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# À quoi sert-elle la physique statistique ?

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**Leticia F. Cugliandolo**

Sorbonne Université  
Laboratoire de Physique Théorique et Hautes Energies  
Institut Universitaire de France

`leticia@lpthe.jussieu.fr`  
`www.lpthe.jussieu.fr/~leticia/seminars`

**Sorbonne, 2023**

- Career

  - Studies

  - Research

  - Mentoring

  - Responsibilities

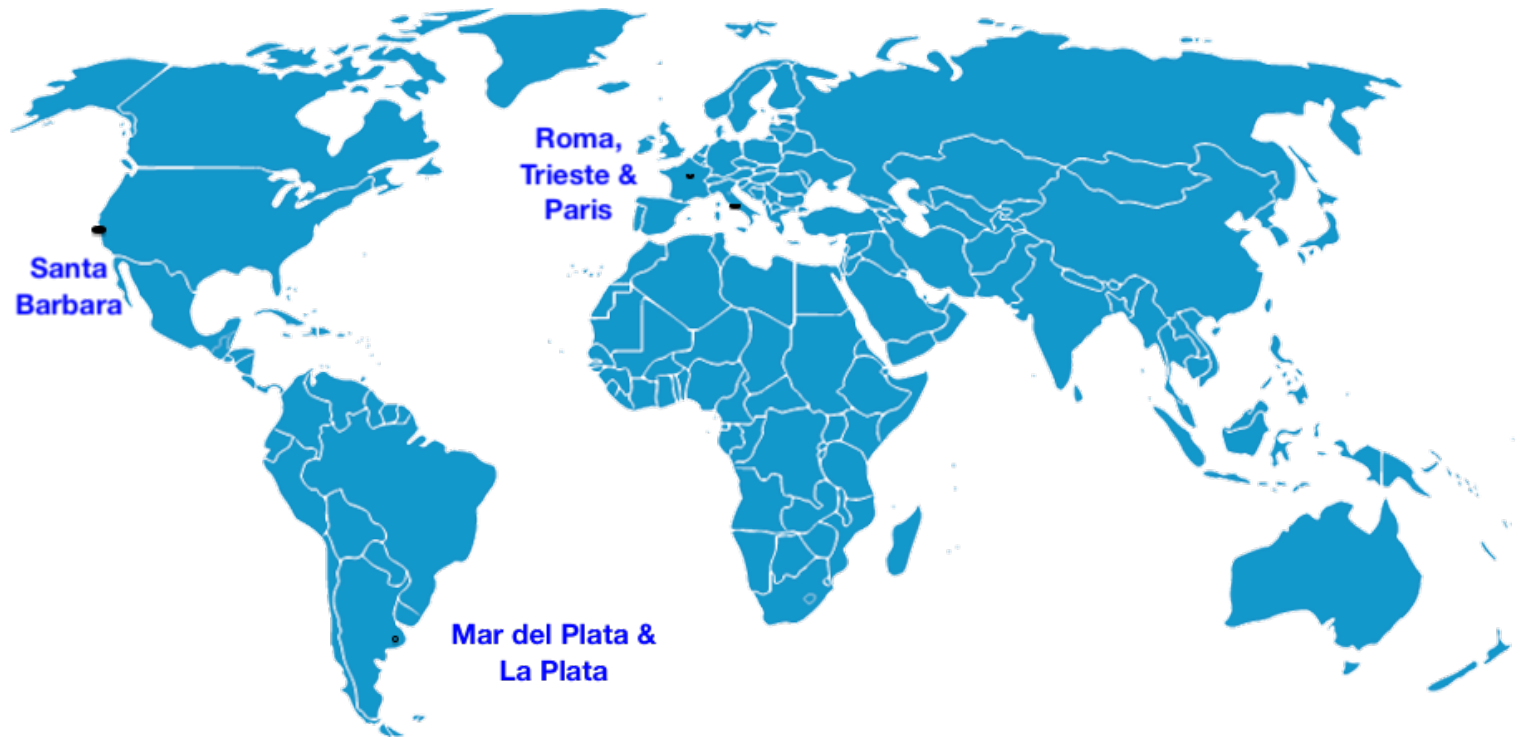
- Physics

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# World

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## International career



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# Argentina

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## Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata



1st & 2nd year

**Electronic Engineering**

3er año

**Physics**



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# Argentina

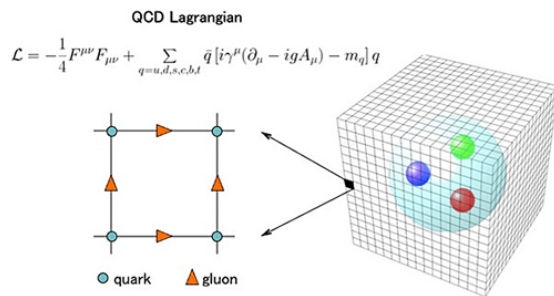
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Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Physics Department



# Argentina

## Theoretical physics



4th & 5th year

**Licenciatura** (Master) in Physics

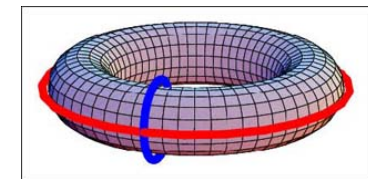
*Zero-modes on the lattice : the vortex fermion system*



**Doctorado** (PhD) in Physics

UNLP 1988-1991

*Topological quantum field theories*



Supervisors Fidel A. Schaposnik (UNLP) & Eduardo Fradkin (University of Urbana-Champaign, USA)

Subjects related to the 2016 Nobel Prize (Thouless, Kosterlitz & Haldane) & Fields Medal 1990 (Witten)

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# Italia

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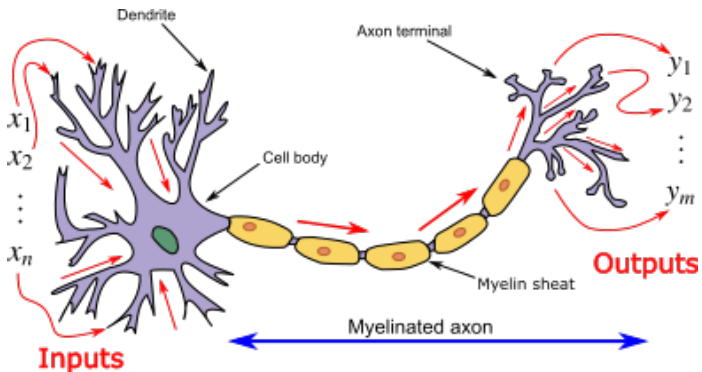
## Università di Roma I 'La Sapienza'



SAPIENZA  
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

# Roma

## Post-doc: from Field Theory to Statistical Physics



Neural networks (91-92)

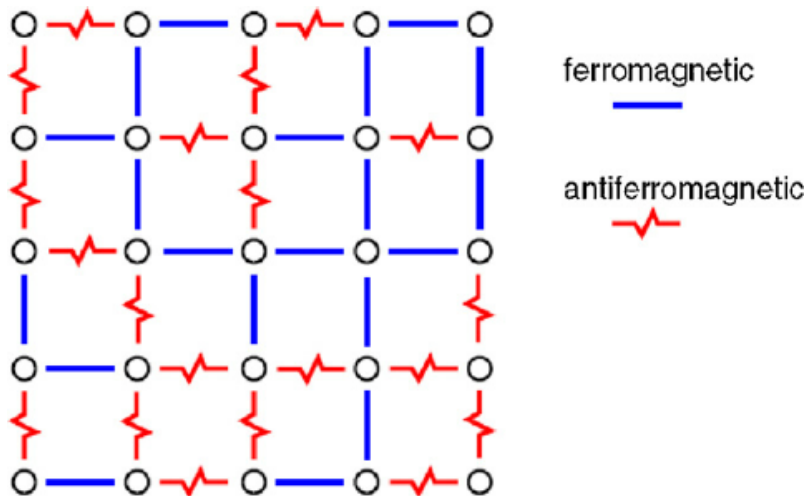
Spin glasses (92-94)

$$H = - \sum_{i \neq j} J_{ij} S_i S_j$$

$S_i$  up-down spins  $\uparrow \downarrow$  or  
neuron firing/quiescent

$J_{ij}$  magnetic coupling or  
Hebb memory rule

More later



Subjects related to the 2021 Nobel Prize (Giorgio Parisi)



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# Paris

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## 2nd post-doc and positions



1994-1996 CEA Saclay

**Glass theory**



1997-2003 ENS Paris

**Quantum disordered systems**



2003-present Sorbonne Université

**Active matter**



**Frustrated magnetism**

**Quantum out of equilibrium systems**

**Formalism** etc. etc. etc.



Long term visits to University of California at Santa Barbara, Harvard, ICTP Trieste, The University of Cambridge, Universidad de Buenos Aires



# Students/post-docs

## Still working with



G. Semerjian

Assist. Prof. ENS

C. DaSilva 

Private sector PT

D. Loi 

Informatics IT

A. Sicilia 

Blogger-periodista

C. Aron

CNRS at ENS

A. Jelić 

Associate ICTP

E. Katzav 

Prof. Jerusalem

D. Levis 

Prof. Barcelona

L. Foini 

CNRS Saclay

J. Bonart 

Finance UK

H. Ricateau

Informatics FR

A. Tartaglia 

Informatics IT

M. Casiulis 

post-doc Israel

D. Barbier

post-doc Suisse

X. Turkeshi 

G. Alfaro-Miranda 

R. Agrawal 



A. Kolton Academia

S. Bustingorry

P. Guruciaga

JL Iguain

H. Lozza

N. Nessi



MP Loureiro

Z. G.-Arenas 



M. Kennett  → 

P. Charbonneau 

A. Velenich 



A. Suma

P. Digregorio

I. Petrelli

O. Mazzarisi

C. Caporusso

Many in  
academia & some  
in private sector:  
mainly journalism,  
finance & info

