

Gauge anomalies on shell and collinear factorization

Edoardo Alviani, IJCLab – Université Paris-Saclay

alviani@ijclab.in2p3.fr

Based on work 2509.03368 in collaboration with Adam Falkowski

A river can be crossed with a bridge or a boat.



A storm
calls for



Resistance to wind
fluctuations



Resistance to water waves
fluctuations

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In the same way any theory has to be **resistant to quantum fluctuations** regardless of the formalism we use to navigate it.

In this talk

1. Introducing the question: anomalies and on-shell methods
2. Gravity as a probe for anomalies
3. Collinear factorization and unitarity
4. Gauge anomalies on shell
5. Outlook

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Why???

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[Fermion masses and mixing angles from gauge symmetries, Ibanez, Ross]

[Yukawa matrices from a spontaneously broken abelian symmetry, Dudas, Pokorski, Savoy]

Why???

- Gauge anomalies must cancel when gaugeing flavour symmetries
- On-shell understanding of the Green-Schwarz mechanism in anomalous- $U(1)$ flavour models

1. Introducing the question: quantum fields

Lagrangians for spin-1 and -2 particles have **gauge symmetry**.

Unphysical: gauge dependence cancel in observables

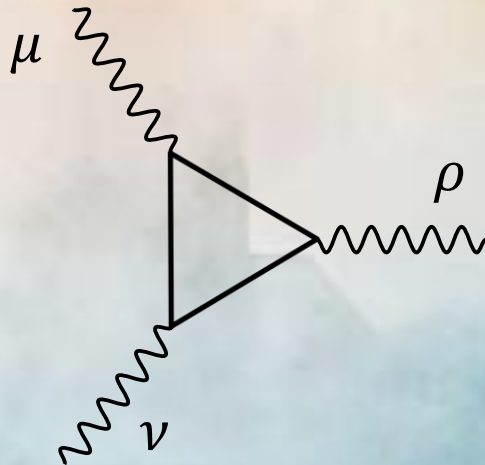
Necessary: prevents the existence of negative norm states

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Anomaly: breaking of a symmetry upon computing loop correlators.

Not problematic in principle.

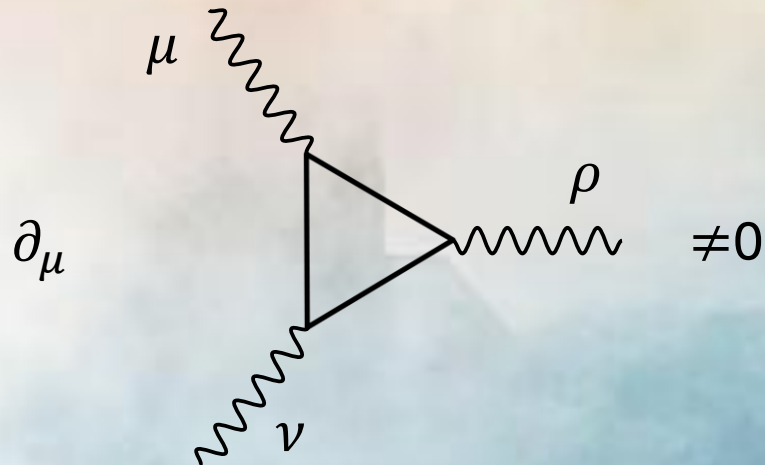
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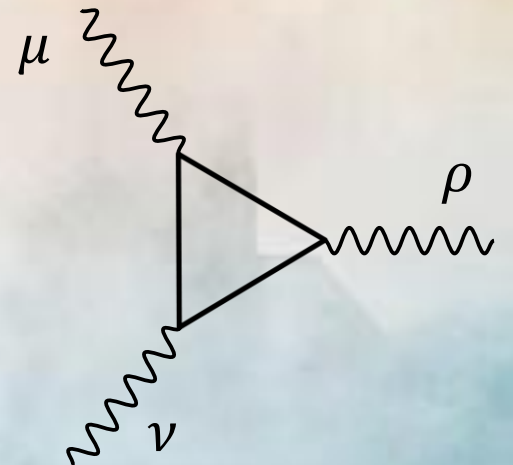
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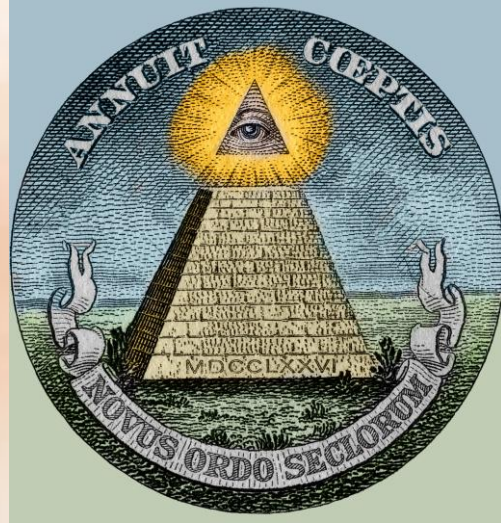
At one-loop, gauge symmetry (as Ward identities) is lost unless **gauge anomaly cancellation conditions** are satisfied



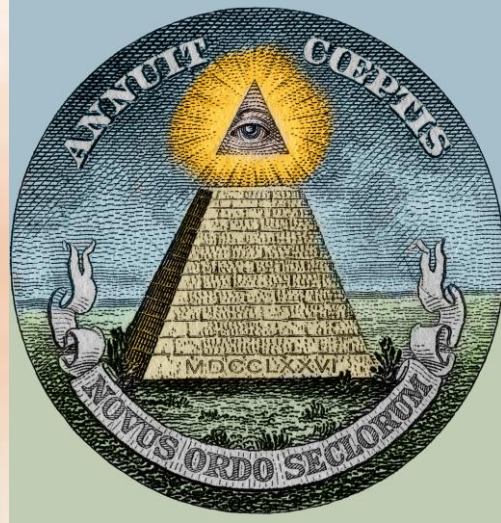
The diagram shows a triangle loop with two incoming wavy lines on the left and one outgoing wavy line on the right. The top-left incoming line is labeled with the Greek letter μ . The bottom-left incoming line is labeled with the Greek letter ν . The right outgoing line is labeled with the Greek letter ρ . To the left of the diagram is the symbol ∂_μ . To the right of the diagram is the expression $\neq 0$. A purple arrow points from the diagram to the equation $\sum_n Q_n^3 = 0$.

Physical constraints on the spectrum of the theory

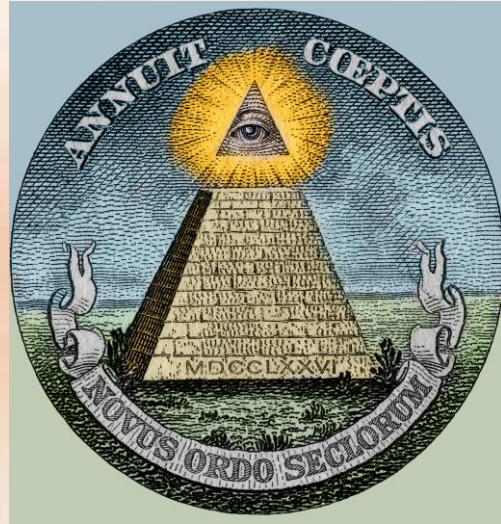
1. Excursus: Amplitudes



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1. Excursus: S-matrix

S-matrix: unitary operator relating states at past and future infinity:

$$S = \lim_{\substack{t_i \rightarrow -\infty \\ t_f \rightarrow +\infty}} e^{i H_0 t_f} e^{-i H(t_f - t_i)} e^{-i H_0 t_i} = 1 + iT$$



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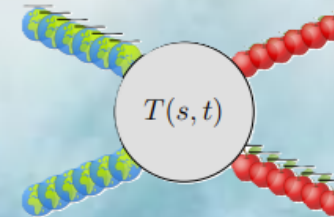
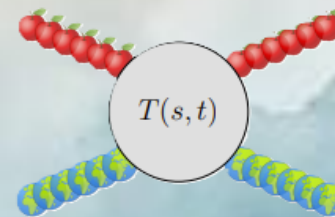


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Crossing symmetry: relates



[Mizera]

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Little group symmetry: can we exploit it manifestly?

