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New York University, Abu Dhabi



TQFTs of Higher SuGra Gauge Sectors

based in parts on joint work with:

D. Fiorenza, G. Giotopoulos, H. Sati

Urs Schreiber

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Or: How M-Brane
Charge may be
Quantized in tmf .

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entry point to the literature:

Higher Gauge Theory via Differential Nonabelian Cohomology

arXiv:2606.12534



IR-Completing Higher Gauge Fields

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Quantum Fields traditionally defined incrementally:

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UV-completion: local interactions

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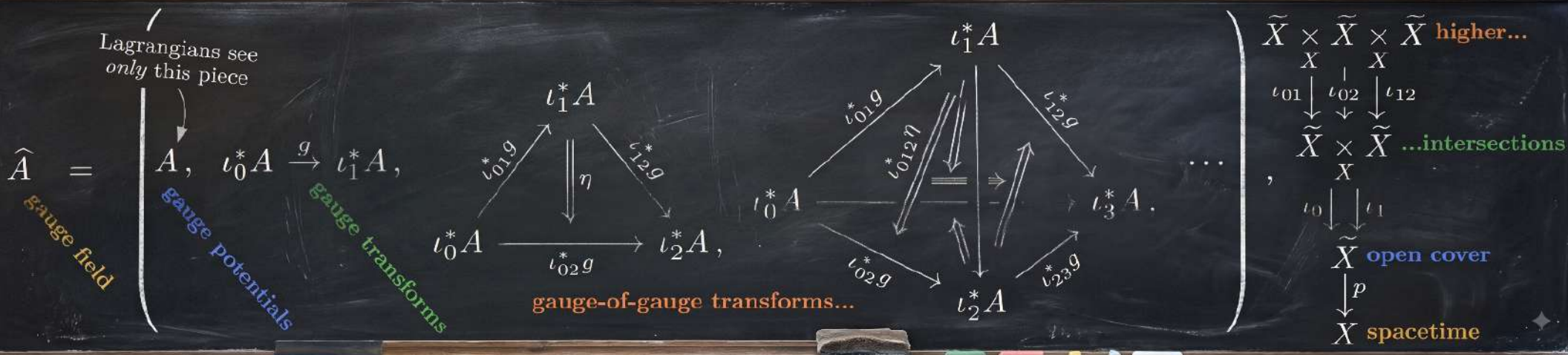
IR-completion: global field topology
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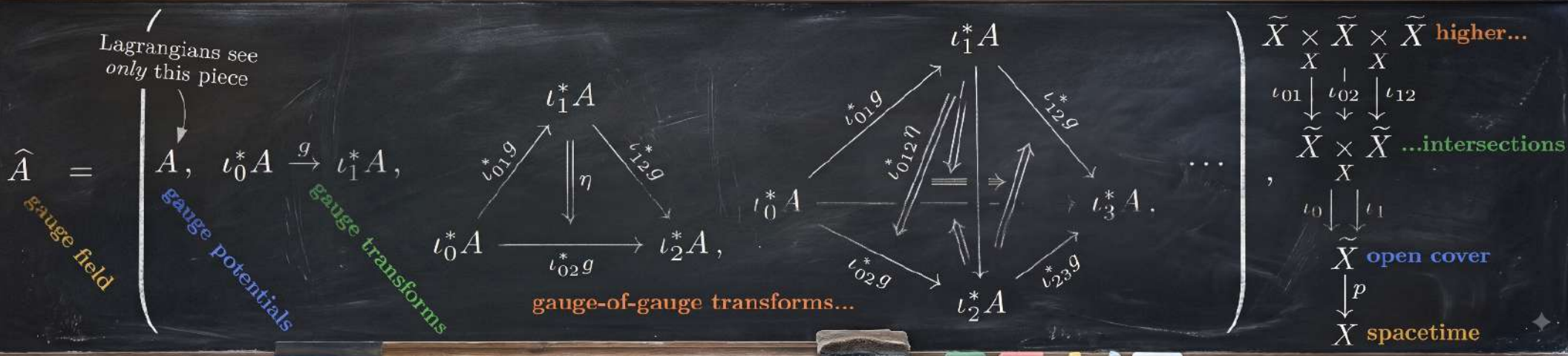


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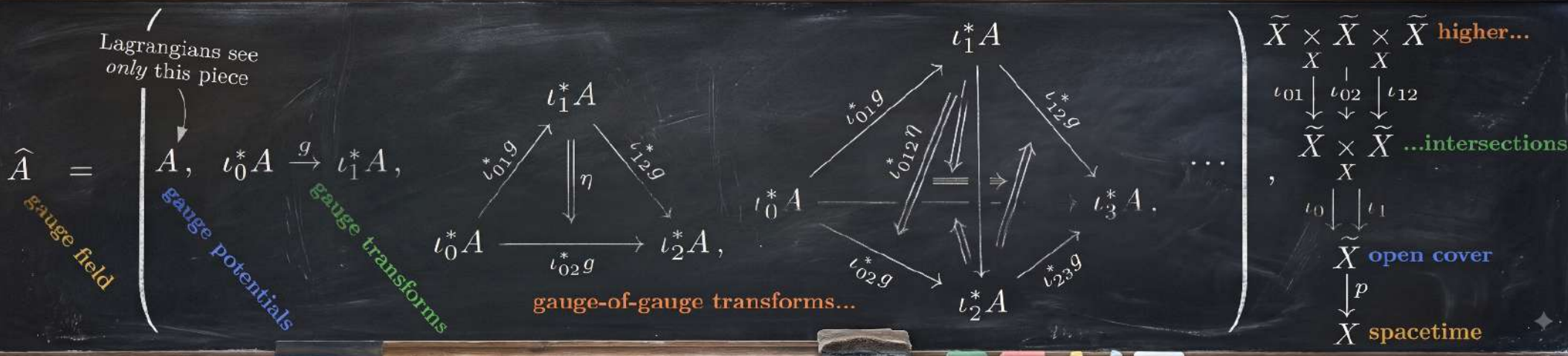


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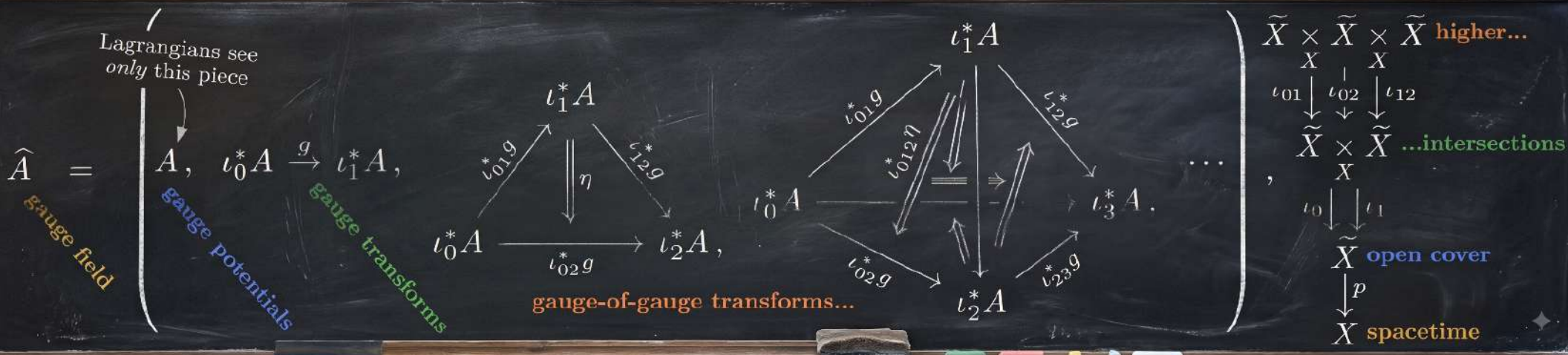
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Recall: IR-Completion of Maxwell

non-perturbative



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for vacuum electromagnetism on $X^{1,3} \simeq \mathbb{R}^{1,0} \times X^3$:

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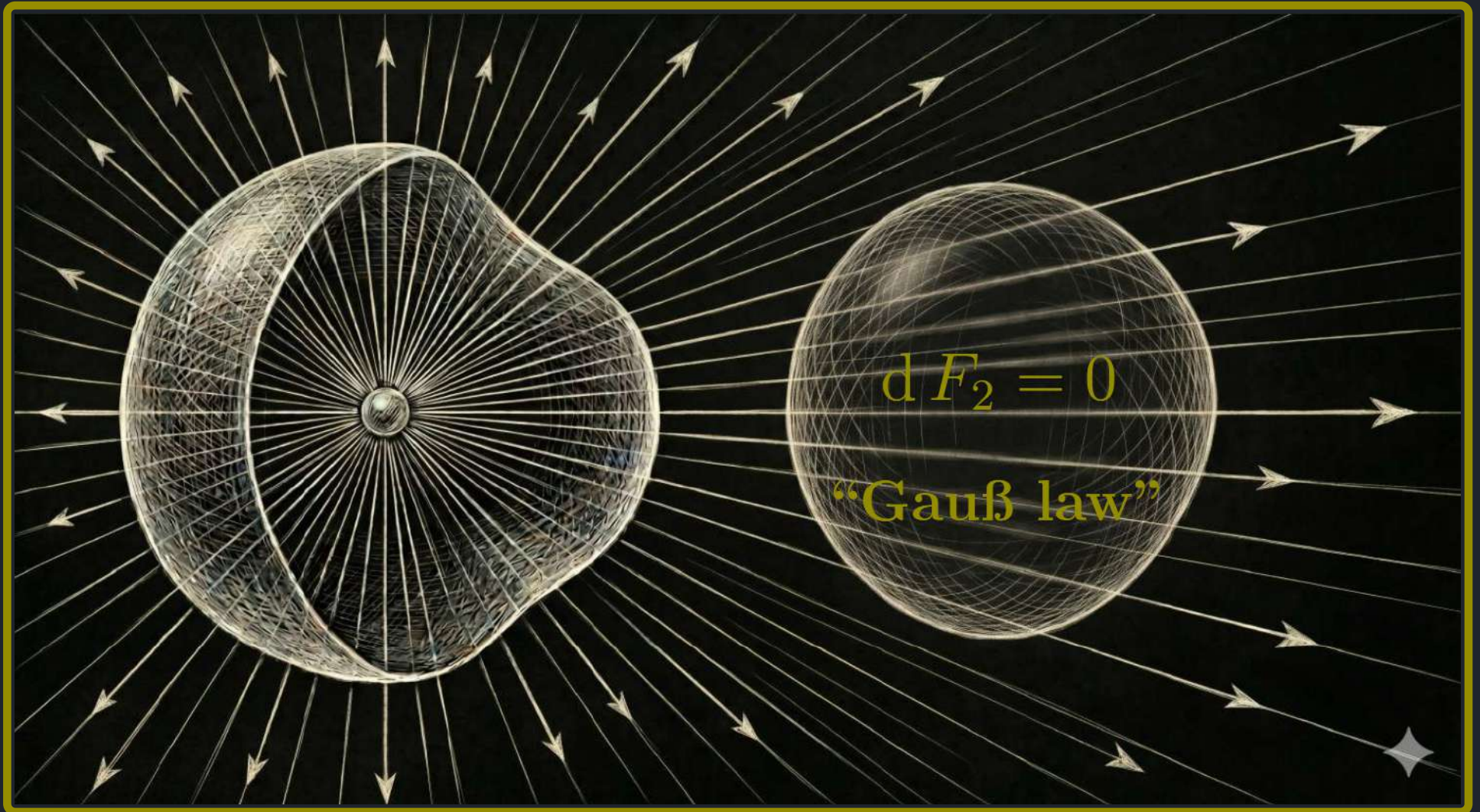
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Differential Cohomology

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theory

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magnetic
&
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classifying space of
twisted K-theory

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idealized

10D IIA NS/RR

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11D Maxwell-CS

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$$\mathfrak{l} S^4$$

$$d G_7 = \frac{1}{2} G_4 G_4$$

Example:
4D SuGra
5D SuGra
10D SuGra

11D SuGra

IR-Completion of Higher Maxwell-Type

Higher Gauge Theory of Maxwell-type: $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{For } \textit{characteristic} \mathfrak{a} \in L_\infty \text{Alg}_{\mathbb{R}} \\ \text{temporal germs of on-shell fluxes} \\ \text{on } X^{1,d} \simeq \mathbb{R}^{1,0} \times X^d \text{ are:} \\ \boxed{\{\text{on-shell fluxes}\} \simeq \Omega_{\text{cl}}^1(X^d; \mathfrak{a})} \end{array} \right.$

Examples	theory	Gauß law	characteristic
	4D Maxwell	$d F_2 = 0$ $d E_2 = 0$	$\mathfrak{l} B^2 \mathbb{Z}^2$
	5D Maxwell-CS	$d F_2 = 0$ $d E_3 = \frac{1}{2} F_2 F_2$	$\mathfrak{l} S^2$
	idealized 10D IIA NS/RR	$d H_3 = 0$ $d F_{2\bullet} = F_{2\bullet-2} H_3$	$\mathfrak{l}(\text{KU}_0 // \text{BU}(1))$
	11D Maxwell-CS	$d G_4 = 0$ $d G_7 = \frac{1}{2} G_4 G_4$	$\mathfrak{l} S^4$

