

GT-shadows and their action on Grothendieck's child's drawings

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This talk is loosely based on joint paper <https://arxiv.org/abs/2008.00066> with Khanh Q. Le and Aidan Lorenz.

The absolute Galois group $G_{\mathbb{Q}}$ of rationals and \widehat{GT}

$G_{\mathbb{Q}}$ is the group of (field) automorphisms of the algebraic closure $\overline{\mathbb{Q}}$ of the field \mathbb{Q} of rational numbers. This group is uncountable. In fact, for every finite Galois extension $E \supset \mathbb{Q}$, any element $g \in \text{Gal}(E/\mathbb{Q})$ can be extended (in infinitely many ways) to an element of $G_{\mathbb{Q}}$. The group $G_{\mathbb{Q}}$ is one of the most mysterious objects in mathematics!

In 1990, Vladimir Drinfeld introduced yet another mysterious group \widehat{GT} (the Grothendieck-Teichmueller group). \widehat{GT} consists pairs (\hat{m}, \hat{f}) in $\widehat{\mathbb{Z}} \times \widehat{F}_2$ satisfying some conditions and it receives a one-to-one homomorphism

$$G_{\mathbb{Q}} \hookrightarrow \widehat{GT}.$$

Only two elements of $G_{\mathbb{Q}}$ **are known explicitly**: the identity element and the complex conjugation $a + bi \mapsto a - bi$. The corresponding images in \widehat{GT} are $(0, 1)$ and $(-1, 1)$.

Incarnations of Grothendieck's child's drawings are ...

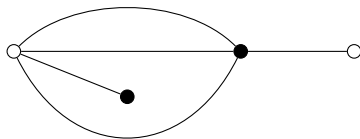
Isom. classes of (non-constant) holomorphic maps $f : \Sigma \rightarrow \mathbb{CP}^1$ from compact connected Riemann surfaces (without boundary) that do not have branching points above every $w \in \mathbb{CP}^1 - \{0, 1, \infty\}$.

Isom. classes of finite degree connected coverings of $\mathbb{CP}^1 - \{0, 1, \infty\}$.

Conjugacy classes of finite index subgroups of $F_2 := \langle x, y \rangle$.

Equivalence classes of pairs (g_1, g_2) of permutations in S_d (for some d) for which the group $\langle g_1, g_2 \rangle$ acts transitively on $\{1, 2, \dots, d\}$.

Isomorphism classes of connected bipartite ribbon graphs with d edges (for some d).

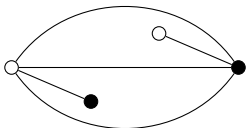


The action of $G_{\mathbb{Q}}$ on child's drawings

Given a child's drawing D , we can find a smooth projective curve X defined over $\overline{\mathbb{Q}}$ and an algebraic map $f : X \rightarrow \mathbb{P}_{\mathbb{Q}}^1$ that does not have branching points above every $w \in \mathbb{P}_{\mathbb{Q}}^1 - \{0, 1, \infty\}$. (X, f) is called a **Belyi pair** corresponding to D .

The coefficients defining the curve X and the map f lie in some finite Galois extension E of \mathbb{Q} . Given any $g \in \text{Gal}(E/\mathbb{Q})$, the child's drawing $g(D)$ is the one corresponding to the new Belyi pair $(g(X), g(f))$. We simply act by g on the coefficients defining X and f !

The $G_{\mathbb{Q}}$ -orbit of the above child's drawing has two elements. It's 'Galois conjugate' is



The action of $\widehat{\text{GT}}$ on child's drawings

Let (\hat{m}, \hat{f}) be an element of $\widehat{\text{GT}}$ and D be a child's drawing. It is convenient to represent D by a group homomorphism

$$\varphi : F_2 \rightarrow S_d,$$

where $\varphi(F_2)$ is transitive. (D corresponds to the conjugacy class of the stabilizer of 1.)

φ extends, by continuity, to a (continuous) group homomorphism $\hat{\varphi} : \widehat{F}_2 \rightarrow S_d$. The child's drawing $D^{(\hat{m}, \hat{f})}$ corresponds to the group homomorphism

$$\hat{\varphi} \circ \hat{T}|_{F_2} : F_2 \rightarrow S_d,$$

where

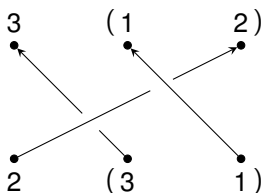
$$\hat{T}(x) := x^{2\hat{m}+1} \quad \text{and} \quad \hat{T}(y) := \hat{f}^{-1} y^{2\hat{m}+1} \hat{f}.$$

See Y. Ihara's paper "On the embedding of $\text{Gal}(\overline{\mathbb{Q}}/\mathbb{Q})$ into $\widehat{\text{GT}}$ ".

