

Symmetry and conservation laws:

conservation laws and symmetries have been always of considerable interest in science. Since the early stages of physics, symmetry have provided an extremely powerful & useful tool in our effort to understand nature. They gradually became backbone & important in formulation of many mathematical models.

It was belief prior to Kepler, Galileo etc that

"God is perfect, therefore nature must be perfectly symmetric"

\Rightarrow Planetary orbit must be perfect circles

\rightarrow Kepler's planetary motion says its ellipses \leftarrow not a perfect circle.

\Rightarrow celestial object must be perfect spheres!

\rightarrow Galileo discovered, there are mountain on moon \leftarrow not a perfect sphere.

Kepler established planetary motion during 1609, about how planets move around the sun in ellipse. Next Newton in 1687 explained why they move in such a way. by formulating law of gravity $F = G \frac{m_1 m_2}{r^2}$. Laplace showed that planets' movement along ellipse followed from the conservation law calculated by him.

$$A = \vec{v} \times M + \mu \frac{\vec{r}}{r} \quad \vec{v} \rightarrow \text{velocity}$$

$$A \rightarrow \text{area} \quad A = \vec{v} \times \vec{L} - GMm \frac{\vec{r}}{r} \quad L = m(\vec{r} \times \vec{v}) \text{ angular momentum}$$

$$\mu = -GMm \quad \text{or } L = mr^2\theta \quad m \rightarrow \text{mass of planet.}$$

$\vec{r}, \vec{v} \rightarrow$ position vector of planet \bullet

$m \rightarrow$ magnitude of \vec{r}

Laplace used the formal definition of conservation law for calculation of this conserved vector. Later it was shown that using certain symmetry one can calculate the conservation of this vector. Kepler's and Law, the conservation of area, follows from the conservation of angular momentum. Angular momentum corresponds to the central symmetry of Newton's gravitational field. Thus, the idea of symmetry and the corresponding conservation law helps to explain the movement of planets in ellipse.

② Newton's laws ~~are~~ implicitly assume that they are valid for all times in the past, present and future. Processes that we see occurring in these distant galaxies actually happened billions of years ago. Thus this is kind of remaining same ~~as~~ over time translation, so we can say

"Newton's laws have time-translation symmetry"

③ Newton's laws are supposed to apply equally well everywhere in universe. Newton realized that the same laws that cause apples to fall from trees here on earth apply to planets billion of kilometer way from earth

"Newton's laws have ~~time~~ space-translation symmetry"

④ Newton force is $\vec{F} = m\vec{a}$, if we change the direction of the motion the force doesn't change i.e. same force for all directions, i.e. no preferred direction in space.

"Newton's laws have rotational symmetry"

So it's kind to establish that: "symmetry resides in the laws of nature, not necessarily in the solutions to these laws."

What is the symmetry?

The mathematician Weyl gave a simple definition of a symmetry - "a symmetry exists if one does something and it does not make a difference". Like a circular cylinder is an axially symmetric object because if you rotate around its axis over some arbitrary angle, it looks exactly same. ~~that~~ Physics ~~is~~ remains same if a system of particles is placed under a different angle in otherwise empty space. There are no preferred directions in empty space. The angle that you place a system under does not make a difference. The corresponding conservation law will turn out to be conservation of angular momentum.

What it means in terms of physics that empty space has no preferred direction. According to QM, the Schrödinger equation, ^{or Dirac eqn for RQM} describes the physics, it says that the derivatives of wave function can be found as:

$$\frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial t} = i \frac{1}{\hbar} H \Psi$$

If space has no preferred direction, then Hamiltonian must be same ~~derivative of the wave function~~ regardless of angular orientation of coordinate system used. Consider an electronic structure of hydrogen atom, the electron is not in empty space, it is around a proton; but electric field of the proton has no preferred direction either. In terms of cartesian co-ordinate system the H for Ψ are

$$H = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \left(\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial z^2} \right) - \frac{e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{1}{\sqrt{x^2+y^2+z^2}}$$

