

SYMMETRY, ITS BREAKING AND HIERARCHICAL LEVELS

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ABSTRACT

Seen from the proper perspective, much of physics is a recognition of symmetry. The history of this perspective is briefly reviewed, leading to the modern geometrical formulation. Geometrical Hamiltonian mechanics, Noether's theorem and the general process of reduction to smaller spaces of description are reviewed. As examples, Euler's equations for the rigid body and the perfect fluid are shown to be identical. Breaking of symmetries often introduces a hierarchical structuring. A viewpoint is presented from which the guiding center and oscillation center descriptions in plasma physics are unified with geometrical optics descriptions in wave theories within a Hamiltonian framework. Connections with a general theory of different levels of description in physical theories are drawn, e.g., Kinetic vs. Fluid descriptions in statistical mechanics, quantum vs. classical physics, etc. Should time permit, relations with quantum chaos, topological excitations and catastrophe optics will be indicated.

Biographical Sketch

Stephen Omohundro is a graduate student in physics at U.C. Berkeley studying under Allan Kaufman in plasma physics and Alan Weinstein in mathematics. He is visiting CNLS for the summer.

Symmetry, Its Breaking, & Hierarchical Levels

by Stephen Omohundro

June 25, 1982, Center for Nonlinear
Studies - Los Alamos, NM

1. Symmetry & Its History
2. Modern Hamiltonian Dynamics: Noether's Thm, Reduction
3. Lie-Poisson Brackets: Euler's eqns.
4. Hierarchical Structures & Symmetry Breaking
5. Averaging: Guiding & Oscillation center descriptions
6. Geometrical Optics: Diffraction, Quantum Chaos, Diffractionals
7. General Theory of Levels of Description

PHILOSOPHY:

HOW IS PHYSICS POSSIBLE?

A priori you need at least one mark on the page for every thing in the real world, and any description is more complicated than reality.

SOLUTION: SYMMETRY !! - lots of things are the same.

Need symmetries of only parts of structures.



Can define a component of a structure this way.

eg. Approximate descriptions.

Like Klein in geometry: FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE TRANSFORMATIONS WHICH PRESERVE A STRUCTURE

⇒ CONCEPT OF A GROUP:

A set G with a multiplication $G \times G \rightarrow G$ such that:

1. \exists Identity element e s.t. $ea = ae = a \quad \forall a \in G$
2. \exists Inverses: $\forall a \in G, \exists a^{-1} \in G$ s.t. $aa^{-1} = a^{-1}a = e$
3. Associativity: $\forall a, b, c \in G \quad a(bc) = (ab)c$

HIGHLIGHTS IN GROUPS AND PHYSICS

- < B.C. Interest in Symmetry - 5 Platonic Solids - 17 discrete symmetries of plane
- 1630 Galileo - relativity of motion
- 1770 Lagrange - develops some key concepts applied to number theory & solvability of eq.
- 1815 Cauchy - permutation groups
- 1831 Galois - impossibility of quintic soln. - normal subgroup concept
- 1849 Cayley - formal definition of group - definition of matrices
- 1869 Sophus Lie - ideas of Galois applied to differential equations
- 1870 C. Jordan - "Traité des substitutions et des équations algébriques" - 1st group th. book
- 1872 Felix Klein - Erlanger program for unifying geometry - publicity campaign for gr
- 1881 Weber - defines group representations
- 1894 Sartre - Classifies complex simple lie groups - real in 1914
- ~ Tait says of Cayley "Is it not a shame that such an outstanding man puts his abilities to such entirely useless questions?"
- 1904 Poincaré - notices symmetry group of special relativity
- 1918 Emmy Noether - theorem relating symmetries & conserved quantities
- H. Weyl - Notices gauge symmetry of electromagnetism
- 1927 E. Wigner - uses representation theory to simplify perturbations in Q.M.
- 1928 H. Weyl - publishes "Gruppentheorie und Quantenmechanik"
- ~ New theory jokingly referred to as "Group Pest"
- 1931 E. Wigner - publishes "Gruppentheorie"
- 1939 " " - finds irreducible representations of inhomogeneous Lorentz gp
- ~ 1952 Applications to nuclear spectroscopy
- 1954 Yang & Mills - Non-abelian gauge symmetry
- 1962 Gell-Mann & Zweig - $SU(3)$ and quarks
- 1964 David Hestenes - Geometric Algebra

