Mapping a new cluster of charmoniumlike structures at $e^+e^-$ collisions

Jun-Zhang Wang1,2, *, Dian-Yong Chen3, †, Xiang Liu1,2,4, §, and Takayuki Matsuki5‡
1School of Physical Science and Technology, Lanzhou University, Lanzhou 730000, China
2Research Center for Hadron and CSR Physics, Lanzhou University & Institute of Modern Physics of CAS, Lanzhou 730000, China
3School of Physics, Southeast University, Nanjing 210094, China
4Lanzhou Center for Theoretical Physics, Key Laboratory of Theoretical Physics of Gansu Province, and Frontiers Science Center for Rare Isotopes, Lanzhou University, Lanzhou 730000, China
5Tokyo Kasei University, 1-18-1 Kaga, Itabashi, Tokyo 173-8602, Japan
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In this work, we find a Critical Energy induced Enhancement (CEE) mechanism for the general three-body open-charm process at the $e^+e^-$ collisions, which utilizes the peculiar kinematic behavior of the $e^+e^-$ annihilation process involving three-body final states. We present a general analysis of a three-body process $e^+e^- \rightarrow B\overline{C} \rightarrow B(\overline{C} \rightarrow D^\ast E)$. When the center-of-mass (CM) energy of the $e^+e^-$ collision satisfies a critical relation $\sqrt{s} = m_B + m_C$, there clearly exists the reflection peak of an intermediate $C$ state near the threshold of the invariant mass distribution of $m_{BE}$ or $m_{AD}$, whose formation is very sensitive to the CM energy. The reflection enhancement phenomenon induced at the critical energy means that a new cluster of charmoniumlike structures can be experimentally mapped. Taking an example of $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^\ast e\overline{D}^\ast(2573) \rightarrow D^\ast e\overline{D}^\ast(2573)$, we further illustrate this novel phenomenon when $\sqrt{s} \approx 4.680$ GeV. What is more important is that a series of optimal CM energy points to search for new charmoniumlike structures in three-body open-charm processes from $e^+e^-$ annihilation are suggested, which can be accessible at BESIII and further BelleII as a new research topic.

Introduction.—Since 2003, dozens of charmoniumlike XYZ states have been observed with the accumulation of experimental data with high precision, which form a new family in hadron spectroscopy. Study of charmoniumlike states is constantly improving our knowledge of exotic hadronic matter and is deepening our understanding of non-perturbative behavior of strong interaction (see review articles [1–5] for getting recent progress). Until now, the exploration of charmoniumlike XYZ states has become a frontier in science of matter.

At present, these reported charmoniumlike states can be grouped into five clusters which involve several typical production processes like $B$ decay, $e^+e^-$ collision, and $\gamma\gamma$ fusion [1, 2]. Among them, $e^+e^-$ collision is an ideal platform to capture charmoniumlike states. For example, abundant $Y$ states [6–12] which result in "$Y$ problem" [13] can be directly produced by $e^+e^-$ collisions, while two $X$ states [14, 15] are from double charmonium production in $e^+e^-$ collision. Here, the Belle, BaBar and, running BESIII experiments based on $e^+e^-$ collision are the main force of finding out charmoniumlike states. Obviously, $e^+e^-$ collision as an effective way to produce charmoniumlike states has played a crucial role when constructing charmoniumlike state families in the past 18 years. Standing at a new starting point of new ten years, we believe that $e^+e^-$ collision will still be a rich mine of producing charmoniumlike states.

In this letter, we find a Critical Energy induced Enhancement (CEE) mechanism for the three-body open-charm processes from $e^+e^-$ annihilation, by which we map a new cluster of charmoniumlike structures that can be largely produced on the invariant mass distribution of the corresponding open-charm channel by choosing a specific critical energy of positron-electron system. Different from possible hidden-charm exotic hadronic resonances, these new charmoniumlike structures with a non-resonant nature can be more easily identified due to the existence of the unique CEE mechanism. In the forthcoming years, BESIII and Belle II will have great ability and opportunity to hunt for the predicted new cluster of charmoniumlike structures, for which the concrete suggestion of searching for them will be given.

