Cold atoms, the Efimov effect and limit cycles

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work done in Heidelberg in collaboration with

Richard Schmidt, Sergej Moroz and Christof Wetterich

EPFL
Lausanne, 15/04/2013

based on

- S. Floerchinger, R. Schmidt, S. Moroz and C. Wetterich, Phy. Rev. A 79, 013603 (2009);
- S. Moroz, S. Floerchinger, R. Schmidt and C. Wetterich, Phys. Rev. A 79, 042705 (2009);
- S. Floerchinger, R. Schmidt and C. Wetterich, Phys. Rev. A 79, 053633 (2009);
- S. Floerchinger, R. Schmidt and S. Moroz, Few-Body Syst. 51, 153 (2011).

Why are Ultracold quantum gases interesting?

- Ultracold gases in the bulk are simple systems!
  - for example: Fermi surface is usually a sphere.
- Both fermions and bosons can be studied.
- Interactions can be tuned to arbitrary values.
- Lower dimensional systems can be realized.

Very nice model system to test methods of quantum and statistical field theory!

Cold atoms in a laser trap

- typical density
  - particle number $N = 10^6$
  - cloud volume $V = 10^{-9}$ cm^3
  - interparticle distance $d = 0.1$ μm
- typical temperature
  - temperature $T = 10^{-6} K$
  - thermal de-Broglie length $\lambda_T = 1$ μm
- typical interaction parameters
  - interaction range $\lambda_{\mathrm{vdW}} = 10^{-4}$ μm
  - scattering length $a = (0...\infty)$ μm

Theoretical challenge

- quantum effects are important
- many particles / nonzero density
- nonzero temperature
- large interaction strength
- possibly non-equilibrium dynamics
- similar problems as in QCD matter: Heavy ion collisions, Neutron stars, ...
- advantage for cold quantum gases: very well controlled, experiments on a table-top

Complexity problem with strong interaction

- Strong interactions lead to strong effects. Qualitative features of a theory can change!
- Physical properties can become universal! Microscopic details become irrelevant.
- Strong interaction effects lead to fast Equilibration: Dynamics can be described by Close-to-Equilibrium methods.

Fermi gases with different physics

- 1 component Fermi gas - no s-wave interaction
- 2 component Fermi gas - BCS-BEC crossover
- 3 component Fermi gas - ??

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  - Three-body problem: Efimov effect

    (Efimov, Phys. Lett. **33B**, 563 (1970),
    Review: Braaten and Hammer, Phys. Rep. **428**, 259 (2006))

Fermi gases with different physics

- 1 component Fermi gas - no s-wave interaction
- 2 component Fermi gas - BCS-BEC crossover
- 3 component Fermi gas - ??
  - Three-body problem: Efimov effect

    (Efimov, Phys. Lett. **33B**, 563 (1970),
    Review: Braaten and Hammer, Phys. Rep. **428**, 259 (2006))
  - On the lattice: Trion formation

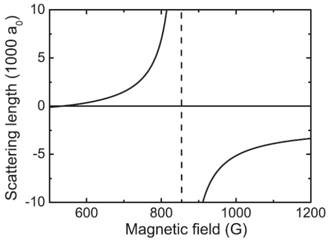
    (Rapp, Zarand, Honerkamp, and Hofstetter, PRL **98**, 160405 (2007),
    Rapp, Hofstetter and Zarand, PRB **77**, 144520 (2008).)

Single component Fermi gas

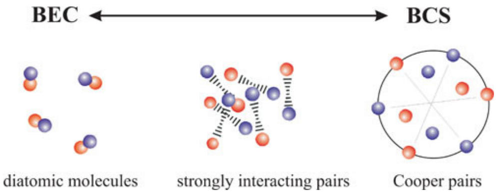
- Most properties of dilute ultracold quantum gases are dominated by s-wave interactions.
- For identical fermions (only one spin component) wavefunction has to be antisymmetric in position space.
- s-wave interaction suppressed by Pauli blocking.
- Behaves like ideal Fermi gas in many respects.

