

Probing Particle Physics with the Cosmological Collider

Yi Wang (王一)

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

14 Aug 2025



Why the name "Cosmological Collider"?



Looks Similar

High energy particles: $E \sim H \sim 10^{13}$ GeV (?)

Conserved quantities: $\zeta, h_{ij}, \dots$

Detectors: CMB, LSS

and more

How to determine particle mass?

Through "how squeezed"

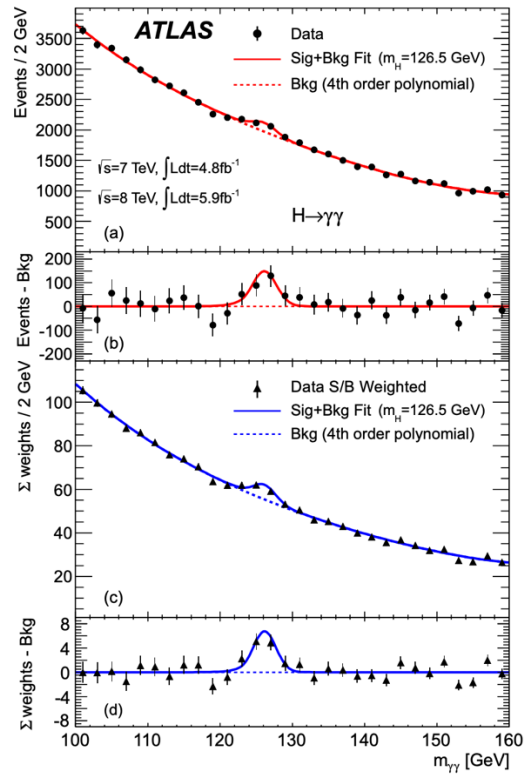


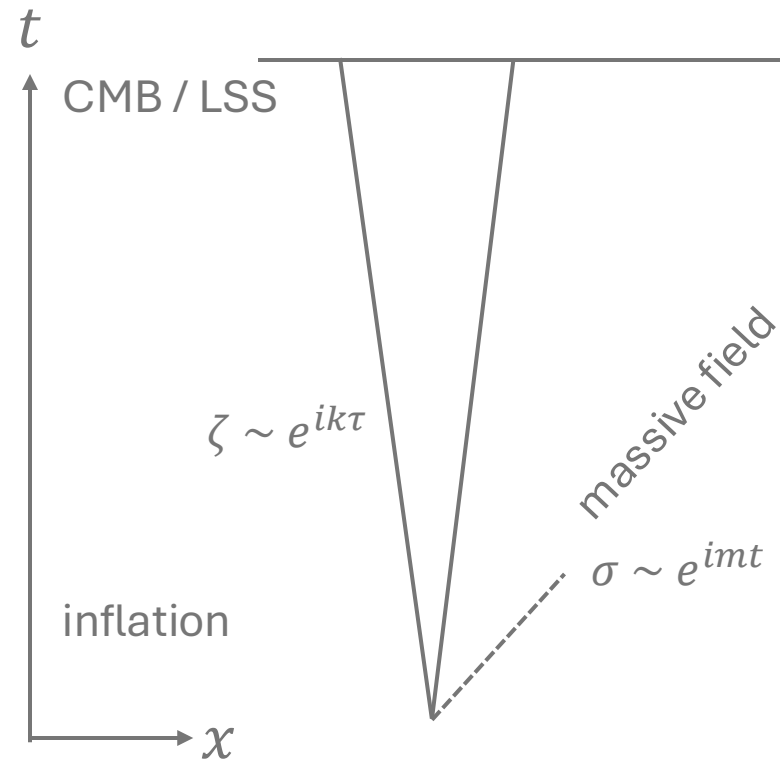
Figure: ATLAS



$$\left(\frac{k_d}{k_p}\right)^{i\mu}$$

How to determine particle mass?

Through "how squeezed"



$$ds^2 = -dt^2 + a^2 d\mathbf{x}^2 = a^2 (-d\tau^2 + d\mathbf{x}^2)$$

Chen, YW, 0909.0496, 0911.3380

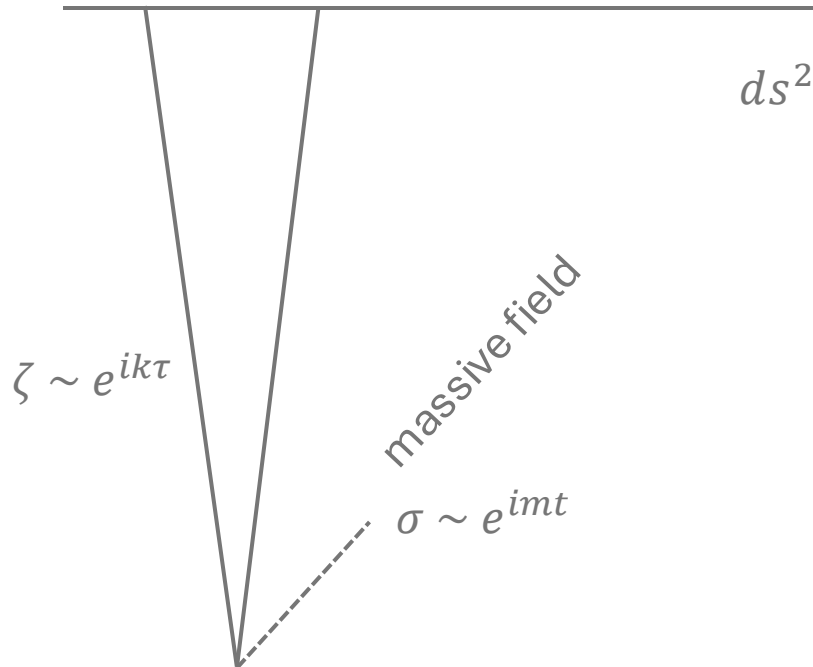
Baumann, Green, 1109.0292

Noumi, Yamaguchi, Yokoyama, 1211.1624

Arkani-Hamed, Maldacena, 1503.08043

How to determine particle mass?

