

Anomalies, Conformal Manifolds, and Spheres

Nathan Seiberg

Institute for Advanced Study

Jaume Gomis, Po-Shen Hsin, Zohar Komargodski, Adam
Schwimmer, NS, Stefan Theisen, [arXiv:1509.08511](https://arxiv.org/abs/1509.08511)

CFT Sphere partition function $\log Z$

- Power divergent terms are not universal. Can be removed by counterterms like $\Lambda^d \int \sqrt{\gamma} + \Lambda^{d-2} \int \sqrt{\gamma} R + \dots$
- In addition
 - for odd d $\log Z = -F$ is universal (ambiguity in quantized imaginary part due to Chern-Simons terms – depends on framing)
 - for even d $\log Z = C \log(r\Lambda) - F$.
 - C is universal (in $2d$ it is $c/3$ and in $4d$ it is $-a$)
 - F is not universal; it can be absorbed in a local counterterm, $\int \sqrt{\gamma} E_d F$ with E_d the Euler density
- Used in c-theorem and its generalizations, entanglement entropy, ...

Conformal manifolds

- $S = S_0 + \int \lambda^i O_i(x)$ is an exactly marginal deformation
- Family of CFTs labeled by coordinates λ^i
- Metric on the conformal manifold – the Zamolodchikov metric

$$\langle O_i(x) O_j(0) \rangle = \frac{g_{ij}(\lambda)}{|x|^{2d}}$$

- Focus on $d = 2$ (later $d = 4$)

Conformal manifolds of $2d$ (2,2) SCFT

- Typical example: sigma models with Calabi-Yau target space.
- In string theory the coordinates on the conformal manifold are the moduli – massless fields in $4d$
 - $2d$ chiral fields λ
 - $2d$ twisted chiral fields $\tilde{\lambda}$
- The conformal manifold is Kahler with

$$K = K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) + K_{tc}(\tilde{\lambda}, \bar{\tilde{\lambda}})$$

2d (2,2) curved superspace

- For rigid SUSY in curved spacetime use supergravity [Festuccia, NS]
- Simplification in 2d
 - (locally) pick conformal gauge $\gamma_{\mu\nu} = e^{2\sigma} \delta_{\mu\nu}$
 - for SUSY (locally) pick superconformal gauge
 - use flat space expressions with explicit σ 's
- Two kinds of (2,2) supergravities. In the superconformal gauge they depend on
 - A chiral $\Sigma = \sigma + i a + \dots$ with $A_\mu = \epsilon_{\mu\nu} \partial^\nu a$ an axial R-gauge field (Lorentz gauge). The curvature is in a chiral superfield $\mathcal{R} = \bar{D}^2 \bar{\Sigma}$. We will focus on this.
 - A twisted chiral $\tilde{\Sigma} = \sigma + i \tilde{a} + \dots$ with $\tilde{A}_\mu = \epsilon_{\mu\nu} \partial^\nu \tilde{a}$ a vector R-gauge field (Lorentz gauge).

2d (2,2) curved superspace

- In this language the curvature is in a chiral superfield $\mathcal{R} = \bar{D}^2 \bar{\Sigma}$. It contains $\partial^2 \sigma$.
- To preserve rigid SUSY in a non-conformal theory we need to add terms to the flat superspace Lagrangian.
- Various backgrounds in the literature are easily described, e.g.
 - Topological twist is $\Sigma = 0, \bar{\Sigma} = 2\sigma \neq 0$
 - Omega background

$$\Sigma = 0$$

$$\bar{\Sigma} = 2\sigma + 2i\epsilon\bar{z}\partial_{\bar{z}}(2\sigma + \log\bar{z})\bar{\theta}^2$$

2d (2,2) curved superspace

- Supersymmetry on \mathbb{S}^2 [Benini, Cremonesi; Doroud, Gomis, Le Floch, Lee] is achieved with (suppress r dependence)

$$\Sigma = -\log(1 + |z|^2) + \theta^2 \frac{i}{1+|z|^2}$$

$$\bar{\Sigma} = -\log(1 + |z|^2) + \bar{\theta}^2 \frac{i}{1+|z|^2}$$

- $\bar{\Sigma}$ is not necessarily the complex conjugate of Σ .