# Students/post-docs

## Parcours

A. Sicilia Adventurous journalist



C. Aron CR CNRS at ENS



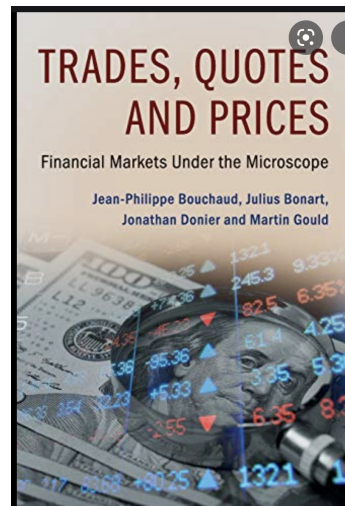
M. Kasiulis Lutetian Project NYU



D. Levis Prof. at Barcelona



J. Bonart Citadel



L. Foini CR CNRS at IPHT CEA Saclay

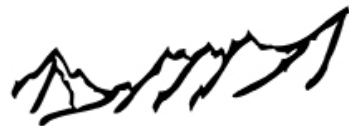


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# Les Houches

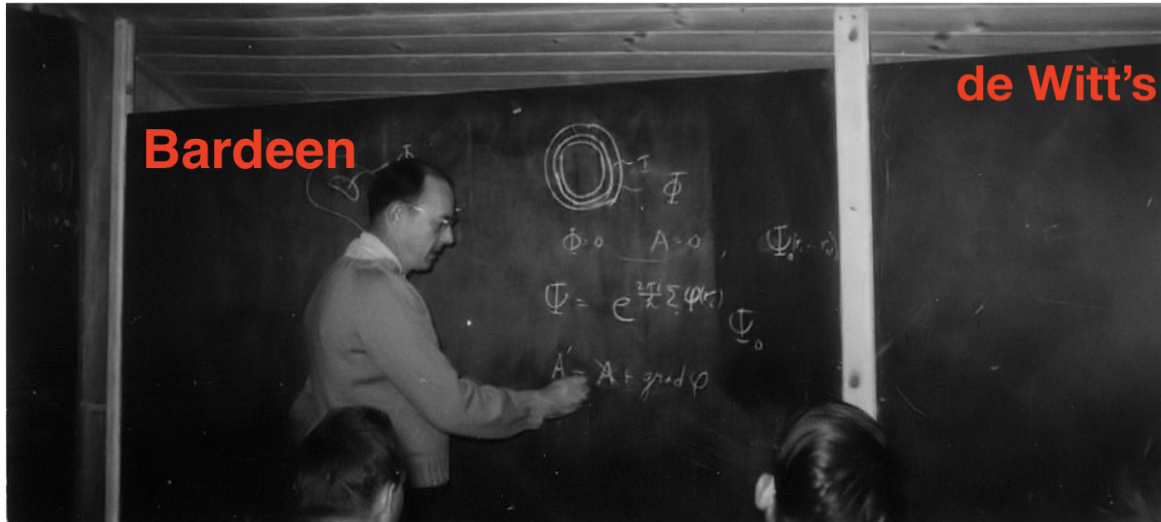
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ÉCOLE DE PHYSIQUE  
des HOUCHES

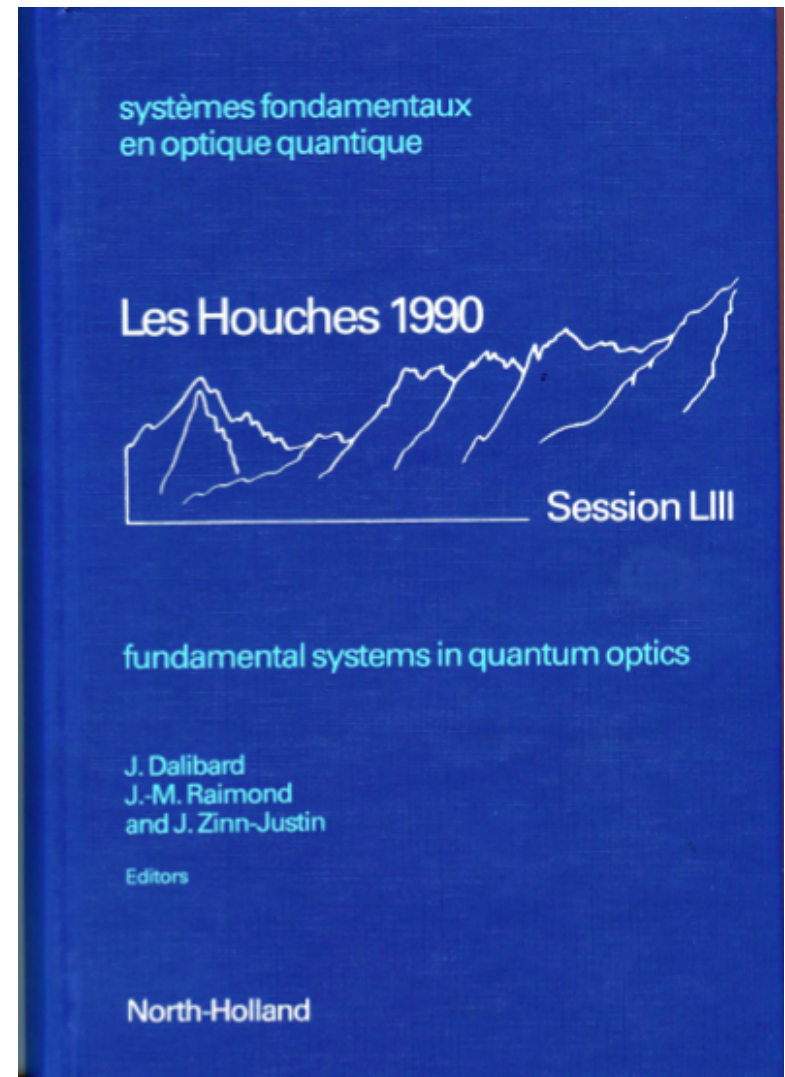
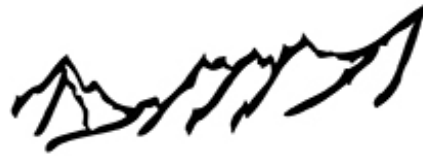


# Les Houches

Ecole de Physique des Houches



ÉCOLE DE PHYSIQUE  
des HOUCHES



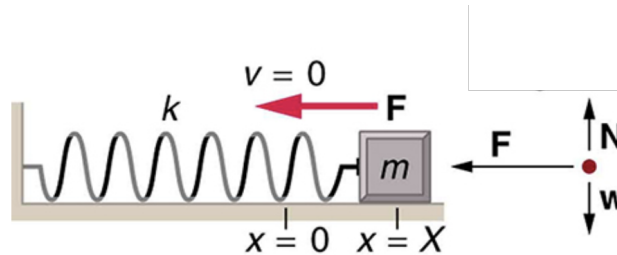
**Statistical Physics  
and disordered systems**

# Classical mechanics

## Newton - Hamilton - Lagrange

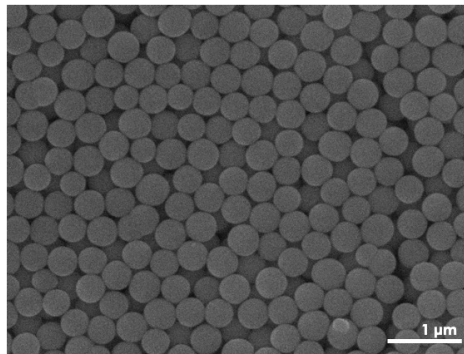
Newton (Physics 101)  $m\vec{a} = \vec{F}$

- Solve simple problems especially for gradient forces  $\vec{F}(\vec{x}) = -\vec{\nabla}V(\vec{x})$  e.g.



- What happens if instead of one single particle there are many in interaction ?

$$\dot{\vec{p}}_i \equiv m\vec{a}_i = \vec{F}_i(\{\vec{x}_j\}) \quad i, j = 1, \dots, N \gg 1$$



Very hard to solve.

Approximations & numerics

**Collective phenomena**

Interest in **macroscopic**



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# Statistical physics

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## Advantage

**No need to solve the Newton dynamic equations!**

Under the *ergodic hypothesis*, after some *equilibration time*  $t_{\text{eq}}$ , *macroscopic observables* can be, on average, obtained with a *static* calculation, as an average over all configurations in phase space weighted with a probability distribution function  $P(\{\vec{p}_i, \vec{x}_i\})$

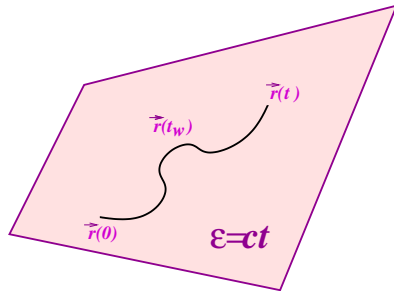
$$\langle A \rangle = \int \prod_i d\vec{p}_i d\vec{x}_i P(\{\vec{p}_i, \vec{x}_i\}) A(\{\vec{p}_i, \vec{x}_i\})$$

$\langle A \rangle$  should coincide with  $\bar{A} \equiv \lim_{\tau \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{\tau} \int_{t_{\text{eq}}}^{t_{\text{eq}} + \tau} dt' A(\{\vec{p}_i(t'), \vec{x}_i(t')\})$

the *time average* typically measured experimentally

# Statistical physics

Ensembles: recipes for  $P(\{\vec{p}_i, \vec{x}_i\})$  according to circumstances



## Microcanonical distribution

$$P(\{\vec{p}_i, \vec{x}_i\}) \propto \delta(\mathcal{H}(\{\vec{p}_i, \vec{x}_i\}) - \mathcal{E})$$

Flat probability density

Isolated system

$$\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{H}(\{\vec{p}_i, \vec{x}_i\}) = ct$$

$$S_{\mathcal{E}} = k_B \ln g(\mathcal{E})$$

Entropy

$$\beta \equiv \frac{1}{k_B T} = \left. \frac{\partial S_{\mathcal{E}}}{\partial \mathcal{E}} \right|_{\mathcal{E}}$$

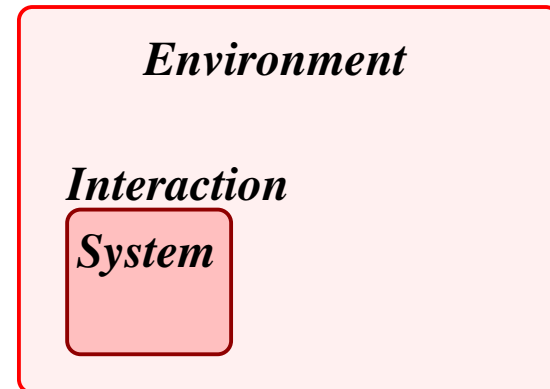
Temperature

$$\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E}_{\text{system}} + \mathcal{E}_{\text{env}} + \mathcal{E}_{\text{int}}$$

Neglect  $\mathcal{E}_{\text{int}}$  (short-range interact.)

$$\mathcal{E}_{\text{system}} \ll \mathcal{E}_{\text{env}} \quad \beta = \frac{\partial S_{\mathcal{E}_{\text{env}}}}{\partial \mathcal{E}_{\text{env}}}$$

$$P(\{\vec{p}_i, \vec{x}_i\}) \propto e^{-\beta \mathcal{H}(\{\vec{p}_i, \vec{x}_i\})}$$

