Entanglement and the Phase Transition in Single Mode Superradiance

Neill Lambert$^1$, Clive Emary$^2$, and Tobias Brandes$^1$

$^1$ Department of Physics, UMIST, P.O. Box 88, Manchester M60 1QD, England
$^2$ Instituut–Lorentz, Universiteit Leiden, P. O. Box 9506 RA Leiden, The Netherlands

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We consider the entanglement properties of the quantum phase transition in the single-mode superradiance model, involving the interaction of a boson mode and an ensemble of atoms. For infinite system size, the atom-field entanglement of formation diverges logarithmically with the correlation length exponent. Using a continuous variable representation, we compare this to the divergence of the entropy in conformal field theories, and derive an exact expression for the scaled concurrence and the cusp-like non-analyticity of the momentum squeezing.

Entanglement has shot to prominence in recent years on the back of the success of three key areas: quantum computing, quantum cryptography, and quantum teleportation. In this quantum information paradigm, entanglement is a resource which can be exploited to perform hitherto unimagined physical tasks.

Latterly, a new emphasis has emerged in which entanglement is related to properties of interacting many-body systems. This approach is being pursued most vigorously in connection with quantum phase transitions (QPTs), as it is hoped that entanglement may shed light upon the dramatic effects occurring in critical systems which, by their very nature, involve complex collective quantum mechanical behaviour. A complete theory of many-body entanglement is still lacking. Current techniques are reliant upon bipartite decompositions of the total system, and the criteria for selecting the most pertinent decomposition are by no means clear.

Investigations so far have therefore been restricted to interacting spin-1/2 systems on a one-dimensional lattice or on a simplex, which require the (more or less artificial) splitting into two spin-subsystems.

In this Letter, we study the entanglement properties of the one-mode superradiance (Dicke) model, where collective and coherent behaviour of pseudo-spins (atoms) is induced by coupling (with interaction constant $\lambda$) to a physically distinct single-boson subsystem. We present here exact solutions for the entanglement of formation between these two subsystems, and for the pairwise entanglement between atoms at and away from the critical point $\lambda_c$. Recently the QPT in this model has been related to the emergence of chaos for $\lambda > \lambda_c$ in a corresponding classical Hamiltonian. Our real-space representation of the modes allows us to analyse the scaling of the atom-field entanglement at the critical point, and to compare with results from conformal field theories for one-dimensional spin chains. Furthermore, we derive explicit expressions for the concurrence and the related (momentum) squeezing for all coupling parameters $\lambda$.

A model that has drawn considerable interest in the context of entanglement near criticality is the $XY$-model. In ferromagnetic spin 1/2 chains, the concurrence as a function of system size has been used to demonstrate scaling of entanglement near the transition point. Osterloh et al. have shown that the derivatives of the concurrence between neighbour and next-nearest neighbour spins exhibits a universal scaling behaviour in the region of the critical point in this model. Furthermore, the study of such systems has led Osbourne and Nielsen to the notion of a ‘critically entangled’ system where the correlation length $\xi$ of the system is divergent and entanglement exists over all length scales. Vidal et al. have used an alternative approach and studied the entanglement between blocks of $L$ contiguous spins and the rest of the chain and have found a striking relation to the entropy $S_L \approx (c + \tilde{c})/6 \log L + \text{const}$ in 1+1 conformal field theories with central charges $c$ and $\tilde{c}$.

We start by describing our model, which is the single-mode Dicke Hamiltonian describing the interaction of $N$ two-level atoms of splitting $\omega_0$ with a single bosonic mode of frequency $\omega$

$$\mathcal{H} = \omega_0 \sum_{i=1}^{N} s_i^{(z)} + \omega a^\dagger a + \sum_{i=1}^{N} \frac{\lambda}{\sqrt{N}} (a^\dagger + a) \left( s_{i}^{(+) \dagger} + s_{i}^{(-)} \right)$$

$$= \omega_0 J_z + \omega a^\dagger a + \lambda \sqrt{2J} \left( a^\dagger + a \right) (J_+ + J_-), \quad (1)$$

where the second form follows from the introduction of collective spin operators of length $j = N/2$. In the thermodynamic limit, $N, j \to \infty$, the system undergoes a QPT at a critical coupling of $\lambda = \lambda_c = \sqrt{\omega_0}/2$, at which point the system changes from a largely unexcited normal phase to a super-radiant one in which both the field and atomic collection acquire macroscopic occupations.

