Comments on Scaling Limits of $4d \mathcal{N} = 2$ theories

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- The day before yesterday, I mainly talked about the behind-the-scene story concerning my personal relation to the *a*-theorem.
- I don't have time to talk about a today; the method to calculate a of an N = 2 SCFT is a talk in itself.
- Instead I'd like to talk in detail about the structure of the low energy limit of $\mathcal{N} = 2$ **SU**(N) with $N_f = 2n$ flavors.
- I guess it's not so bad to recall the Seiberg-Witten theory.



It's a strange structure, but not that strange.

• Consider **SU**(2) with a number of **doublets** and a number of **triplets**.

Doublets, taken alone, comprise a **free** CFT with $SU(2)_F$

Triplets, taken alone, comprise a **free** CFT with $SU(2)_F$

• So the theory is: CFT₁ and CFT₂ coupled via **SU**(2) gauge bosons

The only difference here is that both CFT₁ and CFT₂ are **non-free**.

You can call them unparticle sectors if you like.

- We habitually think of field theory as gauge groups + matter fields ...
- but matter fields might not be free.
- In this case we had a conventional UV description which was a SUSY QCD,
- but there's no guarantee there is a conventional UV description either.
- Just studying conventional field theories might not be enough.

- I'm very sorry I didn't have time to put figures into the slides.
- I'll use the small whiteboard there to draw them.



1. $\mathcal{N} = 2$ Basics

2. SU(N) without quarks

3. SU(N) with quarks



1. $\mathcal{N} = 2$ Basics

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3. $\mathrm{SU}(N)$ with quarks





vector multiplet

adjoint of G

traceless $N \times N$ matrix

hypermultiplet

some rep of G

N-dim column vector

•
$$\langle Q
angle = \langle ilde{Q}
angle = 0$$
 for simplicity.

•
$$V(\phi) = \operatorname{tr}[\phi, \phi^{\dagger}]^2$$

• Classically,
$$\phi = \begin{pmatrix} a_1 & & & \\ & a_2 & & \\ & & a_3 & \\ & & \ddots & \\ & & & a_N \end{pmatrix} \longrightarrow V(\phi) = 0$$

(n.b. $\sum a_i = 0$)

• (N-1)-dimensional moduli space of vacua.

$$\phi = egin{pmatrix} a_1 & & & & \ & a_2 & & & \ & & a_3 & & \ & & & \ddots & \ & & & & a_N \end{pmatrix}$$

Classically,

• Masses of W-bosons : $|a_i - a_j|$

$$\mathcal{L} \supset [A_{\mu}, \langle \phi
angle] [A^{\mu}, \langle \phi
angle]$$

- $U(1)^{N-1}$ remains unbroken and massless
- Masses of the quarks : $|a_i + m|$

$$W = ilde{Q} \langle \phi
angle Q + m ilde{Q} Q = \sum_{i=1}^N (a_i + m) ilde{Q}^i Q_i$$

$$\phi = egin{pmatrix} a_1 & & & & \ & a_2 & & & \ & & a_3 & & \ & & \ddots & \ & & & & \ddots & \ & & & & a_N \end{pmatrix}$$

Classically,

• Masses of W-bosons : $|a_i - a_j|$

•
$$\langle {f tr}\, \phi^k
angle = \sum a^k_i,$$
 or equivalently

•
$$\langle \det(x-\phi) \rangle = x^N + u_2 x^{N-2} + u_3 x^{N-3} + \dots + u_N$$

where $u_k = a_1 a_2 \cdots a_k + \text{permutations.}$

Quantum effect modifies this relation. But how?

Quantum mechanically,

- Writing $\phi = \text{diag}(a_1, \dots, a_N)$ doesn't make much sense because they are gauge dependent.
- W-boson masses are physical. →
 Define a_i so that W-boson masses are |a_i a_j|.
- Vevs of operators are **physical**. \rightarrow **Define** u_k so that $\langle \det(x - \phi) \rangle = x^N + u_2 x^{N-2} + u_3 x^{N-3} + \dots + u_N$

• $u_k = a_1 a_2 \cdots a_k$ + permutations + quantum corrections

What are these quantum corrections?

