110. Fix a short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow 0$$

of R -modules. Then B is of finite length if and only if A and C are of finite length. In fact, the length of B upper-bounds the lengths of A and C , and the length of B is at most the sum of the lengths of A and C .

Proof. We use the embedding $A \hookrightarrow B$ to view A as a R -submodule of B , and we use the projection $B \twoheadrightarrow C$ to view $C \cong B/A$ as a quotient. We now take the directions independently.

- Suppose that B is of finite length; namely, we get a composition series

$$B =: B_0 \supsetneq B_1 \supsetneq \cdots \supsetneq B_{n-1} \supsetneq B_n := (0).$$

We have two parts.

- We show that A has finite length. Indeed, set $A_k := B_k \cap A$ so that we get the descending chain

$$A = A_0 \supseteq A_1 \supseteq \cdots \supseteq A_{n-1} \supseteq A_n = (0).$$

Now, we can compute the quotients as³

$$\frac{A \cap B_k}{A \cap B_{k+1}} \cong \frac{(A \cap B_k) + B_{k+1}}{B_{k+1}},$$

which we can see is a submodule of the simple module B_k/B_{k+1} . Thus, the quotients A_k/A_{k+1} are either 0 or simple, so after removing the A_k which have $A_k = A_{k+1}$, we will have a composition series of length at most n .

- We show that C has finite length. Indeed, set $C_k := (B_k + A)/A$ so that we get the descending chain

$$C = C_0 \supseteq C_1 \supseteq \cdots \supseteq C_{n-1} \supseteq C_n = (0).$$

We can compute the quotients as⁴

$$\frac{(B_k + A)/A}{(B_{k+1} + A)/A} \cong \frac{B_k + A}{B_{k+1} + A}.$$

But now we note that the map $B_k \hookrightarrow B_k + A \twoheadrightarrow (B_k + A)/(B_{k+1} + A)$ is surjective and has kernel containing B_{k+1} , so there is a surjective map

$$\frac{B_{k+1}}{B_k} \twoheadrightarrow \frac{C_{k+1}}{C_k}.$$

In particular, this kernel is a submodule of a simple module, so the quotient C_{k+1}/C_k is either B_{k+1}/B_k (and therefore simple) or (0) . So, removing the C_k such that $C_k = C_{k+1}$ will remove the (0) s from the composition series will give C a composition series of length at most n .

³ The kernel of the composition $A \cap B_k \hookrightarrow (A \cap B_k) + B_{k+1} \twoheadrightarrow ((A \cap B_k) + B_{k+1})/B_{k+1}$ is $A \cap B_{k+1}$. The map is surjective because any element of $((A \cap B_k) + B_{k+1})/B_{k+1}$ will have a representative in $A \cap B_k$.

⁴ The kernel of the composite of surjective maps $B_k + A \twoheadrightarrow (B_k + A)/A \twoheadrightarrow \frac{(B_k + A)/A}{(B_{k+1} + A)/A}$ is $B_{k+1} + A$.

We remark that the above arguments showed that the length of B upper-bounds the lengths of A and C by constructing a composition series with length at most the length B .

- Suppose that A and C both have finite length. In particular, we can conjure a composition series

$$C =: C_0 \supsetneq C_1 \supsetneq \cdots \supsetneq C_{n-1} \supseteq C_n := (0),$$

and the idea is to pull this back along $\pi : B \twoheadrightarrow C$, setting $B_k := \pi^{-1}(C_k)$. In particular, we will get a descending chain (in fact strictly descending because π is surjective) of submodules

$$B = B_0 \supsetneq B_1 \supsetneq \cdots \supsetneq B_{n-1} \supseteq B_n = A, \quad (*)$$

where $B_n = \pi^{-1}((0)) = A$ by exactness. Furthermore, we see that π restricts to a surjection $B_k \twoheadrightarrow C_k$, and upon modding out the image by C_{k+1} , we see that exactly B_{k+1} will be in the kernel, implying that the quotient

$$\frac{B_k}{B_{k+1}} \cong \frac{C_k}{C_{k+1}}$$

will be simple. So indeed, $(*)$ starts a composition series for B with so far n composition factors.

However, we can then append $(*)$ with the composition series of A , thus providing a composition series for B with length equal to the sum of the lengths of A and C . It follows from the definition that the length of B is at most the sum of the lengths of A and C . ■

Remark 2.111 (Nir). We will show below that the length of a module of finite length is unique among composition series. In this case, the second part of the argument shows that equality holds: the length of B is equal to the sums of the lengths of A and C .

Corollary 2.112. Fix a module M and a chain of submodules

$$M := M_0 \supseteq M_1 \supseteq \cdots \supseteq M_N := (0).$$

If each quotient M_i/M_{i+1} is of finite length, then M is of finite length.

Proof. We induct on N . When $N = 1$, we have $M = M_0/M_1$, so there is nothing to say. Otherwise, by the induction, we may assume that M_1 is of finite length because of the chain of submodules

$$M_1 \supseteq \cdots \supseteq M_N := \{0\}$$

with M_i/M_{i+1} always simple. But now we see we have the short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow M_1 \rightarrow M \rightarrow M_0/M_1 \rightarrow 0,$$

so because M_1 and M_0/M_1 both have finite length, $M = M_0$ will have finite length. ■

2.3.4 The Jordan–Hölder Theorem

We will now check that the length of a submodule is well-defined. Here is a follow-up result from the argument of Proposition 2.110; we will use it as a technical lemma in the proof.

Lemma 2.113. Fix $A \subsetneq B$ a proper containment of R -modules, and suppose that B has finite length so that A also has finite length. Then the length of A is strictly less than the length of B .

Proof. We will show that, if the lengths of A and B are in fact equal, then $A = B$. As in the argument for Proposition 2.110, fix a composition series

$$B =: B_0 \supsetneq B_1 \supsetneq \cdots \supsetneq B_{n-1} \supsetneq B_n := (0),$$

where n is the length of B . This induces a descending chain

$$A = A_0 \supseteq A_1 \supseteq \cdots \supseteq A_{n-1} \supseteq A_n = (0), \quad (*)$$

where $A_k := A \cap B_k$. This chain for A would be a composition series, but some of the composition factors might vanish, and we obtained a composition series for A by removing the equal terms from the series.

However, if the length of A were equal to the length of B , then in the process of removing redundancies from $(*)$ must not do anything at all, for any removed redundancy would imply that the length of A is strictly less than the length of B .

It follows that we have

$$\frac{A_k}{A_{k+1}} = \frac{A \cap B_k}{A \cap B_{k+1}} \cong \frac{(A \cap B_k) + B_{k+1}}{B_{k+1}}$$

is equal to B_k/B_{k+1} for each k . In particular, $(A \cap B_k) + B_{k+1} = B_k$ for each k .

Now, we claim that A contains B_k by inducting downwards on k ; this will finish because it will show A contains $B = B_0$ and hence equals B . Now, the statement is true for $k = n$ because $A_n = B_n = (0)$. Then for the inductive step, we know $A \supseteq B_{k+1}$, so it follows

$$B_k = (A \cap B_k) + B_{k+1} \subseteq A$$

as well, finishing. ■

Here is the main result on composition series.

Theorem 2.114 (Jordan–Hölder). Fix M an R -module which has a composition series. Then all composition series of M have the same length. Namely, any strictly descending chain of submodules of M can be refined into a composition series of length equal to the length of M .

Proof. Omitted. This is Eisenbud and in fact essentially the same as the proof for groups if one has seen the corresponding proof for groups. ■

2.3.5 Modules of Finite Length

The Jordan–Hölder theorem gives us the following quick result about modules of finite length, which is arguably a classification of modules of finite length. (We will shortly be able to give better descriptions of modules of finite length.)

Corollary 2.115. Fix M an R -module. Then M is of finite length if and only if M is both Artinian and Noetherian.

Proof. We will be brief; the backwards direction is Lemma 2.108. For the forwards direction, suppose M has a composition series with n composition factors. The point is that composition series are maximal among all chains of distinct submodules, so any chain of submodules can have at most $n + 1$ distinct submodules. In particular, any ascending or descending chain must stabilize. ■

Quickly, note that the support of M is particularly nice when M has a composition series, which essentially comes from various facts we've already proven.

Lemma 2.116. Fix M an R -module with a finite composition series

$$M := M_0 \supsetneq M_1 \supsetneq \cdots \supsetneq M_n := \{0\}.$$

Then $\text{Supp } M$ is the composition factors.

Proof. The point is to turn the composition series into a whole bunch of short exact sequence, from which we can read off the support. Namely, we have the short exact sequences

$$0 \rightarrow M_i \rightarrow M_{i+1} \rightarrow M_{i+1}/M_i \rightarrow 0$$

from which we can read off the support inductively. ■

And here is a nice result which we get from this.

Theorem 2.117. Fix M a R -module of finite length. Then the following are true.

(a) We can glue the localization maps $M \rightarrow M_{\mathfrak{p}}$ together to form an R -module isomorphism

$$M \cong \bigoplus_{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Supp } M} M_{\mathfrak{p}}.$$

(b) The multiplicity of a simple module R/\mathfrak{m} as a composition factor is the length of $M_{\mathfrak{p}}$ as an $R_{\mathfrak{p}}$ -module.

Proof. We will be very brief. The details are in Eisenbud. Last time we showed that if a morphism $\varphi : M \rightarrow N$ induces isomorphisms $\varphi_{\mathfrak{m}} : M_{\mathfrak{m}} \rightarrow N_{\mathfrak{m}}$ for each maximal ideal $\mathfrak{m} \subseteq R$, then φ is an isomorphism. Thus, it suffices to show the canonical map

$$\varphi : M \rightarrow \bigoplus_{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Supp } M} M_{\mathfrak{p}}$$

induces isomorphisms under localization. Namely, localizing by some maximal ideal \mathfrak{m} , we get a map

$$\varphi_{\mathfrak{m}} : M_{\mathfrak{m}} \rightarrow \bigoplus_{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Supp } M} (M_{\mathfrak{p}})_{\mathfrak{m}}.$$

The main point, now, is to compute that

$$(R/\mathfrak{p})_{\mathfrak{q}} \cong \begin{cases} 0 & \mathfrak{p} \neq \mathfrak{q}, \\ R_{\mathfrak{p}}/\mathfrak{p}R_{\mathfrak{p}} & \mathfrak{p} = \mathfrak{q}. \end{cases}$$

For (b), the point is to localize a composition series to get the result, again using the above computation. ■

2.3.6 Artinian Grab-Bag

We are now able to give the following classification.

Theorem 2.118. Fix R a ring. Then R is Artinian if and only if R is Noetherian and all its primes are maximal.

We split the proof into two parts.

Proof of the backwards direction in Theorem 2.118. Suppose R is neither Artinian nor Noetherian. It will suffice to show that not all prime ideals of R are maximal.

Being neither Artinian nor Noetherian conspire to give us an ideal J maximal with respect to the property that R/J is not Artinian: because R is not Artinian, the collection

$$\mathcal{P} := \{\text{ideal } J \subseteq R : R/J \text{ is not Artinian}\}$$

is nonempty (for $(0) \in \mathcal{P}$), and because R is Noetherian, there will be a maximal element, which we call \mathfrak{p} . Observe that \mathfrak{p} is not maximal, for then R/\mathfrak{p} would be a field and hence be Artinian.

With this in mind, we claim that \mathfrak{p} must be prime. This will finish because \mathfrak{p} will be a prime which is not maximal. Well, suppose that $a \notin \mathfrak{p}$. Consider the short exact sequence of R -modules

$$0 \rightarrow \frac{\mathfrak{p} + (a)}{\mathfrak{p}} \rightarrow \frac{R}{\mathfrak{p}} \rightarrow \frac{R}{\mathfrak{p} + (a)} \rightarrow 0.$$

We are going to profit from studying this short exact sequence by using Proposition 2.104. In particular, R/\mathfrak{p} is not Artinian, so we cannot have both R -modules on its left and right be Artinian.

