# ALGEBRAIC GEOMETRY OF TOPOLOGICAL FIELD THEORIES

#### DAVID BEN-ZVI

This was a chalk talk. The speaker's notes may be found at the bottom.

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

This work is joint with D. Nadler, A. Neitzke, and T. Nevins. It's part of an FRG group with Freed, Frenkel, Hopkins, Moore, and Telemon.

Goal: explore mysterious object coming out of physics called Theory X. Physicists call this the six dimensional (2,0) SCFT.

This involves going from physics to representation theory and the topology comes in as part of the dictionary. There is still much work to do related to the foundations. What we're presenting here is what should be true (based on physical intuition) and consequences once Theory X with the prescribed properties has been constructed.

There will be a workshop on related material at Banff called BIRS May 24-29, 2015.

## 2. Rough features of theory X

Everywhere we are working over  $\mathbb{C}$ .

Big picture: begin with a simply laced Lie algebra g and get a 6-dimensional conformal field theory.

The accessible part of this is a 2-dimensional conformal field theory (CFT) valued in a 4-dimensional topological field theory (TFT).

Given a Riemann surface  $\Sigma$  we associate  $X_{\Sigma}$ , an oriented 4-dimensional TFT. In a recent paper Freed and Teleman describe the structure of this object. We will related these objects to representation theory.

We model  $X_{\Sigma}$  using *B*-models (or '*B* type  $\Sigma$ ' models). A *B*-model is provided by looking at maps from simplicial sets into  $\mathcal{M}$ , where  $\mathcal{M}$  is a scheme or stack.

For example if  $\mathcal{M} = \operatorname{Spec} R$  then  $O(\mathcal{M}^X) = O(\mathcal{M}) \otimes X$  and  $O(\mathcal{M}^{S^1}) = O(\mathcal{M}) \otimes S^1$ . This is the DAG-style mapping space.

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In the derived category  $QC(\mathcal{M}^X) = QC(\mathcal{M}) \otimes \Sigma$  where  $\mathcal{M}$  is a nice object (e.g. a scheme or stack), and  $QC(\mathcal{M})$  is quasi-coherent sheaves over  $\mathcal{M}$ . This example has been worked out by Ben-Zvi, Freed, Nadler.

*B*-model is a 2d TFT where to a point we associate  $QC(\mathcal{M})$  thought of as a dg-category.

Rowanski-Witten theory (RW-theory) is a 3d TFT where to a point we associate  $QC(\mathcal{M})$  thought of as a monoidal category. This is the 3d TFT attached to a holomorphic symplectic manifold.

Formally,  $RW_{T^*M}(S^1) = QC(\mathcal{M}) \otimes S^1 = QC(\mathcal{L}M)$  where  $\mathcal{L}M$  is the loop space. By HKR this is equal to  $QC(T_{\mathcal{M}}[-1])$ . Koszul duality (if you complete along  $\mathcal{M}$ ) gives an isomorphism to  $QC(T^*\mathcal{M})$ . This justifies the definition above.

### 3. MODULI SPACES AND 4D TFTS

Let *Z* be a 4d TFT (we'll say a word about what we mean at the end of the section). It's taking a 3-manifold to a chain complex and a 2-manifold to a dg category. The motivation is from super-symmetric gauge theory. This is the type of data the physics is providing.

We want to define the moduli space of Z. We will need to consider so-called 'local operators' in Z. Morally, local operators are things you can insert points into.

We define the *chain complex of local operators* to be  $Z(S^3)$ . It has the natural structure of an  $E_4$ -algebra. The motivation is by looking at a 4-manifold as a cobordism between 3-manifolds, e.g. from  $M^3 \coprod S^3$  to  $M^3$ . Then for any point  $x \in M$  one can then look at what happens when you cut out a ball around x and carry that ball through the cobordism. That provides an action of  $Z(M^3)$  on  $Z(S^3)$  and so  $Z(S^3)$  is a  $Z(M^3)$ -module.

The factorization homology is  $Z(M) \in \int_M Z(S^3)$ . Think of  $\int_M Z(S^3)$  as  $Z(S^3) \otimes M$  in a similar way to the  $- \otimes -$  in the previous section but now for  $E_4$ -algebras rather than commutative algebras.

Define the moduli space  $\mathcal{M}_4$  as  $S pec(Z(S^3))$ . This is an  $E_4$ -algebra, i.e. a commutative ring together with an odd Poisson bracket.

Basically we are trying to do algebraic geometry where we replace commutative rings by  $E_4$ -algebras.

By construction,  $Z(S^3)$  corresponds to functions on  $\mathcal{M}_4$ , i.e. what physicists would call vev's or vacuum expectation values. So  $Z(M^3)$  is a sheaf on  $\mathcal{M}_4$ .

Now that we have the moduli space  $\mathcal{M}_4$  in hand we can construct the X promised at the start.

