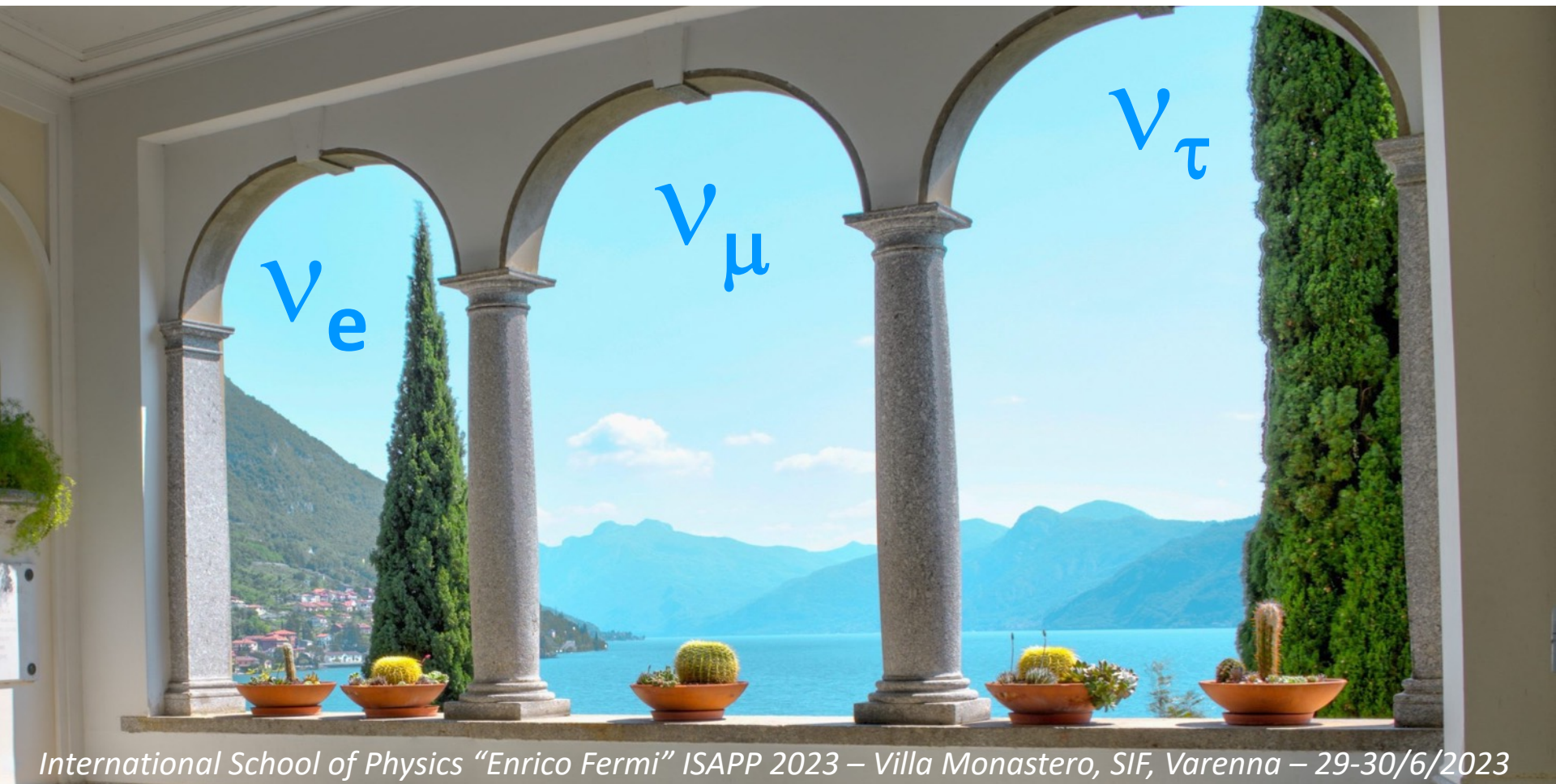


Neutrino Oscillations

Lecture I



International School of Physics "Enrico Fermi" ISAPP 2023 – Villa Monastero, SIF, Varenna – 29-30/6/2023

Eligio Lisi
(INFN, Bari, Italy)

This set of lectures I-IV is intended for a broad audience of PhD students and postdocs working in different areas (theo / pheno / expt) of particle physics, astrophysics, cosmology.

The goal is to “get you (more) interested” in ν oscillations, by moving from basic neutrino properties and phenomena to more advanced topics at the current frontier of the field.

Several exercises are also proposed on ν oscillation probabilities (with solutions!).

People interested in further reading can usefully browse the “Neutrino Unbound” website: www.nu.to.infn.it , or just email me for advice about specific topics: eligio.lisi@ba.infn.it

Outline of lectures:

Lecture I

Pedagogical introduction + warm-up exercise

Lecture II

3 ν osc. in vacuum and matter: notation and basic math

Lecture III

2 ν approximations of phenomenological interest

Lecture IV

Back to 3 ν oscillations: Status and Perspectives

Feel free to stop me and ask questions at any time!

Pedagogical introduction

1930: ν hypothesis and first kinematical properties

A famous letter by Wolfgang Pauli:

Original - Photocopy of Dec 1933
Abschrift/15.12.33 PM

Offener Brief an die Gruppe der Radioaktiven bei der
Gauvereins-Tagung zu Tübingen.

Abschrift
Physikalisches Institut
der Eidg. Technischen Hochschule
Zürich

Zürich, 4. Des. 1930
Ulrichstrasse

Liebe Radioaktive Damen und Herren,

Wie der Ueberbringer dieser Zeilen, den ich kuldovollst
anzuhören bitte, Ihnen des näheren auseinanderzusetzen wird, bin ich
angesichts der "falschen" Statistik der N - und $Li-6$ Kerne, sowie
des kontinuierlichen beta-Spektrums auf einen verzweifelten Ausweg
verfallen um den "Wechselstz" (1) der Statistik und den Energiesatz
zu retten. Nämlich die Möglichkeit, es könnten elektrisch neutrale
Teilchen, die ich Neutronen nennen will, in den Kernen existieren,
welche den Spin $1/2$ haben und das Ausschlussprinzip befolgen und
sich von Lichtquanten ausserdem noch dadurch unterscheiden, dass sie
sich mit Lichtgeschwindigkeit laufen. Die Masse der Neutronen
kannste von derselben Grössenordnung wie die Elektronenmasse sein und
jedenfalls nicht grösser als 0.01 Protonenmasse. Das kontinuierliche
beta-Spektrum wäre dann verständlich unter der Annahme, dass beim
beta-Zerfall mit dem Elektron jeweils noch ein Neutron emittiert
wird, derart, dass die Summe der Energien von Neutron und Elektron
konstant ist.

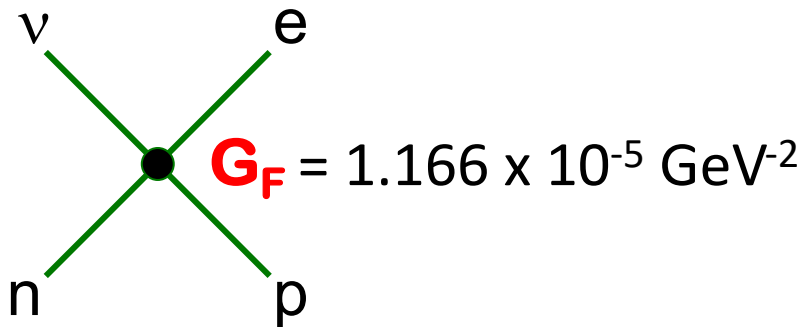
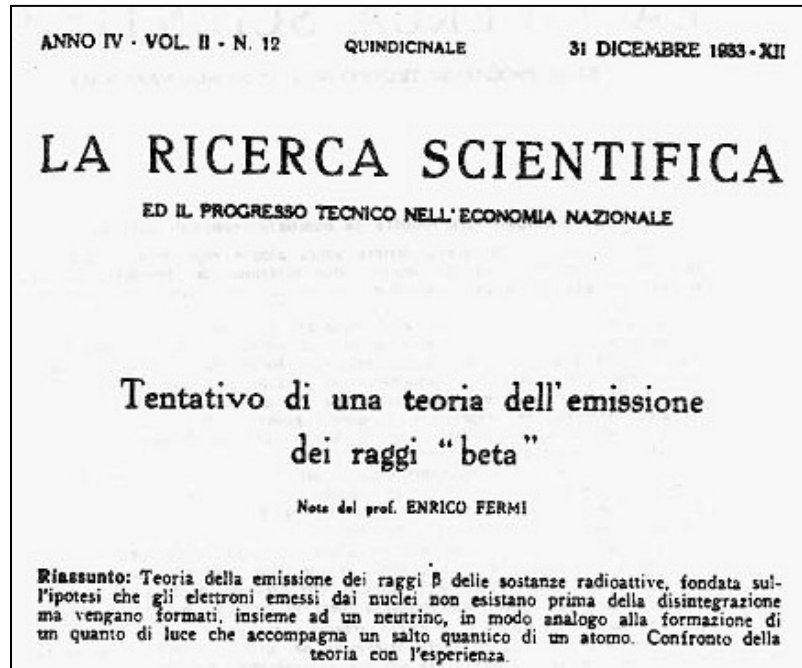


spin $1/2$, tiny mass, zero electric charge

1930: $m_\nu < 0.01 \text{ GeV}$
Today: $m_\nu < 0.1 - 1 \text{ eV}$

Three years later: ν name and first dynamical properties

A famous paper by Enrico Fermi:

