

# World of coupled oscillators

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# Theme

- **Coupled Oscillators provide a useful paradigm for the study of collective behavior of large complex systems**
- **A wonderful world to be in – full of interesting mathematical challenges and novel applications – physics, chemistry, biology, economics.....**
- **Still a very active area of research**
- **Lends itself easily to `hands-on style' experiments!**

## Coupled Oscillators in the Natural World

- Walking, clapping, running.....
- Pacemaker cells in the heart
- Insulin secreting cells in the pancreas
- Neural networks in the brain and spinal cord
  - control rhythmic behaviour like breathing ...
- Groups of crickets, frogs in monsoon,
- **Swarms of Fireflies**

A common and striking occurrence is  
the emergence of a single rhythm –  
“synchrony”

## QUESTIONS?

- How do coupled oscillators synchronize?
- Can one construct simple mathematical models to understand this phenomenon?

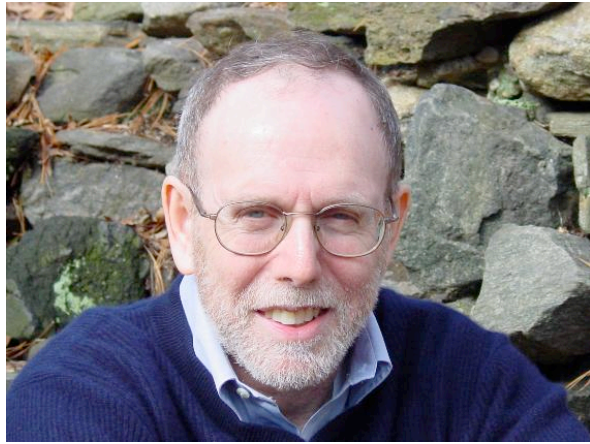


~ 1650

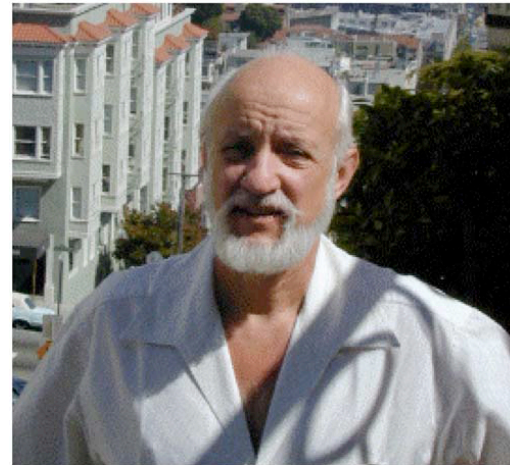
*Observations and conjectures regarding  
Pendulum clocks*

*Huygens*





**Charles S. Peskin**



**Arthur T. Winfree**

## **Mathematical Biologists**

***Pioneering work around 1970s***

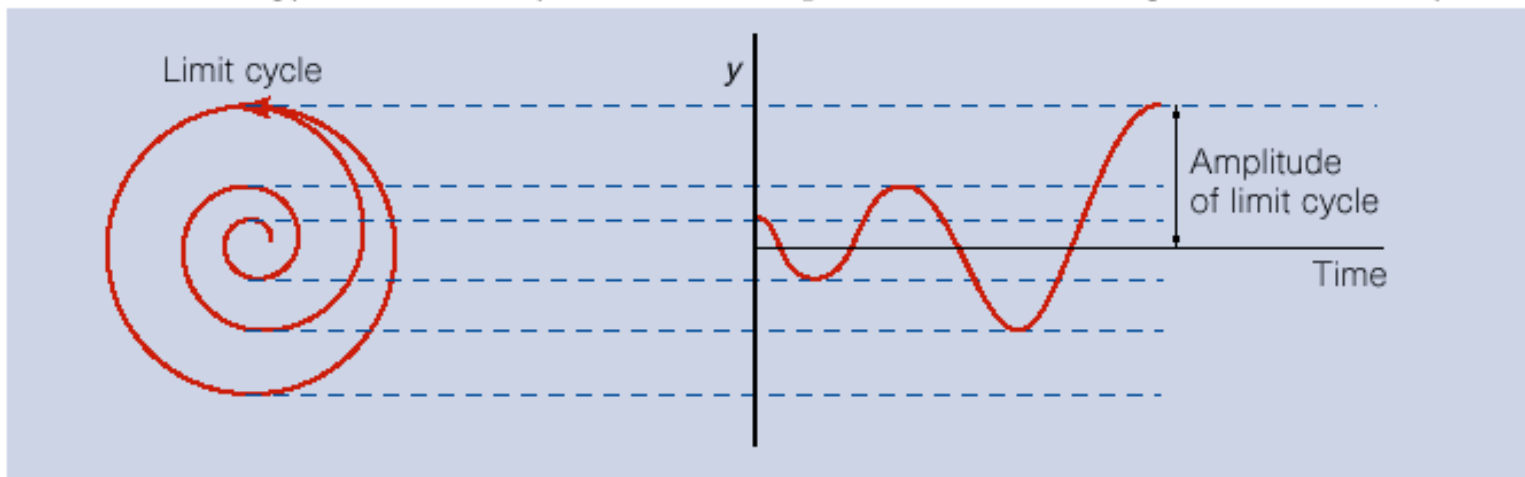
- Charles S. Peskin (N.Y.U.) – circa 1975
  - electrical circuit model for pacemaker cells
  - capacitor in parallel with a resistor - constant input current - mimics firing of a pacemaker cell
  - considered an array of identical oscillators - globally coupled (pulse coupling)

### TWO CONJECTURES

- System would always eventually synchronize
- It would synchronize even if the oscillators are not quite identical

- PESKIN PROVED HIS FIRST CONJECTURE FOR 2 OSCILLATORS  
(ALSO FOUND AN OUT OF PHASE EQUILIBRIUM)
- GENERAL PROOF FOR ARBITRARY NUMBER OF OSCILLATORS  
WAS OBTAINED 15 YRS LATER (*STROGATZ & MIROLLO*)
- ARTHUR T. WINFREE (1966) - graduate student at Princeton
  - MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH
  - CONSIDERED SYSTEM OF COUPLED *LIMIT CYCLE OSCILLATORS*
  - WEAK COUPLING APPROXIMATION
  - CONSIDERED ONLY PHASE VARIATIONS
  - GLOBAL COUPLING
- **Y. Kuramoto** – developed the model further and made extensive use of it.

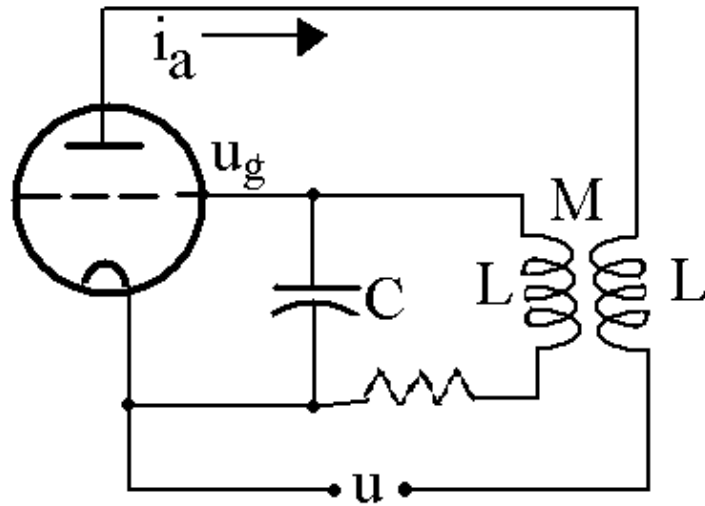
# LIMIT CYCLE OSCILLATOR



$$X'' + a(X^2 - 1)X' + X = 0, \quad a > 0$$

“Isolated closed curve in phase space”

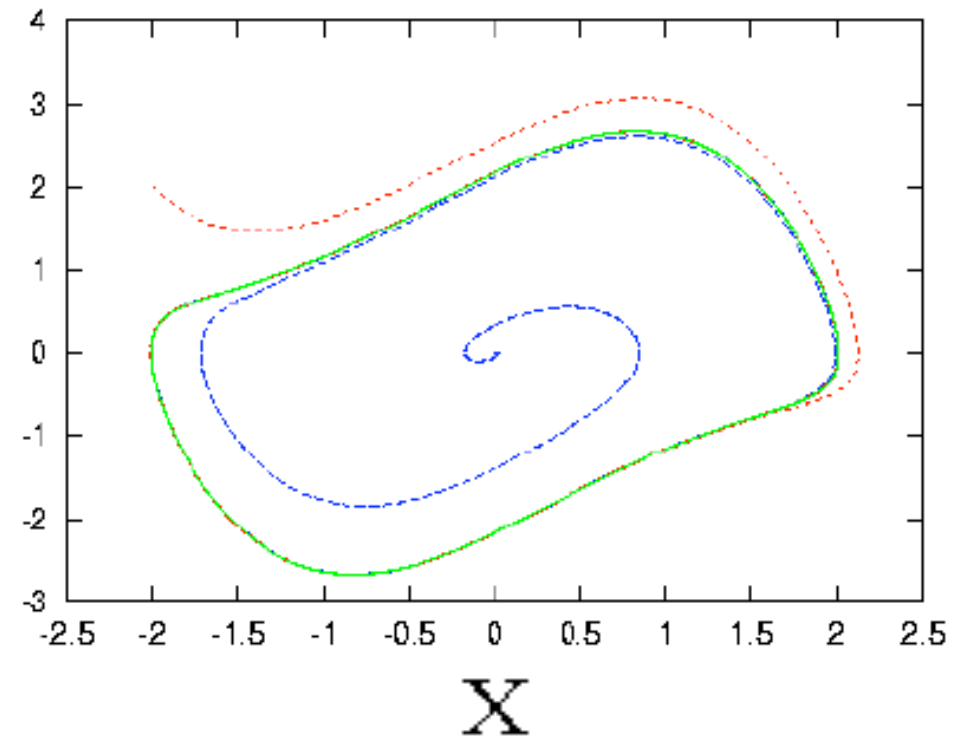
# Van der Pol Oscillator



$$i = C \frac{d u_g}{dt}$$

$$X = u_g$$

$\dot{X}$



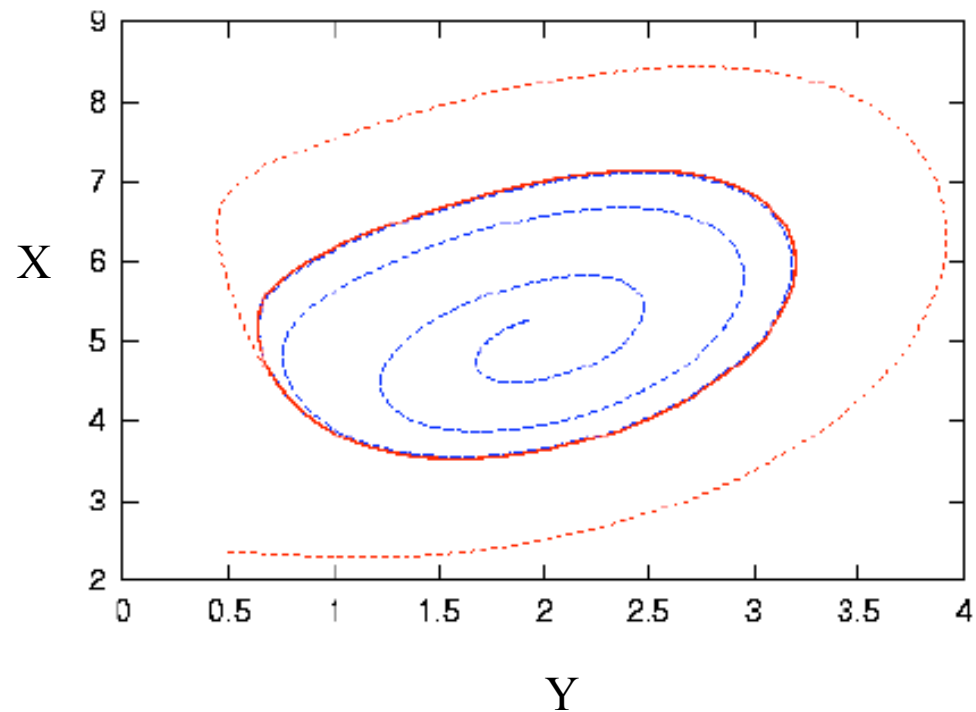
## Belousov Zhabotinsky Reaction

Citric acid and bromate ions in a solution of sulfuric acid, and in the presence of a cerium catalyst.

$$\dot{X} = a - X - \frac{4XY}{1+X^2}$$

$$\dot{Y} = bX \left( 1 - \frac{Y}{1+X^2} \right)$$

$$a=10, b=2$$



# A SINGLE HOPF BIFURCATION OSCILLATOR

$$Z'(t) = (a + i\omega - |Z(t)|^2)Z(t)$$

$$/ \rightarrow d/dt$$

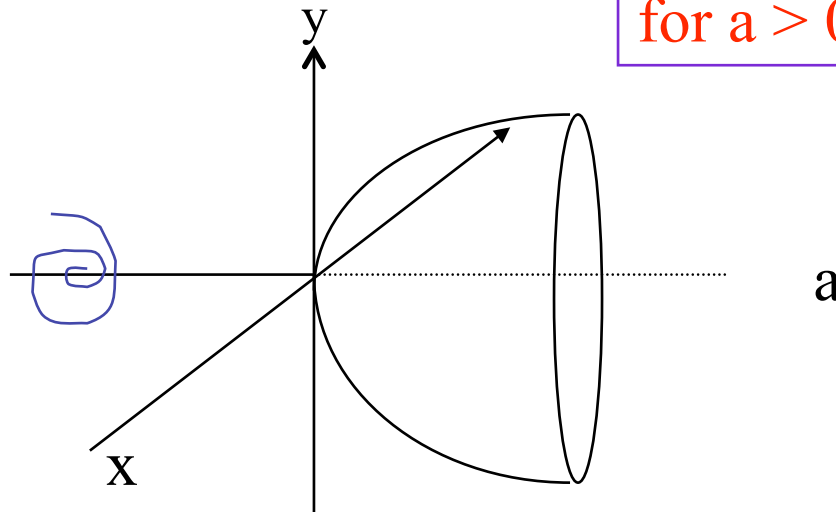
$$\text{where } Z = X + iY = r \exp(i\theta)$$

