

# **K3 surfaces**

## **lecture 3: Hopf theorem**

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## Bialgebras (reminder)

**DEFINITION:** Let  $A^\bullet, B^\bullet$  be graded commutative algebras. The **tensor product algebra** is  $A^\bullet \otimes B^\bullet$  with the product  $a \otimes b \cdot a' \otimes b' = (-1)^{\tilde{b}\tilde{a}'} aa' \otimes bb'$ .

**REMARK:** By Künneth formula,  $H^\bullet(X \times Y)$  is isomorphic to  $H^\bullet(X) \otimes H^\bullet(Y)$  as an algebra.

**DEFINITION:** Let  $A^\bullet$  be a graded commutative algebra over a field  $k$ . We say that  $A^\bullet$  is a **bialgebra** if it is equipped with a homomorphism of algebras  $A \xrightarrow{\Delta} A \otimes A$ , called **comultiplication** which is **coassociative**, that is, satisfies

$$\Delta \circ \Delta \otimes \text{Id}_A = \Delta \circ \text{Id}_A \otimes \Delta : A \longrightarrow A \otimes_k A \otimes_k A.$$

**Counit** of a bialgebra is an algebra homomorphism  $A \xrightarrow{\varepsilon} k$  which satisfies  $\Delta \circ (\varepsilon \otimes \text{Id}_A) = \Delta \circ (\text{Id}_A \otimes \varepsilon) = \text{Id}_A$ . In the sequel, we shall tacitly assume that all bialgebras have counit.

**REMARK:** Coassociative comultiplication means that the dual space  $(A^\bullet)^*$  is equipped with an algebra structure. Compatibility of comultiplication with the multiplication in  $A^\bullet$  means that **this algebra structure on  $(A^\bullet)^*$  is given by a morphism of  $A$ -modules.**

## Bialgebras of finite type (reminder)

Let  $V^\bullet$  be a graded vector space. Denote by  $\text{Sym}_{gr}(V^\bullet)$  the tensor product  $\text{Sym}^*(V^{\text{even}}) \otimes \Lambda^*(V^{\text{odd}})$  with a natural grading. On  $\text{Sym}^*(V^{\text{even}}) \otimes \Lambda^*(V^{\text{odd}})$  one has a natural structure of an algebra.

**DEFINITION: Free commutative algebra** is a polynomial algebra. **Free graded commutative algebra** is  $\text{Sym}_{gr}(V^\bullet)$ , where  $V^\bullet$  is a graded vector space.

**DEFINITION: A graded algebra of finite type** is an algebra graded by  $i \geq 0$ , with all graded components finitely-dimensional.

**THEOREM: (Hopf theorem)** Let  $A^\bullet$  be a graded bialgebra of finite type over a field  $k$  of characteristic 0. **Then  $A^\bullet$  is a free graded commutative  $k$ -algebra.**

**REMARK:** This allows one to compute the multiplicative structure **on all Lie groups and on all loop spaces of finite CW-spaces.**

**REMARK:** For any Lie group  $H^*(G)$  is finite-dimensional, hence  **$H^*(G)$  is isomorphic to a Grassmann algebra.** In particular,  $\dim H^*(G) = 2^n$ .

**Heinz Hopf (1894-1971)**



Heinz Hopf (1894-1971)

## Hopf algebras

**DEFINITION:** A bialgebra is called a **Hopf algebra** if it is equipped with a homomorphism  $A \xrightarrow{S} A$  ("**the antipode map**"), and the following diagram is commutative:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 & & A \otimes A & \xrightarrow{S \otimes \text{Id}} & A \otimes A & & \\
 & \nearrow \Delta & & & & \searrow \text{mult} & \\
 A & & & & & & A \\
 & \xrightarrow{\varepsilon} & k & \xrightarrow{1} & & & \\
 & \searrow \Delta & & & & \nearrow \text{mult} & \\
 & & A \otimes A & \xrightarrow{\text{Id} \otimes S} & A \otimes A & & 
 \end{array}$$

**REMARK: The antipode condition is self-dual:** if  $A$  is a Hopf algebra, the dual space  $A^*$  is also a Hopf algebra, multiplication goes to comultiplication.

