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# ALMOST PERIODIC HOMEOMORPHISMS OF $E^2$ ARE PERIODIC

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In this paper we show that every almost periodic homeomorphism of the plane onto itself must be periodic. This improves well-known results.

1. Introduction. In [3] Foland showed that every almost periodic homeomorphism of a disk onto itself is topologically either a reflection in a diameter or a rotation. Hemmingsen [7] studies homeomorphisms on compact subsets of  $E^2$ , with equicontinuous families of iterates, and shows that if such a compact set has an interior point of infinite order, then the compact set is a disk or annulus. If it is a disk, then the homeomorphism is a rotation or reflection. Kerékjártó [8, pp. 224-226] showed that every periodic homeomorphism of a disk onto itself is a conjugate of either a rotation or a reflection. It was brought to my attention by S. Kinoshita that Kerékjártó in [9] obtains a characterization of those homeomorphisms of  $S^2$  onto itself which are regular; that is, homeomorphisms h such that  $\{h^n\}_{n\in I}$  forms an equicontinuous family. It is known [4] that almost periodic homeomorphisms on compact metric spaces satisfy this property, so that our theorem for  $E^2$  would follow from the theorem for  $S^2$ .

However, our proof of the main theorem uses Bing's  $\varepsilon$ -growth technique [6] to obtain an invariant disk, and thus re-does a portion of [2], [7], and [9] in a particularly nice way.

Montgomery began a study of almost periodic transformation groups in [13], with the main results for  $E^3$ . One very nice theorem states that if G is a one-parameter almost periodic transformation group (a.p.t.g.) of  $E^3$  whose minimal closed invariant sets are one-dimensional, and whose orbits are uniformly bounded, then G is the identity. Our theorem may be regarded as something of an analogue to this theorem for  $E^2$ . That is, our theorem shows that if  $G = \{h^n\}_{n\in I}$  is an a.p.t.g. of  $E^2$ ,  $h \neq e$ , then the orbits are not uniformly bounded.

2. Preliminaries. The definitions used here of the following are as in [4] and [6]: Relatively dense subsets of the integers; homeomorphisms almost periodic at a point, pointwise almost periodic (p.a.p.), and almost periodic (a.p.) on the space; invariant set; and minimal set are defined in [4]. Property S,  $\varepsilon$ -growth, and  $\varepsilon$ -sequential growth are defined in [6]. The orbit of x in the space X is the set

 $\{h^n(x) \mid n \in I\}$ , and is denoted by 0(x).

We will use the following known results.

PROPOSITION 2.1. [6, pg. 212]. Let K be a subset of a metric space X. If K has property S, then K is locally connected.

PROPOSITION 2.2. [6, pg. 215]. If K is a subset of a metric space X and K has property S, then  $\overline{K}$  has property S. Thus, if K has property S, then  $\overline{K}$  is locally connected.

PROPOSITION 2.3. [6, pg. 216]. Let X be a metric space with property S, H and K subsets of X, and  $\varepsilon > 0$ . If K is an  $\varepsilon$ -sequential growth of H, then K has property S and is open in X.

Note. The double arrow in  $f: A \rightarrow B$  denotes an onto function.

- 3. Obtaining invariant disks. In this section we use the concept of an  $\varepsilon$ -sequential growth to enable us to obtain  $E^2$  as the union of an increasing tower of invariant disks for any a.p. homeomorphism of the plane onto itself.
- LEMMA 3.1. Let X be a compact metric space and let  $\{f_n\}$  be an equicontinuous collection of functions on X. Then for each  $\varepsilon > 0$ , there is a  $\delta > 0$  such that diam  $(f_n(\delta \operatorname{set})) < \varepsilon$ , for all  $n \in I$ .
- *Proof.* Let  $\varepsilon > 0$ . For each  $x \in X$ , there exists  $\gamma > 0$  such that diam  $(f_n(\gamma nbd \text{ of } x)) < \varepsilon$  for all  $n \in I$ , since  $\{f_n\}$  is equicontinuous. Choose such a neighborhood for each  $x \in X$ . This forms a cover of X and therefore some finite subcollection covers X. Let  $\delta$  be a Lebesgue number for this subcover. Then diam  $(f_n(\delta set)) < \varepsilon$  for all  $n \in I$ .
- LEMMA 3.2. Let h be a homeomorphism of  $S^2$  onto itself such that h(p) = p where p is the north pole of  $S^2$ , and let X be a locally connected continuum in  $S^2$ , containing p, such that h(X) = X. Let  $\varepsilon = \dim S^2$ , and by uniform continuity of h, let  $\delta > 0$  such that diam  $(h(\delta\text{-set})) < \varepsilon/2$ . Then if diam  $X < \delta$  and U is the component of  $S^2 X$  containing the south pole, we have h(U) = U.
- *Proof.* We first show that each component of  $S^2-X$  must go onto some component of  $S^2-X$ . Let V be a component of  $S^2-X$ , and suppose there exist points x and  $y \in V$  such that  $h(x) \in W_1$ ,  $h(y) \in W_2$ , where  $W_1 \neq W_2$  are components of  $S^2-X$ . Let A be an arc

