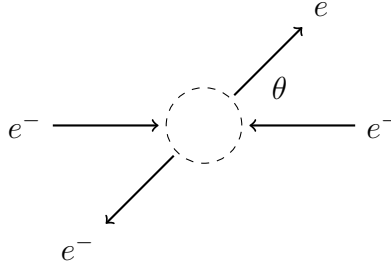
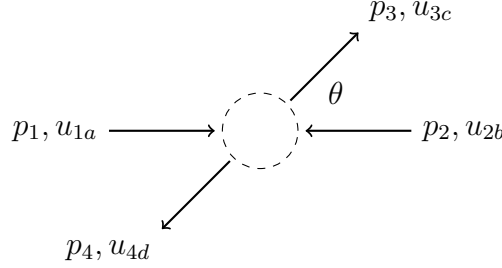


Moller scattering

The following diagram shows the geometry of a Moller scattering experiment.



Here is the same diagram with momentum labels p and Dirac spinor labels u .



In center of mass coordinates the momentum vectors are

$$p_1 = \begin{pmatrix} E \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ p \end{pmatrix} \quad p_2 = \begin{pmatrix} E \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ -p \end{pmatrix} \quad p_3 = \begin{pmatrix} E \\ p \sin \theta \cos \phi \\ p \sin \theta \sin \phi \\ p \cos \theta \end{pmatrix} \quad p_4 = \begin{pmatrix} E \\ -p \sin \theta \cos \phi \\ -p \sin \theta \sin \phi \\ -p \cos \theta \end{pmatrix}$$

electron 1 electron 2 electron 3 electron 4

Symbol p is incident momentum. Symbol E is total energy $E = \sqrt{p^2 + m^2}$ where m is electron mass. Polar angle θ is the observed scattering angle. Azimuth angle ϕ cancels out in scattering calculations.

The spinors are

$$u_{11} = \begin{pmatrix} E + m \\ 0 \\ p \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad u_{21} = \begin{pmatrix} E + m \\ 0 \\ -p \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad u_{31} = \begin{pmatrix} E + m \\ 0 \\ p_{3z} \\ p_{3x} + ip_{3y} \end{pmatrix} \quad u_{41} = \begin{pmatrix} E + m \\ 0 \\ p_{4z} \\ p_{4x} + ip_{4y} \end{pmatrix}$$

electron 1 electron 2 electron 3 electron 4
spin up spin up spin up spin up

$$u_{12} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ E + m \\ 0 \\ -p \end{pmatrix} \quad u_{22} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ E + m \\ 0 \\ p \end{pmatrix} \quad u_{32} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ E + m \\ p_{3x} - ip_{3y} \\ -p_{3z} \end{pmatrix} \quad u_{42} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ E + m \\ p_{4x} - ip_{4y} \\ -p_{4z} \end{pmatrix}$$

electron 1 electron 2 electron 3 electron 4
spin down spin down spin down spin down

Spinor subscripts have 1 for spin up and 2 for spin down. The spinors are not individually normalized. Instead, a combined spinor normalization constant $N = (E + m)^4$ will be used.

This is the probability density for spin state $abcd$. The formula is derived from Feynman diagrams for Moller scattering.

$$|\mathcal{M}_{abcd}|^2 = \frac{e^4}{N} \left| \frac{1}{t} (\bar{u}_{3c} \gamma^\mu u_{1a}) (\bar{u}_{4d} \gamma_\mu u_{2b}) - \frac{1}{u} (\bar{u}_{4d} \gamma^\nu u_{1a}) (\bar{u}_{3c} \gamma_\nu u_{2b}) \right|^2$$