(2,2) sphere partition functions

- [Benini, Cremonesi; Doroud, Gomis, Le Floch, Lee] placed a nonconformal gauged linear sigma model on a sphere with

$$\Sigma = -\log(1 + |z|^2) + \theta^2 \frac{i}{1+|z|^2}$$

$$\bar{\Sigma} = -\log(1 + |z|^2) + \bar{\theta}^2 \frac{i}{1+|z|^2}$$

- This theory flows in the IR to a nonlinear sigma model with Calabi-Yau target space.
- They computed Z of the IR theory using localization in the UV theory.

(2,2) sphere partition functions

- Amazing conjecture [Jockers, Kumar, Lapan, Morrison, Romo]: this \mathbb{S}^2 partition function is

$$Z = r^{c/3} e^{-K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda})}$$

(restoring the radius r , whose power reflects the ordinary conformal anomaly).

Similarly, using $\tilde{\Sigma}$ it is $Z = r^{c/3} e^{-K_{tc}(\tilde{\lambda}, \tilde{\bar{\lambda}})}$.

- Proofs based on localization, squashed sphere, tt^* , twisting, counterterms and properties of the background [Gomis, Lee; Gerchkovitz, Gomis, Komargodski; ...] .

Questions/confusions

- Given that the one point function of a marginal operator vanishes, how can the sphere partition function depend on λ ?
- Why is it meaningful?
 - Can add a local counterterm $\int \sqrt{\gamma} R f(\lambda, \bar{\lambda})$, making the answer non-universal
- In an SCFT on the sphere there is no need to add terms to the Lagrangian to preserve SUSY
 - Why does it depend on the background Σ ?
 - If it does not, what determines whether we used Σ or $\tilde{\Sigma}$ to find e^{-K_c} or $e^{-K_{tc}}$?
 - Where is the freedom in Kahler transformations?
- What's the conceptual reason for it? Is it UV or IR?

Conformal manifolds and anomalies (w/o SUSY)

Zamolodchikov metric $\langle O_i(x) O_j(0) \rangle = \frac{g_{ij}(\lambda)}{|x|^4}$

In momentum space $\int e^{ipx} \langle O_i(x) O_j(0) \rangle \sim g_{ij}(\lambda) p^2 \log(\mu^2/p^2)$

Dependence on the scale μ leads to a conformal anomaly: with position dependent λ (suppressed coefficients) [Osborn; Friedan, Konechny]

$$T_{\mu}^{\mu} = c R + g_{ij}(\lambda) \partial_{\mu} \lambda^i \partial^{\mu} \lambda^j + \dots$$

Ordinary conformal anomaly

A more subtle anomaly (actually, less subtle)

More about anomalies

- The partition function Z is a nonlocal functional of the background fields (the metric $\gamma_{\mu\nu}$, exactly marginal couplings λ^i , background gauge fields, etc.).
- Its variation under changing the conformal factor $\delta_\sigma \log Z$ is an integral of a local functional of the background fields and $\delta\sigma$.
- $\delta_\sigma \log Z$
 - Must be coordinate invariant in spacetime (assume that the regularization preserves it, i.e. $T_{\mu\nu}$ is conserved also at coincident points)
 - Must be coordinate invariant in the conformal manifold
 - Must obey the Wess-Zumino consistency conditions
 - In SUSY theories it must be supersymmetric

More about anomalies

- A term in $\delta_\sigma \log Z$ that is a Weyl variation of a local term is considered trivial.
- An anomaly is a “cohomologically nontrivial” term.
 - It cannot be removed by changing a local counterterm.
 - It cannot change by changing the renormalization scheme.
- Therefore, even though it arises due to a short distance regulator, it is universal – it does not depend on the choice of regulator.

