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Review text:

The field of applicability of the concept of PT -symmetry of differential operators (where, say, P is parity and T is complex conjugation) has recently been successfully extended to classical optics, both theoretically and experimentally. The text shows that the quantum-theoretical “ancestors” of these models may still offer useful methodical hints in the new setting. Among them the author emphasizes the profit gained by the transition to isospectral selfadjoint operators. This degenerates here to the mere complex shift of the argument in Bloch functions. In the case under consideration (taken from Ref. [8]), this simplifies the picture. Besides this formal advantage the sinusoidal setup is shown to exhibit also specific phenomenological merits - its most remarkable properties (like birefringence) are shown weakening when one moves away from the sinusoidal shape.