The von Neumann algebra of smooth four-manifolds and a quantum theory of space-time and gravity

Gábor Etesi

Department of Geometry, Mathematical Institute, Faculty of Science,
Budapest University of Technology and Economics,
Egry J. u. 1, H ép., H-1111 Budapest, Hungary *

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Abstract

Making use of its smooth structure only, out of a connected oriented smooth 4-manifold a von Neumann algebra is constructed. As a special four dimensional phenomenon this von Neumann algebra is approximated by algebraic (i.e., formal) curvature tensors of the underlying 4-manifold and the von Neumann algebra itself is a hyperfinite factor of II₁ type hence is unique up to abstract isomorphisms of von Neumann algebras. Nevertheless over a fixed 4-manifold this von Neumann algebra admits a representation on a Hilbert space such that its unitary equivalence class is preserved by orientation-preserving diffeomorphisms. Consequently the Murray–von Neumann coupling constant of this representation is well-defined and gives rise to a new and computable real-valued smooth 4-manifold invariant.

Some consequences of this construction for quantum gravity are also discussed. Namely reversing the construction by starting not with a particular smooth 4-manifold but with the unique hyperfinite II₁ factor, a conceptually simple but manifestly four dimensional, covariant, non-perturbative and genuinely quantum theory is introduced whose classical limit is general relativity in an appropriate sense. Therefore it is reasonable to consider it as a sort of quantum theory of gravity. In this model, among other interesting things, the observed positive but small value of the cosmological constant acquires a natural explanation.

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1 Introduction

This paper, considered as a substantial technical and conceptual clarification of our earlier work [7], naturally splits up into two parts: a mathematical one describing a self-contained and relatively simple way how to attach up to abstract isomorphisms a single von Neumann algebra to every smooth 4-manifold by making use of their smooth structures only; and a physical part exhibiting a manifestly covariant, non-perturbative four dimensional quantum theory resembling a quantum theory of four dimensional space-time and gravity. This is achieved by reversing the mathematical construction.

*E-mail: etesi@math.bme.hu
The 20-21st century has been witness to a great expansion of mathematics and physics bringing a genuinely two-sided interaction between them. The 1980-90’s culmination of discoveries in low dimensional differential topology driven by Yang–Mills theory of particle physics has dramatically changed our understanding of four dimensional spaces: nowadays we know that the interplay between topology and smoothness is unexpectedly complicated precisely in four dimensions leading to the existence of a superabundance of smooth four dimensional manifolds. While traditional invariants of differential topology loose power in three and four dimensions, the new quantum invariants provided by various Yang–Mills theories work exactly in these dimensions allowing an at least partial enumeration of manifolds. It is perhaps not just an accident that quantum invariants are applicable precisely in three and four dimensions, equal to the phenomenological dimensions of physical space(-time).

It is interesting that unlike Yang–Mills theories, classical general relativity—despite its powerful physical content, too—has not contributed to our understanding of four dimensionality yet. This might follow from the fact that general relativity, unlike Yang–Mills theories with their self-duality phenomena, permits formulations in every dimensions greater than four exhibiting essentially the same properties. This is certainly true when general relativity is considered in its usual fully classical differential-geometric context however four dimensionality gets distinguished here as well if one tries to link differential geometry with non-commutativity. Our main result is the following:

**Theorem 1.1.** Let $M$ be a connected oriented smooth $4$-manifold. Making use of its smooth structure only, a von Neumann algebra $\mathcal{R}(M)$ can be constructed which is geometric in the sense that it contains a norm-dense subalgebra of algebraic (i.e., formal) curvature tensors on $M$ and $\mathcal{R}(M)$ itself is a hyperfinite factor of type $\text{II}_1$ (hence is unique up to abstract isomorphism of von Neumann algebras).

Moreover $\mathcal{R}(M)$ admits a representation on a certain separable Hilbert space over $M$ such that the unitary equivalence class of this representation is invariant under orientation-preserving diffeomorphisms of $M$. Consequently the Murray–von Neumann coupling constant of this representation gives rise to a smooth invariant $\gamma(M) \in [0,1)$. It behaves like $\gamma(M \setminus Y) = \gamma(M)$ under excision of homologically trivial submanifolds and $\gamma(M \# N) = (\gamma(M) + \gamma(N))/(1 + \gamma(M)\gamma(N))$ under connected sum.

The outstanding problem of modern theoretical physics is how to unify the obviously successful and mathematically consistent theory of general relativity with the obviously successful but yet mathematically problematic relativistic quantum field theory. It has been generally believed that these two fundamental pillars of modern theoretical physics are in tension with each other concerning not only the mathematical apparatus they rest on but even at a deep foundational level (cf. e.g. [10]): classical concepts of general relativity such as the space-time event, the light cone or the event horizon of a black hole are too “sharp” objects from a quantum theoretic viewpoint while relativistic quantum field theory is not background independent from the aspect of general relativity. We do not attempt here to survey the vast physical, mathematical and even philosophical literature triggered by the unification problem; we just mention that nowadays the leading candidates expected to be capable for a sort of unification are Hamiltonian or Lagrangian canonical covariant quantization methods of gravity [2, 15] and string theory. But surely there is still a long way ahead; nevertheless most of the physicists and mathematicians have the conviction that one day the language of classical general relativity will sound familiar to quantum theorists and vice versa i.e., theoretical bridges must exist connecting the two pillars.

In this context it is interesting that reversing the mathematical approach leading to Theorem 1.1, a conceptionally simple, consistent and apparently novel [7] physical theory drops out which is genuinely quantum and is reasonable to say that it describes gravity in four dimensions. More precisely at least mathematically this theory rests on a solid basis provided by the powerful theory of von Neumann algebras follows: the starting setup is to take the unique hyperfinite $\text{II}_1$ factor von Neumann algebra as the primordial structure and to consider the superabundance of oriented smooth 4-manifolds as being
embedded into it (roughly speaking as orbits of the inner automorphism group of this von Neumann algebra) as well as view the members of a dense subalgebra of this von Neumann algebra as algebraic (i.e. formal, not stemming from an actual metric) curvature tensors along these 4-manifolds. The next step is to identify the von Neumann algebra itself with the algebra of local observables of a quantum theory; therefore in this quantum theory curvature-like quantities in four dimensions are measured in a quantum mechanical sense. This measurement procedure is at least mathematically well-defined due to the existence of a unique faithful finite trace on the $\text{II}_1$ factor von Neumann algebra.

However the physical interpretation of this theory is more subtle and will not be systematically worked out here; of course the main reason is that lacking direct encounters with strong gravitational fields yet we cannot raise appropriate experimental physical questions what to measure. Therefore we will only consider sporadic examples, forecasted or suggested by the mathematical structure. The central question in a physical theory is the understanding of the dynamics it describes. This is related with the concept of energy and time. In our universal quantum theory the only distinguished operator is the unit of the von Neumann algebra consequently it is the only candidate to play the role of a Hamiltonian here. Concerning this choice a convincing mathematical point is that the expectation value of this trivial Hamiltonian i.e., the corresponding energy in certain states coincides with the smooth 4-manifold invariant mentioned in Theorem 1.1; while a physical point is that calculating this energy in a “cosmological state” corresponding to the Friedman–Lemaître–Robertson–Walker model we obtain a simple qualitative explanation of the observed small positive value of the cosmological constant. On the other hand the dynamics is trivial in this theory since our choice for the Hamiltonian is trivial leading to the by-now familiar “problem of time” in gravity theories [2, 6] and in more generality [3, 20, 23].

We close the introduction with a comment on this time problem. Apparently our approach here supports the “no time at all” schools like [3]. However in fact, in our opinion, time is intrinsically and deeply present in all quantum theories and is responsible for their very properties like their probabilistic nature. Since the born of phenomenological thermodynamics in the 19th century, physicists have thought that the phenomenon of (macroscopic) time is related with or somehow stems from the thermodynamical properties of matter. A radical idea along these lines is a quite abandoned suggestion of Weizsäcker [23]. He says that time cannot be completely described in terms of homogeneous geometric extensions like space because the empirically most obvious feature of time is its inhomogeneous character what he calls the chronology of time: the past consists of facts and in principle is subject to unambiguous description, while in sharp contrast the future consists of possibilities hence allowing a probabilistic description only; the chronology of time is equivalent to the empirical validity of the second law of thermodynamics. Therefore, since a physical theory makes predictions on physical happenings—i.e., says something about the future—it must exhibit a probabilistic structure at a sufficiently fundamental level. In this sense quantum theory is a fundamental theory and its intrinsic probabilistic nature reflects the intrinsic chronological nature of time. A recent proposal of Connes–Rovelli is the thermodynamical time hypothesis [6]: they introduce time in quantum theories by interpreting it as the (essentially unique) one-parameter group of modular automorphisms of von Neumann algebras associated with their thermal equilibrium (KMS) states. It turns out that our dynamics coincides with this modular dynamics in the infinitely high temperature (i.e., tracial state) limit.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 is self-contained and is devoted to a mathematically rigorous proof of Theorem 1.1 through a chain of lemmata extending similar results in [7]. The physicist-minded reader can skip this section at first reading by accepting the content of Theorem 1.1. Section 3 contains the introduction of a four dimensional quantum theory of gravity by interpreting Theorem 1.1 from a physical viewpoint. The language of this section is therefore quite different from the previous one.
2 Mathematical construction

Following [7] consider the isomorphism class of a connected oriented smooth 4-manifold (without boundary) and from now on let \( M \) be a once and for all fixed representative in it carrying the action of its own orientation-preserving group of diffeomorphisms \( \text{Diff}^+(M) \). Among all tensor bundles \( T^{(p,q)}M \) over \( M \) the 2nd exterior power \( \wedge^2 T^*M \subset T^{(0,2)}M \) is the only one which can be endowed with a pairing in a natural way i.e., with a pairing extracted from the smooth structure (and the orientation) of \( M \) alone. Indeed, consider its associated vector space \( \Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C}) := C^\infty_c(M;\wedge^2 T^*M \otimes_{\mathbb{R}} \mathbb{C}) \) of compactly supported complexified 2-forms on \( M \). Define \( \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_{L^2(M)} : \Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C}) \times \Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C}) \to \mathbb{C} \) via integration, more precisely put

\[
\langle \alpha, \beta \rangle_{L^2(M)} := \int_M \alpha \wedge \overline{\beta}
\]  

(complex-linear in its first and conjugate-linear in its second variable). This pairing is sesquilinear non-degenerate however is indefinite in general hence can be regarded as an indefinite sesquilinear scalar product on \( \Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C}) \). Let \( \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C})) \) denote the unital algebra of all \( \mathbb{C} \)-linear operators on \( \Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C}) \); in particular it consists of the unital subalgebra of all (not compactly supported!) bundle-morphisms of \( \wedge^2 T^*M \otimes_{\mathbb{R}} \mathbb{C} \) i.e., \( C^\infty(M;\text{End}(\wedge^2 T^*M \otimes_{\mathbb{R}} \mathbb{C})) \subseteq \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C})) \). Likewise, diffeomorphisms are included via pullback i.e., \( \text{Diff}^+(M) \subseteq \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C})) \) as well.

In the spirit of noncommutative geometry [5] and recalling and extending results of [7] let us now distillate from the plethora of four dimensional smooth structures a single von Neumann algebra through a sequence of steps as follows. Our overall reference on von Neumann algebras is [1].

**Lemma 2.1.** Let \( \ast \) be the adjoint operation on \( \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C})) \) with respect to the indefinite sesquilinear scalar product (1) i.e., formally defined by \( \langle A^\ast \alpha, \beta \rangle_{L^2(M)} := \langle \alpha, A\beta \rangle_{L^2(M)} \) for all \( \alpha, \beta \in \Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C}) \). Consider the \( \ast \)-closed space

\[
V(M) := \{ A \in \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C})) \mid A^\ast \in \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C})) \text{ exists and } r(A^\ast A) < +\infty \}
\]

defined by the \( \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C})) \) spectral radius

\[
r(B) := \sup_{\lambda \in \mathbb{C}} \left\{ |\lambda| \mid B - \lambda \text{Id}_{\Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C})} \in \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C})) \text{ is not bijective} \right\}.
\]

Then \( \sqrt{r} \) is a norm and the corresponding completion of \( V(M) \) renders \( (V(M), \ast) \) a \( C^\ast \)-algebra \( \mathcal{R}(M) \). This \( C^\ast \)-algebra is non-trivial in the sense that \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) contains the space of all bounded bundle morphisms i.e., \( C^\infty(M;\text{End}(\wedge^2 T^*M \otimes_{\mathbb{R}} \mathbb{C})) \cap V(M) \) as well as all orientation preserving diffeomorphisms of \( M \) i.e., \( \text{Diff}^+(M) \). Hence in particular it possesses a unit \( 1 \in \mathcal{R}(M) \).

