

Insights from Light-Front Quantization on the Unruh Effect

A. Deur

Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility

In collaboration with:

S. J. Brodsky, C. D. Roberts and B. Terzić

arXiv:2405.06002

The Unruh Effect

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 - ◆ For each choice of time there is a **different vacuum**. (Unless time are related by Lorentz transfo.)
 - ◆ The vacuum attached to an inertial frame appears populated by real particles to an accelerated observer (whose own vacuum is empty, by definition).

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(acceleration = gravitational force \equiv spacetime curvature)
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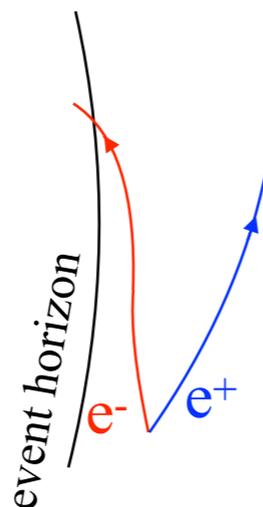
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- ◆ **Interpretation:** If a vacuum loop's pair of virtual particles occurs near an event horizon, one of the particles may fall beyond the event horizon and the pair annihilation is prevented: one particle becomes real (taking energy from the Black Hole (Hawking radiation) or from the frame acceleration (Unruh effect)).



The Unruh Effect

LF quantization: $p^+ \geq 0 \Rightarrow$ trivial vacuum (aside from possible zero-modes).

No loops of virtual particle with non-zero momenta.

What about the Unruh effect in LF quantization?

Field decomposition

In frame x_μ (with vacuum $|0\rangle$):

Field decomposition in **positive** and **negative** frequency modes:

$$\phi = \int dp (\hat{a}_p f_p + \hat{a}_p^\dagger f_p^*), \text{ with } f_p \propto e^{ip^\mu x_\mu}$$

For IF: $f_p \propto e^{-i(\omega t - pz)}$,

For LF: $f_{p^+} \propto e^{-\frac{i}{2}(p^- x^+ + p^+ x^-)}$.

annihilation creation operators

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In another frame x'_μ (with vacuum $|0'\rangle$):

$$\phi = \int dp' (\hat{b}_{p'} f_{p'} + \hat{b}_{p'}^\dagger f_{p'}^*)$$

If **no unambiguous** separation **positive** and **negative** modes in different frames, then

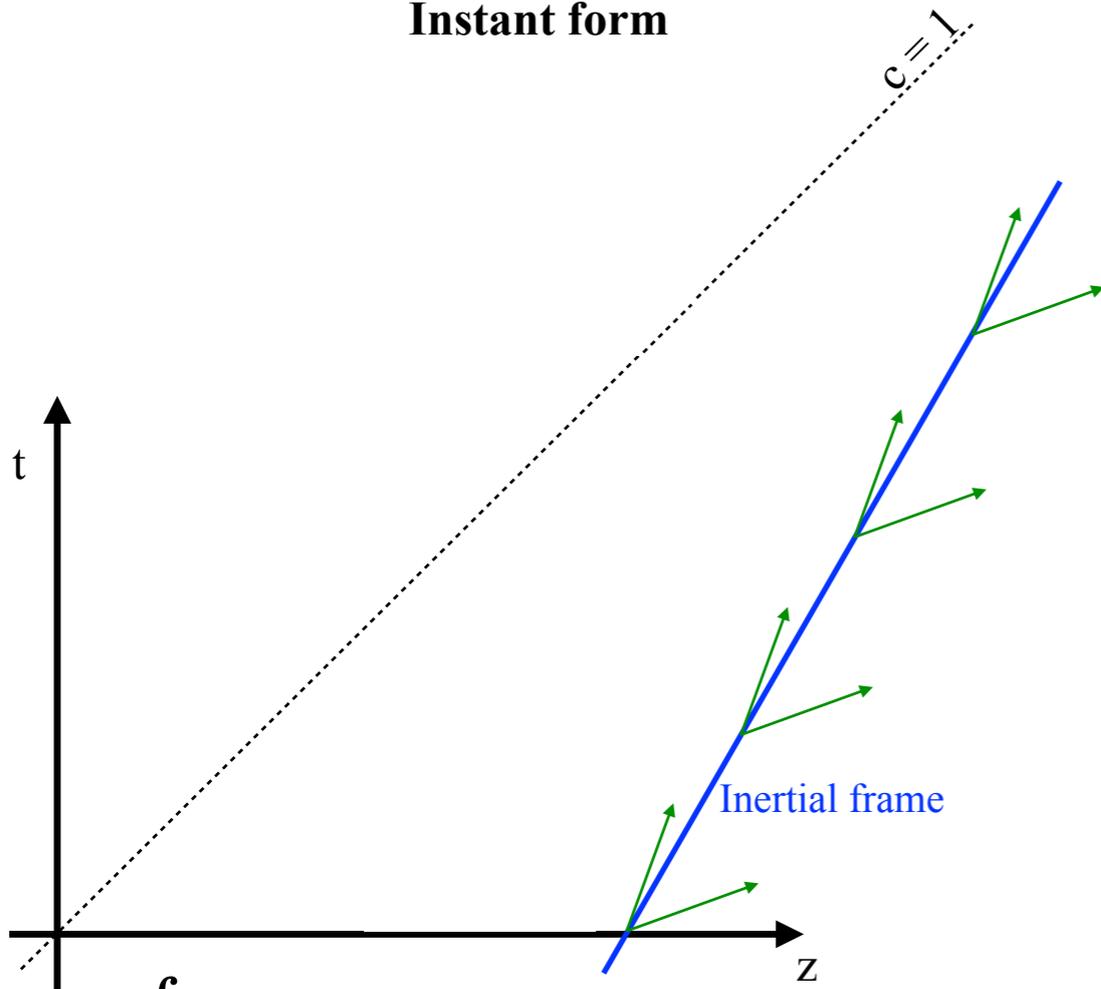
$$\hat{b}_{p'} = \alpha \hat{a}_p + \beta \hat{a}_p^\dagger \quad \text{with } \beta \neq 0$$

$$\Rightarrow \hat{b}_{p'} |0'\rangle = 0 \quad \text{but } \hat{b}_{p'} |0\rangle = (\alpha \hat{a}_p + \beta \hat{a}_p^\dagger) |0\rangle = \hat{a}_p^\dagger |0\rangle \propto |p\rangle.$$

i.e., $\hat{b}_{p'} |0\rangle \propto |p\rangle \neq 0$  Unruh effect

Inertial frames

Instant form



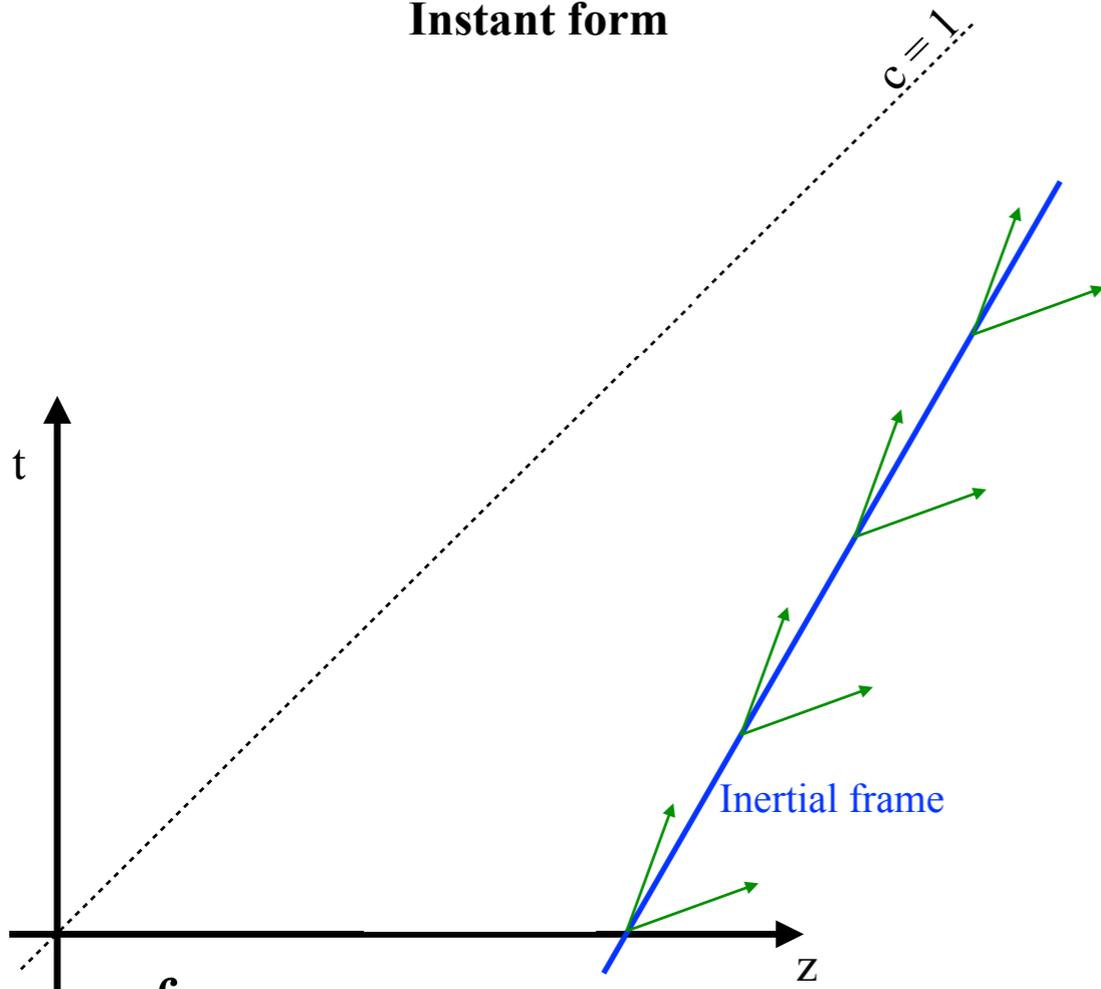
$$\phi = \int dp (\hat{a}_p f_p + \hat{a}_p^\dagger f_p^*), \text{ with } f_p \propto e^{ip^\mu x_\mu}$$

If the frames are related by a Lorentz boost (viz inertial frames):

$$f_p \propto e^{ip^\mu x_\mu} = e^{i(\omega t - pz)} = e^{i(\omega' t' - p' z')} \Rightarrow \hat{a}_p = \hat{b}_{p'}. \quad \beta = 0: \text{ No Unruh effect.}$$

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$$\frac{\partial f_p}{\partial t'} = \left[\frac{\partial t}{\partial t'} \partial_t + \frac{\partial z}{\partial t'} \partial_z \right] f_p = i [\omega \cosh \theta - p \sinh \theta] f_p = -i \omega' f_p$$

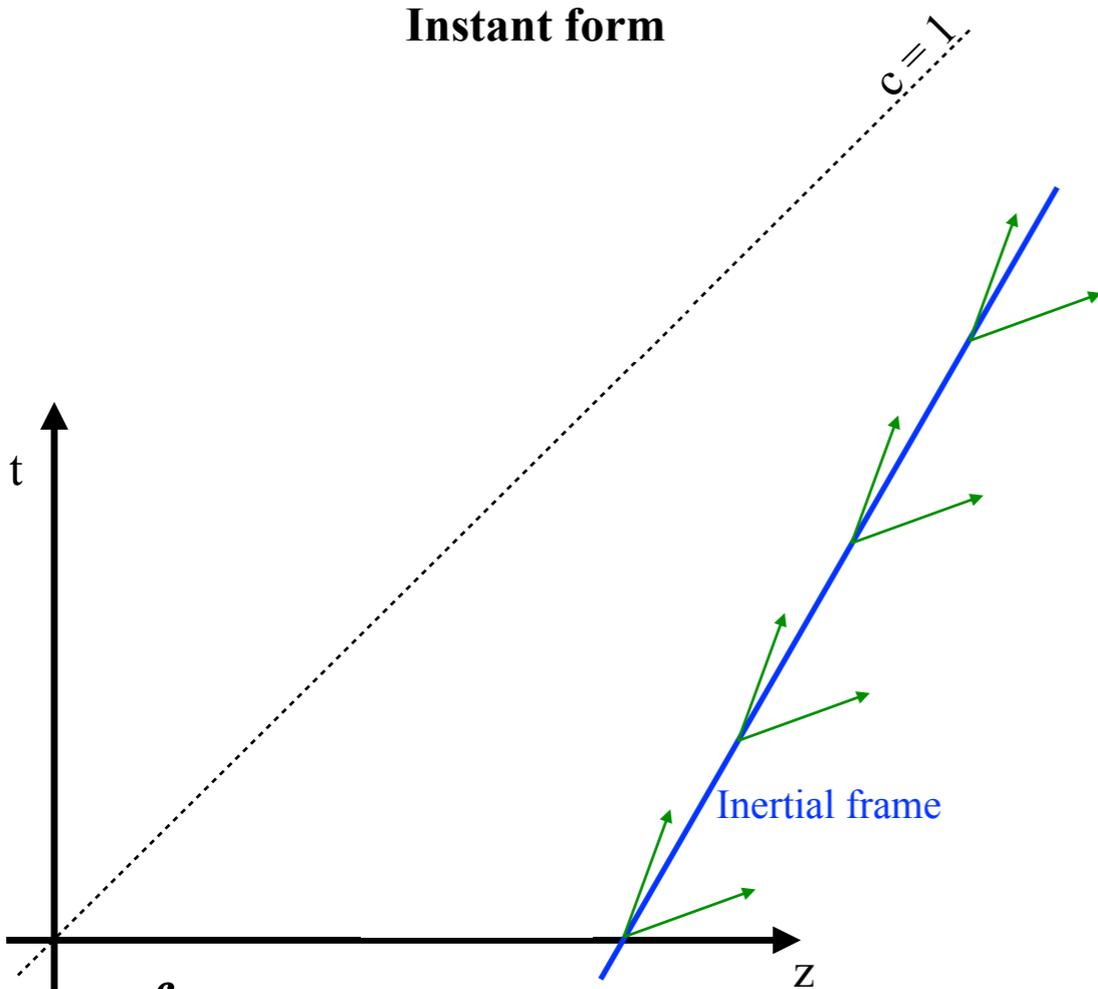
Frequencies in the boosted frame are boosted frequencies.

\Rightarrow **unambiguous separation of positive and negative modes.**

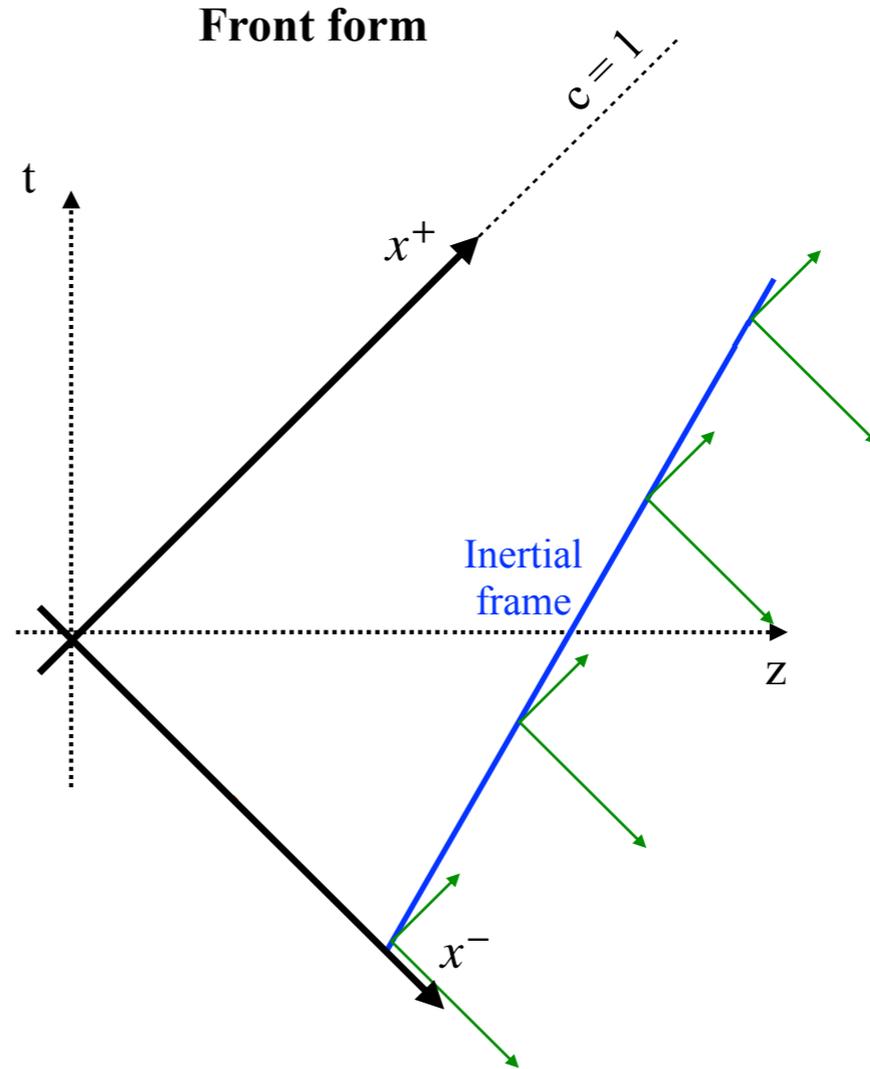
No Unruh effect in inertial frames, as it should be.

