

NONRELATIVISTIC EXPANSION OF STRING THEORY

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Non-Relativistic Strings and Beyond, Nordita 2023

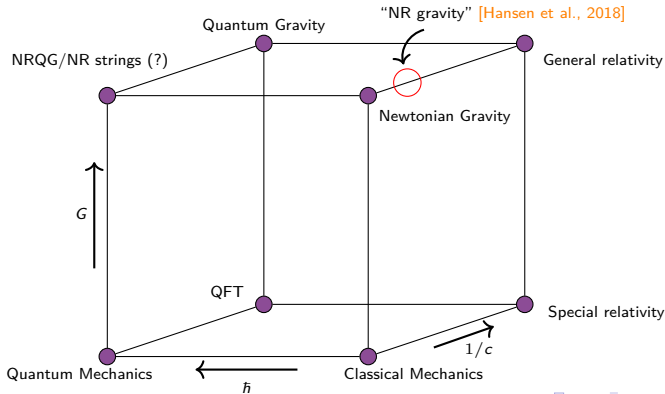
Nonrelativistic strings

- Nonrelativistic string theory has a long and illustrious history, starting with GO and Danielsson et al.

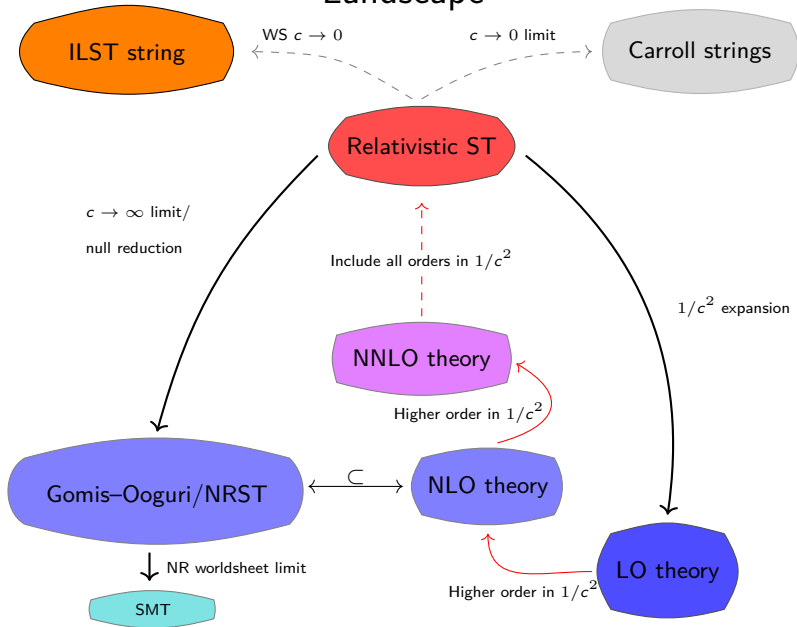
[Gomis–Ooguri, '00; Danielsson et al., '00]

- This talk: NR string theory from “post-Newtonian” $1/c^2$ expansions (cf. Jørgen’s talk)

[Hansen et al., '18 & '20]



"Landscape"



The (string) $1/c^2$ expansion of string theory

An expansion requires a dimensionless parameter.

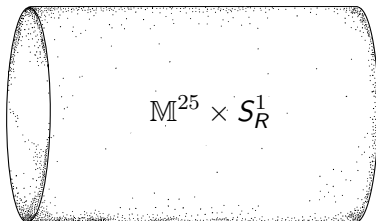
- This requires a compact direction in target space

$$\epsilon = \alpha' \hbar / (cR^2) = \frac{\alpha'_{\text{eff}} \hbar}{c^2 R_{\text{eff}}^2} \text{ with } cT = T_{\text{eff}}, \quad R/c = R_{\text{eff}}$$

Hence:

$1/c^2$ -expansion \leftrightarrow expansion around decompactification limit

- Nonrelativistic interpretation: $v_{\text{com}} \sim \sqrt{\hbar \alpha'_{\text{eff}} / R_{\text{eff}}} \ll c$



Expansion of the spectrum and longitudinal T-duality

$$M^2 = \frac{\hbar^2 n^2}{c^2 R^2} + \frac{w^2 R^2}{\alpha'^2} + \frac{2}{\alpha' c} (N + \tilde{N} - 2\hbar)$$