ANSWER: Take

$$\Sigma: y^2 = P(x)^2 - \Lambda^{2N-N_f} \prod_{k=1}^{N_f} (x+m_k)$$

where

$$P(x) = \langle \det(x-\phi) \rangle = x^N + \frac{u_2}{u_2}x^{N-2} + \frac{u_3}{u_3}x^{N-3} + \dots + \frac{u_N}{u_N}$$

and the differential on it

$$\lambda = rac{x}{2\pi i} d\log rac{P(x)+y}{P(x)-y}$$

Then

$$a_i = \int_{A_i} \lambda.$$

This is **exact**.

(n.b. λ needs slight modification when $N_f=2N$)

- SU(2) by [Seiberg-Witten] 1994
- **SU**(*N*) by [Argyres-Shapere], [Hanany-Oz] 1995
- done by combining correct guesses at a few singular points + holomorphy
- (Re)derived by performing the path integral by [Nekrasov] 2003.

Another interpretation [Witten] 1997, [Gaiotto] 2009:

- On a single M5 lives a 6d theory. M2s ending on the M5 give strings on it.
- Put the theory on 2d Σ . Gives a 4d theory.
- The string tension is position-dependent, $|\lambda|$.
- A string wrapped on C has the mass

$$\int_C |\lambda| \geq \left|\int_C \lambda \right|$$

It's not just that
$$a_i = \int_{A_i} \lambda$$
. E.g.

- Choice of $C \longrightarrow$ W-bosons, quarks, monopoles, dyons ...
- Which choice of C really gives rise to particles
- Whether that particle is a vector or a hyper or one with higher-spin ...

[Shapere-Vafa] 1999, [Gaiotto-Moore-Neitzke] 2008~

• When an electric particle goes around a magnetic particle, it gets the phase

$$\exp[2\pi i q_e q_m']$$

• If the first particle has the charge (q_e,q_m) and the second (q_e^\prime,q_m^\prime) then

$$\exp[2\pi i(q_eq_m'-q_e'q_m)]$$

- The number $q_e q_m^\prime q_e^\prime q_m$: Dirac quantization pairing
- If the first particle comes from C_1 and the second C_2 ,

$$q_eq_m'-q_e'q_m=\#(C_1\cap C_2)$$



1. $\mathcal{N} = 2$ Basics

2. SU(N) without quarks

3. $\mathrm{SU}(N)$ with quarks

Σ: ([Klemm-Lerche-Yankielowicz-Theisen], [Argyres-Faraggi], 1994)

$$y^2 = P(x)^2 - \Lambda^{2N}$$

= $(x^N + u_2 x^{N-2} + \dots + u_N + \Lambda^N) imes$
 $(x^N + u_2 x^{N-2} + \dots + u_N - \Lambda^N)$

Let

$$x^N + u_2 x^{N-2} + \dots + u_N = (x - \underline{a}_1)(x - \underline{a}_2) \cdots (x - \underline{a}_N)$$

 $\Lambda = 0$: Doubles zeros at $x = \underline{a}_i \longrightarrow$ Small Λ : Cuts between $x = \underline{a}_i^{\pm} = \underline{a}_i \pm O(\Lambda^N)$ The differential was

$$\lambda = xd\log(P+y)/(P-y)$$

Close to $x = \underline{a}_i$ it is

$$\lambda \sim \underline{a}_i dx/x$$

Therefore

$$egin{aligned} a_i &= rac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{A_i} \lambda \sim \underline{a}_i \ &rac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{B_{ij}} \lambda \sim rac{2N}{2\pi i} (\underline{a}_i - \underline{a}_j) \log \Lambda \end{aligned}$$

