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ON THE DERIVED CATEGORY OF THE CAYLEY PLANE

L. MANIVEL

Abstract. We describe a maximal exceptional collection on the Cayley plane, the minimal homogeneous projective variety of $E_6$. This collection consists in a sequence of 27 irreducible homogeneous bundles.

1. The Cayley plane

Let $O$ denote the normed algebra of (real) octonions (see e.g. [Ba]), and let $\mathbb{C}$ be its complexification. The space $J_3(O) = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} c_1 & x_3 & \bar{x}_2 \\ x_3 & c_2 & x_1 \\ \bar{x}_2 & \bar{x}_1 & c_3 \end{pmatrix}, \quad c_i \in \mathbb{C}, \quad x_i \in O \right\} \cong \mathbb{C}^{27}$ of $O$-Hermitian matrices of order 3, is the exceptional simple complex Jordan algebra.

The subgroup $SL_3(O)$ of $GL(J_3(O))$ consisting of automorphisms preserving the determinant is the adjoint group of type $E_6$. The action of $E_6$ on the projectivization $\mathbb{P}J_3(O)$ has exactly three orbits: the complement of the determinantal hypersurface, the regular part of this hypersurface, and its singular part which is the closed $E_6$-orbit. These three orbits can be viewed as the (projectivized) sets of matrices of rank three, two, and one respectively.

The closed orbit, i.e. the (projectivization of) the set of rank one matrices, is called the Cayley plane and denoted $OP^2$. It can be defined by the quadratic equation

$$X^2 = \text{trace} (X)X, \quad X \in J_3(O),$$

or as the closure of the affine cell

$$OP^2_0 = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 & x & y \\ x & \bar{x} & \bar{y} \\ y & \bar{y} & \bar{x} \end{pmatrix}, \quad x, y \in O \right\} \cong \mathbb{C}^{16}.$$

Since the Cayley plane is a closed orbit of $E_6$, it can also be identified with the quotient of $E_6$ by a parabolic subgroup, namely the maximal parabolic subgroup $P_1$ defined by the simple root $\alpha_1$ in the notation below. The semi-simple part of this maximal parabolic is isomorphic to $\text{Spin}_{10}$.

If we denote by $V_\omega$ the irreducible $E_6$-module with highest weight $\omega$, we have $J_3(O) \simeq V_{\omega_1}$. This is a minuscule module, meaning that its weights with respect to any maximal torus of $E_6$, are all conjugate under the action of the Weyl group $W(E_6)$. For more details, see [LM, IM].

Note that the Dynkin diagram of type $E_6$ has an obvious symmetry of order two, which accounts for the duality between irreducible modules. For example, the dual module of $V_{\omega_1}$ is $V_{\omega_6}$. 

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2. Homogeneous bundles on the Cayley plane

2.1. Irreducible homogeneous bundles. The category of homogeneous bundles on a rational homogeneous variety $G/P$ is equivalent to the category $\text{Mod}_P$ of $P$-modules. Recall that $P$ has a non trivial decomposition $P = LP^u$, where $P^u$ denotes the unipotent radical and $L$ a Levi factor. Since $P^u$ is non trivial, $P$ is not reductive, and $P$-modules are not completely reducible in general. Irreducible $P$-modules have a trivial action of $P^u$, so that they are completely determined by their $L$-module structure. Since $L$ is reductive, its irreducible modules are well understood: they are uniquely determined by their highest weight $\omega$, which can be any $L$-dominant weight of $G$. We denote by $E_\omega$ the corresponding irreducible homogeneous vector bundles on $G/P$. By the Borel-Weil theorem, $H^0(G/P, E_\omega) = V_\omega$ if $\omega$ is dominant, and otherwise $H^0(G/P, E_\omega) = 0$.

For the Cayley plane $\mathbb{O}P^2 = E_6/P_1$, a Levi factor $L$ of $P_1$, modded out by its one dimensional center, is a copy of Spin$_{10}$. An $L$-dominant weight $\omega$ is a linear combination $\omega = a_1\omega_1 + a_2\omega_2 + a_3\omega_3 + a_4\omega_4 + a_5\omega_5 + a_6\omega_6$ of the fundamental weights of $e_6$, with $a_2, \ldots, a_6 \geq 0$. We can encode $\omega$ by the Dynkin diagram of $E_6$, where the node corresponding to the fundamental weight $\omega_i$ is labeled $a_i$.