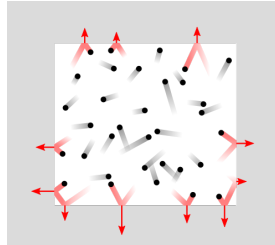
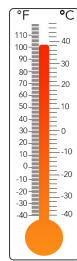


Canonical ensemble

# Statistical physics

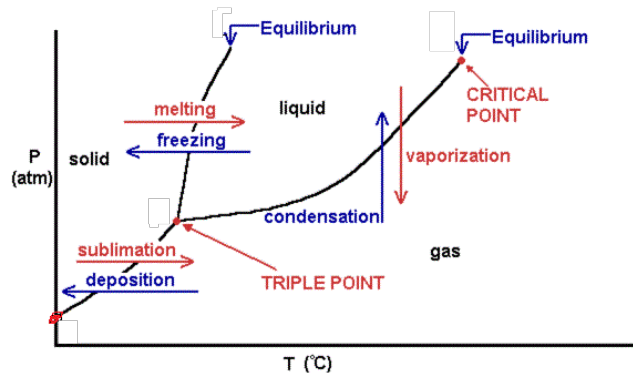
## Accomplishments

- Microscopic definition & derivation of **thermodynamic** concepts  
(**temperature**, **pressure**, *etc.*) and laws (**equations of state**, *etc.*)



$$PV = nRT$$

- Theoretical understanding of **collective effects**  $\Rightarrow$  **phase diagrams**



**Phase transitions** : sharp changes in the macroscopic behavior when an external (e.g. the temperature of the environment) or an internal (e.g. the interaction potential) parameter is changed

- Calculations can be difficult but the **theoretical frame** is set beyond doubt

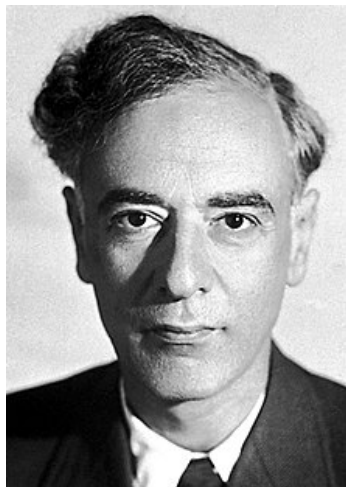
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# Statistical physics

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Four very important players & concepts

L. D. Landau



Phase transitions  
Symmetry breaking

1962

K. Wilson



Renormalization  
Universality

1982

P. W. Anderson



Higgs Mechanism  
Disorder, Localization

1977

D. J. Thouless



Topology  
Disorder, Localization

2016 Nobel Prizes

**Theoretical description of phase transitions**  
**Importance of randomness – More is different**

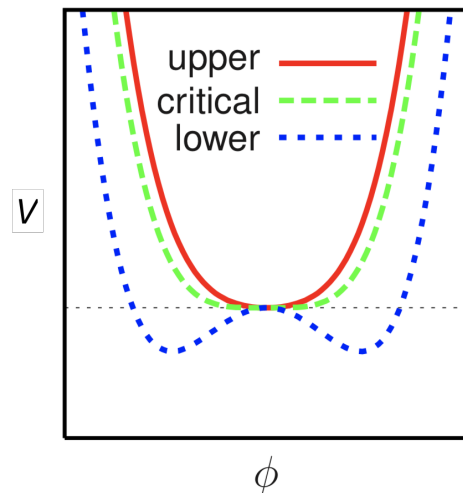
# Landau Theory

## A phase-transition : change of state

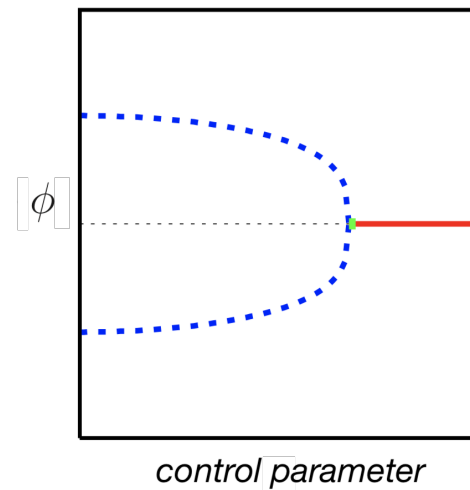
A point representing the global state (a macroscopic observable) of the system

In the “upper” phase, the *effective potential* in which it moves has only one minimum,  $\phi = 0$ .

In the “lower” phase, the effective potential has two minima  $\phi = \pm\phi_0 \neq 0$ .



Landau free-energy



Order parameter

**Disorder**

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# Geometric randomness

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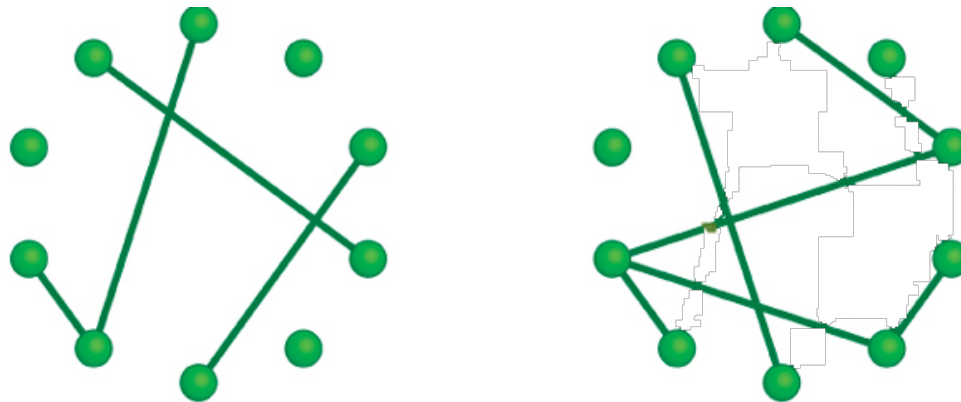
## Random graphs

Fixed random – quenched/frozen – objects

Different realisations, heterogeneities

Simplest example, random graphs

Take  $N$  vertices and draw a link joining each pair with probability  $p$



Two realisations

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# Geometric randomness

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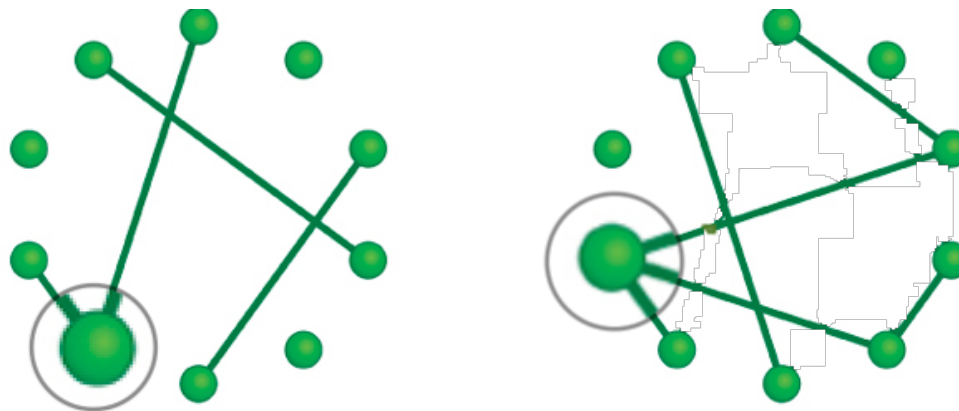
## Random graphs

Fixed random – quenched/frozen – objects

Different realisations, heterogeneities

Simplest example, random graphs

Take  $N$  vertices and draw a link joining each pair with probability  $p$



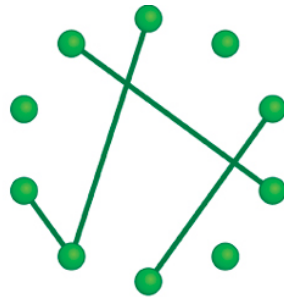
Heterogeneity fluctuations



# Geometric randomness

## Mathematics & applications

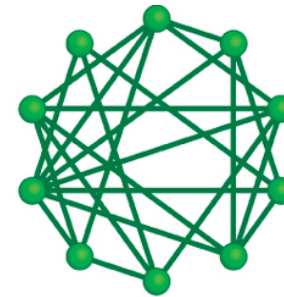
Erdős-Rényi (1959)



$p = 0.1$



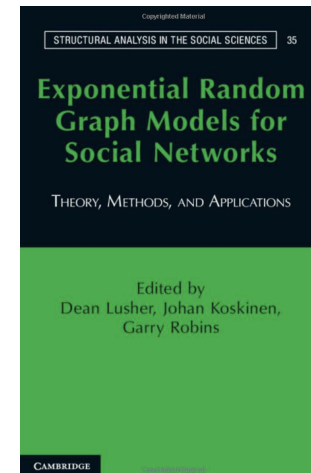
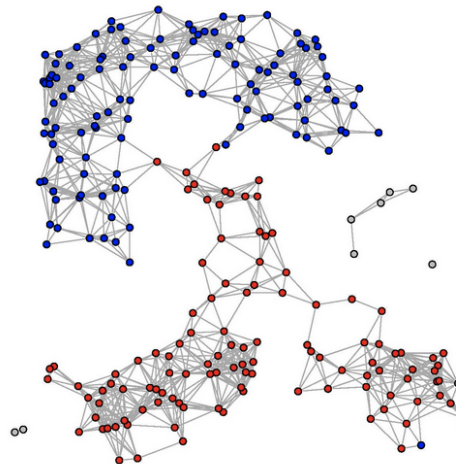
$p = 0.25$