W-bosons:

$$A_i - A_j: \qquad a_i - a_j$$

SU(2) 't Hooft-Polyakov monopoles embedded using the (i, j)-th entry

$$B_{ij}: (a_i-a_j)rac{2N}{2\pi i}\log\Lambda.$$

Classically, the mass of the monopole is

$$au(a_i - a_j)$$
 where $au = \frac{4\pi i}{g^2} + \frac{\theta}{2\pi}$
 $\longrightarrow \qquad \Lambda \frac{\partial}{\partial \Lambda} au = \frac{2N}{2\pi i}$

This correctly reproduces one-loop running from the vector multiplet,

$$b_0 = 2N.$$

What happens when Λ is very big?

$$y^2=(x^N+u_2x^{N-2}+\cdots+u_N+\Lambda^N) imes \ (x^N+u_2x^{N-2}+\cdots+u_N-\Lambda^N)$$

Set

$$u_2 = \epsilon^2 \hat{u}_2,$$

÷

$$egin{aligned} u_{N-1} &= \epsilon^{N-1} \hat{u}_{N-1}, \ u_N &= \Lambda^N + \epsilon^N \hat{u}_N \end{aligned}$$

$$\rightarrow$$
 $y^2 \sim 2\Lambda^N x^N + \text{small deformation.}$

Electric & magnetic particles are both light.

[Argyres-Douglas] 1995, [Eguchi-Hori-Ito-Yang] 1996

$$y^2 \sim 2 \Lambda^N x^N + ext{small}$$
 deformation.

- The differential is $\lambda \sim x dy$ when $x \sim 0$.
- Cuts are at $x\sim\epsilon \longrightarrow y\sim\epsilon^{N/2} \longrightarrow \int \lambda\sim\epsilon^{1+N/2}.$
- $\int \lambda$ determines the physical mass. $\rightarrow [\epsilon] = \frac{2}{N+2}$.
- The scaling dimension is then $[\hat{u}_k] = rac{2k}{N+2}.$
- Originally, $u_k \sim \operatorname{tr} \phi^k$ and $[u_k] \sim k$.
- Dimensions got reduced by $\frac{2}{N+2}$!



1. $\mathcal{N} = 2$ Basics

2. SU(N) without quarks

3. SU(N) with quarks

$$\Sigma: y^2 = P(x)^2 - \Lambda^{2N-N_f} \prod_k (x - m_k)$$

where

$$egin{aligned} P(x) &= \langle \det(x-\phi)
angle \ &= x^N + u_2 x^{N-2} + \dots + u_N \ &= (x-\underline{a}_1)(x-\underline{a}_2) \cdots (x-\underline{a}_N) \end{aligned}$$

with the differential

$$\lambda = xd\log\frac{P+y}{P-y}$$

 λ has poles at $x = m_i$ with residue m_i .

$$\Sigma: y^2 = P(x)^2 - \Lambda^{2N-N_f} \prod_k (x-m_k)$$

where

$$P(x) = (x - \underline{a}_1)(x - \underline{a}_2) \cdots (x - \underline{a}_N)$$

When $\Lambda \ll \underline{a}_i \ll m_k$, there are two regions of the curve

- around $x \sim m$
- around $x \sim \underline{a} \implies$ almost the same as the pure case with

$$\Lambda'^{2N} = \Lambda^{2N-N_f} \prod_k m_k.$$

There are cycles C_{ik} with

$$rac{1}{2\pi i}\int_{C_{ik}}\lambda=a_i+m_k$$
 : hypers

What happens when Λ is very big? Let $N_f = 2n$, set m = 0.

$$egin{aligned} y^2&=P(x)^2-\Lambda^{2N-2n}x^{2n}\ &=(x^N+\dots+u_{N-n}x^n+\dots+u_N+\Lambda^{N-n}x^n) imes\ &(x^N+\dots+u_{N-n}x^n+\dots+u_N-\Lambda^{N-n}x^n) \end{aligned}$$

Set

$$u_{N-n} = \Lambda^{N-n}, \qquad u_k = 0$$
 otherwise.

$$\rightarrow y^2 = (x^N + 2\Lambda^{N-n}x^n)x^N$$

- You can proceed as in $N_f = 0$... [Argyres-Plesser-Seiberg-Witten] 1994 [Eguchi-Hori-Ito-Yang] 1996
- But extra care is necessary when $N_f \ge 4$. ($N_f = 2$ is OK).

