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### INTERPOLATING BLASCHKE PRODUCTS GENERATE $H^{\infty}$

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#### INTERPOLATING BLASCHKE PRODUCTS GENERATE $H^{\infty}$

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#### The algebra of bounded analytic functions on the open unit disc is generated by the set of Blaschke products having simple zeros which form an interpolating sequence.

Let  $H^{\infty}$  be the algebra of bounded analytic functions in the unit disc  $\mathbb{D}$  and set

$$||f|| = \sup_{z \in \mathbb{D}} |f(z)|,$$

for  $f \in H^{\infty}$ . A Blaschke product is an  $H^{\infty}$  function of the form

$$B(z) = \prod_{\nu=1}^{\infty} \frac{-\overline{z_{\nu}}}{|z_{\nu}|} \frac{z - z_{\nu}}{1 - \overline{z_{\nu}}z}$$

with  $\sum (1 - |z_{\nu}|) < \infty$ . In [5] D.E. Marshall proved that  $H^{\infty}$  is the closed linear span of the Blaschke products: given  $f \in H^{\infty}$  and  $\varepsilon > 0$ , there are constants  $c_1, \ldots, c_n$  and Blaschke products  $B_1, \ldots, B_n$  such that

(1) 
$$||f + c_1 B_1 + \dots + c_n B_n||_{\infty} < \varepsilon.$$

In fact, Marshall proved that the unit ball of  $H^{\infty}$  is the uniformly closed convex hull of the set of Blaschke products (including  $B \equiv 1$ ).

A Blaschke product B(z) is called an *interpolating Blaschke product* if

(2) 
$$\inf_{\nu} \left( 1 - |z_{\nu}|^2 \right) |B'(z_{\nu})| = \delta_B > 0,$$

because of the Carleson theorem that (2) holds if and only if every interpolation problem

$$f(z_{\nu})=w_{\nu}, \qquad \nu=1,2,\ldots,$$

for  $\{w_{\nu}\} \in l^{\infty}$ , has a solution  $f \in H^{\infty}$ . Although the interpolating Blaschke products comprise a small subset of the set of all Blaschke products, they play a central role in the theory of  $H^{\infty}$ . See the last three chapters of [3]. The theorem in this paper helps explain why interpolating Blaschke products are so important in that theory.

**Theorem.**  $H^{\infty}$  is the closed linear span of the interpolating Blaschke products.

In other words, (1) is true with the additional proviso that each of  $B_1, \ldots, B_n$  is an interpolating Blaschke product.

The theorem solves a problem posed in [3] and [4]. It is not known if the set of interpolating Blaschke products is norm dense in the set of all Blaschke products. It is also not known if the unit ball of  $H^{\infty}$  is the closed convex hull of the set of all interpolating Blaschke products.

Recently, Marshall and A. Stray [6] proved the theorem in the special case that f extends continuously to almost every point of  $\partial \mathbb{D}$ , and our proof closely follows their reasoning. In particular, the idea of comparing (11) and (12) and the argument deriving the theorem from Lemma 3 below are both due to them. We thank Violant Marti for making the drawings.

The hyperbolic distance between  $z \in \mathbb{D}$  and  $w \in \mathbb{D}$  is

$$\rho(z,w) = \log\left(\frac{1+\left|\frac{z-w}{1-\overline{w}z}\right|}{1-\left|\frac{z-w}{1-\overline{w}z}\right|}\right),$$

and the hyperbolic derivative of an analytic function f is

$$(1-|z|^2)|f'(z)|.$$

The hyperbolic derivative is invariant under conformal changes in  $z \in \mathbb{D}$ .

The Blaschke product with zeros  $\{z_{\nu}\}$  is an interpolating Blaschke product if and only if the following conditions both hold:

(3) 
$$\inf_{\nu\neq\mu}\rho(z_{\mu},z_{\nu})>0$$

and

(4) 
$$\sum_{z_{\nu} \in Q} (1 - |z_{\nu}|) < C\ell(Q)$$

for all  $Q = \{re^{i\theta} : \theta_0 < \theta < \theta_0 + \ell(Q), 1 - \ell(Q) < r < 1\}$ . See [1] or Chapter VII of [3].

