# Gauge theory non-local operators from two dimensional conformal field theories

#### Filippo Passerini

Institut für Physik, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

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#### A large class of 4-dimensional $\mathcal{N}=2$ gauge theories

Gaiotto [Gaiotto 09] has constructed a large class of 4-dimensional  $\mathcal{N} = 2$  gauge theories that describe the low energy dynamics of a stack of *N* M5-branes compactified on a punctured Riemann surface  $C_{(f_a),g}$ 



A four dimensional gauge theory  $\mathcal{T}_{(f_a),g}$  is characterized by the same data labeling the surface

- the genus g
- the number of punctures (f<sub>a</sub>). There are different types of puncture and each type is labeled by a Young tableaux with N boxes.

A  $\mathcal{N} = 2$  gauge theory is associated to any punctured Riemann surface  $C_{(f_a),g} \iff \mathcal{T}_{(f_a),g}$ 

More in details

- ( $f_a$ ) punctures encode the flavor symmetry of the gauge theory  $\mathcal{T}_{(f_a),g}$
- ► the different degenerations of the surface C<sub>(f<sub>a</sub>),g</sub> such that it becomes a set of pairs of pants connected by thin tubes are associated to the different S-duality frame of the gauge theory T<sub>(f<sub>a</sub>),g</sub>
- the thin tubes connecting the pair of pants are the weakly coupled gauge groups
- the moduli space of  $C_{(f_a),g}$  is equal to the physical parameter space of  $\mathcal{T}_{(f_a),g}$

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Geometrical interpretation of S-duality!!

Consider N = 2, i.e. the low energy theory of 2 M5-branes

- one type of puncture  $\implies$  only SU(2)'s flavor groups
- one type of pair of pants  $\implies$  only SU(2)'s gauge groups

and in this case

$$C_{f,g} \iff \mathcal{T}_{f,g}$$

- f punctures  $\iff$   $(SU(2))^{f}$  flavor group
- f + 3g 3 thin tubes  $\iff (SU(2))^{f+3g-3}$  gauge group

Let's consider a particular example,  $C_{4,0}$ .

### C<sub>4,0</sub> Riemann surface

Let's consider a degeneration limit of the  $C_{4,0}$ 



- 4 punctures  $\iff$   $(SU(2))^4$  flavor group
- ▶ 1 tube  $\iff$  SU(2) gauge group

This is the flavor and gauge group content of the conformal N=2 SU(2) gauge theory coupled to 4 hypermultiplets ( $N_f = 4$ )



#### $\mathcal{N}=2$ SU(N) gauge theory with $N_f = 2N$

What is the Riemann surface associated to the conformal N=2 SU(N) gauge theory coupled to  $N_f = 2N$  hypermultiplets ?



The flavor group is  $U(1) \otimes SU(N) \oplus U(1) \otimes SU(N)$ . There are two types of flavor group thus we need two types of punctures:

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- simple puncture associated to U(1) flavor group
- full puncture associated to SU(N) flavor group

## C(2,2),0 Riemann surface

The weakly coupled conformal N=2 SU(N) gauge theory coupled to  $N_f = 2N$  hypermultiplets is associated to a degeneration of  $C_{(2,2),0}$ 



The tube in the center is associated to the SU(N) gauge group

- It is possible to consider different degenerations of C<sub>(2,2),0</sub>, where the punctures are grouped in different ways
- One of the possible degenerations describes a strongly coupled theory that do not admit a Lagrangian description
- Different theories associate to different degeneration of C<sub>(2,2),0</sub> are related by the S-duality transformations

Can we use this 2D-4D connection to perform quantitative computations?

[AGT 09]: yes!

#### From 4D to 2D: the AGT proposal

The partition function of four dimensional gauge theories  $\mathcal{T}_{(f_a),g}(A_{N-1})$  defined on  $S^4$  is equivalent to a correlator of two dimensional  $A_{N-1}$  Toda field theory defined on  $C_{(f_a),g}$  [AGT 09][Wyllard 09]

$$Z_{\mathcal{T}_{f,g}} = \langle V_{m_1} \ldots V_{m_f} 
angle_{\mathsf{A}_{N-1}}$$
 Toda on  $C_{(f_a),g}$ 

- there is one primary for each puncture and the momenta  $m_1, \ldots, m_f$  are related to the masses of the hypermultiplets
- different correlators of the same 2D field theory compute the partition function of different 4D gauge theories

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Where does it come from?

