THE SL(2, C) CHARACTER VARIETY OF THE ONE-HOLED TORUS

SER PEOW TAN, YAN LOI WONG, AND YING ZHANG

Abstract. In this note we announce several results concerning the SL(2, C) character variety \( \mathcal{X} \) of the one-holed torus. We give a description of the largest open subset \( \mathcal{X}_{BQ} \) of \( \mathcal{X} \) on which the mapping class group \( \Gamma \) acts properly discontinuously, in terms of two very simple conditions, and show that a series identity generalizing McShane’s identity for the punctured torus holds for all characters in this subset. We also give variations of the McShane-Bowditch identities to characters fixed by an Anosov element of \( \Gamma \) with applications to closed hyperbolic three manifolds. Finally we give a definition of end invariants for SL(2, C) characters and give a partial classification of the set of end invariants of a character in \( \mathcal{X} \).

1. Introduction

Let \( T \) be the one-holed torus, \( \pi \) its fundamental group, and \( \Gamma := \pi_0(\text{Homeo}(T)) \) the mapping class group of \( T \). In this note we announce several results concerning the SL(2, C) character variety \( \mathcal{X} \) of \( T \). Here is a brief description of our results.

We first give a characterization of the largest open subset \( \mathcal{X}_{BQ} \) of \( \mathcal{X} \) on which the mapping class group \( \Gamma \) acts properly discontinuously, in terms of two very simple conditions, called the Bowditch Q-conditions. This generalizes results of Bowditch [5], who gives a similar description for the “type-preserving” characters, and also of Goldman [7], see also [6], who studied the dynamics of the action of \( \Gamma \) on the real SL(2) characters, and gave a (geometric) description of the set for the real characters. Note that for \( [\rho] \in \mathcal{X} \), it is possible to verify if \( [\rho] \) satisfies these conditions algorithmically.

We next show that a series identity generalizing McShane’s remarkable identity for the punctured torus holds for all characters in this subset (the original identity can be regarded as the formal derivative of the general identity evaluated at the appropriate parameter value). This generalizes results of McShane [11, 12], Bowditch [2, 5], Mirzakhani [13] and the authors [16, 17] for two generator subgroups of SL(2, C). We also give necessary and sufficient conditions for this identity to hold for characters \( [\rho] \in \mathcal{X} \), thereby giving a complete answer to the question of when the identity holds for two generator subgroups of SL(2, C).

1991 Mathematics Subject Classification. Primary 57M50.

The authors are partially supported by the National University of Singapore academic research grant R-146-000-056-112. The third author is also partially supported by the National Key Basic Research Fund (China) G1999075104.
The next set of results are for variations of the McShane-Bowditch identities to characters fixed by an Anosov element of $\Gamma$, and which satisfy a relative version of the Bowditch $Q$-conditions. These have applications to closed hyperbolic three manifolds, and generalize the results of Bowditch in [4].

Finally we give a definition of end invariants for $\text{SL}(2, \mathbb{C})$ characters, inspired by Bowditch’s definition in [5], and give a partial classification of the set $E(\rho)$ of end invariants of a character $[\rho] \in X$. When non-empty, this set gives information about the extent to which the action of $\Gamma$ on $[\rho]$ is not proper. In particular we give classification results for real characters, imaginary characters and discrete characters.

Acknowledgements. We would like to thank Bill Goldman, Caroline Series, Makoto Sakuma and Greg McShane for their encouragement, helpful conversations, correspondence and comments.

