

Hydrodynamic Attractors: Theoretical Overview

Alexander Soloviev

ECT* September 22, 2025



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the European Union**

Overview

Motivation

Recap of hydro attractors

Attractors in MIS, RTA kinetic theory, holography

Outlook

Hydrodynamics' unreasonable effectiveness

Hydrodynamics - it just works!

Hydrodynamics' unreasonable effectiveness

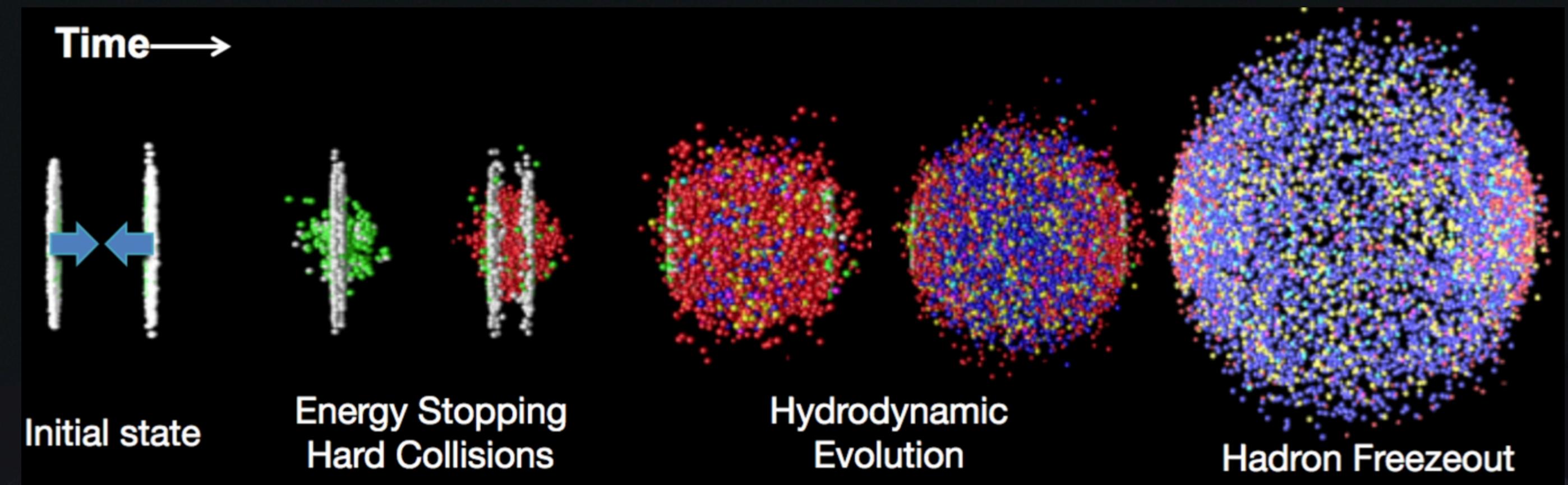
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- Hydrodynamics is eerily successful far from equilibrium, for collision times $\sim 1 \text{ fm}/c$

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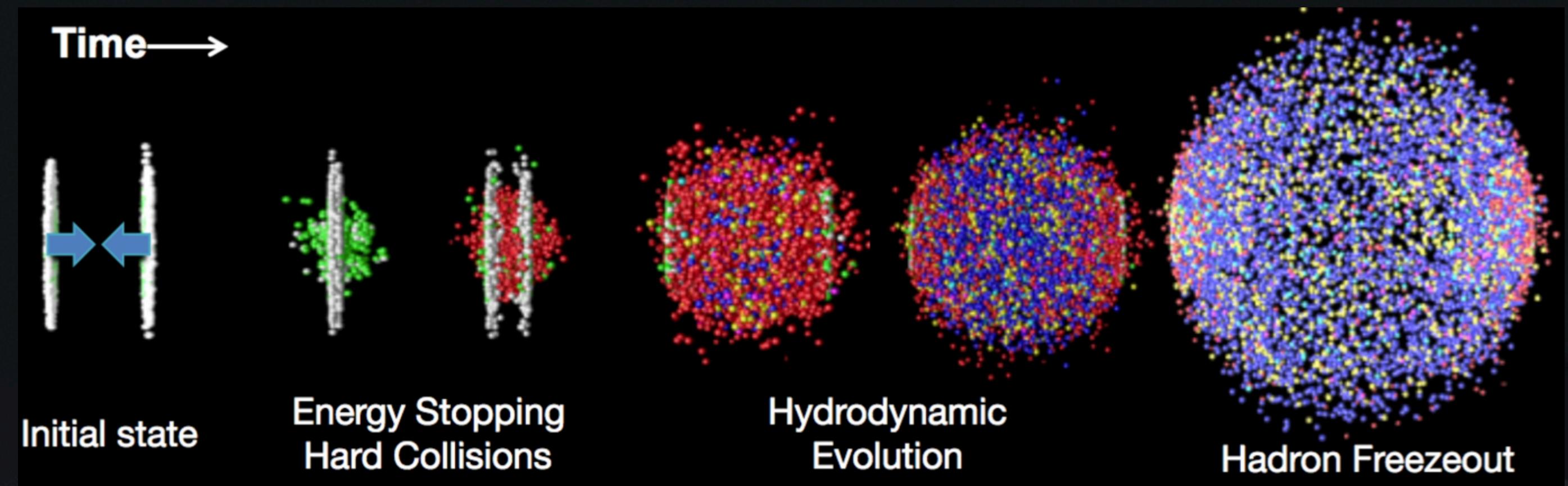


Nayak 2012

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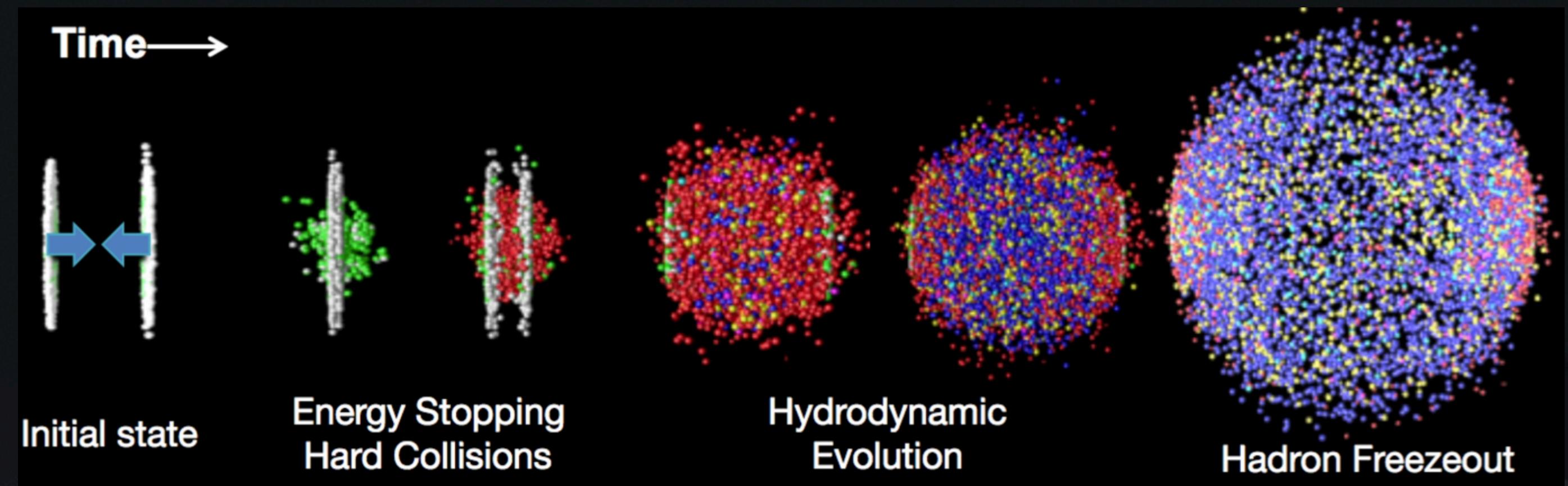
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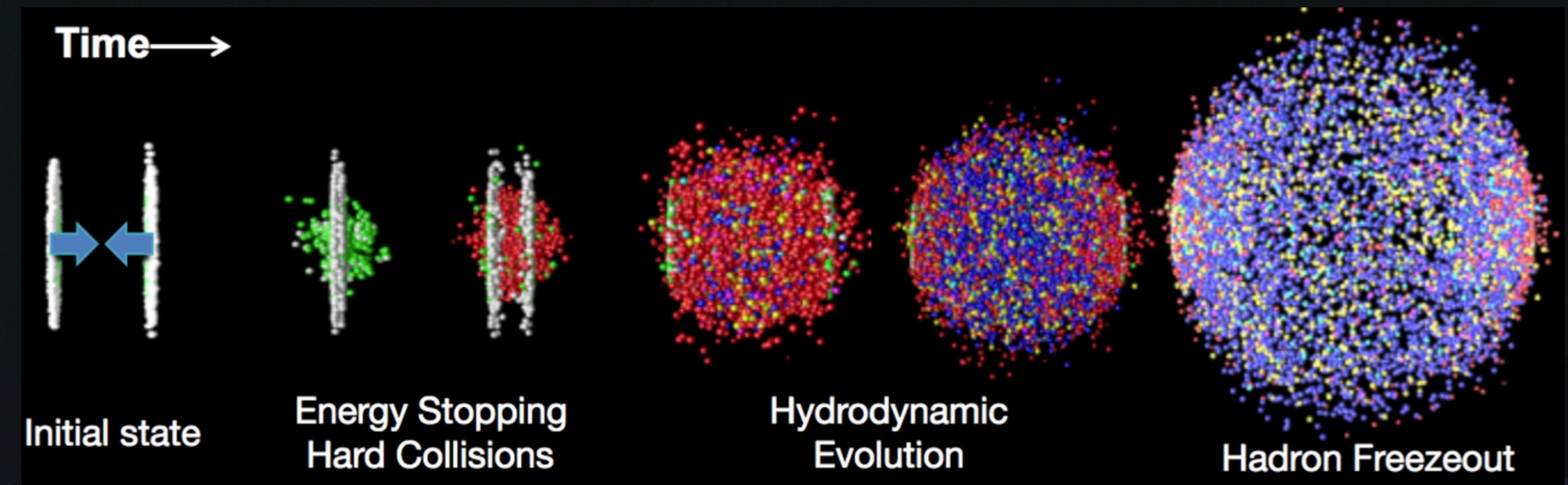
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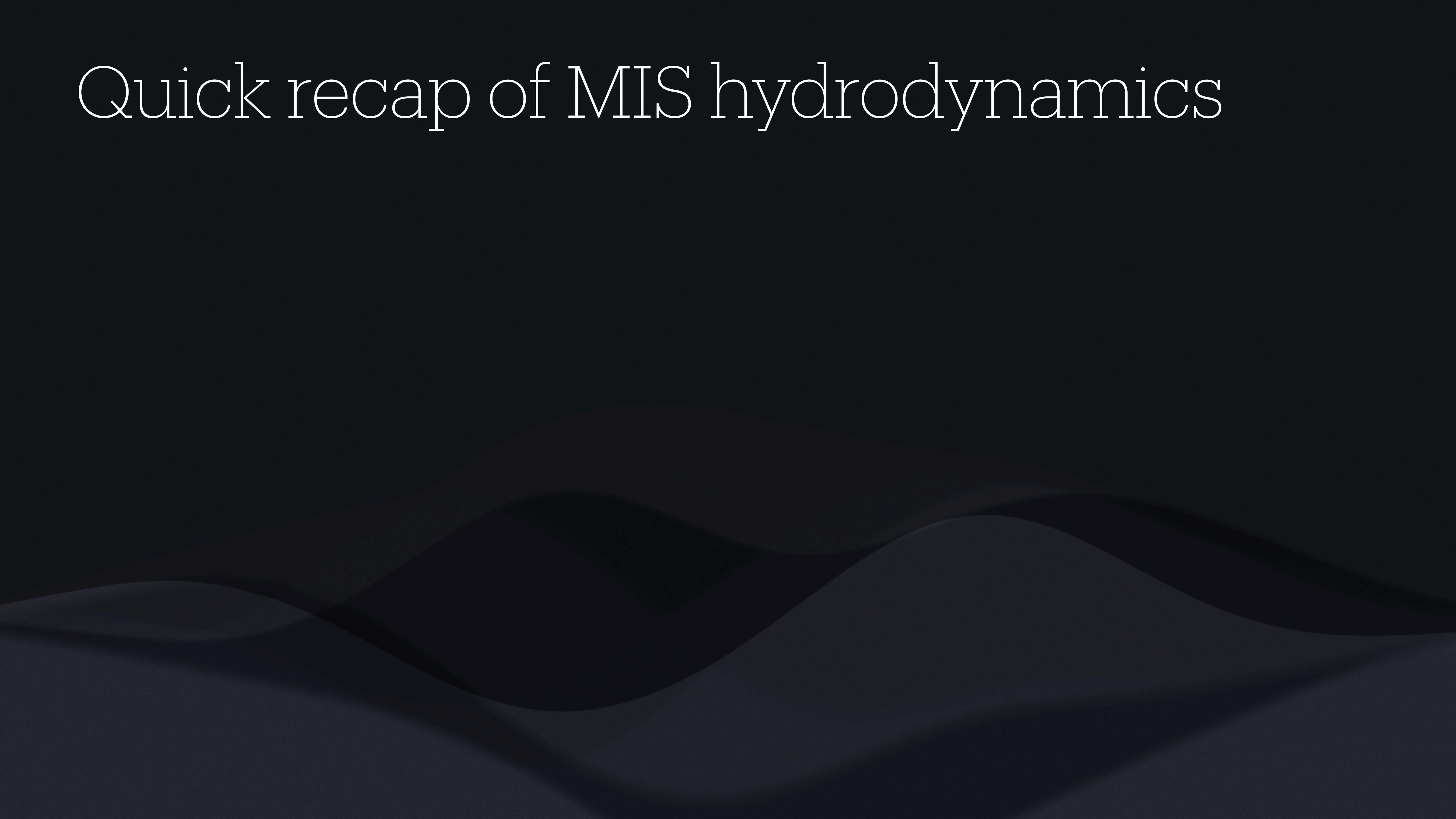
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- Essential ingredients for attractor: competition between expansion and interaction

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Müller 1967, Israel, Stewart
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- Alternatively, general frame approach (BDNK) remains causal at 1st order

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Bemfica, Disconzi, Noronha 2018, Kovtun 2019, Gavassino, Antonelli Haskel 2020, Gavassino 2021

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Go with the flow

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- So far, so flat space - how does the story look outside of Minkowski?

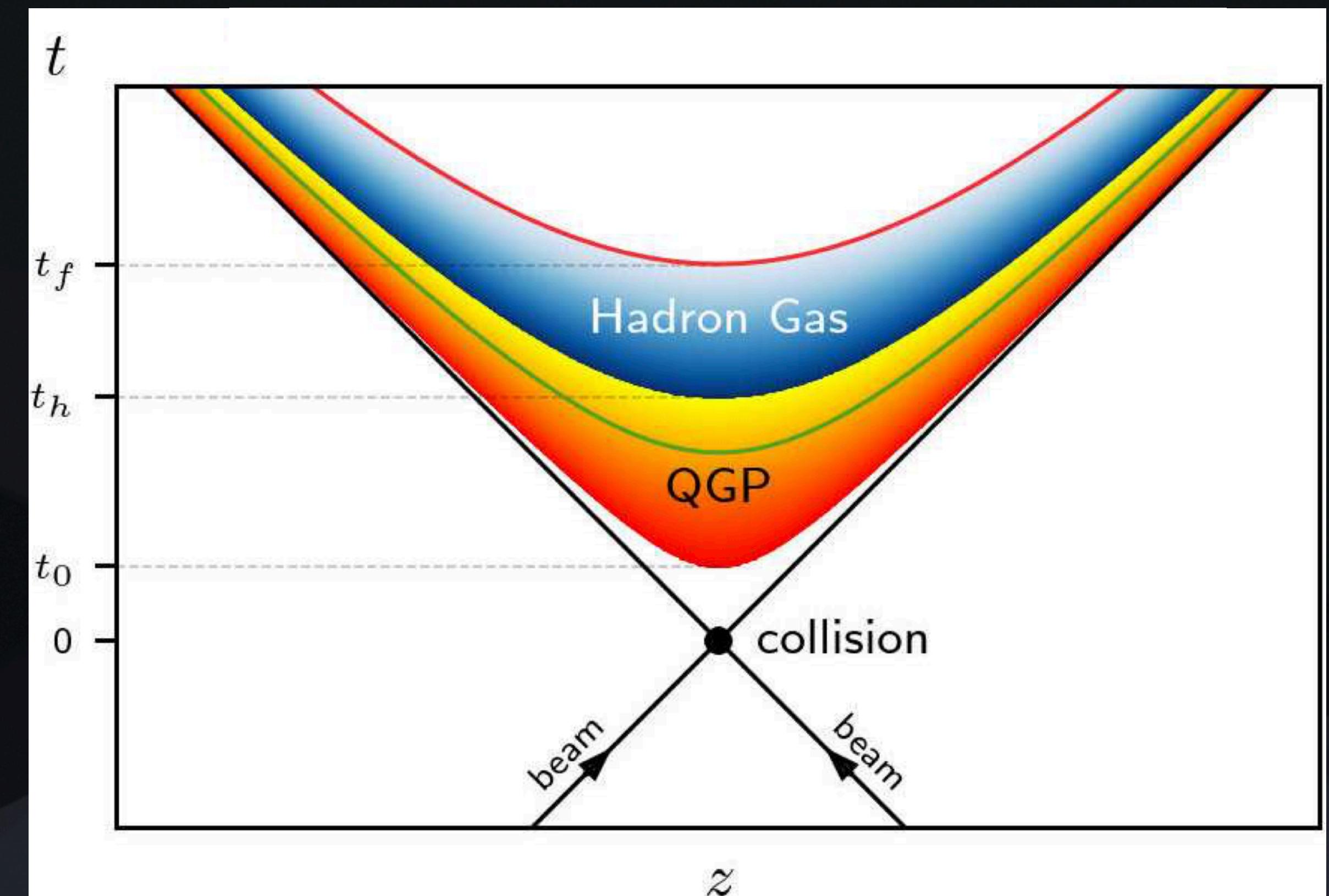
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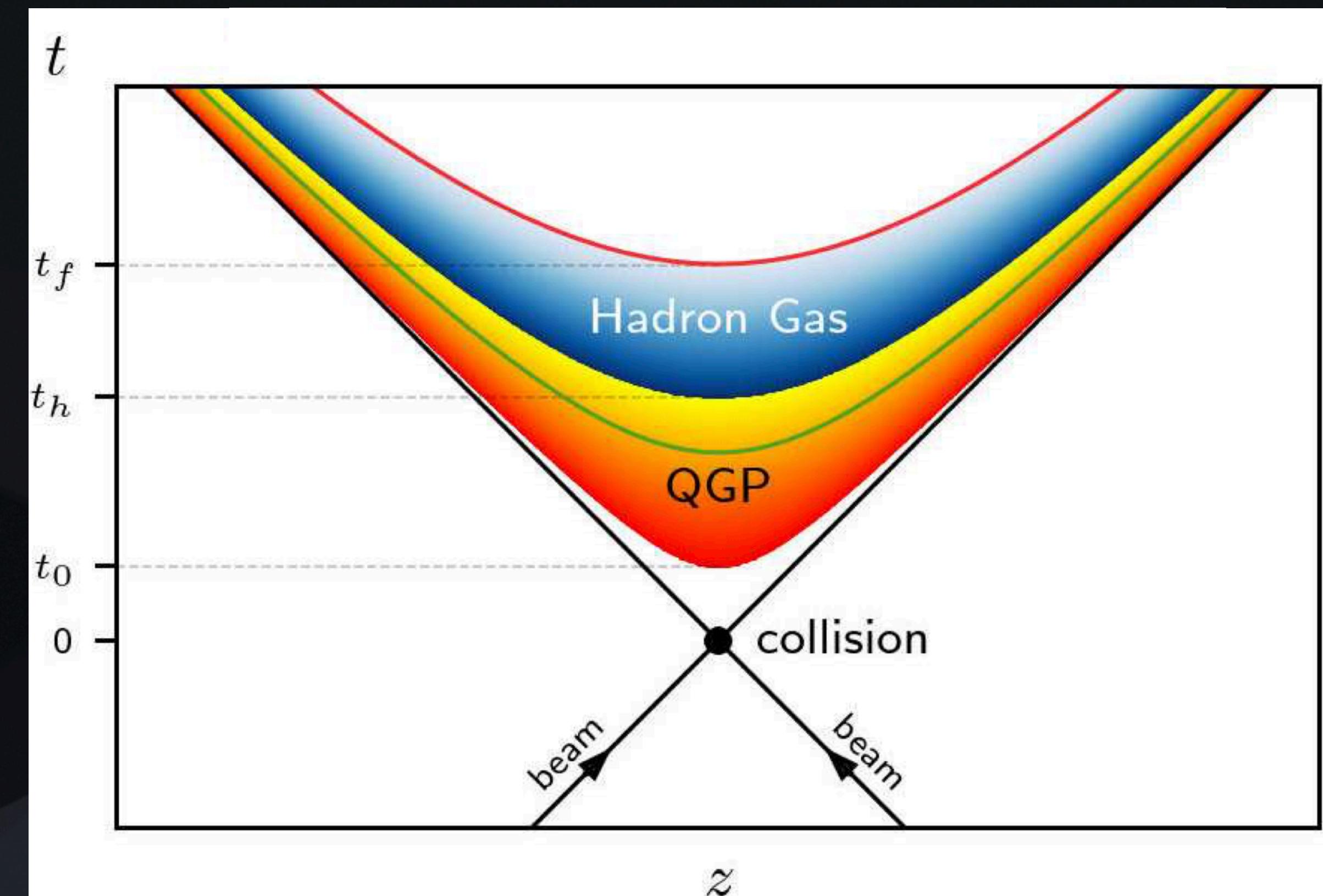


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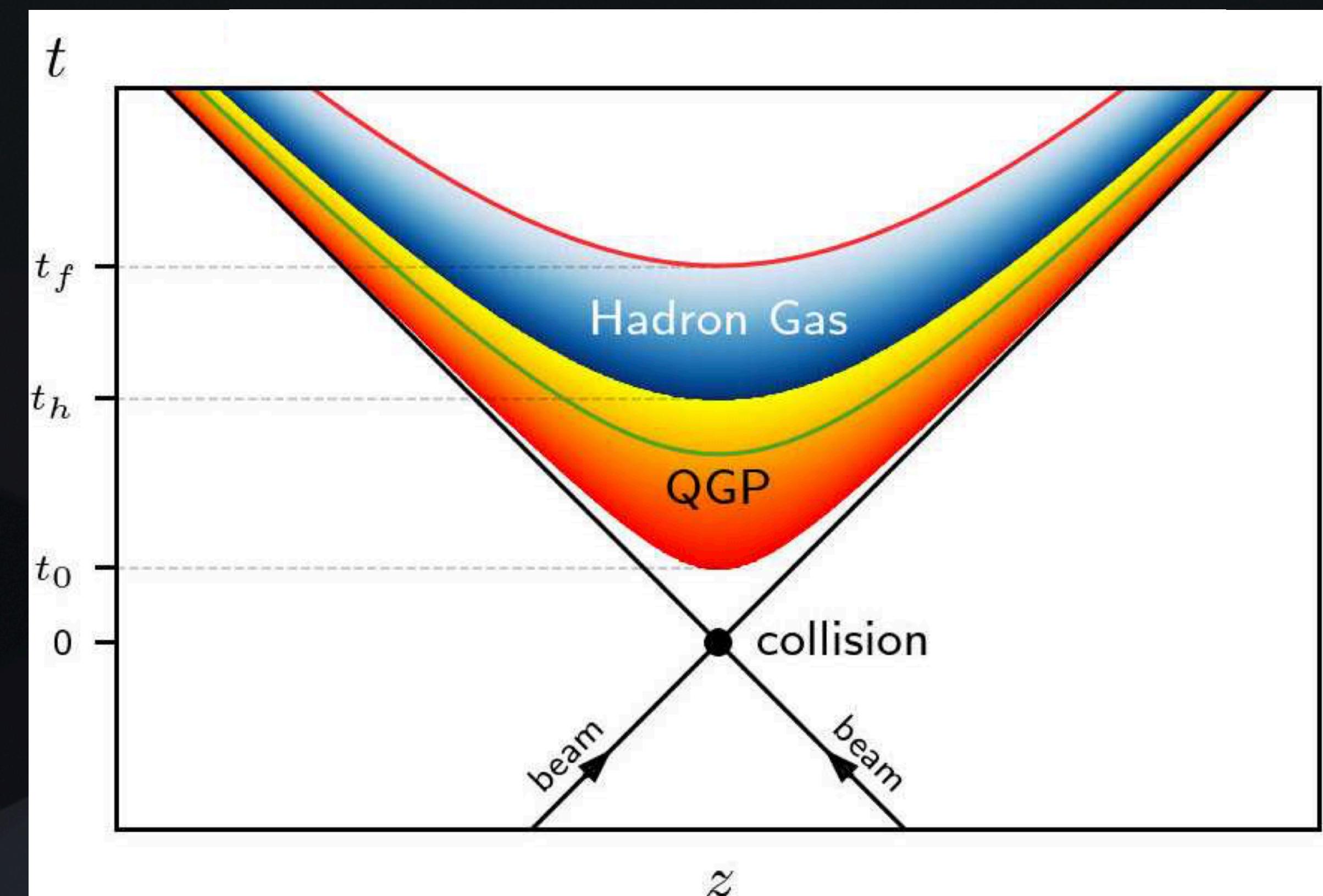


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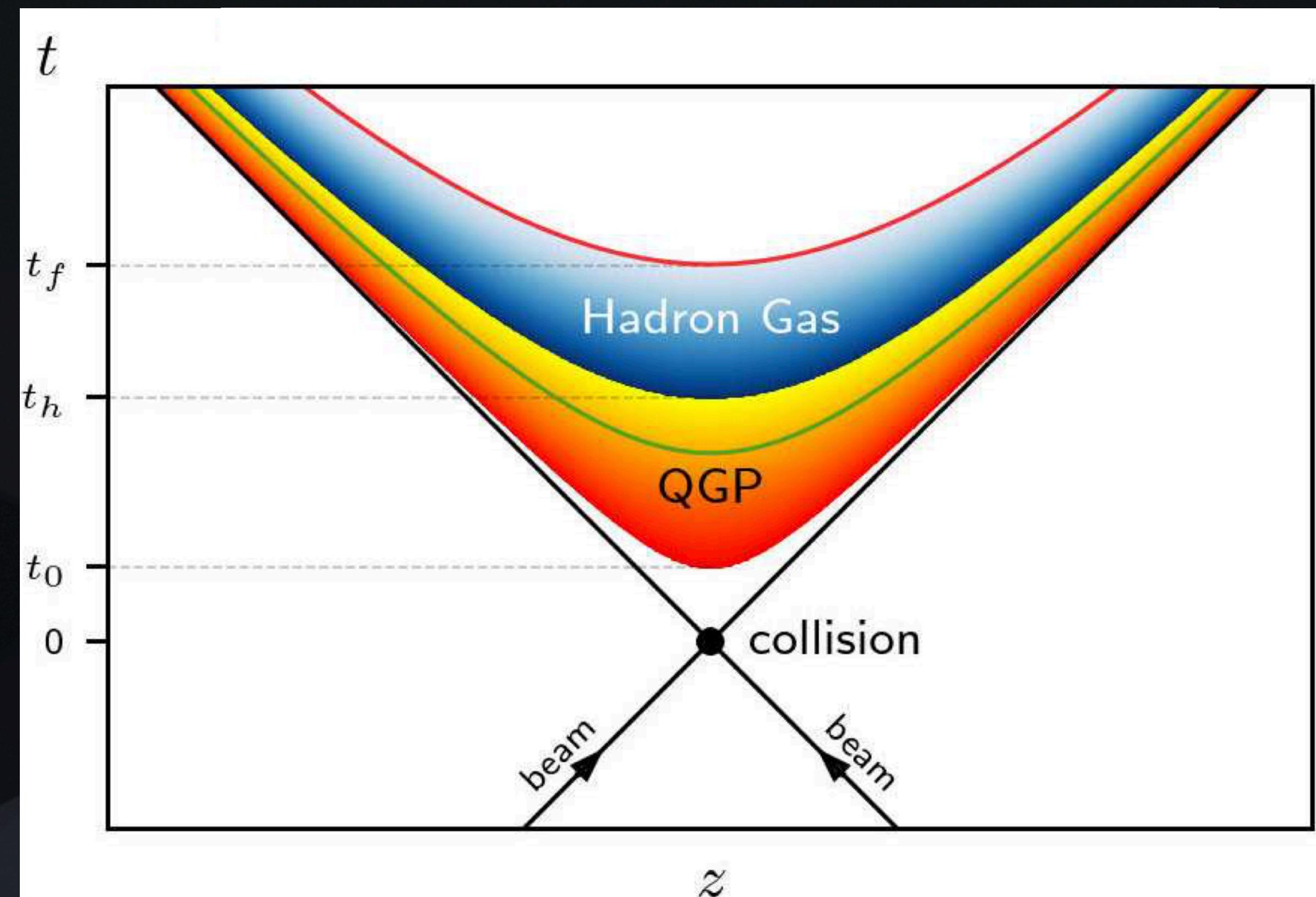


