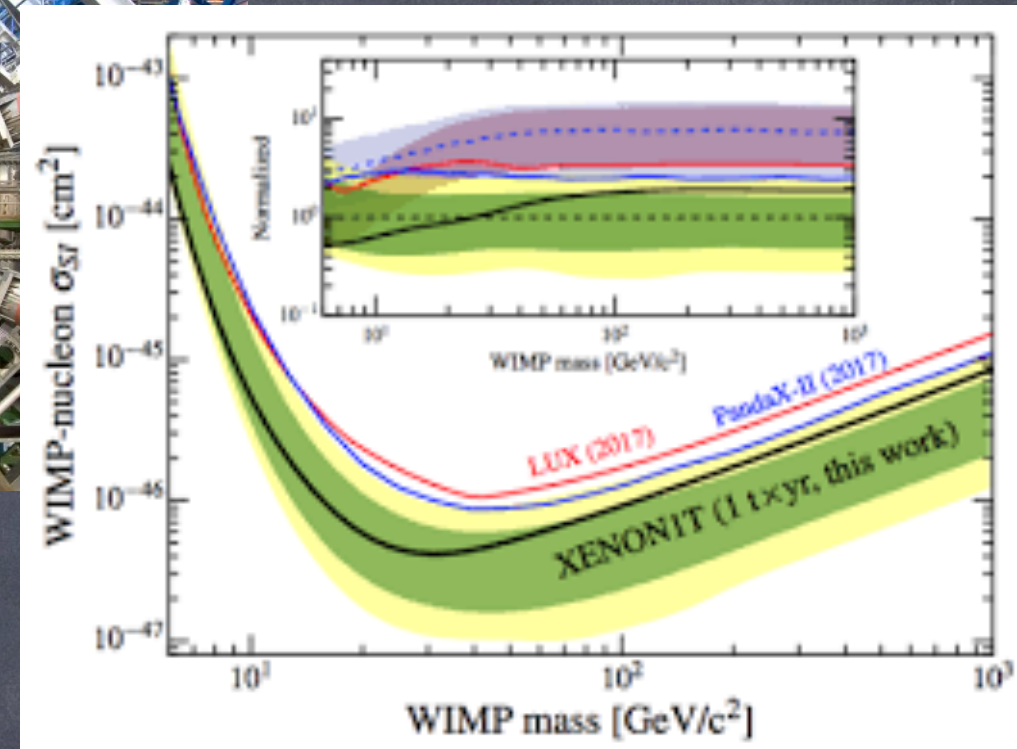
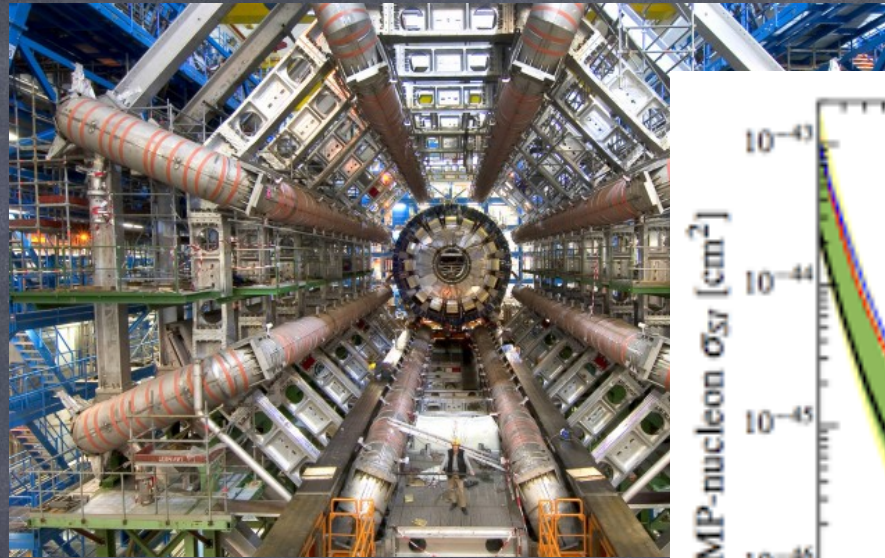


Search Optimization, Dynamical Criticality, and Higgs Metastability

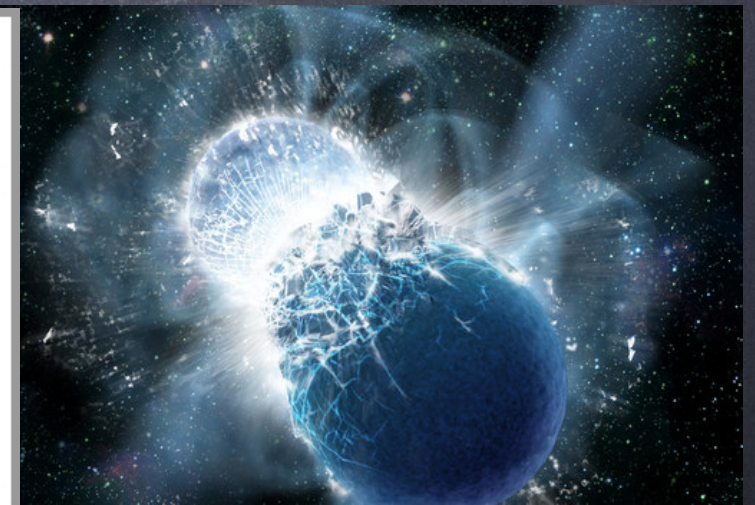
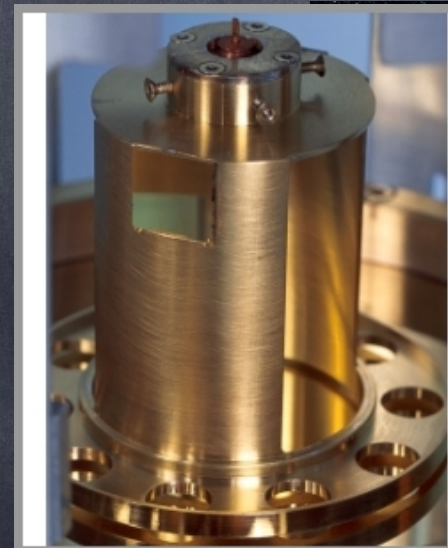
Justin Khoury (U. Penn)
with Onkar Parrikar, to appear

The Post-Naturalness Era?

- What stabilizes the Higgs mass (hierarchy problem)?
 - No new physics at LHC
 - No WIMPs detected



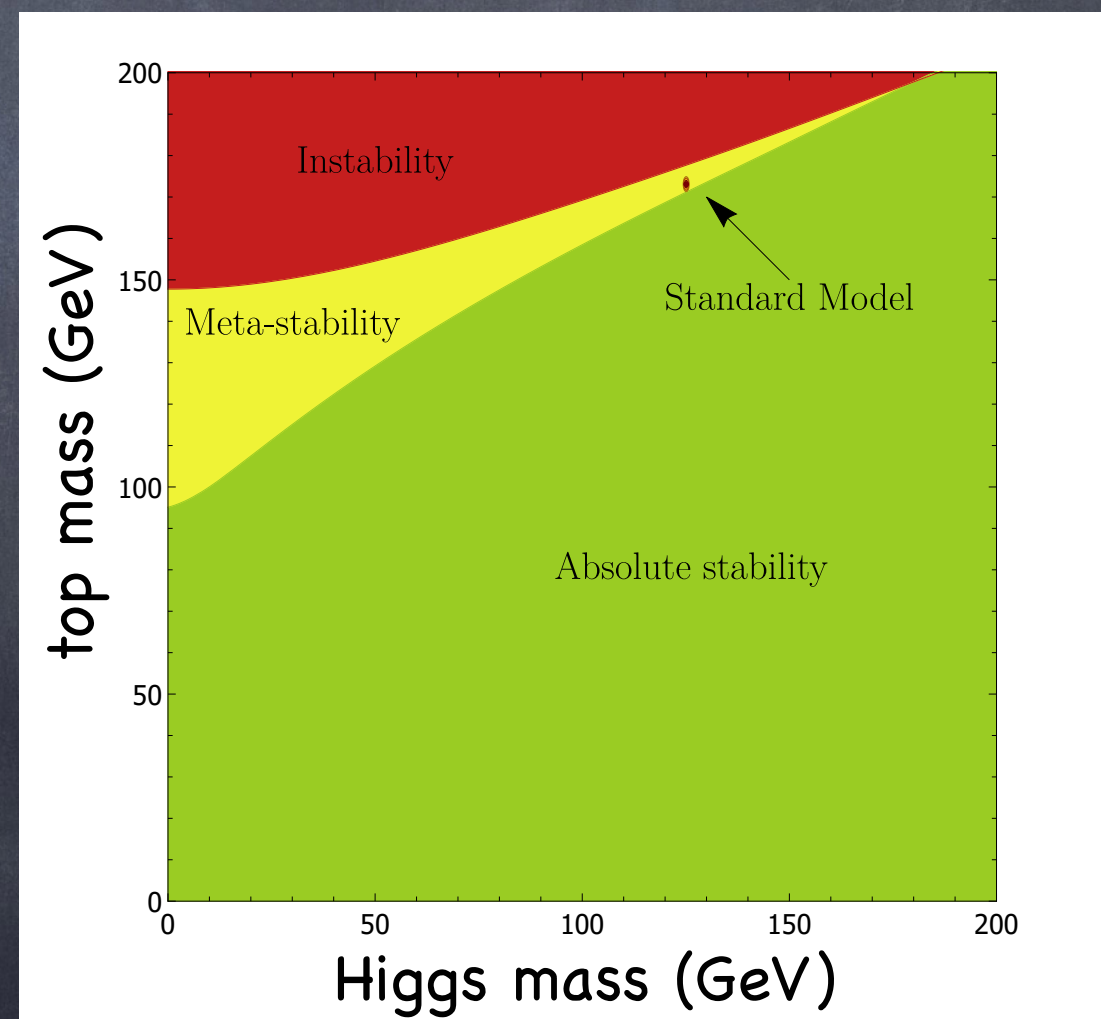
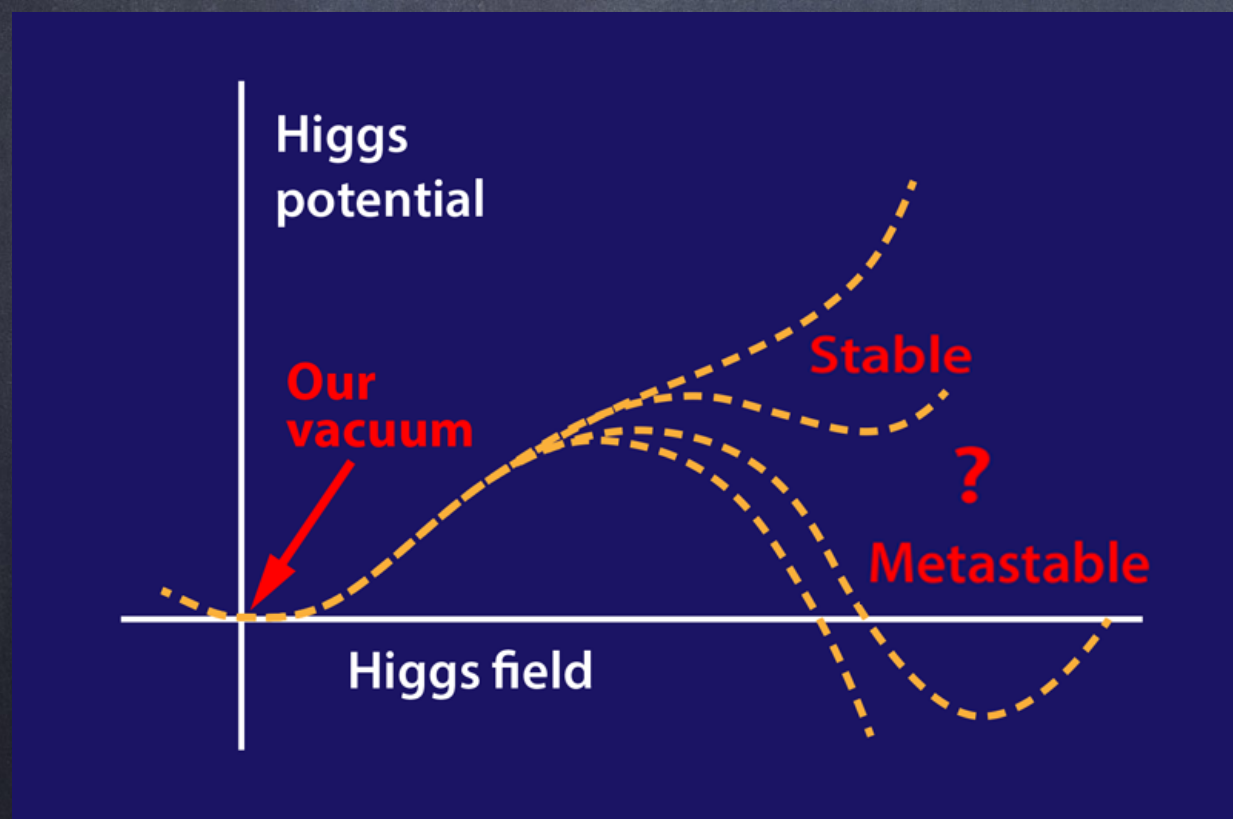
- What explains the vacuum energy (cosmological constant problem)?
 - Constraints on deviations from GR are increasingly tight



Higgs metastability

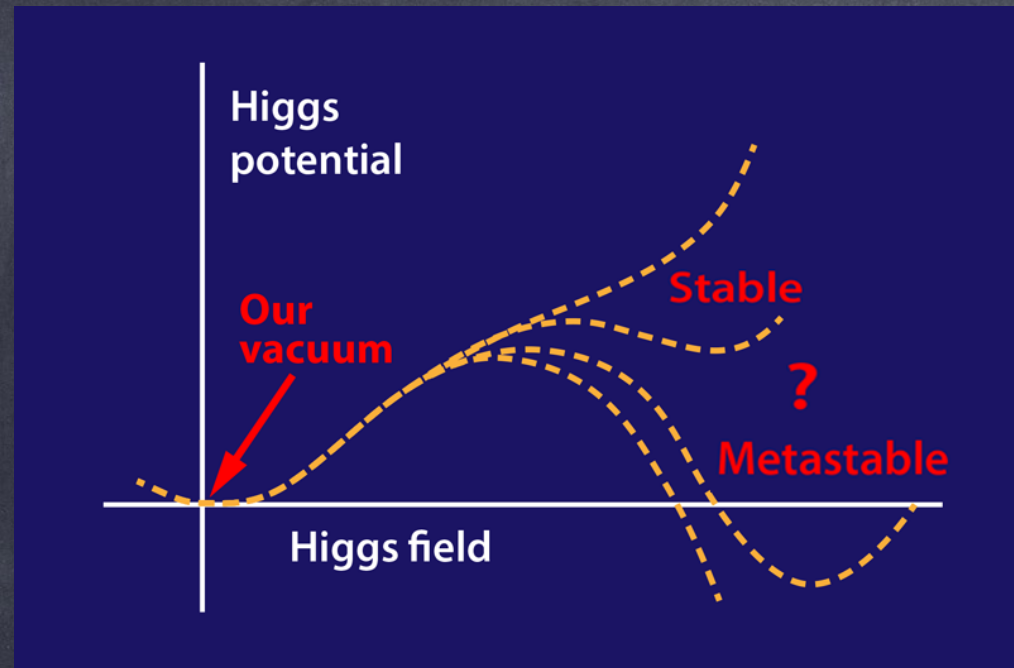
Frampton (1976); Sher (1989); Degraassi et al. (2012); Buttazzo et al. (2013); Bednyakov et al. (2015); Andreassen, Frost and Schwartz (2017)

- A disturbing consequence of a “grand desert” above the weak scale is the **metastability** of our vacuum
- Higgs discovery with $m_h \simeq 125$ GeV fixes all SM parameters, and allows computation of quantum effective potential



Andreassen, Frost and Schwartz (2017)

Higgs metastability as near criticality



Nucleation prob. within
observable universe:

$$\kappa \equiv \frac{\Gamma_{\text{decay}}}{H_0^4}$$

Percolation transition:
Guth & Weinberg (1983)

$$10^{-6} \lesssim \kappa_c \lesssim 0.24$$

Estimated lifetime of
our vacuum:

$$\tau = 10^{526^{+409}_{-202}} \text{ years}$$

Andreassen et al. (2017)

Reassuringly long, but hinges on delicate numerical cancellation:

$$P_{\text{decay}} \simeq \frac{\mu_*^4}{H_0^4} \exp\left(-\frac{8\pi^2}{3|\lambda(\mu_*)|}\right) \quad \mu_* \simeq 3 \times 10^{17} \text{ GeV}$$

- This delicate numerical conspiracy cannot be an accident
- Difficult to conjure up an anthropic explanation

Why is our universe so precariously close to instability?