from x to y in V. Since A misses X, and h(X) = X, h(A) misses X. But h(A) is connected and contains points of different components of  $S^2 - X$ , and therefore must contain a point of X. This is a contradiction. Therefore h(V) is a subset of a component of  $S^2 - X$ . The same argument applied to  $h^{-1}$ , shows  $h^{-1}$  (componet)  $\subseteq$  some component of  $S^2 - X$ , so that h(V) is a component of  $S^2 - X$ . We next show that h(U) = U. Suppose  $h(U) \neq U$ . Then there is a component  $W(\neq U)$  of  $S^2 - X$ , such that h(W) = U. Now diam  $W < \delta$ , and therefore diam  $h(W) < \varepsilon/2$ . Therefore  $h(W) \neq U$ . This is a contradiction. Thus h(U) = U.

LEMMA 3.3. Let h be an almost periodic homeomorphism of  $E^2$  onto  $E^2$  and let  $\varphi\colon E^2 \to S^2$  be the inverse of the stereographic projection. Let p be the north pole of  $S^2$ . Let  $g\colon S^2 \to S^2$  be defined by  $g(x) = \begin{cases} \varphi h \varphi^{-1}(x), & \text{for } x \in S^2 - \{p\} \\ p, & \text{for } x = p \end{cases}$  Then g is an a.p. homeomorphism of  $S^2$  onto  $S^2$ .

Proof. Let  $\varepsilon > 0$ . We must show that there exists a relatively dense subset A of I such that  $d(x, g^n(x)) < \varepsilon$  for all  $x \in S^2$  and all  $n \in A$ . Now we know there exists a relatively dense subset A of I such that  $d(x, h^n(x)) < \varepsilon$  for all  $x \in E^2$  and all  $n \in A$ . Also, it follows from pg. 20 of [1] that  $\varphi$  has the property that  $d(y, y') \ge d(\varphi(y), \varphi(y'))$  for all  $y, y' \in E^2$ . Now since  $d(y, h^n(y)) < \varepsilon$  for all  $y \in E^2$  and all  $n \in A$ ,  $d(\varphi^{-1}(x), h^n \varphi^{-1}(x)) < \varepsilon$  for all  $x \neq p \in S^2$ , all  $n \in A$ . Thus  $d(\varphi \varphi^{-1}(x), \varphi h^n \varphi^{-1}(x)) < \varepsilon$  and  $d(x, \varphi h^n \varphi^{-1}(x)) < \varepsilon$  for all  $x \in S^2$ , all  $n \in A$ . It follows that  $d(x, g(x)) < \varepsilon$  for all  $x \in S^2$ , all  $n \in A$ , and g is a.p.

THEOREM 3.1. Let h be an a.p. homeomorphism on  $S^2$  such that h keeps the north pole p fixed. Then for each  $\eta > 0$ , there exists an  $\eta$ -disk E which is invariant under h (in fact h(E) = E), and contains p in its interior.

*Proof.* Let  $\gamma$  be the diameter of  $S^2$ . Then there exists  $\delta > 0$  such that diam  $(h(\delta \operatorname{-set})) < \gamma/2$ , by uniform continuity of h. Let  $0 < \varepsilon < \min{\{\eta, \delta, \gamma\}}$ , and let  $\{\varepsilon_i\}$  be a decreasing sequence of positive numbers such that  $\sum \varepsilon_i < \varepsilon \le \eta$ . We will obtain E as an  $\varepsilon$ -sequential growth of the set  $\{p\}$ .

