

Topological Superconductors

Finland's Aalto University researchers have theorized that superconducting surfaces can become topological superconductors when magnetic iron atoms are deposited on the surface in a regular pattern. They used the latest mathematical and physical models to predict the existence of a topological superconducting state on metallic superconducting surfaces and thin films. [28]

Since the 1930s scientists have been searching for particles that are simultaneously matter and antimatter. Now physicists have found strong evidence for one such entity inside a superconducting material. The discovery could represent the first so-called Majorana particle, and may help researchers encode information for quantum computers. [27]

This paper explains the magnetic effect of the superconductive current from the observed effects of the accelerating electrons, causing naturally the experienced changes of the electric field potential along the electric wire. The accelerating electrons explain not only the Maxwell Equations and the Special Relativity, but the Heisenberg Uncertainty Relation, the wave particle duality and the electron's spin also, building the bridge between the Classical and Quantum Theories.

The changing acceleration of the electrons explains the created negative electric field of the magnetic induction, the Higgs Field, the changing Relativistic Mass and the Gravitational Force, giving a Unified Theory of the physical forces. Taking into account the Planck Distribution Law of the electromagnetic oscillators also, we can explain the electron/proton mass ratio and the Weak and Strong Interactions.

Since the superconductivity is basically a quantum mechanical phenomenon and some entangled particles give this opportunity to specific matters, like Cooper Pairs or other entanglements, as strongly correlated materials and Exciton-mediated electron pairing, we can say that the secret of superconductivity is the quantum entanglement.

Contents

Researchers predicted existence of new quantum matter theoretically	2
New Particle Is Both Matter and Antimatter	3
The Quest of Superconductivity	4
Experiences and Theories	4
Conventional superconductivity	4

Superconductivity and magnetic fields	5
Room-temperature superconductivity.....	5
Exciton-mediated electron pairing	5
Resonating valence bond theory.....	5
Strongly correlated materials	6
New superconductor theory may revolutionize electrical engineering	6
Unconventional superconductivity in $\text{Ba}^{0.6}\text{K}^{0.4}\text{Fe}^2\text{As}^2$ from inelastic neutron scattering	7
A grand unified theory of exotic superconductivity?	7
The role of magnetism.....	7
Concepts relating magnetic interactions, intertwined electronic orders, and strongly correlated superconductivity	8
Significance.....	8
Superconductivity's third side unmasked.....	9
Strongly correlated materials.....	9
Fermions and Bosons	10
The General Weak Interaction	10
Higgs Field and Superconductivity	10
Superconductivity and Quantum Entanglement	12
Conclusions	12
References:.....	13

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Researchers predicted existence of new quantum matter theoretically

The work examines the properties of superconductors in low temperatures. The results are important in the search for new quantum states and possible use in future electronics applications.

'We know that in a quantum state, electric current moves without resistance on the surfaces of superconducting metals. This is an interesting phenomenon that we wanted to study in more detail. Topological superconductors differ from normal ones in that they have a current constantly moving around their edges. This current contains exotic particles called Majorana fermions. We obtained reliable signals from these particles in tests performed at the end of last year,' explains Academy Research Fellow Teemu Ojanen from the Aalto University Low Temperature Laboratory in Finland.

'The edges of a topologically superconducting surface are unidirectional, and thus the current is only transported in a single direction. However, the number and direction of edge states can vary. This situation could be compared to a traffic circle in which the number of lanes and the direction can change,' continues Ojanen.

It has been theoretically predicted that Majorana fermions have properties that can help create complicated quantum states, for example, by braiding the particles around each other. The structures produced in this manner can be utilised for coding information and future applications likely include quantum computers. [28]

New Particle Is Both Matter and Antimatter

Physicists think that every particle of matter has an antimatter counterpart with equal mass but opposite charge. When matter meets its antimatter equivalent, the two annihilate one another. But some particles might be their own antimatter partners, according to a 1937 prediction by Italian physicist Ettore Majorana. For the first time researchers say they have imaged one of these Majorana particles, and report their findings in the October 3 Science.

