OLD PROBLEMS IN LOW-ENERGY KN PHYSICS
AND PERSPECTIVES OPENING UP AT NEW MACHINES

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ABSTRACT

We survey the open problems in low–energy KN physics, in the perspective of using
the new machines presently planned, such as the $\phi$–factory DAΦNE at I.N.F.N. Nat. Labs.
in Frascati (as a source of tagged, low–energy kaons) and the KAON Factory at TRIUMF
(as a producer of intense, intermediate–energy kaon beams).

Contribution presented at the
International Symposium on Hypernuclear and Strange Particle Physics
Shimoda, Japan, December 9–12, 1991
1. INTRODUCTION.

The aim of this contribution is to review the state–of–the–art of both our experimental and theoretical knowledge of the low–energy $K N$ physics, and to stress the importance of better information on several of its parameters, notably the $K N Y$ coupling constants and the $K N$ sigma terms.

Our main motivation stems from the possibilities opening up in the next few years, when new machines such as DAΦNE and KAON will become operational. They will make possible again to perform systematic studies of $K N$ interactions, whose importance was stressed in the past\(^1\), in connection with the closing down of low–energy machines and/or kaon beam lines (particularly with the demolition of NIMROD and the closing of CERN beam lines); this left the remaining beam lines, at BNL and KEK, to carry all the load of the recent research with strange particles.

Now let us shortly describe the main, relevant features of DAΦNE and KAON, in order to elucidate their complementarity for such a systematic investigation.

DAΦNE ("Double Annular $\Phi$–factory for Nice Experiments") is the $\phi$–factory, due to replace Adone at the Frascati National Laboratories of I.N.F.N., and has already been approved as part of the Institution’s five–year plan. Because of its high commissioning luminosity\(^2\), its two interaction regions will be sources of $\simeq 436 \ K^\pm \ s^{-1}$, at a momentum of 126.9 MeV/c, with a momentum resolution of $\simeq 1.1 \times 10^{-2}$, as well as of $\simeq 303 \ K_L \ s^{-1}$, at a momentum of 110.1 MeV/c, with the slightly worse resolution of $\simeq 1.5 \times 10^{-2}$.

This will make possible to perform $K^\pm N$ experiments from the elastic threshold up to about 125 MeV/c and $K_L N$ experiments at 110 MeV/c with practically no background, since those from both $\pi^\pm$'s and leptons are easy to eliminate at a trigger level: because the $\pi^\pm$'s come almost all from events with three or more final particles, the former can be suppressed by momentum and acollinearity cuts, while the latter are completely eliminated by a momentum cut, which also eliminates collinear pions from $\phi \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^-$.

The KAON ("Kaons, Antiprotons, Other hadrons and Neutrinos") Factory design is an accelerator complex, recently approved by the Canadian Federal Government, which will use the existing TRIUMF $H^-$ cyclotron as an injector\(^3\). Six charged–kaon channels are foreseen with momenta ranging from 0.4 to 21 GeV/c, and the intensities of the beams in the lowest momentum range below 800 MeV/c go from a few to about a hundred millions
$K^- \text{ s}^{-1}$, $K^+$ beams being about twice more intense\textsuperscript{4}.

Decays in flight limit the purity of fixed–target–machine kaon beams: to perform measurements at momenta below 400 MeV/c, one has to use moderators, which at the same time decrease the kaon intensity and increase the beam contamination at the final target. This contamination requires identification of the incoming particles either via additional TOF or Čerenkov apparatuses: thus the advantage provided by the high intensities has to be balanced against the higher costs of the experiments. This situation contrasts that at the $\phi$ factories, where the intensities are lower by orders of magnitude, but contaminations can be controlled without additional setups.

The coming in operation of KAON and DAΦNE will improve significantly our possibility of making low–energy $KN$ experiments, both increasing statistics and covering in detail regions barely explored in the past: this will allow new, much more accurate analyses. Therefore in this contribution we want to discuss which phenomenological aspects of $KN$ physics may benefit from the situation. For this purpose we shall briefly review the present status of the phenomenology and mention a number of problems which are still open.