Two component Fermi gas

- Two spin (or hyperfine-spin) components ψ_1 and ψ_2.
- For equal mass $M_{\psi_1} = M_{\psi_2}$, density $n_{\psi_1} = n_{\psi_2}$ etc. SU(2) spin symmetry
- s-wave interaction measured by scattering length a.
- Repulsive microscopic interaction: Landau Fermi liquid.
- Attractive interaction leads to many interesting effects!
- Scattering length can be tuned experimentally with Feshbach resonances.



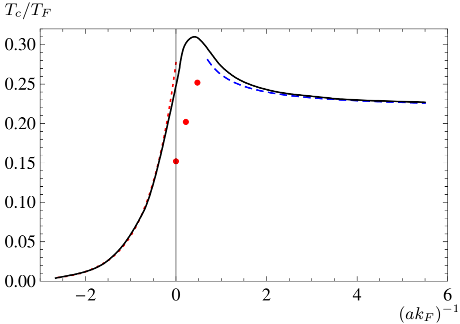
BCS-BEC Crossover



- Small negative scattering length $a \to 0_-$
  - Formation of Cooper pairs in momentum space
  - BCS-theory valid
  - superfluid at small temperatures
  - order parameter $\varphi \sim \psi_1 \psi_2$
- Small positive scattering length $a \to 0_+$
  - Formation of dimers or molecules in position space
  - Bosonic mean field theory valid
  - superfluid at small temperatures
  - order parameter $\varphi \sim \psi_1 \psi_2$
- Between both limits: Continuous *BCS-BEC Crossover*
  - scattering length becomes large: strong interaction
  - superfluid, order parameter $\varphi \sim \psi_1 \psi_2$ at small T

Phase diagram BCS-BEC Crossover

- Crossover best parameterized by $c^{-1} = (ak_F)^{-1}$.
- Different methods give phase diagram
- Result of renormalization group study:



(Floerchinger, Scherer and Wetterich, PRA **81**, 063619 (2010).)

- More complicated phase diagram with population imbalance

Three component Fermi gas

- For equal masses, densities etc. global SU(3) symmetry

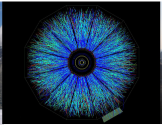
$$\begin{pmatrix}\psi_1\\ \psi_2\\ \psi_3\end{pmatrix} \to u \begin{pmatrix}\psi_1\\ \psi_2\\ \psi_3\end{pmatrix}, \quad u \in \text{SU(3)}.$$

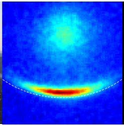
  Similar to flavor symmetry in the Standard model!
- For small scattering length $|a| \to 0$
  - BCS ($a < 0$) or BEC ($a > 0$) superfluidity at small T.
  - order parameter is conjugate triplet $\bar{\mathbf{3}}$ under SU(3)

$$\varphi = \begin{pmatrix}\varphi_1\\ \varphi_2\\ \varphi_3\end{pmatrix} \sim \begin{pmatrix}\psi_2\psi_3\\ \psi_3\psi_1\\ \psi_1\psi_2\end{pmatrix}.$$

  - SU(3) symmetry is broken spontaneously for $\varphi \neq 0$.
- What happens for large $|a|$?

How should we describe the world?

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QUANTUM FIELD THEORY.

Classical field theory

- Describes electro-magnetic fields, waves, ... $(\hbar \to 0)$.
- Crucial object: classical action

$$S[\phi] = \int dt \int d^d x \; \mathcal{L}(\phi, \partial_t \phi, \vec{\nabla}\phi, \dots)$$

- Classical field equations from $\frac{\delta S}{\delta \phi} = 0$.
- Symmetries of S lead to conserved currents.
- All physical observables are easily obtained from S.

Quantum field theory

- Describes electrons, atoms, quarks, gluons, protons,...
  ...and cold quantum gases
- Crucial object: quantum effective action

$$\Gamma[\phi] = \int dt \int d^d x \; U(\phi) + ...$$

- Quantum field equations from $\frac{\delta \Gamma}{\delta \phi} = 0$
- Symmetries of Γ lead to conserved currents
- All physical observables are easily obtained from Γ
- Γ is generating functional of 1-PI Feynman diagrams and depends on external parameters like T, μ, or $\vec{B}$

Symmetries of non-relativistic field theories

- U(1) for particle number conservation.
- Possibly SU(N) spin symmetry.
- Translations and Rotations.
- Galilean boost transformations.
- Possibly scale / conformal symmetries (at $a = \infty$).
- U(1), SU(N) and Galilean invariance are broken spontaneously by a Bose-Einstein condensate.
- Galilean invariance is broken explicitely by a thermal bath for $T > 0$.

