

Title: Quantum Field Theory for Cosmology - Lecture 20240118

Speakers: Achim Kempf

Collection: Quantum Field Theory for Cosmology (PHYS785/AMATH872)

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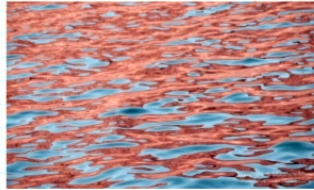
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QFT for Cosmology, Achim Kempf, Lecture 4

From Heisenberg to Schrödinger picture

Water:

$$\hat{\phi}(x, t)$$



Probe amplitudes, e.g., with a cork:



Quantum field:

$$\hat{\phi}(x, t)$$

How to visualise an operator-valued field?

Probe amplitudes, e.g., with atoms (Lecture 8):



For now...

⇒ At each  $x$  obtain real-valued measurement outcome,  $\phi(x)$ .

Analogous to measuring  $\hat{q}_a$  and obtaining measurement outcomes  $q_a$ .

Definition: Assume that  $\phi: \mathbb{R}^3 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is an arbitrary function. Then we define

$$|\phi\rangle \in \mathcal{X}$$

to be the joint eigenvector of all  $\hat{\phi}(x, t)$  obeying

Assume we have some means to measure

$$\hat{\phi}(x, t)$$

at a time  $t$  for all  $x \in \mathbb{R}^3$ .

Q: Why possible in principle?

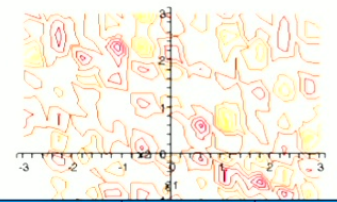
A: Because  $\hat{\phi}^\dagger(x, t) = \hat{\phi}(x, t)$  and  $[\hat{\phi}(x, t), \hat{\phi}(x', t)] = 0 \forall x, x' \in \mathbb{R}^3$

Note: The  $\hat{\phi}(x, t) \forall x \in \mathbb{R}^3$  are a maximal set of commuting observables.

Example: Assume system is in the vacuum state  $|\Omega\rangle$ .

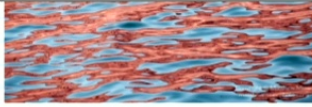
What is then a typical measurement outcome  $\phi(x)$ ?

Shown are the level curves of a typical measurement outcome  $\phi(x)$ .



The measurement collapses the system into the ground state:

$$\phi(x, t)$$



Quantum field:

$$\hat{\phi}(x, t)$$

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↑ i.e. for all  $x \in \mathbb{R}^3$   
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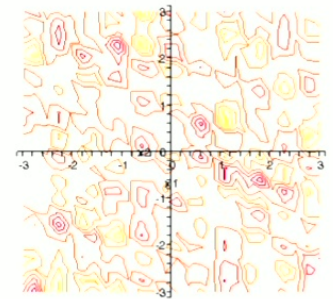
$$\hat{\phi}(x, t)|\phi\rangle = \phi(x)|\phi\rangle \quad \text{for all } x \in \mathbb{R}^3$$

Analogous to:  $\hat{q}_a(t)|q\rangle = q_a|q\rangle$  for all  $a = 1, \dots, 3N$   
↑ of particles

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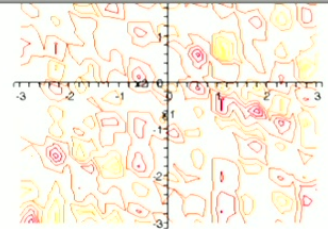
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### How to calculate in the Schrödinger picture?