The new Majorana particle showed up inside a superconductor, a material in which the free movement of electrons allows electricity to flow without resistance. The research team, led by Ali Yazdani of Princeton University, placed a long chain of iron atoms, which are magnetic, on top of a superconductor made of lead. Normally, magnetism disrupts superconductors, which depend on a lack of magnetic fields for their electrons to flow unimpeded. But in this case the magnetic chain turned into a special type of superconductor in which electrons next to one another in the chain coordinated their spins to simultaneously satisfy the requirements of magnetism and superconductivity. Each of these pairs can be thought of as an electron and an antielectron, with a negative and a positive charge, respectively. That arrangement, however, leaves one electron at each end of the chain without a neighbor to pair with, causing them to take on the properties of both electrons and antielectrons—in other words, Majorana particles.

As opposed to particles found in a vacuum, unattached to other matter, these Majoranas are what's called "emergent particles." They emerge from the collective properties of the surrounding matter and could not exist outside the superconductor.

The new study shows a convincing signature of Majorana particles, says Leo Kouwenhoven of the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands who was not involved in the research but previously found signs of Majorana particles in a different superconductor arrangement. "But to really speak of full proof, unambiguous evidence, I think you have to do a DNA test." Such a test, he says, must show the particles do not obey the normal laws of the two known classes of particles in nature—fermions (protons, electrons and most other particles we are familiar with) and bosons (photons and other force-carrying particles, including the Higgs boson). "The great thing about Majoranas is that they are potentially a new class of particle," Kouwenhoven adds. "If you find a new class of particles, that really would add a new chapter to physics."

Physicist Jason Alicea of California Institute of Technology, who also did not participate in the research, said the study offers "compelling evidence" for Majorana particles but that "we should keep in mind possible alternative explanations—even if there are no immediately obvious candidates." He praised the experimental setup for its apparent ability to easily produce the elusive Majoranas. "One of the great virtues of their platform relative to earlier works is that it allowed the researchers to apply a new type of microscope to probe the detailed anatomy of the physics."

The discovery could have implications for searches for free Majorana particles outside of superconducting materials. Many physicists suspect neutrinos—very lightweight particles with the strange ability to alter their identities, or flavors—are Majorana particles, and experiments are ongoing to investigate whether this is the case. Now that we know Majorana particles can exist inside superconductors, it might not be surprising to find them in nature, Yazdani says. “Once you find the concept to be correct, it’s very likely that it shows up in another layer of physics. That’s what’s exciting.”

The finding could also be useful for constructing quantum computers that harness the laws of quantum mechanics to make calculations many times faster than conventional computers. One of the main issues in building a quantum computer is the susceptibility of quantum properties such as entanglement (a connection between two particles such that an action on one affects the other) to collapse due to outside interference. A particle chain with Majoranas capping each end would be somewhat immune to this danger, because damage would have to be done to both ends simultaneously to destroy any information encoded there. “You could build a quantum bit based on these Majoranas,” Yazdani says. “The idea is that such a bit would be much more robust to the environment than the types of bits people have tried to make so far.” [27]

The Quest of Superconductivity

Superconductivity seems to contradict the theory of accelerating charges in the static electric current, caused by the electric force as a result of the electric potential difference, since a closed circle wire no potential difference at all. [1]

On the other hand the electron in the atom also moving in a circle around the proton with a constant velocity and constant impulse momentum with a constant magnetic field. This gives the idea of the centripetal acceleration of the moving charge in the closed circle wire as this is the case in the atomic electron attracted by the proton. Because of this we can think about superconductivity as a quantum phenomenon. [2]

Experiences and Theories

Conventional superconductivity

Conventional superconductivity can be explained by a theory developed by Bardeen, Cooper and Schrieffer (BCS) in 1957. In BCS theory, electrons in a superconductor combine to form pairs, called Cooper pairs, which are able to move through the crystal lattice without resistance when an electric voltage is applied. Even when the voltage is removed, the current continues to flow indefinitely, the most remarkable property of superconductivity, and one that explains the keen interest in their technological potential. [3]