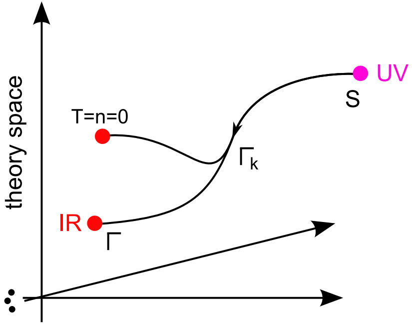
The renormalization group

- Very important in modern understanding of quantum field theory.
- Describes how (effective) theories evolve to other (effective) theories at smaller energy/momentum scales.
- Makes a simple, efficient and intuitive description of complex phenomena possible.

How do we obtain the quantum effective action $\Gamma[\phi]$?

Idea of functional renormalization: $\Gamma[\phi] \to \Gamma_k[\phi]$

- k is additional infrared cutoff parameter.
- $\Gamma_k[\phi] \to \Gamma[\phi]$ for $k \to 0$.
- $\Gamma_k[\phi] \to S[\phi]$ for $k \to \infty$.
- Dependence on T, μ or $\vec{B}$ trivial for $k \to \infty$.



$\Gamma[\phi]$ *and the grand canonical ensemble*

Functional integral representation of the partition function

$$Z = e^{-\beta\Omega_G} = \mathrm{Tr}\, e^{-\beta(H-\mu N)} = \int D\chi\, e^{-S[\chi]}.$$

Generalization with $J = \frac{\delta}{\delta\phi}\Gamma_k[\phi]$

$$e^{-\Gamma_k[\phi]} = \int D\chi\, e^{-S[\phi+\chi]+J\chi-\frac{1}{2}\chi\, R_k\, \chi}.$$

- R_k is an infrared cutoff function
  - suppresses all fluctuations $R_k \to \infty$ for $k \to \infty$.
  - is removed $R_k \to 0$ for $k \to 0$.
- $\Gamma_k[\phi]$ is the *average action* or *flowing action*.
- Grand canonical potential is obtained from $\beta\Omega_G = \Gamma_k[\phi]$ for $k = 0$ and $J = 0$.

How the flowing action flows

Simple and exact flow equation (WETTERICH 1993)

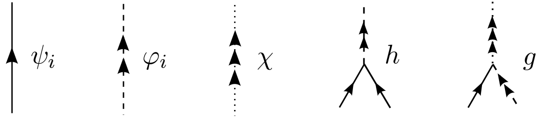
$$\partial_k \Gamma_k[\phi] = \frac{1}{2} \mathsf{STr} \left(\Gamma_k^{(2)}[\phi] + R_k \right)^{-1} \partial_k R_k .$$

- Differential equation for a functional.
- For most cases not solvable exactly.
- Approximate solutions can be found from Truncations.
  - Ansatz for Γ_k with a finite number of parameters.
  - Derive ordinary differential equations for this parameters or couplings from the flow equation for Γ_k.
  - Solve these equations numerically.

Simple truncation for fermions with three components

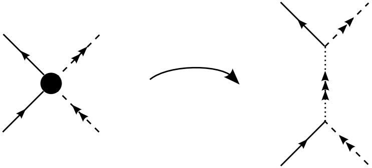
$$\begin{aligned}\Gamma_k &= \int_x \psi^\dagger(\partial_\tau - \vec{\nabla}^2 - \mu)\psi + \varphi^\dagger(\partial_\tau - \frac{1}{2}\vec{\nabla}^2 + m_\varphi^2)\varphi \\ &\quad + \chi^*(\partial_\tau - \frac{1}{3}\vec{\nabla}^2 + m_\chi^2)\chi \\ &\quad + h\,\epsilon_{ijk}(\varphi_i^*\psi_j\psi_k + h.c.) \quad + g(\varphi_i\psi_i^*\chi + h.c.).\end{aligned}$$

