# The Mathematics of Quantum Entanglement

From Tensor Products to Type III Factors

Charles Alfred Streb IV
Independent Researcher
chuck.streb@gmail.com

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**Abstract**

This is an expository reference on the mathematical structure of quantum entanglement. It contains no new results. Part I treats the finite-dimensional theory, where entanglement is defined by the failure of a convex tensor decomposition and is computable in principle. Part II treats the infinite-dimensional and algebraic setting. For sharp local regions in relativistic quantum field theory, the tensor-product and reduced-density-matrix framework generally fails: under the usual phase-space and scaling assumptions, local observable algebras are typically hyperfinite factors of type $\mathrm{III}_1$, with no intrinsic normal semifinite trace, no intrinsic local density matrix, and no reduced-state von Neumann entropy. Part III develops the structures that replace that framework – Tomita–Takesaki modular theory, Araki relative entropy, and the crossed-product construction. The continuous core of a type $\mathrm{III}_1$ factor is type $\mathrm{II}_\infty$ and carries a semifinite trace; in the gravitationally dressed de Sitter observer construction, the resulting observable algebra is type $\mathrm{II}_1$. Statements are proved when the proof is short and otherwise attributed precisely. The intended use is as a definitional reference: every term is pinned, and every substantive claim is either proved here or tied to a cited result with its hypotheses stated.

**Keywords:** quantum entanglement; separability; Schmidt decomposition; von Neumann algebras; type III factors; Tomita–Takesaki modular theory; relative entropy; crossed product; algebraic quantum field theory; lattice gauge theory.

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**Article type:** Expository / review. No new results are claimed; see Scope and epistemic status below.

## Contents

## Scope and epistemic status

Every mathematical result presented here is drawn from established literature. The document makes no claim of priority. Its purpose is expository: to fix definitions, state the hypotheses under which standard conclusions hold, and catalogue common category errors. Like any expository work, its formulations remain open to correction if a hypothesis is omitted, a reference is misapplied, or a distinction is stated too strongly. Those distinctions are collected in Section 13.

# Part I

# Finite Dimensions

## 1 Setting and definitions

Let $\mathcal{H}_A$ and $\mathcal{H}_B$ be finite-dimensional complex Hilbert spaces, $\dim \mathcal{H}_A = d_A$, $\dim \mathcal{H}_B = d_B$. The composite system has Hilbert space $\mathcal{H} = \mathcal{H}_A \otimes \mathcal{H}_B$. Write $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ for the bounded operators and

$$\mathcal{S}(\mathcal{H}) = \{\rho \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}) : \rho = \rho^*,\ \rho \geq 0,\ \operatorname{Tr} \rho = 1\}$$

for the states (density operators).

**Definition 1.1** (Separability)**.** A state $\rho \in \mathcal{S}(\mathcal{H}_A \otimes \mathcal{H}_B)$ is separable with respect to the bipartition $(A, B)$ if there exist a probability distribution $\{p_i\}_{i=1}^n$ and states $\rho_i^A \in \mathcal{S}(\mathcal{H}_A)$, $\rho_i^B \in \mathcal{S}(\mathcal{H}_B)$ such that

$$\rho = \sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i\, \rho_i^A \otimes \rho_i^B, \qquad p_i \geq 0, \qquad \sum_i p_i = 1. \tag{1}$$

Otherwise $\rho$ is entangled.

Three features of Definition 1.1 deserve emphasis immediately, because each is a standard source of confusion.

*Remark* 1.2 (The definition is negative). Entanglement is defined by the failure of the convex decomposition (1). Positive criteria and witnesses exist in special settings, but there is no known simple, computationally tractable universal criterion for arbitrary mixed states.

*Remark* 1.3 (The definition is relative to the cut). Separability is a property of the pair consisting of a state and a tensor factorization. The proposition "$\rho$ is entangled" is not well formed until the factorization $\mathcal{H} \cong \mathcal{H}_A \otimes \mathcal{H}_B$ is specified. A Hilbert space of dimension $d_A d_B$ admits many factorizations, and a vector entangled with respect to one may be a product with respect to another. See Example 1.5.

*Remark* 1.4 (Separable is not the same as uncorrelated). A separable state need not be a product state; (1) permits classical correlation through the mixing weights $p_i$. Product states are the special case $n = 1$.

