Superconductivity in pictures

Alexey Bezryadin

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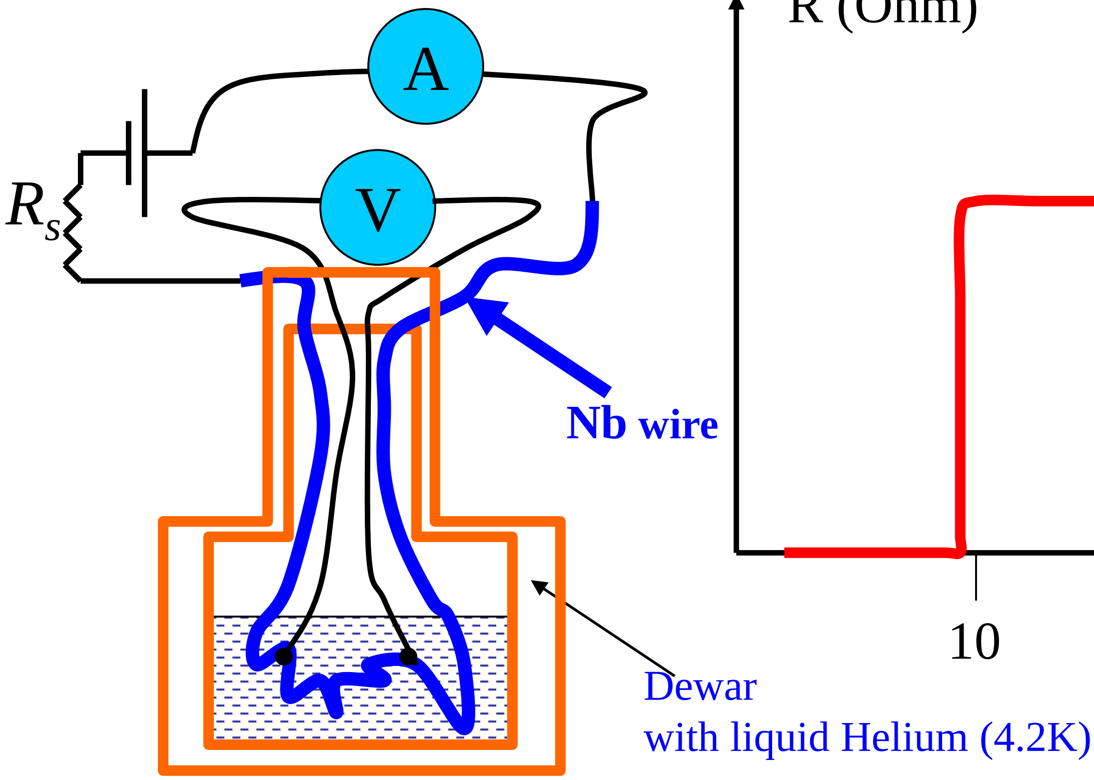
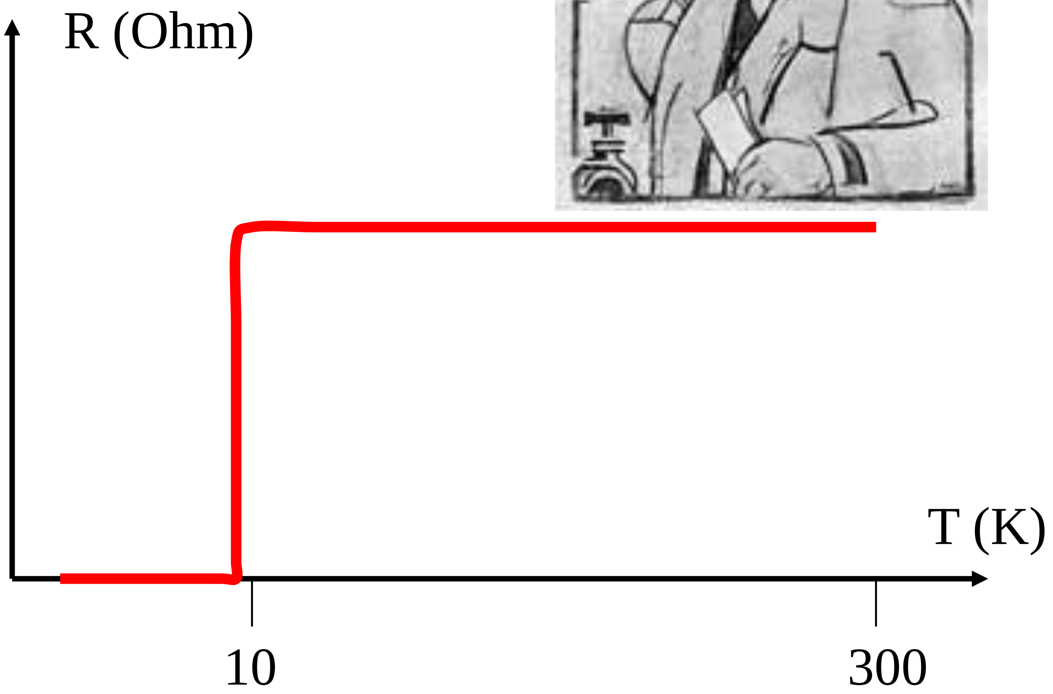
How one can measure superconductivity?

Electrical resistance of some metals drops to zero below a certain temperature which is called "critical temperature“ (H. K. O. 1911)

How to observe superconductivity

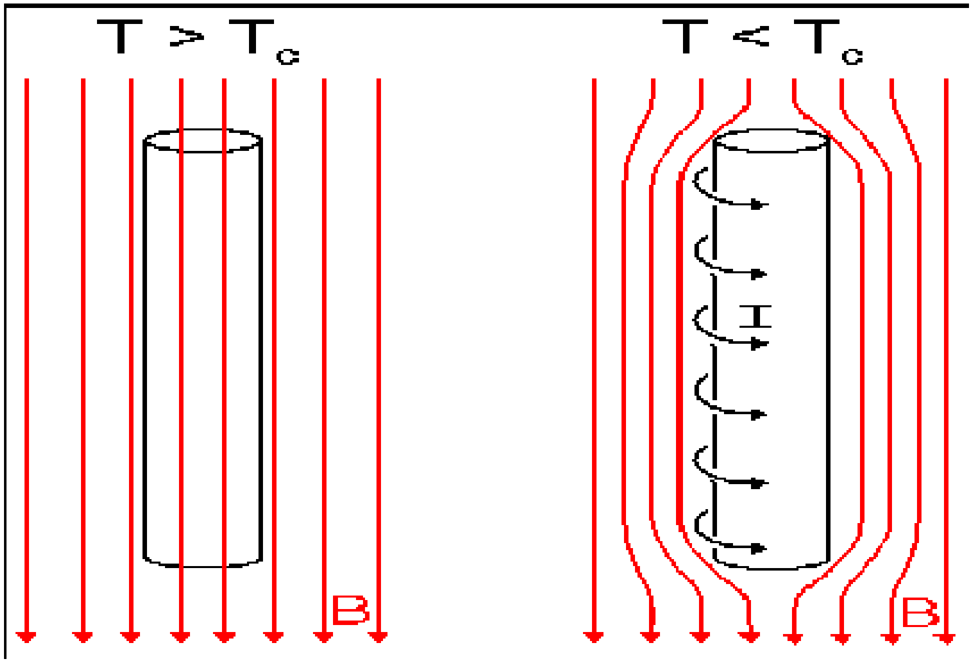
- Take Nb wire
- Connect to a voltmeter and a current source
- Put into helium Dewar
- Measure electrical resistance





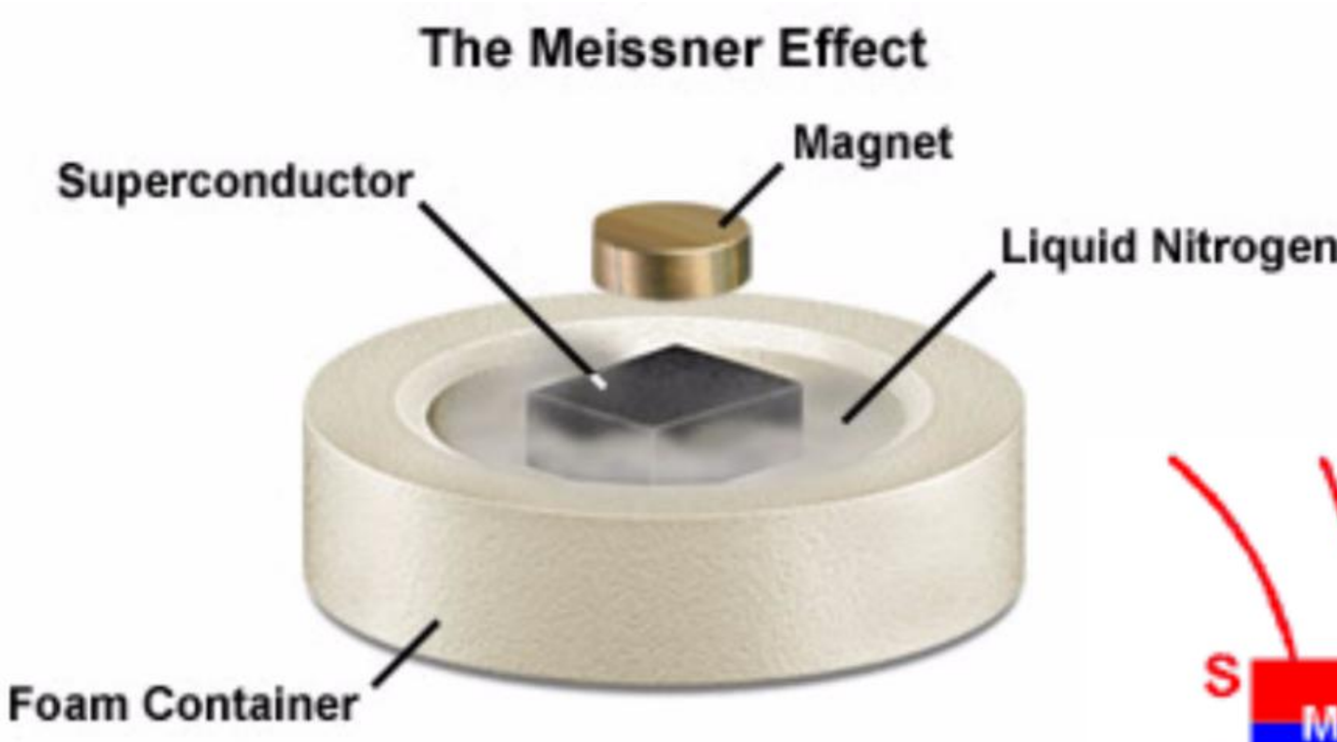
Heike Kamerling Onnes

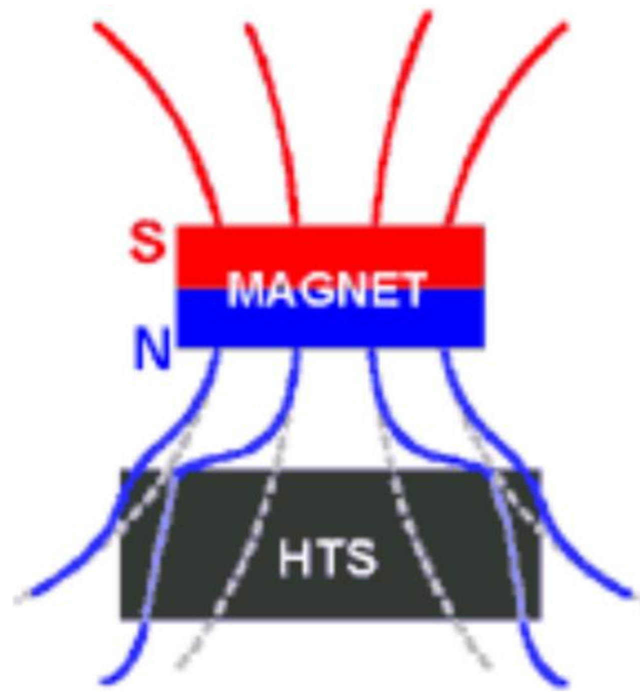
Meissner effect – the key signature of superconductivity



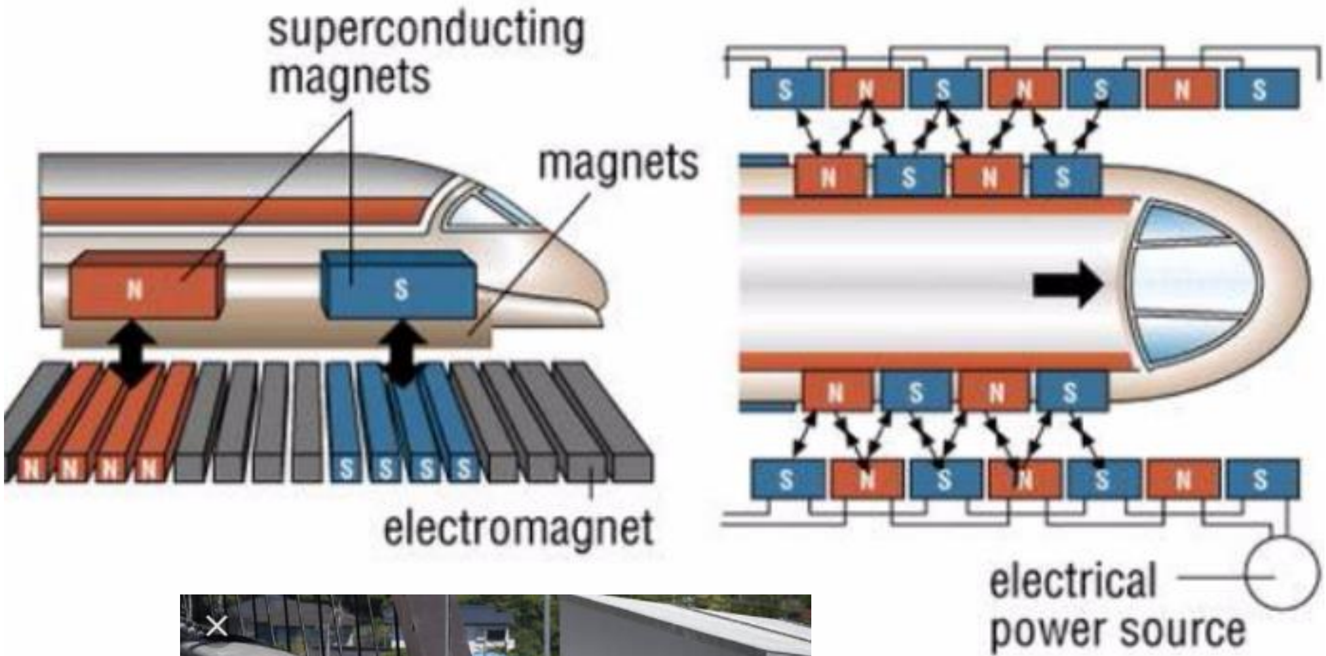
Formula	T_c (K)	H_c (T)	Type	BCS
Elements				
Al	1.20	0.01	I	yes
Cd	0.52	0.0028	I	yes
Diamond:B	11.4	4	II	yes
Ga	1.083	0.0058	I	yes
Hf	0.165		I	yes
α-Hg	4.15	0.04	I	yes
β-Hg	3.95	0.04	I	yes
In	3.4	0.03	I	yes
Ir	0.14	0.0016[7]	I	yes
α-La	4.9		I	yes
β-La	6.3		I	yes
Mo	0.92	0.0096	I	yes
Nb	9.26	0.82	II	yes
Os	0.65	0.007	I	yes

Magnetic levitation





Magnetic levitation train



blogs.wsj.com

U.S. Transportation Secretary Foxx
Rides on Japan's Maglev Train - Jap...

