20. Clamped-free beam in Fig. 293C. If the beam is clamped at the left and free at the right (Fig. 293C), the boundary conditions are

$$u(0, t) = 0, \qquad u_x(0, t) = 0,$$
$$u_{xx}(L, t) = 0, \qquad u_{xxx}(L, t) = 0.$$

Show that F in Prob. 15 satisfies these conditions if βL is a solution of the equation

$$\cosh \beta L \cos \beta L = -1. \tag{23}$$

Find approximate solutions of (23).

12.4 D'Alembert's Solution of the Wave Equation. Characteristics

It is interesting that the solution (17), Sec. 12.3, of the wave equation

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2} = c^2 \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2}, \qquad c^2 = \frac{T}{\rho}, \tag{1}$$

can be immediately obtained by transforming (1) in a suitable way, namely, by introducing the new independent variables

$$v = x + ct, \qquad w = x - ct. \tag{2}$$

Then u becomes a function of v and w. The derivatives in (1) can now be expressed in terms of derivatives with respect to v and w by the use of the chain rule in Sec. 9.6. Denoting partial derivatives by subscripts, we see from (2) that $v_x = 1$ and $w_x = 1$. For simplicity let us denote $u(x, t)$, as a function of v and w, by the same letter u. Then

$$u_x = u_v v_x + u_w w_x = u_v + u_w.$$

We now apply the chain rule to the right side of this equation. We assume that all the partial derivatives involved are continuous, so that $u_{wv} = u_{vw}$. Since $v_x = 1$ and $w_x = 1$, we obtain

$$u_{xx} = (u_v + u_w)_x = (u_v + u_w)_v v_x + (u_v + u_w)_w w_x = u_{vv} + 2u_{vw} + u_{ww}.$$

Transforming the other derivative in (1) by the same procedure, we find

$$u_{tt} = c^2(u_{vv} - 2u_{vw} + u_{ww}).$$

By inserting these two results in (1) we get (see footnote 2 in App. A3.2)

$$\boxed{u_{vw} \equiv \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial w \, \partial v} = 0.} \tag{3}$$

The point of the present method is that (3) can be readily solved by two successive integrations, first with respect to w and then with respect to v. This gives

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial v} = h(v) \qquad \text{and} \qquad u = \int h(v)\, dv + \psi(w).$$

Here $h(v)$ and $\psi(w)$ are arbitrary functions of v and w, respectively. Since the integral is a function of v, say, $\phi(v)$, the solution is of the form $u = \phi(v) + \psi(w)$. In terms of x and t, by (2), we thus have

$$u(x, t) = \phi(x + ct) + \psi(x - ct). \tag{4}$$

This is known as **d'Alembert's solution**[1] of the wave equation (1).

Its derivation was much more elegant than the method in Sec. 12.3, but d'Alembert's method is special, whereas the use of Fourier series applies to various equations, as we shall see.

D'Alembert's Solution Satisfying the Initial Conditions

$$\text{(a)}\quad u(x, 0) = f(x), \qquad \text{(b)}\quad u_t(x, 0) = g(x). \tag{5}$$

These are the same as (3) in Sec. 12.3. By differentiating (4) we have

$$u_t(x, t) = c\phi'(x + ct) - c\psi'(x - ct) \tag{6}$$

where primes denote derivatives with respect to the *entire* arguments $x + ct$ and $x - ct$, respectively, and the minus sign comes from the chain rule. From (4)–(6) we have

$$u(x, 0) = \phi(x) + \psi(x) = f(x), \tag{7}$$

$$u_t(x, 0) = c\phi'(x) + c\psi'(x) = g(x). \tag{8}$$

Dividing (8) by c and integrating with respect to x, we obtain

$$\phi(x) - \psi(x) = k(x_0) + \frac{1}{c}\int_{x_0}^{x} g(s)\, ds, \qquad k(x_0) = \phi(x_0) - \psi(x_0). \tag{9}$$

If we add this to (7), then ψ drops out and division by 2 gives

$$\phi(x) = \frac{1}{2} f(x) + \frac{1}{2c}\int_{x_0}^{x} g(s)\, ds + \frac{1}{2} k(x_0). \tag{10}$$

