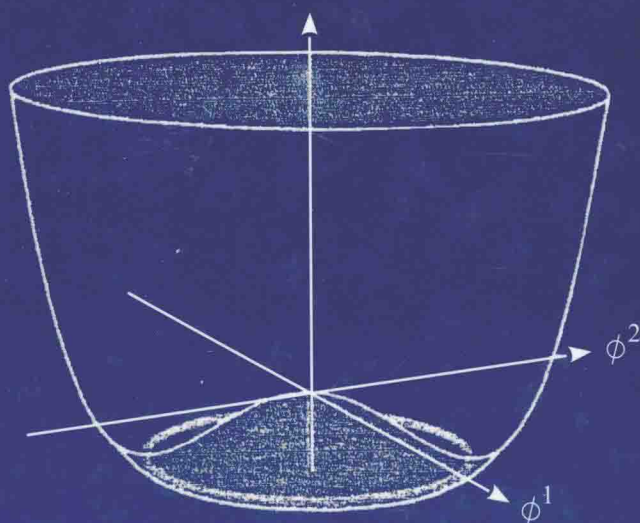


SERIES IN HIGH ENERGY PHYSICS, COSMOLOGY, AND GRAVITATION

# Group Theory for the Standard Model of Particle Physics and Beyond



Ken J. Barnes



CRC Press

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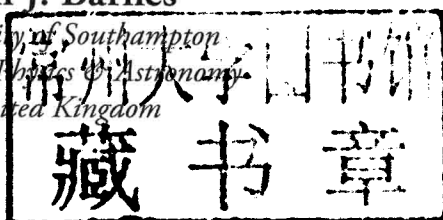
A TAYLOR & FRANCIS BOOK

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Ken J. Barnes

*University of Southampton  
School of Physics & Astronomy  
United Kingdom*



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## *Preface*

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This book emerged out of lectures to first year postgraduate students at the then Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Southampton, before I retired. It is hoped that this book will be appropriate for similar groups of readers in many other institutions across the world. Experimenters in this subject would probably gain much from reading this book, although some may find it difficult.

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## *Acknowledgments*

This book could never have been written without the consistently excellent help of Mrs. Hannah Williams, who handled LaTeX, figures, and packaging apparently with ease. My son, Dr. Geoffrey W. Morton, is also thanked for some of the figures and general advice. Dr. Jason Hamilton-Charlton is thanked for his generosity in providing both LaTeX and English electronic copies of my supersymmetry notes. Finally, I thank my wife, Jacky, for her continual support and help when writing anything seemed quite impossible.

---

## *Introduction*

This book is definitely not a book on mathematics. It is a book on the use of symmetries, mainly described by the techniques of Lie groups and Lie algebras. Although no proofs of theorems and the like are given, except in special cases, the ideas are very firmly based on a lifetime of lecturing experience.



# Contents

Preface .....	ix
Acknowledgments .....	xi
Introduction .....	xiii
<b>1 Symmetries and Conservation Laws .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Lagrangian and Hamiltonian Mechanics .....	2
Quantum Mechanics .....	6
The Oscillator Spectrum: Creation and Annihilation Operators .....	8
Coupled Oscillators: Normal Modes .....	10
One-Dimensional Fields: Waves .....	13
The Final Step: Lagrange–Hamilton Quantum Field Theory .....	16
References .....	20
Problems .....	20
<b>2 Quantum Angular Momentum .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Index Notation .....	23
Quantum Angular Momentum .....	25
Result .....	27
Matrix Representations .....	28
Spin $\frac{1}{2}$ .....	28
Addition of Angular Momenta .....	30
Clebsch–Gordan Coefficients .....	32
Notes .....	33
Matrix Representation of Direct (Outer, Kronecker) Products .....	34
$\frac{1}{2} \otimes \frac{1}{2} = 1 \oplus 0$ in Matrix Representation .....	35
Checks .....	36
Change of Basis .....	37
Exercise .....	38
References .....	38
Problems .....	38
<b>3 Tensors and Tensor Operators .....</b>	<b>41</b>
Scalars .....	41
Scalar Fields .....	42
Invariant functions .....	42
Contravariant Vectors ( $t \rightarrow$ Index at Top) .....	43
Covariant Vectors (Co = Goes Below) .....	44
Notes .....	44

