

Pacific Journal of Mathematics

DECOMPOSITIONS OF E^3 WHICH YIELD E^3

RALPH JOSEPH BEAN

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In recent years interest has been focused on the following two questions.

If G is an upper semi-continuous decomposition of E^3 whose decomposition space G' is homeomorphic to E^3 , under what conditions can we conclude that

- (1) each element of G is point-like?
- (2) there is a pseudo-isotopy $F: E^3 \times [0, 1] \rightarrow E^3$ such that $F|E^3 \times 0$ is the identity and $F|E^3 \times 1$ is equivalent to the projection map $\Pi: E^3 \rightarrow G'$?

An example of Bing of a decomposition of E^3 into points, circles, and figure-eights shows that some additional hypotheses must be inserted. The theorem presented here gives such hypotheses, namely that the nondegenerate elements form the intersection of a decreasing sequence of finite disjoint unions of cells-with-handles, and project into a Cantor set.

For definitions and notation see [1]. In the example of Bing previously mentioned, the image of the union of the nondegenerate elements H^* under the projection map Π is an arc. Thus, the first condition one might impose in an attempt to answer the above questions is that $\Pi(H^*)$ be a Cantor set. I suspect that this is sufficient, however, that is still unknown. We use an additional hypothesis here.

THEOREM. *Let G be an upper semi-continuous decomposition of E^3 whose decomposition space G' is E^3 and let the image $\Pi(H^*)$ of the union of all the nondegenerate elements be a Cantor set. Suppose also that G is definable by cells-with-handles, that is*

$$H^* = \bigcap_{i=1}^{\infty} \left(\bigcap_{j=1}^{N_i} C_{ij} \right)$$

where each C_{ij} is a cell-with-handles, $C_{ij} \cap C_{ik} = \emptyset$ for $j \neq k$, and $\bigcup_{i=1}^{N_i} C_{ij}$ is contained in the point-set interior of $\bigcup_{j=1}^{N_{i-1}} C_{i-1,j}$ for $i = 2, 3, \dots$. Then each element of G is point-like and there is a pseudo-isotopy $F: E^3 \times [0, 1] \rightarrow E^3$ such that $G = \{F^{-1}(x, 1)\}_{x \in E^3}$.

Proof of the theorem. By Bing's approximation theorem, we can assume that each C_{ij} is polyhedral. We will rely on the following theorem of Hempel [3].

THEOREM (Hempel). *Suppose C and C' are polyhedral 3-manifolds with boundary in S^3 such that C is a cell-with-handles and such*

that there is a map f of C onto C' which takes $\text{Bd}(C)$ homeomorphically onto $\text{Bd}(C')$. Then C and C' are homeomorphic; in particular, $f|_{\text{Bd}(C)}$ can be extended to a homeomorphism of C onto C' .

We will first show that if $g \in G$, then g is point-like. Let U be some neighborhood of g . Then some C_{ij} of the theorem is such that $g \subset \text{Int } C_{ij} \subset C_{ij} \subset U$. We will find a cell C such that $g \subset \text{Int } C \subset C_{ij}$. $\Pi(g)$ is a point and $\Pi(g) \in \text{Int } \Pi(C_{ij})$ so there is a cell C' such that $\Pi(g) \in \text{Int } C' \subset \Pi(C_{ij})$. For this fixed C' there must be an i' and a j' such that $\Pi(g) \in \Pi(C_{i'j'}) \subset \text{Int } C'$. For each $k = 1, 2, \dots, \hat{j}', \dots, N_{i'}$, we will modify Π on $C_{i',k}$ so that the new map Π' is a homeomorphism except on $C_{i',j'}$. We can do this because of Hempel's theorem. It is then easy to show that $\Pi'^{-1}(C')$ is the cell C we are seeking, since Π'^{-1} is a homeomorphism on $\text{Bd } C'$.

In order to prove that G' may be realized by pseudo-isotopy we need only show the following lemma is true. The theorem will then follow [2].