1. Excursus: On shell methods

$$p_\mu \sigma^\mu = \begin{pmatrix} p_0 - p_3 & p_1 - ip_2 \\ p_1 + ip_2 & p_0 + p_3 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\det(p_\mu \sigma^\mu) = p^2 = 0$$

$$p_\mu \sigma_{\alpha\dot{\alpha}}^\mu = |p \rangle_\alpha [p |_{\dot{\alpha}}$$

$$\text{with } [p |_{\dot{\alpha}} = (|p \rangle_\alpha)^* \\ , \alpha = 1, 2$$

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*Make little group
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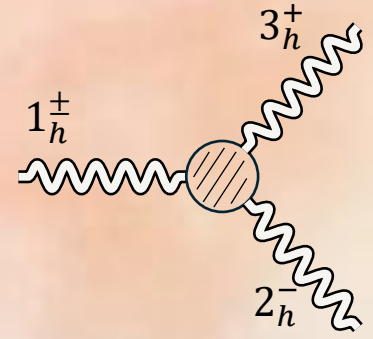
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Scattering amplitudes are **naturally expressed** in terms of these variables.

$$M(1^{h_1} 2^{h_2} 3^{h_3}) = \begin{cases} g_h \langle 12 \rangle^{h_3-h_1-h_2} \langle 23 \rangle^{h_1-h_2-h_3} \langle 13 \rangle^{h_2-h_1-h_3}, & h_1 + h_2 + h_3 < 0 \\ g_a [12]^{h_1+h_2-h_3} [23]^{h_2+h_3-h_1} [13]^{h_1+h_3-h_2}, & h_1 + h_2 + h_3 \geq 0 \end{cases}$$

1. Excursus: On shell methods

$$M(1_h^- 2_h^- 3_h^+) = \frac{1}{M_{Pl}} \frac{\langle 12 \rangle^6}{\langle 13 \rangle^2 \langle 23 \rangle^2}$$



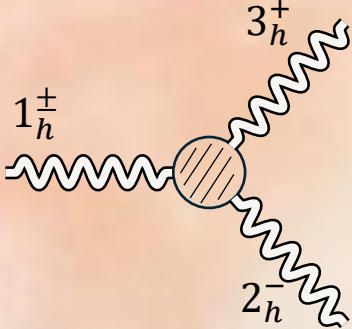
$$G_3^{(\mu_1 \nu_1, \mu_2 \nu_2, \mu_3 \nu_3)}(p_1, p_2, p_3) = \left(\frac{i}{8}\right) \text{Sym}_{\mu_1 \leftrightarrow \nu_1} \text{Sym}_{\mu_2 \leftrightarrow \nu_2} \text{Sym}_{\mu_3 \leftrightarrow \nu_3} \left[g_3^{(\mu_1 \nu_1, \mu_2 \nu_2, \mu_3 \nu_3)}(p_1, p_2) + 5 \text{ perms of } (1,2,3) \right]$$

$$g_3^{(\mu_1 \nu_1, \mu_2 \nu_2, \mu_3 \nu_3)}(p_1, p_2) = \left(\frac{\kappa}{4}\right) \left[\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) p_1^{\mu_3} p_2^{\nu_3} \eta^{\mu_1 \mu_2} \eta^{\nu_1 \nu_2} - p_1^{\mu_3} p_2^{\mu_1} \eta^{\nu_1 \mu_2} \eta^{\nu_2 \nu_3} + (p_1 \cdot p_2) \left(-\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) \eta^{\mu_1 \nu_1} \eta^{\mu_2 \mu_3} \eta^{\nu_2 \nu_3} + \eta^{\mu_1 \nu_2} \eta^{\mu_2 \nu_3} \eta^{\mu_3 \nu_1} - \left(\frac{1}{4}\right) \eta^{\mu_1 \mu_2} \eta^{\nu_1 \nu_2} \eta^{\mu_3 \nu_3} + \left(\frac{1}{8}\right) \eta^{\mu_1 \nu_1} \eta^{\mu_2 \nu_2} \eta^{\mu_3 \nu_3} \right) \right]$$

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- Great for:
- finding bases of higher dimensional operators
 - deriving higher point tree amplitudes from factorization and recursion
 - simplifying loop matching and operator mixing via unitarity
 - making chirality and helicity selection rules manifest

TO DO IN THE FUTURE

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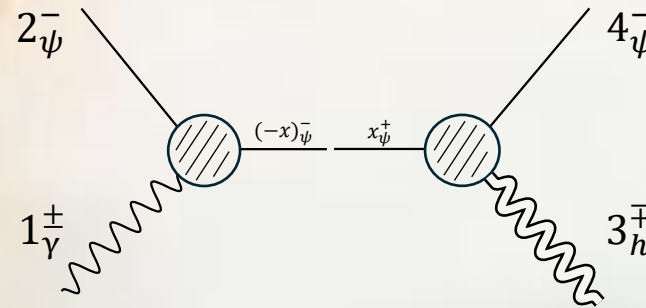
$$M_4 = \frac{R_s}{s} + \frac{R_t}{t} + \frac{R_u}{u} + \frac{R_{st}}{st} + \frac{R_{su}}{su} + \frac{R_{tu}}{tu} + \frac{R_{stu}}{stu} + C$$

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$$\text{Res}[M_4, s = 0] = \lim_{s \rightarrow 0} M_4 s = R_s + \frac{R_{st}}{t} + \frac{R_{su}}{u} + \frac{R_{stu}}{tu} =$$

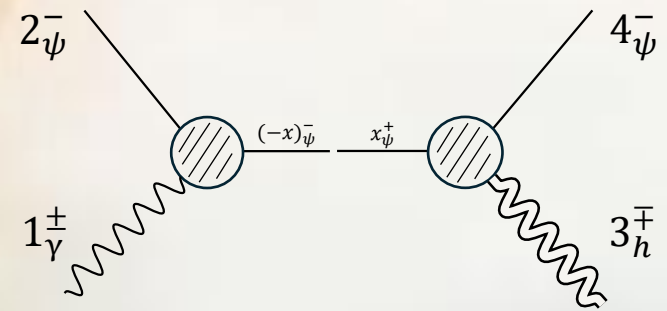


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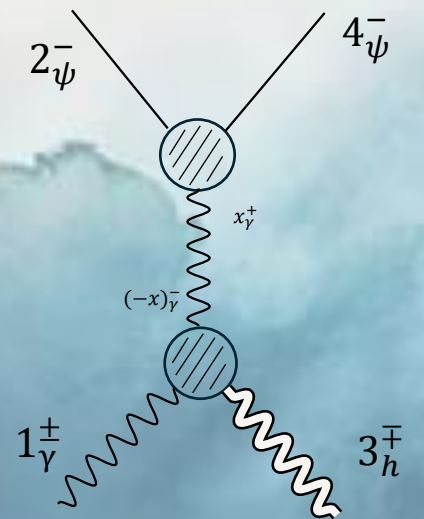
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1. Excursus: Unitarity cuts

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We can reconstruct loop amplitudes just by recycling tree-level informations

$$A_n^{1-loop} = \text{[n legs]} = \sum_i d_i \text{[box]} + \sum_i c_i \text{[triangle]} + \sum_i b_i \text{[bubble]} + R_n$$

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We can reconstruct loop amplitudes just by recycling tree-level informations

$$A_n^{1-loop} = \text{[n legs loop diagram]} = \sum_i d_i \text{[square tree diagram]} + \sum_i c_i \text{[triangle tree diagram]} + \sum_i b_i \text{[circle tree diagram]} + R_n$$

Unitarity cut: replace two propagators with delta functions putting them on-shell

