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# A Quantum Theory of Mitt Romney

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THE recent remark by Mitt Romney's senior adviser Eric Fehrnstrom that upon clinching the Republican nomination Mr. Romney could change his political views "like an Etch A Sketch" has already become notorious. The comment seemed all too apt, an apparent admission by a campaign insider of two widely held suspicions about Mitt Romney: that he is a) utterly devoid of any ideological convictions and b) filled with aluminum powder.

The imagery may have been unfortunate, but Mr. Fehrnstrom's impulse to analogize is understandable. Metaphors like these, inexact as they are, are the only way the layman can begin to grasp the strange phantom world that underpins the very fabric of not only the Romney campaign but also of Mitt Romney in general. For we have entered the age of *quantum politics*; and Mitt Romney is the first quantum politician.

A bit of context. Before Mitt Romney, those seeking the presidency operated under the laws of so-called classical politics, laws still followed by traditional campaigners like Newt Gingrich. Under these Newtonian principles, a candidate's position on an issue tends to stay at rest until an outside force — the Tea Party, say, or a six-figure credit line at Tiffany — compels him to alter his stance, at a speed commensurate with the size of the force (usually large) and in inverse proportion to the depth of his beliefs (invariably negligible). This alteration, framed as a positive by the candidate, then provokes an equal but opposite reaction among his rivals.

But the Romney candidacy represents literally a quantum leap forward. It is governed by rules that are bizarre and appear to go against everyday experience and common sense. To be honest, even people like Mr. Fehrnstrom who are experts in Mitt Romney's reality, or "Romneality," seem bewildered by its implications; and any person who tells you he or she truly "understands" Mitt Romney is either lying or a corporation.

Nevertheless, close and repeated study of his campaign in real-world situations has yielded a standard model that has proved eerily accurate in predicting Mitt Romney's behavior in debate after debate, speech after speech, awkward look-at-me-I'm-a-regular-guy moment after awkward look-at-me-I'm-a-regular-guy moment, and every other event in his face-time continuum.

The basic concepts behind this model are:

*Complementarity.* In much the same way that light is both a particle *and* a wave, Mitt Romney is

both a moderate *and* a conservative, depending on the situation (Fig. 1). It is *not* that he is one or the other; it is *not* that he is one and then the other. *He is both at the same time.*

*Probability.* Mitt Romney's political viewpoints can be expressed only in terms of *likelihood*, not certainty. While some views are obviously far less likely than others, *no* view can be thought of as absolutely impossible. Thus, for instance, there is at any given moment a nonzero chance that Mitt Romney supports child slavery.

*Uncertainty.* Frustrating as it may be, the rules of quantum campaigning dictate that no human being can ever simultaneously know both *what* Mitt Romney's current position is and *where* that position will be at some future date. This is known as the "principle uncertainty principle."

*Entanglement.* It doesn't matter whether it's a proton, neutron or Mormon: the act of observing cannot be separated from the outcome of the observation. By asking Mitt Romney how he feels about an issue, you unavoidably affect how he feels about it. More precisely, Mitt Romney will feel *every possible way* about an issue until the moment he is asked about it, at which point the many feelings decohere into the single answer most likely to please the asker.

*Noncausality.* The Romney campaign often violates, and even reverses, the law of cause and effect. For example, ordinarily the *cause* of getting the most votes leads to the *effect* of being considered the most electable candidate. But in the case of Mitt Romney, the *cause* of being considered the most electable candidate actually produces the *effect* of getting the most votes.

*Duality.* Many conservatives believe the existence of Mitt Romney allows for the possibility of the spontaneous creation of an "anti-Romney" (Fig. 2) that leaps into existence and annihilates Mitt Romney. (However, the science behind this is somewhat suspect, as it is financed by Rick Santorum, for whom science *itself* is suspect.)

What does all this bode for the general election? By this point it won't surprise you to learn the answer is, "We don't know." Because according to the latest theories, the "Mitt Romney" who seems poised to be the Republican nominee is but one of countless Mitt Romneys, *each* occupying his own cosmos, *each* supporting a different platform, *each* being compared to a different beloved children's toy but *all* of them equally real, *all* of them equally valid and *all* of them running for president at the same time, in their own alternative Romnealities, somewhere in the vast Romniverse.

And *all* of them losing to Barack Obama.

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