1. 1962 Kirillov - 1-1 correspondence between co-adjoint orbits and irreducible unitary representations of simply connected nilpotent Lie groups
- 1964 Kostant - noticed co-adjoint orbits have symplectic structure
- 1965 Books on special functions of physics in terms of groups
- 1966 Arnold - Rigid body & Perfect fluid as ham. systems on Lie groups
- 1968 Lax - Complete integrability of KdV & "Lax pair"
- 1970 Sourlas - Momentum map & geometric quantization
- 1972 - Annual conference on "Group Theoretical Methods in Physics"
- 1974 Marsden & Weinstein - "Reduction" generalizing: symmetry \Rightarrow integrals
- 1979 - Adler - KdV on coadjoint orbits
- 1979 - Guillemin & Stenzel - Liquid drop model of nucleus as coadjoint orb.
- 1980 - Symes & Kostant - Integrability of Toda lattice as coadjoint orbit
- 1981 - Marsden & Weinstein - Maxwell-Vlasov eqns. of plasma as coadjoint orb.

Notice the trend:

- ~1930 Symmetries of known physical systems simplify calculations
eg. Wigner-Eckart theorem
- ~1954 Symmetry is used to propose new physical model - Yang-Mills
- ~1962 Symmetry is basic attribute of model - SU(3) & quarks
- ~1968 Symmetries of fundamental structure not realized in nature
- spontaneous symmetry breaking - Higgs particles
- ~1970's Symmetries of kinematical structure independent of dynamics
 ↑ This is a realization of a viewpoint stressed by Weyl!

IN ACTION OF A GROUP G ON A SET M IS:

A map $G \times M \rightarrow M$ so that

1. $e \cdot m = m$ $e = \text{identity of } G, m \in M$

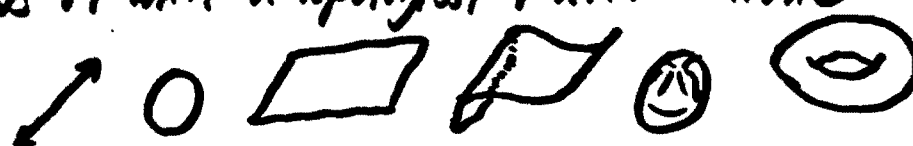
2. $g \cdot (h \cdot m) = (gh) \cdot m \quad \forall g, h \in G, m \in M$

eg. $G = \text{Rotations by } 0^\circ, 120^\circ, 240^\circ$ $M = \{ \triangle, \triangle, \triangle \}$

To be a symmetry, the action of G should preserve some structure of M .

TAKE M TO BE THE STATE SPACE FOR SOME DYNAMICAL

SYSTEM - typically endows M with a topological & differentiable structure


MANIFOLDS: 

LIE GROUPS eg. the real line under addition,

the torus $T^n = \mathbb{R}^n / \mathbb{Z}^n$, $GL(n) = n \times n$ nonsingular matrices

"Coordinates are unphysical" (but sometimes useful)

- they break the symmetry of a problem

eg.  vs. 

To understand a specific instance of something, look at a whole class of related things: eg. physical laws, orbit vs. phase portrait, perturbation theory, catastrophe theory, mathematics (eg. real numbers \rightarrow topology & analysis, algebra, ordering).

MECHANICS:

Newton (1670): $F=ma$ for gravitating planets

Euler (1740): Universal principle (fluids, etc.)

