

Theta series and tautological cycles on orthogonal Shimura varieties

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Motivation: Moduli space of curves

- Let

$$\mathbf{M}_g = \left\{ \Sigma_g : \text{diagram of genus } g \right\} / \cong$$

be the moduli space of compact Riemann surfaces of genus $g \geq 2$.

- By Teichmüller theory,

$$\mathbf{M}_g \cong \mathbf{T} / \text{MCG}$$

where \mathbf{T} is the **Teichmüller space** and MCG is the **mapping class group**.

- **Deligne-Mumford**: there is a projective compactification $\overline{\mathbf{M}}_g$ of \mathbf{M}_g , called **Deligne-Mumford compactification**. Its boundary $\partial(\overline{\mathbf{M}}_g)$ has $\lfloor \frac{g}{2} \rfloor + 1$ irreducible components δ_i , $0 \leq i \leq \lfloor \frac{g}{2} \rfloor$, where

$$\delta_i = \left\{ C \cup C' \mid \text{gen}(C) = i, \text{gen}(C') = g - i \right\}.$$

Tautological cycles on \mathbf{M}_g

Fact: The Chow ring $\mathrm{CH}^*(\mathbf{M}_g)$ is highly complicated (e.g., potentially non-finitely generated). Mumford's tautological ring captures its most geometric/essential part.

- **Geometry from Moduli Spaces:** The moduli space \mathbf{M}_g “naturally carries” a universal family of smooth curves:

$$\pi : \mathbf{M}_{g,1} \rightarrow \mathbf{M}_g, \quad \text{with fiber } \pi^{-1}([C]) = C$$

- Set

$$T_\pi = \ker (T_{\mathbf{M}_{g,1}} \rightarrow \pi^* T_{\mathbf{M}_g}) .$$

to be **relative tangent bundle**.

- **Mumford's κ -Classes:** define

$$\kappa_i = \pi_* \left(c_1(T_\pi)^{i+1} \right) \in \mathrm{CH}^i(\mathbf{M}_g).$$

and the subring $\mathrm{R}^*(\mathbf{M}_g) \subset \mathrm{CH}^*(\mathbf{M}_g)$ generated by κ_i is called the tautological ring for \mathbf{M}_g .

Core Insight: The tautological ring encodes essential intersection-theoretic data on \mathbf{M}_g .

Structure of the Tautological Ring

Theorem (Harer, Looijenga, Faber)

Let $R^*(M_g) = \bigoplus_{d \geq 0} R^d(M_g)$. Then:

- (0) (**Mumford's conjecture**) $R^*(M_g)$ is generated by $\kappa_1, \dots, \kappa_{\lfloor g/3 \rfloor}$ and $R^1(M_g) = \text{Pic}(M_g)$.
- (1) (**Vanishing**) $R^d(M_g) = 0$ for $d > g - 2$.
- (2) (**1-Dimensionality**) $R^{g-2}(M_g) \cong \mathbb{Q}$.

Remark.

- Properties (1)–(2) is part of **Faber's conjecture**.

Faber's conjecture also include the (**Gorenstein Property**), i.e. the intersection pairing

$$R^d(M_g) \times R^{g-2-d}(M_g) \rightarrow R^{g-2}(M_g) \cong \mathbb{Q}$$

is perfect, which imply a *Poincaré duality* structure on $R^*(M_g)$. This is still open.

- There is an analogous result on \overline{M}_g . e.g. $R^1(\overline{M}_g) = \text{Pic}(\overline{M}_g)$ is spanned by κ_1 and irreducible components of $\partial(\overline{M}_g)$.

Higher dimensional case: K3 surfaces

Definition

- A compact complex surface S is a K3 surface if
 1. $\pi_1(S) = 1$,
 2. $H^0(S, \Omega_S^2)$ is spanned by a nowhere degenerated 2-form.
- A **quasi-polarized K3 surface of genus g** is a pair (S, L) where S is a K3 surface, $L \in \text{Pic}(S)$ is a nef line bundle with $L^2 = 2g - 2$.
- Let

$$\mathbf{F}_g = \left\{ (S, L) : \text{quasi-polarized K3 surfaces of genus } g \right\} / \cong$$

be the coarse moduli space of quasi-polarized K3 surfaces.

Global Torelli Theorem (Pjateckiĭ-Šapiro, Šafarevič)

\mathbf{F}_g is isomorphic to a 19-dimensional quasi-projective Shimura variety via the period map, equipped with a canonical compactification $\overline{\mathbf{F}}_g$, called the **Baily-Borel compactification**.

