

Spatial Hysteresis and Optical Patterns

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With 149 Figures



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To dear Galya, Alexey, and Marianna

Preface

This book addresses a subject at the crossing point of two lines of investigation – synergetics and modern nonlinear optics. First, the book is devoted to *optical patterns* that previously were mainly attributed to the display of instabilities of homogeneous field distributions. Second, we deal with *optical bistability* and *hysteresis*, which historically were studied predominantly for point (lumped, spatially nondistributed) systems.

In the book, which seems to be the first monograph devoted to optical patterns, I attempt to demonstrate that the variety of optical patterns and other synergetical phenomena is especially rich in spatially *distributed* bistable systems, and that instabilities of homogeneous states are not necessary for the formation of the patterns. Of special interest are patterns such as *dissipative optical solitons*, which individually have particle-like features and when combined resemble molecules, crystals, biological objects, and even social groups.

Another essential point is the key role of *inhomogeneities* of bistable systems. As for hysteresis, it has been studied mostly in point systems, in which, with fixed characteristics of the input signal, one of several sets of steady-state output signal characteristics can form, depending on the prehistory. In spatially distributed optical systems, the kinetics of hysteresis acquires the form of “*spatial hysteresis*”, or hysteresis of spatial distributions of field characteristics. This problem of “stereoscopic vision” of such hysteresis was solved in optical bistability some 20 years ago, and the concepts proposed were later confirmed and expanded. Consistent description of spatial hysteresis is one of the basic subjects of this book. The concept of spatial hysteresis is fairly general, being applied to various systems with phase transition of the first kind. In optics, this and other types of inhomogeneities allow us to control pattern location and features, being thus of important applied significance.

Optics contributes also a new – *diffractive* – mechanism for coupling of spaced elements of a system, as compared with the *diffusion* coupling typical for chemical and biological systems. This mechanism, with field diffractive oscillations inherent in optics, is responsible for the presence of various spatial structures with unusual properties, which can be observed not only in optics but also in other “coherent” fields.

Of interest may also be the consideration of entirely confined, *three-dimensional optical solitons*, the discussion of the *quantum aspects* of optical bistability and the correspondence between the display of bistability in classical and quantum objects, as well as the possible applications of the phenomena of spatial distributivity for *optical information processing* given in the book.

The book material was used for teaching students specializing in quantum electronics and applied mathematics at the St. Petersburg State Institute of Fine Mechanics and Optics (Technical University). Knowledge of nonlinear optics is helpful, though not absolutely necessary, for the main notions, ideas and approaches are introduced in the book when required. For instance, in the first two appendices, more thorough and up-to-date as compared with standard textbooks, an analysis of certain fundamentals of nonlinear optics is given, including nonparaxial radiation propagation.

The book material is based on research carried out at the S.I. Vavilov State Optical Institute and at the Research Institute for Laser Physics (St. Petersburg). I am therefore grateful to E.B. Alexandrov and A.A. Mak for their support, and to V.E. Semenov, G.V. Khodova, A.V. Fedorov, S.V. Fedorov, A.G. Vladimirov, V.A. Smirnov and my other colleagues – coauthors of the articles – for joint work. During the work I had the pleasure of discussing various problems of bistability and optical patterns with S.A. Akhmanov, M.A. Vorontsov, F.V. Bunkin, F.V. Karpushko, G.V. Sinitzyn, A.V. Grigoryants, Yu.S. Balkarey, M.S. Soskin, H. Gibbs, G. Khitrova, W. Firth, L. Lugiato, M. Brambilla, F. Lederer, L. Torner, Yu. Kivshar, A. Akhmediev, A. Boardman, P. Mandel, C. Weiss, R. Kuszelewicz, and their colleagues.

I would particularly like to express my gratitude to Prof. H. Haken, who has done so much in the field of not only general synergetics, but optical synergetics as well, for his support for turning out an English translation of my book. The English version is a revised and expanded edition, as compared with my Russian book “Optical Bistability and Hysteresis in Distributed Nonlinear Systems” (Nauka, Moscow, 1997). Although many general aspects of the theory were clarified earlier, further experiments were still a desideratum. It would therefore seem fitting that “Spatial Hysteresis and Optical Patterns” appears with the onset of the new millennium, after the impressive experiments on dissipative optical solitons in semiconductor microcavities by C.O. Weiss, R. Kuszelewicz, and their colleagues in the year 2000.

