

Particle creation in an expanding Universe

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Contents

1. Introduction	2
1.1. Scalar field in gravitational field	2
2. Particle creation due to expansion	6
2.1. The model	6
2.2. Hypergeometric differential equation	8
2.3. Solutions to the Hypergeometric differential equation	10
2.4. Particle creation (Bogolyubov transformation)	13
2.5. Discussion	15
2.6. Summary	18
A. Additional calculations	20
A.1. More general form of scaling function and Sauter pulse	20

1. Introduction

In our project we will be considering real scalar fields and how they behave in a background metric which varies with time. Because we're not dealing with a time-independent system, energy will not be conserved. In particular, we will see that this leads to particle creation.

1.1. Scalar field in gravitational field

Consider a free real scalar field ϕ in usual Minkowski space with Lagrangian

$$\mathcal{L} = \frac{1}{2}\eta^{\mu\nu}\partial_\mu\phi\partial_\nu\phi - \frac{1}{2}m^2\phi^2 \quad (1.1)$$

where $\eta^{\mu\nu}$ is the metric tensor of Minkowski space¹. The equation of motion for ϕ is then obtained by minimizing the action

$$S = \int d^4x \left(\frac{1}{2}\eta^{\mu\nu}\partial_\mu\phi\partial_\nu\phi - \frac{1}{2}m^2\phi^2 \right). \quad (1.2)$$

To couple ϕ *minimally* to a gravitational background field we generalize this result by introducing an arbitrary metric $g_{\mu\nu}$ instead of $\eta_{\mu\nu}$ and to make the integration measure covariant again² we further add a factor $\sqrt{-g}$ where g is the determinant of $g_{\mu\nu}$ ³. Our action then becomes

$$S_{\min} = \int d^4x \sqrt{-g} \left[\frac{1}{2}g^{\mu\nu}\partial_\mu\phi\partial_\nu\phi - \frac{1}{2}m^2\phi^2 \right]. \quad (1.3)$$

Another way to couple ϕ is *non-minimally* via an additional term $-\frac{1}{12}R\phi^2$ in the action, where R is the Ricci scalar:⁴

$$S_{\text{non-min}} = \int d^4x \sqrt{-g} \left[\frac{1}{2}g^{\mu\nu}\partial_\mu\phi\partial_\nu\phi - \frac{1}{2}\left(m^2 + \frac{R}{6}\right)\phi^2 \right] \quad (1.4)$$

While $S_{\text{non-min}}$ looks a bit more complicated (remember that R also depends on the metric), it has the nice property of being *conformally invariant* for $m = 0$, i.e. invariant under transformations

$$g_{\mu\nu} \rightarrow \tilde{g}_{\mu\nu} = \Omega^2(x)g_{\mu\nu}.$$

Therefore, this type of coupling is also referred to as *conformal coupling*. Even though we're not going to set $m = 0$, this form of the action will nevertheless have a pleasant effect.

¹We use the particle physics convention $\eta = \text{diag}(+1, -1, -1, -1)$

² d^4x would not be in a space with arbitrary metric $g_{\mu\nu}$

³The minus sign under the square root is necessary to make g positive. g is always negative if we use the metric grading $(+, -, -, -)$.

⁴Notice that that violates the the strong equivalence principle [1].

Notice that both (1.3) and (1.4) reduce to (1.2) for $g_{\mu\nu} = \eta_{\mu\nu}$. Minimizing (1.3) and (1.4) yields the equation of motion [2]

$$\square\phi + (m^2 + \xi R)\phi = 0 \quad (1.5)$$

where ξ is either 0 or $\frac{1}{6}$, depending on whether one uses minimal or non-minimal coupling, respectively, and \square is the covariant generalization of the d'Alembertian, explicitly⁵:

$$\square\phi \equiv \frac{1}{\sqrt{-g}}\partial_\mu \left(g^{\mu\nu} \sqrt{-g} \partial_\nu \phi \right) \quad (1.6)$$

For the rest of the project we will employ the assumption of a homogeneous and isotropic universe for which Einstein's field equations can be solved exactly. The solution thereof is the so-called *Friedmann-Lemaître-Robertson-Walker-Metric* (FLRW). This solution admits both spatially curved and flat metrics but we will only be interested in the flat ($k = 0$) solution with infinitesimal volume

$$ds^2 = dt^2 - a^2(t)\delta_{ij}dx^i dx^j. \quad (1.7)$$

Notice that the scaling factor $a(t)$ only depends on time but not on the spatial part of x . After introducing so-called *conformal time*

$$\eta(t) \equiv \int^t \frac{dt}{a(t)} \quad (1.8)$$

we see, that (1.7) is conformally equivalent to the Minkowski metric $\eta_{\mu\nu}$

$$ds^2 = a^2(\eta) \left[d\eta^2 - \delta_{ij}dx^i dx^j \right] = a^2(\eta)\eta_{\mu\nu}dx^\mu dx^\nu \equiv g_{\mu\nu}dx^\mu dx^\nu \quad (1.9)$$

which will greatly simplify our calculations⁶.

We can now write (1.5) for metric (1.9) for which we calculate (recall that $g^{\mu\nu}$ is the inverse of $g_{\mu\nu}$ and R can be calculated by performing a coordinate transformation on the well known result for the Ricci scalar curvature of the FLRW-metric in FLRW coordinates).

$$\begin{aligned} g^{\mu\nu} &= a^{-2}\eta^{\mu\nu} \\ \sqrt{-g} &= a^4 \\ R &= 6\frac{a''}{a^3} \end{aligned}$$

⁵Notice again, that for $g_{\mu\nu} = \eta_{\mu\nu}$ this reduces to the usual d'Alembertian and (1.5) reduces to the Klein-Gordon-Equation.

⁶Remark: For a massless field this means that we could perform a conformal transformation in (1.4), i.e. effectively using the Minkowski metric $\eta_{\mu\nu}$, while leaving the action invariant. But $R = 0$ for $\eta_{\mu\nu}$, hence, (1.4) reduces to (1.2) with $m = 0$ which means that the dynamics of a massless scalar field do not change if it's conformally coupled to gravity. (This can also be seen mathematically in (6.13) in [2].)

where the double prime denotes the second derivative with respect to η . Plugging this into (1.5) yields

$$\frac{1}{a^4} \partial_\mu (a^2 \partial^\mu \phi) + \left(m^2 + 6\xi \frac{a''}{a^3} \right) \phi = 0$$

which, after defining

$$\chi(x) \equiv a(\eta) \phi(x) \quad (1.10)$$

and exploiting that $\partial_\mu \partial^\mu a = a''$ (as a only depends on η), takes the simple form

$$0 = \left[\partial_\mu \partial^\mu + m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta) \right] \chi(x) \quad (1.11)$$

$$m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta) \equiv m^2 a^2 - \frac{a''}{a} + 6\xi \frac{a''}{a}. \quad (1.12)$$

Decomposing $\chi(x) = \chi(\eta, \mathbf{x})$ into Fourier modes⁷

$$\chi(\eta, \mathbf{x}) = \int \frac{d^3 \mathbf{k}}{(2\pi)^{\frac{3}{2}}} \chi_{\mathbf{k}}(\eta) e^{i\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{x}}$$

results in a differential equation for the modes:

$$0 = \left[\frac{d^2}{d\eta^2} + \omega_k^2(\eta) \right] \chi_{\mathbf{k}}(\eta) \quad (1.13)$$

$$\omega_k^2(\eta) \equiv k^2 + m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta) \quad (1.14)$$

where $k^2 \equiv |\mathbf{k}|^2$. Upon specifying ξ we obtain explicit expressions for the effective mass for the two possibilities to couple the scalar field to gravity⁸:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{minimally coupled } (\xi = 0) : \quad & m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta) = m^2 a^2 - \frac{a''}{a} \\ \text{conformally coupled } (\xi = 1/6) : \quad & m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta) = m^2 a^2 \end{aligned}$$

Notice that for massless fields χ we find that the conformally coupled field behaves just like a free field while the minimally coupled one feels gravity's effect even in the massless case.

From a mathematical point of view, the actual form of $m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta)$ is irrelevant: Our task is to solve the wave equation (1.13) with a time-dependent mass term. Nevertheless, we will see that the conformally coupled one allows for an easier interpretation in terms of what happens physically: In the actual calculation we will specify $m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta)$ by some function

$$m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta) = m^2 F(\eta) \quad (1.15)$$

⁷We denote 3-vectors by boldface symbols.