2. THE STATUS OF PRESENT INFORMATION ON $KN$ INTERACTIONS AT LOW MOMENTA.

The low–energy interactions for both $K^+N$ and $K^-N$ are described in terms of phase shifts. The amplitudes for the two sectors ($S = +1$ and $S = -1$) are related by analyticity and crossing; additionally, the regeneration amplitude is a linear combination of the two. In the following we shall give a picture of the situation of the phase shifts for each sector separately. It has to be observed that this information comes basically from the charged–kaon induced reactions: although it has occasionally been suggested to analyze simultaneously these data and the regeneration ones\textsuperscript{5}, the statistical weight of the latter has been insufficient to provide more than a mere consistency check\textsuperscript{6}.

Let us start with the $S = +1$ sector. Most $K^+N$ data come from experiments performed more than ten years ago, excepting some higher–momentum polarization data coming from KEK. The low–energy region is described by $S$– and $P$–waves for both $I = 0,1$ isospin channels: while $K^+p$ scattering is pure $I = 1$, with a repulsive $S$–wave and a weak $P$–wave which starts being felt only in the higher–momentum range, $K^+n$ scattering (whose extraction from $K^+d$ requires a treatment of the three–body problem
for the $Knp$ system) contains also an $I = 0$ amplitude, characterized by a small $S$–wave scattering length and a weak $P$–wave (as in the $I = 1$ channel).

The general behavior of the low–energy amplitudes is thus rather well understood. Interactions of $K^+$’s with the nuclear constituents correspond to a mean–free path of about 7 fm, so that they are sensitive probes of nuclear matter; in the last few years much debate has been given to the comparison of $K^+$ scattering on nucleons with that on nuclei (in particular on carbon), which led to the suggestive hypothesis of a possible swelling of nucleons in nuclei. The present uncertainty on the relevant data does not allow sharp predictions, so that more precise information is necessary.

Turning now to the $S = -1$ sector, the most typical features of low–energy $\bar{K}N$ scattering are its large unphysical regions, which start at the $\pi\Lambda$ threshold for $I = 1$ and at the $\pi\Sigma$ one for $I = 0$, and extend to the elastic $\bar{K}N$ one. The importance of these regions is enhanced by the presence of both the $P$–wave $\Sigma(1385)$ and the $S$–wave $\Lambda(1405)$ resonances: the scattering amplitudes there have to be analytic continuations of the corresponding ones in the low–energy $\bar{K}N$ channels.

The low–energy amplitudes are described by a partial–wave formalism which has to include: a) couplings between all the open channels, b) analyticity in the energy plane, and c) unitarity in all channels considered. The most common one is the K–matrix formalism, where one writes the partial–wave $T$–matrix $\hat{T}^l_I$ as

$$\hat{T}^l_I = \hat{K}^l_I - i\hat{Q}(2l+1).$$

Here $\hat{K}^l_I$ is a real Hermitian matrix, and $\hat{Q}$ is the diagonal matrix of the c.m.s. momenta $q_i$ (or a modification of the latter, analytic in the cut $s$–plane and having the same behavior at the thresholds). Several parameters are usually required to describe the low–energy region above and below threshold, leaving much too large a margin for ambiguities, given the quality of presently available data, unless the parameters are otherwise constrained by suitable theoretical arguments.

A little accounting shows that, even neglecting the weakly coupled $\pi\pi\Lambda$ channel, the formalism requires, for each coefficient of a power series in $s$ for either $\hat{K}^l_I$ or its inverse $\hat{M}^l_I$, three parameters for $I = 0$ and six for $I = 1$, or a total of 36 parameters to describe all channels up to order $q^3$ with $S$– and $P$–waves.

Note that the charge states of the same system have been counted as one channel: though the differences in threshold energies could be considered purely electromagnetic
effects, the situation is here more complex than in the $\pi N$ case, even in the physical region. We have indeed $\omega_{K^0 n} - \omega_{K^0 p} = +8.13$ MeV, corresponding to a $p_L(K^-) = 90$ MeV/c, versus $\omega_{\pi^0 n} - \omega_{\pi^0 p} = -3.79$ MeV: thus $K^0 n$ threshold effects (cusps and/or dips) will be observable in the momentum region covered by the $\phi$–factory kaons, and could provide valuable information on the interplay between electromagnetic and strong interactions in the $K$–matrix representation of the $\bar{K}N$ amplitudes.

