

Propagators in Quantum Mechanics on Multiply Connected Spaces

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Introduction.

In several recent papers [4], [5], [6], [11], [15] quantum mechanics and quantum mechanical propagators on multiply connected spaces have been discussed. The quantum mechanics of a free particle moving on the Riemannian manifold $M = G$, a simple Lie group, was examined by J. S. Dowker in [5]. In this paper he showed that the quasi-classical approximation is "exact" and that the propagator may be calculated either by "the sum over classical paths" or by the stationary state method. In a later paper [6] Dowker suggested a natural framework (following [11]) for quantum mechanical propagators on multiply connected, homogeneous spaces.

In this paper we indicate the interconnections of Dowker's formulation and the yoga of the Selberg trace formula. The Selberg trace formula plays a very fundamental role in a broad cross section of mathematics. Below we demonstrate its vitality in modern physics.

§1. Quantum Mechanical Propagators.

Various compact and noncompact homogeneous manifolds occur in the world of mathematical physics: e.g., the spherical top, the particle with spin, the classical energy level of the Kepler problem, etc. This leads naturally to the consideration of homogeneous manifolds of the form $M = G/H$, where initially G is a separable, locally compact unimodular group with compact isotropy subgroup $H = \{g \in G \mid g m_0 = m_0\}$. Let $C_c(G)$ denote the associative algebra over \mathbb{C} of continuous functions with compact support, under the

multiplication $(f_1 * f_2)(g) = \int_G f_1(gx^{-1})f_2(x)dx$. The associated space of spherical functions, $C_c(H \backslash G/H)$, is a subalgebra of $C_c(G)$. If the convolution algebra of spherical functions is commutative, then (G, H) is a Gelfand pair.

The quantum mechanical propagator for a homogeneous Riemannian manifold $M = G/H$, with Laplace-Beltrami operator Δ , is denoted by $K_{G/H}(t; x, y)$. It is characterized by the equations

$$(i \frac{\partial}{\partial t} + \frac{1}{2} \Delta_x) K_{G/H}(t; x, y) = 0 \text{ for } t > 0$$

and

$$\psi(x) = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0^+} \int_{G/H} K(t; x, y) \psi(y) dy$$

for ψ in a suitable class of functions on M . What is essential here is that the propagator is a two-point invariant function:

$$K_{G/H}(t; gxH, gyH) = K_{G/H}(t; xH, yH),$$

which follows from the invariance of $\Delta_{G/H}$ by the action of G on $M = G/H$:

$G \times M \rightarrow M$, $(g, xH) \rightarrow gxH$. Any two-point invariant function, e.g., $K_{G/H}$, defines a rotationally symmetric function on M , i.e., $f(hm) = f(m)$ for all h in H . Viz., $f(m) = K(t; m, m_0)$ (or $m = zH \rightarrow K_{G/H}(t; zH) = K_{G/H}(t; y^{-1}xH, H)$). And conversely. Furthermore, any rotationally symmetric function $f(m)$ may also be considered as a function on G , viz., $\tilde{f}(g) = f(m)$ if $gm_0 = m$. It is easily checked that \tilde{f} is H -bi-invariant on G ; and conversely, every spherical function on G defines a r.s. function f on M .

Under the Gelfand pair hypothesis, there is a special class of spherical functions on G which are "orthogonal and span" the space of all spherical functions. These spherical functions are the elementary or zonal spherical (z.s.) functions. The z.s. functions can be characterized in several ways: e.g., ϕ in $C(H \backslash G/H)$ is a z.s. function iff $\phi(e) = 1$ and $f * \phi = \lambda_f \phi$ for all f in $C_c(H \backslash G/H)$.