#### 4D Gauge theory side

The partition function for  $\mathcal{N}=2$  gauge theories on  $S^4$  can be written as [Pestun 07]

$$Z_{\mathcal{T}_{f,g}} = \int [da] \; ilde{Z}^{(\sigma)} \; ar{ ilde{Z}}^{(\sigma)}$$

- a is the VEV of adjoint scalars in the vector multiplets
- $\sigma$  labels the S-duality frame

 $\tilde{Z}$  includes a perturbative and a non-perturbative factor

 $\tilde{Z} = Z_{\text{pert}} Z_{\text{instanton}}$ 

where

$$Z_{\text{instanton}} = Z_{\text{instanton}}(\tau, a, \hat{m}, \epsilon_1, \epsilon_2)$$

- au is the gauge coupling
- *m̂* are the hypermultiplets masses
- $\epsilon_1, \epsilon_2$  are the deformation parameters

## 2D CFT side, N=2

*A*<sub>1</sub> Toda field theory is better known as Liouville field theory. It is described by a 2D Lagrangian  $S_{Liou} = S_{Liou}(\phi, b)$ 

- $\phi(z, \overline{z})$  is a 2D scalar field
- b is dimensionless coupling constant

The theory is conformal invariant. The Virasoro primaries that generate the Hilbert space are given by  $V_{\alpha}(z, \bar{z}) = e^{2\alpha \phi(z, \bar{z})}$ , where

- $\triangleright \alpha$  is the primary momentum
- ► the conformal dimension is given by Δ(α) = α(Q − α) where Q = b + 1/b

Conformal Bootstrap Approach: any correlator can be expressed in terms of 3-point functions and conformal blocks

E.G. Consider the case of  $C_{4,0}$ 

$$\langle m_1 | V_{m_2}(1) V_{m_3}(z, \bar{z}) | m_4 \rangle$$

$$= \int d\alpha \langle m_1 | V_{m_2}(\mathbf{1}) | \alpha \rangle \langle \alpha | V_{m_3}(z,\bar{z}) | m_4 \rangle \mathcal{F}_{\alpha,m_1,m_2,m_3,m_4}^{(\sigma)}(z) \bar{\mathcal{F}}_{\alpha,m_1,m_2,m_3,m_4}^{(\sigma)}(\bar{z})$$

where  $\sigma$  label the decomposition of the conformal block. In this case



Considering a different decomposition of the correlator the result does not change: modular invariance AGT have pointed out that

$$Z_{\text{instanton}}^{(\sigma)}(\tau, \boldsymbol{a}, \hat{\boldsymbol{m}}, \epsilon_1, \epsilon_2) = \mathcal{F}_{\alpha, \boldsymbol{m}}^{(\sigma)}(\boldsymbol{z})$$

 $Z_{\text{pert}} = 3$ -point functions

Considering

- $a \sim \alpha$  VEV of the scalars are related to the internal momenta
- $\hat{m} \sim m$  masses of the hypers are related to external momenta
- $\epsilon_1 = b, \epsilon_2 = 1/b$  deformation parameters are related to the coupling constant
- $e^{2\pi i \tau} = z$  gauge couplings are related to the worldsheet coordinates

S-duality invariance of the partition function follows from modular invariance of the correlator!

## 2D CFT side, N>2

 $A_{N-1}$  Toda field theory is a generalization of Liouville field theory. It is described by a 2D Lagrangian  $S_{A_{N-1}} = S_{A_{N-1}}(\phi, b)$ 

- $\phi = \sum_{k=1}^{N-1} \varphi_k e_k$  where  $e_k$  is a simple root of  $A_{N-1}$  algebra
- b is a dimensionless coupling constant

Besides conformal invariance,  $A_{N-1}$  Toda field theory enjoys also higher spin symmetries. There are in total N - 1 holomorphic currents  $W^{(i+1)}$  (i = 1, ..., N - 1) that realize a  $W_N$  algebra.