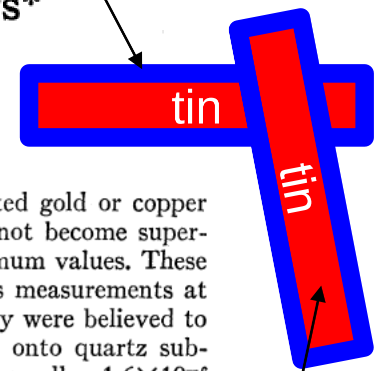
Discovery of the supercurrent, known now as proximity effect, in SNS junctions

PHYSICAL REVIEW VOLUME 117, NUMBER 3 FEBRUARY 1, 1960

Non-superconductor (normal metal, i.e., Ag)

Superconductivity of Contacts with Interposed Barriers*

HANS MEISSNER†
Department of Physics, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland
(Received August 25, 1959)



Resistance *vs* current diagrams and "Diagrams of State" have been obtained for 63 contacts between crossed wires of tin. The wires were plated with various thicknesses of the following metals: copper, silver, gold, chromium, iron, cobalt, nickel, and platinum. The contacts became superconducting, or showed a noticeable decrease of their resistance at lower temperatures if the plated films were not too thick. The limiting thicknesses were about 35×10^{-6} cm for Cu, Ag, and Au; 7.5×10^{-6} cm for Pt, 4×10^{-6} cm for Cr, and less than 2×10^{-6} cm for the ferromagnetic metals Fe, Co, and Ni. The investigation was extended to measurements of the resistance of contacts between crossed wires of copper or gold plated with various thicknesses of tin. Simultaneous measurements of the (longitudinal) resistance of the tin-plated gold or copper wires showed that these thin films of tin do not become superconducting for thicknesses below certain minimum values. These latter findings are in agreement with previous measurements at Toronto. The measurements at Toronto usually were believed to be unreliable because films of tin evaporated onto quartz substrates can be superconducting at thicknesses as small as 1.6×10^{-6} cm. It is now believed that just as superconducting electrons can drift into an adjoining normal conducting layer and make it superconducting, normal electrons can drift into an adjoining superconducting layer and prevent superconductivity.

Superconductor (tin)

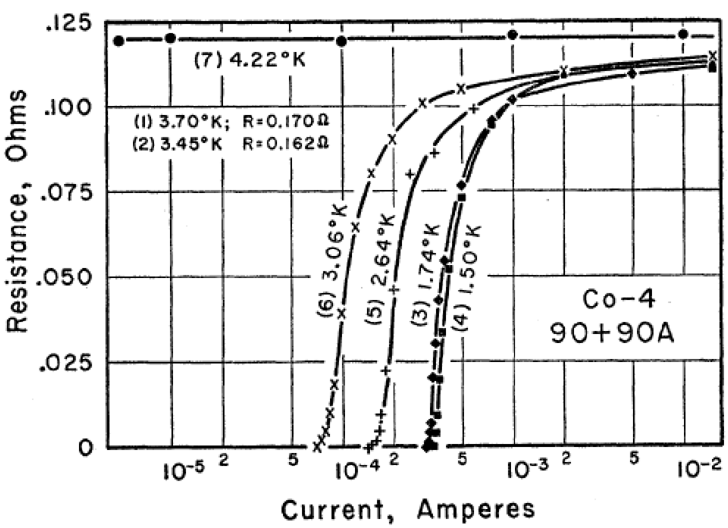


FIG. 1. Resistance *vs* current diagram of cobalt-plated contact Co 4, representative of diagrams type A.

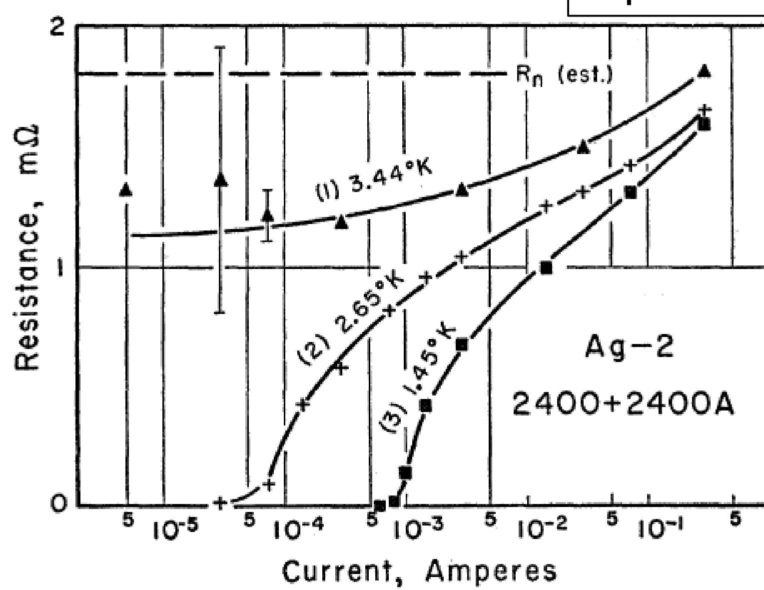
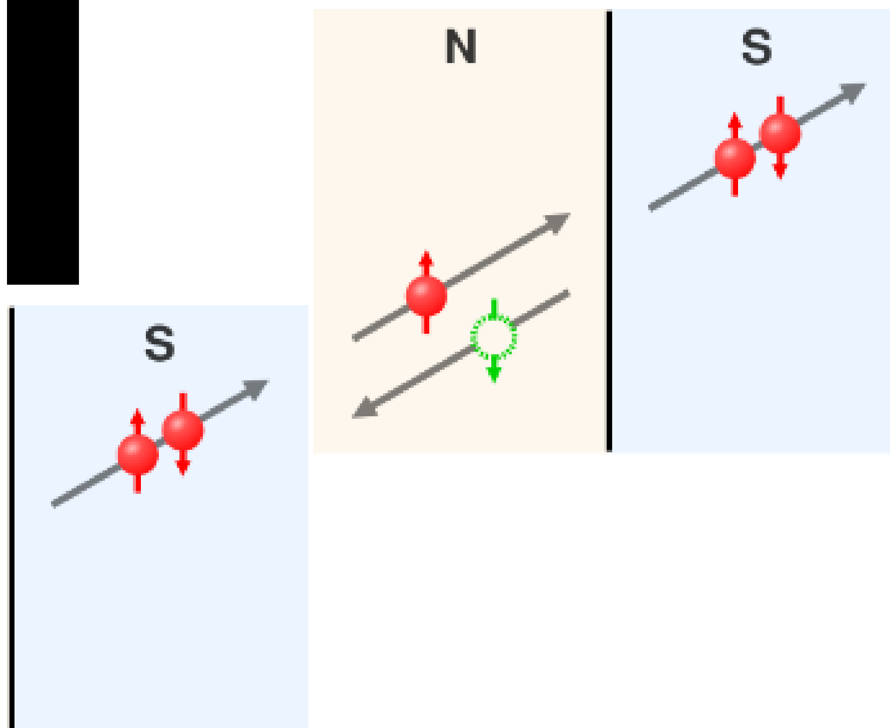


FIG. 2. Resistance *vs* current diagram of silver-plated contact Ag 2, representative of diagrams type B.

Explanation of the supercurrent in SNS junctions --- Andreev reflection

www.kapitza.ras.ru
www.kapitza.ras.ru/~andreev/afan...

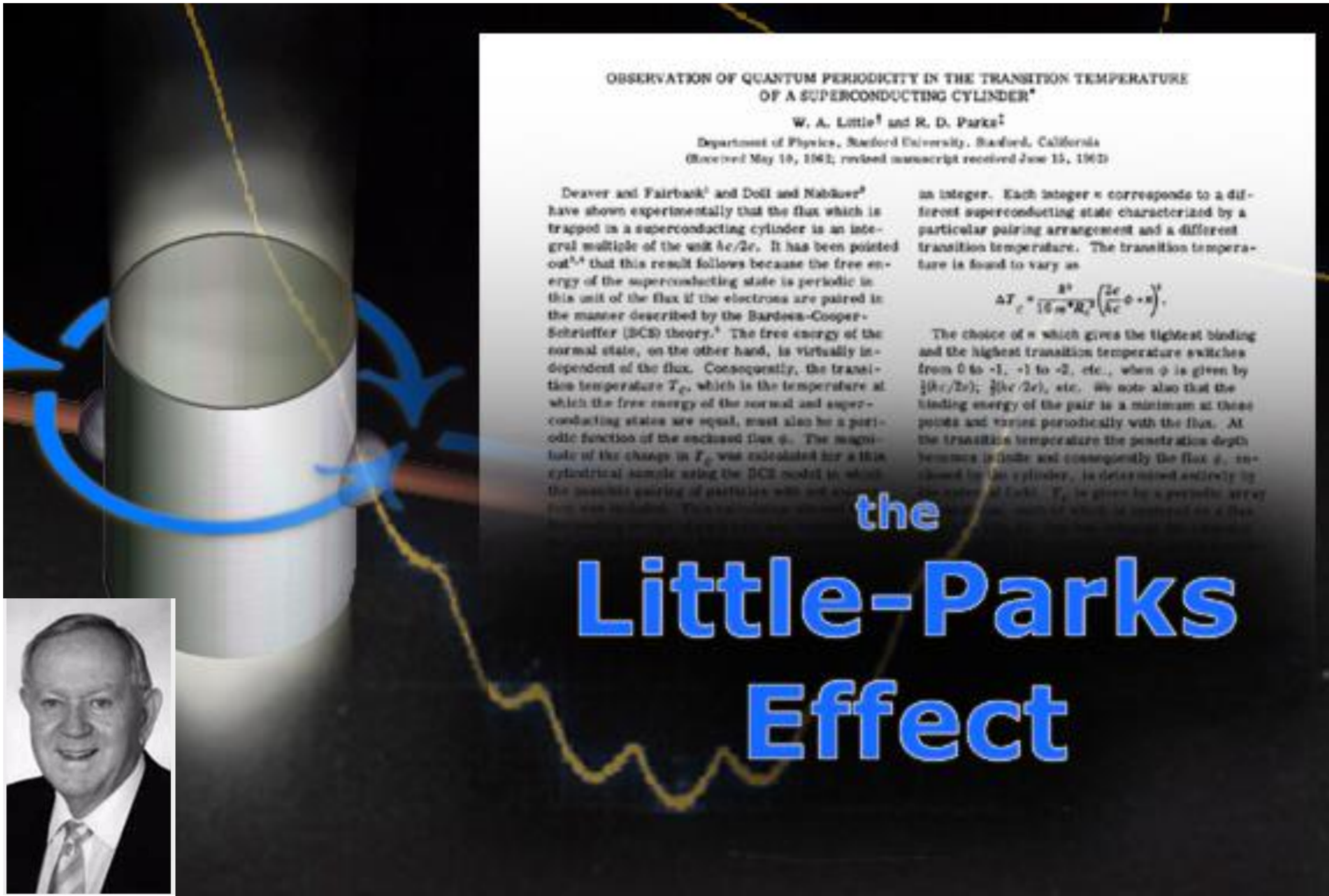
Andreev reflection



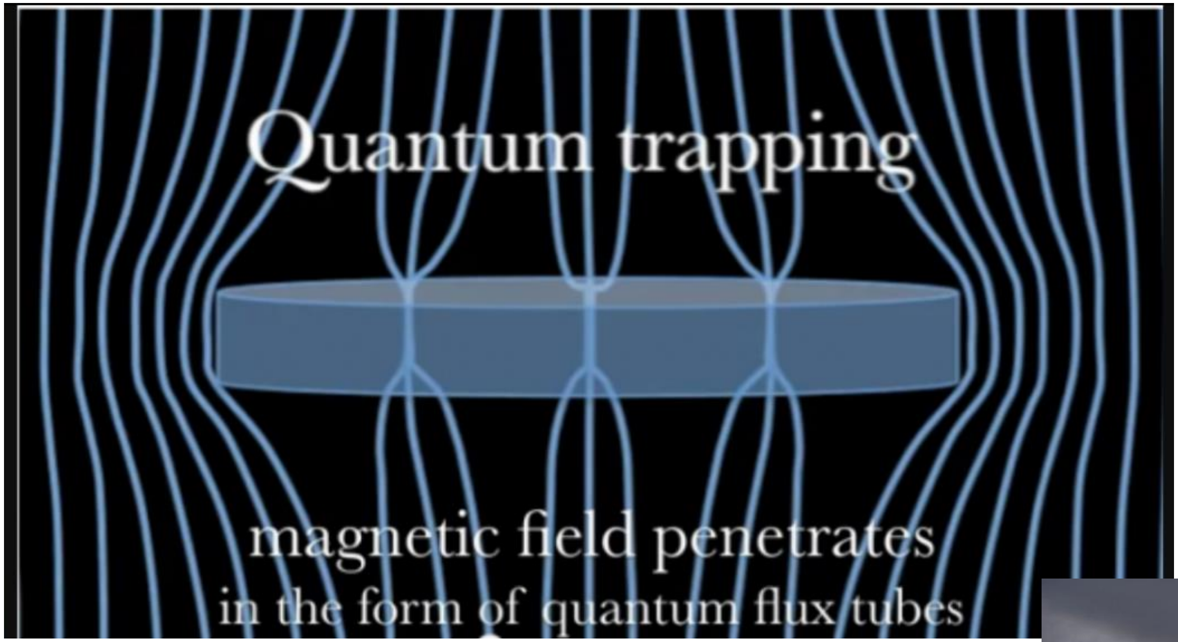
A.F. Andreev, 1964

Searching for an explanation: Little-Parks effect ('62)

The basic idea: magnetic field induces non-zero vector-potential, which produces non-zero superfluid velocity, thus reducing the Tc.



