


**The Geometry of Fox's Free Calculus  
with Applications to  
Higher Dimensional Knots**

Work in Progress

**Samuel Lomonaco**  
University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)  
Email: Lomonaco@UMBC.edu  
WebPage: [www.csee.umbc.edu/~lomonaco](http://www.csee.umbc.edu/~lomonaco)



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PowerPoint slides can be found at:  
[www.csee.umbc.edu/~lomonaco/Lectures.html](http://www.csee.umbc.edu/~lomonaco/Lectures.html)

# The Fox Free Calculus

## Algebraic Def. of Fox Free Derivative $\partial / \partial x_j$

Let  $G$  be a group, and let  $\mathbb{Z}G$  denote the corresponding group ring over the ring of integers  $\mathbb{Z}$ .

**Def.** A **derivative**  $D$  on a group ring  $\mathbb{Z}G$  is defined as a map

$$D: \mathbb{Z}G \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}G$$

satisfying the following condition:

- 1)  $D(\omega_1 + \omega_2) = D\omega_1 + D\omega_2$
- 2)  $D(\omega_1\omega_2) = (D\omega_1)\omega_2 + \omega_1 D\omega_2$

where  $\circ: \mathbb{Z}G \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$  is the **trivializer** morphism which maps each element of  $G$  to  $1$  of  $\mathbb{Z}$ .

## Algebraic Def. of Fox Free Derivative $\partial / \partial x_j$

**Def. (Cont.)** Let  $G$  be the free group  $F(\underline{x})$ . Then to each free generator  $x_j \in \underline{x}$ , there corresponds a unique derivative

$$D_j = \partial / \partial x_j$$

in  $\mathbb{Z}F(\underline{x})$ , called the **derivative with respect to**  $x_j$ , which has the property

$$\frac{\partial x_i}{\partial x_j} = \delta_{ij} \quad (\text{Kronecker delta})$$

## Immediate consequence of the def of $\partial / \partial x_j$

Let

$$w_1, w_2 \in F(\underline{x})$$

then

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x_j}(w_1 w_2) = \frac{\partial(w_1)}{\partial x_j} + w_1 \frac{\partial(w_2)}{\partial x_j}$$

But Where is  
the  
Geometry  
???

The Search  
for Geometry

# Knot Theory

## Various Placement Problems

- 3-D Knot Theory

$$k : S^1 \rightarrow S^3$$

1-Knot  $(S^3, kS^1)$

- 4-D Knot Theory

$$k : S^2 \rightarrow S^4$$

2-Knot  $(S^4, kS^2)$

- 5-D Knot Theory

$$k : S^3 \rightarrow S^5$$

3-Knot  $(S^5, kS^3)$

## 3-D Knot Theory

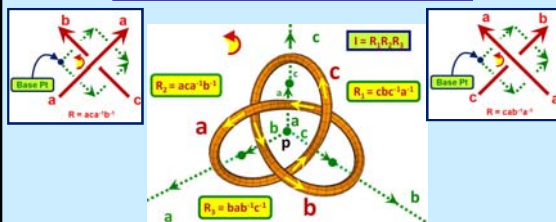
1-Knots

## The Fundamental Group $\pi_1(X)$

Knot Exterior  $X = S^3 - \text{SmallOpenTubularNbd}(kS^1)$

- Fundamental Group  $\pi_1(X) =$  Knot Invariant
- Asphericity of Knots (Papakyriakopoulos)  
 $\Rightarrow X = K(\pi_1(X), 1)$ .  $\therefore \pi_n X = 0$  for  $n > 1$

## The Wirtinger Presentation



$(a, b, c : r_1, r_2, r_3)$

Generators

Relators

## Group Presentations

Question: When do two presentations represent the same group ?

### Tietze Transformations: $T_1^{\pm 1}, T_2^{\pm 1}$

Tietze 1:  $(\underline{x} : \underline{r}) \xrightarrow{T_1} (\underline{x} \cup y : \underline{r} \cup s)$ , where

- $y$  is a new symbol, and
- $s = y\xi^{-1}$ , with  $\xi \in F(\underline{x})$

Tietze 2:  $(\underline{x} : \underline{r}) \xrightarrow{T_2} (\underline{x} : \underline{r} \cup s)$ , where

- $s \in \text{Cons}(\underline{r})$ , i.e.,  $s = \prod_{\alpha=1}^m r_{j(\alpha)}^{w_\alpha}$ , with
- $w_\alpha \in F(\underline{x})$ ,  $0 \leq \alpha \leq m$ , and
- $r_{j(\alpha)}^{w_\alpha} = W_\alpha \cdot r_{j(\alpha)} \cdot W_\alpha^{-1}$

### Group Presentations

**Question:** When do two presentations represent the same group?

**Theorem (Tietze):** Two group presentations represent the same group iff there exists a finite sequence of Tietze transformations which transforms one into the other.