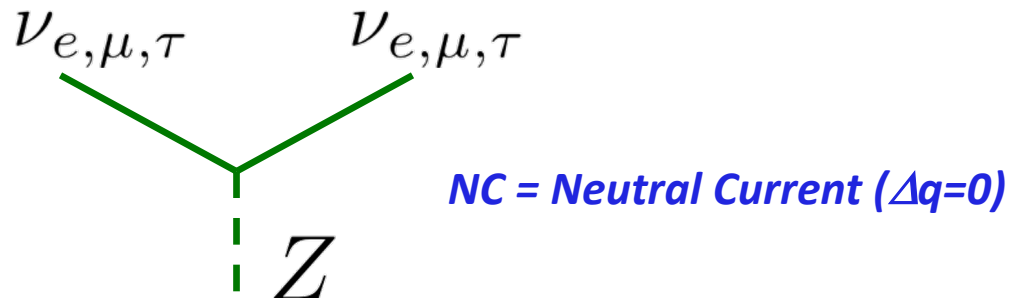
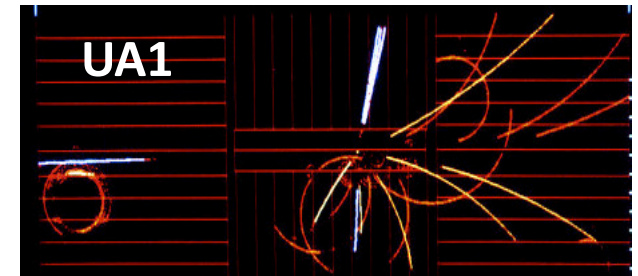
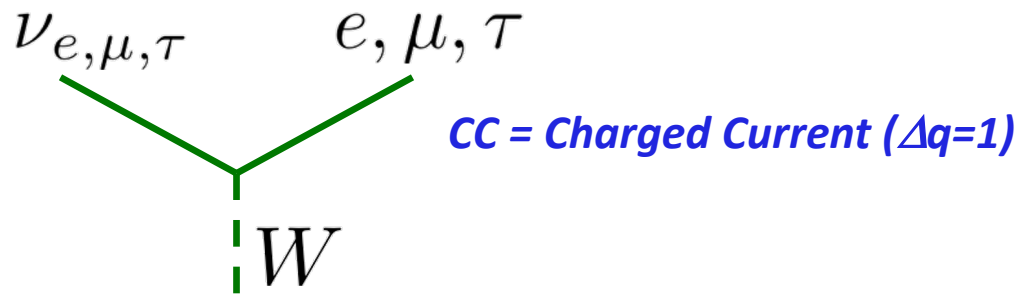


→ Sets the energy scale
 $\sqrt{(1/G_F)} \sim O(\text{few } 10^2) \text{ GeV}$
of weak interactions

Many decades of research have revealed other n properties: There are
3 different ν “flavors” $e \mu \tau$

$$\begin{pmatrix} \nu_e \\ e \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \nu_\mu \\ \mu \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \nu_\tau \\ \tau \end{pmatrix} \quad \begin{matrix} \leftarrow q = 0 \\ \leftarrow q = -1 \end{matrix} \quad (\Delta q = 1)$$

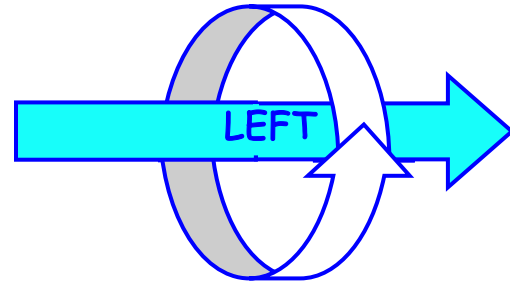
and their Fermi interactions are mediated by a charged **vector boson W** ,
 with a neutral counterpart, the **Z boson**



Such interactions are chiral (= not mirror-symmetric):

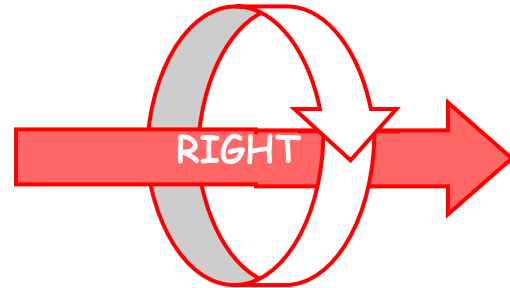
Neutrinos are created in
a left-handed (LH) state

ν



Anti-nus are created in
a right-handed (RH) state

$\bar{\nu}$

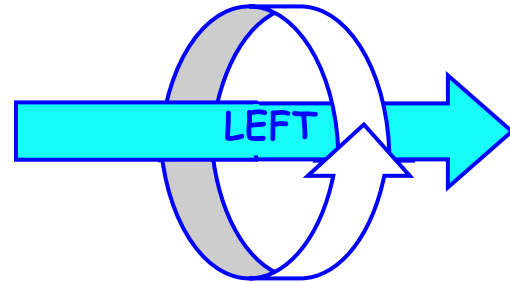


P parity symmetry (space coordinate reversal) is violated

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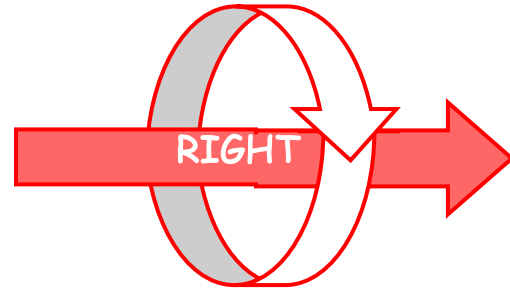
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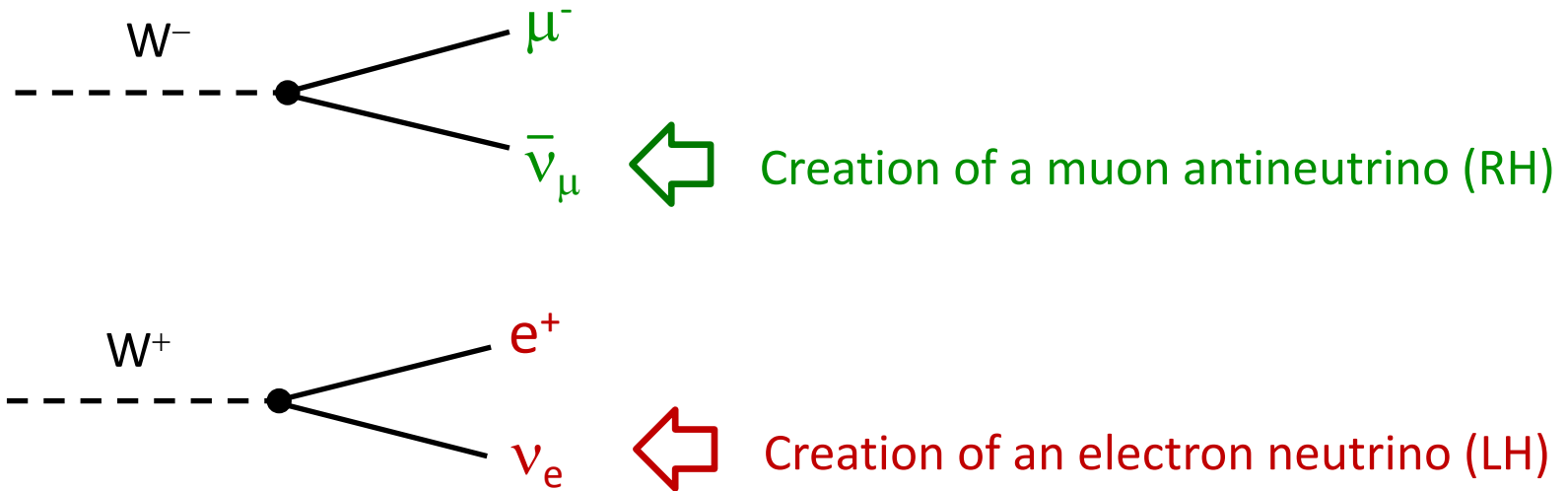
We shall consider also other discrete symmetries:

C charge conjugation (particle-antiparticle exchange)

T time reversal (change arrow of time)

*Note: combined **CPT** symmetry always conserved in QFT*

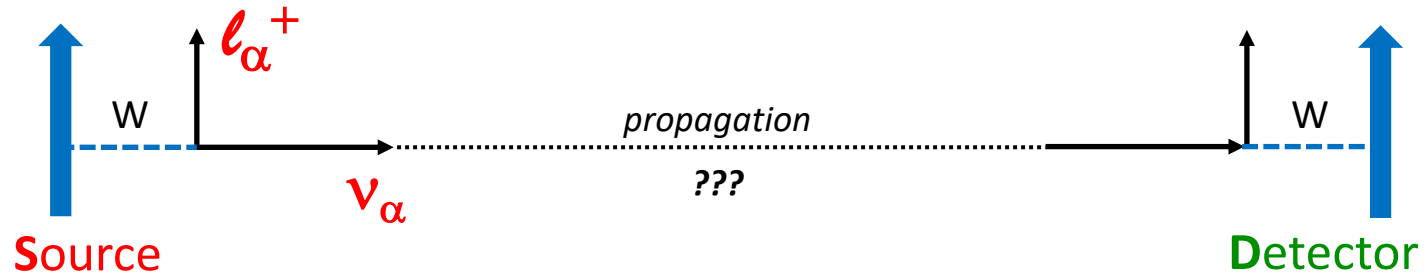
CC processes at **production** provide an operative definition of ν flavor, via the corresponding charged (anti)lepton. E.g., in leptonic decays:



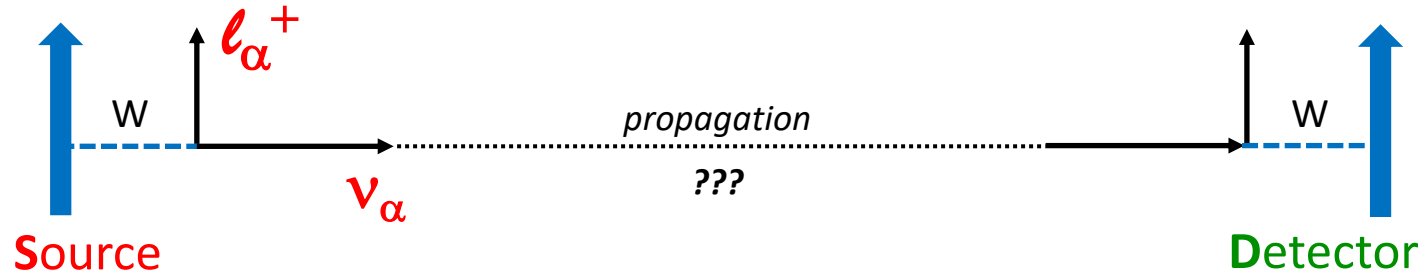
Similarly at **detection**, e.g.:



But... what happens in between?