⁸The first one agrees with (6.8) in [1], where the authors discuss the situation of a minimally coupled field. The second one is what the authors of [3] are working with (c.f.(9,10)).

where $F(\eta)$ is such that it approaches constants c_{\pm}^2 for $\eta \rightarrow \pm\infty$, i.e. the effective mass (and therefore gravitational effects) is only relevant in some time interval and infinitely far in the past/future our field behaves like a free field of mass mc_{\pm} .

Consequently, we can interpret $F(\eta)$ as the scaling function $a^2(\eta)$ **only** if we couple scalar field and gravity *conformally*! If we coupled them *minimally*, on the other hand, we'd have to solve the differential equation

$$F(\eta) = a^2(\eta) - \frac{a''(\eta)}{m^2 a(\eta)}$$

to find the scaling function $a^2(\eta)$ and to understand how the universe expands/contracts. But since this differential equation contains m explicitly, we expect $a^2(\eta)$ to also depend on m which means that the scaling of the universe depends on the mass of the scalar field it is coupled to. In our project, though, we want the gravitational field to be a background field and in particular, we do not want the scalar field to have any influence on the background.

Obviously, one could just go the other way around: Specify $a^2(\eta)$, calculate $m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta)$ for the minimally and conformally coupled field and solve (1.13) for that effective mass. Notice, that with a scaling function having the same asymptotic behaviour as discussed above, both fields would behave as if they were free fields of mass mc_{\pm} in the distant future and past: The second derivative $a''(\eta)$ which appears in the effective mass of the minimally coupled field vanishes in those limits and for the conformally coupled one it is trivial. The initial and final conditions thus seem to be the same in both cases. Though the crucial thing is that the *way to go from past infinity to future infinity* is different. And the actual evolution of the universe's size has a huge influence on which and how many particles are produced during the expansion (as we shall see later). In general, the effective mass expressions for the minimally coupled field in those regions would be a lot more complicated and we didn't manage to find an appropriate $a^2(\eta)$ such that it takes a simple form. Therefore, we will not follow this approach in our project but rather choose the function $F(\eta)$ (because this makes calculations easier) and consequently understand the scalar field to be conformally coupled to gravity (because then we can understand $F(\eta)$ to be the scaling function of the universe and treat gravity as being just a classical background).

2. Particle creation due to expansion

2.1. The model

Remember that in section 1.1 we restricted ourselves to a scalar field which is coupled to gravity conformally. The effective mass of the field in that case was

$$m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta) = m^2 F(\eta)$$

where $F(\eta)$ is also the scaling function of the universe. To specify a model, our only task left is to specify the function $F(\eta)$: In order to have a well-defined notion of particles and vacua before and after the expansion, we want the model to exhibit a static universe behaviour in the remote past and future (at least asymptotically). This was previously alluded to by requiring that $F(\eta)$ asymptotically approaching constants c_{\pm}^2 for $\eta \rightarrow \pm\infty$. Such a behaviour can for example be modelled by⁹

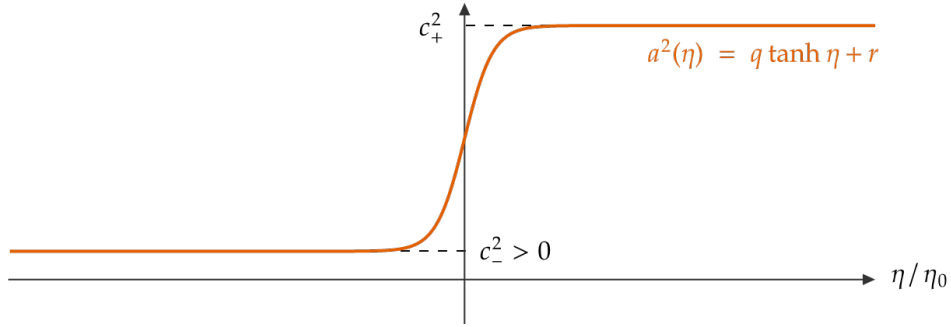
$$F(\eta) = a^2(\eta) = q \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} + r \quad (2.1)$$

$$q = \frac{c_+^2 - c_-^2}{2} \quad (2.2)$$

$$r = \frac{c_+^2 + c_-^2}{2} \quad (2.3)$$

where η_0 sets a scale on which the expansion happens, smaller η_0 meaning more rapid expansion.

Furthermore, we want that the universe starts out at finite size, i.e. we set $c_-^2 > 0$ and we want it to expand, i.e. $c_+^2 > c_-^2$. Such a function looks like the following:



Disclaimer: This model is not meant to be highly physical or something that could actually exist without contradicting General Relativity. This choice is merely instructive as it allows for an analytic solution.

Our goal is thus to solve (1.13), i.e.

$$\left[\frac{d^2}{d\eta^2} + \omega_k^2(\eta) \right] \chi_{\mathbf{k}}(\eta) = 0 \quad \text{where} \quad \omega_k^2(\eta) = k^2 + m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta) \quad (2.4)$$

⁹see appendix A.1 for a version also including a \tanh^2 term

with an effective mass given by

$$m_{\text{eff}}^2(\eta) = m^2 \left(q \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} + r \right). \quad (2.5)$$

We can already see that for asymptotic times $\eta \rightarrow \mp\infty$, ω_k approaches a constant value

$$\omega_{\text{in}} \equiv \omega_k(\eta \rightarrow -\infty) = \sqrt{k^2 + (r - q)m^2} = \sqrt{k^2 + c_-^2 m^2} \quad (2.6)$$

$$\omega_{\text{out}} \equiv \omega_k(\eta \rightarrow +\infty) = \sqrt{k^2 + (r + q)m^2} = \sqrt{k^2 + c_+^2 m^2} \quad (2.7)$$

and therefore, in the distant past and future, the solutions χ will behave like plane waves of those frequencies as (2.4) asymptotically reduces to a simple wave equation. Notice that this is exactly what we need to define the notion of a vacuum.

The functions $\chi_{\mathbf{k}}(\eta)$ are the modes of the auxiliary field $\chi(\eta, \mathbf{x})$ which relates to the initial real scalar field $\phi(x)$ as (c.f. (1.10))

$$\chi(x) \equiv a(\eta)\phi(x)$$

with $a^2(\eta)$ being the conformal factor. Since $\omega_{\mathbf{k}}^2(\eta) = \omega_k^2(\eta)$ is direction-independent, one can find solutions $v_{\mathbf{k}}^*$ and $v_{\mathbf{k}}$ to the ODE¹⁰ which also depend on $k = |\mathbf{k}|$ only. Because χ is a real field, the complex conjugate components are related by $\chi_{\mathbf{k}}^* = \chi_{-\mathbf{k}}$. The general solution can hence be written as¹¹

$$\chi_{\mathbf{k}}(\eta) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} [a_{\mathbf{k}}^- v_{\mathbf{k}}^*(\eta) + a_{-\mathbf{k}}^+ v_{\mathbf{k}}(\eta)] \quad (2.8)$$

where $a_{\mathbf{k}}^-$ and $a_{-\mathbf{k}}^+$ are integration constants and are related to each other by

$$a_{\mathbf{k}}^+ = (a_{-\mathbf{k}}^-)^*. \quad (2.9)$$

For the linearly independent functions $v_{\mathbf{k}}^*$ and $v_{\mathbf{k}}$ (which satisfy the ODE) one can define a scalar product using the Wronski-determinant

$$W[v_{\mathbf{k}}, v_{\mathbf{k}}^*] \equiv v_{\mathbf{k}}' v_{\mathbf{k}}^* - v_{\mathbf{k}} (v_{\mathbf{k}}^*)' = 2i \operatorname{Im}(v_{\mathbf{k}}' v_{\mathbf{k}}^{*2}) \quad (2.10)$$

which can be shown to be η -independent (a prime denotes the derivative with respect to η). One can use this to *normalize* the component functions:

$$\begin{aligned} W[v_{\mathbf{k}}, v_{\mathbf{k}}^*] &\stackrel{!}{=} 2i \\ \Leftrightarrow \operatorname{Im}(v_{\mathbf{k}}' v_{\mathbf{k}}^*) &= 1 \end{aligned} \quad (2.11)$$

which then holds for all time. Once this holds¹², one calls $v_{\mathbf{k}}$ and $v_{\mathbf{k}}^*$ mode functions. To give a short summary: Our final task is to find mode functions satisfying

$$\left[\frac{d^2}{d\eta^2} + \omega_k^2(\eta) \right] v_{\mathbf{k}}(\eta) = 0 \quad \text{where} \quad \operatorname{Im}(v_{\mathbf{k}}' v_{\mathbf{k}}^*) = 1. \quad (2.12)$$

¹⁰For a complex scalar field one would have to find two independent mode functions $v_{\mathbf{k}}$ and $u_{\mathbf{k}}$ but since we shall continue treating real fields only, the two mode functions are connected by complex conjugation.