**Proof.** Our strategy to prove the lemma is as follows. Obviously \( (V(M), \ast) \) is a \( \ast \)-algebra. Provided it can be equipped with a norm such that the corresponding completion of \( V(M) \) improves \( (V(M), \ast) \) to a \( C^\ast \)-algebra then, knowing the uniqueness of the \( C^\ast \)-algebra norm, this sought norm \( \|[\cdot]\| \) on all \( A \in V(M) \) must look like \( \|[A]\|^2 = \|[A^\ast]\|^2 = \|[A^\ast A]\| = r(A^\ast A) \). Therefore we want to see that the spectral radius gives a norm here by comparing it with known other norms.

We begin with some preparations. First, being \( \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_{L^2(M)} \) given by (1) non-degenerate, there exist non-canonical decompositions

\[
\Omega^2_c(M;\mathbb{C}) = \Omega^+_c(M;\mathbb{C}) \oplus \Omega^-_c(M;\mathbb{C})
\]
into maximal definite orthogonal subspaces i.e., \( \pm \langle \cdot , \cdot \rangle_{L^2(M)} |_{\Omega^\pm(M; \mathbb{C})} : \Omega^\pm_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \times \Omega^\pm_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \to \mathbb{C} \) are both positive definite moreover \( \Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \perp L^2(M) \Omega^-_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \). Therefore these restricted scalar products can be used to complete \( \Omega^\pm_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \) to separable Hilbert spaces \( h^\pm(M) \) respectively yielding non-canonical direct sum Hilbert space completions \( h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M) \supset \Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \) with particular non-degenerate positive definite scalar products \( \langle \alpha, \beta \rangle_{L^2(M)} := \langle \alpha^+, \beta^+ \rangle_{L^2(M)} - \langle \alpha^-, \beta^- \rangle_{L^2(M)} \) and induced norms \( \| \cdot \|_{L^2(M)} \) on these completions. Here \( \alpha^\pm := P^\pm \alpha \), etc. where \( P^\pm : h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M) \to h^\pm(M) \) are the orthogonal projections with respect to (1). Put \( J := P^+ - P^- \) and let \( \dagger \) denote the adjoint over \( h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M) \). Then \( J^2 = \text{Id}_{h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)} \) and \( J^\dagger = J \) hence \( J \) is a unitary operator on \( h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M) \).

It formally satisfies \( A^\ast = JA^\dagger J \) and \( A^\dagger = JA^\ast J \).

Recall that the operator norm on \( \mathcal{B}(h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)) \), the \( C^* \)-algebra of bounded linear operators on \( h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M) \), is

\[
\|B\| = \sup_{\|v\|_{L^2(M)} = 1} \|Bv\|_{L^2(M)} = \sup_{\|v\|_{L^2(M)} = 1, \|w\|_{L^2(M)} = 1} \text{Re}(Bv, w)_{L^2(M)}.
\]

The adjoint \( \dagger \) and this norm \( \| \cdot \| \) are actually the \( \ast \)-operation and norm on \( \mathcal{B}(h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)) \) therefore by the uniqueness of the \( C^* \)-algebra norm \( \|B\|^2 = \|B^\dagger\|^2 = \|B^\ast B\| = r'(B^\ast B) \) where we can define the \( \mathcal{B}(h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)) \) spectral radius as

\[
r'(B) := \sup_{\lambda \in \mathbb{C}} \{ |\lambda| \mid B - \lambda \text{Id}_{h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)} \in \text{End}(h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)) \text{ is not bijective} \}
\]

by the bounded inverse theorem. It readily follows that if \( B \in \mathcal{B}(h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)) \cap \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C})) \) then \( r(B) = r'(B) \) and if \( A \in V(M) \) then \( r(A^\ast A) = r'(A^\ast A) \). Our last ingredient is Gelfand’s spectral radius formula \( r'(B) = \lim_{k \to +\infty} \|B^k\|^{1/k} \leq \|B\| \) (cf. e.g. [18, Sect. XI.149]).

After these preparations we can embark upon the proof. Consider first any bounded linear operator \( A \in \mathcal{B}(h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)) \cap \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C})) \). Then \( A^\dagger \) hence \( A^\ast = JA^\dagger J \) exists and \( \|A\| < +\infty \). Moreover by \( \|J\| = 1 \) we get on the one hand

\[
r(A^\ast A) = r(JA^\dagger JA) = r'(JA^\dagger JA) \leq \|JA^\dagger JA\| \leq \|J\|^2 \|A\|^2 = \|A\|^2
\]

consequently \( A \in V(M) \). Proceeding further, it is straightforward that \( \|JA^\ast JA\| = \|A^\dagger A\| \). Additionally it follows from (3) and the unitarity of \( J \) that \( \|A^\ast A\| = \|JA^\dagger JA\| = \|A^\dagger A\| \). Suppose \( A \) is invertible; if \( v \in h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M) \) is a unit vector then so is \( u = A^{-1} J Av \). Hence \( \|A^\dagger Au\|_{L^2(M)} = \|A^\dagger J Av\|_{L^2(M)} \) and we find via (3) that \( \|A^\dagger JA\| = \|A^\dagger A\| \). Consequently we obtain for invertible hence by continuity for all operators \( A \in \mathcal{B}(h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)) \cap \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C})) \) that \( \|JA^\ast JA\| = \|A^\ast A\| \) (and commonly equal to \( \|A\|^2 \)) implying \( \|JA^\ast JA\|^k = \|(A^\ast A)^k\| \) for all \( k \in \mathbb{N} \).

Conversely, consider secondly any \( A \in V(M) \). Then \( A^\ast \) hence \( A^\dagger = JA^\ast J \) exists and \( r(A^\ast A) < +\infty \). Therefore, on the other hand, for any \( \varepsilon > 0 \) one can find a positive integer \( k \) such that

\[
r(A^\ast A) + \varepsilon = r'(A^\ast A) + \varepsilon \geq \|(A^\ast A)^k\|^\frac{1}{k} = \|(JA^\ast JA)^k\|^\frac{1}{k} \geq r'(JA^\ast JA) - \varepsilon = r'(A^\dagger A) - \varepsilon = \|A\|^2 - \varepsilon
\]

yielding, since \( \varepsilon > 0 \) was arbitrary, that in fact

\[
r(A^\ast A) \geq \|A\|^2
\]

consequently \( A \in \mathcal{B}(h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)) \cap \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C})) \). We eventually conclude that

\[
r(A^\ast A) = \|A\|^2 \quad \text{along} \quad V(M) = \mathcal{B}(h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)) \cap \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C}))
\]
demonstrating that the spectral radius indeed provides us with a norm on $V(M)$. Therefore putting

$$[[A]] := \sqrt{r(A^*A)} \quad (5)$$

we can complete $V(M)$ with respect to this norm and enrich the $*$-algebra $(V(M), *)$ to a $C^*$-algebra $\mathcal{R}(M)$. Additionally we obtain $\mathcal{R}(M) \subset \mathcal{B}(h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M))$ however this is not a $*$-inclusion.

Finally, it is obvious that $R \in C^0(M; \text{End}(\wedge^2T^*M \otimes \mathbb{R} \mathbb{C})) \cap V(M)$ if and only if $[[R]] < +\infty$ hence $R \in \mathcal{R}(M)$ i.e., $\mathcal{R}(M)$ contains bounded (in this sense) bundle morphisms of $\wedge^2T^*M \otimes \mathbb{R} \mathbb{C}$. Likewise, a diffeomorphism $\Phi \in \text{Diff}^+(M)$ acts on $\Omega^2(M; \mathbb{C})$ via pullback $\omega \mapsto \Phi^*\omega$ and by the orientation-preserving-diffeomorphism invariance of integration obviously $\langle \Phi^*\alpha, \Phi^*\beta \rangle_{L^2(M)} = \langle \alpha, \beta \rangle_{L^2(M)}$ holds; hence we can see that diffeomorphisms are unitary operators i.e., $(\Phi^*)^*(\Phi^*) = \text{Id}_{\Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C})}$. Consequently $[[\Phi^*]] = 1$ demonstrating $\Phi^* \in \mathcal{R}(M)$. In particular $\mathcal{R}(M)$ possesses a unit $1$ represented either by the identity bundle morphism $\text{Id}_{\wedge^2T^*M \otimes \mathbb{R} \mathbb{C}}$ or by $1 \in \text{Diff}^+(M)$ as claimed. \hfill \Box

**Remark.** Note that by construction $[[\cdot]] = \| \cdot \|$ where this latter norm is the operator norm (3) for any particular completion $h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M) \supset \Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C})$; hence these norms in fact numerically coincide on their common domain $\mathcal{B}(h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)) \cap \text{End}(\Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C}))$ equal to $V(M)$ by (4).

**Lemma 2.2.** The norm $[[\cdot]]$ given by (5) on $\mathcal{R}(M)$ can be improved to a Hermitian scalar product $(\cdot, \cdot)_\mathcal{R}(\mathcal{R}(M) \times \mathcal{R}(M) \to \mathbb{C}$ rendering $\mathcal{R}(M)$ a Hilbert space $\mathcal{H}(M)$ with underlying complete complex vector space isomorphic to $\mathcal{R}(M)$.

Moreover $\mathcal{R}(M) \subset \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}(M))$ inherits the structure of a von Neumann algebra with a finite trace functional $\tau : \mathcal{R}(M) \to \mathbb{C}$ satisfying $\tau(1) = 1$.

**Proof.** Let $N : \mathcal{R}(M) \to \mathbb{R}$ be the norm-function $N(B) := [[B]]^2$; it satisfies $N(1) = 1$ where $1 \in \mathcal{R}(M)$ is the unit. Take its derivative at $1 \in \mathcal{R}(M)$ restricted to $\mathcal{R}(M)$ i.e., the $\mathbb{C}$-linear map

$$N_*(1) : \left. \begin{array}{ccc} T_1\mathcal{R}(M) & \to & T_1\mathbb{R} \\ \mathcal{R}(M) & \to & \mathbb{R} \end{array} \right\}. \quad (6)$$

and with two $A, B \in \mathcal{R}(M)$ consider the pairing

$$(A, B)_\mathbb{R} := \frac{1}{4}N_*(1)(A^*B + B^*A)$$

which, if exists, is clearly a symmetric, $\mathbb{R}$-linear map $\mathcal{R}(M)_{\mathbb{R}} \times \mathcal{R}(M)_{\mathbb{R}} \to \mathbb{R}$ where $\mathcal{R}(M)_{\mathbb{R}}$ denotes the real vector space underlying $\mathcal{R}(M)$ (i.e., $\mathcal{R}(M)_{\mathbb{R}}$ coincides with $\mathcal{R}(M)$ except that the scalar multiplication by $\sqrt{-1}$ is not defined in $\mathcal{R}(M)_{\mathbb{R}}$). We demonstrate that this pairing exists, is in fact non-degenerate and definite hence gives rise to a definite real scalar product on $\mathcal{R}(M)_{\mathbb{R}}$.

