

Sammanfattning av SI2360 Analytisk mekanik och klassisk fältteori

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Sammanfattning

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1 Coordinates

Coordinates A general set of coordinates on \mathbb{R}^n is n numbers $\chi^a, a = 1, \dots, n$ that uniquely define a point in the space.

Example: Cartesian coordinates In cartesian coordinates we introduce an orthonormal basis \mathbf{e}_i . We can then write $\mathbf{x} = \chi^i \mathbf{e}_i$. This example is, however, not very illustrative.

Basis vectors There are two different choices of coordinate bases.

The first is the tangent basis of vectors

$$\mathbf{E}_a = \partial_{\chi^a} \mathbf{x} = \partial_a \mathbf{x}.$$

The second is the dual basis

$$\mathbf{E}^a = \vec{\nabla} \chi^a.$$

Vector coordinates Any vector can now be written as

$$\mathbf{v} = v^a \mathbf{E}_a = v_a \mathbf{E}^a.$$

The v^a are called contravariant components and the v_a are called covariant components.

We can now compute the scalar product

$$\mathbf{E}_a \cdot \mathbf{E}^b = \partial_a \mathbf{x} \cdot \vec{\nabla} \chi^b = \delta_a^b.$$

Coordinate transformations Suppose that a vector can be written as

$$\mathbf{v} = v^a \mathbf{E}_a = v^{a'} \mathbf{E}'_{a'}.$$

How do we transform between these? A single component is given by

$$v^{a'} = \mathbf{E}'_{a'} \cdot v^a \mathbf{E}_a = v^a (\vec{\nabla} \chi^{a'} \cdot \partial_a \mathbf{x}) = v^a \partial_a \chi^{a'}.$$

Tangents to curves The tangent to a curve is given by

$$\dot{\gamma} = \frac{d\mathbf{x}}{dt} = \partial_a \mathbf{x} \frac{d\chi^a}{dt} = \dot{\chi}^a \mathbf{E}_a.$$

Gradients The gradient of a curve is given by

$$\vec{\nabla} f = \partial_a f \vec{\nabla} \chi^a = \mathbf{E}^a \partial_a f.$$

Rates of change along a curve The rate of change of a quantity along a path is given by

$$\frac{df}{dt} = \partial_a f \frac{d\chi^a}{dt} = \vec{\nabla} f \cdot \dot{\gamma}.$$

2 Tensors

Definition A tensor of rank N is a multilinear map from N vectors to a scalar.

Components of a tensor The components of a tensor are defined by

$$T(\mathbf{E}^{a_1}, \dots, \mathbf{E}^{a_N}) = T^{a_1, \dots, a_N}.$$

These are called the contravariant components of the tensor, and the covariant components are defined similarly. Mixed components can also be defined.

Rules for tensors Tensors obey the following rules:

$$\begin{aligned}(T_1 + T_2)(\mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_{n_2}) &= T_1(\mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_{n_2}) + T_2(\mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_{n_2}), \\ (kT)(\mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_{n_2}) &= kT(\mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_{n_2}).\end{aligned}$$

In component form:

$$\begin{aligned}(T_1 + T_2)^{a_1 \dots a_n} &= T_1^{a_1 \dots a_n} + T_2^{a_1 \dots a_n}, \\ (kT)^{a_1 \dots a_n} &= kT^{a_1 \dots a_n}.\end{aligned}$$

The metric tensor The metric tensor g is a rank 2 tensor defined by $g(\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{w}) = \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w}$. Its components satisfy

$$v_a = \mathbf{E}_a \cdot v^b \mathbf{E}_b = g(\mathbf{E}_a, \mathbf{E}_b) v_b = g_{ab} v^b,$$

and likewise

$$v^a = g^{ab} v_b.$$

We note that

$$v_a = g_{ab} v^b = g_{ab} g^{bc} v_c,$$

which implies $g_{ab} g^{bc} = \delta_a^c$.

Tensor product Given two tensors T_1 and T_2 of ranks n_1 and n_2 , we can define the rank $n_1 + n_2$ tensor $T_1 \otimes T_2$ as

$$(T_1 \otimes T_2)(\mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_{n_1}, \mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_{n_2}) = T_1(\mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_{n_1}) T_2(\mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_{n_2}).$$

In component form:

$$(T_1 \otimes T_2)^{a_1 \dots a_{n_1+n_2}} = T_1^{a_1 \dots a_{n_1}} T_2^{a_{n_1+1} \dots a_{n_1+n_2}}.$$

Tensors as linear combinations Using the tensor product, all tensors can be written as linear combinations of certain basis elements due to their bilinearity. Define

$$e_{a_1 \dots a_n} = \mathbf{E}_{a_1} \otimes \dots \otimes \mathbf{E}_{a_n}$$

to be the tensor that satisfies

$$e_{a_1 \dots a_n}(\mathbf{E}^{b_1}, \dots, \mathbf{E}^{b_n}) = (\mathbf{E}_{a_1} \cdot \mathbf{E}^{b_1}) \dots (\mathbf{E}_{a_n} \cdot \mathbf{E}^{b_n}) = \delta_{a_1}^{b_1} \dots \delta_{a_n}^{b_n}.$$

Then any tensor can be written as

$$T = T^{a_1 \dots a_n} e_{a_1 \dots a_n}$$

where the $T^{a_1 \dots a_n}$ are exactly the contravariant components of T .

Tensors as linear transforms on tensors A rank n tensor can also be viewed as a linear map from rank m tensors to rank $n - m$ tensors. To do this, we first define, given T , the rank $n - m$ tensor $\tilde{T}(\mathbf{w}_1 \otimes \dots \otimes \mathbf{w}_m)$ such that

$$(\tilde{T}(\mathbf{w}_1 \otimes \dots \otimes \mathbf{w}_m))(\mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_{n-m}) = T(\mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_m, \mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_{n-m}).$$

This map is also linear in all the \mathbf{w}_i . Next, given a rank $n - m$ tensor \tilde{T} , one can define the rank $n - m$ tensor $T(\mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_m)$ such that

$$T(\mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_m, \mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_{n-m}) = (\tilde{T}(\mathbf{w}_1 \otimes \dots \otimes \mathbf{w}_m))(\mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_{n-m}).$$

This is a linear rank n tensor.

