

Hereditarily non-weakly chainable continua in products of plane continua

by

Alejandro Illanes (México, D.F., and Lubbock, TX)

Abstract. We prove that the product of any two non-degenerate plane continua contains a non-degenerate hereditarily non-weakly chainable continuum. Consequently, in the product of two pseudo-arcs, there exists a non-degenerate subcontinuum containing no pseudo-arc. This answers a question by D. P. Bellamy.

1. Introduction. The class \mathcal{K} of continua containing only singletons as continuous images of the pseudo-arc is much smaller than the class of continua containing no arcs. Nevertheless, we show that the product of any two non-degenerate plane continua contains a non-degenerate member of \mathcal{K} . The class \mathcal{K} is also the class of continua containing only singletons as weakly chainable subcontinua (see [8] and [15]).

Throughout this paper the letter P will denote the pseudo-arc.

The pseudo-arc is one of the most intriguing continua and is related to some of the most important problems in continuum theory. Very recently [11], it has been shown that there are only three non-degenerate homogeneous continua in the plane, namely: the circumference, the pseudo-arc and the circle of pseudo-arcs. Moreover, the pseudo-arc is hereditarily equivalent, that is: P is homeomorphic to each of its non-degenerate subcontinua, and it is an open problem to determine if there exists another hereditarily equivalent continuum besides the arc and the pseudo-arc. For information about the pseudo-arc, the reader can see the excellent survey [16].

The product $P \times P$ also has several singular properties and there are a number of related interesting open problems:

(a) Each autohomeomorphism of $P \times P$ is a product of homeomorphisms or a product of homeomorphisms followed by a permutation of the coor-

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dinates [4]. This result has been extended in two directions: to any power (finite or countable) of P [3], and to embeddings from $P \times P$ into $P \times P$ [6]. It is not known if the result for embeddings can be extended to P^n for $n \geq 3$.

(b) It is not known if for each map $f : P \times P \rightarrow P$, either f is constant on each fiber of the form $P \times \{x\}$, or f is constant on each fiber of the form $\{x\} \times P$.

(c) The product $P \times P$ is aposyndetic but the intersection of each pair of subcontinua of $P \times P$, with non-empty interior, is non-empty [9].

(d) Each subcontinuum M of $P \times P$ with onto projections on each of the factors has arbitrarily small open connected neighborhoods in $P \times P$. This means that, for each open subset U of $P \times P$ with $M \subset U$, there is an open connected subset V of $P \times P$ such that $M \subset V \subset U$ [5] (see [12] and [13] for more information about this topic).

(e) Does any retraction $r : P \times P \rightarrow \Delta = \{(x, x) \in P \times P : x \in P\}$ have the form of either $r(x, y) = (x, x)$ for all (x, y) , or $r(x, y) = (y, y)$ for all (x, y) ? [17, Question 20].

(f) Wayne I. Lewis has announced that any hereditarily indecomposable plane continuum can be embedded in $P \times P$, and in fact, any hereditarily indecomposable continuum in \mathbb{R}^n can be embedded in P^n .

(g) The product $P \times P$ has been useful for constructing homogeneous continua with interesting decomposition properties [19], [20].

It is not easy to construct non-obvious continua inside $P \times P$. So, David P. Bellamy has asked if, for each $n \in \mathbb{N}$, every non-degenerate subcontinuum of P^n contains a pseudo-arc [2, Question 18]. This question was the main motivation for this paper. We answer Bellamy's question by showing that each product of two non-degenerate plane continua contains a non-degenerate hereditarily non-weakly chainable subcontinuum. In particular, there exists a non-degenerate subcontinuum of $P \times P$ containing no homeomorphic copies of P .

In this paper, a *continuum* is a non-empty compact connected metric space. Recall that the pseudo-arc is the only non-degenerate chainable and hereditarily indecomposable continuum. By [8] and [15], we can define a continuum X to be *weakly chainable* if it is the continuous image of P ; note that being weakly chainable is a topological invariant property. A continuum X is *hereditarily non-weakly chainable* if it belongs to the class \mathcal{K} , in other words: the only weakly chainable subcontinua of X are the one-point sets.

