Particle-Soliton Degeneracy in 2D QCD from Spontaneously Broken Non-Invertible Symmetry

Southern Regional Mathematical String Theory Meeting

Particle-Soliton Degeneracies from Spontaneously Broken Non-Invertible Symmetry [C. Córdova, DGS, N. Holfester. (2403.08883)] Topological Cosets via Anyon Condensation and Applications to Gapped QCD_2 [C. Córdova, DGS. (2412.01877)] Particle-Soliton Degeneracy in 2D Quantum Chromodynamics [C. Córdova, DGS, N. Holfester. (2412.21153)]

- Diego García-Sepúlveda (University of Chicago)
 - March 22, 2025

Outline

- Introduction and Motivation.
- *Key concepts: A pedagogical example.*
- Setting up 2D QCD.
- 3D TQFT Description of Topological Cosets.
- Applications to Gapped 2D QCD.
- Future Directions.

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- However, the QCD sector is rather difficult too understand due to asymptotic freedom.
 - High-Energy regime well-understood: Weakly coupled as $E \to \infty$.
 - Low-Energy regime mysterious to this day: Strongly coupled as $E \rightarrow 0$, and perturbative methods lose their usefulness. We do not understand why QCD is trivially gapped!

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 - Low-Energy regime mysterious to this day: Strongly coupled as $E \rightarrow 0$, and perturbative methods lose their usefulness. We do not understand why QCD is trivially gapped!
- Valuable to gather intuition about QCD in strongly coupled regime by studying related models.

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- This work: Characterize the spectrum of 2D QCD theories when gapped.

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Introducing key concepts: A pedagogical Example

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IR

Some Key Concepts: Particles and Solitons

Two qualitative different type of physical excitations:

- **Particles**: Excitations above a single vacuum state.
- •Solitons: Excitations that interpolate between distinct vacua.



Cannot continuously deform soliton to particle: requires changing boundary condition at infinity.



An integrable/pedagogical Example

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Schematically: Scalar field theory in two spacetime dimensions. Landau-Ginzburg realization of the model with potential



No reflection symmetry in potential! [Lassig-Mussardo-Cardy, Zamolodchikov]

$$V(\phi) = \phi^6 - 10\lambda^3 \phi^3 + 12\lambda^5 \phi$$

- Turning on λ sets up a relevant deformation $(\phi_{2,1} \text{ deformation}).$
- Spectrum is gapped, and there are two ground states.





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All the states have the same mass:

$$m_p = m_s$$

Natural interpretation to this phenomenon?



Contemporary understanding of symmetry in a physical system: A physical excitation in the system which can be continuously deformed at no cost in energy. A topological operator in the theory. [D. Gaiotto, A. Kapustin, N. Seiberg, B. Willet. 1412.5148].



Textbook example:

$$U(M) = \exp\left(\int_{M} j\right)$$

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Mathematically described by fusion category theory







Spontaneous Symmetry Breaking. ----- Imply energetic degeneracies.



Can be anomalous (and thus constrain RG flows).

May be gauged if non-anomalous



Simplest Example: Verlinde Line Operators in 2D RCFT

[Verlinde Nucl. Phys. B300 (1988) 360–376].[N. Drukker, D. Gaiotto, J. Gomis (1003.1112)].[C-M. Chang, Y-H. Lin, S-H. Shao, Y. Wang, X. Yin. (1802.04445)].

Diagonal 2D RCFT
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: Prima
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Trigger a Renormalization Group Flow by a relevant operator ϕ_{i^*} :

$$\mathcal{R} + \lambda \phi_{i^*}$$
$$\mathcal{R}$$
$$\overset{\mathcal{R}}{\longleftarrow} \text{RG Flow}$$



Verlinde lines preserved throughout the RG flow

$$\mathscr{L}_k \text{ preserved} \iff \frac{S_{k\,i^*}}{S_{0\,i^*}} = \frac{S_{i\,0}}{S_{0\,0}}$$

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Minimal models are clearly under good technical control. (Known spectra of primaries, modular S-matrix, etc...) [C-M. Chang, Y-H. Lin, S-H. Shao, Y. Wang, X. Yin. (1802.04445)]



At the UV CFT point:

$$\eta \times \eta = 1$$
$$\eta \times N = N \times \eta =$$
$$N \times N = 1 + \eta$$
$$W \times W = 1 + W$$

Tricritical Ising Model M_4			
Kac label	Conformal Weight	Verlinde Line	Quantum Dime
(1,1) or $(3,4)$	$h_{1,1} = 0$	1	$d_{1,1} = 1$
(1,2) or (3,3)	$h_{1,2} = 1/10$	$W\otimes\eta$	$d_{1,2} = \frac{1+\sqrt{5}}{2}$
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Solitons: Need to quantize the theory over the real line. Impose boundary conditions at infinity.