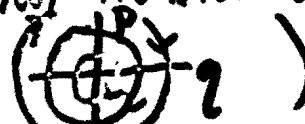
Everything expressed in coordinates - only way to show configuration space coordinate independence was via a variational principle (Hamilton's principle)

Lagrange (1808): $\dot{q}_i = \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_i}$ $\dot{p}_i = -\frac{\partial H}{\partial q_i}$

(Now known as Hamilton's equations)

Poisson (1830): $\{f, g\} = \sum_{i,j=1}^n \left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial q_i} \frac{\partial g}{\partial p_i} - \frac{\partial g}{\partial q_i} \frac{\partial f}{\partial p_i} \right)$

So $\dot{f} = \{f, H\}$

This structure is invariant under canonical transformations, generalizing contact transformations (eg SHO )

MODERN FORMULATION - forget coordinates

A POISSON MANIFOLD is a manifold M with a

Poisson bracket: $\{, \}: \mathcal{F}(M) \times \mathcal{F}(M) \rightarrow \mathcal{F}(M)$

such that 1) bilinearity - $\{f, ag_1 + bg_2\} = a\{f, g_1\} + b\{f, g_2\}$, $a, b \in \mathbb{R}$, $f, g_1, g_2 \in \mathcal{F}(M)$

2) antisymmetry - $\{f, g\} = -\{g, f\}$

3) Jacobi's identity - $\{f, \{g, h\}\} + \{g, \{h, f\}\} + \{h, \{f, g\}\} = 0$

4) Derivation property - $\{f, gh\} = \{f, g\}h + \{f, h\}g$

This structure is preserved under the (∞ -dim) "Lie" group of canonical transformations.

HAMILTON'S EQNS. OF MOTION: $\dot{f} = \{f, H\}$

HAMILTONIAN VECTOR FIELD: $X_H = \{ \cdot, H \}$

or in coordinates x^i on M : $X_H^i = \{x^i, H\}$



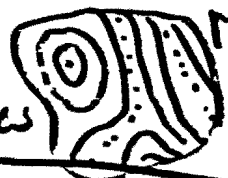
CONSERVED QUANTITY: is a function that commutes w/ H

$\{f, H\} = 0$ so $\dot{f} = 0$, f const. on integral curves of X_H .

CASIMIR FUNCTION: commutes with every function.

SYMPLECTIC MANIFOLD: is a Poisson manifold where every tangent vector belongs to some hamiltonian vector field. (So the only Casimir functions are constants).

HM - Every Poisson manifold is foliated by symplectic leaves



A symmetry of a Poisson manifold M w/ hamiltonian H is the action of a Lie group G by canonical transformations on M which preserves the hamiltonian.

eg $G = \mathbb{R}^1$, the action is just the flow along a hamiltonian vector field X_f . H conserved $\Rightarrow X_f H = 0$

Noether's Theorem: $\Rightarrow f$ is a conserved quantity. Pf: $\dot{f} = \{f, H\} = -\{H, f\} = -X_f H = 0$

Generalization: REDUCTION (Marsden & Weinstein)

Orbit space M/G inherits a poisson structure, allows us to reduce the number of degrees of freedom under consideration.

