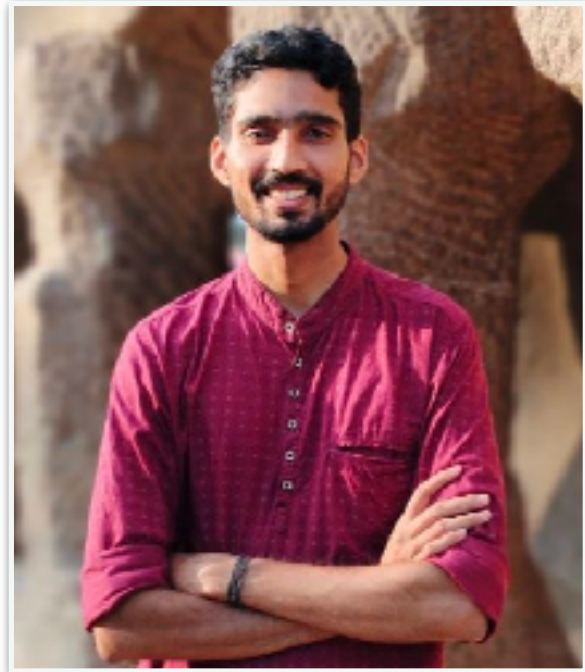


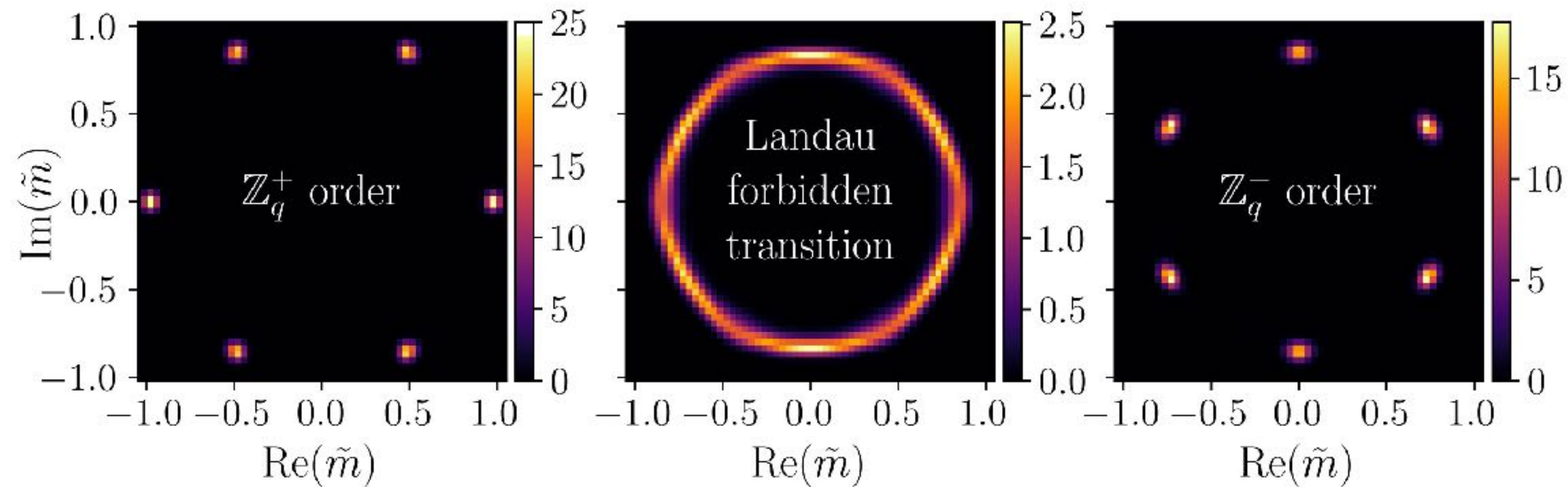
Emergence in a classical frustrated system: Symmetry, order, and '*deconfined classical*' criticality



Vishnu



Rajesh



Abhishodh

Advanced School and Conference on Quantum Matter
ICTP, Dec 1 - Dec 12 2025

Vishnu P. K., A. Prakash, R. Narayanan, **TC**
arXiv:2505.05194

Titas Chanda
Dept. of Physics, IIT Madras, India



Emergence



Sunrise in Marina Beach, Chennai, India

Emergence

The Principle of Emergence...

The collective behavior of interacting microscopic particles leads to **new phenomena at macroscopic scales**

Emergence

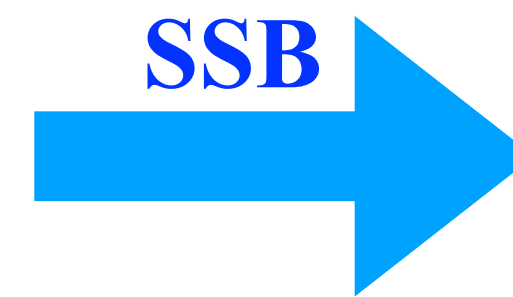
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Emergence of order...
by spontaneous symmetry breaking
as described by Landau-Ginzburg theory

Microscopic theory
described by $\mathcal{L}$ or $\mathcal{H}$
respects certain global symmetry



The ground state $|\psi_{GS}\rangle$
or the thermal state $\rho_{th}(T)$
violates the symmetry
develops (local) order

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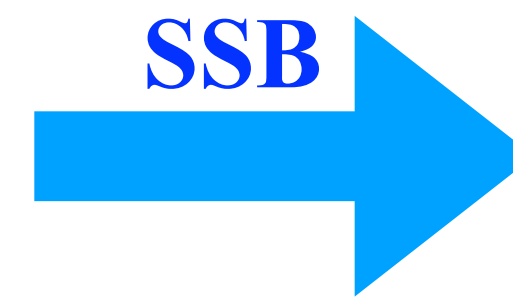
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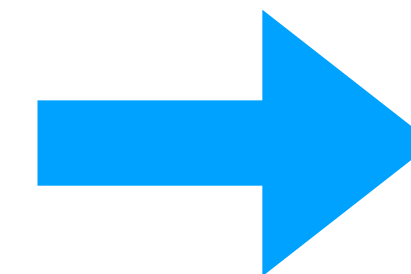
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Low-energy description
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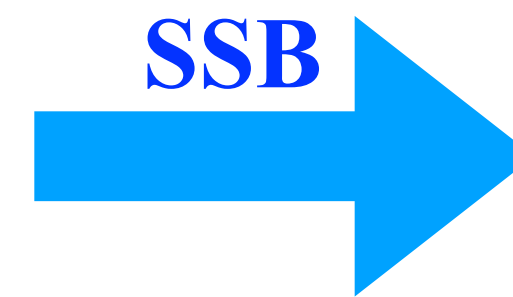
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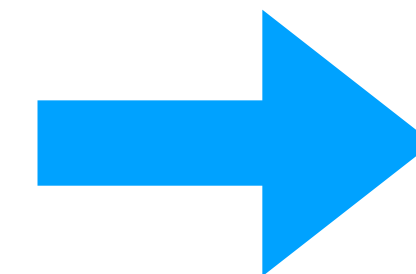
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Eur. Phys. J. D (2020) 74: 165
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THE EUROPEAN
PHYSICAL JOURNAL D

Colloquium

Simulating lattice gauge theories within quantum technologies

Mari Carmen Bañuls^{1,2}, Rainer Blatt^{3,4}, Jacopo Catani^{5,6,7}, Alessio Celi^{3,8}, Juan Ignacio Cirac^{1,2}, Marcello Dalmonte^{9,10}, Leonardo Fallani^{5,6,7}, Karl Jansen¹¹, Maciej Lewenstein^{8,12,13}, Simone Montangero^{14,15,a}, Christine A. Muschik³, Benni Reznik¹⁶, Enrique Rico^{17,18}, Luca Tagliacozzo¹⁹, Karel Van Acoleyen²⁰, Frank Verstraete^{20,21}, Uwe-Jens Wiese²², Matthew Wingate²³, Jakub Zakrzewski^{24,25}, and Peter Zoller³

PHILOSOPHICAL
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Review



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[nature](#) > [nature physics](#) > [perspectives](#) > article

Perspective | Published: 01 February 2018

Symmetry and emergence

[Edward Witten](#)

[Nature Physics](#) **14**, 116–119 (2018) | [Cite this article](#)

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“...in the early days of particle physics, the global symmetries or conservation laws were considered fundamental...”

“...in a modern understanding of particle physics, global symmetries are approximate”... and “...are in significant part an “accidental” consequence of the gauge symmetries of the Standard Model...”

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**Phase diagram of Rydberg-dressed atoms on two-leg square ladders:
Coupling supersymmetric conformal field theories on the lattice**

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Common Folklore...

RG **irrelevant** perturbations can lead to enhanced symmetry in the coarse-grained theory

$$\text{Exact action: } S = S_{CFT}^{Sym} + g \int dt d\mathbf{r} \, O(t, \mathbf{r}) \xrightarrow[\substack{\text{Under } (t, \mathbf{r}) \rightarrow (\lambda t, \lambda \mathbf{r}) \\ O(\lambda t, \lambda \mathbf{r}) = \lambda^{-\Delta} O(t, \mathbf{r})}]{\text{RG flow}} S = S_{CFT}^{Sym} + g \lambda^{d-\Delta} \int dt d\mathbf{r} \, O(t, \mathbf{r})$$

Becomes **irrelevant** in the infrared limit for $\Delta > d$

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We are going to contradict this conventional wisdom on emergence... in a **classical many-body system**

Frustration + relevant perturbation $\longrightarrow$ emergent symmetry $\xrightarrow{\text{SSB}}$ emergent order

Classical Many-Body Systems not quantum...



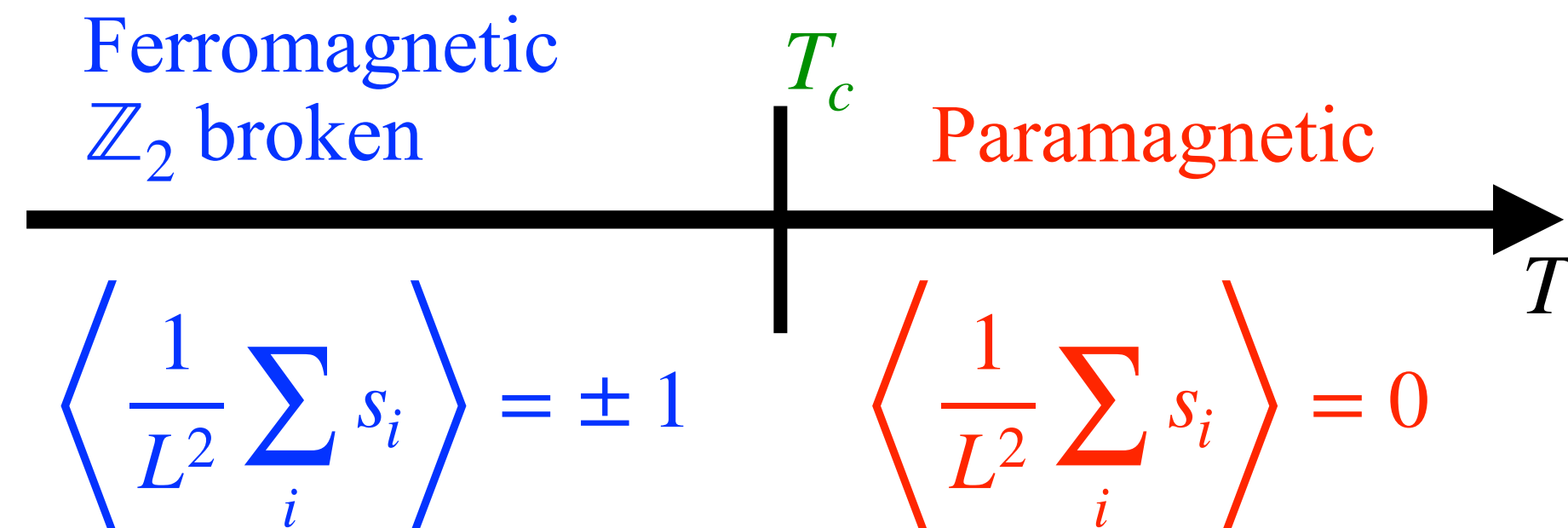
Example: 2D Ising model

$$H = -J \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} s_i s_j \quad s = \pm 1$$

$$= -J \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j) \quad \theta = 0, \pi$$



$$\mathbb{Z}_2 \text{ symmetry: } \begin{aligned} s_i &\rightarrow \pm s_i \\ \theta_i &\rightarrow \theta_i + n\pi \end{aligned} \quad \forall i$$



Textbook examples

Classical Many-Body Systems

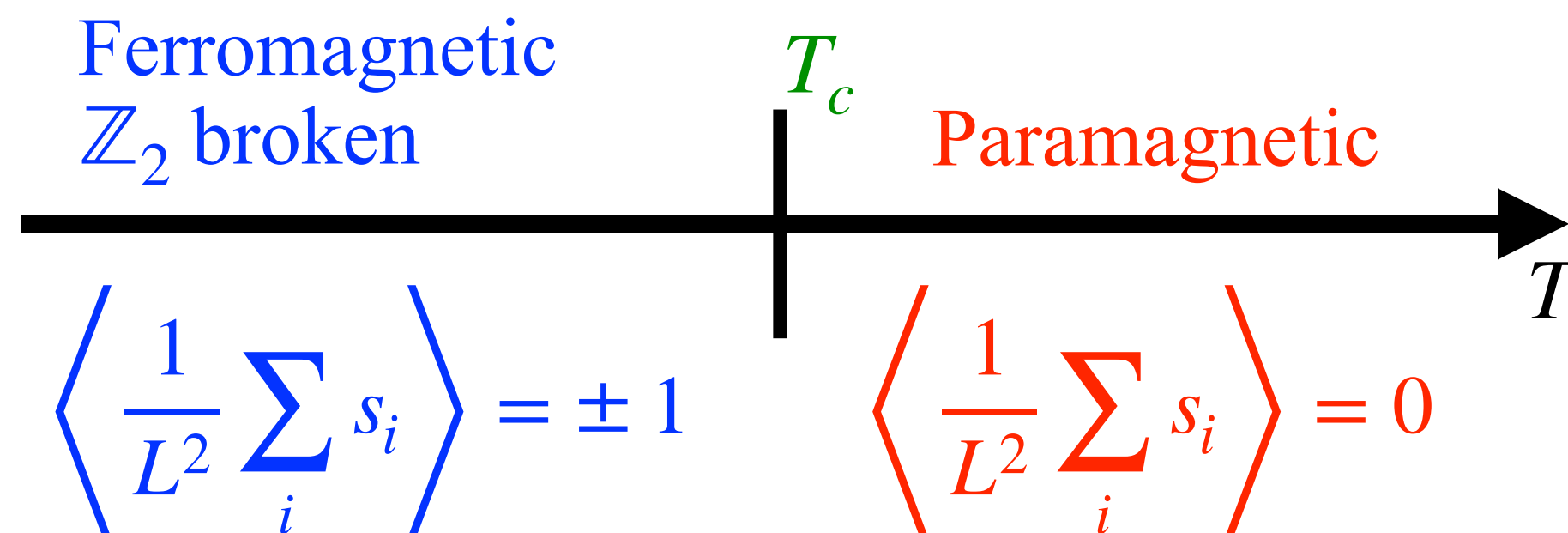
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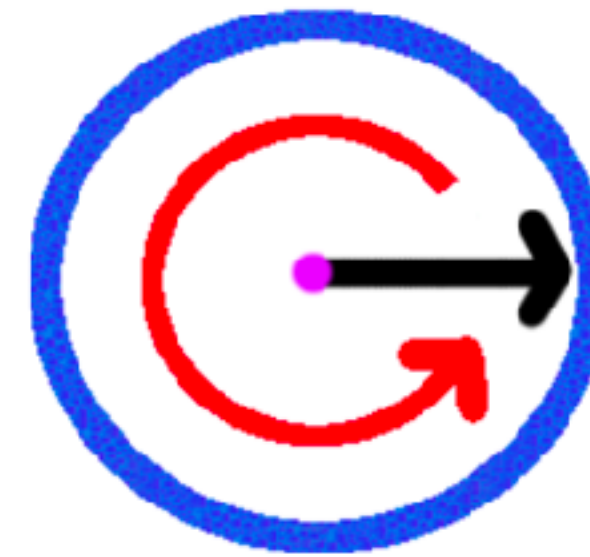
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Example: 2D XY model

$$H = -J \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j) \quad 0 \leq \theta < 2\pi$$

XY spins

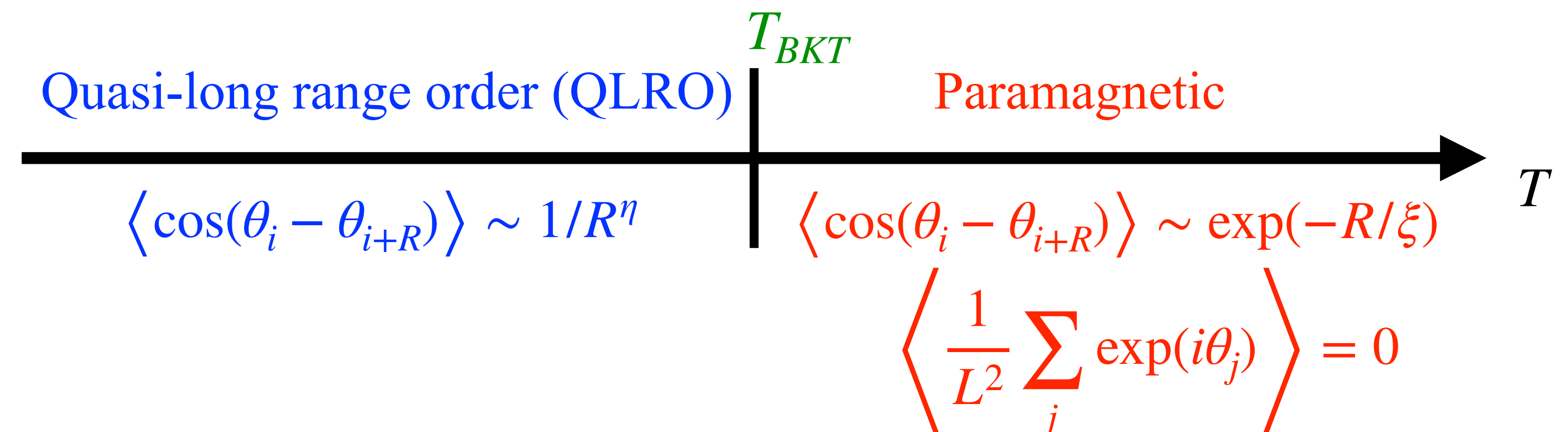


$$O(2) \text{ symmetry: } \begin{aligned} SO(2) &: \theta_i \rightarrow \theta_i + \alpha \\ \mathcal{R} &: \theta_i \rightarrow -\theta_i \end{aligned} \quad \dots \forall i$$

In 2D... continuous symmetry **cannot be broken** (Mermin-Wagner theorem)

But... **still has a phase transition**...

Berezinskii-Kosterlitz-Thouless (BKT) Transition

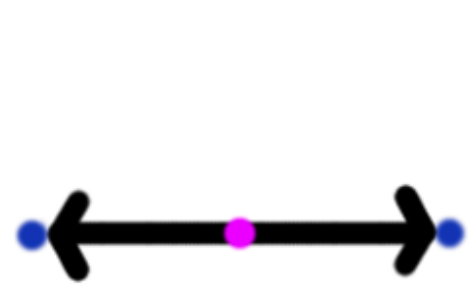


Classical Many-Body Systems

Example: 2D q -state clock model... somewhere between Ising and XY

$$H = -J \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j) \quad \theta = \frac{2n\pi}{q}; \quad n = 0, 1, \dots, q-1$$

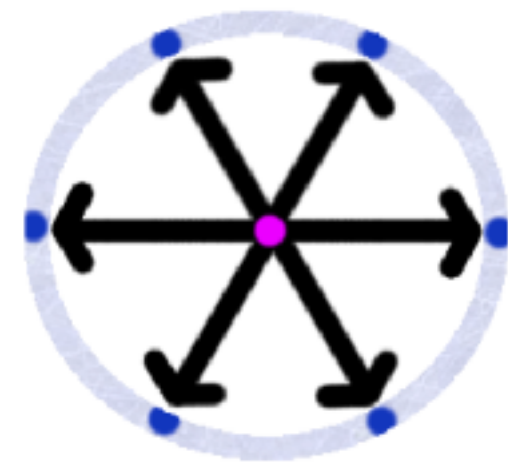
$$D_q \text{ symmetry: } \begin{aligned} \mathbb{Z}_q &: \theta_i \rightarrow \theta_i + \frac{2m\pi}{q} \dots \forall i \\ \mathcal{R} &: \theta_i \rightarrow -\theta_i \end{aligned}$$



Ising spins



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6-state clock spins

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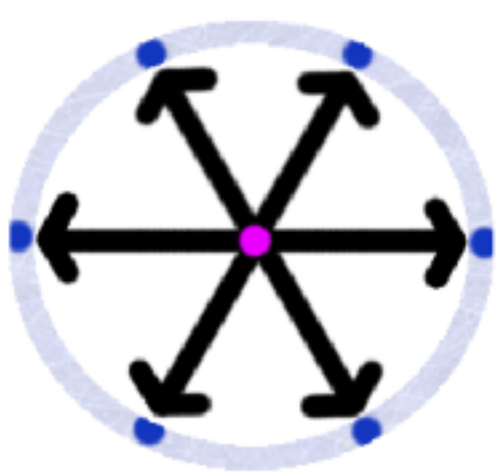
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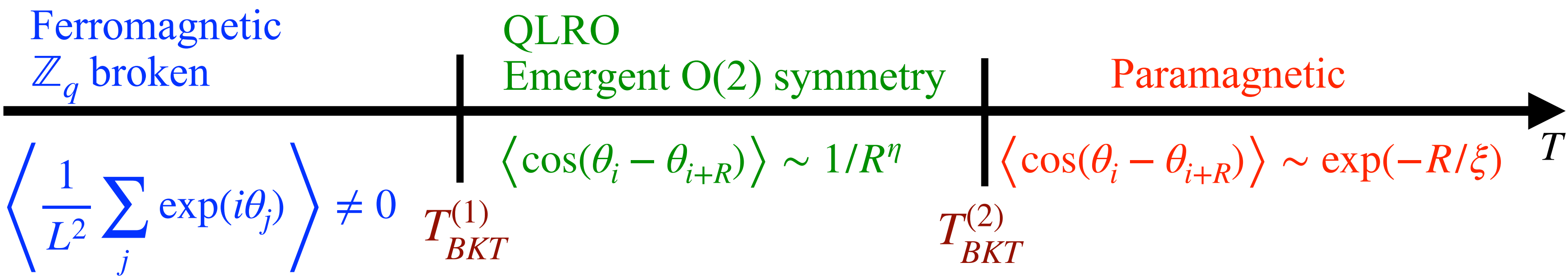


6-state clock spins

Interesting scenario happens for $q \geq 5$

at intermediate T ...

there is an emergent $O(2)$ symmetry
that cannot be broken... gives a QLRO phase



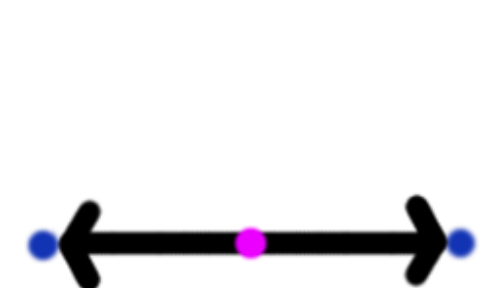
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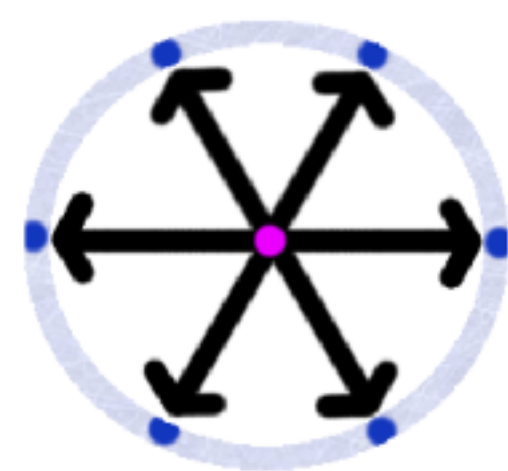
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Ferromagnetic
 $\mathbb{Z}_q$ broken

QLRO

Emergent $O(2)$ symmetry

Paramagnetic

$$\left\langle \frac{1}{L^2} \sum_j \exp(i\theta_j) \right\rangle \neq 0$$

$T_{BKT}^{(1)}$

$$\langle \cos(\theta_i - \theta_{i+R}) \rangle \sim 1/R^\eta$$

$T_{BKT}^{(2)}$

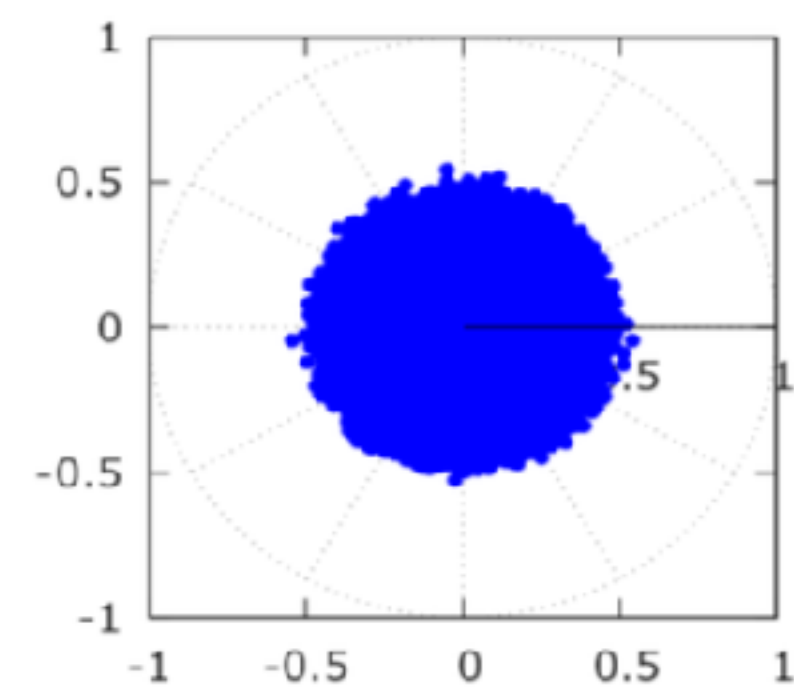
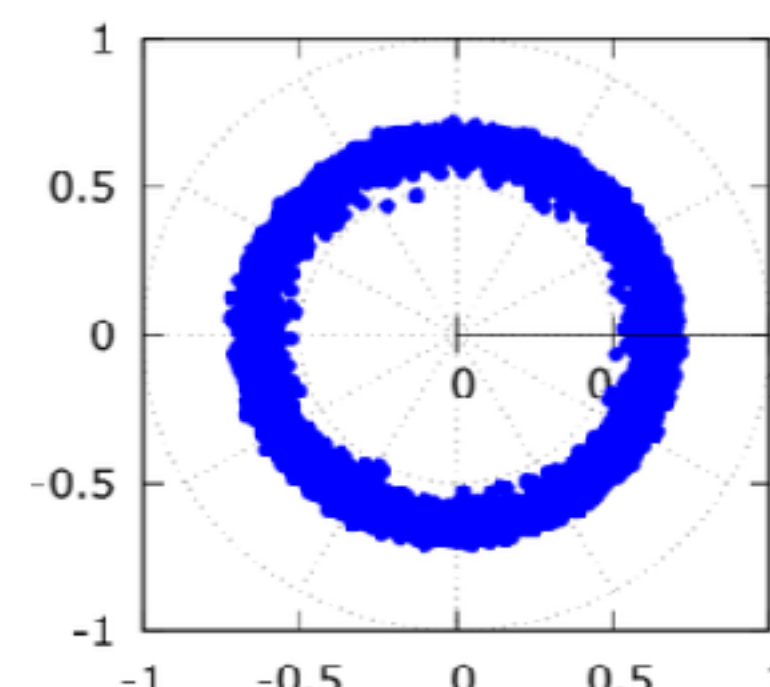
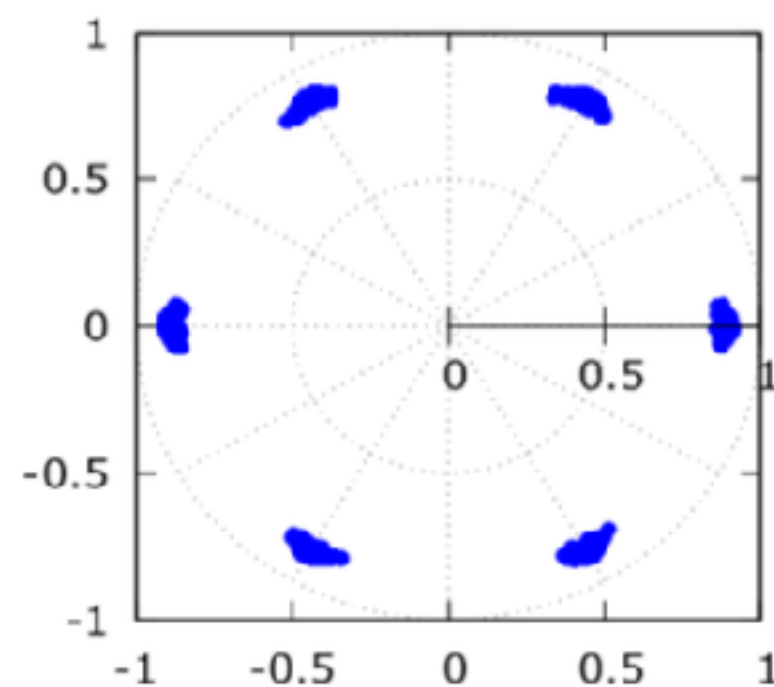
$$\langle \cos(\theta_i - \theta_{i+R}) \rangle \sim \exp(-R/\xi)$$

T

Polar plot of complex order parameter:

$$m = \left\langle \frac{1}{L^2} \sum_j \exp(i\theta_j) \right\rangle$$

from different Monte Carlo snapshots



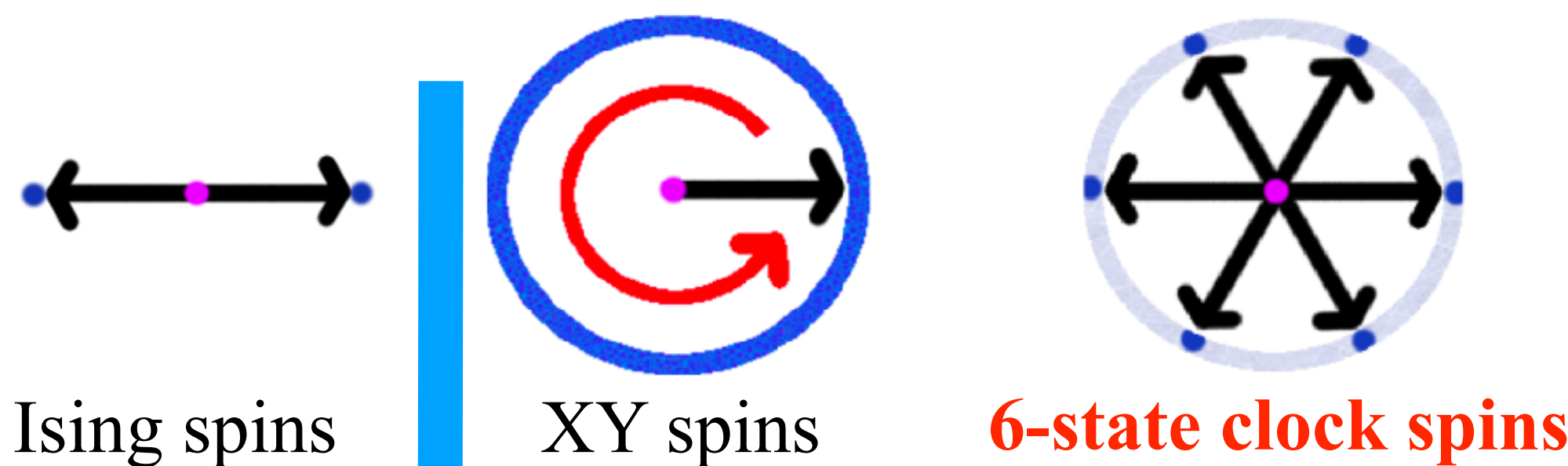
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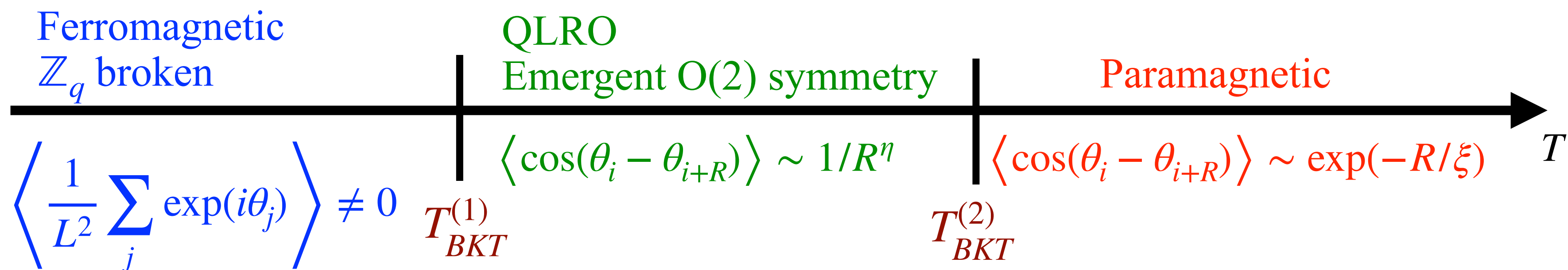


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Soften the 'clock' restriction
by putting energy penalty



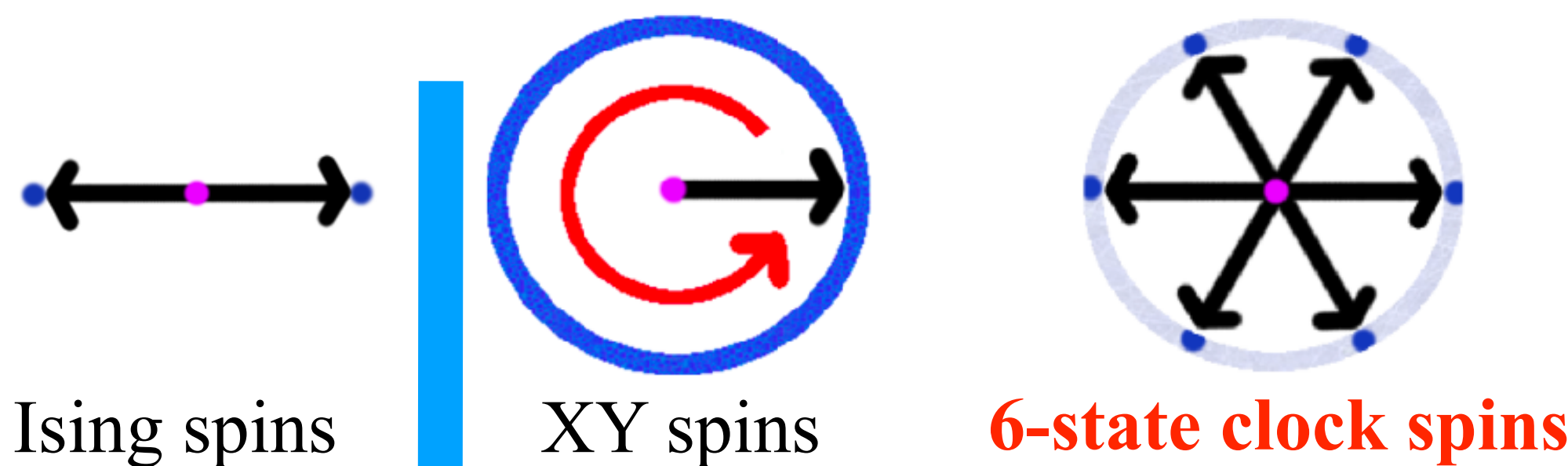
$$H_{soft} = -J \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j) - h_1 \sum_i \cos(q\theta_i) \quad 0 \leq \theta < 2\pi, h_1 > 0$$

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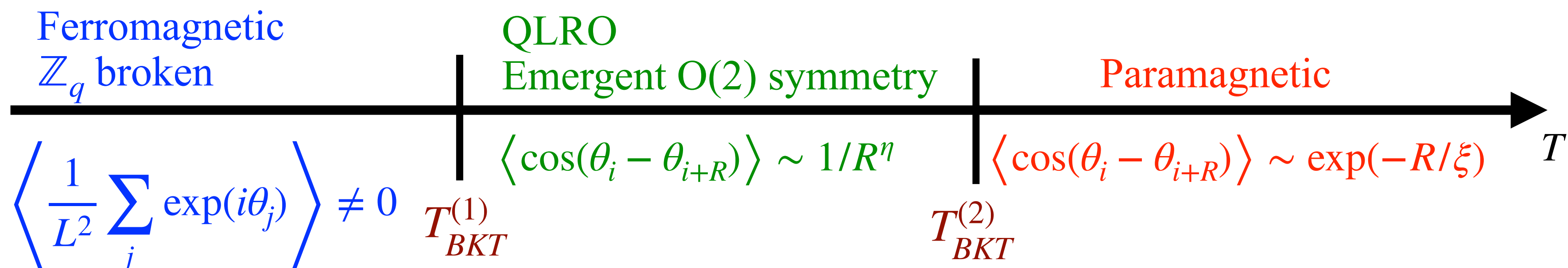
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Soften the 'clock' restriction
by putting energy penalty

RG relevant
i.e., $h_1 \rightarrow \infty$ at infrared

$$H_{soft} = -J \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j) - h_1 \sum_i \cos(q\theta_i) \quad 0 \leq \theta < 2\pi, h_1 > 0$$

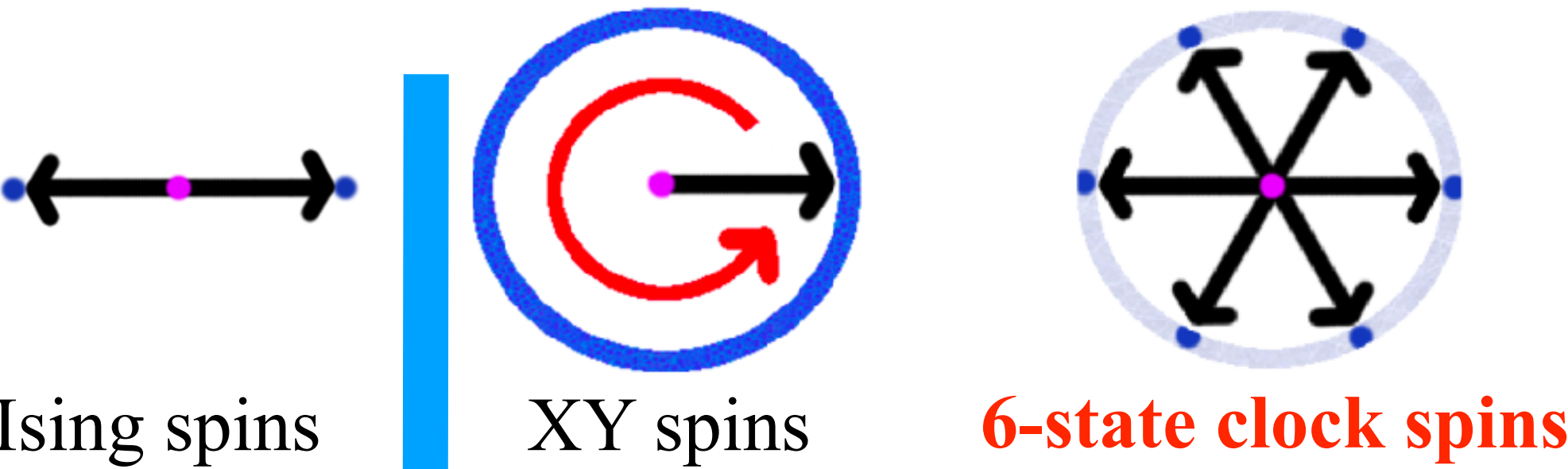


Classical Many-Body Systems

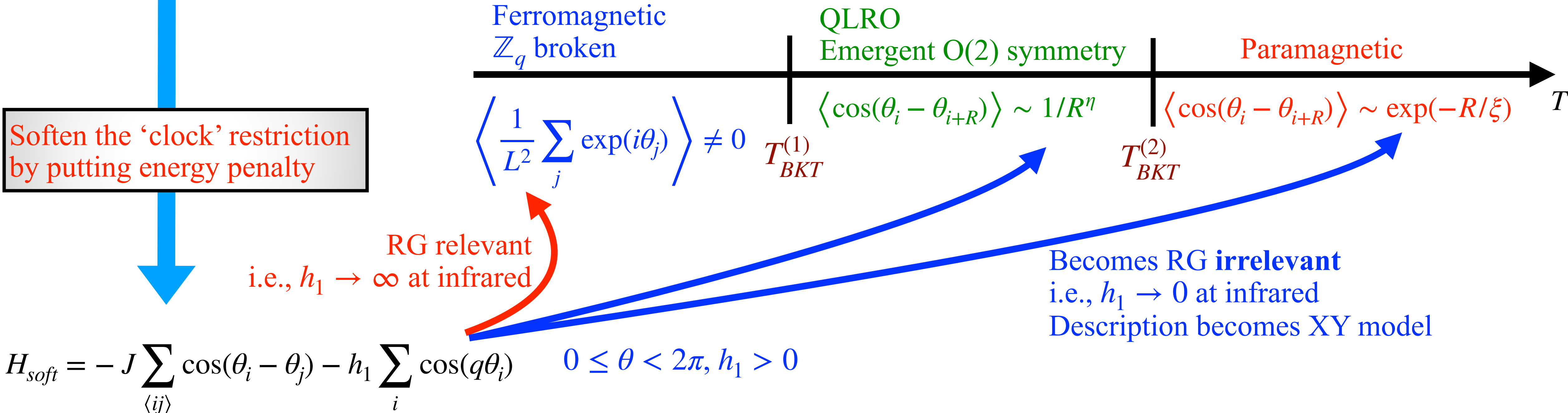
Example: 2D q -state clock model... somewhere between Ising and XY

$$H = -J \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j) \quad \theta = \frac{2n\pi}{q}; \quad n = 0, 1, \dots, q-1$$

D_q symmetry: $\mathbb{Z}_q : \theta_i \rightarrow \theta_i + \frac{2m\pi}{q} \dots \forall i$
 $\mathcal{R} : \theta_i \rightarrow -\theta_i$



Interesting scenario happens for $q \geq 5$
at intermediate T ...
there is an emergent $O(2)$ symmetry
that cannot be broken... gives a **QLRO** phase



Frustrated Classical Many-Body Systems

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Frustrated Classical Many-Body Systems

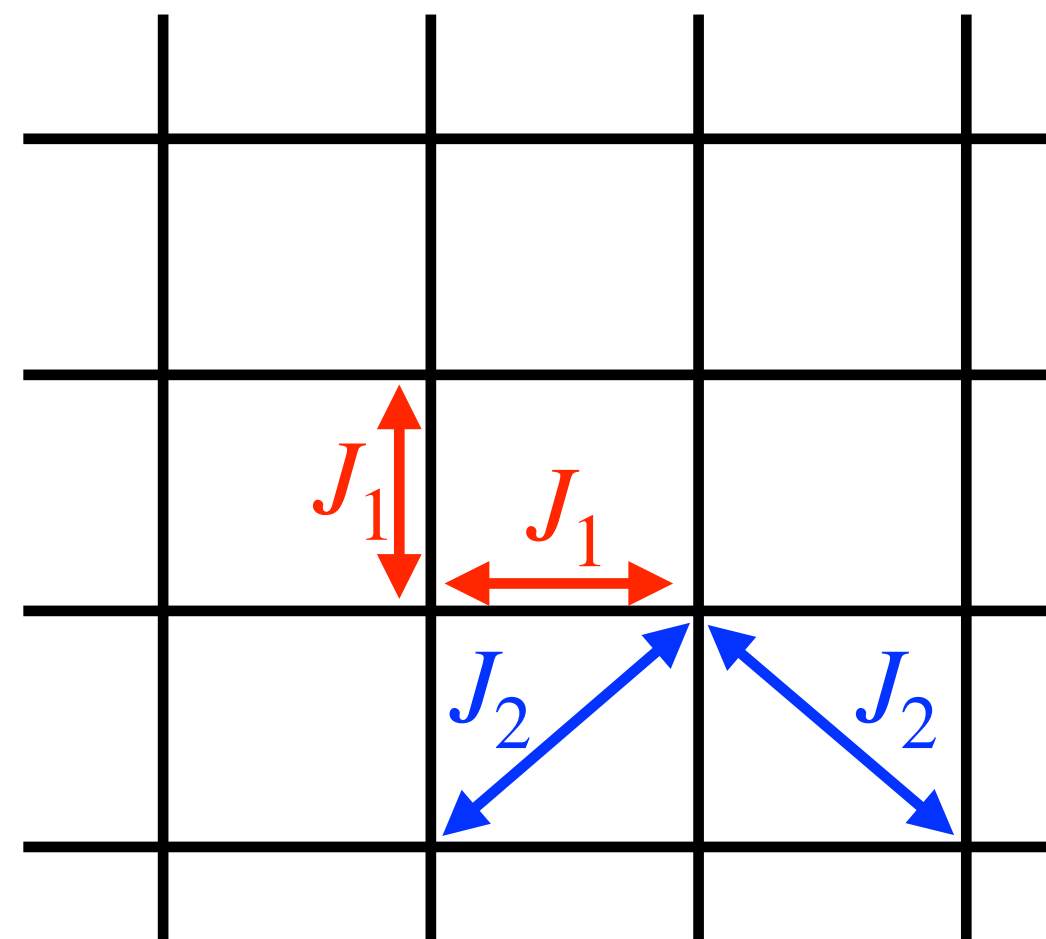
Frustration @ IIT Madras campus



$$H = -J_1 \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j) + J_2 \sum_{\langle\langle ij \rangle\rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j)$$

Nearest-neighbor
ferromagnetic interaction

Next-nearest neighbor
anti-ferromagnetic interaction



Frustrated Classical Many-Body Systems

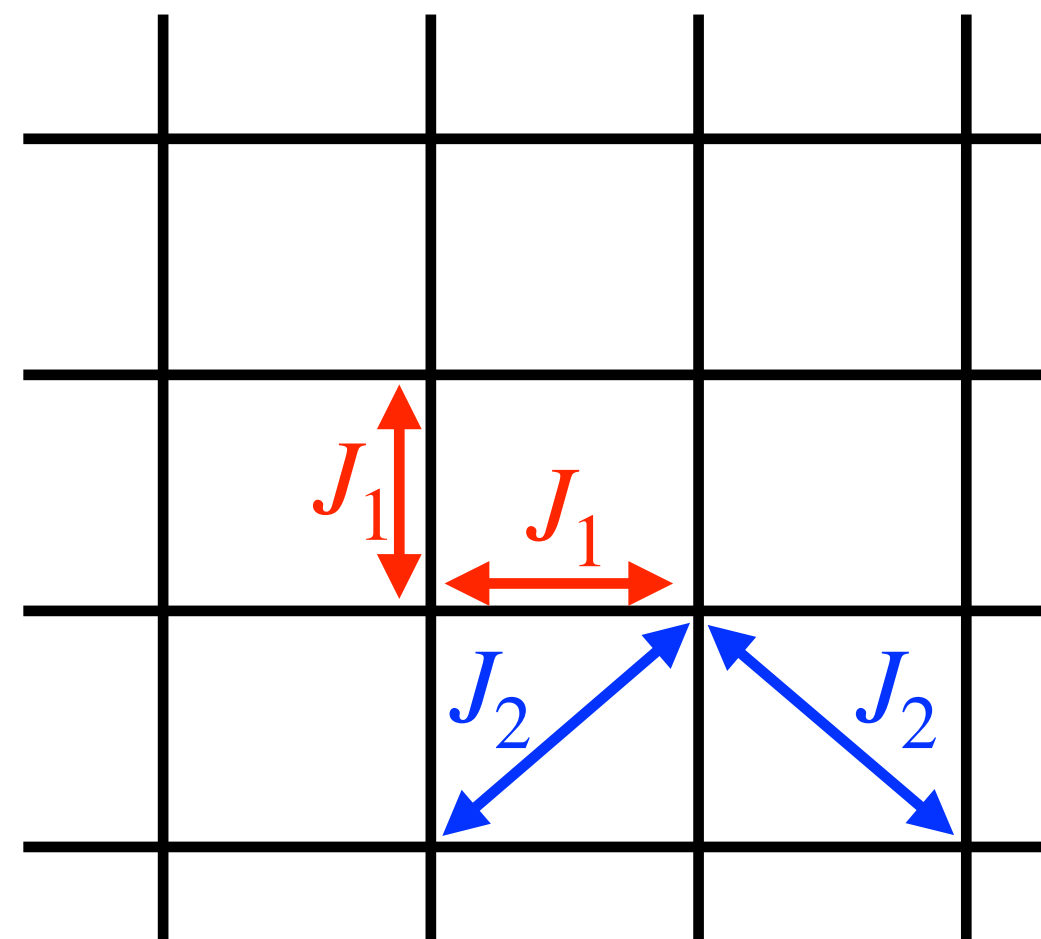
Frustration @ IIT Madras campus



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Nearest-neighbor
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$$\theta = \frac{2n\pi}{q}; \quad n = 0, 1, \dots, q-1 \dots \text{with even } q \geq 6$$

Note: Even the **Ising** (Gangat, PRB 2024, Chatelain, PRE 2025),
and **XY** (Song et. al., PRB 2025) limits
are still debated and under active considerations

How to crack these systems



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How to crack these systems

Option 1: Traditional Classical Monte Carlo (CMC)...

