

# Pushing up the temperature of the electroweak phase transition.

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DESY/U.Hamburg

**MITP virtual Workshop**  
**"Shaping the Universe: Frameworks & Footprints of Cosmological Phase Transitions",**  
**January 27 2026**



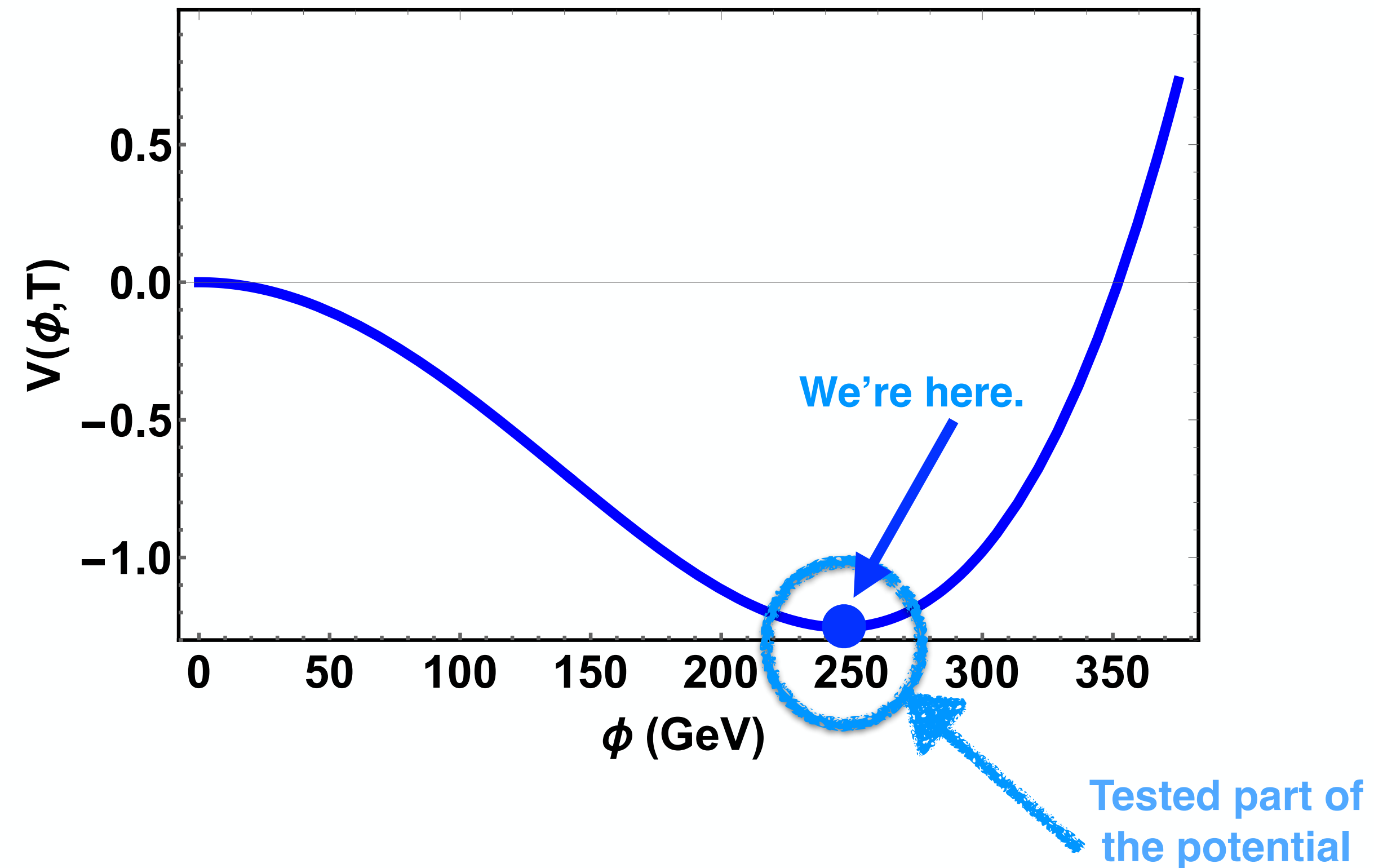
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# THE HIGGS POTENTIAL .