The  $\mathcal{W}_N$  primaries that generate the Hilbert space are given by  $V_{\alpha} = e^{\langle \alpha, \phi \rangle}$ 

- $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$  is the scalar product in the root space
- $\alpha$  is a vector in the root space of the  $A_{N-1}$  algebra
- the conformal dimension is given by  $\Delta(\alpha) = \frac{1}{2} \langle \alpha, 2Q \alpha \rangle$

Some special states are

- semidegenerate states. There are null states in the Verma module
- degenerate states. α = -bΩ<sub>1</sub> <sup>1</sup>/<sub>b</sub>Ω<sub>2</sub>, N-1 null states in the Verma module, (maximum number)

Differently from Liouville the theory is not solved, but there are certain correlators that can be computed exactly.

E.G. Consider the case of  $C_{(2,2),0}$ 



Different types of punctures are now associated to different types of primaries

- ► simple puncture associated to semidegenerate state  $V_{\chi}$  with  $\chi = \kappa \omega_1$
- full puncture associated to a non-degenerate state V<sub>m</sub> with generic m

The correlator

$$\langle m_1|V_{\chi_2}(1)V_{\chi_3}(z,\overline{z})|m_4\rangle$$

$$= \int d\alpha \langle m_1 | V_{\chi_2}(1) | \alpha \rangle \langle \alpha | V_{\chi_3}(z,\bar{z}) | m_4 \rangle \mathcal{F}^{(\sigma)}_{\alpha,m_1,\chi_2,\chi_3,m_4}(z) \bar{\mathcal{F}}^{(\sigma)}_{\alpha,m_1,\chi_2,\chi_3,m_4}(\bar{z})$$

reproduce the partition function for the N=2 SU(N) theory with  $N_f = 2N$ hypermultiplets! What happen if we insert non-local operators in the gauge theory?

What are the operators that we can insert without spoiling the 4D-2D relation?



The  $\mathcal{N} = 2$  4D theories can be thought as the worldvolume theory of M5-branes compactified on  $C_{f,g}$ 

$$N M5 = \begin{bmatrix} 4D & C \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 10 \\ \hline X & X & X & X & X & X & X \\ \end{bmatrix}$$

We add to the system other M2 or M5 in order to form supersymmetric intersections

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#### M-theory picture

Let's focus now on this particular M2-M5 intersection

$$N = \begin{bmatrix} 4D & C \\ \hline 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 10 \\ \hline X & X & X & X & X & X \\ M2 & X & X & X & X \\ X & X & X & X \\ \end{bmatrix}$$

On the M5-branes worldvolume, the M2-brane manifests itself as

- ▶ 1-dimensional operator on the 4D space  $\Rightarrow \frac{1}{2}$  BPS Loop Operator!
- ► 1-dimensional operator on C<sub>f,g</sub> ⇒ Monodromy of a chiral degenerate state [DGOT 09][AGGTV 09]

The monodromy is evaluated along a curve  $\gamma$  on  $C_{\!f,g}$ . The magnetic and electric charge of the loop operator are encoded by the curve  $\gamma$  [DMO 09][DGOT 09][AGGTV 09]

The 't Hooft Loop is associated to the curve



The Wilson Loop is associated to the curve



The monodromy can be computed performing a chain of modular transformations of the conformal block. For the Wilson loop



Modular transformations can be expressed by the action of the elements of the Moore-Seiberg groupoid. For Liouville theory these are known explicitly and one can compute any kind of loop operator: electric, magnetic or dyonic. For the Wilson loop case, the result is in agreement with Pestun [Pestun 07].

For  $A_{N-1}$  Toda field theory the modular transformations are not known explicitly. However since the modular transformation to perform involve degenerate fields, loop operators can be computed as monodromy of generalized hypergeometric functions ! [Passerini 10]

Indeed, the 4-point function with two degenerate fields results

 $\langle V_{\alpha_1}(0) V_{-b\omega_1}(z,\bar{z}) V_{-b\omega_{N-1}}(1) V_{\alpha_2}(\infty) \rangle = |z|^{2b\langle \alpha_1,h_1 \rangle} |1-z|^{\frac{-2b^2}{N}} G(z,\bar{z})$ 

where  $G(z, \bar{z})$  satisfy the generalized hypergeometric equation.

