## **IV. Space-time symmetries**

Conservation laws have their origin in symmetries and invariance properties of the underlying interactions

Symmetries, conservation laws and "non-observables":

Symmetry transformation	Conservation law or selection rule	Non-observable
Space translation: $x \rightarrow x+\delta x$	momentum	absolute spatial position
Rotation: $\mathbf{x} \rightarrow \mathbf{x}'$	angular momentum	absolute spatial direction
Time translation: $t \rightarrow t+\delta t$	energy	absolute time
<b>Reflection:</b> $\mathbf{x} \rightarrow -\mathbf{x}$	parity	"handedness" (absolute generalized right/left)
Charge conjugation: $q \rightarrow -q$	particle-antiparticle symmetry	absolute sign of electric charge
$\psi \rightarrow e^{iq} \theta \psi$	charge q	relative phase between states of different q
$\psi \rightarrow e^{iL} \theta \psi$	lepton number L	relative phase between states of different L
$\psi \rightarrow e^{iB} \theta \psi$	baryon number B	relative phase between states of different B

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#### Translational invariance

When a closed system of particles is moved from from one position in space to another, its physical properties do not change

Considering an infinitesimal translation  $\dot{x}_i \rightarrow \dot{x}'_i = \dot{x}_i + \delta \dot{x}$ , the Hamiltonian of the system transforms as:

$$H(\vec{x}_1, \vec{x}_2, \dots, \vec{x}_n) \to H(\vec{x}_1 + \delta \vec{x}, \vec{x}_2 + \delta \vec{x}, \dots, \vec{x}_n + \delta \vec{x})$$

In the simplest case of a free particle,

$$H = -\frac{1}{2m}\nabla^2 = -\frac{1}{2m}\left(\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial z^2}\right)$$
(40)

From Equation (40) it is clear that

$$H(\dot{x}'_{1}, \dot{x}'_{2}, ..., \dot{x}'_{n}) = H(\dot{x}_{1}, \dot{x}_{2}, ..., \dot{x}_{n})$$
(41)

which is true for any general closed system

# \* The Hamiltonian is *invariant* under the *translation operator* $\hat{D}$ , which is defined as an action onto an arbitrary wavefunction $\psi(\vec{x})$ such that $\hat{D}\psi(\vec{x}) \equiv \psi(\vec{x} + \delta \vec{x})$ (42)

For a single-particle state  $\psi'(\vec{x}) = H(\vec{x})\psi(\vec{x})$ , from (42) one obtains:  $\hat{D}\psi'(\vec{x}) = \psi'(\vec{x} + \delta\vec{x}) = H(\vec{x} + \delta\vec{x})\psi(\vec{x} + \delta\vec{x})$ 

Since the Hamiltonian is invariant under translation,  $\hat{D}\psi'(\hat{x}) = H(\hat{x})\psi(\hat{x} + \delta\hat{x})$ , and using the definitions once again,  $\hat{D}H(\hat{x})\psi(\hat{x}) = H(\hat{x})\hat{D}\psi(\hat{x})$  (43)

♦ It is said that  $\hat{D}$  commutes with Hamiltonian
(a standard notation for this is  $[\hat{D}, H] = \hat{D}H - H\hat{D} = 0$ )

Since  $\delta \hat{x}$  is an infinitely small quantity, translation (42) can be expanded:

$$\psi(\vec{x} + \delta \vec{x}) = \psi(\vec{x}) + \delta \vec{x} \cdot \nabla \psi(\vec{x})$$
(44)

Form (44) includes explicitly the momentum operator  $\hat{p} = -i\nabla$ , hence the translation operator  $\hat{D}$  can be rewritten as

$$\hat{D} = 1 + i\delta \hat{x} \cdot \hat{p}$$
(45)

Substituting (45) to (43), one obtains

$$[\hat{p}, H] = 0$$
 (46)

which is simply the *momentum conservation law* for a single-particle state whose Hamiltonian in invariant under translation.