**Lemma 1.** Let B be a Blaschke product and let  $\{z_{\nu}\}$  be its zeros, counted with their multiplicities. Then the following are equivalent:

(a)  $B = B_1 \dots B_N$ , with each  $B_j$  an interpolating Blaschke product.

(b) Condition (4) holds.

(c) There exist positive constants  $\rho_0, \delta_0$  such that for each  $z_{\nu}$  there is  $w_{\nu}$  with

(5) 
$$\rho(z_{\nu}, w_{\nu}) \leq \rho_0$$

and

(6) 
$$(1 - |w_{\nu}|^2) |B'(w_{\nu})| \ge \delta_0.$$

In [6] it is shown that if B satisfies one of these conditions, then B is the uniform limit of a sequence of interpolating Blaschke products.

*Proof of Lemma* 1. The equivalence between (a) and (b) is in [7]. Assume (c) holds, let

$$Q = \{ re^{i\theta} : \theta_0 < \theta < \theta_0 + \ell(Q), \ 1 - \ell(Q) < r < 1 \},\$$

and set

$$T(Q) = \{ re^{i\theta} \in Q : 1 - \ell(Q) < r < 1 - 2^{-1}\ell(Q) \}.$$

To prove (4), we may assume there exists  $z_{\nu} \in T(Q)$ . Let  $w_{\nu}$  satisfy (5) and (6). Then there exists  $a_{\nu}$  such that  $\rho(a_{\nu}, z_{\nu}) < \rho_0$  and  $|B(a_{\nu})| \ge m = m(\rho_0, \delta_0) > 0$ . Then the inequalities

$$\log m^{-2} \ge \log |B(a_{\nu})|^{-2} \ge \sum_{z_{\mu} \in Q} \frac{(1 - |z_{\mu}|^2) (1 - |a_{\nu}|^2)}{|1 - \overline{a_{\nu}} z_{\mu}|^2}$$
$$\ge \frac{A(\rho_0, \delta_0)}{\ell(Q)} \sum_{z_{\mu} \in Q} (1 - |z_{\mu}|)$$

show that (4) holds.

If (a) holds, there exists C > 0 such that

$$|B(z)| \ge C \prod_{j=1}^N \inf_{\{B_j(z_\nu)=0\}} \left| \frac{z - z_\nu}{1 - \overline{z_\nu} z} \right|.$$

Fix  $\delta_0 > 0$ . Given  $z_{\nu}$ , there exists  $\zeta_{\nu}$  such that  $\rho(z_{\nu}, \zeta_{\nu}) \leq \delta_0$  and  $|B(\zeta_{\nu})| \geq m = m(\delta_0) > 0$ , and then the geodesic arc from  $z_{\nu}$  to  $\zeta_{\nu}$  contains a point  $w_{\nu}$  at which (6) holds.

We write  $\mathcal{F}$  for the set of finite products of interpolating Blaschke products. By the remark following Lemma 1, it is enough to prove (1) with each  $B_j \in \mathcal{F}$ , and by Marshall's theorem it is also enough to prove (1) when f = B is a Blaschke product.

Fix a Blaschke product B and let  $0 < \alpha < \beta < 1$ ,  $M = 2^{K} > 1$ , and  $\delta < 1$  be constants which will be determined later. We may assume  $|B(0)| > \beta$ . Consider "squares" of the form

$$Q_{n,j} = \{ re^{i\theta} : 2\pi j 2^{-n} \le \theta < 2\pi (j+1)2^{-n}; \ 1-2^{-n} \le r < 1 \}$$

and their top halves

$$T(Q_{n,j}) = Q_{n,j} \cap \{ re^{i\theta} : 1 - 2^{-n} \le r < 1 - 2^{-n-1} \}.$$

Let  $G_1 = \left\{Q_1^{(1)}, Q_2^{(1)}, \dots\right\}$  be the set of maximal  $Q_{n,j}$  for which

$$\inf_{T(Q_{n,j})}|B(z)|<\alpha.$$

The squares in  $G_1$  have disjoint interiors. Write  $S_{p,j}^{(1)}$ ,  $1 \le p \le M = 2^K$ , for  $2^K$  different  $Q_{n+K,j} \subset Q_k^{(1)} = Q_{n,j}$ . If M is fixed and  $1 - \beta$  is small, then by Harnack's inequality