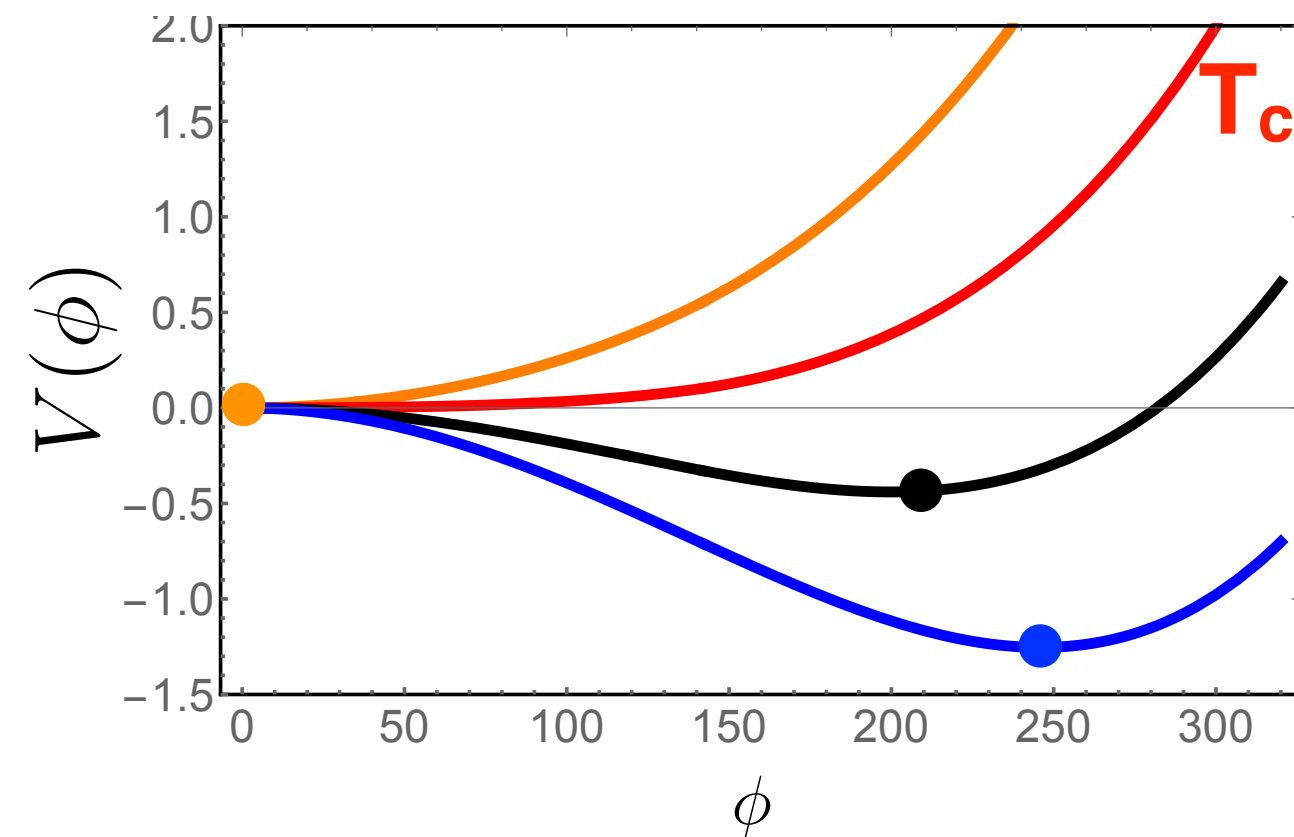
**TODAY, T=0**  $V_0(\phi) = -\mu^2\phi^2/2 + \lambda\phi^4/2$



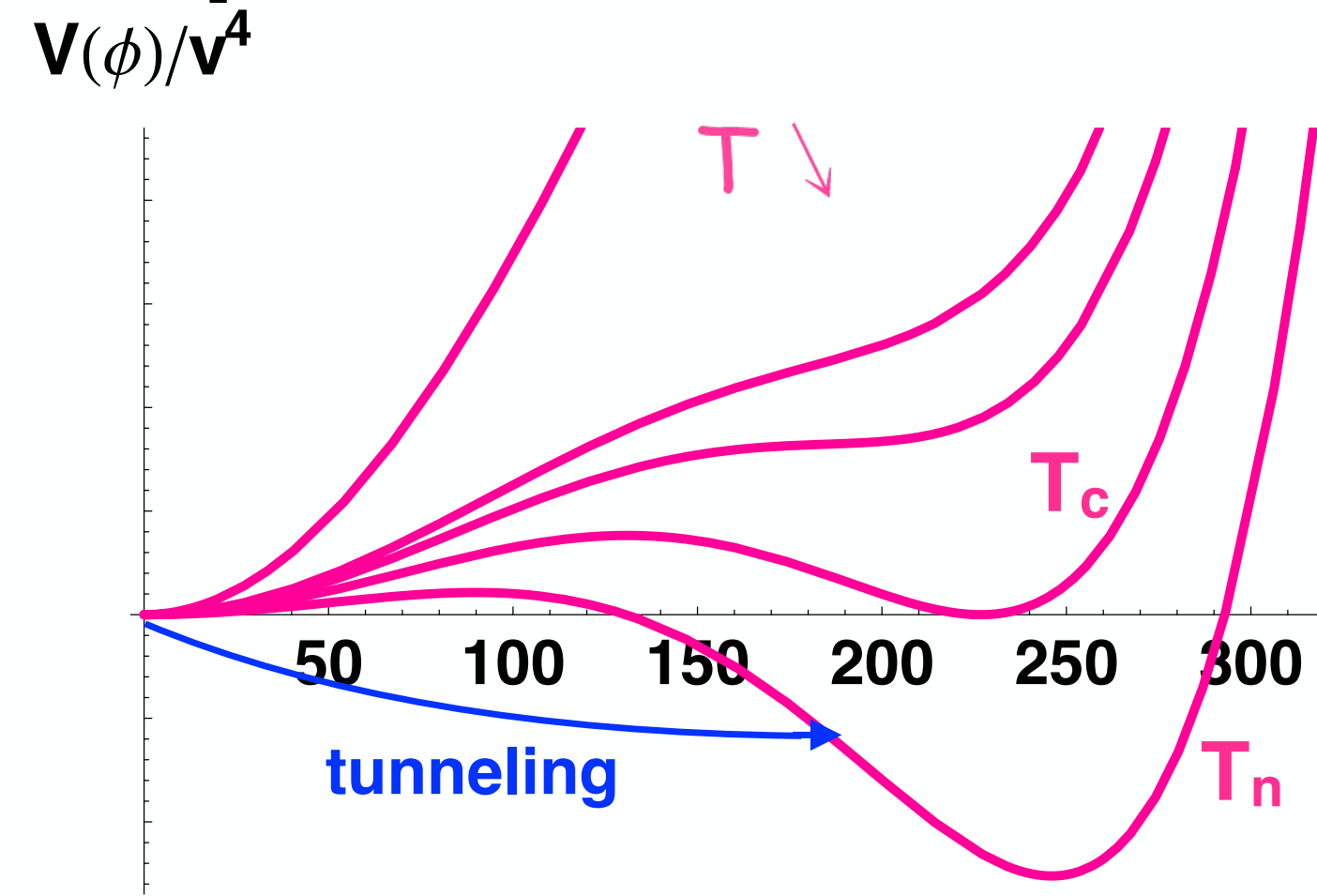
> How did we end up here ?