The relation to representation theory is well-known also. There is a one-one correspondence between the set of positive definite (p.d.) z.s. functions on G and the set $\hat{G}(1)$ of equivalence classes of class one representations of G . The notion of spanning is in the sense of a Fourier expansion of a suitable spherical function f :

$$f(g) = \int_{\hat{G}(1)} \hat{f}(\lambda) \phi_\lambda \hat{d}\mu(\lambda)$$

$$\text{where } \hat{f}(\lambda) = \int_G f(g) \phi_\lambda^* dg.$$

In the case G is compact and so \hat{G} is discrete, then for every f in $L^2(H \backslash G/H)$ there is a Fourier series expansion

$$f = \sum_{\lambda \in \hat{G}(1)} f(\lambda) \phi_\lambda$$

$$\text{where } d(\lambda) \hat{f}(\lambda) = \int_G f(g) \phi_\lambda^*(g) dg = \int_{G/H} f \phi_\lambda^* = \int_{H \backslash G/H} f \phi_\lambda^*; \text{ and if } U_\phi \text{ is the (class one)}$$

$$\text{representation associated to the p.d.z.s. function } \phi, \text{ then } \phi(gH) = \int_H \chi_{U_\phi}(g \cdot h) dh$$

where χ is the character of the representation U_ϕ of G on $H(U_\phi)$.

Since $K_{G/H}(t; m, m_0)$ gives a spherical function on G , we might consider an expansion in terms of the z.s. functions on G , viz.,

$$K_{G/H}(t; m, n) = \int_{\hat{G}(1)} \phi_\lambda(g) \hat{d}\mu_t(\lambda), \quad gn = m,$$

$$\text{or} = \sum_{\lambda \in \hat{G}(1)} \phi_\lambda(g) F_\lambda(t)$$

if G is compact. The function $F_\lambda(t)$ is the spectral density.

When $M = G$ is a compact connected Lie group, it is easy to calculate the spectral density. Knowing $\Delta_G \chi_\lambda = h_\lambda \chi_\lambda$, then $F_\lambda(t) = d(\lambda) \exp(-ih_\lambda t)$ (where $F_\lambda(0) = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0^+} \int_G K_G(t; g) \chi_\lambda(g)^* dg = \chi_\lambda(e) = d(\lambda)$).

Thus $K_G(t;g) = \sum_{\lambda \in \hat{G}(1)} d(\lambda) \exp(-ih_\lambda t) \chi_\lambda(g)$, (i.e., eq. (19) in [5]).

As sketched by Dowker [6] if $K_G(t;g)$ is the propagator on G , then

$K_{G/H}(t;zh) = \int_H K_G(t;zh) dh$. Viz., if $\pi: G \rightarrow M = G/H$ is the natural projection

then $\Delta_M(f) \circ \pi = \Delta_G(f \circ \pi)$. Thus $(\Delta_M K_M)(gH) = [\Delta_G \int_H K_G(t; \cdot, h^{-1}) dh](g) =$

$[\int_H \Delta_G K_G(t; \cdot, h^{-1}) dh](g) = -i \partial/\partial t [\int_H K_G(\cdot) dh] = -i [\partial/\partial t K_M](gH)$; and

$\lim_{t \rightarrow 0^+} \int f \circ \pi(g) K_G(t;g) dg = f \circ \pi(e) = f(H)$. Thus $K_M(t;gH) =$

$\sum_{\lambda \in \hat{G}(1)} d(\lambda) \exp(-ih_\lambda t) \phi_\lambda(gH)$, or $K_M(t;xH,xH) = \sum_{\lambda \in \hat{G}(1)} d(\lambda) \dim Z(H(\lambda)) \exp(-ih_\lambda t)$ (1.1)

where $Z(H(\lambda)) = \{v \in H_\lambda \mid U_\lambda(h)v = v \text{ for all } h \text{ in } H\}$, where $H(\lambda)$ is the representation space of λ , $d(\lambda) = \dim H(\lambda)$.

We now turn our attention to the relation between the propagator K_M on $M = G/H$ and the propagator K_M on $M = \Gamma \backslash G/H$, where Γ is a discrete subgroup of G . The best way to look at this question is as follows. Suppose the propagator is known only over the subspace γm_0 where γ varies over Γ . Then what is the relation of the spectral density of the propagator we observe to that of the unobserved propagator on the whole space M ? The connection is given by the Selberg trace formula which we review next.

§2. The Selberg Trace Formula.