Similar to the large-spin problem analysed in this context, the Dicke Hamiltonian can be regarded as a zero-dimensional field theory with mean-field type behaviour, where the $S_N$ permutation symmetry of the atoms and the absence of an intrinsic length scale makes the model exactly solvable. Despite this simplicity, our model exhibits many non-trivial properties; in particular, exact solutions for the non-analyticities of the entanglement of formation and the concurrence can be related to the scaling exponent, the finite-size behavior, and the underlying semi-classical integrable/chaos cross-over which has been shown to occur around the phase transition.
Entanglement of formation.— As a measure of the entanglement between the atoms and the field, we calculate the von-Neumann entropy \( S = -\text{tr} \rho \log_2 \rho \) of the reduced density matrix (RDM) \( \hat{\rho} \) of the field-mode. In the normal phase, \( \hat{\rho} \) is simply determined by the ground state wave function, Eq. (3), whereas in the super-radiant phase two degenerate ground states exist that have wave functions \( \Psi_{\pm} \) similar to Eq. (3), but displaced from the origin by amounts proportional to \( \pm \sqrt{J} \). This degeneracy arises from the breaking of the parity symmetry \( \Pi = \exp \{ i \pi [a^\dagger a + J_z + j] \} \) for \( \lambda > \lambda_c \). Because \( \Psi_{\pm} \) and \( \Psi_{\mp} \) are orthogonal, the convex nature of the von-Neumann entropy \( \Pi \) implies that in the SR phase \( S(\rho_{\text{cat}}) = S(\rho_{\pm}) + 1 \), where \( \rho_{\pm} \) is the RDM of either of the two (macroscopically separated for large \( N \)) solutions, and \( \rho_{\text{cat}} \) is the RDM of the superposition ‘cat’ state of the two. The cat state restores the broken parity, and thus the latter expression will be used for comparison with the numerical results for finite \( N \).

Having clarified this additional distinction between the two phases, we now explicitly calculate the normal phase RDM in the \( x \)-representation,

\[
\rho_L(x, x') = c_L \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dy f_L(y) \Psi^*(x, y) \Psi(x', y). 
\]

Here, \( c_L \) is a normalisation constant, and the introduction of the cut-off function \( f_L(y) \equiv e^{-y^2/L^2} \) will allow us to discuss the effect of a partial trace over the atomic \( (y) \) modes (see below). A straightforward calculation shows that \( \rho_L \) is identical to the density matrix of a single harmonic oscillator with frequency \( \Omega_L \) in a canonical ensemble at temperature \( T \equiv 1/\beta \), where

\[
\cosh \beta \Omega_L = 1 + 2 \frac{\varepsilon - \varepsilon_+ + 4(\varepsilon_+ - \varepsilon_- s^2)/L^2}{(\varepsilon_+ - \varepsilon_-)^2s^2}. 
\]

The entropy \( S_L \) obtained from \( \rho_L \) is thus given by the expression

\[
S_L(\zeta) = [\zeta \coth \zeta - \ln(2 \sinh \zeta)] / \ln 2, \quad \zeta \equiv \beta \Omega_L / 2.
\]

This strikingly simple result allows some interesting observations. First of all, the entropy \( S_\infty \) (cut-off \( L = \infty \)) undergoes a divergence at the critical point as we approach \( \lambda_c \) from either side. In the region near \( \lambda_c \), the excitation energy \( \varepsilon_- \) vanishes as \( \varepsilon_- \propto |\lambda - \lambda_c|^{2\nu} \), with the exponent \( \nu = 1/4 \) describing the divergence of the characteristic length \( \xi \equiv \varepsilon_-^{-1/2} \). Using \( S_\infty(\zeta) = [1 - \ln(2\zeta) + \zeta^2/6] / \ln 2 + O(\zeta^4) \) and \( \zeta = \sqrt{\varepsilon_-/2}[1 + O(\varepsilon_-)] \) with \( \varepsilon_- \equiv 2\varepsilon_-/(\varepsilon_+ s^2) \), we find that \( S_\infty \) diverges logarithmically as \( S_\infty \propto -\nu \log_2 |\lambda - \lambda_c| = \log_2 \xi, \quad \nu = 1/4 \).