# The EW phase transition

## Standard Model crossover

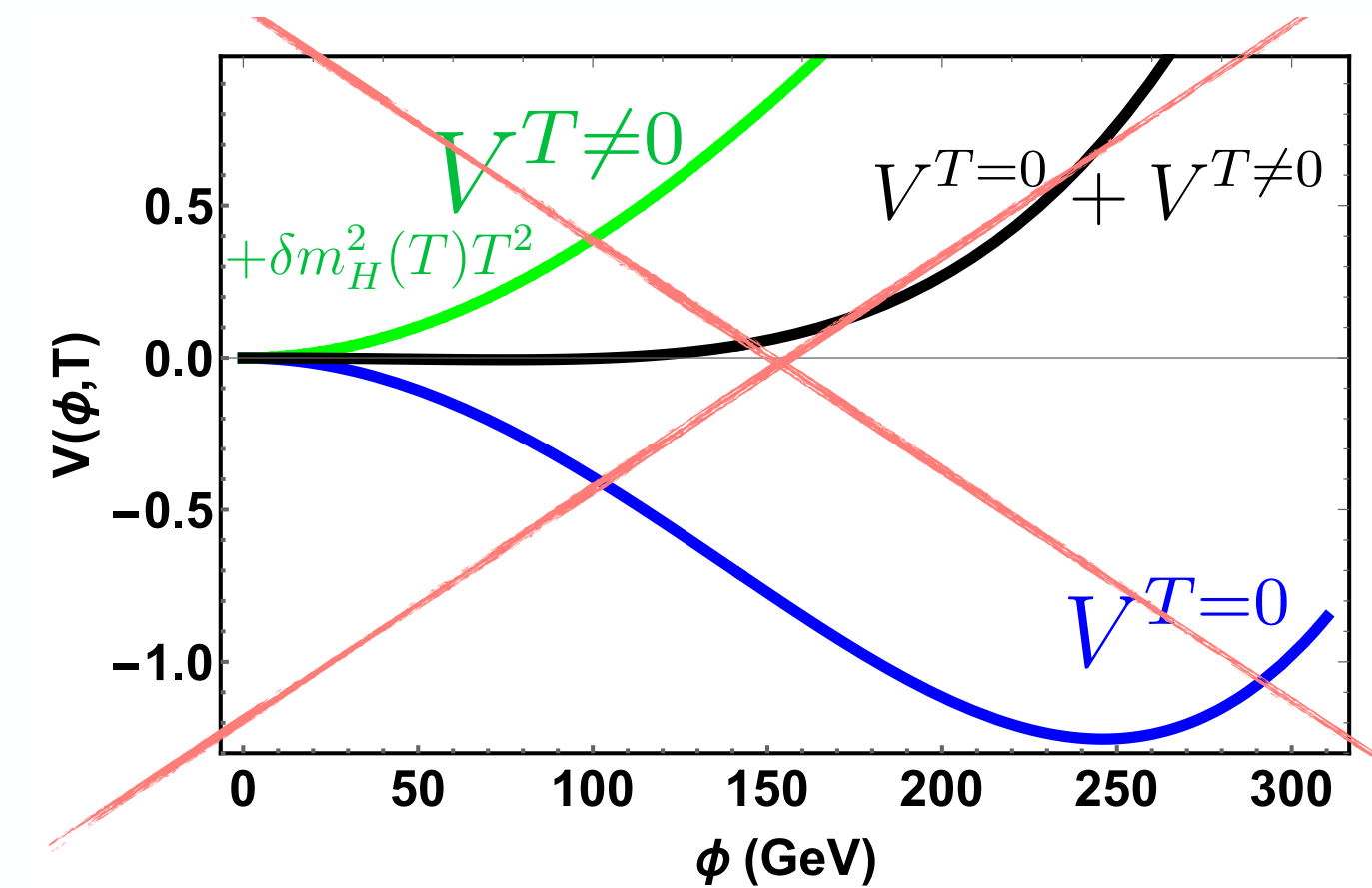


## 1st-order EW phase transition



∃ new EW-mass scalars (light for strong PT)

## No EW phase transition or happening at scale $\gg v$



∃ new EW-mass ( $\ll \sim 300$  GeV) singlets

LHC has huge potential to explore all this

**A universe in which EW symmetry was always broken always had its sphalerons shutoff, which is challenging to explain baryogenesis.**

# Baryon Number Violation Standard Model .

due to chirality + topology of electroweak theory

From the anomaly

$$\partial_\mu j_B^\mu = N_F \frac{\alpha_W}{8\pi} \text{Tr} F \tilde{F}$$



EW field strength

$$B = \int d^3x j_B^0$$

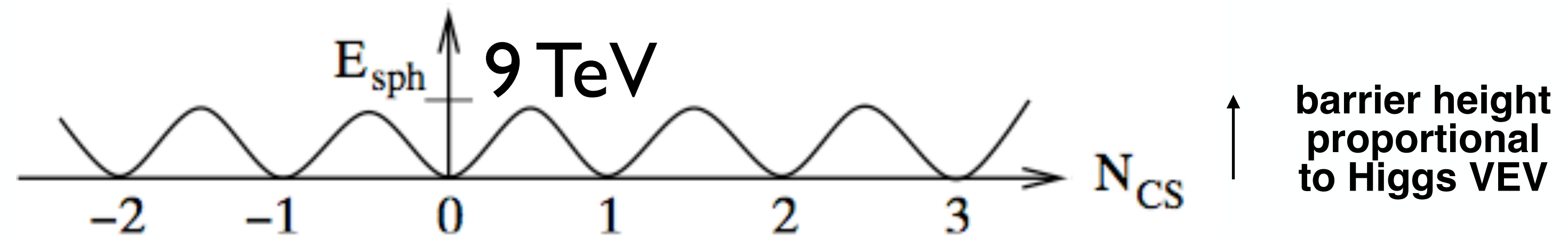
$$\Delta B = \Delta L = N_F \Delta N_{CS}$$

