

Testimony about Jacob

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A topologist could learn about dynamics circa 1970 from the young dynamicists around Berkeley: Mike Shub, Sheldon Newhouse, Jacob Palis, John Franks, John Smilie, Bill Thurston.....

There was also a talk of Mauricio Peixoto, Brazil, IMPA and a famous conference in Bahia.

At this point hyperbolic systems could be intertwined with negative curvature with each side informing the other. However it became necessary to study bifurcations and these seemed to have a rich and knowable structure in non invertible systems and group actions in one real or one complex variable.

In the early 80's one learned Paulo Sad and Ricardo Mañé working at IMPA were attacking a conjecture of Fatou using a not yet written down result of this writer about another Fatou question. It was hard to find out what was going on by telephone and Jacob suggested a trip down to Brazil, even though it was vacation time in Rio and IMPA was closedown. The confusion in math was discussed first with Jacob who said "no problem you know all about quasiconformal mappings etc." Jacob opened up IMPA and we all went to work .

Jacob was right: the Holomorphic following argument of Paulo didn't quite prove the Fatou problem but it had a quasi-conformal interpretation and a good theorem came out.

Jacob's intuition was amazing.