

MA 523: Homework 7

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PROBLEM 7.1

Solve the Dirichlet problem for the Laplace equation in \mathbb{R}^2

$$\begin{cases} \Delta u = 0 & \text{in } 1 < |x| < 2, \\ u = x_1 & \text{on } |x| = 1, \\ u = 1 + x_1 x_2 & \text{on } |x| = 2. \end{cases}$$

(Hint: Use Laurent series.)

SOLUTION. First, let us make the change of variables $(x_1, x_2) \mapsto re^{i\theta}$ to the Dirichlet problem in question:

$$\begin{cases} \Delta u = 0 & \text{in } 1 < r < 2, \\ u = \frac{1}{2}(e^{i\theta} + e^{-i\theta}) & \text{on } r = 1, \\ u = 1 + \frac{1}{i}(e^{i2\theta} - e^{-i2\theta}) & \text{on } r = 2. \end{cases} \quad (7.1)$$

Now, suppose u is a solution, of the form

$$u(re^{i\theta}) = b \ln r + \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} (a_n r^n + \overline{a_{-n}} r^{-n}) e^{in\theta},$$

to the problem (7.1). It is easy to see that u is in fact harmonic:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta u &= u_{rr} + \frac{1}{r} u_r + \frac{1}{r^2} u_{\theta\theta} \\ &= -br^{-2} + br^{-2} + \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} [(n(n-1) + n - n^2) a_n r^n \\ &\quad + (n(n-1) + n - n^2) \overline{a_{-n}} r^{-n}] e^{in\theta} \\ &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

Next we use the boundary data to compute the coefficients a_n , $n \in \mathbb{Z}$. Using the data (7.1) on $r = 1$, we have

$$\frac{1}{2}(e^{i\theta} + e^{-i\theta}) = \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} (a_n + \overline{a_{-n}}) e^{in\theta} \quad (7.2)$$

and on $r = 2$,

$$1 + \frac{1}{i}(e^{i2\theta} - e^{-i2\theta}) = b \ln 2 + \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} (2^n a_n + 2^{-n} \overline{a_{-n}}) e^{in\theta}. \quad (7.3)$$

These equations immediately tell us that $b = 1/\ln 2$. Moreover, the following relations on the coefficients hold

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{2} &= a_1 + \overline{a_{-1}}, \\ 0 &= a_n + \overline{a_{-n}} \quad \text{if } n \neq \pm 1, \\ \frac{1}{i} &= 2^2 a_2 + 2^{-2} \overline{a_{-2}}, \\ -\frac{1}{i} &= 2^2 a_{-2} + 2^{-2} \overline{a_2}, \\ 0 &= 2^n a_n + 2^{-n} \overline{a_{-n}} \quad \text{if } n \neq \pm 2. \end{aligned}$$

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PROBLEM 7.2

Let Ω be a bounded domain with a C^1 boundary, $g \in C^2(\partial\Omega)$ and $f \in C(\bar{\Omega})$. Consider the so called *Neumann problem*

$$\begin{cases} -\Delta u = f & \text{in } \Omega, \\ \frac{\partial u}{\partial \nu} = g & \text{on } \partial\Omega, \end{cases} \quad (*)$$

where ν is the outer normal on $\partial\Omega$. Show that the solution of $(*)$ in $C^2(\Omega) \cap C^1(\bar{\Omega})$ is unique up to a constant; i.e., if u_1 and u_2 are both solutions of $(*)$, then $u_2 = u_1 + \text{const.}$ in Ω .

(*Hint*: Look at the proof of the uniqueness for the Dirichlet problem by energy methods [E, 2.2.5a].)

SOLUTION. Suppose u_1 and u_2 are solutions to the Neumann problem $(*)$. Define $v := u_1 - u_2$. Then v is harmonic in Ω and $\partial v / \partial \nu = 0$ on $\partial\Omega$. Consider the energy functional

$$E[v] = \frac{1}{2} \int_{\Omega} |Dv|^2 dx.$$

By Green's formula version (ii),

$$\begin{aligned} E[v] &= \frac{1}{2} \int_{\Omega} |Dv|^2 dx \\ &= -\frac{1}{2} \int_{\Omega} v \Delta v dx + \int_{\partial\Omega} \frac{\partial v}{\partial \nu} v dS(x) \\ &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

This implies that $|Dv|^2 = Dv \cdot Dv = 0$ which, since the standard inner product on \mathbb{R}^n is positive-definite, implies that $Dv \equiv 0$. It follows that $u_1 = u_2 + \text{const.}$, i.e., the solution u to $(*)$ is unique up to a constant. ■

PROBLEM 7.3

Write down an explicit formula for a solution of

$$\begin{cases} u_t - \Delta u + cu = f & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n \times (0, \infty), \\ u = g & \text{on } \mathbb{R}^n \times \{t = 0\}, \end{cases}$$

where $c \in \mathbb{R}$.

(*Hint:* Rewrite the problem in terms of $v(x, t) := e^{ct}u(x, t)$.)

SOLUTION.

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