

Contents

1 Quantum Imaging with Continuous Variables

<i>Luigi A. Lugiato, Alessandra Gatti, and Enrico Brambilla</i>	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The Concepts of Squeezing and of Entanglement with Continuous Variables, and Their Intrinsic Connection	2
1.2.1 Prototype Model I	2
1.2.2 Prototype Model II	3
1.3 Intrinsic Relation Between Squeezing and Entanglement	5
1.4 Spatially Multimode Parametric Down-Conversion: Some Topics in Quantum Imaging	7
1.4.1 Spatially Multimode Versus Single-Mode Squeezing: Optical Parametric Down-Conversion of Type-I	7
1.4.2 Near-Field/Far-Field Duality in Type-I OPAs	8
1.4.3 Detection of Weak Amplitude or Phase Objects Beyond the Standard Quantum Limit	11
1.4.4 Image Amplification by Parametric Down-Conversion (Type-I)	12
References	14

2 Spatial Entanglement in Optical Parametric Down-Conversion

<i>Alessandra Gatti, Enrico Brambilla, Ottavia Jedrkiewicz, and Luigi A. Lugiato</i>	17
2.1 Introduction	17
2.2 Simultaneous Near-Field and Far-Field Spatial Quantum Correlation in the High-Gain Regime of Type-II Parametric Down-Conversion	17
2.2.1 Propagation Equations for the Signal-Idler Fields and Input-Output Relations	17
2.2.2 Near- and Far-Field Correlations in the Stationary and Plane-Wave Pump Approximation	22
2.2.3 Near- and Far-Field Correlations: Numerical Results in the General Case	25
2.2.4 Far-Field Correlations	25
2.2.5 Near-Field Correlations	26

2.3	Detection of Sub-Shot-Noise Spatial Correlations in High-Gain Parametric Down-Conversion	28
2.3.1	Detection of the Spatial Features of the Far-Field PDC Radiation by Means of the CCD	29
2.3.2	Experimental Set-Up for Spatial-Correlations Measurements	30
2.3.3	Detection of Quantum Spatial Correlations: Spatial Analogue of Photon Antibunching in Time	33
2.4	Multiphoton, Multimode Polarization Entanglement in Parametric Down-Conversion	38
	References	43

3 Quantum Imaging in the Continuous-Wave Regime Using Degenerate Optical Cavities

	<i>Agnès Maître, Nicolas Treps, and Claude Fabre</i>	47
3.1	Introduction	47
3.2	Classical Imaging Properties of Degenerate Optical Cavities	47
3.2.1	Introduction	47
3.2.2	Cavity Round-Trip Transform	48
3.2.3	Image Transmission Through an Optical Cavity	50
3.3	Theory of Optical Parametric Oscillation in a Degenerate Cavity	52
3.3.1	Classical Behavior	52
3.3.2	Quantum Properties	54
3.4	Experimental Results	57
3.4.1	Classical Effects: Observation of Optical Patterns	58
3.4.2	Observation of Quantum Correlations in Images	59
3.5	Conclusion	63
	References	63

4 Quantum Imaging by Synthesis of Multimode Quantum Light

	<i>Nicolas Treps, Hans A. Bachor, Ping Koy Lam, and Claude Fabre</i>	67
4.1	Introduction	67
4.2	Quantum Noise in an Arraylike Detection	68
4.3	Implementing a Sub-Shot-Noise Array Detection	70
4.4	The Quantum Laser Pointer	71
4.5	Optical Read-Out	73
4.6	Measuring a Signal in an Optimal Way	76
4.7	Conclusion	77
	References	78

5 Ghost Imaging

	<i>Alessandra Gatti, Enrico Brambilla, Morten Bache, and Luigi A. Lugiato</i>	79
5.1	Introduction	79
5.2	General Theory of Ghost Imaging with Entangled Beams	81
5.2.1	Specific Imaging Schemes	83

5.3	Wave-Particle Aspect	85
5.4	Spatial Average in Ghost Diffraction: Increase of Spatial Bandwidth and of Speed in Retrieval	87
5.5	Ghost Imaging with Homodyne Detection	88
5.6	Debate: Is Quantum Entanglement Really Necessary for Ghost Imaging?	90
5.7	Ghost Imaging by Split Thermallike Beams: Theory [15–17]	92
5.7.1	Analogy Between Thermal and Entangled Beams in Ghost Imaging [15–17]	93
5.7.2	Resolution Aspects	95
5.7.3	Relations with the Classic Hanbury–Brown and Twiss Correlation Technique [37]	95
5.7.4	Correlation Aspects	96
5.7.5	Visibility Aspects	98
5.7.6	Some Historical Considerations	100
5.7.7	Rule-of-Thumb Comparison Between Entangled and “Thermal” Ghost Imaging	100
5.8	Ghost Imaging with Split Thermal Beams: Experiment	101
5.8.1	High-Resolution Ghost Imaging [23]	102
5.8.2	The Ghost Diffraction Experiment: Complementarity Between Coherence and Correlation [24]	107
	References	110