Well, $\mathfrak{p} \subsetneq \mathfrak{p} + (a)$, so by maximality, $R/(\mathfrak{p} + (a))$ will have to be Artinian. So instead $(\mathfrak{p} + (a))/\mathfrak{p}$ cannot be Artinian. But now we observe that we have the following isomorphism of R -modules.

Lemma 2.119. Fix R a ring and $I \subseteq R$ an ideal and $a \in R$. Then we define $(I : a) := \{r \in R : ar \in I\}$, and we claim that $(I : a)$ is an ideal and

$$\frac{R}{(I : a)} \cong \frac{I + (a)}{I}.$$

Proof. Note that there is an R -module map $\varphi : R \rightarrow (a) + I$ by

$$\varphi : x \mapsto ax.$$

Indeed, $\varphi(r_1x_1 + r_2x_2) = ar_1x_1 + ar_2x_2 = r_1\varphi(x_1) + r_2\varphi(x_2)$. Now, modding out the image by $I \subseteq (a) + I$, we get a map

$$\tilde{\varphi} : R \rightarrow \frac{(a) + I}{I}.$$

We note that this map is surjective because any coset $[x]_I$ with $x \in (a) + I$ can have $x = ar + p$ where $r \in R$ and $p \in I$, meaning that $\tilde{\varphi}(r) = [ar]_I = [x]_I$. Further, we can compute the kernel of $\tilde{\varphi}$ as

$$\{r \in R : ar \in I\} = (I : a).$$

Thus, $(I : a) = \ker \tilde{\varphi}$ is an ideal, and $\tilde{\varphi}$ induces an isomorphism $R/(I : a) \rightarrow (I + (a))/I$, finishing. ■

Now, because $(\mathfrak{p} + (a))/\mathfrak{p}$ is not Artinian, we see $R/(\mathfrak{p} : a)$ cannot be Artinian. But certainly $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq (\mathfrak{p} : a)$ because each $x \in \mathfrak{p}$ has $ax \in \mathfrak{p}$, so we must have

$$\mathfrak{p} = (\mathfrak{p} : a)$$

by the maximality of \mathfrak{p} . We now finish the proof. Suppose now that $ab \in \mathfrak{p}$, and we claim that $b \in \mathfrak{p}$. Well, $ab \in \mathfrak{p}$ implies that $b \in (\mathfrak{p} : a) = \mathfrak{p}$. So we are done. ■

Proof of the forwards direction of Theorem 2.118. For the other direction, we note that we can show all primes are maximal without tears.

Lemma 2.120. Fix R an Artinian ring. Then any prime ideal $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq R$ is maximal.

Proof. We follow the argument given here. Well, given \mathfrak{p} a prime so that R/\mathfrak{p} is an integral domain, we show that R/\mathfrak{p} is actually a field. Well, we can pick up $[x]_{\mathfrak{p}} \neq 0$ represented by some $x \notin \mathfrak{p}$, and we show that $[x]_{\mathfrak{p}}$ is a unit. Note that we have the descending chain

$$(x) \supseteq (x^2) \supseteq (x^3) \supseteq \cdots,$$

which must eventually stabilize, so there is some $n \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $(x^n) = (x^{n+1})$, so there is $r \in R$ with $x^n = rx^{n+1}$. In particular,

$$x^n(1 - xr) = 0.$$

Working in R/\mathfrak{p} , we see that $[x]_{\mathfrak{p}} \neq 0$, so the fact that R/\mathfrak{p} is an integral domain implies that

$$[x]_{\mathfrak{p}} \cdot [r]_{\mathfrak{p}} = 1,$$

so indeed, $[x]_{\mathfrak{p}}$ is a unit. ■

So it remains to show that R is Artinian implies that R is Noetherian. We introduce the following definition.

Jacobson
radical

Definition 2.121 (Jacobson radical). Fix R a ring. Then we define the *Jacobson radical* $J \subseteq R$ to be

$$J := \bigcap_{\mathfrak{m}} \mathfrak{m},$$

where \mathfrak{m} ranges over all maximal ideals of R .

Note that the Jacobson radical is an ideal because ideals are closed under intersection. Alternatively, we can view J as the kernel of the map

$$R \rightarrow \prod_{\mathfrak{m}} R,$$

for any ring R , where the product is over maximal ideals $\mathfrak{m} \subseteq R$.

In fact, in the case where R is Artinian, the above map will be surjective. By the Chinese remainder theorem, it suffices to show that there are only finitely many maximal ideals of R .

Lemma 2.122. Fix R an Artinian ring. Then R has only finitely many maximal ideals.

Proof. We follow the argument from here because I think it is pretty close to what I understand Professor Serganova saying in class.

The point here is that infinitely many maximal ideals will induce an infinite composition series. Indeed, suppose that we have some infinite collection $\{\mathfrak{m}_k\}_{k=1}^{\infty}$ of maximal ideals, and we claim that the chain

$$\mathfrak{m}_1 \supseteq \mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \mathfrak{m}_2 \supseteq \mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \mathfrak{m}_2 \cap \mathfrak{m}_3 \supseteq \cdots$$

is an infinite composition series; this will verify that R is not Artinian.

Indeed this chain is infinite, and to see that it is a composition series, we have to check that

$$\frac{\mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \cdots \cap \mathfrak{m}_k}{\mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \cdots \cap \mathfrak{m}_k \cap \mathfrak{m}_{k+1}}$$

is simple for each $k \geq 1$. Indeed, note that we have the following commutative diagram with exact rows, where the vertical morphisms are isomorphisms given by the Chinese remainder theorem.

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} 0 & \longrightarrow & \frac{\mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \cdots \cap \mathfrak{m}_n}{\mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \cdots \cap \mathfrak{m}_n \cap \mathfrak{m}_{n+1}} & \longrightarrow & \frac{R}{\mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \cdots \cap \mathfrak{m}_n \cap \mathfrak{m}_{n+1}} & \longrightarrow & \frac{R}{\mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \cdots \cap \mathfrak{m}_n} \longrightarrow 0 \\ & & & & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ 0 & \longrightarrow & R/\mathfrak{m}_{n+1} & \longrightarrow & \bigoplus_{k=1}^{n+1} R/\mathfrak{m}_k & \longrightarrow & \bigoplus_{k=1}^n R/\mathfrak{m}_k \longrightarrow 0 \end{array}$$

In particular, the square commutes because $[r]_{\mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \cdots \mathfrak{m}_n \cap \mathfrak{m}_{n+1}}$ in the top-left will go to $([r]_{\mathfrak{m}_1}, \dots, [r]_{\mathfrak{m}_n})$ in the bottom-right, no matter which path we choose. Thus, there is an induced isomorphism

$$\frac{\mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \cdots \cap \mathfrak{m}_n}{\mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \cdots \cap \mathfrak{m}_n \cap \mathfrak{m}_{n+1}} \cong \frac{R}{\mathfrak{m}_{n+1}},$$

so indeed this R -module is simple, say by Remark 2.78. ■

Remark 2.123. Intuitively, there can only be finitely many maximal ideals \mathfrak{m} because each R/\mathfrak{m} will induce a composition factor, of which there are only finitely many because R is Artinian. In the above proof, we have actually shown how to induce such a composition series using each of these composition factors.

Remark 2.124 (Nir). In fact, an Artinian ring will have only finitely many prime ideals, which we can see directly because all primes are maximal.

We now proceed with the proof of Theorem 2.118. The main idea is to try to make Lemma 2.122 sharp by using the descending chain of submodules

$$R \supsetneq \mathfrak{m}_1 \supsetneq \mathfrak{m}_1 \cap \mathfrak{m}_2 \supsetneq \cdots \supsetneq \bigcap_{k=1}^r \mathfrak{m}_k,$$

where $\{\mathfrak{m}_k\}_{k=1}^r$ are our maximal ideals. However, it turns out that this descending chain may and can simply bottom out at the Jacobson radical J , which might be nonzero, and so we will not get an actual composition series. But at least we can (again) hope that J is “small enough” so that continue this sequence somehow.

Remark 2.125 (Serganova). Here is alternate motivation for the below claim: the payoff to Lemma 2.122 is that the Chinese remainder theorem gives us right-exactness of the short exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow J \rightarrow R \rightarrow \prod_{\mathfrak{m}} R/\mathfrak{m} \rightarrow 0.$$

In particular,

$$R/J \cong \prod_{\mathfrak{m}} R/\mathfrak{m}$$

is a product of finitely many simple modules R/\mathfrak{m} , so R/J will be of finite length. (Note R/J has only finitely many ideals because each R/\mathfrak{m} has only two ideals.) We would like to turn the fact that R/J is of finite length into the fact that R is of finite length, but we will need a smallness condition on J to make this work.

The key claim is as follows.

Lemma 2.126. Fix R an Artinian ring. Then the Jacobson radical J is nilpotent.

Proof. Observe that we have a descending chain

$$J \supseteq J^2 \supseteq J^3 \subseteq \cdots,$$

which stabilizes because R is Artinian. So suppose that $J^N = J^{N+1} = I$ for some $N \geq 1$, and we hope $I = (0)$. By the stabilization, we see $I^2 = J^{2N} = J^N = I$.

Now, if $I \neq (0)$, then we can find a minimal ideal $K \subseteq I$ such that $IK \neq (0)$ and $K \neq (0)$. (Note that $I = K$ would work— $I^2 = I \neq (0)$ —but is perhaps not minimal; we need Zorn’s lemma to get the minimal

such ideal.) We start with some fact-collection on K . Note that $I(IK) = I^2K = IK \neq (0)$ and $IK \neq (0)$ while $IK \subseteq K$, so K 's minimality forces

$$IK = K.$$

Furthermore, because $K \neq (0)$, there exists $a \in K \setminus \{(0)\}$ such that $aI \neq (0)$. So $(a)I \neq (0)$ while $(a) \neq 0$, so $(a) \subseteq K$ combined with K 's minimality (again) forces

$$K = (a).$$

Combining the above two facts, we are granted $b \in I$ such that $ba = a$.

But here is the key trick: we can write $ba = a$ as

$$a(1 - b) = 0.$$

However, $b \in I$ implies $b \in J$ implies $1 - b \notin J$, so $(1 - b)$ is not in any maximal ideal. So it follows $(1 - b) = R$, so $1 - b \in R^\times$! Upon cancelling, we see $K = (a) = 0$, which is our contradiction. ■

We now return to the proof. We claim that R is of finite length, which will imply that R is Noetherian. Instead of using intersections of maximal ideals as in Lemma 2.122, our salvage will use products of maximal ideals, which grant us enough flexibility.

Indeed, the main obstruction is verifying that some finite product of maximal ideals will actually vanish. But if, say, $J^N = (0)$ where $J \subseteq R$ is our Jacobson radical, then

$$(\mathfrak{m}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{m}_r)^N \subseteq \left(\bigcap_{k=1}^n \mathfrak{m}_k \right)^N = J^N = (0).$$

So some finite product of maximal ideals will vanish; for the sake of not mixing up our letters, let $\{\mathfrak{p}\}_{k=1}^n$ be a sequence of (not necessarily distinct) maximal ideals so that $\mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_n = (0)$. Then we work with the chain

$$R \supseteq \mathfrak{p}_1 \supseteq \mathfrak{p}_1 \mathfrak{p}_2 \supseteq \cdots \supseteq \mathfrak{p}_1 \mathfrak{p}_2 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_{n-1} \supseteq \mathfrak{p}_1 \mathfrak{p}_2 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_n = (0).$$

By Corollary 2.112, it suffices to check that each quotient

$$M_k := \frac{\mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_k}{\mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_{k+1}}$$

is of finite length, for each $k \geq 0$. (When $k = 0$, the empty product gives R .) Now, M_k is an R -module, but note that the \mathfrak{p}_{k+1} -action kills an element, so in fact the ring morphism $R \rightarrow \text{End}(M_k)$ descends to a ring morphism $R/\mathfrak{p}_{k+1} \rightarrow \text{End}(M_k)$.

