

Title: Higher spin symmetry in gravity and string

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Abstract: Higher spin symmetries are gauge symmetries sourced by massless particles with spin greater than two. When coupled with diffeomorphism, they give rise to higher spin gravity. After a review on higher spin gravity, I will discuss its holography and its embedding in the string theory. Finally I will talk about some applications of higher spin symmetry, both in string theory and in QFT.

Higher spin symmetry in gravity and string

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Perimeter, October 9, 2019

Based on work with *Datta, Eberhardt, Gaberdiel, Lin, Longhi, Gopakumar, Peng, Theisen, Wang, and Zhang*

Brief history of Higher-spin theories

Massless higher spin particles in **flat space**

- Free spin- s field:

Fronsdal '78

totally-symmetric, double traceless, rank- s tensor $\phi_{\mu_1\mu_2\dots\mu_s}$
with gauge symmetry $\delta\phi_{\mu_1\mu_2\dots\mu_s} = \partial_{\{\mu_1}\zeta_{\mu_2\dots\mu_s\}}$ (ζ : traceless)

$$\text{DOF} = \frac{(D-4+2s)(D-5+s)!}{(D-4)!s!} = \begin{cases} D-2 & \text{for } s=1 \\ \frac{D(D-3)}{2} & \text{for } s=2 \\ 0 & \text{for } D=3 \\ 2 & \text{for } D=4 \end{cases}$$

- Interacting, non-minimal coupling to gravity

Bengtsson Bengtsson Brink '83, Metsaev '91

No-go against coupling HS to gravity (minimally) in flat space

Theorem (Coleman-Mandula '67)

S-matrix of interacting theory in flat space cannot have higher-spin symmetry

Vasiliev's higher-spin theory

Vasiliev: Go to AdS or dS

Fradkin Vasiliev '87

- No S-matrix in $(A)dS$
- $\ell_{(A)dS}$ serves as expansion parameter to control higher derivatives expansions. (non-local \longrightarrow quasi-local.)

Vasiliev system

1. lives in AdS_d or dS_d
2. one field per spin from $s = 2, 3, \dots, \infty$

Vasiliev '91, Sundborg '01, Witten '01, Mikhailov '02, Klebanov-Polyakov '02

3. Extension of Einstein gravity
 - graviton couples to an infinite tower of massless higher-spin particles
 - diffeomorphism coupled with higher-spin gauge symmetry
 - Extension of Riemannian geometry
4. No lagrangian, a system of equation of motions.

Simplest higher spin gravity

3D Einstein gravity + negative c.c. $\Leftrightarrow \mathfrak{sl}(2) \oplus \mathfrak{sl}(2)$ Chern-Simon

From pure Einstein gravity to **pure higher spin gravity**:

$$\boxed{\mathfrak{sl}(2) \longrightarrow \mathfrak{sl}(N)}$$

Action: $S = S_{\text{CS}}[A] - S_{\text{CS}}[\tilde{A}]$

$$S_{\text{CS}}[A] = \frac{k}{4\pi} \int_{\mathcal{M}} \text{Tr}[AdA + \frac{2}{3}A^3] \quad \text{with } A, \tilde{A} \in \mathfrak{sl}(N, \mathbb{R})$$

Translate to metric-like formalism

1. Dreibein $e = \frac{A - \tilde{A}}{2}$ and spin connection $\omega = \frac{A + \tilde{A}}{2}$
2. metric and spin-3 field

$$G_{\mu\nu} = \text{Tr}[e_\mu e_\nu] \quad \varphi_{\mu\nu\rho}^{(3)} = \text{Tr}[e_{\{\mu} e_\nu e_{\rho\}}] \quad \dots$$

$\mathfrak{sl}(N) \oplus \mathfrak{sl}(N)$ Chern-Simons theory — Spectrum

Spectrum of $\mathfrak{sl}(N)$ Chern-Simons theory

1. Choose an $\mathfrak{sl}(2)$ subalgebra that corresponds to spin-2:

$$\text{spin-2} : \quad \{L_1, \quad L_0, \quad L_{-1}\}$$

2. Decompose $\mathfrak{sl}(N)$ in terms of irreps of the gravitational $\mathfrak{sl}(2)$

$$\text{spin-}s : \quad \{W_m^{(s)}\} \quad m = -s + 1, \dots, s - 1$$

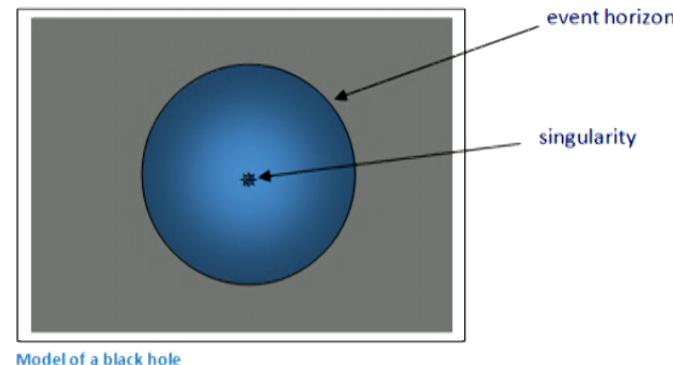
Principal embedding: 1 spin- s field for each $s = 2, \dots, N$

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} W_3^{(4)} & W_2^{(4)} & W_1^{(4)} & W_0^{(4)} & W_{-1}^{(4)} & W_{-2}^{(4)} & W_{-3}^{(4)} \\ W_2^{(3)} & W_1^{(3)} & W_0^{(3)} & W_{-1}^{(3)} & W_{-2}^{(3)} & & \\ L_1 & L_0 & & L_{-1} & & & \end{array}$$

$\mathfrak{sl}(N) \oplus \mathfrak{sl}(N)$ Chern-Simons theory — Classical solutions

1. No propagating degrees of freedom
2. Non-trivial classical solutions such as black holes

Black hole in Einstein gravity:
singularity behind horizon
(cosmic censorship)



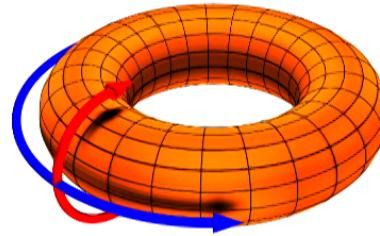
Model of a black hole

3. Problem of defining black holes in higher spin gravity:
Singularity and horizon are **not gauge-invariant** concepts.
(metric is **coupled** to higher-spin fields)
4. Question: how to define black hole in higher spin gravity"

Higher-spin black hole and conical surplus

Cosmic censorship = smoothness condition

gauge theory: $\text{Hol}_c(A) \equiv \mathcal{P}e^{\oint_c A}$ is trivial around a shrinkable cycle.