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 & & \xrightarrow[\text{non-abelian de Rham map}]{\quad} \mathcal{A}_{\mathbb{R}}
 \end{array}
 \qquad
 \begin{array}{c}
 \mathcal{A} \\
 \downarrow \text{\mathbb{R-rationalization}} \\
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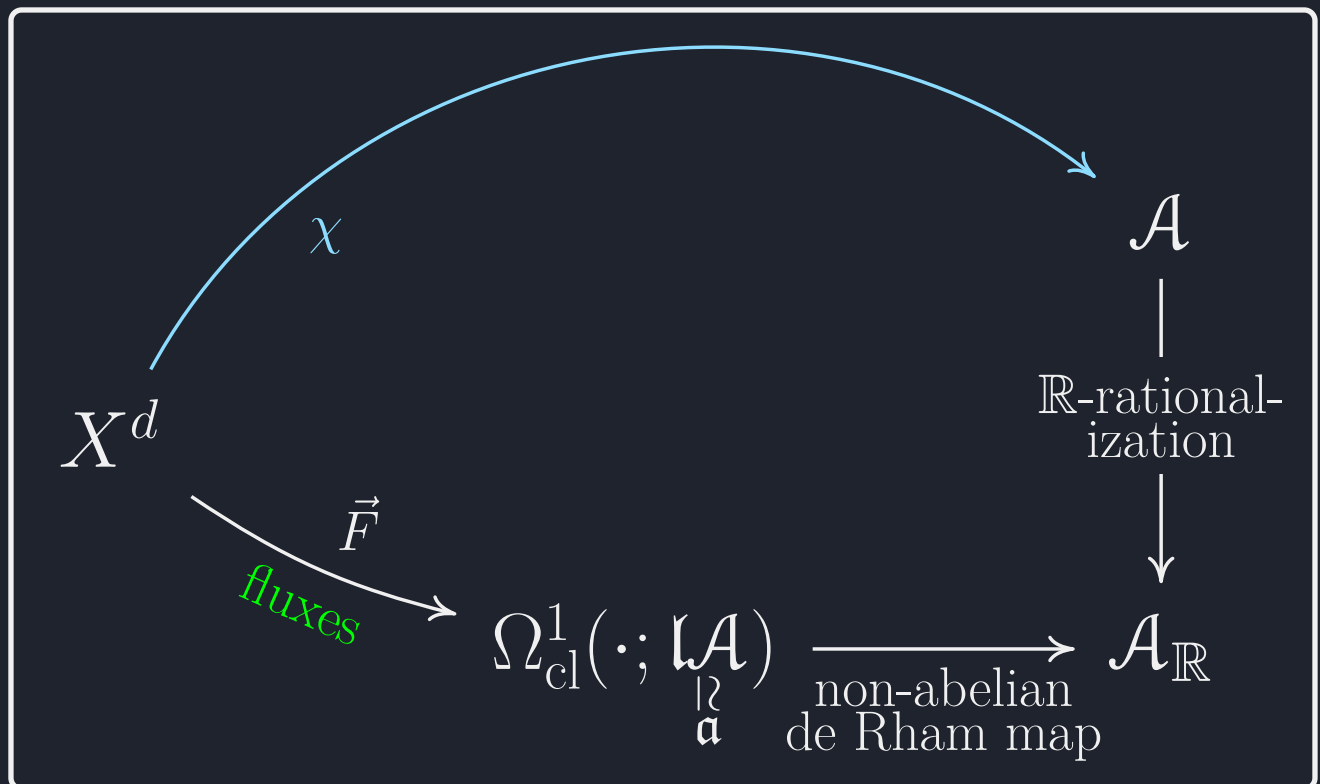
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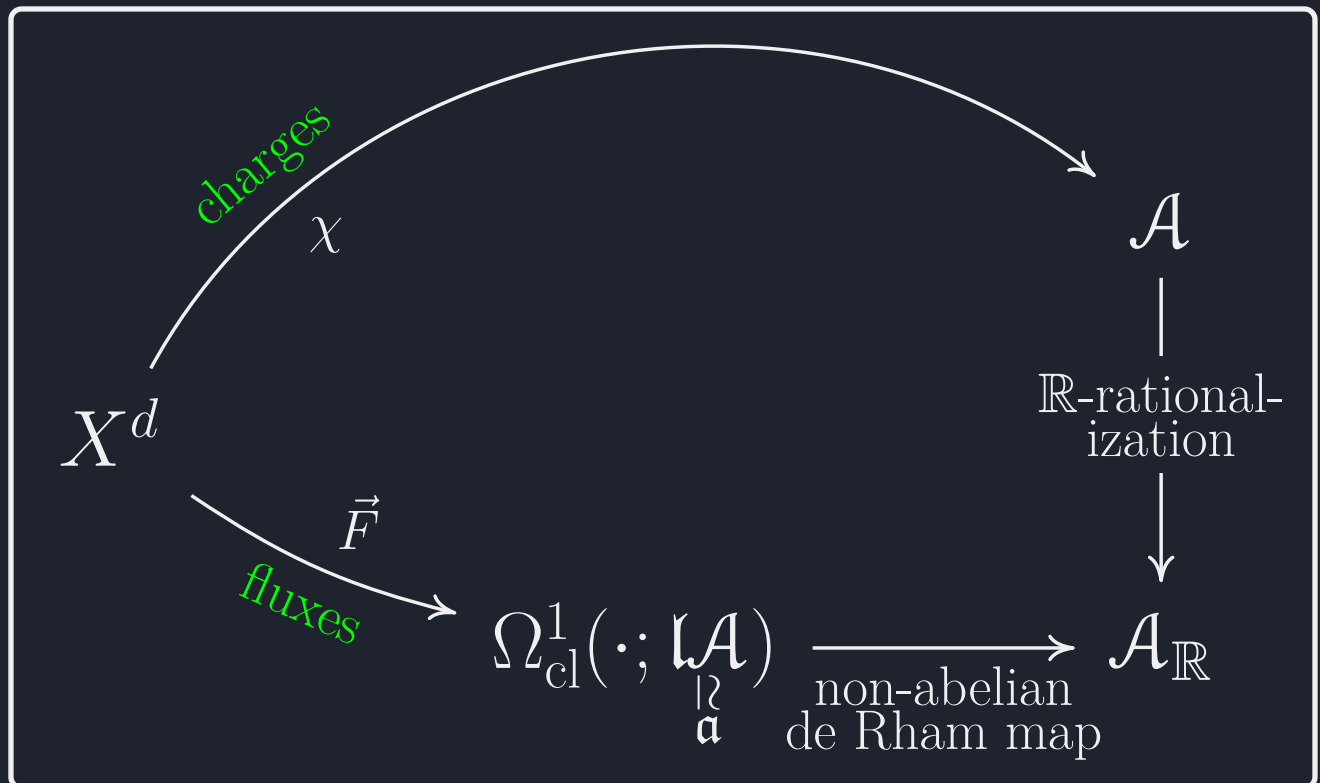
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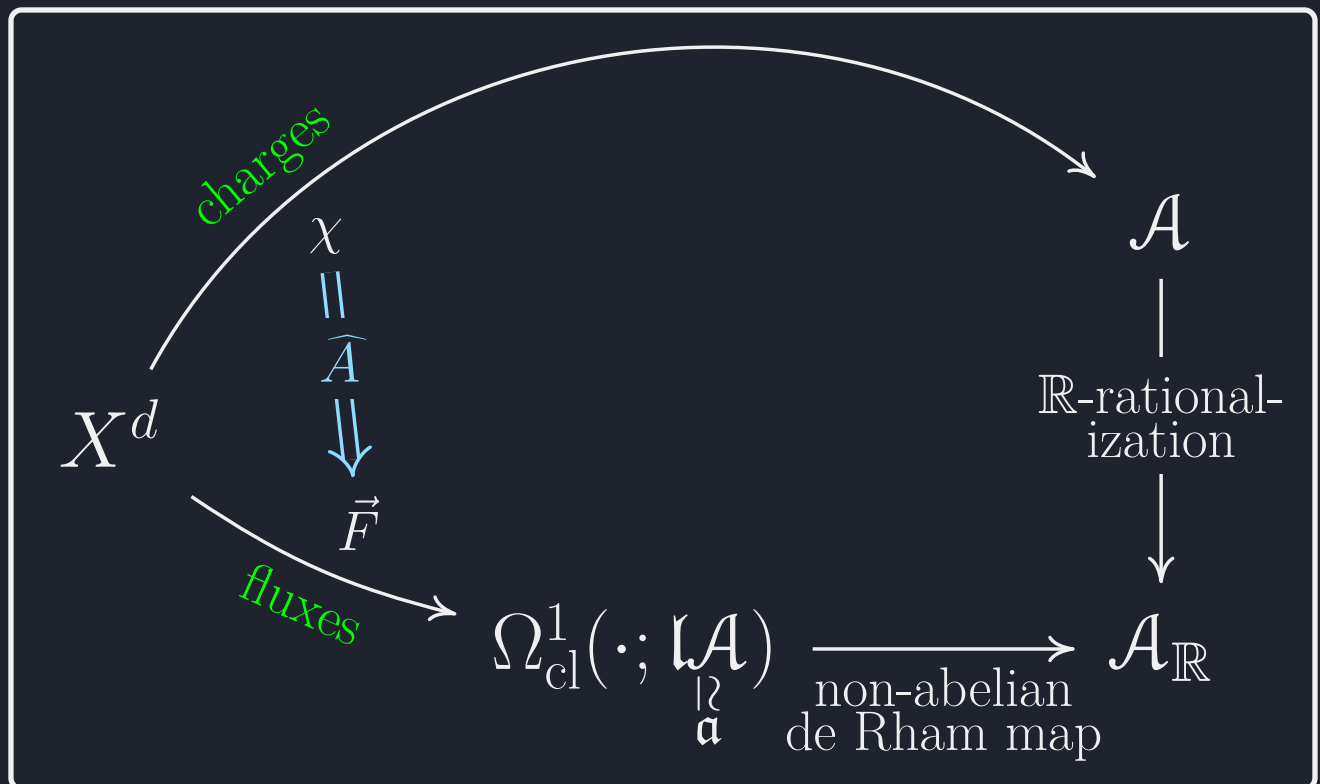
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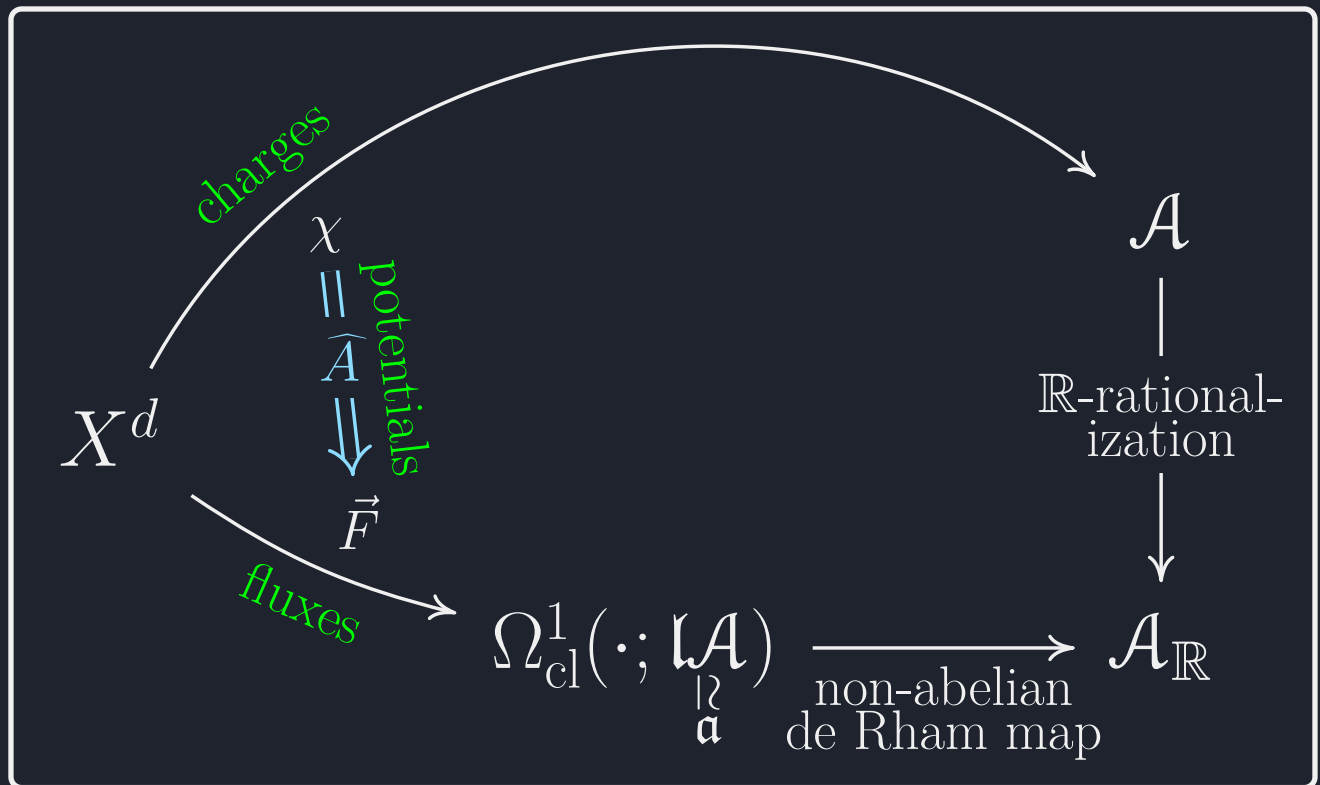
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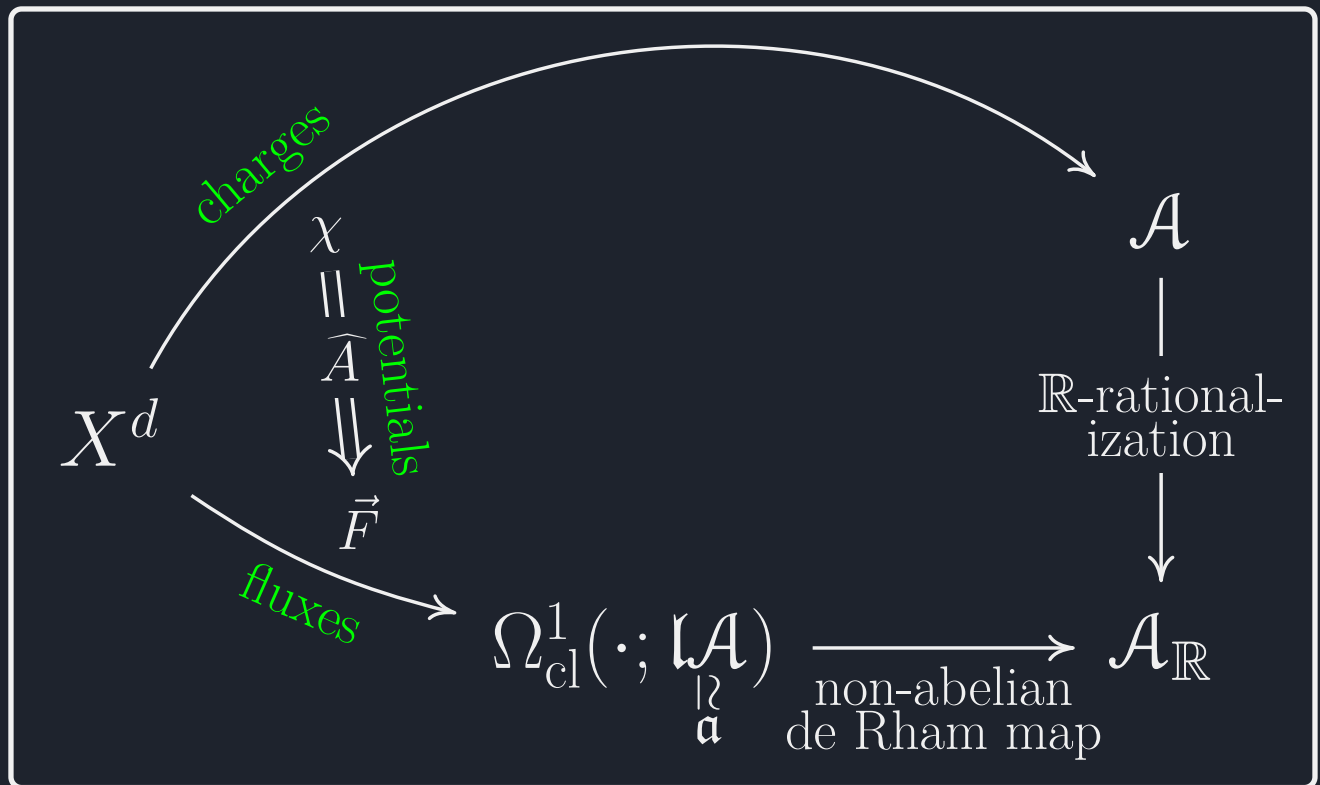