¹¹see [1] for details

¹²which is apparently linked to current conservation of the Klein-Gordon field [3] (can we please discuss this?)

2.2. Hypergeometric differential equation

Equation (2.12) can be solved by substituting

$$\xi(\eta) \equiv \frac{1}{2} \left(1 + \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} \right), \quad (2.13)$$

leading to¹³

$$0 = \left[\frac{d^2}{d\eta^2} + \omega_k^2 \right] v_{\mathbf{k}} = \left[\frac{d}{d\eta} \frac{\partial \xi}{\partial \eta} \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi} + \omega_k^2 \right] v_{\mathbf{k}} = \left[\left(\frac{d}{d\eta} \frac{\partial \xi}{\partial \eta} \right) \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi} + \left(\frac{\partial \xi}{\partial \eta} \frac{\partial \xi}{\partial \eta} \right) \frac{\partial^2}{\partial \xi^2} + \omega_k^2 \right] v_{\mathbf{k}}.$$

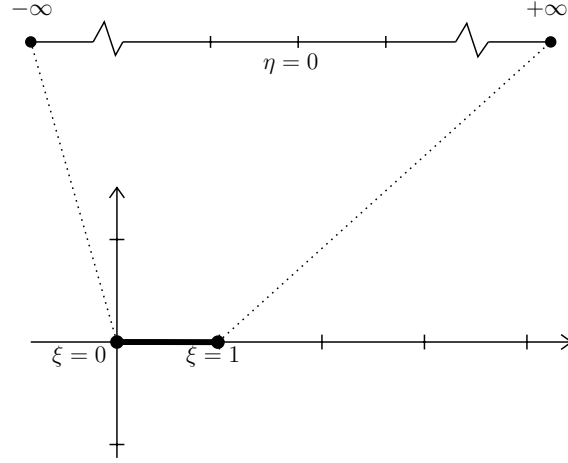


Figure 1: Substitution (2.13) maps the real axis to the unit interval, i.e. formally, the points $\eta = \pm\infty$ are mapped to $\xi = 0, 1$ and the whole real axis fits in between. The differential equation can then be analytically continued to the whole complex plane (actually, this is what we will exploit) but keep in mind that in the end we will just be interested in the solution for $\xi \in [0, 1]$ i.e. $\eta \in (-\infty, \infty)$.

Now using that

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d}{d\eta} \frac{\partial \xi}{\partial \eta} &= \frac{\tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0}}{\eta_0^2} \left(1 - \tanh^2 \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} \right) = \frac{4}{\eta_0^2} (2\xi - 1)(\xi^2 - \xi) \quad \text{and} \\ \frac{\partial \xi}{\partial \eta} \frac{\partial \xi}{\partial \eta} &= \left[\frac{1}{2\eta_0} \left(1 - \tanh^2 \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} \right) \right]^2 = \left(\frac{2}{\eta_0} (\xi^2 - \xi) \right)^2 \end{aligned}$$

one obtains

$$\begin{aligned} \left[\frac{4}{\eta_0^2} (\xi(\xi - 1))^2 \frac{\partial^2}{\partial \xi^2} + \frac{4}{\eta_0^2} \xi(\xi - 1)(2\xi - 1) \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi} + \omega_k^2 \right] v_{\mathbf{k}} &= 0 \\ \left[\xi^2(\xi - 1)^2 \frac{\partial^2}{\partial \xi^2} + \xi(\xi - 1)(2\xi - 1) \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi} + \frac{\eta_0^2}{4} \omega_k^2 \right] v_{\mathbf{k}} &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

¹³With an abuse of notation, i.e. keeping the same symbol for $v_{\mathbf{k}}(\xi(\eta))$ and $v_{\mathbf{k}}(\eta)$. Furthermore, we omit the arguments of $\omega_k^2(\xi(\eta))$ and $v_{\mathbf{k}}(\xi(\eta))$ to enhance readability.

We now need an explicit expression for ω_k^2 :

$$\begin{aligned}\omega_k^2 &= k^2 + m^2 \left[q \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} + r \right] \\ &= k^2 + m^2 (r - q(1 - 2\xi)) \\ &= \omega_{\text{in}}^2 + 2qm^2\xi \\ &\equiv \omega_{\text{in}}^2 + \tilde{c}\xi\end{aligned}$$

where we see (using (2.6) and (2.7)) that

$$\omega_{\text{in}}^2 + \tilde{c} = \omega_{\text{out}}^2.$$

If we further define

$$c \equiv \frac{\eta_0^2}{4} \tilde{c} \quad (2.14)$$

$$\Omega_{\text{in}}^2 \equiv \frac{\eta_0^2}{4} \omega_{\text{in}}^2 \quad (2.15)$$

$$\Omega_{\text{out}}^2 \equiv \frac{\eta_0^2}{4} \omega_{\text{out}}^2 = \Omega_{\text{in}}^2 + c \quad (2.16)$$

$$\Omega_{\pm} \equiv \Omega_{\text{out}} \pm \Omega_{\text{in}} \quad (2.17)$$

the differential equation becomes

$$0 = \left[\xi^2(1 - \xi)^2 \frac{\partial^2}{\partial \xi^2} + \xi(1 - \xi)(1 - 2\xi) \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi} + \Omega_{\text{in}}^2 + c\xi \right] v_{\mathbf{k}} \quad (2.18)$$

Since we want our solutions to behave like plane waves for $\eta \rightarrow \pm\infty$ (i.e. $\xi \rightarrow 0^+, 1^-$) we make the ansatz¹⁴

$$v_{\epsilon}(\xi) = N \xi^{-\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{out}}} h_{\epsilon}(\xi) \quad (2.19)$$

with $\epsilon = \pm 1$ just a sign to compensate the fact that $\sqrt{\Omega^2} = \pm\Omega = \epsilon\Omega$ and N a normalization constant to be determined by (2.11). The demonstration that this ansatz indeed asymptotically behaves like plane waves is postponed to the end of section 2.3. Substituting the ansatz into (2.18) gives¹⁵

$$\left[\xi(1 - \xi) \frac{\partial^2}{\partial \xi^2} + (1 - 2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{in}} - 2(1 + i\epsilon\Omega_{-})\xi) \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi} - (i\epsilon\Omega_{-} - \Omega_{-}^2) \right] h_{\epsilon}(\xi) = 0$$

which has the form of the hypergeometric differential equation

$$\left[x(1 - x) \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} + (\gamma - (\alpha + \beta + 1)x) \frac{\partial}{\partial x} - \alpha\beta \right] h(x) = 0 \quad (2.20)$$

¹⁴We will omit the \mathbf{k} -dependence for now to enhance readability.

¹⁵don't try this by hand

if we set

$$\begin{aligned}\gamma &= 1 - 2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{in}} \\ \alpha + \beta + 1 &= 2(1 + i\epsilon\Omega_-) \\ \alpha\beta &= (i\epsilon\Omega_- - \Omega_-^2).\end{aligned}$$

Explicit expressions can be obtained by solving this system of equations:

$$\alpha = i\epsilon\Omega_- \tag{2.21}$$

$$\beta = 1 + i\epsilon\Omega_- \tag{2.22}$$

$$\gamma = 1 - 2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{in}} \tag{2.23}$$

for which the following very convenient relations hold

$$1 - \alpha = \beta^* \tag{2.24} \qquad 1 - \gamma = 2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{in}} \tag{2.27}$$

$$1 - \beta = \alpha^* \tag{2.25} \qquad \gamma - \alpha - \beta = -2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{out}}. \tag{2.28}$$

$$2 - \gamma = \gamma^* \tag{2.26}$$

Now that we know the coefficients of the hypergeometric differential equations the problem is basically solved.

