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MATH60005 Optimisation Coursework

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Part 1

i)

$$f(x, y) = x^2 - 2xy^2 + \frac{1}{2}y^4$$

f is coercive if it satisfies

$$\lim_{\|x\| \rightarrow \infty} f(x) = \infty$$

for any $x = (x, y)^T$.
We will consider the trajectory $x = (\alpha^2, \alpha)^T$ as $\alpha \rightarrow \infty$.
On this trajectory,

$$\begin{aligned} f(x) &= (\alpha^2)^2 - 2(\alpha^2)(\alpha)^2 + \frac{1}{2}(\alpha)^4 \\ &= \alpha^4 - 2\alpha^4 + \frac{1}{2}\alpha^4 \\ &= -\frac{1}{2}\alpha^4 \end{aligned}$$

Hence, as $\alpha \rightarrow \infty$, $\|x\| \rightarrow \infty$ but $f(x) \rightarrow -\infty$. Thus, f is not coercive as it does not go to ∞ for all large x .

ii)

To find the stationary points of f we first consider

$$\begin{aligned} \nabla f(x) &= \begin{bmatrix} \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \\ \frac{\partial f}{\partial y} \end{bmatrix} \\ &= \begin{bmatrix} 2x - 2y^2 \\ 2y^3 - 4xy \end{bmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

Hence, we look for solutions of the system of equations given by (1)

$$\begin{aligned} 2x - 2y^2 &= 0 \\ 2y^3 - 4xy &= 0 \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

The first equation has solution $x = y^2$ and the second equation has two solutions, $2x = y^3$ and $y = 0$.
So f has one stationary point at $(0, 0)$.

$$\begin{aligned} \nabla^2 f(x) &= \begin{bmatrix} 2 & -4y \\ -4y & 6y^2 - 4x \end{bmatrix} \\ \Rightarrow \nabla^2 f(0, 0) &= \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \neq 0 \end{aligned}$$

$\nabla^2 f(0, 0)$ is a positive semi-definite matrix so we can conclude that $(0, 0)$ is either a local minimum or a saddle point. We will consider two trajectories to determine the nature of the stationary point.

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