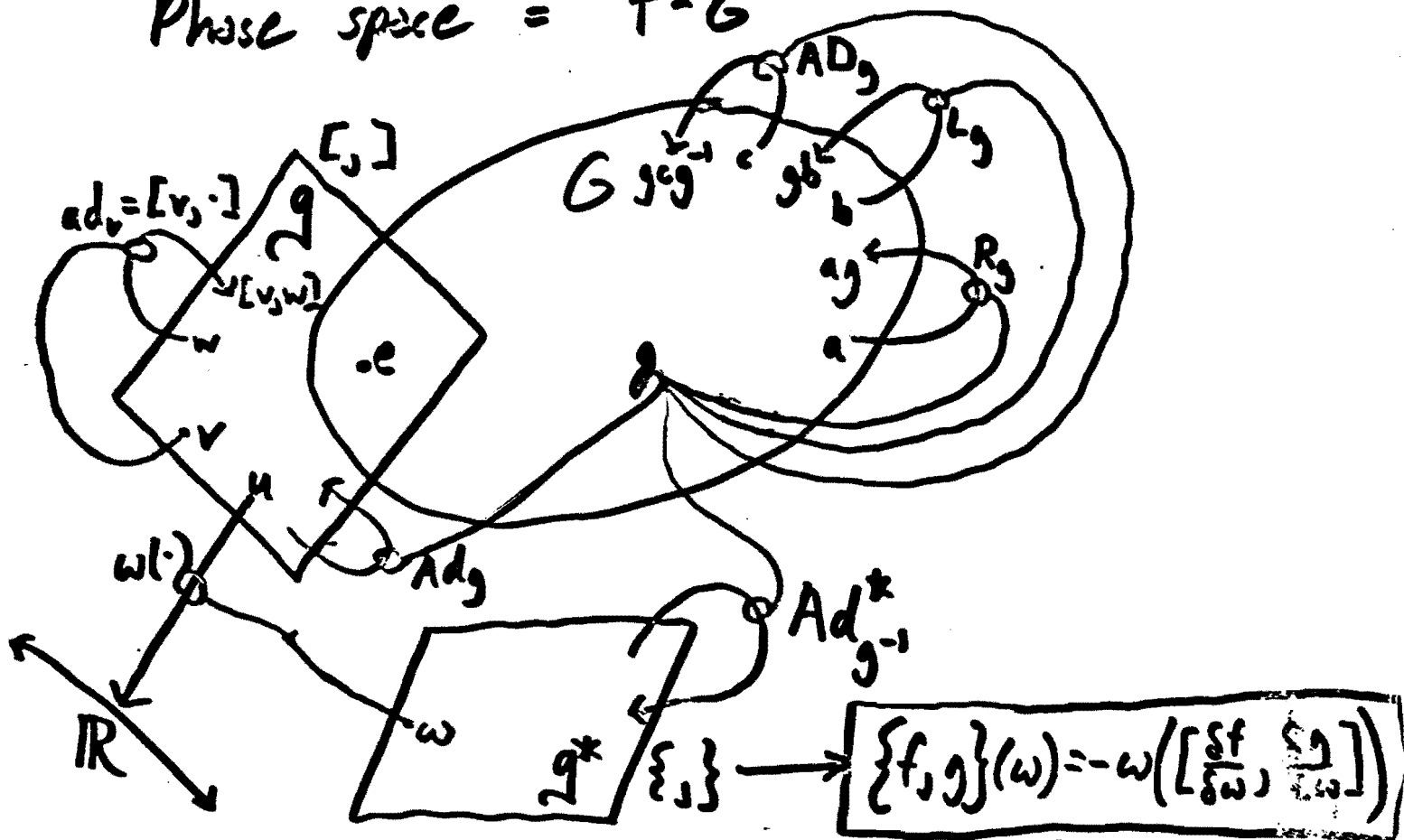
eg if G is commutative:  translation symmetry

Use Noether: p_x const., x -irrelevant lose 2-degrees of freedom
 commutative \Rightarrow still y, z translation symmetric \Rightarrow get rid of 6 deg.

eg if G not commutative - more complicated
 same as above, rotation symmetry. L_x, L_y, L_z conserved
 so fix them but once we pick out by, say rotations about z
 then have picked a direction - can't pick out by the others
 \Rightarrow only get rid of 4 degrees of freedom

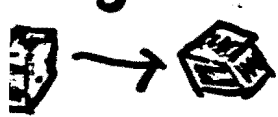
PUN - Let G be the configuration space for a system (as well as the symmetry group).

