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**Alexander Turbiner\*** ([turbiner@nucleares.unam.mx](mailto:turbiner@nucleares.unam.mx)), Instituto de Ciencias Nucleares, UNAM, AP 70-543, 04510 Mexico-City, DF, Mexico. *The Heun operator as a Hamiltonian*. Preliminary report.

It is shown that the celebrated Heun operator  $H_e = -(a_0x^3 + a_1x^2 + a_2x)\frac{d^2}{dx^2} + (b_0x^2 + b_1x + b_2)\frac{d}{dx} + c_0x$  is the Hamiltonian of the  $sl(2, R)$ -quantum Euler-Arnold top of spin  $\nu$  in a constant magnetic field. For  $a_0 \neq 0$  it is canonically-equivalent to  $BC_1(A_1)$ - Calogero-Moser-Sutherland quantum models, if  $a_0 = 0$ , ten known one-dimensional quasi-exactly-solvable (QES) problems are reproduced, and if, in addition,  $b_0 = c_0 = 0$ , then four well-known one-dimensional quantal exactly-solvable problems are reproduced. If spin  $\nu$  of the top takes (half)-integer value the Hamiltonian possesses a finite-dimensional invariant subspace and  $(2\nu+1)$  polynomial eigenfunctions occur. Discrete systems on uniform and exponential lattices are introduced which are canonically-equivalent to one described by the Heun operator. (Received September 07, 2016)