

Topics in Current Physics

Real-Space Renormalization

Editors:

T. W. Burkhardt and J. M. J. van Leeuwen

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for Models of Linear Polymers, Branched
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With 60 Figures

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Preface

The renormalization-group approach is largely responsible for the considerable success which has been achieved in the last ten years in developing a complete quantitative theory of phase transitions. Before, there was a useful physical picture of phase transitions, but a general method for making accurate quantitative predictions was lacking. Existent theories, such as the mean-field theory of Landau, sometimes reproduce phase diagrams reliably but were known to fail qualitatively near critical points, where the critical behavior is particularly interesting because of its universal character.

In the mid 1960's Widom found that the singularities in thermodynamic quantities were well described by homogeneous functions. Kadanoff extended the homogeneity hypothesis to correlation functions and linked it to the idea of scale invariance. In the early 1970's Wilson showed how Kadanoff's rescaling could be explicitly carried out near the fixed point of a flow in Hamiltonian space. He made the first practical renormalization-group calculation of the flow induced by the elimination of short-wave-length Fourier components of the order-parameter field. The universality of the critical behavior emerges in a natural way in this approach, with a different fixed point for each universality class. The discovery by Wilson and Fisher of a systematic expansion procedure in ϵ for a system in $d = 4 - \epsilon$ dimensions was followed by a cascade of calculations of critical quantities as a function of d and of the order-parameter dimensionality n . Using field-theoretic techniques, Brézin, Le Guillou, Zinn-Justin, Nickel, and others have turned the ϵ expansion into an astonishingly accurate tool for computing the critical behavior of three-dimensional systems.

Another class of renormalization procedures has been developed, in which the renormalization is carried out in real space rather than Fourier space. In the real-space renormalization of a system of spins on a lattice, lengths are rescaled by replacing cells of spins by single spins, following the intuitive scaling picture of Kadanoff rather closely. Unlike the Fourier-space methods, real-space renormalization works directly with a microscopic Hamiltonian and attempts to calculate non-universal information, for example phase diagrams, in addition to universal quantities. It is not a priori clear that renormalization will work on a microscopic level. There is no unique prescription for renormalizing in real space, and a con-

siderable number of approximate renormalization techniques have been developed. There have been applications to a wide variety of different physical systems. The domain of applicability is by no means restricted to critical phenomena. Striking successes have been achieved, but there are also some general problems with the approach. This volume is a review of the present state of the art.

The literature on real-space renormalization is already too large to be reviewed in a single volume. We have included contributions on five or six general areas where, in our opinion, particularly significant developments have taken place. We decided not to repeat at length material already covered in the 1976 review article by Niemeijer and van Leeuwen in Vol.6 of the Domb-Green series *Phase Transitions and Critical Phenomena*.

In the introductory chapter we give an overview of real-space renormalization and discuss some of the fundamental problems. Griffiths-Pearce singularities, exact differential renormalization, and the phenomenological renormalization related to finite-size scaling are also considered. Chapter 2, by Burkhardt, is devoted to bond-moving and variational approximation techniques. In Chapter 3 Swendsen reviews Monte Carlo renormalization methods. Real-space renormalization procedures have been developed for quantum systems and for dynamic critical phenomena. These two topics are discussed by Pfeuty, Jullien, and Penson and by Mazenko and Valls in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively. Chapters 6 and 7 review two specific areas of application where real-space renormalization is making a significant contribution. In Chapter 6, by Schick, two-dimensional adsorbed systems are considered, and in Chapter 7, by Stanley, Reynolds, Redner, and Family, applications to percolation and polymers.

The suggestion for a Topics volume on real-space renormalization originally came from K. Binder, whom we thank for his encouragement. We also thank the contributors and H. Lotsch of Springer-Verlag for their cooperation in preparing a review of this rapidly developing field.

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March 1982

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1. Progress and Problems in Real-Space Renormalization

T.W. Burkhardt and J.M.J. van Leeuwen

With 5 Figures

The real-space renormalization approach to statistical mechanics is reviewed. A brief account of progress in the field is given. Some fundamental difficulties with the approach are discussed, in particular the proliferation of interactions, the ambiguity in the choice of the weight function, and the peculiarities in the thermodynamic limit noted by GRIFFITHS and PEARCE. Two methods which avoid the problem of proliferation of interactions are considered in some detail: differential real-space renormalization and the phenomenological renormalization related to finite-size scaling.