Credit for the final English text version belongs to O.I. Brodovich and S.V. Voronin whose untimely death prevented him from seeing the book published. I am also very grateful to A.G. Samsonov and A.M. Kokushkin for their help in the typesetting of the manuscript.

Contents

1. Introduction to the Physics of Distributed Bistable Systems	1
1.1 Types of Optical Bistability, Nonlinearity, and Feedback	1
1.1.1 Bistability, Multistability, and Hysteresis	1
1.1.2 Absolute and Convective Bistability	3
1.1.3 Conditions of Bistability	4
1.1.4 Types of Optical Bistability	5
1.1.5 Increasing Absorption Optical Bistability	6
1.1.6 Electro-optical Schemes	7
1.1.7 Nonlinear Cavities (Interferometers)	7
1.1.8 Nonlinear Reflection	7
1.1.9 Bistable Lasers	8
1.2 Transverse and Longitudinal Distributivity; Componency	8
1.3 Why Study Distributed Bistable Systems?	10
1.4 First Investigations of Distributed Optical Bistable Systems	13
2. Increasing Absorption Bistability	17
2.1 Model and Initial Equations	18
2.2 Bistability of Point Systems	21
2.2.1 Stationary States	22
2.2.2 Kinetics	23
2.2.3 Effect of Noise	27
2.3 Steady-State Distributions in a One-Dimensional System	30
2.3.1 Mechanical Analogy	30
2.3.2 Stationary Inhomogeneous Distributions	33
2.4 Stability of Steady-State Distributions	36
2.5 Switching Waves	38
2.5.1 Switching Waves and the Mechanical Analogy	38
2.5.2 Stable and Unstable Switching Waves	40
2.5.3 Numerical Simulations	43
2.6 Spatial Switching	44

2.7	Wide Radiation Beam	48
2.7.1	Asymptotic Analysis	48
2.7.2	Spatial Bistability	52
2.8	Spatial Hysteresis	54
2.9	Systems with Sharp Transverse Inhomogeneity	56
2.10	Longitudinal and Transverse Distributivity	60
2.10.1	Longitudinal Distributivity	61
2.10.2	Joint Longitudinal and Transverse Distributivity	62
2.11	Other Factors; Bibliography	64
2.11.1	Two-Dimensional Transverse Distributivity	64
2.11.2	Fluctuations	65
2.11.3	Effect of Delay	66
2.11.4	Isolated Loops	66
2.11.5	Componency	66
2.11.6	Experiments	67
3.	Hybrid Bistable Devices	69
3.1	Stationary, Periodic, and Chaotic Regimes	69
3.2	Effect of Finite Feedback Bandwidth	77
4.	Driven Nonlinear Interferometers	83
4.1	Models of Nonlinear Interferometers	84
4.1.1	Driven Ring Interferometers	84
4.1.2	Model of Transverse Distributivity	88
4.1.3	Model of a Nonlinear Screen	91
4.1.4	Transversely Confined and Point Schemes	92
4.1.5	Model of Slow Nonlinearity	93
4.2	Stability of Stationary Regimes	94
4.2.1	Self-pulsations	95
4.2.2	Modulation Instability	97
4.3	Instabilities of Transverse Field Structure	101
4.3.1	Matrix Representation	101
4.3.2	Cavities Without and with Magnification	104
4.4	Model of Threshold Nonlinearity	108
4.4.1	General Solution	108
4.4.2	Switching Waves	109
4.4.3	Stability of Switching Waves	111
4.4.4	Switching Waves: Influence of Inhomogeneities	113
4.4.5	Single Localized Structures	114
4.4.6	Stability of Dissipative Optical Solitons	115
4.4.7	Dissipative Solitons: Effect of Inhomogeneities	118
4.4.8	Cylindrically Symmetric Solitons	121
4.4.9	Combined Switching Waves	121
4.4.10	Bound Dissipative Optical Solitons	122
4.4.11	The Case of Multistability	123

