We study the conjecture made by Chang, Minwalla, Sharma, and Yin on the duality between the \( \mathcal{N} = 6 \) Vasiliev higher spin theory on AdS\(_4\) and the \( \mathcal{N} = 6 \) Chern-Simons-matter theory, so-called ABJ theory, with gauge group \( U(N) \times U(N+M) \). Building on our earlier results on the ABJ partition function, we develop the systematic \( 1/M \) expansion, corresponding to the weak coupling expansion in the higher spin theory, and compare the leading \( 1/M \) correction, with our proposed prescription, to the one-loop free energy of the \( \mathcal{N} = 6 \) Vasiliev theory. We find an agreement between the two sides up to an ambiguity that appears in the bulk one-loop calculation.
1 Introduction

It has long been speculated that string theory in the high energy limit $E\sqrt{\alpha'} \to \infty$ undergoes drastic reduction of degrees of freedom due presumably to enhanced symmetries associated with an infinite number of massless fields which appear in this limit \[1\][2]. This is the extremity of stringy regime and may reveal what string theory truly is. The infinite number of massless fields are higher spin fields, and the high energy limit of string theory may thus yield higher spin (HS) theory. String theory might then be realized as the symmetry broken phase of HS theory where the mass scale $1/\sqrt{\alpha'}$ is dynamically generated.

Higher spin theory has generated a great deal of interest recently. This goes back to the old work of Vasiliev \[3,4\] who constructed interacting theories of massless higher spin fields that successfully included gravity, i.e., a spin-2 field. The crucial idea was to consider HS theories on de Sitter (dS) or anti-de Sitter (AdS) space, instead of Minkowski space, in order to evade no-go theorems concerning massless higher spin fields \[5\]. Years later, Klebanov and Polyakov \[6\] made the important conjecture that the HS theory on AdS$_4$ space is dual to the $O(N)$ vector model (VM) at critical points. Substantial and highly nontrivial evidence for the HS/VM duality was later provided by Giombi and Yin who demonstrated that 3-point functions of conserved higher spin currents agree on both sides \[7\]. This conjecture and its generalizations were further tested successfully at one loop of the HS theory for the vector models at both UV and IR fixed points \[8,11\]. Meanwhile, the collective field method was applied to the vector models, elucidating how the HS theory can be directly reconstructed from the VM as well as providing a new perspective on the origin of the duality as a gauge phenomenon \[12,13\]. It should also be noted that, pioneered by Gaberdiel and Gopakumar, tremendous progress has been made in the study of the duality between HS theories on AdS$_3$ and minimal CFT$_2$’s due to the relative simplicity in lower dimensionality \[14,18\].

String theory on AdS space in the limit $\sqrt{\alpha'}/R_{\text{AdS}} \to \infty$ may provide a concrete example in which one can probe the symmetric phase of string theory in the high energy limit and study its connection to HS theory\[7\]. Via the AdS/CFT correspondence, the limit may also give us the vector model dual to the HS theory. Indeed, such an example was suggested by Chang, Minwalla, Sharma, and Yin (CMSY) \[20\] who proposed the HS limit of AdS$_4$/CFT$_3$ with $\mathcal{N} = 6$ supersymmetries (SUSY), the version conjectured by Aharony, Bergman, and Jafferis (ABJ) \[21\] that generalized their earlier work with Maldacena (ABJM) \[22\]. The gravity theory is M-theory on $AdS_4 \times S^7/\mathbb{Z}_k$ with the 3-form field turned on, $C_3 \propto M$, and the dual field theory is the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ $U(N)_k \times U(N+M)_{-k}$ Chern-Simons-matter (CSM) theory, called the ABJ theory, where $k$ and $-k$ are the Chern-Simons levels for the two gauge groups.\[7\]

$^1$In the case of the HS theory on AdS$_3$ with $\mathcal{N} = 4$ supersymmetries it was shown via the AdS/CFT correspondence that the HS theory describes a closed subsector in the symmetric phase of the type IIB string theory on $AdS_3 \times S^5 \times T^4$ in the high energy limit \[19\].
At large $k$, the M-theory circle of radius $R_{11} = 1/k$ shrinks and M-theory reduces to type IIA string theory on $AdS_4 \times \mathbb{CP}^3$ with the NSNS 2-form turned on, $B_2 \propto M k^{-1/2}$. The ingredient crucial to the HS/VM duality is the presence of the $B_2$ that, in particular, provides $U(M)$ vectors in the dual field theory. The HS limit proposed by CMSY is

$$M, |k| \to \infty \quad \text{with} \quad t \equiv \frac{M}{|k|} \quad \text{and} \quad N \text{ finite} \quad (1.1)$$

which is conjectured to be the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ $U(N)$ Vasiliev theory, constructed by CMSY and Sezgin-Sundell [23], where the Newton constant $G_{\text{HS}}$ of the HS theory is proportional to $1/M$ and the parity-violating (PV) phase $\theta_0 = \pi t/2$. This is, in fact, the high energy limit of type IIA string theory, since the string length is large, $\sqrt{\alpha'}/R_{\text{AdS}} \sim (k/N)^{1/4} \to \infty$. As a comparison, let us consider type IIB string theory on $AdS_5 \times S^5$. If we take the $\sqrt{\alpha'}/R_{\text{AdS}}^{\text{IIB}} \to \infty$ limit, the 't Hooft coupling $\lambda \to 0$ and the dual field theory, $\mathcal{N} = 4$ super Yang-Mills (SYM) theory, becomes free. This is in contrast with the ABJ theory which remains nontrivial in the high energy limit (1.1).

Therefore, the ABJ theory in the HS limit is an ideal setup in which to study the high energy regime of string theory and elucidating its non-trivial dynamics. In this paper we study the HS limit of CMSY by (1) developing the systematic $1/M$ expansion of the free energy of the ABJ theory, (2) calculating the one-loop free energy of the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ HS theory, and (3) subjecting the results to a one-loop test.

The free energy or the partition function of the ABJ(M) theory has been studied extensively over the last few years thanks to the localization technique [25] which drastically simplifies path integrals of supersymmetric gauge theories [26,27]. Inspired by the seminal work of Drukker, Marino, and Putrov [28] and, in good part, with the use of the elegant Fermi gas approach developed by Marino and Putrov [29], a great deal about the ABJ(M) partition function has been uncovered, in particular, at large $N$, both in perturbative [29,30] and nonperturbative expansions [31,32]. There has also been significant progress in the study of Wilson loops in the ABJ(M) theory [33] as well as the partition functions of more general Chern-Simons-matter theories [34]. However, the ABJ partition function in the HS limit (1.1) has not been much investigated in the literature. In the current paper, building on our earlier work [35,36], we develop a systematic procedure to compute a large $M$ expansion of the partition function and start exploring the highly stringy regime of the HS/ABJ duality at finite $N$. The HS limit can alternatively be extracted from the conifold expansion developed in [37], but our approach has the advantage of directly giving the $1/M$ expansion.

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2 In CMSY, the Newton constant $G_{\text{HS}}$ was identified with $\frac{1}{M^{1+\eta}}$. However, as we will see below, the finite $M$ corrections instead suggest that the identification $G_{\text{HS}} \propto \frac{1}{M^2}$ works better.

3 It should be noted that there has been significant progress in the study of the free field limit of $AdS_5/CFT_4$.

4 We thank Marcos Mariño for pointing out to us the use of the conifold expansion for the HS limit.
To compare the $1/M$ expansion of the ABJ free energy with that of the HS free energy, an obstacle is the lack of an action for the Vasiliev theory from which to extract a weak coupling expansion\footnote{Although there are some propositions about actions of the Vasiliev theory \cite{38,41}, it is not obvious to compute tree level free energy from these actions.}. In this paper, following Refs. \cite{8,11}, we circumvent this problem by computing the one-loop free energy, which can be computed without an action as long as we know the spectrum, and by comparing it with the ABJ free energy.

The organization of this paper is as follows: In section 2 we summarize our claim and the main results on the HS and ABJ free energy and the correspondence between the two sides. In section 3 we review the integral representation, sometimes referred to as “mirror description” of the ABJ partition function, using which we analyze the free energy in the HS limit and develop a systematic $1/M$ expansion. Some of the technical details in section 3 are provided in Appendices \textit{A} and \textit{B}. In section 4 we calculate the one-loop free energy of $\mathcal{N} = 6$ Vasiliev HS theory. We close our paper with discussions in section 5.

2 The main results

We first summarize our claim and the main results on the correspondence between the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ HS and ABJ free energies in the limit (1.1) with $1/M$ corrections.

Higher spin theories are dual to vector models. Our working assumption is that the vector degrees of freedom dual to the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ HS theory are massless open strings stretched between $N$ regular and $M$ fractional D3-branes in the type IIB frame of the (UV-completed) ABJ theory; see figure 1. Since the ABJ theory has a $U(N) \times U(N + M)$ adjoint and $(\tilde{N}, N + M)$ bi-fundamentals with their conjugates, we need to subtract unwanted (non-vector) degrees of freedom, i.e., (a) the $U(M)$ adjoint, (b) $U(N) \times U(N)$ adjoints, (c) the $(\tilde{N}, N)$ bi-fundamentals and their conjugates, in order to compare the VM free energy with that of the HS theory. Note that (b) and (c) give the same matter content as appears in the $U(N)_k \times U(N)_k^{-k}$ ABJM theory.