$p = 0.5$

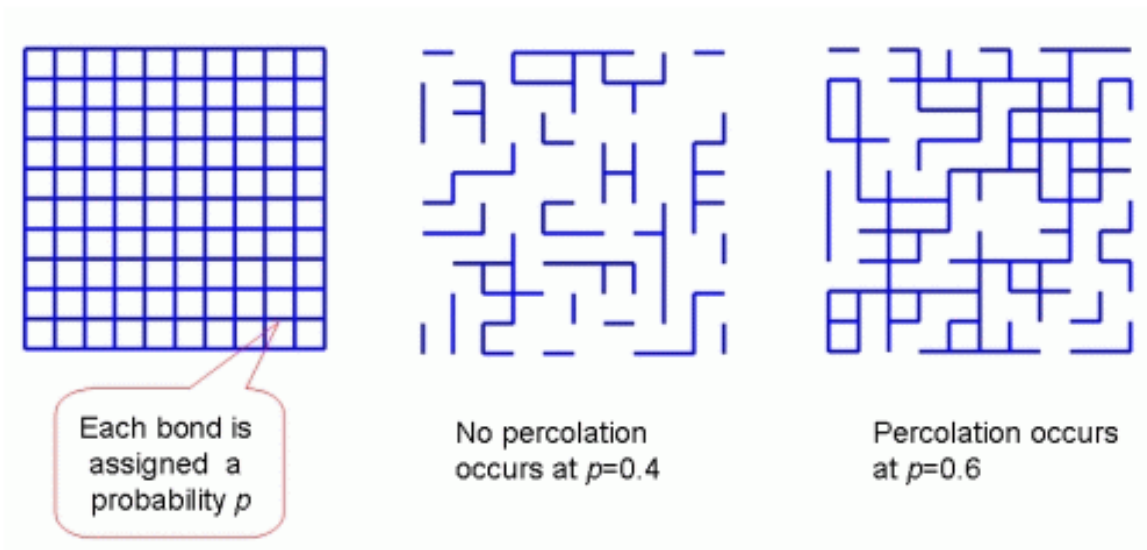
Questions :  
complete subgraphs ?  
is the graph connected ?  
*etc.*

**Networks**



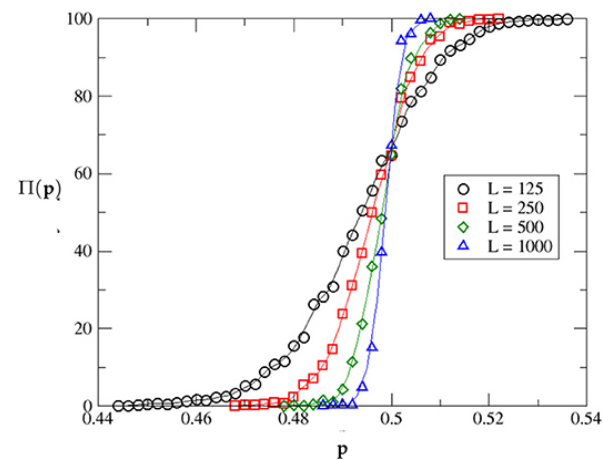
# Geometric randomness

## Percolation



Probability  $\Pi$   
of there being a path  
taking from one end to the other  
as a function of  $p$   
for different system sizes  $L$

**Phase transition**



# Physics : spin-glasses

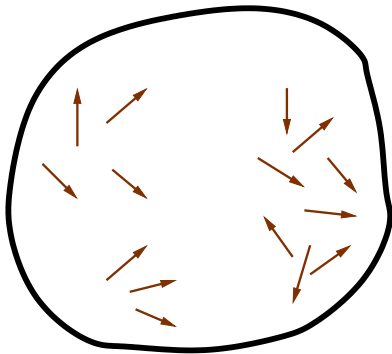
Magnetic impurities (spins) randomly placed in an inert host

$\vec{r}_i$  are random and time-independent since

the impurities do not move during experimental time-scales  $\Rightarrow$

**quenched randomness**

Magnetic impurities in a metal host



spins can flip but not move

RKKY interaction potential

$$V(r_{ij}) \propto \frac{\cos 2k_F r_{ij}}{r_{ij}^3} S_i S_j$$

very rapid oscillations about 0

positive & negative

slow power law decay.

# Physics : spin-glasses

## Models on a lattice with random couplings

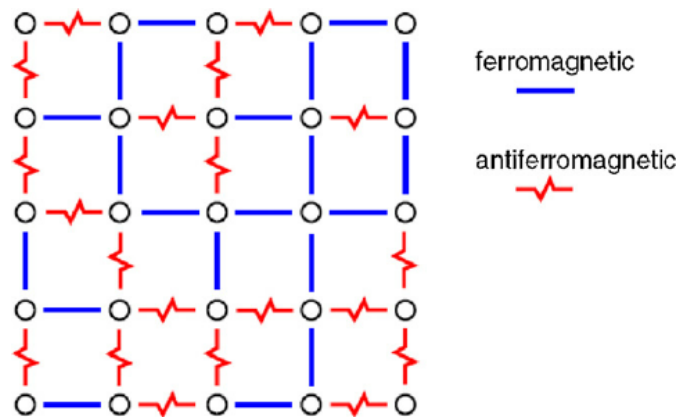
Ising spins  $s_i = \pm 1$  sitting on a lattice

$J_{ij}$  are random and time-independent since

the impurities do not move during experimental time-scales  $\Rightarrow$

**quenched randomness**

Magnetic impurities in a metal host



spins can flip but not move

**Edwards-Anderson model**

$$H_J[\{s_i\}] = - \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} J_{ij} s_i s_j$$

$J_{ij}$  drawn from a pdf with

zero mean & finite variance

# Rugged landscapes

## Beyond the Landau potential

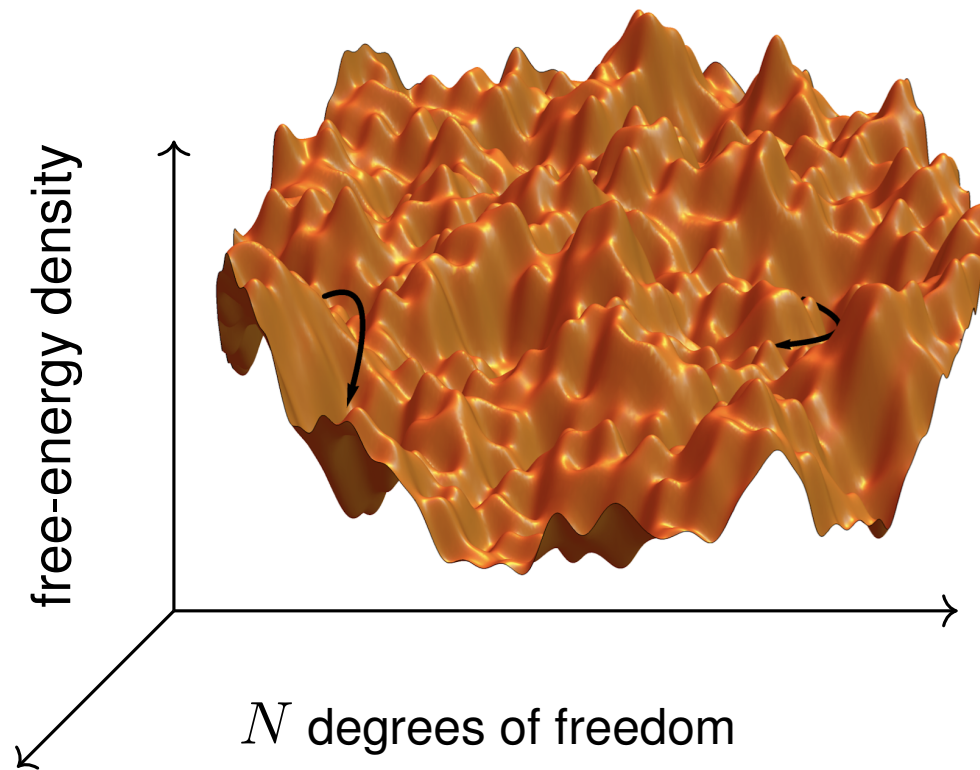


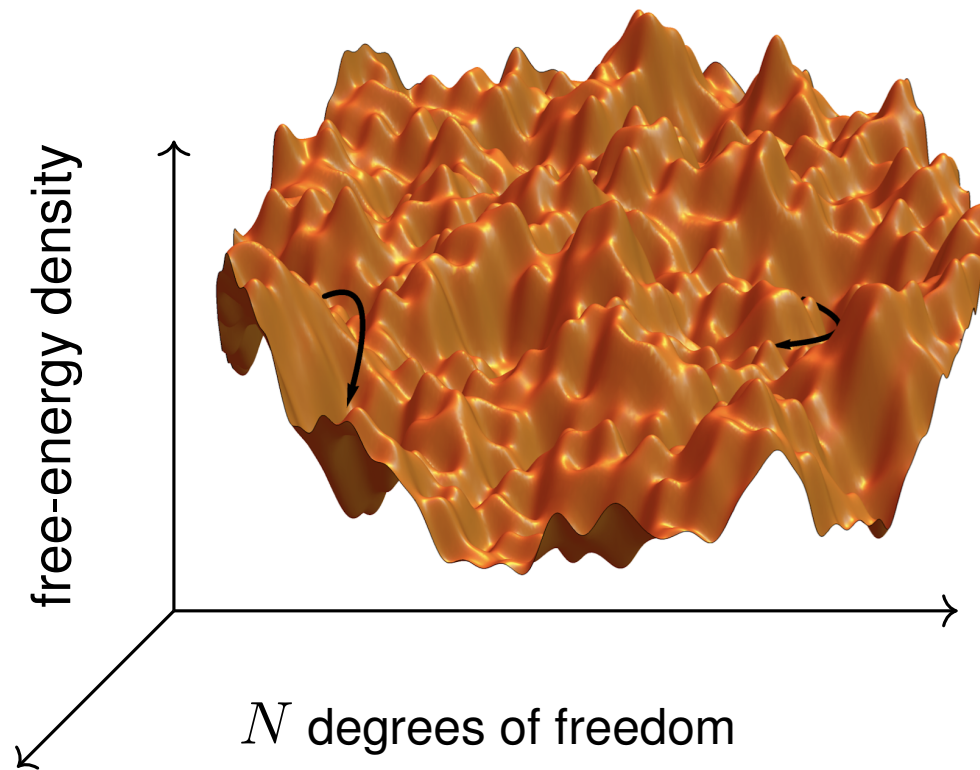
Figure adapted from a picture by **C. Cammarota**

Topography of the landscape on the  $N$ -dimensional substrate made by the  $N$  order parameters ?

Numerous studies by **theoretical physicists (TAP 1977)** and **probabilists**

# Rugged landscapes

## Beyond the Landau potential



How to reach the absolute minimum ?

Thermal activation, surfing over tilted regions, quantum tunneling ?

