

# Quantum Error Correcting Codes and Matrix Factorisations

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## 1 Quantum Error Correcting Codes

**Definition 1.0.1.** A **qubit** is a copy of the  $\mathbb{C}$ -Hilbert space  $\mathbb{C}^2$ .

The **state** of a qubit  $\mathbb{C}^2$  is a vector  $|\psi\rangle \in \mathbb{C}^2$  of norm 1.

A pair  $(\mathbb{C}^2, |\psi\rangle)$  consisting of a qubit  $\mathbb{C}^2$  and a state  $|\psi\rangle \in \mathbb{C}^2$  is a **prepared qubit** and we say  $\mathbb{C}^2$  has been **prepared** to  $|\psi\rangle$ .

**Definition 1.0.2.** Let  $\mathcal{H}_1, \mathcal{H}_2$  be two state spaces. The **composite state space** is  $\mathcal{H}_1 \otimes \mathcal{H}_2$ . A **state** of a composite system is a vector  $|\psi\rangle \in \mathcal{H}_1 \otimes \mathcal{H}_2$  which can be written as a linear combination of pure tensors

$$\alpha_1 |\psi_1\rangle + \dots + \alpha_n |\psi_n\rangle \in \mathcal{H}_1 \otimes \mathcal{H}_2$$

where the coefficients satisfy  $|\alpha_1|^2 + \dots + |\alpha_n|^2 = 1$ .

We define a measurement as a family of possible outcomes with associated probabilities. We allow for the possibility that measurements effect the state, and so measurements are operators upon the state space.

**Definition 1.0.3.** A **measurement** on a state space  $\mathcal{H}$  is a finite family of linear operators  $\{M_m : \mathcal{H} \rightarrow \mathcal{H}\}_{m \in \mathcal{M}}$  satisfying the **completeness condition**.

$$\sum_{m \in \mathcal{M}} M_m^\dagger M_m = I \tag{1}$$

An element  $m \in \mathcal{M}$  is an **outcome**.

The **resulting state** after measurement  $\{M_m\}_{m \in \mathcal{M}}$  and outcome  $m$  is:

$$\frac{M_m |\psi\rangle}{\sqrt{p(m)}} \tag{2}$$

**Remark 1.0.4.** Associated to every measurement and state vector  $|\psi\rangle$  there is a value

$$p(m) := \langle \psi | M_m^\dagger M_m | \psi \rangle = \|M_m |\psi\rangle\|^2 \quad (3)$$

It follows from (1) that  $p(m) \leq 1$  for all  $m, |\psi\rangle$ . We understand  $p(m)$  as the probability of outcome  $m$  on the measurement  $\{M_m\}_{m \in \mathcal{M}}$ .

**Definition 1.0.5.** A linear transformation  $P$  is a **projector** if  $P^2 = P$ .

**Definition 1.0.6.** A **quantum error correcting code (QECC)** is a pair  $\mathcal{Q} = (\mathcal{H}, S)$  consisting of a state space  $\mathcal{H}$  along with a set of operators  $S$  on  $\mathcal{H}$ . The elements of  $S$  are the **stabilisers**. The **codespace**  $\mathcal{H}^S$  of  $\mathcal{Q}$  is the maximal subspace of  $\mathcal{H}$  invariant under all the operators in  $S$ .

See Appendix A for an example of a simple QECC.

## 2 Matrix factorisations

### 2.1 Koszul Complex

Recall that a  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded ring  $R$  comes equipped with a choice of isomorphism  $R \cong R_0 \oplus R_1$  where  $R_0, R_1$  are subgroups of  $R$ . The elements of  $R_1$  are **odd**.

**Definition 2.1.1.** Let  $E$  be a  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded ring and consider a set of odd elements  $\theta_1, \dots, \theta_n, \theta_1^*, \dots, \theta_n^* \in E$ . These **satisfy the canonical anticommutation relations** if the following hold for all  $i, j = 1, \dots, n$ .