2. An auxiliary continuum. A *ray* is a space homeomorphic to $[0, \infty)$. A *map* is a continuous function. Let S^1 be the unit circle, centered at the origin, in the Euclidean plane \mathbb{R}^2 . Let $e : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow S^1$ be the exponential map given by $e(t) = (\cos 2\pi t, \sin 2\pi t)$.

Let

$$\begin{aligned} R_1 &= \{(1 + 1/t)e(t) \in \mathbb{R}^2 : t \in [1, \infty)\}, \\ R_2 &= \{(1 + 1/t)e(t + 1/2) \in \mathbb{R}^2 : t \in [1, \infty)\}, \\ Y &= R_1 \cup S^1 \cup R_2 \subset [-2, 2]^2. \end{aligned}$$

Then Y is the union of two compactifications of $[0, \infty)$ having S^1 as the remainder. Notice that $R_1 \cap R_2 = \emptyset$. The points $2e(0) = (2, 0)$ and $2e(1/2) = (-2, 0)$ will be called the *end points* of Y .

Given a continuum W , a map $f : W \rightarrow S^1$ can be lifted if there exists a map $h : W \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ such that $f = e \circ h$. By [7, Théorème 1], f can be lifted if and only if f is homotopic to a constant map. The continuum W has *property (b)* provided that each map $f : W \rightarrow S^1$ can be lifted (or f is homotopic to a constant map). Recall that W is *chainable* provided that for each $\varepsilon > 0$ there exists a finite open cover $\mathcal{U} = \{U_1, \dots, U_n\}$ of W such that $U_i \cap U_j \neq \emptyset$ if and only if $|i - j| \leq 1$ and $\text{diam}(U_i) < \varepsilon$ for each $i \in \{1, \dots, n\}$. It is easy to show that chainable continua have *property (b)*.

LEMMA 2.1. *If W is a continuum with property (b), then for each map $f : W \rightarrow Y_1 = R_1 \cup S^1$, either $f(W) \subset R_1$ or $f(W) \subset S^1$.*

Proof. Suppose that $f(W) \cap R_1 \neq \emptyset$. It suffices to show $f(W) \subset R_1$. Fix an $x_0 \in W$ with $f(x_0) \in R_1$, and let $A = f^{-1}(R_1)$ and $B = f^{-1}(S^1)$. Define $\alpha(t) = 1 + 1/t$ for $t \geq 1$ and $\alpha(t) = 3 - t$ for $t < 1$, and note $\alpha(t) \rightarrow \infty$ as $t \rightarrow -\infty$, and $\alpha : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow (1, \infty)$ is a homeomorphism. Expand the ray R_1 to the double ray $R_0 = \{\alpha(t)e(t) \in \mathbb{R}^2 : t \in \mathbb{R}\}$. Note that the map $\beta : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow R_0$ given by $\beta(t) = \alpha(t)e(t)$ is a homeomorphism.

Let $r : Y_1 \rightarrow S^1$ be the natural retraction $r(z) = z/|z|$. Since W has *property (b)*, there exists a map $h : W \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ such that $r \circ f = e \circ h$. Note that this equality holds for any map $h_k(t) = h(t) + k$, where k is an integer.

Define $g : A \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ by $g(x) = \beta^{-1}(f(x)) - h(x)$. Then g is continuous. Given $x \in A$, let $t = \beta^{-1}(f(x))$. Then

$$e(g(x)) = \frac{e(t)}{e(h(x))} = \frac{r(\beta(t))}{e(h(x))} = 1.$$

Hence, g takes only integer values. Thus, without loss of generality, we assume that $g(x_0) = 0$, or equivalently $f(x_0) = \beta(h(x_0))$.

Let $A_0 = g^{-1}(0)$ and $A_1 = A - A_0$. Then $A = A_0 \cup A_1$, $A_1 = g^{-1}(\{k : k \text{ is an integer and } k \neq 0\})$, and A_0 and A_1 are closed in A . Thus, $A_1 \cup B$ is closed in W .