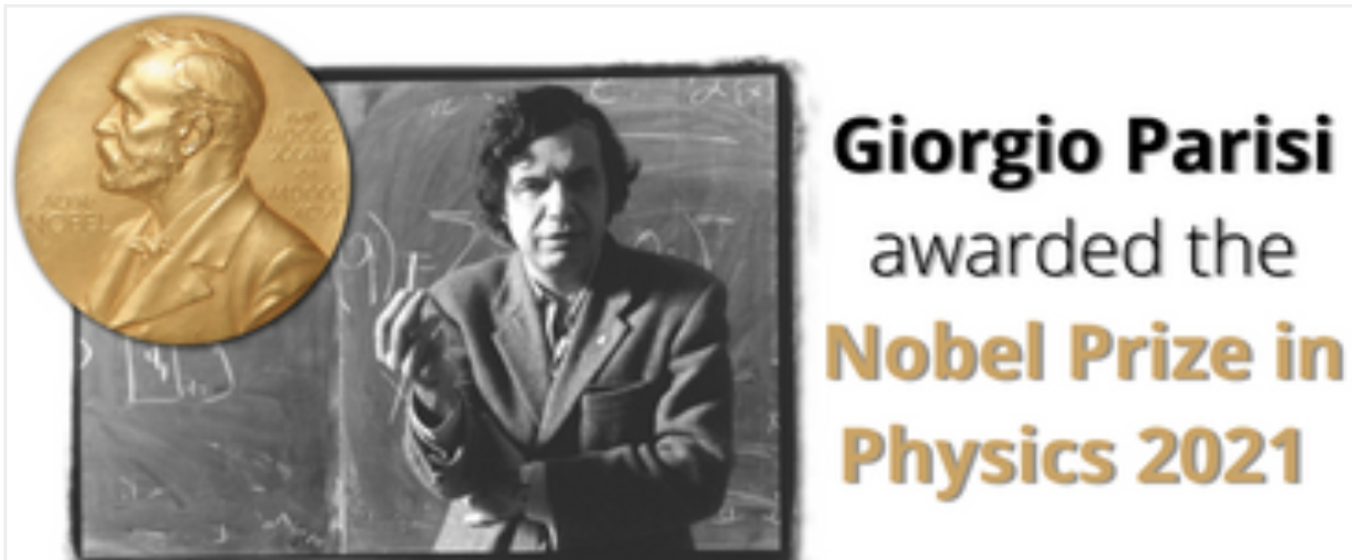
Optimisation problem Smart algorithms ? Computer sc - applied math

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# Replica Theory

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Giorgio Parisi



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# Replica method

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## A sketch

$$-\beta[f_J] = \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \frac{[\ln Z_N(\beta, J)]}{N} = \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \lim_{n \rightarrow 0} \frac{[Z_N^n(\beta, J)] - 1}{Nn}$$

$Z_N^n$  partition function of  $n$  independent copies of the system : **replicas**.

Gaussian average over disorder : coupling between replicas

$$\sum_a \sum_{i \neq j} J_{ij} s_i^a s_j^a \Rightarrow \sum_{i \neq j} \left( \sum_a s_i^a s_j^a \right)^2$$

Quadratic decoupling with the Hubbard-Stratonovich trick

$$Q_{ab} \sum_i s_i^a s_i^b + \frac{1}{2} Q_{ab}^2$$

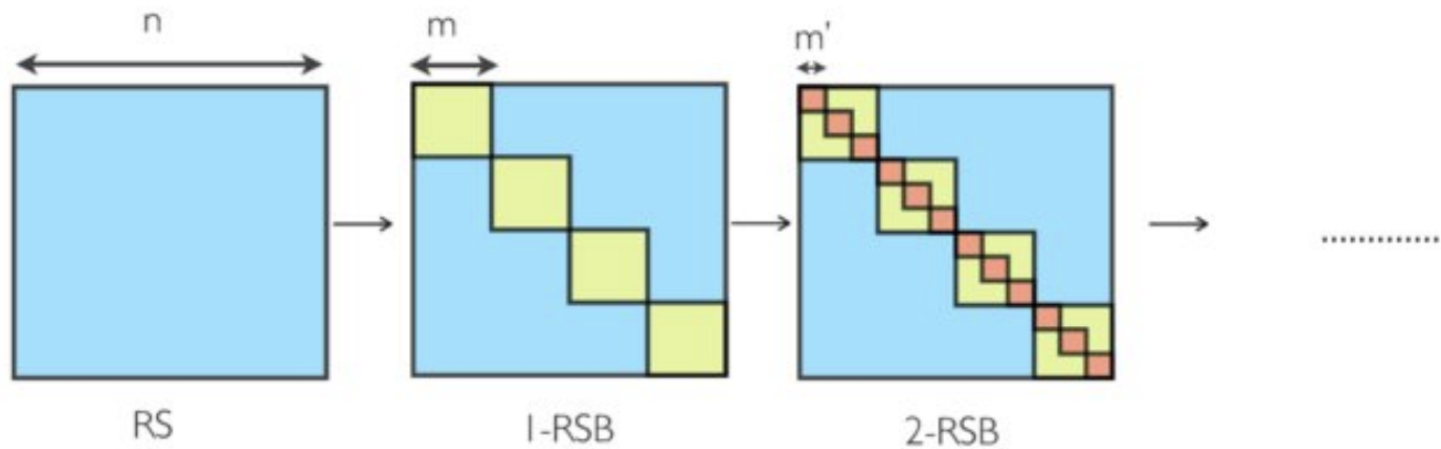
$Q_{ab}$  is a  $0 \times 0$  matrix but it admits an interpretation in terms of **overlaps**

The elements of  $Q_{ab}$  can be evaluated by **saddle-point** if one exchanges the limits  $N \rightarrow \infty$   $n \rightarrow 0$  with  $n \rightarrow 0$   $N \rightarrow \infty$ .



# Replica Theory

The  $n \times n$  matrix  $Q_{ab}$

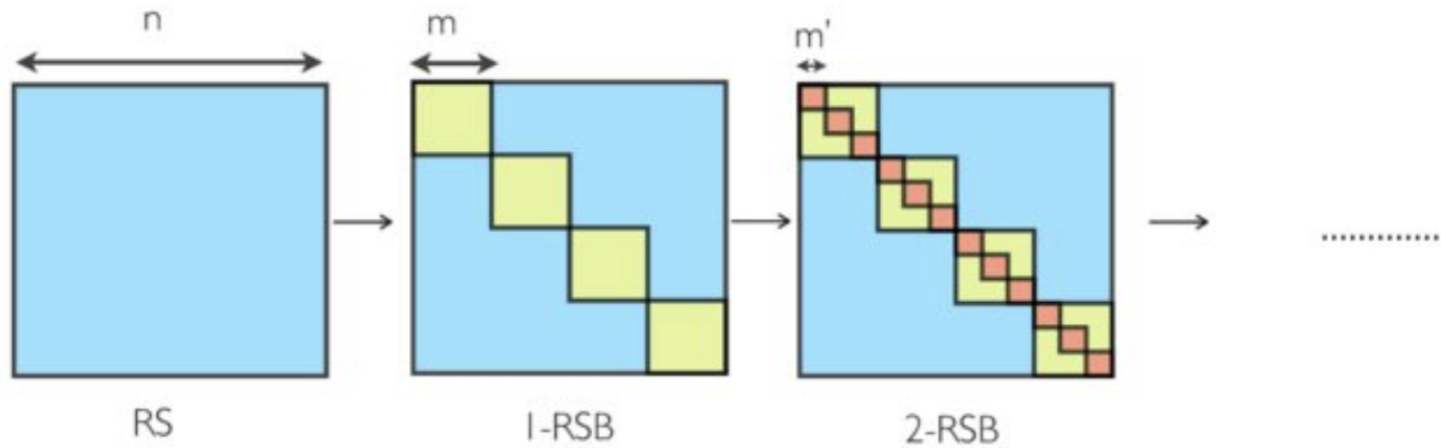


Replica symmetry breaking

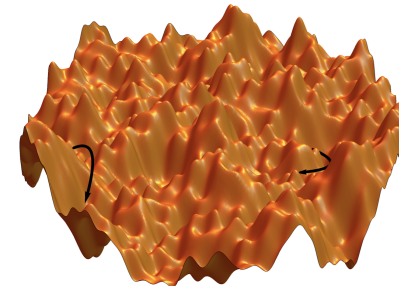
Parisi 1977-1979

# Replica Theory

The  $n \times n$  matrix  $Q_{ab}$



Loosely speaking  
the entries  $Q_{ab}$  tell us about  
about the similarity between the  
configurations in the different  
valleys & the topology of the **landscape**

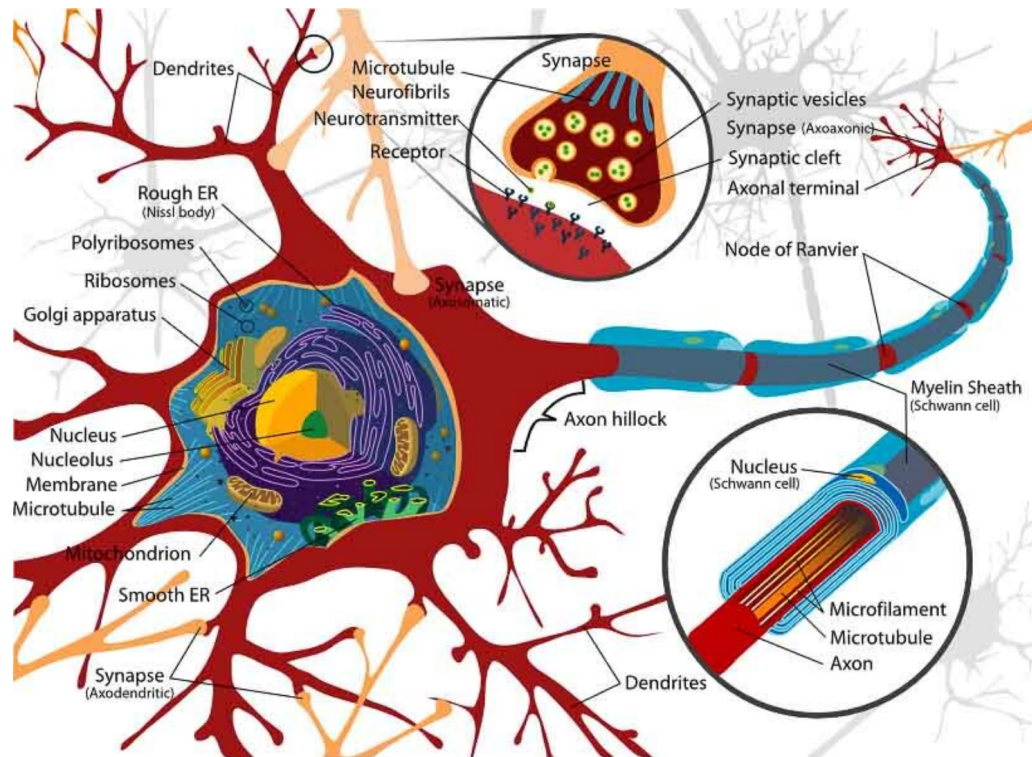


Parisi 1977-1979

**Some applications**

# Neural Networks

## Real neural network



Neurons connected by synapsis on a **random graph**

Figures from AI, Deep Learning, and Neural Networks explained, A. Castrounis

# Neural networks

## Models on graphs with random couplings

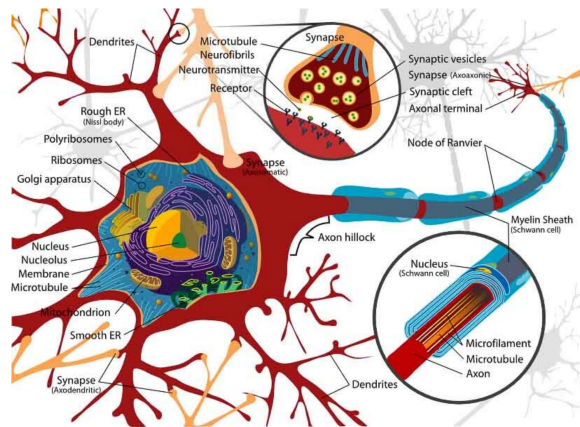
The neurons are Ising spins  $s_i = \pm 1$  on a graph