Stewart – Landau Oscillator

$$\begin{aligned} r' &= r(a - r^2) \\ \theta' &= \omega \end{aligned}$$

$$\delta r' = a \delta r$$

Origin ( $r=0$ ) stable for  $a \leq 0$   
for  $a > 0$  **limit cycle osc.**



## Two Coupled Limit cycle Oscillators

$$\dot{Z}_1(t) = (1 + i\omega_1 - |Z_1(t)|^2) Z_1(t) + K [Z_2(t) - Z_1(t)],$$

$$\dot{Z}_2(t) = (1 + i\omega_2 - |Z_2(t)|^2) Z_2(t) + K [Z_1(t) - Z_2(t)],$$

**K = coupling constant; a=1**



## In polar coordinates

$$\begin{aligned}\dot{r}_1 &= r_1(1 - K - r_1^2) + Kr_2 \cos[\theta_2 - \theta_1], \\ \dot{r}_2 &= r_2(1 - K - r_2^2) + Kr_1 \cos[\theta_1 - \theta_2], \\ \dot{\theta}_1 &= \omega_1 + K \frac{r_2}{r_1} \sin[\theta_2 - \theta_1], \\ \dot{\theta}_2 &= \omega_2 + K \frac{r_1}{r_2} \sin[\theta_1 - \theta_2].\end{aligned}$$

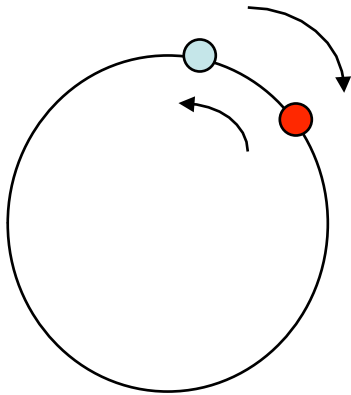
**Weak coupling approximation:** separation of time scales –  
short time – relaxation to limit cycle –  
long time phases interact - - **let  $r_1 \approx r_2 \approx \text{constant}$**

**Identical oscillators :**  $\omega_1 = \omega_2$

define  $\phi = \theta_2 - \theta_1$

$$\dot{\phi} = -2K \sin(\phi)$$

Force tries to reduce phase difference



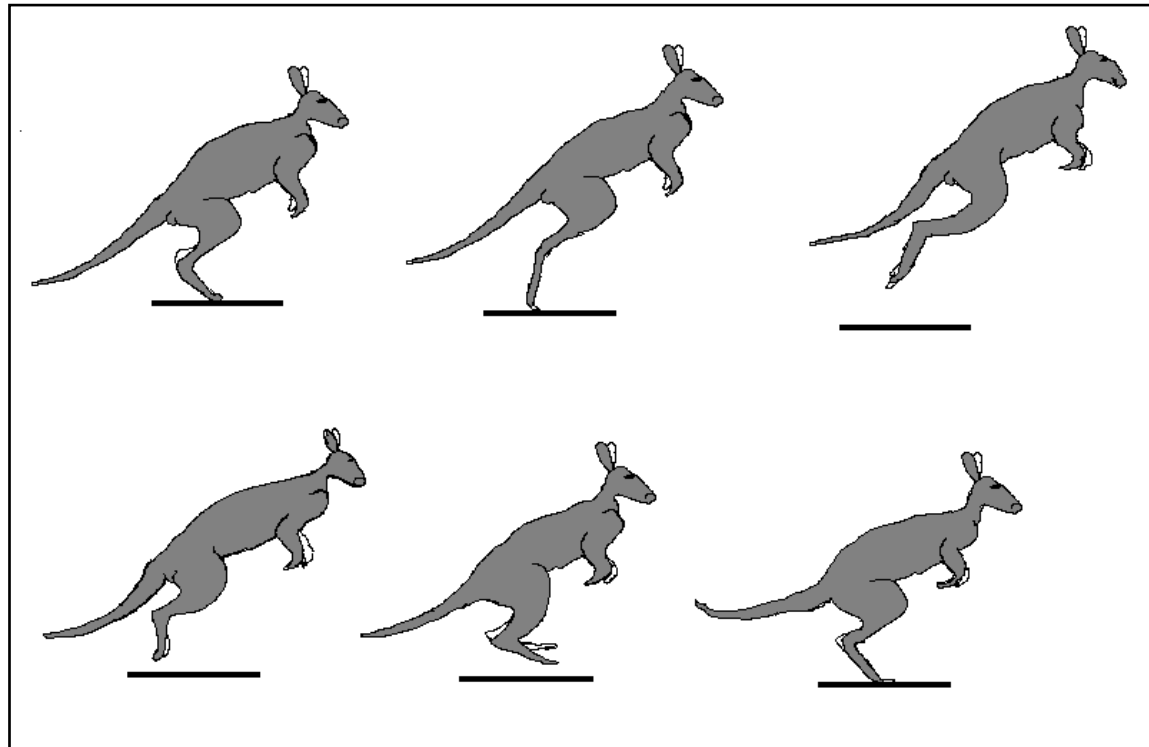
## EQUILIBRIA

$\phi = 0 \Rightarrow \theta_1 = \theta_2$  symmetric state

$\phi = \pi \Rightarrow \theta_1 = \theta_2 + \pi$  anti-symmetric state

**PHASE LOCKING** - “synchrony” is only a part of the story - “symmetry breaking” - general scenario

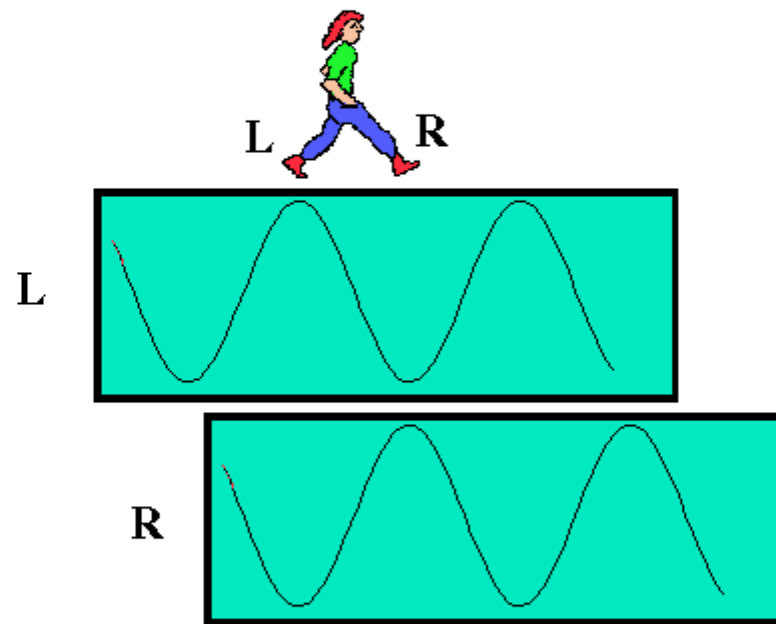
# PHASE EQUILIBRIA and ANIMAL GAITS



**In Phase**

## Out of Phase Synchronization in Human Walking / Running

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## 4 OSCILLATORS

$$\theta_1 = \theta_2 ; \theta_3 = \theta_4 ; \theta_1 = \theta_3 + \pi \text{ -- rabbit, camel, horse}$$

$$\theta_2 = \theta_1 + \pi / 4 ; \theta_3 = \theta_2 + \pi / 4 ; \theta_4 = \theta_3 + \pi / 4 ; \text{ -elephant}$$

$$\theta_1 = \theta_2 = \theta_3 = \theta_4 \quad \text{-- GAZELLE}$$

## HORSE GAITS



walk



trot



gallop

Running speed →

## Three Oscillators

$$\theta_1 = \theta_2 = \theta_3$$

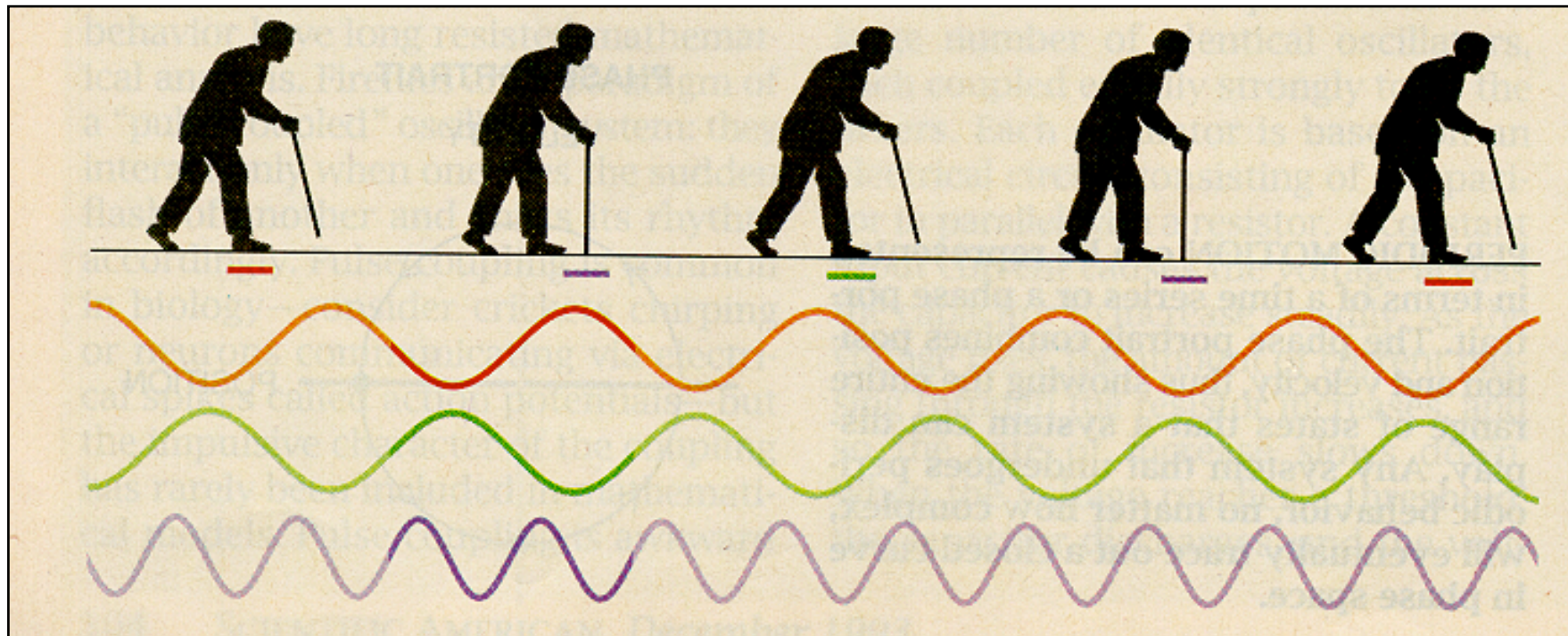
$$\theta_1 = \theta_2 + \pi/3 ; \theta_2 = \theta_3 + \pi/3 ;$$

$$\theta_1 = \theta_2 ; \theta_3 \text{ no relation - same frequency}$$

$$\theta_1 = \theta_2 + \pi ; \theta_3 \text{ has twice the frequency}$$

**Two out of synchrony and one twice as fast**

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- 6 OSCILLATORS -- INSECTS, COCKROACHES ETC.
- CENTIPEDE! – traveling wave



Courtesy: Dan Goldman

**QUESTION:** Coupled osc. Equilibria and Animal gaits - is this a mere coincidence or is there a deeper connection?

- Active area of research
- Central pattern generators (brain and spine)
- Group theoretic methods coupled with generalized Hopf bifurcations
- Clinical experiments

## 2 NON-IDENTICAL OSCILLATORS

$$\boxed{\dot{\phi} = \Delta - 2K \sin(\phi)} \quad \begin{aligned} \dot{\theta}_1 &= \omega_1 + K \frac{r_2}{r_1} \sin[\theta_2 - \theta_1], \\ \dot{\theta}_2 &= \omega_2 + K \frac{r_1}{r_2} \sin[\theta_1 - \theta_2]. \end{aligned}$$

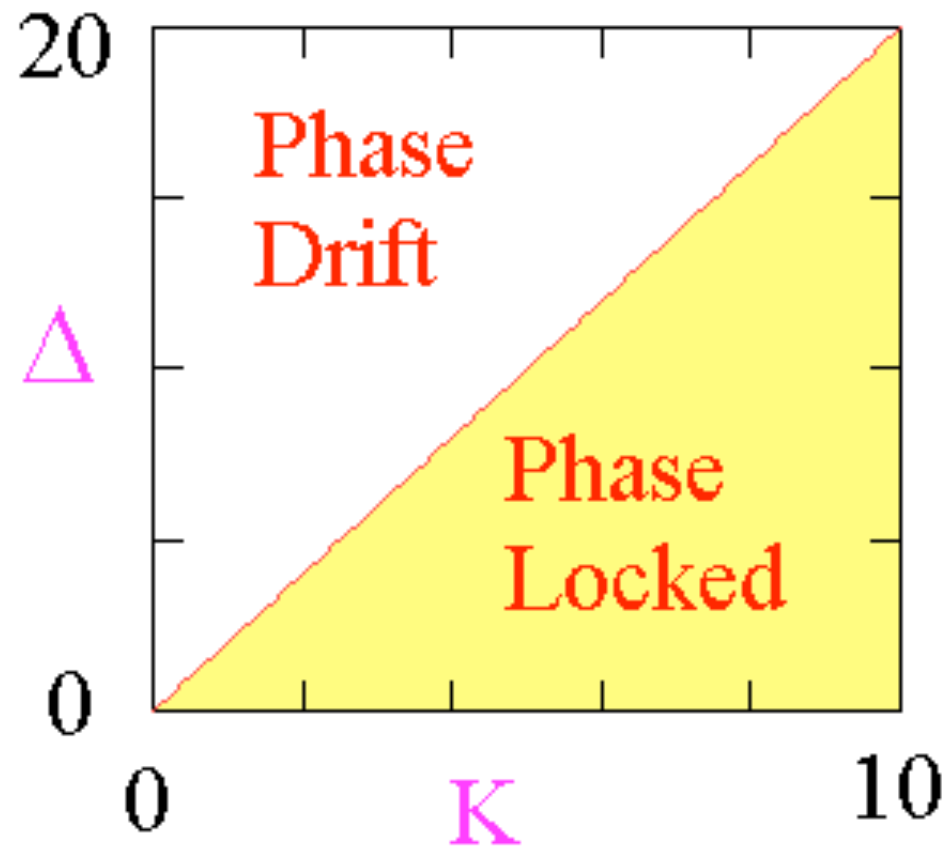
where  $\Delta = |\omega_1 - \omega_2|$

PHASE LOCKING ONLY IF  $\Delta \leq 2K$

Then  $\dot{\theta} = \langle \omega \rangle = \frac{(\omega_1 + \omega_2)}{2}$  Common frequency