Note that the set $\beta(h(W))$ is a subcontinuum of R_0 having positive distance from S^1 , and $f(A_0) \subset \beta(h(W))$. Thus A_0 is closed in A and has no limit points in B . Therefore, A_0 is closed in W . Thus A_0 and $A_1 \cup B$ are closed disjoint subsets of W and $W = A_0 \cup (A_1 \cup B)$. We have $A_0 \neq \emptyset$

because $x_0 \in A_0$. Thus $A_1 \cup B = \emptyset$ by the connectedness of W . Hence $f(W) \subset R_1$. ■

LEMMA 2.2. *If W is a continuum with property (b), then for each map $f : W \rightarrow Y$ there exists $i \in \{1, 2\}$ such that $f(W) \subset S^1 \cup R_i$.*

Proof. Consider the retraction $r : Y \rightarrow S^1 \cup R_1$ given by $r(z) = z/|z|$ if $z \in R_2$, and $r(z) = z$ if $z \notin R_2$. By Lemma 2.1, either $r(f(W)) \subset R_1$ or $r(f(W)) \subset S^1$. In the first case we are done. In the second case, $f(W) \cap R_1 = \emptyset$, so $f(W) \subset S^1 \cup R_2$. ■

Now we will construct a continuum Z in $[0, 1]^2$ such that each of its subcontinua contains subcontinua that “resemble” Y . We will use a technique of Z. Janiszewski who constructed a hereditarily decomposable plane continuum without arcs. Janiszewski’s technique has also been used in [10], and it is different from the one in [21].

We start by taking the simple closed curve $Z_1 = S^1 \subset [-1, 1]^2$. Choose a countable dense subset $D_1 = \{a_1, a_2, \dots\}$ of Z_1 .

Construct Z_2 by blowing up each a_i to a simple closed curve S_i . This can be done by induction as follows. Choose a subarc J of Z_1 with end points p and q such that $a_1 \in J - \{p, q\}$. Replace J by a copy Y_1 of Y in such a way that the end points of Y_1 are the points p and q , and $Y_1 \cap (Z_1 - J) = \emptyset$. Let $Q_1 = Y_1 \cup (Z_1 - J)$ and let S_1 be the simple closed curve contained in Y_1 ; we assume that $\text{diam}(S_1) < 1/2$. We will say that Q_1 is obtained from Z_1 by blowing up the point a_1 to a simple closed curve S_1 . Notice that the continuum obtained from Q_1 by shrinking S_1 to a point is a simple closed curve. Now construct the continuum Q_2 by blowing up the point in Q_1 that corresponds to a_2 to a simple closed curve S_2 with $\text{diam}(S_2) < 1/2^2$. Continue inductively until all points a_i have been blown up to simple closed curves S_i with $\text{diam}(S_i) < 1/2^i$, to finally obtain a continuum Z_2 . Applying the theorem of Anderson–Choquet [1, Theorem 1] it can be shown that this can be done in such a way that Z_2 is embeddable in $[0, 1]^2$. We denote by $f_1 : Z_2 \rightarrow Z_1$ the map that shrinks each S_i into the point a_i . Then f_1 is a monotone map.

In the second step construct a continuum Z_3 from Z_2 in such a way that each simple closed curve S_i is replaced by a copy of Z_2 . That is, in each S_i choose a countable dense subset D_i and blow up each of its points to a simple closed curve. In this way, Z_3 contains countably many disjoint copies of Z_2 , and we denote by $f_2 : Z_3 \rightarrow Z_2$ the map that shrinks to a point each of the newly created simple closed curves. Notice that f_2 is a monotone map.

Inductively, suppose that Z_n has been constructed. Construct Z_{n+1} by replacing each simple closed curve in Z_n by a topological copy of Z_2 . Let $f_n : Z_{n+1} \rightarrow Z_n$ denote the monotone map that shrinks to a point each of the newly created simple closed curves.

Define

$$Z = \varprojlim \{Z_n, f_n\} = \left\{ (z_1, z_2, \dots) \in \prod Z_n : z_i = f_i(z_{i+1}) \text{ for each } i \in \mathbb{N} \right\}.$$

By the theorem of Anderson–Choquet, Z can be embedded in $[0, 1]^2$. We may assume that $\{(0, 0), (1, 1)\} \subset Z$. Thus, we will denote the points of Z in two ways, namely, as points in $[0, 1]^2$ and as sequences of points in $\prod Z_n$.