- $\theta_i \theta_j + \theta_j \theta_i = 0$
- $\theta_i^* \theta_j^* + \theta_j^* \theta_i^* = 0$
- $\theta_i \theta_j^* + \theta_j \theta_i^* = \delta_{ij}$

When  $A \cong A_0 \oplus A_1, B \cong B_0 \oplus B_1$  are  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded modules (over a graded ring  $R$ , say), a homomorphism  $\varphi : A \rightarrow B$  can be written as a matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} \varphi_{00} & \varphi_{01} \\ \varphi_{10} & \varphi_{11} \end{pmatrix} \quad (4)$$

where  $\varphi_{00}(A_0) \subseteq B_0, \varphi_{01}(A_0) \subseteq B_1, \varphi_{10}(A_1) \subseteq B_0, \varphi_{11}(A_1) \subseteq B_1$ . Writing this matrix as a sum yields respectively an even and odd component of  $\varphi$

$$\begin{pmatrix} \varphi_{00} & \varphi_{01} \\ \varphi_{10} & \varphi_{11} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \varphi_{00} & 0 \\ 0 & \varphi_{11} \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \varphi_{01} \\ \varphi_{10} & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (5)$$

In this way,  $\text{Hom}(A, B)$  is also a  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded module over  $R$ .

When  $E$  is a  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded ring of the form  $E = \text{End}(A)$  for some  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded ring  $A$ , then  $E$  admitting a set of odd elements satisfying the anticommutation relations is sufficient for  $A$  to admit a Clifford algebra representation [1, Lemma 5.6.2].

**Definition 2.1.2.** The Clifford Algebra  $C_n$  is generated by elements  $\mu_1, \dots, \mu_n, \nu_1, \dots, \nu_n$  subject to:

$$[\mu_i, \mu_j] = -2\delta_{ij} \quad [\nu_i, \nu_j] = 2\delta_{ij} \quad [\mu_i, \nu_j] = 0$$

where  $[\xi, \zeta] = \xi\zeta + \zeta\xi$  for  $\xi, \zeta \in \{\mu_1, \dots, \mu_n, \nu_1, \dots, \nu_n\}$ .

There is a  $C_m$  action on  $S_m$  and hence on  $S_m \otimes_{\mathbb{C}} (Y \otimes X)$ . This is induced by two canonical endomorphisms which exist on  $S_m$ . The **wedge** and **contraction** maps.

$$\begin{aligned} \theta_i : \bigwedge^{d-1} (\mathbb{C}\theta_1 \oplus \dots \oplus \mathbb{C}\theta_n) &\longrightarrow \bigwedge^d (\mathbb{C}\theta_1 \oplus \dots \oplus \mathbb{C}\theta_n) \\ \theta_{j_1} \wedge \dots \wedge \theta_{j_{d-1}} &\longmapsto \theta_i \wedge \theta_{j_1} \wedge \dots \wedge \theta_{j_{d-1}} \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} \theta_i^* : \bigwedge^d (\mathbb{C}\theta_1 \oplus \dots \oplus \mathbb{C}\theta_n) &\longrightarrow \bigwedge^{d-1} (\mathbb{C}\theta_1 \oplus \dots \oplus \mathbb{C}\theta_n) \\ \theta_{j_1} \wedge \dots \wedge \theta_{j_d} &\longmapsto \sum_{k=1}^d (-1)^{k+1} \delta_{j_k=i} \theta_{j_1} \wedge \dots \wedge \hat{\theta}_{j_k} \wedge \dots \wedge \theta_{j_d} \end{aligned}$$

Given a free  $R$ -module  $A = R\theta_1 \oplus \dots \oplus R\theta_r$  of rank  $r$ , the multiplication and contraction operators satisfy the canonical anticommutation relations. Thus,  $A$  admits a Clifford algebra representation.

## 2.2 Matrix factorisations

Let  $k$  denote a ring.

Recall that if  $A, B$  are  $\mathbb{Z}$ -graded  $k$ -modules then  $\text{Hom}(A, B)$  is also  $\mathbb{Z}$ -graded [3]. We have a similar definition for  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded modules.

**Definition 2.2.1.** Let  $A, B$  be  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded  $k$ -modules. A homomorphism  $f : A \longrightarrow B$  is **even** if  $f(A_0) \subseteq B_0$  and  $f(A_1) \subseteq A_1$ . The homomorphism  $f$  is **odd** if  $f(A_0) \subseteq B_1$  and  $f(A_1) \subseteq B_0$ .