Referring back to the proof of Lemma 2.1 consider again the particular Hilbert space completion $h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M) \supset \Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C})$. Recalling (4) we can assume that $V(M)$, hence by extension $\mathcal{R}(M)_{\mathbb{R}}$ acts on $h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)$ by bounded linear operators (however this is neither a $*$-action nor a direct-sum-preserving action). Take now $0 \neq t \in \mathbb{R}$ and $1, A \in \mathcal{R}(M)_{\mathbb{R}}$ and insert them into $N$. The spectral mapping theorem [18, Sect. X.151] stating $\text{Spec}(u(T)) = u(\text{Spec} T)$, when applied for a bounded operator $T$ with $\text{Spec} T \subset \mathbb{R}_+$ and $\mathbb{R}_+$-preserving holomorphic function $u$, implies $r(u(T)) \geq u(r(T))$. Hence putting $T := A^*A$ and $u(z) := (1 + rz)^2$ we get by (5) and (4) on the one hand that

$$N(1 + tA^*A) = r((1 + tA^*A)^2) \geq (1 + t \cdot r(A^*A))^2 = 1 + 2t\|A\|^2 + t^2\|A\|^4.$$
On the other hand by (5), (4) and (3) we estimate $N$ from above like
\[
N(1 + tA^*A) = \|1 + tA^*A\|^2 = \left( \sup_{\|v\|_{L^2(M)} = 1, \|w\|_{L^2(M)} = 1} \text{Re} \left( (1 + tA^*A)v, w \right) \right)^2 \leq 1 + 2t\|A^*A\| + t^2\|A^*A\|^2
\]
consequently writing $1 = N(1)$ and $\|A^*A\| = \|A\|^2$ we come up with the two-sided estimate
\[
\|A\|^2 + \frac{t}{2}\|A\|^4 \leq \frac{1}{2} \left( N(1 + tA^*A) - N(1) \right) = \frac{1}{2} \|A\|^2 + \frac{t}{2}\|A\|^4
\]
demonstrating, when taking the limit $t \to 0$, that $(A, A)_{\mathbb{R}} = \frac{1}{2}N_\ast(1)A^*A$ exists on $\mathcal{R}(M)_{\mathbb{R}}$ and vanishes if and only if $A = 0$. In fact $(A, A)_{\mathbb{R}} = \|[A]\|^2$ and we conclude that $(\cdot, \cdot)_{\mathbb{R}}$ is a non-degenerate real scalar product on $\mathcal{R}(M)_{\mathbb{R}}$ with induced norm $\|[\cdot]\|$. Taking into account that $\|\sqrt{-1}A\| = \|A\|$ we can improve $(\cdot, \cdot)_{\mathbb{R}}$ to a Hermitian scalar product $(\cdot, \cdot)$ on $\mathcal{R}(M)$ as usual
\[
(A, B) := \frac{1}{2} \left( \|[A + B]\|^2 - \|[A]\|^2 - \|[B]\|^2 \right) + \sqrt{-1} \left( \|[A + \sqrt{-1}B]\|^2 - \|[A]\|^2 - \|[\sqrt{-1}B]\|^2 \right)
\]
(complex-linear in its first and conjugate-linear in its second variable) with induced norm $\|\cdot\|$. Completing $\mathcal{R}(M)$ with respect to this norm improves $\mathcal{R}(M)$ to a Hilbert space $\mathcal{H}(M)$. But note that sharing the same norm $\|\cdot\|$, the two spaces $\mathcal{H}(M)$ and $\mathcal{R}(M)$ are canonically isomorphic as complete complex vector spaces. We will therefore write $A \in \mathcal{R}(M)$ but $\hat{A} \in \mathcal{H}(M)$.

Concerning the second statement, since $\mathcal{R}(M)$ acts on itself via multiplication from the left which is continuous and by (6) satisfies $(\hat{A}B, \hat{C}) = (\hat{B}, \hat{A}^*\hat{C})$ i.e., is compatible with the scalar product on $\mathcal{H}(M)$, we obtain a unital *-inclusion $\pi_M : \mathcal{R}(M) \to \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}(M))$ into the $C^\ast$-algebra of bounded linear operators on $\mathcal{H}(M)$ i.e., a faithful representation of $\mathcal{R}(M)$ on $\mathcal{H}(M)$ given by $\pi_M(A)\hat{B} := \hat{A}\hat{B}$. To prove that $\mathcal{R}(M)$ is a von Neumann algebra over $\mathcal{H}(M)$ it is enough to demonstrate that $\pi_M(\mathcal{R}(M))$ is closed in any topology on $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}(M))$ different from its uniform topology [1, Theorem 2.1.3]. So let $\{A_i\}_{i \in \mathbb{N}}$ be a sequence in $\mathcal{R}(M)$ such that $\{\pi_M(A_i)\}_{i \in \mathbb{N}}$ converges for instance in the strong topology on $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}(M))$ to an element $a \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}(M))$ i.e., for all $\hat{B}_1, \ldots, \hat{B}_k \in \mathcal{H}(M)$ with associated seminorms
\[
\lim_{i \to +\infty} \|[\pi_M(A_i) - a]\|_{\hat{B}_1, \ldots, \hat{B}_k} = \lim_{i \to +\infty} \left( \|[\pi_M(A_i) - a]\|_{\hat{B}_1} + \ldots + \|[\pi_M(A_i) - a]\|_{\hat{B}_k} \right) = 0
\]
holds. Hence taking $k = 1$ and $\hat{B}_1 := \hat{1} \in \mathcal{H}(M)$ we know that $\lim_{i \to +\infty} \|\pi_M(A_i) - a\|_1 = 0$ consequently
\[
\|[A_i - A_j]\| \leq \|[A_i - A]\| + \|[A_j - A]\| = [\pi_M(A) - a]_1 + [\pi_M(A) - a]_1 \to 0 \quad \text{as} \quad i, j \to +\infty
\]
convincing us that $\{A_i\}_{i \in \mathbb{N}}$ is a Cauchy sequence in the complete space $\mathcal{R}(M)$ hence it has a unique limit $A \in \mathcal{R}(M)$. By continuity of $\pi_M$ we find that in fact $\pi_M(A) = a$ therefore $a = A \in \mathcal{R}(M)$. This demonstrates that $\mathcal{R}(M)$ is a von Neumann algebra as desired, operating on $\mathcal{H}(M)$.

Finally, the scalar product on $\mathcal{H}(M)$ has the straightforward property $(\hat{A}, \hat{B}) = (\hat{B}^*, \hat{A}^*)$ consequently putting
\[
\tau(A) := (\hat{A}, \hat{1})
\]
we obtain a $\mathbb{C}$-linear map $\tau : \mathcal{R}(M) \to \mathbb{C}$ satisfying $|\tau(A)| \leq \|[\hat{A}]\| = \|[A]\| < +\infty$ such that $\tau(AB) = \tau(BA)$ and $\tau(1) = 1$ i.e., a finite trace on $\mathcal{R}(M)$ as claimed. ☐
Remark. Note that although $\mathfrak{R}(M)$ and $\mathcal{H}(M)$ are isomorphic as complete complex vector spaces they are not isomorphic as unitary- more precisely as $U(\mathcal{H}(M))$-modules: given a unitary operator $U \in U(\mathcal{H}(M))$ then $A \in \mathfrak{R}(M)$ is acted upon as $A \mapsto UAU^{-1}$ but $\hat{B} \in \mathcal{H}(M)$ transforms as $\hat{B} \mapsto U\hat{B}$. 

Let us continue exploring the structure of the operator algebra $\mathfrak{R}(M)$ by making contacts with the local four dimensional differential geometry of $M$. In fact all the constructions so far work for an arbitrary oriented and smooth 4k-manifold with $k = 0, 1, 2, \ldots$ however the next lemma is the very manifestation of four dimensionality permanently lurking behind these considerations.

**Lemma 2.3.** The von Neumann algebra $\mathfrak{R}(M)$ is geometric in the sense that for every $A \in \mathfrak{R}(M)$ there exists a sequence $\{R_i(A) \in C^\infty(M; \text{End}(\wedge^2 T^* M \otimes _R \mathbb{C})) \cap V(M) \mid i \in \mathbb{N}\}$ of bounded complexified algebraic (i.e., formal) curvature tensors on $M$ with the property 

$$\lim_{i \to +\infty} \| [A - R_i(A)] \| = 0$$

(7)

where $\| \cdot \|$ is the spectral radius norm (5) for which $\mathfrak{R}(M)$ is complete.

Moreover $\mathfrak{R}(M)$ is a hyperfinite factor of type $\text{II}_1$ (hence is unique up to abstract isomorphisms of von Neumann algebras).

**Proof.** A peculiarity of four dimensions is that the $*$-subalgebra $C^\infty(M; \text{End}(\wedge^2 T^* M \otimes _R \mathbb{C}))$ of bundle morphisms can be interpreted as the space of algebraic (i.e., formal) curvature tensors on $M$. For example if $(M, g)$ is an oriented Riemannian 4-manifold then its honest, i.e., not just formal, Riemannian curvature tensor $R_g$ is a member of this subalgebra and with respect to the decomposition of 2-forms into their (anti)self-dual parts it looks like (cf. [21])

$$R_g = \left( \frac{1}{12} \text{Scal} + \text{Weyl}^+ \right) \frac{\Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C})}{\Omega^-_c(M; \mathbb{C})} : \Omega^-_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \longrightarrow \Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \bigoplus \Omega^-_c(M; \mathbb{C})$$

(8)

By definition elements of $\text{End}(\Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C}))$ map the space of sections $\Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C}) = C^\infty(M; \wedge^2 T^* M \otimes _R \mathbb{C})$ into itself. Consequently for all $A \in V(M) \subseteq \text{End}(\Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C}))$ and $\omega \in \Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C})$ the image satisfies $A\omega \in \Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C})$ hence define

$$R(A, \omega) \in C^\infty(M; \text{End}(\wedge^2 T^* M \otimes _R \mathbb{C})) \cap V(M) \subseteq \text{End}(\Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C})) \cap V(M)$$

by writing the image as $A\omega = R(A, \omega)\omega$ i.e., $(A\omega)_x = R(A, \omega)_x\omega_x$ at every point $x \in M$. The notation indicates that in general this algebraic curvature tensor $R(A, \omega)$ depends even on the 2-form $\omega$, and $A$ itself is an algebraic curvature tensor precisely if $A = R(A)$ i.e., is independent of $\omega$. By construction $\mathfrak{R}(M)$ is generated by $V(M)$ consequently for every $A \in \mathfrak{R}(M)$ and $\omega \in \Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \subset h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)$ and real number $\varepsilon > 0$ we know $A\omega \in h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)$ and there exists $R(A, \omega)$ as above such that

$$\|A\omega - R(A, \omega)\omega\|_{L^2(M)} \leq \frac{\varepsilon}{2}$$

holds. Let $\{\omega_i\}_{i \in \mathbb{N}}$ be a once and for all fixed countable dense subset of $\Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \subset h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)$ and given $R(A, \omega)$, for all $i = 1, 2, \ldots$ put $R_i(A) := R(A, \omega_i)$. These algebraic curvature tensors have the property that for any $\omega \in \Omega^+_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \subset h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)$ and $\varepsilon > 0$ we can find infinitely many indices $i \in \mathbb{N}$ such that

$$\|R(A, \omega)\omega - R_i(A)\omega\|_{L^2(M)} \leq \frac{\varepsilon}{2}.$$
Then \( \{ R_i(A) \in C^\infty(M; \text{End}(\wedge^2 T^*M \otimes \mathbb{R} C)) \cap V(M) \mid i \in \mathbb{N} \} \) approximates \( A \in \mathcal{R}(M) \) in the following sense. First note that for all \( \omega \in \Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \subset h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M) \) and \( \varepsilon > 0 \) we can find infinitely many indices \( i \in \mathbb{N} \) such that

\[
\|(A - R_i(A))\omega\|_{L^2(M)} \leq \|(A - R(A, \omega))\omega\|_{L^2(M)} + \|(R(A, \omega) - R_i(A))\omega\|_{L^2(M)} \leq \frac{\varepsilon}{2} + \frac{\varepsilon}{2} = \varepsilon
\]

consequently for these indices

\[
[[A - R_i(A)]] = \|A - R_i(A)\| = \sup_{\|\omega\|_{L^2(M)} = 1} \|(A - R_i(A))\omega\|_{L^2(M)} \leq \varepsilon
\]

yielding \( \liminf_{i \to +\infty} [[A - R_i(A)]] = 0 \) hence passing to a subsequence (this is surely necessary) we come up with (7).

From this density result we immediately draw two consequences. The first consequence is that \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) is hyperfinite. We demonstrate this by proving that to every finite collection \( A_1, \ldots, A_k \in \mathcal{R}(M) \) of operators and real number \( \varepsilon > 0 \) there exists a finite dimensional \(*\)-subalgebra \( \mathcal{G} \subset \mathcal{R}(M) \) such that \([A_1 - \mathcal{G}] \leq \varepsilon, \ldots, [A_k - \mathcal{G}] \leq \varepsilon\). Given an operator \( A_j \neq 0 \) acting on \( h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M) \), take any complex number \( \lambda_j \in \text{Spec} A_j \subset \mathbb{C} \) from its non-empty spectrum and put \( B_{\lambda_j} := A_j - \lambda_j 1 \in \mathcal{R}(M) \).