### The Geometry of Group Presentations

**Def.** An **abstract Group presentation** consists of two sets

- $\underline{x}$ , the set of **generators**,
- $\underline{r}$ , the set of **relators**,

together with an evaluation map

$$\hat{\cdot} : \underline{r} \rightarrow F(\underline{x})$$

from the set of relators  $\underline{r}$  into the free group  $F(\underline{x})$  on the set of symbols  $\underline{x}$ .

### The Geometry of Group Presentations

Example:  $(a, b, c : r_1, r_2, r_3)$ , where

$$\begin{cases} \hat{r}_1 = cbc^{-1}a^{-1} \\ \hat{r}_2 = aca^{-1}b^{-1} \\ \hat{r}_3 = bab^{-1}c^{-1} \end{cases}$$

### The Geometry of Group Presentations

**Def.** A CW-complex is said to be **monopointed** if it has only one 0-cell.

**Proposition.** Up to renaming and reordering, there exists a one-to-one correspondence between the set of abstract group presentations and a set of monopointed 2-D CW-complexes.

$$(\underline{x} : \underline{r}) \leftrightarrow K(\underline{x} : \underline{r})$$

### The Geometry of Group Presentations

The CW-complex  $K(\underline{x} : \underline{r})$  is constructed with an initial 0-cell, denoted by  $\infty$ , and then iteratively attaching cells as follows:

**1-cells:** For each generator  $x_j \in \underline{x}$ , adjoin an oriented 1-cell  $X_j$  by attaching both endpoints to the sole 0-cell  $\infty$ .

**2-cells:** For each relator  $r_k \in \underline{r}$ , adjoin an oriented 2-cell  $r_k$  with attaching map  $\hat{r}_k$ .

### Examples

Example:  $Torus = (a, b : r), \hat{r} = ab\bar{a}\bar{b}$

Example:  $\mathbb{R}P^2 = (a, b : r), \hat{r} = ab\bar{a}\bar{b}$

Example:  $S^1 \vee D^2 = (a, b : r), \hat{r} = b$

Example:  $S^1 \vee S^1 \vee S^2 = (a, b : r), \hat{r} = 1$

Example:  $S^2 \vee S^2 = (\emptyset : r_1, r_2), \hat{r}_1 = 1, \hat{r}_2 = 1$

### The Geometry of the Tietze Moves

- Tietze 1 attaches a 2-cell  $S$  and a free edge  $Y$ .

$$T_1 : (\underline{x} : \underline{r}) \mapsto (\underline{x} \cup y : \underline{r} \cup s), \hat{s} = y\xi^{-1}, \xi \in F(\underline{x})$$

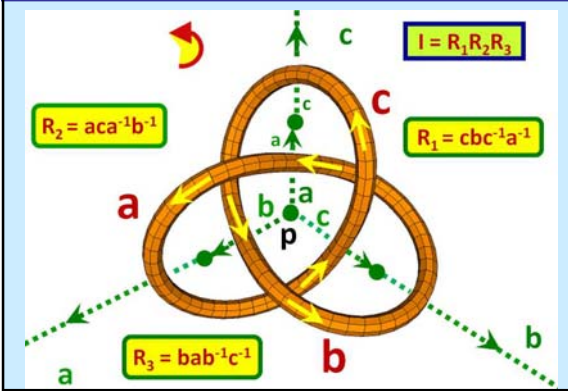
Thus,  $T_1$  is a simple homotopy operation; and therefore preserves homotopy type.

- Tietze 2 attaches a 2-cell  $S$ .

$$T_2 : (\underline{x} : \underline{r}) \mapsto (\underline{x} : \underline{r} \cup s), \hat{s} \in \text{Cons}(\underline{r})$$

Thus,  $T_2$  does NOT necessarily preserve homotopy type !

### The Geometry of the Wirtinger Presentation



### A Paradox ?

Paradox: The Wirtinger presentation actually represents the 3-D knot exterior  $X$  as a 2-D CW complex. The sole 3-cell in the exterior  $X$  has been omitted !!!

The usual "fix": The Wirtinger presentation has one too many generators. So an unnecessary relator is tossed out by applying a Tietze 2 move.

Fortunately, in this particular case, the Tietze 2 move preserves the homotopy type because there is a simple homotopy type move on the 3-D complex collapsing the 3-D complex to the same resulting 2-D complex

### Observation

The 3-cell in  $X$  corresponds to an identity  $I$  among the relators, namely:

$$I \xrightarrow{\hat{\phantom{I}}} \hat{I} = r_1 r_2 r_3 \xrightarrow{\hat{\phantom{I}}} \overline{cbca} \cdot \overline{acab} \cdot \overline{babc} = 1$$

Where does this identity "live" ?

### Groups with Operators

Def. Let  $H$  and  $G$  be groups. The group  $G$  is said to be an H-group provided there exists a morphism  $H \rightarrow \text{Aut}(G)$  of  $H$  into the group  $\text{Aut}(G)$  of automorphisms of  $G$ .