**N<sub>CS</sub>: Chern-Simons  
number**

**B-L is conserved**

# Baryon Number Violation Standard Model .

Energy of gauge field configuration as a function of Chern Simons number  $E$



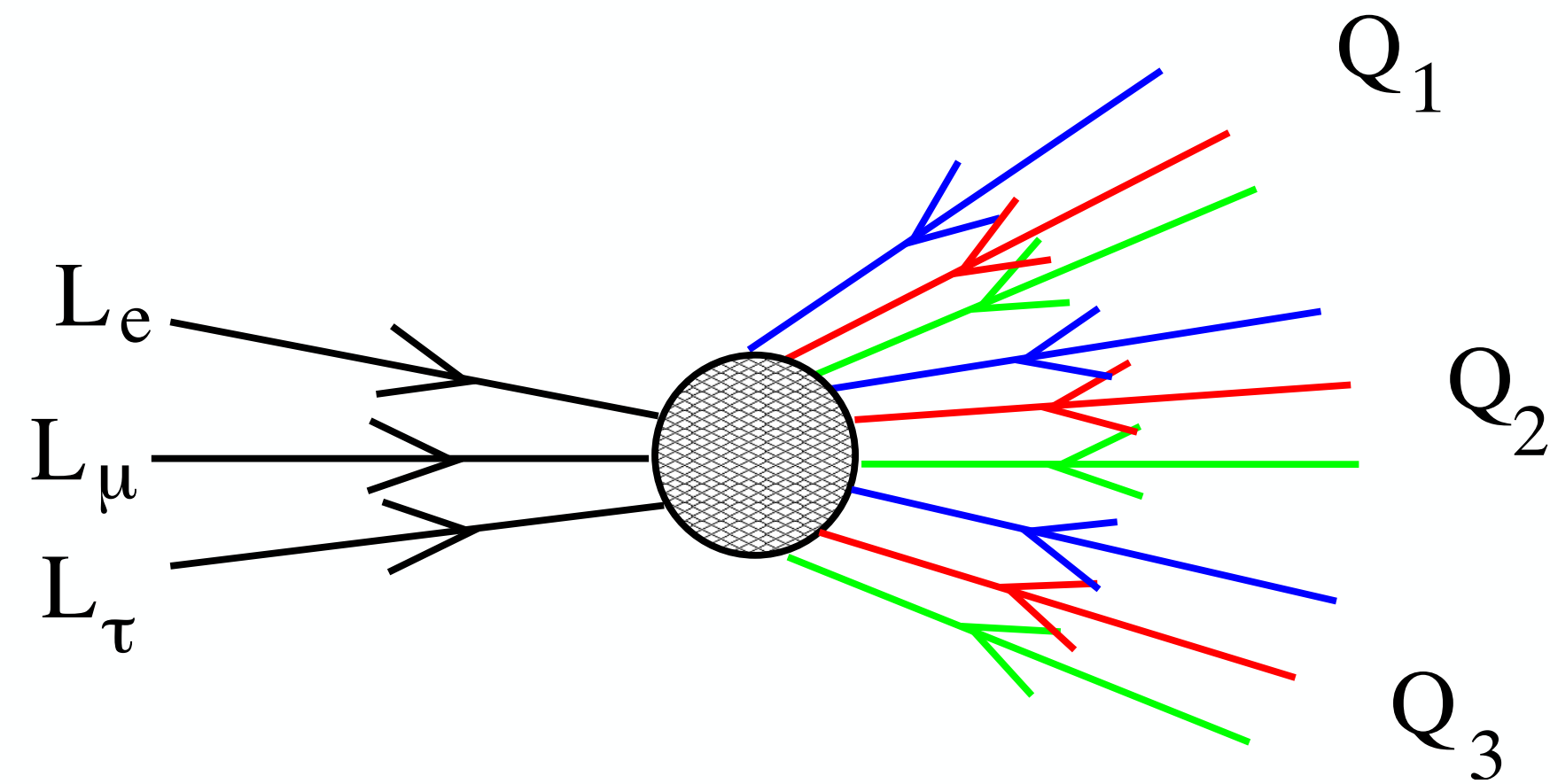
$$\Delta B = \Delta L = N_F \Delta N_{CS}$$

Baryons are created by transitions between topologically distinct vacua of the  $SU(2)_L$  gauge field

$$N_{CS}(t) - N_{CS}(0) = \frac{g^2}{16\pi^2} \int_0^t dt \int d^3x \text{Tr}[W^{\mu\nu} \tilde{W}_{\mu\nu}]$$

# Sphalerons !

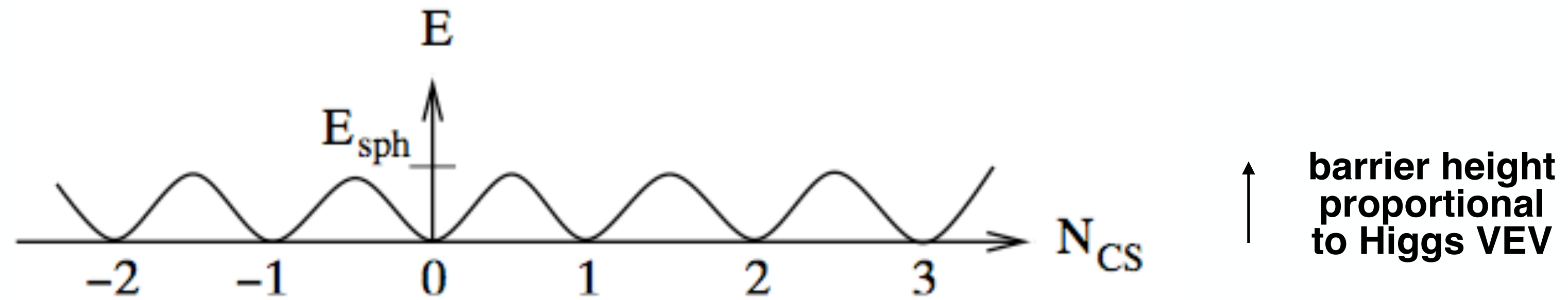
**Determinant in almost all baryogenesis mechanisms whatever their energy scale**



$$\Delta B = N_f \Delta N_{CS}$$

Each transition creates 9 LH-quarks and 3 LH leptons.

