Geometric Invariant Theory and Nonabelian Hodge Correspondence Reading Seminar

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March 4, 2024

1 Seminar Outline

The nonabelian Hodge correspondence is a deep and beautiful theory that identifies three moduli spaces: the **Betti moduli space** $\mathcal{M}_{\mathrm{B}}$ of surface group representations, the **de Rham moduli space** $\mathcal{M}_{\mathrm{dR}}$ of flat connections and the **Dolbeault moduli space** $\mathcal{M}_{\mathrm{Dol}}$ of Higgs bundles, whose objects on the surface appear to arise from very different contexts. The moduli spaces themselves are constructed as GIT quotients based on the **geometric invariant theory** pioneered by Mumford. The correspondence between these moduli spaces is the cumulative work of Corlette, Donaldson, Hitchin and Simpson built on that of many mathematicians and the machinery involved to prove these results lies in the intersection of algebraic geometry, complex geometry, geometric analysis and gauge theory.

$$\begin{tikzcd}
\mathcal{M}_{\mathrm{B}} \arrow[r, "\cong"] & \mathcal{M}_{\mathrm{dR}} \arrow[rr, "\cong"] \arrow[dr, "\cong"'] & & \mathcal{M}_{\mathrm{Dol}} \\
& & \{\text{Harmonic bundles}\} \arrow[ur, "\cong"'] &
\end{tikzcd}$$

The goal of this reading seminar is two-fold:

- Understand the workings of geometric invariant theory and how they are applied in the construction of the moduli spaces involved in the nonabelian Hodge correspondence.
- Understand the geometric properties of objects in the moduli spaces and without going into too much nasty detail, sketch the correspondence between the moduli spaces for $G = \mathrm{GL}(n, \mathbb{C})$.

This topic lies in the intersection of many aspects of mathematics and may yield something useful for everyone in spite of different background and interests. For those more geometrically minded who are working with the moduli spaces, we provide the algebro-geometric foundation of their construction, while for those more algebraically minded, these are excellent examples of GIT and testing ground for your understanding. We aim to divide the topics in a way that strikes a balance between algebra and geometry, thereby bringing forth interaction and collaboration.

2 Format and Schedule

For our first introductory meeting, we meet on 16.11. at 11:00 in the common area of the library. There we will decide a most convenient time and place to meet.

- Place: A3 02
- Time: On the listed dates (usually Thursdays) 11:00–12:30
- Organisers: Please email us for questions and comments!
  - Enya Hsiao: `enya.hsiao@mis.mpg.de`
  - Leonie Kayser: `leo.kayser@mis.mpg.de`

Each week, a participant will give a 45-60 minute talk summarizing our reading and provide additional information (details in the list of talks below). We will then spend 30 minutes to discuss one problem/exercise/example chosen by the speaker. Depending on whether participants find it useful, we can hold discussion sessions roughly every four meetings to clear up any accumulated confusion.

Tentative dates

The following is a possible plan of the seminar assuming that we hold regular discussion sessions and that we meet weekly on Thursdays with minor modifications.

Date	Topic	Reading
16.11.	0. Introduction and Overview	This document
23.11.	1. Affine and projective varieties	[Gat21, 1–7]
30.11.	2. Algebraic groups and invariant theory	All: [Bri09, 1.1, "1.20–1.23"]
		NLA: [Hos15, 3.1–3.2, 4.1–4.4]
07.12.	3. Affine GIT	All: [Bri09, 1.2]
		NLA: [Hos15, 3.3–3.5, 4.5–4.6]
14.12.	*Discussion: Gauge theory*	[Hos13, 2]
11.01.	4. The Betti Moduli space: Character variety	[Tho23, 2]
18.01.	5. The de Rham Moduli space: Flat connections	[Tho23, 3, 4, 5]
25.01.	6. The Riemann-Hilbert correspondence	[Tho23, 3]
01.02.	*Discussion: Proj and Ample line bundles*	
08.02.	7. Projective GIT	All: [Bri09, 1.3]
		NLA: [Hos15, 5.1–5.2, 6.1–6.2]
15.02.	8. Hilbert-Mumford Criterion	[Hos15, 5.3–5.5, 6.3–6.4]
22.02.	9. The moduli problem	[Hos15, 2, 3.6]
04.03.	*Discussion: Complex geometry*	
14.03.	10. The Dolbeault Moduli space: Higgs bundles	[Tho23, 7, 8]
21.03.	11. Harmonic bundles and Donaldson-Corlette correspondence	[Tho23, 9]
28.03.	12. The Hitchin-Simpson correspondence	[Tho23, 9]

3 List of Talks

The schedule above is built upon the following list of preliminary talks, interweaving the two main topics.