High-temperature superconductivity

In 1986, high-temperature superconductivity was discovered (i.e. superconductivity at temperatures considerably above the previous limit of about 30 K; up to about 130 K). It is believed that BCS theory alone cannot explain this phenomenon and that other effects are at play. These effects are

still not yet fully understood; it is possible that they even control superconductivity at low temperatures for some materials. [8]

Superconductivity and magnetic fields

Superconductivity and magnetic fields are normally seen as rivals – very strong magnetic fields normally destroy the superconducting state. Physicists at the Paul Scherrer Institute have now demonstrated that a novel superconducting state is only created in the material CeCoIn_5 when there are strong external magnetic fields. This state can then be manipulated by modifying the field direction. The material is already superconducting in weaker fields, too. In strong fields, however, an additional second superconducting state is created which means that there are two different superconducting states at the same time in the same material. The new state is coupled with an anti-ferromagnetic order that appears simultaneously with the field. The anti-ferromagnetic order from whose properties the researchers have deduced the existence of the superconducting state was detected with neutrons at PSI and at the Institute Laue-Langevin in Grenoble. [6]

Room-temperature superconductivity

After more than twenty years of intensive research the origin of high-temperature superconductivity is still not clear, but it seems that instead of *electron-phonon* attraction mechanisms, as in conventional superconductivity, one is dealing with genuine *electronic* mechanisms (e.g. by antiferromagnetic correlations), and instead of s-wave pairing, d-waves are substantial. One goal of all this research is room-temperature superconductivity. [9]

Exciton-mediated electron pairing

Theoretical work by Neil Ashcroft predicted that solid metallic hydrogen at extremely high pressure (~500 GPa) should become superconducting at approximately room-temperature because of its extremely high speed of sound and expected strong coupling between the conduction electrons and the lattice vibrations (phonons). This prediction is yet to be experimentally verified, as yet the pressure to achieve metallic hydrogen is not known but may be of the order of 500 GPa. In 1964, William A. Little proposed the possibility of high temperature superconductivity in organic polymers. This proposal is based on the exciton-mediated electron pairing, as opposed to phonon-mediated pairing in BCS theory. [9]

Resonating valence bond theory

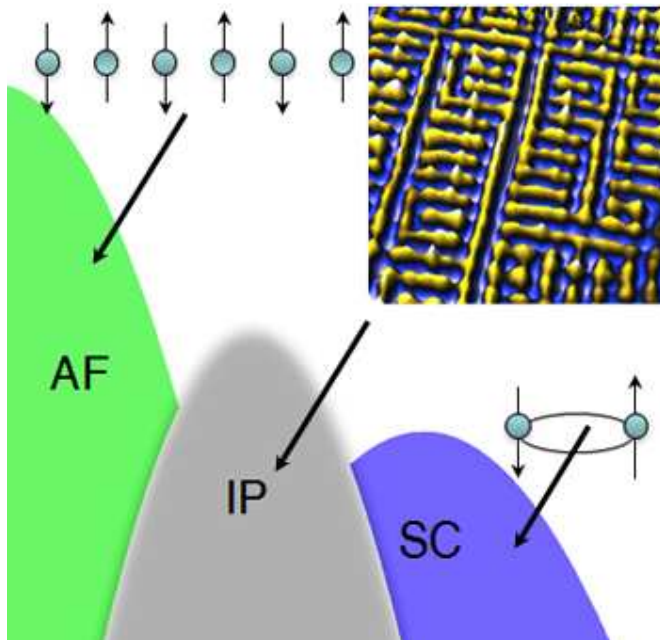
In condensed matter physics, the resonating valence bond theory (RVB) is a theoretical model that attempts to describe high temperature superconductivity, and in particular the superconductivity in cuprate compounds. It was first proposed by American physicist P. W. Anderson and the Indian theoretical physicist Ganapathy Baskaran in 1987. The theory states that in copper oxide lattices, electrons from neighboring copper atoms interact to form a valence bond, which locks them in place. However, with doping, these electrons can act as mobile Cooper pairs and are able to superconduct. Anderson observed in his 1987 paper that the origins of superconductivity in doped cuprates was in the Mott insulator nature of crystalline copper oxide. RVB builds on the Hubbard and t-J models used in the study of strongly correlated materials. [10]