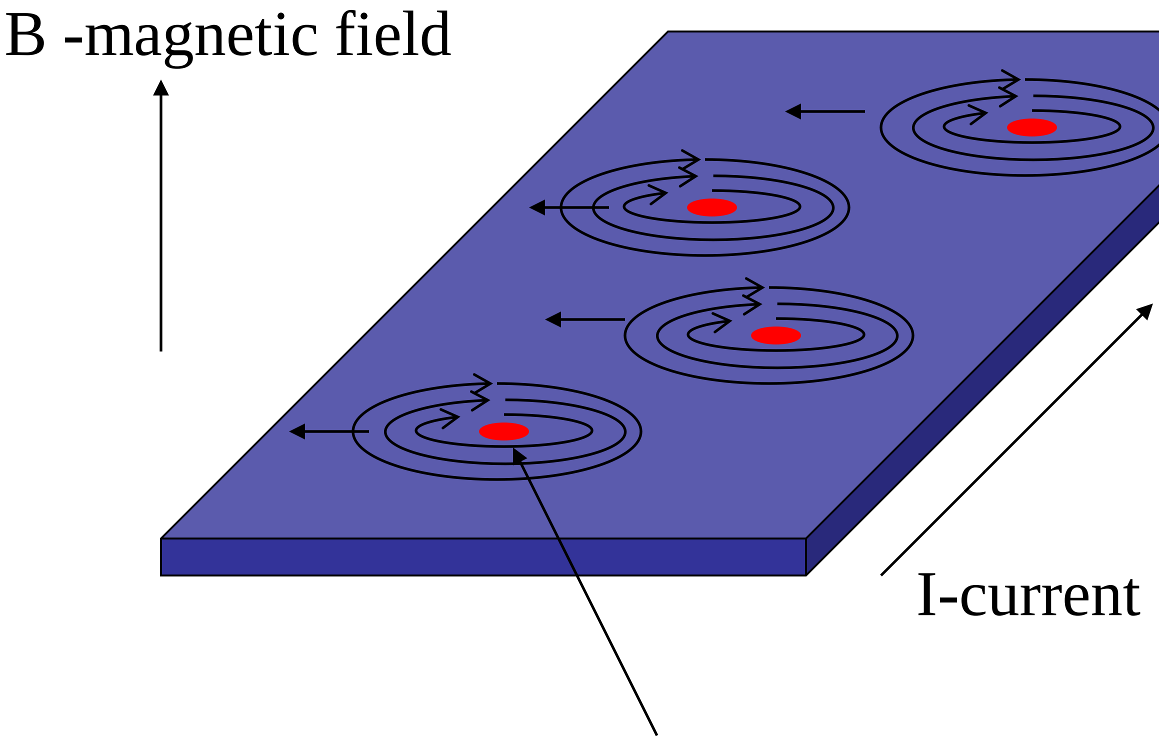
Superconducting vortices produced by magnetic field



Vortices introduce electrical resistance to otherwise superconducting materials

Magnetic field creates vortices--

Vortices cause dissipation (i.e. a non-zero electrical resistance)!



The order parameter:

$$\Psi = |\Psi| \exp(-i\varphi)$$

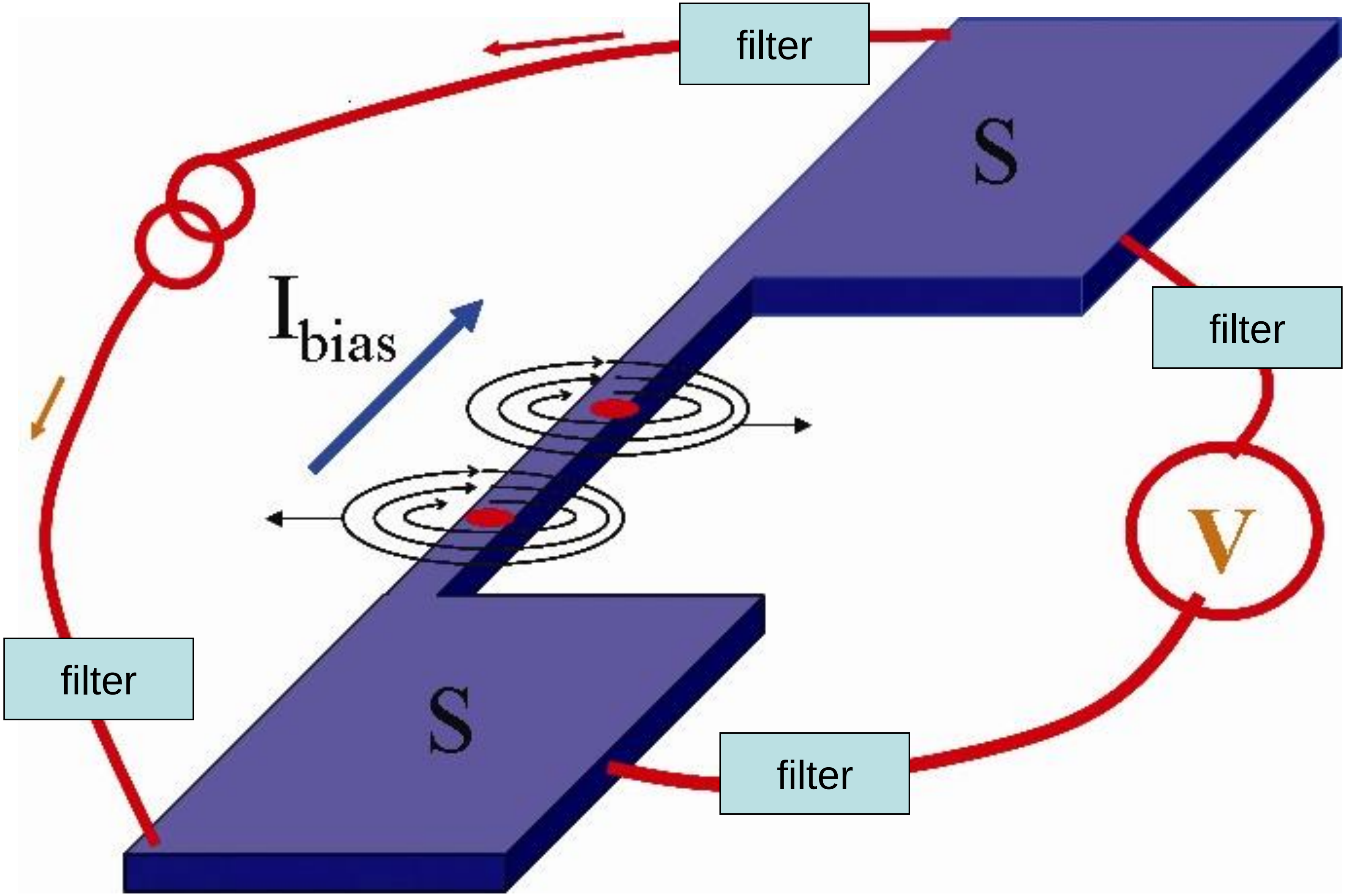
amplitude

phase

Vortex core: normal, not superconducting; diameter ξ~10 nm

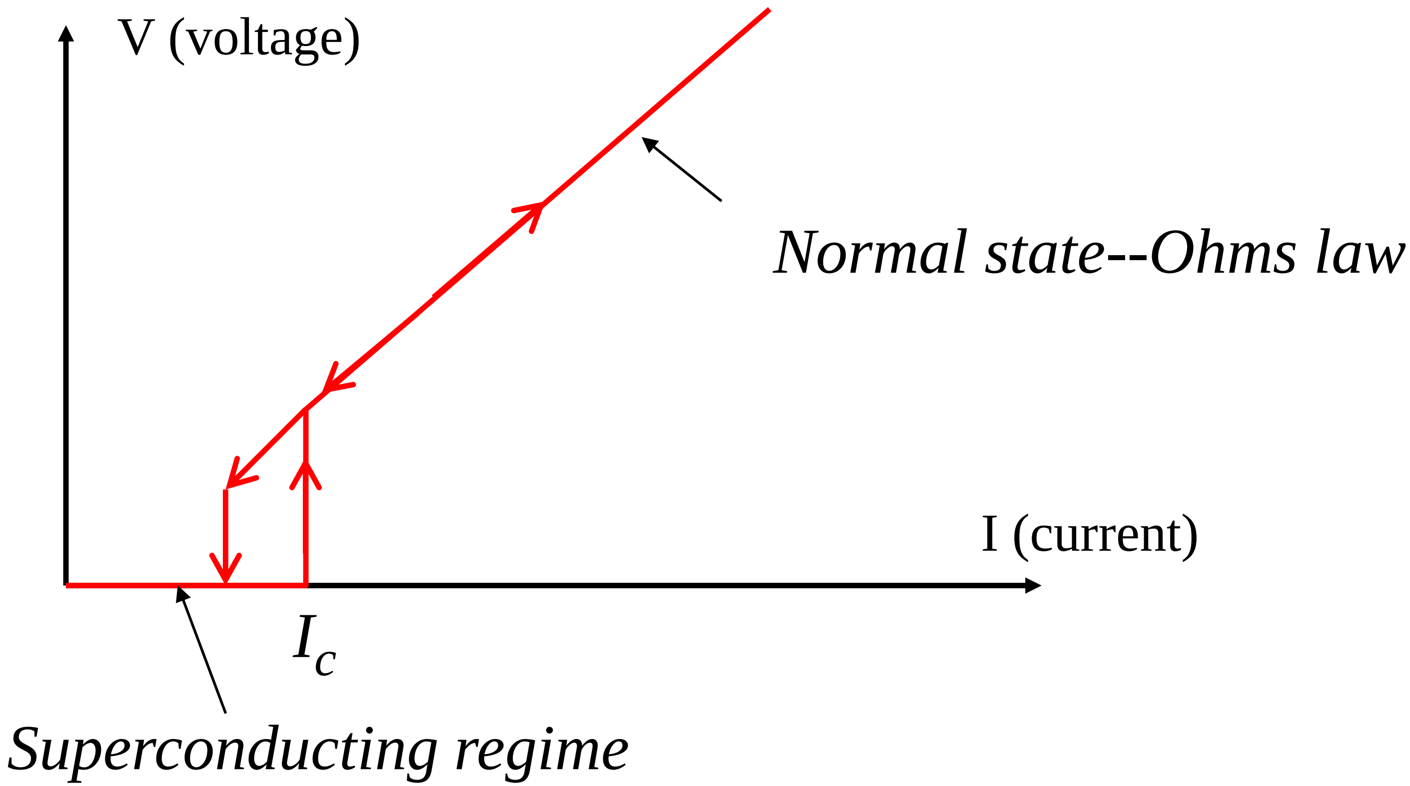
DC transport measurement schematic

Phase slip events are shown as red dots

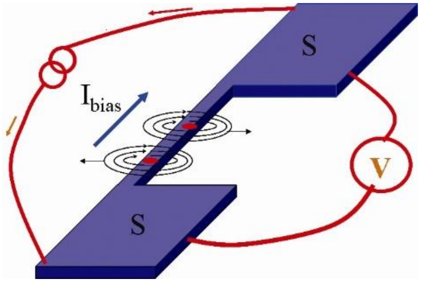


Superconductivity: very basic introduction

Electrical resistance is zero only if current is not too strong



How to use voltage to figure out the rate of phase slips?