Frustration $\Rightarrow$ Single spin-flip updates $\Rightarrow$ large autocorrelation time / critical slowing down

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Corner transfer matrix renormalization group (CTMRG)... see the review by Okunishi, Nishino, Ueda (2022)

Partition function $Z = \sum_{\{s\}} e^{-\beta H(\{s\})} = \text{Tr} \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{Diagram of a 5x5 grid of yellow and red circles connected by lines, representing a tensor network contraction.} \end{array} \right]$

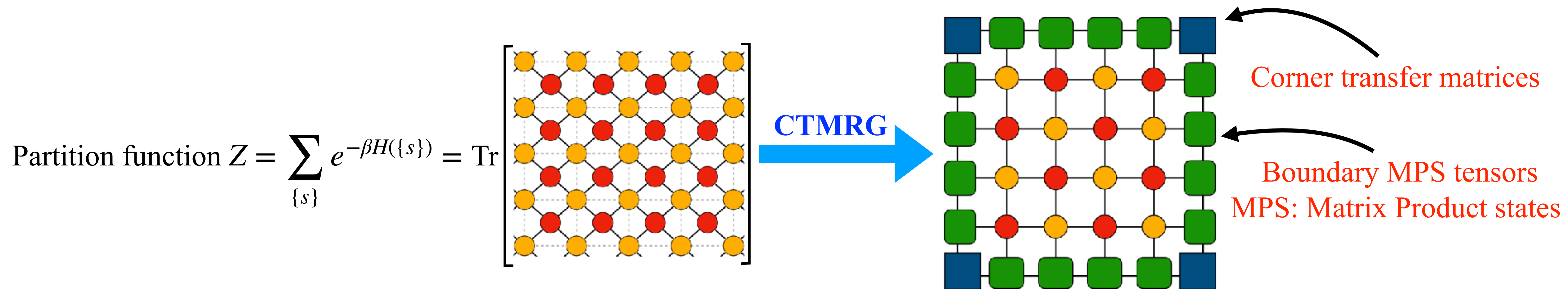
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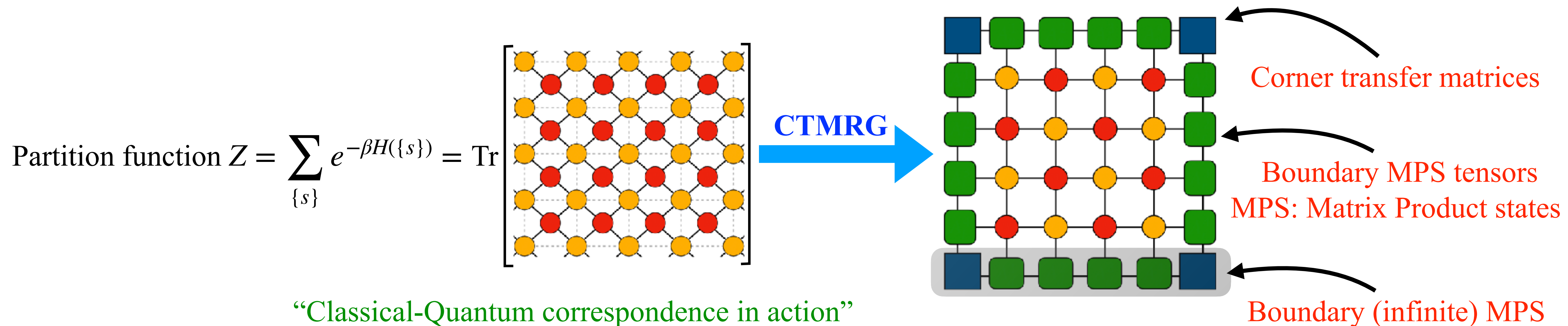
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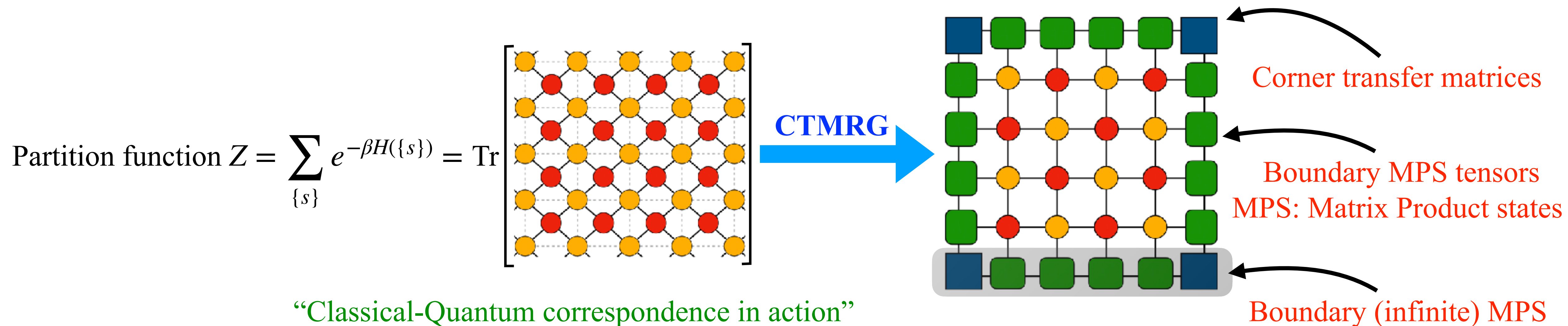
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- Efficient, elegant, deterministic
- Calculation of observables, correlation functions.. as easy as it can get.. exactly similar to MPS methods for 1D quantum systems
- von Neumann Entanglement Entropy (EE) ‘for a classical system’... (almost) no extra computational cost...
- Calabrese-Cardy scaling of EE to get the central charge and the universality class... without much trouble...

How to crack these systems

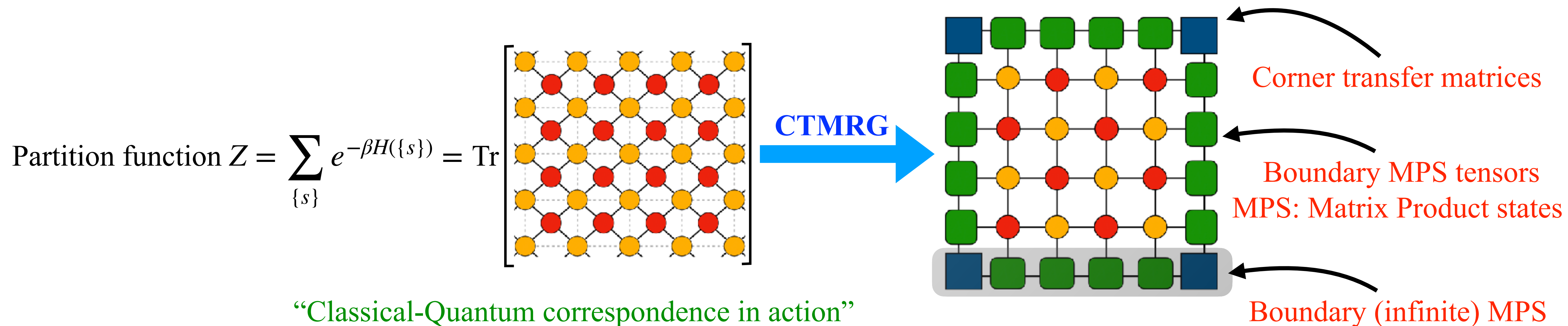
Option 1: Traditional Classical Monte Carlo (CMC)...

CMC still a powerful and useful tool

Frustration $\Rightarrow$ Single spin-flip updates $\Rightarrow$ large autocorrelation time / critical slowing down

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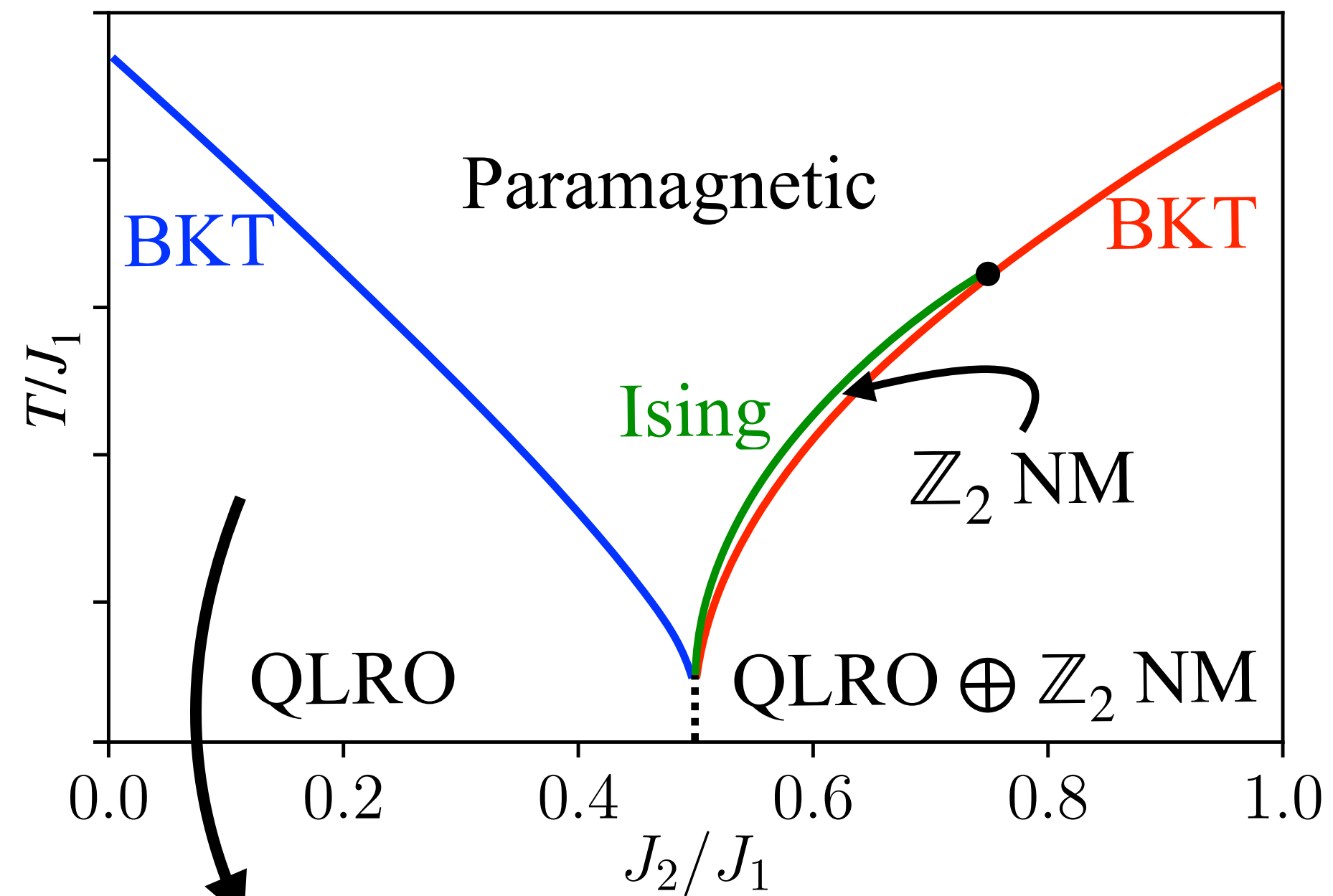
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Results



J_1 - J_2 Model... In the XY limit

$$H = -J_1 \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j) + J_2 \sum_{\langle\langle ij \rangle\rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j)$$



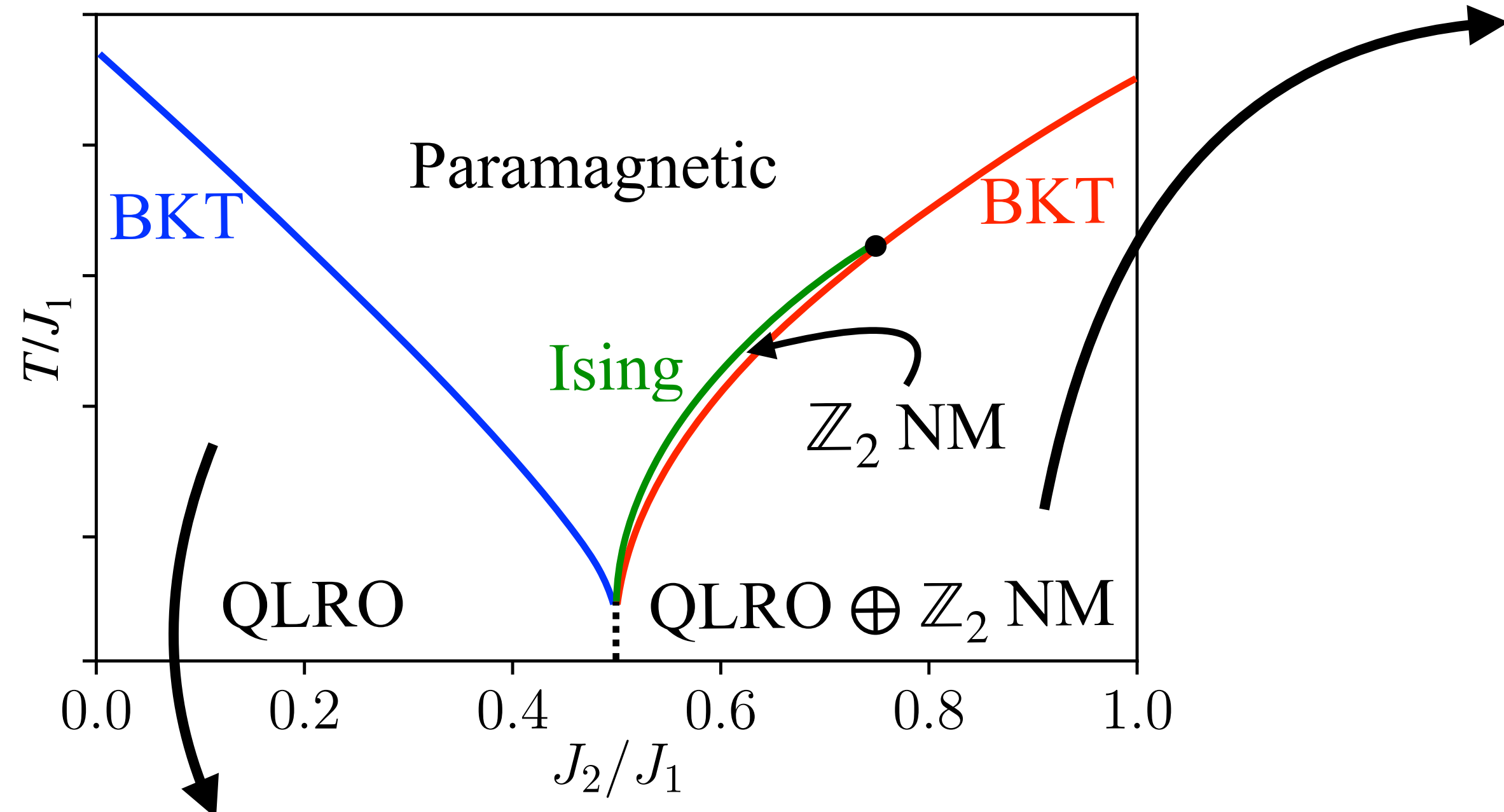
Quasi-long-range-order phase
as $U(1)$ symmetry cannot break

$$\langle \cos(\theta_i - \theta_{i+R}) \rangle \sim 1/R^\eta$$

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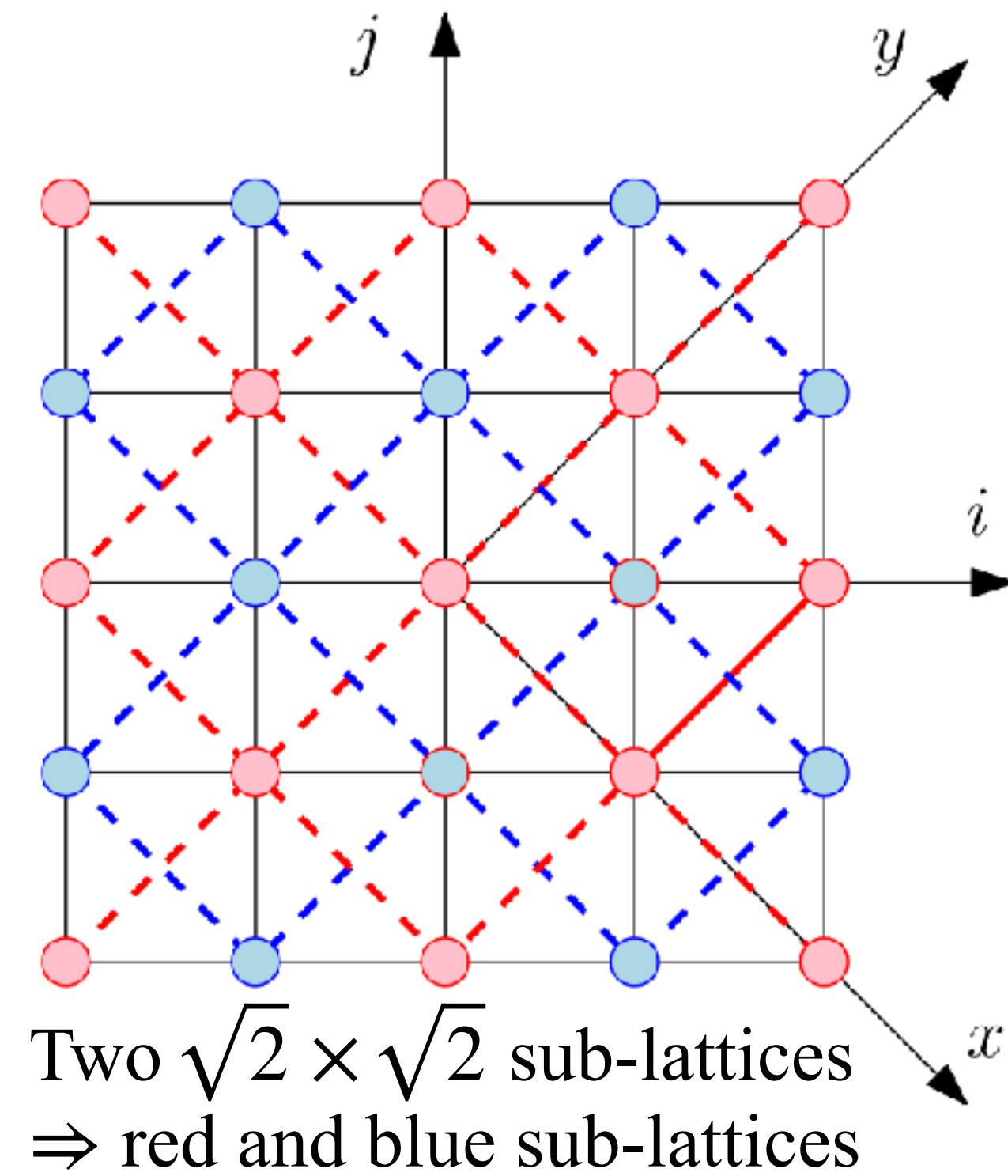
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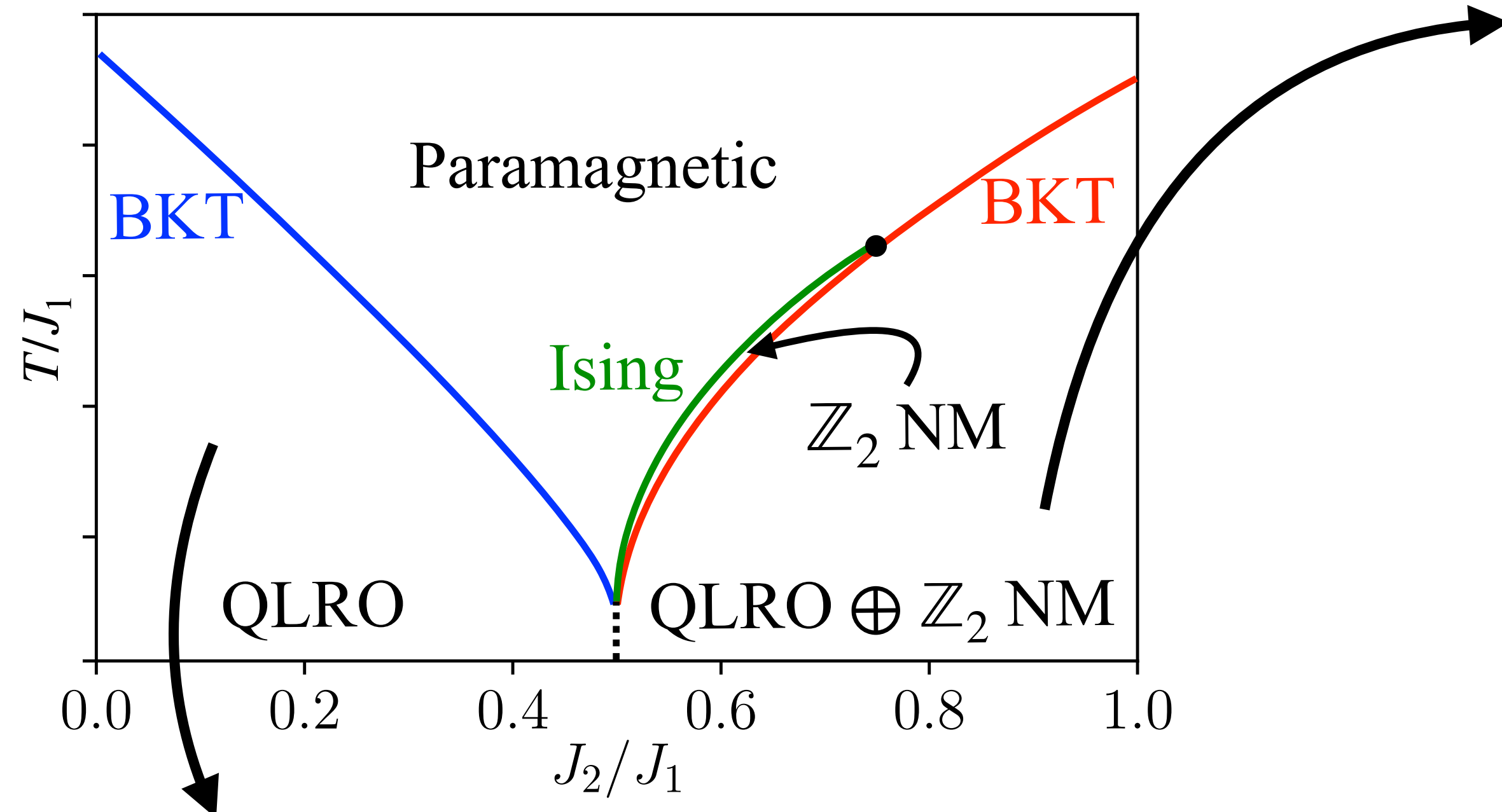


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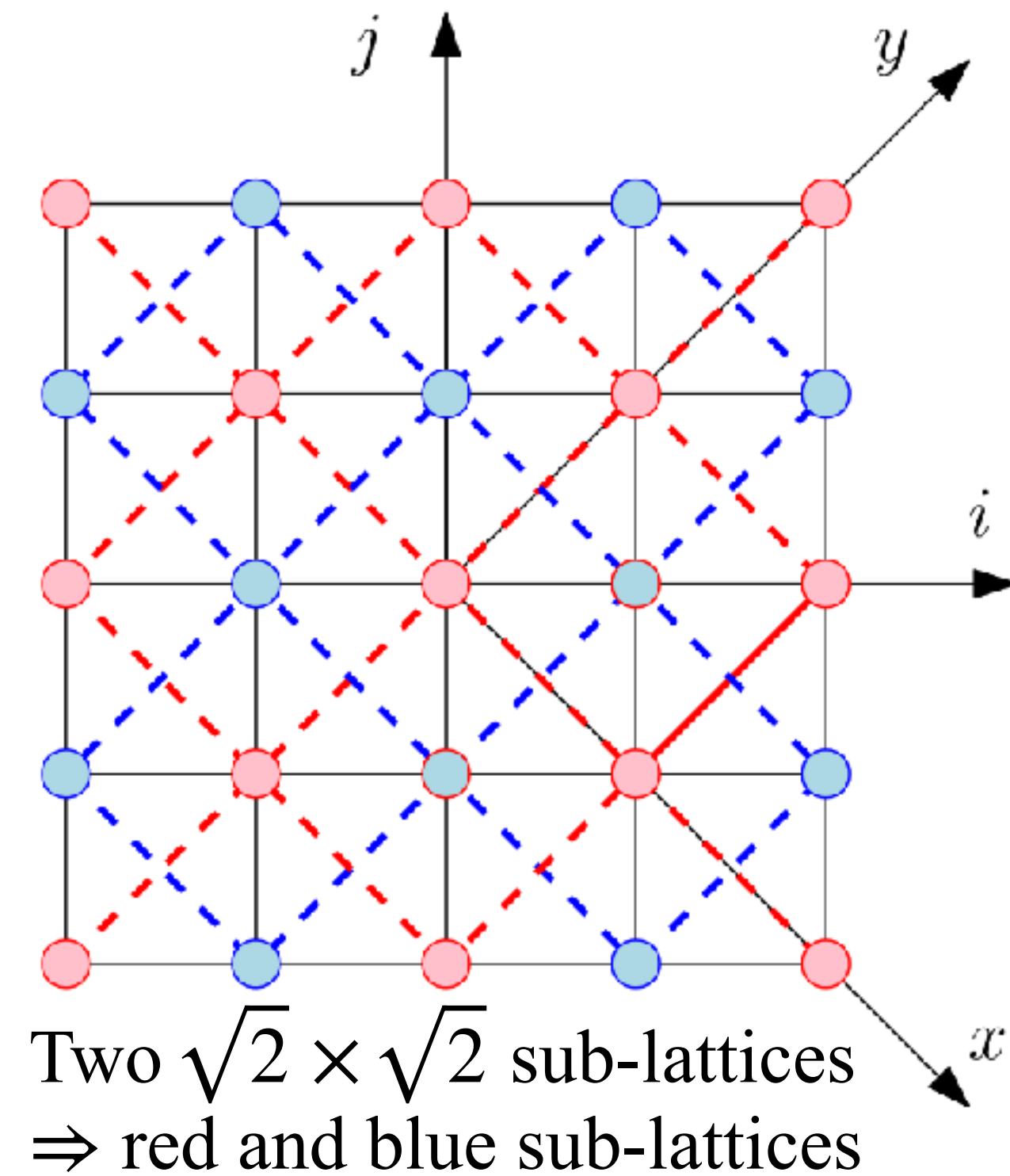
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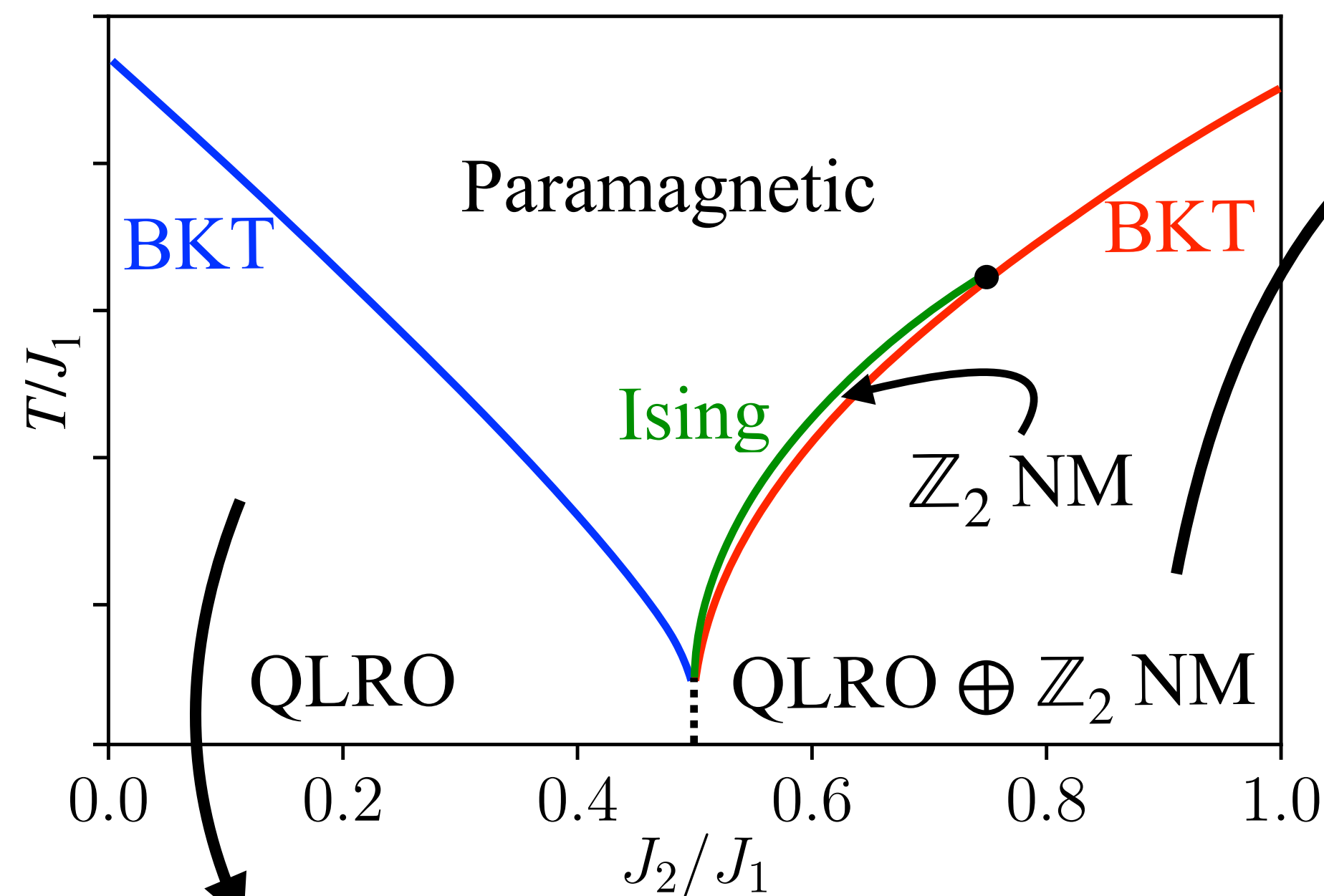


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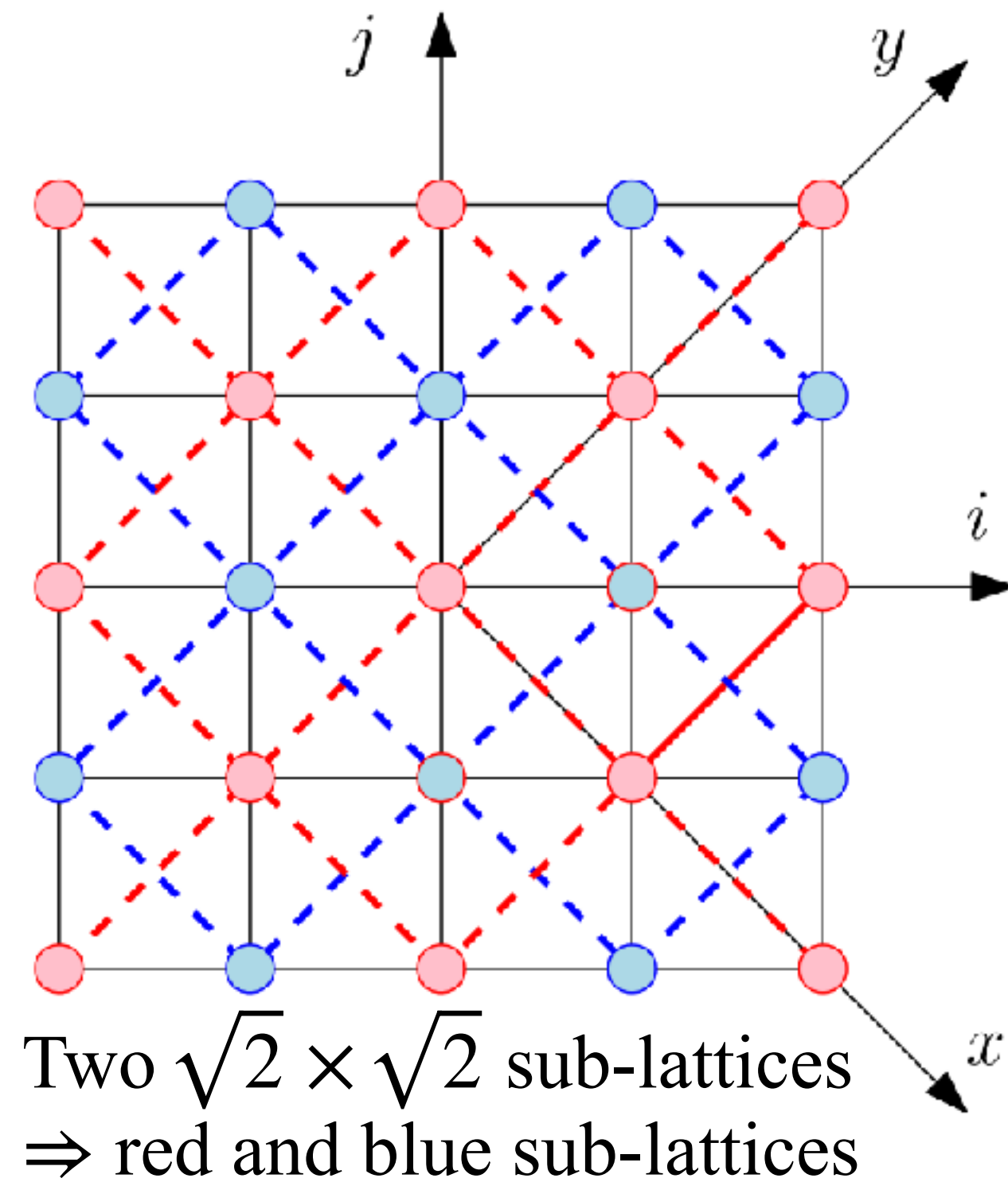
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But at finite T “**order-by-disorder**” kicks in ...
locking the relative angle to either 0 or π
symmetry reduces to $U(1) \times \mathbb{Z}_2$
forming a $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -broken **Nematic ($\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM) order**...



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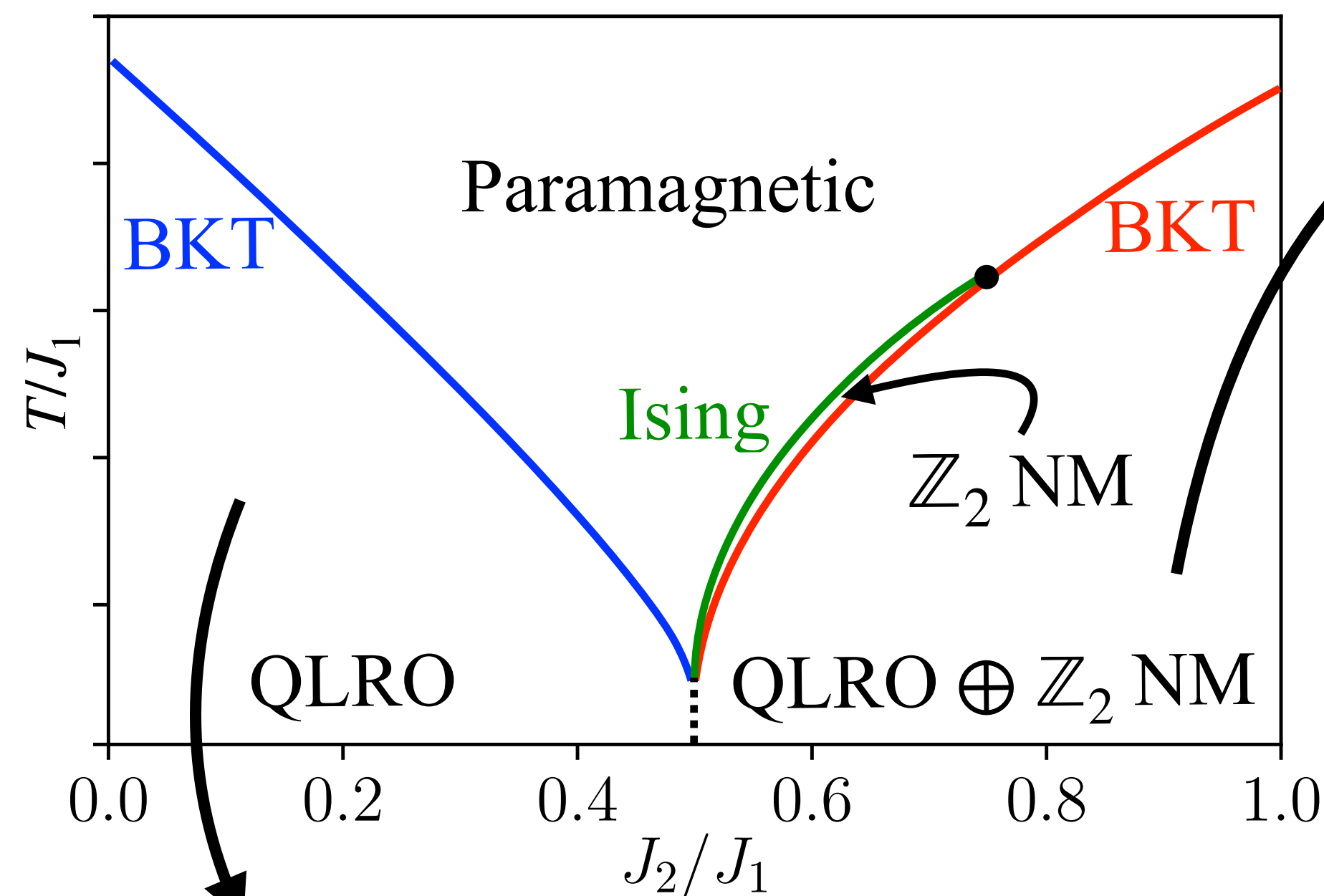
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Quasi-long-range-order phase as $U(1)$ symmetry cannot break

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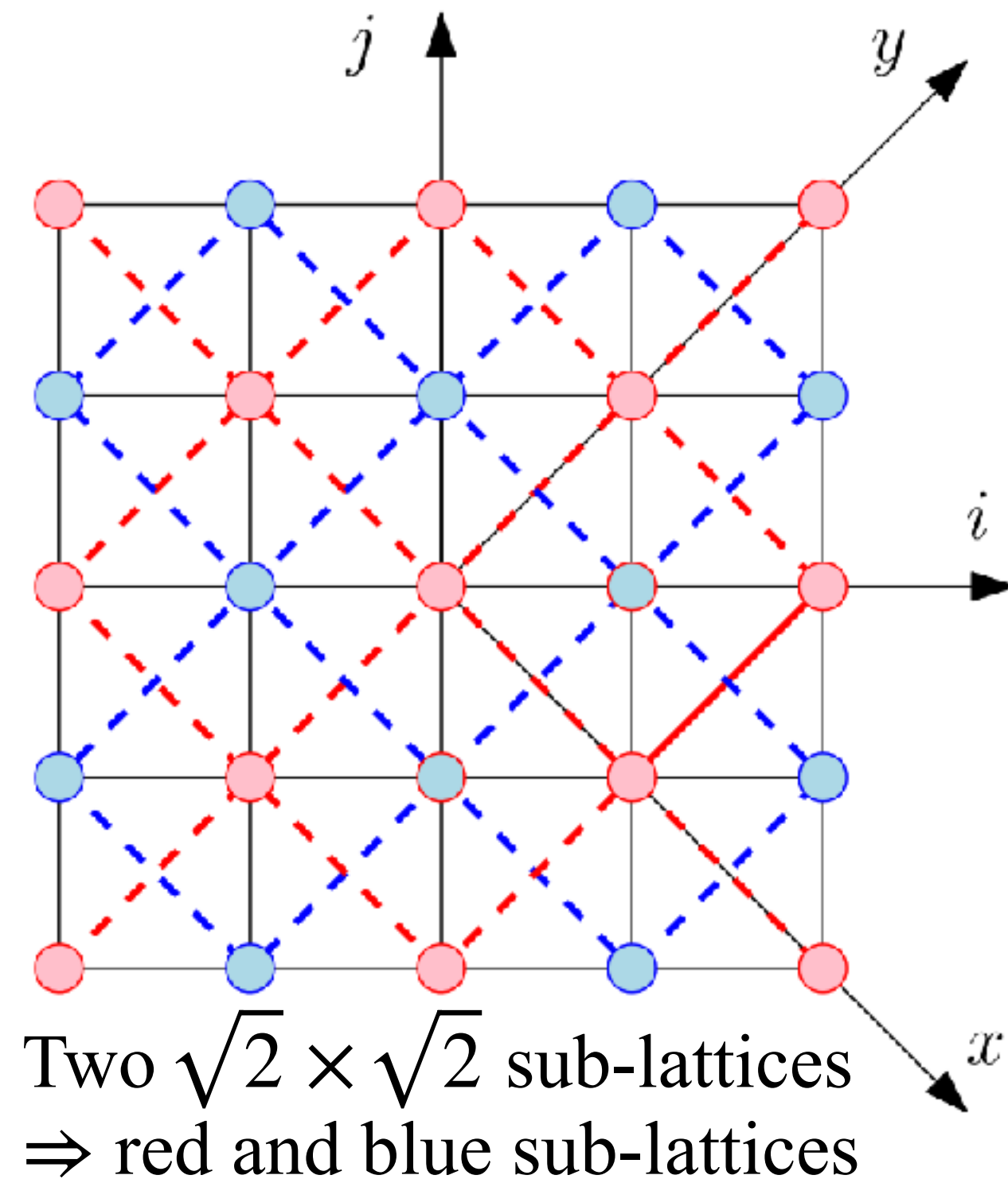
But at finite T “order-by-disorder” kicks in ... locking the relative angle to either 0 or π symmetry reduces to $U(1) \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ forming a $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -broken Nematic ($\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM) order...