Through "how squeezed"

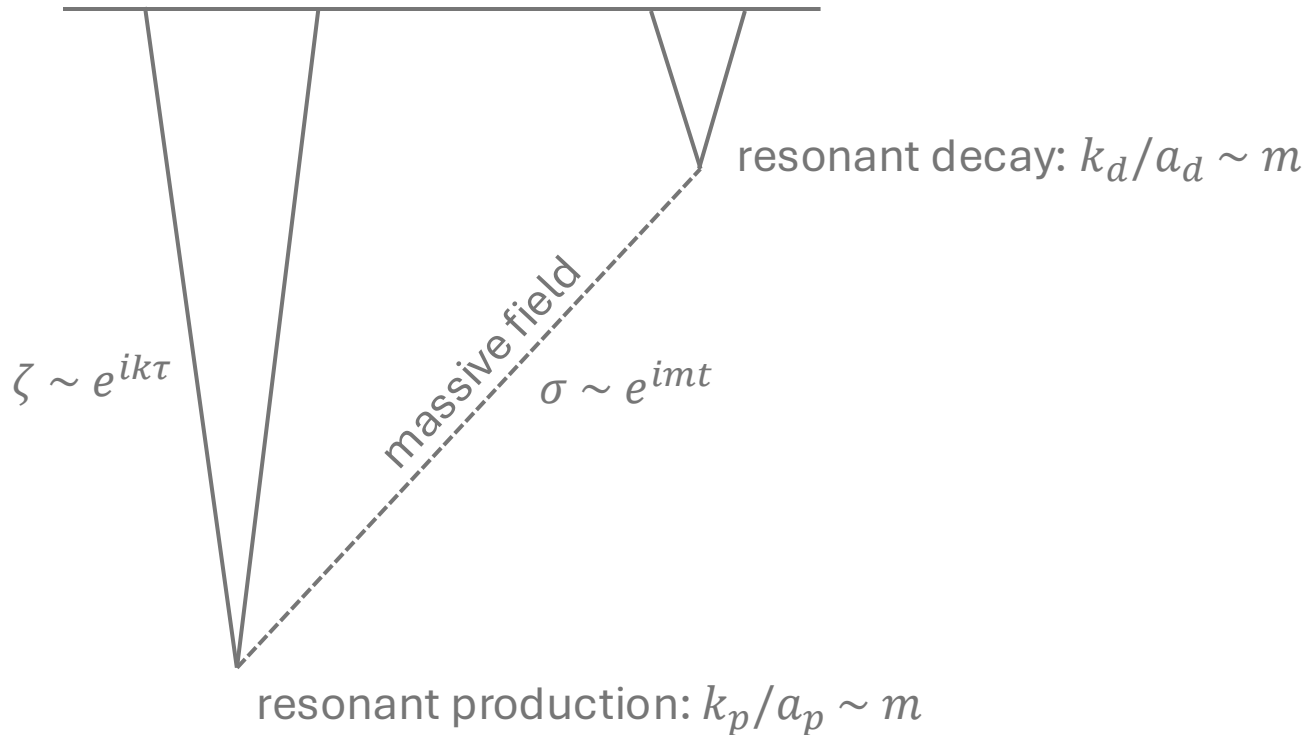


$$ds^2 = -dt^2 + a^2 d\mathbf{x}^2 = a^2 (-d\tau^2 + d\mathbf{x}^2)$$

resonant production: $k_p/a_p \sim m$

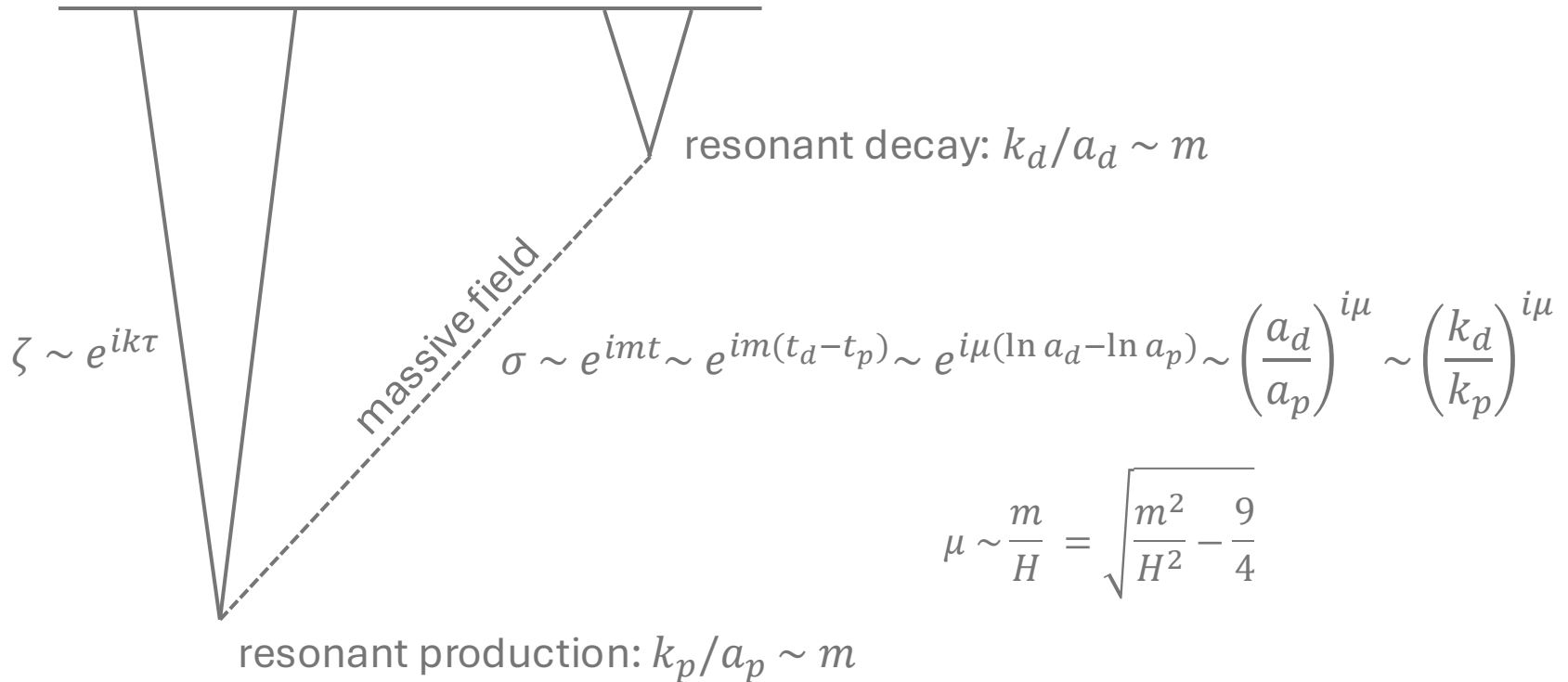
How to determine particle mass?