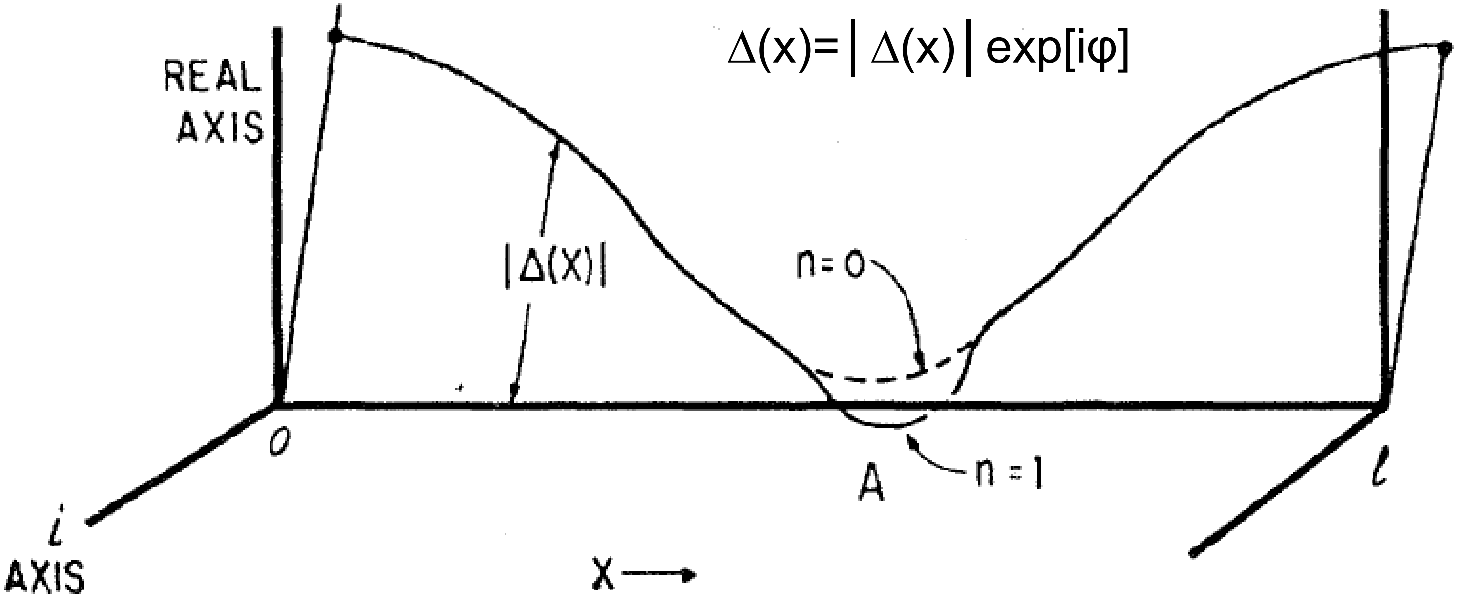


$2eV = \hbar\, d\varphi/dt$

According to Shrodinger, $\varphi = Et/\hbar$
Remember $i\hbar(d\Psi/dt) = E\,\Psi$
But for BCS pairs $E = 2eV$,
where V is the electric potential.
Thus the equation above can be obtained:

$$2eV = \hbar\, d\varphi/dt$$

Transport properties: Little's Phase Slip



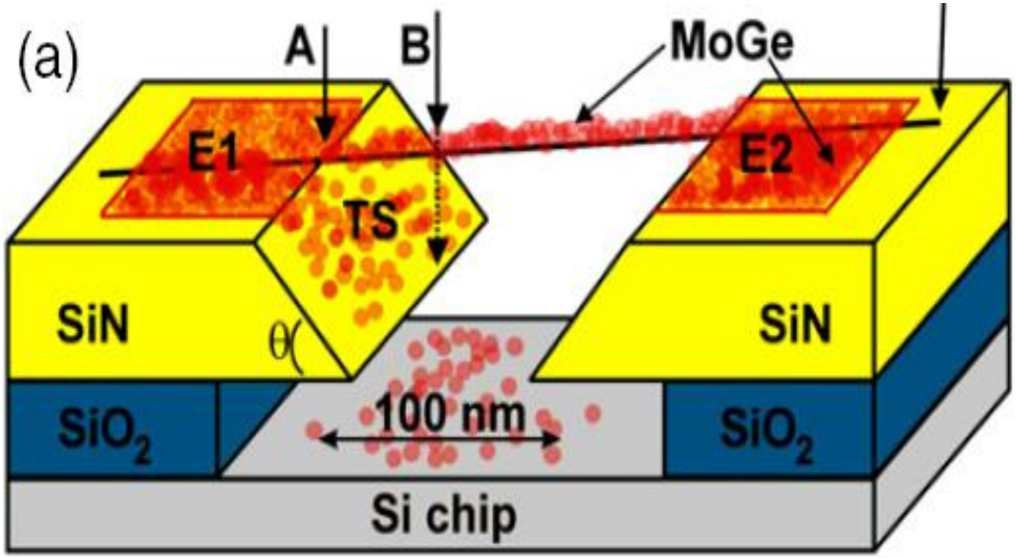
W. A. Little, "Decay of persistent currents in small superconductors", Physical Review, V.156, pp.396-403 (1967).

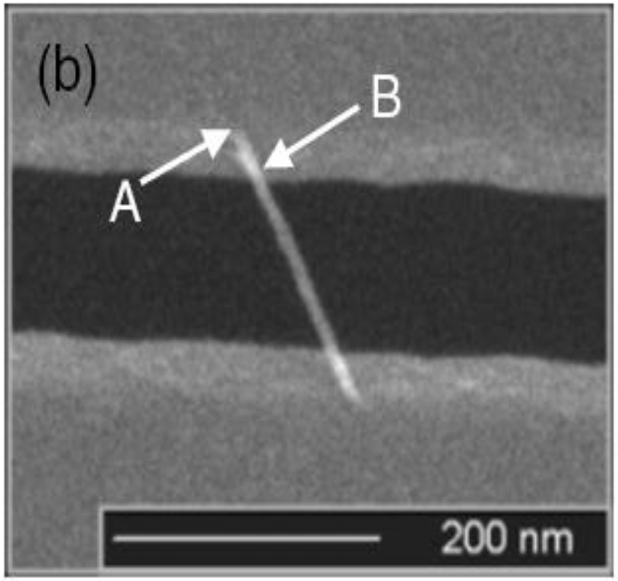
Two types of phase slips (PS) can be expected:

1. The usual, thermally activated PS (TAPS)
2. Quantum phase slip (QPS)

Fabrication of nanowires

Method of Molecular Templating





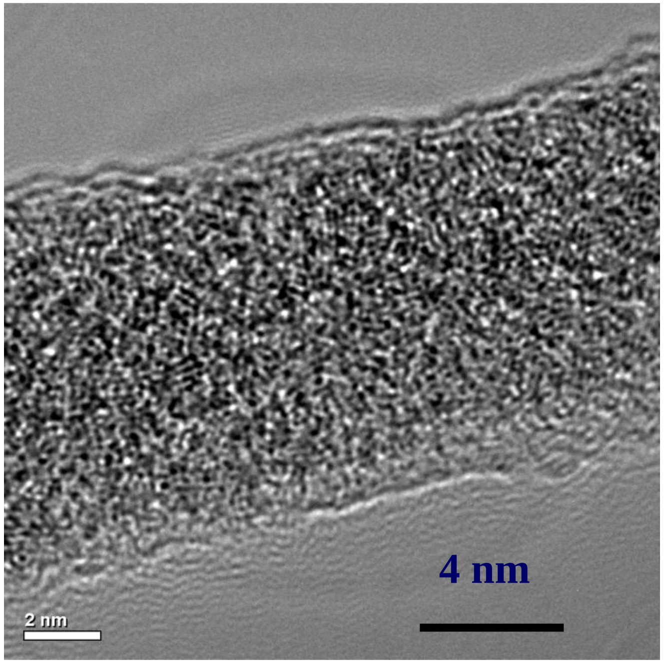
Si/ SiO_2/SiN substrate with undercut

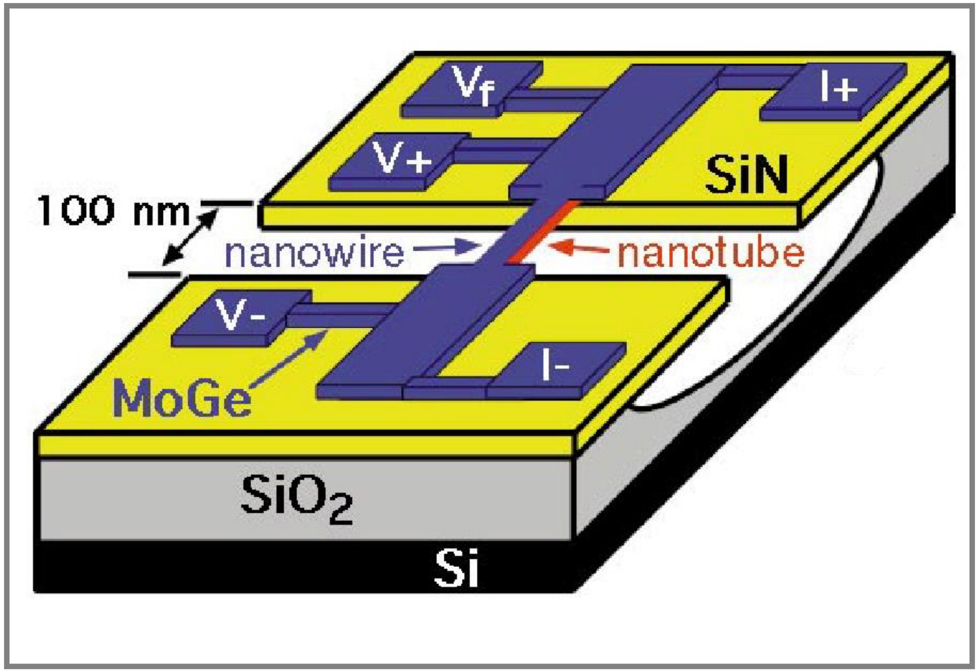
~ 0.5 mm Si wafer
500 nm SiO_2
60 nm SiN
Width of the trenches ~ 50 - 500 nm

HF wet etch for ~10 seconds to form undercut

Bezryadin, Lau, Tinkham, *Nature* **404**, 971 (2000)

Sample Fabrication

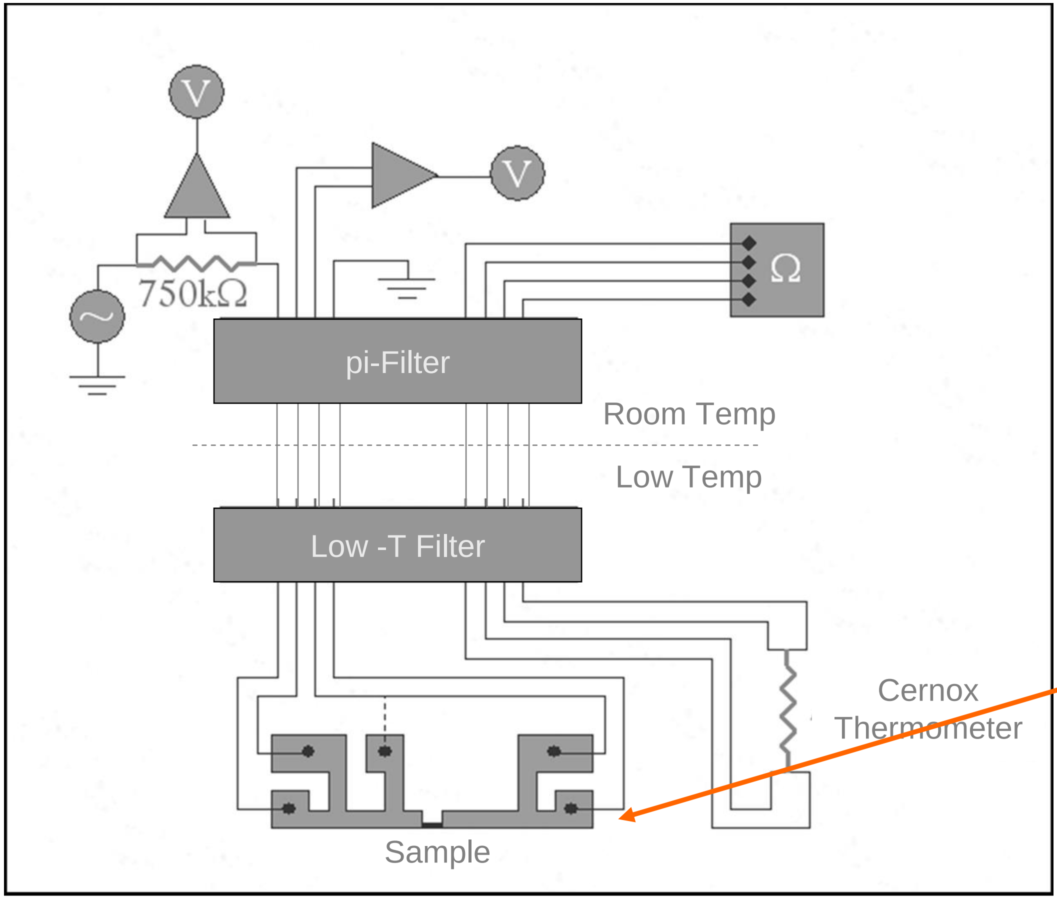




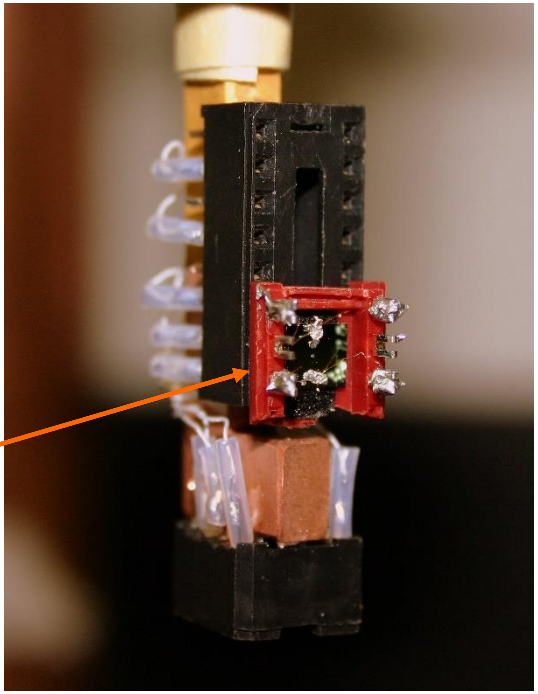
TEM image of a wire shows amorphous morphology.
Nominal MoGe thickness = 3 nm

Schematic picture of the pattern Nanowire + Film Electrodes used in transport measurements

Measurement Scheme



Circuit Diagram



Sample mounted on the ^{3}He insert.