Preparations:

Hilbert basis: The set  $\{|\phi\rangle\}$

of all joint eigenvectors of the  $\hat{\phi}(x,t)$  for all  $x \in \mathbb{R}^3$  can be used to form a "complete ON basis" of  $\mathcal{X}$ . (up to functional analytic subtleties)

### Resolution of the identity:

⇒ For any  $|\Psi\rangle \in \mathcal{X}$  we have:

$$|\Psi\rangle = \int_{\phi \in \mathcal{X}(\text{ON})} |\phi\rangle \langle \phi | \Psi \rangle D[\phi]$$

↑ it's more subtle really

analogous to:

$$|q\rangle = \int |q\rangle \langle q | \Psi \rangle d^3q$$

Wave function:  $\Psi(q)$

### The "Wave functional"

#### Recall QM:

- Assume  $\{\hat{q}_i\}_{i=1, \dots, N}$  is compl. set of commuting observables, with joint eigenvectors  $|q\rangle$  obeying:  $\hat{q}_i |q\rangle = q_i |q\rangle$ .
- Then the function  $\Psi$ , given by  $\Psi(q) = \langle q | \Psi \rangle$  is called the "wave function" of  $|\Psi\rangle$  in the  $\{\hat{q}_i\}$  basis.

Example:  $\{\hat{p}_i\}$  yield mom. wave functions  $\Psi(p) = \langle p | \Psi \rangle$   
 $p = \{p_1, p_2, \dots, p_N\}$

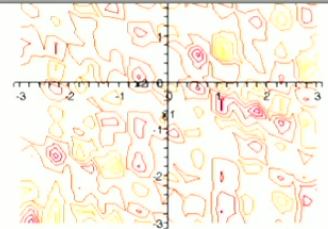
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## In QFT:

E.g.,  $\{\hat{\phi}(x)\}_{x \in \mathbb{R}^3}$  is compl. set of com. observables  
 with joint eigenvectors  $|\phi\rangle$  obeying  $\hat{\phi}(x)|\phi\rangle = \phi(x)|\phi\rangle$ .

or, e.g., also the  $\{\hat{\pi}(x)\}$ .

Then,  $\Psi$ , given by

(Convention square bracket because argument is a function)  $\Psi[\phi] := \langle \phi | \Psi \rangle$

$\{|\phi\rangle\}$  form field OR eigen basis

(called a "functional" because argument is a function)

alternatively could use e.g. joint eigenbasis of the  $\hat{H}(x,t)$ .

is called the "wave functional".

## Interpretation of $\Psi[\phi]$ ?

- Assume the system is in an arbitrary state  $|\Psi\rangle \in \mathcal{X}$  at  $t$ .  
e.g., vacuum  $|0\rangle$
- If measuring now  $\hat{\phi}(x,t)$  at all  $x \in \mathbb{R}^3$  what is the probability amplitude for finding, say, the values  $\phi(x)$ ?

Answer:  $\text{prob}[|\Psi\rangle \rightarrow |\phi\rangle] = |\langle \phi | \Psi \rangle|^2 = |\Psi[\phi]|^2$

Q: The eqn. of motion for  $\Psi[\phi,t]$ ?

A: The QFT Schrödinger equation!

For every quantum theory, we have in the Schrödinger picture of the time evolution:

$$i\hbar \frac{d}{dt} |\Psi(t)\rangle = \hat{H} |\Psi(t)\rangle$$

But how do  $\hat{\phi}(x)$  and  $\hat{\pi}(x)$  act on wave functionals  $\Psi[\phi,t]$ ?

A valid representation of  $[\hat{\phi}(x), \hat{\pi}(x)] = i\delta^3(x-x')$  is:

(Exercise: check)

$\hat{\phi}(x) \cdot \Psi[\phi,t] = \phi(x) \Psi[\phi,t]$  Analogous to:  $\hat{q}_a \cdot \Psi(q,t) = q_a \Psi(q,t)$

$\hat{\pi}(x) \cdot \Psi[\phi,t] = -i \frac{\delta}{\delta \phi(x)} \Psi[\phi,t]$  Analogous to:  $\hat{p}_a \cdot \Psi(q,t) = -i \frac{\partial}{\partial q_a} \Psi(q,t)$

functional derivative, as in variational principle used to

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Which form does it take for  $\Psi[\phi, t]$ ?

Here in QFT:

now independent of time!

$$\hat{H} = \int \frac{1}{2} (\hat{\pi}^2(x) + \hat{\phi}(x)(-\Delta + m^2)\hat{\phi}(x)) d^3x$$

If measuring now  $\hat{\phi}(x, t)$  at all  $x \in \mathbb{R}^3$  what is the probability amplitude for finding, say, the values  $\phi(x)$ ?

