

# Higher genus knot contact homology and recursion for the colored HOMFLY polynomial

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## Plan of talk:

- Background
- Augmentation varieties and Gromov-Witten disk potentials
- Legendrian SFT and quantization of the augmentation variety
- Recursive construction of the wave function

- $K = K_1 \cup \cdots \cup K_k \subset S^3$  a  $k$ -component link.

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- $L_K \subset T^*S^3$  the Lagrangian conormal of  $K$ :

$$L_K = \{(q, p) \in T^*S^3 : q \in K, p|_{TK} = 0\},$$

components of  $L_K$  are  $\approx S^1 \times \mathbf{R}^2$ .

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- $\Lambda_K \subset ST^*S^3$  the Legendrian conormal of  $K$ :

$$ST^*S^3 = \{(q, p) \in T^*S^3 : |p| = 0\}, \quad \Lambda_K = L_K \cap ST^*S^3,$$

components of  $\Lambda_K$  are  $\approx S^1 \times S^1$ .

# Chern-Simons, large N, and topological string

- Let  $P_{m_1, \dots, m_k}(K)$  denote the (un-normalized) HOMFLY-polynomial of  $K$  with  $K_j$  colored by the  $m_j^{\text{th}}$  symmetric representation  $s_{m_j}$  (1-row Young diagram with  $m$  boxes).

$$P_{m_1, \dots, m_k}(K) = \int \mathcal{D}A e^{\frac{ik}{4\pi} CS(A)} \prod_{j=1}^k \text{tr}_{s_{m_j}}(\text{Hol}(K_j)),$$

where the path integral is over gauge orbits of  $U(N)$ -connections  $A$ .

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- Define the HOMFLY wave function:

$$\Psi_K(q, Q, x) = \sum_{m_1, \dots, m_k} P_{m_1, \dots, m_k}(K) e^{-m_1 x_1} \dots e^{-m_k x_k},$$

where  $q = e^{\frac{2\pi i}{k+N}}$  and  $Q = q^N$ .

- The resolved conifold  $X$  is the total space of  $\mathcal{O}(-1)^{\oplus 2} \rightarrow \mathbf{CP}^1$ .



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- Both  $X$  and  $T^*S^3$  are resolutions of a quadratic cone in  $\mathbf{C}^4$ . Topologically the same outside 0-sections. Symplectically asymptotic at  $\infty$ .
- By a non-exact shift along a closed 1-form in a neighborhood of  $K \subset S^3$ ,  $L_K$  can be shifted off the 0-section and becomes a Lagrangian in  $X$  asymptotic to  $[T, \infty) \times \Lambda_K$  at  $\infty$ .

# Chern-Simons, large $N$ , and topological string

- Witten relates  $U(N)$  Chern-Simons theory in  $S^3$  to A-model open topological string in  $T^*S^3$  with  $N$  branes on  $S^3$ .

# Chern-Simons, large $N$ , and topological string

- Witten relates  $U(N)$  Chern-Simons theory in  $S^3$  to A-model open topological string in  $T^*S^3$  with  $N$  branes on  $S^3$ .
- Gopakumar-Vafa and Ooguri-Vafa relates A-model open topological string in  $T^*S^3$  with  $N$  branes on  $S^3$  to closed strings  $X$ , and open strings connecting these  $N$  branes to branes on  $L_K$  to strings in  $X$  with endpoint only on  $L_K$ .

- Combining these results gives

$$\begin{aligned}\psi_K \left( x, Q, g_s = \frac{2\pi i}{k+N} \right) &= Z_{GW}(X; L_K) \\ &= \exp \left( \sum_{\chi, r, n} c_{\chi, r, l} g_s^{-\chi} Q^r e^{nx} \right),\end{aligned}$$

where  $Z_{GW}$  is the Gromov-Witten partition function counting holomorphic curves in  $X$  with boundary on  $L_K$ ,  
 $t = \log Q = Ng_s$  is the area of  $\mathbf{CP}^1$ .

