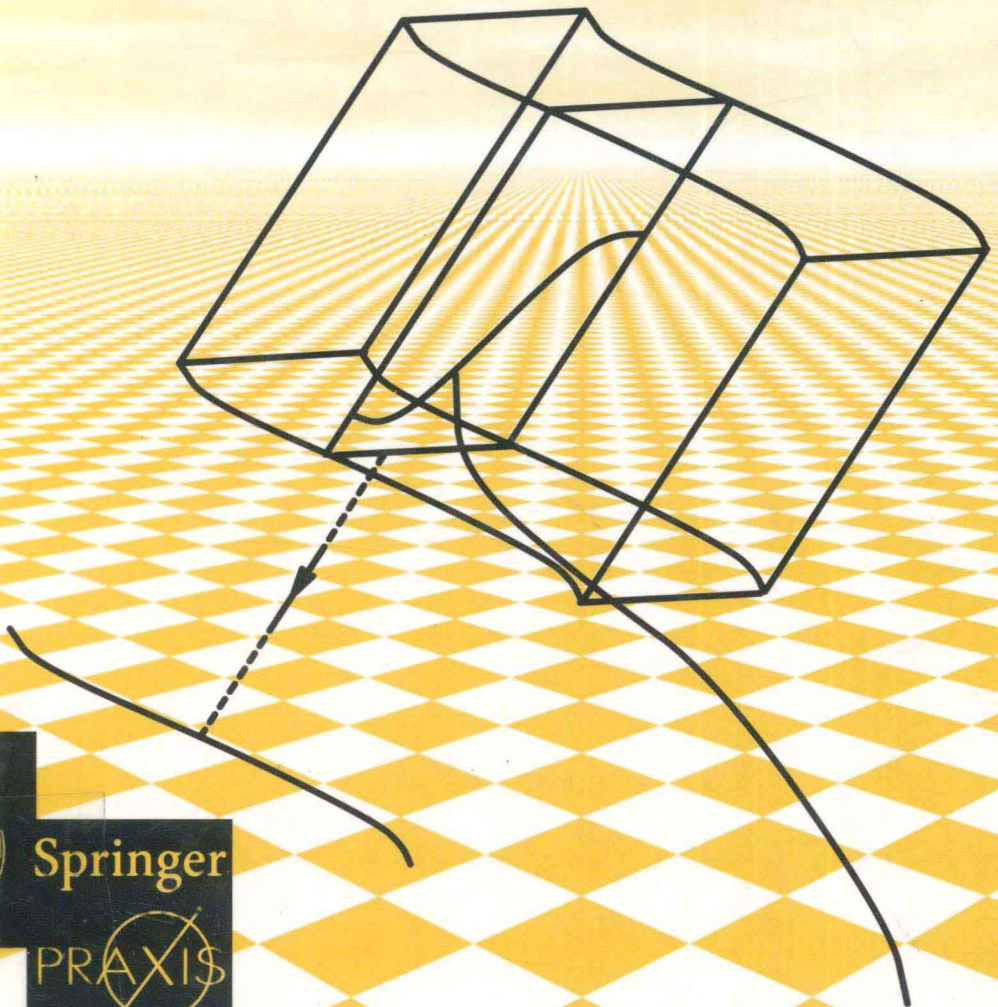


GEOMETRY, SPINORS AND APPLICATIONS

Donal J. Hurley
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Springer

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Geometry, Spinors and Applications



Springer

Published in association with
Praxis Publishing
Chichester, UK



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SPRINGER-PRAXIS BOOKS IN MATHEMATICS

ISBN 1-85233-223-9 Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg New York

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Hurley, Donal J.
Geometry, spinors and applications
1. Spinor analysis
I. Title II. Vandyck, Michael A.
515.6'3

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Hurley, Donal J., 1944–
Geometry, spinors, and applications / Donal J. Hurley and Michael A. Vandyck.
p. cm.
Includes index.
1. Spinor analysis. 2. Mathematical physics. I. Vandyck, Michael A., 1959– II. Title.
QC20.7.S65 H87 2000
530.15'563—dc21

99-050072

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© Praxis Publishing Ltd, Chichester, UK, 2000
Printed by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall, UK

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Cover design: Jim Wilkie

Printed on acid-free paper supplied by Precision Publishing Papers Ltd, UK

Geometry, Spinors and Applications

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Preface

Philosophy is written in this grand book, the universe, which stands continually open to our gaze; but the book cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language, and read the letters, in which it is composed. It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometric figures without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it; without these, one wanders about in a dark labyrinth.