Phase space = T^*G

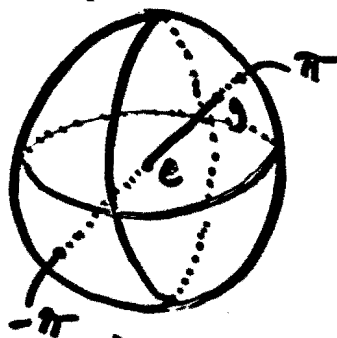


Get Lie-Poisson bracket on \mathfrak{g}^* : \curvearrowright

x. THE RIGID BODY - Pick a starting position, the configuration space is then the rotation group $SO(3)$



Topologically = \mathbb{RP}^3



Topology important since not simply connected i.e. $\text{circle} \neq \text{circle} \Rightarrow$ double-valued

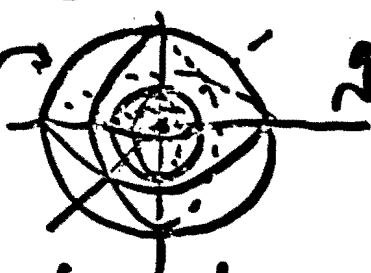
spin reps. \Rightarrow Pauli exclusion principle \Rightarrow US!

Lie algebra = $\mathfrak{so}(3) = 3 \times 3$ anti-symmetric matrices

Identify with \mathbb{R}^3 via $u = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -u_z & u_y \\ u_z & 0 & -u_x \\ -u_y & u_x & 0 \end{pmatrix}$ $[u, v] = \vec{u} \times \vec{v}$

$\mathfrak{so}(3)$ -invariant metric $\vec{u} \cdot \vec{v} = -\frac{1}{2} \text{Trace}(uv)$

coadjoint orbits = symplectic leaves $\mathfrak{g}^* \cong \mathbb{R}^3$



\mathfrak{g}^* is the space of angular momenta in the body. The coadjoint orbits are spheres of constant angular momentum.

total angular momentum is a Casimir function which will be conserved by any hamiltonian flow on \mathfrak{g}^* . In coordinates $(L_1, L_2, L_3) \in \mathfrak{g}^*$ with the usual hamiltonian: $H(L) = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{L_1^2}{I_1} + \frac{L_2^2}{I_2} + \frac{L_3^2}{I_3} \right)$

The Lie-Poisson equations become the Euler eqns:

$$\dot{\vec{L}} = \{ \vec{L}, H \} = -L \left(\left[\frac{\delta L}{\delta L}, \frac{\delta H}{\delta L} \right] \right) = -\vec{L} \cdot (\vec{L} \times \frac{\delta H}{\delta L})$$

$$\text{or } \dot{L}_1 = \frac{I_2 - I_3}{I_1 I_2} L_2 L_3 \text{ \& cyclic permutations}$$

eg COMPRESSIBLE IDEAL FLUID

reference configuration $\xrightarrow{\eta}$



Group: $G = \mathcal{D} \circ \mathcal{F}$

where \mathcal{D} = diffeomorphisms of \mathbb{R}^3
 \mathcal{F} = functions on \mathbb{R}^3

\circ = semi-direct product, w/ usual action of \mathcal{D} on \mathcal{F}

Lie Algebra: $\mathfrak{g} = \mathcal{X} \times \mathcal{F}$ \mathcal{X} = vector fields on \mathbb{R}^3

Dual of Lie Algebra: $\mathfrak{g}^* = \mathcal{X}^* \times \mathcal{F}^*$ \mathcal{X}^* = momentum densities
 \mathcal{F}^* = mass densities

Lie Poisson bracket: $F, G : \mathcal{X}^* \times \mathcal{F}^* \rightarrow \mathbb{R}, \mu \in \mathcal{X}^*, \rho \in \mathcal{F}^*$

