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Alessandro Teta

A Mathematical Primer on Quantum Mechanics

 Springer

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To Ade

Preface

This book is an elaboration of lecture notes written during the preparation of courses for mathematics students given for some years at the Universities of L'Aquila and "La Sapienza" of Roma. The aim of the book is to provide an elementary introduction to nonrelativistic Quantum Mechanics for a single particle from the point of view of Mathematical Physics. It is mainly addressed to students in Mathematics at master's degree level, but it could also be useful for students in Physics interested in a deeper understanding of the mathematical aspects of the theory.

No previous physical knowledge of Quantum Mechanics is required and the mathematical language necessary to develop theory and applications is explicitly introduced. The prerequisites are basic notions of Classical Physics, elementary theory of Hilbert spaces, Fourier transform, and elements of real and complex analysis.

The first four chapters of the book are aimed to provide some physical and mathematical background. In Chap. 1, the basic notions of Hamiltonian Mechanics and Electromagnetism are recalled, with an emphasis on some aspects relevant for understanding the origin and the development of Quantum Mechanics. In Chap. 2, the historical evolution of the ideas in Physics from Planck's hypothesis to Bohr's model of the hydrogen atom is briefly described. In Chap. 3, we introduce the Schrödinger equation, discuss Born's statistical interpretation, and outline a first sketch of the new theory. It is also stressed the need of more advanced notions from the theory of linear operators in Hilbert spaces to obtain a rigorous and consistent description of the theory. Such notions are introduced in Chap. 4, where we describe the main concepts, i.e., self-adjoint and unitary operators, resolvent and spectrum, spectral theorem (stated without proof), different classifications of the spectrum, all supported by examples and exercises.

In Chap. 5, an axiomatic and rigorous formulation of nonrelativistic Quantum Mechanics is given. We avoid generality and neglect some technical difficulties. The aim is to provide the theoretical instruments to approach elementary problems of Quantum Mechanics for a single particle. We also briefly mention some interpretational problems of the theory connected with the measurement process.

The applications of the formalism are described in Chaps. 6–9. The emphasis is on a detailed analysis of simple models as free particle, harmonic oscillator, point interaction, and hydrogen atom. For each model, we construct the self-adjoint Hamiltonian, characterize the spectrum, and discuss the main dynamical properties. These models are of crucial importance to understand the qualitative behavior of a quantum particle in some relevant physical situations. We believe that a deep understanding of their physical and mathematical properties is an unavoidable prerequisite to deal with more difficult problems in Quantum Mechanics.

Some more advanced topics are also treated starting from the concrete analysis of the models. In Chap. 9, elements of spectral analysis for Schrödinger operators are introduced to study the spectrum of the Hamiltonian of the hydrogen atom. In Appendix A, the semiclassical evolution of a Gaussian state is described using the results obtained for the harmonic oscillator in Chap. 7. In Appendix B, the basic concepts of scattering theory are discussed and then used to revisit the simple one-dimensional scattering problem analyzed in Chap. 8 for a point interaction.

Many exercises are proposed in the text and their solution is crucial for a good understanding of the subject.

After studying this book, the reader should have gained the essential background to approach the analysis of advanced mathematical problems in Quantum Mechanics. Among the many excellent textbooks on the subject appeared in the literature in recent times, we mention

Strocchi, F.: *An Introduction to the Mathematical Structure of Quantum Mechanics*. World Scientific (2008).

Faddeev, L. D., Yakubovskii, O. A.: *Lectures on Quantum Mechanics for Mathematics Students*. AMS (2009).

Teschl, G.: *Mathematical Methods in Quantum Mechanics*. AMS (2009).

Dimock, J.: *Quantum Mechanics and Quantum Field Theory*. Cambridge University Press (2011).

Gustafson, S. J., Sigal, I. M.: *Mathematical Concepts of Quantum Mechanics*. Springer (2011).

Hall, B. C.: *Quantum Theory for Mathematicians*. Springer (2013).

Dell’Antonio, G.: *Lectures on the Mathematics of Quantum Mechanics*. Atlantis Press (2015).