Using properties of the monodromy group of the generalized hypergeometric equation, it follows that [Passerini 10]

- the Wilson Loop in the fundamental and antifundamental representation is associated to the monodromy of the chiral degenerate field V<sub>-bw1</sub>
- the orientation of the curve selects between fundamental and antifundamental representation
- the orientation of the monodromy curve is a new feature of the N > 2 case



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The correlator associated to the partition function of the conformal SU(N) with  $N_f = 2N$ 

#### $\langle m_1 | V_{\chi_2}(1) V_{\chi_3}(z, \overline{z}) | m_4 \rangle$

is modified as

$$\int d\alpha \mathcal{L} \langle m_1 | V_{\chi_2}(1) | \alpha \rangle \langle \alpha | V_{\chi_3}(z,\bar{z}) | m_4 \rangle \mathcal{F}^{(\sigma)}_{\alpha,m_1,\chi_2,\chi_3,m_4}(z) \bar{\mathcal{F}}^{(\sigma)}_{\alpha,m_1,\chi_2,\chi_3,m_4}(\bar{z})$$

and the explicit expressions for the monodromies are

$$\mathcal{L} = \frac{1}{N} \text{Tr}_F \, e^{i2\pi ba} \qquad \bar{\mathcal{L}} = \frac{1}{N} \text{Tr}_{\bar{F}} \, e^{i2\pi ba}$$

Using the AGT dictionary, this result is in agreement with the Wilson loop expectation value obtained by Pestun [Pestun 07] using gauge theory! In agreement also with [DGG 10]

#### M-theory picture

Let's now consider the following M5-M5 intersection

On the N M5-branes worldvolume, the intersecting M5-brane manifests itself as

- ▶ 2-dimensional operator on the 4D space  $\Rightarrow \frac{1}{2}$  BPS Surface Operator!
- wrap completely the  $C_{f,g} \Rightarrow$  different 2-dimensional CFT! [AT 10]

As argued by Alday and Tachikawa  ${\rm [AT \ 10]},$  this M-theory setup describes a full ramified surface operator  ${\rm [GW \ 06]}$ 

#### full ramified surface operators

A ramified surface operator is defined imposing that the fields in the theory posses a certain singularity on the 2D subspace where the operator is supported

Considering  $(z_1, z_2)$  as complex coordinates of  $\mathbb{R}^4$  and placing the operator at  $z_2 = 0$ , taking  $z_2 = re^{i\theta}$ , the gauge potential near r = 0 behaves as

 $A_{\mu}dx^{\mu} \sim diag(\alpha_1,\ldots,\alpha_N)id\theta$ 

A full surface operator has  $\alpha_1 \neq \ldots \neq \alpha_N$  thus

- the unbroken gauge group is  $U(1)^{N-1}$
- N-1 monopole numbers  $\ell_i = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{Z_2=0} F_i$

The instantons are classical solutions of the form

 $A_{\mu}dx^{\mu} = \bar{A}_{\mu}dx^{\mu} + f(r)\operatorname{diag}(\alpha_{1},\ldots,\alpha_{N})id\theta$ 

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- $\bullet \ f(0) = 1 \quad f(\infty) = 0$
- instanton number k, is the instanton number of  $\bar{A}_{\mu}$

#### Instanton function with surface operators

An instanton is characterized by *N* topological quantities  $(k, \ell_1, \ldots, \ell_{N-1})$ . It results more convenient to consider the following topological numbers [Braverman 04][BE 04][Negut 08][FFNR 08]

 $\vec{k} = (k_1, ..., k_N)$  where  $k_1 = k$   $k_{i+1} = k_i + \ell_i$ 

- ► M<sub>N,k</sub> the moduli space of this configuration has 4(k<sub>1</sub> + ... + k<sub>N</sub>) real dimension
- $\mathcal{M}_{N\vec{k}}$  is a singular space but can be regularized

The instanton partition function is given by

$$Z_{\textit{instanton}} = \sum_{\lambda} Z_{\vec{k}}(\lambda) \prod_{i} y_{i}^{k_{i}}$$