This is to say that M_k is an R/\mathfrak{p}_{k+1} -vector space. To show that M_k is of finite length, we need to know that M_k is finite-dimensional. Well, if M_k were not finite-dimensional, then an infinite basis would provide an infinitely descending chain of R/\mathfrak{p}_{k+1} -submodules

$$\frac{\mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_k}{\mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_{k+1}} \supsetneq \frac{N_1}{\mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_{k+1}} \supsetneq \frac{N_2}{\mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_{k+1}} \supsetneq \cdots$$

Taking the pre-images of $R \rightarrow R/\mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_{k+1}$, this lifts to an infinite descending chain

$$\mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_k \supsetneq N_1 + \mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_{k+1} \supsetneq N_2 + \mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_{k+1} \supsetneq \cdots,$$

which violates the condition that R is Artinian.⁵ This finishes. ■

⁵ Technically we ought to check that these submodules are distinct. This is because the projection map $\varphi : R \rightarrow R/\mathfrak{p}_1 \cdots \mathfrak{p}_{k+1}$ is surjective, so the pre-image of distinct sets will remain distinct.

2.3.7 Geometry of Artinian Rings

While we're here, we provide some more nice facts.

Proposition 2.127. Any Artinian ring is a product of local Artinian rings.

Proof. This essentially comes down to modules of finite length being products of localizations over their support. ■

We can even give a geometric view to what we are doing.

Proposition 2.128. Fix $I \subseteq k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$. Then the following are equivalent.

- (a) The ring $R := k[x_1, \dots, x_n]/I$ is Artinian.
- (b) The set $Z(I) \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ is finite.
- (c) The ring R is a finite-dimensional k -algebra.

Proof. We follow Eisenbud. We take our implications in sequence.

- We show (a) implies (b). Suppose that the ring $R := k[x_1, \dots, x_n]/I$ is Artinian. Then R has finitely many maximal ideals by Lemma 2.122, which are in bijection to points in $Z(I)$, so $Z(I)$ is finite.
- We show (b) implies (c). Suppose that $Z(I)$ is finite. Then $R = k[x_1, \dots, x_n]/I$ is in bijection with k -valued (polynomial) functions on $Z(I)$, but as $Z(I)$ is finite, we can build any function as a polynomial function by (say) Lagrange interpolation.

Rigorously, two polynomials $f, g \in k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ has $[f]_I = [g]_I$ if and only if $[f - g]_I = [0]_I$ if and only if $f - g \in I$ if and only if $f - g$ vanishes on $Z(I)$ if and only if f and g agree on $Z(I)$. So $[f]_I$ can indeed be viewed as a function on $Z(I)$.

Thus, R is in bijection with k -valued functions on finitely many points, but this space is simply $k^{Z(I)}$, which is a finite-dimensional vector space. Adding in the ring structure to R makes R into a finite-dimensional k -algebra.

- We show (c) implies (a). Indeed, any strictly descending chain of submodules of a finite-dimensional k -vector space must terminate, so R is Artinian as a k -vector space. Any R -submodule of R will also be a k -vector space, so we see that any strictly descending chain of R -submodules of R must terminate as well. Thus, R is Artinian. ■

2.3.8 The Radical, Returned

And we end our discussion with the following miscellaneous result.

Proposition 2.129. Fix an ideal $I \subseteq R$. Then

$$\text{rad } I = \bigcap_{I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}} \mathfrak{p},$$

where \mathfrak{p} ranges over all prime ideals containing I .

Proof. The main point is the following lemma.

Lemma 2.130. Fix R a ring and $I \subseteq R$ an ideal and $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed subset such that $I \cap U = \emptyset$. Suppose \mathfrak{p} is maximal in the set of ideals satisfying $\mathfrak{p} \cap U = \emptyset$ and $I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$. Then \mathfrak{p} is prime.

Before proving the lemma, we note that, under the hypotheses of the problem, such a maximal ideal \mathfrak{p} will exist, which we can conjure by Zorn's lemma from the set of all ideals satisfying $\mathfrak{p} \cap U = \emptyset$ and $I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$.⁶

Proof. Suppose that $a, b \notin \mathfrak{p}$, and it suffices to show that $ab \notin \mathfrak{p}$. Well, $(a) + \mathfrak{p}$ and $(b) + \mathfrak{p}$ are both strictly larger than \mathfrak{p} while containing $I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$, so they must intersect U . Suppose $u \in ((a) + \mathfrak{p}) \cap U$ and $v \in ((b) + \mathfrak{p}) \cap U$. Then

$$uv \in ((a) + \mathfrak{p})((b) + \mathfrak{p}) = (ab) + (a)\mathfrak{p} + (b)\mathfrak{p} + \mathfrak{p}^2 \subseteq (ab) + \mathfrak{p}.$$

Thus, $(ab) + \mathfrak{p}$ intersects U at $uv \in U$, so it follows $\mathfrak{p} \neq (ab) + \mathfrak{p}$ because $\mathfrak{p} \cap U = \emptyset$. Thus, $ab \notin \mathfrak{p}$, finishing. ■

We now attack the proposition directly. In one direction, suppose that $a \in \text{rad } I$ so that $a^n \in I$ for some $n \in \mathbb{N}$. Then for any prime \mathfrak{p} containing I , we have $a^n \in \mathfrak{p}$, so $a \in \mathfrak{p}$ by primality of \mathfrak{p} . It follows

$$\text{rad } I \subseteq \bigcap_{I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}} \mathfrak{p}.$$

The other inclusion requires the lemma. Suppose that $a \notin \text{rad } I$, and we will find a prime $\mathfrak{p} \supseteq I$ such that $a \notin \mathfrak{p}$. Indeed, we pick up an ideal \mathfrak{p} containing I which is maximal avoiding the set

$$\langle a \rangle := \{a^n : n \in \mathbb{N}\}.$$

Indeed, such an ideal \mathfrak{p} by the discussion preceding the lemma, and it is prime by the lemma. But $a \notin \mathfrak{p}$ while $I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$, so it follows that

$$a \notin \bigcap_{I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}} \mathfrak{p},$$

finishing. ■

Corollary 2.131. Fix R a ring. Then $r \in R$ is nilpotent if and only if $r \in \mathfrak{p}$ for each prime ideal $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq R$.

Proof. The set of nilpotent elements in R is

$$\text{rad}(0) = \{r \in R : r^n = 0 \text{ for some } n \in \mathbb{N}\}.$$

By Proposition 2.129, this will be the intersection of all prime ideals of R . In other words, an element $r \in R$ is nilpotent if and only if $r \in \mathfrak{p}$ for all primes \mathfrak{p} , which is what we wanted. ■

2.4 February 3

Today we are talking associated primes.

2.4.1 Associated Primes

Fix M an R -module. Then given $m \in M$, recall that we can look at

$$\text{Ann } m = \{r \in R : rm = 0\}.$$

Observe that $m \neq 0$ promises $\text{Ann } m \neq R$ because $1_R m \neq 0$. In particular, these ideals are proper most of the time.

It will turn out to be productive to give require some structure out of these annihilators.

⁶ This set is nonempty because $I \cap U = \emptyset$ and $I \subseteq I$. All ascending chains have an upper bound by taking the union along the chain.

Associated
primes

Definition 2.132 (Associated primes). Fix M an R -module. Then a prime ideal $\mathfrak{p} \in \operatorname{Spec} R$ is *associated to M* if and only if $\mathfrak{p} = \operatorname{Ann} m$ for some $m \in M$. We denote $\operatorname{Ass} M \subseteq \operatorname{Spec} R$ to be the set of all associated primes to M .

As usual, let's see some examples.

Example 2.133. We have that $\operatorname{Ass}(0) = \emptyset$ because the annihilator of any element in (0) is R (because all elements are 0), which is not a prime ideal.

Exercise 2.134. Let n be a nonzero integer. Fix $M := \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z}$ as a \mathbb{Z} -module. Then $\operatorname{Ass} M = \{(p) : \text{prime } p \mid n\}$.

Proof. Let (p) be a prime. Then (p) is associated to M if and only if there exists some $m \in M$ such that

$$\operatorname{Ann} m = (p).$$

If $p \mid n$, then we note that $\operatorname{Ann} \left[\frac{n}{p} \right]_n = (p)$ because $n \mid \frac{n}{p} \cdot k$ if and only if $p \mid k$. Thus, $\{(p) : \text{prime } p \mid n\} \subseteq \operatorname{Ass} M$.

Conversely, if $\operatorname{Ann} m = (p)$ is prime, then we see that we have a \mathbb{Z} -module map $\varphi : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z}$ by $r \mapsto rm$, which has kernel $\operatorname{Ann} m = (p)$. Namely, we have an injection

$$\mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z} \hookrightarrow \mathbb{Z}/n\mathbb{Z},$$

so $p \mid n$ by Lagrange's theorem on groups. ■

We can generalize the trick at the end of the proof to give the following characterization of associated primes; this characterization will be easier to use for more element-free proofs.

Lemma 2.135. Fix M an R -module. Then a prime $\mathfrak{p} \in \operatorname{Spec} R$ is associated to M if and only if there is an injective R -module homomorphism $R/\mathfrak{p} \hookrightarrow M$. In fact, if $\mathfrak{p} = \operatorname{Ass} m$, then the injection provides an isomorphism $R/\mathfrak{p} \rightarrow Rm$.

Proof. We take the directions separately.

- Suppose that \mathfrak{p} is associated to M . Then there exists $m \in M$ such that $\mathfrak{p} = \operatorname{Ann} m$, so we consider the map $\varphi : R \rightarrow M$ by

$$\varphi : r \mapsto rm$$

If $r_1, r_2 \in R$ and $x_1, x_2 \in R$, then $\varphi(r_1x_1 + r_2x_2) = r_1x_1m + r_2x_2m = r_1\varphi(x_1) + r_2\varphi(x_2)$, so φ is indeed an R -linear map. Then, by definition of $\operatorname{Ann} m$ we see that $\mathfrak{p} = \operatorname{Ann} m = \ker \varphi$, so there is an induced injection

$$\overline{\varphi} : R/\mathfrak{p} \hookrightarrow M,$$

which is what we wanted.

To finish, we note that φ is surjective onto Rm , so $\varphi : R/\mathfrak{p} \rightarrow Rm$ is an isomorphism.

- Suppose that there is an embedding $\varphi : R/\mathfrak{p} \hookrightarrow M$. Then define $m := \varphi([1]_{\mathfrak{p}})$. Now, $rm = 0$ if and only if $r\varphi([1]_{\mathfrak{p}}) = \varphi([r]_{\mathfrak{p}})$ is equal to $0 = \varphi([0]_{\mathfrak{p}})$, so $rm = 0$ is equivalent to $r \in \mathfrak{p}$. Thus, $\operatorname{Ann} m = \mathfrak{p}$, as desired.

Lastly, we note φ is again surjective onto Rm , so $\varphi : R/\mathfrak{p} \rightarrow Rm$ is an isomorphism. ■

Remark 2.136 (Nir). The embedding

$$\frac{\mathbb{Q}[x]}{(x-2)} \cong \mathbb{Q} \cong \frac{\mathbb{Q}[x]}{(x)}$$

does not mean that $(x-2)$ is an associated prime of $\mathbb{Q}[x]/(x)$ because the above embedding is of \mathbb{Q} -modules, not $\mathbb{Q}[x]$ -modules. Explicitly, $[x]_{(x-2)}$ goes to 2 goes to $[2]_{(x)}$, but $x \cdot [1]_{(x-2)}$ goes to $x \cdot 1$ goes to $x \cdot [1]_{(x)} = [0]_{(x)}$.

We close our introduction with another example.

Example 2.137. Fix $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq R$ a prime ideal and fix $M := R/\mathfrak{p}$. Certainly $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$ because $\text{Ann}[1]_{\mathfrak{p}} = \mathfrak{p}$. (Alternatively, use Lemma 2.135 and note $R/\mathfrak{p} \hookrightarrow R/\mathfrak{p} = M$.) Conversely, fix some $b \in R \setminus \mathfrak{p}$, and we want to know what primes can arise as

$$\text{Ann}([b]_{\mathfrak{p}}) = \{a \in R : ab \in \mathfrak{p}\}.$$

But with $b \notin \mathfrak{p}$, the primality of \mathfrak{p} means that $ab \in \mathfrak{p}$ implies $a \in \mathfrak{p}$. (And conversely, $a \in \mathfrak{p}$ implies $ab \in \mathfrak{p}$.) So $\text{Ann}([b]_{\mathfrak{p}}) = \mathfrak{p}$ for any $b \notin \mathfrak{p}$, so $\text{Ass } M = \{\mathfrak{p}\}$.

