

# NOTES ON CHAIN FIELD THEORY

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ABSTRACT. Scratch work double checking Dr Wise's calculations in chain field theory.

## 1. TROUSER DIAGRAMS

We first set up the trousers diagram, as doodled on the right. It basically is a cobordism from one circle to two (disjoint) circles. The boundaries (well, the notion of a circle to be more precise) consist of 1 edge and 1 vertex (each). So  $e_i$  is the edge that starts and ends at  $v_i$  (where  $i = 1, 2, 3$ ). We have two additional edges which connects the initial state (the  $e_1, v_1$  circle) to the terminal state (the  $e_2, e_3$  circles). These edges define the trousers diagram. We are interested in calculating the various algebraic quantities which will be used in the homological calculations, which we use motivated by discrete differential geometry.

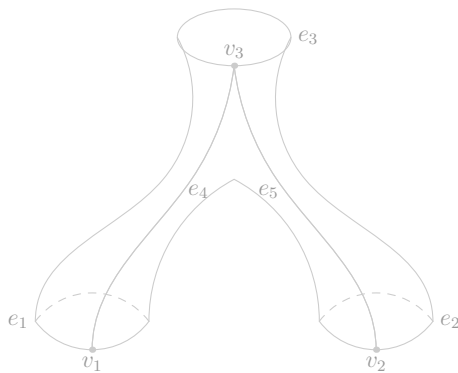


FIGURE 1. Trousers Diagram

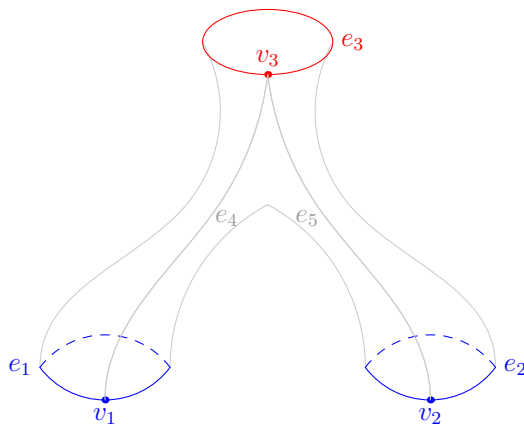


FIGURE 2. Initial/terminal states highlighted.

To begin setting up a chain to describe the initial and terminal states (doodled on the left in red and blue, respectively), we should consider the number of edges and vertices. We see that we don't need to consider anything "higher" than vertices and edges since there are no  $p$ -cells. Let  $r_v$  be the number of red vertices,  $r_e$  be the number of red edges. We see that the chain describing the initial state is  $0 \leftarrow C_0 \leftarrow C_1$  where  $C_0 \cong \mathbb{Z}^{r_v}$  and  $C_1 \cong \mathbb{Z}^{r_e}$  are the free groups generated by the vertices and edges in the initial state (respectively).

We thus have our chain describing our initial state be:

$$(1.1) \quad 0 \leftarrow \mathbb{Z} \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}$$

Now, we would like a corresponding chain describing the final state. We see, similarly, that the chain would be

$$(1.2) \quad 0 \leftarrow C'_1 \leftarrow C'_2$$

where  $C'_1 \cong \mathbb{Z}^{b_v}$  and  $C'_2 \cong \mathbb{Z}^{b_e}$ ,  $b_v$  is the number of blue vertices,  $b_e$  is the number of blue edges. We see by inspection that  $b_v = 2$  and  $b_e = 2$ , thus the chain describing the final state is

$$(1.3) \quad 0 \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}^2 \leftarrow \mathbb{Z}^2.$$

We would like a chain complex to describe the cobordism altogether.

The general scheme for the cobordism is

$$(1.4) \quad \begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbb{Z} & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z} & & \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ \mathcal{M}_1 & \longleftarrow & \mathcal{M}_2 & \longleftarrow & \mathcal{M}_3 \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \mathbb{Z}^2 & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z}^2 & & \end{array}$$

where we are trying to find  $\mathcal{M}_1$  which corresponds to the free group generated by *all* of the vertices in the diagram, and  $\mathcal{M}_2$  corresponds to the free group generated by *all* of the edges in the diagram.

