

Noether's theorem for Dirac fermions:

Lagrangian: $\mathcal{L} = \mathcal{L}[\psi, \partial_\mu \psi, \bar{\psi}, \partial_\mu \bar{\psi}]$

Transformation law: $\psi \rightarrow \psi + \delta\psi \quad \bar{\psi} \rightarrow \bar{\psi} + \delta\bar{\psi}$

Lagrangian transforms: $\mathcal{L}[\psi] \rightarrow \mathcal{L}[\psi] + \delta\mathcal{L}$

where

$$\delta\mathcal{L} = \frac{\partial\mathcal{L}}{\partial\psi} \delta\psi + \frac{\partial\mathcal{L}}{\partial(\partial_\mu\psi)} \delta(\partial_\mu\psi) + \delta\bar{\psi} \frac{\partial\mathcal{L}}{\partial\bar{\psi}} + \delta(\partial_\mu\bar{\psi}) \frac{\partial\mathcal{L}}{\partial(\partial_\mu\bar{\psi})} \quad (*)$$

Equations of motion: $\frac{\partial\mathcal{L}}{\partial\psi} = \partial_\mu \underbrace{\frac{\partial\mathcal{L}}{\partial(\partial_\mu\psi)}}_{\text{abbr: } \pi^\mu} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\partial\mathcal{L}}{\partial\bar{\psi}} = \partial_\mu \frac{\partial\mathcal{L}}{\partial(\partial_\mu\bar{\psi})}$

Then (*) becomes:

$$\begin{aligned} \delta\mathcal{L} &= (\partial_\mu \pi^\mu) \delta\psi + \pi^\mu (\partial_\mu \delta\psi) + \delta\bar{\psi} (\partial_\mu \pi^\mu) + \partial_\mu (\delta\bar{\psi}) \pi^\mu \\ &= \partial_\mu (\pi^\mu \delta\psi + \underbrace{\delta\bar{\psi} \pi^\mu}_{\text{vanishes for unsymmetrized Lagrangian}}) \end{aligned}$$

If Lagrangian is invariant (up to a divergence) under transformation,

$$\delta\mathcal{L} = \partial_\mu V^\mu$$

then,

with associated conserved charge:

$$0 = \partial_\mu (\underbrace{\pi^\mu \delta\psi + \delta\bar{\psi} \pi^\mu}_{\text{Noether current } J^\mu} - V^\mu)$$

$$Q = \int d^3x J^0(x, t) \quad \dot{Q} = 0.$$

Examples: Vector transformation $\psi \rightarrow e^{-i\alpha} \psi \Rightarrow \delta\psi = -i\alpha \psi$

$$\delta\mathcal{L} = \alpha \partial_\mu \underbrace{(\bar{\psi} \gamma^\mu \psi)}_{J_V^\mu} = 0$$

Axial transformation $\psi \rightarrow e^{-i\alpha \gamma_5} \psi \Rightarrow \delta\psi = -i\alpha \gamma_5 \psi$

$$\delta\mathcal{L} = \alpha \partial_\mu \underbrace{(\bar{\psi} \gamma^\mu \gamma_5 \psi)}_{J_A^\mu} = 0$$

Examples:

Vector

4-component Dirac

$$U(1)_V: \quad \psi \rightarrow e^{-i\alpha} \psi$$

$$\delta\mathcal{L} = \partial_\mu \underbrace{(\bar{\psi} \gamma^\mu \psi)}_{J^\mu_\downarrow}$$

Two component Weyl

$$\psi = \begin{pmatrix} \chi \\ \bar{\chi}^\dagger \end{pmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} e^{-i\alpha} & \\ & e^{-i\alpha} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \chi \\ \bar{\chi}^\dagger \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \delta\mathcal{L} &= \partial_\mu \left[\overset{(\text{Left})}{\chi^\dagger \sigma^\mu \chi} + \overset{(\text{Right})}{\bar{\chi} \sigma^\mu \bar{\chi}^\dagger} \right] \\ &= \partial_\mu \left[\chi^\dagger \sigma^\mu \chi - \bar{\chi}^\dagger \sigma^\mu \bar{\chi} \right] \end{aligned}$$

Axial

$$U(1)_A: \quad \psi \rightarrow e^{-i\alpha \gamma_5} \psi$$

$$\delta\mathcal{L} = \partial_\mu \underbrace{(\bar{\psi} \gamma^\mu \gamma_5 \psi)}_{J^\mu_A}$$

$$\psi = \begin{pmatrix} \chi \\ \bar{\chi}^\dagger \end{pmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} e^{+i\alpha} & \\ & e^{-i\alpha} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \chi \\ \bar{\chi}^\dagger \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\delta\mathcal{L} = \partial_\mu \left[\overset{(-\text{Left})}{-\chi^\dagger \sigma^\mu \chi} + \overset{(+\text{Right})}{\bar{\chi} \sigma^\mu \bar{\chi}^\dagger} \right]$$