Other fine-tunings can be understood as **problems of criticality**.

- Weak hierarchy:
Giudice & Rattazzi (2006)

$$-M_{\text{Pl}}^2 \lesssim m_h^2 \lesssim M_{\text{Pl}}^2$$



$$m_h^2 \simeq M_{\text{Pl}}^2$$
$$\langle h \rangle = 0^*$$



$$m_h^2 \simeq 0$$
$$\langle h \rangle = 246 \text{ GeV}$$



$$m_h^2 \simeq -M_{\text{Pl}}^2$$
$$\langle h \rangle \sim M_{\text{Pl}}$$

* In SM, electroweak still broken at QCD scale by Higgs coupling to quark condensate.

- Cosmological constant:



$$\Lambda > 0$$

stable



$$\Lambda = 0$$

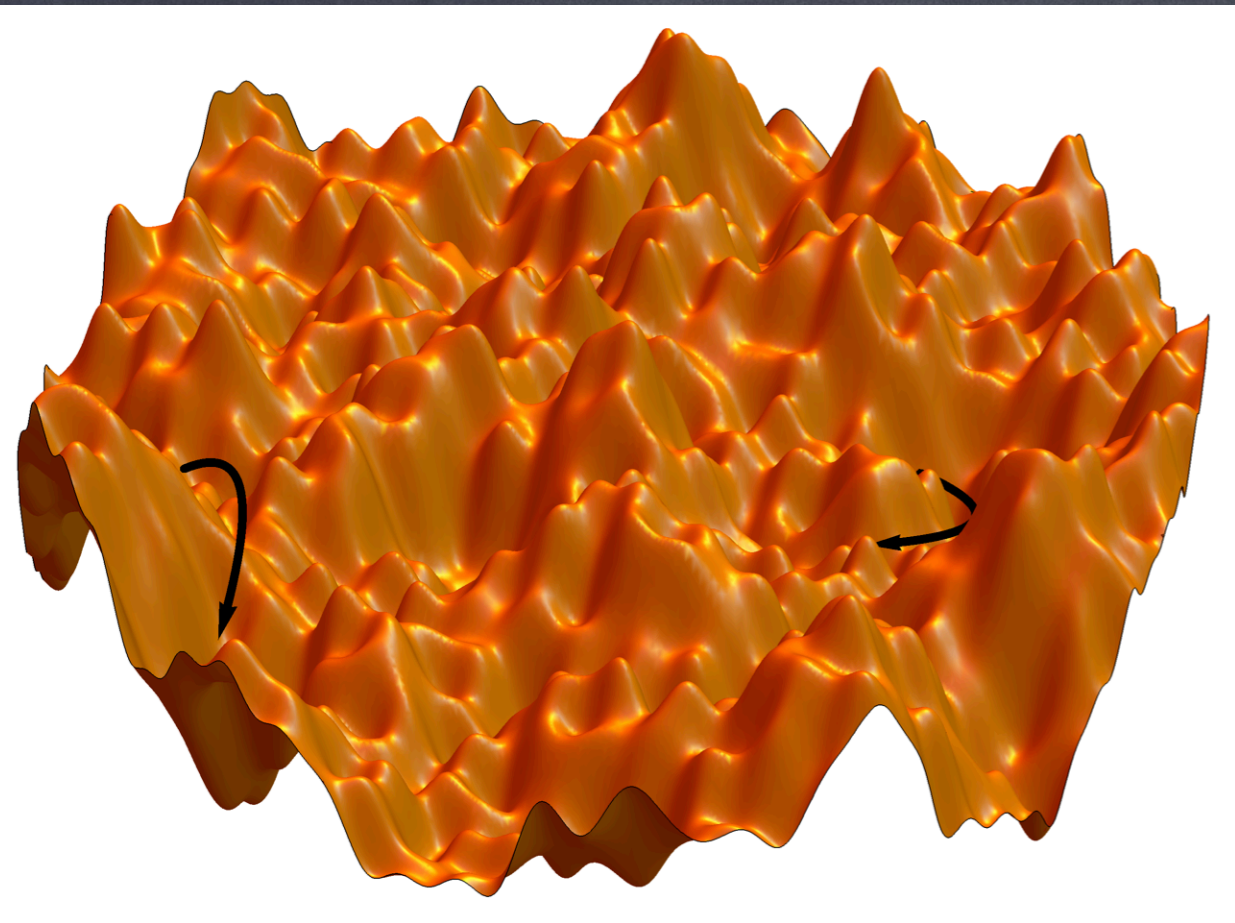


$$\Lambda < 0$$

Non-linearly unstable

Landscape approach

Landscape approach



- Physical parameters vary across a vast landscape of metastable vacua
- Observed values are environmentally determined

Usual strategy:

Garriga & Vilenkin (1998)

- Focus on late-time, stationary/equilibrium distribution

$$f_i^\infty \equiv \text{fraction of comoving volume occupied by } i^{\text{th}} \text{ vacuum}$$

- Hope: among all hospitable vacua, our vacuum is typical/generic

(Principle of mediocrity)

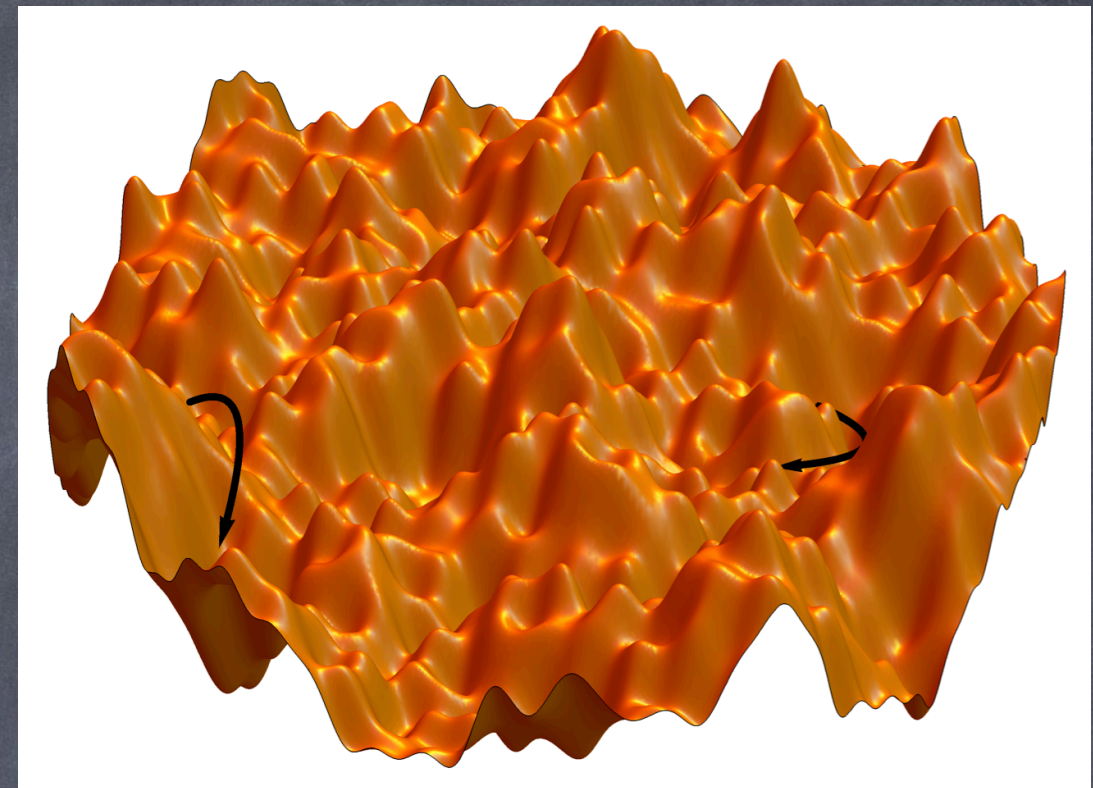
Challenges with the usual approach

- Many long-lived vacua

⇒ exponentially long relaxation time

⇒ frustration, aging dynamics

(glassy system)



Relatedly, finding vacua within hospitable range of Λ is NP-hard

Denef & Douglas (2007)

- Bubbles of all types are generated ∞ -many times as $t \rightarrow \infty$

⇒ Predictions depend on choice of time variable

⇒ Predictions also depend on comoving vs physical volume

(Measure problem)

Long-standing problem

Linde & Mezhlumian (1993)

Garcia-Bellido, Linde & Linde (1994)

Garriga & Vilenkin (1998)

Garriga et al. (2006)

Vanchurin & Vilenkin (2006)

Bousso (2006)

Bousso, Freivogel & Yang (2009)...

Instead of focusing on equilibrium distributions, in this talk we will study the **approach to equilibrium**

Denef, Douglas, Greene & Zukowski (2018):

Suppose that the multiverse has existed for a **time much shorter** than the exponentially-long mixing time ($t \ll t_{\text{relax}}$).

Instead of asking:

What hospitable vacua occur most frequently according to late-time equilibrium distribution?

...the question becomes:

What hospitable vacua have the right properties to be easily accessed early on?

With Onkar Parrikar, to appear

This suggests a natural selection mechanism,
which selects vacua at criticality.

Near-criticality of
our universe



Non-equilibrium phase
transitions in landscape
dynamics

Consider a finite region of the landscape containing $N \gg 1$ vacua.
 (Assume all dS vacua, and treat as closed system)

$f_i(t) \equiv$ fraction of comoving volume occupied by i^{th} vacuum

Volume is conserved: $\sum_{i=1}^N f_i(t) = 1$

$\kappa_{ij} \equiv$ transition rate for $j \rightarrow i$

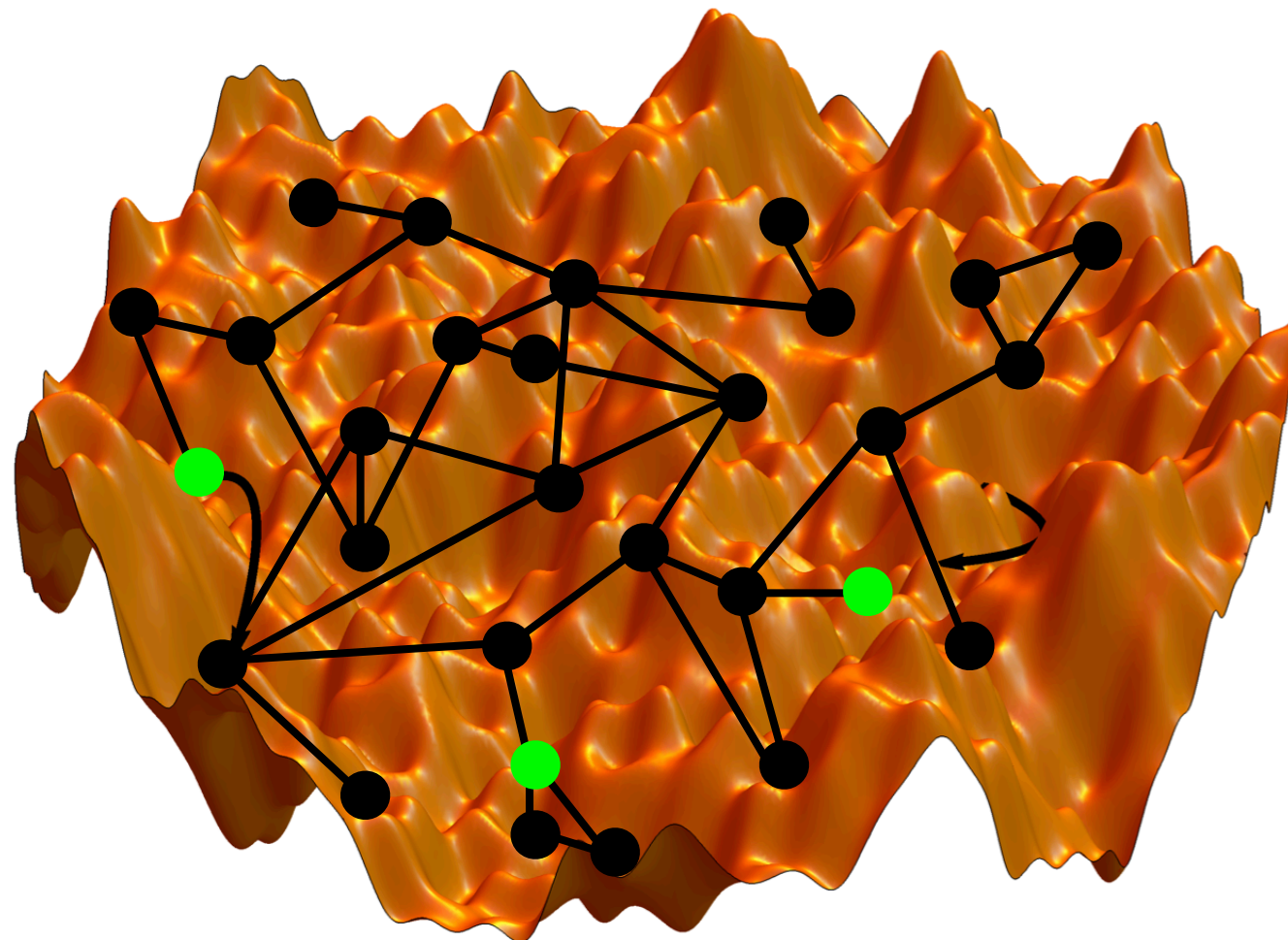
Satisfies linear master equation for Markov process:

$$\frac{df_i}{dt} = \sum_j (\kappa_{ij} f_j - \kappa_{ji} f_i)$$

transitions into i

transitions out of i

● = hospitable ● = inhospitable

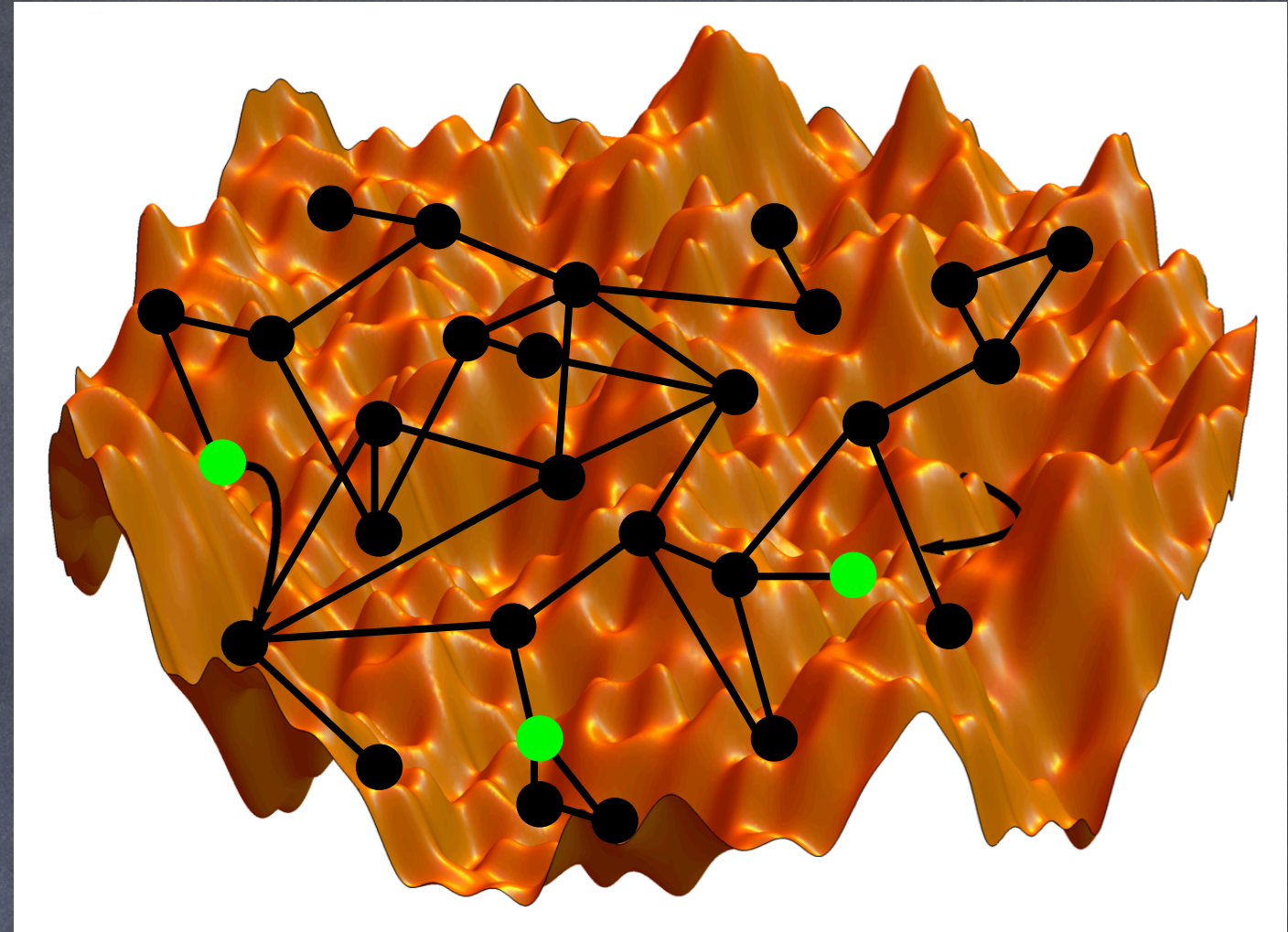


Garriga & Vilenkin (1998)

Landscape dynamics as random walk

$$\frac{df_i}{dt} = \sum_j (\kappa_{ij} f_j - \kappa_{ji} f_i)$$

$\kappa_{ij} \equiv$ transition rate for $j \rightarrow i$



Alternative interpretation:

$f_i(t) \equiv$ probability that random walker is in i^{th} vacuum

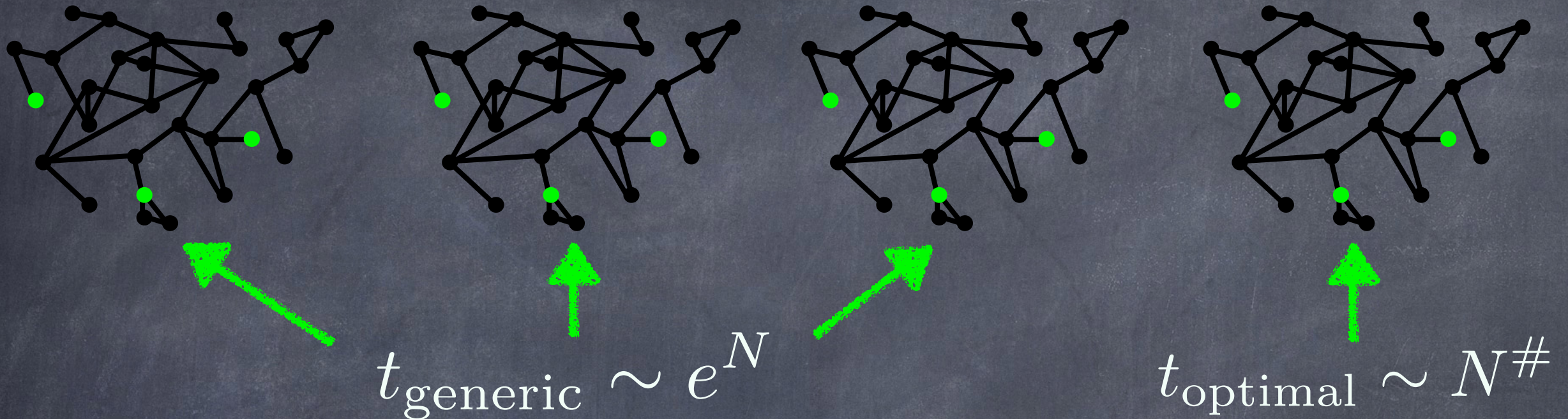
Random walks on
complex networks

- Biological networks
- Epidemiology
- Urban traffic

- World wide web
- Power grids

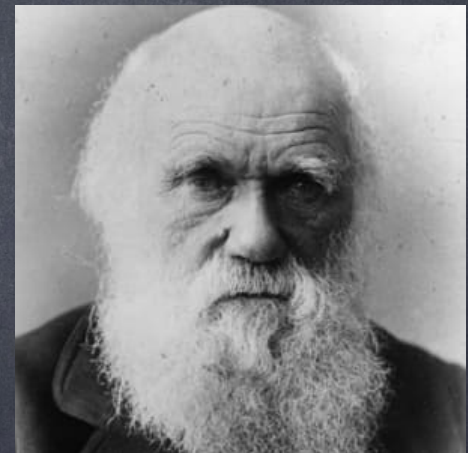
...

In the vastness of the landscape, imagine many replicas of the fiducial region, each with slight differences in transition rates, network topology etc.



Textbook example of natural selection:

- Ensemble = gene pool; Each region = set of alleles
- "Genetic" make-up is heritable (cosmological expansion)
- Hospitable alleles compete for a finite resource (comoving volume)



Target alleles (i.e., hospitable vacua) best adapted to (i.e., easily accessed by) their environment (i.e., other vacua in the region) get naturally selected.

Naturally-selected hospitable vacua, far from being typical/mediocre, are **exceptional and fine-tuned**, much like complex organisms in the natural world are fine-tuned.

But they are **fine-tuned for a purpose**:

Hospitable vacua residing in optimal regions are exponentially more efficient at being accessed early on

In Nature, striking relation between **complexity** and **criticality**.
(Criticality hypothesis)

**Natural selection/
search optimization**



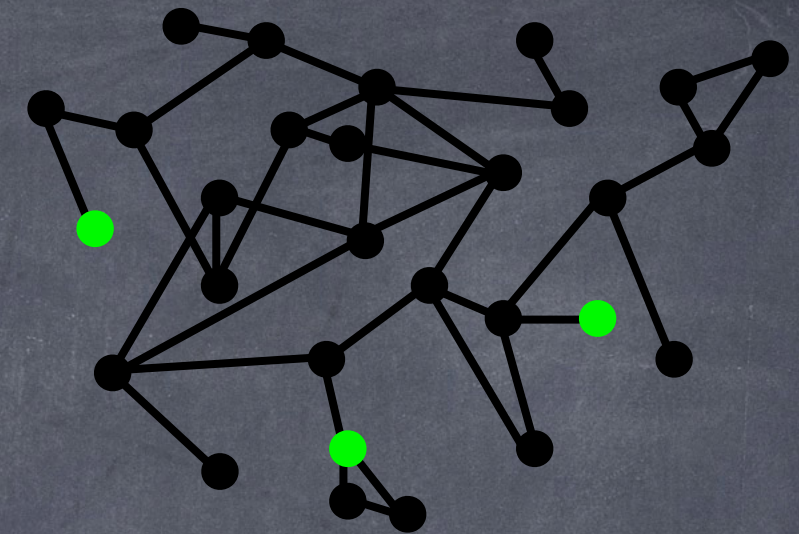
Dynamical criticality

Importantly, optimality criteria (and phenomenological predictions) will be **time-reparametrization invariant** and **independent of comoving vs physical volume**.

Transition rates on the landscape

- Coleman-De Luccia:

$$\kappa_{ij} = \frac{A_{ij}}{w_j}$$



adjacency matrix:

$$A_{ij} = A_{ji} = \left(M^4 e^{-S_{\text{bounce}}} \right)_{ij} \text{ Lee \& Weinberg (1987)}$$

weights:

$$w_j = H_j^3 \mathcal{N}_j^{-1} e^{\frac{2\pi}{G H_j^2}}$$

de Sitter entropy
(Low-energy vacua exponentially weighted)

lapse function:

$$d\tau_j = \mathcal{N}_j dt$$

proper time global time

(In this talk, remain agnostic about choice of global time)

➔ Random walk on weighted, undirected network Zhang et al. (2013)

- Detailed balance:

$$\frac{\kappa_{ji}}{\kappa_{ij}} = \frac{w_j}{w_i}$$

Lee & Weinberg (1987)

(Regional) equilibrium distribution

Master equation: $\frac{df_i}{dt} = \sum_j M_{ij} f_j$

$$M_{ij} \equiv \kappa_{ij} - \delta_{ij} \sum_r \kappa_{rj}$$

Transition matrix

Perron-Frobenius theorem: M_{ij} has one vanishing eigenvalue

$$\lambda_1 = 0$$

All others are strictly negative:

$$0 > \lambda_2 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_N$$

Zero-mode sets the stationary/equilibrium distribution:

$$M \vec{f}^\infty = 0 \implies f_i^\infty = \frac{w_i}{\sum_j w_j}$$

Garriga & Vilenkin (1998)

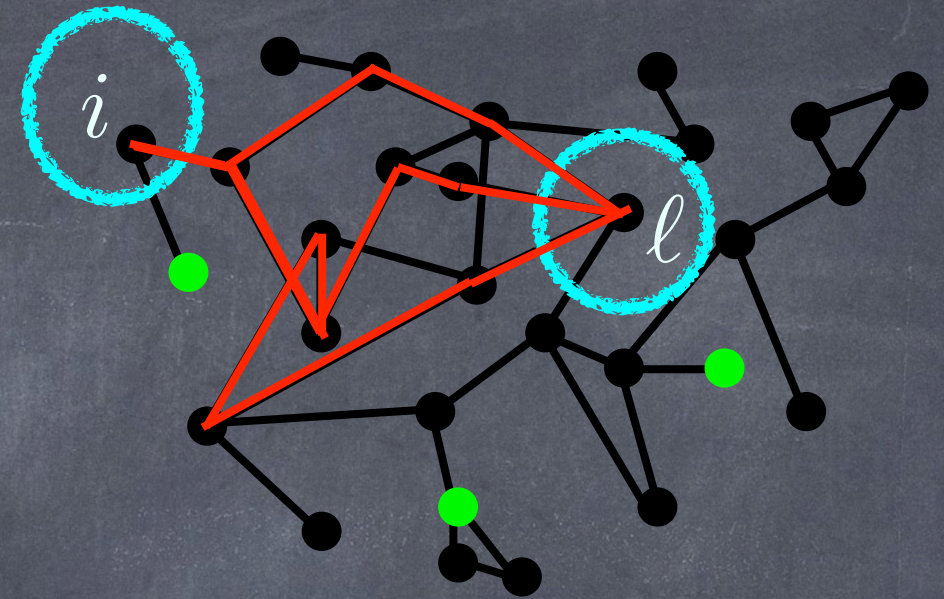
- Depends only on the weights
- Low-energy vacua exponentially favored

First-Passage Processes

How quickly is equilibrium reached?

A popular measure of search efficiency is the mean first-passage time:

$\langle t_{i \rightarrow \ell} \rangle \equiv$ Avg time for walker starting from node i to reach node ℓ



Global mean first-passage time (Kemeny's constant):

$$t_{\text{MFPT}} \equiv \sum_k \langle t_{i \rightarrow k} \rangle f_k^\infty$$

Famously, independent of starting node!



Neatly expressed as spectral sum:

$$t_{\text{MFPT}} = \sum_{\ell=2}^N \frac{1}{|\lambda_\ell|}$$

Non-zero eigenvalues of M_{ij}

Must diagonalize large $N \times N$ matrix — a daunting numerical task!

"Downward" approx'n

Schwartz-Perlov & Vilenkin (2006); Olum & Schwartz-Perlov (2007)

Recall detailed balance:

$$\frac{\kappa_{ji}}{\kappa_{ij}} = \frac{w_j}{w_i} \sim e^{-\frac{2\pi}{G} \left(\frac{1}{H_j^2} - \frac{1}{H_i^2} \right)}$$

"upward" transitions
exponentially suppressed

In downward approx'n, neglect upward transitions to leading order.

