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Orbifolds, special varieties and classification theory: appendix

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The present text is a technical appendix to [Ca04], giving with proofs the results used there concerning geometric quotients, Zariski regularity, and $S$-stability.

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1.1. Introduction.

This first part is a polished version of a first draft, partly based on the exposition of this first draft given in the master thesis of A. Höring ([H03]), whom I thank for his authorisation to use his text here. The aim of this first part of the present text is to prove the following result.

**Theorem 1.1.** — Let $X$ be a compact connected normal complex space and let $S \subset C(X)$, the Chow Scheme of $X$, be a covering family for $X$. Note $R(S)$ the equivalence relation on $X$ induced by $S$, for which $x, y \in X$ are equivalent iff contained in a connected union of a finite number of the members of the family of analytic cycles of $X$ parametrised by $S$.

Then there exists a fibration $q_S : X \to X_S$ such that its general fibre is an equivalence class for $R(S)$. Furthermore $q_S$ is almost holomorphic and unique up to equivalence of meromorphic fibrations. The map $q_S$ is called the $S$-quotient of $X$.

A covering family $S \subset C(X)$ must be understood as in Def. 1.8, i.e. its irreducible components are compact, the generic members of the family $S$ are irreducible and the projection from the incidence graph to $X$ is surjective.

Theorem 1.1 was proved in [Ca81] in the case where $S$ is supposed to be irreducible. The general case however easily reduces to this special case. We follow very closely the approach of [Ca81], simplified in one step. A similar result holds in the algebraic category, as carefully shown by a different approach in [DeOl, ch.5], see also [Ko96].

The normality of $X$ is essential, as shown by the examples given in [Ca81]. By way of constrast, the compactness assumption of $X$ and of the components of $S$ can be weakened to the $X$-properness of the incidence graph of each of the components of $S$ (see [Ca94]).

We now shortly sketch the proof of Theorem 1.1: it is obtained from the study of the increasing sets $R_n(x) \subset X$ consisting of all $y \in X$ which can be connected to a given generic $x \in X$ by a connected union of $n \geq 0$ members of the family $S$.

Easy arguments (given in Section 1.4, based on Remmert’s proper image theorem and the compactness of the irreducible components of $S$)
show that these sets are analytic closed in \( X \) (assuming \( S \) to have only finitely many components, a case to which one can easily reduce the general case).

In a first step (Section 1.5) we begin by treating the easiest case: when the support of a generic cycle parametrized by \( S \) is already the fibre of an almost-holomorphic fibration \( q : X \to S \) (see notations below in 1.1 for this notion). We show that in this case \( q \) is already the \( S \)-quotient.

We next solve the case when the family is “stationary” (ie: for generic \( x \in X \), the dimension of \( R_2(x) \) is the same as that of \( R_1(x) \)), by showing that the \( R_1(x)'s \), for \( x \in X \), are the family of fibres of an almost-holomorphic meromorphic map.

In Section 1.6 we solve the main case, where \( S \) is irreducible, by reducing to the preceding “stationary” case. This reduction step is a consequence of the fact that the dimension of \( R_n(x) \) is obviously bounded. We show that when this dimension becomes stationary, the family \( R_n(x) \), for \( x \in X \), is in fact a “stationary” family.

This is the crucial step of the proof. It unfortunately requires preliminary technical irreducibility criteria both of global and local (analytic) nature, exposed at the beginning of Section 1.6.

Finally in Section 1.7 we solve the general case, by an easy reduction to the case where \( S \) is irreducible. This reduction consists in suitably composing the quotients obtained component-by-component of \( S \).

The proof allows to find (finite) bounds on the length of chains needed to connect points in one generic equivalence class, which (slightly) improve the ones shown in [K-M-M92]. This is exposed in Section 1.8.

For reader’s convenience, we started by recalling in Section 1.2 the few basic facts that we use from the theory of Chow-Schemes in the analytic context.

The remaining sections prove Theorem 1.1.

**Notations, fibrations, almost holomorphic maps:**

For general facts on complex analytic spaces, we refer to [KK83]. Complex spaces are reduced and of finite dimension. The topology considered is, unless otherwise specified, the metric (analytic) topology. Otherwise, it is the Zariski topology. For meromorphic maps we use the terminology defined in 1.2. The abbreviation “wlog”, for: “without loss of generality” will be frequently used. We also recall the following terminology from [Ca04].
DEFINITION 1.2 [Ca04]. — Let $f : X \to Y$ be a surjective meromorphic map between normal compact irreducible complex spaces and let $\Gamma \subset X \times Y$ be the closure of the graph of $f$.

1. Let $p_Y : \Gamma \to Y$ be the restriction of the second projection to $\Gamma$, then we define $p_Y(\Gamma)$ as the image of $f$. By consequence $f$ is said to be surjective if $Y = p_Y(\Gamma)$. This definition is equivalent to the fact that $f|_U$ is dominant, where $U \subset X$ is a Zariski open set such that $f$ is defined on $U$.

2. We define the indeterminacy locus $I_f$ to be the set of points $x \in X$ where the fibre of the first projection $p_X^{-1}(x) \subset \Gamma$ is not a singleton. Define furthermore $f(I_f) = p_Y(p_X^{-1}(I_f))$:

Then $f$ is said to be almost holomorphic if $f(I_f) \neq Y$.

3. For $y \in Y$, define $p_X(p_Y^{-1}(y))$ as the (Chow-theoretic) fibre of $f$ over $y$. If $y \notin f(I_f)$, this definition coincides with the usual definition of a fibre.

4. For $U \subset X$, define the image of $U$ by $f$ to be: $f(U) := p_Y(p_X^{-1}(U))$. Of course, if $U$ does not meet the indeterminacy locus this coincides with the usual definition.

DEFINITION 1.3 [Ca04]. — A fibration $f : X \to Y$ is a surjective meromorphic map between irreducible compact complex spaces such that the generic fibre of $f$ is irreducible. A fibration is said to be (almost) holomorphic, if so is the map.

Another fibration $f' : X' \to Y'$ is said to be equivalent to $f$ if there exist bimeromorphic maps $u : X \to X'$ and $v : v : Y \to Y'$ such that $f' \circ u = v \circ f$. We say that $f'$ is a model or representative of $f$.

1.2. Generalities on the cycle space.

In this paragraph we recall some basic notions about the cycle space that parametrizes compact cycles with multiplicities for a given complex space. We give a brief presentation of this so-called Cycle Space (or Chow
Scheme in the algebraic case) following the original paper [Ba75, Ch. 0-II] and the expository [C-94, Ch. VIII]. A description of the topology of the cycle space can be found in [SGAN82]. Lemmas 1.9-1.12 expose elementary properties of covering families that will be of importance in the following sections.

**Definition 1.4** [Ba75]. — Let $X$ be a complex space and $d \in \mathbb{N}$ an integer. A $d$-cycle on $X$ is a finite linear combination $Z = \sum n_i Z_i$ where the $n_i$’s are nonnegative integers and the $Z_i$’s compact irreducible analytic subsets of $X$ of pure dimension $d$ which are pairwise distinct. The support of $Z$, denoted $|Z|$ is the union of the (reduced) $Z_i$’s. The integer $n_i$ is called the multiplicity of $Z_i$ in the cycle $Z$.

The set of all $d$-cycles is denoted $C_d(X)$ and the set of all cycles (the union of all $C_d(X)$ for $d \in \mathbb{N}$) is denoted $C(X)$. We call $C(X)$ the cycle space or Chow scheme, or Barlet space of $X$.