# Rate of B-violation through sphalerons at $T=0$ .



Quantum Tunneling rate:  $\Gamma \sim e^{-4\pi/\alpha_W} \sim 10^{-165}$

$$\alpha_W \sim 1/30$$

**$\Rightarrow$  Baryon number violation is totally suppressed in the SM at zero temperature**

**However, is sizeable at high temperatures, as it becomes possible to go over the barrier via thermal fluctuations**

# Rate of B-violation in the Standard Model .

The Higgs VEV sets the scale of **B**-violation

Two very  $\neq$  rates depending whether  $T > T_c$  or  $T < T_c$

$T_c$ : Temperature of the EW phase transition

- In the EW symmetric phase,  $T > T_c$       $\Gamma \sim \alpha_W^4 T^4$
- In the EW broken phase,  $T < T_c$       $\Gamma \sim v^4 e^{-E_{\text{sph}}/T}$      where  $E_{\text{sph}} \propto \langle \phi \rangle$

## Relating Baryon and Lepton number asymmetries at $T > T_c$

$$B = \sum_i (2\mu_{q_i} + \mu_{u_i} + \mu_{d_i})$$
$$L = \sum_i L_i, \quad L_i = 2\mu_{l_i} + \mu_{e_i}$$

**At high temperature in the plasma, all processes at equilibrium give rise to constraints among the chemical potentials of quarks, leptons and Higgs.**

**At thermal equilibrium, one finds that B, L and B-L are related by:**

$$\mathbf{B} = \frac{8N_f + 4}{22N_f + 13} (\mathbf{B-L})$$

$$\mathbf{c_s} = 28/79$$

$$\mathbf{L} = (\mathbf{c_s} - 1)(\mathbf{B-L})$$

**Therefore, at thermal equilibrium (when sphalerons are active), B relaxes to (B-L). In the SM, B-L=0 so any primordial baryon asymmetry produced at early times gets erased by sphalerons in a theory which conserves B-L.**

# Baryon number violation in the Standard Model due to sphalerons at finite temperature

$T_{EWPT}$ : Temperature of the EW phase transition

- In the EW symmetric phase,  $T > T_{EWPT}$

out-of-equilibrium if:  $T > 10^{12} \text{ GeV}$

- In the EW broken phase,  $T < T_{EWPT}$

out-of-equilibrium if:  $\langle \phi \rangle / T > 1$

$\langle \phi \rangle$ : Higgs vacuum expectation value

At equilibrium:

$$\mathbf{B} = \frac{8N_f + 4}{22N_f + 13} (\mathbf{B-L})$$

# Sphalerons' implications

**2 main possibilities for baryogenesis:**

**1)  $B-L=0$   
theory**  
(this talk)

**Baryogenesis must take place at the EWPT.  
Advantage: connected to EW physics,  
testable**

**2)  $B-L \neq 0$   
theory**

**High-scale baryogenesis possible.  
Disadvantage: typically difficult to test**

**Create  $B-L \neq 0$ , e.g through out-of-equilibrium decays, which then gets converted into  $B$  by sphalerons.  
Popular example: Leptogenesis**