2. Preliminaries and definitions

2.1. Basic Definitions. Let $T$ be the one-holed torus and $\pi$ its fundamental group which is freely generated by two elements $X, Y$ corresponding to simple closed curves on $T$ with geometric intersection number one. The $\text{SL}(2, \mathbb{C})$ character variety $X := \text{Hom}(\pi, \text{SL}(2, \mathbb{C})) / \text{SL}(2, \mathbb{C})$ of $T$ is the set of equivalence classes of representations $\rho : \pi \mapsto \text{SL}(2, \mathbb{C})$, where the equivalence classes are obtained by taking the closure of the orbits under conjugation by $\text{SL}(2, \mathbb{C})$. The character variety stratifies into relative character varieties: for $\kappa \in \mathbb{C}$, the $\kappa$ relative character variety $X_\kappa$ is the set of equivalence classes $[\rho]$ such that

$$\text{tr} \rho(XYX^{-1}Y^{-1}) = \kappa$$

for one (and hence any) pair of generators $X, Y$ of $\pi$. By classical results of Fricke, we have the following identifications:

$$X \cong \mathbb{C}^3,$$

$$X_\kappa \cong \{ (x, y, z) \in \mathbb{C}^3 \mid x^2 + y^2 + z^2 - xyz - 2 = \kappa \},$$

the identification is given by

$$\iota : [\rho] \mapsto (x, y, z) := (\text{tr}\rho(X), \text{tr}\rho(Y), \text{tr}\rho(XY)),$$

where $X, Y$ is a fixed pair of generators of $\pi$. The topology on $X$ and $X_\kappa$ will be that induced by the above identifications.

A character is real if $\iota([\rho]) \in \mathbb{R}^3$, imaginary if two of the entries of $\iota([\rho])$ are purely imaginary and the third real, and dihedral if two of the entries or $\iota([\rho])$ are zero (so that the third entry is $\pm \sqrt{\kappa + 2}$).

The outer automorphism group of $\pi$, $\text{Out}(\pi) := \text{Aut}(\pi) / \text{Inn}(\pi) \cong \text{GL}(2, \mathbb{Z})$ is isomorphic to the mapping class group $\Gamma := \pi_0(\text{Homeo}(T))$ of $T$ and acts on $X$ preserving the trace of the commutator of a pair of generators, hence it also acts on $X_\kappa$, the action is given by

$$\phi([\rho]) = [\rho \circ \phi^{-1}],$$
where \( \phi \in \text{Out}(\pi) \) and \( [\rho] \in X \) or \( X_\kappa \) respectively. It is often convenient to consider only the subgroup \( \text{Out}(\pi)^+ \) of “orientation-preserving” automorphisms, corresponding to the orientation-preserving homeomorphisms \( \Gamma^+ \) of \( T \), which is isomorphic to \( \text{SL}(2,\mathbb{Z}) \). The action of \( \text{Out}(\pi)^+ \) (respectively, \( \text{Out}(\pi) \)) on \( X \) and \( X_\kappa \) is not effective, the kernel is \( \{ \pm I \} \), generated by the elliptic involution of \( T \) so that the effective action is by \( \text{PSL}(2,\mathbb{Z}) \) (respectively, \( \text{PGL}(2,\mathbb{Z}) \)).

2.2. Simple curves, pants graph of \( T \). Let \( \mathcal{C} \) be the set of free homotopy classes of non-trivial, non-periodal simple closed curves on \( T \), the elements of \( \mathcal{C} \) correspond to certain elements of \( \pi \), up to conjugation and inverse. Let \( \mathcal{C}(T) \) be the “pants graph” of \( T \), the vertices of \( \mathcal{C}(T) \) are the elements of \( \mathcal{C} \), where two vertices are joined by an edge if and only if the corresponding curves on \( T \) have geometric intersection number one. \( \Gamma \) and \( \text{Out}(\pi) \) acts naturally on \( \mathcal{C} \) (respectively \( \mathcal{C}(T) \)). We can realize \( \mathcal{C}(T) \) as the Farey graph/triangulation of the upper half plane \( \mathbb{H}^2 \) so that \( \mathcal{C} \) is identified with \( \hat{\mathbb{Q}} \), the action of \( \Gamma \) is realized by the action of \( \text{PGL}(2,\mathbb{Z}) \) on the Farey graph. The projective lamination space \( \mathcal{P}\mathcal{L} \) of \( T \) is then identified with \( \hat{\mathbb{R}} \) and contains \( \mathcal{C} \) as the (dense) subset of rational points.

