

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Ramprasad Saptharishi

Chennai Mathematical Institute
and
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur
Ph.D Student

August 11, 2008

Introduction

Axiom of Choice

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Appetiser to the Proof

Broken Circle \equiv Circle

$$F_2 \equiv F_2 \cup F_2$$

Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

Doubling the almost-sphere

Sphere to Almost-Sphere

Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

Introduction

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The Banach-Tarski Paradox

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Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

Doubling the almost-sphere

Sphere to Almost-Sphere

Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

The Statement: Informal

Given a large number of boxes of oranges, each box being non-empty, then one can create a box of oranges consisting of exactly one from each box.

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One can pick a representative of each box

The Statement: Formal

Axiom of Choice

Let \mathcal{A} be a collection of non-empty sets. Then, there exists a *choice function*

$$f : \mathcal{A} \longrightarrow \bigcup_{A \in \mathcal{A}} A$$

such that $f(A) \in A$ for all $A \in \mathcal{A}$.



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- Required for various fundamental results:
 - Every vector space has a basis
 - Every field has an algebraic closure
 - Given two sets A , B , either $|A| > |B|$ or $|B| > |A|$ or $|A| = |B|$
 - Product of non-empty sets is non-empty

What's the harm in using it?

Well... some consequences of AoC are extremely counter-intuitive, like the *well-ordering theorem*.

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Well... some consequences of AoC are extremely counter-intuitive, like the *well-ordering theorem*. The most bizarre (IMHO) being the Banach-Tarski Paradox.

Introduction

Axiom of Choice

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Appetiser to the Proof

Broken Circle \equiv Circle

$F_2 \equiv F_2 \cup F_2$

Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

Doubling the almost-sphere

Sphere to Almost-Sphere

Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

The Ultimate Jigsaw Puzzle

Proposition (Banach-Tarski)

Assuming the axiom of choice, it is possible to partition the solid unit sphere into 6 pieces A_1, \dots, A_6 , and just rotate/translate these pieces to A'_1, \dots, A'_6 which a partition of two disjoint unit spheres.

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Disclaimer: I am being a mathematician. By sphere, I mean

$$B_3 = \{(x, y, z) \in \mathbb{R}^3 : x^2 + y^2 + z^2 \leq 1\}$$

The Ultimate Jigsaw Puzzle

- What about volume preservation?

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- We'll see a proof, not involving 6 but certainly less than 20 pieces.

Introduction

Axiom of Choice

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Appetiser to the Proof

Broken Circle \equiv Circle

$$F_2 \equiv F_2 \cup F_2$$

Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

Doubling the almost-sphere

Sphere to Almost-Sphere

Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

Introduction

Axiom of Choice

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Appetiser to the Proof

Broken Circle \equiv Circle

$$F_2 \equiv F_2 \cup F_2$$

Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

Doubling the almost-sphere

Sphere to Almost-Sphere

Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

The Circle and the Broken Circle

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$$A = \{e^{in} : n = 0, 1, 2, \dots\}$$

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$\rho : z \mapsto e^i z$, rotation by one radian counterclockwise.

$$A' = \rho(A)$$

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Keep B as it is and we get the broken circle.

Introduction

Axiom of Choice

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Appetiser to the Proof

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Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

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Sphere to Almost-Sphere

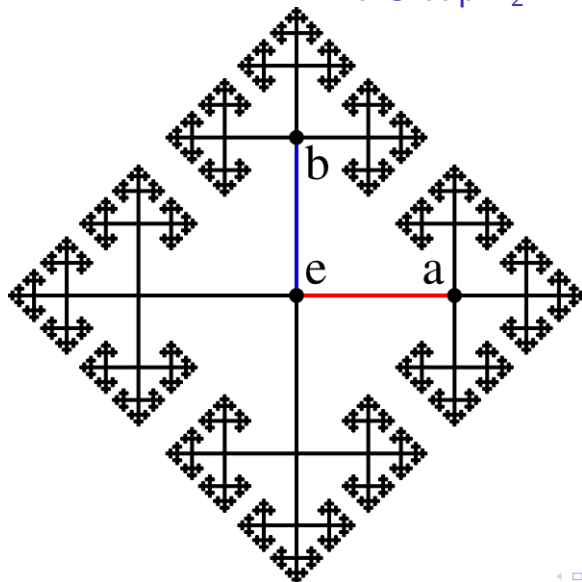
Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