We fix the following notation: If $S$ is a complex space parametrizing a family of cycles $(Z_s)_{s \in S}$, then we note $Z_s$ the cycle with multiplicities, $|Z_s| \subset X$ its support and $[Z_s]$ the point in $C(X)$ corresponding to $Z_s$. If $S$ is embedded in $C(X)$, we identify occasionally $s \in S$ and $[Z_s] \in C(X)$.

We shall define the notion of an analytic family $(Z_s)_{s \in S}$ of $d$-cycles of $X$ parametrised by an analytic space $S$ only when $S$ is normal, because a simple geometric description of this notion can be given in this situation, which is the only one we shall use. Moreover, one can always reduce to this special case by normalising the parameter space.

**Definition 1.5** ([Ba75, Chapt. 1, Thm 1]). — Let $S$ be a normal complex space and $(Z_s)_{s \in S}$ be a family of $d$-cycles of $X$ parametrized by $S$ (ie: for each $s \in S$, $Z_s$ is an element of $C_d(X)$). Let $G_S$.

$$|G_S| := \{(s,x) | x \in |Z_s|\} \subset S \times X$$

The set $|G_S|$ is called the incidence graph of the family $S$. We note $p_S$ and $p_X$ the restrictions of the first and second projections of $S \times X$ to $G_S$.

Then this family is said to be analytic if:

1. the incidence graph $|G_S|$ is a closed analytic subset of $S \times X$.
2. the restriction of the first projection $p_S$ of $S \times X$ to $|G_S|$ is proper, surjective and its fibres have pure dimension $d$.  

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3. for any irreducible component $|G^j_S|$ of $|G_S|$, there exists a positive integer $n^j$ such that for $s$ generic in $S^j := p_S(|G^j_S|)$ all irreducible components of $|Z_s|$ contained in $|G^j_S|$ have multiplicity $n^j$. (The closed analytic cycle $G_S = \sum_j n^j G^j_S$ is called the graph of the analytic family parametrized by $S$).

4. For any $s \in S$, any $j$, and any local multisection $\sigma : S' \to |G^j_S|$, defined on a small open neighborhood $S'$ of $s$ in $S$, if the image of $\sigma$ meets $Z_s$ at a single point $x$, contained in a unique irreducible component $Z^i_s$ of $Z_s$, the multiplicity of $|Z^i_s|$ in $Z_s$ is $m.n^j$, where $m$ is the degree of the restriction of $p_X$ to the image of $\sigma$.

Remark. — Let us comment briefly on condition 4. in the above definition: when $|G_S|$ is given, and also the $n^j$'s as above, the multiplicities on each fibre $|Z_s|$, for any $s \in S$ can be uniquely determined, so as to satisfy this condition if $S$ is normal. This is the content of the second assertion of 1.7 below.

One property of analytic families should be mentioned (which is part of the definition, in general): if $(s, x) \in |G_S|$, the graph of such an analytic family, then shrinking $S$ near $s$, there exists a finite proper ramified covering map $g : U \to S \times B$, defined on some open neighborhood $U$ of $(s, x)$ in $|G_S|$, where $B$ is an open polydisc in $\mathbb{C}^d$, such that $p_S = h \circ g$, if $h : S \times B \to S$ is the first projection.

The main result here is:

**Theorem 1.6** [Ba75]. — The definition of an analytic family (for arbitrary $S$) defines a contravariant functor $F^d_X$ from the category of complex spaces to the category of sets, $F^d_X(S)$ being simply the set of analytic families of compact $d$-dimensional cycles parametrized by $S$. Morphisms are defined by base change over the parameter space.

This functor is representable, i.e. there exists a complex space $C_d(X)$ and an isomorphism of functors $F^d_X \leftrightarrow Mor(-, C_d(X))$.

The following geometric version of Hironaka’s flattening theorem is of constant use:

**Theorem 1.7** ([Ba79], see also [C-P94]). — Let $G \subset S \times X$ be an irreducible compact analytic subset such that the restriction $p : G \to S$ is surjective.
There exists a unique meromorphic map \( f : S^r \to C(X) \) sending a generic \( s \in S \) to the reduced cycle of \( X \) with support \( p^{-1}(s) \). In particular, the image of \( f \) is compact since \( S \) is.

If moreover the fibres of \( p \) are all of same dimension, and if \( S \) is normal, then \( f \) is holomorphic.

We call \( f \) the (Chow-theoretic) fibre map of \( p \).

1.3. Covering families.

**Notation:** If \( s \in S \) and \( Z_s \) is the corresponding cycle on \( X \), then the restriction of \( p_X \) to \( p_S^{-1}(s) = \{(s, x) \mid x \in |Z_s|\} \) is an embedding with image \( |Z_s| \). This identification motivates to note \( p_S^{-1}(s) =: \widehat{Z_s} \).

**Definition 1.8.** Let \( X \) be a compact connected normal complex space. Then \( S \subseteq C(X) \) is said to be a covering family of \( X \) if the following conditions are satisfied:

1. \( S \) is an at most countable disjoint union of compact irreducible subvarieties \( S_i \subseteq C(X) \).
2. If \( s \in S_i \) is a generic point, then \( Z_s \) is irreducible and reduced, this for any irreducible component \( S_i \) of \( S \).
3. \( X \) is the union of all \( |Z_s| \)'s for \( s \in S \).

**Remarks.**

1. Note that our condition on \( X \) implies in particular that \( X \) is irreducible. Furthermore as generic cycles are supposed to be reduced, the multiplicities \( n^x \) will be equal to one. So we shall not distinguish between the incidence graph \( |G_S| \) and the graph \( G_S \). In the following we write \( G_S \) for the incidence graph.
2. We could replace conditions 2)-3) equivalently by: the restrictions of the projection \( p_S \) (resp. \( p_X \)) to the incidence graph has irreducible reduced generic fibres (resp. is surjective).
3. If \( S \) is a covering family, then at least one of its irreducible components is a covering family. Conditions 1) and 2) are obvious and for 3) consider that by compactness of the components of \( S \), the incidence graph of every irreducible component of \( S \) is itself compact, so its image by \( p_X \) in \( X \) is either \( X \) or a proper analytic subset. As \( X \) is irreducible, Baire’s category theorem yields the result.
4. The condition of compactness of the irreducible components will be critical for our proof. By [Li75], it is always satisfied for compact Kähler manifolds.

5. We will always suppose $S$ to be normal. If $S$ is not normal, let $d: S' \rightarrow S$ be its normalization, then the morphism $d$ corresponds to an analytic family of $n$-cycles parametrized by $S'$ (use the functoriality in 1.6). In fact, this family contains the same cycles as $S$, but the same cycle $Z_s$ will appear several times, if $s \in S$ is not a normal point. This also shows that normalizing does not change the equivalence relation $R(S)$ induced on $X$ (cf. Section 1.4).

The following easy lemma will play a crucial role at some key steps of the construction. Especially important is the irreducibility property stated in the second assertion.

**Proposition 1.9.** If $S$ is a covering family of $X$ and $S_i$ is any of its irreducible components, then

1. $Z_s$ is connected for $s \in S$,
2. $G_{S_i}$ (the incidence graph of $S_i$) is irreducible and compact for every $i$.

**Proof.** The first assertion is an immediate consequence of the analytic Zariski’s Main theorem, combined with Stein factorisation.