**Example 1.** The weight $\omega = -\omega_1$ defines a character of $L$. So $E_{-\omega_1}$ is just a line bundle, the negative generator of the Picard group. The dual bundle $E_{\omega_1}$ defines the embedding of $\mathbb{O}P^2$ in $\mathbb{P}V_{\omega_1} = \mathbb{P}J_3(\mathbb{O})$ and will be denoted $O_{\mathbb{O}P^2}(1)$.

![Diagram](image)

$O_{\mathbb{O}P^2}(1) \simeq \bullet \rightarrow \circ \rightarrow \circ \rightarrow \bullet \rightarrow \circ$

**Example 2.** The weight that defines the tangent bundle of $\mathbb{O}P^2$ is the highest root of $e_6$, which is also the dominant weight defining the adjoint representation. Note that the corresponding representation of Spin$_{10}$ is one of the half-spin representations, which has dimension sixteen, as the Cayley plane.

$T_{\mathbb{O}P^2} \simeq \bullet \rightarrow \circ \rightarrow \bullet \rightarrow \circ \rightarrow \bullet \rightarrow \circ \rightarrow \bullet \rightarrow \circ$

The Borel-Weil theorem yields that $H^0(\mathbb{O}P^2, T_{\mathbb{O}P^2}) = e_6$, as expected.

Since the two half-spin representations of Spin$_{10}$ are dual one of the other, one could expect that the weight defining the cotangent bundle of $\mathbb{O}P^2$ be $\omega_2$. This is not exactly true: the defining weight is $\omega_2 - \omega_1$, where substracting $\omega_1$ amounts, at the level of bundles, to twisting by $O_{\mathbb{O}P^2}(-1)$. To check this, one needs to remember that if an irreducible $L$-module has highest weight $\omega$, then its lowest weight is $w_0^L(\omega)$, where $w_0^L$ denotes the longest element of the Weyl group $W(L)$ of $L \simeq \text{Spin}_{10} \times \mathbb{C}^*$, and then the highest weight of the dual module is $-w_0^L(\omega)$. But this weight must be computed inside the weight lattice of $e_6$, on which $W(L)$ acts naturally since it is embedded in $W(E_6)$. And the result of this computation will be what it would be in the weight lattice of Spin$_{10}$, only up to extra multiples of $\omega_1$.

$\Omega_{\mathbb{O}P^2}^1 \simeq \circ \rightarrow \bullet \rightarrow 1 \rightarrow -1$
Example 3. The minimal non trivial representation of Spin$_{10}$ is the vector representation. This implies that up to line bundles, the irreducible homogeneous bundle defined by $\omega_6$ has minimal rank, equal to ten. We denote it by $\mathcal{S}$.

$$\mathcal{S} \simeq \begin{array}{c}
\bullet \\
1 \\
\circ
\end{array}$$

The vector representation of Spin$_{10}$ is self-dual. For the reasons explained above, this does not quite imply that $\mathcal{S}$ be self-dual, but this must be the case up to a twist by a line bundle. One can easily check that $\mathcal{S}^\vee = \mathcal{S}(-1)$.

The geometric interpretation of $\mathcal{S}$ is the following. By the Borel-Weil theorem, we have $H^0(\mathbb{OP}^2, \mathcal{S}) = V_{\omega_6}^\vee = V_{\omega_1} = \mathcal{J}_3(\mathcal{O})$. An irreducible homogeneous bundle with non trivial sections is generated by global sections, so dualizing the evaluation map we get an injection

$$\mathcal{S}^\vee \hookrightarrow \mathcal{J}_3(\mathcal{O})^\vee \otimes \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{OP}^2}.$$ 

This map identifies each fiber of $\mathcal{S}^\vee$ with the linear span of an $\mathcal{O}$-line, a maximal quadric in the dual Cayley plane $\mathbb{OP}^2 \subset \mathbb{P}\mathcal{J}_3(\mathcal{O})^\vee$, see \[LM\]. (Note that the Cayley plane and its dual are isomorphic, but only non-canonically: this reflects the fact that the order two symmetry of the Dynkin diagram can only be realized as an outer automorphism of $E_6$.) In particular the presence of this maximal quadric explains that there is a natural quadratic form

$$\text{Sym}^2 \mathcal{S} \to \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{OP}^2}(1).$$

Definition. Let $\mathcal{S}_2$ be the kernel of the map $\text{Sym}^2 \mathcal{S} \to \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{OP}^2}(1)$. Since the symmetric square of the vector representation of Spin$_{10}$ is, up to the trivial factor defined by the quadratic form, irreducible, $\mathcal{S}_2$ is an irreducible vector bundle, with highest weight $2\omega_6$.