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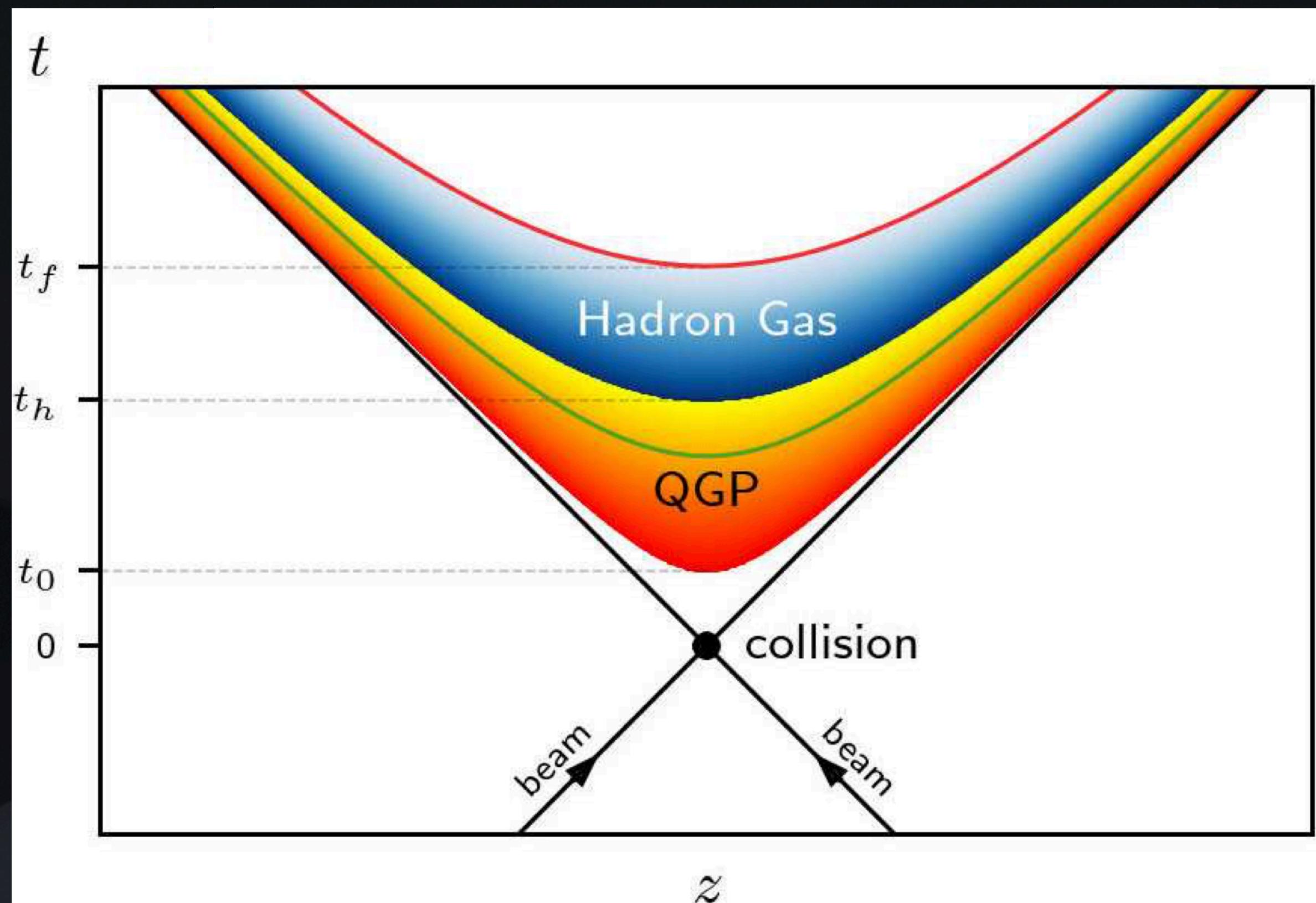


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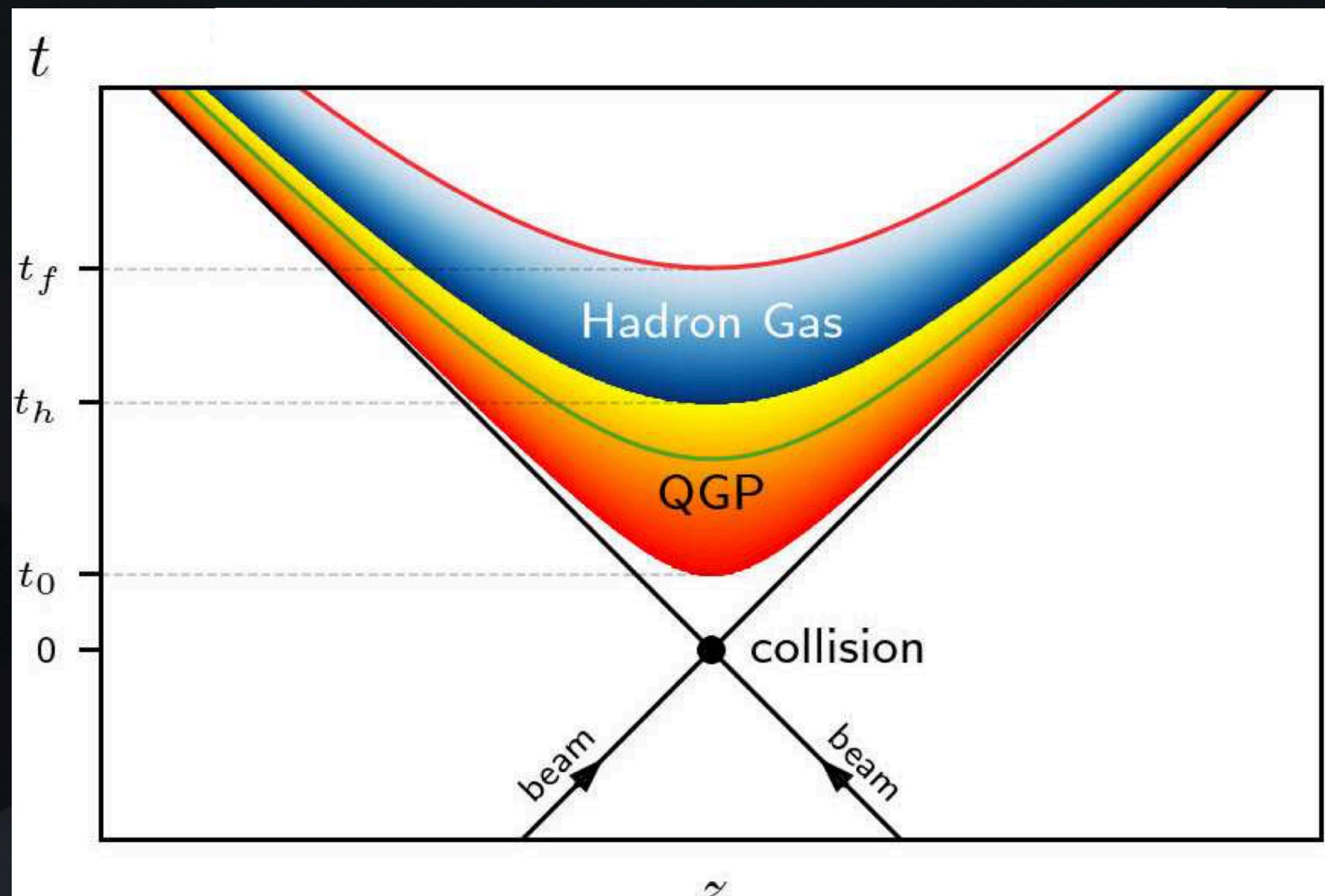


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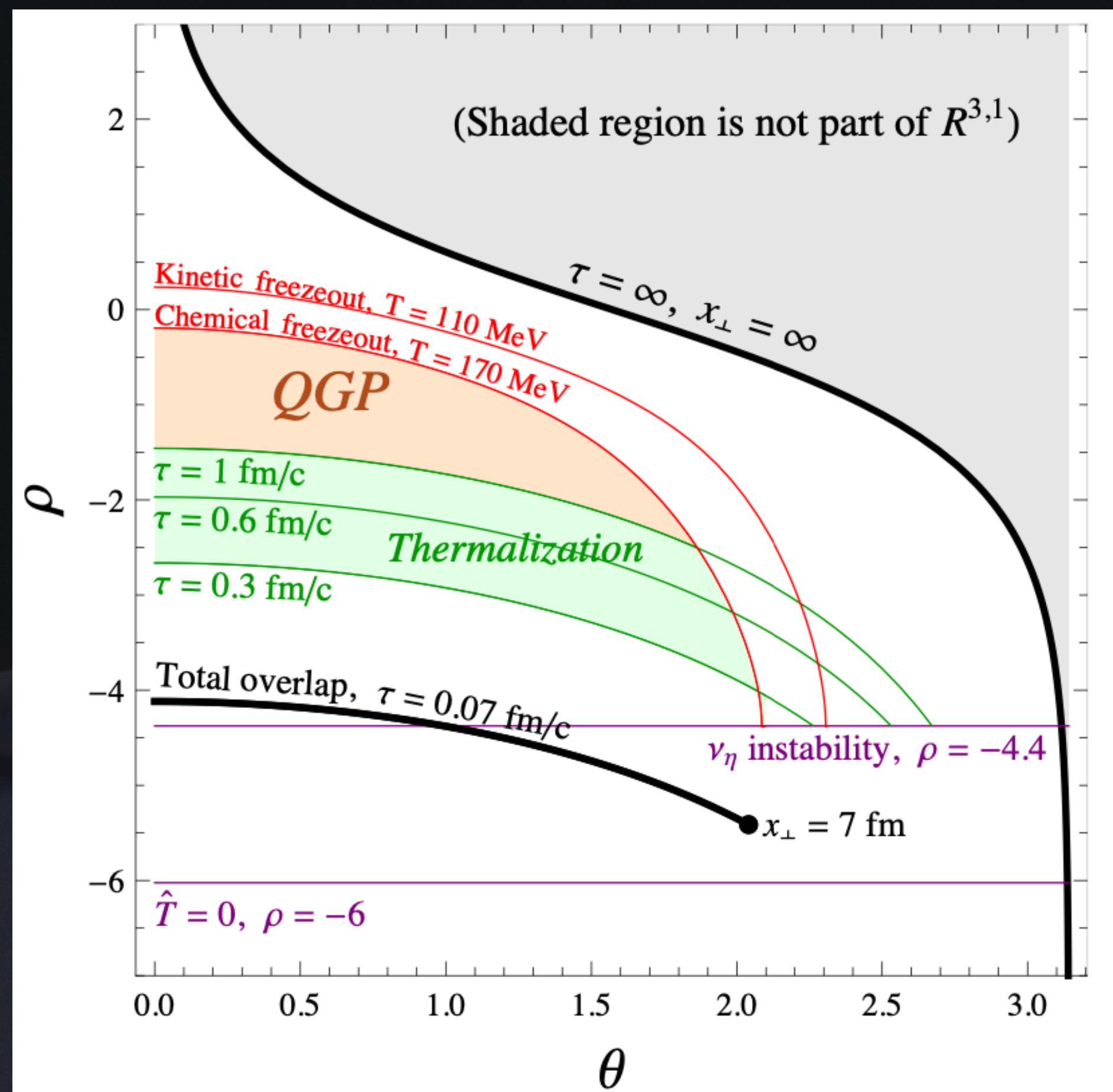
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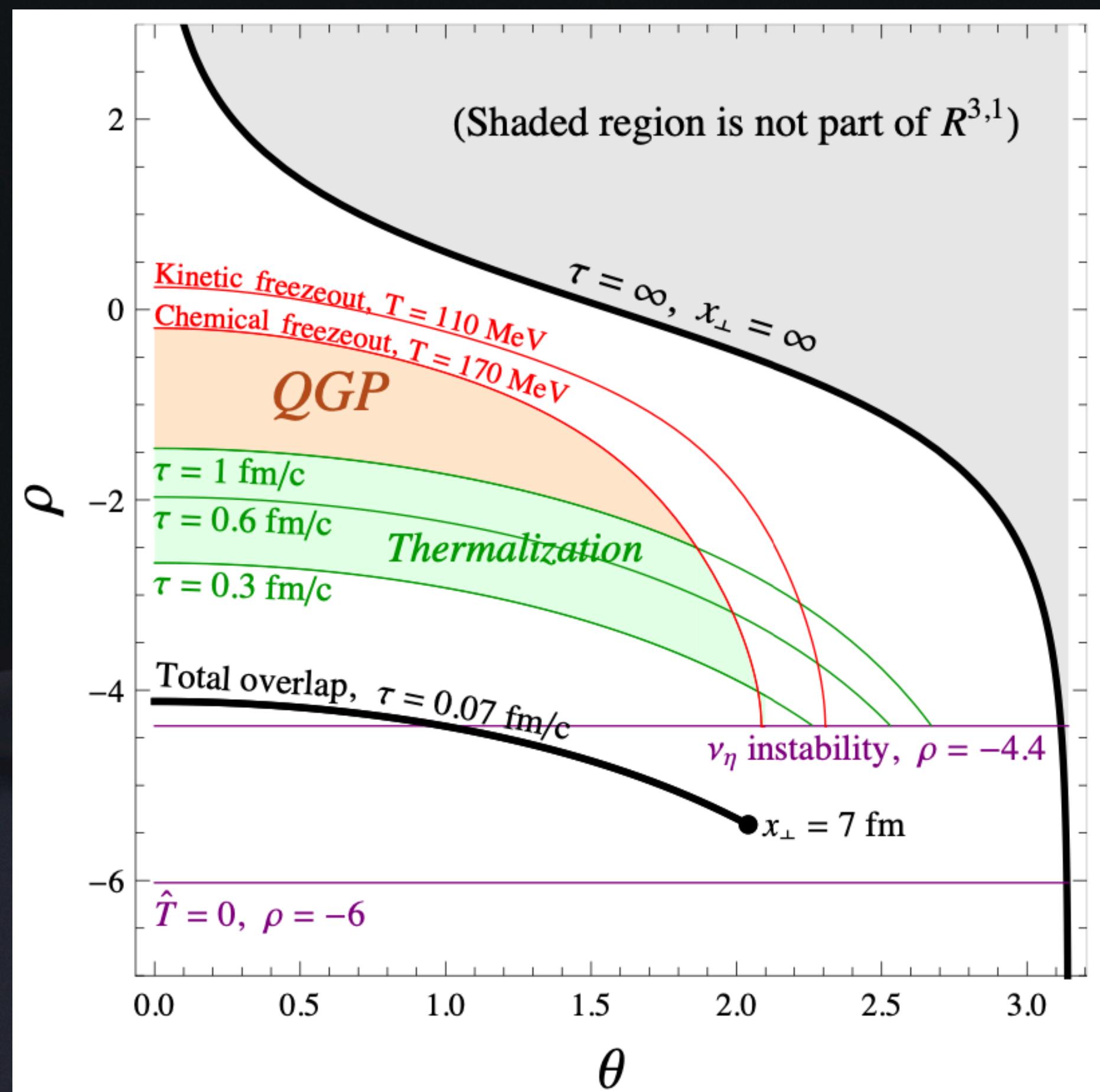


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Gubser 2010, Gubser, Yarom 2010

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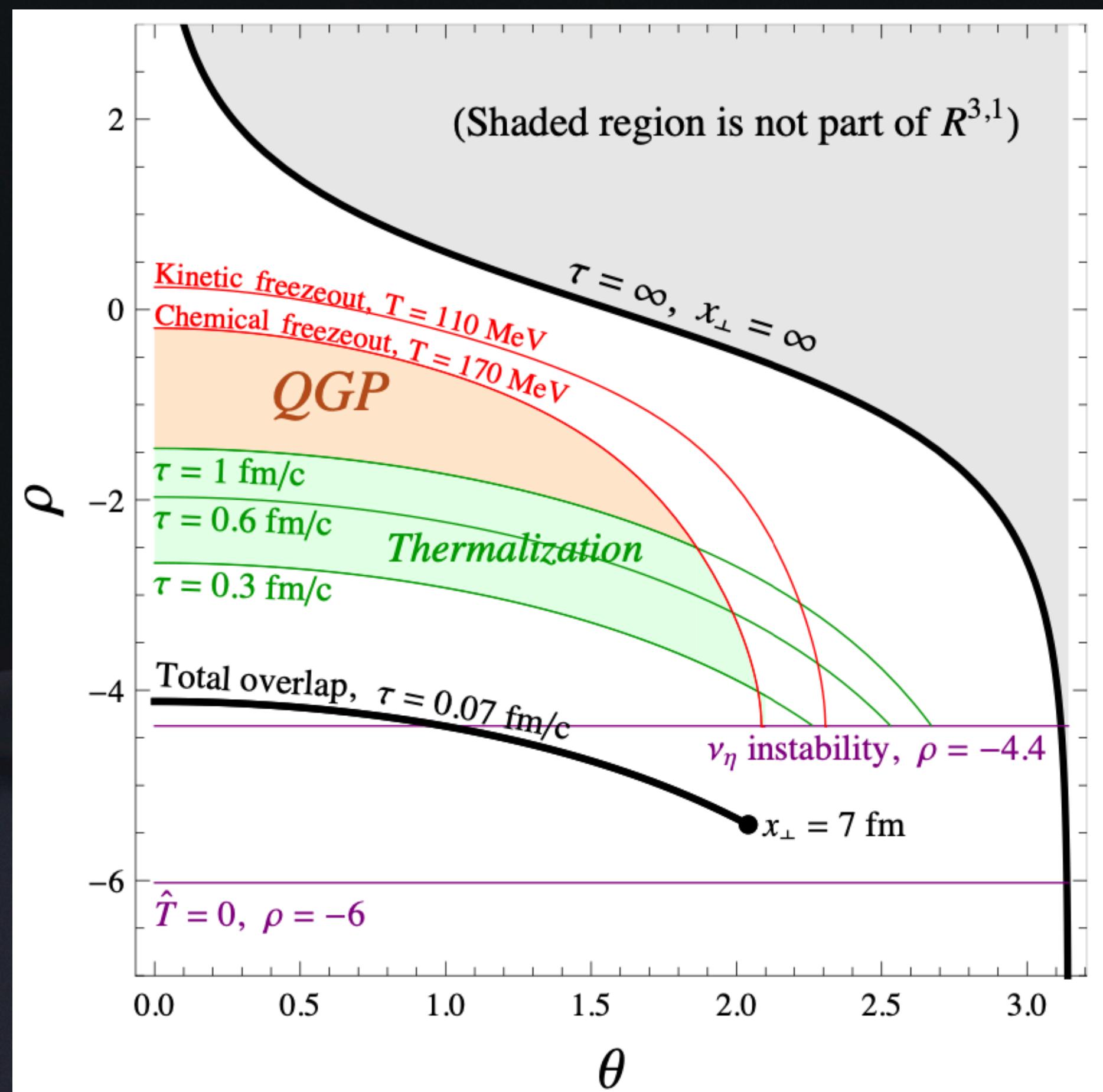
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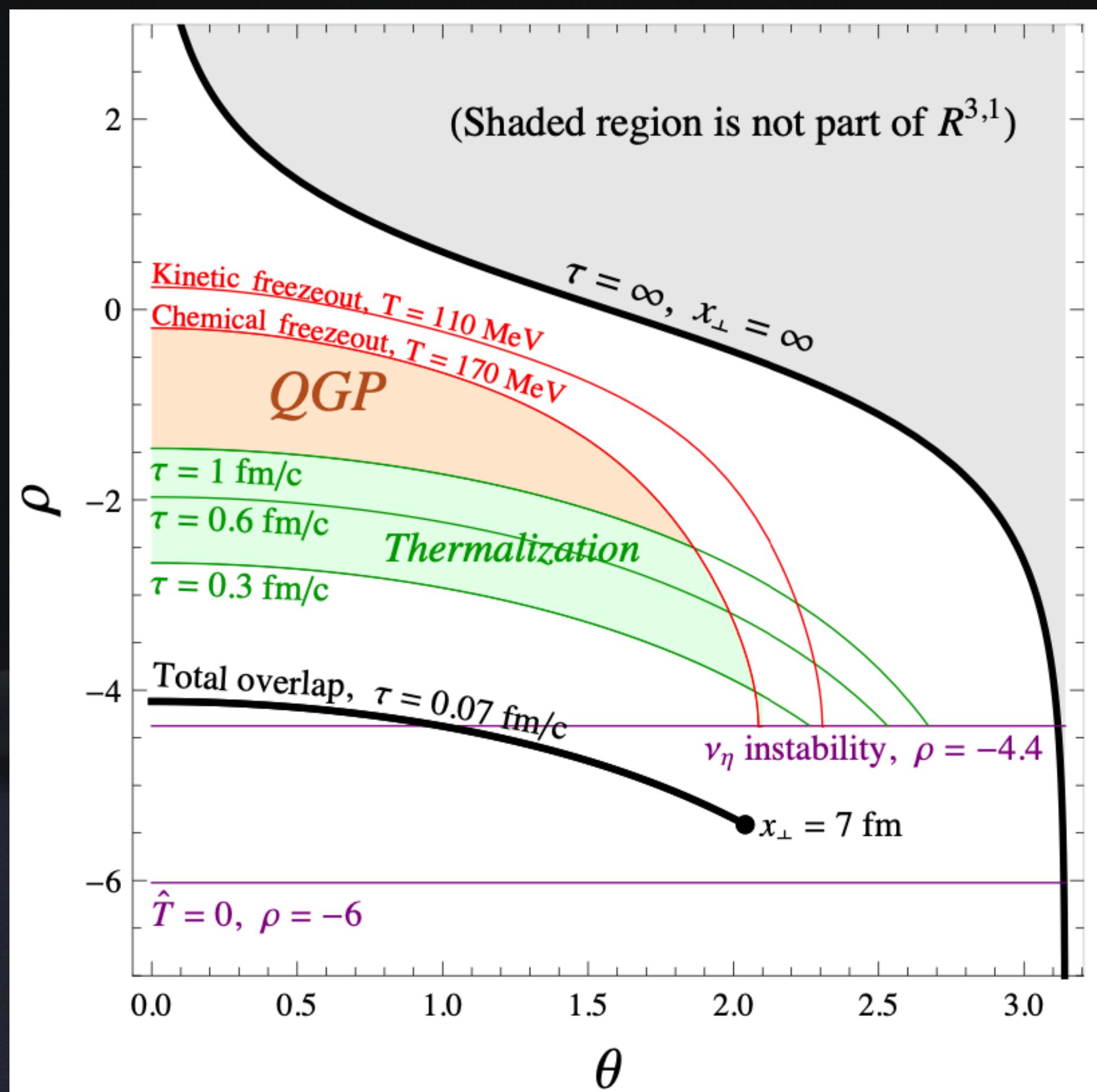
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- Boost-invariant cylindrical flow
- Back to Bjorken (plus Weyl)

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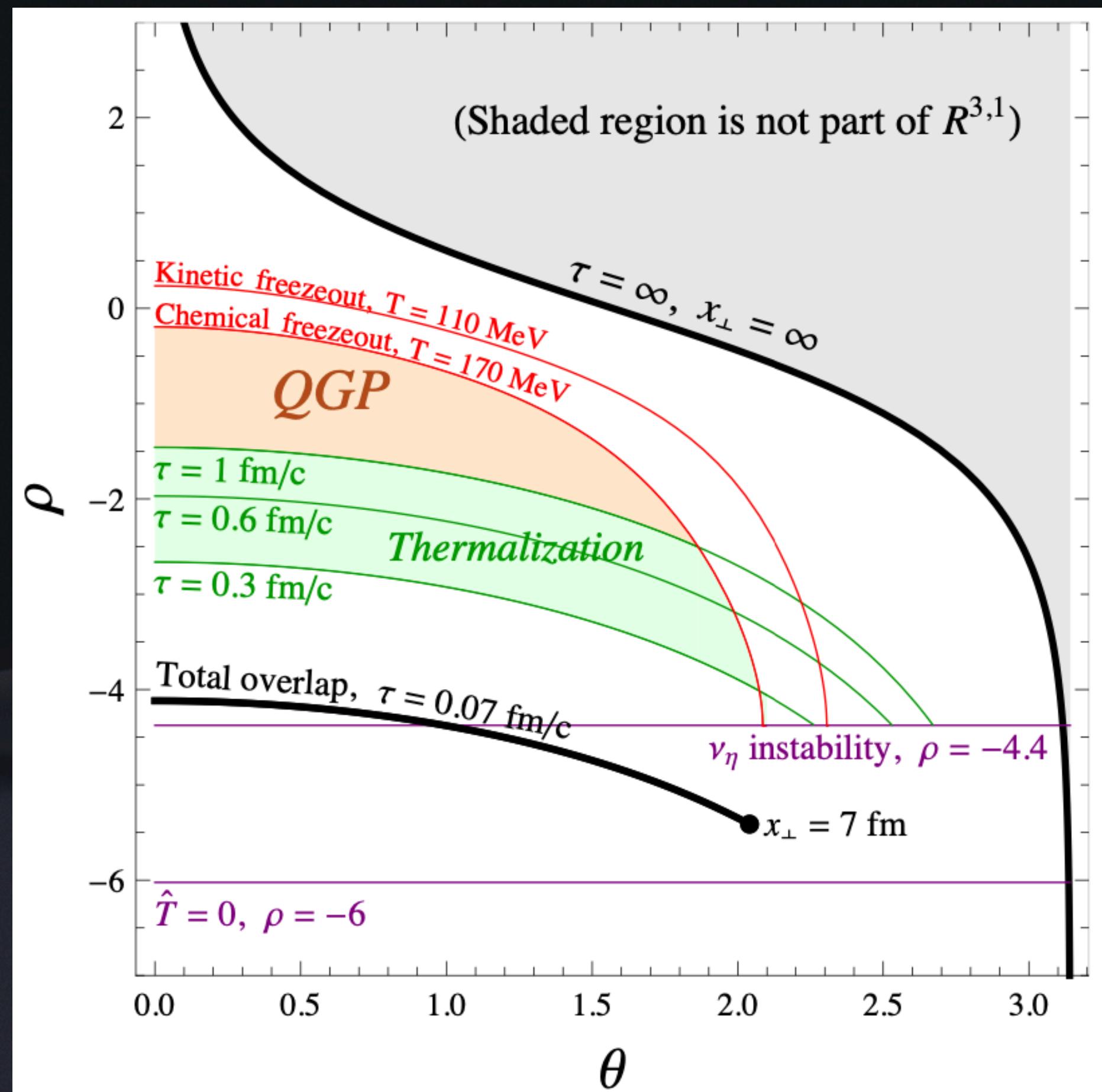
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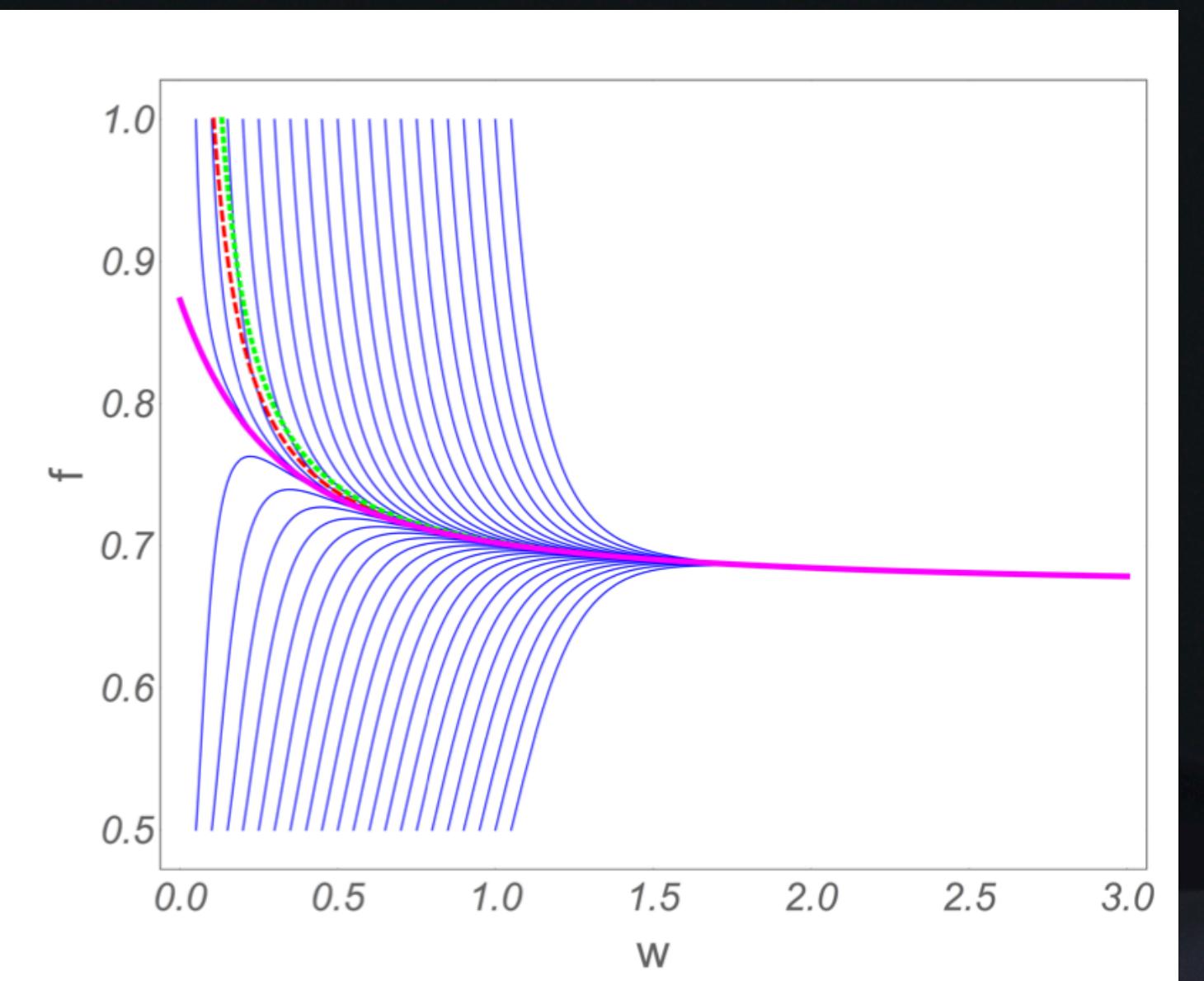
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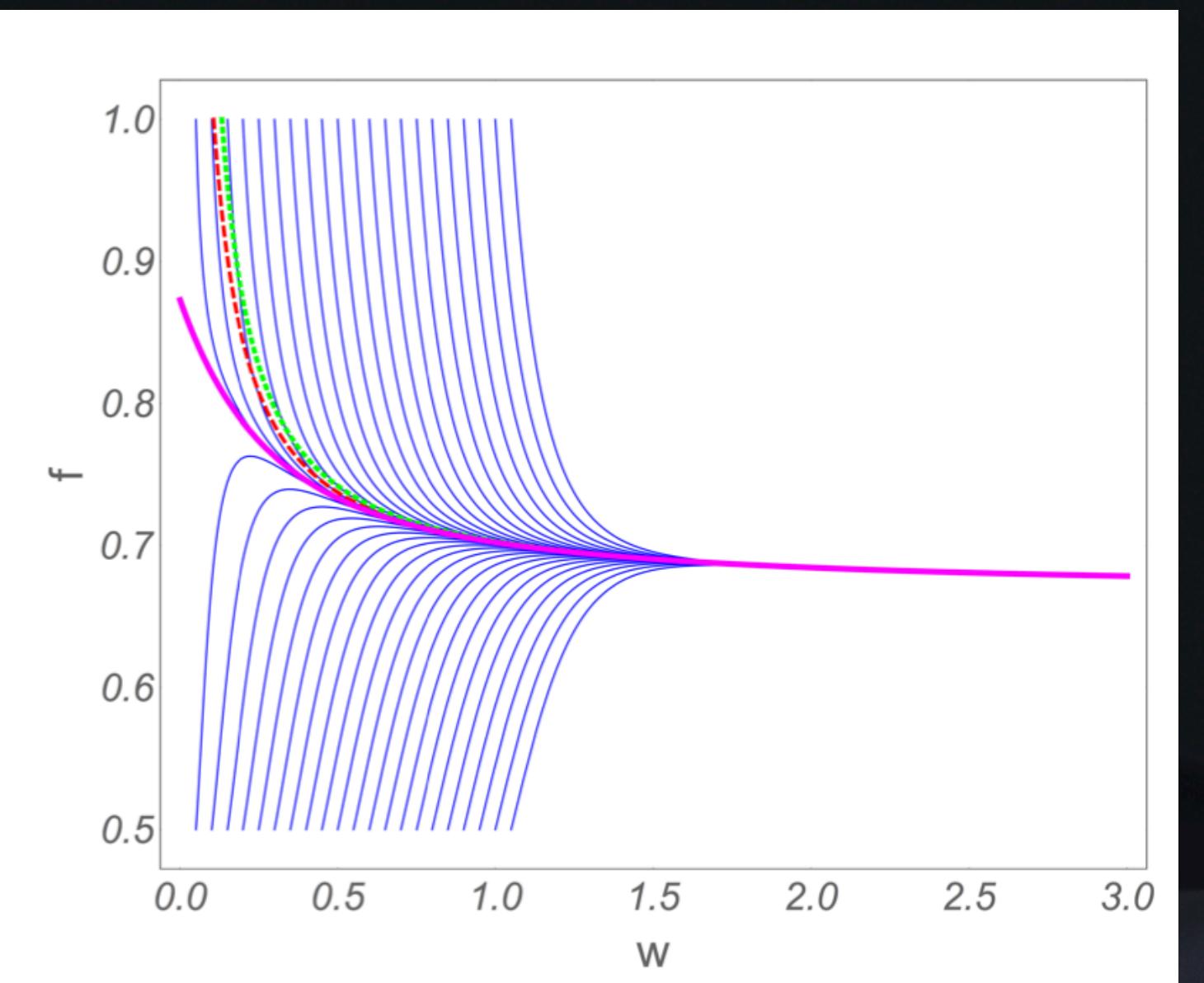
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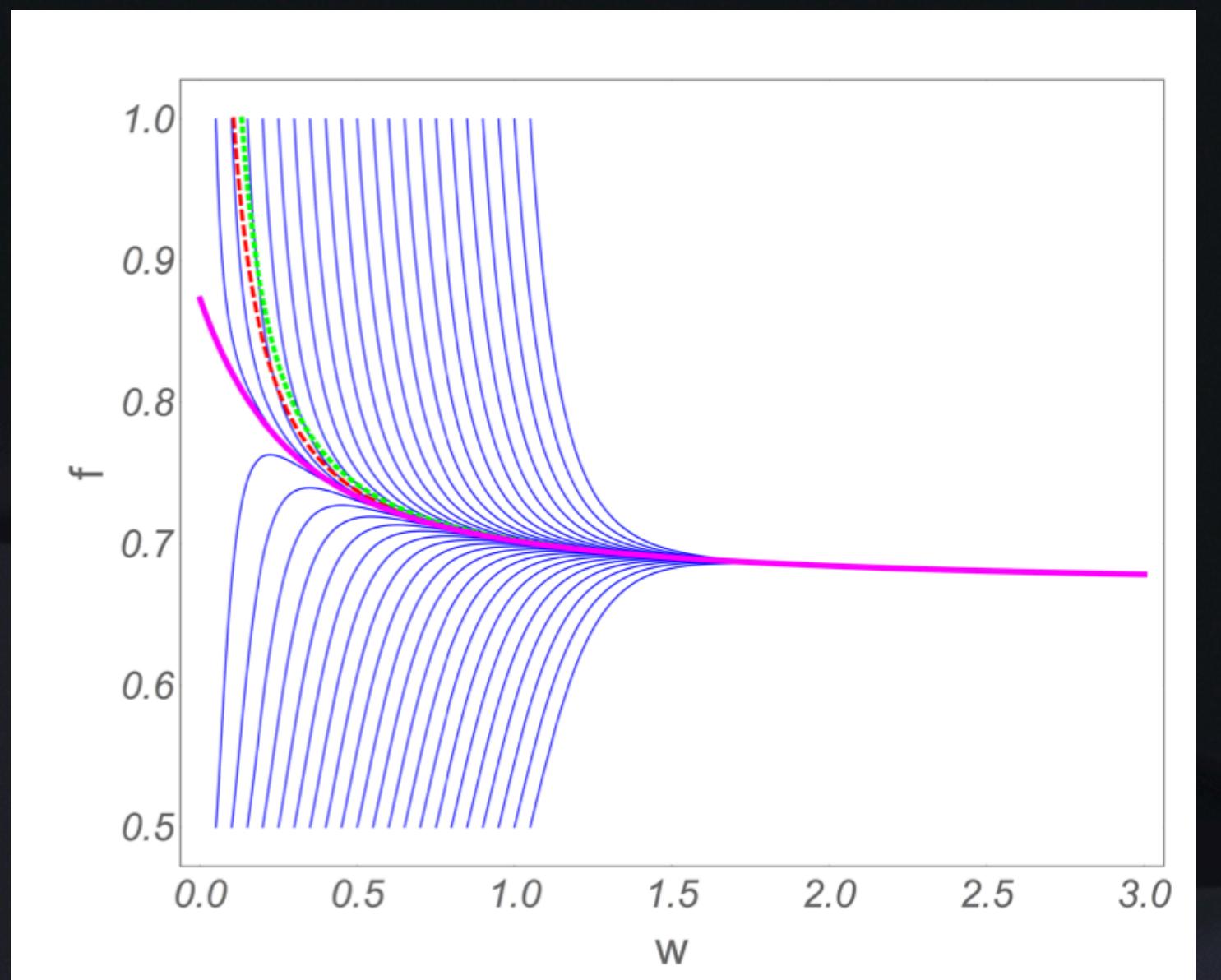
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- See that initial conditions decay rapidly to attractor curve