**Remark 2.2.2.** If  $f : A \longrightarrow B$  is any module homomorphism then  $f$  can be written as a matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} f_{00} & f_{01} \\ f_{10} & f_{11} \end{pmatrix} \quad (6)$$

The morphism  $f$  is thus even if  $f_{01} = f_{10} = 0$  and is odd if  $f_{00} = f_{11} = 0$ . This also shows that the morphism  $f$  can be written as the sum of an even and an odd component.

**Definition 2.2.3.** Let  $f \in k$  be a non-zero divisor. A **linear factorisation of  $f \in k$  over  $k$**  is a pair  $(X, \partial_X)$  consisting of a  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded  $k$ -module  $X = X_0 \oplus X_1$  and an odd homomorphism  $\partial_X : X \longrightarrow X$  satisfying

$$\partial_X^2 = f \cdot \text{id}_X \quad (7)$$

If  $X$  is free then  $(X, \partial_X)$  is a **matrix factorisation**.

The theory of Matrix factorisations is motivated by the search for square roots to operators. As a toy example, multiplication by  $x^2 - y^2$  in  $\mathbb{C}[x, y]$  does not admit a square root, but it does if we allow matrix solutions.

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & x - y \\ x + y & 0 \end{pmatrix}^2 = (x^2 - y^2) \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (8)$$

A more serious example is given by the square root of the Laplacian operator, see the Introduction of [4].

Our interest in matrix factorisations comes from the fact that appropriate homotopy categories of matrix factorisations form the homcategories of the bicategory of Landau-Ginzburg models, which we anticipate to find within a model of multiplicative linear logic (proofs as hypersurface singularities).

**Definition 2.2.4.** A **morphism of linear factorisations**

$$\alpha : \left( X = X_0 \oplus X_1, d_X = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & p_X \\ q_X & 0 \end{pmatrix} \right) \longrightarrow \left( Y = Y_0 \oplus Y_1, d_Y = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & p_Y \\ q_Y & 0 \end{pmatrix} \right)$$

of  $f \in R$  is a pair of morphisms  $\alpha_0 : X_0 \longrightarrow Y_0, \alpha_1 : X_1 \longrightarrow Y_1$  rendering the following diagram commutative.

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} X_0 & \xrightarrow{p_X} & X_1 & \xrightarrow{q_X} & X_0 \\ \downarrow \alpha_0 & & \downarrow \alpha_1 & & \downarrow \alpha_0 \\ Y_0 & \xrightarrow{p_Y} & Y_1 & \xrightarrow{q_Y} & Y_0 \end{array} \quad (9)$$

Given a matrix factorisation  $(X = X_0 \oplus X_1, d_X) = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & p_X \\ q_X & 0 \end{pmatrix}$  there is a sequence

$$\dots \xrightarrow{p_X} X_1 \xrightarrow{q_X} X_0 \xrightarrow{p_X} X_1 \xrightarrow{q_X} \dots \quad (10)$$

however, we note that in general  $d_X^2 = f \cdot I \neq 0$  and so strictly speaking this is *not* a chain complex.

**Definition 2.2.5.** We use the notation of Definition 2.2.4. Let  $\beta = (\beta_0, \beta_1)$  be another morphism of linear factorisations  $(X, d_X) \rightarrow (Y, d_Y)$ . The morphisms  $\alpha, \beta$  are **homotopic** if there exists a pair of morphisms  $h_0 : X_0 \rightarrow Y_1, h_1 : X_1 \rightarrow Y_0$  such that the following holds

$$\alpha_0 - \beta_0 = q_Y h_0 + h_1 p_X, \quad \alpha_1 - \beta_1 = h_0 q_X + p_Y h_1 \quad (11)$$

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccccc} \dots & \xrightarrow{q_X} & X_0 & \xrightarrow{p_X} & X_1 & \xrightarrow{q_X} & X_0 & \xrightarrow{p_X} & X_1 & \xrightarrow{q_X} & \dots \\ & \nearrow h_0 & \downarrow \alpha_0 & \parallel \beta_0 & \nwarrow h_1 & \downarrow \alpha_1 & \parallel \beta_1 & \nwarrow h_0 & \downarrow \alpha_0 & \parallel \beta_0 & \nwarrow h_1 \\ \dots & \xrightarrow{q_Y} & Y_0 & \xrightarrow{p_Y} & Y_1 & \xrightarrow{q_Y} & Y_0 & \xrightarrow{p_Y} & Y_1 & \xrightarrow{q_Y} & \dots \end{array}$$

The relation of homotopy defines an equivalence relation on the set of morphisms of linear factorisations.

