Quantum discord of cosmic inflation:
Can we show that CMB anisotropies are of quantum-mechanical origin?

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We investigate the quantumness of primordial cosmological fluctuations and its detectability. The quantum discord of inflationary perturbations is calculated for an arbitrary splitting of the system, and shown to be very large on super-Hubble scales. This entails the presence of large quantum correlations, due to the entangled production of particles with opposite momentums during inflation. To determine how this is reflected at the observational level, we study whether quantum correlators can be reproduced by a non-discordant state, i.e. a state with vanishing discord that contains classical correlations only. We demonstrate that this can be done for the power spectrum, the price to pay being twofold: first, large errors in other two-point correlation functions and second, the presence of intrinsic non-Gaussianity. The detectability of these two features remains to be determined but could possibly rule out a non-discordant description of the cosmic microwave background. If one abandons the idea that perturbations should be modelled by quantum mechanics and wants to use a classical stochastic formalism instead, we show that any two-point correlators on super-Hubble scales can be exactly reproduced regardless of the squeezing of the system. The latter becomes important only for higher-order correlation functions that can be accurately reproduced only in the strong squeezing regime.

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I. INTRODUCTION

According to the most recent cosmological observations [1–3], inflation [4–9] provides a mechanism for generating large scale fluctuations [10–15] that fits the data very well [16–20]. The scope of this mechanism is not limited to broad phenomenological predictions but is also deeply connected to the realm of quantum gravity, which makes it particularly interesting from a theoretical point of view. Indeed, according to inflation, the large scale structure in our Universe and the cosmic microwave background (CMB) anisotropies are nothing but quantum fluctuations of the gravitational and inflaton fields, stretched over cosmological distances.

However, the above claim is often taken with a grain of salt probably because, in practice, astronomers analyze the data with purely classical techniques and apparently never need to rely on the quantum formalism to understand them. This situation raises the question of the observational signature of the quantum nature of inflationary perturbations [21–51]. Is quantum mechanics really necessary in order to explain the properties of the CMB anisotropies or can everything be described in a classical context (in which case doubts could be cast on the quantum origin of the perturbations)? To put it differently, what would be wrong and which properties would be missed if the analysis were performed in a fully classical framework? The goal of this article is to address this question both at the theoretical and observational levels. The question is particularly timely since, in quantum information theory, new tools that are directly relevant to the problems discussed in this article have recently been introduced, such as the quantum discord [52, 53].

This paper is organized as follows. In the next section, Sec. II, we briefly review the theory of inflationary cosmological perturbations of quantum mechanical origin. We pay special attention to the quantum state in which the fluctuations are placed, namely a two-mode squeezed state. In Sec. III, we introduce the quantum discord [52, 53] which is a quantity that has recently received a lot of attention in the quantum information community and which is designed to measure the quantumness of correlations present in a quantum state. It was first applied to cosmological fluctuations in Ref. [54], where, in the case where decoherence of perturbations [55–63] occurs due to environment degrees of freedom, the quantum discord of the joint primordial perturbations-environment system was calculated. In this paper, we show that, even in the absence of an environment, particles with wavenumbers \( k \) and \( -k \) are created by the same quantum event, and as such, are highly entangled. This gives rise to a large quantum discord. In practice, we find that it is proportional to the squeezing parameter which is itself proportional to the number of \( \epsilon \)-folds spent be-
tween the Hubble radius exit during inflation and the end of inflation (typically $\sim 50$ e-folds for the scales observed in the CMB). We conclude that the CMB is a highly non-classical system that is placed in an entangled quantum state. We also consider the discord for an arbitrary splitting of the system, showing that it is always non-vanishing except for the case where the two subsystems correspond to the real and imaginary parts of the Mukhanov-Sasaki variable. This shows that a purely classical description of cosmological perturbations necessarily fails to reproduce all its quantum correlations. To make this statement more explicit, we then calculate

\[ \text{correlation functions.} \]

Finally, in Sec VI, we present a framework for the origin of the large scale structure and CMB anisotropies. According to inflation, they are vacuum quantum fluctuations amplified by gravitational instability and stretched over cosmological distances. At the technical level, two types of perturbations are produced: gravitational waves and scalar fluctuations. In the rest of this article, we consider scalar fluctuations only but the present analysis could straightforwardly be applied to tensor modes (since, at leading order in slow roll, they have the same dynamics as scalar perturbations). The scalar sector can be described by a single quantity, the so-called Mukhanov-Sasaki variable

\[ \zeta(\eta, \mathbf{x}) \]

related to the curvature perturbation

\[ v(\eta, \mathbf{x}) = aM_{\text{Pl}}\sqrt{2\epsilon_1} \zeta(\eta, \mathbf{x}). \]

Here, $a(\eta)$ is the Friedmann-Lemaître-Roberston-Walker scale factor, $\eta$ is the conformal time (related to the cosmic time $t$ by $dt = a d\eta$), $M_{\text{Pl}}$ denotes the Planck mass and $\epsilon_1 \equiv 1 - (a'/a)'^2/(a'/a)^2$ is the first slow-roll parameter [65, 66]. This last quantity controls whether inflation takes place or not. Indeed, since $\dot{a}/a = (\dot{a}/a)^2(1 - \epsilon_1)$, where a dot means derivative with respect to cosmic time, inflation is equivalent to having $\epsilon_1 < 1$. Moreover, the Planck data, in particular the measurement [2] of the scalar spectral index $n_s = 0.968\pm0.006$ at 68% confidence level, and the tensor-to-scalar ratio 95% constraint $r < 0.11$, indicate that we not only have $\epsilon_1 < 1$ but in fact $\epsilon_1 < 1$, a regime known as slow-roll inflation [65–69].

The next step consists in deriving an equation of motion for $v(\eta, \mathbf{x})$. Expanding the action of the system (i.e. Einstein-Hilbert action plus the action of a scalar field) up to second order in the perturbations, one obtains the following expression [70]:

\[ (2) \delta S = \frac{1}{2} \int d^4x \left[ (v')^2 - \delta^{ij} \partial_i v \partial_j v + \frac{(a\sqrt{\epsilon_1})''}{a\epsilon_1} v^2 \right]. \]

Instead of working in real space, it turns out to be convenient to go to Fourier space. We define the Fourier transform of $v(\eta, \mathbf{x})$ by

\[ v(\eta, \mathbf{x}) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^{3/2}} \int_{\mathbb{R}^3} d^3k v_k(\eta) e^{i \mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{x}}, \]

where the vector $\mathbf{k}$ denotes the comoving wavevector. Here, because $v(\eta, \mathbf{x})$ is real, one has $v_{-\mathbf{k}} = v_{\mathbf{k}}$ (where a star denotes the complex conjugation). As will be discussed in the following, this relation is important since it shows that, in Fourier space, all degrees of freedoms are not independent. This is of course expected since we now have a description of curvature perturbations in terms of a complex function while we started from a real one. Inserting Eq. (3) into Eq. (2), one obtains

\[ (2) \delta S = \frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^3} d\eta d^3k \left[ v_{\mathbf{k}}' v_{\mathbf{k}}'^* - \left( k^2 - z'' \right) v_k v_k^* \right], \]
where the integration is performed in the full Fourier space and we have defined the background quantity \( z(\eta) \) by \( z(\eta) \equiv a M_{\odot} \sqrt{2\pi} \). Then, under the subtraction of the total derivative \( (v_k v_k^{*} z'/z)'/2 \) in the Lagrangian, which leaves the action unchanged, Eq. (4) becomes

\[
(2) \delta S = \frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{3}} d\eta \, d^{3}k \left[ v_k' v_k^{*} + v_k v_k^{*} \right] + \left( \frac{\zeta^2}{2} - \frac{k^2}{2} \right) v_k v_k^{*}.
\]

(5)

From this action, the Euler-Lagrange equation reads

\[
\frac{d}{d\eta} \left( \frac{\delta L}{\delta v_k^*} \right) - \frac{\delta L}{\delta v_k} = \frac{1}{2} \left[ v_k'' + \left( k^2 - \frac{\zeta^2}{z} \right) v_k \right] = 0,
\]

or \( v_k'' + \omega^2(k, \eta)v_k = 0 \) with \( \omega^2(k, \eta) \equiv k^2 - \frac{\zeta^2}{z} \). One recognizes the equation of motion of a parametric oscillator, that is to say an oscillator with time-dependent frequency. Here, the time dependence is due to the interaction with a classical source, the background gravitational frequency. Here, the time dependence is due to the interaction with a classical source, the background gravitational field described by the scale factor \( a(\eta) \). As discussed in Ref. [71], this is very similar to the Schwinger effect, the background gravitational field is described by the scale factor \( a(\eta) \). Indeed, it is well known that, if quantization of harmonic oscillators naturally leads to coherent states, quantization of parametric oscillators leads to squeezed states.

Let us now apply the Hamiltonian formalism. Here, in order to deal with independent variables only, we split the integral in the action into two parts and change \( k \) into \(-k\) in the second part. This leads to the following expression,

\[
(2) \delta S = \frac{1}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^{3+}} d\eta \, d^{3}k \left[ v_k' v_k^{*} + v_k v_k^{*} \right] + \left( \frac{\zeta^2}{2} - \frac{k^2}{2} \right) v_k v_k^{*}.
\]

where the integral over \( k \) is now performed in half the Fourier space, \( k \in \mathbb{R}^{3+} \). Then our next move is to define the conjugate momentum,

\[
p_k = \frac{\delta L}{\delta v_k^*} = v_k' - \frac{\zeta^2}{z} v_k.
\]

(8)

It is easy to see that if \( v_k \) is a measure of the curvature perturbation \( \zeta_k = v_k/z \), the conjugate momentum \( p_k \) is a measure of its time derivative since

\[
\zeta_k'(\eta) = \frac{p_k(\eta)}{z(\eta)}.
\]

(9)

On large scales (i.e. scales larger than the Hubble radius during inflation), the solution to Eq. (6) implies that \( \zeta_k(\eta) \sim A_k (1 + \#_1 k^2 \eta^2 + \#_2 k^4 \eta^4 + \cdots) + B_k \int^\eta d\tau / \eta^2 \) where \( A_k \) and \( B_k \) are two scale dependent constants and \#_1 and \#_2 two scale independent constants. During inflation, the first branch (the “growing mode”) is constant while the second one (the “decaying mode”) is decaying (hence the claim that curvature perturbation are conserved). From the above expansion, one has \( \zeta_k'(\eta) \sim 2 A_k \#_1 k^2 \eta + B_k / \eta^2 \) and we see that, in the super-Hubble limit where \( k \eta \to 0 \), the second term of the growing mode dominates over the leading term in the decaying mode. This means that \( \zeta_k'(\eta) \propto 1 / (z(\eta)) \) and, as a consequence, \( p_k \) tends to a constant.

Let us now calculate the Hamiltonian of the system, defined as

\[
H = \int_{\mathbb{R}^{3+}} d^{3}k \left[ \hat{p}_k \hat{v}_k' + \hat{v}_k \hat{p}_k' - L \right].
\]

(10)

Notice that the terms \( \hat{p}_k \hat{v}_k' \) and \( \hat{p}_k \hat{v}_k' \) are summed up only in \( \mathbb{R}^{3+} \) [77]. Plugging in the Lagrangian \( L \) obtained in Eq. (7), one has

\[
H = \int_{\mathbb{R}^{3+}} d^{3}k \left[ p_k \hat{p}_k + \frac{\zeta^2}{2} (p_k \hat{v}_k + \hat{p}_k v_k) + k^2 v_k v_k^* \right].
\]

(11)

Quantization consists in introducing the creation and annihilation operators \( \hat{c}_k \) and \( \hat{c}^\dagger_k \) obeying the commutation relations \( [\hat{c}_k, \hat{c}^\dagger_p] = \delta(k - p) \). From now on, quantum operators are denoted with a hat. The Mukhanov-Sasaki variable and its conjugate momentum are related to these operators through the following formulas

\[
\hat{v}_k = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2k}} (\hat{c}_k + \hat{c}^\dagger_{-k}),
\]

(12)

\[
\hat{p}_k = -i \sqrt{2} \left( \hat{c}_k - \hat{c}^\dagger_{-k} \right).
\]

(13)

Notice that Eqs. (12) and (13) mix creation and annihilation operators associated to the modes \( k \) and \(-k\). This is different from what is usually done since the common practice is to work “mode by mode.” These definitions are necessary since they ensure that \( \hat{v}_{-k} = \hat{v}_k^* \).

The final step is to express the Hamiltonian in terms of the creation and annihilation operators. We obtain

\[
\hat{H} = \int_{\mathbb{R}^{3+}} d^{3}k \left[ \frac{k}{2} \left( \hat{c}_k \hat{c}^\dagger_{k} + \hat{c}_{-k} \hat{c}^\dagger_{-k} \right) \right.

- \left. \frac{i \zeta^2}{2} \left( \hat{c}_k \hat{c}_{-k} - \hat{c}^\dagger_{-k} \hat{c}^\dagger_{k} \right) \right].
\]

(14)

In this expression, the first term represents a collection of free oscillators with energy \( \omega = k \) (compatible with the fact that we deal with massless excitations) while the second one describes the interaction between the quantized perturbations and the classical source. Of course, if the scale factor is constant (Minkowski spacetime), then
\[ z \text{ is a constant and this term disappears. This term is responsible for the creation of pairs of particles. We observe that the structure } \hat{c}_k^\dagger \hat{c}_k \text{ implies that the particles are created with opposite momenta, thus ensuring momentum conservation.} \]

Let us now discuss the equation of motion. It is given by the Heisenberg equation, namely \( d\hat{c}_k/d\eta = -i \left[ \hat{c}_k, \hat{H} \right] \). Using Eq. (14), this leads to

\[
i \frac{d\hat{c}_k}{d\eta} = k\hat{c}_k + i\frac{z'}{z} \hat{c}_k^\dagger.
\]

This can be solved by mean of the Bogoliubov transformation

\[
\hat{c}_k(\eta) = u_k(\eta)\hat{c}_k(\eta_{mi}) + v_k(\eta)\hat{c}_k^\dagger(\eta_{mi}),
\]

where \( u_k(\eta) \) and \( v_k(\eta) \) (not to be confused with the Mukhanov-Sasaki variable) are two functions depending on the wavevector modulus only\(^1\) and obeying

\[
i \frac{du_k(\eta)}{d\eta} = k u_k(\eta) + i\frac{z'}{z} v_k(\eta),
\]

\[
i \frac{dv_k(\eta)}{d\eta} = k v_k(\eta) + i\frac{z'}{z} u_k(\eta).
\]

They must moreover satisfy \( |u_k(\eta)|^2 - |v_k(\eta)|^2 = 1 \) in order for the commutation relation between the creation and annihilation operators to be properly normalized. Let us also notice that the combination \( u_k + v_k^* \) obeys the same equation of motion as the Mukhanov-Sasaki variable, namely

\[
u_k = u_k + v_k^*, \quad \nu_k^* = u_k + v_k^*
\]

and straightforward calculations lead to

\[
\hat{c}_k(\eta) = e^{i\theta_{k,1}} \hat{c}_k(\eta_{mi}) + e^{i\theta_{k,2}} \hat{c}_k^\dagger(\eta_{mi}),
\]

with \( \theta_{k,1} = \theta_{k,2} \equiv \theta_k, \) and

\[
u_k = e^{-i\theta_k} \cos r_k, \quad \nu_k = -e^{i\theta_k + 2i\phi_k} \sinh r_k.
\]

One can explicitly check that the vacuum state is rotationally invariant, \( \hat{R}(\theta_{k})|0_k, 0_{-k}\rangle = |0_k, 0_{-k}\rangle \), which implies that if the initial state is the vacuum state, \( \theta_k \) cancels out in all physical quantities, as will be checked in what follows. More explicitly, using operator ordering theorems \([74]\), one has

\[
\hat{S}(r_k, \phi_k) = \exp \left[ -e^{2i\phi_k} \frac{\tanh r_k}{\tanh(r_k^2)} \hat{c}_k(\eta_{mi}) \hat{c}_k^\dagger(\eta_{mi}) \right] 
\]

\[
\times \exp \left[ -\ln (\cosh r_k) \left[ \hat{c}_k(\eta_{mi}) \hat{c}_k(\eta_{mi}) \right] \right]
\]

\[
\times \exp \left[ e^{-2i\phi_k} \frac{\tanh r_k \hat{c}_k(\eta_{mi}) \hat{c}_k^\dagger(\eta_{mi})}{} \right],
\]

and straightforward calculations lead to

\[
\hat{S}(r_k, \phi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_{k})|0_k, 0_{-k}\rangle = \frac{1}{\cosh r_k} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} e^{2i\phi_k} \left( -1 \right)^n \tanh r_k r_k |n_k, n_{-k}\rangle.
\]

This is a two-mode squeezed state, well known in the context of quantum optics as an entangled state. Indeed, in a very sketchy way (restricting the sum to \( n = 0 \) and
\( n = 1 \) and ignoring the coefficients of the expansion, just for the purpose of illustration, it is of the form

\[
|\Psi\rangle \sim \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \left( |0_k\rangle |0_{-k}\rangle + |1_k\rangle |1_{-k}\rangle \right),
\]

which, indeed, is in an inseparable form since it cannot be written as \(|\Psi_k\rangle \otimes |\Psi_{-k}\rangle\). Entangled states are considered as the most non-classical states and the above discussion shows that the CMB is placed in such a state. Moreover, it is known that in the strong squeezing limit, the state \((28)\) exactly tends towards an Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen (EPR) \([78]\) quantum state. We are therefore led to conclude that the CMB is a highly non-classical system.

Before concluding this section, it is interesting to derive the equations satisfied by the parameters \(r_k\), \(\varphi_k\) and \(\theta_k\). From Eq. \((28)\), we see that their time evolution controls the time evolution of the quantum state \((28)\). Using Eqs. \((17)-(18)\) and \((24)-(25)\), one obtains

\[
\frac{dr_k}{d\eta} = -\frac{z'}{z} \cos (2\varphi_k),
\]

\[
\frac{d\varphi_k}{d\eta} = -k + \frac{z'}{z} \coth (2r_k) \sin (2\varphi_k),
\]

\[
\frac{d\theta_k}{d\eta} = k - \frac{z'}{z} \tanh r_k \sin (2\varphi_k).
\]

The two first equations form a closed system, and \(\theta_k\) can be derived once \(r_k\) and \(\varphi_k\) are known. This is expected since, as already said, \(\theta_k\) is a spurious parameter that does not play any physical role. Exact solutions are available only in the exact de Sitter case, for which we have

\[
r_k(\eta) = -\arcsinh \left( \frac{1}{2k\eta} \right),
\]

\[
\varphi_k(\eta) = \frac{\pi}{4} - \frac{1}{2} \arctan \left( \frac{1}{2k\eta} \right),
\]

\[
\theta_k(\eta) = k\eta + \arctan \left( \frac{1}{2k\eta} \right).
\]

On super-Hubble scales, at the end of inflation, we have \(r_k \to +\infty\) (notice that \(r_k\) is positive because conformal time is negative during inflation), \(\varphi_k \to \pi/2\) and \(\theta_k \to -\pi/2\), which remains true for quasi de Sitter expansions.