We thus propose that the partition function $Z_{\text{HS}}(G_{\text{HS}}, \theta_0, N)$ of the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ $U(N)$ Vasiliev HS theory, normalized by the $U(N)$ volume, can be extracted from that of the $U(N)_k \times U(N + M)_k^{-k}$ ABJ theory, $Z_{\text{ABJ}}(N, N + M)_k$, by the quotient

$$Z_{\text{HS}}(G_{\text{HS}}, \theta_0; N) = \frac{1}{\text{Vol}(U(N))} \frac{|Z_{\text{ABJ}}(N, N + M)_k|}{Z_{\text{CS}}(M)_k Z_{\text{ABJM}}(N)_k}$$

(2.1)

with the identification of the parameters

$$G_{\text{HS}} = \frac{\gamma}{M \sin(\pi t)} \pi t \quad \text{and} \quad \theta_0 = \frac{\pi t}{2}$$

(2.2)

where $\gamma$ is a constant that cannot be fixed by the analysis of the current paper, $t = M/|k|$ as defined in (1.1), and $Z_{\text{CS}}(M)_k$ and $Z_{\text{ABJM}}(N)_k = Z_{\text{ABJ}}(N, N)_k$ are the partition function of

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[Page 3]
Figure 1: The open-string interpretation of the field content of the ABJ theory in the type IIB UV description. $N$ D3-branes are intersecting with an NS5-brane and with a $(1,k)$ 5-brane, and wrap the horizontal direction which is periodically identified. $M$ fractional D3-branes partially wrap the horizontal direction, ending on the 5-branes. (For more detail about the brane configuration, see [21, 22].) The open strings stretching between D3-branes represent fields in the ABJ theory. To obtain the fields relevant for the duality to higher spin (HS) theory, we must remove the open strings related to $U(\mathcal{M})_{k}$ CS theory ((a), blue dashed-dotted line) and to $U(N)_{k} \times U(N)_{-k}$ ABJM theory ((b) and (c), red dashed lines). The HS strings that remain (thick black lines) are $U(\mathcal{M})$ vectors.

the $\mathcal{N} = 2 U(M)$ Chern-Simons theory at level $k$ and of the $U(N)_{k} \times U(N)_{-k}$ ABJM theory, respectively. The quotient by these factors is to remove contributions from the non-vector degrees of freedom, i.e., $Z_{CS}(\mathcal{M})_{k}$ and $Z_{ABJM}(N)_{k}$ corresponding, respectively, to the $U(M)$ adjoint and the $U(N) \times U(N)$ adjoint and bi-fundamentals.

This quotient on the RHS of (2.1) was motivated in part to respect the invariance under the duality

$$M \leftrightarrow |k| - M, \quad k \leftrightarrow -k.$$  

(2.3)

In the case of the ABJ theory this is known as the Giveon-Kutasov-Seiberg duality under which the partition function $Z_{ABJ}(N,N+M)_{k}$ is invariant \[21\] \[22\]. For the CS partition function $Z_{CS}(\mathcal{M})_{k}$, this is nothing but the level-rank duality, whereas the invariance of the ABJM partition function $Z_{ABJM}(N)_{k}$ trivially holds. Note that the first of (2.3) can be written in terms of $t$ as

$$t \rightarrow 1 - t.$$  

(2.4)

The identification of the Newton constant $G_{HS}$ in \[2.2\] can be inferred from the $1/M$ expansion of the $U(N)$ HS free energy $F_{HS}(G_{HS}, \theta_{0}; N) \equiv -\log Z_{HS}(G_{HS}, \theta_{0}; N)$. Namely, with the identification \[2.2\], the $1/M$ expansion of the ABJ free energy, which is the content
of section 3 implies the following $G_{\text{HS}}$ expansion of the HS free energy:

$$F_{\text{HS}}(G_{\text{HS}}, \theta_0, N) = \frac{\gamma N}{G_{\text{HS}}} \frac{2 \mathcal{I}(\theta_0)}{\sin(2\theta_0)} + \frac{N^2}{2} \ln\left(\frac{2\pi G_{\text{HS}}}{\gamma}\right) - (2N^2 - 1)(3\cos(4\theta_0) + 1)\frac{NG_{\text{HS}}}{48\gamma} + \mathcal{O}(G_{\text{HS}}^2),$$

(2.5)

where

$$\mathcal{I}(x) \equiv -\int_0^x dy \log \tan y = \text{Im}[\text{Li}_2(i \tan x)] - x \log \tan x = \mathcal{I}\left(\frac{\pi}{2} - x\right).$$

(2.6)

Note that the Newton constant $G_{\text{HS}}$ with the identification (2.2) is a duality invariant. It is also worth emphasizing that this identification agrees with the one suggested by the computation of three point functions of higher spin currents for non-supersymmetric theories which is an independent and a completely different analysis [43].

Besides the sensible identification of the Newton constant $G_{\text{HS}}$, the free energy (2.5) has a few favorable features: (1) The leading $1/G_{\text{HS}}$ term is linear in $M$, as opposed to $M^2$ as would be expected from the $U(M)$ vector degrees of freedom, and the dependence on the PV phase $\theta_0$ is qualitatively similar to that of the $\mathcal{N} = 2$ theory in [44] which exhibits the invariance under $\theta_0 \leftrightarrow \frac{\pi}{2} - \theta_0$. (2) The leading $1/M$ correction, the logarithmic term in (2.5), agrees with the one-loop free energy of the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ HS theory whose contribution comes solely from $U(N)$ gauge fields, as calculated in section 4 up to the ambiguity of the constant $\gamma$.

3 The boundary side: ABJ theory

In this section, we study the HS limit of the partition function of the ABJ theory and develop a systematic way to derive its large $M$ expansion. The expansion can be explicitly worked out any finite order in principle. In the next section, we will use the 1-loop part of the expansion for comparison with the bulk Vasiliev theory.

3.1 The ABJ partition function

The partition function of the $U(N_1)_k \times U(N_2)_{-k}$ ABJ theory on $S^3$ has been written in the matrix model form [25, 26] using the localization technique [27]. The explicit expression of the partition function is

$$Z_{\text{ABJ}}(N_1, N_2)_k = \mathcal{N} \int \prod_{j=1}^{N_1} \frac{d\mu_j}{2\pi} \prod_{a=1}^{N_2} \frac{d\nu_a}{2\pi} \frac{\Delta_{\text{sh}}(\mu)^2 \Delta_{\text{sh}}(\nu)^2}{\Delta_{\text{ch}}(\mu, \nu)^2} e^{\frac{i}{2\pi} \left(\sum_{j=1}^{N_1} \mu_j^2 - \sum_{a=1}^{N_2} \nu_a^2\right)},$$

(3.1)

With the large $M$ expansion we develop in section 3 one can in principle compute the expansion to arbitrary finite order. In Eq. (3.25), we present the explicit expansion up to order $G_{\text{HS}}^4 \sim 1/M^4$ terms.
where $\Delta_{sh}$ and $\Delta_{ch}$ are the one-loop determinant of the vector multiplets and the matter multiplets in the bi-fundamental representation, respectively:

$$
\Delta_{sh}(\mu) = \prod_{1 \leq j < m \leq N_1} \left( 2 \sinh \frac{\mu_j - \mu_m}{2} \right), \quad \Delta_{sh}(\nu) = \prod_{1 \leq a < b \leq N_2} \left( 2 \sinh \frac{\nu_a - \nu_b}{2} \right),
$$

$$
\Delta_{ch}(\mu, \nu) = \prod_{j=1}^{N_1} \prod_{a=1}^{N_2} \left( 2 \cosh \frac{\mu_j - \nu_a}{2} \right).
$$

Furthermore, $k \in \mathbb{Z}_{\neq 0}$ is the Chern-Simons level, while $\mathcal{N}$ is the normalization factor

$$
\mathcal{N} \equiv \frac{i^{-\frac{2}{3}(N_1^2 - N_2^2)}}{N_1! N_2!}, \quad \kappa \equiv \text{sign } k.
$$

Because of the relation

$$
Z_{ABJ}(N_2, N_1)_k = Z_{ABJ}(N_1, N_2)_{-k} = Z_{ABJ}(N_1, N_2)^*_{k},
$$

we can assume $N_1 \leq N_2$ and $k > 0$ without loss of generality, as we will do henceforth. We set

$$
N_1 \equiv N, \quad N_2 \equiv N + M, \quad M \geq 0.
$$

We write $Z_{ABJ}(N_1, N_2)$ also as $Z_{ABJ}(N; M)$.

There are various ways to analyze the ABJ partition function (3.1), including the Fermi gas approach extensively used in the literature. However, for the purpose of studying its HS limit, the most convenient starting point is the “mirror description” of the ABJ partition function found in [35], generalizing the mirror description of the ABJM partition function [47,48]. The “mirror description” of the ABJ partition function is as follows:

$$
Z_{ABJ}(N; M)_k = i^{-N(N+M-1)/2} q^{N-k} M^{(M-1)/2} Z_{CS}(M)_k \Psi(N; M)_k,
$$

where

$$
Z_{CS}(M)_k = q^{-\frac{M}{2} (M-1)/2} \prod_{j=1}^{M-1} \left( 2 \sin \frac{\pi j}{k} \right)^{M-j}
$$

is the partition function for the $U(M)_k$ CS theory and we defined the quantity

$$
\Psi(N; M)_k \equiv \frac{(-1)^{\frac{1}{2} N(N-1)}}{N_1!} \prod_{j=1}^{N} \left[ \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{C} \frac{d s_j}{\sin(\pi s_j)} \right] \prod_{j=1}^{N} \left( \frac{q^{s_j + 1}}{(1 - q^{s_j + 1})} \right) \prod_{1 \leq j < m \leq N} \frac{(1 - q^{s_m - s_j})^2}{(1 + q^{s_m - s_j})^2}.
$$

\footnote{Note that $\Psi$ defined in (3.9) is different from the one in [35] by the inclusion of the factor $(-1)^{\frac{1}{2} N(N-1)}$.}
In the above, we defined

\[ q \equiv e^{-\frac{2\pi i}{k}}, \]

and \((a)_n = (a; q)_n = \prod_{j=0}^{n-1} (1 - aq^j)\) is the \(q\)-Pochhammer symbol. The contour of integration in (3.9) is \(C = [-i\infty + \eta, +i\infty + \eta]\) with the constant \(\eta\) chosen to lie in the following range:

\[
\begin{aligned}
-M - 1 < \eta < 0 & \quad (k \geq 2M) \\
-k^2 - 1 < \eta < -\frac{k}{2} - M & \quad (M \leq k \leq 2M)
\end{aligned}
\]

In [35], various consistency checks of the expression (3.7) were performed: (i) agreement of the perturbative expansion with the original matrix integral (3.1), (ii) vanishing of the partition function for \(k < M\), in accord with the prediction [21] that there must be no SCFT in this range, and (iii) invariance under the Giveon-Kutasov-Seiberg duality (2.3). Later, the expression (3.7) was derived in [36] directly from the matrix integral (3.1) using the Cauchy-Vandermonde formula.

