

Contents

1	Introduction: Origin, Use and Interpretation of Feynman Diagrams	1
1.1	A Tool for Organizing Calculations	1
1.2	Tempting but Incorrect Interpretations	2
1.3	The Origin of Feynman Diagrams	5
1.4	The Reasons for the Diagrams' Success	7
1.4.1	Intuition and Visualizability	7
1.4.2	Similarity	9
1.5	The Ingredients of Modern QED	10
1.5.1	Calculation Methods	11
1.5.2	Correct and Justified Predictions	12
1.6	Representing and Calculating	13
1.6.1	Developing Appropriate Means of Representation	14
1.6.2	Features of Appropriateness	16
1.7	Inconspicuous Conceptual Innovations	17
1.8	A comparison with Traditional Means of Representations	19
2	Quantum Electrodynamics Without Feynman Diagrams	23
2.1	Scattering: The Transition Between Energy Levels	23
2.2	Classifying Possible Transitions	33
2.3	An Attempt to Improve the Representation	36
2.4	Cancellation of the Infinities	43
2.4.1	Mass-Type Divergences	43
2.4.2	Polarization-Type Divergences	45
2.4.3	Bookkeeping Versus Isolating the Infinities	49
3	Quantum Mechanics Without a Hamiltonian Operator	51
3.1	The Main Difficulties of QED	51
3.2	How the Classical Action Constructs the Quantum Theory	52
3.2.1	Using the Lagrangian to Represent the Wave Function	52
3.2.2	Application to Systems Without a Lagrangian Function	55
3.3	Interpretation: Microscopic Paths	57
3.4	The Advantages of the Alternative Formulation	60
3.5	The Unsatisfactory Integration of Spin and Relativity	63

4	The Dirac Equation: Feynman's Great Struggle	65
4.1	A Brownian Model of the Electron	65
4.1.1	The Dirac Equation in One Dimension	66
4.1.2	How Dirac's Equation Describes Zigzag Paths	68
4.1.3	Path Counting	71
4.1.4	Explaining the Wave Function's Time Evolution	75
4.2	Welton's Input: Three Dimensions?	77
4.3	The Need for an Appropriate Symbol System	82
4.3.1	Two Spatial Dimensions	84
4.3.2	Three Spatial Dimensions	84
4.4	Feynman's Programme	92
4.5	The Impossible "Picture"	93
4.6	Positrons: A Threat to Path Counting	95
4.6.1	Closed Loops	96
4.6.2	Diagrammatic Induction	96
4.7	Direct Interaction	102
4.7.1	An Attempt to Construct a Hamiltonian	104
4.7.2	An Unsatisfactory Interpretation	108
5	Free Propagation and Successive Scattering	113
5.1	Basic Solutions Not Basic Equations	113
5.2	Interpreting the Schrödinger and Dirac Equations	115
5.3	The Scattering of Probability Waves	117
5.4	Waves Propagating Forwards and Backwards in Time	120
5.4.1	Pairs in Intermediate States	121
5.4.2	The Production and Annihilation of Real Pairs	123
5.5	Generalization to Two Particles	124
5.5.1	Automatic Inclusion of the Exclusion Principle	124
5.5.2	The Irrelevancy of Closed Loops	126
5.6	Interaction: Reinterpreting the Classical Representation	130
5.6.1	Scattering Situations Only	130
5.6.2	Adapting the Classical Expression for Electrostatic Interaction	131
5.6.3	Interpreting the Potential as the Propagation of Photons	133
5.7	The Right "picture"	136
6	The Field Theoretical Systematization of Feynman's Theory	141
6.1	Widespread Misunderstanding: The Need for Systematization	141
6.2	Dyson Intervenes	143
6.2.1	The Most Appropriate State Vector	144
6.2.2	Green's Functions Interpreted as Vacuum Expectation Values	149
6.3	An Algorithm for Pairing Operators	154

- 6.4 The Diagrams Reduced to Their Essentials 156
 - 6.4.1 Disconnected Parts 157
 - 6.4.2 Self-Energy Parts 158
- 6.5 Interpreting the Reduced Symbols 160
 - 6.5.1 Mass Renormalization 161
 - 6.5.2 Introducing a New Type of Vacuum Polarization 161
 - 6.5.3 Charge Renormalization 164
- 6.6 The Removal of the Infinities 165
 - 6.6.1 The Further Removal of Redundant Symbols 167
 - 6.6.2 Isolating the Infinities 170
- 7 The Development of a New Means of Representation:**
 - Goals and Milestones 177**
 - 7.1 The Search for Solutions to Theoretical Problems 177
 - 7.2 Elaboration of a Well-Known Interpretation 178
 - 7.3 Problematic Attempts to Generalize First Results 178
 - 7.4 Abandoning the Search for a Microscopic Justification 182
 - 7.5 The Successful Modification of the Theory 184
 - 7.5.1 Feynman’s Proposal 184
 - 7.5.2 Critique 185
 - 7.5.3 The Systematization of Feynman’s Method 186
 - 7.6 The Explanatory Power of the New Means of Representation 188
- Appendix A Diagrammatic Induction 191**
- Appendix B Synopsis of Manuscripts and Principal Publications 193**
- References 195**
- Index 203**