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Instant form



Front form



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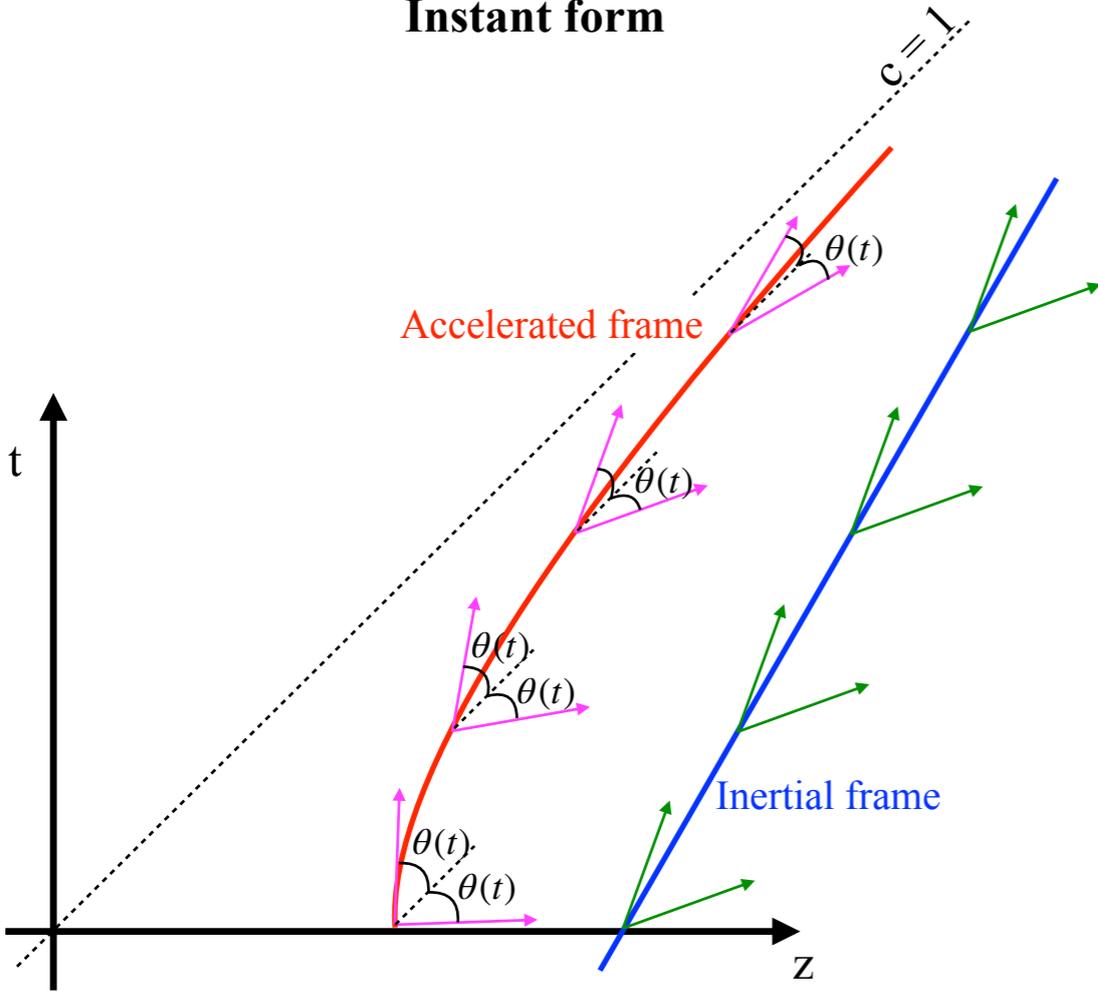
$$\frac{\partial f_{p^+}}{\partial x^{+'}} = -\frac{i}{2} p^{-'} f_{p^+} \text{ for LF}$$

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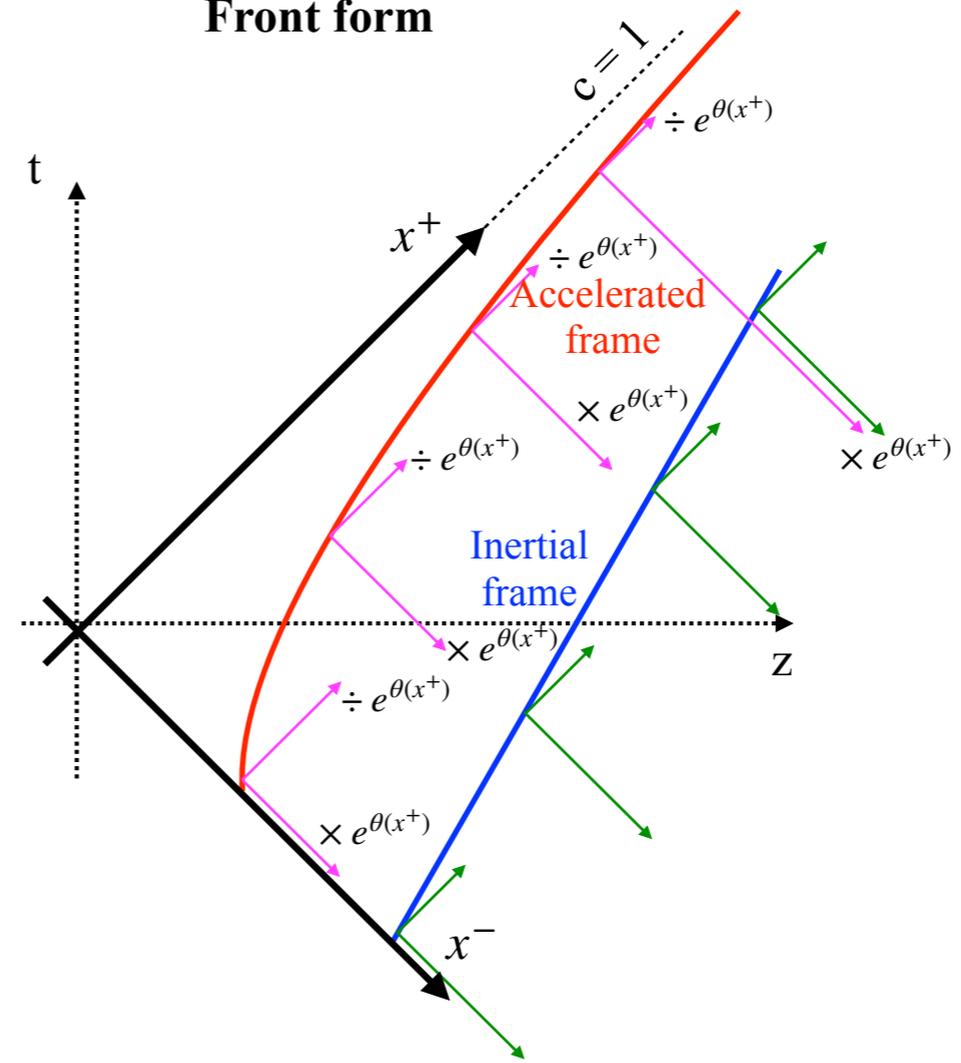
Accelerating frames

Acceleration: succession of boosts with changing rapidity, e.g., $\theta(t) = ut$ or $\theta(x^+) = ux^+$:

Instant form



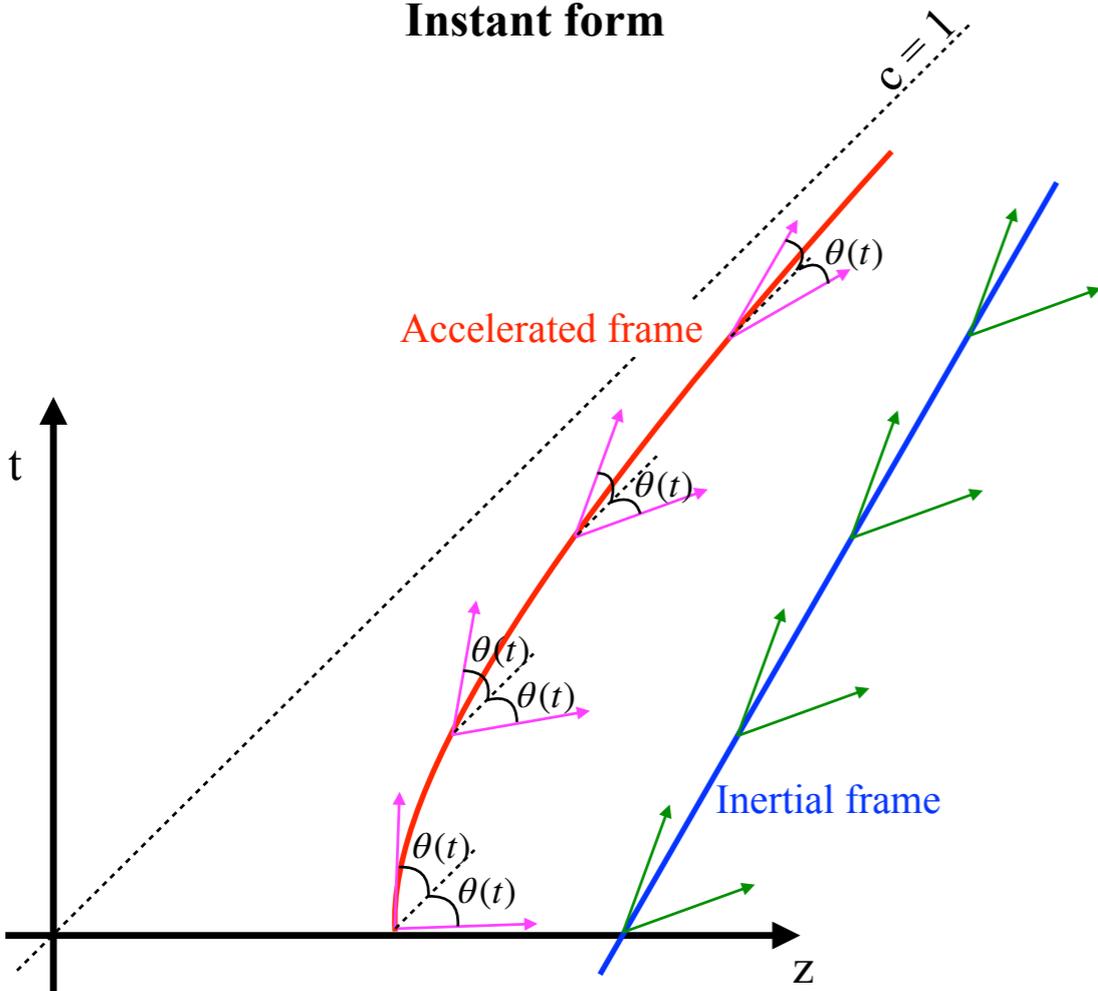
Front form



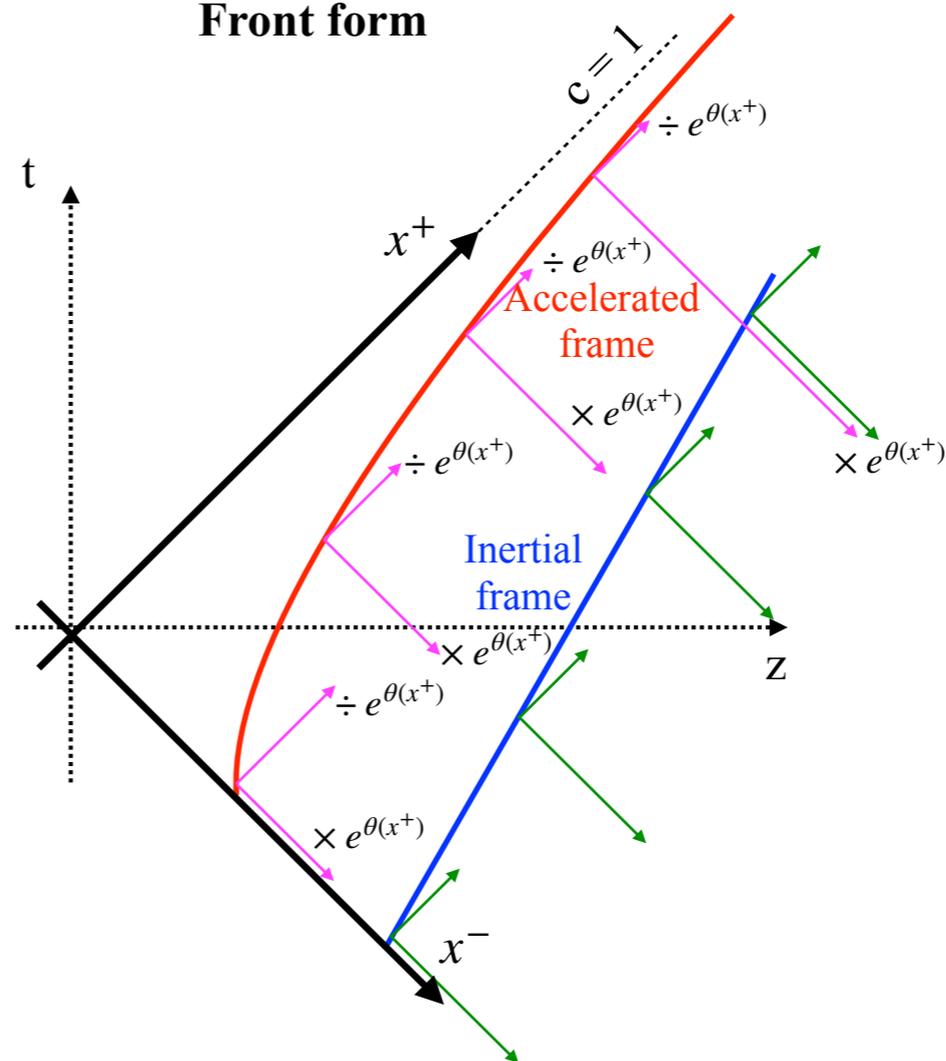
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Time-dependent space-time mixing \Rightarrow ambiguous separation of + and - modes $\Rightarrow \beta \neq 0 \Rightarrow$ Unruh effect

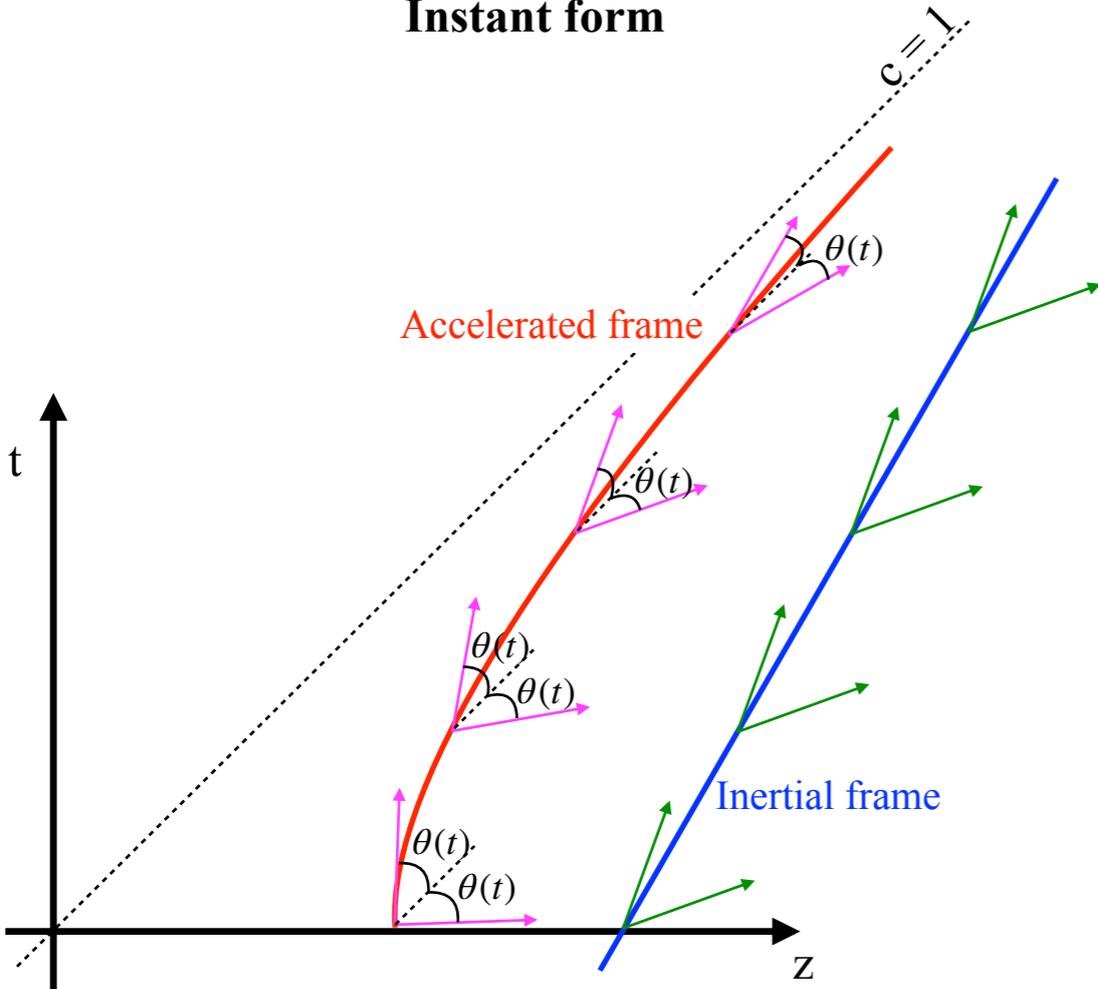
$$\frac{\partial f_p}{\partial t'} = -i [\omega' + \partial_t \theta (\omega z - t p)] f_p, \text{ with } \partial_t \theta(t) = u \operatorname{sech}(ut) / [1 - uz + ut \tanh(ut)] \text{ for IF,}$$

Not Lorentz invariant.