**EXAMPLE:** Let  $N$  be a group, and  $C(N)$  the space of functions on  $N$  equipped with the bialgebra structure. Then the map  $n \rightarrow n^{-1}$  defines an antipode structure on  $C(N)$ . We obtain that **the algebra  $C(N)$  of functions on a group is a Hopf algebra** (check this).

**EXAMPLE:** Let  $G$  be a topological group, and  $H^*(G)$  its cohomology algebra. Consider the map  $H^*(G) \xrightarrow{S} H^*(G)$ , induced by  $x \rightarrow x^{-1}$ . **Then  $H^*(G)$  is a Hopf algebra** (check this).

## Primitive elements in a bialgebra

**DEFINITION:** An element  $x$  of a bialgebra is called **primitive** if  $\Delta(x) = x \otimes 1 + 1 \otimes x$ .

**REMARK:** First, the Hopf theorem is proven for all bialgebras, generated (multiplicatively) by the primitive elements, and then we prove that finite type bialgebras are generated by primitive elements.

**DEFINITION:** Let  $A$  be a bialgebra, and  $P \subset A$  the space of primitive elements. Consider the natural homomorphism  $\text{Sym}_{gr}(P) \xrightarrow{\psi} A$ . We say that  $A$  **is free up to degree  $k$**  if  $\bigoplus^{i \leq k} \text{Sym}_{gr}^i(P) \xrightarrow{\psi} A$  is an embedding.

**REMARK:** The following lemma **immediately implies Hopf theorem for all bialgebras generated by primitive elements.**

**LEMMA:** Let  $A^\bullet$  be a bialgebra which is free up to degree  $k$ . **Then  $A^\bullet$  is free up to degree  $k + 1$ .**

## Hopf theorem for bialgebras generated by primitive elements

**LEMMA:** Let  $A^\bullet$  be a bialgebra which is free up to degree  $k$ . **Then  $A^\bullet$  is free up to degree  $k + 1$ .**

**Proof. Step 1:** Let  $\{x_i\}$  be a basis in the space  $P$  of primitive elements. Consider a polynomial relation of degree  $k + 1$ , say,  $Q(x_1, \dots, x_n) = 0$ , and represent it as a polynomial of  $x_1$  with coefficients which are polynomials of  $x_2, \dots, x_n$ :  $Q = Q_m x_1^m + Q_{m-1} x_1^{m-1} + \dots + Q_0$ . Clearly,  $\Delta(Q) = Q \otimes 1 + 1 \otimes Q + R$ , where  $R \in \mathfrak{A} := \left( \bigoplus^{i \leq k} \text{Sym}_{gr}^i(P) \right) \otimes \left( \bigoplus^{i \leq k} \text{Sym}_{gr}^i(P) \right)$ .

**Step 2:** Since  $\psi : \bigoplus^{i \leq k} \text{Sym}_{gr}^i(P) \xrightarrow{\psi} A$  is an embedding, and elements of  $\mathfrak{A}$  belong to  $\text{im } \psi \otimes \text{im } \psi$ , each element of  $\mathfrak{A}$  can be uniquely represented as a sum of monomials  $\lambda \otimes \mu$ , where  $\lambda, \mu$  are degree  $\leq k$  monomials on  $x_i$ . Denote by  $\Pi : \mathfrak{A} \rightarrow x_1 \otimes \left( \bigoplus^{i \leq k} \text{Sym}_{gr}^i(P) \right)$  the projection to the sum of all monomials of form  $x_1 \otimes \mu$ . Since  $\Delta(x_i) = x_i \otimes 1 + 1 \otimes x_i$ , one has  $\Delta(x_1^m) = (x_1 \otimes 1 + 1 \otimes x_1)^m$ , **giving  $\Pi(\Delta(x_1^m)) = mx_1 \otimes x_1^{m-1}$ .**