—> **Only way to achieve baryogenesis in minimal (B-L) conserving theory:**

**At the electroweak phase transition:**  
**Electroweak baryogenesis**

# EW baryogenesis: 40 years old and still attractive

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16 May 1985

## ON ANOMALOUS ELECTROWEAK BARYON-NUMBER NON-CONSERVATION IN THE EARLY UNIVERSE

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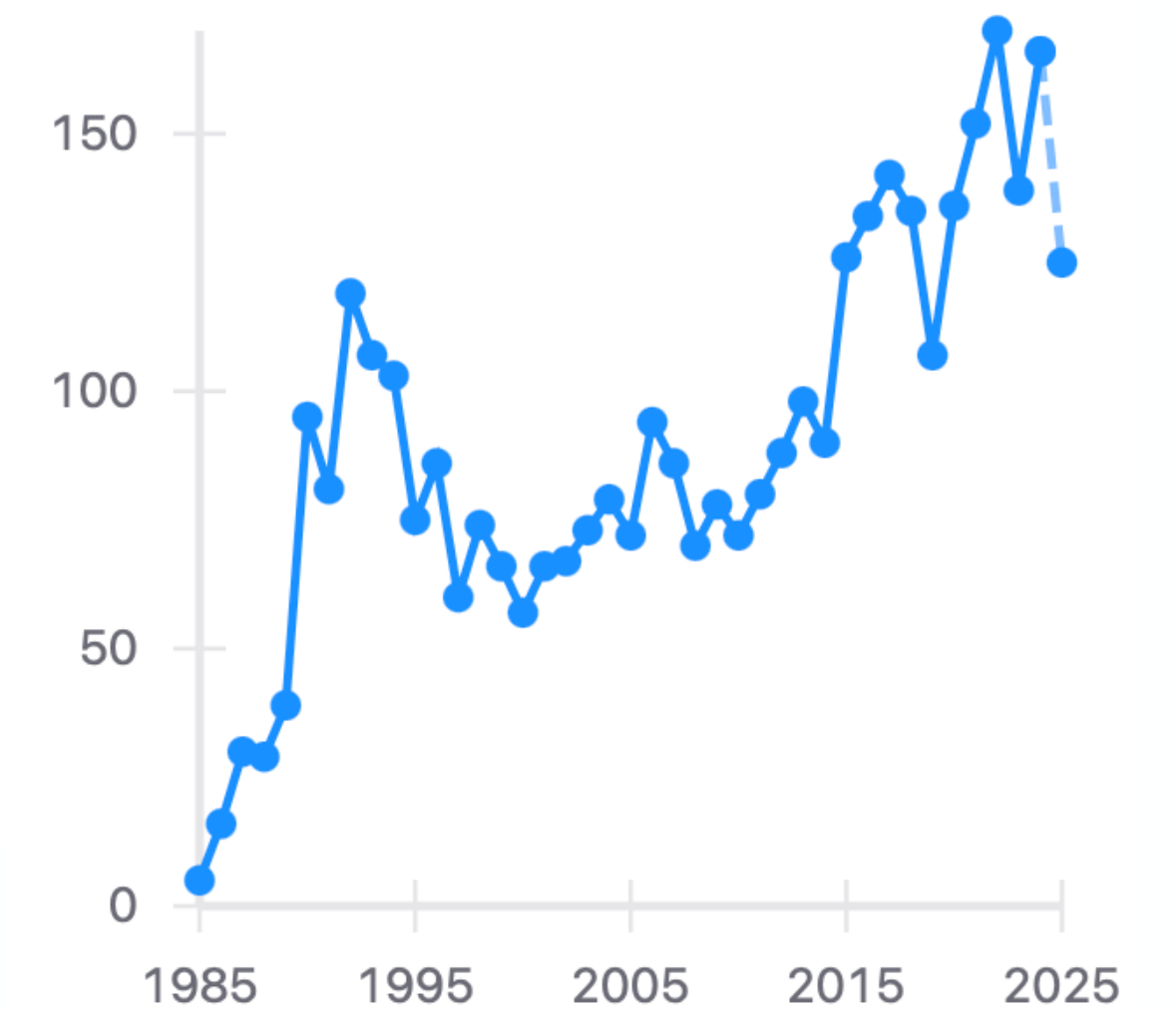
and