Thus, the entanglement between the atoms and field diverges with the same critical exponent as the characteristic length - a clear demonstration of critical entanglement.

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**FIG. 1:** Entanglement of formation \( S_\infty \) between atoms and field for both \( N \to \infty \) and finite \( N \). Inset: Scaling of the value of the entanglement maximum as a function of \( \log_2 N \). The Hamiltonian is on scaled resonance \( \omega = \omega_0 = 1 \).

The starting point for our analysis in the thermodynamic limit is the Holstein-Primakoff representation of the angular momentum operators \( J_z = (b^\dagger b - j) \), \( J_+ = b^\dagger \sqrt{2j - b^\dagger b} \), \( J_- = J_+^\dagger \). Here, \( b \) and \( b^\dagger \) are bosonic operators that convert \( \mathcal{H} \) into a two-mode bosonic problem. This allows us to obtain effective Hamiltonians that are exact in the thermodynamic limit, by neglecting terms from expansions of the Holstein-Primakoff square-roots. In the normal phase, \( \lambda < \lambda_c \), we expand the square-roots directly and obtain the effective Hamiltonian

\[
\mathcal{H}^{(1)} = \omega_0 b^\dagger b + \omega a^\dagger a + \lambda (a^\dagger a + b^\dagger b) - j \omega_0. \tag{2}
\]

In the super-radiant phase, we first displace both boson modes by quantities proportional to \( \sqrt{J} \) before we approximate the square-roots. This leads to a second effective Hamiltonian, the form of which is also bilinear and similar to Eq. (2).

We now consider the normal phase ground state in some detail; the super-radiant phase results following with slight modification. The eigenstates of \( \mathcal{H}^{(1)} \) are two-mode squeezed states. Via the introduction of a position-momentum representation for the two oscillators; \( x = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2s}}(a^\dagger + a) \), \( y = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2c}}(b^\dagger + b) \), with the momenta defined canonically, we may write the ground-state wavefunction as

\[
\Psi(x, y) = \left( \frac{\varepsilon_+ \varepsilon_-}{\pi^2} \right)^{1/4} e^{-\varepsilon_-/4} e^{-K^2(s^2)/4} e^{i(\gamma s^2 + sy)} \tag{3}
\]

where \( \varepsilon_+ = \frac{1}{2} \left( \omega^2 + \omega_0^2 \right) \pm \sqrt{\left( \omega_0^2 - \omega^2 \right)^2 + 16\lambda^2 \omega^2 \omega_0} \) are the excitation energies of the system, \( s \equiv \sin \gamma, \ c \equiv \cos \gamma \), and the angle \( 2\gamma = \arctan(4\lambda \sqrt{\omega^2 \omega_0}/(\omega_0^2 - \omega^2)) \) characterises the squeezing axis. This wavefunction forms the basis of the current analysis.
As we approach $\lambda_c$, the parameter $\zeta = \hbar \Omega_\infty / k_B T$ of the fictitious thermal oscillator approaches zero, indicating that a classical limit of the field RDM is being approached, interpreted either as the temperature $T$ going to infinity, or the frequency $\Omega_\infty$ approaching zero. In terms of the original parameters of the system, the dependence of the entropy is through the ratio of energies $\varepsilon_\infty \propto \varepsilon_- / \varepsilon_+$. Although the entanglement calculated here is a genuine quantum property of the combined atom-field system, the above results highlight that in the limit of $N \to \infty$ atoms, the exact mapping of the system to two coupled oscillators leads to emergent pseudo-classical behaviour. This is consistent with the observation that the Dicke Hamiltonian in fact is strongly connected to a classical (cusp) singularity in the catastrophe theory sense.

We next compare the analytical result from Eq. (3,6) for the entropy $S_\infty$ (corresponding to completely tracing out the atomic mode) with the corresponding finite $N$ results obtained from numerical diagonalisation. Fig. 1 shows these results, and illustrates the finite size scaling. Defining $\lambda^M$ as the position of the entropy maximum, and $S_M$ as the value of the maximum entropy, we observe $\lambda^M - \lambda_c \propto N^{-0.75 \pm 0.1}$, and $S_M \propto (0.14 \pm 0.01) \log N$.