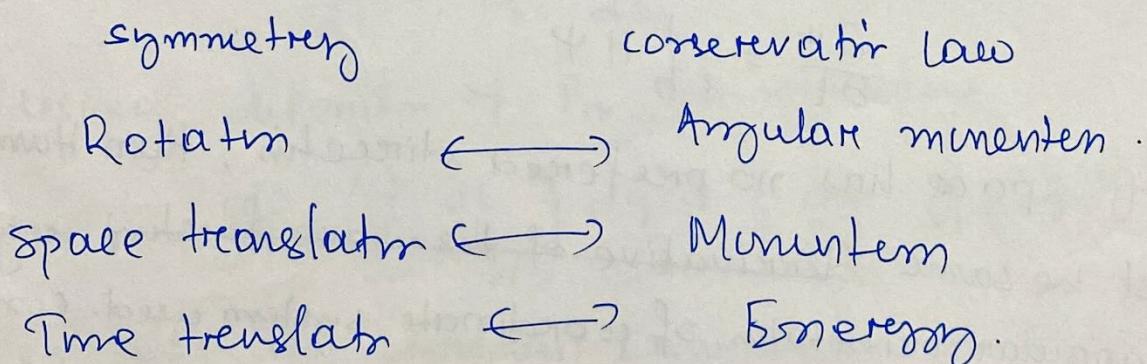
$$H' = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \left(\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x'^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial y'^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial z'^2} \right) - \frac{e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{1}{\sqrt{x'^2+y'^2+z'^2}}$$

First term is kinetic operator, as you can see the Laplacian operator is independent of angular orientation & second term also independent of angular orientation as $\sqrt{x^2+y^2+z^2}$ doesn't rotate remain same i.e. $\sqrt{x^2+y^2+z^2} = \sqrt{x'^2+y'^2+z'^2}$

Then the expression for the Hamiltonian ~~does~~ does not depend on the angular orientation of coordinate system, you need to change primed system to unprimed only.

The equality of Hamiltonian in the original and rotated coordinate system has a consequence. This rotation operator must commute with the Hamiltonian. No matter whatever way you rotate the physics result still remains same. This observation can give a ~~conclusion~~ indicator that

"A symmetry of physics is described by unitary operators that commutes with the Hamiltonian, we also can find that it is true to find a conserved quantity if there is a symmetry."



Noether, Emmy (1882–1935) discovered that "conservation laws are a consequence of the simple and elegant properties of the space and time." The content of Newton's laws is in their symmetry properties.

assume that Li Langrangian is symmetric under some transformation of variables.

\Rightarrow that is all q_i 's change according to same rule.

$$q_i \rightarrow q_i(s)$$

but Li Lagrangian does not change, no matter what value of s is used

$$\frac{d}{ds} L \{ q_i(s), \dot{q}_i(s); t \} = 0$$

Noether claimed that for any such symmetry, Li quantity

$$C = p_{q_i} \frac{dq_i(s)}{ds}$$
 must be conserved.

Let's see what happens when we take Li derivatives of C with respect to time (assume s has no time dependence)

$$\frac{dc}{dt} = p_{q_i} \frac{d}{dt} \frac{dq_i(s)}{ds} + p_{\dot{q}_i} \frac{d}{dt} \frac{d\dot{q}_i(s)}{ds}$$

using definition of p_i this will become

$$\frac{dc}{dt} = \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}_i} \right) \frac{dq_i(s)}{ds} + \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}_i} \frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{dq_i(s)}{ds} \right)$$

Now let's use ~~Lang~~ Lagrange's equation of motion

$$\frac{dc}{dt} = \frac{\partial L}{\partial q_i} \frac{d q_i}{ds} + \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}_i} \frac{d \dot{q}_i}{ds}$$

$$\text{Right hand side} = \frac{d}{ds} L \{ q_i(s), \dot{q}_i(s); t \}$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{dc}{dt} = 0 \quad \text{That means } C \text{ is conserved.}$$

This result is one of the most important theorems in physics. It holds not only for classical mechanics, but also for quantum mechanics, relativity and quantum field theories.

Symmetry considerations are a powerful tool to explore and understand the behaviour of elementary particles. Symmetry can be classified into two broad categories.

(1) Global symmetry: A Global Symmetry is one which is valid at all spacetime points. The existence of open numbers in a system always arise from the invariance of the system under a global geometrical transformation.

(2) Local symmetry: A Local symmetry is one which has different symmetry transformations at different points in spacetime. Such symmetries play a pivotal role in physics as they form the basis of what are known as gauge theories.

Symmetries that are relevant to particle physics may be classified as follows:

(a) Permutation Symmetry: This is also called as the exchange symmetry, and deals with the symmetry of the system under permutation (or exchange) of identical particles. It results in Bose-Einstein statistics (for bosons) and Fermi-Dirac statistics (for fermions).

(b) Continuous Symmetry: This type of transformation deals with the symmetry of the system under infinitesimally small (therefore continuous) transformations. Translation in space and time, rotation in space

Lorentz transformation are examples of such symmetry.

The corresponding quantum numbers are additive.