Returning to conformal manifolds and anomalies (w/o SUSY)

$$\langle O_i(x) O_j(0) \rangle = \frac{g_{ij}(\lambda)}{|x|^4}$$

$$\int e^{ipx} \langle O_i(x) O_j(0) \rangle \sim g_{ij}(\lambda) p^2 \log(\mu^2/p^2)$$

leads to [Osborn; Friedan, Konechny]

$$\delta_\sigma \log Z \sim \int \sqrt{\gamma} \delta\sigma (c R + g_{ij}(\lambda) \partial_\mu \lambda^i \partial^\mu \lambda^j + \dots)$$

Ordinary conformal anomaly

A more subtle anomaly

Conformal manifolds and anomalies (w/o SUSY)

Another possible anomaly in $2d$

$$\delta_\sigma \log Z \sim \int \sqrt{\gamma} \delta\sigma \epsilon^{\mu\nu} B_{ij}(\lambda) \partial_\mu \lambda^i \partial_\nu \lambda^j$$

can be ruled out as follows.

$$\langle O_{i_1}(p_1) O_{i_2}(p_2) \cdots \rangle = \log \mu^2 \delta(\sum p_i) A_{i_1 i_2 \cdots} + \cdots$$

where \cdots are finite.

$A_{i_1 i_2 \cdots}$ is a second order polynomial in the momenta.

Set e.g. $p_3 = p_4 = \cdots = 0$ and find

$$A_{i_1 i_2 \cdots} = p_1^2 \partial_{i_3} \partial_{i_4} \cdots g_{i_1 i_2}.$$

Therefore, all these anomalies are generated from the metric and there is no “ B -field” anomaly.

Warmup: $2d \mathcal{N} = 1$

- The conformal manifold is parameterized by real superfields λ^i .
- The anomaly should be expressed in superspace – need to use curved superspace.
- Use the superconformal gauge – the conformal factor σ is in a real superfield Σ and the curvature is in $\mathcal{R} = D^2 \Sigma$.

- The anomaly $\delta_\sigma \log Z \sim \int \sqrt{\gamma} \delta\sigma (c R + g_{ij}(\lambda) \partial_\mu \lambda^i \partial^\mu \lambda^j + \dots)$ is supersymmetrized in the superconformal gauge as

$$\delta_\Sigma \log Z \sim \int d^2\theta \delta\Sigma (c D^2 \Sigma + g_{ij}(\lambda) D_+ \lambda^i D_- \lambda^j + \dots)$$

Ordinary conformal anomaly

A more subtle anomaly

- Ambiguity due to a local counterterm $\int d^2\theta \mathcal{R} f(\lambda)$ prevents us from making any statement about Z .

(2,2) SCFT

- The conformal manifold is parameterized by chiral superfields λ^i and twisted chiral superfields $\tilde{\lambda}^{\tilde{a}}$.
- The anomaly should be expressed in superspace – need to use curved superspace.
- Focus on the supergravity, where the conformal factor σ is in a chiral superfield Σ and the curvature is in a chiral superfield $\mathcal{R} = \bar{D}^2 \bar{\Sigma}$.

(2,2) SCFT

- The supersymmetrization of the anomaly

$$\delta_\sigma \log Z \sim \int \sqrt{\gamma} \delta\sigma \left(c R + g_{i\bar{i}} \partial_\mu \lambda^i \partial^\mu \bar{\lambda}^{\bar{i}} + \tilde{g}_{a\bar{a}} \partial_\mu \tilde{\lambda}^a \partial^\mu \tilde{\lambda}^{\bar{a}} \right)$$

after gauge fixing is

$$\delta_\Sigma \log Z \sim \int d^4\theta (\delta\Sigma + \delta\bar{\Sigma}) \left(c (\Sigma + \bar{\Sigma}) + K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) - K_{tc}(\tilde{\lambda}, \tilde{\bar{\lambda}}) \right)$$

The first term can also be written as $c \int d^2\theta \delta\Sigma \mathcal{R} + c.c.$

- Lack of “B-anomaly” proves that K is such a sum of two terms.
- Invariance under Kahler transformations of $K_{tc}(\tilde{\lambda}, \tilde{\bar{\lambda}})$ by $\tilde{f}(\tilde{\lambda})$ and of $K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda})$ by $f(\lambda)$ up to a variation of a local counter term $\int d^4\theta \delta\Sigma \tilde{f}(\tilde{\lambda}) = \int d^2\theta \delta\mathcal{R} f(\lambda)$.
- Alternatively, Kahler invariance, involves a shift $\Sigma \rightarrow \Sigma + \frac{1}{c} f(\lambda)$.