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Contents

1	Elements of Hamiltonian Mechanics and Electromagnetism	1
1.1	Hamilton's Equations	1
1.2	Constants of Motion and Poisson Brackets	6
1.3	Canonical Transformations	8
1.4	Hamilton–Jacobi Equation	13
1.5	Separation of Variables	16
1.6	Wave Front Method	21
1.7	Liouville's Equation	24
1.8	Geometrical Optics and Mechanical Analogy	28
1.9	Maxwell's Equations in Vacuum	32
1.10	Maxwell's Equations in Inhomogeneous Media and Short Wavelength Asymptotics	38
	References	43
2	From Planck's Hypothesis to Bohr's Atom	45
2.1	Physics at the End of the Nineteenth Century	45
2.2	Black Body Radiation	46
2.3	Photoelectric Effect	48
2.4	Atomic Structure of Matter	49
2.5	Bohr's Atom	52
2.6	Bohr–Sommerfeld Quantization	57
	References	59
3	The Formulation of Wave Mechanics	61
3.1	Matrix Mechanics and Wave Mechanics	61
3.2	The Schrödinger Equation	63
3.3	Born's Statistical Interpretation	67
3.4	Observables	69

3.5	A First Sketch of the Theory	74
3.6	Classical Limit of Quantum Mechanics	75
	References	77
4	Linear Operators in Hilbert Spaces	79
4.1	Preliminaries	79
4.2	Bounded and Unbounded Operators	81
4.3	Adjoint Operators	84
4.4	Symmetric and Self-adjoint Operators	87
4.5	Self-adjointness Criterion and Kato–Rellich Theorem	90
4.6	Resolvent and Spectrum	94
4.7	Isometric Operators and Unitary Operators	98
4.8	Spectral Theorem	102
	4.8.1 Stieltjes Measures	102
	4.8.2 Orthogonal Projectors	105
	4.8.3 Spectral Family	106
	4.8.4 Formulation of the Spectral Theorem	110
	4.8.5 Functional Calculus	112
4.9	Unitary Groups	114
4.10	Point, Absolutely Continuous, and Singular Continuous Spectrum	116
4.11	Discrete and Essential Spectrum	119
	References	121
5	Rules of Quantum Mechanics	123
5.1	Formulation of the Rules	123
5.2	Some Comments and Developments	125
5.3	The Measurement Problem	131
5.4	Mathematical Treatment of a Quantum Mechanical Problem	136
	References	138
6	Free Particle	139
6.1	Free Hamiltonian	139
6.2	Free Propagator	145
6.3	Evolution of a Wave Packet	148
6.4	Interference of Two Wave Packets	152
6.5	Particle in a Constant Force Field	156
	References	158
7	Harmonic Oscillator	159
7.1	Hamiltonian	159
7.2	Properties of the Unitary Group	166
7.3	Time Evolution of a Gaussian State	167

7.4	Particle in a Constant Magnetic Field	170
7.5	Completeness of the Hermite Polynomials	173
	References	174
8	Point Interaction	175
8.1	Hamiltonian and Spectrum	175
8.2	Eigenfunction Expansion	179
8.3	Asymptotic Evolution for $ t \rightarrow \infty$	182
8.4	A One-Dimensional Scattering Problem	185
8.5	Two Point Interactions	191
8.6	Self-adjoint Extensions of A_0	194
8.7	Proof of the Eigenfunction Expansion Theorem	198
	References	202
9	Hydrogen Atom	203
9.1	Self-adjointness	203
9.2	Essential Spectrum	206
9.3	Absence of Positive Eigenvalues	207
9.4	Existence of Negative Eigenvalues	209
9.5	Estimate of the Minimum Eigenvalue	211
9.6	Eigenvalue Problem in Spherical Coordinates	212
9.7	Eigenvalue Problem for the Angular Momentum	216
9.8	Reduction to the Radial Problem	223
9.9	Energy Levels and Stationary States	225
9.10	Completeness of the Spherical Harmonics	232
	References	233
	Appendix A: Semiclassical Evolution	235
	Appendix B: Basic Concepts of Scattering Theory	243
	Index	257