(b) Discrete symmetry: This kind of symmetry is evidently not continuous. This system exhibits symmetries which are steps apart from each other. Space-time inversion, time reversal, charge conjugation are example of discrete symmetry. The quantum numbers are multiplicative.

(c) Unitary Symmetry: Such symmetries arises from phase transformation of field, or from generalised rotation in internal space of the system. They are related to many generalised "charges" for example $U(1)$ symmetry for electric charges, $SU(2)$ for isospin, $SU(3)$ for flavor or color symmetry. The associated quantum numbers are additive.

If the lagrangian of the world would be fully known we could derive the equations of motion from it, and the symmetries of nature and conservation laws would automatically follow.

→ Maxwell lagrangian yields, via the Maxwell equation, all the symmetries and conservation laws of the electrodynamics.

- As we just gave the definition discrete symmetry gives a multiplicative conserved quantum numbers and continuous symmetry lead to additive conserved quantum numbers.

When is an observable conserved?

The expectation value of a general mechanical operator

$$F \text{ is } \langle F \rangle \equiv \langle \psi | F | \psi \rangle$$

$$\text{with } \langle F \rangle^* = \langle \psi | F^\dagger | \psi \rangle \text{ Hermitian conjugate.}$$

The expectation value of an observable is a real number so that the operator of an observable should be Hermitian.

$$F = F^\dagger \text{ if } \langle F \rangle \text{ is observable.}$$

Because energy is an observable the Hamiltonian H is Hermitian. We have from the Schrödinger equation and its Hermitian conjugate

$$i \frac{\partial |\psi\rangle}{\partial t} = H|\psi\rangle$$

$$-i \frac{\partial \langle \psi |}{\partial t} = \langle \psi | H^\dagger = \langle \psi | H$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{\partial \langle F \rangle}{\partial t} = i \langle \psi | HF - F^\dagger H | \psi \rangle = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow [HF - F^\dagger H] = 0 \Rightarrow [H, F] = 0$$

An observable constant of motion F is Hermitian and commutes with the Hamiltonian.

When H is known, we can find observable constants of motion by searching for Hermitian operators that commute with H . However, when H is not fully known, it is sufficient to establish (or postulate) the invariance of H or Lagrangian, under a symmetry operator.

What is a symmetry operator:

A transformation operator U transforms one wave function into another

$$|\psi'\rangle = U|\psi\rangle$$

wave functions are always normalized so that we must have $\langle \psi' | \psi' \rangle = \langle \psi | U^\dagger U | \psi \rangle = 1$

it follows the transformation operators must be unitary

$$U^\dagger U = U U^\dagger = I$$

we call U a symmetry operator when $| \Psi' \rangle$ obeys the same Schrödinger equation $| \Psi \rangle$. Then, with U time independent,

$$i \frac{\partial U}{\partial t} | \Psi \rangle = \cancel{H} U | \Psi \rangle \rightarrow i \frac{\partial | \Psi \rangle}{\partial t} = U^\dagger H U | \Psi \rangle$$

ie. $U^{-1} H U | \Psi \rangle \xrightarrow[i \text{ want it to be.}]{} H | \Psi \rangle$

This can happen only when

$$U^\dagger H U = H \text{ or } [H, U] = 0$$

A symmetry operator U is unitary and commutes with the Hamiltonian. Thus U commutes with the Hamiltonian, as does a constant of motion. However, we cannot identify U with an observable since it is unitary, and not necessarily Hermitian. Let's generalise some of the important features & laws of the formalism related to the Symmetry and conservation laws.

As we already saw, the symmetry and conservation laws are closely connected. conservation laws are results of symmetries in the physical system. One can separate various symmetries into two categories:

- (a) Space-time symmetries including space translation, time translation, rotation, Lorentz transformation, space inversion, time reversal, etc.

(b) other symmetries not related to space-time, such as isospin, permutation symmetry, charge-conjugation, gauge invariance, etc. These can be considered as internal symmetries.

we first consider examples of the space-time symmetries. suppose we describe a physical system with two different frames of references s and s' . s and s' are related by

$$(t, x, y, z) \longrightarrow (t', x', y', z')$$

The transformation can be satisfied specified by the number of parameters it contains. For example, a time translation $t \rightarrow t' = t + \tau$ is specified by a single parameter τ . Space translation, $\vec{v}' = \vec{v} + \vec{a}$, is specified by the three parameters (a_x, a_y, a_z) . Rotation (orientation) of the coordinate system is also represented by three parameters.

In general, these transformations form families or groups of transformations and they have properties of group. what is group?