Generalization of (45) and (46) for the case of multiparticle state leads to the general momentum conservation law for the total momentum

$$\vec{p} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \vec{p}_i$$

#### Rotational invariance

When a closed system of particles is rotated about its centre-of-mass, its physical properties remain unchanged

Under a rotation about e.g. z-axis through an angle  $\theta$ , coordinates  $x_i, y_i, z_i$  transform to new coordinates  $x'_i, y'_i, z'_i$  as follows:

$$x'_{i} = x_{i} \cos \theta - y_{i} \sin \theta$$
  

$$y'_{i} = x_{i} \sin \theta + y_{i} \cos \theta$$
  

$$z'_{i} = z$$
(47)

Correspondingly, the new Hamiltonian of the rotated system will be the same as the initial one,  $H(\vec{x}_1, \vec{x}_2, ..., \vec{x}_n) = H(\vec{x}_1, \vec{x}_2, ..., \vec{x}_n)$ 

Considering rotation through an infinitesimal angle  $\delta\theta$ , equations (47) transform to

$$x' = x - y\delta\theta$$
,  $y' = y + x\delta\theta$ ,  $z' = z$ 

A rotational operator  $\hat{R}_Z$  is introduced by analogy with the translation operator  $\hat{D}$ :

$$\hat{R}_{z}\psi(\dot{x}) \equiv \psi(\dot{x}') = \psi(x - y\delta\theta, y + x\delta\theta, z)$$
(48)

Expansion to first order in  $\delta\theta$  gives:

$$\psi(\vec{x}') = \psi(\vec{x}) - \delta\theta\left(y\frac{\partial}{\partial x} - x\frac{\partial}{\partial y}\right)\psi(\vec{x}) = (1 + i\delta\theta\hat{L}_z)\psi(\vec{x})$$

where  $\hat{L}_z$  is z-component of the orbital angular momentum operator  $\hat{L}$ :

$$\hat{L}_{z} = -i\left(x\frac{\partial}{\partial y} - y\frac{\partial}{\partial x}\right) \text{ (in classical mechanics } \vec{L} = \vec{r} \times \vec{p} \Rightarrow L_{z} = (xp_{y} - yp_{x})\text{)}$$

Sor a general case of rotation about an arbitrary direction specified by a unit vector  $\vec{h}$ ,  $L_Z$  has to be replaced by the corresponding projection of  $\vec{L}$ :  $\vec{L} \cdot \vec{n}$ , giving

$$\hat{R}_n = 1 + i\delta\theta(\hat{L}\cdot\vec{n})$$
(49)

Considering  $\hat{R}_n$  acting on a single-particle state  $\psi'(\hat{x}) = H(\hat{x})\psi(\hat{x})$  and repeating same steps as for the translation case, one gets:

$$[R_n, H] = 0 \tag{50}$$

$$[\hat{L},H] = 0 \tag{51}$$

This applies to a spin-0 particle moving in a central potential, i.e., in a field that does not depend on a direction, but only on the absolute distance.

If a particle posseses a non-zero spin, the total angular momentum is the sum of the orbital and spin angular momenta:

$$\hat{J} = \hat{L} + \hat{S} \tag{52}$$

and the wavefunction is a product of the independent space wavefunction  $\psi(\hat{x})$  and spin wavefunction  $\chi$ :

$$\Psi = \psi(\dot{x})\chi$$

For the case of spin-1/2 particles, the spin operator is represented in terms of Pauli matrices  $\sigma$ :

$$\hat{S} = \frac{1}{2}\sigma \tag{53}$$

where  $\sigma$  has components (recall Chapter I.):

$$\sigma_{1} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \sigma_{2} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -i \\ i & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \sigma_{3} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}$$
(54)

Let us denote now spin wavefunction for spin "up" state as  $\chi = \alpha$  ( $S_z = 1/2$ ) and for spin "down" state as  $\chi = \beta$  ( $S_z = -1/2$ ), so that

$$\alpha = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \beta = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$$
(55)

Both  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  satisfy the eigenvalue equations for operator (53):

$$\hat{S}_{z} \alpha = \frac{l}{2} \alpha$$
 ,  $\hat{S}_{z} \beta = -\frac{l}{2} \beta$ 