**Free  $F(\underline{x})$ -groups**

**Def.** Let  $\underline{x}$  and  $\underline{t}$  be two disjoint sets of symbols, and let  $F(\underline{x})$  and  $F(\underline{x} \cup \underline{t})$  denote the corresponding free groups, respectively. The **free  $F(\underline{x})$ -group** on the symbols  $\underline{t}$ , written  $\mathfrak{F}_{F(\underline{x})}(\underline{t})$ , is the smallest normal subgroup of  $F(\underline{x} \cup \underline{t})$  containing  $\underline{t}$ .

It immediately follows that  $\mathfrak{F}_{F(\underline{x})}(\underline{t})$  is invariant under the conjugation action of  $F(\underline{x})$ .

**Free  $F(\underline{x})$ -groups**

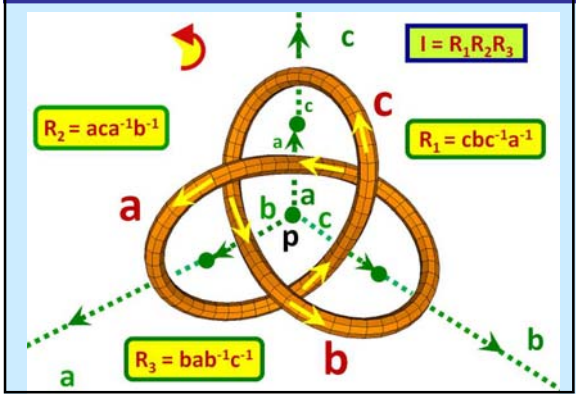
Thus, the elements of  $\mathfrak{F}_{F(\underline{x})}(\underline{t})$  are of the form:

$$\prod_{\alpha} t_{j(\alpha)}^{w_{\alpha}}$$

where  $t_{j(\alpha)}^{w_{\alpha}} = w_{\alpha} \cdot t_{j(\alpha)} \cdot w_{j(\alpha)}^{-1}$

**Note.** This conjugation action is a left action.

**The Geometry of the Wirtinger Presentation**



**Wirtinger Hyper Presentation**

The Wirtinger 3-D CW decomposition of the exterior  $X$  is nothing more than the non-abelian free resolution:

$$G \xleftarrow{\nu} F(a,b,c) \xleftarrow{\wedge} \mathfrak{F}_F(r_1, r_2, r_3) \xleftarrow{\wedge} \mathfrak{F}_F(I)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \overline{cbca} &\xleftarrow{\wedge} r_1 & r_1 r_2 r_3 &\xleftarrow{\wedge} I \\ \overline{acab} &\xleftarrow{\wedge} r_2 \\ \overline{babc} &\xleftarrow{\wedge} r_3 \end{aligned}$$

Please note that  $\wedge^2 = 1$  and  $\nu \wedge = 1$ .

**Wirtinger Hyper Presentation**

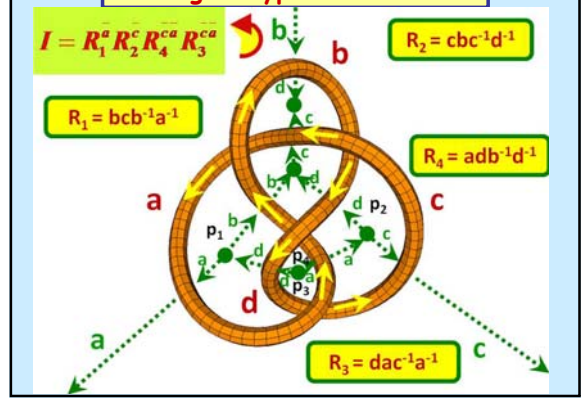
$$G \xleftarrow{\nu} F(a,b,c) \xleftarrow{\wedge} \mathfrak{F}_F(r_1, r_2, r_3) \xleftarrow{\wedge} \mathfrak{F}_F(I)$$

We denote the above non-abelian free resolution more cryptically as

$$(a,b,c : r_1, r_2, r_3 : I)$$

and call it a hyper presentation.

**Wirtinger Hyper Presentation**



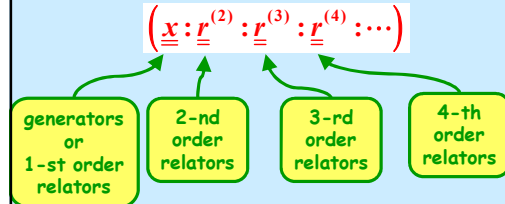
### Wirtinger Hyper Presentation

$$(a, b, c, d : r_1, r_2, r_3, r_3 : I)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \overline{bcba} &\xleftarrow{\wedge} r_1 & r_1^a r_2^c r_4^{ca} r_3^{ca} &\xleftarrow{\wedge} I \\ \overline{cbcd} &\xleftarrow{\wedge} r_2 \\ \overline{daca} &\xleftarrow{\wedge} r_3 \\ \overline{adbd} &\xleftarrow{\wedge} r_4 \end{aligned}$$