So indeed, any prime of R can arise as an associated prime.

2.4.2 Associated Primes in Localization

In the spirit of the above example, we have the following proposition.

Proposition 2.138. Fix M an R -module. Suppose $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq R$ is an ideal maximal in

$$\mathcal{P} := \{\text{Ann } m : m \in M \setminus \{0\}\}.$$

Then we claim \mathfrak{p} is prime.

Proof. Now take $ab \in \mathfrak{p}$ and $a \notin \mathfrak{p}$, and we show that $ab \notin \mathfrak{p}$ implies $b \in \mathfrak{p}$. Well, $ab \in \mathfrak{p}$ implies that $a(bm) = (ab)m = 0$, so $a \in \text{Ann } bm$. But certainly any $x \in \mathfrak{p}$ will have

$$x(bm) = b(xm) = 0,$$

so $x \in \text{Ann } bm$, so $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq \text{Ann } bm$. However, we now see that $\text{Ann } bm$ is an annihilator strictly containing \mathfrak{p} (because $a \in \text{Ann } bm \setminus \mathfrak{p}$). This looks like a contradiction, but it is not: instead we merely must have $bm = 0$, which means $b \in \mathfrak{p}$. ■

We have the following corollary.

Corollary 2.139. Fix R a Noetherian ring and M a nonzero R -module. Then $\text{Ass } M$ is nonempty.

Proof. As in Proposition 2.138, set

$$\mathcal{P} := \{\text{Ann } m : m \in M \setminus \{0\}\}.$$

Because R is Noetherian, \mathcal{P} will contain a maximal element, which will be a prime $\mathfrak{p} = \text{Ann } m$ for some $m \in M$. So $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$, meaning $\text{Ass } M \neq \emptyset$. ■

Remark 2.140 (Nir). It is possible to have a nonzero module with no associated primes; we follow the example given in sx2931719. Consider $R := C(\mathbb{R}, \mathbb{R})$ the ring of continuous functions $\mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ as a module over itself. Fix any $f \in R \setminus \{0\}$, and we show $\text{Ann } f$ is not prime.

Because $f \neq 0$, find $a \in \mathbb{R}$ such that $f(a) \neq 0$, and by continuity some $b > a$ close to a also has $f(b) \neq 0$. (Here we use continuity of f .) Then set $m := \frac{a+b}{2}$ and

$$g(x) = \begin{cases} (x-m)^2 & x \leq m, \\ 0 & x \geq m, \end{cases} \quad \text{and} \quad h(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & x \leq m, \\ (x-m)^2 & x \geq m. \end{cases}$$

Then $g, h \in C(\mathbb{R}, \mathbb{R})$ and $gh = 0 \in \text{Ann } f$. However, $(gf)(a) \neq 0$ and $(hf)(b) \neq 0$, so $g, h \notin \text{Ann } f$.

Remark 2.141. For the sake of comparison, let's compare $\text{Supp } M$ with $\text{Ass } M$. For example, when R is a domain, then $\text{Ass}_R R = \{(0)\}$ by the integral domain condition. However, the support $\text{Supp } R = \text{Spec } R$, so the associated primes appear smaller.

Indeed, we will find that the associated primes will be smaller than $\text{Supp } M$.

Localization was able to tell us about maps by looking locally everywhere: an element was 0 if and only if zero on all localizations. However, it turns out that we can limit what we have to focus on.

Proposition 2.142. Fix R Noetherian and M an R -module. Then, given $m \in M$, we have $m = 0$ if and only if $\frac{m}{1} = 0$ in $M_{\mathfrak{p}}$ for each $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$.

Proof. The forwards direction here is easy: if $m = 0$, then $\frac{m}{1} = \frac{0}{1} = 0$ in $M_{\mathfrak{p}}$ for any prime \mathfrak{p} and therefore for any prime $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$.

In the other direction, suppose $m \neq 0$, and we need to find an associated prime $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$ for which $\frac{m}{1} \neq 0$ in $M_{\mathfrak{p}}$. But we note that $\frac{m}{1} = \frac{0}{1}$ in $M_{\mathfrak{p}}$ if and only if there exists $u \in M \setminus \mathfrak{p}$ such that $um = 0$ if and only if $(M \setminus \mathfrak{p}) \cap \text{Ann } m \neq \emptyset$ if and only if

$$\text{Ann } m \not\subseteq \mathfrak{p}.$$

So our goal is to construct an associated prime \mathfrak{p} such that $\text{Ann } m \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$.

The main idea is to use Proposition 2.138 to give us our prime. We set

$$\mathcal{P}_m := \{\text{Ann } m' : \text{Ann } m' \supseteq \text{Ann } m \text{ and } m' \neq 0\}.$$

Note that \mathcal{P}_m is nonempty because $\text{Ann } m \in \mathcal{P}_m$, so \mathcal{P}_m will have a maximal element named \mathfrak{p} . (Here we are using the condition that R is Noetherian.) We now note that \mathfrak{p} is also maximal in

$$\mathcal{P} := \{\text{Ann } m' : m' \neq 0\}.$$

Indeed, if $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq \text{Ann } m'$, then $\text{Ann } m \subseteq \text{Ann } m'$, so $\text{Ann } m' \in \mathcal{P}_m$, so $\mathfrak{p} = \text{Ann } m'$ by maximality of \mathfrak{p} . It follows from Proposition 2.138 that \mathfrak{p} is indeed prime, so it is an associated prime containing $\text{Ann } m$. ■

Here are some corollaries.

Corollary 2.143. Fix R Noetherian and M an R -module. Then a submodule $N \subseteq M$ has $N = 0$ if and only if $N_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$ for each $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$.

Proof. Again, in the forwards direction, note that $N = 0$ implies $N_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$ for each prime \mathfrak{p} .

In the reverse direction, suppose that $N_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$ for each $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$. Then any $m \in N$ has $\frac{m}{1} = 0$ in $N_{\mathfrak{p}}$ for each $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$, but this means that there exists $u \in R \setminus \mathfrak{p}$ such that $um = 0$, which also holds in $M_{\mathfrak{p}}$. This is to say that $\frac{m}{1} = 0$ in $M_{\mathfrak{p}}$ for each $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$, so $m = 0$ by Proposition 2.142. ■

Corollary 2.144. Fix R Noetherian and M, N as R -modules. Then a map $\varphi : M \rightarrow N$ is injective if and only if $\varphi : M_{\mathfrak{p}} \rightarrow N_{\mathfrak{p}}$ is injective if and only if $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$.

Proof. By Corollary 2.143, $\ker \varphi \subseteq M$ vanishes if and only if $(\ker \varphi)_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$ for each $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$. But $(\ker \varphi)_{\mathfrak{p}} = \ker \varphi_{\mathfrak{p}}$ by Corollary 2.54, so $\ker \varphi = 0$ if and only if $\ker \varphi_{\mathfrak{p}} = 0$ for each $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$, which is what we wanted. ■

2.4.3 Associated Primes in Short Exact Sequences

We note that associated primes also behave in short exact sequences, somewhat.

Lemma 2.145. Suppose

$$0 \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow 0$$

is a short exact sequence of R -modules. Then $\text{Ass } A \subseteq \text{Ass } B \subseteq \text{Ass } A \cup \text{Ass } C$.

Proof. Denote our morphisms by

$$0 \rightarrow A \xrightarrow{\iota} B \xrightarrow{\pi} C \rightarrow 0.$$

We have that $\text{Ass } A \subseteq \text{Ass } B$ because any annihilator in A will end up being any annihilator in B as well. We note that any $a \in A$ has

$$\text{Ann } \iota(a) = \{r \in R : r\iota(a) = 0\} = \{r \in R : \iota(ra) = 0\} \stackrel{*}{=} \{r \in R : ra = 0\} = \text{Ann } a,$$

where in $\stackrel{*}{=}$ we have used the injectivity of ι . So any associated prime $\mathfrak{p} = \text{Ann } a$ of A will also be an associated prime $\mathfrak{p} = \text{Ann } \iota(a)$ of B .

Remark 2.146 (Nir). Alternatively, any associated prime $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } A$ induces an R -embedding $R/\mathfrak{p} \hookrightarrow A$ (by Lemma 2.135). Post-composing with ι gives an R -embedding $R/\mathfrak{p} \hookrightarrow B$, so Lemma 2.135 gives $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } B$.

It remains to show $\text{Ass } B \subseteq \text{Ass } A \cup \text{Ass } C$. Well, suppose $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } B \setminus \text{Ass } A$, and we show that $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } C$. Namely, we can find $b \in B$ such that

$$\text{Ann } b = \mathfrak{p}.$$

To make some of our language easier, we note that this $b \in B$ induces $f : R/\mathfrak{p} \hookrightarrow B$ by $f : [r]_{\mathfrak{p}} \mapsto rb$ (as in Lemma 2.135); note $\text{im } f = Rb$. It will be enough to show that $\pi f : R/\mathfrak{p} \rightarrow C$ is injective to show that $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } C$ by Lemma 2.135.

We compute

$$\ker(\pi f) = \{[r]_{\mathfrak{p}} \in R/\mathfrak{p} : \pi f([r]_{\mathfrak{p}}) = 0\} = \{[r]_{\mathfrak{p}} \in R/\mathfrak{p} : rb \in \ker \pi = \text{im } \iota\}.$$

In particular, because $f : R/\mathfrak{p} \rightarrow Rb$ is an isomorphism, $\ker(\pi f)$ will vanish if and only if each $rb \in Rb$ with $rb \in \text{im } \iota$ has $rb = 0$. That is, we want to show that

$$Rb \cap \text{im } \iota \stackrel{?}{=} \{0\}.$$

Indeed, each $rb \in Rb \setminus \{0\}$ (so that $r \notin \mathfrak{p}$) has $s \in \text{Ann } rb$ if and only if $sr \in \mathfrak{p}$ if and only if $s \in \mathfrak{p}$, so any nontrivial intersection above would induce an annihilator $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } A$, which we assumed is not the case. ■

Corollary 2.147. Suppose $B = A \oplus C$ as R -modules. Then $\text{Ass } B = \text{Ass } A \cup \text{Ass } C$.

Proof. Note the split short exact sequences

$$0 \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow 0$$

and

$$0 \rightarrow C \rightarrow B \rightarrow A \rightarrow 0$$

give that $\text{Ass } A, \text{Ass } C \subseteq \text{Ass } B$ by Lemma 2.145. In particular, $\text{Ass } A \cup \text{Ass } C \subseteq \text{Ass } B$, but Lemma 2.145 implies $\text{Ass } B \subseteq \text{Ass } A \cup \text{Ass } C$ already, so equality follows. ■

Here's a quick example of our theory at work, actually able to classify associated primes.

Example 2.148. We work with \mathbb{Z} -modules. Indeed, fix any finitely generated abelian group

$$M \cong \bigoplus_{k=1}^n \mathbb{Z}/p_k^{\alpha_k} \mathbb{Z},$$

where the p_k are primes (possible equal to 0) and α_k positive integers. Then By Corollary 2.147, we have that

$$\text{Ass } M = \bigcup_{k=1}^n \text{Ass } \mathbb{Z}/p_k^{\alpha_k} \mathbb{Z}.$$

So it remains to compute $\text{Ass } \mathbb{Z}/p^\alpha \mathbb{Z}$ where p is a prime (possibly equal to 0) and α is a positive integer. But we note $\text{Ass } \mathbb{Z}/0\mathbb{Z} = \text{Ass } \mathbb{Z} = \{(0)\}$ because \mathbb{Z} is an integral domain. And for nonzero primes, Exercise 2.134 tells us that $\text{Ass } \mathbb{Z}/p^\alpha \mathbb{Z} = \{(p)\}$, so we find $\text{Ass } M = \{(p_k)\}_{k=1}^n$.