1.1 Introduction

Following WILSON's first application of renormalization-group ideas to critical phenomena, there has been an enormous activity in the field [1.1-9]. Renormalization techniques in both momentum and position space have been developed. In the momentum-space or field-theoretical approach, critical exponents and other universal quantities have been calculated in expansions in $\epsilon = d - d^*$, where d is the dimension of interest and d^* is the upper or lower critical dimension. The ϵ expansion has lead to extremely precise estimates [1.10] of the critical exponents of several three-dimensional systems. Momentum-space renormalization-group techniques have also been applied to dynamic critical phenomena [1.11]. The starting point in a momentum-space renormalization-group calculation is a coarse-grained Hamiltonian in which details irrelevant to the universal critical behavior have been eliminated. This Hamiltonian is a functional of the order-parameter field. Renormalization results from an elimination of the short-wavelength Fourier components of the field and subsequent rescaling of lengths and of the field.

Position or real-space renormalization deals directly with the microscopic Hamiltonian. Most of the applications have considered spins on a lattice. In the renormalization, new spin variables which replace blocks of the original spins are defined and their effective interactions determined. Except in a few special applications the real-space renormalization procedures devised thus far are not exact but rely on approximations lacking an expansion parameter. So far the approach

has been less successful in predicting the critical exponents of three-dimensional systems than the extrapolation procedures incorporating exact results of the ϵ expansion. However, for systems, particularly those with discrete spins, in low dimensions where the critical fluctuations are strong and the ϵ expansion not very useful, real-space renormalization is one of the most powerful of the calculational techniques of comparable simplicity currently available. As the real-space renormalization procedures are directly applicable to microscopic models of spins on a lattice with no prior coarse graining, one can calculate nonuniversal as well as universal quantities, for example, the phase diagram as a function of the interaction parameters, or the specific heat as a function of the temperature. Real-space renormalization also provides a natural description of a first-order transition [1.12, 13]. The approach has an intuitive simplicity and can often be conveniently tailored to a particular application.

This book is primarily devoted to developments in real-space renormalization which have taken place since the preparation of the 1976 review article [1.13] in the Domb-Green series. The reader seeking a detailed introduction to the subject is referred to [1.13]. Section 1.2 of this chapter contains a brief review of the real-space renormalization approach. Sections 1.3,4 summarize some of the more significant recent developments in the field not covered in [1.13]. Certain of these developments are treated in detail in other contributions to this volume. In Sect.1.5 some of the fundamental inherent difficulties in real-space renormalization are discussed, in particular the proliferation of interactions which results from the renormalization operation, the problem of choosing a suitable weight function, and the peculiarities in the thermodynamic limit pointed out by GRIFFITHS and PEARCE [1.14-16]. Sections [1.6,7] describe two successful procedures that manage to avoid these problems. In Sect.1.6 exact differential renormalization transformations [1.17-22] are considered. An exact differential transformation has been devised for the two-dimensional Ising model with nearest-neighbor interactions on a triangular lattice [1.17]. No additional couplings are generated by the renormalization, but the couplings become spatially dependent. Section 1.7 contains a discussion of "phenomenological renormalization" [1.23], a type of finite-size scaling analysis that bears some resemblance to real-space renormalization. No proliferation of interactions occurs in phenomenological renormalization either. The approximation can be systematically improved and the convergence of the results observed. Section 1.8, which completes the chapter, contains concluding remarks.

1.2 Review of Real-Space Renormalization

Real-space renormalization methods implement an intuitive picture, proposed by KADANOFF [1.24] several years before the renormalization-group breakthrough, to explain certain universal aspects of critical behavior. In this picture, cells of spins in a nearly critical system behave like individual spins in a system somewhat farther from criticality. A possible assignment of spins into cells is shown in Fig.1.1. The dots represent the original or site spins, which we denote by $\{s\}$ and the crosses the cell spins $\{s'\}$. The central thermodynamic quantity of interest is the free energy

$$f = \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} (1/N) \ln Z, \quad (1.1)$$

where N is the number of s spins and the partition function Z is defined by

$$Z = \sum_s \exp H(s). \quad (1.2)$$

$H(s)$ is the dimensionless Hamiltonian (in which a factor $-(k_B T)^{-1}$ has been incorporated) of the system of s spins. The sum in (1.2) is over all configurations of the s spins.

