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## A locally connected non-movable continuum that fails to separate $E^3$

by

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**Abstract.** A locally connected continuum  $X$  (Fig. 2) is constructed by tunneling into a 3-cell in such a way that  $E^3 - X$  is connected. The non-movability of  $X$  is proven using the three-manifold techniques of Haken and Waldhausen.

**1. Introduction.** K. Borsuk has introduced and studied the important shape property of movability for compacta. Examples of movable compacta include compact absolute neighborhood retracts and compacta embeddable in 2-manifolds (see [1], [10], and [7]). Some of the more exotic continua, such as solenoids, are not movable ([1]). It seems especially worthwhile to seek convenient characterizations of movable compacta in 3-manifolds. Most examples of locally connected continua in Euclidean 3-space  $E^3$  that come to mind are movable (for example, locally connected one-dimensional continua are movable), but in general this is not enough to do the job. In particular, Borsuk gave in [2] an example of a locally connected, non-movable continuum in  $E^3$ . His example separates  $E^3$  into two pieces. In an effort to focus on what does (and does not) make a *continuum* (i.e., compact, connected Hausdorff space) in  $E^3$  movable, we present an example of a locally connected, non-movable continuum with connected complement in  $E^3$ . (This answers the second part of Borsuk’s Problem 5.5 in [2].)

A compactum  $X$  is *movable* if for some (and hence for every) embedding  $X \subset Q$  (= the Hilbert cube), the following holds: Each neighborhood  $U$  of  $X$  contains a neighborhood  $V$  of  $X$  such that for each neighborhood  $W$  of  $X$ , the final stage of some homotopy of  $V$  in  $U$  throws  $V$  into  $W$ . Of course, it can be shown that if  $X$  lies in a nice space, such as a manifold  $M$ , then  $X$  is movable by the preceding definition if and only if the corresponding movability statement holds for  $X$  with respect to its neighborhoods in  $M$ . Our example is constructed from a 3-cell by an infinite sequence of tunneling operations. (See Figure 2: any resemblance to a Christmas tree is coincidental.)

While the example itself is easy to describe, our proof of its non-movability seems rather elaborate. Perhaps simpler proofs and/or examples exist. We rely heavily

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on the techniques and concepts of W. Haken ([3], [4]) and F. Waldhausen ([13]). The reader must also be willing to accept omegatators (see our Section 2 and references [6] and [12]) and their elementary properties.

**2. Preliminaries.** The next few sections contain our most important definitions, notations, and conventions.

All of our mappings, manifolds, submanifolds, etc., are to be piecewise-linear. A "manifold" is connected. A 2-manifold  $F$  in a 3-manifold  $M^3$  is usually *properly embedded*, i.e.,  $\partial F = F \cap \partial M$  (where " $\partial$ " denotes boundary of a manifold), and 2-sided in the sense of having a collar neighborhood  $F \times [-1, 1]$  each of whose levels  $F \times \{t\}$  is properly embedded. (In such notation,  $F$  is always identified with  $F \times \{0\}$ .) We let  $\Delta^n$  denote an  $n$ -simplex. A piecewise-linear homeomorph of  $\Delta^n$  is an  $n$ -cell; a piecewise-linear homeomorph of  $S^n = \partial \Delta^{n+1}$  is an  $n$ -sphere.  $E^n$  denotes Euclidean  $n$ -space. A *cube-with-handles of genus  $n$*  is a 3-manifold piecewise-linearly homeomorphic to the regular neighborhood in  $E^3$  of a finite, connected graph of Euler characteristic  $1-n$ . The *disk-sum* of two oriented 3-manifolds  $M_1, M_2$  with nonempty boundary is the oriented 3-manifold obtained by pasting  $M_1, M_2$  together via an orientation-reversing homeomorphism between 2-cells  $D_1, D_2$ , where  $D_i \subset \partial M_i$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ .

