



# Cantor boundary behavior of analytic functions

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## Abstract

Let  $A(\mathbb{D})$  be the space of analytic functions on the open disk  $\mathbb{D}$  and continuous on  $\bar{\mathbb{D}}$ . Let  $\partial\mathbb{D}$  be the boundary of  $\mathbb{D}$ , we are interested in the class of  $f \in A(\mathbb{D})$  such that the image  $f(\partial\mathbb{D})$  is a curve that forms loops everywhere. This fractal behavior was first raised by Lund et al. (1998) [21] in the study of the Cauchy transform of the Hausdorff measure on the Sierpinski gasket. We formulate the property as the *Cantor boundary behavior* (CBB) and establish two sufficient conditions through the distribution of zeros of  $f'(z)$  and the mean growth rate of  $|f'(z)|$  near the boundary. For the specific cases we carry out a detailed investigation on the gap series and the complex Weierstrass functions; the CBB for the Cauchy transform on the Sierpinski gasket will appear elsewhere.

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## 1. Introduction

Let  $\mathbb{D}$  be the open unit disk and let  $\partial\mathbb{D}$  be the boundary of  $\mathbb{D}$ . For  $f$  analytic in  $\mathbb{D}$  and continuous on  $\bar{\mathbb{D}}$ , let  $\partial f(\mathbb{D})$  denote the boundary of  $f(\mathbb{D})$ . It follows from the open mapping

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theorem that  $\partial f(\mathbb{D}) \subset f(\partial\mathbb{D})$ . These two sets have very rich and intriguing geometric properties. In fact, when  $f$  is conformal on  $\mathbb{D}$ , then they are equal and there is a large literature on their boundary behaviors; the reader can refer to Pommerenke [28] for the classical developments; there are more recent developments in connection with Brownian motion [20] and for the random fractals [3,4].

Our interest is in the class of analytic functions  $f$  for which the image curve  $f(\partial\mathbb{D})$  form infinitely many loops everywhere; naturally they are not univalent. From intuition, the function  $f$  has the property that for any open arc  $I$  on  $\partial\mathbb{D}$ ,  $f(I)$  contains at least one loop (which is inside  $f(\mathbb{D})$ ). If we let  $\mathcal{C} = f^{-1}(\partial f(\mathbb{D}))$ , then  $\mathcal{C} = \partial\mathbb{D} \setminus \bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} I_i$ , where  $I_i$  are open arcs of  $\partial\mathbb{D}$ ,  $f(I_i) \subset f(\mathbb{D})$ , and  $\overline{\bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} I_i} = \partial\mathbb{D}$ . The condition of loops everywhere implies that  $\mathcal{C}$  is a nowhere dense closed set (i.e., totally disconnected) and the image stretches out to be  $f(\mathcal{C}) = \partial f(\mathbb{D})$ , which is a curve if  $f(\mathbb{D})$  is simply connected, or contains more than one curve if  $f(\mathbb{D})$  is multiple connected. This is analogous to the Cantor function that maps the Cantor set onto the interval  $[0, 1]$ . Also note that for any uncountable nowhere dense closed set  $E \subset \partial\mathbb{D}$ , if we let  $E' \subseteq E$  be the set of accumulation points  $x$  of  $E$  such that each neighborhood of  $x$  contains *uncountably* many points of  $E$ , then  $E'$  is, in addition, a perfect set (no isolated point), and it is well known that such  $E'$  is homeomorphic to the Cantor set [17, p. 100]. For this reason we call an uncountable nowhere dense closed subset  $E \subset \partial\mathbb{D}$  a *Cantor-type set* for convenience.

This boundary behavior was first observed by Lund et al. [21] in the study of Cauchy transform on the Sierpinski gasket. Let  $\mu$  be the canonical Hausdorff measure on the Sierpinski gasket  $K$  and let  $F(z) = \int_K d\mu(w)/(z - w)$  be the Cauchy transform. It is clear that  $F$  is analytic outside  $K$ , and they showed that  $F$  has a Hölder continuous extension over  $K$ . Let  $\Delta$  be the unbounded connected component of  $\mathbb{C} \setminus K$ . From computer graphics, they observed that the image  $F(\partial\Delta)$  is a complicate system of loops. They raised the *Cantor set conjecture* that  $F^{-1}(\partial F(\Delta))$  is a Cantor-type set (see also [7,8]). By using the Riemann mapping theorem, we can convert it into the more general problem on the unit disk  $\mathbb{D}$  as the above.

To formulate such boundary behavior, there are difficulties in obtaining a precise meaning of “infinitely many loops”. Our approach is to use a weaker topological concept on the connected components determined by  $f(\partial\mathbb{D})$ . We let  $\widehat{\mathbb{C}}$  be the Riemann sphere. We make a first decomposition on the range as

$$\widehat{\mathbb{C}} \setminus f(\partial\mathbb{D}) = \bigcup_j \mathcal{W}_j \tag{1.1}$$

where  $\mathcal{W}_j$  are connected components (see section 2); then a second decomposition on the domain by

$$f^{-1}(\mathcal{W}_j) = \bigcup_{k=1}^{q_j} O_j^k \tag{1.2}$$

with  $O_j^k$  connected components and  $q_j < \infty$ . It follows that these  $\mathcal{W}_j, O_j^k$  are simply connected and  $f$  satisfies  $f(O_j^k) = \mathcal{W}_j$  and  $f(\partial O_j^k) = \partial\mathcal{W}_j$  (Theorem 2.4), this is equivalent to say that  $f : O_j^k \rightarrow \mathcal{W}_j$  is a *proper map*, in the sense that pre-images of compact subsets in the range are compact [29].

**Definition 1.1.** We say that  $f \in A(\mathbb{D})$  has the *Cantor boundary behavior (CBB)* if (i)  $f^{-1}(\partial f(\mathbb{D}))$  and (ii)  $f^{-1}(\partial\mathcal{W}_j) \cap \partial\mathbb{D}$  for each  $j$ , are Cantor-type set in  $\partial\mathbb{D}$ .

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