$$\begin{aligned} \{F, G\}(\mu, \rho) &= - \int (\mu, \rho) \left[\left(\frac{\delta F}{\delta \mu}, \frac{\delta F}{\delta \rho} \right), \left(\frac{\delta G}{\delta \mu}, \frac{\delta G}{\delta \rho} \right) \right] d^3x \\ &= - \int (\mu, \rho) \left(\left[\frac{\delta F}{\delta \mu}, \frac{\delta G}{\delta \mu} \right], \frac{\delta F}{\delta \mu} \left(\frac{\delta G}{\delta \rho} \right) - \frac{\delta G}{\delta \mu} \left(\frac{\delta F}{\delta \rho} \right) \right) d^3x \\ &= - \int \mu \cdot \left[\frac{\delta F}{\delta \mu}, \frac{\delta G}{\delta \mu} \right] d^3x - \int \rho \left(\nabla \cdot \left(\frac{\delta G}{\delta \rho} \right) \cdot \frac{\delta F}{\delta \mu} - \frac{\delta G}{\delta \mu} \cdot \nabla \frac{\delta F}{\delta \rho} \right) d^3x \\ &= - \int \left(\mu \left(\frac{\delta F}{\delta \mu} \cdot \nabla \frac{\delta G}{\delta \mu} - \frac{\delta G}{\delta \mu} \cdot \nabla \frac{\delta F}{\delta \mu} \right) + \rho \left(\frac{\delta F}{\delta \mu} \cdot \nabla \frac{\delta G}{\delta \rho} - \frac{\delta G}{\delta \mu} \cdot \nabla \frac{\delta F}{\delta \rho} \right) \right) d^3x \end{aligned}$$

Hamiltonian: $H : \mathcal{X}^* \times \mathcal{F}^* \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ $H(\mu, \rho) = \frac{1}{2} \int (\rho v^2 + \rho U(\rho)) d^3x$

Eqns. of Motion: $\dot{F} = \{F, H\}$ = Euler's Eqns!

$$\frac{\partial v}{\partial t} + v \cdot \nabla v + \frac{1}{\rho} \nabla \left(\rho^2 \frac{\partial U}{\partial \rho} \right) = 0 \quad \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \nabla(\rho v) = 0$$

This is analogous to a top in a gravitational field.

Easy to add in entropy and any other convecting quantities by enlarging the group.

FURTHER EXAMPLES (from Marsden 1981)

System

Group

1. Free rigid body $SO(3)$ = rotation group
2. heavy top $E(3)$ = Euclidean group
3. perfect incompressible fluid \mathcal{D}_{vol} = volume preserving diffeomorphisms
4. compressible fluid $\mathcal{D} \times \mathcal{F}$ = diffeomorphisms semi-direct \times functions
5. Korteweg de Vries equation $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{F}$ = invertible Fourier Integral operators
6. Toda Lattice lower triangular matrices
7. Liouville equation \mathcal{S} = canonical transformations
8. Heisenberg equations of Q.M. $U(\mathcal{H})$ = unitary transformations of \mathcal{H}
9. Lax eqns. of nonlinear waves U = unitary group
10. Poisson-Vlasov equations \mathcal{S} = canonical transformations

Other examples arise through symmetry & reduction

1. Maxwell's Equations gauge group of electrodynamics
2. Yang-Mills' Equations principle bundle automorphisms
3. Einstein's eqn. in general relativity diffeomorphism group of spacetime
4. Supergravity supersymmetry transformations

THE UNIVERSE IS FULL OF HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE

of matter: quantum fields → particle excitations (eg quarks) →
→ composite particles (eg hadrons) → atoms → molecules → crystal grains →
→ boulders → planets & stars → galaxies → clusters → superclusters → ?

of levels of description in physics

of knowledge physics → chemistry → biology → psychology → sociology

of speech tones → phonemes → words → sentences → stories → speeches

of biology organelles → cells → tissues → organs → organisms → societies → eco-systems

of political systems, machines, levels of command etc. etc. etc.

In physics (and many of the other systems), the basic simplification of hierarchies is:

BEHAVIORS ON SCALES LARGER THAN YOURS ARE VARYING SO SLOWLY IN SPACE AND TIME THAT THEY AFFECT YOU ALMOST AS IF THEY WERE CONSTANT.

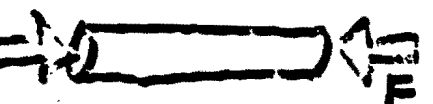
BEHAVIORS ON SCALES SMALLER THAN YOURS ARE VARYING SO QUICKLY IN SPACE AND TIME THAT ALMOST ONLY THEIR AVERAGE EFFECT IS IMPORTANT.