**Example 1.5.** Let $\mathcal{H} = \mathbb{C}^2 \otimes \mathbb{C}^2$ with basis $\{|00\rangle, |01\rangle, |10\rangle, |11\rangle\}$ and take

$$|\Phi^+\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\big(|00\rangle + |11\rangle\big),$$

which is entangled for this cut. Choose a unitary $U$ on $\mathbb{C}^4$ with $U|\Phi^+\rangle = |00\rangle$; the factorization transported by $U$ makes the same abstract vector a product. The physical content of the subsystem split therefore lies in the decomposition selected by the observable structure – in practice, for ordinary bipartite experiments, by locality and laboratory access.

## 2 Pure states: the Schmidt decomposition

For pure states the separability problem is completely solved by a linear-algebraic normal form.

**Theorem 2.1** (Schmidt decomposition)**.** *Let* $|\psi\rangle \in \mathcal{H}_A \otimes \mathcal{H}_B$ *be a unit vector. Then there exist orthonormal sets* $\{|a_i\rangle\}_{i=1}^r \subset \mathcal{H}_A$ *and* $\{|b_i\rangle\}_{i=1}^r \subset \mathcal{H}_B$ *and scalars* $\lambda_i > 0$ *with* $\sum_i \lambda_i^2 = 1$ *such that*

$$|\psi\rangle = \sum_{i=1}^{r} \lambda_i |a_i\rangle \otimes |b_i\rangle. \tag{2}$$

*The number* $r \le \min(d_A, d_B)$ *and the multiset* $\{\lambda_i\}$ *are uniquely determined by* $|\psi\rangle$*.*

*Proof.* Expand $|\psi\rangle = \sum_{jk} C_{jk} |j\rangle \otimes |k\rangle$ in product bases and regard $C = (C_{jk})$ as a $d_A \times d_B$ matrix. The singular value decomposition gives $C = U\Sigma V^*$ with $U, V$ unitary and $\Sigma$ diagonal with nonnegative entries $\lambda_1 \ge \cdots \ge \lambda_r > 0$. Setting $|a_i\rangle = \sum_j U_{ji}|j\rangle$ and $|b_i\rangle = \sum_k \overline{V}_{ki}|k\rangle$ yields (2). Normalization gives $\sum_i \lambda_i^2 = \mathrm{Tr}(CC^*) = 1$. Uniqueness of the $\lambda_i$ is uniqueness of the singular values. □

**Definition 2.2.** The integer $r$ in Theorem 2.1 is the Schmidt rank of $|\psi\rangle$; the $\lambda_i$ are its Schmidt coefficients.

**Proposition 2.3** (Pure-state criterion)**.** *A pure state* $|\psi\rangle$ *is separable if and only if its Schmidt rank is* 1*, equivalently if and only if the reduced state* $\rho_A = \mathrm{Tr}_B\, |\psi\rangle\langle\psi|$ *is pure.*

*Proof.* From (2),

$$\rho_A = \sum_i \lambda_i^2 |a_i\rangle\langle a_i|,$$

whose nonzero spectrum is $\{\lambda_i^2\}$. Thus $\rho_A$ is pure if and only if $r = 1$, which is equivalent to $|\psi\rangle = |a_1\rangle \otimes |b_1\rangle$. Conversely, if the rank-one projector $|\psi\rangle\langle\psi|$ admitted a separable convex decomposition, extremality of pure states would force every nonzero term to equal that projector, hence to be a product projector. □

Proposition 2.3 is the conceptual heart of the finite-dimensional pure-state theory: the whole is in a pure state while the parts need not be. Complete information about the composite can coexist with irreducible mixedness of each component. A classical point mass on a Cartesian product, by contrast, induces point masses on each factor.

**Definition 2.4** (Maximally entangled)**.** A pure state on $\mathbb{C}^d \otimes \mathbb{C}^d$ is maximally entangled if all Schmidt coefficients equal $d^{-1/2}$, equivalently if $\rho_A = \mathbf{1}/d$.