### Terminology for Hyper Presentations

The current names identities, identities of identities, identities of identities, etc. are too cumbersome. So we are forced to adopt the following terminology:



### Hyper Tietze Moves

There is only one hyper Tietze move for each order, namely:

$n$ -th order hyper Tietze move :  $T_n$

$$T_n : (\dots : \underline{r}^{(n)} : \underline{r}^{(n+1)} : \dots) \mapsto (\dots : \underline{r}^{(n)} \cup \sigma : \underline{r}^{(n+1)} \cup \tau : \dots)$$

where  $\hat{\tau} = \sigma \hat{\xi}^{-1}$  and  $\hat{\sigma} = \hat{\xi}$

and where  $\hat{\xi} \in \mathfrak{F}_F(\underline{r}^{(n)})$

### Hyper Presentation Equivalence

The definition of hyper presentation equivalence is a straight forward exercise for the audience. So is the proof of the following theorem:

**Theorem:** Two hyper presentations are equivalent iff there is a finite sequence of hyper Tietze moves that transform one into the other.

### The Geometry of Hyper Presentations

**Proposition.** Up to renaming and reordering, there exists a one-to-one correspondence between the set of finite hyper presentations and a set of monopointed CW-complexes.

$$(\underline{x} : \underline{r}^{(3)} : \underline{r}^{(4)} : \dots) \leftrightarrow K(\underline{x} : \underline{r}^{(3)} : \underline{r}^{(4)} : \dots)$$

The hyper Tietze moves correspond to simple homotopy moves on the associated CW-complexes.

Moreover, two hyper presentations define CW-complexes of the same simple homotopy type iff there is a finite sequence of Tietze moves which transforms one into the other.

### The Geometry of the Fox Free Calculus

Let  $\mathfrak{P} = (\underline{x} : \underline{r}^{(2)} : \underline{r}^{(3)} : \dots : \underline{r}^{(n)})$

be a hyper presentation, and let

$$K = K(\mathfrak{P})$$

be the corresponding CW-complex.

Let  $G = \pi_1(K)$  the fundamental group of  $K$ .

Let  $\nu : F(\underline{x}) \rightarrow G$  be the epimorphism associated with  $(\underline{x} : \underline{r}^{(2)})$

Finally, let  $\mathbb{Z}G$  be the group ring of  $G$  over the integers  $\mathbb{Z}$ .

**The Geometry of the Fox Free Calculus**

Let  $\tilde{K}$  be the universal cover of  $K$ , and let  $\tilde{\tilde{K}} = \tilde{K} \times \text{Kerv } \nu$  be the non pathwise connected space above  $\tilde{K}$ .

We now use the Fox free derivatives to construct a chain complex  $C_* = C_*(\tilde{\tilde{K}})$

**Hence,  $H_*(\tilde{\tilde{K}}) = H_*C_*$**

Moreover,  $H_*(\tilde{K}) = H_*(\mathbb{Z}G \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}F} C_*)$

**The Geometry of the Fox Free Calculus**

The chain groups are defined as follows:

• The 0-th chain group  $C_0 = C_0(\infty)$  is defined as the free  $\mathbb{Z}F$ -module generated by the 0-cell  $\infty$ .

• For  $n > 0$ , the n-th chain group  $C_n = C_n(\underline{R}^{(n)})$  is defined as the free  $\mathbb{Z}F$ -module generated by the set of n-cells  $\underline{R}^{(n)}$ .

**The Geometry of the Fox Free Calculus**

The boundary morphisms are defined as follows:

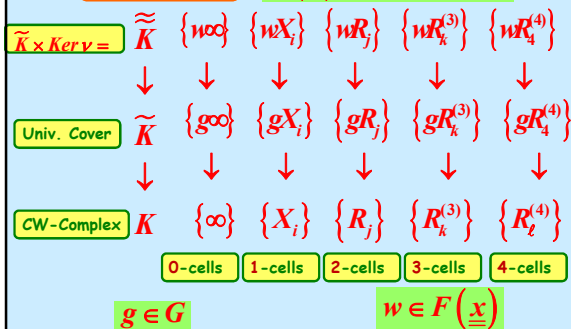
• For  $n = 0$ , 
$$\begin{matrix} C_0(\infty) & \xleftarrow{\partial} & C_1(\underline{X}) \\ (x_j - 1)\infty & \xleftarrow{\partial} & X_j \end{matrix}$$

• For  $n > 0$ , 
$$\begin{matrix} C_{n-1}(\underline{R}^{(n-1)}) & \xleftarrow{\partial} & C_n(\underline{R}^{(n)}) \\ \sum_k \left( \frac{\partial r_j^{(n)}}{\partial r_k^{(n-1)}} \right) R_k^{(n-1)} & \xleftarrow{\partial} & R_k^{(n)} \end{matrix}$$