Tensors .....	45
Notes and Properties .....	45
Rotations .....	47
Vector Fields .....	48
Tensor Operators .....	49
Scalar Operator .....	49
Vector Operator .....	49
Notes .....	50
Connection with Quantum Mechanics .....	51
Observables .....	51
Rotations .....	52
Scalar Fields .....	52
Vector Fields .....	53
Specification of Rotations .....	55
Transformation of Scalar Wave Functions .....	56
Finite Angle Rotations .....	57
Consistency with the Angular Momentum Commutation Rules .....	58
Rotation of Spinor Wave Function .....	58
Orbital Angular Momentum ( $\underline{x} \times \underline{p}$ ) .....	60
The Spinors Revisited .....	65
Dimensions of Projected Spaces .....	67
Connection between the “Mixed Spinor” and the Adjoint (Regular) Representation .....	67
Finite Angle Rotation of $SO(3)$ Vector .....	68
References .....	69
Problems .....	69
 <b>4 Special Relativity and the Physical Particle States .....</b>	 <b>71</b>
The Dirac Equation .....	71
The Clifford Algebra: Properties of $\gamma$ Matrices .....	72
Structure of the Clifford Algebra and Representation .....	74
Lorentz Covariance of the Dirac Equation .....	76
The Adjoint .....	78
The Nonrelativistic Limit .....	79
Poincaré Group: Inhomogeneous Lorentz Group .....	80
Homogeneous (Later Restricted) Lorentz Group .....	82
Notes .....	84
The Poincaré Algebra .....	88
The Casimir Operators and the States .....	89
References .....	93
Problems .....	93
 <b>5 The Internal Symmetries .....</b>	 <b>95</b>
References .....	105
Problems .....	105

<b>6</b>	<b>Lie Group Techniques for the Standard Model Lie Groups</b>	107
	Roots and Weights	108
	Simple Roots	111
	The Cartan Matrix	113
	Finding All the Roots	113
	Fundamental Weights	115
	The Weyl Group	116
	Young Tableaux	117
	Raising the Indices	117
	The Classification Theorem (Dynkin)	119
	Result	119
	Coincidences	119
	References	120
	Problems	120
<b>7</b>	<b>Noether's Theorem and Gauge Theories of the First and Second Kinds</b>	125
	References	129
	Problems	129
<b>8</b>	<b>Basic Couplings of the Electromagnetic, Weak, and Strong Interactions</b>	131
	References	136
	Problems	136
<b>9</b>	<b>Spontaneous Symmetry Breaking and the Unification of the Electromagnetic and Weak Forces</b>	139
	References	144
	Problems	145
<b>10</b>	<b>The Goldstone Theorem and the Consequent Emergence of Nonlinearly Transforming Massless Goldstone Bosons</b>	147
	References	151
	Problems	151
<b>11</b>	<b>The Higgs Mechanism and the Emergence of Mass from Spontaneously Broken Symmetries</b>	153
	References	155
	Problems	155
<b>12</b>	<b>Lie Group Techniques for beyond the Standard Model Lie Groups</b>	157
	References	159
	Problems	160