Tensor contraction Given a complete set of vectors \mathbf{v}_i and their dual \mathbf{v}^i such that $\mathbf{v}_i \cdot \mathbf{v}^i = \delta_i^j$, the contraction $e_{12}T$ of two arguments of a rank n tensor is the tensor of rank $n - 2$ satisfying

$$(e_{12}T)(\mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_{n-2}) = T(\mathbf{v}_i, \mathbf{v}^i, \mathbf{w}_1, \dots, \mathbf{w}_{n-2}).$$

In component form:

$$(e_{12}T)^{a_1 \dots a_{n-2}} = T_c^{a_1 \dots a_{n-2}}.$$

The definition is similar (I assume) for the contraction of other arguments.

3 Geometry

Covariant derivatives and Christoffel symbols When computing a derivative, one must account both for the change in the quantity itself and the change of basis. We have

$$\partial_b \mathbf{E}_a = \Gamma_{ba}^c \mathbf{E}_c$$

where the Γ_{ba}^c are called Christoffel symbols. These satisfy

$$\mathbf{E}^c \cdot \partial_b \mathbf{E}_a = \mathbf{E}^c \cdot \Gamma_{ba}^d \mathbf{E}_d = \delta_d^c \Gamma_{ba}^d = \Gamma_{ba}^c.$$

Note that

$$\partial_a \mathbf{E}_b = \partial_a \partial_b \mathbf{x} = \partial_b \partial_a \mathbf{x} = \partial_b \mathbf{E}_a,$$

which implies

$$\Gamma_{ba}^c = \Gamma_{ab}^c.$$

Using this, we can compute the partial derivate of $\mathbf{v} = v^a \mathbf{E}_a$ with respect to χ^a as

$$\partial_a \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{E}_b \partial_a v^b + v^b \partial_a \mathbf{E}_b = \mathbf{E}_b \partial_a v^b + v^b \Gamma_{ab}^c \mathbf{E}_c.$$

Renaming the summation indices yields

$$\partial_a \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{E}_b (\partial_a v^b + v^c \Gamma_{ac}^b),$$

which contains one term from the change in the coordinates and one term from the change in basis. We now define the covariant derivative of the contravariant components of \mathbf{v} as

$$\vec{\nabla}_a v^b = \partial_a v^b + v^c \Gamma_{ac}^b.$$

We would also like to define the covariant derivative of the covariant components of a vector field. To do this, we use the fact that

$$\partial_a \mathbf{E}_b \cdot \mathbf{E}^c = \partial_a \delta_b^c = 0.$$

The product rule yields

$$\mathbf{E}_b \cdot \partial_a \mathbf{E}^c + \mathbf{E}^c \cdot \partial_a \mathbf{E}_b = \mathbf{E}_b \cdot \partial_a \mathbf{E}^c + \mathbf{E}^c \cdot \Gamma_{ab}^d \mathbf{E}_d = \mathbf{E}_b \cdot \partial_a \mathbf{E}^c + \delta_d^c \cdot \Gamma_{ab}^d = \mathbf{E}_b \cdot \partial_a \mathbf{E}^c + \Gamma_{ab}^c,$$

which implies

$$\partial_a \mathbf{E}^c = -\Gamma_{ab}^c \mathbf{E}^b.$$

Repeating the steps above now yields

$$\vec{\nabla}_a v_b = \partial_a v_b - \Gamma_{ab}^c v_c.$$

Curve length Consider some curve parametrized by t , and let $\dot{\gamma}$ denote its tangent. The curve length is given by

$$ds^2 = d\mathbf{x} \cdot d\mathbf{x} = g(\dot{\gamma}, \dot{\gamma}) dt^2 = g_{ab} \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^b dt^2.$$

The curve length is now given by

$$L = \int dt \sqrt{g_{ab} \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^b}.$$

Geodesics A geodesic is a curve that extremises the curve length between two points. From variational calculus, it is known that such curves satisfy the Euler-Lagrange equations, and we would like a differential equation that describes such a curve. By defining $\mathcal{L} = \sqrt{g_{ab} \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^b}$, the Euler-Lagrange equations for the curve length becomes

$$\partial_{\chi^a} \mathcal{L} - \frac{d}{dt} \partial_{\dot{\chi}^a} \mathcal{L} = 0.$$

The Euler-Lagrange equation thus becomes

$$\frac{1}{2\mathcal{L}} \dot{\chi}^b \dot{\chi}^c \partial_a g_{bc} - \frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{1}{2\mathcal{L}} g_{bc} (\dot{\chi}^b \delta_a^c + \dot{\chi}^c \delta_a^b) \right) = 0.$$

A minor simplification yields

$$\frac{1}{2\mathcal{L}} \dot{\chi}^b \dot{\chi}^c \partial_a g_{bc} - \frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{1}{\mathcal{L}} g_{ac} \dot{\chi}^c \right) = 0.$$

Expanding the time derivative yields

$$\frac{1}{2\mathcal{L}} \dot{\chi}^b \dot{\chi}^c \partial_a g_{bc} - \frac{1}{\mathcal{L}} \frac{d}{dt} (g_{ac} \dot{\chi}^c) + g_{ac} \dot{\chi}^c \frac{1}{\mathcal{L}^2} \frac{d\mathcal{L}}{dt} = 0.$$

This may be written as

$$\frac{1}{2\mathcal{L}} \dot{\chi}^b \dot{\chi}^c \partial_a g_{bc} - \frac{1}{\mathcal{L}} \frac{d}{dt} (g_{ac} \dot{\chi}^c) + \frac{1}{\mathcal{L}} g_{ac} \dot{\chi}^c \frac{d \ln \mathcal{L}}{dt} = 0.$$

The curve may be reparametrized such that \mathcal{L} is equal to 1 everywhere, yielding

$$\frac{1}{2} \left(\dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^b \partial_c g_{ab} - \frac{d}{dt} (2\dot{\chi}^a g_{ac}) \right) = 0.$$

