

# EXTREMAL QUASICONFORMAL MAPPINGS WITH PRESCRIBED BOUNDARY VALUES

BY

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1. Let  $R$  be a Riemann surface whose universal covering space is conformally equivalent to the unit disk. We can regard  $R$  as the interior of a Riemann surface with boundary  $R^*$  whose boundary is as large as possible (see §3). A quasiconformal map  $f$  of  $R$  onto another Riemann surface  $S$  has a unique continuous extension  $f^*$  mapping  $R^*$  onto  $S^*$ . Two quasiconformal maps  $f$  and  $g$  of  $R$  onto  $S$  are homotopic modulo the boundary if  $f^* = g^*$  on  $R^* - R$  and there exists a homotopy between  $f^*$  and  $g^*$  which is constant on  $R^* - R$ . If  $R^* - R$  is empty then  $f$  is just homotopic to  $g$ .

Let  $K$  be the complex cotangent bundle of  $R$ . Then  $\beta(f)$ , the Beltrami differential of  $f$ , is an element of  $L^\infty(\bar{K}K^{-1})$ , the Banach space of all essentially bounded sections of the bundle  $\bar{K}K^{-1}$ . (Locally  $v \in L^\infty(\bar{K}K^{-1})$  is given by  $v_\alpha d\bar{z}_\alpha/dz_\alpha$ .)  $L^\infty(\bar{K}K^{-1})$  is the dual of  $L^1(K^2)$ , the Banach space of integrable sections of the bundle  $K^2$ . (Locally  $\varphi \in L^1(K^2)$  is given by  $\varphi_\alpha dz_\alpha^2$ .) Let  $A(R)$  denote the closed subspace of  $L^1(K^2)$  of all integrable analytic quadratic differentials on  $R$ . By  $\|\beta(f) \mid A(R)\|$  we denote the norm of the restriction of  $\beta(f)$ , regarded as a linear functional on  $L^1(K^2)$ , to the closed subspace  $A(R)$ .

The quasiconformal map  $f: R \rightarrow S$  is extremal if  $\|\beta(f)\| \leq \|\beta(g)\|$  for all maps  $g$  homotopic to  $f$  modulo the boundary. The main result is

**THEOREM 1.** *If  $f: R \rightarrow S$  is extremal then  $\|\beta(f) \mid A(R)\| = \|\beta(f)\|$ .*

**COROLLARY 1.** *If  $R$  is a compact surface minus a finite number of points, then  $A(R)$  is finite dimensional and consists of all meromorphic quadratic differentials on the compact surface with poles of order at most one at the deleted points. Furthermore there exists a nonzero  $\theta \in A(R)$  and a constant  $c$  with  $\beta(f) = c\theta/|\theta|$ .*

**REMARK.** This result is classical and due to Teichmüller.

**Proof.** Since  $A(R)$  is finite dimensional, by Theorem 1 there exists a nonzero  $\theta \in A(R)$  with  $\int_R \beta(f)\theta = \int_R \|\beta(f)\| |\theta|$ . This can happen only if  $\beta(f)\theta = \|\beta(f)\| |\theta|$ , and therefore  $\beta(f) = \|\beta(f)\| \bar{\theta}/|\theta|$ .

**COROLLARY 2.** *If  $f: R \rightarrow S$  is extremal then  $\|\beta(f) \mid R - K\| = \|\beta(f)\|$  for every compact proper subset  $K$  of  $R$ .*

**Proof.** By Theorem 1 we can find a sequence  $\theta_n \in A(R)$  with  $\|\theta_n\| = 1$  and  $\int_R \beta(f)\theta_n \rightarrow \|\beta(f)\|$ . Since the value of an analytic function at a point is the average

of its values over a disk centered at that point, the  $\theta_n$  are uniformly bounded on every compact subset. Using Cauchy's formula their derivatives are uniformly bounded also, and by passing to a subsequence we may assume that the  $\theta_n$  converge uniformly on compact subsets to some  $\theta \in A(R)$ . Suppose  $\|\beta(f) \mid R-K\| < \|\beta(f)\|$ . Since

$$\left| \int_R \beta(f) \theta_n \right| \leq \|\beta(f)\| \int_K |\theta_n| + \|\beta(f) \mid R-K\| \int_{R-K} |\theta_n|$$

we must have  $\int_{R-K} |\theta_n| \rightarrow 0$ , and the  $\theta_n$  converge to  $\theta$  in  $L^1$  norm. We then have  $\|\theta\| = 1$  and  $\beta(f)(\theta) = \|\beta(f)\|$ , and we can repeat the previous argument to show  $\beta(f) = \|\beta(f)\| \theta / |\theta|$ . This gives a contradiction.