<b>13</b>	<b>The Simple Sphere</b> .....	161
	References .....	181
	Problems .....	182
<b>14</b>	<b>Beyond the Standard Model</b> .....	185
	Massive Case .....	188
	Massless Case .....	188
	Projection Operators .....	189
	Weyl Spinors and Representation .....	190
	Charge Conjugation and Majorana Spinor .....	192
	A Notational Trick .....	194
	$SL(2, \mathcal{C})$ View .....	194
	Unitary Representations .....	195
	Supersymmetry: A First Look at the Simplest ( $N = 1$ ) Case .....	196
	Massive Representations .....	197
	Massless Representations .....	199
	Superspace .....	200
	Three-Dimensional Euclidean Space (Revisited) .....	200
	Covariant Derivative Operators from Right Action .....	207
	Superfields .....	209
	Supertransformations .....	211
	Notes .....	211
	The Chiral Scalar Multiplet .....	212
	Superspace Methods .....	213
	Covariant Definition of Component Fields .....	214
	Supercharges Revisited .....	214
	Invariants and Lagrangians .....	217
	Notes .....	220
	Superpotential .....	221
	References .....	225
	Problems .....	225
	<b>Index</b> .....	229

# 1

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## *Symmetries and Conservation Laws*

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You may already be familiar with the ideas of conserved quantities, such as charge in electromagnetism, but it will not hurt to go through this once more, and there may be students for whom it is quite new. Since we are dealing with elementary particles, we may as well think of conserved numbers carried on particles, and indeed we will start with the charge  $e$  on the proton. If we consider the charge of the electron ( $-e$ ), which carries electric currents, what do we mean by “it is conserved” and what consequences might this have? We might as well, for simplicity, start with the problem in classical physics and turn to quantum mechanics later. Well, the first thing is that it cannot simply vanish or appear. Of course it can vanish by having equal but opposite charges annihilate it (producing, for example, the photons of light), or it can appear in the reverse of this. All other conserved quantities such as energy, and linear and angular momentum must be conserved—in our picture carried on the photons. Already we see that this must happen at the same time and at the same spatial point, but this is natural when the charges are carried on the particles.

You may well be familiar with the idea of conservation of charge being associated with the four divergence of the current carrying that charge. Calling  $j^\mu$  the current carried by an electron (of charge  $(-)e$ ) we can write

$$\partial_\mu j^\mu = 0. \quad (1.1)$$

Then we have

$$\partial\rho/\partial t + \underline{\nabla} \cdot \underline{j} = 0 \quad (1.2)$$

where  $\rho$  is the time component of  $j^\mu$  and  $\underline{j}$  is the spatial part of this current. If we integrate over a fixed volume we find

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{\partial\rho}{\partial t} + \text{flow of current normally into the volume} \\ & - \text{flow of current normally out of the volume} = 0. \end{aligned} \quad (1.3)$$

This means that the rate of increase of charge in the volume is equal to the rate of flow of charge into the volume minus the rate of flow out of the volume. A very natural feature of the model we use is where the charges are carried on the

particles. Of course, this concept needs slight changing in the world of special relativity where there is apparent contraction of lengths and dilation of times in different reference frames. Similarly in quantum mechanics further modifications are needed, which are yet further changed in quantum field theory. But we are getting too far ahead of ourselves. Let us ask what symmetries have to do with these conservation laws as our title of this chapter suggests. There is a theorem by E. Noether [1] to the effect that this is precisely what happens. It is not appropriate to prove this theorem at this stage, but it is very powerful and extends to all types of description of the physics discussed earlier. (Students note that Noether was a woman doing important work of this type at a time when there were nowhere near as many women working in science.)

The point that is necessary to understand at this stage is that all conserved quantities in physics are linked to symmetries in this way. We shall meet examples of this later. The mathematics underlying this structure is that of group theory, both discrete groups and continuous groups as described by Lie. But for the moment we move on to simple examples in the next two chapters.

## Lagrangian and Hamiltonian Mechanics

Although it has been made clear that the reader is expected to be competent in quantum field theory, an exception is made at this point to be sure that the readers really can cope.