Tautological ring of \mathbf{F}_g

- Motivated from Mumford's work, Marian-Oprea-Pandarpande defined the κ -classes on family of quasi-polarized K3 surfaces $\pi : \mathcal{X} \rightarrow B$ as below

$$\kappa_{a_1, \dots, a_k, b} := \pi_* (\mathcal{L}_1^{a_1} \cdots \mathcal{L}_k^{a_k} c_2(T_\pi)^b)$$

where $\mathcal{L}_i \in \text{Pic}(\mathcal{X})$.

- Let $\mathbf{R}^*(\mathbf{F}_g) \subseteq \text{CH}^*(\mathbf{F}_g)$ be the subring generated by κ -classes on families of K3 surfaces over the **higher Noether-Lefschetz loci** of \mathbf{F}_g .
- **MOP Conjecture:**
 - (0) **Generators:** $\mathbf{R}^*(\mathbf{F}_g)$ is generated by components in the higher Noether-Lefschetz loci.
 - (1) **Vanishing:** $\mathbf{R}^d(\mathbf{F}_g) = 0$ for $d > 19 - 2$
 - (2) **1-Dim:** $\mathbf{R}^{17}(\mathbf{F}_g) \cong \mathbb{Q}$
- (0) has been confirmed by Yin-Pandarpande, and also Bergero-L. (in cohomology) via different methods.

A Comparative Overview

Moduli space of curves

- $\text{Pic}(\mathbf{M}_g) \cong \mathbb{Z}$
- $\text{Pic}(\overline{\mathbf{M}}_g) \cong \mathbb{Z}^{[\frac{g}{2}]+2}$
- $R^*(\mathbf{M}_g)$ is finitely generated
- $R^{>g-2}(\mathbf{M}_g) = 0$
- $R^{g-2}(\mathbf{M}_g) \cong \mathbb{Q}$

Moduli space of quasi-polarized K3 surfaces

- $\text{Pic}(\mathbf{F}_g) \cong \mathbb{Z}^{d(g)}$, $d(g) \approx [\frac{19g}{24}] + 1$
- $\text{Pic}(\overline{\mathbf{F}}_g) \cong \mathbb{Z}$
- It remains open whether $R^*(\mathbf{F}_g)$ is finitely generated
- **Petersen '19**: $R^{>\dim \mathbf{F}_g - 2}(\mathbf{F}_g) = 0$ modulo homological equivalence
- **Canning-Oprea-Pandharipande '24**: $R^{\dim \mathbf{F}_g - 2}(\mathbf{M}_g) \cong \mathbb{Q}$ when $g = 2$.

We will discuss the generalization of this picture and the motivations.

General Setting: Shimura variety of orthogonal type

- M : an integral lattice of signature $(2, n)$.
- $\mathbf{D} = \{x \in \mathbb{P}(M \otimes \mathbb{C}) \mid x^2 = 0, (x, \bar{x}) > 0\}$
- Γ : a congruence subgroup of the stable orthogonal group $\tilde{\mathcal{O}}(M)$.
- **Baily-Borel compactification**: The Shimura variety $\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M) = \Gamma \backslash \mathbf{D}$ is a quasi-projective variety, and it admits a canonical compactification:

$$\overline{\mathrm{Sh}}_\Gamma(M) = \mathrm{Proj} \bigoplus_k H^0(\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M), \lambda^{\otimes k}),$$

where λ is the **Hodge line bundle** on $\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M)$.

- **Example**. When $M = \langle 2 - 2g \rangle \oplus U^{\oplus 2} \oplus E_8^{\oplus 2}(-1)$ and $\Gamma = \tilde{\mathcal{O}}(M)$, $\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M) \cong \mathbf{F}_g$.
- **Geometric properties**: $\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M)$ has only quotient singularities and is therefore **\mathbb{Q} -factorial**, while $\overline{\mathrm{Sh}}_\Gamma(M)$ can have **canonical singularities**.

Tautological cycles on $\mathrm{Sh}(M)$

- On $\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M)$, there are natural cycles of the form

$$\Gamma_v \backslash v^\perp \rightarrow \Gamma \backslash D$$

where $v \subseteq M$ is a negative definite subspace.

- When $\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M) = \mathbf{F}_g$, these are irreducible components of higher Noether-Lefschetz loci.
- Let $R^*(\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M))$ be the subring of $\mathrm{CH}^*(\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M))$ generated by all natural cycles.

A conjectural description is

Conjecture and questions

Assume $\dim \mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M) > 3$. Then

1. The cycle class map $R^*(\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M)) \rightarrow H^*(\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M), \mathbb{Q})$ is injective
2. $R^*(\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M))$ is finitely generated (A stronger version of Kudla's modularity).
3. $R^{>\dim-2}(\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M)) = 0$.
- 4? $R^{\dim-2}(\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M)) = \mathbb{Q}$ for $\Gamma = \widetilde{\mathrm{O}}(M)$?