We note that the expression in the paranthesis is the Euler-Lagrange equation for the integral of \mathcal{L}^2 . Expanding the derivative yields

$$\frac{1}{\mathcal{L}} \left(\frac{1}{2} \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^b \partial_c g_{ab} - g_{ac} \ddot{\chi}^a - \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^b \partial_b g_{ac} \right) = 0.$$

Multiplying this by $-g^{cd} \mathcal{L}$ yields

$$g_{ac} g^{cd} \ddot{\chi}^a + \frac{1}{2} \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^b g^{cd} (2\partial_b g_{ac} - \partial_c g_{ab}) = g_{ac} g^{cd} \ddot{\chi}^a + \frac{1}{2} \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^b g^{cd} (\partial_b g_{ac} + \partial_b g_{ac} - \partial_c g_{ab}) = 0.$$

The a and b indices are summed over, and may thus be swapped. Combined with the symmetry of the metric tensor, this yields

$$g_{ac} g^{cd} \ddot{\chi}^a + \frac{1}{2} \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^b g^{cd} (\partial_b g_{ac} + \partial_a g_{cb} - \partial_c g_{ab}) = 0.$$

Summation of the first term over a gives $g_{ac} g^{cd} \ddot{\chi}^a = g^{cd} \ddot{\chi}_c$, and summation over c gives $g^{cd} \ddot{\chi}_c = \ddot{\chi}^d$. This thus yields

$$\ddot{\chi}^d + \frac{1}{2} \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^b g^{cd} (\partial_b g_{ac} + \partial_a g_{cb} - \partial_c g_{ab}) = 0.$$

Christoffel symbols and the geodesic equation Consider a straight line with a tangent vector of constant magnitude. In euclidean space, this is a geodesic. This curve satisfies

$$\frac{d\dot{\gamma}}{dt} = (\dot{\gamma} \cdot \vec{\nabla})\dot{\gamma} = \dot{\chi}^a \partial_a \dot{\gamma} = \dot{\chi}^a (\vec{\nabla}_a \dot{\chi}^d) \mathbf{E}_d = (\dot{\chi}^a \partial_a \dot{\chi}^d + \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^c \Gamma_{ac}^d) \mathbf{E}_d.$$

Comparison to the chain rule yields

$$\frac{d\dot{\gamma}}{dt} = (\ddot{\chi}^a + \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^c \Gamma_{ac}^d) \mathbf{E}_d.$$

Comparing this to the geodesic equation yields

$$\Gamma_{ab}^d = \frac{1}{2} g^{dc} (\partial_b g_{ac} + \partial_a g_{cb} - \partial_c g_{ab}).$$

A better approach would have been to go through the derivation of the geodesic equation again, identifying the Christoffel symbols as you go, but I have no idea how to do that.

The geometry of curved space In curved space, we face the restriction that there is no position vector. All vectors in curved space are instead restricted to the tangent space. It turns out that tangent vectors at a point have coordinates $\dot{\chi}^a$ and that the tangent vectors consist of the tangent vectors to the coordinate lines, i.e. partial derivatives.

We can also impose a metric tensor such that $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} = g_{ab} v^a w^b$, where the metric tensor is symmetric and positive definite.

Dual vectors can be defined as linear maps from tangent vectors to scalars, i. e. on the form

$$V(\mathbf{w}) = V_a w^a.$$

In particular, the dual vector df can be defined as

$$df(\mathbf{v}) = v^a \partial_a f = \frac{df}{dt}$$

along a curve with \mathbf{v} as a tangent. A basis for the space of dual vectors is $e^a = d\chi^a$. The tangent and dual spaces, if a metric exists, are related by $v_a = g_{ab} v^b$.

Curve lengths are defined and computed as before. By defining geodesics as curves that extremize path length, this gives a set of Christoffel symbols and therefore a covariant derivative and a sense of what it means for a vector to change along a curve.

4 Classical mechanics

In classical mechanics, configuration space is the space of all possible configurations of a system. We can impose coordinates χ^a on this space in order to use what we know.

Kinetic energy Kinetic energy is defined by a rank 2 tensor as

$$E_k = \frac{1}{2} T_{ab} \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^b,$$

where the dot now really represents the time derivative.

Hamilton's principle We define the Lagrangian of a system as $\mathcal{L} = E_k - V$, where V is the potential energy and taken to be a function on coordinate space. The action of a system over time is defined as

$$S = \int dt \mathcal{L}.$$

Hamilton's principle states that for the motion of the system in configuration space, $\delta S = 0$. This can be expressed as

$$\delta S = \int dt \delta \mathcal{L} = \int dt \left(\partial_{\chi^a} \mathcal{L} - \frac{d}{dt} \partial_{\dot{\chi}^a} \mathcal{L} \right) \delta \chi^a = 0.$$

The kinetic metric Consider a system with no potential energy. The Lagrangian simply becomes $\mathcal{L} = \frac{1}{2}T_{ab}\dot{\chi}^a\dot{\chi}^b$. This is very similar to the integral of curve length (or, rather its square, the extremum of which was noted to be the same), except g_{ab} has been replaced by T_{ab} . This inspires us to define T_{ab} as the kinetic metric, with corresponding Christoffel symbols.

Motion of a classical system By defining $a^b = \dot{\chi}^a \vec{\nabla}_a \dot{\chi}^b$, the previous work leads us to a system with no potential satisfying $a^b = \ddot{\chi}^b + \Gamma_{ac}^b \dot{\chi}^a \dot{\chi}^c = 0$. In other words, a system with no potential moves along the geodesics of the kinetic metric.

For a system with a potential, only the $\partial_{\chi^a} \mathcal{L}$ term is affected, and

$$a^b = -T^{ba} \partial_a V = T^{ba} F,$$

which is a generalization of Newton's second law.

Noether's theorem Noether's theorem relates symmetries of physical systems to conservation laws.