A disjoint collection ("system")  $\{F_i\}$  of 2-manifolds in the 3-manifold  $M^3$  is *compressible* in  $M^3$  if for some 2-cell  $D \subset M^3$ ,  $D \cap \bigcup F_i = \partial D$  and  $\partial D$  bounds no 2-cell in  $\bigcup F_i$ . Otherwise, the system is *incompressible* in  $M^3$ .  $M^3$  is *boundary-irreducible* if  $\partial M^3$  is incompressible in  $M^3$ . We say that  $M^3$  is *irreducible* if each 2-sphere in  $M^3$  bounds a 3-cell in  $M^3$ . The properly embedded system  $\{F_i\}$  is *boundary-compressible* in  $M^3$  if some component of some  $\partial F_i$  bounds a 2-cell in  $\partial M^3$ , or if for some 2-cell  $D \subset M^3$ ,  $D \cap \bigcup F_i$  is an arc  $A \subset \partial D$  that fails to cut off a 2-cell in  $\bigcup F_i$ , with  $(\partial D) - A \subset \partial M^3$ , and with  $(\partial D) \cap \bigcup \partial F_i$  consisting of exactly two points. Otherwise, the system is *boundary-incompressible*.

If  $G$  is a group and  $a, b \in G$ ,  $[a, b]$  denotes the *commutator*  $a^{-1}b^{-1}ab$  of  $a$  and  $b$ . For nonempty subsets  $A, B$  of  $G$   $\langle A, B \rangle$  denotes that subgroup of  $G$  generated by the set of all commutators  $[a, b]$ , for  $a \in A, b \in B$ . The smallest normal subgroup of  $G$  containing  $A$  is denoted  $\langle A, G \rangle$ . We let  $G_m$  denote the  $m$ th term in the *lower central series* of  $G$ . That is,  $G_1 = G, G_2 = [G_1, G]$  (the *commutator subgroup*), and in general  $G_{m+1} = [G_m, G]$  for  $m \geq 1$ . By  $G_\omega$  we mean  $\bigcap_{m \geq 1} G_m$  (the *omegatorator subgroup*). Each  $G_m$  is normal in  $G$ , for  $m \leq \omega$ . A basic fact we use is that  $G_\omega = 1$  for each free group  $G$  (see pp. 108-109 of [9]).

Of course, our groups are really fundamental groups of arcwise connected spaces  $M$ . A *loop* in  $M$  is a mapping  $f: S^1 \rightarrow M$ . (A "mapping" is always continuous.) A *free homotopy* between loops is a homotopy that may not fix the basepoint. A loop in  $M$  determines a conjugate class of elements in the fundamental group  $\pi_1(M)$ , and it makes sense to consider whether the  $\pi_1$ -class of a loop belongs to a given normal subgroup of  $\pi_1(M)$ . To say that a loop in  $M$  is an *omegatorator* in  $M$  (where  $M$  is an arcwise connected space) means that the  $\pi_1$ -class of the loop belongs to  $\pi_1(M)_\omega$ .

We sometimes write  $\langle J, \pi_1(M^3) \rangle$  when  $J$  is a 1-sphere (or *simple closed curve*) in a 3-manifold  $M^3$ , to mean the smallest normal subgroup of  $\pi_1(M^3)$  containing the  $\pi_1$ -class of a loop corresponding to  $J$ . A *2-handle* is a 3-cell with a product structure as  $\Delta^2 \times [-1, 1]$ . To attach a 2-handle *along* a simple closed curve  $J \subset \partial M^3$ , we paste the 2-handle onto  $M^3$  via a homeomorphism of  $(\partial \Delta^2) \times [-1, 1]$  with a regular neighborhood of  $J$  in  $\partial M^3$ . Finally,  $Z$  denotes the infinite cyclic group;  $*$  denotes free product;  $\approx$  symbolizes homeomorphism of spaces; and  $\cong$  symbolizes isomorphism of groups.

**3. The continuum  $X$ .** Our continuum  $X$  will be defined as the intersection of a nested sequence  $M(1) \supset M(2) \supset \dots$  in  $E^3$  of compact 3-manifolds with connected boundary. Let  $M(1)$  be the compact 3-manifold with connected boundary of genus two shown in Figure 1. This figure shows a 3-cell  $T(0)$  and two linked, "spanning"