$$f(w) = \frac{2}{3} + \frac{4C_\eta}{9w} + \frac{8C_\eta C_{\tau\Pi}}{27w^2} + O\left(\frac{1}{w^3}\right).$$

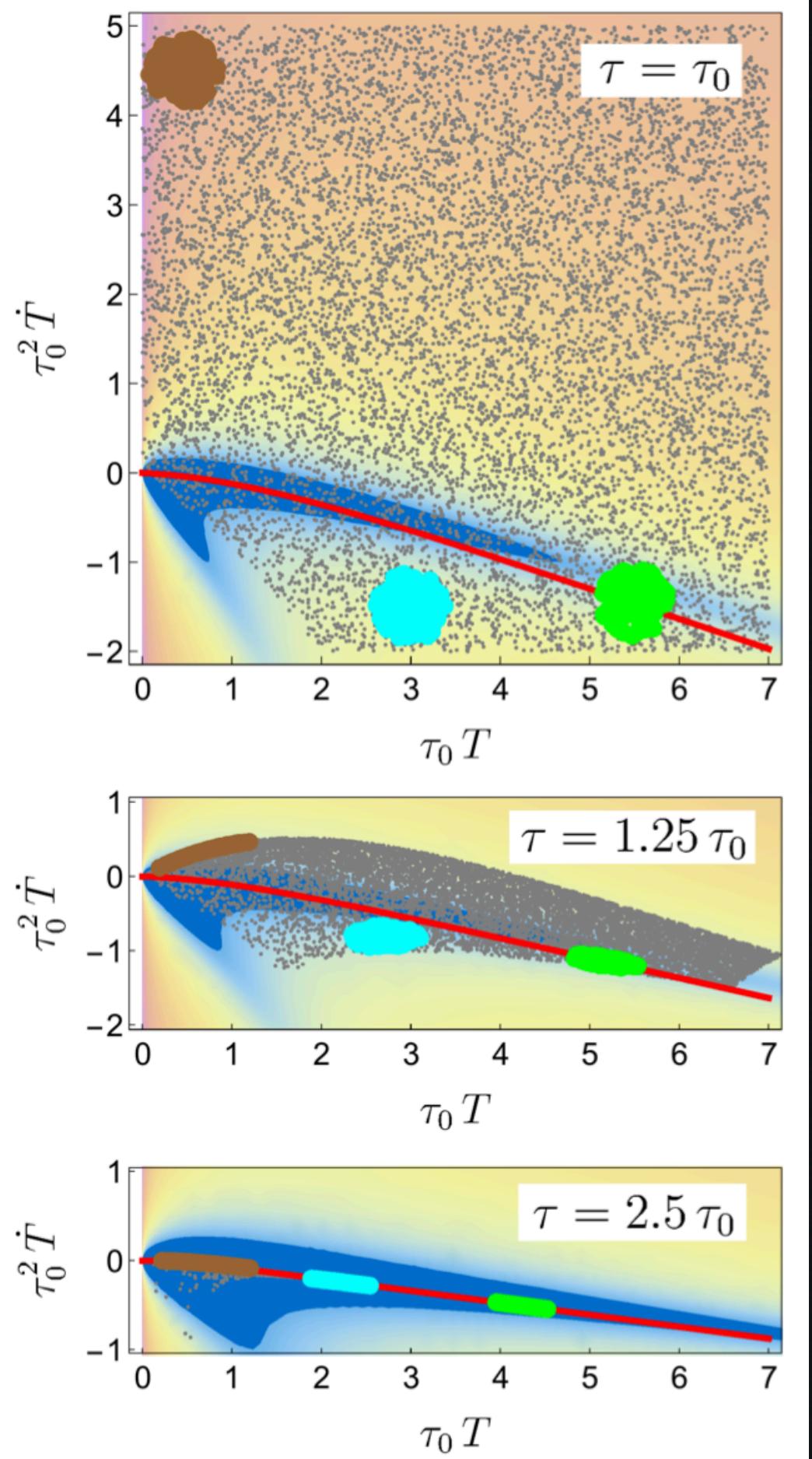
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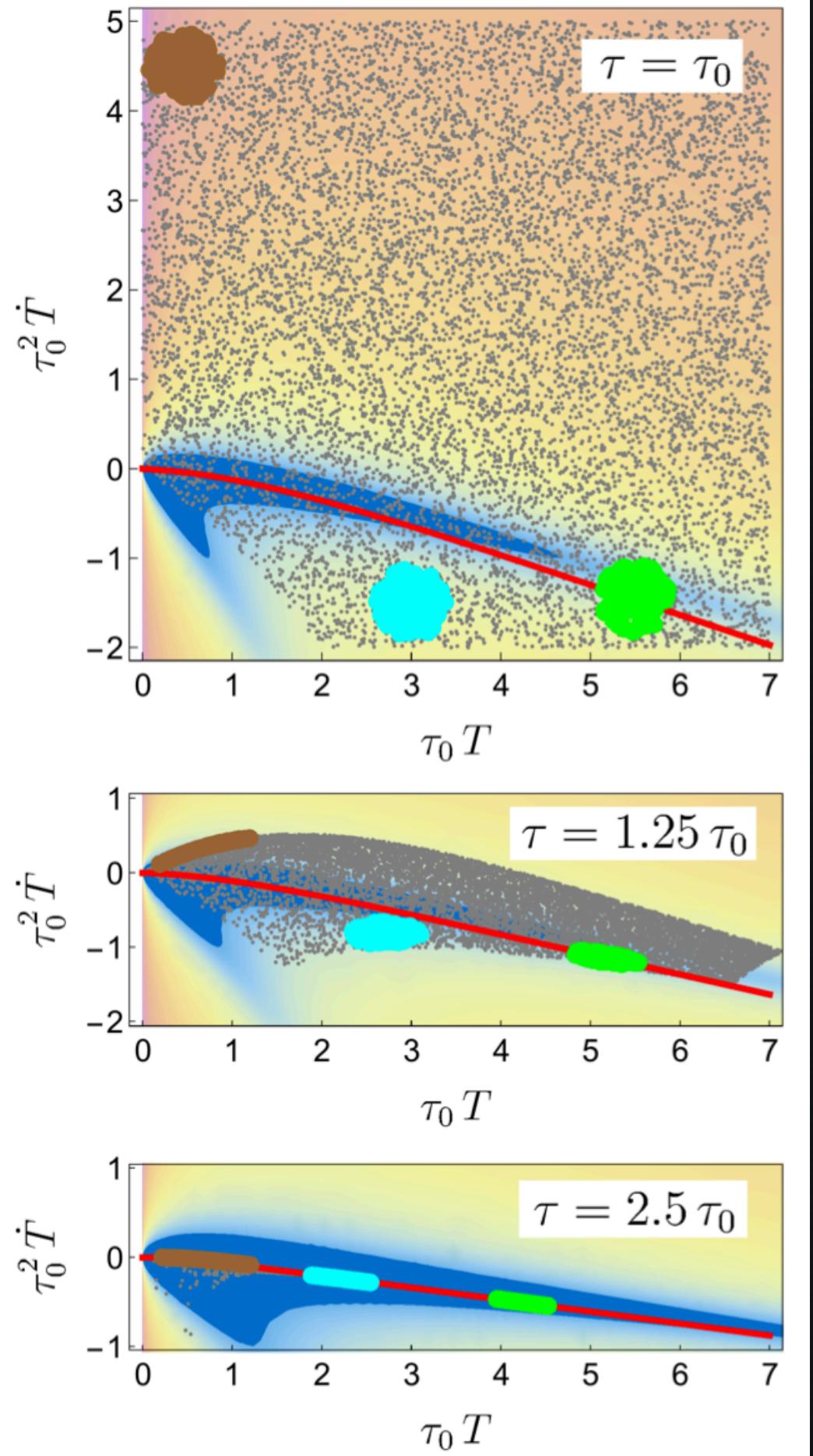
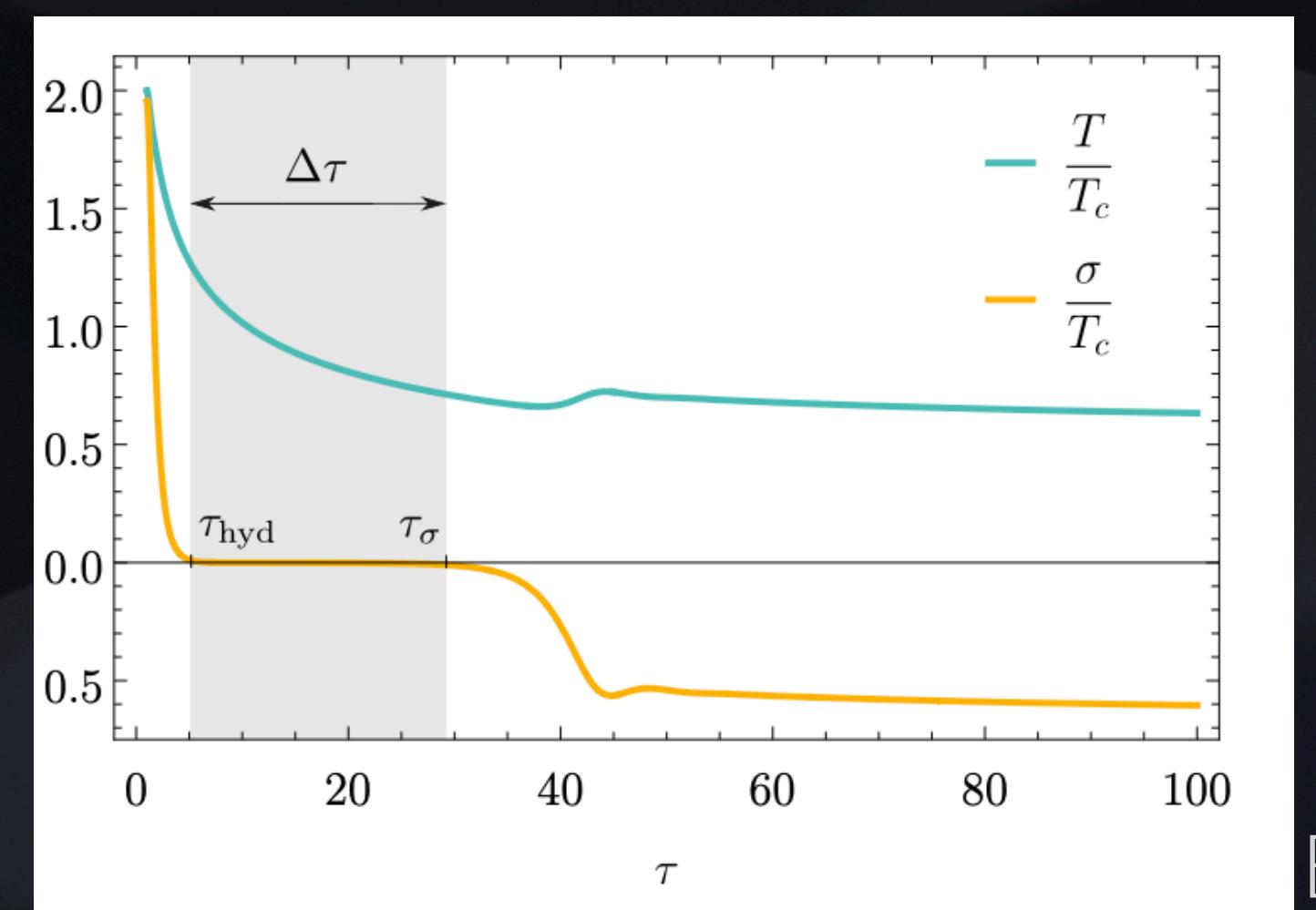
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Heller, Jefferson, Spałinski,
Svensson 2020

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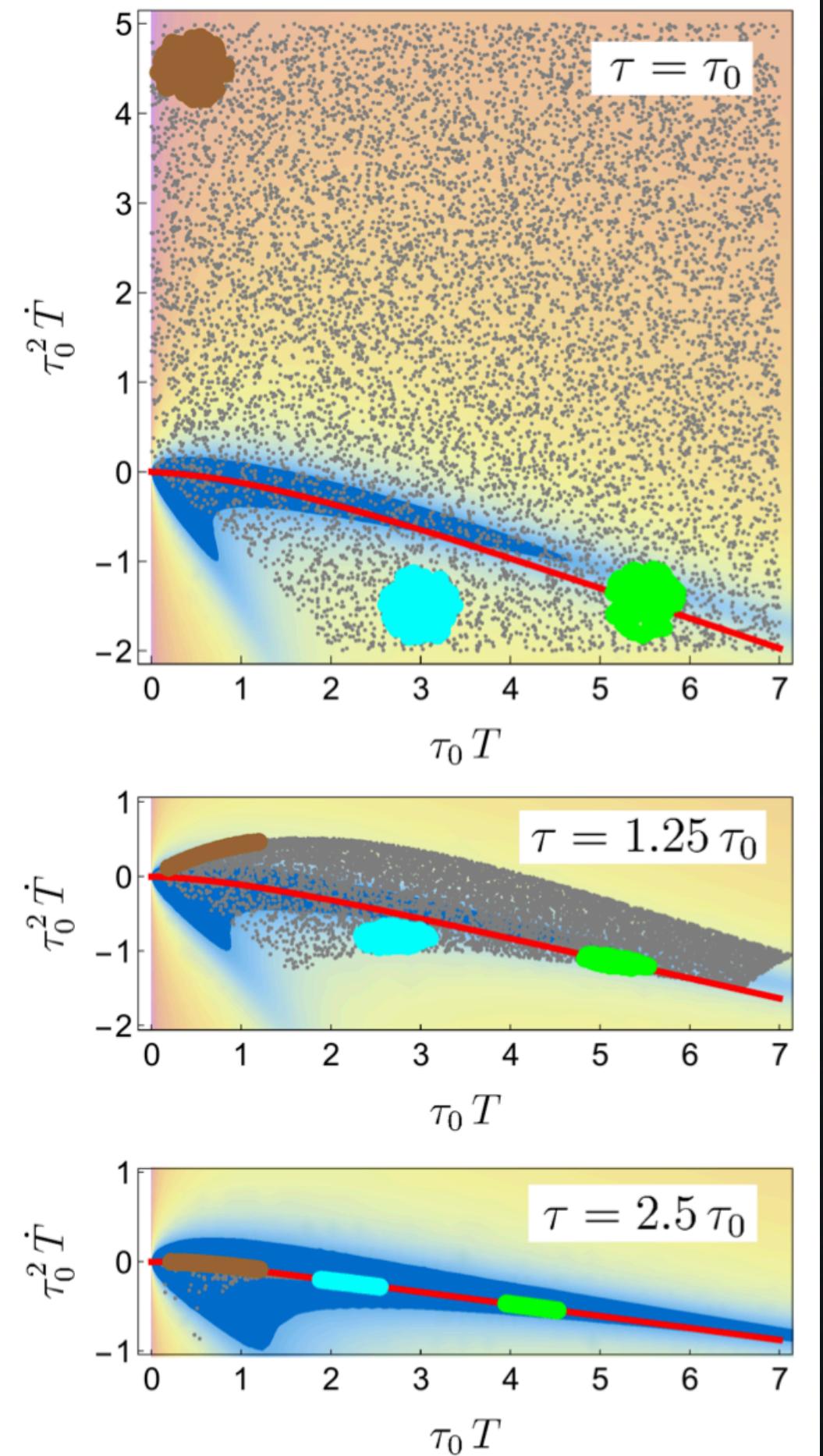
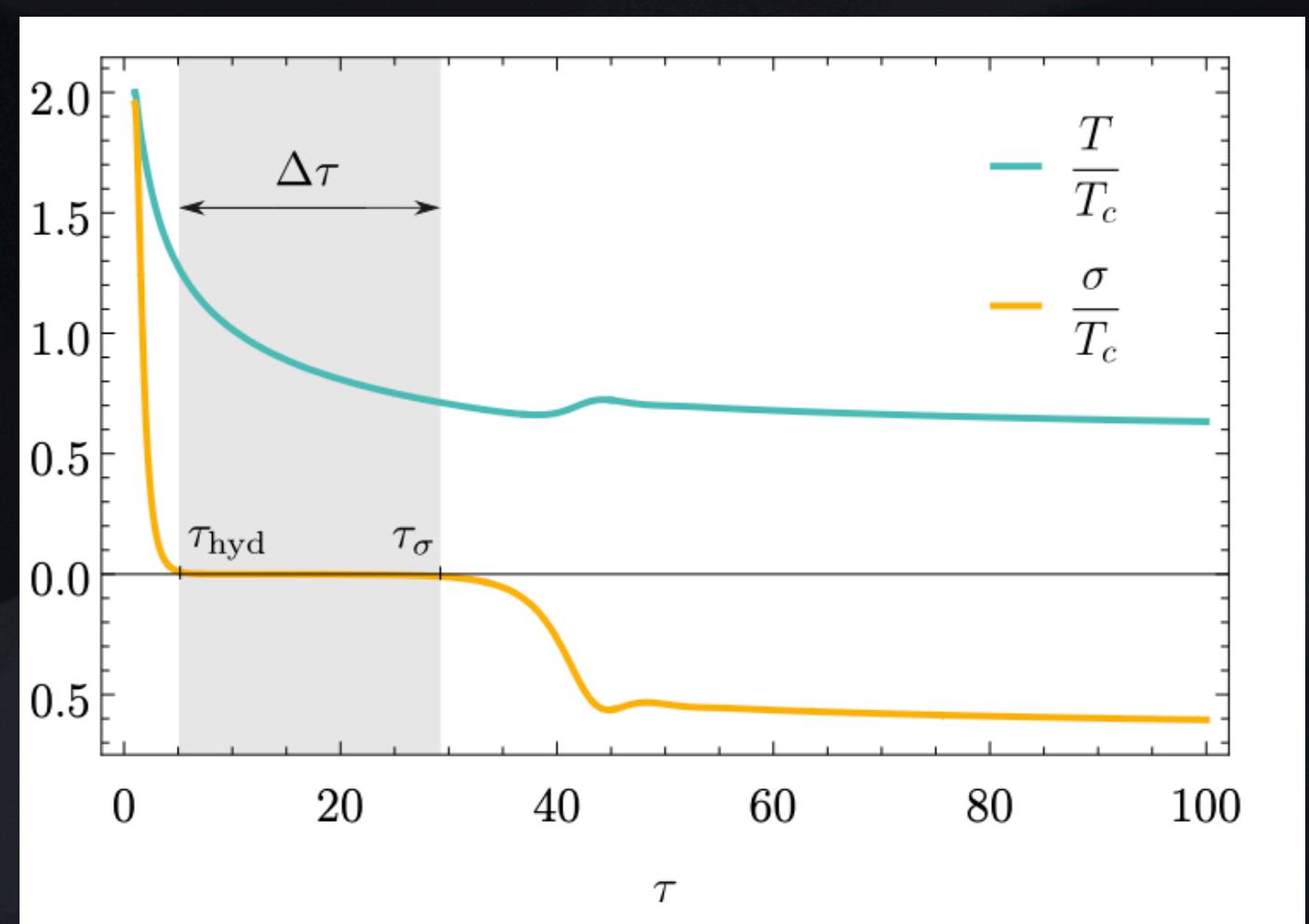
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- Attractor time, see T. Mitra's talk Thurs. 16:00



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- See also I. Aniceto's talk Tues. 10:00



Heller, Jefferson, Spałinski,
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Resumming the gradient expansion



Resumming the gradient expansion

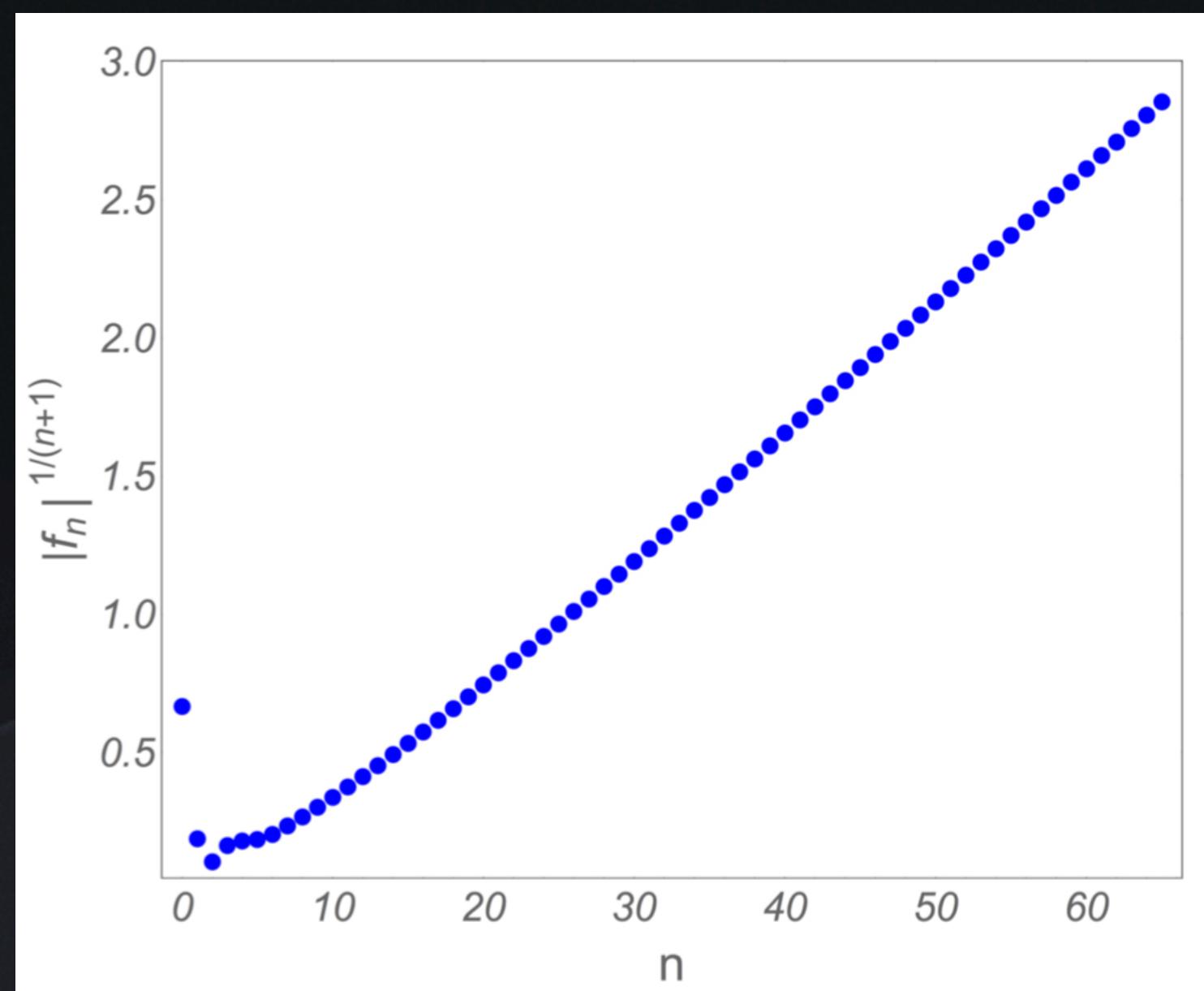
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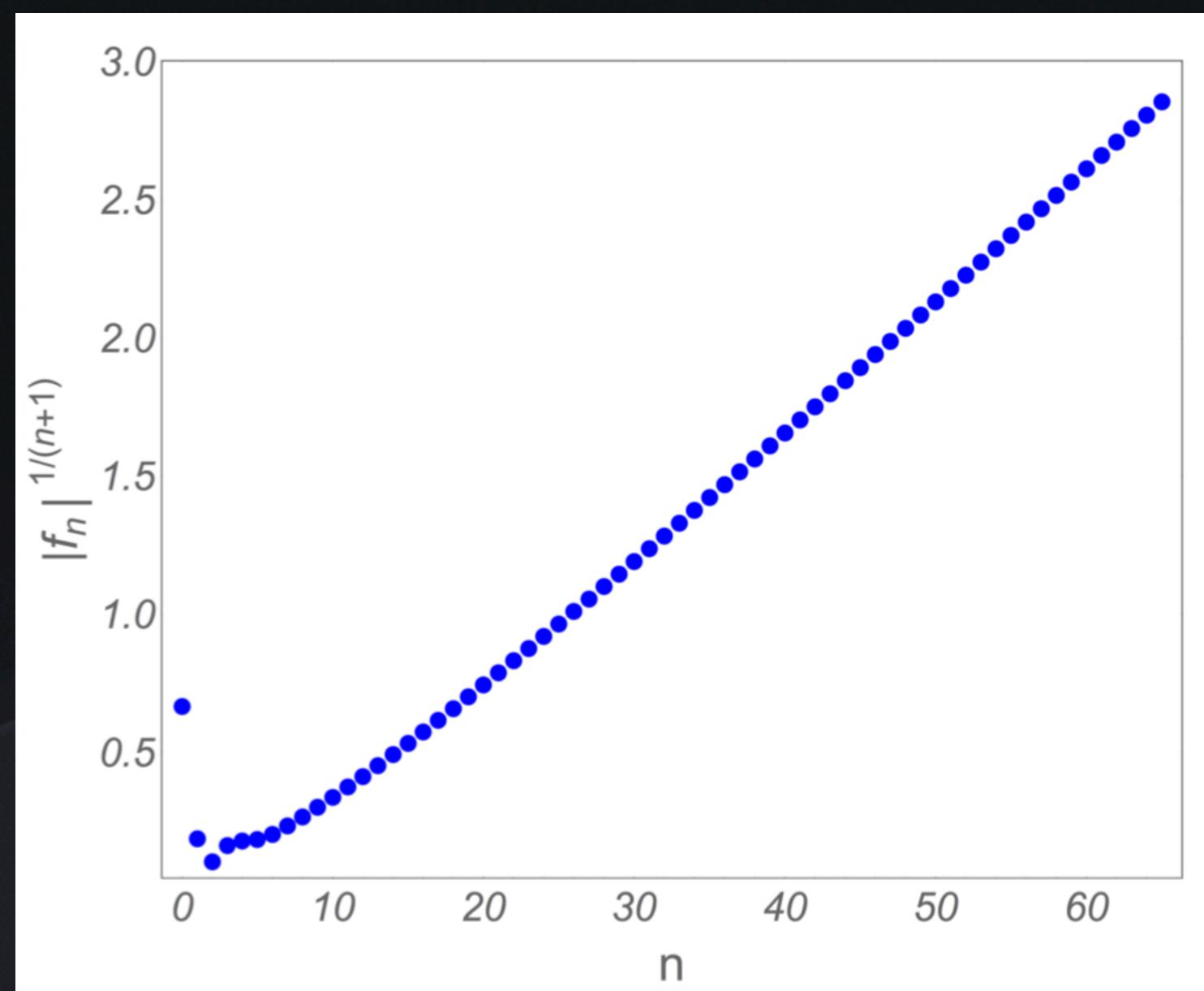
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Heller, Spaliński 2015, Heller, Janik, Witaszczyk
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Svensson, Withers 2022...