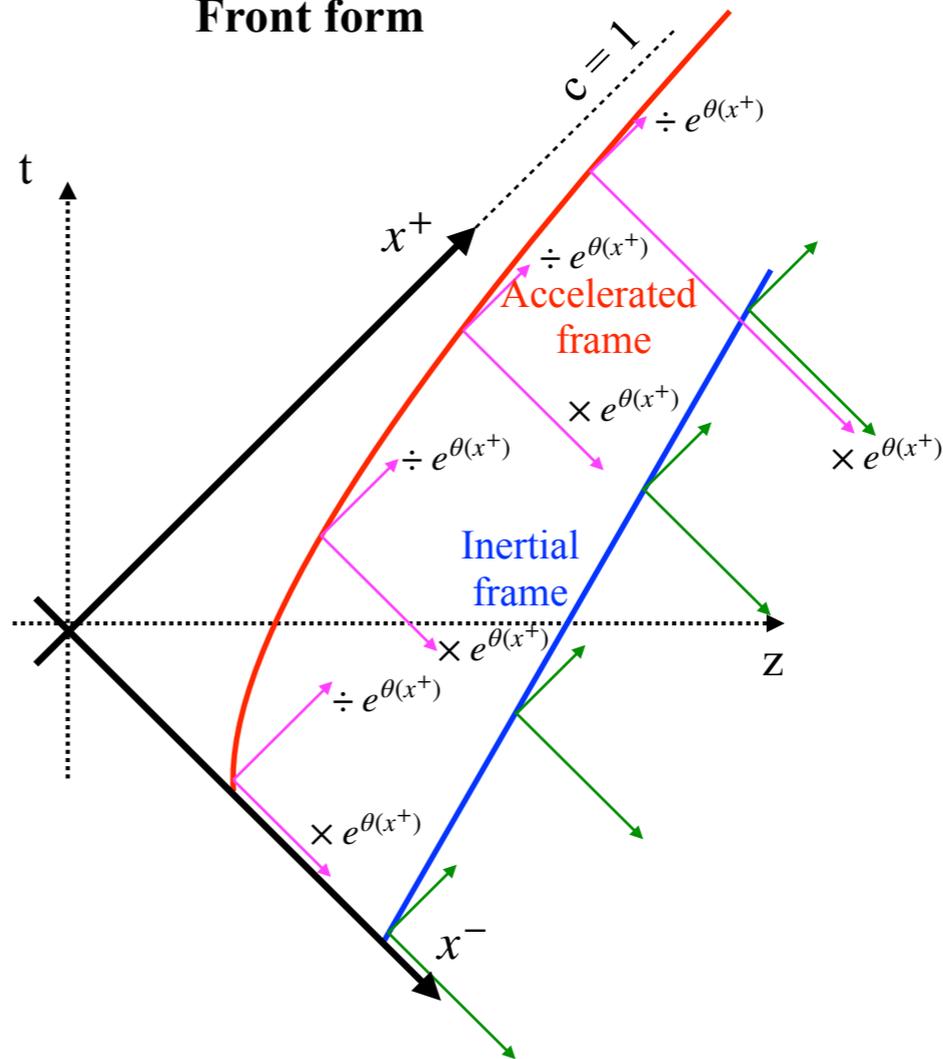
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$$\frac{\partial f_{p^+}}{\partial x^{+'}} = -\frac{i}{2} [p^{-'} + \partial_{x^+} \theta (x^- p^+ - x^+ p^-)] f_{p^+}, \text{ with } \partial_{x^+} \theta(x^+) = v e^{-vx^+} / [1 + vx^+] \text{ for LF}$$

$\partial_{x^+} \theta$ only time-dependent. Space \perp time always \Rightarrow **unambiguous** separation of + and - modes $\Rightarrow \beta = 0 \Rightarrow$ No Unruh effect

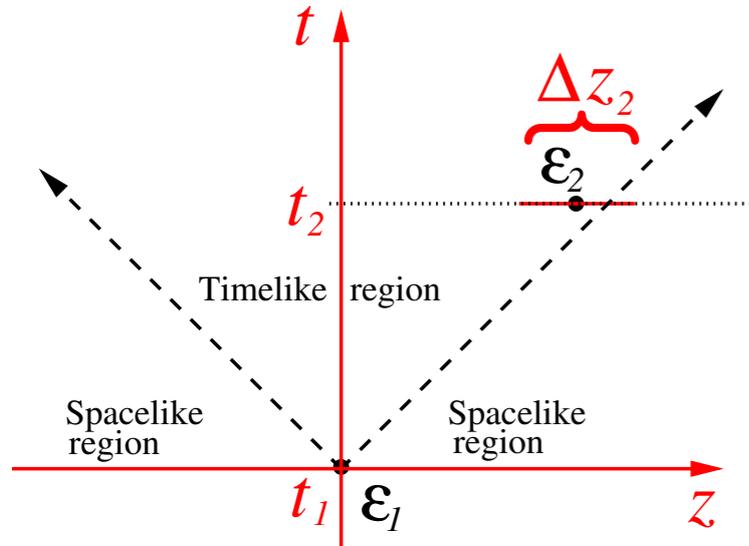
Connection to commutation relations & vacuum structure

Canonical quantization done at **constant proper time**.

Heisenberg uncertainty principle originates from commutation relations

⇒ Uncertainty principle operates at equal time.

⇒ complex IF vacuum.



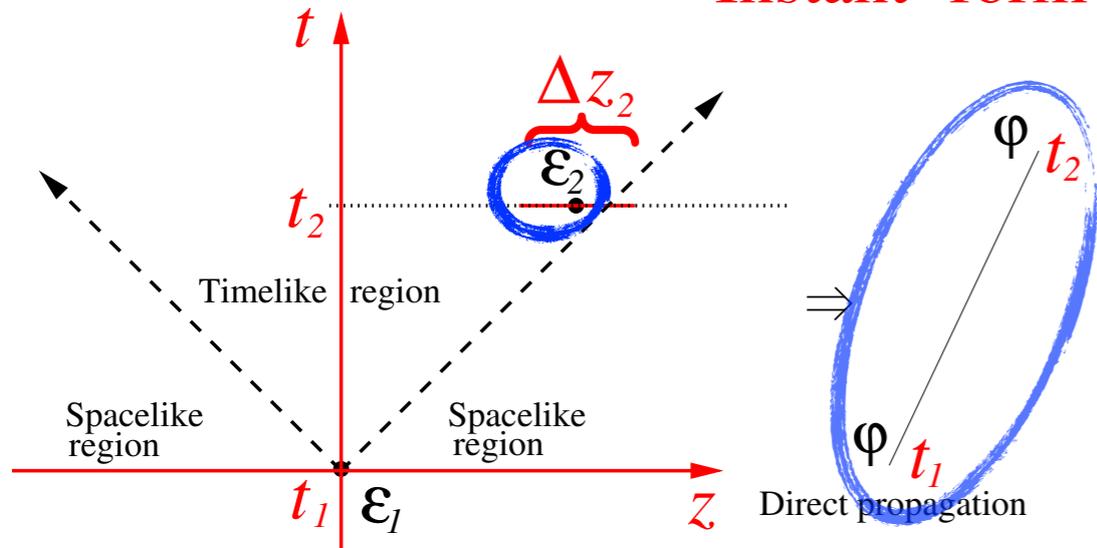
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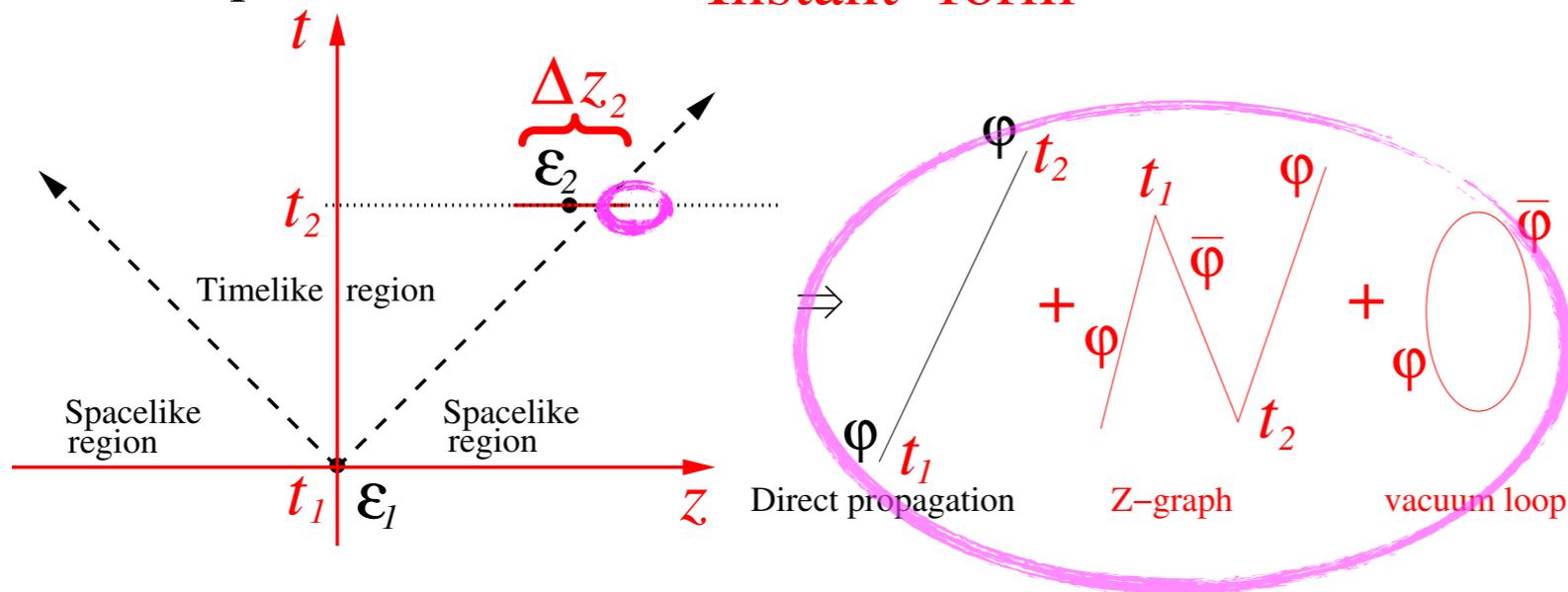
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If events \mathcal{E}_1 and \mathcal{E}_2 at times t_1 and t_2 are **spacelike-separated**, **time-ordering** of \mathcal{E}_1 and \mathcal{E}_2 is **frame-dependent**.

In some frames, $t_1 < t_2$ and **Z-graphs** appear. They contribute negative probabilities.

⇒ Need disconnected **vacuum loops** to balance the negative probabilities.

