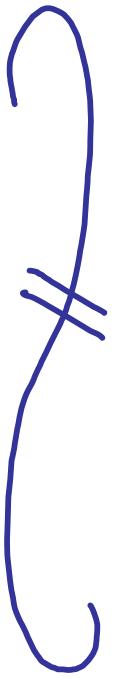


New Mathematics

for

Old Scattering Amplitudes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Spradlin".

M. Spradlin, Brown University

DPF 2011

Many have contributed significantly to these developments including

The goals of this research program are:

- to **explore** the rich mathematical structure of scattering amplitudes
- to **exploit** that structure to make previously impossible calculations trivial

The Appeal of Long-Lasting Vitality

From 2004 through 2011 (and beyond?) the

impossible → hard → trivial

phase transition often occurred on the
timescale of months, not years.

Communal pride trumps (occasional)
individual shame!

Why $N=4$ Super-Yang Mills Theory?

- A nontrivial but apparently solvable four-dimensional QFT.

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- Moreover it = quantum gravity in AdS space

Why $N=4$ Super-Yang Mills Theory?

- A nontrivial but apparently solvable four-dimensional QFT.
- But not just some random QFT, it is a **gauge theory**, and hence a cousin of QCD.
- Moreover it = **quantum gravity** in AdS space
- Most importantly, because it **is there and YES WE CAN!**

S-Matrix Theory Reloaded?

The spirit behind much recent progress is similar to that of "S-Matrix Theory".

If we have seen further than the giants of the past, it is because

S-Matrix Theory Reloaded?

The spirit behind much recent progress is similar to that of "S-Matrix Theory".

If we have seen further than the giants of the past, it is because we're focused squarely on the well-manicured lawn beneath our feet ($N=4$) rather than the dark jungle looming ahead (QCD).

A Completely Different Philosophy

Then, the idea was

- (1) enumerate the principles
(locality, analyticity, etc.)
- (2) solve!

A Completely Different Philosophy

Then, the idea was

- (1) enumerate the principles
(locality, analyticity, etc.)
- (2) solve!

Now, our aim is to

- (1) write down the solution **BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY**
- (2) deduce the principles from understanding its structure

BUCKLE

YOUR

SAFETY BELTS

I'll focus almost exclusively on
planar, color-striped partial amplitudes
in $\mathcal{N}=4$ Yang-Mills theory.

$$A(l_1, \dots, l_n) = \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} A(\sigma(l_1), \dots, \sigma(l_n)) \text{Tr} [T^{a_{\sigma(1)}} \dots T^{a_{\sigma(n)}}]$$

color-ordered partial amplitude

Amplitude Representation

In massless ϕ^3 theory, two representations of the tree-level four-particle amplitude are

$$A = -\frac{1}{s} - \frac{1}{t} - \frac{1}{u}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} A = & \frac{10s^2}{tu} + \frac{20s}{t} - \frac{9s}{tu} + \frac{32s}{u} + \frac{10u}{t} - \frac{15}{t} \\ & + \frac{34t}{u} - \frac{15}{u} + 42 + \frac{22t}{s} - \frac{5u}{ts} + \frac{10u}{s} \\ & + \frac{12t^2}{us} - \frac{5t}{us} - \frac{11}{s} \end{aligned}$$

They are equal, if you use

$$s + t + u = 0$$

A linear constraint \Rightarrow switch to

free variables

Amplitude
Representation
Spinor Helicity

For particles with spin we need spinor helicity variables.

Solve $k^2=0$ via $k^M = \sigma_{aa}^M \begin{pmatrix} \chi_a \\ \bar{\chi}_a \end{pmatrix}$
2 2-component objects

Notation $\langle ij \rangle = \epsilon_{ab} \chi_i^a \chi_j^b$ $[ij] = \epsilon_{ab} \chi_i^a \chi_j^b$

$$\langle i|j+k|\ell \rangle = \langle ij \rangle [je] + \langle ik \rangle [ke]$$

Amplitude
Representation
Spinor Helicity
MHV etc.

A spin-1 particle has 2 physical states
helicity + or -

The n -particle MHV amplitude
involves $\frac{n-2}{2}$ + helicity & particles
- helicity

$N\text{MHV}:$ $(n-3, 3)$

$N^2\text{MHV}:$ $(n-4, 4)$

etc.

Amplitude
Representation
Spinor Helicity
MHV etc.
Parke-Taylor

The tree-level MHV amplitude is

$$\frac{+ + + -i}{+ -j +} = \frac{\langle i:j \rangle^4}{\langle n \rangle \langle n3 \rangle \dots \langle n1 \rangle}$$

(Parke Taylor '86, Berends Giele' 88)

This is, psychologically, the most important formula in our field.