What is a symmetry, then? Consider a one-parameter transformation $t \rightarrow \tau(t, s)$, $q^a \rightarrow Q^a(q, s)$, where s is the parameter with respect to which the system is transformed, such that $\tau(t, 0) = t$, $Q^a(q, s) = q^a$ and for small $s = \varepsilon$ that $t \rightarrow t + \varepsilon \delta t$, $q^a \rightarrow q^a + \varepsilon \delta q^a$. This is assumed to be normalized such that δt is either 0 or 1. How? Don't ask. A quasi-symmetry of a system with Lagrangian \mathcal{L} is a transformation such that

$$\varepsilon \delta \mathcal{L} = \mathcal{L}(Q, \dot{Q}, \tau) - \mathcal{L}(q, \dot{q}, t) = \varepsilon \frac{dF}{dt}$$

for some F . The variation of the Lagrangian can be written as

$$\delta \mathcal{L} = \partial_{q^a} \mathcal{L} \delta q^a + \partial_{\dot{q}^a} \mathcal{L} \delta \dot{q}^a + \partial_t \mathcal{L} \delta t.$$

The total time derivative of the Lagrangian is given by

$$\frac{d\mathcal{L}}{dt} = \partial_t \mathcal{L} + \partial_{q^a} \mathcal{L} \dot{q}^a + \partial_{\dot{q}^a} \mathcal{L} \ddot{q}^a,$$

which yields

$$\delta \mathcal{L} = \partial_{q^a} \mathcal{L} (\delta q^a - \dot{q}^a \delta t) + \partial_{\dot{q}^a} \mathcal{L} (\delta \dot{q}^a - \ddot{q}^a \delta t) + \frac{d\mathcal{L}}{dt} \delta t.$$

The equations of motion are $\partial_{q^a} \mathcal{L} = \frac{d}{dt} \partial_{\dot{q}^a} \mathcal{L}$. For a set of coordinates that satisfy this - a so-called on-shell solution - we have

$$\begin{aligned} \delta \mathcal{L} &= \frac{d}{dt} \partial_{\dot{q}^a} \mathcal{L} (\delta q^a - \dot{q}^a \delta t) + \partial_{\dot{q}^a} \mathcal{L} (\delta \dot{q}^a - \ddot{q}^a \delta t) + \frac{d\mathcal{L}}{dt} \delta t \\ &= \frac{d}{dt} (\partial_{\dot{q}^a} \mathcal{L} (\delta q^a - \dot{q}^a \delta t) + \mathcal{L} \delta t). \end{aligned}$$

If the transformation is a quasi-symmetry of the system, then this is equal to a total time derivative of F , and the quantity

$$J = F - \partial_{\dot{q}^a} \mathcal{L} \delta q^a + (\dot{q}^a \partial_{\dot{q}^a} \mathcal{L} - \mathcal{L}) \delta t$$

thus satisfies $\frac{dJ}{dt} = 0$. We can introduce the general momenta $p_a = \partial_{\dot{q}^a} \mathcal{L}$ and the Hamiltonian $\mathcal{H} = p_a \dot{q}^a - \mathcal{L}$ to write

$$J = F - p_a \delta q^a + \mathcal{H} \delta t.$$

We arrive at the conclusion that J is a conserved quantity under a quasi-symmetry of the system. Identifying the conservation laws of a system is thus a matter of identifying the quasi-symmetries of a system and computing J under that transformation.

Example: A free particle in space Consider a free particle in space. Its Lagrangian is given by $\mathcal{L} = \frac{1}{2}m\dot{\mathbf{x}}^2$, and the variation of this is

$$\delta\mathcal{L} = m\dot{\mathbf{x}} \cdot \delta\dot{\mathbf{x}}.$$

Its general momentum is

$$\mathbf{p} = \partial_{\dot{\mathbf{x}}}\mathcal{L} = m\dot{\mathbf{x}}.$$

The Hamiltonian is

$$\mathcal{H} = \mathbf{p} \cdot \dot{\mathbf{x}} - \mathcal{L} = \frac{1}{2}m\dot{\mathbf{x}}^2.$$

We now want to identify quasi-symmetries of the system that make the variation of the Lagrangian either zero or the time derivative of some quantity. A key idea here is that we are only allowed to change the variations (or so I think).

A first attempt is keeping $\delta\mathbf{x}$ constant and not varying time (a spatial translation), which implies $\delta\dot{\mathbf{x}} = \mathbf{0}$ and $\delta\mathcal{L} = 0$. This implies that F is constant. The conserved quantity is thus

$$J = F - \mathbf{p} \cdot \delta\mathbf{x} = F - \mathbf{p} \cdot \mathbf{c},$$

i.e. the momentum of the system is conserved. We also note that the constant F in this case is arbitrary, and we might as well have set it to 0. This will be the case at least sometimes.

A second attempt is varying time, i.e. $\delta t = 1$, but keeping the coordinates fixed, i.e. $\delta\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{0}$ (a time translation). This yields $\delta\dot{\mathbf{x}} = \mathbf{0}$ and $\delta\mathcal{L} = 0$. Once again F is constant and taken to be zero, and the conserved quantity is thus $J = H$, i.e. the Hamiltonian of the system is conserved.

A third attempt is to somehow make the scalar product in the variation of the Lagrangian zero, without varying time. An option is $\delta\mathbf{x} = \boldsymbol{\omega} \times \mathbf{x}$, where $\boldsymbol{\omega}$ is a constant vector. This yields $\delta\dot{\mathbf{x}} = \boldsymbol{\omega} \times \dot{\mathbf{x}}$ and $\delta\mathcal{L} = 0$. The conserved quantity is thus

$$\begin{aligned} J &= -\mathbf{p} \cdot (\boldsymbol{\omega} \times \mathbf{x}) \\ &= -\boldsymbol{\omega} \cdot (\mathbf{x} \times \mathbf{p}). \end{aligned}$$

Since $\boldsymbol{\omega}$ is constant, that means that $\mathbf{x} \times \mathbf{p}$, i.e. the angular momentum, is conserved.

Hamiltonian mechanics Hamiltonian mechanics starts with trying to transform $\mathcal{L}(q, \dot{q}, t)$ to $\mathcal{H}(q, p, t)$. To start with this, we reintroduce the general momenta $p_i = \partial_{\dot{q}_i}\mathcal{L}$ and define the Hamiltonian

$$\mathcal{H} = p_i \dot{q}_i - \mathcal{L}.$$

This is a Legendre transform of the Hamiltonian, which is discussed below. In Lagrangian mechanics, we considered paths in configuration space. In Hamiltonian mechanics, we instead consider paths in phase space, i.e. a space where the points are (q, t) . In this space, paths do not intersect as the system is deterministic. The new equations of motion in this formalism is

$$\dot{p}_i = -\partial_{q_i}\mathcal{H}, \quad \dot{q}_i = \partial_{p_i}\mathcal{H}.$$

Paths in phase space are periodic for integrable systems and fill out the accessible parts of phase space for chaotic systems.