6 Quantum Limits of Optical Super-Resolution

	<i>Mikhail I. Kolobov</i>	113
6.1	Super-Resolution in Classical Optics	113
6.2	Quantum Theory of Super-Resolution	115
6.2.1	Quantum Theory of Optical Imaging	115
6.2.2	Quantum Theory of Optical Fourier Microscopy	119
6.3	Quantum Limits in Reconstruction of Optical Objects	121
6.3.1	Reconstruction of Classical Noise-Free Objects	121
6.3.2	Reconstruction of Objects with Quantum Fluctuations ..	126
6.3.3	Point-Spread Function for Super-Resolving Reconstruction of Objects	128
6.4	Squeezed-Light Source for Microscopy with Super-Resolution ...	132
	References	138

7 Noiseless Amplification of Optical Images

	<i>Mikhail I. Kolobov and Eric Lantz</i>	141
7.1	Introduction	141
7.2	Traveling-Wave Scheme for Amplification of Images	142
7.3	Optimum Phase Matching for Parametric Amplification	145
7.4	Quantum Fluctuations in the Amplified Image and Conditions for Noiseless Amplification	149

7.5 Experimental Demonstration of Temporally Noiseless Image Amplification 155

7.6 Experiment on Spatially Noiseless Amplification of Images 158

References 164

8 Optical Image Processing in Second-Harmonic Generation

Pierre Scotto, Pere Colet, Adrian Jacobo, and Maxi San Miguel 167

8.1 Introduction 167

8.2 Image Processing in Second-Harmonic Generation at a Classical Level 168

8.2.1 Frequency Up-Conversion of an Image 171

8.2.2 Contrast Enhancement and Contour Recognition 172

8.2.3 Noise Filtering Properties 174

8.3 Quantum Image Processing in Type-I Second-Harmonic Generation 175

8.3.1 Field-Operator Dynamics 176

8.3.2 Quantum Image Processing 181

8.4 Quantum Image Processing in Type-II Second-Harmonic Generation 188

8.4.1 Propagation Equations 189

8.4.2 Linearly y -Polarized Pump: Frequency Addition Regime 192

8.4.3 45°-Linearly Polarized Pump: Noiseless Up-Conversion and Amplification 193

References 199

9 Transverse Distribution of Quantum Fluctuations in Free-Space Spatial Solitons

Eric Lantz, Nicolas Treps, and Claude Fabre 201

9.1 Introduction 201

9.2 General Method 202

9.2.1 Propagation Equations for the Fluctuations 202

9.2.2 Green's Function Approach 203

9.2.3 Correlations Between the Photocurrents 204

9.3 Spatial Solitons: Mean Values 205

9.3.1 $\chi^{(3)}$ Scalar Spatial Soliton 205

9.3.2 $\chi^{(3)}$ Vector Spatial Soliton 206

9.3.3 $\chi^{(2)}$ Spatial Soliton 206

9.4 Squeezing on the Total Beam 208

9.4.1 $\chi^{(3)}$ Scalar Spatial Soliton 208

9.4.2 $\chi^{(3)}$ Vector Soliton: Total Beam Squeezing and Correlation Between Polarizations 208

9.4.3 $\chi^{(2)}$ Spatial Solitons 210

9.5 Local Quantum Fluctuations 211

9.5.1 $\chi^{(3)}$ Scalar Spatial Soliton 211

9.5.2 Intensity Squeezing by Spatial Filtering 214

9.5.3 $\chi^{(3)}$ Vector Soliton 215

9.6	Quantum Correlations Between Field Quadratures at Different Points	216
9.6.1	$\chi^{(3)}$ Scalar Spatial Soliton	216
9.6.2	Vector Solitons	216
9.6.3	$\chi^{(2)}$ Spatial Solitons	217
9.7	Conclusion	218
	References	218
10 Quantum Fluctuations in Cavity Solitons		
	<i>Gian-Luca Oppo and John Jeffers</i>	221
10.1	Introduction	221
10.2	Cavity Solitons in Degenerate Optical Parametric Oscillators ...	222
10.2.1	Spatial Equations and Domain Walls with Oscillatory Tails	223
10.2.2	Cavity Solitons Formed by Locked Domain Walls	223
10.3	Quantum Fluctuations in DOPO	226
10.3.1	Wigner Representation	226
10.3.2	Q-Representation	227
10.4	Arrays of CS Induced by Quantum Fluctuations	227
10.5	Quantum Features in the Near and the Far Field of CS	231
10.5.1	Quantum Correlations of CS in the Near Field	231
10.5.2	Quantum Correlations of CS in the Far Field	233
10.6	Conclusions and Acknowledgments	236
	References	236
11 Quantum Holographic Teleportation and Dense Coding of Optical Images		
	<i>Ivan V. Sokolov</i>	239
11.1	Introduction	239
11.2	Continuous-Variable Squeezing and Entanglement for Spatially Multimode Light Fields	240
11.2.1	Spatial Scales of Quantum Correlations in Squeezed Light	240
11.2.2	Spatially Multimode Entanglement	243
11.3	Quantum Holographic Teleportation of Optical Images	244
11.3.1	Basics of Quantum Teleportation	245
11.3.2	Optical Scheme for Quantum Teleportation of Images ...	246
11.3.3	Quantum Statistics of the Teleported Field	247
11.3.4	Global and Reduced Fidelity of Holographic Teleportation	254
11.3.5	Quantum Holographic Teleportation and Holography ...	259
11.4	Quantum Dense Coding of Optical Images	260
11.4.1	Basics of Quantum Dense Coding	260
11.4.2	Optical Scheme for Quantum Dense Coding of Images ..	261
11.4.3	Shannon Mutual Information for Images	264
11.4.4	Channel Capacity	266