Then \( B_{\lambda_j} \) is not bijective. If \( \{0\} \neq \text{Ker} B_{\lambda_j} \) for all \( j = 1, \ldots, k \) then pick any \( 0 \neq v_j \in \text{Ker} B_{\lambda_j} \). It readily follows from \( A_j v_j = \lambda_j v_j + B_{\lambda_j} v_j = \lambda_j v_j \) that taking the finite dimensional complex subspace \( W \subset h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M) \) spanned by \( v_1, \ldots, v_k \) and then putting

\[
\mathcal{G} := \text{End} W \cap \mathcal{R}(M)
\]

the finite dimensional \(*\)-subalgebra \( \mathcal{G} \cong \text{gl}(W) \) satisfies \( \mathcal{G} \subset \mathcal{R}(M) \) and \( A_1, \ldots, A_k \in \mathcal{G} \). Hence \( \mathcal{G} \) possesses the required property. If it happens that \( \text{Ker} B_{\lambda_j} = \{0\} \) for some \( j = 1, \ldots, k \) then replace \( A_j \) with any approximating algebraic curvature tensor \( R(A_j) \) satisfying \([A_j - R(A_j)] \leq \varepsilon\) and this time take \( \lambda_j \in \text{Spec} R(A_j) \subset \mathbb{C} \) and \( B_{\lambda_j} := R(A_j) - \lambda_j 1 \in \mathcal{R}(M) \). Then \( B_{\lambda_j} \) is again not bijective but surely \( \text{Ker} B_{\lambda_j} \neq \{0\} \). Indeed, assume the converse is true. Because \( B_{\lambda_j} = R(A_j) - \lambda_j \text{Id}_{\wedge^2 T^*M \otimes \mathbb{R} C} \) is itself an algebraic curvature tensor, being non-bijective means that at least in a neighbourhood \( U \subseteq M \) of a point the finite dimensional maps \( B_{\lambda_j}|_x : \wedge^2 T^*_x M \otimes \mathbb{R} C \to \wedge^2 T^*_x M \otimes \mathbb{R} C \) are not invertible for all \( x \in U \). But in this case there would exist an element \( 0 \neq \omega_U \in \Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \), local in the sense that \( \text{supp} \omega_U \subset U \), satisfying \( B_{\lambda_j} \omega_U = 0 \), a contradiction. Consequently we can suppose \( \text{Ker} B_{\lambda_j} \neq \{0\} \) for all \( j = 1, \ldots, k \). Defining again \( W \) as the span of the \( v_j \)'s with \( 0 \neq v_j \in \text{Ker} B_{\lambda_j} \) for all \( j = 1, \ldots, k \) and taking \( \mathcal{G} := \text{End} W \cap \mathcal{R}(M) \) then \( A_j \in \mathcal{G} \) or \( R(A_j) \in \mathcal{G} \). Therefore this \( \mathcal{G} \subset \mathcal{R}(M) \) is a finite dimensional \(*\)-subalgebra with the required property for all \( \varepsilon > 0 \). We conclude that \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) is hyperfinite.

The second consequence is that \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) is a factor. Indeed, although the center of the dense subalgebra of algebraic curvature tensors \( C^\infty(M; \text{End}(\wedge^2 T^*M \otimes \mathbb{R} C)) \subset C^\infty(M; \mathbb{C}) \cdot \text{Id}_{\wedge^2 T^*M \otimes \mathbb{R} C} \) hence is infinite dimensional, the center of \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) is isomorphic to the one dimensional space \( \mathbb{C} \cdot \text{Id}_{\wedge^2 T^*M \otimes \mathbb{R} C} \) only, taking into account the connectedness of \( M \) and the fact that \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) contains all orientation-preserving diffeomorphisms as well. Indeed, if \( \Phi : M \to M \) is a diffeomorphism and \( R = f \cdot \text{Id}_{\wedge^2 T^*M \otimes \mathbb{R} C} \) is any diagonal algebraic curvature tensor and \( \omega \in \Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C}) \) then \( (\Phi^* (f \cdot \text{Id}_{\wedge^2 T^*M \otimes \mathbb{R} C}) \omega) = \Phi^*(f \omega) = (\Phi^* f) \Phi^* \omega \) but \( (f \cdot \text{Id}_{\wedge^2 T^*M \otimes \mathbb{R} C} (\Phi^* \omega) = f \Phi^* \omega \) and these coincide if and only if \( f : M \to \mathbb{C} \) is a constant by the connectivity of \( M \). The center of \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) is therefore one dimensional i.e., \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) is a factor.

Summing up, \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) is a hyperfinite factor possessing a trace. Being trace of a factor, this trace is unique (cf. [1, Proposition 4.1.4]) moreover satisfies \( \tau(1) = 1 \) as we have seen in Lemma 2.2 consequently \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) is a hyperfinite factor of \( \Pi_1 \) type. \( \diamond \)
Remark. 1. Equation (7) says that general elements of \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) can be approximated by simple geometric operators i.e., algebraic curvature tensors on \( M \). However probably it is more constructive to obtain generic operators by kernel functions as follows [7]. A double 2-form \( K \) is a section of the bundle \( (\wedge^2 T^* M \otimes \mathbb{R} \otimes \mathbb{C}) \times (\wedge^2 T^* M \otimes \mathbb{R} \otimes \mathbb{C}) \) over \( M \times M \); regarding it as a “kernel function”, out of an algebraic curvature tensor \( R \in C^\infty(M;\text{End}(\wedge^2 T^* M \otimes \mathbb{R} \otimes \mathbb{C})) \) one can construct a more general operator \( A \in \text{End}(\Omega^2_M(M;\mathbb{C})) \) whose action on a 2-form \( \omega \) at the point \( x \in M \) looks like

\[
(A \omega)_x := \int_{y \in M} K_{x,y} \wedge (R_{x,y}) \,.
\]

Of course in order this integral to make sense and to ensure that \( A \in \mathcal{R}(M) \) we have to specialize the precise class of these “kernel functions”. We shall not do it here but observe that more singular the kernel \( K \) is, the more general the resulting bounded linear operator \( A \) is.

2. The existence of a unique finite trace has many interesting consequences. For example, let \( \Sigma \subset M \) be a compact (possibly empty or just a point) oriented surface and let \( \omega \in \Omega^2_M(M;\mathbb{C}) \) be a real volume form on it. Then \( \text{Area}_\omega(\Sigma) := \int_\Sigma \omega \geq 0 \) is the area of the surface (with respect to the volume form) and more generally, with \( A \in V(M) \) the continuous extension of the assignment \( A \mapsto \int_\Sigma A \omega \) gives rise to a continuous linear functional on \( \mathcal{R}(M) \). Identifying \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) with \( \mathcal{A}(\Sigma) \) as complex complete vector spaces, by the Riesz–Fischer theorem (cf. e.g. [18, Sect. II.28]) there exists a unique element \( B_{\Sigma,\omega} \in \mathcal{R}(M) \) satisfying \( \int_\Sigma A \omega = \int_\Sigma A \omega \) along \( V(M) \subset \mathcal{R}(M) \). This particular element \( B_{\Sigma,\omega} \in \mathcal{R}(M) \) has the property \( \tau(B_{\Sigma,\omega}) = (B_{\Sigma,\omega},1) = \int_\Sigma \omega = \text{Area}_\omega(\Sigma) \geq 0 \) that is, has non-negative real trace. Therefore let us call an element \( B \in \mathcal{R}(M) \) a \textit{surfacelike operator} if it has non-negative real trace what we call its \textit{area}. That is, if \( \tau(B) \in \mathbb{R}_+ \subset \mathbb{C} \) holds and \( \text{Area}(B) := \tau(B) \geq 0 \) is its area. Examples provided by any projection \( P \in \mathcal{R}(M) \) since \( \tau(P) \in [0,1] \). Surfacelike operators will appear in Section 3.

3. Let \( M \) be a connected oriented smooth 4-manifold as so far and take the Abelian von Neumann algebra \( L^\infty((M,\lambda^4);\mathbb{C}) \) of essentially bounded \( \mathbb{C} \)-valued functions with respect to the 4-dimensional Lebesgue measure; given \( f \in L^\infty((M,\lambda^4);\mathbb{C}) \) the map \( f \mapsto f \text{Id}_{\wedge^2 T^* M \otimes \mathbb{R} \otimes \mathbb{C}} \) gives rise to a canonical continuous \( * \)-algebra injection into \( \mathcal{R}(M) \); in fact it is onto a maximal non-singular Abelian i.e., Cartan subalgebra \( \mathcal{A}(M) \) of \( \mathcal{R}(M) \). Note that all Cartan subalgebras of \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) are isomorphic via automorphisms of \( \mathcal{R}(M) \), cf. [1, Chapters 3 and 12]. Take any measurable subset \( \emptyset \subset X \subset M \) with corresponding characteristic function \( \chi_X \in L^\infty((M,\lambda^4);\mathbb{C}) \). Out of it one can construct a projection

\[
P_X := \chi_X \text{Id}_{\wedge^2 T^* M \otimes \mathbb{R} \otimes \mathbb{C}} \in \mathcal{A}(M) \subset \mathcal{R}(M) ,
\]

having the property that if \( X, Y \subset M \) are disjoint measurable subsets then \( P_X \) and \( P_Y \) are orthogonal. Therefore if \( X \subset M \) is bigger than a point then there exists a decomposition \( X = X' \cup X'' \) hence one can find corresponding \( P_{X'}, P_{X''} \in \mathcal{A}(M) \subset \mathcal{R}(M) \) satisfying \( P_X = P_{X'} + P_{X''} \) and \( P_{X'} P_{X''} = 0 \). However note that all measure-zero subsets give rise to the same zero projection hence in particular a point \( x \in M \) corresponds to a projection \( P_x \in \mathcal{R}(M) \) which is the trivial one \( P_x = 0 \). Hence in \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) the “too small” subsets of \( M \) are not visible. Therefore let us call a non-trivial projection \( P \in \mathcal{A}(M) \subset \mathcal{R}(M) \) a \textit{spacelike operator}. They will be used in Section 3.

To make a comparison, in \textit{algebraic geometry} points are characterized by maximal ideals of an abstractly given commutative ring. Here the corresponding objects would therefore be the maximal two-sided (weakly closed) ideals of a von Neumann algebra (regarded as a non-commutative ring). However in sharp contrast to the commutative situation a tracial factor von Neumann algebra is always \textit{simple} (cf. e.g. [1, Proposition 4.1.5]) consequently in our case the concept of ideals cannot be used
to characterize points hence the reason we used rather special elements of the von Neumann algebra when talking about at least subsets. This resembles the reconstruction of space in matrix models, cf. e.g. [13, 16].

We close this section by extracting a smooth 4-manifold invariant out of our efforts so far whose properties will be investigated elsewhere.

**Lemma 2.4.** Let \( M \) be a connected oriented smooth 4-manifold and \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) its von Neumann algebra with trace \( \tau \) as before. Then there exists a complex separable Hilbert space \( \mathcal{H}(M) \) and a representation \( \rho_M : \mathcal{R}(M) \to \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}(M)) \) with the following properties. If \( \pi_M : \mathcal{R}(M) \to \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}(M)) \) is the standard representation constructed in Lemma 2.2 then \( \{0\} \subseteq \mathcal{H}(M) \subseteq \mathcal{H}(M) \) and \( \rho_M = \pi_M|_{\mathcal{H}(M)} \) holds; therefore, although \( \rho_M \) can be the trivial representation, it is surely not unitary equivalent to the standard representation. Moreover the unitary equivalence class of \( \rho_M \) is invariant under orientation-preserving diffeomorphisms of \( M \).

Therefore the Murray–von Neumann coupling constant\(^2\) of \( \rho_M \), equal to \( \tau(P_M) \in [0, 1) \subset \mathbb{R}_+ \) where \( P_M : \mathcal{H}(M) \to \mathcal{H}(M) \) is the orthogonal projection, is invariant under orientation-preserving diffeomorphisms. Consequently \( \gamma(M) := \tau(P_M) \) is a smooth 4-manifold invariant.