III. INFLATIONARY DISCORD

The discussion of the last section indicates that the quantumness of the CMB is a priori large. Therefore, it seems important to better quantify this property. Recently, in the context of quantum information theory, Henderson and Vedral \([72]\) and Ollivier and Zurek \([53]\) have introduced the quantum discord, which aims to quantitatively measure the quantumness of a system. The goal of this section is to calculate the quantum discord of inflationary perturbations.

Quantum discord is defined as follows. Let us consider a bipartite system \(E = E_k \otimes E_{-k}\) (we write the two systems “\(k\)” and “\(-k\)” for obvious reasons but it should be clear that the following considerations are in fact valid for any bipartite system). The idea is to introduce two ways of calculating the mutual information between the two subsystems that coincide for classical correlations but not necessarily in quantum systems. The difference between the two results will then define the quantum discord. The first measure of mutual information is provided by the von Neumann entropy,

\[
\mathcal{I}(k, -k) = S[\hat{\rho}(k)] + S[\hat{\rho}(-k)] - S[\hat{\rho}(k, -k)],
\]

where \(S\) is the entropy defined by \(S = -\text{Tr}(\hat{\rho} \log_2 \hat{\rho})\), \(\hat{\rho}\) being the density matrix of the system under consideration. Let us recall that the density matrix of the sub-system “\(k\)” (respectively “\(-k\)” \()) is obtained from the full density matrix \(\rho(k, -k)\) by tracing over the degrees of freedom associated with “\(-k\)” (respectively “\(k\)” \()), that is to say \(\hat{\rho}(k) = \text{Tr}_{-k}[\hat{\rho}(k, -k)]\) (respectively \(\hat{\rho}(-k) = \text{Tr}_k[\hat{\rho}(k, -k)]\)).

Then let us imagine that a measurement of an observable of the sub-system “\(-k\)” is performed through a projector \(\hat{\Pi}_j\) (defined on \(E_{-k}\)). This transforms the state into \(\hat{\rho} \to \hat{\rho}(\hat{\Pi}_j/p_j)\), with probability \(p_j \equiv \text{Tr}[\hat{\rho} \hat{\Pi}_j/\rho]\). If we only access \(E_k\), tracing over \(-k\), the state becomes

\[
\hat{\rho}(k; \hat{\Pi}_j) = \text{Tr}_{-k}\left[\frac{\hat{\rho}(k, -k) \hat{\Pi}_j}{p_j}\right].
\]

Now, if one performs a set of all possible measurements through a complete set\(^2\) of projectors \(\{\hat{\Pi}_j\}\), an alternative definition of mutual information is given by

\[
\mathcal{J}(k, -k) = S[\hat{\rho}(k)] - \sum_j p_j S[\hat{\rho}(k; \hat{\Pi}_j)].
\]

Classically, thanks to Bayes theorem, we have \(\mathcal{J}(k, -k) = \mathcal{I}(k, -k)\). Quantum mechanically however, this need not be true and the deviation from the previous equality therefore represents the quantumness of the correlations contained in a given state. This is why quantum discord is defined by

\[
\delta(k, -k) = \min_{\{\hat{\Pi}_j\}} [\mathcal{I}(k, -k) - \mathcal{J}(k, -k)],
\]

where we minimize over all possible sets of measurements in order to avoid dependence on the projectors. More detailed discussions on the physical interpretation and meaning of quantum discord and entanglement can be found in Refs. [52, 53, 79].

\(2\) More precisely, \(\{\hat{\Pi}_j\}\) forms a positive operator valued measure, obeying the partition of unity \(\sum_j \hat{\Pi}_j = 1\). They generalize complete sets in the sense that they do not need to be orthogonal.
Let us now calculate the quantum discord of inflationary perturbations. For the two-mode squeezed state (28), the density matrix is given by

$$\hat{\rho}(k, -k) = \frac{1}{\cosh^2 r_k} \sum_{n, n' = 0}^{\infty} e^{2i(n-n')\varphi_k} (-1)^{n + n'} \tanh^{n+n'} r_k |n_k, n_{-k}\rangle \langle n_k, n_{-k}^\prime|.$$  \hspace{1cm} (40)

The reduced density matrix \(\hat{\rho}(k)\) is obtained from the full density matrix by tracing out degrees of freedom associated to \(\sim -k\). One has

$$\hat{\rho}(k) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \langle n_{-k} | \hat{\rho}(k, -k) | n_{-k}\rangle$$  \hspace{1cm} (41)

$$= \frac{1}{\cosh^2 r_k} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \tanh^{2n} r_k |n_k\rangle \langle n_k|,$$  \hspace{1cm} (42)

which is a thermal state with inverse temperature \(\beta_k = -\ln \tanh^2 r_k\). We have of course a similar equation for \(\hat{\rho}(-k)\) where \(|n_k\rangle\langle n_k|\) is replaced by \(|n_{-k}\rangle\langle n_{-k}|\).

Our next move is to calculate the entropy of the different density matrices appearing in the expression of the discord. As can be shown explicitly, the entropy of \(\hat{\rho}(k, -k)\) vanishes since we deal with a pure state. Since \(\hat{\rho}(k)\) represents a thermal state, its entropy is simply given by [60]

$$S[\hat{\rho}(k)] = (1 + \langle \hat{n}_k \rangle) \log_2 (1 + \langle \hat{n}_k \rangle) - \langle \hat{n}_k \rangle \log_2 \langle \hat{n}_k \rangle,$$  \hspace{1cm} (43)

where \(\langle \hat{n}_k \rangle = \sinh^2 r_k\) is the mean occupation number. Obviously, this formula is also valid for \(\hat{\rho}(-k)\). Finally, the quantity \(S[\hat{\rho}(k; \hat{\Pi}_j)]\) remains to be calculated. In Appendix A, we show that \(\hat{\rho}(k; \hat{\Pi}_j)\) is in fact a pure state and, consequently, its entropy is zero. Therefore, it follows that the discord is given by

$$\delta(k, -k) = S[\hat{\rho}(-k)] = \cosh^2 r_k \log_2 (\cosh^2 r_k)$$

$$- \sinh^2 r_k \log_2 (\sinh^2 r_k).$$  \hspace{1cm} (44)

The corresponding function is displayed in Fig. 1. One can see that except for \(r_k = 0\), the discord is not zero, and, therefore, the quantum state of the perturbations is not classical. In fact, \(r_k = 0\) corresponds to a coherent state [81, 82]. Such states are often called “quasi classical” and are known to be the “most classical” states since they follow the classical trajectory in phase space, with minimal spread. In the strong squeezing limit however, \(r_k \rightarrow \infty\), we have

$$\delta(k, -k) = \frac{2}{\ln 2} r_k - 2 + \frac{1}{\ln 2} + O(e^{-2r_k}).$$  \hspace{1cm} (45)

Let us recall that for the modes within the CMB window, at the end of inflation, \(r_k \sim 50\). We conclude that the CMB is placed in a state which is “very quantum.” This means that it is certainly impossible to reproduce all the correlation functions in a classical picture as we are going to demonstrate explicitly in the following section. In fact, the results of this section show that, strictly speaking, there is no transition to a classical behavior since the discord only grows. But we will also see that the situation is subtle and that, nevertheless, a classical treatment of the perturbations can partially be employed, in a sense that will be carefully discussed in the following.

Let us also mention that quantum discord is always defined relatively to a given division into two subsystems. For example, in what precedes, the quantum discord was shown to be large for the bipartite system \(\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E}_k \otimes \mathcal{E}_{-k}\). A priori, with a different division, one would have obtained a different result. For example, let us write the Hamiltonian (11) in terms of the real and imaginary (or Hermitian and anti-Hermitian) parts of \(v_k\) and \(p_k\), denoted \(v_k^R, v_k^I, p_k^R, p_k^I\), and defined by \(v_k = (v_k^R + iv_k^I)/\sqrt{2}\) and \(p_k = (p_k^R + ip_k^I)/\sqrt{2}\). Notice that the relation \(v_k^I = v_{-k}\) implies that \(v_k^R = v_{-k}^R\) and \(v_k^I = -v_{-k}^I\). One has

$$H = \int_{\mathbb{R}^3} d^3k \left[ \frac{1}{2} (p_k^R)^2 + \frac{k}{2} (v_k^R)^2 + \frac{z'}{z} v_k^R p_k^R \right]$$

$$+ \int_{\mathbb{R}^3} d^3k \left[ \frac{1}{2} (p_k^I)^2 + \frac{k}{2} (v_k^I)^2 + \frac{z'}{z} v_k^I p_k^I \right].$$  \hspace{1cm} (46)

One can see that the “real” and “imaginary” sectors are in fact independent. This suggests that the quantum discord calculated with respect to \(\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E}_R \otimes \mathcal{E}_I\) should vanish. It is therefore interesting to calculate the quantum discord calculated with respect to an arbitrary subdivision of our system \(\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E}_1 \otimes \mathcal{E}_2\). Starting from \(\hat{c}_k\) and \(\hat{c}_{-k}\), the
most generic pair of independent ladder operators can be written as

\[ \hat{a}_1 = \cos \alpha \hat{c}_k + \sin \alpha \hat{c}_{-k} \]
\[ \hat{a}_2 = e^{2i\alpha} (\cos \alpha \hat{c}_{-k} - \sin \alpha \hat{c}_k), \]

where \( \alpha \) is an angle varying from 0 to \( \pi/4 \). This defines a one-parameter family of subdivision such that, if \( \alpha = 0 \), then \( \mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E}_k \otimes \mathcal{E}_{-k} \) and, if \( \alpha = \pi/4 \), then \( \mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E}_R \otimes \mathcal{E}_I \). One can then proceed and calculate the corresponding discord along the lines already explained before. This is what is done in detail in Appendix B. The result is displayed in Fig. 2 for a few values of \( k/(aH) \). As expected, one can check that the discord always vanishes for \( \alpha = \pi/4 \) (\( \mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E}_R \otimes \mathcal{E}_I \)) while it is maximal when \( \alpha = 0 \) (\( \mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E}_k \otimes \mathcal{E}_{-k} \)). It also increases with the squeezing level, since more pairs of particles with wavenumbers \( k \) and \( -k \) are produced as time proceeds, in agreement with Fig. 1.

The above analysis undoubtedly shows that the CMB is a strongly discordant quantum system. In particular, it contains genuine quantum correlations between the \( k \) and \( -k \) modes (and in fact, as the previous calculation demonstrates, between any “1” and “2” modes except if \( \alpha = \pi/4 \)). A priori, this makes a classical description of the CMB impossible. Therefore, the fact that, in practice, the CMB data are analyzed without any reference to the quantum formalism appears to be rather paradoxical. The rest of this paper is devoted to this question.

IV. QUANTUM PREDICTIONS FOR THE PERTURBATIONS

In practice, the quantities of observational interest are correlation functions. In this section, as a first step, we derive these correlation functions for the full quantum state (28). We make use of the quantum information formalism, which sheds some new light on the standard calculation of inflationary cosmological perturbations.

A. Quantum information theory and cosmological perturbations

A two-mode squeezed state being Gaussian, its characteristic function is Gaussian as well and all correlation functions can be calculated from the covariance matrix. To compute this covariance matrix, we can use the techniques of quantum information theory \([80, 83]\). In order to do so, we must formulate the problem such that this formalism can be applied. This technical question actually plays an important role in the following. The point is that the quantum information formalism is designed mode by mode while, as already noted, Eqs. (12) and (13) mix creation and annihilation operator associated with two different modes, \( k \) and \( -k \). We must therefore reformulate the problem such that “coordinates” (“position” and “momentum”) are Hermitian operators defined for a single mode. This leads us to introduce the quantities \( \hat{q}_k \) and \( \hat{p}_k \) such that

\[ \hat{q}_k = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2k}} (\hat{c}_k + \hat{c}_k^\dagger) \]
\[ \hat{p}_k = -i \frac{1}{\sqrt{2k}} (\hat{c}_k - \hat{c}_k^\dagger). \]

Here, and in the rest of this article, we work in the Schrödinger picture where \( \hat{q}_k \) and \( \hat{p}_k \) are viewed as constant and the state is evolving. Contrary to Eqs. (12) and (13) defining \( v_k \) and \( p_k \), Eqs. (49) and (50) do not mix different modes. Making use of Eqs. (12) and (13), one can establish the relation between the two sets of variables, which read

\[ \hat{v}_k = \frac{1}{2} \left[ \hat{q}_k + \hat{q}_{-k} + \frac{i}{k} (\hat{p}_k - \hat{p}_{-k}) \right] \]
\[ \hat{p}_k = \frac{1}{2k} [k (\hat{q}_k - \hat{q}_{-k}) + i (\hat{p}_k + \hat{p}_{-k})]. \]

In particular, since \( \hat{q}_k = \hat{q}_k^\dagger \) and \( \hat{p}_k = \hat{p}_k^\dagger \), one can check that we indeed have \( \hat{v}_k = \hat{v}_{-k} \). The quantum information formalism provides us with all correlation functions for combinations of \( \hat{q}_k \) and \( \hat{p}_k \), and using Eqs. (51) and (52), correlation functions for combinations of \( \hat{v}_k \) and \( \hat{p}_k \) can be inferred.

Let us now introduce the characteristic function. It is a real function defined on a four-dimensional real space,
given by
\[ \chi(\xi) = \text{Tr} \left[ \hat{\rho} \hat{\mathcal{W}}(\xi) \right], \]
(53)
where \( \hat{\mathcal{W}}(\xi) \) is the Weyl operator, namely
\[ \hat{\mathcal{W}}(\xi) = e^{i \xi \hat{R}}, \]
(54)
with \( \hat{R} = (k^{1/2}\hat{q}_k, k^{-1/2}\hat{\pi}_k, k^{1/2}\hat{q}_k, k^{-1/2}\hat{\pi}_k)^T \).
In the above expressions, \( \hat{\rho} \) is obviously the density operator.

In appendix C, we show that the two-mode squeezed state has a Gaussian characteristic function given by
\[ \chi(\xi) = \delta^{\gamma \xi^2} / 4, \]
(55)
where \( \gamma \) is the covariance matrix, related to the two-point correlation functions by \( \langle R_j R_k \rangle = \gamma_{jk} / 2 + i J_{jk} / 2 \). Here, \( J \) is the commutator matrix, \( i J_{jk} = [\hat{R}_j, \hat{R}_k] \), given by \( J = J_1 \oplus J_1 \) with
\[ J_1 = \left( \begin{array}{cc} 0 & 1 \\ -1 & 0 \end{array} \right). \]
(56)

The covariance matrix of the two-mode squeezed state (28) has been derived in appendix C and this leads to
\[ \langle \hat{v}_k \hat{v}_p \rangle = \frac{1}{2k} \left[ \cosh(2r_k) - \sinh(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k) \right] \delta(k + p), \]
(57)
\[ \langle \hat{p}_k \hat{p}_p \rangle = \frac{k}{2} \left[ \cosh(2r_k) + \sinh(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k) \right] \delta(k + p), \]
(58)
\[ \langle \hat{v}_k \hat{p}_p \rangle = \left[ \frac{i}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \sinh(2r_k) \sin(2\varphi_k) \right] \delta(k + p). \]
(59)

B. Two-point correlation functions

Using the above results, one can proceed and calculate the power spectrum for the states (28). Using Eq. (3), the correlation function of the Mukhanov-Sasaki variable is given by
\[ \langle \hat{v}(\eta, x) \hat{v}(\eta, y) \rangle = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3} \int d\mathbf{k} d\mathbf{p} \langle \hat{v}_k(\eta) \hat{v}_p(\eta) \rangle e^{ik \cdot (x-y)}. \]
(60)
For the two-mode squeezed state, the only correlation function \( \langle \hat{v}_k(\eta) \hat{v}_p(\eta) \rangle \) that does not vanish is when \( \mathbf{p} = -\mathbf{k} \). From Eq. (57), it follows that
\[ \langle \hat{v}(\eta, x) \hat{v}(\eta, y) \rangle = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3} \int d\mathbf{k} \frac{1}{2k} \left[ \cosh(2r_k) - \sinh(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k) \right] e^{ik \cdot (x-y)}. \]
(61)
We notice that the result only depends on \( |x - y| \) as expected in a homogeneous and isotropic universe. As a consequence, one can perform the angular integration and one obtains
\[ \langle \hat{v}(\eta, x) \hat{v}(\eta, y) \rangle = \frac{4\pi}{(2\pi)^3} \int_0^\infty \frac{dk}{k} \frac{1}{k |x - y|} \left[ \cosh(2r_k) - \sinh(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k) \right], \]
(62)
or, using Eq. (1),
\[ \langle \hat{v}(\eta, x) \hat{v}(\eta, y) \rangle = \frac{4\pi}{(2\pi)^3} \frac{1}{a^2 M^2_{D1}} \int_0^\infty \frac{dk}{k} \frac{1}{k |x - y|} \left[ \cosh(2r_k) - \sinh(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k) \right]. \]
(63)
To go further, one needs to specify \( r_k \) and \( \varphi_k \). In the de Sitter limit, they are given by Eqs. (33) and (34), and on super-Hubble scales \( (-k) \ll 1 \), this gives rise to \( \cosh(2r_k) \approx \sin(2r_k) \approx 1 + 1/(2k^2 \eta^2) \) and \( \cos(2\varphi_k) \approx 1 - 2k^2 \eta^2 \). As a consequence, the power spectrum \( P_v \) of \( v(\eta, x) \), defined through \( \langle \hat{v}_k \hat{\rho}_p \rangle = 2\pi^3 P_v / k^3 \delta(k - p) \), becomes \( P_v = 1/(2\pi^2 \eta^2) \) and the power spectrum of curvature perturbations can be expressed as
\[ P_\zeta = \frac{H^2}{8\pi^2 M^2_{D1} \eta_1}, \]
(64)
where we have used that in de Sitter spacetimes, \( a(\eta) = -1/(H \eta) \). This formula is the standard result \[1, 84\]. Of course, strictly speaking, we have \( \eta_1 = 0 \) for exact de Sitter (there are no density perturbations in de Sitter) so, in fact, the above result is valid at leading order in slow roll only.