11.5	Conclusions and Outlook	270
A	Properties of Spatially Multimode Squeezing	271
B	Homodyne Detection with Spatial Resolution	273
	References	275

12 Orbital Angular Momentum of Light

	<i>Stephen M. Barnett and Roberta Zambrini</i>	277
12.1	Introduction	277
12.2	Angular Momentum in Electromagnetism	278
	12.2.1 Spin and Orbital Angular Momentum	280
	12.2.2 Angular Momentum in Paraxial Optics	281
	12.2.3 Mechanical Effects	283
12.3	Beams Carrying Orbital Angular Momentum	284
	12.3.1 Phase Singularities and Spatial Properties	284
	12.3.2 Laguerre-Gaussian and Bessel Beams	284
	12.3.3 Generation and Conversion	286
	12.3.4 Other Field Spatial Profiles	289
	12.3.5 Fractional Orbital Angular Momentum	290
12.4	Quantum Optical Angular Momentum	290
	12.4.1 States of Spin and Orbital Angular Momentum	290
	12.4.2 Measuring Orbital Angular Momentum	291
12.5	Angle and Angular Momentum	292
	12.5.1 Uncertainty Relation for Angle and Angular Momentum	292
	12.5.2 Intelligent and Minimum Uncertainty Product States ...	294
	12.5.3 Communications	297
	12.5.4 Rotation Measurements	299
12.6	Orbital Angular Momentum in Quantum Nonlinear Optics	300
	12.6.1 Phase Matching	301
	12.6.2 Second-Harmonic Generation of Laguerre-Gaussian Beams	302
	12.6.3 Down-Conversion and Entanglement	304
	12.6.4 High-Order Nonlinearity	306
12.7	Conclusion	307
	References	308
	Index	313

1 Quantum Imaging with Continuous Variables

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1.1 Introduction

A significant fraction of the research activities in the field of quantum imaging concerns optical Parametric Down-Conversion (PDC). Some basic features of this phenomenon will be described in this first chapter of the volume, which deals with the multiphoton regime of the signal-idler field, that one meets in Optical Parametric Amplifiers (OPA) with medium or high gain or in Optical Parametric Oscillators (OPO). In this case, the behavior of the system is naturally described in terms of continuous variables such as field intensity or field quadratures. On the other hand, in the (very) low gain regime of the OPA, one detects coincidences between signal and idler photons and a significant part of the literature on quantum imaging deals with this case, as illustrated in the review article [1].

The first part of this chapter, which is based on the tutorial delivered by one of us (L. A. L.) in the Cargèse workshop,¹ will introduce some key concepts in the continuous variable description, such as squeezing in quadratures and in photon number difference, or entanglement between quadratures, and the basic connection between this entanglement and squeezing. This will be done with the help of two paradigmatic models, one including a single radiation mode and the other with two modes. The second part of this chapter will be devoted to the spatially multimode configuration that one meets in OPAs and in degenerate OPOs. We will discuss the topic of spatially multimode squeezing or local squeezing and of spatial correlations, with the related near-field/far-field interest for quantum imaging, namely the detection of weak amplitude or phase objects duality in type-I OPA/OPO. Then we will turn our attention to two subjects of direct detection beyond the standard quantum limit and the image amplification by parametric down-conversion. The results illustrated in this chapter have been obtained prior to QUANTIM, whereas new results are included in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5.

¹ "Imaging at the Limits," ESF/PESC Exploratory Workshop, *Cargèse (Corsica), France, 5-11 September 2004.*

1.2 The Concepts of Squeezing and of Entanglement with Continuous Variables, and Their Intrinsic Connection

1.2.1 Prototype Model I

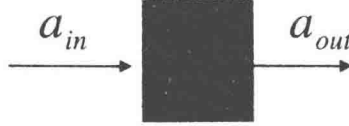


Fig. 1.1. “Input-output box” for an OPA (or an OPO below threshold) in the degenerate single-mode configuration.