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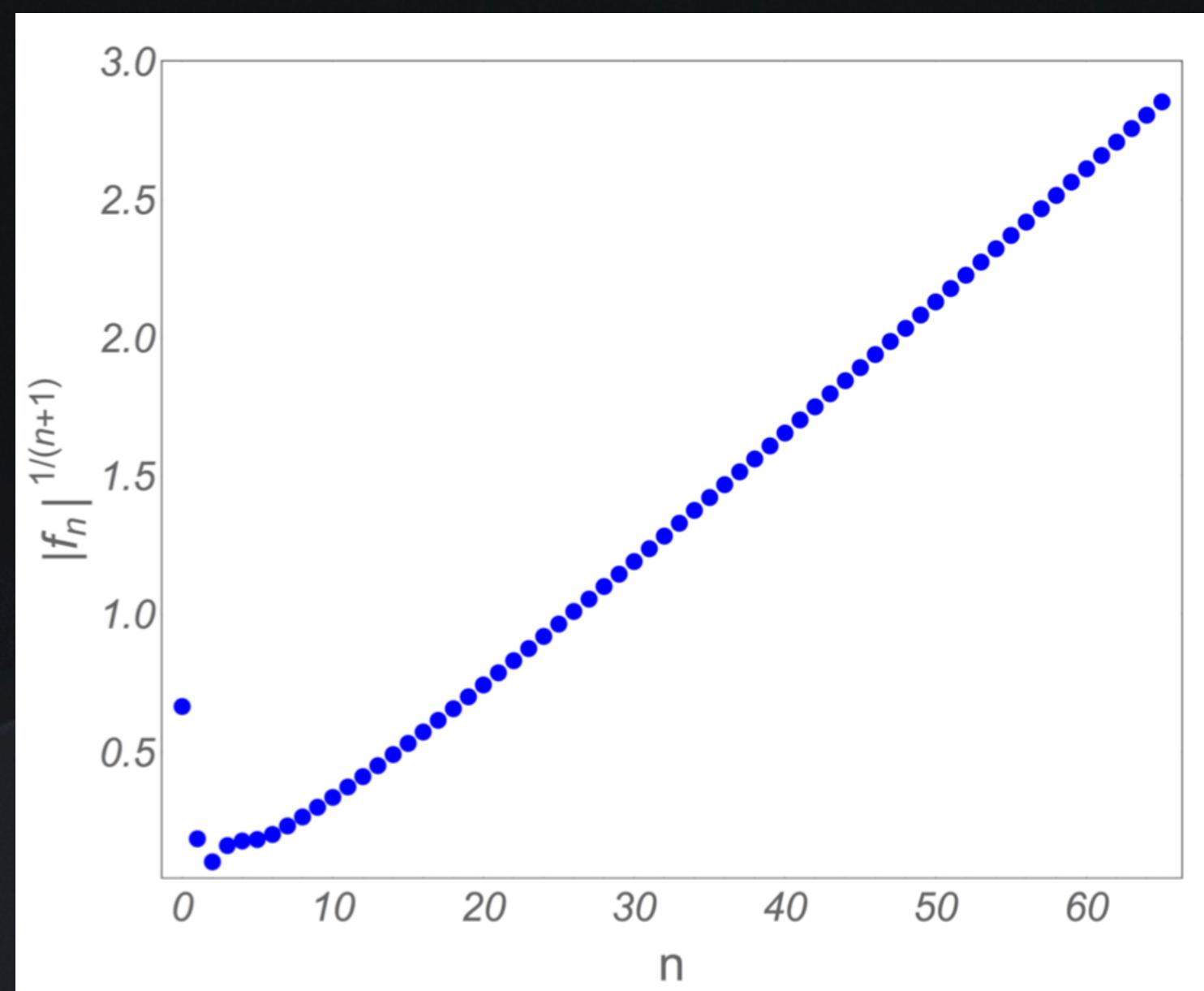
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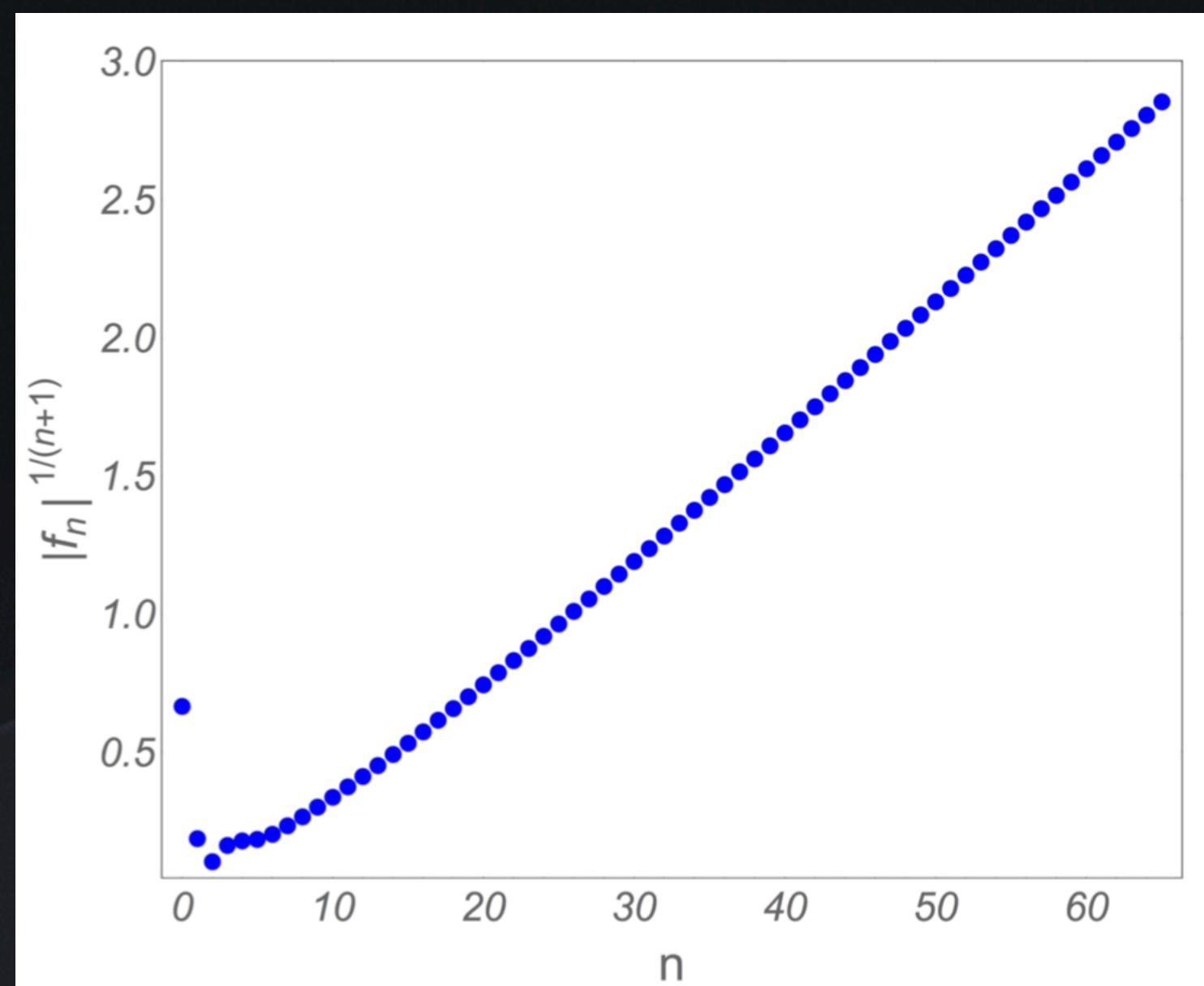


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Resumming the gradient expansion

See I. Aniceto's talk Tues. 10:00

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- Perspective: attractor as non-perturbative resummed object
- Diagnostic tools: Borel resummation, Padé approximation, etc.
- Hydro as a trans-series



$$f(w) = \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} c^m \Omega(w)^m \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} a_{m,n} w^{-n}$$

$$\Omega \equiv w^{-\gamma} \exp(-w\xi_0)$$

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Attractors are everywhere

Hydro via MIS/BRSSS

Kinetic theory

Holography

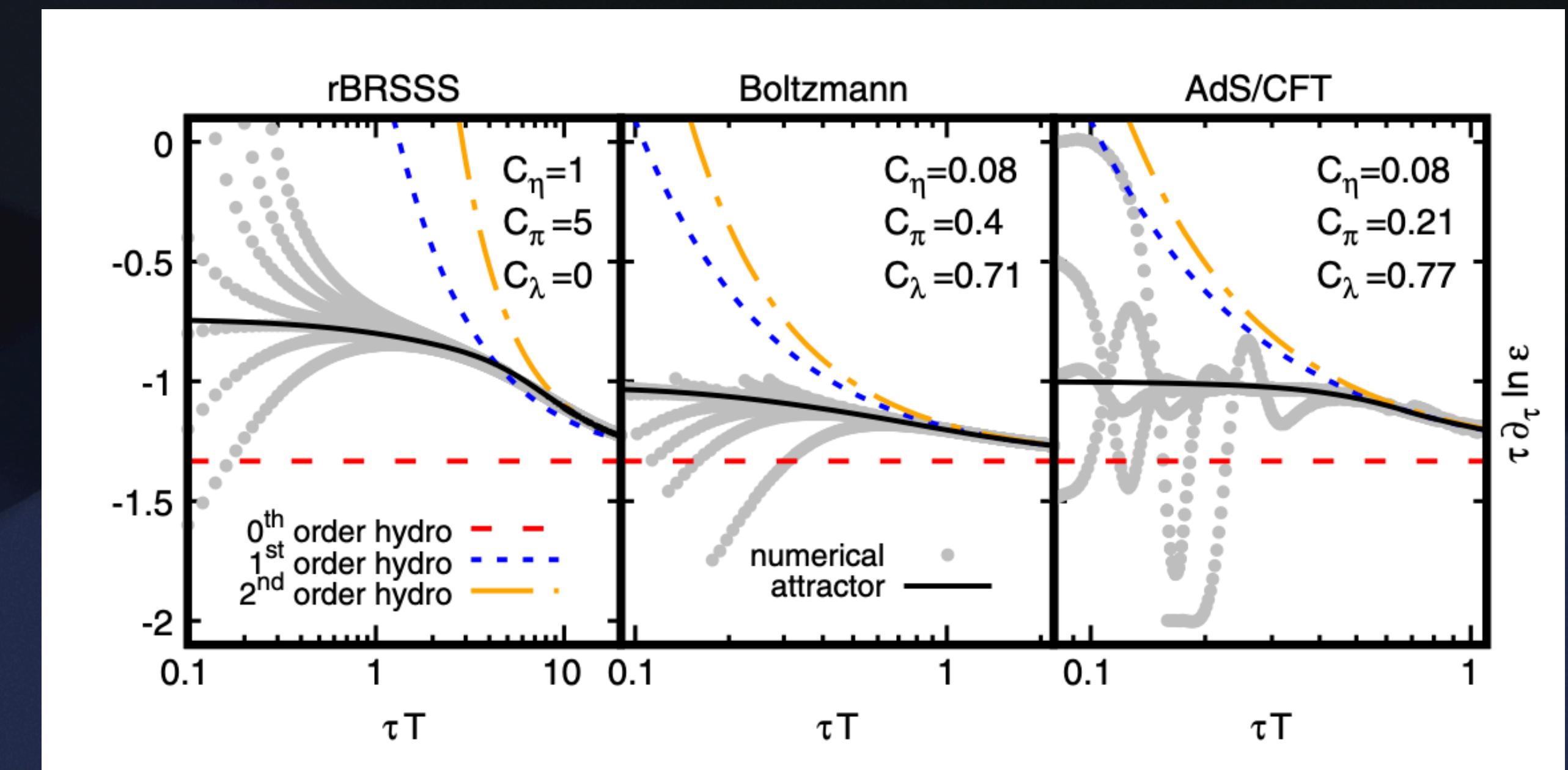
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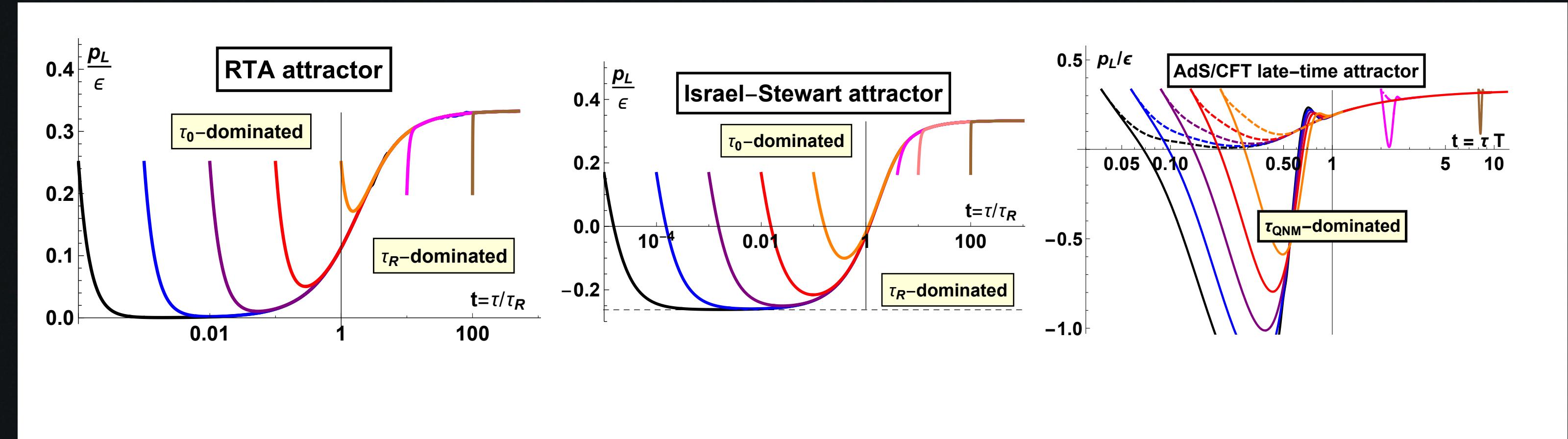
Romatschke 2018

Hydro via MIS/BRSSS

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Kurkela, van der Schee, Wiedemann, Wu 2019

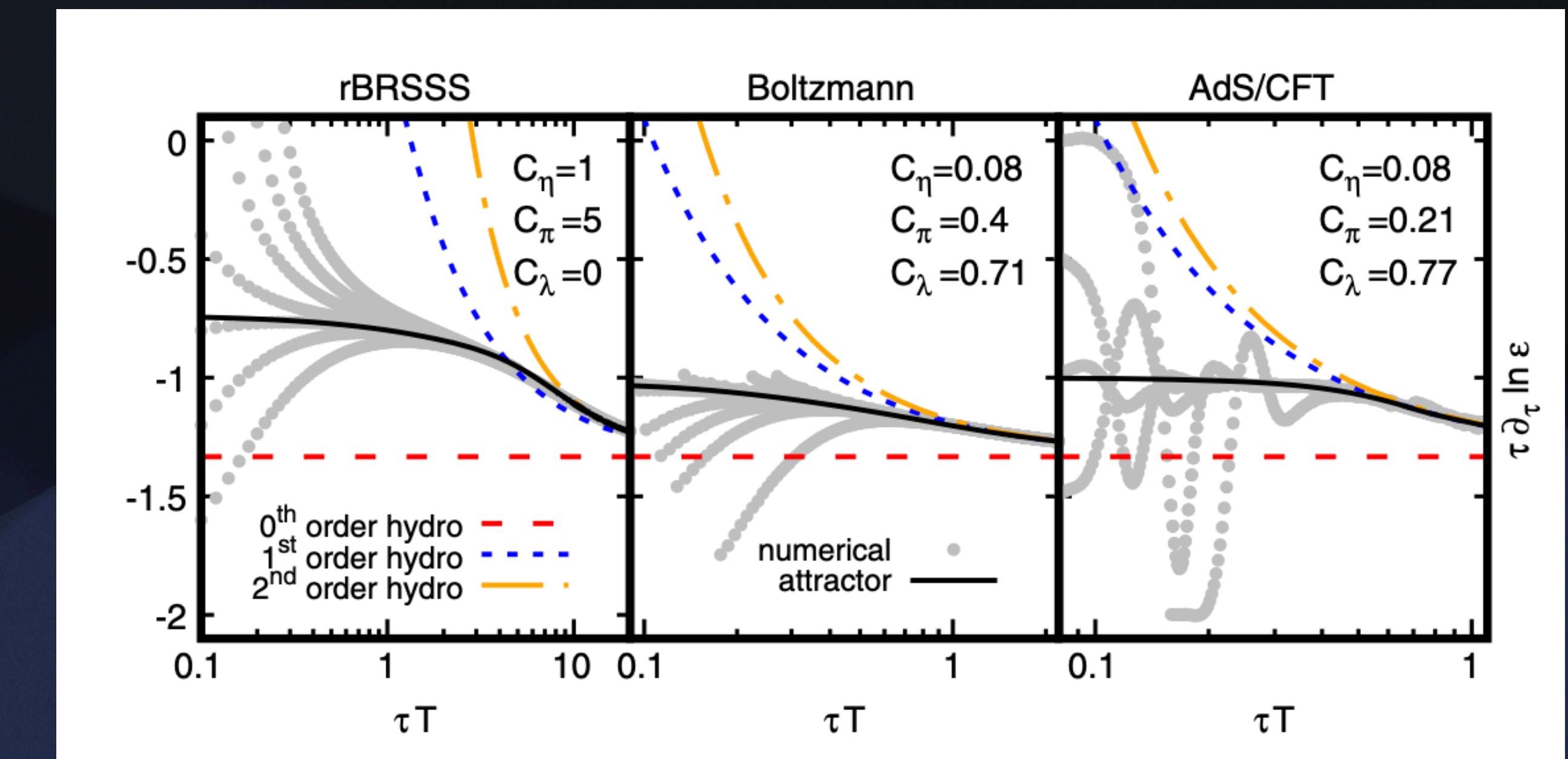
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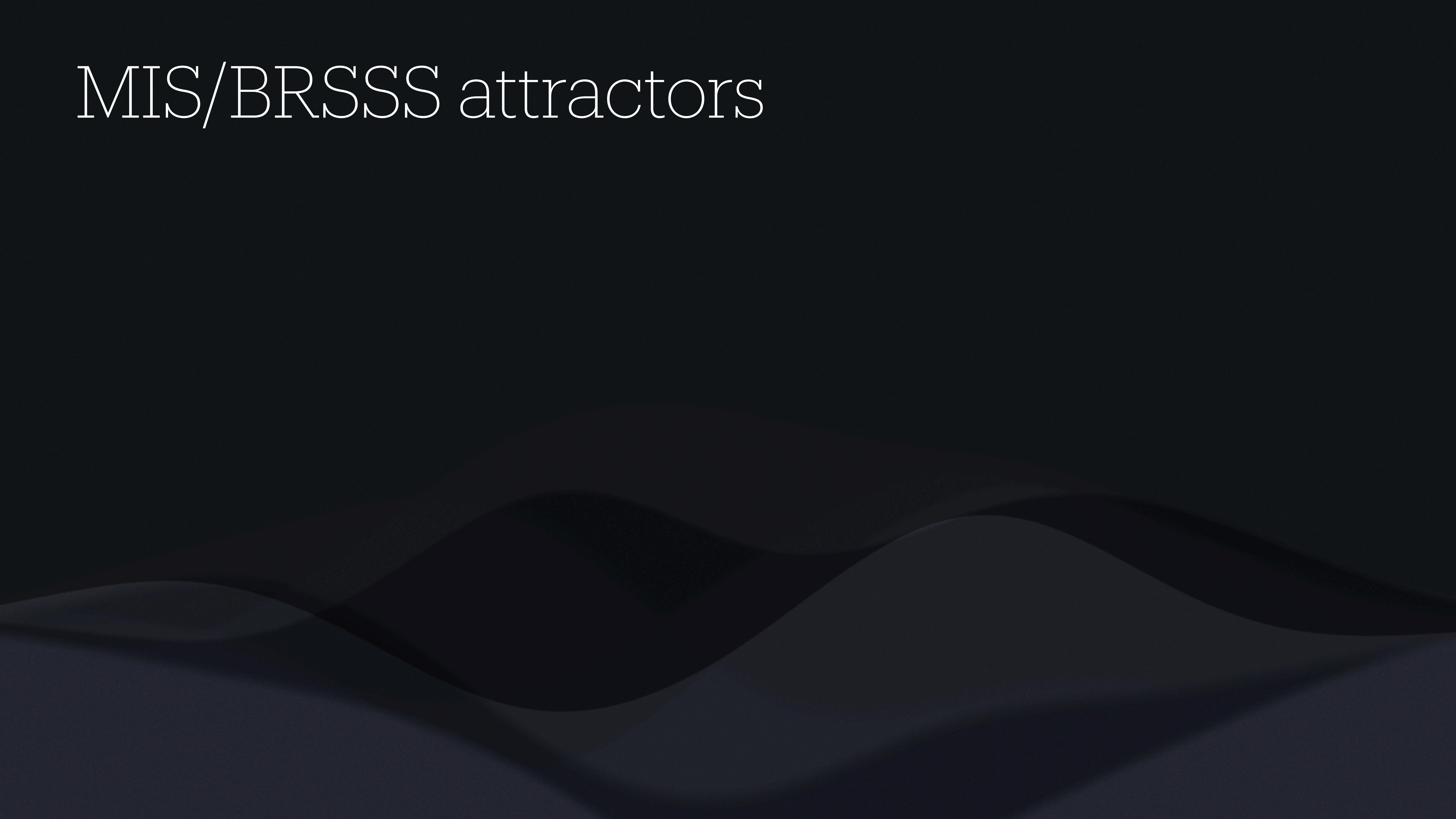
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MIS/BRSSS attractors

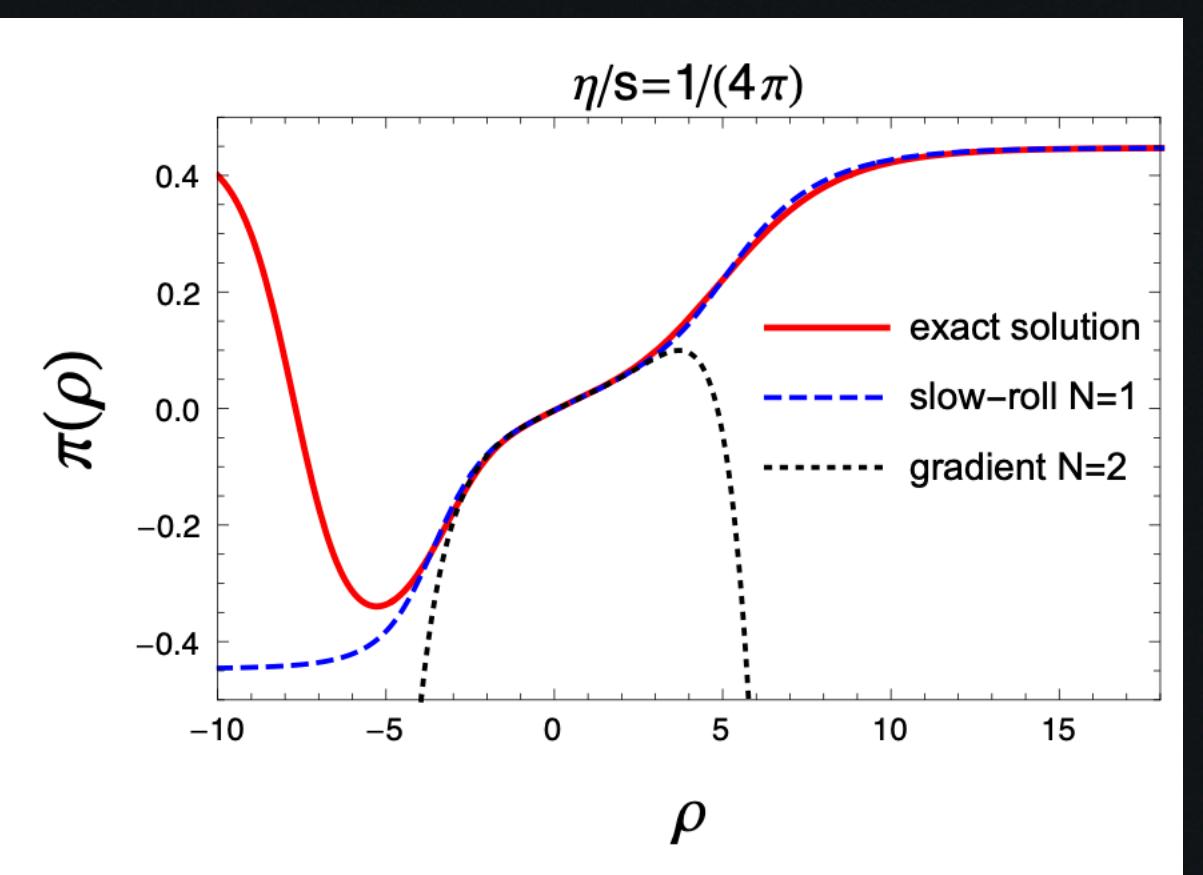
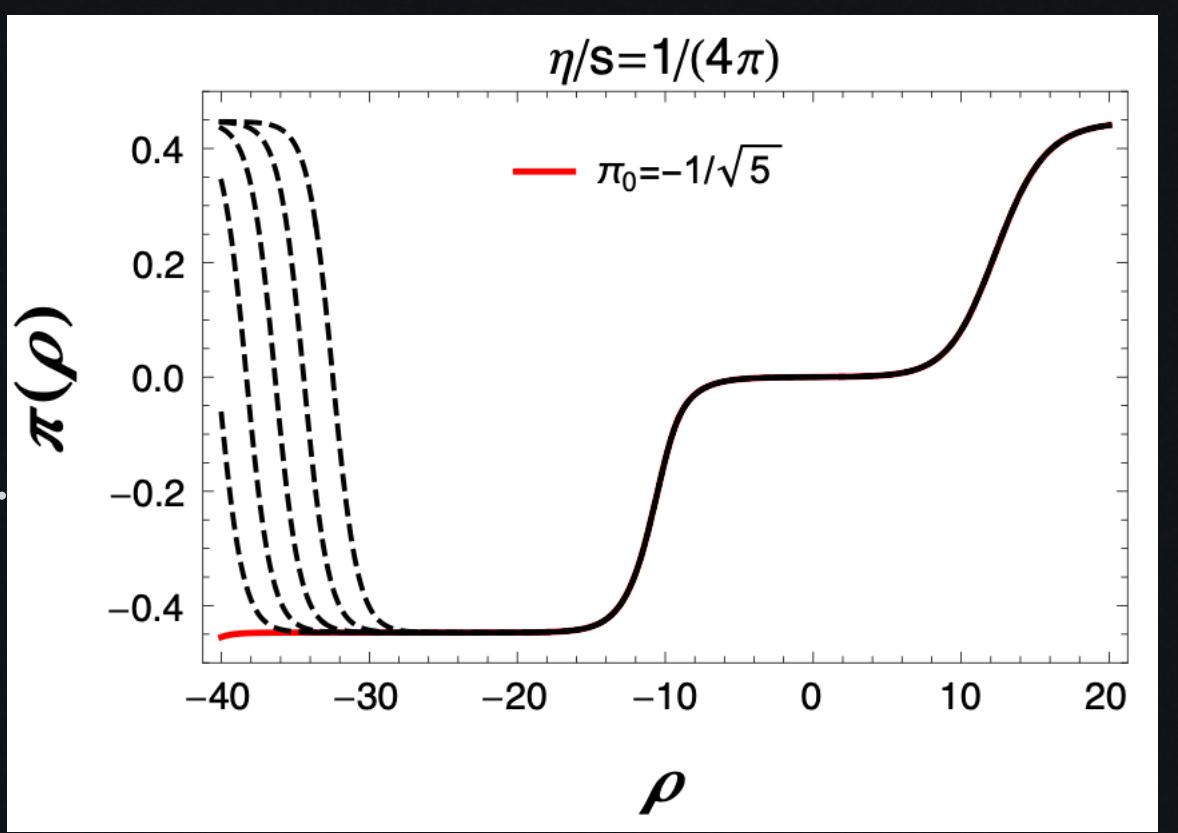


MIS/BRSSS attractors

- Benchmarking hydro expansions via attractor S. Jaiswal, Chattopadhyay, A. Jaiswal, Pal, Heinz, 2019