- This leads to $E = \sqrt{M^2 c^4 + p^2 c^2} = c^2 E_{\text{LO}} + E_{\text{NLO}} + \dots$, with

$$E = \frac{\overbrace{c^2 w R_{\text{eff}}}^{\sim mc^2}}{\alpha'_{\text{eff}}} + \frac{N_{(0)} + \tilde{N}_{(0)}}{w R_{\text{eff}}} + \frac{\alpha'_{\text{eff}}}{2w R_{\text{eff}}} p_{(0)}^2 + \mathcal{O}(c^{-2})$$

- Spectrum can be written as

$$M^2 = \frac{n^2 \tilde{R}^2}{\alpha'^2} + \frac{w^2 R^2}{\alpha'^2} + \frac{2}{\alpha' c} (N + \tilde{N} - 2\hbar)$$

- T-duality amounts to: $R \leftrightarrow \frac{\hbar \alpha'}{c R} =: \tilde{R}$ and $w \leftrightarrow n$
 \Rightarrow T-dual parameter $\tilde{\epsilon} = \frac{\alpha' \hbar}{c \tilde{R}^2}$.

- T-duality switches between expansions in ϵ and $\tilde{\epsilon}$:

$$\epsilon \leftrightarrow \tilde{\epsilon}$$

Nonrelativistic expansion of string actions (a taste of...)

- The Polyakov Lagrangian on flat target space is

$$\mathcal{L}_P = -\frac{cT}{2} \sqrt{-\gamma} \gamma^{\alpha\beta} \partial_\alpha X^M \partial_\beta X^N \eta_{MN}$$

- Here, $\eta_{MN} = \text{diag}(\overbrace{-c^2, c^2}^A, \overbrace{1, \dots}^i)$ and (cf. Jelle's talk)

$$X = x + c^{-2}y + \dots, \quad \overbrace{\gamma_{\alpha\beta} = \gamma_{(0)\alpha\beta} + c^{-2}\gamma_{(2)\alpha\beta} + \dots}^{\text{gauge fix } \gamma_{\alpha\beta} = \eta_{\alpha\beta}}$$

- Splitting the index as $M = (A, i)$ gives the LO and NLO Lagrangians ($\mathcal{L}_P = c^2 \mathcal{L}_{P\text{-LO}} + \mathcal{L}_{P\text{-NLO}} + \dots$)

$$\mathcal{L}_{P\text{-LO}} = -\frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2} \partial_\alpha X^A \partial^\alpha X_A, \quad \mathcal{L}_{P\text{-NLO}} = -\frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2} [\partial_\alpha X^i \partial^\alpha X^i + 2\partial_\alpha y^A \partial^\alpha X_A]$$

Equivalent to GO w/o instanton term with $\partial_\pm y^\mp \sim \lambda_\pm$

The plan

- ① String $1/c^2$ expansion of closed bosonic string theory
- ② Phase space formulation
- ③ Open strings

String Newton–Cartan geometry from large- c



Geometry	Field content
String $1/c^2$ expansion of Lorentzian geometry	LO: τ_M^A, H_{MN}^\perp up to NLO: $\tau_M^A, H_{MN}^\perp, m_M^A, \phi_{MN}^\perp$ up to NNLO: $\tau_M^A, H_{MN}^\perp, m_M^A, \phi_{MN}^\perp, B_M^A$ etc.
Type II SNC	$\tau_M^A, H_{MN}^\perp, m_M^A, \phi_{MN}^\perp$ (LO and NLO fields from above)
Type I SNC	$\tau_M^A, H_{MN}^\perp, m_M^A$

- Decompose metric and its inverse as [Hansen et al., '18; Hansen et al. '20]

$$G_{MN} = c^2 \eta_{AB} T_M^A T_N^B + \Pi_{MN}^\perp, \quad G^{MN} = c^{-2} \eta^{AB} T^M_A T^N_B + \Pi^{\perp MN}$$

where $A, B = 0, 1$ and $T_M^A \Pi^{\perp MN} = T^M_A \Pi_{MN}^\perp = 0$

- Expand as

$$T_M^A = \tau_M^A + c^{-2} m_M^A + \mathcal{O}(c^{-4}), \quad \Pi_{MN}^\perp = H_{MN}^\perp + \mathcal{O}(c^{-2})$$

to get [Andringa et al., '12; Bergshoeff et al. '18]

$$G_{MN} = c^2 \tau_{MN} + H_{MN} + \mathcal{O}(c^{-2})$$

with

$$\tau_{MN} = \eta_{AB} \tau_M^A \tau_N^B, \quad H_{MN} = H_{MN}^\perp + 2\eta_{AB} \tau_{(M}^A m_{N)}^B$$