FREQUENCY ENTRAINMENT

## Two Phase Coupled Oscillators



## N coupled (phase only ) oscillators

$$\dot{\theta}_i = \omega_i + \frac{K}{N} \sum_{j=1}^N \sin(\theta_j - \theta_i), \quad i = 1, \dots, N$$

Frequencies given by a unimodal distribution function

$$g(\omega) = g(-\omega)$$

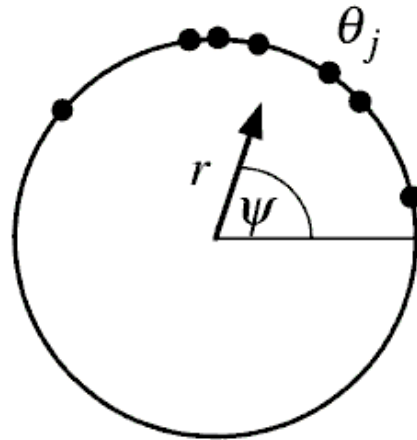
“global coupling” - mean field approximation

Complex order parameter:

$$r e^{i\psi} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^N e^{i\theta_j}$$

$r(t)$  - measure of phase coherence

$\psi(t)$  - average phase



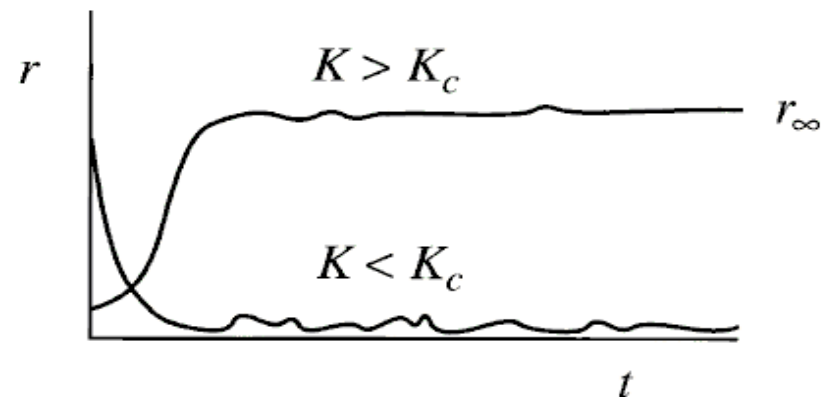
$r = 1$  – synchrony

$r = 0$  – phase drift

$$\dot{\theta}_i = \omega_i + Kr \sin(\psi - \theta_i), \quad i = 1, \dots, N.$$

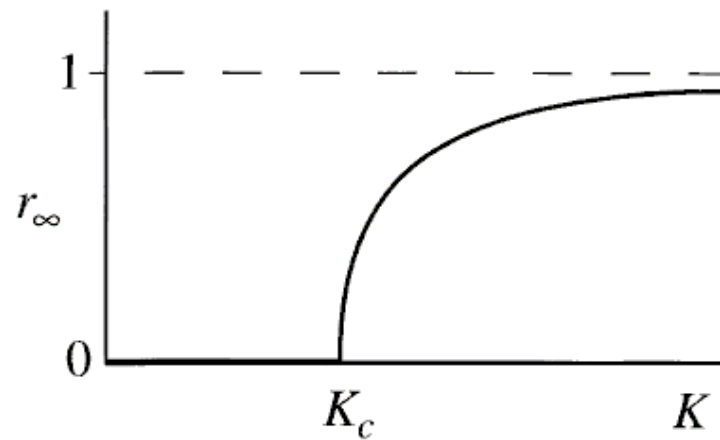
Kuramoto solved the equation exactly for  $r = \text{constant}$  and obtained the threshold condition for synchrony  $K \geq K_c$

$$K_c = \frac{2}{\pi g(0)}$$



$$r = \sqrt{1 - \frac{K_c}{K}} \quad \text{for} \quad g(\omega) = \frac{\gamma}{\pi(\gamma^2 + \omega^2)}$$

“Second order phase transition”



Near onset

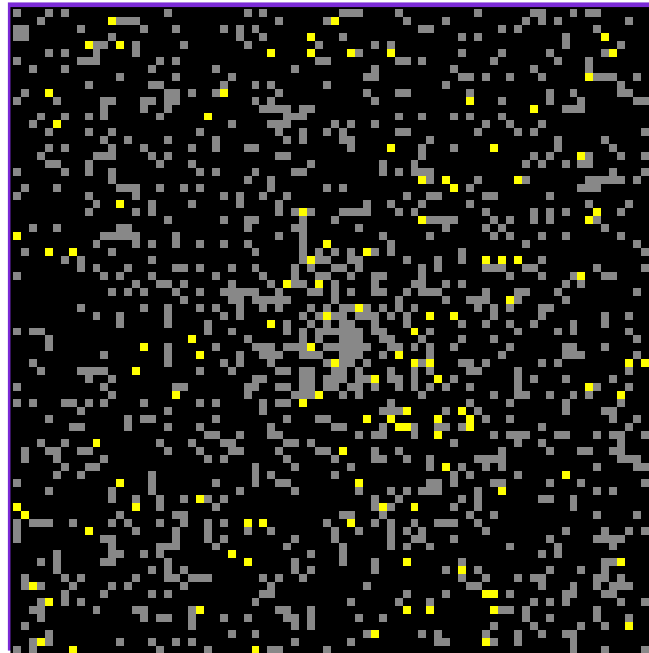
$$r \approx \sqrt{\frac{16}{\pi K_c^3}} \sqrt{\frac{\mu}{-g''(0)}}$$

Supercritical bifurcation

for  $g''(0) < 0$

(Strogatz and Mirollo, J. Stat. Phys. 63 (1991) 613)

## Synchronization in Fire Flies





## Synchronization in fireflies



- **S. Strogatz** - *“From Kuramoto to*
- *Crawford: exploring the onset of*
- *synchronization in populations of*
- *coupled oscillators”*

***Physica D 143 (2000) 1-20.***

## Strong Coupling Limit: Amplitude effects

$$\begin{aligned}\dot{Z}_1(t) &= (1 + i\omega_1 - |Z_1(t)|^2) Z_1(t) + K [Z_2(t) - Z_1(t)], \\ \dot{Z}_2(t) &= (1 + i\omega_2 - |Z_2(t)|^2) Z_2(t) + K [Z_1(t) - Z_2(t)],\end{aligned}$$

$|Z_1| = |Z_2| = 0$  is an equilibrium solution

### Stability of the origin?

$$\lambda^2 - 2(a + i\bar{\omega})\lambda + (b_1 + ib_2) + c = 0$$

$$a = 1 - K, \quad b_1 = a^2 - \bar{\omega}^2 + \Delta^2/4, \quad b_2 = 2a\bar{\omega}.$$

$$c = -K^2.$$

Origin stable if  $\operatorname{Re}(\lambda) < 0$ .

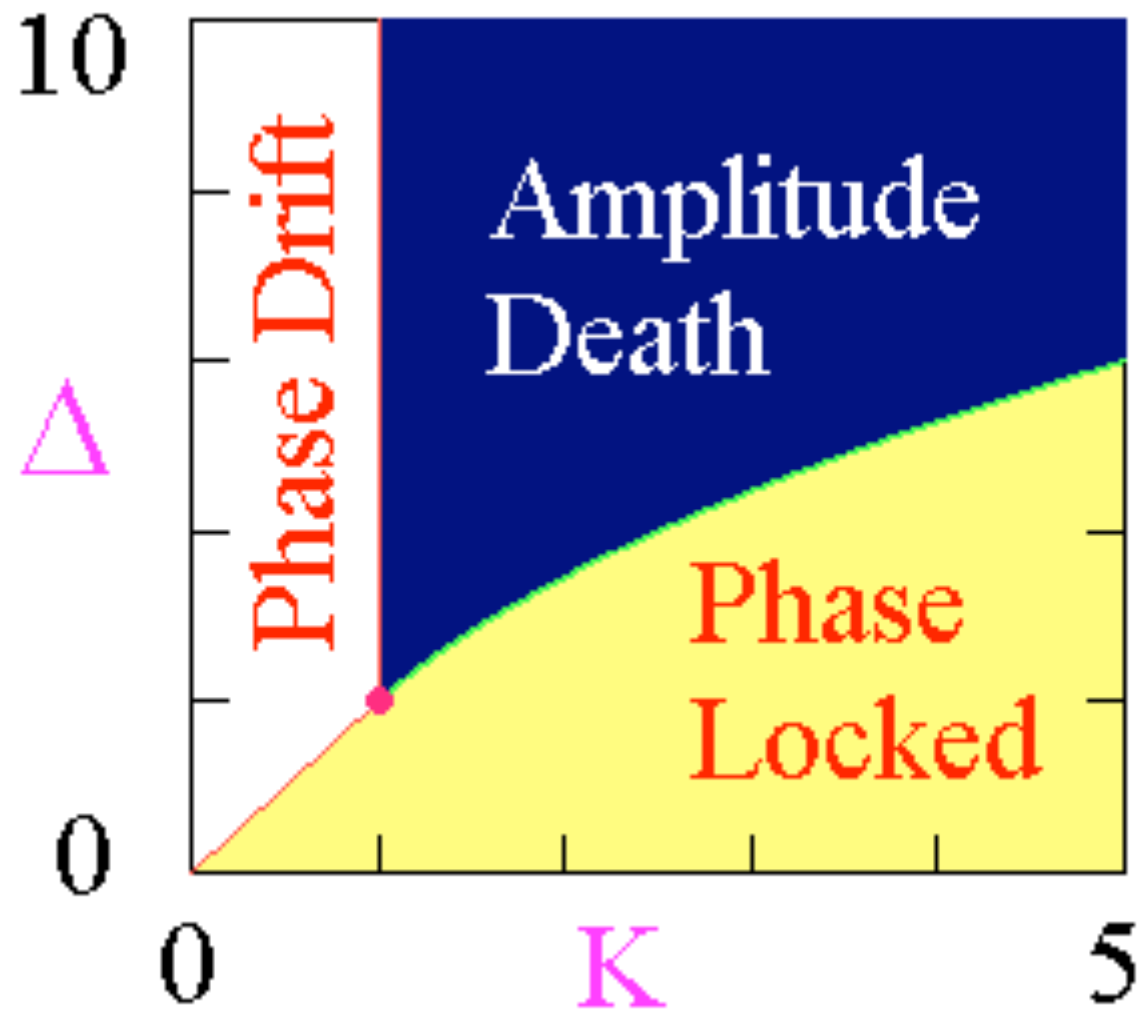
## Marginal Stability Curve

Substitute  $\lambda = \alpha + i\beta$  in characteristic equation and  
solve it for  $\alpha = 0$ .

This yields  $\beta = \bar{\omega}$

And the conditions:  $K = 1, K = \gamma(\Delta) = \frac{1}{2}(1 + \frac{\Delta^2}{4})$

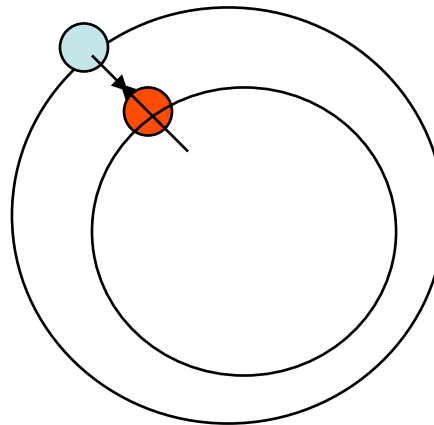
## Two Amplitude Coupled Oscillators



## Physical picture of amplitude death

(strong coupling limit)

Two oscillators



Each oscillator pulls the other off its limit cycle and they both collapse into the origin  $r = 0$  -- **AMPLITUDE DEATH**

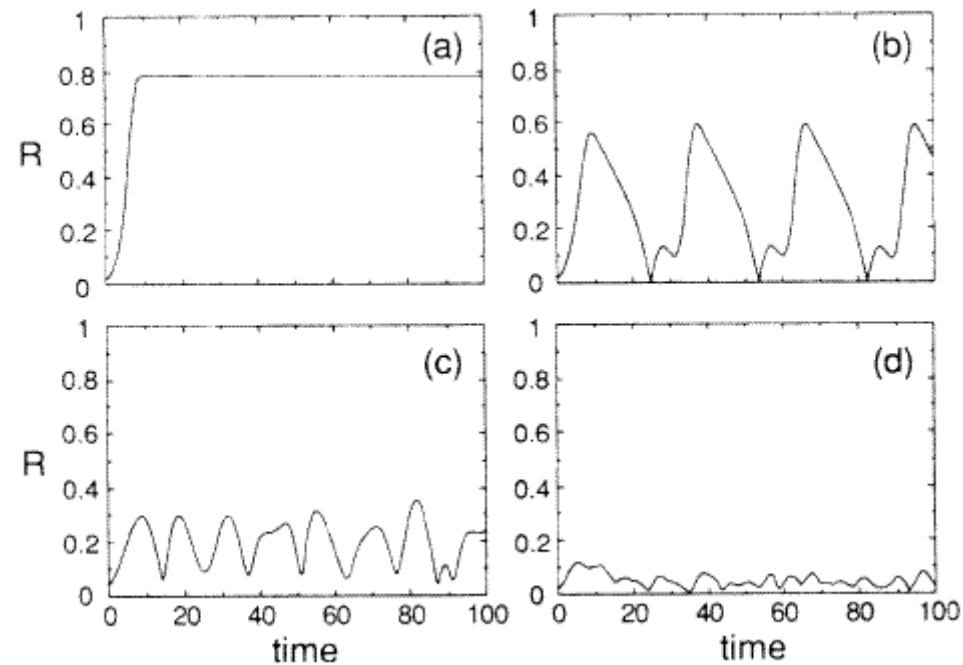
**Happens for  $K$  large and  $\Delta$  large**