Let Γ be a closed subgroup of finite index of a separable locally compact group G . Let L be a finite dimensional unitary representation of Γ . The induced representation U^L acting on $H(U^L)$, [12]. Let χ_L , resp χ_{U^L} , denote the associated characters $g \rightarrow \text{Tr} L(g)$, resp. $g \rightarrow \text{Tr} U^L(g)$. For f in $L^1(G)$, define U_f^L by $(U_f^L \alpha_1, \alpha_2) = \int_G f(g) (U^L(g) \alpha_1, \alpha_2) dg$ for α_i in $H(U^L)$. Then $\text{Tr}(U_f^L) =$

$\int_G \chi_{U^L}(g) f(g) dg$ can be computed:

$$\text{Tr}(U_f^L) = \frac{1}{o(\Gamma \backslash G)} \sum_{\tilde{y} \in \Gamma \backslash G} \int_{\Gamma} f(y^{-1} \gamma y) \chi_L(\gamma) d\gamma$$

or $\int_{\Gamma \backslash G} \left[\int_{\Gamma} f(y^{-1} \gamma y) \chi_L(\gamma) d\gamma \right] \times dv(\tilde{y}) \quad (*)$

If U^L decomposes discretely as $U^L = \sum_{\lambda \in \hat{G}} \bigoplus n(\lambda) U^{\lambda}$ with multiplicity $n(\lambda)$, then

$$\text{Tr}(U_f^L) = \sum_{\lambda \in \hat{G}} n(\lambda) \text{Tr} U_f^{\lambda} = \int_{\hat{G}} \text{Tr} U_f d\hat{\mu}(M) \quad (**)$$

The Selberg trace formula (STF) in its first version is that $(*) = (**)$. These hypotheses are met when Γ is a discrete subgroup of G such that $\Gamma \backslash G$ is compact.

The induced representation U^L is a discrete direct sum of IUR of G , each occurring with finite multiplicity $n_{\Gamma}(\lambda, L)$; so $[U^L] = \sum_{\lambda \in \hat{G}} n_{\Gamma}(\lambda, L) \lambda$ where \hat{G} is the set of

equivalence classes of IUR's. If f is an admissible function--i.e., (a) the series $\sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} f(y^{-1} \gamma x) L(\gamma)$ converges absolutely, uniformly on compacts of $G \times G$,

to a continuous function $F(x, y, L)$ and (b) U_f is of trace class, then the STF holds

$$\sum_{\lambda \in \hat{G}} n_{\Gamma}(\lambda, L) \text{Tr} U_f^{\lambda} = \int_{\Gamma \backslash G} \text{Tr} F(x, x, L) d\dot{x} = \sum_{\gamma \in C_{\Gamma}} \chi_L(\gamma) \text{Vol}(\Gamma_{\gamma} \backslash G_{\gamma}) J_{\gamma}(f)$$

where C_{Γ} is a complete set of representatives in Γ of G -conjugacy classes of

elements of Γ , G_{γ} is the centralizer of γ in G , $\Gamma_{\gamma} = \Gamma \cap G_{\gamma}$, $J_{\gamma}(f) = \int_{G_{\gamma} \backslash G} f(x^{-1} \gamma x) dx_{\gamma}$

The connection of the STF with class one representations is as follows. A

C_1 -spherical function f has the property that $\bigoplus_{\lambda} (f) = \text{Tr} U_f^{\lambda} = 0$ unless λ is of type one in which case $\bigoplus_{\lambda} (f) = \hat{f}(\lambda)$. Thus if f is also admissible and if

$\sum_{\lambda \in \hat{G}(1)} n_{\Gamma}(\lambda, L) \hat{f}(\lambda)$ converges absolutely then the Selberg-Tamagawa trace formula

(STTF) states that

$$\sum_{\lambda \in \mathcal{G}(1)} n_{\Gamma}(\lambda, L) \hat{f}(\lambda) = \sum_{\gamma \in C_{\Gamma}} \chi_L(\gamma) \text{Vol}(\Gamma \backslash G_{\gamma}) J_{\gamma}(f).$$

§3. Back to Propagators.