Tony Bollinger's sample-mounting procedure in winter in Urbana

Procedure (~75% Success)

- Put on gloves

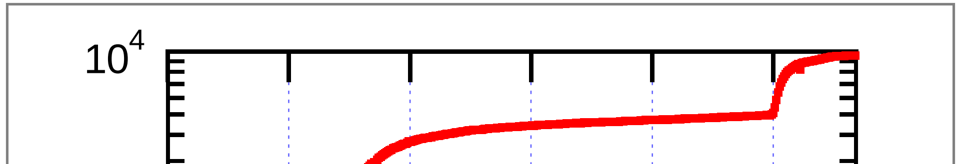
- Put grounded socket for mounting in vise with grounded indium dot tool connected
- Spray high-backed black chair all over and about 1 m square meter of ground with anti-static spray

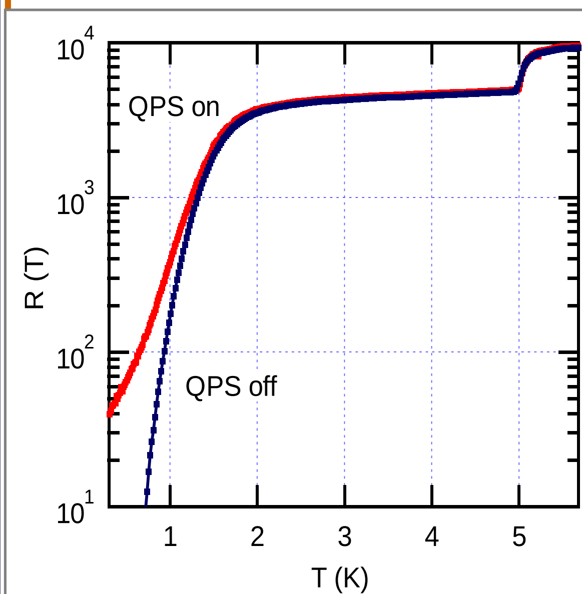
  - DO NOT use green chair
  - Not sure about short-backed black chairs

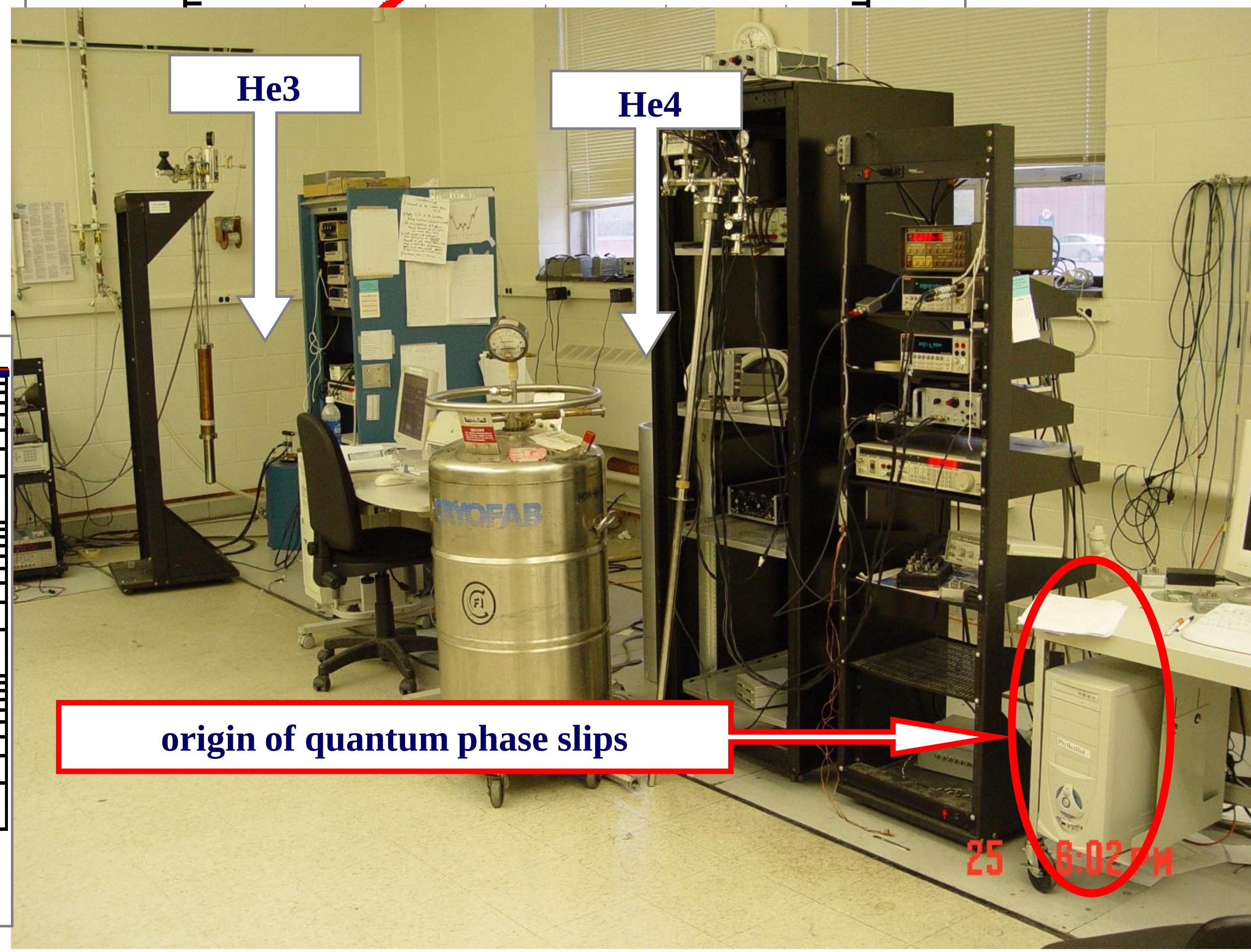
- Sit down
- Spray bottom of feet with anti-static spray

- Plant feet on the ground. ***Do not move your feet again for any reason until mounting is finished.***
- Mount sample
- Keep sample in grounded socket until last possible moment
- Test samples in dipstick at ~1 nA

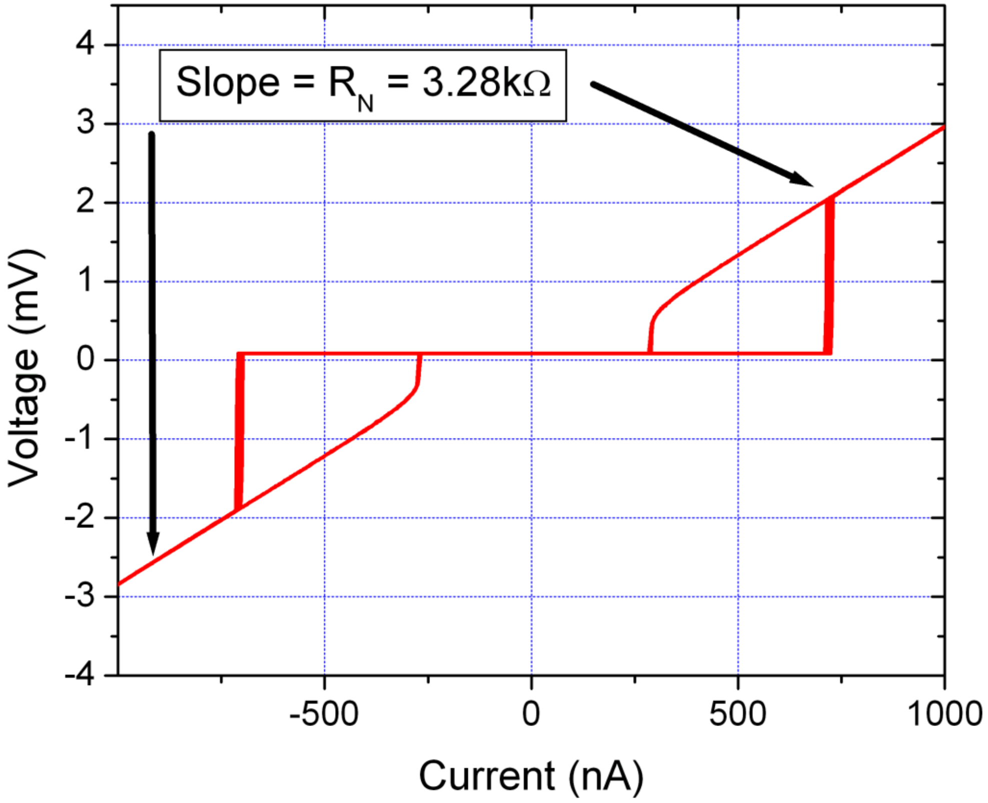
Possible Origin of Quantum Phase Slips







Search for QPS at high bias currents, by measuring the fluctuations of the switching current



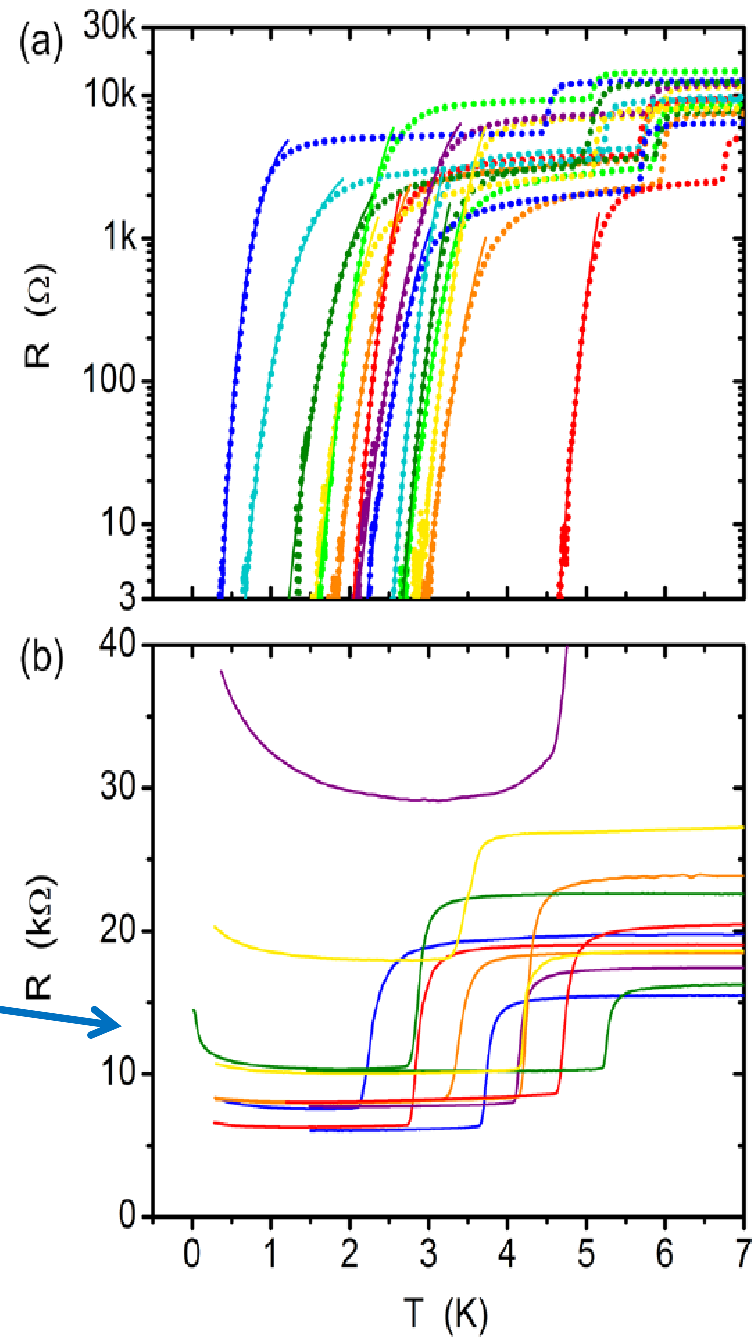
Dichotomy in nanowires: Evidence for superconductor-insulator transition (SIT)

R=V/I I~3 nA

The difference between samples is the amount of the deposited Mo79Ge21.

$$R_{\text{sheet}} = 100 - 400\,\Omega$$

Can the insulating behavior be due to Anderson localization of the BCS condensate?



Bollinger, Dinsmore, Rogachev, Bezryadin, Phys. Rev. Lett. **101**, 227003 (2008)

Useful Expression for the Free Energy of a Phase Slip

"Arrhenius-Little" formula for the wire resistance:

$$R_{AL} \approx R_N \, exp[-\Delta F(T)/k_B T]$$

$$\Delta F = (8\sqrt{2}/3)(H_c(T)^2/8\pi)(A\xi(T))$$

$$\frac{\Delta F(0)}{k_B T_c} = \sqrt{6}\,\frac{\hbar I_c(0)}{2ek_B T_c} = 0.83\,\frac{R_q L}{R_n \xi(0)} = 0.83\,\frac{R_q}{R_{\xi(0)}}$$

APPLIED PHYSICS LETTERS VOLUME 80, NUMBER 16 22 APRIL 2002

Quantum limit to phase coherence in thin superconducting wires

M. Tinkham[a)] and C. N. Lau
Physics Department, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Linearity of the Schrödinger's equation

Suppose Ψ_1 is a valid solution of the Schrödinger equation:

$$i\hbar\frac{\partial\psi_1}{\partial t}=\frac{\partial^2\psi_1}{\partial x^2}+U(x)\psi_1$$

And suppose that Ψ_2 is another valid solution of the Schrödinger equation:

$$i\hbar\frac{\partial\psi_2}{\partial t}=\frac{\partial^2\psi_2}{\partial x^2}+U(x)\psi_2$$

Then $(\Psi_1 + \Psi_2)/\sqrt{2}$ is also a valid solution, because:

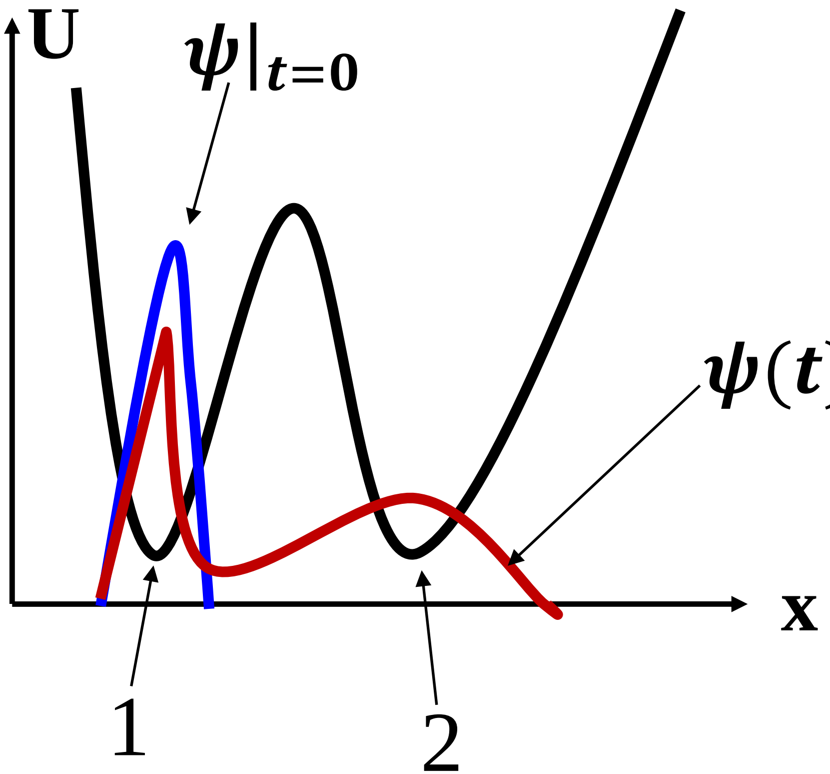
$$i\hbar\frac{\partial(\psi_1+\psi_2)}{\partial t}=\frac{\partial^2(\psi_1+\psi_2)}{\partial x^2}+U(x)(\psi_1+\psi_2)$$