3.2 The large \(M\) expansion

We would like to develop a formulation to evaluate the ABJ partition function in the HS limit (1.1). The expression (3.7) is especially suitable for that purpose, since the number of integrals \(N\) is fixed in the HS limit. To begin with, let us rewrite (3.9) in the following way [46]:

\[
\Psi(N; M)_k = \frac{1}{N!} \prod_{j=1}^{N} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dx_j \ e^{\sum_{j=1}^{N} f(x_j) \prod_{j<m} \tanh \frac{\pi (x_j - x_m)}{k}},
\]

where we did the following change of variables

\[
s_j = -\frac{M + 1}{2} + ix_j, \quad j = 1, \ldots, N,
\]

and also defined

\[
f(x, k, t) = \sum_{m = -\frac{M-1}{2}}^{\frac{M-1}{2}} \log \tanh \frac{\pi (x + im)}{k} - R(x),
\]

with

\[
R(x) = \begin{cases} 
\log(2 \cosh(\pi x)) & (M = 2p : \text{even}) \\
\log(2 \sinh(\pi x)) & (M = 2p - 1 : \text{odd}).
\end{cases}
\]

In (3.14), the summation over \(m\) is done in steps of one; namely, \(m = -\frac{M-1}{2}, -\frac{M-1}{2} + 1, \ldots, \frac{M-1}{2} - 1, \frac{M-1}{2}\), whether \(M\) is even or odd. It is easy to show that the integration
contour for \( x_j \) in (3.12) corresponds to choosing \( \eta \) correctly in the range (3.11), and that \( x = 0 \) is the critical point of the function \( f(x) \) for both even and odd \( M \). Therefore, the strategy is to expand \( f(x) \) around \( x = 0 \) and carry out the integration by expansion around that point, taking into account the HS limit (1.1). It is easy to show that \( f(x, k, t) \) is an even function in \( x \).

As we have shown in Appendix A, using the Euler-Maclaurin formula, \( f(x, k, t) \) can be formally rewritten as

\[
f(x, k, t) = \frac{\cos \frac{2x\eta}{k}}{\sinh \frac{\eta}{k}} \log \tan \frac{\pi t}{2},
\]

in the sense that the formal power expansion of (3.16) around \( x = 0 \) reproduces the formal power expansion of (3.14). Namely, the right hand side gives the asymptotic expansion of \( f(x, k, t) \). Let us write the expansion of (3.16) in \( x \) as

\[
f(x, k, t) \equiv \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n f_{2n}(k, t)}{(2n)!} \frac{x^{2n}}{k^{2n-1}}, \tag{3.17}
\]

Here, the quantities \( f_{2n}(k, t) \) are defined as the expansion coefficients and their explicit expression is given by (3.16) as

\[
f_{2n}(k, t) = k^{2n-1} \left( \frac{2\eta}{k} \right)^{2n} \log \tan \frac{\pi t}{2} = \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} \frac{2^{2n}(2 - 2^{2m}) B_{2m}}{(2m)!} k^{2m} \left( \frac{\partial_t}{k} \right)^{2n+2m-1} \log \tan \frac{\pi t}{2}, \tag{3.18}
\]

where \( B_n \) are the Bernoulli numbers. Note that \( f_{2n}(k, t) \) is defined so that its \( 1/k \) expansion (which is equivalent to the \( 1/M \) expansion) starts with an \( \mathcal{O}(k^0) \) term. The \( m = 0 \) term in \( f_0 \) is understood as

\[
\frac{1}{\partial_t} \log \tan \frac{\pi t}{2} = \int_0^t dy \log \tan \frac{\pi y}{2} = -\frac{2}{\pi} \mathcal{I} \left( \frac{\pi t}{2} \right),
\]

where \( \mathcal{I}(x) \) was defined in (2.6).

If we write down the first few terms of the expansion (3.17), we have

\[
f(x, k, t) = kf_0(k, t) - \frac{f_2(k, t)}{2!} \frac{x^2}{k} + \frac{f_4(k, t)}{4!} \frac{x^4}{k^3} - \cdots. \tag{3.20}
\]

The first term gives a constant contribution irrelevant for the \( x \) integration, while the \( x^2 \) term suggests that we define a new variable \( \xi \) by

\[
x = k^{1/2} \xi,
\]

so that the expansion (3.20) now reads

\[
f(x, k, t) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n f_{2n}(k, t)}{(2n)!} \frac{\xi^{2n}}{k^{n-1}} = kf_0(k, t) - \frac{f_2(k, t)}{2!} \xi^2 + \frac{f_4(k, t)}{4!} \frac{\xi^4}{k} + \cdots. \tag{3.22}
\]
Now, the $\xi^2$ term is $O(k^0)$ and the higher power terms in $\xi$ are down by powers of $1/k$. This gives a starting point for the large $k$ (large $M$) expansion of the integral (3.12).

In terms of $\xi$, the integral (3.12) can be rewritten as

$$
\Psi(N; M)_k = \frac{\pi^N(N-1)e^{kNf_0(k,t)}}{N!k^{N+2-N}} \left[ \prod_{j=1}^N \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} d\xi_j \right] \Delta(\xi)^2 
$$

$$
\times \exp \left[ \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n f_{2n}(k,t)}{(2n)!} k^{n-1} \sum_{j=1}^N \xi_j^{2n} + 2 \sum_{1 \leq j < m \leq N} \log \frac{\tanh \frac{\pi(\xi_j - \xi_m)}{k^{1/2}}}{\pi(\xi_j - \xi_m)} \right],
$$

(3.23)

where $\Delta(\xi)$ is the Vandermonde determinant,

$$
\Delta(\xi) = \prod_{1 \leq j < m \leq N} (\xi_j - \xi_m).
$$

(3.24)

The integral (3.23) is a standard Hermitian matrix integral and can be straightforwardly evaluated, regarding the $\xi^2$ term as giving the propagator and all higher power terms as interactions. Here we do not present the detail of the computation but simply write down the resulting large $M$ expansion:

$$
\mathcal{F}(N; M)_k \equiv -\log \Psi(N; M)_k
$$

$$
= \frac{2NM}{\pi t} \mathcal{I} \left( \frac{\pi t}{2} \right) + \frac{N^2}{2} \ln \frac{4M}{\pi t \sin(\pi t)} - \frac{N}{2} \ln \frac{2M^2}{\pi t^2} - \ln G_2(N + 1)
$$

$$
- \frac{N(2N^2 - 1)}{48} \left( \frac{\pi t}{M \sin(\pi t)} \right)^4 \left[ 3 \cos(2\pi t) + 1 \right]
$$

$$
- \frac{N^2}{2304} \left( \frac{\pi t}{M \sin(\pi t)} \right)^2 \left[ (17N^2 + 1) \cos(4\pi t) + 4(11N^2 - 29) \cos(2\pi t) - 157N^2 + 211 \right]
$$

$$
- \frac{N}{552960} \left( \frac{\pi t}{M \sin(\pi t)} \right)^3 \left[ (674N^4 + 250N^2 + 201) \cos(6\pi t)
$$

$$
- 6(442N^4 + 690N^2 - 427) \cos(4\pi t) + 3(2282N^4 + 3490N^2 - 3635) \cos(2\pi t)
$$

$$
+ 4348N^4 - 21940N^2 + 12750 \right]
$$

$$
- \frac{N^2}{22118400} \left( \frac{\pi t}{M \sin(\pi t)} \right)^4 \left[ (6223N^4 + 8330N^2 + 2997) \cos(8\pi t)
$$

$$
- 8(3983N^4 + 6730N^2 - 363) \cos(6\pi t) + 20(3797N^4 + 1870N^2 + 1623) \cos(4\pi t)
$$

$$
- 8(22249N^4 - 44410N^2 + 37011) \cos(2\pi t) - 56627N^4 + 113630N^2 - 18753 \right]
$$

$$
+ O(M^{-5}).
$$

(3.25)

Note that the full ABJ free energy $F_{ABJ} = -\log Z_{ABJ}$ contains more terms coming from (3.7). The computational detail of (3.25) can be found in Appendix B. Because we used an asymptotic expansion in evaluating the integral, the large $M$ expansion (3.25) is also an asymptotic expansion to be completed by non-perturbative corrections.
4 The bulk side: $\mathcal{N} = 6$ Vasiliev theory

In this section we compute the one-loop free energy of the bulk HS theory dual to the ABJ theory in the higher spin limit (1.1). It was conjectured in [20] that the ABJ theory in the higher spin limit corresponds to the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ parity-violating $U(N)$ Vasiliev theory on $AdS_4$.

The Vasiliev theory has three parameters:

1. The Newton constant $G_{HS}$ which is proportional to $M^{-1}$ at large $M$, as mentioned in the Introduction and section 2.

2. The rank $N$ of the $U(N)$ Chan-Paton factors which is identified with the $N$ of the $U(N) \times U(N + M)$ gauge group of the ABJ theory.

3. The PV phase $\theta_0$ which violates parity and higher spin symmetry. As stated in the Introduction, $\theta_0$ is identified with the ’t Hooft coupling $t$ by $\theta_0 = \pi t / 2$ [20, 49].

The partition function of the Vasiliev theory takes the following form in perturbation theory:

$$Z_{HS} \equiv e^{-F_{HS}} \quad \text{where} \quad F_{HS} = \frac{1}{G_{HS}} F_{HS}^{(-1)} + F_{HS}^{(0)} + G_{HS} F_{HS}^{(1)} + \cdots.$$ (4.1)

The free energy $F_{HS}^{(\ell)}$ at $(\ell + 1)$-loops is a function of the PV phase $\theta_0$ and may receive logarithmic corrections of the form $G_{HS}^\ell \log G_{HS}$. The tree-level free energy $G_{HS}^{-1} F_{HS}^{(-1)}$ is the saddle point action of the Vasiliev theory. Although there are some propositions on the actions of the Vasiliev theory [38–41], it is not obvious to compute the tree level free energy from these actions. Thus we focus on the leading correction $F_{HS}^{(0)}$, the one-loop free energy of the Vasiliev theory. The spectrum does not depend on the PV phase $\theta_0$, and we can compute $F_{HS}^{(0)}$ in the standard manner [8–11, 15, 50].