Presently available low–energy data consist essentially of integrated cross sections, with extremely scarce angular distributions and polarizations, coming in only at higher energies; as mentioned above, this, and the limited statistics, do not allow to determine uniquely the parameters, and additional constraints are usually introduced.

As a typical example of this procedure one can mention the use of fixed–$t$ dispersion relations\textsuperscript{10} (for symbols and conventions, see Ref. 9)

$$D^+(\omega) = D^+(0) + \sum_Y \frac{\omega R_Y g_Y^2}{\omega Y (\omega - \omega_Y)} + \frac{\omega}{\pi} \int_{\omega_{thr}}^{\infty} \left[ \frac{A^+(\omega)}{\omega'(\omega' - \omega)} - \frac{A^-(\omega')}{\omega'(\omega' + \omega)} \right] d\omega',$$

connecting the threshold amplitudes and the integrals over the unphysical region, entering the last term (given by fits to the low–energy data), to data on real and imaginary parts of the amplitudes at higher energies.

Good knowledge of the real parts is essential in making such constraints tight, calling in turn for high–quality measurements of elastic cross sections in the Coulomb–nuclear interference region: the accuracy of available data has till now limited the use of these constraints to $t = 0$, where the imaginary part of the amplitude is provided by the optical theorem. Drastic improvements over the quality of the data used for amplitude analyses\textsuperscript{7} (both $d\sigma/d\Omega$ and polarization $P$) are required to extend them also to $t \neq 0$.

In this context one has to remark that the validity of dispersion relations is related to that of microcausality at short distances; the use of dispersive constraints in data analysis may then weaken the significance of the tests on the above validity. Therefore the availability of new, accurate, low–energy data should be regarded as an essential contribution to an unbiased understanding of the basics of fundamental interactions.

A general feature of all the parametrizations is a strongly absorptive interaction in both isospin channels. However, the detailed structure of the amplitudes, particularly in the unphysical region, is far from being determined, mainly due to the low statistics of the experiments performed up to now on inelastic production of these low–mass systems\textsuperscript{13}.
3. THE STILL UNANSWERED PROBLEMS OF LOW–ENERGY $KN$ PHYSICS.

The uncertainties discussed in the previous section, on the determination of the low–energy $KN$ and $KN$ amplitudes, reflect on uncertainties in the evaluation of a number of quantities, which are fundamental to our understanding of strong–interaction physics in the strange–particle sector. In particular we are referring to the $KNY$ coupling constants, to the $\sigma$–terms, and to the still open puzzle posed by the energy shift and the width of the X–ray lines of kaonic hydrogen.

Coupling constants were once considered fundamental, or studied as tests of $SU(3)_f$ symmetry; they have regained status as sensitive tests of the structure of the explicit chiral–symmetry breaking of QCD$^{14}$, via their deviations $\Delta_{K NY}(0)$ from Goldberger–Treiman relations, defined by

$$\sqrt{\frac{1}{2}(M_N + M_Y)} G_A^Y N(0) = f_K g_{KNY} + \Delta_{KNY}(0),$$

and strongly dependent on the nature and parameters of this breaking in QCD$^{15}$.

Note that the most advanced analyses$^{16}$ still yield errors of order unit on $g_{KNY}^2/4\pi$, one order of magnitude larger than errors in the $\pi N$ case! To reach definite conclusions, one needs thus one order of magnitude improvements$^{17}$ on the determination of the couplings: due to the cancellations involved in the dispersive integrals, this requires even better improvements in the actual data. For the $K N \Sigma$ coupling (the smaller and more uncertain of the two) $K_S$ regeneration in hydrogen is the best source of information, directly giving (through isospin symmetry) the charge–odd combination of $K^{\pm} n$ amplitudes required for the integrands, and thus eliminating part of the above–mentioned cancellations, while at the same time dispensing us from the uncertainties related to the neutron–amplitude extraction from $K^{\pm} d$ data$^{18}$.

It is also worthwhile mentioning that deuterium scattering data do not exist at all below a momentum of about 400$MeV/c$, and one has to replace them with extrapolations (with inherently larger errors) over a quite sizeable energy interval. Scattering data on deuterium are also interesting per se, as a testing ground of multichannel, three–body calculations.