Special Divisors on Orthogonal Shimura Varieties

The problem (4?) for $\Gamma = \tilde{O}(M)$ is related to the study of divisors on $\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M)$.

- **Heegner divisors:** For $m \in \mathbb{Q}^{\geq 0}$ and $\gamma \in M^\vee/M$, define

$$H_{m,\gamma} = \begin{cases} \Gamma \backslash \sum_{\substack{v \in M+\gamma \\ \frac{v^2}{2} = -m}} v^\perp, & \text{if } (m, \gamma) \neq (0, 0), \\ -\lambda, & \text{if } (m, \gamma) = (0, 0). \end{cases}$$

which can be regarded as an element in $\mathrm{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M))$.

- **Bergeron-L-Millson-Moeglin:** If $\mathrm{rank}(M) \geq 5$, then $\mathrm{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M))$ is spanned by the irreducible components of $H_{m,\gamma}$.
- When M contains two hyperbolic lattices and $\Gamma = \tilde{O}(M)$, by using Eichler's criteria, $\mathrm{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\mathrm{Sh}(M))$ is spanned by Heegner divisors.
- If $\dim \mathrm{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\mathrm{Sh}_\Gamma(M)) > 1$, Problem (4?) likely has a negative answer.

Picard group of Baily-Borel compactification

Theorem 1 (Huang-L-Müller-Ye)

Suppose

1. M contains two hyperbolic lattice;
2. $\text{rank}(M) > 10$;
3. $M \otimes \mathbb{Z}_p$ contains three hyperbolic for all p .

If $\Gamma = \widetilde{\text{O}}(M)$, then

$$\text{Pic}(\overline{\text{Sh}}_\Gamma(M)) \cong \mathbb{Z}$$

is spanned by some multiple of the extended Hodge line bundle $\bar{\lambda}$.

Remark:

- It will be interesting to know if $\dim \text{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\overline{\text{Sh}}_\Gamma(M)) = 1$ for more general Γ and M with $\text{rank}(M) \geq 5$ or not, (In fact, we find that this also holds for 2-elementary lattice containing two hyperbolics)
- The proof heavily use the closed relation between Heegner divisors and vector-valued modular forms.

Modular Forms

- **Vector-Valued version:** Given $\rho : \mathrm{SL}_2(\mathbb{Z}) \rightarrow \mathrm{GL}(V)$ (or its double cover $\mathrm{Mp}_2(\mathbb{Z})$), a vector-valued function $f : \mathbb{H} \rightarrow V$ is called a **modular form of weight k of type ρ** if

$$f\left(\frac{az+b}{cz+d}\right) = (cz+d)^k \cdot \rho\left(\begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix}\right) (f(z)), \quad \forall \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \in \mathrm{SL}_2(\mathbb{Z}).$$

- If the constant terms in its Fourier expansion are all 0, it is called a **cuspidal form**. Set $\mathbf{Cusp}_k(\rho)$: space of cuspidal forms of weight k and type ρ .
- e.g. the **Eisenstein series**

$$\mathbf{E}_{2k}(z) = \frac{1}{2\zeta(2k)} \sum_{(m,n) \neq (0,0)} \frac{1}{(m+nz)^{2k}}.$$

is a modular form of weight $2k$.

- If ρ is a Weil representation, a main source to construct vector-valued modular forms is from Borcherds' theta series.

Theta Series

- Borchers' Theta Series

- for any even lattice L , there is a Weil representation of $\mathrm{Mp}_2(\mathbb{Z})$ attached to L

$$\rho_L : \mathrm{Mp}_2(\mathbb{Z}) \rightarrow \mathbb{C}[L^\vee/L]$$

- if L is **definite** and h is a harmonic polynomial of degree $d > 0$, the **vector-valued Theta series**

$$\Theta_{L,h}(z) = \sum_{v \in L^\vee} h(v) q^{\frac{v^2}{2}} \mathbf{e}_v,$$

is an element in $\mathbf{Cusp}_{d+\frac{\mathrm{rank}(L)}{2}}(\rho_L)$, where \mathbf{e}_v is the standard basis of $\mathbb{C}[L^\vee/L]$.

- Set $\mathbf{Cusp}_k^\theta(\rho_L) \subseteq \mathbf{Cusp}_k(\rho_L)$ to be the subspace generated by $\Theta_{\Lambda,h}$ for all definite lattice $\Lambda \in \mathbf{Gen}(L)$.