2.3. Bowditch Q-conditions (BQ-conditions). For \([\rho] \in X \) and \( X \in \mathcal{C} \), \( tr \rho(X) \) is well-defined. We define the Bowditch space as the subset \( X_{BQ} \) of \( X \) consisting of characters \([\rho]\) satisfying the following conditions (the Bowditch Q-conditions):

1. \( tr \rho(X) \notin \mathbb{Z} \) for all \( X \in \mathcal{C} \);
2. \( |tr \rho(X)| \leq 2 \) for only finitely many (possibly no) \( X \in \mathcal{C} \).

3. Statement of results

3.1. Quasi-convexity. For fixed \([\rho] \in X \) and \( K > 0 \), define \( \mathcal{C}_K(T) \) to be the subgraph of \( \mathcal{C}(T) \) spanned by the set of \( X \in \mathcal{C} \) for which \( |tr \rho(X)| \leq K \). Then we have the following simple but fundamental result of Bowditch which plays a key role in the proofs of all subsequent results. The result was stated for type-preserving characters in [5] but the proof works for all characters.

**Theorem 3.1.** (Bowditch [4]) For any \([\rho] \in X \), \( \mathcal{C}_K(T) \) is connected for all \( K \geq 2 \).

3.2. Action of \( \Gamma \) and generalizations of McShane’s identity.

**Theorem 3.2.** (Theorems 2.2, 2.3 and Proposition 2.4 of [19])

(a) \( X_{BQ} \) is open in \( X \).

(b) \( \Gamma \) acts properly discontinuously on \( X_{BQ} \). Furthermore, \( X_{BQ} \) is the largest open subset of \( X \) for which this holds.

(c) For \([\rho] \in X_{BQ} \cap X_\kappa \),

\[
\sum_{X \in \mathcal{C}} \log \frac{e^{\nu} + e^{l(\rho(X))}}{e^{-\nu} + e^{l(\rho(X))}} = \nu \mod 2\pi i, \tag{1}
\]

and the sum converges absolutely; where \( \nu = \cosh^{-1}(\kappa/2) \), and the complex length \( l(\rho(X)) \) is given by the formula

\[
l(\rho(X)) = 2\cosh^{-1}\left(\frac{tr \rho(X)}{2}\right), \tag{2}
\]

where we adopt the convention that the function \( \cosh^{-1} \) has images with non-negative real part and imaginary part in \((-\pi, \pi]\).
Remark 3.3. In the case when \( \kappa = -2, \nu = 0 \) and all the terms of (1) are identically zero. However, if we take the first order infinitesimal, or the formal derivative of (1) and evaluate at \( \nu = 0 \), we get
\[
\sum_{X \in \mathcal{C}} \frac{1}{1 + e^{l(\rho(X))}} = \frac{1}{2},
\]
which is McShane’s original identity in [11] for real type-preserving characters, and also Bowditch’s generalization in [3] and [5] for general type-preserving characters. Note also that when \( \kappa = 2 \), which corresponds to the reducible characters, the Bowditch Q-conditions are never satisfied, see [20]. Parts (a) and (b) of the above were originally stated in [19] in terms of the relative character varieties.

3.3. Necessary and sufficient conditions. Replacing condition (1) of the BQ-conditions by (1') \( \text{tr} \rho(X) \not\in (-2, 2) \) for all \( X \in \mathcal{C} \), we get the extended Bowditch space \( \hat{X}_{BQ} \), and we have the following result:

**Theorem 3.4.** (Theorem 1.6 of [18]) For \( [\rho] \in \mathcal{X} \), the identity (1) of Theorem 3.2 (c) holds (with absolute convergence of the sum) if and only if \([\rho]\) lies in the extended Bowditch space \( \hat{X}_{BQ} \).

The above result gives a complete answer to the question of when the generalized McShane’s identity holds for two generator subgroups of \( \text{SL}(2, \mathbb{C}) \).