A second problem, related both to the nature of the chiral–symmetry breaking and to the structure of the baryon octet wavefunctions, is the determination of the so–called $\sigma$–terms, proportional to the elastic, forward scattering amplitudes for zero four–momentum
kaons. Their values can be extracted in the most economical way using the values for
the amplitudes at zero laboratory–energy, at momentum transfers \( t \leq 0 \) obtainable from
fixed–\( t \) dispersion relations\(^{19}\).

Amplitudes at zero laboratory–energy do not have any special theoretical significance
in themselves: it is only because the Cheng–Dashen point for \( KN \)–scattering amplitudes,
\( t = 2m_K^2 \), \( s = u = M_N^2 \), lies in the \( t \)–channel unphysical region, that one is forced to
construct a “modified Cheng–Dashen technique”, employing zero–energy amplitudes, to
get at the \( KN \) \( \sigma \)–terms. These, and in particular their \( I_t = 0 \) part
\[
\sigma_{KN}^{(0)} = \frac{m_s + m}{m_s - m} \frac{1 + y}{1 - y} \left[ \langle N | - \frac{3}{4} H_8(0) | N \rangle \right] + O\left(\frac{m_d - m_u}{m_s - m}\right),
\]
are an extremely sensitive and direct measurement of the scalar, strange–quark density in
the nucleon, measured by the ratio
\[
y = \langle N|\bar{s}s|N\rangle/\langle N|\frac{1}{2}(\bar{u}u + \bar{d}d)|N\rangle.
\]

The above \( \sigma \)–term is a much more direct indication of the value of \( y \) than the \( \pi N \)
one
\[
\sigma_{\pi N} = \frac{m}{m_s - m} \frac{1}{1 - y} \left[ \langle N | - 3 H_8(0) | N \rangle \right],
\]
where it is hard to separate the strong dependence on \( y \) from the equally strong one on
the light–quark mass ratio \( m_s/m \).

The ratio \( y \) has been the subject of a recent, lively theoretical debate\(^{20}\) (mostly based
on model–dependent assumptions), with wide–ranging implications, from OZI–rule viola-
tions in scattering and production of hadrons, through the validity of lattice approaches to
baryon structure and spectroscopy, to the equation of state of dense baryonic matter, with
the enticing possibility of “kaon condensation” in primordial baryogensys, dense neutron
stars, and relativistic heavy–ion collisions\(^{21}\).

Employing \( t \)–channel unitarity and analyticity, plus the hypothesis that the \( S \)–wave
dominates this channel at low values of \( t \), the on–mass–shell, zero–energy amplitudes have
been connected to the \( \sigma \)–terms, via the phases \( \phi_I(t) \) of the isospin–\( I \), \( t \)–channel \( \bar{N}N \rightarrow \bar{K}K \)
amplitude, related to the \( S \)–wave meson–meson ones via coupled–channel unitarity in an
\( N/D \) representation\(^{19}\), and derived a relation of the form
\[
D_I^{(+)}(t) = \frac{2\sigma_{KN}^{(I)}}{f_K^2} \frac{P_I(t)}{P_I(2m_K^2)} \exp\left[ \frac{t}{\pi} \int \frac{\phi_I(t')dt'}{t' - t} \right] + \text{Born term contributions},
\]
where $P_I(t)$ is a suitably smooth function of $t$, analytic in the $t$–plane cut from $t_L < 0$ to $t = 4m_K^2$. By dividing the zero–energy amplitudes (obtained from dispersion relations) by the Omnès function in eq. (7), and subtracting the Born terms, one extrapolates this representation to $t = 2m_K^2$ to extract the $I_t = 0 \sigma$–term, and from it the ratio $y$.

In contrast with the small absolute uncertainty of the method when applied to $\pi N$–amplitudes$^{19,22}$, its application to the $K N$ case carries an intrinsic uncertainty of the order of 100 MeV for both $K^\pm N \sigma$–terms, which could be adequate to discriminate between at least some of the existing, model–dependent predictions$^{20}$, were not the errors coming from the data several times larger$^{19,23}$, and indeed comparable with the estimates themselves. A definite answer to the $\sigma$–term problem, both for the $K N$ and the $\pi N$ systems, could thus come only through a drastic reduction in the errors of the first one, extremely sensitive to those on the low–energy and unphysical $\bar{K}N$ regions$^{23}$, due to large cancellations in the dispersive integrals and between these latter and the Born terms.