Spins within each sublattice tries to order anti-ferromagnetically... fails due to Mermin-Wagner... QLRO

$$\langle \cos(\theta_i - \theta_{i+R}) \rangle \sim 1/R^\eta$$

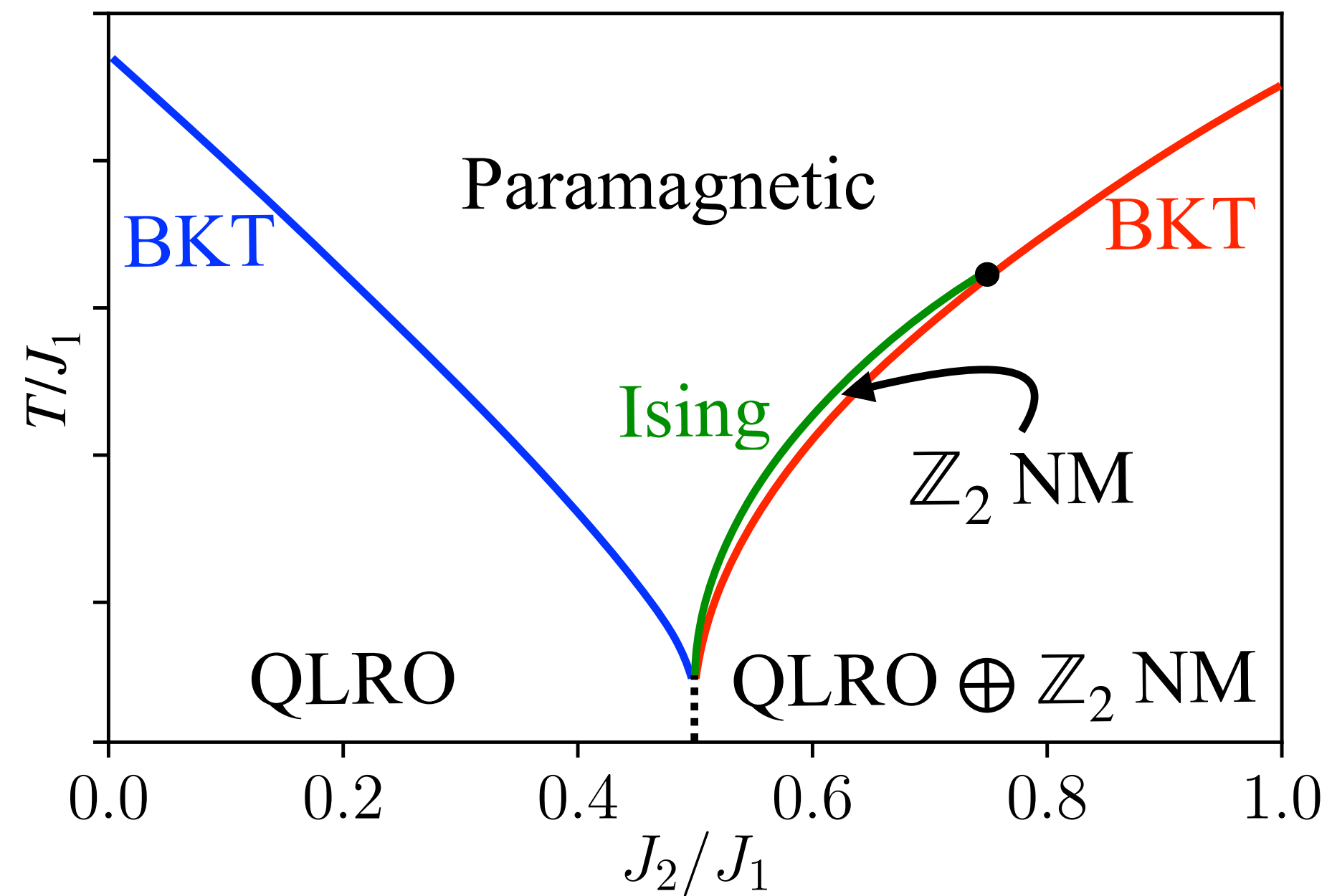
Nematic order parameter $\kappa \sim \pm 1$

$$\kappa = \frac{1}{4} \langle \cos(\theta_{\mathbf{i}} - \theta_{\mathbf{i}+\hat{x}}) + \cos(\theta_{\mathbf{i}+\hat{y}} - \theta_{\mathbf{i}+\hat{x}+\hat{y}}) - \cos(\theta_{\mathbf{i}} - \theta_{\mathbf{i}+\hat{y}}) - \cos(\theta_{\mathbf{i}+\hat{x}} - \theta_{\mathbf{i}+\hat{x}+\hat{y}}) \rangle.$$



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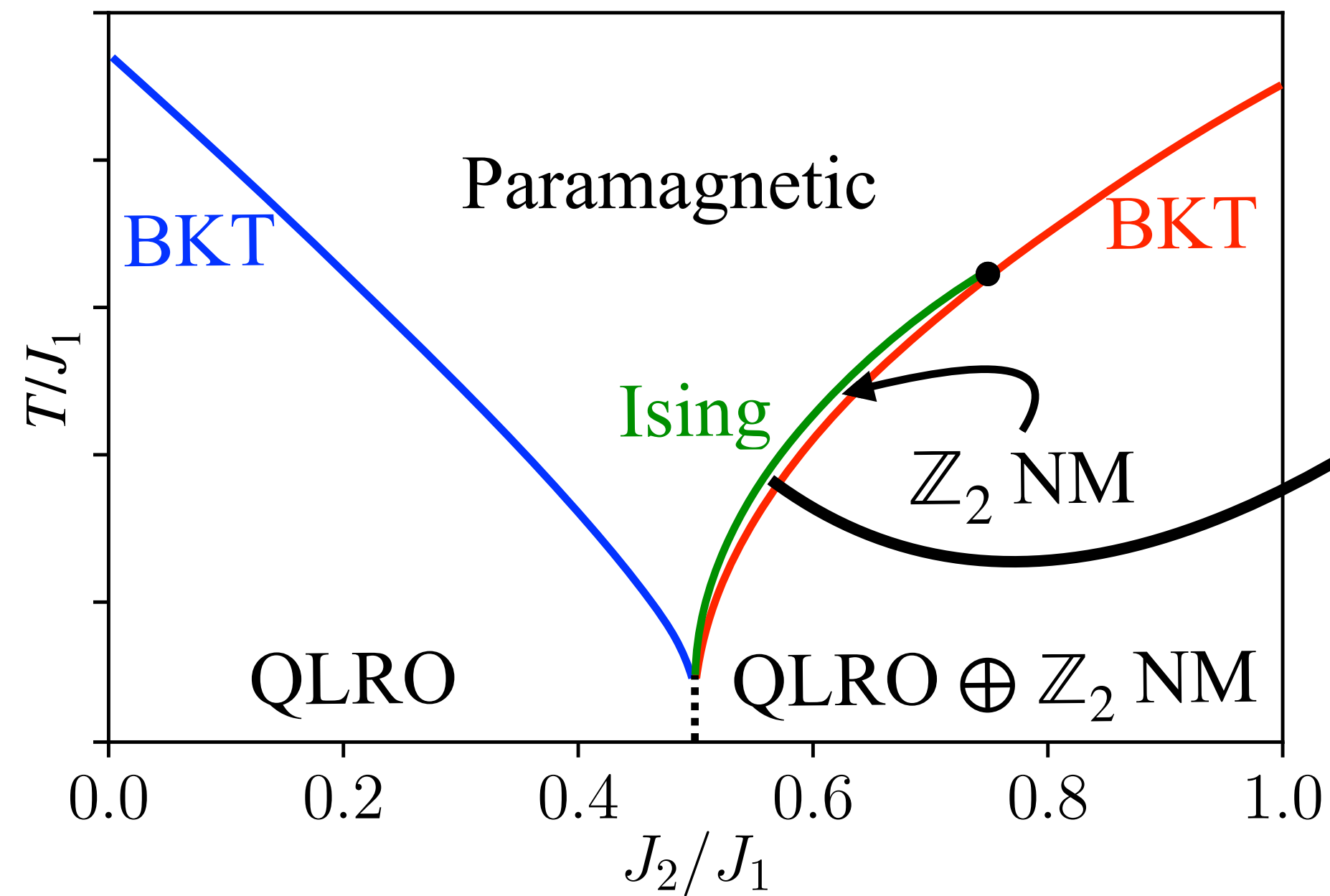


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At small $J_2/J_1 > 1/2$... after BKT transition...

QLRO $\oplus \mathbb{Z}_2$ NM phase goes to a phase... with no QLRO...
 $\langle \cos(\theta_i - \theta_{i+R}) \rangle \sim \exp(-R/\xi)$



but **non-zero nematic order** $\kappa \neq 0$...
 $\mathbb{Z}_2$ **NM phase**... two-fold degeneracy

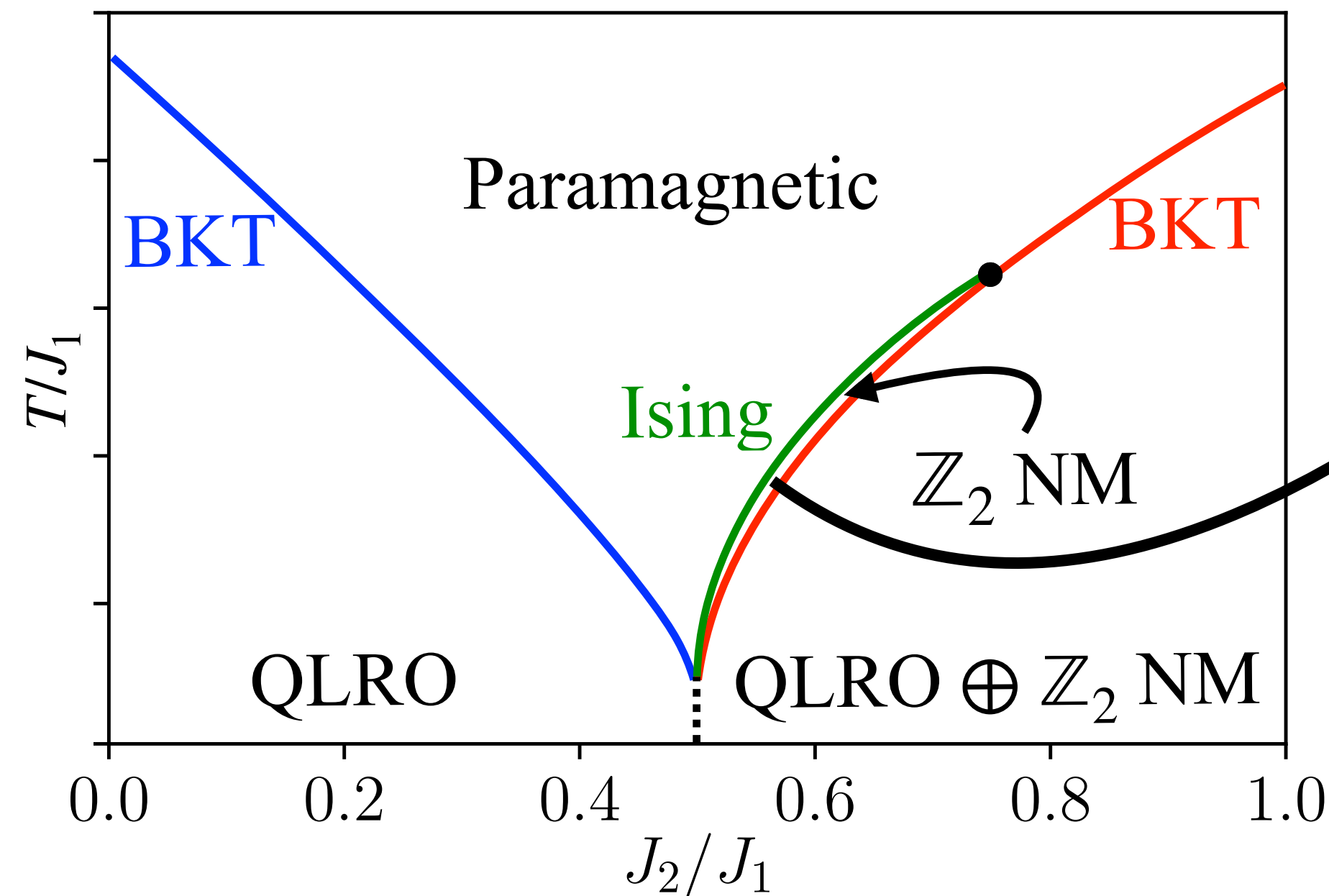
This $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM phase is connected to the paramagnetic phase by **Ising transition**

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This $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM phase is connected to the paramagnetic phase by **Ising transition**

At higher $J_2/J_1 > 1/2$... QLRO $\oplus \mathbb{Z}_2$ NM phase **directly** goes
 paramagnetic phase via BKT



**Simultaneous destruction of $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM order and
 QLRO is still not understood**

These results were hypothesized in two decades old CMC study: Loison et. al., PRB 2000
 Only confirmed rigorously using TN: Song et. al., PRB 2025

Our work

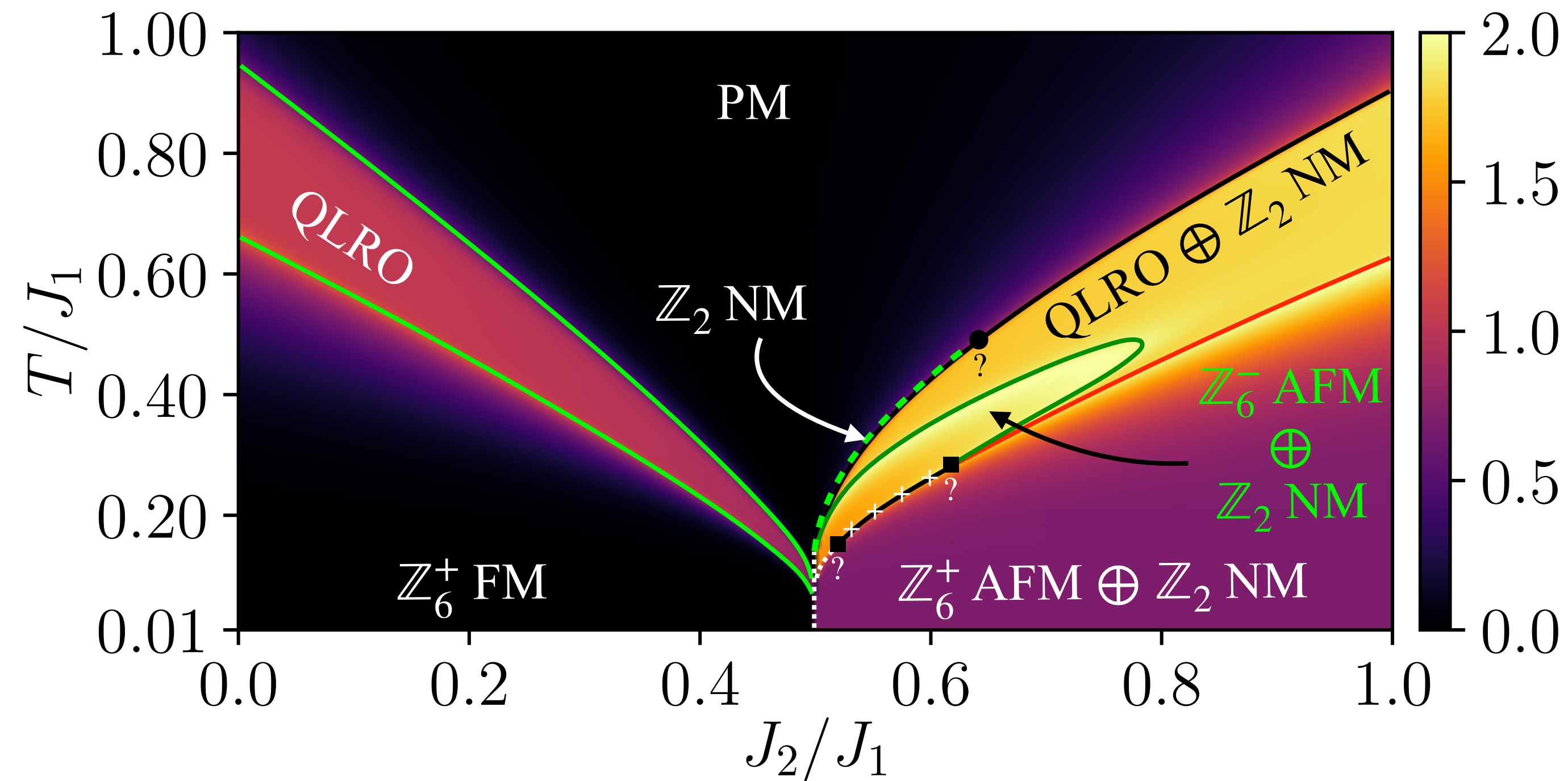


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J_1 - J_2 Clock Model

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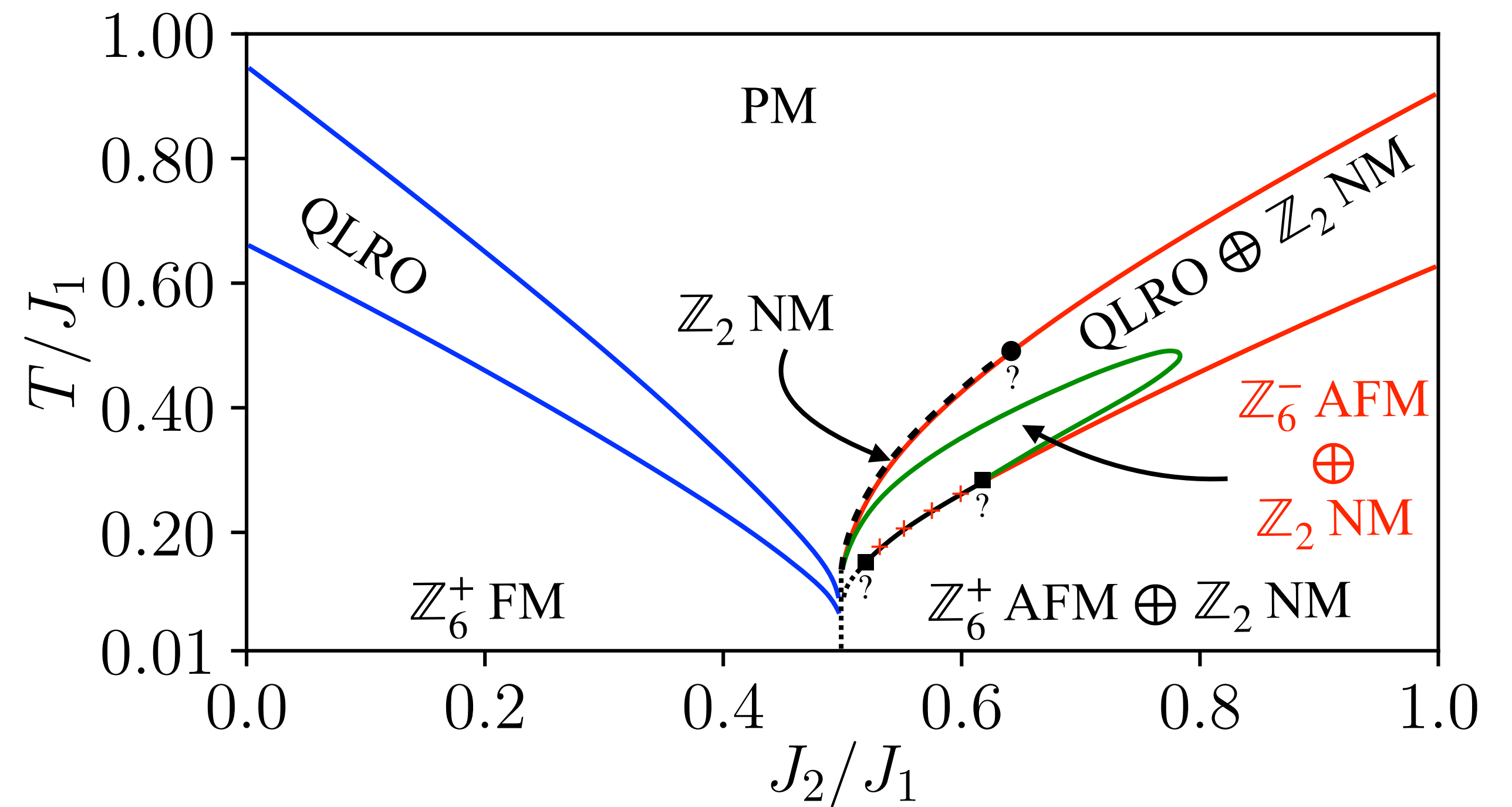
I will show results for $q = 6$...
but results remain valid for any even $q \geq 6$



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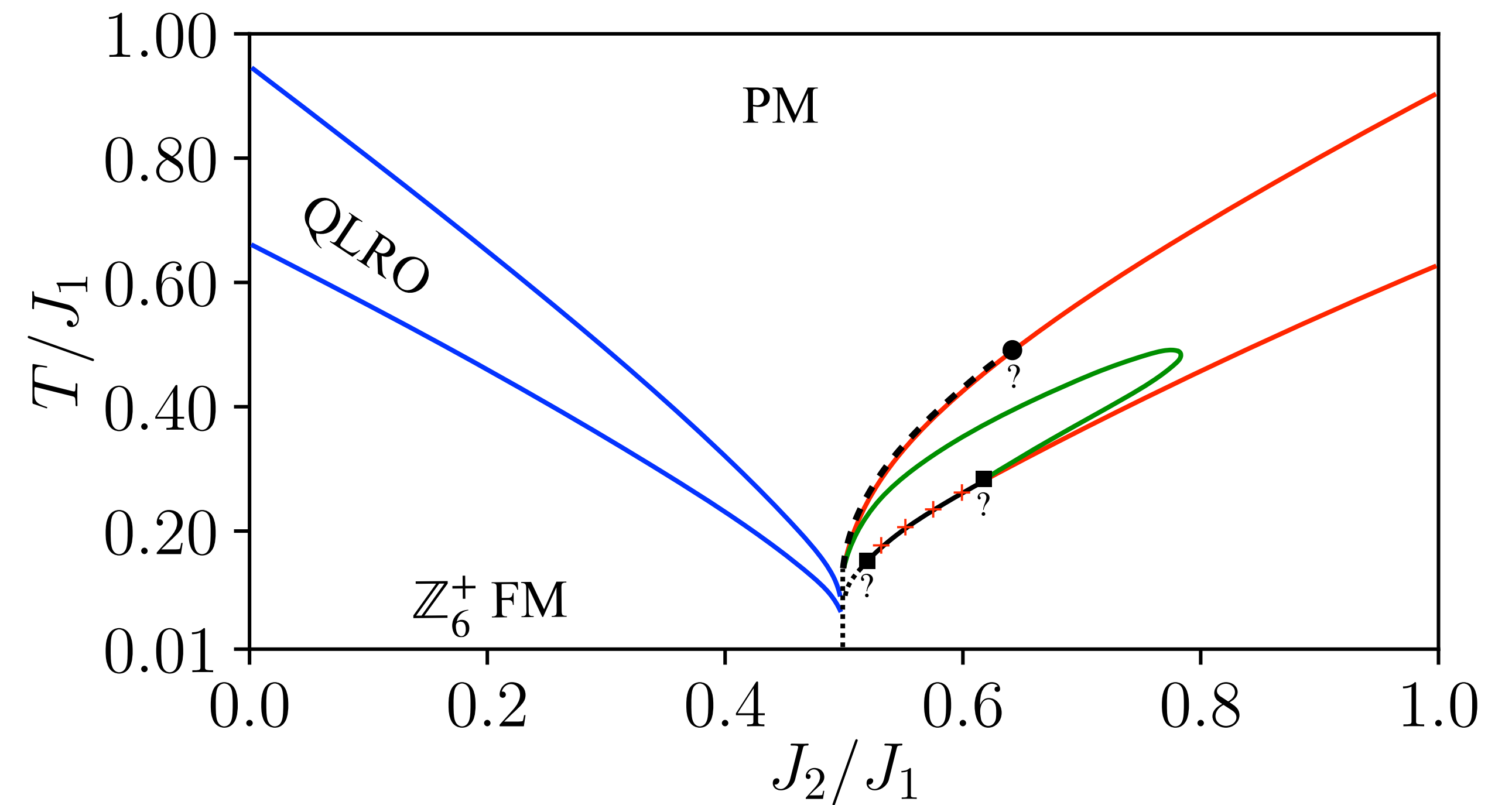
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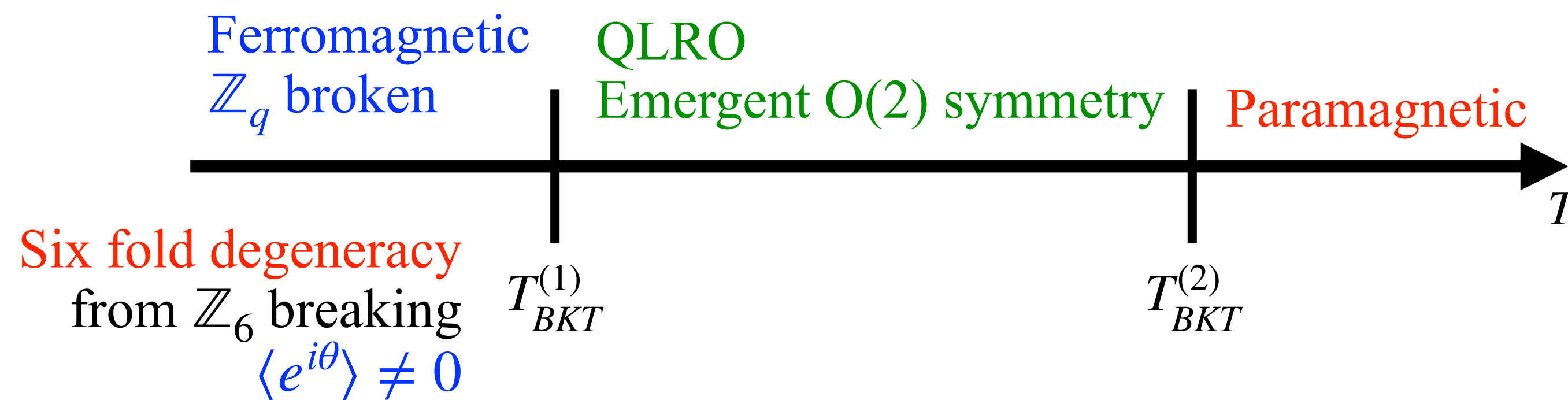
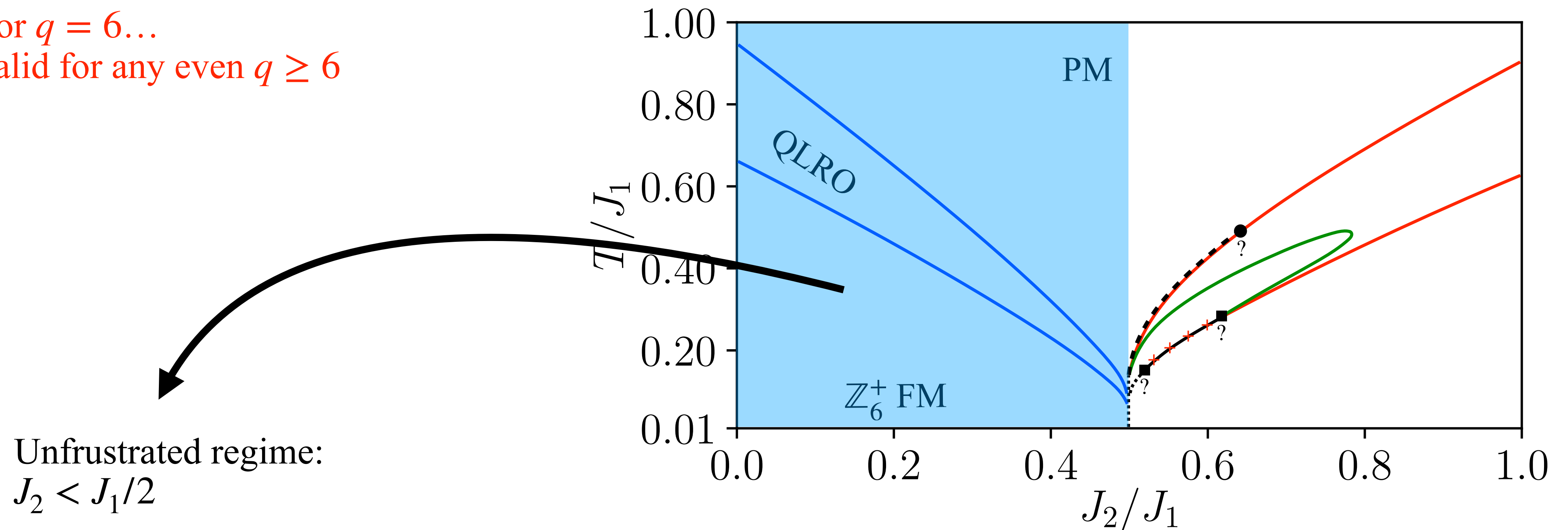
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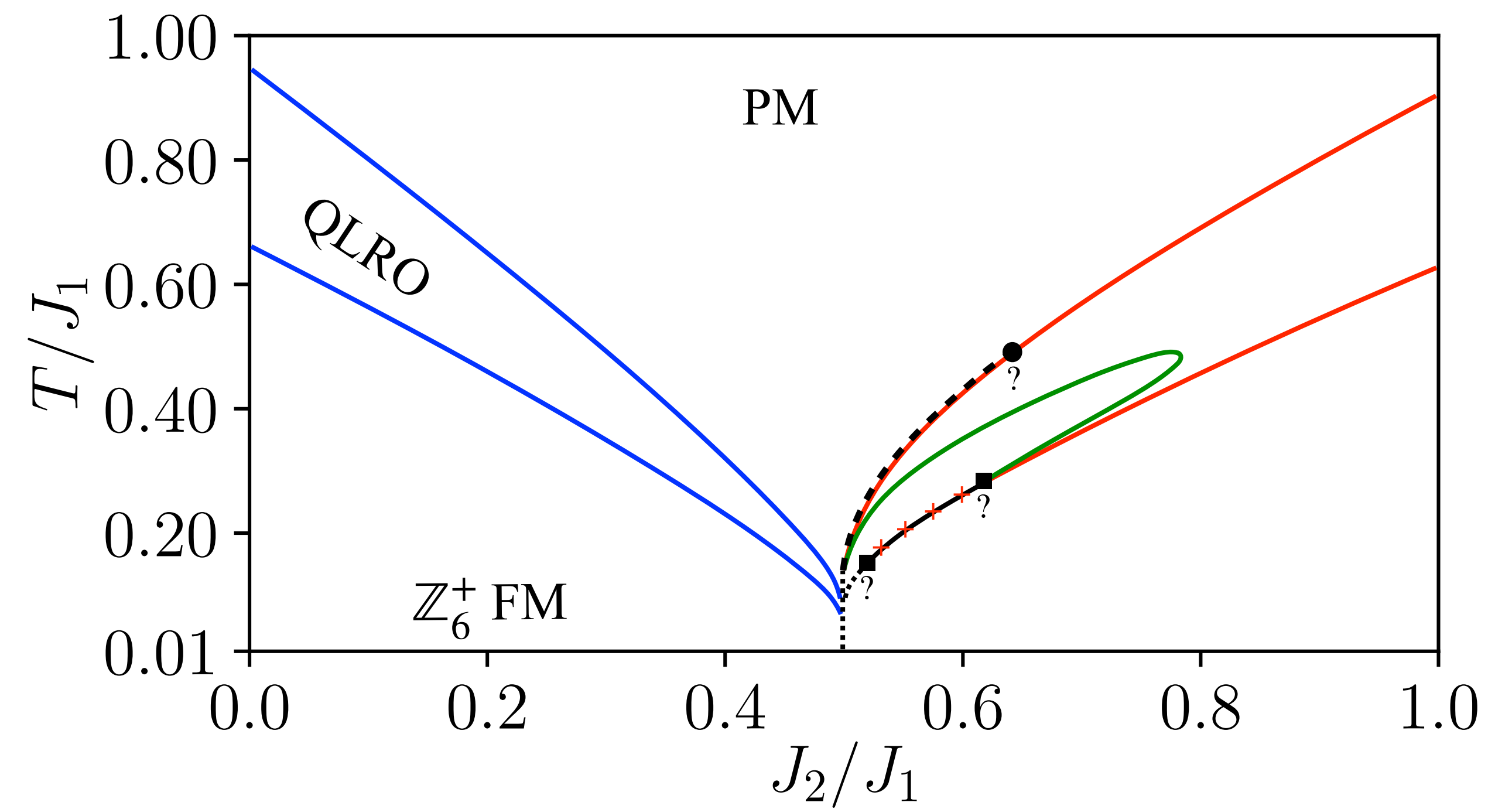


Our notation

$\mathbb{Z}_q^+ \Rightarrow$ effective (coarse grained) clock angles are
even multiples of π/q ,
i.e., $2n\pi/q$... just like the microscopic theory

J_1 - J_2 Clock Model

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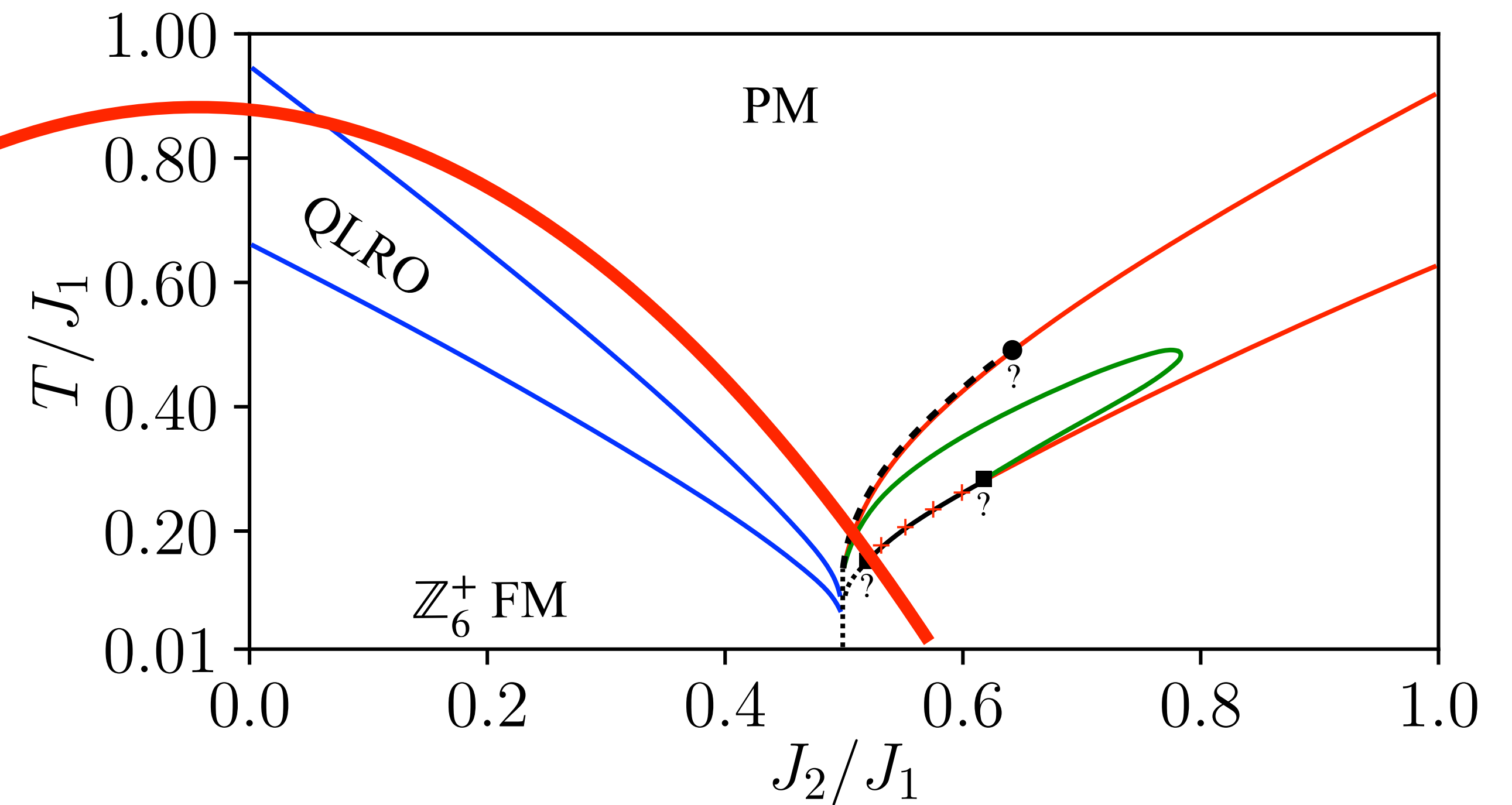


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Giving $\mathbb{Z}_6 \times \mathbb{Z}_6$ degeneracy



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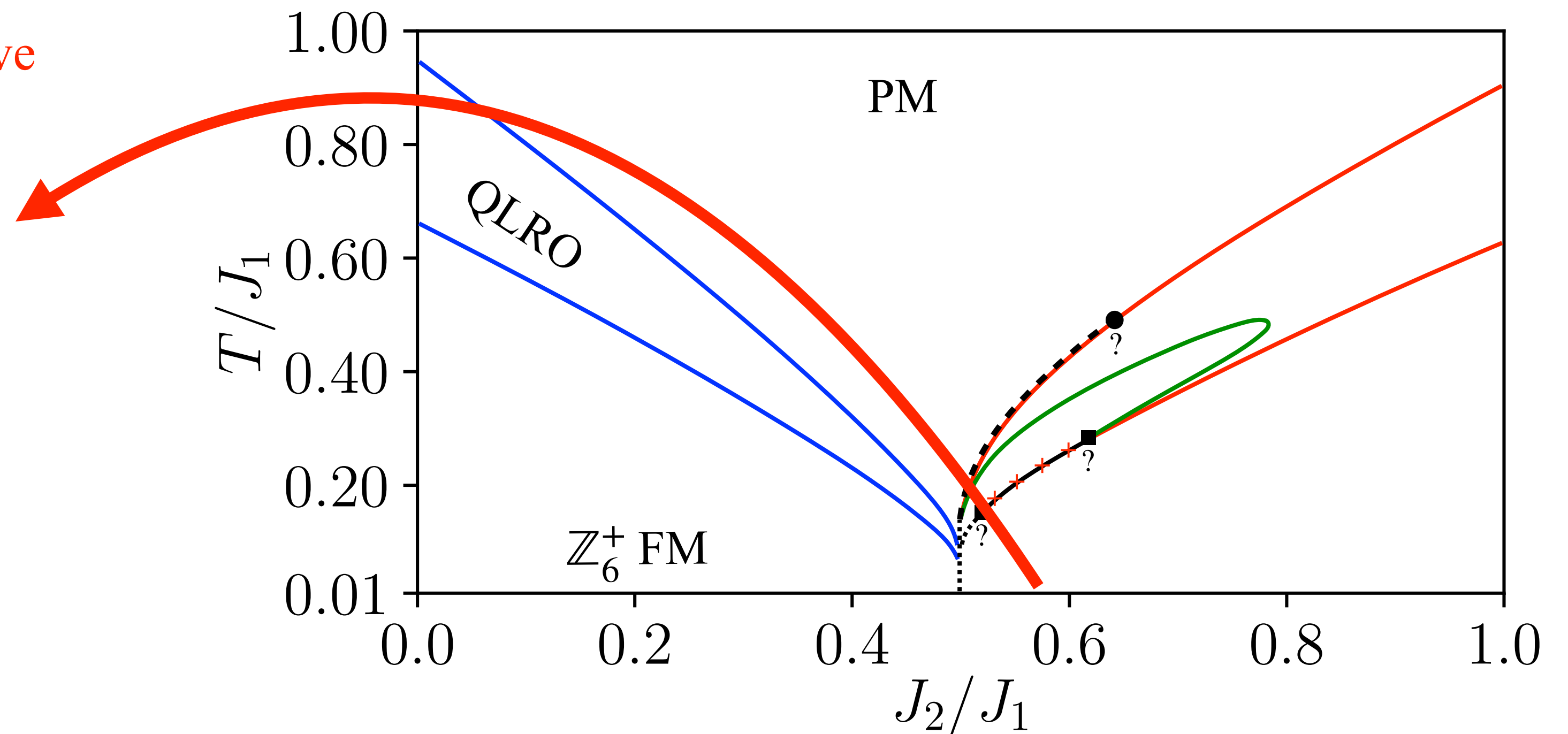
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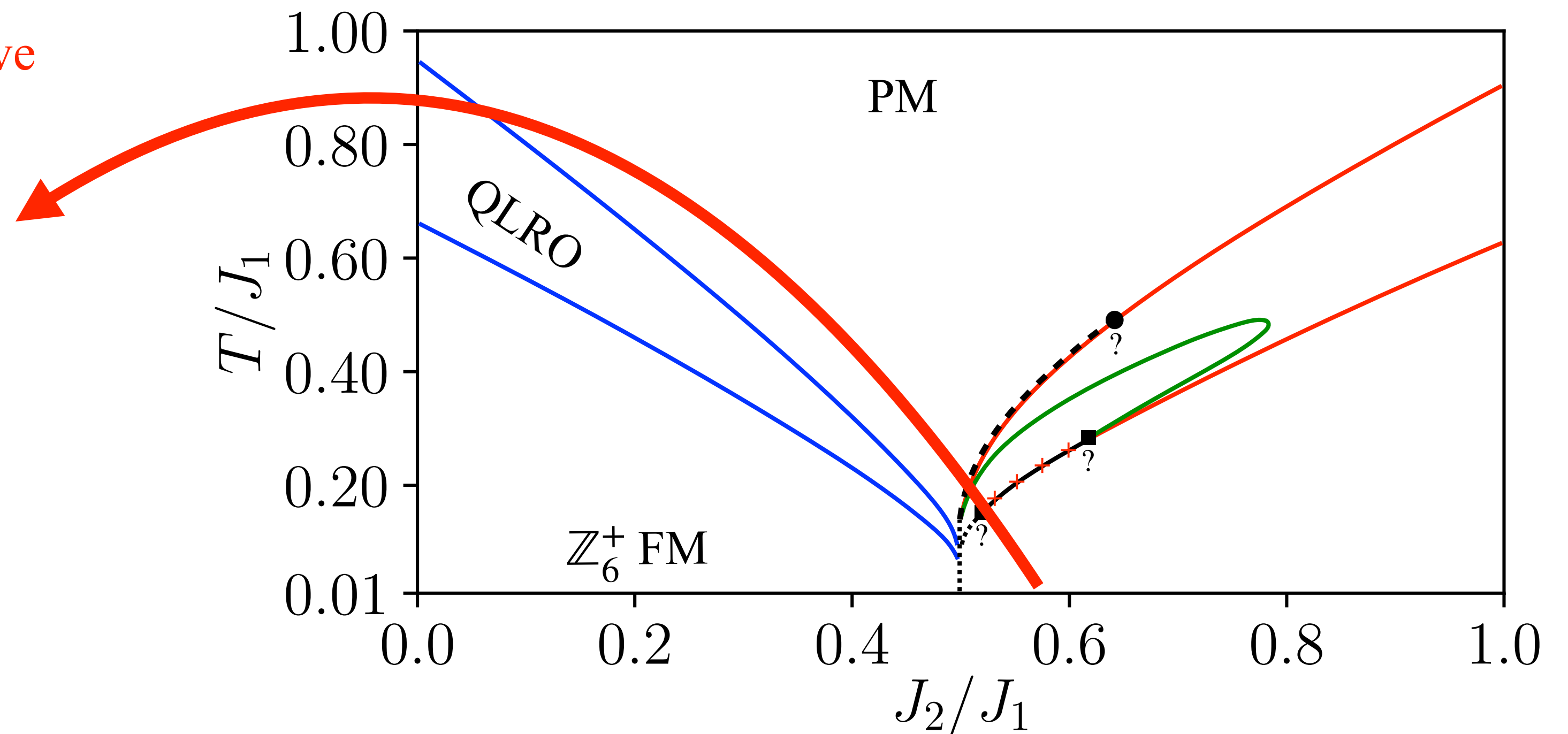
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$$\tilde{m} = \frac{1}{L^2/2} \sum_{i_x, i_y} (-1)^{i_x + i_y} \exp(i\theta_{(i_x, i_y)}),$$