Topic A: Geometric Invariant Theory

For geometric invariant theory, we will have six talks following the lecture notes by Victoria Hoskins [Hos15] and Michel Brion [Bri09]. Exercise problems complementary to Hoskin's lectures can be found on her website: `https://www.math.ru.nl/~vhoskins/moduli_and_GIT.html`. For the relevant background on Algebraic Geometry we recommend Andreas Gathmann's lecture notes [Gat21], available at `https://agag-gathmann.math.rptu.de/de/alggeom.php`. Excellent and readable books on algebraic groups and invariant theory are Mukai's *An Introduction to Invariants and Moduli* [Muk03] and Derksen & Kemper's *Computational Invariant Theory* [DK15].

1. Affine and projective varieties (Leonie)

This is a very condensed intro to the theory of quasi-projective varieties. We emphasize the correspondence of varieties and reduced finite-type $\mathbb{C}$-algebras, which is crucial to understand the GIT quotient construction.

- Affine algebraic sets $V(\mathfrak{a})$, vanishing ideals $I(X)$, Zariski topology, Nullstellensatz
- The structure sheaf $\mathcal{O}_X$ of an affine variety $X \subseteq \mathbb{C}^n$, making it a *space with functions*
- Morphisms of affine varieties, the correspondence {affine varieties} $\leftrightarrow$ {f.t. reduced $\mathbb{C}$-algebras}
- Abstract varieties and their morphisms
- Projective varieties, homogeneous ideals, projective Nullstellensatz, quasiprojective varieties
- Products of affine and (quasi)projective varieties

2. Algebraic groups and invariant theory (Barbara)

In this week we learn about affine algebraic groups $G \subseteq \mathrm{GL}(n, \mathbb{C})$ and invariant rings A^G. We also learn about the important class of *reductive* groups and why they are particularly nice.

- (Affine/linear) algebraic group, homomorphism of algebraic groups, normal subgroups, quotient group
- Linear representations, group actions, equivariant maps
- Algebraic tori, weight space decompositions
- Group action on $\mathbb{C}$-algebras, the invariant ring A^G
- Hilbert's 14th problem and its solutions (If this is too much for the talk, then we can push this into 3.)
- Reductive groups, the main theorems (over $\mathbb{C}$ of course)

3. Affine GIT (Anaëlle)

In this week we learn about various notions of quotients, and that reductive groups acting on affine varieties allow for good quotients.

- Orbits, stabilizers, closed actions, orbit dimension & closure decomposition (this may overlap with week 2)
- Categorial, geometric and good quotients (the definitions in [Hos15] and [Bri09] look slightly different)
- Good quotients are categorial, some properties
- Construction of affine GIT quotients, affine GIT quotients are good
- Stable points and the good quotient on X^{s}
- Examples!

7. Projective GIT (Bernhard)

8. Hilbert-Mumford criterion (Maximilian)

9. The moduli problem (Leonie)

Topic B: Nonabelian Hodge Correspondence

For nonabelian Hodge correspondence we will have six talks focusing on a subset of the following references: [Tho23; Hos13; Li19; WG11; Wen16; Got14]. As there is a plethora of sources on this subject without a unifying standard text, we will take the more accessible lecture notes [Tho23] as our base and build up the details from here.

4. The Betti Moduli space: Character variety (Fernando)

Let S be a surface of $g \geq 2$. In this talk we discuss the character variety as the affine GIT quotient of the representation variety $\mathrm{Hom}(\pi_1 S, G)$ by the conjugation action of a complex reductive group. Start by introducing the representation variety with its a natural affine algebraic variety structure and give a description of the invariant ring for some nice group, e.g. $\mathrm{GL}(n, \mathbb{C})$. In the spirit of affine GIT, identify the polystable orbits as those arising from completely reducible representations and the stable points from irreducible representations. Translate these definitions using parabolic, levi subgroups into the familiar definition for representations.

Additional references: [Mar], [Sik10].

5. The de Rham Moduli space: Flat connections (Jiajun)

The goal of this talk is to construct the moduli space of flat connections over a surface via symplectic reduction and state (!) that this corresponds to some GIT quotient via the Kempf-Ness theorem. Begin by defining a flat connection on a principal bundle and observe that the space of connections has a natural symplectic structure preserved by the gauge group action. Define the moment map of a Hamiltonian action and its corresponding symplectic reduction. If the resulting space is a manifold, it inherits a symplectic structure. Show that the gauge group action is Hamiltonian and the moment map is given by curvature.

Additional references: [Hos13], [MS17].

6. The Riemann-Hilbert correspondence (Pengfei)

Exhibit the equivalence of categories between flat connections on a G-principal bundle, G-local systems and surface group representations into G. To do so, one defines the holonomy of a connection and show that when the connection is flat this induces a surface group representation up to conjugation. This correspondence gives a complex analytic isomorphism of the Betti and de Rham moduli spaces. Could you explain why the isomorphism is not algebraic?

Additional references: [Sim94].

10. The Dolbeault Moduli space: Higgs bundles (Tim)

Construct the Higgs bundle moduli space via the hyperkähler quotient.

Additional references:

11. Harmonic bundles and Donaldson-Corlette correspondence (Christian)

12. The Hitchin-Simpson correspondence (Enya)

References

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