3.4. McShane-Bowditch identities for punctured torus bundles. We next consider further variations of the McShane-Bowditch identities. Recall that \( \theta \in \Gamma \) acts naturally on \( \pi \), and hence on \( \mathcal{X} \) where the action is given by
\[
\theta([\rho]) = [\rho \circ \theta^{-1}].
\]
Suppose that \([\rho]\) is stabilized by an Anosov element \( \theta \in \Gamma^+ \) (this corresponds to a hyperbolic element if we identify \( \Gamma^+ \) with \( \text{SL}(2, \mathbb{Z}) \)). So there exists \( A \in \text{SL}(2, \mathbb{C}) \) such that for \( \alpha \in \pi \),
\[
\theta(\rho)(\alpha) = A \cdot \rho(\alpha) \cdot A^{-1}.
\]
Note that \( \text{tr} \rho(X) \) is well-defined on the classes \([X] \in \mathcal{C}/(\theta)\). Suppose further that \([\rho]\) satisfies the relative Bowditch Q-conditions on \( \mathcal{C}/(\theta) \), that is,
\begin{enumerate}
  \item \( \text{tr} \rho(X) \not\in (-2, 2) \) for all \([X] \in \mathcal{C}/(\theta)\);
  \item \( |\text{tr} \rho(X)| \leq 2 \) for only finitely many (possibly no) \([X] \in \mathcal{C}/(\theta)\).
\end{enumerate}
Using the identification of \( \Gamma^+ \) with \( \text{SL}(2, \mathbb{Z}) \) and \( \mathcal{C} \) with \( \hat{Q} \subset \mathbb{R} \) \( \cong \mathcal{P} \mathcal{L} \) in [22] we get that the repelling and attracting fixed points of \( \theta, \mu_- \), \( \mu_+ \in \mathcal{P} \mathcal{L} \) partitions \( \mathcal{C} \) into two subsets \( \mathcal{C}_L \cup \mathcal{C}_R \) which are invariant under the action of \( \theta \). We have the following generalizations of the McShane-Bowditch identities:

**Theorem 3.5.** (Theorems 5.6 and 5.9 of [19]) Suppose that \([\rho]\) is stabilized by an Anosov element \( \theta \in \Gamma^+ \) and satisfies the relative Bowditch Q-conditions as stated above. Then
\[
\sum_{[X] \in \mathcal{C}/(\theta)} \log \frac{e^{\nu} + e^{l(\rho(X))}}{e^{-\nu} + e^{l(\rho(X))}} = 0 \mod 2\pi i,
\]
and
\[
\sum_{[X] \in \mathcal{C}_L/(\theta)} \log \frac{e^{\nu} + e^{l(\rho(X))}}{e^{-\nu} + e^{l(\rho(X))}} = \pm l(A) \mod 2\pi i,
\]
where the sums converge absolutely; and \( l(A) \) is the complex length of the conjugating element \( A \) corresponding to \( \theta \) as described above, and the sign in (3) depends only on our choice of orientations.

Remark 3.6. For type-preserving characters \((\kappa = -2)\), the result is due to Bowditch [4], where the summands of (4) and (5) should be replaced appropriately as in Remark 3.3 by the summands of McShane’s original identity, and \( l(A) \) in (3) should be replaced by \( \lambda \), which has an interpretation as the modulus of the cusp of an associated complete hyperbolic three manifold. There are also similar identities in the case where \( \theta \) is reducible, that is, corresponds to a parabolic element of \( \text{SL}(2, \mathbb{Z}) \), see [18].

The above result has applications to hyperbolic three manifolds. Let \( M \) be an orientable 3-manifold which fibers over the circle, with the fiber a once-punctured torus, \( T \). Suppose that the monodromy \( \theta \) of \( M \) is Anosov. By results of Thurston, see [22] and [21], \( M \) has a complete finite-volume hyperbolic structure with a single cusp, which can in turn be deformed to incomplete hyperbolic structures, on which hyperbolic Dehn surgery can be performed to obtain complete hyperbolic manifolds without cusps. Restricting the holonomy representation to the fiber gives us characters which are stabilized by \( \theta \), and in the complete case, the relative Bowditch Q-conditions are satisfied, as for small deformations of the complete structure to incomplete structures (see [19]). The identities can be interpreted as series identities for these (in)complete structures, involving the complex lengths of certain geodesics corresponding to the homotopy classes of essential simple closed curves on the fiber. The quantity \( \nu \) can be interpreted as half the complex length of the meridian of the boundary torus, and \( l(A) \) as the complex length of a (suitably chosen) longitude of the boundary torus.