Now, we prove the most important property of Z .

LEMMA 2.3. *The continuum Z is hereditarily non-weakly chainable.*

Proof. Suppose to the contrary that there exists a non-degenerate subcontinuum Q_0 of Z such that Q_0 is weakly chainable. Let $g : P \rightarrow Q_0$ be an onto mapping.

Recall that $Z = \varprojlim Z_n \subset \prod Z_n$. For each $m \in \mathbb{N}$, let $\rho_m : \prod Z_n \rightarrow Z_m$ be the projection on the m th coordinate. Since Q_0 is non-degenerate, we can define $m = \min\{i \in \mathbb{N} : \rho_i(Q_0) \text{ is non-degenerate}\}$. If $m > 1$, since $\rho_{m-1}(Q_0)$ is degenerate, $\rho_m(Q_0)$ is contained in one of the simple closed curves that are constructed in Z_m by blowing up a point in Z_{m-1} .

Therefore, $\rho_m(Q_0)$ is contained in one simple closed curve $S \subset Z_m$. Notice that this is also true in the case $m = 1$.

Let $C(P)$ denote the hyperspace of subcontinua of P , endowed with the Hausdorff metric.

Fix a point $p_0 \in P$. Take a map $\sigma : [0, 1] \rightarrow C(P)$ such that $\sigma(0) = \{p_0\}$, $\sigma(1) = P$ and if $0 \leq s < t \leq 1$, then $\sigma(s) \subset \sigma(t)$ [14, Theorem 14.6]. Since $\rho_m(g(\sigma(0)))$ is a one-point set and $\rho_m(g(\sigma(1))) = \rho_m(g(P)) = \rho_m(Q_0)$ is a non-degenerate subcontinuum of S , there exists $t_0 \in [0, 1]$ such that $\rho_m(g(\sigma(t_0)))$ is a subarc of S . Let $Q_1 = \sigma(t_0)$. Then $\rho_m(g(Q_1))$ is a subarc of S , and Q_1 is a non-degenerate subcontinuum of P . Hence, Q_1 is also homeomorphic to P .

Let $J = \rho_m(g(Q_1))$. In the construction of Z_{m+1} we replaced S by a topological copy of Z_2 . In particular, we took a countable dense subset $D = \{x_1, x_2, \dots\}$ of J and we blew up each x_i to a simple closed curve R_i , to obtain the continuum $f_m^{-1}(J)$. We may assume that x_1 is not an end point of J . Then $J - \{x_1\} = M_2 \cup M_3$, where M_2 and M_3 are rays.

Let T be the quotient continuum obtained by shrinking to a point each of the simple closed curves R_2, R_3, \dots . Let $\psi : f_m^{-1}(J) \rightarrow T$ be the quotient map. Notice that T is homeomorphic to the continuum Y of Lemma 2.2, where R_1 corresponds to S^1 , and the rays R_1^* and R_2^* correspond to the rays $\psi(f_m^{-1}(M_1))$ and $\psi(f_m^{-1}(M_2))$.

Consider the map $\psi \circ \rho_{m+1} \circ g : Q_1 \rightarrow T$. Given a point $q \in Q_1$, let $u = (u_1, u_2, \dots) = g(q)$. Then $u_m = \rho_m(g(q)) \in J$, so $u_{m+1} \in f_m^{-1}(u_m) \in f_m^{-1}(J)$

and $u_{m+1} = \rho_{m+1}(g(q))$. Hence, we can apply ψ to the element $\rho_{m+1}(g(q))$. This proves that $\psi \circ \rho_{m+1} \circ g$ is well defined.

Take a point $v \in M_1 - D$. Since to construct Z_{n+1} , we did not blow up v , the set $f_m^{-1}(v)$ is a singleton, say $f_m^{-1}(v) = \{v_1\}$. Since $v \in J = \rho_m(g(Q_1))$, there exists a point $t = (t_1, t_2, \dots) \in g(Q_1)$ such that $v = t_m$. Since $f_m(t_{m+1}) = t_m$, we have $t_{m+1} = v_1$. Let $t = g(q_v)$, where $q_v \in Q_1$. Thus, $(\psi \circ \rho_{m+1} \circ g)(q_v) = \psi(\rho_{m+1}(t)) = \psi(v_1) \in \psi(f_m^{-1}(M_1))$. This proves that $(\psi \circ \rho_{m+1} \circ g)(Q_1)$ intersects the ray $\psi(f_m^{-1}(M_1))$. Similarly, $(\psi \circ \rho_{m+1} \circ g)(Q_1)$ intersects the ray $\psi(f_m^{-1}(M_2))$.