# 3 Entropy of entanglement

**Definition 3.1.** The von Neumann entropy of $\rho$ is $S(\rho) = -\mathrm{Tr}(\rho \log \rho)$, with $0 \log 0 := 0$.

**Definition 3.2** (Entropy of entanglement)**.** For a pure state $|\psi\rangle$ on $\mathcal{H}_A \otimes \mathcal{H}_B$,

$$E(\psi) = S(\rho_A) = -\sum_{i=1}^{r} \lambda_i^2 \log \lambda_i^2.$$

**Proposition 3.3.** *For any pure* $|\psi\rangle$, $S(\rho_A) = S(\rho_B)$*. Moreover,* $E(\psi) = 0$ *if and only if* $|\psi\rangle$ *is a product state, and the maximum* $\log \min(d_A, d_B)$ *is attained exactly when the nonzero Schmidt coefficients are uniform.*

*Proof.* By Theorem 2.1, $\rho_A$ and $\rho_B$ have the same nonzero spectrum $\{\lambda_i^2\}$, hence equal entropy. The Shannon entropy of $\{\lambda_i^2\}$ vanishes exactly for a point mass and is maximized by the uniform distribution on $\min(d_A, d_B)$ outcomes. □

*Remark* 3.4 (Why this fails for mixed states). For a mixed $\rho$, $S(\rho_A)$ is not an entanglement measure. The classically correlated separable state

$$\tfrac{1}{2}\big(|00\rangle\langle 00| + |11\rangle\langle 11|\big)$$

has $S(\rho_A) = \log 2 > 0$ while being separable by inspection. Mixed-state theory therefore uses distinct constructions – entanglement of formation, distillable entanglement, negativity, relative entropy of entanglement, and others – which do not generally coincide.

# 4 Detecting entanglement: PPT and its limits

**Definition 4.1** (Partial transpose). Fix a basis of $\mathcal{H}_B$. The partial transpose $\rho^{T_B}$ is defined on matrix elements by

$$\langle ij|\rho^{T_B}|kl\rangle = \langle il|\rho|kj\rangle.$$

The matrix representation depends on the chosen basis, but positivity and the spectrum of $\rho^{T_B}$ are invariant under a change of basis on $B$.

**Theorem 4.2** (Peres necessary condition). *If $\rho$ is separable, then $\rho^{T_B} \geq 0$.*

*Proof.* Transposition is a positive map. If $\rho = \sum_i p_i \rho_i^A \otimes \rho_i^B$, then

$$\rho^{T_B} = \sum_i p_i \rho_i^A \otimes (\rho_i^B)^T,$$

a convex combination of positive operators. □

**Definition 4.3.** A state is PPT if $\rho^{T_B} \geq 0$ and NPT otherwise.

**Theorem 4.4** (Horodecki; sufficiency in low dimension). *For $2 \times 2$ and $2 \times 3$ systems, up to exchanging the factors, a state is separable if and only if it is PPT. Beginning with $3 \times 3$ and $2 \times 4$, PPT is no longer sufficient: entangled PPT states exist.*

The proof rests on the structure theory of positive maps: positive maps $\mathcal{B}(\mathbb{C}^2) \to \mathcal{B}(\mathbb{C}^2)$ and $\mathcal{B}(\mathbb{C}^2) \to \mathcal{B}(\mathbb{C}^3)$ are decomposable, whereas indecomposable positive maps exist in higher dimensions. See [15, 23].

**Definition 4.5** (Bound entanglement). An entangled PPT state from which no maximally entangled pure state can be distilled by local operations and classical communication, even from arbitrarily many copies, is called bound entangled.

The existence of bound entanglement shows that entanglement theory cannot be reduced to a single scalar ordering valid for all states and operational tasks.

**Theorem 4.6** (Gurvits). *The weak membership problem for the convex set of separable states is NP-hard.*

Theorem 4.6 gives a precise complexity-theoretic obstruction to an efficient universal separability test. It does not preclude exact criteria or algorithms in restricted dimensions, symmetry classes, or special families; it shows that the unrestricted problem is computationally intractable under standard complexity assumptions [13].