But... what happens in between?



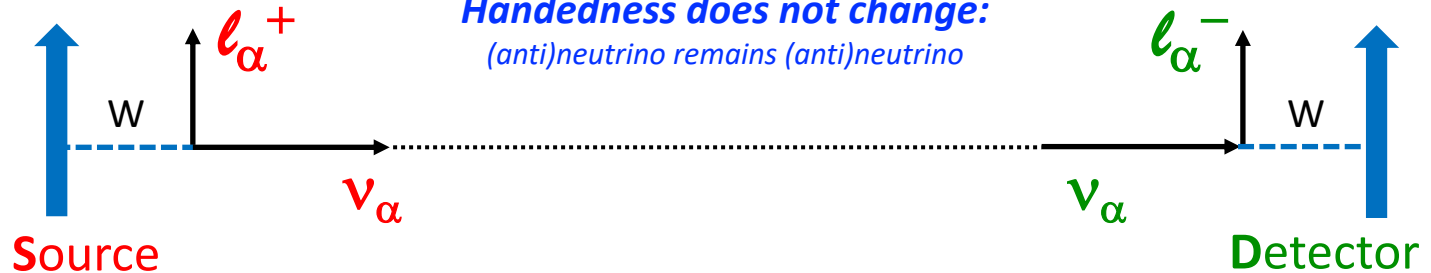
If neutrinos are massless: $v=c \rightarrow$ “clock” is frozen \rightarrow no change!

Flavor does not change.

neutrino- α remains neutrino- α

Handedness does not change:

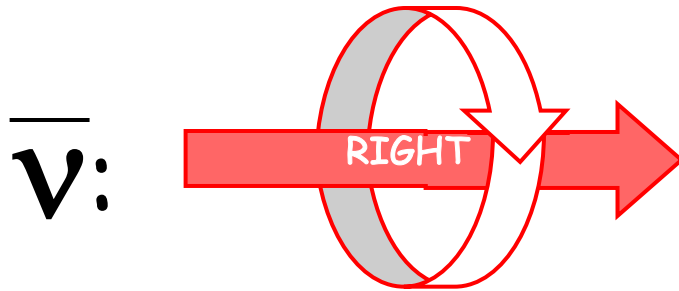
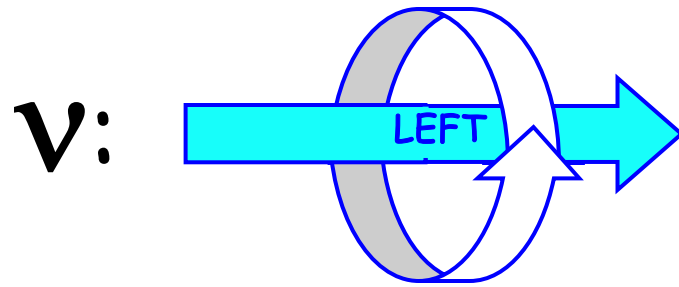
(anti)neutrino remains (anti)neutrino



However, If ν have mass, interesting things may happen to handedness and flavor...

Handedness: is a constant of motion for massless neutrinos

[You would see handedness reversal if you could travel faster... but you can't ($v=c$)!]

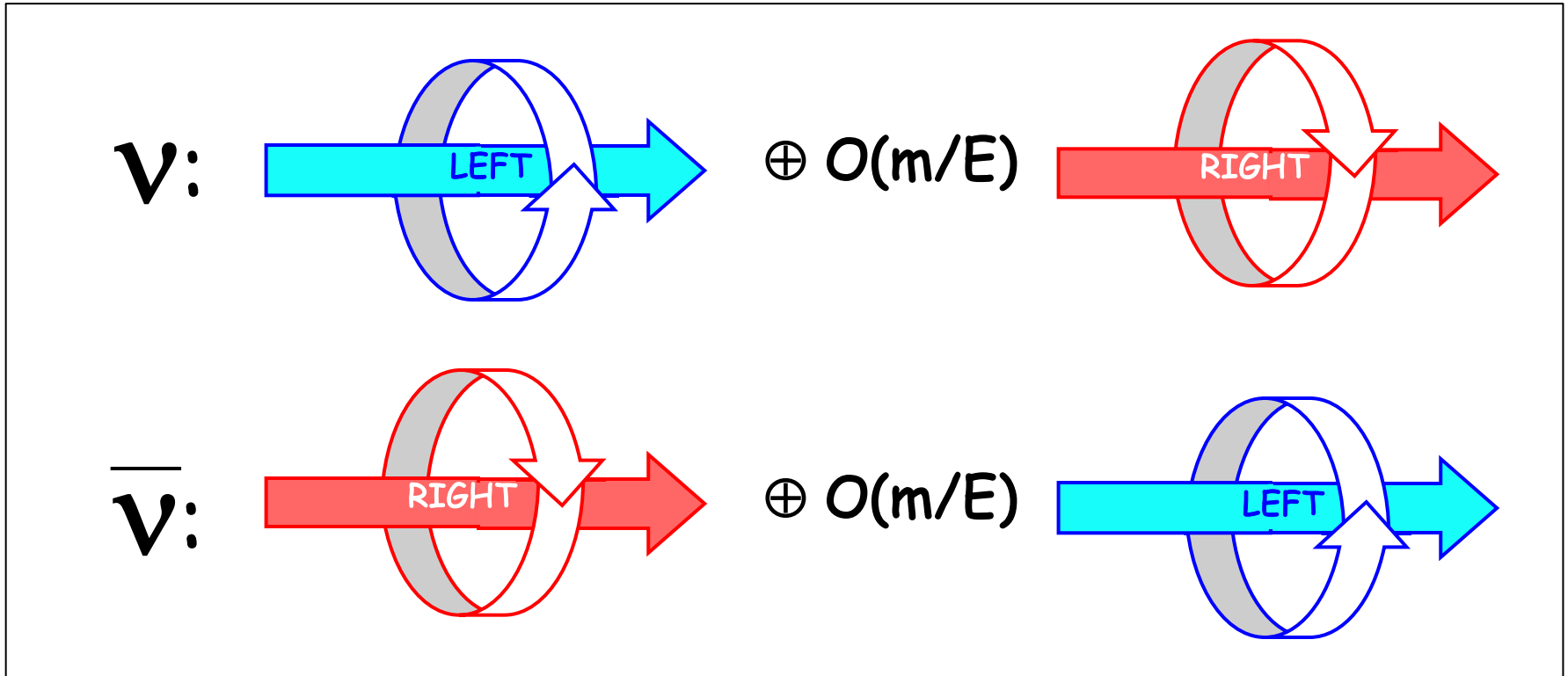


This is a massless “Weyl” two-spinor with 2 independent d.o.f

[And this was also the theoretical prejudice in the construction of the Standard Model]

Massive ν can develop the “wrong” handedness at $O(m/E)$

E = neutrino energy; the Dirac equation couples RH and LH states for $m \neq 0$

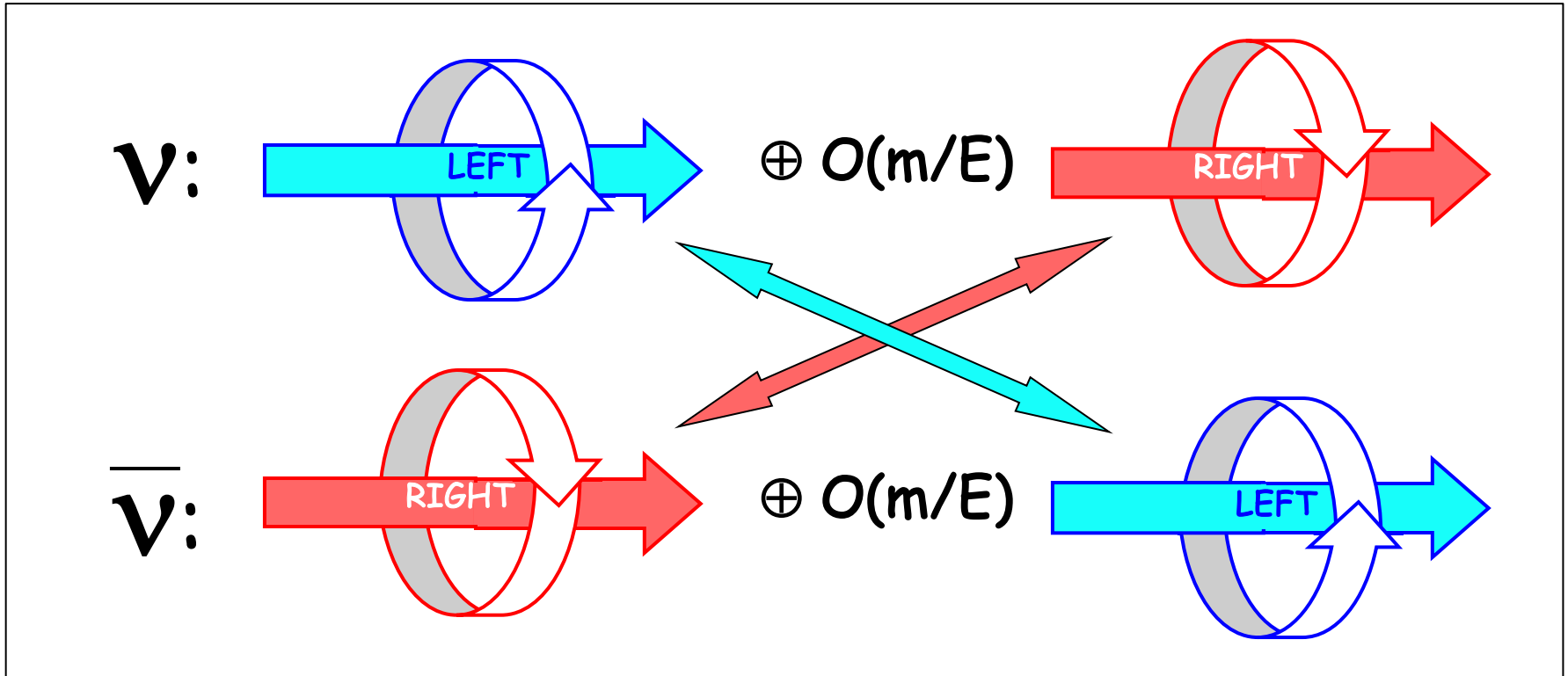


If these 4 d.o.f. are independent: massive “Dirac” four-spinor

ν and anti- ν are different, as the charged fermions are. Can define a conserved “lepton number”

But, for neutral fermions, two components might be identical !