Therefore, Q_1 has property (b) and $\psi(\rho_{m+1}(g(Q_1)))$ intersects both rays of the continuum T . This contradicts 2.2 and completes the proof of Lemma 2.3. ■

3. A general construction. We will use the following version of the Mountain Climbing Theorem [18, Theorem 2].

LEMMA 3.1. *Suppose that $g, h : [0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]$ are piecewise linear maps such that $g(0) = 0 = h(0)$ and $g(1) = 1 = h(1)$. Then there exist piecewise linear maps $\alpha, \beta : [0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]$ such that $\alpha(0) = 0 = \beta(0)$, $\alpha(1) = 1 = \beta(1)$ and $g \circ \alpha = h \circ \beta$.*

In this section we consider subcontinua N_1 and N_2 of $[0, 1]^2$ such that $\{(0, 0), (1, 1)\} \subset N_1 \cap N_2$.

We consider an arbitrary continuum E in $[0, 1]^2$ such that $(0, 0), (1, 1) \in E$, although we will ultimately take E homeomorphic to Z .

We construct a subcontinuum X of $N_1 \times N_2$, depending on E , that will be a limit of continua.

Let H denote the Hausdorff metric in the hyperspace of subcontinua of $[0, 1]^2$.

For each $n \in \mathbb{N}$, take piecewise linear maps $g, h, k : [0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]^2$ such that $g(0) = h(0) = k(0) = (0, 0)$, $g(1) = h(1) = k(1) = (1, 1)$, $H(\text{Im } g, E) < 1/n$, $H(\text{Im } h, N_1) < 1/n$ and $H(\text{Im } k, N_2) < 1/n$. We write $h = (h_1, h_2)$, $g = (g_1, g_2)$ and $k = (k_1, k_2)$.

Since $g_1(0) = 0 = h_1(0)$ and $g_1(1) = 1 = h_1(1)$, by Lemma 3.1, there exist piecewise linear maps $\alpha, \beta : [0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]$ such that $\alpha(0) = 0 = \beta(0)$, $\alpha(1) = 1 = \beta(1)$ and $h_1 \circ \alpha = g_1 \circ \beta$.

We can apply Lemma 3.1 to the maps β and the identity in $[0, 1]$, so there exist piecewise linear maps $\gamma, \lambda : [0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]$ such that $\gamma(0) = 0 = \lambda(0)$, $\gamma(1) = 1 = \lambda(1)$ and $\beta \circ \gamma = \lambda$.

We can also apply Lemma 3.1 to the maps k_1 and $g_2 \circ \lambda$, so there exist piecewise linear maps $\delta, \eta : [0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]$ such that $\delta(0) = 0 = \eta(0)$, $\delta(1) = 1 = \eta(1)$ and $k_1 \circ \delta = g_2 \circ \lambda \circ \eta$.

Let $\varphi : [0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]^4$ be given by

$$\begin{aligned}\varphi &= (h_1 \circ \alpha \circ \gamma \circ \eta, h_2 \circ \alpha \circ \gamma \circ \eta, k_1 \circ \delta, k_2 \circ \delta) \\ &= (g_1 \circ \beta \circ \gamma \circ \eta, h_2 \circ \alpha \circ \gamma \circ \eta, g_2 \circ \lambda \circ \eta, k_2 \circ \delta) \\ &= (g_1 \circ \beta \circ \gamma \circ \eta, h_2 \circ \alpha \circ \gamma \circ \eta, g_2 \circ \beta \circ \gamma \circ \eta, k_2 \circ \delta).\end{aligned}$$

Let $X_n = \text{Im } \varphi$. Notice that X_n is a subcontinuum of $[0, 1]^4$.