Let  $D_1 = \{p\}$ . The set  $\{h^n\}_{n \in I}$  is equicontinuous [4, pg. 341], and  $\varepsilon_1 > 0$ . Thus by Lemma 3.1, there exists  $\delta_1 > 0$  such that diam  $(h^n(\delta_1 - set)) < \varepsilon_1$  for all  $n \in I$ . Let  $\mathcal{U}_1 = \{U_{11}\}$  be a cover of  $D_1$  by an open connected set of  $S^2$  such that  $\mu(\mathcal{U}_1) < \min\{\delta_1, \varepsilon_1\}$ . Let  $D_2 = \bigcup_{n \in I} h^n(U_{11})$  and note that  $D_2$  is invariant. We show that  $D_2$  is an  $\varepsilon_1$ -growth of  $D_1$ . We must show parts (i) and (ii) of the definition of  $\varepsilon$ -growth.

Proof of (i). If  $x \in D_2 - D_1$ , then there exists an integer n such that  $x \in h^n(U_{11})$ . But  $h^n(U_{11})$  is connected and diam  $(h^n(U_{11})) < \varepsilon_1$ . Also,  $h^n(U_{11})$  contains p and so meets  $D_1$ .

Proof of (ii).  $U_{11}$  is an open set containing the compact set  $D_1$ .  $S^2 - U_{11}$  is compact, and disjoint from  $D_1$  which is compact. Thus  $d(D_1, S^2 - U_{11}) = 2\alpha_1$  for some  $\alpha_1 > 0$ , and it follows that the  $\alpha_1$ -nbd. of  $D_1$  is a subset of  $D_2$ . Thus (i) and (ii) hold and  $D_2$  is an  $\epsilon_1$ -growth of  $D_1$ .

We now wish to obtain an  $\varepsilon_2$ -growth of  $D_2$ . We note that since  $D_2$  is invariant, so is  $\overline{D}_2$ . Now for  $\varepsilon_2 > 0$ , there exists  $\delta_2 > 0$  such that diam  $(h^n(\delta_2\text{-set})) < \varepsilon_2$  for all n. Again this is possible by Lemma 3.1. Let  $\mathscr{U}_2$ :  $U_{2,1}$ ,  $U_{2,2}$ ,  $\cdots$ ,  $U_{2,k_2}$  be a finite cover of  $\overline{D}_2$  by open connected subsets of  $S^2$  of diameter  $< \min{\{\delta_2, \, \varepsilon_2\}}$  and let

$$D_3 = igcup_{n\in I} h^n\left(igcup_{i=1}^{k_2}\ U_{2,i}
ight)$$
 .

Then  $D_3$  is invariant.

We show that  $D_3$  is an  $\varepsilon_2$ -growth of  $D_2$ . We prove parts (i) and (ii) of the definitions of  $\varepsilon$ -growth.

*Proof of* (i). Let  $x \in D_3 - D_2$ . Then  $x \in h^n(U_{2,i})$  for some pair n, i. But  $h^n(U_{2,i})$  is connected, meets  $D_2$ , and has diameter  $< \varepsilon_2$ .

*Proof of* (ii).  $\bar{D}_2$  and  $S^2 - \bigcup_{n \in I} h^n(\bigcup_{i=1}^{k_2} U_{2,i})$  are disjoint compact subsets of  $S^2$  and thus are a positive distance apart, say  $2\alpha_2$ . Then the  $\alpha_2$ -nbd. of  $\bar{D}_2$ , and therefore the  $\alpha_2$ -nbd. of  $D_2$ , is a subset of  $D_3$ .

Thus (i) and (ii) hold, and  $D_3$  is an  $\varepsilon_2$ -growth of  $D_2$ .

It is clear that we may continue the process inductively, obtaining at the *i*th stage, a connected open set  $D_i$  which is an  $\varepsilon_{i-1}$ -growth of  $D_{i-1}$ . Let  $E' = \bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} D_i$ . Then by Proposition 2.3, E' is open and has property S. Thus  $\bar{E}'$  is a locally connected continuum, by Proposition 2.2. Further  $\bar{E}'$  is invariant. We show that  $\bar{E}'$  has no cut points. Note that E' has no cut points since it is open (and connected). Thus any cut point of  $\bar{E}'$  would be in  $\bar{E}' - E'$ , so that there would exist a component of  $\bar{E}'$  containing points of  $\bar{E}' - E'$  only. But these are all limit points of E'. This is a contradiction, and it follows that  $\bar{E}'$  has no cut points.