- Quantizing strings connecting  $L_K$  to itself in the same spirit upgrades generators  $(x_j, p_j)$  of  $H_1(\Lambda_K)$  to operators,  $p_j = g_s \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j}$ . Acting on other string states:

$$p_j \Psi_K(x) = g_s \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \Psi_K.$$

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$$p_j \Psi_K(x) = g_s \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} \Psi_K.$$

- Short wave asymptotics give

$$\Psi_K(x) = \exp \left( g_s^{-1} \int p dx + \dots \right) = \exp \left( g_s^{-1} W_K(x) \dots \right),$$

where  $W_K(x)$  is the GW disk potential.

- From the recursion relation for  $\Psi_K$  we find that

$$p_j = \frac{\partial W_K}{\partial x_j},$$

is a Lagrangian variety  $V_K$  in  $(\mathbb{C}^*)^{2k}$ .



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- The variety  $V_K$  is closely related to the augmentation variety of knot contact homology. The relation gives a way to calculate GW disk potentials via much easier curve counts at infinity. We will explain this next.

# Knot contact homology

- Knot contact homology is a Floer-type theory (the Chekanov-Eliashberg algebra of  $\Lambda_K$ ) associated to the contact action functional:

$$c: [0, 1] \rightarrow ST^*S^3, \quad c(0), c(1) \in \Lambda_K, \quad c \mapsto \int_c pdq,$$

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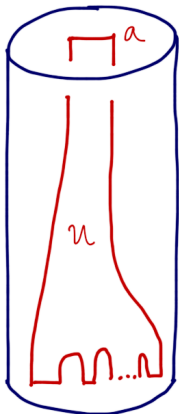
- Critical paths of positive action are *Reeb chords*, flow lines of  $R$  with  $d(pdq)(R, \cdot) = 0$ ,  $pdq(R) = 1$ .
- The knot contact homology algebra  $\mathcal{A}_K$  is  $CE(\Lambda_K)$ , the free unital (non-commutative) graded algebra

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{A}_K &= \mathbb{C}[H_2(ST^*S^3, \Lambda_K)] \langle \text{Reeb chords} \rangle \\ &= \mathbb{C}[e^{\pm x_j}, e^{\pm p_j}, Q^{\pm 1}]_{j=1}^k \langle \text{Reeb chords} \rangle \end{aligned}$$

- The grading  $|c|$  of a Reeb chord is defined by a Maslov index. For  $\Lambda_K$ , Reeb chords correspond to oriented binormal geodesics on  $K$  with grading equal to the Morse index (in an  $\mathbf{R}^3$ -patch,  $\min = 0$ ,  $\text{sad} = 1$ ,  $\max = 2$ ).

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- The differential  $d: \mathcal{A}_K \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_K$  is linear, satisfies Leibniz rule, and is defined on generators through a holomorphic curve count. The dg-algebra  $(\mathcal{A}_K, d)$  is invariant under deformations up to homotopy and in particular up to quasi-isomorphism.

# Knot contact homology



$$u: (D, \partial D) \rightarrow (R \times Y, R \times \Lambda),$$

$$du + \mathcal{J} \circ du \circ i = 0.$$

$$\partial a = \sum_{|a| - |b| = 1} |M_A(a; \underline{b})| e^A \underline{b}$$

$$b_1 \ b_2 \ \dots \ b_k ; \ \underline{b} = b_1 \dots b_k$$

.

# Knot contact homology

$$\underline{\partial^2 = 0:}$$

$$\partial \left( \begin{array}{c} | \\ \cap \\ \cap \\ | \end{array} \right) = \begin{array}{c} \nearrow^1 \searrow \\ \cap \\ \nwarrow_1 \end{array}$$

In particular,

$$\begin{array}{|c|} \hline 1 \\ \hline 1 \\ \hline \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{|c|} \hline 2 \\ \hline \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} \nearrow^1 \searrow \\ \cap \\ \nwarrow_1 \end{array}$$

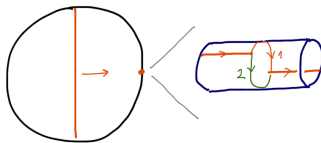


# Knot contact homology

- In general, the knot contact homology can be explicitly computed from a braid presentation of a link. For a braid on  $n$  strands the algebra has  $n(n - 1)$  generators in degree 0,  $n(2n - 1)$  in degree 1, and  $n^2$  in degree 2.