Similarly, subtraction of (9) from (7) and division by 2 gives

$$\psi(x) = \frac{1}{2} f(x) - \frac{1}{2c}\int_{x_0}^{x} g(s)\, ds - \frac{1}{2} k(x_0). \tag{11}$$

In (10) we replace x by $x + ct$; we then get an integral from x_0 to $x + ct$. In (11) we replace x by $x - ct$ and get minus an integral from x_0 to $x - ct$ or plus an integral from $x - ct$ to x_0. Hence addition of $\phi(x + ct)$ and $\psi(x - ct)$ gives $u(x, t)$ [see (4)] in the form

$$u(x, t) = \frac{1}{2}[f(x + ct) + f(x - ct)] + \frac{1}{2c}\int_{x-ct}^{x+ct} g(s)\, ds. \tag{12}$$

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[1]JEAN LE ROND D'ALEMBERT (1717–1783), French mathematician, also known for his important work in mechanics.

We mention that the general theory of PDEs provides a systematic way for finding the transformation (2) that simplifies (1). See Ref. [C8] in App. 1.

If the initial velocity is zero, we see that this reduces to

$$u(x, t) = \tfrac{1}{2}[f(x + ct) + f(x - ct)], \tag{13}$$

in agreement with (17) in Sec. 12.3. You may show that because of the boundary conditions (2) in that section the function f must be odd and must have the period $2L$.

Our result shows that the two initial conditions [the functions $f(x)$ and $g(x)$ in (5)] determine the solution uniquely.

The solution of the wave equation by the Laplace transform method will be shown in Sec. 12.11.

Characteristics. Types and Normal Forms of PDEs

The idea of d'Alembert's solution is just a special instance of the **method of characteristics**. This concerns PDEs of the form

$$Au_{xx} + 2Bu_{xy} + Cu_{yy} = F(x, y, u, u_x, u_y) \tag{14}$$

(as well as PDEs in more than two variables). Equation (14) is called **quasilinear** because it is linear in the highest derivatives (but may be arbitrary otherwise). There are three types of PDEs (14), depending on the discriminant $AC - B^2$, as follows.

Type	Defining Condition	Example in Sec. 12.1
Hyperbolic	$AC - B^2 < 0$	Wave equation (1)
Parabolic	$AC - B^2 = 0$	Heat equation (2)
Elliptic	$AC - B^2 > 0$	Laplace equation (3)

Note that (1) and (2) in Sec. 12.1 involve t, but to have y as in (14), we set $y = ct$ in (1), obtaining $u_{tt} - c^2 u_{xx} = c^2(u_{yy} - u_{xx}) = 0$. And in (2) we set $y = c^2 t$, so that $u_t - c^2 u_{xx} = c^2(u_y - u_{xx})$.

A, B, C may be functions of x, y, so that a PDE may be **of mixed type**, that is, of different type in different regions of the xy-plane. An important mixed-type PDE is the **Tricomi equation** (see Prob. 10).

Transformation of (14) to Normal Form. The normal forms of (14) and the corresponding transformations depend on the type of the PDE. They are obtained by solving the **characteristic equation** of (14), which is the ODE

$$Ay'^2 - 2By' + C = 0 \tag{15}$$

where $y' = dy/dx$ (note $-2B$, not $+2B$). The solutions of (15) are called the **characteristics** of (14), and we write them in the form $\Phi(x, y) = \text{const}$ and $\Psi(x, y) = \text{const}$. Then the transformations giving new variables v, w instead of x, y and the normal forms of (14) are as follows.

Type	New Variables		Normal Form
Hyperbolic	$v = \Phi$	$w = \Psi$	$u_{vw} = F_1$
Parabolic	$v = x$	$w = \Phi = \Psi$	$u_{ww} = F_2$
Elliptic	$v = \frac{1}{2}(\Phi + \Psi)$	$w = \frac{1}{2i}(\Phi - \Psi)$	$u_{vv} + u_{ww} = F_3$

Here, $\Phi = \Phi(x, y), \Psi = \Psi(x, y), F_1 = F_1(v, w, u, u_v, u_w)$, etc., and we denote u as function of v, w again by u, for simplicity. We see that the normal form of a hyperbolic PDE is as in d'Alembert's solution. In the parabolic case we get just one family of solutions $\Phi = \Psi$. In the elliptic case, $i = \sqrt{-1}$, and the characteristics are complex and are of minor interest. For derivation, see Ref. [GenRef3] in App. 1.