Thus  $\bar{E}'$  is a locally connected continuum with no cut points, and from Theorem 9 of [11] it follows that the boundary of each of its complementary domains is a simple closed curve. Now one of its complementary domains, say F, contains the open southern hemisphere, and therefore has diameter  $\geq \gamma$ , while each of the other complementary domains has diameter less than  $\varepsilon$ , since diam  $\bar{E}' < \varepsilon$ . Thus by Lemma 3.2, F is invariant, and h(F) = F. Let  $E = S^2 - F$ .

Then diam  $E < \varepsilon$ , h(E) = E, and E is a disk, by the Jordan-Schoenflies theorem [6, pg. 257], since it's a continuum not separating  $S^2$  and has a simple closed curve as its boundary. Clearly E contains p in its interior. Then E is the desired 2-cell.

COROLLARY 3.1.1. Let h be an a.p. homeomorphism of  $E^2$  onto itself. Then  $E^2$  is the union of an increasing sequence of disks  $\{B_i\}_{i=1}^\infty$  such that

- (1)  $B_1 \subseteq B_2^0 \subseteq B_2 \subseteq B_3^0 \subseteq B_3 \subseteq \cdots \subseteq B_n^0 \subseteq B_n \subseteq \cdots$  and
- (2)  $h(B_n) = B_n$  for all n.

*Proof.* Let  $\{\varepsilon_i\}$  be a decreasing sequence of positive numbers. By Theorem 3.1, there exist disks  $K_i'$  on  $S^2$  such that (1) diam  $K_i' < \varepsilon_i$ , (2)  $h(K_i') = K_i'$  and (3)  $K_i'$  contains p, the north pole of  $S^2$ . Let  $K_1 = K_1'$ ,  $K_2 = \text{first } K_i'$  such that  $K_i' \subseteq (K_1)^0$ ,  $K_3 = \text{first } K_i'$  such that  $K_i' \subseteq (K_2)^0$ , etc. Let  $\varphi \colon S^2 \to E^2$  be the stereographic projection. Then  $\{B_i\} = \{\varphi(K_i)\}$  is the desired sequence.

4. The main theorem. In this section we prove the main theorem of this paper.

LEMMA 4.1. Let  $B_1$  and  $B_2$  be 2-cells in  $E^2$  such that  $B_1 \subseteq B_2^0$ . Let h be a homeomorphism of  $B_2$  onto itself such that

- $(1) \quad h(B_1) = B_1,$
- (2)  $h = \varphi^{-1}r\varphi$  for some rotation r on the disk  $D_2$  with center at the origin and radius 2, where  $\varphi \colon B_2 \twoheadrightarrow D_2$  is a homeomorphism, and
- (3)  $\varphi(\operatorname{Bd} B_1)$  is a circle centered at the origin. Then there exists a homeomorphism  $g: B_2 \twoheadrightarrow D_2$  such that
  - (1)  $g(Bd B_1)$  is the unit circle, and
  - (2)  $h = g^{-1}rg$ .

*Proof.* We first make a definition. We call a homeomorphism  $f\colon D_2 \to D_2$  radial iff f takes each radius onto itself, and is such that circles centered at the origin go onto circles centered at the origin.

Now let  $\Psi\colon D_2\to D_2$  be a radial homeomorphism of  $D_2$  onto itself such that  $\Psi(\varphi(\operatorname{Bd} B_1))$  is the unit circle. Then  $\Psi\varphi$  is a homeomorphism of  $B_2$  onto  $D_2$  such that  $\Psi\varphi(\operatorname{Bd} B_1)$  is the unit circle. Further, for any rotation r, since  $\Psi^{-1}r\Psi=r$ ,  $\varphi^{-1}r\varphi=\varphi^{-1}(\Psi^{-1}r\Psi)\varphi=\varphi^{-1}\Psi^{-1}r\Psi\varphi=(\Psi\varphi)^{-1}r(\Psi\varphi)$ . Thus we let  $g=\Psi\varphi$  and g is the desired homeomorphism.