Legendre transforms To illustrate the Legendre transform, consider a function $f(x, y)$ and $g(x, y, u) = ux - f(x, y)$. Its total derivative is given by

$$dg = u dx + x du - \partial_x f dx - \partial_y f dy.$$

By choosing $u = \partial_x f$, we obtain

$$dg = x du - \partial_y f dy,$$

implying that g is only a function of u and y . To obtain g , invert the definition of u to obtain $x(u, y)$.

Equations of motion The variation of the Hamiltonian is given by

$$\begin{aligned} d\mathcal{H} &= \dot{q}_i dp_i + p_i dq_i - \partial_{q_i} \mathcal{L} dq_i - \partial_{\dot{q}_i} \mathcal{L} d\dot{q}_i - \partial_t \mathcal{L} dt \\ &= \dot{q}_i dp_i - \partial_{q_i} \mathcal{L} dq_i - \partial_t \mathcal{L} dt. \end{aligned}$$

Combining this with the equations of motion

$$\partial_{q_i} \mathcal{L} = \frac{d}{dt} (\partial_{\dot{q}_i} \mathcal{L}) = \frac{d}{dt} (p_i) = \dot{p}_i$$

yields

$$\dot{q}_i = \partial_{p_i} \mathcal{H}, \quad \dot{p}_i = -\partial_{q_i} \mathcal{H}, \quad \partial_t \mathcal{L} = -\partial_t \mathcal{H}.$$

We also have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d\mathcal{H}}{dt} &= \partial_{q_i} \mathcal{H} \dot{q}_i + \partial_{p_i} \mathcal{H} \dot{p}_i + \partial_t \mathcal{H} \\ &= \partial_t \mathcal{H}, \end{aligned}$$

and so the Hamiltonian is conserved if it has no explicit time dependence.

Liouville's theorem As paths in phase space do not cross, we can think of the time evolution of a system as a flow in phase space. The volume element is $dV = dq dp$. Liouville's theorem states that flow in phase space is incompressible.

To show this, consider the state at some point in time and after some infinitesimal time dt . Denote the point in phase space at the start as (q, p) and after dt as (q', p') . To first order in time we have

$$q'_i = q_i + \dot{q}_i dt = q_i + \partial_{p_i} \mathcal{H} dt, \quad p'_i = p_i + \dot{p}_i dt = p_i - \partial_{q_i} \mathcal{H} dt.$$

The volume element is given by

$$\begin{aligned} dV' &= (dq + (\partial_q \partial_p \mathcal{H} dq + \partial_p^2 \mathcal{H} dp) dt) (dp - (\partial_q^2 \mathcal{H} dq + \partial_p \partial_q \mathcal{H} dp) dt) \\ &= dq dp + (-dq (\partial_q^2 \mathcal{H} dq + \partial_p \partial_q \mathcal{H} dp) + dp (\partial_q \partial_p \mathcal{H} dq + \partial_p^2 \mathcal{H} dp)) dt \\ &= dq dp + (-\partial_q^2 \mathcal{H} (dq)^2 + (\partial_q \partial_p \mathcal{H} - \partial_p \partial_q \mathcal{H}) dq dp + \partial_p^2 \mathcal{H} (dp)^2) dt. \end{aligned}$$

The equations of motion imply that the terms containing two consecutive derivatives with respect to the same variable are equal to zero. Assuming the Hamiltonian to be sufficiently smooth, the cross-derivatives are equal. This implies

$$dV' = dV.$$

Poisson brackets Consider a function $f(q, p, t)$. Its time derivative is given by

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{df}{dt} &= \partial_{q_i} f \dot{q}_i + \partial_{p_i} f \dot{p}_i + \partial_t f \\ &= \partial_{q_i} f \partial_{p_i} \mathcal{H} - \partial_{p_i} f \partial_{q_i} \mathcal{H} + \partial_t f \\ &= \{f, \mathcal{H}\} + \partial_t f, \end{aligned}$$

where we now have defined the Poisson bracket. It is bilinear and satisfies

$$\begin{aligned} \{f, g\} &= -\{g, f\}, \\ \{fg, h\} &= f\{g, h\} + \{f, h\}g, \\ \{f, \{g, h\}\} + \{g, \{h, f\}\} + \{h, \{f, g\}\} &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

The expression above implies that if $\{f, \mathcal{H}\} = 0$ and f does not depend explicitly on time, then it is a constant of motion.

Restatement of Liouville's theorem We define $\rho(q, p, t)$ as the probability that a particle is close to (q, p) . Alternatively, for a large number of particles, we can define it as the number of particles close to (q, p) .

We have

$$\frac{d\rho}{dt} = 0,$$

implying

$$\partial_t \rho = -\{\rho, \mathcal{H}\}.$$

This is an equivalent statement of Liouville's theorem.

Canonical transformation A canonical transformation is a transformation $(\mathbf{q}, \mathbf{p}) \rightarrow (\mathbf{Q}, \mathbf{P})$ such that the Hamiltonian H expressed in these new coordinates also satisfies Hamilton's equations in the new coordinates, i.e.

$$\dot{Q}_i = \partial_{P_i} H, \quad \dot{P}_i = -\partial_{Q_i} \mathcal{H}.$$

Canonical transformations and Poisson brackets It turns out that a transformation in phase space is canonical if and only if they preserve the following equations:

$$\{q_i, q_j\} = \{p_i, p_j\} = 0, \quad \{q_i, p_j\} = \delta_{ij}.$$

To show this, consider some point x in phase space. Under the canonical transformation, it transforms to y . Suppose now that the relation

$$\dot{x}_i = J_{ij} \partial_{x_j} \mathcal{H}$$

to be true. According to the equations of motion, this would imply

$$J_{ij} = \begin{cases} 1, & j = i + n, i = 1, 2, \dots, n, \\ -1, & j = i - n, i = n + 1, \dots, 2n. \end{cases}$$