The quadratic map $\text{Sym}^2 \mathcal{S} \to \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{OP}^2}(1)$ induces a cubic map $\text{Sym}^3 \mathcal{S} \to \mathcal{S}(1)$. Let $\mathcal{S}_3$ be the kernel of this cubic map. This is the irreducible bundle with highest weight $3\omega_6$.

2.2. Bott’s theorem. The fundamental tool for computing the cohomology of vector bundles on homogeneous spaces is Bott’s theorem, which extends the Borel-Weil theorem for global sections to higher cohomology groups.

Consider on $G/P$ an irreducible vector bundle $\mathcal{E}_\omega$. We have seen that it has non trivial global sections exactly when $\omega$ is dominant. In general, let $\rho$ denote the sum of the fundamental weights, and consider the weight $\omega + \rho$. This weight is singular if there exists a root $\alpha$ such that $\langle \omega + \rho, \alpha^\vee \rangle = 0$ (equivalently, $\omega + \rho$ is fixed by the simple reflection $\alpha$). Otherwise, there exists a unique $w$ in the Weyl group such that $w(\omega + \rho)$ is strictly dominant, and then $w(\omega + \rho) - \rho$ is dominant.

Theorem 1 (Bott’s theorem). If $\omega + \rho$ is singular, then $\mathcal{E}_\omega$ is acyclic. Otherwise, there is a unique $w \in W(E_6)$ such that $w(\omega + \rho)$ is strictly dominant. Then

$$H^\ell(w)(G/B, \mathcal{E}_\omega) = V_{w(\omega + \rho) - \rho}^\vee,$$

and the other cohomology groups of $\mathcal{E}_\omega$ vanish.

Remark. To check whether the weight $\omega + \rho$ is singular or not, we can proceed as follows. If $\omega + \rho$ is not dominant, one of its coefficients on the basis of fundamental weights, say on $\omega_i$, must be negative. Then we apply the simple reflection $s_{\alpha_i}$, in order to cross the hyperplane orthogonal to $\alpha^\vee_i$. Not that since $E_6$ is simply laced, this simply amounts to changing the (negative) coefficient of $\omega_i$ into its opposite, and adding it to the coefficients of the fundamental weights connected to $\omega_i$ in the Dynkin diagram. Iterating this procedure, we will eventually get a weight with some zero coefficient, which will imply that $\omega + \rho$ is singular, or get a strictly dominant weight which will be the representative $w(\omega + \rho)$ of the $W(E_6)$-orbit of $\omega + \rho$ in the interior of the dominant
chamber. In the latter case, the number of applications of these simple reflections is nothing but the length \( \ell(w) \) of \( w \), which is the degree of the only non-zero cohomology group of \( E_\nu \).

### 3. Exceptional sequences

3.1. Exceptional bundles. Recall that an object \( F \) of the derived category of coherent sheaves on a variety \( X \) is exceptional if \( R\text{Hom}(F, F) = \mathbb{C} \). If \( F \) is represented by a vector bundle \( F \) on \( X \), this means that

\[
H^i(X, \text{End}(F)) = \delta_{i,0}\mathbb{C}.
\]

**Proposition 1.** The homogeneous bundles \( S, S_2, S_3 \) on \( \mathbb{OP}^2 \) are exceptional.

**Proof.** If \( U \) denotes the vector representation of Spin\(_{10} \), we know that \( \wedge^2U \) is an irreducible (and even fundamental) representation, and that \( \text{Sym}^2U \) splits into a trivial factor generated by the invariant quadratic form, and an irreducible summand. At the level of bundles, since \( S_\nu = S(-1) \), this implies that

\[
\text{End}(S) = E_{\omega_5}(-1) \oplus \mathbb{OP}^2 S_2(-1).
\]

The bundle \( E_{\omega_5}(-1) \) has highest weight \( \omega = \omega_5 - \omega_1 \). Since \( \omega + \rho = \omega_2 + \omega_3 + \omega_4 + 2\omega_5 + \omega_6 \) is orthogonal to \( \alpha_\gamma \), \( \omega + \rho \) is singular. By Bott’s theorem we conclude that \( E_{\omega_5}(-1) \) is acyclic. For exactly the same reason \( S_2(-1) \) is also acyclic. We conclude that

\[
H^i(\mathbb{OP}^2, \text{End}(S)) = H^i(\mathbb{OP}^2, \mathbb{OP}^2) = \delta_{i,0}\mathbb{C}.
\]

So \( S \) is exceptional.