CEE mechanism.—In 2014, the BESIII collaboration reported two charged charmoniumlike structures $Z_c(3885)^\pm$ and $Z_c(4025)^\pm$ in the three-body open-charm processes $e^+e^- \rightarrow \pi^\pm(D\overline{D}^\ast\gamma)^\mp$ [16] and $e^+e^- \rightarrow \pi^\mp(D\overline{D}^\ast\gamma)^\pm$ [17], respectively, whose peak positions are very close to the production thresholds of respective open-charm channels $D^{(*)}\overline{D}$. The two charged $Z_c$ structures are generally treated to be good candidates of exotic hidden-charm tetraquark states due to the neutral property of a charmonium meson [1, 2]. In Ref. [18], the Lanzhou group proposed a totally different opinion to understand the structures of $Z_c(3885)^\pm$ and $Z_c(4025)^\pm$, both of which can be uniformly decoded as the reflection structures of the $P$-wave charmed meson $D_1(2420)$ involved in $e^+e^- \rightarrow D\overline{D}_1(2420) \rightarrow D\overline{D}\pi$ and $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^\ast\overline{D}_1(2420) \rightarrow D^\ast\overline{D}\pi$, respectively. Later, this unique reflection explanation to $Z_c(3885)^\pm$ was further supported by the BESIII’s measurement on the degree of asymmetry in the angular distribution of final states [18]. Building on previous studies, in this work, we find a CEE mechanism existing in the general open-charm process with three-body final states, which can widely induce this specific reflection peak phenomenon near a threshold. Based on this mechanism, in addition to $Z_c(3885)^\pm$ and $Z_c(4025)^\pm$, we can expect that more charmoniumlike $Z_c$ structures can be produced from the $e^+e^-$ annihilation process by setting their individual critical energy. And then a new cluster of charmoniumlike structures can be established. In the
following, we will illustrate it in detail.

Focusing on the three-body open-charm channels from the $e^+e^-$ annihilation, $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^{(*)}_s\bar{D}^{(*)}_s \rightarrow D^{(*)}_s(D^{(*)}_s\pi)$, $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^{(*)}_s\bar{D}^{(*)}_s \rightarrow D^{(*)}_s(D^{(*)}_s\eta)$, and $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^{(*)}_s\bar{D}^{(*)}_s \rightarrow D^{(*)}_s(D^{(*)}_sK)$, we start with a general three-body process from the electron and positron annihilation, $A(p_1) \rightarrow B \rightarrow D(p_3)E(p_3)$, whose schematic diagram can be seen in Fig. 1. Here, $D^{(*)}_s$ denotes the higher states in the charmed/charmed-strange meson family. When choosing some special center-of-mass (CM) energy of the $e^+e^-$ collision ($\sqrt{s} = m_B + m_e$), the reflection signal of an intermediate $C$ clearly exists in the invariant mass distribution of $m_{BD}$ or $m_{RD}$. Especially, this reflection is sensitive to the width of $C$ if $C$ is a narrow state.

As we all know, in the three-body decay process shown in Fig. 1, the pole information of an intermediate $C$ can be reflected on the indirect invariant mass spectrum of $m_{BD}$ or $m_{RD}$. However, a kinematical behavior of the pole in indirect invariant mass spectrum is very different from that of direct invariant mass spectrum. Here, we take $m_{BD}$ as an example. The pole information of an intermediate resonance is fully determined by the propagator $1/((p_1 - p_3)^2 - m^2_C + i\epsilon\Gamma_C)$ and is not dependent on the Lorentz structure of an interaction vertex. By solving the equation $(p_1 - p_3)^2 - m^2_C = 0$, we can find a critical value $\sqrt{s}_{\text{critical}} = m_B + m_c$, which is a critical energy point of pole distributions of an intermediate state. In Fig. 2, we show the numerical contour plot of $(p_1 - p_3)^2 - m^2_C$, dependent on the invariant mass $m_{BD}$ and scattering angle $\theta_2$, where $\theta_2$ is the angle of three momentum of a particle $E$ to the $z$ axis in spherical coordinates. We notice that there appears a continuous pole distribution in the three-body phase space when the CM energy is larger than the critical energy. When decreasing the CM energy close to the critical energy, the pole curve gradually tends to a single pole point, which exactly corresponds to the critical energy $\sqrt{s}_{\text{critical}}$. Of course, it is not surprising that there is no pole structure in the CM energy region smaller than $\sqrt{s}_{\text{critical}}$, where the intermediate state is always a virtual state.