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- The unknot



$$\mathcal{A}_U = \mathbb{C}[e^{\pm x}, e^{\pm p}, Q^{\pm 1}] \langle c, e \rangle, \quad |c| = 1, \quad |e| = 2,$$
$$\partial e = c - c = 0, \quad \partial c = 1 - e^x - e^p + Qe^x e^p$$

- The trefoil  $T$  (differential in degree 1):

$$\mathcal{A}_T = \mathbb{C}[e^{\pm x}, e^{\pm p}, Q^{\pm 1}] \langle a_{12}, a_{21}, b_{12}, b_{21}, c_{ij}, e_{ij} \rangle_{i,j \in \{1,2\}},$$

$$|a_{ij}| = 0, \quad |b_{ij}| = |c_{ij}| = 1, \quad |e_{ij}| = 2,$$

$$\partial b_{12} = e^{-x} a_{12} - a_{21},$$

$$\partial b_{21} = e^x a_{21} - a_{12},$$

$$\partial c_{11} = e^p e^x - e^x - (2Q - e^p) a_{12} - Q a_{12}^2 a_{21},$$

$$\partial c_{12} = Q - e^p + e^p a_{12} + Q a_{12} a_{21},$$

$$\partial c_{21} = Q - e^p + e^p e^x a_{21} + Q a_{12} a_{21},$$

$$\partial c_{22} = e^p - 1 - Q a_{21} + e^p a_{12} a_{21},$$

# Augmentation variety

- Consider  $\mathcal{A}_K$  as a family over  $(\mathbf{C}^*)^{2k+1}$  of  $\mathbf{C}$ -algebras, where points in  $(\mathbf{C}^*)^{2k+1}$  correspond to values of coefficients  $(e^{x_j}, e^{p_j}, Q)$ .

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- An augmentation of  $\mathcal{A}_K$  is a chain map

$$\epsilon: \mathcal{A}_K \rightarrow \mathbf{C}, \quad \epsilon \circ \partial = 0,$$

of unital dg-algebras ( $\mathbf{C}$  lives in degree 0 and has trivial differential).

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- The augmentation variety  $V_K$  is the algebraic closure of

$$\left\{ (e^{x_j}, e^{p_j}, Q) \in (\mathbf{C}^*)^{2k+1} : \mathcal{A}_K \text{ has augmentation} \right\}.$$

- For the unknot  $U$ :

$$A_U(e^x, e^p, Q) = 1 - e^x - e^p + Qe^x e^p.$$

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- For the trefoil  $T$ :

$$\begin{aligned} A_T(e^x, e^p, Q) = & Q^3 - Q^3 e^x - Q^2 e^p + Q^2 e^x e^p \\ & - 2Qe^x e^{2p} + 2Q^2 e^x e^{2p} + Qe^x e^{3p} \\ & - e^{2x} e^{3p} - Qe^x e^{4p} + e^{2x} e^{4p}. \end{aligned}$$

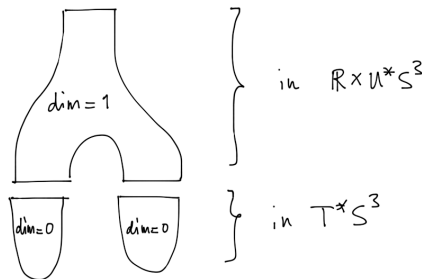


# Augmentations and exact Lagrangian fillings

- Exact Lagrangian fillings  $L$  of  $\Lambda_K$  in  $T^*S^3$  induces augmentations by

$$\epsilon_L(a) = \sum_{|a|=0} |\mathcal{M}_A(a)| e^A.$$

The map on coefficients are just the induced map on homology.



# Augmentations and exact Lagrangian fillings

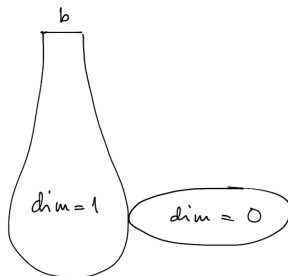
- There are two natural exact fillings of  $\Lambda_K$  in  $T^*S^3$  ( $Q = 1$ ):  $L_K$  and  $M_K \approx S^3 - K$ . Thus,  $e^p = 1$  and  $e^x = 1$  belong to  $V_K|_{Q=1}$  for any  $K$ .