## EXAMPLES OF AMPLITUDE DEATH

- **CHEMICAL OSCILLATIONS** - BZ REACTIONS  
(coupled stirred tank reactors - Bar Eli effect)
- **POPULATION DYNAMICS**  
Two sites with same predator prey mechanism can have oscillatory behaviour. If species from one site can move to another at appropriate rate (appropriate coupling strength) the two sites may become stable (stop oscillating)
- **ORGAN PIPES**

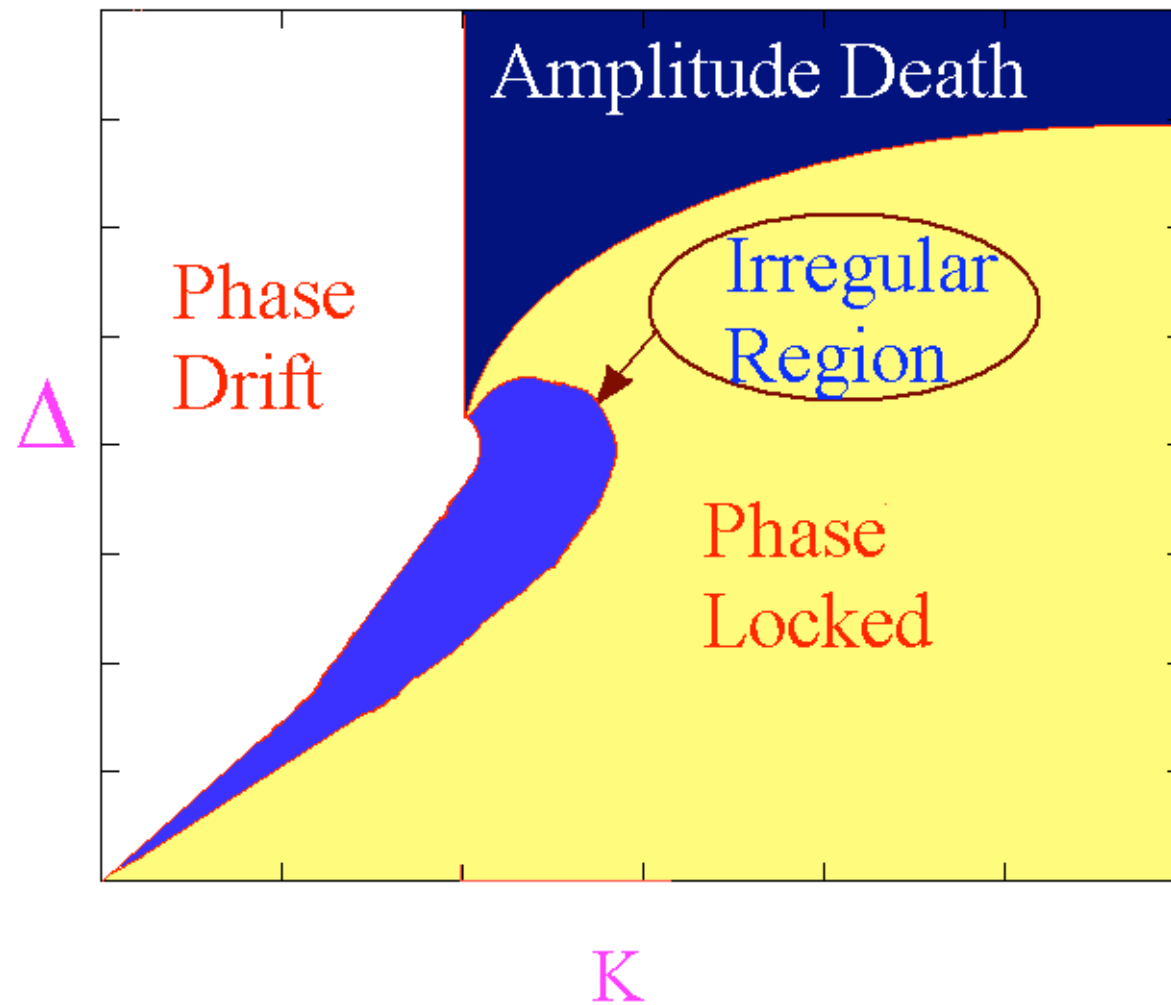
Matthews and Strogatz, PRL 1990

$$\dot{z}_j = z_j(1 - |z_j|^2 + i\omega_j) + \frac{K}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N (z_i - z_j)$$



$R$  is the order parameter

## Large Number of Amplitude Coupled Oscillators





So far we have looked at systems with “global” coupling  
– mean field coupling

**What about other forms of coupling?**

**Short range interactions (nearest neighbour)?**

**Non-local coupling?**

**Time delayed coupling**

## EXTENSION TO SYSTEMS WITH SHORT RANGE INTERACTIONS

- Nearest neighbour coupling
- Limit of very large N – chain of identical oscillators

$$\frac{\partial \psi_j}{\partial t} = (1 + i\omega_0 - |\psi_j|^2)\psi_j + K[\psi_{j+1} - \psi_j] + K[\psi_{j-1} - \psi_j],$$

In the continuum limit set  $\psi_j = \psi(ja)$

Let  $a \rightarrow 0$  ;  $ja \rightarrow x$

$$\frac{\partial \psi(x,t)}{\partial t} = (1 + i\omega_0 - |\psi(x,t)|^2)\psi(x,t) + K \frac{\partial^2 \psi(x,t)}{\partial x^2}$$

Complex Ginzburg Landau Eqn

## Non-local coupling

$$\frac{\partial \psi_j(t)}{\partial t} = (1 + i\omega_0 - |\psi_j|^2)\psi_j + K \sum_{i=1}^N G(j-i)(\psi_i - \psi_j)$$

Continuum limit :

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial \psi(x,t)}{\partial t} = & (1 + i\omega_0 - |\psi(x,t)|^2)\psi(x,t) \\ & + K \int_{-L}^L G(x-x') [\psi(x',t) - \psi(x,t)] dx' \end{aligned}$$

**Non-local CGLE**

## Weak coupling limit

$$\psi(x, t) = r(x, t)e^{i\phi(x, t)}$$

Ignore amplitude variations

$$\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial t} = \omega - \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} G(x - x') \sin[\phi(x, t) - \phi(x', t) + \alpha] dx'.$$

*“Ring of identical phase oscillators with non-local coupling”*

$$\dot{\theta}_i = \omega_i + \frac{K}{N} \sum_{j=1}^N \sin(\theta_j - \theta_i)$$

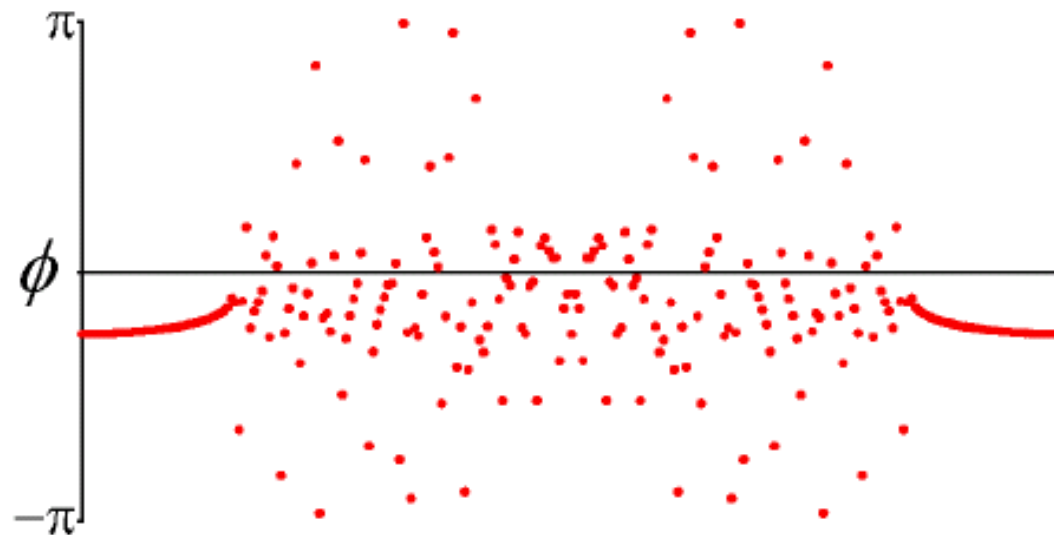
Compare with

$$G(y) = \frac{\kappa}{2} \exp(-\kappa|y|)$$

Kuramoto and Battogtokh,  
Nonlin. Phen. Complex Syst, 5 (2002) 380

## *“Novel” collective state*

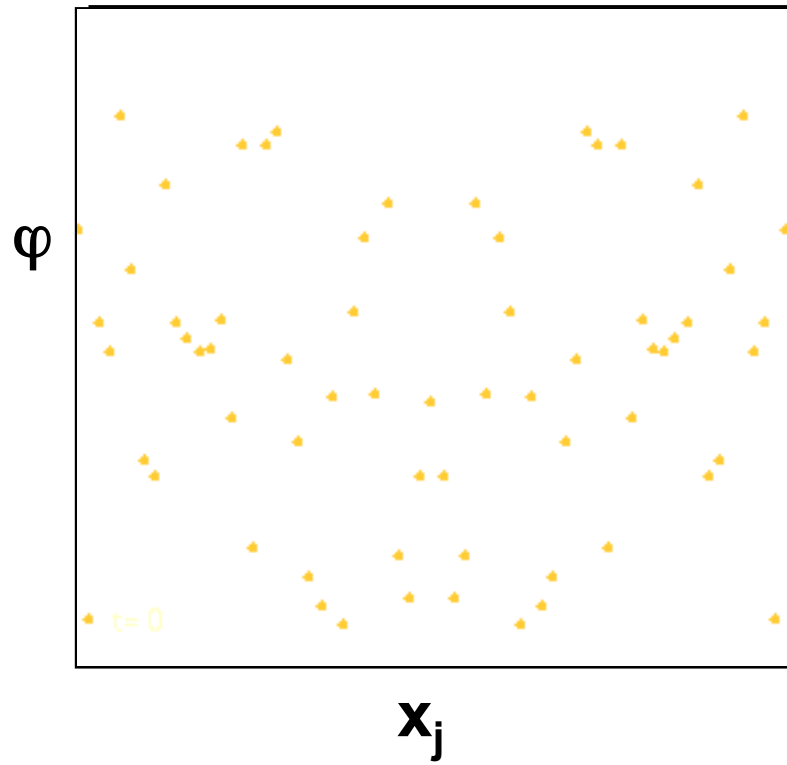
Simultaneous existence of coherent and incoherent states



$\kappa = 4.0$ ,  $\alpha = 1.45$ ,  $N = 256$  oscillators.

## *“Chimera” state*

## Chimera



## Understanding the Chimera state



Define a rotating frame with frequency  $\Omega$

Relative phase in that frame

$$\theta = \phi - \Omega t$$

$$R(x, t)e^{i\Theta(x, t)} = \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} G(x - x')e^{i\theta(x', t)}dx'.$$

**Complex order parameter**

$$\frac{\partial \theta}{\partial t} = \omega - \Omega - R \sin [\theta - \Theta + \alpha]$$

Look for stationary solutions in which  $R$  and  $\Theta$  are space dependent

$$\omega - \Omega = R(x) \sin [\theta^* - \Theta(x) + \alpha]$$

**Oscillators with**  $R(x) \geq |\omega - \Omega|$   $\longrightarrow$  Fixed pt.  $\theta^*$

$R(x) < |\omega - \Omega|$  drift around the phase circle monotonically.

# Time delayed coupling?

Time delay is ubiquitous in real systems due to finite propagation speed of signals, finite reaction times of Chemical reactions, finite response time of synapses etc.