Through "how squeezed"



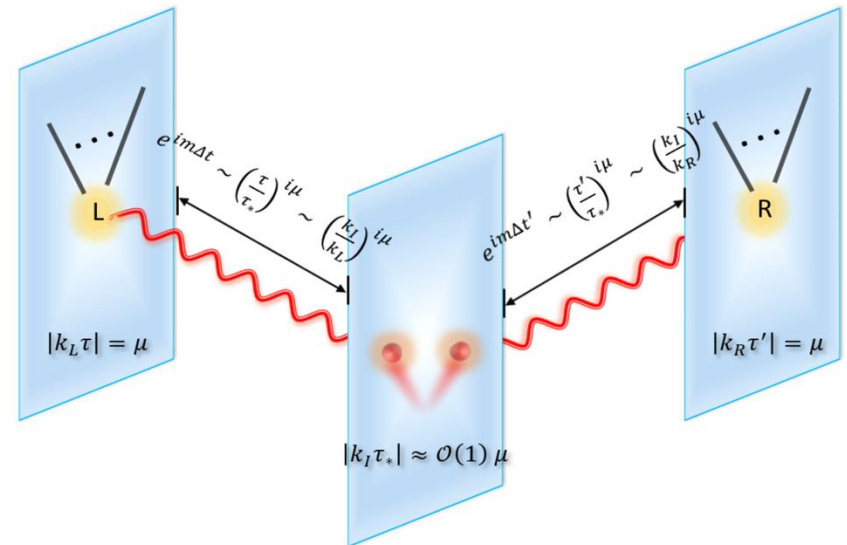
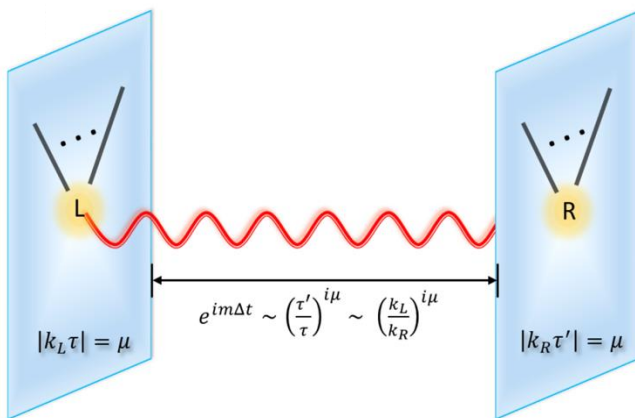
How to determine particle mass?

Through "how squeezed"



How to determine particle mass?

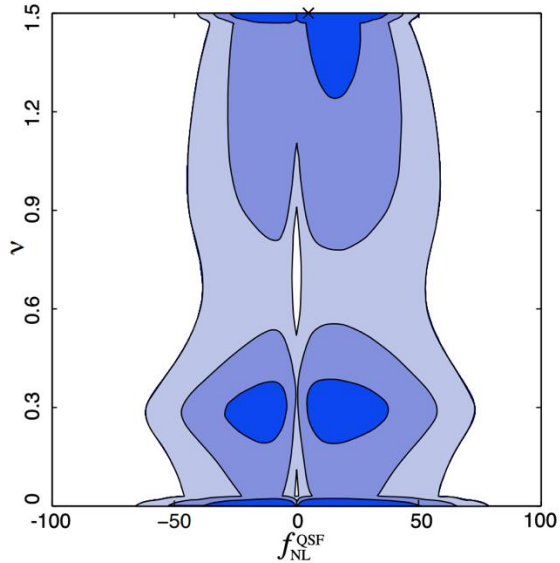
Through "how squeezed"