Such an idea is responsible for most of the perturbation theories in use - one would like to find a general setting in which to make it precise

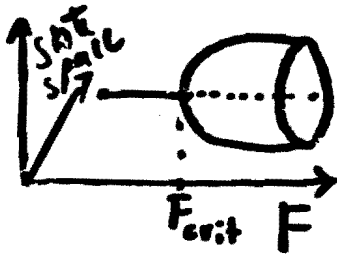
IN A HAMILTONIAN SYSTEM, APPROXIMATE SYMMETRIES GIVE RISE TO APPROXIMATELY CONSERVED QUANTITIES.

$$|X_f \cdot H| = \epsilon \Rightarrow |f| = |\{f, H\}| = |\{H, f\}| = |X_f \cdot H| = \epsilon$$

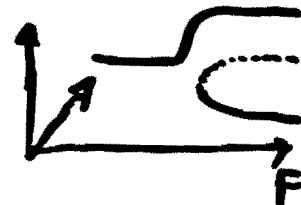
If one uses bifurcation theory to study the statics of a compressed cylindrically symmetric beam

 one obtains a bifurcation diagram where a stable fixed point gives birth to an unstable fixed point and a whole circle of stable (marginally in some directions) fixed points:

points:



If one breaks the symmetry one obtains a diagram:



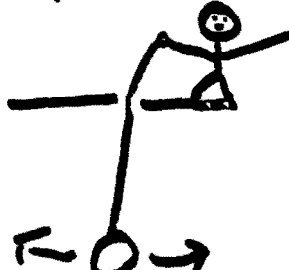
Really doing the experiment one finds that for small asymmetry the beam bends quickly in any of the original directions, but then slowly drifts to the preferred direction.

I.e. the symmetry breaking has introduced dynamics on a new time scale relative to the original problem.

This is a very general phenomenon.

Theorem (modulo some technicalities): Given a dynamical system X_ε $0 \leq \varepsilon$ whose flow reduces to a non-zero circle action at $\varepsilon=0$, one can find an action of S^1 dependent on ε which preserves X_ε for some interval of ε . This carries over to the Hamiltonian case where the S^1 action is generated by a conserved quantity J_ε .

The first order piece of J_ε in an ε Taylor expansion is usually known as the adiabatic invariant.

Example  pendulum w/ slowly varying length
 $\frac{\text{energy}}{\text{freq.}} = \frac{H}{\omega}$ is adiabotically conserved.

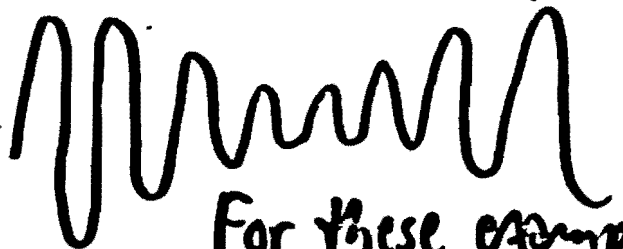
Ex Gyro-motion of charged particle in a magnetic field.
 eg. 2-d (x, y, p_x, p_y) $\{f, g\} = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \frac{\partial g}{\partial p_x} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y} \frac{\partial g}{\partial p_y} - \frac{\partial f}{\partial p_x} \frac{\partial g}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial f}{\partial p_y} \frac{\partial g}{\partial y}$

$$\underline{B} = \nabla \times \underline{A} \quad H = \frac{1}{2} \left(\underline{p} - \frac{e}{c} \underline{A} \right)^2$$

Or: $(\underline{x}, \underline{v})$ $\{f, g\} = \frac{\partial f}{\partial \underline{x}} \cdot \frac{\partial g}{\partial \underline{v}} - \frac{\partial f}{\partial \underline{v}} \frac{\partial g}{\partial \underline{x}} + \underline{B} \cdot \left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial \underline{v}} \times \frac{\partial g}{\partial \underline{v}} \right)$

$$H = \frac{1}{2} v^2$$

Ex. Oscillation Center motion of charged particle in EM wave

 Pondermotive Potential
 For these examples "Lie Transform" methods

Consider linear waves in a homogeneous medium. The translation group symmetry lifts (analogous to Koopmanism) to a linear representation on wave phase space. This action decomposes into an action on modes (fourier components just get phase shifted) thus the single freq. ω subspace has a circle action on it.
 \Rightarrow ripe for perturbing.