**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE COLLECTIVE  
DYNAMICS OF COUPLED SYSTEMS IN THE  
PRESENCE OF TIME DELAY?**



## SIMPLE TIME DELAYED MODEL

$$\begin{aligned}\dot{Z}_1(t) &= (1 + i\omega_1 - |Z_1(t)|^2)Z_1(t) + K[Z_2(t - \tau) - Z_1(t)], \\ \dot{Z}_2(t) &= (1 + i\omega_2 - |Z_2(t)|^2)Z_2(t) + K[Z_1(t - \tau) - Z_2(t)],\end{aligned}$$

(Reddy, Sen and Johnston, Phys. Rev. Letts. 80 (1998) 5109;  
Physica D 129 (1999) 15 )

## Weak coupling limit

$$\begin{aligned}\dot{\theta}_1 &= \omega_1 + K \sin[\theta_2(t - \tau) - \theta_1], \\ \dot{\theta}_2 &= \omega_2 + K \sin[\theta_1(t - \tau) - \theta_2].\end{aligned}$$

**Phase locked solution:**  $\dot{\theta}_j = \Omega t + \alpha$

$$\Omega = \bar{\omega} - 2K \sin(\Omega\tau)$$

$$\bar{\omega} = \frac{\omega_1 + \omega_2}{2}$$

- **Multiple frequency states**
- **Frequency suppression**

$$\Omega \approx \frac{\bar{\omega}}{1 + 2K\tau}$$

## Early work by Schuster et al

- **Multiple Frequencies:**

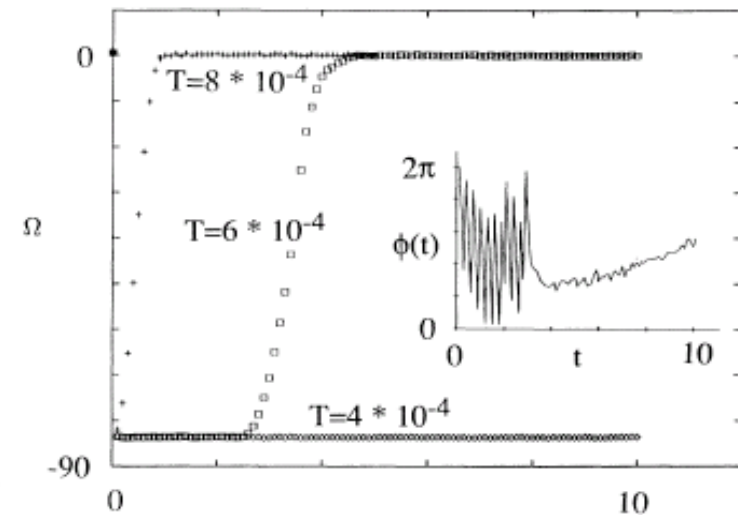
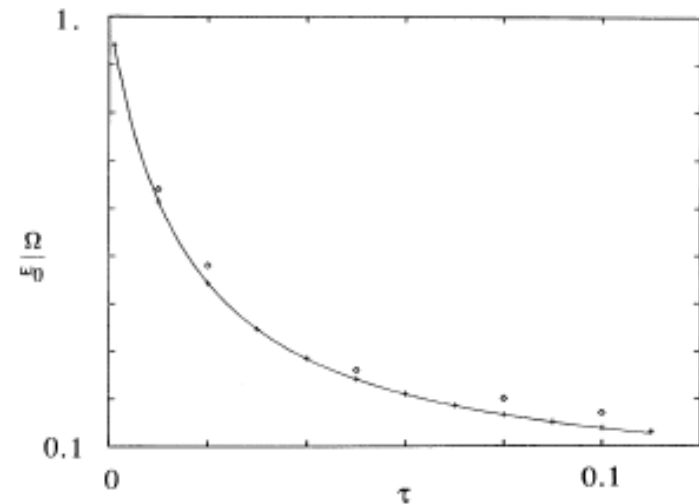
H.G. Schuster and P. Wagner,  
Prog. Theor. Phys. 81 (1989) 93

- **Frequency suppression**

Niebuhr, Schuster & Kammen,  
Phys.Rev.Lett. 67 (1991) 2753

## Kuramoto model

$$\frac{d\phi_i(t)}{dt} = \omega_0 + K \sum_j \sin[\phi_j(t - \tau) - \phi_i(t)] + \eta_i$$



## Strong Coupling Limit:

Linear stability analysis of the origin  $Z=0$

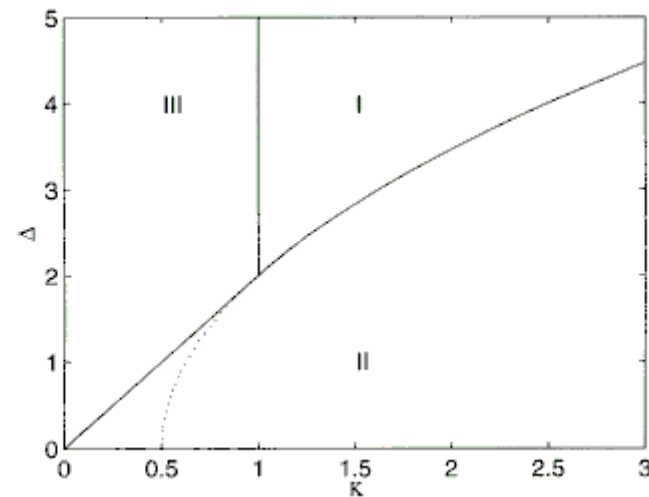
***Amplitude Death***

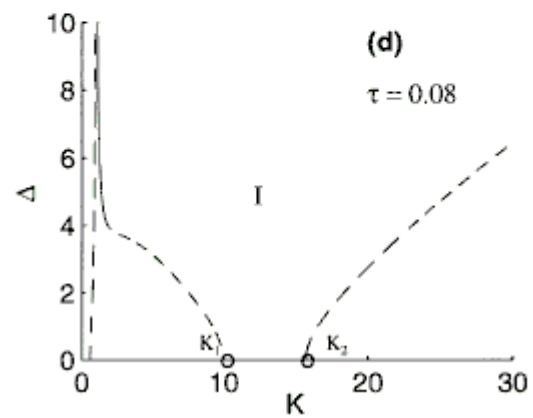
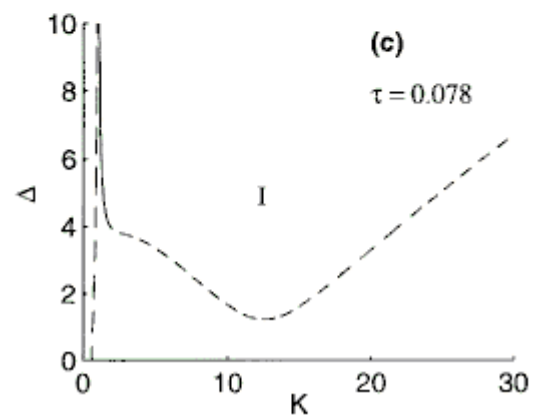
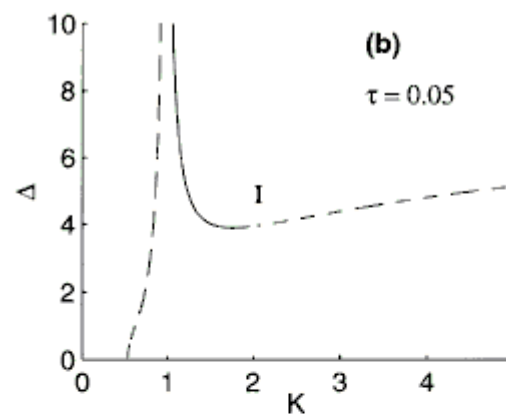
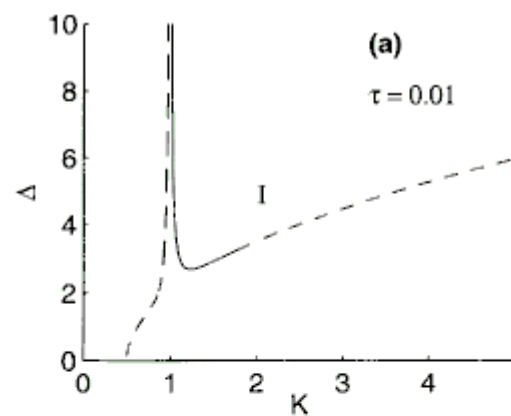
Eigenvalue equation:

$$(a - \lambda + i\omega_1)(a - \lambda + i\omega_2) - K^2 e^{-2\lambda\tau} = 0$$

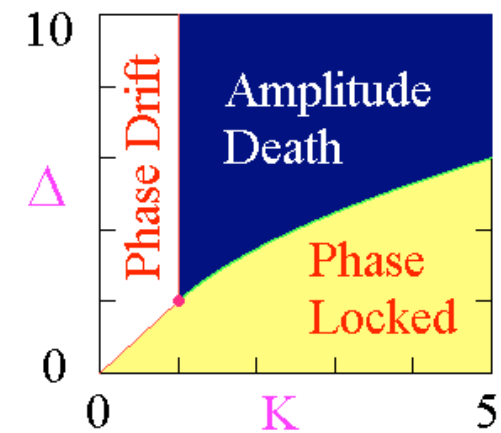
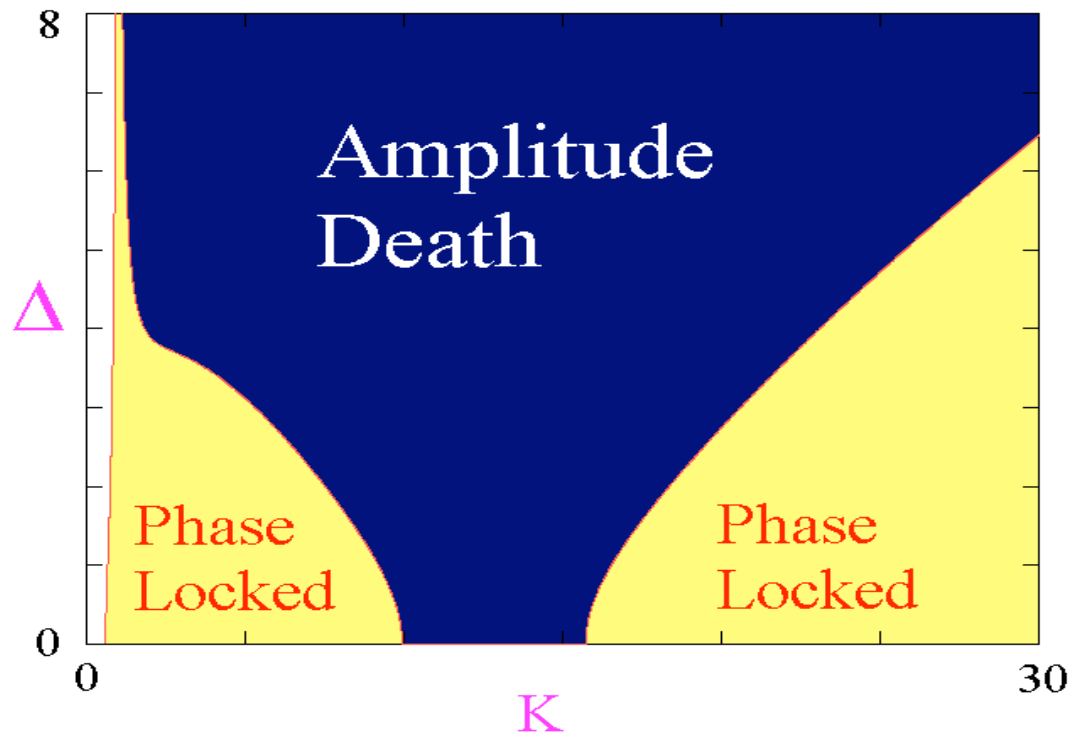
For  $\tau = 0$  detailed analysis by  
D.G. Aronson, G.B. Ermentrout and  
N. Kopell, Physics **41 D** (1990) 403

$$a = 1 - K$$





## Two Coupled Oscillators with Delay

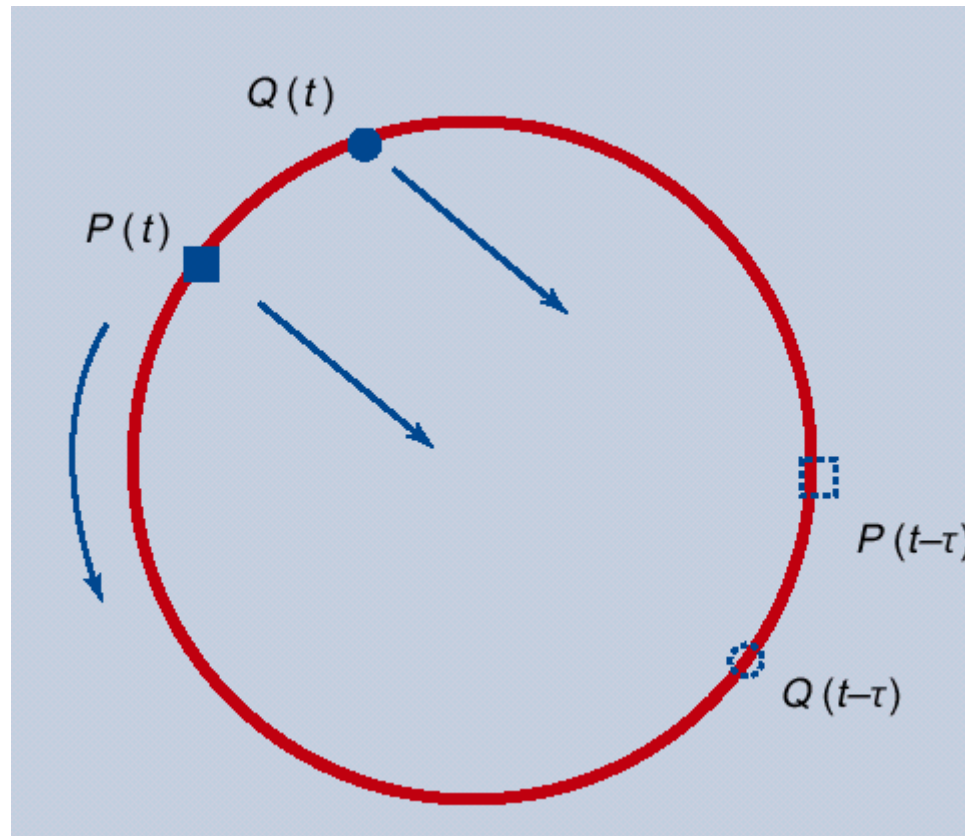


(no delay)

**Identical Oscillators  
can DIE!**

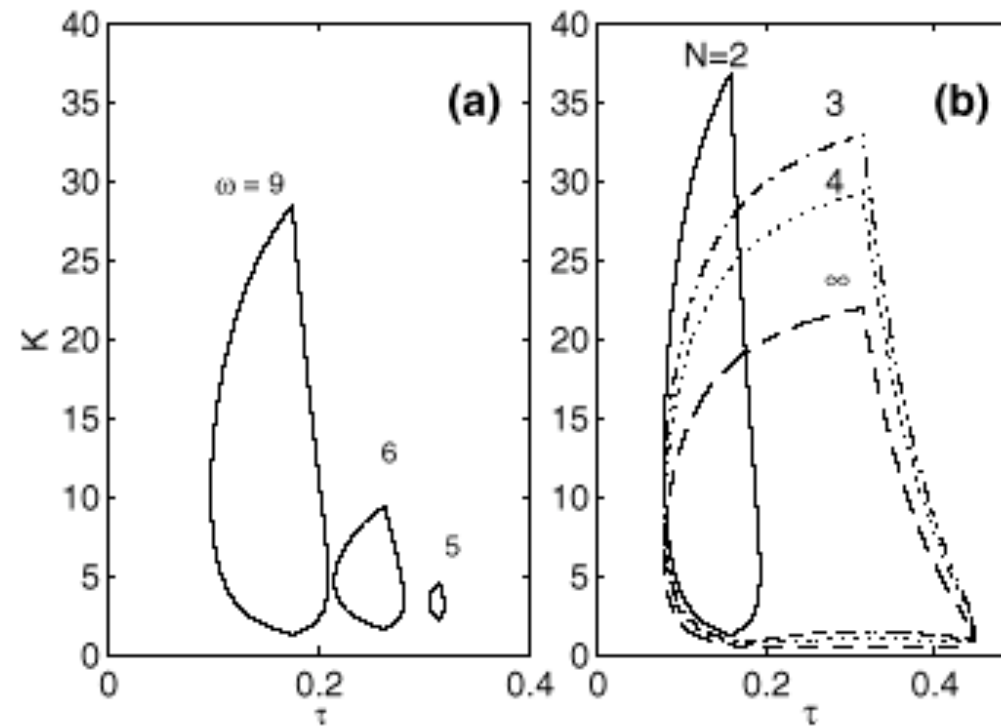
(Reddy, Sen and Johnston, Phys. Rev. Letts. 80 (1998) 5109;  
Physica D 129 (1999) 15 )

## Geometric Interpretation of delay induced death in identical oscillators



The current state  $P(t)$  is pulled towards the retarded state  $Q(t-\tau)$  of the other oscillator and vice-versa. For appropriate values of  $K$  and time delay both oscillations will spiral inwards and die out.