It's message is ...

The Philosophy of Amplitheology

1. Simplifications do not happen by accident.

Amplitude
 Representation
 Spinor Helicity
 MHV etc.
 Parke-Taylor
 Superamplitude

Working in $\mathcal{N}=4$ superspace we write

$$A_{\text{MHV}} = \frac{\delta^8 \left(\sum_{i=1}^n k_i^\alpha \gamma_i^4 \right)}{\langle 12 \rangle \langle 23 \rangle \dots \langle n1 \rangle} \quad (\text{Nair '88})$$

supermomentum conservation

$$A = A_{\text{MHV}} [1 + \mathcal{P}_{\text{NMHV}} + \mathcal{P}_{\text{NNMHV}} + \dots]$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \uparrow & & \uparrow \\ \Theta(\eta^8) & & \Theta(\eta^4) \\ & & \uparrow \\ & & \Theta(\eta^8) \end{array} \quad \text{etc.}$$

Amplitude
Representation
Spinor Helicity
MHV etc.
Parke-Taylor
Superamplitude
BCFW

BCFW is a quadratic on-shell recursion relation; schematically

$$\sum_{k=2}^n \frac{1}{k-2}$$

It is important both conceptually and practically – for rapidly generating data.

There is no single "BCFW representation", different discrete choices give apparently different (but secretly =) results.

Example: The amplitude $A(1^-, 2^-, 3^-, 4^+, 5^+, 6^+)$ may be

expressed as either

$$[4|5+6|1]^3$$

$$\frac{[13][23](56)(61)[2|3+4|5]}{[23][34](56)(61)[2|3+4|5]} S_{234}$$

+

$$\frac{[6|1+2|3]^3}{[61][12](34)(45)[2|3+4|5]} S_{612}$$

or

$$\frac{\langle 12\rangle^3 [45]^3}{S_{123}}$$

$$\frac{[12][23](45)(56)[1|2+3|4][3|4+5|6]}{[12][23](45)(56)[1|2+3|4][3|4+5|6]} S_{123} +$$

+

$$\frac{\langle 23\rangle^3 [56]^3}{\langle 23\rangle^3 [56]^3}$$

$$+\frac{\langle 34\rangle [61][1|2+3|4][5|6+1|2]}{\langle 34\rangle [61][1|2+3|4][5|6+1|2]} S_{234}$$

Equality of these two expressions can (essentially) only be

checked by **numerical experimentation**.

[Richardson's theorem: there is no algorithm for determining if two mathematical expressions are equal.]

A. Hodges followed his nose and found that there is a reason why in this case $(2 \text{ terms}) = (3 \text{ terms})$.

Each expression computes the volume of a polytope in complex projective space, triangulated in different ways!

This is one of many examples showing that...

The Philosophy of AmplitudoLOGY

1. Simplifications do not happen by accident.
2. This is an experimental science.
(Get the answer first, by any means necessary, then analyze it.)

Amplitude
 Representation
 Spinor Helicity
 MHV etc.
 Parke-Taylor
 Superamplitude
 BCFW
 Λ =Volumes
 Twistor Space

"We can go to twistor space by
 carrying out a $1/2$ -fourier transform
 " "

$$A(\lambda_a, \mu_{\dot{a}}) = \int d^{\mathbb{R}} \bar{\chi}_{\dot{a}} e^{i \bar{\chi}_{\dot{a}} \lambda^a} A(\lambda_a, \bar{\chi}_{\dot{a}})$$

Since an overall rescaling of the
 4 variables (λ, μ) leaves k^m unchanged,
 they parameterize \mathbb{CP}^3 .
 points in $\mathbb{CP}^3 \Leftrightarrow$ null rays in spacetime
 lines in $\mathbb{CP}^3 \Leftrightarrow$ points in spacetime

Amplitude

Representation

Spinor Helicity

MHV etc.

Parke-Taylor

Superamplitude

BCFW

A=Volumes

Twistor Space

Twistor String

Nothing that

momentum conserving delta function

$$A_{\text{MHV}} = \underbrace{\int d^4 x \exp(i x^\alpha \sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i^\alpha \bar{\lambda}_i^\alpha)}_{\langle 12 \rangle \dots \langle n1 \rangle}$$

Amplitude
Representation

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Parke-Taylor

Superamplitude

BCFW

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Twistor String

Nothing that
momentum conserving delta function

$$\text{Amplitude} = \int d^4x \exp\left(i\chi_{ai} \sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i^a \bar{\lambda}_i^a\right) \frac{1}{\langle 12 \rangle \dots \langle n1 \rangle}$$

measure on the moduli space of lines in \mathbb{P}^3

Witten invented a topological string theory on \mathbb{P}^3 which computes the tree-level $N^k \text{MHV}$ amplitude as an integral over curves of degree $k+1$!