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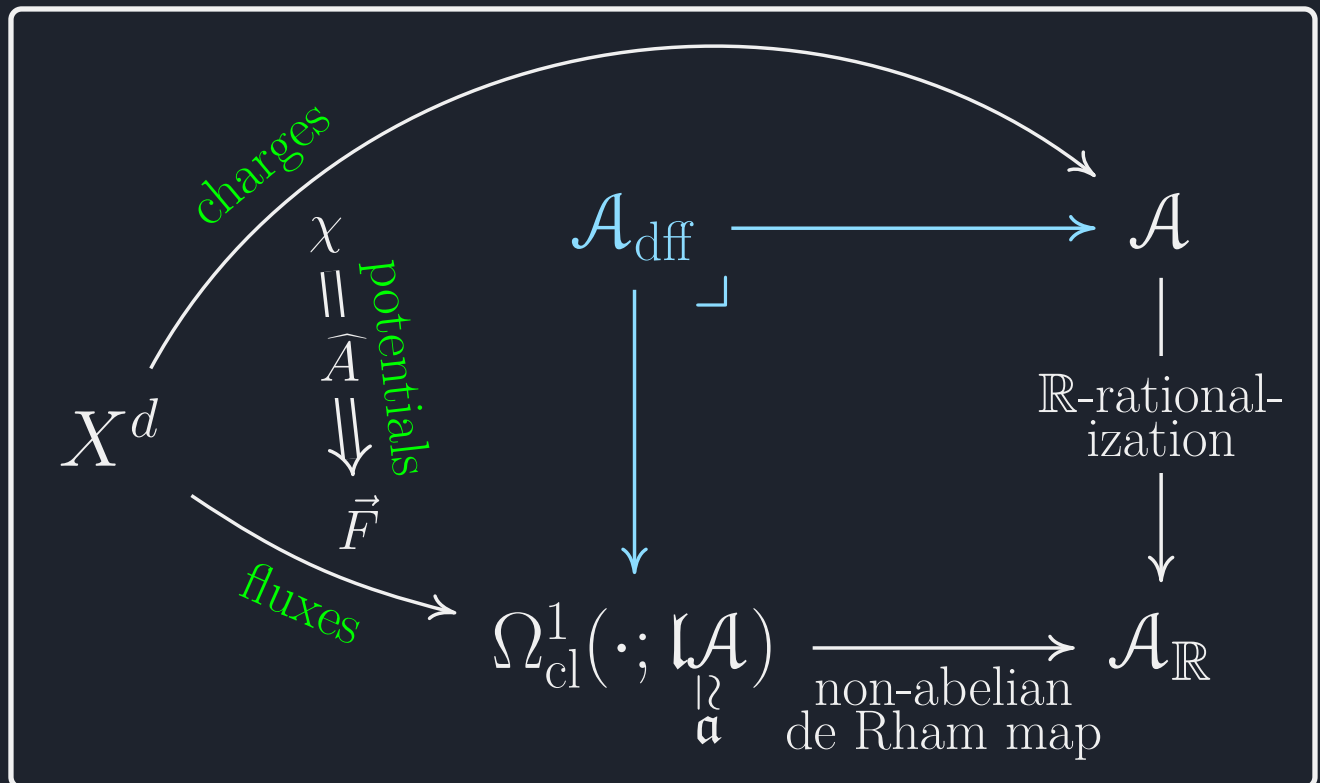
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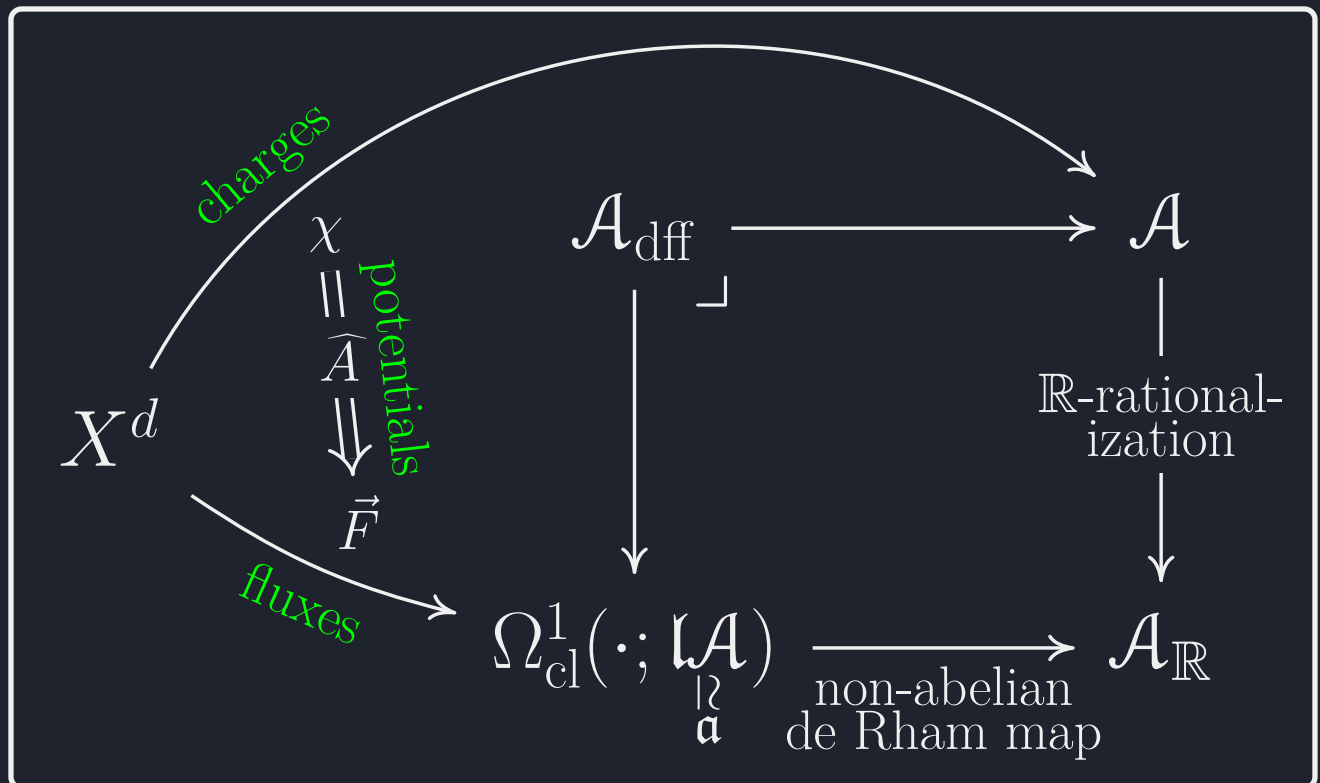
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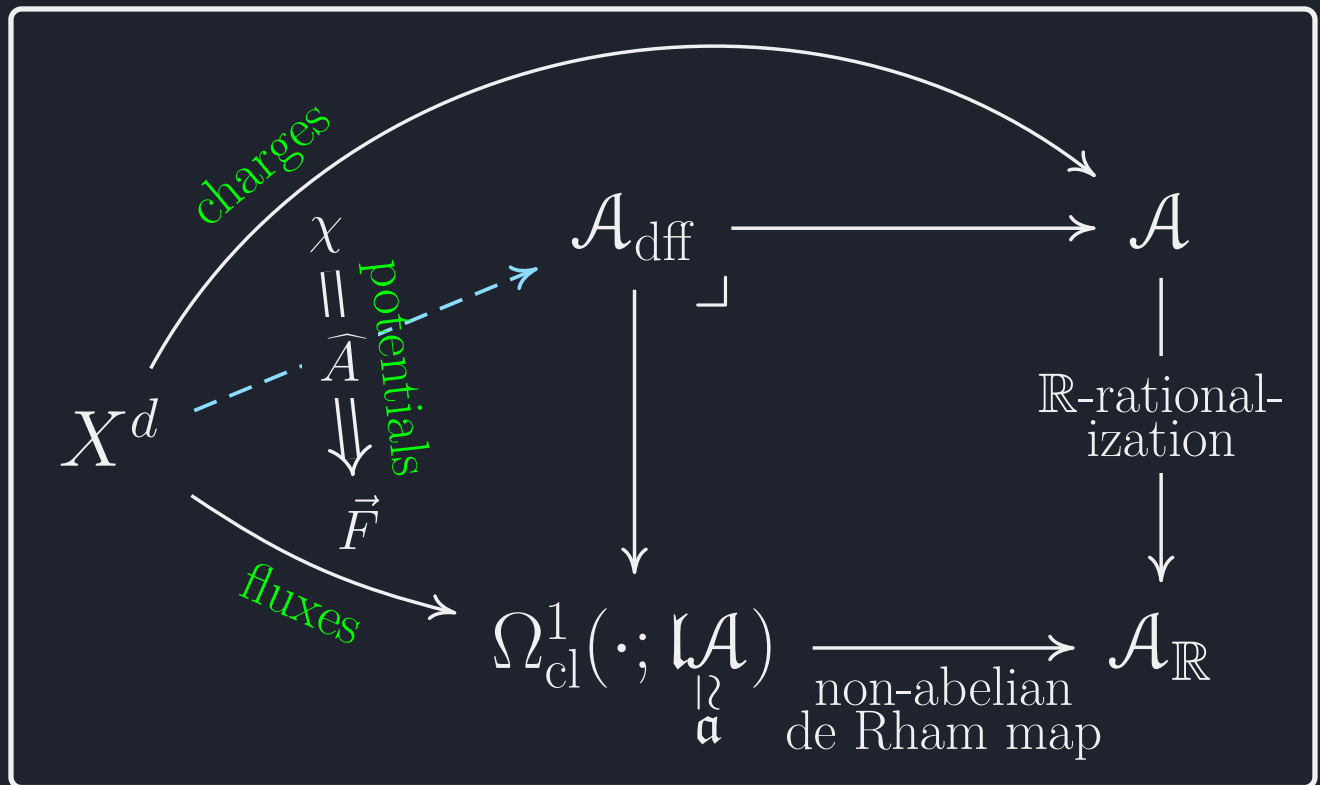
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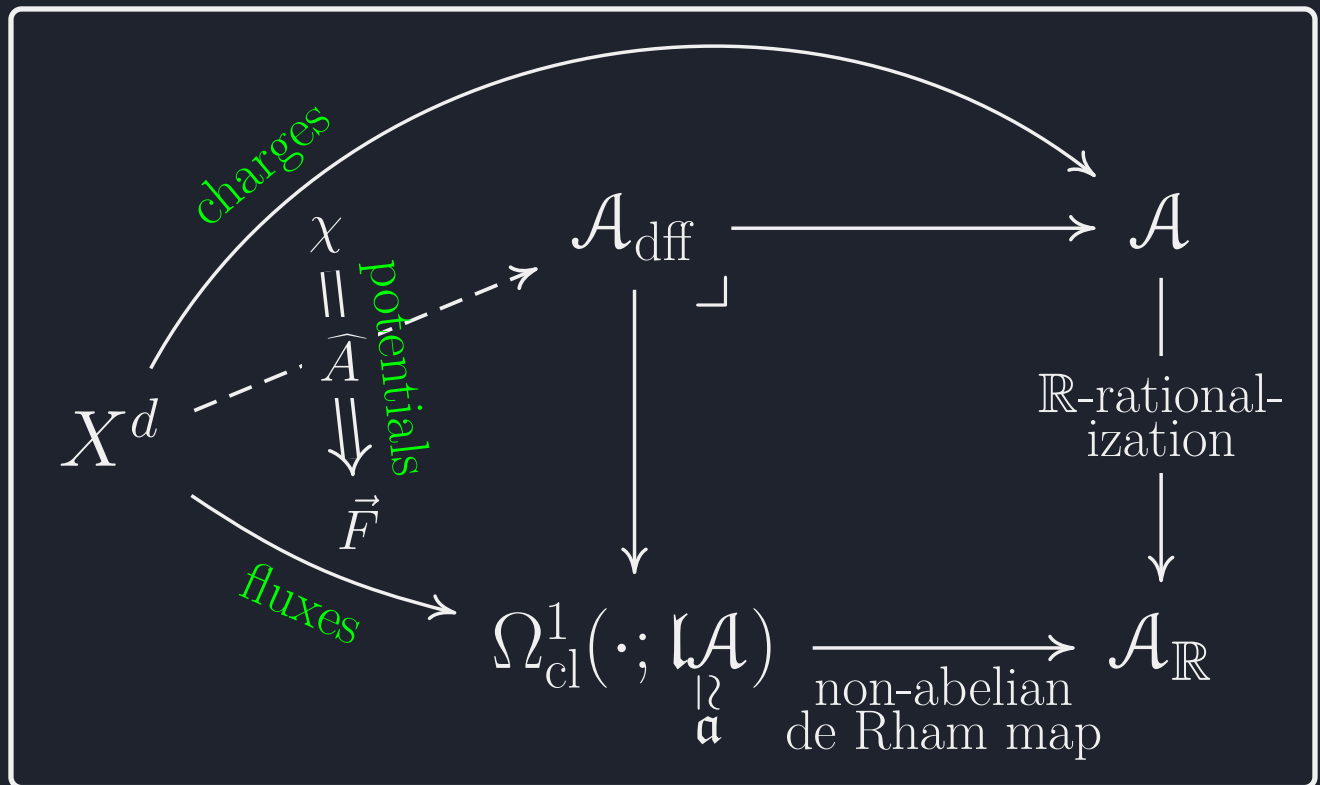
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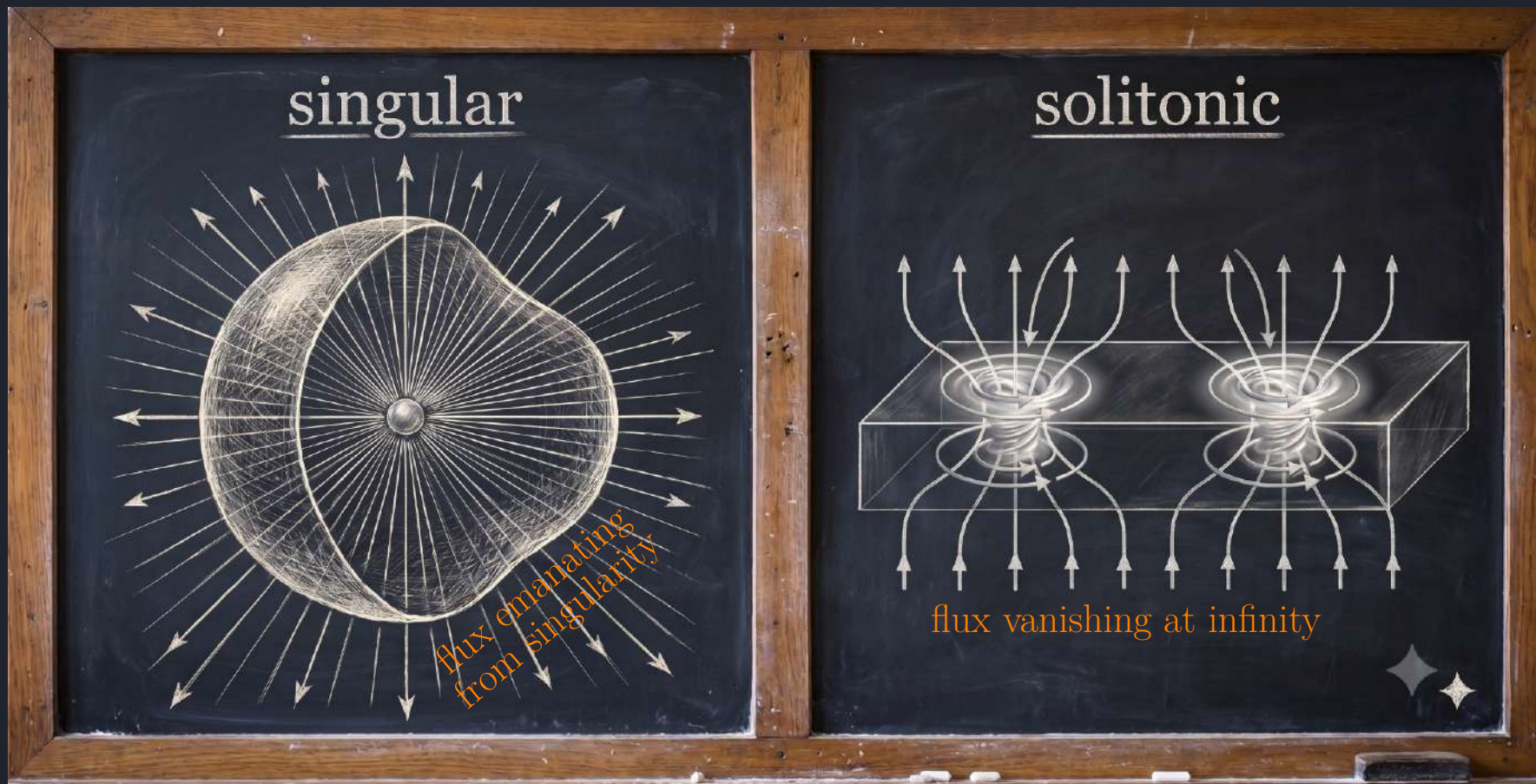
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$$\text{TopObs}_{\bullet}(X^d; \mathcal{A}) \simeq H_{\bullet}(\text{Map}^*(X_{\cup\{\infty\}}^d; \mathcal{A}), \mathbb{C})$$