2.3. Solutions to the Hypergeometric differential equation

We can now easily find the solutions of the hypergeometric differential equation which are tabulated in [4]. In particular, we are interested in solutions $h_\epsilon(\eta)$ which are asymptotically constant for $\eta \rightarrow \pm\infty$, i.e. in the regular singular points $\xi = 0, 1$ of the differential equation (because then our mode functions v 's behaviour is determined by the plane wave part of the ansatz (2.19)). For each of those points there exist two linearly independent solutions defined within an open disc of radius 1 in the complex plane, centered around that points (see fig. 2). If neither γ nor $\gamma - \alpha - \beta$ are integers (which is the case here) the solution reads¹⁶

$$\begin{aligned}h_{\epsilon,1}^{(0)}(\xi) &= F(\alpha, \beta, \gamma; \xi) \\ h_{\epsilon,2}^{(0)}(\xi) &= \xi^{1-\gamma}(1-\xi)^{\gamma-\alpha-\beta}F(1-\alpha, 1-\beta, 2-\gamma; \xi) \\ h_{\epsilon,1}^{(1)}(\xi) &= F(\alpha, \beta, \alpha + \beta + 1 - \gamma; 1-\xi) \\ h_{\epsilon,2}^{(1)}(\xi) &= \xi^{1-\gamma}(1-\xi)^{\gamma-\alpha-\beta}F(1-\alpha, 1-\beta, \gamma - \alpha - \beta + 1; 1-\xi)\end{aligned} \tag{2.29}$$

which, after using relations (2.24)-(2.28) can be rewritten as

¹⁶c.f. chapter (15.10(i)) of [5] together with their equation (15.8.1). Notice that the differential equation also has a regular singular point at $\xi = \infty$ but we are only interested in $\xi = 0, 1$, as discussed earlier. This is actually a great relieve because for the solution to have the nice plane wave behaviour at $\xi = \infty$, we'd also need $\alpha - \beta$ to not be an integer. A requirement that would fail here.

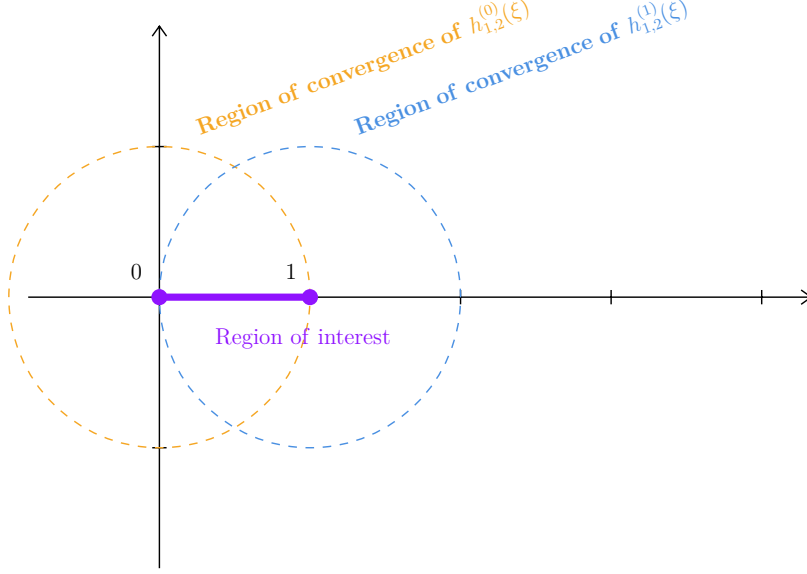


Figure 2: The hypergeometric functions can be expressed as a series with convergence radius 1. The special solutions hold in a neighborhood of 0 and 1, which means (by analycity) that they can be unambiguously continued to the whole region of convergence (i.e. in particular to the whole interval $[0, 1]$ which is our region of interest). One may as well discuss all the other analytic properties of the solutions outside this interval but we're not interested in that as discussed before. This means, that for our purposes the solutions given in (2.29) may be treated as analytic functions defined everywhere in $[0, 1]$. In particular, this also means, that we are allowed to compare the solutions $h^{(0)}$ to $h^{(1)}$.

$$\begin{aligned}
h_{\epsilon,1}^{(0)}(\xi) &= F(\alpha, \beta, \gamma; \xi) \\
h_{\epsilon,2}^{(0)}(\xi) &= \xi^{2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{-2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{out}}} F(\beta^*, \alpha^*, \gamma^*; \xi) \\
h_{\epsilon,1}^{(1)}(\xi) &= F(\alpha, \beta, \alpha + \beta + 1 - \gamma; 1 - \xi) \\
h_{\epsilon,2}^{(1)}(\xi) &= \xi^{2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{-2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{out}}} F(\beta^*, \alpha^*, \alpha^* + \beta^* + 1 - \gamma^*; 1 - \xi).
\end{aligned} \tag{2.30}$$

Inserting this into ansatz (2.19) we obtain¹⁷

$$\begin{aligned}
v_{\epsilon,1}^{(0)}(\xi) &= N^{(0)} \xi^{-\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{out}}} F(\alpha, \beta, \gamma; \xi) \\
v_{\epsilon,2}^{(0)}(\xi) &= N^{(0)} \xi^{\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{-\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{out}}} F(\alpha^*, \beta^*, \gamma^*; \xi) \\
v_{\epsilon,1}^{(1)}(\xi) &= N^{(1)} \xi^{-\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{out}}} F(\alpha, \beta, \alpha + \beta + 1 - \gamma; 1 - \xi) \\
v_{\epsilon,2}^{(1)}(\xi) &= N^{(1)} \xi^{\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{-\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{out}}} F(\alpha^*, \beta^*, \alpha^* + \beta^* + 1 - \gamma^*; 1 - \xi)
\end{aligned} \tag{2.31}$$

with unspecified normalization constants (which w.l.o.g. were assumed to be real). Notice that those are just two functions and their complex conjugates (since one can easily see from (2.20) that the hypergeometric function with complex conjugated arguments

¹⁷we also exploit that F is completely symmetric in α and β (can be seen from differential equation)

is just the complex conjugated function, i.e. $F(\alpha^*, \beta^*, \gamma^*, x) = F^*(\alpha, \beta, \gamma, x)$. Therefore, we only have to calculate two normalization constants $N^{(0,1)}$. Those can be found by condition (2.11). But since it turns out that this is rather tedious and we do not explicitly need them here, we apologize to the completionist reader and leave them undetermined for now.

We can now freely choose $\epsilon = +1$ and call the first and third equation *positive energy solutions* v^+ . Thus one obtains the following expressions for the mode functions ($v_{\text{in/out}}$ behaving like a plane wave at $\mp\infty$):

$$\begin{aligned} v_{\text{in}}^+ &= N^{(0)} \xi^{-i\Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{i\Omega_{\text{out}}} F(\alpha, \beta, \gamma; \xi) \\ v_{\text{in}}^- &= N^{(0)} \xi^{i\Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{-i\Omega_{\text{out}}} F(\alpha^*, \beta^*, \gamma^*; \xi) \\ v_{\text{out}}^+ &= N^{(1)} \xi^{-i\Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{i\Omega_{\text{out}}} F(\alpha, \beta, \alpha + \beta + 1 - \gamma; 1 - \xi) \\ v_{\text{out}}^- &= N^{(1)} \xi^{i\Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{-i\Omega_{\text{out}}} F(\alpha^*, \beta^*, \alpha^* + \beta^* + 1 - \gamma^*; 1 - \xi). \end{aligned} \quad (2.32)$$

from which it is apparent that we have pairs of complex conjugate functions (as we expected the mode functions to be as our initial field was real). The asymptotic behavior of a positive or negative frequency solution, indicated by the superscripts $+$ and $-$, can be read off by the asymptotic behavior for the in- and outgoing solutions, respectively. First, consider the ingoing mode functions: They are supposed to behave like plane waves for $\eta \rightarrow -\infty$ or, equivalently, $\xi \rightarrow 0^-$. In order to see that this is the case let's remind ourselves of the definition of ξ in (2.13). Then we have

$$\xi = \frac{1}{2} \left(1 + \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} \right) \quad (2.33)$$

$$1 - \xi = \frac{1}{2} \left(1 - \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} \right). \quad (2.34)$$

This can be rewritten in terms of exponential functions:

$$1 \pm \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} = \frac{2 e^{\pm \frac{\eta}{\eta_0}}}{e^{+\frac{\eta}{\eta_0}} + e^{-\frac{\eta}{\eta_0}}} = \frac{2}{1 + e^{\mp \frac{\eta}{\eta_0}}}$$

Hence we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \xi^{-i\Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{i\Omega_{\text{out}}} &= \left(\frac{1 - \xi}{\xi} \right)^{i\Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{i\Omega_{\text{out}}} \\ &= \left(e^{-2\frac{\eta}{\eta_0}} \right)^{i\Omega_{\text{in}}} \left(\frac{1}{1 + e^{\frac{\eta}{\eta_0}}} \right)^{i\Omega_{\text{out}}} \\ &\underset{\eta \rightarrow -\infty}{\sim} e^{-i\frac{2\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\eta_0}\eta} = e^{-i\omega_{\text{in}}\eta}. \end{aligned} \quad (2.35)$$

By complex conjugation it follows

$$\xi^{i\Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{-i\Omega_{\text{out}}} \underset{\eta \rightarrow -\infty}{\sim} e^{i\frac{2\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\eta_0}\eta} = e^{i\omega_{\text{in}}\eta}. \quad (2.36)$$

Taking into account that the ingoing solutions v_{in}^+ and v_{in}^- in (2.32) are constructed such that $F(\alpha, \beta, \gamma; \xi) \rightarrow 1$ for $\xi \rightarrow 0^-$, one can now easily read off that v_{in}^+ asymptotically behaves like a positive frequency plane wave at $\eta \rightarrow -\infty$ and v_{in}^- like a negative frequency one. A similar calculation for $\eta \rightarrow +\infty$ yields that

$$\xi^{-i\Omega_{in}}(1-\xi)^{i\Omega_{out}} \underset{\eta \rightarrow \infty}{\sim} e^{-i\frac{2\Omega_{out}}{\eta_0}\eta} = e^{-i\omega_{out}\eta} \quad (2.37)$$

$$\xi^{i\Omega_{in}}(1-\xi)^{-i\Omega_{out}} \underset{\eta \rightarrow \infty}{\sim} e^{i\frac{2\Omega_{out}}{\eta_0}\eta} = e^{i\omega_{out}\eta} \quad (2.38)$$

and thus again an easy identification of positive and negative frequency solution for the outgoing modes.

