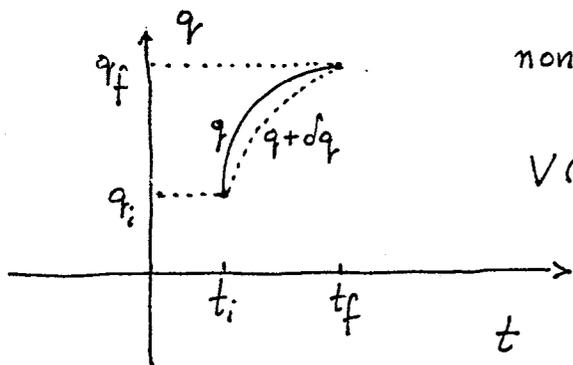


# THE UNIFIED ACTION PRINCIPLE

(addendum to PH 141/lecture 2)

## Action Principle



nonrelativistic particle in one dimension

$V(q)$  potential energy

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

$\delta S = 0$  for physical orbit

$$q(t) \rightarrow q(t) + \delta q(t)$$

$$L = K - V$$

$$K = \frac{1}{2} m \dot{q}^2$$

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

Euler-Lagrange equation

(Newton equation)

$$m \ddot{q} = f \quad f = - \frac{\partial V}{\partial q}$$

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$$p = \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}}$$

definition of canonical momentum

$$p = m \dot{q}$$

$$H = p\dot{q} - L \quad \text{Hamiltonian}$$

$$H = \frac{p^2}{m} - \frac{p^2}{2m} + V(q) = \frac{p^2}{2m} + V(q) \quad \text{energy}$$

quantum theory  $[q, p] = i\hbar$

oscillator example  $V(q) = \frac{1}{2} m\omega^2 q^2$  operators

$$H = \frac{p^2}{2m} + \frac{1}{2} m\omega^2 q^2$$

$$a^+ = \sqrt{\frac{m\omega}{2\hbar}} \left( q - i \frac{1}{m\omega} p \right)$$

creation and annihilation operators

$$a = \sqrt{\frac{m\omega}{2\hbar}} \left( q + i \frac{1}{m\omega} p \right)$$

$$[a, a^+] = 1$$

$$H = \hbar\omega \left( a^+ a + \frac{1}{2} \right)$$

↑ zero point energy (can be left out by normalization)

$$a |0\rangle = 0 \quad \text{ground state}$$

note on gravity and cosmological constant

$$a^+ |0\rangle \quad \text{first excited state}$$

$$|n\rangle = \frac{(a^+)^n}{\sqrt{n!}} |0\rangle \quad H |n\rangle = \left( n + \frac{1}{2} \right) \hbar\omega |n\rangle$$

$$\langle \psi(t) | a | \phi(t) \rangle = \langle \psi(0) | e^{\frac{i}{\hbar} Ht} a e^{-\frac{i}{\hbar} Ht} | \phi(0) \rangle$$

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$$a(t) = e^{\frac{i}{\hbar} H t} a e^{-\frac{i}{\hbar} H t} \quad a(0) = a$$

Heisenberg picture

$$\frac{da(t)}{dt} = \frac{i}{\hbar} [H, a]$$

$$\dot{a}(t) = -i\omega a(t)$$

$$a(t) = e^{-i\omega t} a$$

$$a^+(t) = e^{i\omega t} a^+$$

$$q(t) = \sqrt{\frac{\hbar}{2m\omega}} \left( a e^{-i\omega t} + a^+ e^{i\omega t} \right)$$

satisfies the Euler-Lagrange equation

$$m\ddot{q} = -m\omega^2 q$$

classically  $a, a^+$  are determined by initial conditions  $q(0)$  and  $p(0)$

$$\ddot{q} + \omega^2 q = 0$$

generalization to  $N$  degrees of freedom

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

$$L(q_1, \dot{q}_1, q_2, \dot{q}_2, \dots, q_N, \dot{q}_N)$$

$$\frac{d}{dt} \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}_k} = \frac{\partial L}{\partial q_k} \quad k=1, 2, \dots, N$$