By labeling vacua by increasing pot., $V_1 \leq V_2 \leq \dots \leq V_N$, transition matrix becomes upper-triangular:

$$M = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\ & -\kappa_2 & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\ & & 0 & \cdot & \cdot \\ & & & \cdot & \cdot \\ & & & & -\kappa_N \end{pmatrix}$$

Total rate out

of each vacuum: $\kappa_j \equiv \sum_r \kappa_{rj}$

($\kappa_1 = 0$ in the approx'n)

But eigenvalues of upper-triangular matrix are diagonal entries:

\Rightarrow

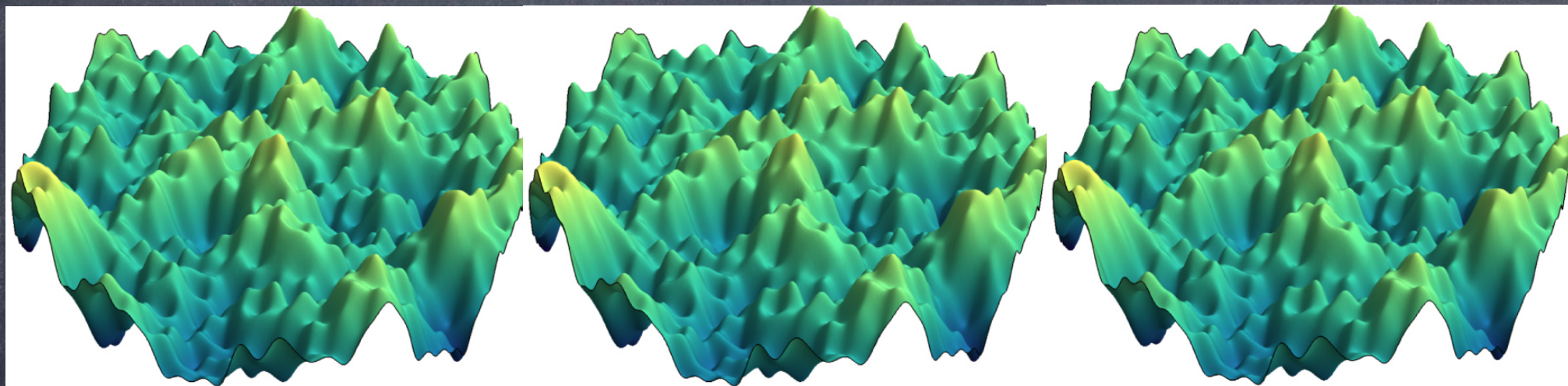
$$\lambda_\ell \simeq -\kappa_\ell$$

Global mean first-passage time

$$t_{\text{MFPT}} = \sum_{j=2}^N \frac{1}{|\lambda_j|} \simeq \sum_{j=2}^N \frac{1}{\kappa_j}$$

Total residency time
(diffusion in disordered media)

Ensemble of regions:



Typical regions include vacua whose only allowed transitions are upward jumps

\Rightarrow Exponentially long t_{MFPT}

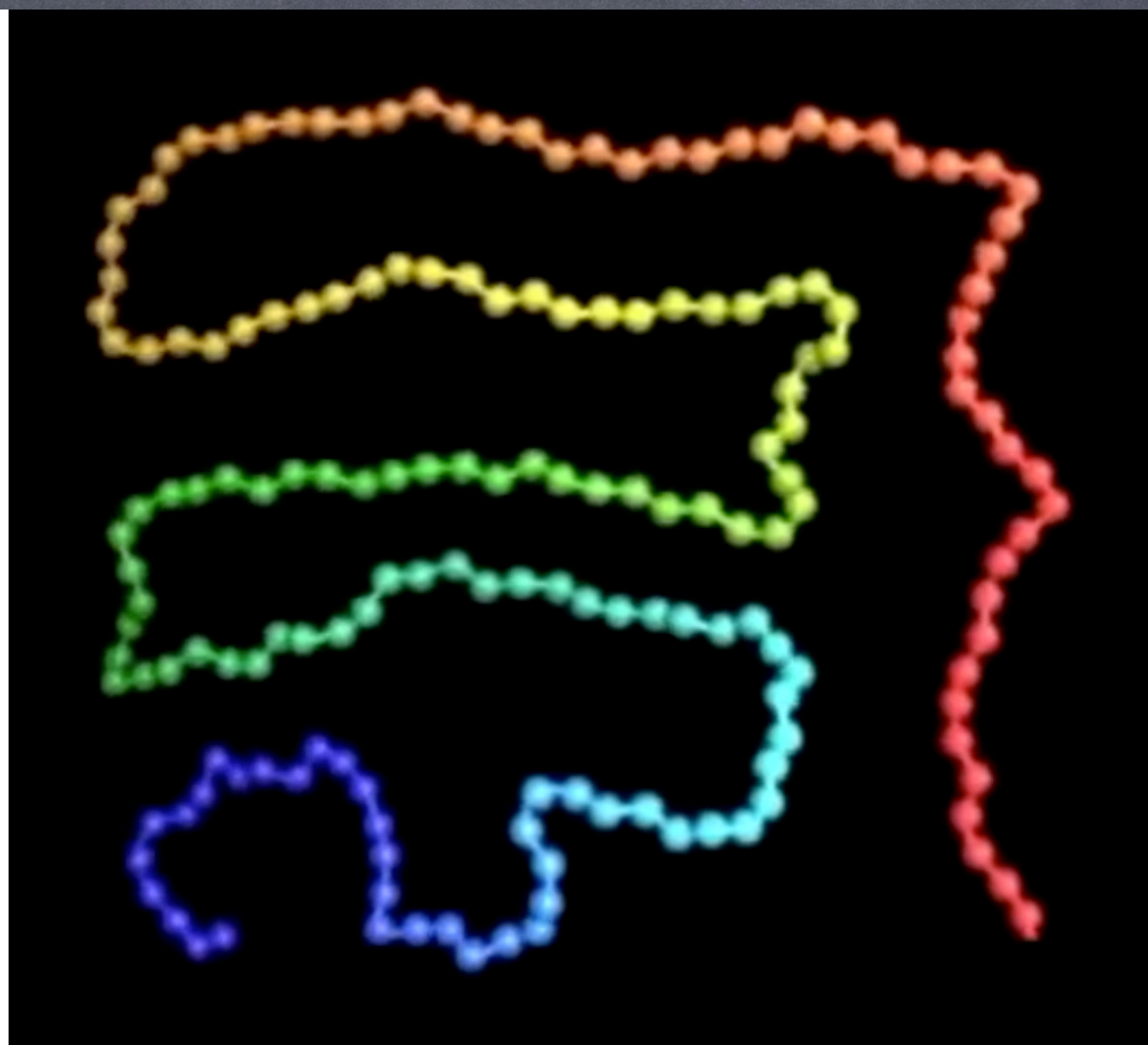
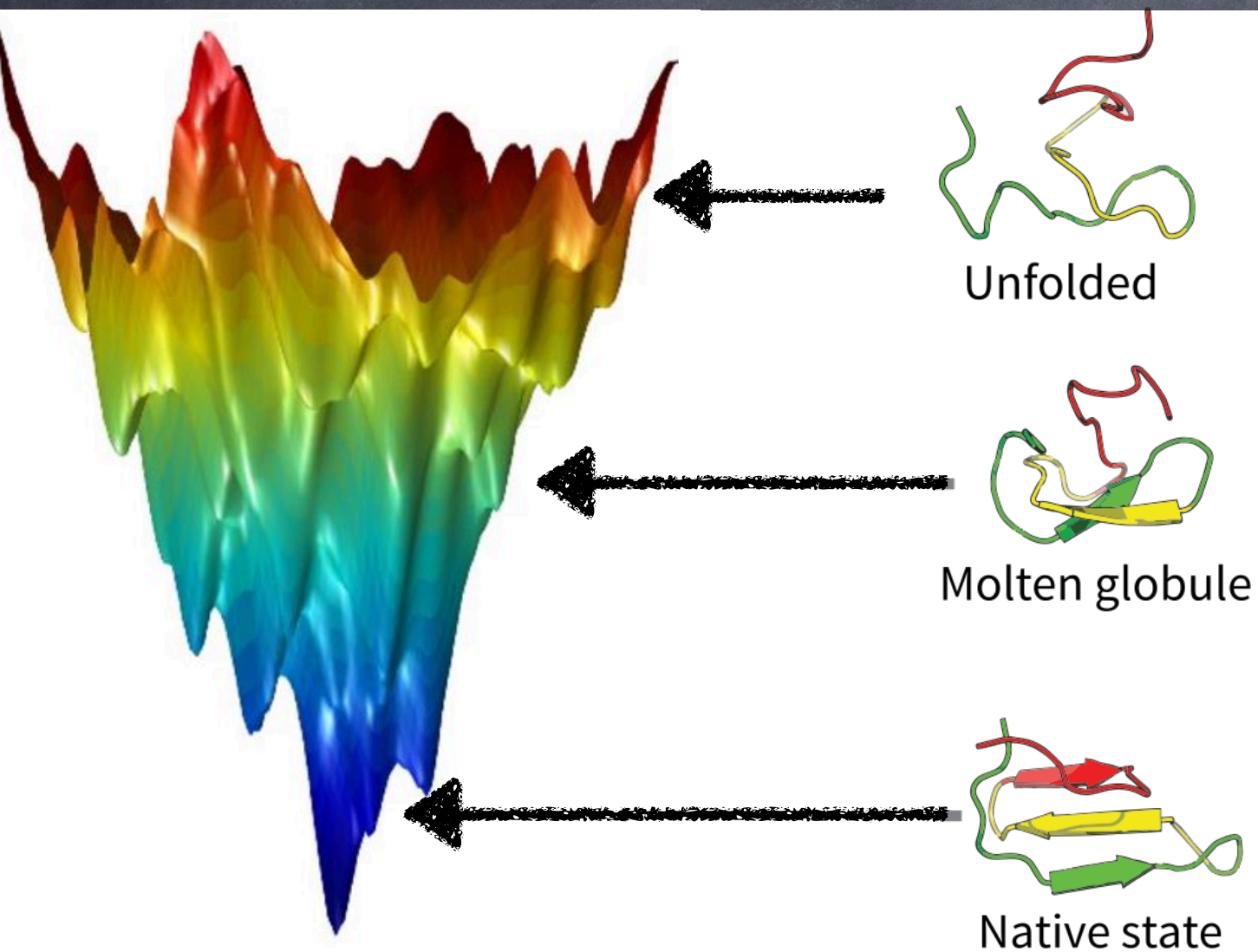
$$\Rightarrow t_{\text{MFPT}} \sim e^{\frac{2\pi}{GH_{\min}^2}} \sim e^N$$

Consistent with NP-hard complexity class
Denef & Douglas (2007)

Global mean first-passage time

$$t_{\text{MFPT}} = \sum_{j=2}^N \frac{1}{|\lambda_j|} \simeq \sum_{j=2}^N \frac{1}{\kappa_j}$$

Total residency time
(diffusion in disordered media)



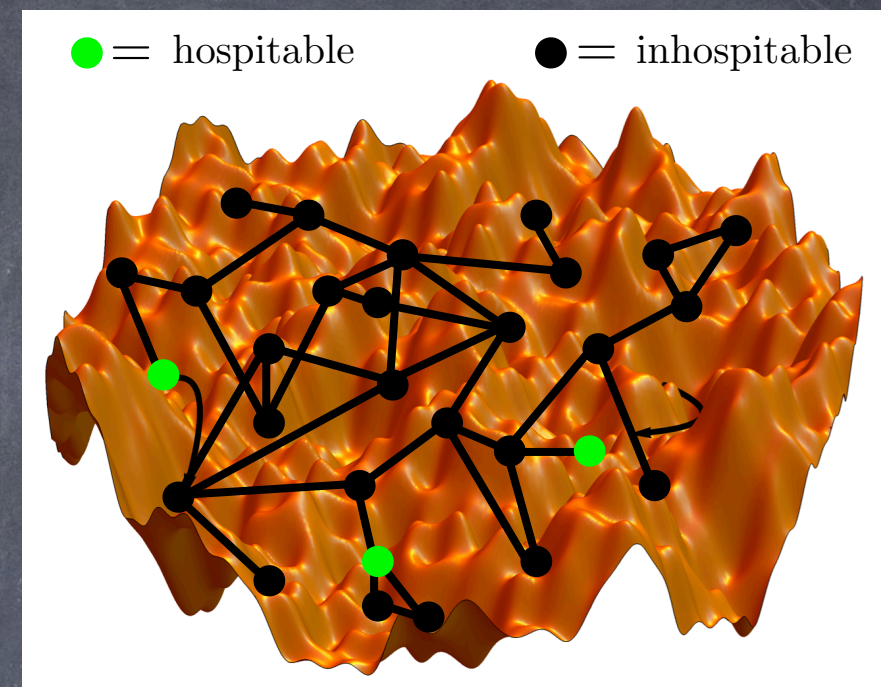
$$\Rightarrow t_{\text{MFPT}} \sim N^\#$$

(NP-hardness is 'worst-case'. Special cases can be polynomial.)

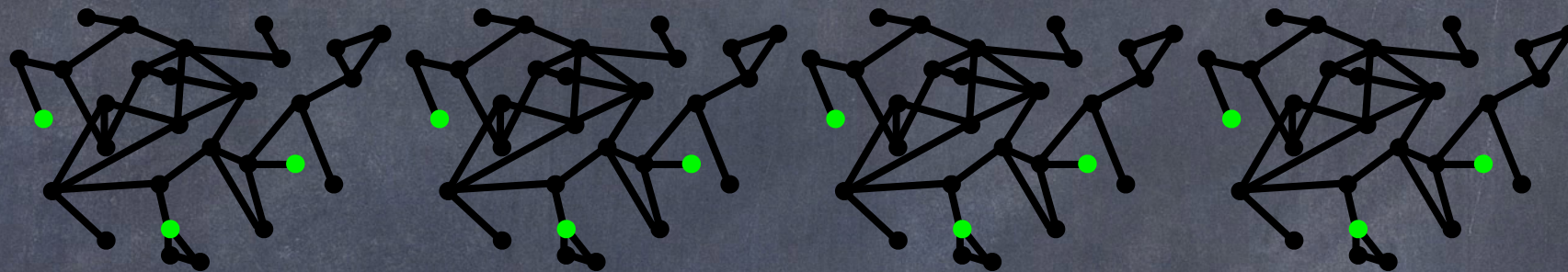
Quick recap

Landscape dynamics: random walk on weighted, undirected network

$$\frac{df_i}{dt} = \sum_j (\kappa_{ij} f_j - \kappa_{ji} f_i) \quad ; \quad \kappa_{ij} = \frac{A_{ij}}{w_j}$$



Ensemble:



- Statistically identical equilibrium distribution: $f_i^\infty = \frac{w_i}{\sum_j w_j}$
- But vastly different A_{ij} , hence different “mixing times”:

Typical, glassy region:

$$t_{\text{MFPT}} \sim e^N$$

Golden, funnel-like region:

$$t_{\text{MFPT}} \sim N^\#$$



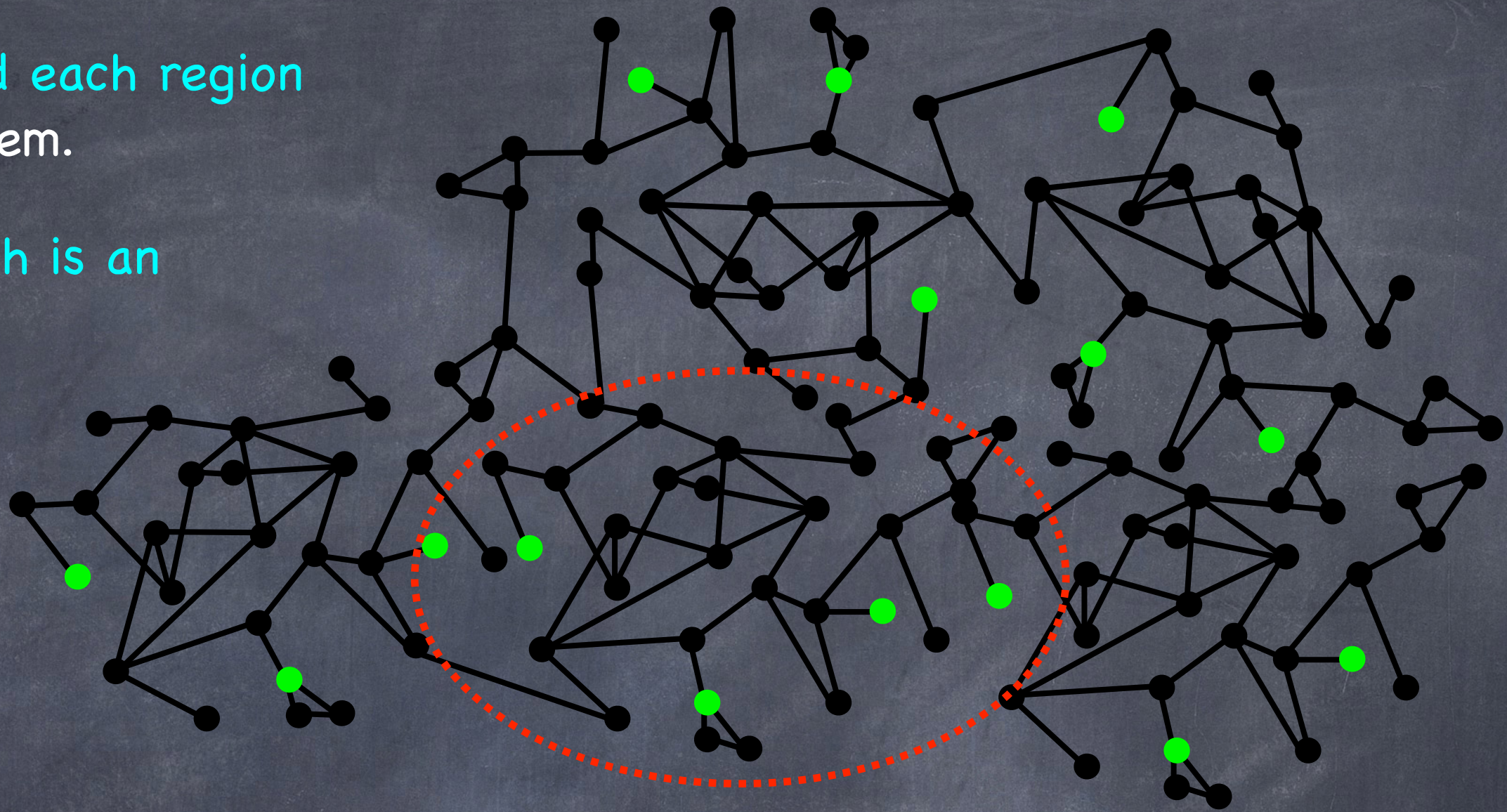
Constrains topology of optimal region



Otherwise, favors fastest rates possible

So far treated each region
as closed system.