**Step 3:** Let  $\Pi(R) := x_1 \otimes R_0$ . Since  $Q = 0$  in  $A$ , its component  $R_0$  is also equal to 0. Then Step 2 gives  $0 = x_1 \otimes R_0 = x_1 \otimes \sum_{i=1}^m mx_1^{m-1} Q_m$  where  $Q_i$  are polynomials defined in Step 1. Then all  $Q_i = 0$ . ■

## Algebras with filtration

**REMARK:** Step 3 of the proof of previous lemma uses  $\text{char } k = 0$ . **Hopf theorem is false for  $\text{char } k > 0$ .**

**DEFINITION: Filtration** on an algebra  $A$  is a sequence of subspaces  $A_0 \supset A_1 \supset A_2 \supset \dots$  such that  $A_i \cdot A_j \subset A_{i+j}$

**EXAMPLE:** Let  $I \subset A$  be an ideal. **the  $I$ -adic filtration** is the filtration by the degrees of the ideal  $I$ :  $A \supset I \supset I^2 \supset I^3 \supset \dots$

**DEFINITION:** Let  $A_0 \supset A_1 \supset A_2 \supset \dots$  be a filtered algebra. **The associated graded algebra** is  $A_{gr} := \bigoplus_i A_i/A_{i+1}$ .

**LEMMA:** Let  $A \supset I \supset I^2 \supset I^3 \supset \dots$  be an adic filtration, and  $A_{gr} := \bigoplus_i I^i/I^{i+1}$  the associated graded algebra. **Then  $A_{gr}$  is generated by its first and second graded components  $A/I \oplus I/I^2$ .**

**Proof:** Indeed,  $I^k/I^{k+1}$  is generated by products of  $k$  elements in  $(I/I^2)$ . ■



## The augmentation ideal

**DEFINITION:** **Augmentation ideal** in a bialgebra is the kernel of the counit homomorphism  $\varepsilon : A \longrightarrow k$ .

**CLAIM:** Let  $Z \subset A$  be the augmentation ideal. Then

$$\Delta(x) = 1 \otimes x + x \otimes 1 \pmod{Z \otimes Z}. \quad (**)$$

for any  $x \in Z$ .

**Proof:** Indeed,  $Z \otimes Z = \ker(\varepsilon \otimes \text{Id}_A) \cap \ker(\text{Id}_A \otimes \varepsilon)$ . The counit condition gives  $x = [\varepsilon \otimes \text{Id}_A](\Delta(x))$  and  $x = [\text{Id}_A \otimes \varepsilon](\Delta(x))$ , while

$$[\varepsilon \otimes \text{Id}_A](1 \otimes x + x \otimes 1) = \varepsilon(x) + x = [\text{Id}_A \otimes \varepsilon](1 \otimes x + x \otimes 1).$$

Comparing these equations, we obtain

$$\Delta(x) - 1 \otimes x - x \otimes 1 \in Z \otimes Z.$$

when  $\varepsilon(x) = 0$ . ■

## Proof of Hopf theorem

**THEOREM: (Hopf theorem)** Let  $A$  be a graded bialgebra of finite type over a field  $k$  of characteristic 0. **Then  $A$  is a free graded commutative  $k$ -algebra.**

**Proof. Step 1:** Consider the filtration of  $A$  by the degrees of the augmentation ideal  $Z$ , and let  $A_{gr} := \bigoplus_i Z^i / Z^{i+1}$  be the associated graded algebra. **Since  $\Delta(Z) = 1 \otimes x + x \otimes 1 \pmod{(Z \otimes Z)}$ , one has  $\Delta(Z^p) \subset \bigoplus_{i+j=p} Z^i \otimes Z^j$ .**

