

3.1 Introduction

Unusually in physics, there is no pithy phrase that sums up the study of *dynamics* (the way in which forces produce motion), *kinematics* (the motion of matter), *mechanics* (the study of the forces and the motion they produce), and *statics* (the way forces combine to produce equilibrium). We will take the phrase *dynamics and mechanics* to encompass all the above, although it clearly does not!

To some extent this is because the equations governing the motion of matter include some of our oldest insights into the physical world and are consequentially steeped in tradition. One of the more delightful, or for some annoying, facets of this is the occasional use of arcane vocabulary in the description of motion. The epitome must be what Goldstein¹ calls “the jabberwockian sounding statement” *the polhode rolls without slipping on the herpolhode lying in the invariable plane*, describing “Poinsot’s construction” – a method of visualising the free motion of a spinning rigid body. Despite this, dynamics and mechanics, including fluid mechanics, is arguably the most practically applicable of all the branches of physics.

Moreover, and in common with electromagnetism, the study of dynamics and mechanics has spawned a good deal of mathematical apparatus that has found uses in other fields. Most notably, the ideas behind the generalised dynamics of Lagrange and Hamilton lie behind much of quantum mechanics.