Let us now try to evaluate other correlators, in particular the one involving the curvature perturbation and its time derivative. For a two-mode squeezed state, using Eq. (9), we have
\[ \langle \hat{\zeta}(\eta, x) \hat{\zeta}(\eta, y) + \hat{\zeta}^*(\eta, x) \hat{\zeta}(\eta, y) \rangle = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3} \int d\mathbf{k} \left( \langle \hat{v}_k \hat{\rho}_p - k \rangle + \langle \hat{p}_k \hat{\rho}_p - k \rangle \right) e^{ik \cdot (x-y) \eta}. \]
(65)
The next step is to use Eq. (59) together with the fact that \( \hat{v}_k \hat{\rho}_p - k = i \). This commutation relation ensures that the term \( i/2 \) in Eq. (59) cancels out and that the above correlation function is real. Then, one arrives at
\[ \langle \hat{\zeta}(\eta, x) \hat{\zeta}(\eta, y) + \hat{\zeta}^*(\eta, x) \hat{\zeta}(\eta, y) \rangle = -\frac{4\pi}{(2\pi)^3} \frac{1}{z^2(\eta)} \int_0^\infty \frac{dk}{k} \frac{1}{k |x - y|} \left[ \cosh(2r_k) - \sinh(2r_k) \sin(2\varphi_k) \right]. \]
(66)
In the de Sitter super-Hubble limit, this gives rise to \( \hat{\zeta}^* + \hat{\zeta} \sim 1/z \sim \eta \) which is consistent with the fact that \( \zeta_k \) and \( p_k = z \zeta_k \) are constant on large scales.

Finally, it is also interesting to evaluate the two-point correlation function \( \langle \hat{\zeta}(\eta, x) \hat{\zeta}(\eta, y) \rangle \). Straightforward
manipulations lead to
\[
\langle \zeta' (\eta, x) \zeta' (\eta, y) \rangle = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3 z^2(\eta)} \int dk \langle \hat{p}_k \hat{p}_{-k} \rangle e^{ik(x-y)} \tag{67}
\]
\[
= -\frac{4\pi}{(2\pi)^3 z^2(\eta)} \int_0^\infty dk \sin(k|x-y|) k \frac{k}{k} \left[ \cosh(2r_k) + \sinh(2r_k) \cos(2\phi_k) \right].
\tag{68}
\]
For the exact de Sitter case, we have \( \cosh(2r_k) + \sinh(2r_k) \cos(2\phi_k) = 1 \) and this correlator is proportional to \( \eta^2 \) as expected.

V. CAN THE QUANTUM CORRELATION FUNCTIONS BE OBTAINED WITH A NON-DISCORDANT STATE?

In the previous section, we have established the correlation functions of the full quantum state. Given that, as already mentioned, the CMB is usually analyzed in a classical framework, we now study to which extent a “classical state,” i.e. a non-discordant quantum state, can reproduce these results. Notice that, the discord being non-vanishing, we already know for sure that it cannot be the case exactly. As a consequence, here, we rather want to study whether the difference between the exact and the classical approaches is large enough to be seen observationally, which, if so, would be considered as a proof that the perturbations are of quantum-mechanical origin.

A. Two-point correlation functions

The most generic expression for a bipartite system containing classical correlations only is given by [53, 85, 86]
\[
\hat{\rho}_{\text{cl}} = \bigotimes_{k \in \mathbb{R}^3} \sum_{n,m} p_{nm}(k) \hat{\rho}_n(k) \otimes \hat{\rho}_m(-k) \tag{69}
\]
where the \( p_{nm} \)'s satisfy \( \sum_{n,m} p_{nm}(k) = 1 \). The \( p_{nm} \)'s represent a joint probability distribution function that we do not need to specify for the moment. Several comments are in order at this point. Firstly, the above density matrix represents a quantum state that is a priori anisotropic. Indeed, here, the momentum space is split into two parts, \( \mathbb{R}^3^+ \) and \( \mathbb{R}^3^- \), and the number of quanta present in each corresponding mode a priori differs. In the following, we denote “\( k \)” a vector belonging to \( \mathbb{R}^3^+ \) and “\( -p \)” a vector belonging to \( \mathbb{R}^3^- \). Therefore, in Eq. \( (70) \), \( m \) denotes a state with \( m \) quanta for \( -k \in \mathbb{R}^3^- \), the vector \( -k \) being of course minus the vector \( k \). Secondly, in appendix D, we explicitly show that, as stated above, the quantum discord vanishes for the state \( (70) \). Thirdly, it is also important to remark, as demonstrated in appendix E, that this state is not a Gaussian state. As a consequence, one cannot define a covariance matrix. One has to proceed directly from the above density matrix in order to calculate the different two-point (and higher) correlation functions. Straightforward calculations give
\[
\langle \hat{v}_k \hat{v}_p \rangle_{\text{cl}} = \langle \hat{v}_{-k} \hat{v}_{-p} \rangle_{\text{cl}} = 0, \tag{71}
\]
\[
\langle \hat{v}_k \hat{v}_p \rangle_{\text{cl}} = \langle \hat{v}_{-k} \hat{v}_{-p} \rangle_{\text{cl}} = \frac{k}{2} \left[ 1 + \sum_{n,m} n (p_{nm} + p_{mn}) \right] \delta(k-p). \tag{72}
\]
The last expression contains a Dirac function which indicates that the result is non-vanishing only if \( k = p, p \in \mathbb{R}^3^+ \) being the vector obtained from \( -k \in \mathbb{R}^3^- \) by multiplying by minus one. It is also interesting to notice that it can be written as the correlation function calculated in the Bunch-Davies vacuum, \( 1/(2k) \), multiplied by \( 1 + \langle N \rangle \), where \( \langle N \rangle \) is the mean of the particle number operator \( \hat{N} = c_{k}^{\dagger} c_{k} + c_{-k}^{\dagger} c_{-k} \), in agreement with Refs. [87, 88]. The other auto correlation functions read
\[
\langle \hat{p}_k \hat{p}_p \rangle_{\text{cl}} = \langle \hat{p}_{-k} \hat{p}_{-p} \rangle_{\text{cl}} = 0, \tag{73}
\]
\[
\langle \hat{p}_k \hat{p}_{-p} \rangle_{\text{cl}} = \langle \hat{p}_{-k} \hat{p}_p \rangle_{\text{cl}} = \frac{k}{2} \left[ 1 + \sum_{n,m} n (p_{nm} + p_{mn}) \right] \delta(k-p). \tag{74}
\]
In particular, for any distribution \( p_{nm} \), one has the following property,
\[
k^2 \langle \hat{v}_k \hat{v}_{-k} \rangle_{\text{cl}} = \langle \hat{p}_k \hat{p}_{-k} \rangle_{\text{cl}}, \tag{75}
\]
while one can check, see Eqs. \((57)\) and \((58)\), that this is not the case for the two-mode squeezed state. We conclude that a classical state \((69)\) cannot reproduce all the correlation functions of the two-mode squeezed state in accordance with the fact that they have a different quantum discord.

Finally, the cross correlation functions can be written as
\[
\langle \hat{v}_k \hat{p}_p \rangle_{\text{cl}} = \langle \hat{v}_{-k} \hat{p}_{-p} \rangle_{\text{cl}} = 0, \tag{76}
\]
\[
\langle \hat{v}_k \hat{p}_{-p} \rangle_{\text{cl}} = \frac{i}{2} \left[ 1 + \sum_{n,m} n (p_{nm} - p_{mn}) \right] \delta(k-p), \tag{77}
\]
\[
\langle \hat{v}_{-k} \hat{p}_p \rangle_{\text{cl}} = \frac{i}{2} \left[ 1 + \sum_{n,m} n (p_{mn} - p_{nm}) \right] \delta(k-p). \tag{78}
\]
The fact that \( \langle \hat{v}_k \hat{p}_{-p} \rangle_{\text{cl}} \neq \langle \hat{v}_{-k} \hat{p}_p \rangle_{\text{cl}} \) is a consequence of the anisotropy of the quantum state \( (70) \). If one does not want to violate homogeneity and isotropy, one simply has to require the joint probability \( p_{nm} \) to be symmetric, and the cosmological principle is satisfied when
\[
p_{nm} = p_{mn}. \tag{79}
\]
Let us now be more accurate and repeat the calculation of the power spectrum for the classical state. Using Eqs. (71) and (72), it is obvious that the standard power spectrum can always be recovered provided the coefficients $p_{nm}$ are chosen such that $\langle \hat{v}_k(\eta) \hat{v}_{-k}(\eta) \rangle_{cl} = \langle \hat{v}_k(\eta) \hat{v}_{-k}(\eta) \rangle$, that is to say

$$1 + \sum_{n,m} 2np_{nm} = \cosh(2r_k) - \sinh(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k). \quad (80)$$

A possible solution is to take $p_{nm} = p_n \delta(n - m)$ with $p_n$ being given by a thermal distribution, $p_n = (1 - e^{-\beta_k}) e^{-\beta_k n}$, with

$$\beta_k = - \ln \left[ \frac{\cosh(2r_k) - \sin(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k) - 1}{\cosh(2r_k) - \sin(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k) + 1} \right]. \quad (81)$$

In the super-Hubble limit, the corresponding temperature goes to infinity. The classical state (69) can then be written

$$\hat{\rho}_{cl} = (1 - e^{-\beta_k}) \sum_{n=0}^{+\infty} e^{-\beta_k n} |n_k, n_{-k} \rangle \langle n_k, n_{-k}|. \quad (82)$$

In other words, we have a thermal “gas” of pairs of particles with momentum $k$ and $-k$. At the level of the power spectrum, this “classical” description leads to the same result as the quantum one.

As was done before for the two-mode squeezed state, let us now try to evaluate other correlators, involving the curvature perturbation and its time derivative. Using Eqs. (76), (77) and (78) together with Eq. (79), we immediately see that

$$\langle \hat{\zeta}(\eta, \mathbf{x}) \hat{\zeta}(\eta, \mathbf{y}) \rangle_{cl} = 0. \quad (83)$$

Several comments are in order. Firstly, we see that the classical correlator is not equal to the quantum one; see Eq. (66). It is possible to ensure that the quantum and classical power spectra coincide, but then the price to pay is that the other correlators differ. This is of course conceptually very important. It means that by treating the problem classically, rather than quantum mechanically, we are really doing something wrong: some observables are not correctly calculated. This is consistent with the fact that a two-mode squeezed state has a large discord.

Secondly, in practice, the difference between the quantum and the classical results is tiny and unobservable probably forever. Indeed, the classical correlator is exactly zero and the quantum one is proportional to $1/\eta \sim e^{-N_*}$, where $N_*$ is the number of e-folds between the Hubble radius exit during inflation and the end of inflation. Modes probed in the CMB typically have $N_* \sim 50$ and, hence, the quantum correlator is very small for the CMB scales.

We conclude that, at the level of the two-point function, a classical description is acceptable. Thirdly, in any case, it should be clear that the classical description is an effective one only. The state (69) is introduced by hand and is not a solution of the quantum Einstein equations.

Finally, let us repeat the calculation of the correlator involving two derivatives of the curvature perturbations for the classical situation. We now have

$$\langle \hat{\zeta}(\eta, \mathbf{x}) \hat{\zeta}(\eta, \mathbf{y}) \rangle_{cl} = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3 z^2(\eta)} \int \frac{dk}{k} k^{3/2} \sum_{n,m} p_{nm} \left( n + \frac{1}{2} \right) \int_0^\infty dk \sin(k|x-y|) \times k^3 \left[ \cosh(2r_k) - \sin(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k) \right]. \quad (84)$$

But the coefficients $p_{nm}$ were specified when we required the quantum and classical power spectra to be the same. This means that, as already discussed, the above correlator is in fact explicitly known. From Eq. (80) indeed, one has

$$\langle \hat{\zeta}'(\eta, \mathbf{x}) \hat{\zeta}'(\eta, \mathbf{y}) \rangle_{cl} = \frac{4\pi}{(2\pi)^3 z^2(\eta)} \int_0^\infty dk \sin(k|x-y|) \times k^3 \left[ \cosh(2r_k) - \sin(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k) \right], \quad (85)$$

which is different from Eq. (68). In the de Sitter super-Hubble limit, this gives that $\langle \hat{\zeta}' \hat{\zeta}' \rangle_{cl}$ is constant, in accordance with Eq. (75). In fact, this last equation shows that $\langle \hat{\zeta}' \hat{\zeta}' \rangle_{cl}$ and $\langle \hat{\zeta} \hat{\zeta} \rangle_{cl}$ always scale in the same way.

Since we have imposed $\langle \hat{\zeta} \hat{\zeta} \rangle_{cl} = \langle \hat{\zeta} \hat{\zeta} \rangle_{cl}$ is constant on large scales, so is $\langle \hat{\zeta}' \hat{\zeta}' \rangle_{cl}$. Therefore, we conclude that $\langle \hat{\zeta}' \hat{\zeta}' \rangle_{cl} \sim e^{-2N_*}$ and $\langle \hat{\zeta} \hat{\zeta} \rangle_{cl}$ strongly differ $(\langle \hat{\zeta}' \hat{\zeta}' \rangle_{cl} \sim e^{-2N_*} \ll 1)$ and that, as before, the classical description cannot reproduce the quantum results. Contrary to before however, the classical correlator is not exponentially small, leaving thus the possibility to distinguish the two states experimentally.

### B. Non-Gaussianities

We have just seen that two-point correlators for a discordant and for a non-discordant states differ but that this difference is, in practice, very small. Another way to differentiate these two states is to look at non-Gaussianities. All three-point correlation functions vanish in both the two-mode squeezed and classical states; hence one has to consider four-point correlation functions. For the classical state, making use of the same techniques as above, one finds
In this expression, we have kept the coefficients \( p_n(k) \) unspecified so that the following generic comments can be made. The first line of Eq. (87) corresponds to the standard disconnected part of the four-point correlation function. For the two-mode squeezed state, it is the only term that is obtained, which is in agreement with Wick’s theorem given that, as already explained, the two-mode squeezed state is Gaussian. This means that the second and third lines of Eq. (87) correspond to a non-Gaussian contribution. This one is not of the local type and, in fact, corresponds to a scale dependent \( g_{NL} \), notably due to the presence of the \( \delta \) terms. Therefore, it remains to generate templates corresponding to this structure in order to determine whether such a four-point function is already excluded or not. Let us however notice that for the thermal state introduced above Eq. (81), the term in braces is given by \( (\cosh \beta_k - 1)^{-1} \). On super-Hubble scales, \( \beta_k \rightarrow 0 \) and this term blows up. Let us also remark that the non-Gaussianities studied here are due to the intrinsic non-Gaussian character \([89, 90]\) of the classical state and not to the non-linearities of the theory. But of course we expect those non-linearities to produce extra contributions, at the level of both the three- and four-point correlation functions \([88, 91]\). We conclude that constraining the four-point correlation function would be an important test since it has the potential (depending on the level of classical non-Gaussianity) to rule out non discordant primordial states, hence indirectly proving the large quantumness of the CMB anisotropies.

\[
\langle \hat{c}_{k_1} \hat{c}_{k_2} \hat{c}_{k_3} \hat{c}_{k_4} \rangle_{\text{cl}} = \langle \hat{c}_{k_1} \hat{c}_{k_2} \rangle_{\text{cl}} \langle \hat{c}_{k_3} \hat{c}_{k_4} \rangle_{\text{cl}} + \langle \hat{c}_{k_1} \hat{c}_{k_3} \rangle_{\text{cl}} \langle \hat{c}_{k_2} \hat{c}_{k_4} \rangle_{\text{cl}} + \langle \hat{c}_{k_1} \hat{c}_{k_4} \rangle_{\text{cl}} \langle \hat{c}_{k_2} \hat{c}_{k_3} \rangle_{\text{cl}} + \frac{\delta_{k_1+k_2+k_3+k_4,0}}{2k_1^2} \left\{ \left( \sum_{n} n^2 p_n(k_1) - 4 \left[ \sum_{n} n p_n(k_1) \right]^2 - \sum_{n} (n+1) p_n(k_1) \right) \right. \\
\times \left( \delta_{k_1,-k_2} \delta_{k_1,k_3} + \delta_{k_1,-k_2} \delta_{k_1,-k_3} + \delta_{k_1,k_2} \delta_{k_1,-k_3} \right) \right\}. \quad (87)
\]

VI. CAN THE QUANTUM CORRELATION FUNCTIONS BE OBTAINED IN A CLASSICAL STOCHASTIC DESCRIPTION?

In section V, we studied to what extent a classical state can reproduce the quantum correlation functions. We saw that, in principle, it cannot (even if, in practice, it remains to be seen whether it can be detected). Although it was called classical, the situation was still described in terms of a quantum state. This is why here, we go one step further and even ignore the quantum formalism, working only in terms of a stochastic probability distribution.

A. General properties

If an effective classical stochastic description is possible, quantum averages of any operator \( \hat{A} \) should be given by an integral of a stochastic distribution over classical phase space, namely

\[ \langle \hat{A} \rangle = \langle A \rangle_{\text{stoch}}, \quad (88) \]

with

\[ \langle A \rangle_{\text{stoch}} = \int A(R) W(R) d^4R. \quad (89) \]

As usual, a hat denotes a physical observable \( \hat{A} = A(\hat{R}) \), while \( A \) (no hat) is an ordinary real function. The vector \( \hat{R} \), previously defined below Eq. (54), represents the classical variables in phase space and, obviously, \( \hat{R} \) denotes the corresponding operators \( \hat{R} = (k^{1/2}\hat{q}_k, k^{-1/2}\hat{p}_k, k^{1/2}\hat{q}_{-k}, k^{-1/2}\hat{p}_{-k})^T \). The quantity \( W(R) \) represents a probability density function. The stochastic description is possible and meaningful if three conditions are met: first, \( W \) is positive everywhere and normalized to unity (so that it can be interpreted as a distribution function); second, \( W \) obeys the classical equation of motion (see below); and, third, Eq. (88) is valid.

Let us now discuss how \( W \) can be concretely found (if it can). For this purpose, we introduce the Weyl transform \( \hat{A} \) of the operator \( A \) through the following expression

\[ \hat{A}(\hat{q}_k, \hat{p}_k, \hat{q}_{-k}, \hat{p}_{-k}) = \int dx \ dy \ e^{-i\pi_k x - i\pi_{-k} y} \times \left\{ \hat{q}_k + \frac{x}{2} q_{-k} + \frac{y}{2} \right\} \hat{A} \left\{ \hat{q}_k - \frac{x}{2} q_{-k} - \frac{y}{2} \right\}, \quad (90) \]

which builds a real function in phase space, \( \hat{A} \), out of the quantum operator \( A \). It is important to stress that \( A \) is a function (i.e. not an operator) which, for instance, means that \( A \hat{B} = \hat{B} A \). However, \( AB \neq BA \) in general. It is also important to notice that, a priori, \( A \neq A \). In fact, in Appendix F, the following exact result is established,

\[ \hat{R}_i = R_i, \quad \hat{R}_j \hat{R}_k = R_j R_k + \frac{i}{2} J_{jk}, \quad (91) \]

where the matrix \( J \) is defined in Eq. (56). Moreover, since \( R \) and \( V \equiv (k^{1/2}v_k, k^{-1/2}p_k, k^{1/2}v_{-k}, k^{-1/2}p_{-k})^T \) are
linearly related through Eqs. (51) and (52), this relation translates into a similar one for $V$, namely

$$V_i = V_i, \quad \overline{V_j V_k} = V_j V_k + \frac{i}{2} I_{jk}, \tag{92}$$

where $I$ is the anti-diagonal matrix with coefficients $(-1, 1, -1, 1)$ on the antidiagonal and verifies $iI_{j,k} = \{V_j, V_k\}$. Therefore, the only non-vanishing terms of the $I$ matrix are the ones corresponding to products of the form $v_k p_{-k}$. Even more general relations are established in Appendix F.