**Step 2:** Consider the filtration on  $A \otimes A$  by the powers of the ideal  $\tilde{Z} := Z \otimes 1 + 1 \otimes Z$ . The natural map

$$\bigoplus_{p+q=n} \frac{Z^p}{Z^{p+1}} \otimes \frac{Z^q}{Z^{q+1}} \longrightarrow \bigoplus_n \frac{\tilde{Z}^n}{\tilde{Z}^{n+1}}$$

is by construction surjective, and takes graded components to graded components of the same dimension, hence  $A_{gr} \otimes A_{gr}$  is isomorphic to  $\bigoplus_n \frac{\tilde{Z}^n}{\tilde{Z}^{n+1}}$  (these components are finite dimension because  $A^*$  is of finite type). Step 1 implies that  $\Delta(Z^n) \subset \tilde{Z}^n$ , hence **the comultiplication  $\Delta : A_{gr} \longrightarrow A_{gr} \otimes A_{gr}$  induces a bialgebra structure on  $A_{gr}$ .**

## Proof of Hopf theorem (2)

**Step 3:** The algebra  $A_{gr}$  is multiplicatively generated by  $Z^1/Z^2$ . Since  $\Delta(x) = 1 \otimes x + x \otimes 1 \pmod{(Z \otimes Z)}$ , all elements of  $Z^1/Z^2$  are primitive in  $A_{gr}$ . Therefore, the algebra  $A_{gr}$  is generated by primitive elements. This implies that  $A_{gr}$  is a free algebra generated by its space of primitive elements.

**Step 4:** Let  $x_i$  be a basis in the space of primitive elements of  $A_{gr}$ , and let  $\tilde{x}_i$  be a representative of each of  $x_i \in Z^k/Z^{k+1}$  in  $Z_k$ , of the same parity as  $x_i$ . Since there is no non-trivial relations between  $x_i$ , there are no non-trivial relations between  $\tilde{x}_i$ . It remains to show that  $\tilde{x}_i$  generate  $A$ .

**Step 5:** Return to the grading originally given on  $A$ . Since  $\varepsilon$  is compatible with grading, the ideal  $Z$  is a direct sum of its graded components, and the algebra  $A_{gr}$  is equipped with a grading induced from  $A$ . Dimensions of the graded components  $A^p$  and  $A_{gr}^p$  of  $A$  and  $A_{gr}$  are equal, because any filtered space is isomorphic as a vector space to its associated graded space. Let  $\{y_i\}$  be a set of monomials of  $x_i \in A_{br}$  giving a basis in the graded component  $A_{gr}^p$ , and  $\{\tilde{y}_i\}$  the corresponding monomials in  $A^p$ . Since  $\{y_i\}$  are linearly independent, the monomials  $\{\tilde{y}_i\}$  are linearly independent, and since  $\dim A^p = \dim A_{gr}^p$ , these monomials generate  $A^p$ . We have shown that  $A$  is freely generated by the vectors  $\{\tilde{y}_i\}$ . ■

## Grassmannian $\text{Gr}(n) := \text{Gr}(n, \infty)$ as a classifying space (reminder)

**DEFINITION:** Consider the natural embeddings

$$\text{Gr}(n, m) \hookrightarrow \text{Gr}(n, m + 1) \hookrightarrow \text{Gr}(n, m + 2) \hookrightarrow \dots,$$

associated with the maps  $\mathbb{K}^m \hookrightarrow \mathbb{K}^{m+1} \hookrightarrow \mathbb{K}^{m+2} \hookrightarrow \dots$  and **let  $\text{Gr}(n) := \text{Gr}(n, \infty)$  denote the union of all these spaces** (that is, the inductive limit of cellular complexes). By definition,  $\text{Gr}(n)$  is the space of  $n$ -dimensional subspaces in  $\mathbb{K}^\infty$ , where  $\mathbb{K}^\infty$  denotes  $\bigoplus_{i=0}^{\infty} \mathbb{K}$ .

**DEFINITION:** **The fundamental bundle** on  $\text{Gr}(n)$  is the vector bundle with fiber  $W$  at a point  $W \subset \mathbb{K}^\infty$ .