Therefore, this peculiar kinematic property near the critical energy point can cause some fantastic phenomenon, i.e., the line shape of a reflection peak for an intermediate $C$ is sensitive to the initial CM energy. In other word, a reflection enhancement structure near threshold that corresponds to a single pole can be largely induced at the CM energy point of $\sqrt{s} = \sqrt{s}_{\text{critical}}$, which is main meaning of the CEE mechanism. The position of this single pole can be determined analytically with the following expression

$$m_{BD}^\text{pole} = \sqrt{(m_c^2 - m_E^2 + m_D^2 + m_p)(m_D^2 + m_B^2 + m_c^2)}$$  \(1\)

which is useful for the concrete experimental analysis. By inputting the mass of intermediate $C$, this pole position of a reflection peak structure can be obtained.

![FIG. 1: The schematic diagram for a general three-body process from the electron and positron annihilation. Here, $A$ may denote a vector charmonium or charmoniumlike state with $J^{PC} = 1^{-+}$ coupling to a virtual photon. $B$, $D$, and $E$ denote the particles involved in the final states, while $C$ is an intermediate state. $p_1$, $p_2$, $p_3$, and $p_4$ are defined to be the four-momenta of initial state and three final states, respectively, while $p_C = p_1 - p_4$ corresponds to the propagation momentum of an intermediate $C$.](https://example.com/fig1)

![FIG. 2: The contour plot of $(p_1 - p_3)^2 - m^2_C$ in the invariant mass $m_{BD}$ and scattering angle $\theta_2$. Here, we assume the masses of all final states to be 1 MeV and $m_c = 3$ MeV. Diagrams (a)-(d) correspond to $\sqrt{s} = \sqrt{s}_{\text{critical}} = 200, 100, 0, -100$ keV, respectively.](https://example.com/fig2)
In order to calculate this process, we adopt the effective Lagrangian approach, where the related Lagrangians include [25–27]

\[ \mathcal{L}_{\gamma Y} = -e \overline{\psi}_Y Y \gamma^\mu A_\mu, \]

\[ \mathcal{L}_{D_0 D_0 Y} = g_{D_0 D_0 Y} \overline{Y}_0 (D_{s0}^{(*)} D_{s0}^{(*)} + D_{s0}^{(*)} D_{s0}^{(*)}), \]

\[ \mathcal{L}_{K D_0 D_0} = g_{K D_0 D_0} (D_{s0}^{(*)} (\overline{y}_D \overline{y}_D, K) D + D^\dagger (\overline{y}_D \overline{y}_D, K) D_{s0}^{(*)}), \]

(2)

Here, \( A_\mu, D_{s0}^{(*)}, K \) are photon, charmed-strange meson \( D_{s0}^{(*)}(2573) \), and kaon fields, respectively, and \( g_{D_0 D_0 Y} \) and \( g_{K D_0 D_0} \) are the coupling constants. Thus, the general amplitude of the \( e^+ e^- \rightarrow Y(p_1) \rightarrow D_{s0}^{(*)}(p_4)D_{s0}^{(*)}(2573)^+ \rightarrow D_{s0}^{(*)}(D^0(p_3)K^+(p_2)) \) channel can be written as

\[ M = \overline{v}(k_2) e^{-i m_D^2} \left( \frac{\gamma^\mu}{s} - \frac{\gamma^\nu}{s} \right) Y(p_1) \left( \frac{1}{s - m_D^2} + im_D \Gamma_Y \right) \]

\[ \times g_{D_0 D_0 Y} g_{K D_0 D_0} \epsilon^\nu_{\lambda} (p_1 - p_4)^2 - m_{D_0}^2 + im_{D_0} \Gamma_D, \]