The fundamental property of the Weyl transform is that

$$\text{Tr} \left( \hat{A} \hat{B} \right) = \int \hat{A}(R) \hat{B}(R) d^4 R \left(2\pi\right)^2. \tag{93}$$

Given that $\langle \hat{A} \rangle = \text{Tr} \left( \hat{\rho} \hat{A} \right)$, this immediately suggests taking for $W$ the Weyl transform of the density operator, $W = \hat{\rho}/(2\pi)^2$ [the factor $(2\pi)^2$ originates from the fact that we consider a system whose phase space is $\mathbb{R}^3$; had we considered a system with phase space $\mathbb{R}^{2n}$, this factor would have been $(2\pi)^n$] namely

$$W(R) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int dx dy e^{-i\pi k x - i\pi -k y} \times \left\langle q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} + \frac{y}{2}, p_k - \frac{x}{2}, p_{-k} - \frac{y}{2} \right\rangle. \tag{94}$$

Then it follows that any expectation value of a physical observable can be obtained through the relation

$$\langle \hat{A} \rangle = \int \hat{A}(R) W(R) d^4 R, \tag{95}$$

or, in other words,

$$\langle \hat{A} \rangle = \langle \hat{A} \rangle_{\text{stoch}}. \tag{96}$$

It is worth emphasizing again that this equation is exact. As a consequence, the condition given by Eq. (88) is realized if the Weyl transform equals its classical counterpart, that is to say if

$$\hat{A} = A. \tag{97}$$

Let us conclude this sub-section by noticing that, as is well known, $W(R)$ given by Eq. (94) is the Wigner function [92, 93]. For illustrative purposes, we now give the Wigner function of the two-mode squeezed and classical states. With the covariance matrices calculated in section IV, one obtains an explicit expression for the two-mode squeezed state Wigner function, namely (see appendix G)

$$W = \frac{1}{\pi^2} \exp \left[ - \left( \frac{k q_k^2 + k q_{-k}^2 + \pi_k^2 + \pi_{-k}^2}{k} \right) \cosh(2r_k) \right]$$

$$- 2 \left( q_k \pi_{-k} + q_{-k} \pi_k \right) \sin(2\varphi_k) \sinh(2r_k)$$

$$- 2 \left( k q_k q_{-k} - \frac{\pi_k \pi_{-k}}{k} \right) \cos(2\varphi_k) \sinh(2r_k) \right]. \tag{98}$$

It is a positive, Gaussian function. Using Eqs. (51) and (52), the corresponding expression in terms of the $v_k$ and $p_k$ variables can be established as well. One can notice that due to the last term, $W$ can neither be factorized as $W = W_k(q_k, \pi_k) W_{-k}(q_{-k}, \pi_{-k})$ nor as $W = W_k(v_k, p_k) W_{-k}(v_{-k}, p_{-k})$, which reflects the presence of correlations between the modes $k$ and $-k$. These correlations vanish in the sub-Hubble limit [where $\cos(2\varphi_k) \sinh(2r_k) = 0$], but in the super-Hubble limit, the Wigner function gets squeezed along the directions $k = -k$,

$$W \propto \delta (q_k - q_{-k}) \delta (\pi_k + \pi_{-k}), \tag{99}$$

hence the term squeezing.

Let us now calculate the Wigner function of the classical state (70). Combining Eqs. (G15) and (E14), one obtains after a few manipulations

$$W_{\text{cl}} = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int_0^\infty \int_0^\infty x dy \left[ \coth(\beta_k/2) \frac{1}{x^2 + y^2} I_0 \left( \cosh \left( \frac{\beta_k}{2} \right) \frac{xy}{4} \right) \right.$$

$$\left. J_0 \left( x \sqrt{\frac{k q_k^2 + \pi_k^2}{k}} \right) J_0 \left( y \sqrt{\frac{k q_{-k}^2 + \pi_{-k}^2}{k}} \right) \right]. \tag{100}$$

where $\beta_k$ has been defined in Eq. (81) and $I_0$ and $J_0$ are Bessel functions. As already pointed out in section V, one can see that the classical state is a non-Gaussian one. It is also interesting to notice that, in the sub-Hubble limit, $\beta_k \rightarrow \infty$, the argument of the $I_0$ function vanishes and the integrals over $x$ and $y$ can be factorized. This means that, in this limit, the Wigner function becomes separable, $W = W_k(q_k, \pi_k) W_{-k}(q_{-k}, \pi_{-k})$. When $\beta_k$ decreases, this is not the case anymore and the two modes are correlated. This is similar to what was noted for the two-mode squeezed state. However, these correlations are of a different nature. Indeed, since the classical Wigner function depends on the phase-space variables only through the two combinations $k q_k^2 + \pi_k^2/k$ and $k q_{-k}^2 + \pi_{-k}^2/k$, it is rotationally invariant inside each mode. In particular, squeezing does not take place.

---

3 Let us notice that when one of the modes is integrated out, the classical Wigner function becomes Gaussian. For example, the marginalized Wigner function in the plane $(q_k, \pi_k)$, obtained by marginalizing over $q_{-k}$ and $\pi_{-k}$, can be expressed as the Fourier transform of the restrained characteristic function $\chi(\eta_1, \eta_2, 0, 0)$, and one obtains

$$W_{\text{cl}}(q_k, \pi_k) = \frac{1}{\pi} \tanh \left( \frac{\beta_k}{2} \right) e^{-\tanh \left( \frac{\beta_k}{2} \right) \left( k q_k^2 + \frac{\pi_k^2}{k} \right)}, \tag{101}$$

Therefore, the non-Gaussianity of the classical Wigner function directly reflects the (classical) correlations between the two modes $k$ and $-k$. 


FIG. 3: Marginalized Wigner function \( W(q_k, q_{-k}) = \int W(q_k, \pi_k, q_{-k}, \pi_{-k}) d\pi_k d\pi_{-k} \), for the super-Hubble mode \( k/(aH) = 0.3 \). The left panel corresponds to the two-mode squeezed state while the right panel is for the classical state \((82)\). One can see that as explained in the text and contrary to the two-mode squeezed state, the classical state is both non-Gaussian and unsqueezed.

is consistent with the results obtained in the previous sections. In Fig. 3, we display the marginalized Wigner functions \( W(q_k, q_{-k}) \) for the two-mode squeezed and classical states.

### B. The case of a Gaussian state

So far, the discussion was fully generic. We now discuss whether the three conditions for the validity of a stochastic classical description mentioned before, namely \( W \) being positive everywhere, \( W \) obeying the classical equation of motion and the validity of Eq. \((88)\) or, equivalently, of Eq. \((97)\), are satisfied for a Gaussian state.

Let us start with the first condition, i.e. the positivity of the Wigner function. In appendix G, it is shown that, for Gaussian states, the characteristic function of which is of the form given by Eq. \((55)\), one has

\[
W(R) = \frac{1}{\pi^2 \sqrt{\det \gamma}} e^{-R^T \gamma^{-1} R}.
\]

In this case, the Wigner function is therefore a (correctly normalized) Gaussian function with covariance matrix \( \gamma \) (hence its name). This also means that it is positive at any time and, thus, indeed satisfies our first condition. Notice that this is a general feature of Gaussian states and is completely independent from the fact that we have squeezing (large or not). For instance, a coherent state also has a positive Wigner function.

Let us now examine the second condition. In appendix H, we show that, for any quadratic Hamiltonian, the Wigner function obeys a classical equation of motion. Indeed, if one differentiates Eq. \((94)\) with respect to time and makes use of the Schrödinger equation, one obtains

\[
\frac{dW}{d\eta} = \{H_k, W\}_{PB},
\]

where the right-hand side of this equation is the Poisson bracket between the Hamiltonian \( H_k \) and the Wigner function. The above equation therefore describes a Liouville evolution. This means that if one starts from a collection of pairs of point-like particles [the first one living in \((q_k, \pi_k)\), the other one in \((q_{-k}, \pi_{-k})\)] at time \( \eta \) that mimic the distribution \( W(\eta) \), and if one lets them all evolve according to the classical Hamilton equations, the distribution calculated at later time \( \eta' \) matches \( W(\eta') \).

We therefore conclude that the second condition is also met. Again, this is completely independent of whether we have large squeezing or not and is true for any quadratic Hamiltonian.

Finally, we come to the third condition, namely the equality between quantum and stochastic correlators. Using Eqs. \((91)\) and \((96)\), one has

\[
\langle \hat{R}_j \hat{R}_k \rangle = \langle \hat{R}_j \hat{R}_k \rangle_{\text{stocha}} = \left\langle \hat{R}_j \hat{R}_k + \frac{i}{2} J_{jk} \right\rangle_{\text{stocha}} = \left\langle \hat{R}_j \hat{R}_k \right\rangle_{\text{stocha}} + \frac{i}{2} J_{jk}.
\]

This implies that for combinations of \( \hat{R}_j \) and \( \hat{R}_k \) such that \( J_{jk} = 0 \), the stochastic distribution reproduces exactly the two-point quantum correlators. The only cases where \( J_{jk} \neq 0 \) correspond to mixed terms and we find

\[
\langle q_k \pi_k \rangle_{\text{stocha}} = \langle q_{-k} \pi_{-k} \rangle_{\text{stocha}} = \langle \pi_k q_k \rangle_{\text{stocha}} = \langle \pi_{-k} q_{-k} \rangle_{\text{stocha}} = 0.
\]

In terms of the Mukhanov-Sasaki variable and its conj
gate momentum, this means that
\[
\langle v_k p \rangle_{\text{stocha}} = \frac{1}{2k} \left[ \cosh(2r_k) - \sinh(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k) \right] \times \delta(k + p),
\]
\[
\langle p_k p \rangle_{\text{stocha}} = \frac{k}{2} \left[ \cosh(2r_k) + \sinh(2r_k) \cos(2\varphi_k) \right] \times \delta(k + p),
\]
\[
\langle v_k p \rangle_{\text{stocha}} = -\frac{1}{2} \sinh(2r_k) \sin(2\varphi_k) \delta(k + p).
\]

These equations should be compared to their quantum counterparts, namely Eqs. (57), (58) and (59). We notice that the only correlator which is not identical is the last one: \(\langle v_k \hat{p} - k \rangle \neq \langle v_k p - k \rangle_{\text{stocha}}\); see Eqs. (59) and (109). There is an additional \(i/2\) in the quantum correlator which makes the difference. However, contrary to the classical state studied in section V, all the correlators of \(\hat{\zeta}\) and \(\hat{\zeta}'\) are correctly reproduced. This is evident for \(\langle \hat{\zeta} \rangle\) and \(\langle \hat{\zeta}' \rangle\) since they do not involve the two-point function \(\langle \hat{v}_k \hat{p} - k \rangle\) but it is also true that
\[
\langle \hat{\zeta}(\eta, x) \hat{\zeta}'(\eta, y) \rangle = \langle \hat{\zeta}(\eta, x) \hat{\zeta}'(\eta, y) \rangle_{\text{stocha}}.
\]

The reason is that the above operator is Hermitian and, therefore, the complex term \(i/2\) cancels out. This means that, as far as the two-point correlators are concerned, the quantum and stochastic descriptions cannot be observationally distinguished. Notice that this conclusion is independent of the value of \(r_k\) and is valid for any value of the squeezing parameter.

Actually, squeezing only plays a role when computing higher order observable quantities involving the momentum. For example, in Appendix F, it is shown that
\[
\langle \hat{q}_k^2 \hat{\pi}_k^2 \rangle_{\text{stocha}} = \langle \hat{q}_k^2 \hat{\pi}_k^2 \rangle - 2i \hat{q}_k \hat{\pi}_k - 1/2.
\]
Making use of Eq. (96), this means that
\[
\langle \hat{q}_k^2 \hat{\pi}_k^2 \rangle_{\text{stocha}} = \langle \hat{q}_k^2 \hat{\pi}_k^2 \rangle - 1,
\]
so that the difference between the quantum and stochastic correlators is still present for Hermitian operators. However, from the results of section IV A, one has
\[
\langle \hat{q}_k^2 \hat{\pi}_k^2 + \hat{\pi}_k^2 \hat{q}_k^2 \rangle = \cosh^2(2r_k)/2
\]
which is exponentially large when \(r_k \gg 1\). Therefore, in the large squeezing limit, the stochastic description gives accurate results for these correlators too.

As mentioned before, a difference between the quantum and stochastic cases arises only if the corresponding correlators contain \(\hat{q}_k\) and the momentum. In particular, we show in Appendix F that \(\hat{q}_k^2 = q_k^2\). However, this does not mean that higher order terms, i.e. such as \(\langle \hat{q}_k^4 \rangle\), will also be correctly and automatically reproduced since \(\hat{\zeta}_k = \hat{q}_k/\varepsilon\) is expressed in terms of \(\hat{q}_k\) but also in terms of \(\hat{\pi}_k\); see Eq. (51). In other words, higher order correlators of \(\hat{\zeta}_k\) will precisely involve terms with various powers of \(\hat{q}_k\) and \(\hat{\pi}_k\) for which the squeezing plays a role.

It is usually said that a stochastic classical distribution successfully reproduces the quantum correlators of cosmological fluctuations in the large squeezing limit. The results of this section shed some light on this statement. The fact that the Wigner function is positive and evolves under the classical equations of motion is independent of the squeezing level and is just a consequence of having a quadratic Hamiltonian and a Gaussian state. For observable (i.e. Hermitian) operators, two-point correlators are also correctly reproduced by the Wigner function regardless of the squeezing level, and it is only when considering higher order correlators that squeezing comes into play.

Therefore, our ability to calculate exactly the power spectrum in the stochastic approach has nothing to do with the large squeezing limit but is in fact due to the property that the Hamiltonian is quadratic.

\section{VII. Discussion and Conclusion}

Let us now summarize our main findings. The presence of quantum correlations in a quantum state can be characterized by the recently proposed quantum discord \cite{2014PhRvA..89j2104W,2014PhRvA..89e2116P}. Cosmological perturbations produced during inflation are placed in a two-mode squeezed state, for which we have calculated the quantum discord and showed that it is very large at the end of inflation. This means that primordial perturbations represent a highly non-classical system.

We have also computed the discord for a general splitting of the system and shown that, except for the specific case where the two sub-systems correspond to the real and imaginary parts of the Mukhanov-Sasaki variable, the quantum discord is always very large on super-Hubble scales. In an ordinary situation, such as a Bell-type experiment where the spin states of two remote systems are measured, the splitting is unambiguous, and the two subsystems are obviously the two particles that have travelled far away from each other. But the situation is less clear when a measurement of a “continuous” system is performed. A priori, a measurement corresponds to a realization which provides us with all the values of the \(\hat{q}_k\)'s, i.e. a map of the CMB. How should we split this system into two subsystems? These tricky questions are in fact connected to deeper issues related to the status of the measurement problem in a cosmological context; see Refs. \cite{Kiefer1996,2005PhRvD..72l3525F}.

In order to determine how the large quantum discord is reflected at the observational level, we have compared the correlation functions of the two-mode squeezed states

\footnote{A remaining non-trivial question is whether a stochastic classical description is valid to describe (even approximately) correlators of non analytical functions in \(v\) and \(p\) (or \(q\) and \(\pi\)) \cite{2014PhRvA..89e2116P}.}
with the ones that would be obtained (i) from a “classical state”, that is to say a state with vanishing quantum discord, that contains classical correlations only; and (ii) from a classical stochastic distribution. The results are summarized in table I. One can design a classical state that reproduces the observed primordial power spectrum. However, large differences with the two-mode squeezed state correlators then appear in other two-point functions, and such classical states are intrinsically non-Gaussian. Then, if one is ready to abandon the idea that perturbations should be described in the framework of quantum mechanics and wants to use a classical stochastic distribution instead, we have seen that because the Hamiltonian is quadratic and the two-mode squeezed state is Gaussian, the Wigner function provides such a distribution, evolving under the classical equation of motion and allowing us to reproduce all observable (i.e. Hermitian) two-point correlators. It is important to stress that the squeezing plays no role at this level. The large squeezing is important only if one wants to correctly reproduce non-Hermitian or higher order correlators.

Let us conclude with a few remarks. First, the fact that a classical stochastic distribution succeeds in reproducing the two-mode squeezed state late time correlators is due to most phase information being contained in the decaying mode, which is not observable in the large squeezing limit in the minimal setup we considered here. More complicated situations, such as multi-field inflation [96] where entropic perturbations can source the decaying mode on large scales, or models where features in the potential [97–99] give rise to transient violations of slow roll (hence modified squeezing histories) may therefore lead to different conclusions. Second, in light of the results of this paper, the presence of large quantum correlations in primordial perturbations can be seen as a remarkable feature of inflation. It would be interesting to see whether this property is also present in alternative scenarios [100] to inflation, such as bouncing cosmologies [101] or ekpyrotic setups [102].

The answer to the question raised in the title of this paper is yes in principle, and maybe in practice. On top of the possible channels we exhibited in this article, other observations, such as Bell-type experiments, may also be capable of proving the existence of large quantum correlations in the CMB. We plan to investigate these issues in future publications [103, 104].