[Cannot pair components between electron and positron is forbidden: violate electric charge.]

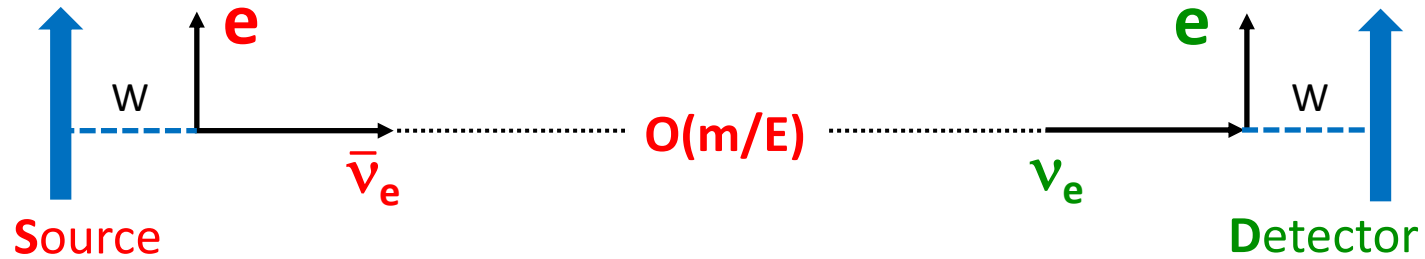


Massive “Majorana” four-spinor with only 2 independent d.o.f.

No fundamental distinction between ν / $\bar{\nu}$, up to a possible “Majorana phase”:

A *very* neutral particle with no electric charge, no leptonic number ...

E.g., if neutrinos are Majorana, expect $\bar{\nu} \rightarrow \nu$ transition:

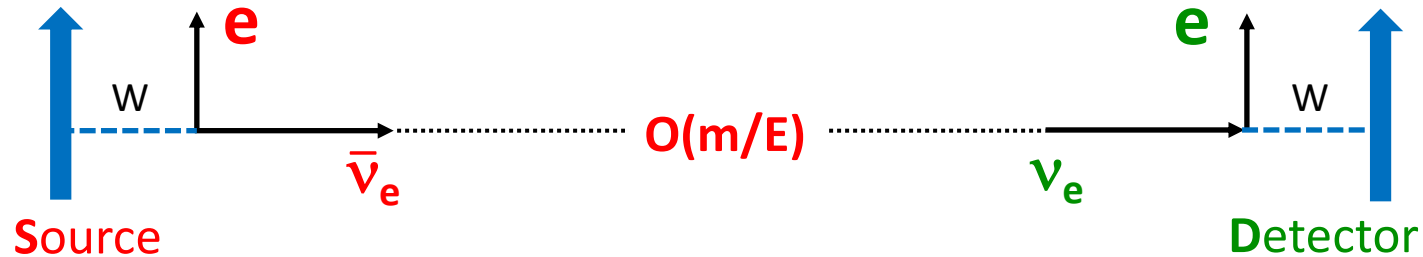


But, we haven't seen anything like that so far ...

E.g., reactions induced by neutrinos haven't been observed with anti-neutrinos ...

Paradox? No!

E.g., if neutrinos are Majorana, expect $\bar{\nu} \rightarrow \nu$ transition:



E.g., in the highest-statistics ν experiments, using reactor sources of anti- ν_e with $E \sim \text{few MeV}$, we have seen $O(10^7)$ events from inverse beta-decay (IBD) reaction:

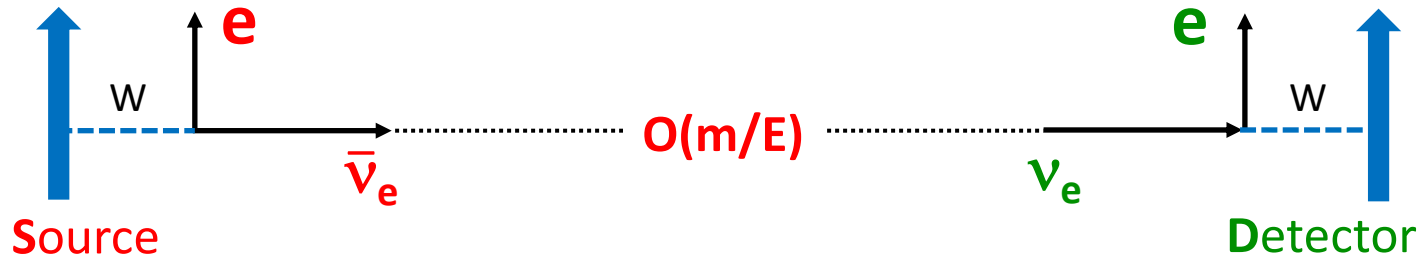


If neutrinos are Dirac, the same reaction with initial ν_e is *strictly forbidden*:



If neutrinos are Majorana, it *is allowed* in principle, but in practice is suppressed by $O(m/E) < 10^{-7}$ and becomes \sim unobservable: $<O(1)$ reactor event in 10^7 (if any)

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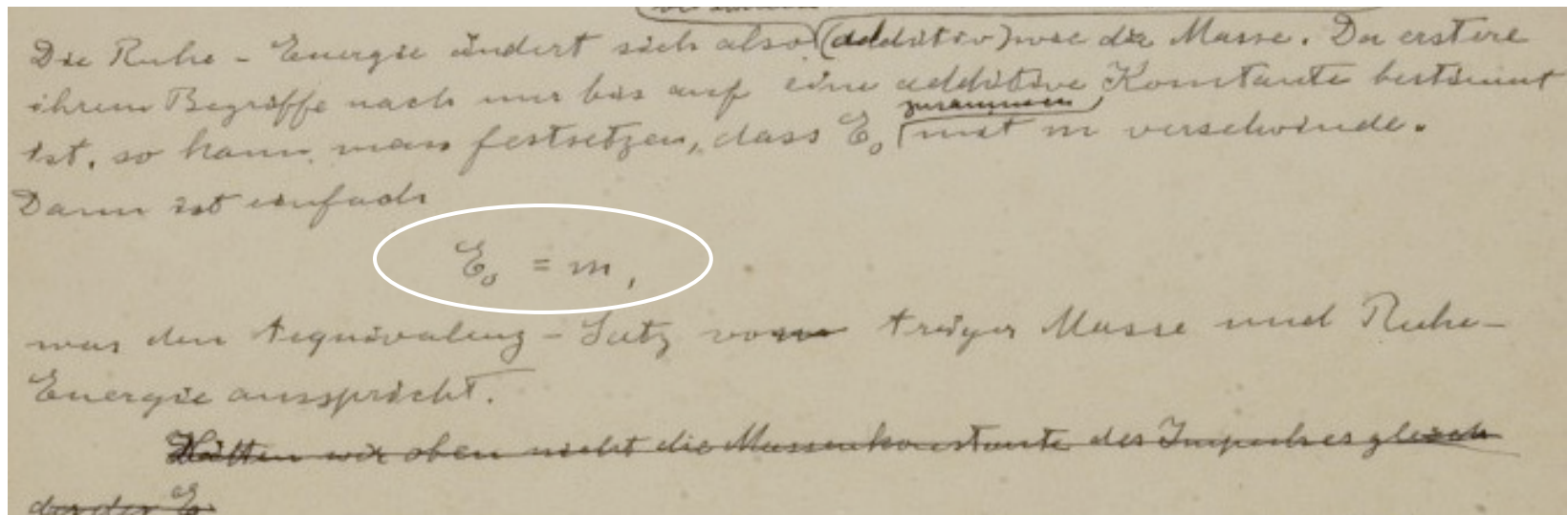
To observe $\nu \rightarrow \bar{\nu}$ transitions, better compare $O(1)$ event to ~ 0 , than to 10^N !

\rightarrow Search for **neutrinoless $\beta\beta$ decay: occurs if and only if neutrinos are Majorana**
(microscopic process with ν production and absorption in the same nucleus)

Proof that ν are massive has been provided (1998+) by an alternative process, involving macroscopic distances $x=L$ and observable when $O(m^2 L/E) \sim O(1)$:

Neutrino flavor oscillations (or transitions)

Let's start from a celebrated equation, already handwritten in natural units:



... namely, for $p \neq 0$:

$$E = \sqrt{m^2 + p^2}$$

Expand at small p/m or $m/p \rightarrow$

Our ordinary experience takes
place in the limit: $p \ll m$

$$E \simeq m + \frac{p^2}{2m}$$

mass kinetic
energy

Our ordinary experience takes place in the limit: $p \ll m$

$$E \simeq m + \frac{p^2}{2m}$$

... while neutrinos experience the opposite limit: $p \gg m$

$$E \simeq p + \frac{m^2}{2p}$$

Energy difference between two neutrinos ν_i e ν_j with mass m_i e m_j in the same beam ($p_i = p_j \simeq E$) :

$$\Delta E \simeq \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2}{2E}$$

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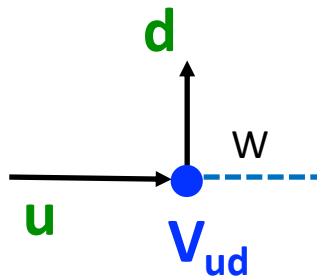
$$\Delta E \simeq \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2}{2E}$$

Tiny $\Delta E \rightarrow$ Probed at large (macroscopic) $L \sim \Delta t$ from uncertainty relation:

$$1 \sim \Delta E \Delta t \simeq \frac{m_i^2 - m_j^2}{2E} L$$

Besides (different) neutrino masses, a second important ingredient of neutrino oscillations is **mixing**. In the Standard Model, mixing matrices arise, after SSB, in CC interaction vertices involving massive fermions:

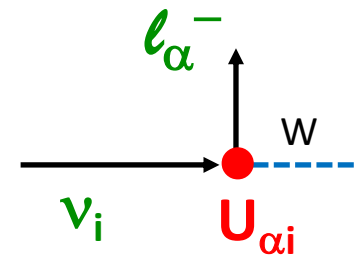
Quarks:



● = CC strength
 $\propto V$ element
 with $VV^\dagger=1$

CKM = Cabibbo-Kobayashi-Maskawa

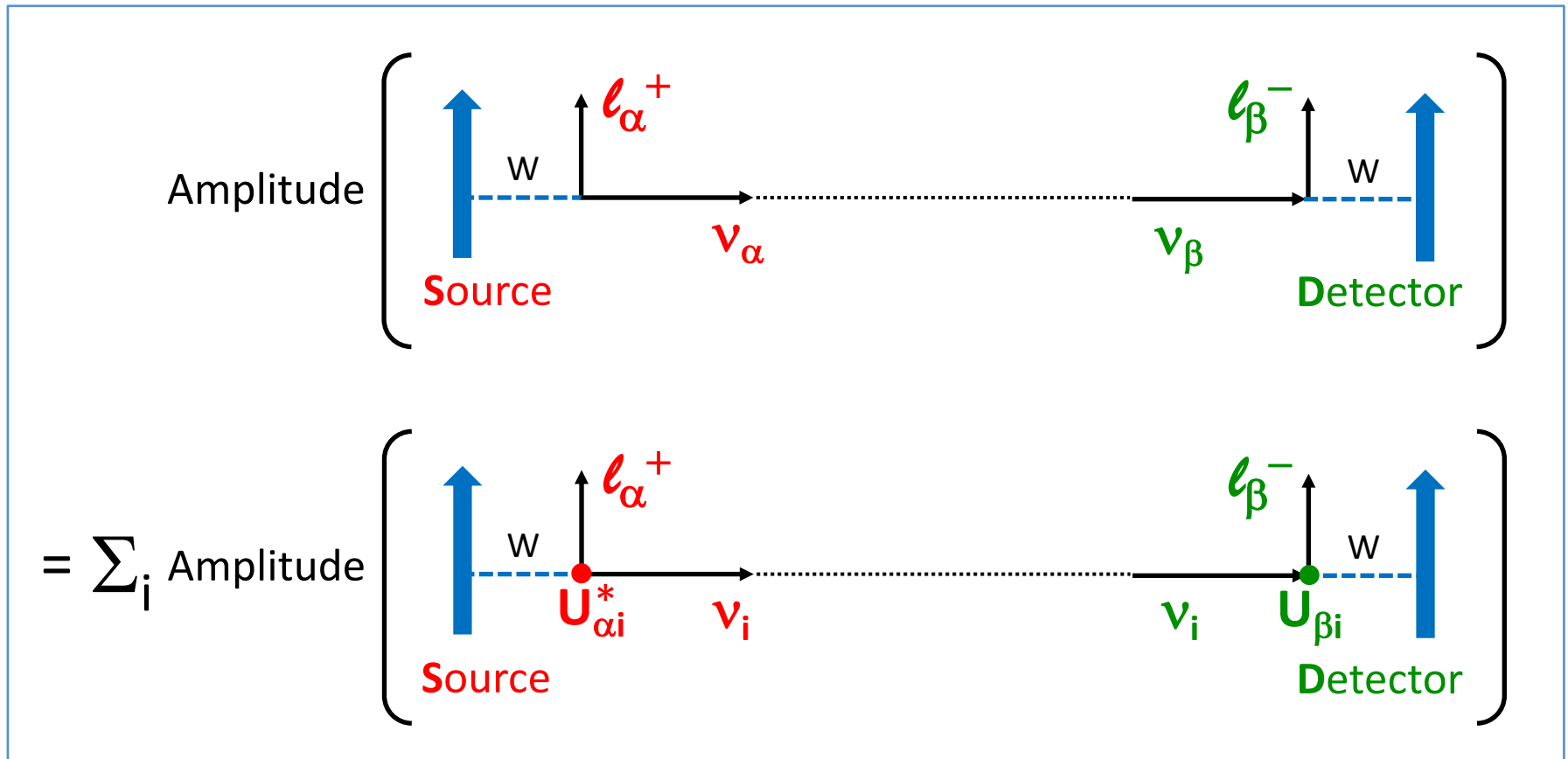
Leptons:



● = CC strength
 $\propto U$ element
 with $UU^\dagger=1$

PMNS = Pontecorvo-Maki-Nakagawa-Sakata

With both ingredients... flavor may change from α (production) to β (detection)!



$$\nu_{\beta} = U_{\beta i} \nu_i$$

$$\nu_i = U_{\alpha i}^{*} \nu_{\alpha}$$

$$\text{Oscill. probability} = |\text{Amplitude}|^2$$

$$\left(\begin{array}{l} \text{Note: for } \bar{\nu} \\ \ell_{\alpha}^{\pm} \rightarrow \ell_{\alpha}^{\mp} \\ \mathbf{U} \rightarrow \mathbf{U}^{*} \end{array} \right)$$

Warm-up exercise:
The simplest oscillation probability

Hereafter, some excellent approximations for neutrino oscillations with $m \ll E$:

(1) Take $x \simeq t$ and $\partial x \simeq \partial t$

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(2) Forget about initial and final interactions, isolate ν propagation only:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{---} \rightarrow \text{---} \\ \text{ } \quad \text{ } \\ \textcolor{red}{\nu}_\alpha \quad \textcolor{green}{\nu}_\beta \end{array} = \sum_i \begin{array}{c} \text{---} \rightarrow \text{---} \\ \text{ } \quad \text{ } \\ \textcolor{red}{U}_{\alpha i}^* \quad \textcolor{red}{\nu}_i \quad \textcolor{green}{\nu}_i \quad \textcolor{green}{U}_{\beta i} \end{array}$$

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(3) Forget about spin, Majorana/Dirac... treat ν as “scalar” wavefunctions

$$\nu_\alpha = \begin{bmatrix} \nu_e \\ \nu_\mu \\ \nu_\tau \end{bmatrix} \quad \nu_i = \begin{bmatrix} \nu_1 \\ \nu_2 \\ \nu_3 \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{with} \quad \begin{cases} |\nu_e|^2 + |\nu_\mu|^2 + |\nu_\tau|^2 = 1 \\ |\nu_1|^2 + |\nu_2|^2 + |\nu_3|^2 = 1 \end{cases}$$

flavor basis mass basis

e.g., a pure ν_e state in flavor basis is $\begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$

Next steps: find the hamiltonian of ν propagation \rightarrow Schroedinger equation:

$$H_f \begin{bmatrix} \nu_e \\ \nu_\mu \\ \nu_\tau \end{bmatrix} = i \frac{d}{dx} \begin{bmatrix} \nu_e \\ \nu_\mu \\ \nu_\tau \end{bmatrix}$$

Solve, square amplitudes, get oscillation probabilities, discuss phenomenology!

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Solve, square amplitudes, get oscillation probabilities, discuss phenomenology!

H_f = hamiltonian in flavor basis (3x3 matrix). Relation with H_m in mass basis:

$$H_f = U H_m U^\dagger$$

U
 \downarrow

$$\begin{bmatrix} \nu_e \\ \nu_\mu \\ \nu_\tau \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} U_{e1} & U_{e2} & U_{e3} \\ U_{\mu1} & U_{\mu2} & U_{\mu3} \\ U_{\tau1} & U_{\tau2} & U_{\tau3} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \nu_1 \\ \nu_2 \\ \nu_3 \end{bmatrix}$$

U^\dagger
 \downarrow

$$\begin{bmatrix} \nu_1 \\ \nu_2 \\ \nu_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} U_{e1}^* & U_{\mu1}^* & U_{\tau1}^* \\ U_{e2}^* & U_{\mu2}^* & U_{\tau2}^* \\ U_{e3}^* & U_{\mu3}^* & U_{\tau3}^* \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \nu_e \\ \nu_\mu \\ \nu_\tau \end{bmatrix}$$

$$[\nu \rightarrow \bar{\nu} : U \rightarrow U^*]$$

The simplest case: two neutrinos evolving in vacuum

(flavors α and β , masses m_i and m_j)

U is real:
(tomorrow: back to
complex vs real U)

$$\begin{bmatrix} \nu_\alpha \\ \nu_\beta \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \cos \theta & \sin \theta \\ -\sin \theta & \cos \theta \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \nu_i \\ \nu_j \end{bmatrix}$$

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H_m is easy:
(diagonal energies)

$$H_m = \begin{bmatrix} E_i & \\ & E_j \end{bmatrix} \simeq p \begin{bmatrix} 1 & \\ & 1 \end{bmatrix} + \frac{1}{2E} \begin{bmatrix} m_i^2 & \\ & m_j^2 \end{bmatrix}$$

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Evolution op.:
(overall phases $\propto \mathbf{1}$
are unobservable)

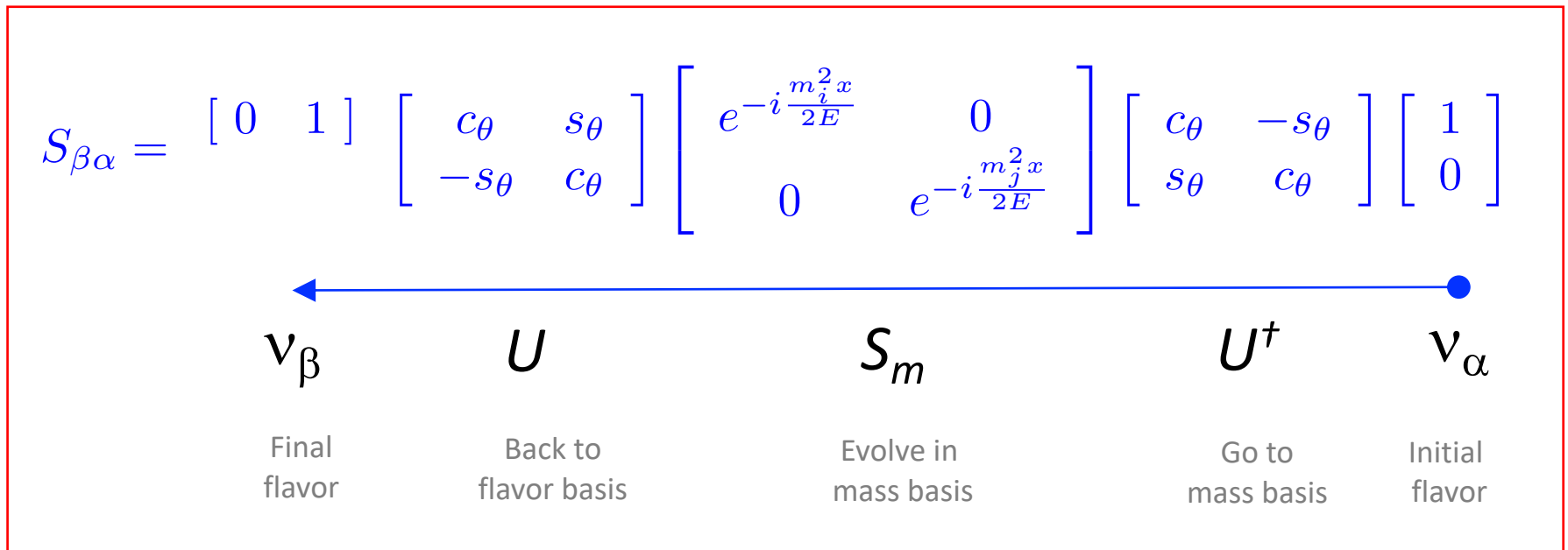
$$S_m = e^{-iH_m x} = \begin{bmatrix} e^{-i \frac{m_i^2 x}{2E}} & \\ & e^{-i \frac{m_j^2 x}{2E}} \end{bmatrix}$$