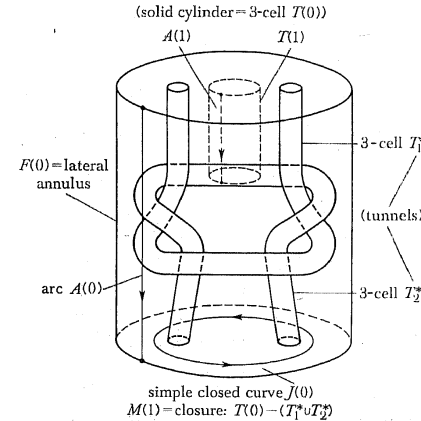


Fig. 1

tunnels (3-cells)  $T_1^*$  and  $T_2^*$ . The closure of  $T(0) - (T_1^* \cup T_2^*)$  is  $M(1)$ . It is shown in [15] that  $\pi_1(M(1))$  is not a free group. (In fact, as shown algebraically in [15] and in Section 3 of [6], the simple closed curve  $J(0)$  represents a non-trivial omegatorator in  $M(1)$ . The fact that  $J(0)$  represents an omegatorator can also be seen geometrically from Figure 1, where  $J(0)$  bounds a punctured torus in  $M(1)$ : There is a non-separating simple closed curve in this punctured torus that is freely homotopic in  $M(1)$  to  $J(0)$ . By induction, it can be seen that  $J(0)$  represents an element belonging to each term in the lower central series of  $\pi_1(M(1))$ .)

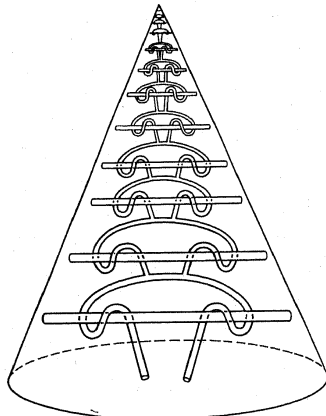
Some homeomorphism  $h$  of  $E^3$  onto  $E^3$  reduces to the identity outside a 3-cell containing  $T(0)$ , throws the 3-cell  $T(0)$  onto the 3-cell  $T(1)$ , throws the oriented arc  $A(0)$  onto the oriented arc  $A(1)$ , and throws the annulus  $F(0)$  onto the closure

of  $\partial(T(1)) - \partial(M(1))$ . We can also choose  $h$  so that the diameter of  $h^n(T(0))$  goes to zero as  $n$  goes to infinity. (We denote the  $n$ -fold composition of  $h$  by  $h^n$ .)

If  $M(n-1)$  has been defined for some  $n \geq 2$ , we put  $M(n)$  equal to the closure of

$$M(n-1) - h^{n-1}(T_1^* \cup T_2^*).$$

Finally, let  $X = \bigcap_{n=1}^{\infty} M(n)$  (see Fig. 2). It is clear that  $X$  is a locally connected continuum, and that  $E^3 - X$  is connected. Note that  $X$  minus a point is a 3-manifold-with boundary.



$X$  is: the solid right circular cone minus a network of tunnels

Fig. 2

We introduce some notation for later use.  $M(n)$  contains some special annuli  $F(0), \dots, F(n-1)$  (defined by Figure 1 and by  $F(i) = h^i(F(0))$  for  $i > 0$ ), some special arcs  $A(0), \dots, A(n-1)$  (defined by Figure 1 and by  $A(i) = h^i(A(0))$  for  $i > 0$ ), and some special closed curves  $J(0), \dots, J(n-1)$  (defined by Figure 1 and by  $J(i) = h^i(J(0))$  for  $i > 0$ ). We take  $M_i(n)$  to be the closure of:  $M(n)$  minus a thin regular neighborhood of  $A(i)$  in  $M(n)$  for  $1 \leq i \leq n-1$ .

**4.  $X$  is not movable.** We first collect some facts for our proof.

**FACT 1.**  $M(n)$  is irreducible.

*Proof.*  $M(n)$  is irreducible because  $E^3$  is irreducible and  $\partial M(n)$  is connected.

**FACT 2.** The annuli  $F(1), \dots, F(n-1)$  are disjoint and properly embedded in  $M(n)$ . Further,  $F(i)$  splits  $M(n)$  into a cube-with-handles  $H_i$  of genus  $2i+1$  and a 3-submanifold  $B_i(n)$  homeomorphic to  $M(n-i)$ . Hence,  $M_i(n)$  is homeomorphic to the disk-sum of  $H_i$  and  $B_i(n)$ .

*Proof.* These statements are easy to verify geometrically by drawing a few diagrams. We leave them to the reader.