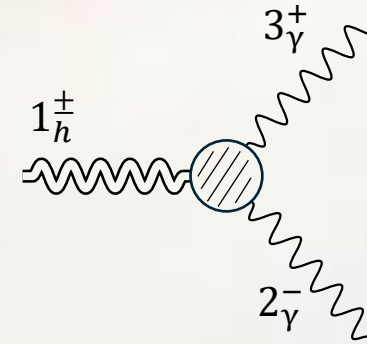
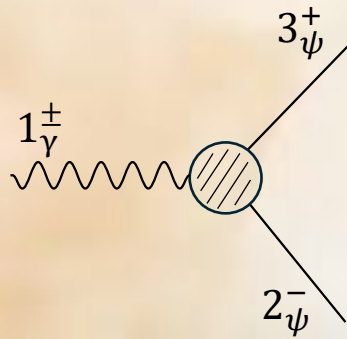
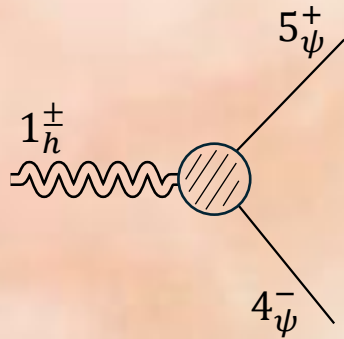
$$Disc_{s_{ij}}[A_n^{1-loop}] = \text{[cut loop diagram]} = \sum_i d_i \text{[cut square tree diagram]} + \sum_i c_i \text{[cut triangle tree diagram]} + \sum_i b_i \text{[cut circle tree diagram]} + R_n$$

This is computed in terms of the tree-level amplitudes on the **left** and the **right** of the cut

Each cut gives you some coefficients

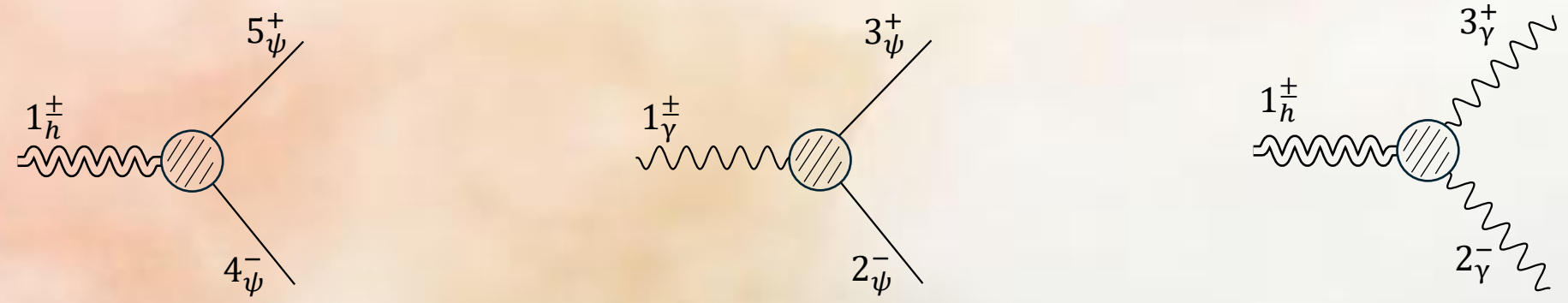
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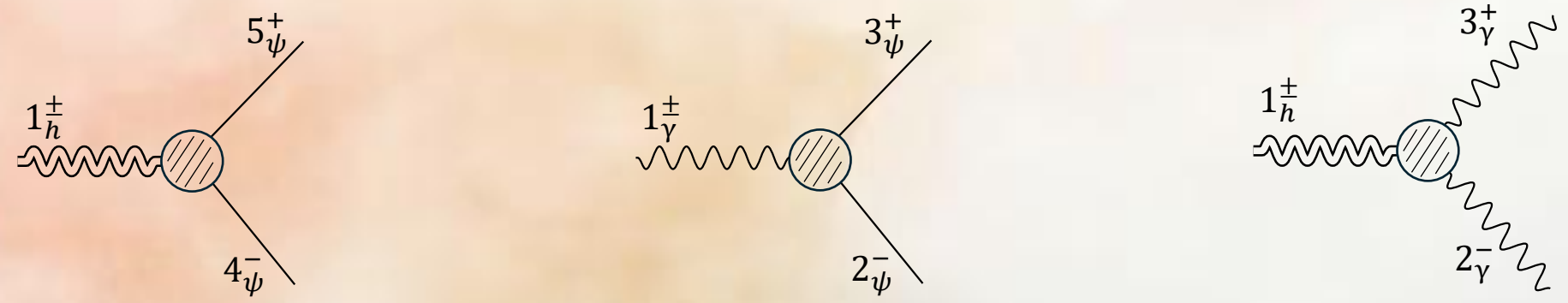


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Gauge invariance is bypassed from the get-go

1. Introducing the question: goal of this work

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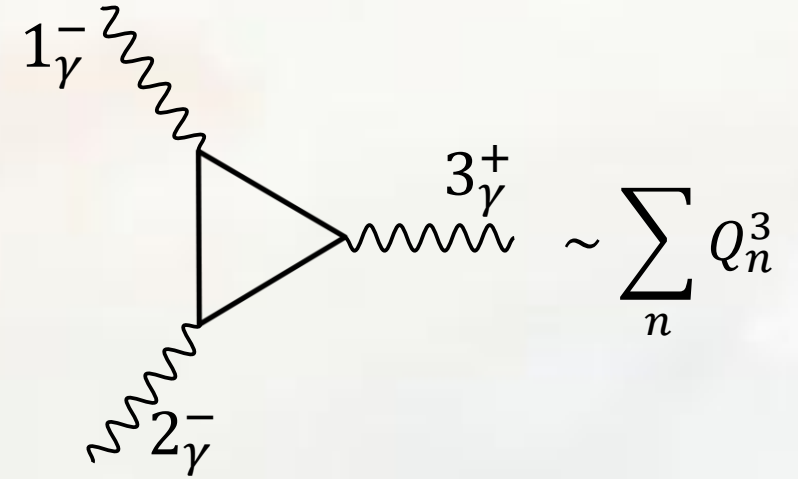
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Answer: anomalies lead to a breakdown of collinear factorization

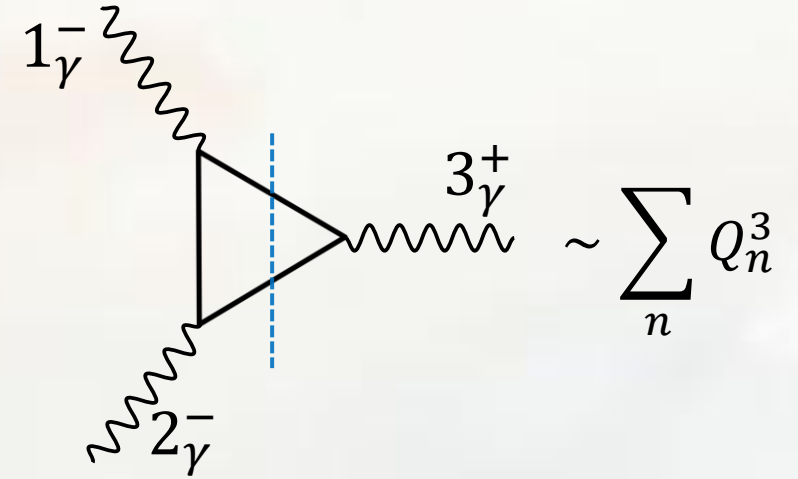
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Anomalies appear in triangle one-loop diagrams, but for technical reasons these are hard to study on-shell.



