Dual views of string impurities. Geometric singularities and flux backgrounds

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Robert Duivenvoorden was born in Leiderdorp, The Netherlands on March 30 1977 and spent his early childhood with his mother's family in Bulgaria. After completing his secondary education at the 'Gymnasium Haganum' in The Hague he commenced studies in physics and mathematics at Leiden University, passing his propaedeutic exams in 1996. As part of his undergraduate studies he spent one year at Keble College, at the University of Oxford, as an exchange student. He graduated in theoretical physics in 2000 under the supervision of prof. J. de Boer and prof. P. J. van Baal with a master's thesis on the subject of holography in string theory.

In the four subsequent years, the author performed his Ph. D. research under the supervision of prof. J. de Boer at the Institute for Theoretical Physics of the University of Amsterdam as an *onderzoeker in opleiding* employed by Stichting FOM. His Ph.D. research resulted in this thesis as well as the papers [109, 110], concerning three-dimensional non-perturbative gauge theories, which are not a basis for this thesis.

During this four years as a Ph.D. student, the author has tutored classes in string theory and in gravitation and cosmology. Also, he has had the opportunity to attend various schools, workshops and conferences, i.a. in Mumbai, Santa Barbara, Les Houches as well as a number of other locations.

The author is looking forward to continue to explore the fascinating realm of physics and mathematics after obtaining his Ph.D. as a post-doctoral researcher at the Center for Geometry and Theoretical Physics at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

Чем ночь темней - тем звезды ярче.

В.В.Розанов