2.4.4 Finding All Associated Primes

Let's try as hard as we can to find all associated primes. To start, we show there are finitely many. Here is our main lemma in the proof that there are finitely many associated primes.

Lemma 2.149. Fix M a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring R . Then M has a finite filtration

$$0 =: M_0 \subseteq M_1 \subseteq \cdots \subseteq M_n = M$$

such that each quotient $M_{k+1}/M_k \cong R/\mathfrak{p}_k$ for some prime ideals $\{\mathfrak{p}_k\}_{k=0}^{n-1}$.

Proof. If $M = 0$, then our filtration is just " $M_0 = M$."

If $M \neq 0$, then because R is Noetherian, $\text{Ass } M$ is nonempty. So find some $\mathfrak{p}_0 = \text{Ann } m_0$ for $m_0 \in M/M_0 = M$, and (using Lemma 2.135) set $M_1 := Rm_1 \cong R/\mathfrak{p}_1$. If $M/M_1 = (0)$, then we get the filtration series

$$M_0 \subseteq M_1.$$

More generally, suppose that, for some $\ell \in \mathbb{N}$, we have built a strictly ascending chain

$$M_0 \subseteq M_1 \subseteq \cdots \subseteq M_\ell$$

such that $M_{k+1}/M_k \cong R/\mathfrak{p}_k$ for each $0 \leq k < \ell$. If $M/M_\ell = 0$, then this filtration satisfies the conclusion.

Otherwise, R is Noetherian, so $\text{Ass } M/M_\ell$ is nonempty, so find $\mathfrak{p}_\ell \in \text{Ass } M/M_\ell$. Then (using Lemma 2.135), we get to say $\mathfrak{p}_\ell = \text{Ann}[m]_{M_\ell}$ so that $R/\mathfrak{p}_\ell \cong R[m]_{M_\ell}$. So define $M_{\ell+1} := M_\ell + Rm$. Then

$$\frac{M_{\ell+1}}{M_\ell} = \frac{M_\ell + Rm}{M_\ell} \cong R[m]_{M_\ell},$$

where the last isomorphism is by $[x + rm]_{M_\ell} = [rm]_{M_\ell} \mapsto r[m]_{M_\ell}$. But then $M_{\ell+1}/M_\ell \cong R/\mathfrak{p}_\ell$, so we get to continue our filtration.

However, this filtration-creating process gives us an ascending chain of R -submodules

$$M_0 \subseteq M_1 \subseteq \cdots,$$

which must eventually terminate because M is Noetherian— M is finitely generated over the Noetherian ring R . But the only way for our process to terminate is when we find some M_n such that $M/M_n = (0)$, or equivalently $M = M_n$, so the filtration is completed. ■

And here is our result.

Theorem 2.150. Fix M a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring R . Then $\text{Ass } M$ is finite.

Proof. By Lemma 2.149, we are promised a filtration

$$0 =: M_0 \subseteq M_1 \subseteq \cdots \subseteq M_n = M$$

such that each quotient $M_{k+1}/M_k \cong R/\mathfrak{p}_k$ for some primes $\{\mathfrak{p}_k\}_{k=0}^{n-1}$. In particular, we get the short exact sequences

$$0 \rightarrow M_k \rightarrow M_{k+1} \rightarrow M_{k+1}/M_k \rightarrow 0,$$

which tell us that $\text{Ass } M_{k+1} \subseteq \text{Ass } M_k \cup \text{Ass } M_{k+1}/M_k$ by Lemma 2.145. But $\text{Ass } M_{k+1}/M_k = \text{Ass } R/\mathfrak{p}_k = \{\mathfrak{p}_k\}$ by Example 2.137. So, inductively, we get that

$$\text{Ass } M_k \subseteq \bigcup_{\ell=0}^{k-1} \{\mathfrak{p}_\ell\},$$

where the induction starts with $\text{Ass } M_0 = \text{Ass}(0) = \emptyset$. Now, setting $k = n$ recovers the result. ■

Remark 2.151 (Nir). The above theorem is “effective” in the sense that, if we could compute the filtration Lemma 2.149, we would have an effective upper bound on $\text{Ass } M$. However, making the filtration required using the non-effective Proposition 2.138.

Let’s also discuss some other ways we can access associated primes; just like support, associated primes commute with localization.

Proposition 2.152. Fix M a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring R . Further, fix $U \subseteq R$ a multiplicatively closed subset. Then we have that

$$\text{Ass}_{R[U^{-1}]} M[U^{-1}] = \{\mathfrak{p}[U^{-1}] : \mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M, \mathfrak{p} \cap U = \emptyset\}.$$

Proof. Recall from Theorem 2.29 that

$$\text{Spec } R[U^{-1}] = \{\mathfrak{p}[U^{-1}] : \mathfrak{p} \in \text{Spec } R \text{ and } \mathfrak{p} \cap U = \emptyset\},$$

so these are all the primes we have to consider.

In one direction, suppose that $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$ and $\mathfrak{p} \cap U = \emptyset$ so that $\mathfrak{p}[U^{-1}] \in \text{Spec } R[U^{-1}]$. Because $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$, Lemma 2.135 gives us an embedding

$$R/\mathfrak{p} \hookrightarrow M.$$

But localization preserves injectinos, so this induces an injection

$$R[U^{-1}]/\mathfrak{p}[U^{-1}] \hookrightarrow M[U^{-1}],$$

from which Lemma 2.135 promises $\mathfrak{p}[U^{-1}] \in \text{Ass } M[U^{-1}]$.

The other direction is harder. Suppose that $\mathfrak{p}[U^{-1}] \in \text{Ass}_{R[U^{-1}]} M[U^{-1}]$, so we are promised some injection

$$R[U^{-1}]/\mathfrak{p}[U^{-1}] \hookrightarrow M[U^{-1}].$$

We need to turn this into an injection $R/\mathfrak{p} \hookrightarrow M$. As a first step, we note that, because $R[U^{-1}]$, we can let φ be the composite

$$(R/\mathfrak{p}) \otimes_R R[U^{-1}] \cong \frac{R \otimes_R R[U^{-1}]}{\mathfrak{p} \otimes_R R[U^{-1}]} \cong \frac{R[U^{-1}]}{\mathfrak{p}[U^{-1}]} \hookrightarrow M[U^{-1}] \cong M \otimes_R R[U^{-1}].$$

The key trick is to apply Lemma 2.61, which gives a functorial morphism

$$\alpha : \text{Hom}_R(R/\mathfrak{p}, M) \otimes_R R[U^{-1}] \cong \text{Hom}_{R[U^{-1}]}((R/\mathfrak{p}) \otimes_R R[U^{-1}], M \otimes_R R[U^{-1}]).$$

But now we see M is finitely generated, so there is some projection $R^n \twoheadrightarrow M$. With R Noetherian, all submodules of R^n will be finitely generated, so the kernel of $R^n \twoheadrightarrow M$ is finitely generated, so M is in fact finitely presented.

Thus, Proposition 2.67 promises our α is an isomorphism. Namely, we have some morphism $\psi : R/\mathfrak{p} \rightarrow M$ such that $\alpha(s/u \otimes \psi) = \varphi$ in the sense that (tracking Lemma 2.61 through)

$$\alpha(\psi \otimes s/u)([r]_{\mathfrak{p}} \otimes s'/u') = \psi([r]_{\mathfrak{p}}) \otimes (ss')/(uu') = \varphi([r]_{\mathfrak{p}} \otimes s'/u').$$

We now check that ψ is an injection, which will finish by Lemma 2.135.

Indeed, if $\psi([r]_{\mathfrak{p}}) = 0$, then $\psi([r]_{\mathfrak{p}}) \otimes 1/1 = \varphi([r]_{\mathfrak{p}} \otimes 1/1) = 0$, so the injectivity of φ implies $[r]_{\mathfrak{p}} \otimes 1/1 = 0$. Viewing this in $(R/\mathfrak{p})[U^{-1}]$, we see we're saying

$$\frac{[r]_{\mathfrak{p}}}{1} = \frac{[0]_{\mathfrak{p}}}{1},$$

which implies there is some $u \in U$ such that $u[r]_{\mathfrak{p}} = u[0]_{\mathfrak{p}} = [0]_{\mathfrak{p}}$ so that $ur \in \mathfrak{p}$. But $U \cap \mathfrak{p} = \emptyset$, so $u \notin \mathfrak{p}$, so this requires $r \in \mathfrak{p}$, so $[r]_{\mathfrak{p}} = [0]_{\mathfrak{p}}$. Thus, $\ker \psi$ is trivial, and ψ is indeed injective. ■

Amusingly, we can also look at associated primes by their union.

Proposition 2.153. Fix M a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring R . Then

$$\bigcup_{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M} \mathfrak{p} = \bigcup_{m \in M \setminus \{0\}} \text{Ann } m.$$

Proof. Note that each $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$ is an annihilator of a nonzero element $m \in M \setminus \{0\}$, so we get

$$\bigcup_{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M} \mathfrak{p} \subseteq \bigcup_{m \in M \setminus \{0\}} \text{Ann } m.$$

For the other direction, pick up any $\text{Ann } m$ for $m \neq 0$. By Proposition 2.142, there exists $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$ such that $\frac{m}{1} \neq \frac{0}{1}$, so there exists no $u \in R \setminus \mathfrak{p}$ such that $um = 0$. In other words, $(R \setminus \mathfrak{p}) \cap \text{Ann } m = \emptyset$, so

$$\text{Ann } m \subseteq \mathfrak{p}.$$

Looping all over $\text{Ann } m$ gives the needed inclusion. ■

Remark 2.154 (Serganova). One could also proceed more directly, without using Proposition 2.142, by choosing \mathfrak{p} to be maximal among annihilators containing $\text{Ann } m$ as in the proof of Proposition 2.142.

Corollary 2.155. Fix M a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring R , and fix any ideal $J \subseteq R$. Then one of the following is true.

- (i) We have $J \subseteq \text{Ann } m$ for some $m \in M$
- (ii) There exists $a \in J$ such that $am = 0$ implies $m = 0$ for each $m \in M$.

Proof. The idea is to use Proposition 2.153. Suppose (ii) is false so that every $a \in J$ annihilates some nonzero element of M . Then

$$J \subseteq \bigcup_{m \in M \setminus \{0\}} \text{Ann } m = \bigcup_{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M} \mathfrak{p}.$$

We claim that $J \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ for some $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$, which will show J satisfies (i). For concreteness, label

$$\{\mathfrak{p}_1, \dots, \mathfrak{p}_n\}.$$

as the primes of $\text{Ass } M$ maximal among the other primes of $\text{Ass } M$; this labaeling is finite because of Theorem 2.150. Note that only working with these maximal primes will not hurt us because each $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$ lives inside some prime maximal in $\text{Ass } M$ so that

$$J \subseteq \bigcup_{\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M} \mathfrak{p} \subseteq \bigcup_{k=1}^n \mathfrak{p}_k.$$

The reason that we are using these maximal primes is to be promised some $x_{k,\ell} \in \mathfrak{p}_\ell \setminus \mathfrak{p}_k$ for $k \neq \ell$.

Now, suppose that $J \not\subseteq \mathfrak{p}_k$ for each \mathfrak{p}_k , and we will show J is not a subset of the union of the \mathfrak{p}_k s. Well, $J \not\subseteq \mathfrak{p}_k$ grants us some $y_k \in J \setminus \mathfrak{p}_k$, from which we set

$$x_k := y_k \prod_{\substack{1 \leq k \leq n \\ k \neq \ell}} x_{k,\ell}.$$

None of the factors here live in \mathfrak{p}_k , so $x_k \notin \mathfrak{p}_k$. However, x_k contains a factor in J and in \mathfrak{p}_ℓ for each $\ell \neq k$, so x_k lives in each of those ideals. To finish, we note

$$x := \sum_{k=1}^n x_k$$

will live in J because each $x_k \in J$, but for each \mathfrak{p}_k , $x_k \notin \mathfrak{p}_k$ while $x_\ell \in \mathfrak{p}_\ell$ for each $\ell \neq k$, so $x \notin \mathfrak{p}_k$. Thus, $x \in J$ but not in any of the primes \mathfrak{p}_k , finishing. ■

Lastly, we provide another way to generated associated primes, to close out our discussion.