- Shrinkable cycle is time \Rightarrow higher spin black holes

Gutperle Kraus '11

- Shrinkable cycle is space \Rightarrow Conical surplus Castro et.al. '11
(higher spin version of thermal AdS_3)

- $SL(2, \mathbb{Z})$ -family of solutions

WL Lin Wang '13

higher-spin holography

Understand quantum higher spin gravity via its holographic dual

gravity with higher spin gauge symmetry in AdS_{d+1}



CFT $_d$ with high spin currents

Examples of higher spin holography

- Vasiliev in $\text{AdS}_4 = \text{O}(N)$ model *Klebanov Polyakov '02*
Sezgin Sundell '02
- Vasiliev in $\text{AdS}_3 = \mathcal{W}_{N,k}$ minimal model ($= \frac{\mathfrak{su}(N)_k \oplus \mathfrak{su}(N)_1}{\mathfrak{su}(N)_{k+1}}$) *Gaberdiel Gopakumar '10*

Features of higher-spin holography

1. Weak/Weak duality

$$\left(\frac{R}{\ell_p}\right)^4 \sim N \quad \left(\frac{R}{\ell_s}\right)^4 \sim \lambda = (g_{YM})^2 N$$

Traditional **Gauge/Gravity** correspondence: **Strong/Weak** duality

$$R \gg \ell_s \gg \ell_p \implies N \rightarrow \infty \quad \lambda \gg 1$$

Higher-Spin theory: **Weak/Weak** duality

$$\ell_s \gg R \gg \ell_p \implies N \rightarrow \infty \quad \lambda \ll 1$$

2. Supersymmetry is not required.

3. CFT dual is always free

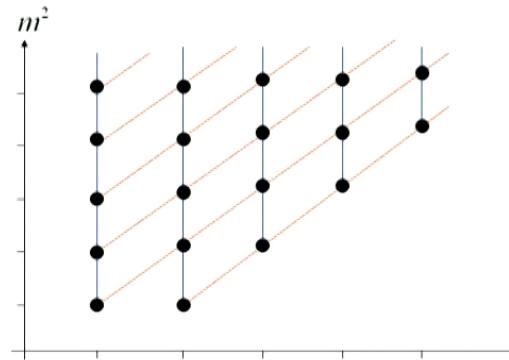
Maldacena-Zhiboedov '11, Stanev '13

- Except for $\text{AdS}_3/\text{CFT}_2$
- AdS version of Coleman-Mandula

tensionless limit and stringy symmetry

String theory has **infinite number of massive** higher spin particles

$$m \sim \frac{1}{\ell_s}$$



Tensionless limit: $\frac{\ell_s}{\ell_{\text{AdS}}} \rightarrow \infty$ (quantum: 1)

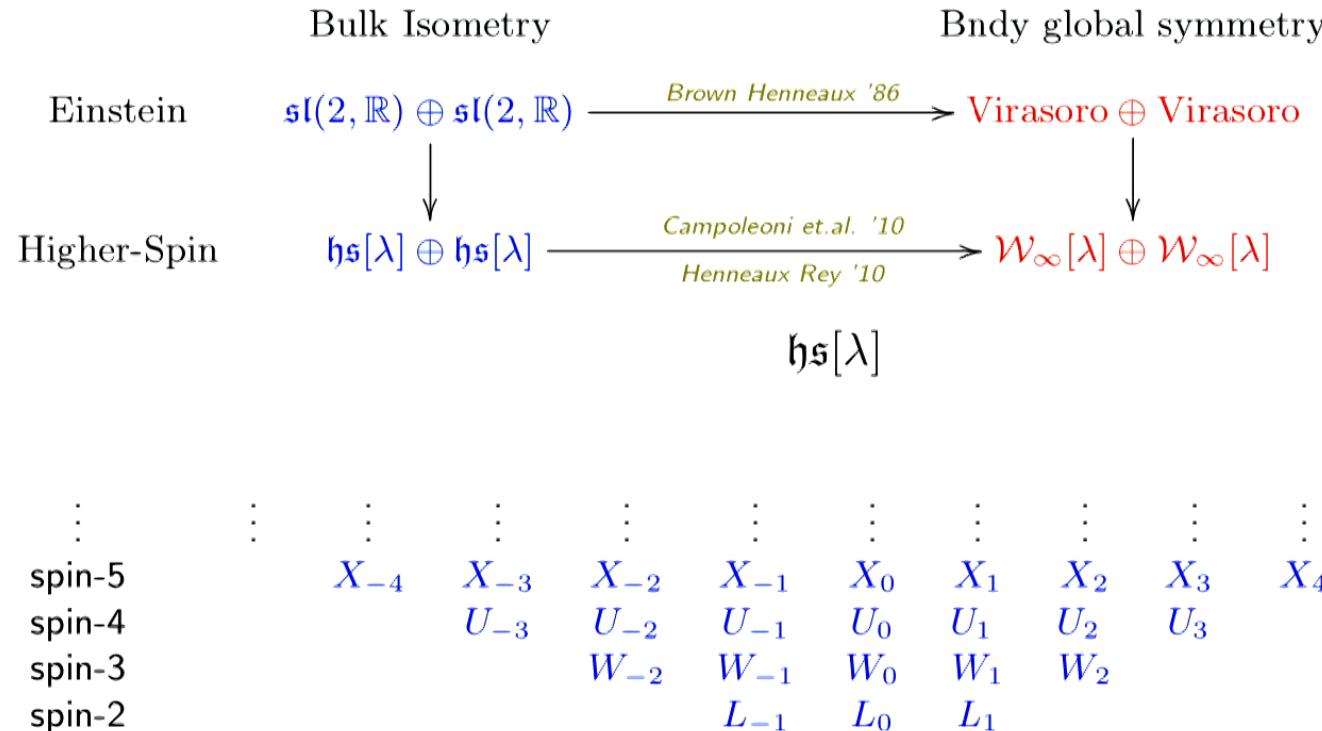
massive higher spin particle \Rightarrow massless \Rightarrow **stringy** symmetry

- subalgebra: **Vasiliev higher spin** symmetry (one per spin)
(from **Leading Regge** trajectory)

Vasiliev '91, Sundborg '01, Witten '01, Mikhailov '02, Klebanov-Polyakov '02

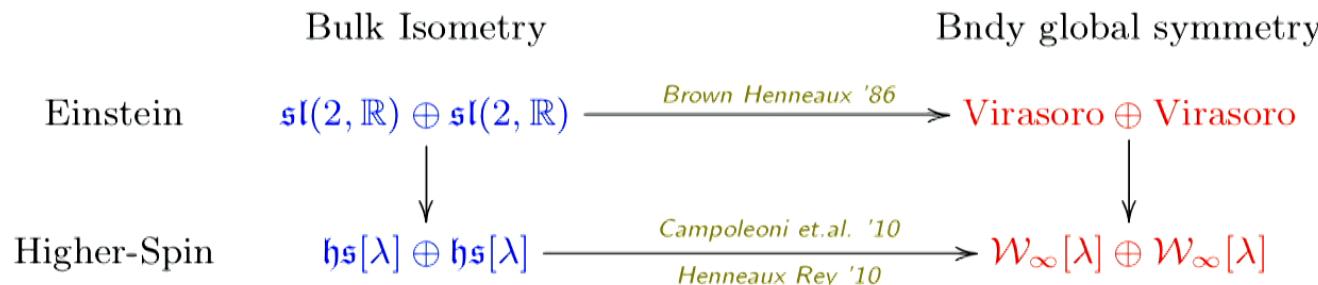
Tensionless string in AdS_3

- Symmetry enhancement from bulk AdS_3 to boundary CFT_2



Tensionless string in AdS_3

- **Symmetry enhancement** from bulk AdS_3 to boundary CFT_2



- In tensionless limit, the worldsheet theory of string in $\text{AdS}_3 \times S^3 \times T^4$ is a symmetric orbifold of T^4 .