**FACT 3.**  $J(0)$  is a non-trivial omegator in  $M(n)$  for each  $n \geq 1$ . Hence  $\pi_1(M(n))$  is not free. Further, there is a homomorphism of  $\pi_1(M(n))$  onto a free group of rank  $2n$  whose kernel is precisely

$$\langle J(0), \pi_1(M(n)) \rangle = \pi_1(M(n))_{\omega}.$$

*Proof.* It has been remarked earlier (using [15]) that  $J(0)$  is a non-trivial omegator in  $M(1)$ . The neatest way to exhibit the desired homomorphism from  $\pi_1(M(n))$  onto a free group of rank  $2n$  is by means of a geometric construction. Namely, attach a 2-handle to  $\partial M(n)$  along  $J(0)$  and observe that the resulting 3-manifold has a fundamental group that is free of rank  $2n$ . We leave this pleasant sketching exercise to the reader. (Figure 3 may help: it shows  $M(2)$  from a slightly different perspective.) The homomorphism described has the correct kernel (i. e., the left side of the displayed equation above), by van Kampen's theorem. By [6] Theorem 1, this kernel is also  $\pi_1(M(n))_{\omega}$ . Hence,  $J(0)$  is an omegator in  $M(n)$ .

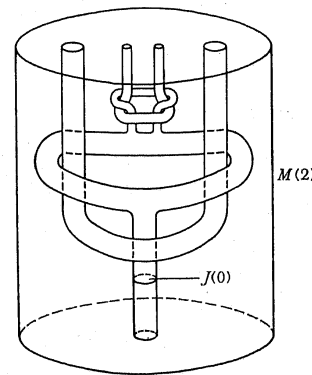


Fig. 3

To prove inductively that  $J(0)$  is not contractible in  $M(n)$ , we need only observe that some retraction

$$M(n) \rightarrow B_1(n) \approx M(n-1)$$

takes  $J(0)$  homeomorphically to  $J(1)$ . (In fact  $H_1$ , a cube-with-handles of genus 3, retracts onto  $F(1)$  in the desired way since  $J(1)$  generates a direct summand in the integral first homology of  $H_1$ .)

**FACT 4.** The system of surfaces  $F(1), \dots, F(n-1)$  is incompressible and boundary-incompressible in  $M(n)$ .

Proof. To show incompressibility, it must be proven that there is no 2-cell  $D \subset M(n)$  with  $D \cap \bigcup F(j) = \partial D$ , a non-contractible simple closed curve in some  $F(i)$ . Any such 2-cell  $D$  would lie entirely in  $H_i$  or entirely in  $B_i(n)$ . It would then follow that attaching a 2-handle to  $\partial H_i$  (respectively,  $\partial B_i(n)$ ) along  $\partial D$  would not affect its fundamental group. But (as can be seen geometrically) the result of attaching a 2-handle in this way to  $\partial H_i$  (respectively,  $\partial B_i(n)$ ) is a 3-manifold homeomorphic to  $M(i)$  (respectively, a 3-manifold with fundamental group free of rank  $2(n-i)$ ). Since (Fact 3) the fundamental group of  $M(j)$  is never free, no such 2-cell  $D$  can exist.

To show boundary-incompressibility of this system of annuli, it must first be noted that no component of any  $\partial F(i)$  bounds a 2-cell in  $\partial M(n)$ . This is clear by examining the two pieces into which such a component separates  $\partial M(n)$ . (Neither is a 2-cell.)

Second, it must be shown that there is no 2-cell  $D \subset M(n)$  with  $D \cap \bigcup F_j$  equal to an arc  $A \subset \partial D$  that is a spanning arc of some  $F(i)$ , with  $(\partial D) - A \subset \partial M(n)$ , and with  $(\partial D) \cap \bigcup \partial F_j$  consisting of exactly two points. (We assume that  $A$  spans  $F(i)$ , since if  $\partial A$  is in one component of  $\partial F(i)$ , then the closure of one component of  $F(i) - A$  is a 2-cell.) Such a 2-cell  $D$  would be properly embedded in  $H_i$  or properly embedded in  $B_i(n)$ . Then, the effect of attaching a 2-handle to  $\partial H_i$  (respectively,  $\partial B_i(n)$ ) along a component of  $\partial F(i)$  would be to replace  $H_i$  (respectively,  $B_i(n)$ ) by a 3-manifold  $R^3$  homeomorphic to  $H_i$ , cut along  $D$  (respectively,  $B_i(n)$  cut along  $D$ .) But (considering the first possibility:  $D \subset H_i$ )  $\pi_1(H_i)$  is free, so  $\pi_1(R^3)$  would be free. This is impossible, since it is clear geometrically that a 2-handle can be attached to  $\partial H_i$  along a component of  $\partial F(i)$  so as to yield  $M(i)$ . Similarly, if it were true that  $D \subset B_i(n)$  we would note that  $\pi_1(B_i(n))$  is not free, so  $\pi_1(R^3)$  would not be free. But this is absurd, since it is clear geometrically that a 2-handle can be attached to  $\partial B_i(n)$  along a component of  $\partial F(i)$  so as to yield a 3-manifold with free fundamental group. We conclude that the system of surfaces is boundary-incompressible.