**REMARK.** Given any quasiconformal map  $f: R \rightarrow S$ , it follows from the usual compactness properties of quasiconformal mappings that there exists at least one extremal map homotopic to  $f$  modulo the boundary. Strebel [7] has shown that when  $R$  is the unit disk such an extremal need not have the form  $\beta(f) = c\theta/|\theta|$  and need not be unique.

2. The proof of Theorem 1 will be modeled upon the following general result.

**THEOREM 2.** *Let  $B$  be a Banach space and  $B^*$  its dual. Let  $M$  be a  $C^1$  submanifold of  $B^*$ . Suppose that the dual norm in  $B^*$  assumes its minimum, or maximum, on  $M$  at a point  $x$  in  $M$ , and that there exists a closed subspace  $A$  of  $B$  such that the tangent space to  $M$  at  $x$  is the subspace of  $B^*$  orthogonal to  $A$ . Then  $\|x \mid A\| = \|x\|$ .*

**Proof.** Suppose  $\|x \mid A\| < \|x\|$ . By the Hahn-Banach extension theorem we can find a linear functional  $y$  in  $B^*$  with  $y \mid A = x \mid A$  and  $\|y\| = \|x \mid A\| < \|x\|$ . Since  $y - x$  vanishes on  $A$ , we can construct a  $C^1$  path  $\alpha: (-\varepsilon, \varepsilon) \rightarrow M$  with  $\alpha(0) = x$  and  $D\alpha(0)(1) = y - x$ .

Then for sufficiently small positive  $t$

$$\|\alpha(t) - \alpha(0) - D\alpha(0)(t)\|/t < \|x\| - \|y\|$$

since  $\|x\| - \|y\| > 0$ . But then

$$\begin{aligned} \|\alpha(t)\| &< \|\alpha(0) + D\alpha(0)(t)\| + (\|x\| - \|y\|)t \\ &\leq \|x + t(y - x)\| + (\|x\| - \|y\|)t \\ &\leq (1 - t)\|x\| + t\|y\| + t\|x\| - t\|y\| = \|x\| \end{aligned}$$

and the norm does not assume its minimum on  $M$  at  $x$ . Similarly, for sufficiently small negative  $t$ ,  $\|\alpha(t)\| > \|x\|$  and the norm does not assume its maximum on  $M$  at  $x$  either.

In the case where  $B$  is a Hilbert space this condition yields a familiar result.

**COROLLARY 3.** *If  $B$  is a Hilbert space, then  $x$  is orthogonal to the tangent space to  $M$  at  $x$ .*

**Proof.** Since  $\|x \mid A\| = \|x\|$ ,  $x \in A$ .

3. We can represent  $R$  as the quotient of the unit disk  $D$  under the Fuchsian group  $\Gamma$ . Write the boundary of  $D$  as the disjoint union of the closed set  $\Lambda(\Gamma)$  of limits of fixed points of  $\Gamma$  and the relatively open set  $\Phi(\Gamma)$  of points of discontinuity of  $\Gamma$ . Then  $R^* = D \cup \Phi(\Gamma)/\Gamma$  is a Riemann surface with boundary whose interior is  $R$ , and any such surface is (conformally equivalent to) an open subset of  $R^*$ . Thus the boundary of  $R^*$  is as large as possible.

If  $f: R \rightarrow S$  is a quasiconformal map, we may represent  $S$  also as the quotient of the disk by another Fuchsian group  $\Delta$ , and the map  $f$  is covered by a quasiconformal map  $F$  of the unit disk to itself which has a continuous extension  $F^*$  on the closed disk covering a continuous extension  $f^*: R^* \rightarrow S^*$  of  $f$ .

**THEOREM 3.** *Two maps  $f, g: R \rightarrow S$  are homotopic modulo the boundary if and only if they can be covered by maps  $F^*$  and  $G^*$  of the disk to itself which agree on the boundary of the disk.*

**Proof.** First suppose  $f$  and  $g$  are homotopic modulo the boundary, and let  $h^*(t): R^* \rightarrow S^*$  be the homotopy with  $h^*(0) = f^*$ ,  $h^*(1) = g^*$  and  $h^*$  constant on  $R^* - R$ . Then by the Covering Homotopy Theorem we can cover  $h^*(t)$  with a homotopy  $H^*(t): D \rightarrow D$  which is constant on  $\Phi(\Gamma)$ .