Gaberdiel Gopakumar '18, Eberhardt Gaberdiel Gopakumar '19

- **Stringy symmetry** at $\text{AdS}_3 \sim$ chiral algebra of $\text{Sym}^N(T^4)$
 - What is the mathematical description?

Stringy symmetry \gg higher-spin symmetry \gg conformal symmetry

Size of stringy symmetry

Virasoro (\sim partition)

$$\prod_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{1-q^k} = \sum_{n=0} p(n) q^n = 1 + q + 2q^2 + 3q^3 + 5q^4 + 7q^5 + 11q^6 + \dots$$

$$p(n) \sim \frac{1}{n} \cdot \exp\left(\sqrt{\frac{2}{3}} \pi \sqrt{n}\right)$$

Hardy Ramanujan '18

higher spin symmetry (\sim plane partition)

$$\prod_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(1-q^k)^k} = \sum_{n=0} M(n) q^n = 1 + q + 3q^2 + 6q^3 + 13q^4 + 24q^5 + 48q^6 + \dots$$

$$M(n) \sim n^{-\frac{25}{36}} \cdot \exp\left(\frac{3\zeta(3)^{\frac{1}{3}}}{2^{\frac{2}{3}}} n^{\frac{2}{3}}\right)$$

Wright '31

stringy symmetry (\sim double partition)

$$\prod_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(1-q^k)^{p(k)}} = \sum_{n=0} D(n) q^n = 1 + q + 3q^2 + 6q^3 + 14q^4 + 27q^5 + 58q^6 + \dots$$

$$D(n) \sim n \cdot \exp\left(\frac{\pi^2}{6} n\right)$$

Kaneiwa '79

plane partition

↓

plane partition*MacMahon '12*

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} M(n)q^n = \prod_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(1-q^k)^k} = 1 + q + 3q^2 + 6q^3 + 13q^4 + 24q^5 + 48q^6 + \dots$$

$$M(n) \sim n^{-\frac{25}{36}} \cdot \exp\left(\frac{3\zeta(3)^{\frac{1}{3}}}{2^{\frac{2}{3}}} n^{\frac{2}{3}}\right)$$

Wright '31

MacMahon's conjecture on d-dim partition

$$\sum_{\Lambda_d} q^{|\Lambda_d|} = \sum_{n=0} P^{(d)}(n)q^n = \prod_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(1-q^k)^{\binom{k+d-3}{d-2}}}$$

partition ($d = 2$): $\sum_{n=0} p(n)q^n = \prod_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{1-q^k}$ ✓

plane partition ($d = 3$): $\sum_{n=0} M(n)q^n = \prod_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(1-q^k)^k}$ ✓

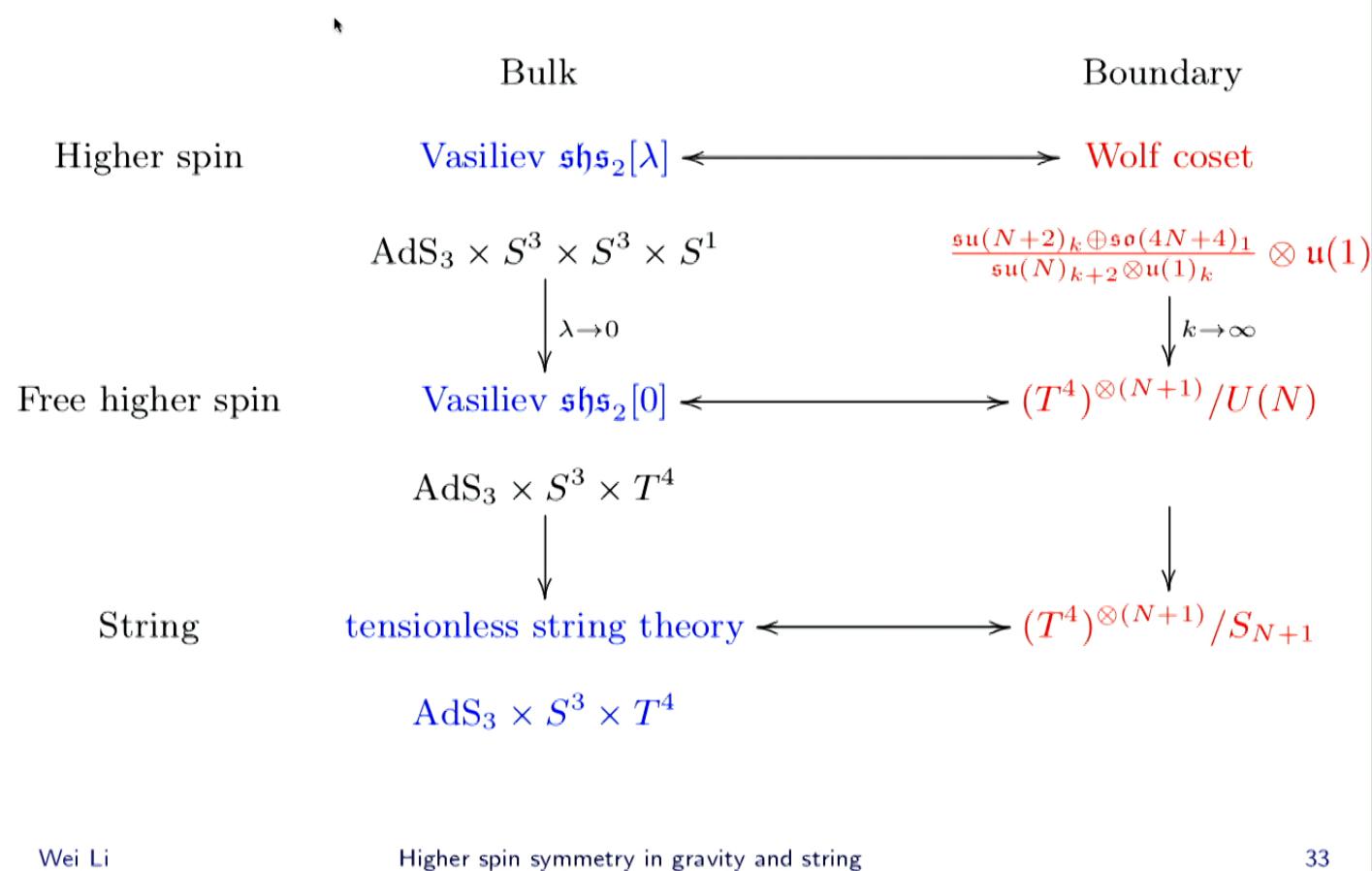
solid partition ($d = 4$):
$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{n=0} S(n)q^n &= \prod_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(1-q^k)^{\frac{k(k+1)}{2}}} \\ &= 1 + q + 4q^2 + 10q^3 + 26q^4 + 59q^5 + 141q^6 + \dots \end{aligned}$$