4.1 The one-loop contribution

The $\mathcal{N} = 6$ Vasiliev theory is constructed from the so-called $n = 6$ extended supersymmetric Vasiliev theory by imposing a set of $SO(6)$ invariant boundary conditions [20, 51]. The parity-even $n = 6$ Vasiliev theory can have 64 supercharges, but the boundary conditions and the parity violation reduce the number of supersymmetries to $\mathcal{N} = 6$ with 24 supercharges. The spectrum of the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ Vasiliev theory is given by [20, 51]

- 32 fields for each integer, $s = 0, 1, \cdots$, and half-integer spin, $s = \frac{1}{2}, \frac{3}{2}, \frac{5}{2}, \cdots$

- All integer and half-integer spin fields with $s \geq 2$ obey the so-called $\Delta_+ = s + 1$ boundary condition at the $AdS_4$ boundary.

---

\[^8\text{We thank Rajesh Gopakumar for stimulating discussions which motivated us to carry out the calculation in this section.}\]
• Half of the spin-0 fields have the $\Delta_+ = 1$ boundary condition, whereas the other half $\Delta_- = 2$.

• 31 of the spin-1 fields have the $\Delta_+ = 2$ boundary condition, whereas the remaining one satisfies the $\Delta_- = 1$ condition. The $\Delta_-$ spin-1 field is most important in the following and corresponds to a gauge field.

We summarize the spectrum in Table 1. There is, however, a very important caveat: The boundary conditions, as stated here, are only true in the strict large $M$ limit. In fact, $\Delta_{\pm}$ is the dimension of CFT operators dual to higher spin fields and may thus receive $1/M$ corrections [49, 52]. As we will see, the $1/M$ correction to the $\Delta_-$ spin-1 field is particularly important and contributes to the one-loop free energy, whereas all the rest of $1/M$ corrections, even if present, have no contributions to one-loop. In Table 1 we indicated the $O(1/M)$ correction to the $\Delta_-$ spin-1 field to emphasize this point.

| spin   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1   | $s \geq 2$ | half-integer |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------|-------------|
| no. of fields | 16  | 16  | 31  | 1   | 32        | 32          |
| boundary cond. | $\Delta_+ = 1$ | $\Delta_- = 2$ | $\Delta_+ = 2$ | $\Delta_- = 1 + \frac{c_-}{M}$ | $\Delta_+ = s + 1$ | $\Delta_+ = s + 1$ |

Table 1: The spectrum of the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ Vasiliev theory labeled by spin, number of fields, and boundary conditions. Note, in particular, the $O(1/M)$ correction to the $\Delta_-$ spin-1 field (gauge field), where $c_-$ is an unknown constant. The dimension of other fields also receives $O(1/M)$ corrections, although it is not relevant for our purpose and thus not explicitly written.

We can now write down the bulk one-loop partition function

$$e^{-F_{\text{bulk}}^{(0)}} = \left[ Z_{0,\Delta_+}^{16} Z_{0,\Delta_-}^{16} Z_{1,\Delta_+}^{31} Z_{1,\Delta_-}^{1} \prod_{s=2}^{\infty} Z_{s,\Delta_+}^{32} \prod_{s=0}^{\infty} Z_{s,\Delta_-}^{32} \right]^{N^2},$$

(4.2)

where $Z_{s,\Delta_{\pm}}$ is the partition function for a field with spin $s$ and the boundary condition $\Delta_{\pm}$ and can be expressed in terms of functional determinants of symmetric transverse traceless (STT) tensors in $AdS_4$ [8, 10, 11, 50] 9

$$Z_{s,\Delta_{\pm}} = \begin{cases} \left[ \frac{\det_{s-1,\Delta_{\pm}}^{\text{STT}} [-\nabla^2 + (s + 1)(s - 1)]}{\det_{s,\Delta_{\pm}}^{\text{STT}} [-\nabla^2 + (s + 1)(s - 2) - s]} \right]^{1/2} & \text{for } s \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0} \\ \left[ \frac{\det_{s,\Delta_{\pm}}^{\text{STT}} [-\nabla^2 + (s - 1/2)^2]}{\det_{s-1,\Delta_{\pm}}^{\text{STT}} [-\nabla^2 + (s + 1/2)^2]} \right]^{1/4} & \text{for } s \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0} + \frac{1}{2} \end{cases},$$

(4.3)

with the understanding that

$$\det_{s}^{\text{STT}}[\cdots] = 1 \quad \text{for} \quad s < 0 .$$

(4.4)

9In the unit $R_{\text{AdS}} = 1$. 

11
Roughly speaking, the spin-\((s - 1)\) determinants in (4.3) are the contributions from the gauge fixing ghosts. These determinants can be explicitly computed by applying the techniques developed in [53, 54]. To proceed, we first simplify (4.2) by using the result of Giombi and Klebanov for the type-A Vasiliev theory [8],

\[ Z_{\text{type A}} = \infty \prod_{s=0}^{\infty} Z_{s, \Delta_+} = 1. \]  

(4.5)

Dividing (4.2) by \((Z_{\text{type A}})^{32N^2}\) yields

\[ e^{-F^{(0)}_{\text{HS}}} = \left( \frac{Z_{0, \Delta}}{Z_{0, \Delta_+}} \right)^{16} \left( \frac{Z_{1, \Delta_-}}{Z_{1, \Delta_+}} \right) \prod_{s \in \mathbb{Z} + \frac{1}{2}} Z_{s, \Delta_+}^{32N^2} \].

(4.6)

So, the bosonic contribution to the one-loop free energy could come only from the spin-0 and spin-1 fields. This simplifies the calculation.

For the convenience of the subsequent calculations we introduce

\[ F_{(\Delta, s)} = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{2} \log \det \left( \left[ -\nabla^2 + \left( \Delta - \frac{3}{2} \right)^2 - s - \frac{9}{4} \right] \right) & \text{for } s \in \mathbb{Z} \\ \frac{1}{2} \log \det \left( \left[ -\nabla^2 + \left( \Delta - \frac{3}{2} \right)^2 \right] \right) & \text{for } s \in \mathbb{Z} + \frac{1}{2} \end{cases} \]

(4.7)

which has been computed by Camporesi and Higuchi [53, 54] and is given in terms of the spectral zeta function

\[ F_{(\Delta, s)} = \frac{1}{2} \zeta'_{(\Delta, s)}(0) + \frac{1}{2} \zeta_{(\Delta, s)}(0) \log (\Lambda^2), \]

(4.8)

where the spectral zeta function \(\zeta_{(\Delta, s)}(z)\) is defined by

\[ \zeta_{(\Delta, s)}(z) = \frac{8(2s + 1)}{3\pi} \int_0^{\infty} \frac{\mu_s(u)}{u^2 + (\Delta - 3/2)^2} du, \quad \zeta'_{(\Delta, s)}(z) = \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \zeta_{(\Delta, s)}(z), \]

\[ \mu_s(u) = \frac{\pi u}{16} \left[ u^2 + \left( s + \frac{1}{2} \right)^2 \right] \tanh (\pi (u + is)) . \]

(4.9)

The parameter \(\Lambda\) in (4.8) is a UV cutoff. The logarithmic divergence arises in even dimensions and is related to the conformal anomaly. As we will show below, the logarithmic divergence actually cancels out in the \(\mathcal{N} = 6\) Vasiliev theory (in a certain regularization scheme). Hence the net contribution to the one-loop partition function comes solely from \(\zeta'_{(\Delta, s)}\). In particular, the \(\mathcal{O}(\log M)\) correction observed in the ABJ theory comes entirely from the \(\Delta_-\) spin-1 field and the consequence of the “induced gauge symmetry” [9].

### 4.2 The bosonic contributions

We first consider the bosonic part \(F^{(0)}_{\text{HS,B}}\) of the one-loop free energy. As commented on below (4.6), there are only contributions from the spin-0 and spin-1 fields. Moreover, as it will turn
out, it is free of logarithmic divergences. For integer spins, the spectral zeta function \( \zeta_{(\Delta,s)}(0) \) has been calculated by Giombi and Klebanov [8]:

\[
\zeta_{(\Delta,s)}(0) = \frac{2s + 1}{24} \left[ \nu^4 - \left( s + \frac{1}{2} \right)^2 \left( 2\nu^2 + \frac{1}{6} - \frac{7}{240} \right) \right] \quad \text{with} \quad \nu = \Delta - \frac{3}{2}.
\]

(4.10)

Noting that \( \Delta_+ - 3/2 = -(\Delta_- - 3/2) \), this expression implies, due to the invariance under \( \nu \to -\nu \), that

\[
\zeta_{(\Delta_+,s)}(0) = \zeta_{(\Delta_-,s)}(0) .
\]

(4.11)

Thus the logarithmic divergence in the bosonic part of the free energy cancel out between the contributions from different boundary conditions, namely,

\[
\log \frac{Z_{0,\Delta_+}}{Z_{0,\Delta_-}} \bigg|_{\log \text{div}} = 0 , \quad \log \frac{Z_{1,\Delta_-}}{Z_{1,\Delta_+}} \bigg|_{\log \text{div}} = 0 ,
\]

(4.12)

where \( \log \text{div} \) means the logarithmically divergent part.