## 5 What entanglement does not do

**Theorem 5.1** (No communication). *Let $\rho$ be a state on $\mathcal{H}_A \otimes \mathcal{H}_B$ and let $\Lambda$ be a completely positive trace-preserving map acting on $B$. Then*

$$\mathrm{Tr}_B\big[(\mathbf{1} \otimes \Lambda)(\rho)\big] = \mathrm{Tr}_B\,\rho = \rho_A.$$

*Proof.* Write $\Lambda(\sigma) = \sum_k K_k \sigma K_k^*$ with $\sum_k K_k^* K_k = \mathbf{1}_B$. For any $X \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}_A)$,

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathrm{Tr}[(X \otimes \mathbf{1})(\mathbf{1} \otimes \Lambda)(\rho)] &= \sum_k \mathrm{Tr}[(X \otimes K_k)\rho(\mathbf{1} \otimes K_k^*)] \\
&= \mathrm{Tr}\left[(X \otimes \sum_k K_k^* K_k)\rho\right] \\
&= \mathrm{Tr}[(X \otimes \mathbf{1})\rho]\,.
\end{aligned}$$

Since $X$ was arbitrary, the reduced states coincide. □

Entanglement by itself transmits no controllable signal. Every statistic available locally to $A$ is determined by $\rho_A$, which is unchanged by a trace-preserving operation performed only on $B$. The correlations become operationally visible when records from the two sides are compared through an ordinary communication channel.

**Theorem 5.2** (Monogamy; CKW inequality). *For three qubits $A, B, C$,*

$$C^2_{A|BC} \geq C^2_{AB} + C^2_{AC},$$

*where $C$ denotes concurrence [7]. In particular, if $A$ and $B$ are maximally entangled, then $A$ has no entanglement with $C$.*

## 6 Entanglement is strictly weaker than Bell nonlocality

**Definition 6.1.** A state $\rho$ admits a local hidden-variable model for a specified class of measurements if there is a probability space $(\Lambda, \mu)$ and response functions $p(a|x,\lambda)$, $p(b|y,\lambda)$ such that

$$\mathrm{Tr}\big[\rho(M_a^x \otimes N_b^y)\big] = \int_\Lambda p(a|x,\lambda)p(b|y,\lambda)\,d\mu(\lambda)$$

for all measurements in that class.

**Theorem 6.2** (Werner). *There exist entangled states admitting local hidden-variable models for all projective measurements. In particular, Werner constructed a family on $\mathbb{C}^d \otimes \mathbb{C}^d$ containing an entangled parameter range with an explicit local model [21].*

Hence

$$\text{Bell violation} \Longrightarrow \text{entangled}, \qquad \text{entangled} \not\Longrightarrow \text{Bell violation}.$$

Entanglement is a property of a state relative to a specified subsystem structure; Bell nonlocality is a property of the measurement correlations that the state can generate.

# Part II

# Infinite Dimensions and Operator Algebras

## 7 Why the finite-dimensional framework does not survive unchanged

Part I relied on a specified tensor product $\mathcal{H}_A \otimes \mathcal{H}_B$ and on states represented by trace-class density operators. For sharp local regions in continuum relativistic quantum field theory, the relevant subsystem structure is instead algebraic, and the reduced-density-matrix framework generally fails.

**Definition 7.1** (von Neumann algebra)**.** A von Neumann algebra $\mathcal{M} \subseteq \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ is a unital $*$-subalgebra closed in the weak operator topology. Equivalently, by the double-commutant theorem, $\mathcal{M} = \mathcal{M}''$, where

$$\mathcal{M}' = \{X \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}) : XY = YX \text{ for all } Y \in \mathcal{M}\}.$$

**Definition 7.2** (Factor)**.** A von Neumann algebra $\mathcal{M}$ is a factor if its centre $\mathcal{M} \cap \mathcal{M}'$ equals $\mathbb{C}\mathbf{1}$.

In algebraic QFT one assigns to each spacetime region $O$ a von Neumann algebra $\mathcal{A}(O)$ of observables measurable in $O$, subject to isotony, locality, covariance, and additional physical conditions. The finite-dimensional bipartition is replaced by a specified pair of commuting local algebras, such as $(\mathcal{A}(O), \mathcal{A}(O'))$ for a region and its causal complement.

## 8 Type classification

The Murray–von Neumann classification sorts factors by the structure of their projections and traces.

**Definition 8.1.** A factor $\mathcal{M}$ is of:

- **type I** if it contains a minimal projection; then $\mathcal{M} \cong \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}_0)$ for some Hilbert space $\mathcal{H}_0$;
- **type II** if it has no minimal projections but admits a faithful normal semifinite trace; type $\mathrm{II}_1$ has a finite normalized trace, whereas type $\mathrm{II}_\infty$ has a semifinite infinite trace;
- **type III** if it admits no nonzero faithful normal semifinite trace. Equivalently, every nonzero projection is infinite in the Murray–von Neumann sense.

