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Foundations of Quantum Mechanics: Assignment 9

Exercise 34: Essay question. Explain why Schrödinger's theory Sm has a many-worlds character.

Exercise 35: Marginal and conditional distribution
Consider two random variables X, Y that assume only values ± 1. Their joint distribution can be described by a 2×2 table of probabilities. **(a)** Give a generic example of such a table (i.e., one without symmetries). For your table, compute **(b)** the marginal distribution of X and **(c)** that of Y, as well as **(d)** the conditional distribution of X, given that $Y = +1$, **(e)** the expectation value $\mathbb{E}(X)$, and **(f)** $\mathbb{E}(XY)$.

Exercise 36: Spin singlet state
Verify through direct computation that in the spin space $\mathbb{C}^4 = \mathbb{C}^2 \otimes \mathbb{C}^2$ of two spin-$\frac{1}{2}$ particles,

$$\begin{aligned} &|x\text{-up}\rangle|x\text{-down}\rangle - |x\text{-down}\rangle|x\text{-up}\rangle \\ =\ &|y\text{-up}\rangle|y\text{-down}\rangle - |y\text{-down}\rangle|y\text{-up}\rangle \\ =\ &|z\text{-up}\rangle|z\text{-down}\rangle - |z\text{-down}\rangle|z\text{-up}\rangle \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

up to phase factors.

Exercise 37: Allcock's paradox[1]
Allcock considered a "soft detector," i.e., one for which the particle may fly through the detector volume for a while before being detected. An as effective description, Allcock proposed an imaginary potential. For example, for a single particle in 1d and a detector in the right half axis, he considered the Schrödinger equation

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial \psi}{\partial t} = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \psi}{\partial x^2} - iv 1_{x \geq 0} \psi \tag{2}$$

with $v > 0$ a constant. The time evolution then is not unitary.

(a) Derive from (2) the continuity equation

$$\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} = -\mathrm{div}\, j - \tfrac{2v}{\hbar} 1_{x \geq 0} \rho \tag{3}$$

for $\rho = |\psi|^2$ and $j = \frac{\hbar}{m} \mathrm{Im}[\psi^* \partial\psi/\partial x]$. Eq. (3) is the evolution of the probability density of a particle that moves along Bohmian trajectories and disappears spontaneously (stochastically) at rate $2v/\hbar$ whenever it stays in the region $x \geq 0$. $\|\psi_t\|^2$ is a decreasing function of t and represents the probability that the particle has not been detected (and disappeared from the model) yet.

(b) To obain an effective description of a hard detector (i.e., one that will detect the particle as soon as it reaches the region $x \geq 0$), Allcock assumed that ψ_0 is concentrated in $\{x < 0\}$ and took the limit $v \to \infty$, but found that the particle never gets detected ($\|\psi_t\|^2 = \text{const.}$)! That is parallel to the quantum Zeno effect.

[1] G.R. Allcock: The time of arrival in quantum mechanics II. The individual measurement. *Annals of Physics* **53**: 286–310 (1969)

Prove the following simplified version: In a 2d Hilbert space $\mathbb{C}^2$, let $\psi_0 = (1,0)$ evolve with the (non-self-adjoint) Hamiltonian

$$H_v = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & -iv \end{pmatrix} . \tag{4}$$

Then for every $t > 0$, $\psi_t = e^{-iH_v t/\hbar}\psi_0 \to \psi_0$ as $v \to \infty$.

Hand in: Tuesday December 17, 2019, in class

Reading assignment due Friday December 20, 2019:
A. Einstein, B. Podolsky, N. Rosen: Can Quantum-Mechanical Description of Physical Reality Be Considered Complete? *Physical Review* **47**: 777–780 (1935)