**Proof.** First let us exhibit a representation of \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) by recalling [7, Theorem 3.2]; this construction is inspired by the general Gelfand–Naimark–Segal technique however exploits the special features of our construction so far as well. Pick a pair \( (\Sigma, \omega) \) consisting of an (immersed) compact oriented surface \( \Sigma \hookrightarrow M \) without boundary and a (not necessarily compactly supported!) 2-form \( \omega \in \Omega^2(M; \mathbb{C}) \) which is closed i.e., \( d\omega = 0 \). Consider the continuous \( \mathbb{C} \)-linear functional \( F_{\Sigma, \omega} : \mathcal{R}(M) \to \mathbb{C} \) by continuously extending the map

\[
A \mapsto \frac{1}{2\pi \sqrt{-1}} \int_{\Sigma} A\omega
\]

from \( V(M) \) to \( \mathcal{R}(M) \). Let \( \{0\} \subseteq I_{\Sigma, \omega} \subseteq \mathcal{R}(M) \) be the closure in the norm \( \| \cdot \| \) on \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) of the subset of elements \( A \in \mathcal{R}(M) \) satisfying \( F_{\Sigma, \omega}(A^*A) = 0 \). In fact for all pairs \( (\Sigma, \omega) \) obviously \( \{0\} \not\subseteq I_{\Sigma, \omega} \). We assert that \( I_{\Sigma, \omega} \) is a norm-closed multiplicative left-ideal in \( \mathcal{R}(M) \) which is non-trivial and independent of \( (\Sigma, \omega) \) if \( F_{\Sigma, \omega}(1) \neq 0 \) and \( I_{\Sigma, \omega} = \mathcal{R}(M) \) hence again independent of \( (\Sigma, \omega) \) if \( F_{\Sigma, \omega}(1) = 0 \).

Consider first the case when \( F_{\Sigma, \omega}(1) \neq 0 \). Then we can assume that \( F_{\Sigma, \omega}(1) = 1 \) hence \( F_{\Sigma, \omega} \) is a positive functional; applications of the standard inequality \( |F_{\Sigma, \omega}(A^*B)|^2 \leq F_{\Sigma, \omega}(A^*A)F_{\Sigma, \omega}(B^*B) \) show that \( I_{\Sigma, \omega} \) is a multiplicative left-ideal in \( \mathcal{R}(M) \). Concerning its \( \omega \)-dependence, without loss of generality we can assume that \( \omega|_\Sigma \) nowhere vanishes and let \( \omega' \) be another closed 2-form with the same property along \( \Sigma \) satisfying \( F_{\Sigma, \omega'}(1) = 1 \); then there always exists an invertible and bounded bundle morphism \( R \in C^\infty(M; \text{End}(\wedge^2 T^* M \otimes \mathbb{C})) \cap \mathcal{R}(M)^x \) satisfying \( \omega'|_\Sigma = R\omega|_\Sigma \). Then \( F_{\Sigma, \omega'}(A^*A) = F_{\Sigma, \omega}(A^*AR) \) hence by the above inequality in the form \( |F_{\Sigma, \omega'}(A^*A)|^2 \leq F_{\Sigma, \omega}(A^*A)F_{\Sigma, \omega}(AR^*A) \) we find \( I_{\Sigma, \omega'} \supseteq I_{\Sigma, \omega} \). Likewise, the equality \( F_{\Sigma, \omega}(A^*A) = F_{\Sigma, \omega'}(A^*A^*) \) gives the converse estimate \( |F_{\Sigma, \omega}(A^*A)|^2 \leq F_{\Sigma, \omega}(A^*A)F_{\Sigma, \omega'}((AR)^*AR) \) implying \( I_{\Sigma, \omega'} \subseteq I_{\Sigma, \omega} \). Consequently \( I_{\Sigma, \omega'} = I_{\Sigma, \omega} \).

Concerning the general \( (\Sigma, \omega) \)-dependence of \( I_{\Sigma, \omega} \) we argue as follows. Let \( \eta_\Sigma \in \Omega^2(M; \mathbb{R}) \) be a nowhere vanishing closed real 2-form representing the Poincaré-dual \( [\eta_\Sigma] \in H^2(M; \mathbb{R}) \) of \( \Sigma \hookrightarrow M \); then referring to the identity \( \int_\Sigma \omega = \int_M \omega \wedge \eta_\Sigma \) and putting \( \omega := \eta_\Sigma \) the functional can be re-expressed as \( F_{\Sigma, \eta_\Sigma}(A^*A) = \frac{1}{2\pi \sqrt{-1}} \langle A\eta_\Sigma, A\eta_\Sigma \rangle_{L^2(M)} \) in terms of the indefinite scalar product (1) on \( M \). Let \( \Sigma' \hookrightarrow M \) be another compact oriented surface and \( \omega' \) another closed 2-form such that \( F_{\Sigma', \omega'}(1) = 1 \). Taking a

\(^2\)Also called the \( \mathcal{R}(M) \)-dimension of a left \( \mathcal{R}(M) \)-module hence denoted \( \dim_{\mathcal{R}(M)} \), cf. [1, Chapter 8].
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similar nowhere-vanishing representative \( \eta_\Sigma \in \Omega^2(M; \mathbb{R}) \) for the Poincaré-dual we can therefore pick again \( R \in C^0(M; \text{End}(\wedge^2 T^* M \otimes \mathbb{R}) \cap \mathcal{H}(M)^\times \) satisfying \( \eta_\Sigma = R \eta_\Sigma \). Then

\[
F_{\Sigma, \eta_\Sigma}(A^* A) = \frac{1}{2\pi \sqrt{-1}} \langle A \eta_\Sigma, A \eta_\Sigma \rangle_{L^2(M)} = F_{\Sigma, \eta_\Sigma}((AR \eta_\Sigma, AR \eta_\Sigma)_{L^2(M)} = F_{\Sigma, \eta_\Sigma}((AR)^* (AR))
\]

demonstrating that \( F_{\Sigma, \eta_\Sigma} R \subseteq I_{\Sigma, \eta_\Sigma} \). In the same fashion \( F_{\Sigma, \eta_\Sigma} (A^* A) = F_{\Sigma, \eta_\Sigma}((AR)^* (AR)) \) convinces us that \( I_{\Sigma, \eta_\Sigma} R^{-1} \subseteq F_{\Sigma, \eta_\Sigma} \). Putting together all of these we find \( I_{\Sigma, \omega} = I_{\Sigma, \eta_\Sigma} R = I_{\Sigma, \omega'} R \). Secondly if \((\Sigma, \omega)\) is such that \( F_{\Sigma, \omega}(1) = 0 \) then repeating the previous analysis we obtain that \( I_{\Sigma, \omega} \) is a closed multiplicative left-ideal too, however containing \( 1 \in \mathcal{H}(M) \) as well consequently \( I_{\Sigma, \omega} = \mathcal{H}(M) \). Therefore if \((\Sigma', \omega')\) is another pair with \( F_{\Sigma', \omega'}(1) = 0 \) then obviously \( I_{\Sigma, \omega} = I_{\Sigma', \omega'} \) (and equal to \( \mathcal{H}(M) \)).

Let us proceed further by exploiting now the observation made in Lemma 2.2 that as a complete complex vector space \( \mathcal{H}(M) \) is isomorphic to its standard \( L^2 \) Hilbert space \( \mathcal{H}(M) \) with scalar product \((\cdot, \cdot)\) and \( \mathcal{H}(M) \) acts on \( \mathcal{H}(M) \) by the standard representation \( \pi_M \) i.e., multiplication from the left. In this way we can regard \( \{0\} \subseteq I_{\Sigma, \omega} \subseteq \mathcal{H}(M) \) as a closed linear subspace \( \{0\} \subseteq I_{\Sigma, \omega} \subseteq \mathcal{H}(M) \) as well. Consider the orthogonal projection \( Q_{\Sigma, \omega} : \mathcal{H}(M) \rightarrow I_{\Sigma, \omega} \). We can assume \( Q_{\Sigma, \omega} \in \mathcal{H}(M) \) and is acting by \( \pi_M(Q_{\Sigma, \omega}) \hat{A} = Q_{\Sigma, \omega} A \). Therefore another projection \( Q_{\Sigma', \omega'} : \mathcal{H}(M) \rightarrow I_{\Sigma', \omega'} = I_{\Sigma, \omega} R^{-1} \) acts like

\[
\hat{Q}_{\Sigma', \omega'} A = ((Q_{\Sigma, \omega}(AR)) R^{-1})^{-} = \hat{Q}_{\Sigma, \omega} \hat{A}
\]

for all \( \hat{A} \in \mathcal{H}(M) \) i.e., \( Q_{\Sigma', \omega'} = Q_{\Sigma, \omega} \) hence \( I_{\Sigma', \omega'} = I_{\Sigma, \omega} \). Therefore \( \{0\} \subseteq I_{\Sigma, \omega} \subseteq \mathcal{H}(M) \) is a well-defined closed subspace of \( \mathcal{H}(M) \) which is non-trivial if \( F_{\Sigma, \omega}(1) \neq 0 \) and coincides with \( \mathcal{H}(M) \) if \( F_{\Sigma, \omega}(1) = 0 \). Take the orthogonal complement \( \{0\} \subseteq I_{\Sigma, \omega} \subseteq \mathcal{H}(M) \) with its restricted scalar product \((\cdot, \cdot)|_{I_{\Sigma, \omega}}\) and denote the Hilbert space \((I_{\Sigma, \omega}^\perp, \cdot, \cdot)|_{I_{\Sigma, \omega}}\) simply by \( \mathcal{H}(M) \). Note that \( \mathcal{H}(M) \) is isomorphic to \( \mathcal{H}(M)/I_{\Sigma, \omega} \) as a complex vector space however its Hilbert space structure might be different from the one provided by (some) \( F_{\Sigma, \omega} \) on the quotient as in the usual GNS construction. Since \( \{0\} \subseteq I_{\Sigma, \omega} \subseteq \mathcal{H}(M) \) is a multiplicative left-ideal and the scalar product on \( \mathcal{H}(M) \) satisfies \( (\hat{A} \hat{B}, \hat{C}) = (\hat{B}, A \hat{C}) \) the standard representation \( \pi_M : \mathcal{H}(M) \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}(M)) \) restricts to a representation on \( \{0\} \subseteq \mathcal{H}(M) \subseteq \mathcal{H}(M) \). This is either a unique non-trivial representation if \( \mathcal{H}(M) \neq \{0\} \) (provided by a functional over \( M \) with \( F_{\Sigma, \omega}(1) \neq 0 \) if exists), or the trivial one if \( \mathcal{H}(M) = \{0\} \) (provided by a functional with \( F_{\Sigma, \omega}(1) = 0 \) which always exists). Keeping these in mind, for a given \( M \) we define

\[
\rho_M : \mathcal{H}(M) \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}(M)) \text{ to be } \begin{cases} \pi_M |_{\mathcal{H}(M)} \text{ on } \mathcal{H}(M) \neq \{0\} \text{ if possible,} \\ \pi_M |_{\mathcal{H}(M)} \text{ on } \mathcal{H}(M) = \{0\} \text{ otherwise.} \end{cases}
\]

The choice is unambiguously determined by the topology of \( M \) (see the Remark below).

From the general theory [1, Chapter 8] we know that the Murray–von Neumann coupling constant of \( \rho_M \) depends only on the unitary equivalence class of \( \rho_M \) and if \( P_M : \mathcal{H}(M) \rightarrow \mathcal{H}(M) \) is the orthogonal projection then \( P_M \in \mathcal{H}(M) \) and the coupling constant is equal to \( \tau(P_M) \in [0, 1] \). However observing that \( \rho_M \) is surely not isomorphic to \( \pi_M \) since \( I_M \) is never trivial the case \( \tau(P_M) = 1 \) is excluded i.e., in fact \( \tau(P_M) \in [0, 1) \). Finally, consider an orientation-preserving diffeomorphism \( \Phi : M \rightarrow M \). It follows from Lemma 2.1 that it induces a unitary inner automorphism \( A \mapsto \Phi^* A (\Phi^*)^* \) of \( \mathcal{H}(M) \). Moreover it transforms \( I_{\Sigma, \omega} \) into \( I_{\Sigma', \omega'} = I_{\Phi(\Sigma)} \Phi^* \) hence \( F_{\Sigma', \omega'}(1) = 0 \) if and only if \( F_{\Sigma', \omega'}(1) = 0 \) consequently the Hilbert space \( \mathcal{H}(M) \) is invariant under \( \Phi \). We obtain that \( \Phi \) transforms \( \rho_M \) into a new representation \( \Phi^* \rho_M (\Phi^*)^* \) on \( \mathcal{H}(M) \) which is unitary equivalent to \( \rho_M \).