The accuracy of the exponents are limited by the available numerical data. The divergence of the entropy is logarithmic due to the symmetric nature of the spin system. The entropy here saturates at a maximum value of $\log_2 (N + 1)$, in contrast with general spin systems which saturate at $\log_2 (2^N)$ due to their larger Hilbert spaces. This distinction is expected to be important in determining the complexity of classically simulating a quantum phase transition. An explicit plot of the entropy scaling is shown as an inset in Fig. 1, while the scaling of the position of the maximum point is shown as an inset in Fig. 2.

We next consider the system at the critical point but keep the ‘tracing parameter’ $L$ finite. This corresponds to a situation where the trace over the (atomic) $y$-coordinate is performed over only a finite gaussian effective region of size $L$ for the atomic wave function. With $\varepsilon_- = 0$, the relevant dimensionless energy scale is now $\varepsilon_L \equiv 2 / (L^2 \varepsilon_+ \varepsilon_-)$, and the entanglement entropy diverges as (again omitting constants)

$$S_L \propto - \frac{1}{2} \log_2 (2 \varepsilon_L) = \log_2 L \quad (L \to \infty).$$

This result can now be compared with a recent calculation by Vidal et al. of the critical entanglement of formation of blocks of $L$ spins in one-dimensional interacting $XY$ and $XXZ$ spin-chain models. There, the prefactor for the $\log L$ dependence of $S_L$ at criticality is given by the central charges of the underlying conformal field theory in $1 + 1$ dimensions. Note, however, that a direct comparison would require the tracing out of $L$ atoms from the $N$-atom Hamiltonian (see below) with $N \to \infty$, $L$ fixed, but the general principle is the same. In this context, the Dicke model corresponds to a zero-dimensional field theory and, for $N \to \infty$, is in fact closely related to Srednicki’s simple two-oscillator model in his introductory discussion of entropy and area.

Pairwise entanglement and concurrence. To observe the behaviour of the entanglement between atoms within the ensemble, we proceed by considering the ‘pairwise’ entanglement of formation for mixed states, as parameterized by the concurrence. The absence of an intrinsic length scale in our model simplifies our calculations, enabling us to employ the prescription set out for symmetric Dicke states in. The matrix elements of the reduced density matrix $\rho_{12}$ for any two atoms is determined by the expectation values of the collective operators, $\langle J_z \rangle$, $\langle J_x \rangle$, and $\langle J_y \rangle$. We then define the scaled concurrence as $C_N = NC$, with $C \equiv \max \{0, \lambda_1 - \lambda_2 - \lambda_3 - \lambda_4\}$, where the $\lambda_i$ are the square roots of the eigenvalues (in descending order) of $\rho_{12} (\sigma_x \otimes \sigma_x) \rho_{12} (\sigma_y \otimes \sigma_y)$. Wang and Sanders have shown that $C_N$ can be expressed in terms of the Kitagawa-Ueda spin squeezing for symmetric multi-spin states.

We show numerical results for the scaled concurrence $C_N$ in Fig. 2, together with the analytic thermodynamic limit result described below. For all $\lambda$ and $N$, $C_N$ is less than that of the pure $W$-state $|j, \pm(j - 1)\rangle$, which has $C_N = 2$, the maximum pairwise concurrence of any Dicke state. For small coupling $\lambda$, we recognise an $N$-independent behaviour of $C_N$ which may be obtained from perturbation theory in $\lambda$ as

$$C_N (\lambda \to 0) \sim 2 \alpha^2 / (1 + \alpha^2), \quad \alpha \equiv \lambda / (\omega + \omega_0).$$

As with the entropy, we can perform a finite scaling analysis of the numerical data. Again, two power law expressions are found for $\lambda^M$ and $C_N$: $\lambda^M - \lambda_c \propto N^{-0.68 \pm 0.1}$.
and $C^N_N(\lambda_c) - C_N \propto N^{-0.25 \pm 0.01}$. Plots of this behaviour are shown as an inset in Fig. 2.