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Appendix A: The Projected State is a Pure State

In this appendix, we show that the projected state defined in Eq. (37) is a pure state, and that, as a consequence, its entropy vanishes. Let us start from a general bipartite state which can always be written as

$$|\psi\rangle = \sum_{n,m} c_{nm} |n_k, m_{-k}\rangle.$$  

(A1)

Then, the corresponding density matrix reads

$$\hat{\rho}(k, -k) = \sum_{n,m} \sum_{p,q} c_{nm}^* c_{pq} |n_k\rangle \langle p_k| \otimes |m_{-k}\rangle \langle q_{-k}|.$$  

(A2)

The next step, as was discussed around Eq. (37), is to consider the following projector which corresponds to the measurement of an observable of the sub-system “−k”

$$\hat{\Pi}_j = \hat{1}_k \otimes |j_{-k}\rangle \langle j_{-k}|.$$  

(A3)
From this expression, it is easy to show that
\[
\hat{\rho}(k, -k)\hat{\Pi}_j = \sum_{n,m} \sum_p c_{nm} c_{pj}^* |n_k\rangle \langle p_k| \otimes |m_{-k}\rangle \langle j_{-k}|
\]  
(A4)
from which we deduce that
\[
\text{Tr}_k \left[ \hat{\rho}(k, -k)\hat{\Pi}_j \right] = \sum_i \langle i_{-k}|\hat{\rho}\hat{\Pi}_j|i_{-k}\rangle = \sum_n \sum_p c_{nj} c_{pj}^* |n_k\rangle \langle p_k|.
\]  
(A5)
We also have \(\text{Tr} \left[ \hat{\rho}(k, -k)\hat{\Pi}_j \right] = \sum_n c_{nj} c_{nj}^*\) where, here, the trace is taken over the full state space. Therefore, the state defined in Eq. (37) can be expressed as
\[
\hat{\rho}(k; \hat{\Pi}_j) = \frac{1}{\sum_n c_{nj} c_{nj}^*} \sum_n \sum_p c_{nj} c_{pj}^* |n_k\rangle \langle p_k|.
\]  
(A6)
From this expression, it is straightforward to show that \(\hat{\rho}^2(k; \hat{\Pi}_j) = \hat{\rho}(k; \hat{\Pi}_j)\). Indeed, using the above explicit expression, one has
\[
\hat{\rho}^2(k; \hat{\Pi}_j) = \frac{1}{\sum_n c_{nj} c_{nj}^*} \sum_n \sum_p c_{nj} c_{nj}^* \sum_p \sum_{pq} c_{pq} c_{pq}^* |p_k\rangle \langle q_k| \sum_r c_{rj} c_{rj}^* |r_k\rangle \langle s_k|
\]  
(A7)
\[
= \frac{1}{\sum_n c_{nj} c_{nj}^*} \sum_n \sum_p \sum_{pq} \sum_{rs} c_{pq} c_{pq}^* c_{rj} c_{rj}^* |p_k\rangle \langle q_k| |r_k\rangle \langle s_k|
\]  
(A8)
\[
= \frac{1}{\sum_n c_{nj} c_{nj}^*} \sum_n \sum_p \sum_{rs} \sum_{pq} c_{pq} c_{pq}^* c_{rj} c_{rj}^* |p_k\rangle \langle s_k|
\]  
(A9)
\[
= \frac{1}{\sum_n c_{nj} c_{nj}^*} \sum_n \sum_p \sum_{rs} c_{pq} c_{pq}^* c_{rj} c_{rj}^* |p_k\rangle \langle s_k|
\]  
(A10)
\[
= \frac{1}{\sum_n c_{nj} c_{nj}^*} \sum_n \sum_p \sum_{rs} \sum_{pq} c_{pq} c_{pq}^* |p_k\rangle \langle s_k|
\]  
(A11)
It is therefore a pure state and, consequently, as noticed in the main text, its entropy vanishes.

Appendix B: Quantum Discord for a General Splitting of the System

In this appendix, we calculate the discord for a general splitting of the quantum system as discussed in Sec. III. The calculations presented here lead to Fig. 2. The state of the system is given by Eq. (28) and can be written as
\[
\hat{\rho} = \frac{1}{\cosh^2(r_k)} \sum_{n,n'=0}^{\infty} e^{2(n-n')c_k} (-1)^{n+n'} \tanh^{n+n'}(r_k) |n_k, n_{-k}\rangle \langle n_{n'}, n_{-n'}| = \sum_{n,n'=0}^{\infty} a_{n,n'} |n_k, n_{-k}\rangle \langle n_{n'}, n_{-n'}|,
\]  
(B1)
which defines the coefficients \(a_{n,n'}\). Here, the density matrix is expanded over the states \(|n_k, n_{-k}\rangle\) which is especially convenient when the system is split according to \(E = E_k \otimes E_{-k}\). In this appendix, however, we consider the case where \(E = E_1 \otimes E_2\), the corresponding ladder operators being given by Eqs. (47) and (48). It is therefore more convenient to use the states
\[
|n_1, m_2\rangle = \frac{\hat{a}_1^n}{\sqrt{m!}} \frac{\hat{a}_2^m}{\sqrt{n!}} |0_1, 0_2\rangle,
\]  
(B2)
containing \(n\) quanta in the mode 1 and \(m\) quanta in the mode 2. As a consequence, one must first write \(|n_k, n_{-k}\rangle = \sum_{m,p} \langle m_1, p_2|n_k, n_{-k}\rangle |m_1, p_2\rangle\) and calculate \(\langle m_1, p_2|n_k, n_{-k}\rangle\). This quantity can be written as
\[
\langle m_1, p_2|n_k, n_{-k}\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{m_1 p_2 m_2 n_1 n_2}} \langle 0_1, 0_2\rangle \langle \hat{a}_1^m \hat{a}_2^n \rangle \langle \hat{c}_k^n \hat{c}_{-k}^n |0_1, 0_2\rangle,
\]  
(B3)
where we used Eq. (B2) and that |0_k,0_{-k}| = |0_1,0_2|. Then, the idea of the calculation is to permute the operators such that (\hat{a}_1)^m and (\hat{a}_2)^p directly act on |0_1,0_2|. In order to do so, we use the fact [105] that, for two operators \hat{X} and \hat{Y} such that [\hat{X},\hat{Y}] = d\hat{I}, one has

$$[\hat{X}^n, \hat{Y}^m] = \sum_{\ell=1}^{\text{min}(n,m)} d^{\ell}\ell! \binom{n}{\ell} \binom{m}{\ell} \hat{Y}^{m-\ell} \hat{X}^{n-\ell}, \tag{B4}$$

where the coefficient \binom{n}{\ell} = n!/[n - \ell)!\ell)!]. This immediately implies that

$$\hat{X}^n\hat{Y}^m = \sum_{\ell=0}^{\text{min}(n,m)} d^{\ell}\ell! \binom{n}{\ell} \binom{m}{\ell} \hat{Y}^{m-\ell} \hat{X}^{n-\ell}. \tag{B5}$$

Let us make use of this relation. Since [\hat{a}_1, \hat{c}_k^\dagger] = \cos \alpha, see Eq. (47), one has

$$\hat{a}_1^m (\hat{c}_k^\dagger)^n = \sum_{\ell=0}^{\text{min}(m,n)} (\cos \alpha)^{\ell_1} \ell_1! \binom{m}{\ell_1} \binom{n}{\ell_1} \hat{c}_k^{\ell_1}\hat{a}_1^{m-\ell_1} \hat{a}_1^{-\ell_1} \hat{c}_k^{\ell_1\dagger} \tag{B6}$$

Moreover, since \hat{a}_1 and \hat{a}_2 commute, one can first permute them and then use the relation we have just established. In that case Eq. (B3) can be written as

$$\langle m_1, p_2|n_k, n_{-k}\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{m!p!n!m!}} \sum_{\ell_1=0}^{\text{min}(m,n)} (\cos \alpha)^{\ell_1} \ell_1! \binom{m}{\ell_1} \langle m_1, \ell_1|0_1,0_2\rangle (\hat{a}_2)^p \hat{c}_k^{\ell_1\dagger} \hat{a}_1^{m-\ell_1} \hat{a}_1^{-\ell_1} \hat{c}_k^{\ell_1\dagger} \langle 0_1,0_2\rangle. \tag{B7}$$

In order for \hat{a}_1 to act on the vacuum, we see that one more permutation is needed. It can be obtained by using again the same trick. Since [\hat{a}_1, \hat{c}_k^\dagger\hat{c}_k] = \sin \alpha, see Eq. (47), one has

$$\hat{a}_1^{m-\ell_1} \hat{c}_k^\dagger \hat{c}_k^{\ell_1\dagger} = \sum_{\ell_2=0}^{\text{min}(m-\ell_1,n)} (\sin \alpha)^{\ell_2} \ell_2! \binom{m-\ell_1}{\ell_2} \binom{n}{\ell_2} \hat{c}_k^{\ell_2\dagger} \hat{a}_1^{m-\ell_1-\ell_2} \hat{a}_1^{-\ell_1-\ell_2}, \tag{B8}$$

and, therefore, one can write

$$\langle m_1, p_2|n_k, n_{-k}\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{m!p!n!m!}} \sum_{\ell_1=0}^{\text{min}(m,n)\text{min}(m-\ell_1,n)} \sum_{\ell_2=0}^{\text{min}(m-\ell_1,n)} (\cos \alpha)^{\ell_1} \ell_1! \binom{m}{\ell_1} (\sin \alpha)^{\ell_2} \ell_2! \binom{m-\ell_1}{\ell_2} \langle m_1, \ell_1|0_1,0_2\rangle \langle 0_1,0_2\rangle. \tag{B9}$$

This expression vanishes unless \(m - \ell_1 - \ell_2 = 0\) or \(\ell_2 = m - \ell_1\). Moreover, clearly, if \(n < m - \ell_1\), then \(\text{min}(m - \ell_1,n) = n\), the sum over \(\ell_2\) runs from 0 to \(n\), and \(\ell_2\) can never reach \(m - \ell_1\). In that case, the above expression is zero. On the contrary, if \(n > m - \ell_1\), then \(\text{min}(m - \ell_1,n) = m - \ell_1\) and the sum over \(\ell_2\) runs from 0 to \(m - \ell_1\). But if \(n > m - \ell_1\), it also means that \(\ell_1 > m - n\) and, if this quantity is positive, the sum over \(\ell_1\) must start from this value rather than from zero. In other words, it must start from \(\text{max}(0, m - n)\). Therefore, one obtains

$$\langle m_1, p_2|n_k, n_{-k}\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{m!p!n!m!}} \sum_{\ell_1=\text{max}(0, m-n)}^{\text{min}(m,n)} (\cos \alpha)^{\ell_1} \ell_1! \binom{m}{\ell_1} (\sin \alpha)^{m-\ell_1} \langle m_1, \ell_1|0_1,0_2\rangle. \tag{B10}$$

The next step is now to bring the operator \(\hat{a}_2\) to the left and the same method we have just described can be applied. After straightforward manipulations, the final expression reads

$$\langle m_1, p_2|n_k, n_{-k}\rangle = \sqrt{\frac{m!p!}{n!m!}} \sum_{\ell_1=\text{max}(0, m-n)}^{\text{min}(m,n)} (\cos \alpha)^{2\ell_1 + n - m} (\sin \alpha)^{m + n - 2\ell_1} (-1)^{n - \ell_1} e^{2ip\alpha} \binom{n}{m - \ell_1} \binom{n}{\ell_1} \delta(m + p, 2n). \tag{B11}$$
The appearance of the $\delta$ function makes sense since it means that the same total number of particles must be contained in both states. In particular, one can check that, in the specific case $\alpha = 0$, the previous expression gives $\delta(m - n)\delta(p - n)$, as it should.

Using the expression previously established, one can then write

$$|n_k, n_{-k}⟩ = \sum_{m=0}^{+\infty} \sum_{p=0}^{+\infty} \langle m_1, p_2 | n_k, n_{-k}⟩ |m_1, p_2⟩ = \sum_{m=0}^{2n} \langle m_1, (2n - m)_2 | n_k, n_{-k}⟩ |m_1, (2n - m)_2⟩ \tag{B12}$$

$$= [-\cos(\alpha)\sin(\alpha)]^n \sum_{m=0}^{2n} \sqrt{m!(2n - m)!} n! e^{-2i(2n - m)\alpha} (\tan(\alpha))^m$$

$$\frac{\min(m,n)}{\ell=\max(0,m-n)} (\tan(\alpha))^{-2\ell} (-1)^{\ell} \left( \frac{n}{m-\ell} \right) \left( \frac{n}{\ell} \right) |m_1, (2n - m)_2⟩.$$ \tag{B13}

This expression can be further simplified as the second sum can be calculated in terms of a hypergeometric function. Indeed, the sum over $m$ can be split into a sum from $m = 0$ to $m = n$, in which case one has $m \leq n$ and a sum from $m = n + 1$ to $m = 2n$, in which case one has $m > n$. But in these two cases, the corresponding sum over $\ell$ is known since for $m \leq n$, one has

$$\sum_{\ell=0}^{m} \left[ -\frac{1}{\tan^2(\alpha)} \right]^\ell \left( \frac{n}{m-\ell} \right) \left( \frac{n}{\ell} \right) = \left[ -\frac{1}{\tan^2(\alpha)} \right]^{m-n} \left( \frac{n}{m-n} \right) \frac{\binom{n}{m}}{\binom{m}{n}} (m - n, -n, 1 + m - n, -\frac{1}{\tan^2(\alpha)}) \tag{B14}$$

while, for $m \geq n$, one can write

$$\sum_{\ell=1}^{m-n} \left[ -\frac{1}{\tan^2(\alpha)} \right]^\ell \left( \frac{n}{m-\ell} \right) \left( \frac{n}{\ell} \right) = \left[ -\frac{1}{\tan^2(\alpha)} \right]^{m-n} \left( \frac{n}{m-n} \right) \frac{\binom{n}{m-n}}{\binom{m-n}{n}} (m - n, -n, 1 + m - n, -\frac{1}{\tan^2(\alpha)}) \tag{B15}$$

As a consequence, the state $|n_k, n_{-k}⟩$ can be expressed as

$$|n_k, n_{-k}⟩ = \left[ -\frac{\cos(\alpha)\sin(\alpha)}{n!} \right] e^{4im\alpha} \sum_{m=0}^{n} \sqrt{(m!(2n - m)!} e^{-2im\alpha} (\tan(\alpha))^m \left( \frac{n}{m} \right) \frac{\binom{n}{m}}{\binom{m}{n}} (m - n, -n, 1 + m - n, -\frac{1}{\tan^2(\alpha)}) |m_1, (2n - m)_2⟩ +$$

$$2n \sum_{m=0}^{2n} b_{nm} |m_1, (2n - m)_2⟩ \tag{B16}$$

which defines the coefficients $b_{nm}$. Combining Eqs. (B1) and (B17), one can write the expression of the density matrix as

$$\hat{\rho}_{12} = \sum_{n,n'=0}^{\infty} \sum_{m=0}^{2n} \sum_{m'=0}^{2n'} a_{n'n} b_{nm} b^*_{n'm'} |m, 2n - m⟩⟨m', 2n' - m'|.$$ \tag{B18}

We are now in a position to calculate the discord along the lines of Sec. III. The quantity $I_{12}$ is defined by $I_{12} = S(\hat{\rho}_1) + S(\hat{\rho}_2) - S(\hat{\rho}_{12})$, where $\hat{\rho}_1$ ($\hat{\rho}_2$) is obtained from $\hat{\rho}_{12}$ by tracing out the degrees of freedom of the sub-system 2 (1). Then let us imagine that we make a measurement on the sub-system 1 corresponding to an operator $\hat{1}_j$. This defines $\hat{\rho}_2(\hat{1}_j) = \text{Tr}_1(\hat{\rho}_{12}\hat{1}_j/\rho_j)$ where $\rho_j = \text{Tr}(\hat{\rho}_{12}\hat{1}_j)$ and $J_{12} = S(\hat{\rho}_2) - \sum_j p_j S(\hat{\rho}_2(\hat{1}_j))$. However, we have shown in Appendix A that $S(\hat{\rho}_2(\hat{1}_j)) = 0$ since $\hat{\rho}_2$ is still a pure state. As a result, $J_{12} = S(\hat{\rho}_2)$ and, hence, the discord is just given by $\delta_{12} = S(\hat{\rho}_1)$. We see that we only need to calculate the entropy of $\hat{\rho}_1$. In order to obtain this reduced density matrix, we trace out the second set of degrees of freedom. Using Eq. (B18), this leads to the
following expression:

\[
\hat{\rho}_1 = \sum_{p=0}^{\infty} \langle p_2|\hat{\rho}|p_2\rangle = \sum_{p=0}^{\infty} \sum_{n,n'=0}^{2n} a_{n,n'} b_{n,n'} \langle p_2|m,2n-m\rangle \langle m',2n'-m'|p_2\rangle.
\]

(B19)

\[
\hat{\rho}_1 = \sum_{n,n'=0}^{2n} a_{n,n'} b_{n,n'} \langle p_2|m,2n-m\rangle \langle m',2n'-m'|p_2\rangle.
\]

(B20)

Since \(\hat{\rho}_1\) is a priori not a thermal state, one cannot directly apply Eq. (43). In an analogy with Eqs. (49) and (50), let us therefore introduce the quantities \(\hat{q}_{1,2}\) and \(\hat{p}_{1,2}\) defined by \(\hat{q}_{1,2} = (\sqrt{2k})^{-1}(a_{1,2} + a_{1,2}^\dagger)\) and \(\hat{p}_{1,2} = -i\sqrt{k/2}(a_{1,2} - a_{1,2}^\dagger)\). This defines the vector \(\hat{P}_j = (k^{1/2}\hat{q}_1, k^{-1/2}\hat{p}_1, k^{1/2}\hat{q}_2, k^{-1/2}\hat{p}_2)\) which is the equivalent of \(\hat{R}_j\) defined after Eq. (54). Then the covariance matrix \(\gamma_{jk}\) is defined by \(\langle \hat{P}_j \hat{P}_k \rangle = \gamma_{jk}/2 + iJ_{jk}/2\); see below Eq. (55) in the text and the definition of the matrix \(J_{jk}\) given by Eq. (56). In fact, since we want to calculate the entropy of the sub-system 1 only, it is sufficient to consider the covariance matrix in the first subsystem. Straightforward calculations lead to

\[
\gamma_{11} = k\langle \hat{a}_1^2 \rangle = \langle \hat{a}_1^2 + \langle \hat{a}_1^2 \rangle + 2\hat{a}_1 \hat{a}_1^\dagger \rangle - 1 = \text{Tr} \{\hat{\rho}_1 \hat{a}_1^2 + \langle \hat{a}_1^2 \rangle + 2\hat{a}_1 \hat{a}_1^\dagger \} - 1,
\]

(B21)

\[
\gamma_{12} = \gamma_{21} = i \langle \hat{a}_1^2 \rangle^2 - \hat{a}_1 \}, = i \text{Tr} \{\hat{\rho}_1 \langle \hat{a}_1^2 \rangle^2 - \hat{a}_1 \},
\]

(B22)

\[
\gamma_{22} = -\langle \hat{a}_1^2 \rangle^2 - 2\hat{a}_1 \hat{a}_1^\dagger - 1 = -\text{Tr} \{\hat{\rho}_1 \langle \hat{a}_1^2 \rangle^2 - 2\hat{a}_1 \hat{a}_1^\dagger \} - 1,
\]

(B23)

which is explicitly known since we have determined the density matrix \(\hat{\rho}_1\); see Eq. (B18). As is evident from the above expressions, in order to find \(\gamma_{jk}\), it is sufficient to determine the three following quantities, \(\langle \hat{a}_1^2 \rangle\), \(\langle \hat{a}_1^2 \rangle^2\) and \(\langle \hat{a}_1 \hat{a}_1^\dagger \rangle\). For the sake of illustration, let us calculate the first one. One has

\[
\langle \hat{a}_1^2 \rangle = \text{Tr} \{\hat{\rho}_1 \hat{a}_1^2 \} = \sum_{p=0}^{\infty} \sum_{n,n'=0}^{2n} a_{n,n'} b_{n,n'} \langle p|m,2n-m\rangle \langle m,2n'-m'|p\rangle.
\]

(B24)

\[
\sum_{p=0}^{\infty} \sum_{n,n'=0}^{2n} a_{n,n'} b_{n,n'} \langle p|m,2n-m\rangle \langle m,2n'-m'|p\rangle.
\]

(B25)

\[
\sum_{n=1}^{2n} a_{n,n-1} b_{n,n-1} \sqrt{m(m-1)}
\]

(B26)

The two other quantities are given by similar calculations. Then it is sufficient to calculate the eigenvalues \(\kappa\) of the matrix \((\gamma/2)J_1\) to directly obtain the symplectic spectrum, thanks to Williamson’s theorem [106]. One obtains

\[
\kappa = \pm i \sqrt{\langle \hat{a}_1 \hat{a}_1^\dagger \rangle - \langle \hat{a}_1^2 \rangle^2} \pm i \sigma,
\]

(B27)

which defines \(\sigma\). Finally, the von Neumann entropy, and therefore the discord \(\delta_{12}\), is given by the following expression:

\[
\delta_{12} = S(\hat{\rho}_1) = -\text{Tr} (\hat{\rho}_1 \log \hat{\rho}_1) = \left(\sigma + \frac{1}{2}\right) \log_2 \left(\sigma + \frac{1}{2}\right) - \left(\sigma - \frac{1}{2}\right) \log_2 \left(\sigma - \frac{1}{2}\right).
\]

(B28)

We have evaluated this expression numerically. It is displayed as a function of the parameter \(\alpha\) in Fig. 2. The dependence in \(kn\) is hidden in the coefficients \(a_{n,n'}\) which depend on the squeezing parameters, these ones being explicit time-dependent quantities.