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Both non-zero



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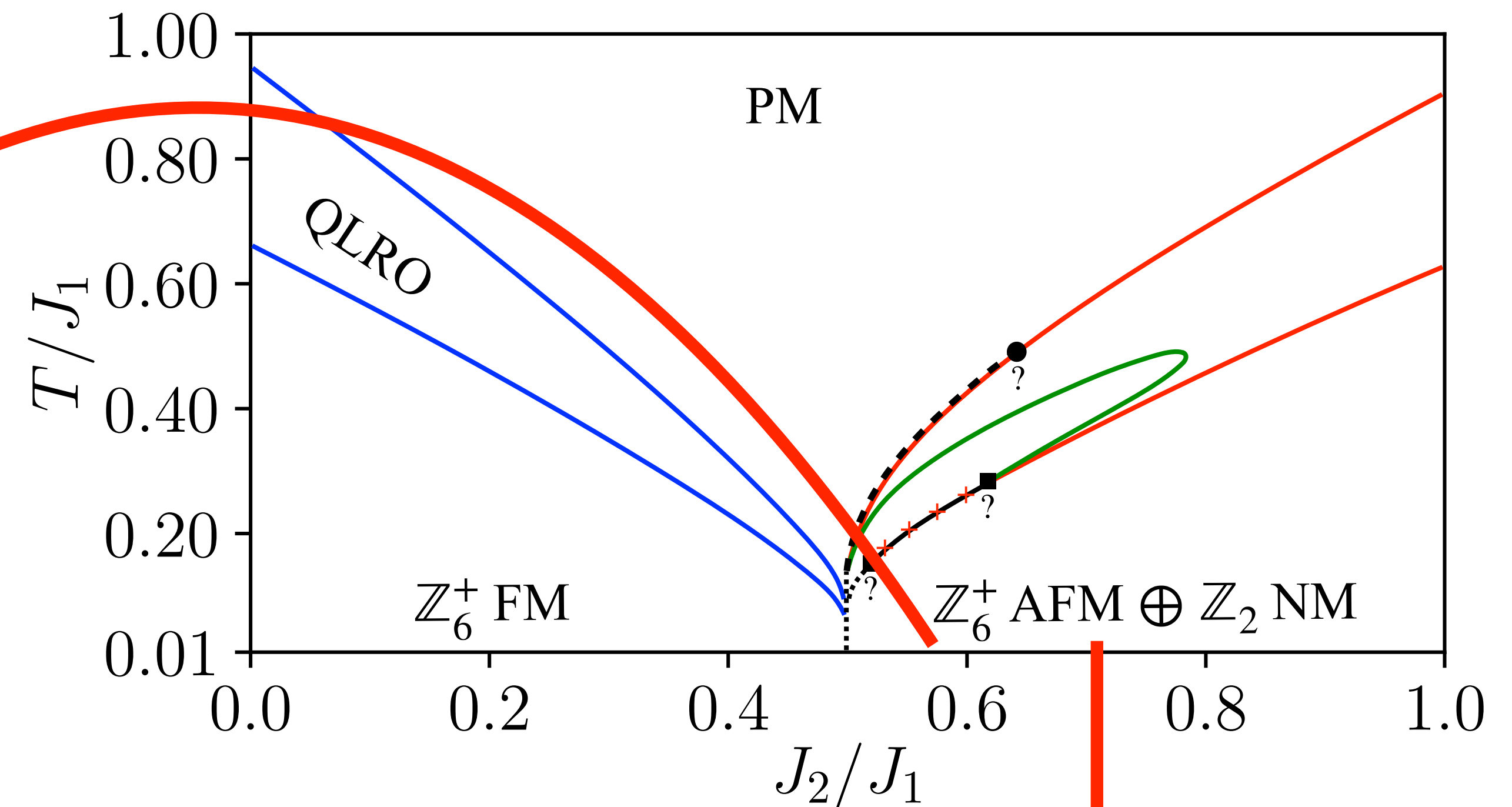
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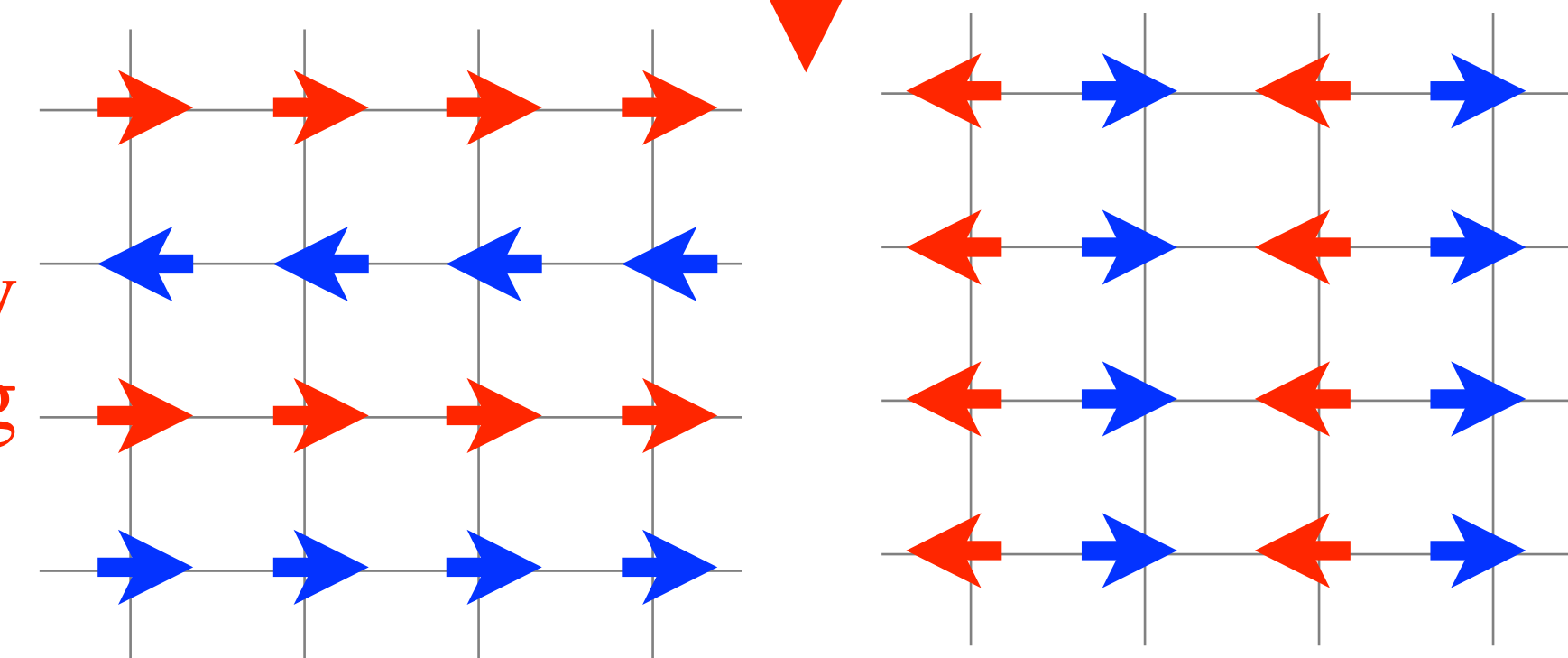
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12 fold degeneracy from $\mathbb{Z}_6 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ breaking



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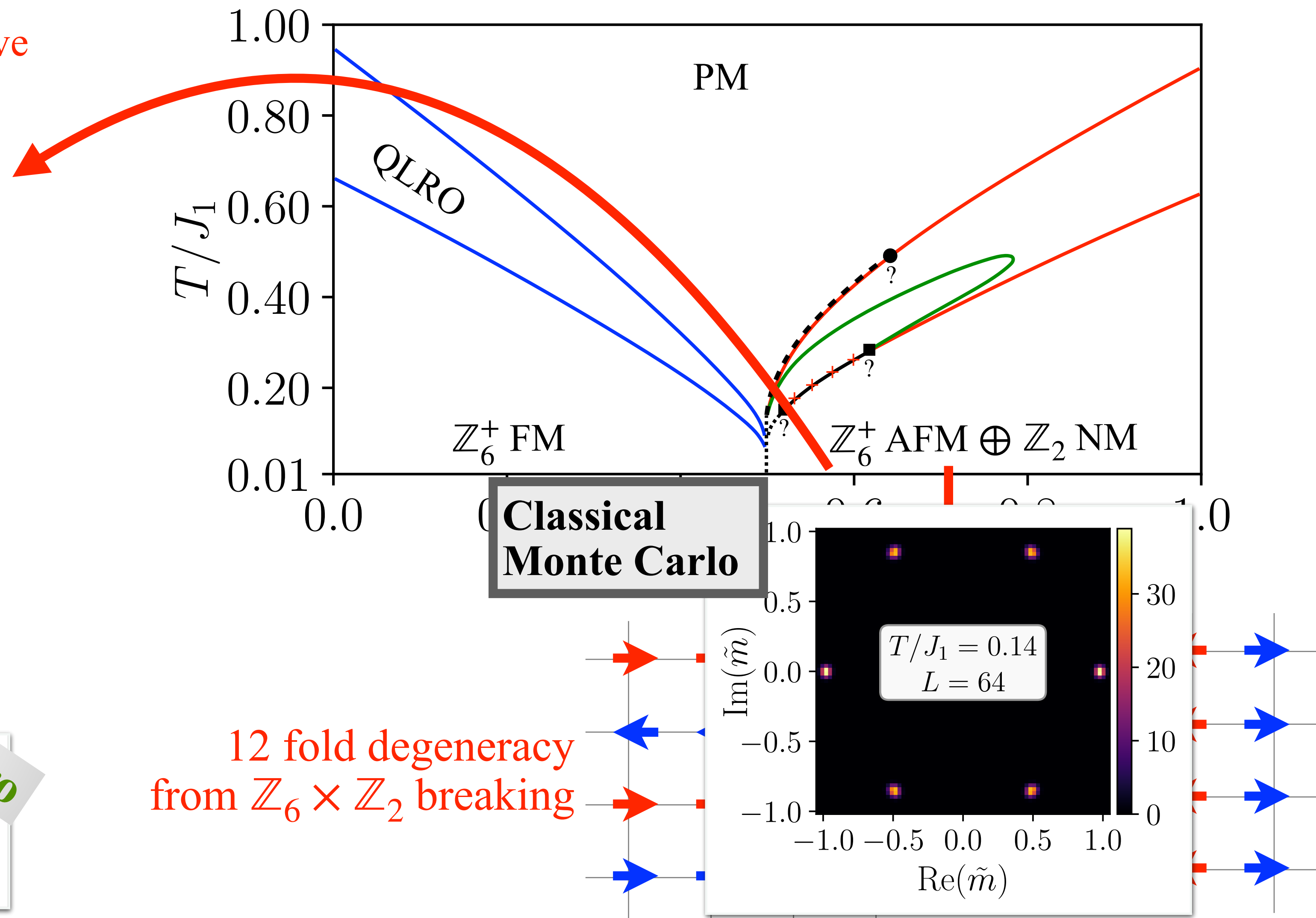
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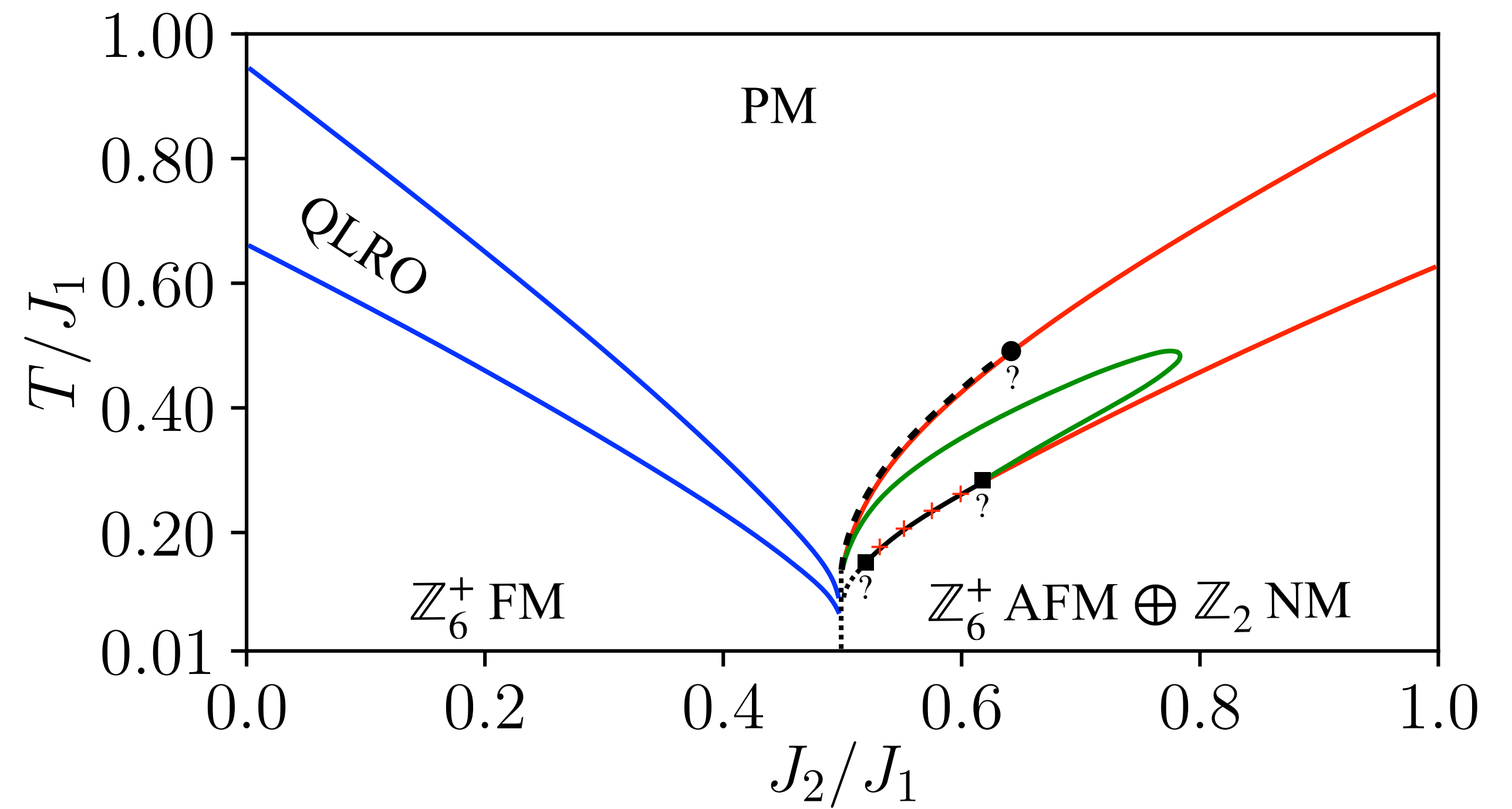


12 fold degeneracy from $\mathbb{Z}_6 \times \mathbb{Z}_2$ breaking

J_1 - J_2 Clock Model

$$H = -J_1 \sum_{\langle ij \rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j) + J_2 \sum_{\langle\langle ij \rangle\rangle} \cos(\theta_i - \theta_j) \quad \theta = \frac{2n\pi}{q}; \quad n = 0, 1, \dots, q-1$$

The J_1 - J_2 XY physics



J_1 - J_2 Clock Model

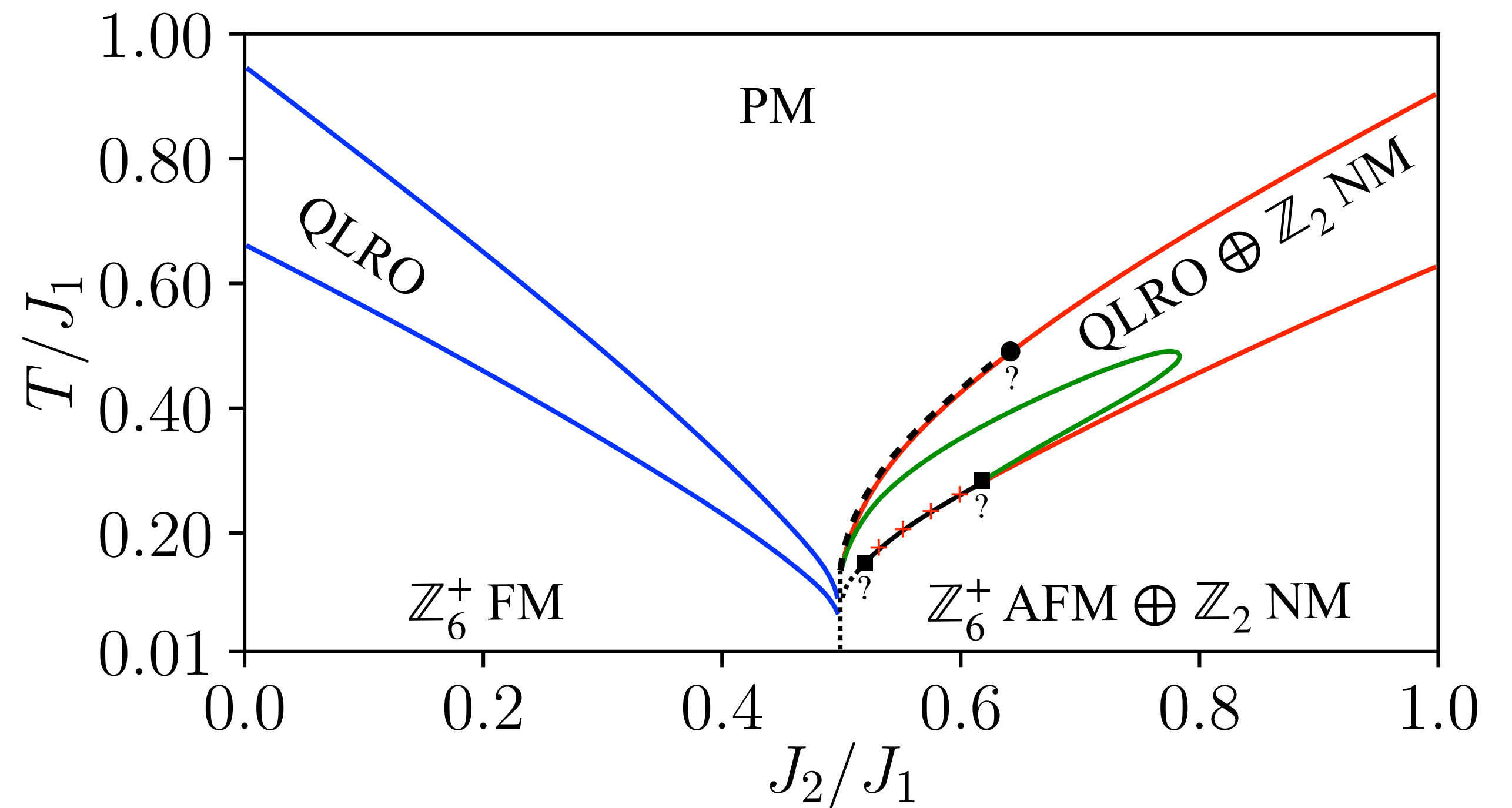
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The J_1 - J_2 XY physics

With increasing T ... $O(2)$ symmetry emerges...
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Nematic $\mathbb{Z}_2$ remains **broken**...

altogether... **QLRO $\oplus$ $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM**...
like the low- T phase of XY model...



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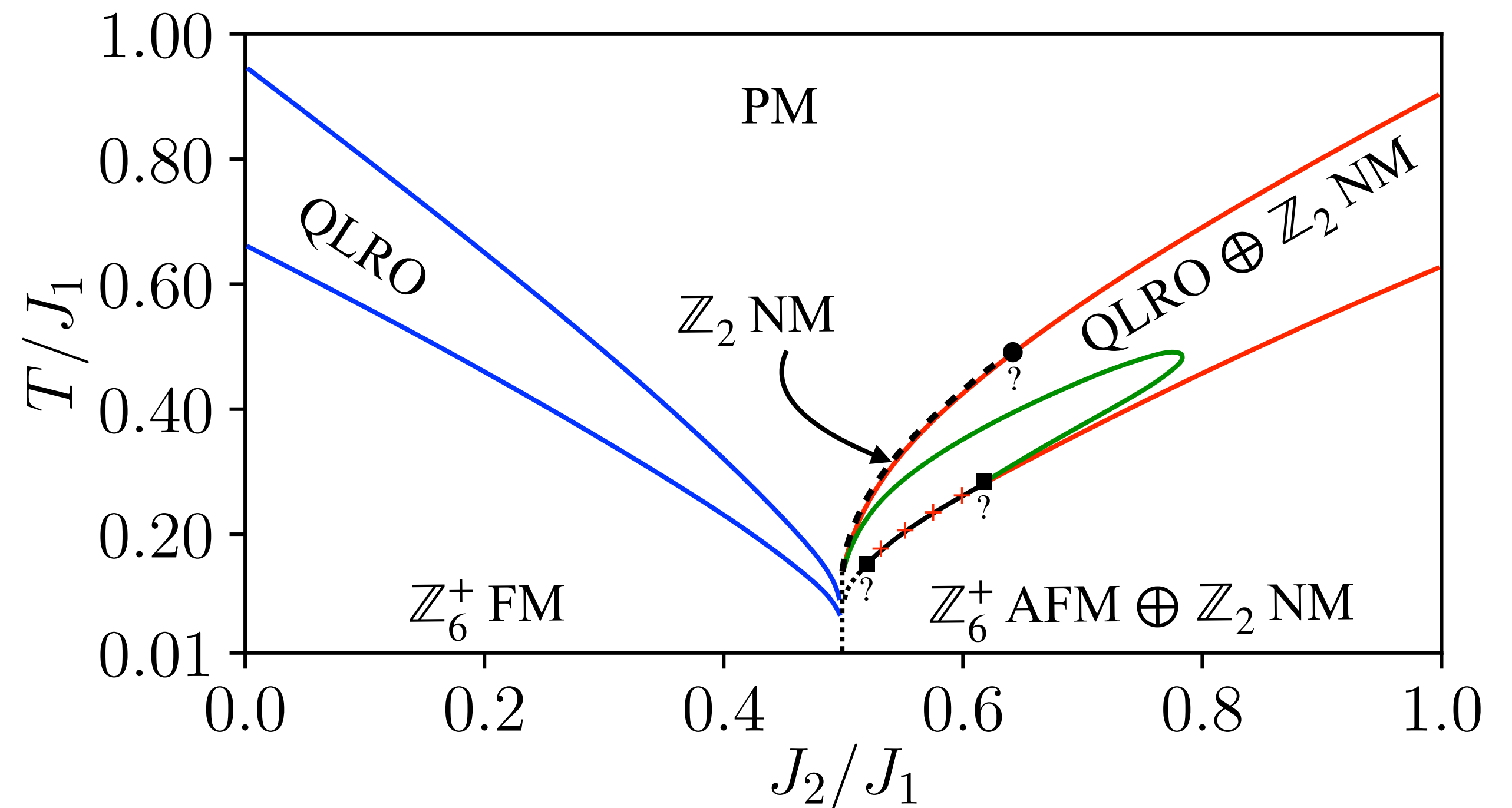
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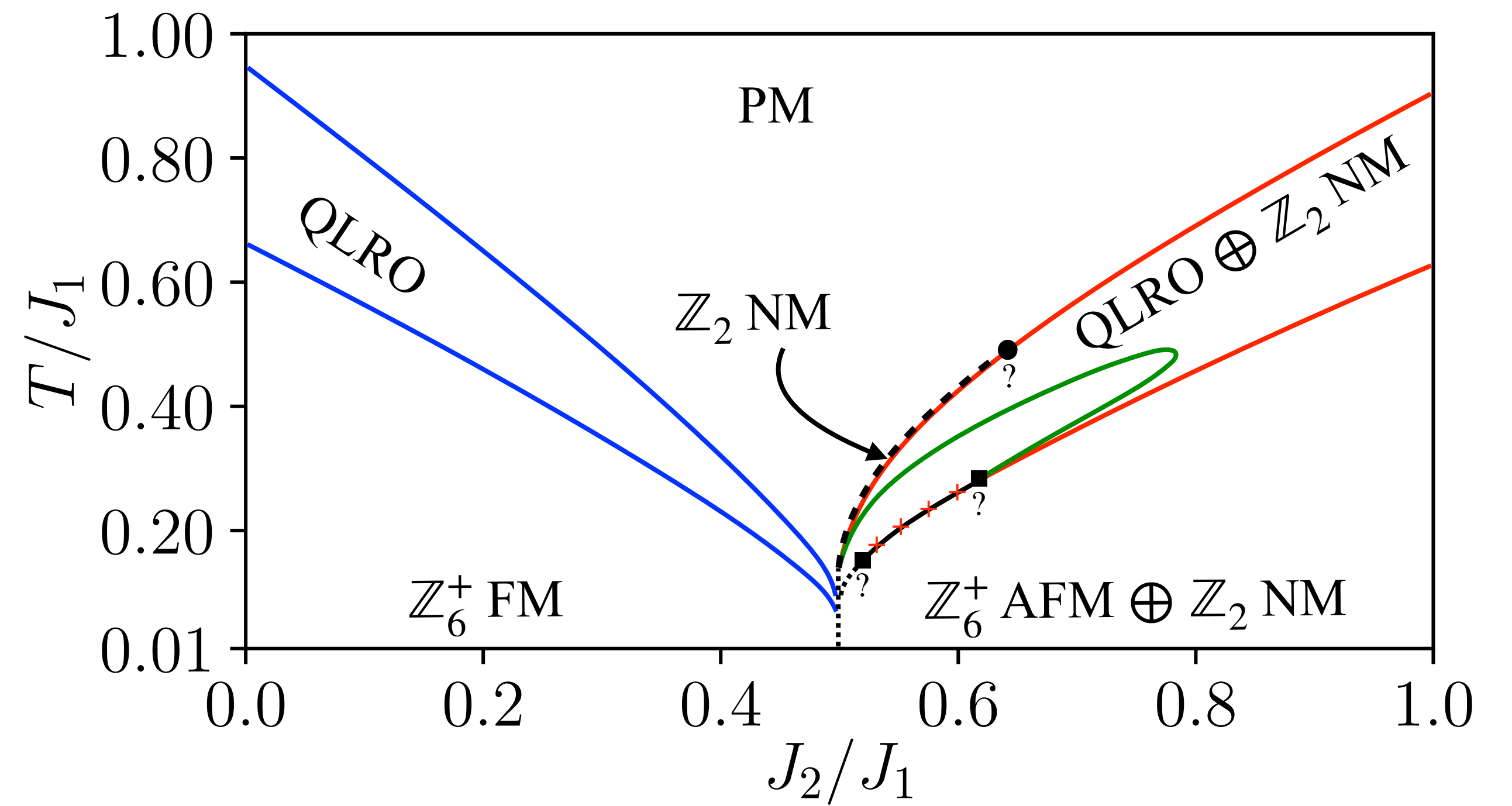
Again like XY model... **QLRO $\oplus$ $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM** goes to (via BKT)
another **Nematic** phase... with no QLRO....

This $\mathbb{Z}_2$ **NM** phase... then goes to paramagnetic phase... via **Ising transition**...



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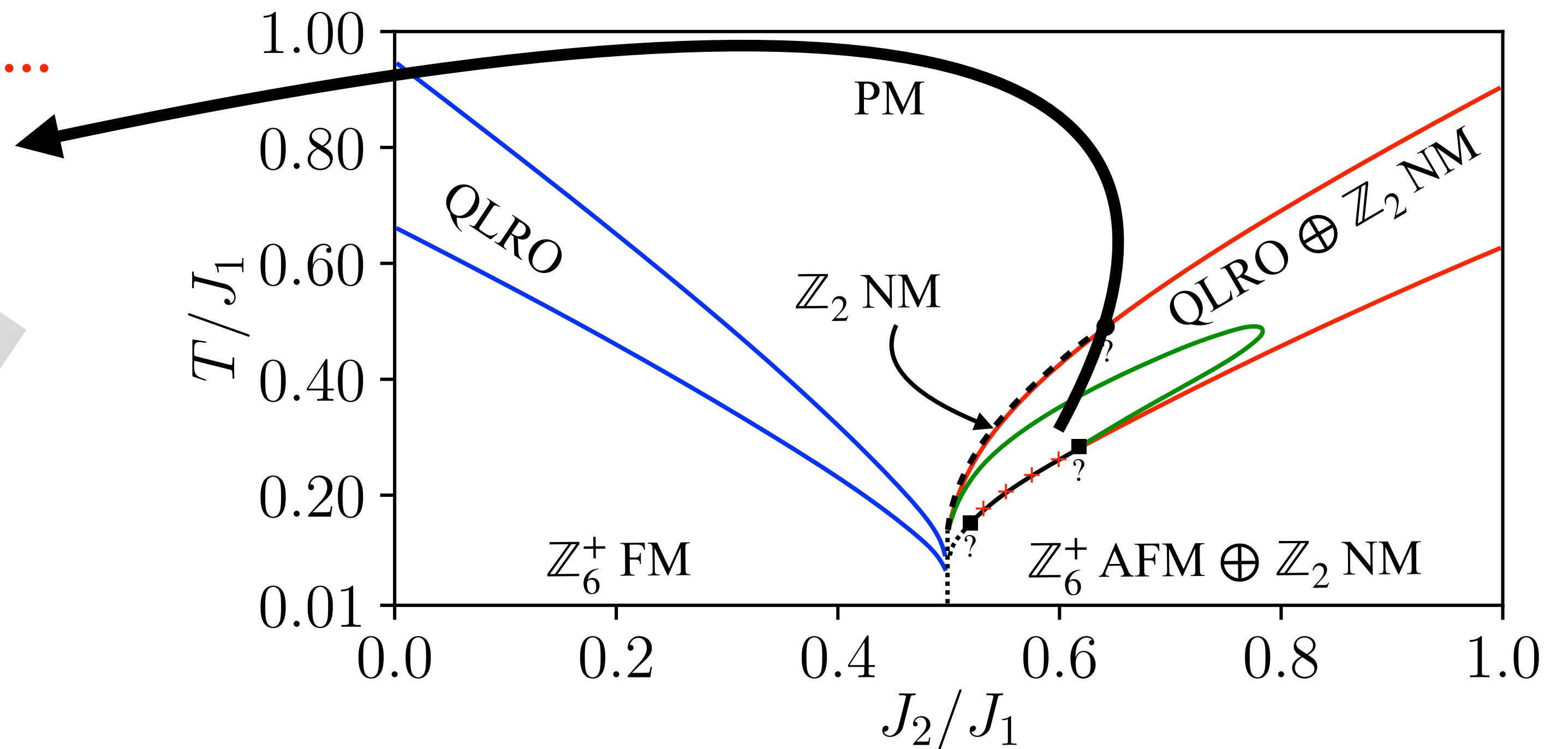
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Both non-zero

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But...



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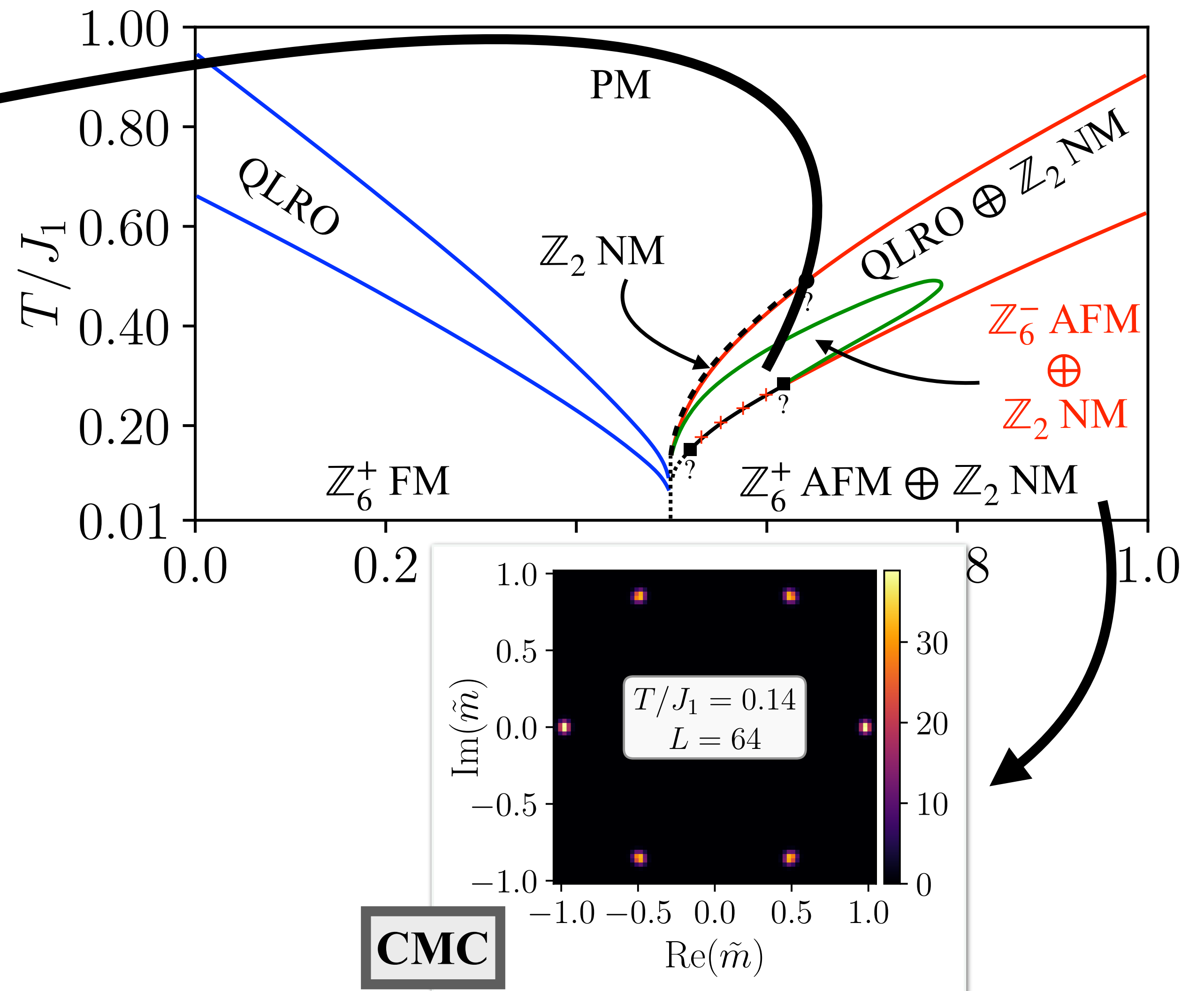
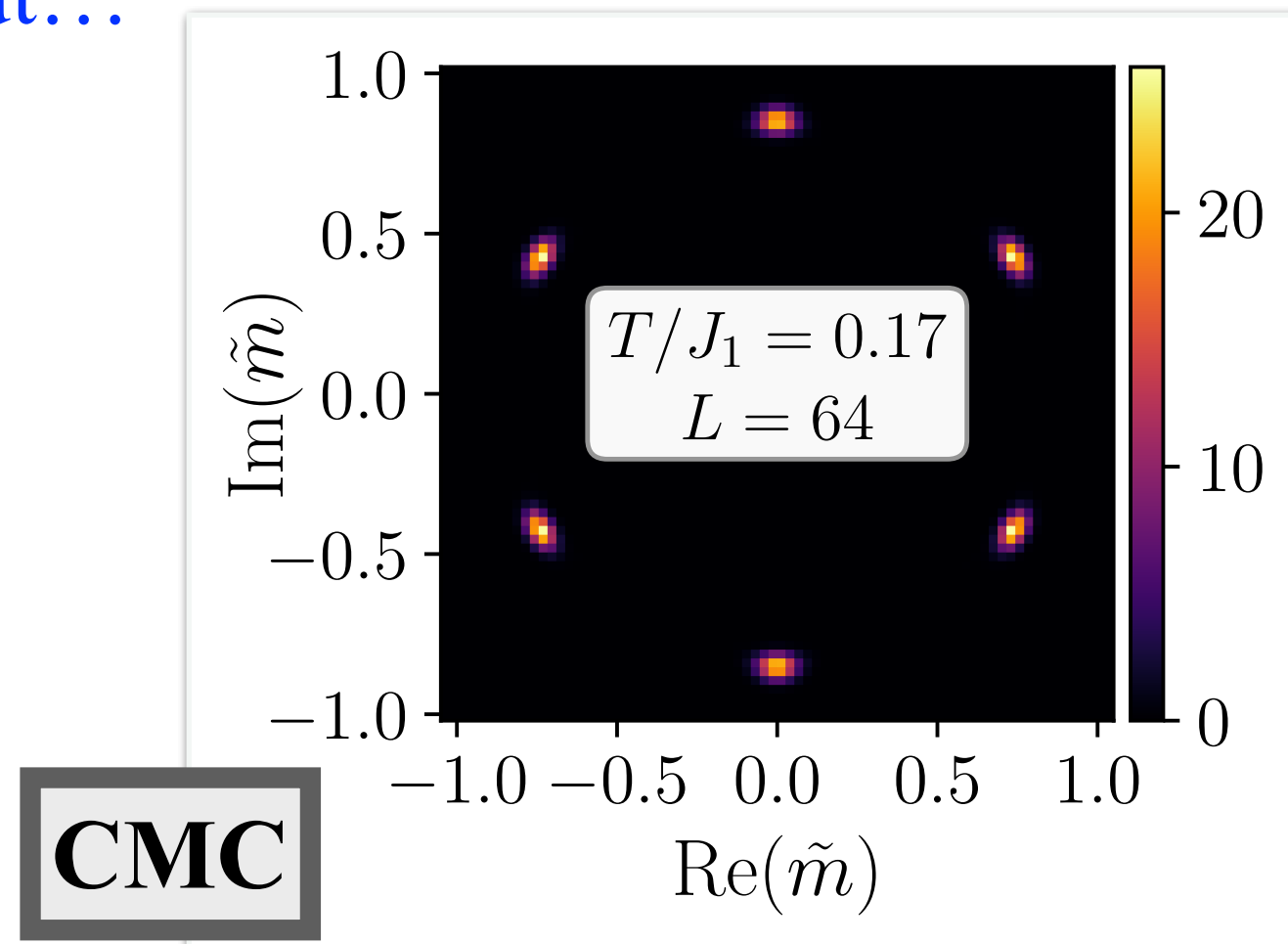
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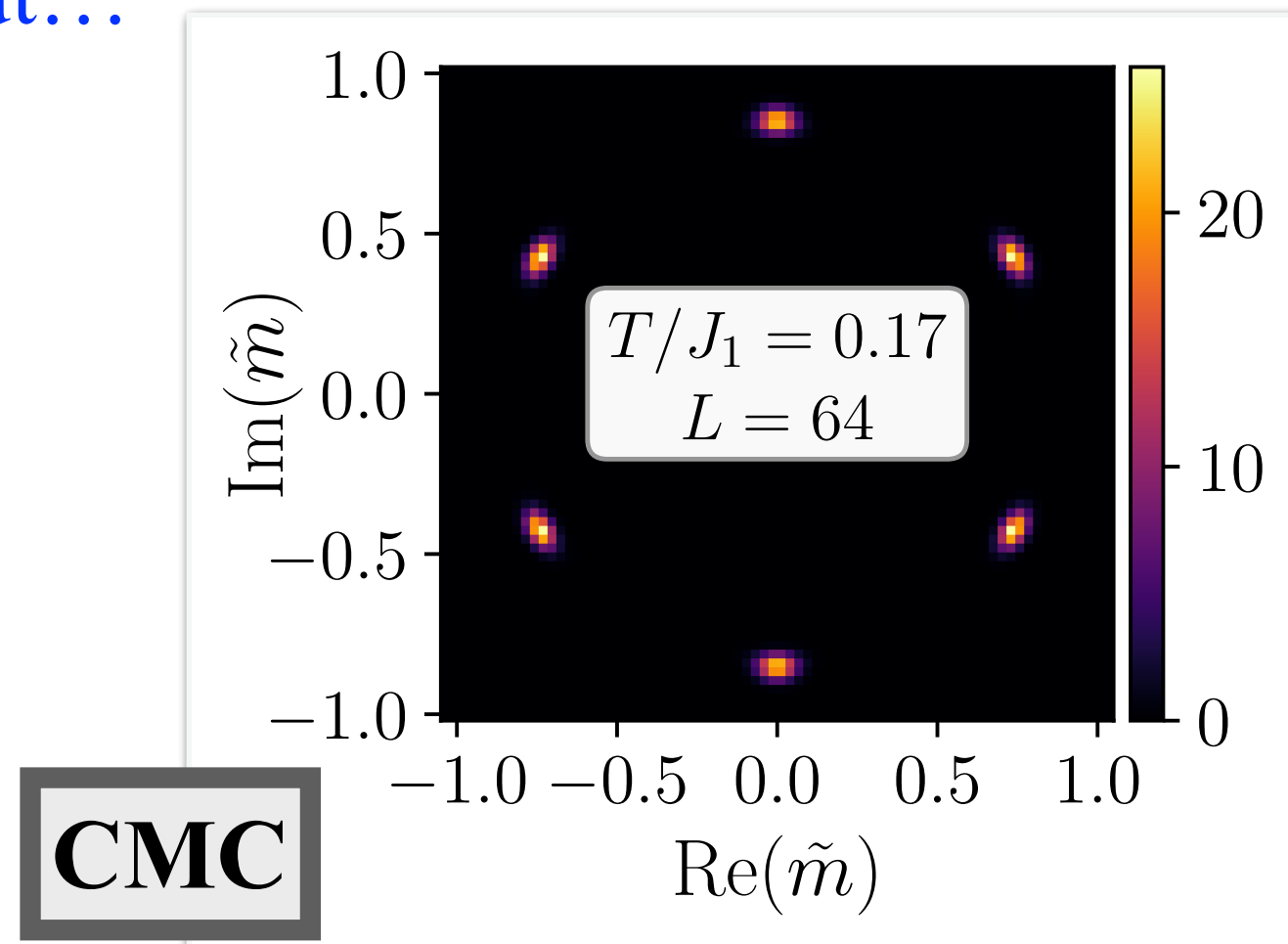
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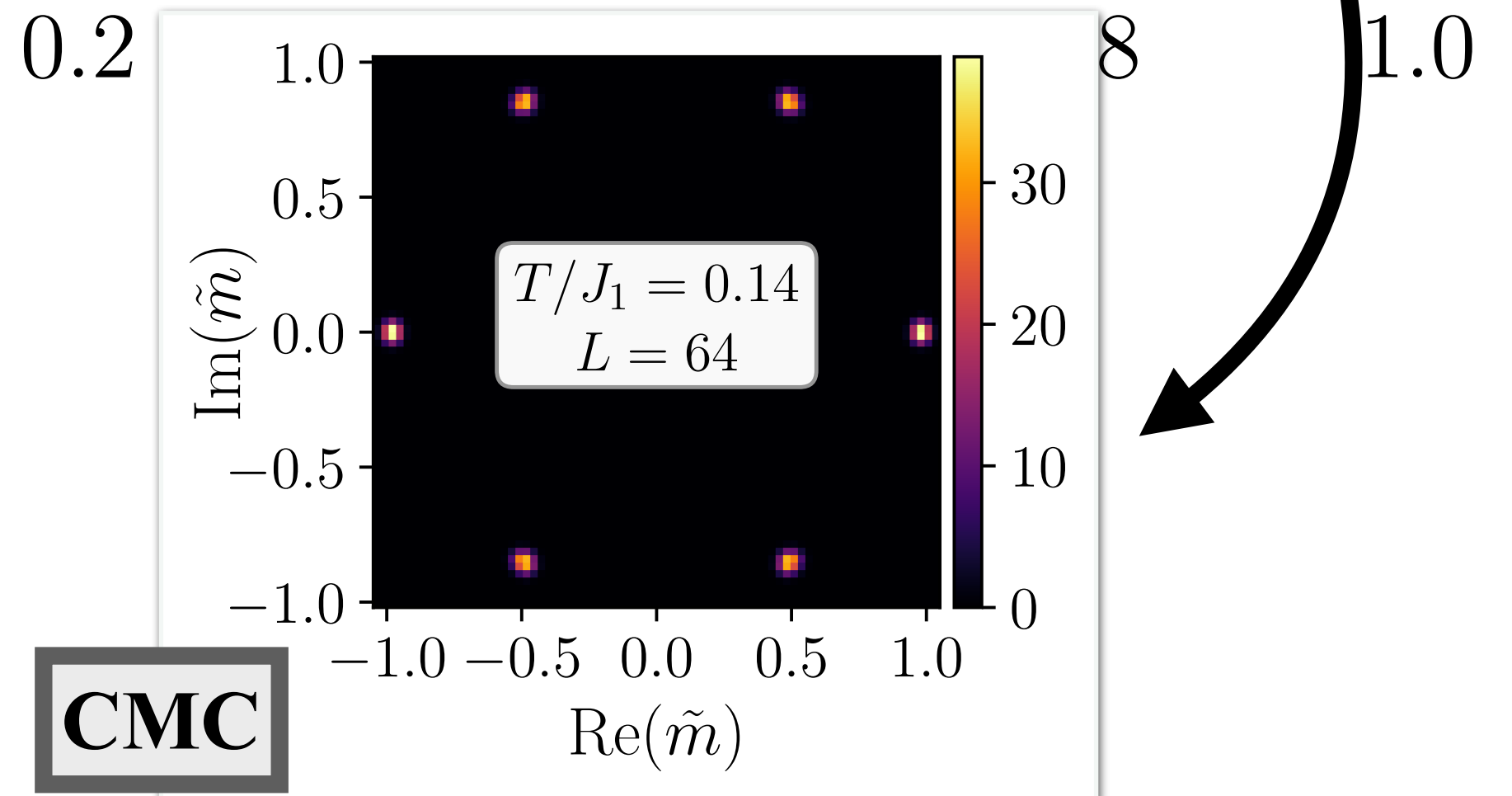
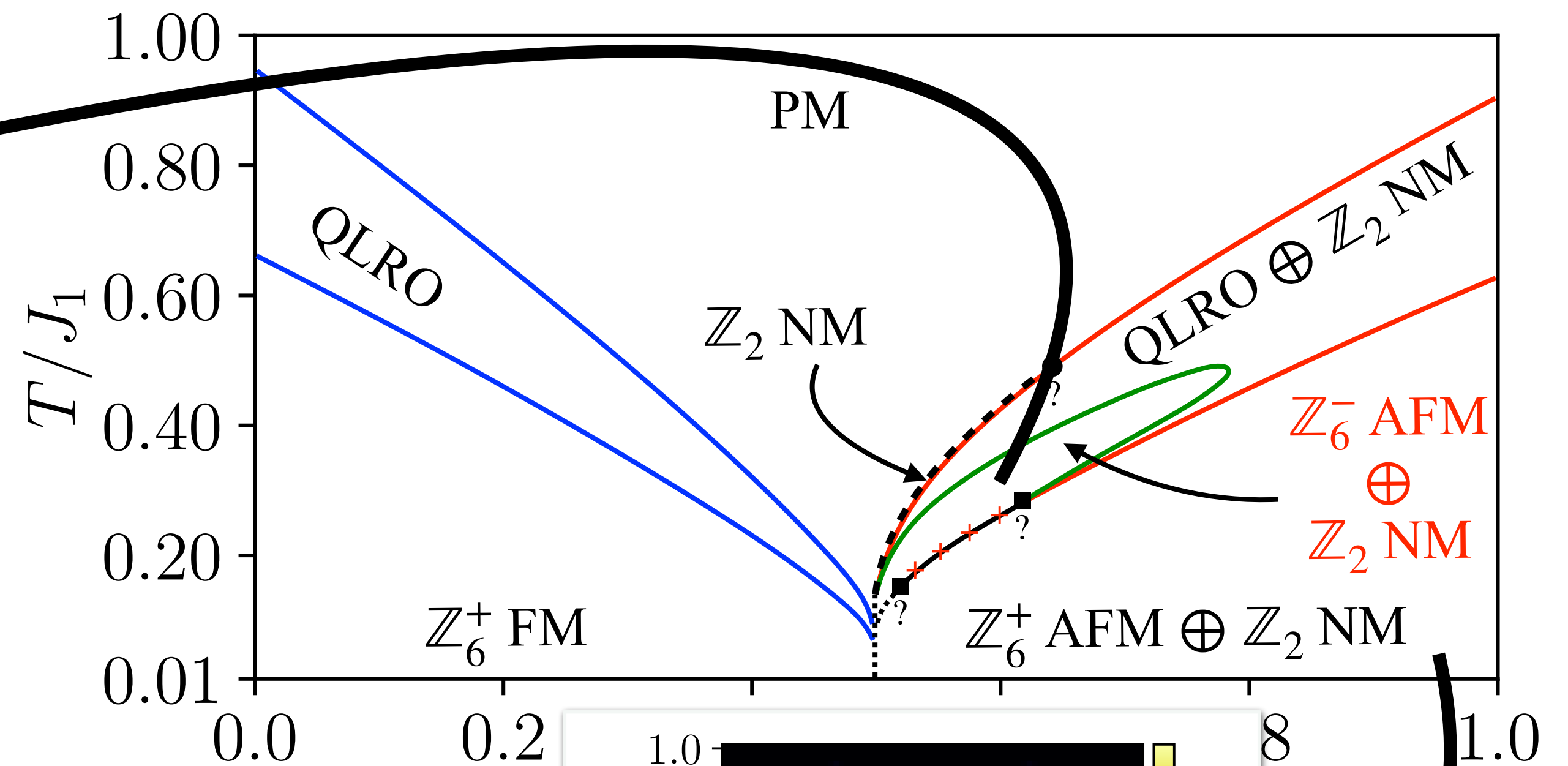
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New emergent degrees-of-freedom