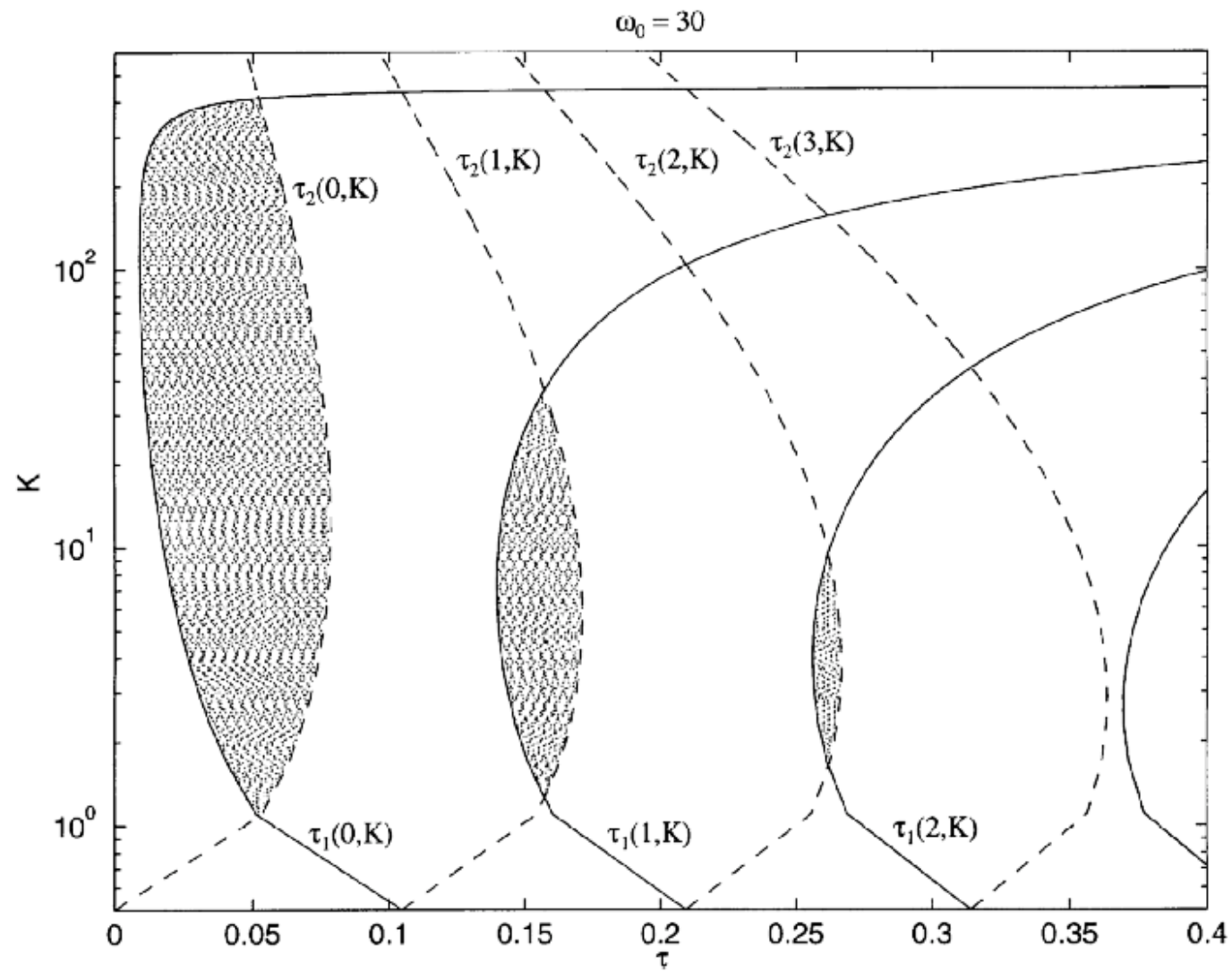
- **Existence of death islands in  $K - \tau$  space**



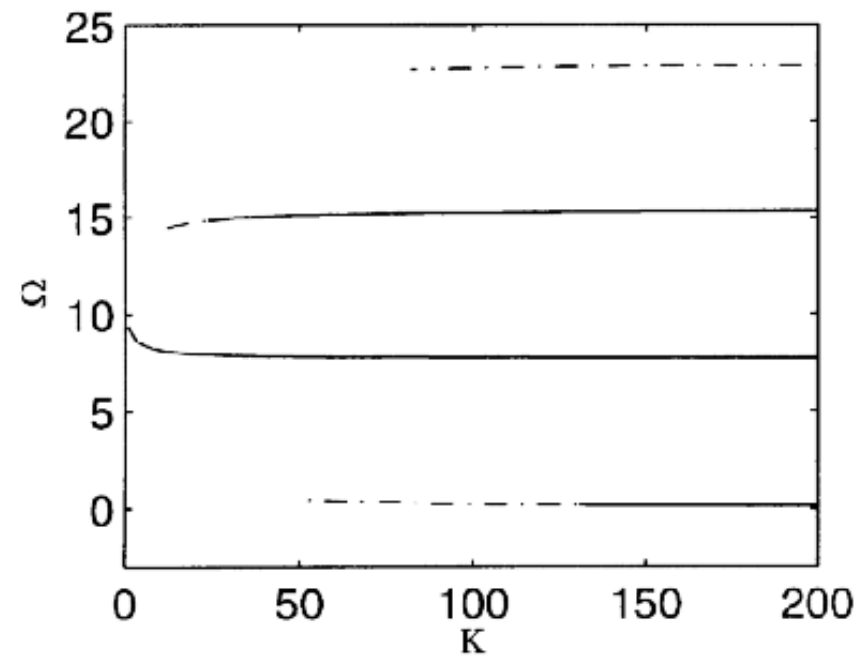
Size, shape vary with  $N$  and  $\omega$



- Existence of multiple death islands



- **Existence of higher frequency states and their stability**



- Experimental verification carried out on coupled nonlinear circuits  
(Reddy, Sen, Johnston, PRL, **85** (2000) 3381)

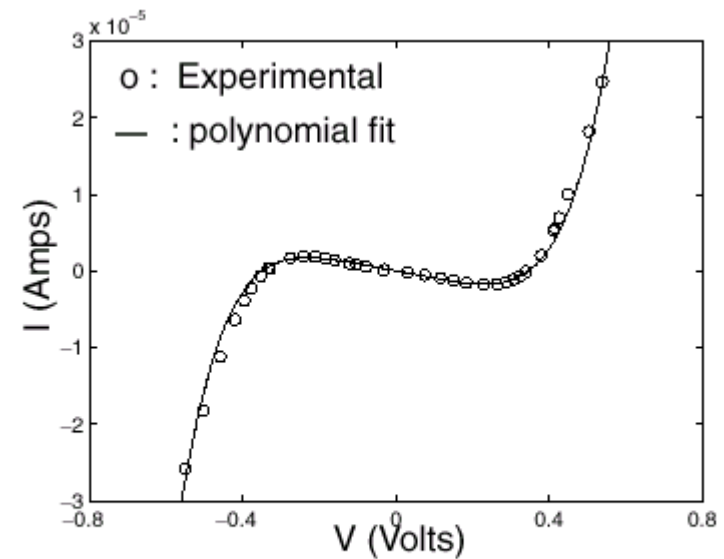
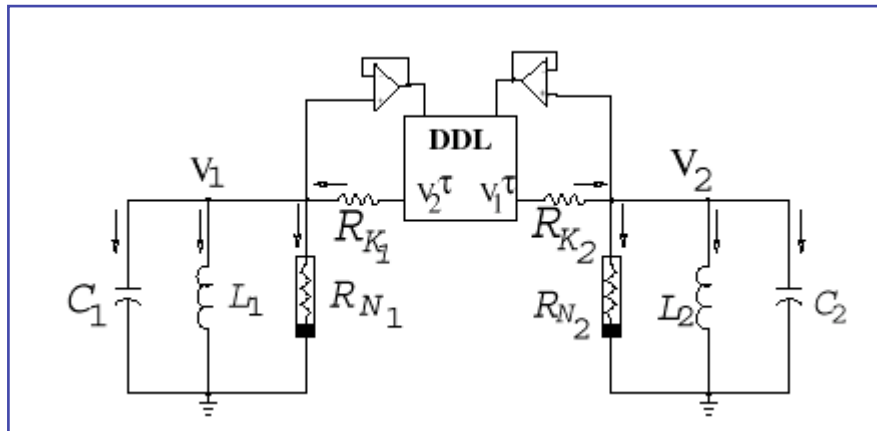
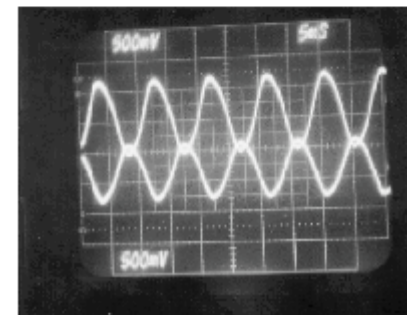
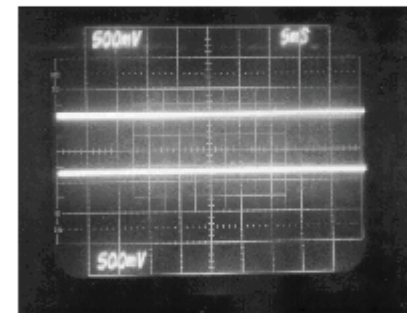
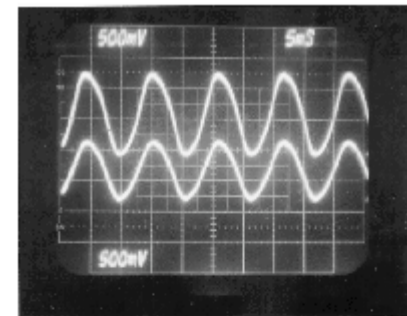


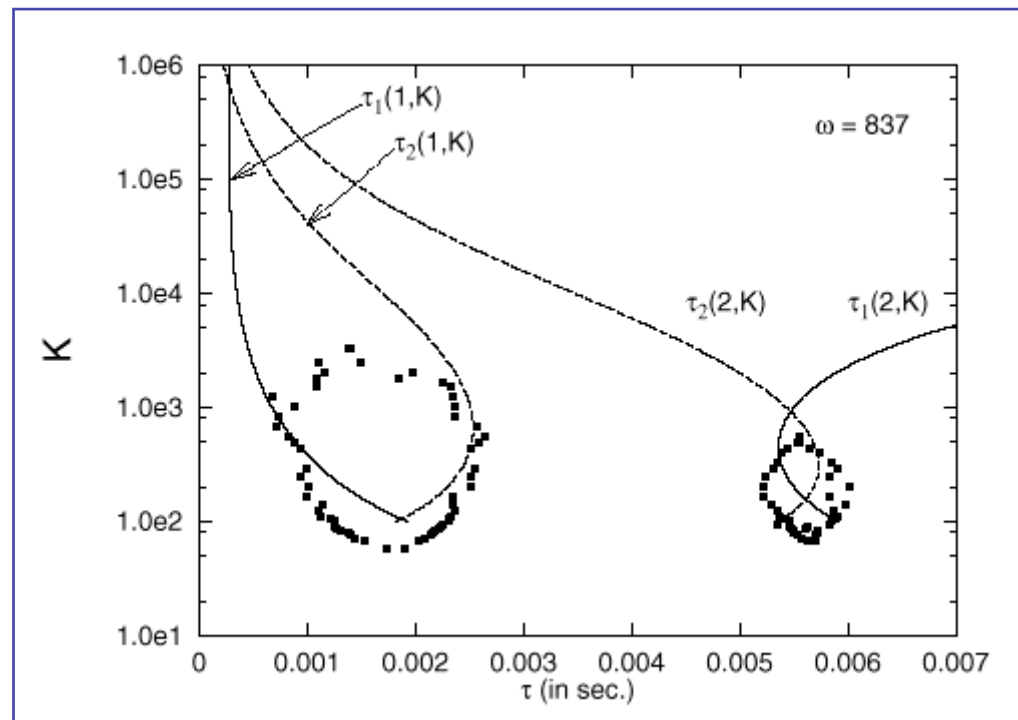
FIG. 2. The  $V$ - $I$  characteristics of the nonlinear component  $R_N$ . The continuous line is a polynomial fit of the experimental points.

$$\ddot{V}_i + g(V_i)\dot{V}_i + \omega_i^2 V_i = K_i[\dot{V}_j(t - \tau) - \dot{V}_i(t)]$$