Appendix C: Covariance Matrix of a Two-Mode Squeezed State

In this appendix, we calculate the covariance matrix of a two-mode squeezed quantum state. The characteristic function \(\chi\) has been introduced in Eq. (53) and the Weyl operator \(\hat{W}\) defined in Eq. (54). Using the form (26) for the density matrix, and, as below Eq. (54), defining \(\hat{R} = (k^{1/2}\hat{q}_k, k^{-1/2}\hat{\pi}_k, k^{1/2}\hat{q}_{-k}, k^{-1/2}\hat{\pi}_{-k})^T\), we have

\[
\hat{R}_1, \hat{R}_2, \hat{R}_3, \hat{R}_4
\]

\[
(\hat{R}_1, \hat{R}_2, \hat{R}_3, \hat{R}_4)^T
\]
the characteristic function $\chi(\xi)$ (where the components of $\xi$ are denoted as $\xi_1$, $\xi_2$, $\xi_3$ and $\xi_4$) can be written as

$$\chi(\xi) = \text{Tr} \left[ \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) |0_k, 0_{-k}\rangle \langle 0_k, 0_{-k}| \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) e^{\xi_1 \hat{R}_1 + \xi_2 \hat{R}_2 + \xi_3 \hat{R}_3 + \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} \right]$$

(C1)

$$= \text{Tr} \left[ |0_k, 0_{-k}\rangle \langle 0_k, 0_{-k}| \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) e^{\xi_1 \hat{R}_1 + \xi_2 \hat{R}_2 + \xi_3 \hat{R}_3 + \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) \right]$$

(C2)

$$= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \sum_{n'=0}^{\infty} |n_k, n'_{-k}\rangle \langle 0_k, 0_{-k}| \langle 0_k, 0_{-k}| \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) e^{\xi_1 \hat{R}_1 + \xi_2 \hat{R}_2 + \xi_3 \hat{R}_3 + \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) |n_k, n'_{-k}\rangle$$

(C3)

$$= (0_k, 0_{-k}| \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) e^{\xi_1 \hat{R}_1 + \xi_2 \hat{R}_2 + \xi_3 \hat{R}_3 + \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) |0_k, 0_{-k}\rangle$$

(C4)

$$= (0_k, 0_{-k}| \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) e^{\xi_1 \hat{R}_1 + \xi_2 \hat{R}_2 + \xi_3 \hat{R}_3 + \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) |0_k, 0_{-k}\rangle$$

(C5)

$$= e^{\xi_1 \hat{R}_1 / 2 + i \xi_2 / 2} (0_k, 0_{-k}| \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) e^{\xi_1 \hat{R}_1 + \xi_2 \hat{R}_2 + \xi_3 \hat{R}_3 + \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) |0_k, 0_{-k}\rangle$$

(C6)

where we have made use of the Baker-Campbell-Hausdorff formula $e^{\hat{A} + \hat{B}} = e^{-[\hat{A}, \hat{B}]/2} e^{\hat{A}} e^{\hat{B}}$, valid if the operators $\hat{A}$ and $\hat{B}$ commute with their commutator $[\hat{A}, \hat{B}]$, which is the case here; see below. The next step consists in introducing the operator $\hat{S} \hat{R} (\hat{S} \hat{R})^\dagger$ (which is unity) between each exponential factor. This means that we must now calculate

$$\hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) e^{\xi_1 \hat{R}_1 + \xi_2 \hat{R}_2 + \xi_3 \hat{R}_3 + \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) = \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n!} i^n \xi^n_1 \hat{R}_1^n \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k)$$

(C7)

$$= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n!} i^n \xi^n_1 \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}_1^n \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k).$$

(C8)

But one has (in order to avoid cumbersome notation, in this equation, we do not write the dependence in the squeezing parameters)

$$\hat{R}^\dagger \hat{S}^\dagger \hat{R} \hat{S} = \hat{R}^\dagger \hat{S}^\dagger \hat{R}_1 \hat{S} \hat{R}^\dagger \hat{S}^\dagger \hat{R}^{-1}_1 \hat{S} \hat{R}^\dagger \hat{S} \hat{R}^\dagger \hat{S}^\dagger = \hat{R}^\dagger \hat{S}^\dagger \hat{R}_1 \hat{S} \hat{R}^\dagger \hat{S} \hat{R}^\dagger \hat{S} \hat{R}^\dagger \hat{S}^{-1} \hat{R} \hat{S} \hat{R} \hat{S} = (\hat{R}^\dagger \hat{S}^\dagger \hat{R}_1 \hat{S} \hat{R})^n.$$

(C9)

As a consequence, one can rewrite the series as

$$\hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) e^{\xi_1 \hat{R}_1 + \xi_2 \hat{R}_2 + \xi_3 \hat{R}_3 + \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n!} i^n \xi^n_1 \left[ \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}_1 \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) \right]^n$$

(C10)

$$= e^{i \xi_1 \hat{R}_1 (r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k)}.$$

(C11)

Using this result in the expression of the characteristic function, not only for the first exponential term but for the four terms, we arrive at the following expression:

$$\chi(\xi) = e^{i \xi_1 \xi_2 / 2 + i \xi_3 / 2} (0_k, 0_{-k}| e^{i \xi_1 \hat{R}_1 + i \xi_2 \hat{R}_2 + i \xi_3 \hat{R}_3 + i \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) |0_k, 0_{-k}\rangle$$

(C12)

To proceed, one has to evaluate the four terms $\hat{R}^\dagger \hat{S}^\dagger \hat{R}_1 \hat{S} \hat{R}$. Using Eqs. (21), and (22), it is easy to show that

$$\hat{O}_1 = \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}_1 \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) = \hat{R}_1 \text{cosh } r_k \text{ cos } \theta_k + \hat{R}_2 \text{ cos } r_k \sin \theta_k$$

$$- \hat{R}_3 \sinh r_k \text{ cos } (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k),$$

(C13)

$$\hat{O}_2 = \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}_2 \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) = - \hat{R}_1 \text{ cos } r_k \sin \theta_k + \hat{R}_2 \text{ cos } r_k \text{ cos } \theta_k$$

$$- \hat{R}_3 \sinh r_k \text{ cos } (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k),$$

(C14)

$$\hat{O}_3 = \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}_3 \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) = - \hat{R}_1 \text{ sinh } r_k \text{ cos } (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k) - \hat{R}_2 \text{ sinh } r_k \text{ sin } (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k)$$

$$+ \hat{R}_3 \text{ cos } r_k \text{ cos } \theta_k + \hat{R}_4 \text{ cos } r_k \text{ sin } \theta_k,$$

(C15)

$$\hat{O}_4 = \hat{R}^\dagger(\theta_k) \hat{S}^\dagger(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}_4 \hat{S}(r_k, \varphi_k) \hat{R}(\theta_k) = - \hat{R}_1 \text{ sinh } r_k \text{ sin } (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k) + \hat{R}_2 \text{ sinh } r_k \text{ cos } (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k)$$

$$- \hat{R}_3 \text{ cos } r_k \text{ sin } \theta_k + \hat{R}_4 \text{ cos } r_k \text{ cos } \theta_k.$$
As a consequence, the characteristic function (C12) now takes the form
\[
\chi(\xi) = e^{\xi_j \xi_j/2} (\langle 0, 0 | e^{-i \xi_j \hat{q}_j} e^{-i \xi_j \hat{q}_j} | 0, 0 \rangle)
\]
(C18)
\[
= \langle 0, 0 | e^{i \xi_j \hat{q}_j} + e^{-i \xi_j \hat{q}_j} \frac{\xi_j \hat{q}_j}{2} e^{i \xi_j \hat{q}_j} + e^{-i \xi_j \hat{q}_j} \frac{\xi_j \hat{q}_j}{2} | 0, 0 \rangle
\]
(C19)
\[
= \langle 0, 0 | e^{i \eta_j \hat{R}_j + i \eta_j \hat{R}_j + i \eta_j \hat{R}_j + i \eta_j \hat{R}_j} | 0, 0 \rangle \equiv \chi_{\text{vac}}(\eta_1, \eta_2, \eta_3, \eta_4),
\]
(C20)
where the coefficients \( \eta_i \) can be expressed as
\[
\eta_1 = \xi_1 \cosh \theta_k - \xi_2 \sinh \theta_k \sin \theta_k - \xi_3 \sinh \theta_k \cos (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k) - \xi_4 \sinh \theta_k \sin (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k),
\]
(C21)
\[
\eta_2 = \xi_1 \cosh \theta_k \sin \theta_k + \xi_2 \cosh \theta_k \cos \theta_k - \xi_3 \sinh \theta_k \sin (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k) + \xi_4 \sinh \theta_k \cos (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k),
\]
(C22)
\[
\eta_3 = -\xi_1 \sinh \theta_k \cos (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k) - \xi_2 \sinh \theta_k \sin (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k) + \xi_3 \cosh \theta_k - \xi_4 \cosh \theta_k \sin \theta_k,
\]
(C23)
\[
\eta_4 = -\xi_1 \sinh \theta_k \sin (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k) + \xi_2 \sinh \theta_k \cos (2 \varphi_k + \theta_k) + \xi_3 \cosh \theta_k \sin \theta_k + \xi_4 \cosh \theta_k \cos \theta_k.
\]
(C24)

In Eq. (C20), \( \chi_{\text{vac}}(\eta_1, \eta_2, \eta_3, \eta_4) \) represents the characteristic function of the vacuum. But this function is well-known and easy to calculate. The vacuum state is a Gaussian state and one has, see for instance Eq. (33) of Ref. [83],
\[
\chi_{\text{vac}}(\eta_1, \eta_2, \eta_3, \eta_4) = e^{-\eta^T \text{Id}_4 \eta/4},
\]
(C25)
where \( \text{Id}_4 \) is the identity matrix in four dimensions. Since the definition of the covariance matrix \( \gamma \) is given by the expression
\[
\chi(\xi_1, \xi_2, \xi_3, \xi_4) = e^{-\xi^T \gamma \xi/4},
\]
(C26)
this implies that
\[
\sum_{i=1}^{4} \eta_i^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{4} \sum_{j=1}^{4} \gamma_{ij} \xi_i \xi_j,
\]
which allows us to infer the components of the covariance matrix. Then lengthy but straightforward calculations lead to the following covariance matrix for the two-mode squeezed state:
\[
\gamma = \begin{pmatrix}
\cosh (2r_k) & 0 & -\sinh (2r_k) \cos (2 \varphi_k) & -\sinh (2r_k) \sin (2 \varphi_k) \\
0 & \cosh (2r_k) & -\sinh (2r_k) \sin (2 \varphi_k) & \sinh (2r_k) \cos (2 \varphi_k) \\
-\sinh (2r_k) \cos (2 \varphi_k) & -\sinh (2r_k) \sin (2 \varphi_k) & \cosh (2r_k) & 0 \\
-\sinh (2r_k) \sin (2 \varphi_k) & \sinh (2r_k) \cos (2 \varphi_k) & 0 & \cosh (2r_k)
\end{pmatrix}.
\]
(C28)

We notice that \( \gamma \) does not depend on the rotation angle \( \theta_k \). Once we have the covariance matrix, we can determine the two-point correlation functions by means of the relation \( \langle \hat{R}_j \hat{R}_k \rangle = \gamma_{jk}/2 + i \gamma_{jk}/2 \) derived in appendix F. As mentioned in the main text, the matrix \( J \) is defined by
\[
J = \begin{pmatrix}
0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\
-1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & -1 & 0
\end{pmatrix}.
\]
(C29)

Using the above expression of the correlation matrix, the explicit form of the two-point correlators are given by
\[
\langle \hat{q}_k \hat{q}_k \rangle = \langle \hat{q}_{-k} \hat{q}_{-k} \rangle = \frac{1}{2k} \cosh (2r_k), \quad \langle \hat{q}_k \hat{q}_k \rangle = \langle \hat{q}_{-k} \hat{q}_{-k} \rangle = \frac{k}{2} \cosh (2r_k)
\]
(C30)
\[
\langle \hat{q}_k \hat{q}_{-k} \rangle = -\frac{1}{2k} \sinh (2r_k) \cos (2 \varphi_k), \quad \langle \hat{q}_k \hat{q}_{-k} \rangle = \frac{k}{2} \sinh (2r_k) \cos (2 \varphi_k),
\]
(C31)
\[
\langle \hat{q}_k \hat{q}_{-k} \rangle = -\frac{1}{2} \sinh (2r_k) \sin (2 \varphi_k), \quad \langle \hat{q}_k \hat{q}_{-k} \rangle = \langle \hat{q}_{-k} \hat{q}_{-k} \rangle = -\langle \hat{q}_k \hat{q}_k \rangle = -\langle \hat{q}_{-k} \hat{q}_{-k} \rangle = \frac{i}{2}
\]
(C32)

These results are used in the main text in order to calculate the two-point correlation functions of \( \hat{v}_k \) and \( \hat{p}_k \); see Eqs. (57), (58) and (59), related to \( \hat{q}_k \) and \( \hat{p}_k \) through Eqs. (51) and (52).
Appendix D: Discord of a Classical State

In this appendix, we show that classical states given by Eq. (70) have vanishing quantum discord. Let us first calculate the reduced density matrix $\hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k)$ obtained by tracing out Eq. (70) over degrees of freedom belonging to space “$-k$”. One obtains

$$\hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k) = \sum_{m} \langle m_{-k} | \sum_{i=0}^{\infty} \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} p_{ij} | i_k \rangle | j_{-k} \rangle | j_{-k} \rangle \langle i_k | = \sum_{ij} p_{ij} | i_k \rangle \langle i_k | . \tag{D1}$$

In the same manner, one obtains a similar expression for $\hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(-k)$ where $i_k$ is replaced by $j_{-k}$ in the above formula. It is easy to show that these matrices are diagonal in the basis $|n_k\rangle$. Indeed,

$$\langle n_k | \hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k) | m_k \rangle = \delta_{nm} \sum_j p_{nj} . \tag{D2}$$

Of course, one has a similar relation (but not identical if the probabilities are not symmetric) in the other half space, namely

$$\langle n_{-k} | \hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k) | m_{-k} \rangle = \delta_{nm} \sum_i p_{in} . \tag{D3}$$

Therefore, it is straightforward to calculate the corresponding entropy. Indeed, the calculation of the entropy requires in general estimating the logarithm of a matrix, which is a non-trivial task. But when the matrix is diagonal, its logarithm is just a diagonal matrix whose entries are given by the logarithm of the entries of the original matrix. As a consequence, one immediately deduces that

$$S[\hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k)] = \sum_i \left[ \left( \sum_{ij} p_{ij} \right) \log \left( \sum_{ij} p_{ij} \right) \right] , \quad S[\hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(-k)] = \sum_i \left[ \left( \sum_{ij} p_{ij} \right) \log \left( \sum_{ij} p_{ij} \right) \right] . \tag{D4}$$

On the other hand, since the full density matrix $\hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k, -k)$ satisfies

$$\langle n_{k} m_{-k} | \hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k, -k) | n'_{k} m'_{-k} \rangle = p_{nm} \delta_{n'n} \delta_{mm'} , \tag{D5}$$

one can write its entropy as

$$S[\hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k, -k)] = \sum_{ij} p_{ij} \log p_{ij} . \tag{D6}$$

It follows that the mutual information $I(k, -k)$ is given by

$$I(k, -k) = \sum_i \left[ \left( \sum_{ij} p_{ij} \right) \log \left( \sum_{ij} p_{ij} \right) \right] + \sum_i \left[ \left( \sum_{ij} p_{ij} \right) \log \left( \sum_{ij} p_{ij} \right) \right] - \sum_{ij} p_{ij} \log p_{ij} . \tag{D7}$$

This completes the first step in the calculation of the discord.

Let us now calculate the quantity $J(k, -k)$. We consider again the projector $\hat{\Pi}_j$ introduced in Eq. (A3). It is easy to show that

$$\hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k; -k) \hat{\Pi}_j = \sum_n p_{nj} | n_k \rangle \langle n_k | \otimes | j_{-k} \rangle \langle j_{-k} | . \tag{D8}$$

Moreover, using this expression, one can also establish that

$$\text{Tr} \left[ \hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k; -k) \right] = \sum_n p_{nj} . \tag{D9}$$

Then, in order to derive a formula for $\hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k; \hat{\Pi}_j)$, one has to trace out the degrees of freedom contained in “$-k$” in Eq. (D8), see also Eq. (37), and it comes to

$$\hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k; \hat{\Pi}_j) = \frac{1}{\sum_{ij} p_{ij}} \sum_n p_{nj} | n_k \rangle \langle n_k | . \tag{D10}$$
This density matrix is diagonal with elements \( p_{nj} / \sum_j p_{lj} \) on the diagonal. Consequently, the conditional entropy \( S_{\text{cond}} \) which, as before, requires the calculation of the logarithm of the above mentioned matrix, can be easily estimated and reads

\[
S_{\text{cond}} \equiv \sum_j \left( \sum_{\ell} p_{lj} \right) S \left[ \hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k; \hat{\Pi}_{j}) \right] = \sum_j \left( \sum_{\ell} p_{lj} \right) \sum_n \frac{p_{nj}}{\sum_i p_{ij}} \log \left( \frac{p_{nj}}{\sum_i p_{ij}} \right) \tag{D11}
\]

\[
= \sum_{nj} p_{nj} \log \left( \frac{p_{nj}}{\sum_i p_{ij}} \right) = \sum_{nj} p_{nj} \log (p_{nj}) - \sum_{nj} p_{nj} \log \left( \sum_i p_{ij} \right) \tag{D12}
\]

\[
= \sum_{nj} p_{nj} \log (p_{nj}) - \sum_j \left[ \left( \sum_n p_{nj} \right) \log \left( \sum_i p_{ij} \right) \right]. \tag{D13}
\]

It follows that the quantity \( \mathcal{J}(k, -k) \) can be expressed as

\[
\mathcal{J}(k, -k) \equiv S[\hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k)] - S_{\text{cond}} = \sum_i \left[ \left( \sum_{\ell} p_{li} \right) \log \left( \sum_j p_{lj} \right) \right] - \sum_{nj} p_{nj} \log (p_{nj}) \]

\[
+ \sum_j \left[ \left( \sum_n p_{nj} \right) \log \left( \sum_i p_{ij} \right) \right] = \mathcal{I}(k, -k). \tag{D14}
\]

Therefore, we see that, for the choice of \( \hat{\Pi}_j \) made above, the difference between \( \mathcal{J}(k, -k) \) and \( \mathcal{I}(k, -k) \) vanishes. In order to obtain the discord, one must minimize this quantity over the set of projectors, see Eq. (39). However, the discord is a positive definite quantity [86] and, as a consequence, if for one specific choice of \( \hat{\Pi}_j \) one proves it is zero, then it obviously means that the minimum is also zero. Therefore, as announced in the main text, we conclude that the quantum discord of the “classical” state vanishes.