Topologically gapped 2D QFT: IR is a 2D TQFT, consisting on many vacua (topological local operators), acted over by the (possibly non-invertible) symmetry of the QFT.

[G. Moore, G. Segal (0609042].

[T-C. Huang, Y-H. Lin, S. Seifnashri (2110.02958)].

[G. Moore. " A few remarks on topological field theory "]



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- If $|\psi_{m,n}\rangle \in \mathcal{H}_{m,n}$ with $m \neq n$: state is a soliton.
- If $|\psi_{n,n}\rangle \in \mathcal{H}_{n,n}$ state is a particle over the vacua $|\Omega_n\rangle$. No interpolation of vacua.



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- Clearly, local operators preserve sector.



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Spontaneously broken symmetry: acts over the vacua. Sectors may be permuted/intertwined.



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 $W \times 1$

Symmetry spontaneously broken (gapped phase): $\mathscr{H}_{1,1} \oplus \mathscr{H}_{1,W} \oplus \mathscr{H}_{W,1} \oplus \mathscr{H}_{W,W}$



 $V(\phi) = \phi^6 - 10\lambda^3\phi^3 + 12\lambda^5\phi$

Multiplets of states relating particles and solitons in 2D via non-invertible symmetry [2403.08883]:





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 $W \times V$



Multiplets of states relating particles and solitons in 2D via non-invertible symmetry [2403.08883]:

$$W = 1 + W$$

Recover the particle-soliton degeneracies of the spectrum from the non-invertible (Fibonacci) symmetry in the flow!



n, n

Another example: $M_4 - \lambda \phi_{(1,3)}$

Lines 1, η and N preserved by $\phi_{(1,3)}$ deformation. \mathbb{Z}_2 Tambara-Yamagami (Ising) Soliton Degeneracy: $\eta \times \eta = 1$ $\eta \times N = N \times \eta = N$ $N \times N = 1 + \eta$

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Generalization: $M_n - \phi_{(1,3)}$

2(n-2)-fold soliton degeneracy

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[Zamolodchikov. *Nucl.Phys.B* 358 (1991) 497-523]. [2403.08883]








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Non-simply-connected gauge groups to disregard one-form symmetry throughout the flow: finite excitations only







Setting up 2D QCD

Setup for (massless) 2D QCD

The theory we consider is QCD in two spacetime dimensions. The gauge group is G and the matter fields are massless fermions transforming in some (irreducible) representation \mathbf{R} of G. In other words:

$$S_f(g_{YM}) = \int d^2x \left[-\frac{1}{4g_{YM}^2} \operatorname{Tr}(F^2) + \operatorname{Tr}(\psi^T i D \psi) \right]$$

Bosonize: Gauged WZW model with $Spin(dim(\mathbf{R}))_1$ matter content and G gauge fields, plus kinetic term for gauge fields:

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In principle, no loss of information: fermionization/bosonization invertible.

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When is a 2D QCD theory gapped?



Setup for (massless) 2D QCD

A series of results illuminate how to describe the low-energy regime:

[Z. Komargodski, K. Ohmori, K. Roumpedakis, S. Seifnashri. (2008.07567)] [D. Delmastro, J. Gomis, M. Yu. (2108.02202)]

Gap criterion: The theory is gapped if and only if the corresponding coset has a vanishing central charge:

$$\frac{\text{Spin}(\dim(\mathbf{R}))_1}{G_{I(\mathbf{R})}} \quad \text{with}$$

 $C_{\frac{\text{Spin}(\dim(\mathbf{R}))_1}{G_{I(\mathbf{R})}}} = c_{\text{Spin}(\dim(\mathbf{R}))_1} - c_{G_{I(\mathbf{R})}} = 0$

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Wish to study the action of non-invertible symmetries over vacua:



$$\lim_{g_{YM}\to\infty}S_b(g_{YM})=S_{gWZW}(A)$$

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$$UV \bullet Spin(\dim(\mathbf{R}))_{1}$$

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$$g_{YM} - IR \bullet S_{gWZW}(A)$$

In the UV: Free Fermions (E In the IR: Gauged WZW Mo



A fruitful way of describing cosets makes use of an appropriate 3D TQFT construction. Recall the relationship between G_k Chern-Simons theory and G_k WZW theory. [S. Elitzur, G. Moore, A. Schwimmer, N. Seiberg. (*Nucl. Phys. B* 326 (1989) 108-134)]



The data of the 2D theory is easily reconstructed from that of the bulk TQFT:

Local operators:



Verlinde lines:

$$= \frac{k}{4\pi} \int_{Y} \operatorname{Tr}(A \, dA + \frac{2}{3}A^3) \qquad A_0 \Big|_{\partial Y} = 0$$

$$= \frac{k}{\pi} \int_{\partial Y} \operatorname{Tr}(U^{-1}\partial_{\phi}U \, U^{-1}\partial_t U) + \frac{k}{12} \int_{Y} \operatorname{Tr}(U^{-1}dU)^3$$



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More precisely, Moore & Seiberg instructs us to construct the Chern-Simons theory $(G_k \times$

- The algebraic data of the coset CFT $G_k/H_{\tilde{k}}$ may then be obtained following the "three-step gauging rule".
- boundary 2D theory, resulting in a 2D CFT with single vacuum.