GALILEO [23]

This book arose from the investigation of a particular question in spinor theory, namely the problem of defining Lie and covariant differentiation of spinor fields. The problem has already been investigated in the literature, mostly in special cases, but some of the approaches adopted differ widely from one another; moreover, a number of results obtained by different authors are in contradiction with one another. It was therefore essential to resolve these contradictions and to present the question, in full generality, in a unified fashion. (Some recent developments by the authors may be found in [13], [41], [42], and the references cited therein.)

In the course of this study, it was found necessary to draw information from several areas of geometry and algebra, for instance from fibre bundles, Lie groups, Clifford algebras, representation theory, etc. Therefore it became clear that, if one attempted to present the theory in a rather self-contained fashion, one would be led to bring together and summarise a certain amount of material of interest to a wide community; furthermore, even the well-known topics, such as covariant differentiation of a tensor, would receive an unusual treatment, as a result of the specific question towards which they would be focused.

When this was realised, it required only a small step to decide to include selected applications to physics of the material presented in the theoretical part of the book. These applications illustrate not only spinorial calculus but also aspects of differential geometry. In this fashion, the authors hope that their work will be helpful both to students and to researchers: students will have at their disposal

an account of some aspects of spinors, algebra, and geometry, with applications to physics, whereas researchers, who will be familiar with the standard topics, might concentrate on the specific problem of spinorial differentiation.

It is important to emphasise that our aim was not to present a *complete* account of *all* the aspects touched upon in this book. It would obviously be impossible to present in one volume the whole of differential geometry, fibre bundles, Lie groups, Clifford algebras, etc. Some important topics, such as the bundle theory of curvature and torsion, have been omitted completely. On the other hand, topics that are only briefly mentioned in the more usual treatment of the material, such as metric-incompatible connections, receive here a great deal of attention. This is a result of the emphasis that our specific question puts on the subject. For this reason, the reader is assumed to have some familiarity with differential geometry, so as to be able to see our considerations in a broader context.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge here the people from whom the authors have benefitted, directly or indirectly, in the writing of this book. We wish to express our deep gratitude to Professor D. Speiser for his incisive criticisms, comments, and remarks at various stages of the work, and for suggesting some of the notations adopted in the text. Throughout the years leading up to the final version of the book, we have been enlightened by discussions with Professors L. Ó Raifeartaigh, J. Lewis, P. Hogan, F. Hehl, and T. Laffey, and with Drs. J. D. McCrea, C.T. O'Sullivan, and F.A. Deeney.

We would also like to thank the students who have participated in the investigation, the preparation, and the collation of the material presented hereafter. They were, in chronological order, Messrs. P. Delaney, A. O'Connor, P. Campbell, and T. Philbin. Moreover, Mr. D. Flannery, through the interest that he took in the work, and the searching questions that he asked us, provided much of the encouragement and the stimulation that proved essential for the successful completion of our task.

We greatly appreciate the advice that we received from Dr. P. Cronin and Professor G. Huxley about Greek etymology. The new terms *euthikhode* and *brachisth-*

ode are the tangible fruits of our pleasant and interesting discussions.

For various aspects of computer-assisted typesetting, we are very indebted to Mr. P. Flynn and Dr. J. Morrisson, and Messrs. D. Ó Cruialaoich, N. Madden, P. Twomey, J. O’Riordan, and J. Sheehan, as well as Miss K. Lally, with a special mention for Mr. P. Angove, who produced the figures. Dr. C.T. O’Sullivan, Professor M. Mansfield, and Mr. C. Horwood, of Praxis, are gratefully acknowledged for their guidance in the art of book publishing.

Our gratitude also goes to FORBAIRT, the Mathematics Department, and the Physics Department of University College Cork, for some financial support. Finally, the first-named author wishes to thank his wife, Anne, for her support and encouragement, and the second-named author would like to thank the Irish motorcycling community (in particular MAG Ireland) for providing the proper atmosphere and environment without which this book could never have been written.