We proceed similarly with the other two bundles. First observe that \( S_2' = S_2(-2) \) and \( S_3' = S_3(-3) \). Using e.g. LiE to compute tensor products of representations of Spin\(_{10} \), we get the decompositions:

\[
\text{End}(S_2) = E_{4\omega_6}(-2) \oplus E_{\omega_5 + 2\omega_6}(-2) \oplus E_{2\omega_5}(-2) \oplus E_{\omega_5}(-1) \oplus E_{\omega_5}(-1) \oplus \mathbb{OP}^2,
\]

\[
\text{End}(S_3) = E_{6\omega_6}(-3) \oplus E_{\omega_5 + 4\omega_6}(-3) \oplus E_{2\omega_5 + 2\omega_6}(-3) \oplus E_{3\omega_5}(-3) \oplus E_{4\omega_6}(-2) \oplus E_{\omega_5 + 2\omega_6}(-3) \oplus E_{2\omega_5}(-1) \oplus E_{\omega_5}(-1) \oplus \mathbb{OP}^2.
\]

Our claim amounts to the acyclicity of all the non trivial vector bundles in these decompositions, hence, by Bott’s theorem, to the singularity of all the corresponding weights, once we have added \( \rho \). We use the remark after Bott’s theorem above. Consider for example \( E_{6\omega_6}(-3) \), whose highest weight is \( 6\omega_6 - 3\omega_1 \). After adding \( \rho \), we get successively, applying \( s_{\alpha_1} \) and \( s_{\alpha_2} \):

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
-2 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\
1 & & & 7 \\
\end{array} \quad \mapsto \quad \begin{array}{cccc}
2 & -1 & 1 & 1 \\
1 & & & 7 \\
\end{array} \quad \mapsto \quad \begin{array}{cccc}
1 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\
& & & 7 \\
\end{array}
\]

Since there is a zero label on the rightmost diagram, we conclude that \( E_{6\omega_6}(-3) \) is acyclic. Proceeding in the same way with the other bundles, we conclude the proof. \( \square \)

**Remark.** Observe that the irreducible vector bundle \( \wedge^2S \) is not exceptional. Indeed, if \( U \) is again the vector representation of Spin\(_{10} \), \( \wedge^2U \oplus \wedge^2U \) contains \( \wedge^4U \), which is an irreducible (but not fundamental) representation, contained in the tensor product of the two half-spin representations. This implies that \( \text{End}(\wedge^2S) \) contains \( E_{\omega_2 + \omega_3}(-2) \), which is not acyclic. Indeed, \( s_{\alpha_1}(\omega_2 + \omega_3 - 2\omega_1 + \rho) = \omega_2 + \rho \) is strictly dominant, hence

\[
H^1(\mathbb{OP}^2, E_{\omega_2 + \omega_3}(-2)) = \mathbb{C}.
\]
3.2. A maximal exceptional sequence. Recall that an exceptional sequence of sheaves on a projective variety $X$ is a sequence $F_1, \ldots, F_m$ of exceptional sheaves such that

$$\text{Ext}^q(F_i, F_j) = 0 \quad \forall q \geq 0, \quad \forall i > j.$$ 

It is strongly exceptional if moreover

$$\text{Ext}^q(F_i, F_j) = 0 \quad \forall q > 0, \quad \forall i \leq j.$$ 

Since $\mathbb{OP}^2$ has index 12, it follows from the Kodaira vanishing theorem that the sequence $\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{OP}^2}, \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{OP}^2}(1), \ldots, \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{OP}^2}(10), \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{OP}^2}(11)$ is strongly exceptional. On the other hand, it is easy to see that the classes in K-theory of the members of an exceptional sequence are linearly independent (see [Bo]). For rational homogeneous spaces, the K-theory is a free $\mathbb{Z}$-module admitting for basis the classes of the structure sheaves of the Schubert varieties. The length of a maximal exceptional sequence is expected to coincide with the rank of the K-theory, that is, the number of Schubert classes, which is also the topological Euler characteristic of the variety. For the Cayley plane this number is equal to 27, so we expect to be able to enlarge the preceding exceptional sequence of line bundles. For this we will use the exceptional bundles $S, S_2$ and $S_3$, and will apply Bott’s theorem again and again.