M.E. SHAPOSHNIKOV <sup>1</sup>

*International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste, Italy*

Received 8 February 1985

Citations per year

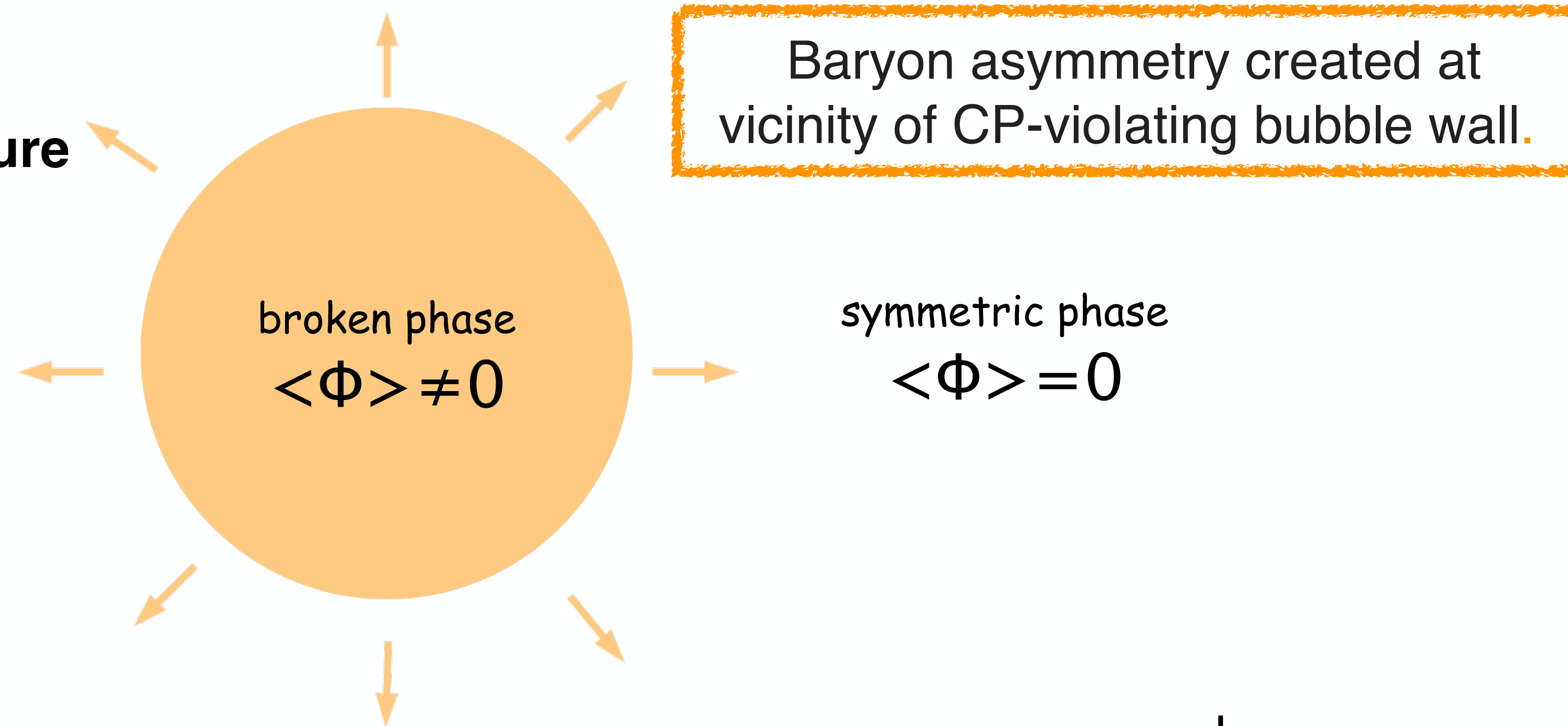


# Standard EW baryogenesis during a first-order EW phase transition

Kuzmin, Rubakov, Shaposhnikov'85

Cohen, Kaplan, Nelson'91

$T_n \equiv$  nucleation temperature



**Fine-tuned?**

**Requires**

$$\left. \frac{\langle \phi \rangle}{T} \right|_{T_n} \sim \mathcal{O}(1)$$

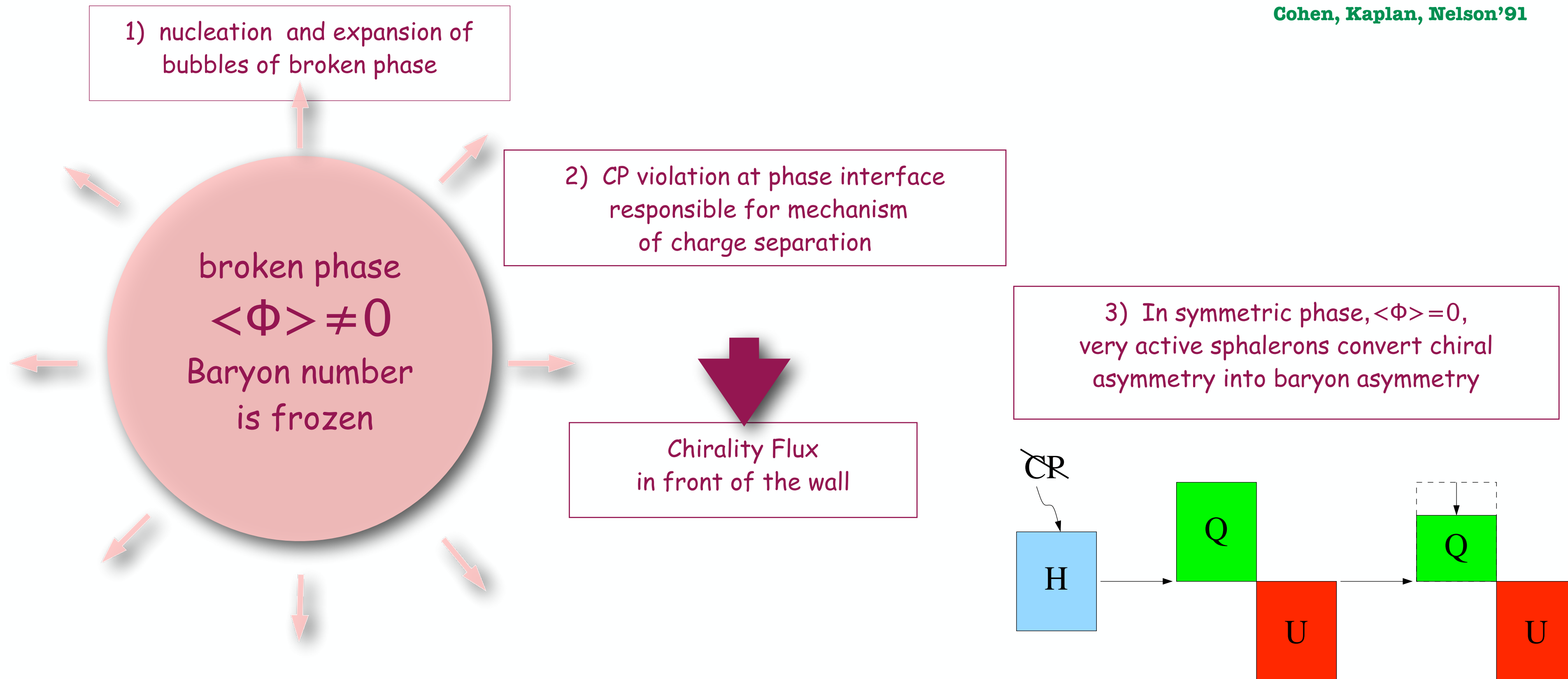
If  $\left. \frac{\langle \phi \rangle}{T} \right|_{T_n} \ll 1 \rightarrow$  Washout

If  $\left. \frac{\langle \phi \rangle}{T} \right|_{T_n} \gg 1 \rightarrow$  Too-fast wall, no time for diffusion

# EW baryogenesis during a first-order EW phase transition .

Kuzmin, Rubakov, Shaposhnikov'85

Cohen, Kaplan, Nelson'91



Strength of EW phase transition  $\equiv \frac{\langle \Phi(T_n) \rangle}{T_n} \gtrsim 1$

