# Basic dynamics for Kleinian groups

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**Definition** The limit set  $L_{\Gamma}$  of a Kleinian group  $\Gamma$  is the set of all accumulation points of  $\Gamma$ .*w* for any  $w \in H^3$ .

Since  $\Gamma$  acts discretely on  $H^3$ , the limit set is a closed subset of  $\overline{\mathbb{C}}$ .

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Let *d* denote the corresponding metric on  $H^3$ . If  $w_1$ ,  $w_2$  are two points in  $H^3$  then  $d(\gamma.w_1, \gamma.w_2) = d(w_1, w_2)$  for all  $\gamma \in \Gamma$ .

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$$\lim_{n\to\infty}\gamma_n.w_1=\lim_{n\to\infty}\gamma_n.w_2=z.$$

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For  $A \in SL(2, \mathbb{C})$ ,  $A^*A$  is has strictly positive eigenvalues with product 1. So we have

$$A^*A = Q^*\Delta^2Q$$

where  $Q \in SU(2, \mathbb{C})$  and

$$\Delta = egin{pmatrix} \lambda & \mathbf{0} \ \mathbf{0} & \lambda^{-1} \end{pmatrix}.$$

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By choice of Q, we can assume  $0 < \lambda < 1$ , unless  $A \in SU(2, \mathbb{C})$  and  $A^*A$  is the identity in which case  $\lambda = 1$ . Then

$$\sqrt{A^*A}=Q^*\Delta Q,$$

and, for any  $\underline{v} \in \mathbb{C}^2$ ,

$$\|\sqrt{A^*A}\underline{v}\|^2 = < A^*A\underline{v}, \underline{v} > = \|A\underline{v}\|^2.$$

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Hence, for some  $P \in SU(2, \mathbb{C})$ ,

$$A = PQ\sqrt{A^*A} = P\Delta Q.$$

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This is known as the *compact-abelian-compact decomposition* (of  $A \in SL(2, \mathbb{C})$ ) and is an instance of a decomposition which works for any semisimple Lie group.

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Suppose that  $A_n$  is a sequence of matrices in a Kleinian group  $\Gamma$  such that  $A_n.j$  converges to  $z_0 \in \overline{\mathbb{C}}$  and

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with  $P_n$  and  $Q_n \in SU(2, \mathbb{C})$  and, for  $0 < \lambda_n < 1$ ,

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$$\lim_{n\to\infty}(\Delta_n Q_n).j=0,$$

and so

$$\lim_{n\to\infty}A_n.j=P.0.$$

Also, if  $z \in \overline{\mathbb{C}}$  and  $Q.z \neq \infty$  then

$$\lim_{n\to\infty}A_n.z=P.0.$$

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We can use this to prove the following:

**Lemma 2** Suppose that  $\Gamma$  is non-elementary. For any  $z_0 \in L_{\Gamma}$ ,

$$\overline{\Gamma.z_0} = L_{\Gamma}.$$

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*Proof* Take any  $z \in L_{\Gamma}$  and sequence  $\{A_n\} \subset \Gamma$  with  $A_n.j \to z$ . Write  $A_n = P_n \Delta_n Q_n$  as before and assume  $P_n \to P$  and  $Q_n \to Q$ .

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• If 
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 then  $A_n \rightarrow z_0 \rightarrow P . 0 = z$ .

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• If 
$$z_0 \neq Q^{-1} . \infty$$
 then  $A_n \rightarrow z_0 \rightarrow P . 0 = z$ .

▶ If  $z_0 = Q^{-1} . \infty$  then choose  $B \in \Gamma$  such that  $B.z_0 \neq z_0$ . then  $(A_n B).j = A_n.B.j \rightarrow z$  by Lemma 1. So  $(A_n B).z_0 = A_n.(B.z_0) \rightarrow z$ .

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The following lemma shows that the complement  $\Omega_{\Gamma}$  of  $L_{\Gamma}$  has a property claimed in the last lecture.

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# The complement of the limit set

The following lemma shows that the complement  $\Omega_{\Gamma}$  of  $L_{\Gamma}$  has a property claimed in the last lecture. **Lemma 3** If  $z \notin L_{\Gamma}$  then there exists an open neighbourhood U of z such that  $A.U \cap U \neq \emptyset$  for  $A \in \Gamma$  only if A.z = z - in which case A must be elliptic.

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Certainly if z is fixed by A and A is parabolic or hyperbolic then z ∈ L<sub>Γ</sub>, because if A is parabolic then A<sup>n</sup>.j → z as n → ±∞ and if A is hyperbolic then A<sup>n</sup>.j → z either as n → +∞ or as n → -∞, depending on whether z is an attracting or repelling fixed point of A.

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- So now suppose that there are sequences  $\{A_n\} \subset \Gamma$  and  $\{z_n\} \subset \overline{\mathbb{C}}$  such that  $z_n \to z$  and  $A_n.z_n \to z$  and all  $A_n$  distinct.

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- Write  $A_n = P_n \Delta_n Q_n$  as before and as before assume that  $P_n \rightarrow P$  and  $Q_n \rightarrow Q$ .