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The 4d TFT's we're considering have a small subtlety. We're really asking for a 4d TFT with 4-dualizability *relative to*  $Z(S^3)$ . In particular,  $Z(S^3 \times S^1)$  is not well-defined. Think of this "relative to  $Z(S^3)$ " condition as a finiteness condition in the background, analogous to the following situation in algebra. Any algebra has a center, which can be finite dimensional.  $S^3$  is like the center of a 3d TFT, and we're working with  $Z(S^3)$  so this finiteness condition has to be built into what we mean by a 4d TFT. See the speaker's written work for more details.

## 4. First attempt at understanding X

Let  $\Sigma$  be a Riemann surface. Then  $X_{\Sigma}$  is supposed to be a 4d TFT. This will be done via the  $M_4$  from above. Define  $M_4^{even}$  to be the Hitchin base  $\bigoplus H^0(\Sigma, \Omega^{\otimes d_i})$ . The  $\mathbb{C}^*$  action on  $\Omega^{\otimes d_i}$  gives a cohomological grading. Observe that there is no interesting  $E_4$ -structure, because of the grading.

Let  $Z_{S^1}$  be a 3d TFT given by  $Z_{S^1}(M) = Z(S^1 \times M)$ . This gets you from the 4d TFT Z to a 3d TFT. We can play this trick again:

Follow the previous section and construct a 3d moduli space  $\overline{M_3}$  as Spec of local operators in  $Z_{S^1}$  and then define  $Z_{S^1}(S^2) = Z(S^1 \times S^2)$  as an  $E_3$ -algebra. Can then form even Poisson algebra as above. So now there's an affine Poisson structure of degree 2.

In our examples this is uninteresting because for  $Z = X_{\Sigma}$ , the resulting  $\overline{\mathcal{M}_3}$  is just  $\mathcal{M}_4$ . So we must have done something wrong.

## 5. Second Attempt

We can turn to the physics to see what we did wrong. Physicists look at the 3d moduli space of a 4d gauge theory as the total space of Seiberg-Witten theory, formed from integral systems. In this light, we should not have tried to built our moduli space from affine data.

So we go back and look at Z(-) as:

 $Z(S^2) =$ line defects

 $Z(S^1)$  = surface defects

 $Z(S^0)$  = surface domain walls

Line defects are defined on 1-manifolds embedded in 4-manifolds by way of Lurie's tangle hypothesis. The other two cases are similar.

Consider line operators on  $Z(S^2)$ . This is now an  $E_3$ -category with the same operations as before on vector spaces, labeled by 3-disks. The unit sitting in the  $E_3$ -category is just  $Z(D^3)$ , i.e. you fill in one of the  $S^2$ 's sitting in M. Now,

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 $\langle 1 \rangle = End(1)$ -modules =  $Z(S^3)$ -modules. And  $Z(S^3)$  is an  $E_4$ -algebra, so we have strictly more structure than in our first attempt.

As in the previous section you can go down a layer and get an  $E_2$ -category, etc. In physics these line operators are known as Wilson-Hooft operators.

Use line operators in  $Z_{S^1}$ , i.e.  $Z_{S^1}(S^1) = Z(T^2)$  for the torus  $T^2$ . This is now an  $E_2$ -braided category.

Recall that our goal is to get an interesting 3d TFT. If we were working with a symmetric monoidal category then we'd use Tannakian formalism at this point. In fact this will work, as we now sketch.

The idea of Tannakian formalism is that if *C* is a symmetric monoidal  $\infty$ -category then you can try to realize it as  $QC(\mathcal{M})$  for some scheme or stack  $\mathcal{M}$ . So now we should try to realize our braided category as  $QC(\mathcal{M}) \otimes$  (something). For example, if *C* is Rep(G) then  $\mathcal{M} = BG$ . In general one finds  $\mathcal{M}$  by Yoneda embedding.

Let *R* be a commutative ring. Define Spec  $C(R) = Hom_{\otimes}(C, R \text{-mod})$ . This object wants to be an algebraic stack, and if *C* is given by the method above then it is one.

DAGVIII and Wallbridge explain well the connection between C and  $QC(\operatorname{Spec} C)$ .

Note: we have been ignoring connectivity. Would need t-structures to do formally, and this has been done.

Let *C* be an  $E_n$ -category. Test it against *R*-mod as above and you get an  $RE_{n+1}$ -algebra. So Spec *C* is an  $E_{n+1}$ -stack and in the best case scenario it's actually QC(Spec C). This is not true for a random braided tensor category but we do expect this to hold for Theory *X*. So we will assume this and leave it to the topologists to prove that it works.

We are looking at  $Z_{S^1}(S^1)$  as an  $E_2$ -category. We get  $\mathcal{M}_3 = \operatorname{Spec} Z_{S^1}(S^1)$  as an  $E_3$ -stack (in particular, an even Poisson stack).