In reality, each is an
open system.



Once random walker lands in a golden region, how can we
minimize the probability of escape?

In principle requires modeling environment...

Instead study a proxy requirement that depends solely on the intrinsic
dynamics of the region:

Demand that walks be recurrent in the $N \rightarrow \infty$ limit.

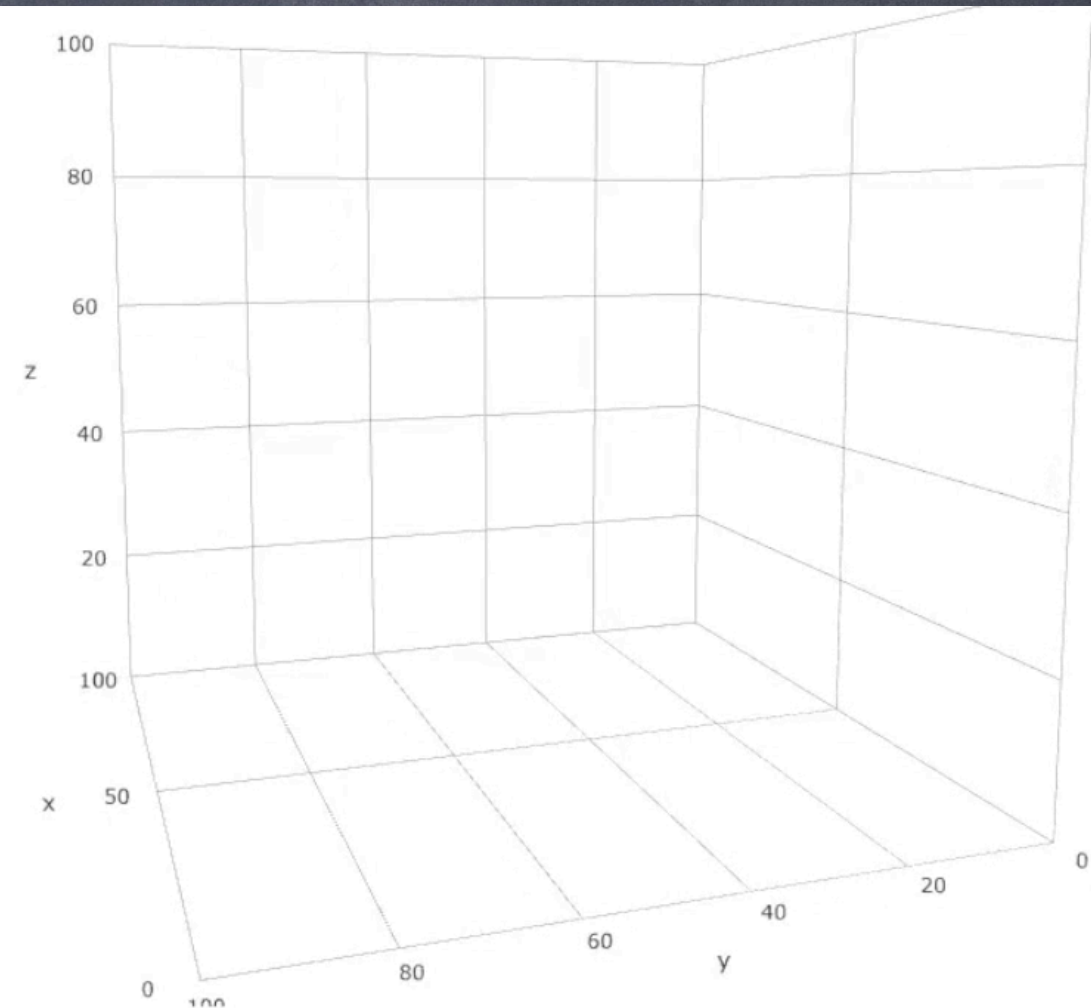
Recurrent and Transient Random Walks

Recurrence: • Random walker will eventually return to starting node
(Equivalently, random walker will eventually visit every node.)

Transience: • Random walker may never return to starting node

Pólya's theorem

Simple random walks on \mathbb{R}^d are recurrent for $d \leq 2$,
and transient for $d > 2$.





"A drunk man will find his way home, but a drunk bird may get lost forever."

- Shizuo Kakutani, UCLA Colloquium

Recurrent/Transient Random Walks on Networks

First-passage probability: $F_{ki}(t) \equiv$ probability density that walker, who started at node i , visits node k for the 1st time at time t

$$\left(\text{Note: MFPT is first moment, } \langle t_{i \rightarrow k} \rangle = \int_0^\infty dt \, t F_{ki}(t) \right)$$

In particular, $F_{ii}(t) \equiv$ first-return probability density

Escape probability: Probability that walker never returns to starting node

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} S_{ii}(t) = 1 - \int_0^\infty dt \, F_{ii}(t)$$

$\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} S_{ii}(t) = 0 \quad \Longleftrightarrow \quad \text{Recurrence}$

$\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} S_{ii}(t) = \text{finite} \quad \Longleftrightarrow \quad \text{Transience}$

Importantly, recurrence/transience criterion is time-reparam. invariant

Escape probability:

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} S_{ii}(t) \equiv \frac{1}{\mathcal{T}_i} ; \quad \mathcal{T}_i = \infty \iff \text{Recurrence} \\ \mathcal{T}_i < \infty \iff \text{Transience}$$

- Walks are always recurrent for finite N
- Non-trivial case: $N \rightarrow \infty$ (First send $N \rightarrow \infty$, then $t \rightarrow \infty$.)

Averaged over all nodes, neatly expressed as spectral sum:

$$\langle \mathcal{T} \rangle = \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{N} \sum_{\ell=2}^N \frac{1}{\Delta t |\lambda_\ell|} = \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \frac{t_{\text{MFPT}}}{\Delta t N}$$

$\Delta t \equiv$ discrete time step

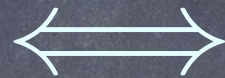
- Remarkably, simply related to global MFPT
- Recognized as dimensionless mean residency time.
- In downward approx'n, $\lambda_\ell \simeq -\kappa_\ell$, reduces to

$$\langle \mathcal{T} \rangle \simeq \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \left\langle \frac{1}{\kappa_i \Delta t} \right\rangle$$

Manifestly time-reparam. invariant

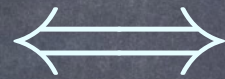
2 competing requirements

• Search efficiency



minimal t_{MFPT}

• Sweeping exploration



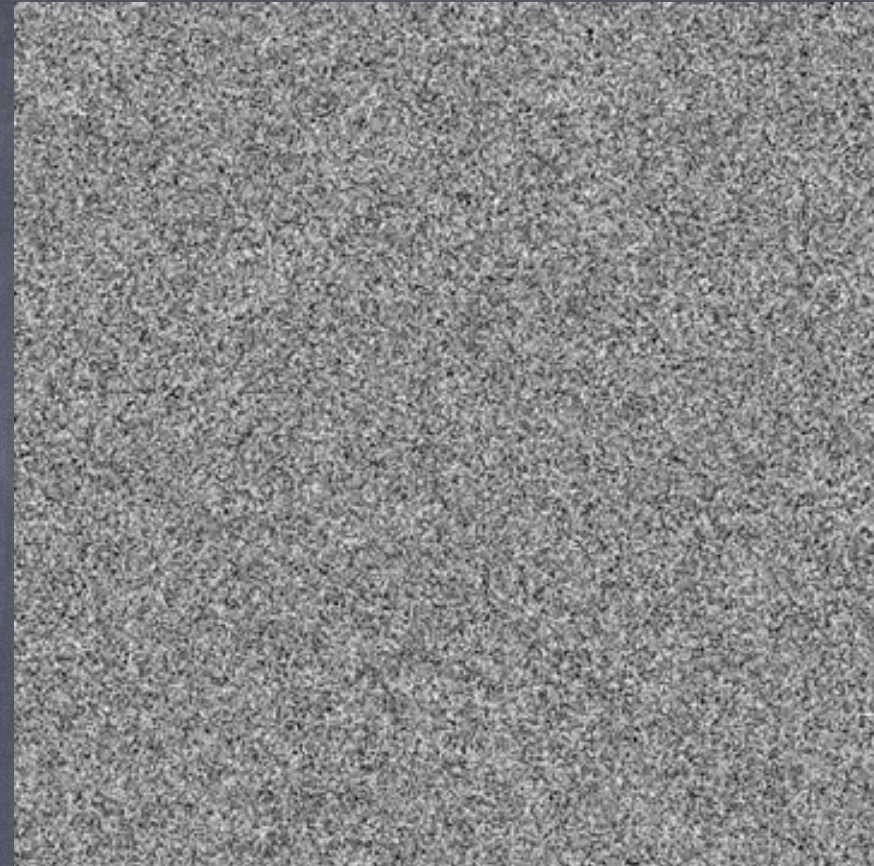
recurrence: $\frac{t_{\text{MFPT}}}{\Delta t N} \xrightarrow{N \rightarrow \infty} \infty$

Optimal regions reach a compromise by having the shortest MFPT compatible with recurrence.

Optimality select regions at critical boundary between recurrence and transience.

Different notions of criticality

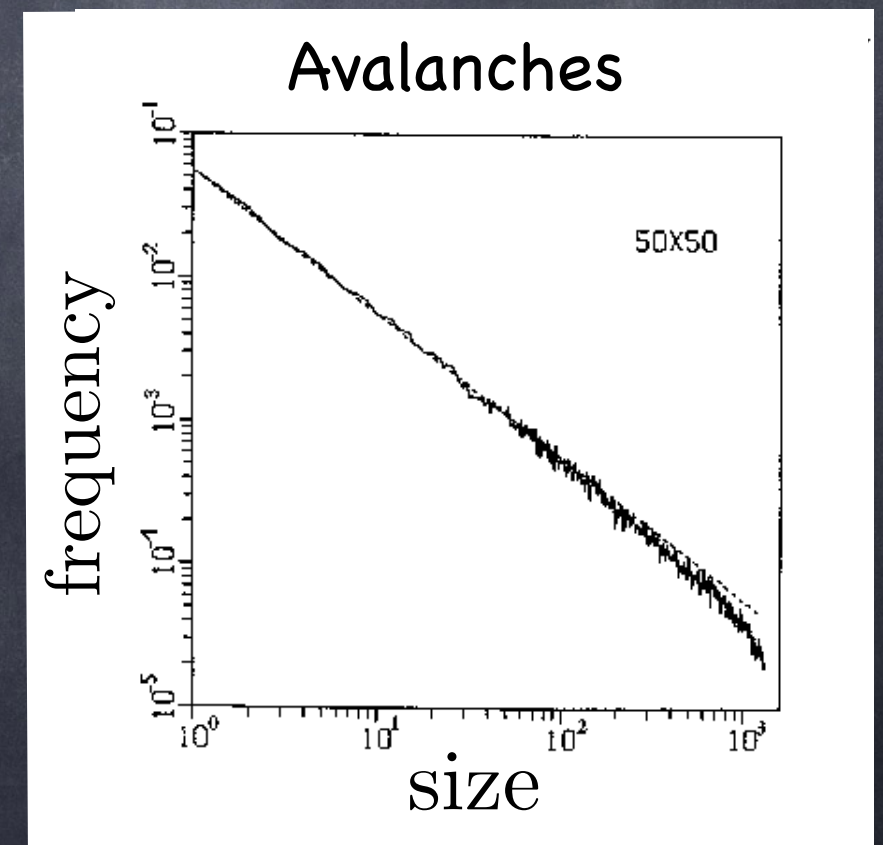
- Equilibrium phase transitions
($T \rightarrow T_c$)



- Non-equilibrium (dynamical) phase transitions



Bak, Tang & Wiesenfeld (1987)



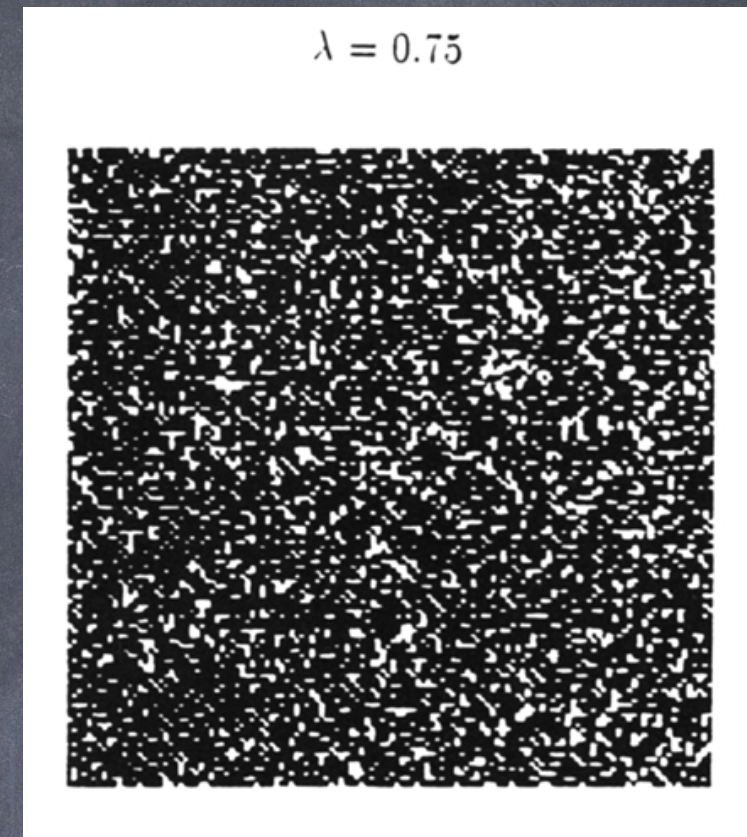
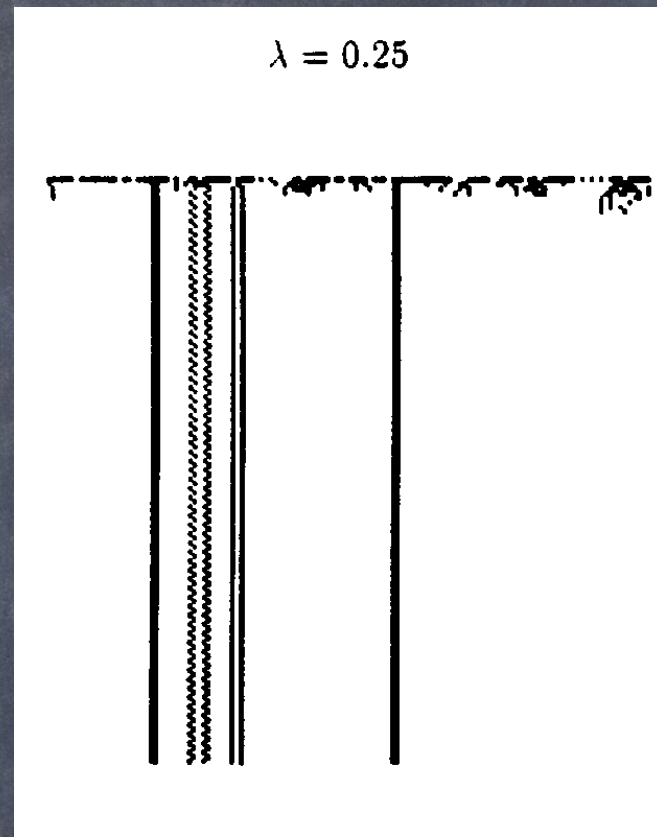
- “Edge of chaos” dynamical phase transition: critical boundary between **stable** and **unstable** dynamics