A stronger version via Borcherds' theta lifting

Set $\text{Sh}(M) = \text{Sh}_{\tilde{O}(M)}(M)$. Borcherds introduces the **singular theta lifting**, which enable us to give an explicit description of $\text{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{Sh}(M))$ via modular forms.

Set

- $\mathbf{ACusp}_k(\rho_M)$: space generated by $\mathbf{Cusp}_k(\rho_M)$ and an Eisenstein series of weight k .
- M : even lattice of signature $(2, n)$ containing two hyperbolic lattice

There is an isomorphism

$$\Upsilon : \text{Pic}(\text{Sh}(M))_{\mathbb{Q}} \cong \mathbf{ACusp}(\rho_M)^{\vee},$$

sending the Heegner divisor $H_{m,\gamma}$ to the **coefficients functional**

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{ACusp}_{\frac{n+2}{2}}(\rho_M) &\longrightarrow \mathbb{Q} \\ \sum_{m' \in \mathbb{Q}, \gamma' \in M^{\vee}/M} a_{m', \gamma'} q^{m'} \mathbf{e}_{\gamma'} &\mapsto a_{m, \gamma} \end{aligned}$$

Local obstruction for extending Heegner divisors

Question: when an element in $\mathrm{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\mathrm{Sh}(M))$ can be extended to the boundary?

- For $x \in \overline{\mathrm{Sh}}_{\Gamma}(M)$, the **local Picard group** at x is defined as:

$$\mathrm{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\overline{\mathrm{Sh}}_{\Gamma}(M), x) := \lim_{x \in U} \mathrm{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(U \cap \mathrm{Sh}(M)).$$

- There is a restriction map:

$$\mathrm{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\mathrm{Sh}_{\Gamma}(M)) \rightarrow \mathrm{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\overline{\mathrm{Sh}}_{\Gamma}(M), x).$$

Some multiple of $H \in \mathrm{Pic}(\mathrm{Sh}_{\Gamma}(M))$ can be extended to x if its image in $\mathrm{Pic}(\overline{\mathrm{Sh}}_{\Gamma}(M), x)$ is trivial.

- **Example:** $\lambda^{\otimes n}$ can be extended to the boundary for sufficiently large n .
- **Extension of λ (by Lan):** If Γ is neat, then λ can be extended to $\overline{\mathrm{Sh}}_{\Gamma}(M)$.

Obstruction from theta series

Fact: the boundary components of $\overline{\text{Sh}}(M)$ correspond to isotropic planes $J \subseteq M$.

Theorem (Bruinier-Freitag)

Suppose

- M : lattice of signature $(2, n)$ and $U^{\oplus 2} \subseteq M$;
- $J \subseteq M$: an isotropic plane;
- $\partial_J \subseteq \overline{\text{Sh}}(M) - \text{Sh}(M)$: the boundary component corresponds to J ;
- $H = \sum_{\gamma \in M^\vee / M} \sum_{m \in \mathbb{Q}} a_{m, \gamma} H_{m, \gamma}$

Then H is trivial in $\text{Pic}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\overline{\text{Sh}}(M), x)$ for general $x \in \partial_J$ if and only if

$$\sum_{\gamma \in M^\vee / M} \sum_{m \in \mathbb{Q}} a_{m, \gamma} c_{m, \gamma} = 0$$

for all theta series $\Theta_{J^\perp / J, h} = \sum_{m, \gamma} c_{m, \gamma} q^m \mathbf{e}_\gamma$, where h runs over all harmonic polynomials of degree 2.

Observations and question

- **1st observation:** as M contains two hyperbolic, then

$$\left\{ J^\perp / J \mid J \subseteq M \text{ is an isotropic plane} \right\}$$

contains the genus of negative definite lattices of rank $n - 2$ with discriminant group $\cong M^\vee / M$.

- **A necessary condition:** if $H \in \text{Pic}_\mathbb{Q}(\text{Sh}(M))$ can be extended to $\overline{\text{Sh}}(M)$, then

$$\Upsilon(H)(f) = \sum_{\gamma \in M^\vee / M} \sum_{m \in \mathbb{Q}} a_{m,\gamma} c_{m,\gamma} = 0$$

for all $f \in \mathbf{Cusp}_{\frac{n+2}{2}}^\theta(\rho_M)$.

- **2nd observation:** $H \in \text{Pic}_\mathbb{Q}(\text{Sh}(M))$ is proportional to λ if and only if

$$\Upsilon(H)(f) = 0$$

for all $f \in \mathbf{Cusp}_{\frac{n+2}{2}}(\rho_M)$.