(2,2) SCFT

With an axial R-symmetry the supersymmetry current multiplet $J_{\pm\pm}$ is a real superfield satisfying (slightly simplified)

$$\bar{D}_{\mp} J_{\pm\pm} = \mp D_{\pm} W$$

with chiral W .

In an SCFT $W = 0$ at separated points, but the anomaly sets a contact term

$$\begin{aligned} W &= \bar{D}^2 \left(c \bar{\Sigma} + K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) - K_{tc}(\tilde{\lambda}, \tilde{\bar{\lambda}}) \right) = \\ &= c \mathcal{R} + \bar{D}^2 \left(K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) - K_{tc}(\tilde{\lambda}, \tilde{\bar{\lambda}}) \right) \end{aligned}$$

- It is invariant under Kahler transformations provided we also shift $\Sigma \rightarrow \Sigma + \frac{1}{c} f(\lambda)$.

Ambiguities

- In the superconformal gauge the local terms are expressed in terms of the chiral curvature superfield $\mathcal{R} = \bar{D}^2 \bar{\Sigma}$.
- Terms that depend on Σ not through \mathcal{R} are non-local.
- Therefore, the anomaly is not a variation of a local term.
- Freedom in the local term

$$\int d^2\theta \mathcal{R} f(\lambda) + c.c. = \int d^4\theta \bar{\Sigma} f(\lambda) + c.c.$$

with holomorphic $f(\lambda)$ leads to freedom in Kahler transformations of $K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda})$. (It can be absorbed in a shift of Σ .)

- Other than that, the anomaly is unambiguous.

The anomaly in components

For a purely conformal variation $\delta\Sigma = \delta\sigma$ the anomaly is

$$\begin{aligned} \delta_\Sigma \log Z &\sim \int d^4\theta (\delta\Sigma + \delta\bar{\Sigma}) \left(c (\Sigma + \bar{\Sigma}) + K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) - K_{tc}(\tilde{\lambda}, \bar{\tilde{\lambda}}) \right) \\ &= \int \left[\delta\sigma \left(c \square\sigma + g_{i\bar{i}} \partial_\mu \lambda^i \partial^\mu \bar{\lambda}^{\bar{i}} + \tilde{g}_{a\bar{a}} \partial_\mu \tilde{\lambda}^a \partial^\mu \bar{\tilde{\lambda}}^{\bar{a}} \right) \right. \\ &\quad \left. - \square\delta\sigma K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) \right] \end{aligned}$$

The last term leads to

$$\log Z \sim \int \sqrt{\gamma} R K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) + \dots$$

and hence on S^2

$$Z = r^{c/3} e^{-K_c}$$

Q.E.D.

The anomaly in components

For a purely conformal variation $\delta\Sigma = \delta\sigma$ the anomaly is

$$\begin{aligned} \delta_\Sigma \log Z &\sim \int d^4\theta (\delta\Sigma + \delta\bar{\Sigma}) \left(c (\Sigma + \bar{\Sigma}) + K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) - K_{tc}(\tilde{\lambda}, \bar{\tilde{\lambda}}) \right) \\ &= \int \left[\delta\sigma \left(c \square\sigma + g_{i\bar{i}} \partial_\mu \lambda^i \partial^\mu \bar{\lambda}^{\bar{i}} + \tilde{g}_{a\bar{a}} \partial_\mu \tilde{\lambda}^a \partial^\mu \bar{\tilde{\lambda}}^{\bar{a}} \right) \right. \\ &\quad \left. - \square\delta\sigma K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) \right] \end{aligned}$$

The last term leads to

$$\log Z \sim \int \sqrt{\mathcal{V}} R K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) + \dots$$

Without SUSY this term is not universal. It is the variation of the local counterterm $\square\delta\sigma K_c(\lambda, \bar{\lambda})$. With SUSY it is related to the universal term and hence it is meaningful.