4.5	Structures for Other Nonlinearities	123
4.5.1	Switching Waves	124
4.5.2	Metastability and Kinetics of Local Perturbations	125
4.5.3	Dissipative Optical Solitons	127
4.6	Effect of Inhomogeneities	135
4.6.1	Switching Waves	136
4.6.2	Spatial Hysteresis	137
4.6.3	Oblique Incidence	139
4.6.4	“Mechanics” of Dissipative Solitons	143
4.6.5	Dissipative Solitons and Spatial Hysteresis	147
4.7	Switching Waves and Solitons in Conditions of Instability	148
4.7.1	Plane-Wave Excitation	148
4.7.2	Excitation with a Radiation Beam	152
4.7.3	Effect of Transverse Instability	155
4.8	Effect of Componency	156
4.8.1	Model of a Magneto-optic Interferometer	157
4.8.2	Homogeneous Stationary and Nonstationary Regimes	158
4.8.3	Modulation Instability	161
4.8.4	Polarized Dissipative Optical Solitons	162
4.8.5	Related Schemes	163
4.9	Bibliography; Experiments	169
4.9.1	Instabilities Related to Longitudinal Distributivity	169
4.9.2	Wide-Aperture Semiconductor Microresonators	170
4.9.3	Instabilities of the Transverse Field Structure	170
4.9.4	Switching Waves and Spatial Hysteresis	172
4.9.5	Dissipative Optical Solitons	174
5.	Nonlinear Radiation Reflection	177
5.1	Reflection of Plane Wave from Transparent Nonlinear Media	177
5.1.1	Nonlinear Layer	177
5.1.2	Nonlinear Half-Space	181
5.2	A Weakly Absorbing Nonlinear Medium	189
5.3	Nonlinear Reflection of Beams	196
5.3.1	Boundary Conditions	196
5.3.2	Paraxial Approach	199
5.3.3	Nonparaxial Approach: Bistability of Beam Reflection	201
5.4	Discussion and References	203
6.	Bistable Laser Schemes	207
6.1	Model and General Relations	207
6.1.1	Laser Model	207
6.1.2	Maxwell–Bloch Equations	208
6.1.3	Energy Balance	210

6.1.4	Symmetry	211
6.1.5	Monochromatic Plane-Wave Solutions	212
6.1.6	Modulation Instability	213
6.2	Transversely One-Dimensional Structures	213
6.2.1	Fast Nonlinearity	213
6.2.2	Effect of Relaxation Rates	219
6.3	Transversely Two-Dimensional Structures	225
6.3.1	Stripes	225
6.3.2	Cylindrically Symmetric Intensity Distribution	226
6.3.3	Asymmetric Rotating Laser Solitons	227
6.3.4	Nonparaxial Laser Solitons	230
6.4	Interaction of Laser Solitons	231
6.4.1	Conditions of “Galilean Symmetry”	231
6.4.2	Regimes of Weak Overlapping	232
6.4.3	Multisoliton Structures	239
6.4.4	Effect of Relaxation	240
6.5	Effect of Smooth and Sharp Inhomogeneities	242
6.5.1	Smooth Inhomogeneities	242
6.5.2	Sharp Inhomogeneities (Mirror Edges)	243
6.6	Laser Bullets – Three-Dimensional Laser Solitons	246
6.6.1	Bifurcation Analysis	247
6.6.2	Formation of Laser Bullets	249
6.6.3	Interaction of Laser Bullets	251
6.6.4	Nonparaxial Effects	252
7.	Conclusion: Comparing Different Types	
	of Optical Patterns	255
A.	Paraxial and Nonparaxial	
	Radiation Propagation	259
B.	Constitutive Equations	
	for Medium Nonlinear Polarization	269
C.	Transverse Structures	
	and Digital Optical Computing	273
D.	Bistability of the Quantum	
	Anharmonic Oscillator	279
E.	Transverse Effects	
	for Squeezed States of Light	287
	References	294
	Index	307