A group, usually denoted by G , is a set of elements with very specific mathematical properties. The elements can be labelled in a discrete index or by a continuous varying parameters.

usually it is represented by.

$$\{g_i\} \in G$$

G would be called group if it satisfy to following basic properties:

(1) Closure Property: The product of two group elements
Law of multiplication: should also be a group element.

$$\Rightarrow \text{if } g_i \in G \\ g_j \in G \Rightarrow g_i g_j \in G$$

(2) Associativity Property: In taking the product of three group elements, it doesn't matter if you first multiply the two left ones and then the right one. or first the two right ones and then left one.

$$\Rightarrow g_i \in G, g_j \in G, g_k \in G$$

$$\Rightarrow (g_i g_j) g_k = g_i (g_j g_k) \quad \text{Associativity}$$

(3) Identity Properties: There exists a unique identity element, which is the same for both left and right multiplication

$$e \in G \quad \& \quad g \in G$$

such that all $eg = ge = g$

usually denote inverse by almost all books.

(4) Inverse: Each group element has its own unique inverse, which should also an element of group and is both left and a right inverse.

"there is nothing if $g \in G$ there must be $g^{-1} \in G$

$$\text{so that } gg^{-1} = g^{-1}g = e$$

- (1) For a finite discrete group with n elements then $n = |G|$ is the order of the group.
- (2) For any $g \in G$ the smallest integer m such that $g^m = e$ is the order of g .
- (3) Two groups $G = \{g_i\}$, $G' = \{g'_i\}$ are isomorphic $G \cong G'$, if there is a one to one correspondence $\phi: g_i \leftrightarrow g'_i$ between the elements consistent with the group multiplication rules. Even if $G \cong G'$ there is not necessarily a unique choice for ϕ but of course we must have $\phi: e \leftrightarrow e'$. A crucial consequence of basic group axioms is

$$\{g_i g_j\} = \{g_i\} \text{ for any } g \text{ since } g_i g_j = g_i g$$

$$\Rightarrow g_j = g_i$$

which implies

$$\sum_i f(g_i) = \sum_i f(g_i g)$$

Subgroup: For any group G a subgroup $H \subset G$ is naturally defined as a set of elements belonging to G which is also a group. A proper subgroup H is when $H \neq G$ and is denoted $H < G$. For any subgroup H there is an equivalence relation between $g_i, g'_i \in G$

$$g_i \sim g'_i \Leftrightarrow g'_i = g_i h \text{ for } h \in H$$

that mean H must obey all the rules of group and it is of its own elements.

- should follow associativity
- should follow closure property
- inverse
- identity

and H also a subset of $G \Rightarrow H \subset G$.

(3) $R_{2\pi}$ gives same orientation or it does not change the orientation thus it is an identity element.

$$e R_{\pi} = R_{2\pi} R_{\pi} = R_{3\pi} = R_{\pi}$$

$$R_{\pi} e = R_{\pi} R_{2\pi} = R_{3\pi} = R_{\pi}$$

$$\Rightarrow e R_{\pi} = R_{\pi} e = R_{\pi}$$

Thus it has identity element.

(4) $R_{\pi/2} R_{3\pi/2} = R_{2\pi} = e \Rightarrow R_{\pi/2} = (R_{3\pi/2})^{-1}$

$$R_{3\pi/2} R_{\pi} = R_{2\pi/2} = e \Rightarrow R_{\pi} = (R_{\pi})^{-1}$$

Inverse exists.

Since all the four required condition are satisfied for this rotation sets of operations, we can call this collection as a group.

$$\{e, R_{\pi/2}, R_{\pi}, R_{3\pi/2}\} \in G_R$$

G_R is a group of rotation.

Since this is not a group theory course we conclude here about various groups. However we will pull up necessary group mechanical tools whenever and whenever it is required. But let's also see some examples relevant to our context.

Consider space translation:

$$\vec{r}'' = \vec{r} + \vec{a}, \quad \vec{r}'' = \vec{r}' + b$$

(a) sequential $\vec{r} \rightarrow \vec{r}' \rightarrow \vec{r}''$ transforming gives

$$\vec{r}'' = \vec{r}' + (\vec{a} + \vec{b}), \text{ which is also a space translation}$$

(b) $\vec{a} = 0$ is the identity transformation

There are two observation we can make out of it.

- (1) when we rotate the square it forms a four set of fundamental rotation by which we can get any rotation

i.e. $R_{\pi/2}$ is equivalent to $R_{5\pi/2}$

or R_{π} is " " $R_{3\pi}$

Those basic rotation are $R_{\pi/2}, R_{\pi}, R_{3\pi/2}, R_{2\pi}$

- (2) of all basic rotation $R_{2\pi}$ is a very special rotation as it give all vertices back to its original starting point. we can call it identity rotation it does not change. lets call it e.