Let us consider the “black box” in Fig. 1.1, with an input mode and an output mode associated with annihilation and creation operators \hat{a}_{in} and $\hat{a}_{\text{in}}^\dagger$ and \hat{a}_{out} , $\hat{a}_{\text{out}}^\dagger$, respectively, with

$$[\hat{a}_{\text{in}}, \hat{a}_{\text{in}}^\dagger] = 1, \quad [\hat{a}_{\text{out}}, \hat{a}_{\text{out}}^\dagger] = 1. \quad (1.1)$$

Let us assume the input-output relation

$$\hat{a}_{\text{out}} = U\hat{a}_{\text{in}} + V\hat{a}_{\text{in}}^\dagger, \quad (1.2)$$

with coefficients U and V obeying the condition

$$|U|^2 - |V|^2 = 1, \quad (1.3)$$

which ensures the unitarity of transformation (1.2). In the following we take for definiteness

$$U = \cosh g, \quad V = \sinh g. \quad (1.4)$$

A concrete realization of (1.2) is given, for example, by a degenerate OPA (or OPO below threshold) in the single-mode configuration.

Case 1

If \hat{a}_{in} is in a coherent state $|\alpha\rangle$, so that the mean value of \hat{a}_{in} is $\langle\hat{a}_{\text{in}}\rangle = \alpha$, one has from (1.2)

$$\langle\hat{a}_{\text{out}}\rangle = U\alpha + V\alpha^*. \quad (1.5)$$

Hence the system behaves as a phase-sensitive amplifier/deamplifier; for example, if α is real one has amplification:

$$|\langle\hat{a}_{\text{out}}\rangle|^2 = |U + V|^2 |\alpha|^2 = e^{2g} |\langle\hat{a}_{\text{in}}\rangle|^2, \quad (1.6)$$

whereas if α is imaginary one has deamplification:

$$|\langle\hat{a}_{\text{out}}\rangle|^2 = |U - V|^2 |\alpha|^2 = e^{-2g} |\langle\hat{a}_{\text{in}}\rangle|^2. \quad (1.7)$$

Case 2

Let us focus, instead, on the case that \hat{a}_{in} is in the vacuum state $|0\rangle$. If we consider the quadrature components of the input and output modes

$$\hat{X}_{in} = \frac{\hat{a}_{in} + \hat{a}_{in}^\dagger}{2}, \quad \hat{Y}_{in} = \frac{\hat{a}_{in} - \hat{a}_{in}^\dagger}{2i}, \quad (1.8)$$

$$\hat{X}_{out} = \frac{\hat{a}_{out} + \hat{a}_{out}^\dagger}{2}, \quad \hat{Y}_{out} = \frac{\hat{a}_{out} - \hat{a}_{out}^\dagger}{2i}, \quad (1.9)$$

the input-output relation (1.2) can be rephrased in the following form,

$$\hat{X}_{out} = e^g \hat{X}_{in}, \quad \hat{Y}_{out} = e^{-g} \hat{Y}_{in}, \quad (1.10)$$

hence the quadrature component \hat{X} is amplified whereas the quadrature component \hat{Y} is deamplified, and from Fig. 1.2 one sees that the input vacuum state is transformed into a squeezed vacuum state, with squeezing in the quadrature component \hat{Y} . By varying the phase of the coefficients U and V with respect to the choice (1.4), the squeezing can be produced in an arbitrary quadrature component $\hat{X}_\theta = 1/2(\hat{a}e^{-i\theta} + \hat{a}^\dagger e^{i\theta})$, for any value of θ .

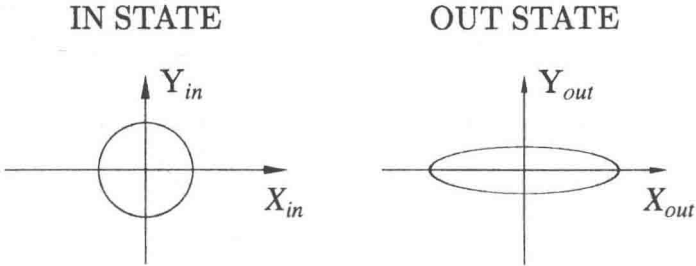


Fig. 1.2. The input-output relation (1.2) with (1.4) transforms the vacuum state into a squeezed vacuum state, with squeezing in the quadrature component \hat{Y} .

1.2.2 Prototype Model II

Let us now consider the black box in Fig. 1.3, with two input and two output modes such that

$$[\hat{a}_{i,in}, \hat{a}_{j,in}^\dagger] = \delta_{ij}, \quad [\hat{a}_{i,out}, \hat{a}_{j,out}^\dagger] = \delta_{ij} \quad (i, j = 1, 2), \quad (1.11)$$

and the input-output relations

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{a}_{1\text{out}} &= U_1 \hat{a}_{1\text{in}} + V_1 \hat{a}_{2\text{in}}^\dagger, \\ \hat{a}_{2\text{out}} &= U_2 \hat{a}_{2\text{in}} + V_2 \hat{a}_{1\text{in}}^\dagger,\end{aligned}\quad (1.12)$$

with the unitarity condition

$$|U_i|^2 - |V_i|^2 = 1, \quad U_1 V_2 = U_2 V_1. \quad (1.13)$$

In the following we take for definiteness

$$U_1 = U_2 = U = \cosh g, \quad V_1 = V_2 = V = \sinh g. \quad (1.14)$$

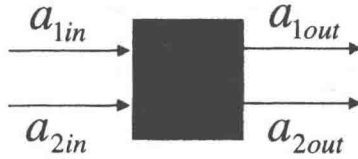


Fig. 1.3. Input-output box for an OPA (or an OPO below threshold) in the non-degenerate two-mode configuration.