Strongly correlated materials

Strongly correlated materials are a wide class of electronic materials that show unusual (often technologically useful) electronic and magnetic properties, such as metal-insulator transitions or half-metallicity. The essential feature that defines these materials is that the behavior of their electrons cannot be described effectively in terms of non-interacting entities. Theoretical models of the electronic structure of strongly correlated materials must include electronic correlation to be accurate. Many transition metal oxides belong into this class which may be subdivided according to their behavior, *e.g.* high- T_c , spintronic materials, Mott insulators, spin Peierls materials, heavy fermion materials, quasi-low-dimensional materials, etc. The single most intensively studied effect is probably high-temperature superconductivity in doped cuprates, *e.g.* $\text{La}_{2-x}\text{Sr}_x\text{CuO}_4$. Other ordering or magnetic phenomena and temperature-induced phase transitions in many transition-metal oxides are also gathered under the term "strongly correlated materials." Typically, strongly correlated materials have incompletely filled *d*- or *f*-electron shells with narrow energy bands. One can no longer consider any electron in the material as being in a "sea" of the averaged motion of the others (also known as mean field theory). Each single electron has a complex influence on its neighbors. [11]

New superconductor theory may revolutionize electrical engineering

High-temperature superconductors exhibit a frustratingly varied catalog of odd behavior, such as electrons that arrange themselves into stripes or refuse to arrange themselves symmetrically around atoms. Now two physicists propose that such behaviors – and superconductivity itself – can all be traced to a single starting point, and they explain why there are so many variations.



An "antiferromagnetic" state, where the magnetic moments of electrons are opposed, can lead to a variety of unexpected arrangements of electrons in a high-temperature superconductor, then finally to the formation of "Cooper pairs" that conduct without resistance, according to a new theory. [22]

Unconventional superconductivity in $\text{Ba}^{0.6}\text{K}^{0.4}\text{Fe}_2\text{As}_2$ from inelastic neutron scattering

In BCS superconductors, the energy gap between the superconducting and normal electronic states is constant, but in unconventional superconductors the gap varies with the direction the electrons are moving. In some directions, the gap may be zero. The puzzle is that the gap does not seem to vary with direction in the iron arsenides. Theorists have argued that, while the size of the gap shows no directional dependence in these new compounds, the sign of the gap is opposite for different electronic states. The standard techniques to measure the gap, such as photoemission, are not sensitive to this change in sign.

But inelastic neutron scattering is sensitive. Osborn, along with Argonne physicist Stephan Rosenkranz, led an international collaboration to perform neutron experiments using samples of the new compounds made in Argonne's Materials Science Division, and discovered a magnetic excitation in the superconducting state that can only exist if the energy gap changes sign from one electron orbital to another.

"Our results suggest that the mechanism that makes electrons pair together could be provided by antiferromagnetic fluctuations rather than lattice vibrations," Rosenkranz said. "It certainly gives direct evidence that the superconductivity is unconventional."

Inelastic neutron scattering continues to be an important tool in identifying unconventional superconductivity, not only in the iron arsenides, but also in new families of superconductors that may be discovered in the future. [23]

A grand unified theory of exotic superconductivity?

The role of magnetism

In all known types of high- T_c superconductors—copper-based (cuprate), iron-based, and so-called heavy fermion compounds—superconductivity emerges from the "extinction" of antiferromagnetism, the ordered arrangement of electrons on adjacent atoms having anti-aligned spin directions. Electrons arrayed like tiny magnets in this alternating spin pattern are at their lowest energy state, but this antiferromagnetic order is not beneficial to superconductivity.