Table of contents

List of tables	x <i>i</i>
List of figures	x <i>iii</i>
Preface	xv
I Preliminaries and Algebraic Aspects of Spinors	1
1. General Vector Spaces	5
1.1 Vector Space, Dual and Double Dual	5
1.1.1 Definition of a vector space V	5
1.1.2 Basis of a vector space	7
1.1.3 Linear mappings	8
1.1.4 Dual V^* of a vector space V	9
1.1.5 Canonical basis of V^*	10
1.1.6 Changes of bases in V and V^*	10
1.1.7 Double dual V^{**}	11
1.2 Tensors over a Vector Space	12
1.2.1 Definition of the space of tensors Θ_q^p	12
1.2.2 Tensor product \otimes	13
1.2.3 Canonical basis of Θ_q^p	13
1.2.4 Changes of bases in Θ_q^p	14
1.2.5 Contractions of tensors	15
1.2.6 Mapping of tensors	17
1.2.7 Tensor products of linear mappings	18
1.3 Exterior Algebras Λ^* and Λ	24
1.3.1 The vector space of q -linear alternating forms	25

1.3.2	Exterior product \wedge	26
1.3.3	Canonical basis of Λ^*_q	26
1.3.4	Interior product $i_{\vec{v}}$	27
1.3.5	Pull-back of a q -form	28
1.3.6	Exterior algebra Λ^*	28
1.3.7	Exterior algebra Λ	29
2.	Vector Spaces with a Metric	31
2.1	Metric and Tensors	31
2.1.1	Metric, scalar product, norm	31
2.1.2	Equivalence between V and V^*	32
2.2	Clifford Algebras and Spinors	34
2.2.1	Clifford product \vee and real Clifford algebras $C_{rs}(\mathbf{R})$. . .	34
2.2.2	Quaternions as the Clifford algebra $C_{02}(\mathbf{R})$	38
2.2.3	Detailed study of the Clifford algebra $C_{31}(\mathbf{R})$	40
2.2.4	Clifford group Γ_{rs} of the Clifford algebra $C_{rs}(\mathbf{R})$ and its representations	45
2.2.5	Clifford group $\Gamma_{02}(\mathbf{R})$ of the real quaternions	50
2.2.6	Algebraic definition of $C_{rs}(\mathbf{R})$ -spinors	56
2.3	Linear Mappings between Tensors and Spinors	64
II	Preliminaries and geometrical aspects of spinors	71
3.	Manifolds in General	73
3.1	C^∞ Manifolds	73
3.1.1	Definition of a C^∞ manifold \mathcal{M}	73
3.1.2	Tangent space, cotangent space, tensors, and tensor fields	75
3.1.3	Commutator of two vector fields	79
3.1.4	Induced mappings on a manifold	80
3.1.5	Derivatives along a curve and integral curves of a vector field.	84

3.1.6	General Lie derivative and geometrical interpretation	86
3.1.7	Particular Lie derivatives and properties	92
3.2	Affine Manifolds	97
3.2.1	Covariant derivative and connection	97
3.2.2	Transformation law of the connection	99
3.2.3	Parallel-transport and eutikhodes	101
3.2.4	Torsion, curvature, and geometrical interpretation	107
3.3	Metric Manifolds	113
3.3.1	Metric tensor g	113
3.3.2	Non-metricity tensor H and decomposition of the connection	114
3.3.3	Geometrical interpretation of the non-metricity	121
3.3.4	Brachisthodes and geodesics	124
3.3.5	Symmetric and antisymmetric parts of the connection	128
3.3.6	Covariant differentiation revisited	132
4.	Lie Groups as Special Manifolds	135
4.1	Fundamental Concepts	135
4.1.1	Definition of a Lie group \mathcal{G}	135
4.1.2	Left-invariant vector fields and forms	137
4.1.3	Lie algebra \mathfrak{g} of a Lie group \mathcal{G}	138
4.1.4	Left action of a Lie group on a manifold	142
4.2	Special Lie Groups and their Lie Algebras	143
4.2.1	General linear group GL_n	143
4.2.2	Orthogonal group O_{rs}	146
4.2.3	Special linear and orthogonal groups SL_n and SO_{rs}	148
4.2.4	Clifford group $\Gamma_{31}(\mathbf{R})$ and spin group ${}_N\Gamma_{31}^+(\mathbf{R})$	152
5.	Fibre Bundles as Special Manifolds	157
5.1	Fundamental Concepts	157
5.1.1	Fibre bundles and vector bundles	157

5.1.2	Construction of a fibre bundle from its transition functions	
	t_{ij}	162
5.1.3	Cross-section σ of a fibre bundle	162
5.1.4	Principal bundles	164
5.1.5	Connection on a principal bundle	169
5.2	Applications of Fibre Bundles	175
5.2.1	Horizontal lift and bundle formulation of covariant differentiation	175
5.2.2	Conformal bundle and conformal connections	185
III	General Spinorial Differentiation	193
6.	Geometrical Definition of $C_{31}(\mathbb{R})$ Spinors	197
7.	Differentiation of Spinor Fields	201
7.1	Equivalence between Lie and Covariant Differentiation	202
7.2	Covariant Derivative of a Spinor Field	203
7.3	Heuristic Approaches to Covariant Differentiation	211
	7.3.1 Tensorial method	211
	7.3.2 Bundle method	213
7.4	Lie Derivative of a Spinor Field	221
7.5	Tensor-Spinors and their Derivatives	223
7.6	Complements	228
8.	Interplay between Differentiations	235
8.1	Statement of the Problem	235
8.2	Investigation of the Problem	239
8.3	Arbitrariness in the Spinorial Derivative	244
8.4	Comparison with Conventional Methods	251
9.	The Invariant Formalism	255