Kahler invariance

$$Z = r^{c/3} e^{-K_c}$$

- Kahler transformations of K_c can be absorbed in a local counter term.
- Alternatively, full Kahler invariance when Σ is also shifted. With this interpretation Z is invariant under the combined transformation

$$K_c \rightarrow K_c + f(\lambda) + \bar{f}(\bar{\lambda})$$

$$r \rightarrow r e^{\frac{3}{c}(f(\lambda) + \bar{f}(\bar{\lambda}))}$$

Extensions

- Trivial to repeat with $\tilde{\Sigma}$ and to find K_{tc} .
 - Here we choose the contact terms to preserve the vector R-symmetry – use the other (2,2) supergravity.
 - Equivalently, we use a different regulator that preserves the supergravity of $\tilde{\Sigma}$.
- $2d \mathcal{N} = (0,2)$
- $4d$
 - $\mathcal{N} = 1$
 - $\mathcal{N} = 2$

$2d \mathcal{N} = (0,2)$

- The conformal manifold is parameterized by chiral superfields λ^i .
- The conformal factor σ is in a chiral superfield Σ and the curvature is in a chiral superfield $\mathcal{R}_- = \partial_{--}\bar{D}_+\bar{\Sigma}$.
- Several possible anomalies including:
 - The ordinary anomaly
$$i\int d\theta^+ c \delta\Sigma \mathcal{R}_- + c.c. = i\int d^2\theta^+ c \delta\Sigma \partial_{--}\bar{\Sigma} + c.c.$$
 - The anomaly associated with the metric
$$i\int d^2\theta^+ (\delta\Sigma + \delta\bar{\Sigma})(K_i \partial_{--}\lambda^i - K_{\bar{i}}\partial_{--}\bar{\lambda}^{\bar{i}})$$
 - ...

$$2d \mathcal{N} = (0,2)$$

- The anomaly associated with the metric

$$i \int d^2 \theta^+ (\delta \Sigma + \delta \bar{\Sigma}) (K_i \partial_{--} \lambda^i - K_{\bar{i}} \partial_{--} \bar{\lambda}^{\bar{i}})$$

- Using the lack of “B-anomaly”

$$\begin{aligned} i \int d^2 \theta^+ (\delta \Sigma + \delta \bar{\Sigma}) (K_i \partial_{--} \lambda^i - K_{\bar{i}} \partial_{--} \bar{\lambda}^{\bar{i}}) \\ = i \int d^2 \theta^+ (\delta \Sigma + \delta \bar{\Sigma}) (\partial_i K \partial_{--} \lambda^i - \partial_{\bar{i}} K \partial_{--} \bar{\lambda}^{\bar{i}}) \end{aligned}$$

with real K .

- Hence, the metric on the conformal manifold must be Kahler.
- The last term includes in its component expansion $\square \delta \sigma K$ and could lead to an interesting Z . But...

Ambiguities in $2d \mathcal{N} = (0,2)$

- As in all our examples, a local counterterm

$$i \int d\theta^+ \mathcal{R}_- f(\lambda) + c.c. = i \int d^2\theta^+ \partial_{--} \bar{\Sigma} f(\lambda) + c.c.$$
 with holomorphic $f(\lambda)$ – Kahler transformations of K .
- Can redefine the $2d$ metric by a function of the moduli.
 - Locally a chiral superfield is the same as a real superfield (not in $(2,2)$). Hence, in the conformal gauge we can shift (more carefully, use SUGRA)

$$\Sigma \rightarrow \Sigma + \frac{i}{\partial_{++}} \bar{D}_+ D_+ H(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}).$$

- This shifts the ordinary anomaly term

$$i \int d^2\theta^+ \delta\Sigma \partial_{--} \bar{\Sigma} \rightarrow i \int d^2\theta^+ \delta\Sigma \partial_{--} \bar{\Sigma} + i \int d^2\theta^+ \delta\Sigma \partial_{--} H,$$
 which includes in components $\square \delta\sigma H$.
- Hence, Z is ambiguous (note, there is no local counterterm).