**Appendix E: Characteristic Function of a Classical State**

In this appendix, we calculate the characteristic function of the classical state (70). Let us recall that the characteristic function \( \chi \) is defined in Eq. (53) [and the Weyl operator in Eq. (54)]. As a consequence, we have

\[
\chi(\xi) = \text{Tr} \left[ \hat{\rho}_{\text{class}}(k, -k) e^{i \xi_1 \hat{R}_1 + i \xi_2 \hat{R}_2 + i \xi_3 \hat{R}_3 + i \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} \right] \tag{E1}
\]

\[
= \sum_{n,m} \langle n_k, m_{-k} | \sum_{i,j} p_{ij} | i_k \rangle \langle i_k | \otimes | j_{-k} \rangle \langle j_{-k} | e^{i \xi_1 \hat{R}_1 + i \xi_2 \hat{R}_2 + i \xi_3 \hat{R}_3 + i \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} | n_k, m_{-k} \rangle \tag{E2}
\]

\[
= e^{i \xi_1 \xi_2 + i \xi_3 \xi_4 / 2} \sum_{n,m} p_{nm} \langle n_k, m_{-k} | e^{i \xi_1 \hat{R}_1} e^{i \xi_2 \hat{R}_2} e^{i \xi_3 \hat{R}_3} e^{i \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} | n_k, m_{-k} \rangle \tag{E3}
\]

\[
= e^{i \xi_1 \xi_2 + i \xi_3 \xi_4 / 2} \sum_{n,m} \int \left( k^{1/2} x_k \right) \text{d} \left( k^{1/2} x_k \right) \int \left( k^{1/2} y_{-k} \right) \text{d} \left( k^{1/2} y_{-k} \right) \int \left( k^{1/2} y_{-k} \right) \text{d} \left( k^{1/2} y_{-k} \right) \left( n_k, m_{-k} | e^{i \xi_1 \hat{R}_1} e^{i \xi_2 \hat{R}_2} | x_k, x_{-k} \right) \right.
\]

\[
\times \left. \langle x_k, x_{-k} | e^{i \xi_3 \hat{R}_3} e^{i \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} | y_{k}, y_{-k} \rangle \langle y_{k}, y_{-k} | n_k, m_{-k} \rangle \right), \tag{E4}
\]

where, in the last equality, we have introduced the closure relation twice. In this expression, \( | x_k \rangle \) represents the eigenstate of the “position operator” \( \hat{q}_k \). This is especially convenient because the action of an operator of the form \( e^{i \xi_1 \hat{R}_1} \) on this state is particular simple. Indeed, one has

\[
e^{i \xi_3 \hat{R}_3} e^{i \xi_4 \hat{R}_4} | y_{k}, y_{-k} \rangle = e^{i \xi_3 k^{1/2} y_{k} - e^{i \xi_4 k^{-1/2}} y_{-k}} | y_{k}, y_{-k} \rangle = e^{i \xi_3 k^{1/2} y_{k} - e^{i \xi_4 k^{-1/2}} y_{-k}} \]

\[
e^{i \xi_3 k^{1/2} / (y_{-k} - e^{-i \xi_4 k^{-1/2}})} | y_{k}, y_{-k} - e^{-i \xi_4 k^{-1/2}} \rangle. \tag{E5}
\]

In the same way, one can also write

\[
e^{i \xi_1 \hat{R}_1} e^{i \xi_2 \hat{R}_2} | x_k, x_{-k} \rangle = e^{i \xi_1 k^{1/2} (x_k - e^{i \xi_2 k^{-1/2}})} | x_k - e^{i \xi_2 k^{-1/2}}, x_{-k} \rangle. \tag{E7}
\]
As a consequence, using these two last relations, Eq. (E4) now takes the following form

\[
\chi(\xi) = e^{i\xi_2\xi_2^+/2+i\xi_3\xi_3^+/2} \sum_{n,m} k^2 P_{nm} \int dx_k dx_{-k} dy_k dy_{-k} e^{i\xi_3^1 k^{1/2} x_k e^{-i\xi_2 \xi_2^+} e^{-i\xi_3 \xi_3^+}} (n, m | x_k - \xi k^{-1/2}, x_{-k})
\]

\[
\times \langle x_k | x_{-k} \rangle \langle y_k | y_{-k} \rangle (n, m | n, m)
\]

\[
= e^{-i\xi_2 \xi_2^+/2+i\xi_3 \xi_3^+/2} \sum_{n,m} k^2 P_{nm} \int dx_k dx_{-k} e^{i\xi_3^1 k^{1/2} x_k} e^{i\xi_2^{-1/2} x_{-k}} \langle n | x_k - \xi^{-1/2} x_{-k} \rangle (m | x_{-k})
\]

\[
\times \langle x_k | n \rangle \langle x_{-k} + \xi^{-1/2} x_{-k} | m \rangle.
\]

(E8)

Then, in order to proceed, one has to calculate scalar products of the form \( \langle x_k | n \rangle \). But this is nothing but the wavefunction of a state containing \( n \) particles and, as is well known, it can be expressed in terms of Hermite polynomials \( H_n \). As a consequence, one obtains

\[
\chi(\xi) = e^{-i\xi_2 \xi_2^+/2+i\xi_3 \xi_3^+/2} \sum_{n,m} k^2 P_{nm} \int dx_k dx_{-k} e^{i\xi_3^1 k^{1/2} x_k} e^{i\xi_2^{-1/2} x_{-k}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{\pi 2^n n!}} e^{-(k^{1/2} x_k - \xi_2)^2} H_n \left( k^{1/2} x_k - \xi_2 \right)
\]

\[
\times \frac{1}{\sqrt{\pi 2^n n!}} e^{-(k^{1/2} x_{-k}^+ + \xi_2)^2} H_m \left( k^{1/2} x_{-k}^+ + \xi_2 \right)
\]

\[
= \frac{1}{\pi} \sum_{n,m} \frac{p_{nm}}{2^{n+m} n! m!} \int du e^{-u^2} H_n \left( u - \frac{\xi_2}{2} + i\frac{\xi_3}{2} \right) H_m \left( v + \frac{\xi_2}{2} + i\frac{\xi_3}{2} \right)\]

\[
\times \int dv e^{-v^2} H_m \left( v - \frac{\xi_2}{2} + i\frac{\xi_3}{2} \right) H_n \left( u + \frac{\xi_2}{2} + i\frac{\xi_3}{2} \right).
\]

(E10)

Thanks to Eq. (7.377) of Ref. [107], the two integrals involving an exponential function and the product of two Hermite polynomials can be performed exactly. As a result, one obtains

\[
\chi(\xi) = e^{-(\xi_2^2 + \xi_3^2 + \xi_4^2 + \xi_4^2)/4} \sum_{n,m} p_{nm} L_n \left( \frac{\xi_2^2 + \xi_3^2}{2} \right) L_m \left( \frac{\xi_2^2 + \xi_3^2}{2} \right),
\]

(E12)

where \( L_n^0 \equiv L_n \) is a Laguerre polynomial; see Eq. (8.970.2) of Ref. [107]. Of course, to go further, one needs to specify the distribution \( p_{nm} \). But the last equation has the advantage of showing that, in general, the characteristic function of the classical state has no reason to be Gaussian. If one makes the choice \( p_{nm} = (1 - e^{-\beta_k}) e^{-\beta_k n} \delta(n - m) \), see the discussion around Eq. (81), then the characteristic function reduces to

\[
\chi(\xi) = e^{-(\xi_2^2 + \xi_3^2 + \xi_4^2 + \xi_4^2)/4} (1 - e^{-\beta_k}) \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} e^{-\beta_k n} L_n \left( \frac{\xi_2^2 + \xi_3^2}{2} \right) L_n \left( \frac{\xi_2^2 + \xi_3^2}{2} \right).
\]

(E13)

This series can be calculated explicitly by means of Eq. (8.976.1) of Ref. [107]. The result reads

\[
\chi(\xi) = e^{-\tanh^{-1} \left( \frac{\beta_k}{2} \right) \left( \frac{\xi_2^2 + \xi_3^2 + \xi_4^2 + \xi_4^2}{2} \right)} L_0 \left( \frac{\sqrt{\xi_2^2 + \xi_3^2 + \xi_4^2 + \xi_4^2}}{2 \sinh(\beta_k/2)} \right),
\]

(E14)

where \( L_0 \) is a modified Bessel function of order zero [107]. The virtue of this expression is twofold. First, since the argument of the Bessel function is always positive and \( L_0 \) is also always positive, the characteristic function is positive everywhere. Second, even with the simple choice of \( p_{nm} \) made before, one can see that the characteristic function is not Gaussian (note that in the sub-Hubble limit where \( \beta_k \to \infty \), the argument of the Bessel vanishes and the Bessel function becomes \( 1 \); hence the characteristic function is Gaussian in this limit).

**Appendix F: Quantum Correlators and Weyl Transforms**

In this appendix we show how mean values of quantum operators can be calculated by means of the Wigner function [93]. Using the definition of the Weyl transform given in Eq. (90) and that of the Wigner function, see
Eq. (94), let us first calculate the following integral \( \int \tilde{A}W dq_k d\pi_k dq_{-k} d\pi_{-k} \). One has

\[
\int \tilde{A}W dq_k d\pi_k dq_{-k} d\pi_{-k} = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int \left\langle q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} + \frac{y}{2}, \tilde{A} | q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} - \frac{y}{2} \right\rangle e^{-i\pi_k (x + y) - i\pi_{-k} (y + y')} dq_k d\pi_k dq_{-k} d\pi_{-k} dx dy dz dy'.
\]

The integration over \( \pi_k \) and \( \pi_{-k} \) gives rise to Dirac delta functions, which can then be used to perform the integrals over \( x' \) and \( y' \). As a consequence, one obtains

\[
\int \tilde{A}W dq_k d\pi_k dq_{-k} d\pi_{-k} = \int \left\langle q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} + \frac{y}{2}, \tilde{A} | q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} - \frac{y}{2} \right\rangle \times \left\langle q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} - \frac{y}{2}, \tilde{A} \right\rangle dq_k d\pi_k dq_{-k} dx dy.
\]

The next step consists in performing a change of variables. Instead of working in terms of \( q_k, x \) and \( q_{-k}, y \), we define the quantities \( u \pm k \) and \( w \pm k \) such that \( u_k = q_k - x/2, w_k = q_k + x/2, u_{-k} = q_{-k} - y/2 \) and \( w_{-k} = q_{-k} + y/2 \). The determinant of the Jacobian of these transformations being one, one has \( dq_k dx = dq_k dw_k \) and \( dq_{-k} dy = dq_{-k} dw_{-k} \); hence

\[
\int \tilde{A}W dq_k d\pi_k dq_{-k} d\pi_{-k} = \int \left\langle w_k, w_{-k} | \tilde{A} | u_k, u_{-k} \right\rangle \left\langle u_k, u_{-k} | \tilde{A} \right\rangle dw_k dw_{-k}.
\]

As a consequence, the expectation value of \( \tilde{A} \) can be obtained by something which is the average of the physical quantity represented by \( \tilde{A} \) over phase space with probability density \( W \) characterizing the state. Therefore, as explained in the main text, the quantum problem can be replaced by a stochastic approach in \( \tilde{A} \). It is thus interesting to study under which conditions \( A \) and \( \tilde{A} \) can be identified. A general expression for any analytic operator \( \tilde{A} \) is provided by its Taylor series in terms of the operators \( \tilde{q}_k, \tilde{\pi}_k, \tilde{q}_{-k} \) and \( \tilde{\pi}_{-k} \). Making use of the canonical commutation relations, this can always be written as

\[
\tilde{A} = \sum_{n_1, n_2} a_{n_1, n_2} \tilde{q}_k^{n_1} \tilde{\pi}_k^{n_2} + \sum_{n_1, n_2} b_{n_1, n_2} \tilde{q}_k^{n_1} \tilde{\pi}_k^{n_2} + \sum_{n_1, n_2} c_{n_1, n_2} \tilde{q}_{-k}^{n_1} \tilde{\pi}_{-k}^{n_2} + \sum_{n_1, n_2} d_{n_1, n_2} \tilde{q}_{-k}^{n_1} \tilde{\pi}_{-k}^{n_2} + \sum_{n_1, n_2} \tilde{q}_k^{n_1} \tilde{\pi}_k^{n_2} + \sum_{n_1, n_2} \tilde{q}_{-k}^{n_1} \tilde{\pi}_{-k}^{n_2},
\]

where \( a_{n_1, n_2}, \ldots, f_{n_1, n_2} \) are numerical coefficients. Let us calculate the Weyl transform of each of these terms. From the definition (90), one can write that

\[
\tilde{q}_k^{n_1} \pi_k^{n_2} = \int dx dy e^{-i\pi_k x - i\pi_{-k} y} \left\langle q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} + \frac{y}{2}, \tilde{A} | q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} - \frac{y}{2} \right\rangle \left\langle q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} + \frac{y}{2}, \tilde{A} \right\rangle dq_k d\pi_k dq_{-k} d\pi_{-k} dx dy.
\]

where \( a_{n_1, n_2}, \ldots, f_{n_1, n_2} \) are numerical coefficients. Let us calculate the Weyl transform of each of these terms. From the definition (90), one can write that

\[
\tilde{q}_k^{n_1} \pi_k^{n_2} = \int dx dy e^{-i\pi_k x - i\pi_{-k} y} \left\langle q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} + \frac{y}{2}, \tilde{A} | q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} - \frac{y}{2} \right\rangle \left\langle q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} + \frac{y}{2}, \tilde{A} \right\rangle dq_k d\pi_k dq_{-k} d\pi_{-k} dx dy.
\]
where we have inserted the identity operator twice. Making use of the relation \( \langle q_k | \pi_k \rangle = \exp(iq_k\pi_k) / \sqrt{2\pi} \), the previous expression can be simplified and one obtains

\[
\overline{q}^{n_1, n_2}_{k, k} = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int dx \; dy \; dx_k' \; dy_k' \; dx_{k'}' \; dy_{k'}' e^{-i\pi k x - i\pi y} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} \left( \pi_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_2} \left( q_{k'} - \frac{y}{2} \right)^{n_1} \left( \pi_{k'} - \frac{y}{2} \right)^{n_2} \\
\times \exp \left[ i \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right) \pi_k' + i \left( q_{k'} - \frac{y}{2} \right) \pi_{k'}' - i \left( q_k - \frac{y}{2} \right) \pi_k' - i \left( q_{k'} + \frac{x}{2} \right) \pi_{k'} - i \left( q_{k'} - \frac{y}{2} \right) \pi_k' \right] 
\]

\[= \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int dx \; dy \; dx_k' \; dy_k' \; dx_{k'}' \; dy_{k'}' e^{-i\pi k x - i\pi y} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} \left( \pi_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_2} \delta(\pi_{k'} - \pi_k') \\
\times \delta(\pi_{k'} - \pi_{k''}) \exp \left[ i \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right) \pi_k' + i \left( q_{k'} - \frac{y}{2} \right) \pi_{k'}' - i \left( q_k - \frac{y}{2} \right) \pi_k' - i \left( q_{k'} + \frac{x}{2} \right) \pi_{k'} - i \left( q_{k'} - \frac{y}{2} \right) \pi_k' \right] 
\]

\[= \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int dx \; dy \; dx_k' \; dy_k' \; dx_{k'}' \; dy_{k'}' e^{-i\pi k x - i\pi y} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} \left( \pi_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_2} \delta(\pi_{k'} - \pi_k') \\
\times \delta(\pi_{k'} - \pi_{k''}) \exp \left[ i \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right) \pi_k' + i \left( q_{k'} - \frac{y}{2} \right) \pi_{k'}' - i \left( q_k - \frac{y}{2} \right) \pi_k' - i \left( q_{k'} + \frac{x}{2} \right) \pi_{k'} - i \left( q_{k'} - \frac{y}{2} \right) \pi_k' \right] 
\]

This expression can be further simplified since the second integral is the Fourier transform of a monomial function. This leads to

\[\overline{q}^{n_1, n_2}_{k, k} = (-i)^{n_2} \int dx e^{-i\pi k x} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} \delta^{(n_2)}(x), \]

where \( \delta^{(n_2)} \) stands for the \( n_2 \)th derivative of the delta function. After integrating by parts \( n_2 \) times, one obtains the following formula:

\[\overline{q}^{n_1, n_2}_{k, k} = i^{n_2} \int dx \; \frac{\partial^{n_2}}{\partial x^{n_2}} \left[ e^{-i\pi k x} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} \right] \delta(x). \]

The derivative can be calculated by making use of the binomial formula and this leads to

\[\frac{\partial^{n_2}}{\partial x^{n_2}} \left[ e^{-i\pi k x} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} \right] = \sum_{j=0}^{n_2} \binom{n_2}{j} \frac{\partial^j}{\partial x^j} \left( e^{-i\pi k x} \right) \frac{\partial^{n_2-j}}{\partial x^{n_2-j}} \left[ \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} \right] \]

\[= \sum_{j=0}^{n_2} \binom{n_2}{j} \left( -i\pi k \right)^j e^{-i\pi k x} \frac{\partial^{n_2-j}}{\partial x^{n_2-j}} \left( \frac{1}{n_1-n_2+j} \right) \pi_{k}^{n_1-n_2+j} \theta(j+n_1-n_2), \]

where \( \theta(j+n_1-n_2) = 1 \) if \( j \geq n_2 - n_1 \) and 0 otherwise. Inserting this expression into Eq. (F15), one obtains, after integrating out the \( \delta(x) \) function,

\[\overline{q}^{n_1, n_2}_{k, k} = \left( \frac{q_k}{-2i} \right)^{n_2} \sum_{j=0}^{n_2} \frac{n_2!}{n_1-n_2+j}! \theta(j+n_1-n_2). \]