$J_{ij}$  are random and time-independent since

the synapses do not change during experimental time-scales  $\Rightarrow$

**quenched randomness**

The neural net



spins can flip but not move

### Hopfield model

$$H_J[\{s_i\}] = - \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} J_{ij} s_i s_j$$

memory stored in the synapsis

$$J_{ij} = 1/N_p \sum_{\mu=1}^{N_p} \xi_i^\mu \xi_j^\mu$$

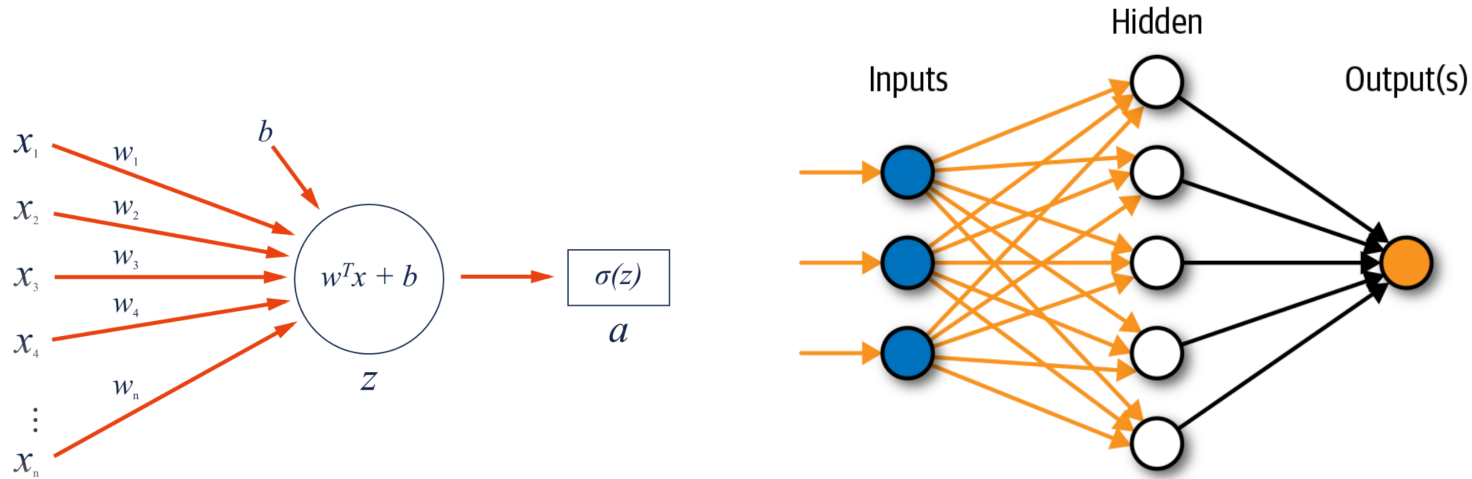
the patterns  $\xi_i^\mu$

are drawn from a pdf with

zero mean & finite variance

# Neural Networks

## Sketch & artificial network



The connections in  $w^T$  may have a random component

The state of the neuron up (firing), down (quiescent) is a result of the calculation

In the artificial network one chooses the geometry (number of nodes in internal layer, number of hidden layers, connections between layers)

Figures from AI, Deep Learning, and Neural Networks explained, A. Castrounis

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# Optimisation problems

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## Constrained satisfaction problems

Problems involving **variables** which must satisfy some **constraints**

e.g. equalities, inequalities or both

studied in computer science to

compute their **complexity** or develop **algorithms** to most efficiently solve them

Typically,  $N$  variables, which have to satisfy  $M$  constraints.

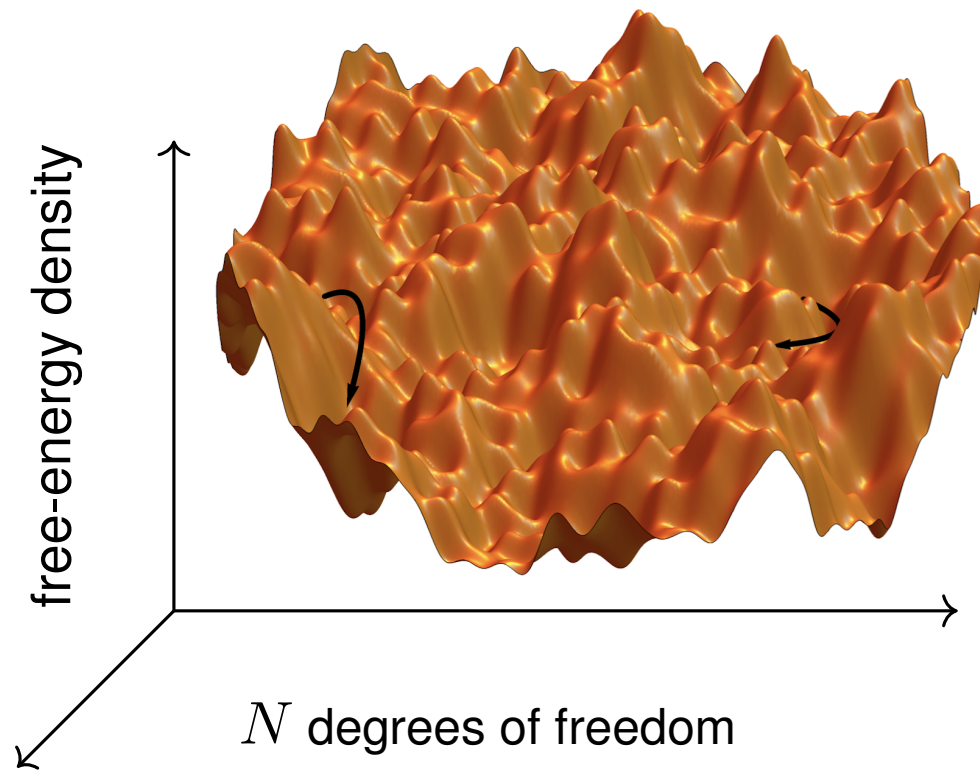
e.g. the variables could be the weights of a neural network, and each constraint imposes that the network satisfies the correct input-output relation on one of  $M$  training examples (e.g. distinguishing images of cats from dogs).

**Statistical physics** approach

thermodynamic limit  $N \rightarrow \infty$  and  $M \rightarrow \infty$  with  $\alpha = M/N$  finite

# Rugged landscapes

## Beyond the Landau potential



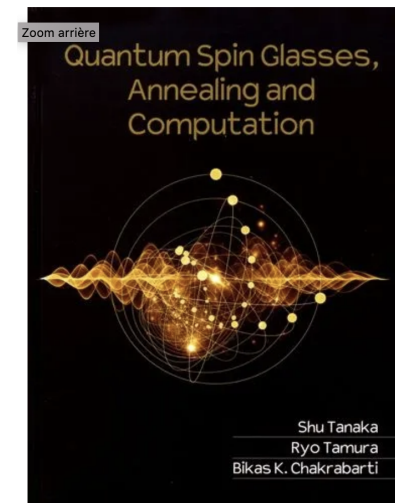
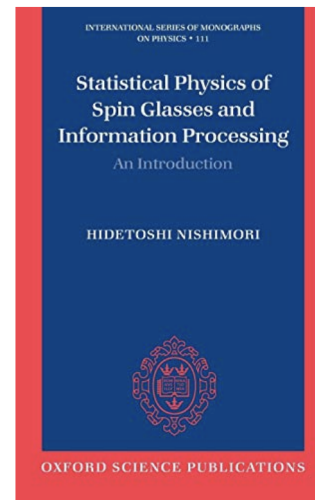
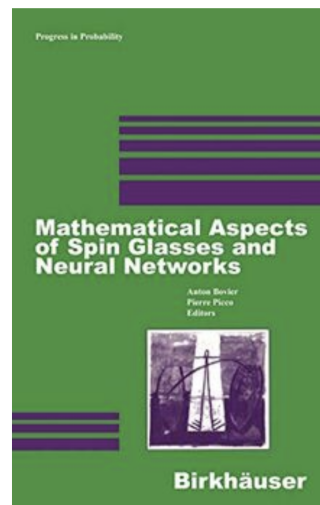
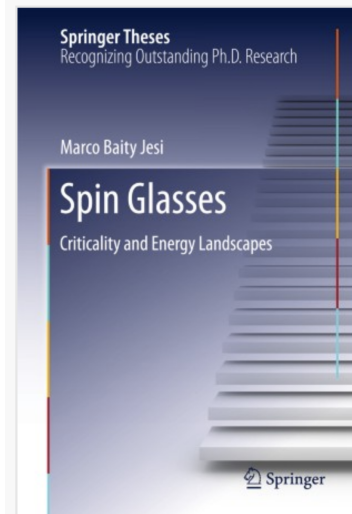
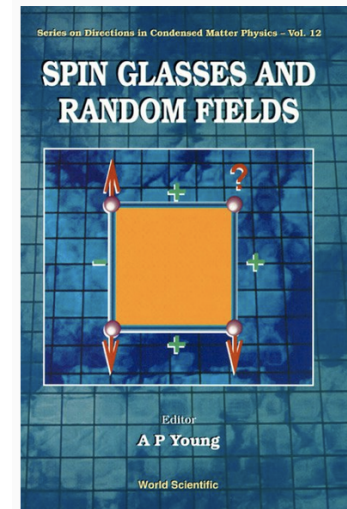
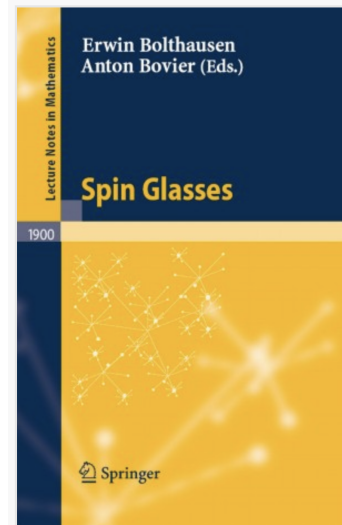
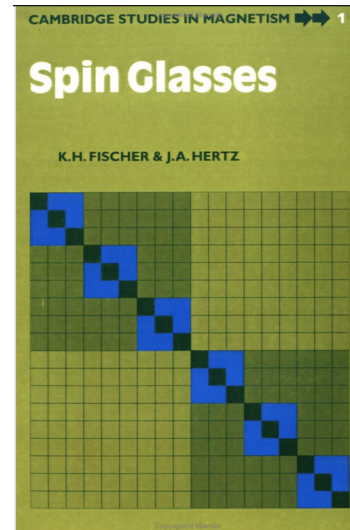
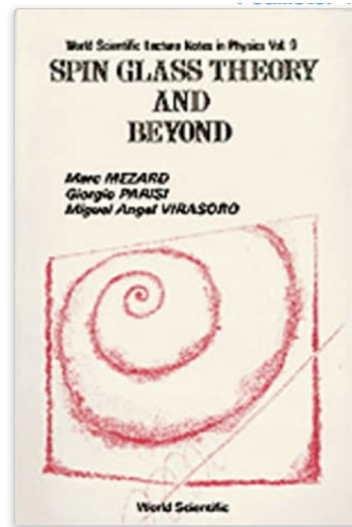
How to reach the absolute minimum ?