compute by hand

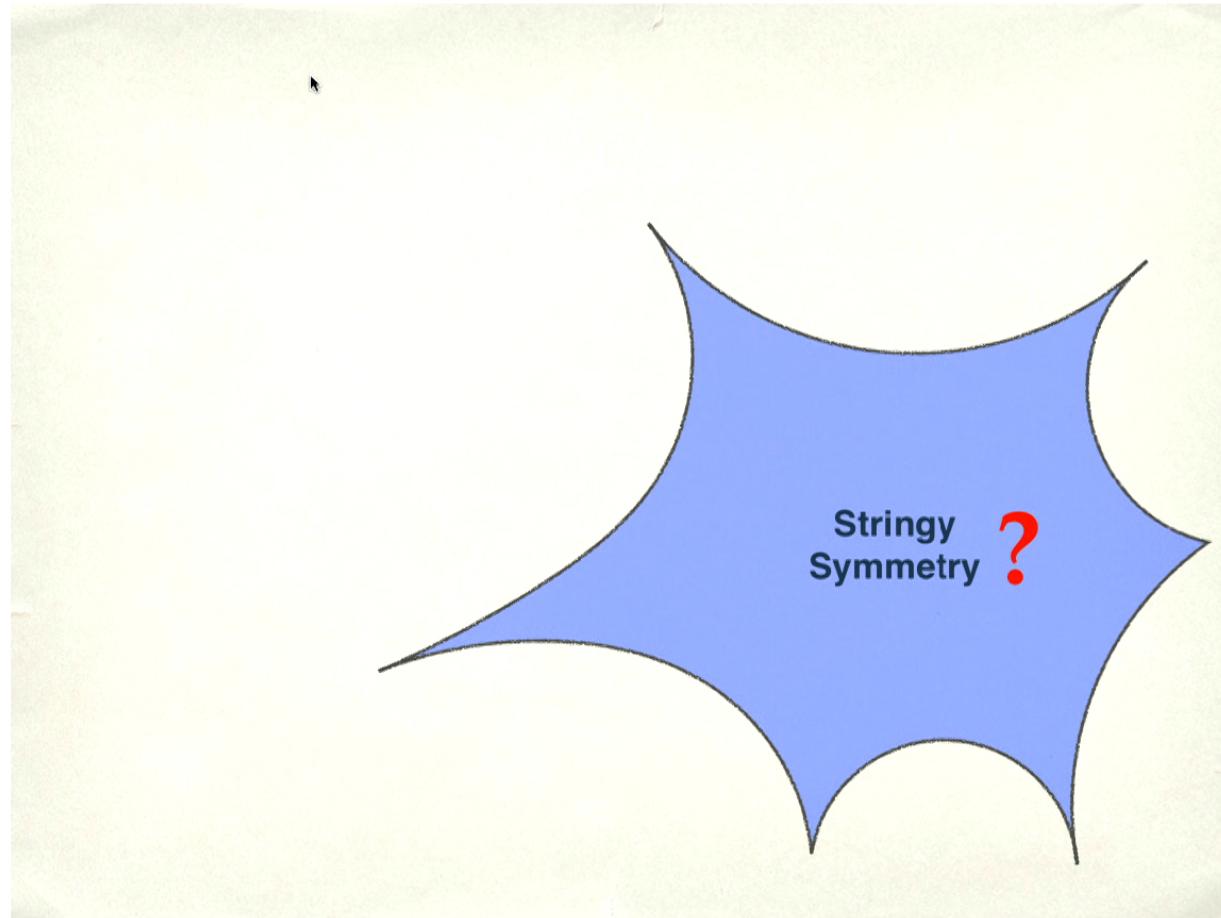
$$\sum_{n=0} S(n)q^n = 1 + q + 4q^2 + 10q^3 + 26q^4 + 59q^5 + 140q^6 + \dots$$

Generating function for $d \geq 4$ dimensional partition is still unknown.

Embed higher-spin theory in string theory



How to characterize stringy symmetry mathematically?

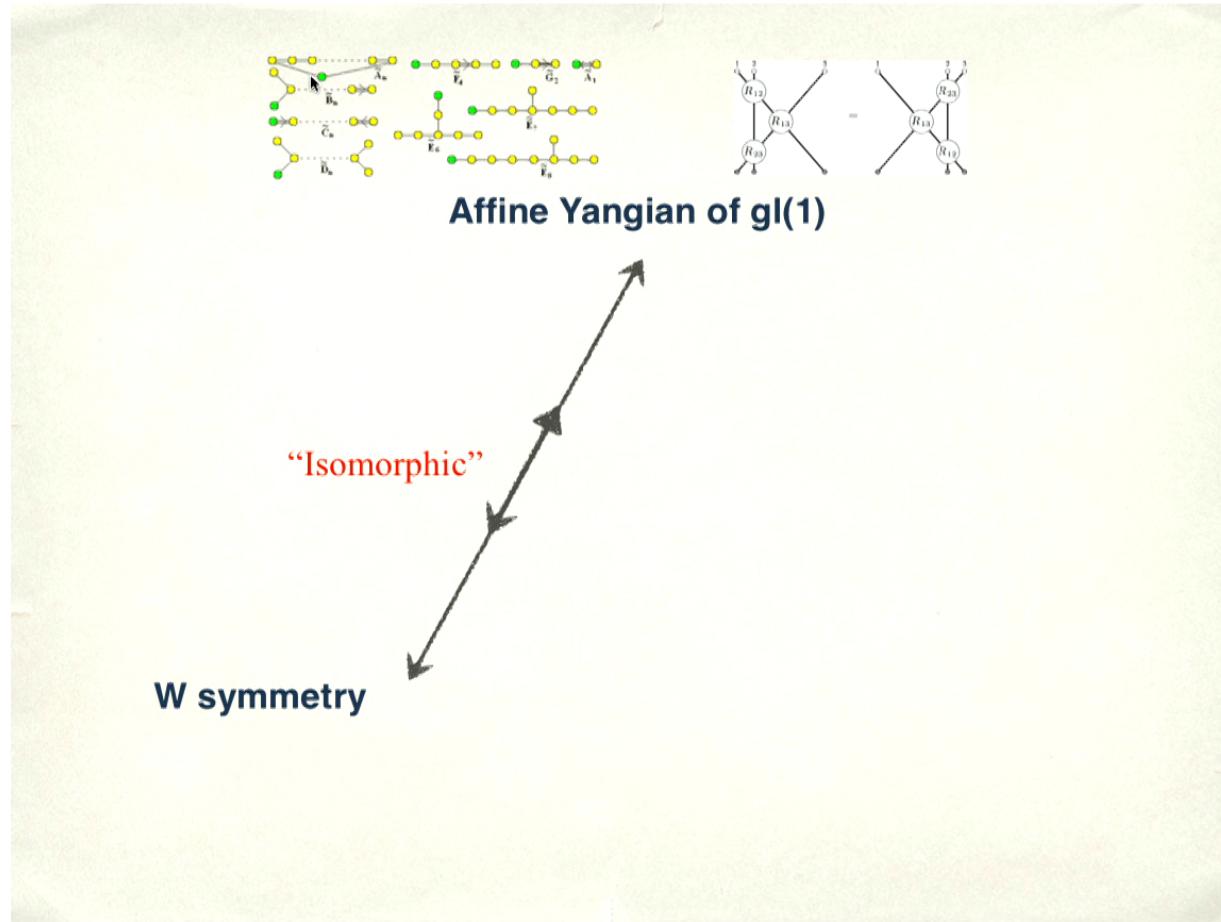


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Higher spin symmetry in gravity and string