Slowly varying speed in medium $-\nabla^2 u + n(x)u_{tt} = 0$

Still hamiltonian: $u_t = \frac{w}{n(k)}$ $w_t = \nabla^2 u$

$$\{q, p\} = \int \left(\frac{\delta q}{\delta u} \frac{\delta p}{\delta w} - \frac{\delta q}{\delta w} \frac{\delta p}{\delta u} \right) dx \quad H = \int \left(\frac{1}{2} \frac{w^2}{n(x)} + \frac{1}{2} \nabla u \cdot \nabla u \right) dx$$

\Rightarrow Geometric Optics, WKB, etc. $u = \tilde{u} e^{i\psi(x)}$
 eikonal eqn. for rays from ψ .
 transport eqns. for amplitude \tilde{u} .

Write waves in k, x space using local fourier transform (Wigner functions): $u^2(k, x) = \int e^{ik \cdot x'} u(x + \frac{1}{2}x') u^*(x - \frac{1}{2}x') dx'$

Obtain evolution in terms of a Lie-Poisson bracket.

$$\{A_1, A_2\} = \int d^3k d^3x \mathcal{J}(k, x) \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left(\frac{\delta A_1}{\delta \mathcal{J}} \right) \cdot \frac{\partial}{\partial k} \left(\frac{\delta A_2}{\delta \mathcal{J}} \right) - \frac{\partial}{\partial k} \left(\frac{\delta A_1}{\delta \mathcal{J}} \right) \cdot \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \left(\frac{\delta A_2}{\delta \mathcal{J}} \right) \right]$$

Group is symplectomorphisms of k, x space. A coadjoint orbit is densities w/ support on Lagrangian submanifolds i.e. via Maslov-eikonal waves (which have a canonical bracket)

Some Examples of Levels of Description in Physics

1. Quantum Electrodynamics \rightarrow Quantum particles in classical EM \rightarrow exact classical particles in EM \rightarrow non-relativistic particles in EM \rightarrow macroscopic matter (D, H) \rightarrow EUM \rightarrow eikonal waves = geometrical optics \rightarrow optical system as symplectic transformation (eg. of \mathcal{E} 's + particles)
2. Quantum (e^- + nucleus) \rightarrow Quantum e^- + classical nucleus \rightarrow classical (e^- + nucleus)
3. Particle desc. of fluid \rightarrow viscous fluid \rightarrow inviscid fluid \rightarrow shallow waves \rightarrow h.d.V.
4. Klimontovich plasma \rightarrow BBGKY hierarchy \rightarrow Vlasov \rightarrow Fluid, Eikonal, Osc. Center, etc.
5. 3-body problem \rightarrow restricted 3-body problem \rightarrow 2-body problem
6. EM \rightarrow electric circuits
7. General Relativity \rightarrow Special Relativity \rightarrow Newtonian dyn. + Galilean rel.
8. BCS superconductivity \rightarrow London picture
9. Statistical Mechanics \rightarrow Thermodynamics (Non-eg. \rightarrow eg.)
10. Crystals \rightarrow phonons + dislocations (Kosterlitz-Thouless phase transition)
11. Heisenberg spin system \rightarrow "vortices" + spin waves
12. Gas Dynamics \rightarrow Nonlinear acoustics \rightarrow linear acoustics
13. Nucleus \rightarrow Liquid Drop model
14. 2-d fluid \rightarrow vortices
15. particulate description \rightarrow rigid bodies (classical classical mech.)
- particles + field \rightarrow pseudoparticles (many-body theory)