If the transformation is canonical, then the same should be true after the transformation. On the other hand, the chain rule yields

$$\dot{y}_i = \partial_{x_j} y_i J_{ik} \partial_{x_k} y_m \partial_{y_m} H.$$

Comparing this with the Jacobian \mathcal{J} yields

$$J = \mathcal{J} J \mathcal{J}^T.$$

Infinitesimal transformations Consider a transformation of the form

$$q_i \rightarrow q_i + \alpha F_i, \quad p_i \rightarrow p_i + \alpha E_i.$$

Computing the Poisson brackets of the new coordinates and momenta, and requiring it to be zero, yields

$$\begin{aligned} \{Q_i, P_j\} &= \{q_i, p_j\} + \{q_i, \alpha E_j\} + \{\alpha F_i, p_j\} + \{\alpha F_i, \alpha E_j\} \\ &= \dots \\ &= \delta_{ij} + \alpha(\partial_{p_i} E_j + \partial_{q_j} F_i) + \dots \end{aligned}$$

and the requirement

$$\partial_{p_i} E_j = -\partial_{q_j} F_i.$$

A simple choice of solution is

$$E_j = -\partial_{q_j} G, \quad F_i = \partial_{p_i} G$$

for some (smooth) function G . We say that G generates the symmetry.

We now reinsert this into the coordinate transformations. By considering the transformation as a map onto the same phase space, we obtain

$$\partial_\alpha q_i = \partial_{p_i} G, \quad \partial_\alpha p_i = -\partial_{q_i} G.$$

We notice the strong analogy with Hamilton's equations. This kind of transformations can be thought of as flows in phase space.

Symmetries and infinitesimal transformations Suppose now that we perform an infinitesimal transformation. We then obtain

$$\frac{d\mathcal{H}}{d\alpha} = \{\mathcal{H}, G\}.$$

We say that G is a symmetry of the system if $\{\mathcal{H}, G\} = 0$. We can show that if G is a symmetry of the system, then it is conserved.

Something Lagrangians IG We return to the principle of least action. Symmetries of the Lagrangian were on the form $\mathcal{L} \rightarrow \mathcal{L} + \frac{dF}{dt}$. We can now choose $F = G$, and instead consider this as a variational problem on phase space instead, where we seek the extrema of

$$S = \int dt p_i \dot{q}_i - \mathcal{H}.$$

We now say that a canonical transformation of the system is a transformation such that

$$\int dt P_i \dot{Q}_i - H$$

is still extremal under the transformation. The Euler-Lagrange equations imply that this is true if

$$p_i \dot{q}_i - \mathcal{H} = P_i \dot{Q}_i - H + \frac{dF}{dt}.$$

There are various functions that can satisfy this. For instance, consider a function $F(q, Q, t)$. We obtain that

Another choice is a function $F = F_2(q, P, t) - P_i Q_i$. We have

$$\frac{dF}{dt} = \partial_{q_i} F_2 \dot{q}_i + \partial_{P_i} F_2 \dot{P}_i - \dot{P}_i Q_i - P_i \dot{Q}_i + \partial_t F_2.$$

Inserting this into the above criterion yields

$$p_i = \partial_{q_i} F_2, \quad Q_i = \partial_{P_i} F_2, \quad H = \mathcal{H} + \partial_t F_2.$$

Hamilton-Jacobi theory Suppose that we could perform a transformation on the form $F = F_2(q, P, t) - P_i Q_i$ such that $H = 0$. This would imply that all Q_i and P_i were to be constant. The equation

$$\mathcal{H} + \partial_t F_2 = 0$$

would thus define a differential equation in F_2 . We can now, with some reasoning behind it, I guess, call F_2 the action S . This yields the Hamilton-Jacobi equation

$$H + \partial_t S = 0.$$

5 Group theory

Definition of a group A group is a set of objects G with an operation $G \times G \rightarrow G$, $(a, b) \rightarrow ab$ such that

- If $a, b \in G$ then $ab \in G$.
- $a(bc) = (ab)c$ for all $a, b, c \in G$.
- There exists an identity e such that $ae = ea = a$ for all $a \in G$.
- There exists for every element a an inverse $a^{-1} \in G$ such that $aa^{-1} = a^{-1}a = e$.

Groups can be

- cyclic, i.e. all elements in the group are powers of a single element.
- finite, i.e. groups containing a finite number of elements.
- infinite.
- discrete, i.e. all elements in the group can be labeled with some index.
- continuous.
- commutative, i.e. $ab = ba$ for all elements in the group.

Subgroups If $G = \{g_\alpha\}$ and the subset $H = \{h_\alpha\}$ is also a group, we call H a subgroup of G and write $H < G$.

Generators The generators of a group is the smallest set of elements in the group such that all other elements in the group can be composed by the elements in the set. In this context, we will use the generators in a wider context - for instance, the matrix J that is used to create rotation matrices is said to be a generator of the group.

Direct products Given two groups F and G , we define $F \times G$ as the set of ordered pairs of elements of the two groups. The group action of $F \times G$ is the group actions of F and G separately on the elements in the ordered pair.

Homomorphisms and isomorphisms A homomorphism is a map $f : G \rightarrow H$ such that $f(g_1)f(g_2) = f(g_1g_2)$. If the map is bijective, f is called an isomorphism.

Point groups Point groups are symmetries of, for instance, a crystal structure that leave at least one point in the structure invariant. Examples include

- rotations.
- reflections.
- spatial inversions.

Combined with certain discrete translation, these are the space groups of the crystal. Space groups are the groups of all symmetries of a crystal.

Dihedral groups The dihedral group D_n is the group of transformations that leave an n -sided polygon invariant.

Lie groups Formally, a Lie group is a group containing a manifold and the group operation and inverse operation being smooth maps on the manifold. Its elements are $g(\theta)$, where $g(\mathbf{0}) = 1$. We can expand the map as $g(\theta) \approx 1 + A$, where

$$A = i\theta_a T_a,$$

where the T_a are the generators. That means that close to the identity, the non-commutativity of such maps is captured by the commutators, or Lie brackets:

$$[T_a, T_b] = if_{a,b,c}T_c.$$

The generators are self-adjoint, so the constants $f_{a,b,c}$ are real.