Where the Fox Free derivatives  $\partial / \partial x_j$  are geometrically defined as follows:

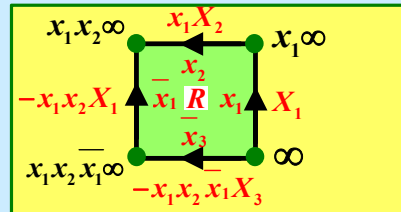
**Cell Decompositions of  $K, \tilde{K}, \tilde{\tilde{K}}$**

**Epimorphism:**  $F(\underline{x}) \xrightarrow{\nu} G = \pi_1 K$



Recall  $\mathfrak{P} = (\underline{x} : r^{(2)} : r^{(3)} : \dots : r^{(n)})$  and  $K = K(\mathfrak{P})$ .

If, for example,  $r \in r^{(2)}$  with  $\hat{r} = x_1 x_2 \bar{x}_1 \bar{x}_3$ , then the corresponding 2-cell  $R$  in  $\tilde{\tilde{K}}$  is



$$\begin{aligned} \partial R &= (1 - x_1 x_2) X_1 + x_1 X_2 - x_1 x_2 x_1 X_3 \\ &= \frac{\partial \hat{r}}{\partial x_1} X_1 + \frac{\partial \hat{r}}{\partial x_2} X_2 + \frac{\partial \hat{r}}{\partial x_3} X_3 \end{aligned}$$



If, for example,  $u \in \underline{r}^{(3)}$  with  $\hat{u} = r_1^{x_1} r_2^{x_2} r_1^{-x_1 x_3}$ , then the boundary chain map of the corresponding 3-cell  $U$  in  $\tilde{\tilde{K}}$  is:

$$\begin{aligned} \partial U &= \left( x_1 - \hat{r}_1^{x_1} \hat{r}_2^{x_2} x_1 x_3 \hat{r}_1 \right) R_1 + \hat{r}_1^{x_1} x_3 R_2 \\ &= \left( \frac{\partial \hat{u}}{\partial r_1} \right)^\wedge R_1 + \left( \frac{\partial \hat{u}}{\partial r_2} \right)^\wedge R_2 \end{aligned}$$

## 2-Knots

### Various Placement Problems

- 3-D Knot Theory

$$k : S^1 \rightarrow S^3$$

1-Knot  $(S^3, kS^1)$

- 4-D Knot Theory

$$k : S^2 \rightarrow S^4$$

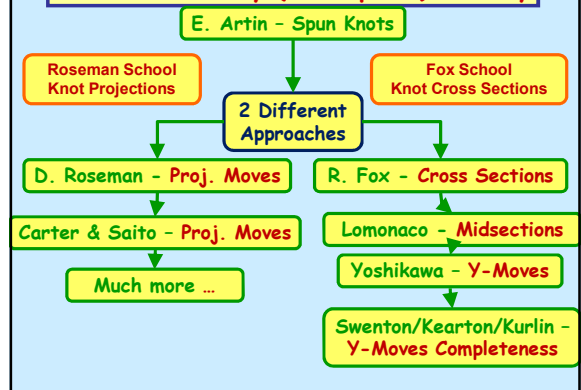
2-Knot  $(S^4, kS^2)$

- 5-D Knot Theory

$$k : S^3 \rightarrow S^5$$

3-Knot  $(S^5, kS^3)$

### 4-D Knot Theory (Incomplete) History



### 4-D Analog of the Asphericity of Knots ?

For 1-knots, asphericity implies the exterior  $X$  is an Eilenberg-MacLane space, i.e.,

$$X = K(\pi_1 X, 1)$$

**Question.** What can be said about analog of Papa's asphericity theorem for 2-knots?

### 4-D Analog of the Asphericity of Knots ?

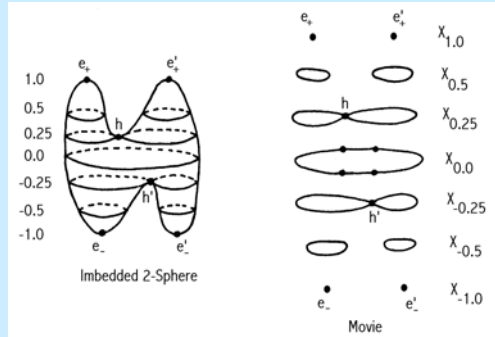
**Def.** A 2-knot  $(S^4, kS^2)$  is said to be quasi-aspherical (QA) if the third homology group of the universal cover of its exterior vanishes.

