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Exceptional Structures in Cosmological Billiards

Exceptional Structures and the Standard Model
Higgs Centre, Edinburgh University,
13 - 17 July 2026

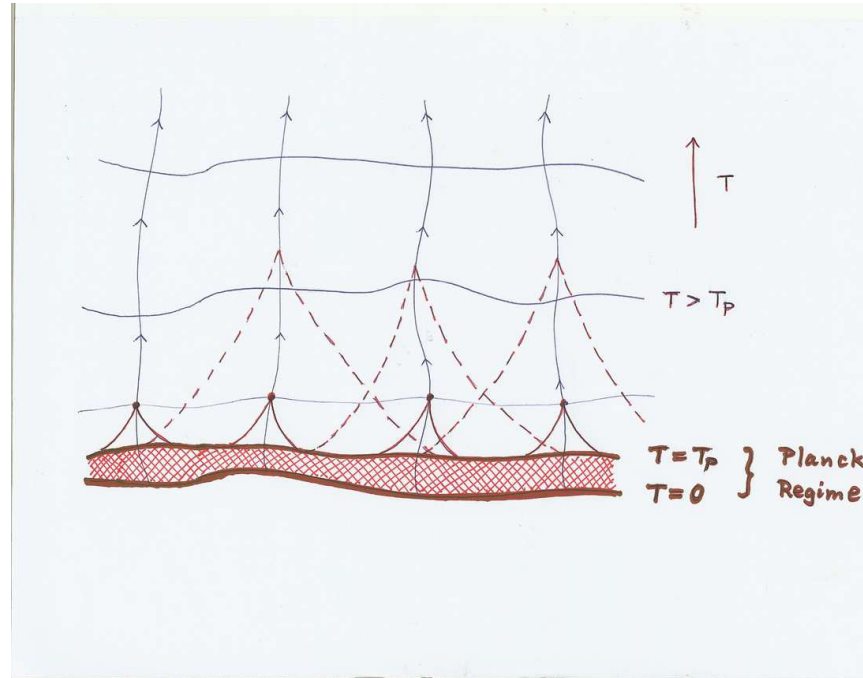
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*Based on work done in collaboration with Axel Kleinschmidt,
Michael Koehn and Jakob Palmkvist.*

Main Message(s)

- This talk: exceptional structures appear already in mini-superspace quantum cosmology
 - Octonions and octavians
 - Exceptional groups: E_8 , E_9 and E_{10}
 - New types of modular forms
 - E_{10} and $K(E_{10})$ are absolutely distinguished $\Rightarrow$
 - expected to play a key role in understanding
 - Quantum gravity and unification
 - Structure of fermionic sector of Standard Model with $48 = 3 \times 16$ fundamental spin- $\frac{1}{2}$ fermions (quarks and leptons)
 - ... and eight supermassive gravitinos as the only new fermionic degrees of freedom $\rightarrow$ **a testable prediction (JUNO, DUNE,...)**
- ... the last two items (based on joint work with A. Kleinschmidt and K.A. Meissner) for some other time!

Basics of BKL

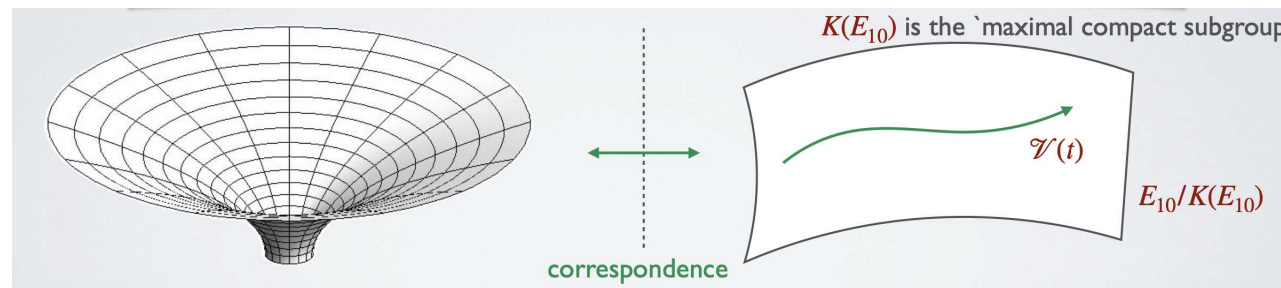


For $T \rightarrow 0$ spatial points decouple and the system is effectively described by a continuous *superposition of one-dimensional systems* $\rightarrow$ **effective dimensional reduction to $D = 1$!** [Belinski,Khalatnikov,Lifshitz (1972)]

Space(-time) emergence from $E_{10}/K(E_{10})$

$\Rightarrow$ reverse viewpoint: not E_{10} from dimensional reduction, but space-time based field theory from E_{10} !