Type III factors split further by Connes' invariant $S(\mathcal{M})$, defined from the spectra of modular operators associated with faithful normal states or weights. The case $S(\mathcal{M}) = [0, \infty)$ is type $\mathrm{III}_1$ [9].

**Theorem 8.2** (Local algebras under physical regularity hypotheses)**.** *For broad classes of relativistic quantum field theories satisfying the relevant short-distance scaling, local-definiteness, and phase-space or nuclearity conditions, local algebras of bounded regions are isomorphic to the unique hyperfinite type* $\mathrm{III}_1$ *factor. Wedge algebras in the vacuum representation are likewise type* $\mathrm{III}_1$ *in standard models. The precise hypotheses vary with the framework and cannot be replaced by the Wightman axioms alone.*

See [11, 4, 14, 22]. The conclusion holds in many free-field, conformal-net, and nuclear AQFT models, but the hypotheses are part of the result.

**Corollary 8.3** (No sharp type-I reduction). *Let $\mathcal{A}(O)$ be a type* $\mathrm{III}_1$ *local algebra for a sharp region $O$.*

*(i) There is no factorization $\mathcal{H} \cong \mathcal{H}_O \otimes \mathcal{H}_{O'}$ for which $\mathcal{A}(O) = \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}_O) \otimes \mathbf{1}$.*

*(ii) A normal state on $\mathcal{A}(O)$ has no intrinsic density-operator representation $\omega(X) = \tau(\rho X)$ relative to a faithful normal semifinite trace on $\mathcal{A}(O)$, because no such trace exists.*

*(iii) Consequently, the ordinary reduced-state von Neumann entropy $S(\rho_O)$ is not defined for the sharp local algebra. Finite quantities in continuum QFT require a regulator, a split inclusion, a renormalized difference, or an algebraic quantity such as relative or mutual information.*

*Proof.* A factorization in (i) would identify $\mathcal{A}(O)$ with a type I factor, contradicting invariance of type under isomorphism. Statement (ii) follows from the absence of a faithful normal semifinite trace. Statement (iii) follows because the formula $-\operatorname{Tr}(\rho_O \log \rho_O)$ presupposes precisely such a density operator and trace. □

The qualification "sharp" matters. For two regions separated by a nonzero collar, the split property may insert a type I factor between their local algebras and thereby provide an effective tensor-product description. That construction does not turn the exact region/complement algebra into type I [14, 22].

The question "how entangled are these two sharp regions?" therefore has no answer as a single reduced-density-matrix entropy. It can still be addressed through state-dependent algebraic notions, including relative entropy, mutual information for separated regions, modular data, and operational correlation measures.

**Theorem 8.4** (Reeh–Schlieder). *Let $\Omega$ be the vacuum vector and $O$ any open region with nonempty interior. Under the standard hypotheses of the theorem, $\mathcal{A}(O)\Omega$ is dense in $\mathcal{H}$, so $\Omega$ is cyclic for every local algebra. For the causal complement relation, the vacuum is also separating: if $X\Omega = 0$ with $X \in \mathcal{A}(O)$, then $X = 0$.*

Reeh–Schlieder [18] illustrates the strength of local-global correlations in relativistic QFT: vectors obtained by acting in any nonempty open region are dense in the global Hilbert space. It does not by itself prove that the local algebra is type III, but it supplies the cyclic and separating structure required by modular theory.

# Part III

# Modular Theory, Relative Entropy, and Gauge Constraints

## 9 Tomita–Takesaki modular theory

Modular theory supplies canonical structure when no intrinsic trace is available.

**Definition 9.1.** Let $\mathcal{M} \subseteq \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ and let $\Omega \in \mathcal{H}$ be cyclic and separating for $\mathcal{M}$. Define the antilinear operator $S_0$ on the dense domain $\mathcal{M}\Omega$ by

$$S_0 X\Omega = X^*\Omega, \qquad X \in \mathcal{M}.$$

**Theorem 9.2** (Tomita–Takesaki)**.** *The operator $S_0$ is closable. Let $S$ be its closure and write the polar decomposition as $S = J\Delta^{1/2}$. Then:*

*(i)* $\Delta = S^*S$ *is positive, self-adjoint, and injective, while $J$ is an antiunitary involution;*

*(ii)* $\Delta^{it}\mathcal{M}\Delta^{-it} = \mathcal{M}$ *for all $t \in \mathbb{R}$;*

*(iii)* $J\mathcal{M}J = \mathcal{M}'$.