Proof

- Certainly if z is fixed by A and A is parabolic or hyperbolic then z ∈ L<sub>Γ</sub>, because if A is parabolic then A<sup>n</sup>.j → z as n → ±∞ and if A is hyperbolic then A<sup>n</sup>.j → z either as n → +∞ or as n → -∞, depending on whether z is an attracting or repelling fixed point of A.
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- Write  $A_n = P_n \Delta_n Q_n$  as before and as before assume that  $P_n \rightarrow P$  and  $Q_n \rightarrow Q$ .
- ▶ We have seen that  $A_n.j \rightarrow P.0$  and  $A_n^{-1}.j \rightarrow Q^{-1}.\infty$ , and  $A_n.z \rightarrow P.0$  unless  $z = Q^{-1}.\infty$ . But  $z \neq Q^{-1}.\infty$  because  $z \notin L_{\Gamma}$ .

Proof

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- ► In fact  $A_n.z' \to P.0$  uniformly on some neighbourhood of *z* if  $z \neq Q^{-1}.\infty$  (which is true). So  $A_n.z_n \to P.0$ . But then  $z = P.0 \in L_{\Gamma}$ , giving a contradiction.

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Proof

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- As before write A<sub>n</sub> = P<sub>n</sub>Δ<sub>n</sub>Q<sub>n</sub> with P<sub>n</sub> → P and Q<sub>n</sub> → Q, so that z = P.0. Choose any B ∈ Γ such that B.z ≠ Q<sup>-1</sup>.∞.

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- ► Then, as in Lemma 2,  $A_n B.z' \rightarrow z$  uniformly for z' in some open neighbourhood U of z.

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- ► As before write  $A_n = P_n \Delta_n Q_n$  with  $P_n \to P$  and  $Q_n \to Q$ , so that z = P.0. Choose any  $B \in \Gamma$  such that  $B.z \neq Q^{-1}.\infty$ .
- ► Then, as in Lemma 2,  $A_n B.z' \rightarrow z$  uniformly for z' in some open neighbourhood U of z.
- Then for all sufficiently large n, A<sub>n</sub>B(U) ⊂ U. But then A<sub>n</sub>B must be hyperbolic with attractive fixed point in U.

The following lemma shows that another property of the limit set claimed in the last lecture is true.

**Lemma 4** If  $\Gamma$  is nonelementary then attractive fixed points of elements of  $\Gamma$  are dense in  $L_{\Gamma}$ .

Proof

- Let  $z \in L_{\Gamma}$  and let  $\{A_n\} \subset \Gamma$  with  $A_n.j \rightarrow z$ .
- As before write A<sub>n</sub> = P<sub>n</sub>Δ<sub>n</sub>Q<sub>n</sub> with P<sub>n</sub> → P and Q<sub>n</sub> → Q, so that z = P.0. Choose any B ∈ Γ such that B.z ≠ Q<sup>-1</sup>.∞.
- ► Then, as in Lemma 2,  $A_n B.z' \rightarrow z$  uniformly for z' in some open neighbourhood U of z.
- ▶ Then for all sufficiently large n,  $A_n B(\overline{U}) \subset U$ . But then  $A_n B$  must be hyperbolic with attractive fixed point in U.
- Since U can be taken arbitrarily small, z is approximated arbitrarily closely by attractive fixed points of hyperbolic elements.

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**Lemma 5** Let  $\Gamma$  be nonelementary. Then the set of pairs consisting of attractive and repelling endpoints of hyperbolic elements of  $\Gamma$  is dense in  $L_{\Gamma} \times L_{\Gamma}$ .

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Let (z<sub>1</sub>, z<sub>2</sub>) ∈ L<sub>Γ</sub> × L<sub>Γ</sub> where z<sub>1</sub> is an attractive fixed point of A<sub>1</sub> and z<sub>2</sub> is a repelling fixed point of A<sub>2</sub> and z<sub>1</sub> ≠ z<sub>2</sub>.

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- Let z<sub>3</sub> and z<sub>4</sub> be the repelling and attractive fixed points of A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>2</sub> respectively. Assume also that z<sub>4</sub> ≠ z<sub>3</sub>.

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#### $A_2^{-1}(\overline{U_2}) \subset U_2, \; A_2(\overline{U_4}) \subset U_4$

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▶ Then for all sufficiently large *n* and *m*,

 $A_2^n.(\overline{U_1}) \subset U_4$ 

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It follows that U<sub>1</sub> contains the attractive fixed point of A<sub>1</sub><sup>m</sup>A<sub>2</sub><sup>n</sup> and U<sub>2</sub> contains the repelling fixed point.

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# Discussion: Equivalence between hyperbolic action and convex cocompact

There is a covering of L<sub>Γ</sub> by finitely many open balls U<sub>i</sub> (1 ≤ i ≤ n) such that, for each ε > 0, there is a covering of L<sub>Γ</sub> by sets of the form γ.U<sub>i</sub> with γ ∈ Γ and of radius < ε in the spherical metric.

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