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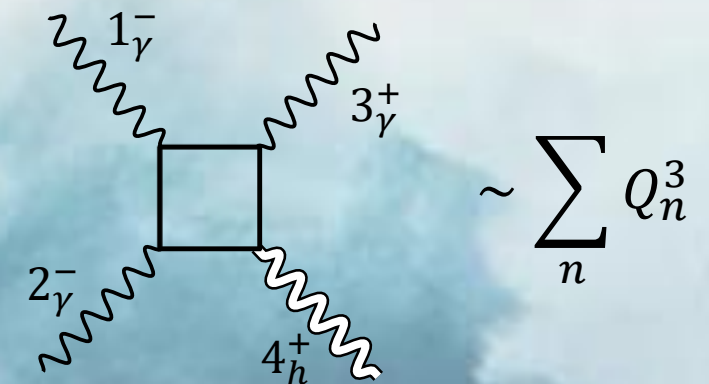
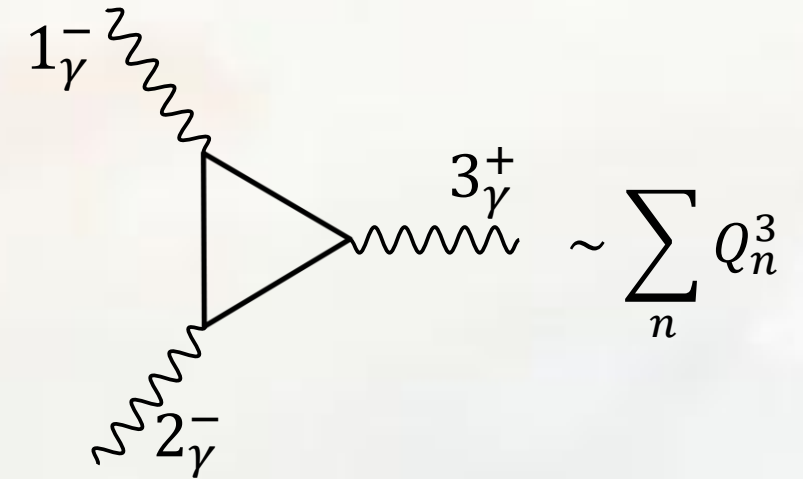
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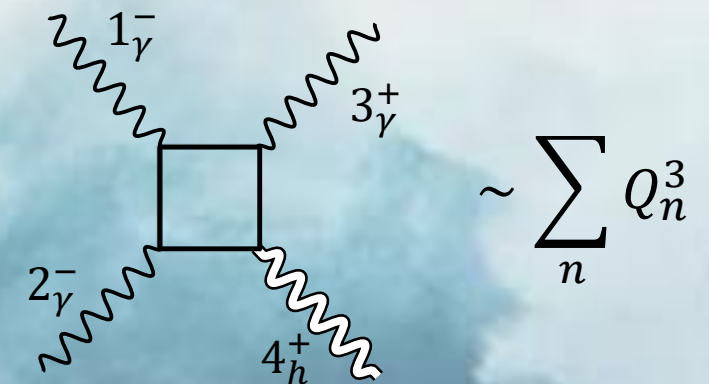
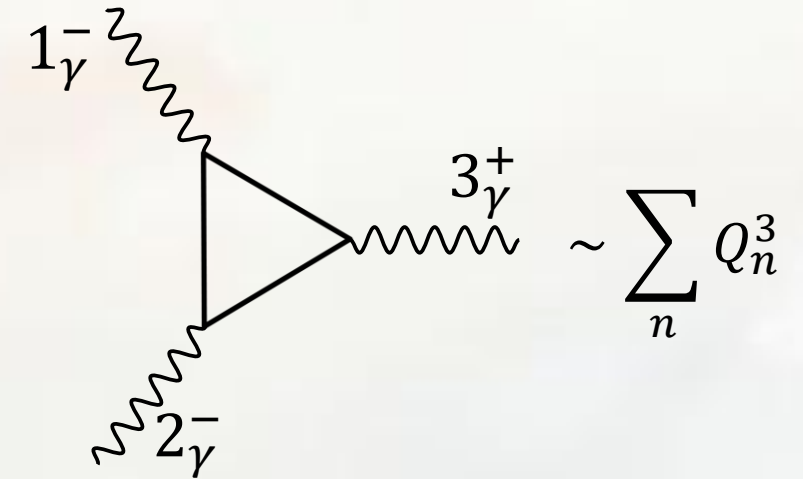
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$$\mathcal{M}^{(1)} [1_{\gamma}^{-} 2_{\gamma}^{-} 3_{\gamma}^{+} 4_h^{+}] = M_{3\gamma h} + R_{3\gamma h},$$

$$M_{3\gamma h} \equiv - \left[\sum_{n=1}^N s_n Q_n^3 \right] \frac{\sqrt{2}e^3}{16\pi^2 M_{\text{Pl}}^3} \langle 12 \rangle^2 [34]^2 [4 | p_1 p_2 | 4] F_{3\gamma h}(s, t),$$

$$F_{3\gamma h}(s, t) \equiv \frac{1}{s^3} \left\{ 4 \log \left(\frac{t}{u} \right) + \frac{t-u}{s} \left[\log \left(\frac{t}{u} \right)^2 + \pi^2 \right] \right\} \Big|_{u=-s-t}.$$



3. Collinear factorization

Our statement is that anomalies manifest on-shell as the breakdown of collinear factorization, formulated as

[Bern, Chalmers, Dixon, Kosower, Perelstein, Rowowsky]

The diagram illustrates the collinear factorization of an n -leg loop diagram. On the left, an n -leg loop diagram with legs labeled a and b is shown. An arrow labeled $s_{ab} \rightarrow 0$ points to a summation symbol \sum_x . The sum consists of two terms:

- The first term is a diagram where legs a and b meet at a shaded vertex, connected to a shaded propagator labeled x , which then connects to an $n-1$ leg loop diagram. This term is labeled "Universal & depends on collinear kinematics only".
- The second term is a diagram where legs a and b meet at a smaller shaded vertex, connected to a shaded propagator labeled x , which then connects to a larger shaded $n-1$ leg loop diagram. This term is labeled "Zero in gravity" and "Universal & depends on collinear kinematics only".

The entire equation is labeled (1).

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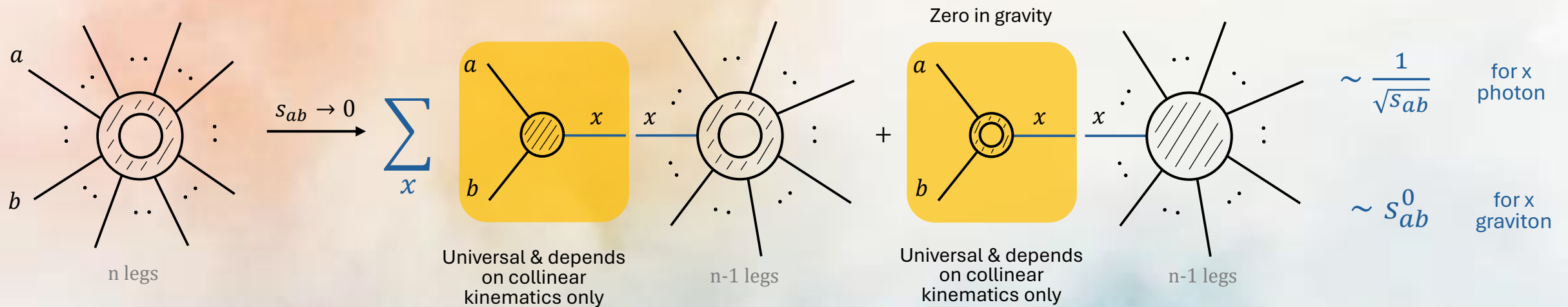
$$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{Diagram of } n \text{ legs} \xrightarrow{S_{ab} \rightarrow 0} \sum_x \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{Yellow-shaded vertex } (a, b, x) \\ \text{Universal \& depends on collinear kinematics only} \end{array} \right] \text{---} \begin{array}{c} \text{Diagram of } n-1 \text{ legs} \\ \text{---} \end{array} \\
 + \begin{array}{c} \text{White vertex } (a, b, x) \\ \text{Zero in gravity} \\ \text{Universal \& depends on collinear kinematics only} \end{array} \text{---} \begin{array}{c} \text{Diagram of } n-1 \text{ legs} \\ \text{---} \end{array}
 \end{array}
 \quad (1)$$

Crucially, this factorization holds for $n \geq 5$

3. Collinear factorization

Our statement is that anomalies manifest on-shell as the breakdown of collinear factorization, formulated as

[Bern, Chalmers, Dixon, Kosower, Perelstein, Rowowsky]