We now have two equivalent pairs of solutions of the initial differential equation. Those can be related by a Bogolyubov transformation and the Bogolyubov coefficients can be used to calculate the density of particles created during the expansion, as is explained in [1].

2.4. Particle creation (Bogolyubov transformation)

Writing out the dependencies again, the Bogolyubov transformation reads as

$$\begin{aligned} v_{in}^+(k, \eta) &= a_k v_{out}^+(k, \eta) + b_k v_{out}^-(k, \eta) \\ v_{in}^-(k, \eta) &= b_k^* v_{out}^+(k, \eta) + a_k^* v_{out}^-(k, \eta) \\ |a_k|^2 - |b_k|^2 &= 1. \end{aligned}$$

In our case, the two equations are the same (because we treat a real field) so we only have to find a_k , b_k such that v_{in}^+ can be expressed via v_{out}^\pm . For that we only need to consider the following three equations of (2.32) (which we write in an earlier form using again relations (2.24)-(2.28)):

$$\begin{aligned} v_{in}^+ &= N^{(0)} \xi^{-i\Omega_{in}} (1-\xi)^{i\Omega_{out}} F(\alpha, \beta, \gamma; \xi) \\ v_{out}^+ &= N^{(1)} \xi^{-i\Omega_{in}} (1-\xi)^{i\Omega_{out}} F(\alpha, \beta, \alpha + \beta - \gamma + 1; 1-\xi) \\ v_{out}^- &= N^{(1)} \xi^{i\Omega_{in}} (1-\xi)^{-i\Omega_{out}} F(1-\alpha, 1-\beta, \gamma - \alpha - \beta + 1; 1-\xi). \end{aligned} \quad (2.39)$$

Now using the transformation formula¹⁸

$$\begin{aligned} F(\alpha, \beta, \gamma; \xi) &= \kappa_1 F(\alpha, \beta, \alpha + \beta - \gamma + 1; 1-\xi) \\ &\quad + \kappa_2 \xi^{1-\gamma} (1-\xi)^{\gamma-\alpha-\beta} F(1-\alpha, 1-\beta, \gamma - \alpha - \beta + 1; 1-\xi) \end{aligned} \quad (2.40)$$

with

$$\begin{aligned} \kappa_1 &= \frac{\Gamma(\gamma)\Gamma(\gamma - \alpha - \beta)}{\Gamma(\gamma - \alpha)\Gamma(\gamma - \beta)} \\ \kappa_2 &= \frac{\Gamma(\gamma)\Gamma(\alpha + \beta - \gamma)}{\Gamma(\alpha)\Gamma(\beta)}, \end{aligned} \quad (2.41)$$

¹⁸as arises from (9.131 1/2) in [4]. Notice that we also exploited $F(a, b, c; x) = F(b, a, c; x)$ again.

we can pretty much read off the Bogolyubov coefficients: Inserting our relations for α , β , γ and multiplying by $N^{(0)}N^{(1)}\xi^{-i\Omega_{\text{in}}}(1-\xi)^{i\Omega_{\text{out}}}$ gives

$$\begin{aligned} & N^{(0)}N^{(1)}\xi^{-i\Omega_{\text{in}}}(1-\xi)^{i\Omega_{\text{out}}}F(\alpha, \beta, \gamma; \xi) \\ &= \kappa_1 N^{(0)}N^{(1)}\xi^{-i\Omega_{\text{in}}}(1-\xi)^{i\Omega_{\text{out}}}F(\alpha, \beta, \alpha + \beta - \gamma + 1; 1 - \xi) \\ &+ \kappa_2 N^{(0)}N^{(1)}\xi^{i\Omega_{\text{in}}}(1-\xi)^{-i\Omega_{\text{out}}}F(1 - \alpha, 1 - \beta, \gamma - \alpha - \beta + 1; 1 - \xi) \end{aligned}$$

or, looking at (2.39),

$$N^{(1)}v_{\text{in}}^+ = \kappa_1 N^{(0)}v_{\text{out}}^+ + \kappa_2 N^{(0)}v_{\text{out}}^- \quad (2.42)$$

which means that our Bogolyubov coefficients are just given by $\kappa_{1,2}$ and the normalization constants. Our final result is

$$a_k = \frac{N^{(0)}}{N^{(1)}} \frac{\Gamma(1 - 2i\Omega_{\text{in}})\Gamma(-2i\Omega_{\text{out}})}{\Gamma(1 - i\Omega_+)\Gamma(-i\Omega_+)} \quad (2.43)$$

$$b_k = \frac{N^{(0)}}{N^{(1)}} \frac{\Gamma(1 - 2i\Omega_{\text{in}})\Gamma(2i\Omega_{\text{out}})}{\Gamma(i\Omega_-)\Gamma(1 + i\Omega_-)}. \quad (2.44)$$

Now is a good point to talk about the normalization constants: As you can see, we only need the ratio $N^{(0)}/N^{(1)}$ and we know that

$$\begin{aligned} & |a_k|^2 - |b_k|^2 = 1 \\ \Leftrightarrow & |\kappa_1|^2 - |\kappa_2|^2 = \left| \frac{N^{(1)}}{N^{(0)}} \right|^2 \end{aligned} \quad (2.45)$$

must hold. Therefore, it's totally sufficient for our purposes to calculate only this quantity: Using some relations for the Γ -function¹⁹ we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} |\kappa_2|^2 &= \frac{|-2i\Omega_{\text{in}}|^2 |\Gamma(-2i\Omega_{\text{in}})|^2 |\Gamma(2i\Omega_{\text{out}})|^2}{|i\Omega_-|^2 |\Gamma(i\Omega_-)|^2 |\Gamma(i\Omega_-)|^2} \\ &= \frac{4\Omega_{\text{in}}^2}{\Omega_-^2} \frac{\Omega_-^2 (\sinh \pi\Omega_-)^2}{4\Omega_{\text{in}}\Omega_{\text{out}} \sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{in}}) \sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{out}})} \\ &= \frac{\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\Omega_{\text{out}}} \frac{(\sinh \pi\Omega_-)^2}{\sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{in}}) \sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{out}})} \end{aligned} \quad (2.46)$$

$$|\kappa_1|^2 = \frac{\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\Omega_{\text{out}}} \frac{(\sinh \pi\Omega_+)^2}{\sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{in}}) \sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{out}})} \quad (2.47)$$

and after applying some basic relations for the hyperbolic functions the final result is

$$|\kappa_2|^2 = \frac{\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\Omega_{\text{out}}} \frac{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_-) - 1}{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_+) - \cosh(2\pi\Omega_-)} \quad (2.48)$$

$$|\kappa_1|^2 = \frac{\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\Omega_{\text{out}}} \frac{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_+) - 1}{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_+) - \cosh(2\pi\Omega_-)}. \quad (2.49)$$

¹⁹ $\Gamma(x+1) = x\Gamma(x)$, $|\Gamma(iy)|^2 = \pi/(y \sinh \pi y)$, for $y \in \mathbb{R}$ (see [4] sec. 8.33)

Then (2.45) reveals

$$\left| \frac{N^{(1)}}{N^{(0)}} \right|^2 = \frac{\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\Omega_{\text{out}}}. \quad (2.50)$$

For finding the density of particles created during the expansion we are interested in $|b_k|^2$:

$$n(k) = |b_k|^2 = \left| \frac{N^{(0)}}{N^{(1)}} \right|^2 |\kappa_2|^2 = \frac{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_-) - 1}{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_+) - \cosh(2\pi\Omega_-)} \quad (2.51)$$

where we remind the reader of some definitions from earlier:

$$\begin{aligned} \Omega_{\text{in}} &= \frac{\eta_0}{2} \sqrt{k^2 + (r - q)m^2} = \frac{\eta_0}{2} \sqrt{k^2 + c_-^2 m^2} \\ \Omega_{\text{out}} &= \frac{\eta_0}{2} \sqrt{k^2 + (r + q)m^2} = \frac{\eta_0}{2} \sqrt{k^2 + c_+^2 m^2} \\ \Omega_{\pm} &= \Omega_{\text{out}} \pm \Omega_{\text{in}} \end{aligned}$$

This result is in agreement with [3]²⁰.