Proposition 2.156. Fix M a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring R . If \mathfrak{p} is a minimal prime ideal containing $\text{Ann } M$, then $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M$.

Proof. The main idea is to localize at \mathfrak{p} so that $\text{Ass } M_{\mathfrak{p}}$ should be $\{\mathfrak{p}_{\mathfrak{p}}\}$. Because M is finitely generated, Proposition 2.73 tells us that $\mathfrak{p} \supseteq \text{Ann } M$ implies $M_{\mathfrak{p}} \neq 0$. In particular, Corollary 2.139 tells us that

$$\text{Ass}_{R_{\mathfrak{p}}} M_{\mathfrak{p}} \neq \emptyset.$$

However, Proposition 2.152 tells us that

$$\text{Ass}_{R_{\mathfrak{p}}} M_{\mathfrak{p}} = \{\mathfrak{q}_{\mathfrak{p}} : \mathfrak{q} \in \text{Ass } M, \mathfrak{q} \cap (R \setminus \mathfrak{p}) = \emptyset\},$$

which must be nonempty. So we are given some associated prime $\mathfrak{q} \in \text{Ass } M$ with $\mathfrak{q} \cap (R \setminus \mathfrak{p}) = \emptyset$. But $\mathfrak{q} \in \text{Ass } M$ implies that $\mathfrak{q} \supseteq \text{Ann } M$ (\mathfrak{q} is an annihilator) while $\mathfrak{q} \cap (R \setminus \mathfrak{p}) = \emptyset$ implies that $\mathfrak{q} \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$. So minimality of \mathfrak{p} (!) tells us $\mathfrak{p} = \mathfrak{q} \in \text{Ass } M$, finishing. ■

Quote 2.157. I hope you see how powerful this idea is, of localization.

2.4.5 Motivating Primary Decomposition

Let's give some motivational remarks for the primary decomposition. As an example, we consider \mathbb{Z} , where it happens that

$$(m) \cap (n) = (mn) = (m)(n).$$

This is a very nice property to have, with respect to proving unique prime factorization and such. Namely, to state unique prime factorization, we call an ideal "primary" if it is the power of some prime ideal. Then we see existence of prime factorization is saying that any ideal (n) is the intersection of finitely many "primary" ideals.

We will try to generalize this. Here is our definition of "primary."

p-primary

Definition 2.158 (p-primary). Fix $\mathfrak{p} \in \text{Spec } R$ a prime ideal and R -modules $N \subseteq M$. Then N is a \mathfrak{p} -primary submodule of M if and only if

$$\text{Ass } M/N = \{\mathfrak{p}\}.$$

Example 2.159. For a prime $p \in \mathbb{Z}$, the ideals (p^k) are p -primary in \mathbb{Z} by Exercise 2.134.

Example 2.160. Any prime ideal \mathfrak{p} is \mathfrak{p} -primary in R because $\text{Ass}(R/\mathfrak{p}) = \{\mathfrak{p}\}$ by Example 2.137.

Let's prove one nice lemma to finish off today.

Lemma 2.161. Fix M a module over a Noetherian ring R . Fix N_1, \dots, N_m a finite collection of \mathfrak{p} -primary submodules of an R -module M . Then

$$\bigcap_{k=1}^n N_k$$

is also \mathfrak{p} -primary.

Proof. By induction, it suffices to show the result for $m = 2$ so that we want to show $N_1 \cap N_2$ is \mathfrak{p} -primary. Now, we have the right-exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow N_1 \cap N_2 \rightarrow M \rightarrow \frac{M}{N_1} \oplus \frac{M}{N_2},$$

which tells us that we have an embedding $\frac{M}{N_1 \cap N_2} \hookrightarrow \frac{M}{N_1} \oplus \frac{M}{N_2}$. But then Lemma 2.145 gives

$$\text{Ass } \frac{M}{N_1 \cap N_2} \subseteq \text{Ass } M/N_1 \cup \text{Ass } M/N_2 = \{\mathfrak{p}\},$$

so we are done. In particular, $\text{Ass } \frac{M}{N_1 \cap N_2} \neq \emptyset$ by Corollary 2.139 because R is Noetherian and $N_1 \cap N_2 \subseteq N_1 \subsetneq M$. ■

And we close by stating the theorem.

Theorem 2.162 (Primary Decomposition). Fix a finitely generated module M over a Noetherian ring R . Then any submodule $M' \subseteq M$ is an intersection of finitely many primary submodules of M .

2.5 February 8

Today we discuss primary decomposition.

2.5.1 Minimal Primes

Let's talk a little bit about minimal prime ideals. In particular, suppose that we have a strictly descending chain of prime ideals

$$\mathfrak{p}_1 \supseteq \mathfrak{p}_2 \supseteq \cdots$$

Because prime ideals are closed under intersection in the chain, Zorn's lemma now promises us a minimal prime ideal.

More generally, we have the following definition.

Minimal
prime

Definition 2.163 (Minimal prime). Fix R a ring and $I \subseteq R$ an ideal. Then a prime $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq R$ is a *minimal prime ideal over I* if \mathfrak{p} is a minimal element of the set of prime ideals containing I .

The above Zorn's lemma argument shows that these minimal primes actually exist.

Proposition 2.164. Fix R a ring and $I \subsetneq R$ a proper ideal. Then there is a minimal prime \mathfrak{p} over I .

Proof. We will be a little more careful than the above discussion. Let \mathcal{P} be the set of primes containing I , and we partial order \mathcal{P} by inclusion. Note that I , being a proper ideal, is contained in some maximal ideal \mathfrak{m} , so $\mathfrak{m} \in \mathcal{P}$. Thus, \mathcal{P} is nonempty.

To apply Zorn's lemma to get out a minimal element, we need to show that any descending chain in \mathcal{P} is bounded below. Well, suppose that we have a chain

$$\mathfrak{p}_1 \supseteq \mathfrak{p}_2 \supseteq \mathfrak{p}_3 \supseteq \cdots$$

of prime ideals containing I . Then we set

$$\mathfrak{p} := \bigcap_{k=1}^{\infty} \mathfrak{p}_k.$$

We claim that $\mathfrak{p} \in \mathcal{P}$, which will finish by Zorn's lemma. Because $I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}_k$ for each \mathfrak{p}_k , we have $I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$. Because each \mathfrak{p}_k is an ideal, the intersection \mathfrak{p} will be an ideal.

Lastly, to see that \mathfrak{p} is prime, suppose that $xy \in \mathfrak{p}$ so that we need to show $x \in \mathfrak{p}$ or $y \in \mathfrak{p}$. If $x \in \mathfrak{p}_k$ for each \mathfrak{p}_k , then $x \in \mathfrak{p}$, and we are done. Otherwise there exists \mathfrak{p}_N such that $x \notin \mathfrak{p}_N$, but then for any $n \geq N$, we have $\mathfrak{p}_n \subseteq \mathfrak{p}_N$, so $x \notin \mathfrak{p}_n$ as well. But because $xy \in \mathfrak{p}_n$, we see that

$$y \in \mathfrak{p}_n$$

for each $n \geq N$. Because $\mathfrak{p}_N \subseteq \mathfrak{p}_m$ for each $m \leq N$, we see that in fact $y \in \mathfrak{p}_k$ for each k . Thus $y \in \mathfrak{p}$. ■

In the Noetherian case, our minimal primes are somewhat controlled.

Proposition 2.165. Fix R a Noetherian ring and $I \subseteq R$ an ideal. Then there are only finitely many minimal prime ideals over I .

Proof 1. Note $I = R$ has no minimal prime ideals over R , so we only consider proper ideals. Suppose for the sake of contradiction we have a proper ideal J for which there are infinitely many minimal prime ideals over J . Then, because R is Noetherian, we may find a maximal such ideal, and we name it I .

Note that if I is prime, then I is the unique minimal prime over I , for any minimal prime over I which is contained in I must equal I . Thus, I cannot be prime, so there exist $a, b \in R$ such that $a, b \notin I$ while $ab \in I$. Now we look at

$$I + (a) \quad \text{and} \quad I + (b).$$

In particular, I is a strict subset of both $I + (a)$ and $I + (b)$, so maximality of I forces $I + (a)$ and $I + (b)$ to have only finitely many minimal prime ideals over them. Let \mathcal{P}_a and \mathcal{P}_b be the finite sets of minimal primes over $I + (a)$ and $I + (b)$, respectively.

To finish, we claim that the set of minimal primes over I is a subset $\mathcal{P}_a \cup \mathcal{P}_b$, which will be enough because it will show that there are only finitely many minimal primes over I , a contradiction. Indeed, suppose \mathfrak{p} is a minimal prime over I . Then $ab \in \mathfrak{p}$, so $a \in \mathfrak{p}$ or $b \in \mathfrak{p}$; without loss of generality, we take

$$I + (a) \subseteq \mathfrak{p}.$$

So we claim that $\mathfrak{p} \in \mathcal{P}_a$. Indeed, if a prime \mathfrak{q} is contained in \mathfrak{p} while containing $I + (a)$, then \mathfrak{q} is a prime contained in \mathfrak{p} while containing I , so minimality of \mathfrak{p} implies $\mathfrak{p} = \mathfrak{q}$. This finishes. ■

Proof 2. We can use the machinery of associated primes we have been building. Note that R/I is a finitely generated R -module, and $x \in \text{Ann } R/I$ if and only if $x \cdot [r]_I = [0]_I$ for all $r \in R$ if and only if $xr \in I$ for all $r \in R$ if and only if $x \in I$ (by taking $r = 1$). Thus,

$$\text{Ann } R/I = I.$$

Now, any prime minimal over I will be a minimal prime containing $\text{Ann } R/I$, which by Proposition 2.156 will be a prime associated to R/I . Thus, the set of minimal primes over I is a subset of

$$\text{Ass } R/I,$$

which is finite by Theorem 2.150. ■

2.5.2 Primary Decomposition for Geometers

We note that Proposition 2.165 has the following corollary.

Corollary 2.166. Fix R a Noetherian ring and $I \subseteq R$ an ideal. Then $\text{rad } I$ is the intersection of finitely many prime ideals.

Proof. By Proposition 2.129, we write

$$\text{rad } I = \bigcap_{I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}} \mathfrak{p}.$$

Letting \mathcal{P} be the set of minimal primes over I , we see that each \mathfrak{p} over I has some $\mathfrak{P}_{\mathfrak{p}} \in \mathcal{P}$ such that $\mathfrak{P}_{\mathfrak{p}} \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$ (for otherwise \mathfrak{p} ought be minimal). Thus,

$$\bigcap_{\mathfrak{p} \in \mathcal{P}} \mathfrak{p} \subseteq \bigcap_{I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}} \mathfrak{p} \subseteq \bigcap_{I \subseteq \mathfrak{p}} \mathfrak{P}_{\mathfrak{p}} \subseteq \bigcap_{\mathfrak{p} \in \mathcal{P}} \mathfrak{p},$$

so equalities follow. Thus, $\text{rad } I$ is equal to the intersection of the primes in \mathcal{P} , of which there are finitely many by Proposition 2.165. ■

We close with a geometric interpretation of Corollary 2.166. We have the following definition.

Irreducible

Definition 2.167 (Irreducible). Fix $X \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ an affine algebraic set. Then X is *irreducible* if and only if $I(X) \subseteq k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ is prime; i.e., $A(X)$ is an integral domain. We might call X a *variety* in this case.