In the situation above where Γ is a discrete subgroup of G with $\Gamma \backslash G$ compact, Γ acts on G/H by left translation and the quotient space $\Gamma \backslash G/H$ is compact. As above with $L = I$, $L_2(\Gamma \backslash G/H) = \sum \bigoplus H(\lambda)$ where the Laplacian $\Delta \in \mathcal{D}(G/H)$ acts on $H(\lambda)$ by the scalar $h_{\lambda}(\Delta)$. Formally the sum $\sum_{\lambda \in \mathcal{G}(1)} d(\lambda) \exp(-it h_{\lambda}(\Delta))$ is the trace of the operator $\exp(-it\Delta)$ on $L_2(\Gamma \backslash G/H)$. Of course $\exp(-it\Delta)$ for $-\infty < t < \infty$ is a group with distributional kernel $\sum_{\lambda} \sum_{j=1}^{d(\lambda)} \exp(-it h_{\lambda}(\Delta)) \phi_{\lambda j}(x) \overline{\phi_{\lambda j}(y)}$,

where $\{\phi_{\lambda j}\}$, $j=1, \dots, d(\lambda)$ is an ONB for $H(\lambda)$.

If the Euclidean case is mimicked one expects that on $L_2(H \backslash G/H)$ the operator $\exp(-it\Delta)$ has an integral kernel $k(t; y^{-1}x) = g(it; y^{-1}x)$ where $g_t(m)$, $m \in G/H$, is the fundamental solution of the heat equation $\Delta u = \partial u / \partial t$ on G/H . The analogous integral operator on $L_2(\Gamma \backslash G/H)$ should then be obtained by "periodizing" k by "wrapping it around" $\Gamma \backslash G/H$ along the orbits of Γ on G/H , i.e., (for L nontrivial)

$$K_{\Gamma \backslash G/H}(t; y, x) = \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} L(\gamma) k_t(\gamma^{-1} \gamma x) \text{ with trace being } \sum_{\gamma \in \mathcal{G}(1)} n_{\Gamma}(\lambda, L) \exp(-it h_{\lambda}(\Delta)) =$$

$\int_{\Gamma \backslash G/H} K(t; x, x) dx$. (Requiring the wave functions to transform according to

$$\psi(\gamma m) = L(\gamma) \psi(m), \text{ one is led to } \int_M k(t; x, y) \psi(y) = \int_{\Gamma \backslash M} K(t; x, y) \psi(y) \text{ where } K(t; x, y) =$$

$$\sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} L(\gamma) k(t; x, \gamma y) \text{ as observed by Selberg [16]. Later this was the motivation for}$$

eq. (5') of [6] and [11].)

This leads naturally to the conjecture that K_t has a trace $\int_{\Gamma \backslash G/H} K_t(x, x) dx =$

$$\sum_{\lambda \in \mathcal{G}(1)} n_{\Gamma}(\lambda, L) \exp(-it h_{\lambda}(\Delta)) = \int_{\Gamma \backslash G/H} \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} \chi_L(\gamma) k_t(\gamma^{-1} \gamma x) dx = \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} \chi_L(\gamma) \int_F k_{G/H}(t; \gamma^{-1} \gamma x) dx$$

(3.1)

where F is a measurable fundamental domain for Γ in G/H . In this generalized STF we emphasize that everything is understood only formally.

The conjecture crystallizes the status of the remarks in [4], [5], [6], [11], and elsewhere. The evidence which leads us to expect a GSTF to be true is as follows.

Of course (3.1) reduces to (1.1) in the case $\Gamma = \text{id}$ and G compact. Furthermore, it was observed by Schulman [15] for $SU(2)$ and Dowker [5] for a compact Lie group G that the propagator is formally

$$K_G(t; x) = \sum_{\substack{\text{classical} \\ \text{paths}}} k(t; \gamma x)$$

where $k(t; \exp H)$ satisfies the "radial equation"

$$i \frac{\partial}{\partial t} j - \left(\sum_{k=1}^n \frac{\partial^2}{\partial h_k^2} + 4\pi^2 |\rho|^2 \right) j = 0$$