Thus we can group these item to a set as

$$G = \{e, R_{\pi/2}, R_{\pi}, R_{3\pi/2}\}$$

$$(1) \quad R_{\pi/2} R_{\pi} \text{ } \textcircled{O} = R_{3\pi/2}$$

$$R_{\pi/2} R_{\pi/2} = R_{\pi}$$

Thus multiplying any two elements gives any an element which also part of G. Thus this satisfy closure group.

$$(2) \quad (R_{\pi/2} R_{\pi}) R_{3\pi/2} = R_{3\pi/2} R_{3\pi/2} = R_{3\pi} = R_{\pi}$$

$$\epsilon R_{\pi/2} (R_{\pi} R_{3\pi/2}) = R_{\pi/2} R_{3\pi/2} = R_{3\pi} = R_{\pi}$$

$$\Rightarrow (R_{\pi/2} R_{\pi}) R_{3\pi/2} = R_{\pi/2} (R_{\pi} R_{3\pi/2})$$

Thus it satisfies associative properties.

(i) The simplest group consists of two elements e with multiplict law $ee = e$.

(ii) Next simplest group consists of two element is $e \& a$ with law of multiplication

$$ee = e \quad ea = ae = a \quad aa = e$$

(iii) The groups whose element commutes are called abelian groups.

$$g_i \in G \quad g_j \in G \quad g_k \in G$$

$$g_i g_j = g_j g_i \Rightarrow g_i g_j - g_j g_i = 0 \Rightarrow [g_i, g_j] = 0$$

$$[g_k, g_j] = 0 \text{ or } [g_i, g_k] = 0$$

(iv) The smallest non abelian group is the group of permutation of three objects

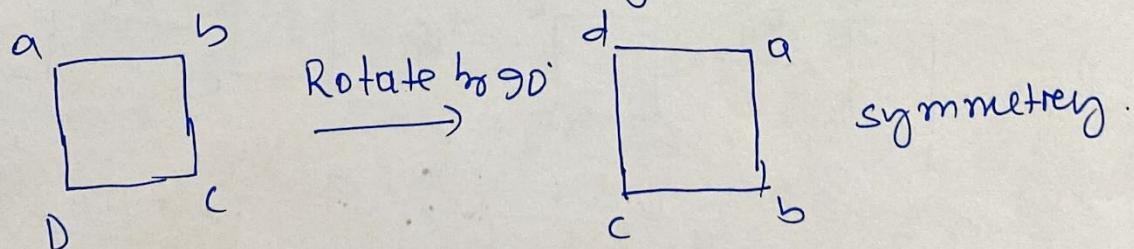
$$e = (1\ 2\ 3) \quad a = (2\ 1\ 3) \quad b = (1\ 3\ 2)$$

$$c = (3\ 2\ 1) \quad d = (3\ 1\ 2) \quad e = (2\ 3\ 1)$$

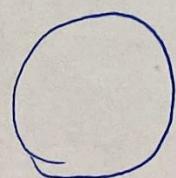
$$\text{note that } ab = (3\ 1\ 2) \text{ while } ba = (2\ 3\ 1)$$

$$ab \neq ba$$

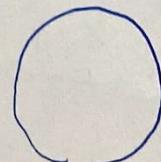
Now let's take a simple example of group along with symmetry through example. Taking an example of



we can do the rotation in step of $90^\circ (\pi/2)$ to generate similar orientation



Rotate my own axis



continuous symmetry.

Rotate by any angle it remain same.

Now the question is how many ways we can rotate $\pi/2$, π , $3\pi/2$ and 2π . Now define this rotation operator. Please note that although we can make rotation in any rotation but any rotation other than $\pi/2$, $3\pi/2$ and 2π would not make it look like as it was like the original configuration. Original configuration has 4 vertices and when you make a rotation say 20° rotation all vertices points will be distorted. So the vertices will go into each other only when if the rotation is done by $\pi/2$ or any integer multiple of $\pi/2$ like $\pi/2, \pi, 3\pi/2, 2\pi \dots$ ie..

let's define this rotation as R then the elements are.

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} R_{\pi/2}, R_\pi, R_{3\pi/2}, R_{2\pi}, \\ R_{5\pi/2}, R_{3\pi}, R_{7\pi/2}, R_{4\pi}, \\ \dots \end{array} \right\}$$

Let's see what happens in each rotation.

