TEN CHAPTERS IN TURBULENCE

Turbulence is ubiquitous in science, technology and daily life and yet, despite years of research, our understanding of its fundamental nature is tentative and incomplete. More generally, the tools required for a deep understanding of strongly interacting many-body systems remain underdeveloped.

Inspired by a research programme held at the Newton Institute in Cambridge, this book contains reviews by leading experts that summarize our current understanding of the nature of turbulence from theoretical, experimental, observational and computational points of view. The articles cover a wide range of topics, including the scaling and organized motion in wall turbulence; small scale structure; dynamics and statistics of homogeneous turbulence, turbulent transport and mixing; and effects of rotation, stratification and magnetohydrodynamics, as well as superfluid turbulence.

The book will be useful to researchers and graduate students interested in the fundamental nature of turbulence at high Reynolds numbers.

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Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-76944-0 - Ten Chapters in Turbulence
Edited by Peter A. Davidson, Yukio Kaneda and katepalli R. Sreenivasan
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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

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

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521769440

First published 2013

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

ISBN 978-0-521-76944-0 Hardback

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Preface

Vorticity fields that are not overly damped develop extremely complex spatial structures exhibiting a wide range of scales. These structures wax and wane in coherence; some are intense and most of them weak; and they interact nonlinearly. Their evolution is strongly influenced by the presence of boundaries, shear, rotation, stratification and magnetic fields. We label the multitude of phenomena associated with these fields as *turbulence*[1] and the challenge of predicting the statistical behaviour of such flows has engaged some of the finest minds in twentieth century science.

The progress has been famously slow. This slowness is in part because of the bewildering variety of turbulent flows, from the ideal laboratory creations on a small scale to heterogeneous flows on the dazzling scale of cosmos. Philip Saffman (*Structure and Mechanisms of Turbulence II*, Lecture Notes in Physics **76**, Springer, 1978, p. 273) commented: "... we should not altogether neglect the possibility that there is no such thing as 'turbulence'. That is to say, it is not meaningful to talk about the properties of a turbulent flow independently of the physical situation in which it arises. In searching for a theory of turbulence, perhaps we are looking for a chimera ... Perhaps there is no 'real turbulence problem', but a large number of turbulent flows and our problem is the self-imposed and possibly impossible task of fitting many phenomena into the Procrustean bed of a universal turbulence theory."[2]

More than forty years have passed since Steven Orszag (*J. Fluid Mech.* **41**, 363, 1970) made the whimsical comment, as if with an air of resignation: "It must be admitted that the principal result of fifty years of turbulence research is the recognition of the profound difficulties of the subject". The hope he expressed that "This is not meant to imply that a fully satisfactory theory is beyond hope", appearing almost as an afterthought in his paper, is still unrealized but progress has been made. In recent years one of the driving forces behind this progress has been the ever increasing power of computer simulations.[3] These simulations, in conjunction with ever more ambitious laboratory and field experiments, have helped us understand the

[1] We will not use the term here in its more general connotation of complex behaviour in an array of many-dimensional systems.
[2] Saffman was merely pointing out that he was open to this multiplicity, not declaring that research in turbulence is tantamount to taxonomy.
[3] The progress in numerical simulations of turbulence is a tribute to Orszag's untiring efforts. Sadly, he passed away during the preparation of this book.

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role of organised motion in near-wall turbulence, and the structure and dynamics of small scales in statistically homogeneous turbulence and other turbulent flows. Together, experiments and simulations have enhanced our understanding of turbulent mixing and dispersion, allowing us to probe the validity and refinement of many classical scaling predictions, and have successfully complemented each other. In strongly stratified turbulence, for example, we have learnt that we are not free to prescribe the vertical Froude number; rather, nature dictates that it is of order unity. This understanding has been crucial to developing a self-consistent scaling theory of stratified turbulence. Similarly, in rapidly rotating turbulence, simulations have supplemented laboratory experiments and there is now a vigorous debate as to what precise role is played by inertial waves in forming the long-lived columnar vortices evident in both simulations and experiments. Yet another area in which simulations and experiments have admirably supplemented each other is turbulence in superfluids, which displays some of the same macroscopic phenomena as classical turbulence even though the microscopic physics in the two instances is quite different.

This book was conceived during an Isaac Newton programme on turbulence held in Cambridge in the Fall of 2008, and in particular after the workshop on *Inertial-Range Dynamics and Mixing* organised by the editors. The chapters, which take the form of reviews, are written by leading experts in the field and should appeal to specialists and non-specialists alike. They cover topics from small-scale turbulence in velocity and passive scalar fields to organized motion in wall flows, from dispersion and mixing to quantum turbulence as well as rotating, stratified and magnetic flows. They reflect the breadth, the nature and the features of turbulence already mentioned. The chapters progress from the those dealing with more general issues, such as homogeneous turbulence and passive scalars through to wall flows, ending with chapters dealing with stratification, rapidly rotating flows, the effect of electromagnetic fields and quantum turbulence. Each is intended to be a comprehensive account of lasting value that will help to open up new lines of enquiry. Yet, the title of the book conforms to the pragmatic style of the articles, rather than to a grand vision which promises more than it delivers.

The editors wish to thank the director and staff of the Isaac Newton Institute for their constant support during the 2008 turbulence programme, and Peter Bartello, David Dritschel and Rich Kerswell who co-organised the programme with great enthusiasm. They wish to thank CUP for the professionalism in preparing the book, and all the authors for their hard work and patience.

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