JOINT TUFTS/MIT COSMOLOGY SEMINAR

Dynamically generated tilt of isocurvature fluctuations

Saarik Kalia

IFAE

Light scalar fields acquire isocurvature fluctuations during inflation. While these fluctuations could lead to interesting observable signatures at small scales, they are strongly constrained on large scales by cosmic microwave background observations. When the mass of the scalar is much lighter than the inflationary Hubble scale, $m \ll H_I$, the spectrum of these fluctuations is flat. Meanwhile, if $m \gg H_I$, the fluctuations are suppressed. A blue-tilted isocurvature spectrum which exhibits enhanced structure on small scales but avoids observational constraints on large scales therefore requires a coincidence of scales $m \sim H_I$ for a free massive scalar. In this talk, I will show that if a scalar field possesses a nontrivial potential, its inflationary dynamics naturally cause this condition to be satisfied, and so a blue-tilted spectrum is generically expected for a large class of potentials. Specifically, if its potential V exhibits a region which satisfies the slow-roll condition $V'' < 3H_I^2$, the scalar condensate will spend most of inflation close to the boundary of this region, so that its effective mass is typically close to H_I. The resulting blue tilt is inversely proportional to the number of e-folds of inflation prior to horizon crossing. If the scalar is long-lived, this mechanism leads to an attractor prediction for its relic abundance, which is insensitive to initial conditions of the scalar. In particular, a scalar field with quartic self-interactions can achieve the correct abundance to constitute all of the dark matter for a wide range of masses. I will show the relationship between the mass and self-coupling of quartic dark matter predicted by this mechanism.

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Cosman Seminar Room

Center for Theoretical Physics

Building 6C, Room 6C-442

Massachusetts Institute of Technology