In the thermodynamic limit $N \to \infty$, the scaled concurrence can be expressed as

$$C_\infty = (1 + \mu) \left[ \frac{1}{2} \langle (d^+)^2 \rangle - \langle d^+ d \rangle \right] + \frac{1}{2} (1 - \mu),$$  \hspace{1cm} (10)

setting $\mu = 1$ and $d^+ = b^\dagger$ in the normal phase ($\lambda < \lambda_c$), and $\mu = (\lambda_c/\lambda)^2$ and $d^+ = b^\dagger + \sqrt{N(1-\mu)/2}$ in the SR phase ($\lambda > \lambda_c$). Recalling $b^\dagger = \sqrt{\omega_0/2} (y - \mu p_y/\omega_0)$, we can further transform Eq. (10) to establish a relation between the scaled concurrence, the momentum squeezing $(\Delta p_y)^2 \equiv \langle p_y^2 \rangle - \langle p_y \rangle^2$. We have

$$C_\infty = (1 + \mu) \left[ \frac{1}{2} - \langle (\Delta p_y)^2/\omega_0 \rangle \right] + \frac{1}{2} (1 - \mu),$$  \hspace{1cm} (11)

where again, setting $\mu = (\lambda_c/\lambda)^2$ gives the super-radiant phase equivalent. The concurrence can be explicitly related to the parameters in the reduced $y$ (atom) oscillator density matrix as $C_\infty = 1 - (\mu \Omega/\omega_0) \coth(\beta \Omega)/2$ with $\coth(\beta \Omega) = 1 + 2 \beta \epsilon \epsilon_+ / D$, $D \equiv [c \beta (\epsilon \epsilon_- - \epsilon \epsilon_+)]^2$, and $2 \Omega / \sinh(\beta \Omega) = D / (\epsilon \epsilon_-^2 + \epsilon \epsilon_+ s^2)$. Due to symmetry, these are the same parameters as for the reduced field $(x)$ density matrix $\rho_\infty$. Eq. (10), with $s = \sin \gamma$ and $c = \cos \gamma$ interchanged. After simple algebra one obtains $C_\infty = 1 - \mu (\epsilon \epsilon_-^2 + \epsilon \epsilon_+^2)/\omega_0$. Due to space restrictions, we only give analytical results at resonance ($\omega = \omega_0$),

$$C_{\infty}^{\leq 1} = 1 - \frac{1}{2} \left[ \sqrt{1 + x} + \sqrt{1 - x} \right], \quad x \equiv \lambda / \lambda_c$$  \hspace{1cm} (12)

$$C_{\infty}^{\geq 1} = 1 - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2} x^2} \left[ \left( \sin^2 \gamma \right) \sqrt{1 + x^4 - \sqrt{(1 - x^4)^2 + 4}} \right] + \left( \cos^2 \gamma \right) \sqrt{1 + x^4 + \sqrt{(1 - x^4)^2 + 4}},$$  \hspace{1cm} (13)

where $2 \gamma = \arctan[2/\epsilon_+^2] \in [0, \pi/2]$. These explicit expressions reveal the square-root non-analyticity of the scaled concurrence near the critical point $\lambda_c$. The concurrence assumes its maximum $C_\infty = 1 - \sqrt{2}/2 \approx 0.293$ at the critical point $\lambda = \lambda_c$. We note that Eq. 12 is consistent with the maximum of the (unscaled) concurrence approaching the critical point in a related, dissipative version of the Dicke model in the normal phase [19]. Our findings are also in agreement with the behaviour of the concurrence in the collective spin model, $H = -(2\lambda/N)(S_x^2 + \gamma S_y^2) - 2S_z + (\lambda/2)(1 + \gamma)$ [19] and differ from 1D spin chains, where the maximum of the $C$ does not coincide with its non-analyticity at the critical point. We also note here that the squeezing obtains its minimal value at $\lambda_c$, which is again in agreement with the above spin model.

In conclusion, we have obtained exact results for the entropy and the concurrence in a model that allows us to quantify entanglement across a quantum phase transition. The clear physical distinction between the subsystems (pseudo-spin or two-level system and bosonic mode) enables us to see distinctly the logarithmic divergence of the entropy in the thermodynamic limit as a function of the coupling constant. We mention that quantum phase transitions have also been discussed very recently in the context of entanglement generation (e.g., for atoms in optical lattices [20]), and quantum computation schemes [14]. A further though still mainly unexplored aspect remains the fundamental role of the phase transition for the connection between entanglement and the underlying integrable to quantum chaotic transition.

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