where \( \Gamma_D = \frac{1}{4} (\bar{g}_{\rho \sigma \mu \nu} \bar{g}_{\rho \sigma \lambda \alpha} - \frac{1}{2} \bar{g}_{\rho \sigma} \bar{g}_{\lambda \alpha}) \) with \( \bar{g}_{\rho \sigma} = -g_{\rho \sigma} + (p_{\rho} p_{\sigma} - p_{\mu} p_{\nu})/m_D \) is the spin projection operator of tensor particle. With the above preparation, the differential cross section vs. invariant mass \( m_{D^0D^-} \) or the recoil spectrum of \( K^+ \) can be calculated by integrating over the phase space of three-body final states, i.e.,

\[ \frac{d\sigma}{dm_{D_0 D_0}} = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3} \frac{1}{2 s \sqrt{(k_1 \cdot k_2)^2}} |M|^2 \left| p_2 \right|^2 d\Omega_2 d\Omega_3, \]

(4)

where the overline above the amplitude stands for the average over the spin of electron and positron and the sum over the spin of final states, and the \( p_1^\star \) and \( \Omega_3 \) are the three-momentum and solid angle of \( D^0 \) meson in the center of mass frame of the \( D_0D_0 \) system.

In Fig. 3, we test the sensitivity of the reflection line shape of \( D_{s0}^{(*)}(2573) \) near the critical CM energy by plotting a differential cross section vs. the \( m_{D^0D^-} \) invariant mass with four CM energies \( \sqrt{s} = 4.630, 4.680, 4.690, \) and 4.730 GeV. Here, \( \sqrt{s} = 4.680 \) GeV is just the critical energy value for the discussed \( e^+ e^- \rightarrow D_{s0}^{(*)} D_{s0}^{(*)}(2573)^+ \rightarrow D_{s0}^{(*)}(D^0K^+) \). Due to the peculiar kinematic behavior, it can be found that the line shape of a reflection signal is sensitive to the CM energy value around 4.680 GeV. When \( \sqrt{s} > 4.680 \) GeV, the line shape of the reflection does not look like a peak structure and becomes more flat with increasing \( \sqrt{s} \). When CM energy is exactly at 4680 MeV, the line shape of reflection represents a critical peak structure. For another region of \( \sqrt{s} < 4.680 \) GeV, although all reflection line shapes look like a peak structure, their sensitivity is reflected on the relative magnitude of events because of the off-shell suppression effect of the pole. In Fig. 4, the relative differential cross sections based on five CM energy points of \( \sqrt{s} = 4.680, 4.675, 4.670, 4.650, \) and 4.630 GeV are given. It can be seen that the relative magnitude of differential cross sections is very sensitive to the CM energy. For example, there is about 40% suppression for the tiny energy change of 5 MeV away from the critical energy. Additionally, there is even an order of magnitude difference between \( \sqrt{s} = 4.680 \) and 4.650 GeV, which means that these reflection peaks that are far from the critical energy are most likely invisible in experiments. Hence, it can be seen that the reflective peak near a threshold is the most obvious at critical position of \( \sqrt{s} = \sqrt{s_{\text{critical}}} \), which should be the best CM energy to induce the formation of the charmoniumlike structures as a reflection nature.

Besides this, the reflection line shape is also sensitive to the width of an intermediate state \( D_{s0}^{(*)}(2573) \) as shown in Fig. 5, where all line shapes have the same pole position at \( m_{D^0D^-} = 4.003 \) GeV when the CM energy is \( \sqrt{s} = 4.680 \) GeV. In fact, until now the resonance parameters of \( D_{s0}^{(*)}(2573) \), especially its width, have not been well established by directly analyzing the corresponding Breit-Wigner distribution [19]. The measured width of \( D_{s0}^{(*)}(2573) \) is from 2 to 33 MeV if considering...
TABLE I: The proposal for inducing charmoniumlike structures through our proposed CEE mechanism. The last column shows the corresponding pole position of a reflective charmoniumlike peak in the invariant mass of $D^{(*)}_{s0}(2573)^*$.