Moving on

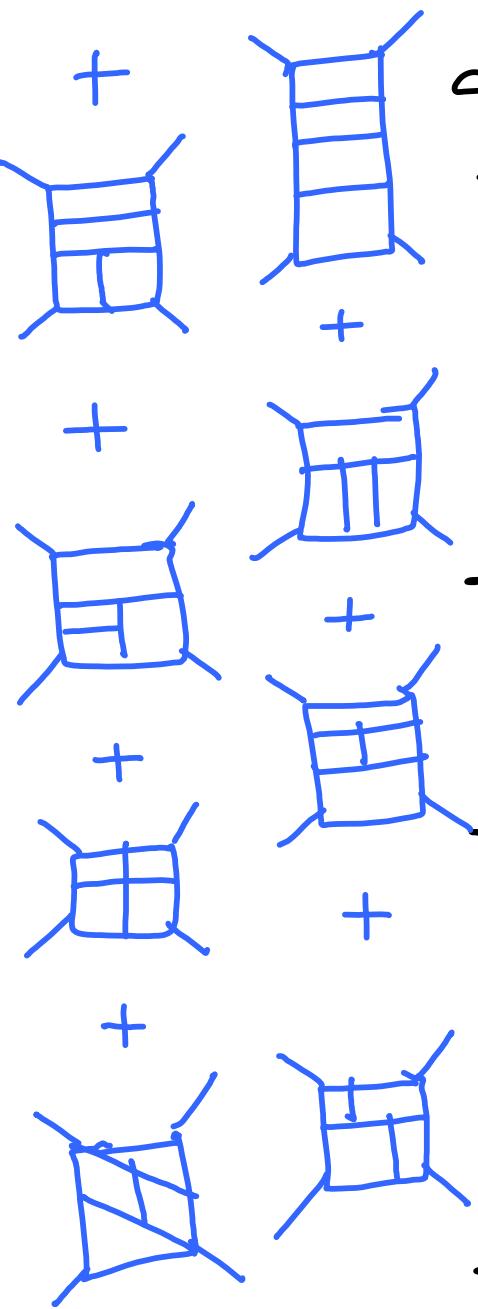
To

Stop Leveling

Amplitude
Representation
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Twistor Space
Twistor String
Gen. Unitarity

Union of the unitarity-based method
(**Bern, Dixon, Dunbar, Kosower**) with more
recent advances (**Britto, Cachazo, Feng**)
allowed much more **data** to be collected

e.g. the four-loop four-particle amplitude



(**Bern, Czakon, Dixon, Kosower, Smirnov**)

A pattern in this data reveals a surprise...

What is Dual Conformal Symmetry?

A strange non-local symmetry under which scattering amplitudes are co-covariant

-tree level gluon amplitudes in QCD } N_{color}
- all orders in SYM } = ∞

No understanding at the level of
the Lagrangian.

What is Dual Conformal Symmetry?

A strange non-local symmetry under which scattering amplitudes are co-variant

A n -particle
A M_{HV}
An-particle

is invariant

Dual conformal symmetry

(Drummond, Henn, Korchemsky, Sokatchev)

Parameterize

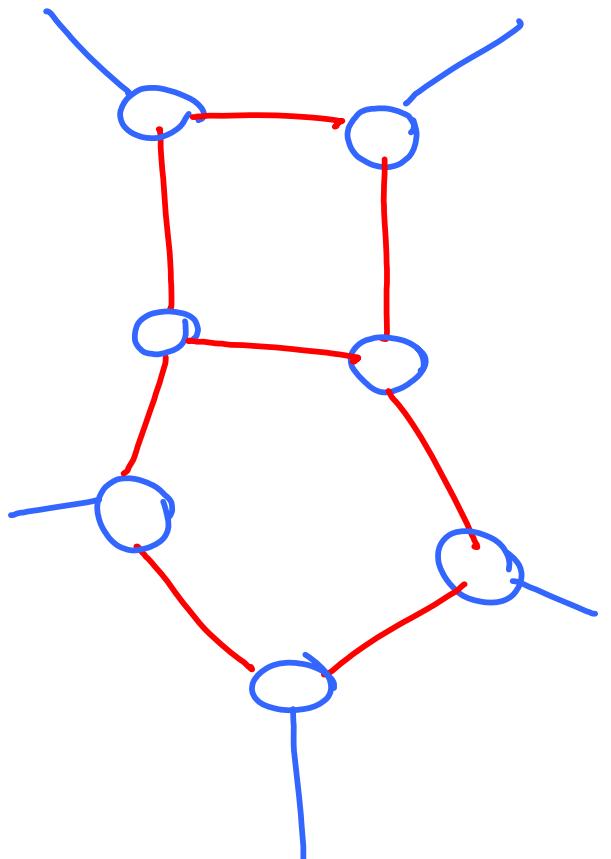
$$\left. \begin{array}{l} k_1 = x_1 - x_2 \\ k_2 = x_2 - x_3 \\ \vdots \\ k_n = x_n - x_1 \end{array} \right\} \sum k_i = 0$$