**Theorem.** (Lomonaco) If  $(S^4, kS^2)$  is QA, then the homotopy type of its exterior  $X$  is determined by its algebraic 3-type, i.e., by the triple consisting of:

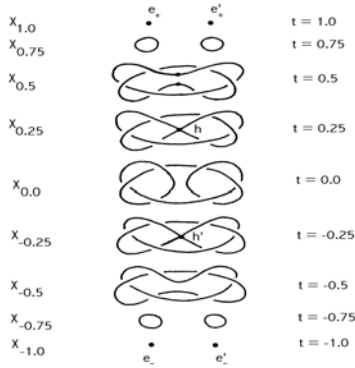
- $\pi_1 X$
- $\pi_2 X$  as a  $\mathbb{Z}\pi_1 X$ -module
- The first k-invariant  $kX$  lying in  $H^3(\pi_1 X; \pi_2 X)$

## The Cross sectional Approach to 2-Knots

### Edwin Abbott's Flatland



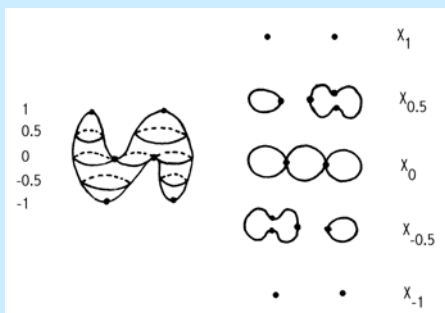
### 3-D Land



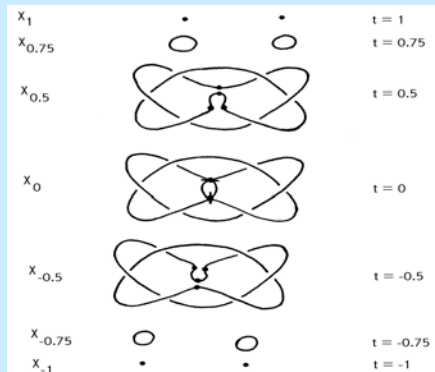
## The Midsection Representation 2-Knots

Reducing  
4-D Knot Theory  
to  
3-D Knot Theory

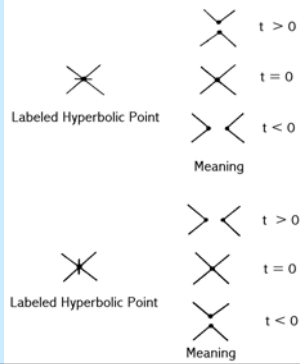
### Edwin Abbott's Flatland



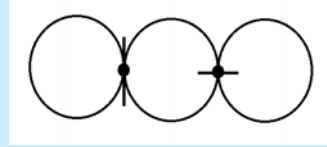
### 3-D Land



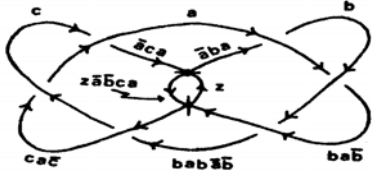
### Midsection Labeling Scheme



### Midsection Representation of a 2-sphere

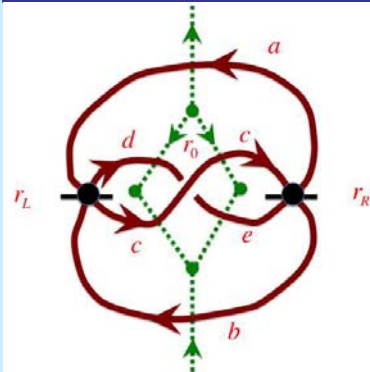


### Midsection Rep of a Spun Trefoil



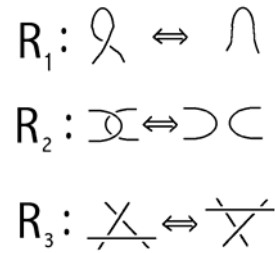
$$\begin{cases} \pi_1 K = (a, b : abab^{-1}a^{-1}b^{-1} = 1) \\ \pi_2 K = (\partial U_{\square} : (1-a+ba)\partial U_{\square} = 0) \\ H^3(\pi_1 K; \pi_2 K) = 0 \text{ and } \underline{k}K = 0 \end{cases}$$

### Midsection of $(S^4, k\mathbb{R}P^2)$

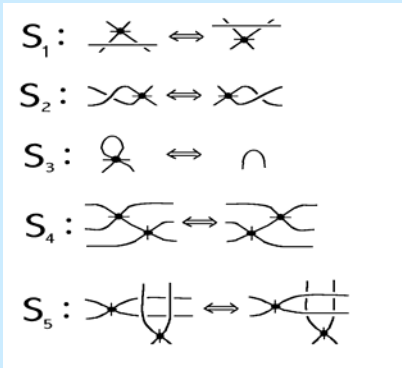


### Midsection Moves on 2-Knots

### Reidemeister Moves



**Yoshikawa Moves**



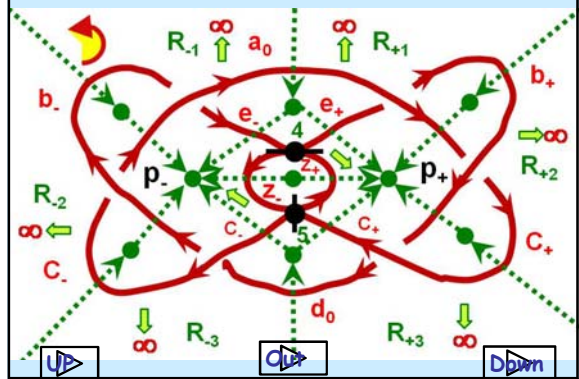
**The Geometry of Group Presentations**

**Theorem(Yoshikawa).** The Reidemeister and Yoshikawa moves on the midsection representation of a 2-knot preserve knot type.