See [20, 3]. Part (ii) defines the modular automorphism group

$$\sigma_t^\omega(X) = \Delta^{it} X \Delta^{-it},$$

attached to the faithful normal vector state $\omega(X) = \langle \Omega, X\Omega \rangle$. With the convention

$$K = -\log \Delta,$$

$K$ is the modular Hamiltonian or modular generator.

*Remark* 9.3 (Cocycle uniqueness and outer modular flow). For two faithful normal states, Connes' cocycle theorem relates the corresponding modular flows by an inner cocycle. Thus there is generally no state-independent preferred automorphism group acting on $\mathcal{M}$ itself. The state-independent object is the induced homomorphism

$$\mathbb{R} \longrightarrow \mathrm{Out}(\mathcal{M}),$$

where $\mathrm{Out}(\mathcal{M}) = \mathrm{Aut}(\mathcal{M})/\,\mathrm{Inn}(\mathcal{M})$. This is the precise sense in which modular "time" is intrinsic to the algebra.

**Theorem 9.4** (Bisognano–Wichmann)**.** *For a Wightman theory satisfying the hypotheses of the theorem, let $W$ be the right Rindler wedge and $\mathcal{A}(W)$ its algebra with vacuum $\Omega$. Then the modular group of $(\mathcal{A}(W), \Omega)$ is the Lorentz-boost group:*

$$\Delta^{it} = U\big(\Lambda_W(-2\pi t)\big),$$

*and $J$ implements the corresponding wedge reflection, equivalently CPT composed with a rotation in the standard formulation.*

This theorem [2] turns abstract modular flow into a geometric symmetry. It yields the Unruh KMS property of the wedge-restricted vacuum. De Sitter space has an analogous static-patch relation between the vacuum modular flow, the static Killing flow, and the Gibbons–Hawking temperature, subject to the corresponding field-theoretic assumptions.

**Definition 9.5** (KMS condition)**.** A state $\omega$ on $\mathcal{M}$ is KMS at inverse temperature $\beta$ for a flow $\alpha_t$ if, for suitable $X, Y \in \mathcal{M}$, the function $F(t) = \omega(X\alpha_t(Y))$ extends analytically to the strip $0 < \operatorname{Im} t < \beta$ and satisfies

$$F(t + i\beta) = \omega(\alpha_t(Y)X).$$

Every faithful normal state is KMS at $\beta = 1$ with respect to its own modular flow. This modular KMS property is automatic. Interpreting it as physical thermality requires an additional identification of modular flow with a physically meaningful time evolution, as in the Bisognano–Wichmann setting.

## 10 Relative entropy: what survives

An intrinsic entropy of a single local state may fail, while entropy of one state relative to another remains well defined.

**Definition 10.1** (Araki relative entropy)**.** Let $\omega$ and $\varphi$ be faithful normal states on $\mathcal{M}$, represented in standard form by vectors $\Omega$ and $\Phi$. Define the relative Tomita operator by closing

$$S_{\Phi|\Omega} X\Omega = X^* \Phi,$$

and let $\Delta_{\Phi|\Omega} = S^*_{\Phi|\Omega} S_{\Phi|\Omega}$. The Araki relative entropy is

$$S(\omega\|\varphi) = -\langle \Omega, \log \Delta_{\Phi|\Omega}\, \Omega\rangle,$$

with the usual extension to nonfaithful states.

**Theorem 10.2** (Basic properties)**.** *Araki relative entropy is nonnegative, vanishes exactly when the states agree, is jointly convex, and is monotone under restriction: if $\mathcal{N} \subseteq \mathcal{M}$, then*

$$S_{\mathcal{N}}(\omega\|\varphi) \leq S_{\mathcal{M}}(\omega\|\varphi).$$

See [1, 16]. In finite dimensions this reduces to

$$S(\rho\|\sigma) = \operatorname{Tr} \rho(\log \rho - \log \sigma).$$

For suitable pairs of states it remains finite on type $\mathrm{III}_1$ algebras without introducing a local trace or density matrix. Relative entropy is therefore a central entropic quantity in QFT and underlies modern results involving modular energy, energy inequalities, the Bekenstein bound, and the quantum null energy condition.