For each  $\gamma \in \Gamma$  there exists a  $\delta \in \Delta$  with  $H^*(0)\gamma = \delta H^*(0)$ . Fix  $x$  in the interior of  $D$  and consider the two curves in  $D$  given by  $H^*(t)\gamma(x)$  and  $\delta H^*(t)x$ . Since both are liftings of the same curve in  $S$  and both have the same initial point, they must agree. Thus  $H^*(t)\gamma = \delta H^*(t)$  for all  $t$ .

But then  $H^*(t)$  must be constant on the fixed points of  $\Gamma$ , and hence on the whole boundary of the disk. Therefore  $F^* = H^*(0)$  and  $G^* = H^*(1)$  cover  $f$  and  $g$  and agree on the boundary of the disk.

Conversely suppose  $F^*$  and  $G^*$  agree on the boundary of the disk. Define  $H^*(t)(z)$  to be the point which divides the noneuclidean line segment between  $F^*(z)$  and  $G^*(z)$  in the ratio  $t : (1-t)$ . Then  $H^*(t)$  covers a homotopy

$$h^*(t): R^* \rightarrow S^*$$

between  $f^*$  and  $g^*$  constant on  $R^* - R$ .

Let  $f_n: R \rightarrow S$  be a sequence of maps homotopic to  $f$  modulo the boundary, with  $\|\beta(f_n)\| \leq k < 1$ . Cover  $f$  and  $f_n$  with maps  $F^*$  and  $F_n^*$  of the closed disk to itself which all agree on the boundary, and with  $\|\beta(F_n)\| \leq k < 1$ . Some subsequence of the  $F_n^*$  will converge uniformly to a quasiconformal map  $G^*$  (see Ahlfors [1]) which agrees with  $F^*$  on the boundary of the disk, and which covers a quasiconformal map  $g: R \rightarrow S$  homotopic to  $f$  modulo the boundary. Moreover  $\|\beta(g)\| \leq \liminf \|\beta(f_n)\|$  so we may choose the  $f_n$  to make  $g$  extremal.

4. In order to apply Theorem 2, I need the following result, which occurs (implicitly) in Bers [3].

**THEOREM 4.** *Let  $N$  be the set of all Beltrami differentials of quasiconformal maps of  $R$  onto itself homotopic to the identity map modulo the boundary. Then  $N$  is an analytic submanifold of  $L^\infty(\bar{K}K^{-1})$  in a neighborhood of zero whose tangent space at zero is the subspace orthogonal to  $A(R)$ .*

For completeness I shall outline the proof. Let  $D$  be the unit disk and  $D'$  its complement in the sphere. Define

$$P_n\mu(z) = (n!/2\pi i) \int_D \mu(\zeta)(\zeta - z)^{-n-1} d\zeta \wedge d\bar{\zeta}.$$

For  $\mu \in L^\infty(D)$ ,  $P_n\mu$  is analytic in  $D'$  with a zero at infinity of order at least  $n+1$ , and  $d/dz P_n\mu = P_{n+1}\mu$  in  $D'$ . Moreover for  $\mu \in L^p(D)$ , any  $p > 2$ ,  $P_0\mu$  is Hölder-continuous in the entire sphere and has generalized derivatives  $\partial/\partial\bar{z} P_0\mu = \mu$  and  $\partial/\partial z P_0\mu = P_1\mu$ . In  $D$ ,  $P_1$  is a singular integral and by the Calderón-Zygmund inequality it is a bounded linear operator of  $L^p(D)$  into itself, whose norm, by the Riesz convexity theorem, approaches 1 as  $p$  approaches 2. We can then prove (see Ahlfors [2, p. 97]) that

$$w(\mu)(z) = z + P_0(I - \mu P_1)^{-1}\mu(z)$$

is a quasiconformal map of the sphere to itself with Beltrami differential  $\mu$  on  $D$  and analytic on  $D'$ .