- Units are such that $\hbar = k_B = 2M = 1$
- Wavefunction renormalization for ψ, φ and χ is implicit.
- Γ_k contains terms for
  - fermion field $\psi = (\psi_1, \psi_2, \psi_3)$
  - bosonic field $\varphi = (\varphi_1, \varphi_2, \varphi_3) \sim (\psi_2\psi_3, \psi_3\psi_1, \psi_1\psi_2)$
  - trion field $\chi \sim \psi_1\psi_2\psi_3$

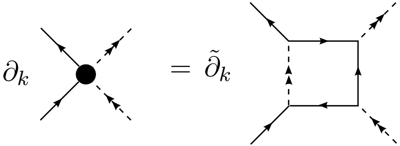


"Refermionization"

- Trion field is introduced via a generalized Hubbard-Stratonovich transformation



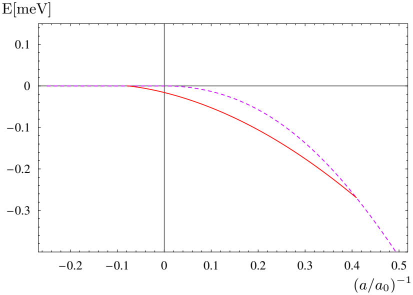
- Fermion-boson coupling is regenerated by the flow

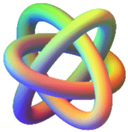


- Express this again by trion exchange
  (Gies and Wetterich, PRD **65**, 065001 (2002),
  Floerchinger and Wetterich, PLB **680**, 371 (2009).)

Binding energies

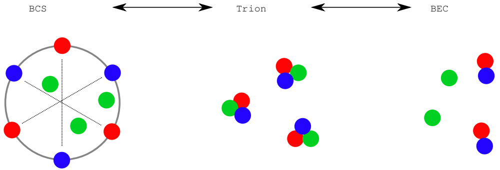
- Vacuum limit $T \to 0, \quad n \to 0$.





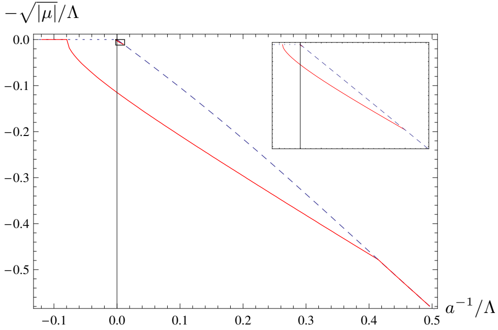
- Binding energy per atom for
  - molecule or dimer φ (dashed line)
  - trion or trimer χ (solid line)
- For large scattering length a trion is energetically favorable!
- Three-body bound state even for $a < 0$.

Quantum phase diagram



- BCS-Trion-BEC transition
  (Floerchinger, Schmidt, Moroz and Wetterich, PRA **79**, 013603 (2009)).
  - $a \to 0_-$: Cooper pairs, $SU(3) \times U(1) \to SU(2) \times U(1)$.
  - $a \to 0_+$: BEC of molecules, $SU(3) \times U(1) \to SU(2) \times U(1)$.
  - $a \to \pm\infty$: Trion phase, $SU(3)$ unbroken.
- Quantum phase transitions
  - from BCS to Trion phase
  - from Trion to BEC phase.

Efimov effect



- Self-similarity in energy spectrum.
- Efimov trimers become more and more shallow. At $a = \infty$

$$E_{n+1} = e^{-2\pi/s_0} E_n.$$

- Simple truncation: $s_0 \approx 0.82$.
- Advanced truncation: $s_0 \approx 1.006$ (exact result)

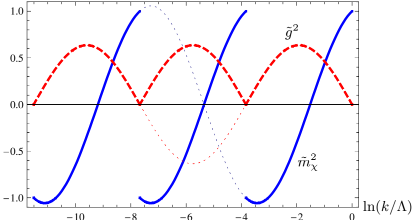
(Moroz, Floerchinger, Schmidt and Wetterich, PRA **79**, 042705 (2009).)