Codimension-2 foliations and the “strong foliation constraint”

- Historically the “SFC” played an important role in NRST

[Bergshoeff et al., 2018]

$$d\tau^A = \omega^A_B \wedge \tau^B$$

The $1/c^2$ expansion comes equipped with its own foliation constraint:

- The beta function of ST at LO in α' is Einstein's Eq. $R_{MN} = 0$, which at LO in $1/c^2$ becomes the Frobenius condition

$$H^{\perp QS} H^{\perp RT} (d\tau^A)_{QR} (d\tau^B)_{ST} = 0 \iff \boxed{d\tau^A = \alpha^A_B \wedge \tau^B}$$

- Reduces to SFC when $\alpha^A_B = \omega^A_B$

Expansion generalities

- String Lagrangian schematically of the form $\mathcal{L}[X; c]$ and expands in $1/c^2$ as [Hansen et al., '19]

$$\mathcal{L}[X; c] = c^2 \mathcal{L}^{(-2)}(X) + \mathcal{L}^{(0)}(X) + \mathcal{O}(c^{-2})$$

- A further (functional) Taylor expansion in $X = x + c^{-2}y + \dots$ leads to

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{L}[X; c] &= c^2 \mathcal{L}^{(-2)}(x) + \left[\mathcal{L}^{(0)}(x) + y^M \frac{\delta \mathcal{L}^{(-2)}(x)}{\delta x^M} \right] + \mathcal{O}(c^{-2}) \\ &= c^2 \mathcal{L}_{\text{LO}}(x) + \mathcal{L}_{\text{NLO}}(x, y) + \mathcal{O}(c^{-2})\end{aligned}$$

\Rightarrow subleading fields “remember” lower-order e.o.m.s

Expansion of the Polyakov Lagrangian

- The Polyakov Lagrangian is

$$\mathcal{L}_P = -\frac{cT}{2} \sqrt{-\gamma} \gamma^{\alpha\beta} \partial_\alpha X^M \partial_\beta X^N G_{MN}$$

EXPANSION RECIPE: [Hansen et al., '19; Harmark et al. '19; Hansen et al., '20]

- Mantra: expand everything

$$X^M = x^M + c^{-2} y^M + \mathcal{O}(c^{-4})$$

$$\gamma_{\alpha\beta} = \gamma_{(0)\alpha\beta} + c^{-2} \gamma_{(2)\alpha\beta} + \mathcal{O}(c^{-4})$$

$$G_{\alpha\beta}(X) = \partial_\alpha X^M \partial_\beta X^N G_{MN}(X) = c^2 \tau_{\alpha\beta}(x) + H_{\alpha\beta}(x, y) + \mathcal{O}(c^{-2})$$

where

$$\tau_{\alpha\beta}(x) = \partial_\alpha x^M \partial_\beta x^N \tau_{MN}(x)$$

$$H_{\alpha\beta}(x, y) = \partial_\alpha x^M \partial_\beta x^N H_{MN}(x) + 2\partial_{(\alpha} x^M \partial_{\beta)} y^N \tau_{MN}(x) + \partial_\alpha x^M \partial_\beta x^N y^L \partial_L \tau_{MN}(x)$$

Expanding the Polyakov Lagrangian to NLO

- This procedure leads to an expansion of the form

$$\mathcal{L}_P = c^2 \mathcal{L}_{P\text{-LO}} + \mathcal{L}_{P\text{-NLO}} + \mathcal{O}(c^{-2})$$

where

$$\mathcal{L}_{P\text{-LO}} = -\frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2} \sqrt{-\gamma_{(0)}} \gamma_{(0)}^{\alpha\beta} \tau_{\alpha\beta}$$

$$\mathcal{L}_{P\text{-NLO}} = -\frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2} \sqrt{-\gamma_{(0)}} \gamma_{(0)}^{\alpha\beta} H_{\alpha\beta} + \frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{4} \sqrt{-\gamma_{(0)}} G_{(0)}^{\alpha\beta\gamma\delta} \tau_{\alpha\beta} \gamma_{(2)\gamma\delta} + y^M \frac{\delta \mathcal{L}_{P\text{-LO}}}{\delta x^M}$$

with $G_{(0)}^{\alpha\beta\gamma\delta} = \gamma_{(0)}^{\alpha\gamma} \gamma_{(0)}^{\delta\beta} + \gamma_{(0)}^{\alpha\delta} \gamma_{(0)}^{\gamma\beta} - \gamma_{(0)}^{\alpha\beta} \gamma_{(0)}^{\gamma\delta}$ the WDW metric