The operad PaB

For every integer $n \geq 1$, $\text{PaB}(n)$ is a groupoid, whose objects are (completely) parenthesized sequences of $1, 2, \dots, n$ (each $i \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ appears exactly once). For instance, $\text{PaB}(2)$ has exactly two objects $(1, 2)$ and $(2, 1)$; $\text{PaB}(3)$ has 12 objects: $(1, 2)3, (2, 1)3, \dots, 1(2, 3), 2(1, 3), \dots$

Let B_n be Artin's braid group and PB_n be the kernel of the canonical homomorphism $\rho : B_n \rightarrow S_n$. $\{x_{ij}\}_{1 \leq i < j \leq n}$ denote standard generators of PB_n . $\text{Hom}_{\text{PaB}}(\tau, \tilde{\tau}) := \rho^{-1}(\tilde{\tau}^{-1} \circ \tau) \subset B_n$. For instance,

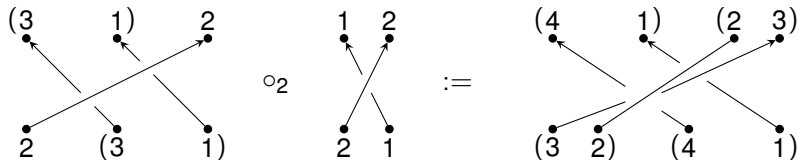


An example of computing an elementary insertion

Note that the automorphism group of every object in $\text{PaB}(n)$ is the pure braid group PB_n on n strands. For instance,

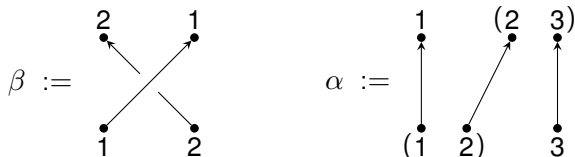
$$\text{Aut}_{\text{PaB}}((1, 2)3) = \text{PB}_3 \quad \text{and} \quad \text{Aut}_{\text{PaB}}((1, 2)) = \text{PB}_2 = \langle x_{12} \rangle.$$

Here is an example of computing an elementary insertion:



Mac Lane's coherence theorem tells us that ...

PaB is generated by these two morphisms



Any relation involving α and β is a consequence of the pentagon relation:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} (1(23))4 & \longrightarrow & 1((23)4) \\ \nearrow & & \searrow \\ ((12)3)4 & \longrightarrow & (12)(34) \longrightarrow 1(2(34)) \end{array}$$

and the two hexagon relations.

The group \widehat{GT} is ...

the group of continuous automorphisms

$$\widehat{T} : \widehat{PaB} \rightarrow \widehat{PaB}$$

of the profinite completion \widehat{PaB} of PaB .

Since β and α are topological generators of \widehat{PaB} , every $\widehat{T} \in \widehat{GT}$ is uniquely determined by

$$\widehat{T}(\beta) = \beta \circ x_{12}^{\widehat{m}} \quad \text{and} \quad \widehat{T}(\alpha) = \alpha \circ \widehat{f},$$

where $\widehat{f} \in \widehat{PB}_3 = \text{Aut}_{\widehat{PaB}}((1, 2)3)$ and $x_{12}^{\widehat{m}} \in \widehat{PB}_2 = \text{Aut}_{\widehat{PaB}}((1, 2))$.

We tacitly identify F_2 with the subgroup $\langle x_{12}, x_{23} \rangle \leq PB_3$. The basic relations on α and $\beta \Rightarrow \widehat{f} \in \widehat{F}_2$. In fact, $\widehat{f} \in ([\widehat{F}_2, \widehat{F}_2])^{top. \text{ closure}}$

\widehat{GT} as the subgroup of $\text{Aut}(\widehat{F}_2)$

Since the automorphism group of $(1, 2)3$ in $\widehat{\text{PaB}}(3)$ is $\widehat{\text{PB}}_3$, every $\widehat{T} \in \widehat{GT}$ gives us an automorphism of $\widehat{\text{PB}}_3$. Restricting this automorphism to $\widehat{F}_2 \leq \widehat{\text{PB}}_3$, we get the automorphism of \widehat{F}_2 :

$$\widehat{T}(x_{12}) := x_{12}^{2\widehat{m}+1} \quad \text{and} \quad \widehat{T}(x_{23}) := \widehat{f}^{-1} x_{23}^{2\widehat{m}+1} \widehat{f}. \quad (1)$$

One can show that every element $(\widehat{m}, \widehat{f}) \in \widehat{GT}$ is uniquely determined by the automorphism (1). Some mathematicians identify \widehat{GT} with the corresponding group of continuous automorphisms of \widehat{F}_2 .