**Lemma 1.** The bundle $S(-i)$ is acyclic for $1 \leq i \leq 12$.

**Proof.** We play the same game as above, starting with the weight $\omega_6 - i\omega_1 + \rho$. At each step, the weight we get either has a zero coefficient, in which case the game stops and we conclude that we started with a singular weight, or there is a negative coefficient and we apply the corresponding simple reflexion. This goes as follows:

1. $-i + 1 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad \rightarrow \quad i - 1 \quad \frac{1}{2 - i} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad \rightarrow \quad 1 \quad \frac{3 - i}{i - 2} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad \rightarrow$

2. $\frac{1}{4 - i} \quad 1 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 4 - i \quad \rightarrow \quad 1 \quad \frac{1}{i - 4} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 4 - i \quad \rightarrow \quad 1 \quad \frac{5 - i}{i - 4} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad \rightarrow$

3. $\frac{1}{6 - i} \quad 1 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 6 - i \quad \rightarrow \quad 1 \quad \frac{1}{i - 6} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 6 - i \quad \rightarrow \quad 1 \quad \frac{7 - i}{i - 6} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad \rightarrow$

4. $\frac{1}{7 - i} \quad 1 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 7 - i \quad \rightarrow \quad 1 \quad \frac{1}{i - 9} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 9 - i \quad \rightarrow \quad 1 \quad \frac{1}{i - 8} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad \rightarrow$

5. $\frac{1}{9 - i} \quad 1 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 9 - i \quad \rightarrow \quad 1 \quad \frac{1}{i - 9} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 10 - i \quad \rightarrow \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad 10 - i \quad \rightarrow \quad 2 \quad \frac{1}{i - 10} \quad 1 \quad 1 \quad \frac{1}{1} \quad \rightarrow$
This concludes the proof. \(\square\)

Note that for \(i = 13\) we finally get the strictly dominant weight \(\omega_1 + \rho\). Since we needed to apply 16 simple reflections, we conclude by Bott’s theorem that

\[
H^{16}(\mathbb{P}^2, S(-13)) = V^\vee_{\omega_1}.
\]

But by Serre duality, \(H^{16}(\mathbb{P}^2, S(-13))\) is dual to \(H^0(\mathbb{P}^2, S^\vee(1)) = H^0(\mathbb{P}^2, S)\) which, by Borel-Weil, is \(V^\vee_{\omega_6} \simeq V_{\omega_1}\). This is a way to check that the computation above, and those of the same type that will follow, are indeed correct.

The same statement holds for our two other exceptional bundles:

**Lemma 2.** \(S_2(-i)\) and \(S_3(-i)\) are acyclic for \(1 \leq i \leq 12\).

Now consider their endomorphism bundles:

**Lemma 3.** \(\text{End}(S)(-i)\) is acyclic for \(1 \leq i \leq 11\).

**Proof.** We have seen that \(\text{End}(S) = S_2(-1) \oplus O_{\mathbb{P}^2} \oplus E_{\omega_5}(-1)\). We already know that \(S_2(-i - 1)\) and \(O_{\mathbb{P}^2}(-i)\) are acyclic for \(1 \leq i \leq 11\). There remains to treat the case of \(E_{\omega_5}(-i - 1)\), which we do as above. After adding \(\rho\) to \(\omega_5 - (i + 1)\omega_1\), we get successively:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Diagram 1} & \longrightarrow & \text{Diagram 2} \\
\text{Diagram 3} & \longrightarrow & \text{Diagram 4} \\
\text{Diagram 5} & \longrightarrow & \text{Diagram 6} \\
\end{array}
\]
This concludes the proof. \[ \square \]