- **Question:** Is $\mathbf{Cusp}_{\frac{n+2}{2}}^\theta(\rho_M) = \mathbf{Cusp}_{\frac{n+2}{2}}(\rho_M)$? If this holds, then $\text{Pic}_\mathbb{Q}(\overline{\text{Sh}}(M))$ is spanned by λ .

Cusp forms as theta series

The proof of Theorem 1 relies on the following theta lifting result

Theorem 2 (Theta lifting)

With the assumption as before.

- $\mathbf{E}_{k,M}^{(2)}$: the vector-valued Siegel Eisenstein series of weight k and type $\rho_M^{(2)}$;
- Set $\vartheta(z, z') = \partial_d \mathbf{E}_{k,M}^{(2)}(z, z')$, where ∂_d is the Eichler-Zagier's differential operator.

For $d > 0$ and $k = d + \text{rank}(M)$, there is an injective map

$$\Psi : \mathbf{Cusp}_k(\rho_M) \rightarrow \mathbf{Mod}_k(\rho_M) \quad (1)$$

given by

$$f \mapsto \int_{\text{SL}_2(\mathbb{Z}) \backslash \mathbb{H}} \langle f(z), \vartheta(z, -\overline{z'}) \rangle \frac{dx dy}{y^{2-k}}$$

whose image is exactly $\mathbf{Cusp}_k^\theta(\rho_M)$. In other words, $\mathbf{Cusp}_k(\rho_M) = \mathbf{Cusp}_k^\theta(\rho_M)$.

Proof of Theorem 2

Image of Ψ : $\Psi(f) \in \mathbf{Cusp}_k^\theta(\rho_M)$ follows from a dedicated computation by using Siegel-Weil formula.

Injectivity of Ψ :

- The idea is to use **vector-valued Hecke operators**: for each $\alpha \in \mathbb{Z}$, there is an operator

$$\mathbf{T}_{\alpha^2} : \mathbf{Cusp}_k(\rho_M) \rightarrow \mathbf{Cusp}_k(\rho_M)$$

defined by

$$\mathbf{T}_{\alpha^2}(f) = \alpha^{k-2} \sum_i \sum_{\gamma \in G} \left(f_\gamma \mid_k [\tilde{\delta}_i] \right) \otimes \left(\mathbf{e}_\gamma \mid [\tilde{\delta}_i] \right),$$

where $f = \sum_{\gamma \in G} f_\gamma \mathbf{e}_\gamma$ and $\tilde{\delta}_i$ are coset representatives of $\mathrm{Mp}_2(\mathbb{Z})$.

Proof of Theorem 2

- Properties of Hecke operators (**Bruinier-Stein**)

- (i) They are self-adjoint with respect to the Petersson inner product.

- (ii) Set $N := \min \left\{ m \in \mathbb{Z}_{>0} \mid mx^2 = 0, \forall x \in M^\vee / M \right\}$. The Hecke operators

$$\{\mathbf{T}_{\alpha^2} : \gcd(\alpha, N) = 1\}$$

generate a commutative subalgebra.

- (iii) $\mathbf{T}_{\alpha^2} \circ \mathbf{T}_{\beta^2} = \mathbf{T}_{(\alpha\beta)^2}$ if $\gcd(\alpha, \beta) = 1$.

- For $k > d + 3$, we have

$$\Psi = C \sum_{\alpha=1}^{\infty} \frac{\mathbf{T}_{\alpha^2}}{\alpha^{2k-2-d}}.$$

for some non-zero constant C .

Theta lifting as Heck operators

- Injectivity of $\sum_{\alpha=1}^{\infty} \frac{\mathbf{T}_{\alpha^2}}{\alpha^{2k-2-d}} \cdot$

- $\mathbf{Cusp}_k(\rho_M)$ is spanned by simultaneous eigenforms of \mathbf{T}_{α^2} with $\gcd(\alpha, N) = 1$.
- let $f \in \mathbf{Cusp}_k(\rho_M)$ be a non-zero simultaneous eigenform with eigenvalue ψ_{α^2} , then

$$\left(\sum_{\substack{\alpha \geq 1 \\ \gcd(\alpha, N)=1}} \frac{\mathbf{T}_{\alpha^2}}{\alpha^{2k-2-d}} \right) (f) = \left(\sum_{\substack{\alpha \geq 1 \\ \gcd(\alpha, N)=1}} \frac{\psi_{\alpha^2}}{\alpha^{2k-2-d}} \right) f = L(f, 2k-2-d) \cdot f \neq 0.$$

- The case $p \mid N$ needs additional attention. It makes use of the isotropic lift of modular forms.

Thanks!