In flavor basis:
(nondiagonal
→ flavor change)

$$S_f = U S_m U^\dagger$$

$$P(\nu_\alpha \rightarrow \nu_\beta) = P_{\alpha\beta} = |S_{\beta\alpha}|^2$$

Swap of indices reflects opposite writing (from right to left) of algebraic operations:



[Take care of correct indices; e.g., for three neutrinos, in general it is $\mathbf{P}_{\alpha\beta} \neq \mathbf{P}_{\beta\alpha}$]

Expect to be sensitive to phase differences, thus to $\Delta\mathbf{m}^2 = \mathbf{m}_i^2 - \mathbf{m}_j^2$

Exercise: **Pontecorvo's formula**

$$P_{\alpha\beta} = \sin^2(2\theta) \sin^2 \left(\frac{\Delta m^2 x}{2E} \right)$$

Exercise: **Change of units**

$$\frac{\Delta m^2 x}{4E} = 1.267 \left(\frac{\Delta m^2}{\text{eV}^2} \right) \left(\frac{x}{\text{m}} \right) \left(\frac{\text{MeV}}{E} \right)$$

In many textbooks: $1.267 \simeq 1.27$, no longer adequate in subpercent precision expts!

$$P(\nu_\alpha \rightarrow \nu_\beta) = 4 \sin^2 \theta \cos^2 \theta \sin^2 \left(\frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 L}{4E} \right)$$

“Amplitude”

(vanishes for $\theta=0$ or $\pi/2$,
is maximal for $\theta=\pi/4$)

“Phase”

(vanishes for degenerate
masses or small L/E)

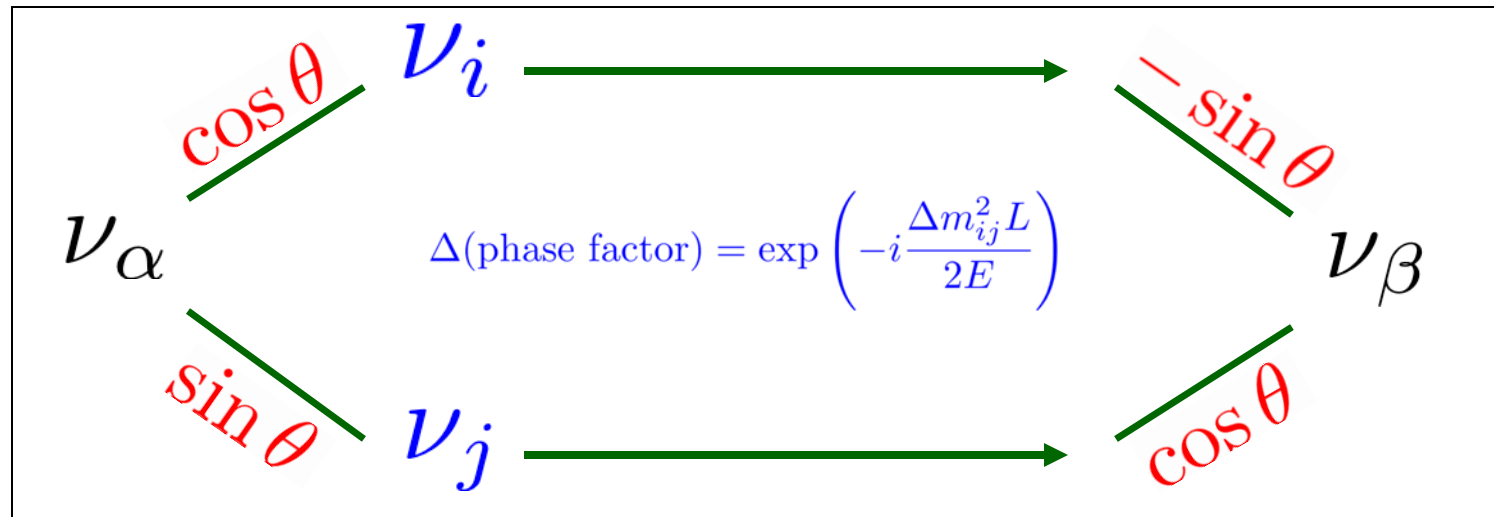
This is the flavor “appearance” probability $P_{\alpha\beta}$. The “survival” probability $P_{\alpha\alpha}$ for the flavor α is the complement to unity: $P_{\alpha\alpha} = 1 - P_{\alpha\beta}$

The oscillation effect depends on the *difference* of (squared) masses, not on the *absolute masses themselves*.

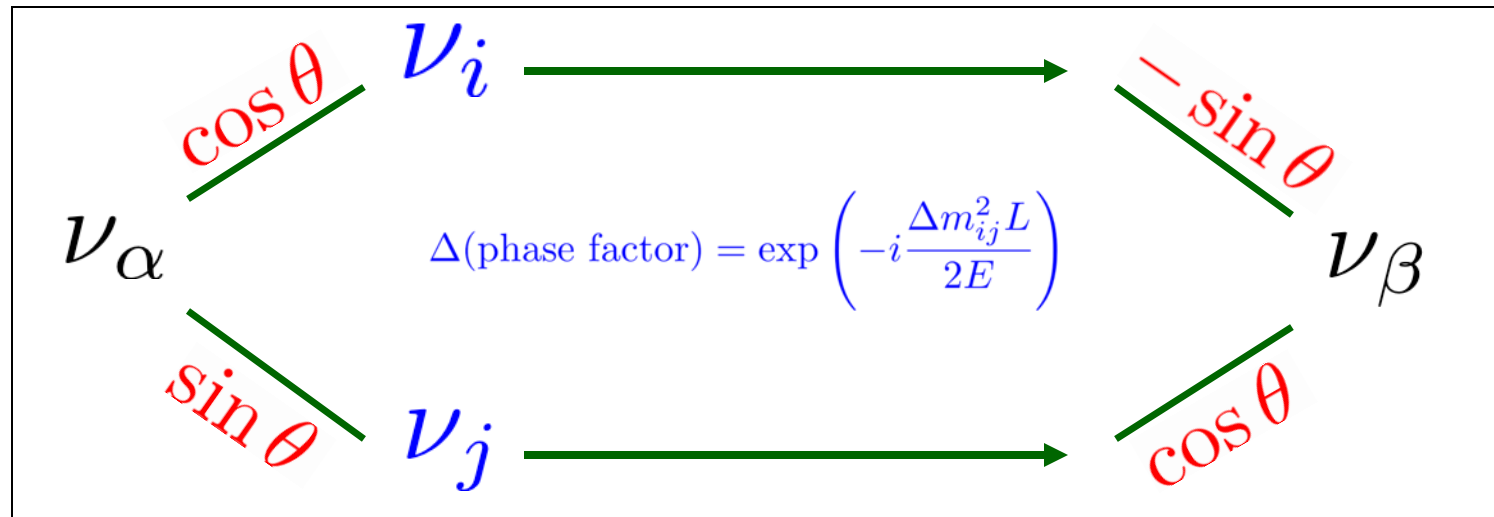
The oscillating term is squared, repeats at $n\pi$. Oscillation length: $L_{\text{osc}} = 4\pi E / \Delta m^2$

The above probability is octant-symmetric: amplitude does not change when $\theta \rightarrow \pi/2 - \theta$, namely, $c_\theta \rightarrow s_\theta$

Analogy with a double-slit interference experiment in vacuum:



Analogy with a double-slit interference experiment in vacuum:



Fringes best
observed when

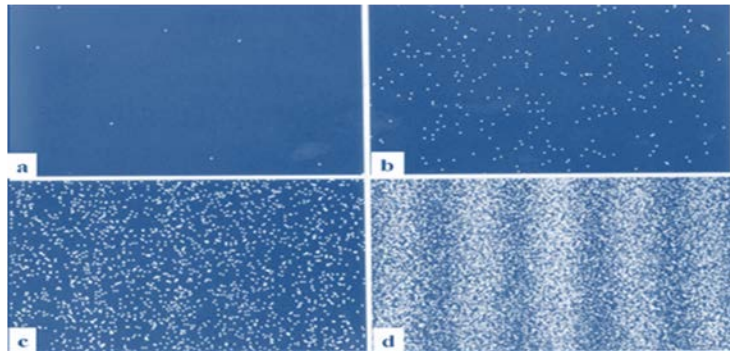
$$1 \sim \Delta E \Delta t \simeq \frac{m_i^2 - m_j^2}{2E} L$$