**Definition 2.2.6.** A linear transformation whose underlying  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded  $k$ -module is free and of finite rank is a **matrix factorisation**. There is a category  $\text{hmf}(k[\underline{x}], f)$  where the objects are matrix factorisations of  $f$  and the morphisms are homotopy equivalence classes of morphisms of matrix factorisations.

**Definition 2.2.7.** If  $(X, d_X)$  is a matrix factorisation then so is  $(X[1], -d_X)$ . If we denote this by  $\Psi(X, d_X)$  then  $\Psi : \text{hmf}(k[\underline{x}], f) \rightarrow \text{hmf}(k[\underline{x}], f)$  is extends to an endofunctor which induces a supercategorical structure on  $\text{hmf}(k[\underline{x}], f)$  if we take  $\xi : \Psi^2 \rightarrow 1_{\text{hmf}(k[\underline{x}], f)}$  to be the identity.

**Definition 2.2.8.** Let  $(X, \partial_X)$  be a linear factorisation of  $f \in k$  over  $k$  and  $(Y, \partial_Y)$  a linear factorisation of  $g \in k$  also over  $k$ . Then the **tensor product** of  $(X, \partial_X)$  and  $(Y, \partial_Y)$  consists of the following data:

$$X \otimes_k Y, \quad \partial_{X \otimes_k Y} = d_X \otimes 1 + 1 \otimes d_Y \quad (12)$$

where  $X \otimes_k Y$  is the *graded* tensor product, which satisfies the following for all  $x_1, x_2 \in X, y_1, y_2 \in Y$ .

$$(x_1 \otimes y_1)(x_2 \otimes y_2) = (-1)^{\deg(x_2)\deg(y_1)}(x_1x_2 \otimes y_1y_2) \quad (13)$$

**Lemma 2.2.9.** *The tensor product  $(X \otimes_k Y, \partial_{X \otimes_k Y})$  is a linear factorisation of  $f + g$ .*

*Proof.* See [1][Page 35]. □

In the special case where there exists  $f \in k[\underline{x}], g \in k[\underline{y}], h \in k[\underline{z}]$  and  $(X, \partial_X)$  is a linear factorisation of  $f - g \in k[\underline{x}, \underline{y}]$  and  $(Y, \partial_Y)$  is a linear factorisation of  $g - h \in k[\underline{y}, \underline{z}]$  then we also have the *cut* of  $(X, \partial_X)$  and  $(Y, \partial_Y)$ .

**Definition 2.2.10.** For each  $y_1, \dots, y_n \in \underline{y}$  let  $\partial_{y_i}g$  denote the formal partial derivative of  $g$  with respect to  $y_i$ . Denote by  $J_g$  the following  $k[\underline{y}]$ -module.

$$J_g := k[\underline{y}]/(\partial_{y_1}g, \dots, \partial_{y_n}g) \quad (14)$$

The **cut** of  $(X, \partial_X), (Y, \partial_Y)$  is the data of

$$X|Y := (X \otimes_{k[\underline{y}]} J_g \otimes_{k[\underline{y}]} Y), \quad \partial_{X|Y} = d_X \otimes 1 \otimes 1 + 1 \otimes 1 \otimes d_Y \quad (15)$$

**Lemma 2.2.11.** *The cut  $X|Y$  is a matrix factorisation of  $f - h$ .*

*Proof.* Check this. □

We will use the following Lemma to indirectly talk about matrix factorisations using  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded modules over Clifford algebras.

**Definition 2.2.12.** Let  $k[\underline{x}], k[\underline{y}]$  denote polynomial rings over variables  $x_1, \dots, x_n$  and  $y_1, \dots, y_n$  respectively. Let  $U(\underline{x}) = \sum_{i=1}^n x_i^2$ .

We let  $C_U$  denote the  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded  $k$ -algebra with multiplicative generators  $\mu_1, \dots, \mu_n, \nu_1, \dots, \nu_n$  satisfying the relations

$$[\mu_i, \mu_j] = -2\delta_{ij} \quad [\mu_i, \nu_j] = 0 \quad [\nu_i, \nu_j] = 2\delta_{ij} \quad (16)$$

where  $\delta_{ij} = 1$  if and only if  $i = j$  and  $\delta_{ij} = 0$  otherwise is the Kronecker delta.