Given $i, j \in \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ with $i \neq j$, define $\pi_{i,j} : [0, 1]^4 \rightarrow [0, 1]^2$ by

$$\pi_{i,j}(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4) = (x_i, x_j).$$

Then $H(\pi_{1,2}(X_n), N_1) = H(\text{Im}(\pi_{1,2} \circ \varphi), N_1) = H(\text{Im } h, N_1) < 1/n$. Thus, $H(\pi_{1,2}(X_n), N_1) < 1/n$. Similarly, $H(\pi_{3,4}(X_n), N_2) < 1/n$ and $H(\pi_{1,3}(X_n), E) < 1/n$.

By the compactness of the hyperspace of subcontinua of $[0, 1]^4$, there exist a subcontinuum X of $[0, 1]^4$ and a subsequence $\{X_{n_l}\}_{l=1}^\infty$ such that

$$X = \lim X_{n_l}.$$

By the continuity of the projections, $\pi_{1,2}(X) = N_1$, $\pi_{3,4}(X) = N_2$ and $\pi_{1,3}(X) = E$. Thus, $X \subset N_1 \times N_2$.

Now, we show the most important property of X .

LEMMA 3.2. *Suppose for every $i \in \{1, 2\}$ and $t \in [0, 1]$, $(\{t\} \times [0, 1]) \cap N_i$ is totally disconnected. Let Q be a non-degenerate subcontinuum of X . Then $\pi_{1,3}(Q)$ is a non-degenerate subcontinuum of E .*

Proof. Suppose to the contrary that $\pi_{1,3}(Q) = \{(x_1, x_3)\}$ for some $(x_1, x_3) \in E$. Let $\pi_1 : [0, 1]^2 \rightarrow [0, 1]$ be the projection on the first coordinate.

We have $\pi_1(\pi_{3,4}(Q)) = \{x_3\}$. This yields $\pi_{3,4}(Q) \subset (\{x_3\} \times [0, 1]) \cap N_2$. The hypothesis implies that $\pi_{3,4}(Q)$ is totally disconnected. Since $\pi_{3,4}(Q)$ is connected, we conclude that $\pi_{3,4}(Q)$ is degenerate. Similarly, $\pi_{1,2}(Q)$ is degenerate. This implies that Q is degenerate, a contradiction. ■

4. Main result. Consider the continuum X constructed by taking a continuum E homeomorphic to Z and satisfying $\{(0, 0), (1, 1)\} \subset E \subset [0, 1]^2$.

THEOREM 4.1. *Let M_1 and M_2 be non-degenerate subcontinua of $[0, 1]^2$. Then $M_1 \times M_2$ contains a non-degenerate hereditarily non-weakly chainable subcontinuum.*

Proof. For each $i \in \{1, 2\}$, we choose a subcontinuum N_i of M_i as follows. If M_i contains no arcs, set $N_i = M_i$, otherwise fix an arc N_i contained in M_i . In order to prove the theorem, it is enough to construct the continuum X in $N_1 \times N_2$.

For each $i \in \{1, 2\}$, if N_i is an arc, we assume that $N_i = \{(t, t) \in [0, 1]^2 : t \in [0, 1]\}$, and if M_i does not contain an arc, we may assume that $\{(0, 0), (1, 1)\} \subset N_i$.

Then N_1 and N_2 satisfy the hypothesis of Lemma 3.2. Consider the continuum X constructed for Lemma 3.2.

Suppose that X contains a non-degenerate weakly chainable continuum Q . By Lemma 3.2, $\pi_{1,3}(Q)$ is non-degenerate, so $\pi_{1,3}(Q)$ is a weakly chainable subcontinuum of Z . This contradicts Lemma 2.3. ■

COROLLARY 4.2. *There exists a non-degenerate subcontinuum of $P \times P$ that does not contain pseudo-arcs.*

PROBLEM 4.3. *Let M_1 and M_2 be non-degenerate continua. Does the product $M_1 \times M_2$ contain a non-degenerate hereditarily non-weakly chainable subcontinuum?*

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Alejandro Illanes
Instituto de Matemáticas
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
Circuito Exterior, Cd. Universitaria
04510, México, D.F., Mexico
E-mail: illanes@matem.unam.mx

Current address:
Department of Mathematics
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, Texas 79409-1042, U.S.A.