Analogously to (49), rotation operator for a spin-1/2 particle generalizes to

$$\hat{R}_n = 1 + i\delta\theta(\hat{J}\cdot\hat{\vec{n}})$$
(56)

When the rotation operator  $\hat{R}_n$  acts onto a wave function  $\Psi = \psi(\hat{x})\chi$ , components  $\hat{L}$  and  $\hat{S}$  of  $\hat{J}$  act independently upon the corresponding wave functions:

$$\hat{J}\Psi = (\hat{L} + \hat{S})\psi(\hat{x})\chi = [\hat{L}\psi(\hat{x})]\chi + \psi(\hat{x})[\hat{S}\chi]$$

That means that although the total angular momentum has to be conserved,  $\hat{[J, H]} = 0$ 

the rotational invariance does not in general lead to the conservation of L and S separately:

$$[\hat{L},H] = -[\hat{S},H] \neq 0$$

However, presuming that the forces can change only orientation of the spin, but not its absolute value, one can conclude that

$$[H, \hat{L}^2] = [H, \hat{S}^2] = 0$$

Good quantum numbers are those which are associated with conserved observables (operators commute with the Hamiltonian)

Spin is one of the quantum numbers which characterize any particle – elementary or composite.

- Spin of a composite particle is the total angular momentum J of its constituents in their centre-of-mass frame
- Quarks are spin-1/2 particles  $\Rightarrow$  the spin quantum number J of hadrons can be either integer or half-integer
- Spin projections on a chosen z-axis  $-J_z$  can take any of 2J+1 values, from -J to J with the "step" of 1, depending on the particle's spin orientation
  - Isually, it is assumed that L and S are "good" quantum numbers together with J, while  $J_z$  depends on the spin orientation.



Figure 78: A naive illustration of possible  $J_z$  values for spin-1/2 and spin-1 particles Using "good" quantum numbers, one can refer to a particle via spectroscopic notation, like

$$^{2S+1}L_{J} \tag{57}$$

- S,P,D,F... are used correspondingly
  Solution
  <p
- In this notation, the lowest-lying (L=0) bound state of two particles of spin-1/2 (a meson) will be  ${}^{1}S_{0}$  or  ${}^{3}S_{1}$



Figure 79: Quark-antiquark states for L=0

<sup>(</sup>● For mesons with L ≥ 1, possible states are:  ${}^{I}L_{L}$ ,  ${}^{3}L_{L+1}$ ,  ${}^{3}L_{L}$ ,  ${}^{3}L_{L-1}$ 

♦ Baryons are bound states of 3 quarks  $\Rightarrow$  there are two orbital angular momenta connected to the relative motion of quarks.



Figure 80: Internal orbital angular momenta of a three-quark state

- (a) total orbital angular momentum is  $L = L_{12} + L_3$ .
- ◎ spin of a baryon  $S=S_1+S_2+S_3 \Rightarrow S=1/2$  or S=3/2

Possible baryon states:

<sup>2</sup>S<sub>1/2</sub>, <sup>4</sup>S<sub>3/2</sub> (
$$L = 0$$
)  
<sup>2</sup>P<sub>1/2</sub>, <sup>2</sup>P<sub>3/2</sub>, <sup>4</sup>P<sub>1/2</sub>, <sup>4</sup>P<sub>3/2</sub>, <sup>4</sup>P<sub>5/2</sub> ( $L = 1$ )  
<sup>2</sup>L<sub>L+1/2</sub>, <sup>2</sup>L<sub>L-1/2</sub>, <sup>4</sup>L<sub>L-3/2</sub>, <sup>4</sup>L<sub>L-1/2</sub>, <sup>4</sup>L<sub>L+1/2</sub>, <sup>4</sup>L<sub>L+3/2</sub> ( $L \ge 2$ )

#### Parity

Parity transformation is the transformation by reflection:

$$\dot{\tilde{x}}_i \to \dot{\tilde{x}'}_i = -\dot{\tilde{x}}_i \tag{58}$$

A system is said to be invariant under parity transformation if

$$H(-\overset{\flat}{x_1},-\overset{\flat}{x_2},\ldots,-\overset{\flat}{x_n}) = H(\overset{\flat}{x_1},\overset{\flat}{x_2},\ldots,\overset{\flat}{x_n})$$

Parity is not an exact symmetry: it is violated in weak interactions!