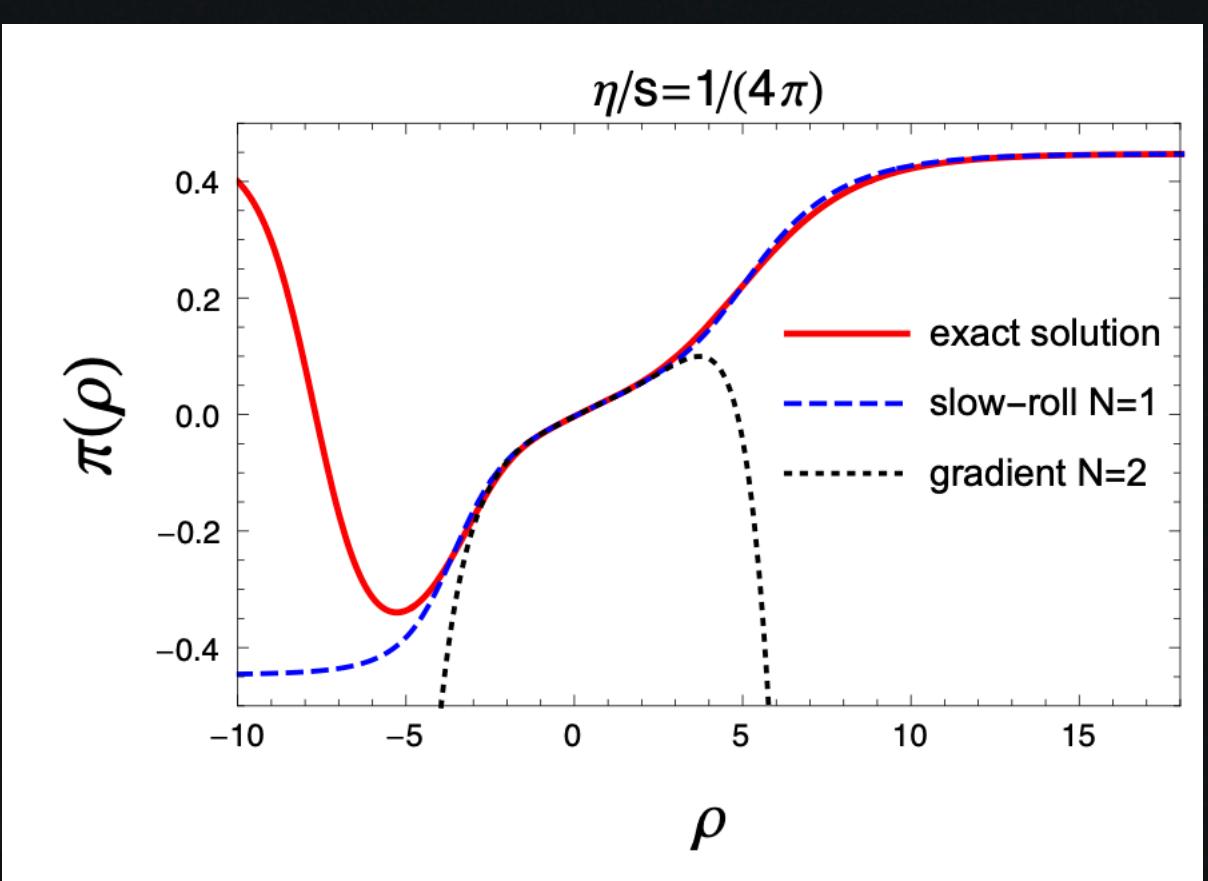
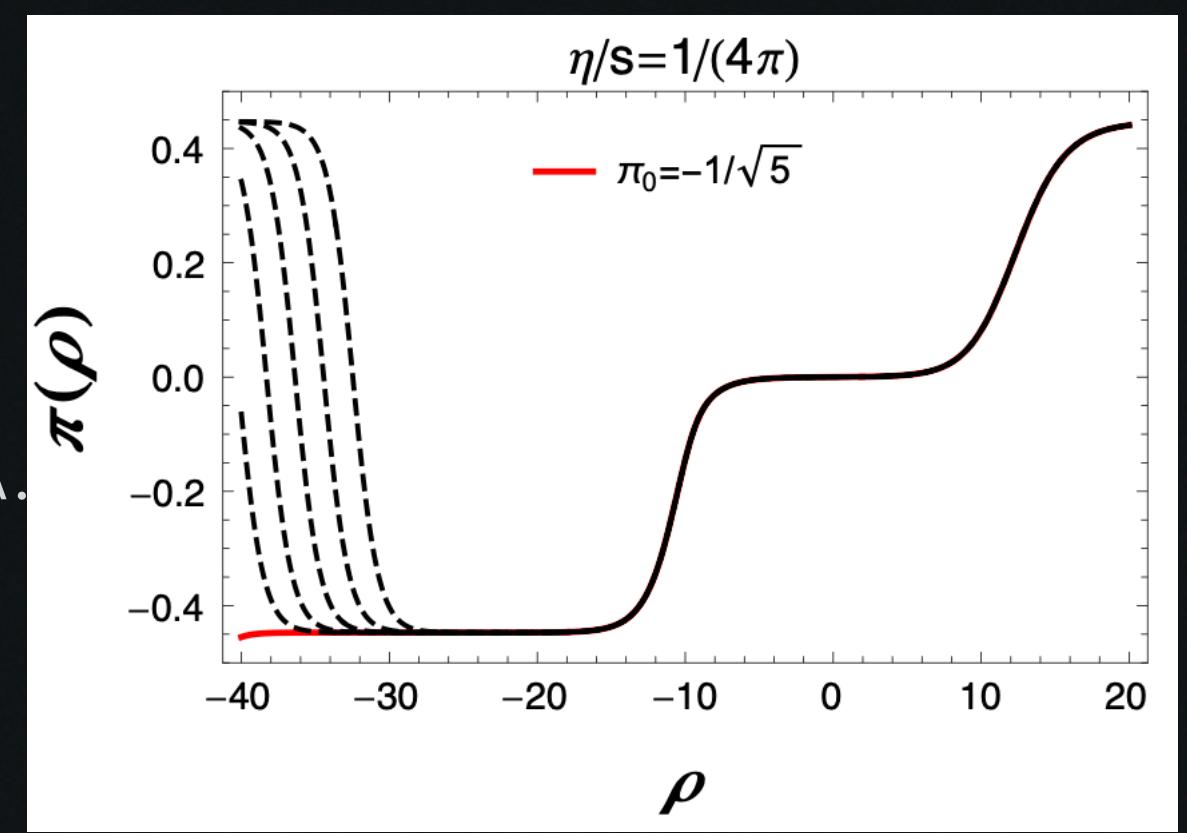
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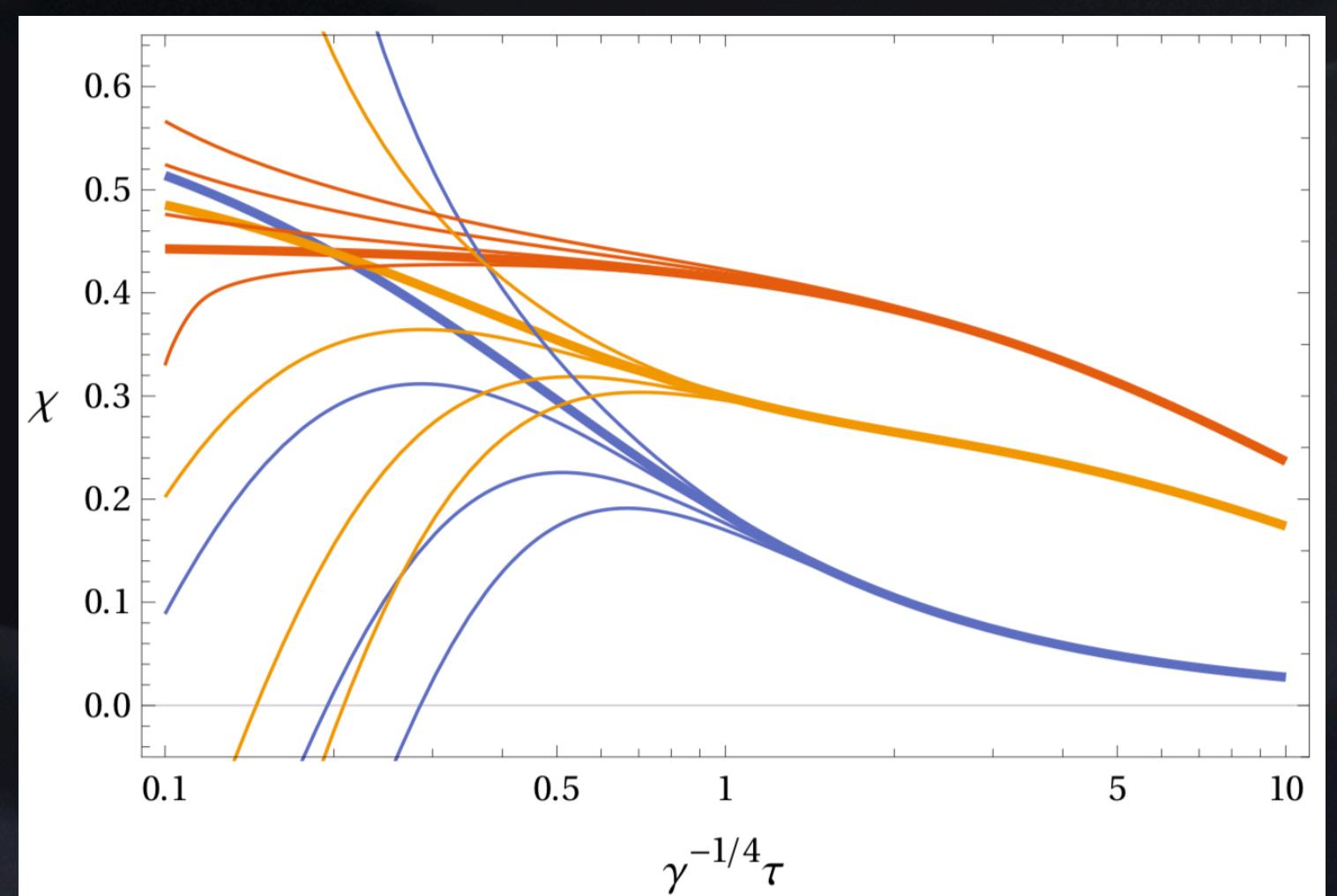
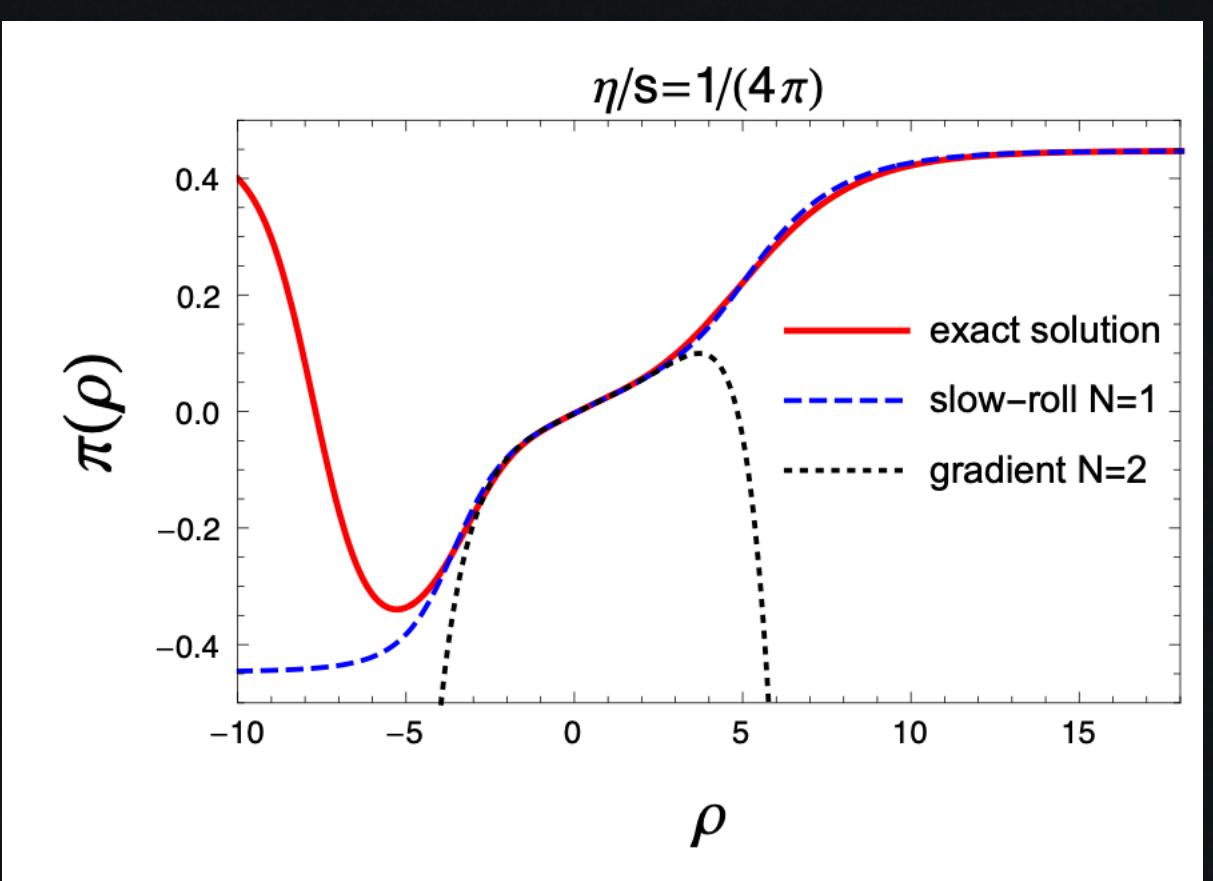
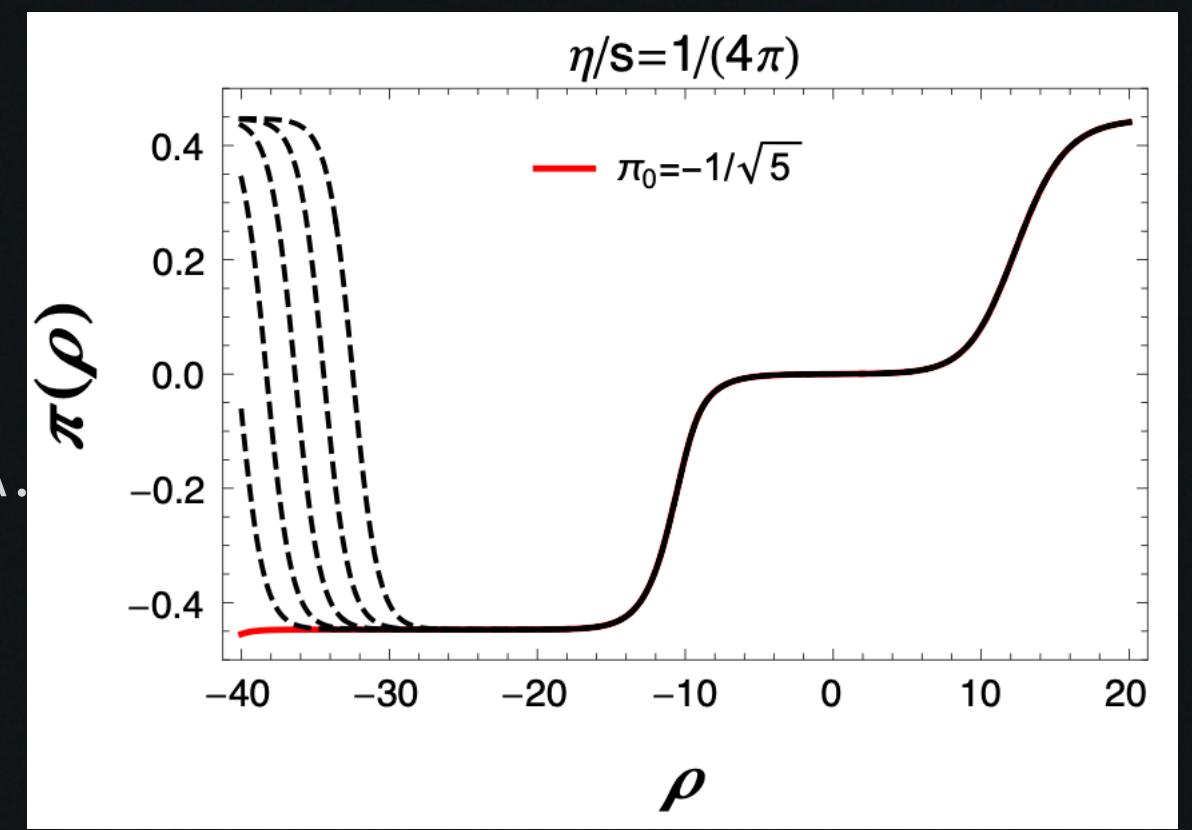
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S. Jaiswal, Chattopadhyay, A.
Jaiswal, Pal, Heinz, 2019

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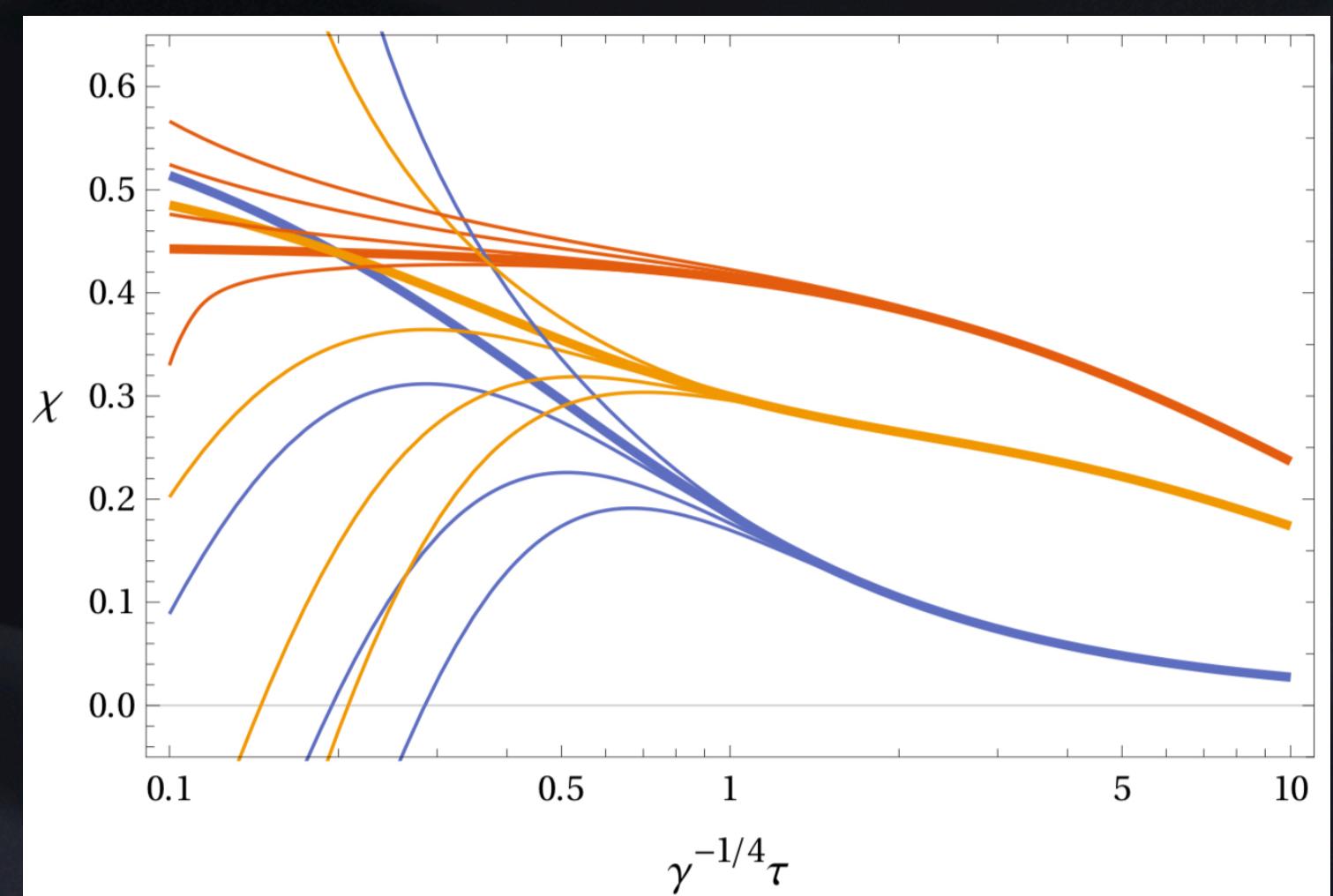
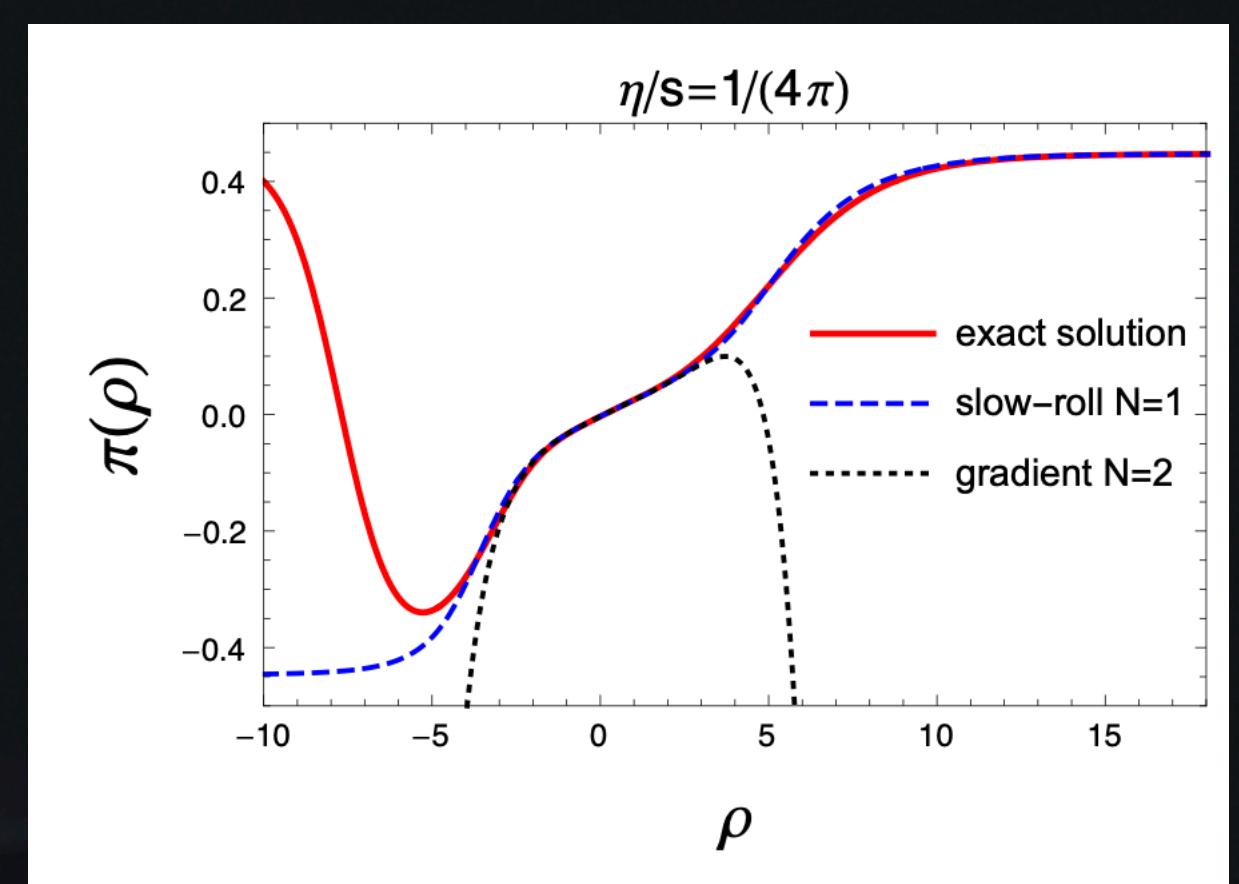
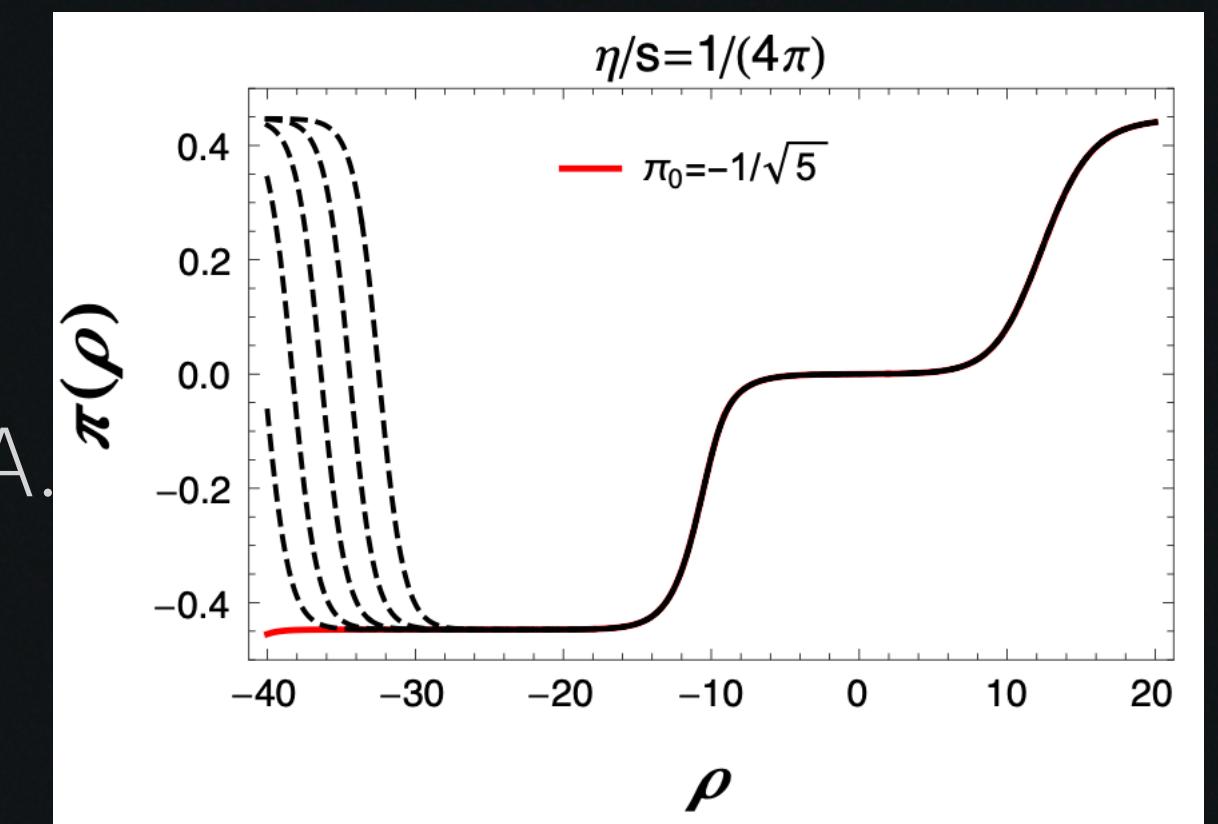
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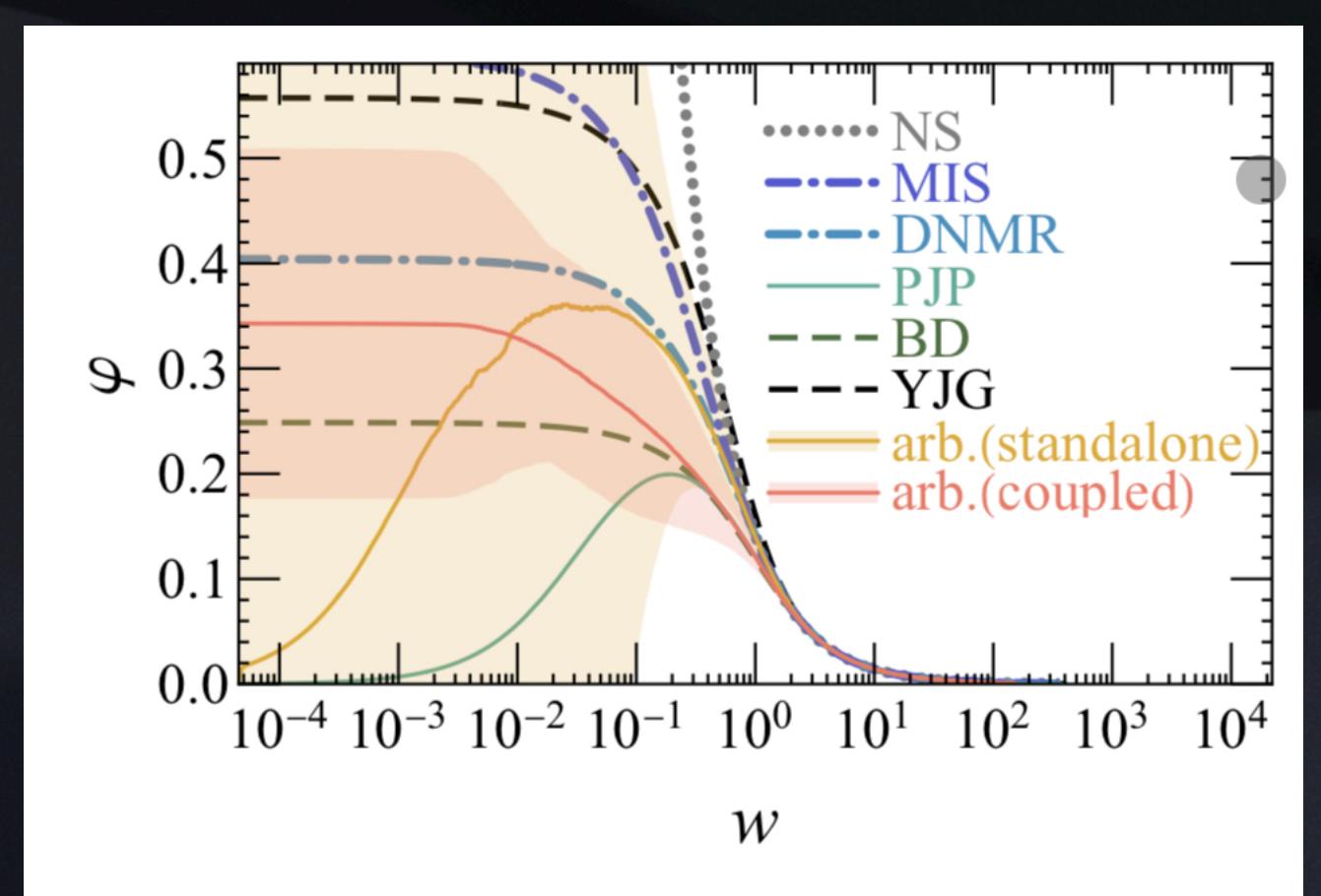
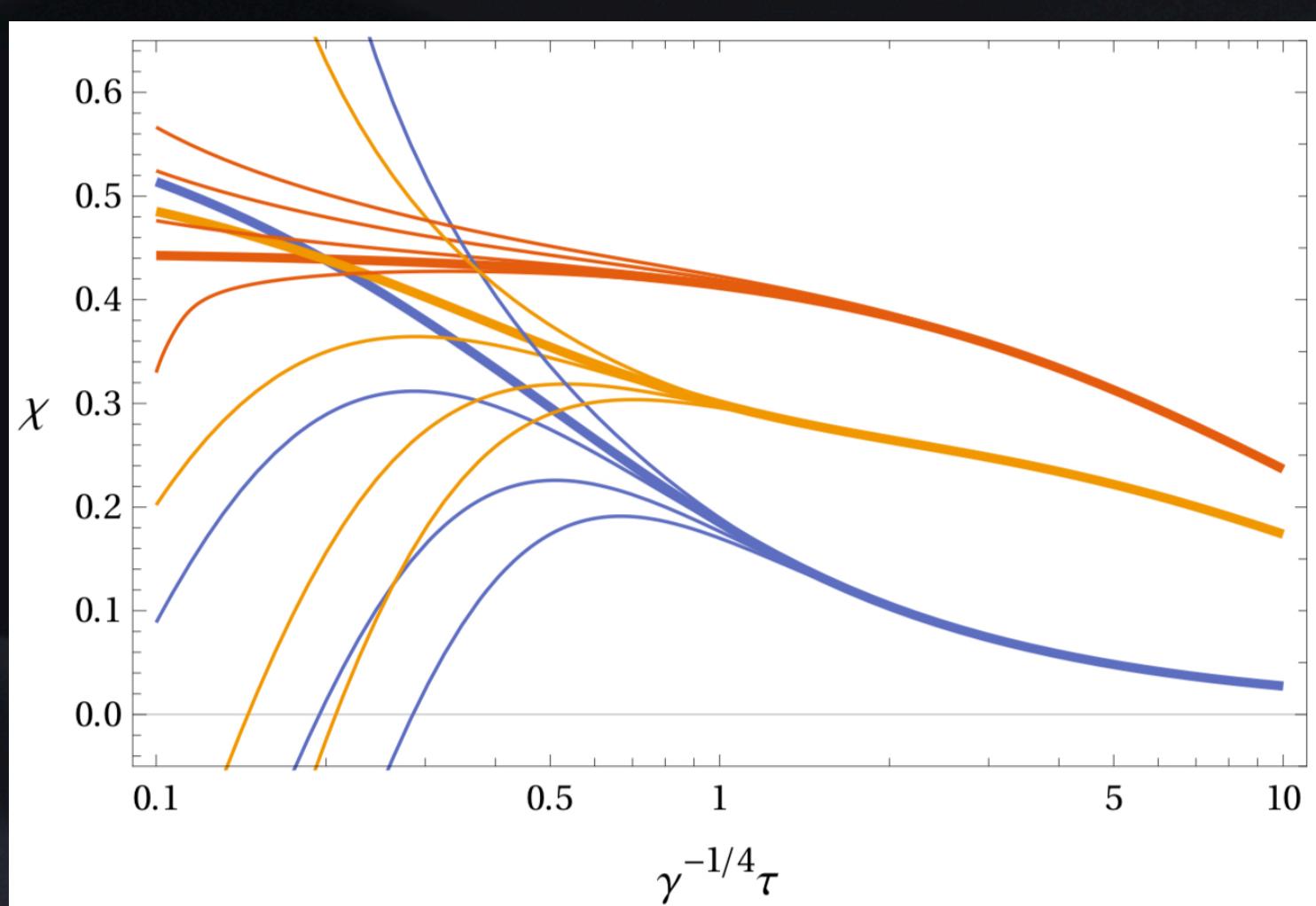
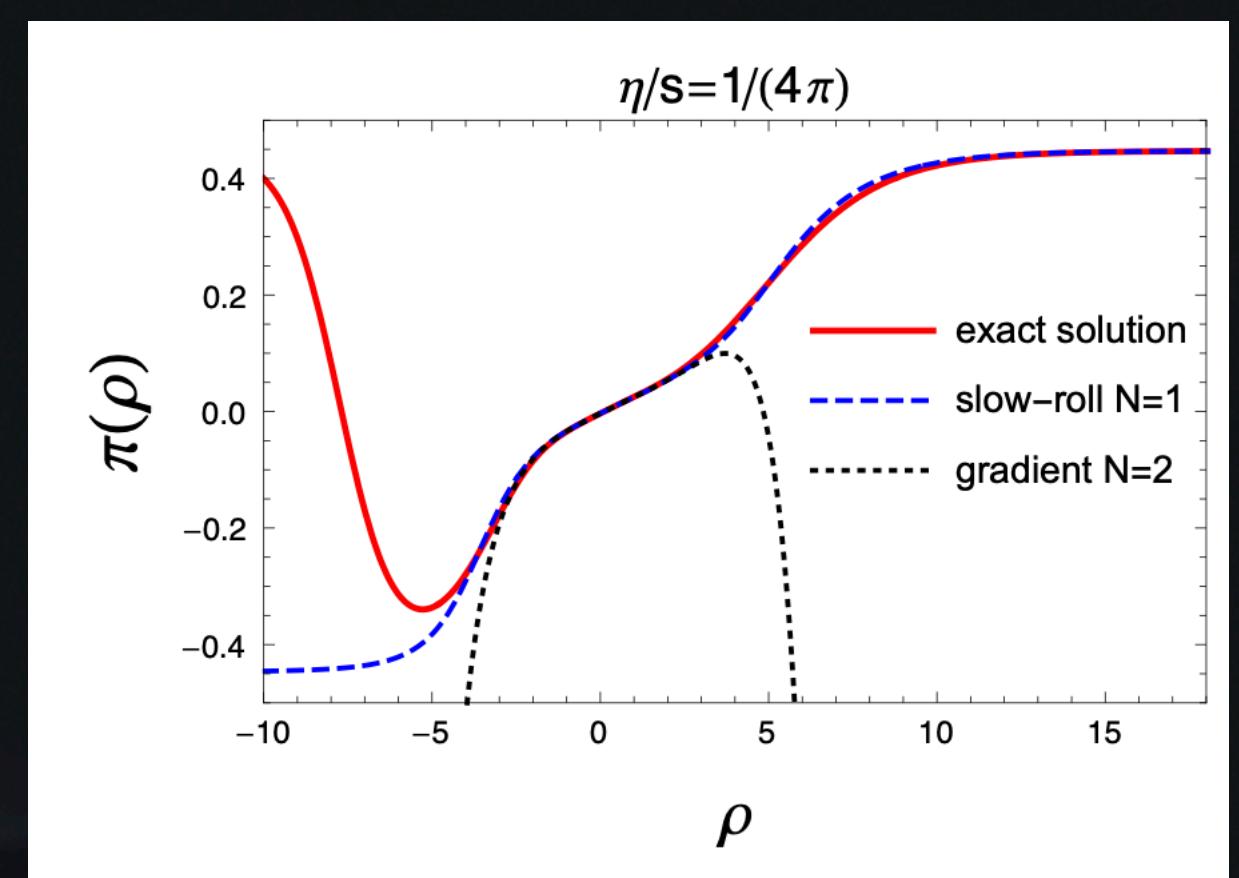
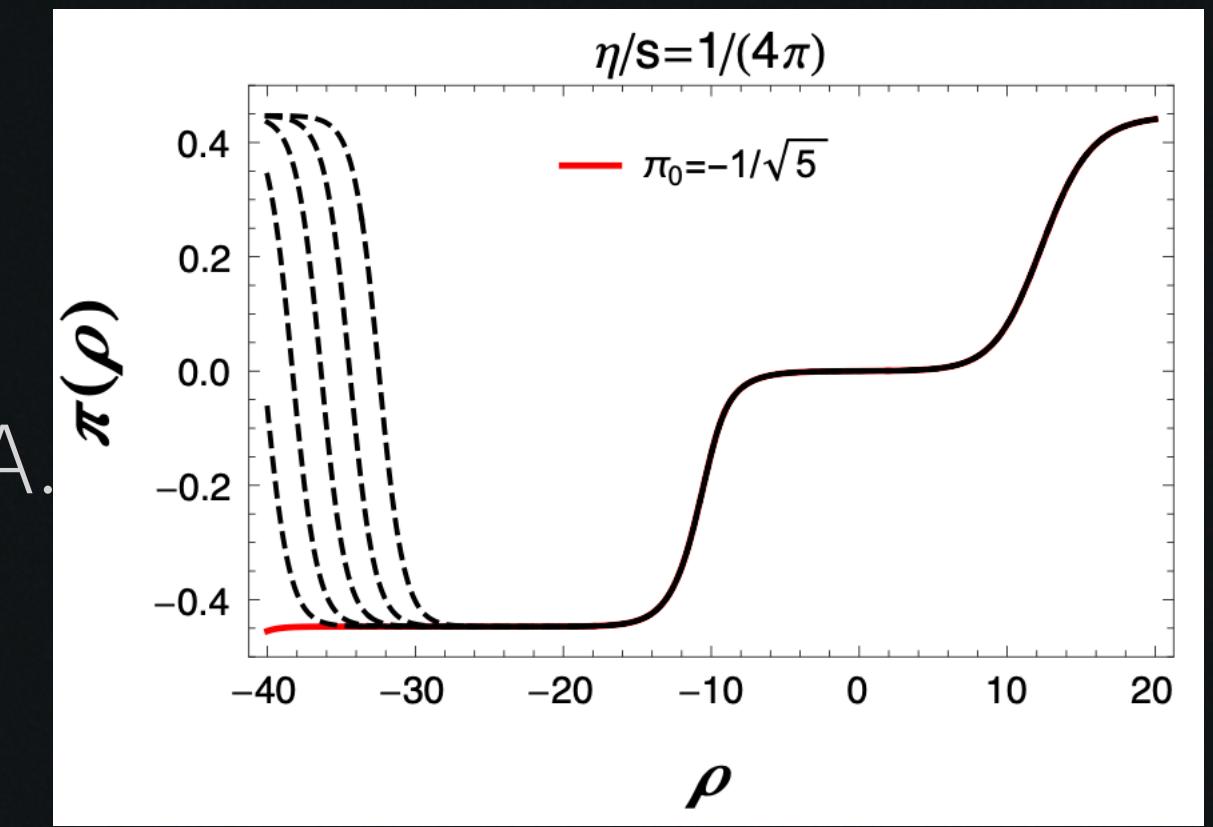
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- Spin hydro attractor