**Lemma 4.** \( \text{End}(S_2)(-i) \) is acyclic for \( 1 \leq i \leq 2 \).

**Proof.** We have seen how to decompose \( \text{End}(S_2) \) into irreducible bundles. We need to apply Bott’s theorem to each component. Consider for example the component \( E_{2\omega_5}(-2) \). After twisting by \( O_{\mathbb{P}^2}(-i) \) and adding \( \rho \) to the corresponding weight, we get:

For \( i = 1, 2 \) we get singular weights, as claimed. But note that for \( i = 3 \), the last weight above is \( \rho \), so that that \( H^3(O_{\mathbb{P}^2}, E_{2\omega_5}(-5)) = \mathbb{C} \). In particular \( \text{End}(S_2)(-3) \) is not acyclic. Examining the other components we can easily complete the proof that \( \text{End}(S_2)(-1) \) and \( \text{End}(S_2)(-2) \) are both acyclic. \[ \square \]

In a completely similar way, we check that:

**Lemma 5.** \( \text{End}(S_3)(-1) \) is acyclic.

**Lemma 6.** \( S_2 \otimes S(-i - 1) \) is acyclic for \( 1 \leq i \leq 12 \).

**Proof.** Use the decomposition, that we obtain e.g. using LiE,

\[ S_2 \otimes S = S_3 \oplus S(1) \oplus E_{\omega_5 + \omega_6}. \]

The first two factors have already been considered. The third one is treated in the same way. \[ \square \]

**Lemma 7.** \( S_3 \otimes S(-i - 1) \) is acyclic for \( 1 \leq i \leq 6 \).

**Proof.** Here the relevant decomposition is

\[ S_3 \otimes S = E_{4\omega_6} \oplus S_2(1) \oplus E_{\omega_5 + 2\omega_6}. \]

The most limiting term is the first one, since it gives rise to the sequence:
For $i = 1, \ldots, 6$ we get singular weights, as claimed, but for $i = 7$ the last weight above is $\rho$. We can therefore conclude that $H^8(\mathbb{O}P^2, \mathcal{E}_{\omega_5 + 2\omega_6}(-8)) = \mathbb{C}$. Therefore $S_3 \otimes S(-8)$ is not acyclic. We conclude the proof by checking the last component. 

**Lemma 8.** $S_3 \otimes S_2(-i-2)$ is acyclic for $1 \leq i \leq 2$.

**Proof.** We have the decomposition:

$$S_3 \otimes S_2 = \mathcal{E}_{\omega_5} \oplus \mathcal{E}_{\omega_5 + 3\omega_6} \oplus \mathcal{E}_{2\omega_5 + \omega_6} \oplus \mathcal{E}_{\omega_5 + \omega_6}(1) \oplus S_3(1) \oplus S(2).$$

The last three terms have already been considered. Among the first three, the most limiting one is the third one, which contributes non trivially for $i = 3$. But for $i = 1, 2$ all the factors are acyclic.

We can now prove our main result.

**Theorem 2.** The following sequence, of length 27, of vector bundles on the Cayley plane $\mathbb{O}P^2$,

$$\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{S}, \mathcal{O}(1), \mathcal{S}(1), \mathcal{O}(2), \mathcal{S}(2), \mathcal{O}(3), \mathcal{S}(3), \mathcal{O}(4), \mathcal{S}_2(3), \mathcal{S}(4), \mathcal{S}_3(3), \mathcal{O}(5), \mathcal{S}_2(4), \mathcal{S}(5), \mathcal{S}_3(4), \mathcal{O}(6), \mathcal{S}_2(5), \mathcal{S}(6), \mathcal{O}(7), \mathcal{S}(7), \mathcal{O}(8), \mathcal{S}(8), \mathcal{O}(9), \mathcal{S}(9), \mathcal{O}(10), \mathcal{O}(11)$$

is a maximal strongly exceptional collection.