Topological Light-Cone Quantization

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For spacetimes of the form

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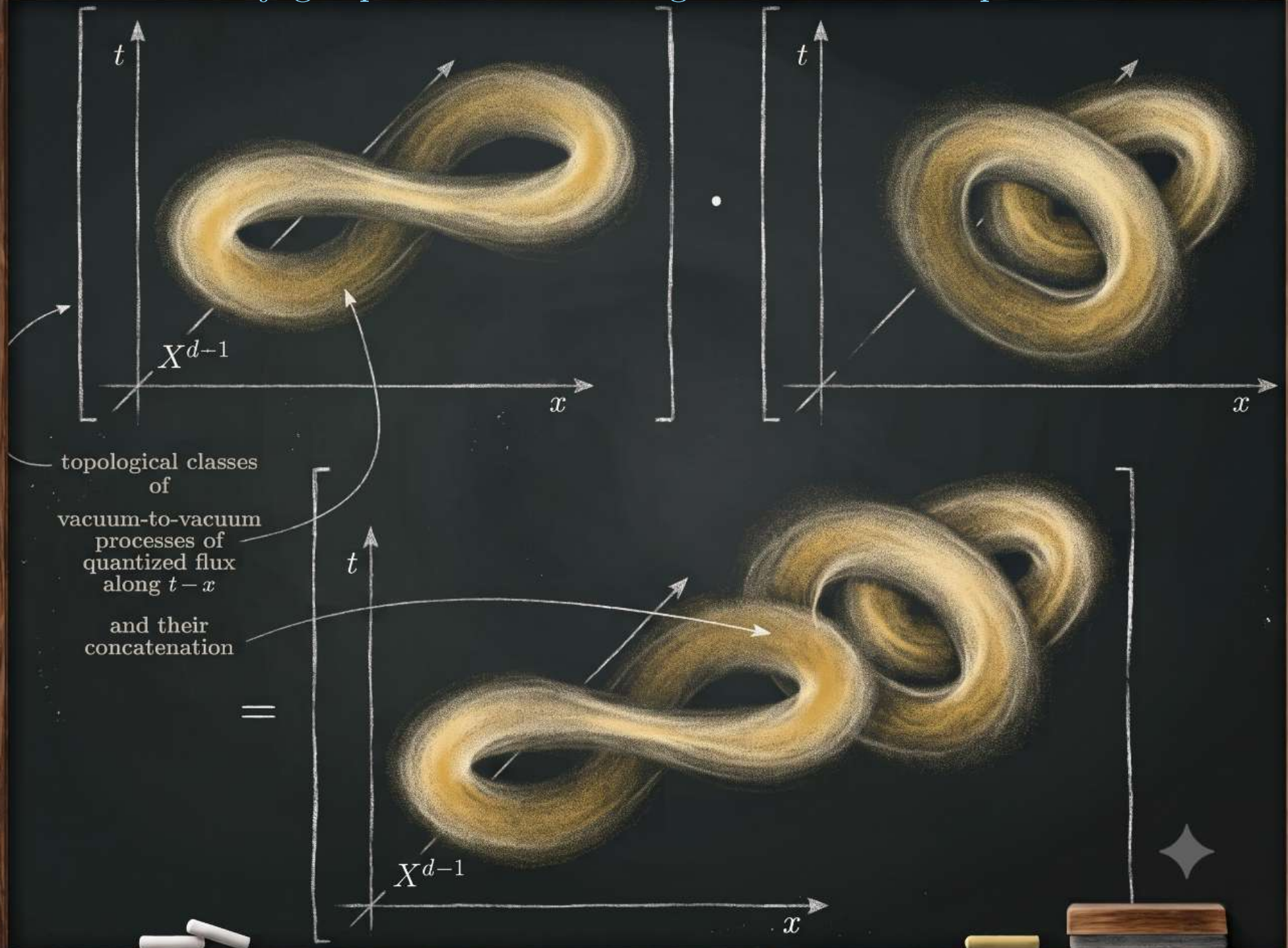
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Pontrjagin product here: Light front-ordered product:



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generally elusive, works here
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here:
boundary
theory $\left\{ \begin{array}{ccc} \text{Mod}_{\mathbb{C}} & \longrightarrow & \text{Loc}_{\mathbb{C}}(\text{Map}^*((-)\cup\{\infty\}; \mathcal{A})) \\ X^{d-1} \vdash \mathbb{1} & \mapsto & \mathcal{H}(X^{d-1}) \end{array} \right.$

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$\Rightarrow$ over X^{d-1} these boundary state spaces are:

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“general covariance”

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actual experiment!
cf. below

$\simeq \text{Loc}_{\mathbb{C}}(\text{Map}^*(X^{d-1}, \mathcal{A}) // \text{Diff}(X^{d-1}))$
“general covariance”

IR-Completion with Sources & Branes

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higher Maxwell-type fluxes with sources have

a *characteristic fibration*
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theory

Gauß law

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4D Maxwell
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$$\mathrm{d} J_3^{\text{el}} = 0$$

$$X_{\cup\{\infty\}}^3 \xrightarrow{(J_3^{\text{mg}}, J_3^{\text{el}})} \Omega_{\text{cl}}^1(\cdot; \mathfrak{l} B B^2 \mathbb{Z}^2)$$

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electron number = current cohomology
with compact spatial support!

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Examples

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4D Maxwell with sources	$\begin{array}{l} F_2 \\ E_2 \\ \mathrm{d} J_3^{\text{mg}} = 0 \\ \mathrm{d} J_3^{\text{el}} = 0 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} X^3 \\ \downarrow \iota \\ X^3_{\cup\{\infty\}} \xrightarrow{(J_3^{\text{mg}}, J_3^{\text{el}})} \Omega^1_{\text{cl}}(\cdot; \mathfrak{l} B B^2 \mathbb{Z}^2) \end{array}$

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4D Maxwell
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$$\begin{aligned} d F_2 &= \iota^* J_3^{\text{mg}} \\ d E_2 &= \iota^* J_3^{\text{el}} \\ d J_3^{\text{mg}} &= 0 \\ d J_3^{\text{el}} &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X^3 & \xrightarrow{(F_2, E_2)} & \Omega_{\text{cl}}^1(\cdot; \mathfrak{l} E B^2 \mathbb{Z}^2) \\ \downarrow \iota & & \downarrow \\ X_{\cup \{\infty\}}^3 & \xrightarrow{(J_3^{\text{mg}}, J_3^{\text{el}})} & \Omega_{\text{cl}}^1(\cdot; \mathfrak{l} B B^2 \mathbb{Z}^2) \end{array}$$

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M5-probe
of 11D SUGra

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M5-probe of 11D SUGra	$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{d} G_4 &= 0 \\ \mathrm{d} G_7 &= \tfrac{1}{2}G_4G_4 \end{aligned}$	$X^{10} \xrightarrow{(G_4, G_7)} \Omega_{\mathrm{cl}}^1(\cdot; \mathfrak{l}S^4)$

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M5-probe
of 11D SUGra

$$d G_4 = 0$$

$$d G_7 = \frac{1}{2} G_4 G_4$$

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$$d H_3 = \phi^* G_4$$

$$d G_4 = 0$$

$$d G_7 = \frac{1}{2} G_4 G_4$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Sigma^5 & \xrightarrow{H_3} & \Omega_{\text{cl}}^1(\cdot; \iota_{S^4} S^7) \\ \downarrow \phi & & \downarrow \iota_{h_{\text{IH}}} \\ X^{10} & \xrightarrow{(G_4, G_7)} & \Omega_{\text{cl}}^1(\cdot; \iota S^4) \end{array}$$

IR-Completion with Sources & Branes

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a *characteristic fibration* $\begin{matrix} \mathfrak{a} \\ \downarrow \\ \mathfrak{b} \end{matrix} \in \text{Fib}(L_\infty\text{Alg}_\mathbb{R})$

theory

Gauß law

characteristic

4D Maxwell
with sources

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{d} F_2 &= \iota^* J_3^{\mathrm{mg}} \\ \mathrm{d} E_2 &= \iota^* J_3^{\mathrm{el}} \\ \mathrm{d} J_3^{\mathrm{mg}} &= 0 \\ \mathrm{d} J_3^{\mathrm{el}} &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X^3 & \xrightarrow{(F_2, E_2)} & \Omega_{\mathrm{cl}}^1(\cdot; \mathfrak{l}EB^2\mathbb{Z}^2) \\ \downarrow \iota & & \downarrow \\ X_{\cup\{\infty\}}^3 & \xrightarrow{(J_3^{\mathrm{mg}}, J_3^{\mathrm{el}})} & \Omega_{\mathrm{cl}}^1(\cdot; \mathfrak{l}BB^2\mathbb{Z}^2) \end{array}$$

M5-probe
of 11D SUGra

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{d} H_3 &= \phi^* G_4 \\ \mathrm{d} G_4 &= 0 \\ \mathrm{d} G_7 &= \tfrac{1}{2} G_4 G_4 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \Sigma^5 & \xrightarrow{H_3} & \Omega_{\mathrm{cl}}^1(\cdot; \mathfrak{l}_{S^4} S^7) \\ \downarrow \phi & & \downarrow \mathfrak{l}h_{\mathbb{H}} \\ X^{10} & \xrightarrow{(G_4, G_7)} & \Omega_{\mathrm{cl}}^1(\cdot; \mathfrak{l}S^4) \end{array}$$

Examples

IR-Completion with Sources & Branes

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meaning that its Sullivan
relative minimal model is $\text{CE} \left(\begin{array}{c} \mathfrak{a} \\ \downarrow \\ \mathfrak{b} \end{array} \right)$

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& charges are in *twisted relative* nonabelian cohomology:

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IR-Complete C-Field & M5 Model

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recall: 11D SuGra with M5-probes
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$$\begin{array}{c} \downarrow_{S^4} S^7 \\ \downarrow \iota_{h_{\text{II}}} \\ \downarrow S^4 \end{array}$$

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$p =$	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
$H^0(\mathbb{R}^{1,10} - \mathbb{R}^{1,p}; S^4)$	0	0	$\mathbb{Z}$	0	0	$\mathbb{Z}$	0	0	0	0	(integral)
$\simeq \pi_{9-p}(S^4)$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	
	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}^2$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}^2$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/12}$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}$	0	0	0	0	0	(fractional)

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near horizon of a p -brane

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			$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	(fractional)
			$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}^2$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}^2$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/12}$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}$	0	0	0	0	0	

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M2-brane

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$H^0(\mathbb{R}^{1,10} - \mathbb{R}^{1,p}; S^4)$	0	0	$\mathbb{Z}$	0	0	$\mathbb{Z}$	0	0	0	0	(integral)
$\simeq \pi_{9-p}(S^4)$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	
	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}^2$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}^2$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/12}$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}$	0	0	0	0	0	(fractional)

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M5-brane

$p =$	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
$H^0(\mathbb{R}^{1,10} - \mathbb{R}^{1,p}; S^4)$	0	0	$\mathbb{Z}$	0	0	$\mathbb{Z}$	0	0	0	0	(integral)
$\simeq \pi_{9-p}(S^4)$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	$\oplus$	
	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}^2$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}^2$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/12}$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}$	$\mathbb{Z}_{/2}$	0	0	0	0	0	(fractional)

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hence stably $\mathbb{S}^4(X^{10})$

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$$\downarrow$$

hence stably $\mathbb{S}^4(X^{10})$

exactly in this (co)dimension
the sphere spectrum $\mathbb{S}$
is approximated by tmf :

$$\mathbb{S} \xrightarrow{\simeq_{\leq 6}} \mathrm{tmf}$$

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- entails that M-brane charges are in *CoHomotopy* $\pi^4(X^{10})$

exactly in this (co)dimension
the sphere spectrum $\mathbb{S}$
is approximated by tmf :

$$\mathbb{S} \xrightarrow{\simeq_{\leq 6}} \mathrm{tmf}$$

hence stably $\mathbb{S}^4(X^{10})$

$$\begin{array}{c} \downarrow \wr \\ \text{in tmf} \quad \mathrm{tmf}^4(X^{10}) \end{array}$$

IR-Complete C-Field & M5 Model

recall: 11D SuGra with M5-probes
is characterized by:

$$\begin{array}{c} \mathfrak{l}_{S^4} S^7 \\ \downarrow \mathfrak{l} h_{\mathbb{H}} \\ \mathfrak{l} S^4 \end{array}$$

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IR-Complete C-Field & M5 Model