Wang, Yan, Pu 2024

- “Attractor of hydrodynamic attractors” Chen, Shi 2025

Mitra, Mondkar,
Mukhopadhyay, Rebhan, AS
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Attractors in kinetic theory



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- Main object is the 1 particle distribution function $f = f(t, x^i, p_i)$

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Anderson, Witting 1974

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$$f(\tau, \omega, p_\perp) = D(\tau, \tau_0) f_0(\omega, p_\perp) + \int_{\tau_0}^{\tau} \frac{d\tau'}{\tau_R(\tau')} D(\tau, \tau') f_{\text{eq}}(\tau', \omega, p_\perp)$$

Florkowski, Ryblewski,
Strickland 2013, Denicol,
Heinz, Martinez, Noronha,
Strickland 2014

- Damping function, $D(\tau_2, \tau_1) = e^{-\int_{\tau_1}^{\tau_2} d\tau'' \tau_R^{-1}}$ $\omega = tp_L - zE$

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Giacalone, Mazeliauskas,
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Almaalol, Kurkela, Strickland 2020,
Alawi, Strickland 2023 ...

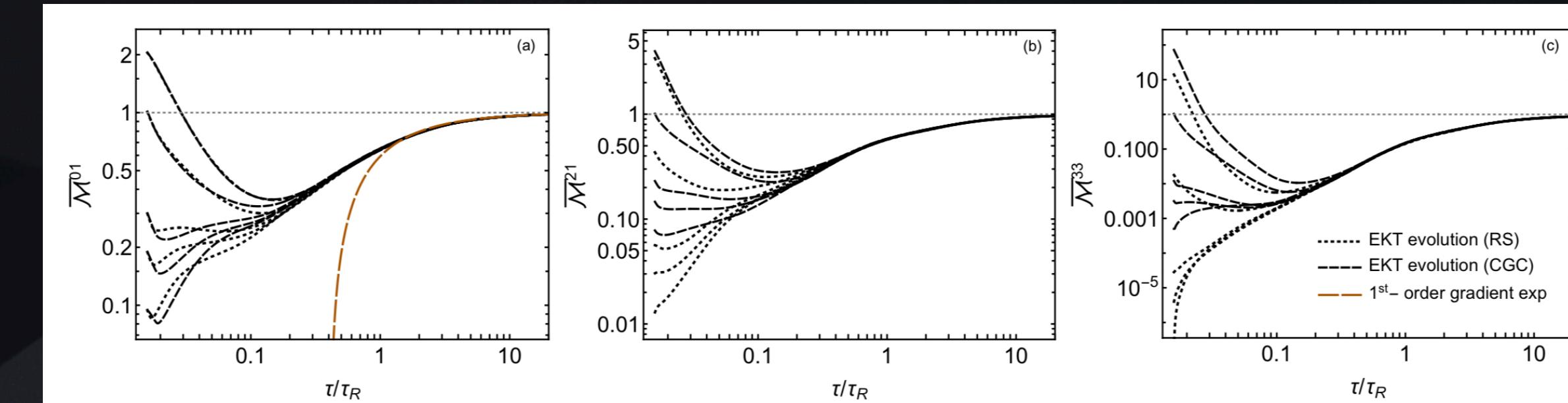


FIG. 1. Evolution of the scaled moments (a) $P_L/P_L^{\text{eq}} = \bar{\mathcal{M}}^{01}$, (b) $\bar{\mathcal{M}}^{21}$, and (c) $\bar{\mathcal{M}}^{33}$ when varying the initial momentum-space anisotropy. Black dotted and dashed lines show EKT evolution with RS and CGC initial conditions, respectively. The orange long-dashed line shows the first-order gradient expansion result (Navier-Stokes). See supplemental Fig. 4 for plots of more moments.

Almaalol, Kurkela, Strickland 2020

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Almaalol, Kurkela, Strickland 2020,
Alawi, Strickland 2023 ...

Blaizot, Yan 2020, 2021,
Jaiswal, Blaizot, Bhalerao,
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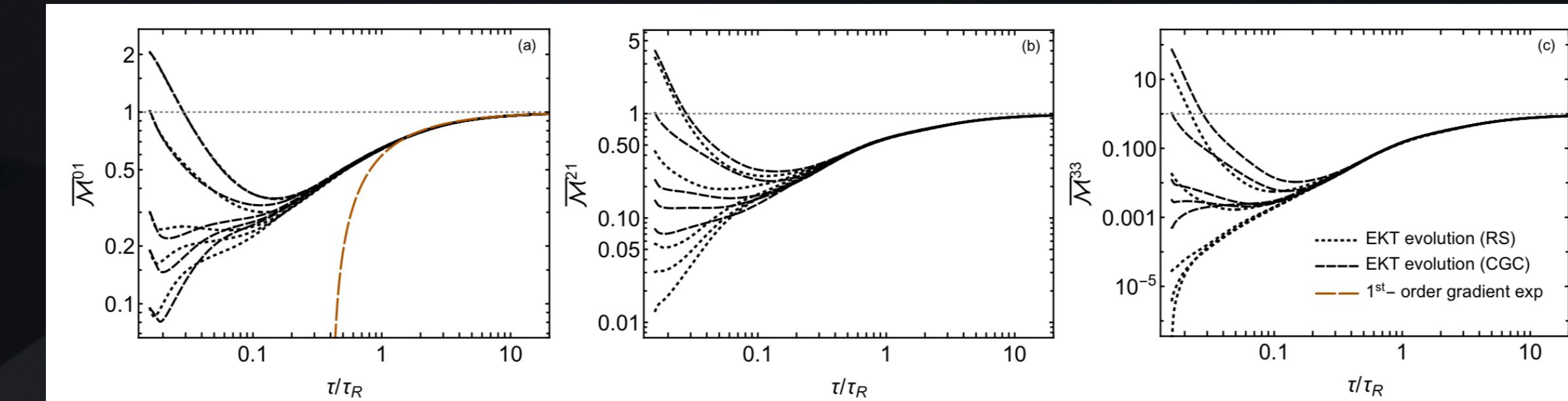


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Chen, Jaiswal, Yan 2022 ...

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Behtash, Cruz-Camacho, Martinez 2017, Behtash,
Kamata, Martinez, Shi 2019, Dash, Roy 2020,

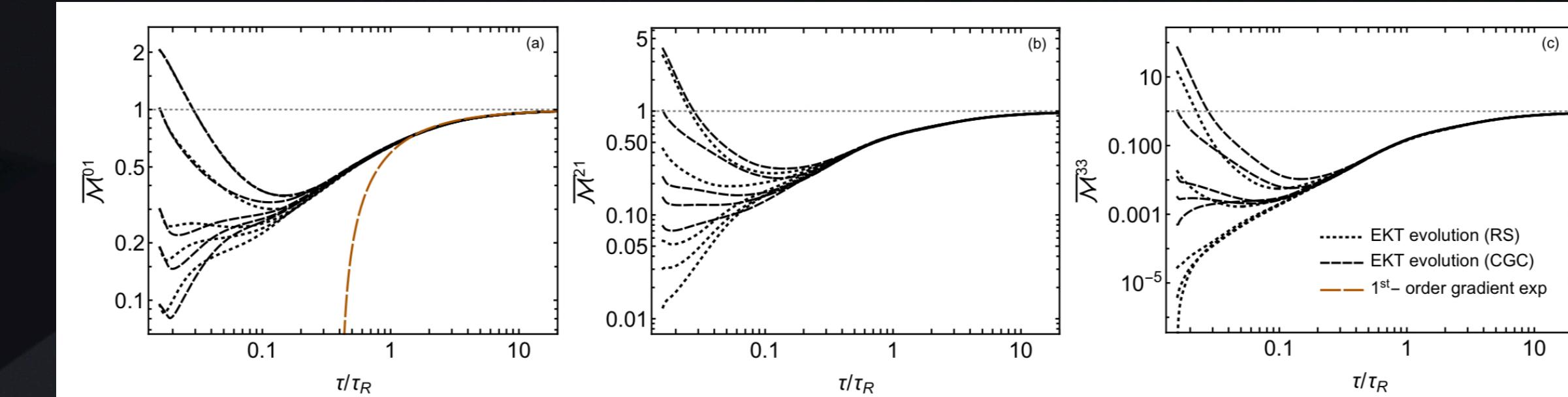


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Chen, Jaiswal, Yan 2022 ...

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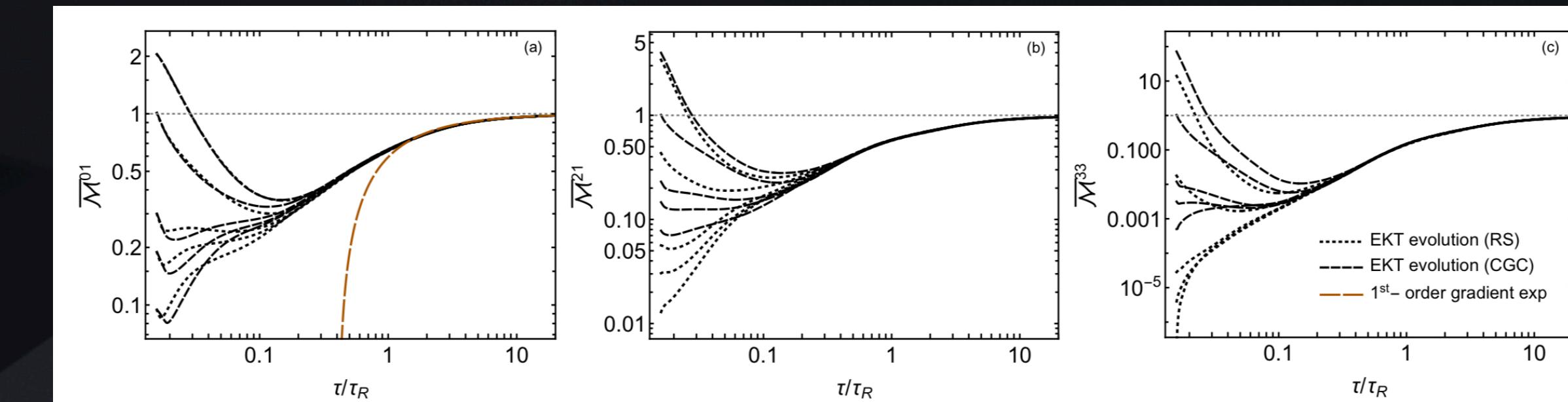


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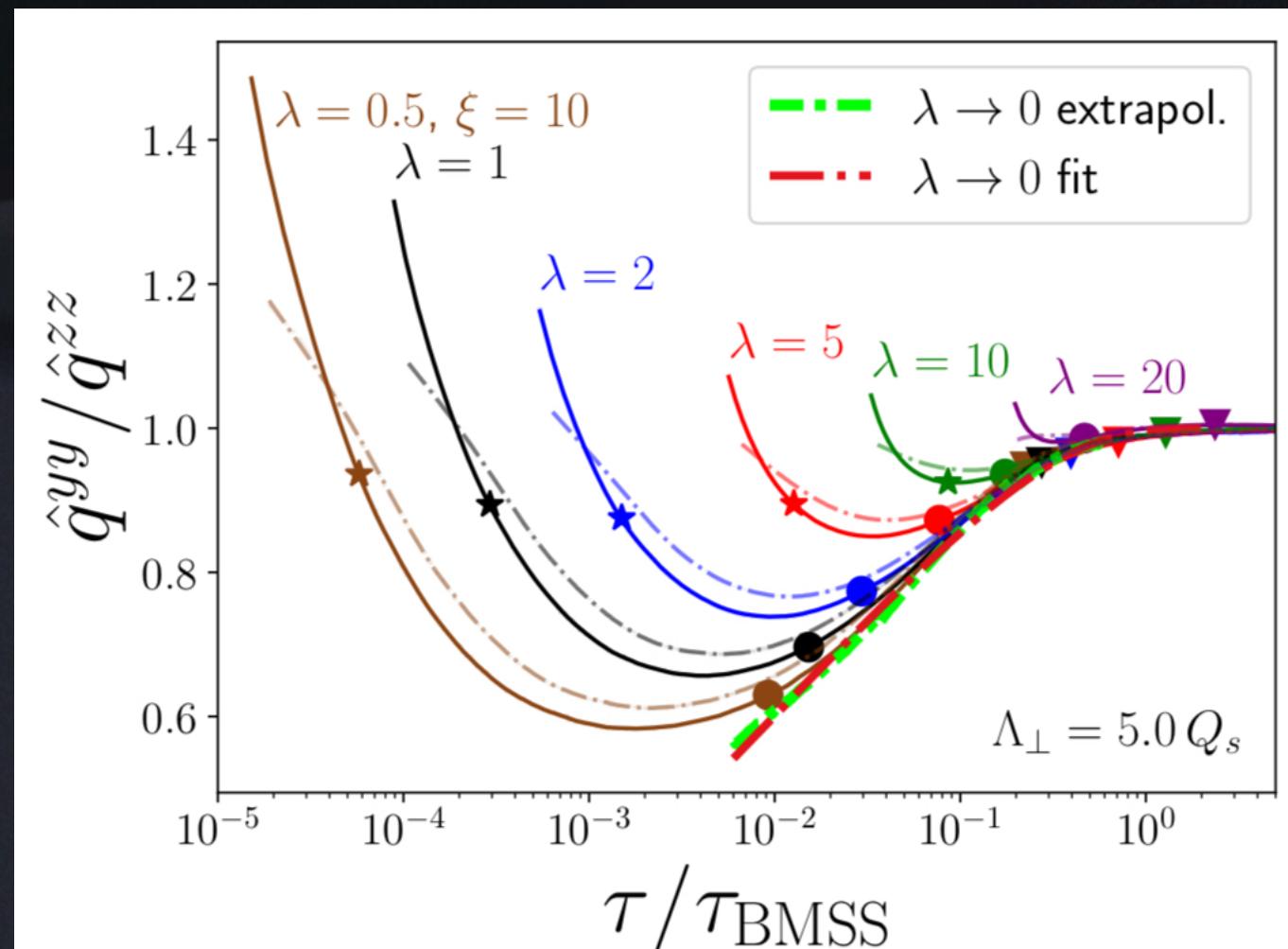
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- Limiting attractors F. Lindenbauer Tue. 17:00



Boguslavski, Kurkela,
Lappi, Lindenbauer,
Perron 2023

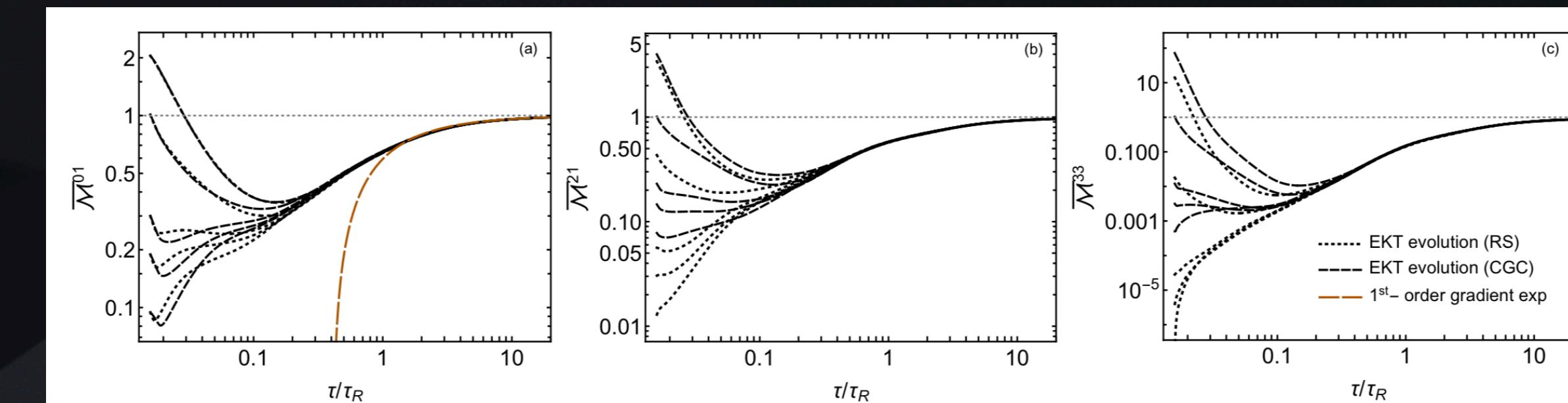
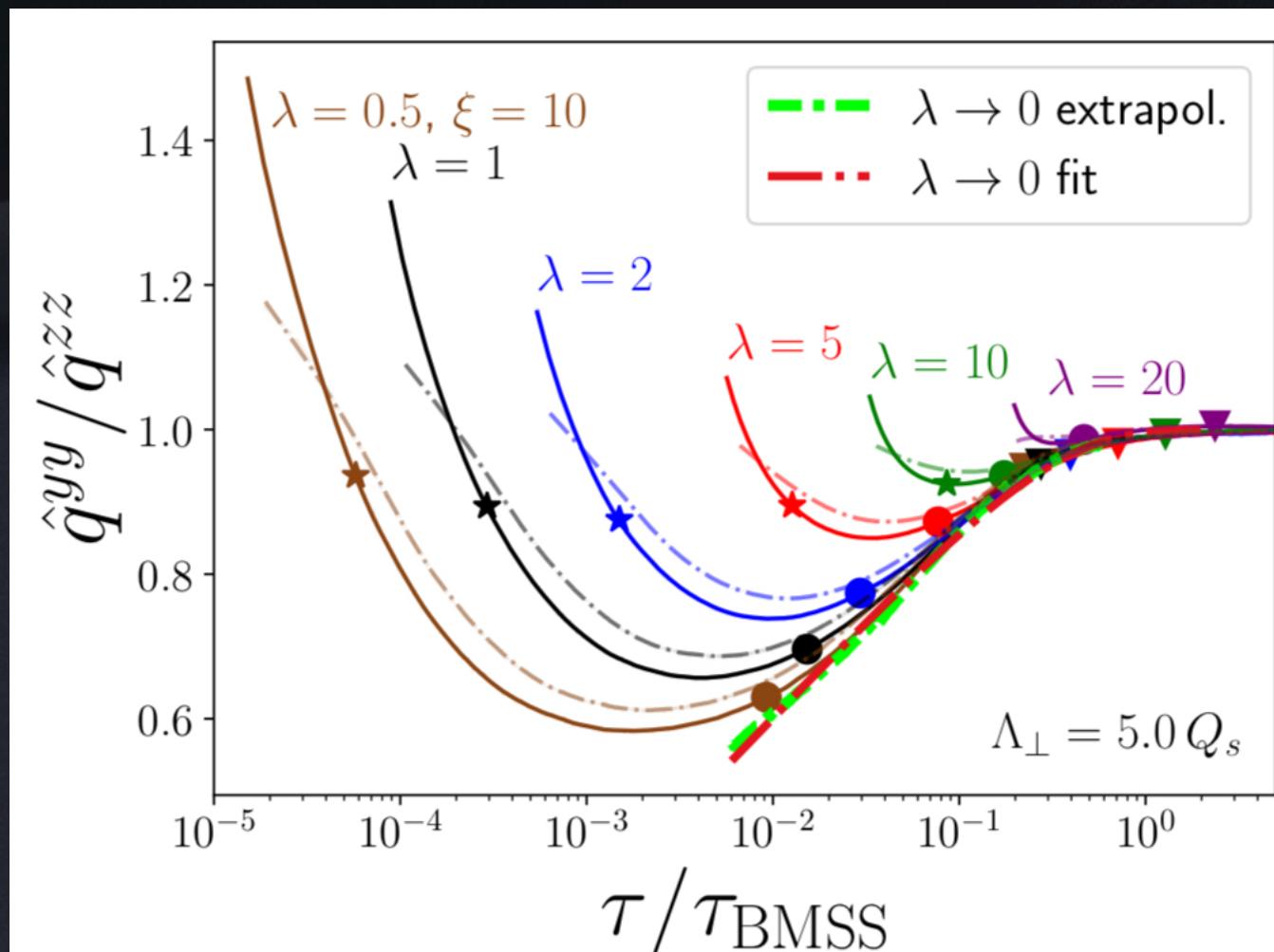


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Lappi, Lindenbauer,
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Giacalone, Mazeliauskas,
Schlichting 2019

Blaizot, Yan 2020, 2021,
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Chen, Jaiswal, Yan 2022 ...