It is one of those curious quirks of history that long before quantum theory was developed this version of classical mechanics established a framework that was capable of treating both fields and particles in both classical and quantum aspects. You are strongly urged to read Chapter 19 of Volume II of *The Feynman Lectures on Physics* [2] as an introduction to the deep and fascinating approach to physics in terms of the “principle of least action,” if you have not met it previously. We shall approach the topic in a more pedestrian manner than Feynman, partly because I am not so brave a teacher and partly because I want to get you calculating for yourself as soon as possible. It is my firm belief that the best way to get on top of a subject like this is to lose your fear of it by getting your hands dirty and actually doing the real calculations in detail yourself.

Suppose we have a one-dimensional system—yes, it is going to be the harmonic oscillator. We shall call the displacement from equilibrium  $q(t)$  rather than  $x(t)$  because later on we shall want “displacements of the fields” at various points  $x$  and we do not wish to confuse the “displacements” with the spatial positions. Then Newton’s second law is replaced by the Euler–Lagrange [3] equation

$$\frac{d}{dt} \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}} = \frac{\partial L}{\partial q} \quad (1.4)$$

where  $\dot{q}$  is the time derivative of  $q$ . The Lagrangian,  $L$ , is the difference between the kinetic energy ( $T$ ) and the potential energy ( $V$ ), that is,

$$L(q, \dot{q}) = T - V \quad (1.5)$$

and is to be regarded as a function of the independent variables  $q$  and  $\dot{q}$  for the purposes of partial differentiation. For the harmonic oscillator with mass  $m$  and spring constant  $k$  we have

$$V = \frac{k}{2}q^2 = \frac{m\omega^2}{2}q^2 \quad (1.6)$$

where  $\omega^2 = \frac{k}{m}$ . So that

$$L = \frac{m}{2}\dot{q}^2 - \frac{m\omega^2}{2}q^2 \quad (1.7)$$

and the Euler–Lagrange equation yields

$$\frac{d}{dt}(m\dot{q}) = -m\omega^2q \quad (1.8)$$

and we retrieve

$$\ddot{q} = -\omega^2q \quad (1.9)$$

as expected.

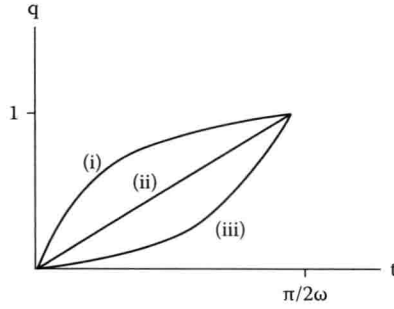
Now that we have a little experience with this formalism, we can take a look at the principle of least action. You will have noticed perhaps that the concept of force (which was primary in Newton's approach) has become secondary to the idea of potential. The least action principle makes the equation of motion itself something that is derived from the minimization of the action

$$S = \int_{t_i}^{t_f} L(q, \dot{q})dt \quad (1.10)$$

where  $t_i$  and  $t_f$  are initial and final times. The principle postulates that the actual path (often alternatively called trajectory) followed by the particle is that which minimizes  $S$ . Imagine that, given  $L$  as an explicit function of  $q$  and  $\dot{q}$ , you evaluate  $S$  for a few paths. These are just fictitious paths and none of them is likely to be the Newtonian one. I have drawn the three from the problem on the  $q$ – $t$  diagram in Figure 1.1.

These must start and finish at the same places and times. According to the principle, only if one of these coincides with the Newtonian path will the value of  $S$  be the minimum possible. You need a calculus approach to get a general answer. Notice, however,  $S$  is a function of the function  $q(t)$ . We say it is a "functional" of  $q(t)$ . We need to find the particular function,  $q_0(t)$ , that minimizes  $S$ .

Suppose there is a small variation  $\delta q(t)$  in a path  $q(t)$  from  $q(t_i)$  to  $q(t_f)$ . When  $q(t) = q_0(t)$ , the variation  $\delta S$  caused by this change  $\delta q$  must vanish.