Then we define  $X_{\Sigma}$  to be the association  $\mathcal{M}_3 \leftrightarrow T^*Bun_O(\Sigma)$  (a.k.a. Hitchin space coming from the stack  $Bun_O$ ), making use of the action of  $\mathbb{C}^*$  to get the appropriate grading.

A physicist would say that we're approximating the compactification of Z on  $S^1$  by a RW-theory on the moduli space  $RW_{M_3}$ . See the work of Garotto-Moore-Neitzke.

Given a scheme Y, we have said  $QC(T^*Y)$  looks like  $QC(\mathscr{L}Y)$  (at least, locally and after doing a completion) which is an  $E_2$ -category.

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#### 6. Using this object we've defined

6.1. Structures on  $Z(T^2)$  and on  $\mathcal{M}_3$ . Because this is an  $E_2$ -category there is a unit object  $\mathcal{O}_{\mathcal{M}_3} = Z(S^1 \times D^2) \in Z(S^1 \times S^1)$ , given by the structure sheaf  $\Gamma(\mathcal{M}_3, \mathcal{O}) = Hom(\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{O}) = Z(S^1 \times S^2)$  and  $\mathcal{O}(\overline{\mathcal{M}_3}) = Z(S^1 \times S^2)$ .

Choice of a point  $x \in T^2$  (the 2-torus) gives a map  $\phi : \mathcal{M}_3 \to \mathcal{M}_4$ , the moduli space we started with. This is a map of  $E_3$ -schemes where the codomain is given the trivial  $E_3$ -structure (e.g.  $\mathcal{M}_3 \to [T^2, \mathcal{M}_4] \to \mathcal{M}_4$ ). More structure can be obtained by considering the factorization homology. This  $\phi$  is a collection of Poisson commuting functions, which is starting to look like an integral system, so we are getting closer to the physics.

One can also define a dual integral system. Previously we worked with  $Z(S^1 \times S^1)$  and got the braided monoidal structure by looking at the second  $S^1$ . If we instead look at the first  $S^1$  then we get the dual integral system. We have an  $SL_2\mathbb{Z}$  worth of  $E_2$ -structures. We also get

$$Z(T^2) = \mathcal{M}_3 \iff \mathcal{M}_3^v = \operatorname{Spec}(Z(S^1 \times S^1))$$

As stacks  $\mathcal{M}_3$  and  $\mathcal{M}_3^{\nu}$  are identical, but there are non-trivial derived self-equivalences.

If our conjecture regarding Theory X is accurate (after Theory X is constructed that is) then this will correspond to the following structure in the physics world:



6.2. **Hitchin Section.** We want a section of the map  $\mathcal{M}_3 \to \mathcal{M}_4$ . That's like saying  $\mathcal{M}_3$  has two monoidal structures and the second one is convolution.

 $O^{\nu} = O_{\mathcal{M}_3^{\nu}} = Z(D^2 \times S^1) \in QC(\mathcal{M}_3)$  is the unit for the convolution structure on  $QC(\mathcal{M}_3)$ .

$$\Gamma(\mathcal{M}_3, \mathcal{O}^{\nu}) = Hom(\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{O}^{\nu}) = Z(D^2 \times S^1 \coprod_{T^2} S^1 \times D^2) = Z(S^3) = \mathcal{O}(\mathcal{M}_4)$$

The compatibility of  $\otimes$  and \* gives a map  $\mathcal{M}_3 \to \mathcal{M}_4$ , i.e. a family of abelian groups which is compatible from the eyes of  $\mathcal{M}_4$ . That's really what an integrable system is, and this is our punchline. The 4d TFT knows about the integrable system. See the work of Ngô.

6.3. Quantization of integrable systems. This is based on the work of on  $\Omega$ -deformations.

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There is a tautological way to quantize  $Z(S^1 \times S^1)$  by passing to  $S^1$ -equivariant family  $Z(S^1 \times S^1)^{S^1}$ . This is a family over  $C^*(BS^1) = \mathbb{C}[\epsilon]$  where  $|\epsilon| = 2$ .

Deformation quantization of  $\mathcal{M}_3$  gives an association  $QC(\mathcal{M}_3) \rightarrow QC_{\epsilon}(\mathcal{M}_3) = Z(S^1 \times S^1)^{S^1}$ 

Under our conjecture this corresponds to  $QC(T^*Bun_G) \to \mathscr{D}(Bun_G)$  where  $\mathscr{D}$  is for *D*-modules. So this is saying in particular that  $QC(\mathscr{L}X)^{S^1} \leftrightarrow \mathscr{D}\operatorname{-mod}(X)$ , i.e. *X* knows how to quantize itself.

We get a similar picture as from the beginning of this section, but with  $\epsilon$ :



This material also relates to Geometric Langlands, which provides

 $\mathscr{D}$ -mod $(Bun_G \Sigma) \simeq QC(Loc_{G_v} \Sigma)$ 

One could also do deformation quantization on both  $S^{1}$ 's and get a more complicated version of Geometric Langlands.

There are many similar games you can play.

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