Pre-equilibrium Bjorken attractor
Aniceto, Noronha, Spalinski 2024

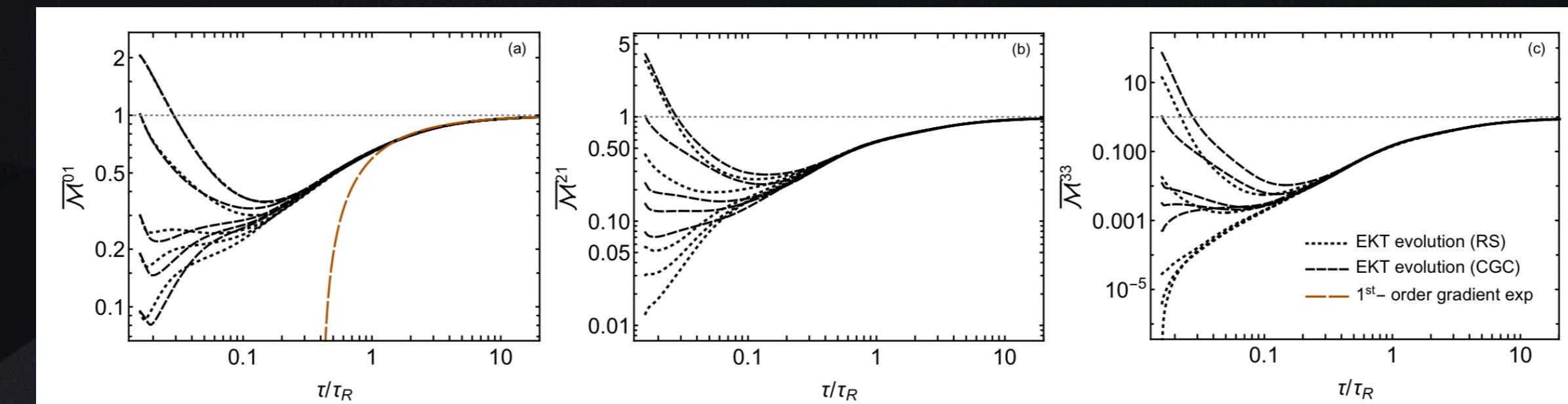
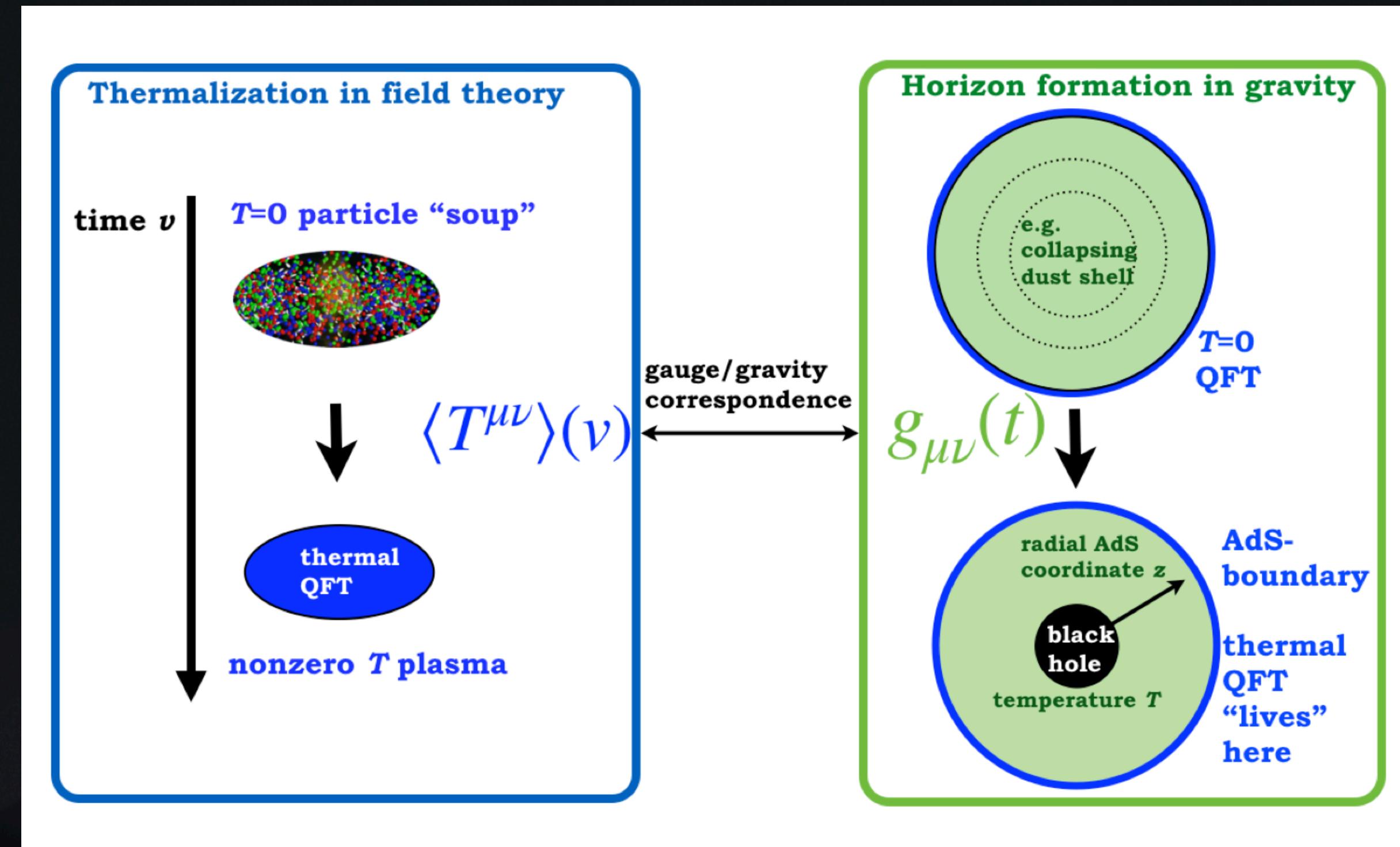


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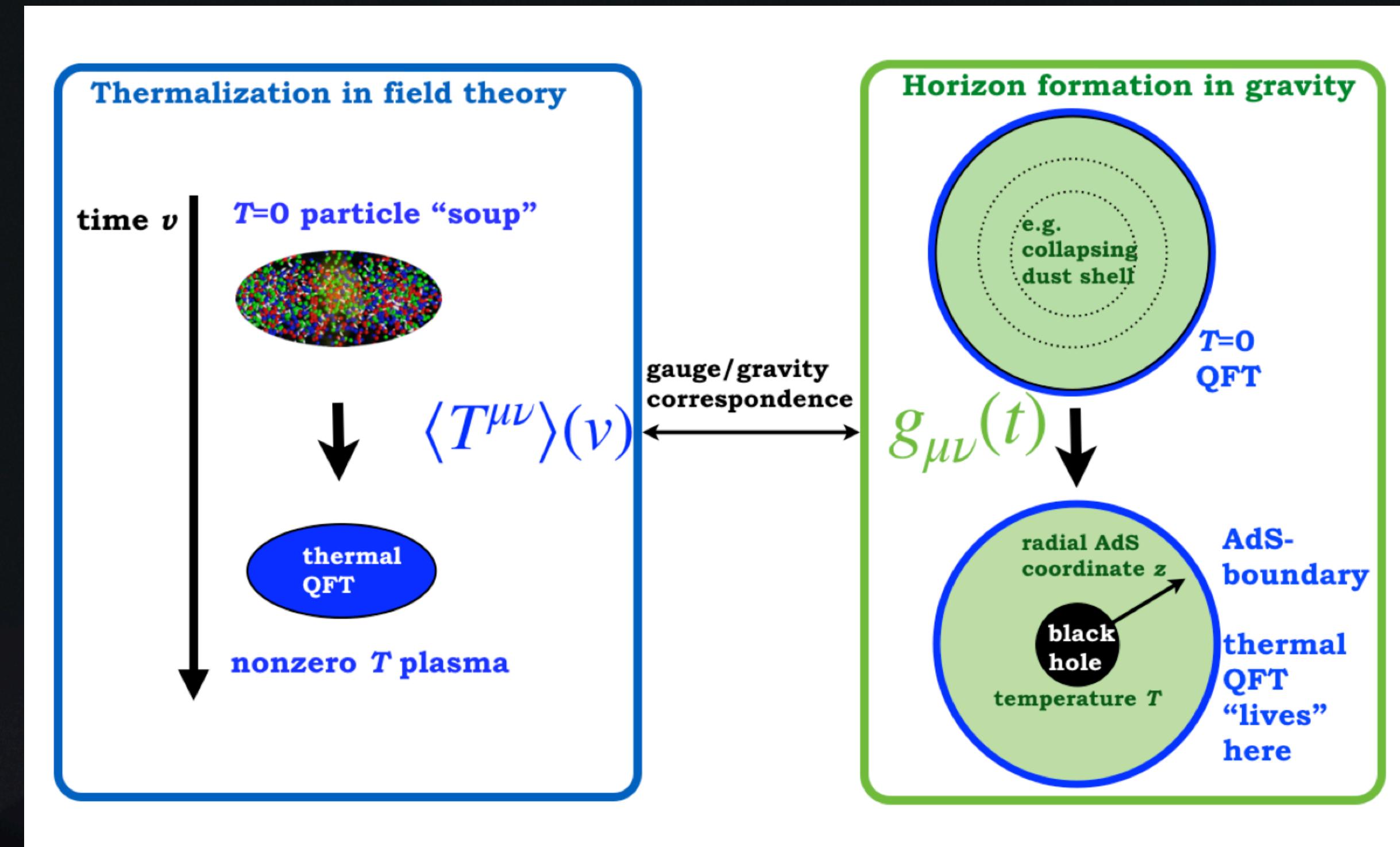
Almaalol, Kurkela, Strickland 2020

Holography at a glance



Kaminski,
Cartwright, Knipfer,
Wondrak, Schenke,
Bleicher 2023

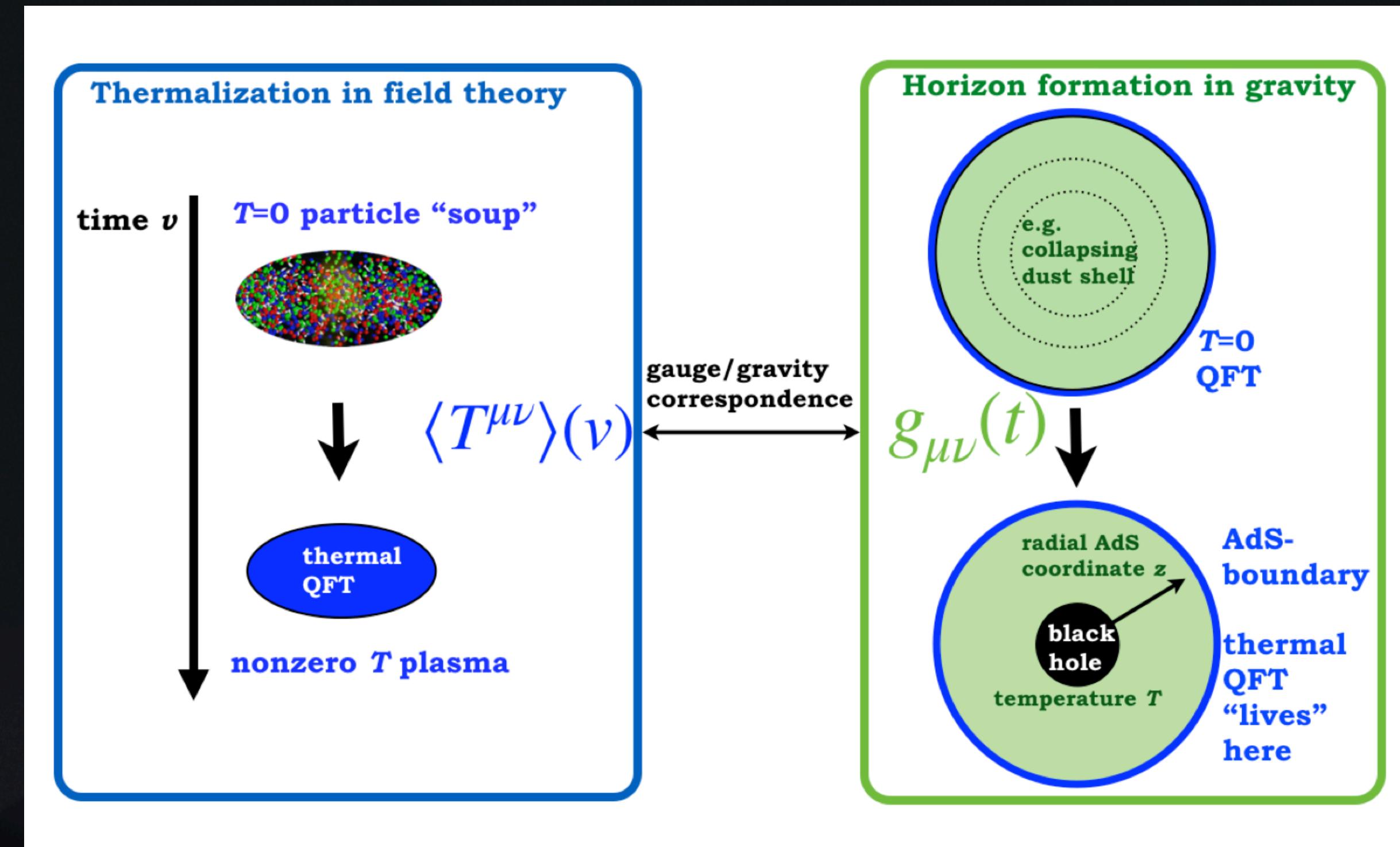
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- Same physical theory

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- Same physical theory
- Two equivalent formulation: strong \leftrightarrow weak correspondence

Holographic attractors



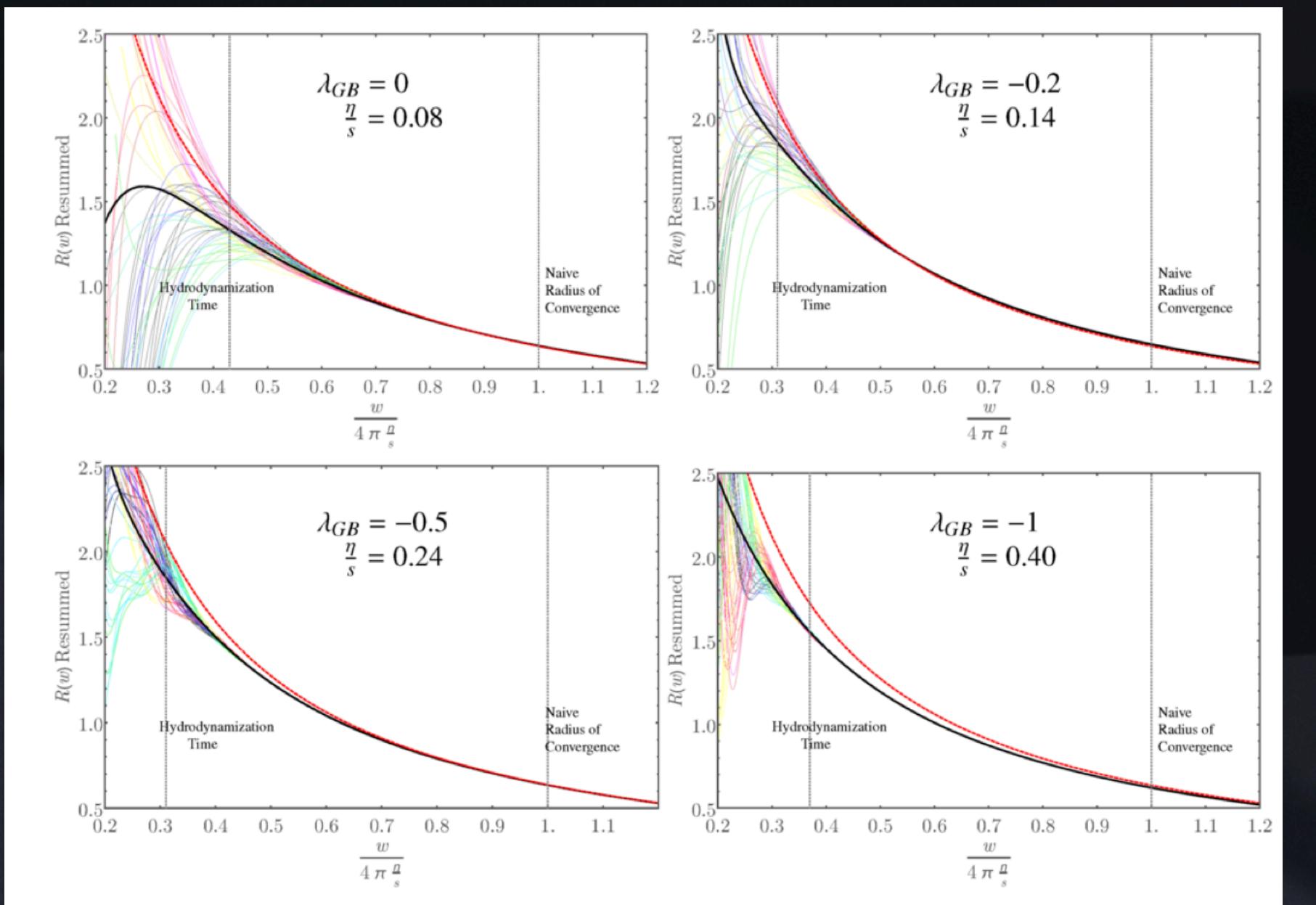
Holographic attractors

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Janik, Peschanski 2005, Kinoshita,
Mukohhyama, Nakamura, Oda, 2008 ...

Holographic attractors

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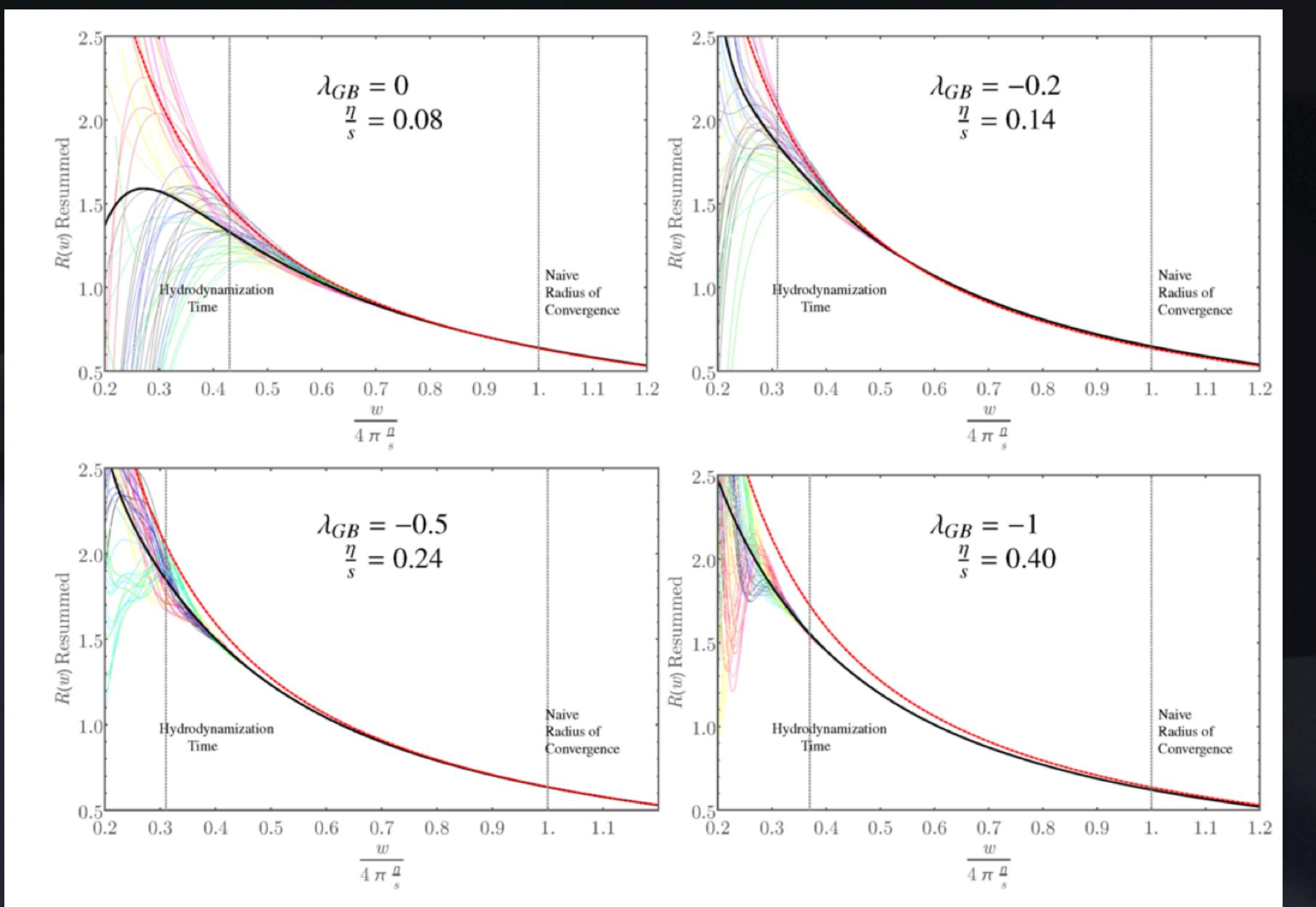


Holographic attractors

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- Speed of sound attractors

Janik, Peschanski 2005, Kinoshita, Mukohhyama, Nakamura, Oda, 2008 ...

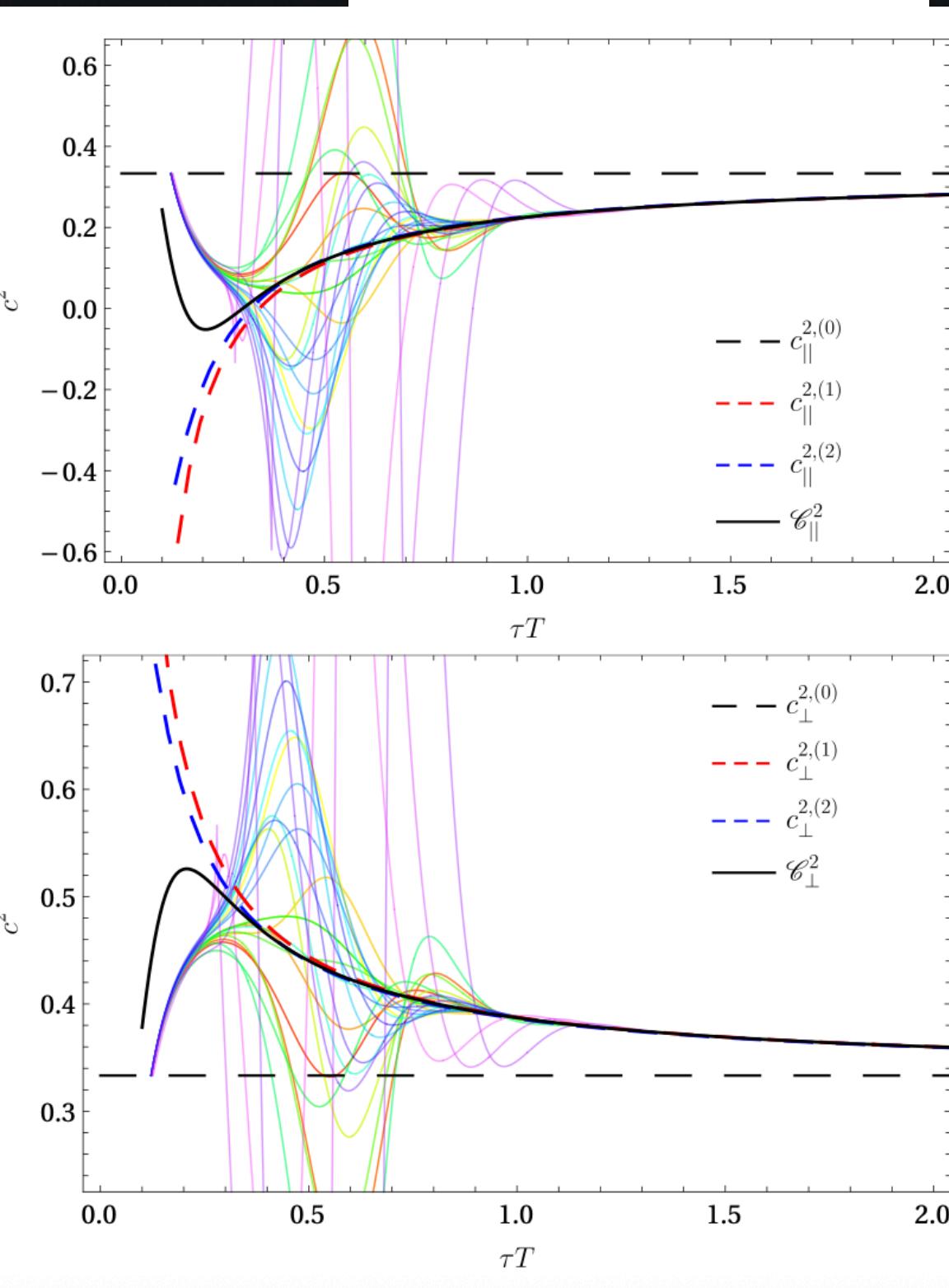
Cartwright, Kaminski, Knipfer 2022 Kaminski, Cartwright, Knipfer, Wondrak, Schenke, Bleicher 2023



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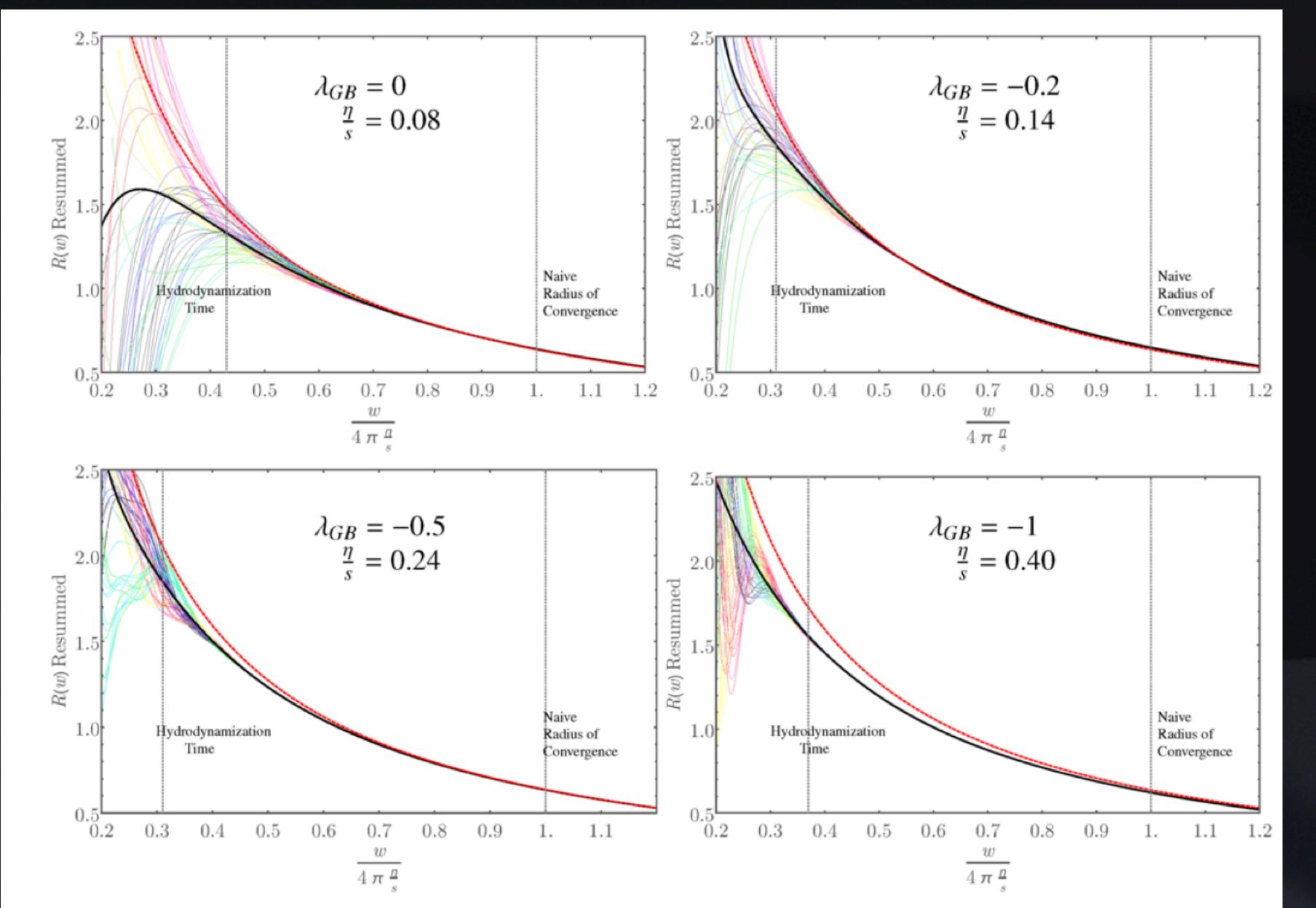