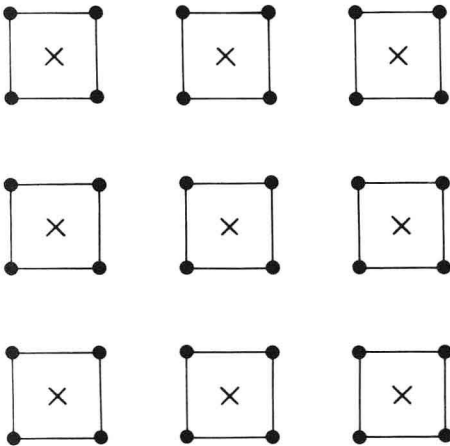


Fig.1.1. Possible assignment of spins to cells. The dots represent site spins and the crosses cell spins. There are four sites per cell

Adding an arbitrary spin-independent constant to $H(s)$ changes the free energy by an additive constant. It is convenient to choose a convention such as $\sum_s H(s) = 0$ or $H = 0$ for a particular spin configuration in order to define the Hamiltonian $H(s)$ uniquely.

In real-space renormalization the interactions between the cell spins are calculated from the interactions between the site spins. A Hamiltonian $G + H'(s')$ for the cell spins (where G is independent of the spin configurations and the zeroes of $H'(s')$ and $H(s)$ are fixed according one of the conventions mentioned above) is

defined by the renormalization transformation

$$\exp[G + H'(s')] = \sum_s P(s', s) \exp H(s) \quad (1.3)$$

The weight function $P(s', s)$, which couples the cell and site spins, satisfies

$$\sum_{s'} P(s', s) = 1 \quad , \quad (1.4)$$

which insures that the partition functions of the cell and site-spin systems are the same. The condition (1.4) is not very restrictive, and a variety of weight functions [1.13] have been tried. Generally (some exceptions are noted below), the transformation is designed so that the s' and s spins are spins of the same type, for example, in applications to the Ising model both the s' and s spins take the values ± 1 . Evaluating the sum over configurations in (1.3) reduces the number of spins and enlarges the lattice constant. In momentum-space renormalization [1.1-9] degrees of freedom are eliminated and the length scale expanded by integrating the Boltzmann factor $\exp H$ of the coarse-grained Hamiltonian over short-wavelength fluctuations of the spin variables.

It is useful to expand $H(s)$ in the form $H(s) = \sum_{\alpha} K_{\alpha} \Omega_{\alpha}(s)$, where the K_{α} are coupling constants and the $\Omega_{\alpha}(s)$ a complete set of interactions generated by repeated application of (1.3) from the initial Hamiltonian of interest. Because of the proliferation of interactions under the renormalization operation, the set generally contains an infinite number of elements, but in approximate calculations only a finite subset is taken into account. H' can also be expanded in terms of the Ω_{α} , with coupling constants K'_{α} . Equation (1.3) implies a set of equations

$$\underline{K}' = \underline{K}'(\underline{K}) \quad (1.5)$$

relating the coupling constants of the original and renormalized spins. Here \underline{K} and \underline{K}' denote the entire sets of K_{α} and K'_{α} . The transformation law

$$f(\underline{K}) = g(\underline{K}) + \frac{1}{b^d} f(\underline{K}') \quad (1.6)$$

for the free energy per spin also follows from (1.3,4). In deriving (1.6), one has written $g = G/N$ and $b^d = N/N'$, b being the length rescaling factor, and the thermodynamic limit is implicitly taken to be $N \rightarrow \infty$. From (1.6) one sees that $g(\underline{K})$ is the contribution to the free energy from the degrees of freedom eliminated in the renormalization step.

Once the functions $\underline{K}'(\underline{K})$ and $g(\underline{K})$ are known, the free energy may be calculated with the formula

$$f(K) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{b^{nd}} g(\underline{K}^{(n)}) + \lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{b^{md}} f(\underline{K}^{(m)}) \quad , \quad (1.7)$$

obtained by iterating (1.5,6). $\underline{K}^{(n)}$ in (1.7) denotes the set of coupling constants after n iterations. In the renormalization-group approach [1.1-9,13] one can cal-