Representations A representation is a homomorphism $D : G \rightarrow GL(V)$, where $GL(V)$ is the group of all invertible linear transformations on V . The group elements thus act on V according to

$$D(g_1)D(g_2)v = D(g_1g_2)v, \quad v \in V.$$

Reducible and irreducible representations Two representations are equivalent if they satisfy $S^{-1}DS = D'$, where S is a matrix representing a change of basis. Some representations can be written as direct sums in certain bases. For these, there is a basis where the representation is block diagonal. These are reducible. Those that cannot are irreducible.

Small and large rotations in two dimensions Consider a rotation of an infinitesimal displacement $d\mathbf{x}$ with a rotation R . The requirement for length to be preserved implies $R^T R = 1$.

Consider now a rotation by a small angle $\delta\theta$. Taylor expanding it in terms of the angle yields

$$R(\delta\theta) \approx 1 + A\delta\theta.$$

The requirement for R to be orthogonal yields $A^T = -A$. We choose the solution

$$J = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}.$$

We can now write the rotation matrix as

$$R(\delta\theta) = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & \delta\theta \\ -\delta\theta & 1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

We would now like to construct a large rotation in terms of smaller rotations as

$$R(\theta) = \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \left(1 + \frac{\theta}{N} J \right)^N = e^{\theta J}.$$

We can write this as an infinite series and use the fact that $J^2 = -1$ to obtain

$$R(\theta) = \cos \theta + J \sin \theta.$$

Rotations in three dimensions The argument done for two dimensions does not use the dimensionality, so we conclude that even for higher dimensions, $R^T R = 1$. Expanding a small rotation around the identity yields that the first-order term must include an antisymmetric matrix. The space of antisymmetric 3×3 matrices is three-dimensional. We thus choose the basis

$$J_x = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}, J_y = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}, J_z = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Exponentiating yields

$$R(\theta) = e^{\sum \theta_i J_i} = e^{\theta \cdot \mathbf{J}}.$$

In physics we usually extract a factor i such that the basis matrices are Hermitian, and the rotation becomes

$$R(\theta) = e^{i\theta \cdot \mathbf{J}}.$$

The set of generators of these rotations constitutes the Lie algebra.

We know in general that rotations in three dimensions do not commute. In fact, we obtain in general that

$$R(\theta)R(\theta')R^{-1}(\theta) = \theta_a \theta'_b [J_a, J_b],$$

where $[J_a, J_b]$ is the commutator. This commutator satisfies

$$[J_a, J_b]^T = [J_b^T, J_a^T] = [-J_b, -J_a] = -[J_a, J_b],$$

which implies

$$[J_a, J_b] = f_{a,b,c} J_c.$$

It can be shown that

$$[J_i, J_j] = \varepsilon_{i,j,k} J_k,$$

or in a physics context (where a factor i is extracted):

$$[J_i, J_j] = i\varepsilon_{i,j,k} J_k.$$

Symmetries in classical mechanics

Example: Newton's second law Newton's second law $m\ddot{\mathbf{x}} = -\vec{\nabla}V$, assuming the potential to be fixed, has certain symmetry properties:

- The transformation $t \rightarrow t' = t + t_0$ is a symmetry, as $\frac{d}{dt} = \frac{d}{dt'}$ and V is not changed under the transformation.
- The transformation $t \rightarrow \tau = -t$ is a symmetry as $\frac{d}{dt} = \frac{d\tau}{dt} \frac{d}{d\tau} = -\frac{d}{d\tau}$, which implies $\frac{d^2}{dt^2} = \frac{d^2}{d\tau^2}$ and V is not changed under the transformation.
- Considering a system of particles, if the forces between these only depend on differences between the position vectors, the translation $\mathbf{x}_i \rightarrow \mathbf{y}_i = \mathbf{x}_i + \mathbf{x}_0$ is a symmetry as it does not change any differences.

Example: Constraining solutions using symmetries If a system is invariant under some transformation $\mathbf{x} \rightarrow \mathbf{R}(\mathbf{x})$, then any property u dependant on those coordinates satisfies $u(\mathbf{x}) = u(\mathbf{R}(\mathbf{x}))$.

Connection to Noether's theorem We defined symmetries of the action as transformations that satisfy $\delta\mathcal{L} = 0$. In particular, we can construct a set of transformations such that $\partial_s t = \delta t$, $\partial_s q^a = \delta q^a$, where s is the symmetry parameter. This is a one-parameter family of symmetries. By defining $T_s q(t, 0) = q(t, s)$, these symmetries satisfy

$$T_{s_2} T_{s_1} q(t, 0) = T_{s_1+s_2} q(t, 0).$$

We see that these symmetries define a group.

Example: A particle in a moving potential

6 Relativity

The Galilean group The Galilean group is the group of transformations between frames of reference under which the laws of physics are invariant. It consists of:

- Translations by a constant vector.
- Rotations of the coordinate axes.
- Boosts, i.e. translating the coordinates along a line with a constants speed.

It is based on a concept of absolute time. It turns out that the arc element $d^2s = dx^2 + dy^2 + dz^2$ at a given time is preserved under all of these transformations.

The invariance of the laws of physics under these transformations corresponds to there being no special position or direction in the universe, and no special velocity. At least two of these claims have thus far not been disproved.

The emergence of special relativity It turned out that Maxwell's equations were not invariant under Galilean transformations.

DISCLAIMER: THIS IS SERIOUS HEAD CANON! The issue with Maxwell's equations is that they predict that electromagnetic waves travel at speed c . This should of course be the same in all frames of reference, according to Galilean relativity. No other wave phenomena had previously raised an issue as they travel through a medium. This medium naturally defines a certain frame of reference in which the physics are special, namely the rest frame of the medium. Only by transporting the medium with you when doing the boost will you reobtain the same physics. A natural idea to follow from this is that electromagnetic waves travel in a medium, so physicists started searching for it. After having found no evidence of its existence, most notably through Michelson and Morley's experiment, the conclusion was that there was no medium in which electromagnetic waves travelled, and thus the speed of light had to be one of the invariant properties under transformation between inertial frames of reference.