Local vs non-local particle productions

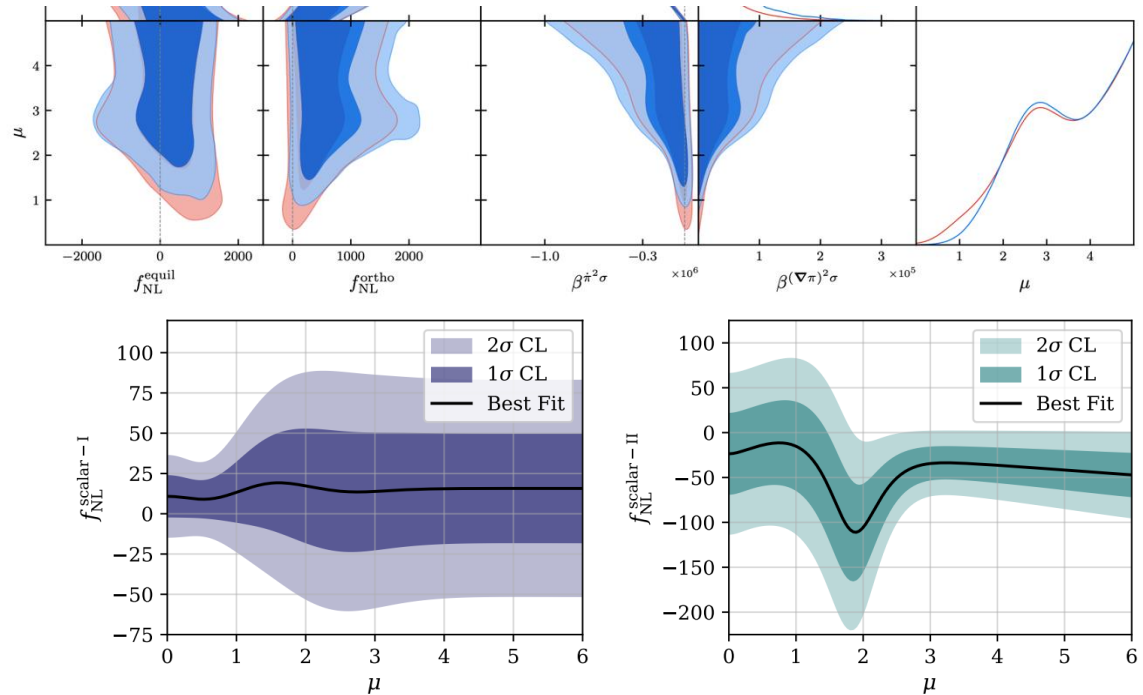
Figure: Tong, Zhu, YW, 2112.03448

Observational searches



$$\text{Light exchange } v = \sqrt{\frac{9}{4} - \frac{m^2}{H^2}}$$

Planck Team, 1303.5084



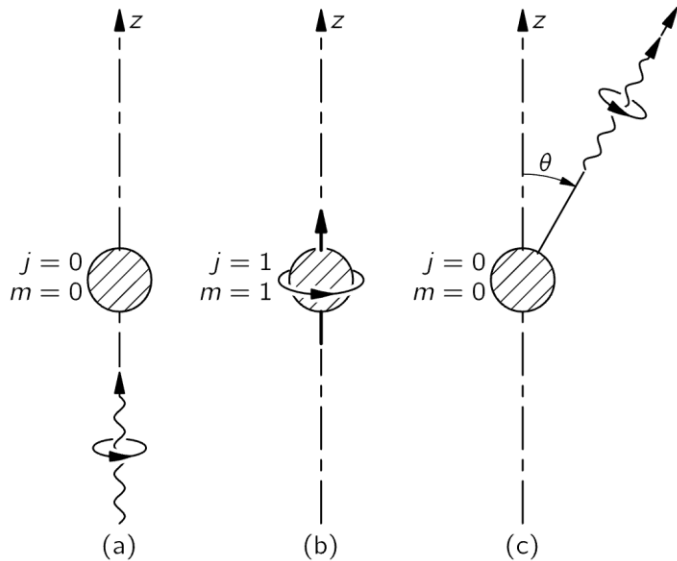
$$\text{Heavy exchange } \mu = \sqrt{\frac{m^2}{H^2} - \frac{9}{4}}, \quad \dot{\phi}^2 \sigma \text{ and "ortho"}$$

LSS: Cabass, Philcox, Ivanov, Akitsu, Chen,

Simonovic, Zaldarriaga, 2404.01894

CMB: Sohn, Wang, Fergusson, Shellard, 2404.07203

How to determine angular momentum?



$$a \langle + | R_y(\theta) | + \rangle = \frac{a}{2} (1 + \cos \theta)$$

Combinations of RHC, LHC,
convert to linear polarizations: $P_j (\cos \theta)$



Figure from
https://www.feynmanlectures.caltech.edu/III_18.html

Extracting the particle physics data

From correlation $\langle \zeta_{\mathbf{k}_1} \zeta_{\mathbf{k}_2} \zeta_{\mathbf{k}_3} \cdots \rangle :$

Extract mass: $(k \text{ ratios})^{\pm i\mu}$ Chen, YW, 0911.3380

Extract spin: $P_J(\cos \theta)$ Arkani-Hamed, Maldacena, 1503.08043

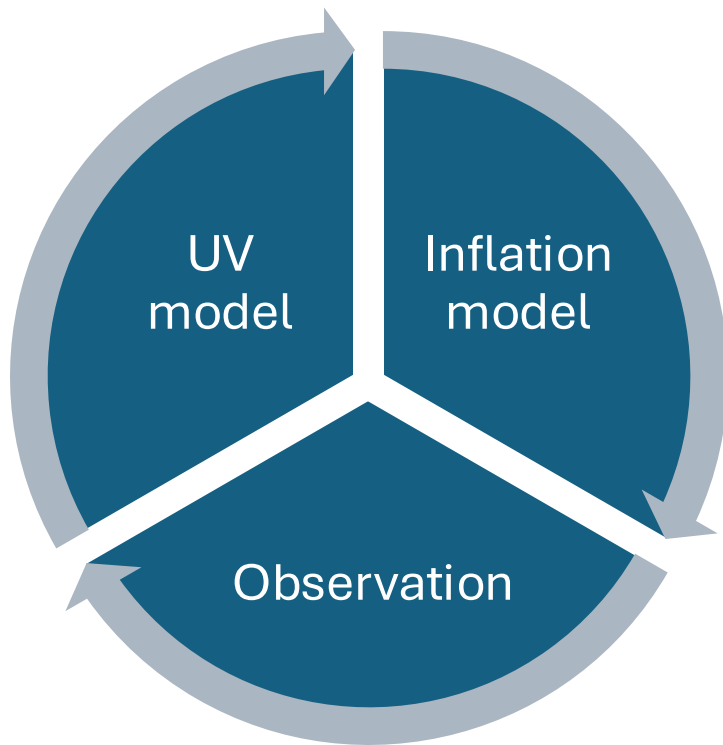
Extract parity: $\text{Im} \langle \cdots \rangle$ Liu, Tong, YW, Xianyu, 1909.01819