Absolute handedness can actually be defined

A parity operator  $\hat{P}$  is defined as

$$\hat{P}\psi(\vec{x},t) \equiv P_a \psi(-\vec{x},t)$$
(59)

Two consecutive reflections must result in a system identical to the initial:

$$\hat{P}^2 \psi(\vec{x}, t) = \psi(\vec{x}, t)$$
(60)

From equations (59) and (60),  $P_a = +1$ , -1

Consider a particle wavefunction which is a solution of the Dirac equation

(16):  $\psi_{\vec{p}}(\vec{x}, t) = u(\vec{p})e^{i(\vec{p}\vec{x} - Et)}$ , where  $u(\vec{p})$  is a four-component spinor independent of  $\vec{x}$ . Parity operation on such a wavefunction is then:

$$\hat{P}\psi_{\vec{p}}(\vec{x},t) = P_a u(-\vec{p})e^{i((-\vec{p})(-\vec{x}) - Et)}$$
(61)

• Particle at rest ( $\dot{p} = 0$ ) is an eigenstate of the parity operator:

$$\hat{P}\psi_0(\vec{x},t) = P_a u(0)e^{-iEt} = P_a \psi_0(\vec{x},t)$$
(62)

Sector Eigenvalue  $P_a$  is called the *intrinsic parity* of a particle a: intrinsic parity is parity of a particle at rest

• Different particles have different, independent, values of parity  $P_a$ . For a system of *n* particles,

$$\hat{P}\psi(\dot{x}_1, \dot{x}_2, \dots, \dot{x}_n, t) \equiv P_1 P_2 \dots P_n \psi(-\dot{x}_1, -\dot{x}_2, \dots, -\dot{x}_n, t)$$

Polar coordinates offer a convenient frame: parity transformation is  $r \rightarrow r' = r$ ,  $\theta \rightarrow \theta' = \pi - \theta$ ,  $\phi \rightarrow \phi' = \pi + \phi$ 

and a wavefunction can be written as

$$\Psi_{nlm}(\dot{x}) = R_{nl}(r)Y_l^m(\theta, \phi)$$
(63)

In Equation (63),  $R_{nl}$  is a function of the radius only, and  $Y_l^m$  are spherical harmonics, which describe angular dependence.

Under the parity transformation,  $R_{nl}$  does not change, while spherical harmonics change as

$$Y_l^m(\theta, \phi) \to Y_l^m(\pi - \theta, \pi + \phi) = (-1)^l Y_l^m(\theta, \phi)$$

$$\downarrow$$

$$\hat{P}\psi_{nlm}(\vec{x}) = P_a \psi_{nlm}(-\vec{x}) = P_a (-1)^l \psi_{nlm}(\vec{x})$$

Output A particle with a definite orbital angular momentum is also an eigenstate of parity with an eigenvalue  $P_a(-1)^l$ .

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Considering only electromagnetic and strong interactions, and using the usual argumentation, one can prove that parity is conserved:

$$[\hat{P},H] = 0$$

- Recall: the Dirac equation (16) suggests a four-component wavefunction to describe both electrons and positrons: 2 components for electrons, 2 components for positrons.
- Indeed, intrinsic parities of e<sup>−</sup> and e<sup>+</sup> are related, namely:  $P_{e^+}P_{e^-} = -1$
- This is true for all the fermions (spin-1/2 particles), i.e.,

$$P_f P_{\overline{f}} = -1 \tag{64}$$

Experimentally this can be confirmed by studying the reaction  $e^+e^- \rightarrow \gamma \gamma$ where initial state has zero orbital momentum and parity of  $P_{\rho^-} P_{\rho^+}$ 

If the final state has relative orbital angular momentum  $l_{\gamma}$ , its parity is  $P_{\gamma}^{2}(-1)^{l_{\gamma}}$ 

Since  $P_{\gamma}^2 = 1$ , from the parity conservation law stems that  $P_{e^-} P_{e^+} = (-1)^{l_{\gamma}}$ Experimental measurements of  $l_{\gamma}$  confirm (64)

While (64) can be proven in experiments, it is impossible to determine  $P_{e^-}$  or  $P_{e^+}$ , since these particles are created or destroyed only in pairs.