Renormalization group limit cycle

- For $\mu = 0$ and $a^{-1} = 0$ flow equations for rescaled couplings

$$k \frac{\partial}{\partial k} \begin{pmatrix} \tilde{g}^2 \\ \tilde{m}_\chi^2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 7/25 & -13/25 \\ 36/25 & 7/25 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \tilde{g}^2 \\ \tilde{m}_\chi^2 \end{pmatrix}.$$

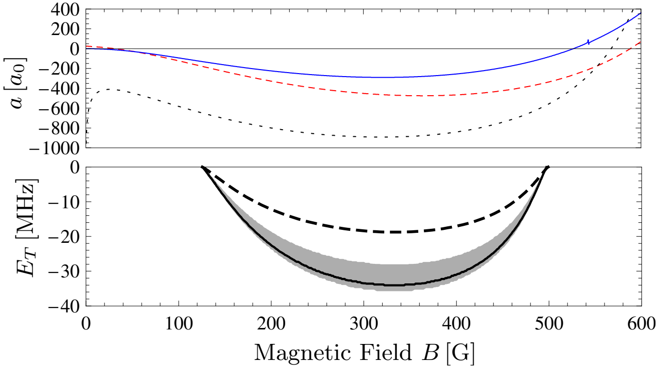
- Solution is log-periodic in scale.



- Every zero-crossing of $\tilde{m}_\chi^2$ corresponds to a new bound state.
- For $\mu \neq 0$ or $a^{-1} \neq 0$ limit cycle scaling stops at some scale k. Only finite number of Efimov trimers.

Contact to experiments

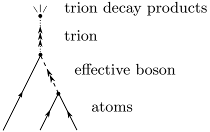
- Model can be generalized to case without SU(3) symmetry (Floerchinger, Schmidt and Wetterich, PRA A **79**, 053633 (2009)).
- Hyperfine states of ^{6}Li have large scattering lengths.

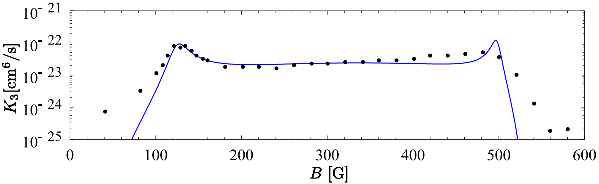


- Binding energies might be measured using RF-spectroscopy.
- Lifetime is quite short ~ 10ns.

Three-body loss rate

- Three-body loss rate measured experimentally (Ottenstein et al., PRL **101**, 203202 (2008); Huckans et al., PRL **102**, 165302 (2009))





- Trion may decay into deeper bound molecule states
- Calculate B-field dependence of loss process above.
- Left resonance (position and width) fixes model parameters.
- Form of curve for large B is prediction.
- Similar results obtained by other methods (Braaten, Hammer, Kang and Platter, PRL **103**, 073202 (2009); Naidon and Ueda, PRL **103**, 073203 (2009).)

Conclusions

- Ultracold fermions with three components quite interesting
- Functional renormalization group description works well
- Efimov effect arises from limit cycle
- Many-body physics shows parallels to QCD
  - BCS – "Color" – superfluidity for small negative a
  - Trion – "Hadron" – phase for large $|a|$
  - BEC – "Color" – superfluidity for small positive a
- Experimental tests are possible

Truncations

For many purposes *derivative expansions* are suitable approximations. For example we use for the BCS-BEC Crossover

$$\Gamma_k = \int_{\tau,\vec{x}} \Big\{ \psi^\dagger(\partial_\tau - \vec{\nabla}^2 - \mu)\psi + \varphi^*(Z_\varphi \partial_\tau - A_\varphi \frac{1}{2}\vec{\nabla}^2)\varphi$$
$$- h(\varphi^* \psi_1 \psi_2 + h.c.) + \frac{1}{2}\lambda_\psi (\psi^\dagger \psi)^2 + U_k(\varphi^*\varphi, \mu) \Big\}$$

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- The coefficients Z_φ, A_φ, λ_ψ, h and the effective potential U_k are scale-dependent.
- The effective potential U_k contains no derivatives - describes homogeneous fields.
- Wave-function renormalization and self-energy corrections for fermions can be included as well.