The  $\mathcal{M}_3$  corresponds to the free group generated by the “skin” of the cobordism, if we think of the edges as the “bones” the cobordism is somewhat analogous to a tent. We see that there are only three edges in total in our diagram. They are doodled on the left. The initial vertices are in red, the terminal vertices are in blue. So we see that there are  $2+1=3$  vertices telling us that  $\mathcal{M}_1 \cong \mathbb{Z}^3$ , which solves one part of our problem. We are left with trying to deduce what the other aspects of the chain complex could be.

We are worried about the edges, since we already deduced that  $\mathcal{M}_3 \cong \mathbb{Z}$ . There is only one “skin” to the diagram. We can fill in the parts of

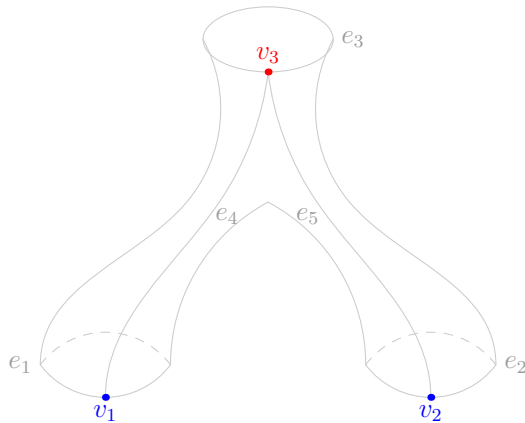


FIGURE 3. All vertices highlighted

the chain complex that we know:

$$(1.5) \quad \begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbb{Z} & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z} & & \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ \mathbb{Z}^3 & \longleftarrow & \mathcal{M}_2 & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z} \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \mathbb{Z}^2 & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z}^2 & & \end{array}$$

We need to deduce what  $\mathcal{M}_2$  is.

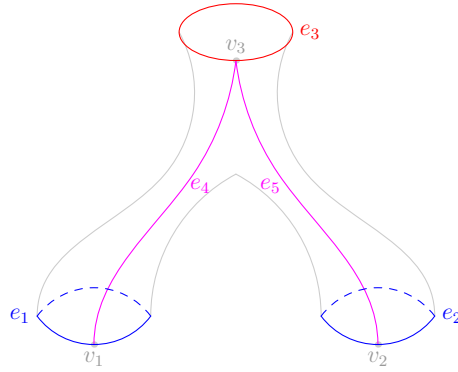


FIGURE 4. All edges highlighted.

Doodled above in figure (4) is the diagram with *all* of the edges highlighted. The initial edge is in red, the terminal edge is in blue, and the intermediate edges are in purple. We see that there is a total of  $1+2+2=5$  edges, which allows us to deduce that  $\mathcal{M}_2 \cong \mathbb{Z}^5$ . This is the last part of the computation of the chain complex, the rest of the calculation for this particular cobordism is strictly manipulation via the functor  $\mathbf{nChain} \rightarrow \mathbf{Hilb}$ . (This won't require too much algebraic manipulation since we are working with regular, old fashioned electromagnetism, so we are concerned with assigning information from  $U(1)$  to edges; the compactness of  $U(1)$  simplifies life significantly.) To summarize, the chain calculation is finished with

$$(1.6) \quad \begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbb{Z} & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z} & & \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ \mathbb{Z}^3 & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z}^5 & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z} \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \mathbb{Z}^2 & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z}^2 & & \end{array}$$