Vanishing
fringes when

$$\ll 1$$

Unresolved
fringes (gray
screen) when

$$\gg 1$$



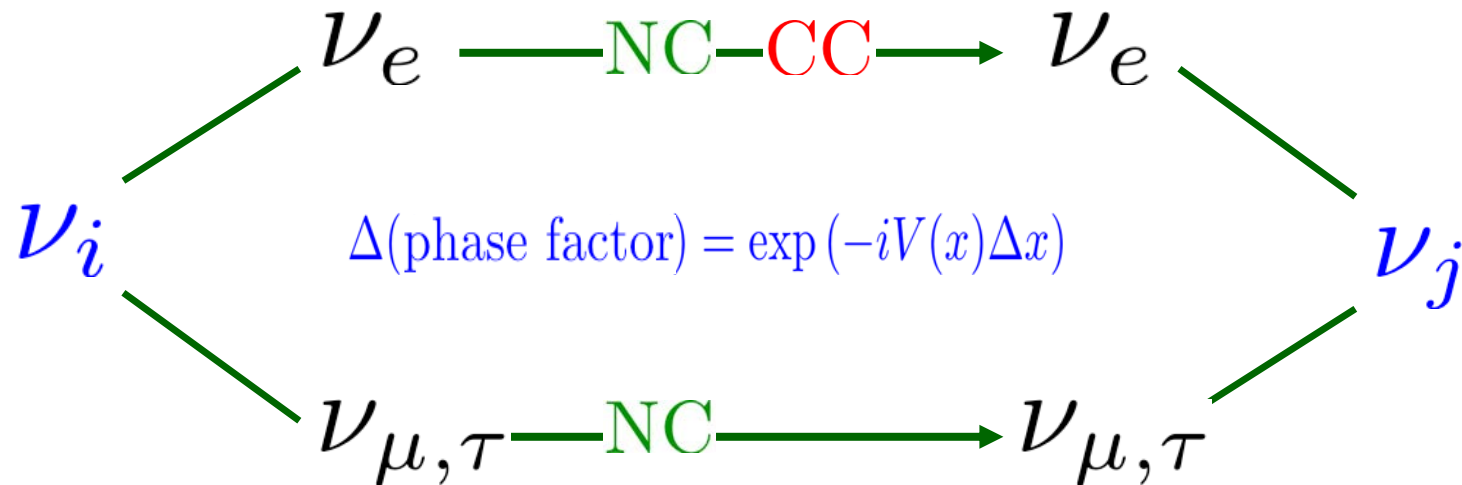
Orders of magnitude of L, E for some past/current oscillation experiments

	Initial flavors	Typical E	Typical L
Short-baseline (SBL) reactor neutrinos: CHOOZ, Double Chooz, RENO, Daya Bay...	$\bar{\nu}_e$	few MeV	O(1) km
Long-baseline reactor neutrinos: KamLAND	$\bar{\nu}_e$	few MeV	O(10^2) km
Long-baseline (LBL) accelerator neutrinos: K2K, OPERA, T2K, NOvA...	$(\bar{\nu}_\mu)$ mostly	O(1) GeV	O(10^{2-3}) km
Atmospheric neutrinos: MACRO, MINOS, (Super)-Kamiokande, IceCube...	$(\bar{\nu}_\mu) (\bar{\nu}_e)$	> O(0.1) GeV	O(10^{1-4}) km
Solar neutrinos: Chlorine, Gallium, Super-K, SNO, Borexino...	ν_e	O(1-10) MeV	1 a.u.

In the latter case, $L=1$ a.u. actually plays a marginal role in oscillations, dominated by matter effects

More in Lecture II and III:

Analogy of matter effects with double-slit experiment:
one “arm” (e-flavor) feels a different “refraction index”
through coherent forward scattering (not absorption!)

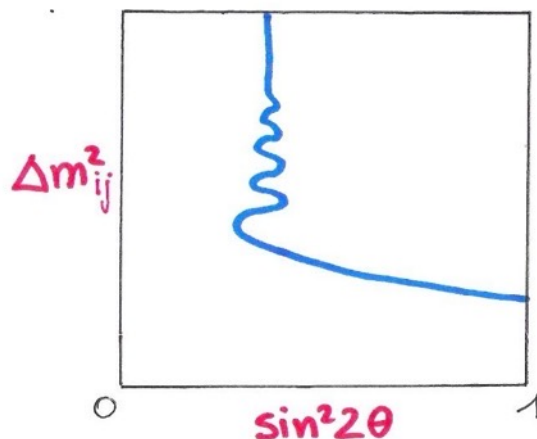


Governed by a tiny v “interaction energy” or “potential” V
Not necessarily periodic effects: oscillations \rightarrow transitions

Generic experimental constraints in 2ν approxim.

- Experiments measure some "averaged" $P_{\alpha\beta} \simeq \sin^2 2\theta \left\langle \sin^2 \left(\frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 x}{4E} \right) \right\rangle$

- Curve of iso - $P_{\alpha\beta}$:

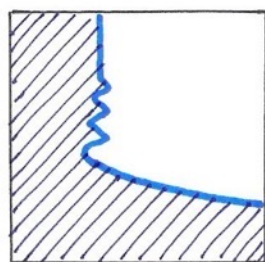


$\leftarrow \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 x}{4E} \gg 1, \langle \dots \rangle \sim \frac{1}{2}, \text{ fast oscillations}$

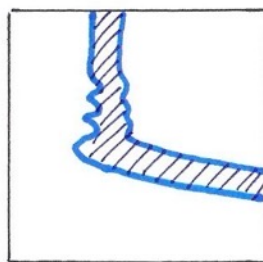
$\leftarrow \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 x}{4E} \sim \mathcal{O}(1)$

$\leftarrow \frac{\Delta m_{ij}^2 x}{4E} \ll 1, \text{ vanishing oscillations}$

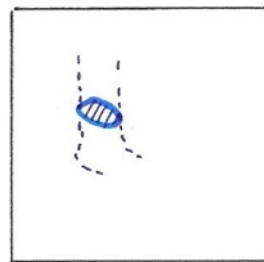
- Possible expt. constraints:



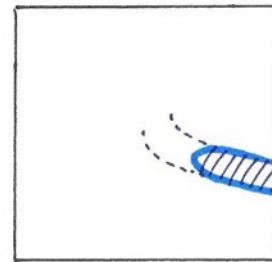
No signal



Signal



Precise signal
at small mixing

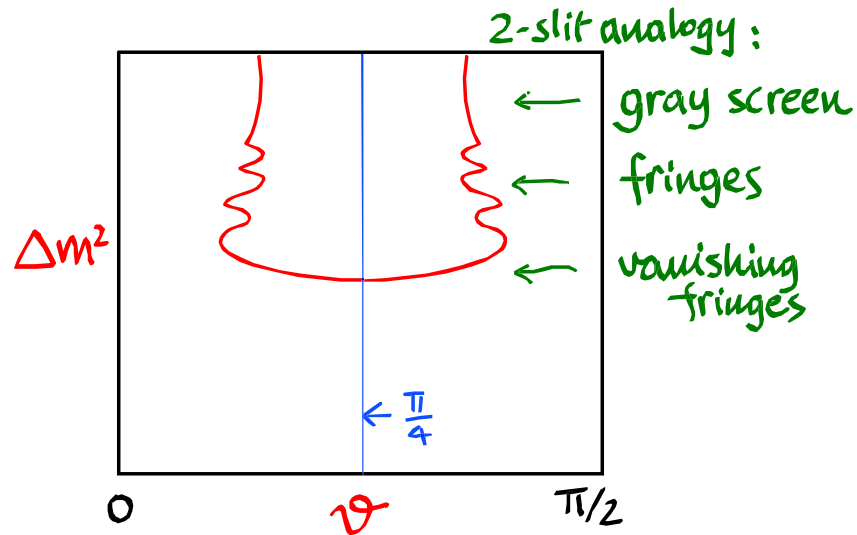


Precise signal
at large mixing

(need ≥ 2 expts or spectral data in 1 expt)

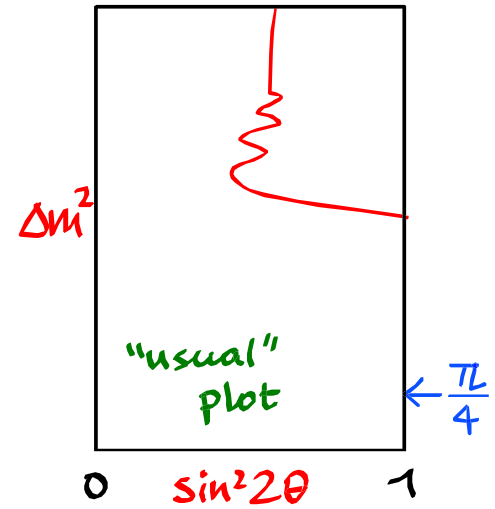
Octant (a)symmetry:

Typical iso- $\langle P_{\alpha\beta} \rangle$ contours



Octant symmetry: $\theta \rightarrow \frac{\pi}{2} - \theta$ in $P_{\mu\mu}$

If 2nd octant folded onto the 1st one:



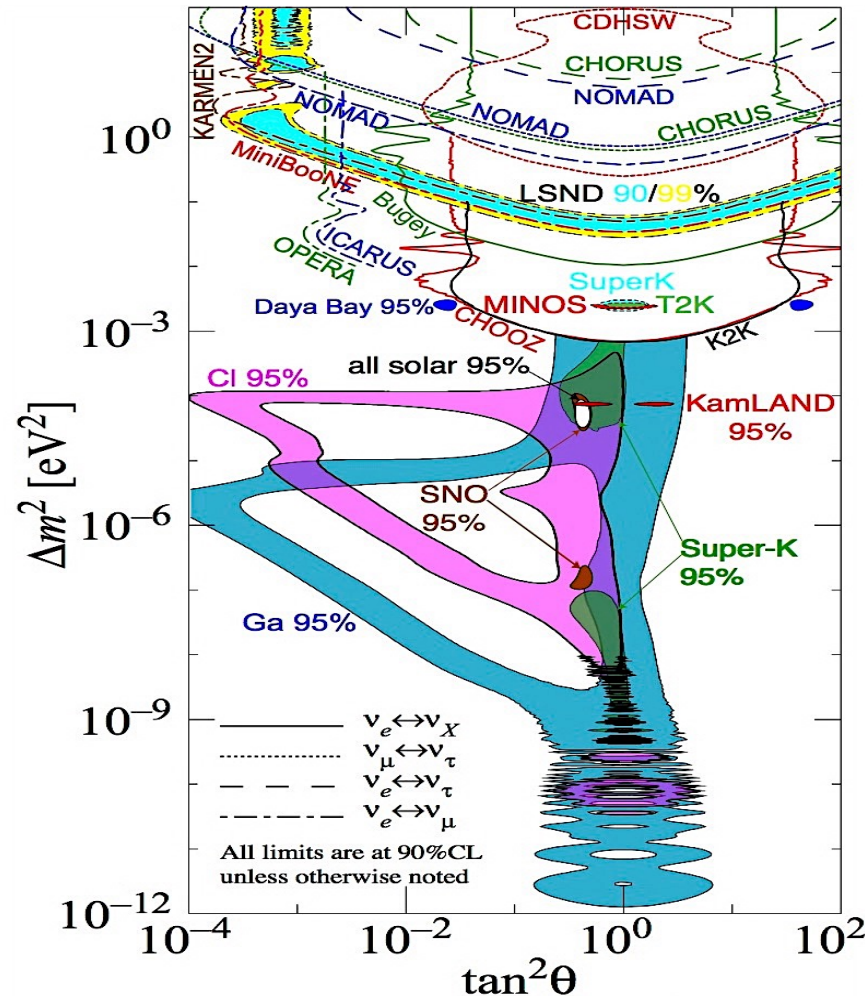
Basically obsolete

In general, better to use
(preserve octant-symmetry)