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A concrete relation between HS and integrability



Modes of $\mathcal{W}_{1+\infty}$

$$W^{(s)}(z) = \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \frac{W_n^{(s)}}{z^{n+s}} \quad s = 1, 2, 3, \dots$$

⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
spin-5	...	X_{-4}	X_{-3}	X_{-2}	X_{-1}	X_0	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	...
spin-4	...	U_{-4}	U_{-3}	U_{-2}	U_{-1}	U_0	U_1	U_2	U_3	U_4	...
spin-3	...	W_{-4}	W_{-3}	W_{-2}	W_{-1}	W_0	W_1	W_2	W_3	W_4	...
spin-2	...	L_{-4}	L_{-3}	L_{-2}	L_{-1}	L_0	L_1	L_2	L_3	L_4	...
spin-1	...	J_{-4}	J_{-3}	J_{-2}	J_{-1}	J_0	J_1	J_2	J_3	J_4	...

Regrouping the modes

$$W^{(s)}(z) = \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \frac{W_n^{(s)}}{z^{n+s}} \quad s = 1, 2, 3, \dots$$

⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
spin-5	...	X_{-3}	X_{-2}	$X_{-1} \sim e_4$	$X_0 \sim \psi_5$	$X_1 \sim f_4$	X_2	X_3	X_4		
spin-4	...	U_{-3}	U_{-2}	$U_{-1} \sim e_3$	$U_0 \sim \psi_4$	$U_1 \sim f_3$	U_2	U_3	U_4		
spin-3	...	W_{-3}	W_{-2}	$W_{-1} \sim e_2$	$W_0 \sim \psi_3$	$W_1 \sim f_2$	W_2	W_3	W_4		
spin-2	...	L_{-3}	L_{-2}	$L_{-1} \sim e_1$	$L_0 \sim \psi_2$	$L_1 \sim f_1$	L_2	L_3	L_4		
spin-1	...	J_{-3}	J_{-2}	$J_{-1} \sim e_0$	$J_0 \sim \psi_1$	$J_1 \sim f_0$	J_2	J_3	J_4		

affine Yangian generators

$$e(z) = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \frac{e_j}{z^{j+1}} \quad \psi(z) = 1 + \sigma_3 \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \frac{\psi_j}{z^{j+1}} \quad f(z) = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \frac{f_j}{z^{j+1}}$$

Affine Yangian of \mathfrak{gl}_1

Def: **Associative** algebra with generators e_j, f_j and $\psi_j, j = 0, 1, \dots$

- Generators

$$\psi(z) = 1 + (h_1 h_2 h_3) \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \frac{\psi_j}{z^{j+1}} \quad e(z) = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \frac{e_j}{z^{j+1}} \quad f(z) = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \frac{f_j}{z^{j+1}}$$

- Parameters (h_1, h_2, h_3) with $h_1 + h_2 + h_3 = 0$
- One S_3 invariant function $\varphi_3(z) = \frac{(z+h_1)(z+h_2)(z+h_3)}{(z-h_1)(z-h_2)(z-h_3)}$
- Defining relations

$$[e(z), f(w)] = -\frac{1}{h_1 h_2 h_3} \frac{\psi(z) - \psi(w)}{z - w}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \psi(z) e(w) &\sim \varphi_3(z-w) e(w) \psi(z) & \psi(z) f(w) &\sim \varphi_3(w-z) f(w) \psi(z) \\ e(z) e(w) &\sim \varphi_3(z-w) e(w) e(z) & f(z) f(w) &\sim \varphi_3(w-z) f(w) f(z) \end{aligned}$$

- Initial conditions

$$[\psi_{0,1}, e_j] = 0 \quad [\psi_2, e_j] = 2e_j \quad [\psi_{0,1}, f_j] = 0 \quad [\psi_2, f_j] = -2f_j$$

- Serre relation

$$\text{Sym}_{(j_1, j_2, j_3)} [e_{j_1}, [e_{j_2}, e_{j_3+1}]] = 0 \quad \text{Sym}_{(j_1, j_2, j_3)} [f_{j_1}, [f_{j_2}, f_{j_3+1}]] = 0$$

Schiffmann Vasserot '12 Maulik Okounkov '12 Tsymbaliuk '14

Advantages of affine Yangian over \mathcal{W}_∞

1. number of generators

- \mathcal{W}_∞ : ∞^*
 $J(z), T(z), W^{(3)}(z), W^{(4)}(z) \dots$
- affine Yangian of \mathfrak{gl}_1 : **only 3**
 $\psi(z), e(z), f(z)$

2. Defining relations

- \mathcal{W}_∞ :
non-linear, fixed order by order by Jacobi-identities
- affine Yangian of \mathfrak{gl}_1 :
linear, given explicitly

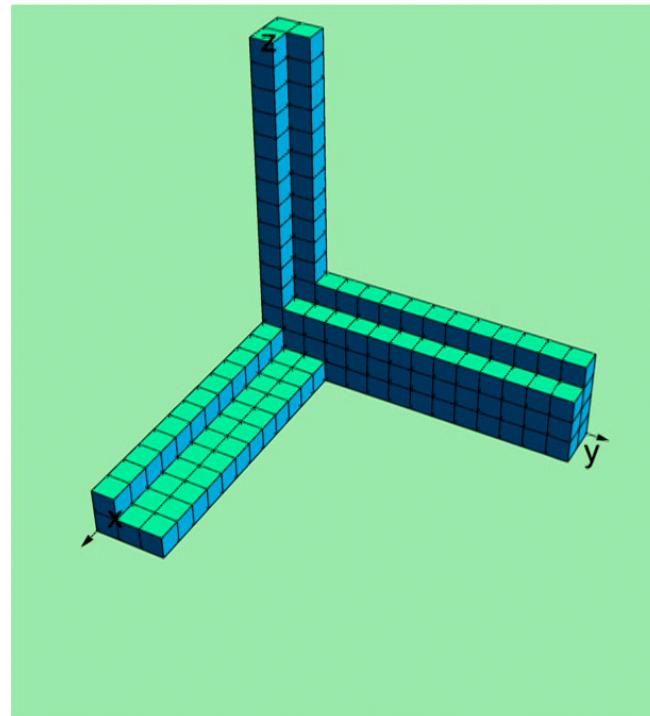
3. S_3 invariance

- \mathcal{W}_∞ : **Hidden**
- affine Yangian of \mathfrak{gl}_1 : **manifest**

4. Plane partition representation

Plane partition with non-trivial asymptotics

Ground state of $(\Lambda_x, \Lambda_y, \Lambda_z)$



Action of $\hat{\mathcal{Y}}(\mathfrak{gl}_1)$ on a plane partition

- $\psi(z)$ acts **diagonally**

Tsymbaliuk '14, Prochazka '15

$$\psi(z)|\Lambda\rangle = \psi_\Lambda(z)|\Lambda\rangle$$

$$\psi_\Lambda(z) \equiv \left(1 + \frac{\psi_0 \sigma_3}{z}\right) \prod_{\square \in (\Lambda)} \varphi_3(z - h(\square))$$

$$h(\square) = h_1 x(\square) + h_2 y(\square) + h_3 z(\square)$$

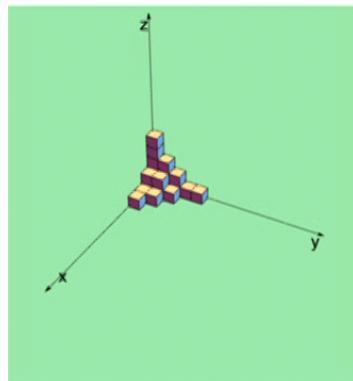
- $e(z)$ **adds** one box

$$e(z)|\Lambda\rangle = \sum_{\square \in \text{Add}(\Lambda)} \frac{\left[-\frac{1}{\sigma_3} \text{Res}_{w=h(\square)} \psi_\Lambda(w)\right]^{\frac{1}{2}}}{z - h(\square)} |\Lambda + \square\rangle$$