New boundary condition describing the embedding of gauge groups at the boundary:

$$H_{\tilde{k}} \hookrightarrow G_k$$

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• Physical interpretation: Quotienting (gauging) the common center $\mathbb{Z}_{G \cap H}^{(1)}$ removes additional topological sectors in the



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Exception to the Moore-Seiberg construction (i.e. where the "three-step gauging rule" fails).

- Maverick Cosets
- Conformal Embeddings

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Exception to the Moore-Seiberg construction (i.e. where the "three-step gauging rule" fails).

- Maverick Cosets
- Conformal Embeddings

New boundary condition describing the embedding of gauge groups at the boundary:

$$H_{\tilde{k}} \hookrightarrow G_k$$

$$(H_{-\tilde{k}})/\mathbb{Z}_{G\cap H}^{(1)}$$

• Physical interpretation: Quotienting (gauging) the common center $\mathbb{Z}_{G \cap H}^{(1)}$ removes additional topological sectors in the



A fruitful way of describing cosets makes use of an appropriate 3D construction: [G. Moore, N. Seiberg. (*Phys.Lett.B* 220 (1989) 422-430)]



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Common "Moore-Seiberg framework" for gapless cosets and topological cosets

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Common "Moore-Seiberg framework" for gapless cosets and topological cosets

Important observation: Topological cosets are always associated to a topological boundary condition of the corresponding bulk Chern-Simons theories. [A. Davydov, M. Müger, D. Nikshych, V. Ostrik. (1009.2117)] [YZ. Huang, A. Kirillov Jr., J. Lepowsky. (1406.3420)]



3D TQFT Description of Topological Cosets



The algebraic theory of anyons

Main important point: 3D TQFTs are theories consisting solely of topological line operators: anyons.

Mathematically, these line operators are described by the formalism of modular tensor categories.

In practice: a finite set of lines fulfilling a finite set of data.

- The set of lines
- Fusion rules
- Topological Spin/Conformal weight
- Modular S Matrix

In principle, any correlator can be computed from this finite set of data.





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In the current application we will be mostly working with G_k Chern-Simons theories, in which case the above properties are mostly inherited from the corresponding WZW theory.

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- called *Lagrangian Algebra*:
 - $\mathscr{L} = \bigoplus_{a} n_a a, \quad n_a \in \mathbb{N}$
- Physical interpretation: Lagrangian algebra dictates which anyon can end at topological boundary. [J. Kaidi, Z. Komargodski, K. Ohmori, S. Šeifnashri, S-H. Shao. (2107.13091)]

• Topological boundary conditions of a 3D TQFT described by a linear combination of anyons in the theory

 $a \in \mathcal{L}$



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$$\chi_{\Lambda}^{G_{k}}(q) = \sum_{\lambda} b_{(\Lambda,\lambda)} \chi_{\lambda}^{H_{\tilde{k}}}(q), \quad b_{(\Lambda,\lambda)} \in \mathbb{N} . \implies \mathscr{L} = \bigoplus_{(\Lambda,\lambda)} b_{(\Lambda,\lambda)}(\Lambda,\bar{\lambda})$$





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Natural candidate for Lagrangian algebra in topological cosets:

Gauging of generalized symmetry \mathcal{F} : Insert a mesh of \mathcal{F} throughout the spacetime region where the original theory \mathscr{C} is defined. [1412.5148].

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• Topological boundary conditions of a 3D TQFTs are always endowed by an associated fusion category \mathcal{F} .

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"Anyon condensation" in condensed matter.



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From 2D perspective: \mathscr{F} are topological lines \implies Symmetries of (massless) 2D QCD.

How do we characterize this associated fusion category \mathcal{F} at the boundary?

