

3. The Quantum Harmonic Oscillator

We start with the Hamilton function (2.91) for the classical harmonic oscillator

$$(3.1) \quad H_\omega(q_\omega, p_\omega) = \frac{p_\omega^2}{2m_\omega} + \frac{1}{2}m_\omega\omega^2q_\omega^2$$

In quantum mechanics, we try, to convert it to an operator \hat{H} that can meet the stationary Schrödinger eigenvalue equation $\hat{H}|\psi\rangle \doteq E_\omega|\psi\rangle$, (e.g. see. (2.64) to (2.67)).

3.1.2. The Quantum Real Scalar Field for the Linear Harmonic Oscillator

We transform (3.1)↔(2.91) to the operator edition, by first rewriting the *quantity* $q_\omega \in \mathbb{C}$ to a *real field quantity* $q \in \mathbb{R}$,⁶⁷ where we use Planck's constant \hbar , which is marked **green**.

$$(3.2) \quad q \sim \sqrt{\frac{m\omega}{\hbar}} \cdot |q_\omega|, \text{ or quadratic as the last term of (3.1) } \hbar\omega q^2 \equiv m\omega^2|q_\omega|^2 = m\omega^2(q_\omega^*q_\omega) \geq 0.$$

Then we rewrite the momentum p_ω from this normalised *field quantity* q using the *momentum operator* (2.81) in accordance with (2.71) $[q, \hat{p}] = i$

$$(3.3) \quad \hat{p} = -i\frac{\partial}{\partial q} = -i\left(\frac{\partial q_\omega}{\partial q}\right)\frac{\partial}{\partial q_\omega} \sim -i\frac{1}{\hbar}\sqrt{\frac{\hbar}{m\omega}}\frac{\partial}{\partial q_\omega} \sim \sqrt{\frac{1}{\hbar m\omega}} \cdot p_\omega, \text{ or quadratic}$$

$$(p_\omega)^2 \sim -\hbar m\omega \frac{\partial^2}{\partial q^2}, \text{ because } p_\omega \sim \sqrt{\hbar m\omega} \left(-i\frac{\partial}{\partial q}\right) = \sqrt{\frac{m\omega}{\hbar}} \left(-i\hbar\frac{\partial}{\partial q}\right)$$

By substitutions in $H_\omega(q, p)$ we rewrite the Hamilton operator \hat{H}_ω for the harmonic oscillator

$$(3.4) \quad H_\omega = \frac{p_\omega^2}{2m_\omega} + \frac{1}{2}m_\omega\omega^2q_\omega^2 \sim \hat{H}_\omega = \frac{\hbar m\omega}{2m}\frac{\partial^2}{\partial q^2} + \frac{\hbar m\omega^2}{2m\omega}q^2 = \frac{\hbar\omega}{2}(\hat{p}(\hat{p})+q^2) = \frac{\hbar\omega}{2}\left(-\frac{\partial^2}{\partial q^2} + q^2\right).$$

We note that a local external m has no impact as it is not included in the last formulation.⁶⁸

To prevent the classical Hamilton function loses its meaning, we can choose an internal impedance factor $m_\omega \neq 0$ by choosing $m_\omega c^2 \sim \hbar\omega$, ($c=1$), imply that $q \sim \omega|q_\omega|$ and $p_\omega \sim \hbar\omega\hat{p}$. (refer Figure 1.3)

In this way, you can understand a cyclic oscillation in a quantum-mechanical field equivalent to a 'classic' harmonic oscillator. – I now propose a new interpretation:

We intuit $q \in \mathbb{R}$ as a purely *isotropic scalar field* with **no** specific *direction* in any space!

The Hamilton operator for the harmonic oscillator of the *field quantity* q is now

$$(3.5) \quad \hat{H}_\omega = \frac{\hbar\omega}{2}\left(-\frac{\partial^2}{\partial q^2} + q^2\right) = \frac{\hbar\omega}{2}\left(q^2 - \frac{\partial^2}{\partial q^2}\right)$$

Hence, we write the stationary Schrödinger eigenvalue equation as

$$(3.6) \quad \frac{\hbar\omega}{2}\left(-\frac{\partial^2}{\partial q^2} + q^2\right)|\psi(q)\rangle \doteq E_\omega|\psi(q)\rangle$$

The expression in parenthesis can be rewritten as

$$(3.7) \quad q^2 - \frac{\partial^2}{\partial q^2} = \left(q - \frac{\partial}{\partial q}\right)\left(q + \frac{\partial}{\partial q}\right) + \frac{\partial}{\partial q}q - q\frac{\partial}{\partial q}$$

The last two terms constitute the commutator

$$(3.8) \quad \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial q}, q\right] = 1, \text{ because } \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial q}, q\right]\psi = \frac{\partial}{\partial q}(q\psi) - q\frac{\partial}{\partial q}\psi = q\frac{\partial}{\partial q}\psi + \frac{\partial q}{\partial q}(\psi) - q\frac{\partial}{\partial q}\psi = 1(\psi), \text{ therefore}$$

$$(3.9) \quad q^2 - \frac{\partial^2}{\partial q^2} = \left(q - \frac{\partial}{\partial q}\right)\left(q + \frac{\partial}{\partial q}\right) + 1$$

Now the stationary Schrödinger eigenvalue equation (3.6) is written as

⁶⁷ A *field* is a commutative ring of numbers, e.g., scalars as real \mathbb{R} or complex \mathbb{C} numbers, that therefore are called *scalar fields*. The reason for a real scalar field $q \in \mathbb{R}$ here is, that we first look at a *linear* harmonic oscillator. And omit the complex part $q \leftrightarrow \tilde{q}_\omega \in \mathbb{R}$ of $q_\omega(t) = \tilde{q}_\omega e^{-i\omega t} \in \mathbb{C}$. The blue quantity q indicate its origin from a *quantity* scalar field operator $\hat{q} = i\frac{\partial}{\partial p}$.

⁶⁸ This is the big shift that happens when you go from Classical Mechanics to modern *quantum field theory*.