TURBULENCE STRUCTURE AND VORTEX DYNAMICS

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edited by

J.C.R. Hunt

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and

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University of Cambridge

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521175128

First published 2000
First paperback edition 2011

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-78131-2 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-17512-8 Paperback

Additional resources for this publication at www.cambridge.org/9780521175128

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-17512-8 - Turbulence Structure and Vortex Dynamics
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Introduction

Leonardo da Vinci's drawings of eddies below waterfalls, John Constable's paintings of swirling and disintegrating cloud shapes and L.F. Richardson's Swiftian rhyme all show different aspects of the essential nature of turbulence. When expressed in prosaic scientific language the modern understanding of turbulence is that it is a collection of weakly correlated vortical motions, which, despite their intermittent and chaotic distribution over a wide range of space and time scales, actually consist of local characteristic 'eddy' patterns that persist as they move around under the influences of their own and other eddies' vorticity fields. Numerical simulations and experimental observations have now identified basic forms and even the 'life-cycles' of some of these structures. Some of them, for example, seem to appear as local shear layers, then evolve into vortex tubes and finally break up. In some cases quite extreme distortion and interaction between vortices lead to very large local velocities. These universal features occur in all highly turbulent flows. However, because the largest scale eddies extend across the whole flow and are strongly influenced by the boundary conditions they are not universal; nevertheless they tend to have the same characteristic forms in each type of turbulent flow.

In the Isaac Newton Institute (INI) programme on turbulence held between January and July 1999 there were several workshops and conferences on different aspects of the subject. All of them succeeded in bringing together physicists, engineers, mathematicians and experimentalists, as can be seen in this and other volumes and review articles describing the programme (Voke, Sandham & Kleiser 1999; Launder & Sandham 2000; Vassilicos 2000; Hunt, Sandham, Vassilicos, Launder, Monkewitz & Hewitt 2000).

In the Symposium on Vortex Dynamics and Turbulence Structure there were lectures and discussions on a number of key questions that have engaged turbulence researchers for many years. What is the overall significance for turbulent flows of vortical structures? How should one study their persistence and characteristic structure; do they correspond to some kind of eigensolutions of the basic equations or of some reduced form of these equations; what are their geometrical statistics and their stability, given that they exist in a chaotic environment with many other structures surrounding them? How do they interact or not interact with each other and with surrounding turbulence, and what are their dissipative properties? Are the near-singularities of the turbulence or the conjectured finite-time singularities related to the vortical or other (e.g. straining) structures, and if so what kind? What are the Eulerian and Lagrangian properties of such structures, and how do their conditional statistics relate to the well-established unconditional Eulerian and

Lagrangian statistics (e.g. spectra, energy cascades up- and down-scale, relative motions of particles) and the scaling properties of the entire flow? To what extent can turbulence be represented in terms of space-filling functions such as Fourier or Chebychev basis functions or is it necessary to work in terms of localised functions such as wavelets.

The articles in this volume address all these questions. Most involve mathematical analysis, but some describe numerical simulations and experimental results that focus on these questions. Some of the papers focused on the deterministic kinds of vortical motion that characterise eddy motions, while others also relate these studies to the overall statistics of the turbulent flows which can be measured more readily than the details of individual eddies. Only one paper is exclusively concerned with the statistical dynamics of turbulence.

Deterministic analyses were applied to isolated vortices, to their response when subject to large scale rotational and irrotational straining, and to their interaction with each other. In some situations large scale straining is a reasonable 'mean-field' approximation for the average effects of all other vortices. But in other situations it is necessary to consider specific interactions between small numbers of vortices. **Fukumoto & Moffatt** analyse the effect of viscosity on the motion of a vortex ring, and how the diffusion of vorticity changes its motion. The straining of vortices are considered in three papers; **Gibbon, Galanti & Kerr** consider the general mathematical properties of the stretching and compression of vorticity, including the surprising fact that its tendency to become a singularity at any point in the flow is related to the overall properties of the flow.

There are many different ways that finite amplitude vortices can be stretched and distorted, and **Le Dizes** presents an analysis of a new family of stretched non-axisymmetric vortices. As elongated vortices are stretched and distorted by external straining fields, oscillations and waves can develop and lead to the formation of new structures and ultimately to the total breakdown into small scale chaotic motion. The basic mechanisms of these 'core dynamics' are reviewed by **Pradeep & Hussain**. In some cases the external motions are caused by adjacent vortices and then the instability and transformations are coupled in a global sense, as shown in the experimental paper of **Williamson, Leweke & Miller**. In 'classical' fluids such as air and water at ambient temperature, the vorticity in a vortex diffuses out of vortices or is exchanged when vortices interact as a result of molecular diffusion. In superfluids at very low temperatures these diffusion processes do not occur and therefore vortices move and interact with each other according to the theory of ideal inviscid flow. However certain quantum effects also lead to dissipative phenomena such as reconnection. This is the motivation of **Barenghi's** paper on ideal fluid turbulence and its relation to normal fluid turbulence.