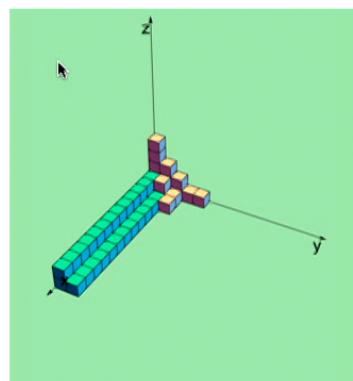
- $f(z)$ **removes** one box

$$f(z)|\Lambda\rangle = \sum_{\square \in \text{Rem}(\Lambda)} \frac{\left[-\frac{1}{\sigma_3} \text{Res}_{w=h(\square)} \psi_\Lambda(w)\right]^{\frac{1}{2}}}{z - h(\square)} |\Lambda - \square\rangle$$

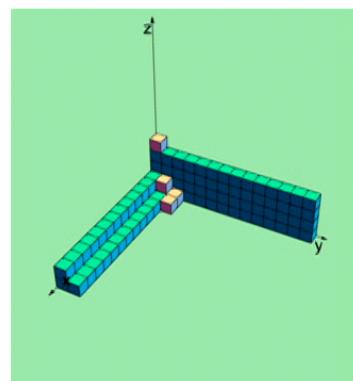
Plane partition as representations of W



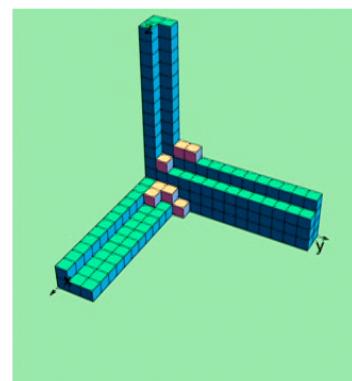
Trivial b.c.



$$(\Lambda_x; 0) = (\Lambda; 0)$$



$$(\Lambda_x; \Lambda_y) = (\Lambda_+; \Lambda_-) \quad (\Lambda_x; \Lambda_y; \Lambda_z)$$