Cellular automata:

Wolfram (1984);
Langton (1990);
Crutchfield et al. (1993)

In cellular automata, associated with **optimal information processing**

- information storage/transfer
- dynamic response
- universal computation



Dynamical criticality via natural selection

- **Poised at dynamical criticality:** compromise between robustness and adaptability



Dynamical criticality

Recurrence: $\langle \mathcal{T} \rangle \simeq \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \left\langle \frac{1}{\kappa_i \Delta t} \right\rangle = \infty$

- Use proper time, $\kappa_i \Delta t = \kappa_i^{\text{proper}} \Delta \tau_i \sim H_i^{-1}$
- In the continuum limit,

$$\langle \mathcal{T} \rangle = \int dV \frac{\sqrt{V}}{M_{\text{Pl}}} \kappa^{-1}(V) \mathcal{P}(V)$$

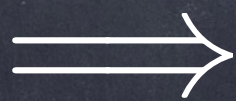
$\mathcal{P}(V) \equiv$ probability distribution
 $\kappa(V) \equiv$ average proper transition rate

- Assume $\mathcal{P}(V) \simeq \text{const.}$ as $V \rightarrow 0$ Weinberg (2003)

$$\implies \langle \mathcal{T} \rangle \simeq \int_0 dV \frac{\sqrt{V}}{M_{\text{Pl}}} \kappa^{-1}(V) \text{ diverges for } \kappa(V) \sim V^{\frac{3}{2} + \alpha}; \quad \alpha \geq 0$$

Critical case ($\alpha = 0$):

$$\kappa_{\text{crit}}(V) \sim \frac{V^{3/2}}{M_{\text{Pl}}^5}$$



$$\langle \mathcal{T} \rangle \sim \int_{V_{\text{min}}} \frac{dV}{V} \sim \ln V_{\text{min}} \sim \ln N$$

Identical to dynamical phase transition from normal to anomalous diffusion in disordered media

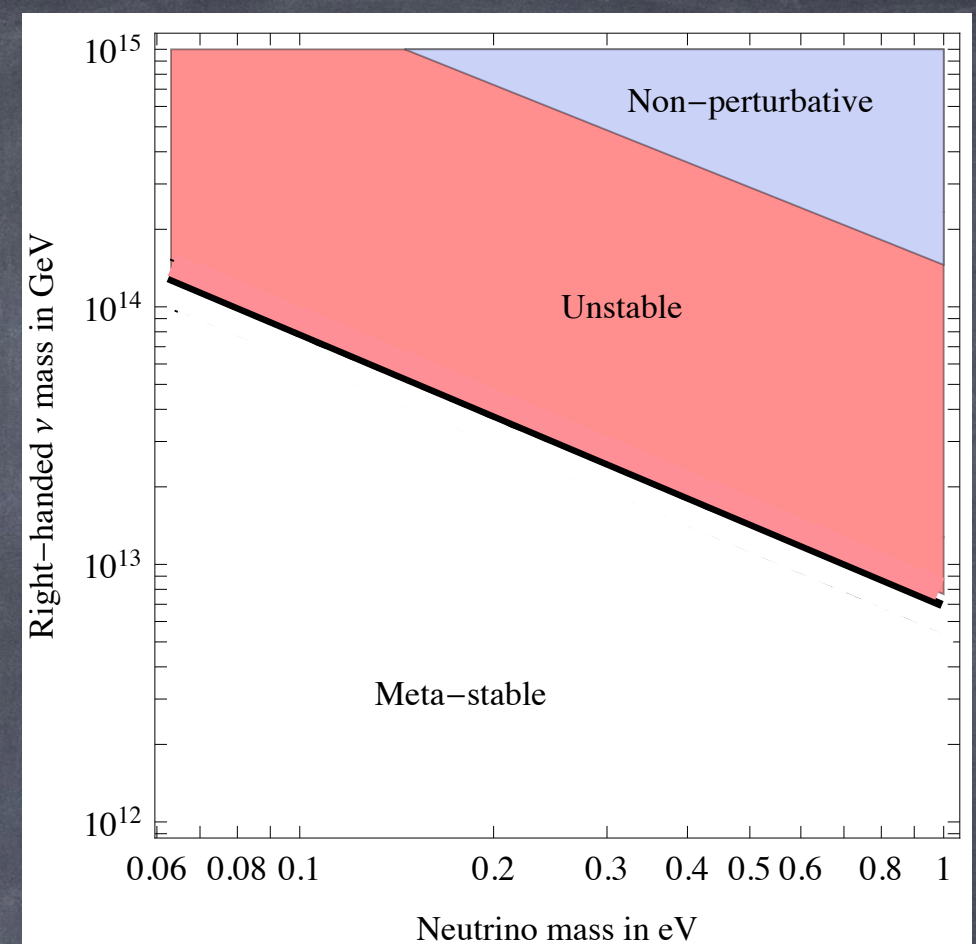
Phenomenological Implications
(Do not rely on anthropics)

• Right-handed neutrinos

Sufficiently massive RH neutrinos make EW vacuum **less stable**

Can bring SM lifetime closer to optimality with

$$M_N \sim 10^{13} - 10^{14} \text{ GeV}$$



Elias-Miró et al. (2011)

• Strong CP and QCD axion

QCD axion makes EW vacuum **more stable**

$$f_a \gtrsim 10^{10} \text{ GeV}$$

Hertzberg (2011)

Meanwhile,

$$\Omega_a h^2 \simeq 0.7 \left(\frac{\theta_i}{\pi} \right)^2 \left(\frac{f_a}{10^{12} \text{ GeV}} \right)^{7/6}$$

• Cosmological constant (NOT time-reparam invariant)

Local equilibrium distribution: $f_i^\infty \sim e^{\frac{2\pi}{GH_i^2}}$

Exponentially favors vacuum with smallest potential energy V_{\min} .
With N vacua, this is statistically

$$V_{\min} \sim \frac{M_{\text{Pl}}^4}{N}$$

Can explain observed C.C. if our region contains $N \gtrsim 10^{120}$

Note: Could make same argument in the “global” approach to the landscape
e.g. Linde & Vanchurin (2010)

⇒ favors smallest potential energy anywhere on the landscape

⇒ But expect such vacuum to be nearly supersymmetric,
with tiny $m_{3/2}$ and $V_{\min} \sim m_{3/2}^4$.

Instead our mechanism predicts:

$$\frac{V_{\min}}{m_{3/2}^4} \sim \frac{1}{N}$$

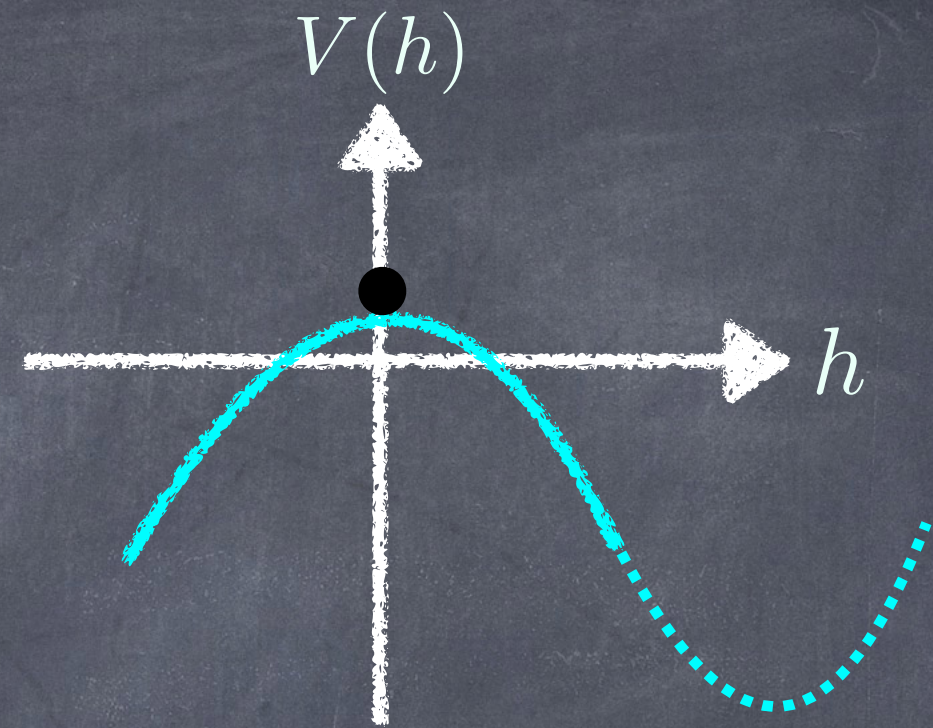
“Given the value of the CC, why is the SUSY breaking scale so large?”

Banks (2001)

AdS vacua

Tunneling into AdS vacua

dS \rightarrow AdS transition rate can be reliably calculated
Coleman & De Luccia



Within a Hubble time, AdS region starts to collapse

Big Crunch singularity?

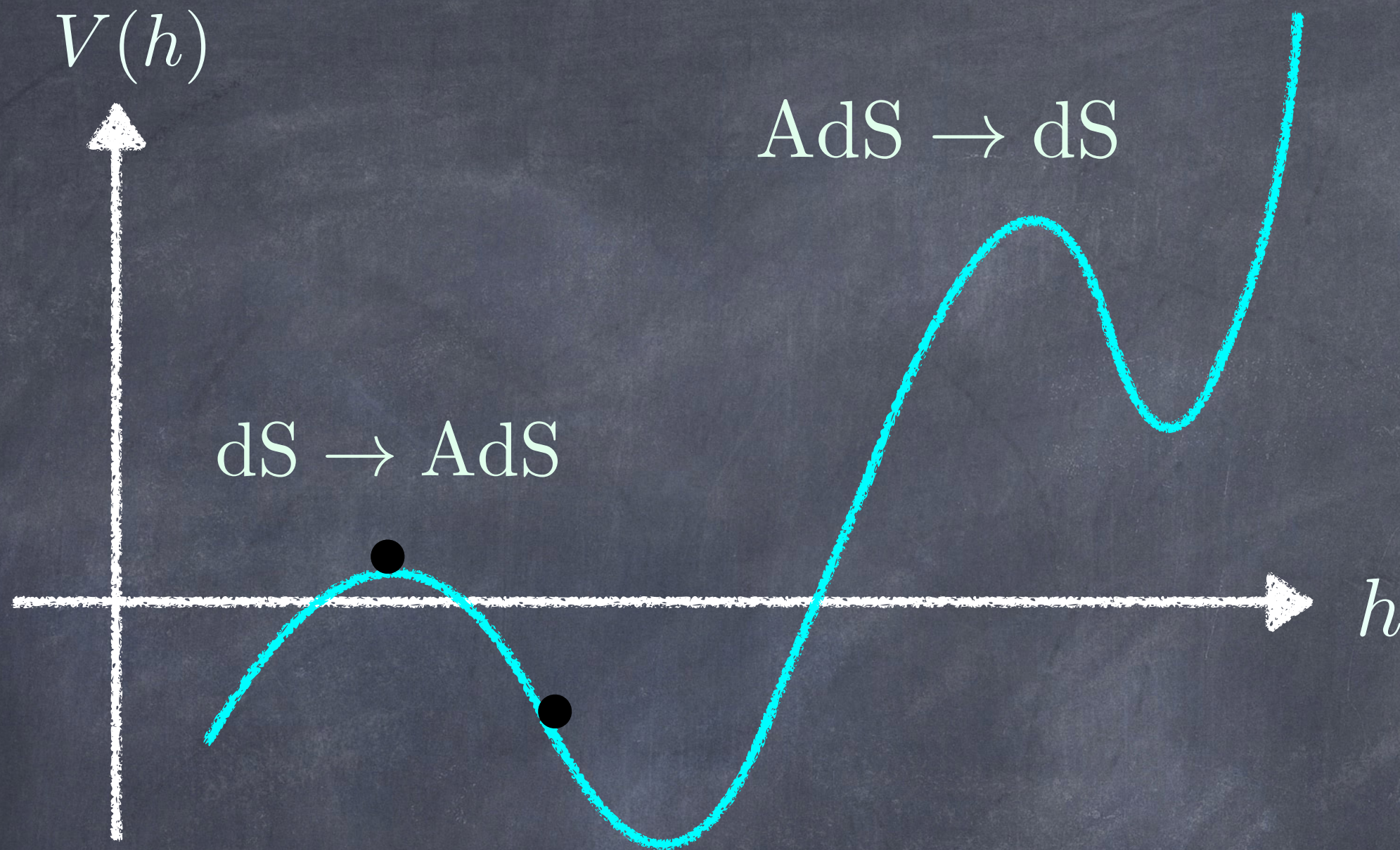
AdS vacua are terminal
 \Rightarrow probability sinks

Death?