The second assertion will be proven using the next few easy lemmas. Fix an irreducible component $S_i$. By 1.12, $p_{S_i}$ is open. By the irreducibility Lemma 1.10 there is a dense Zariski open subset $S_i^* \subset S_i$ such that $G^*: = p_{S_i}^{-1}(S_i^*) \subset G_{S_i}$ is irreducible. By the density Lemma 1.11, $G^*$ is dense in $G_{S_i}$, so $G_{S_i}$ is also irreducible. The compactness follows from the properness of $p_{S_i}$ stated in 1.5. □

**Remark.** Note that the proof of the second assertion also holds for every irreducible compact analytic subset of $S$.

**Lemma 1.10 (Irreducibility lemma).** Let $X$ and $T$ be complex spaces, with $T$ irreducible. Assume $X$ has only finitely many irreducible components. Let $\varphi: X \rightarrow T$ be a proper surjective holomorphic map, the generic fibre of which is irreducible.

Then, there exists a dense Zariski open subset $T^* \subset T$, such that $\varphi^{-1}(T^*)$ is irreducible.
Proof. — There is a unique irreducible component of $X$, say $X_0$, mapped surjectively onto $T$, otherwise the fibre of $\varphi$ over the generic point of $T$ were not irreducible. Now the other irreducible components of $X$ are mapped by $\varphi$ to finitely many proper closed analytic subsets of $T$. Just choose $T^*$ to be contained in their complement. 

**Lemma 1.11.** — Let $(Z_s)_{s \in S}$ be an analytic family of cycles for $X$, a compact connected normal complex space, parametrized by a reduced complex space $S$. Let $S^* \subset S$ be a dense Zariski open subset of $S$ and $G_S$ (resp. $G_{S^*}$) the incidence graph of the family $S$ (resp. $S^*$), with their topology induced as subsets of $S \times X$. Then $G_{S^*}$ is dense in $G_S$ (for both topologies: metric and Zariski).

Proof. — As the metric topology is finer than the Zariski topology, it is sufficient to show the assertion in the first case. By Lemma 1.12, $p_S$ is an open mapping, so the preimage in $G_S$ of the dense $S^*$ is dense.

**Proposition 1.12.** — In the situation of lemma 1.11, let $p_S : G_S \to S$ be the restriction of the projection on the first factor. Then $p_S$ is an open mapping for the analytic topology.

Proof. — Let $(s, x) \in |G_S|$, the graph of such an analytic family, be any point. Then shrinking $S$ near $s$, there exists a finite proper ramified covering map $g : U \to S \times B$, defined on some open neighborhood $U$ of $(s, x)$ in $|G_S|$, where $B$ is an open polydisc in $\mathbb{C}^d$, such that $p_S = h \circ g$, if $h : S \times B \to S$ is the first projection. (This is part of the definition of an analytic family. (See [Ba75, Chapt. 1], or the remark following 1.5). This obviously implies the stated openness of $p_S$.

Remark. — An equivalent statement is: if $f : X \to S$ is a surjective proper holomorphic map from $X$, purely $n + d$-dimensional, to $S$, normal and purely $n$-dimensional, then $f$ is an open map, if all fibres of $f$ are $d$-dimensional. The similar statement is standard for flat maps, but we could (unfortunately) not find this statement in the literature.

**1.4. S-equivalence.**

**Definition 1.13.** — Let $S \subset C(X)$ be a covering family for $X$. For $s_1, \ldots, s_n \in S$ we say that $Z_{s_1}, \ldots, Z_{s_n}$ form an $n$-chain of $S$ if the union
of their supports is connected. We say that the n-chain is ordered if \( |Z_{s_j}| \) meets \( |Z_{s_{j+1}}| \) for \( j = 1, \ldots, n-1 \).

Two points \( x, x' \in X \) are called \( S \)-equivalent iff \( x \) and \( x' \) can be joined by an \( n \)-chain for some \( n \in \mathbb{N} \), depending on \( x, x' \). In which case we say that \( x \) and \( x' \) are \( n \)-equivalent.

As every point \( x \) in \( X \) is connected to itself by a 1-chain, this defines an equivalence relation \( R(S) \) on \( X \).

We say \( X \) is \( S \)-connected if \( R(S) \) has a single equivalence class (i.e. any two points can be connected by some \( n \)-chain). A subset of \( X \) is \( S \)-saturated if it is the union of \( R(S) \)-equivalence classes.

Remarks. —

1. Note that we did not suppose \( S \) to be irreducible, yet we suppose as usual for covering families that its irreducible components are compact. Furthermore the equivalence relation \( R(S) \) depends only on the supports of the cycles on \( X \), the structure of an analytic family does not appear in the definition. Arbitrary base changes on \( S \) do not change this equivalence relation. In particular, the normalization of \( S \) does not change \( R(S) \) (cf. Def. 1.8).

2. If \( Z_s \) is a member of the family \( S \), that does not meet any other member of the family \( S \) (ie: \( |Z_s| \cap |Z_{s'}| \neq \emptyset \Rightarrow s = s' \)), then \( |Z_s| \) is an equivalence class for \( R(S) \). For example, if \( f : X \to S \) is a flat proper surjective connected holomorphic map with \( X \) smooth (normal is sufficient), and if \( (Z_s)_{s \in S} \) is the family of its fibres, the equivalence relation \( R(S) \) is of course the one having the fibres of \( f \) as equivalence classes. We will use this (trivial) example of an equivalence class in 1.5.

3. We note

\[
R^\infty(S) = R(S) = \{(x, y) \in X \times X \mid x \sim y\} \subset X \times X
\]

the graph of the equivalence relation. In the same way, for \( n \geq 1 \) we set

\[
R_n(S) = \{(x, y) \in X \times X \mid x \text{ and } y \text{ are } n-\text{equivalent}\}.
\]

Set, by definition, \( R_0(S) := \Delta_X \), the diagonal of \( X \times X \) and note that \( R(S) = \cup_n R_n(S) \). In the following, we fix a covering family \( S \) and replace \( R(S) \) by \( R \) and \( R_n(S) \) by \( R_n \).
Lemma 1.14. — Let $X$ be a compact connected normal complex space and $S \subset C(X)$ an irreducible compact covering family for $X$. Note $G_S \subset S \times X$ the incidence graph and $p_S : G_S \to S$ (resp. $p_X : G_S \to X$) the restriction of the first (resp. second) projection. For any $n \geq 1$, let $p_n' : R_n \to X$ (resp. $p_n'' : R_n \to X$) be the restriction of the first (resp. second) projection of $X \times X$ on $X$ to $R_n$. Then

1. $R_1$ is irreducible and compact.

2. $R_{n+1} = (p_n'' \times p_1')((p_n'' \times p_1')^{-1}({\Sigma X}))$

3. $R_n \subset X \times X$ is Zariski closed and compact.

Proof. — 1) We follow [Ca81]: Let $(\Gamma_s)_{s \in S} := (Z_s \times Z_s)_{s \in S}$ be the analytic family of compact cycles in $X \times X$ parametrized by $S$. Then for generic $s$ the cycle $\Gamma_s$ is irreducible and reduced, so we apply 1.9 to obtain that the incidence graph $\Gamma \subset S \times X \times X$ is irreducible and compact. Let $q_i : \Gamma \to X$ be the restriction of the $i$-th projection ($i = 2, 3$) to $\Gamma$, then $R_1 = (q_2 \times q_3)(\Gamma)$ is irreducible and compact.