**THEOREM:** Let  $B$  be a vector bundle of rank  $n$  on a cellular space  $X$ . Then there exists a continuous map  $\varphi : X \rightarrow \text{Gr}(n)$  such that  **$B$  is isomorphic to the pullback  $\varphi^* B_{\text{fun}}$  of the fundamental bundle.**

**Proof:** Last lecture. ■

**REMARK:** In fact,  $\text{Gr}(n)$  is the classifying space of vector bundles of rank  $n$ , in the sense that **isomorphism classes of vector bundles on  $X$  are in bijective correspondence with homotopy classes of maps  $\varphi : X \rightarrow \text{Gr}(n)$ .**

## The infinite Grassmannian (reminder)

**DEFINITION:** Choose a basis  $x_0, x_1, \dots$ , in  $\mathbb{C}^\infty$  or  $\mathbb{R}^\infty$ , and let  $R: \mathbb{C}^\infty \rightarrow \mathbb{C}^\infty$  be defined as above,  $R(x_i) = x_{i+1}$ . Consider the embedding  $Gr(n, \infty) \hookrightarrow Gr(n+1, \infty)$ , taking the space  $L \subset \mathbb{C}^\infty$  to  $\langle x_0, R(L) \rangle$ . The union (inductive limit)  $\bigcup_n Gr(n, \infty)$  is called **the infinite Grassmannian**, and is denoted as  $BU$ .

**DEFINITION:** Vector bundles  $B_1, B_2$  are called **stably equivalent** if  $B_1 \oplus U_1 \cong B_2 \oplus U_2$ , where  $U_i$  are trivial vector bundles.

**THEOREM:** Let  $X$  be a finite cellular space. Then **homotopy classes of maps  $X \rightarrow BG$  are in bijective correspondence with classes of stable equivalence of vector bundles.**

**Proof:** Left as an exercise. ■

## *BU* as an H-space (reminder)

**Bott periodicity identifies the space of loops on  $U$  and  $BU$** ; this implies that  $BU$  is an H-space (loop spaces are H-spaces). However, the H-structure on  $BU$  can be constructed explicitly.

**PROPOSITION:** Consider a map  $S : \mathbb{C}^\infty \times \mathbb{C}^\infty \longrightarrow \mathbb{C}^\infty$  taking the basis vectors  $x_i$  of the first space to  $x_{2i}$  and the basis vectors of the second space to  $x_{2i+1}$ . Then  $L, L' \longrightarrow S(L, L')$  **defines a structure of an H-space on the infinite Grassmannian  $BU$ .**

**Proof:** We need to show H-associativity, which would follow if we prove that any permutation of basis elements is homotopic to identity. This is left as an exercise. ■

**COROLLARY:**  $H^*(BU, \mathbb{Q})$  **is a free supercommutative algebra.**

**Proof:** Follows from Hopf theorem. ■

**REMARK:** It is not hard to write a cellular decomposition for the Grassmannian (“Schubert cells”); all cells are even-dimensional, which gives the dimensions of the groups  $H^i(BG)$ . Then the Hopf theorem can be used to compute the cohomology algebra. This also implies that **the algebra  $H^*(BG)$  is commutative (and therefore, free polynomial).**

## Cohomology of $BU$ (reminder)

**CLAIM:**  $H^*(BU, \mathbb{Q})$  is a free polynomial algebra generated by classes  $c_1, c_2, \dots$  in all even degrees.

**Proof:** Consider the principal  $U$ -bundle  $E \rightarrow BU$ . Cohomology of  $U$  is a free graded commutative algebra with one generator in each odd degree, as shown earlier today.

$E_2^{p,q}$ -term of the Leray-Serre spectral sequence is  $H^p(BU) \otimes H^q(U)$ . Since this sequence converges to 0, every generator of  $H^*(U)$  has to go to a generator of  $H^*(BU)$ .

For each generator of  $H^*(U)$  of degree  $2n + 1$ , the corresponding generator has degree  $2n + 2$ , **hence there is one generator in each even degree.** ■

## Chern classes: axiomatic definition

**DEFINITION: Chern classes** are classes  $c_i(B) \in H^{2i}(X)$ ,  $i = 0, 1, 2, \dots$ , defined for each complex vector bundle  $B$  on a cellular space  $X$  and satisfying the following axioms.

