

Add a "philosophical  
corner"

### A Quick Introduction to Khovanov Homology

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**Abstract.** I will tell the Kauffman bracket story of the Jones polynomial as Kauffman told it in 1987, then the Khovanov homology story as Khovanov told it in 1999, and finally the "local Khovanov homology" story as I understood it in 2003. At the end of our 90 minutes we will understand what is a "Jones homology", how to generalize it to tangles and to cobordisms between tangles, and why it is computable relatively efficiently. But we will say nothing about more modern stuff — the Rasmussen invariant, Alexander and HOMFLYPT knot homologies, and the categorification of  $sl_2$  and other Lie algebras.

~~A Quick Reference Guide to Khovanov's Categorification of the Jones Polynomial~~  
The Jones Polynomial:  $J(\times) = qJ(\text{0-smoothing}) - q^2J(\text{1-smoothing})$   $J(\times) = -qJ(\text{0-smoothing}) + q^{-1}J(\text{1-smoothing})$ ;  
 $J(\emptyset) = 1$ ;  $J(\bigcirc L) = (q + q^{-1})J(L)$ .

Khovanov's construction:  $K(L)$  — a chain complex of graded  $\mathbb{Z}$ -modules;

$$K(\times) = \text{Flatten} \left( 0 \rightarrow K(\text{?})\{1\} \xrightarrow{\text{height 0}} K(\text{?})\{2\} \rightarrow 0 \right); \quad K(\times) = \text{Flatten} \left( 0 \rightarrow K(\text{?})\{-2\} \xrightarrow{\text{height -1}} K(\text{?})\{-1\} \rightarrow 0 \right);$$

$$K(\emptyset) = 0 \rightarrow \mathbb{Z} \xrightarrow{\text{height 0}} 0; \quad K(\bigcirc L) = V \otimes K(L); \quad \text{Kh}(L) = \mathcal{H}(K(L))$$

$$V = \text{span}\langle v_+, v_- \rangle; \quad \deg v_{\pm} = \pm 1; \quad q\dim V = q + q^{-1} \quad \text{with } q\dim \mathcal{O} := \sum_m q^m \dim \mathcal{O}_m;$$

$\mathcal{O}\{l\}_m := \mathcal{O}_{m-l}$  so  $q\dim \mathcal{O}\{l\} = q^l q\dim \mathcal{O}$ ; *in corner!*

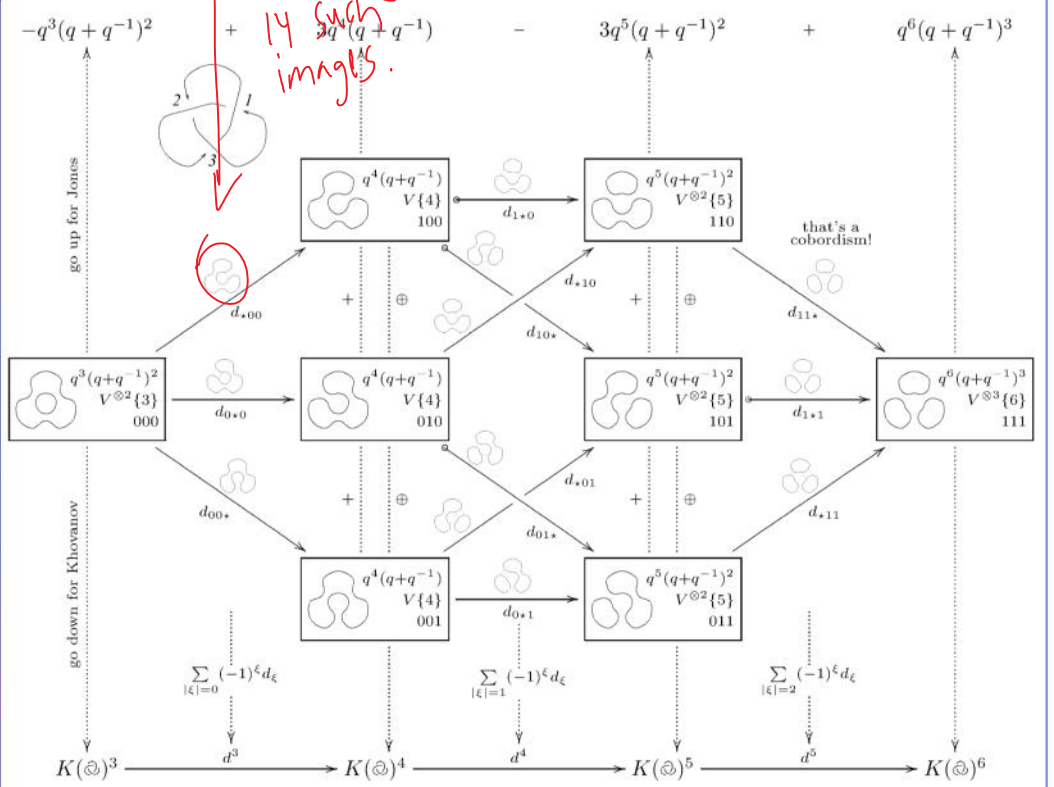
$$\begin{aligned} \left( \begin{array}{c} \bigcirc \bigcirc \bigcirc \\ \bigcirc \end{array} \right) &\rightarrow (V \otimes V \xrightarrow{m} V) \\ \left( \begin{array}{c} \bigcirc \bigcirc \\ \bigcirc \end{array} \right) &\rightarrow (V \xrightarrow{\Delta} V \otimes V) \end{aligned}$$