3.5. End Invariants. We state some results concerning the end invariants of a character \([\rho]\) in this subsection, these results can be found in [20].

Definition 3.7. (End invariants) An element \( X \in \mathcal{PL} \) is an end invariant of \([\rho]\) if there exists \( K > 0 \) and a sequence of distinct elements \( X_n \in \mathcal{C} \) such that \( X_n \to X \) and \( \left| \text{tr} \rho(X_n) \right| < K \) for all \( n \).

This definition generalizes the notion of a geometrically infinite end for a discrete, faithful, type-preserving character. Denote by \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) \) the set of end invariants of \([\rho]\), this is a closed subset of \( \mathcal{PL} \) (see [20]).

Theorem 3.8. The set of end invariants \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) \) is equal to \( \mathcal{PL} \) if and only if (i) \([\rho]\) is dihedral; or (ii) \([\rho]\) corresponds to a \( \text{SU}(2) \) representation. Furthermore, if \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) \neq \mathcal{PL} \), then \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) \) has empty interior in \( \mathcal{PL} \).

Theorem 3.9. The set of end invariants \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) \) is empty if and only if \([\rho]\) satisfies the extended Bowditch Q-conditions.

The next set of results classify \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) \) for real characters, reducible characters \((\kappa = 2)\), imaginary characters and discrete characters.

Theorem 3.10. (End invariants for real characters). Suppose \([\rho] \in \mathcal{X}_\kappa \) is real, with \( \kappa \neq 2 \). Then exactly one of the following must hold:

(a) \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) = \emptyset \), and \( \rho \) satisfies the extended BQ-conditions.
Theorem 3.13. (End Invariants for reducible characters). For \( [\rho] \in \mathcal{X}_2 \), \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) = \{X_0\} \) or \( \mathcal{P} \mathcal{L} \). Furthermore, in the first case, if \( X_0 \in \mathcal{C} \), then \( \text{tr } \rho(X_0) \in [-2,2] \) and \( \text{tr } \rho(X) \notin [-2,2] \) for all \( X \in \mathcal{C} \setminus \{X_0\} \), if \( X_0 \notin \mathcal{C} \), then \( \text{tr } \rho(X) \notin [-2,2] \) for all \( X \in \mathcal{C} \); and in the second case, \( \text{tr } \rho(X) \in [-2,2] \) for all \( X \in \mathcal{C} \).

The following theorem gives a partial classification for imaginary characters.

Theorem 3.12. (End Invariants for imaginary characters). Suppose that \( [\rho] \) is imaginary.

(i) \( \kappa = -2 \): For \( [\rho] \in \mathcal{X}_{-2} \), \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) \) is either a Cantor subset of \( \mathcal{P} \mathcal{L} \), or consists of a single element \( X \) in \( \mathcal{C} \). In the latter case, \( \text{tr } \rho(X) = 0 \) and \( [\rho] \) is equivalent under the action of \( \Gamma \) to a character corresponding to the triple \((0, x, ix)\) where \( x \in \mathbb{R} \) satisfies \( |x| \geq 2 \).

(ii) \( -14 \leq \kappa < 2 \): For \( [\rho] \in \mathcal{X}_\kappa \), \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) \) is either a Cantor subset of \( \mathcal{P} \mathcal{L} \), or consists of a single element \( X \) in \( \mathcal{C} \).

(iii) \( \kappa < -14 \): For \( [\rho] \in \mathcal{X}_\kappa \), \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) \) is a Cantor subset of \( \mathcal{P} \mathcal{L} \); consists of a single element \( X \) in \( \mathcal{C} \); or is empty.

Finally, we say that a character is discrete if the set \( \{\text{tr } \rho(X) \mid X \in \mathcal{C}\} \) is discrete in \( \mathbb{C} \). We have the following result.