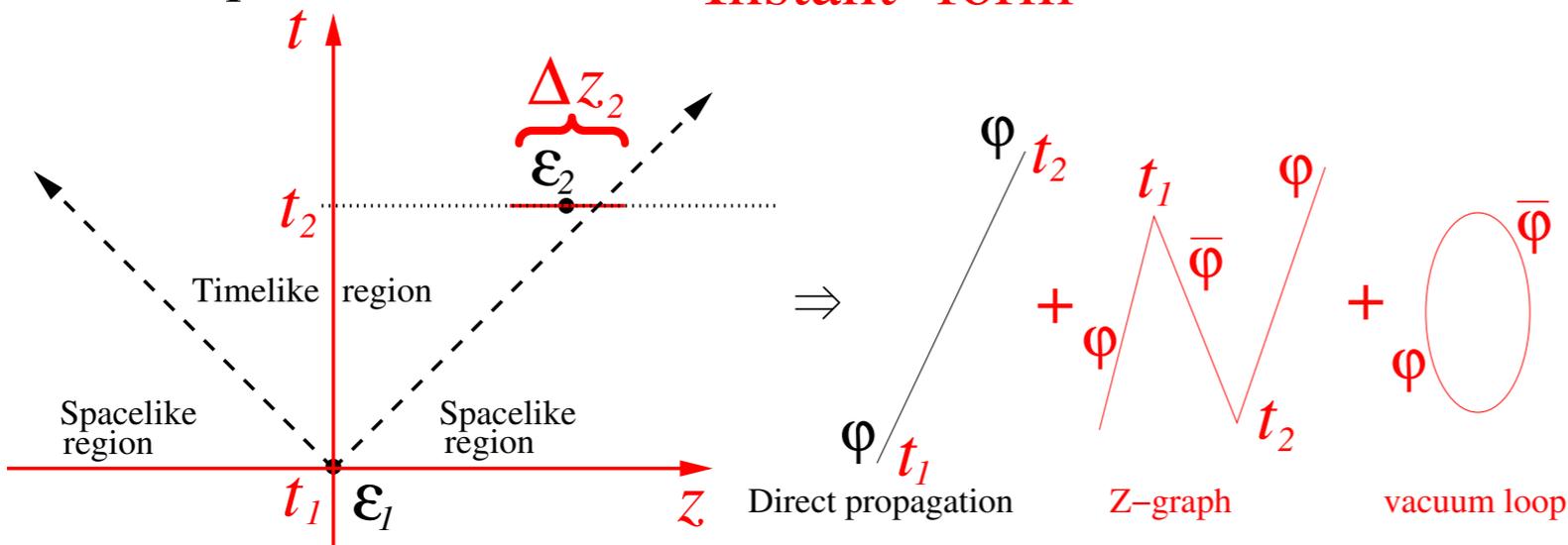
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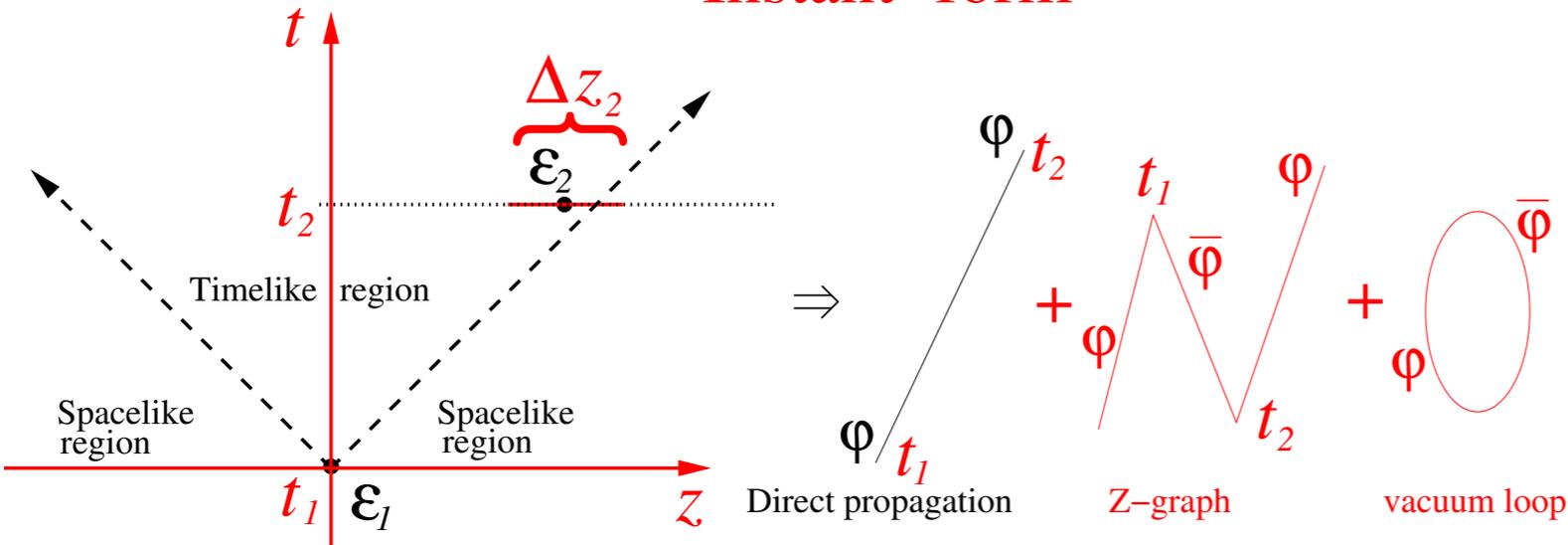
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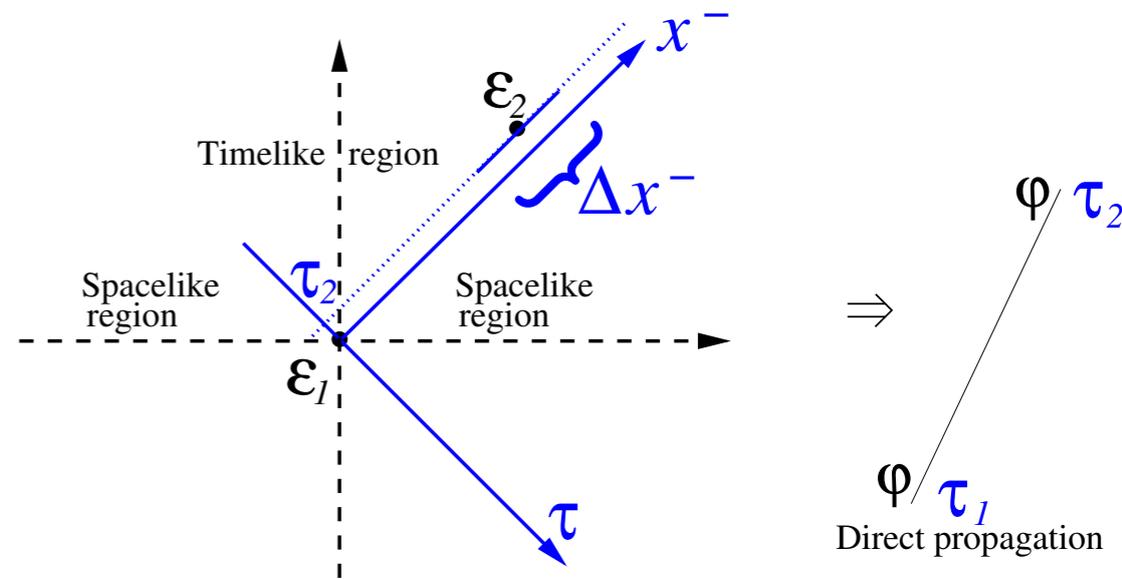
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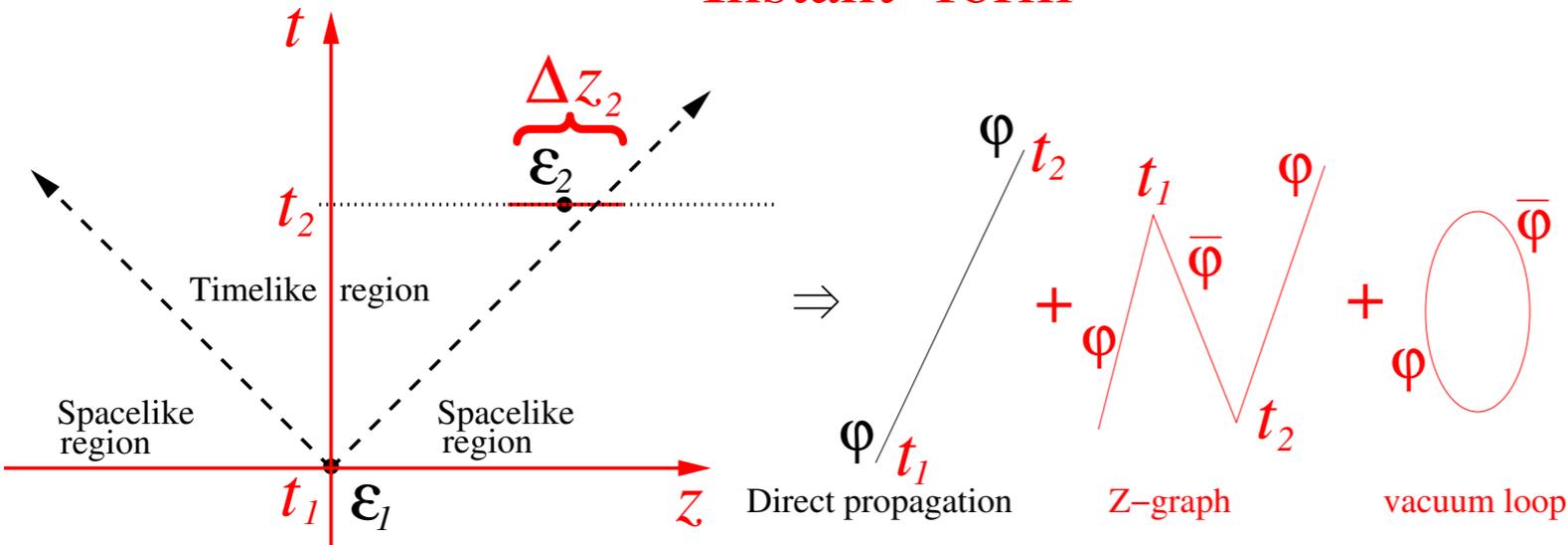
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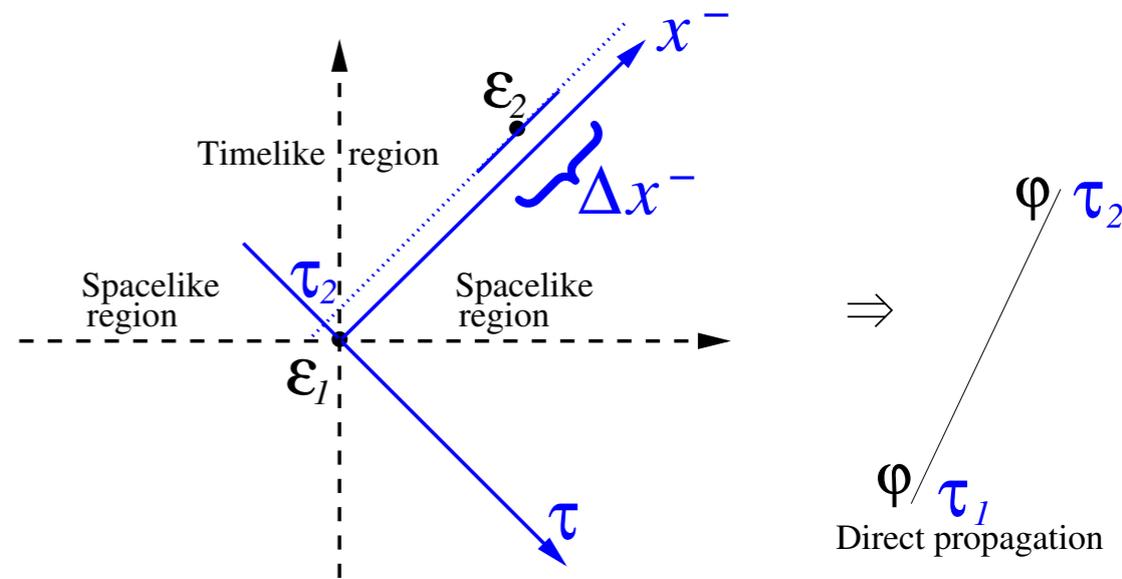
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This persists in an accelerated LF frame: **no Unruh effect**.

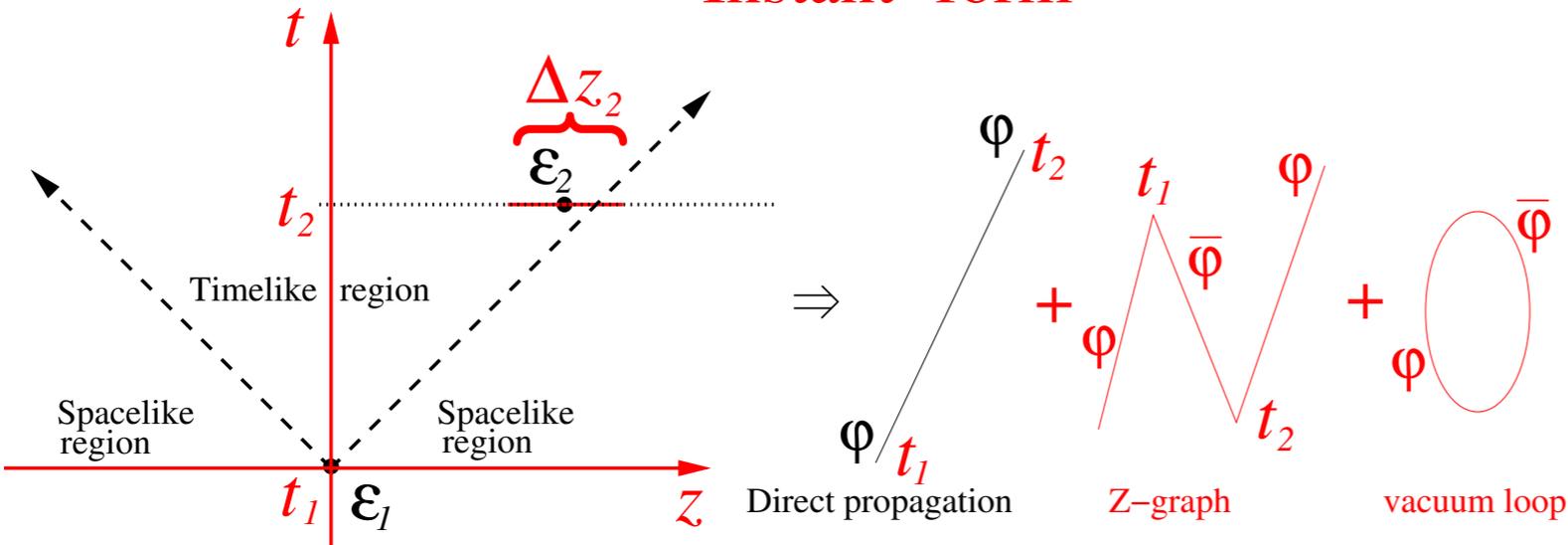
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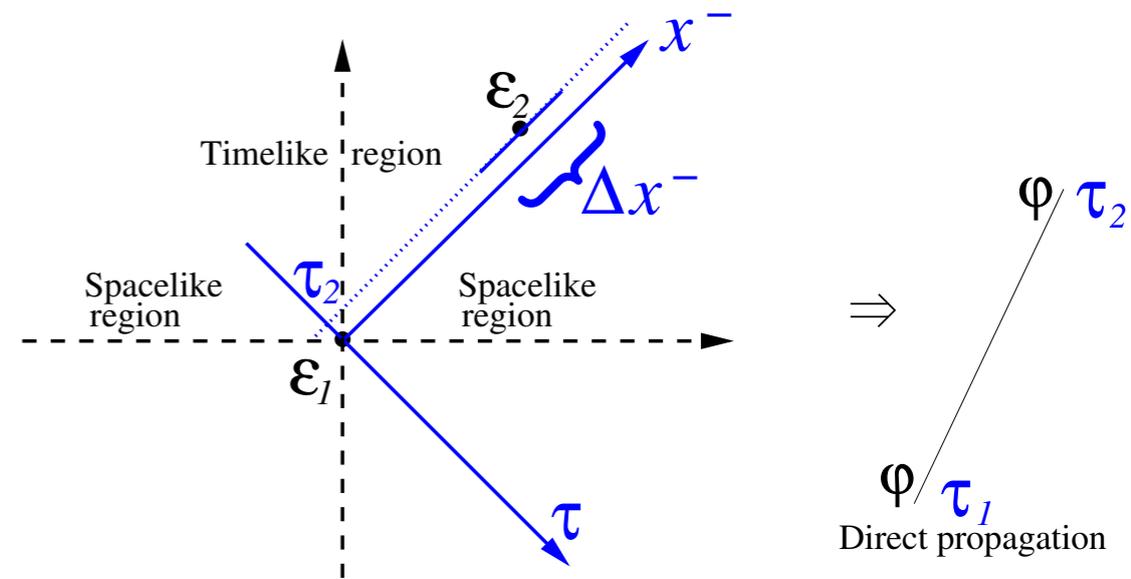
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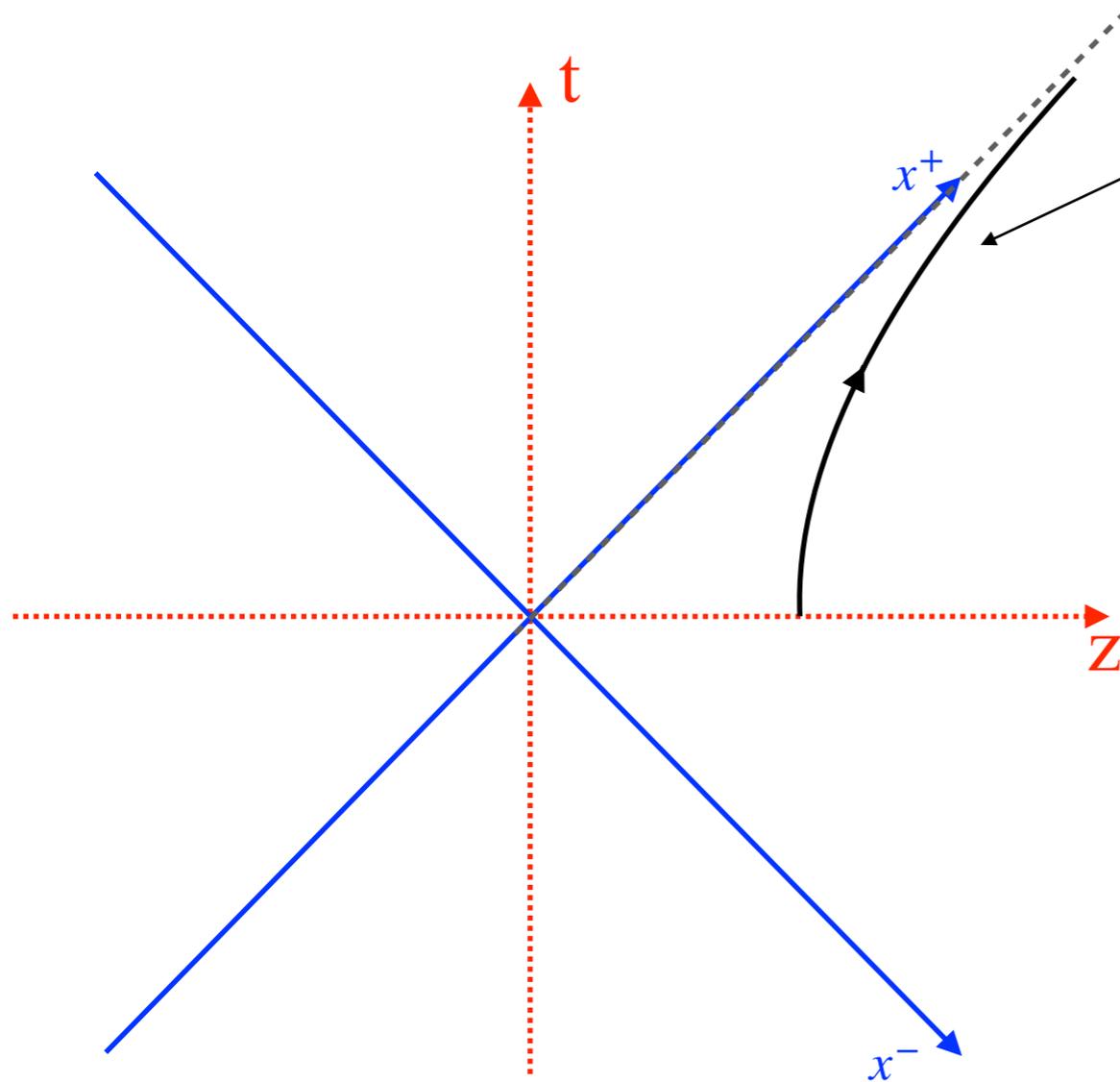
\mathcal{E}_1 and \mathcal{E}_2 are **always timelike-separated**: **No vacuum loops**.

This persists in an accelerated LF frame: **no Unruh effect**.