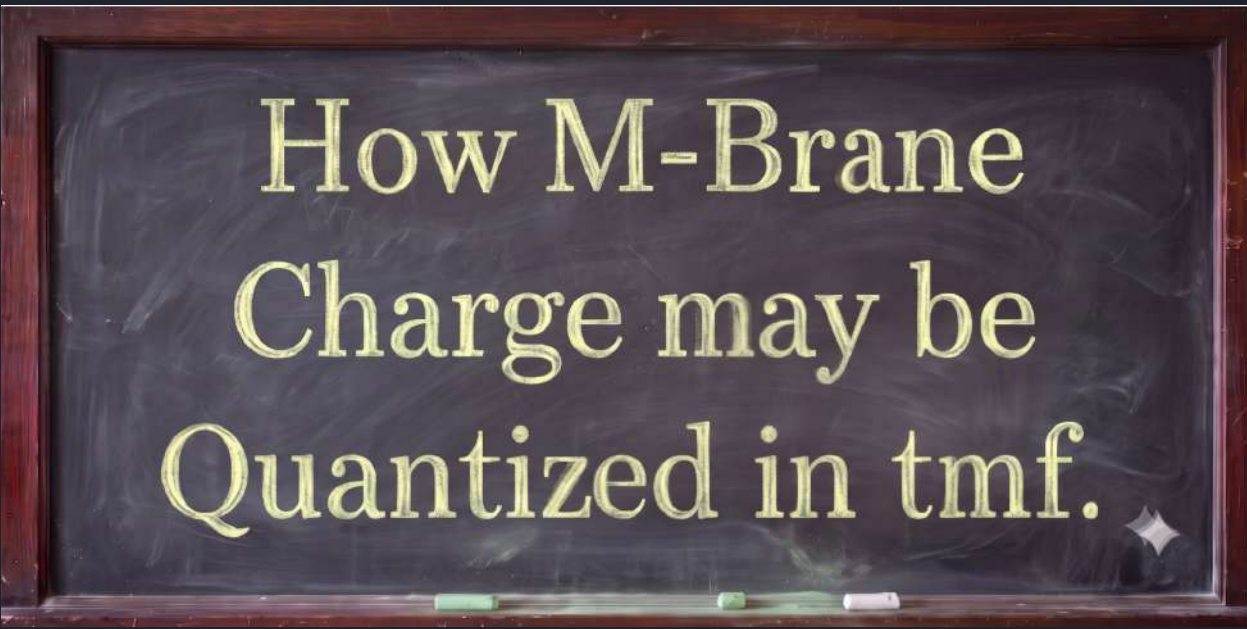
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How M-Brane
Charge may be
Quantized in tmf.

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IR-Complete C-Field & M5 Model

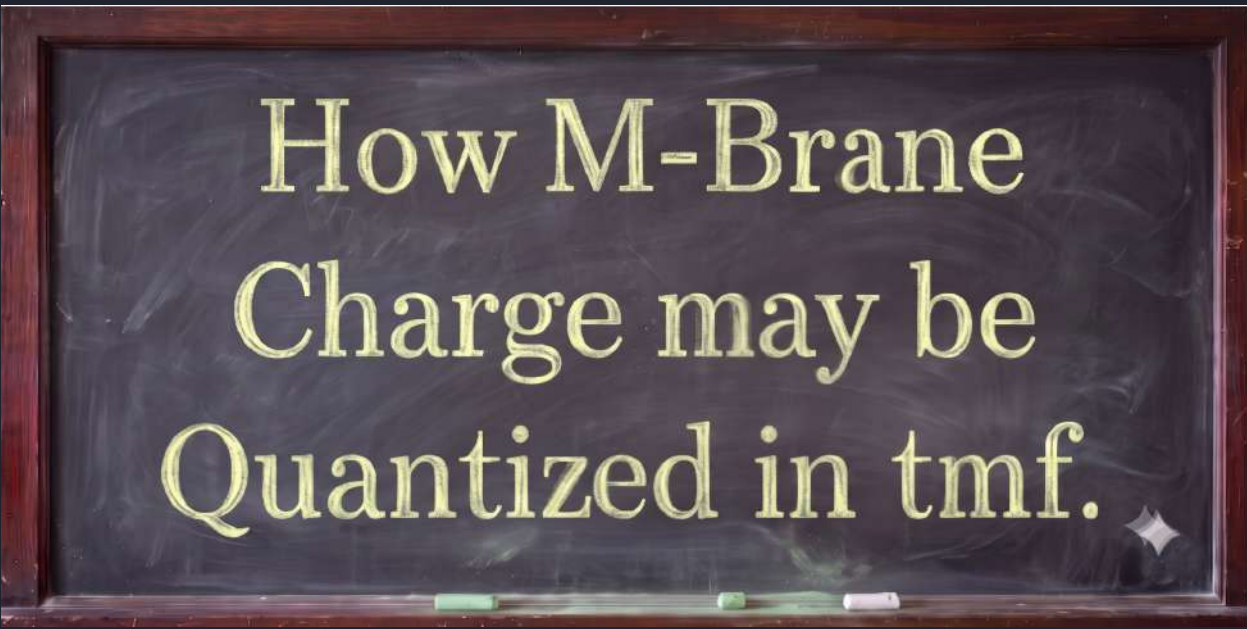
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CoHomotopy:



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$$\begin{array}{c} \mathbb{R}^1 \times X^9 \dashrightarrow S^4 \xrightarrow{\Sigma^4 1^E} E_4 \\ \text{M2/M5 charges} \quad \text{in } \pi^4 \text{ seen in stable } E\text{-cohomology} \end{array}$$

IR-Complete C-Field & M5 Model

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$$\begin{array}{c} S^7 \\ \downarrow h_{\mathbb{H}} \\ S^4 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} \mathbb{R}^1 \times \Sigma^4 \\ \downarrow \phi \\ \text{M5-probe} \end{array}$$

$$\mathbb{R}^1 \times X^9 \dashrightarrow S^4 \xrightarrow{\Sigma^4 1^E} E_4$$

M2/M5 charges in π^4 seen in stable E -cohomology

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M1-charges in twisted π^3

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbb{R}^1 \times \Sigma^4 & \dashrightarrow & S^7 & & \\ \downarrow \phi & & \downarrow h_{\mathbb{H}} & & \\ \mathbb{R}^1 \times X^9 & \dashrightarrow & S^4 & \xrightarrow{\Sigma^4 1^E} & E_4 \end{array}$$

M5-probe

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M1-charges in twisted π^3 measured in E -cohomology

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbb{R}^1 \times \Sigma^4 & \dashrightarrow & S^7 & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow \phi & & \downarrow h_{\mathbb{H}} & \swarrow h_3^E & \downarrow 0 \\ \text{M5-probe} & & & & \\ \mathbb{R}^1 \times X^9 & \dashrightarrow & S^4 & \xrightarrow{\Sigma^4 1^E} & E_4 \end{array}$$

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is equivalently quaternionic E -orientation over 10D spaces

M2/M5 charges in π^4 seen in stable E -cohomology

IR-Complete C-Field & M5 Model

recall: 11D SuGra with M5-probes is characterized by:

$$\Rightarrow \text{admits IR-completion classified by quaternionic Hopf fibration}$$
M1-charges in twisted π^3 measured in E -cohomology

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
\mathbb{R}^1 \times \Sigma^4 & \dashrightarrow & S^7 & \longrightarrow & * & & \text{is equivalently} \\
\downarrow \phi & & \downarrow h_{\mathbb{H}} & & \downarrow 0 & & \text{quaternionic} \\
\text{M5-probe} & & & & \mathbb{H}P^2 & & \text{\textit{E}-orientation} \\
& & & & \downarrow h_3^E & & \text{over 10D spaces} \\
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M2/M5 charges in π^4 seen in stable E -cohomology

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M1-charges in twisted π^3 measured in E -cohomology

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbb{R}^1 \times \Sigma^4 & \dashrightarrow & S^7 & \longrightarrow & * \\ \downarrow \int \phi & & \downarrow h_{\mathbb{H}} & & \swarrow \text{e.g. for } E \\ \text{M5-probe} & & & & 0 \text{ complex-oriented} \\ & & & & \downarrow \\ \mathbb{R}^1 \times X^9 & \dashrightarrow & S^4 & \xrightarrow{\Sigma^4 1^E} & E_4 \\ & & \nearrow \text{ } & \searrow h_3^E & \\ & & \mathbb{H}P^2 & & \end{array}$$

M2/M5 charges in π^4 seen in stable E -cohomology

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$\Rightarrow$ M5-branes on 4-manifold Σ^4 } give classes in E^4 of spacetime relative worldvolume

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in particular:

for C an elliptic curve and E_C its elliptic cohomology

$\Rightarrow$ $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{M5-branes on} \\ \text{4-manifold } \Sigma^4 \end{array} \right\}$ give classes in E_C^4 of spacetime relative worldvolume

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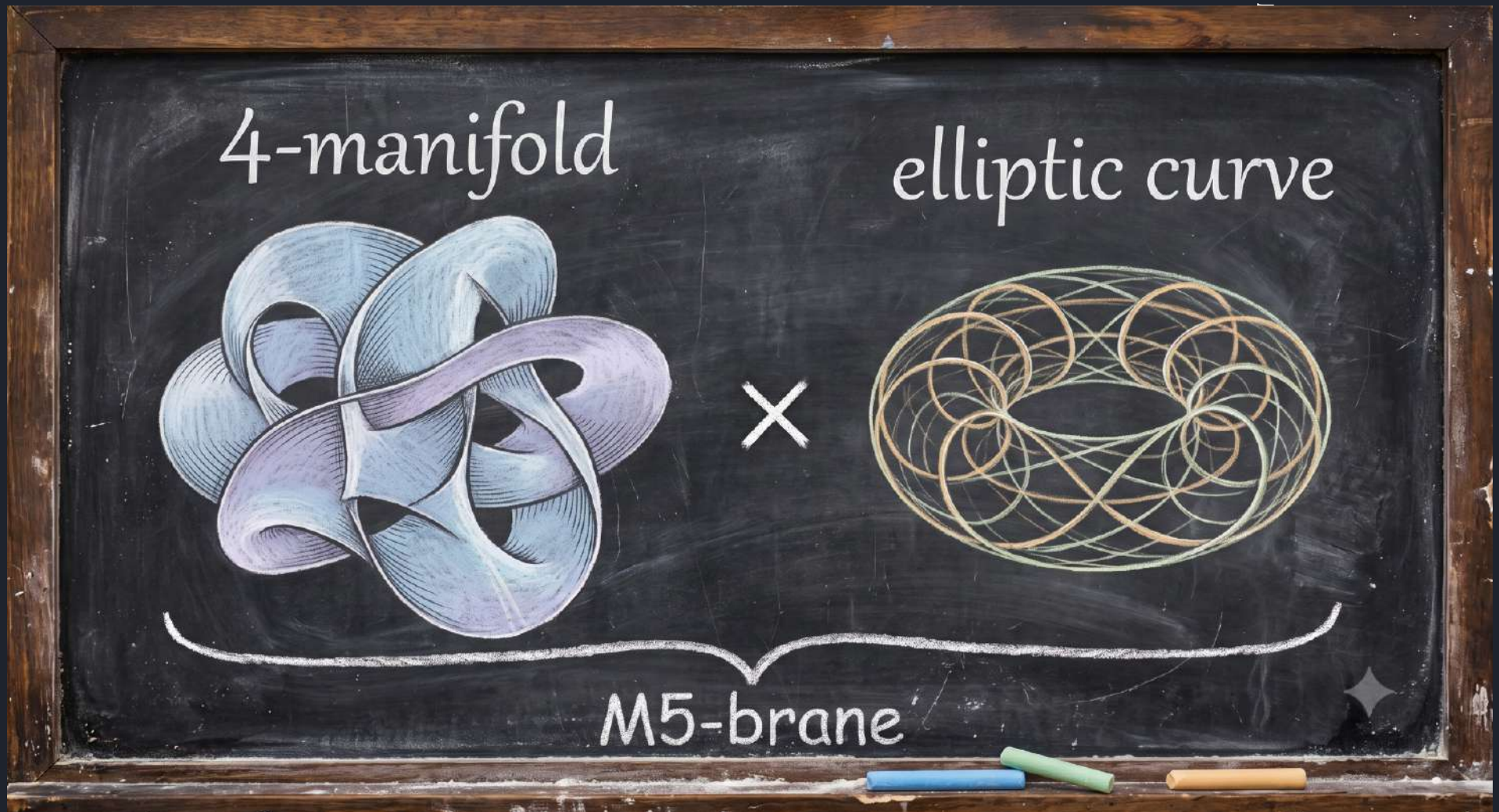
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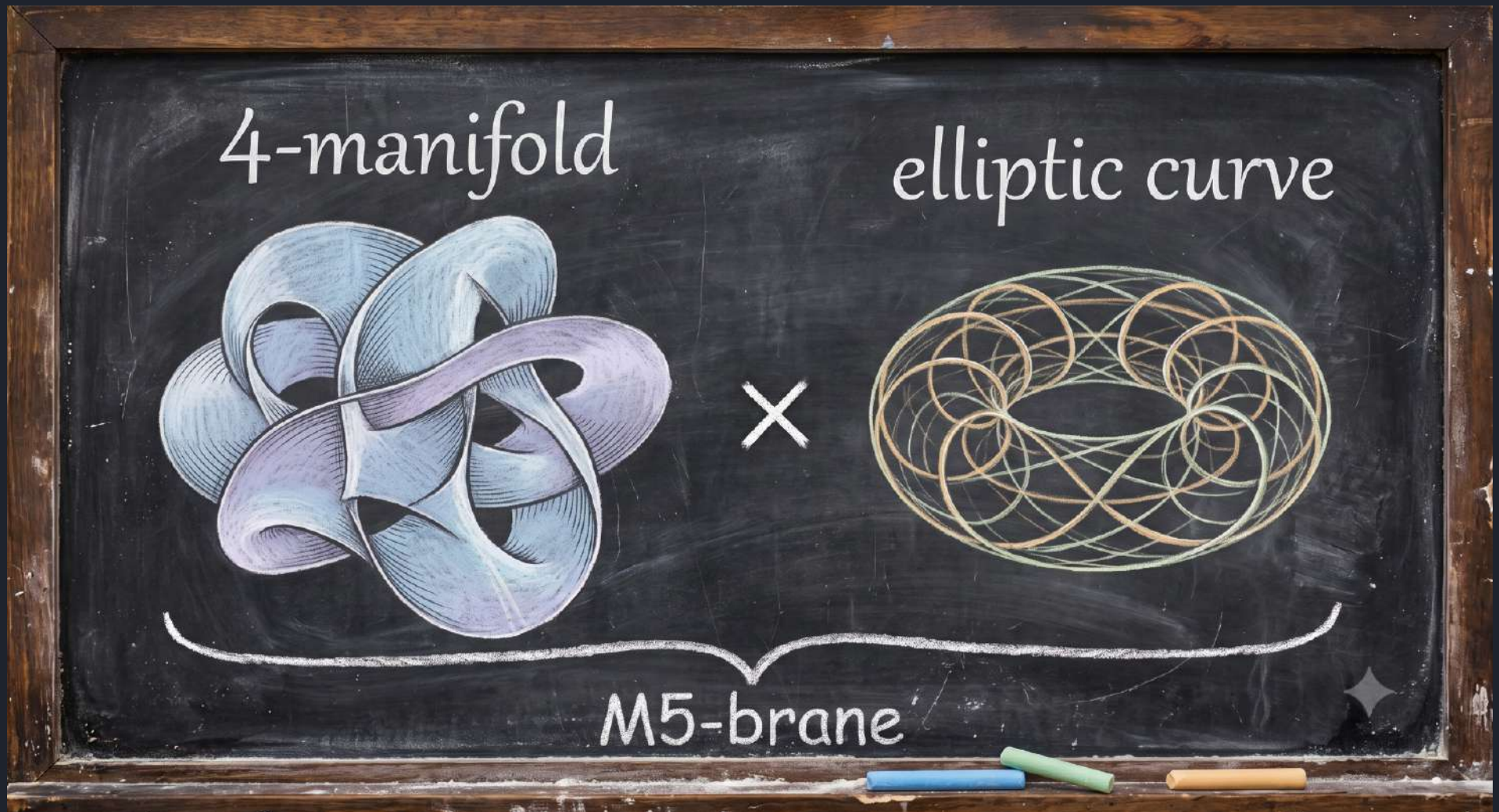
IR-Complete C-Field & M5 Model