Turning to the finite piece, we first calculate the spin-1 free energy. Again borrowing the result from [8], we have

\[
\log \frac{Z_{1,\Delta_-}}{Z_{1,\Delta_+}} = \frac{1}{2} \left( I_B(\Delta_+ - 3/2, 1) - I_B(\Delta_- - 3/2, 1) \right) ,
\]

(4.13)

where

\[
I_B(\nu, s) = \frac{2s + 1}{3} \int_0^\nu dx \left[ \left( s + \frac{1}{2} \right)^2 x - x^3 \right] \psi(x + 1/2)
\]

(4.14)

with \( \psi(z) \) being the digamma function. Here, as emphasized in the discussion of the spectrum, we need special care in dealing with the conformal dimensions \( \Delta_\pm \). Generically, the dimensions \( \Delta_\pm \) may receive the finite \( M \) corrections

\[
\Delta_+ = 2 + \frac{c_+}{M} + \mathcal{O} \left( \frac{1}{M^2} \right) , \quad \Delta_- = 1 + \frac{c_-}{M} + \mathcal{O} \left( \frac{1}{M^2} \right) ,
\]

(4.15)

where \( c_\pm \) are some constants. In fact, it has been shown [49,52] that the \( \mathcal{O}(1/M) \) corrections exist in three-dimensional interacting theories. When we take into account the \( \mathcal{O}(1/M) \) corrections, an explicit calculation shows

\[
I_B(\Delta_+ - 3/2, 1) = \mathcal{O}(M^0) , \quad I_B(\Delta_- - 3/2, 1) = -\log M + \mathcal{O}(M^0)
\]

(4.16)

where the \( c_+ \) dependence yielded an \( \mathcal{O}(1/M) \) contribution, whereas the \( c_- \) dependence \( \mathcal{O}(M^0) \). We thus find that

\[
\log \frac{Z_{1,\Delta_-}}{Z_{1,\Delta_+}} = \frac{1}{2} \log M + \mathcal{O}(M^0) .
\]

(4.17)

Since we do not currently know the value of \( c_- \), we cannot calculate the \( \mathcal{O}(M^0) \) term. Similarly, it is straightforward to find the spin-0 free energy as

\[
\log \frac{Z_{0,\Delta_-}}{Z_{0,\Delta_+}} = \frac{1}{2} \left( I_B(-1/2, 0) - I_B(1/2, 0) \right) = \mathcal{O}(M^0) .
\]

(4.18)
Combining (4.17) and (4.18) together, we conclude that the bosonic part of the bulk one-loop free energy is

\[ F^{(0)}_{\text{HS,B}} = - \frac{N^2}{2} \log M + O(M^0). \tag{4.19} \]

### 4.3 The fermionic contributions

We next consider the fermionic part \( F^{(0)}_{\text{HS,F}} \) of the one-loop free energy. Again, as it will turn out, it is free of logarithmic divergences. Moreover, it has no \( \log M \) corrections.

We first show the absence of the logarithmic divergences: For \( s \in \mathbb{Z} + 1/2 \), we can rewrite the spectral zeta function \( \zeta_{(\Delta,s)}(z) \) as a sum of two terms

\[ \zeta_{(\Delta,s)}(z) = \frac{8(2s + 1)}{3\pi} (g_1(\nu, s; z) + g_2(\nu, s; z)), \tag{4.20} \]

where

\[ g_1(\nu, s; z) = \frac{\pi}{16} \int_0^\infty du \frac{u^{1/2}}{(u^2 + \nu^2)^2} \left[ u^2 + \left( s + \frac{1}{2} \right)^2 \right], \]

\[ g_2(\nu, s; z) = \frac{\pi}{8} \int_0^\infty du \frac{u^{1/2}}{(u^2 + \nu^2)^2(e^{2\pi u} - 1)} \left[ u^2 + \left( s + \frac{1}{2} \right)^2 \right]. \tag{4.21} \]

By explicit calculations, these two terms are given by

\[ g_1(\nu, s; 0) = \frac{\pi \nu^2}{64} \left[ \nu^2 - \left( s + \frac{1}{2} \right)^2 \right], \quad g_2(\nu, s; 0) = \frac{\pi(20s(s + 1) + 7)}{3840}. \tag{4.22} \]

Meanwhile, from (4.6) and (4.8), the logarithmically divergent piece of \( F^{(0)}_{\text{HS,F}} \) is

\[ -8N^2 \left[ \zeta_{(3/2,1/2)}(0) + \sum_{s \in \mathbb{Z} + 1/2} \left( \zeta_{(s+1,s)}(0) - \zeta_{(s+2,s-1)}(0) \right) \right] \log (\Lambda^2). \tag{4.23} \]

This sum, as it stands, is divergent, and must be regularized. We adopt the regularization used in the analysis \[11,10\]. This yields

\[ F^{(0)}_{\text{HS,F}} \bigg|_{\log \text{div}} = -8N^2 \left[ \zeta_{(3/2,1/2)}(0) + \lim_{\alpha \to 0} \sum_{s \in \mathbb{Z} + 1/2} s^{-\alpha} \left( \zeta_{(s+1,s)}(0) - \zeta_{(s+2,s-1)}(0) \right) \right] \log (\Lambda^2) \]

\[ = 32 \left[ \frac{11}{360} + \lim_{\alpha \to 0} \sum_{s \in \mathbb{Z} + 1/2} s^{-\alpha} \left( -\frac{5s^4}{12} + \frac{5s^2}{24} + \frac{13}{2880} \right) \right] \log (\Lambda^2) = 0, \tag{4.25} \]

\[ \text{This regularization can be slightly generalized to:} \]

\[ \zeta_{(3/2,1/2)}(0) + \lim_{\alpha \to 0} \sum_{s \in \mathbb{Z} + 1/2} (s + x)^{-\alpha} \zeta_{(s+1,s)}(0) - \lim_{\alpha \to 0} \sum_{s \in \mathbb{Z} + 1/2} (s + y)^{-\alpha} \zeta_{(s+2,s-1)}(0). \tag{4.24} \]

One can show that this vanishes so long as \( x + y = 0 \).
where we used (4.22) to find the second line. Thus the fermionic part of the one-loop free energy is also free of logarithmic divergences.

We next evaluate the finite part. For \( s \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0} + 1/2 \), an explicit computation yields

\[
\zeta'_{(\Delta,s)}(0) = -\frac{8(2s + 1)}{3\pi} ((s + 1/2)^2d_1 + d_3) + I_F(\nu, s) - \frac{(2s + 1)}{72} \nu \left(-3\nu^2 + 4\nu^2 + \nu - 12s^2 - 12s - 3\right),
\] (4.26)

where

\[
d_n = \frac{\pi}{8} \int_0^\infty du \frac{u^n \log u^2}{e^{2\pi u} - 1}, \quad I_F(\nu, s) = \frac{2s + 1}{3} \int_0^\nu dx \left[ \left(s + \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 x - x^3 \right] \psi(x).
\] (4.27)

It is then straightforward to show that each piece in the finite part is of order \( \mathcal{O}(M^0) \),

\[
\zeta'_{(s+1,s)}(0) = \mathcal{O}(M^0), \quad \zeta'_{(s+2,s-1)}(0) = \mathcal{O}(M^0).
\] (4.28)

Hence the \( \mathcal{O}(\log M) \) contribution is absent in the fermionic free energy, and it is at most of order \( \mathcal{O}(M^0) \),

\[
F^{(0)}_{\text{HS,F}} = \mathcal{O}(M^0).
\] (4.29)

### 4.4 The full one-loop free energy

Altogether, we find the full bulk one-loop free energy to be

\[
F^{(0)}_{\text{HS}} = F^{(0)}_{\text{HS,B}} + F^{(0)}_{\text{HS,F}} = -\frac{N^2}{2} \log M + \mathcal{O}(M^0).
\] (4.30)

Note that the leading \( \mathcal{O}(\log M) \) contribution comes entirely from the \( \Delta_{-} \) spin-1 field, the \( U(N) \) gauge fields, and, as in [9], is the consequence of the “induced gauge symmetry.”

The bulk one-loop free energy (4.30) agrees with the \( \mathcal{O}(\log M) \) correction to the ABJ free energy with the identification (2.2) of the Newton constant

\[
G_{\text{HS}} = \frac{\gamma}{M \sin(\pi t)}.
\] (4.31)

We are, however, unable to determine the constant \( \gamma \) which requires the precise value of the \( \mathcal{O}(M^0) \) correction.

### 5 Discussions

In the last two sections, we have calculated the free energies of the ABJ theory in the HS limit and the \( \mathcal{N} = 6 \) Vasiliev theory at one-loop. We are now ready to discuss the correspondence between the two theories. However, it is not as straightforward as comparing the free energy
of the ABJ theory (3.25) and that of the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ HS theory (4.30) as they are, and it requires some considerations to make the correspondence more precise.

As already mentioned in section 2, the ABJ theory, even in the HS limit (1.1), has more degrees of freedom than necessary to describe the $\mathcal{N} = 6$ HS dual. For instance, the free energy of the ABJ theory in the limit (1.1) goes as $M^2$, since the ABJ theory is a theory of $U(M)$ matrices. On the other hand, the free energy of the HS theory is expected to grow as $M$, reflecting the fact that it is dual to a $U(M)$ vector model. The $M^2$ growth comes from the $U(M)$ part of the $U(N) \times U(N+M)$ CS free energy. In the case of $U(M)$ CS theory coupled to fundamental matter [55], the $O(M)$ growth was extracted by normalizing the CS partition function to be unity, or equivalently, dividing the full partition function by the CS partition function. In our case, however, the situation is more involved, since the gauge group is a product group $U(N) \times U(N+M)$ and the ABJ theory has bi-fundamental matter.

Here we first recall our proposal made in section 2 and then elaborate on it. The proposed correspondence is given in (2.1):

$$Z_{\text{HS}}(G_{\text{HS}}, \theta_0; N) = \frac{Z_{\text{vec}}(M; N)_k}{\text{Vol}(U(N))}, \quad (5.1)$$

where the “vector model subsector” of the partition function is identified as

$$Z_{\text{vec}}(M; N)_k = \frac{|Z_{\text{ABJ}}(N, N + M)_k|}{Z_{\text{CS}}(M)_k Z_{\text{ABJM}}(N)_k}. \quad (5.2)$$

In addition to the normalization by the $U(M)$ CS partition function, there are quotients by (1) the ABJM partition function $Z_{\text{ABJM}}(N)_k = Z_{\text{ABJ}}(N, N)_k$ and (2) the $U(N)$ volume, $\text{Vol}(U(N)) = (2\pi)^{N(N+1)}/G_2(N + 1)$. The quotient by the $U(N)$ volume in (5.1) is the natural normalization for the bulk $U(N)$ theory. The main idea behind (5.2) is to regard the open strings stretched between $N$ regular and $M$ fractional D3-branes as the vector degrees of freedom dual to the HS theory, as illustrated in Figure 1 for the type IIB brane construction of the ABJ(M) theory. Thus the quotients by $Z_{\text{CS}}(M)_k$ and $Z_{\text{ABJM}}(N)_k$ are to remove contributions from the diagrams that only involve open strings of other endings. As quantitative justifications for the quotients (5.2), we note that the free energy $F_{\text{vec}} = -\log Z_{\text{vec}}$ of the vector model subsector has the following properties:

1. $F_{\text{vec}}$ scales as $M \propto G_{\text{HS}}^{-1}$ at the leading order in the HS limit (and of order $O(N^2)$ when expressed in terms of the bulk 't Hooft coupling $\lambda_{\text{HS}} = NG_{\text{HS}}$, as it should be for $U(N)$ theory).