Also: Momentum conservation ⇒ no vacuum loops: LF particles must have $p^+ \geq 0$. Vacuum $p^+ = 0$ ⇒ one of the particles of the vacuum loop would have $p^+ < 0$, which is forbidden.

Standard derivation (Unruh 1976)

S. M. Carroll, Spacetime and Geometry: An Introduction to General Relativity, Cambridge University Press

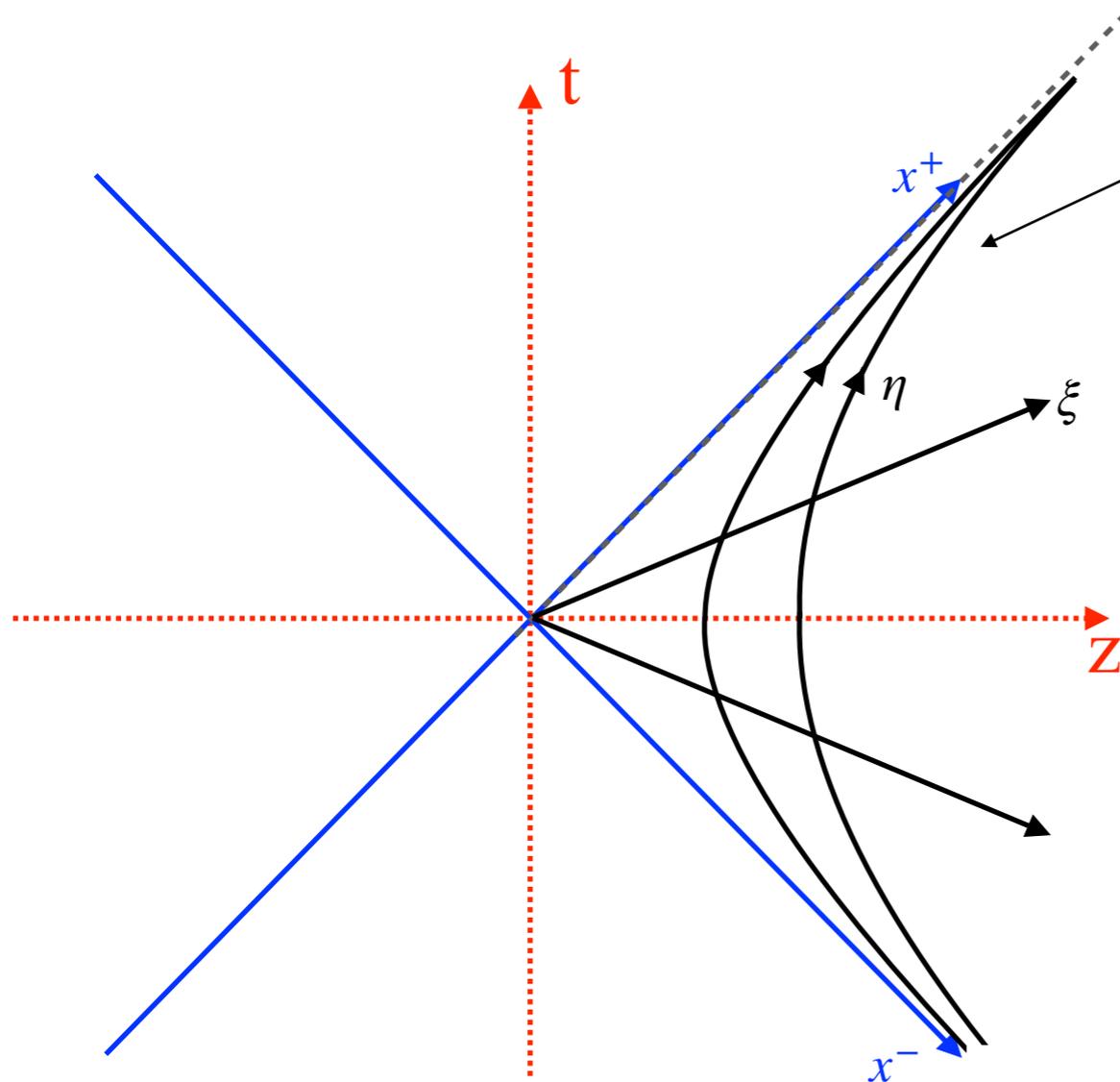


Acceleration:

- Hyperboloid in IF: $t^2(\rho) = z^2(\rho) - \alpha^2$
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⇒ define new coordinate system (ξ, η) :

$$\left. \begin{aligned} z &= \frac{1}{a} e^{a\xi} \cosh(a\eta) \\ t &= \frac{1}{a} e^{a\xi} \sinh(a\eta) \end{aligned} \right\} \text{IF}$$

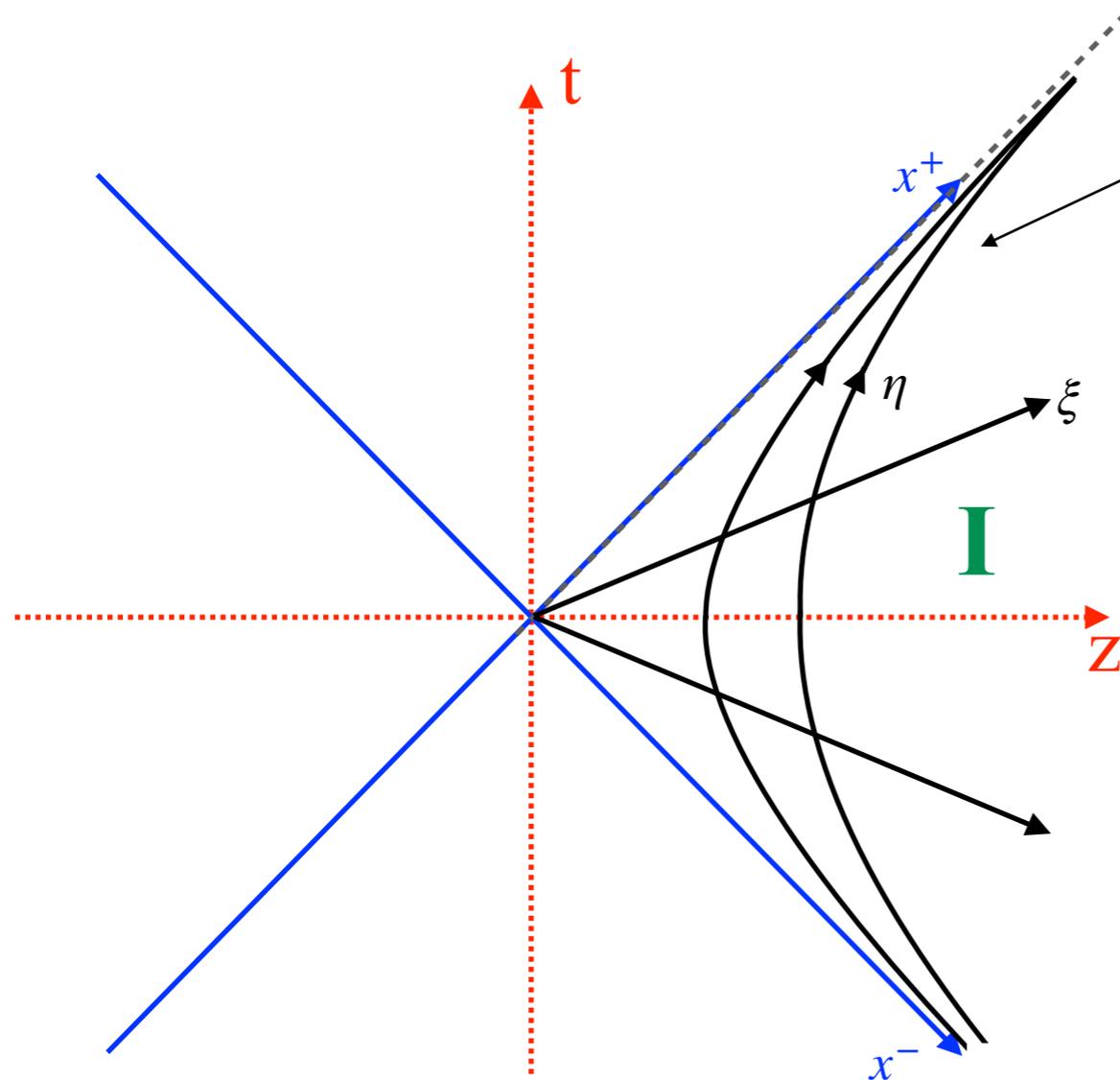
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ξ : Rindler space; η : Rindler time

Acceleration: “Orbit” in Rindler spacetime (ξ =const., η evolves)

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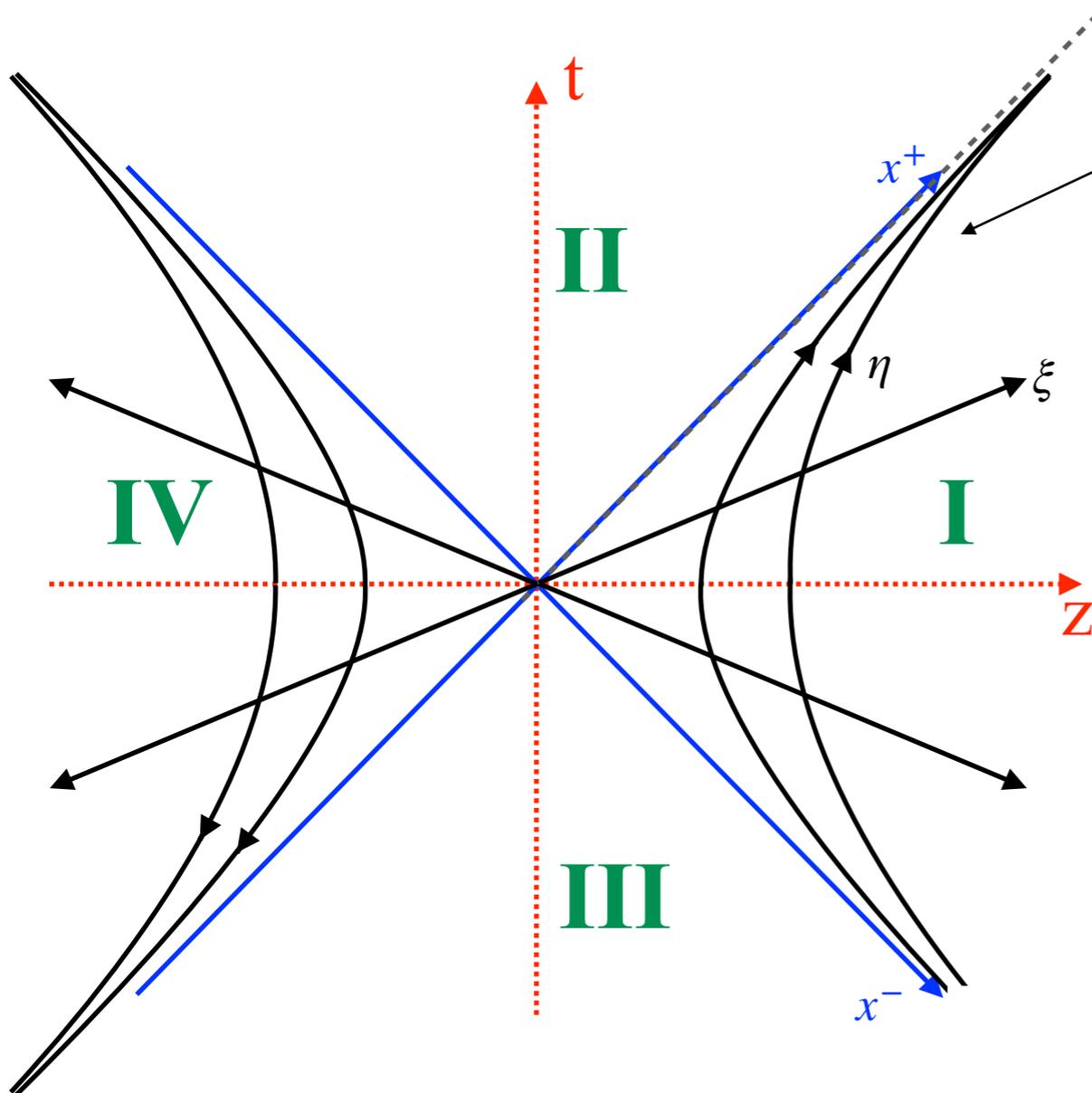
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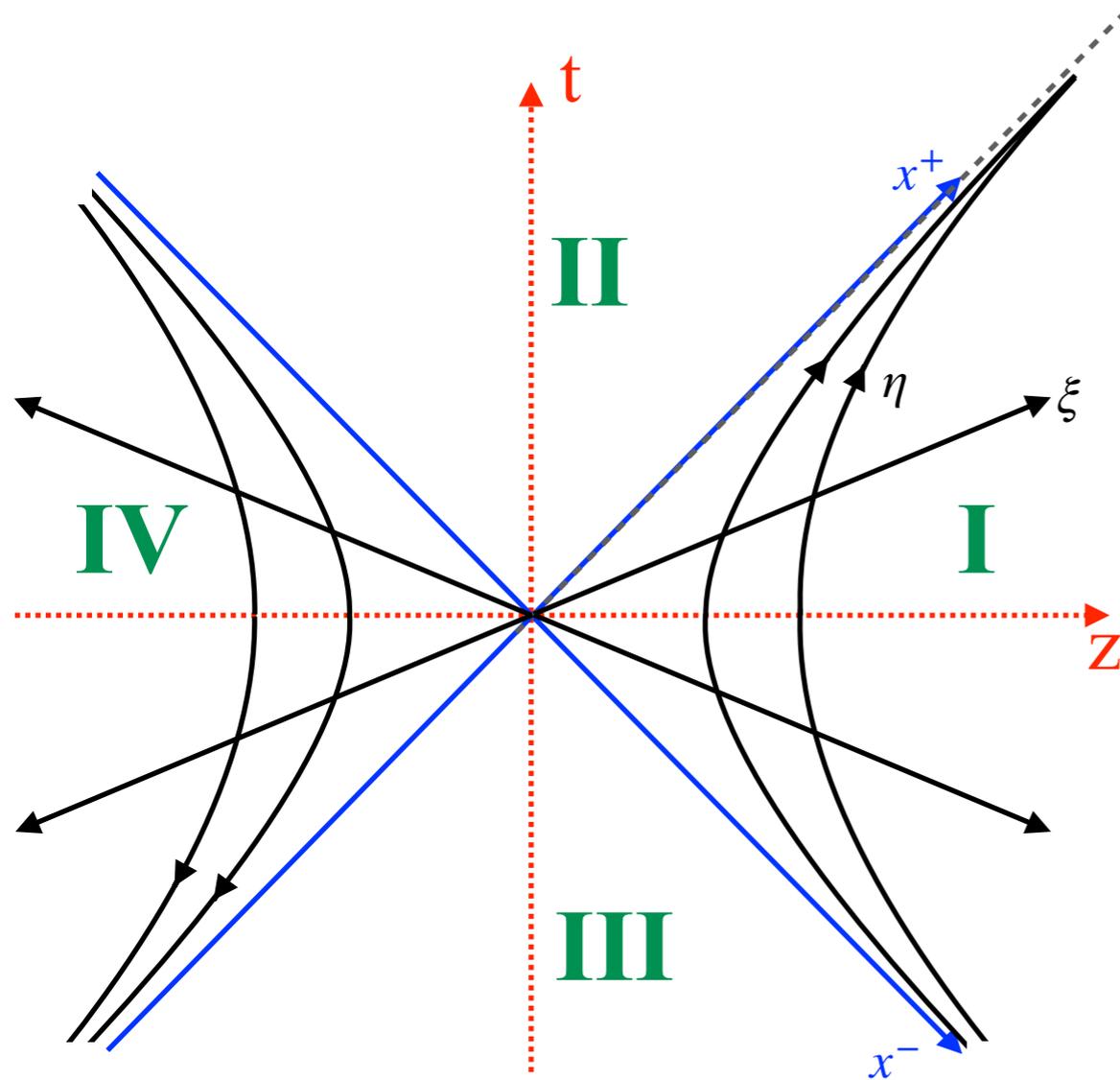
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Other coordinates needed for region IV:

$$\left. \begin{aligned} z &= -\frac{1}{a} e^{a\xi} \cosh(a\eta); & t &= -\frac{1}{a} e^{a\xi} \sinh(a\eta) \\ x^- &= -\frac{1}{a} e^{a(-\eta+\xi)}; & x^+ &= -\frac{1}{a} e^{a(\eta+\xi)} \end{aligned} \right\}$$