\Rightarrow Then amplitudes are invariant under conformal transformations on the x_i .

Amplitude
Representation
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Twistor Space
Twistor String
Dual Conformal Inv.
The Integrand
Leading Sings.

The L -loop integrand is a rational function with (by definition) only simple poles in $\mathbb{C}^4 L$ (the loop momentum variables).

A **leading singularity** is a residue of the integrand @ one of these poles.



has a pole when all 8 propagators go on-shell

Amplitude
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 $A = Volumes$
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The Integrand
Leading Sings.
Yangian Symmetry

Yangian Symmetry

= the closure under commutation of
{ ordinary conformal transformations,
dual conformal transformations }

Amplitude
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Leading Sings.
Yangian Symmetry
R-Invariants

R-invariants = a natural collection
of Yangian invariant objects which
constitute the building blocks for
e.g. tree-level BCFW representations
& leading singularities of loop integrands
(= δ -functions constraining five
points in $\mathbb{CP}^{3|4}$ to lie inside a
common \mathbb{CP}^3 subspace.)

Amplitude
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Leading Sings.

Yangian Symmetry

R-Invariants

Grassmannian Int.

Grassmannian Integral = A contour integral over the space of $k \times n$ matrices

$$\int [dC]_{k \times n} \frac{\delta^{4|4}(C_{ai} Z_i)}{(|\dots k)(2\dots k+1) \dots (n+k-1)}$$

minors of the matrix C

(Arkani-Hamed, Cachazo, Cheung, Kaplan)

which is a generating function for all n -particle $N^{\textcolor{blue}{k}} \text{MHV}$ Yangian invariants.

(It's residues are \mathcal{R} -invariants.)

Amplitude

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Grassmannian Int.