## 11 The crossed product: recovering a semifinite trace

Crossed products and Takesaki duality are classical operator-algebraic constructions. Their recent gravitational applications provide a concrete physical interpretation of the additional degree of freedom that converts a type III algebra into a semifinite one.

**Definition 11.1** (Crossed product)**.** Let $\mathcal{M}$ be a von Neumann algebra with modular flow $\sigma_t$. The crossed product $\mathcal{M} \rtimes_\sigma \mathbb{R}$ acts on $L^2(\mathbb{R}, \mathcal{H})$ and is generated by

$$(\pi(X)\psi)(t) = \sigma_{-t}(X)\psi(t), \qquad (\lambda(s)\psi)(t) = \psi(t-s).$$

**Theorem 11.2** (Continuous core and type reduction)**.** *Let $\mathcal{M}$ be a type $\mathrm{III}_1$ factor and let $\sigma_t$ be the modular automorphism group of a faithful normal weight. Then the crossed product*

$$\mathcal{M} \rtimes_\sigma \mathbb{R}$$

*is its continuous core, a semifinite factor of type $\mathrm{II}_\infty$ equipped with a canonical trace up to overall normalization. Takesaki duality reconstructs $\mathcal{M}$ from the core together with the dual action.*

See [20, 3]. The passage from a type $\mathrm{II}_\infty$ core to a type $\mathrm{II}_1$ algebra requires additional data, for example compression by a finite projection or a specific physical constraint. It does not follow merely from the positivity of a generator.

A type II factor supports noncommutative $L^1$ density operators relative to its trace. For type $\mathrm{II}_1$, the trace can be normalized by $\tau(\mathbf{1}) = 1$; for type $\mathrm{II}_\infty$, the trace is unique only up to positive rescaling. Entropy can then be defined for states whose density has finite $-\tau(\rho \log \rho)$, but it need not be finite for every state. Rescaling the $\mathrm{II}_\infty$ trace shifts such entropies by a state-independent constant.

**Theorem 11.3** (Chandrasekaran–Longo–Penington–Witten)**.** *In the gravitationally dressed de Sitter static-patch construction, observables tied to an observer's worldline form a von Neumann algebra of type* $\mathrm{II}_1$*. The algebra has a maximum-entropy state corresponding semiclassically to empty de Sitter space, and its entropy agrees, for semiclassical states, with generalized entropy*

$$S_{\text{gen}} = \frac{A}{4G_N} + S_{\text{out}}$$

*up to a state-independent additive constant [8].*

In this construction, the observer and gravitational dressing are not optional labels: they are part of the algebraic definition that produces the type $\mathrm{II}_1$ observable algebra. The remaining additive normalization is not removed merely by naming the observer; it is fixed only after a trace or entropy convention is chosen.

## 12 Entanglement in gauge theories: the factorization obstruction

A second obstruction appears in gauge theory, already on a finite lattice. Let $G$ be a compact gauge group and

$$\mathcal{H}_{\text{phys}} = \{\psi \in \mathcal{H}_{\text{kin}} : G_x\psi = \psi \text{ for every vertex } x\}$$

be the Gauss-law-invariant subspace. Although $\mathcal{H}_{\text{kin}} = \bigotimes_\ell L^2(G)$ factorizes over links, $\mathcal{H}_{\text{phys}}$ generally does not factorize across a spatial cut. Wilson lines and Gauss-law constraints couple the two sides through boundary representation data.

**Theorem 12.1** (Superselection decomposition)**.** *For a chosen electric-centre or extended-Hilbert-space prescription and boundary-link set* $\Gamma$*, the physical Hilbert space decomposes into superselection sectors of boundary irreducible representations:*

$$\mathcal{H}_{\text{phys}} \cong \bigoplus_{\{R_\ell\}} \left(\mathcal{H}_A^{\{R_\ell\}} \otimes \mathcal{H}_B^{\{R_\ell\}}\right).$$