Notice that for $m = 0$ we have that $\Omega_- = 0$ and therefore $n(k, m = 0) = 0$ as well, i.e. no *massless* particles are produced during the expansion.

Finally, one can find the total number of produced particles for different values of η_0 and m by integrating the density:

$$N(\eta_0, m) = \int_{\mathbb{R}} d^3\mathbf{k} \, n(k; \eta_0, m) = 4\pi \int_0^\infty dk \, k^2 \, n(k; \eta_0, m) \quad (2.52)$$

2.5. Discussion

Since we're dealing with three parameters m , k and η_0 which still have dimensions our first goal is to define dimensionless parameters. This can be achieved by defining

$$\tilde{m} \equiv c_+ \eta_0 m \quad (2.53)$$

$$\tilde{k} \equiv \eta_0 k. \quad (2.54)$$

It can be understood as using k and m in units of η_0^{-1} and we further scaled m such that it relates to the mass *after* the expansion of the universe (remember that $m_{\text{eff}}^2 = a^2 m^2$, i.e. the notion of mass *scales* together with the universe). Because in order to be able to later relate results for different expansion scenarios we need to normalize \tilde{m} such that it relates to the respective mass scale *after* the universe stopped expanding²¹. With these

²⁰Set $a = r$, $b = q$, $c = 0$, $\lambda = \eta_0^{-1}$

²¹Measuring a particle's mass to be $\tilde{m} = 1$ then amounts to reading the value $1/\eta_0$ off of a scale in the remote future, long after the expansion of the universe ended. Normalizing it like this makes it comparable to different expansion scenarios: After all, this is the value you measure and say *the expansion created that many particles of that specific mass*.

definitions, (2.51) becomes

$$\begin{aligned}
n(\tilde{k}) &= \frac{\cosh \pi \left(\sqrt{k^2 \eta_0^2 + c_+^2 \eta_0^2 m^2} - \sqrt{k^2 \eta_0^2 + c_-^2 \eta_0^2 m^2} \right) - 1}{\cosh \pi \left(\sqrt{k^2 \eta_0^2 + c_+^2 \eta_0^2 m^2} + \sqrt{k^2 \eta_0^2 + c_-^2 \eta_0^2 m^2} \right) - \cosh \pi \left(\sqrt{k^2 \eta_0^2 + c_+^2 \eta_0^2 m^2} - \sqrt{k^2 \eta_0^2 + c_-^2 \eta_0^2 m^2} \right)} \\
&= \frac{\cosh \pi (\tilde{\omega}_{\text{out}} - \tilde{\omega}_{\text{in}}) - 1}{\cosh \pi (\tilde{\omega}_{\text{out}} + \tilde{\omega}_{\text{in}}) - \cosh \pi (\tilde{\omega}_{\text{out}} - \tilde{\omega}_{\text{in}})}
\end{aligned} \tag{2.55}$$

with²²

$$\begin{aligned}
\tilde{\omega}_{\text{out}} &\equiv \sqrt{\tilde{k}^2 + \tilde{m}^2} \\
\tilde{\omega}_{\text{in}} &\equiv \sqrt{\tilde{k}^2 + \frac{c_-^2}{c_+^2} \tilde{m}^2}
\end{aligned}$$

which do *not* depend on η_0 anymore and is therefore independent of the timescale of the expansion. It also doesn't depend on the absolute values of c_+ and c_- but just on their ratio (which is always positive and smaller than 1). We can also infer that the closer c_-/c_+ is to one, the smaller $n(\tilde{k})$ is, i.e. the bigger the universe ends up compared to its size in the remote past, the more particles will be created.

In addition to the particle density, we find for the total number of particles (2.52)

$$N(\eta_0, \tilde{m}) = \frac{4\pi}{\eta_0^3} \int_0^\infty d\tilde{k} \tilde{k}^2 n(\tilde{k}; \tilde{m}) \tag{2.56}$$

where η_0 only enters via the prefactor η_0^{-3} , meaning that a relative increase in how rapid the expansion happens will have a cubic effect on the number of produced particles! We

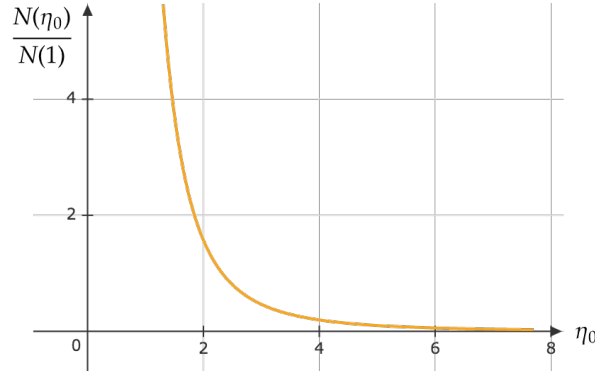


Figure 3: Dependence of the total number of produced particles on the characteristic time scale of the expansion of the universe: For infinitely fast expansions, infinitely many particles are produced

²²Notice that $\tilde{\omega}_{\text{out}}$ and $\tilde{\omega}_{\text{in}}$ are the frequencies (now in terms of the dimensionless quantities \tilde{k} and \tilde{m}) of the plane waves which we use to define vacua in the remote future and past, respectively. It is here where we can clearly see, that \tilde{m} corresponds to the rest mass of a particle as seen from an observer in the remote future.

will now choose two specific scaling factors and try to verify our findings:

$$F(\eta) = a^2(\eta) = q \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} + r$$

with

$$\begin{aligned} q &\in \{1, 4\} & c_-^2 &= 1 \\ r &\in \{2, 5\} & c_+^2 &\in \{3, 9\}. \end{aligned}$$

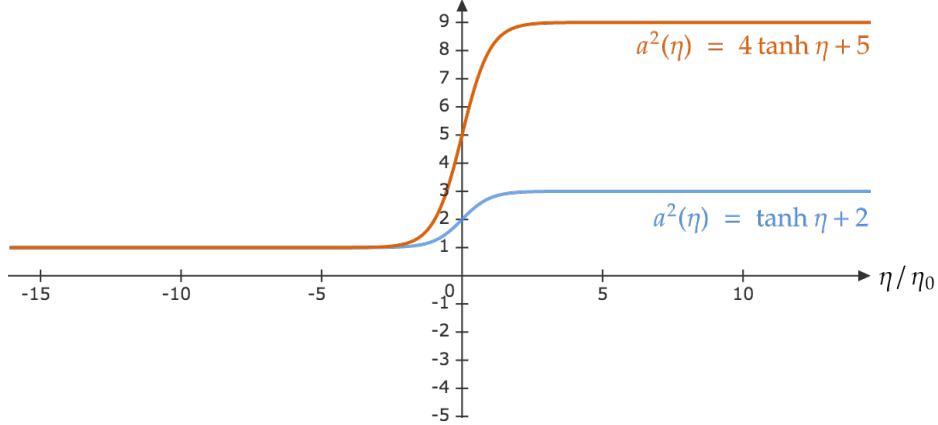


Figure 4: Two universes starting out at the same size but expanding differently. The orange one ends up larger than the blue one. The time scale on which the expansion happens is identical in both cases.

We can use (2.56) to calculate the number of produced particles as a function of their mass \tilde{m} (which is the mass *after* the expansion) and plot $N(\tilde{m})$ for both cases. This is shown in figure 5. We observe that for some particular mass, which lies at $\sim (\eta_0)^{-1}$, the number of produced particles is maximal. This means that the timescale of the expansion sets the mass scale of the preferably produced particles! As expected, we also see that for smaller c_-/c_+ , i.e. further away from 1, more particles are produced²³. Indeed, one also finds, that for identical ratios c_-/c_+ , the number of produced particles is identical, as expected and seen in figure 6. If we keep the expansion function the same but just shift it up, i.e. make the constant term larger, we effectively bring c_-/c_+ closer to 1 and following the intuition established earlier we'd expect less particles to be produced. That this is indeed the case can be seen in figure 7²⁴.

So far we only used a constant η_0 for all our scenarios. What happens if we change it, though? The result is shown in figure 8: As expected, the number of produced particles

²³They're 1/3 for the blue curve and 1/9 for the orange one in this example

²⁴This has a rather nice consequence when thinking about the early universe: If it starts out very small, a tiny expansion (in absolute terms) already creates a lot of particles, whereas the same (absolute) expansion happening today, for example, would be negligible in terms of particle production.