1.  $c_0(B) = 1$ .
2. **functoriality:** for each continuous map  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  we have  $f^*c_i(B) = c_i(f^*B)$ .
3. **Whitney formula:**  $c_*(B \oplus B') = c_*(B)c_*(B')$ , where  $c_*(B) = \sum_i c_i(B)$  (“full Chern class”).
4. **normalization:** Let  $\mathcal{O}(i)$  be the standard bundle on a complex projective space. Then  $c_1(\mathcal{O}(1)) = [H]$ , where  $[H]$  is the fundamental class of a hyperplane section. For all  $i > 1$ , we have  $c_i(\mathcal{O}(1)) = 0$ .

**REMARK:** From functoriality it follows that  $c_i(B) = 0$  when  $B$  is trivial and  $i > 0$ .



## Chern classes on $BU(1)^n$

To prove the uniqueness of Chern classes, we start with the following exercise.

**EXERCISE:** Prove that  $BU(1) = \mathbb{C}P^\infty$ .

**DEFINITION:** The fundamental bundle on  $BU(1)^n$  is a rank  $n$  bundle on  $BU(1)^n = (\mathbb{C}P^\infty)^n$  obtained by taking a direct sum of the fundamental bundles pulled back from each  $BU(1)$ .

**REMARK:** The Chern classes of the fundamental bundle on  $BU(1)^n$  are uniquely determined from the axioms. Indeed, the fundamental bundle on  $BU(1) = \mathbb{C}P^\infty$  is  $\mathcal{O}(1)$ , its Chern class is the generator of  $H^*(\mathbb{C}P^\infty, \mathbb{Q}) = \mathbb{Q}([H])$ , and the Chern classes of a direct sum are determined from the Whitney formula.

**THEOREM: (Splitting principle):** Let  $\varphi_{\text{fun}} : BU(1)^n \rightarrow BU$  be the map associated with the fundamental bundle composed with the embedding  $\text{Gr}(n) \rightarrow BU$ . Then  $\varphi_{\text{fun}}$  induces an injective map on cohomology up to degree  $n$ , and takes the primitive generator  $\chi_d \in H^{2d}(BU)$  to the class  $\lambda \sum_{i=1}^n z_i^d$  in the polynomial algebra  $H^*(BU(1)^n) = \mathbb{Q}[z_1, \dots, z_n]$ .

**Proof:** Next lecture, if there is demand. ■

## Chern classes: uniqueness

**THEOREM:** The Chern classes are uniquely determined from the axioms.

**Proof. Step 1:** Every bundle is a pullback of the fundamental bundle on  $BU(n) = \text{Gr}(n, \infty)$ . Therefore, the Chern classes are obtained as a pullbacks of the Chern classes of the fundamental bundle on  $BU(n)$ . Since  $c_i(B) = c_i(B \oplus \text{trivial bundle})$ , **these classes are restrictions of classes in  $H^*(BU)$ .**

**Step 2:** Consider the map  $BU(1)^n \longrightarrow BU(n)$  induced by the fundamental bundle. This map is injective on cohomology, as follows from the splitting principle. Since the Chern classes of the fundamental bundle on  $BU(1)^n$  are determined from the axioms, and  $H^*(BU(n)) \subset H^*(BU(1)^n)$ , **the Chern classes of the fundamental bundle on  $BU(n)$  are determined from the axioms. ■**

**REMARK:** We just **proved uniqueness of Chern classes satisfying the axiomatic definition.** The easiest way to show existence of Chern classes satisfying the axioms is **to prove the Hopf theorem and use its proof.**

## Primitive generators of $H^*(BU)$

**REMARK:** Any class  $a \in H^i(BU)$  can be evaluated on a bundle  $B$  over  $X$ , producing a class  $a(B) \in H^i(X)$ . Indeed,  $B$  is the pullback of the fundamental bundle  $B_{\text{fun}}$  on  $\text{Gr}(n)$ , giving a map  $\varphi_B : X \rightarrow BU$ , and we set  $a(B) = \varphi_B^*(a)$ .

**REMARK:** Historically, this was done by using invariant polynomials on curvature, for some Hermitian connection on  $B$ .