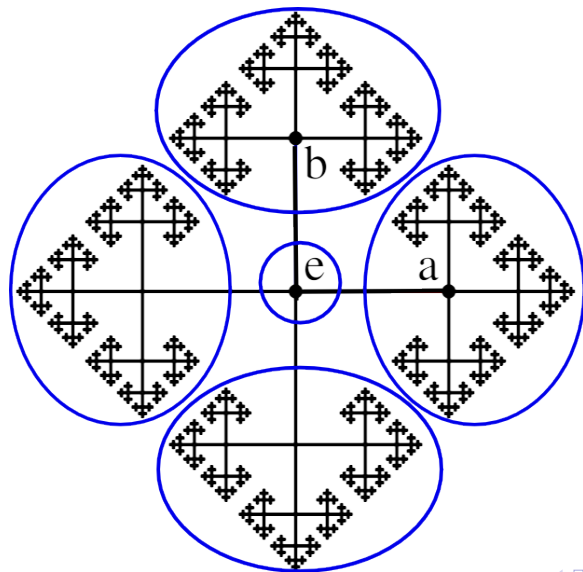
The Free Group

The Free Group over 2 Generators

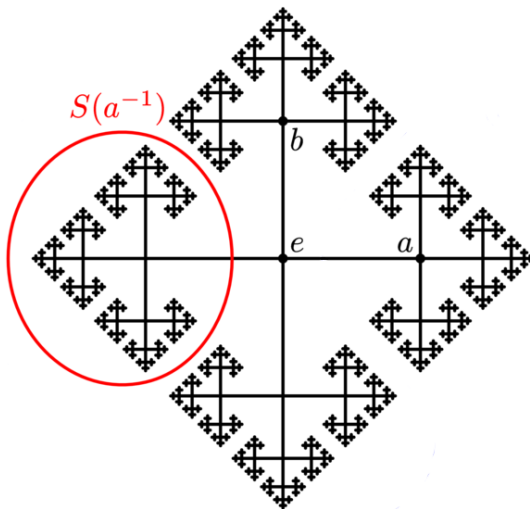
The elements of this groups are strings over a, a^{-1}, b, b^{-1} where multiplication is concatenation. And you collapse sequences like aa^{-1} to the identity of the empty string. Hence, $aabb^{-1}a^{-1} = a$.