for H regular, where: T is the maximal torus in G ; the Lie algebra of T is \mathcal{T} with basis H_1, \dots, H_n ; $\rho = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{r=1}^N \frac{N-r}{2} \theta_r$ where θ_r are the positive roots of G ($N = \dim G$); $|\cdot|$ is the Cartan-Killing norm; $j(H) = \prod_r [\exp(\pi i \theta_r(H)) - \exp(-\pi i \theta_r(H))]$ for H in \mathcal{T} ; T' is the set of regular (i.e., $j(H) \neq 0$) points of \mathcal{T} ; $H = \sum_k h_k H_k$. This fits precisely in our framework as hinted by Dowker. Viz., the propagator $K(t; x, y)$ on G satisfies $K(t; x, y) = K(t; y^{-1}x, e) = K(t; y^{-1}x)$; and the map $z \rightarrow K(t, z)$ is invariant by inner automorphisms of G . Thus it is determined by the restriction to the maximal torus TCG and $K(t; \exp)$ satisfies the radial equation for $h = \exp H \in T'$. The positive roots θ_r of G are linear forms on \mathcal{T} which take integral values on a discrete subgroup Γ of \mathcal{T} . The function

$$T' \ni h \rightarrow k_\Gamma(t; h) = \exp \frac{(4\pi^2 i |\rho|^2 t)}{(it)^{n/2}} \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} \frac{[L(h) \exp(-i|h|^2/4t)](h)}{j(h)}$$

is a W -invariant solution of the radial equation (where W is the Weyl group

with order $|W|$). Then $\int_G K(t;g) dg = \frac{1}{|W|} \int_T |j(u)|^2 \times [\int_G K(t;gug^{-1}) dg] du =$

$$\frac{1}{\text{Vol}(T/\Gamma)|W|} \int_{T/\Gamma} \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} |j(h+\gamma)|^2 k_T(h+\gamma) dh. \quad \text{This is given by (16)-(18) in [5].}$$

(Note that $|\rho|^2 = R/6$ where R is the scalar curvature of G .)

For the heat equation on these spaces, the analogous formulae have been proven in [1], [7], and elsewhere.

In the simple case that $G = R$, $H = \{e\}$, and $\Gamma = Z$, the GSTF reduces to the following analogue of the Poisson-Jacobi (theta) formula

$$\sum_{n \in Z} e^{-itn^2} = \sqrt{\pi/t} \sum_{m \in Z} \exp\left[\frac{i(2\pi m)^2}{4t}\right] \exp\left(\frac{-i\pi}{4}\right) \quad (3.2)$$

where n^2 is the spectrum of $-\Delta$ on $S_1^1 = R/Z$ and $2\pi m$ is the length of the iterated closed geodesic (length 2π on S_1^1).

Colin de Verdiere has generalized the classical Poisson-Jacobi formula

$$\sum_{n \in Z} \exp(-n^2/z) = \sqrt{\pi z} \sum_{m \in Z} \exp(-\pi^2 m^2 z) \quad \text{Re } z > 0$$

for certain Riemannian manifolds with negative sectional curvature to

$$\sum_{k \geq 0} \exp(-\lambda_k/z) = \sum_{\ell \in L \setminus \{0\}} f_\ell(z) \exp(-\ell^2/4) \quad (F)$$

where F denotes the techniques of nonlinear Fourier transform, $0 = \lambda_0 < \lambda_1 \leq \lambda_2 \leq \dots$

are the eigenvalues of the Laplacian $-\Delta$ on the compact connected Riemannian manifold M , L = set of lengths (and their opposites) of periodic geodesics on M .

Note also Chazarain's formula [2].

The author is unable at present to prove the GSTF in the most general case. (Perhaps via techniques of Nelson and Ray it has been suggested.) However in the case in [11], $G = R$, $H = \{e\}$ and $\Gamma = Z$, the GSTF can be proven. The dynamics of

the situation here is the fixed axis rigid rotator with Lagrangian $L = \frac{I}{2} \dot{\phi}^2$,