Another problem, which for a long time has puzzled baryon spectroscopists, is the nature of the $\Lambda(1405)$, shifting with times from the $S$–matrix language (CDD pole, $\bar{K}N$ bound state, or resonance?) to the quark–gluon one ($qqq$ baryon, $\bar{K}N$ bound state, multiquark or hybrid state?). Indeed even its correct reproduction remains an outstanding problem in quark–model phenomenology$^{24}$.

The state can be directly observed (and has indeed been seen$^{13}$) only in $\Sigma \pi$ (and possibly in $\Lambda \pi \pi$) inelastic production: the determination of its coupling to the channel $\bar{K}N$ requires an extremely stable extrapolation of the parametrization for the threshold–region into the unphysical one, possible only with much smaller error corridors and more stringent analyticity constraints than those presently available$^{25}$.

The $\Lambda(1405)$ nature reflects on the probabilities for radiative capture at threshold (the “strange” analogues of the Panofsky ratio in the $\pi N$ system) as well: present measurements are just above observability$^{26}$ (mostly because of the extremely high backgrounds due to the pion contamination of the beams), and therefore unable to decide between different, if not conflicting, theoretical expectations$^{27}$.

The high purity of the $\phi$–factory as a kaon source makes it an ideal environment for this kind of physics.

Last, but not least, we wish to mention the still open mystery of kaonic hydrogen: the three experiments performed up to now on this system$^{28}$ have collected a total of only a few tens of events interpreted as atomic $K$–lines, above backgrounds orders of magnitude
larger. Even their identification as bona–fide kaonic–hydrogen spectral lines is open to questioning\textsuperscript{29}. Also, to the best of our knowledge, all models purported to reproduce them conflict either with \(\bar{K}N\) amplitude analyses or with simple, quantum–mechanical pictures of absorptive processes: thus these models either failed to solve this mystery, or were able to explain the data only at the price of highly non–smooth or even unphysical energy behaviors of the amplitudes\textsuperscript{30}.

An experiment, planned to clearly identify and measure energies and widths of the \(K^-p\) (and \(K^-d\)) \(K\)–lines, could either eliminate the mystery or open the way to new and unforeseen physics in this very–low–energy domain of the strong interactions.

4. A SKETCH OF AN EXPERIMENTAL AND THEORETICAL PROGRAM FOR \(KN\) PHYSICS AT THE NEW MACHINES.

This last section of our review will be covering what we believe are the programs to be carried out, both by the experimentalists working at the new machines and by the theorists in order to fully exploit the data these machines will be producing.

In 1990, at the Vancouver “Workshop on Science at the KAON Factory”, we presented a list of experiments we then thought could, and ought to, be carried on only at such a facility\textsuperscript{31}. The new possibilities, opening up at a suitable \(\phi\)–factory such as DAΦNE\textsuperscript{32}, force us to slightly revise that list.

Its first item was “a dedicated, low–energy (\(p_L \leq 300\) MeV/c) \(K^-p\) or \(K^-d\)” scattering “experiment with the cleanest beam–line afforded by present–day technology”: probably for \(p_L \leq 125\) MeV/c a dedicated detector at the \(\phi\)–factory DAΦNE can win over a fixed–target experiment, due to the extreme cleanliness of the former in this momentum range, even despite its low kaon–production rate. A possibility we did not mention was that of doing experiments with polarized targets: fixed–target machines are indeed the only place where these measurements can be performed. The latter, essential to any good amplitude analysis, have been up to now unavailable for momenta below about 800 MeV/c. Note in this respect that DAΦNE can produce about \(3 \times 10^6\) \(K^-p\) interactions in a typical apparatus\textsuperscript{32} in a “Snowmass year” (\(i.e.\) 10\(^7\) s) of experimentation, enough to measure angular distributions in all channels, and also polarizations, but the latter only for the self–analyzing, final–hyperon states.

Second item on that list was a “good quality \(K^0_S\)–regeneration experiment on hydrogen (and deuterium) with an intense, low–momentum \(K^0_L\) beam”: here DAΦNE can help
at very low momenta (110 MeV/c only), measuring tagged $K^0_S$ regenerations (together with all inelastic channels) in the same apparatus used to measure $K^-$ (and $K^+$) interactions with hydrogen (or deuterium, changing the gas filling the “target” fiducial volume), again with “yearly” rates of the order of $10^6$ events.