(7) 
$$\sup_{T(S_{p,j}^{(1)})} |B(z)| < \beta.$$

Now let  $H_1 = \left\{ V_1^{(1)}, V_2^{(1)}, \dots \right\}$  be the set of maximal  $Q_{n,j}$  such that

$$V^{(1)}_{k} \subset Q^{(1)}_{p}$$

for some  $Q_p^{(1)}$  and

$$\inf_{T\left(V_{k}^{(1)}\right)}|B(z)|>\beta.$$

Since |B| has nontangential limit 1 almost everywhere,

$$\sum_{V_k^{(1)} \subset Q_p^{(1)}} \ell\left(V_k^{(1)}\right) = \ell\left(Q_p^{(1)}\right).$$

If  $(1 - \beta)/(1 - \alpha)$  is small, then

$$l\left(V_{k}^{(1)}\right) < \frac{1}{M}l\left(Q_{p}^{(1)}\right)$$

when  $V_k^{(1)} \subset Q_p^{(1)}$ , again by Harnack's inequality. Hence  $V_k^{(1)} \subset S_{p,j}^{(1)}$ , for some p, j, because of (7).

Next let  $G_2 = \left\{Q_1^{(2)}, Q_2^{(2)}, \dots\right\}$  be the set of maximal  $Q_{n,j}$  such that

$$Q_{n,j} \subset V_k^{(1)} \in H_1$$

and

$$\inf_{T(Q_{n,j})}|B(z)|<\alpha.$$

If  $(1 - \beta)/(1 - \alpha)$  is small, then

(8) 
$$\sum_{Q_j^{(2)} \subset V_k^{(1)}} \ell\left(Q_j^{(2)}\right) < \varepsilon \ell\left(V_k^{(1)}\right)$$

(see [3, p. 334]). We form the  $S_{p,k}^{(2)}$  as before and continue, obtaining  $Q_j^{(m)}, S_{p,j}^{(m)}$  and  $V_k^{(m+1)}$ with

$$Q_j^{(m)} \supset S_{p,j}^{(m)} \supset V_k^{(m+1)}.$$

See Figure 1. Then B(z) has zeros only in

$$\bigcup_{m,j} \left( Q_j^{(m)} \setminus \bigcup_{V_k^{(m+1)} \subset Q_j^{(m)}} V_k^{(m+1)} \right).$$

In fact, if  $1 - \alpha$  is small enough, all zeros from

$$Q_j^{(m)} igvee_{V_k^{(m+1)} \subset Q_j^{(m)}} V_k^{(m+1)}$$

fall into

$$\bigcup_{p=1}^{M} R_{p,j}^{(m)} = \bigcup_{p=1}^{M} \left( S_{p,j}^{(m)} \setminus \bigcup_{V_{k}^{(m+1)} \subset S_{p,j}^{(m)}} V_{k}^{(m+1)} \right),$$

`

and we require  $1 - \alpha$  to be that small.



Figure 1.

Now factor

$$B=B_1B_2\cdots B_M,$$

where for fixed  $p, B_p$  has zeros only in  $\bigcup_{m,j} R_{p,j}^{(m)}$ . Fix p, set

$$\Gamma_{p,j}^{(m)} = \partial R_{p,j}^{(m)} \setminus \partial S_{p,j}^{(m)}$$

and mark points  $z^*_{\nu} = z^*_{\nu}(m,p,j)$  on  $\Gamma^{(m)}_{p,j}$  with

(9) 
$$\rho(z_{\nu}^*, z_{\nu+1}^*) = \delta.$$

Let  $B_p^*$  be the Blaschke product with zeros  $\bigcup_{m,j} z_{\nu}^*(m, p, j)$ . Then by (3), (4), (8) and (9),  $B_p^*$  is an interpolating Blaschke product.