Other papers here show how a combination of deterministic and statistical

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analyses of turbulent velocity fields is leading to a better understanding of the qualitative characteristics of the eddy motion in turbulence as well as to quantitative predictions. Much research is based on the assumption that this is the key to improving the approximate models of turbulence (such as Large Eddy Simulation and spectral models) and to assessing their accuracy and range of application. **Leonard** analyses, following the earlier ideas of Synge & Lin (1943), the dynamics and kinematics of small individual eddies or packets of vorticity, strained by eddy motions with larger length scales. He explores the limits when the lengths of the strained eddies become comparable with the larger ones, and tend to form elongated and randomly twisted 'ribbons'. The consequences for the spectra are worked out.

Novikov explains why this dynamical interaction implies that small scale turbulence may not be as statistically independent of the large scales as is assumed in Kolmogorov's theory; there may be fewer degrees of freedom and some aspects of their motion may be 'slaved' to the larger scales on some 'slow' manifold. He derives some statistical conditions based on this concept. However the eddy motions do need to be considered because they determine the intermittency of turbulence which he explains as being crucial to the interpretation of the overall turbulence statistics.

Warhaft's discussion of experimental measurements of small scale turbulence also takes up this theme. The higher the order of the statistical moments the more they are anisotropic. These are associated with small scale organised structures, in which there are strong local gradients in both the velocity and scalar fields,. He demonstrates that the structures can be defined more precisely if measurements are made at three rather than two points simultaneously, which has been usual up to now.

Flow visualisation and experiments have indicated that these structures are quite geometrically complex, often approximating to sheets of vorticity and scalars wound up into spiral forms which correspond to a type of ideal mathematical singularity. **Vassilicos** analyses such velocity fields and their effects on the diffusion of scalars; he also shows how these types of eddy can be detected when they occur at random positions in numerical simulations of turbulent flows. He demonstrates how such structures are consistent with the 'anomalous' scaling laws found in statistical correlations in fully developed turbulence.

Tsinober analyses the dynamical equations governing correlations between the straining and vorticity fields of small scale turbulence, in order to clarify the relative roles of vortex stretching and straining, or relative advection, in producing even smaller scales and thence dissipation. His results suggest that it may be necessary to consider a cycle of stretching and straining of eddy motions to understand the full dynamics; indeed the simple, rather static concept of vortex stretching is quite inconsistent with the production

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of smaller scales. Like Betchov in 1956 he has the temerity to propose an amendment to L.F. Richardson's rhyme about the roles of great whirls and lesser whirls in the cascade process!

Hunt's paper is similar to Leonard's in assuming that the analysis of the non-linear interactions in turbulence can be usefully idealised as a sequence of events when small scale vortices are strained by large scale motions. He discusses how the weakly non-linear effects cause the vortex sheets to roll up, or become unstable. Curiously there is a geometrical problem to be solved: how to define the changes in these shapes, which are associated with the cycle of growth, transformation and breakup of small scale eddies, that Tsinober analyses using statistical data in his paper. Hunt also reviews an outstanding kinematical question about turbulence as to when and to what extent spectra reflect on the one hand the forms of the eddies themselves, especially their singularities, and on the other, the distribution of their amplitudes with wavenumber (or frequency).

Cambon takes up the question, touched on by Hunt, that when vortices are formed in turbulence, for example as a result of straining by larger scales, various kinds of waves and instabilities tend to grow. He reviews and relates a number of current mathematical techniques used for analysing these perturbations. He points out how some are local and some global; some are based on eigen solutions, while others are based on general linear solutions more dependent on initial conditions. Many interesting special cases are described in detail, and reasons are given why cyclonic eddies are more stable than anticyclonic.

In numerical simulations the resolution is now fine enough for even small scale flow structure to be described for high Reynolds number turbulence. **Lesieur, Comte and Metais** use Large Eddy Simulation techniques to examine the structure of the vortices that form in shear flows and rotating flows. They explain how the vortices contribute to the statistical distribution of kinetic energy in the turbulence, as well as describing in some detail how the different scales and orientations of vortices are related in these chaotic flows, which have a high degree of local organisation.

On long enough timescales it is likely that the internal eddy structure is unimportant, in which case turbulence can be analysed rather like a visco-elastic fluid, based on the concepts and methods of statistical physics. **McComb & Johnston** use methods involving the Renormalisation Group. In conjunction with novel assumptions about the statistical independence of the small eddy scales, they derive quantitatively the energy spectrum of turbulence and new results about the internal 'eddy viscosity' that controls the energy transfer between eddy scales. These methods may well have wider applications to more complex flows in future.

We, and we believe all the speakers at the workshop, are extremely grateful

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to Geoff Hewitt, Peter Monkewitz and Neil Sandham for their invaluable contribution to the organisation of the Isaac Newton Institute's Turbulence Research Programme: to Keith Moffatt and the wonderful staff of the Isaac Newton Institute, ERCOFTAC, the European Commission, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Industrial Working Group under the chairmanship of Michael Reeks, for their support; and to the Isaac Newton Institute for sponsoring and hosting the workshops.

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