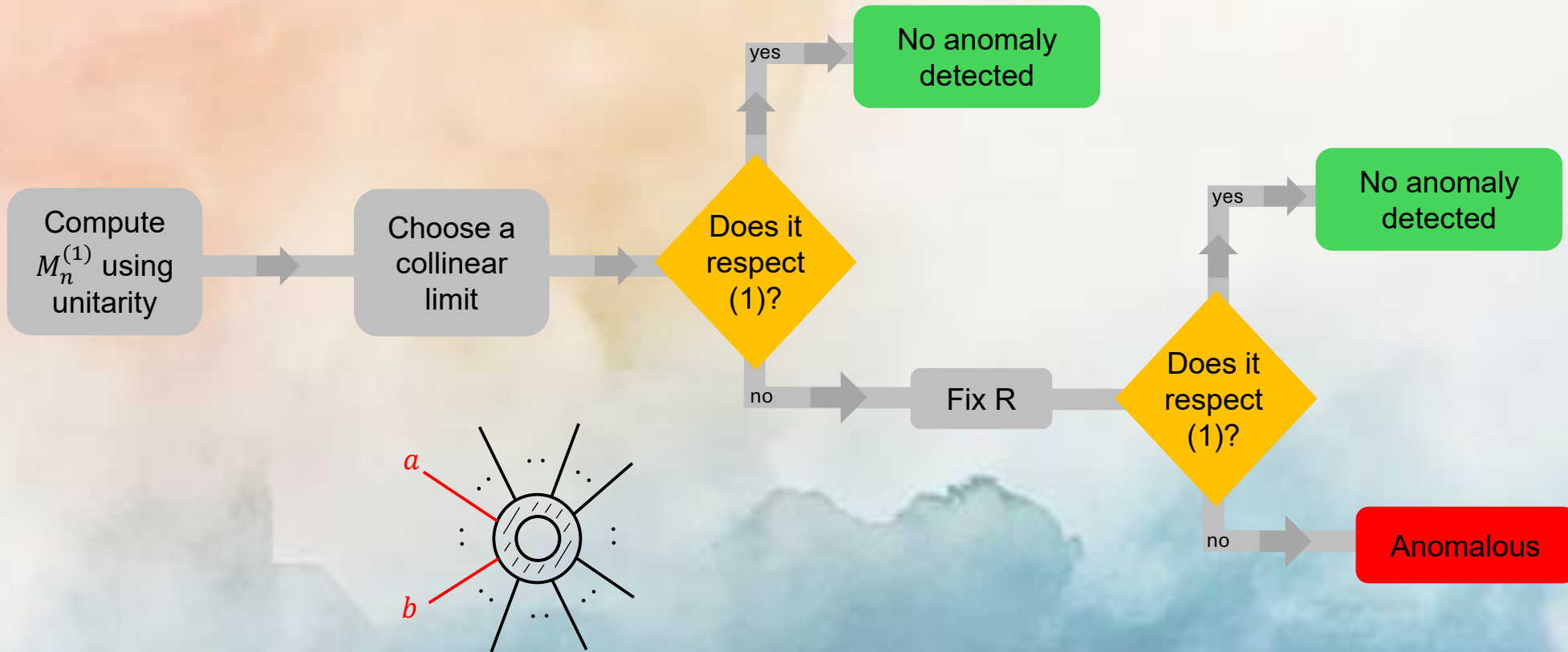


Crucially, this factorization holds for $n \geq 5$

Any deviation from this pattern leads to an inconsistency.

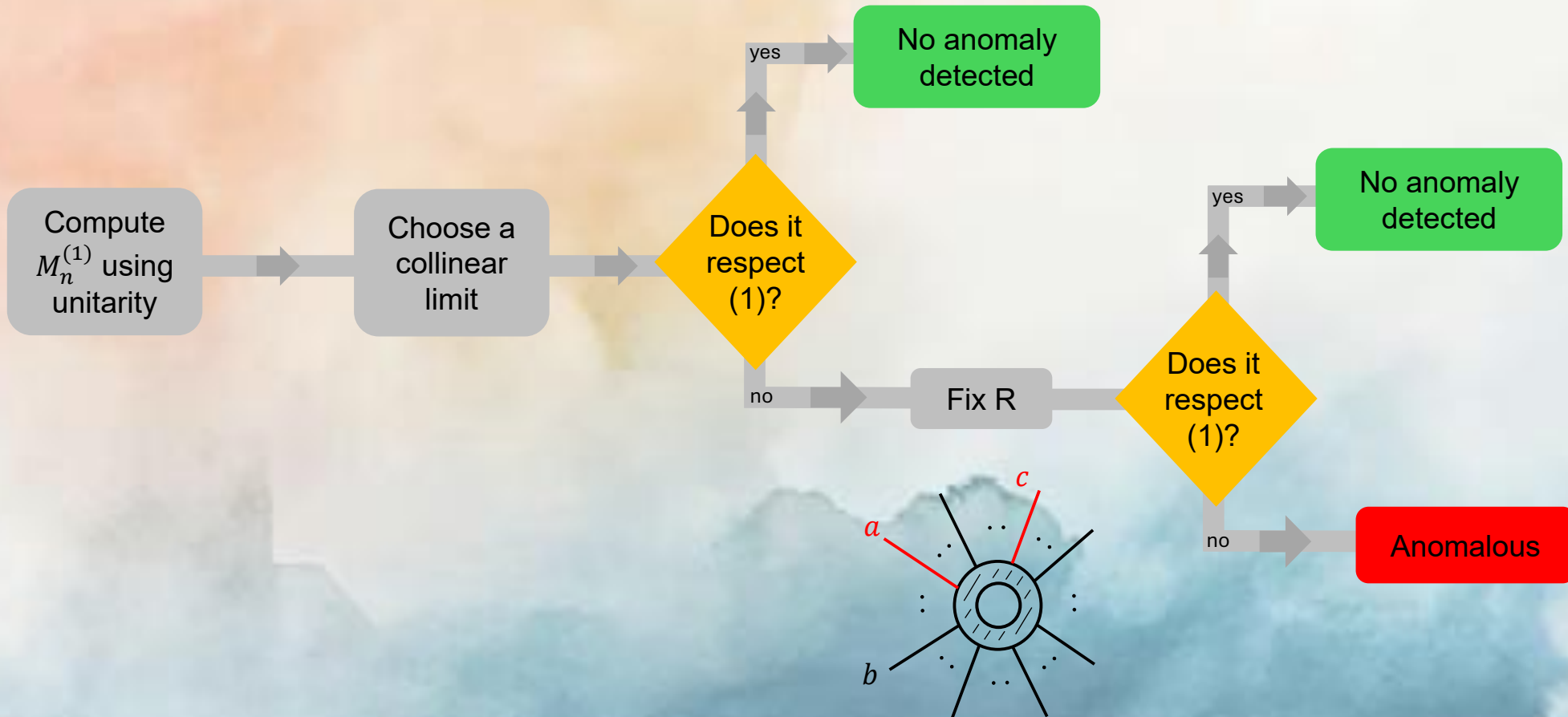
3. Collinear factorization

We constructed the following algorithm to detect anomalous theories fully on-shell