Remembering that  $R = D/\Gamma$ , let  $L^\infty(D, \Gamma) = L^\infty(\bar{K}K^{-1})$  be the Banach subspace of  $\mu \in L^\infty(D)$  with  $\mu = (\mu \circ \gamma) \arg^{-2} \gamma'$  for all  $\gamma \in \Gamma$ . Also let  $B(D', \Gamma)$  be the Banach space of all analytic functions  $\varphi$  in  $D'$  with a zero of order at least 4 at infinity, which satisfy  $\varphi = (\varphi \circ \gamma)(\gamma')^2$  and whose norm  $\sup (z\bar{z} - 1)^2 |\varphi(z)|$  is finite. This is just the norm of the quadratic differential  $\varphi(z) dz^2$  in the Poincaré metric on  $D'$ . Let  $[f]$  denote the Schwarzian derivative of  $f$ . Since  $\mu$  is invariant under  $\Gamma$ , for each  $\gamma \in \Gamma$  the map  $w(\mu) \circ \gamma \circ w(\mu)^{-1}$  is an analytic homeomorphism of the sphere and hence is itself a Möbius transformation  $\delta$ . Then  $w(\mu) \circ \gamma = \delta \circ w(\mu)$ , and

$$([w(\mu)] \circ \gamma)(\gamma')^2 = [w(\mu)].$$

Moreover by a theorem of Nehari [6] on schlicht mappings  $\sup (z\bar{z} - 1)^2 |[w(\mu)]| \leq 6$ . Hence  $\Lambda(\mu) = [w(\mu)]$  belongs to  $B(D', \Gamma)$  and  $\|\Lambda(\mu)\| \leq 6$ .

**LEMMA 1.**  $\Lambda: L^\infty(D, \Gamma) \rightarrow B(D', \Gamma)$  is a complex analytic map and  $D\Lambda(0) = P_3$ .

**Proof.** Fix a point  $z \in D$ . Since  $(I - \mu P_1)^{-1}\mu$  is a uniformly convergent power series in  $\mu$ ,  $w(\mu)(z)$ ,  $d/dz w(\mu)(z)$ ,  $\dots$ ,  $d^3/dz^3 w(\mu)(z)$  are all analytic functions of  $\mu$ . Therefore so is  $\Lambda(\mu)(z)$ . Let  $\gamma$  be the circle of radius 1 in the  $t$ -plane. By the Cauchy integral formula, for  $\|\nu\| < 1 - \|\mu\|$ ,

$$D\Lambda(\mu)(\nu)(z) = (1/2\pi i) \int_\gamma \Lambda(\mu + t\nu)(z)/t^2 dt.$$

Since  $|\Lambda(\mu + t\nu)(z)| \leq 6(z\bar{z} - 1)^{-2}$ ,  $D\Lambda(\mu)$  is a bounded complex linear map of  $L^\infty(D, \Gamma)$  into  $B(D', \Gamma)$ . Also for  $|c| \leq 1/2$

$$\begin{aligned} |\Lambda(\mu + c\nu)(z) - \Lambda(\mu)(z) - D\Lambda(\mu)(c\nu)(z)| \\ \leq (1/2\pi) \int_{\gamma} |\Lambda(\mu + t\nu)(z)| |(t-c)^{-1} - t^{-1} - ct^{-2}| dt \\ \leq 12c^2(z\bar{z} - 1)^{-2}. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore  $\|\Lambda(\mu + c\nu) - \Lambda(\mu) - D\Lambda(\mu)(c\nu)\| \leq 12c^2$  so  $\Lambda$  is in fact differentiable with derivative  $D\Lambda(\mu)$ . Since  $D\Lambda(\mu)$  is complex-linear,  $\Lambda$  is analytic. By evaluating at  $z$  again we may compute  $Dw(0)(\mu)(z) = P_0\mu(z)$  and  $D\Lambda(0)(\mu)(z) = P_3\mu(z)$ . Therefore  $D\Lambda(0) = P_3$ .

Define a continuous linear map  $S: B(D', \Gamma) \rightarrow L^\infty(D, \Gamma)$  by

$$S\varphi(z) = c(1 - z\bar{z})^2 \bar{z}^{-4} \varphi(\bar{z}^{-1}).$$

Using a reproducing formula for analytic functions (see Bers [3, Lecture 3, p. 6]),  $D\Lambda(0) \circ S$  is the identity for an appropriate choice of the constant  $c$ . This proves that  $D\Lambda(0)$  maps  $L^\infty(D, \Gamma)$  onto  $B(D', \Gamma)$  and its kernel is a closed split subspace. By the inverse function theorem  $\Lambda^{-1}(0)$  is an analytic submanifold in a neighborhood of zero.