Let

$$(1.7) \quad Z : \mathbf{nChain} \rightarrow \mathbf{Hilb}$$

be the chain field theory describing regular, old-school electromagnetism (i.e. the connections are defined on the edges, the gauge is  $U(1)$ , etc.). The time evolution

of our doodle is described by the morphism

$$(1.8) \quad Z(\mathbb{Z}) \rightarrow Z(\mathbb{Z}^2).$$

With gauge systems, we typically find the physically meaningful states by taking the orbit of the gauge group modulo the stabilizer. Similarly, the physically meaningful states would be

$$(1.9) \quad Z(C) \cong L^2 \left( \frac{\mathcal{A}(C)}{\mathcal{G}(C)} \right)$$

where  $\mathcal{A}(C) := C^p$  = group of p-connections, and  $\mathcal{G}(C) := C^{p-1}$  = gauge group,  $C^p := \text{hom}(C_p, U(1))$ . For those of us interested in old-school electromagnetism this is 1-connections. We see that for compact groups we don't have to mod out by the gauge transformations, so we integrate over the connections on the manifold.

**Remark 1.** Remember that connections are elements of  $\text{hom}(\mathbb{Z}^{X_p}, U(1))$ . That is, functions assigning to elements of the free group generated by the p-cells  $X_p$  data from our group  $U(1)$ .

We end up with

$$(1.10) \quad Z(C) \cong L^2 \left[ \text{hom}(\mathbb{Z}, U(1)) \right]$$

since there is only one edge in the initial state.

**Proposition 1.** We have the following isomorphism

$$(1.11) \quad \text{hom}(\mathbb{Z}, U(1)) \cong U(1).$$

*Proof.* We see that for  $\varphi \in \text{hom}(\mathbb{Z}, U(1))$  that

$$(1.12) \quad \varphi(1) = \alpha \quad \Rightarrow \quad \varphi(n) = \alpha^n$$

since  $n = 1 + \dots + 1$  which uses the law of composition in  $\mathbb{Z}$  as a free group. This is preserved by a homomorphism  $\varphi$  and becomes multiplication (the law of composition) in the group  $U(1)$ . Since the choice of  $a = \exp(i\theta)$  is arbitrary (for some  $\theta \in [0, 2\pi)$ ), we can choose a different  $\varphi$  for each  $\theta$  mapping all of  $\mathbb{Z}$  to all of  $U(1)$ .  $\square$

By our proposition, we have that

$$(1.13) \quad Z(\mathbb{Z}) \cong L^2(U(1)).$$

Similarly, we have for the target

$$(1.14) \quad Z(\mathbb{Z}^2) \cong L^2(U(1) \otimes U(1)).$$

Thus our cobordism give the time evolution by the functor

$$(1.15) \quad Z(M) : L^2(U(1)) \rightarrow L^2(U(1) \otimes U(1)).$$

The question we want to answer is: *how exactly does it work?*

The strategy is that we'll consider the object  $Z(M)$  as a mathematical operator, and we recall from linear algebra to compute the entries of an operator we have to compute how it acts on basis elements.

First we need to pick some elements of  $L^2(U(1))$  and  $L^2(U(1))^{\otimes 2}$ . Remember that we are working with connections, i.e. functions from  $C_p$  to  $U(1)$ . So we should choose for  $L^2(U(1))$  functions of the form

$$(1.16) \quad \psi(A) = \exp(ikA).$$

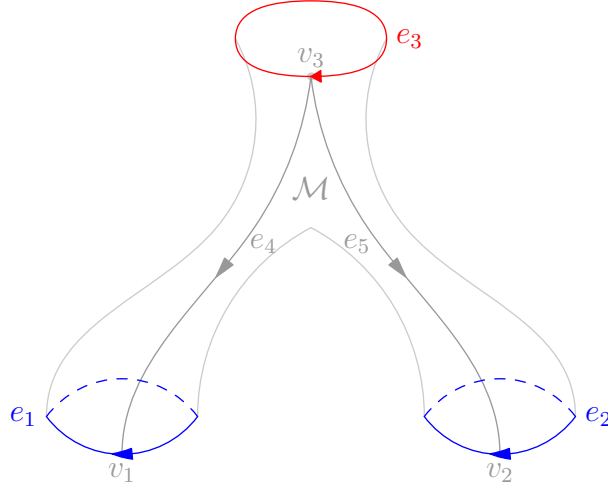


FIGURE 5. The manifold with orientation picked arbitrarily. The curvature calculations depend on the parts of the figure colored in. Red contributions are positive, blue contributions are negative