Answer:  $\text{prob}[\lvert \Psi \rangle \rightarrow \lvert \phi \rangle] = |\langle \phi \lvert \Psi \rangle|^2 = |\Psi[\phi]|^2$

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functional derivative, as in variational principle used to derive Euler Lagrange equations.

Therefore:

$$\hat{H} = \int \frac{1}{2} \left( -\frac{\delta^2}{\delta \phi^2(x)} + \phi(x)(-\Delta + m^2)\phi(x) \right) d^3x$$

inconvenient

It is more convenient to use infrared-regularized momentum space:

Schrödinger picture of the time evolution:

$$i\hbar \frac{d}{dt} |\Psi(t)\rangle = \hat{H} |\Psi(t)\rangle$$

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$$\hat{H} = \int \frac{1}{2} \left( \overset{\text{now independent of time!}}{\hat{\pi}^2(x)} + \hat{\phi}(x) (-\Delta + m^2) \hat{\phi}(x) \right) d^3x$$

We now need to represent

$$[\hat{\phi}_k, \hat{\pi}_{k'}] = i\delta_{k, -k'}$$

on the wave functionals  $\Psi[\tilde{\phi}, t]$ .

( $\tilde{\phi}_k$  is Fourier transform of  $\phi(x)$ )

As you should verify, this works:

$$\hat{\phi}_k \Psi[\tilde{\phi}, t] = \tilde{\phi}_k \Psi[\tilde{\phi}, t]$$

$$\hat{\pi}_k \Psi[\tilde{\phi}, t] = -i \frac{\partial}{\partial \tilde{\phi}_{-k}} \Psi[\tilde{\phi}, t]$$

**Note:** Ordinary derivatives here because set of variables  $\{\tilde{\phi}_k\}$  is discrete, since  $k = \frac{2\pi}{L}(n_1, n_2, n_3)$ ,  $\vec{n} \in \mathbb{Z}^3$ .

$$\hat{\pi}(x) \Psi[\phi, t] = -i \frac{\delta}{\delta \phi(x)} \Psi[\phi, t]$$

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Schrödinger equation:

$$i\partial_t |\psi\rangle = \hat{H} |\psi\rangle \text{ becomes:}$$

$$i\partial_t \Psi[\tilde{\phi}, t] = \sum_k \frac{1}{2} \left( -\frac{\partial}{\partial \tilde{\phi}_k} \frac{\partial}{\partial \tilde{\phi}_{-k}} + (k^2 + m^2) \tilde{\phi}_k \tilde{\phi}_{-k} \right) \Psi[\tilde{\phi}, t]$$

Recall: For QM harm. osc., ground state Schrödinger wave function is:

$$\psi(x, t) = N e^{-\frac{1}{2}\omega x^2 - i\omega t}$$

Exercise: check it. Can you solve for excited states?

Ground state solution in QFT reads, similarly:

$$\Psi[\tilde{\phi}, t] = N e^{-\sum_k \frac{1}{2} (\omega_k \tilde{\phi}_k \tilde{\phi}_{-k} - i\omega_k t)}$$

$= (\vec{k}^2 + m^2)^{1/2}$

Exercise: verify

... which we had already seen before.



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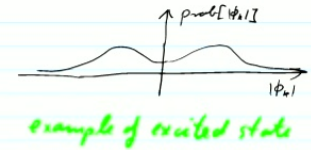
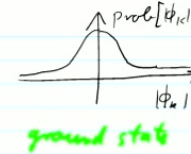
### Generic wave functionals

□ Assume the system is in a state,  $|\alpha\rangle$ , other than  $|\psi_0\rangle$ .

⇒ For at least some modes oscillators,  $|\alpha\rangle$  is not the ground state.

□ But if an oscillator is excited, then its wave function spreads out - classically its amplitude of oscillation would increase.

⇒ If a mode  $k$  is excited then the prob. distribution of the  $\phi_k$  spreads:



□ The more a mode  $k$  is excited, the more likely is a measurement of  $\hat{\phi}_k$  to yield a  $\phi_k$  with large modulus  $|\phi_k|$ .