2) We have:

$$(p_n'' \times p_1')^{-1}(\Sigma X) = \{((y, x), (x, z)) | x \in X, y and x are n-equiv., z and x are 1-equiv.\}$$

In particular, $y$ and $z$ can be connected by an $(n + 1)$-chain, which allows to conclude, as $(p_n' \times p_1')((y, x), (x, z)) = (y, z)$. For the other inclusion suppose $y$ and $z$ to be $(n + 1)$-equivalent (but not $n$-equivalent, otherwise there is nothing to show) and $s_1, \ldots, s_{n+1} \in S$ such that $|Z_{s_1} \cup \ldots \cup Z_{s_{n+1}}|$ is connected and contains $y$ and $z$. Suppose wlog this chain to be ordered (otherwise permute the indices $s_j$), then $y \in |Z_{s_1}|$ and $z \in |Z_{s_{n+1}}|$. As the cycles are connected, we have, for $x \in |Z_{s_1} \cap |Z_{s_2}|$, that $x$ and $y$ (resp. $z$) are 1-equivalent (resp. n-equiv.) and $(p_n' \times p_1')((y, x), (x, z)) = (y, z)$.

3) Complex spaces are separated, so $\Sigma X$ is closed. Then $T := (p_n'' \times p_1')^{-1}(\Sigma X) \subset X \times X \times X \times X$ is closed, so compact for the metric topology. It is also Zariski closed, as $p_n'' \times p_1'$ is holomorphic. So the restriction $p_n' \times p_1'' : T \to X \times X$ is a holomorphic mapping between compact complex spaces. By Remmert’s proper mapping theorem, its image is an analytic subset of $X \times X$, its compactness being obvious.

Definition 1.15. — Let $R^0$ be an irreducible component of $R_n$. Then $R^0$ is said to be significant if it contains $\Sigma X$. 

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In the following we note $R_\Delta^n$ the union of the significant irreducible components of $R_n$ and $d_n := \dim(R_\Delta^n)$. Because $R_n \subset R_{n+1}$, we have: $R_\Delta^n \subset R_\Delta^{n+1}$, and so the sequence $d_n$ is non-decreasing and bounded by the dimension of $X \times X$, and so becomes eventually stationary.

Remarks.—

1. Let $\sigma : X' \to X$ the blow-up of a point $P$ on a smooth projective surface. Then define two points on $X'$ to be equivalent if their images in $X$ coincide. The graph of this equivalence relation is $X' \times_X X' \subset X' \times X'$. More precisely, if $E = \sigma^{-1}(P)$ then $X' \times_X X' = \Delta_{X'} \cup (E \times E)$. So the only significant component is the diagonal itself.

2. Let $X$ be smooth projective surface and $f : X \to C$ a morphism onto a smooth curve and $s : C \to X$ a section of $f$, note $C' \subset X$ its image. Let $R$ be the equivalence relation on $X$ induced by $R'_1 = (X \times_C X) \cup (C' \times C') \subset X \times X$ (two points are 1-equivalent if they are both in the same fibre or both in $C'$). It is then clear that any two points can be connected by a 3-chain, so $R = X \times X$; $X$ consists of single equivalence class. If we delete the non-significant component $C' \times C'$ from $R'_1$, two points are $n$-equivalent iff they are in the same fibre, so $R = X \times_C X$, each fibre is an equivalence class for $R$. We see that the non-significant component has important influence on the equivalence classes.

The following lemma shows that, by way of contrast, for an irreducible covering family, the non-significant components have no influence on the graph of the equivalence relation.

**Lemma 1.16 (Infinity lemma).** — Let $X$ be a compact connected normal complex space. For any symmetric set $\Delta_X \subset A \subset X \times X$ (i.e. $(x, y) \in A \iff (y, x) \in A$) note $R^\infty(A) \subset X \times X$ the graph of the equivalence relation induced by the reflexive, symmetric relation on $X$ with graph $A$.

Let $S \subset C(X)$ be a normal irreducible covering family for $X$. Then with the notations of 1.13 and 1.15, we have for any $n \geq 1$:

$$R^\infty(R_1(S)) = R^\infty(R^\Delta_n(S)) = R^\infty(R_n(S)).$$

**Proof.** — As $A \subset B$ implies $R^\infty(A) \subset R^\infty(B)$, we obtain

$$R^\infty(R_1(S)) \subset R^\infty(R^\Delta_n(S)) \subset R^\infty(R_n(S)).$$
(The irreducibility of $S$ assures $R_1(S) = R_1^\Delta(S) \subset R_1^\Delta(S)$). We are left to show that $R_1^\infty(R_1(S)) \subset R_1^\infty(R_1(S))$. Yet by definition $R_1(S) \subset R_1^\infty(S) = R_1^\infty(R_1(S))$ and $R_1^\infty(R_1^\infty(A)) = R_1^\infty(A)$.

1.5. The stationary case.

If $S$ is an irreducible covering family of the complex space $X$ and $G_S$ the incidence graph, we have the following basic diagram:

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
G_S & \overset{p_X}{\longrightarrow} & X \\
\downarrow p_S & & \\
S & \end{array}
$$

We will start with an easy case.

**Proposition 1.17.** — Let $S$ be irreducible, assume $p_X : G_S \rightarrow X$ is a proper modification, that $p_S : G_S \rightarrow S$ is proper surjective, with generic fibre irreducible, and assume that $q := p_S \circ (p_X)^{-1} : X \rightarrow S$ is almost-holomorphic. The generic fibres of $q$ (ie: the generic $Z_s$) are then $R(S)$-equivalence classes, and $q$ is the $S$-quotient of the family $S$.

**Remark.** — The hypothesis that $q$ is almost-holomorphic is essential, here. Consider indeed the case in which $X = \mathbb{P}^2$, and $(Z_s)_{s \in \mathbb{P}^1}$ is the family of lines through a given point $a \in \mathbb{P}^2$.

**Proof.** — If $Z_s$ is a regular fibre of $q$ (ie: if $Z_s$ does not meet the indeterminacy locus of $q$), then $Z_s$ does not meet any other member of the family $S'$, if $\sigma : S' \rightarrow \mathcal{C}(X)$ is the fibre map, and if $S' \subset \mathcal{C}(X)$ is its image. (See the part c) of proof of 1.19 below for details).

**Definition 1.18.** — Let $X$ be a compact connected normal complex space, $S$ an irreducible covering family for $X$ and $G_S$ the incidence graph. Then $S$ is said to be stationary if

1. $p_X : G_S \rightarrow X$ is a modification
2. $\dim(R_1^\Delta(S)) = d_2 = d_1 = \dim(R_1^\Delta(S))$

**Theorem 1.19.** — Let $X$ be a compact connected normal complex space and $S \subset \mathcal{C}(X)$ an irreducible stationary covering family for $X$, note
Then $q_S = p_S \circ p_X^{-1} : X \rightarrow S$ is an almost holomorphic fibration which is the $S$-quotient of $X$.

Proof. — We show by contradiction that $q_S$ is an almost holomorphic fibration and suppose that a generic fibre of $q_S$ meets the indeterminacy locus $I_{q_S}$. By construction this is equivalent to say that the fibre meets the indeterminacy locus $I_{p_X^{-1}}$. Moreover, for $s \in S$, $q_S^{-1}(s) = |Z_s|$.

a) We will obtain a contradiction in the following way: For $j = 1, 2$ let $q_j : R_j^\Delta \rightarrow X$ be the restriction of the second projection of $X \times X$ on $X$ to $R_j^\Delta$. As $p_X$ is a modification there is a Zariski open dense subset $X^*$ of $X$, such that every point $x \in X^*$ lies in exactly one cycle $|Z_s|$ parametrized by $S$ (in particular $p_X^{-1}$ is defined on $X^*$). Hence $\dim(q_1^{-1}(x)) = \dim(|Z_s|) = n$.