FACT 5.  $M(n)$  is boundary-irreducible.

Proof. It must be shown that for each properly embedded 2-cell  $D \subset M(n)$ ,  $\partial D$  is contractible in  $\partial M(n)$ . We put  $D$  in general position with respect to  $\bigcup_{j=1}^{n-1} F(j)$  and induct on  $k$ , the number of components of

$$D \cap \bigcup_{j=1}^{n-1} F(j).$$

If  $k = 0$ , then  $D$  is properly embedded either in  $B_{n-1}(n) \approx M(1)$ , or in some component of  $M(n) - \bigcup F(j)$  homeomorphic to  $H_1$  (a cube-with-handles of genus 3). In either case, we could conclude that  $M(1)$  is boundary-reducible. (In the second case, attach a 2-handle to the component of  $M(n) - \bigcup F(j)$  along a component of  $\partial F(i)$  to see this.)

From the boundary-reducibility of  $M(1)$ , it would follow that  $M(1)$  is the disk-sum of two compact 3-manifolds, each bounded by a torus. (Each is a "cube-with-

a-possibly-knotted-hole".) Each such 3-manifold is well-known (see [5; Theorem 5]) to admit a mapping onto a cube-with-handles of genus 1 that induces a homeomorphism between their boundaries. (An equivalent concept is that of "boundary-retractability", see [6].) From this it would follow that  $M(1)$  admits such a mapping onto a cube-with-handles of genus two. This is known to be false (see [8] and [6]).

If  $k > 0$ , we construct an isotopy of  $M(n)$  onto  $M(n)$  that moves  $D$  off  $\bigcup F(j)$ . This is a routine argument: Use incompressibility of the  $F(j)$ 's and irreducibility of  $M(n)$  to remove any simple closed curves in  $D \cap \bigcup F(j)$ ; use boundary-incompressibility of the system of  $F(j)$ 's, plus irreducibility of  $M(n)$ , plus the " $k = 0$ " case above, to remove any arcs in this intersection. We omit the details.

FACT 6. The loop  $J(0)$  is not freely homotopic in  $M(1)$  to an omegator in  $M_i(n)$ , for  $n \geq 1$  and  $1 \leq i \leq n-1$ .

Proof. By Fact 2,  $M_i(n)$  is topologically the disk-sum of a cube-with-handles of genus  $(2i+1)$  and a 3-manifold  $B_i(n)$ . Further, some homeomorphism of  $B_i(n)$  onto  $M(n-i)$  takes  $J(i)$  onto  $J(0)$ . By Fact 3 and the existence of this homeomorphism, some homomorphism of  $\pi_1(B_i(n))$  onto a free group of rank  $2(n-i)$  has kernel

$$\langle J(i), \pi_1(B_i(n)) \rangle.$$

Hence, some homomorphism of

$$\pi_1(M_i(n)) \cong \pi_1(B_i(n)) * (\text{free group of rank } 2i+1)$$

onto a free group of rank  $2n+1$  has kernel

$$\langle J(i), \pi_1(M_i(n)) \rangle.$$

By [6] Theorem 1,

$$\langle J(i), \pi_1(M_i(n)) \rangle = \pi_1(M_i(n))_\omega.$$

The last displayed equation, plus the fact that  $J(i)$  lies in a 3-cell in  $M(1)$ , imply that the inclusion  $M_i(n) \rightarrow M(1)$  induces a  $\pi_1$ -homomorphism that maps  $\pi_1(M_i(n))_\omega$  trivially. The desired conclusion now follows from Fact 3.

FACT 7. For  $n \geq 1$  and  $1 \leq i < j \leq n-1$ , no non-zero multiple of  $J(i)$  homotopes in  $M(n)$  into  $F(j)$ .

Proof. Attach a 2-handle to  $M(n)$  along  $J(j)$  and note that some polyhedral, properly embedded 2-cell in the resulting 3-manifold splits it into two pieces. One of these admits a homeomorphism onto  $M(j)$  that reduces to the identity on  $F(i)$ . Hence, by Fact 4 the conjugate class of elements in  $\pi_1(M(n))$  determined by a multiple of  $J(i)$  meets

$$\langle J(j), \pi_1(M(n)) \rangle$$

trivially. This more than proves the above claim.