Similarly for  $L^2(U(1))^{\otimes 2}$  we have a “tensor product” of two such functions yielding one that looks like

$$(1.17) \quad \phi(A_1, A_2) = \exp(ikA_1) \exp(ikA_2).$$

We will use such functions to figure out the components of the operator in question.

**Proposition 2.** We have by Fourier expansion:

$$(1.18) \quad \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \exp\left(\frac{-1}{2e^2 V} (A + 2n\pi)^2\right) = \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \exp\left(\frac{-e^2 V n^2}{2}\right) e^{inA}$$

(up to some constant coefficient).

Well, we find by eq (16) of [1] that

$$(1.19) \quad \langle \overset{\textcolor{red}{\frown}}{\phi}, Z(M) \underset{\textcolor{blue}{\sqcup}}{\psi} \rangle = \int_{\substack{\text{connections} \\ \text{on } \mathcal{M}}} \overline{\phi(A|_{S'})} \psi(A|_S) e^{-S(A)} \mathcal{D}A$$

$\textcolor{red}{\frown} \in L^2(U(1))^{\otimes 2}$   
 $\textcolor{blue}{\sqcup} \in L^2(U(1))$

where  $S(A)$  is the action. This allows us to compute entries in  $Z(M)$ , kind of like how we compute entries in the  $S$ -matrix. We see in section 7 (et seq) of [1] that the path integral should consider

$$(1.20) \quad \left( \begin{matrix} p\text{-connections} \\ \text{on } \mathcal{M} \end{matrix} \right) = U(1)^{X_p}.$$

For us  $p = 1$  and  $|X_1| = 5$ , so the measure  $\mathcal{D}A$  in our case becomes

$$(1.21) \quad \mathcal{D}A = \frac{dA_1}{2\pi} \frac{dA_2}{2\pi} \frac{dA_3}{2\pi} \frac{dA_4}{2\pi} \frac{dA_5}{2\pi}$$

To calculate the action, we need to pick an orientation for the manifold. We do this in figure 5, and we calculate the curvature of the entire manifold to be:

$$(1.22) \quad \begin{aligned} F &= A(e_3) - A(e_4) + A(e_1) + A(e_4) - A(e_5) + A(e_2) + A(e_5) \\ &= A(e_3) + A(e_1) + A(e_2) \end{aligned}$$

We end up with the integrand being

$$(1.23) \quad \overline{\phi(A|_{S'})} \psi(A|_S) e^{-S(A)} = e^{-ikA_1} e^{-ikA_2} e^{ikA_3} \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \exp\left(\frac{-h}{2e^2}(F + 2\pi n)^2\right)$$

where we sum over  $\mathbb{Z}^{X_{p+1}} = \mathbb{Z}^1$ . We can now rewrite our integral to be

$$(1.24) \quad \begin{aligned} \langle \phi, Z(M)\psi \rangle &= \iint_0^{2\pi} \frac{dA_4}{2\pi} \frac{dA_5}{2\pi} \iiint_0^{2\pi} e^{-ikA_1} e^{-ikA_2} e^{ikA_3} \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \exp\left(\frac{-h}{2e^2}(F + 2\pi n)^2\right) \frac{dA_1}{2\pi} \frac{dA_2}{2\pi} \frac{dA_3}{2\pi} \\ &= \iint_0^{2\pi} \frac{dA_4}{2\pi} \frac{dA_5}{2\pi} \iiint_0^{2\pi} e^{-ikA_1} e^{-ikA_2} e^{ikA_3} \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \exp\left(\frac{-h}{2e^2}(F + 2\pi n)^2\right) \frac{dA_1}{2\pi} \frac{dA_2}{2\pi} \frac{dA_3}{2\pi} \end{aligned}$$

The factor  $\iint dA_4 dA_5$  end up contributing a factor of 1.