2. $F_{\text{vec}}$ enjoys the Giveon-Kutasov-Seiberg duality (2.3), namely,

$$F_{\text{vec}}(M; N)_k = F_{\text{vec}}(|k| - M; N)_{-k}. \quad (5.3)$$
3. The leading logarithmic correction agrees with the bulk one-loop result \([4.30]\),

\[
F_{\text{vec}}(M;N)_k = \cdots - \frac{N^2}{2} \log M + \cdots .
\]  

(5.4)

We have already emphasized the importance of the first property. Meanwhile, the second property might look a matter of aesthetics. However, the duality invariance \((5.3)\) ensures the parity symmetry restoration at \(\theta_0 = 0\) and \(\pi/2\) with the identification \(\theta_0 = \pi t/2\) where \(t = M/|k|\), as required by the PV Vasiliev theory \([20]\). Had it been the \(U(N + M)\) CS partition function \(Z_{\text{CS}}(N + M)_k\) to be divided in \((5.2)\), the duality invariance would not have been respected. This vindicates the quotient by the \(U(M)\) CS partition function \(Z_{\text{CS}}(M)_k\) as opposed to \(Z_{\text{CS}}(N + M)_k\). Lastly, as already stated in previous sections, the last property implies the agreement between the ABJ and HS theories, provided that the HS Newton constant is identified as

\[
G_{\text{HS}} = \frac{\gamma}{M \sin(\pi t)} \xrightarrow{t \to 0} \frac{\gamma}{M} \tag{5.5}
\]

which agrees with the one suggested in \([43]\) for non-supersymmetric theories. It must be stressed that the quotient by the ABJ partition function \(Z_{\text{ABJM}}(N)_k\) is crucial for us to be able to make this identification. To elaborate on this point, we note that the free energies for the partition functions appearing in \((5.2)\) have the following expansions:

\[
\text{Re} [F_{\text{ABJ}}(N,N + M)_k] - F_{\text{CS}}(M)_k = \frac{2NM}{\pi t} \mathcal{I} \left( \frac{\pi t}{2} \right) + \frac{N^2}{2} \log \frac{4M}{(\pi t) \sin(\pi t)} + \log \frac{\text{Vol}(U(N))}{(2\pi)^{\frac{2N}{2}}} + \mathcal{O}(M^{-1}) \tag{5.6}
\]

and

\[
F_{\text{ABJM}}(N)_k = N^2 \log \frac{2M}{\pi t} + \log \frac{\text{Vol}(U(N))^2}{(2\pi)^{N^2}} + \mathcal{O}(M^{-2}) . \tag{5.7}
\]

Subtracting \((5.7)\) from \((5.6)\), we find the free energy for the “vector model subsector” to be

\[
F_{\text{vec}}(M;N)_k = \frac{2NM}{\pi t} \mathcal{I} \left( \frac{\pi t}{2} \right) - \log [\text{Vol}(U(N))] - \frac{N^2}{2} \log \left( \frac{1}{2\pi} \frac{M \sin(\pi t)}{\pi t} \right) + \mathcal{O}(M^{-1}) . \tag{5.8}
\]

As is evident, the logarithmic terms in \((5.6)\) and \((5.7)\) conspire to yield the combination \(M \sin(\pi t)/(\pi t) = \gamma G_{\text{HS}}^{-1}\) as well as the correct dependence on the \(U(N)\) volume. Besides being duality invariant, this provides a nontrivial justification for the quotient by the ABJM partition function in \((5.2)\). We also note that the appearance of the combination \(M \sin(\pi t)/(\pi t)\) persists in higher orders of the \(1/M\) expansion, as can be seen in \((3.25)\).

All indicate that our proposal \((5.1)\) and \((5.2)\) is at work. However, it is worth noting that the “vector model subsector” may be a misnomer, since open strings stretched between \(M\)
fractional and $N$ regular D3-branes do couple with open strings of other endings corresponding to $U(M)$ and $U(N)$ adjoints and $U(N) \times U(N)$ bi-fundamentals. Although the quotients (5.2) do remove all diagrams that only involve the latter degrees of freedom, it is not the case that these degrees of freedom do not appear at all in the vacuum diagrams. So the quotients (5.2) do not completely single out $U(M)$ vectors, and there is no $U(M)$ vector subsector in the strict sense.

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A Formal expansion of $f(x, k, t)$

In this Appendix, we derive the formal expansion (3.16) of the quantity $f(x, k, t)$ defined in (3.14).

First, let us do the following trivial rewriting of (3.14) as

$$f(x, k, t) = \sum_{m=\frac{-M-1}{2}}^{\frac{M-1}{2}} \log \frac{\tanh \frac{\pi(x + im)}{k}}{\pi(x + im)} + \sum_{m=\frac{-M-1}{2}}^{\frac{M-1}{2}} \log \frac{\pi(x + im)}{k} - R(x). \quad (A.1)$$

The quantity $f_{2n}(k, t)$, which was defined in (3.17) and can be written as

$$f_{2n}(k, t) = (-1)^n k^{2n-1} \partial_k^{2n} f(x, k, t)|_{x=0}, \quad (A.2)$$

is computed from the expression (A.1) as follows. First, for even $M$\footnote{Recall that the summation is always done in steps of one.}

$$f_{2n} = \begin{cases} \displaystyle k^{-1} \left[ \sum_{m=\frac{-M-1}{2}}^{\frac{M-1}{2}} \log \frac{\tan \frac{\pi m}{k}}{\pi m} + 2 \sum_{m=\frac{1}{2}}^{\frac{M-1}{2}} \log \frac{\pi m}{k} - \log 2 \right] & (n = 0), \\
\displaystyle k^{2n-1} \left[ \sum_{m=\frac{-M-1}{2}}^{\frac{M-1}{2}} \partial^2 m \log \frac{\tan \frac{\pi m}{k}}{\pi m} - 2(2n - 1)! \sum_{m=\frac{1}{2}}^{\frac{M-1}{2}} \frac{1}{m^{2n}} - (-1)^n \frac{(2\pi)^{2n}(2^n - 1)B_{2n}}{2n} \right] & (n \geq 1). \end{cases} \quad (A.3)$$
Here, we used the relation $\partial_x = -i \partial_m$ and the formula [56, eq. 1.518.2]

$$R^{M: \text{even}}(x) = \log(2 \cosh(\pi x)) = \log 2 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{(2\pi)^{2n}(2^{2n} - 1)B_{2n}}{2n(2n)!} x^{2n}. \quad (A.4)$$

For odd $M$, some care is needed in setting $x = 0$, because the singularity at $x = 0$ coming from the $m = 0$ term in the second sum of (A.1) cancels against the singularity coming from $R(x)$. Using the formula [56, eq. 1.518.1]

$$R^{M: \text{odd}}(x) = \log(2 \sinh(\pi x)) = \log 2 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{(2\pi)^{2n}B_{2n}}{2n(2n)!} x^{2n}, \quad (A.5)$$

we obtain, for odd $M$,

$$f_{2n} = \begin{cases} 
  k^{-1} \left[ \sum_{m=-\frac{M-1}{2}}^{\frac{M-1}{2}} \log \tan \frac{\pi m}{2} + 2 \sum_{m=1}^{\frac{M-1}{2}} \log \frac{\pi m}{k} - \log(2k) \right] & (n = 0), \\
  k^{2n-1} \left[ \sum_{m=-\frac{M-1}{2}}^{\frac{M-1}{2}} \partial_m^2 \log \tan \frac{\pi m}{2} - 2(2n - 1)! \sum_{m=1}^{\frac{M-1}{2}} \frac{1}{m^{2n}} - (-1)^n (2\pi)^{2n}B_{2n} \right] & (n \geq 1). 
\end{cases} \quad (A.6)$$

Because the summand in the first terms of (A.3), (A.6) is regular at $m = 0$ thanks to the rewriting (A.1), it can be safely evaluated using the Euler-Maclaurin formula. The version of the Euler-Maclaurin formula relevant here is the one that uses the midpoint trapezoidal rule and is given by (see e.g. [57])

$$g(a + \frac{1}{2}) + g(a + \frac{3}{2}) + \ldots + g(b - \frac{1}{2}) = \int_a^b dt g(t) + \sum_{n=1}^{w} \frac{(2^{-2n+1} - 1)B_{2n}}{(2n)!} \left[ g^{(2n-1)}(m) - g^{(2n-1)}(0) \right] + R_{w-1}, \quad (A.7)$$

where the remainder function is

$$R_w = \frac{(-1)^{w+1}}{w!} \int_0^m dt g^{(w+1)}(t) \zeta(-w, t + \frac{1}{2}) \quad (A.8)$$

and $\zeta(s, q)$ is the Hurwitz zeta function. Generally, $R_w$ does not vanish in the $w \to \infty$ limit and, therefore, sending $w \to \infty$ and dropping $R_w$ in (A.7) gives a non-convergent asymptotic expansion.

For $n \geq 1$, the second terms of (A.3) and (A.6) involve the generalized harmonic number,

$$H^{(r)}_q = \sum_{m=1}^{q} \frac{1}{m^r}. \quad (A.9)$$

Its asymptotic expansion for large $q$ is [58]

$$H^{(r)}_q \sim \zeta(r) - \frac{2q + r + 1}{2(r - 1)(q + 1)^r} - \frac{1}{(r - 1)!} \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \frac{(2l + r - 2)! B_{2l}}{(2l)! (q + 1)^{2l+r-1}}, \quad (A.10)$$
where “∼” means an asymptotic expansion and \( \zeta(s) \) is the Riemann zeta function. By expanding this in \( r \) around \( r = 0 \) and collecting the \( \mathcal{O}(r) \) terms, we obtain the asymptotic expansion

\[
\sum_{m=1}^{q} \log m \sim \frac{1}{2} \log(2\pi) - 1 - q + (q + \frac{1}{2}) \log(q + 1) + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{B_{2k}}{2k(2k - 1)(q + 1)2^{k-1}}, \tag{A.11}
\]

which we can use for evaluating the \( n = 0 \) case of (A.3) and (A.6).