- The LO e.o.m. is

$$0 = \varepsilon^{\alpha\beta} \partial_\alpha x^K \partial_\beta x^L \varepsilon_{AB} (d(\tau^A \wedge \tau^B))_{MKL} + \text{“Virasoro”}$$

- If the Frobenius condition is satisfied, a sufficient* condition for the above to vanish *identically* is if $\alpha_M^A{}_B$ is *traceless*, of which the SFC is a special case

SNC string \subset NLO string

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{P-NLO}} = -\frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2} \sqrt{-\gamma_{(0)}} \gamma_{(0)}^{\alpha\beta} H_{\alpha\beta} + \frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{4} \sqrt{-\gamma_{(0)}} G_{(0)}^{\alpha\beta\gamma\delta} \tau_{\alpha\beta} \gamma_{(2)\gamma\delta} + y^M \frac{\delta \mathcal{L}_{\text{P-LO}}}{\delta X^M}$$

- Decompose

$$\gamma_{(0)\alpha\beta} = \eta_{ab} e_\alpha^a e_\beta^b, \quad \gamma_{(2)\alpha\beta} = 2e_{(\alpha}^a e_{\beta)}^b A_{ab}$$

where a, b are tangent space WS indices

- This results in the Lagrangian

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{P-NLO}} = -\frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2} \varepsilon^{\alpha\beta} [\lambda_{++} e_\alpha^+ \tau_\beta^+ + \lambda_{--} e_\alpha^- \tau_\beta^-] - \frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2} \sqrt{-\gamma_{(0)}} \gamma_{(0)}^{\alpha\beta} H_{\alpha\beta} + y^M \frac{\delta \mathcal{L}_{\text{NG-LO}}}{\delta X^M}$$

where $\tau_\beta^\pm = \tau_\beta^0 \pm \tau_\beta^1$ and

$$\lambda_{\pm\pm} = 4e^\alpha_{\mp} (\mp \tau_\alpha^0 + \tau_\alpha^1) A_{\pm\pm} \mp 2e^\gamma_{\pm} (\tau_N^\mp \partial_\gamma y^N + \partial_\gamma X^M y^N \partial_N \tau_M^\mp)$$

- For $\alpha^A_A = 0$ this reproduces the SNC string

[H₂O, '17; Bergshoeff et al., '18; Harmark et al. '19]

Phase space formulation and Poisson brackets

- The relativistic phase Lagrangian is

$$L = \oint d\sigma^1 \left[\dot{X}^M P_M - \overbrace{\vartheta^- \mathcal{H}_- - \vartheta^+ \mathcal{H}_+}^{\mathcal{H}_\pm = \frac{1}{4cT} (P \pm cTX')^M (P \pm cTX')^N \eta_{MN}} \right]$$

- Momentum expands as $P_A = c^2 P_{(-2)A} + P_{(0)A} + c^{-2} P_{(2)A} + \dots$
and $P_i = P_{(0)i} + c^{-2} P_{(2)i} + \dots$
- This gives

$$L_{\text{LO}} = \oint d\sigma^1 \left[\dot{X}^A P_{(-2)A} + \text{"LO constraints"} \right],$$

$$L_{\text{NLO}} = \oint d\sigma^1 \left[\dot{X}^i P_{(0)i} + \dot{X}^A P_{(0)A} + \dot{Y}^A P_{(-2)A} + \text{"LO \& NLO constraints"} \right],$$

$$L_{\text{NNLO}} = \oint d\sigma^1 \left[\dot{X}^A P_{(2)A} + \dot{Y}^A P_{(0)A} + \dot{Z}^A P_{(-2)A} + \dot{X}^i P_{(2)i} + \dot{Y}^i P_{(0)i} + \dots \right]$$

- Hence: Poisson brackets change at each order

The normal ordering constant

- Gauge-fixed Poisson brackets are

$$\{\alpha_k^i, \alpha_{-k}^j\} = -ik\delta^{ij} \text{ at NLO}, \quad \{\alpha_k^i, \beta_{-k}^j\} = -\frac{ik}{2}\delta^{ij} \text{ at NNLO}$$

where $x^i \sim \sum (i/k)\alpha_k^i e^{-ik\sigma^-} + \dots$ and $y^i \sim \sum (i/k)\beta_k^i e^{-ik\sigma^-} + \dots$