THEOREM. The continuum  $X$  described above is not movable.

Proof. Enlarge each  $M(n)$  slightly by adding a collar to its boundary, to obtain a compact, polyhedral neighborhood  $U(n)$  of  $X$ , so that each

$$U(n) \subset \text{Int } U(n-1).$$

and yet  $X = \bigcap_{n=1}^{\infty} U(n)$ . In particular,  $U(n)$  is homeomorphic to  $M(n)$ .  $U(n)$  contains some special annuli, arcs, etc. which correspond to those already described in  $M(n)$ . We use the same notation for these corresponding objects in  $U(n)$ , even though they are slightly different.

If  $X$  were movable, there would be a fixed integer  $n \geq 1$  such that for each integer  $k \geq 0$ , some mapping  $f_k$  makes the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} U(n) & \xrightarrow{f_k} & U(n+k) \\ & \searrow & \downarrow \\ & & U(1) \end{array}$$

homotopy-commutative. (The unlabeled arrows are inclusions.) We show that each choice of  $n$  must fail for sufficiently large  $k$ .

Let  $n \geq 1$  be given. Let  $N$  be a finiteness number for  $U(n)$ . That is, each disjoint collection of  $N$  or more compact, properly embedded, incompressible and boundary-incompressible 2-manifolds in  $U(n)$  contains a pair of 2-manifolds that are topologically parallel in  $U(n)$ . (See [3] and [4] for the proof that  $N$  exists. Cf. also [14].) We claim that no mapping  $f$  makes the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} U(n) & \xrightarrow{f} & U(n+N) \\ & \searrow & \downarrow \\ & & U(1) \end{array}$$

homotopy-commutative.

If there were such an  $f$ , it could be assumed (possibly after a homotopy) that  $f$  is transverse with respect to the system of surfaces

$$F = \{F(1), \dots, F(n+N-1)\}$$

in  $U(n+N)$ , and that each component of  $f^{-1}(F)$  is properly embedded, incompressible and boundary-incompressible in  $U(n)$ . (We are using Fact 1 and the first part of Fact 4 in  $U(n+N)$ , plus Fact 5 in  $U(n)$ , and some standard constructions; see [13] Proposition, p. 60.) We claim that for some  $j$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq n+N-1$ , and for each component  $S$  (if there are any) of  $f^{-1}(F(j))$ , the homomorphism of fundamental groups induced by  $f$

$$\pi_1(S) \rightarrow \pi_1(F(j)),$$

is trivial.

For, if this claim is false there is for each  $j$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq n+N-1$ , a component  $S_j$  of  $f^{-1}(F(j))$  contradicting our assertion. Since  $n+N-1 \geq N$ , some  $S_i$  is topologically parallel to some  $S_j$  in  $U(n)$ . By the way  $S_i$  was chosen, some loop  $k$  in  $S_i$  is mapped by  $f$  to a non-contractible loop in  $F(i)$ . Since  $S_i$  is parallel to  $S_j$  in  $U(n)$ ,  $k$  freely

homotopes in  $U(n)$  to a loop in  $S_j$ . Applying  $f$  to this homotopy in  $U(n)$  yields a homotopy in  $U(n+N)$  that contradicts Fact 7. The claim follows.

Suppose  $j$  is such that for each component  $S$  (if any) of  $f^{-1}(F(j))$ , the induced homomorphism

$$\pi_1(S) \rightarrow \pi_1(F(j))$$

is trivial. Then  $f$  can be homotoped to a new map (still called  $f$ ) differing from the old only in tight collar neighborhoods of each component of  $f^{-1}(F(j))$ , and such that the improved  $f$  maps a collar neighborhood of each component of  $f^{-1}(F(j))$  to an arc piercing  $F(j)$  at a single point in  $F(j) - A(j)$ . Thus,  $f$  has been replaced by a homotopic map of  $U(n)$  into the subset

$$U(n+N) - A(j) \approx M_j(n+N)$$

of  $U(n+N)$ . Hence, by Fact 3,  $f(J(0))$  represents an omegator in  $U(n+N) - A(j)$ . By Fact 6,  $J(0)$  cannot be homotopic in  $U(1)$  to  $f(J(0))$ . Hence, our diagram is not homotopy-commutative. The proof is complete.

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