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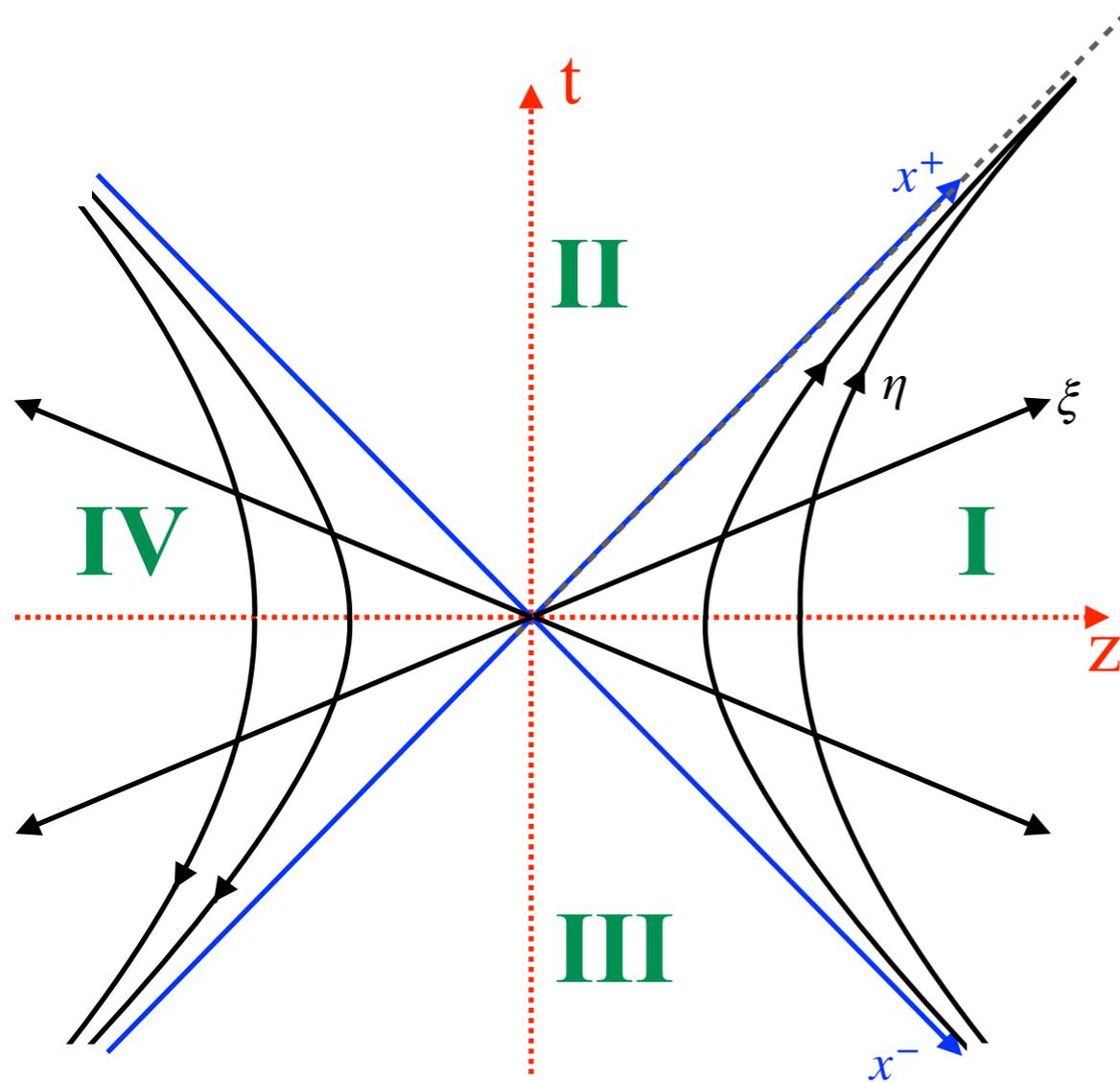


In Rindler space-time, the field is decomposed using regions I and IV Rindler modes:

$$\phi = \int dp (\hat{b}_p^{(I)} g_p^{(I)} + \hat{b}_p^{(I)\dagger} g_p^{(I)*} + \hat{b}_p^{(IV)} g_p^{(IV)} + \hat{b}_p^{(IV)\dagger} g_p^{(IV)*})$$

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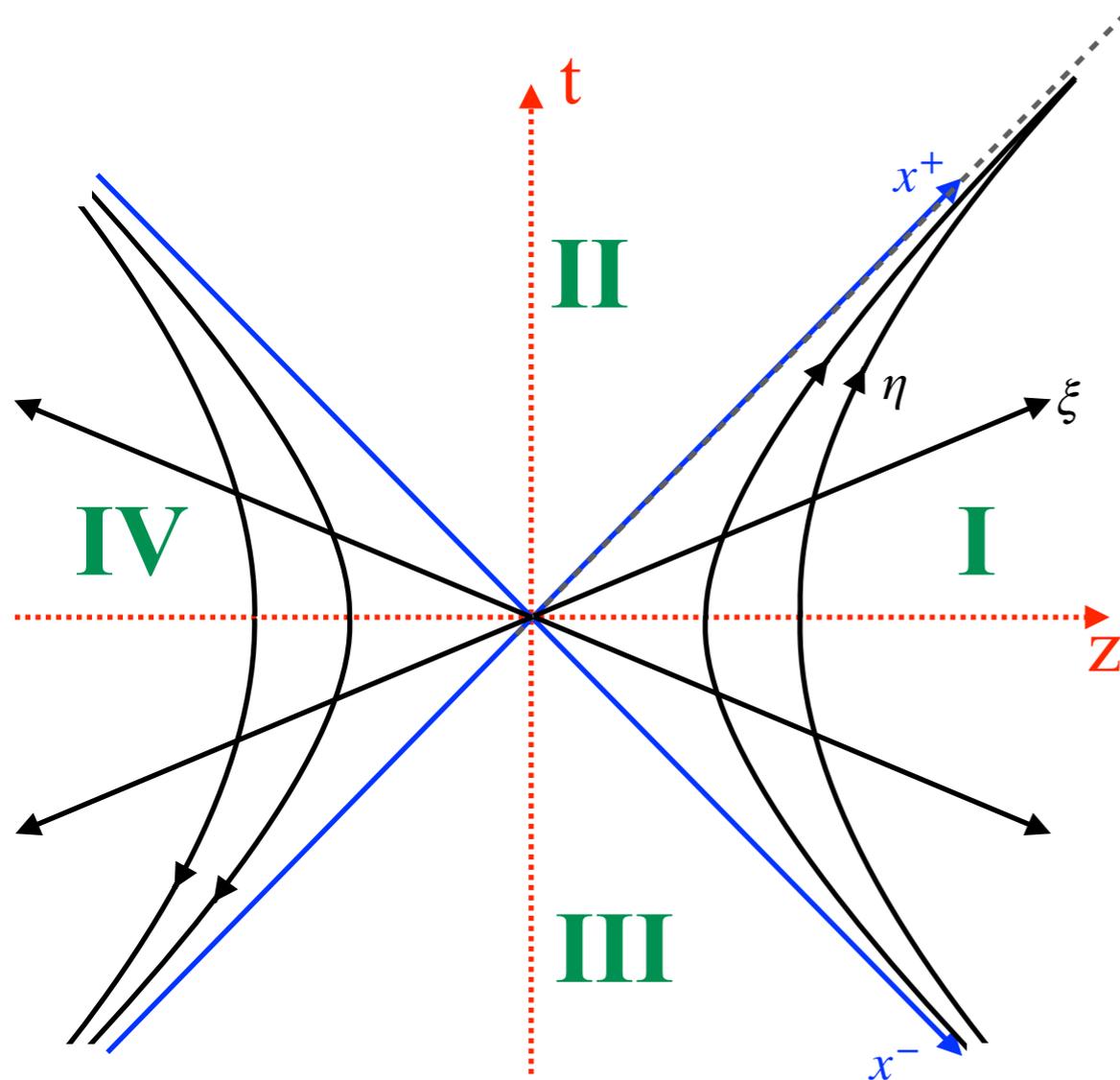
In Minkowski (=inertial) frame (t, z) (IF) or (x^+, x^-) (LF), no spacetime partition \Rightarrow the field is decomposed as usual:

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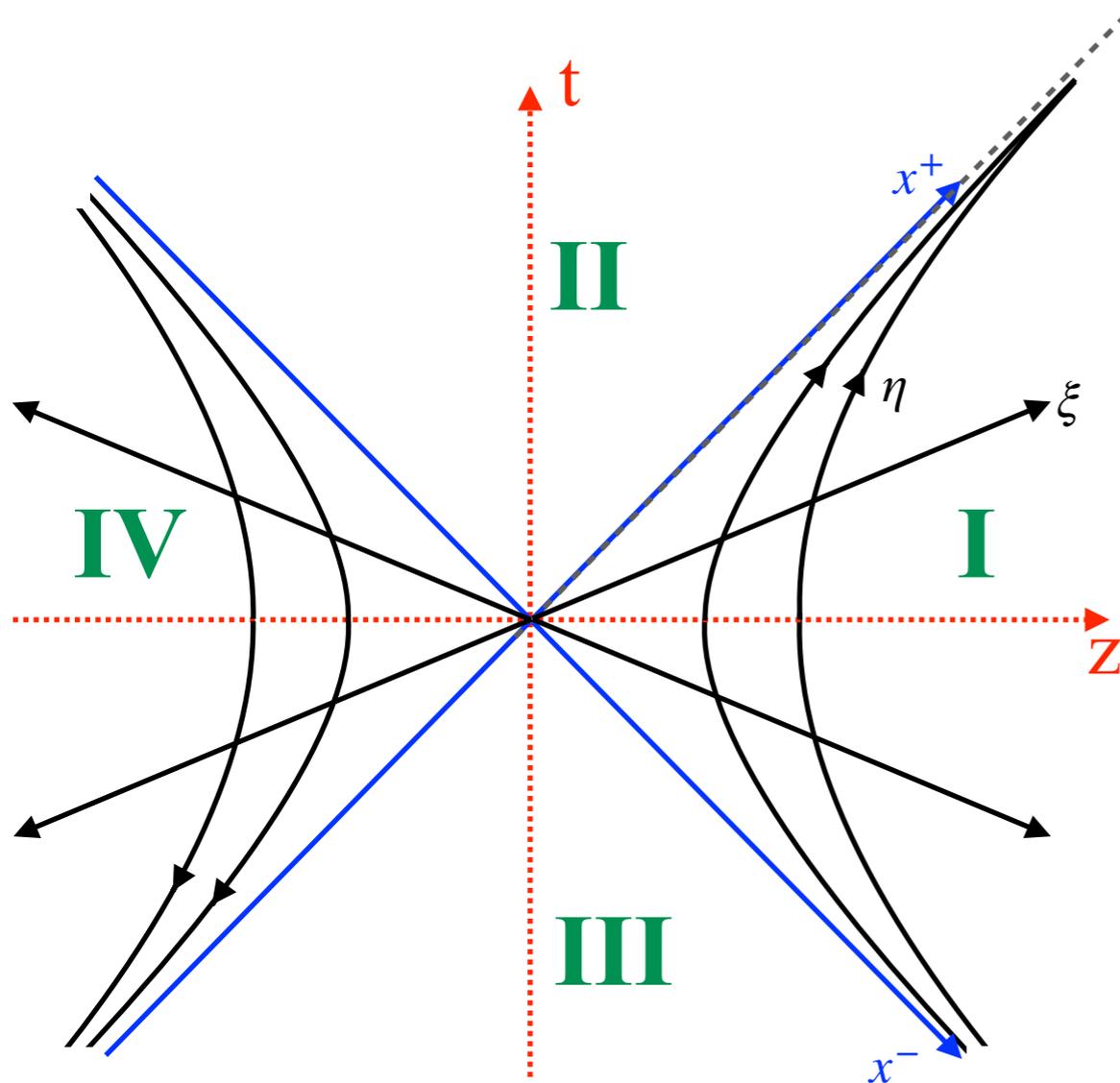
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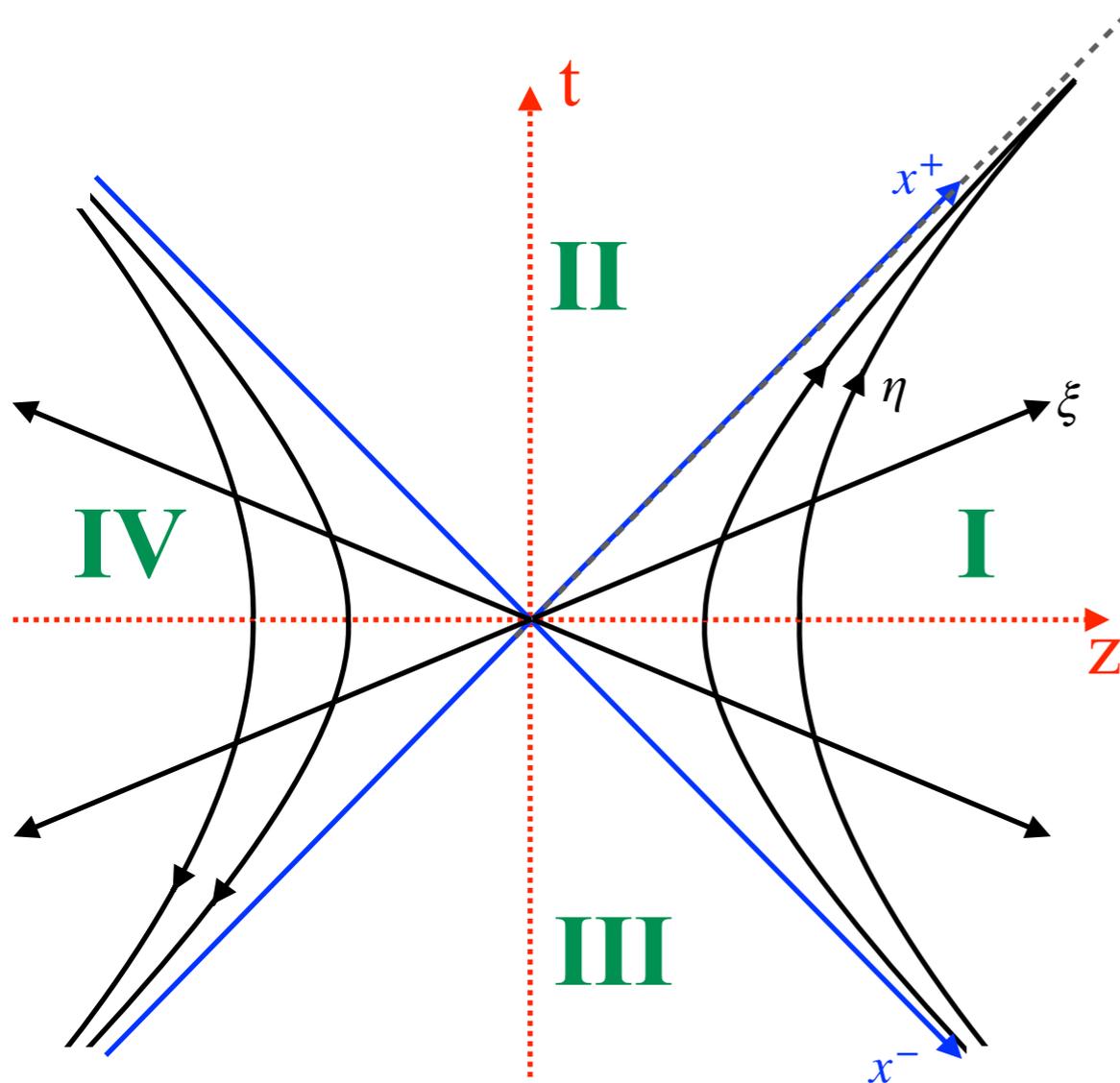
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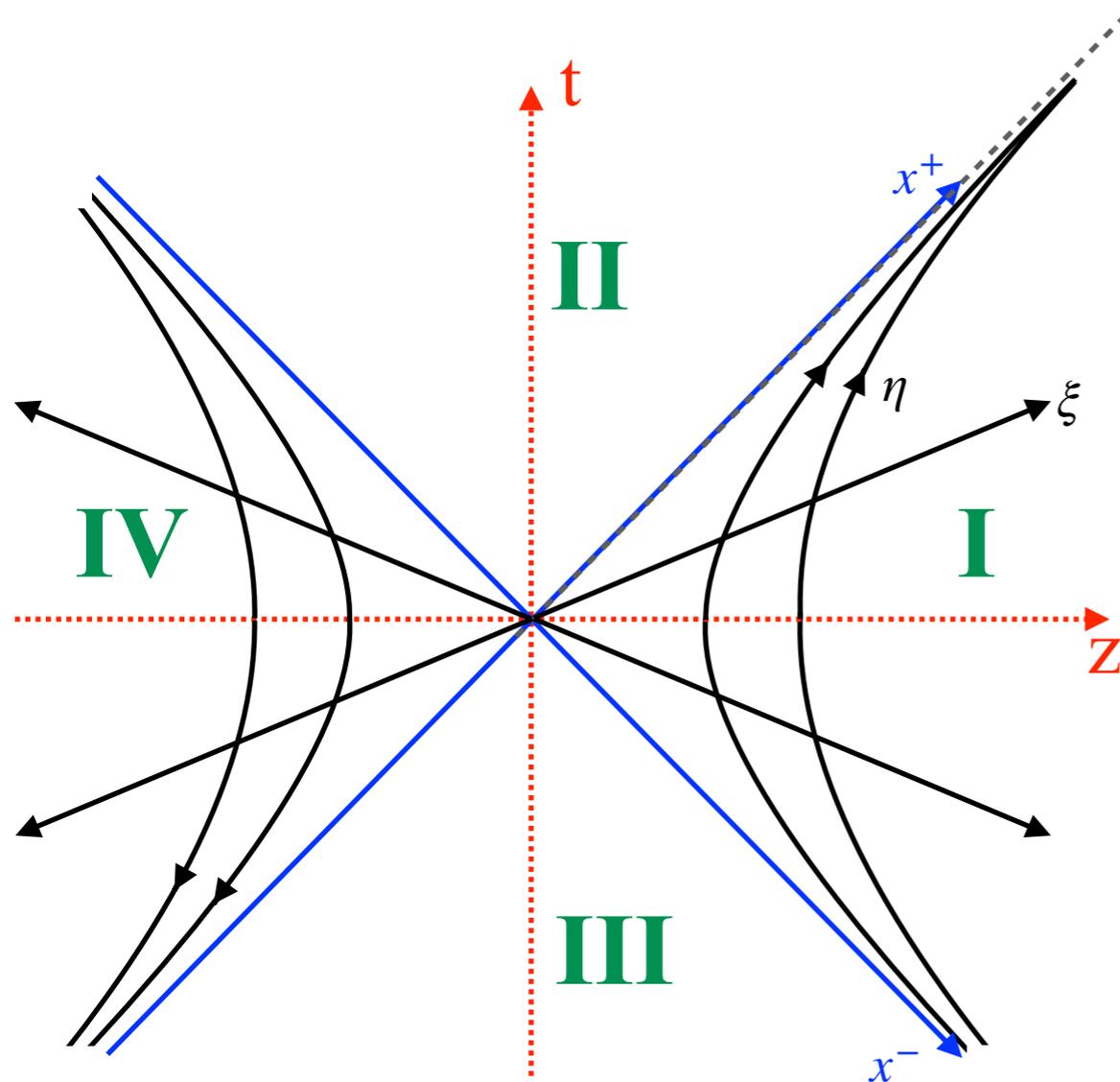
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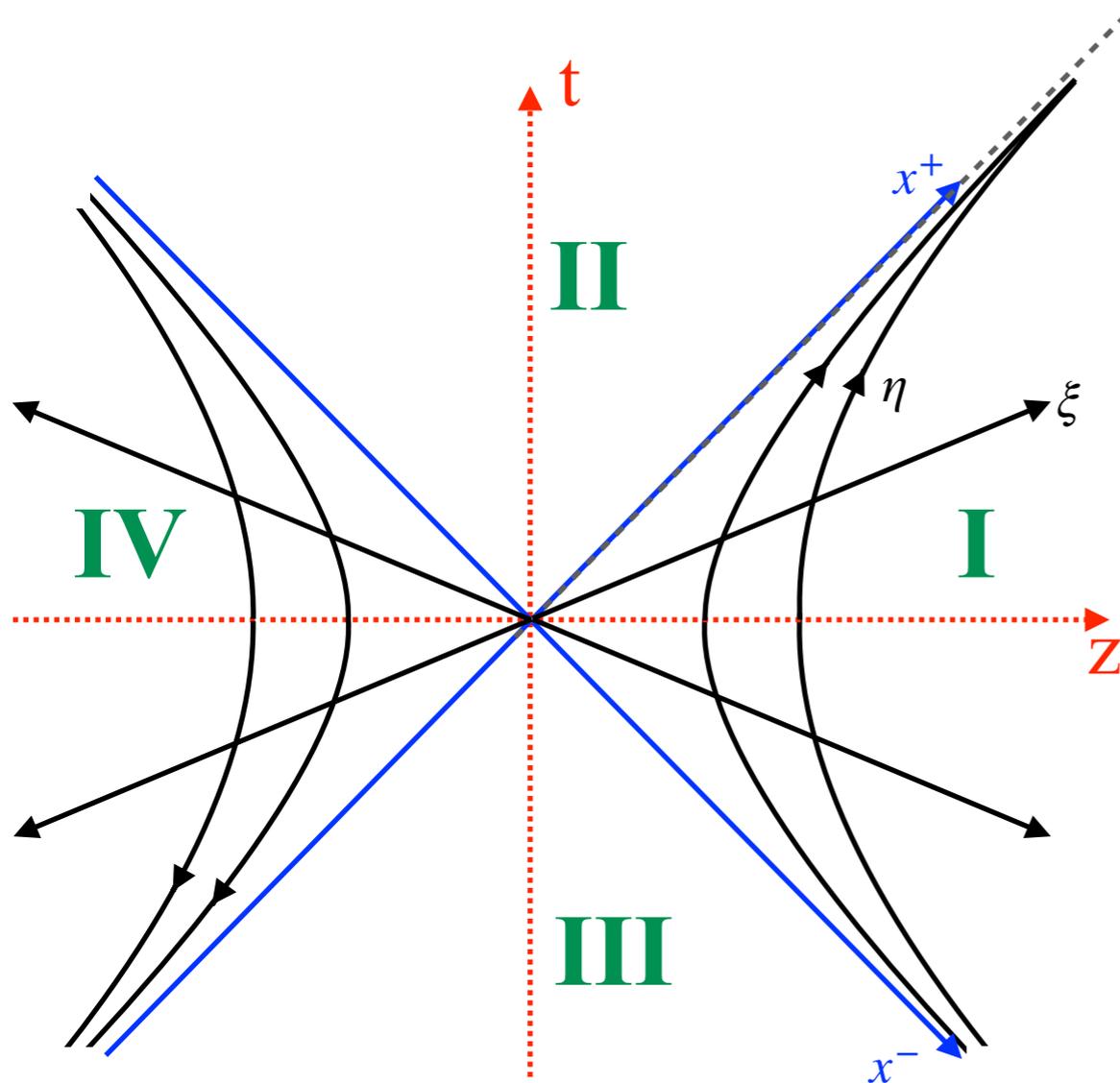
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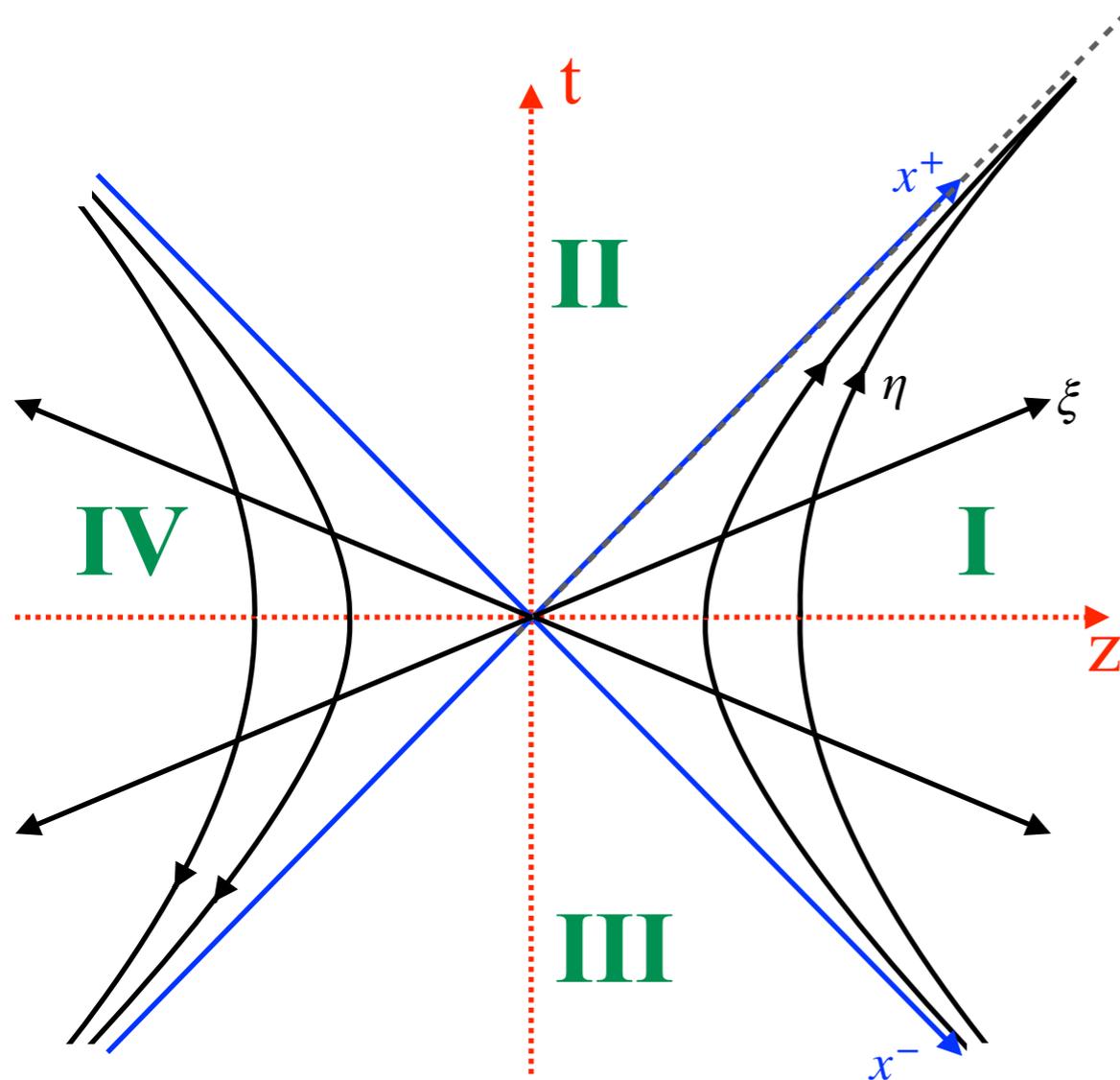
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Preliminary: Rindler time translation \Leftrightarrow Minkowski boost.

Recall the definition of Rindler coordinates:

$$z = \frac{1}{a} e^{a\xi} \cosh(a\eta); \quad t = \frac{1}{a} e^{a\xi} \sinh(a\eta)$$

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Rindler time translation $\eta \rightarrow \eta + \Delta$

$$\Rightarrow \left. \begin{aligned} t' &= t \cosh(a\Delta) + x \sinh(a\Delta) \\ z' &= z \cosh(a\Delta) + t \sinh(a\Delta) \end{aligned} \right\} \text{IF}$$

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Usual boost formulae with rapidity $a\Delta$ (a is the acceleration).

This is because acceleration = succession of boosts with changing rapidity.

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This derivation uses the periodicity in imaginary time ($\tilde{t} \equiv it$) of a QFT at finite temperature $T \equiv 1/\beta$.

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Annotations:

- Partition function (points to Z)
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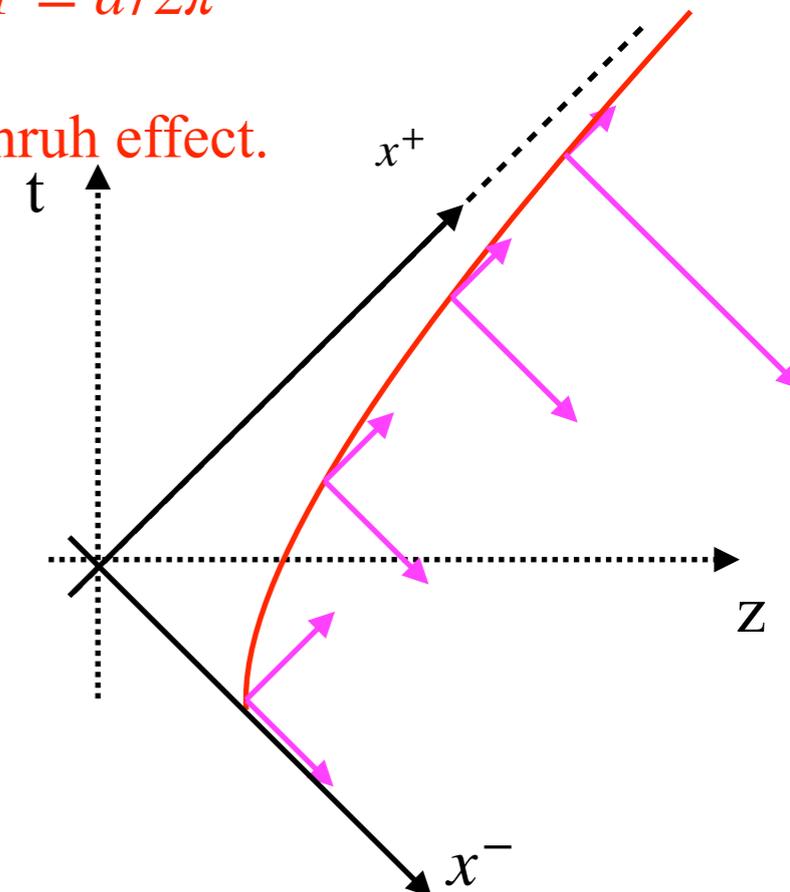
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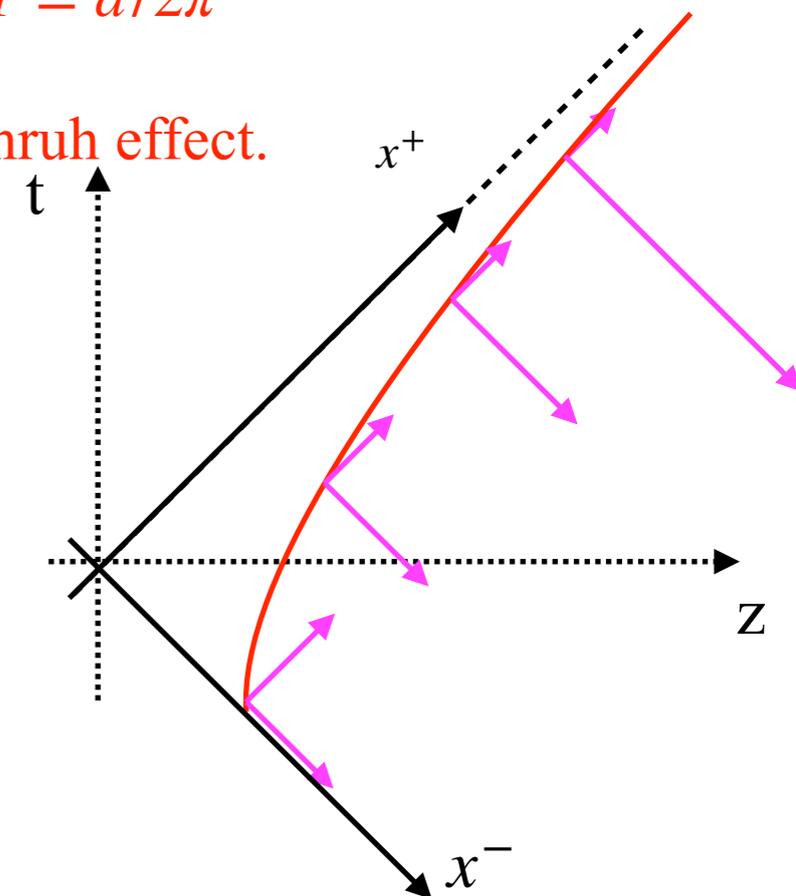
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In Euclidean spacetime the dilation operator serves as LF Hamiltonian.

Fubini, Hanson & Jackiw, PRD 7 1732 (1973)

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No LF Unruh effect.