vacuum

perturbative
in Vasilievnon-perturbative
in Vasiliev

new representation

character of $\mathcal{W}_{1+\infty}$ = generating function of plane partition

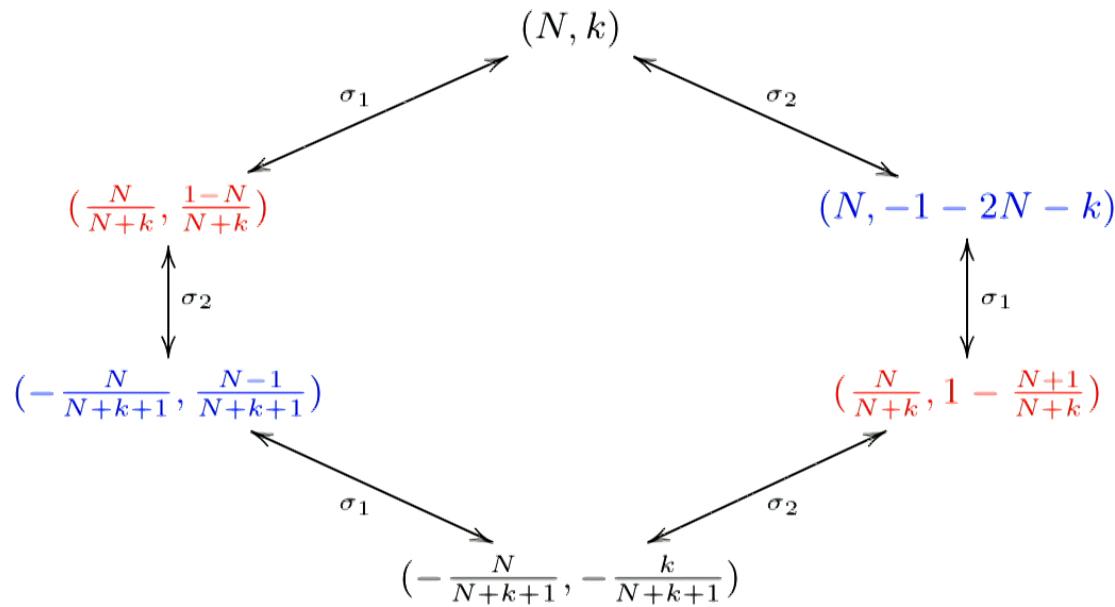
Feigin Jimbo Miwa Mukhin '10-11

\mathcal{S}_3 action on $\mathcal{W}_{N,k}$ coset

$\mathcal{W}_{N,k}$ coset

$$\frac{\mathfrak{su}(N)_k \oplus \mathfrak{su}(N)_1}{\mathfrak{su}(N)_{k+1}}$$

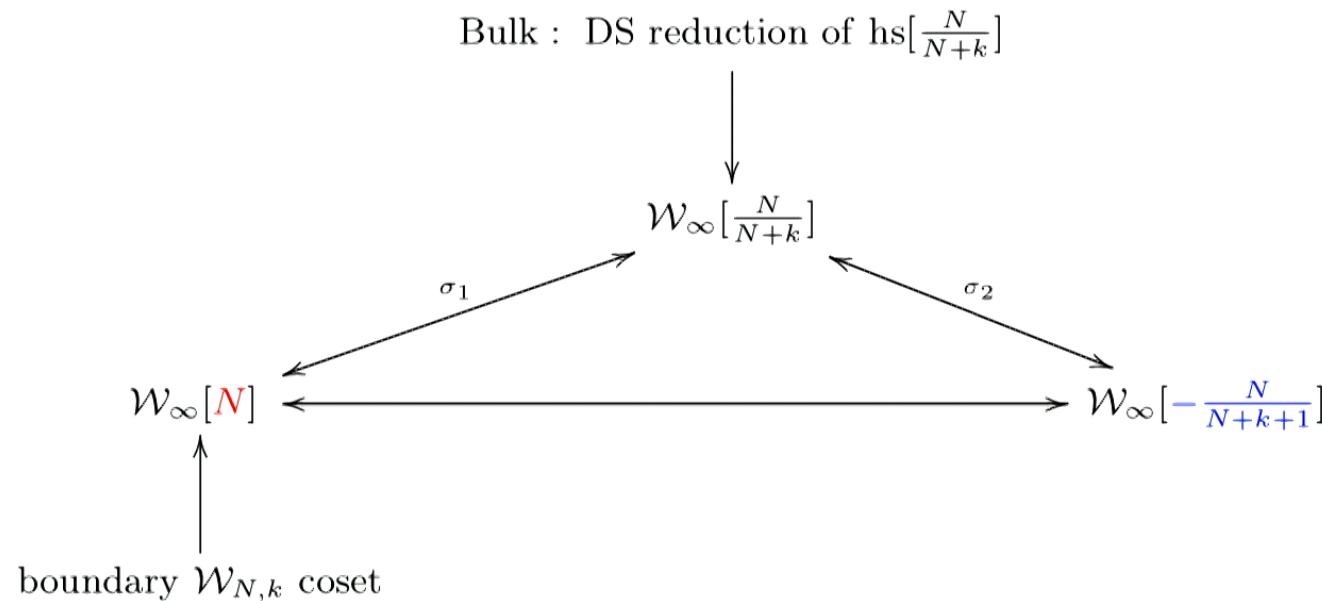
had hidden \mathcal{S}_3



Triality symmetry for higher spin holography

For fixed c , three $\mathcal{W}_\infty[\lambda]$ are isomorphic

Gaberdiel Gopakumar '12

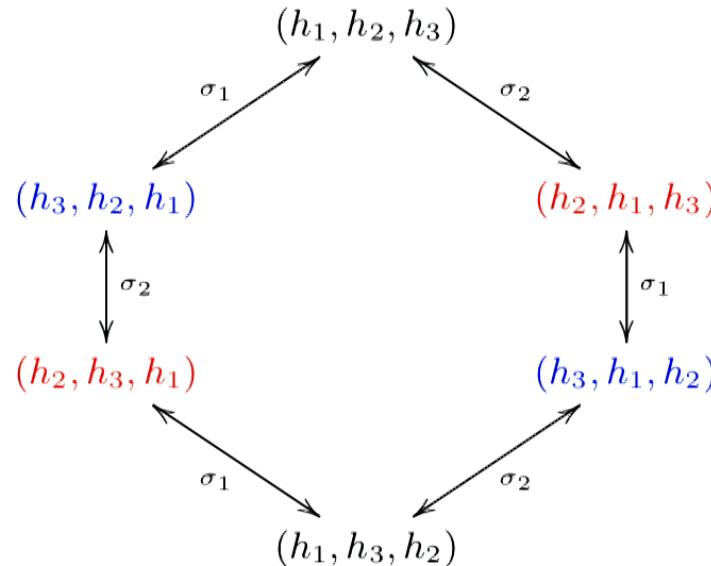


Crucial for Vasiliev theory in $\text{AdS}_3 = \mathcal{W}_{N,k}$ coset

\mathcal{S}_3 symmetry in $\mathcal{Y}[\widehat{\mathfrak{gl}}_1]$

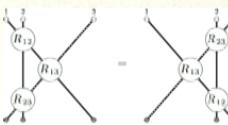
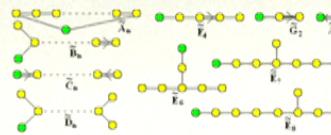
- \mathcal{S}_3 symmetry in \mathcal{W}_∞ CFT is highly non-trivial (UV-IR)
 - hard to check/prove *Gaberdiel Gopakumar '12, Linshaw '17*
 - Manifest in $\mathcal{Y}[\widehat{\mathfrak{gl}}_1]$

Under \mathcal{S}_3 transformation on (N, k)



$\mathcal{N} = 2$ triangle

Gaberdiel WL Peng Zhang '17, Gaberdiel WL Peng '18

**N=2 Affine Yangian of $gl(1)$**

Define

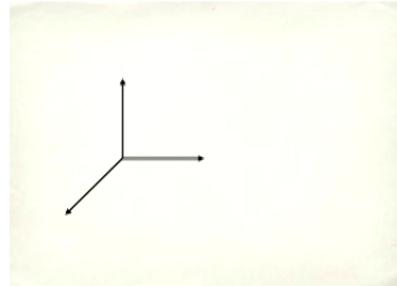
Representation

N=2 W symmetry

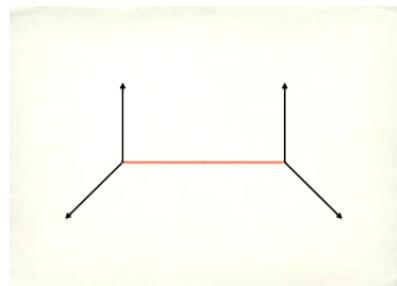
Representation

Twin plane partitions

Building blocks and gluing



1. Algebra: $\mathcal{W}_{1+\infty} \Rightarrow$ affine Yangian of \mathfrak{gl}_1
2. Representation: plane partitions



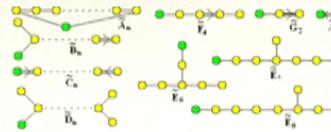
1. Algebra: internal leg \Rightarrow additional operators
conformal dimension
2. Irrep: bi-module \Rightarrow non-trivial b.c. for vertices
relative representation

Two parameter family of glued Yangian!

(Algebraic relations are fixed by demanding that
the algebra acts on twin-plane-partition faithfully.)

$\mathcal{N} = 2$ triangle

Gaberdiel WL Peng Zhang '17, Gaberdiel WL Peng '18

N=2 Affine Yangian of $gl(1)$

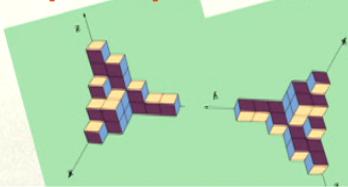
Define

Representation

N=2 W symmetry

Representation

Twin plane partitions



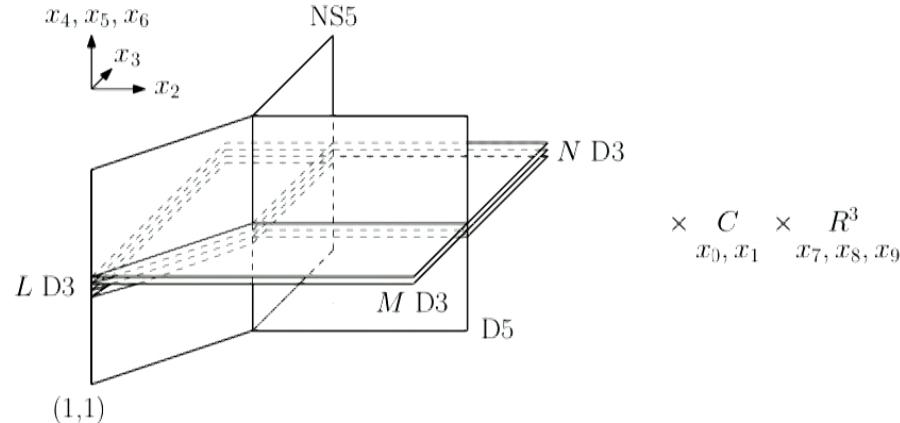
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Y-junction of 4D SYM

picture: Gaiotto Rapcak '17



1. a Y-junction between $U(L)$, $U(M)$, $U(N)$ SYM.
2. Kapustin-Witten twist \implies localize to Junction *Kapustin Witten '06*
3. Along the edges (2+1 dim): Chern Simons with supergroup $U(N_i|N_j)$ *Mikhaylov Witten '14*
4. At the junction (1+1 dim): BPS operators form a vertex operator algebra