Truncating PaB

For our purposes, it is convenient to consider the truncation of PaB:

$$\text{PaB}^{\leq 4} := \text{PaB}(1) \sqcup \text{PaB}(2) \sqcup \text{PaB}(3) \sqcup \text{PaB}(4).$$

This union of groupoids is a **truncated operad** in the following sense:

- S_n acts on $\text{PaB}(n)$ for every $1 \leq n \leq 4$,
- we have elementary insertions $\circ_i : \text{PaB}(n) \times \text{PaB}(m) \rightarrow \text{PaB}(n + m - 1)$ whenever $n + m - 1 \leq 4$ and
- all operad axioms for elementary insertions and the action of symmetric groups are satisfied if arities of all elements are ≤ 4 .

Since PaB is generated by elements of arities 2 and 3 and the key relations are in arities 3 and 4, we have $\widehat{\text{GT}} = \text{Aut}(\widehat{\text{PaB}}^{\leq 4})$.

From now on, “operad” := “truncated operad”.

Compatible equivalence relations on $\text{PaB}^{\leq 4}$

An equivalence relation \sim on $\text{PaB}^{\leq 4}$ is called **compatible** if

- $\gamma \sim \tilde{\gamma} \Rightarrow$ the source (resp. the target) of γ coincides with the source (resp. the target) of $\tilde{\gamma}$;
- $\forall \theta \in S_n$ and $\forall \gamma, \tilde{\gamma} \in \text{PaB}(n)$, $\gamma \sim \tilde{\gamma} \Leftrightarrow \theta(\gamma) \sim \theta(\tilde{\gamma})$;
- the equivalence class of $\gamma \circ \tilde{\gamma}$ depends only on the equivalence classes of γ and $\tilde{\gamma}$;
- for $\gamma \in \text{PaB}(n)$, $\tilde{\gamma} \in \text{PaB}(k)$, $1 \leq i \leq n$, and $\gamma \circ_i \tilde{\gamma}$ depends only on the equivalence classes of γ and $\tilde{\gamma}$;
- for every $2 \leq n \leq 4$, the groupoid $\text{PaB}(n)/\sim$ is finite.

A large supply of compatible equivalence relations on $\text{PaB}^{\leq 4}$ comes from finite index normal subgroups $N \trianglelefteq B_4$ such that $N \leq \text{PB}_4$.

$\text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(B_4)$ is the poset of such subgroups of B_4 .

$$N \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\text{B}_4) \mapsto \sim_N$$

Let \mathcal{G} be a connected groupoid and G be the automorphism group of any object $a \in \text{Ob}(\mathcal{G})$. Then every $N \trianglelefteq G$ gives us an equivalence relation on \mathcal{G} compatible with the composition of morphisms. Indeed, let $\gamma, \tilde{\gamma} \in \mathcal{G}(a, b)$; we declare that $\gamma \sim \tilde{\gamma}$ if $\gamma^{-1} \circ \tilde{\gamma} \in N$.

Given $N \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\text{B}_4)$, there is natural way to define $N_{\text{PB}_3} \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_3}(\text{B}_3)$ and $N_{\text{PB}_2} \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_2}(\text{B}_2)$. Then N , N_{PB_3} and N_{PB_2} give us equivalence relations on $\text{PaB}(4)$, $\text{PaB}(3)$ and $\text{PaB}(2)$, respectively. This way, we get a compatible equivalence relation \sim_N on $\text{PaB}^{\leq 4}$.

Note that $\text{PB}_2 = \langle x_{12} \rangle$ (infinite cyclic group) and B_2 is Abelian. So every $N_{\text{PB}_2} \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_2}(\text{B}_2)$ is of the form $\langle x_{12}^{N_{\text{ord}}} \rangle$ for some positive integer N_{ord} .

So... what are GT-shadows???

Consider the groupoid whose objects are elements of $\text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\text{B}_4)$ and whose morphisms are isomorphisms of operads

$$\text{PaB}^{\leq 4}/\text{N}^{(1)} \xrightarrow{\cong} \text{PaB}^{\leq 4}/\text{N}^{(2)}. \quad (2)$$

We denote this groupoid by GTSh . **GT-shadows** are morphisms of this groupoid.