- So, let's study the easiest case with N_f = 4,
 i.e. SU(2) with N_f = 4.
- Some aspects can be easily generalized to SU(N) with $N_f = 2N$.
- Note that the one-loop beta function vanishes. Known to be vanishing even non-perturbatively. τ is exactly marginal.

$$y^2 = (x^N + u_2 x^{N-2} + \dots + u_N)^2 - f(\tau) \prod_{k=1}^{2N} (x - g(\tau)\mu - \mu_i)$$

- $f(\tau) = 1 g(\tau)^2$ is a certain function of τ .
- The mass of the *i*-th hyper is $m_i = \mu + \mu_i; \sum \mu_i = 0.$
- $f \sim 0$ when the theory is weakly-coupled.
- $f \sim 1$ when the theory is very, very strongly-coupled.

So, let's study what happens when $f = 1 - g^2 \sim 1$.

$$egin{aligned} y^2 &= (x^N + u_2 x^{N-2} + \dots + u_N)^2 - f(au) \prod_{k=1}^{2N} (x - g(au) \mu - \mu_i) \ &= (ilde{x}^N + Ng \mu ilde{x}^{N-1} + \dots + ilde{u}_N)^2 - f(au) \prod_{k=1}^{2N} (ilde{x} - \mu_i) \ &\sim (rac{g^2}{2} ilde{x}^N + Ng \mu ilde{x}^{N-1} + ilde{u}_2 x^{N-2} + \dots + ilde{u}_N) imes \ &(2 ilde{x}^N + Ng \mu ilde{x}^{N-1} + \dots + ilde{u}_N) + \sum_{k=2}^{2N} M_k ilde{x}^{N-k} \end{aligned}$$

- Two zeros around $x\sim 1/g\gg 0$
- 2N-2 zeros around $x \sim O(1)$
- $\lambda \sim dx/x$ in the middle.

Let $\lambda \sim a dx / x$ in the middle tube.

Middle tubular region

• particles of mass $\pm 2a \rightarrow$ W-boson of "magnetic" SU(2)

Region at $x \sim 1/g$

- particles of mass $\pm a \pm N \mu$
 - \rightarrow a doublet hyper charged with magnetic **SU**(2) with mass $N\mu$.

Region at $x \sim O(1)$

• ???

If we originally have SU(2) with $N_f = 4$, it can be better understood.

Middle tubular region

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Region at $x \sim 1/g$

- particles of mass $\pm a \pm N \mu$
 - \rightarrow a doublet hyper charged with magnetic **SU**(2) with mass $N\mu$.

Region at $x \sim O(1)$

- particles of mass $\pm a + \mu_i \mu_j$
- μ_i was in the 4-dim. rep of $\mathbf{SU}(4)_F$
- μ_i μ_j are for the anti-sym. rep of SU(4)_F,
 i.e. the vector of SO(6)_F.

Originally:

SU(2) with four doublets, transforming as $4_{+1} \oplus \overline{4}_{-1}$ under **U**(1) × **SU**(4)

Strong-coupling limit:

SU(2) with one doublets + three doublets, transforming as $1_{+2} \oplus 1_{-2} \oplus 6_0$ under **SO**(2) × **SO**(6)

[Seiberg-Witten], 1994

Originally:

SU(2) with four doublets, transforming as 8_V under SO(8)

Strong-coupling limit:

SU(2) with four doublets transforming as 8_S under SO(8)

[Seiberg-Witten], 1994

SU(N) with 2N flavors in the strongly-coupled limit.

Middle tubular region

• particles of mass $\pm 2a \longrightarrow$ W-boson of "magnetic" SU(2)

Region at $x \sim 1/g$

- particles of mass $\pm a \pm N \mu$
 - \rightarrow a doublet hyper charged with magnetic **SU**(2) with mass $N\mu$.