VOA on the 2D junction is a truncation of $\mathcal{W}_{1+\infty}$

Gaiotto Rapcak '17

* Truncation and gluing

Gluing of these finite truncations of $\mathcal{W}_{1+\infty}$ should give chiral algebra of Y-junction webs

Rapcak Prochazka'17

Finite truncation of $\mathcal{W}_{1+\infty}$ is easier to study as truncation of affine Yangian of \mathfrak{gl}_1

Fukuda Matsuo Nakamura Zhu '15, Prochazka '15

WL Longhi'19

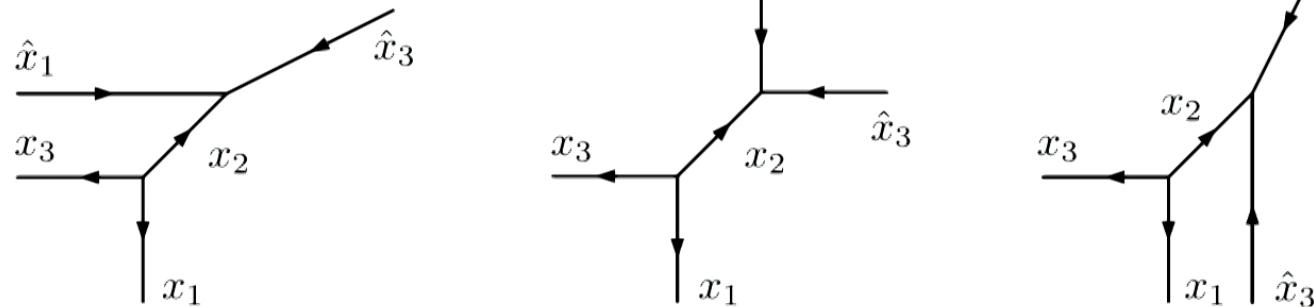
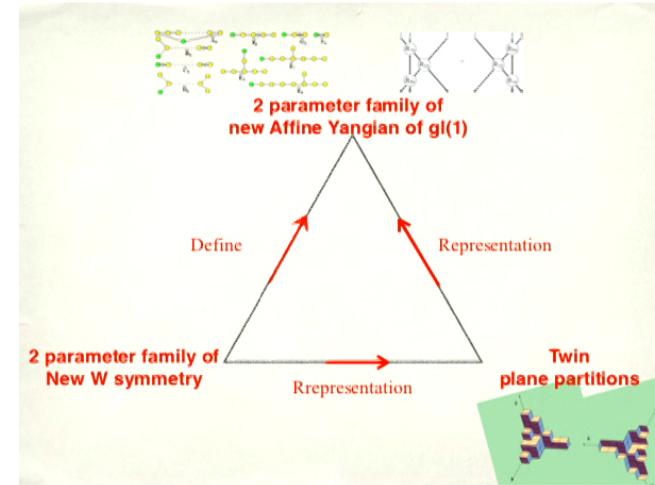
1. Can use affine Yangian of \mathfrak{gl}_1 basis instead of $\mathcal{W}_{1+\infty}$ basis
2. Can first glue and then truncate

New W and Yangian algebras via gluing

WL Longhi '19

The 4 constraints from twin plane partition
match one-to-one

to the 4 constraints from (p, q) web.



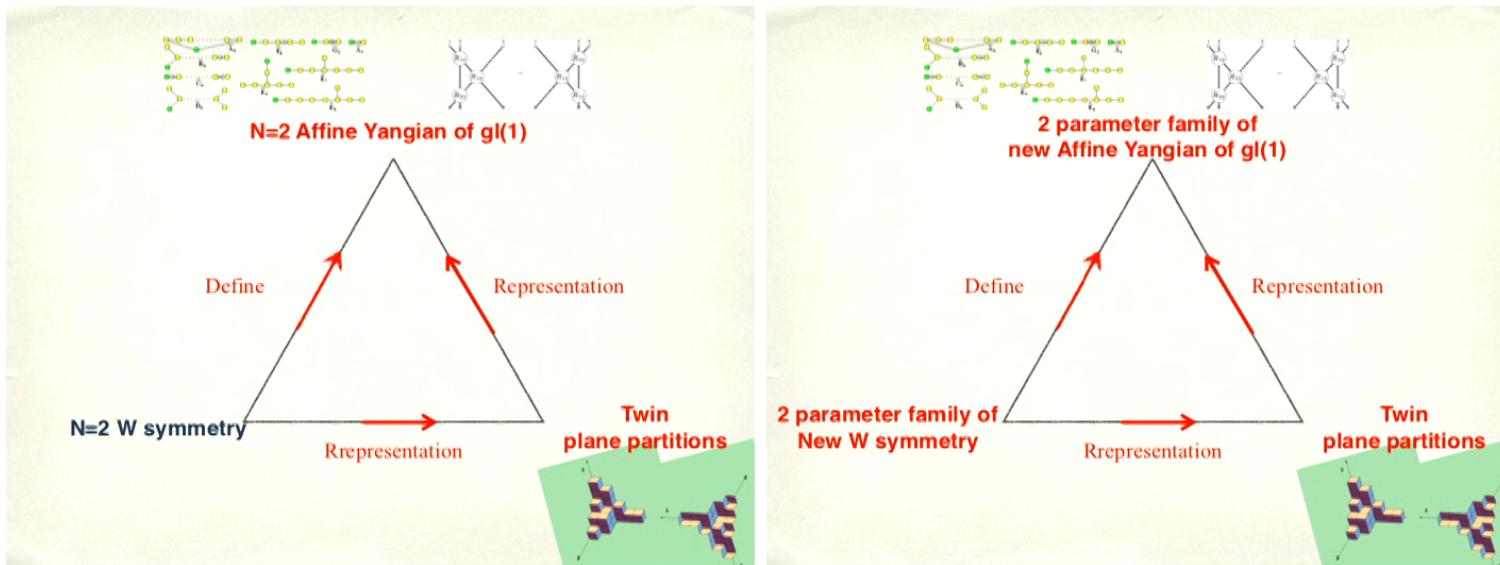
Higher spin gravity and holography

1. It is possible to define gravity coupled to higher spin gauge symmetry in AdS_d or dS_d
2. Simplest example: $\mathfrak{sl}(N) \oplus \mathfrak{sl}(N)$ Chern-Simons
3. higher spin holography is special
simple, weak/weak, no need for supersymmetry

Higher spin symmetry v.s. stringy symmetry

1. Vasiliev's higher spin gravity can be embedded into string theory
2. Tensionless limit \rightarrow stringy symmetry
3. Vasiliev higher spin symmetry is subalgebra of stringy symmetry (from leading Regge trajectory)
4. In AdS_3 : additional symmetry enhancement
5. Tensionless + AdS_3 : strongly constrain the theory

New W and Yangian algebras via gluing plane partitions



Plane partition is also very useful in the gluing process

- visualize Fock space
- Define algebra by faithful representation