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- For the unknot  $A_U(e^x, e^p, Q = 1) = (1 - e^x)(1 - e^p)$ .

# Augmentations and non-exact Lagrangian fillings

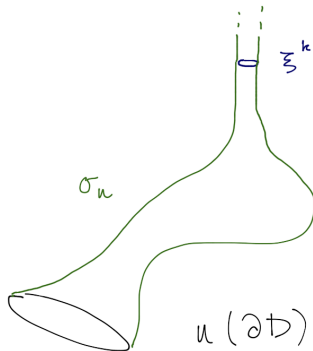
- In contrast to the exact case  $L_K \subset X$  supports closed holomorphic disks and the previous definition of a chain map does not work because of new boundary phenomena.



Compare the family of real curves in  $\mathbf{C}^2$ ,  $xy = \epsilon$ ,  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ .

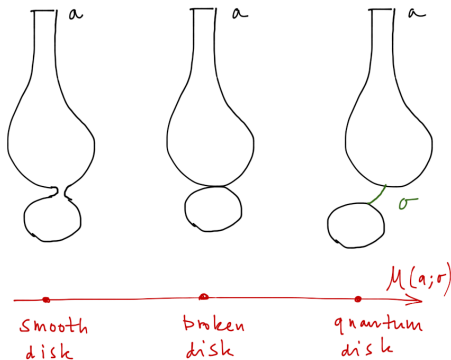
# Augmentations and non-exact Lagrangian fillings

- We resolve this problem by using Fukaya-Oh-Ohta-Ono obstruction chains: fix a chain  $\sigma_D$  for each rigid disk  $D$  that connects its boundary in  $L_K$  to a multiple of a standard homology generator at infinity.



# Augmentations and non-exact Lagrangian fillings

- We introduce quantum corrected holomorphic disks with punctures: these are ordinary holomorphic disks with all possible insertions of  $\sigma$  along the boundary. In the moduli space  $\mathcal{M}_A(a; \sigma)$  of quantum corrected disks, boundary bubbling becomes interior points.

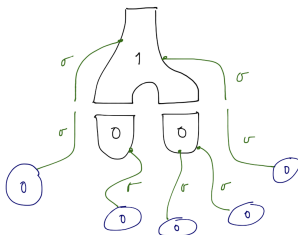


# Augmentations and non-exact Lagrangian fillings

- Analyzing the boundary then shows that

$$\epsilon_L(a) = \sum_{|a|=1} \mathcal{M}_A(a; \sigma) e^A$$

is a chain map provided  $p = \frac{\partial W_K}{\partial x}$ . (This substitution counts quantum corrected disks at infinity.)

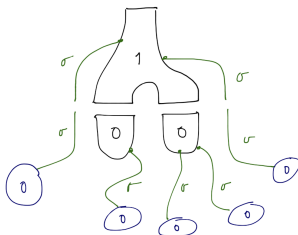


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- We find that  $p = \frac{\partial W_K}{\partial x}$  parameterizes a branch of the augmentation variety.



- We next consider the full quantization. This involves generalizing  $\mathcal{A}_K$  to all genus and corresponds to quantizing  $V_K$ . We call this theory Legendrian SFT. It requires a framework involving bounding chains so that there is no boundary splittings in more complicated holomorphic curves with boundary. Before going into detail, the structure of the theory would then be the following:

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- There is an SFT-potential  $F = F(e^x, Q, g_s)$  that counts configurations of rigid holomorphic curves in  $X$  with boundary on  $L_K$ , bounding chains, and positive punctures. Note that curves contributing to  $F$  must have all positive punctures of degree 0. We have

$$F = F_0 + F_1 + F_2 + \dots,$$

where  $F_j$  counts curves with several positive punctures.

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- The boundary of the 1-dimensional moduli spaces then gives the equation

$$e^{-F} H e^F = 0, \text{ or simply } H e^F = 0.$$

Here we need only consider broken curves with one positive degree 1 chord and the rest degree 0.

