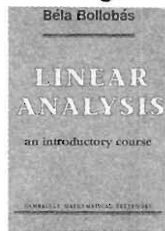


Linear Analysis

C Varughese



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Bela Bollobas

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The appearance of an Indian edition of Bela Bollobas' book '*Linear Analysis*' must surely be welcomed by advanced undergraduate and masters level students in this country. The author mentions that the book reflects the way he would have liked to have been taught analysis. Many readers will, undoubtedly, echo the same feelings about the work.

The book is a comprehensive introduction to what is usually characterised as functional analysis. As such, it is well suited to a fast-paced one semester course, or a relaxed two semester course, at the MSc level. It includes a few topics outside the routine fare, some to provide a geometric flavour and some to provide a glimpse of more recent results in the subject. The latter serve to give the subjects covered a wide chronological spread.

For a book that is modestly sized, it is surprisingly self contained. Definitions are rarely assumed and are instead stated explicitly. Notwithstanding an index of notations at the end of the book, even elementary definitions are often reiterated when used in different contexts. This protects the reader from the handicap of a definition forgotten.

The author gives proofs for most facts relevant to the main thread of the discussion.

These include some, which in similar settings are rarely more than just stated (for example, the well ordering principle is derived from Zorn's lemma). In general, proofs appearing in the book are quite 'efficient'. This is a consequence of a judicious choice and ordering of prior material.

Some of the definitions and results are presented in a more general setting than may be appropriate for a beginner. This is exemplified, for instance, in the rather involved statement of the fact that compact operators form an ideal in the space of bounded operators. Consequently, the onus is occasionally on the reader to adapt the statements to simpler situations to gain a better understanding. (For instance, while discussing an operator between two Banach spaces, one should first visualise the case when both spaces are the same, or possibly an operator on a Hilbert space.) The attendant advantage, of course, is that there is enough to be discovered in subsequent readings.

By its very nature of being comprehensive and concise, the book is expectedly not exhaustive. It is a guided tour of the subject with ample pointers for deeper study. It must be pointed out, though, that no compromise is made on rigour.

Bollobas quotes Harald Bohr's sentiment that 'analysts spend half their time hunting through the literature for inequalities which they want to use but cannot prove'. He goes on to provide a remedy in the form of an opening chapter on basic inequalities... Holder, Minkowski, Cauchy-Schwarz, etc.

The reader is then introduced to normed spaces and linear operators on them.

This leads on to linear functionals and the Hahn-Banach theorem. An interlude on finite dimensional normed spaces is followed by a train of staple theorems...Baire category, closed graph, Tietze-Urysohn, Arzela-Ascoli, Stone-Weierstrass and others. The chapter on contraction mappings that follows might more suitably have been placed later in the book (just before the chapter on fixed point theorems).

A discussion of weak topologies is then followed by a study of Hilbert spaces and some spectral theory. A couple of chapters on compact operators (including the spectral theorem, as a prototype of general spectral theorems) wrap up the operator theory.

A chapter on fixed point theorems and one on the invariant subspace problem (with some known results) provide a finale.

For a subject as well established as the one this book covers, the main body of the text is bound to be a standard set of topics that form the backbone of the subject. But like different performers playing the same musical composition, the difference between authors is the relative emphasis on various results. So it is with this book. Thus we find in it some results that other authors have chosen to play down, or ignore (like the fact that, in an incomplete space, there is always a non-convergent series which is absolutely convergent).

One fact that the author emphasises (and deservingly so) is that the identification of a Hilbert space with its dual is an anti-isomorphism. The belittling of this fact is often a source of confusion. However, the use of the same notation for the adjoint of an

operator, acting on the dual space and on the Hilbert space itself (following the identification), could be a mild source of confusion. Stating, for instance, that the spectrum of T^* is the same as the spectrum of T on a Banach space and that the spectrum of T^* is the conjugate of the spectrum of T in the context of a Hilbert space, could be perplexing to a beginner. One hopes that the author's repeated reminders that the identification of a Hilbert space with its dual is antilinear will dispel any confusion.

The notes at the end of each chapter are a pleasant departure from the usual insipid bibliographical listings. These notes provide historical settings for the topics and also the author's polite evaluations (at least the positive ones) of various sources.

The write-up on the back cover of the book characterises the copious collection of exercises as 'some straightforward, some challenging, none uninteresting'. The exercises certainly live up to this description and supplement the text very well.

However, the inclusion of some of these exercises in the main text, as examples, might have served a useful purpose of illustration. It might also have provided a welcome break in the parade of theorems, lemmas and corollaries. This would have given the reader a breather in what is otherwise a slightly intense presentation.

Of course, this is asking for more icing on the cake. Irrespective of this, what Bollobas has served up is quite delightful.

C Varughese, Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore, India