**REMARK:** Consider a map  $\varphi = (\varphi_1, \varphi_2) : X \rightarrow BU \times BU$ , associated to bundles  $B_1, B_2$ . Composition of  $\varphi$  and the H-multiplication map  $\mu : BU \times BU \rightarrow BU$  produces a map  $\varphi \circ \mu : X \rightarrow BU$  associated with the bundle  $B_1 \oplus B_2$ . Therefore, the comultiplication map  $\Delta : H^*(BU) \rightarrow H^*(BU) \otimes H^*(BU)$  takes  $\varphi^* : H^*(BU) \otimes H^*(BU) \rightarrow H^*(X)$  to  $\Delta \circ \varphi^* : H^*(BU) \rightarrow H^*(X)$  mapping a class in  $\text{Map}(X, BU \times BU)$  associated with the pair  $B_1, B_2$ , to the class in  $\text{Map}(X, BU)$  associated with  $B_1 \oplus B_2$ .

**COROLLARY:** Let  $x \in H^*(BU)$ . Then  $x(B_1 \oplus B_2) = \Delta(x)(B_1, B_2)$ . ■

**COROLLARY:** Let  $x \in H^*(BU)$  be a primitive class. Then  $x(B_1 \oplus B_2) = x(B_1) + x(B_2)$ .

**Proof:** Since  $\Delta(x) = x \otimes 1 + 1 \otimes x$ , the class  $\Delta(x)$  evaluated on  $B_1, B_2$  is equal to  $x(B_1) + x(B_2)$ . ■

## Classes satisfying the Whitney formula

**REMARK:** We will construct the full Chern class as  $c_*(B)$ , where  $c_* \in H^*(BU)$  is a certain cohomology class.

**REMARK:** Let  $\chi_i \in H^{2i}(BU)$  be a primitive generator; by Hopf theorem, this class is unique up to a constant. Since  $\chi_i(B_1 \oplus B_2) = \chi_i(B_1) + \chi_i(B_2)$ , **the class  $C := e^{\sum_i a_i \chi_i}$  satisfies the Whitney formula  $C(B_1 \oplus B_2) = C(B_1)C(B_2)$ , for any collection of coefficients  $a_i \in \mathbb{Q}$ .** To construct Chern classes satisfying the axioms above, **it remains to arrange the coefficients  $a_i$  in such a way that  $C(\mathcal{O}(1)) = 1 + [H]$ .**

**LEMMA:** Consider the natural map  $\varphi : BU(1) \rightarrow BU$  associated with the fundamental bundle on  $BU(1)$ . **Then  $\varphi^*(\chi_i) \neq 0$ .**

**Proof:** Follows immediately from the splitting principle, because  $\varphi^*(\chi_i) = \lambda \sum_j z_j^n$ , and the map  $BU(1) \rightarrow BU(1)^n$  takes  $\sum_j z_j^n \in H^*(BU(1)^n)$  to  $z_1^n \in H^*(BU(1))$ . ■

## Construction of Chern classes

Existence of Chern classes is given by the following easy corollary.

**THEOREM:** Let  $\varphi : BU(1) \rightarrow BU$  be the standard map associated with the fundamental bundle. Choose the generators  $\chi_i \in H^{2i}(BU)$  in such a way that  $\varphi^*(\chi_i) = \log(1 + [H])$ , and let  $c_*(B) := \exp(\sum_i \chi_i)$ . **Then  $c_*(\mathcal{O}(1)) = 1 + [H]$  and  $c_*(B_1 \oplus B_2) = c_*(B_1)c_*(B_2)$ .**

**Proof:**  $c_*(\mathcal{O}(1)) = 1 + [H]$  because  $\varphi^*(\chi_i) = \log(1 + [H])$ , hence  $\exp(\varphi^*(\sum_i \chi_i)) = 1 + [H]$ . Whitney formula  $c_*(B_1 \oplus B_2) = c_*(B_1)c_*(B_2)$  is true when  $c_*$  is an exponent of any sum of primitive elements. ■