Theorem 3.13. For a discrete \([\rho] \in \mathcal{X} \), if \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) \) has at least three elements, then \( \mathcal{E}(\rho) \) is either a Cantor subset of \( \mathcal{P} \mathcal{L} \) or all of \( \mathcal{P} \mathcal{L} \).

4. Further directions and related results

A natural question to pose is whether the results above extend to general surfaces, and especially to closed surfaces without boundary (where a suitable version of McShane’s identity is still lacking). The identities \( [11] \) and \( [12] \) have been generalized by McShane himself to hyperbolic surfaces with cusps \( [12] \), to hyperbolic surfaces with cusps and/or geodesic boundary components by Mirzakhani \( [13] \), to hyperbolic surfaces with cusps, geodesic boundary and/or conical singularities, as well as to classical Schottky groups by the authors in \( [14] \), \( [15] \). Further refinements and analogous results for punctured surface bundles over the circle have also been obtained by Akiyoshi, Miyachi and Sakuma in \( [11] \), \( [2] \). The methods used in the above cited works follow closely that used by McShane in his original proof and differs markedly from those used to prove the results announced in this note, which
are modelled on Bowditch’s proof. In particular, a general set of conditions, equivalent to the Bowditch Q-conditions, for the identities to hold is still lacking. The Bowditch method does extend fairly naturally to the case of the four holed sphere, see [8]. The one-holed torus and the four-holed sphere are the natural building blocks for more complicated surfaces, according to Grothendieck’s reconstruction principle [9], see also Luo’s work on SL(2) character varieties of surfaces in [10]. It would be interesting to see if this method can be used to give an independent proof of the identities for characters of general surfaces, and to provide necessary and sufficient conditions for the identities to hold, and also to shed some light on the dynamics of the mapping class group action on the SL(2, C) character varieties for these general surfaces.

Mirzakhani found some beautiful applications of McShane’s identity, in particular, she used it to compute the Weil-Petersson volume of the moduli space of bordered surfaces in [13], see also [14] and [15] for other striking applications. Theorem 3.2 gives a natural definition of a moduli space for (relative) SL(2, C) characters and it would be interesting to know if the volume can be computed for this moduli space, with respect to the Poisson (complex-symplectic) structure which is invariant under the mapping class group action.

There are also interesting generalizations concerning the end invariants of [ρ]. The results stated in §3.5 can be considered as evidence towards the following conjecture, which is a refinement and generalization of the suggestion by Bowditch in [5] that for a generic [ρ] ∈ X−2 not satisfying the BQ-conditions, E(ρ) should be a Cantor set.

**Conjecture 4.1.** Suppose that E(ρ) has more than two elements. Then either E(ρ) = PL or E(ρ) is a Cantor subset of PL.

There is also a generalization of the ending lamination conjecture for SL(2, C) characters (as Bowditch conjectured for the κ = −2 case) which can be stated as follows:

**Conjecture 4.2.** Suppose that [ρ], [ρ′] ∈ Xκ are such that E(ρ) = E(ρ′), E(ρ) has at least two elements, and E(ρ) ≠ PL. Then [ρ] = [ρ′].

Finally, we say a few words about the generalizations to arbitrary surfaces. The definition of E(ρ) can be extended without much difficulty. The case of the four-holed sphere is similar and the techniques given here should give similar results in that case. In other cases, PL is homeomorphic to the sphere Sn for some n ≥ 2 and a possible generalization of Theorem 3.8 is that E(ρ) has either full measure or measure zero. A possible generalization of Conjecture 4.1 would be that E(ρ) is perfect, if it contains more than two elements. However, we do not have any insights into these more general cases.

**References**

[1] Hirotaka Akiyoshi, Hideki Miyachi and Makoto Sakuma, A refinement of McShane’s identity for quasifuchsian punctured torus groups, In the Tradition of Ahlfors and Bers, III. The
Ahlfors-Bers Colloquium, Oct. 2001, Univ. of Connecticut at Storrs, W. Abikoff, A. Haas (Eds.), Contemporary Mathematics 355, 21–40, American Mathematical Society, 2004.

