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Accidentally light scalars and inflation

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Scalar fields can be accidentally light if symmetries forbid their tree-level masses in the potential at the renormalizable level. We present some example models with small symmetry groups (typically $SU(n) \times U(1)$) but with the scalars transforming in large representations. We discuss possible applications to generating natural hierarchies of scales in models with elementary scalars. In particular, we present a model of hybrid natural inflation where the inflaton potential is flat because it is an accidentally light scalar.

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