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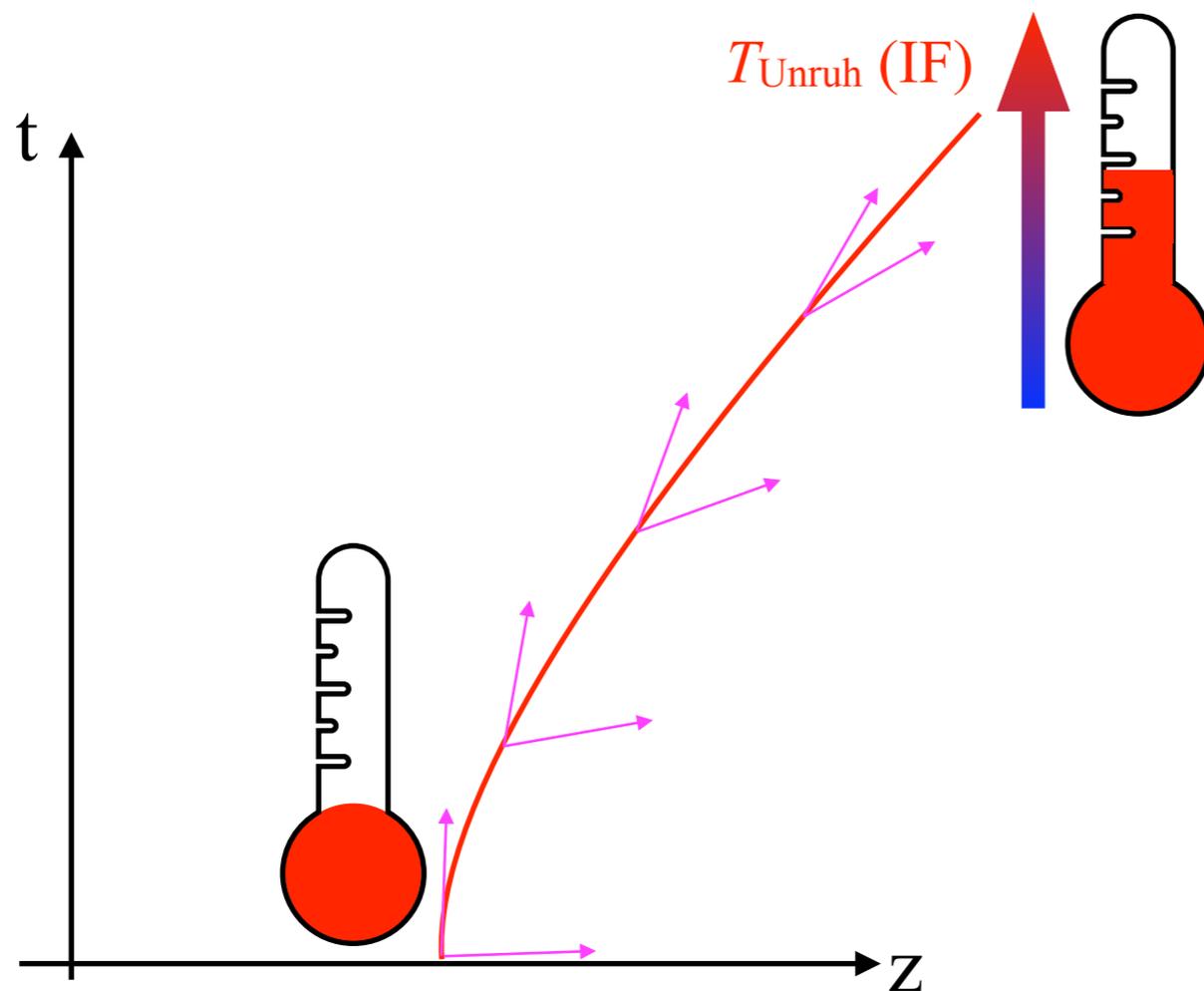
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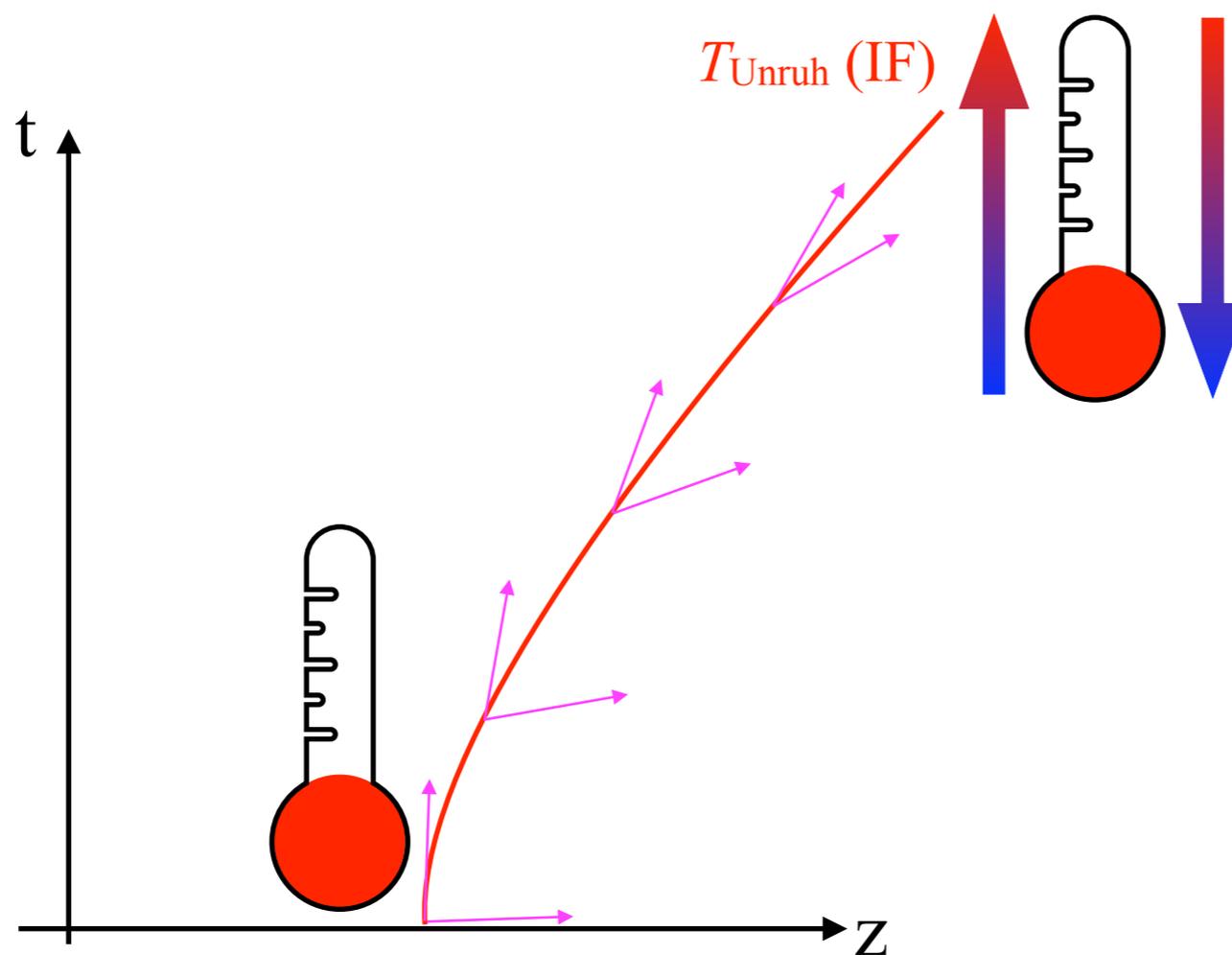
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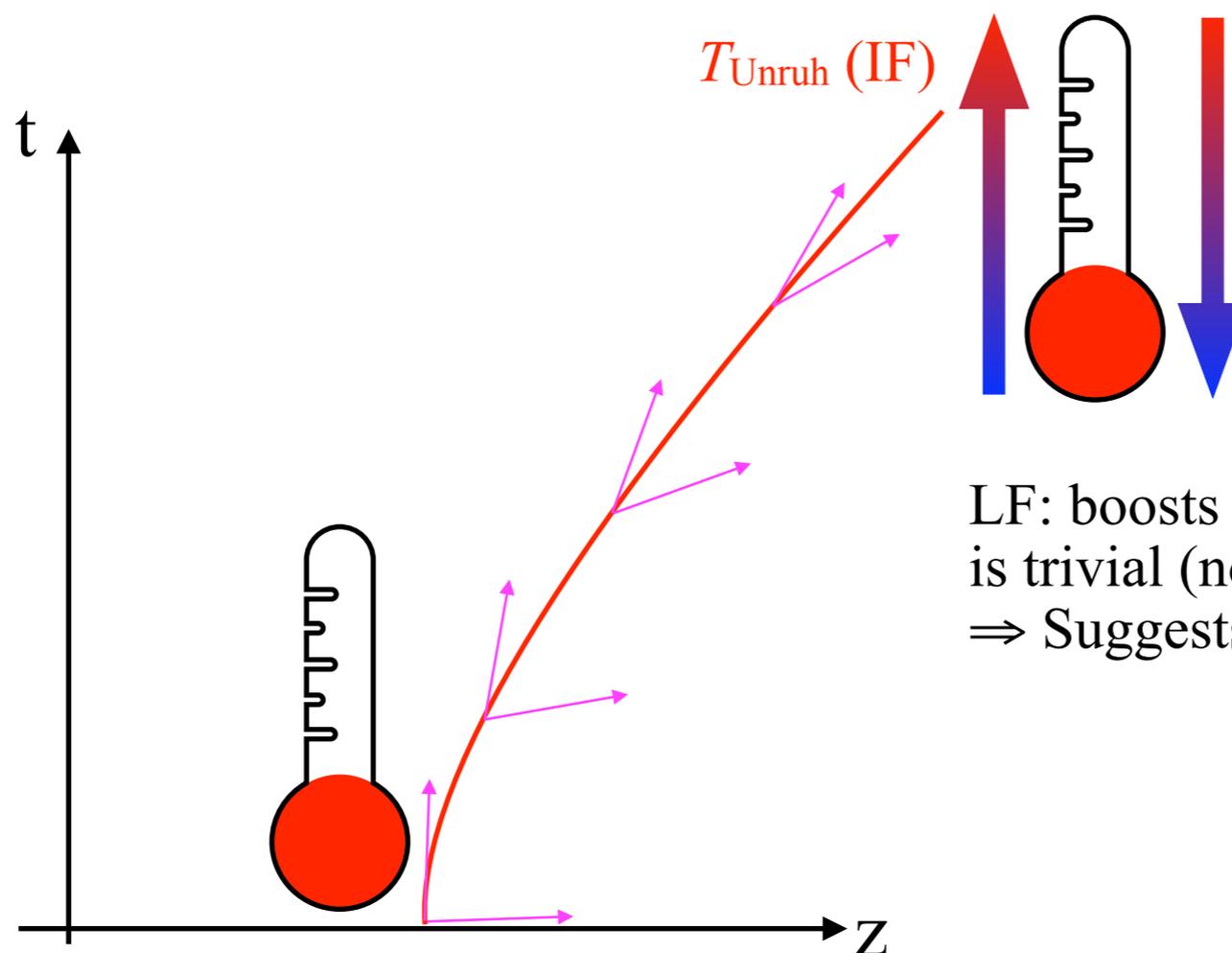
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LF: boosts are kinematical (no cooling) & vacuum is trivial (no Unruh temperature)
 \Rightarrow Suggests **Unruh heating + IF-boost cooling = 0.**

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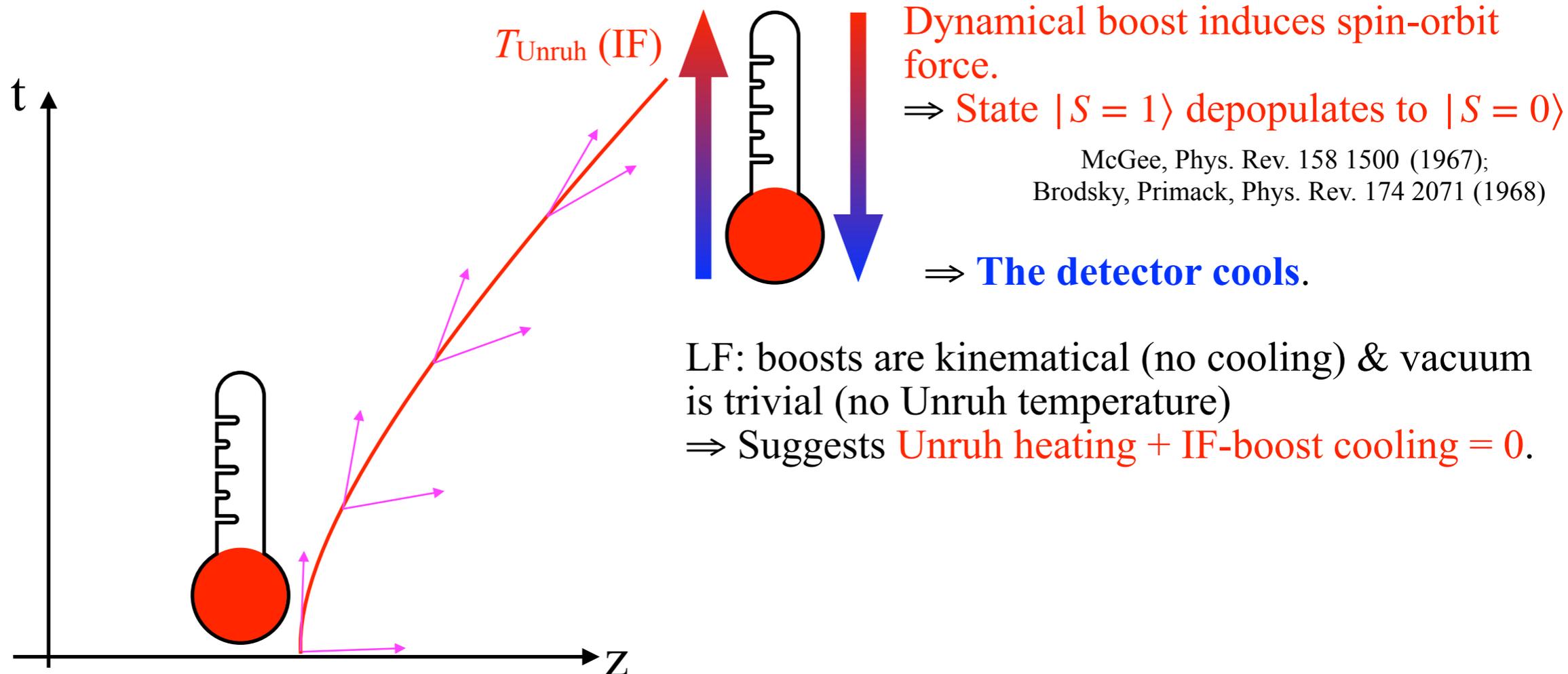
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The IF cooling effect has been overlooked \Rightarrow No compensation mechanism for the Unruh effect, which seems objectively observable.

Implication to Black Hole Evaporation

Equivalence principle between gravity and acceleration: no Unruh effect \Leftrightarrow **no Hawking effect.**

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- Definition of positive and negative frequency modes is ambiguous in accelerated frame/curved spacetime. Since they determine the vacuum state \Rightarrow Unruh effect.
- Apparently contradicts General Relativity's basic principle that for vanishing distances, curved spacetime \rightarrow flat spacetime (=inertial frame, without Unruh effect).

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Equivalence principle between gravity and acceleration: no Unruh effect \Leftrightarrow no Hawking effect.

\Rightarrow No black hole evaporation

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Equivalence principle + LF yields a new perspective on Unruh effect:

- Definition of positive and negative frequency modes is ambiguous in accelerated frame/curved spacetime. Since they determine the vacuum state \Rightarrow Unruh effect.
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- However IF vacuum is complex, with characteristic distance scale (size of the vacuum loops). \Rightarrow cannot take the small distance limit \Rightarrow definition of positive and negative modes ambiguous: Unruh effect.
- Classical physics (with trivial vacuum): no Unruh effect. Indeed, $T_{\text{Unruh}} \propto \hbar$: quantum effect.
- LF vacuum is trivial. No distance scale prevents reaching the flat spacetime limit, with well-defined positive and negative modes \Rightarrow no Unruh effect

Conclusion

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Then, origin of this grave problem is the same as the origin **cosmological constant problem**, with same resolution: trivial LF vacuum \Rightarrow no $\sim 10^{120}$ discrepancy with observed cosmological constant.

Brodsky, Shrock, PNAS. 108, 45 (2011)

Brodsky, *et al*, PRC 82, 022201 (2010); 85, 065202 (2012).

Supplementary slides

LF vacuum

- Firmly established: **no virtual particle loops in LF vacuum.**
- Rôle of possible **zero-momentum LF modes** in the LF vacuum is less clear. But, **irrelevant to the Unruh effect** regardless of their possible existence:
 1. $p^+ = 0$ modes do not transfer momentum/kinetic energy to the Unruh detector: **zero-modes cannot heat thermometers.**
 2. **Vacuum structure is not invoked in IF demonstration of Unruh effect.** Demonstration is based on coordinate definitions of the forms of dynamics + consequent quantization conditions + generic properties of quantum field theory. **Only the interpretation of the effect invokes the vacuum structure to provides an intuitive picture.**
 3. Discussions of the Unruh effect are often set for simplicity in (1+1)D. There the triviality of the LF vacuum (perturbative & non-perturbative) is established.
 4. New perspective in “**Implication to Black Hole Evaporation**”: By definition, zero-point energy occurs at a **single point in space** (their only possible physical contribution being from the infinite momentum loop, viz with conjugate distance $\rightarrow 0$) \Rightarrow **zero-modes do not provide the distance scale necessary to prevent reaching the flat spacetime limit.**

Possible nontrivial nonperturbative vacuum? Also irrelevant because no field coupling nor other expansion parameter enters in the Unruh effect.