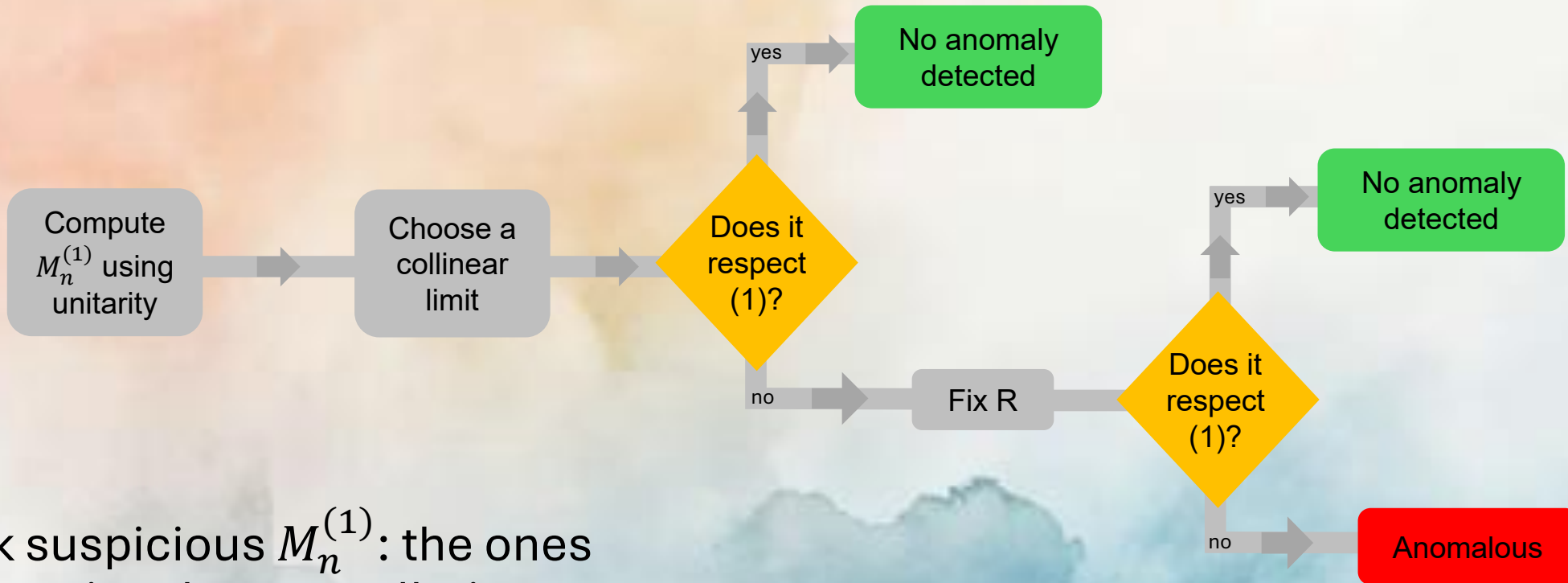
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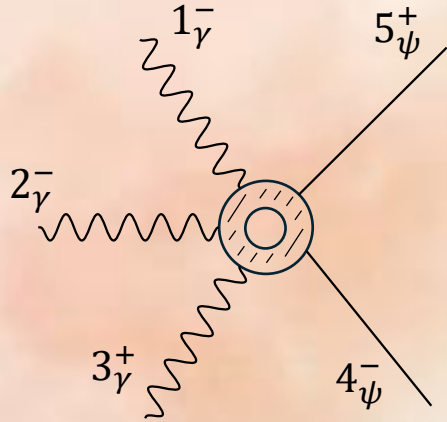
Pick suspicious $M_n^{(1)}$: the ones proportional to cancellation conditions (e.g. $\sum_n Q_n^3$)

3. Attention span saving break

- On shell methods \rightarrow gauge symmetry is dropped
- Gauge anomaly cancellation conditions \rightarrow hidden somewhere
- Collinear factorization \rightarrow broken in some channels
- Restore it with a rational term \rightarrow breaks it in other channels

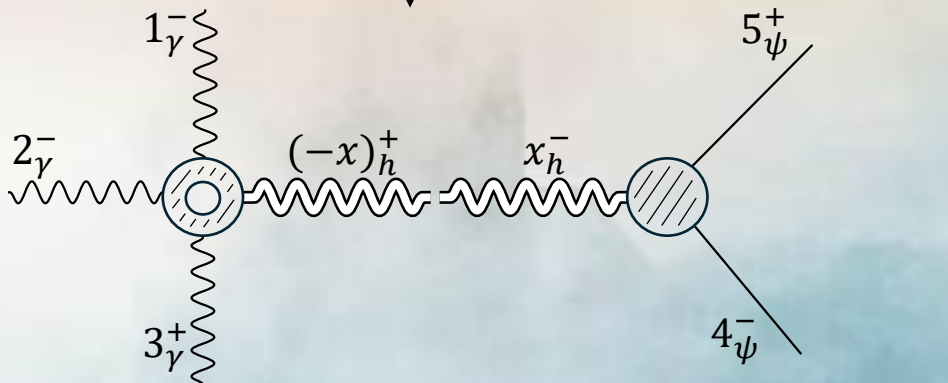


4. Gauge anomalies on-shell: $U(1)^3$



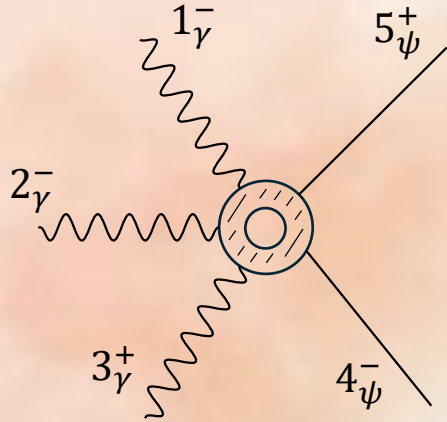
Start from a five point amplitude and take a collinear limit to expose the structure of interest.

$S_{45} \rightarrow 0$



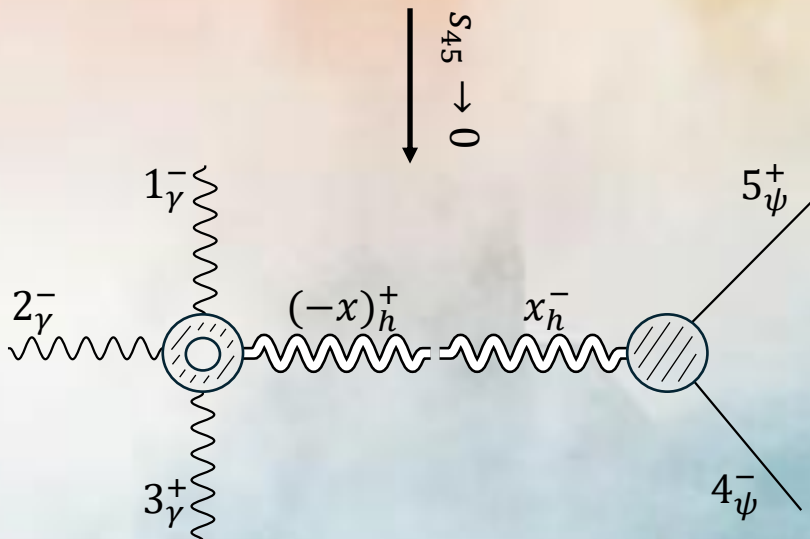
$$\sim \sum_n Q_n^3$$

4. Gauge anomalies on-shell: $U(1)^3$



Take a second collinear limit to test the pole structure. Does it scale as $\frac{1}{\sqrt{s_{12}}}$ or s_{12}^0 ?

If yes, can we **interpret this as a collinear factorization** of the 5-point amplitude?



$s_{12} \rightarrow 0$

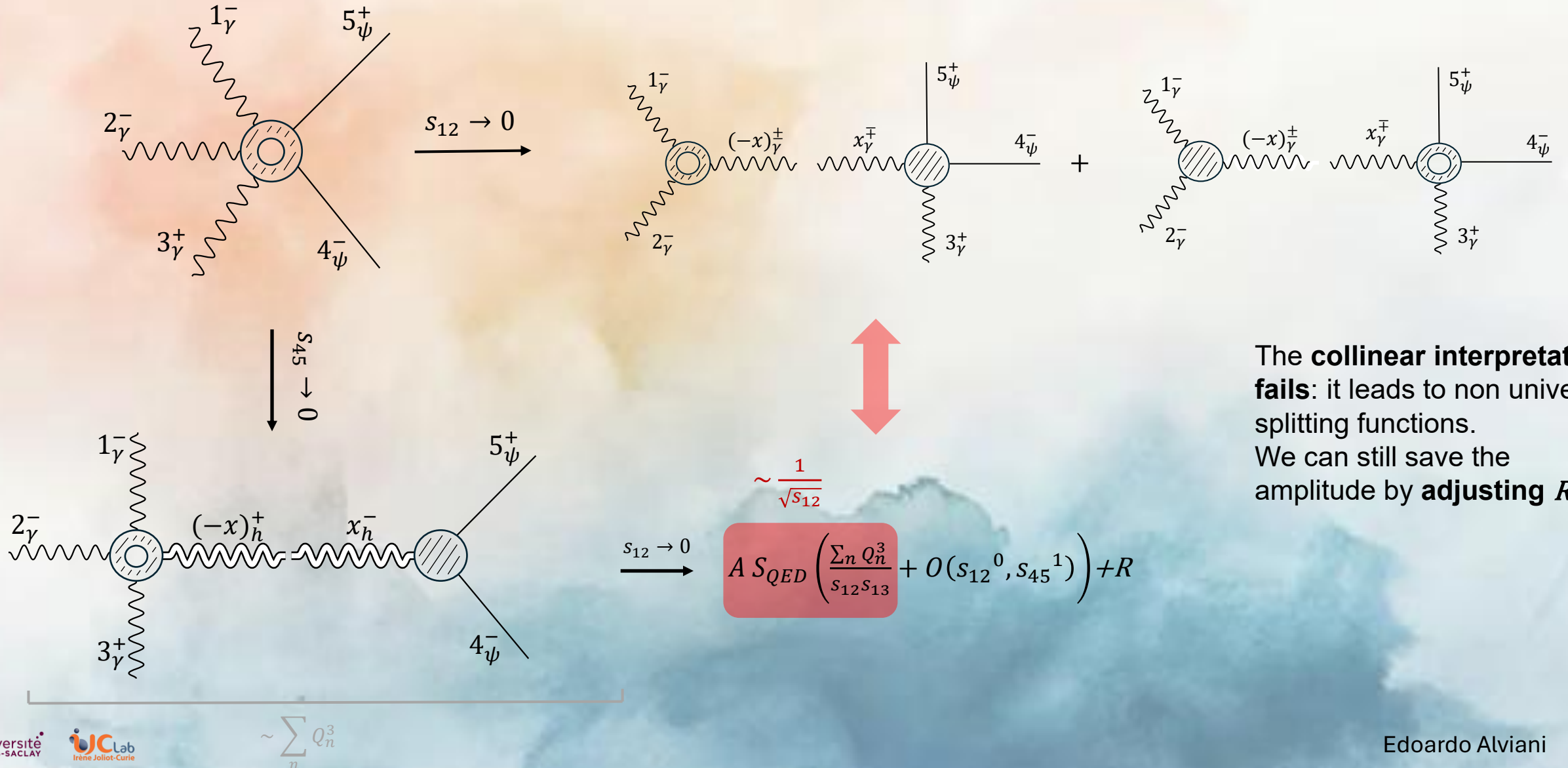
$$\sim \frac{1}{\sqrt{s_{12}}} A S_{QED} \left(\frac{\sum_n Q_n^3}{s_{12}s_{13}} + O(s_{12}^0, s_{45}^1) \right) + R$$