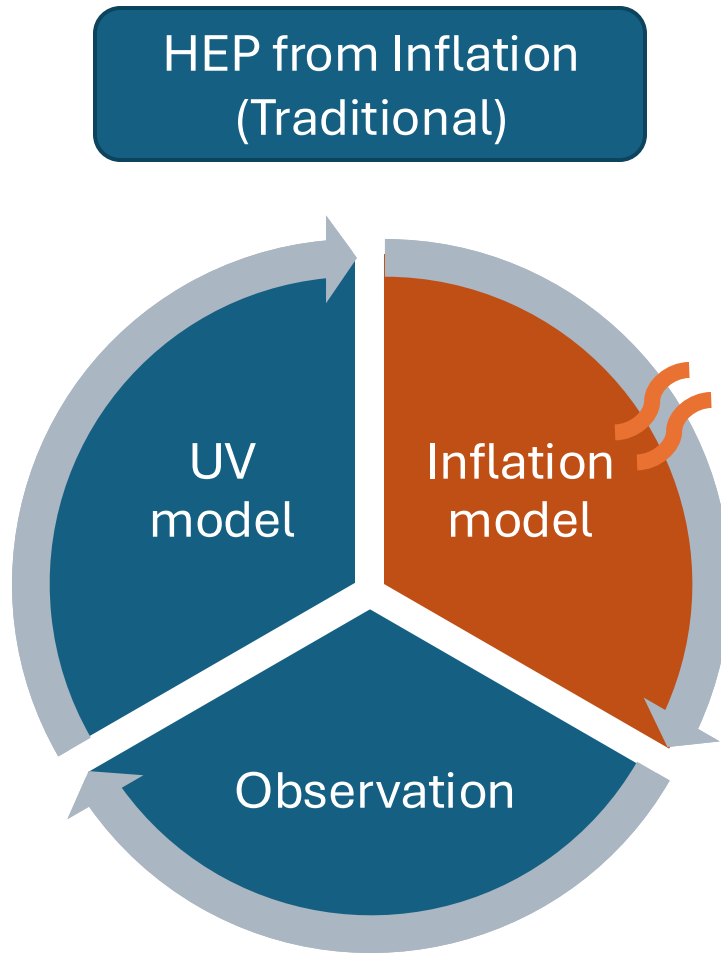
Extract width: $(k \text{ ratios})^{-\frac{3}{2} - \alpha}$ Lu, Reece, Xianyu, 2108.11385

Empowered by bootstraps Arkani-Hamed, Baumann,
Lee, Pimentel, 1811.00024, ...

How it compares to traditional methods?

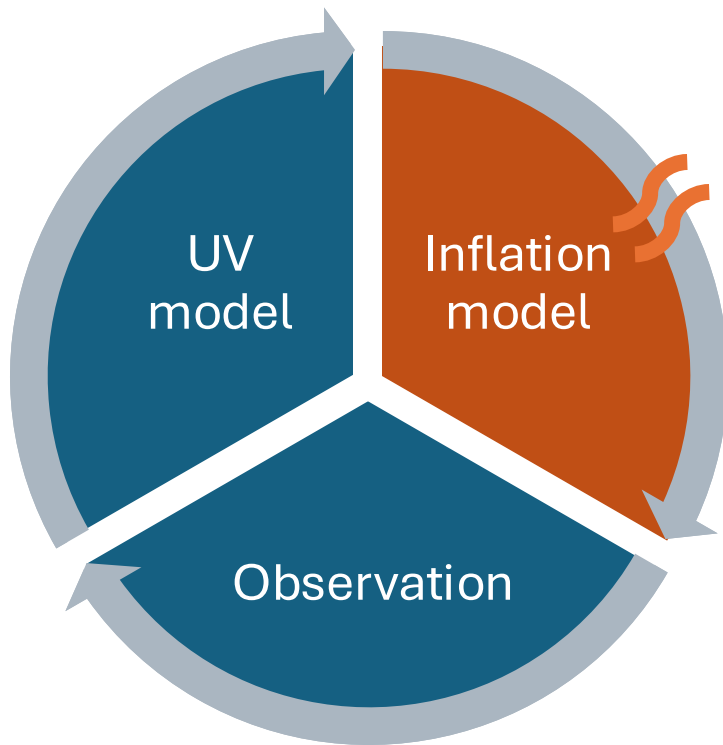
HEP from Inflation
(Traditional)