**Lemma 2.**  $|B_p^*| \leq \delta^{1/4}$  on  $\bigcup_{m,j} R_{p,j}^{(m)}$ .

*Proof.* Clearly  $|B_p^*| < \delta$  on  $\bigcup_{m,j} \Gamma_{p,j}^{(m)}$ . Fix one  $R_{p,j}^{(m)}$ . Then for any  $\varepsilon > 0$ , the harmonic measure

$$\omega\left(z,\Gamma_{p,j}^{(m)},\mathbb{D}\setminus\bigcup\left\{\overline{V_{k}^{(m+1)}\subset S_{p,j}^{(m)}}\right\}\right)>\frac{1}{4}-\varepsilon$$

for all  $z \in R_{p,j}^{(m)}$ , provided  $(1 - \beta)/(1 - \alpha)$  is small. Since  $\log |B_p^*(z)|$  is harmonic, that shows  $|B_p^*| \le \delta^{1/4}$  on  $R_{p,j}^{(m)}$ .

**Lemma 3.** There exist  $A = A(\alpha, \beta, \delta, M)$  and  $\eta = \eta(\alpha, \beta, \delta, M) > 0$  so that if

(10) 
$$\inf_{\xi \in \bigcup_{m,j} R_{p,j}^{(m)}} \rho(z,\xi) > A$$

and if

$$|B_p B_p^*(z)| = \delta^{1/8},$$

then

$$(1-|z|^2)\left|(B_pB_p^*)'(z)\right| \geq \eta.$$

Proof. We have

(11) 
$$\frac{1}{4}\log\frac{1}{\delta} = \log|B_p B_p^*(z)|^{-2} \sim \sum_{\nu} \frac{(1-|z|^2)(1-|z_{\nu}|^2)}{|1-\overline{z_{\nu}}z|^2},$$

where  $\{z_{\nu}\}$  is the zero set of  $B_{p}B_{p}^{*}$ . On the other hand,

(12) 
$$(1-|z|^2) \frac{(B_p B_p^*)'(z)}{B_p B_p^*(z)} = \overline{z} \sum_{\nu} \frac{(1-|z|^2) (1-|z_{\nu}|^2)}{|1-\overline{z_{\nu}}z|^2} \left(\frac{\frac{1}{z}-z_{\nu}}{z-z_{\nu}}\right).$$

By (10) there is A' so that if  $|z - z_{\nu}| < A'(1 - |z|)$ , then  $z_{\nu} \in R_{p,j}^{(m)}$  where  $\ell\left(S_{p,j}^{(m)}\right) < 1 - |z|$ . See Figure 2.



#### Figure 2.

If  $(1 - \alpha)$  is small compared to 1/M, then  $\inf_{T(S_{p,j}^{(m)})} |B(z)| \ge C(\alpha) > 0$ and

$$\sum_{\left\{z_n \in R_{p,j}^{(m)}; B(z_n) = 0\right\}} (1 - |z|^2) \le C_1(\alpha) \ell\left(S_{p,j}^{(m)}\right),$$

where  $C_1(\alpha)$  tends to 0 if  $\alpha$  tends to 1. Therefore

$$\sum_{|z_{\nu}-z| < A'(1-|z|)} \frac{(1-|z_{\nu}|^{2})(1-|z|^{2})}{|1-\overline{z_{\nu}}z|^{2}} \leq \frac{1}{1-|z|^{2}} \sum_{|z_{\nu}-z| < A'(1-|z|)} (1-|z_{\nu}|^{2})$$
$$\leq \frac{1}{\delta M} (1+\varepsilon+\varepsilon^{2}+\cdots)$$
$$+ \frac{C_{1}(\alpha)}{M} (1+\varepsilon+\varepsilon^{2}+\cdots).$$

Take M so large (and consequently  $1 - \alpha$  so small) that

$$\sum_{|z_{\nu}-z| < A'(1-|z|)} \frac{(1-|z_{\nu}|^2)(1-|z|^2)}{|1-\overline{z_{\nu}}z|^2} < \frac{1}{16} \log \frac{1}{\delta}.$$