Note that every isomorphism (2) is uniquely determined by an onto morphism of operads $\text{PaB}^{\leq 4} \rightarrow \text{PaB}^{\leq 4}/\text{N}^{(2)}$. It is convenient to identify morphisms in $\text{GTSh}(\text{N}^{(1)}, \text{N}^{(2)})$ with the onto morphisms of operads

$$\text{PaB}^{\leq 4} \rightarrow \text{PaB}^{\leq 4}/\text{N}^{(2)}$$

whose “kernel” is the compatible equivalence relation corresponding to $\text{N}^{(1)}$. For $\text{N} \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\text{B}_4)$, $\text{GT}(\text{N})$ denotes the set of GT-shadows with the target N .

How to “explain this to a computer”?

For every $N \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\text{B}_4)$, we have $N_{\text{PB}_3} \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_3}(\text{B}_3)$ and $N_{\text{PB}_2} \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_2}(\text{B}_2)$ (or, equivalently, a positive integer $N_{\text{ord}} := |\text{PB}_2 : N_{\text{PB}_2}|$). These subgroups give us \sim on $\text{PaB}^{\leq 4}$.

Since $\text{PaB}^{\leq 4}$ is generated by β and α , every GT-shadow $T : \text{PaB}^{\leq 4} \rightarrow \text{PaB}^{\leq 4}/N$ is uniquely determined by the pair $(m + N_{\text{ord}}\mathbb{Z}, f N_{\text{PB}_3}) \in \mathbb{Z}/N_{\text{ord}}\mathbb{Z} \times \text{PB}_3/N_{\text{PB}_3}$.

Vice versa, for every pair

$$(m + N_{\text{ord}}\mathbb{Z}, f N_{\text{PB}_3}) \in \mathbb{Z}/N_{\text{ord}}\mathbb{Z} \times \text{PB}_3/N_{\text{PB}_3}$$

satisfying the versions of the hexagon relations, the version of the pentagon relation and additional conditions, we have a onto morphism of operads

$$T_{m,f} : \text{PaB}^{\leq 4} \rightarrow \text{PaB}^{\leq 4}/N.$$

GT-shadows coming from elements of \widehat{GT}

Let $N \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\text{B}_4)$ and $\hat{T} \in \widehat{GT}$. Composing the standard inclusion $\text{PaB}^{\leq 4} \rightarrow \widehat{\text{PaB}}^{\leq 4}$, \hat{T} and the projection $\mathcal{P}_N : \widehat{\text{PaB}}^{\leq 4} \rightarrow \text{PaB}^{\leq 4}/N$, we get a GT-shadow T_N .

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \widehat{\text{PaB}}^{\leq 4} & \xrightarrow{\hat{T}} & \widehat{\text{PaB}}^{\leq 4} \\ \uparrow & & \downarrow \mathcal{P}_N \\ \text{PaB}^{\leq 4} & \xrightarrow{T_N} & \text{PaB}^{\leq 4}/N \end{array}$$

We say that T_N comes from an element of \widehat{GT} . If a GT-shadow T comes from an element of \widehat{GT} , then T is called **genuine**. Otherwise, T is called **fake**.

The action of GT-shadows on child's drawings

Let $N \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\text{B}_4)$ and $H \leq \text{F}_2$ be a subgroup that represents a child's drawing D . We say that D is **subordinate** to N if the normal core of H contains $N_{\text{PB}_3} \cap \text{F}_2$. $\text{Dessin}(N)$ denotes the set of child's drawings subordinate to N .

We denote by Dessin the category whose objects are elements of $\text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\text{B}_4)$. For $N^{(1)}, N^{(2)} \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\text{B}_4)$, morphisms from $N^{(1)}$ to $N^{(2)}$ are functions from $\text{Dessin}(N^{(1)})$ to $\text{Dessin}(N^{(2)})$.

Theorem

Let $N^{(1)}, N^{(2)} \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\text{B}_4)$ and $[(m, f)] \in \text{GTSh}(N^{(1)}, N^{(2)})$. Let $\varphi : \text{F}_2 \rightarrow S_d$ be a homomorphism that represents $D \in \text{Dessin}(N^{(2)})$ and $\tilde{\varphi}$ be a homomorphism $\text{F}_2 \rightarrow S_d$ defined by

$$\tilde{\varphi}(x) := \varphi(x^{2m+1}), \quad \tilde{\varphi}(y) := \varphi(f^{-1}y^{2m+1}f).$$

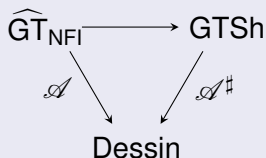
The assignment $\varphi \mapsto \tilde{\varphi}$ gives us a functor $\mathcal{A}^\# : \text{GTSh} \rightarrow \text{Dessin}$.