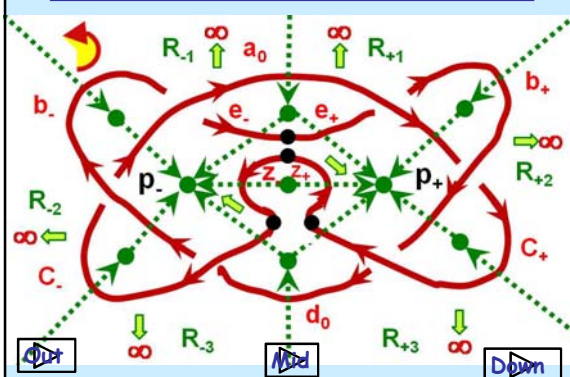
**Theorem(Swenton/Keartin/Kurlin).** Two 2-knot midsections represent the same 2-knot iff there is a finite sequence of Reidemeister and Yoshikawa moves which transforms one into the other.

**The Wirtinger Hyper Presentation of 2-Knots ???**

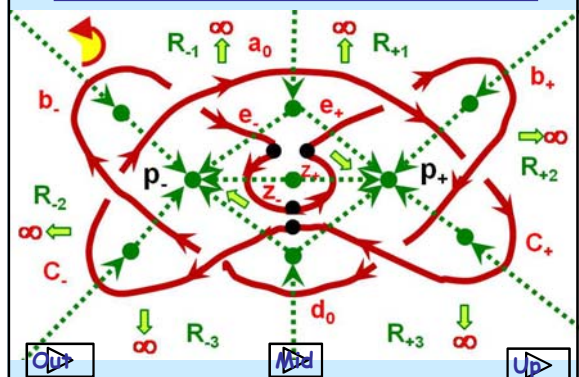
**The Geometry of Group Presentations**

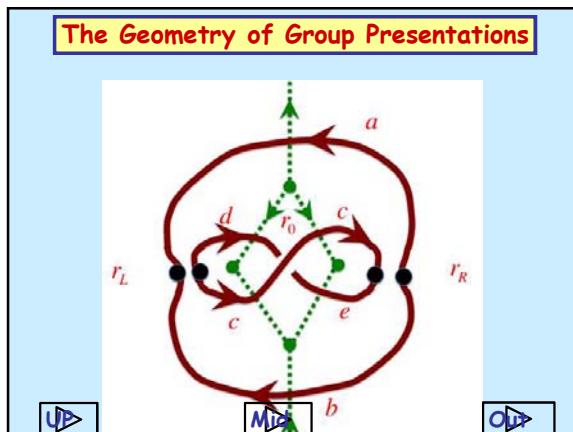
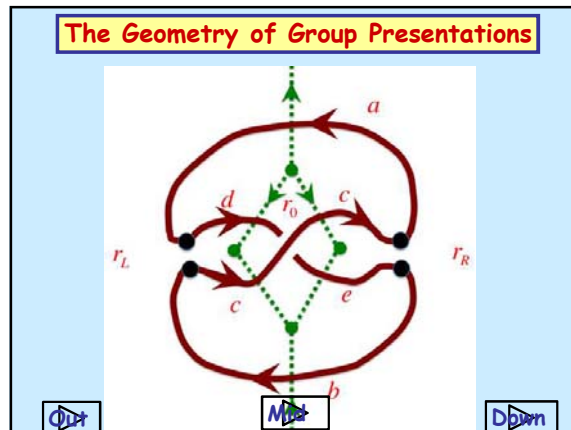
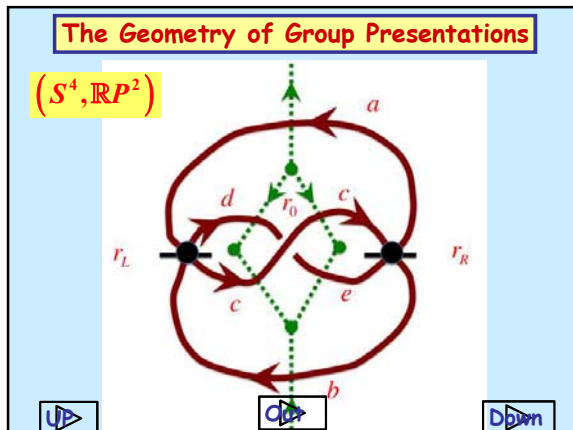


**The Geometry of Group Presentations**



**The Geometry of Group Presentations**





**Ongoing Research Program**

This talk is a description of an ongoing research program which is best summarized by the following two questions:

**Objective 1**

Let  $X$  be the exterior of a 2-knot  $(S^4, kS^2)$ , and let  $X_0$  denote a midsection.