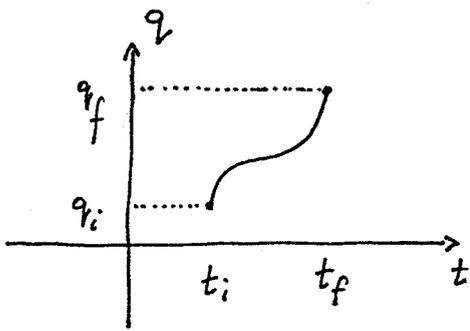
$$p_k = \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}_k} \quad k=1, 2, \dots, N \quad \text{canonical momenta}$$

$$H = \sum_k p_k \dot{q}_k - L \quad \text{Hamiltonian}$$

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## Action Principle and Quantum Theory (digression)



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

↑  
K-V

$\delta S = 0$  action principle in classical physics selects physical trajectory

$$\delta S = \int_{t_i}^{t_f} [L(q + \delta q, \dot{q} + \delta \dot{q}) - L(q, \dot{q})] dt$$

$$\delta S = \int_{t_i}^{t_f} \left( \frac{\partial L}{\partial q} \delta q + \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}} \delta \dot{q} \right) dt = \int_{t_i}^{t_f} \left( \frac{\partial L}{\partial q} - \frac{d}{dt} \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{q}} \right) \delta q dt$$

by partial integration

↑  
must vanish for arbitrary  $\delta q$   
Newton equation

in Quantum Mechanics:

$$G(q_f, q_i; t_f, t_i) = \langle q_f | e^{-\frac{i}{\hbar} H(t_f - t_i)} | q_i \rangle$$

fundamental object  
(propagator)

at  $t = t_i$  particle is prepared at  $q = q_i$   
probability amplitude (complex) that particle will  
be found at  $q = q_f$  at some later time  $t = t_f$

$$\langle \psi_f | e^{-\frac{i}{\hbar} H t} | \psi_i \rangle = \int dq' \int dq \psi_f^*(q') G(q', q; t_f - t_i) \psi_i(q)$$

at  $t = t_i$   $|\psi_i\rangle$  general initial state

$t = t_f$   $|\psi_f\rangle$  probability amplitude of some final state

$$G(q_f, q_i; t_f - t_i) = \sum_{\text{all paths}} e^{\frac{i}{\hbar} S(\text{path})}$$

Quantum Action Principle  
Feynman path integral  
(contains classical limit)

$\frac{S}{\hbar}$  phase of a path

$$\frac{\hbar}{h} = \frac{h}{2\pi} = 1.0546 \times 10^{-34} \text{ Js} = 6.5822 \times 10^{-22} \text{ MeVs}$$

Planck's constant

microscopic motion  $S \lesssim \hbar$  all paths contribute  
(quantum regime)

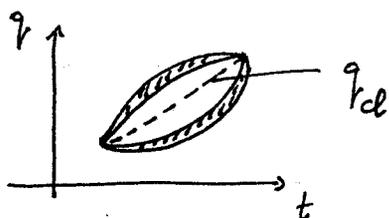
electron moving over distance  $q_f - q_i = 0.1 \times 10^{-8} \text{ cm}$  (size of atom)  
or smaller

$v = 0.1c$  nonrelativistic

$$t_f - t_i = \frac{0.1 \times 10^{-8} \text{ cm}}{0.3 \times 10^{10} \frac{\text{cm}}{\text{s}}} \approx 3 \times 10^{-18} \text{ s}$$

$$S = \frac{1}{2} \underbrace{0.5 \text{ MeV}/c^2}_{m_e} \cdot (0.01 c^2) \cdot 0.3 \times 10^{-18} \text{ s} = 7 \times 10^{-22} \text{ MeVs}$$

$\frac{\delta S}{\hbar}$  phase is slowly changing in quantum motion over macroscopically measurable spread of path bundle, nonclassical trajectories all contribute in quantum situation



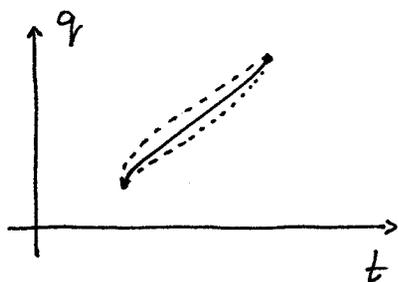
macroscopic body (classical limit)

$$m = 1 \text{ gr} \quad (m_e = 9.1 \times 10^{-28} \text{ gr})$$

$$v = \frac{1}{10} c$$

$$l = 1 \text{ cm}$$

$$S \sim 10^{17} \text{ MeVs} \sim 10^{40} \hbar$$



only very narrow band around the classical path contributes