Conventionally defined parities of leptons are:

$$P_{e^{-}} = P_{\mu^{-}} = P_{\tau^{-}} \equiv 1 \tag{65}$$

And consequently, parities of antileptons have opposite sign.

Since quarks and antiquarks are also produced only in pairs, their parities are defined also by convention:

$$P_u = P_d = P_s = P_c = P_b = P_t = 1$$
 (66)

with parities of antiquarks being -1.

For a meson  $M=(a\overline{b})$ , parity is then calculated as

$$P_M = P_a P_{\bar{b}} (-1)^L = (-1)^{L+1}$$
(67)

If O For the low-lying mesons (L=0) this implies parity of -1, which is confirmed by observations

For a baryon B=(abc), parity is given as

$$P_B = P_a P_b P_c (-1)^{L_{12}} (-1)^{L_3} = (-1)^{L_{12} + L_3}$$
(68)

and for antibaryon  $P_{\overline{B}} = -P_B$ , similarly to the case of leptons.

If O For the low-lying baryons with  $L_{12}=L_3=0$ , (68) predicts positive parities, which is also confirmed by experiment.

Parity of the photon can be deduced from the classical field theory, considering Poisson's equation:

$$\nabla \cdot \vec{E}(\vec{x}, t) = \frac{1}{\varepsilon_0} \rho(\vec{x}, t)$$

Under a parity transformation, charge density changes as  $\rho(\dot{x}, t) \rightarrow \rho(-\dot{x}, t)$  and  $\nabla$  changes its sign, so that to keep the equation invariant, the electric field must transform as

$$\vec{E}(\vec{x},t) \rightarrow -\vec{E}(-\vec{x},t)$$
 (69)

The electromagnetic field is described by the vector and scalar potentials:

$$\vec{E} = -\nabla\phi - \frac{\partial\vec{A}}{\partial t}$$
(70)

For photons, only the vector part corresponds to the wavefunction:

$$\vec{A}(\vec{x},t) = N \hat{\varepsilon}(\vec{k}) e^{i(\vec{k}\vec{x}-Et)}$$

Under parity transformation:  $\vec{A}(\vec{x}, t) \rightarrow P_{\gamma}\vec{A}(-\vec{x}, t)$ , and from (69) follows

$$\vec{E}(\vec{x},t) \to P_{\gamma}\vec{E}(-\vec{x},t).$$
(71)

Ocomparing (71) and (69), one concludes that parity of photon is  $P_{\gamma} = -1$ 

### Charge conjugation

Charge conjugation replaces particles by their antiparticles, reversing charges and magnetic moments

#### Charge conjugation is violated in weak interactions

Absolute sign of the electric charge can actually be defined

For strong and electromagnetic interactions, charge conjugation is a symmetry:

$$[\hat{C},H] = 0$$

It is convenient now to denote a state in a compact notation, using Dirac's "ket" representation:  $|\pi^+, \dot{p}\rangle$  denotes a pion having momentum  $\dot{p}$ , or, in general case,

$$|\pi^{+}\Psi_{1};\pi^{-}\Psi_{2}\rangle \equiv |\pi^{+}\Psi_{1}\rangle|\pi^{-}\Psi_{2}\rangle$$
(72)

Next, we denote particles which have distinct antiparticles with "a", and otherwise – with "a"

In such notations, we describe the action of the charge conjugation operator upon particles of kind " $\alpha$ " as:

$$\hat{C}|\alpha,\Psi\rangle = C_{\alpha}|\alpha,\Psi\rangle$$
 (73)

meaning that the final state acquires a phase factor  $C_{\alpha}$ , and for "a" as:

$$\hat{C}|a,\Psi\rangle = |\bar{a},\Psi\rangle$$
 (74)

meaning that from a particle in the initial state we came to the antiparticle in the final state.