Region at $x \sim O(1)$

• Some strange theory with $SU(2) \times SU(2N)$ symmetry. Call it R_N .

Originally:

SU(N) with 2N doublets, transforming as $2N_{+1} \oplus \overline{2N}_{-1}$ under $U(1) \times SU(2N)$

Strong-coupling limit:

SU(2) with one doublets of charge N under U(1), plus the strange theory R_N with $SU(2) \times SU(2N)$ symmetry.

[Argyres-Seiberg] 2007 did N = 3[Gaiotto] 2009 gave the general direction [Distler-Chacaltana] 2010 did this particular case

- R_2 is just three doublets. Has $SU(2) \times SO(6) \sim SU(2) \times SU(4)$ symmetry.
- R_3 is the E_6 theory of [Minahan-Nemeschansky], 1996. Note that $E_6 \supset SU(2) \times SU(6)$.
- R_N for $N \ge 4$ is, well, R_N .

Originally:

SU(N) with 2N doublets, transforming as $2N_{+1} \oplus \overline{2N}_{-1}$ under $U(1) \times SU(2N)$

Strong-coupling limit:

SU(2) with one doublets of charge N under U(1), plus the strange theory R_N with $SU(2) \times SU(2N)$ symmetry.

The dual is also conformal.

$$b_0 = 4 - 1 - R_N$$
's contribution = 0

 \rightarrow R_N 's contribution to $b_0 = 3$.

Let's come back to SU(N) with $N_f = 2n < 2N$. (This is the new thing; everything so far was a review!)

$$y^{2} = (x^{N} + u_{2}x^{N-2} + \dots + u_{N})^{2} - \Lambda^{2N-2n} \prod_{k} (x - m_{k})$$

= $(\tilde{x}^{N} + \tilde{u}_{1}\tilde{x}^{N-1} + \dots + \tilde{u}_{N})^{2} - \Lambda^{2N-2n}\tilde{x}^{N} - \sum_{k=2}^{2n} M_{k}x^{k}$
= $(\tilde{x}^{N} + \dots + \hat{u}_{N-n}x^{n} + \dots + \tilde{u}_{N}) \times$
 $(\tilde{x}^{N} + \dots + (2\Lambda^{N-n} + \hat{u}_{N-n})x^{n} + \dots + \tilde{u}_{N}) - \sum_{k=2}^{2n} M_{k}x^{k}$

 $\lambda = y d ilde{x}/ ilde{x}^n$ when $ilde{x} \ll \Lambda$. Let $ilde{y} = y/ ilde{x}^{n-1}$ so that $\lambda = ilde{y} d ilde{x}/ ilde{x}$.

For simplicity I'll drop all the hats and the tildes.

$$y^2 = igg[x^{N-n+2} + \dots + u_{N-n+1}x + u_{N-n+2} \ + rac{u_{N-n+3}}{x} + \dots + rac{u_N}{x^{n-2}} igg] imes \ igg[x^{N-n} + \dots + (2\Lambda^{N-n} + u_{N-n}) \ + rac{u_{N-n+1}}{x} + \dots + rac{u_N}{x^n} igg] - \sum_{k=2}^{2n} rac{M_k}{x^{k-2}} \quad ext{with} \quad \lambda = yrac{dx}{x}.$$

We choose to scale as

$$u_1 \propto \epsilon, u_2 \propto \epsilon^2, \cdots, u_{N-n+2} \propto \epsilon^{N-n+2}$$

and

$$u_{N-n+2} \propto \delta^2, u_{N-n+3} \propto \delta^3, \cdots u_N \propto \delta^n; \qquad M_k \propto \delta^k.$$

Therefore
$$\epsilon^{N-n+2} = \delta^2$$
, and $\delta \ll \epsilon$.