A realization of (1.14) is given by a nondegenerate OPA (or OPO below threshold) in the two-mode regime.

Case 1

Let us consider the case when the mode $\hat{a}_{1\text{in}}$ is in a coherent state $|\alpha\rangle$, whereas the mode $\hat{a}_{2\text{in}}$ is in the vacuum state $|0\rangle$. One obtains from (1.12)

$$\langle \hat{a}_{1\text{out}} \rangle = U_1 \alpha, \quad \langle \hat{a}_{2\text{out}} \rangle = V_2 \alpha^*, \quad (1.15)$$

so that

$$|\langle \hat{a}_{1\text{out}} \rangle|^2 = (\cosh^2 g) |\alpha|^2 = (\cosh^2 g) |\langle \hat{a}_{1\text{in}} \rangle|^2, \quad (1.16)$$

$$|\langle \hat{a}_{2\text{out}} \rangle|^2 = (\sinh^2 g) |\alpha|^2 = (\sinh^2 g) |\langle \hat{a}_{2\text{in}} \rangle|^2. \quad (1.17)$$

Hence mode 1 is amplified in a phase-insensitive way, whereas mode 2 is generated from the vacuum, and in the large-gain limit, $g \rightarrow \infty$, it becomes equally as strong as mode 1.

Case 1'

Let us assume that both modes $\hat{a}_{1\text{in}}$ and $\hat{a}_{2\text{in}}$ are in the same coherent state $|\alpha\rangle$. In this case one has from (1.12), (1.14),

$$\langle \hat{a}_{1\text{out}} \rangle = \langle \hat{a}_{2\text{out}} \rangle = \cosh g\alpha + \sinh g\alpha^*, \quad (1.18)$$

so that as in (1.5), one has a phase-sensitive amplification/deamplification. One can prove that, in general, phase-insensitive amplification degrades the signal-to-noise ratio at least by a factor 2, whereas phase-sensitive amplification can preserve the signal-to-noise ratio (noiseless amplification) [1].

Case 2

Let us consider the case when both $\hat{a}_{1\text{in}}$ and $\hat{a}_{2\text{in}}$ are in the vacuum state. The most interesting situation is in the limit of large g , in which $U_i \approx V_i \approx e^g/2$ ($i = 1, 2$), so that by indicating $U = e^g/2$ relations (1.12) reduce to

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{a}_{1\text{out}} &= U\hat{a}_{1\text{in}} + U\hat{a}_{2\text{in}}^\dagger, \\ \hat{a}_{2\text{out}} &= U\hat{a}_{2\text{in}} + U\hat{a}_{1\text{in}}^\dagger, \end{aligned} \quad (1.19)$$

hence by introducing the quadrature components of the input-output modes

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{X}_{j,\text{in}} &= \frac{\hat{a}_{j,\text{in}} + \hat{a}_{j,\text{in}}^\dagger}{2}, & \hat{Y}_{j,\text{in}} &= \frac{\hat{a}_{j,\text{in}} - \hat{a}_{j,\text{in}}^\dagger}{2i}, & j &= 1, 2, \\ \hat{X}_{j,\text{out}} &= \frac{\hat{a}_{j,\text{out}} + \hat{a}_{j,\text{out}}^\dagger}{2}, & \hat{Y}_{j,\text{out}} &= \frac{\hat{a}_{j,\text{out}} - \hat{a}_{j,\text{out}}^\dagger}{2i}, & j &= 1, 2, \end{aligned} \quad (1.20)$$

one obtains the relations

$$\hat{X}_{2\text{out}} = \hat{X}_{1\text{out}}, \quad \hat{Y}_{2\text{out}} = -\hat{Y}_{1\text{out}}. \quad (1.21)$$

Therefore, if one measures, for example, $\hat{X}_{1\text{out}}$ and $\hat{Y}_{1\text{out}}$, one can immediately infer the values of $\hat{X}_{2\text{out}}$ and $\hat{Y}_{2\text{out}}$. This is precisely the phenomenon of *quantum entanglement*, and this is completely identical to the original Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen paradox [2], which was formulated for the position x and momentum p of two particles. This formulation of the EPR paradox for continuous variables \hat{X} and \hat{Y} (quadrature components) of two radiation modes was introduced in [3] taking into account the uncertainties in the measurements of \hat{X} and \hat{Y} . This was experimentally verified in [4].

1.3 Intrinsic Relation Between Squeezing and Entanglement

In this section we show that there is a basic connection between the two paradigmatic models just discussed, which amounts to an intrinsic relation between entanglement and squeezing.