Since the consequtive transformation turns antiparticles back to particles,  $\hat{C}^2 = 1$  and hence

$$C_{\alpha} = \pm 1 \tag{75}$$

For multiparticle states the transformation is:

$$\hat{C}|\alpha_1, \alpha_2, ..., \alpha_1, \alpha_2, ...; \Psi\rangle = C_{\alpha_1} C_{\alpha_2} ... |\alpha_1, \alpha_2, ..., \bar{\alpha}_1, \bar{\alpha}_2, ...; \Psi\rangle$$
 (76)

- ♦ From (73) follows that particles  $\alpha = \gamma, \pi^0, \ldots$  are eigenstates of *C* with eigenvalues  $C_{\alpha} = \pm 1$ .
- Other eigenstates can be constructed from particle-antiparticle pairs:  $\hat{C}|a, \Psi_1; \bar{a}, \Psi_2\rangle = |\bar{a}, \Psi_1; a\Psi_2\rangle = \pm |a, \Psi_1; \bar{a}, \Psi_2\rangle$ 
  - In the state of definite orbital angular momentum, interchanging between particle and antiparticle reverses their relative position vector, for example:

$$\hat{C}|\pi^{+}\pi^{-};L\rangle = (-1)^{L}|\pi^{+}\pi^{-};L\rangle$$
 (77)

For fermion-antifermion pairs theory predicts

$$\hat{C}|\tilde{ff};J,L,S\rangle = (-1)^{L+S}|\tilde{ff};J,L,S\rangle$$
(78)

This implies that e.g. a neutral pion  $\pi^0$ , being a  ${}^1S_0$  state of uu and dd, must have C-parity of 1.

#### **Tests of C-invariance**

♦ Prediction of  $C_{\pi^0} = 1$  can be confirmed experimentally by observing the decay  $\pi^0 \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$ .

The final state has C=1, and from the relations

$$\hat{C} |\pi^{0}\rangle = C_{\pi^{0}} |\pi^{0}\rangle$$
$$\hat{C} |\gamma\gamma\rangle = C_{\gamma}C_{\gamma} |\gamma\gamma\rangle = |\gamma\gamma\rangle$$

follows that  $C_{\pi^0} = 1$ .

 $\diamond$   $C_{\gamma}$  can be inferred from the classical field theory:

$$\vec{A}(\vec{x},t) \rightarrow C_{\gamma} \vec{A}(\vec{x},t)$$

under the charge conjugation, and since all electric charges swap, electric field and scalar potential also change sign:

$$\vec{E}(\vec{x},t) \rightarrow -\vec{E}(\vec{x},t)$$
,  $\phi(\vec{x},t) \rightarrow -\phi(\vec{x},t)$ 

Upon substitution into (70) this gives  $C_{\gamma} = -1$ .

To check predictions of the C-invariance and of the value of  $C_{\gamma}$ , one can try to look for the decay

$$\pi^0 \to \gamma + \gamma + \gamma$$

(a) If predictions for  $C_{\gamma}$  and  $C_{\pi} \partial$  are true, this mode should be forbidden:  $\hat{C} |\gamma\gamma\gamma\rangle = (C_{\gamma})^{3} |\gamma\gamma\gamma\rangle = -|\gamma\gamma\gamma\rangle$ 

contradicts all previous observations. Indeed, experimentally, this  $3\gamma$  mode has never been observed.

Symmetry requirements and corresponding conservation laws explain why certain particle decays are never observed – forbidden Another confirmation of C-invariance comes from observation of  $\eta$ -meson decays:

$$\eta \rightarrow \gamma + \gamma$$
$$\eta \rightarrow \pi^{0} + \pi^{0} + \pi^{0}$$
$$\eta \rightarrow \pi^{+} + \pi^{-} + \pi^{0}$$

<sup>(o)</sup> They are electromagnetic decays, and first two clearly indicate that  $C_{\eta}$ =1. Identical charged pions momenta distribution in the last confirms C-invariance.