# Legendrian SFT

$H$  counts

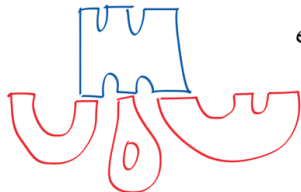


in  $(\mathbb{R} \times S^3, \mathbb{R} \times \Lambda_K)$

$F$  counts



in  $(X, L)$



$e^{-F} H e^F = 0,$   
corresponds  
to

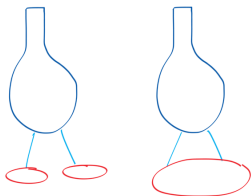
$\partial(1\text{-dim mfd})$

# Legendrian SFT

- Consider next the counterpart of the substitution  $p = \frac{\partial W}{\partial x}$ . When counting arbitrary curves we can make any insertions. A coefficient  $e^p$  in  $H$  then contributes

$$e^{-F} e^{g_s \frac{\partial}{\partial x}} e^F$$

which means we should set  $p = g_s \frac{\partial}{\partial x}$  in  $H$ .



$$\frac{1}{2} g_s^2 \left( \frac{\partial^2 F}{\partial x^2} \right)^2, \quad \frac{1}{2} g_s^2 \left( \frac{\partial^2 F}{\partial x^2} \right), \text{ etc}$$

$$e^{-F} e^{g_s \frac{\partial}{\partial x}} e^F$$

counts all insertions.

- Note that  $\Psi_K(x) = e^{F_0}$ . Thus using elimination theory in the non-commutative setting  $e^P e^x = e^{g_s} e^x e^P$  we should find an operator equation

$$\hat{A}_K(e^x, e^P, Q)\Psi_K(x) = 0,$$

which gives the recursion for the colored HOMFLY.

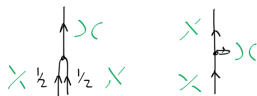
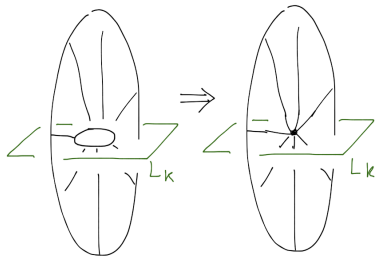
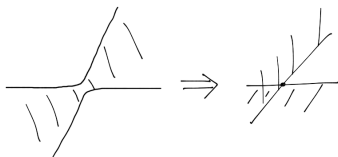
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- Let the degree 1 Reeb chords be denoted  $b_1, \dots, b_m$  and the degree 0 Reeb chords  $a_1, \dots, a_n$
- Additional data: a Morse function  $f$  on  $L_K$  which gives obstruction chains. A 4-chain  $C_K$  for  $L_K$  with  $\partial C_K = 2[L_K]$  which looks like  $\pm J \nabla f$  near the boundary.

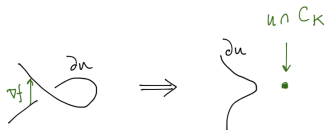
# Legendrian SFT



$m$  odd

$m$  even

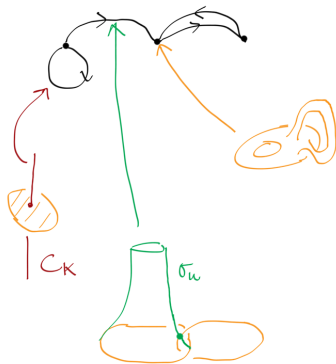
$$\times - \times = e^{1/2 g_S} e^{-1/2 g_S}$$



# Legendrian SFT

- We define the GW-potential  $e^F$  as the generating function of oriented graphs with holomorphic curves at vertices, and intersections with chains at the edges weighted by  $\pm \frac{1}{2}$ :

$$F = \sum C_{\chi, m, l} g_s^{-\chi} e^{m\chi} a_{i_1} \dots a_{i_r}$$



- Let  $H(b_j)$  denote the count of rigid holomorphic curves in the symplectization with a positive puncture at  $b_j$ :

$$H(b_j) = \sum C_{\chi, m, n, l, J} g_s^{-\chi} e^{m\chi} e^{np} a_{i_1} \dots a_{i_r} g_s^l \frac{\partial}{\partial a_{j_1}} \dots \frac{\partial}{\partial a_{j_l}}.$$

- Then if  $p = g_s \frac{\partial}{\partial x}$ ,  $e^{-F} H(b_j) e^F$  counts ends of a 1-dimensional moduli space and in particular:

$$H(b_j) e^F = 0$$

as desired.