$\rightarrow$ map time evolution of bosonic field equations to null geodesic motion on $E_{10}/K(E_{10})$. [Damour, Henneaux, HN(2002)]



$\rightarrow$ analogous to describing evolution of spatial geometry as point particle motion in moduli space $\text{Riem}(\Sigma)/\text{Diff}(\Sigma)$ of $(D-1)$ -geometries.

A concrete scenario for the emergence of space and time from a purely algebraic construct!

For a conceptually different ansatz based on E_{11} see [P.C.West(2001)]

Quantum BKL

[BKL = Belinski,Khalatnikov,Lifshitz(1972);Damour,Henneaux,HN,CQG20(2003)R145]

Metric ansatz with *diagonal* metric components

$$ds^2 = -N^2 dt^2 + \sum_{a=1}^d e^{-2\beta^a(t)} dx_a^2 \quad (\text{Kasner metric})$$

Substitute ansatz into Einstein-Hilbert action $\rightarrow$

$$\mathcal{L} = n^{-1} G_{ab} \dot{\beta}^a \dot{\beta}^b \equiv \sum_a (\dot{\beta}^a)^2 - \left(\sum_a \dot{\beta}^a \right)^2 \Rightarrow \mathcal{H} = G^{ab} \pi_a \pi_b \approx 0$$

Induced *DeWitt metric* G_{ab} in β -space coincides with the *Cartan-Killing metric* of some indefinite Kac-Moody algebra restricted to CSA (for maximal supergravity $d = 10$ and $\text{KMA} = E_{10}$).

Project motion onto *unit hyperboloid* in β -space

$$\beta^a = \rho \omega^a \quad , \quad \omega^a G_{ab} \omega^b = -1 \quad , \quad \rho^2 = -\beta^a G_{ab} \beta^b$$

with $\omega^a = \omega^a(z)$ parametrizing unit hyperboloid.

$\Rightarrow$ **BKL limit:** singularity is reached for $\rho \rightarrow \infty$ ('Zeno time').

‘Integrating out’ matter, off-diagonal and spatial curvature degrees of freedom $\rightarrow$ Effective potential $V(\beta)$ with Toda walls. Drastic simplification in BKL limit: sharp walls partition β -space into *chambers* $\rightarrow$ metric oscillations towards singularity.

Quantize $\Rightarrow$ Wheeler-DeWitt (WDW) operator ($d > 2$)

$$\mathcal{H} \equiv G^{ab} \partial_a \partial_b = -\rho^{1-d} \frac{\partial}{\partial \rho} \left(\rho^{d-1} \frac{\partial}{\partial \rho} \right) + \rho^{-2} \Delta_{LB} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \rho = \text{‘time’}$$

with Laplace-Beltrami Δ_{LB} on $(d-1)$ -dimensional unit hyperboloid $\rightarrow$ wave function obeys **WDW equation**

$$\mathcal{H}\Psi(\rho, z) = 0$$

To solve separate as $\Psi(\rho, z) = R(\rho)F(z)$ with eigenfunctions $-\Delta_{LB}F(z) = EF(z)$. Then [\[Kleinschmidt, Köhn, HN:PRD80\(2009\)061701\]](#)

$$R_{\pm}(\rho) = \rho^{-\frac{d-2}{2}} \exp \left(\pm i \sqrt{E - \frac{(d-2)^2}{4}} \cdot \ln \rho \right) \quad (d > 2)$$

For Laplace-Beltrami use $(d-1)$ -dimensional upper half plane $z = (v, \mathbf{u})$ with $v \in \mathbb{R}_{>}$ and $\mathbf{u} \in \mathbb{R}^{d-2} \Rightarrow$

$$\Delta_{LB} = v^{d-1} \partial_v (v^{3-d} \partial_v) + v^2 \partial_{\mathbf{u}}^2$$

With Dirichlet boundary conditions use inequality

[e.g.:Iwaniec:Spectral Methods of Automorphic Forms,AMS(2000) → KKN(2009)]

$$-(\Delta_{\text{LB}}F, F) \geq \int dv d^{d-2}u v^{3-d}(\partial_v F)^2$$

and rewrite

$$(F, F) = \int dv d^{d-2}u v^{1-d} F^2 = \frac{2}{d-2} \int dv d^{d-2}u v^{2-d} F \partial_v F$$

Cauchy-Schwarz inequality (with $-\Delta_{\text{LB}}F = EF$) $\Rightarrow$

$$E \geq \frac{(d-2)^2}{4}$$

$\Rightarrow$ wave function vanishes at singularity ($\rho=\infty$)!