The state $(\Psi_1 + \Psi_2)/\sqrt{2}$ is a new combined state which is called "quantum superposition" of state (1) and (2)

George Gamow

(He also developed Big Bang theory)

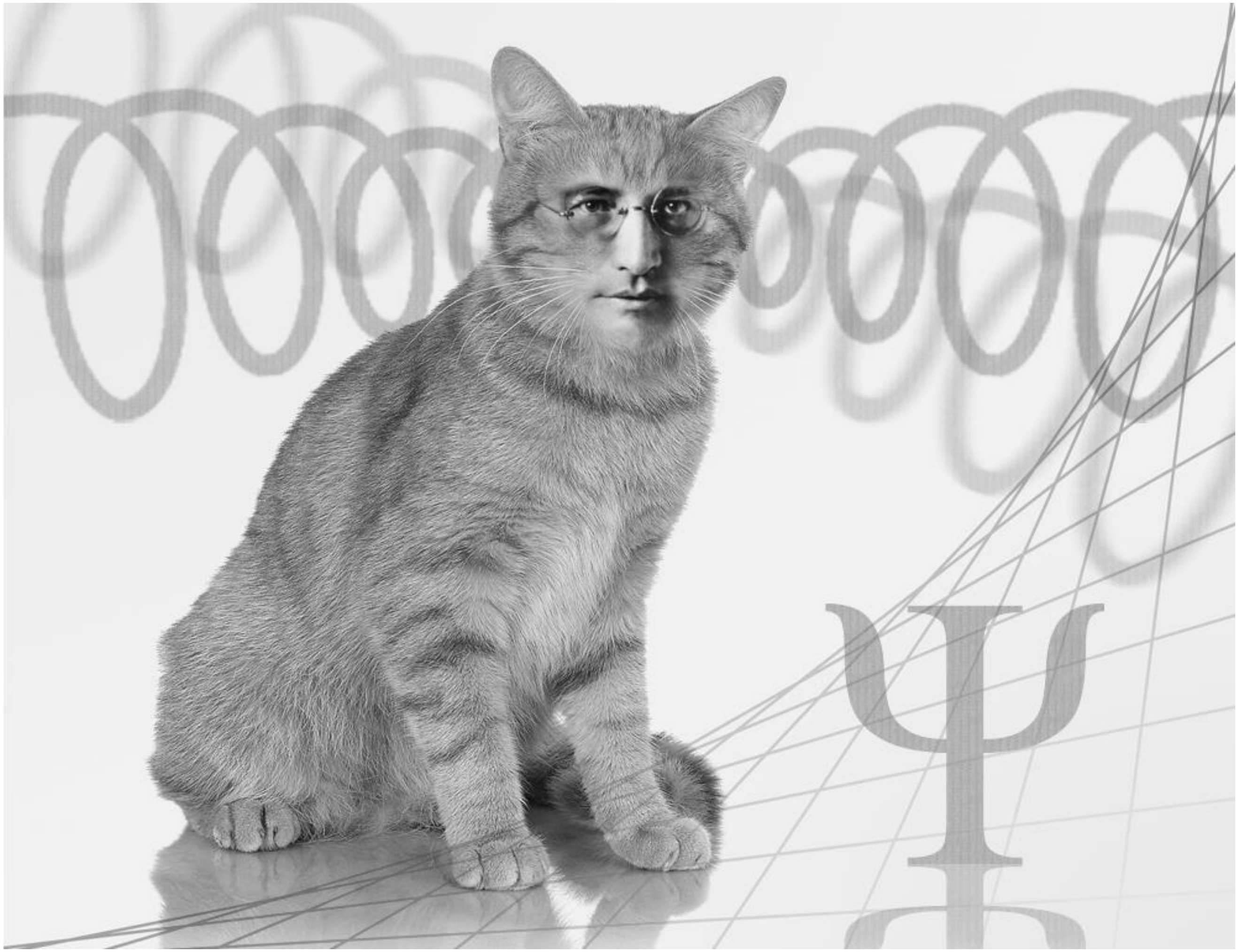
Quantum tunneling



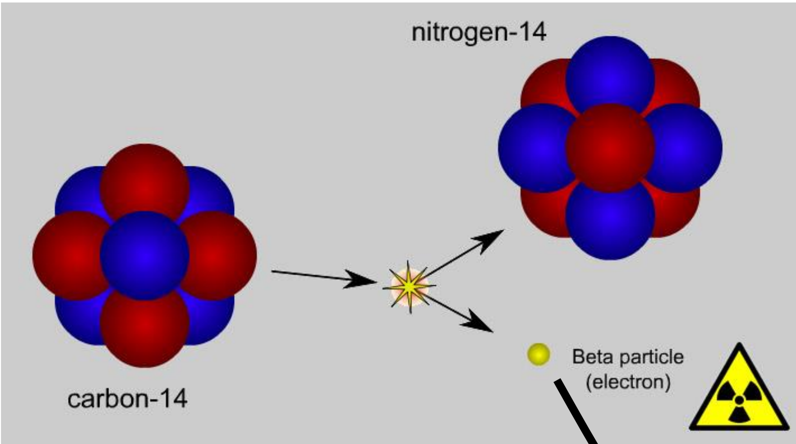
Quantum tunneling is possible since quantum superpositions of states are possible.

Schrödinger cat –
the ultimate macroscopic quantum phenomenon

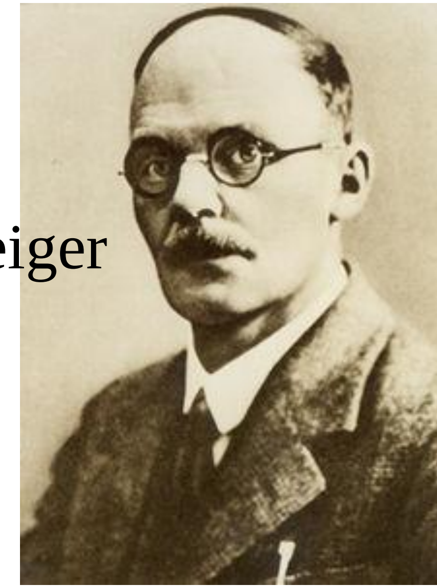
E. Schrödinger, Naturwiss. **23** (1935), 807.



Schrödinger cat – thought experiment

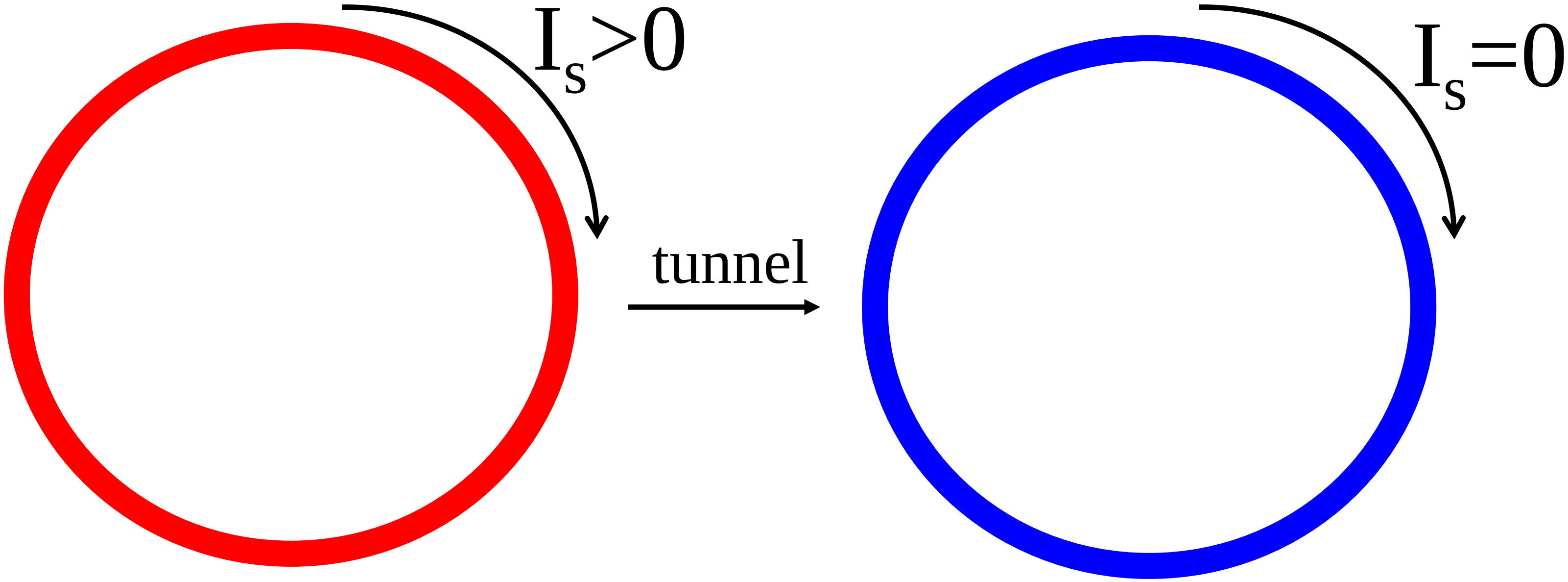


Hans Geiger



Geiger counter

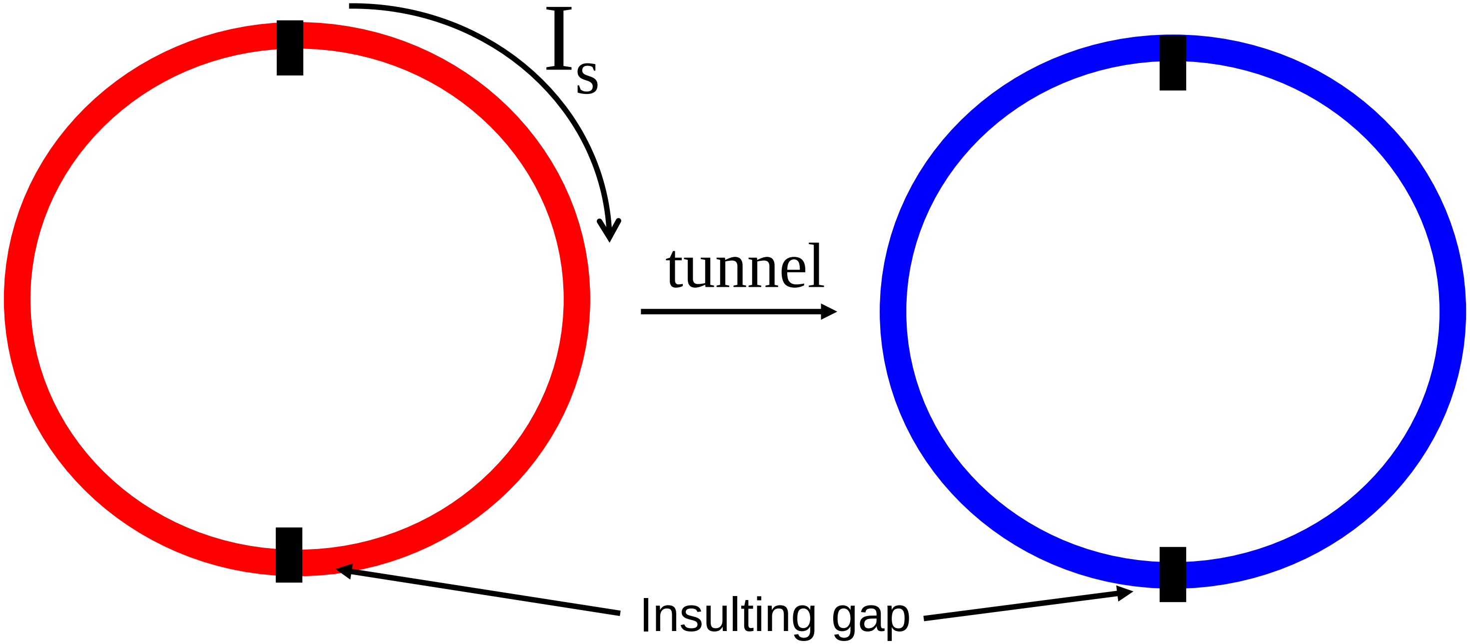
What sort of tunneling we will consider?



-Red color represents some strong current in the superconducting wire loop

-Blue color represents no current or a much smaller current in the loop

Previous results relate loops with insulating interruptions (SQUIDs)



-Red color represents some strong current in the superconducting loop

-Blue color represents no current or very little current in the superconducting loop

Leggett's prediction for macroscopic quantum tunneling (MQT) in SQUIDs

80 Supplement of the Progress of Theoretical Physics, No. 69, 1980

Macroscopic Quantum Systems and the Quantum Theory of Measurement

A. J. LEGGETT

School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences
University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9QH

(Received August 27, 1980)

It is this property which makes a SQUID the most promising candidate to date for observing macroscopic quantum tunnelling; if it should ever become possible to observe macroscopic quantum *coherence*, the low entropy and consequent lack of dissipation will be absolutely essential.[21]

MQT report by Kurkijarvi and collaborators (1981)

VOLUME 47, NUMBER 9 PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS 31 AUGUST 1981

Decay of the Zero-Voltage State in Small-Area, High–Current-Density Josephson Junctions

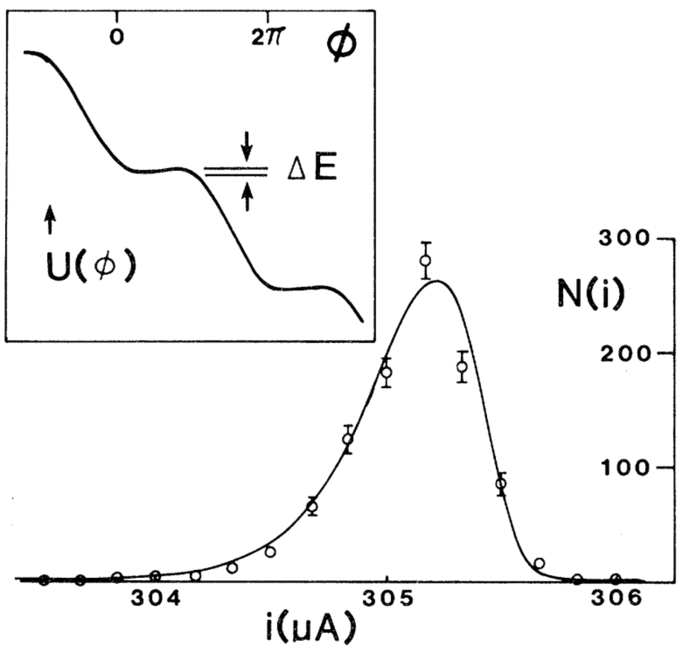


FIG. 1. Measured distribution for $T = 1.6$ K for small high–current-density junction. The solid line is a fit by the CL theory for $R = 20\ \Omega$, $C = 8$ fF, and $i_{cFF} = 310.5\ \mu$A. The inset is $U(\varphi)$ for $x = 0.8$ with barrier ΔE.