As an application, consider any algebraic set $X \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$. Then we know that $I(X)$ is radical, so Corollary 2.166 is saying that we can decompose

$$I(X) = \bigcap_{\mathfrak{p} \in \mathcal{P}} \mathfrak{p},$$

where \mathcal{P} is the finite collection of minimal primes over $I(X)$. Taking zero-sets everywhere, we see that⁷ $Z(I \cap J) = Z(I) \cup Z(J)$, so

$$X = Z(I(X)) = Z\left(\bigcap_{\mathfrak{p} \in \mathcal{P}} \mathfrak{p}\right) = \bigcup_{\mathfrak{p} \in \mathcal{P}} Z(\mathfrak{p}).$$

⁷ If $x \in Z(I \cap J)$ while $x \notin Z(J)$, then there is $g \in J$ such that $g(x) \neq 0$; but $x \in Z(I \cap J)$ means that each $f \in I$ has $(fg)(x) = 0$, forcing $f(x) = 0$. Conversely, if $x \in Z(I)$ (without loss of generality), x will also vanish on $I \cap J$.

Now, $I(Z(\mathfrak{p})) = \text{rad } \mathfrak{p}$ by the Nullstellensatz, and $\text{rad } \mathfrak{p} = \mathfrak{p}$ by primality, so the point of the above is that we have written an arbitrary algebraic set X as a union of finitely many irreducible algebraic sets $Z(\mathfrak{p})$.

Corollary 2.168. Fix $X \subseteq \mathbb{A}^n(k)$ an algebraic set. Then X can be written as the union of finitely many irreducible algebraic sets.

Proof. This follows from the above discussion. ■

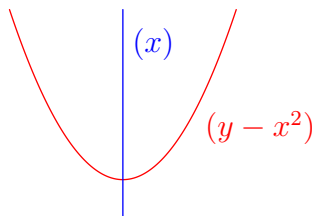
And now let's see a physical example.

Exercise 2.169. Fix $I := (yx - x^3) \subseteq k[x_1, x_2]$, and we decompose $Z(I) \subseteq \mathbb{A}^2(k)$ into irreducibles.

Proof. Well, $yx - x^3 = 0$ if and only if $x = 0$ or $y - x^2 = 0$, so

$$I = (x) \cap (y - x^2).$$

So here is the image of $Z(I)$.



Now we note (x) and $(y - x^2)$ are prime ideals because they are irreducible. ■

2.5.3 Primary Grab-Bag

In Corollary 2.166, we saw that when I was a radical ideal, we could write it as a finite intersection of prime ideals. Primary decomposition provides us with a general theory to do something similar for arbitrary modules. Let's start building towards that.

We pick up the following definitions.

\mathfrak{p} -primary

Definition 2.170 (\mathfrak{p} -primary). Fix M a finitely generated module over R a Noetherian ring. Then a submodule $N \subseteq M$ is \mathfrak{p} -primary if and only if $\text{Ass } M/N = \{\mathfrak{p}\}$.

\mathfrak{p} -coprimary

Definition 2.171 (\mathfrak{p} -coprimary). Fix M a finitely generated module over R a Noetherian ring. Then M is \mathfrak{p} -coprimary if and only if $\text{Ass } M = \{\mathfrak{p}\}$.

In other words, $N \subseteq M$ is \mathfrak{p} -primary if and only if M/N is \mathfrak{p} -coprimary. Similarly, M is \mathfrak{p} -coprimary if and only if $(0) \subseteq M$ is \mathfrak{p} -primary.

We would like some more concrete conditions for being \mathfrak{p} -primary.

Proposition 2.172. Fix M a finitely generated module over R a Noetherian ring. Then the following are equivalent.

- (a) M is \mathfrak{p} -coprimary.
- (b) \mathfrak{p} is the unique minimal prime over $\text{Ann } M$, and \mathfrak{p} contains $\text{Ann } m$ for each $m \in M$.
- (c) $\mathfrak{p}^n \subseteq \text{Ann } M$ for some positive integer n , and \mathfrak{p} contains $\text{Ann } m$ for each $m \in M$.

Proof. We take our implications one at a time.

- We show that (a) implies (b). We are given that $\text{Ass } M = \{\mathfrak{p}\}$.

We first show that \mathfrak{p} is the unique minimal prime over $\text{Ann } M$. Note that $M \neq (0)$ because $\text{Ass } M \neq \emptyset$, so $\text{Ann } M \neq R$; thus, there is at least one minimal prime over $\text{Ann } M$. But we know that any prime minimal containing $\text{Ann } M$ will be associated (by Proposition 2.156) and therefore must equal \mathfrak{p} . In particular, \mathfrak{p} is indeed the unique minimal prime over $\text{Ann } M$.

To finish, we recall from Proposition 2.153 that

$$\bigcup_{m \in M \setminus \{0\}} \text{Ann } m = \bigcup_{\mathfrak{q} \in \text{Ass } M} \mathfrak{q}.$$

However, $\text{Ass } M = \{\mathfrak{p}\}$, so the right-hand side is just \mathfrak{p} . Thus, each $m \in M \setminus \{0\}$ has $\text{Ann } m \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$, as needed.

- We have to show that $\mathfrak{p}^n \subseteq \text{Ann } M$ for some positive integer n . By Proposition 2.129, we see that

$$\text{rad Ann } M = \bigcap_{\text{rad } I \subseteq \mathfrak{q}} \mathfrak{q},$$

where the intersection is over all primes \mathfrak{q} containing $\text{Ann } M$. But \mathfrak{p} is the minimal such prime, so

$$\mathfrak{p} = \bigcap_{\text{rad } I \subseteq \mathfrak{q}} \mathfrak{p} \subseteq \bigcap_{\text{rad } I \subseteq \mathfrak{q}} \mathfrak{q} \subseteq \mathfrak{p},$$

so equalities hold. Thus, $\mathfrak{p} = \text{rad Ann } M$. We now finish by appealing to the following lemma.

Lemma 2.173. Fix R a Noetherian ring and I and J ideals such that $I \subseteq \text{rad } J$. Then there exists a positive integer $n \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $I^n \subseteq J$.

Proof. Because R is Noetherian, the ideal I is finitely generated, so we set

$$I := (x_1, \dots, x_m).$$

Additionally, because $I \subseteq \text{rad } J$, we are promised positive integers a_1, \dots, a_m such that $x_k^{a_k} \in J$ for each x_k . So we set $n := a_1 + \dots + a_m$. Indeed, fix some generating element $y_1 \cdots y_n \in I^n$ so that each $y_k \in I$. We can write

$$y_k = \sum_{\ell=1}^m r_{k,\ell} x_\ell$$

so that when we expand

$$y_1 \cdots y_n = \prod_{k=1}^n \sum_{\ell=1}^m r_{k,\ell} x_\ell,$$

each monomial $x_1^{d_1} \cdots x_m^{d_m}$ must have some d_k at least a_k because $d_1 + \dots + d_m = n = a_1 + \dots + a_m$. In particular, each monomial lives in J , so the full generating element $y_1 \cdots y_n$ lives in J . ■

Remark 2.174 (Nir). The Noetherian condition is necessary. Consider $R := k[x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots]$ with $I = (x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots)$ and $J = (x_1, x_2^2, x_3^3, \dots)$. Then any element of I will only use finitely many monomials, so we can reduce to the Noetherian case to show that a sufficiently large power will be contained in J , giving $I \subseteq \text{rad } J$. However, for each positive integer n , we see $x_{n+1}^n \in I^n \setminus J$, so $I^n \not\subseteq J$.

- Lastly, we show that (c) implies (a). The point is to read the arguments above backwards. Because \mathfrak{p} contains $\text{Ann } m$ for each $m \neq 0$, we see that

$$\mathfrak{p} \supseteq \bigcup_{m \in M \setminus \{0\}} \text{Ann } m = \bigcup_{\mathfrak{q} \in \text{Ass } M} \mathfrak{q},$$

where the last equality is by Proposition 2.153. Namely, \mathfrak{p} contains all associated primes.

So suppose \mathfrak{q} is some associated prime; because we already know that associated primes exist, it will suffice to show that $\mathfrak{q} = \mathfrak{p}$. We know

$$\mathfrak{p}^n \subseteq \text{Ann } M \subseteq \mathfrak{q} \subseteq \mathfrak{p},$$

from which $\mathfrak{q} = \mathfrak{p}$ will follow. Indeed, if $x \in \mathfrak{p}$, we see that $x^n \in \mathfrak{p}^n \subseteq \mathfrak{q}$, so $x \in \mathfrak{q}$ by primality. So $\mathfrak{q} \subseteq \mathfrak{p}$, finishing. ■

Corollary 2.175. Fix R a Noetherian ring. An ideal $I \subseteq R$ is \mathfrak{p} -primary if and only if $\mathfrak{p}^n \subseteq I$ for some positive integer n and, for all $a \notin I$, we have $ab \in I$ implies $b \in \mathfrak{p}$.

Proof. This follows directly from (c) of the proposition. Namely, I is \mathfrak{p} -primary if and only if R/I is \mathfrak{p} -coprimary if and only if $\mathfrak{p}^n \subseteq I$ for some positive integer n and \mathfrak{p} contains all $\text{Ann}[a]_I$ for each $[a]_I \in R/I \setminus \{[0]_I\}$. This latter condition is the same as saying, if $a \notin I$, then $ab \in I$ (which is equivalent to $b \in \text{Ann}[a]_I$) implies $b \in \mathfrak{p}$. ■

Example 2.176. Suppose $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq R$ is a prime ideal. Then, for any positive integer n , \mathfrak{p}^n is \mathfrak{p} -primary: note $\mathfrak{p}^n \subseteq \mathfrak{p}^n$ and, for $a \notin \mathfrak{p}^n$, we see $a \notin \mathfrak{p}$, so $ab \in \mathfrak{p}^n$ forces $ab \in \mathfrak{p}$ and so $b \in \mathfrak{p}$.

2.5.4 Primary Decomposition

And here is our main result.

Theorem 2.177 (Primary decomposition, I). Fix M a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring R . Then every submodule $N \subseteq M$ is the intersection of finitely many primary submodules. Such an intersection is called a *primary decomposition*.

Proof. The key to this result is to instead talk about irreducible decomposition.

Irreducible

Definition 2.178 (Irreducible). Fix M a module over a ring R . Then a submodule $N \subseteq M$ is *irreducible* if and only if $N = N_1 \cap N_2$ for submodules $N_1, N_2 \subseteq M$ implies $N = N_1$ or $N = N_2$.

Example 2.179. The module M is an irreducible submodule of M . Indeed, if $N_1, N_2 \subseteq M$ have $M = N_1 \cap N_2$, then in fact $N_1 = N_2 = M$ is forced.

It will turn out that irreducible implies primary, but we do not know this yet.

Here is the key claim.

Lemma 2.180. Fix M a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring R . Then every submodule $N \subseteq M$ is the intersection of finitely many irreducible submodules. (The empty intersection is considered M here.)

Proof. Suppose for the sake of contradiction that the statement is false so that there is a submodule which is not the intersection of finitely many irreducible submodules. Because M is a Noetherian module, we can find a maximal such submodule N .

Note that N cannot be irreducible, so we can write $N = N_1 \cap N_2$ for $N \subsetneq A, B$. But by the maximality of N , we can write

$$A = \bigcap_{k=1}^n A_k \quad \text{and} \quad B = \bigcap_{\ell=1}^m B_\ell,$$

where the A_k and B_ℓ are irreducible modules. But now

$$N = A \cap B = \left(\bigcap_{k=1}^n A_k \right) \cap \left(\bigcap_{\ell=1}^m B_\ell \right),$$

so N is also the intersection of finitely many irreducible modules, which is a contradiction. ■

Remark 2.181 (Nir). This essentially follows the proof of existence of prime factorizations in \mathbb{Z} : to show that any positive integer n greater than 1 has a prime factorization, we suppose a minimal counterexample (which corresponds to the maximal submodule).

But the smallest counterexample cannot be prime and is thus a product of primes (which corresponds to the intersection of submodules) and derive from the factors having prime factorizations.

And now we can finish up.

Lemma 2.182. Fix M a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring R and $N \subsetneq M$ a proper submodule. If N is irreducible, then N is primary.

Proof. We know that $\text{Ass } M/N$ is nonempty because $M \neq N$, so we need to show that there is exactly one prime.