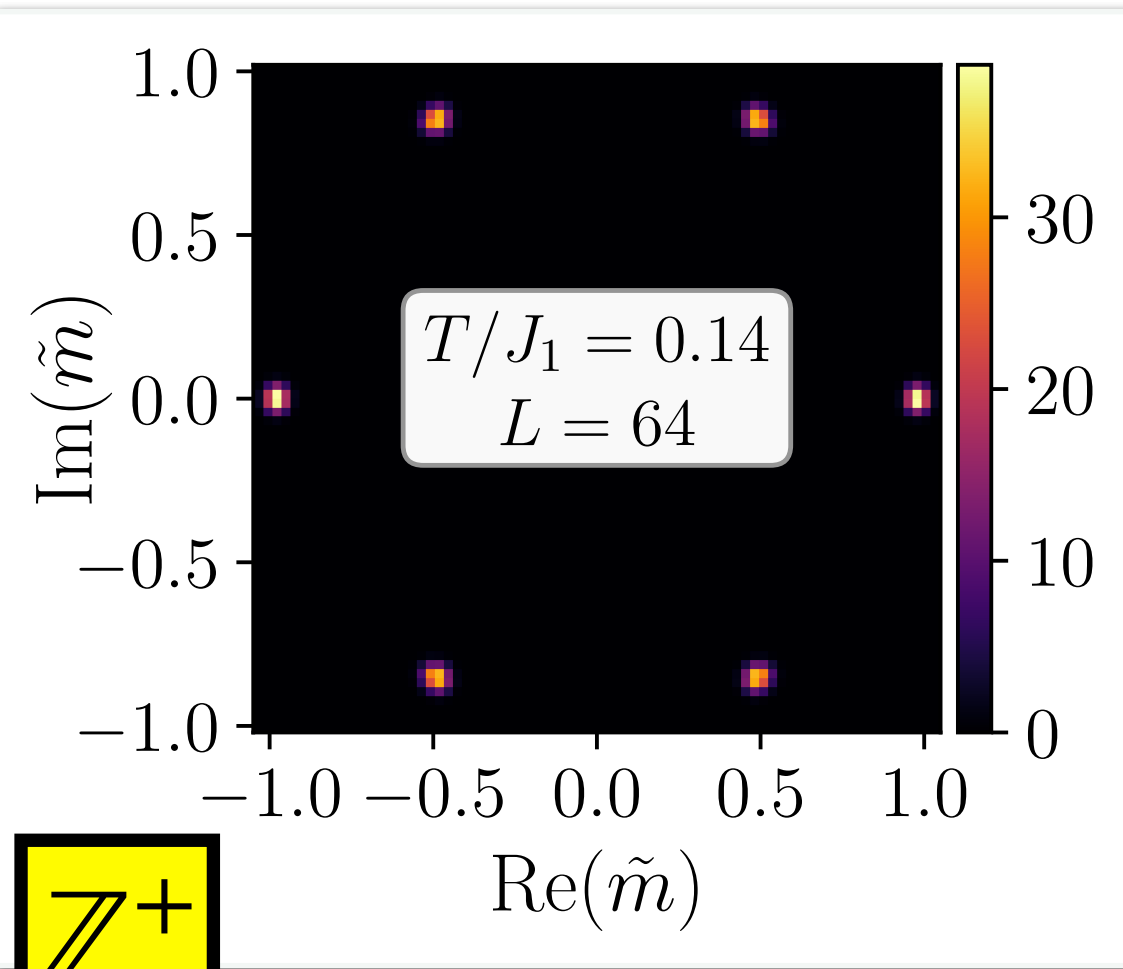
Not allowed in the microscopic theory

Comes from an emergent $\mathbb{Z}_q$ symmetry different from the microscopic theory

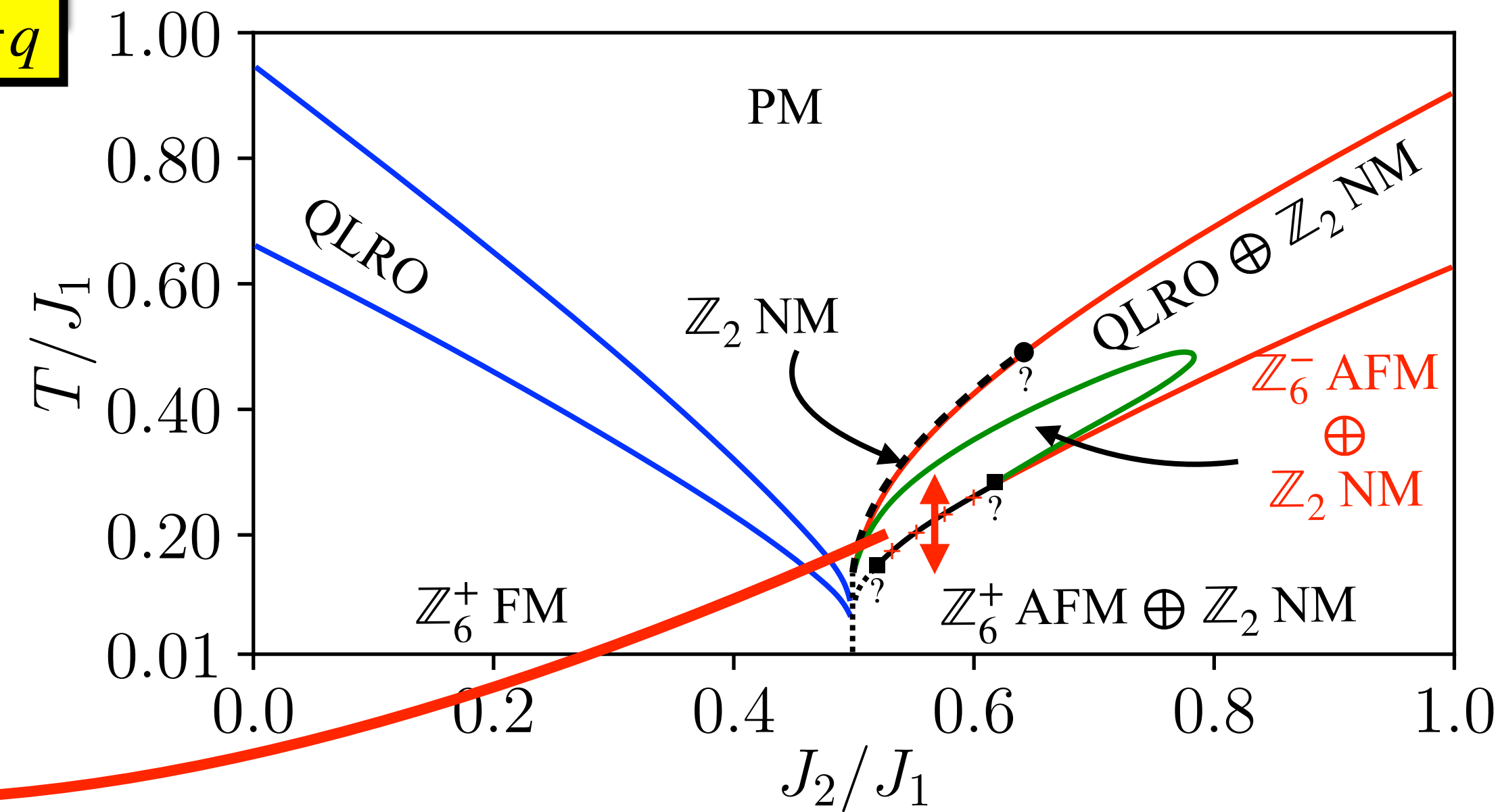
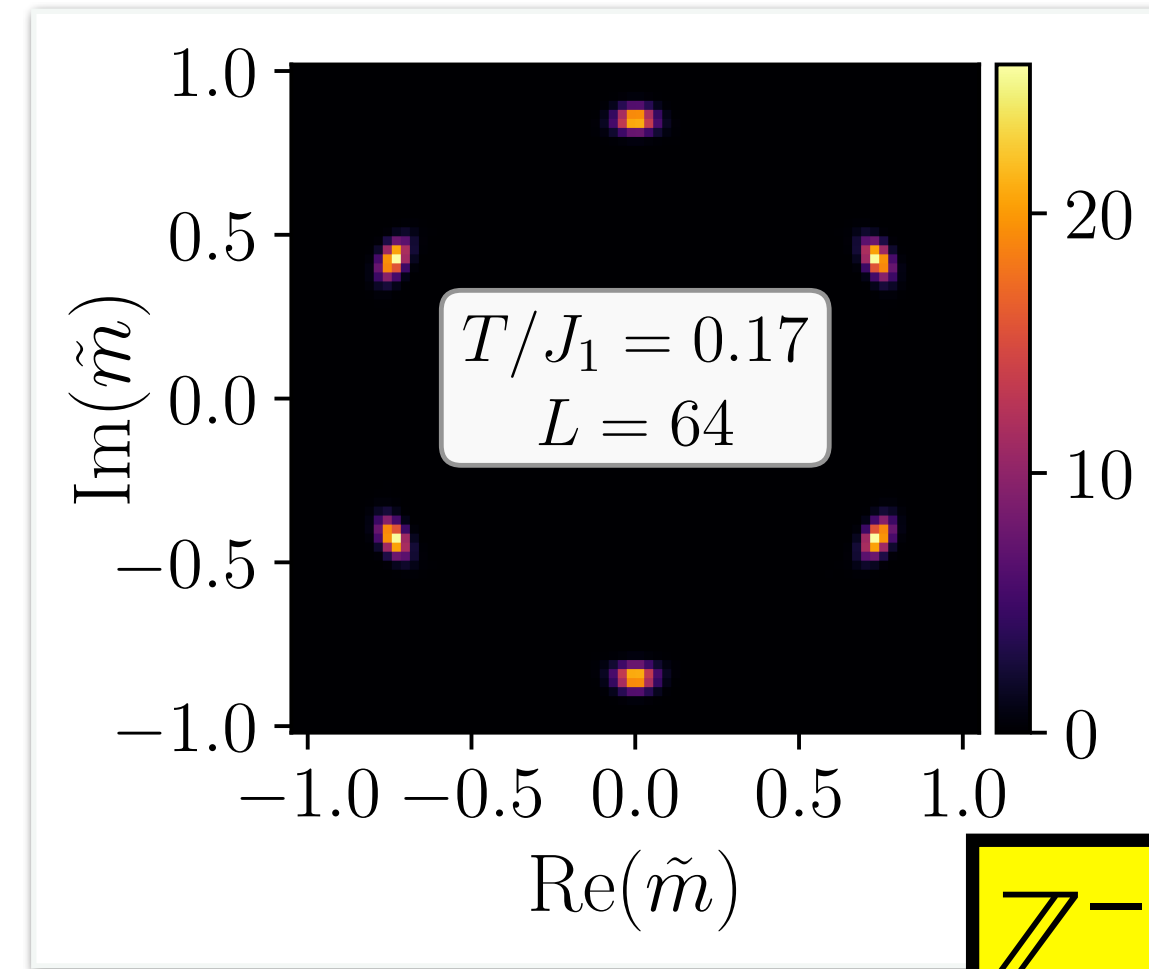


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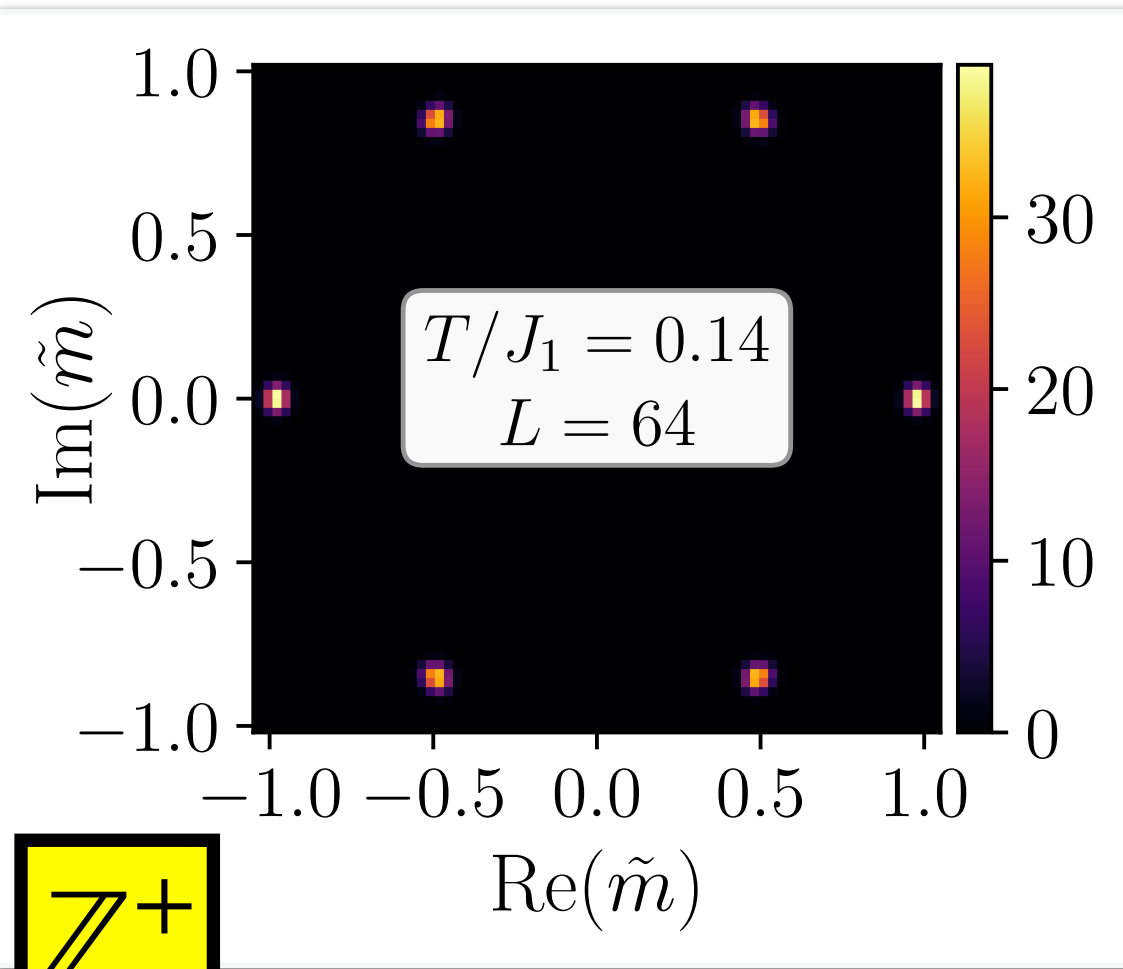


Transition ??

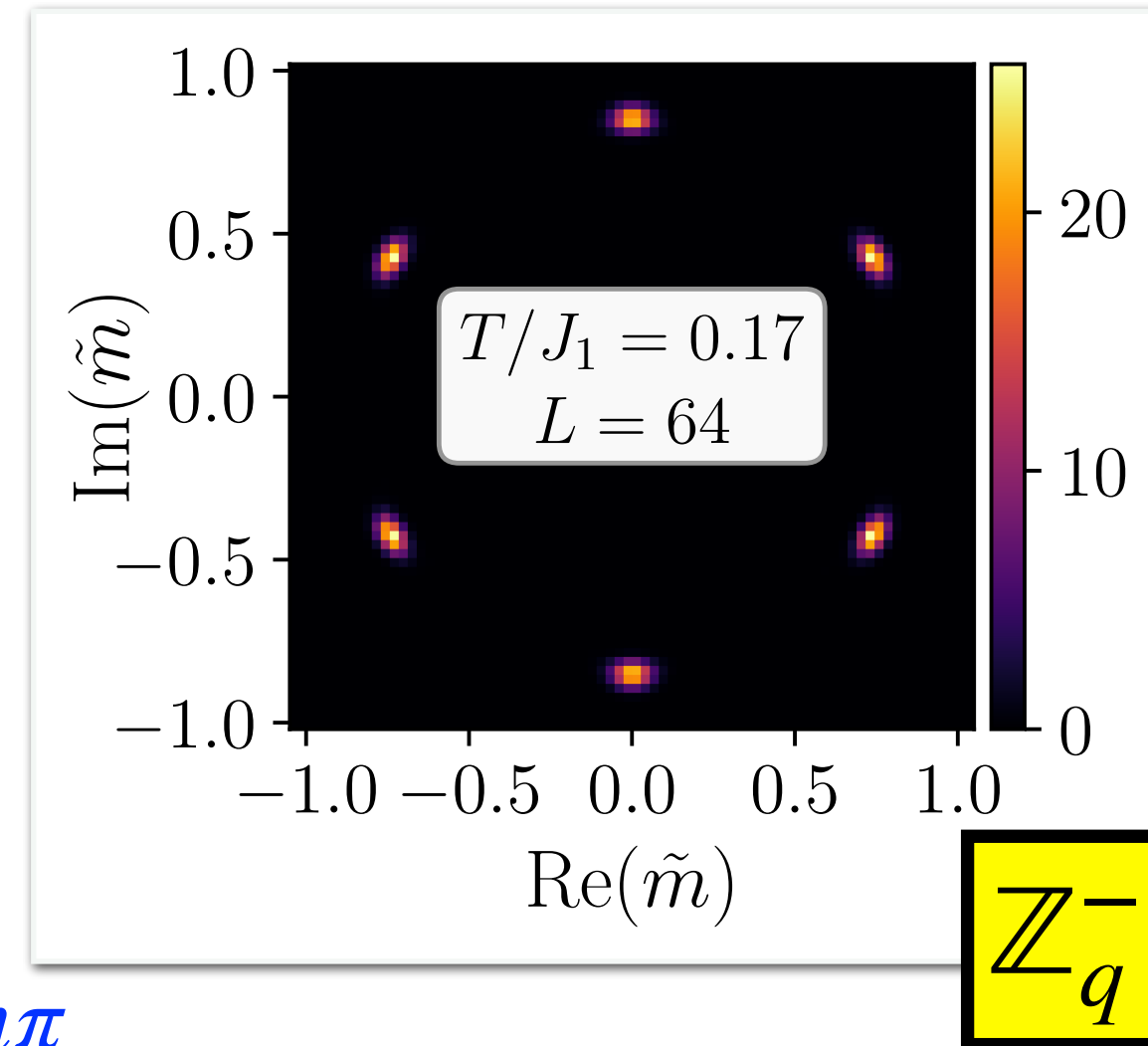


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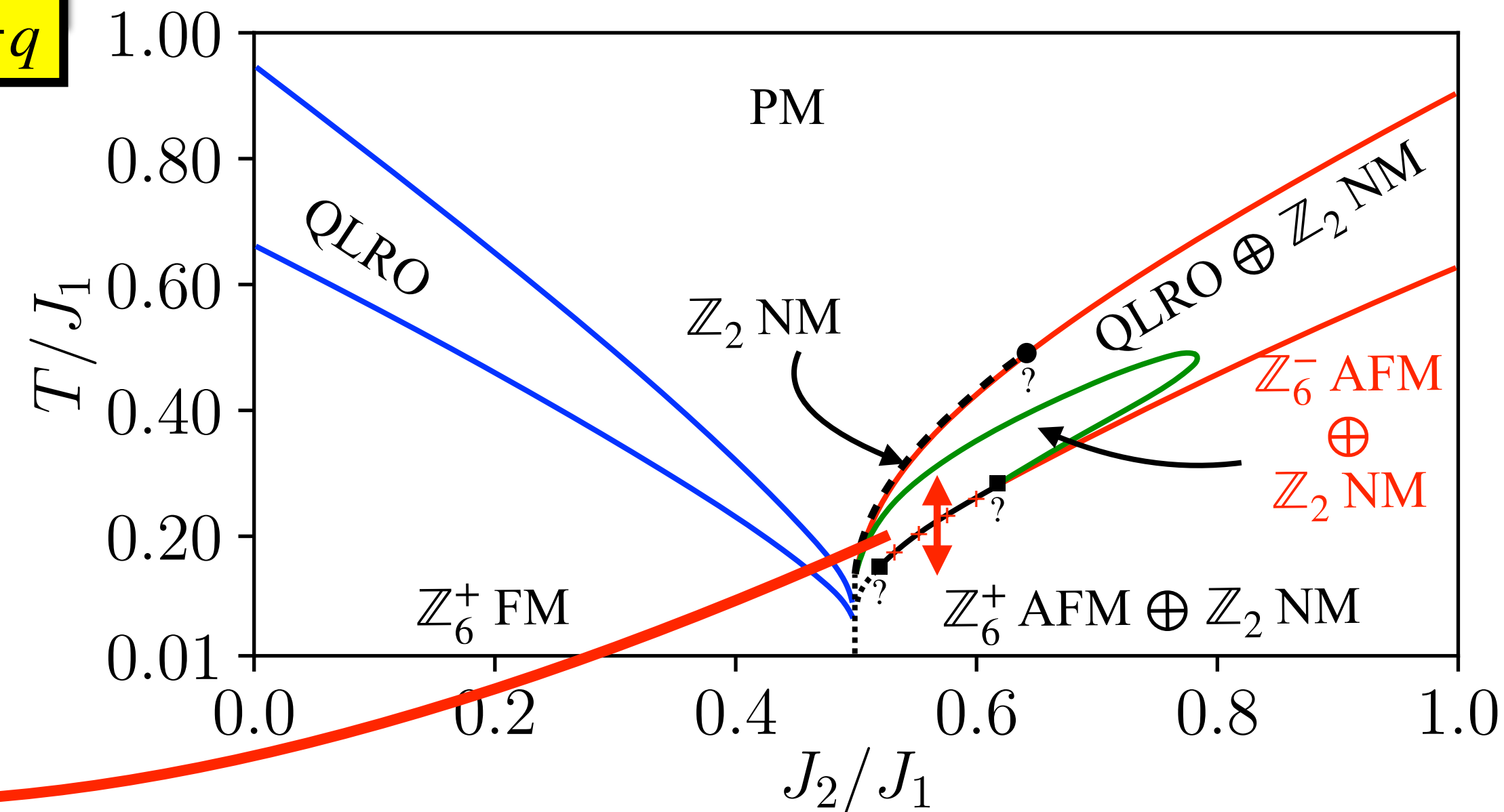
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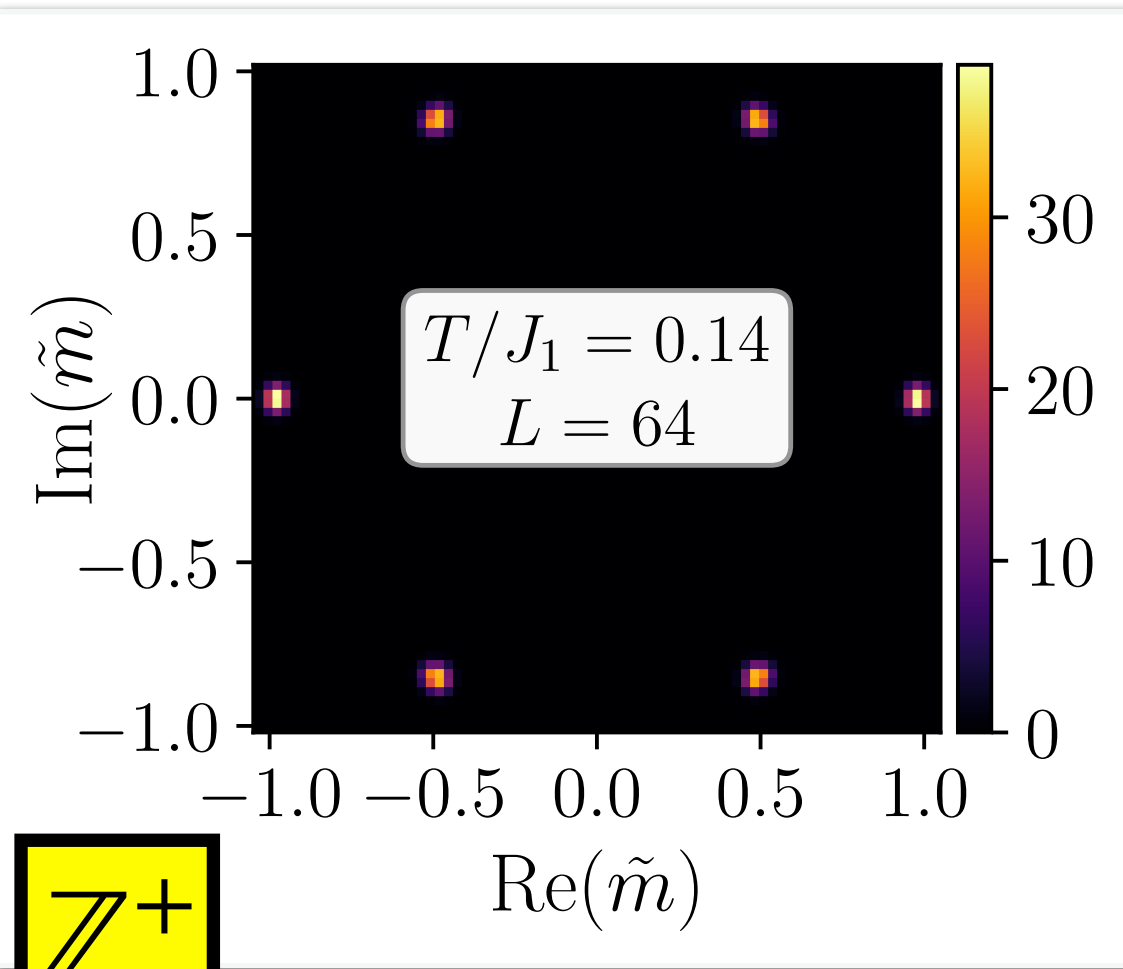


Breaks $\mathbb{Z}_q$: $\theta_i \rightarrow \theta_i + \frac{2m\pi}{q} \dots \forall i$

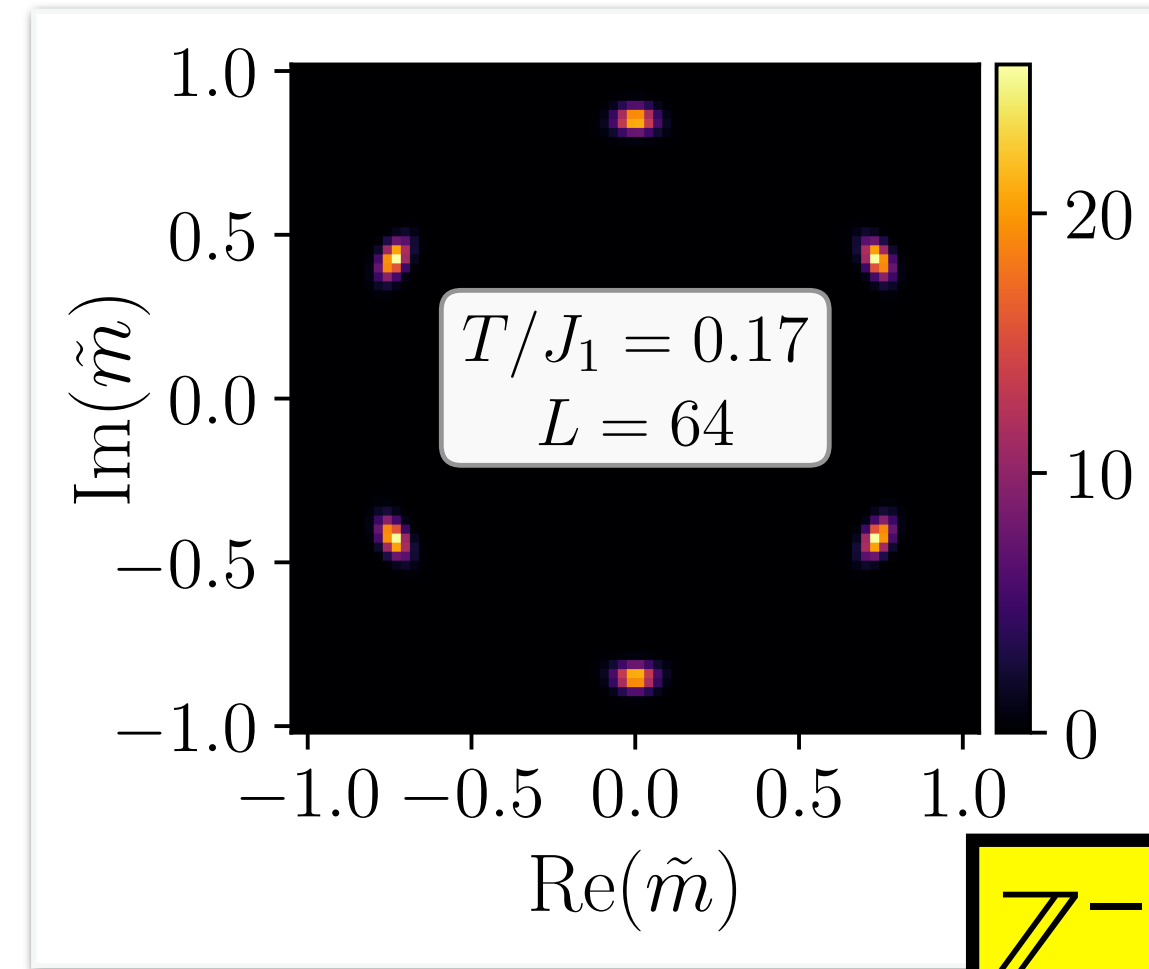


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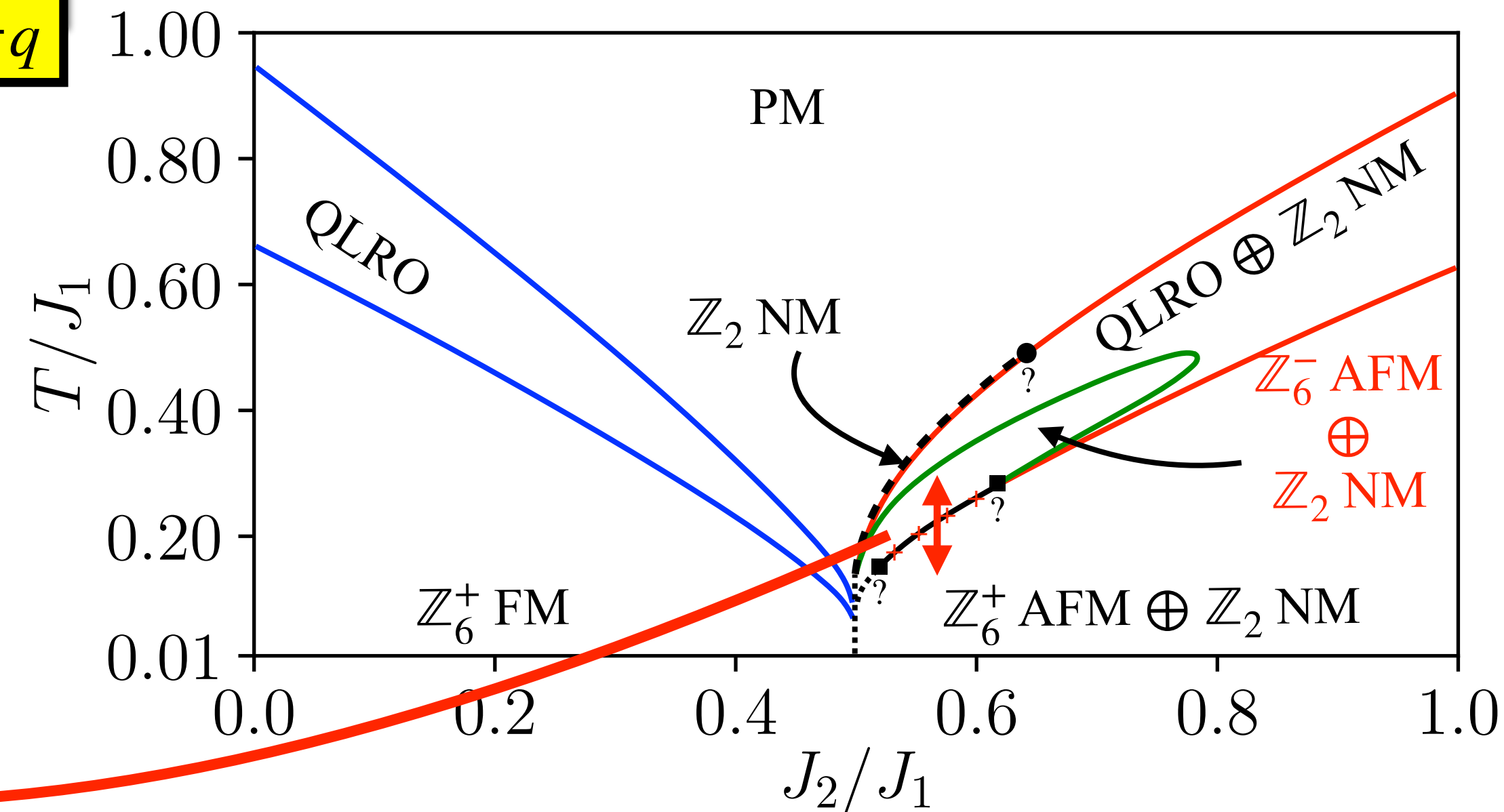
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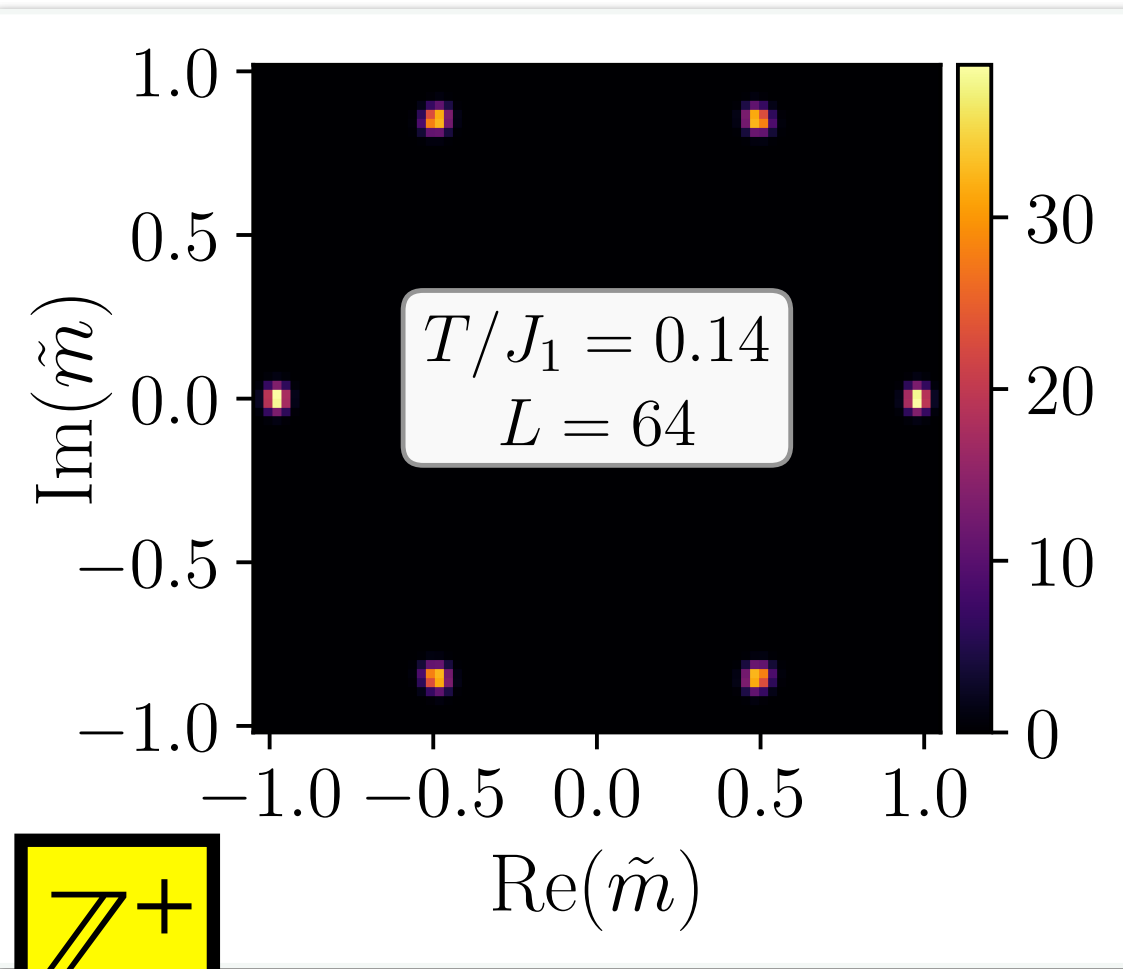
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Two vacua remain invariant

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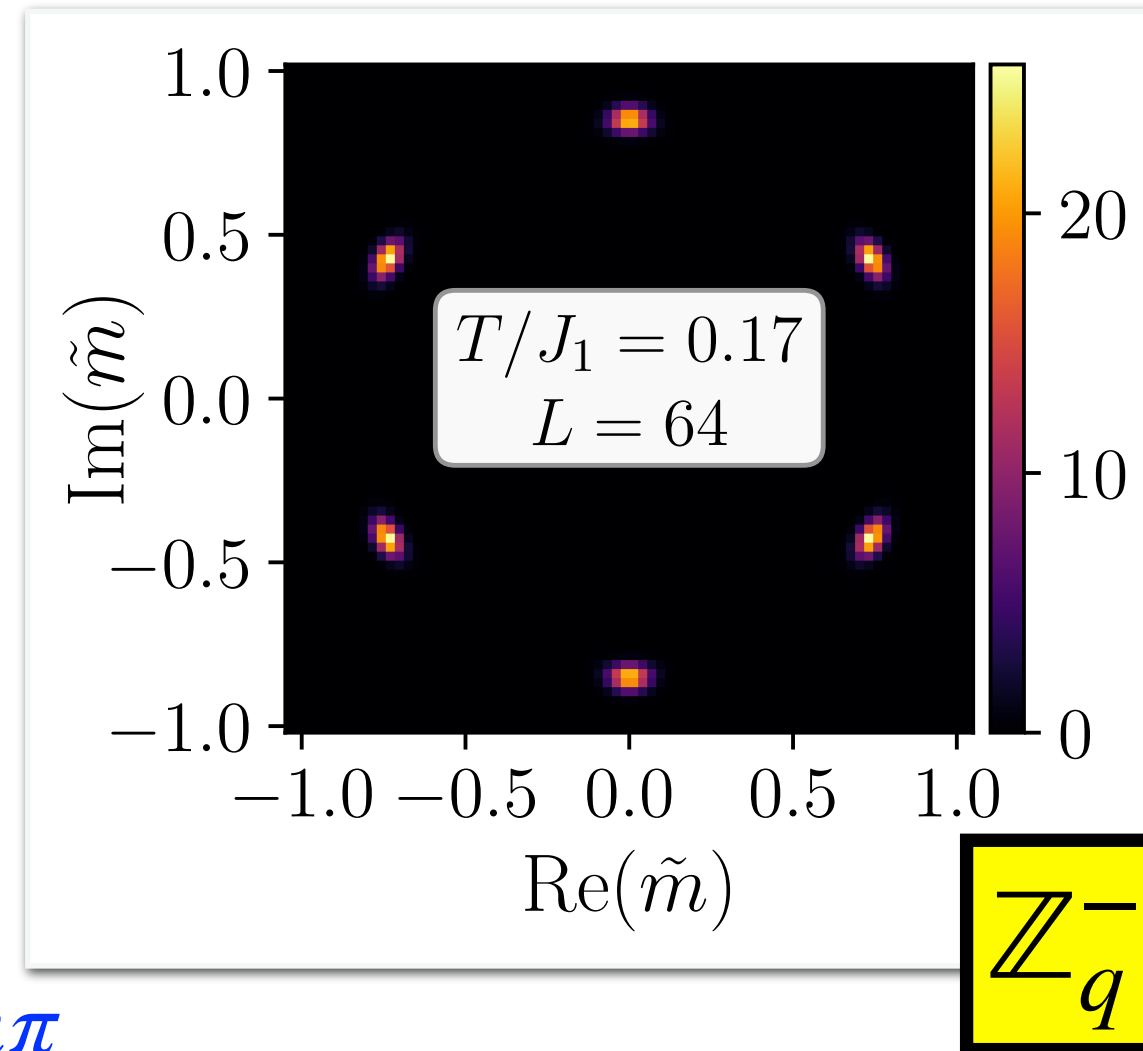