$$m: \begin{cases} v_+ \otimes v_- \mapsto v_- & v_+ \otimes v_+ \mapsto v_+ \\ v_- \otimes v_+ \mapsto v_- & v_- \otimes v_- \mapsto 0 \end{cases}$$

$$\Delta: \begin{cases} v_+ \mapsto v_+ \otimes v_- + v_- \otimes v_+ \\ v_- \mapsto v_- \otimes v_- \end{cases}$$

~~This is a Frobenius Algebra. At a TOPFT level.~~

Example:



*consider modernizing 14 such images.*

*why bother?*



(here  $(-1)^{\xi} := (-1)^{\sum_{i < j} \xi_i}$  if  $\xi_j = \star$ )  
**Theorem 1.** The graded Euler characteristic of  $K(L)$  is  $J(L)$ .  
**Theorem 2.** The homology  $\text{Kh}(L)$  is a link invariant.  
**Theorem 3.**  $\text{Kh}(L)$  is strictly stronger than  $J(L)$ :  $\text{Kh}(\bar{5}_1) \neq \text{Kh}(10_{132})$  whereas  $J(\bar{5}_1) = J(10_{132})$ .  
**References.** Khovanov's arXiv:math.QA/9908171 and arXiv:math.QA/0103190 and my <http://www.math.toronto.edu/~drorbn/papers/Categorification/>.

# Local Khovanov Homology (1)

(an outdated overview)

The Jones polynomial:

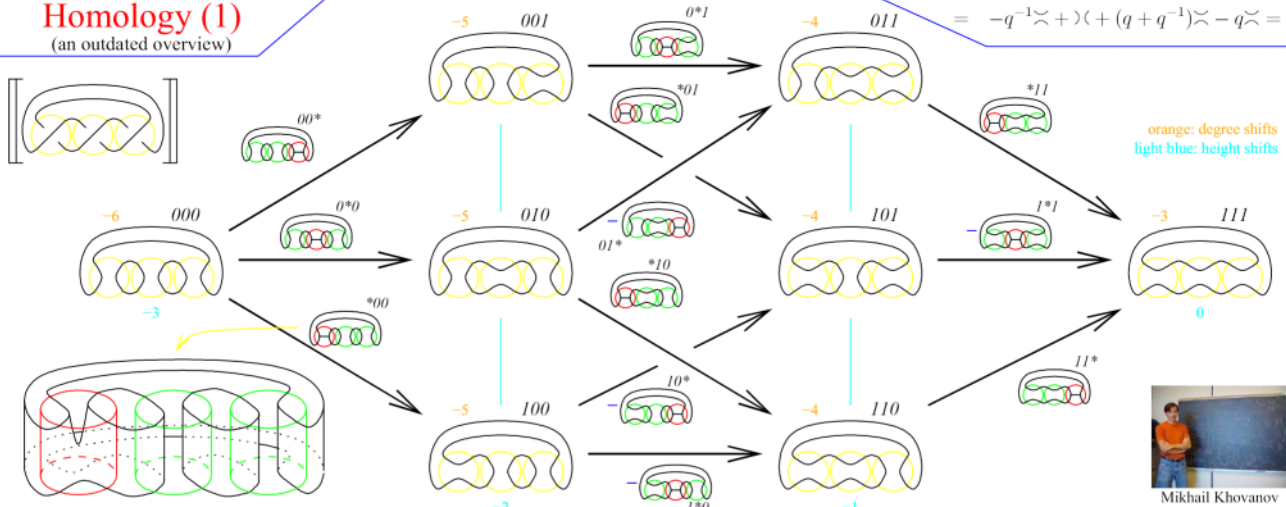
$$J: \text{link} \mapsto q^2 \langle \text{link} \rangle, \quad J: \text{link} \mapsto -q^{-2} \langle \text{link} \rangle + q^{-1} \langle \text{link} \rangle$$

$$\bigcirc = q + q^{-1}$$

$$J: \text{crossing} \mapsto -q^{-1} \langle \text{crossing} \rangle + \langle \text{crossing} \rangle + \langle \text{crossing} \rangle - q \langle \text{crossing} \rangle$$

$$= -q^{-1} \langle \text{crossing} \rangle + (q + q^{-1}) \langle \text{crossing} \rangle - q \langle \text{crossing} \rangle$$

R2



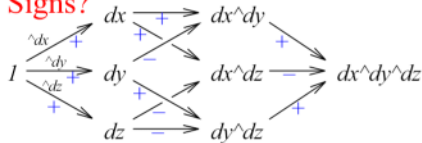
## What is it?