However if the interactions between electrons that cause antiferromagnetic order can be maintained while the actual order itself is prevented, then superconductivity can appear. "In this situation, whenever one electron approaches another electron, it tries to anti-align its magnetic state," Davis said. Even if the electrons never achieve antiferromagnetic order, these antiferromagnetic interactions exert the dominant influence on the behavior of the material. "This antiferromagnetic influence is universal across all these types of materials," Davis said.

Many scientists have proposed that these antiferromagnetic interactions play a role in the ability of electrons to eventually pair up with anti-aligned spins—a condition necessary for them to carry current with no resistance. The complicating factor has been the existence of many different types of "intertwined" electronic phases that also emerge in the different types of high-T_c superconductors—sometimes appearing to compete with superconductivity and sometimes coexisting with it. [24]

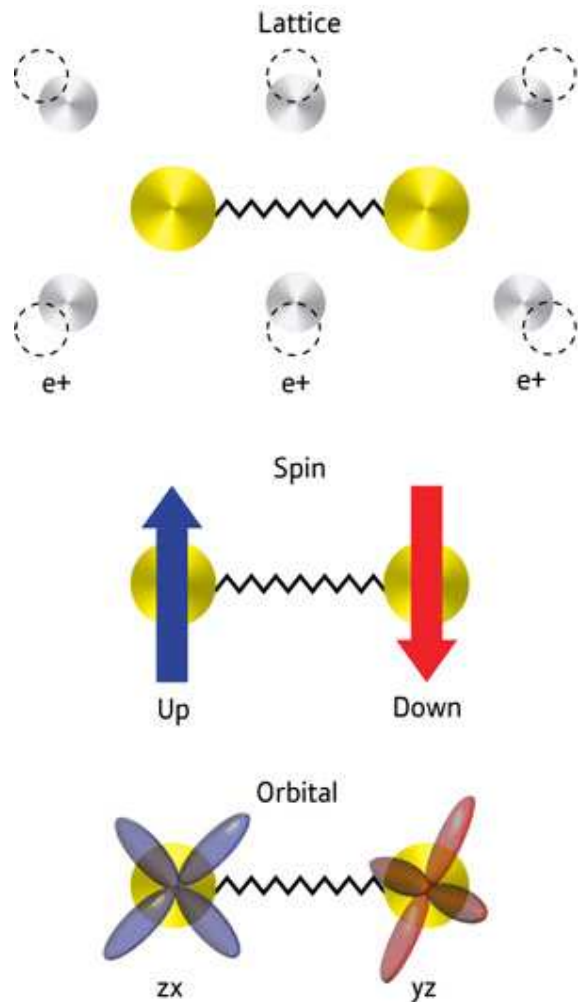
Concepts relating magnetic interactions, intertwined electronic orders, and strongly correlated superconductivity

Unconventional superconductivity (SC) is said to occur when Cooper pair formation is dominated by repulsive electron–electron interactions, so that the symmetry of the pair wave function is other than an isotropic s-wave. The strong, on-site, repulsive electron–electron interactions that are the proximate cause of such SC are more typically drivers of commensurate magnetism. Indeed, it is the suppression of commensurate antiferromagnetism (AF) that usually allows this type of unconventional superconductivity to emerge. Importantly, however, intervening between these AF and SC phases, intertwined electronic ordered phases (IP) of an unexpected nature are frequently discovered. For this reason, it has been extremely difficult to distinguish the microscopic essence of the correlated superconductivity from the often spectacular phenomenology of the IPs. Here we introduce a model conceptual framework within which to understand the relationship between AF electron–electron interactions, IPs, and correlated SC. We demonstrate its effectiveness in simultaneously explaining the consequences of AF interactions for the copper-based, iron-based, and heavy-fermion superconductors, as well as for their quite distinct IPs.

Significance

This study describes a unified theory explaining the rich ordering phenomena, each associated with a different symmetry breaking, that often accompany high-temperature superconductivity. The essence of this theory is an "antiferromagnetic interaction," the interaction that favors the development of magnetic order where the magnetic moments reverse direction from one crystal unit cell to the next. We apply this theory to explain the superconductivity, as well as all observed accompanying ordering phenomena in the copper-oxide superconductors, the iron-based superconductors, and the heavy fermion superconductors. [25]

Superconductivity's third side unmasked



Shimojima and colleagues were surprised to discover that interactions between electron spins do not cause the electrons to form Cooper pairs in the pnictides. Instead, the coupling is mediated by the electron clouds surrounding the atomic cores. Some of these so-called orbitals have the same energy, which causes interactions and electron fluctuations that are sufficiently strong to mediate superconductivity.