Applying the above formulas (A.7), (A.10) and (A.11) to (A.3) and (A.6) and massaging the resulting expression, we obtain the following asymptotic expansion:

\[
f_{2n} \sim \begin{cases} 
\int_{0}^{t} dy \tan \frac{\pi y}{2} + 2 \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \frac{(2^{-2l+1} - 1)B_{2l}}{(2l)!} \frac{(2\partial_{k})^{2l-1}}{k^{2l}} \log \tan \frac{\pi t}{2} + \tilde{f}_{0} & (n = 0), \\
2 \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \frac{(2^{-2l+1} - 1)B_{2l}}{(2l)!} \frac{(2\partial_{k})^{2n+2l-1}}{k^{2l}} \log \tan \frac{\pi t}{2} + \tilde{f}_{2n} & (n \geq 1), 
\end{cases}
\tag{A.12}
\]

where, for even \( M \),

\[
k_{\tilde{f}_{0}} = 2 \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \frac{(2^{2l-1} - 1)B_{2l}}{2l(2l - 1)M^{2l-1}} + (2M + 1) \log \left(1 + \frac{1}{M}\right) - (M + 1) \log \left(1 + \frac{2}{M}\right) + 2 \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \frac{B_{2l}}{2l(2l - 1)} \left[ \frac{1}{(M + 1)^{2l-1}} - \frac{1}{(\frac{M}{2} + 1)^{2l-1}} \right], \tag{A.13}
\]

\[
\frac{\tilde{f}_{2n}}{k^{2n-1}} = 2 \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \frac{2^{2n}(2^{2l-1} - 1)(2n + 2l - 2)!B_{2l}}{(2l)!M^{2l+2n-1}} + (2n - 2)! \left[ \frac{2^{2n}(2M + 2n + 1)}{(M + 1)^{2n}} - \frac{M + 2n + 1}{(\frac{M}{2} + 1)^{2n}} \right] \left[ \frac{2^{2n}(2M + 2n + 1)}{(M + 1)^{2n}} - \frac{M + 2n + 1}{(\frac{M}{2} + 1)^{2n}} \right] \tag{A.14}
\]

while, for odd \( M \),

\[
k_{\tilde{f}_{0}} = 2 \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \frac{(2^{2l-1} - 1)B_{2l}}{2l(2l - 1)M^{2l-1}} + M \log \left(1 + \frac{1}{M}\right) - 1 + 2 \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \frac{2^{2l-1}B_{2l}}{2l(2l - 1)(M + 1)^{2l-1}}, \tag{A.15}
\]

\[
\frac{\tilde{f}_{2n}}{k^{2n-1}} = 2 \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \frac{2^{2n}(2^{2l-1} - 1)(2n + 2l - 2)!B_{2l}}{(2l)!M^{2l+2n-1}} + (2n - 2)! \left[ \frac{2^{2n}(M + 2n)}{(M + 1)^{2n}} \right] \left[ \frac{2^{2n}(M + 2n)}{(M + 1)^{2n}} \right] + 2 \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \frac{2^{2l+2n-1}(2l + 2n - 2)!B_{2l}}{(2l)!(M + 1)^{2l+2n-1}} \tag{A.16}
\]

with \( n \geq 1 \). Some comments in deriving the expression (A.12) are in order. First, the first terms in (A.3), (A.6) were evaluated using the Euler-Maclaurin formula (A.7) and formally dropping the remainder function. In the resulting integrals, we defined \( y \equiv 2m/k \) and rewrote
it in terms of \( y \)-integrals. For \( n \geq 1 \), the integral can be trivially integrated to give the \( l = 0 \) term in (A.12). Furthermore, we split \( \log \left[ \left( \tan \frac{\pi y}{2} \right) / \left( \frac{\pi y}{2} \right) \right] \) = \( \log(\tan(\frac{\pi y}{2})) - \log(\frac{\pi y}{2}) \) and put the ones originating from \( \log(\frac{\pi y}{2}) \) into \( \tilde{\tilde{f}}_0, \tilde{\tilde{f}}_{2n} \). Next, the second terms in (A.3), (A.6) were evaluated using the asymptotic formulas (A.10), (A.11). For odd \( M \), there is no problem in directly applying the these formulas but, for even \( M = 2p \), we need to use the following trick,

\[
\sum_{m=1}^{p-\frac{1}{2}} \frac{1}{m^{2n}} = 2^{2n} \sum_{m=1}^{2p} \frac{1}{m^{2n}} - \sum_{m=1}^{p} \frac{1}{m^{2n}}, \tag{A.18}
\]

before applying the asymptotic formulas. The asymptotic formula (A.10) involves the \( \zeta \) function which may look like a nuisance, but it precisely cancels the last (constant) terms in (A.3), (A.6), due to the identity

\[
\zeta(2n) = \frac{(-1)^{n+1}(2\pi)^{2n}B_{2n}}{2(2n)!}, \quad n \geq 1. \tag{A.19}
\]

Similar cancellations happen for the log terms for \( n = 0 \).

Actually, as we will show below, \( \tilde{\tilde{f}}_0 = \tilde{\tilde{f}}_{2n} = 0 \). Therefore, (A.12) actually becomes

\[
f_{2n} \sim 2 \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \frac{(2^{-2l+1} - 1)B_{2l}(2\partial_t)^{2n+2l-1}k^{2l}}{(2l)!} \log \tan \frac{\pi t}{2} \quad (n \geq 0), \tag{A.20}
\]

where it is understood that, for \( n = l = 0 \),

\[
\frac{1}{\partial_t} \log \tan \frac{\pi t}{2} = \int_0^t dy \log \tan \frac{\pi y}{2}. \tag{A.21}
\]

Formally carrying out the summation in (A.20), we obtain

\[
f_{2n} \sim \frac{(2\partial_t)^{2n}}{k \sinh \frac{\partial_t}{k}} \log \tan \frac{\pi t}{2}. \tag{A.22}
\]

If we substitute the expression (A.22) into (3.17) and formally perform the summation over \( n \), we obtain the expression in the main text, (3.16).

The final result (A.20) may look like the expression which we would obtain if we directly applied the Euler-Maclaurin formula (A.7) to the original expression (3.14). However, of course, the Euler-Maclaurin formula does not work in the presence of a singularity that gives a divergent integral. It is only after the above careful treatment of the singularities as we did above and the delicate cancellation of terms due to the presence of the seemingly unwanted function \( R(x) \) that we arrived at the very simple expression (A.20).
Proof of $\tilde{f}_{2n} = 0$

Let us show that $\tilde{f}_{2n} = 0$ as mentioned above. For simplicity, let us consider the case with odd $M$ and $n \geq 1$. The relevant expression is (A.16). First, because $B_0 = 1$, $B_1 = -1/2$ and $B_{2n+1} = 0$ for $n \geq 1$, we can combine the two terms in the second line to get the following expression:

$$\frac{\tilde{f}_{2n}}{k^{2n-1}} = 2 \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \frac{2^{2l-1} - 1)(2n + 2l - 2)! B_{2l}}{(2l)! M^{2l+2n-1}} + \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^l 2^{2n} (l + 2n - 2)! B_l}{l! (M + 1)^{l+2n-1}}. \quad (A.23)$$

When expanded in $1/M$, the second term is equal to

$$\sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^l 2^{l+2n} (l + 2n - 2)! B_l}{l! M^{l+2n-1}} \sum_{p=0}^{\infty} (-1)^p \binom{l + 2n - 2}{p} \frac{1}{M^p} = \sum_{q=0}^{\infty} \sum_{l=0}^{q} (-1)^q 2^{q+2n} (q + 2n - 2)! B_l \sum_{p=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^p}{(q - l)!} \binom{l + 2n - 2}{p} \frac{1}{M^p} \quad (A.24)$$

Now, recalling the relation between the Bernoulli polynomial $B_n(x)$ and the Bernoulli numbers $B_n$,

$$B_n(x) = \sum_{l=0}^{n} \binom{n}{l} x^{n-l} B_l, \quad (A.25)$$

and also the relation

$$B_n\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) = (2^{1-n} - 1)B_n, \quad (A.26)$$

we find

$$\sum_{l=0}^{q} \binom{q}{l} 2^l B_l = 2^q \sum_{l=0}^{q} \binom{q}{l} \frac{1}{2} \binom{q-1}{l} B_l = 2^q B_q\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) = 2^q (2^{1-q} - 1)B_q. \quad (A.27)$$

Therefore,

$$\sum_{q=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^q 2^{q+2n} (2-q+1) (q + 2n - 2)! B_q}{q! M^{q+2n-1}}. \quad (A.28)$$

Because the summand vanishes for $q = 1$ and because $B_{2n+1} = 0$ for $n \geq 1$, we can set $q = 2l$, $l \geq 0$. Then this cancels the first term in (A.23). So, we have shown $\tilde{f}_{2n} = 0$.

In a quite similar manner, using Bernoulli polynomial/number identities, we can show that $\tilde{f}_0 = 0$ for even $M$ and $\tilde{f}_0 = \tilde{f}_{2n} = 0$ ($n \geq 1$) for odd $M$.  

22
B Evaluation of the matrix integral (3.23)

In this appendix, we would like to systematically evaluate the integral (3.23), which we write down here again for convenience:

\[
\Psi(N; M)_k = e^{-\mathcal{F}(N; M)_k} = \frac{\pi^{N(N-1)} e^{kNf_0}}{N! \frac{k^{N^2-N}}{N}} \prod_{j=1}^{N} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} d\xi_j \Delta(\xi)^2 \times \exp \left[ \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n f_{2n}}{(2n)!} \sum_{j=1}^{N} \xi_j^{2n} + 2 \sum_{j<m}^{} \log \frac{\tanh \frac{\pi(\xi_j-\xi_m)}{k}}{\frac{\pi(\xi_j-\xi_m)}{k}} \right].
\] (B.1)

Note that \( \mathcal{F} \) defined here is different from the full ABJ free energy \( F_{ABJ} = -\log Z_{ABJ} \) which contains more terms coming from (3.7).