This is DeWitt's proposed mechanism for resolving classical singularities in quantum gravity! [DeWitt(1964)]

Complex wave function $\Psi(\rho, z) \rightarrow$ creates *arrow of time*

... could also be relevant for resolution of BH information paradox (if information does not get crushed in singularity it cannot be lost) [Perry(2021):2106.03715]

Octavians and E_8 root lattice

Simple E_8 roots $\varepsilon_1, \dots, \varepsilon_8$ as unit octavians

[Conway,Smith(2003); see also Kleinschmidt,Palmkvist,HN, math.NT1010.2212]

$$\begin{aligned}\varepsilon_1 &= \frac{1}{2}(1 - e_1 - e_5 - e_6) & \varepsilon_2 &= e_1 \\ \varepsilon_3 &= \frac{1}{2}(-e_1 - e_2 + e_6 + e_7) & \varepsilon_4 &= e_2 \\ \varepsilon_5 &= (-e_2 - e_3 - e_4 - e_7) & \varepsilon_6 &= e_3 \\ \varepsilon_7 &= \frac{1}{2}(-e_3 + e_5 - e_6 + e_7) & \varepsilon_8 &= e_4\end{aligned}$$

with octonionic units $e_i, e_j, \dots$ (i, j, k counted mod 7)

$$e_i e_j = e_k \Rightarrow e_{i+1} e_{j+1} = e_{k+1} \quad \text{and} \quad e_{2i} e_{2j} = e_{2k}$$

Thus, the E_8 root lattice can be endowed with the structure of a *non-commutative* and *non-associative* ring such that E_8 roots are *units* of this ring!

E_8 Weyl group generated by fundamental reflections
 $z \rightarrow w_j(z) = -\varepsilon_j z \varepsilon_j$ (associative, but $\varepsilon_i(\varepsilon_j z \varepsilon_j) \varepsilon_i \neq (\varepsilon_i \varepsilon_j) z (\varepsilon_j \varepsilon_i)$)

Automorphic properties of wave function

Reflective walls imply boundary conditions:

$$\Psi(\rho, z) = \pm \Psi(\rho, w_I \cdot z)$$

for fundamental Weyl reflections w_I with $-(+)$ for Dirichlet (Neumann) boundary conditions. For E_{10} we take

$$z = \mathbf{u} + iv, \quad \bar{z} = \bar{\mathbf{u}} - iv \quad (\mathbf{u} \in \mathbb{O}, v > 0; i\mathbf{u} = \bar{\mathbf{u}}i)$$

→ *octonionic upper half plane*. This leads to ‘modular’ action of fundamental Weyl reflections in $W(E_{10})$

$$w_{-1}(z) = \frac{1}{\bar{z}}, \quad w_0(z) = -\theta \bar{z} \theta, \quad w_j(z) = -\varepsilon_j \bar{z} \varepsilon_j$$

where θ highest root of E_8 and ε_j simple roots of E_8 .

The above action extends the octavian realization of $W(E_8)$ to a full modular realization of the hyperbolic Weyl group $W(E_{10})$, with an extra ‘sedenionic’ imaginary unit for the octonionic upper half plane. $\Rightarrow$

Weyl group of $E_{10} = \text{'PGL}_2(\text{O})\text{'}$ [Feingold,Kleinschmidt,HN:JAlg322(2009)1295].

Even subgroup of Weyl group = $\text{PSL}_2(\text{O})$ is the analog of the modular group $\text{PSL}_2(\mathbb{Z})$ ($\rightarrow$ Einstein gravity).

[see also L.Forte,CQG26(2009)045001]

‘Wave function of the Universe’ is a $\text{PGL}_2(\text{O})$ automorphic form! Mathematical theory to be developed...

Restriction of wave function to fundamental domain = division by modular group for string amplitudes.

These results can be supersymmetrized $\rightarrow$ fermionic Fock space has 2^{160} components even for this simplest of approximations. [Kleinschmidt,Köhn,HN(2009)]

More manageable fermionic Fock space via quantization of $N = 1, D = 4$ supergravity in Bianchi IX background [Damour,Spindel:PRD95(2017)126011] $\rightarrow$ further evidence for AE_3 and $K(AE_3)$ in ordinary (Einstein) gravity.