The constancy of the speed of light implies that the infinitesimal quantity

$$d^2s = c^2 dt^2 - dx^2 - dy^2 - dz^2$$

is constant. We will soon replace the elements of the Galilean group with elements that keep this quantity.

Four-vectors and the Minkowski metric We now define the four-vector x^μ , where $\mu = 0, 1, 2, 3$ and $\mu = 0$ corresponds to ct and an inner product with the metric η . The metric is diagonal with $\eta_{11} = 1$ and $\eta_{ii} = -1$ otherwise. This is called the Minkowski metric.

Lorentz transformations We are now interested in transformations that preserve the new arc length. If the transformation is on the form $\mathbf{x}' = \Lambda \mathbf{x}$. Computing the arc length yields

$$\Lambda^T \nu \Lambda = \nu.$$

The transformations satisfying this constitute the Lorentz group, or $O(1, 3)$. Computing the determinant on either side yields $\det(\Lambda)^2 = 1$. The subgroup with determinant 1 (which preserve the direction of time) is the special Lorentz group $SO(1, 3)$.

The equation defining the group elements is symmetric, which imposes constraints on the elements of the matrix. The matrix has 16 elements, so the defining equation places 10 constraints on the coefficients of Λ . With 10 equations and 16 unknowns, we expect 6 linearly independent solutions.

The first three are rotations of space, written in block diagonal form as

$$\Lambda = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & R \end{bmatrix}.$$

Inserted into the defining equation, we obtain

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -R^T R \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

This yields the familiar requirement $R^T R = 1$.

The remaining three transforms are Lorentz boosts corresponding to each axis. This can be shown explicitly for x , and a permutation of coordinates will yield the same result for a boost along any other axis. We believe it to be reasonable that such a transformation should not affect any other coordinates than the boosted coordinate and time. This means that the matrix will be on the form

$$\Lambda = \begin{bmatrix} \Lambda_x & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

The defining equation now yields

$$\Lambda_x^T \sigma_z \Lambda_x = \sigma_z, \quad \sigma_z = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

We expand Λ_x around the identity as $\Lambda_x = 1 - \phi K$, where ϕ is independent of both coordinates and time. Inserting this into the above equation yields

$$(1 - \phi K^T) \sigma_z (1 - \phi K) = \sigma_z.$$

Expanding the bracket yields

$$\begin{aligned} (1 - \phi K^T)(\sigma_z - \phi \sigma_z K) &= \sigma_z, \\ \sigma_z - \phi \sigma_z K - \phi K^T \sigma_z + \phi^2 K^T \sigma_z K &= \sigma_z. \end{aligned}$$

Ignoring higher-order terms yields

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma_z K + K^T \sigma_z &= 0, \\ (\sigma_z K)^T &= -\sigma_z K. \end{aligned}$$

The generator K must therefore be

$$K = \sigma_x = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Now a transformation corresponding to an arbitrary ϕ can be written as

$$\Lambda_x = e^{-\phi K} = \cosh \phi - \sinh \phi \sigma_x,$$

where the last equality comes from writing the exponential as an infinite series and using the fact that $K^2 = 1$. Perhaps someone should do this explicitly.

To identify the transformation more exactly, we consider two frames of reference in which the origins coincide at $t = 0$. Under such a transformation, we require that (ct, vt) map to $(ct', 0)$. This yields

$$-\sinh \phi ct + \cosh \phi vt = 0.$$

Defining $\gamma = \cosh \phi$ and applying hyperbolic identities yields

$$-\sqrt{\gamma^2 - 1}ct + \gamma vt = ct \left(\frac{v}{c}\gamma - \sqrt{\gamma^2 - 1} \right) = 0,$$

$$\gamma = \sqrt{\frac{1}{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}.$$

The transformation can now be written as

$$\Lambda_x = \begin{bmatrix} \gamma & -\frac{v}{c}\gamma \\ -\frac{v}{c}\gamma & \gamma \end{bmatrix}.$$

The total matrix for a boost along any other coordinate axis can be found by permuting the elements in the transformation matrix for the x boost. This yields a basis of matrices, and a boost along an arbitrary direction can be found by taking linear combinations of these.

Adding velocities The product of two boosts is another boost. For two boosts along the same direction, we obtain $\Lambda(\phi_1)\Lambda(\phi_2) = \Lambda(\phi_1 + \phi_2)$. This can be used to show that the total boosted velocity is

$$v_3 = \frac{v_1 + v_2}{1 + \frac{v_1 v_2}{c^2}}.$$

Proper time Consider a particle at the origin in its rest frame. The arc length becomes $ds^2 = c^2 dt^2$. As the left-hand side is invariant, so must the right-hand side be. This makes it natural to define the proper time

$$d\tau = \frac{1}{c} ds.$$

Relativistic kinematics Suppose that you wanted to define $\mathbf{u} = \frac{d\mathbf{x}}{dt}$ as the spatial part of velocity. Well, too bad, cause time transforms under a Lorentz transformation, so this thing will not behave linearly under Lorentz transformation. We need a better alternative.

Consider instead the rest frame S' of the particle, where it is resting at the origin. Its trajectory in the original inertial frame can be parametrized in terms of the proper time. Along a small trajectory we have

$$d\tau = \frac{1}{c} ds = \frac{1}{c} \sqrt{c^2 dt^2 - d\mathbf{x}^2} = dt \sqrt{1 - \left(\frac{d\mathbf{x}}{dt} \right)^2} \implies \frac{dt}{d\tau} = \gamma.$$

We can now define the four velocity

$$U = \frac{dx}{d\tau} = \frac{d}{d\tau} \begin{bmatrix} ct \\ \mathbf{x} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} c \frac{dt}{d\tau} \\ \frac{d\mathbf{x}}{d\tau} \end{bmatrix} = \gamma \begin{bmatrix} c \\ \mathbf{u} \end{bmatrix}$$

where $\mathbf{u} = \frac{d\mathbf{x}}{dt}$. This quantity transforms like a four-vector, and is therefore the four-velocity.