Claim: $\dim(q_2^{-1}(x)) \geq \dim(|Z_s|) + 1$.

Assuming this, as $x$ is generic in $X$, it follows that:

$$\dim(R_2^\Delta) \geq \dim(|Z_s|) + \dim(X) + 1 > \dim(|Z_s|) + \dim(X) = \dim(R_1^\Delta).$$

This clearly contradicts the fact that $S$ is stationary.

b) We are left to show the above claim:

As $p_X^{-1}(X^*)$ is Zariski open (hence dense) and $p_S$ open by 1.12, the set $p_S(p_X^{-1}(X^*))$ is open dense in $S$. So if we fix $x \in X^*$, we may suppose that for $s = q_S(x)$ there exists an irreducible Zariski open neighborhood $S^* \subset S$ such that $Z_s$ is irreducible and reduced for all $s' \in S^*$.

By our hypothesis $|Z_s|$ meets $I_{p_X^{-1}}$, so let $y \in |Z_s| \cap I_{p_X^{-1}}$. By the analytic version of Zariski’s main theorem, as $X$ is normal $p_X^{-1}(y)$ is connected, so of positive dimension everywhere. We choose a curve $C \subset p_X^{-1}(y)$ that contains $(s, y)$ and is locally irreducible at this point. As $C \subset S \times \{y\}$, $p_S(C)$ has dimension 1 and is locally irreducible in $s$. Up to restricting a bit further we may suppose that $S^* \cap p_S(C)$ is irreducible.

By assumption the fibres of $p_S$ over $S^* \cap p_S(C)$ are irreducible, so by the Irreducibility Lemma 1.10 applied to $p_S| : p_S^{-1}(p_S(C)) \rightarrow p_S(C)$ we obtain a Zariski open set $U \subset p_S(C)$ such that $p_S^{-1}(U)$ is irreducible of dimension $\dim(|Z_s|) + 1$. As $x$ is generic, we may suppose $s \in U$, and to ease notations that $U = p_S(C)$. It follows that $W := p_X(p_S^{-1}(p_S(C))) \subset X$. 

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is irreducible of dimension $\dim(|Z_s|) + 1$, as it contains $|Z_s|$ as a proper subset.

We show that $W \times \{x\} \subset R_2^\Delta$. Indeed if $y'$ and $y''$ in $W$ are generic, note $Z_{s'}$ (resp. $Z_{s''}$) the unique cycle containing $y'$ (resp. $y''$) and $s' \in p_S(C)$ (resp. $s'' \in p_S(C)$). Then $Z_{s'}$ and $Z_{s''}$ contain $y$ by construction. So $y'$ and $y''$ can be joined by a 2-chain. Furthermore as $|Z_s| \subset W$, we have $(x, x) \in W \times \{x\}$, as $x$ is generic this allows to conclude. It follows in particular that the fibre $q_2^{-1}(x)$ contains $W \times \{x\}$ hence is of dimension at least $\dim(|Z_s|) + 1$. This completes the proof of the claim.

c) We show that $q_S$ is a fibration and the $S$-quotient: As seen in the first part, the generic fibre of $q_S$ is a cycle $Z_s$, which is by definition irreducible. We saw that $q_S$ is almost holomorphic, so there exists a Zariski open $S^* \subset S$, such that for $s \in S^*$, the fibre $q_S^{-1}(s) = |Z_s|$ yields $|Z_s| \cap I_{p_X}^{-1} = \emptyset$. Suppose there exists $x \in |Z_s|$ and $s' \in S, s' \neq s$ such that $x \in |Z_{s'}|$. Then $p_X^{-1}(x)$ is not a singleton, so $x \in I_{p_X}^{-1}$, a contradiction. So $|Z_s| \cap |Z_{s'}| = \emptyset$ for $s \neq s'$ and by the remark after 1.13, $|Z_s| = q_S^{-1}(s)$ is an $S$-equivalence class.

1.6. The irreducible case.

We will now show Theorem 1.1 in the case where $S$ is irreducible, otherwise said, that $S$ is an irreducible covering family of $X$.

The proof (Thm 1.24) consists in a reduction to the stationary case. For this, we will construct a stationary irreducible covering family $S'$ that induces the same equivalence relation on $X$ and then apply Theorem 1.19.

The generic member of this stationary family consists of the set $R_n(x)$ of all $y \in X$ which are $n$-equivalent to $x$, for $x \in X$ generic, and $n$ sufficiently large, but independent of $x$. The main point of the proof consists in showing that this $R_n(x)$ is irreducible. This needs some technical criteria for irreducibility, both of local and global nature, which we expose now, starting with the standard:

**Lemma 1.20.** — Let $V$ be a complex space and $W \subset V$ a complex subspace. Suppose $V$ to be locally irreducible at $W$ (ie: at its generic point).

For any desingularization $d : V' \to V$ of $V$, the fibres of $d$ over $W$ are connected.
Proof. — If $V$ is normal along $W$, the analytic form of Zariski’s main theorem gives the stated result.

In the general case, let $d' : V'' \to V$ be the normalization of $V$ and let $d'' : V' \to V''$ be a desingularization of $V''$. Then $d := d' \circ d''$ is a desingularization of $V$. We saw that $d''$ has connected fibres, so $d$ has connected fibres if $d'$ is bijective.

We show this property: The claim is local on the base, so fix a $v \in W \subset V$, now $d'$ is a finite map, and for each point $v'' \in d'^{-1}(v)$, there is a unique local irreducible component of $V''$ through $v''$, and this component is mapped bimeromorphically onto the unique local irreducible component of $V$ through $v$. Thus, $d'^{-1}(v)$ consists of the single point $v''$, hence $d'$ is bimeromorphic.

We now come to the second and main technical lemma:

**Lemma 1.21** [Ca81]. — Let $V$ be a complex space, $W$ an irreducible complex space. Let $g : V \to W$ be a surjective holomorphic map and $\sigma : W \to V$ a holomorphic section with image $W' := \sigma(W)$. If $V$ is locally irreducible at the generic point of $W'$ then for $w \in W$ generic:

1. The fibre $V_w = g^{-1}(w)$ is locally irreducible at $\sigma(w)$.
2. If $g$ is proper and $V$ irreducible then $V_w$ is irreducible.

Proof. — This result was shown in [Ca81] using analytic methods and cycle space theory. We shall give here a short proof based on the existence of desingularizations\(^{(1)}\).

Before starting the proof, let us indeed observe that if $V$ is smooth, the first property follows from Sard’s theorem, together with the analytic lower-semicontinuity of the rank of holomorphic map. And that the second property follows from the Stein factorisation. We shall now reduce to this situation using a desingularisation of $V$.