Garriga, Schwartz-Perlov, Vilenkin & Winitzki (2005)

AdS regions bounce
contraction \rightarrow expansion
 \Rightarrow AdS \rightarrow dS transitions

Piao (2004,2009); Nomura (2011)
Garriga & Vilenkin (2012,2013)



Because of high (Planckian?) energy reached at the bounce,

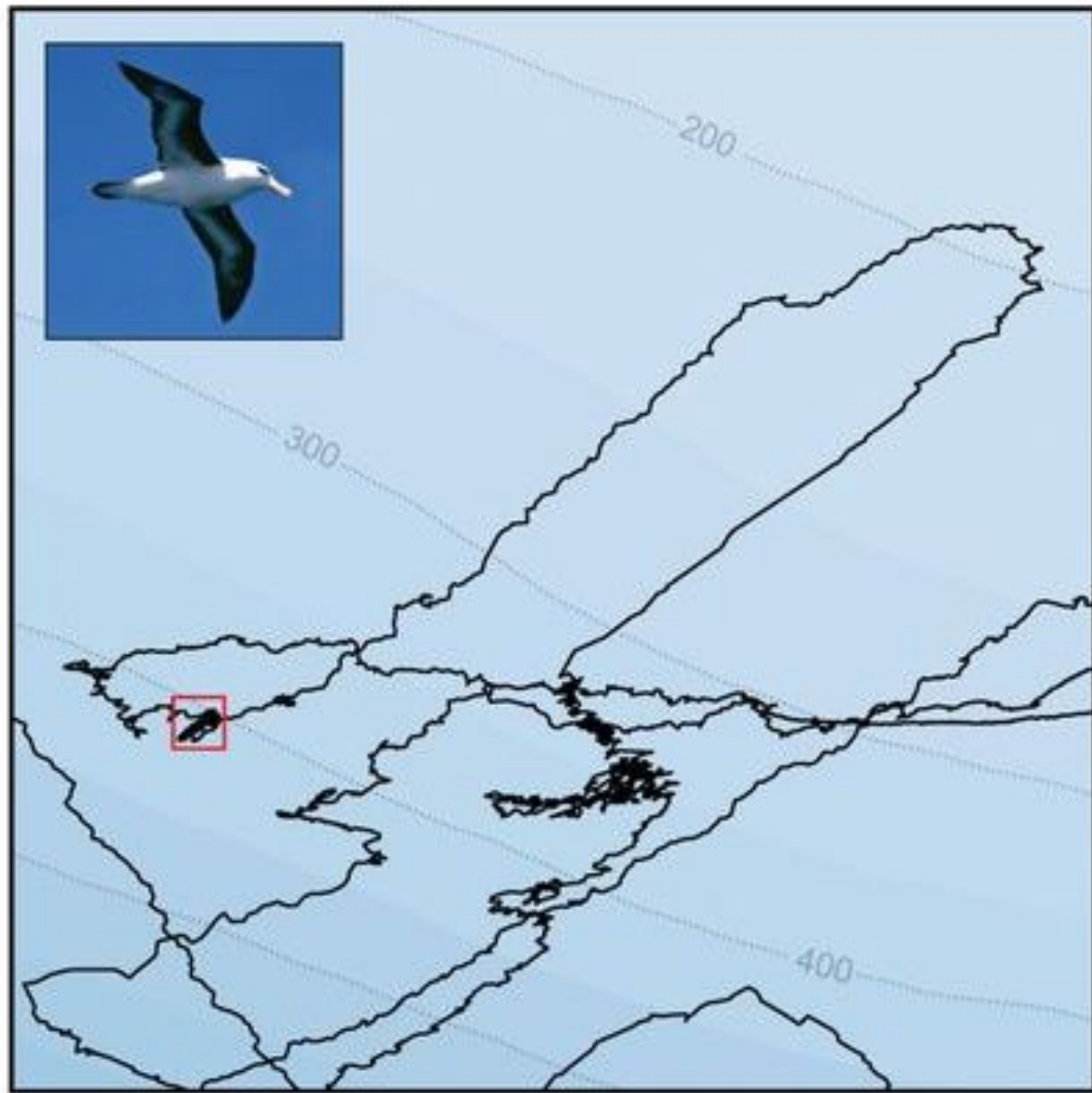
- $AdS \rightarrow dS$ is nearly instantaneous
- can transition (classically) to far away, high-energy vacua

\Rightarrow AdS vacua are short-lived mediators

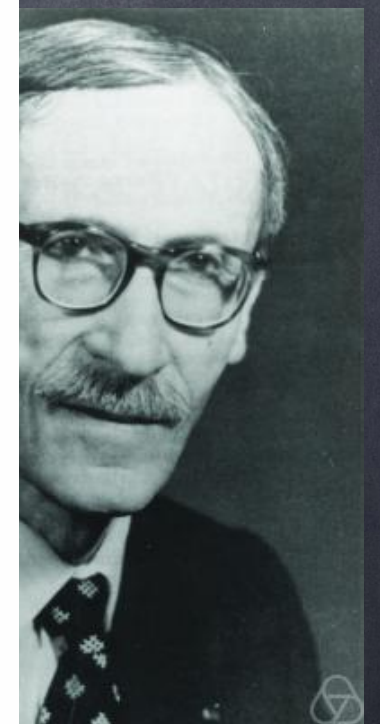
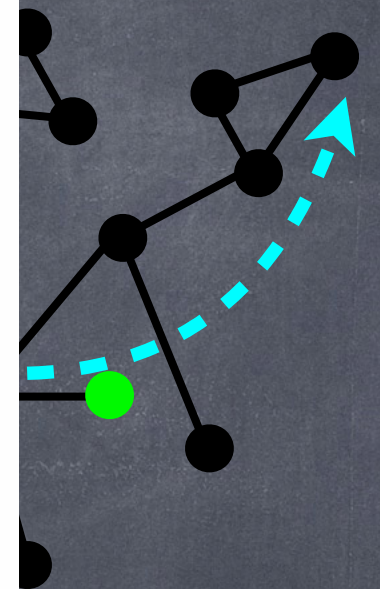
Suggest

- Eff
- Ne

=

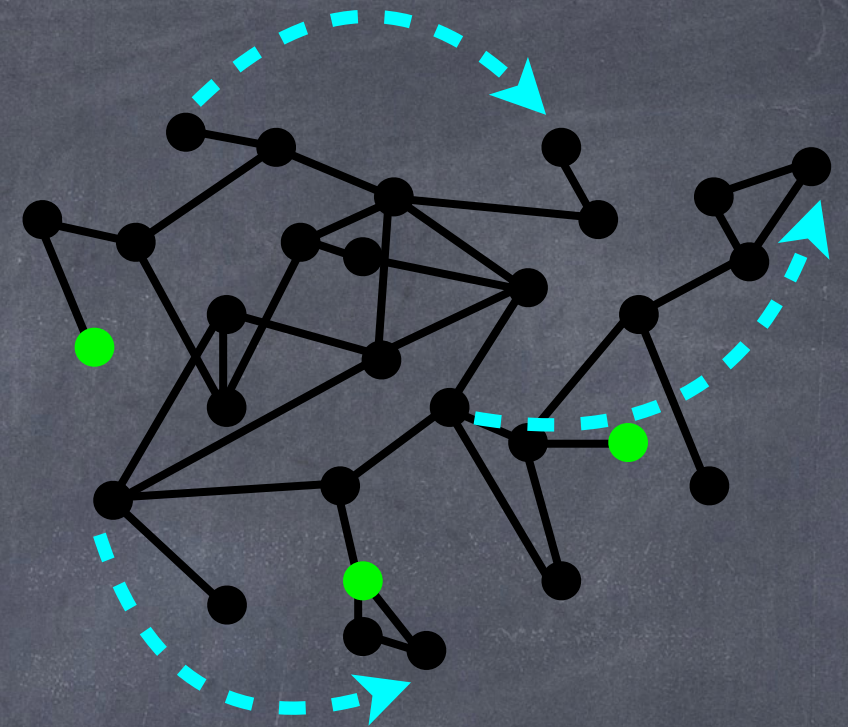


0 5 10 Km



Paul Lévy

Random walks with Lévy flights



$$\kappa_{ij} = \alpha \kappa_{ij}^{\text{CDL}} + (1 - \alpha) \kappa_{ij}^{\text{AdS}}$$

$$0 \leq \alpha \leq 1$$

Local/Brownian moves

Non-local/Lévy moves

Similar to Google's PageRank matrix

$$\alpha = 0.85$$



Brin & Page (1998)

Final thoughts

Most fine-tuning problems are **problems of criticality**

- Generic?**
- Naturalness: **small parameters protected by symmetries**
 - Landscape (standard approach): **principle of mediocrity**

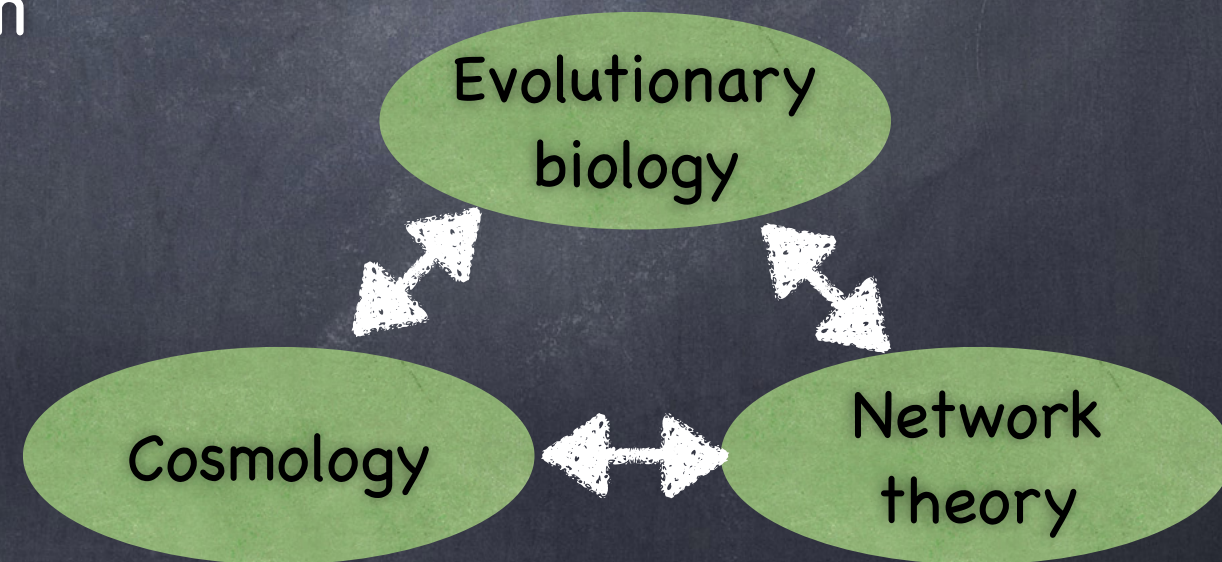
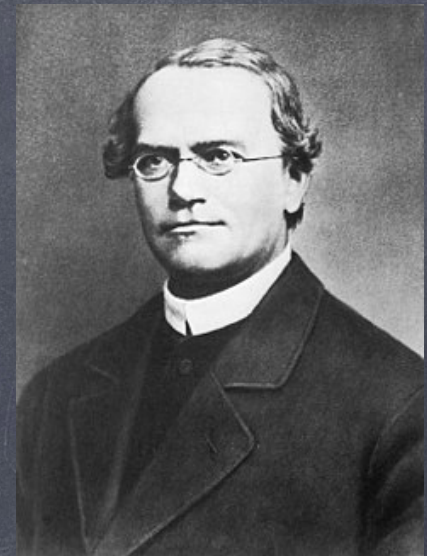
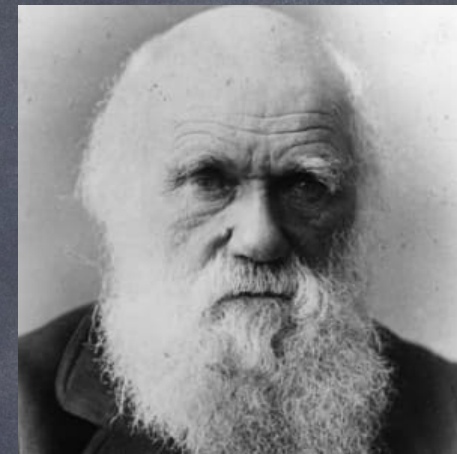
Natural selection: outcomes are fine-tuned and nearly critical

Search optimization on the landscape:
powerful natural selection mechanism

Optimal region: nearly critical vacua

⇒ • **Higgs metastability**

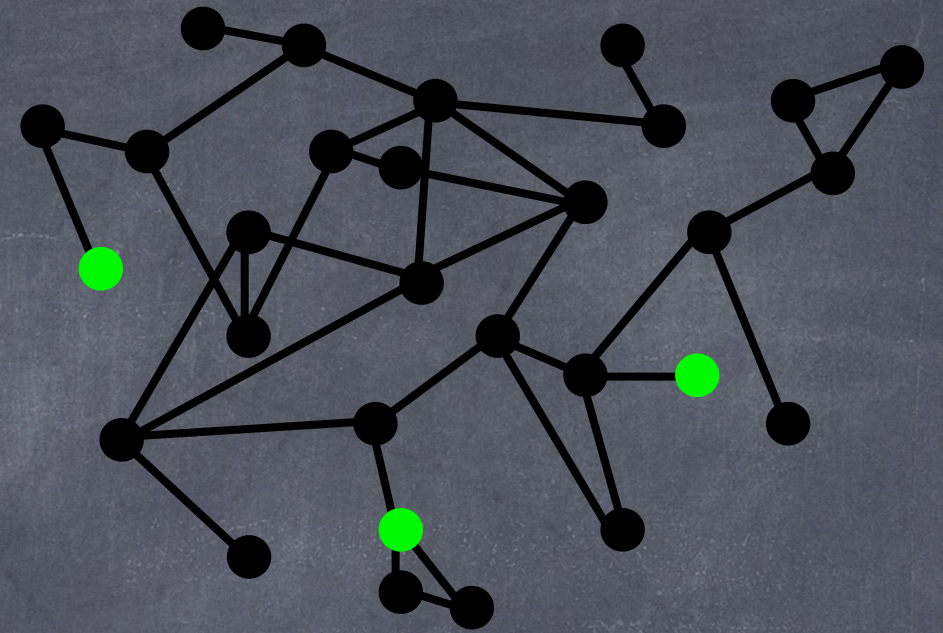
⇒ • **Absence of low-scale SUSY**



Tantalizing questions:

- Enhanced computational capabilities?

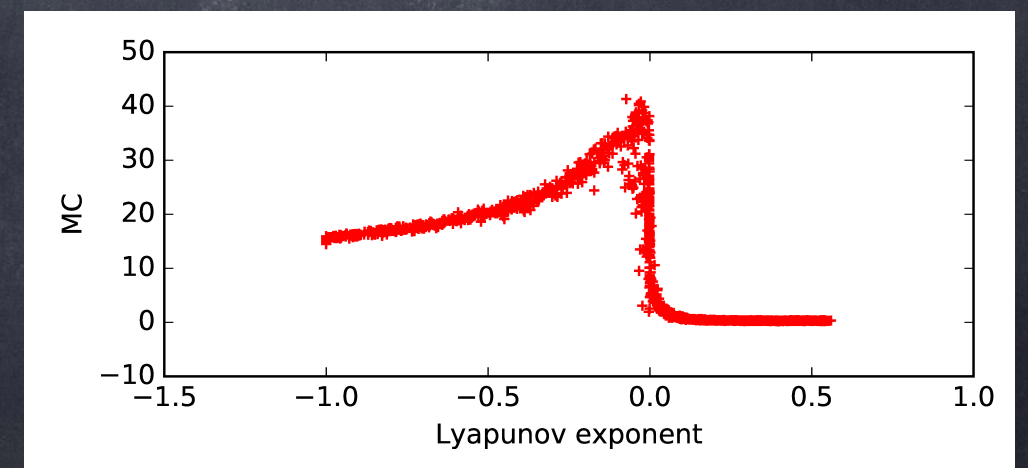
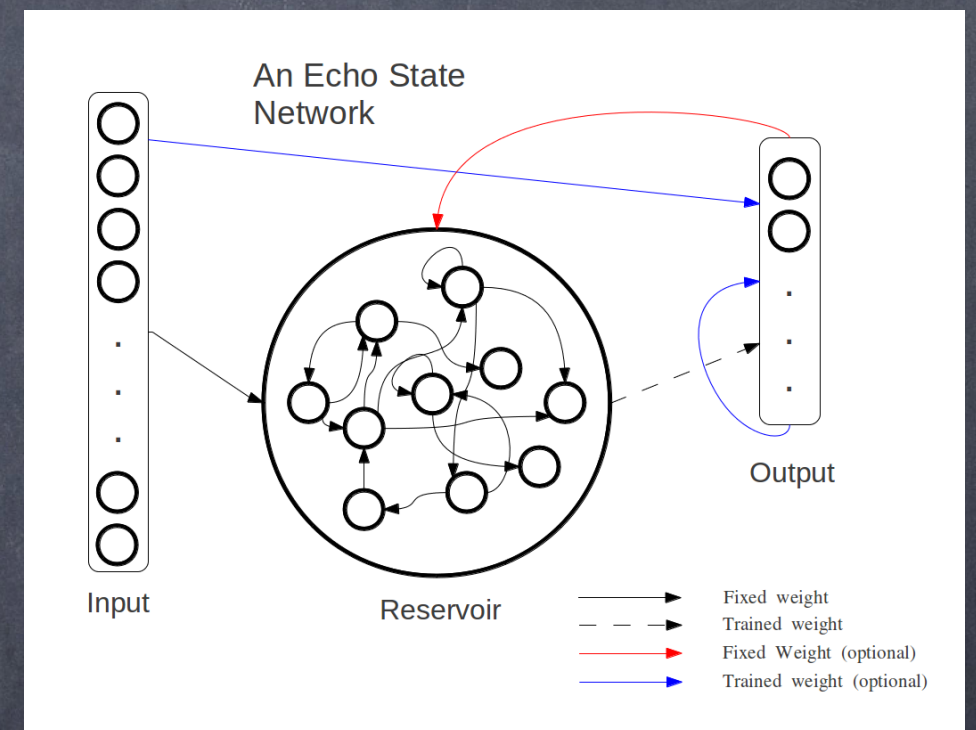
Criticality in cellular automata, random boolean networks and neural networks is associated with optimal information processing