⇒ If, e.g., a mode  $k$  is very highly excited then  $|\phi_k|$  is likely very large,

⇒ measurement of  $\hat{\phi}(x)$  likely yields  $\phi(x)$  which shows a plane wave in the direction  $k$  - on top of the usual quantum fluctuations.

⇒ see project description.

$$\mathbb{1} = \int dx_1 dx_2 dx_3 |x_1, x_2, x_3\rangle \langle x_1, x_2, x_3|$$

$$H(x_1, x_2, x_3) = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \left( \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x_1^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x_2^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x_3^2} \right) + V(x_1, x_2, x_3)$$

$$|\psi\rangle = \mathbb{1}|\psi\rangle = \int d^3x |\vec{x}\rangle \underbrace{\langle \vec{x} | \psi \rangle}_{\psi(x_1, x_2, x_3)} = \int d^3x \psi(\vec{x}) |\vec{x}\rangle$$

$$\boxed{\psi(\vec{x}) = \langle \vec{x} | \psi \rangle}$$

$$i\hbar \frac{d}{dt} \psi(\vec{x}, t) = \hat{H}(\vec{x}, i\hbar \frac{d}{dx_i}) \psi(\vec{x}, t)$$

$$i\hbar \frac{d}{dt} |\psi(t)\rangle = \hat{H}(t) |\psi(t)\rangle \quad \{ |x_1, x_2, x_3\rangle \}$$

$$i\hbar \frac{d}{dt} \langle x_1, x_2, x_3 | \psi(t) \rangle = \langle x_1, x_2, x_3 | \hat{H}(t) | \psi(t) \rangle$$

$$i\hbar \frac{d}{dt} \psi(x_1, x_2, x_3, t) = \int d\tilde{x}_1 d\tilde{x}_2 d\tilde{x}_3 \langle x_1, x_2, x_3 | \hat{H}(t) | \tilde{x}_1, \tilde{x}_2, \tilde{x}_3 \rangle \psi(\tilde{x}_1, \tilde{x}_2, \tilde{x}_3, t)$$

$$i\hbar \frac{d}{dt} \psi(x_1, x_2, x_3, t) = \hat{H}(x_1, x_2, x_3, i\hbar \frac{d}{dx_1}, i\hbar \frac{d}{dx_2}, i\hbar \frac{d}{dx_3}) \psi(x_1, x_2, x_3, t)$$

$$i\hbar \frac{d}{dt} \psi(\vec{x}, t) = \hat{H}(\vec{x}, i\hbar \frac{d}{dx_i}) \psi(\vec{x}, t)$$

$$i\hbar \frac{d}{dt} |\psi(t)\rangle = \hat{H}(t) |\psi(t)\rangle \quad \{|x_1, x_2, x_3\rangle\}$$

$$\langle \phi | \psi(t) \rangle = \langle x_1, x_2, x_3 | \psi(t) \rangle = \langle x_1, x_2, x_3 | \hat{H}(t) | \psi(t) \rangle$$

$$= \int dx_1 dx_2 dx_3 \langle x_1, x_2, x_3 | \hat{H}(t) | \tilde{x}_1, \tilde{x}_2, \tilde{x}_3 \rangle \langle \tilde{x}_1, \tilde{x}_2, \tilde{x}_3 | \psi(t) \rangle$$

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$$\langle \phi | \psi(t) \rangle \quad i\hbar \frac{d}{dt} \langle x_1, x_2, x_3 | \psi(t) \rangle = \langle x_1, x_2, x_3 | \hat{H}(t) | \psi(t) \rangle$$

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$$[\hat{x}_i, \hat{p}_i] = i\hbar \mathbb{1}$$

In x basis:

$$\hat{x}_i \psi(\vec{x}) = x_i \psi(\vec{x}), \quad \hat{p}_i \psi(\vec{x}) = -i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial x_i} \psi(\vec{x})$$

$$x_i \left( -i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial x_i} \right) \psi(\vec{x}, t) - \left( -i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial x_i} \right) x_i \psi(\vec{x}, t) = i\hbar \psi(\vec{x}, t)$$