By proposition (2) we see that (up to a constant) we can simplify our expression to a friendler one:

$$(1.25) \quad \langle \phi, Z(M)\psi \rangle = \iint_0^{2\pi} \frac{dA_4}{2\pi} \frac{dA_5}{2\pi} \iiint_0^{2\pi} e^{-ikA_1} e^{-ikA_2} e^{ikA_3} \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \exp\left(\frac{-e^2 V n^2}{2}\right) \exp(inF) \frac{dA_1}{2\pi} \frac{dA_2}{2\pi} \frac{dA_3}{2\pi}.$$

We just need to plug in our expression for the curvature  $F$  and manipulate it a little to get the solution. Recall first that the kronecker delta is defined by

$$(1.26) \quad \delta_{x,n} = \int_0^{2\pi} e^{i(x-n)\theta} d\theta$$

this will come in handy in a few moments.

By rearranging terms and expanding out the expression for the curvature, we end up with

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \phi, Z(M)\psi \rangle &= \iint_0^{2\pi} \frac{dA_4}{2\pi} \frac{dA_5}{2\pi} \iiint_0^{2\pi} e^{-ikA_1} e^{-ikA_2} e^{ikA_3} \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \exp\left(\frac{-e^2 V n^2}{2}\right) \exp(inF) \frac{dA_1}{2\pi} \frac{dA_2}{2\pi} \frac{dA_3}{2\pi} \\ &= \iint_0^{2\pi} \frac{dA_4}{2\pi} \frac{dA_5}{2\pi} \iiint_0^{2\pi} e^{-ikA_1} e^{-ikA_2} \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \exp\left(\frac{-e^2 V n^2}{2}\right) \exp(inA_1 + inA_2) \frac{dA_1}{2\pi} \frac{dA_2}{2\pi} \underbrace{\int_0^{2\pi} e^{i(n+k)A_3} \frac{dA_3}{2\pi}}_{\text{not quite right...}} \end{aligned}$$

Note that the term in red on that last line is not quite right. The only explanation I could find is that I botched the curvature calculation, it should be

$$(1.27) \quad F = A_1 + A_2 - A_3$$

which then produces the correct expression, yielding for our calculations

$$(1.28) \quad \langle \phi, Z(M)\psi \rangle = \iint_0^{2\pi} \frac{dA_4}{2\pi} \frac{dA_5}{2\pi} \iiint_0^{2\pi} e^{-ikA_1} e^{-ikA_2} \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \exp\left(\frac{-e^2 V n^2}{2}\right) \exp(inA_1 + inA_2) \frac{dA_1}{2\pi} \frac{dA_2}{2\pi} \underbrace{\int_0^{2\pi} e^{i(n-k)A_3} \frac{dA_3}{2\pi}}_{\delta_{k,n}}$$

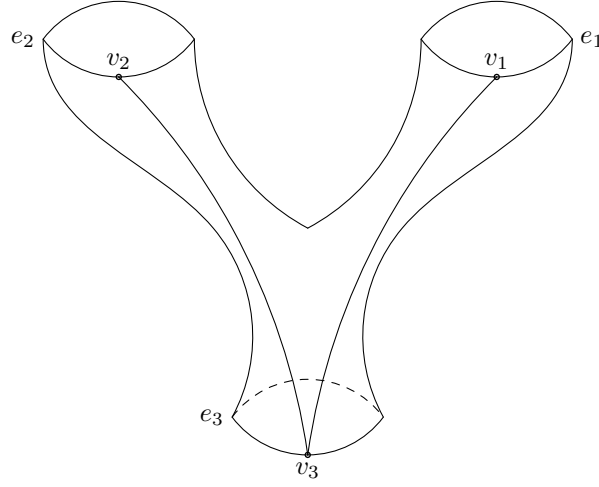


FIGURE 6. The upside down trousers diagram.