Thermal activation, surfing over tilted regions, quantum tunneling ?

Optimisation problem Smart algorithms ? Computer sc - applied math



# Some books



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# Out of equilibrium

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## Driven systems

$$\vec{F}_{\text{ext}} \neq -\vec{\nabla}V(\vec{x})$$

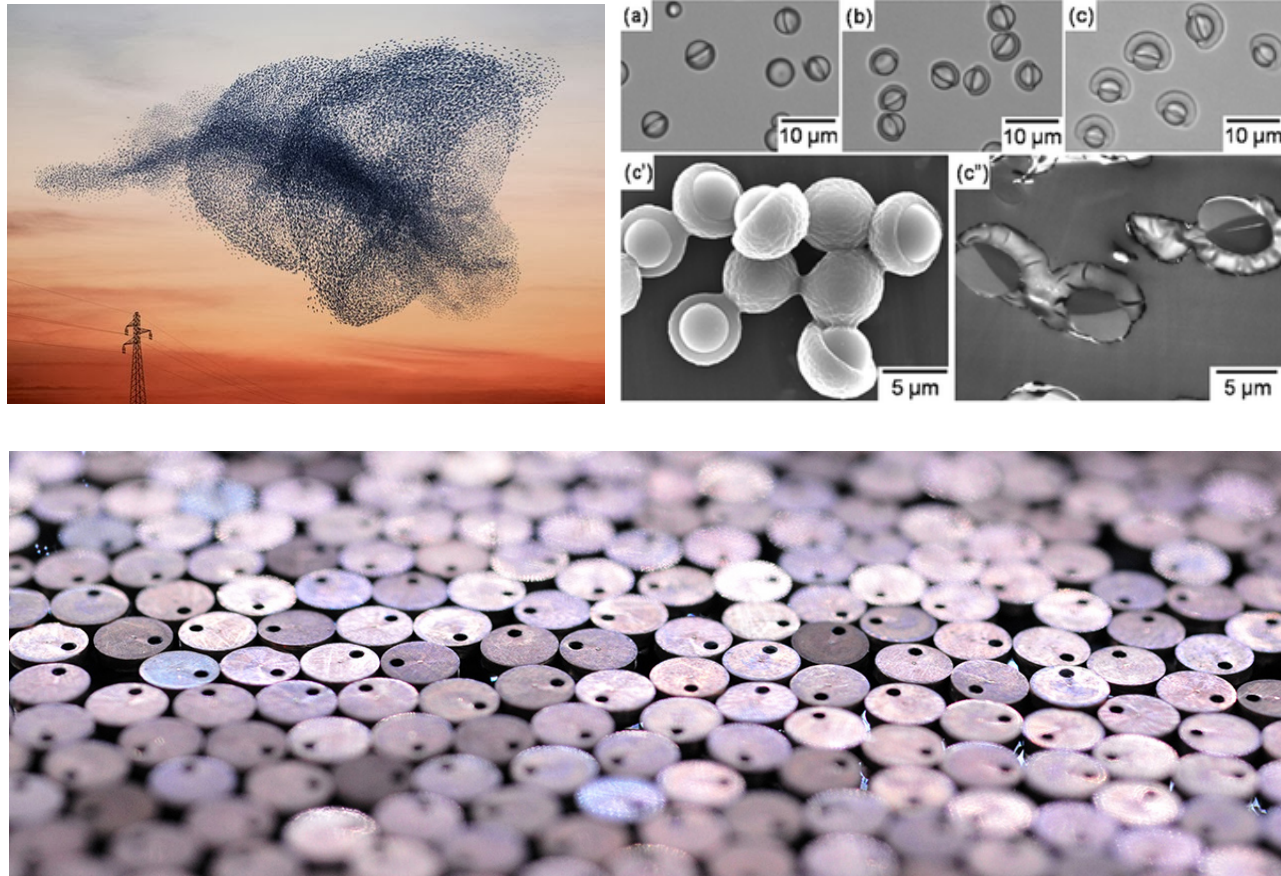
Energy injection  $dE(t)/dt \neq 0$

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# Active matter

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Natural & artificial : birds, bacteria, cells, grains, Janus particles



Experiments & observations **Bartolo et al.** Lyon, **Bocquet et al.** Paris, **Cavagna et al.** Roma, **di Leonardo et al.** Roma, **Dauchot et al.** Paris, just to mention some Europeans

# Active Brownian particles

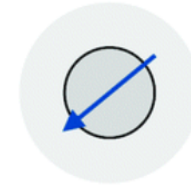
## The standard model – ABPs

Spherical particles with diameter  $\sigma_d$

Environment  $\implies$  Langevin dynamics

Scales  $\implies$  over-damped motion

Self-propulsion  $\implies$  active force  $\vec{F}_{\text{act}}$  along  $\vec{n}_i = (\cos \theta_i(t), \sin \theta_i(t))$



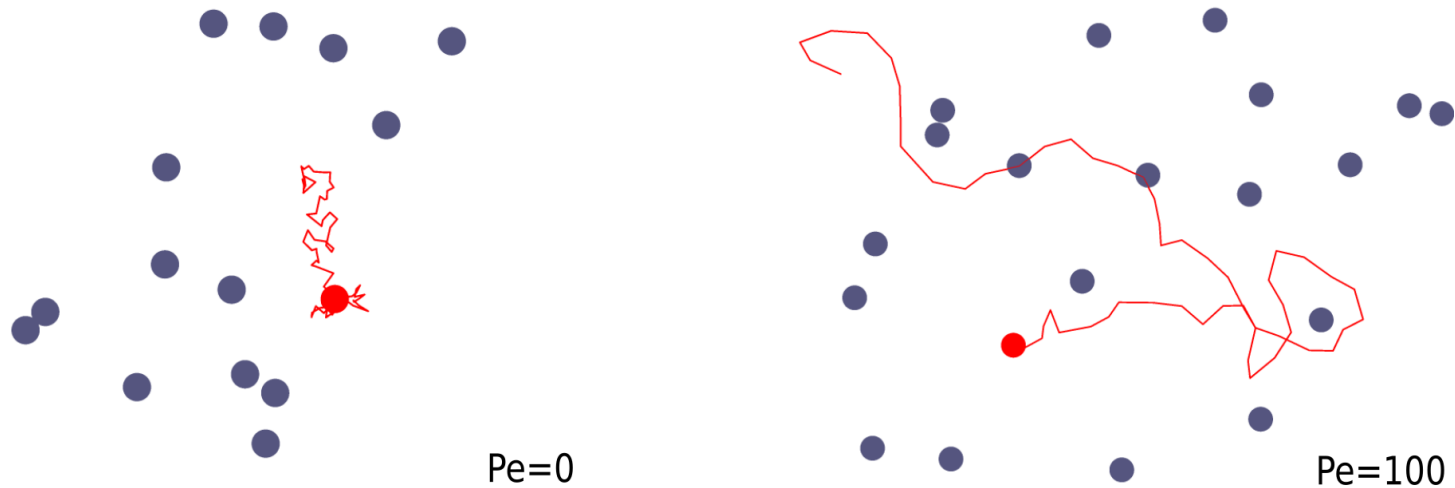
$$\underbrace{\gamma \dot{\vec{r}}_i}_{\text{friction}} = \underbrace{F_{\text{act}} \vec{n}_i}_{\text{propulsion}} - \underbrace{\vec{\nabla}_i \sum_{j(\neq i)} V(r_{ij})}_{\text{inter-particle repulsion}} + \underbrace{\vec{\xi}_i}_{\text{translational white noise}}$$

$$\underbrace{\dot{\theta}_i = \eta_i}_{\text{rotational white noise}}$$

2d packing fraction  $\phi = \pi \sigma_d^2 N / (4S)$  Péclet number  $\text{Pe} = F_{\text{act}} \sigma_d / (k_B T)$