$$S_{QED} = \frac{\langle 12 \rangle^2 [35]^3 \langle 3|p_2\sigma|4\rangle \langle 45 \rangle^2}{s_{12}s_{45}} \sim \sqrt{s_{12}} + O(s_{12})$$

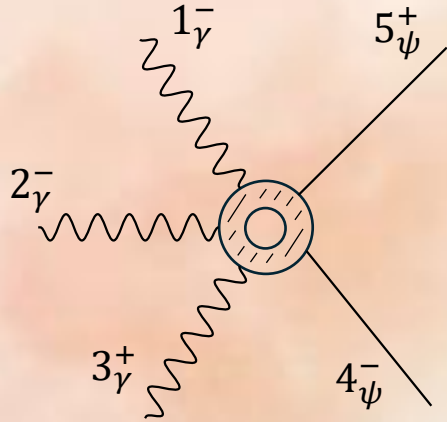
$$A = \frac{-\sqrt{2}e^3}{16\pi^2 M_{Pl}^2}$$

$$\sim \sum_n Q_n^3$$

4. Gauge anomalies on-shell: $U(1)^3$

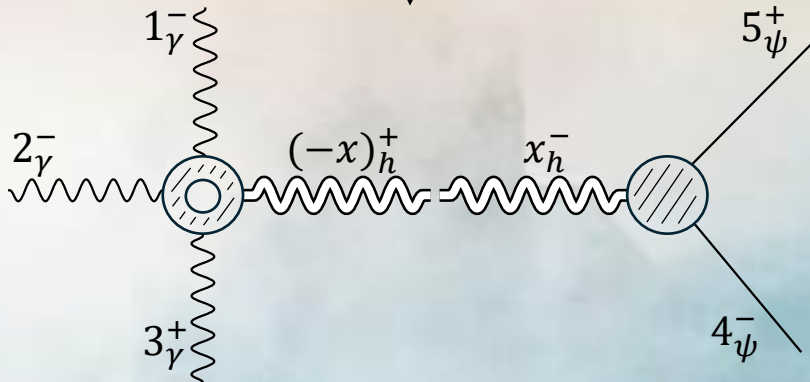


4. Gauge anomalies on-shell: $U(1)^3$



R cancels the s_{12} singularity

$s_{45} \rightarrow 0$



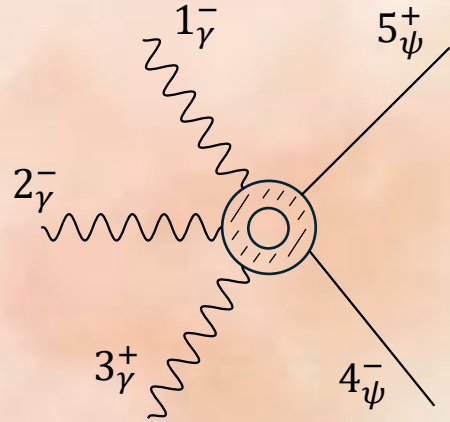
$$R = A \sum_n Q_n^3 S_{QED} \frac{1}{s_{12}s_{13}}$$

$s_{12} \rightarrow 0$

$$A S_{QED} \left(\frac{\sum_n Q_n^3}{s_{12}s_{13}} + O(s_{12}^0, s_{45}^1) \right) + R \sim O(\sqrt{s_{12}})$$

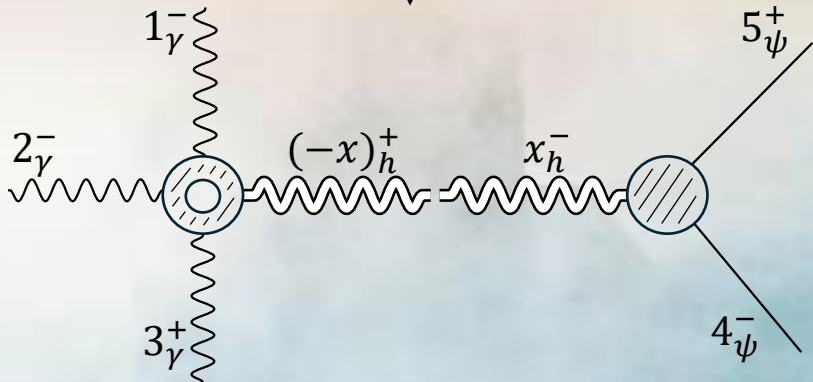
$$\sim \sum_n Q_n^3$$

4. Gauge anomalies on-shell: $U(1)^3$



R cancels the s_{12} singularity, but it **introduces another one** in s_{13} .
 This one cannot be interpreted as a collinear factorization, and there is no other way to cancel it.

$s_{45} \rightarrow 0$



$s_{13} \rightarrow 0$

$$R = A \sum_n Q_n^3 S_{QED} \frac{1}{s_{12}s_{13}} \sim \frac{1}{s_{13}}$$

$s_{12} \rightarrow 0$

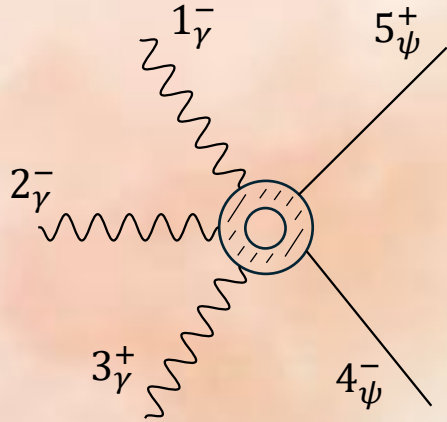
$$A S_{QED} \left(\frac{\sum_n Q_n^3}{s_{12}s_{13}} + O(s_{12}^0, s_{45}^1) \right) + R \sim O(\sqrt{s_{12}})$$

$$S_{QED} = \frac{\langle 12 \rangle^2 [35]^3 \langle 3|p_2\sigma|4 \rangle \langle 45 \rangle^2}{s_{12}s_{45}} \sim \sqrt{s_{12}} + O(s_{12})$$