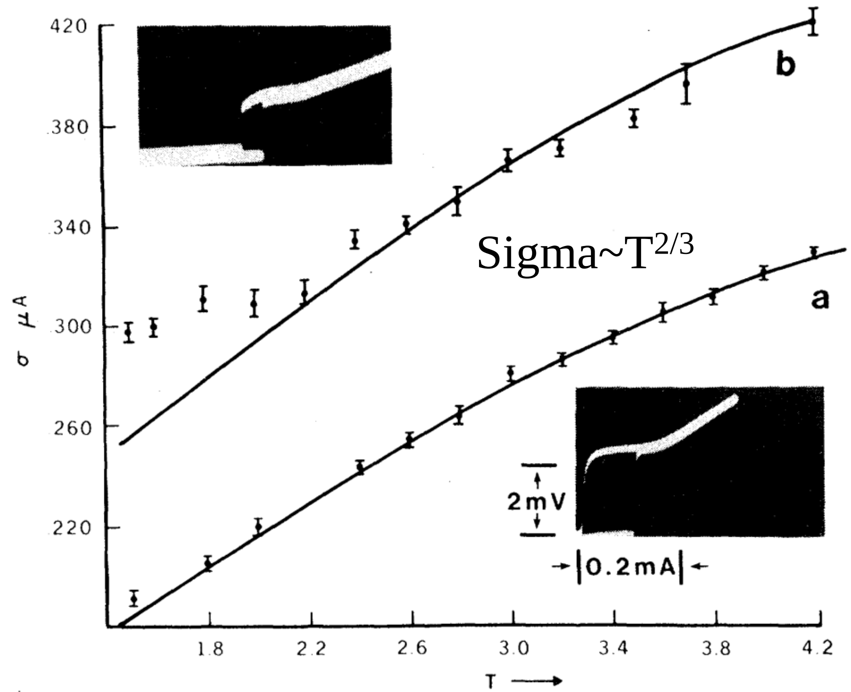
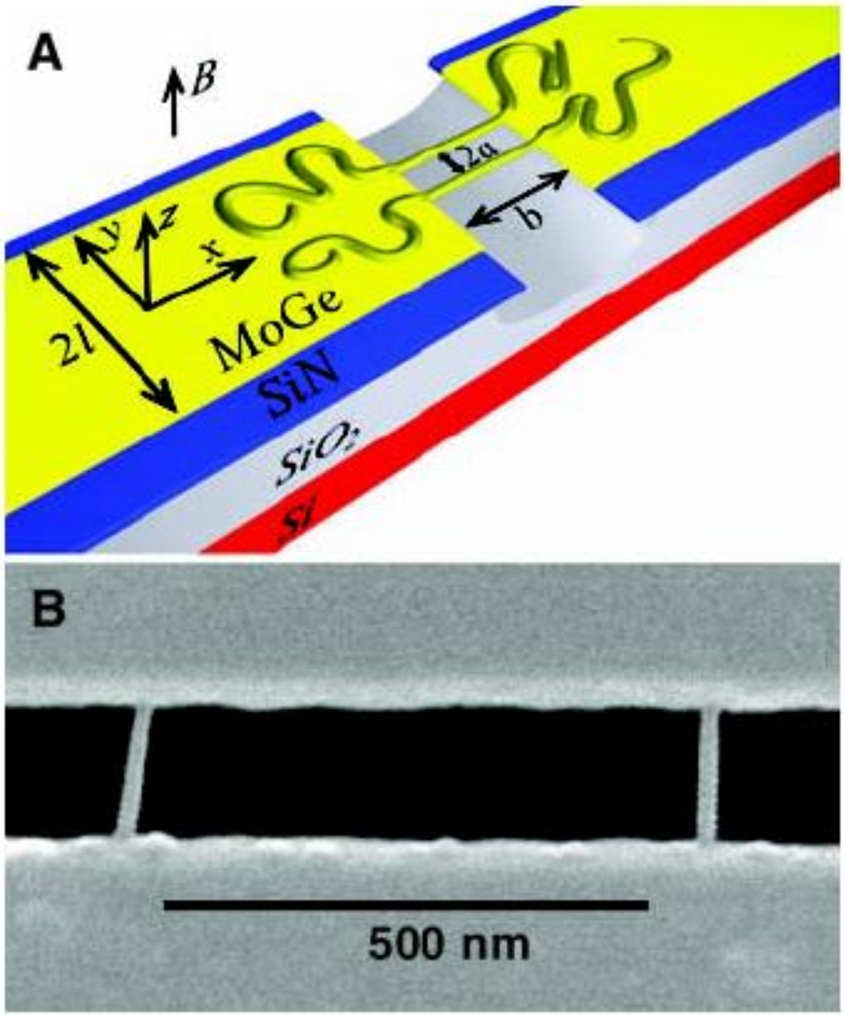
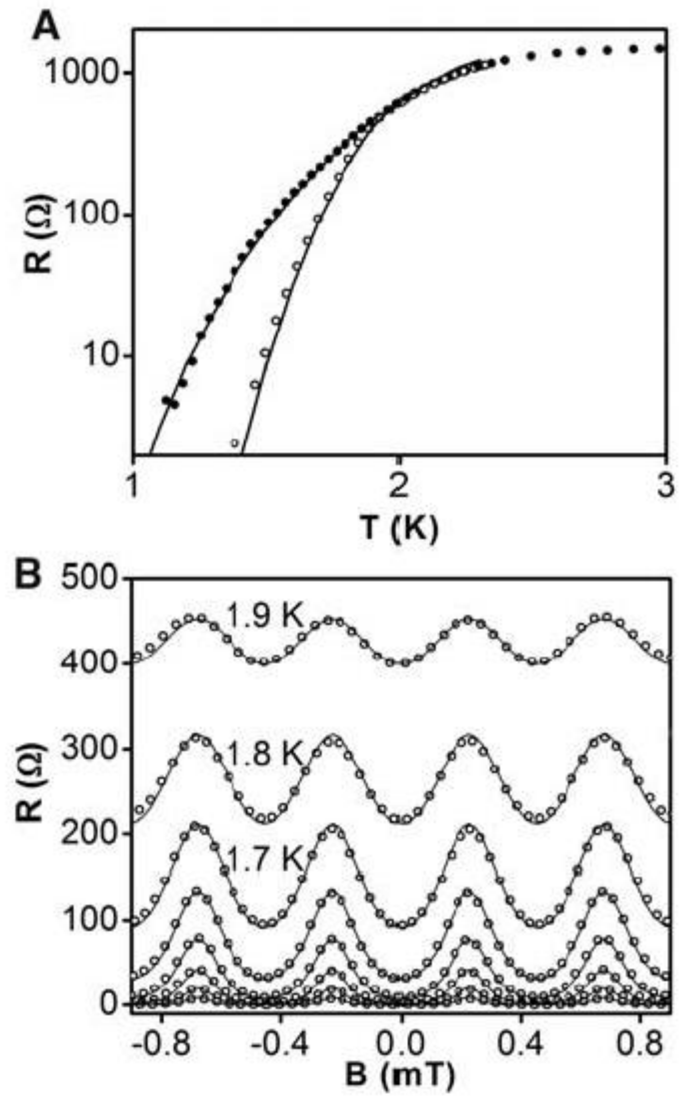


FIG. 2. Measured distribution widths σ vs T for two junctions with current sweep of ~400 μA/sec. Curve a is lower current density junction data and curve b is higher density junction data. The traces adjacent to the plots are the corresponding $I-V$ characteristics at 4.2 K. The scales are the same for both traces.

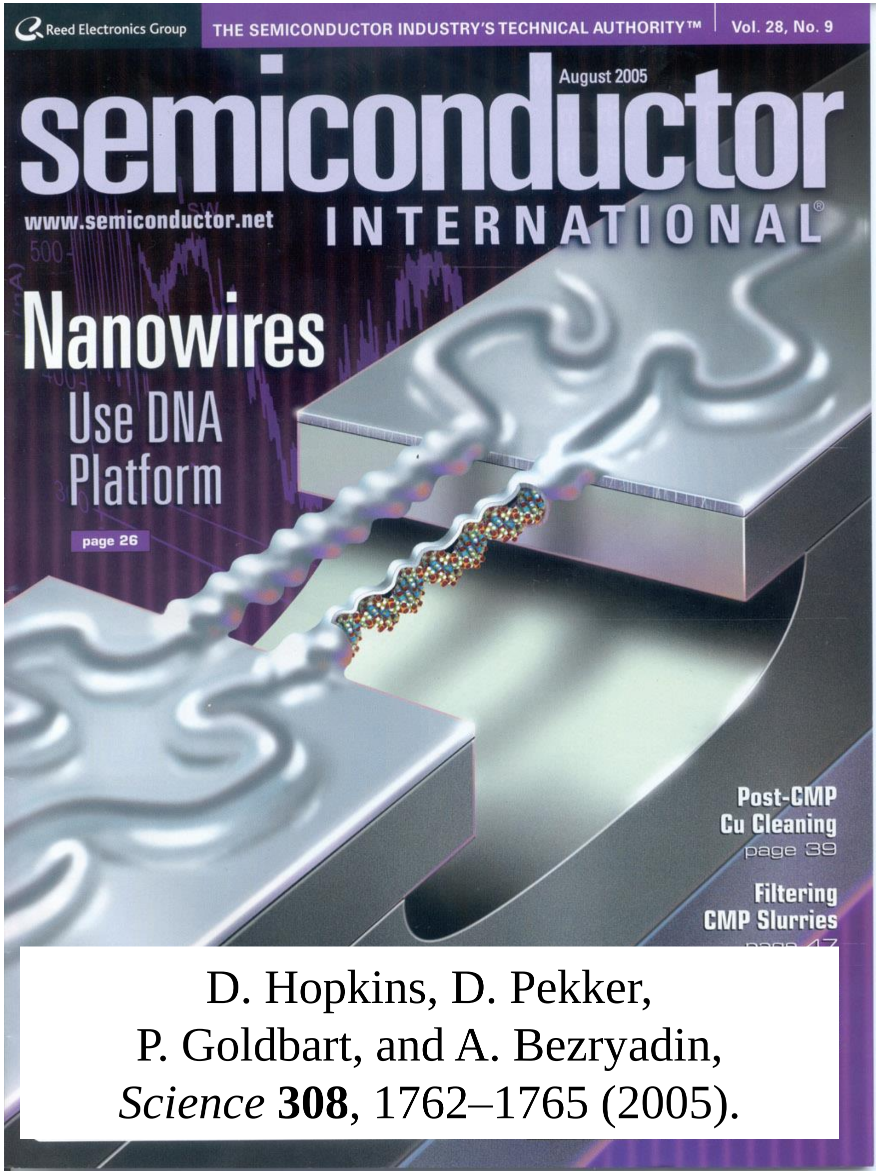
What determines the period of oscillation?

(A simple guess for the period would be $\Delta B \sim \Phi_0/2ab$.
This prediction deviates from the result by a factor 100!)