$$y^2=igg[u_{N-n+2}+rac{u_{N-n+3}}{x}+\cdots+rac{u_N}{x^{n-2}}igg] imes \ igg[2+rac{u_{N-n+2}}{x^2}+\cdots+rac{u_N}{x^n}igg]-\sum_{k=2}^{2n}rac{M_k}{x^{k-2}} \quad ext{with} \quad \lambda=yrac{dx}{x}.$$

$$y^{2} = \left[\check{u}_{2} + \frac{\check{u}_{3}}{x} + \dots + \frac{\check{u}_{n}}{x^{n-2}}\right] \times \left[2 + \frac{\check{u}_{2}}{x^{2}} + \dots + \frac{\check{u}_{n}}{x^{n}}\right] - \sum_{k=2}^{2n} \frac{M_{k}}{x^{k-2}} \quad \text{with} \quad \lambda = y\frac{dx}{x}.$$

$$y^2 = \left[\check{u}_2 + rac{\check{u}_3}{x} + \dots + rac{\check{u}_n}{x^{n-2}}
ight] imes \ \left[2 + rac{\check{u}_2}{x^2} + \dots + rac{\check{u}_n}{x^n}
ight] - \sum_{k=2}^{2n} rac{M_k}{x^{k-2}} \quad ext{ with } \quad \lambda = yrac{dx}{x}.$$

Depends only on n. Can be understood with SU(n) with 2n flavors...

$$y^2 = \left[\check{u}_2 + rac{\check{u}_3}{x} + \dots + rac{\check{u}_n}{x^{n-2}}
ight] imes \ \left[2 + rac{\check{u}_2}{x^2} + \dots + rac{\check{u}_n}{x^n}
ight] - \sum_{k=2}^{2n} rac{M_k}{x^{k-2}} \quad ext{ with } \quad \lambda = yrac{dx}{x}.$$

Depends only on n. Can be understood with SU(n) with 2n flavors...

In fact this is the R_n . $[\delta] = 1$.

Around $x \sim \epsilon$, the curve is

$$y^2=x^{N-n+2}+\cdots+u_{N-n+1}x+u_{N-n+2}$$
 with $\lambda=yrac{dx}{x}.$

Depends only N - n.

Around $x \sim \epsilon$, the curve is

$$y^2 = x^{N-n+2} + \cdots + u_{N-n+1}x + u_{N-n+2}$$
 with $\lambda = y \frac{dx}{x}$.

Depends only N - n.

In fact, it's just SU(N - n + 1) with $N_f = 2$ flavors studied by Eguchi-Hori-Ito-Yang.

(Note that N' = N - n + 1, n' = 1 and therefore N' - n' = N - n.)

Call it S_{N-n+1} . $\epsilon^{N-n+2} = \delta^2$. $[\epsilon] = \frac{2}{N-n+2}$.

And there is the tube in $\delta \ll x \ll \epsilon$.

W-boson with mass
$$2a$$
Monopole with mass $\frac{1}{2\pi i} a \log \frac{\epsilon}{\delta}$

Recall $e^{N-n+2} = \delta^2$. Then $\frac{1}{2\pi i} a \log \frac{\epsilon}{\delta} = \frac{1}{2\pi i} a \frac{N-n}{N-n+2} \log \delta$ $\longrightarrow \qquad b_0 = -\frac{N-n}{N-n+2}.$

$$b_0 = -rac{N-n}{N-n+2} = 4-3-rac{2(N-n+1)}{N-n+2}$$

from SU(2) vector : +4 from R_n : -3 from S_{N-n+1} : $-\frac{2(N-n+1)}{N-n+2}$

I explained how you get -3 from R_n . The last one was known in [Shapere-YT], 2007.

Summary

 $\mathcal{N} = 2$ **SU**(N) $N_f = 2n$ flavors at a very special choice of $\langle \mathbf{tr} \phi^k \rangle$:

- **SU**(2) coupled to
- R_n : a part of the strong coupling dual of ${
 m SU}(2n)$ with 2n flavors
- S_{N-n+1} : the low energy limit of ${
 m SU}(N-n+1)$ with 2 flavors

Exercises:

- SU(N) with 2n + 1 flavors ???
- SO(N)? Sp(N)?
- I believe the structure is very generic