4d

- Without SUSY
 - Anomaly $\int \sqrt{\gamma} \delta\sigma (a E_4 - c W^2 + g_{ij} \lambda^i \lambda^j + \dots)$
 - Ambiguous counterterms
 $\int \sqrt{\gamma} (R^2 F_1(\lambda) + R_{\mu\nu}^2 F_2(\lambda) + R_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma}^2 F_3(\lambda) + \dots)$
- With SUSY need to
 - Supersymmetrize – in $\mathcal{N} = 1, 2$ σ and λ in chiral superfields.
 - Covariantize in spacetime
 - Covariantize in the conformal manifold

$$4d \mathcal{N} = 1$$

- Anomaly

$$\int \sqrt{\gamma} \delta\sigma (a E_4 - c W^2 + g_{i\bar{i}} \lambda^i \bar{\lambda}^{\bar{i}} + \dots)$$

- Ambiguous counterterms

$$\int \sqrt{\gamma} (R^2 F_1(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) + R_{\mu\nu}^2 F_2(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) + R_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma}^2 F_3(\lambda, \bar{\lambda}) + \dots)$$

- Can be supersymmetrized and then the local counterterm makes the sphere partition function ambiguous [Gerchkovitz, Gomis, Komargodski] .

$4d \mathcal{N} = 2$

- Example: theories of class S with moduli λ
- After a lot of algebra (using relevant formulas in the literature) the expressions without SUSY are supersymmetrized and covariantized to

$$\int \sqrt{\gamma} \delta\sigma \left(a E_4 + g_{i\bar{i}} \lambda^i \bar{\lambda}^{\bar{i}} + \dots \right) + \sqrt{\gamma} K(\square^2 \delta\sigma + \dots)$$

Universal

Without SUSY this is not universal, but SUSY relates it to this and hence it is universal.

$$4d \mathcal{N} = 2$$

- Key fact,
 - In $\mathcal{N}=1$ the counterterm that is proportional to the curvature square is an arbitrary function of λ and $\bar{\lambda}$.
 - In $\mathcal{N}=2$ the counterterm that is proportional to the curvature square must be holomorphic in λ .
 - Therefore, here the ambiguity is only in a holomorphic function of λ .
 - Only Kahler transformations of K .

$$4d \mathcal{N} = 2$$

- Collecting all the terms $\log Z \sim \int \sqrt{\gamma} E_4 K + \dots$ and

$$Z = r^{-a} e^{K(\lambda, \bar{\lambda})/12}$$

Ordinary conformal anomaly

The more subtle anomaly

- This reproduces a result of [Gerchkovitz, Gomis, Komargodski; Gomis, Ishtiaque]

Conclusions

- Anomaly under conformal transformations when the coupling constants depend on position
 - Unrelated to supersymmetry
 - This is a UV phenomenon
 - Visible on flat \mathbb{R}^d
 - Independent of the background
- Supersymmetry restricts
 - the form of the anomaly
 - the ambiguity due to local counterterms

Conclusions

- In $2d \mathcal{N} = (2,2)$ the S^2 partition function depends on the anomaly.

– New derivation of

$$Z = r^{c/3} e^{-K_c}$$

- The usual conformal anomaly
 - The more subtle conformal anomaly
- Addresses the questions/confusions we raised...

Conclusions

- Addresses the questions/confusions we raised
 - One point function nonzero because of a term in the operator proportional to the curvature (like in the dilaton)
 - Z can be unambiguous when the counterterm proportional to the curvature depends holomorphically on the couplings.
 - Dependence on Σ due to an anomaly. Different choices lead to K_c or K_{tc} .
 - The anomaly is set in the UV and is detected by the sphere (IR).

Conclusions

- Three step process
 - the anomaly
 - the ambiguity (freedom in counterterms)
 - the sphere
- Other cases
 - $2d \mathcal{N} = 1$ ambiguous
 - $2d \mathcal{N} = (0,2)$ ambiguous
 - $4d \mathcal{N} = 1$ ambiguous
 - $4d \mathcal{N} = 2$ $Z = r^{-a} e^{K/12}$