- Standard approach: $[\hat{q}, \hat{p}] = i\hbar\{q, p\}$ (*)
- However, subleading Lagrangians have non-standard dimensions; $\mathcal{L} = c^2\mathcal{L}_{\text{LO}} + \mathcal{L}_{\text{NLO}} + c^{-2}\mathcal{L}_{\text{NNLO}} + \dots$

↪ Replace (*) with

$$[\hat{a}, \hat{b}] = ik_{[a][b]}\{a, b\}$$

where $k_{[a][b]}$ is some combination of fundamental constants with dimensions of $[a][b]$

The normal ordering constant (cont'd.)

@NLO:

- NLO vacuum $\alpha_{k>0}^i |0\rangle_{\text{NLO}} = 0$, with $[\alpha_k^i] = \text{length} \times \sqrt{\text{mass}/\text{time}}$
- Commutator is $[\alpha_k^i, \alpha_{-k}^j] = \hbar k \delta^{ij}$, # op. is $N_{(0)} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{k \neq 0} \alpha_{-k}^i \alpha_k^i$
- Normal ordering gives

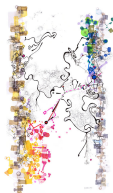
$$\frac{1}{2} \sum_{k \neq 0} \alpha_{-k}^i \alpha_k^i = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \alpha_{-k}^i \alpha_k^i + \frac{\hbar d}{2} \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} k = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \alpha_{-k}^i \alpha_k^i - \frac{\hbar d}{24}$$

@NNLO:

- NNLO vacuum $\alpha_k^i |0\rangle_{\text{NNLO}} = \beta_k^i |0\rangle_{\text{NNLO}} = 0$ for all $k > 0$, with $[\beta] = \sqrt{\text{mass}} \times \text{length} \times (\text{time})^{-5/2}$
- Commutator is now $[\alpha_k^i, \beta_{-k}^j] = c^2 \frac{\hbar k}{2} \delta^{ij}$, subleading # op. is $N_{(2)} = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \alpha_{-k}^i \beta_k^i + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \alpha_k^i \beta_{-k}^i$
(with $N = N_{(0)} + c^{-2} N_{(2)} + \dots$)
- Reproduces the same normal ordering constant:

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \alpha_k^i \beta_{-k}^i = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \beta_{-k}^i \alpha_k^i + c^2 \frac{\hbar d}{2} \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} k = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \beta_{-k}^i \alpha_k^i - c^2 \frac{\hbar d}{24}$$

The $1/c^2$ expansion of open strings



- v -direction a DD-direction
 \rightsquigarrow theory defined on a D24-brane [Gomis et. al., '20]
- NLO action in flat TS given by

$$S_{\text{P-NLO}} = -\frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2} \int d^2\sigma \left[\eta^{\alpha\beta} \partial_\alpha x^i \partial_\beta x^i + y^A \frac{\delta S_{\text{P-LO}}}{\delta x^A} \right] - 2 \int d\sigma^0 [y^t \partial_0 x_t]_{\sigma^1=0}^{\sigma^1=\pi}$$

- BCs: $\eta_{AB} x'^A \delta y^B|_{\text{ends}} = \eta_{AB} y'^A \delta x^B|_{\text{ends}} = \eta_{ij} x'^i \delta x^j|_{\text{ends}} = 0$
 $\Rightarrow x^A$ and y^A satisfy *same* BCs

\rightsquigarrow Revisit T-duality, which in the longitudinal sector is related to the DLCQ of string theory and NCOS

[Gomis et. al., '20]

\rightsquigarrow String $1/c^2$ expansion of the DBI action and D-branes

Summary and Future Directions

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

- Framework for expanding string theory to any desired order in $1/c^2$
- Does not need near-critical Kalb–Ramond background
- Reproduces NRST at NLO as well as the GO spectrum (when taking into account WZ term)

WHAT LIES AHEAD

- beta functions for NRST & $1/c^2$ expansion of NS-NS gravity: the missing Poisson equation? (cf. Jan's talk)
- Open strings and D-branes
- Explore the “landscape” of non-Lorentzian string theories and their possible holographic dualities