• Topological boundary conditions of a 3D TQFT described by a linear combination of anyons in the theory

$$n_a a, n_a \in \mathbb{N}$$





• Simple bulk anyons *a* become generically at boundary via "splitting rule":

• How the bulk anyons split depend on the Lagrangian algebra.

$$a = \sum_{\alpha} z_{a}^{\alpha} \alpha \Longrightarrow \bar{a} = \sum_{\alpha} z_{a}^{\alpha} \bar{\alpha} .$$

$$a = \sum_{\alpha} z_{a}^{\alpha} \alpha \Longrightarrow d_{a} = \sum_{b} z_{a}^{\alpha} d_{\alpha} .$$

$$a \otimes b = \bigoplus_{c} N_{a,b}^{c} c \Longrightarrow \left(\sum_{\alpha} z_{a}^{\alpha} \alpha\right) \times \left(\sum_{\beta} z_{b}^{\beta} \beta\right) = \sum_{c,\gamma} N_{a,b}^{c} z_{c}^{\gamma} \gamma .$$



 $a = \sum_{\alpha} z_a^{\alpha} \alpha, \quad z_a^{\alpha} \in \mathbb{N}$

Simple anyons in the Lagrangian algebra $\mathscr{L} = \bigoplus_a a$ always have a component of the identity line of the boundary theory: $a \rightarrow 1 + \cdots$ Find fusion ring of the 2D boundary by these splitting rules





Once we know how the fusion category acts over the boundary conditions, we can ask how Hilbert spaces defined by different boundary conditions are related by the action of the non-invertible symmetry:



General Story

C. Córdova, K. Ohmori, N. Holfester. (2408.11045)]

For our purposes, the degeneracies can be encoded in quiver diagrams:

- For each vacuum/topological local operator *m*, write a node in the quiver.

[S. Cecotti, C. Vafa. (9211097)]





Irreducible representations are labeled by the lines a of the fusion category. Write N_{ma}^n directed arrows from m to n.







Applications to Gapped 2D QCD

Strategy for 2D QCD

• Start with a gapped 2D QCD theory. This is, a QCD theory such that $c_{\text{Spin}(\dim(\mathbf{R}))_1} - c_{G_{I(\mathbf{R})}} = 0.$
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(simply-connected gauge group)

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Set coset (topological) boundary conditions on both ends, describing the (conformal) embedding $G_{I(R)} \hookrightarrow \operatorname{Spin}(\operatorname{dim}(\mathbf{R}))_1.$

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In order to deal with finite excitations only, we can project by gauging any exact abelian one-form symmetry. This changes the bulk TQFT as

Effectively, in the 2D theory this quotient shifts the global form of the gauge group G to a non-simply connected version thereof.

$$\operatorname{Spin}(\operatorname{dim}(\mathbf{R}))_1 - c_{G_{I(\mathbf{R})}} = 0.$$

$$\operatorname{dim}(\mathbf{R})_1 \times G_{-I(\mathbf{R})}$$

(simply-connected gauge group)

 $Z(\mathcal{F}) = \frac{\operatorname{Spin}(\dim(\mathbf{R}))_1 \times G_{-I(\mathbf{R})}}{\mathbb{Z}^{(1)}}$

 \mathbb{Z} Spin(dim(**R**)) $\cap G$



Characterizing the vacua of 2D QCD

Flow of local operators in 2D QCD [D. Delmastro, J. Gomis. (2211.09036)]

Characterize the vacua of the theory by examining the expectation value of local operators in each vacua (order parameters):



$$= \langle \mathbf{v}_i | \phi_a | \mathbf{v}_i \rangle$$

Matrix of condensates $B_{ai} = \langle \mathbf{v}_i | \phi_a | \mathbf{v}_i \rangle$

$$PSU(5) + \psi_{15}$$
$$B = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 3 + 2\sqrt{2} & 3 + 2\sqrt{2} & -1 & -1 \\ 2 + \sqrt{2} & -2 - \sqrt{2} & -\sqrt{2} \\ 2 + \sqrt{2} & -2 - \sqrt{2} & \sqrt{2} \\ -\sqrt{2} & \sqrt{2} & -\sqrt{2} \end{pmatrix}$$





Particle-Soliton Degeneracy in $SO(3) + \psi_{5}$

Concrete example: SO(3) gauge theories with fermions in the 5

Fusion Category: Three lines $\{1, v, A\}$ with fusion rules:

Three vacua with three irreducible multiplets. Non-empty Hilbert space: States in the connected quiver must exist!







Particle-Soliton Degeneracy in $PSU(4) + \psi_{15}$

Another example: PSU(4) gauge theories with fermions in the 15

• Fusion Category: Four lines $\{1, v, A, B\}$ with fusion rules:



Excitations are necessarily members of the multiplets:



Coset TQFT: $\frac{Spin(15)_1 \times SU(4)_{-4}}{\mathbb{Z}_4^{(1)}}$

×	V	A	В
V	1	В	A
A	В	1 + A + B	v + A + B
В	A	v + A + B	1 + A + B



- Used non-invertible to constrain spectra of gapped 2D QCD theories.
- In particular, non-invertible symmetry implies novel mass degeneracies, e.g. relating the mass of particles and solitons.
- We have seen the importance of appropriately taking into account topological sectors in 2D QFT to understand finite energy physics.
- Seen the practical use of anyon condensation ("gauging of non-invertible one-form symmetry") to derive specific fusion categories in 2D QFTs.





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Thanks for your attention! Questions?