| $\sqrt{s}_{\text{critical}}$ | Recommended process | Involved state | $m^{pole}_{D^{(*)}_{s0}(2573)^*}$ |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 4.00                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^+D^-$ | $D_s(2420)$  | 3890                            |
| 4.05                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2460)$ (1*) | 4091                            |
| 4.10                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2317)$ (0*) | 4092                            |
| 4.15                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2420)$ (1*) | 4035                            |
| 4.20                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2460)$ (2*) | 3910                            |
| 4.25                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2600)$ (1*) | 3906                            |
| 4.30                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2536)$ (1*) | 3982                            |
| 4.35                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2460)$ (1*) | 4234                            |
| 4.40                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2646)$ (0*) | 3994                            |
| 4.45                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2564)$ (2*) | 3921                            |
| 4.50                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2600)$ (1*) | 4052                            |
| 4.55                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2536)$ (1*) | 4125                            |
| 4.60                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2700)$ (1*) | 3878                            |
| 4.65                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2885)$ (1*) | 3899                            |
| 4.70                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2646)$ (0*) | 4138                            |
| 4.75                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2750)$ (2*) | 4068                            |
| 4.80                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2700)$ (1*) | 4023                            |
| 4.85                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2884)$ (2*) | 3914                            |
| 4.90                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(2885)$ (1*) | 4034                            |
| 5.00                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(3148)$ (2*) | 3812                            |
| 5.05                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(3004)$ (2*) | 4138                            |
| 5.10                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(3148)$ (2*) | 3960                            |
| 5.15                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(3260)$ (2*) | 3924                            |
| 5.20                        | $e^+e^- \rightarrow D^s_0D_s^0$ | $D_s(3260)$ (2*) | 4070                            |

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*Since the listed critical CM energies are only the reference values, experimentalists can plan to scan the CM energy points near the suggested reference value.

*They are theoretically predicted charmed/charmed-strange mesons that are still missing in experiments [23, 30].
action process. Therefore, based on this starting point, further theoretical studies involving the suggested three-body open-charm processes from the $e^+e^-$ annihilation are encouraged to consider the detailed dynamics.

Summary.—We have proposed a Critical Energy induced Enhancement (CEE) mechanism to detect a new cluster of charmoniumlike structures, which is based on a peculiar kinematic behavior of a three-body process from the electron and positron annihilation. With $e^+e^- \to D_s^+(D_{s0}(2573)) \to D_s^+(D^0K^+)$ as an example, we have presented the sensitivity of the reflective line shape from $D_s^0(2573)$ existing in the $m_{D_s^+\rho^0}$ invariant mass spectrum on the CM energy of the $e^+e^-$ system. When fixing a special CM energy $\sqrt{s} = 4.680$ GeV, which is just equal to $m_{D_s^+} + m_{D_s^0(2573)}$, an obvious reflection peak near the threshold of $D_s^+D^0$ can be produced. However, when the CM energy is gradually larger than 4.680 GeV, the reflection peak will disappear. For another case of $\sqrt{s} < 4.680$ GeV, the events of reflection peak will be obviously suppressed due to the missing of the single pole. Therefore, the energy of $\sqrt{s} = m_{D_s^+} + m_{D_s^0(2573)}$ is a special critical point and there exist a CEE mechanism for the three-body open-charm process from the $e^+e^-$ collisions. A direct application of this mechanism found in this work is to study the new cluster of charmoniumlike $Z_c$ or $Z_c'(3885)$ structures. We have further suggested a series of three-body open-charm processes from the electron and positron annihilation associated with the corresponding suggested CM energies. We have also noticed that BESIII released “White paper on the Future Physics Program of BESIII” recently [13]. Since the suggested CM energy points involved in three-body open-charm processes can be covered by BEPCII, it is obvious that it is a good chance for BESIII. The running BelleII is also an experimental facility based on the electron and positron collision. By the initial state radiation technique, BelleII has enough potential to measure the suggested three-body open-charm processes. Experimentally studying three-body open-charm processes from electron and positron annihilation with special CM energy points may form a future research topic accessible at BESIII, BelleII and even Super Tau-Charm factory [31].

In fact, this method developed in the present work is not limited only to the suggested three-body open-charm processes mentioned above. We may continue to extend it to three-body open-strange processes and three-body open-bottom processes from the electron and positron annihilation, which can be an effective approach to construct new strangoniumlike and bottomoniumlike structures families, respectively.

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