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- $\lambda = (\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_N)$  is a vector of Young tableau
- $k_i = \sum_{j\geq 1} \lambda_j^{i-j+1}$
- $Z_{\vec{k}}(\lambda)$  depends on the field content

#### $\mathcal{N} = 2 SU(N)$ gauge theory with $N_f = 2N$

Let's focus on the N = 2 SU(N) gauge theory with  $N_f = 2N$  hypers with a full ramified surface operator. We define [KPPW 10]

►  $Z^{(0),i}$  the sum of all terms with  $k_i \neq 0$  and  $k_j = 0$  for  $i \neq j$ 

►  $Z^{(1),i,j}$  the sum of all terms with  $k_i \neq 0$ ,  $k_j = 1$  for and  $k_r = 0$  for  $r \neq i, j$ 

#### Thus

$$Z_{instanton} = \sum_{i} Z^{(0),i} + \sum_{i,j} Z^{(1),i,j} \dots$$

where

$$Z^{(0),i} = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{\left(\frac{\mu_{i+1}}{\epsilon_1} - \frac{a_i}{\epsilon_1} + \frac{\epsilon_2}{\epsilon_1} \lfloor \frac{i}{N} \rfloor + 1\right)_n \left(\frac{\tilde{\mu}_i}{\epsilon_1} - \frac{a_i}{\epsilon_1}\right)_n}{\left(\frac{a_{i+1}}{\epsilon_1} - \frac{a_i}{\epsilon_1} + \frac{\epsilon_2}{\epsilon_1} \lfloor \frac{i}{N} \rfloor + 1\right)_n n!} \left(-y_i\right)^n$$

- ai are the Coulomb branch parameters
- $\mu_i, \tilde{\mu}_i$  are the hypermultiplets masses

### $\mathcal{N} = 2 SU(2)$ theories and affine SL(2) algebra

The instanton partition function for N = 2 SU(2) gauge theories with a full ramified surface operator are equivalent to modified affine SL(2) conformal blocks [AT 10]

Affine SL(2) algebra is defined by

 $[J_n^0, J_m^0] = \frac{k}{2} n \,\delta_{n+m,0} \,, \quad [J_n^0, J_m^{\pm}] = \pm J_{n+m}^{\pm} \,, \quad [J_n^+, J_m^-] = 2 J_{n+m}^0 + k \, n \,\delta_{n+m,0}$ 

- ►  $|j\rangle$  primary state,  $J_0^0|j\rangle = j|j\rangle$  and  $J_{1+n}^-|j\rangle = J_{1+n}^0|j\rangle = J_n^+|j\rangle = 0$
- ► V<sub>j</sub>(x, z) primary field, x is an isospin variable and z is the worldsheet coordinate

The operators act on the primary fields as differential operators

$$[J_n^A, V_j(x, z)] = z^n D^A V_j(x, z)$$
$$D^+ = 2jx - x^2 \partial_x, \qquad D^0 = -x \partial_x + j, \qquad D^- = \partial_x$$

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E.G. for the  $\mathcal{N} = 2$  SU(2) gauge theory with  $N_f = 4$  hypermultiples it results

$$Z_{\text{instanton}} = (1-z)^{2j_2(-j_3+k/2)} \langle j_1 | \mathcal{V}_{j_2}(1,1) \mathcal{V}_{j_3}(x,z) | j_4 \rangle$$

where

$$\mathcal{V}_j = \mathcal{K} V_j \qquad \qquad \mathcal{K}(x, z) = \exp\left[-\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2n-1} \left(z^{n-1} x J_{1-n}^- + \frac{z^n}{x} J_{-n}^+\right)\right]$$

It can be evaluated pertubatively considering the decomposition

$$\sum_{\mathbf{n},\mathbf{A};\mathbf{n}',\mathbf{A}'} \langle j_1 | \mathcal{V}_{j_2}(1,1) | \mathbf{n},\mathbf{A}; j \rangle X_{\mathbf{n},\mathbf{A};\mathbf{n}',\mathbf{A}'}^{-1}(j) \langle \mathbf{n}',\mathbf{A}'; j | \mathcal{V}_{j_3}(x,z) | j_4 \rangle$$

It is a series with only positive powers of *z* and positive and negative powers of *x*. The components  $Z^{(0),i}$  of the instanton function are reproduced by terms with the following internal states [KPPW 10]