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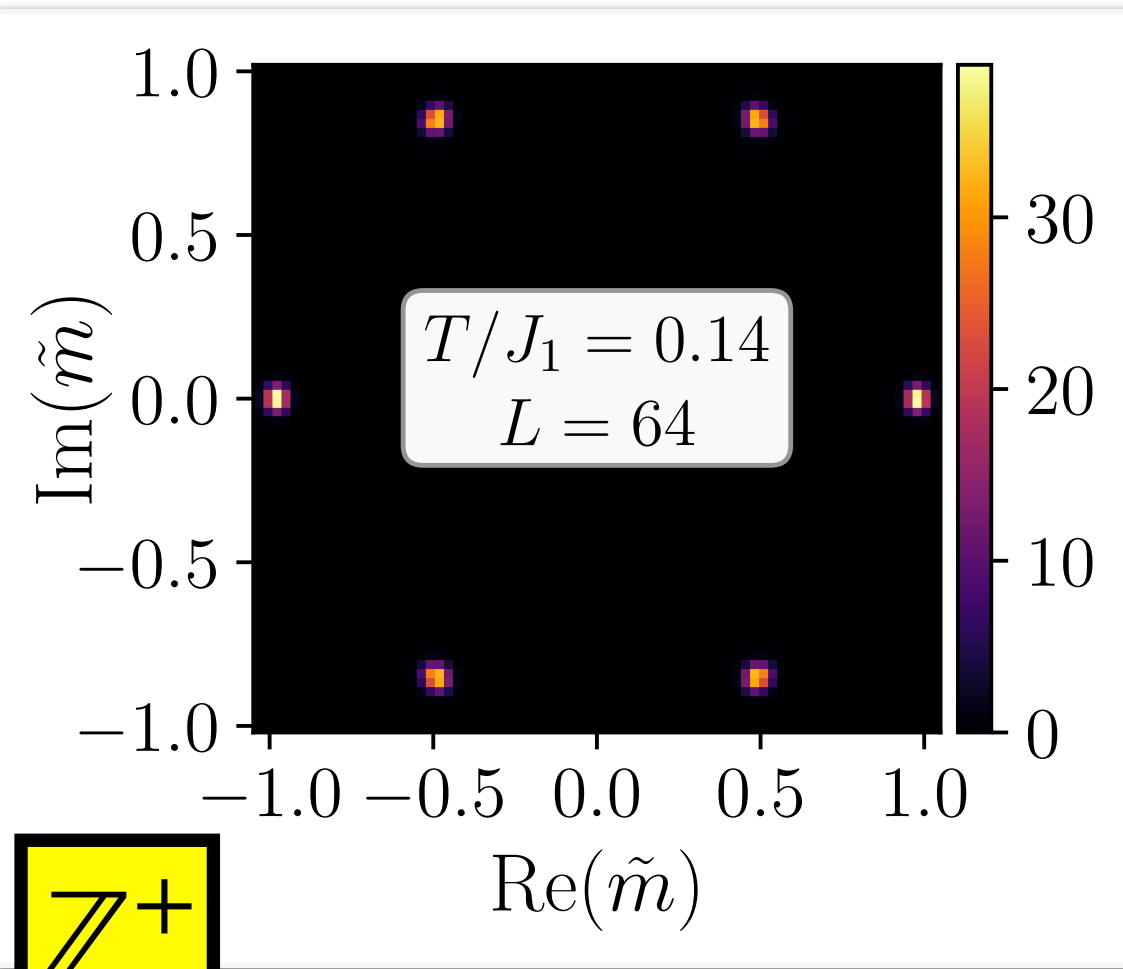
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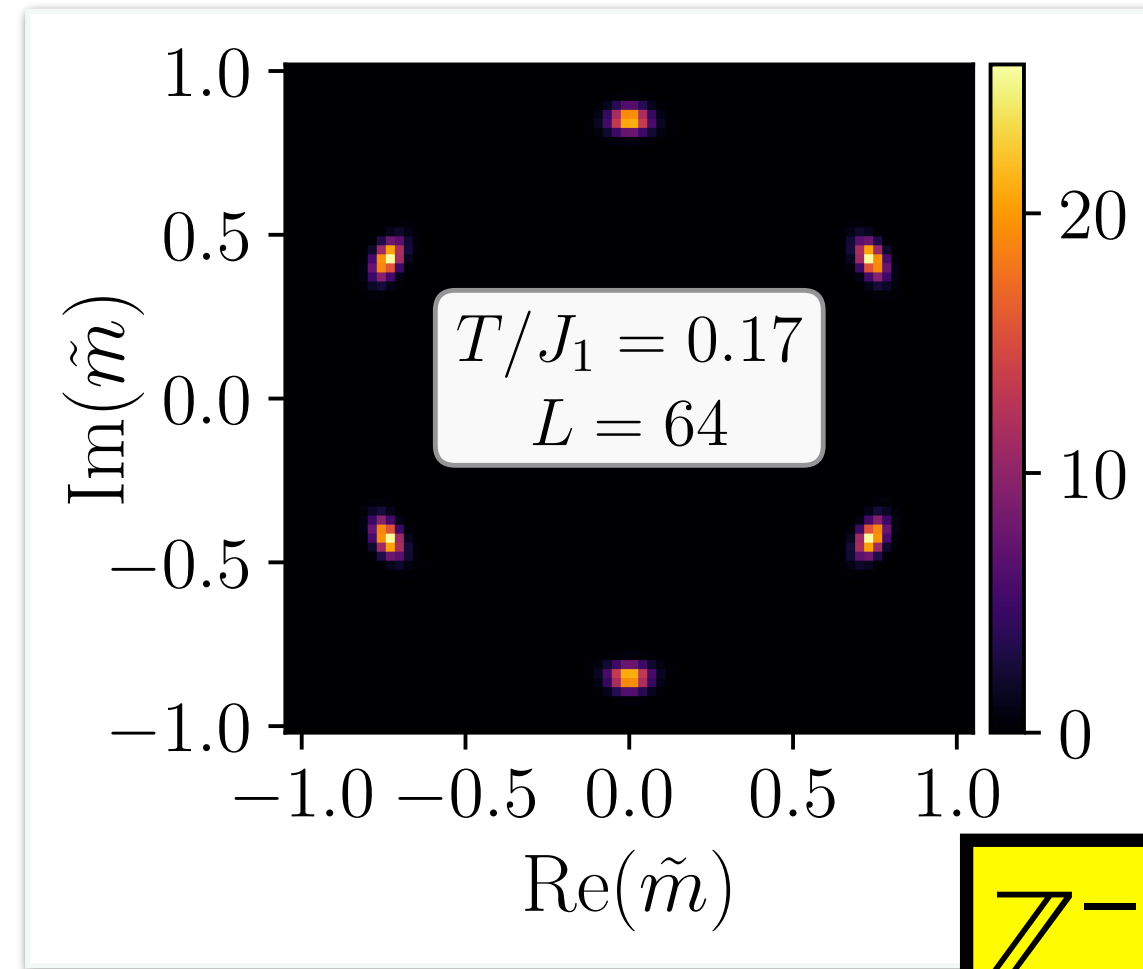
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$\mathbb{Z}_q^+$

Transition ??



$\mathbb{Z}_q^-$

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Incompatible in the sense of Landau paradigm...

Two orders **cannot coexist**...

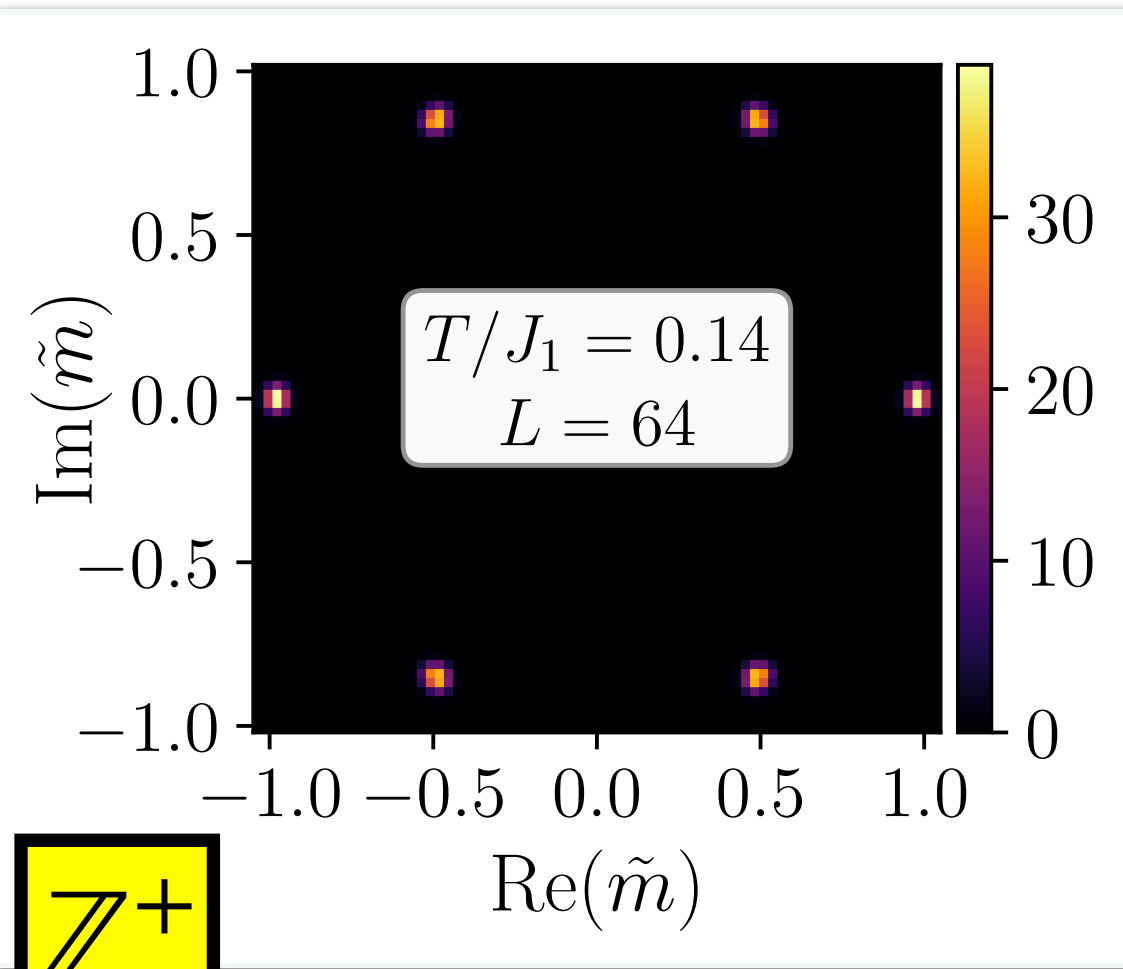
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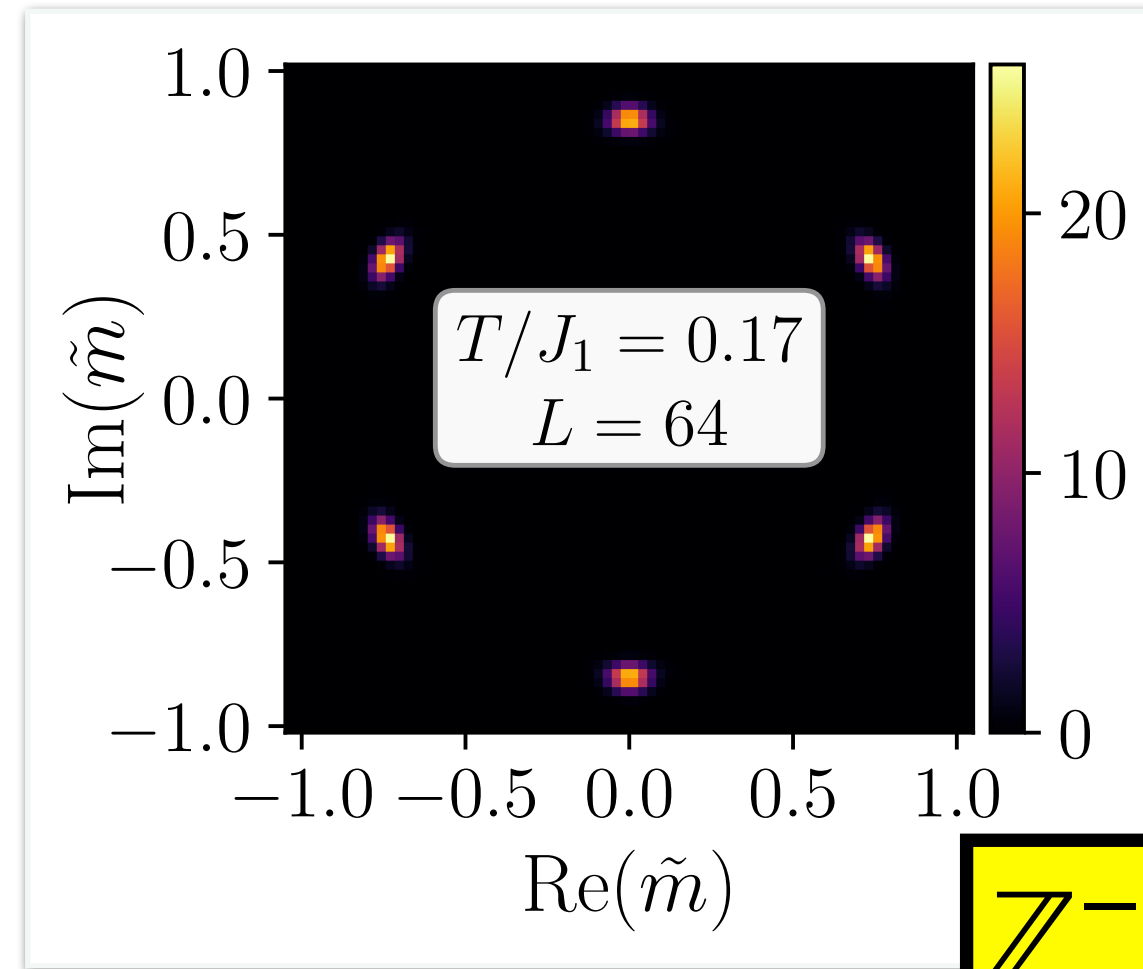
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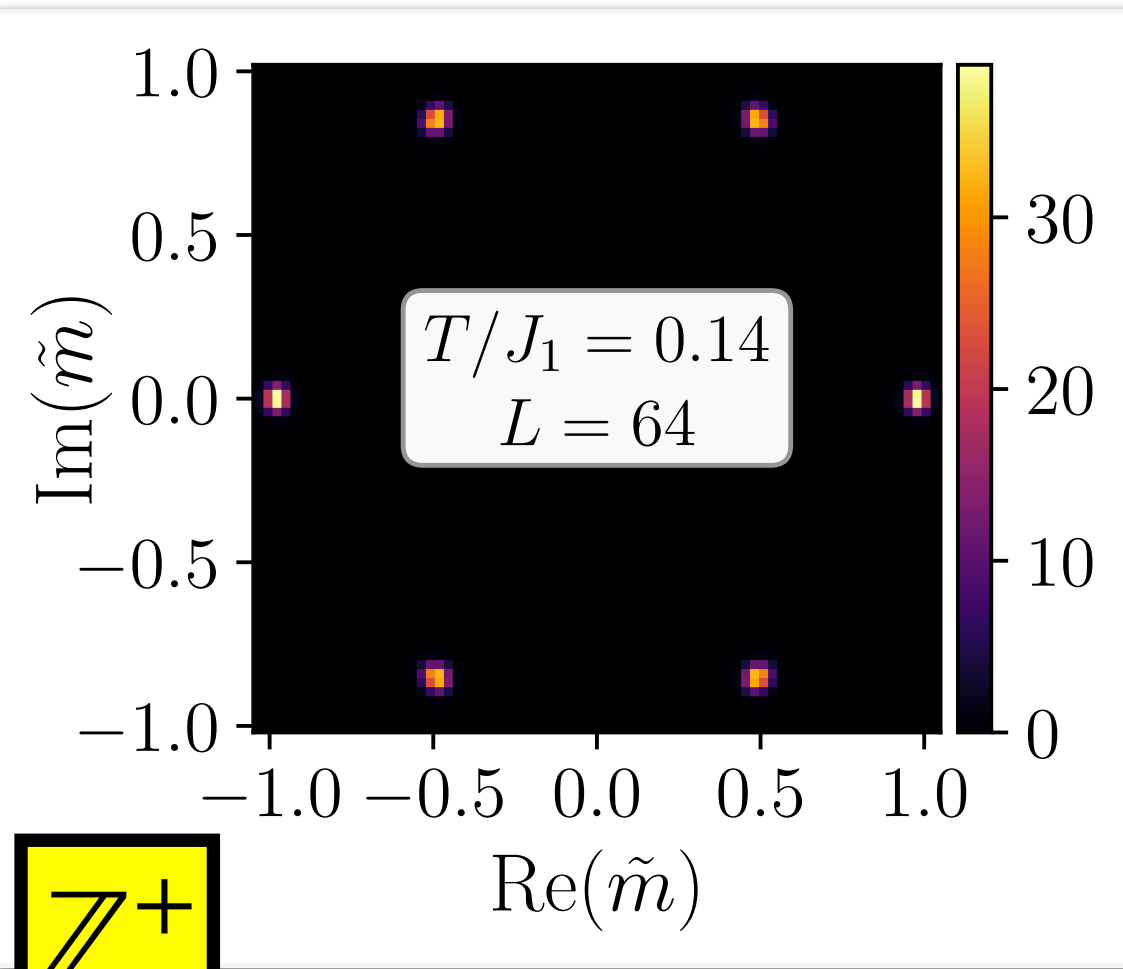
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these two phases can be separated either by...

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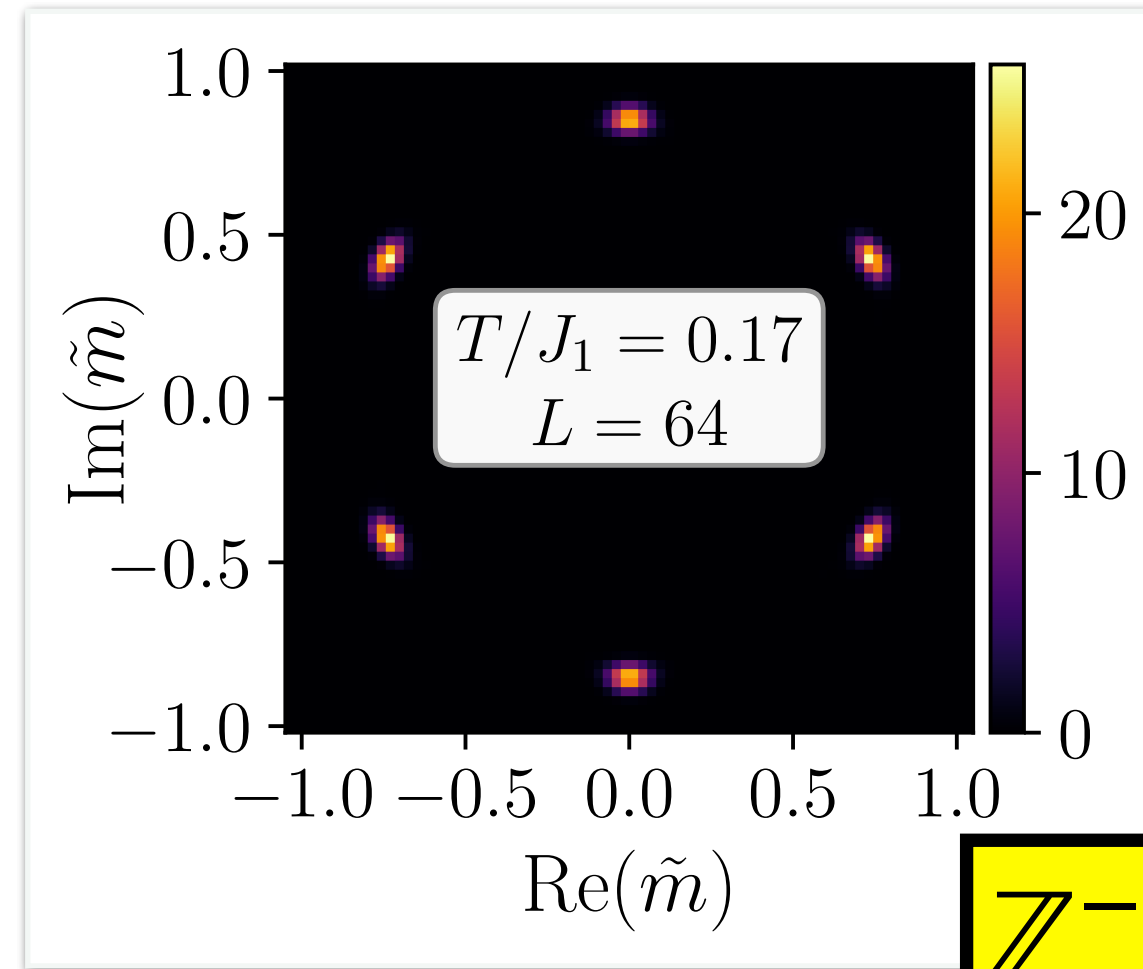
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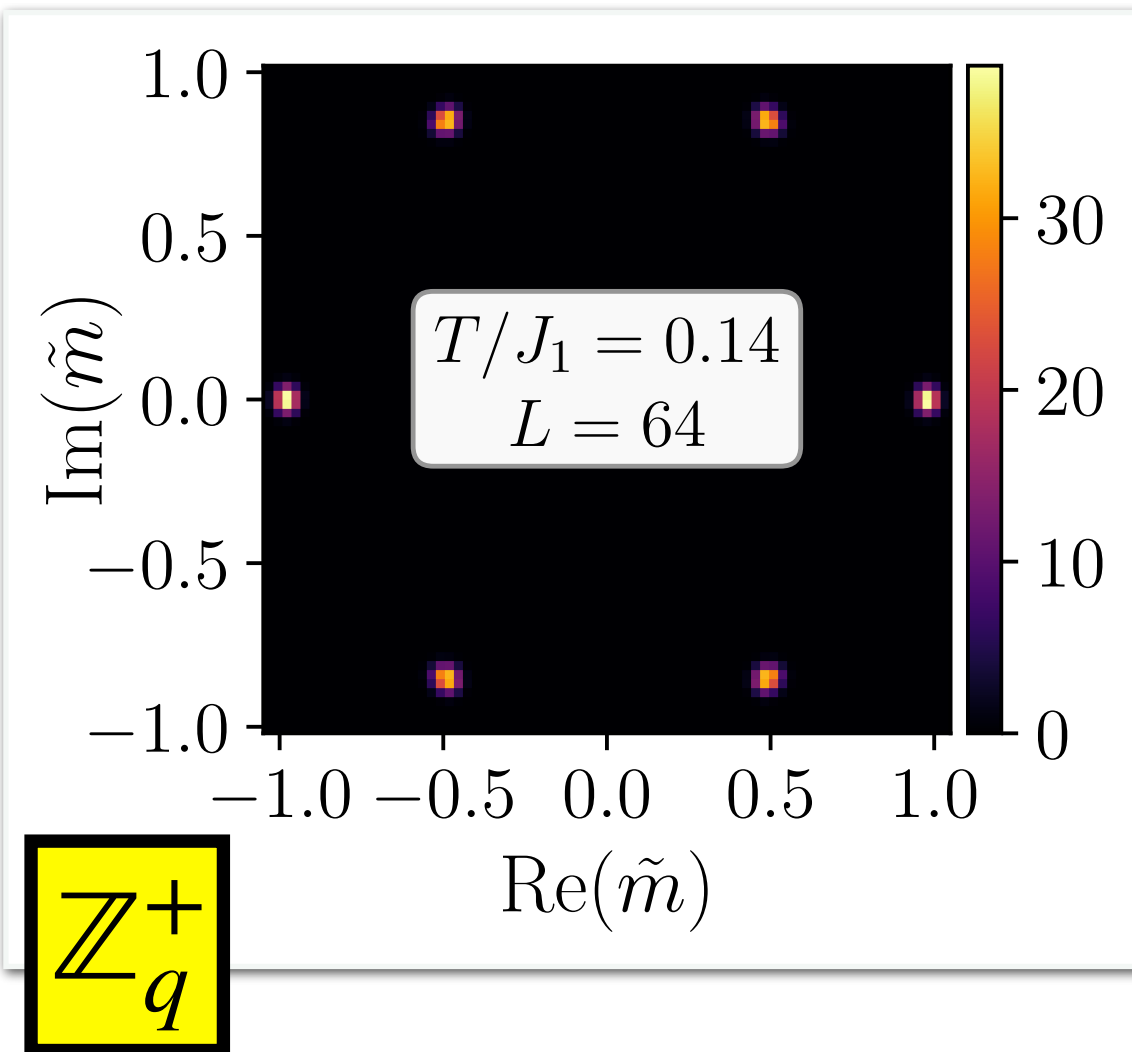
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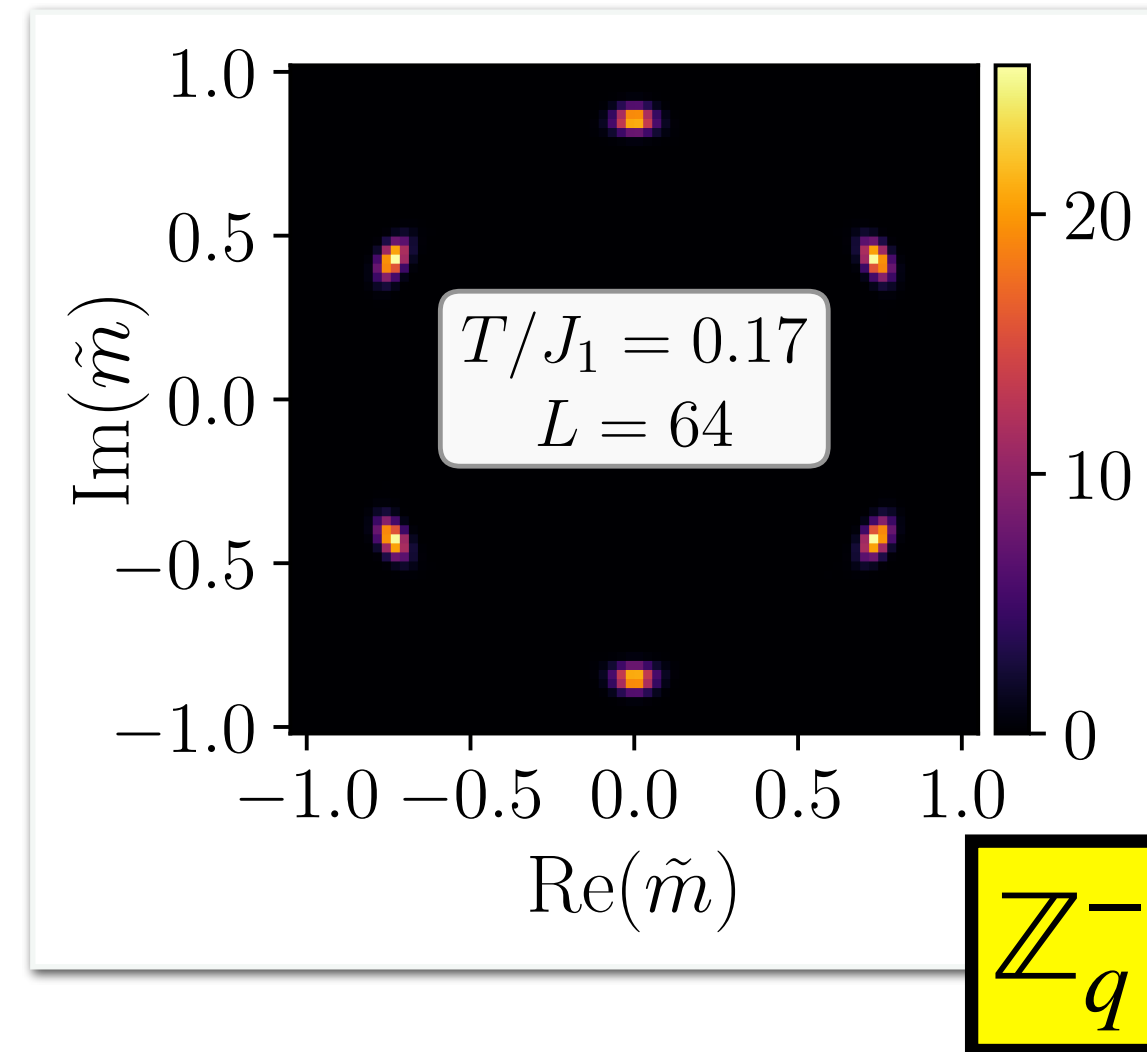
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Classical analogue of **Deconfined Quantum Criticality**...

J_1 - J_2 Clock Model



Transition ??

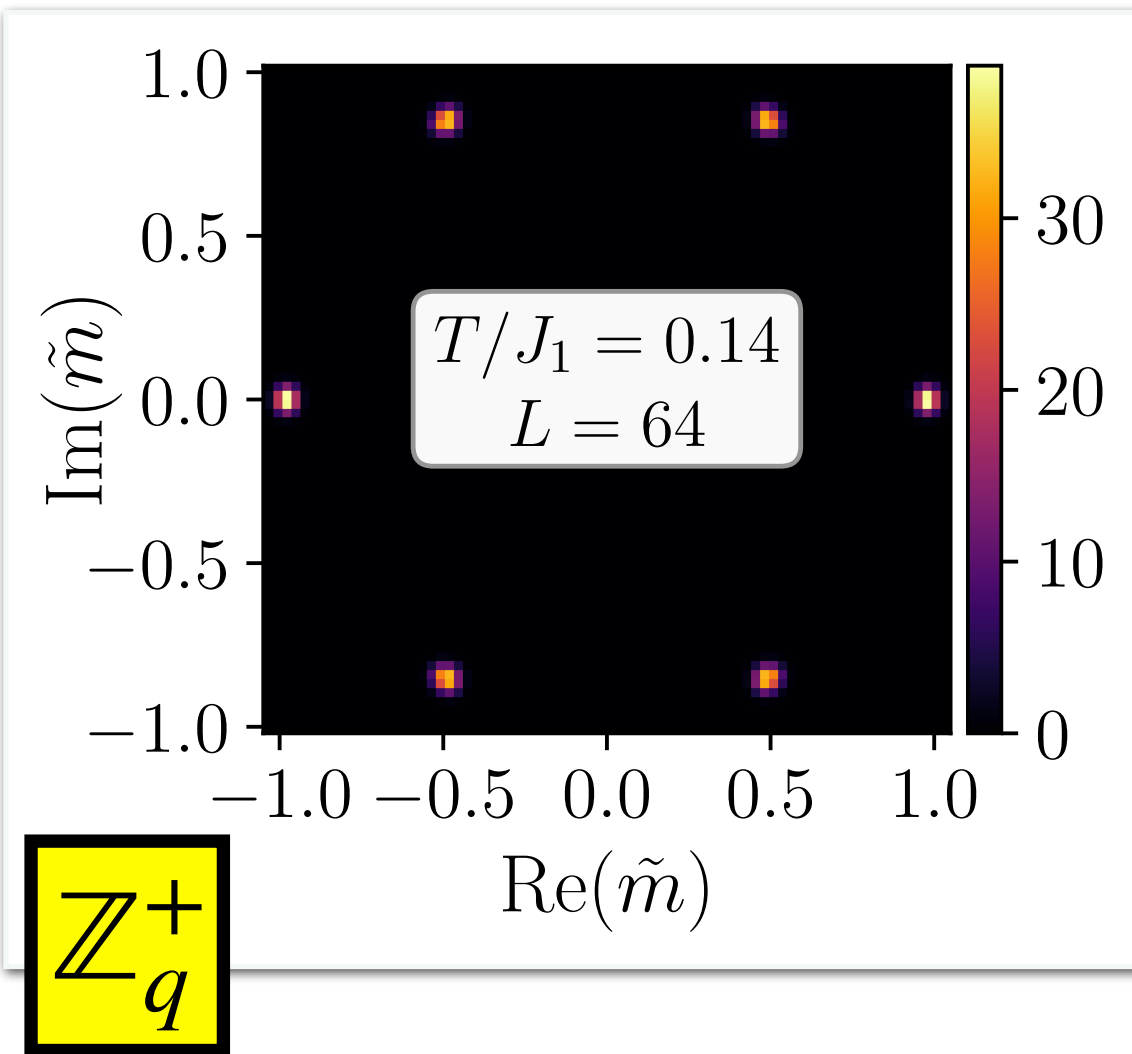


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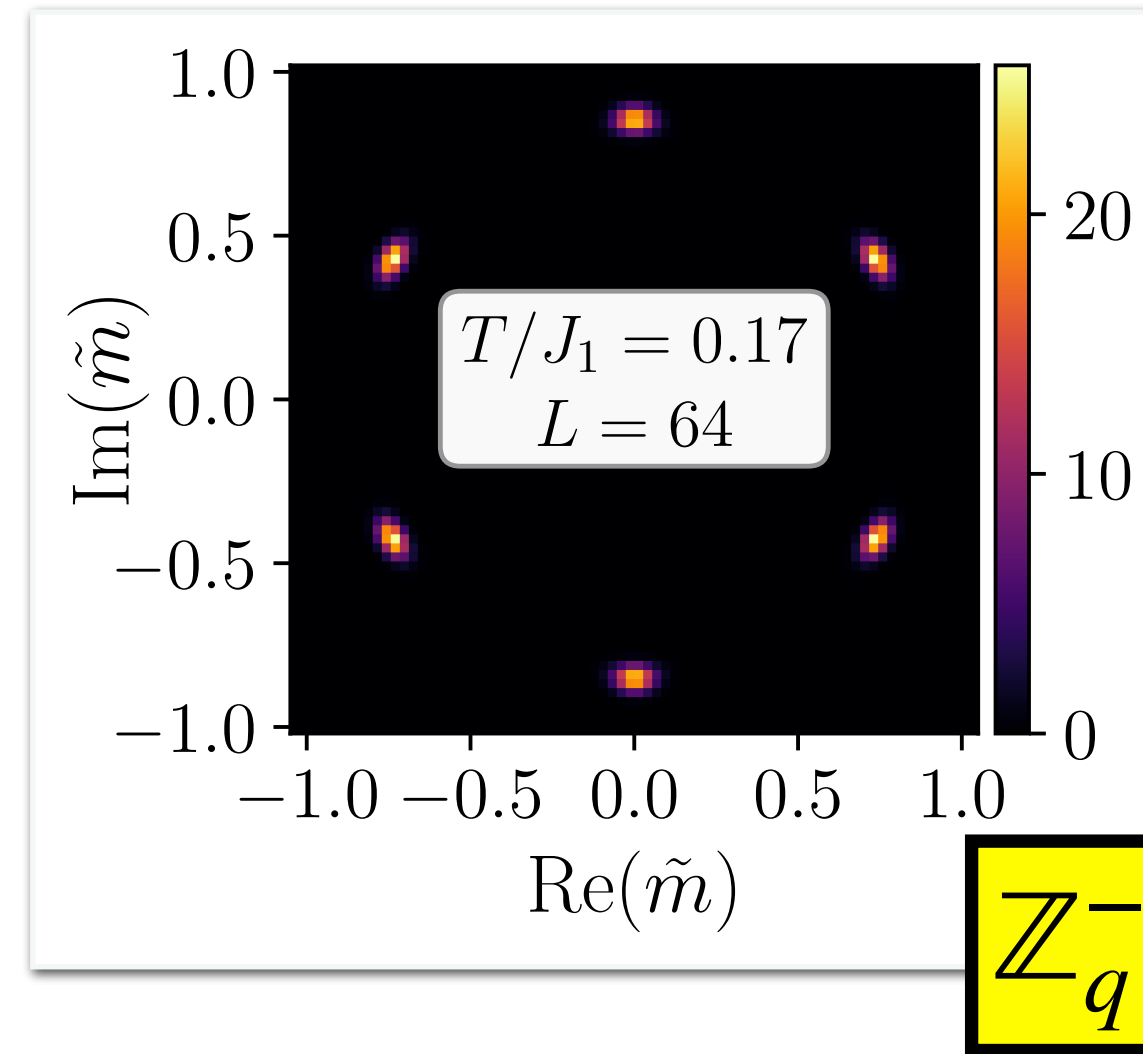
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Classical Origins of Landau-Incompatible Transitions,
Abhishodh Prakash and Nick G. Jones, PRL (2025)

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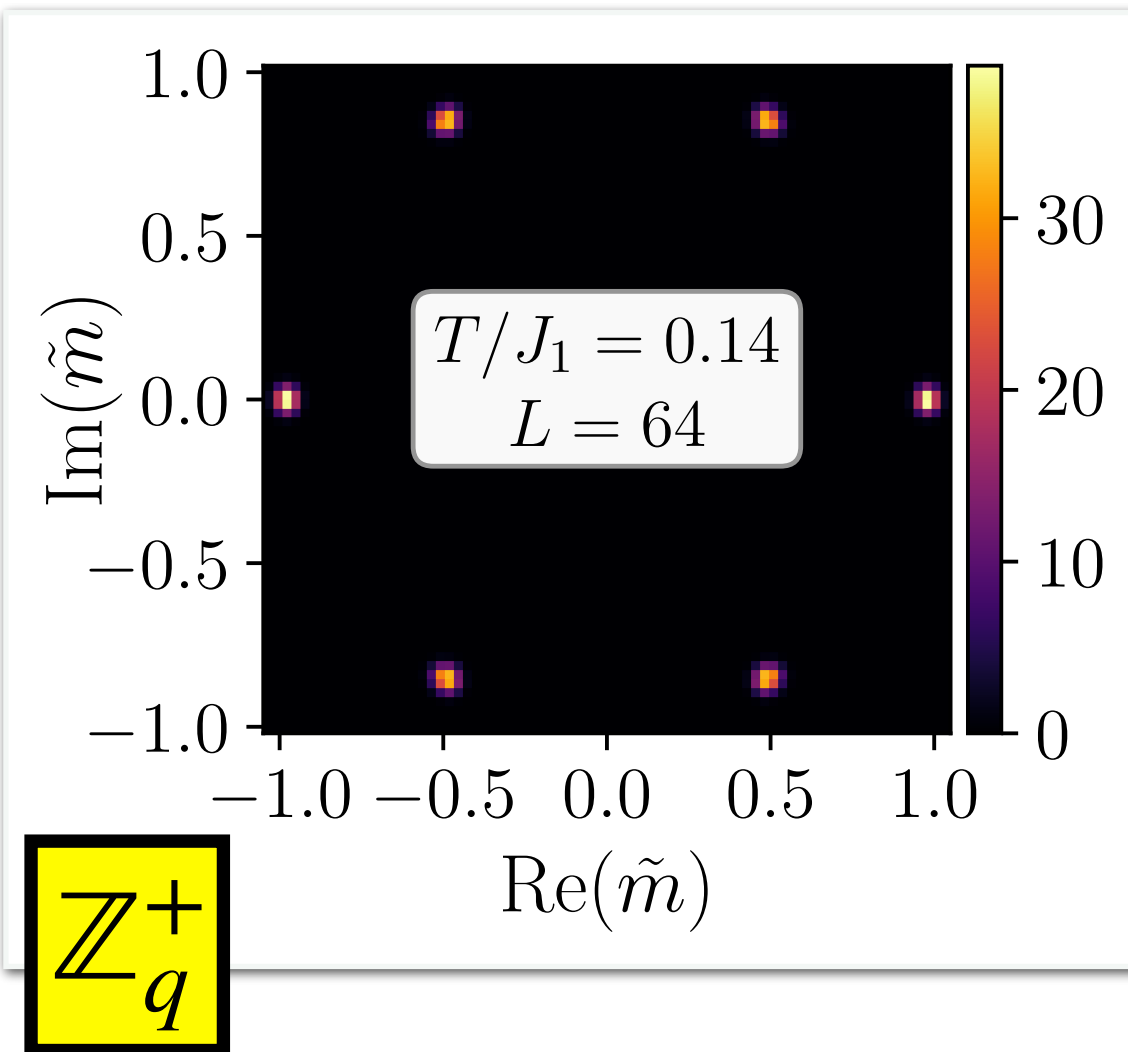
Condensed Matter > Strongly Correlated Electrons

[Submitted on 22 Jun 2023 ([v1](#)), last revised 6 Jul 2023 (this version, v2)]

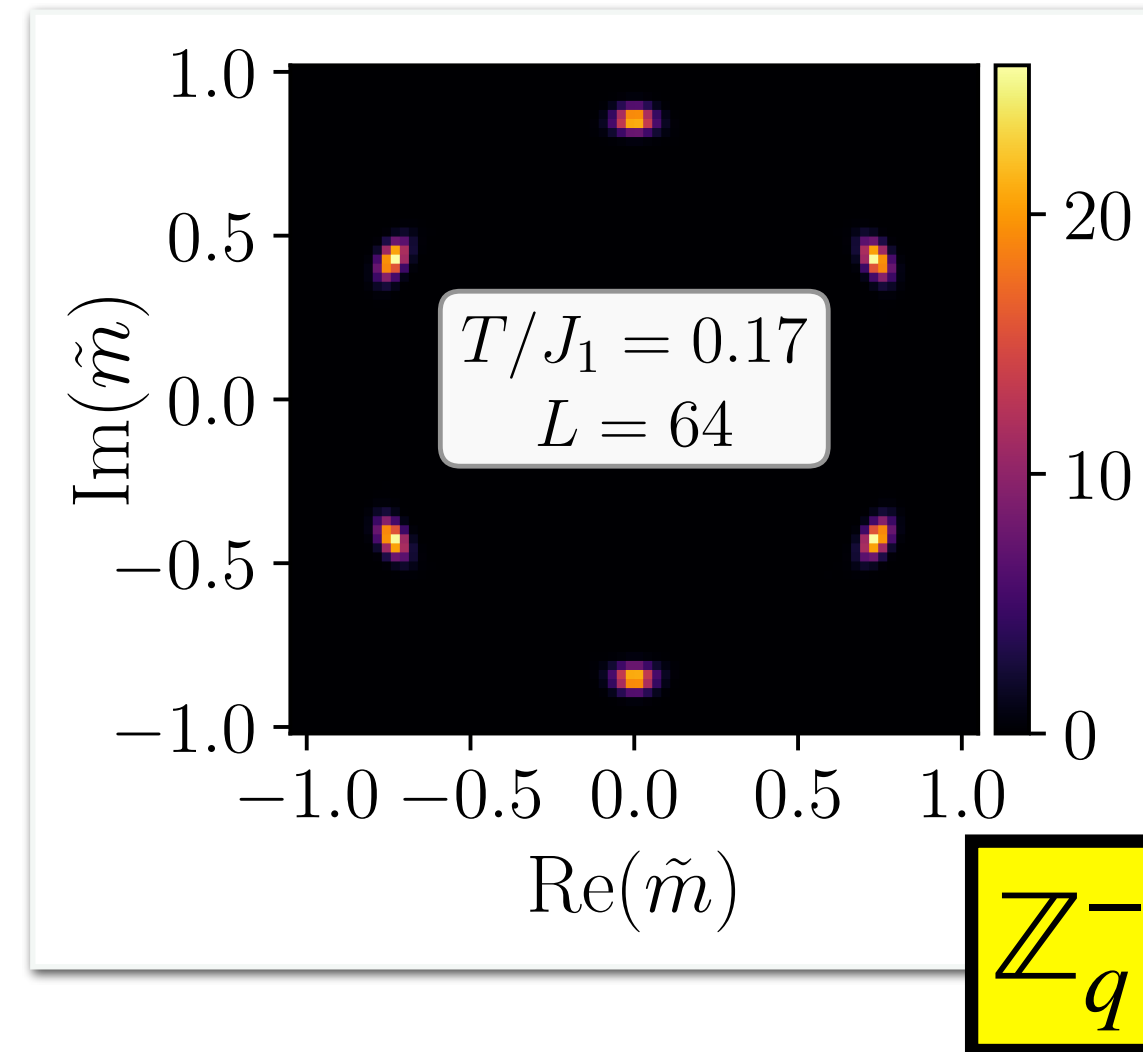
Deconfined quantum critical points: a review

[T. Senthil](#)