no electron interchange electron interchange

Symbol e is electron charge. Symbols t and u are Mandelstam variables

$$t = (p_1 - p_3)^2$$

$$u = (p_1 - p_4)^2$$

Let

$$a_1 = (\bar{u}_{3c} \gamma^\mu u_{1a}) (\bar{u}_{4d} \gamma_\mu u_{2b}), \quad a_2 = (\bar{u}_{4d} \gamma^\nu u_{1a}) (\bar{u}_{3c} \gamma_\nu u_{2b})$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned} |\mathcal{M}_{abcd}|^2 &= \frac{e^4}{N} \left| \frac{a_1}{t} - \frac{a_2}{u} \right|^2 \\ &= \frac{e^4}{N} \left(\frac{a_1}{t} - \frac{a_2}{u} \right) \left(\frac{a_1}{t} - \frac{a_2}{u} \right)^* \\ &= \frac{e^4}{N} \left(\frac{a_1 a_1^*}{t^2} - \frac{a_1 a_2^*}{tu} - \frac{a_1^* a_2}{tu} + \frac{a_2 a_2^*}{u^2} \right) \end{aligned}$$

The expected probability density $\langle |\mathcal{M}|^2 \rangle$ is computed by summing $|\mathcal{M}_{abcd}|^2$ over all spin states and dividing by the number of inbound states. There are four inbound states.

$$\begin{aligned} \langle |\mathcal{M}|^2 \rangle &= \frac{1}{4} \sum_{a=1}^2 \sum_{b=1}^2 \sum_{c=1}^2 \sum_{d=1}^2 |\mathcal{M}_{abcd}|^2 \\ &= \frac{e^4}{4N} \sum_{a=1}^2 \sum_{b=1}^2 \sum_{c=1}^2 \sum_{d=1}^2 \left(\frac{a_1 a_1^*}{t^2} - \frac{a_1 a_2^*}{tu} - \frac{a_1^* a_2}{tu} + \frac{a_2 a_2^*}{u^2} \right) \end{aligned}$$

The Casimir trick uses matrix arithmetic to compute sums.

$$\begin{aligned} f_{11} &= \frac{1}{N} \sum_{abcd} a_1 a_1^* = \text{Tr} \left((\not{p}_3 + m) \gamma^\mu (\not{p}_1 + m) \gamma^\nu \right) \text{Tr} \left((\not{p}_4 + m) \gamma_\mu (\not{p}_2 + m) \gamma_\nu \right) \\ f_{12} &= \frac{1}{N} \sum_{abcd} a_1 a_2^* = \text{Tr} \left((\not{p}_3 + m) \gamma^\mu (\not{p}_1 + m) \gamma^\nu (\not{p}_4 + m) \gamma_\mu (\not{p}_2 + m) \gamma_\nu \right) \\ f_{22} &= \frac{1}{N} \sum_{abcd} a_2 a_2^* = \text{Tr} \left((\not{p}_4 + m) \gamma^\mu (\not{p}_1 + m) \gamma^\nu \right) \text{Tr} \left((\not{p}_3 + m) \gamma_\mu (\not{p}_2 + m) \gamma_\nu \right) \end{aligned}$$

Hence

$$\langle |\mathcal{M}|^2 \rangle = \frac{e^4}{4} \left(\frac{f_{11}}{t^2} - \frac{f_{12}}{tu} - \frac{f_{12}^*}{tu} + \frac{f_{22}}{u^2} \right)$$

The following formulas are equivalent to the Casimir trick. (Recall that $a \cdot b = a^\mu g_{\mu\nu} b^\nu$)

$$\begin{aligned} f_{11} &= 32(p_1 \cdot p_2)^2 + 32(p_1 \cdot p_4)^2 - 64m^2(p_1 \cdot p_3) + 64m^4 \\ f_{12} &= -32(p_1 \cdot p_2)^2 + 32m^2(p_1 \cdot p_2) + 32m^2(p_1 \cdot p_3) + 32m^2(p_1 \cdot p_4) - 32m^4 \\ f_{22} &= 32(p_1 \cdot p_2)^2 + 32(p_1 \cdot p_3)^2 - 64m^2(p_1 \cdot p_4) + 64m^4 \end{aligned}$$