A cube for each knot/link projection;

Vertices: All fillings of with or with .

Edges: All fillings of  $I \times \text{link}$  = with  $I \times \text{filling diagram}$  = or with  $I \times \text{filling diagram}$  = and precisely one .

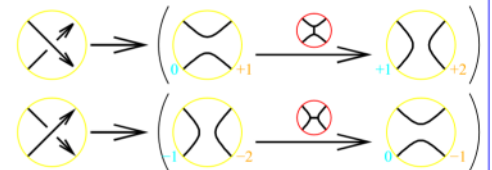
## Signs?



## More crossings?



## General Crossings



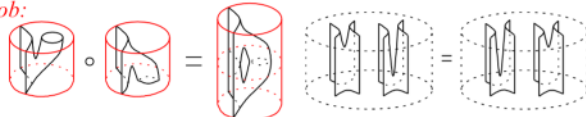
## Where does it live?

In  $Kom(Mat(\langle Cob \rangle / \{S, T, G, NC\})) / \text{homotopy}$

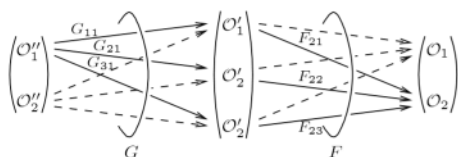
*Kom*: Complexes *Mat*: Matrices

*Cob*: Cobordisms  $\langle \dots \rangle$ : Formal lin. comb.

*Cob*:



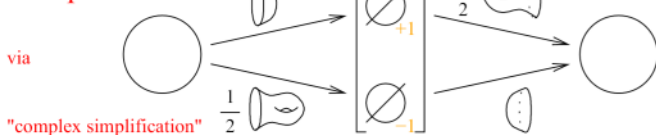
*Mat(C)*:



S: = 0    T: = 2    G: = 0

NC:  $2 \cdot \text{cylinder} = \text{cylinder} + \text{cylinder} + \text{cylinder}$

## Computable!



## Complexes:

$$\Omega = (\Omega^{-n} \rightarrow \Omega^{-n+1} \rightarrow \dots \rightarrow \Omega^{n+1})$$

## Morphisms:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \dots & \rightarrow & \Omega_0^{r-1} & \xrightarrow{d^{r-1}} & \Omega_0^r & \xrightarrow{d^r} & \Omega_0^{r+1} & \rightarrow \dots \\ & & \downarrow F^{r-1} & & \downarrow F^r & & \downarrow F^{r+1} & \\ \dots & \rightarrow & \Omega_1^{r-1} & \xrightarrow{d^{r-1}} & \Omega_1^r & \xrightarrow{d^r} & \Omega_1^{r+1} & \rightarrow \dots \end{array}$$

## Homotopies:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \Omega_0^{r-1} & \xrightarrow{d^{r-1}} & \Omega_0^r & \xrightarrow{d^r} & \Omega_0^{r+1} \\ \downarrow F^{r-1} & \swarrow G^{r-1} & \downarrow F^r & \swarrow G^r & \downarrow F^{r+1} \\ \Omega_1^{r-1} & \xrightarrow{d^{r-1}} & \Omega_1^r & \xrightarrow{d^r} & \Omega_1^{r+1} \end{array}$$

$$F^r - G^r = h^{r+1} d^r + d^{r-1} h^r$$

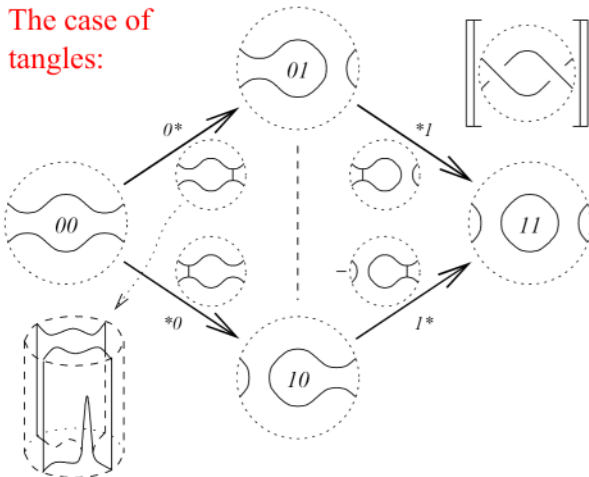
**The Main Point.** "The cube",  $\text{Kh}(L)$ , is an up-to-homotopy invariant of knots and links. It's Euler characteristic is the Jones polynomial, yet it is strictly stronger than the Jones polynomial. It is functorial (in the appropriate sense) and practically computable.