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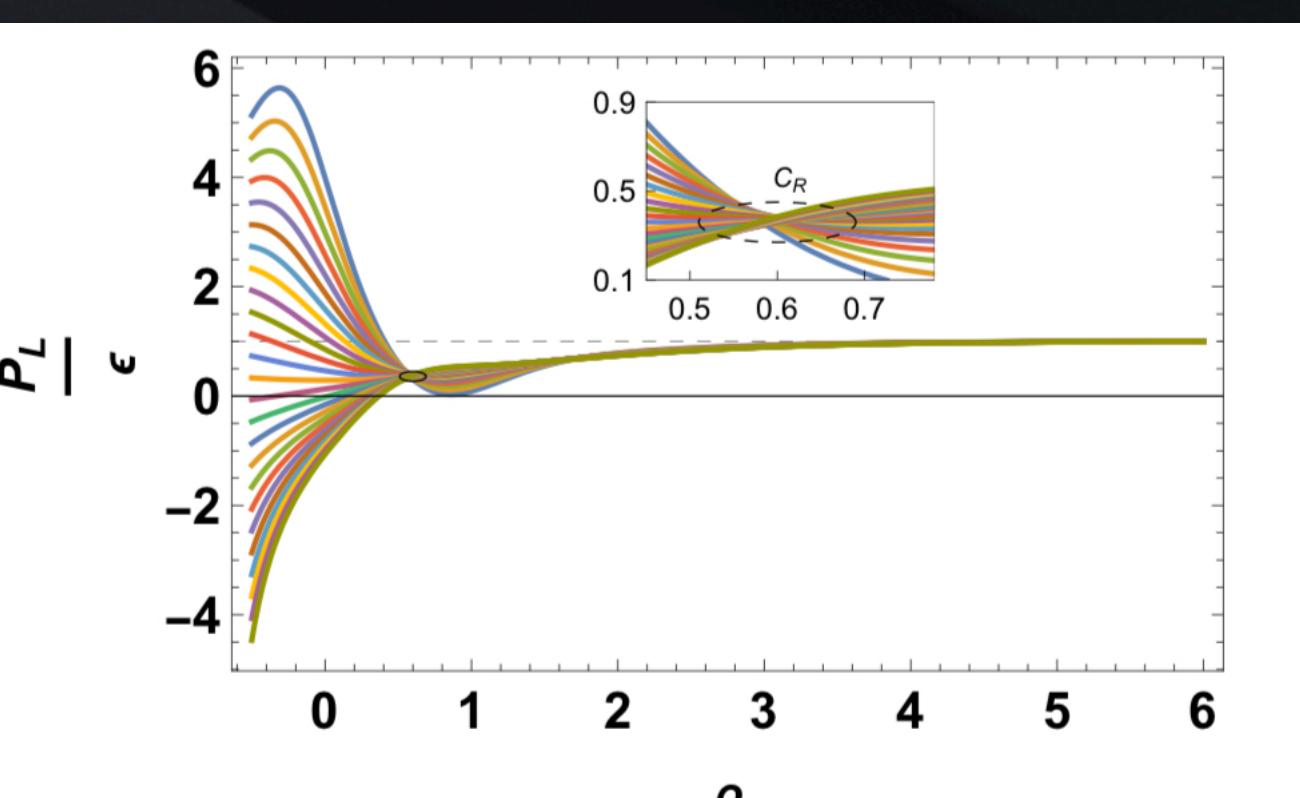
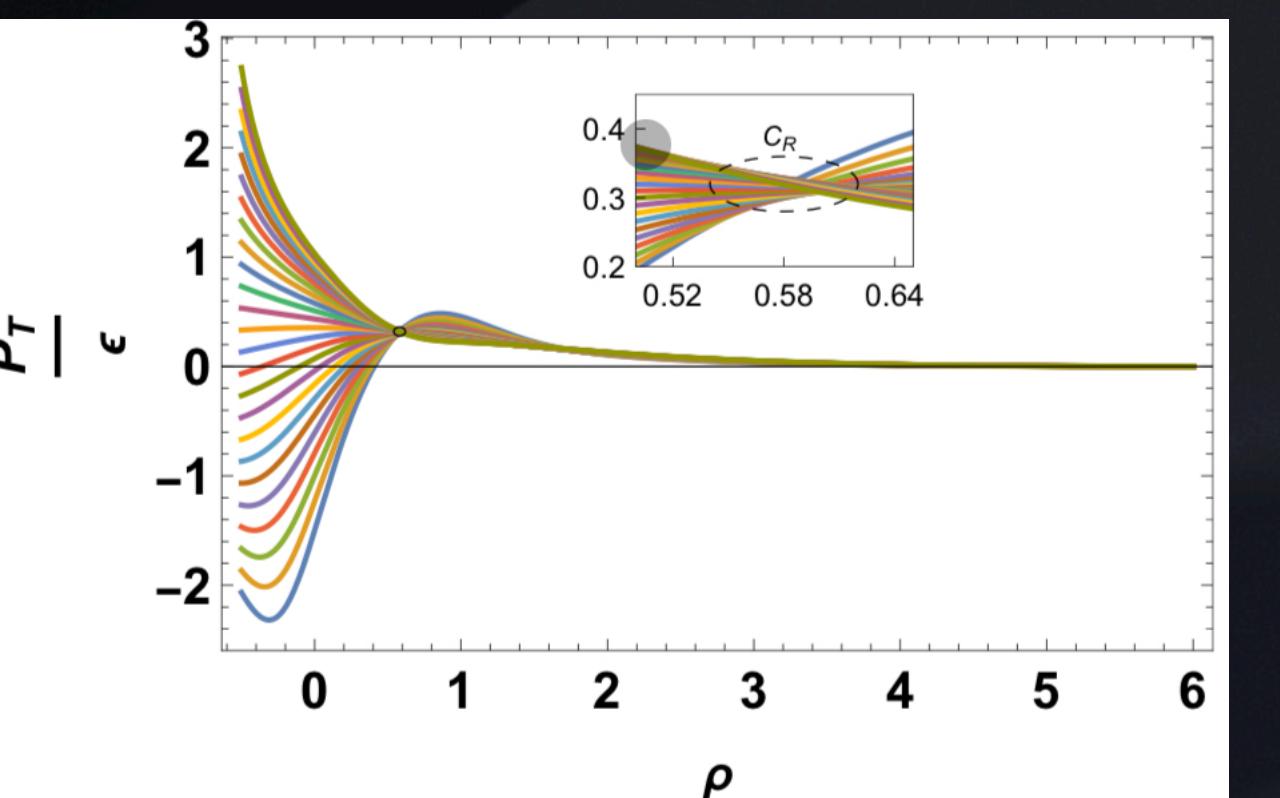
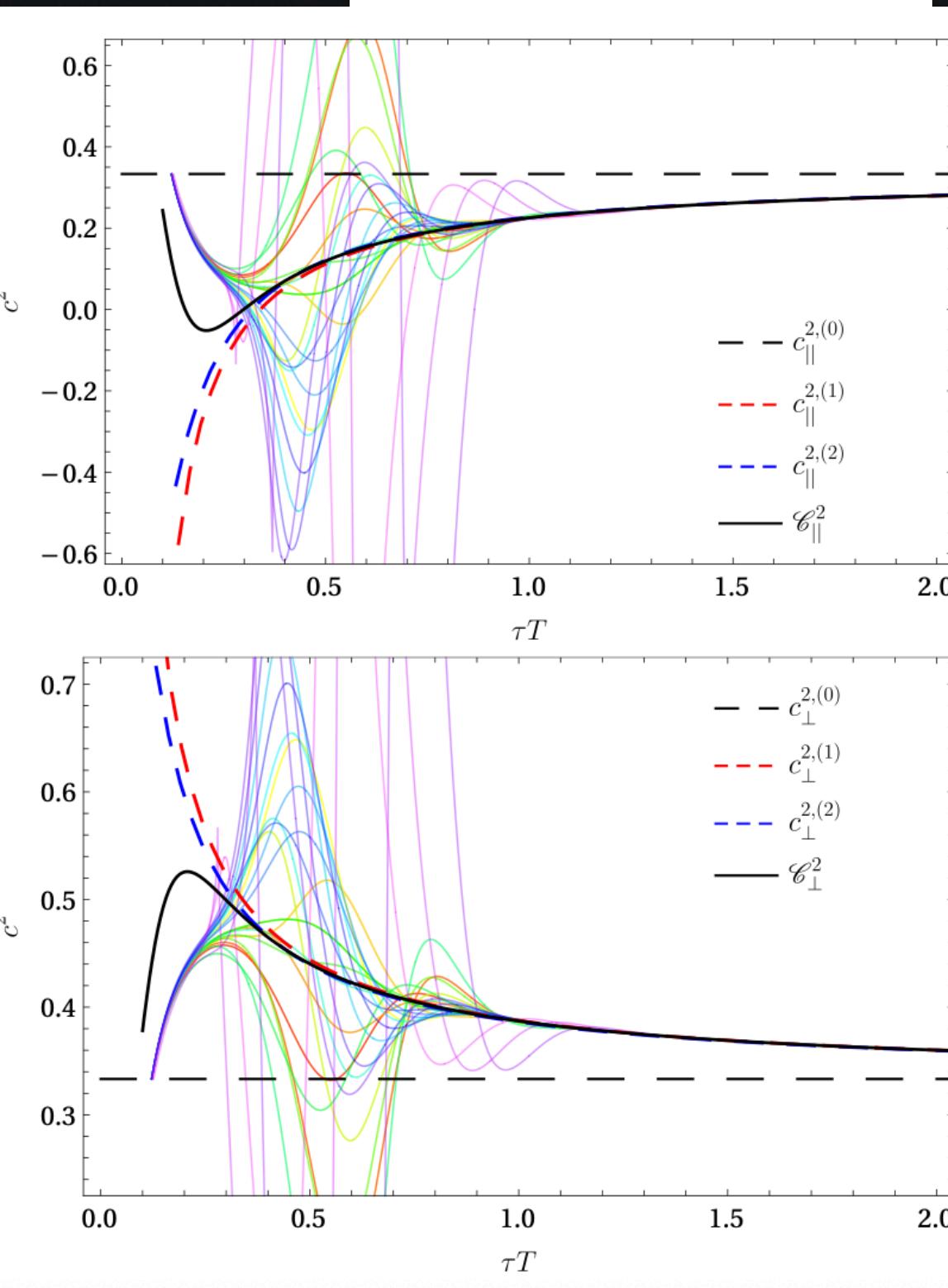
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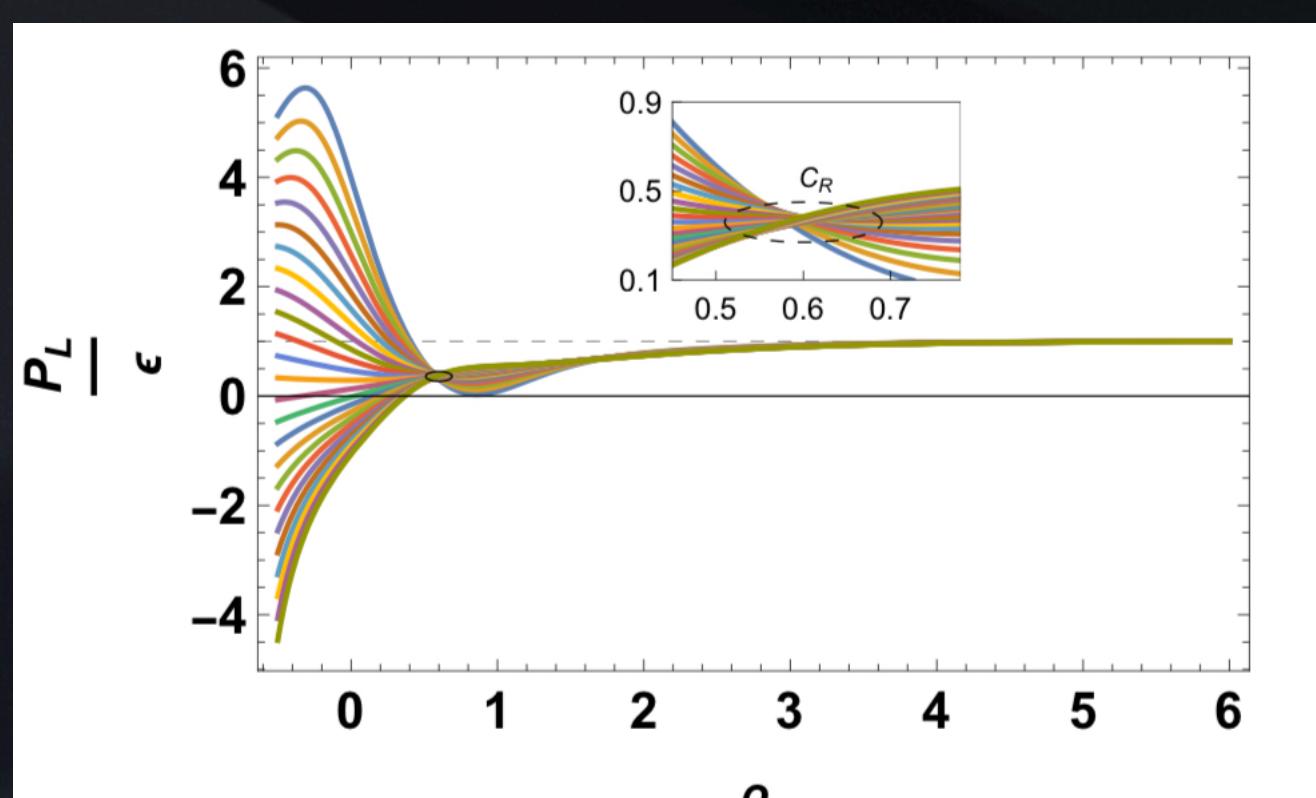
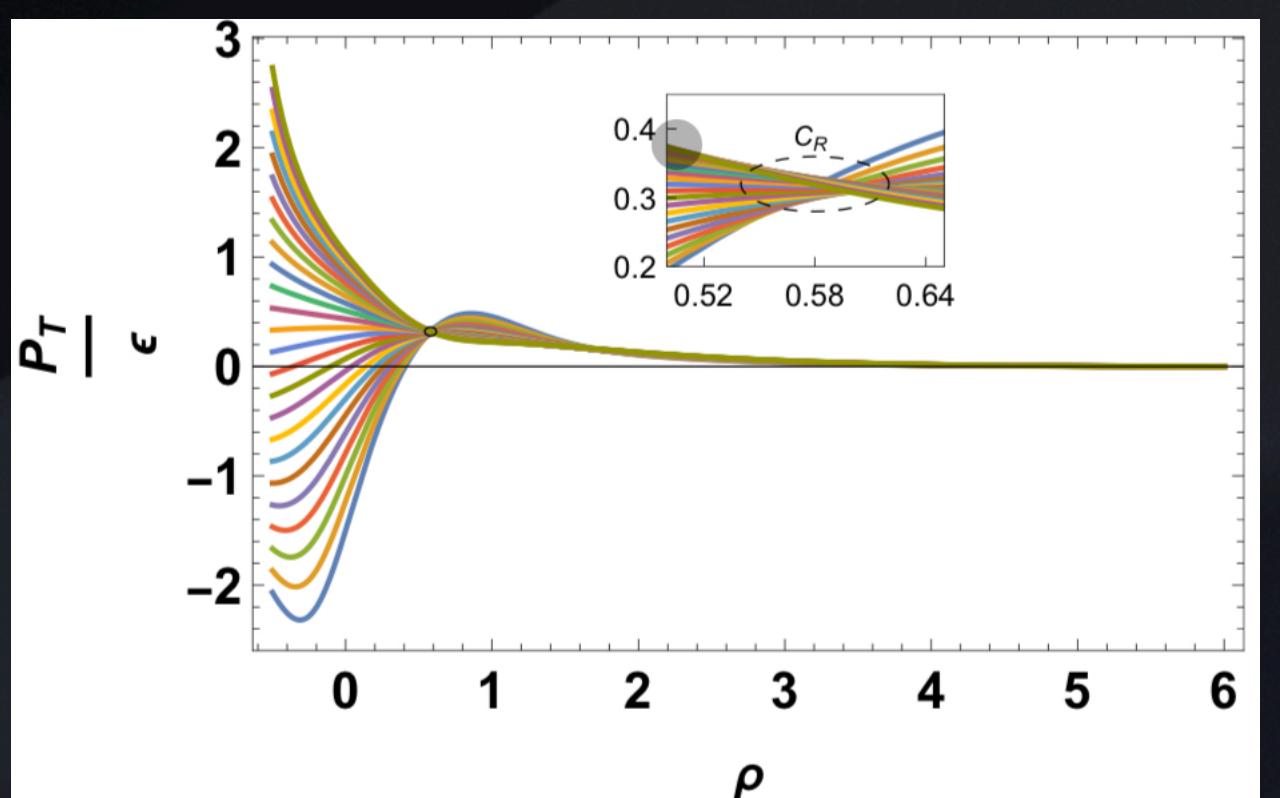
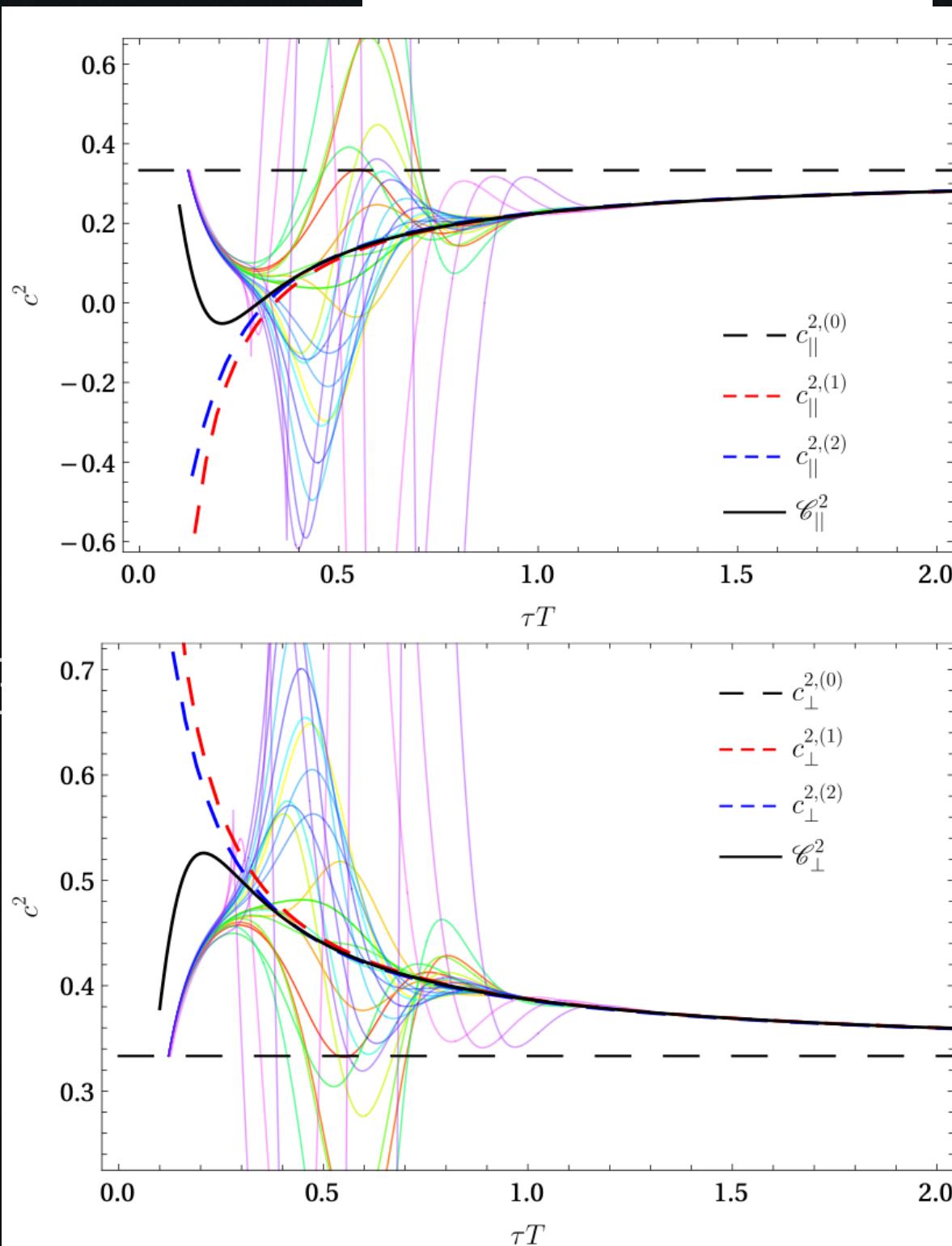
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- Speed of sound attractors
- Holographic Gubser flow
- Large D-results Casalderrey-Solana, Herzog, Meiring 2018
- Convergence of hydro modes

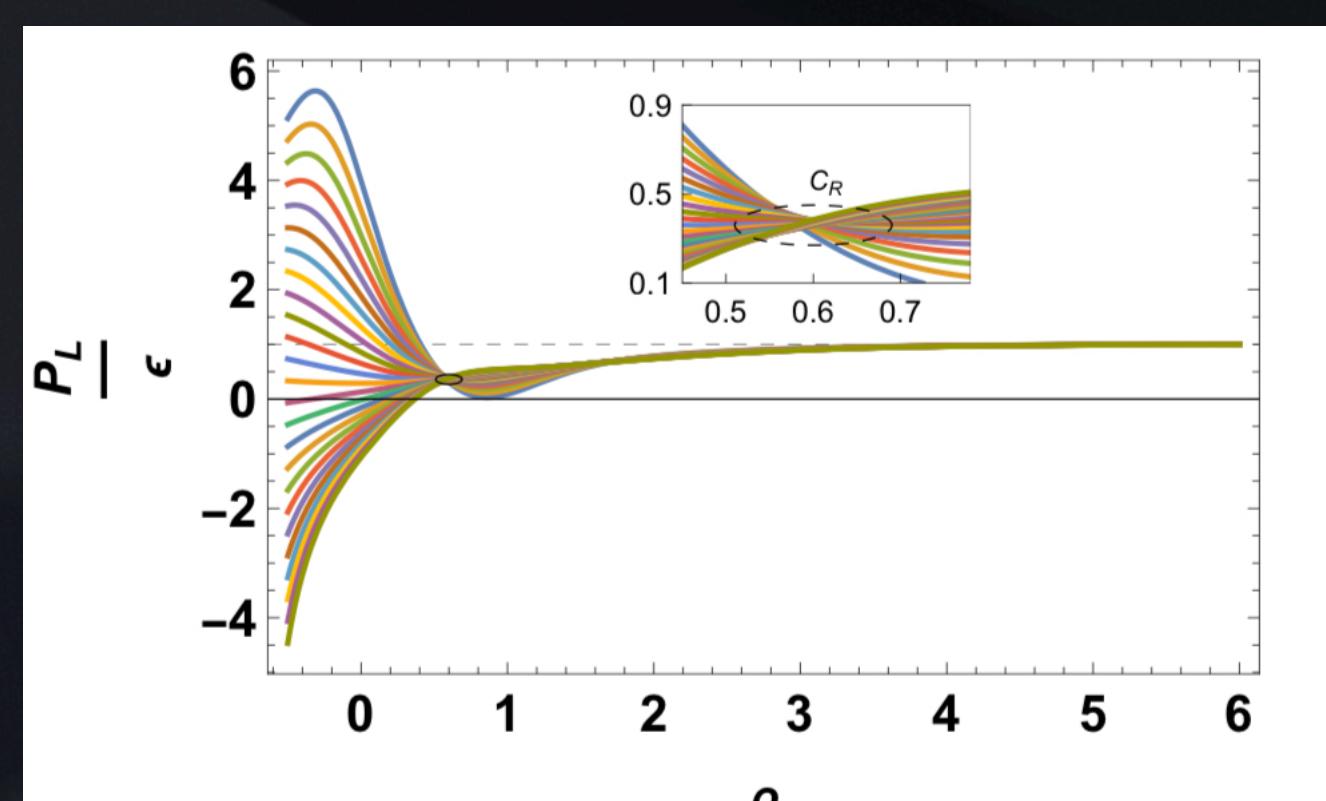
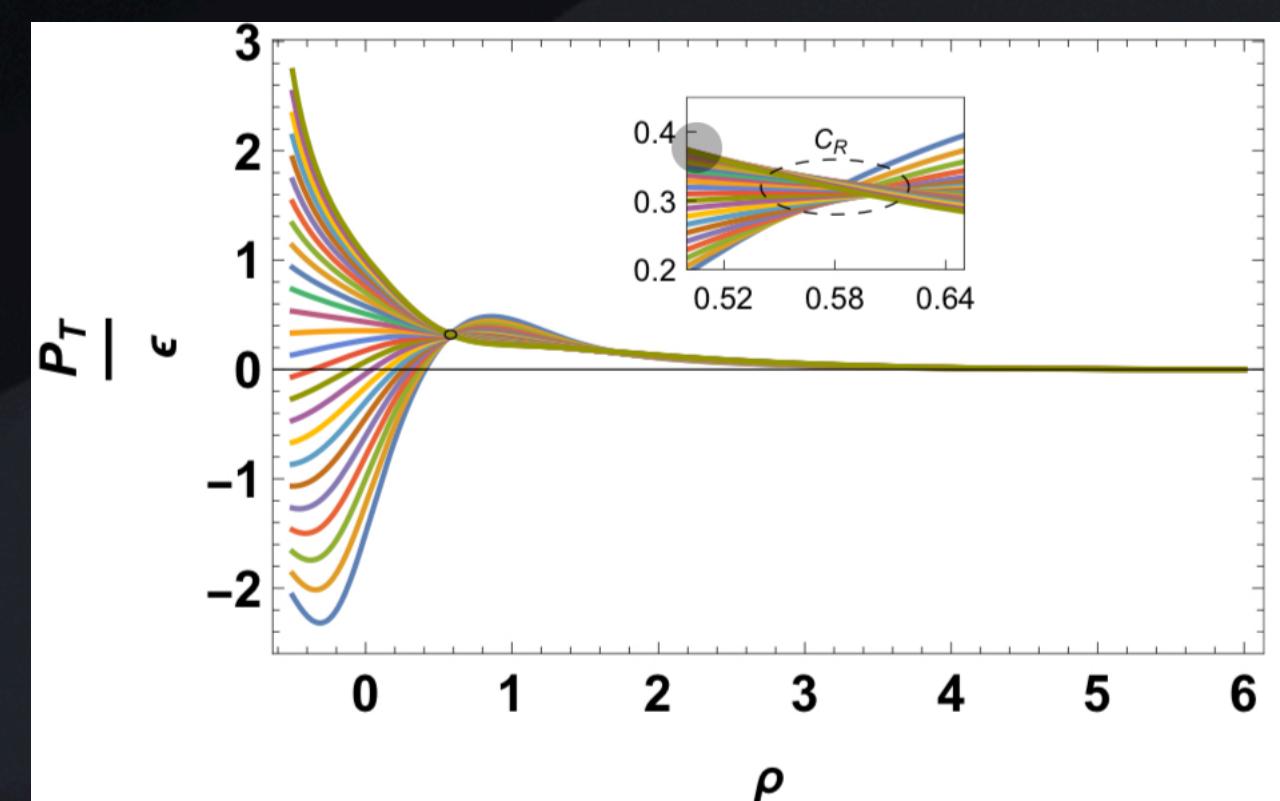
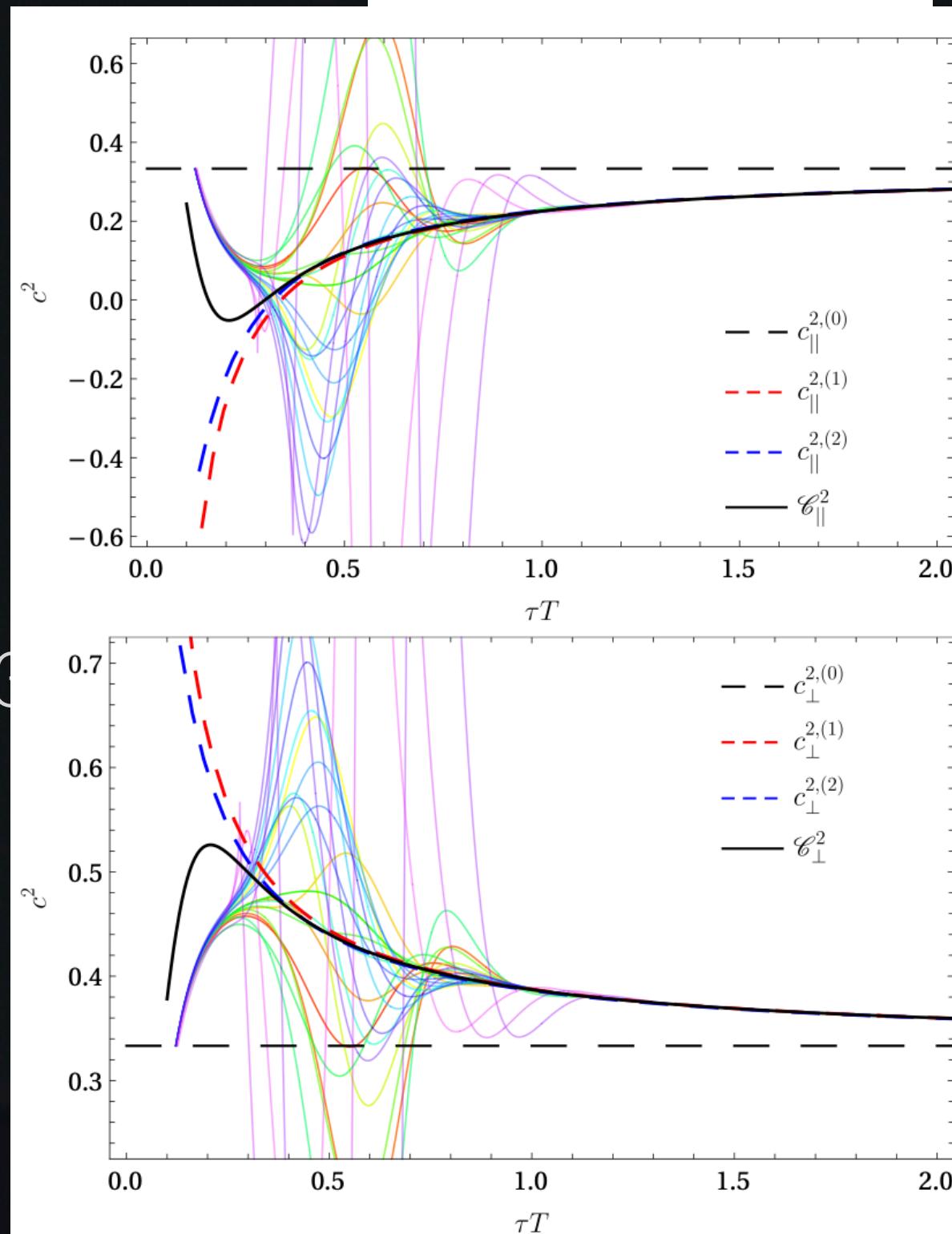
Heller, Serantes,
Spalinski, Svensson,
Withers 2021...

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Outlook

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Hydrodynamic attractors reveal **universal features** far-from-equilibrium across diverse theories

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What's next?



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What's next?

- Condensed matter and cold atoms: T. Enss today at 15:00, K. Fujii at 16:00, C. Werthmann 16:30 and A. Mazeliauskas Tue. 10:30...



Outlook

Hydrodynamic attractors reveal **universal features** far-from-equilibrium across diverse theories

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- Role of fluctuations, phase transitions, ...