9.1	Exposition	255
9.2	Relationship to the General Formalism	259
IV Illustrations and Applications		265
10. Newtonian Mechanics and $C_{30}(\mathbf{R})$		269
10.1	General Theory	269
10.2	Example: Elementary Ballistics	273
11. Electro-Magnetism		281
11.1	Tensorial Formulation	282
11.2	Exterior-Calculus Formulation	290
11.2.1	Preliminary: Exterior differentiation	291
11.2.2	Electro-magnetic forms	294
11.2.3	Electro-magnetic forms and $C_{31}(\mathbf{R})$	296
11.3	Relationship between the Formulations	298
11.3.1	Exterior formulation in components	298
11.3.2	Exterior form and covariant differentiation	301
11.4	Lie Differentiation and Symmetries	305
11.4.1	General theory	305
11.4.2	Example: Electro-magnetic plane waves	306
12. Cartan Formalism		311
13. Geometrical Gravitational Theories		317
13.1	Equations of Motion	318
13.2	Field Equations	320
13.2.1	General relativity	320
13.2.2	Simple supergravity	326
13.3	Symmetries	332
13.3.1	General theory	332

13.3.2	Gravitational plane waves	337
13.3.3	Supersymmetric plane waves	339
13.3.4	Complements on Killing's equation	343
Appendix A: Infeld-van der Waerden Symbols		347
Appendix B: Maxwell's Equations: Complements		353
B.1	Integration of a p -Form	353
B.2	Application to Maxwell's Equations	356
Bibliography		359
Index		365

List of tables

2.1	Multiplication table for $C_{02}(\mathbf{R})$	39
2.2	Multiplication table for $C_{11}(\mathbf{R})$	42
7.1	Four-component and two-component formalisms	232
11.1	Electro-magnetic constants	282

List of figures

2.1	The subgroup structure of Γ_{rs}	48
2.2	The mappings φ of Γ_{rs} to O_{rs} (and subgroups)	49
2.3	The subgroup structure of Γ_{31}	53
2.4	The mappings φ of the subgroups of the Clifford group Γ_{02} of the quaternions to the subgroups of O_{02}	54
3.1	The unit-circle S^1 as a manifold	75
3.2	The diffeomorphism Φ and the charts	81
3.3	Integral curves Γ and Δ of \vec{v} and \vec{w} to calculate $[\vec{v}, \vec{w}]$	89
3.4	Curvilinear quadrilateral based on integral curves of \vec{v} and \vec{w}	91
3.5	Pictorial representation of Lie transport	102
3.6	Pictorial representation of parallel transport	103
3.7	A candidate-euthikhode	105
3.8	The commutator of two vector fields	109
3.9	Simplified diagram for the commutator	110
3.10	Diagram for the torsion	111
3.11	Geometrical interpretation of the curvature	112
3.12	Classification of the connection	120
3.13	Parallel transport and non-metricity	121
3.14	Classification of the non-metricity	125
4.1	The main subgroups of GL_n	149
5.1	Fibre bundle	159
5.2	Transition functions on a bundle	160
5.3	Cross-section of a bundle	163
5.4	Fibre mapping on a principal bundle	165
5.5	Mapping of the fibre above P to \mathcal{F}	166
5.6	Fibre mapping and diffeomorphisms	168
5.7	Isomorphism between $T_Q\mathcal{F}_P$ and $T_e\mathcal{G}$	170

5.8	Consistency requirement for the connection	173
5.9	Horizontal lift $\tilde{\Gamma}$ of Γ	176
5.10	Horizontal lift and cross-section	177
5.11	Preparation for parallel transport	179
7.1	Commuting diagram for spinorial covariant differentiation	213
8.1	Non-commuting diagram for spinorial differentiation	238
8.2	Transport of a spinor and its flag pole	252
10.1	Cannon-ball problem	275
10.2	Angles for the cannon-ball problem	278
10.3	Solution of the cannon-ball problem	279