$$A = \frac{-\sqrt{2}e^3}{16\pi^2 M_{Pl}^2}$$

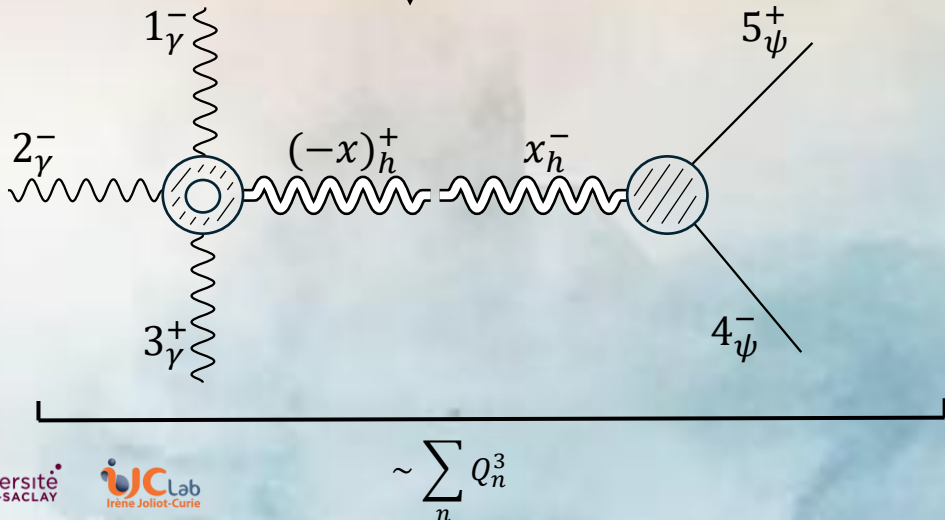
$$\sim \sum_n Q_n^3$$

4. Gauge anomalies on-shell: $U(1)^3$



R cancels the s_{12} singularity, but **it introduces another one** in s_{13} .
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$s_{45} \rightarrow 0$

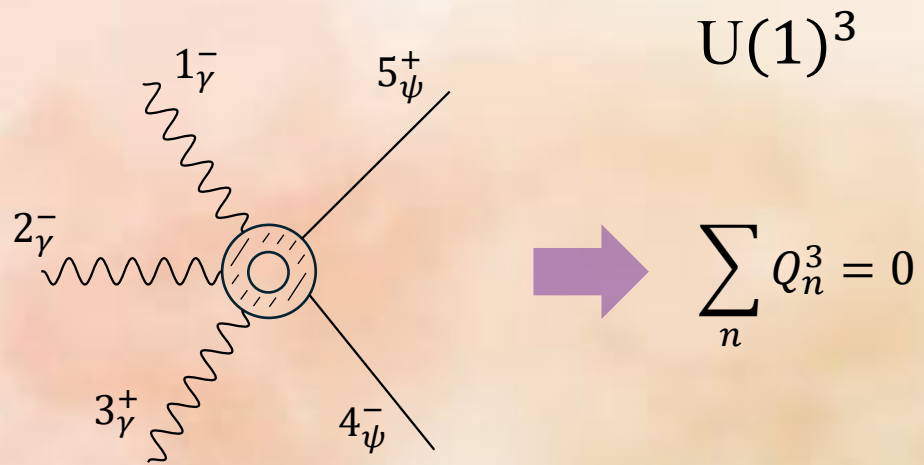


The amplitude is inconsistent, unless this piece is identically zero. This means imposing

$$\sum_n Q_n^3 = 0$$

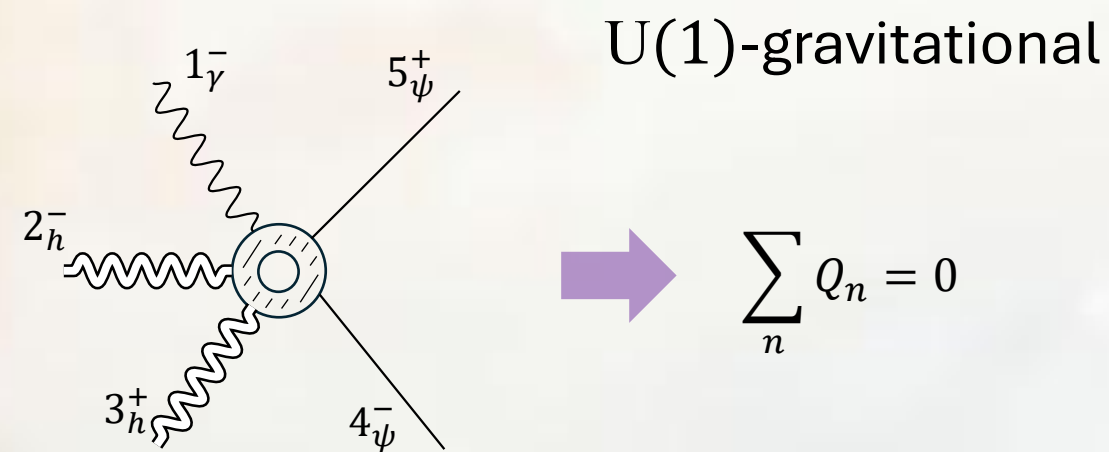
Anomaly cancellation conditions follow from restoring collinear factorization

4. Gauge anomalies on-shell: general



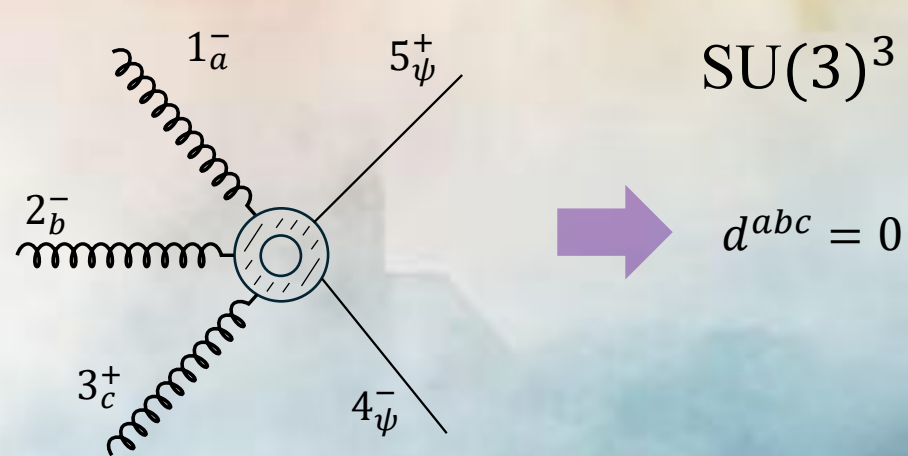
$U(1)^3$

$$\sum_n Q_n^3 = 0$$



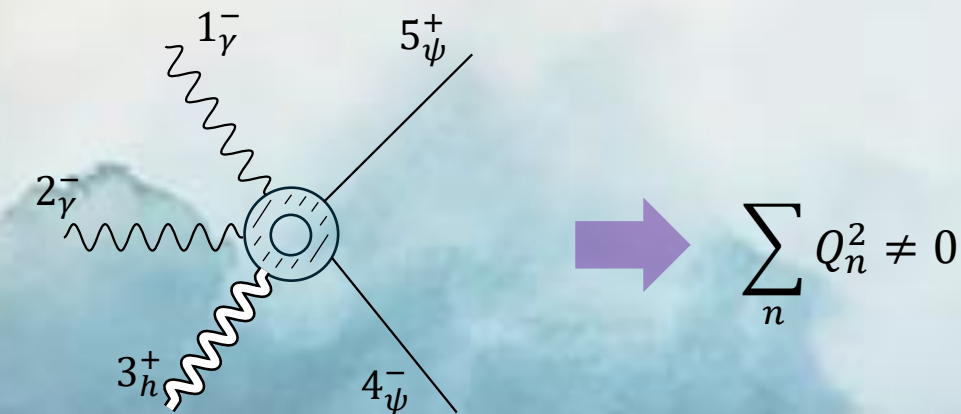
$U(1)$ -gravitational

$$\sum_n Q_n = 0$$



$SU(3)^3$

$$d^{abc} = 0$$



$$\sum_n Q_n^2 \neq 0$$

5. Outlook

In this work we showed how:

- Gauge anomalies appear on shell as breakdown of collinear factorization
- Restoring the factorization yields gauge anomaly cancellation conditions

For the future:

- Include Green-Schwarz formalism: how new DOF restore factorization
- Study global anomalies via a gravity probe
- Possible on-shell proof of the Adler-Bardeen theorem

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And I thank you!