LEMMA 2.  $\Lambda^{-1}(0) = N$ .

**Proof.** First suppose  $\mu \in \Lambda^{-1}(0)$ . Then the Schwarzian derivative of  $w(\mu)$  is zero on  $D'$ , so  $w(\mu)$  agrees on  $D'$  with a Möbius transformation  $A$ . Let  $w = A^{-1} \circ w(\mu)$ . Then  $w$  is  $\mu$ -quasiconformal on  $D$  and the identity on  $D'$ . Since  $\mu \in L^\infty(D, G)$ ,  $w$  covers a  $\mu$ -quasiconformal map of  $R$  onto itself homotopic to the identity modulo the boundary.

Conversely any such map can be lifted to a quasiconformal map  $w$  of  $D$  onto itself which leaves the boundary fixed. Let  $\mu = \beta(w)$ , and extend  $w$  to be the identity in  $D'$ . Then  $w(\mu)w^{-1}$  is an analytic one-to-one map of the sphere onto itself and therefore is a Möbius transformation whose Schwarzian derivative in  $D'$  is  $\Lambda(\mu) = 0$ .

Finally

$$D\Lambda(0)(\mu) = P_3\mu = (6/2\pi i) \int_D \mu(\zeta)/(\zeta - z)^4 d\zeta \wedge d\bar{\zeta}$$

and the functions  $(\zeta - z)^{-4}$  are dense in  $A(D)$ , the integrable analytic functions in  $D$ . Moreover we know (see Earle [4]) that each element of  $A(R)$  is a Poincaré series of an element of  $A(D)$ . Therefore  $T_0N = \text{Ker } D\Lambda(0)$  is the subspace of  $L^\infty(\bar{K}K^{-1})$  orthogonal to  $A(R)$ .

5. The composition of two quasiconformal maps is again quasiconformal. If  $\mu = \beta(f)$  and  $\nu = \beta(g)$  then

$$\begin{aligned}\partial(g \circ f)/\partial z &= \partial g/\partial w \partial f/\partial z + \partial g/\partial \bar{w} \partial \bar{f}/\partial z \\ &= \partial g/\partial w \partial f/\partial z (1 + \bar{\mu}\nu \arg^{-2} \partial f/\partial z) \\ \partial(g \circ f)/\partial \bar{z} &= \partial g/\partial w \partial f/\partial \bar{z} + \partial g/\partial \bar{w} \partial \bar{f}/\partial \bar{z} \\ &= \partial g/\partial w \partial f/\partial \bar{z} (\mu + \nu \arg^{-2} \partial f/\partial \bar{z}).\end{aligned}$$

Here  $f^\# \nu = \nu \arg^{-2} \partial f/\partial \bar{z}$  is the pull-back of  $\nu d\bar{w}/dw$  as a tensor. We then have

$$\beta(g \circ f) = (\mu + f^\# \nu)/(1 + \bar{\mu} f^\# \nu).$$

We may regard this as a calculation in local coordinates for Riemann surfaces. Let  $R$ ,  $S$ , and  $T$  be Riemann surfaces,  $f: R \rightarrow S$  and  $g: S \rightarrow T$  quasiconformal maps, and  $K$  and  $J$  the complex cotangent bundles on  $R$  and  $S$ . The tensor pull-back defines a linear isometric isomorphism  $f^\#: L^\infty(\bar{J}J^{-1}) \rightarrow L^\infty(\bar{K}K^{-1})$ . It is an isometry because  $|f^\# \nu_\alpha| = |\nu_\beta| \circ f_{\beta\alpha}$ , and an isomorphism because  $(f^\#)^{-1} = (f^{-1})^\#$ . Then if  $\mu = \beta(f)$  and  $\nu = \beta(g)$  we have as before

$$\beta(g \circ f) = (\mu + f^\# \nu)/(1 + \bar{\mu} f^\# \nu).$$

This suggests that we define a map of the Beltrami differentials on  $S$  to the Beltrami differentials on  $R$  by

$$C(f)(\nu) = (\mu + f^\# \nu)/(1 + \bar{\mu} f^\# \nu).$$

The Beltrami differentials on  $R$  are the points in the unit ball in  $L^\infty(\bar{K}K^{-1})$ , which I denote by  $B(R)$ . The map  $C(f): B(S) \rightarrow B(R)$  is analytic. Indeed  $(1 + \bar{\mu} f^\# \nu)^{-1}$  admits a uniformly convergent power series since  $\|\bar{\mu} f^\# \nu\| < 1$ . Moreover  $\beta(g \circ f) = C(f)\beta(g)$ , and since every Beltrami differential is the Beltrami differential of some quasiconformal map, it follows that  $C(g \circ f) = C(g) \circ C(f)$ . Therefore,  $C(f)^{-1} = C(f^{-1})$  and  $C(f)$  is bi-analytic.