EXAMPLE 1 D'Alembert's Solution Obtained Systematically

The theory of characteristics gives d'Alembert's solution in a systematic fashion. To see this, we write the wave equation $u_{tt} - c^2 u_{xx} = 0$ in the form (14) by setting $y = ct$. By the chain rule, $u_t = u_y y_t = c u_y$ and $u_{tt} = c^2 u_{yy}$. Division by c^2 gives $u_{xx} - u_{yy} = 0$, as stated before. Hence the characteristic equation is $y'^2 - 1 = (y' + 1)(y' - 1) = 0$. The two families of solutions (characteristics) are $\Phi(x, y) = y + x = \text{const}$ and $\Psi(x, y) = y - x = \text{const}$. This gives the new variables $v = \Phi = y + x = ct + x$ and $w = \Psi = y - x = ct - x$ and d'Alembert's solution $u = f_1(x + ct) + f_2(x - ct)$. ■

PROBLEM SET 12.4

1. Show that c is the speed of each of the two waves given by (4).
2. Show that, because of the boundary conditions (2), Sec. 12.3, the function f in (13) of this section must be odd and of period $2L$.
3. If a steel wire 2 m in length weighs 0.9 nt (about 0.20 lb) and is stretched by a tensile force of 300 nt (about 67.4 lb), what is the corresponding speed of transverse waves?
4. What are the frequencies of the eigenfunctions in Prob. 3?

5–8 GRAPHING SOLUTIONS

Using (13) sketch or graph a figure (similar to Fig. 291 in Sec. 12.3) of the deflection $u(x, t)$ of a vibrating string (length $L = 1$, ends fixed, $c = 1$) starting with initial velocity 0 and initial deflection (k small, say, $k = 0.01$).

5. $f(x) = k \sin \pi x$
6. $f(x) = k(1 - \cos \pi x)$
7. $f(x) = k \sin 2\pi x$
8. $f(x) = kx(1 - x)$

9–18 NORMAL FORMS

Find the type, transform to normal form, and solve. Show your work in detail.

9. $u_{xx} + 4u_{yy} = 0$
10. $u_{xx} - 16u_{yy} = 0$
11. $u_{xx} + 2u_{xy} + u_{yy} = 0$
12. $u_{xx} - 2u_{xy} + u_{yy} = 0$
13. $u_{xx} + 5u_{xy} + 4u_{yy} = 0$
14. $xu_{xy} - yu_{yy} = 0$
15. $xu_{xx} - yu_{xy} = 0$
16. $u_{xx} + 2u_{xy} + 10u_{yy} = 0$
17. $u_{xx} - 4u_{xy} + 5u_{yy} = 0$
18. $u_{xx} - 6u_{xy} + 9u_{yy} = 0$
19. **Longitudinal Vibrations of an Elastic Bar or Rod.** These vibrations in the direction of the x-axis are modeled by the wave equation $u_{tt} = c^2 u_{xx}$, $c^2 = E/\rho$ (see Tolstov [C9], p. 275). If the rod is fastened at one end, $x = 0$, and free at the other, $x = L$, we have $u(0, t) = 0$ and $u_x(L, t) = 0$. Show that the motion corresponding to initial displacement $u(x, 0) = f(x)$ and initial velocity zero is

$$u = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} A_n \sin p_n x \cos p_n ct,$$

$$A_n = \frac{2}{L}\int_0^L f(x) \sin p_n x \, dx, \qquad p_n = \frac{(2n + 1)\pi}{2L}.$$

20. **Tricomi and Airy equations.**[2] Show that the *Tricomi equation* $yu_{xx} + u_{yy} = 0$ is of mixed type. Obtain the **Airy equation** $G'' - yG = 0$ from the Tricomi equation by separation. (For solutions, see p. 446 of Ref. [GenRef1] listed in App. 1.)

[2]Sir GEORGE BIDELL AIRY (1801–1892), English mathematician, known for his work in elasticity. FRANCESCO TRICOMI (1897–1978), Italian mathematician, who worked in integral equations and functional analysis.