Let us consider a 50/50 beamsplitter (Fig. 1.4). One demonstrates that:

- If \hat{a}_1 and \hat{a}_2 are EPR entangled beams (in the sense defined before) then the beam \hat{b}_1 is squeezed in the \hat{Y} quadrature and the beam \hat{b}_2 is squeezed in the \hat{X} quadrature.
- And vice versa.

Proof

Let us consider the input-output relations of the beamsplitter

$$\hat{b}_1 = \frac{\hat{a}_1 + \hat{a}_2}{\sqrt{2}}, \quad \hat{b}_2 = \frac{\hat{a}_2 - \hat{a}_1}{\sqrt{2}}. \quad (1.22)$$

Next, let us assume that \hat{a}_1 and \hat{a}_2 are the entangled output modes $\hat{a}_{1\text{out}}$ and $\hat{a}_{2\text{out}}$ of model II, so that

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{a}_1 &= U\hat{a}_{1\text{in}} + V\hat{a}_{2\text{in}}^\dagger, \\ \hat{a}_2 &= U\hat{a}_{2\text{in}} + V\hat{a}_{1\text{in}}^\dagger, \end{aligned} \quad (1.23)$$

where $\hat{a}_{1\text{in}}$ and $\hat{a}_{2\text{in}}$ are in the vacuum state. By inserting (1.23) into (1.22) we obtain

$$\hat{b}_1 = U\hat{f}_1 + V\hat{f}_1^\dagger, \quad (1.24)$$

$$\hat{b}_2 = U\hat{f}_2 - V\hat{f}_2^\dagger, \quad (1.25)$$

where modes \hat{f}_1 and \hat{f}_2 are defined as

$$\hat{f}_1 = \frac{\hat{a}_{1\text{in}} + \hat{a}_{2\text{in}}}{\sqrt{2}}, \quad \hat{f}_2 = \frac{\hat{a}_{2\text{in}} - \hat{a}_{1\text{in}}}{\sqrt{2}}. \quad (1.26)$$

Because \hat{a}_1 and \hat{a}_2 are in the vacuum state, the same is true for \hat{f}_1 and \hat{f}_2 . Now one notes immediately that (1.24) is identical to the prototype model I (1.2), hence we can conclude that \hat{b}_1 is squeezed with respect to the \hat{Y} quadrature. On the other hand, one sees that (1.25) has the same form of

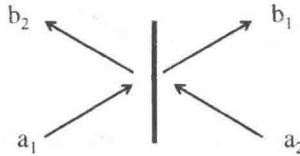


Fig. 1.4. A 50/50 beamsplitter converts modes a_1 and a_2 into modes b_1 and b_2 .

model I (1.2) except that V is replaced by $-V$. One can easily prove that this feature implies that \hat{b}_2 is squeezed with respect to the \hat{X} quadrature.

1.4 Spatially Multimode Parametric Down-Conversion: Some Topics in Quantum Imaging

1.4.1 Spatially Multimode Versus Single-Mode Squeezing: Optical Parametric Down-Conversion of Type-I

In almost all literature on squeezing one considers single-mode squeezing. If one wants to detect a good level of squeezing, the local oscillator must be matched to the squeezed spatial mode and, in addition, it is necessary to detect the whole beam. If one detects only part of the beam, the squeezing is immediately degraded, because a portion of a mode necessarily involves higher-order modes, in which squeezing is absent. What we can call *local squeezing* (i.e., squeezing in small regions of the transverse plane) can be obtained only in the presence of *spatially multimode squeezing*, (i.e., squeezing in a band of spatial modes). This has been predicted by Sokolov and Kolobov for a traveling-wave optical parametric amplifier (OPA) [6,7] and by our group for an optical parametric oscillator (OPO) [8,9]. Let us dwell a moment, for

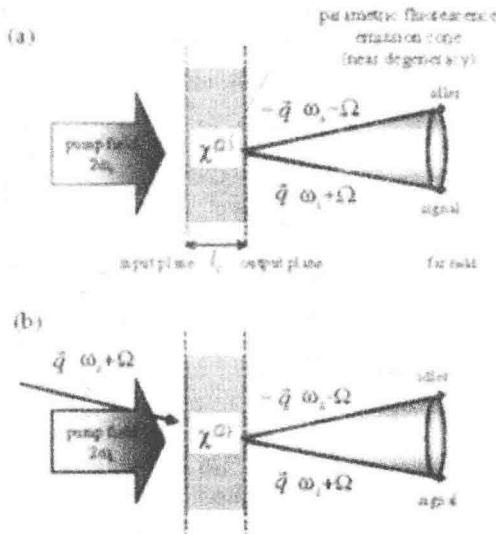


Fig. 1.5. (a) Scheme for parametric down-conversion of type-I. (b) Parametric amplification of a plane-wave; q is the component of the wave-vector in the plane orthogonal to the direction of propagation of the pump.

example, on the case of the OPA of type-I (Fig. 1.5a), in which one has a slab of $\chi^{(2)}$ material that is pumped by a coherent plane wave of frequency $2\omega_s$. A fraction of the pump photons is down-converted into signal-idler photon pairs, which are distributed over a broad band of temporal frequencies around the degenerate frequency ω_s . For each fixed temporal frequency, the

photon pairs are distributed over a band of spatial frequencies labeled by the transverse component \mathbf{q} of the wave-vector.

