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Vincent Rivasseau • Robert Seiringer
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Quantum Many Body Systems

Cetraro, Italy 2010

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Preface

The idea that matter is composed by a huge number of particles (atoms) obeying simple laws of motion and that the macroscopic properties of bodies emerge as collective phenomena starting from this simple description dates back to Democritus (460–370 BC). Since then, physicists of all times have struggled with this fascinating idea in order to really understand the variety of our world starting from a simple microscopic description. Quantum many-body theory is nowadays the area of physics that provides the framework for understanding the collective behavior of vast assemblies of interacting quantum particles. Indeed, we know that matter is composed of atoms and molecules, interacting in accord with the laws of quantum mechanics. The equation describing the evolution and behavior of such assemblies, the Schrödinger equation with Coulomb forces, is well known: it can be written down and studied, and the properties of the system can in principle be understood at a qualitative and quantitative level, starting from this fundamental law. However, the number of variables required for describing the behavior of the microscopic constituents of any macroscopic body is enormous (it is of the order of the number of particles, which is $\sim 10^{23}$ for a mole of substance). Therefore, except for a few special but very important cases (e.g., ideal gases), the deduction of the macroscopic properties from the fundamental microscopic equation is a formidable mathematical challenge. This is, after all, not surprising: we know from experiments that complex and unexpected phenomena like superconductivity, superfluidity, and Bose–Einstein condensation, together with more familiar phenomena like magnetism or metallic behavior, emerge from the collective behavior of a huge number of quantum particles. These remarkable phenomena are a macroscopic manifestation of the law of quantum mechanics and cannot be understood by using Newtonian physics.

From the point of view of mathematical physicists, many-body theory provides an almost ideal field; the basic equation is known and one “just” needs to solve it in order to deduce and understand a number of interesting phenomena. Indeed, if the solutions of the Schrödinger equation with a large number of variables were known this would clearly be of extraordinary importance for physical applications as well as for technological developments. However, the mathematical difficulty of finding such solutions is enormous, but in past years a number of increasingly powerful and

sophisticated techniques have been developed to extract relevant information without having to solve the equation itself. These methods include multiscale analysis, functional inequalities, localization estimates, cluster expansions, supersymmetry and stochastic and conformal geometry. The beautiful mathematics related to these developments has also proved to be useful as a bridge between different disciplines, ranging from algebraic geometry to the study of the shape of bird flocks. The interaction of mathematical and physical complexity has proved to be very fruitful for both fields.

The aim of the *CIME school on Quantum Many-Body Systems*, which took place in Cetraro (Italy) from August 30 to September 4, 2010, was to provide an introduction to the beautiful and powerful mathematical techniques developed in this field. The school was attended by 30 participants from several different countries, including Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, Ukraine and the USA. Although the school was primarily intended for graduate students, the interesting topics and the high reputation of the lecturers also attracted several more senior researchers.

The school consisted of four series of lectures, presented by V. Rivasseau, R. Seiringer, J.P. Solovej, and T. Spencer, and each series was organized into four lessons of 2 h each (two in the morning and one in the afternoon). In addition, one afternoon was devoted to short presentations of the research activity of the younger participants and one evening to a short description of the activities of some of the senior participants.

The lectures of Prof. Rivasseau gave an introduction to some results in solid-state physics, obtained via constructive Renormalization Group methods. While the focus was on the proof of Fermi liquid behavior for a system of nonrelativistic two-dimensional fermions above the BCS transition temperature one lecture was devoted to the exciting perspectives opened by the use of the same methods to quantum gravity.

The lectures of Prof. Seiringer were devoted to the mathematical physics of Bose gases and Bose–Einstein condensation and included a rigorous proof of the latter for dilute, interacting gases in the so-called Gross–Pitaevski limit. Starting from the basic notions he also discussed advanced topics like the analysis of rotating traps and the emergence of lattices of quantized vortices.

Prof. Solovej provided a comprehensive introduction to quantum Coulomb systems. He gave a self-contained presentation of the functional analytic methods used to prove thermodynamic stability of coulombic matter, following a recently developed approach that allows to treat, on the same footing, translation and non-translation invariant systems of charged fermions and bosons.

Finally, Prof. Spencer described the rigorous and powerful methods of supersymmetry and their application to the problem of the localization–delocalization transition in the Anderson model and in random matrices. Moreover, he gave a tutorial review of some classical results and techniques, such as the use of Ward Identities in the XY model.

The atmosphere at the school was very lively, many questions and comments arose during and after each lecture, and scientific discussions took place; the

students profited very much from the possibility of close interactions with the lecturers.

As Editors of these Lectures Notes we would like to thank the people and institutions who contributed to the success of the course. In particular, it is our pleasure to thank the Scientific Committee of CIME for supporting our project; the Director, Prof. Pietro Zecca, and the Secretary, Prof. Elvira Mascolo, for their support during the organization. Special thanks go to the lecturers, who offered a unique occasion to the participants to enter this beautiful field.