The Group F_2 

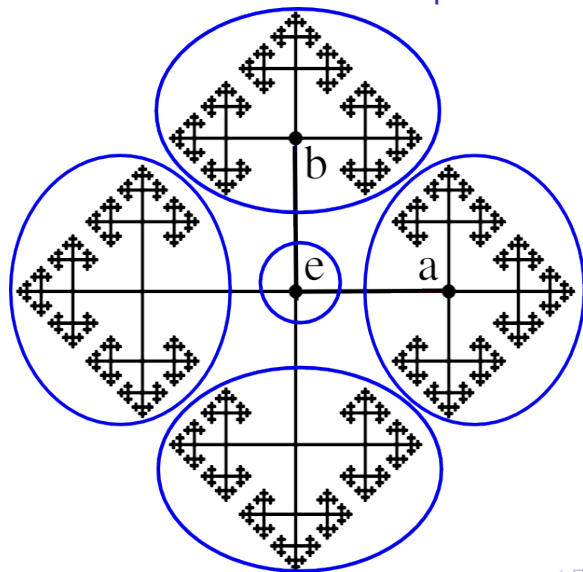
The Partition



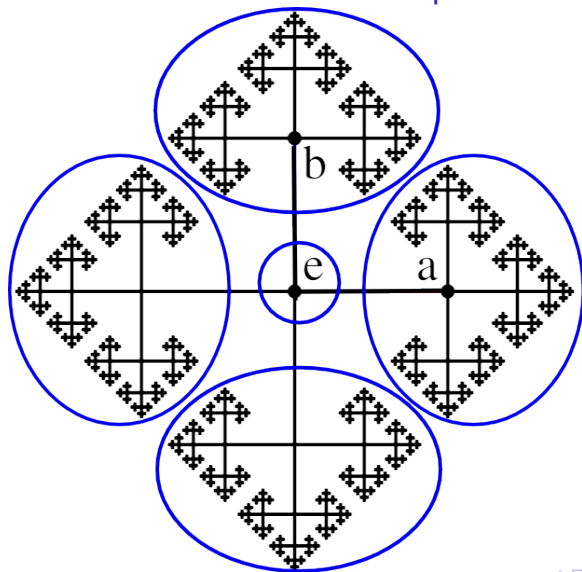
One Piece



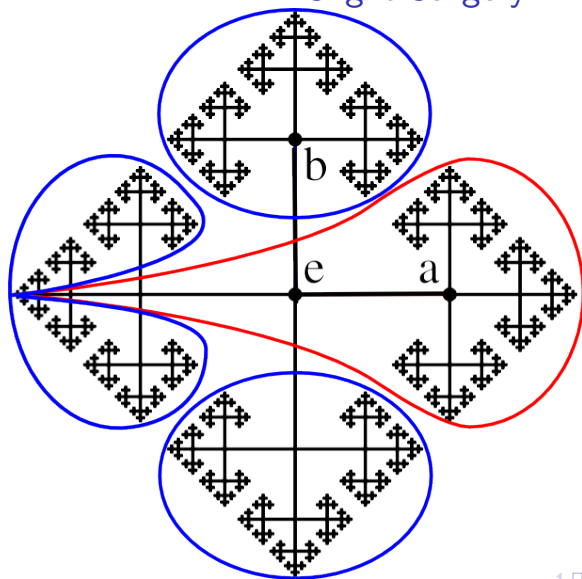
Two Copies!!!



Two Copies!!!



Slight Surgery



Incredible

F_2 can be written as a disjoint union of $\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2, \mathcal{A}_3, \mathcal{A}_4$ that can be used to produce two copies of F_2 .

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Can we find a structure like F_2 inside the solid sphere?

Introduction

Axiom of Choice

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Appetiser to the Proof

Broken Circle \equiv Circle

$F_2 \equiv F_2 \cup F_2$

Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

Doubling the almost-sphere

Sphere to Almost-Sphere

Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

Introduction

Axiom of Choice

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Appetiser to the Proof

Broken Circle \equiv Circle

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Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

Doubling the almost-sphere

Sphere to Almost-Sphere

Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

The Sphere and the Shell

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We shall just restrict ourselves to finding a *paradoxical decomposition* in the spherical shell. Very easy to lift it to the entire sphere.

The Group of Rotations

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- The set of rotations act on the sphere; are characterized by the axis and the angle.
- They form a group.
- Every non-trivial rotation has exactly two fixed points.

Does there exist a copy of F_2 sitting inside this group? Yes

F_2 Inside the Group of Rotations

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Claim

Let σ be the rotation about the x -axis by 1 radian and τ be the rotation about the y axis by 1 radian. Then, σ and τ generate a free group.

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Great. Lets call this group \mathcal{F} .

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Great. Lets call this group \mathcal{F} .

Recall that \mathcal{F} can be decomposed into $\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2, \mathcal{A}_3, \mathcal{A}_4$ such that

$$\mathcal{F} = \mathcal{A}_1 \cup \sigma\mathcal{A}_2 = \mathcal{A}_3 \cup \tau\mathcal{A}_4$$

The *Almost*-Sphere

Each non-trivial $\rho \in \mathcal{F}$ has precisely two fixed points on S_2 . Let D be the set of all fixed points of \mathcal{F} .

$$\tilde{S}_2 = S_2 - D$$

Roadmap

- Transform \mathcal{S}_2 to $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}_2$
- Double $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}_2$, forming two copies of it
- Transform each copy of $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}_2$ back to \mathcal{S}_2

Step 1 and 3 are inverses of each other; we shall cover that after we look at step 2.