Proof of 1) As the assertion concerns only generic fibres, we suppose $W$ to be smooth and connected. Let $d : V' \to V$ be a desingularization of $V$ as in 1.21, i.e. the fibres of $d$ over $W'$ are connected. Note $W'' :=

\(^{(1)}\) As T. Peternell indicated to me, this result can be deduced from [B-F93], by combining theorems 1.1 (applied to property (1.5.10)), and 2.1. Because the proofs of [B-F93] are quite involved, we give the alternative easy proof above (using desingularization, however).
d^{-1}(W') \subset V'$ and $g' = g \circ d : V' \to W$. Then as $V'$ is smooth, there exists a Zariski open dense $W^* \subset W$ such that $g'|_V : g'^{-1}(W^*) \to W^*$ is smooth (this stronger version of Sard's lemma follows directly from the usual one and the analyticity of maps under consideration). So for $w \in W^*$, $g'^{-1}(w)$ is smooth and there is exactly one connected component of $g^{-1}(w)$ that intersects $W''$, this by the preceding lemma.

Now assertion 1) follows directly, as $g'^{-1}(w)$ is smooth and connected near the connected $W''$, so irreducible. This implies that $V_w = d(g'^{-1}(w))$ is irreducible at $\sigma(w)$.

Proof of 2) Keeping the same notations, we see that $g' : V' \to W$ is a proper map between nonsingular varieties, so the Stein factorization of $g'$ exists, let $\bar{g} : V' \to \bar{W}$ be with connected fibres and $h : \bar{W} \to W$ finite such that $g' = h \circ \bar{g}$. As in the first part suppose $g'|_V : g'^{-1}(W^*) \to W^*$ to be a smooth map, i.e. that its fibres $g'^{-1}(w)$ are smooth. We will show that they are also connected, so irreducible, this implies that $V_w = d(g'^{-1}(w))$ is irreducible.

As $g'^{-1}(w) = (h \circ \bar{g})^{-1}(w) = \bar{g}^{-1}(h^{-1}(w))$ and the fibres of $\bar{g}$ are connected, we see that $g'^{-1}(w)$ is connected if and only if $h^{-1}(w)$ is a singleton. So we have to show that $h$ is one-to-one. Let $h' := \sigma \circ h : \bar{W} \to W'$ then $h$ is one-to-one exactly if $h'$ is one-to-one, as the section $\sigma$ is injective. Let $d| : W'' \to W'$ and $\bar{g}| : W'' \to W'$ be the restrictions of $d$ and $\bar{g}$ respectively. By hypothesis, $d|$ has connected fibres, yet $d^{-1}(w) = \bar{g}^{-1}(h'^{-1}(w))$ (see diagram) for $w \in W'$. So $h'$ is one-to-one. □

We shall need the last small technical lemma:

**Lemma 1.22.** — Let $h : W \to R$ be an holomorphic map between complex analytic spaces, with $W$ irreducible. Then some irreducible component of $R$ contains $h(W)$.
Proof. — Otherwise, for each irreducible component $R'$ of $R$, $h^{-1}(R')$ is of empty interior and closed in $W$. This contradicts Baire’s category theorem, because $W$ is covered by countably many such sets.

We now come to the crucial irreducibility lemma which allows to reduce the case $S$ irreducible to the case $S$ stationary.

**Lemma 1.23 [Ca81].—** Let $S \subset C(X)$ be an irreducible compact covering family and $R_n = R_n(S) \subset X \times X$ the graph of $n$-chains induced by $S$ on $X$ (cf 1.4). Note $p : R_n^\Delta \to X$ the restriction of the first projection to the union of its significant components, and for $x \in X$, let $R_n^\Delta(x)$ be its fibre over $x$.

Suppose $d_n := \dim(R_n^\Delta) = \dim(R_n^\Delta_{2n}) =: d_{2n}$. Then

1. $R_n^\Delta$ is symmetric,
2. $R_n^\Delta(x)$ is irreducible and locally irreducible at $(x,x)$ for a generic $x \in X$,
3. $R_n^\Delta$ is irreducible and locally irreducible at $(x,x)$ for a generic $x \in X$.

*Proof. —* 1) is obvious, since $R_n$ is symmetric.

2) follows from 3) and Lemma 1.21 applied to the proper map $p : R_n^\Delta \to X$ and its natural holomorphic section $\sigma : X \to \Delta_X$.

3) It is clearly sufficient to show that $R_n^\Delta$ is locally irreducible at the generic point $(x,x)$ of the diagonal, because then $R_n^\Delta$ will be irreducible. (Because otherwise, two of its components, both containing the diagonal, would provide distinct local irreducible components at each point of the diagonal).

We now assume by contradiction that $I_1, I_2$ are two local irreducible components of $R_n^\Delta$ at a generic point $(x,x)$ of the diagonal. We can assume, wlog that $\dim(I_1) = d_n$.

The respective sets of reducible points of $I_1, I_2$ are analytically constructible and do by construction not contain $\Delta_U$. So if $p_j : I_j \to U$ is the restriction of the $j$-th projection to $I_j$ ($j = 1, 2$), and $\sigma_j : U \to I_j$ its natural section via the diagonal, then $I_j$ is irreducible at the generic point of $\Delta_U$. So by Lemma 1.21 we see that the fibres $I_j(x) := p_j^{-1}(x)$ are irreducible and locally irreducible at $(x,x)$ for $x \in U$ generic. To limit notations we identify $I_j(x) \subset \{x\} \times X$ and its image in $X$, for $j = 1, 2$. 

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The second projection $p_2|: I_1 \rightarrow U$ induces a $U$-space structure on $I_1$, and similarly for $p_1|: I_2 \rightarrow U$. So we can define the fibred product

$$W := I_1 \times_U I_2 = \{(x, y), (y, z) | x \in U, y \in I_1(x), z \in I_2(y)\}.$$

We next define $h : W \rightarrow R_{2n}$, by $h((x, y), (y, z)) := (x, z)$. This is well-defined, as $(x, y)$ can be joined by an $n$-chain and so do $(y, z)$.

**Claim:** We can suppose wlog that $W$ is irreducible.

**Proof:** Let $q : I_1 \times_U I_2 \rightarrow I_1$ be the projection on the first factor of the fibered product, then the generic fibre $q^{-1}((x, y)) \cong I_2(y)$ is irreducible. $I_1$ itself is irreducible, so by the Irreducibility Lemma 1.10 there exists a Zariski open set $I_1^* \subset I_1$ such that $q^{-1}(I_1^*)$ is irreducible. In particular $U^* := p_1(I_1^*)$ is Zariski dense in $U$. We conclude that $q^{-1}(I_1^*)$ is irreducible and contains $\Delta_U$. Yet as $x \in U$ generic, we may suppose that $x \in U^*$ and up to restricting to $U^*$, that $I_1 \times_U I_2$ is irreducible.

We now show that this implies $h(W) \subset R_{2n}^\Delta$. Indeed, for $x$ in $U$, we have $((x, x), (x, x)) \in W$, so $\Delta_U \subset h(W)$. Because $W$ is irreducible, $h(W)$ is contained in one irreducible component $R^0$ of $R_{2n}$, by Lemma 1.22 above.

Suppose that $R^0$ is not significant, then $R^0 \cap \Delta_X$ is a proper analytic subset of the irreducible $\Delta_X$, so of empty interior in $\Delta_X$. In particular, it does not contain the relatively open $\Delta_U \subset \Delta_X$. Thus $R^0$ is significant, and $h(W) \subset R_{2n}^\Delta$.