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

EXTRA SLIDES: SPECTRUM ON FLAT TARGET SPACE



Fixing the gauge

- Flat string NC geometry: $\tau_M^0 = \delta_M^t$, $\tau_M^1 = \delta_M^v$, $m_M^A = 0$, $H_{MN} = \delta_M^i \delta_N^j$ with $i = 2, \dots, 26$
- Expand rel. WS gauge redundancy

$$\Xi^\alpha = \xi_{(0)}^\alpha + c^{-2} \xi_{(2)}^\alpha + \mathcal{O}(c^{-4}) , \quad \omega = \omega_{(0)} + c^{-2} \omega_{(2)} + \mathcal{O}(c^{-4})$$

- Fix LO and NLO redundancies partially by setting

$$\gamma_{(0)\alpha\beta} = \eta_{\alpha\beta} , \quad \gamma_{(2)\alpha\beta} = 0$$

- This leaves residual redundancy (true at all orders)

$$\xi_{(0,2)}(\sigma) = \xi_{(0,2)}^-(\sigma^-) \partial_- + \xi_{(0,2)}^+(\sigma^+) \partial_+$$

Mode expansions and spectrum: LO

- The gauge-fixed P-LO Lagrangian is

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{P-LO}} = \frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2} \eta^{\alpha\beta} \partial_\alpha x^t \partial_\beta x^t - \frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2} \eta^{\alpha\beta} \partial_\alpha x^\nu \partial_\beta x^\nu$$

with Virasoro constraints $\partial_{\mp} x^\pm = 0$, leading to
=0 by fixing res. red.

$$x^\pm = x_0^\pm + w R_{\text{eff}} \sigma^\pm + \overbrace{\sigma^\pm\text{-oscillations}}$$

- The energy at LO is the 'stringy' rest mass

$$E_{\text{LO}} = - \oint d\sigma^1 \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{P-LO}}}{\partial(\partial_0 x^t)} = \frac{w R_{\text{eff}}}{\alpha'_{\text{eff}}}$$

Mode expansions and spectrum: NLO

- The gauge-fixed P-NLO Lagrangian on flat space is

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{P-NLO}} = -\frac{T_{\text{eff}}}{2} \eta^{\alpha\beta} \partial_\alpha x^i \partial_\beta x^i + T_{\text{eff}} \eta^{\alpha\beta} \partial_\alpha y^t \partial_\beta x^t - T_{\text{eff}} \eta^{\alpha\beta} \partial_\alpha y^\nu \partial_\beta x^\nu$$

with Virasoro constraints $\partial_\mp y^\pm = \frac{1}{wR_{\text{eff}}} \partial_\mp x^i \partial_\mp x^i$ and $\partial_\mp x^\pm = 0$

- e.o.m.: $\partial_+ \partial_- y^t = \partial_+ \partial_- y^\nu = \partial_+ \partial_- x^i = 0$ leads to mode expansions

$$x^i = x_0^i + \frac{1}{2\pi T_{\text{eff}}} p_{(0)i} \sigma^0 + \frac{1}{\sqrt{4\pi T_{\text{eff}}}} \sum_{k \neq 0} \frac{i}{k} \left[\alpha'_k e^{-ik\sigma^-} + \tilde{\alpha}'_k e^{-ik\sigma^+} \right]$$

remove osc. from $\partial_\pm y^\pm$ by fixing NLO red.

$$y^\pm = y_0^\pm - \frac{1}{2\pi T_{\text{eff}}} p_{(0)\mp} (\sigma^+ + \sigma^-) + \underbrace{\hspace{10em}}_{\text{oscillations}}$$

- This leads to $N_{(0)} - \tilde{N}_{(0)} = \hbar n w$ and

$$E_{\text{NLO}} = - \oint d\sigma^1 \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}_{\text{P-NLO}}}{\partial \partial_0 x^t} = -p_{(0)t} = \frac{N_{(0)} + \tilde{N}_{(0)}}{wR_{\text{eff}}} + \frac{\alpha'_{\text{eff}}}{2wR_{\text{eff}}} p_{(0)}^2$$

...and combining everything

... we get our previous result:

$$\begin{aligned} E &= c^2 E_{\text{LO}} + E_{\text{NLO}} + \mathcal{O}(c^{-2}) \\ &= \frac{c^2 w R_{\text{eff}}}{\alpha'_{\text{eff}}} + \frac{N_{(0)} + \tilde{N}_{(0)}}{w R_{\text{eff}}} + \frac{\alpha'_{\text{eff}}}{2w R_{\text{eff}}} p_{(0)}^2 + \mathcal{O}(c^{-2}) \end{aligned}$$