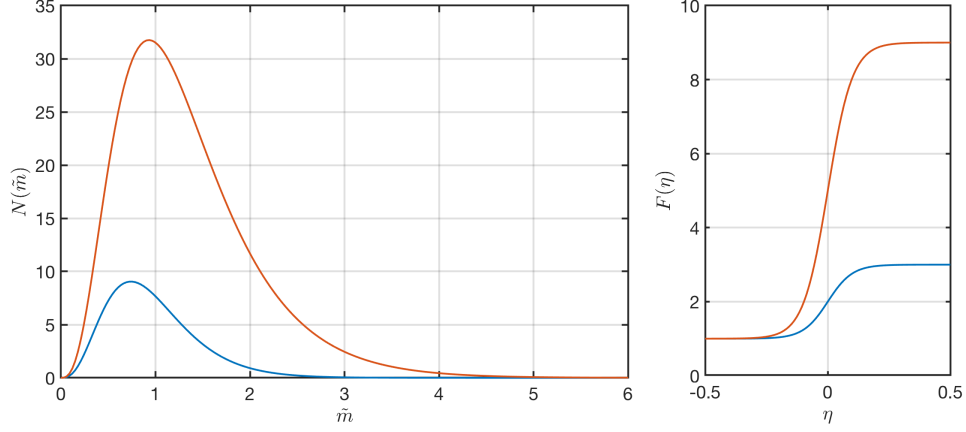


Figure 5: Total number of produced particles for two different ratios c_-/c_+ , starting out at the same universe *size*. The right plot shows the two pulses that the left graphic corresponds to (in this case those are the functions shown at the beginning of this chapter).

increases. In fact, it increases just like we predicted it: For a ratio of 0.8 between the two η_0 s, i.e. making the expansion 20% more rapid, we expect a relative increase of $(0.8)^{-3} \approx 2$.

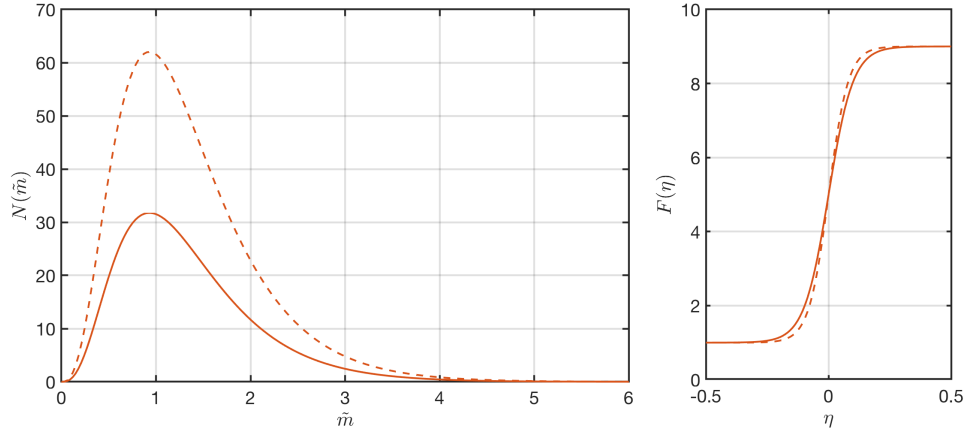


Figure 8: Total number of produced particles for two different expansion rates. The dashed curve represents the case where $\eta_0^{\text{dashed}} = 0.8\eta_0^{\text{solid}}$, i.e. expansion happens 20% more rapidly. This leads to a curve about twice as high as before. The expansion functions are again shown on the right.

2.6. Summary

The model we investigated is obviously an oversimplification and admittedly not very realistic. It was chosen mostly because it allows for an analytic treatment while already giving qualitatively interesting insights into the behaviour of a scalar field in a varying gravitational background. Throughout this work we have shown that the notion of a

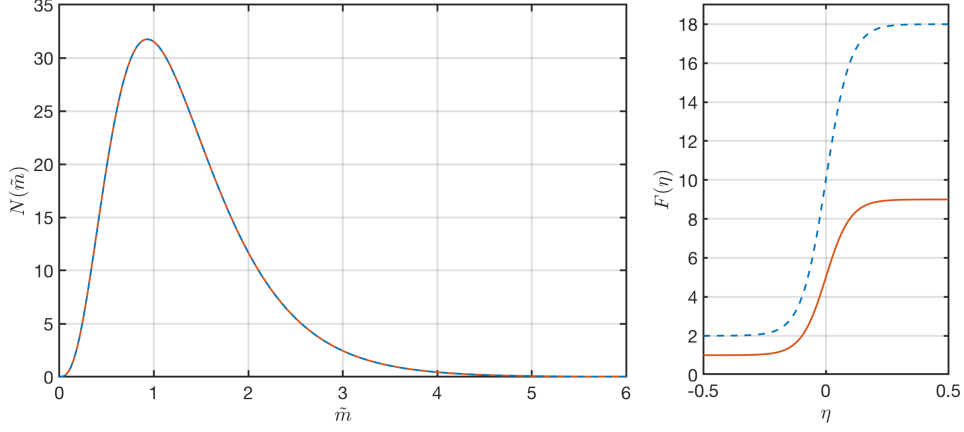


Figure 6: Total number of produced particles for two expansions with *identical* ratio c_-/c_+ . The right plot shows the two pulses that the left graphic corresponds to.

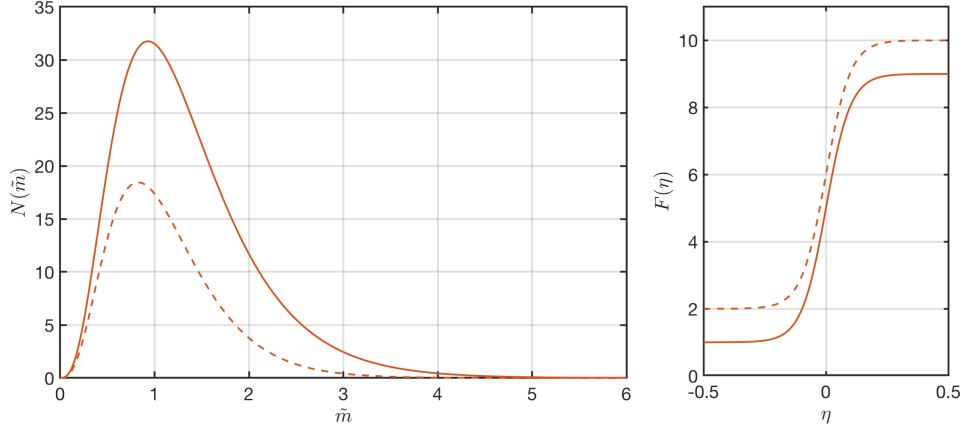


Figure 7: Total number of produced particles for two identical expansions with *different* ratios c_-/c_+ . The right plot shows the two pulses that the left graphic corresponds to.

vacuum in curved spacetime is ambiguous and finding the *physical* vacuum is often non-trivial but crucial to having a meaningful notion of particles. Our model already predicts particle creation due to an expanding universe and the mass scale of these particles is set by the time scale of the expansion. Furthermore, only the *relative* increase in size is relevant for the creation. This in turn means that for a constant (absolute) inflation rate the effect has a much stronger impact during the initial phase, i.e. much more particles would be produced in the early stages of the universe.