# Active Brownian particles

## Typical motion of ABPs in interaction



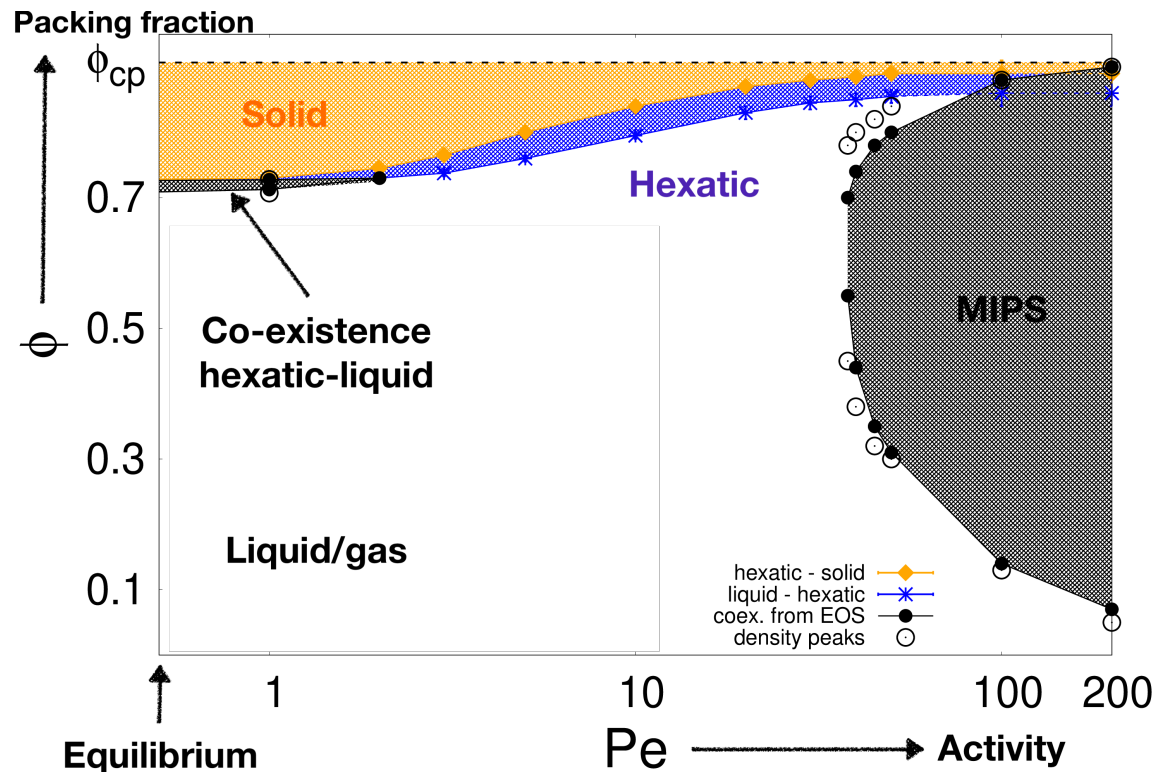
The **activity** induces a **persistent random motion**

Long running periods  $l_p \propto Pe \sigma_d$  and

sudden changes in direction

# Active Brownian particles

## Complex out of equilibrium phase diagram



Motility induced  
phase separation  
(MIPS)  
gas & dense  
droplet

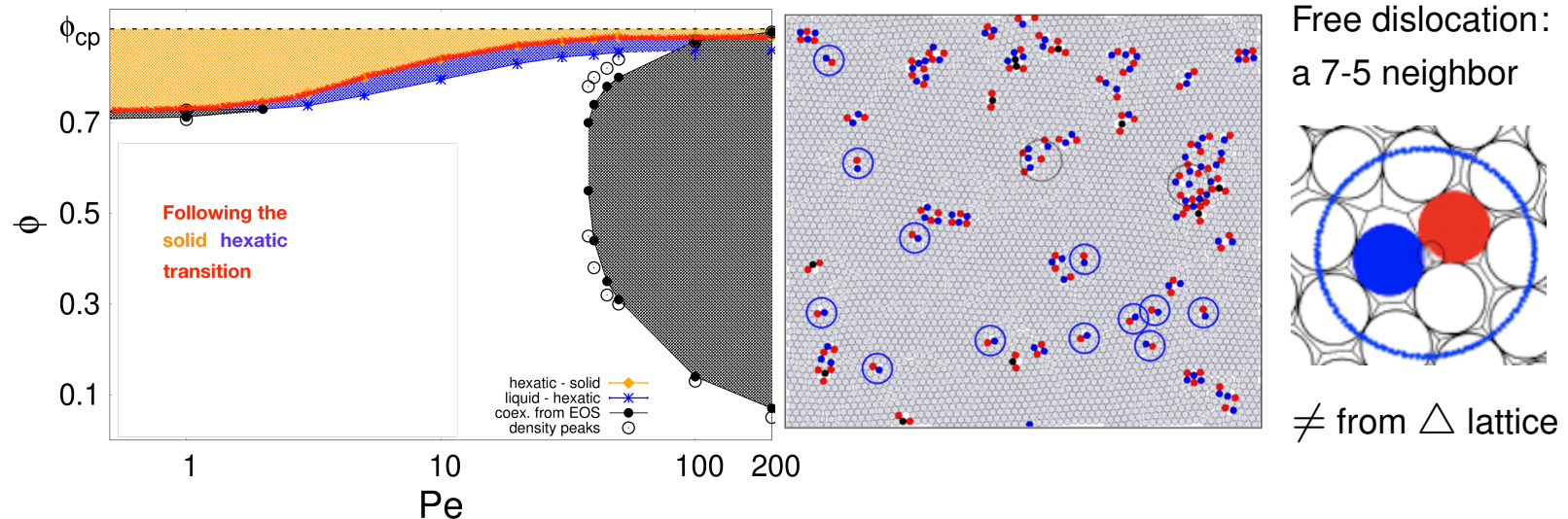
Cates & Tailleur 12

From virial pressure  $P(\phi)$ , translational and orientational correlations  $G_T$  and  $G_6$ , distributions of local density and hexatic order  $\phi_i$  and  $\psi_{6i}$ , at fixed  $k_B T = 0.05$

Digregorio, Levis, Suma, LFC, Gonnella & Pagonabarraga 18

# Active Brownian particles

Out of equilibrium phase diagram **First question (out of many !)**



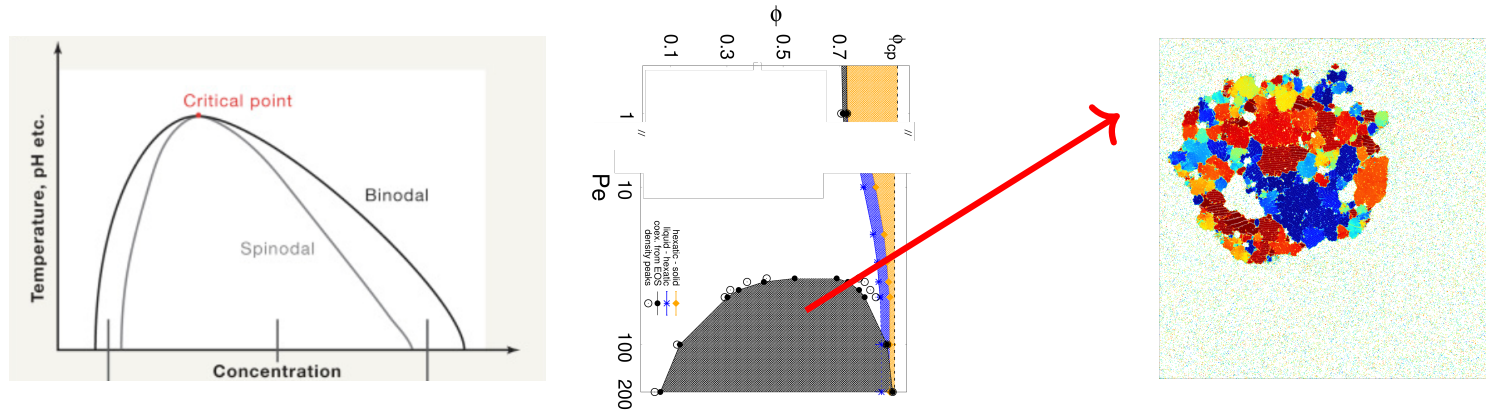
**Solid - Hexatic** transition at  $\phi_{sh}$ , driven by unbinding of dislocation pairs

as in Berezinskii-Kosterlitz-Thouless-Halperin-Nelson-Young universality ?

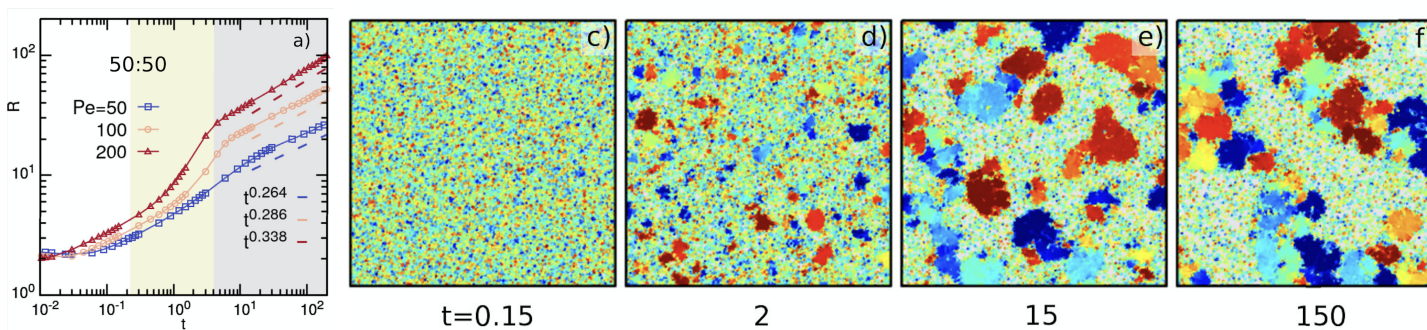
$$\rho_{disloc} \simeq a \exp \left[ -b \left( \frac{\phi_{sh}}{\phi_{sh} - \phi} \right)^\nu \right] \quad \nu \sim 0.37 \quad \forall Pe ?$$

# Active Brownian particles

Out of equilibrium phase diagram So many questions!



Dynamics of formation of the dense phase? but bubbles, hexatic order, ...



Universality with the Lifshitz-Slyozov law  $\mathcal{R}(t) \simeq t^{1/3}$ ? Geometry?

Redner *et al* 13, Stenhammar *et al* 14, ... , Caporusso *et al* 20, Caprini *et al* 20, ...



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# Thermodynamic notions ?

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# Conclusions

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The talk showed some physics going from the general to the particular

statistical physics, disordered systems, out of equilibrium phenomena

Some basic statistical physics questions were discussed and concerned

phase diagrams, universality, effects of disorder, replicas...

Thermodynamic concepts out of equilibrium ?

**Effective temperatures** (heat flows, entropy production, partial equilibrations, fluctuations,...) **importance of time-scales & observables**. Also stochastic thermodynamics, fluctuation theorems, *etc.*

**There is much more to be done and understood**

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# Beyond

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Econophysics

Social physics

Ecology

Biophysics

Computer science

X-physics