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Contents

1	Introduction to the Renormalization Group with Applications to Non-relativistic Quantum Electron Gases	1
	Vincent Rivasseau	
1.1	Introduction to QFT and Renormalization	1
1.1.1	Gaussian Measures	1
1.1.2	Functional Integrals	2
1.1.3	Statistical Mechanics and Thermodynamic Quantities	3
1.1.4	Schwinger Functions	5
1.1.5	Feynman Graphs	7
1.1.6	Feynman Rules	9
1.1.7	Scale Analysis and Renormalization	12
1.1.8	Locality, Power Counting	14
1.1.9	Renormalization, Effective Constants	15
1.1.10	The BPHZ Theorem	16
1.1.11	The Landau Ghost and Asymptotic Freedom	18
1.1.12	Grassmann Representations of Determinants and Pfaffians	20
1.1.13	Trees, Forests and the Parametric Representation	23
1.1.14	BKAR Forest Formula	26
1.1.15	Gram and Hadamard Bounds	28
1.1.16	Single Scale Constructive Theory for a Toy Model	29
1.2	Interacting Fermions in Two Dimensions	33
1.2.1	Introduction	33
1.2.2	The Models: J_2 , J_3 , H_2 ...	34
1.2.3	Interaction, Locality	35
1.2.4	A Brief Review of Rigorous Results	37
1.2.5	Multiscale Analysis, Angular Sectors	38
1.2.6	Renormalization	39
1.2.7	2D Jellium Model: Why Sectors Work	40

1.2.8	3D Jellium Model: Why Sectors Fail	42
1.2.9	The Hadamard Method in x -Space	42
1.2.10	2D Hubbard Model	44
1.2.11	Scale Analysis	45
1.2.12	Sectors	47
1.2.13	Support Properties	49
1.2.14	Momentum Conservation Rules at a Vertex	49
1.2.15	Multiscale Analysis	51
	References	52
2	Cold Quantum Gases and Bose–Einstein Condensation	55
	Robert Seiringer	
2.1	Introduction	55
2.2	Quantum Many-Body Systems	56
2.2.1	The Hamiltonian	56
2.2.2	Quantities of Interest	56
2.2.3	Creation and Annihilation Operators on Fock Space	58
2.2.4	Ideal Quantum Gases	59
2.3	BEC for Interacting Systems	64
2.3.1	The Criterion for BEC	64
2.3.2	The Hard-Core Lattice Gas	65
2.4	Dilute Bose Gases	67
2.4.1	The Model	67
2.4.2	The Two-Particle Case	69
2.4.3	The Ground State Energy of a Dilute Gas	70
2.4.4	Further Rigorous Results	73
2.4.5	The Next Order Term	75
2.5	Dilute Bose Gases in Traps	76
2.5.1	The Gross–Pitaevskii Energy Functional	76
2.5.2	BEC of Dilute Trapped Gases	78
2.5.3	Rotating Bose Gases	79
2.5.4	Main Ideas in the Proof	81
2.5.5	Coherent States	84
2.5.6	Rapidly Rotating Bose Gases	87
	References	91
3	Quantum Coulomb Gases	93
	Jan Philip Solovej	
3.1	Introduction	93
3.2	Classical “Point” Charges	94
3.3	Charged Quantum Gases	97
3.3.1	Quantized Particles and Classical Fields	98
3.3.2	Statistics of Identical Particles	100
3.3.3	Grand Canonical Picture	101
3.3.4	Second Quantization and Quantization of Fields	102
3.3.5	Quantization of the Electromagnetic Field	104

3.3.6	Non-relativistic QED	105
3.3.7	Relativistic QED Hamiltonian.....	106
3.4	Stability	107
3.4.1	Stability of the First Kind for Non-relativistic Particles ...	108
3.4.2	Grand Canonical Stability	109
3.4.3	Existence of the Thermodynamic Limit	114
3.5	Instability	115
3.5.1	Examples of Instability of the First Kind	115
3.5.2	Fermionic Instability of the Second Kind.....	117
3.5.3	Instability of Bosonic Matter	118
	References	123
4	SUSY Statistical Mechanics and Random Band Matrices	125
	Thomas Spencer	
4.1	An Overview	125
4.1.1	Green's Functions	127
4.1.2	Symmetry and the 1D SUSY Sigma Model	128
4.1.3	SUSY Sigma Models in 3D	130
4.2	Classical Models of Quantum Dynamics	131
4.2.1	Manhattan Model	132
4.3	Introduction Random Matrix Ensembles and SUSY.....	133
4.3.1	Some Conjectures About RBM and Random Schrödinger.....	134
4.3.2	Conjectured Universality of GUE and GOE Models.....	135
4.3.3	Green's Functions and Gaussian Integrals	136
4.4	Averaging $\text{Det}(E_\epsilon - H)^{-1}$	137
4.4.1	Gaussian Band Matrices and Statistical Mechanics	139
4.5	The Density of States for GUE and RBM	141
4.5.1	Density of States for RBM	144
4.6	Statistical Mechanics, Sigma Models, and Goldstone Modes	145
4.7	Hyperbolic Symmetry	149
4.7.1	Random Band Case	152
4.8	Phase Transition for a SUSY Hyperbolic Sigma Model	155
4.8.1	Role of Ward Identities in the Proof	159
4.9	Efetov's Sigma Model	161
4.10	Appendix A: Gaussian and Grassmann Integration	163
4.10.1	Grassmann Integration	164
4.10.2	Polar Coordinates for Grassmann and Bosonic Matrices	166
4.11	Appendix B: Formal Perturbation Theory	168
4.11.1	Leading Contribution to Diffusion	171
4.11.2	Perturbation Theory for Random Band Matrices	171
4.12	Appendix C: Bounds on Green's Functions of Divergence Form ...	173
	References	175
	List of Participants.....	179