In Mandelstam variables

$$\begin{aligned} s &= (p_1 + p_2)^2 \\ t &= (p_1 - p_3)^2 \\ u &= (p_1 - p_4)^2 \end{aligned}$$

the formulas are

$$\begin{aligned} f_{11} &= 8s^2 + 8u^2 - 64sm^2 - 64um^2 + 192m^4 \\ f_{12} &= -8s^2 + 64sm^2 - 96m^4 \\ f_{22} &= 8s^2 + 8t^2 - 64sm^2 - 64tm^2 + 192m^4 \end{aligned}$$

High energy approximation

For high energy experiments $E \gg m$ a useful approximation is to set $m = 0$ and obtain

$$\begin{aligned} f_{11} &= 8s^2 + 8u^2 \\ f_{12} &= -8s^2 \\ f_{22} &= 8s^2 + 8t^2 \end{aligned}$$

Hence

$$\begin{aligned} \langle |\mathcal{M}|^2 \rangle &= \frac{e^4}{4} \left(\frac{f_{11}}{t^2} - \frac{f_{12}}{tu} - \frac{f_{12}^*}{tu} + \frac{f_{22}}{u^2} \right) \\ &= \frac{e^4}{4} \left(\frac{8s^2 + 8u^2}{t^2} - \frac{-8s^2}{tu} - \frac{-8s^2}{tu} + \frac{8s^2 + 8t^2}{u^2} \right) \\ &= 2e^4 \left(\frac{s^2 + u^2}{t^2} + \frac{2s^2}{tu} + \frac{s^2 + t^2}{u^2} \right) \end{aligned}$$

Combine terms so $\langle |\mathcal{M}|^2 \rangle$ has a common denominator.

$$\langle |\mathcal{M}|^2 \rangle = 2e^4 \left(\frac{u^2(s^2 + u^2) + 2s^2tu + t^2(s^2 + t^2)}{t^2u^2} \right)$$

For $m = 0$ the Mandelstam variables are

$$\begin{aligned} s &= 4E^2 \\ t &= 2E^2(\cos \theta - 1) \\ u &= -2E^2(\cos \theta + 1) \end{aligned}$$

Hence

$$\begin{aligned}
\langle |\mathcal{M}|^2 \rangle &= 2e^4 \left(\frac{32E^8 \cos^4 \theta + 192E^8 \cos^2 \theta + 288E^8}{16E^8 (\cos \theta - 1)^2 (\cos \theta + 1)^2} \right) \\
&= 4e^4 \frac{(\cos^2 \theta + 3)^2}{(\cos \theta - 1)^2 (\cos \theta + 1)^2} \\
&= 4e^4 \frac{(\cos^2 \theta + 3)^2}{\sin^4 \theta}
\end{aligned}$$

The following equivalent formula can also be used.

$$\begin{aligned}
\langle |\mathcal{M}|^2 \rangle &= 2e^4 \left(\frac{s^2 + u^2}{t^2} + \frac{2s^2}{tu} + \frac{s^2 + t^2}{u^2} \right) \\
&= 2e^4 \left(\underbrace{\frac{1 + \cos^4(\theta/2)}{\sin^4(\theta/2)}}_{\text{no electron interchange}} + \underbrace{\frac{2}{\sin^2(\theta/2) \cos^2(\theta/2)}}_{\text{interaction term}} + \underbrace{\frac{1 + \sin^4(\theta/2)}{\cos^4(\theta/2)}}_{\text{electron interchange}} \right)
\end{aligned}$$

Cross section

The differential cross section is

$$\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega} = \frac{\langle |\mathcal{M}|^2 \rangle}{4(4\pi\epsilon_0)^2 s}, \quad s = (p_1 + p_2)^2$$

For the high energy approximation $m = 0$ we have

$$\langle |\mathcal{M}|^2 \rangle = 4e^4 \frac{(\cos^2 \theta + 3)^2}{\sin^4 \theta} \quad \text{and} \quad s = 4E^2$$

Substitute for $\langle |\mathcal{M}|^2 \rangle$.