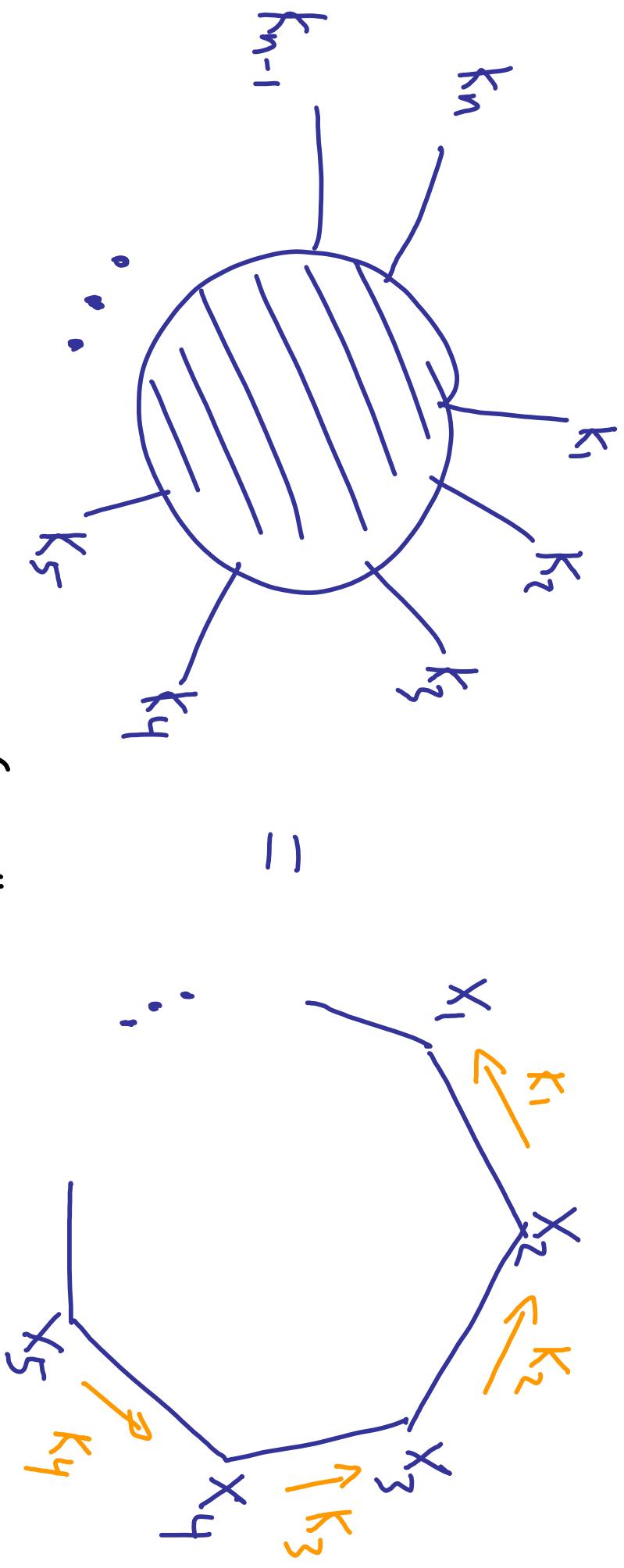
Strong Coupling

Using $AdS/(fT)$, Alday & Maldacena showed that at strong coupling, amplitudes are computed as certain Wilson loops = minimal area surfaces in AdS_5 .
Hence integrability methods can be brought to bear on the problem.

(Alday, Gaiotto, Maldacena)

Amplitudes and Wilson Loops

Another remarkable feature of $\mathcal{N}=4$ supersymmetric Yang-Mills is



The MHV scattering amplitude, for all n and to all orders in perturbation theory, = the expectation value of a Wilson loop on an n -sided polygon with lightlike edges.

Amplitude
Representation
Spinor Helicity
MHV etc.

Parke-Taylor

Superamplitude

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Grassmannian Int.

Strong Coupling

A = Wilson Loop

A = Correlation Fn.

The integrand may in fact be computed
yet **another** way, by correlation functions
of the form

$$\langle \underbrace{\mathcal{O}(x_1) \dots \mathcal{O}(x_n)}_{\text{lightlike separated}} \underbrace{\mathcal{L}(y_1) \dots \mathcal{L}(y_L)}_{\text{Lagrangian insertions}} \rangle$$

Eden, Heslop, Korchemsky, Sokatchev
Adamo, Bullimore, Mason, Skinner

You Say You Want a Revolution

One revolution has come to fruition

$$A = \int d^4 p_1 \cdots d^4 p_L \underbrace{\sum \text{feynman diagrams}}$$

→ exciting new
technology

$$= \int d^4 p_1 \cdots d^4 p_L (\text{relatively simple integrand})$$

You Say You Want a Revolution

One revolution has come to fruition

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$$= \int d^4 p_1 \cdots d^4 p_L (\text{relatively simple integrand})$$

still very hard to evaluate!

But another is desperately needed,

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Strong Coupling	
A = Wilson Loop	
A = Correlation Fn.	
BDS Remainder	

The natural "observable" for loop-level MHV amplitudes is the $\text{BDS remainder function}$ which is what is left after appropriate subtraction of IR divergences, leaving a finite & dual conformal invariant quantity.

The first nontrivial 1-loop amplitude
in $N=4$ SYM is the

2-loop (1-loop is absorbed into BDS
subtraction)

6-particle ($\not\equiv$ any cross-ratios for $n < 6$)

MHV remainder function.

Computed analytically in late 2009 by
Del Duca, Duhr & Smirnov

If that were the best we could do, we
all ought to quit now, there would be
no hope...

If that were the best we could do, we all ought to quit now, there would be no hope...

Goncharov, Verguts, Volovich and I used some mathematical magic called the **symbol** of a **transcendental function** to simplify this expression down to a single line, involving nothing more complicated than the "standard" **Li_n** polylogarithm functions.

The worth of our formula is NOT
that it computes the value of the
2-loop 6-point MHV amplitude!

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that it computes the value of the
2-loop 6-point MHV amplitude!

Nobody cares about the value of this
amplitude!

The worth of our formula is NOT
that it computes the value of the
2-loop 6-point MHV amplitude!

Nobody cares about the value of this
amplitude!

Rather, it is important because it provides
hope, where previously was none, that we
might really unlock the secrets to all orders...

The Philosophy of Amplitheology

1. Simplifications do not happen by accident.
2. This is an experimental science.
(Get the answer first, by any means necessary, then analyze it.)
3. Simplicity has to be believed to be seen.