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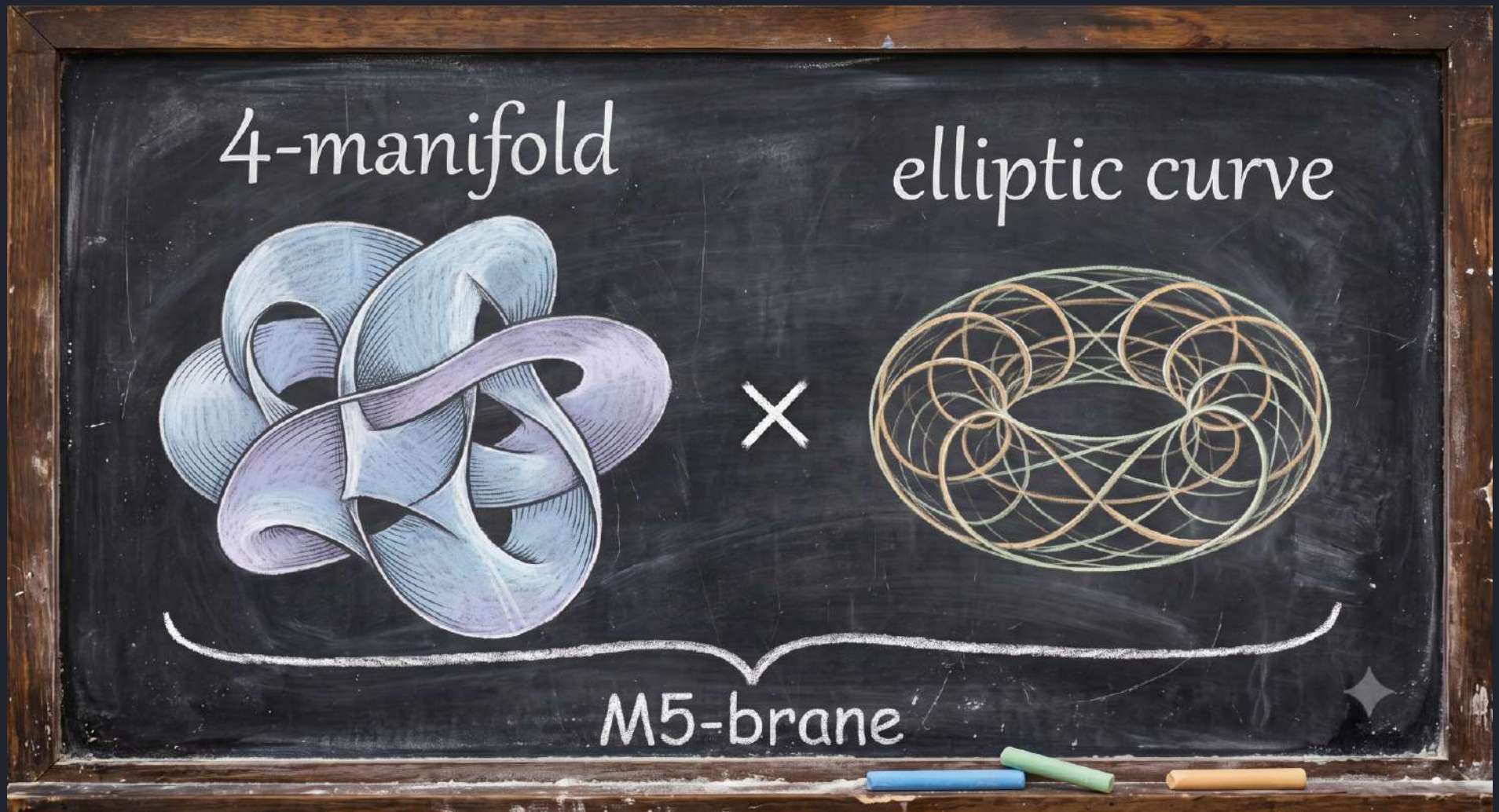
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similar statements are expected in string folklore:

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Local Systems in the Real World

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Topologically Ordered Quantum Matter

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external parameters: $p \in P$

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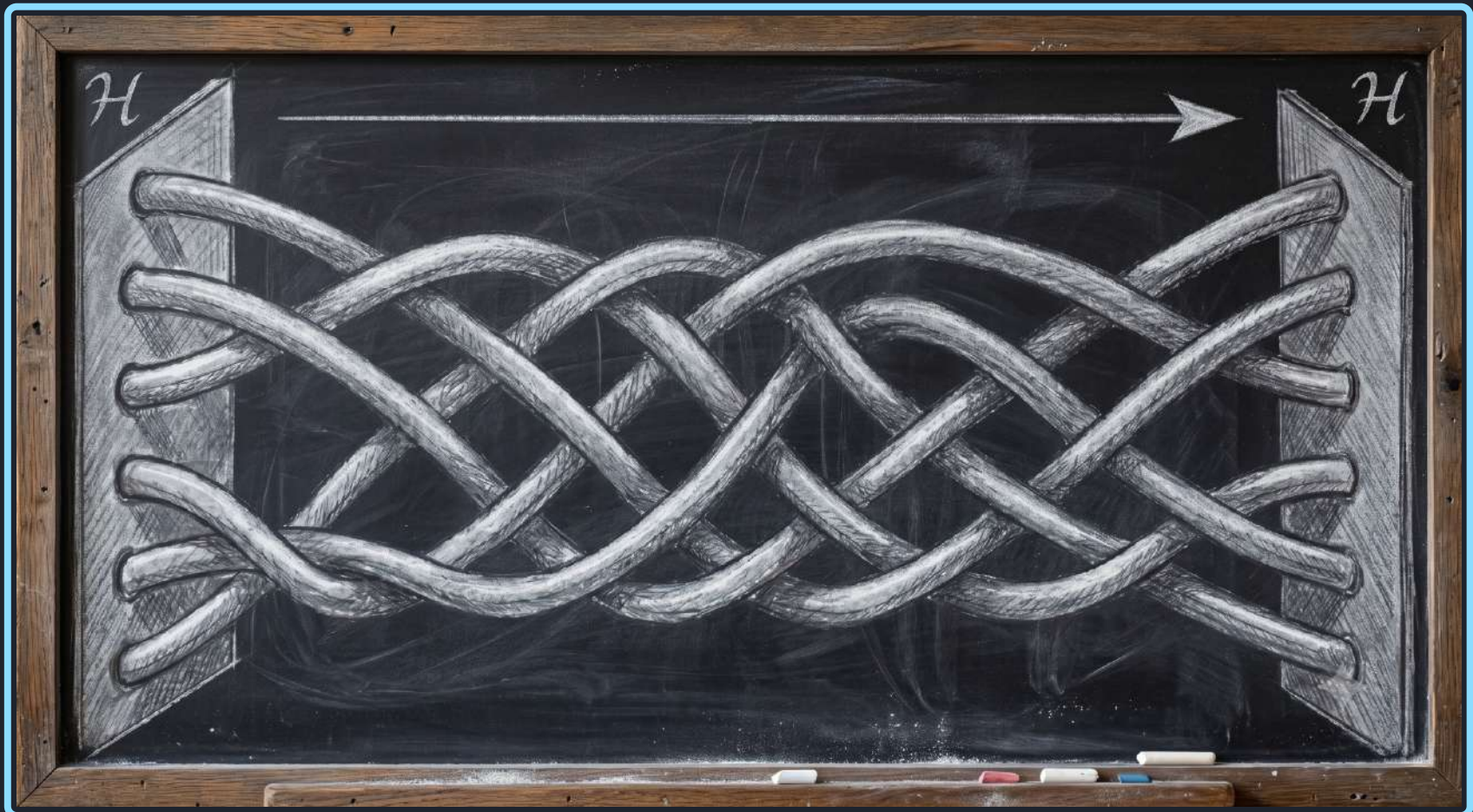
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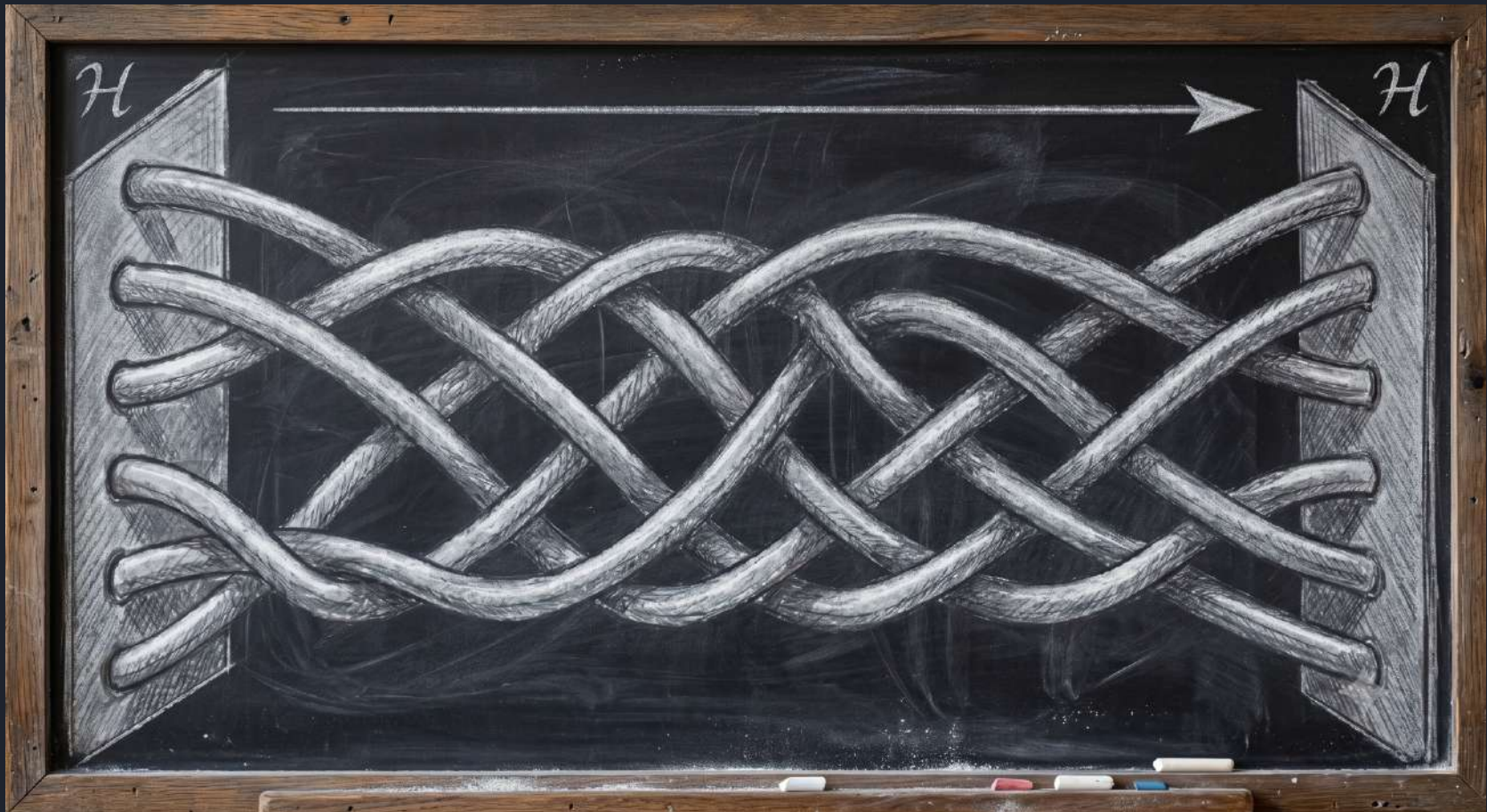
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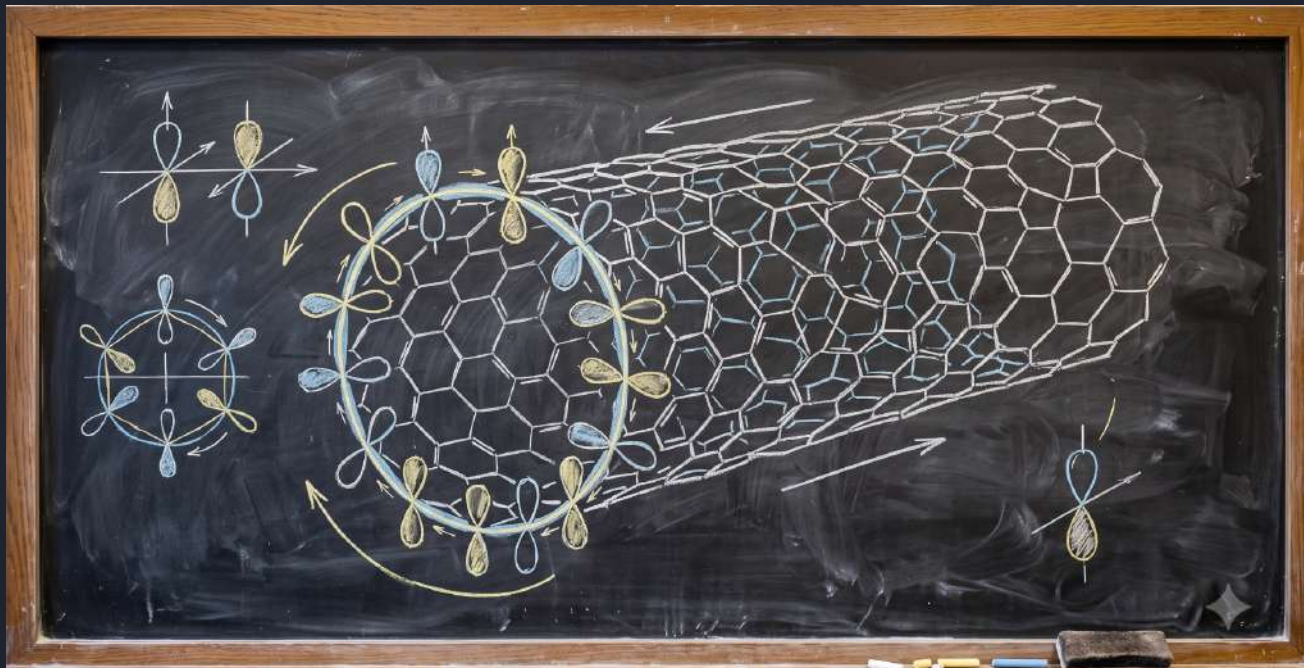
Specifically: Crystalline Phases

