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Can thermal masses constrain the reheating temperature?

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It has been suggested that large thermal masses of the decay products can close the phase space for inflaton decay. This can impose an upper bound on the reheating temperature which does not depend on the inflaton coupling. We study the problem from first principles of nonequilibrium quantum field theory and discuss under which conditions this intuitive argument, based on the kinematics of classical particles, can be applied in the dense primordial plasma.

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