Geodesics on $E_{10}/K(E_{10})$ are infinitely unstable

[Damour, HN: CQG22 (2005) 2849]

Recall geodesic deviation (Jacobi) equation

$$\delta \ddot{\xi}^\mu = \mathcal{R}^\mu{}_{\nu\lambda\rho} \dot{\xi}^\nu \delta \xi^\lambda \dot{\xi}^\rho$$

Choose CSA geodesic $\xi(t) \equiv \xi^a(t)H_a$ ($\Rightarrow \ddot{\xi}^a(t) = 0$) with deviation in direction of E_α^s *i.e.* $\delta \xi = \sum_{\alpha,s} \delta \xi_s^\alpha (E_\alpha^s + E_{-\alpha}^s)$.
 $\Rightarrow$ sectional curvature with generic $v \in \text{CSA}$:

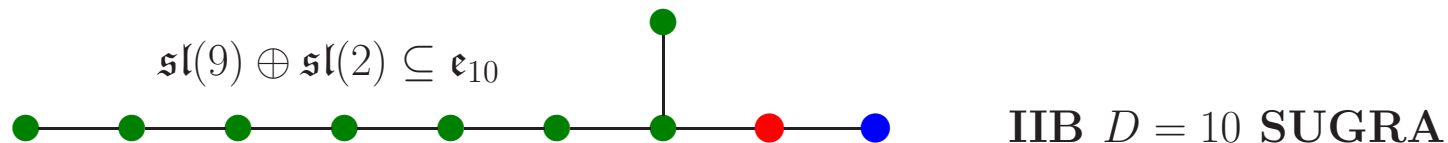
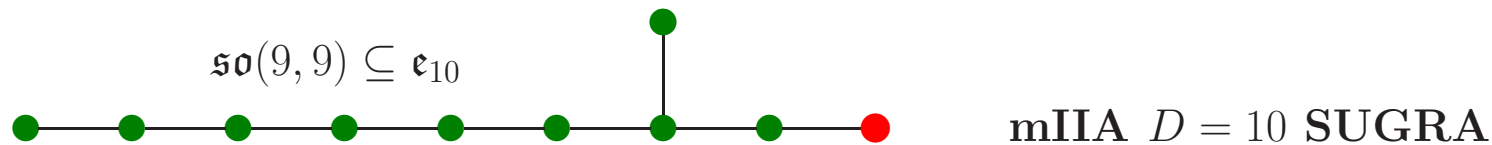
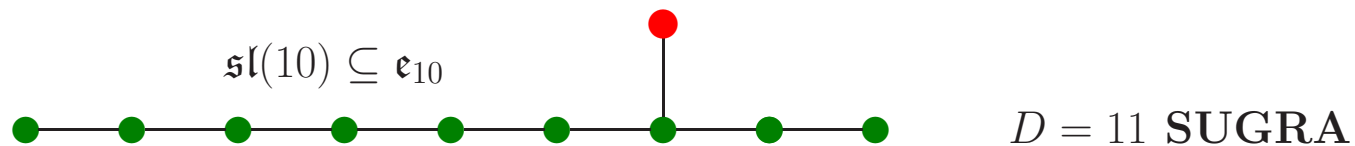
$$\mathcal{R}(v, E_\alpha^+, v, E_\alpha^+) = -(v^a \alpha_a)^2 < 0$$

is negative and decreases without bound: for every imaginary root α , any multiple $n\alpha$ is also a root $\forall n \in \mathbb{N}$
 $\Rightarrow \delta \ddot{\xi}_s^{n\alpha} = n^2 (v \cdot \alpha)^2 \delta \xi_s^{n\alpha} \Rightarrow \delta \xi_s^{n\alpha}(t) \propto e^{n|v \cdot \alpha|t}$ for $E_{n\alpha}^+$.

This strongly suggests that analysis cannot be confined to diagonal metrics and BKL regime, but *must take into account all off-diagonal degrees of freedom.*

Duality symmetries: all in one?

Hyperbolic KMA $\rightarrow$ only finite or affine regular subalgebras!