$$\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega} = \frac{e^4}{(4\pi\epsilon_0)^2 s} \frac{(\cos^2 \theta + 3)^2}{\sin^4 \theta}$$

Noting that

$$e^2 = 4\pi\epsilon_0 \alpha \hbar c$$

we can also write

$$\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega} = \frac{\alpha^2 (\hbar c)^2}{s} \frac{(\cos^2 \theta + 3)^2}{\sin^4 \theta}$$

We can integrate $d\sigma$ to obtain a cumulative distribution function. Let $I(\theta)$ be the following integral of $d\sigma$.

$$I(\theta) = \int \frac{(\cos^2 \theta + 3)^2}{\sin^4 \theta} \sin \theta d\theta$$

The result is

$$I(\theta) = -\frac{8 \cos \theta}{\sin^2 \theta} - \cos \theta$$

The cumulative distribution function is

$$F(\theta) = \frac{I(\theta) - I(a)}{I(\pi - a) - I(a)}, \quad a \leq \theta \leq \pi - a$$

Angular support is limited to an arbitrary $a > 0$ because $I(0)$ and $I(\pi)$ are undefined.

The probability of observing scattering events in the interval θ_1 to θ_2 is

$$P(\theta_1 \leq \theta \leq \theta_2) = F(\theta_2) - F(\theta_1)$$

Notes

1. A. Zee page 134 has the cross section

$$\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega} = \left(\frac{e^2}{4\pi}\right)^2 \frac{1}{8E^2} f(\theta)$$

where $f(\theta)$ is the probability density function

$$f(\theta) = \frac{1 + \cos^4(\theta/2)}{\sin^4(\theta/2)} + \frac{2}{\sin^2(\theta/2) \cos^2(\theta/2)} + \frac{1 + \sin^4(\theta/2)}{\cos^4(\theta/2)}$$

The probability density function is equivalent to

$$f(\theta) = \frac{2(\cos^2 \theta + 3)^2}{\sin^4 \theta}$$

Hence for natural units $\varepsilon_0 = \hbar = c = 1$ and $e^2 = 4\pi\alpha$ the above cross section is equivalent to

$$\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega} = \frac{\alpha^2 (\hbar c)^2 (\cos^2 \theta + 3)^2}{4E^2 \sin^4 \theta}$$

2. In component notation, the trace operators of the Casimir trick become sums over a repeated index, in this case α .

$$\begin{aligned} f_{11} &= \left((\not{p}_3 + m)^\alpha {}_\beta \gamma^{\mu\beta} {}_\rho (\not{p}_1 + m)^\rho {}_\sigma \gamma^{\nu\sigma} {}_\alpha \right) \left((\not{p}_4 + m)^\alpha {}_\beta \gamma_\mu {}^\beta {}_\rho (\not{p}_2 + m)^\rho {}_\sigma \gamma_\nu {}^\sigma {}_\alpha \right) \\ f_{12} &= (\not{p}_3 + m)^\alpha {}_\beta \gamma^{\mu\beta} {}_\rho (\not{p}_1 + m)^\rho {}_\sigma \gamma^{\nu\sigma} {}_\tau (\not{p}_4 + m)^\tau {}_\delta \gamma_\mu {}^\delta {}_\eta (\not{p}_2 + m)^\eta {}_\xi \gamma_\nu {}^\xi {}_\alpha \\ f_{22} &= \left((\not{p}_4 + m)^\alpha {}_\beta \gamma^{\mu\beta} {}_\rho (\not{p}_1 + m)^\rho {}_\sigma \gamma^{\nu\sigma} {}_\alpha \right) \left((\not{p}_3 + m)^\alpha {}_\beta \gamma_\mu {}^\beta {}_\rho (\not{p}_2 + m)^\rho {}_\sigma \gamma_\nu {}^\sigma {}_\alpha \right) \end{aligned}$$

To convert the above formulas to Eigenmath code, the γ tensors need to be transposed so that repeated indices are adjacent to each other. Also, multiply γ^μ by the metric tensor to lower the index.