Local Systems in the Real World

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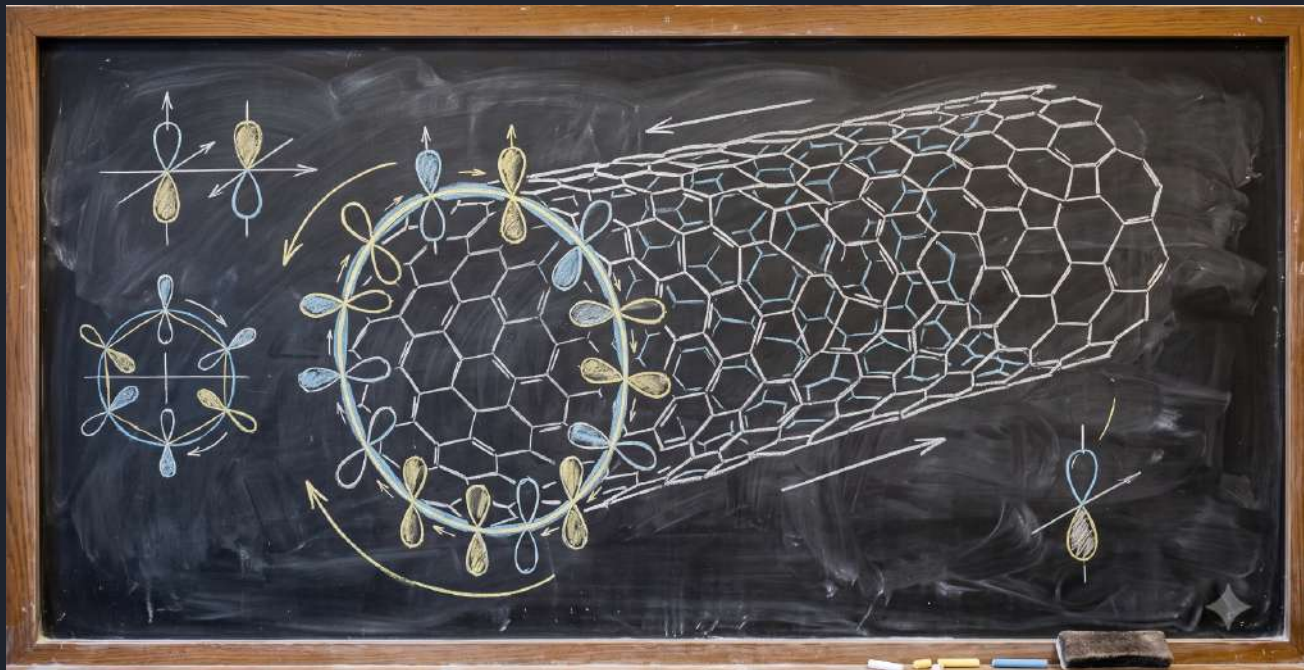
crystal lattice



Local Systems in the Real World

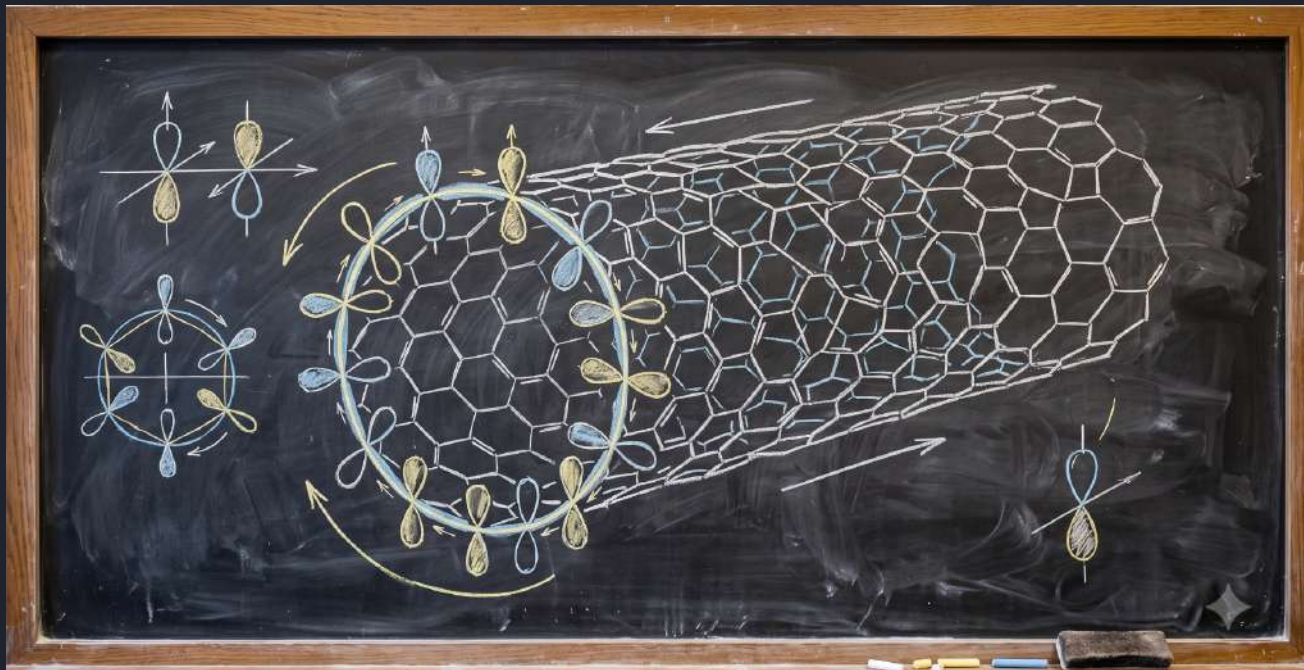
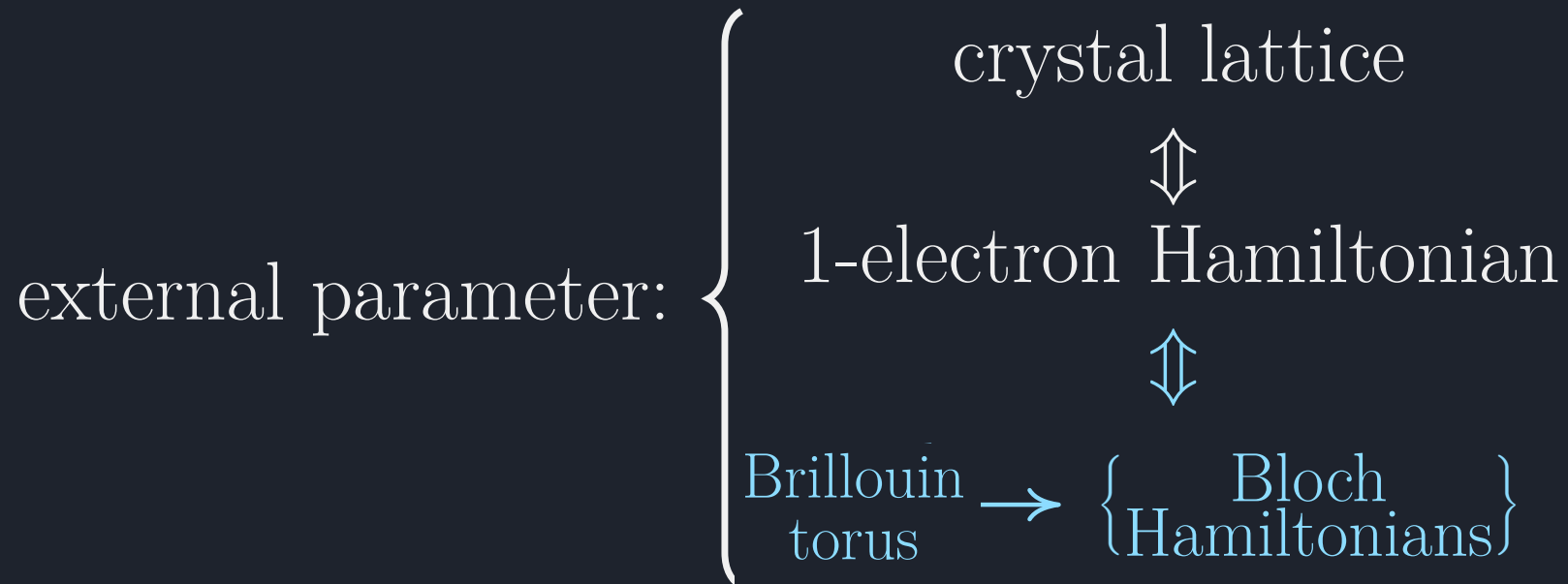
Specifically: Crystalline Phases

external parameter: { crystal lattice
 $\Updownarrow$
1-electron Hamiltonian



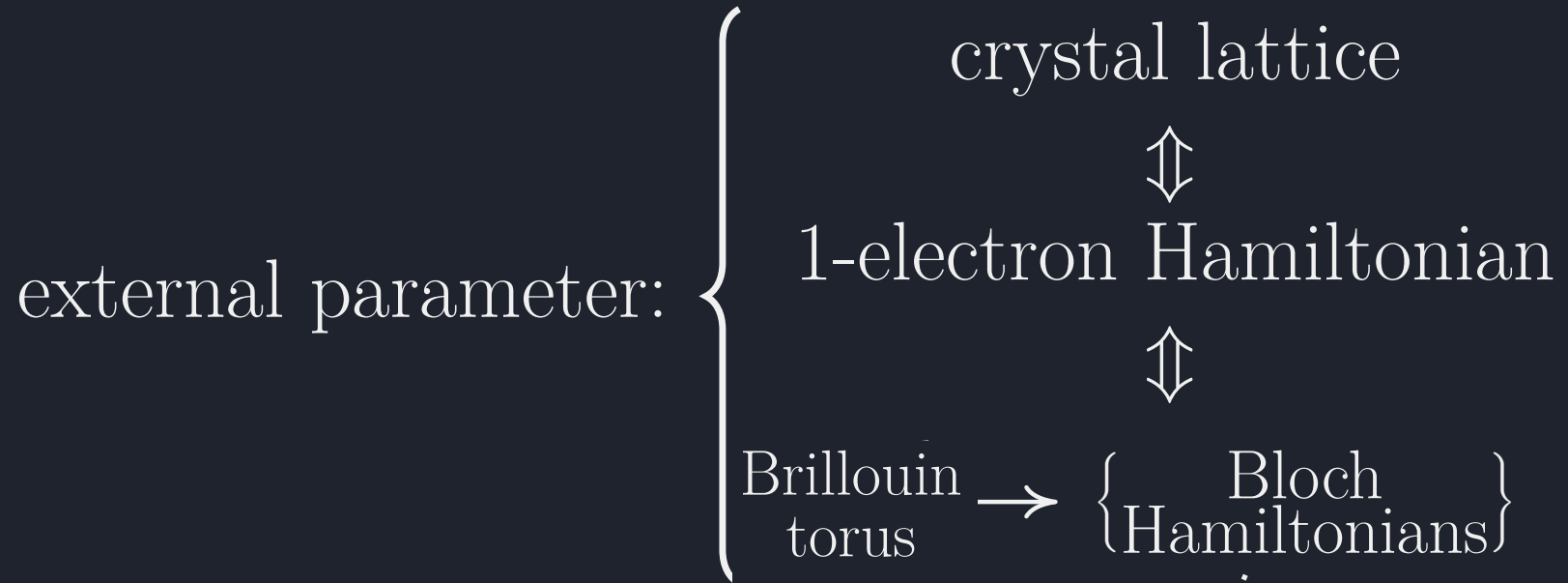
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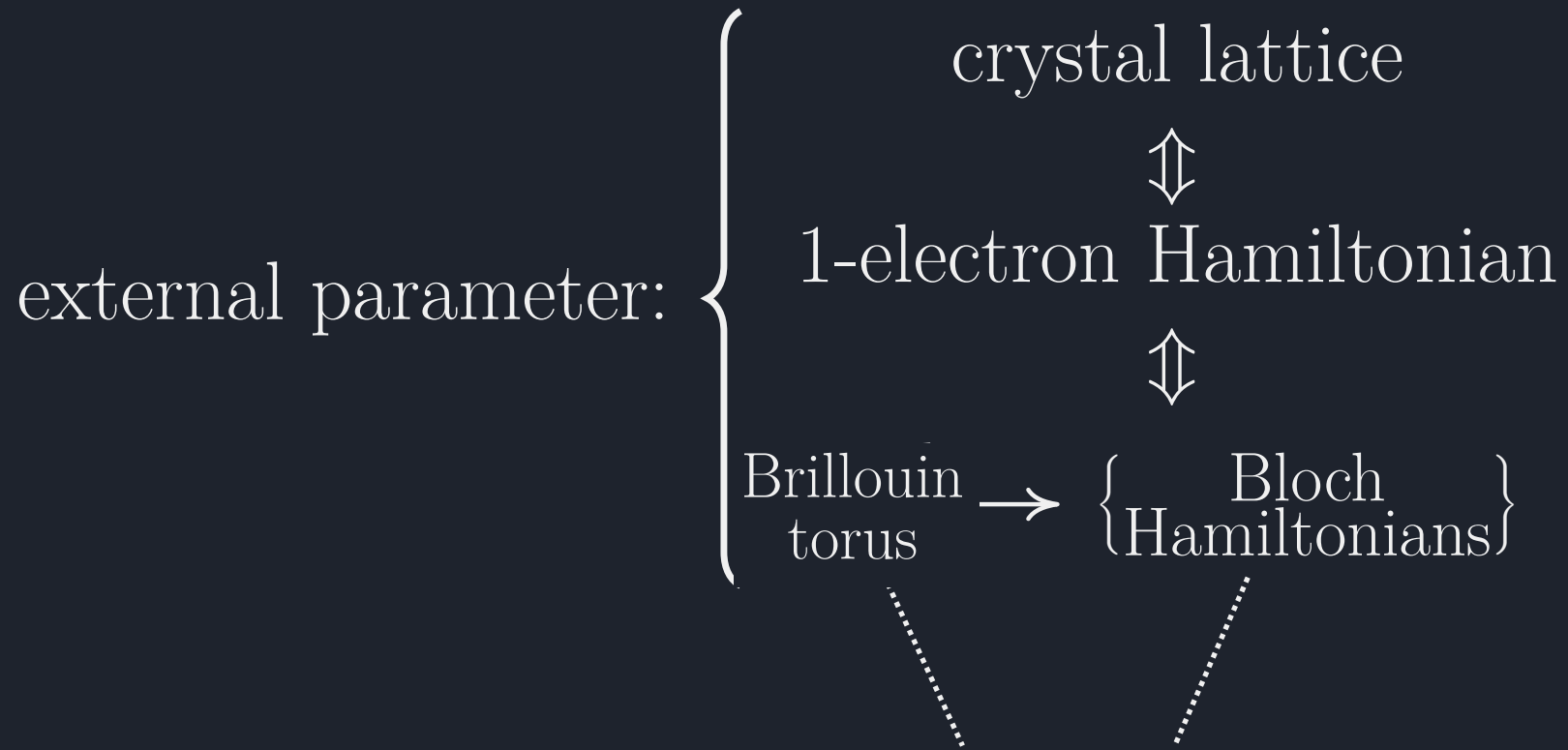
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Local Systems in the Real World