- For the unknot there are no (formal) higher genus curves and the operator equation is

$$\hat{A}_U(e^x, e^p, Q) = (1 - e^x - e^p - Qe^x e^p)\Psi_U = 0.$$

- For the unknot there are no (formal) higher genus curves and the operator equation is

$$\hat{A}_U(e^x, e^p, Q) = (1 - e^x - e^p - Qe^x e^p)\Psi_U = 0.$$

- For the Hopf link  $L$  Reeb chord generators are as for the trefoil. The relevant parts for the operator  $H$  is as follows:

$$H(c_{11}) = (1 - e^{x_1} - e^{p_1} + Qe^{x_1} e^{p_1}) + g_s^2 \partial_{a_{12}} \partial_{a_{21}} + \mathcal{O}(a),$$

$$H(c_{22}) = (1 - e^{x_2} - e^{p_2} + Qe^{x_2} e^{p_2}) + Qe^{x_2} e^{p_2} g_s^2 \partial_{a_{12}} \partial_{a_{21}} + \mathcal{O}(a),$$

$$H(c_{12}) = (e^{p_2} e^{-p_1} - Qe^{x_2} e^{p_2}) g_s \partial_{a_{12}} \\ + g_s^{-1} (e^{-g_s} - 1) (1 - e^{x_2}) a_{21} + \mathcal{O}(a^2),$$

$$H(c_{21}) = (Qe^{x_1} e^{p_1} - e^{g_s} e^{p_1} e^{-p_2}) g_s \partial_{a_{21}} \\ + g_s^{-1} ((e^{g_s} (e^{g_s} - 1) - e^{2g_s} (e^{g_s} - 1) e^{x_1}) e^{p_1} e^{-p_2} \\ + (e^{g_s} - 1) Qe^{x_1} e^{p_1} g_s^2 \partial_{a_{12}} \partial_{a_{21}}) a_{12} + \mathcal{O}(a^2).$$

- After the change of variables,

$$\begin{aligned}e^{x'_1} &= e^{g_s} e^{x_1}, & e^{p'_1} &= e^{g_s} e^{p_1}; \\e^{x'_2} &= Q^{-1} e^{-x_2}, & e^{p'_2} &= e^{-g_s} Q^{-1} e^{-p_2}; \\Q' &= e^{g_s} Q, & g'_s &= -g_s,\end{aligned}$$

we find the D-module ideal generators

$$\begin{aligned}\widehat{A}_L^1 &= (e^{x_1} - e^{x_2}) + (e^{p_1} - e^{p_2}) - Q(e^{x_1} e^{p_1} - e^{x_2} e^{p_2}) \\ \widehat{A}_L^2 &= (1 - e^{-g_s} e^{x_1} - e^{p_1} + Q e^{x_1} e^{p_1})(e^{x_1} - e^{p_2}) \\ \widehat{A}_L^3 &= (1 - e^{-g_s} e^{x_2} - e^{p_2} + Q e^{x_2} e^{p_2})(e^{x_2} - e^{p_1}),\end{aligned}$$

in agreement with HOMFLY.



- Similarly, for the trefoil we get the D-module ideal generator

$$\begin{aligned}\widehat{A}_T = & e^{5g_s} Q^3 (Q - e^{2g_s} e^p) (Q - e^{g_s} e^{2p}) \\ & + (e^{3g_s} (Q - e^{g_s} e^{2p}) (Q - e^{2g_s} e^{2p}) (Q - e^{3g_s} e^{2p}) \\ & + e^{3g_s} Q e^{2p} (Q - e^{3g_s} e^{2p}) (Q - e^{g_s} e^p) \\ & - e^{3g_s} Q^2 \mu (1 - e^{g_s} e^p) (Q - e^{g_s} e^{2p})) e^x \\ & - e^{3p} (1 - e^p) (Q - e^{3g_s} e^{2p}) e^{2x}.\end{aligned}$$

in agreement with recursion for colored HOMFLY.