If  $|z - z_{\nu}| > A'(1 - |z|)$  then

$$\left| \arg\left( rac{1}{z} - z_{
u} \atop z - z_{
u} 
ight) 
ight| < c(A')$$

where  $c(A') \to 0$  as  $A' \to \infty$ . Hence

$$\left| \sum_{|z-z_{\nu}| \ge A'(1-|z|)} \frac{\overline{z} \left(1-|z|^{2}\right) \left(1-|z_{\nu}|^{2}\right)}{|1-\overline{z_{\nu}}z|^{2}} \left(\frac{\frac{1}{z}-z_{\nu}}{z-z_{\nu}}\right) \right| \\ \ge \cos^{-1}(c(A')) \sum_{|z-z_{\nu}| \ge A'(1-|z|)} \left| \frac{\overline{z} \left(1-|z|^{2}\right) \left(1-|z_{\nu}|^{2}\right)}{|1-\overline{z_{\nu}}z|^{2}} \left(\frac{\frac{1}{z}-z_{\nu}}{z-z_{\nu}}\right) \right|.$$

Consequently,

$$\begin{split} (1-|z|^2) \left| (B_p B_p^*)'(z) \right| \\ &\geq \delta^{1/8} \left( \left| \sum_{|z-z_\nu| \ge A'(1-|z|)} \frac{\overline{z} \left(1-|z|^2\right) \left(1-|z_\nu|^2\right)}{|1-\overline{z_\nu} z|^2} \left(\frac{\frac{1}{z}-z_\nu}{z-z_\nu}\right) \right| \right. \\ &- \left. \sum_{|z-z_\nu| < A'(1-|z|)} \left| \frac{\overline{z} \left(1-|z|^2\right) \left(1-|z_\nu|^2\right)}{|1-\overline{z_\nu} z|^2} \left(\frac{\frac{1}{z}-z_\nu}{z-z_\nu}\right) \right| \right) \\ &\geq \delta^{1/8} \left( \cos^{-1}(c(A')) \frac{11}{16} \log(1/\delta) - \frac{1}{16} \log(1/\delta) \right), \end{split}$$

and if A' is large, that proves the lemma.

With Lemma 3, the remainder of the proof is just like in the Marshall-Stray paper [6]. There is  $\gamma, |\gamma| = \delta^{1/8}$ , so that

П

$$\frac{B_p B_p^* - \gamma}{1 - \overline{\gamma} B_p B_p^*} = C_p$$

is a Blaschke product, by a theorem of Frostman [2]. Suppose  $C_p(z) = 0$ . Then

$$|B_p B_p^*(z)| = \delta^{1/8}$$

and

$$(1-|z|^2)\left|C'_p(z)\right| = \frac{(1-|z|^2)}{1-|\gamma|^2}\left|(B_p B_p^*)'(z)\right|.$$

Thus by Lemma 3

$$(1 - |z|^2) \left| C'_p(z) \right| \ge rac{\eta}{1 - \delta^{1/4}}$$

if (10) holds. But if (10) fails, then there is  $\xi \in \bigcup_{m,j} R_{p,j}^{(m)}$  with  $\rho(z,\xi) < A$ . By Lemma 2,  $|B_p B_p^*(\xi)| \leq \delta^{1/4}$ . Somewhere along the hyperbolic geodesic from z to  $\xi$  there is a point w with

$$(1 - |w|^2) \left| (B_p B_p^*)'(w) \right| > \eta' > 0$$

and  $\rho(z, w) < A$ . So by Lemma 1,  $C_p$  is a finite product of interpolating Blaschke products and  $B_p B_p^* \in \mathcal{F}$ .

For  $\sigma$  very small, replace  $B_p^*$  by

$$\widetilde{B}_p^* = \frac{B_p^* - \sigma}{1 - \overline{\sigma} B_p^*},$$

which is again an interpolating Blaschke product by [3, p. 404]. Repeating the above argument with  $\tilde{B}_p^*$ , we see that

$$\widetilde{C}_p = \frac{B_p \widetilde{B}_p^* - \widetilde{\gamma}}{1 - \widetilde{\gamma} B_p \widetilde{B}_p^*}$$

is also a finite product of interpolating Blaschke products for some  $\tilde{\gamma}$ . Thus also  $B_p \tilde{B}_p^* \in \mathcal{F}$ . But then since

$$B_p \widetilde{B}_p^* = -\sigma B_p + (1 - |\sigma|^2) B_p B_p^* + \cdots,$$

we conclude that  $B_p \in \mathcal{F}$ .

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