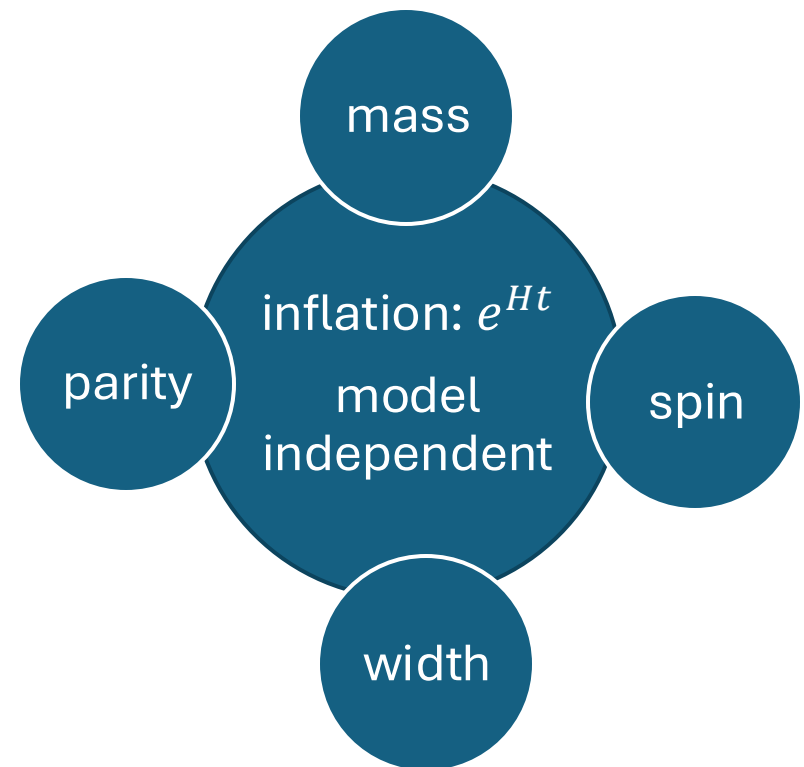


How it compares to traditional methods?

HEP from Inflation
(Traditional)



Cosmological
Collider



Plan

- Introduction
- Why $m \sim H$? $\Rightarrow$ related particle physics
- Towards $m \gg H$? $\Rightarrow$ chemical potential
- Field redefinition / boundary interactions

Why $m \sim H$?

(1) Dynamical: $\mathcal{L} \sim -(\partial\varphi)^2 - \lambda\varphi^4$

massless $\Rightarrow \langle\varphi^2\rangle \sim H^2$

Note: $\varphi^4 \supset \langle\varphi^2\rangle \varphi^2$

$\Rightarrow m_{\text{eff}}^2 \sim \langle\varphi^2\rangle \sim H^2$

Why $m \sim H$?

(1) Dynamical: $\mathcal{L} \sim -(\partial\varphi)^2 - \lambda\varphi^4$

massless $\Rightarrow \langle\varphi^2\rangle \sim H^2$

Note: $\varphi^4 \supset \langle\varphi^2\rangle \varphi^2$

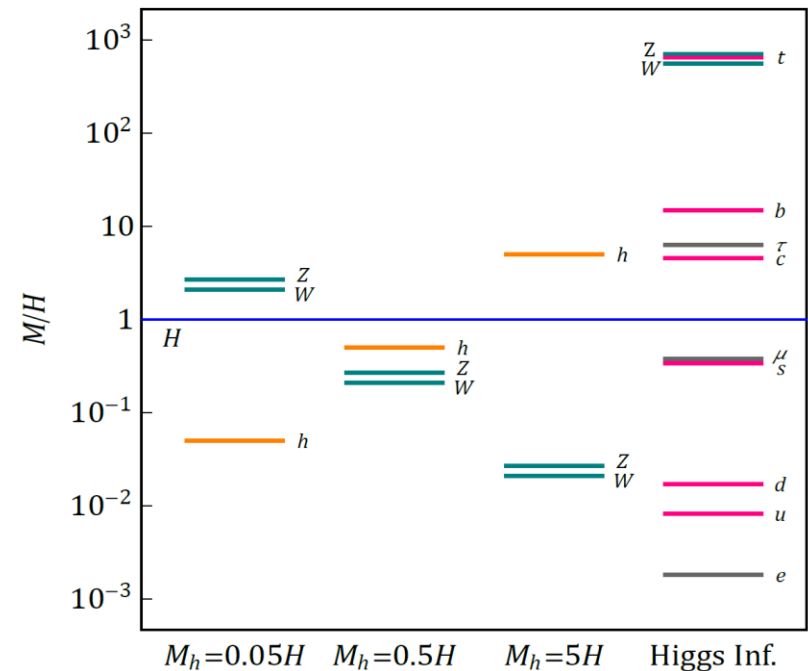
$\Rightarrow m_{\text{eff}}^2 \sim \langle\varphi^2\rangle \sim H^2$

Example: Standard Model

Chen, YW, Xianyu,

1604.07841; 1610.06597; 1612.08122;

Kumar, Sundrum, 1711.03988



Why $m \sim H$?

(1) Dynamical: $\langle \varphi^2 \rangle \sim H^2$

(2) Non-minimal: $\varphi^2 R \sim H^2 \varphi^2$

Thus, Higgs may be in unbroken/broken phases

Chen, YW, Xianyu,

1604.07841; 1610.06597; 1612.08122;

Kumar, Sundrum, 1711.03988

Why $m \sim H$?

(1) Dynamical: $\langle \varphi^2 \rangle \sim H^2$

(2) Non-minimal: $\varphi^2 R \sim H^2 \varphi^2$

(3) Supersymmetry: broken at least at $M \sim H$

Baumann, Green, 1109.0292

Why $m \sim H$?

(1) Dynamical: $\langle \varphi^2 \rangle \sim H^2$

(2) Non-minimal: $\varphi^2 R \sim H^2 \varphi^2$

(3) Supersymmetry: broken at least at $M \sim H$

(4) Coincidental

Neutrino seesaw: Chen, YW, Xianyu, 1805.02656

Grand unification: Kumar, Sundrum, 1811.11200

... ..

Beyond $m \sim H$?

Strings? Quantum gravity? ...

$$\text{Prob} \sim e^{-\frac{m}{H/2\pi}}, \quad \langle \dots \rangle \sim \sqrt{\text{Prob}} \sim e^{-\pi m/H} \text{ suppressed}$$

Making use of more than "temperature"?