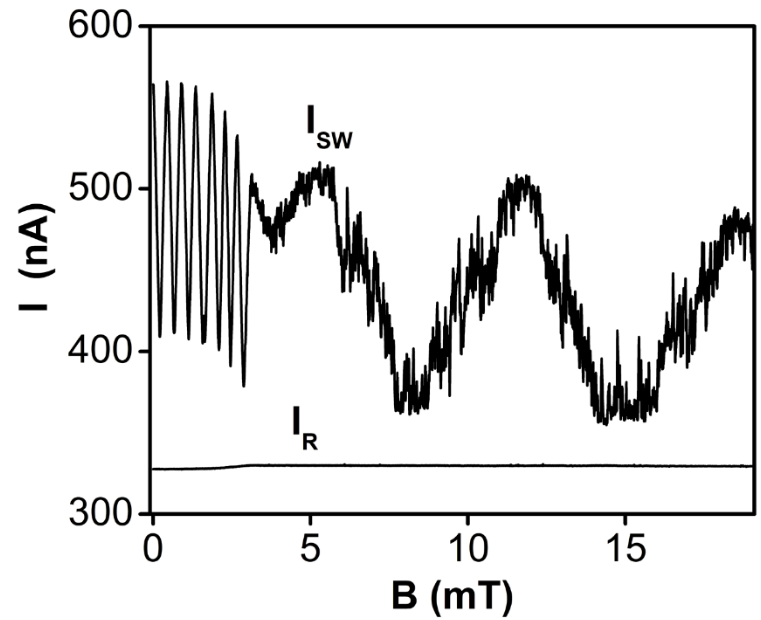


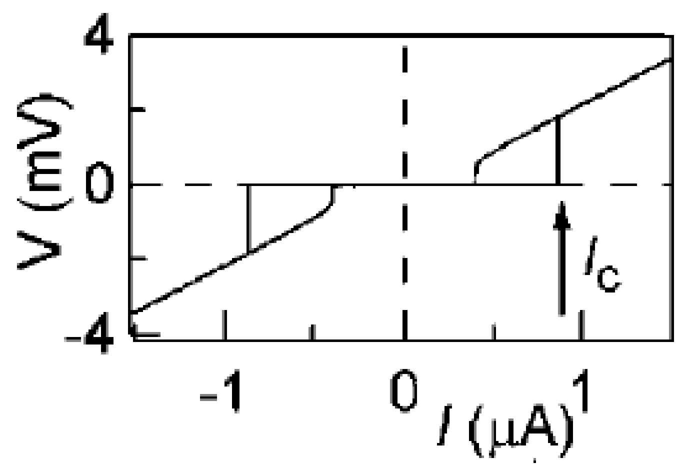


Phase gradiometers templated by DNA

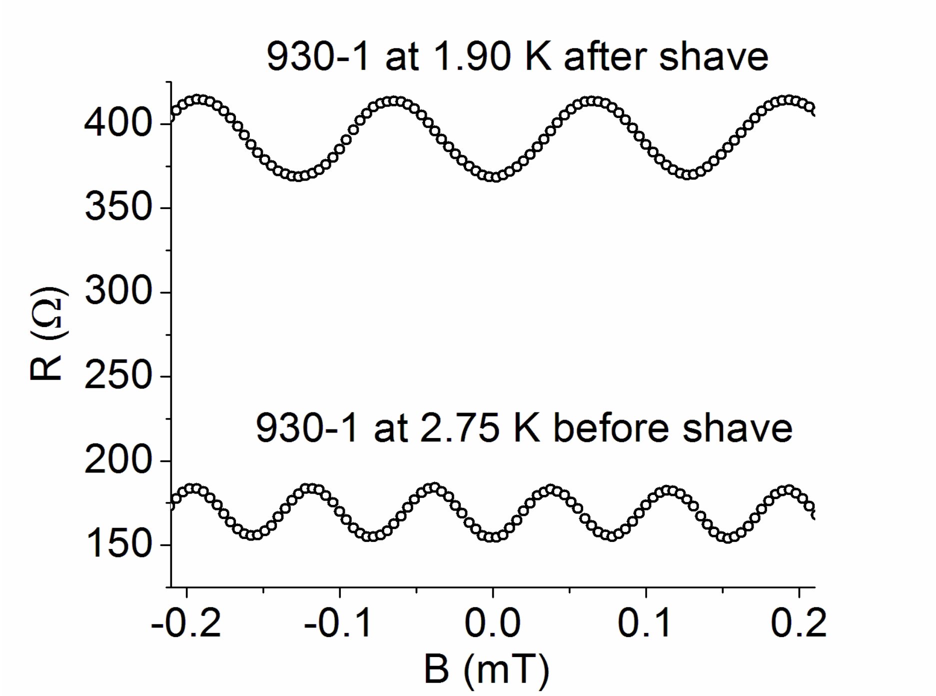


D. Hopkins, D. Pekker,
P. Goldbart, and A. Bezryadin,
Science **308**, 1762–1765 (2005).



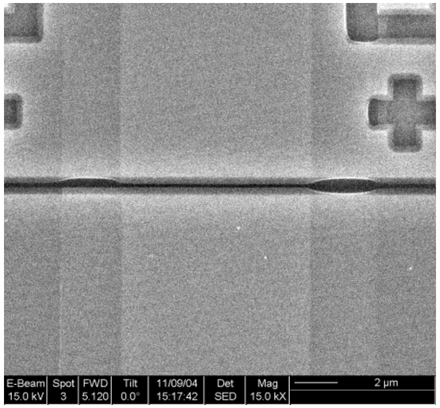


Little-Parks effect.
The period of the oscillation is inversely proportional to the width of the electrodes



The width of the leads was changed from 14480 nm to 8930 nm

The period changed from 77.5 μT to 128 μT



usual SQUID estimate:

$$Period = \frac{\Phi_0}{2ab} \sim 10mT$$

here *2a*-distance between the wires;

b- length of wires

Correct field period:

$$\Delta B = \frac{\pi^2 \Phi_0}{8G\, 4al}$$

here *2l* - the width of the leads

G = .916 is the Catalan number

SQUID – superconducting quantum interference device

SQUID helmet project at Los Alamos

Magnetic field scales:

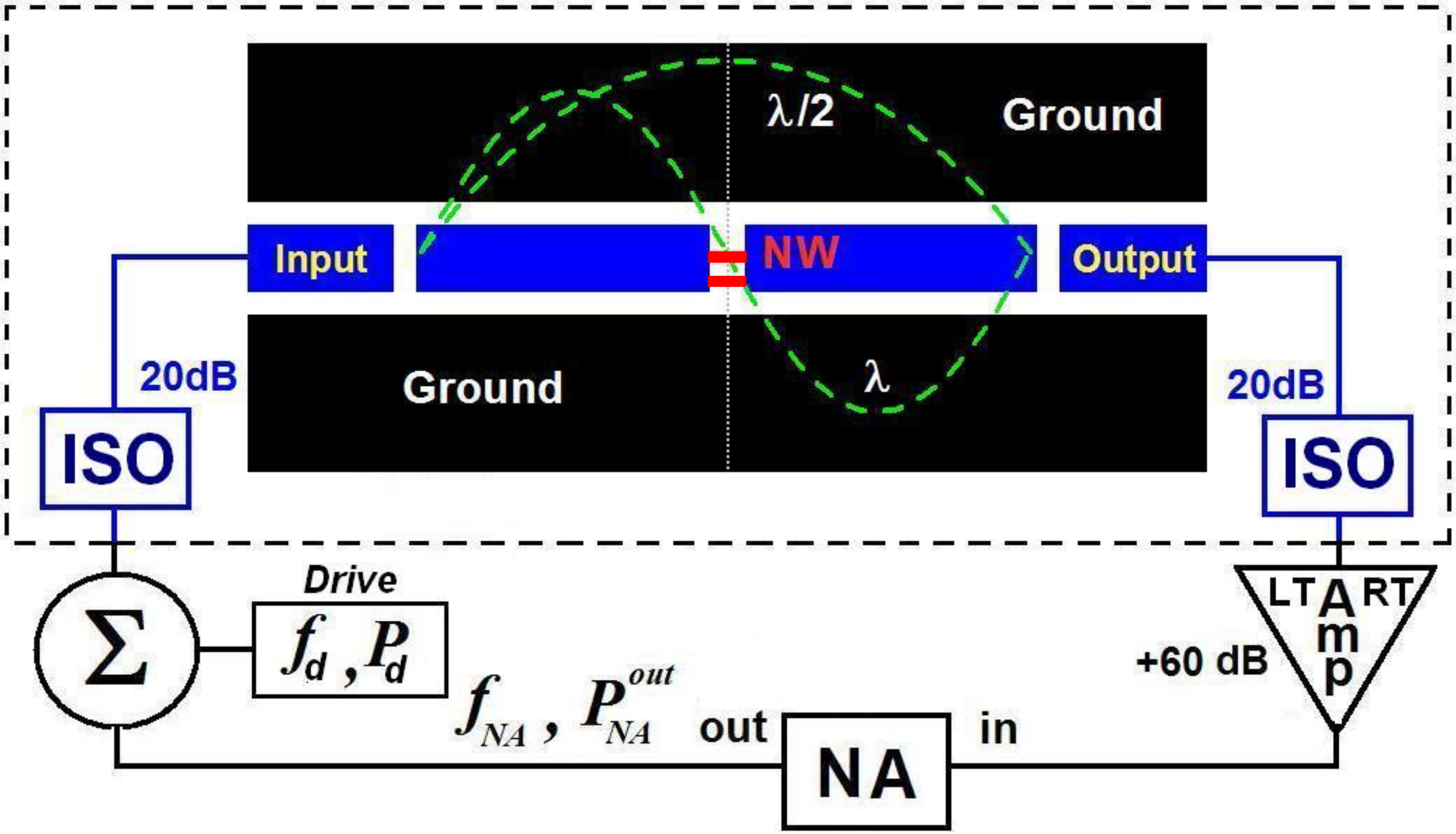
Earth field: ~1G

Fields inside animals: ~0.01G-0.00001G

Fields on the **human brain**: ~0.3nG
This is less than a hundred-millionth of the Earth's magnetic field.

SQUIDs, or Superconducting Quantum Interference Devices, invented in 1964 by Robert Jaklevic, John Lambe, Arnold Silver, and James Mercereau of Ford Scientific Laboratories, are used to measure extremely small magnetic fields. They are currently the most sensitive magnetometers known, with the noise level as low as 3 $fT \cdot Hz^{-1/2}$. While, for example, the Earth magnet field is only about 0.0001 Tesla, some electrical processes in animals produce very small magnetic fields, typically between 0.000001 Tesla and 0.000000001 Tesla. SQUIDs are especially well suited for studying magnetic fields this small.
Measuring the brain's magnetic fields is even much more difficult because just above the skull the strength of the magnetic field is only about 0.3 picoTesla (0.0000000000003 Tesla). This is less than a hundred-millionth of Earth's magnetic field. In fact, brain fields can be measured only with the most sensitive magnetic-field sensor, i.e. with the superconducting quantum interference device, or SQUID.

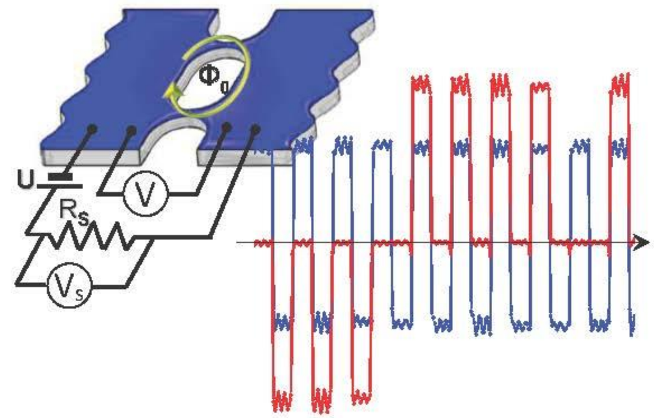
Measuring nanowires within GHz resonators. Detection of individual phase slips.



A. Belkin et al, *Appl. Phys. Lett.* **98**, 242504 (2011)

Applied Physics Letters

scitation.org/journal/apl



Volume 118, Issue 11, 15 Mar. 2021

Supercurrent-controlled kinetic inductance superconducting memory element

Appl. Phys. Lett. **118**, 112603 (2021); doi: 10.1063/5.0040563

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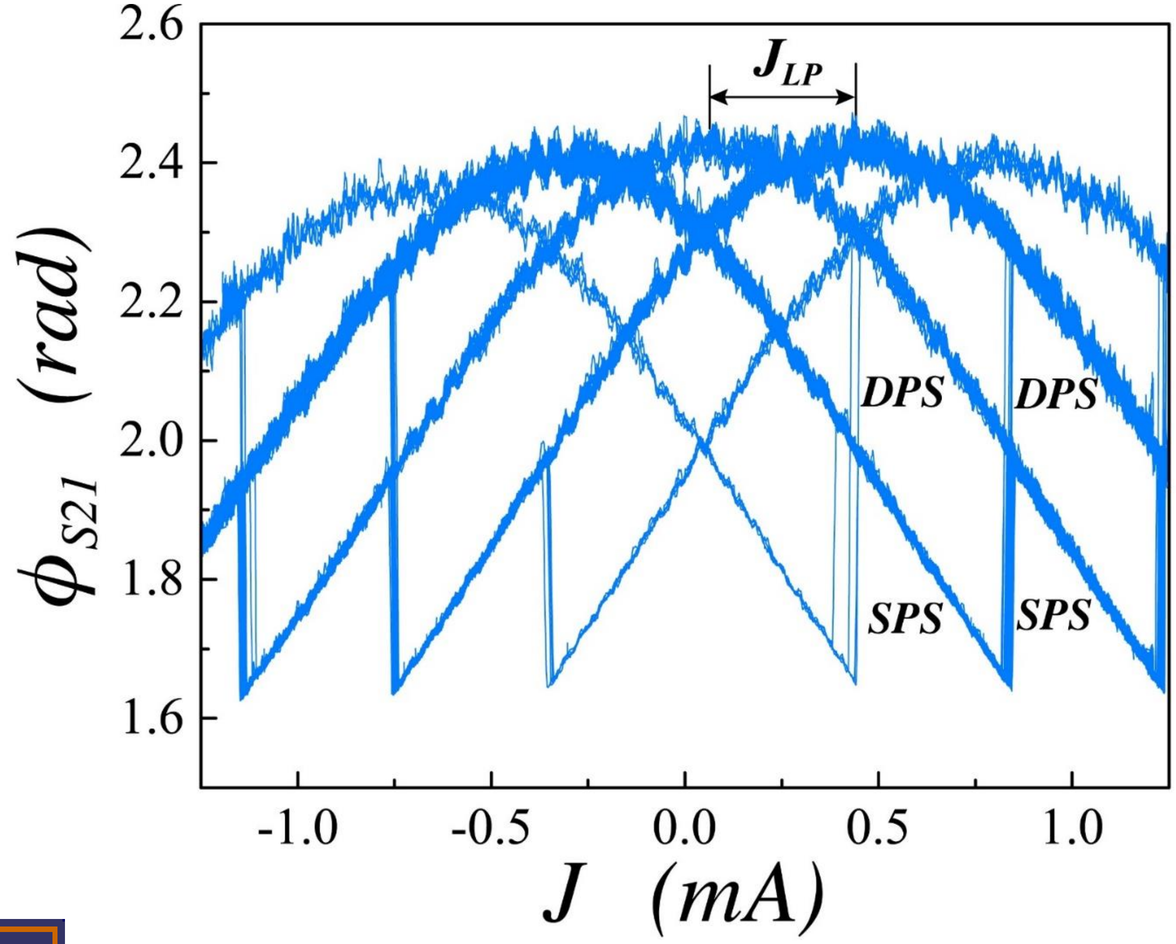
Resonators used to detect single phase slips (SPS) and double phase slips (DPS)



T = 360 mK
$f = f_0(H=0)$

A. Belkin et al, PRX **5**, 021023 (2015)

Conclusions

- Superconductivity is fun and might be useful