## 1.11 Relativity of simultaneity.

Draw a space-time diagram (in d = 2) for two inertial frames connected by a boost with velocity  $\beta$ : What are the angles between the axes t and t', x and x'? Draw lines of constant t and t' and convince yourself that the time order of two space-like events is not invariant.

We parametrize a boost along the x direction by

$$\tilde{t} = t \cosh \eta + x \sinh \eta \,, \tag{18}$$

$$\tilde{x} = t \sinh \eta + x \cosh \eta \,, \tag{19}$$

with  $\tilde{y} = y$  and  $\tilde{z} = z$ . Direct calculation using  $\cosh^2(x) - \sinh^2(x) = 1$  shows that  $\Delta s^2$  is invariant as desired.

Consider now in the system K the origin of the system K. Then x = 0 and

$$\tilde{x} = t \sinh \eta \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{t} = t \cosh \eta \,.$$
(20)

Dividing the two equations gives  $\tilde{x}/\tilde{t} = \tanh \eta$ . Since  $\beta = \tilde{x}/\tilde{t}$  is the relative velocity of the two systems, we have identified the physical meaning of the imaginary "rotation angle  $\eta$ " as the rapidity

$$\eta = \operatorname{arctanh}\left(\beta\right). \tag{21}$$

We obtain the lines of constant  $\tilde{t}_0$  (i.e. the  $\tilde{x}$  axis and its parallels) in the x - t plane by solving (18) for t,

$$t = -\beta x + \tilde{t}_0 \tag{22}$$

Now we recall that a straight-line with y = mx has the angle  $\tan \alpha = m$  to the x axis. Thus the rotation angle in our case is given by  $\eta$ : Since  $\beta \in [-1 : 1]$ ,  $\tilde{x}$  axis has the angle between 0 and  $45^{\circ}$  with the x axis.

In the same way, the  $\tilde{t}$  axis follows from (19) as

$$t = -\beta^{-1}x + \tilde{x}_0. \tag{23}$$

Now  $1/\beta$  is in the range  $[-\infty:1]$  and  $[1:\infty]$ ; the  $\tilde{t}$  axis has thus the angle between 0 and 45° to the t axis.



In the frame (t', x') moving with  $\beta = \tanh(\eta)$  relative to the frame (t, x), the axes are rotated by  $\eta$ . Space-time events like *B* that are inbetween t = const and t' = const have a different time order relative to *A*:  $t'_B > t'_A$  and  $t_A > t_B$ . Since  $|\eta| < 45^\circ$ , time-like events are time-ordered.

Note that the t', x' axes are orthogonal to each other (in space-time), although they are not plotted in the Euclidean geometry of  $\mathbb{R}^2$ .

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