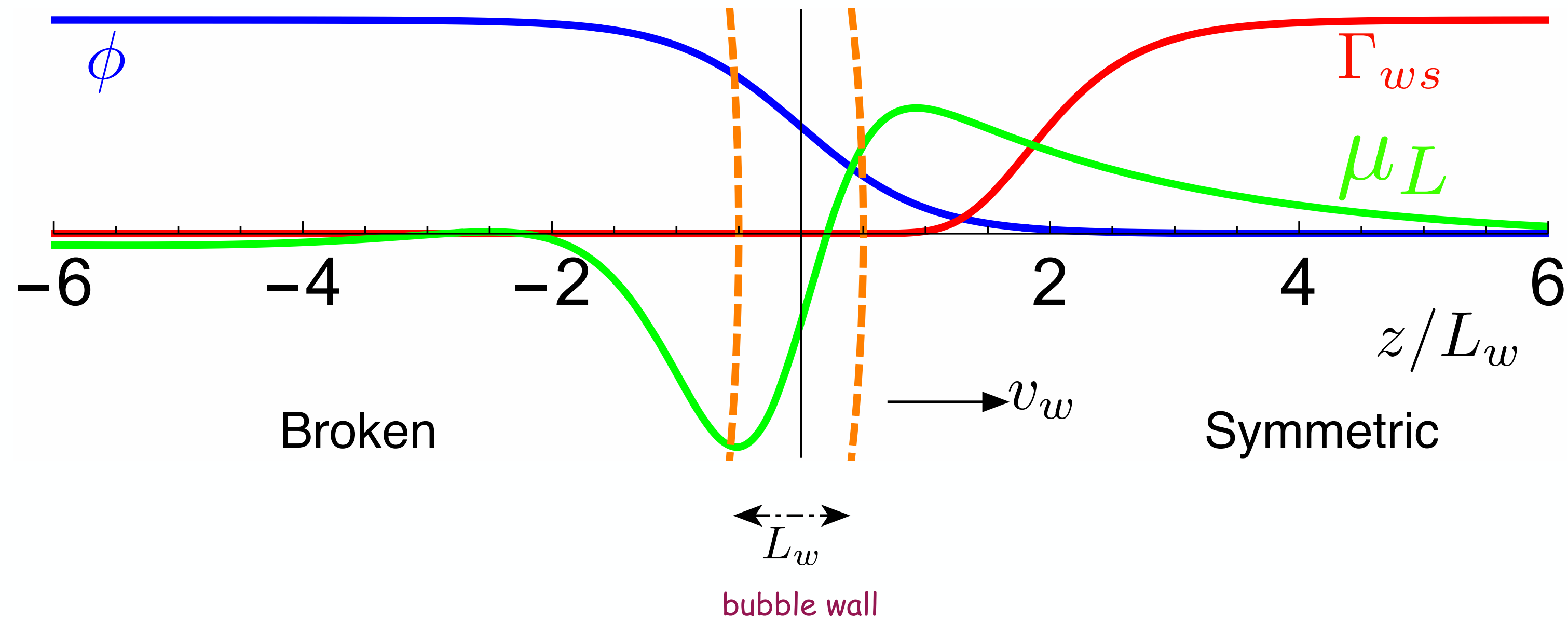
$T_n \equiv$  nucleation temperature

# The EW baryogenesis miracle

$$\eta_B = \frac{n_B(-\infty)}{s} = \frac{135 N_c}{4\pi^2 v_w g_* T} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} dz \Gamma_{ws} \mu_L \text{Exp} \left[ -\frac{3}{2} A \frac{1}{v_w} \int_{-\infty}^z dz_0 \Gamma_{ws} \right]$$

bubble wall velocity

$$\Gamma_{ws} = 10^{-6} T e^{-\frac{E_{sph}}{T} \frac{\phi(T)}{v}} \quad \text{: sphaleron rate}$$



**We will hear about EW baryogenesis in this workshop.**

**Alternative question raised in this talk:**

**Was the EW symmetry ever restored?**

**What kind of BSM would lead to EW symmetry non-restoration (SNR) at high temperature?**

**This is relevant:**

**Sphalerons mediate efficient Baryon number violation at high-temperature in the EW symmetric phase.**

**If there was never any phase of EW symmetry restoration at high temperature, we would need to do baryogenesis without relying on sphalerons**

At high temperature, the Higgs effective potential can be obtained from the free energy of the plasma of particles getting their mass from the Higgs, which is, in the non-interacting gas approximation

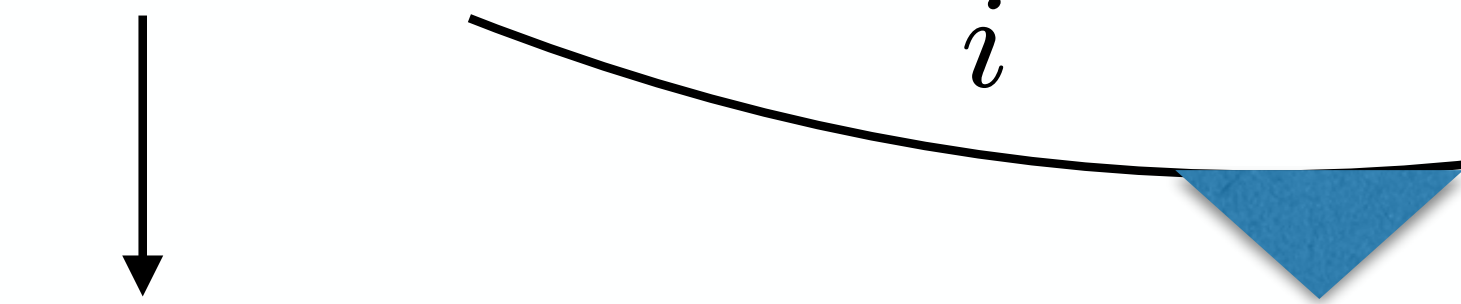
$$\mathcal{F} = V_0 + T \int \frac{d^3 p}{(2\pi)^3} \sum_i \pm g_i \log [1 \mp e^{-E_i/T}]$$

$\uparrow$   
**T=0 potential**
 $\uparrow$   
**internal dof**
 $\swarrow$   
**-/+ : for bosons/fermions**

$$E_i^2 = p^2 + m_i^2$$

$\swarrow$   **$\varphi$ -dependent**

$$\mathcal{F} = V_0 + \frac{T^4}{2\pi^2} \sum_i \pm g_i Y_{b/f} \left( \frac{m_i}{T} \right)$$



**T=0 potential**                      **T≠ 0 potential called  $V_1(\phi, T)$**

with the thermal bosonic/fermionic function defined as

$$Y_{b/f}(x) = \int_0^\infty dy y^2 \log \left[ 1 \mp e^{-\sqrt{x^2+y^2}} \right]$$