**Proof.** This follows from the previous lemmas. Start with the exceptional collection $\mathcal{O}, \ldots, \mathcal{O}(11)$. By Lemma 8, $S_3(1), \ldots, S(9)$ is also an exceptional collection. According to Lemma 8, we have $\text{Hom}(\mathcal{O}(i), S(j)) = 0$ for $j < i \leq j + 12$. Moreover, since $S' = S(-1)$, $\text{Hom}(S(j), \mathcal{O}(i)) = \text{Hom}(\mathcal{O}(j + 1), S(i)) = 0$ for $i \leq j \leq i + 11$. This implies that the sequence

$$\mathcal{O}, \mathcal{S}, \mathcal{O}(1), \mathcal{S}(1), \mathcal{O}(2), \mathcal{S}(2), \mathcal{O}(3), \mathcal{S}(3), \mathcal{O}(4), \mathcal{S}(4), \mathcal{O}(5), \mathcal{S}(5), \mathcal{O}(6), \mathcal{S}(6), \mathcal{O}(7), \mathcal{S}(7), \mathcal{O}(8), \mathcal{S}(8), \mathcal{O}(9), \mathcal{S}(9), \mathcal{O}(10), \mathcal{O}(11)$$

is an exceptional collection. On the other hand, Lemmas 8, 9 and 10 imply that

$$\mathcal{S}_2(3), \mathcal{S}_3(3), \mathcal{S}_2(4), \mathcal{S}_3(4), \mathcal{S}_2(5)$$

is also an exceptional collection. There remains to “insert” this collection inside the previous one. The compatibility conditions are the following. For $S_2$, Lemmas 8, 9 and the fact that $\mathcal{S}' = \mathcal{S}_2(-2)$ imply that we must respect the orderings $\mathcal{O}(k) \cdots \mathcal{S}_2(j) \cdots \mathcal{O}(i)$ and $\mathcal{S}(k) \cdots \mathcal{S}_2(j) \cdots \mathcal{S}(i)$ with $j - 10 \leq k \leq j + 1$ and $j + 1 \leq i \leq j + 12$. Concerning $S_3$, Lemmas 8, 9 and the fact that $\mathcal{S}' = \mathcal{S}_3(-3)$ imply that we must respect the orderings $\mathcal{O}(k) \cdots \mathcal{S}_3(j) \cdots \mathcal{O}(i)$ with $j - 9 \leq k \leq j + 2$ and $j + 1 \leq i \leq j + 12$, and $\mathcal{S}(k) \cdots \mathcal{S}_3(j) \cdots \mathcal{S}(i)$ with $j - 4 \leq k \leq j + 1$ and $j + 1 \leq i \leq j + 6$. The collection of the theorem is compatible with these requirements.

Finally the fact that this collection is strongly exceptional is quite straightforward. Indeed, if $i < j$ and $E_i, E_j$ are the corresponding bundles of the collection, then in most cases $\text{End}(E_i, E_j)$ decomposes as a sum of irreducible vector bundles $\mathcal{E}_\omega$ defined by a highest weight $\omega$ which is dominant. In this case it is an immediate consequence of Bott’s theorem that the higher cohomology groups vanish. Another possibility is that $\omega$ has coefficient $-1$ on $\omega_1$, and then $\mathcal{E}_\omega$ is acyclic. The remaining cases are only of three types, $E_i = \mathcal{S}(k)$ and $E_j = \mathcal{S}_3(k - 1)$, or $E_i = \mathcal{S}_2(k)$ and $E_j = \mathcal{S}_3(k)$, or $E_i = \mathcal{S}_3(k)$ and $E_j = \mathcal{S}_2(k + 1)$. In these cases the coefficient of $\omega$ on $\omega_1$ can be $-2$, but then the coefficient on $\omega_3$ is zero, and the acyclicity follows immediately.

Of course we expect this maximal exceptional collection to be full, i.e. to generate the derived category of the Cayley plane. This would follow from Conjecture 9.1 and its Corollary 9.3 in [Ku3], but we have not been able to prove it.
A possible strategy would be to find a covering family of subvarieties, possibly of small codimension, for which we already have a good understanding of the derived category. This was the strategy used in [Ku1] for an inductive treatment of Grassmannians of lines. In the Cayley plane, there are at least two natural candidates. The first one is the family of $\O$-lines, that is, of eight-dimensional quadrics parametrized by the dual Cayley plane. The other one is the family of copies of the spinor variety of Spin$_{10}$ in $\OP^2$. Indeed, the union of lines in the Cayley plane passing through a given point is known to be a cone over this spinor variety [LM], which we can recover by taking hyperplane sections not containing the given point. These spinor varieties have codimension six, and their derived category is described in [Ku2, 6.2]. But in both cases the codimension is already sufficiently big to make this strategy difficult to implement concretely.

References


[LiE] LiE, a computer algebra package for Lie group computations, http://young.sp2mi.univ-poitiers.fr/ marc/LiE/


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