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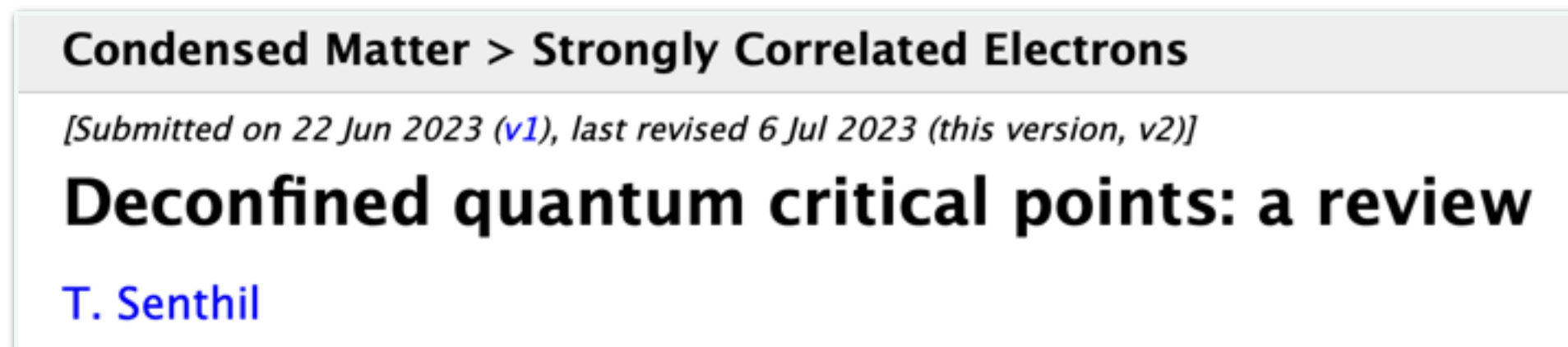


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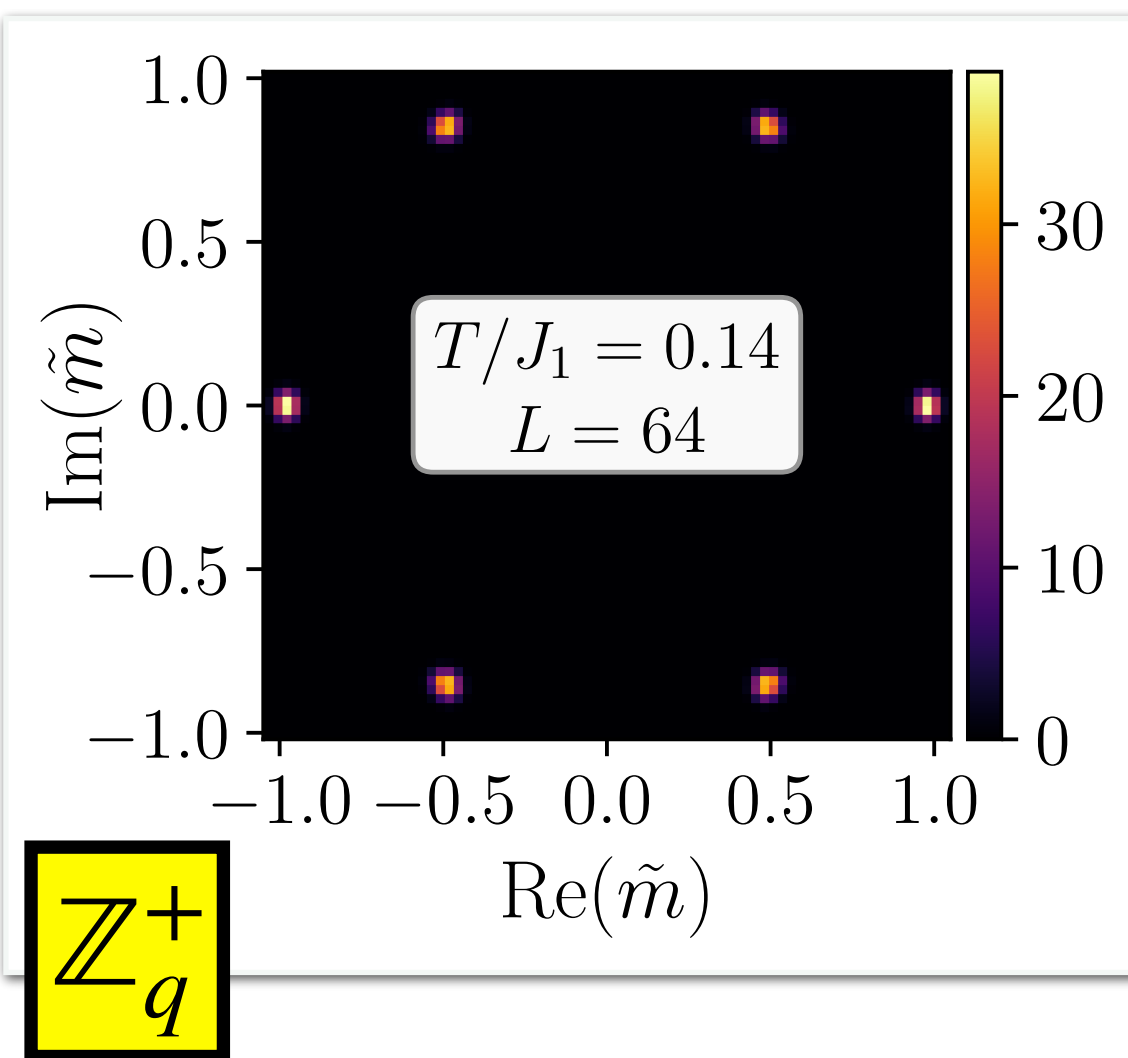
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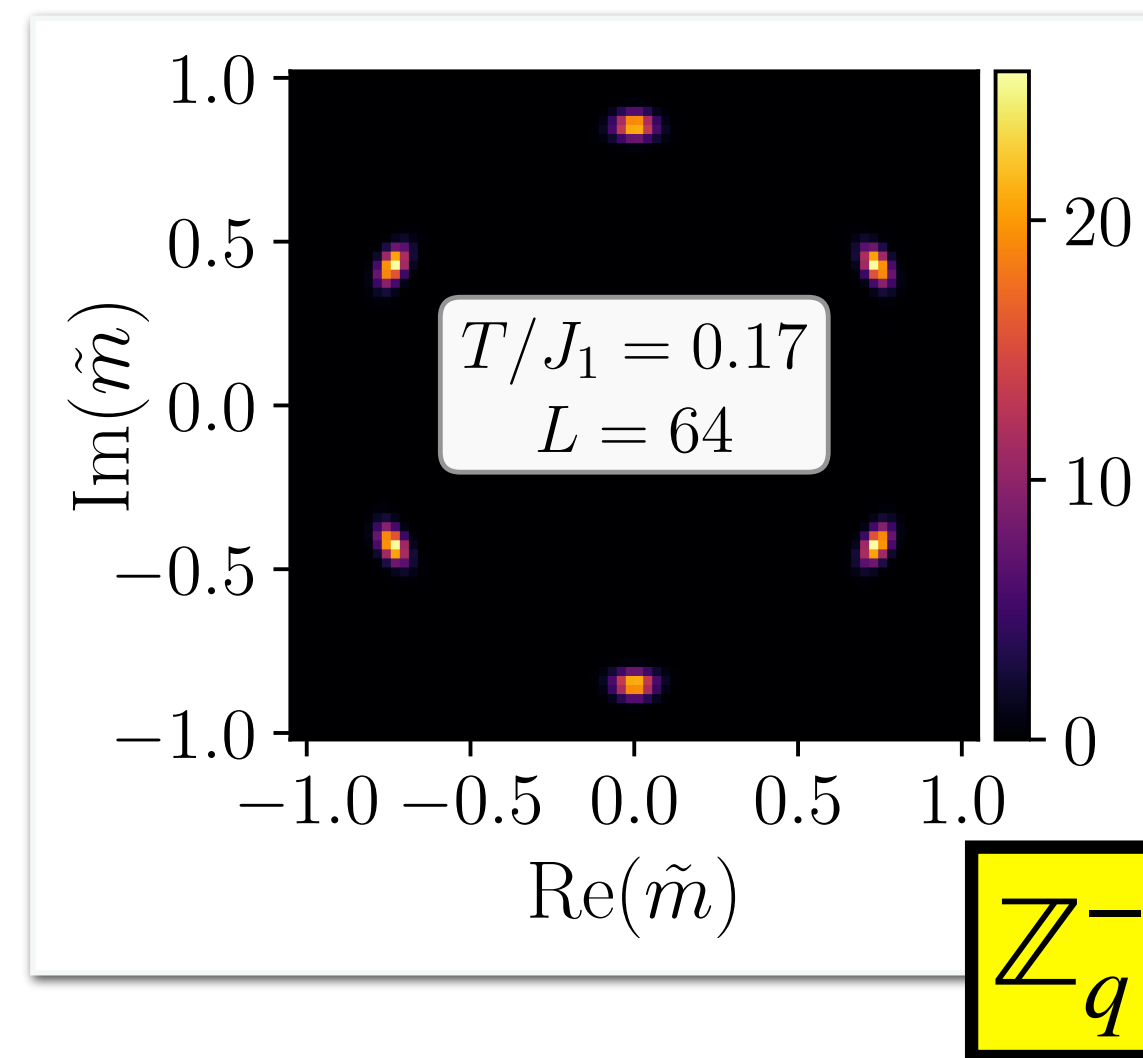


enlarged symmetry (will come back to this)... and...
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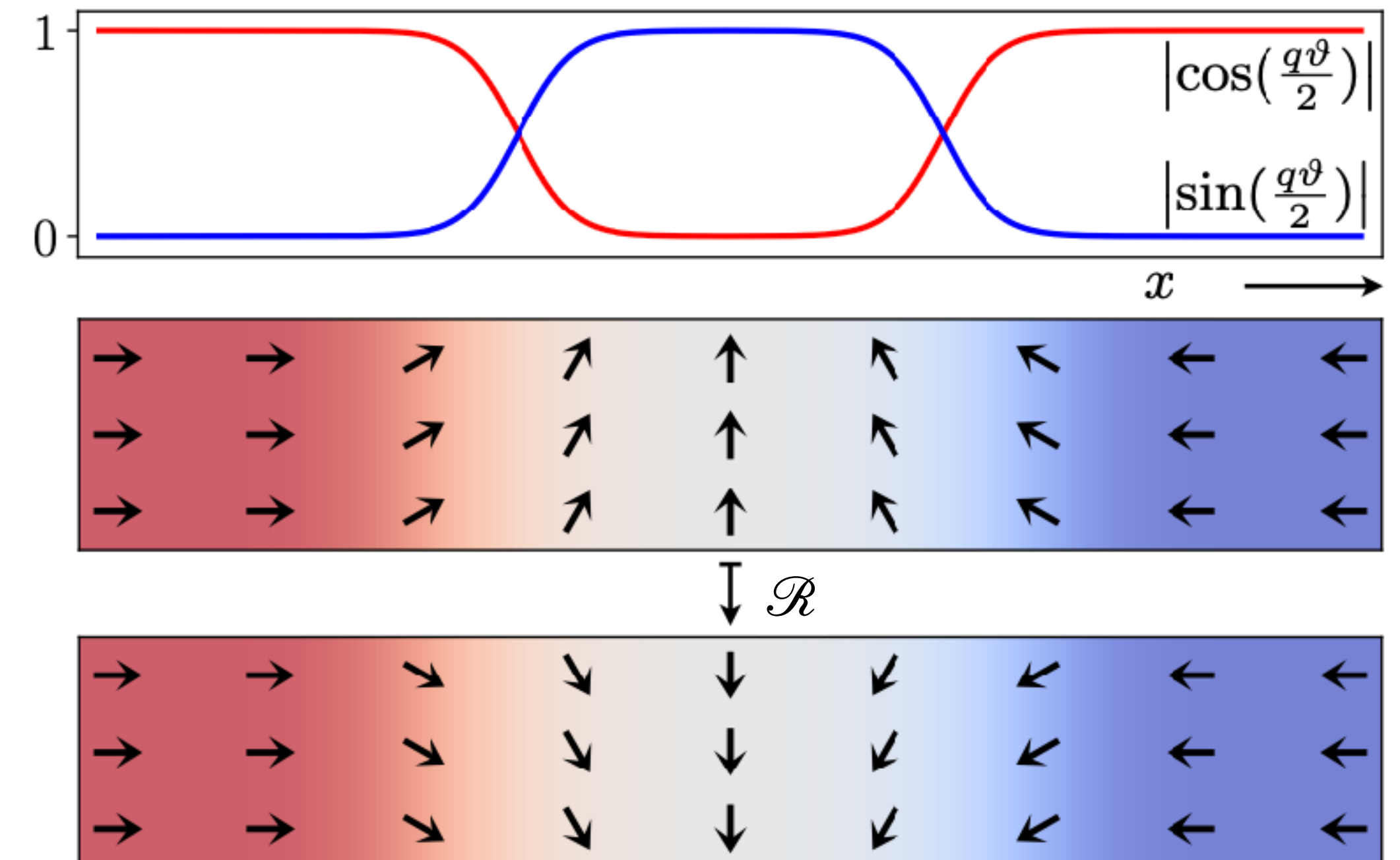
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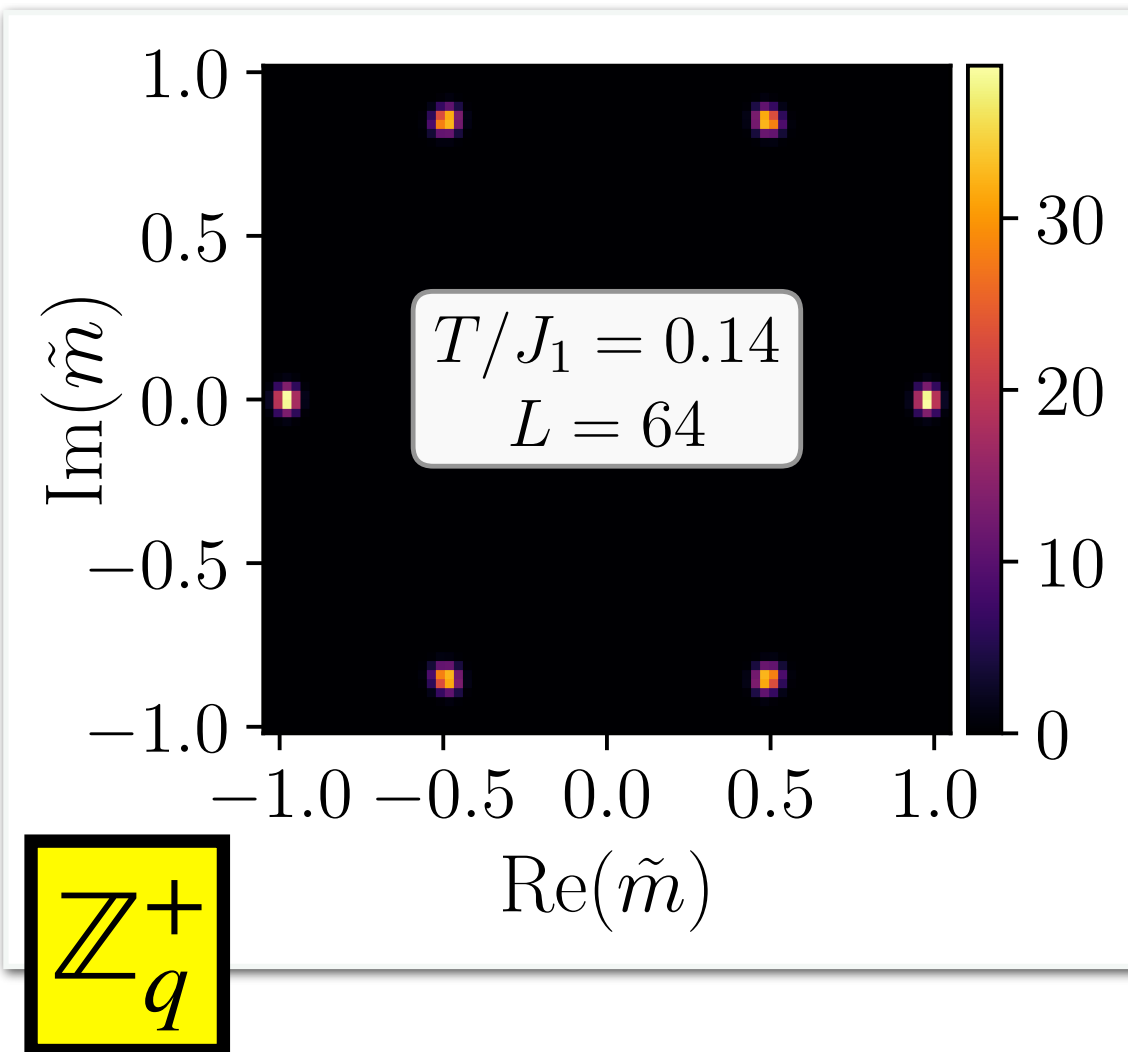
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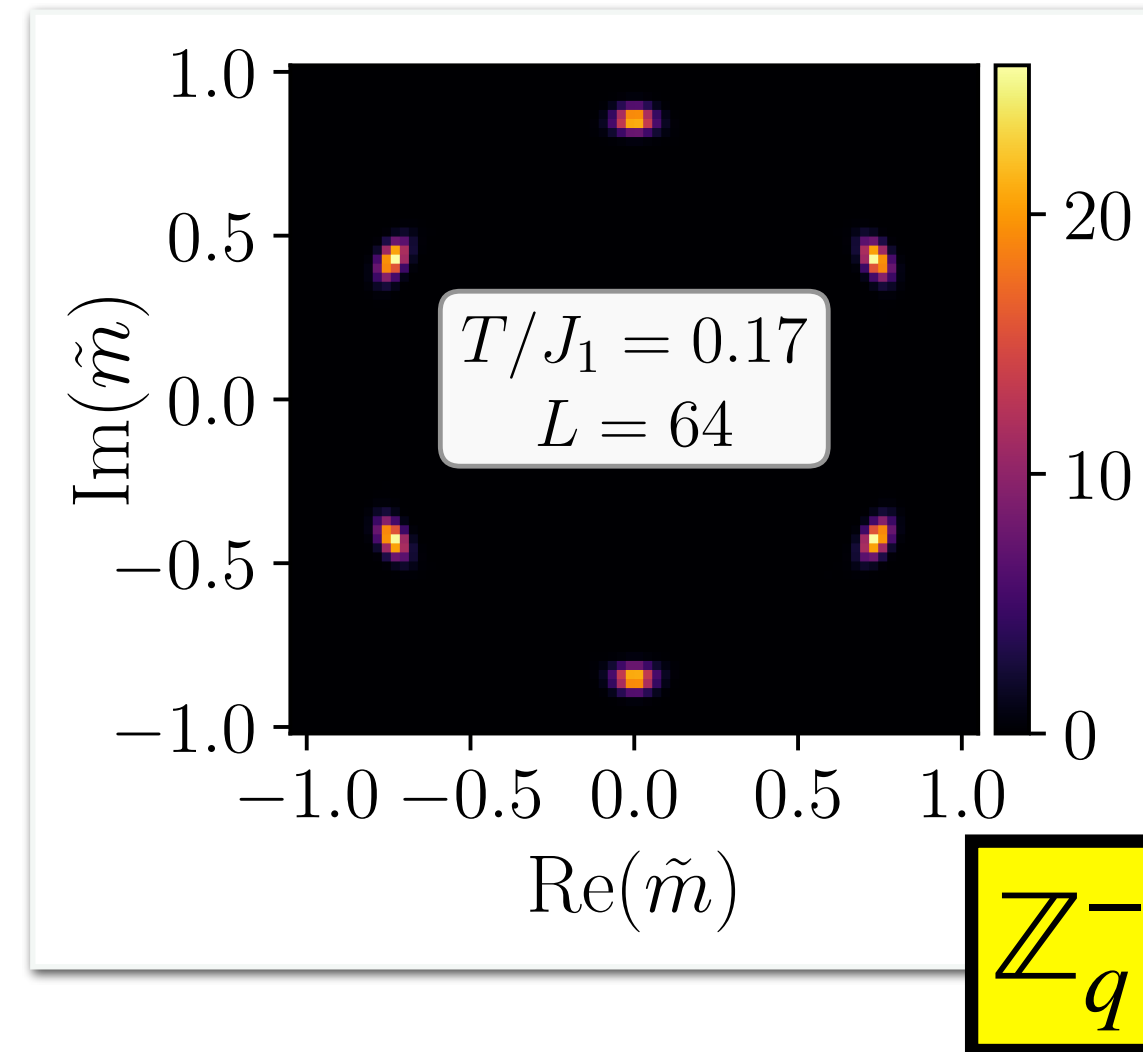
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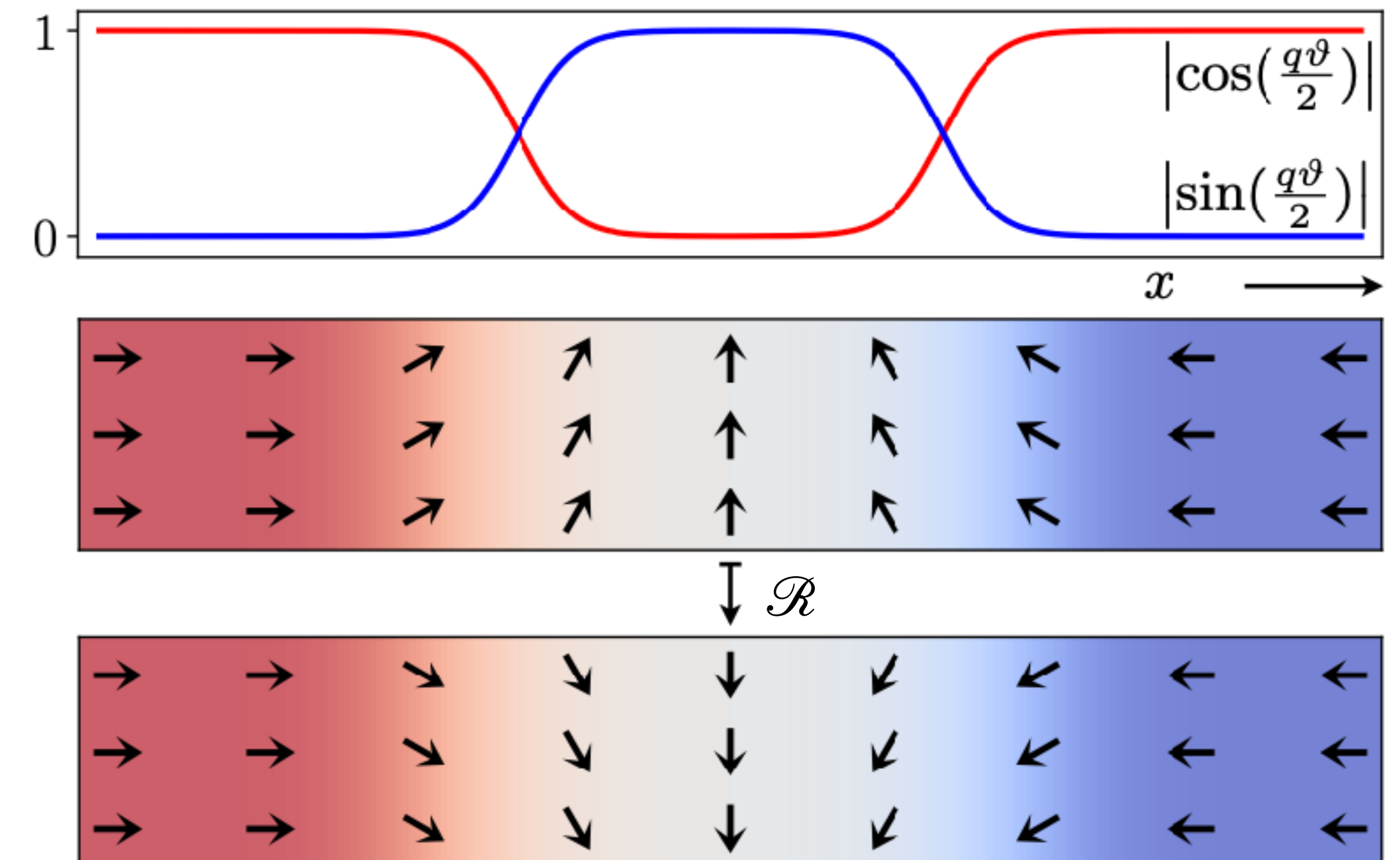
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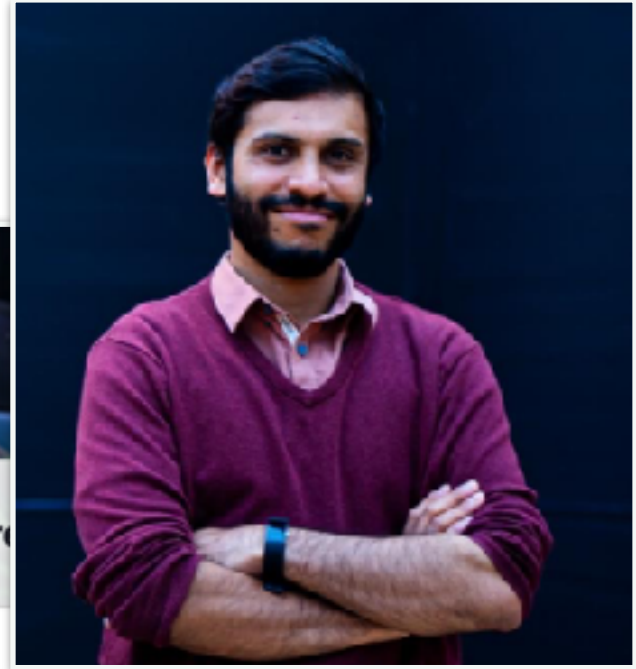
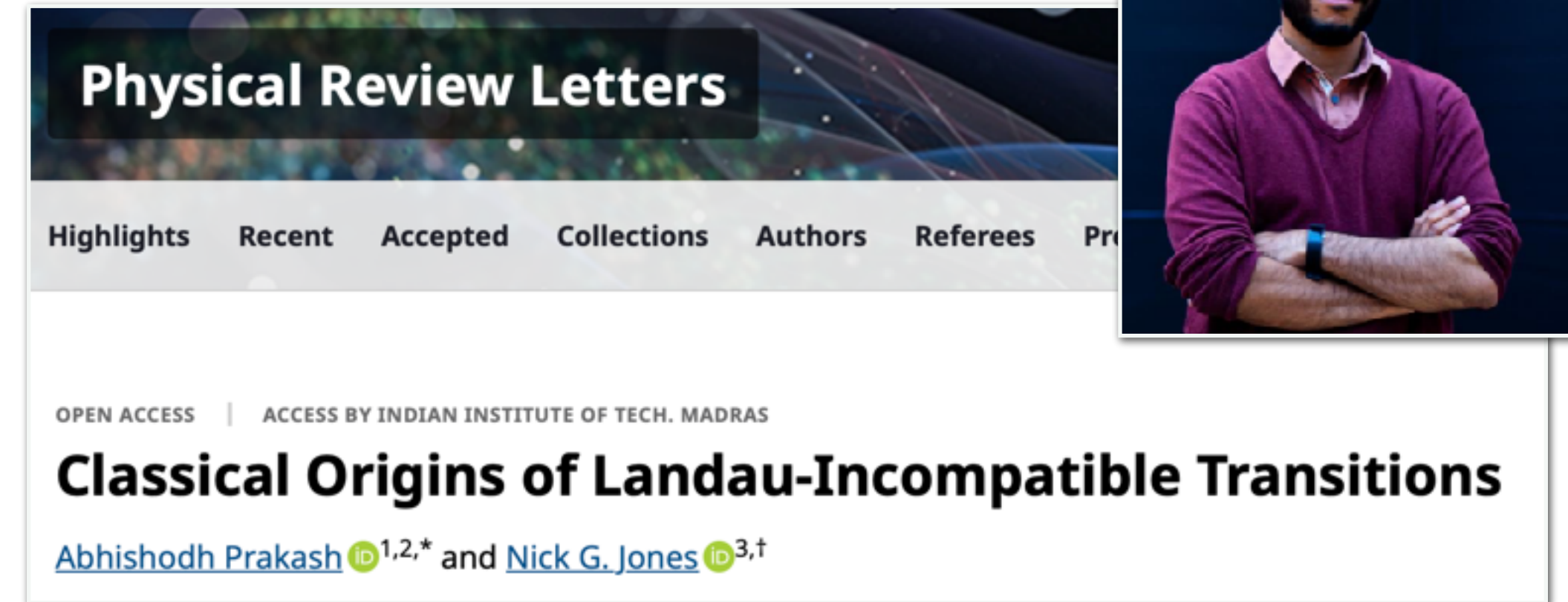
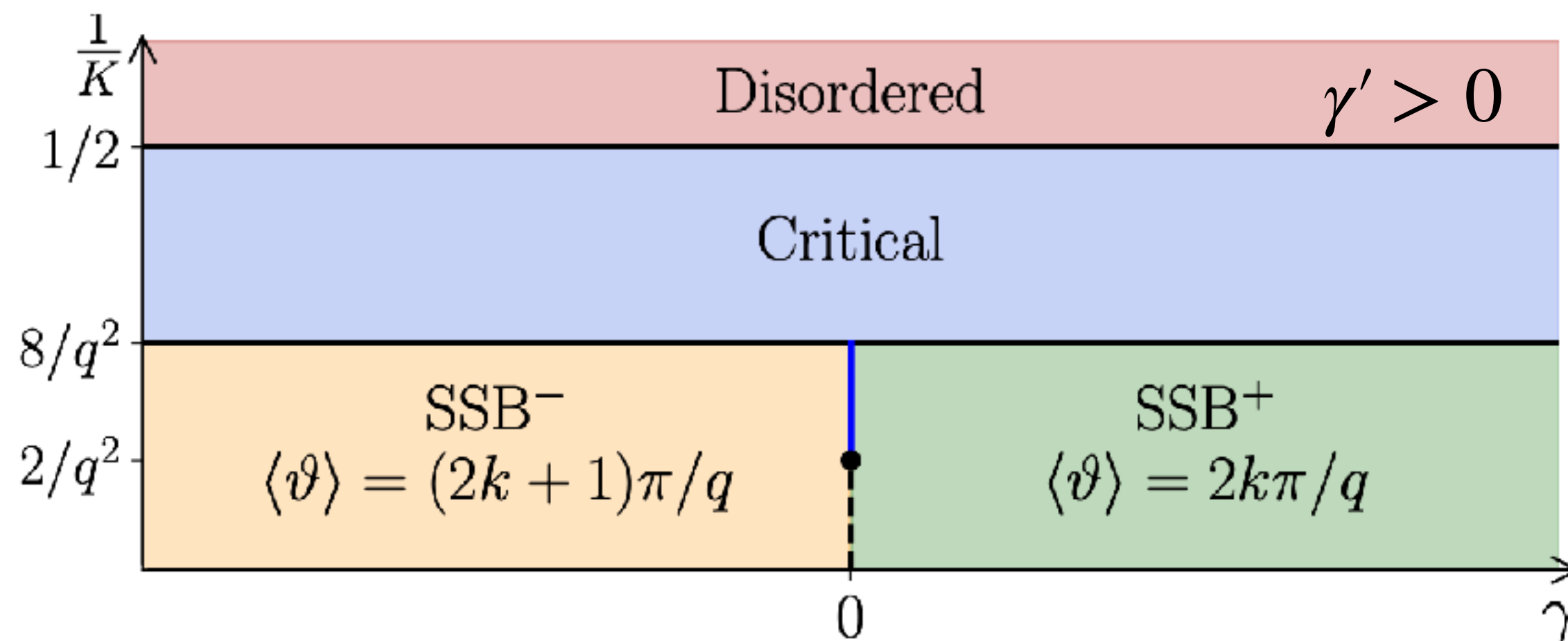
Do we also see this here ??
Let us first discuss this from field theoretic arguments



Phenomenological Field Theory

Postulated field theory *atop* the $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM order

$$S \approx \frac{K}{2\pi} \int d^2x (\nabla \vartheta)^2 - h \int d^2x \cos(\phi) \\ - \gamma \int d^2x \cos(q\vartheta) - \gamma' \int d^2x \cos(2q\vartheta) + \dots,$$

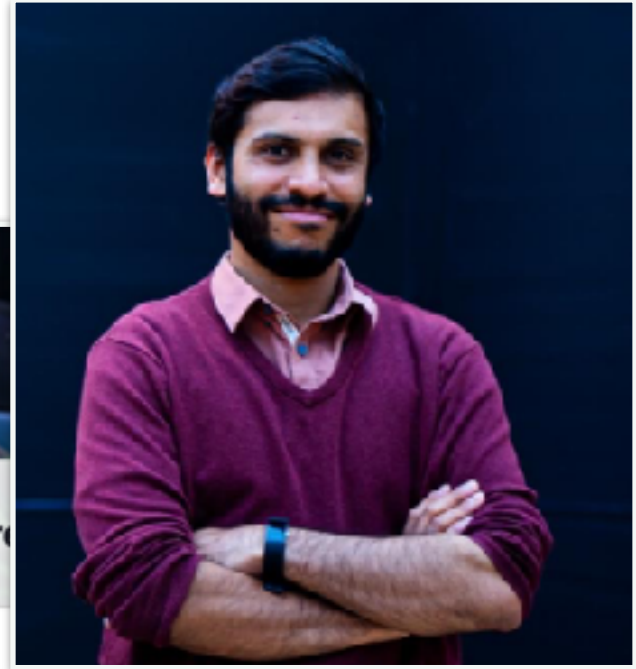
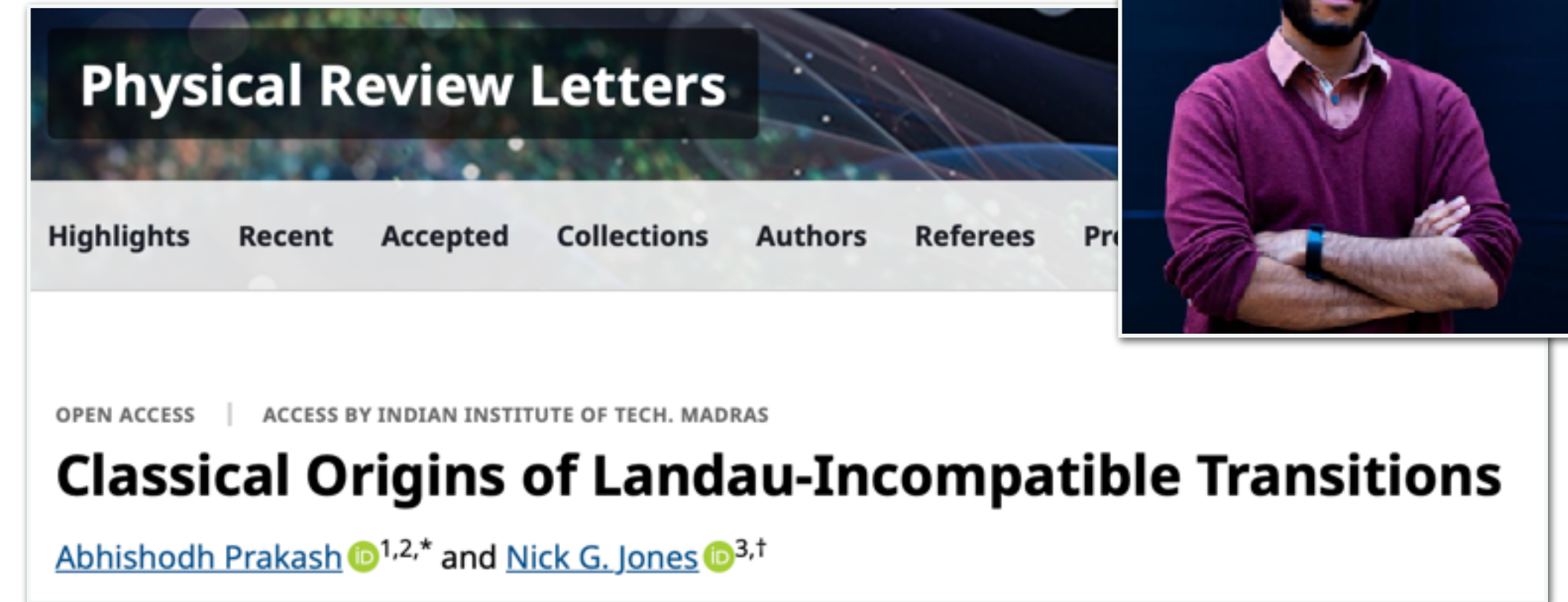
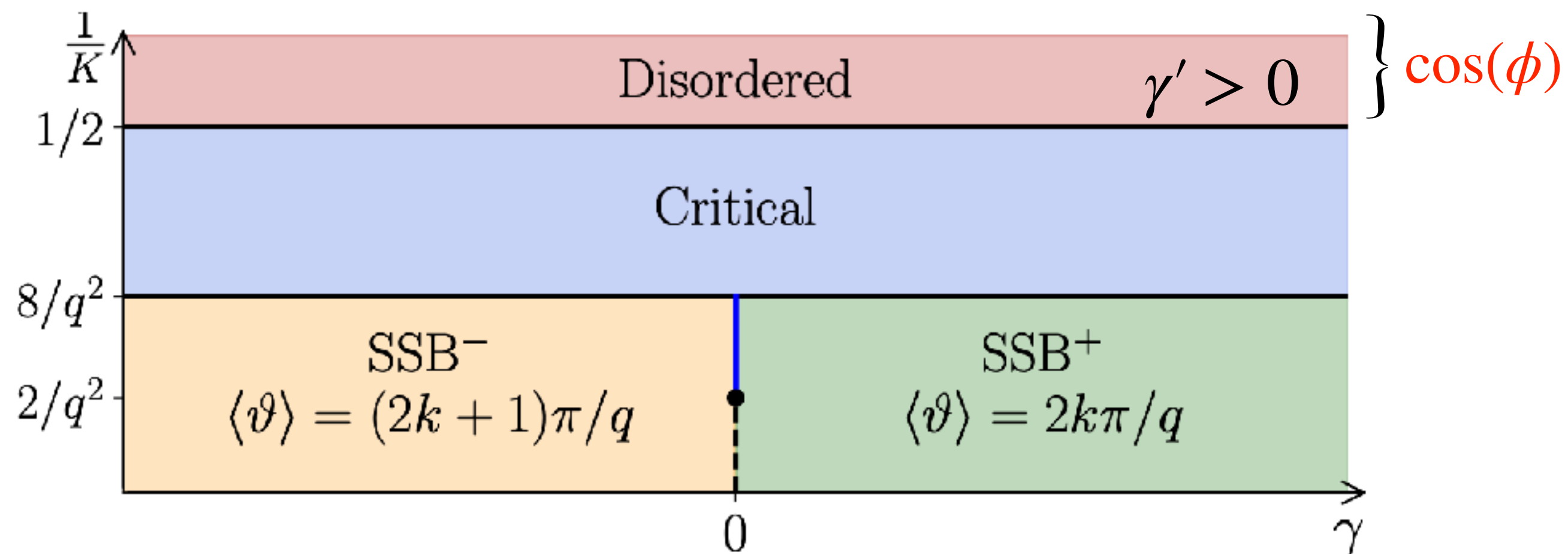


Phenomenological Field Theory

Postulated field theory *atop* the $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM order

Relevant when $K < 2$

$$S \approx \frac{K}{2\pi} \int d^2x (\nabla \vartheta)^2 - h \int d^2x \cos(\phi) - \gamma \int d^2x \cos(q\vartheta) - \gamma' \int d^2x \cos(2q\vartheta) + \dots,$$



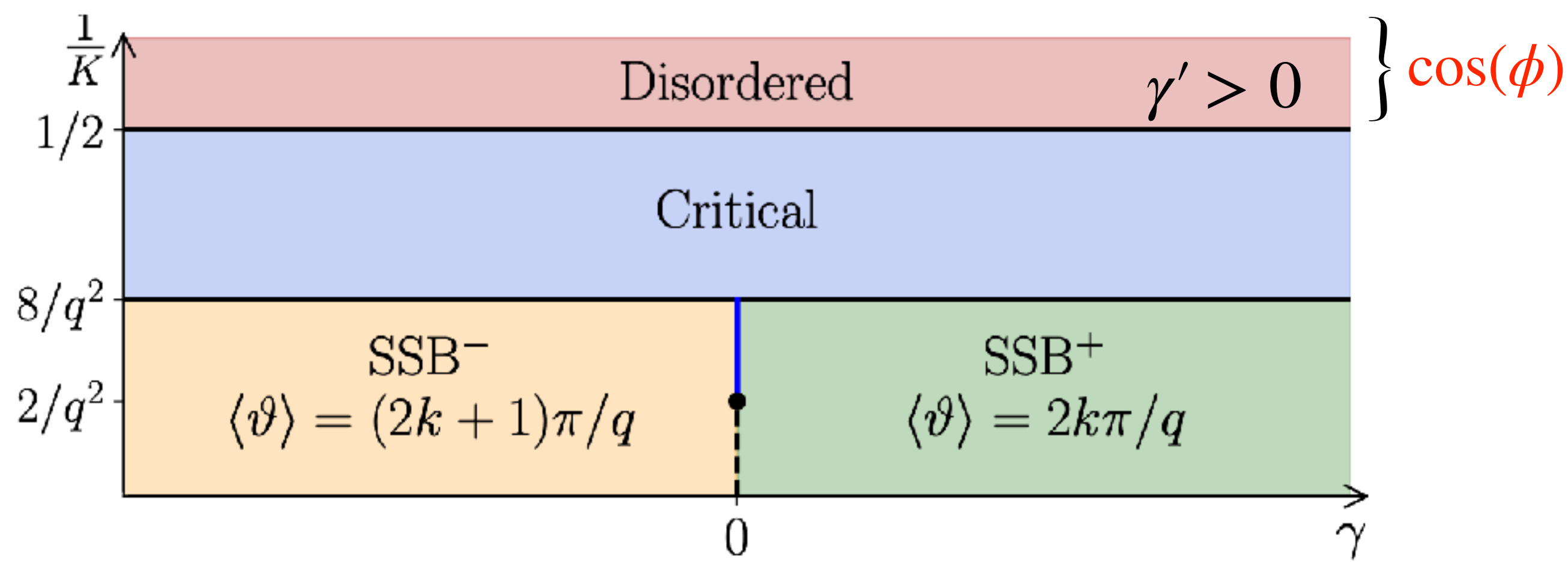
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Relevant when $K < 2$

Relevant when $K > q^2/2$



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Classical Origins of Landau-Incompatible Transitions

Abhishodh Prakash ^{1,2,*} and Nick G. Jones ^{3,†}



$\cos(q\vartheta)$

Responsible for emergent $\mathbb{Z}_q$ symmetry and order

Phenomenological Field Theory

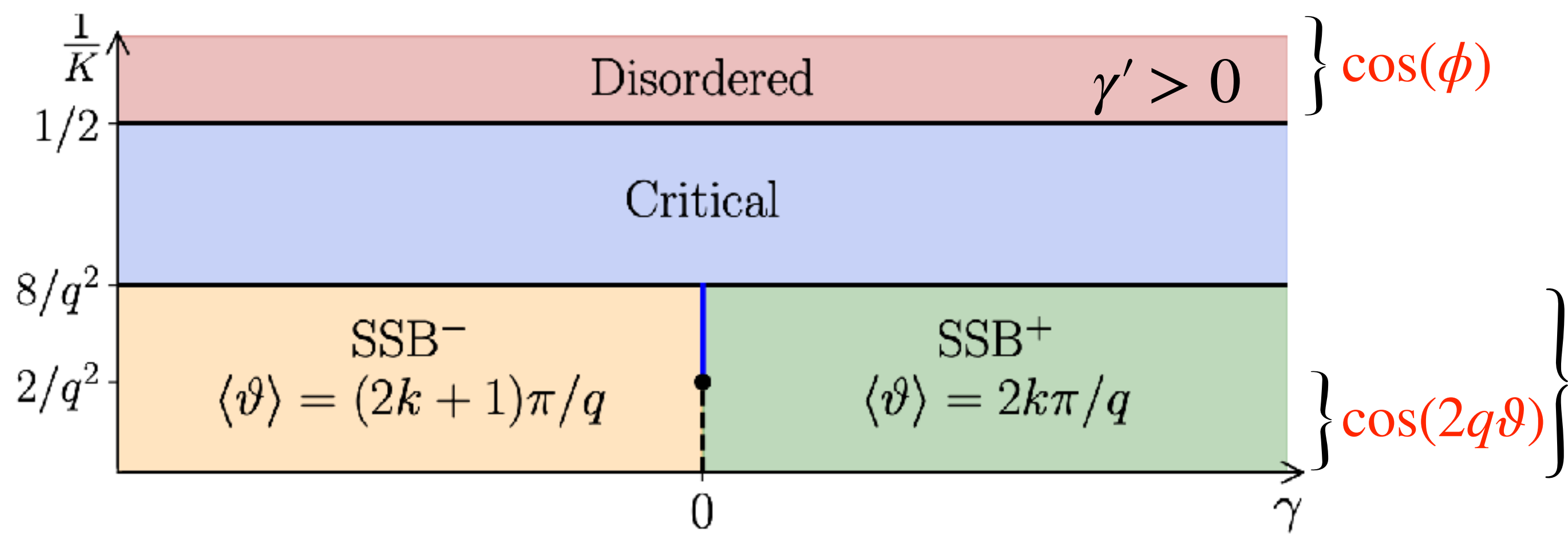
Postulated field theory *atop* the $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM order

$$S \approx \frac{K}{2\pi} \int d^2x (\nabla \vartheta)^2 - h \int d^2x \cos(\phi) - \gamma \int d^2x \cos(q\vartheta) - \gamma' \int d^2x \cos(2q\vartheta) + \dots,$$