*Within that prescription, the corresponding entropy takes the form*

$$\begin{aligned} S = &-\sum_{\{R_\ell\}} p_{\{R_\ell\}} \log p_{\{R_\ell\}} \\ &+ \sum_{\{R_\ell\}} p_{\{R_\ell\}} \sum_{\ell\in\Gamma} \log\dim R_\ell \\ &+ \sum_{\{R_\ell\}} p_{\{R_\ell\}} S_{\{R_\ell\}}. \end{aligned}$$

See [10, 6, 12]. The first term is a Shannon contribution from boundary superselection sectors; the second is an edge-mode or representation-dimension term; the third is the within-sector quantum entropy. Under gauge-invariant local operations, the third term is the ordinarily distillable contribution, while the operational status of the first two depends on the regional algebra and allowed operations. Different algebra assignments or centre choices can therefore produce different entropy decompositions. A statement such as "the entanglement entropy of a Yang–Mills region is $X$" is incomplete until the regional algebra or extension prescription is specified.

## 13 Common category errors

Collected for reference. Each item identifies a distinction that is often blurred.

**E1.** **Stating entanglement without a subsystem structure.** In finite dimensions one must specify a tensor factorization; in algebraic QFT one must specify the relevant pair of subsystem algebras.

**E2.** **Identifying entanglement with Bell nonlocality.** Werner states refute the converse implication; entanglement does not guarantee Bell violation.

**E3.** **Using $S(\rho_A)$ as a mixed-state entanglement measure.** It includes ordinary classical ignorance and correlation.

**E4.** **Treating PPT as decisive in all dimensions.** PPT is necessary generally and sufficient only for $2 \times 2$ and $2 \times 3$ systems.

**E5.** **Expecting an efficient unrestricted separability test.** Weak membership for the separable set is NP-hard, although special families may remain tractable.

**E6.** **Attributing signalling to entanglement.** A local trace-preserving operation leaves the remote reduced state unchanged.

**E7.** **Assigning an ordinary finite reduced-state entropy to a sharp continuum region.** For a type III local algebra, the intrinsic reduced density matrix and its von Neumann entropy are absent. One must specify a regulator, split inclusion, renormalized difference, or algebraic substitute.

**E8.** **Assuming exact Hilbert-space factorization across every spatial boundary.** It fails for a sharp region/complement split in type III QFT and for the physical Hilbert space of gauge theory. Separated regions may nevertheless satisfy the split property.

**E9.** **Confusing the modular operator with its generator.** For type III$_1$, the Connes modular spectrum concerns the positive modular operator $\Delta$, with $S(\mathcal{M}) = [0, \infty)$. With $K = -\log \Delta$, the modular generator has logarithmic spectrum; in standard wedge examples $\mathrm{spec}(K) = \mathbb{R}$, not $[0, \infty)$.

**E10.** **Quoting a horizon entropy without specifying the observable algebra and normalization.** In gravitational constructions one must specify the observer or dressing prescription that defines the algebra, and separately the trace or additive entropy convention.

## 14 Summary of the logical structure

| Setting | Subsystem and entanglement structure | Entropy status |
|---|---|---|
| Finite-dimensional type I | State relative to a chosen tensor factorization; separability is failure of a convex product decomposition | For pure bipartite states, $S(\rho_A)$; finite and computable |
| Infinite-dimensional type I | Same tensor-product/density-operator framework, but entropy may be infinite | Defined when $-\operatorname{Tr}(\rho \log \rho)$ converges |
| Type II factor | Algebra need not be a tensor factor, but a trace exists and normal states admit trace densities | Defined for finite-entropy densities; $\mathrm{II}_\infty$ trace normalization induces an additive ambiguity |
| Type $\mathrm{III}_1$ local QFT | State relative to a pair of local algebras; no intrinsic local trace or reduced density matrix | Ordinary local von Neumann entropy undefined; use relative entropy, mutual information, modular data, or regulated constructions |
| Lattice gauge theory | Gauss law yields boundary superselection sectors and obstructs naive factorization | Decomposition depends on the chosen regional algebra or extension prescription |

The through-line is not that entanglement stops depending on the state. Rather, as one moves from ordinary quantum mechanics to continuum QFT, the subsystem structure must be specified algebraically, and the state must be considered relative to that structure. The tensor-product definition is exact for type I bipartite systems. Type III local QFT requires modular and relative notions, while gauge theory adds a separate constraint-induced ambiguity at spatial boundaries.

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