We proceed by contraposition. So suppose $\mathfrak{p}, \mathfrak{q} \in \text{Ass } M/N$ which are distinct, and we show that N is not irreducible. By Lemma 2.135, we get embeddings

$$\iota_{\mathfrak{p}} : R/\mathfrak{p} \hookrightarrow M/N \quad \text{and} \quad \iota_{\mathfrak{q}} : R/\mathfrak{q} \hookrightarrow M/N.$$

In particular, let $[m_{\mathfrak{p}}]_N := \iota_{\mathfrak{p}}([1]_{\mathfrak{p}})$ and $[m_{\mathfrak{q}}]_N := \iota_{\mathfrak{q}}([1]_{\mathfrak{q}})$. Note that an element $\iota_{\mathfrak{p}}([r]_{\mathfrak{p}}) \in \text{im } \iota_{\mathfrak{p}}$ is nonzero if and only if $r \notin \mathfrak{p}$ because $\iota_{\mathfrak{p}}$ is an embedding. In fact, for any nonzero $\iota_{\mathfrak{p}}([r]_{\mathfrak{p}})$, the annihilator consists of $s \in R$ such that

$$s \cdot r[m_{\mathfrak{p}}] = sr\iota_{\mathfrak{p}}([1]_{\mathfrak{p}}) = \iota_{\mathfrak{p}}([sr]_{\mathfrak{p}})$$

vanishes, but then $r \notin \mathfrak{p}$ makes this equivalent to $s \in \mathfrak{p}$.

So the annihilator of any nonzero element in $\text{im } \iota_{\mathfrak{p}}$ is \mathfrak{p} . Similarly, the annihilator of any nonzero element in $\text{im } \iota_{\mathfrak{q}}$ is \mathfrak{q} . Thus,

$$(\text{im } \iota_{\mathfrak{p}}) \cap (\text{im } \iota_{\mathfrak{q}}) = 0.$$

So we can write

$$N = (\text{im } \iota_{\mathfrak{p}} + N) \cap (\text{im } \iota_{\mathfrak{q}} + N)$$

to break that N is irreducible. Indeed, the $\text{im } \iota_{\bullet} + N$ strictly contains N because the ι_{\bullet} embedded into M/N from a module with more than one element. And $m \in (\text{im } \iota_{\mathfrak{p}} + N) \cap (\text{im } \iota_{\mathfrak{q}} + N)$ implies that $[m]_N \in (\text{im } \iota_{\mathfrak{p}}) \cap (\text{im } \iota_{\mathfrak{q}})$, forcing $m \in N$ as above. ■

Remark 2.183. Not all primary modules are irreducible; see sx3039361. Namely, set $R := k[x, y]$ and $I := (x^2, xy, y^2) = (x, y)^2$. Then I is (x, y) -primary by Example 2.176, but I is not irreducible because

$$I = (x^2, y) \cap (x, y^2).$$

That $x^2, xy, y^2 \in (x^2, y) \cap (x, y^2)$ is clear. In the other direction, if we take $f \in (x^2, y) \cap (x, y^2)$ and remove all monomials divisible by x^2 or y^2 , the remaining polynomial must live in $(x) \cap (y) = (xy)$.

The above two lemmas essentially finish the theorem. Given our submodule $N \subseteq M$, we give it an irreducible "decomposition"

$$N = \bigcap_{k=1}^n N_k.$$

Note that if any $N_k = M$, then we may safely remove the term because all terms of the intersection are subsets of M . So we can write an irreducible decomposition for N where all terms are proper irreducible submodules, which we then know are primary submodules. ■

Let's try to make primary decomposition a little more canonical.

Theorem 2.184 (Primary decomposition, II). Fix M a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring R . Then write some submodule $N \subseteq M$ as

$$N = \bigcap_{i=1}^n N_i$$

such that N_i is \mathfrak{p}_i -primary. Then the following are true.

- (a) We have $\text{Ass } M/N \subseteq \{\mathfrak{p}_1, \dots, \mathfrak{p}_n\}$.
- (b) If we cannot remove some N_i from the decomposition, then $\mathfrak{p}_i \in \text{Ass } M/N$. In particular, if we cannot remove any N_i from the decomposition, then equality in (a) holds.
- (c) If n is as small as possible, then each \mathfrak{p}_i is unique.

Proof. We show these one at a time.

- (a) Note that we can glue together $M \twoheadrightarrow M/N_i$ into a map

$$M \rightarrow \bigoplus_{i=1}^n M/N_i$$

with kernel $\bigcap_i N_i = N$, so we have an induced embedding $M/N \hookrightarrow \bigoplus_{i=1}^n M/N_i$. Then applying Lemma 2.145 and Corollary 2.147, we see

$$\text{Ass } M/N \subseteq \text{Ass} \left(\bigoplus_{i=1}^n M/N_i \right) = \bigcup_{i=1}^n \text{Ass } M/N_i = \{\mathfrak{p}_1, \dots, \mathfrak{p}_n\},$$

where the last equality is by definition of the N_i .

- (b) We are given that, for each j , we have

$$K_j := \bigcap_{\substack{i=1 \\ i \neq j}}^n N_i$$

is not equal to N , but $N_j \cap K_j = N$. Thus, we can construct an embedding

$$\frac{K_j}{N} = \frac{K_j}{K_j \cap N_j} \cong \frac{N_j + K_j}{N_j} \subseteq \frac{M}{N_j}$$

to embed a nonzero submodule of M/N into M/N_j . In particular, Lemma 2.145 tells us (because of the above embedding) that $\text{Ass } K_j/N \subseteq \text{Ass } M/N_i = \{\mathfrak{p}_j\}$ forces $\text{Ass } K_j/N = \{\mathfrak{p}_j\}$ because K_j/N is nonzero.

But then applying Lemma 2.145 again, we see $\{\mathfrak{p}_j\} = \text{Ass } K_j/N \subseteq \text{Ass } M/N$, so we do indeed have $\mathfrak{p}_j \in \text{Ass } M/N$.

- (c) This is easiest done by contraposition: if we have $\mathfrak{p} := \mathfrak{p}_i = \mathfrak{p}_j$ for $i \neq j$, then we show that we can find a smaller primary decomposition. Indeed, by Lemma 2.161, we see that $N_i \cap N_j$ will also be \mathfrak{p} -primary, so we can write

$$N = \bigcap_{k=1}^n N_k = (N_i \cap N_j) \cap \bigcap_{\substack{k=1 \\ k \neq i, j}}^n N_k$$

is a primary decomposition of N now using $n - 1$ primary submodules. ■

Primary decomposition also behaves with localization.

Theorem 2.185 (Primary decomposition, III). Fix M a finitely generated module over a Noetherian ring R . Then write some submodule $N \subseteq M$ as

$$N = \bigcap_{i=1}^n N_i$$

such that N_i is \mathfrak{p}_i -primary. If $U \subseteq R$ is some multiplicatively closed subset, then

$$N[U^{-1}] = \bigcap_{\substack{i=1 \\ \mathfrak{p}_i \cap U = \emptyset}}^n N_i[U^{-1}],$$

where $N_i[U^{-1}]$ is $\mathfrak{p}_i[U^{-1}]$ -primary.

Proof. By Corollary 2.55, we see that

$$N[U^{-1}] = \bigcap_{i=1}^n N_i[U^{-1}].$$

Not all of the $N_i[U^{-1}]$ will in fact be primary submodules, but we can test which will be associated by using Proposition 2.152 to note

$$\text{Ass } M[U^{-1}] / N_i[U^{-1}] = \{\mathfrak{p}[U^{-1}] : \mathfrak{p} \in \text{Ass } M/N_i, \mathfrak{p} \cap U = \emptyset\}.$$

(We have implicitly used the fact that localization commutes with quotients.) In particular, $\text{Ass } M/N_i = \{\mathfrak{p}_i\}$ implies that we only have one prime to check.

- If $\mathfrak{p}_i \cap U = \emptyset$, then $\mathfrak{p}_i[U^{-1}]$ is in fact a prime, so $\text{Ass } M_i[U^{-1}] / N_i[U^{-1}] = \{\mathfrak{p}_i[U^{-1}]\}$. Thus, $N_i[U^{-1}]$ is in fact $\mathfrak{p}_i[U^{-1}]$ -primary.
- Otherwise if $\mathfrak{p}_i \cap U \neq \emptyset$, then we see that $\text{Ass } M[U^{-1}] / N_i[U^{-1}]$ is empty, so the quotient is 0, so $N_i[U^{-1}] = M[U^{-1}]$. In particular, we can remove $N_i[U^{-1}]$ from the intersection.

So we see that

$$N[U^{-1}] = \bigcap_{\substack{i=1 \\ \mathfrak{p}_i \cap U = \emptyset}}^n N_i[U^{-1}],$$

and we have in fact verified that each $N_i[U^{-1}]$ is $\mathfrak{p}_i[U^{-1}]$ -primary, so this provides a primary decomposition. ■

2.5.5 Examples of Primary Decomposition

Let's do some examples.

Example 2.186. For any nonzero integer $n \in \mathbb{Z} \setminus \{0\}$, we can write

$$(n) = \prod_{p \text{ prime}} (p^{\alpha_p}),$$

for some exponents α_p . This is our primary decomposition, and it is unique.

Example 2.187. In general, if R is a unique factorization domain, then any $f \in R$ will have

$$f = up_1^{d_1} \cdots p_n^{d_n}$$

for some unit u , primes p_\bullet , and exponents d_\bullet . Then

$$(f) = \bigcap_{i=1}^n (p_i^{d_i}).$$

In fact, we have the following statement.

Proposition 2.188. Fix R a Noetherian domain. Then R is a unique factorization domain if and only if every minimal prime ideal over a principal ideal is principal.

Proof. We omit this proof. The main idea to the backwards direction is to take a minimal prime ideal (p) to sufficiently high power to read off the exponent. ■

We remark that primary decomposition is not unique, in general, however.

Example 2.189. Consider $R := k[x, y]/(x^2, xy)$. As a k -module, this has basis $\{1, x, y, y^2, y^3 \dots\}$. Now, we see that we can write

$$(x) \cap (y^n) = (xy^n) = (0)$$

for any $n \in \mathbb{N}$. This is a primary decomposition: in particular, $R/(y^n)$ is a local ring (notably, all the basis elements other than 1 nilpotent, so R minus their k -span is the unique maximal ideal), and our associated prime is $(x, y)R/(y^n)$. Additionally, $R/(x)$ will have unique maximal ideal $(x, y)/(x)$, for similar reasons.

The point is that the above example provides “lots” of different minimal primary decompositions.

2.5.6 Graded Rings

We will want to consider primary decomposition for graded rings because later in life we will want to talk about projective space.

Proposition 2.190. Fix $R = R_0 \oplus R_1 \oplus \cdots$ a graded ring and M a graded module over R . Suppose that we have $m \in M$ and $\mathfrak{p} := \text{Ann } m$ a prime ideal. Then \mathfrak{p} is a graded ideal of R .

In other words, associated primes of a graded module are graded.

Proof. We have to show that

$$\mathfrak{p} = \bigoplus_{i=1}^{\infty} (R_i \cap \mathfrak{p}).$$

So we write, for some $f \in \mathfrak{p}$, that

$$f = \sum_{i=1}^p f_i,$$

where $f_i \in R_{d_i}$, and $d_1 < \cdots < d_n$. By induction, it will be enough to show that $f_1 \in \mathfrak{p}$ and then consider $f - f_1$ to continue.

Well, we may write

$$m = \sum_{j \in \mathbb{Z}}^q m_j,$$

where $m_j \in R_{e_j}$. Because $fm = 0$, the term of lowest degree, which is $f_1 m_1$, must itself vanish, so

$$f_1 m = \sum_{j=2}^p f_1 m_j.$$

Thus $\mathfrak{p} \subseteq \text{Ann } f_1 m$, so we set $I := \text{Ann } f_1 m$. If $\mathfrak{p} = \text{Ann } f_1 m$, then we are done because we have effectively removed our decomposition. Otherwise, we can find $g \in I \setminus \mathfrak{p}$. But then gf_1 annihilates m , so $gf_1 \in \mathfrak{p}$, so $f_1 \in \mathfrak{p}$, and we are done. ■