- Death state confirmed
- In-phase and out-of-phase oscillations seen



- **Existence of death islands and their multiple connectedness.**



- **IN-PHASE AND ANTI-PHASE LOCKED STATES**

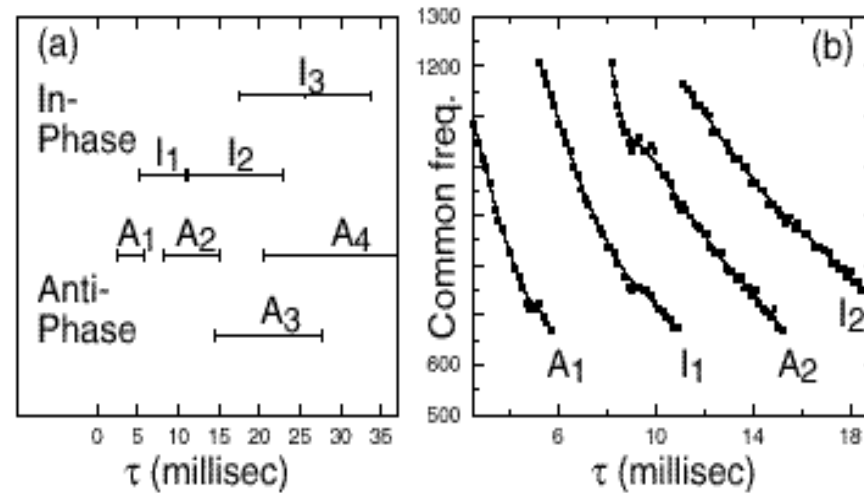


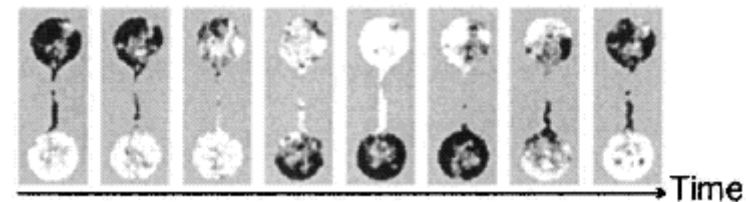
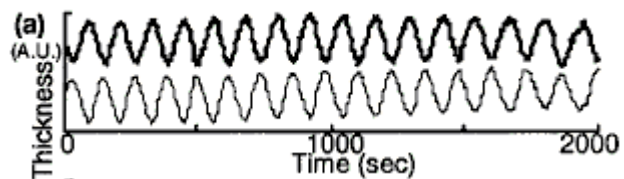
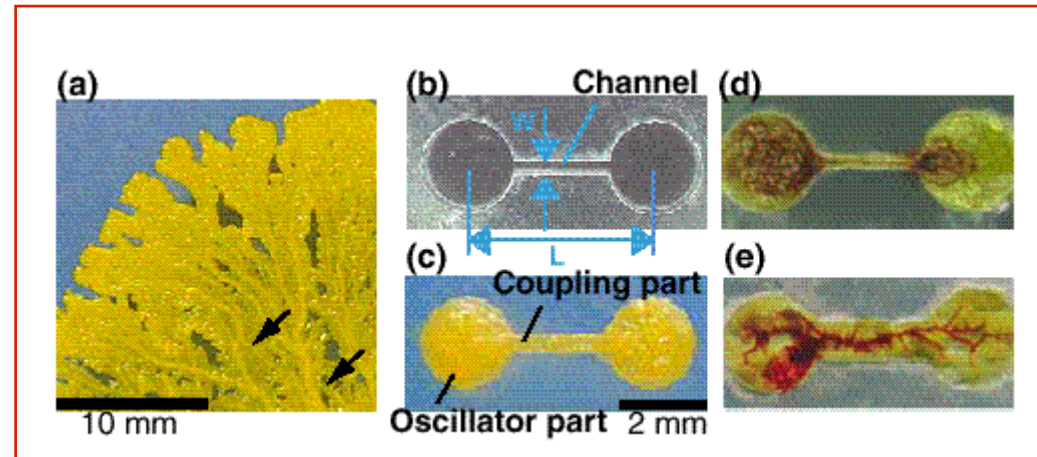
FIG. 6. (a) Coexistence of in-phase- and anti-phase-locked states and (b) suppression of the phase-locked states as  $\tau$  is increased for  $K = 1000 \text{ s}^{-1}$  and  $\omega = 837 \text{ s}^{-1}$ .

# Time delay effects in a living coupled oscillator system

(Takamatsu et al, PRL 85 (2000) 2026)

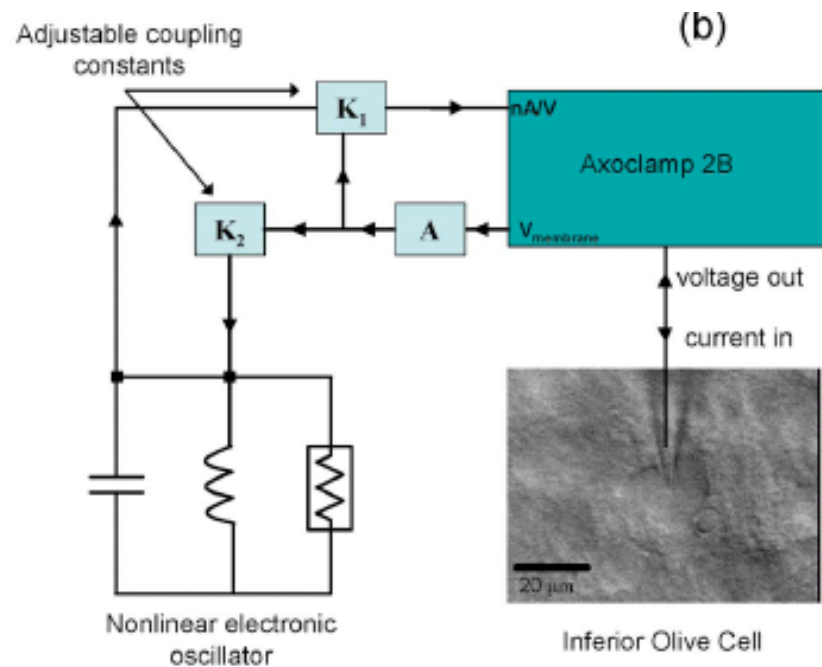
## Experiments with plasmodium of slime mold

- contraction/relaxation states
- time delay and coupling controlled by size of tube
- observed in-phase/anti-phase oscillations



## Strong Coupling of Nonlinear Electronic and Biological Oscillators: Reaching the “Amplitude Death” Regime

I. Ozden,<sup>1</sup> S. Venkataramani,<sup>1</sup> M. A. Long,<sup>3</sup> B. W. Connors,<sup>3</sup> and A. V. Nurmikko<sup>1,2,\*</sup>



*Observed amplitude death  
in a coupled system of an  
electronic oscillator and  
a biological oscillator*

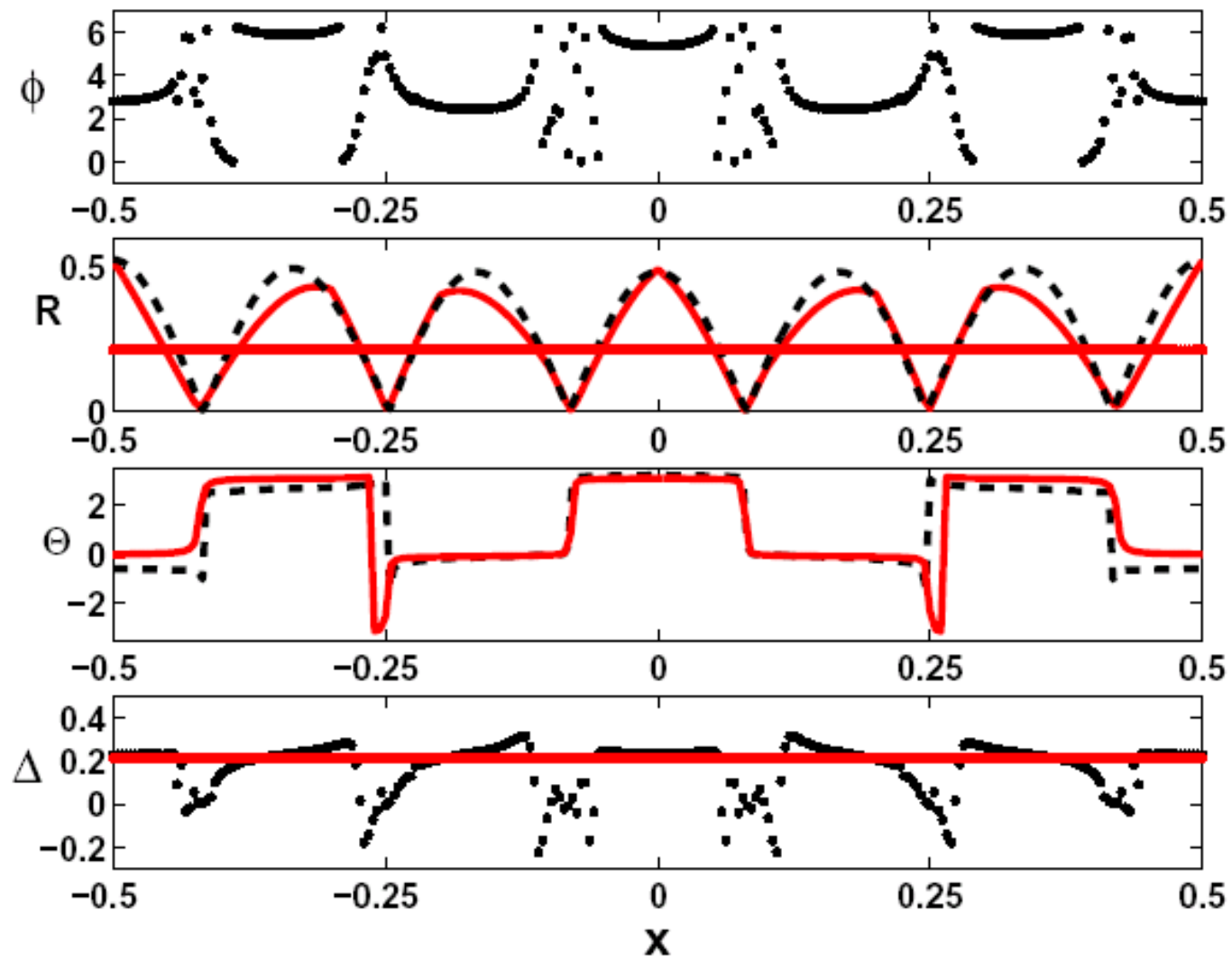


## Non-local time delayed coupling

$$\psi(x, t) = r(x, t)e^{i\phi(x, t)} \quad \text{Ignore amplitude variations}$$

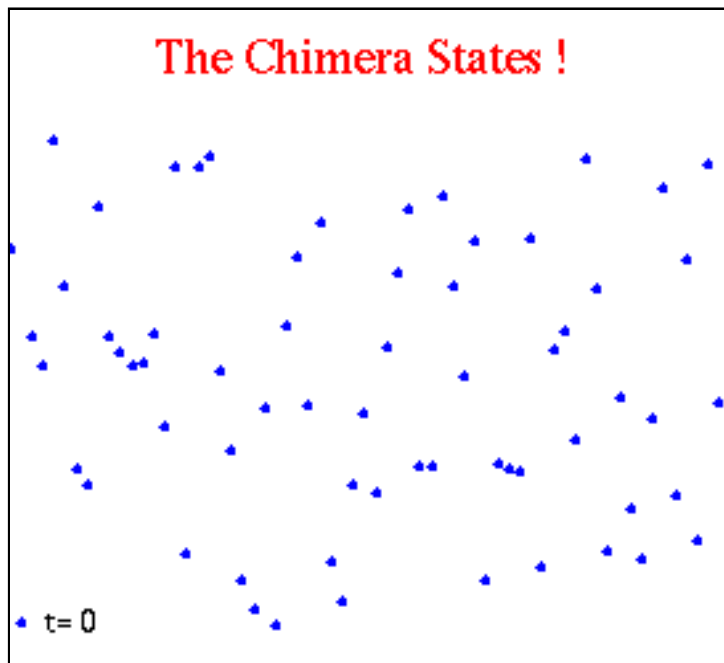
$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}\phi(x, t) = \omega - \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} G(x - x') \times \sin \left[ \phi(x, t) - \phi \left( x', t - \frac{|x - x'|}{v} \right) + \alpha \right] dx'$$

Do Chimera states exist in a time delayed system?