We conclude that \( \gamma(M) := \tau(P_M) \in [0, 1] \) defined by the coupling constant of \( \rho_M \) is a smooth invariant of \( M \) as stated. \( \diamondsuit \)
Remark. Note that $\gamma(M) = 0$ corresponds to the situation when $\rho_M$ is the trivial representation on $\mathcal{K}(M) = \{0\}$. To avoid this we have to demand $F_{\Sigma, \omega}(1) \neq 0$ which is in fact a topological condition: it is equivalent that $F_{\Sigma, \omega}(1) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{\Sigma} \omega = \langle [\Sigma], [\omega] \rangle \in \mathbb{C}$ as a pairing of $[\Sigma] \in H_2(M; \mathbb{Z})$ and $[\omega] \in H^2(M; \mathbb{C})$ in homology is not trivial. Hence $\gamma(M) = 0$ iff $H_2(M; \mathbb{C}) = H_2(M; \mathbb{Z}) \otimes \mathbb{C} = \{0\}$ (or equivalently, $H^2(M; \mathbb{C}) = \{0\}$). Consequently $\gamma(M) = 0$ in particular for $M = S^4, \mathbb{R}^4_{\text{standard}}$.

**Lemma 2.5.** (Excision principle.) Let $M$ be a connected oriented smooth 4-manifold and $\emptyset \subseteq Y \subset M$ a submanifold so that $M \setminus Y \subseteq M$ is connected and the embedding $i : M \setminus Y \to M$ induces an isomorphism $i_* : H_2(M \setminus Y; \mathbb{Z}) \to H_2(M; \mathbb{Z})$ on the 2nd homology. Then $M \setminus Y$ with induced orientation and smooth structure is a connected oriented smooth 4-manifold satisfying $\gamma(M \setminus Y) = \gamma(M)$.

(Gluing principle.) Let $M$ and $N$ be two connected, oriented smooth 4-manifolds and write $M \# N$ for their connected sum. With induced orientation $M \# N$ is a connected, oriented smooth 4-manifold. Its smooth invariant satisfies

$$\gamma(M \# N) = \frac{\gamma(M) + \gamma(N)}{1 + \gamma(M)\gamma(N)}.$$

**Proof.** Regarding the first assertion $M \setminus Y$ is a connected oriented smooth 4-manifold by assumption consequently admits an associated von Neumann algebra $\mathcal{R}(M \setminus Y)$ which is also a hyperfinite II$_1$ factor. Applying the extension-by-zero operation on compactly supported 2-forms the embedding $M \setminus Y \subseteq M$ induces $\Omega^2_c(M \setminus Y; \mathbb{C}) \subseteq \Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C})$ hence $V(M \setminus Y) \subseteq V(M)$ for the corresponding endomorphisms; taking closures we eventually come up with a subfactor $\mathcal{R}(M \setminus Y) \subseteq \mathcal{R}(M)$ with some Jones index $[\mathcal{R}(M) : \mathcal{R}(M \setminus Y)]$. By definition $\mathcal{R}(M \setminus Y)$ acts via $\rho_{M \setminus Y}$ on $\mathcal{K}(M \setminus Y)$ and $\mathcal{R}(M)$ acts via $\rho_M$ on $\mathcal{K}(M)$. By assumption $M \setminus Y \subseteq M$ induces an isomorphism on the 2nd homology hence $\mathcal{K}(M \setminus Y)$ and $\mathcal{K}(M)$ are simultaneously trivial or not; moreover $Y$ has zero 4 dimensional Lebesgue measure therefore $h^2(M \setminus Y) \oplus h^2(M \setminus Y) = h^2(M) \oplus h^2(M)$ for the completion of the 2-form spaces with respect to any splitting (2). This implies $\mathcal{K}(M \setminus Y) = \mathcal{K}(M)$ because otherwise for instance the element $A\omega \in h^2(M) \oplus h^2(M)$ with some $0 \neq A \in \mathcal{K}(M \setminus Y) \subseteq \mathcal{K}(M)$ and $0 \neq \omega \in \Omega^2_c(M; \mathbb{C})$ would be acted upon trivially by $\mathcal{R}(M \setminus Y)$, a contradiction. Consequently $\rho_{M \setminus Y}$ and $\rho_M$ are both representations on $\mathcal{K}(M)$. We know that $\gamma(M)$ is the $\mathcal{R}(M)$-dimension of $\mathcal{K}(M)$ i.e., $\gamma(M) = \dim_{\mathcal{R}(M)} \mathcal{K}(M)$ and likewise $\gamma(M \setminus Y) = \dim_{\mathcal{R}(M \setminus Y)} \mathcal{K}(M \setminus Y)$. Therefore they are related as $\gamma(M \setminus Y) = [\mathcal{R}(M) : \mathcal{R}(M \setminus Y)]\gamma(M)$. However $[\mathcal{R}(M) : \mathcal{R}(M \setminus Y)] = [(\rho_{M \setminus Y}(\mathcal{R}(M \setminus Y)))^\flat : (\rho_{M}(\mathcal{R}(M)))^\flat] = 1$ yielding $\gamma(M \setminus Y) = \gamma(M)$.

Concerning the second assertion note that the $\gamma$-invariant is a well-defined map from (the category) of all orientation-preserving diffeomorphism classes of connected, oriented smooth 4-manifolds into the real interval $[0, 1) \subseteq \mathbb{R}$. But $\mathcal{M}$ forms a commutative semifield with unit $S^4$ under the connected sum operation $\#$. That is, if $X, Y, Z \in \mathcal{M}$ and $S^4 \in \mathcal{M}$ is the 4-sphere then $X \# Y \cong Y \# X$ and $(X \# Y) \# Z \cong X \# (Y \# Z)$ and $X \# S^4 \cong X$. Pick $M, N \in \mathcal{M}$ with their connected sum $M \# N \in \mathcal{M}$ and consider the corresponding invariants $\gamma(M), \gamma(N), \gamma(M \# N) \in [0, 1)$. Define $\bullet : [0, 1) \times [0, 1) \to [0, 1)$ by setting $\gamma(M \# N) = \gamma(M) \cdot \gamma(N)$. The $\bullet$-operation therefore satisfies $\gamma(X) \cdot \gamma(Y) = \gamma(Y) \cdot \gamma(X)$ and $(\gamma(X) \cdot \gamma(Y)) \cdot \gamma(Z) = \gamma(X) \cdot (\gamma(Y) \cdot \gamma(Z))$ and $\gamma(X) \cdot \gamma(Y) = \gamma(X) \cdot \gamma(Y)$. These ensure us that $([0, 1), \bullet)$ is a unital commutative semifield and $\gamma : (\mathcal{M}, \#) \to ([0, 1), \bullet)$ is a unital semifield homomorphism. Quite surprisingly there exists a unique structure of this kind on $[0, 1)$ yielding the shape for $\gamma(M) \cdot \gamma(N)$ as stated. ◇

Remark. Applying the gluing principle of Lemma 2.5 to $S^4 \cong S^4 \# S^4$ and knowing that $0 \leq \gamma(S^4) < 1$ one obtains $\gamma(S^4) = 0$. Hence by the excision principle $\gamma(\mathbb{R}^4_{\text{standard}}) = \gamma(\mathbb{R}^4 \setminus \{\infty\}) = \gamma(S^4) = 0$ as well. These are in accordance with the triviality of $\gamma(S^4)$ and $\gamma(\mathbb{R}^4_{\text{standard}})$ already observed above.

**Proof of Theorem 1.1.** This theorem follows from Lemmata 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5. ◇
3 Physical interpretation

In this section we cannot resist temptation and shall replace the immense class of classical space-times of general relativity with a single universal “quantum space-time” allowing us to lay down the foundations of a manifestly four dimensional, covariant, non-perturbative and genuinely quantum theory of gravity. Accepting Theorem 1.1 this construction is simple, self-contained and is based upon reversing its content or more generally the approach of Section 2. Namely, here in Section 3 not one particular 4-manifold—physically regarded as a particular classical space-time—but the unique hyperfinite II$_1$ factor von Neumann algebra—physically viewed as the universal quantum space-time—is declared to be the primarily given object. Let us see how it works.

1. Observables, fields, states and the gauge group. Let $\mathcal{H}$ be an abstractly given infinite dimensional complex separable Hilbert space and $\mathcal{R} \subset \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ be a hyperfinite factor von Neumann algebra of type II$_1$ acting on $\mathcal{H}$ by the standard representation. We call $\mathcal{R}$ the algebra of (bounded) observables, its tangent space $T_1\mathcal{R} \supset \mathcal{R}$ consisting of the derivatives of 1-parameter families of observables at the unit $1 \in \mathcal{R}$ the algebra of fields, while $\mathcal{H}$ the state space in this quantum theory. The subgroup $U(\mathcal{H}) \cap \mathcal{R}$ of the unitary group of $\mathcal{H}$ acting as the group of unitary inner automorphisms of $\mathcal{R}$ is the gauge group. Note that the gauge group acts on both $\mathcal{R}$ and $\mathcal{H}$ but in a different way.

Two remarks are in order. The first is: what kind of quantum theory is the one in which $\mathcal{R}$ plays the role of the algebra of physical observables? We have seen in Lemma 2.3 that $\mathcal{R}$ contains a dense (in the sense of (7)) subalgebra whose members can be interpreted as bounded local (complexified) algebraic curvature tensors along a smooth manifold whose real dimension is precisely four; consequently up to arbitrary finite experimental accuracy we can demand that the abstract bounded linear operators in $\mathcal{R}$ be four dimensional bounded curvature tensors. Recall that in classical general relativity local gravitational phenomena are caused by the curvature of space-time; hence by demanding $\mathcal{R}$ to consist of local observables the corresponding quantum theory is declared to be a four dimensional quantum theory of pure gravity. In this way we fulfill the Heisenberg dictum that a quantum theory should completely and unambiguously be formulated in terms of its local physical observables. In modern understanding by a physical theory one means a two-level description of a certain class of natural phenomena: the theory possesses a syntax provided by its mathematical core structure and a semantics which is the meaning i.e. interpretation of the bare mathematical model in terms of physical concepts. It is important to point out that in this context our quantum theory is not plainly a mathematical theory anymore but a physical theory. This is because the bare mathematical structure $\mathcal{R}$ (together with a representation $\pi$ on $\mathcal{H}$) is dressed up i.e., interpreted by assigning a physical (in fact, gravitational) meaning to the experiments consistently performable by the aid of this structure (i.e., the usual quantum measurements of operators $A \in \mathcal{R}$ in pure states $v \in \mathcal{H}$ or in more general ones, see below). In our opinion it is of particular interest that the geometrical dimension—equal to four—is fixed at the semantical level only and it matches the known phenomenological dimension of space-time. This is in sharp contrast to e.g. string theory where the geometrical dimension of the theory is fixed already at its syntactical level i.e., by its mathematical structure (namely, the demand of being conformal anomaly free) and it turns out to be much higher than the phenomenological dimension of space-time.