$\log \tan^2 \theta$
or $\sin^2 \theta$

Note: 2v Octant symmetry broken by 3v and/or matter effects

Octant (a)symmetric 2ν contours from Particle Data Group review:



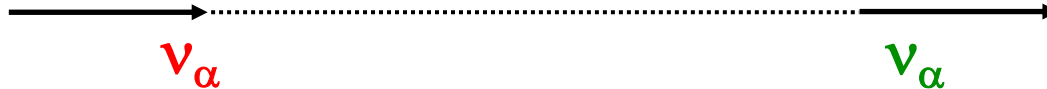
But... patching 2ν approximations in different oscillation channels,
in order to get a full 3ν picture, is no longer a useful approach:

Better to go the other way around, from the full 3ν case to 2ν limits

RECAP

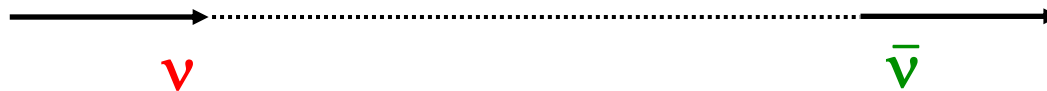
If neutrinos are massless: “clock” is frozen, no change in propagation

*Flavor does not change.
Handedness does not change.*



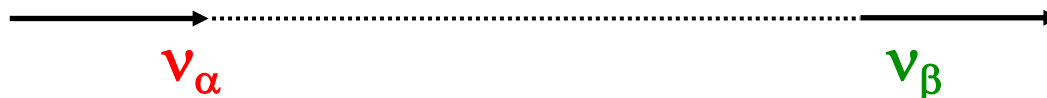
If neutrinos are massive, the other handedness develops at $O(m/E) \ll 1$

*Iff neutrinos are Majorana:
(other lectures in this School)*



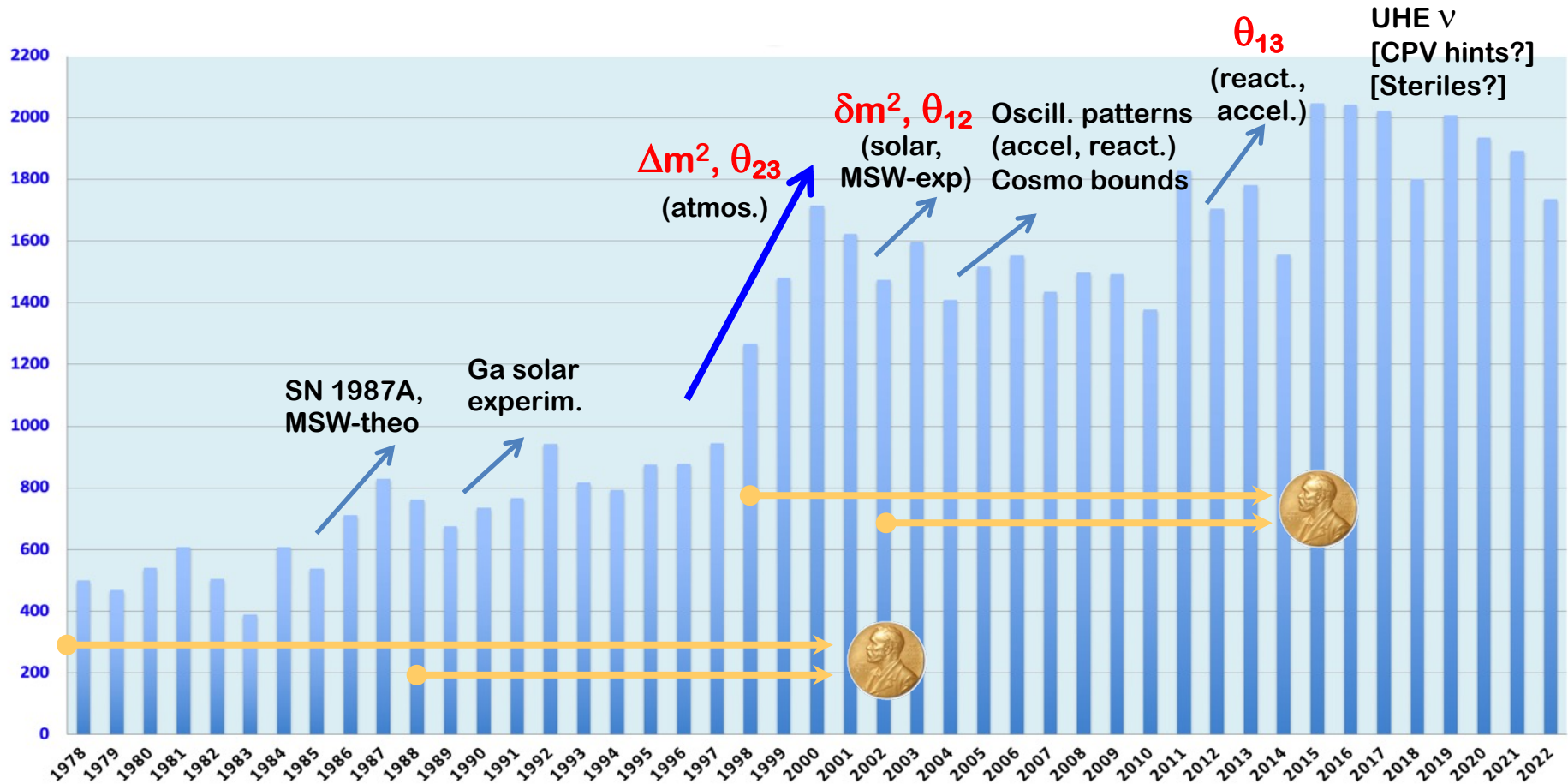
If ν are massive and mixed, other flavors develop at $O(\Delta m^2 L/E)$

*Flavor oscillations / transitions:
(these lectures)*



An active research field...

Papers with *neutrino* in the title, yearly trend from 



future → ... ?

End of Lecture I

Solutions to exercises: extra slides →

Exercise: Pontecorvo's formula

$$S_{\beta\alpha} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} c_\theta & s_\theta \\ -s_\theta & c_\theta \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} e^{-i\frac{m_1^2 x}{2E}} & \\ & e^{-i\frac{m_2^2 x}{2E}} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} c_\theta & -s_\theta \\ s_\theta & c_\theta \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$$
$$= s_\theta c_\theta \left(-e^{-i\frac{m_1^2 x}{2E}} + e^{-i\frac{m_2^2 x}{2E}} \right)$$

To get $|S_{\beta\alpha}|^2$, use the identities:
$$\begin{cases} |a+b|^2 = |a|^2 + |b|^2 + 2\operatorname{Re}(a^*b) \\ 2s_\varphi^2 = 1 - \cos(2\varphi) \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \rightarrow P_{\alpha\beta} &= |S_{\beta\alpha}|^2 \\ &= 2s_\theta^2 c_\theta^2 \left(1 - \cos\left(\frac{\Delta m^2 x}{2E}\right) \right) \\ &= 4s_\theta^2 c_\theta^2 \sin^2\left(\frac{\Delta m^2 x}{4E}\right) \\ &= \sin^2 2\theta \sin^2\left(\frac{\Delta m^2 x}{4E}\right) \end{aligned}$$

Exercise: Change of units (from natural to eV, m)

- Remember that: $1 = \hbar c = 197.327 \text{ MeV} \cdot \text{fm}$ $\leftarrow 1 \text{ fm} = 10^{-15} \text{ m}$
 $(1 \simeq 0.2 \text{ GeV} \cdot \text{fm})$ $\leftarrow \text{"Rule of thumb"}$
Thus: $1 \text{ MeV} \cdot 1 \text{ m} = 5.0677 \times 10^{+12}$

- Rewrite the oscillation phase as:

$$\begin{aligned} \left(\frac{\Delta m^2 x}{4E} \right) &= \frac{1}{4} \left(\frac{\Delta m^2}{\text{eV}^2} \cdot \text{eV}^2 \right) \left(\frac{x}{\text{m}} \cdot \text{m} \right) \left(\frac{\text{MeV}}{E} \cdot \frac{1}{\text{MeV}} \right) \\ &= \frac{1}{4} \left(\frac{1 \text{ eV}^2 \cdot 1 \text{ m}}{1 \text{ MeV}} \right) \left(\frac{\Delta m^2}{\text{eV}^2} \right) \left(\frac{x}{\text{m}} \right) \left(\frac{\text{MeV}}{E} \right) \\ &= \frac{10^{-12}}{4} (\text{MeV} \cdot \text{m}) \left(\frac{\Delta m^2}{\text{eV}^2} \right) \left(\frac{x}{\text{m}} \right) \left(\frac{\text{MeV}}{E} \right) \\ &= 1.267 \left(\frac{\Delta m^2}{\text{eV}^2} \right) \left(\frac{x}{\text{m}} \right) \left(\frac{\text{MeV}}{E} \right) \end{aligned}$$