Kinetic energy of inflaton:

$$P_\zeta = \left(\frac{H^2}{2\pi \dot{\phi}} \right)^2 \sim 2 \times 10^{-9} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \sqrt{\dot{\phi}} \sim 60 H$$

How to use $\sqrt{\dot{\phi}}$?

Beyond $m \sim H$?

How to use $\sqrt{\dot{\phi}} \sim 60 H$?

- Classical oscillation or periodic potential?

Chen 1104.1323; Chen, Namjoo, Wang: 1411.2349;

Flauger et al, 1606.00513; Chen, Ebadi, Kumar, 2205.01107

- Warm inflation? Tong, YW, Zhou, 1801.05688

- Distorted signals with varying mass?

- Chemical potential
Chen, YW, Xianyu 1805.02656
Wang, Xianyu 1910.12876
Sou, Tong, YW, 2104.08772

Beyond $m \sim H$?

Chemical Potential: Three questions converge to one answer

- (1) Theoretical dreaming: How to use $\sqrt{\dot{\phi}} \sim 60 H$?
- (2) Theoretical reasoning: How to couple to inflaton?
 - (a) Shift symmetry: couples to $\partial\phi$
 - (b) EFT: lowest dimension operators: dim-5

$$\frac{1}{\Lambda} (\partial_\mu \phi) \bar{\psi} \gamma^5 \gamma^\mu \psi, \quad \frac{1}{\Lambda} \phi F \tilde{F}, \text{ (scalars?)}$$

Note: c_s is higher dimensional, though historically studied more

Beyond $m \sim H$?

Chemical Potential: Three questions converge to one answer

(1) Theoretical dreaming: How to use $\sqrt{\dot{\phi}} \sim 60 H$?

(2) Theoretical reasoning: dim-5 $\frac{1}{\Lambda} (\partial_\mu \phi) \bar{\psi} \gamma^5 \gamma^\mu \psi, \frac{1}{\Lambda} \phi F \tilde{F}$

(3) Parity odd operators



Chemical potentials μ $N \rightarrow \partial_\mu \phi J^\mu$

Long history in cosmology, e.g., Spontaneous Baryogenesis, Cohen, Kaplan, 1988

$$e^{-\pi m/H} \rightarrow \text{subsidy by } N \rightarrow e^{-\pi(m-\mu)/H}$$

Chen, YW, Xianyu, 1805.02656
Wang, Xianyu, 1910.12876

Various spins:

- **Scalar** $\mathcal{L} = [(\partial_t + i\mu)\Phi^*][(\partial_t - i\mu)\Phi] - |\partial_i \Phi|^2 - m^2 |\Phi|^2$

Can be rotated away by $\Phi \rightarrow e^{i\mu t} \Phi$ (Wang, Xianyu, 1910.12876)

Symmetry breaking (Bodas, Kumar, Sundrum, 2010.04727)

- **Spinor** $\frac{1}{\Lambda} (\partial_\mu \phi) \bar{\Psi} \gamma^5 \gamma^\mu \Psi$ Chen, YW, Xianyu, 1805.02656; Wang, Xianyu, 1910.12876

- **Vector** $-\phi F \tilde{F} / (4\Lambda)$ Lu, YW, Xianyu, 1907.07390; Wang, Xianyu, 1910.12876

- **Tensor** $\frac{1}{4\Lambda^3} \phi W_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} \tilde{W}^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma}$ Wang, Xianyu, 1910.12876; Tong, Xianyu, 2203.06349

Dim 5 operators of the scalar sector?

Hope to keep shift symmetry of ϕ (plenty otherwise)

Studied already: $\frac{\sqrt{-g}}{\Lambda} h \partial\phi \partial\phi$ (the first operator studied)

Other dim 5 scalar operators? $\rightarrow \frac{\sqrt{-g}}{\Lambda} h \partial h \partial\phi$

(Wang, Wang, YW, Yu, to appear)

Question: is it trivial? Viewpoints:

(1) Field redefinition: $\phi = \tilde{\phi} + \frac{1}{2\Lambda} h^2 \rightarrow \text{free} - \frac{1}{2} (\partial\tilde{\phi})^2$

(2) Using IBP: reduced to $\partial \left(\frac{\sqrt{-g}}{2\Lambda} h^2 \partial\phi \right) - \frac{\sqrt{-g}}{2\Lambda} h^2 \square\phi$

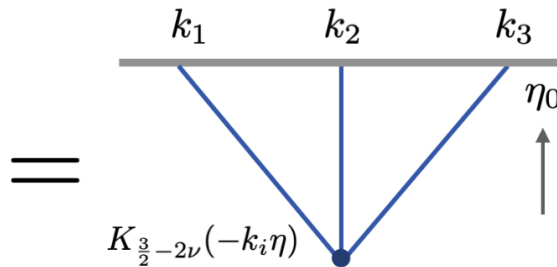
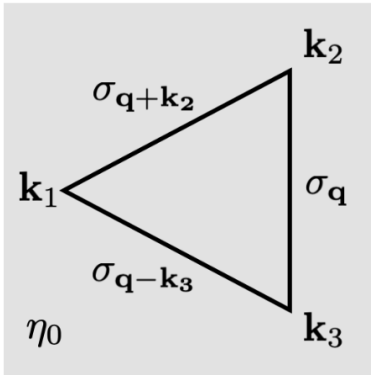
Field redefinition: $\phi = \tilde{\phi} + \frac{1}{2\Lambda} h^2 \rightarrow \text{free } -\frac{1}{2}(\partial\tilde{\phi})^2$

$$\Delta_\sigma = \frac{3}{2} - \nu, \quad x_{ij} = |\mathbf{x}_i - \mathbf{x}_j|$$