LEMMA 4.2. Let  $B_1$  and  $B_2$  be 2-cells in  $E^2$  such that  $B_1 \subseteq B_2^0$ . Let  $h: B_2 \to B_2$  be a homeomorphism such that

- $(1) \quad h(B_1) = B_1$
- (2) there exists a homeomorphism  $\varphi_1: B_1 \to unit \ disk \ such \ that$   $h | B_1 = \varphi_1^{-1} r_1 \varphi_1$ , for some rotation  $r_1: E^2 \to E^2$ , and
- (3) there exists a homeomorphism  $\varphi_2: B_2 \rightarrow D_2$ , where  $D_2$  is the disk of radius 2 about the origin, such that
  - (a)  $h = \varphi_2^{-1} r_2 \varphi_2$ , for some rotation  $r_2$  of  $E^2$  onto itself, and
  - (b)  $\varphi_2(\text{Bd }B_1) = unit \ circle.$

- $(1) \quad g | B_1 = \varphi_1,$
- (2)  $g(Bd B_1) = unit \ circle, \ and$
- $(3) \quad h = g^{-1}r_1g.$

*Proof.* Let the annulus between Bd  $D_1$  and Bd  $D_2$  be decomposed into the continuous collection  $\mathscr{A}$  of arcs which are the intersections of the radii of  $D_2$  with the annulus. Note that  $\varphi_1\varphi_2^{-1}\colon D_1\twoheadrightarrow D_1$  is a homeomorphism that takes  $\varphi_2(x)$  to  $\varphi_1(x)$  for each  $x\in B_1$ . We extend  $\varphi_1\varphi_2^{-1}$  to a homeomorphism  $\Psi\colon D_2\twoheadrightarrow D_2$  by taking each element  $A\in\mathscr{A}$  with endpoint  $\varphi_2(x)\in \operatorname{Bd} D_1$  to the element  $A'\in\mathscr{A}$  with endpoint  $\varphi_1(x)$  in Bd  $D_1$ , in such a way that distance along the segments A and A' are preserved. Thus  $\Psi$  is a homeomorphism of  $D_2$  onto itself such that  $\Psi\mid D_1=\varphi_1\varphi_2^{-1}$ .

Now let  $g = \Psi \varphi_2$ . We show that g is the required homeomorphism. Since  $\Psi = \varphi_1 \varphi_2^{-1}$  on  $D_1$ ,  $\Psi \varphi_2 = (\varphi_1 \varphi_2^{-1}) \varphi_2 = \varphi_1$  on  $B_1$ , so g is an extension of  $\varphi_1$ . Also  $g(\operatorname{Bd} B_1) = \operatorname{unit} \operatorname{circle}$ . It remains to show that  $h = g^{-1}r_1g$  on  $B_2 - B_1$ .

It is sufficient to show that  $r_2 = r_1$  on Bd  $D_1$ . Now  $\varphi_1^{-1}r_1\varphi_1 = \varphi_2^{-1}r_2\varphi_2$  on Bd  $B_1$ , so  $r_2 = (\varphi_1\varphi_2^{-1})^{-1}r_1(\varphi_1\varphi_2^{-1})$  is a conjugate of a rotation. But it follows from [12] that the rotations are characterized by numbers in 1-1 correspondence with  $0 \le x < 1$ , and any conjugate  $f^{-1}rf$  of a rotation is characterized (even though not necessarily a rotation) by the same number as the number for the rotation r. Thus the characterizing number for a conjugate of  $r_1$  is the same as for  $r_1$ . It follows that  $r_1 = r_2$ , and  $r_2 = r_3$  on  $r_4 = r_4$ .

THEOREM 4.1. Let h be an almost periodic homeomorphism of  $E^2$  onto itself. Then h is periodic.

*Proof.* Let  $\{B_i\}$  be an increasing tower of 2-cells of  $E^2$  such that  $B_1 \subseteq B_2^0 \subseteq B_2 \subseteq B_3^0 \subseteq B_3 \subseteq \cdots \subseteq B_n^0 \subseteq B_n \subseteq \cdots$ ,  $\bigcup B_i = E^2$ , and  $h(B_i) = B_i$ . This sequence exists by Corollary 3.1.1.

Case (i). h is orientation preserving. Since  $B_i$  is invariant,  $h|B_i$  is a.p. on  $B_i$  and orientation preserving, and therefore is a conjugate of a rotation on the 2-cell  $D_i$  centered at the origin and

of radius *i*. (This follows from [3].) That is, there exists a rotation  $r_i: D_i \to D_i$  and a homeomorphism  $\varphi_i: B_i \to D_i$  such that  $h \mid B_i = \varphi_i^{-1} r_i \varphi_i$ .