All encompassing: E_{10} contains *all* hyperbolic KMAs with symmetric Cartan matrices as subalgebras. [Viswanath(2008)]

SL(10) decomposition for $\ell \leq 3$

Level decomposition: $\alpha = \ell\alpha_0 + \sum_{j \geq 1} n_j \alpha_j$

- $\ell = 0$: $K^m_n h_m{}^n(t) \in \mathbf{GL}(10) \leftrightarrow$ graviton
- $\ell = 1$: $E^{mnp} A_{mnp}(t) \leftrightarrow$ (electric) 3-form
- $\ell = 2$: $E^{m_1 \dots m_6} A_{m_1 \dots m_6}(t) \leftrightarrow$ dual (magnetic) 6-form
- $\ell = 3$: $E^{m_0|m_1 \dots m_8} A_{m_0|m_1 \dots m_8}(t) \leftrightarrow$ dual graviton

for ‘upper triangular’ generators $E^{mnp}, \dots \rightarrow$ parametrize coset *formally* as $\mathcal{V}(t) = \exp \left(h_m{}^n(t) K^m_n + \frac{1}{3!} A_{mnp}(t) E^{mnp} + \dots \right) \in \mathbf{E}_{10}/\mathbf{K}(\mathbf{E}_{10})$

Idem for mIIA and IIB (and other) decompositions $\Rightarrow$
 $\rightarrow$ different theories by ‘slicing’ $\mathbf{E}_{10}$ in different ways!

$\Rightarrow \mathbf{E}_{10}$ ‘knows all’ about supersymmetry!

Conjecture: spatial dependence gets encoded into higher level ‘states’ $\rightarrow$ space ‘de-emerges’ near singularity

SL(10) Decomposition for $\ell \leq 18$

Table 1: A_9 representations in E_{10} up to level $\ell = 18$

ℓ	p	m	Λ^2	$\dim \mathcal{R}(\Lambda)$	$\text{mult}(\Lambda)$	μ
1	(001000000)	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	2	120	1	1
2	(000001000)	1 2 3 2 1 0 0 0 0	2	210	1	1
3	(100000010)	1 3 5 4 3 2 1 0 0	2	440	1	1
	(000000001)	2 4 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	0	10	8	0
4	(001000001)	2 4 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	2	1155	1	1
	(200000000)	1 4 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	2	55	1	1
	(010000000)	2 4 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	0	45	8	0
5	(000001001)	3 6 9 7 5 3 2 1 0	2	1848	1	1
	(100100000)	2 5 8 6 5 4 3 2 1	2	1848	1	1
	(000010000)	3 6 9 7 5 4 3 2 1	0	252	8	0
6	(100000011)	3 7 11 9 7 5 3 1 0	2	3200	1	1
	(000000002)	4 8 12 10 8 6 4 2 0	0	55	8	0
	(010001000)	3 6 10 8 6 4 3 2 1	2	8250	1	1
	(100000100)	3 7 11 9 7 5 3 2 1	0	1155	8	1
	(000000010)	4 8 12 10 8 6 4 2 1	-2	45	44	1

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18	(002000010)	11 22 33 28 23 18 13 8 4	-20	190575	1044218	973
	(200100010)	10 22 34 28 23 18 13 8 4	-20	351000	1044218	1717
	(010100010)	11 22 34 28 23 18 13 8 4	-22	261360	2485020	2674
	(100010010)	11 23 35 29 23 18 13 8 4	-24	83160	5749818	3208
	(000001010)	12 24 36 30 24 18 13 8 4	-26	6930	12970045	1843
	(500000001)	8 21 34 29 24 19 14 9 4	-8	19305	2472	15
	(310000001)	9 21 34 29 24 19 14 9 4	-16	49280	167116	295
	(120000001)	10 21 34 29 24 19 14 9 4	-20	47190	1043926	857
	(201000001)	10 22 34 29 24 19 14 9 4	-22	45045	2485020	1635
	(011000001)	11 22 34 29 24 19 14 9 4	-24	31185	5749818	2255
	(100100001)	11 23 35 29 24 19 14 9 4	-26	17280	12971009	3295
	(000010001)	12 24 36 30 24 19 14 9 4	-28	2310	28592513	2095
	(400000000)	9 22 35 30 25 20 15 10 5	-18	715	425227	90
	(210000000)	10 22 35 30 25 20 15 10 5	-24	1485	5750072	688
	(020000000)	11 22 35 30 25 20 15 10 5	-26	825	12971009	744
	(101000000)	11 23 35 30 25 20 15 10 5	-28	990	28595548	1628
	(000100000)	12 24 36 30 25 20 15 10 5	-30	210	61721165	1168

- Idem for mIIA and IIB (and other) decompositions
- *E.g.* for $\ell = 28$ we have already 3276 inequivalent irreducible SL(10) representations with maximum outer multiplicity $\mu = 46450629$ for (110100011), for $\ell \leq 28$ altogether $\sim 4.5 \times 10^9$ representations of SL(10) [T.Fischbacher].
- No matter where you truncate these level expansions, they keep getting more complicated with increasing level ℓ (exponential growth!).