This could spur the discovery of new superconductors based on this mechanism. "Our work establishes the electron orbitals as a third kind of pairing glue for electron pairs in superconductors, next to lattice vibrations and electron spins," explains Shimojima. "We believe that this finding is a step towards the dream of achieving room-temperature superconductivity," he concludes. [17]

Strongly correlated materials

Strongly correlated materials give us the idea of diffraction patterns explaining the electron-proton mass rate. [13]

This explains the theories relating the superconductivity with the strong interaction. [14]

Fermions and Bosons

The fermions are the diffraction patterns of the bosons such a way that they are both sides of the same thing. We can generalize the weak interaction on all of the decaying matter constructions, even on the biological too.

The General Weak Interaction

The Weak Interactions T-asymmetry is in conjunction with the T-asymmetry of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, meaning that locally lowering entropy (on extremely high temperature) causes for example the Hydrogen fusion. The arrow of time by the Second Law of Thermodynamics shows the increasing entropy and decreasing information by the Weak Interaction, changing the temperature dependent diffraction patterns. The Fluctuation Theorem says that there is a probability that entropy will flow in a direction opposite to that dictated by the Second Law of Thermodynamics. In this case the Information is growing that is the matter formulas are emerging from the chaos. [18] One of these new matter formulas is the superconducting matter.

Higgs Field and Superconductivity

The simplest implementation of the mechanism adds an extra Higgs field to the gauge theory. The specific spontaneous symmetry breaking of the underlying local symmetry, which is similar to that one appearing in the theory of superconductivity, triggers conversion of the longitudinal field component to the Higgs boson, which interacts with itself and (at least of part of) the other fields in the theory, so as to produce mass terms for the above-mentioned three gauge bosons, and also to the above-mentioned fermions (see below). [16]

The Higgs mechanism occurs whenever a charged field has a vacuum expectation value. In the nonrelativistic context, this is the Landau model of a charged Bose–Einstein condensate, also known as a superconductor. In the relativistic condensate, the condensate is a scalar field, and is relativistically invariant.

The Higgs mechanism is a type of superconductivity which occurs in the vacuum. It occurs when all of space is filled with a sea of particles which are charged, or, in field language, when a charged field has a nonzero vacuum expectation value. Interaction with the quantum fluid filling the space prevents certain forces from propagating over long distances (as it does in a superconducting medium; e.g., in the Ginzburg–Landau theory).

A superconductor expels all magnetic fields from its interior, a phenomenon known as the Meissner effect. This was mysterious for a long time, because it implies that electromagnetic forces somehow become short-range inside the superconductor. Contrast this with the behavior of an ordinary metal. In a metal, the conductivity shields electric fields by rearranging charges on the surface until the total field cancels in the interior. But magnetic fields can penetrate to any distance, and if a magnetic monopole (an isolated magnetic pole) is surrounded by a metal the field can escape without collimating into a string. In a superconductor, however, electric charges move with no dissipation, and this allows for permanent surface currents, not just surface charges. When magnetic fields are introduced at the boundary of a superconductor, they produce surface currents which exactly

neutralize them. The Meissner effect is due to currents in a thin surface layer, whose thickness, the London penetration depth, can be calculated from a simple model (the Ginzburg–Landau theory).