[2] Hirotaka Akiyoshi, Hideki Miyachi and Makoto Sakuma, Variations of McShane’s identity for punctured surface groups, London Mathematical Society Lecture Notes, Y. Minsky, M. Sakuma & C. Series (Eds.), Cambridge University Press (to appear).

[3] Brian H. Bowditch, A proof of McShane’s identity via Markoff triples, Bull. London Math. Soc. 28 (1996), no. 1, 73–78.

[4] Brian H. Bowditch, A variation of McShane’s identity for once-punctured torus bundles, Topology 36 (1997), no. 2, 325–334.

[5] Brian H. Bowditch, Markoff triples and quasi-Fuchsian groups, Proc. London Math. Soc. (3) 77 (1998), no. 3, 697–736.

[6] William M. Goldman, Ergodic theory on moduli spaces, Ann. Math. 146 (1997), 1–33.

[7] William M. Goldman, The modular group action on real SL(2)-characters of a one-holed torus, Geom. Topol. 7 (2003), 443–486.

[8] William M. Goldman, Ser Peow Tan and Ying Zhang, The SL(2, C) character variety of the four-holed sphere, in preparation.

[9] Alexandre Grothendieck, Esquisse d’un programme, London Math. Soc. Lecture Note Ser., 242, Geometric Galois actions, 1, Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, (1997), 5–48.

[10] Feng Luo, Characters of SL(2) representations of groups, J. Differential Geom. 53 (1999), no. 3, 575–626.

[11] Greg McShane, A remarkable identity for lengths of curves, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Warwick, 1991.

[12] Greg McShane, Simple geodesics and a series constant over Teichmuller space, Invent. Math. 132 (1998), no. 3, 607–632.

[13] Maryam Mirzakhani, Simple geodesics and Weil-Petersson volumes of moduli spaces of bordered Riemann surfaces, preprint.

[14] Maryam Mirzakhani, Growth of the number of simple closed geodesics on hyperbolic surfaces, preprint.

[15] Maryam Mirzakhani, Weil-Petersson volumes and intersection theory on the moduli space of curves, preprint.

[16] Ser Peow Tan, Yan Loi Wong and Ying Zhang, Generalizations of McShane’s identity to hyperbolic cone-surfaces, arXiv:math.GT/0404226.

[17] Ser Peow Tan, Yan Loi Wong and Ying Zhang, McShane’s identity for classical Schottky groups, arXiv:math.GT/0411628.

[18] Ser Peow Tan, Yan Loi Wong and Ying Zhang, Necessary and sufficient conditions for McShane’s identity and variations, arXiv:math.GT/0411184.

[19] Ser Peow Tan, Yan Loi Wong and Ying Zhang, Generalized Markoff maps and McShane’s identity, arXiv:math.GT/0502165.

[20] Ser Peow Tan, Yan Loi Wong and Ying Zhang, End Invariants of SL(2, C) characters of the one-holed torus, in preparation.

[21] William P. Thurston, The Geometry and Topology of 3-Manifolds, Lecture Notes, Princeton University, 1977/78.

[22] William P. Thurston, Hyperbolic structures on 3-manifolds II: surface groups and 3-manifolds that fiber over the circle, arXiv:math.GT/9801045 v1.

[23] Ying Zhang, Hyperbolic cone-surfaces, generalized Markoff maps, Schottky groups and McShane’s identity, Ph.D. Thesis, National University of Singapore, 2004.

Department of Mathematics, National University of Singapore, 2 Science Drive 2, Singapore 117543
E-mail address: mattansp@nus.edu.sg

Department of Mathematics, National University of Singapore, 2 Science Drive 2, Singapore 117543
E-mail address: matwyl@nus.edu.sg

Department of Mathematics, National University of Singapore, 2 Science Drive 2, Singapore 117543; current address: Department of Mathematics, Yangzhou University, Yangzhou 225002, P. R. China
E-mail address: yingzhang@alumni.nus.edu.sg