• 
$$(J_0^-)^n |j\rangle$$
 that gives a  $x^n$  term

• 
$$(J_{-1}^+)^n |j\rangle$$
 that gives a  $\left(\frac{z}{x}\right)^n$  term

The complete dictionary is

 $y_1 = x, \qquad y_2 = \frac{z}{x}, \qquad j = -\frac{1}{2} + \frac{a_1}{\epsilon_1}, \qquad k = -2 - \frac{\epsilon_2}{\epsilon_1}$   $j_1 = -\frac{\epsilon_1 + \epsilon_2 + \mu_1 - \mu_2}{2\epsilon_1}, \qquad j_2 = -\frac{2\epsilon_1 + \epsilon_2 + \mu_1 + \mu_2}{2\epsilon_1}$   $j_3 = -\frac{2\epsilon_1 + \epsilon_2 - \tilde{\mu}_1 - \tilde{\mu}_2}{2\epsilon_1}, \qquad j_4 = -\frac{\epsilon_1 + \epsilon_2 + \tilde{\mu}_1 - \tilde{\mu}_2}{2\epsilon_1}$ 

What about the SU(N) gauge theories with N>2 ? [KPPW 10]

## $\mathcal{N} = 2 SU(N)$ theories and affine SL(N) algebra

Affine SL(N) algebra is generated by

 $J_n^i, \qquad J_n^{i+}, \qquad J_n^{i-}, \qquad J_n^{il} \quad (i \neq l)$ 

- ►  $|j\rangle$  primary state, is labeled by  $j = \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} j^i \omega_i$  where  $\omega_i$  are the fundamental weights of SL(N)
- ►  $J_0^i |j\rangle = j^i |j\rangle$  and  $J_0^{i+} |j\rangle = 0$ ,  $J_0^{il} |j\rangle = 0$  (i > l),  $J_n^A |j\rangle = 0$  (n > 0)
- V<sub>j</sub>(x, z) primary field, x is a vector of isospin variables and z is the worldsheet coordinate

The operators act on the primary fields as differential operators

 $[J_n^A, V_j(x, z)] = z^n D^A V_j(x, z)$ 

In general, *x* is a vector of  $\frac{N(N-1)}{2}$  isospin variables and  $D^A$  are differential operators in these variables. Is there a class of states that depend on a lower number of isospin variables?

The primary field with  $j = \chi = \kappa \omega_1$  depends only on N - 1 isospin variables and the action of the generators on these fields is expressed in terms of differential operators  $D^A$  that depends on N - 1 isospin variables

Let's focus on the conformal N=2 SU(N) gauge theory coupled to  $N_f = 2N$  hypermultiplets, i.e.



- simple puncture associated to a state  $V_{\chi}$
- full puncture associated to a non-degenerate state V<sub>j</sub> with generic j

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The instanton function is equivalent to

$$\sum_{\mathbf{n},\mathbf{A};\mathbf{n}',\mathbf{A}'} \langle j_1 | \mathcal{V}_{\chi_2}(1,1) | \mathbf{n},\mathbf{A}; j \rangle X_{\mathbf{n},\mathbf{A};\mathbf{n}',\mathbf{A}'}^{-1}(j) \langle \mathbf{n}',\mathbf{A}'; j | \mathcal{V}_{\chi_3}(x,z) | j_4 \rangle$$

where

$$\mathcal{V}_{\chi_i}(\boldsymbol{x}, \boldsymbol{z}) = V_{\chi_i}(\boldsymbol{x}, \boldsymbol{z}) \mathcal{K}^{\dagger}(\boldsymbol{x}, \boldsymbol{z})$$

and the dictionary is

- We have shown that also also when N > 2 the AGT can be extended to provide a 2D description of 4D gauge theory Wilson loops.
- ▶ We have shown that orientation of the monodromy is relevant for the charge of the loop, when N > 2.
- Can we classify loop operators when N > 2? [GL 10]
- We extended the AT proposal to the case N > 2 and to the non-conformal theories.
- Can we reproduce the full partition function considering the correlator of some CFT with affine algebra?

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What is the physical meaning of the K operator?