The second remark concerns the priority between $\mathcal{R}$ and $\mathcal{H}$ i.e., observables and states. It is an evergreen question in quantum field theory whether the operator algebra of its observables or the Hilbert space of its states should be considered as the primordial structure when constructing it? For example, in the conventional quantum mechanics or Wightman axiomatic quantum field theory the state space is considered to be fundamental while in the more recent algebraic quantum field theory approach [9] the algebra of observables is declared to be the fundamental structure and then the problem arises how to find that representation of this algebra which describes the physical states of the sought quantum
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theory. In our approach here the following special features occur. The first observation concerns $\mathcal{R}$ and $\mathcal{H}$ as bare vector spaces: as a by-product of Lemma 2.2, the inclusion $\mathcal{R} \subset \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ in fact stems from a representation $\pi : \mathcal{R} \to \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ which is simply the left multiplication of $\mathcal{R}$ on itself; hence this so-called standard representation is continuous, irreducible, faithful moreover $\mathcal{R}$ and $\mathcal{H}$ are isomorphic as complete complex vector spaces. Our second observation concerns $\mathcal{R}$ and $\mathcal{H}$ as gauge group modules: the unit $1 \in \mathcal{R}$ is invariant under the gauge group but its image $\hat{1} \in \mathcal{H}$ is a cyclic and separating vector hence is not invariant under the gauge group; consequently $\mathcal{R}$ and $\mathcal{H}$ are not isomorphic as gauge group modules. Nevertheless we can see that this representation $\pi$ meets physical demands and we encounter here a sort of field-state correspondence as in conformal field theory. In spite of this “self-duality” however, we will see shortly that for our purposes it will be more convenient to consider $\mathcal{R}$ (and not $\mathcal{H}$) as the primitive object.

2. Observables as the universal space of all space-times. Taking into account Item 3 of Remark after Lemma 2.3 the unique algebra of observables $\mathcal{R}$ can be looked as the collection of all classical space-times and we can interpret the appearance of the gauge group as the manifestation of the diffeomorphism gauge symmetry of classical general relativity in this quantum theory. More precisely we can make the following observation. Being $\mathcal{R}$ given as it is, it is already meaningful to talk about spacelike operators of $\mathcal{R}$ as in (9) i.e., non-zero projections in a fixed Cartan subalgebra $\mathfrak{A} \subset \mathcal{R}$; they can be regarded as projections $P_U$ in $\mathcal{R}$ encoding e.g. open subsets $U$ in a connected oriented smooth 4-manifold without boundary $M$ which is maximal in the sense that it does not admit a proper smooth embedding into another connected oriented smooth 4-manifold without boundary. This encoding or embedding of open subsets in $\mathcal{R}$ possesses a “separation property”: these spacelike operators are mutually orthogonal projections of $\mathcal{R}$ i.e., if $\emptyset \subsetneq U_1, U_2 \subsetneq M$ are two open subsets satisfying $U_1 \cap U_2 = \emptyset$ then $P_{U_1} P_{U_2} = 0$ for the corresponding spacelike operators. More generally, taking into account that two Cartan subalgebras in $\mathcal{R}$ intersect only in the one dimensional center of $\mathcal{R}$ spanned by the identity $1 \in \mathcal{R}$, if $M, N$ are two maximal 4-manifolds with two open subsets $\emptyset \subsetneq U \subsetneq M$ and $\emptyset \subsetneq V \subsetneq N$ then their corresponding projections cannot be equal, $P_U \neq P_V$. On the contrary, given an open subset $\emptyset \subsetneq U \subsetneq M$ with corresponding spacelike operator $P_U \in \mathcal{R}$ then as $U$ “shrinks” to a point $x \in M$ the corresponding projection $P_x$ always approaches the zero projection $P_x = 0$ in $\mathcal{R}$ regardless what the maximal $M$ and its point $x \in M$ is; and likewise, as $U$ “blows up” to fulfill the whole $M$ the corresponding projection approaches the identity $P_M = 1 \in \mathcal{R}$ regardless what the maximal $M$ is. Consequently in spite of the separation of open subsets in the intermediate stages, neither the minimal pointwise embedding $x \mapsto P_x$ nor the maximal manifoldwise embedding $M \mapsto P_M$ is injective because they are identically equal to the unique zero or the unique identity projection in $\mathcal{R}$, respectively. Finally, the orientation-preserving diffeomorphism group $\text{Diff}^+(M)$ maps diffeomorphic open subsets of $M$ into each other hence maps the corresponding spacelike operators into each other consequently $\text{Diff}^+(M)$ acts on $\mathcal{R}$ via unitary inner automorphisms i.e., as a subgroup of the gauge group $U(\mathcal{H}) \cap \mathcal{R}$.

Although the full algebra $\mathcal{R}$ is not exhausted by spacelike operators because it certainly contains much more operators which are not of geometric origin (see below)—consequently this “universal quantum space-time” is more than a bunch of all classical space-times—this operator algebraic realization of smooth 4-manifolds might shed a new light onto the predicted non-computability issues of quantum gravity [8].

3. Examples of observables and fields. Let us take a closer look of the elements of $\mathcal{R}$ and $T_1 \mathcal{R} \subset \mathcal{R}$. Taking into account the two items above concerning the interpretation of the mathematical results of

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3In accordance with the notation in Section 2 the norm on $\mathcal{R}$ is $\|[\cdot]\|$ and the scalar product on $\mathcal{H}$ is $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$ with induced norm equal to $\|[\cdot]\|$ yielding $\mathfrak{A} \cong \mathcal{H}$ as complex complete vector spaces however not as gauge group modules; we write therefore $A \in \mathcal{R}$ but $A \in \mathcal{H}$, cf. Lemma 2.2 and the Remark after it.
Section 2 we agree to identify the elements of \( \mathfrak{A} \) up to finite accuracy with four dimensional bounded algebraic (i.e., formal) curvature tensors of all possible smooth 4-manifolds. In particular if \((M, g)\) is a solution of the classical (Riemannian or Lorentzian) Einstein’s equation with (complexified) curvature tensor \( R_g \) as in (8) which is an element of \( \mathfrak{A} \) that is, \([R_g]\) < +\( \infty \) then this classical solution \((M, g)\) can be identified with a geometric observable \( R_g \in \mathfrak{A} \) in our quantum theory. For instance smooth solutions like the flat \( \mathbb{R}^4 \) or more generally, the 27 connected, compact orientable flat 4-geometries (in total there exist 74 connected compact Riemannian 4-manifolds, cf.[11]) certainly satisfy this boundedness condition and in fact give rise to the same unique zero observable \( R_g = 0 \in \mathfrak{A} \). Hence the mapping \((M, g) \mapsto R_g\), when \((M, g)\) runs through all bounded 4-geometries, is not injective in general. It is important to note that, on the contrary to smooth solutions, many singular solutions of classical general relativity theory cannot be interpreted as observables because they lack being bounded. More precisely the non-geometric spectral radius norm \([R_g]\) as defined in (5) and Lemma 2.1 can be used over \((M, g)\) to estimate the finite dimensional pointwise norms \(|R_g|\) of the curvature with respect to the metric \( g \) hence \([R_g]\) < +\( \infty \) may imply, in an appropriate sense, that bounded solutions are not allowed to have curvature singularities. As a result, we expect that for example the classical Schwarzschild or Kerr black hole solutions, etc. give rise to no observables in \( \mathfrak{A} \) but rather fields in \( T \mathfrak{A} \supset \mathfrak{A} \).

Beyond the “classical geometrical observables” above one can consider more elementary “classical set-theoretical observables” by taking spacelike operators i.e., projections from a fixed Cartan subalgebra \( \mathfrak{A} \subset \mathfrak{A} \). As we have seen in Item 3 of Remark after Lemma 2.3 they correspond to (open) subsets of maximal 4-manifolds. These spacelike operators are orthogonal if and only if their corresponding subsets do not intersect. Therefore these kind of observables in \( \mathfrak{A} \) represent the “bare space” itself. There are further fields i.e., elements in \( T_1 \mathfrak{A} \) which represent “bare motion”, too. Take an open subset \( U \subseteq M \) of a maximal smooth 4-manifold. Pick local algebraic curvature tensors \( R_U \in C^\infty(U; \text{End}(\wedge^2 T^* U)) \).

On the one hand consider 1-parameter curves \( t \mapsto e^{tr_U} \) in \( \mathfrak{A} \) and identify their derivatives \( R_U \) at \( t = 1 \) with elements in \( T_1 \mathfrak{A} \). Let us recall Lemma 2.1 which says that \( \mathfrak{A} \) contains elements coming from diffeomorphisms, too. Therefore, on the other hand, we can also consider 1-parameter curves \( t \mapsto \Phi_U^t \) of diffeomorphisms satisfying \( \Phi_U^t \in \text{Diff}^+(U) \subseteq \text{Diff}^+(M) \) i.e., the identity outside \( U \). Then the derivative of this curve at \( t = 1 \) is an unbounded operator, the Lie derivative \( L_{X_U} \) by a real vector field \( X_U \in C^\infty(U; TU) \). There is a maximal subspace of these operators satisfying the canonical commutation relations \([R_U^t, R_U^{t'}] = 0\) and \([L_{X_U^t}, L_{X_U^{t'}}] = 0\) and either \([R_U, L_{X_U}] = 0\) or \([R_U, L_{X_U}] = 1\). In particular if a pair \((R_U, L_{X_U})\) satisfies \([R_U, L_{X_U}] = 1\) then we can call \( Q := R_U \) a position while \( P := L_{X_U} \) its canonical conjugate momentum operator associated with \( U \subseteq M \). Consequently the collection of spacelike operators in \( \mathfrak{A} \) can be improved to a collection of CCR subalgebras within \( \mathfrak{A} \) describing a sort of “canonical quantization of subsets” of maximal 4-manifolds.4

4. Questions and answers. First let us clarify what the answers in this quantum theory are because this is easier. Staying within the orthodox framework i.e., the Coppenhagean interpretation and the standard mathematical formulation of quantum theory but relaxing this latter somewhat, given an observable represented by \( A \in \mathfrak{A} \) and a general (i.e., not necessarily pure) state also represented by an element \( B \in \mathfrak{A} \) in the observable algebra (regarded as a “density matrix” operator over the state space \( \mathcal{H} \)) we declare that an answer is like

\[
\text{The expectation value of the observable quantity } A \text{ in the state } B \text{ is } \tau(AB) \in \mathbb{C}
\]

where \( \tau : \mathfrak{A} \rightarrow \mathbb{C} \) is the unique finite trace on the hyperfinite II\(_1\) factor von Neumann algebra \( \mathfrak{A} \). Note

4More generally, as in algebraic quantum field theory [9] one could consider an assignment \( U \mapsto \mathfrak{A}(U) \) describing local algebras of observables along all open subsets \( \emptyset \subseteq U \subseteq M \) of all smooth 4-manifolds \( M \). However this picture is misleading here because, quite conversely, space-times are secondary structures only, injected into the unique observable algebra \( \mathfrak{A} \).
that in order not to be short sighted, at this level of generality we require neither \( A \in \mathcal{A} \) to be self-adjoint nor \( B \in \mathcal{A} \) to be positive and normalized (however these can be imposed if they turn out to be necessary) hence our answers can be complex numbers in general. Nevertheless \( \tau(AB) \) is finite and is invariant under the gauge group of this theory namely the unitary automorphisms of \( \mathcal{A} \) i.e., it is indeed an “answer”—at least syntactically. However despite their well-posedness that is, existence and gauge invariance, from a local geometric viewpoint—being \( \tau \) defined by the abstract concept of global spectral radii—these expectation values are very complicated consequently it might be very difficult to calculate them in practice (e.g. perturbation theoretic issues, etc. might enter the game).

Now we come to the most difficult problem namely what are the meaningful questions here? This problem is fully at the semantical level. The orthodox approach says that a question should be like

\[
\text{From the collection } \text{Spec} \subset \mathbb{C} \text{ of “all possible values the pointer of the experimental instrument—designed to measure } A \text{ in the laboratory}—\text{can assume”, which does occur in } B? \]

and the answer is obtained through a measurement. Let us make a short digression concerning the measurement. Should we assume that, after performing the physical experiment designed to answer the question above, the state \( B \in \mathcal{A} \) will necessarily “collapse” to an eigenstate \( B_\lambda \in \mathcal{A} \) of \( A \)? In our opinion no and this is an essential difference between gravity and quantum mechanics. Namely, in quantum mechanics an ideal observer compared to the physical object to be observed is infinitely large hence the immense physical interaction accompanying the measurement drastically disturbs the entity leading to the collapse of its state. However, in sharp contrast to this, in gravity an ideal observer is infinitely small hence it is reasonable to expect that measurements might not alter gravitational states.