- The Categorification Speculative Paradigm.**
- Every object in math is the Euler characteristic of a complex.
  - Every operation lifts to an operation between complexes.
  - Every identity remains true, up to homotopy.

All arrows in an arbitrary additive category!

## Local Khovanov Homology (2)

The case of tangles:



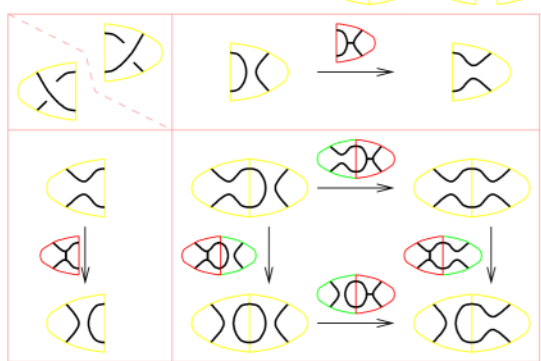
The Reduction Lemma. If  $\phi$  is an isomorphism then the complex

$$[C] \xrightarrow{\begin{pmatrix} \alpha \\ \beta \end{pmatrix}} \begin{bmatrix} b_1 \\ D \end{bmatrix} \xrightarrow{\begin{pmatrix} \phi & \delta \\ \gamma & \epsilon \end{pmatrix}} \begin{bmatrix} b_2 \\ E \end{bmatrix} \xrightarrow{(\mu \ \nu)} [F]$$

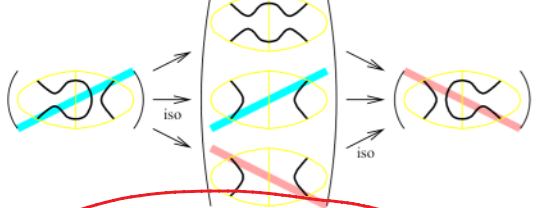
is isomorphic to the (direct sum) complex

$$[C] \xrightarrow{\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \beta \end{pmatrix}} \begin{bmatrix} b_1 \\ D \end{bmatrix} \xrightarrow{\begin{pmatrix} \phi & 0 \\ 0 & \epsilon - \gamma\phi^{-1}\delta \end{pmatrix}} \begin{bmatrix} b_2 \\ E \end{bmatrix} \xrightarrow{(0 \ \nu)} [F]$$

Invariance under R2.



After delooping:



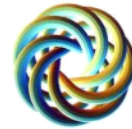
Kurt Reidemeister

- <http://www.math.toronto.edu/~drorbn/papers/Cobordism/>
- <http://www.math.toronto.edu/~drorbn/papers/FastKh/>
- <http://www.math.toronto.edu/~drorbn/Talks/Hamburg-1208/>

Kh(T(7,6)).



In 1 day says



Old techniques:

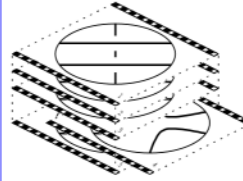
~1,000 years,  
~1GGB RAM.

(now down to seconds)

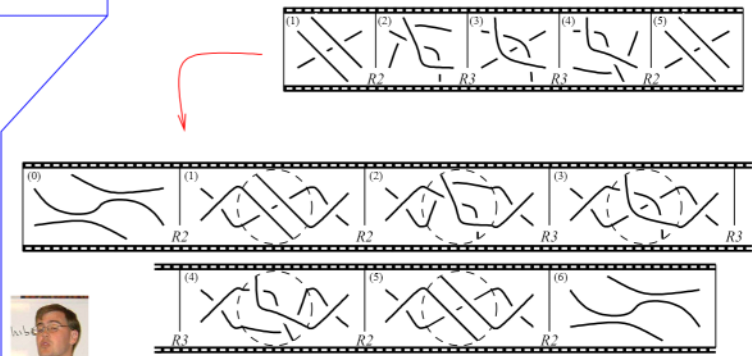
$\dim_j H_r$  is given by:

$j \setminus r$	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
57																					
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Functoriality / cobordisms.



M. Jacobsson



J. Rasmussen: Leads to a no-analysis proof of a conjecture by Milnor.

A more general theory: Remove G and NC, add

$$4Tu: \begin{matrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 3 \\ 4 \end{matrix} + \begin{matrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 3 \\ 4 \end{matrix} = \begin{matrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 3 \\ 4 \end{matrix} + \begin{matrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 3 \\ 4 \end{matrix}$$

(minor further revisions are necessary)

"God created the knots,  
all else in topology is the work of mortals"

Leopold Kronecker (modified)



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