# Recursive calculation of the wave function

- We next turn to finding the wave function  $\Psi_K(x)$  recursively.

# Recursive calculation of the wave function

- We next turn to finding the wave function  $\Psi_K(x)$  recursively.
- Note first that  $W_K(x)$  is given by solving an algebraic equation and hence an analytic function.

# Recursive calculation of the wave function

- Using this and the curve counting isomorphism map

$$CH^{\text{lin}}(\Lambda_K) \oplus C_*(K) \rightarrow \text{Cone}(C_*(\Omega(K, K), K) \rightarrow C_*(K))$$

we find that for generic points in  $V_K$

$$\text{rank}(CH_0^{\text{lin}}) = 0, \quad \text{rank}(CH_1^{\text{lin}}) = 1, \quad \text{rank}(CH_2^{\text{lin}}) = 1$$

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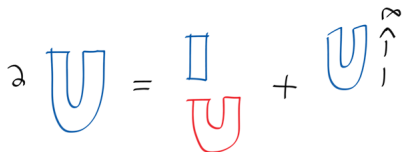
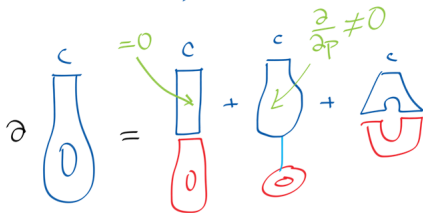
- Furthermore, if  $c$  generates  $CH_1^{\text{lin}}$  then the count of disks at infinity with positive puncture  $c$  passing through the reference curve  $\xi$  is generically non-zero.

# Recursive calculation of the wave function

We illustrate the principle of the recursion in the first step, for the annulus.

$c$  generates  $CH_1^{lin}$

$1 = \dim 1$  ,  $1 = \dim 0$



# Recursive calculation of the wave function

- This generalizes to and A-model topological recursion for all genera. At infinity there are only disks, all higher genus curves are formal and can be computed via these disks and linking numbers. (Note that the first step gives the annulus amplitude needed for usual B-model topological recursion on the spectral curve  $V_K$ .)

# Recursive calculation of the wave function

- This generalizes to and A-model topological recursion for all genera. At infinity there are only disks, all higher genus curves are formal and can be computed via these disks and linking numbers. (Note that the first step gives the annulus amplitude needed for usual B-model topological recursion on the spectral curve  $V_K$ .)
- We consider curves of index 0 and 1. A curve has type  $(n, \chi)$  if it has  $n$  positive degree 0 punctures and Euler characteristic  $\chi$ . An index 0 curve attached to an index 1 curve has attached type  $(n_0, n_1, \chi)$  if it is attached via  $n_0$  positive punctures and chain insertions and has  $n_1$  free positive degree 0 punctures and Euler characteristic  $\chi$ .



# Recursive calculation of the wave function

- Assume inductively we know the counts of index 0 curves of type  $(n, \chi)$  for  $-\chi + n < r$ . Pick a generator  $b$  of  $CH_1^{\text{lin}}$  and consider the boundary of index 1 curves of type  $(0, r)$  with positive puncture at  $b$ .

# Recursive calculation of the wave function

- Assume inductively we know the counts of index 0 curves of type  $(n, \chi)$  for  $-\chi + n < r$ . Pick a generator  $b$  of  $CH_1^{\text{lin}}$  and consider the boundary of index 1 curves of type  $(0, r)$  with positive puncture at  $b$ .
- The broken curves in the boundary with attached curve of type  $(1, 0, r)$  are all attached at an insertion (the ones attached at a chord do not contribute since  $b$  is a cycle in  $CH^{\text{lin}}$ ). The contribution is

$$B(e^x, Q) \cdot F_0^r, \quad B \neq 0.$$

By the inductive assumption we can then solve for  $F_0^r$  in terms of earlier curves and curves at infinity.

# Recursive calculation of the wave function

- For curves of type  $(j, r - j)$ ,  $j > 0$  take a positive puncture at  $a_j$  and pick a primitive  $b_j$  of  $a_j$  in the linearized complex, study the boundary of index 1 curves of type  $(j - 1, r - j)$  with positive puncture at  $b_j$  to see that we can express it in terms of less complex curves.