Let  $d$  be the Poincaré metric in the disk  $D$ , given by

$$d(z, w) = (1/2) \log (1+r)/(1-r) \quad \text{where } r = |(z-w)/(1-\bar{z}w)|.$$

If  $\nu$  and  $\pi$  are two Beltrami differentials and  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are two coordinate charts then since

$$\nu_\beta = \nu_\alpha \arg^2 (dz_\beta/dz_\alpha) \quad \text{and} \quad \pi_\beta = \pi_\alpha \arg^2 (dz_\beta/dz_\alpha)$$

the number  $d(\nu(x), \pi(x)) = d(\nu_\alpha(x), \pi_\alpha(x))$  is invariantly defined for almost all  $x$ . Define a metric on  $B(R)$ , the Beltrami differentials on  $R$ , by

$$\tau(\nu, \pi) = \text{ess sup } d(\nu(x), \pi(x))$$

where the essential supremum is taken over almost all  $x$  in  $R$ . This metric is natural in the sense that it makes each map  $C(f): B(S) \rightarrow B(R)$  an isometry (if we define a metric  $\tau$  on  $B(S)$  in the same way). To establish this result it is necessary only to observe that in terms of a local coordinate chart the map  $C(f)$  is induced by a Möbius transformation from the unit disk in each fibre of  $L^\infty(\bar{J}J^{-1})$  to the unit

disk in the corresponding fibre of  $L^\infty(\bar{K}K^{-1})$ , and the Poincaré metric is invariant under Möbius transformations. This metric is shown to be induced by a Finsler structure on  $B(R)$  by Earle and Eells in [5].

We shall need the following estimate comparing the metric  $\tau$  with the  $L^\infty$  norm.

**THEOREM 5.** *Let  $\nu$  and  $\pi$  be Beltrami differentials. Then*

$$\tau(\nu, \pi) - \tau(\nu, 0) \leq \|\nu - \pi\| - \|\nu\| + o(\|\pi\|)$$

where  $o(t)/t \rightarrow 0$  as  $t \rightarrow 0$ .

**Proof.** The Poincaré metric is very close to the Euclidean metric at the origin, so that

$$d(z, w) - d(z, 0) \leq |z - w| - |z| + o(|w|)$$

where  $o(t)/t \rightarrow 0$  as  $t \rightarrow 0$ . To prove this, regard  $d(z, w)$  and  $|z - w|$  as two functions of  $w$  for fixed  $z \neq 0$  and evaluate the derivatives  $\partial/\partial w$  at  $w=0$ . In both cases a laborious calculation yields  $-\bar{z}/2|z|$ . Since  $d(z, w)$  and  $|z - w|$  are real the derivatives  $\partial/\partial \bar{w}$  are obtained by conjugation. Hence both partial derivatives agree at  $w=0$  and are continuous, so the estimate follows from the Mean Value Theorem. On the other hand, if  $z=0$  we may regard

$$d(0, w) = (1/2) \log (1 + |w|)/(1 - |w|)$$

as a function of  $|w|$ , and taking its derivative at  $|w|=0$  we again obtain the required estimate.

By replacing  $o(t)$  by  $\sup \{o(u) \mid 0 \leq u \leq t\}$  we may assume that the error estimate  $o(t)$  is monotone nondecreasing. Then for the metric  $\tau$  we have

$$\begin{aligned} \tau(\nu, \pi) &= \text{ess sup } d(\nu(x), \pi(x)) \\ &\leq \text{ess sup } \{d(\nu(x), 0) + |\nu(x) - \pi(x)| - |\nu(x)| + o(|\pi(x)|)\} \\ &\leq \text{ess sup } \{d(\nu(x), 0) - |\nu(x)|\} + \text{ess sup } |\nu(x) - \pi(x)| + \text{ess sup } o(|\pi(x)|). \end{aligned}$$

But  $d(z, 0) - |z|$  is a monotonic increasing function of  $|z|$ , since

$$d/dr (1/2) \log (1 + r)/(1 - r) = 1/(1 - r^2).$$

Therefore

$$\tau(\nu, \pi) \leq \tau(\nu, 0) - \|\nu\| + \|\nu - \pi\| + o(\|\pi\|)$$

which proves the theorem.