Concerning the problem of its meaning, since \( A, B \in \mathcal{A} \) have something to do with the curvature of local portions of space-time, it is not easy to assign a straightforward meaning to the above question. Therefore instead of offering a general solution to this problem at this provisory state of the art, let us rather consider some special examples. Take for example Cartan projections \( 0 \neq P, Q \in \mathcal{A} \); as we already mentioned in Section 2 we can suppose \( P = P_U \) is associated with an open subset \( \emptyset \subset U \subset M \) of a space-time 4-manifold \( M \) and likewise, \( Q = Q_V \) with a subset \( \emptyset \subset V \subset N \) of a perhaps different space-time 4-manifold \( N \). Then \( \tau(P_U Q_V) \in \mathbb{C} \) might be interpreted as the “expectation value of \( U \) being physically experienced by \( V \)”, the answer for a sort of classical set-theoretical causality question. In particular if \( U \cap V = \emptyset \), then by the orthogonality of the corresponding projections \( \tau(P_U Q_V) = \tau(0) = 0 \) as one would expect. However if we calculate the expectation values of operators from the aforementioned local CCR algebras generated by \( U \) and \( V \) then the corresponding quantum set-theoretical causality answers might be already non-trivial. Likewise, quite interestingly, if \( (M, g_M) \) is a classical non-singular space-time and \( (N, g_N) \) is another one, then their more advanced i.e., not only set-theoretical but classical geometrical inhabitants may find that \( 0 \neq \tau(R_{g_M} R_{g_N}) \in \mathbb{C} \) in general. Consequently “physical contacts” between different classical geometries can already occur (whatever it means). However given a portion \( (U, g_U) \) of a space-time “we live in” which is nearly flat i.e., in every point \( |R_{g_U}| \approx 0 \) then the detectability of another space-time \( (N, g_N) \) which is also close to being flat is small i.e., \( |\tau(R_{g_N} R_{g_U})| \approx 0 \). This is in accordance with our physical intuition that frequent encounters with different geometries in quantum gravity should occur rather in the strong gravity regime of space-times (hence the reason we do not experience such strange things).

In this universal quantum theory the only distinguished non-trivial self-adjoint gauge invariant operator is the identity \( 1 \in \mathcal{A} \). Therefore the only natural candidate for playing the role of a Hamiltonian responsible for dynamics in this theory is \( 1 \in \mathcal{A} \) (in natural units \( c = \hbar = G = 1 \)). This dynamics is therefore trivial leading to the usual “problem of time” in general relativity [2, 3, 6]. Nevertheless, quite interestingly, this dynamics also coincides with the modular dynamics introduced by Connes and
Rovelli [6] because it is associated with the tracial state \( \tau \) on \( \mathcal{A} \) having the identity as modular operator. The rest energy or mass of a state \( B \in \mathcal{A} \) is defined to be the expectation value of \( 1 \in \mathcal{A} \) in this state more precisely \( m(B) := \tau(1B) \in \mathbb{C} \) (cf. the smooth invariant \( \chi(M) = \tau(1P_M) \) in Lemma 2.4). If \( B \) is non-negative and self-adjoint (as an operator on \( \mathcal{H} \)) then it has non-negative real number energy because (cf. [18, Sect. VII.104]) in this case there always exists a unique self-adjoint operator \( B^\frac{1}{2} \in \mathcal{A} \) satisfying \((B^\frac{1}{2})^* B^\frac{1}{2} = (B^\frac{1}{2})^2 = B \) consequently \( m(B) = \tau(B) = \tau \left( (B^\frac{1}{2})^* B^\frac{1}{2} \right) = \left[ B^\frac{1}{2} \right]^2 \geq 0 \). It turns out that a non-negative self-adjoint state is always a surface-like operator in the sense of Item 2 of Remark following Lemma 2.3 that is, it has non-negative real trace because \( \tau(B) = \left[ B^\frac{1}{2} \right]^2 \geq 0 \). We have interpreted this number as its area i.e., put \( \text{Area}(B) := \tau(B) \). Therefore we obtain

\[
\text{Area}(B) = m(B)
\]

strongly resembling the Penrose’ inequality of classical general relativity.\(^5\)

Proceeding further following [19, Theorem 5], for a non-negative self-adjoint state \( B \) of the \( \Pi_1 \) type von Neumann algebra \( \mathcal{A} \) define the generalized von Neumann entropy by

\[
S(B) := \lim_{\epsilon \downarrow 0} \int \lambda \log \lambda \tau(dE_\lambda)
\]

where \( \{E_\lambda\} \) is the set of spectral projections for \( B \). Formally \( S(B) = \tau(B \log B) \) (with positive sign!). If \( x \geq 1 \) then \( x^2 - x \geq x \log x \geq x - 1 \) with the spectral theorem imply \( \tau(B^2 - B) \geq S(B) \geq \tau(B) - 1 \). Hence in particular \( S(1) = 0 \) and \( S(B) \geq 0 \) if \( \tau(B) \geq 1 \). Knowing that \( \text{Area}(B) = \tau(B) \), the generalized von Neumann entropy and the area of massive states are asymptotically related like

\[
S(B) \sim \text{Area}(B)
\]

in the large area \( \text{Area}(B) \to +\infty \) or equivalently, large mass limit \( m(B) \to +\infty \). This again reminds us something namely the entropy formula for black holes [22, Chapter 12]. Therefore it is challenging to call a non-negative self-adjoint \( B \in \mathcal{A} \) satisfying \( \tau(B) \gg 1 \) a quantum black hole state in this theory.

We conclude with a comment on the cosmological constant problem namely its small but surely positive value \( \Lambda \approx 0.7 \) found in recent observations [17]. Consider a special state which is the curvature operator \( R_{gu} \) of the restricted Friedman–Lemaître–Robertson–Walker metric [22, Chapter 5] modeling the late-time nearly flat and “dust dominated” portion \((U, g_{U})\) of the cosmological space-time we live in. It follows that \( R_{gu} \) has no Weyl component and its non-zero Ricci component is diagonal consequently when considered as a map \( R_{gu} : \Omega^2_c(U; \mathbb{C}) \to \Omega^2_c(U; \mathbb{C}) \) it gives rise to an element \( R_{gu} \in \mathcal{A} \) which is a non-negative self-adjoint operator.\(^6\) Consequently its energy content \( m(R_{gu}) = \tau(1R_{gu}) \geq 0 \). However \( R_{gu} \neq 0 \) and \( 1 \neq 0 \) within \( \mathcal{A} \) imply that in fact \( m(R_{gu}) > 0 \) moreover \( m(R_{gu}) \approx 0 \) because according to our experience \(|R_{gu}| \approx 0 \). Therefore \( m(R_{gu}) \) is an energy-like small positive number hence it is challenging to set \( \Lambda := m(R_{gu}) \) in this model thereby offering a qualitative understanding of the experimental value of the cosmological constant.

\(^5\)In the original formulation [14] of the Penrose inequality as well as in the proofs of its so-called Riemannian version [4, 12] both the area and the mass are defined in a completely different way. Consequently in the original formulation only the validity of an inequality \( \text{Area} \leq 16\pi m^2 \) can be established.

\(^6\)Indeed, the curvature operator of the FLRW metric is simply scalar multiplication on \( \Omega^2_c(U; \mathbb{C}) \) by its scalar curvature, cf. (8). However by [22, Equations 5.2.10, 5.2.14 and 5.2.15] this scalar curvature is equal to \( 8\pi \rho - 24\pi \rho - \frac{\Lambda}{3} \) which is positive in the dust dominated \( P = 0 \) regime for all \( k = -1, 0, +1 \) (this is not obvious from this formula for \( k = +1 \) but is true, cf. [22, Chapter 5]).
5. Recovering classical general relativity. Being this model a genuine quantum theory its matching with known classical field theories is not expected to be a simply limiting process (in the sense of sending some parameter(s) to some special value(s) like $\hbar \to 0$, etc.). Rather, following Haag [9], we expect to recover general relativity by seeking representations $\pi_{\text{classical}}$ of the once and for all given observable algebra $\mathfrak{A}$ which are different from (i.e., not unitarily equivalent to) the one $\pi = \pi_{\text{quantum}}$ used so far. These representations were found in [7, Theorem 3.3] therefore we just recall-summarize their properties here.

Let $\mathfrak{A} \subset \mathfrak{R}$ be a fixed Cartan subalgebra and $0, 1 \neq P \in \mathfrak{A}$ be a spacelike operator as in (9) and $U_P$ its corresponding open subset of a connected, oriented, smooth 4-manifold $M_P$. Moreover pick a (not necessarily compactly supported!) 2-form $\omega \in \Omega^2(U_P; \mathbb{C})$ which is non-degenerate along $U_P$ and satisfies $\int_{U_P} \omega \wedge \overline{\omega} = 1$. In this way one obtains a normalized positive continuous $\mathbb{C}$-linear functional $G_{P,\omega} : \mathfrak{R} \to \mathbb{C}$ by taking the continuous extension of $A \to \int_{U_P} (A\omega) \wedge \overline{\omega}$. Then a standard application of the Gelfand–Naimark–Segal construction gives rise to a representation $\pi_{P,\omega}$ of $\mathfrak{R}$ on a complex separable Hilbert space $\mathcal{H}_{P,\omega}$ with the following properties. There exists a complex Hermitian metric $g_P$ on $U_P$ defined by

$$g_P(X,Y) := \frac{1}{2} \left( \omega(\sqrt{-1}X,Y) - \omega(X,\sqrt{-1}Y) \right), \quad X,Y \in C^\infty(U_P; T U_P \otimes \mathbb{R} \mathbb{C})$$

exhibiting a complex Hermitian 4-manifold $(U_P, g_P)$. The original gauge group $U(\mathcal{H}) \cap \text{Aut}\mathfrak{R}$ of the theory spontaneously breaks down to the finite dimensional orientation-preserving isometry subgroup $\text{Iso}^+(U_P, g_P) \subseteq \text{Diff}^+(U_P) \subseteq \mathfrak{R}$ i.e., $\text{Iso}^+(U_P, g_P)$ has a unitary representation on $\mathcal{H}_{P,\omega}$ and there exist non-trivial invariant vectors in $\mathcal{H}_{P,\omega}$ with respect to this group action. The curvature operator $R_{g_P} \in \mathfrak{R}$ also acts on $\mathcal{H}_{P,\omega}$ via $\pi_{P,\omega}$. Compared to the primordial Hilbert space $\mathcal{H}$ used so far, this Hilbert space has an extra structure namely a decomposition $\mathcal{H}_{P,\omega} = \mathcal{H}_{P,\omega}^+ \oplus \mathcal{H}_{P,\omega}^-$ into orthogonal components (cf. the split Hilbert spaces $h^+(M) \oplus h^-(M)$ in Section 2) induced by the metric $g_P$ such that $\pi_{P,\omega}(\text{Iso}^+(U_P, g_P))$ obeys this splitting moreover $\pi_{P,\omega}(R_{g_P})$ obeys this splitting as well if and only if $(U_P, g_P)$ is Ricci-flat i.e., is a solution of the (complexified) vacuum Einstein’s equation (cf. [7, Section 2 and Theorem 3.3] for more details). Therefore the validity of the vacuum Einstein’s equation is detectable in these representations through $\pi_{P,\omega}(R_{g_P})(\mathcal{H}_{P,\omega}^\pm) \subseteq \mathcal{H}_{P,\omega}^\pm$ that is, the compatibility between the curvature of, and the split Hilbert space structure induced by, the metric. We can call the representation $\pi_{P,\omega} : \mathfrak{R} \to \mathfrak{B}(\mathcal{H}_{P,\omega})$ provided by the functional $G_{P,\omega} : \mathfrak{R} \to \mathbb{C}$ a classical representation of $\mathfrak{R}$. They possess non-trivial modular dynamics at finite temperatures in the sense of [6]. We can regard their superabundance as describing the spontaneously broken classical limits of the unique quantum theory, namely the quantum representation $\pi : \mathfrak{R} \to \mathfrak{B}(\mathcal{H})$ provided by the trace $\tau : \mathfrak{R} \to \mathbb{C}$ possessing trivial modular dynamics at infinite temperature in the sense of [6]. Therefore the passage from the quantum to the classical regime represents some sort of “cooling down” process in this theory, resembling history after the Big Bang.

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