It allows us to reduce this to (by plugging in the Kronecker delta):

$$(1.29) \quad \langle \phi, Z(M)\psi \rangle = \iint_0^{2\pi} e^{-ikA_1} e^{-ikA_2} \underbrace{\left[ \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \exp\left(\frac{-e^2 V n^2}{2}\right) \exp(inA_1 + inA_2) \delta_{n,k} \right]}_{\text{identify as } Z(M)|\psi} \frac{dA_1}{2\pi} \frac{dA_2}{2\pi}$$

The bracketed factor is identified with how the basis vector  $\exp(ikA_3)$  behaves when acted on by the operator  $Z(M)$ . We can simplify things to summarize it thus:

$$(1.30) \quad Z(M) : e^{ikA_3} \mapsto \exp\left(\frac{-e^2 V k^2}{2}\right) \exp(ikA_1 + ikA_2)$$

which is precisely the desired result.

## 2. UPSIDE DOWN TROUSER DIAGRAM

This is nearly identical to the rightside up trousers. However, since the initial state has two (disjoint) circles, and the final state has one circle, the chain diagram becomes

$$(2.1) \quad \begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbb{Z}^2 & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z}^2 & & \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ \mathcal{M}_1 & \longleftarrow & \mathcal{M}_2 & \longleftarrow & \mathcal{M}_3 \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \mathbb{Z} & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z} & & \end{array}$$

In fact we can fill in the missing pieces using the same arguments as for the rightside up trousers:

$$(2.2) \quad \begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbb{Z}^2 & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z}^2 & & \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \\ \mathbb{Z}^3 & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z}^5 & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z} \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \\ \mathbb{Z} & \longleftarrow & \mathbb{Z} & & \end{array}$$

since there are 3 vertices, 5 edges, and 1 3-cell.

We use the same reasoning to suggest that the time evolution operator is described by

$$(2.3) \quad Z(m) : Z(\mathbb{Z}^2) \rightarrow Z(\mathbb{Z})$$

where (by the same arguments as last time)

$$(2.4) \quad Z(\mathbb{Z}) \cong L^2(U(1)), \quad \text{and} \quad Z(\mathbb{Z}^2) \cong L^2(U(1))^{\otimes 2}.$$

We pick out some basis vectors in the initial and final states, specifically

$$(2.5) \quad \psi = e^{ikA_1} e^{ikA_2}$$

for the initial state, and

$$(2.6) \quad \phi = e^{ikA_3}$$

for the final state (where we use shorthand  $A_i = A(e_i)$ ). We calculate the transition probability to deduce what the operator for time evolution is

$$(2.7a) \quad \langle \phi, Z(m)\psi \rangle = \int_{\mathcal{A}(m)} \overline{\phi(A|_S)} \psi(A|_S) e^{-S(A)} \mathcal{D}A$$

$$(2.7b) \quad = \int_{\mathcal{A}(m)} e^{-ikA_3} e^{ikA_1} e^{ikA_2} \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} e^{\frac{-1}{2e^2 V} (F+2n\pi)^2} \mathcal{D}A$$

$$(2.7c) \quad = \iiint_0^{2\pi} e^{-ikA_3} e^{ikA_1} e^{ikA_2} \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} e^{\frac{-e^2 V n^2}{2}} e^{iFn} \frac{dA_1}{2\pi} \frac{dA_2}{2\pi} \frac{dA_3}{2\pi}$$

where  $F$  is the curvature (field strength tensor),  $\mathcal{A}(m)$  is the space of connections on  $m$ .

To compute the field strength we need to calculate the curvature of the connection cochains.

## REFERENCES

- [1] D. K. Wise, “p-form electromagnetism on discrete spacetimes,” *Class. Quant. Grav.* **23** (2006) 5129–5176.  
<http://math.ucdavis.edu/%7Ederek/pform/pform.pdf>.  
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