LEMMA. *If G is as in the theorem, $\varepsilon > 0$ is given, and U is any neighborhood of H^* , then there is an isotopy $F: E^3 \times [0, 1] \rightarrow E^3$ such that $F|_{E^3 \times 0} = 1$, $F(x, t) = x$ for all $x \in E^3 - U$, $t \in [0, 1]$, and for each $g \in G$, $F(g, 1)$ has diameter less than ε .*

Proof. There is an i such that $C_{ij} \subset U$ for $j = 1, \dots, N_i$. We will take $F(x, t) = x$ for all $x \in E^3 - \bigcup_{j=1}^{N_i} C_{ij}$. For each j there is a homeomorphism $h_j: \Pi(C_{ij}) \rightarrow C_{ij}$ which agrees with Π^{-1} on the boundary and we will define a map $\Pi': E^3 \rightarrow E^3$ as follows. For all $x \in E^3 - \bigcup_{j=1}^{N_i} C_{ij}$ let $\Pi'(x) = x$. For $x \in C_{ij}$ let $\Pi'(x) = h_j \Pi(x)$. There is an integer k such that $\Pi'(C_{kl})$ has diameter less than ε for each $l = 1, 2, \dots, N_k$. We may also assume that Π' is piecewise linear on $E^3 - \bigcup_{l=1}^{N_k} \text{Int } C_{kl}$. Using Hempel's result again we modify Π' on each C_{kl} so that the new map Π'' is a piecewise linear homeomorphism agreeing with Π' everywhere except in $\bigcup_{l=1}^{N_k} \text{Int } C_{kl}$. Note that for each $g \in G$, $\text{diam } \Pi''(g) < \varepsilon$. The proof is completed by the following lemma.

LEMMA. *Let C be a polyhedral cell-with-handles in E^3 and let h be a piecewise linear homeomorphism of E^3 onto itself such that $h|_{\text{Bd } C}$ is the identity. Then $h|_C$ is isotopic to the identity.*

Proof of lemma. This lemma appears to be well known, however, an outline of the proof is included for completeness. Since C is a polyhedral cell with handles, there is a collection of mutually disjoint polyhedral disks $D_1 \dots, D_n$ with $D_i \cap \text{Bd } C = \text{Bd } D_i$, $\text{Int } D_i \subset \text{Int } C$ and

such that C is the union of two cells C_1 and C_2 whose intersection is $\bigcup_{i=1}^n D_i$. Since $h(D_i)$ is polyhedral and $h(D_i) \cap \text{Bd } C = D_i \cap \text{Bd } C$ there is an isotopy $H: C \times [0, 1] \rightarrow C$ with $H(x, 0) = h(x)$ $H(x, t) = x$ for all $x \in \text{Bd } C$ and $t \in [0, 1]$ and $H(x, 1) = x$ for $x \in \bigcup_{i=1}^n D_i$. Then $H: C \times 1 \rightarrow C$ is a homeomorphism of C onto itself which is the identity on $\text{Bd } C_1 \cup \text{Bd } C_2$ and we may find the appropriate isotopy returning $H: C \times 1 \rightarrow C$ to the identity.

Question. In the theorem is the requirement that each C_{ij} is a cell-with-handles necessary? Certainly since the image of the union of the nondegenerate elements is a Cantor set in E^3 , it has this cell-with-handles intersection property. It is true that a 3-manifold-with-boundary need not be a cell-with-handles in order to map onto a cell-with-handles with a map which is a homeomorphism on the boundary; however, I believe that these maps would have to have a continuum of nondegenerate elements. The maps we are considering have only a Cantor set of nondegenerate elements.

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Received August 9, 1965. The work was supported by contracts NSF-GP-2244 and GP-5420.

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The *Pacific Journal of Mathematics* is published monthly. Effective with Volume 16 the price per volume (3 numbers) is \$ 8.00; single issues, \$ 3.00. Special price for current issues to individual faculty members of supporting institutions and to individual members of the American Mathematical Society: \$ 4.00 per volume; single issues \$ 1.50. Back numbers are available.

Subscriptions, orders for back numbers, and changes of address should be sent to Pacific Journal of Mathematics, 103 Highland Boulevard, Berkeley 8, California.

Printed at Kokusai Bunken Insatsusha (International Academic Printing Co., Ltd.), No. 6, 2-chome, Fujimi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

PUBLISHED BY PACIFIC JOURNAL OF MATHEMATICS, A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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