Moreover, $h(W)$ contains

$$I_1 = h(\{(x, y), (y, y) | x \in U, y \in I_1(x)\})$$

and

$$I_2 = h(\{(x, x), (x, z) | x \in U, z \in I_2(x)\}).$$

Summing up, we see that $h(W) \subset R_{2n}^\Delta$ is contained in some local irreducible component $R'$ of $R_{2n}^\Delta$, and contains $I_1$ as a proper subset, as $I_1 \neq I_2$. This is a contradiction, because it implies, by the choice of $n$:

$$d_{2n} \geq \dim(R') > \dim(I_1) = d_n = d_{2n}.$$

(We implicitly used here the following standard property: if $A \subset B$ are irreducible complex analytic spaces, with $A$ closed in $B$, and if $A \neq B$, then: $\dim(B) > \dim(A)$.)

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To conclude the proof of Theorem 1.1 for an irreducible family $S$, it is thus now sufficient, due to Theorem 1.19, to prove:

**Theorem 1.24.** — Let $X$ be a compact connected normal complex space and $S$ an irreducible covering family for $X$. Then there exists an irreducible stationary covering family $S'$ for $X$ such that $R(S) = R(S')$.

**Remark.** — This theorem implies the existence of the $S$-quotient in the case where $S$ is supposed to be irreducible, the uniqueness following from the universal property 1.25. Indeed by Theorem 1.19 the $S'$-quotient exists, yet as the equivalence classes for $S$ and $S'$ coincide, this is also the $S$-quotient.

**Proof.** — The sequence $R_n^\Delta \subset X \times X$ is totally ordered and nondecreasing, so there exists some $n \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $\dim(R_n^\Delta) = d_n = d_{2n} = \dim(R_{2n}^\Delta)$. Fix such a $n$ and let $p : R_n^\Delta \to X$ be the restriction of the first projection. Then by Lemma 1.23 the generic fibre is irreducible, so $p$ is a fibration. By [C-P94, p. 331, prop. 2.20], this induces a unique meromorphic map $g : X \to \mathcal{C}(X)$ defined by $x \mapsto R_n^\Delta(x)$ on the Zariski open dense subset of $X$ consisting of points where the fibre of $p$ is irreducible, reduced and of minimal dimension. We note $S'$ the image of $g$. Because $X$ is compact and irreducible, $S'$ is also compact and irreducible by Theorem 1.7. Let $G_{S'} \subset S' \times X$ be the incidence graph of $S'$ then the image of $p_X : G_{S'} \to X$ is dense (it contains the points where $g$ is defined). But $G_{S'}$ is compact, so the continuous $p_X$ is surjective. We conclude that $S'$ is an irreducible covering family.

We show the following two claims:

1. $R(S) = R(S')$,
2. $S'$ is stationary.

Proof of 1) By prop. 1.14, $R_1^\Delta(S')$ is irreducible and so, by Lemma 1.23, $R_n^\Delta(S)$ is irreducible, too. For $x \in X$ generic, we have: $R_n^\Delta(S)(x) = R_n^\Delta(S')(x)$ by construction of $S'$. So the generic fibres of the first projections $p : R_1^\Delta(S') \to X$ and $p' : R_n^\Delta(S) \to X$ coincide, hence $R_1^\Delta(S')$ and $R_n^\Delta(S)$ are bimeromorphic. The bimeromorphic map between them is just the restriction of the identity map on $X \times X$, so admits a bijective extension. So we even have $R_1^\Delta(S') = R_n^\Delta(S) \subset R(S)$. Apply now the infinity Lemma 1.14 to both sides to obtain $R(S') = R(S)$.
Proof of 2) By part 1), \( R_1(S') = R_1^\Delta(S') = R_{n}^\Delta(S) \subset R_{n}(S) \), so \( R_2(S') \subset R_{2n}(S) \), in particular \( R_2^\Delta(S') \subset R_{2n}^\Delta(S) \). This implies \( \dim(R_2^\Delta(S')) \leq d_{2n} = d_n = \dim(R_1^\Delta(S')) \).

So we are left to show that \( p_X : G_{S'} \rightarrow X \) is a modification. Let \( B \subset X \) be an analytic subset such that \( g| : X \setminus B \rightarrow \mathcal{C}(X) \) is a holomorphic map. Then \( S^* := \text{im}(g|) \subset S' \) is a Zariski open irreducible subset of \( S \), and we note \( G_{S^*} := G_{S'} \cap (S^* \times (X \setminus B)) \subset G_{S'} \) (this is a subset of the incidence graph of \( S^* \)) which is Zariski open and dense in \( G_{S'} \). Then \( p_X| : G_{S^*} \rightarrow X \setminus B \) is holomorphic and the following diagram commutes (because \( g \circ p = g \circ p' \), if \( p' : R_{n}^\Delta \rightarrow X \) is the second projection, this because \( R_n^\Delta \) is symmetric; this is the main point of this part of the argument):

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
G_{S^*} & \xrightarrow{p_X|} & X \setminus B \\
\downarrow{p_{S^*}} & & \downarrow{g|} \\
S^* & & 
\end{array}
\]

For \( x \in X \setminus B \), we have \( p_X|^{-1}(x) \subset S^* \times \{x\} \). So if the fibre contains \( (s, x) \) and \( (s', x) \) then \( s = p_{S^*}((s, x)) = g(p_X|((s, x))) = g(p_X|((s', x))) = p_{S^*}((s', x)) = s' \) by the commutativity of the diagram. Summing up we see that \( p_X| \) is holomorphic and one-to-one, so it is a biholomorphism. As \( X \) and \( G_{S^*} \) are reduced, we obtain that \( p_X \) is a modification. \( \square \)

1.7. Proof of Theorem 1.1.

We shall now, as in [Ca99], consider the set of (equivalence classes of) almost-holomorphic fibrations \( f : X \rightarrow Y \) of which the general fibre is contained in some \( S \)-equivalence class (depending on that fibre). We denote by \( \mathcal{F}(X, S) \) this set of (equivalence classes) of fibrations.

If the \( S \)-quotient exists, it will belong to \( \mathcal{F}(X, S) \), and as its general fibres are of maximal possible dimension (=dimension of an \( S \)-equivalence class) its base space will be of minimal dimension among base spaces of fibrations in \( \mathcal{F}(X, S) \).

The proof now reduces to show that the inverse is true: If we choose a fibration in \( \mathcal{F}(X, S) \) with base space of minimal dimension, it is the \( S \)-quotient. The main argument is Lemma 1.29 which makes extensive use of the irreducible case.
We start with a preliminary easy observation:

**Proposition 1.25 (Universal Property of the S-Quotient).** — Let $X$ be a compact connected normal complex space and $S \subset C(X)$ an irreducible compact covering family for $X$. Let $q_s : X \to X_S$ be the $S$-quotient and $\pi : X \to Y$ be an almost holomorphic fibration on $Y$, a compact normal complex space such that the general fibre is contained in an $S$-equivalence class. Then there exists a unique almost holomorphic map $g : Y \to X_S$ such that $q_s = g \circ \pi$.

**Remark.** — This universal property shows that the $S$-quotient is unique up to meromorphic equivalence and completes the proof of Theorem 1.1 in the irreducible case. Note that the proof uses only the compactness of $X_S$ and not the irreducibility of $S$, hence remains valid for the case where the covering family $S'$ is not irreducible nor compact, as $X_S$ will stay compact (cf. proof of Thm 1.1).

**Proof.** — Uniqueness is obvious: For $y \in Y$ general, note $R_y$ the $S$-equivalence class containing the fibre $\pi^{-1}(y)$ then $g(y) := q_s(R_y)$ is the only possible choice. This defines $g$ on a dense set.