6. Let  $N$  be as before the set of all Beltrami differentials of quasiconformal maps of  $R$  onto itself homotopic to the identity modulo the boundary.

**THEOREM 6.** *Let  $f: R \rightarrow S$  be extremal and  $\mu = \beta(f)$ . Then  $\tau(\mu, 0) \leq \tau(\mu, \pi)$  for all  $\pi \in N$ .*

**Proof.** Suppose  $\pi \in N$  and  $\tau(\mu, \pi) < \tau(\mu, 0)$ . We know that  $\pi = \beta(g)$  for some quasiconformal map  $g: R \rightarrow R$  homotopic to the identity modulo the boundary.

If  $H: R \times [0, 1] \rightarrow R$  is a homotopy between  $g$  and the identity fixing the boundary then  $f \circ g^{-1} \circ H$  is a homotopy between  $f$  and the map  $k = f \circ g^{-1}$  which leaves the boundary fixed. Since  $k \circ g = f$ ,  $C(g)\beta(k) = \beta(f)$ . Let  $\mu = \beta(f)$  and  $\lambda = \beta(k)$ . Since  $C(g)$  is an isometry and  $C(g)0 = \beta(g) = \pi$ ,

$$\tau(\lambda, 0) = \tau(C(g)\lambda, C(g)0) = \tau(\mu, \pi) < \tau(\mu, 0).$$

But  $\tau(\mu, 0)$  is a monotone increasing function of  $\|\mu\|$  since  $d(z, 0)$  is a monotone increasing function of  $z$ . Therefore  $\|\lambda\| < \|\mu\|$ . Since  $\lambda = \beta(k)$  and  $k$  is homotopic to  $f$  modulo the boundary,  $f$  is not extremal.

It is now easy to complete the proof of Theorem 1 by imitating the proof of Theorem 2, using the estimate in Theorem 5. Suppose that  $f: R \rightarrow S$  is quasiconformal with Beltrami differential  $\mu = \beta(f)$  but that  $\|\mu \mid A(R)\| < \|\mu\|$ . By the Hahn-Banach Theorem we can find  $\nu \in L^\infty(\bar{K}K^{-1})$  with  $\nu \mid A(R) = \mu \mid A(R)$  and  $\|\nu\| = \|\mu \mid A(R)\| < \|\mu\|$ . Then  $\mu - \nu \in A(R)^\perp$  and  $A(R)^\perp$  is the tangent space at 0 to the analytic submanifold  $N$ . Consequently we can find a  $C^1$  path  $\alpha: (-\varepsilon, \varepsilon) \rightarrow N$  with  $\alpha(0) = 0$  and  $D\alpha(0)(1) = \mu - \nu$ . Then, restricting our attention to positive  $t$ ,

$$\|\alpha(t) - \alpha(0) - D\alpha(0)(t)\|/t = \|\alpha(t) - t\mu + t\nu\|/t \rightarrow 0 \quad \text{as } t \rightarrow 0.$$

This makes  $\|\alpha(t)\| \leq Kt$  for some constant  $K$  and all sufficiently small  $t$ , so  $o(\|\alpha(t)\|)/t \rightarrow 0$  as  $t \rightarrow 0$  as well.

Now by the estimate of Theorem 5

$$\tau(\mu, \alpha(t)) - \tau(\mu, 0) \leq \|\mu - \alpha(t)\| - \|\mu\| + o(\|\alpha(t)\|).$$

Also  $\|\mu - \alpha(t)\| \leq (1-t)\|\mu\| + t\|\nu\| + \|\alpha(t) - t\mu + t\nu\|$ . Combining these inequalities with the estimates above we see that

$$\tau(\mu, \alpha(t)) - \tau(\mu, 0) \leq \beta(t) - t(\|\mu\| - \|\nu\|)$$

where  $\beta(t)/t \rightarrow 0$  as  $t \rightarrow 0$ . Since  $\|\mu\| - \|\nu\| > 0$  we must have  $\tau(\mu, \alpha(t)) < \tau(\mu, 0)$  for all sufficiently small positive  $t$ . Then since  $\alpha(t) \in N$  it follows from Theorem 6 that the map  $f: R \rightarrow S$  is not extremal.

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