If, in addition to the pump field, we inject a coherent plane wave with frequency $\omega_s + \Omega$ and the transverse wave-vector \mathbf{q} (Fig. 1.5b), in the output we have a signal wave that corresponds to an amplified version of the input wave, and for this reason the system is called an optical parametric amplifier. Because of the pairwise emission of photons, there is also an idler wave that, close to degeneracy, is symmetrical with respect to the signal wave. Referring to the case in which only the pump is injected, two regimes can be distinguished. One is that of pure spontaneous parametric down-conversion, as in the case of a very thin crystal. In this case coincidences between partners of single photon pairs are detected. The other is that of dominant stimulated parametric down-conversion, in which a large number of photon pairs at a time is detected. In this chapter we will focus on the second case, whereas the first case will be considered in Chapter 2.

On a more formal ground, let us consider the down-converted signal-idler field emitted close to the degenerate frequency ω_s . Let us denote by $\hat{a}_{\text{in}}(\mathbf{x}, t)$ the signal-idler complex amplitude envelope operator at the input endface of the crystal slab, and by $\hat{a}_{\text{out}}(\mathbf{x}, t)$ the envelope operator at the output endface; t indicates time and $\mathbf{x} \equiv (x, y)$ is the coordinate vector in the endfaces. We expand \hat{a}_{in} and \hat{a}_{out} in Fourier modes in space and time:

$$\hat{a}_{\text{in}}(\mathbf{x}, t) = \int d\mathbf{q} \int d\Omega \hat{a}_{\text{in}}(\mathbf{q}, \Omega) e^{i\mathbf{q} \cdot \mathbf{x} - i\Omega t}, \quad (1.27)$$

$$\hat{a}_{\text{out}}(\mathbf{x}, t) = \int d\mathbf{q} \int d\Omega \hat{a}_{\text{out}}(\mathbf{q}, \Omega) e^{i\mathbf{q} \cdot \mathbf{x} - i\Omega t}. \quad (1.28)$$

One can demonstrate that, in the linear regime of an undepleted pump, the following input-output relations hold [9],

$$\hat{a}_{\text{out}}(\mathbf{q}, \Omega) = U(\mathbf{q}, \Omega) \hat{a}_{\text{in}}(\mathbf{q}, \Omega) + V(\mathbf{q}, \Omega) \hat{a}_{\text{in}}^\dagger(-\mathbf{q}, -\Omega), \quad (1.29)$$

$$\hat{a}_{\text{out}}(-\mathbf{q}, -\Omega) = U(-\mathbf{q}, -\Omega) \hat{a}_{\text{in}}(-\mathbf{q}, -\Omega) + V(-\mathbf{q}, -\Omega) \hat{a}_{\text{in}}^\dagger(\mathbf{q}, \Omega), \quad (1.30)$$

where the expressions of $U(\mathbf{q}, \Omega)$ and $V(\mathbf{q}, \Omega)$ are given in [9]. We can note immediately that, for each fixed \mathbf{q}, Ω , Eqs. (1.29) have the same form of the prototype model II (1.12). Hence the results of Section 1.2.2 hold for this case; for example, Fig. 1.5b corresponds to case 1 of Section 1.2.2. The case of parametric down-conversion of type-II will be considered in Chapter 5.

1.4.2 Near-Field/Far-Field Duality in Type-I OPAs

We want to illustrate the key spatial quantum properties of the field emitted by an OPA of type-I, in the linear regime of negligible pump depletion, or by an OPO below threshold.

In the near field (see Fig. 1.6) one has the phenomenon of spatially multi-mode squeezing or local squeezing discussed in Section 1.4.1. A good level of

squeezing is found, provided the region that is detected has a linear size not smaller than the inverse of the spatial bandwidth of emission in the Fourier plane. If, on the other hand, one looks at the far field (which can be reached, typically, by using a lens as shown in Fig. 1.6) one finds the phenomenon of *spatial entanglement* between small regions located symmetrically with respect to the center. Precisely, if one considers two symmetrical pixels 1 and 2 (Fig. 1.7a), the intensity fluctuations in the two pixels are very well correlated or, equivalently, the fluctuations in the intensity difference between the two pixels are very much below the shot-noise level [10, 11]. Precisely,

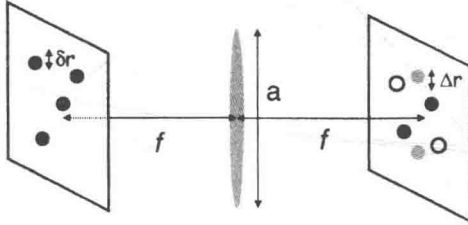


Fig. 1.6. Illustration of the near-field far-field duality; f is the focal plane of the lens. Not shown is the pump field of frequency $2\omega_s$ and the nonlinear slab.