**FIGURE 1.1**  
q-t diagram.

Now we can work out the change of action for any path as

$$\begin{aligned}
 \delta S &= \int_{t_i}^{t_f} \left( \frac{\partial L}{\partial q} \delta q + \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}} \right) dt \\
 &= \int_{t_i}^{t_f} \left( \frac{\partial L}{\partial q} \delta q + \frac{d}{dt} \left[ \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}} \right] - \frac{d}{dt} \left[ \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}} \right] \delta q \right) dt \\
 &= \int_{t_i}^{t_f} \delta q \left( \frac{\partial L}{\partial q} - \frac{d}{dt} \left[ \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}} \right] \right) dt + \left[ \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}} \delta q \right]_{t_i}^{t_f}
 \end{aligned}$$

where we used  $\delta \dot{q} = \frac{d}{dt} \delta q$  in the second step. But we are considering paths with fixed end points, so that  $\delta q(t_i) = 0 = \delta q(t_f)$  for any variation, and the final term vanishes. Hence, since  $\delta S$  must vanish for arbitrary  $\delta q$ , we need

$$\frac{d}{dt} \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}} = \frac{\partial L}{\partial q},$$

which retrieves the Euler-Lagrange equation of motion. The solution of this is the  $q_0(t)$ , which gives the path actually followed by the particle.

As we shall see later, this formalism is well suited to treat systems of the many (indeed infinitely many) linked dynamical variables found in field theories. But the transition from classical to quantum mechanics is made more transparent by considering the Hamiltonian formulation. The idea, in the first place, is to find a change in variables (from  $q$  and  $\dot{q}$ ) which will replace the second order Euler-Lagrange equation by two linked first order equations. This piece of magic is performed by introducing

$$p = \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}} \quad (1.11)$$

as a “generalized momentum conjugate to the generalized coordinate  $q$ .” (When  $q$  is a Cartesian coordinate,  $p$  will frequently be the usual linear momentum, as we shall see.) Then the Hamiltonian is introduced by the



Legendre transformation

$$H(q, p) = p\dot{q} - L(q, \dot{q}) \quad (1.12)$$

and the Euler–Lagrange equation is replaced by the pair of equations

$$\dot{q} = \frac{\partial H}{\partial p} \quad (1.13)$$

$$\dot{p} = -\frac{\partial H}{\partial q}, \quad (1.14)$$

which are known as Hamilton’s canonical equations. To get a feel for this formulation we return to our old friend the harmonic oscillator. From Equation (1.7) we see that

$$p = \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}} = m\dot{q}, \quad (1.15)$$

which is reassuring, and we can then see that from Equation (1.12)

$$\begin{aligned} H &= \frac{p^2}{m} - \left\{ \frac{p^2}{2m} - \frac{m\omega^2}{2} q^2 \right\} \\ &= \frac{p^2}{2m} + \frac{m\omega^2}{2} q^2 \end{aligned}$$

is the form of the Hamiltonian in the new variables. Notice that the Hamiltonian is the total energy,  $T + V$ . This is a very general feature, and provided that time does not appear explicitly then

$$\frac{dH}{dt} = \frac{\partial H}{\partial q} \dot{q} + \frac{\partial H}{\partial p} \dot{p} = \frac{\partial H}{\partial q} \frac{\partial H}{\partial p} + \frac{\partial H}{\partial p} \left[ -\frac{\partial H}{\partial q} \right] = 0, \quad (1.16)$$

which reflects energy conservation. In the present case the equations of motion, Equations (1.13) and (1.14), yield

$$\dot{q} = \frac{p}{m} \quad (1.17)$$

$$\dot{p} = -m\omega^2 q \quad (1.18)$$

when Equation (1.16) is used directly. The first of these reconfirms the definition of the momentum, and on substitution into the second retrieves Equation (1.9) as the second order equation of motion. It turns out, however, to be instructive to solve the first order Equations (1.17) and (1.18) directly. Consider the linear combination

$$A = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \left( x\sqrt{m\omega} + ip\frac{1}{\sqrt{m\omega}} \right), \quad (1.19)$$