The effective potential

- We use a Taylor expansion around the minimum ρ_0

$$U_k(\varphi^*\varphi) = -p + m^2 (\varphi^*\varphi - \rho_0) + \frac{1}{2}\lambda (\varphi^*\varphi - \rho_0)^2.$$

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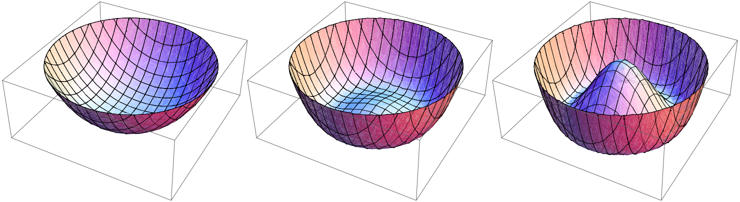
- Symmetry breaking:



$T > T_c$ $T < T_c$ $T \ll T_c$

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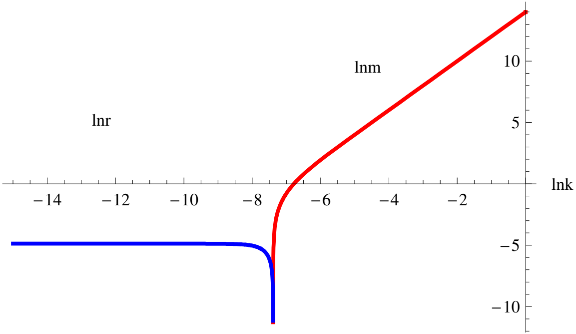
- Typical flow:



Solving the flow equation - Thermodynamic observables

We calculate the grand canonical potential and can therefore access many thermodynamic observables!

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By taking derivatives one obtains e. g. for Bose gas in $d = 3$

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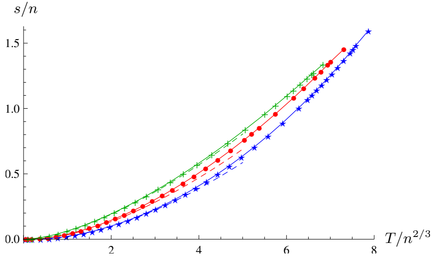

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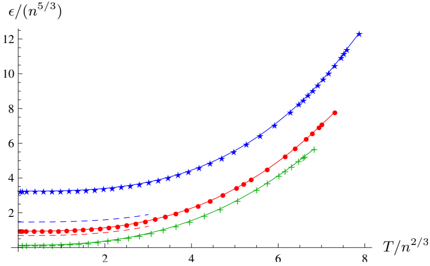

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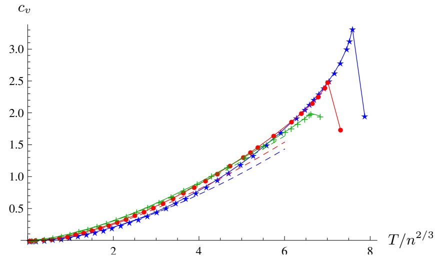

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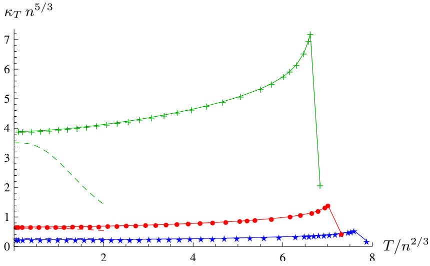

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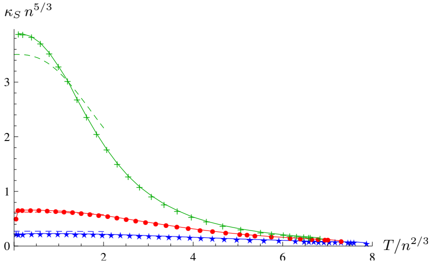

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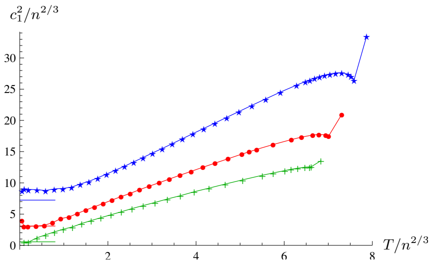

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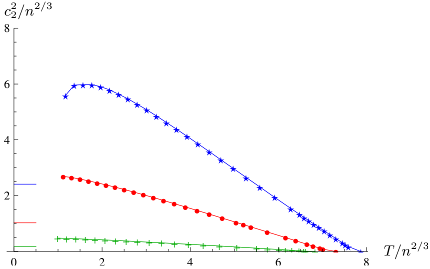

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