**Lemma 2.2.13.** *Let  $\tilde{X}$  be a  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded  $C_U$ -module which is free and finitely generated over  $k$ . Then  $X := \tilde{X} \otimes_k k[\underline{x}, \underline{y}]$  coupled with the map*

$$\partial_X = \sum_{i=1}^n \mu_i x_i + \sum_{j=1}^n \nu_j y_j \quad (17)$$

*is a matrix factorisation of  $U(\underline{y}) - U(\underline{x}) \in k[\underline{x}, \underline{y}]$ .*

*Proof.* See [1][Lemma 5.6.1]. □

**Remark 2.2.14.** The map (17) is odd because we consider  $k[\underline{x}, \underline{y}]$  to admit the  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -grading

$$k[\underline{x}, \underline{y}] \oplus 0 \quad (18)$$

That is,  $k[\underline{x}, \underline{y}]$  has  $k[\underline{x}, \underline{y}]$  entirely in degree 0, and the zero module 0 in degree 1. For example, if  $\underline{x}, \underline{y}$  are both singleton sets  $\underline{x} = \{x\}, \underline{y} = \{y\}$  then

$$\begin{aligned} \deg(\partial_X(x \otimes p)) &= \deg(\mu x \otimes xp + \nu x \otimes y_j p) \\ &= \deg(\mu x) \quad (= \deg(\nu x)) \\ &= \deg(x) + 1 \end{aligned}$$

**Example 2.2.15.** Let  $\underline{x}$  be a set of variables  $\{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$  and  $\sigma \in S_n$  a permutation on this set. Let  $\tilde{X}$  denote the  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded  $k$ -algebra

$$\tilde{X} := \bigwedge (k\theta_1 \oplus \dots \oplus k\theta_n) \quad (19)$$

which is a  $C_U$ -algebra (Definition 2.2.12) with  $C_U$ -action induced by the following

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_i &= \theta_{\sigma^{-1}i} + \theta_{\sigma^{-1}i}^* \\ \nu_i &= \theta_i - \theta_i^* \end{aligned}$$

Thus, by Lemma 2.2.13 we obtain a matrix factorisation  $(X = \tilde{X} \otimes k[\underline{x}, \underline{y}], \partial_X)$ .

Now say we had another similar matrix factorisation; let  $\underline{y} = \{y_1, \dots, y_m\}$  be another set of variables and let  $\tau$  be a permutation on this set. Let  $\tilde{Y}$  denote the  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded  $k$ -algebra

$$\tilde{Y} := \bigwedge (k\psi_1 \oplus \dots \oplus k\psi_m) \quad (20)$$

This is a  $C_U$ -module with  $C_U$ -action induced by the following

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{\nu}_i &= \psi_{\tau^{-1}i} + \psi_{\tau^{-1}i}^* \\ \omega_i &= \psi_i - \psi_i^*\end{aligned}$$

This induces a matrix factorisation  $(Y = \tilde{Y} \otimes k[\underline{y}, \underline{z}], \partial_Y)$  of  $U(\underline{y}) - U(\underline{z})$  where

$$\partial_Y := \sum_{i=1}^n \bar{\nu}_i y_i + \sum_{i=1}^n \omega_i z_i \quad (21)$$

and  $\underline{z} = \{z_1, \dots, z_n\}$  is another set of variables.

We will first consider the cut  $X|Y$ . The sequence of partial derivatives  $(\partial_{y_1} U(\underline{y}), \dots, \partial_{y_n} U(\underline{y})) = (2y_1, \dots, 2y_n)$  and so

$$J_{U(\underline{y})} = k[\underline{y}] / (y_1, \dots, y_n) = k \quad (22)$$

as a  $k[\underline{y}]$ -module with trivial  $k[\underline{y}]$ -action. We thus have

$$X|Y = X \otimes_{k[\underline{x}, \underline{y}]} k \otimes_{k[\underline{y}, \underline{z}]} Y, \quad \partial_{X|Y} = d_X \otimes 1 \otimes 1 + 1 \otimes 1 \otimes d_Y \quad (23)$$

Say  $R$  is a commutative ring. We will consider an element  $f \in R$  of the following particular form: say we have  $a_1, \dots, a_n, b_1, \dots, b_n \in R$  such that  $f = \sum_{i=1}^n a_i b_i$ . The guiding example of such an element is when  $R$  is a polynomial ring and  $f$  is a quadratic form.

