

Re: Actions, symmetries, and gauge theories

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.physics.research/2007-02/msg00020.html>

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 - *Date:* Thu, 8 Feb 2007 06:54:49 +0000 (UTC)
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On 2007-02-06, coalquay404 <coalquay404.2lkya2@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Suppose that we have some theory which is invariant under the action of a gauge group, G . Since this theory is a gauge theory, it can be derived from a singular Lagrangian or Lagrangian density, L . Now suppose that the action for this theory,

$$S = \int L(q, \dot{q})$$

is invariant under the action of some group H . What is the relationship between the groups G and H ?

H may be larger than G . For instance, translation invariance is usually not considered a gauge symmetry. But an action functional may well be translation invariant and invariant under local gauge transformations. This is in fact the case for electrodynamics.

I guess the reason I'm interested in asking this is to find out whether or not the symmetries of an action functional must necessarily be the same as the symmetries of the resultant equations of motion for the theory. As an extension, I wonder if the symmetries of an action could generate a different symmetry group in the equations of motion. It strikes me that this is an obvious question, but I can't seem to find any (rigorous) information on it.

A symmetry of the action functional implies a symmetry of the equations of motion (Noether's theorem). But, a priori, the reverse need not be true. However, I'm not sure I can provide an example off the top of my head. Would such an example answer your question, though?

Hope this helps.

Re: Actions, symmetries, and gauge theories

Igor

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