Introduction

Axiom of Choice

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Appetiser to the Proof

Broken Circle \equiv Circle

$F_2 \equiv F_2 \cup F_2$

Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

Doubling the almost-sphere

Sphere to Almost-Sphere

Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

Orbits of \tilde{S}_2

Claim

For any $\rho \in \mathcal{F}$, $p \in D$ if and only if $\rho(p) \in D$.

Proof.

If $\sigma(p) = p$, then $\rho\sigma\rho^{-1}(\rho(p)) = \rho(p)$. □

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Hence, the group \mathcal{F} acts on $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}_2$ as well.

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Hence, the group \mathcal{F} acts on $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}_2$ as well. Look at the set of orbits and pick a set R of representatives (using the *Axiom of Choice*).

The Partition

Consider the following sets:

$$A_i = \{\rho(R) : \rho \in \mathcal{A}_i\} \quad , \quad i = 1, 2, 3, 4$$

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Claim

This forms a disjoint partition of $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}_2$.

Proof.

If $\rho_1(r) = \rho_2(r)$ for $\rho_1 \neq \rho_2$, then r will be a fixed point of $\rho_1^{-1} \rho_2$.



Doubling the *almost*-sphere

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$$\sigma(A_2) = \sigma(\{\rho(R) : \rho \in \mathcal{A}_2\})$$

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Introduction

Axiom of Choice

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Appetiser to the Proof

Broken Circle \equiv Circle

$F_2 \equiv F_2 \cup F_2$

Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

Doubling the almost-sphere

Sphere to Almost-Sphere

Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

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- The number of bad θ 's is countable. Pick a good angle $\bar{\theta}$ and let $\rho = \rho_{\bar{\theta}}$.

Transforming \mathcal{S}_2 to $\tilde{\mathcal{S}}_2$

Claim

For $m \neq n$, the sets $\rho^m(D)$ and $\rho^n(D)$ are disjoint.

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Claim

For $m \neq n$, the sets $\rho^m(D)$ and $\rho^n(D)$ are disjoint. In particular, $\bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} \rho^n(D)$ does not contain any point of D .

Proof.

Wlog, assume $m > n$. If $\rho^m(d_1) = \rho^n(d_2)$, then $\rho^{m-n}(d_1) = d_2$, which isn't possible by our choice of ρ . □

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$$\begin{aligned} \rho(A) &= \bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} \rho^n(D) = A - D \\ \implies \rho(A) \cup B &= \mathcal{S}_2 - D = \tilde{\mathcal{S}}_2 \end{aligned}$$

Introduction

Axiom of Choice

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Appetiser to the Proof

Broken Circle \equiv Circle

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Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

Doubling the almost-sphere

Sphere to Almost-Sphere

Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

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- As for the other punctured ball, take a circle through the origin and use the broken-circle \equiv circle transformation.

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That completes the proof of the Banach-Tarski Paradox.

Introduction

Axiom of Choice

The Banach-Tarski Paradox

Appetiser to the Proof

Broken Circle \equiv Circle

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Doubling the Sphere

Preliminaries

Doubling the almost-sphere

Sphere to Almost-Sphere

Extending it to the Solid Ball

Conclusion

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(an easier example of it is the Vitali Set. Wiki it)

Last Words

- Axiom of Choice isn't as innocent as it looks.
- Each time you see the AoC in action, ask if you can make the choices explicit.
- The Banach-Tarski Paradox also shows the existence of non-measurable sets.
(an easier example of it is the Vitali Set. Wiki it)
- Any proof of the Banach-Tarski paradox *has* to use the Axiom of Choice.

PJ!

What is a nice anagram of Banach-Tarski?

PJ!

What is a nice anagram of Banach-Tarski?

Banach-Tarski Banach-Tarski

Thank You