**Lemma 2.2.16.** *Suppose  $M$  is a  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ -graded  $R$ -module with odd  $R$ -linear maps  $\theta_i, \theta_i^* : M \rightarrow M, i = 1, \dots, n$  satisfying the canonical anticommutation relations. Then, setting  $\delta_+ = \sum_{i=1}^n a_i \theta_i$  and  $\delta_- = \sum_{i=1}^n b_i \theta_i^*$  we have that  $(M, \delta_- + \delta_+)$  is a linear factorisation of  $f$ .*

*Proof.* See [1, Lemma 4.2.3]. □

Therefore,  $(\bigwedge R^n, \delta_- + \delta_+)$  is a matrix factorisation of  $f$ . This is the **Koszul matrix factorisation of  $f$** .

## A Quantum error correcting codes examples

**Definition A.0.1** (Bit flip correction). Input: a received message  $|\psi\rangle$ ,



1. perform the following projective measurements:

$$\langle \psi | Z_1 Z_2 | \psi \rangle \text{ with resulting state } |\psi'\rangle, \quad (24)$$

followed by

$$\langle \psi' | Z_2 Z_3 | \psi' \rangle \quad (25)$$

let  $(r_1, r_2)$  be the pair of results from these measurements.

2. It will be shown that  $r_1, r_2 \in \{1, -1\}$ , and the resulting state of the second measurement is  $|\psi\rangle$ .
3. Now retrieve  $|\varphi\rangle$  based on the values of  $r_1, r_2$ :
  - if  $(r_1, r_2) = (1, 1)$ , return  $|\psi\rangle$ ,
  - if  $(r_1, r_2) = (-1, 1)$ , return  $X_1 |\psi\rangle$ ,
  - if  $(r_1, r_2) = (1, -1)$ , return  $X_3 |\psi\rangle$ ,
  - if  $(r_1, r_2) = (-1, -1)$ , return  $X_2 |\psi\rangle$

We now prove correctness of Algorithm A.0.1:

*Proof.* It will be helpful to first notice:

$$\begin{aligned} Z_1 Z_2 |000\rangle &= |000\rangle & Z_1 Z_2 |001\rangle &= |001\rangle \\ Z_1 Z_2 |010\rangle &= -|010\rangle & Z_1 Z_2 |011\rangle &= -|011\rangle \\ Z_1 Z_2 |100\rangle &= -|100\rangle & Z_1 Z_2 |101\rangle &= -|101\rangle \\ Z_1 Z_2 |110\rangle &= |110\rangle & Z_1 Z_2 |111\rangle &= |111\rangle \end{aligned}$$

Let  $|\psi\rangle := a|010\rangle + b|101\rangle$  be a state, ie, an element of  $\mathbb{H}^{\otimes 3}$ . We perform the measurement  $Z_1 Z_2$  followed by  $Z_2 Z_3$ :

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \psi | Z_1 Z_2 | \psi \rangle &= (a \langle 010 | + b \langle 101 |) Z_1 Z_2 (a |010\rangle + b |101\rangle) \\ &= (a \langle 010 | + b \langle 101 |) (-a |010\rangle - b |101\rangle) \\ &= -a^2 - b^2 = -1 \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \psi | Z_2 Z_3 | \psi \rangle &= (a \langle 010 | + b \langle 101 |) Z_1 Z_2 (a |010\rangle + b |101\rangle) \\ &= (a \langle 010 | + b \langle 101 |) (-a |010\rangle - b |101\rangle) \\ &= -a^2 - b^2 = -1 \end{aligned}$$

We can infer from the fact that both of these came out as  $-1$  that it was the second bit which was flipped, and so we can correct this. However, what is the impact of this measurement on the state? Again we calculate:

$$\begin{aligned} Z_1 Z_2(a|010\rangle + b|101\rangle) &= Z_1(-a|010\rangle + b|101\rangle) \\ &= -a|010\rangle - b|101\rangle \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} Z_2 Z_3(-a|010\rangle - b|101\rangle) &= Z_2(-a|010\rangle + b|101\rangle) \\ &= a|010\rangle + b|101\rangle \end{aligned}$$

and so the measurements (in the end) did not impact our state.  $\square$

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