We will show that each  $r_i$  must be rational. Suppose by way of contradiction that  $r_i$  is an irrational rotation, for some i (the first such i). Then since  $r_i = \varphi_i(h \mid B_i)\varphi_i^{-1}$  and  $B_{i-1}$  is invariant,  $\varphi_i(B_{i-1})$  is invariant under  $r_i$  and in fact Bd  $(\varphi_i(B_{i-1}))$  is invariant under  $r_i$ . Let x be any point in Bd  $(\varphi_i(B_{i-1}))$ . Since  $r_i$  is an invariant rotation  $\overline{0(x)}$  under  $r_i$  will contain the circle  $C_x$  of radius |x|. Thus  $C_x \subseteq \varphi_i(\operatorname{Bd}(B_{i-1}))$ . But  $\varphi_i(\operatorname{Bd}(B_{i-1}))$  is a simple closed curve, and it follows that  $C_x = \varphi_i(\operatorname{Bd}(B_{i-1}))$ . By Lemma 4.1, we may assume that  $\varphi_i(B_{i-1}) = \operatorname{radius}(i-1)$  disk, and by Lemma 4.2, we may assume that  $\varphi_i(B_{i-1}) = \varphi_{i-1}$ , (that is  $\varphi_i$  is an extension of  $\varphi_{i-1}$ ) and further that  $r_i = r_{i-1}$ . Thus since  $r_i$  is the first irrational rotation, i=1.

Clearly this process may be continued inductively, obtaining  $r_i = r_{i-1}$ , for all i. But then h would be the conjugate of an irrational rotation on  $E^2$ . However, such a rotation is not a.p. since  $d(x, h^n(x)) \to \infty$  as  $x \to \infty$  (for fixed n). This is a contradiction. It follows that each  $r_i$  is a rational rotation.

Now since each  $r_i$  is a rational rotation, it is of finite order, say  $n_i$ . But since  $h | B_i$  is a conjugate of a periodic homeomorphism of order  $n_i$  on the disk  $D_i$ , each point of  $B_i$  (except the "center") has the same order, namely  $n_i$ . Thus each point of  $B_{i-1}$  has order  $n_i$  under  $h | B_i$  and therefore under  $h | B_{i-1}$ . We may backtrack inductively until i = 2, so that each of  $\{h | B_1, h | B_2, \dots, h | B_i\}$  makes each point of  $B_i$  (except the "center") a point of order  $n_i$ ; that is, the orbit consists of  $n_i$  points. It follows that for any j > i, the points of  $B_j$  must all have order  $n_j$  and therefore  $n_j = n_i$ . Thus h must be periodic on  $\bigcup B_i = E^2$ . But a periodic orientation preserving homeomorphism on  $E^2$  is a conjugate of a rotation on  $E^2$  [8, 2, 14]. Thus h is a conjugate of a rotation.

Case (ii). h is orientation reversing. Since  $B_i$  is invariant,  $h|B_i$  is a.p. on  $B_i$  and orientation reversing, and hence a conjugate of a reflection [3]. Thus the fixed point set of  $h|B_i$  is a "diameter" of  $B_i$ , and every other point of  $B_i$  has order 2 (its orbit consists of 2 points). Thus  $h|B_i$  is of order 2, also. By induction  $\{h|B_i, h|B_i, h|B_i, \dots, h|B_i\}$  are each of order 2. For any j > i, the order of  $h|B_i$  order of  $h|B_i$ , by the same argument. Thus h is of period 2 on  $h|B_i = E^2$ , and also is orientation reversing. It follows that h is a conjugate of a reflection [8, 2].

REMARK. It is clear that we have also proved that if h is an almost periodic homeomorphism of  $S^2$  onto itself which is orientation preserving, and therefore keeps at least one point fixed [1, pg. 237],

then h is a conjugate of a rotation. How are arbitrary almost periodic homeomorphisms of  $S^2$  onto itself characterized? There are many nonconjugate fixed point free, almost periodic homeomorphisms of  $S^2$  onto itself. For example, let f be a reflection of  $S^2$  thru the equator, and let r be any rotation of  $S^2$  thru the axis containing the north and south poles. Then rf is fixed point free, no two are conjugate, and each of these is almost periodic. (Note that if r is the  $180^\circ$  rotation, then rf is the antipodal map.) Are conjugates of these maps the only fixed point free homeomorphisms on  $S^2$ ? Gerhard Ritter has just informed me that he will answer this question in the affirmative, in a forthcoming paper.

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