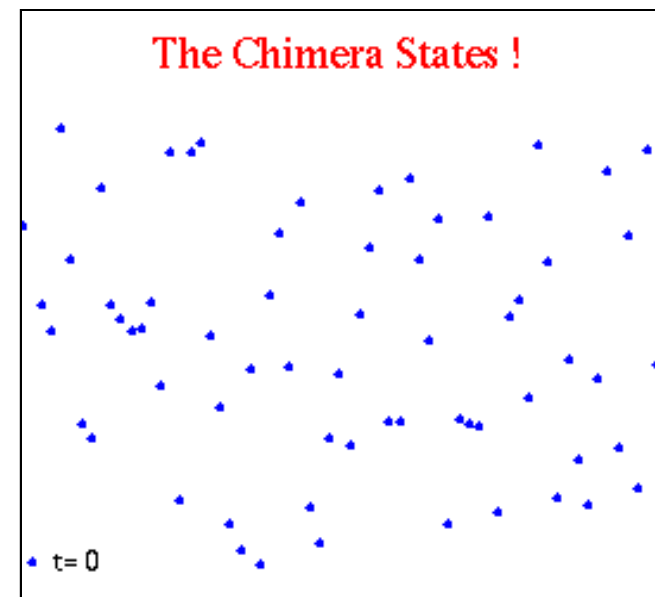


Sethia, Sen & Atay, PRL (2008)

## Chimera states

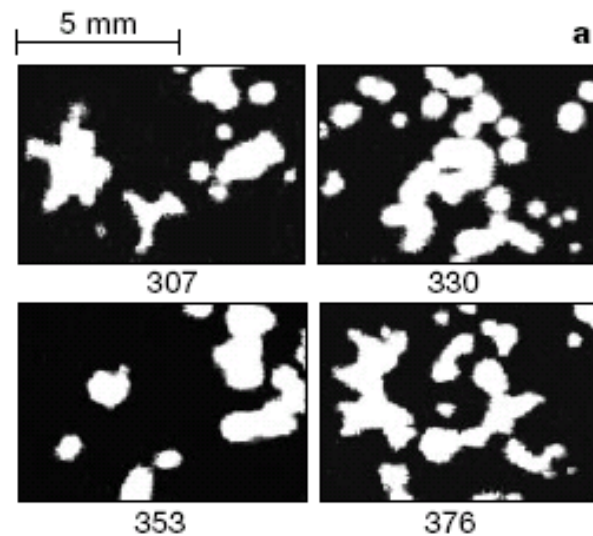


No delay



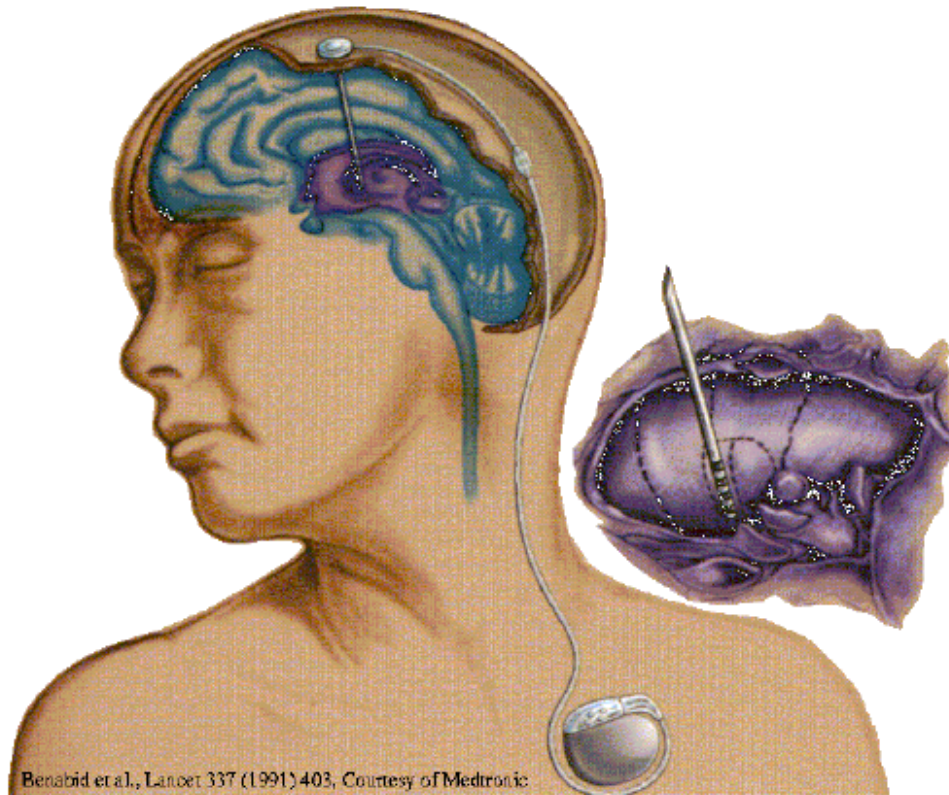
With delay

*Irregular clusters of synchronized phase oscillations in BZ reactions*



Vladimir K. Vanag, Lingfa Yang, Milos Dolnik, Anatol M. Zhabotinsky  
& Irving R. Epstein, *Nature* 406 (2000) 389

## Deep Brain Stimulation

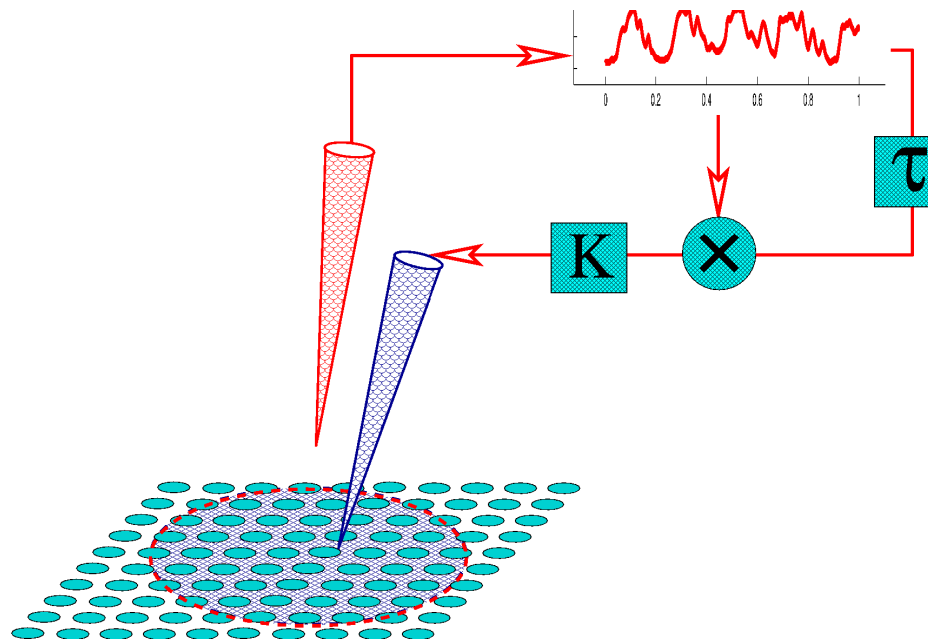


- strong synchronization of neuronal clusters may cause different disease symptoms like peripheral tremor (Morbus Parkinson) or epileptic seizures

### Treatment:

- strong permanent pulsetrain stimulation signal
- suppress or over-activate neuronal activity
- may cause severe side effects

## Stimulation with nonlinear delayed feedback



### Basic Idea:

Desynchronize using a feedback signal

Stimulation signal

$$S(t) = K \bar{Z}^2(t) \bar{Z}^*(t - \tau)$$

[3] O.V. Popovych, C. Hauptmann, and P.A. Tass, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **94**, 164102 (2005)

**Time delay helps in reducing the threshold for desynchronization**

## Model calculation using coupled limit cycle oscillator model

$$\dot{Z}_j(t) = (a_j + i\omega_j - |Z_j(t)|^2)Z_j(t) + C\bar{Z}(t) + \underbrace{K\bar{Z}^2(t)\bar{Z}^*(t-\tau)}_{\text{Stimulation Term}}$$

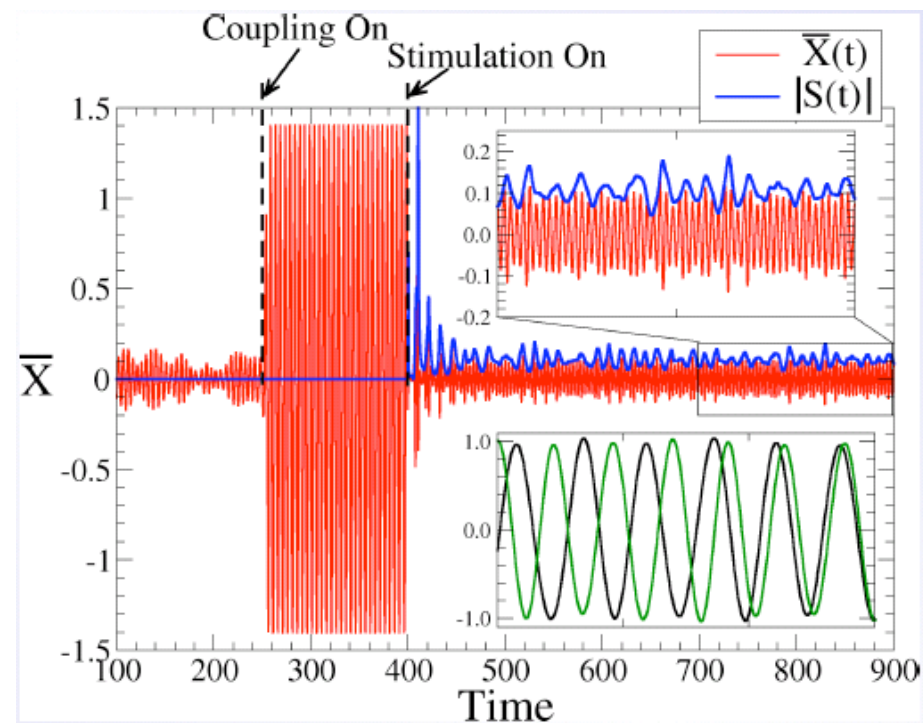
$$\bar{Z}(t) = \bar{X}(t) + i\bar{Y}(t) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^N Z_j(t)$$

$N = 100$ ,  $a_j = 1.0$ ,  
 $\{\omega_j\}$  – Gaussian distributed:  
 mean  $\Omega_0 = 2\pi/T$ ,  $T = 5$   
 deviation  $\sigma = 0.1$

$C = 1$  for  $t > 250$

$K = 150$  for  $t > 400$

delay  $\tau = 5.0 = T$

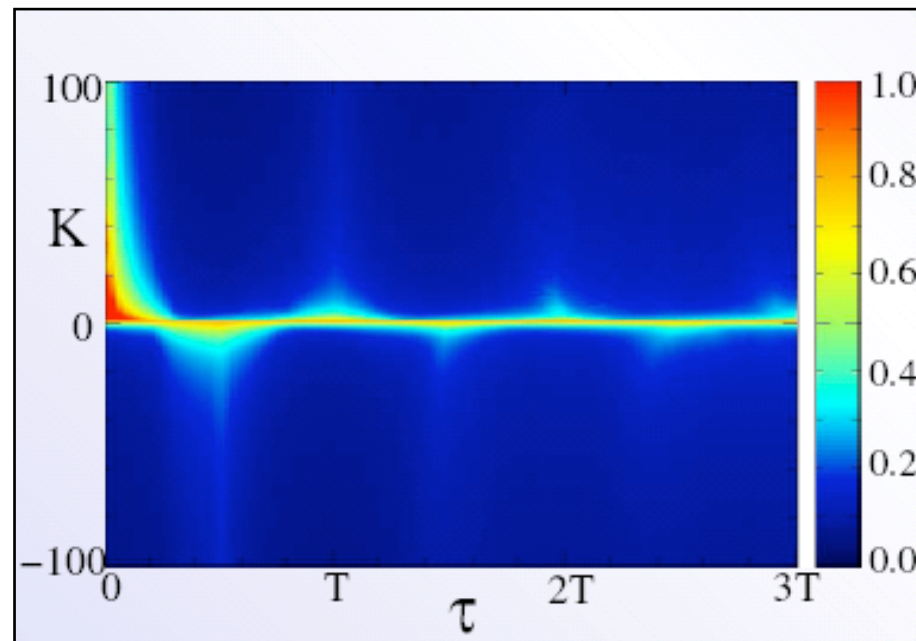




## Effective desynchronization of coupled limit cycle oscillators

The averaged order parameter:

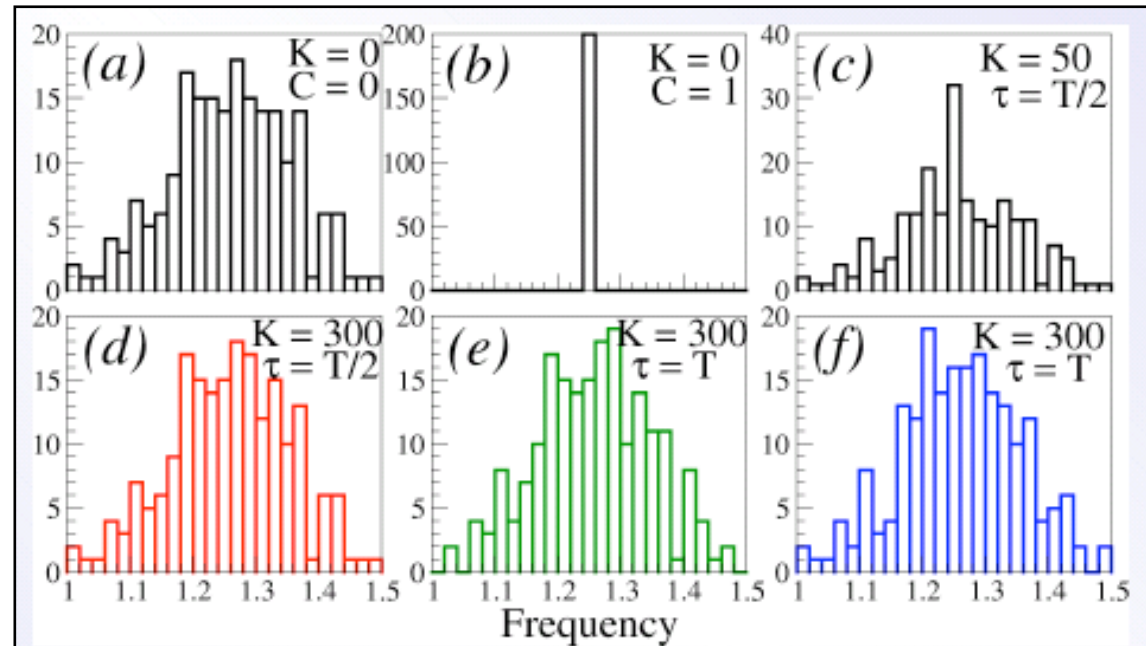
$$\langle R(t) \rangle := \left\langle \left| \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^N \frac{Z_j(t)}{|Z_j(t)|} \right| \right\rangle$$





## Desynchronization mechanism

Stimulation restores individual frequencies of oscillators to natural frequencies



## Concluding remarks:

- Coupled oscillator systems possess a rich variety of collective states which depend upon the coupling strength, nature of the coupling etc.
- *Time delay in the coupling can have profound effects on the collective dynamics e.g. higher frequency states, amplitude death for identical oscillators, forbidden states etc*
- Time delay can also enhance synchronization, facilitate desynchronization, induce bi-stability, influence chaos etc.
- *Useful paradigm for simulating and modeling many physical, chemical and biological systems*

- **Collective dynamics of time delay coupled oscillator systems is an active and fertile area of research in applied mathematics, physics, biology, neuroscience.**
- **Vast potential for applications – communication, chaos control, simulation of turbulence in fluids, population dynamics .....  
..... list keeps growing**
- **Enormous opportunities for experimental studies as well e.g. nonlinear circuits, artificial neural nets, live studies of neurons. coupled lasers etc.**

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