Obviously, one finds a similar expression for \( \overline{q}^{n_1, n_2}_{-k, -k} \). For \( n_1 = 0 \), this immediately leads to \( \overline{q}_k^{0} = \pi_k^{0} \) while for \( n_2 = 0 \), one obtains \( \overline{q}_k^{0} = q_k^{0} \). This means that any analytic function of \( q_k \) only or of \( \pi_k \) only has a trivial Weyl transform, namely \( f(q_k) = f(q_k) \) and \( f(\pi_k) = f(\pi_k) \). However, this is not true for mixed terms containing both \( q_k \) and \( \pi_k \). For example, when \( n_1 = n_2 = 1 \), one finds \( \overline{q}_k \overline{\pi}_k = q_k \pi_k + i/2 \). This is actually due to the fact that \( \hat{q}_k \) and \( \hat{\pi}_k \) do not commute. When \( n_1 = n_2 = 2 \), one finds \( \overline{q}_k \overline{\pi}_k = q_k \pi_k + 2i q_k \pi_k - 1/2 \) and \( \overline{q}_k \overline{\pi}_k = \pi_k q_k - 2i q_k \pi_k - 1/2 \), and so forth. For all other terms in Eq. (F5), the operators commute and the Weyl transform is trivial. For example, let us work out \( \overline{q}^{n_1, n_2}_{k, -k} \) (the other terms proceed in exactly the same way). One has

\[\overline{q}^{n_1, n_2}_{k, -k} = \int dx \; dy \; e^{-i\pi k x - i\pi y} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} \left( q_k - \frac{y}{2} \right)^{n_2} \left( q_k - \frac{y}{2} \right)^{n_2} \]

\[= \int dx \; dy \; e^{-i\pi k x - i\pi y} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} \left( q_k - \frac{y}{2} \right)^{n_2} \left( q_k - \frac{y}{2} \right)^{n_2}. \]
At this stage, one can proceed exactly as before (namely, again introduce twice the identity operator and integrate out the delta Dirac functions) and obtain an equation resembling Eq. (F11). It reads

\[
\hat{\rho}_{nk}^{n_1 n_2} \equiv \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int dx \, dy \, d\pi_k e^{i y (\pi'_k - \pi_k) + iy(\pi'_k - \pi_k)} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} (\pi'_k - \pi_k)^{n_2} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int dx \, d\pi_k e^{i y (\pi'_k - \pi_k)} \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right)^{n_1} (\pi'_k - \pi_k)^{n_2} = q_k^{n_1 n_2},
\]

that is to say the announced result. For similar reasons, one also has \( q_k^{n_1 n_2} = q_k^{n_2 n_1} \), \( \pi_k^{n_1 n_2} = \pi_k^{n_2 n_1} \) and \( \pi_k^{n_1 n_2} = \pi_k^{n_2 n_1} \). In fact, combining these results, the Weyl transform of terms for which \( n_1 + n_2 = 1 \) can be written in a compact manner, namely

\[
\hat{R}_i \hat{R}_k = R_i R_k + \frac{1}{2} \left[ \hat{R}_j, \hat{R}_k \right],
\]

where the commutator \( [\hat{R}_j, \hat{R}_k] \) is given by the matrix \( J \); see Eqs. (56) and (91).

**Appendix G: Wigner Function of a Gaussian State**

In this section, we want to write the Wigner function in terms of the characteristic function and the correlation matrix. In order to do so, let us first derive an explicit expression of the characteristic function in terms of the density matrix elements. As already noticed in the text, a first remark is that, if two operators \( A \) and \( B \) commute with their commutator \( ([A, [B, A]] = [B, [A, B]] = 0) \), the Baker-Campbell-Hausdorff formula reads \( e^{A + B} = e^{-[A, B]/2} e^{A} e^{B} \).

Recalling once more that \( \hat{R} \equiv (k^{1/2}\hat{q}_k, k^{-1/2}\hat{\pi}_k, k^{1/2}\hat{q}_{-k}, k^{-1/2}\hat{\pi}_{-k})^T \equiv (\hat{R}_1, \hat{R}_2, \hat{R}_3, \hat{R}_4)^T \), we see that each \( \hat{R}_i \) satisfies this property. As a consequence, the Weyl operator defined in Eq. (54) can be written as

\[
\hat{W}(\xi) \equiv \exp \left( i \xi^1 \hat{q}_k k^{1/2} + i \xi^2 \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k k^{1/2} + i \xi^3 \hat{q}_{-k} k^{-1/2} + i \xi^4 \hat{\pi}_{-k} k^{-1/2} \right) = e^{i(\xi^1 \hat{q}_k + \xi^2 \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k + \xi^3 \hat{q}_{-k} k^{-1/2} + \xi^4 \hat{\pi}_{-k} k^{-1/2}}.
\]

Using the above expression, one can express the characteristic function \( \chi(\xi) \) [defined in Eq. (53)] as

\[
\chi(\xi) = \text{Tr} \left[ \hat{\rho} \hat{W}(\xi) \right] = \int dq_k dq_{-k} \langle q_k, q_{-k} | \hat{\rho} \hat{W}(\xi) | q_k, q_{-k} \rangle = e^{i(\xi^1 \hat{q}_k + \xi^2 \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k + \xi^3 \hat{q}_{-k} k^{-1/2} + \xi^4 \hat{\pi}_{-k} k^{-1/2}} \langle q_k, q_{-k} | \hat{\rho} | q_k, q_{-k} \rangle \]

\[
= e^{i(\xi^1 \hat{q}_k + \xi^2 \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k + \xi^3 \hat{q}_{-k} k^{-1/2} + \xi^4 \hat{\pi}_{-k} k^{-1/2}} \langle q_k, q_{-k} | \hat{\rho} \hat{q}_{-k} | q_k, q_{-k} \rangle \]

\[
= e^{i(\xi^1 \hat{q}_k + \xi^2 \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k + \xi^3 \hat{q}_{-k} k^{-1/2} + \xi^4 \hat{\pi}_{-k} k^{-1/2}} \langle q_k, q_{-k} | \hat{\rho} \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{q}_{-k} | q_k, q_{-k} \rangle \]

\[
= e^{i(\xi^1 \hat{q}_k + \xi^2 \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k + \xi^3 \hat{q}_{-k} k^{-1/2} + \xi^4 \hat{\pi}_{-k} k^{-1/2}} \langle q_k, q_{-k} | \hat{\rho} \hat{q}_{-k} | q_k, q_{-k} \rangle \]

\[
= e^{i(\xi^1 \hat{q}_k + \xi^2 \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k + \xi^3 \hat{q}_{-k} k^{-1/2} + \xi^4 \hat{\pi}_{-k} k^{-1/2}} \langle q_k, q_{-k} | \hat{\rho} \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{q}_{-k} | q_k, q_{-k} \rangle \]

\[
= e^{i(\xi^1 \hat{q}_k + \xi^2 \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k + \xi^3 \hat{q}_{-k} k^{-1/2} + \xi^4 \hat{\pi}_{-k} k^{-1/2}} \langle q_k, q_{-k} | \hat{\rho} \hat{q}_{-k} | q_k, q_{-k} \rangle \]

\[
= e^{i(\xi^1 \hat{q}_k + \xi^2 \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k + \xi^3 \hat{q}_{-k} k^{-1/2} + \xi^4 \hat{\pi}_{-k} k^{-1/2}} \langle q_k, q_{-k} | \hat{\rho} \hat{k}^{-1/2} \hat{q}_{-k} | q_k, q_{-k} \rangle \]

where we have utilized the closure relation in order to simplify the above expression. We see that the characteristic function has indeed been written in terms of the density matrix elements. However, we still need to calculate the two
other terms which remain in the integral (G6). Recalling that \( \langle q_k | \pi_k \rangle = \exp(\imath q_k \pi_k) / \sqrt{2\pi} \), one arrives at

\[
\langle q_k | e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \hat{g}_k} e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k} | q_k \rangle = \int d\hat{q}_k d\pi_k \langle q_k | e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \hat{g}_k} | \hat{q}_k \rangle \langle \hat{q}_k | e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k} | \pi_k \rangle \langle \pi_k | q_k \rangle
\]

\[
= \frac{1}{2\pi} e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \hat{q}_k} \int d\hat{q}_k d\pi_k \delta (\hat{q}_k - q_k) e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \pi_k} e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \hat{\pi}_k} e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \hat{g}_k} e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \pi_k}
\]

\[
= \frac{1}{2\pi} e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \hat{q}_k} \int d\pi_k e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \pi_k} \delta (k^{-1/2} \xi_2 + \hat{q}_k - q_k)
\]

\[
= e^{\imath \xi k^{-1/2} \hat{q}_k} \delta \left( k^{-1/2} \xi_2 + \hat{q}_k - q_k \right).
\]

Of course, one has a similar expression for the last term in Eq. (G6). As a consequence, the expression of the characteristic function takes the following form:

\[
\chi (\xi) = e^{\imath \xi_2 + \xi_4 / 2} \int d\eta \langle q_k | q_k \hat{\rho} | q_k \rangle \langle q_k, q_k | q_k, q_k \rangle
eq \int d\eta \eta e^{-\imath \xi_2 q_k} \chi (\eta) d\eta,
\]

and express this phase-space function in terms of the density matrix elements. Using the expression of the characteristic function derived above, one has

\[
A (\xi) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3} \int d\eta \eta e^{-\imath \xi_2 q_k} \chi (\eta) d\eta,
\]

\[
A (\xi) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3} \int d\eta \eta \exp \left[ -i \xi \xi_2 + \xi_4 / 2 \right] \langle q_k, q_k | q_k, q_k \rangle e^{-i \xi \xi_2 + \xi_4 / 2} \langle q_k, q_k | q_k, q_k \rangle
\]

\[
A (\xi) = -i k^{1/2} (\xi_2 x + \xi_4 y) \langle k^{-1/2} \xi_1 + x / 2, k^{-1/2} \xi_3 + y / 2 | k^{-1/2} \xi_1 - x / 2, k^{-1/2} \xi_3 - y / 2 \rangle.
\]

Let us now perform the change of integration variable \( q_k = k^{-1/2} \xi_1 + x / 2 \) and \( q_k = k^{-1/2} \xi_3 + y / 2 \). Then one obtains that \( A (\xi) \) is given by

\[
A (\xi) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int dx dy \left[ -i k^{1/2} (\xi_2 x + \xi_4 y) \langle k^{-1/2} \xi_1 + x / 2, k^{-1/2} \xi_3 + y / 2 | k^{-1/2} \xi_1 - x / 2, k^{-1/2} \xi_3 - y / 2 \rangle \right] \Psi (k^{-1/2} \xi_1 + x / 2, k^{-1/2} \xi_3 + y / 2) \Psi^* (k^{-1/2} \xi_1 - x / 2, k^{-1/2} \xi_3 - y / 2),
\]

which exactly coincides with Eq. (94). Therefore, we have shown that

\[
W (\xi) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int d\eta \eta e^{-\imath \xi \xi_2} \chi (\eta),
\]
which is the standard expression of the Wigner function in terms of the characteristic one.

From here, an expression of $W$ in terms of $\gamma$ can be obtained. Indeed, as written in Eq. (C26), for a Gaussian state, one has $\chi(\eta) = \exp(-\eta^T\gamma\eta/4)$, where $\gamma$ is, by definition, the covariance matrix. Inserting this last expression in Eq. (G15), one obtains

$$W(\xi) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int d^4\eta \exp \left(-i\xi^T\eta - \frac{1}{4}\eta^T\gamma\eta \right) d\eta$$

where we have used the fact that the covariance matrix is symmetric, $\gamma^T = \gamma$, and the fact that $\xi$ and $\eta$ are real vectors; hence $\eta^T\xi = \xi^T\eta$. After performing the change of integration variable $\eta \rightarrow \eta + 2i\gamma^{-1}\xi$, the Gaussian integration finally leads to

$$W(\xi) = \frac{1}{\pi^2\sqrt{\det\gamma}} e^{-\xi^T\gamma^{-1}\xi},$$

which is exactly the formula used in the text, in particular, in Sec. VI.

**Appendix H: Evolution Equation for the Wigner Function**

In this appendix, we derive the equation controlling the time evolution of the Wigner function. The time derivative of $W$ can be obtained from Eq. (94). Explicitly, one has

$$\frac{d}{d\eta} W = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int dx dy \left[ \frac{d}{d\eta} \Psi^*(q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_k + \frac{y}{2}) e^{-i\pi_k x - i\pi_{-k} y} \Psi(q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_k + \frac{y}{2}) \right]$$

$$+ \frac{1}{(2\pi)^2} \int dx dy \Psi^*(q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_k - \frac{y}{2}) e^{-i\pi_k x - i\pi_{-k} y} \frac{d}{d\eta} \Psi(q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_k + \frac{y}{2})$$

$$- \frac{i}{(2\pi)^2} \int dx dy \Psi^*\left(\frac{q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_k + \frac{y}{2}}{\hat{H}}\right) e^{-i\pi_k x - i\pi_{-k} y} \psi(q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_k + \frac{y}{2})$$

$$+ \frac{i}{(2\pi)^2} \int dx dy \Psi^*(q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_k - \frac{y}{2}) e^{-i\pi_k x - i\pi_{-k} y} \psi(q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_k + \frac{y}{2})$$

where in the second equality we have used the Schrödinger equation $\partial\Psi/\partial\eta = -i\hat{H}\Psi$ and the fact that the Hamiltonian is Hermitian. In order to proceed, one needs to express the Hamiltonian density in terms of the Gaussian operators $\hat{q}_k$, $\hat{\pi}_k$, $\hat{q}_{-k}$ and $\hat{\pi}_{-k}$. Inserting Eqs. (51) and (52) into Eq. (11), one obtains the following expression:

$$\hat{H}_k = \frac{k^2}{2} \left(\hat{q}_k^2 + \hat{\pi}_k^2\right) + \frac{\tilde{z}}{2} \hat{\pi}_k \hat{\pi}_{-k} + \frac{\tilde{z}}{2} \left(\hat{q}_k + \hat{q}_{-k}\right).$$

The three terms in the above Hamiltonian give rise to three terms for the time evolution of $W$ which, in the following, we denote by $dW_{q^2}/d\eta$, $dW_{z^2}/d\eta$ and $dW_{q\pi}/d\eta$. Let us work them out one by one. The first term can be expressed as

$$\frac{dW_{q^2}}{d\eta} = -i \left(\frac{k}{2\pi}\right)^2 \int dx dy \Psi^* \left(q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} - \frac{y}{2}\right) e^{-i\pi_k x - i\pi_{-k} y} \left(xq_k + yq_{-k}\right) \Psi \left(q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} + \frac{y}{2}\right).$$

Noticing that differentiating Eq. (94) with respect to $\pi_k$ and $\pi_{-k}$ precisely produces factors $x$ and $y$, it is easy to check that the above expression can also be written as

$$\frac{dW_{q^2}}{d\eta} = k^2 \left(q_k \frac{d}{d\pi_k} + q_{-k} \frac{d}{d\pi_{-k}}\right) W.$$
Then recalling that the momentum is represented by $\hat{\pi}_k = -i\partial/\partial q_k$, the second term reads

$$\frac{dW_{\pi^2}}{d\eta} = \frac{i}{2} \left( \frac{\partial^2 + \partial^2}{(2\pi)^2} \right) \int dxdy \left( \frac{\partial^2}{\partial q_k^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial q_{-k}^2} \right) \Psi^*(q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} - \frac{y}{2}) e^{-i\pi_k x - i\pi_{-k} y} \Psi \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} + \frac{y}{2} \right).$$

(H5)

In this expression, derivatives with respect to $q_k$ and $q_{-k}$ can be written as derivatives with respect to $x$ and $y$ by noticing that, for example,

$$\frac{\partial^2}{\partial q_k^2} \Psi^* \left( q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} - \frac{y}{2} \right) = -2 \frac{\partial^2}{\partial q_k \partial x} \Psi^* \left( q_k - \frac{x}{2}, q_{-k} - \frac{y}{2} \right),$$

(H6)

and similar expressions for the three other double derivatives. Then integrating by part the obtained expression yields the formula

$$\frac{dW_{\pi^2}}{d\eta} = - \left( \pi_k \frac{\partial}{\partial q_k} + \pi_{-k} \frac{\partial}{\partial q_{-k}} \right) W.$$

(H7)

Finally, the third term remains to be calculated. It is given by

$$\frac{dW_{\pi^2}}{d\eta} = -\frac{z'}{z} \left( \frac{\partial^2}{(2\pi)^2} \right) \int dxdy e^{-i\pi_k x - i\pi_{-k} y} \Psi^* \left[ \left( q_k - \frac{x}{2} \right) \frac{\partial}{\partial q_{-k}} + \left( q_{-k} - \frac{y}{2} \right) \frac{\partial}{\partial q_k} \right] \Psi^*$$

$$- \frac{z'}{z} \left( \frac{\partial^2}{(2\pi)^2} \right) \int dxdy e^{-i\pi_k x - i\pi_{-k} y} \Psi^* \left[ \left( q_k + \frac{x}{2} \right) \frac{\partial}{\partial q_k} + \left( q_{-k} + \frac{y}{2} \right) \frac{\partial}{\partial q_{-k}} \right] \Psi,$$

(H8)

where, for simplicity, we have omitted the wavefunction arguments. Using the same manipulations as for the other terms, one obtains the following expression:

$$\frac{dW_{\pi^2}}{d\eta} = \frac{z'}{z} \left( \pi_{-k} \frac{\partial}{\partial q_{-k}} + \pi_k \frac{\partial}{\partial q_k} - q_k \frac{\partial}{\partial q_k} - q_{-k} \frac{\partial}{\partial q_{-k}} \right) W.$$

(H9)

Combining Eqs. (H4), (H7) and (H9), one finally obtains

$$\frac{dW}{d\eta} = k^2 \left[ \left( q_k \frac{\partial}{\partial q_k} + q_{-k} \frac{\partial}{\partial q_{-k}} \right) - \pi_k \frac{\partial}{\partial q_k} - q_{-k} \frac{\partial}{\partial q_{-k}} + \frac{z'}{z} \left( \pi_{-k} \frac{\partial}{\partial q_{-k}} + \pi_k \frac{\partial}{\partial q_k} - q_k \frac{\partial}{\partial q_k} - q_{-k} \frac{\partial}{\partial q_{-k}} \right) \right] W.$$

(H10)

It turns out that this last equation is nothing but the classical Liouville equation for the distribution $W$. Indeed, if one introduces the Poisson bracket $\{\}_{PB}$ defined by

$$\{f,g\}_{PB} = \frac{\partial f}{\partial q_k} \frac{\partial g}{\partial q_k} - \frac{\partial f}{\partial q_{-k}} \frac{\partial g}{\partial q_{-k}} + (k \leftrightarrow -k),$$

(H11)

then it is straightforward to write Eq. (H10) as

$$\frac{dW}{d\eta} = \{H_k, W\}_{PB},$$

(H12)

where we have used Eq. (H2). Let us mention that although we have established this result for the Hamiltonian of cosmological perturbations, it can in fact be generalized to any quadratic Hamiltonian.

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