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Observations on Conformal Field Theories

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We review some recent progress on the long-standing problem of characterizing second-order phase transitions. The symmetries of second-order transitions are now better understood.

In addition, there are new general results about critical exponents, a better control of what happens when relevant operators are turned on, and some constraints on higher correlation functions.

These new ideas can be tested in systems ranging from boiling water to quantum gravity in Anti-de Sitter space.

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