$$\begin{aligned} \gamma^{\beta\mu} {}_\rho &\rightarrow \text{gammaT} = \text{transpose}(\text{gamma}) \\ \gamma^\beta {}_{\mu\rho} &\rightarrow \text{gammaL} = \text{transpose}(\text{dot}(\text{gmunu}, \text{gamma})) \end{aligned}$$

Define the following 4×4 matrices.

$$\begin{aligned}(\not{p}_1 + m) &\rightarrow X1 = \text{pslash1} + m \, I \\(\not{p}_2 + m) &\rightarrow X2 = \text{pslash2} + m \, I \\(\not{p}_3 + m) &\rightarrow X3 = \text{pslash3} + m \, I \\(\not{p}_4 + m) &\rightarrow X4 = \text{pslash4} + m \, I\end{aligned}$$

Then for f_{11} we have the following Eigenmath code. The contract function sums over α .

$$\begin{aligned}(\not{p}_3 + m)^\alpha_\beta \gamma^{\mu\beta}_\rho (\not{p}_1 + m)^\rho_\sigma \gamma^{\nu\sigma}_\alpha &\rightarrow T1 = \text{contract}(\text{dot}(X3, \text{gammaT}, X1, \text{gammaT}), 1, 4) \\(\not{p}_4 + m)^\alpha_\beta \gamma^{\mu\beta}_\rho (\not{p}_2 + m)^\rho_\sigma \gamma^{\nu\sigma}_\alpha &\rightarrow T2 = \text{contract}(\text{dot}(X4, \text{gammaL}, X2, \text{gammaL}), 1, 4)\end{aligned}$$

Next, multiply then sum over repeated indices. The dot function sums over ν then the contract function sums over μ . The transpose makes the ν indices adjacent as required by the dot function.

$$f_{11} = \text{Tr}(\cdots \gamma^\mu \cdots \gamma^\nu) \text{Tr}(\cdots \gamma_\mu \cdots \gamma_\nu) \rightarrow \text{contract}(\text{dot}(T1, \text{transpose}(T2)))$$

Follow suit for f_{22} .

$$\begin{aligned}(\not{p}_4 + m)^\alpha_\beta \gamma^{\mu\beta}_\rho (\not{p}_1 + m)^\rho_\sigma \gamma^{\nu\sigma}_\alpha &\rightarrow T1 = \text{contract}(\text{dot}(X4, \text{gammaT}, X1, \text{gammaT}), 1, 4) \\(\not{p}_3 + m)^\alpha_\beta \gamma^{\mu\beta}_\rho (\not{p}_2 + m)^\rho_\sigma \gamma^{\nu\sigma}_\alpha &\rightarrow T2 = \text{contract}(\text{dot}(X3, \text{gammaL}, X2, \text{gammaL}), 1, 4)\end{aligned}$$

Then

$$f_{22} = \text{Tr}(\cdots \gamma^\mu \cdots \gamma^\nu) \text{Tr}(\cdots \gamma_\mu \cdots \gamma_\nu) \rightarrow \text{contract}(\text{dot}(T1, \text{transpose}(T2)))$$

The calculation of f_{12} begins with

$$\begin{aligned}(\not{p}_3 + m)^\alpha_\beta \gamma^{\mu\beta}_\rho (\not{p}_1 + m)^\rho_\sigma \gamma^{\nu\sigma}_\tau (\not{p}_4 + m)^\tau_\delta \gamma^\delta_\mu (\not{p}_2 + m)^\eta_\xi \gamma^\xi_\nu &\rightarrow T = \text{contract}(\text{dot}(X3, \text{gammaT}, X1, \text{gammaT}, X4, \text{gammaL}, X2, \text{gammaL}), 1, 6)\end{aligned}$$

Then sum over repeated indices μ and ν .

$$f_{12} = \text{Tr}(\cdots \gamma^\mu \cdots \gamma^\nu \cdots \gamma_\mu \cdots \gamma_\nu) \rightarrow \text{contract}(\text{contract}(T, 1, 3))$$