$0 \leq \phi < 2\pi$, on $M = SO(2)$; a CONB for the wave functions is given by

$$\{\psi_m(\phi) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{im\phi}\}, m \in \mathbb{Z}, \text{ with } E_m = m^2/2I. \text{ Then } K(t, \phi) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \sum \exp(i\phi n) \exp(-in^2/2\gamma) \\ = \frac{1}{2\pi} \theta_3\left(\frac{\phi}{2}, -\frac{1}{2\gamma\pi}\right) \text{ where } \gamma = I\hbar t \text{ and } \theta_3(z, t) = \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} e^{i\pi t n^2} e^{2inz}. \text{ For } \text{Im} t > 0, \text{ the}$$

Poisson summation formula gives

$$K(t, \phi) = \left(\frac{\gamma}{2\pi i}\right)^{1/2} \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} e^{i\gamma(\phi - 2n\pi)^2/2} = \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma} k(t; \phi + \gamma)$$

where k is the free particle propagator. The GSTF is just the case $\phi = 0$.

Theorem. The GSTF is true for the case $G = \mathbb{R}$, $H = \{e\}$ and $\Gamma = \mathbb{Z}$, i.e., (3.2)

holds in the sense of Wiener's fourier transform.

The proof is straight forward.

§4. Geodesics and Propagators.

As noted above the philosophy in Schulman, Dowker and elsewhere is to express the propagator as a "sum over all classical paths." If M is a compact Riemannian manifold, then each closed path g (distinct from the identity) of $\Pi_1(M)$ corresponds to a closed geodesic γ_g of class g whose length is minimal among the closed curves of the same class as g . If M is of negative sectional curvature then there is only one closed geodesic of each homotopy type and every closed geodesic is so obtained. So there is a biunique correspondence between closed geodesics and nontrivial elements of $\Pi_1(M)$, or between the free homotopy classes of closed paths and the set C_Γ of conjugacy classes of elements of Γ .

In the situation above we have Γ a discrete torsion-free subgroup of Lie group G with $\Gamma \backslash G$ compact. Then $M = \Gamma \backslash G/H$ is a compact Riemannian with simply connected covering space G/H and $\Gamma \simeq \Pi_1(M)$. From these remarks, if M has negative

sectional curvature the GSTF(3J) is modified by writing

$$K_{\Gamma \backslash G/H}(t; y, x) = \sum_{\substack{\text{"all closed"} \\ \text{geodesics } \gamma}} k(t; y^{-1} \gamma x)$$

A large class of manifolds of negative sectional curvature in this form are $\Gamma \backslash G/H$ where G is a noncompact connected simple Lie group of R -rank one and finite center, H is a maximal compact subgroup of G , Γ is a discrete subgroup of G acting freely on G/H ; and G/H is a rank one symmetric space of noncompact type. This is an extremely interesting case for then the length spectrum (lengths of the periodic geodesics γ_g and their multiplicities) is determined by the (harmonic) spectrum of Δ on M . (Huber [10], Atiyah and Duistermaat (to appear), Gangolli (to appear)) and a "generalized" length spectrum plus $\text{Vol}(\Gamma \backslash G)$ determines the (harmonic) spectrum.

§5. STF and Geometric Quantization.

As we know, an important object in geometric quantization is the quantized Hilbert space associated with a Kählerian polarization F , $H^0(M, \mathcal{O}(E))$ where $E \rightarrow M$ is a holomorphic line bundle over (M, Ω) with the curvature of the connection on E being Ω , etc. This situation arises when $M = G/H$ is a bounded symmetric domain with cocompact Γ acting freely; then $M = \Gamma \backslash G/H$ is an algebraic manifold. In this case the first version of the STF applies. E.G., if $E_\lambda \rightarrow M$ is the bundle corresponding to the holomorphic discrete series of Harish Chandra then the multiplicity of the "energy levels" for the "energy manifold" M is

$$n_\Gamma(\lambda) = \dim H^0(M, \mathcal{O}(E_\lambda)) = \sum_\gamma \text{Vol}(\Gamma_\gamma \backslash G_\gamma) J_\lambda(\gamma) = \text{dimension}$$

of the space of automorphic forms for such a representation. (Cf. Hotta-Parthasarathy, et al.)

In general in the situation at the end of §5 if Γ has no elliptic elements $n_\Gamma(\lambda) = \text{Vol}(\Gamma \backslash G) d(\lambda)$ when λ is integrable. (Cf. Langlands, Schmid, et al.)

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