Relevant when $K < 2$

Relevant when $K > q^2/2$

Relevant when $K > q^2/8$



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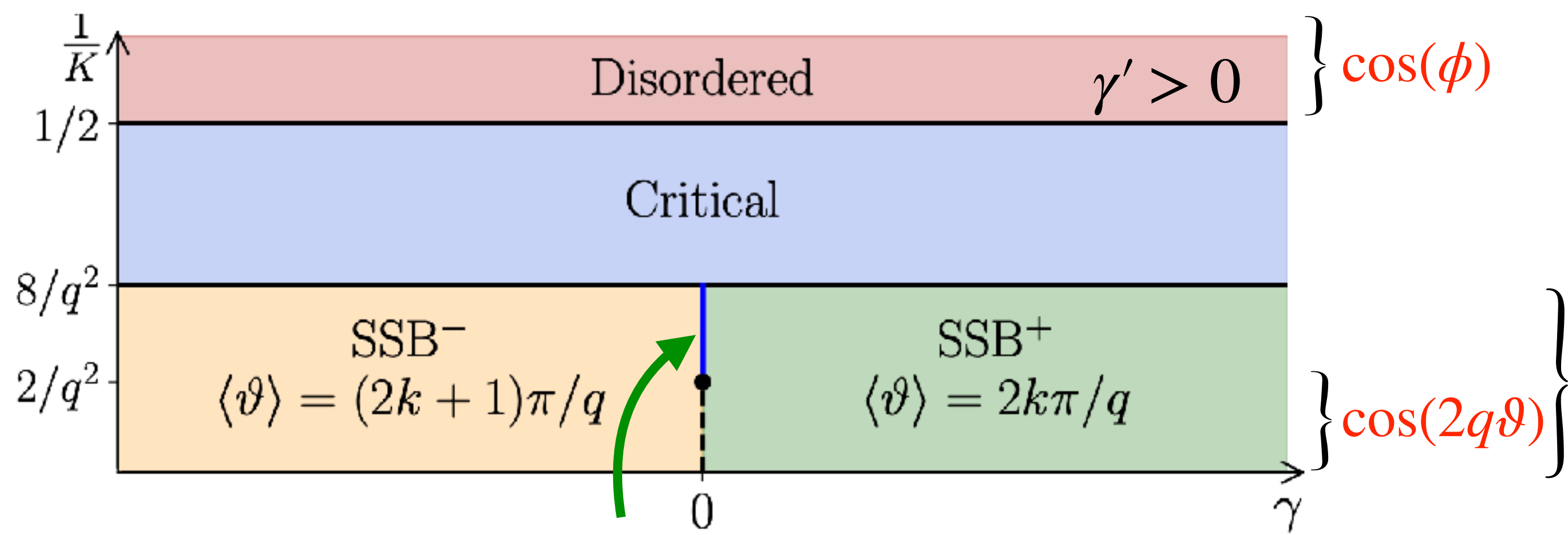
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Classical Origins of Landau-Incompatible Transitions

Abhishodh Prakash^{1,2,*} and Nick G. Jones^{3,†}



Landau-incompatible deconfined transition

A critical **O(2) symmetric** Gaussian field theory continuous transition as γ changes sign

Responsible for emergent $\mathbb{Z}_q$ symmetry and order

Phenomenological Field Theory

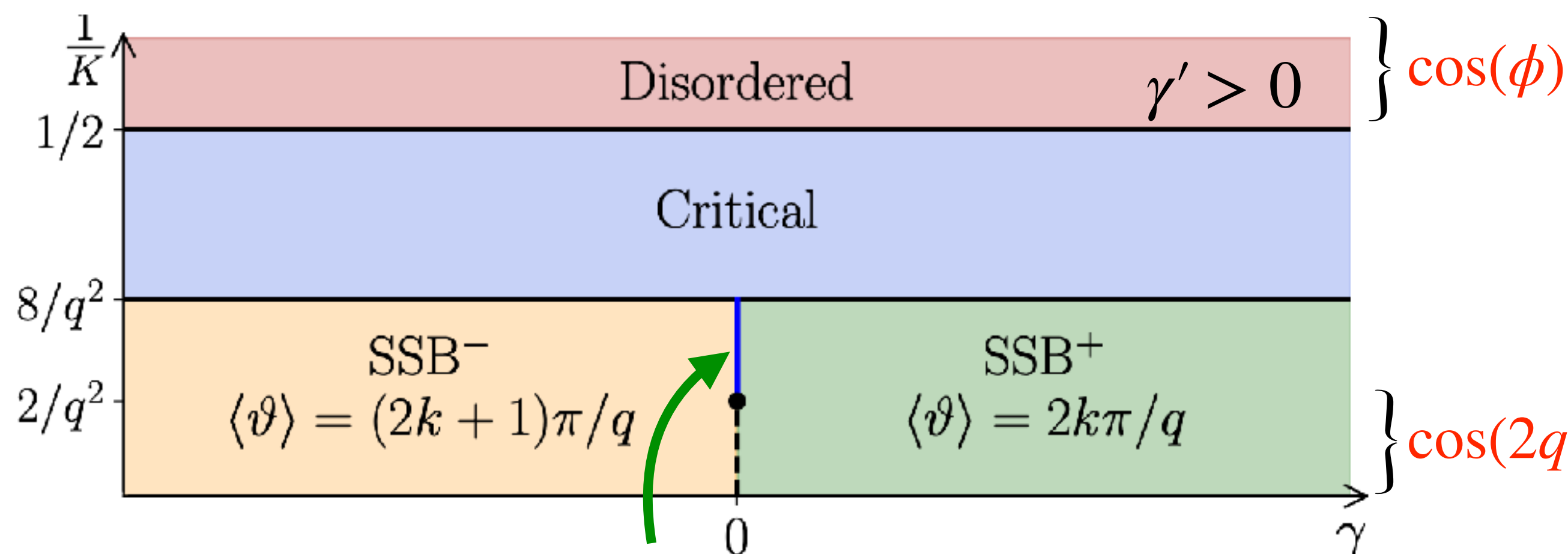
Postulated field theory *atop* the $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM order

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Relevant when $K < 2$

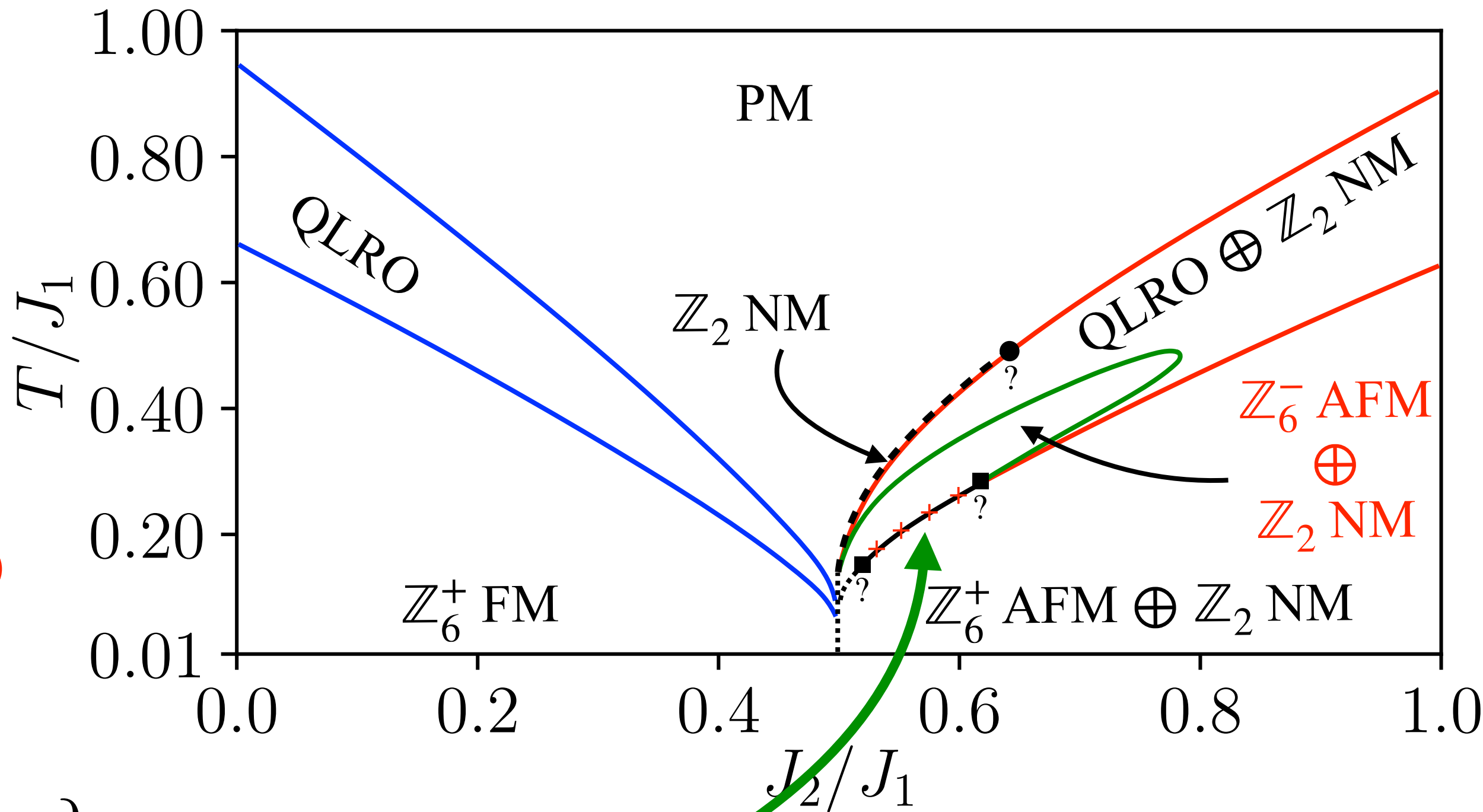
Relevant when $K > q^2/2$

Relevant when $K > q^2/8$



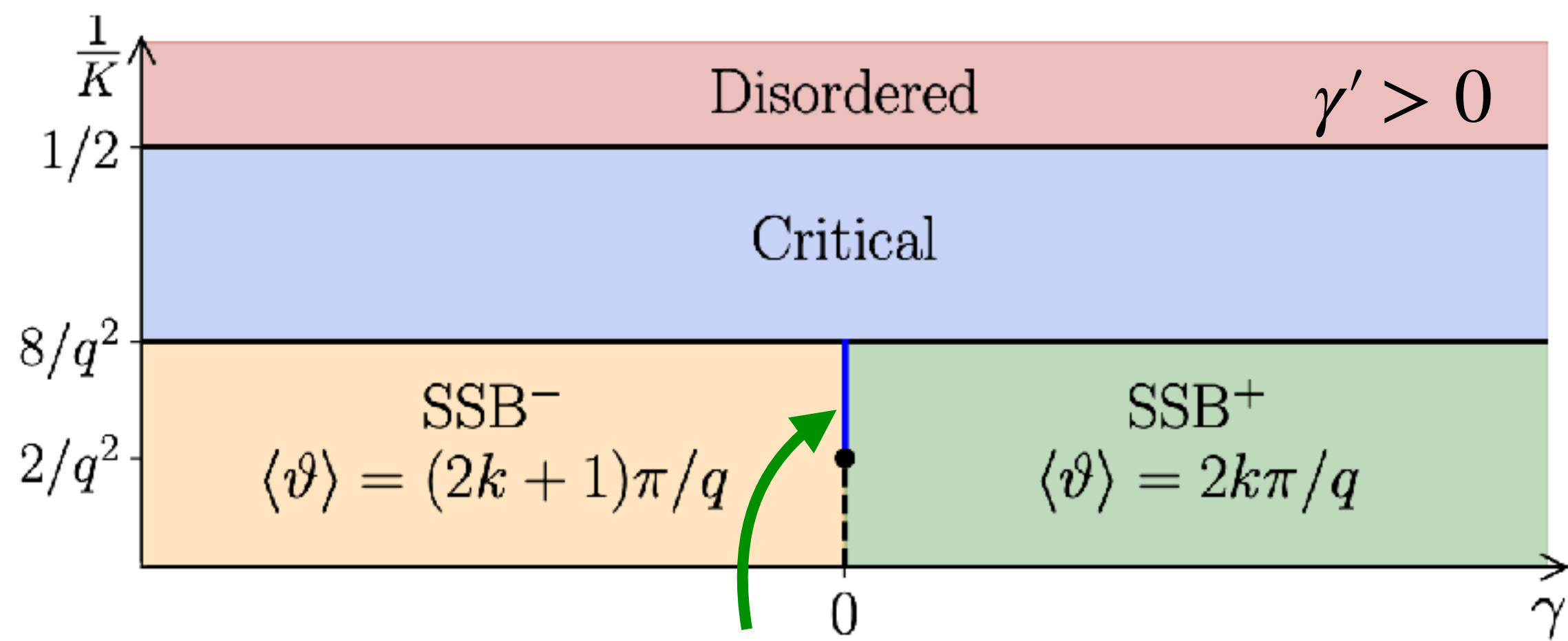
Landau-incompatible deconfined transition

A critical **O(2) symmetric** Gaussian field theory continuous transition as γ changes sign

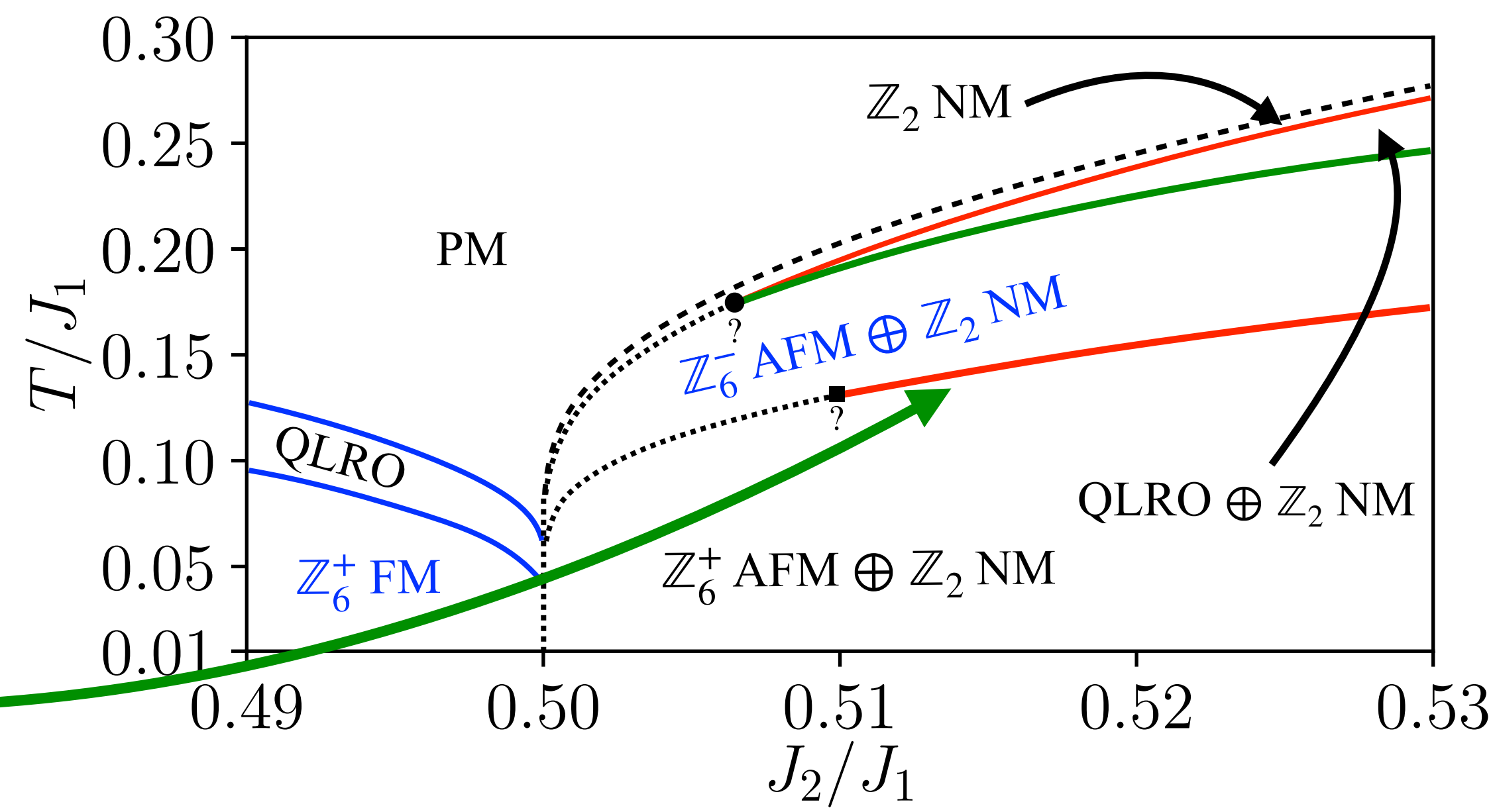


Responsible for emergent $\mathbb{Z}_q$ symmetry and order

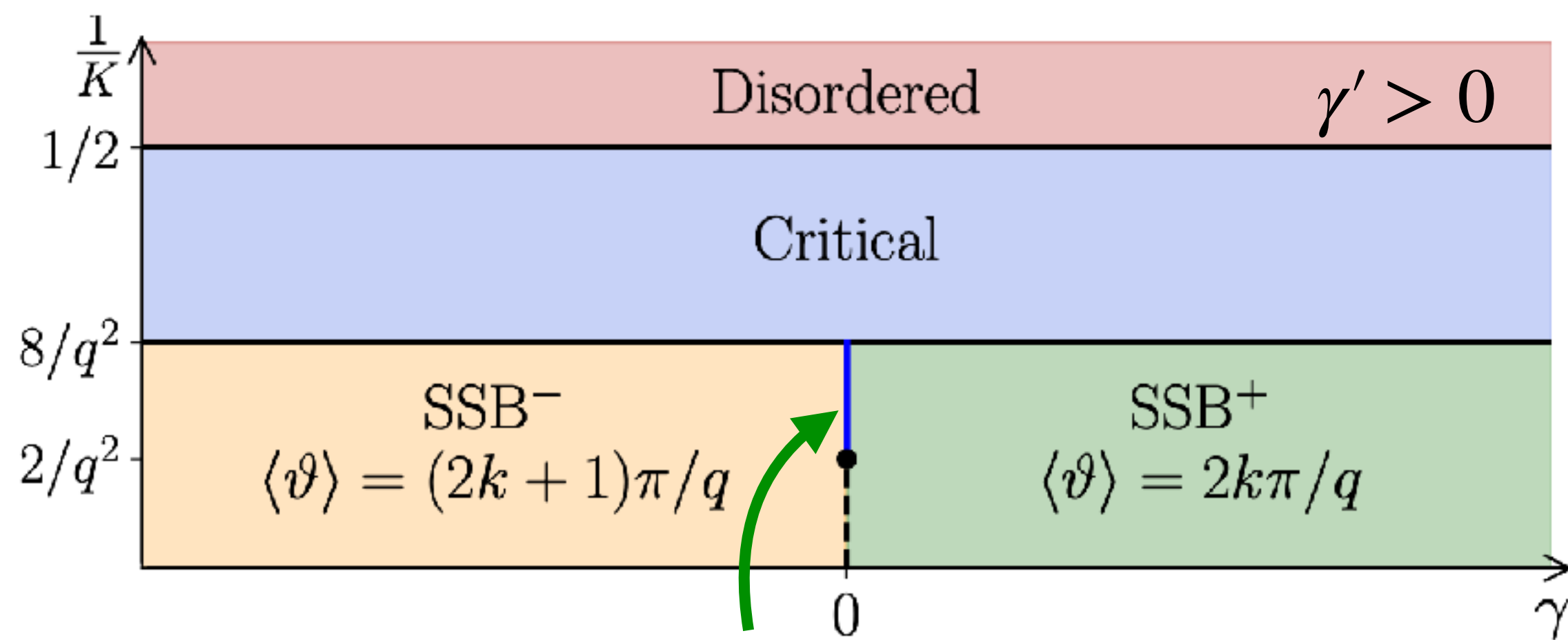
Phenomenological Field Theory



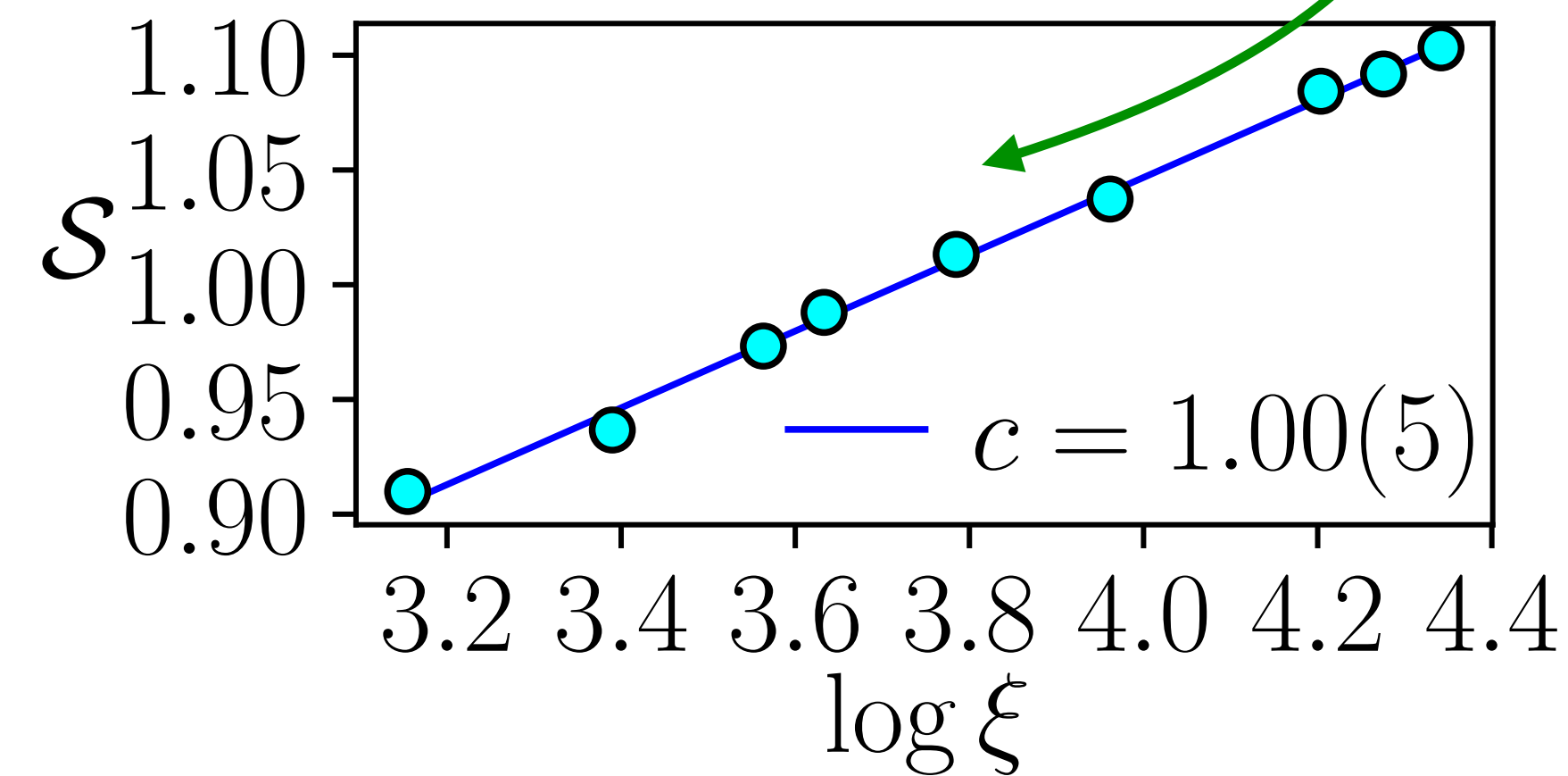
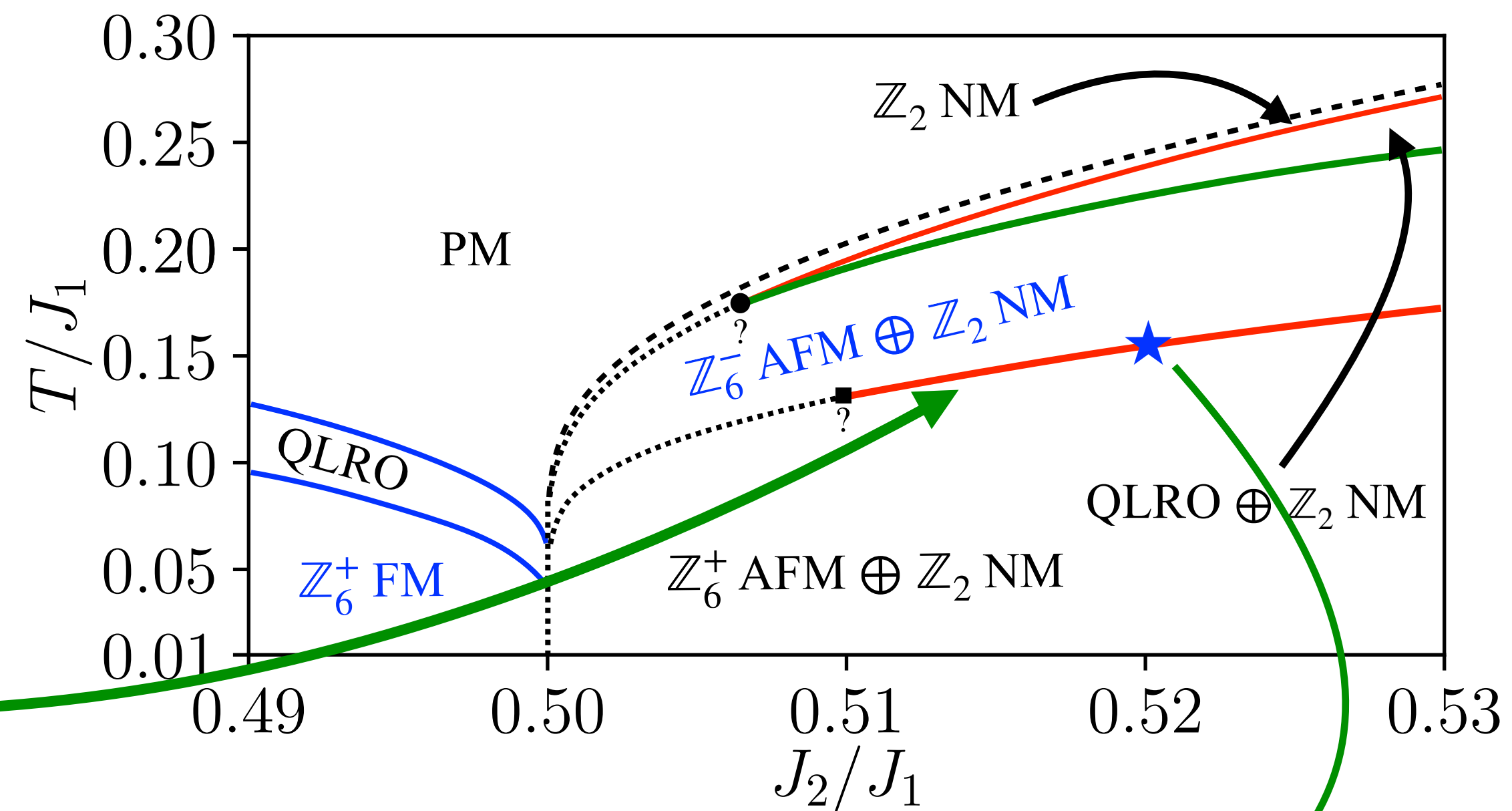
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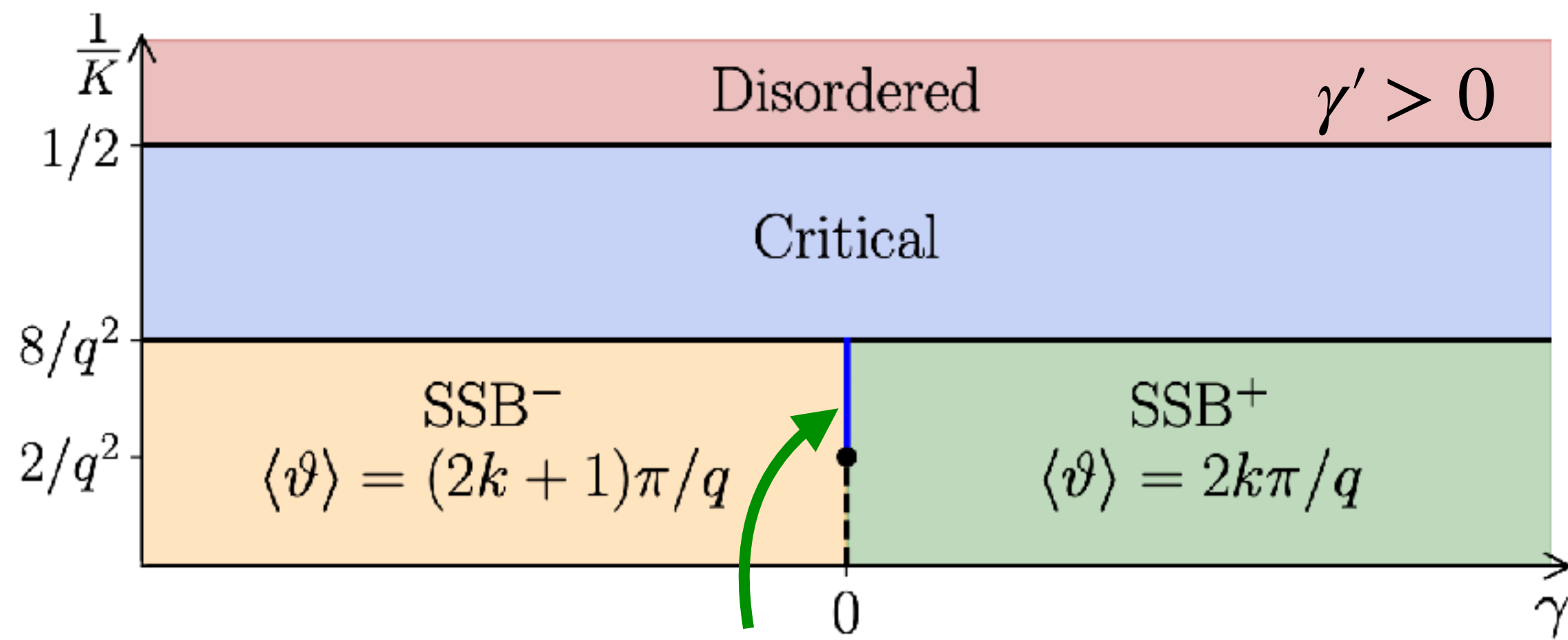


Landau-incompatible deconfined transition

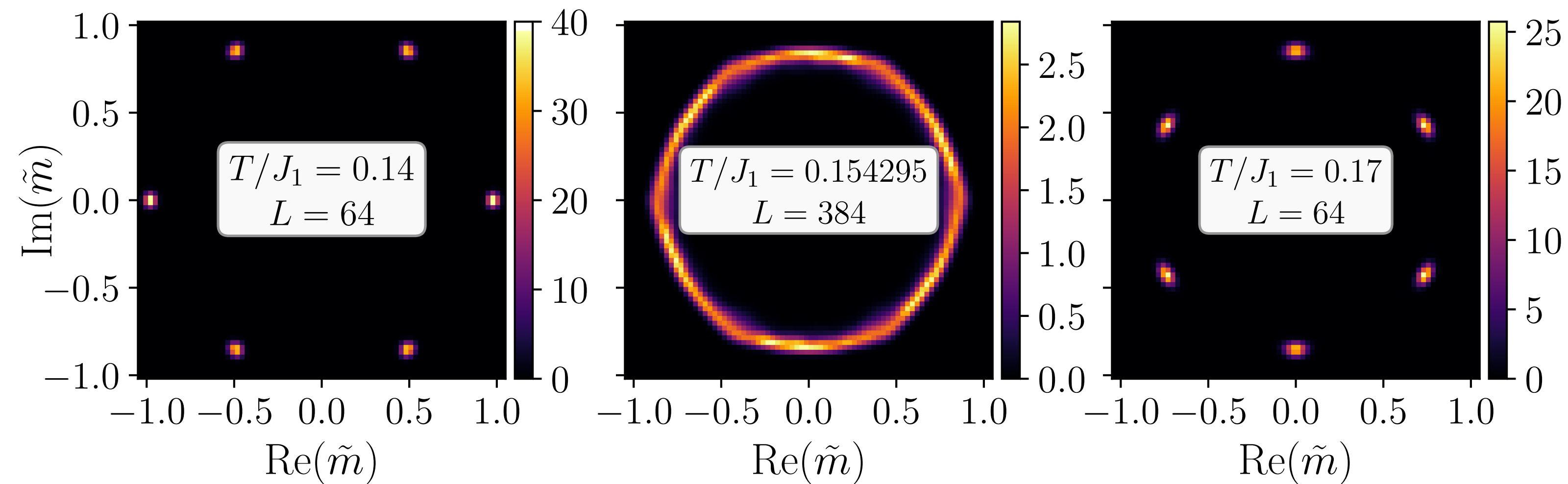
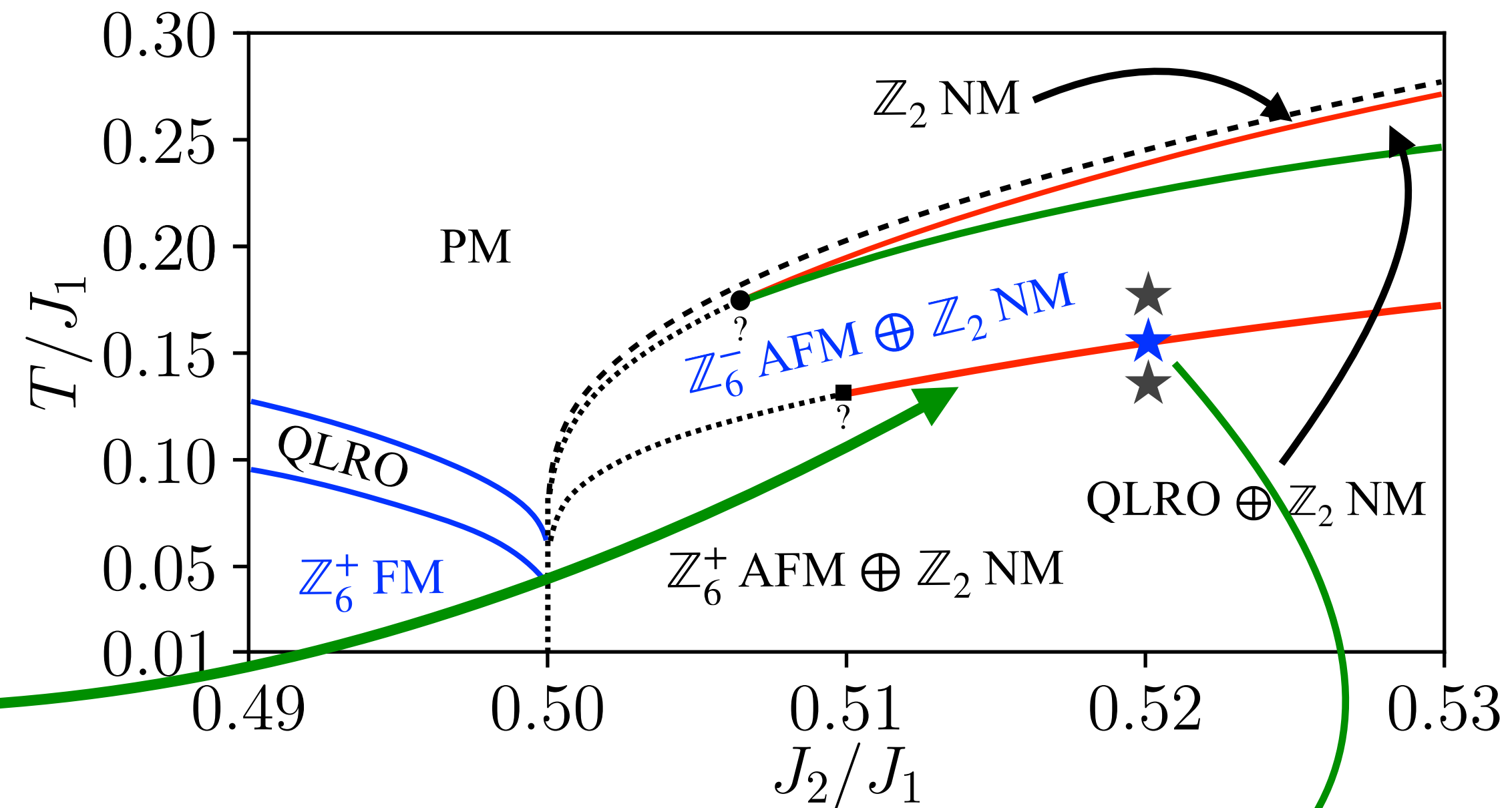


Calabrese-Cardy scaling: $\mathcal{S} = \frac{c}{6} \log \xi + b'$

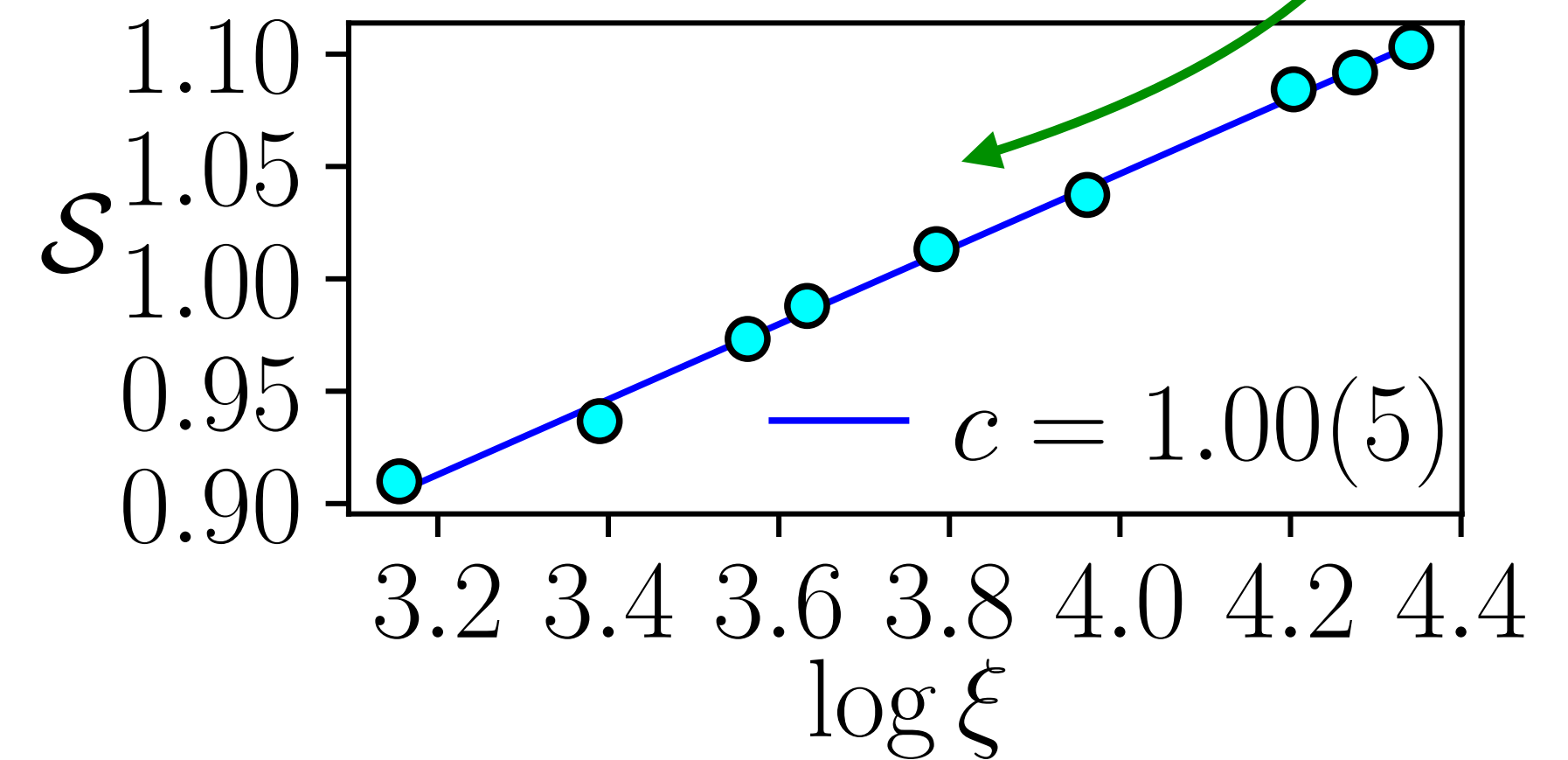
Phenomenological Field Theory



Landau-incompatible deconfined transition



Emergent O(2) symmetry at the deconfined criticality

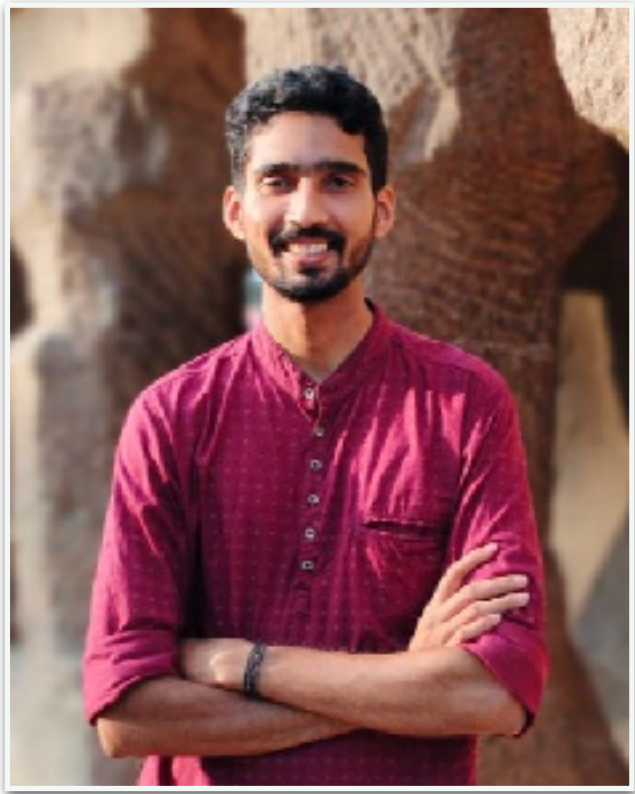


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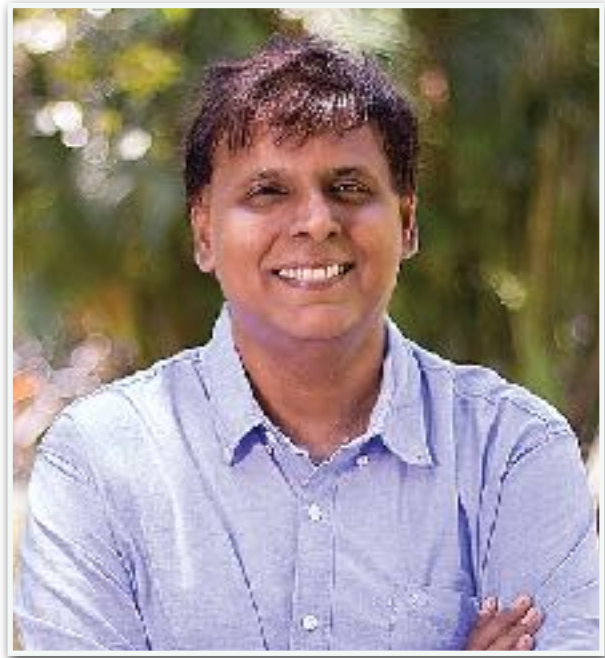
Summary

1. **For the first time**, we map out the phase diagram of 2D frustrated classical J_1 - J_2 clock model.
2. We show **a unique form of emergence**, where coarse-grained degrees of freedom are not allowed by microscopic theory, and realized **not by an RG irrelevant operator**... but **by frustration and an RG relevant operator**.
3. We show the **classical analogue of deconfined transitions**... between two symmetry-broken phase with incompatible symmetries... with being the emergent one...

Phases	$\mathbb{Z}_q$ symm.	is critical ?	$\mathbb{Z}_2$ symm. (spatial)
$\mathbb{Z}_q^+$ FM	Broken	No	Unbroken
QLRO	—	Yes	Unbroken
$\mathbb{Z}_q^+$ AFM $\oplus$ $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM	Broken	No	Broken
QLRO $\oplus$ $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM	—	Yes	Broken
$\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM	—	No	Broken
$\mathbb{Z}_q^-$ AFM $\oplus$ $\mathbb{Z}_2$ NM	Broken (!)	No	Broken
PM	Unbroken	No	Unbroken



Vishnu Pulloor
Kuttanikkad



Rajesh Narayanan



Abhishodh Prakash

cond-mat

arXiv:2505.05194

Condensed Matter > Statistical Mechanics

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Two-dimensional J_1 - J_2 clock model: Enhanced symmetries, emergent orders, and Landau-incompatible transitions

Vishnu Pulloor Kuttanikkad, Abhishodh Prakash, Rajesh Narayanan, Titas Chanda

To appear in PRL...

That would be the end...



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**Thank you !!!
questions??**