Construct an algorithm that computes from the midsection  $X_0$  a presentation of  $\pi_2 X$  as a  $\mathbb{Z}\pi_1 X$ -module that is as efficient and as easy to compute as the Wirtinger presentation.

**Objective 2**

Do the same for the k-invariant:

$$kx \in H^3(\pi_1 X; \pi_2 X)$$

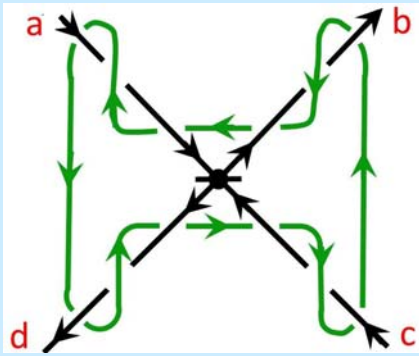
### Conjecture

The baseball generators form a complete set of generators for  $\pi_2 X$  as a  $\mathbb{Z}\pi_1 X$  module.

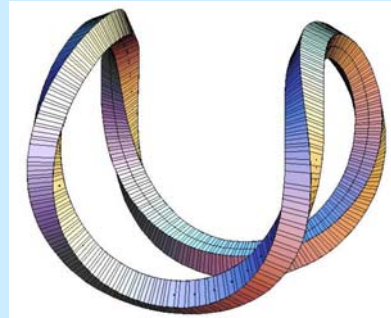
### Baseball Seam



### Baseball Generator $\beta$



### Baseball Seam



**Theorem (Lomonaco):** Let  $X$  be the exterior of a 2-knot  $(S^4, kS^2)$ , and let  $X_0$  denote a midsection. Moreover, let

$$H = \text{Ker}(\pi_1 X_0 \rightarrow \pi_1 X_U \times \pi_1 X_D)$$

Then

$$\pi_2 X \cong \pi_1 X_0 / [H, H]$$

**Observation:** Let baseball curve  $\beta$  is an element of the kernel  $H$  which does not lie in the commutator group  $[H, H]$ .

### R's & I's $\leftrightarrow$ Saddle Pt

Up-Section:

$$\text{Up-R's: } \hat{h}_{UT} = ab, \hat{h}_{UB} = cd$$

$$\text{Up-Id's: } \hat{I}_U = h_{UT} \cdot h_{UB}^{bc} \cdot \bar{h}$$

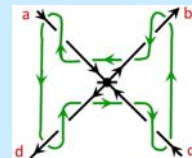
Mid-Section:

$$\text{Mid-R: } \hat{h} = adcb$$

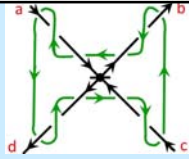
Down-Section:

$$\text{Down-R's: } \hat{h}_{DL} = ad, \hat{h}_{DR} = cb$$

$$\text{Down-Id's: } \hat{I}_D = h_{DL} \cdot h_{DR} \cdot \bar{h}$$



**R's & I's  $\leftrightarrow$  Saddle Pt**

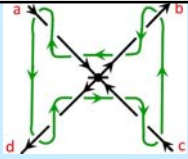


UpSection:  
 Up-R's:  $h_{UT}$  &  $h_{UB}$   $\leftrightarrow$  2-cells (Attached)  
 Up-Id's:  $I_U$   $\leftrightarrow$  3-cell (Attached)

Mid-Section:  
 Mid-R:  $h$   $\leftrightarrow$  2-cell

Down-Section:  
 Down-R's:  $h_{DL}$  &  $h_{DR}$   $\leftrightarrow$  2-cells (Attached)  
 Down-Id's:  $I_D$   $\leftrightarrow$  3-cell (Attached)

**Baseball 2-Cycle**



$\beta = \bar{b}c\bar{d}a \in \text{Ker}(\pi_1 X_0 \rightarrow \pi_1 X_U \times \pi_1 X_D)$

The baseball identity is:  
 $\hat{I}_B = h_{UT}^a \cdot h_{UB}^a \cdot \bar{h}_{DL}^a \cdot \bar{h}_{DR}^c$

The baseball identity  $\hat{I}_B$  does NOT correspond to a 3-cell in the knot exterior.

Hence,  $\hat{I}_B$  corresponds to a non-bounding 2-cycle in the universal covering of the knot exterior.

**More to come**

There is also an algorithm reading off the relators which is conjectured to be complete. But there is not enough time left to explain it.



**This talk based on:**

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### And also based on:

Fox, R.H., [A quick trip through knot theory](#), in "Topology of 3-Manifolds and Related Topics," ed. by M.K. Fort, Jr., Prentice-Hall, Englewoods Cliffs, New Jersey, (1962), 120-167.

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