Then in x-space: $\langle \phi(\mathbf{x}_1)\phi(\mathbf{x}_2)\phi(\mathbf{x}_3) \rangle = \frac{1}{8\Lambda^3} \langle \sigma(\mathbf{x}_1)^2 \sigma(\mathbf{x}_2)^2 \sigma(\mathbf{x}_3)^2 \rangle = \frac{C_\sigma^3 \eta_0^{6\Delta_\sigma} / 8\Lambda^3}{x_{12}^{2\Delta_\sigma} x_{23}^{2\Delta_\sigma} x_{31}^{2\Delta_\sigma}}$

in p-space: $\langle \phi_{\mathbf{k}_1} \phi_{\mathbf{k}_2} \phi_{\mathbf{k}_3} \rangle' = \left(-\frac{\eta_0}{2}\right)^{9-6\nu} \frac{H^6}{\pi^3 \Lambda^3} \Gamma(\nu)^6 I_\nu(k_1, k_2, k_3),$

$$I_\nu = \frac{\pi^{-\frac{3}{2}} 2^{-\frac{1}{2}}}{\Gamma\left(\frac{3\Delta-3}{2}\right) \Gamma\left(\frac{3-\Delta}{2}\right)^3} (k_1 k_2 k_3)^{\Delta-\frac{3}{2}} \int_{-\infty}^0 d\eta (-\eta)^{1/2} \\ \times K_{\Delta-3/2}(-k_1\eta) K_{\Delta-3/2}(-k_2\eta) K_{\Delta-3/2}(-k_3\eta),$$



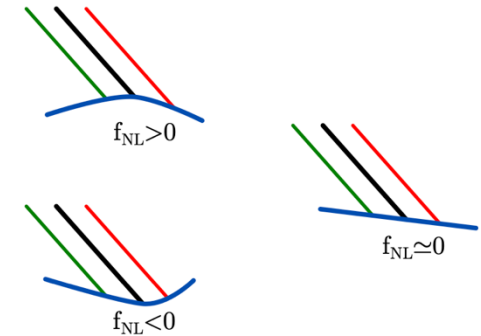
"Dual" to a tree diagram,
composite conform dim

Field redefinition: $\phi = \tilde{\phi} + \frac{1}{2\Lambda} h^2 \rightarrow \text{free} - \frac{1}{2} (\partial \tilde{\phi})^2$

Alternative view: modulated reheating

The ϕ theory: trivial reheating surface

The $\tilde{\phi}$ theory: non-trivial reheating surface



Thus "field redefinition" can be considered as
a particle-physics-realization of modulated reheating

Using IBP: reduced to $\partial \left(\frac{\sqrt{-g}}{2\Lambda} h^2 \partial \phi \right) - \frac{\sqrt{-g}}{2\Lambda} h^2 \square \phi$

(1) $\frac{\sqrt{-g}}{2\Lambda} h^2 \square \phi$: since ϕ is on-shell, $\square \phi \approx 0$

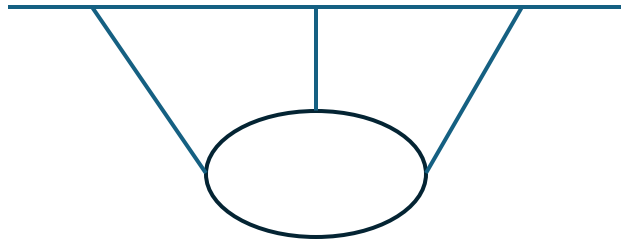
(if not on-shell: $\square$ on Green's function $\rightarrow \delta$ -function)

(2) $\partial \left(\frac{\sqrt{-g}}{2\Lambda} h^2 \partial \phi \right)$: agrees with field redefinition

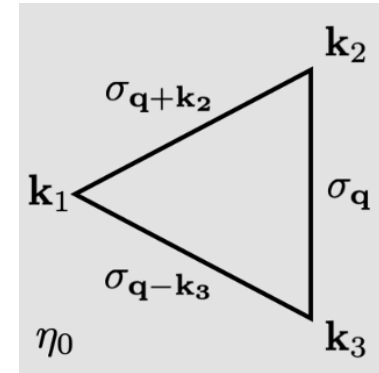
Wang, Wang, YW, Yu, to appear

A systematic study: Ma, Wang, Wang, YW, Yu, in prep.

Non-Gaussianities of $h \partial h \partial \phi$



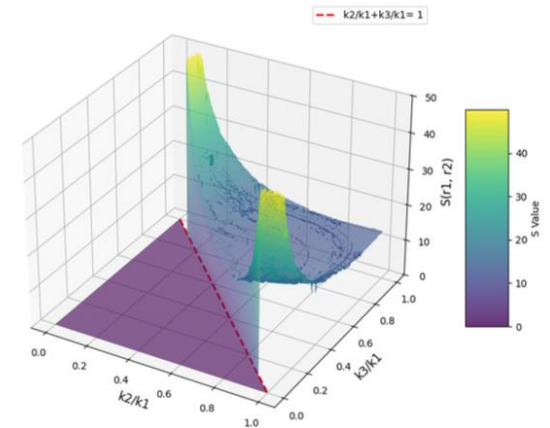
=



Squeezed limit:

$$I_{\text{signal}} \sim \frac{(H\eta_0)^6 (k_1\eta_0)^{3-6\nu} (-2)^{6\nu-11} \sin\nu\pi}{\Lambda^3(\pi)^{9/2}} \Gamma(\nu)^4$$

$$\Gamma\left(2\nu-2, 2\nu-\frac{3}{2}, -\nu+\frac{3}{2}\right) \left(\frac{k_3}{k_1}\right)^{3-4\nu}.$$



See also a tree diagram when h has VEV

Summary

- Cosmological collider

mass, angular momentum, width

$m \sim H$: standard model & beyond

- Chemical potential

$m \gg H$, enhanced rate & parity

- Boundary interactions

New terms overlooked in the literature