Non-equilibrium
critical landscape
dynamics



Optimal information
processing

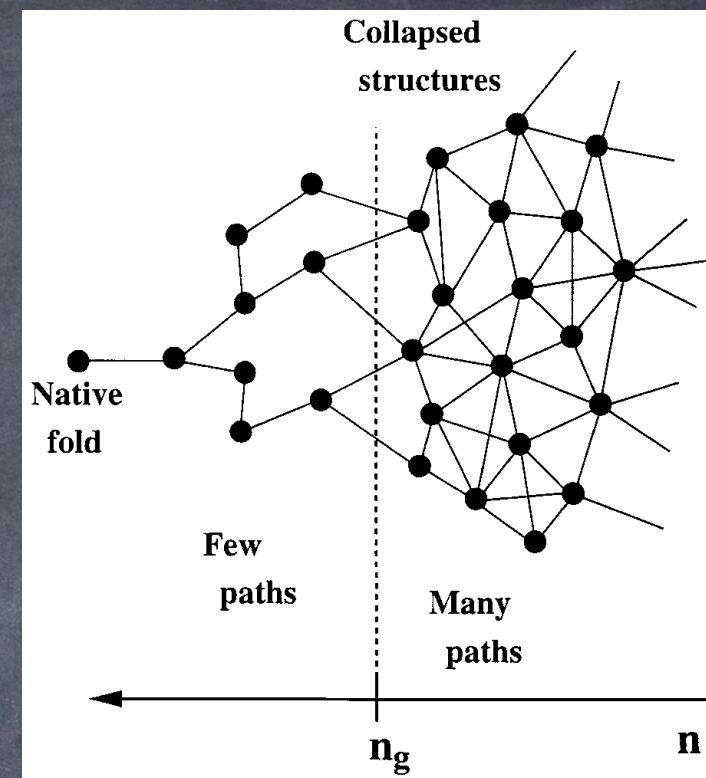


Tantalizing questions:

• Why (no more than) 3 dim'ns?

Search optimality might favor landscape regions with low effective moduli-space dimensionality, particularly near the lowest-energy vacuum.

e.g. Protein landscapes

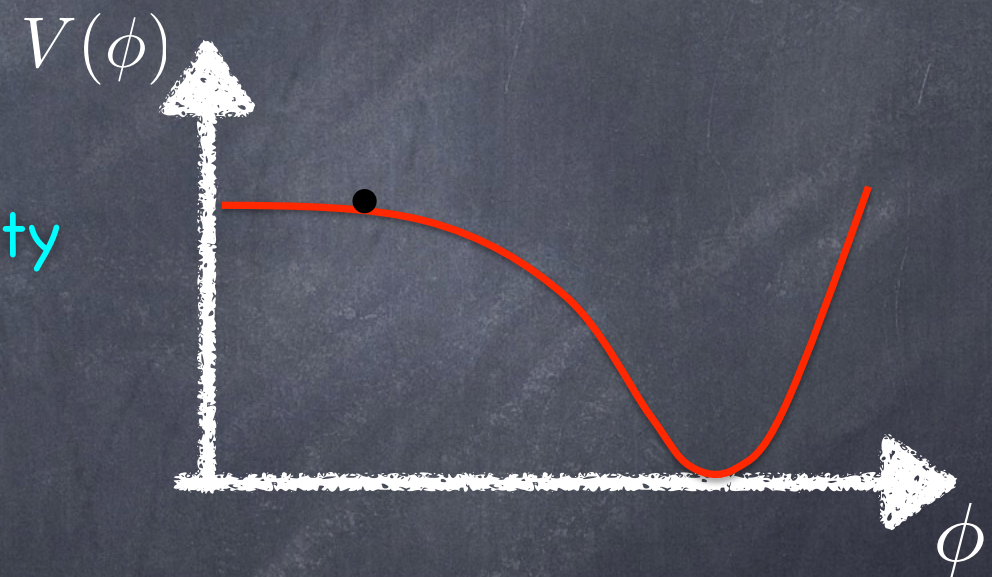


• The early universe

Slow-roll inflation also a problem of near-criticality

$$SO(4, 1) \longrightarrow ISO(3)$$

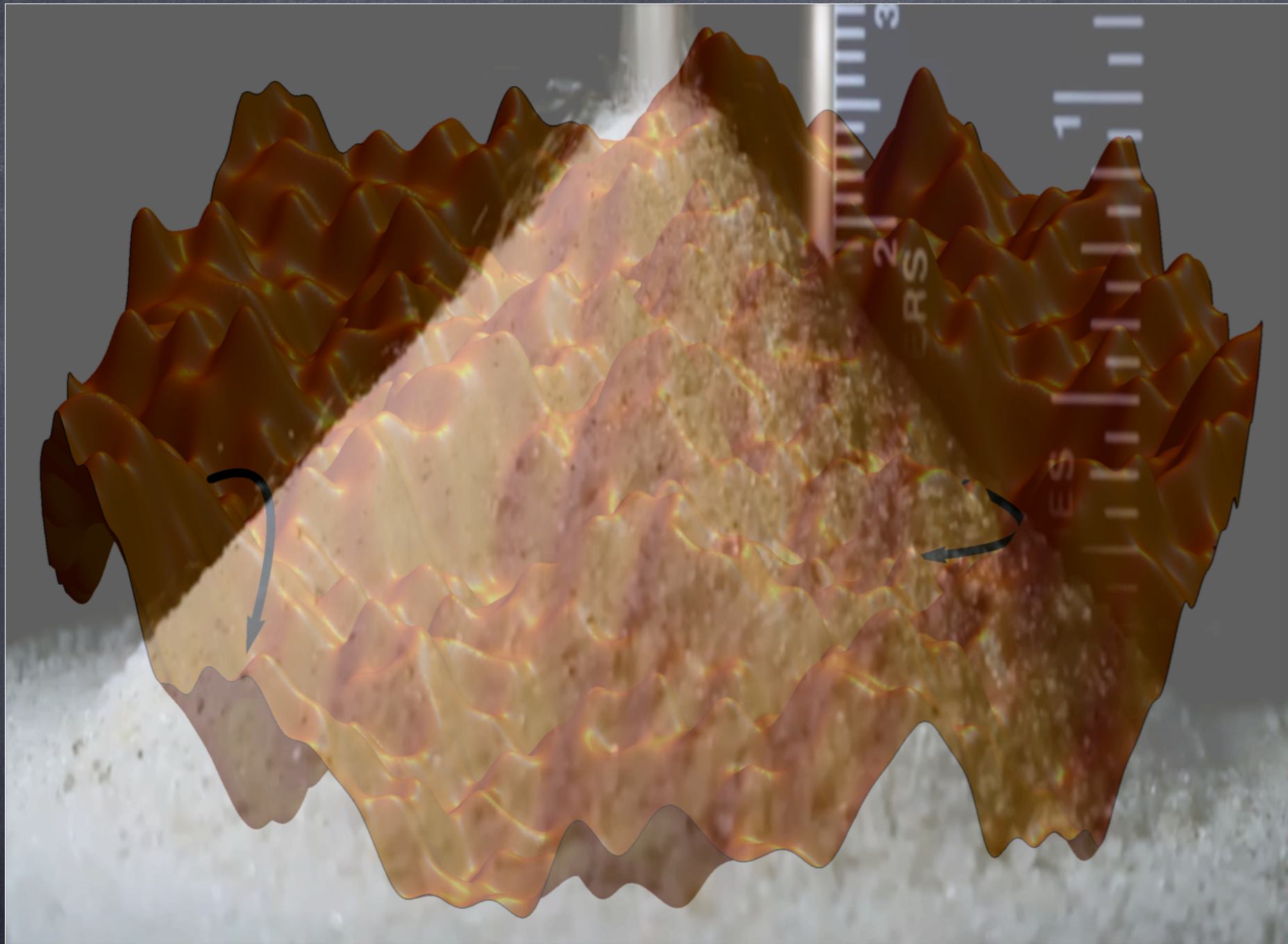
Naturally by-product in optimal/near-critical regions of the landscape?



More tantalizingly: New ways of realizing inflation?

Optimal regions are open systems \implies non-equilibrium inflationary dynamics?

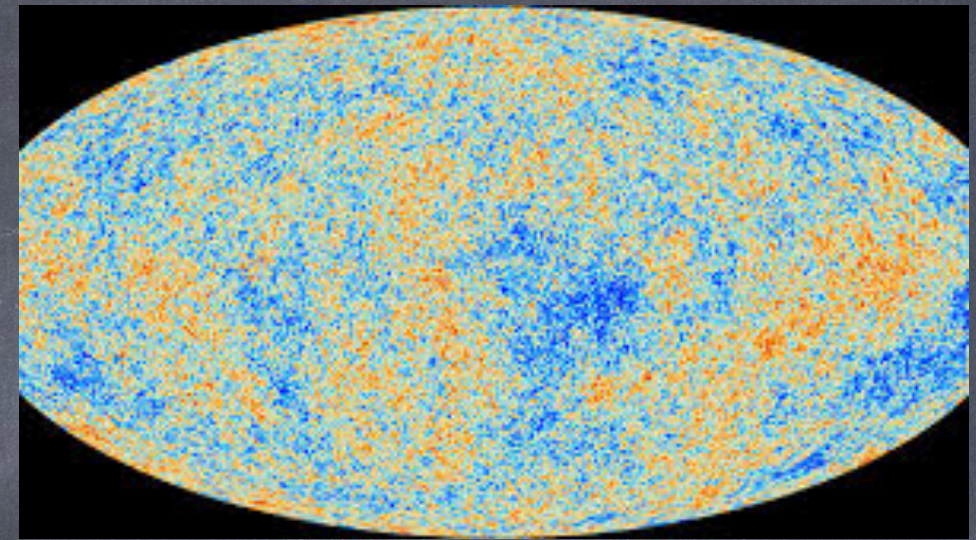
scale-invariant inflationary avalanches?



• The early universe

Scale invariant primordial spectrum suggests near-criticality in the early universe

$$P(k) \sim k^{n_s-1} \quad n_s \simeq 0.96$$

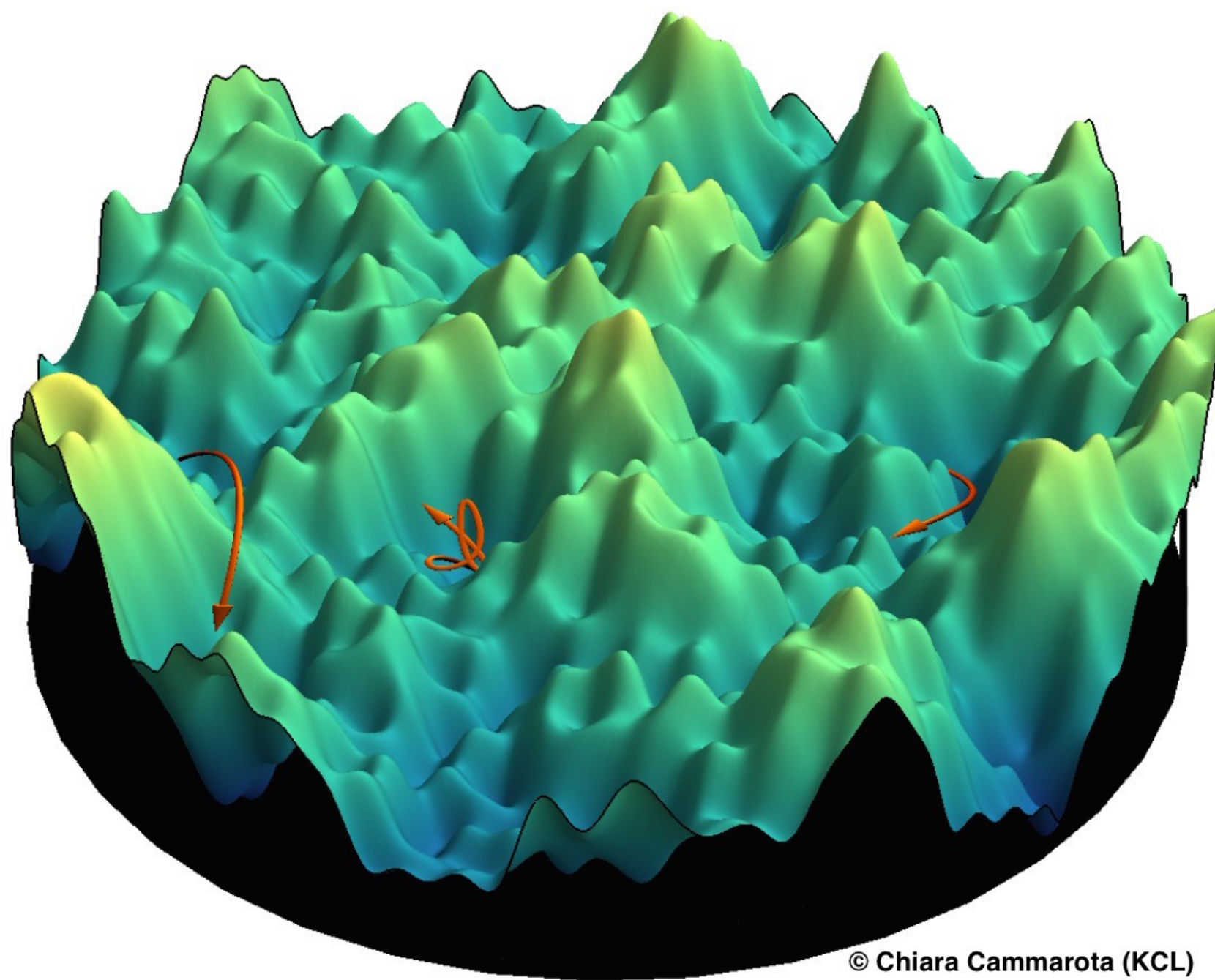


The mechanism traditionally invoked (i.e. slow-roll inflation) relies on approximate conformal invariance



$$\mathrm{SO}(4, 1) \longrightarrow \mathrm{ISO}(3)$$

Maldacena (2002);
Creminelli & Zaldarriaga (2004);
Hinterbichler, Hui & Khoury (2012,2013);
Creminelli, Norena & Simonovic (2012);
Goldberger, Hui & Nicolis (2013);
Hui, Joyce & Wong (2018)



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