A. Additional calculations

A.1. More general form of scaling function and Sauter pulse

We treated scaling functions

$$a^2(\eta) = q \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} + r$$

before but it is actually little work to generalize everything to the form

$$a^2(\eta) = p \tanh^2 \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} + q \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} + r.$$

In that case, in- and outgoing plane waves have frequencies

$$\begin{aligned}\omega_{\text{in}} &\equiv \omega_k(\eta \rightarrow -\infty) = \sqrt{k^2 + (p + r - q)m^2} \\ \omega_{\text{out}} &\equiv \omega_k(\eta \rightarrow +\infty) = \sqrt{k^2 + (p + r + q)m^2}.\end{aligned}$$

The same substitution for ξ still works, but we have to generalize the expression for ω_k^2 as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\omega_k^2 &= k^2 + m^2 \left[p \tanh^2 \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} + q \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} + r \right] \\ &= k^2 + m^2 (p + r - q(1 - 2\xi) - 4p\xi(1 - \xi)) \\ &= \omega_{\text{in}}^2 + 2(q - 2p)m^2\xi + 4pm^2\xi^2 \\ &\equiv \omega_{\text{in}}^2 + \tilde{c}_1\xi + \tilde{c}_2\xi^2\end{aligned}$$

where we see

$$\begin{aligned}\tilde{c}_1 + \tilde{c}_2 &= 2qm^2 \\ \omega_{\text{in}}^2 + \tilde{c}_1 + \tilde{c}_2 &= \omega_{\text{out}}^2.\end{aligned}$$

Again, we define

$$\begin{aligned}c_1 &\equiv \eta_0^2 \tilde{c}_1 / 4 & \Omega_{\text{out}}^2 &\equiv \frac{\eta_0^2}{4} \omega_{\text{out}}^2 = \Omega_{\text{in}}^2 + c_1 + c_2 \\ c_2 &\equiv \eta_0^2 \tilde{c}_2 / 4 & \Omega_{\pm} &\equiv \Omega_{\text{out}} \pm \Omega_{\text{in}} \\ \Omega_{\text{in}}^2 &\equiv \eta_0^2 \omega_{\text{in}}^2 / 4\end{aligned}$$

and the differential equation becomes

$$0 = \left[\xi^2(1 - \xi)^2 \frac{\partial^2}{\partial \xi^2} + \xi(1 - \xi)(1 - 2\xi) \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi} + \Omega_{\text{in}}^2 + c_1\xi + c_2\xi^2 \right] v_{\mathbf{k}}$$

(the term $\sim \xi^2$ is new). We make the same ansatz once again:

$$v_\epsilon(\xi) = N \xi^{-\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{in}}} (1 - \xi)^{\epsilon i \Omega_{\text{out}}} h_\epsilon(\xi)$$

which leads to

$$\left[\xi(1 - \xi) \frac{\partial^2}{\partial \xi^2} + (1 - 2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{in}} - 2(1 + i\epsilon\Omega_-)\xi) \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi} - (c_2 + i\epsilon\Omega_- - \Omega_-^2) \right] h_\epsilon(\xi) = 0$$

which has the form of the hypergeometric differential equation for

$$\begin{aligned} \gamma &= 1 - 2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{in}} \\ \alpha + \beta + 1 &= 2(1 + i\epsilon\Omega_-) \\ \alpha\beta &= (c_2 + i\epsilon\Omega_- - \Omega_-^2). \end{aligned}$$

Explicit expressions can be obtained by solving this system of equations:

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha &= \frac{1}{2} + i\epsilon\Omega_- + \frac{i}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1} \\ \beta &= \frac{1}{2} + i\epsilon\Omega_- - \frac{i}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1} \\ \gamma &= 1 - 2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{in}} \end{aligned}$$

for which we find the relations

$$\begin{aligned} 1 - \alpha &= \alpha^* & 1 - \gamma &= 2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{in}} \\ 1 - \beta &= \beta^* & \gamma - \alpha - \beta &= -2i\epsilon\Omega_{\text{out}}. \\ 2 - \gamma &= \gamma^* \end{aligned}$$

Now the Bogolyubov transformation done earlier is still valid, we only need to update the explicit expressions for α , β , γ and get

$$\begin{aligned} a_k &= \frac{N^{(0)}}{N^{(1)}} \frac{\Gamma(1 - 2i\Omega_{\text{in}})\Gamma(-2i\Omega_{\text{out}})}{\Gamma\left(\frac{1}{2} - i\Omega_+ - \frac{i}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right)\Gamma\left(\frac{1}{2} - i\Omega_+ + \frac{i}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right)} \\ b_k &= \frac{N^{(0)}}{N^{(1)}} \frac{\Gamma(1 - 2i\Omega_{\text{in}})\Gamma(2i\Omega_{\text{out}})}{\Gamma\left(\frac{1}{2} + i\Omega_- + \frac{i}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right)\Gamma\left(\frac{1}{2} + i\Omega_- - \frac{i}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right)}. \end{aligned}$$

To find the normalization constants we calculate again

$$\begin{aligned}
|\kappa_2|^2 &= \frac{|-2i\Omega_{\text{in}}|^2 |\Gamma(-2i\Omega_{\text{in}})|^2 |\Gamma(2i\Omega_{\text{out}})|^2}{\left| \Gamma\left(\frac{1}{2} + i\left(\Omega_- + \frac{1}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right)\right) \right|^2 \left| \Gamma\left(\frac{1}{2} + i\left(\Omega_- - \frac{1}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right)\right) \right|^2} \\
&= 4\Omega_{\text{in}}^2 \frac{\cosh\left(\pi\Omega_- + \frac{\pi}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right) \cosh\left(\pi\Omega_- - \frac{\pi}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right)}{4\Omega_{\text{in}}\Omega_{\text{out}} \sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{in}}) \sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{out}})} \\
&= \frac{\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\Omega_{\text{out}}} \frac{\cosh\left(\pi\Omega_- + \frac{\pi}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right) \cosh\left(\pi\Omega_- - \frac{\pi}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right)}{\sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{in}}) \sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{out}})} \\
&= \frac{\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\Omega_{\text{out}}} \frac{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_-) + \cosh\left(\pi\sqrt{4m^2\eta_0^2 p - 1}\right)}{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_+) - \cosh(2\pi\Omega_-)} \\
|\kappa_1|^2 &= \frac{\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\Omega_{\text{out}}} \frac{\cosh\left(\pi\Omega_+ + \frac{\pi}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right) \cosh\left(\pi\Omega_+ - \frac{\pi}{2}\sqrt{4c_2 - 1}\right)}{\sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{in}}) \sinh(2\pi\Omega_{\text{out}})} \\
&= \frac{\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\Omega_{\text{out}}} \frac{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_+) + \cosh\left(\pi\sqrt{4m^2\eta_0^2 p - 1}\right)}{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_+) - \cosh(2\pi\Omega_-)}
\end{aligned}$$

and find (as previously)

$$\left| \frac{N^{(1)}}{N^{(0)}} \right|^2 = \frac{\Omega_{\text{in}}}{\Omega_{\text{out}}}.$$

The particle density $|b_k|^2$ is thus modified for the more general case and reads:

$$n(k) = |b_k|^2 = \left| \frac{N^{(0)}}{N^{(1)}} \right|^2 |\kappa_2|^2 = \frac{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_-) + \cosh\left(\pi\sqrt{4m^2\eta_0^2 p - 1}\right)}{\cosh(2\pi\Omega_+) - \cosh(2\pi\Omega_-)}$$

where

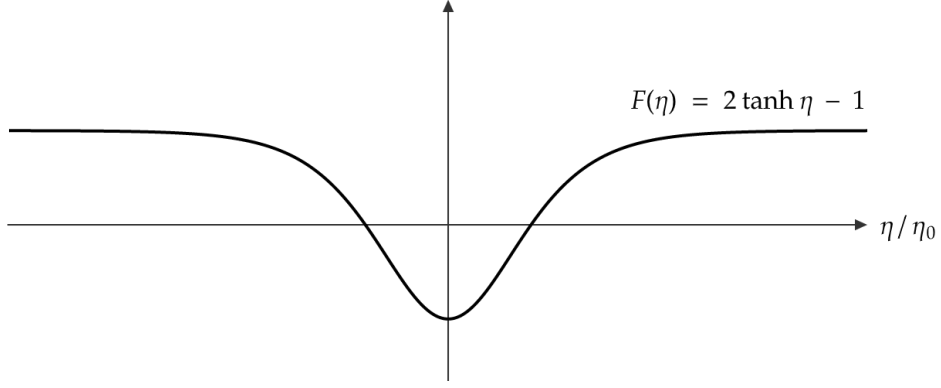
$$\begin{aligned}
\Omega_{\text{in}} &= \frac{\eta_0}{2} \sqrt{k^2 + (p + r - q)m^2} \\
\Omega_{\text{out}} &= \frac{\eta_0}{2} \sqrt{k^2 + (p + r + q)m^2} \\
\Omega_{\pm} &= \Omega_{\text{out}} \pm \Omega_{\text{in}} \\
c_2 &= m^2\eta_0^2 p
\end{aligned}$$

This case now includes the initial idea of using the Sauter pulse

$$m_{\text{eff}}^2 \equiv m^2 \left[2 \tanh \frac{\eta}{\eta_0} - 1 \right]$$

as an effective action term. Notice, however, that this can only be interpreted as the contraction/expansion of the universe for *conformally* coupled fields. In that case, though,

the given function wouldn't make any physical sense, as it switches signs. Therefore (if we use the Sauter pulse to describe the time-dependent effective action), we should be considering minimally coupled fields only. In that case, we may of course have negative effective masses. But then the bigger annoyance is that we do not know how the universe expands/contracts anymore, which is why we didn't choose the Sauter pulse in our model earlier.



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