This simple model treats superconductivity as a charged Bose–Einstein condensate. Suppose that a superconductor contains bosons with charge q . The wavefunction of the bosons can be described by introducing a quantum field, ψ , which obeys the Schrödinger equation as a field equation (in units where the reduced Planck constant, \hbar , is set to 1):

$$i \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \psi = \frac{(\nabla - iqA)^2}{2m} \psi.$$

The operator $\psi(x)$ annihilates a boson at the point x , while its adjoint ψ^\dagger creates a new boson at the same point. The wavefunction of the Bose–Einstein condensate is then the expectation value ψ of $\psi(x)$, which is a classical function that obeys the same equation. The interpretation of the expectation value is that it is the phase that one should give to a newly created boson so that it will coherently superpose with all the other bosons already in the condensate.

When there is a charged condensate, the electromagnetic interactions are screened. To see this, consider the effect of a gauge transformation on the field. A gauge transformation rotates the phase of the condensate by an amount which changes from point to point, and shifts the vector potential by a gradient:

$$\begin{aligned} \psi &\rightarrow e^{iq\phi(x)} \psi \\ A &\rightarrow A + \nabla\phi. \end{aligned}$$

When there is no condensate, this transformation only changes the definition of the phase of ψ at every point. But when there is a condensate, the phase of the condensate defines a preferred choice of phase.

The condensate wave function can be written as

$$\psi(x) = \rho(x) e^{i\theta(x)},$$

where ρ is real amplitude, which determines the local density of the condensate. If the condensate were neutral, the flow would be along the gradients of θ , the direction in which the phase of the Schrödinger field changes. If the phase θ changes slowly, the flow is slow and has very little energy. But now θ can be made equal to zero just by making a gauge transformation to rotate the phase of the field.

The energy of slow changes of phase can be calculated from the Schrödinger kinetic energy,

$$H = \frac{1}{2m} |(qA + \nabla)\psi|^2,$$

and taking the density of the condensate ρ to be constant,

$$H \approx \frac{\rho^2}{2m} (qA + \nabla\theta)^2.$$

Fixing the choice of gauge so that the condensate has the same phase everywhere, the electromagnetic field energy has an extra term,

$$\frac{q^2 \rho^2}{2m} A^2.$$

When this term is present, electromagnetic interactions become short-ranged. Every field mode, no matter how long the wavelength, oscillates with a nonzero frequency. The lowest frequency can be read off from the energy of a long wavelength A mode,

$$E \approx \frac{\dot{A}^2}{2} + \frac{q^2 \rho^2}{2m} A^2.$$

This is a harmonic oscillator with frequency

$$\sqrt{\frac{1}{m} q^2 \rho^2}.$$

The quantity $|\psi|^2$ ($=\rho^2$) is the density of the condensate of superconducting particles.

In an actual superconductor, the charged particles are electrons, which are fermions not bosons. So in order to have superconductivity, the electrons need to somehow bind into Cooper pairs. [12]

The charge of the condensate q is therefore twice the electron charge e . The pairing in a normal superconductor is due to lattice vibrations, and is in fact very weak; this means that the pairs are very loosely bound. The description of a Bose–Einstein condensate of loosely bound pairs is actually more difficult than the description of a condensate of elementary particles, and was only worked out in 1957 by Bardeen, Cooper and Schrieffer in the famous BCS theory. [3]

Superconductivity and Quantum Entanglement

We have seen that the superconductivity is basically a quantum mechanical phenomenon and some entangled particles give this opportunity to specific matters, like Cooper Pairs or other entanglements, as strongly correlated materials and Exciton-mediated electron pairing. [26]

Conclusions

Probably in the superconductivity there is no electric current at all, but a permanent magnetic field as the result of the electron's spin in the same direction in the case of the circular wire on a low temperature. [6]

We think that there is an electric current since we measure a magnetic field. Because of this saying that the superconductivity is a quantum mechanical phenomenon.

Since the acceleration of the electrons is centripetal in a circular wire, in the atom or in the spin, there is a steady current and no electromagnetic induction. This way there is no changing in the Higgs field, since it needs a changing acceleration. [18]

The superconductivity is temperature dependent; it means that the General Weak Interaction is very relevant to create this quantum state of the matter. [19]

We have seen that the superconductivity is basically a quantum mechanical phenomenon and some entangled particles give this opportunity to specific matters, like Cooper Pairs or other entanglements. [26]

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