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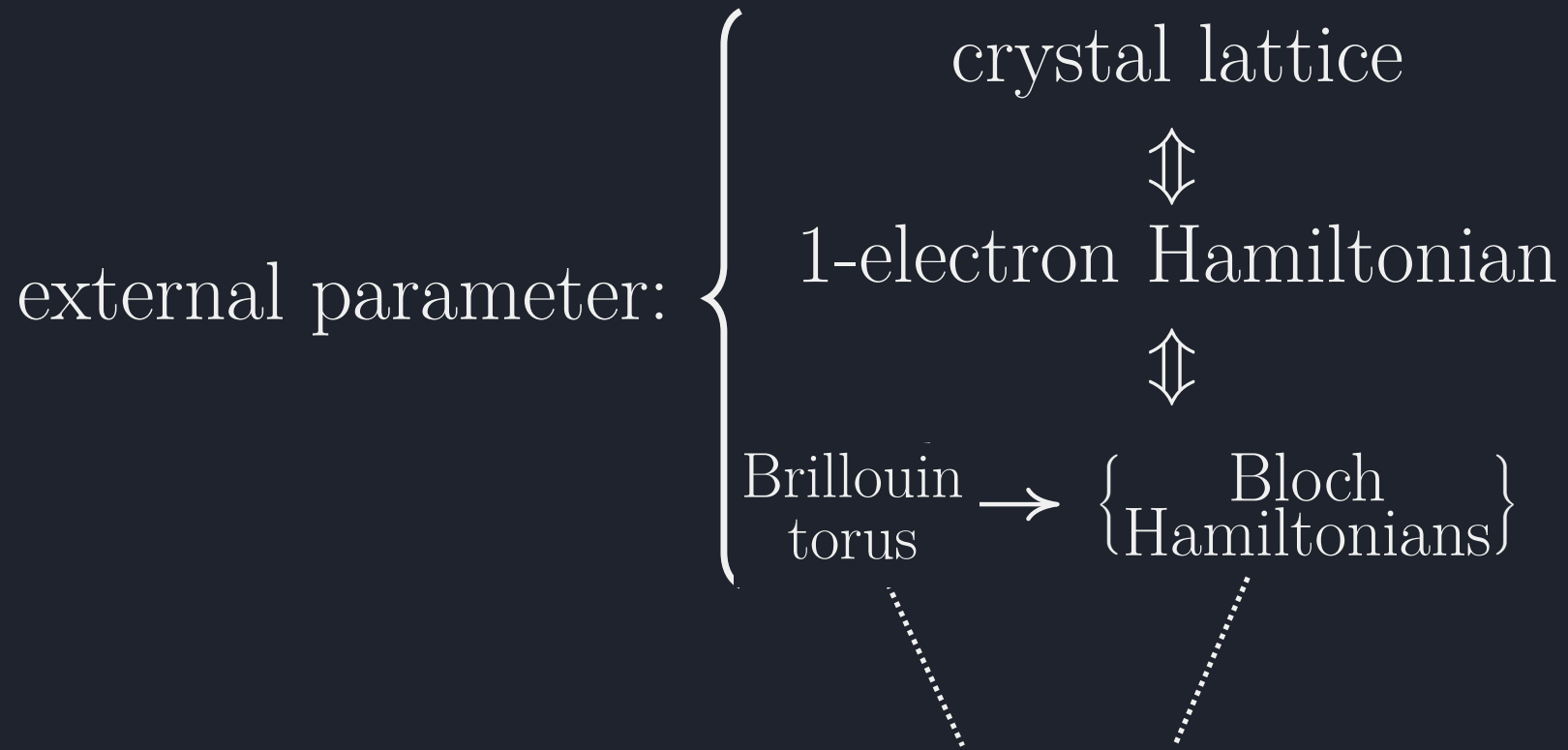


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Local Systems in the Real World

Concretely:

2-band Chern Insulators

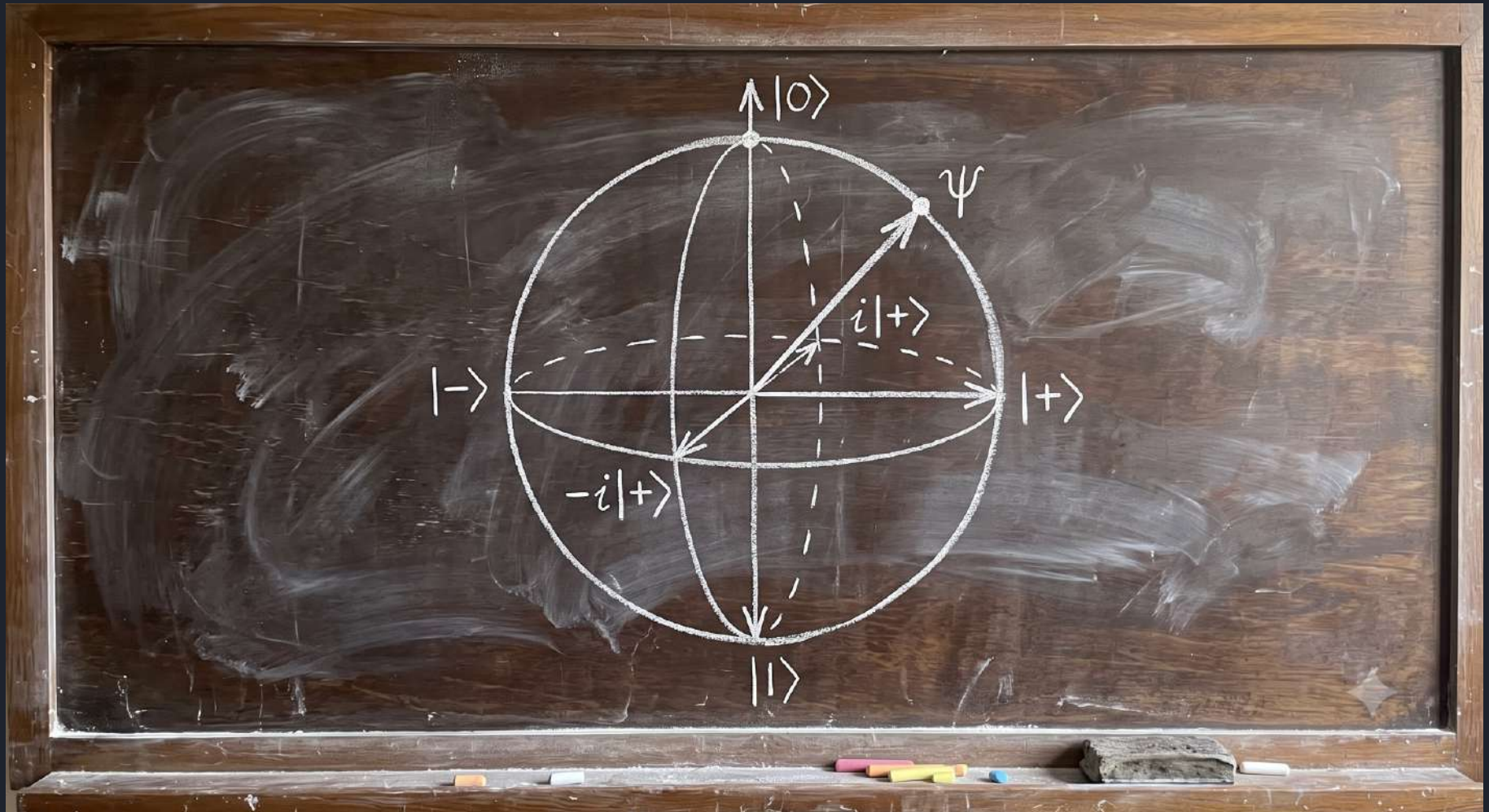
have: $\mathcal{B} \sim \mathbb{C}P^1$

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Theorem [[arXiv:2505.22144](#)]:

$$\mathrm{Loc}_{\mathbb{C}}(\mathrm{Map}(T^2, \mathbb{C}P^1) // \mathrm{Diff}(T^2))$$

$$\cong$$

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forced by
diff equivariance

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seen in experiment!
[Nakamura et al. 2019]

Local Systems in the Real World

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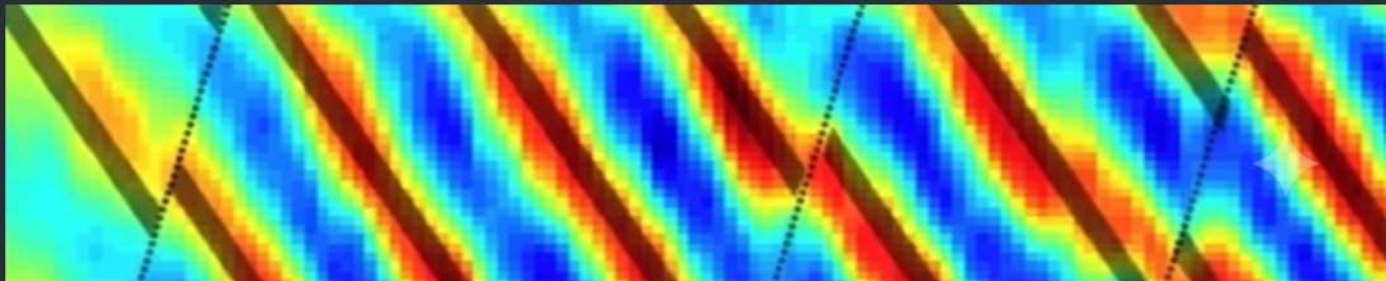
nature

NEWS | 03 July 2020

Welcome anyons! Physicists find best evidence yet for long-sought 2D structures

The 'quasiparticles' defy the categories of ordinary particles and herald a potential way to build quantum computers.

By [Davide Castelvecchi](#)



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Local Systems in the Real World

Local Systems in the Real World

above topological sector,
FQH excitations have
two IR-symmetries
seen in experiment:

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1. W_∞ -symmetry

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(!!)

Local Systems in the Real World

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IR-Complete C-Field & M5 Model

recall: 11D SuGra with M5-probes
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brane configuration

A_n -orbi-singularity

$$X^{10} := \Sigma^3 \times \underset{\left(\begin{smallmatrix} \curvearrowright \\ G \end{smallmatrix}\right)}{\mathbb{C}} \times \underset{\left(\begin{smallmatrix} \curvearrowright \\ G \end{smallmatrix}\right)}{\overline{\mathbb{C}}} \times X^3 \dashrightarrow \underset{\left(\begin{smallmatrix} \curvearrowright \\ G \end{smallmatrix}\right)}{S^4}$$

classifying fibration

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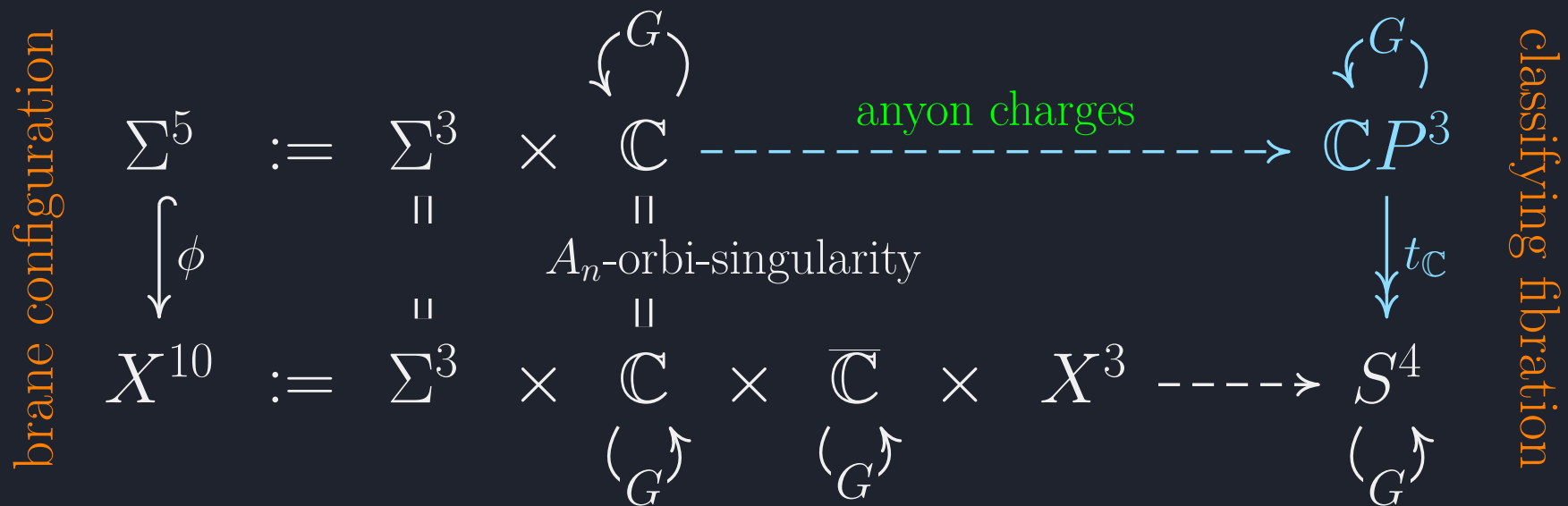
$$\begin{array}{c} \text{brane configuration} \end{array}
 \begin{array}{c} \Sigma^5 \\ \downarrow \phi \\ X^{10} \end{array}
 :=
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 \times
 \begin{array}{c} \begin{array}{c} \curvearrowright^G \\ \mathbb{C} \\ \parallel \\ A_n\text{-orbi-singularity} \\ \parallel \\ \mathbb{C} \\ \curvearrowleft_G \end{array} \\ \times \\ \begin{array}{c} \mathbb{C} \\ \curvearrowleft_G \end{array} \end{array}
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IR-Complete C-Field & M5 Model

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$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & \mathbb{R}^{S^4} S^7 \\ & & \downarrow \iota_{h_{\mathbb{H}}} \\ & & \mathbb{R}^{S^4} \end{array}$$

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The End

For more see:

- *The Character Map In Nonabelian Cohomology* (esp. §9)
- *Complete Topological Quantization of Higher Gauge Fields*
- *Higher Gauge Theory via Differential Nonabelian Cohomology*
- *Higher Superspace Supergravity and its IR-Completions*