The actions are compatible!

\widehat{GT} acts on $NFI_{PB_4}(B_4)$. We denote by \widehat{GT}_{NFI} the corresponding transformation groupoid. We have the obvious functor $\widehat{GT}_{NFI} \rightarrow GTSh$.

Theorem

The action of \widehat{GT} on child's drawings gives us a functor $\mathcal{A} : \widehat{GT}_{NFI} \rightarrow Dessin$. Moreover, the diagram



commutes.

Hierarchy of orbits

Consider a chain in the poset $\text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\mathbb{B}_4)$

$$N^{(1)} \supset N^{(2)} \supset N^{(3)} \supset \dots$$

and a child's drawing $D \in \text{Dessin}(N^{(1)})$. It is clear that D is subordinate to $N^{(i)}$ for every $N^{(i)}$ in this chain.

Recall that $\text{GT}(N)$ denotes the set of all GT-shadows with the target N . ($\text{GT}(N)$ is finite!)

For every child's drawing D , we have the following *hierarchy of orbits*:

$$\text{GT}(N^{(1)})(D) \supset \text{GT}(N^{(2)})(D) \supset \text{GT}(N^{(3)})(D) \supset \dots \supset \widehat{\text{GT}}(D) \supset G_{\mathbb{Q}}(D).$$

It is **very hard** to compute $G_{\mathbb{Q}}(D)$; **there are no tools in modern mathematics** to compute orbits $\widehat{\text{GT}}(D)$; **it is relatively easy** to compute orbits $\text{GT}(N)(D)$.

Proposition

For $N \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(B_4)$, the following conditions are equivalent:

- a) the quotient group PB_4/N is Abelian;
- b) the quotient group $\text{PB}_3/N_{\text{PB}_3}$ is Abelian;

If N satisfies **a)** or **b)**, then we say that we are in the “Abelian setting”.

Theorem

Let $N \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(B_4)$. If the quotient group PB_4/N is Abelian then

$$\text{GT}(N) = \{(\bar{m}, \underline{1}) \mid 0 \leq m \leq N_{\text{ord}} - 1, \gcd(2m + 1, N_{\text{ord}}) = 1\}, \quad (3)$$

where $\bar{m} := m + N_{\text{ord}}\mathbb{Z}$, $\underline{1}$ is the identity element of $\text{PB}_3/N_{\text{PB}_3}$.
Furthermore, **every** GT-shadow in $\text{GT}(N)$ is **genuine**.

Abelian child's drawings

Let $\varphi : F_2 \rightarrow S_d$ be a homomorphism that represents a child's drawing D . Recall that (the conjugacy class of) the permutation group $\varphi(F_2) \leq S_d$ is called the **monodromy group** of D .

A child's drawing D is called **Abelian** if its monodromy group is Abelian. One can show that every Abelian child's drawing is Galois.

The following theorem is from a paper in preparation:

Theorem

Let D be an Abelian child's drawing and $N \in \text{NFI}_{\text{PB}_4}(\mathbb{B}_4)$ such that D is subordinate to N . Then the orbits

$$\text{GT}(N)(D) \supset \widehat{\text{GT}}(D) \supset G_{\mathbb{Q}}(D)$$

*are **singletons**.*

Selected results of computer experiments

Jointly with students, I have been developing a software package ‘GT’ for working with GT-shadows and their action on child’s drawings. A beta version of this package is available at

<https://math.temple.edu/~vald/PackageGT/>

- Let D be a child’s drawing for which the $G_{\mathbb{Q}}$ -orbit and the orbit with respect to the action of GT-shadows are computed. Then these orbits coincide!
- There is **no** “Furusho phenomenon” for GT-shadows: there are examples $f \in F_2$ that satisfy the pentagon relation modulo N but at least one hexagon fails for (m, f) for every $m \in \{0, 1, \dots, N_{\text{ord}} - 1\}$.
- The connected components of GTSh we found have a very small number of objects: ≤ 2 . We could **not** find a connected component of GTSh with > 2 objects!
- So far, we did **not** find **any** example of a fake GT-shadow.

Selected References

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More References?!... Sure!

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THANK YOU!