let us consider the number of photons \hat{N}_1 and \hat{N}_2 detected in pixel 1 and 2, respectively, and the associated fluctuations $\delta\hat{N}_i = \hat{N}_i - \langle\hat{N}_i\rangle$ ($i = 1, 2$). For symmetry reasons one has that $\langle\hat{N}_1\rangle = \langle\hat{N}_2\rangle$, $\langle(\delta\hat{N}_1)^2\rangle = \langle(\delta\hat{N}_2)^2\rangle$. In the limit of the plane-wave pump, the photon number difference $\hat{N}_- = \hat{N}_1 - \hat{N}_2$ turns out to be fluctuationless [10]; that is,

$$\langle(\delta\hat{N}_-)^2\rangle = 0. \quad (1.31)$$

Basically, one has that $\hat{N}_1 = \hat{N}_2$; that is, by measuring \hat{N}_1 one can infer the value of \hat{N}_2 (entanglement). This result expresses in the most emphatic way the emission of signal and idler photons in pairs, and follows from the perfect correlation between the photons in 1 and 2. As a matter of fact one has

$$\langle(\delta\hat{N}_-)^2\rangle = \langle(\delta\hat{N}_1)^2\rangle + \langle(\delta\hat{N}_2)^2\rangle - 2\langle\delta\hat{N}_1\delta\hat{N}_2\rangle; \quad (1.32)$$

because $\langle(\delta\hat{N}_1)^2\rangle = \langle(\delta\hat{N}_2)^2\rangle$ one has from (1.31) that the normalized correlation

$$C \equiv \frac{\langle\delta\hat{N}_1\delta\hat{N}_2\rangle}{\sqrt{\langle(\delta\hat{N}_1)^2\rangle\langle(\delta\hat{N}_2)^2\rangle}} = 1, \quad (1.33)$$

which means perfect correlation. For the realistic case of a Gaussian pump, the fluctuations of \hat{N}_- are below the shot-noise level; [10] that is

$$\langle(\delta\hat{N}_-)^2\rangle < \langle\hat{N}_+\rangle = \langle\hat{N}_1\rangle + \langle\hat{N}_2\rangle. \quad (1.34)$$

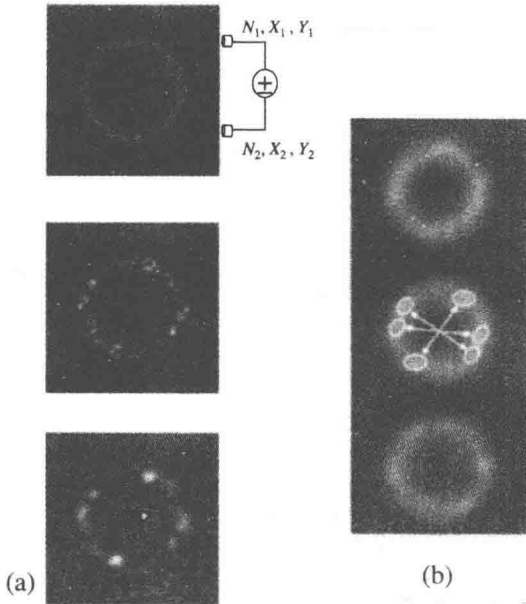


Fig. 1.7. Intensity distribution in the far field for a single shot of the pulsed pump field. (a) Numerical simulations. The waist of the pump beam is $1000\text{ }\mu\text{m}$, $300\text{ }\mu\text{m}$, $150\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ in the three frames from the top to the bottom, respectively. N_i , X_i , Y_i , ($i = 1, 2$) denote the photon numbers and the quadrature component measured in the two pixels 1 and 2, respectively. (b) Experimental observation by Devaux and Lantz at University of Besançon (see [13]).

Because this phenomenon arises for any pair of symmetrical pixels, we call it spatial entanglement. The same effect occurs also for quadrature components, because in the two pixels the fluctuations of the quadrature component \hat{X} are almost exactly correlated, and those of the quadrature component \hat{Y} are almost exactly anticorrelated [12]. The case of perfect correlation/anticorrelation occurs in the limit of the plane-wave pump, in which relations (1.21) hold.

The minimum size of the symmetrical small regions, among which one finds spatial entanglement, is determined by the finite aperture of optical elements, and is given, in the paraxial approximation, by $\lambda f/a$, where λ is the wavelength, f is the focal length of the lens and a is the aperture of optical elements (e.g., the lens aperture; Fig. 1.6). In a more realistic model of the OPA, the finite waist of the pump field must be taken into account. In this case the minimum size of the regions where entanglement is detectable in the far field is determined by the pump waist.

The spatial entanglement of intensity fluctuations in the far field is quite evident even in single shots (the pump field is typically pulsed). Figure 1.7a shows a numerical simulation in a case of noncollinear phase matching at the