The third item was “a kaonic–hydrogen and deuterium experiment”: Shimoda should see presented the first results coming out of the new japanese experiment, which hopefully should solve (or reopen?) the mystery. Undeniably, KAON fluxes shall make statistics even better, and thus offer a further, stringent constraint on $KN$ amplitude analyses, fixing the $K^-p$ and $K^-d$ scattering lengths via the energy shifts and widths of the atomic 1s levels.

Last item on the list was “an elastic–scattering experiment in the Coulomb–nuclear interference region to map $\rho = D/A$”, the real–over–imaginary–part ratio, “over reasonably small energy steps”, where of course the wide momentum ranges that will be provided by KAON should prove invaluable.

We wish to add now to this list the remark that a DAΦNE detector dedicated to kaon experiments on gaseous $H_2$ and $D_2$ can continue is active life, without substantial changes, to measure $K^+-, K^-, and K^0_L$–interactions on heavier gases as well ($He, N_2, O_2, Ne, Ar, Kr, Xe$), exploring not only the properly “nuclear” aspects of these interactions, such as the aforementioned nucleon “swelling” in nuclei, but also generating $\pi\Sigma, \pi\Lambda$ and $\pi\pi\Lambda$ systems with invariant masses in the $KN$ unphysical region, with statistics substantially higher than those now available, due to the $\simeq 4\pi$ geometry allowed by a colliding–beam–machine detector.

All these experiments will provide data of the same quantity and quality now available only for the $\pi N$ system: theoretical tools for their analysis must thus be improved as well, to meet the standards required by this, long awaited for, “forward leap” in the quality of the $KN$ data. Tools of just this level have since long been provided for $\pi N$ amplitude analysis by the so–called “Karlsruhe–Helsinki collaboration” headed over the years by Prof. G. Höhler; their software can not be straightforwardly “imported” to do $KN$ amplitude analyses, mainly because of the complicated analytic structures of the low-energy $KN$ strong–interaction amplitudes. Much for the same reason, the dispersive treatment of Coulomb corrections developed at NORDITA can not be immediately transferred to the strange sector. It has to be recalled that the old data were almost always analyzed using, for these corrections, the old, approximate formula of Dalitz and Tuan, which may be inapplicable to a strongly absorptive interaction close to threshold.
Since the basic principles on which both approaches are based have to hold also for the $KN$ system, as for the $\pi N$ one, it remains for us to work out the details of a partial-wave-analysis procedure, applicable to a system strongly absorptive at threshold such as the $\bar{K}N$ one, and possessing ab-initio the following requirements: i) consistency with both fixed-$t$ and partial-wave dispersion relations; ii) crossing symmetry (and isotopic-spin symmetry as well, to describe simultaneously charge-exchange and regeneration data); iii) analyticity in $t$ beyond the Lehman ellipses, with the correct low-mass, $t$-channel-cut discontinuities given by the $\pi\pi$ cut; iv) a complete treatment of Coulomb corrections.

Both of us have in the past carried out parts of this program (as many others have also done more or less at the same epoch), but only for limited purposes, such as extrapolations either to the hyperon poles$^{16}$ or to the Cheng-Dashen point$^{19}$, or studies of Coulomb effects at threshold$^{29}$: what remains to be done is a merging together of all these techniques into a “global” analysis, on which work is presently under way.

In this perspective we have advanced the proposal to I.N.F.N. for a program of extensive collaboration, code-named KILN (for “Kaon Interactions at Low energies with Nucleons”), which has already received an initial, and thus limited, financial support.

Participation in this collaboration is highly welcome, and we take this occasion for calling upon all theorists which have been or wish to be active in this still open and very much alive (despite greatly exaggerated rumors on the contrary$^{36}$) field of particle physics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One of us (G. V.) would like to express here his gratitude to Colciencias for their substantial support to his participation in this Conference. Also, exchanges of information with theorists and experimentalists involved in the planning of experiments at both machines, KAON and DAΦNE, is gratefully acknowledged by both authors.

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36. The same also happened to Mark Twain, from which we took the liberty of borrowing the pun.