Because \( f_{2n} = f_{2n}(k, t) = \mathcal{O}(k^0) \), we can treat the \( \xi^2 \) term in the exponential of (B.1) as the propagator and all higher power terms as interactions, and evaluate the integral perturbatively in a 1\( /k \) expansion. The last term in the exponential can be written as

\[
\sum_{j<m}^{} \log \frac{\tanh \frac{\pi(\xi_j-\xi_m)}{k}}{\frac{\pi(\xi_j-\xi_m)}{k}} = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} c_{2n} \left( \frac{\pi^2}{k} \right)^n \sum_{j<m}^{} (\xi_j - \xi_j)^{2n} \] (B.2)

where we used the relation [56, eq. 1.518.3]

\[
\ln \frac{\tan x}{x} = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} c_{2n} x^{2n}, \quad c_{2n} = (-1)^{n+1} \frac{(2^{2n-1} - 1)2^{2n} B_{2n}}{n(2n)!}.
\] (B.3)

To avoid clutter, let us use the shorthand notation

\[
\prod_{j=1}^{N} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} d\xi_j = \int d^N \xi, \quad \sum_{j=1}^{N} \xi_j^n = \xi^n, \quad \sum_{1\leq j<m\leq N} (\xi_j - \xi_m)^{2n} = (\Delta \xi)^{2n}.
\] (B.4)

First, note that the Gaussian integral of the quadratic term is given by

\[
\int d^N \xi \Delta(\xi)^2 e^{-\frac{\Delta \xi^2}{2}} = f_2 \frac{N^2}{(2\pi)^\frac{N}{2}} G_2(N+2),
\] (B.5)

where \( G_2(N) \) is the Barnes \( G \)-function. For a quantity \( \mathcal{O}(\xi) \), let us define its expectation value by

\[
\langle \mathcal{O} \rangle = \frac{\int d^N \xi \Delta(\xi)^2 e^{-\frac{\Delta \xi^2}{2}} \mathcal{O}}{\int d^N \xi \Delta(\xi)^2 e^{-\frac{\Delta \xi^2}{2}}}.
\] (B.6)

Then the integral (B.1) can be written as

\[
e^{-\mathcal{F}(N; M)_k} = \frac{2^\frac{N}{2} G_2(N+1) \pi^{N^2-N} e^{kNf_0}}{k^{\frac{N^2}{2}-N} f_2^\frac{N^2}{2}} \times \left( \exp \left[ \sum_{n=2}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n f_{2n}}{(2n)!} k^{2n-1} \xi^{2n} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} c_{2n} \left( \frac{\pi^2}{k} \right)^n (\Delta \xi)^{2n} \right] \right).
\] (B.7)
where we used the relation $G_2(z + 1) = \Gamma(z)G_2(z)$.

The above is sufficient for computing $\mathcal{F}(N; M)_k$ in principle, but the following observation makes the computation simpler. Note that $\Delta(\xi)$ is nothing but the Fadeev-Popov determinant for going from the matrix model of an $N \times N$ Hermitian matrix $X$ to the diagonal gauge where $\xi_j, j = 1, \ldots, N$ are the eigenvalues of $X$. So, the expectation value of $\mathcal{O}$ defined in (B.6) can be written as the expectation value in a Hermitian matrix model as

\[
\langle \mathcal{O} \rangle = \frac{\int dN^2X e^{-\frac{1}{2}\text{tr}X^2}\mathcal{O}}{\int dN^2X e^{-\frac{1}{2}\text{tr}X^2}},
\]

where $X$ is an $N \times N$ Hermitian matrix. When going from the eigenvalue basis in terms of $\xi_j$ back to the Hermitian matrix model, we do the following replacements in $\mathcal{O}$:

\[
\xi^{2n} = \sum_i \xi_i^{2n} \rightarrow \text{tr} X^{2n},
\]

\[
(\Delta \xi)^{2n} = \sum_{i<j}(\xi_i - \xi_j)^{2n} = \frac{1}{2}\sum_{i<j}(\xi_i - \xi_j)^{2n} = \frac{1}{2}\sum_{i<j}\sum_{l=0}^{2n}(-1)^l\binom{2n}{l}\xi_i^{2n-l} \xi_j^{l}
\]

\[
\rightarrow \frac{1}{2}\sum_{l=0}^{2n}(-1)^l\binom{2n}{l} \text{tr} X^l \text{tr} X^{2n-l}
\]

\[
= \sum_{l=0}^{n-1}(-1)^l\binom{2n}{l} \text{tr} X^l \text{tr} X^{2n-l} + \frac{(-1)^n}{2}\binom{2n}{n} (\text{tr} X^n)^2 \equiv (\Delta X)^{2n},
\]

and use the contraction rule

\[
\langle X^{\alpha \beta}X^{\gamma \delta} \rangle = f_2^{-1}\delta_\alpha^\gamma \delta_\beta^\delta.
\]

Some of the correlators computed using the matrix model diagrams are:

\[
\langle \xi^2 \rangle = \langle \text{tr} X^2 \rangle = N^2, \quad \langle (\xi^1)^2 \rangle = \langle (\text{tr} X)^2 \rangle = N,
\]

\[
\langle (\Delta \xi)^2 \rangle = \langle N \text{tr} X^2 - (\text{tr} X)^2 \rangle = N^3 - N,
\]

\[
\langle \xi^4 \rangle = \langle \text{tr} X^4 \rangle = 2N^3 + N, \quad \langle \xi^3 \xi^1 \rangle = \langle \text{tr} X^3 \text{tr} X \rangle = 3N^2,
\]

\[
\langle \xi^2 \xi^2 \rangle = \langle \text{tr} X^2 \text{tr} X^2 \rangle = N^4 + 2N^2, \quad \langle \xi^2 (\xi^1)^2 \rangle = \langle \text{tr} X^2 (\text{tr} X)^2 \rangle = N^3 + 2N,
\]

\[
\langle (\xi^1)^4 \rangle = \langle \text{tr} X^4 \rangle = 3N^2,
\]

\[
\langle (\Delta \xi)^4 \rangle = \langle N \text{tr} X^4 - 4 \text{tr} X^3 \text{tr} X + 3(\text{tr} X^2)^2 \rangle = 5N^4 - 5N^2,
\]

\[
\langle (\Delta \xi)^2 \rangle = \langle [N \text{tr} X^2 - (\text{tr} X)^2]^2 \rangle = N^6 - N^2,
\]

\[
\langle \xi^6 \rangle = \langle \text{tr} X^6 \rangle = 5N^4 + 10N^2, \quad \langle \xi^4 \xi^2 \rangle = 2N^5 + 9N^3 + 4N,
\]

\[
\langle \xi^4 (\xi^1)^2 \rangle = 2N^4 + 13N^2, \quad \langle \xi^4 (\Delta \xi)^2 \rangle = \langle \xi^4 [N \text{tr} X^2 - (\text{tr} X)^2] \rangle = 2N^6 + 7N^4 - 9N^2,
\]

\[
\langle (\xi^1)^3 \rangle = \langle (\text{tr} X^4) \rangle = 4N^6 + 40N^4 + 61N^2.
\]
In the above expressions, we set $f_2 = 1$ for simplicity, but the correct powers of $f_2$ can be recovered on dimensional grounds. When computing correlators such as (B.12), diagrams get out of hand quickly as the power grows. Rather than directly dealing with diagrams, it is easier to assume that a given correlator is an even/odd polynomial in $N$ with certain degree, and determine the coefficients by computer for some small values of $N$.

So, in terms of the Hermitian matrix model, the “free energy” $F(N; M)_k$ can be computed as follows:

$$F(N; M)_k = -kNf_0 + \frac{N^2}{2} \log \frac{k f_2}{\pi} - \frac{N}{2} \log \frac{2k^2}{\pi} - \log G_2(N + 1)$$

$$+ \left\langle \exp \left[ \sum_{n=2}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n f_{2n}}{(2n)!} \tr X^{2n} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} c_{2n} \left( \frac{\pi}{k} \right)^n (\Delta X)^{2n} \right] - 1 \right\rangle_{\text{conn}}, \quad (B.13)$$

where $\langle \rangle_{\text{conn}}$ means the connected part; for example,

$$\langle (\tr X^2)^2 \rangle_{\text{conn}} = \langle (\tr X^2)^2 \rangle - \langle \tr X^2 \rangle^2. \quad (B.14)$$

Carrying out the diagram expansion in (B.13) to a few orders and using the large $k$ expansion of $f_{2n}(k, t)$ given in (3.18), we obtain the following large $k$ expansion for $F(N; M)_k$:

$$F(N; M)_k = \frac{2kN}{\pi} I \left( \frac{\pi t}{2} \right) + \frac{N^2}{2} \ln \frac{4k}{\pi \sin(\pi t)} - \frac{N}{2} \ln \frac{2k^2}{\pi} - \ln G_2(N + 1)$$

$$- \frac{\pi N (2N^2 - 1)}{48 \sin(\pi t) k} \left[ 3 \cos(2\pi t) + 1 \right]$$

$$- \frac{\pi^2 N^2}{2304 \sin^2(\pi t) k^2} \left[ (17N^2 + 1) \cos(4\pi t) + 4(11N^2 - 29) \cos(2\pi t) - 157N^2 + 211 \right]$$

$$- \frac{\pi^3 N}{552960 \sin^3(\pi t) k^3} \left[ (674N^4 + 250N^2 + 201) \cos(6\pi t) - 6(442N^4 + 690N^2 - 427) \cos(4\pi t) \right.$$

$$+ 3(2282N^4 + 3490N^2 - 3635) \cos(2\pi t) + 4348N^4 - 21940N^2 + 12750 \right]$$

$$- \frac{\pi^4 N^2}{22118400 \sin^4(\pi t) k^4} \left[ (6223N^4 + 8330N^2 + 2997) \cos(8\pi t) \right.$$

$$- 8(3983N^4 + 6730N^2 - 363) \cos(6\pi t) + 20(3797N^4 + 1870N^2 + 1623) \cos(4\pi t) \right.$$

$$- 8(22249N^4 - 44410N^2 + 37011) \cos(2\pi t) - 56627N^4 + 113630N^2 - 18753 \right]$$

$$+ O(k^{-5}). \quad (B.15)$$

Rewriting this as a large $M$ expansion gives Eq. (3.25) presented in the main text.

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