Existence: Let $f = (\pi, q_s) : X \to Y \times X_S$ and $\Gamma \subset Y \times X_S$ be the closure of its image. The projections $p_Y : \Gamma \to Y$ and $p_{X_S} : \Gamma \to X_S$ are surjective proper holomorphic mappings. We will show that $p_Y$ is a modification, then $g := p_{X_S} \circ (p_Y)^{-1}$ allows to conclude.

Note $I_{q_s}$ (resp. $I_f$) the indeterminacy locus of $q_s$ (resp. $f$). A general fibre $\pi^{-1}(y)$ is in a $S$-equivalence class, so is contracted by $q_s$. As $q_s$ and $f$ are almost holomorphic, it meets neither $I_{q_s}$ nor $I_f$. Now, $\pi^{-1}(y) = f^{-1}(p_Y^{-1}(y))$ is contracted by $q_s$, hence by $f$. So $p_Y^{-1}(y) = f(f^{-1}(p_Y^{-1}(y)))$ is a point, so there exists a open neighborhood $U \subset Y$ of $y$ such that $p_Y : p_Y^{-1}(U) \to U$ is finite. As the general points are dense in $Y$, $p_Y$ is finite.

But $\Gamma$ is irreducible as it is the image of the closure of the graph of $f$ in $X \times Y \times X_S$ by the projection $p_Y \times p_{X_S}$. So if $Y^* \subset Y$ is a Zariski open set such that for $y \in Y^*$, $\pi^{-1}(y)$ meets neither $I_{\pi}$ nor $I_{q_s}$,
then $\Gamma^* = p_Y^{-1}(Y^*)$ is Zariski open and dense in $\Gamma$. Note $X^* := f^{-1}(\Gamma^*)$, then the restrictions of $\pi$ and $f$ to $X^*$ are holomorphic. $\pi$ is a fibration, so the generic fibres are irreducible, hence connected. As $\pi = p_Y \circ f$ and for $y \in Y^*$, $\pi^{-1}(y) \subset X^*$, this implies that the restriction of $p_Y$ to $\Gamma^*$ is injective, hence a holomorphic inverse $p_Y^{-1} : Y^* \to p_Y^{-1}(Y^*)$ exists. As $p_Y$ is finite, it extends to a meromorphic map on $Y$.

We are left to show that $g$ is almost holomorphic. For $s \in X_S$ generic, $g^{-1}(s) = \pi(q_S^{-1}(s))$, yet the generic fibre of $q_S$ is contained in $X^*$, so its image by $\pi$ is in the dense $Y^*$.

We now proceed to construct step-by-step the $S$-quotient in the general case:

**Definition 1.26.** A fibration $f : X \to Y$ induces an equivalence relation on $X$ in the following way: for $y \in Y$, let $f^{-1}(y)$ be the (Chow-theoretic) fibre as defined in 1.2. By definition two points $x, x'$ in $X$ are 1-equivalent if there exists $y \in Y$ such that $x, x' \in f^{-1}(y)$. As every point $x$ is connected to itself, the graph of 1-chains $R_1(f) \subset X \times X$ is symmetric and contains the diagonal, hence induces an equivalence relation on $X$ (as in 1.16), whose graph will be denoted $R(f) \subset X \times X$.

**Definition 1.27.** Let $S$ be a not necessarily irreducible covering family for a compact connected normal complex space $X$. A fibration $f : X \to Y$ on a compact connected normal complex space $Y$ is subordinate to $S$ if a general fibre of $f$ is contained in an $S'$-equivalence class. We note $\mathcal{F}(X, S)$ the (non-empty) set of $S$-subordinate almost holomorphic fibrations of $X$.

Remark. The fibration $f$ is thus subordinate to $S$ iff $R^1(f) \subset R(S)$, or equivalently, if $R(f) \subset R(S)$.

**Definition 1.28.** For $S$ a covering family for $X$, let $S_i \subset S$ be an irreducible compact component. Note $G_{S_i}$ the incidence graph of $S_i$ and $p_{S_i}^X : G_{S_i} \to X$ the projection to $X$. For $f \in \mathcal{F}(X, S)$, we say that $S_i$ is $f$-covering if $f \circ p_{S_i}^X : G_{S_i} \to Y$ is surjective.

Remark. If $S_i$ is a covering family for $X$, it is $f$-covering. In fact, $S_i$ is $f$-covering if and only if a generic fibre of $f$ meets some cycle parametrized by $S_i$. 

TOME 54 (2004), FASCICULE 3
The following lemma provides a “constructive” method to find the S-quotient in finitely many (at most \(\dim(X)\)) effective steps. Start with an element of \(\mathcal{F}(X, S)\) (for example id) and an \(f\)-covering irreducible component \(S_i\) of \(S\). Then there are two possibilities: a generic cycle for \(S_i\) is contained in an \(f\)-fibre, then go on with the next \(f\)-covering irreducible component, if any. If this is not the case, construct an irreducible covering family \(S'\) and its quotient map \(q_{S'}\). Then \(q_{S'}\) is in \(\mathcal{F}(X, S)\) and we replace \(f\) by \(q_{S'}\). Continue until all \(f\)-covering irreducible components satisfy the first case, then \(f\) is the S-quotient (cf. proof of Thm. 1.1 below).

**Lemma 1.29.** — Let \(f : X \to Y \in \mathcal{F}(X, S)\) and \(S_i\) an \(f\)-covering irreducible component of \(S\). Then either:

1. \(R(S_i) \subset R(f)\), or,
2. there exists an irreducible compact covering family \(S'\) of \(X\) such that the \(S'\)-quotient \(q_{S'} : X \to X_{S'}\) satisfies the following properties,
   3. \(\exists g : Y \to X_{S'}\) an almost holomorphic mapping such that \(q_{S'} = g \circ f\) (in other words: \(f\) is subordinate to \(S'\)).
   4. \(\dim(X_{S'}) < \dim(Y)\)
   5. \(R(S_i) \subset R(S')\)
   6. \(R(S') \subset R(S)\)

**Proof.** — Assume \(R(S_i) \not\subset R(f)\); then \(R_1(S_i) \not\subset R_1(f)\) (cf. proof of the infinity lemma). So for a generic \(s \in S_i\), we have \(\dim(f(|Z_s|)) > 0\), otherwise the irreducible cycle \(|Z_s|\) would be contained in some fibre of \(f\). Because \(S_i\) is \(f\)-covering, a generic cycle \((Z_s)_{s \in S_i}\) is not contained in the indeterminacy locus \(I_f\) nor in any exceptional fibre of the fibration \(f\) (i.e. fibres of dimension larger than that of the generic fibre).

In this case set \(|Z^*_s| = |Z_s| \setminus I_f\) and define \(f(|Z_s|) := \overline{f(|Z^*_s|)}\) to be the Zariski closure. By construction \(f(|Z_s|)\) is an irreducible compact cycle in \(Y\) and up to restricting to a Zariski open set \(S^*_i \subset S_i\) we can suppose the family of cycles to be equidimensional. The same argument as in the proof of Lemma 1.30 below, shows that \((f(|Z_s|))_{s \in S^*_i}\) is an analytic family in \(Y\). If \(\Gamma \subset S_i \times Y\) denotes the closure of the incidence graph of this family, then the generic fibres of the projection of \(\Gamma\) on \(S_i\) are equidimensional, and by [C-P94], or [Ba79], induce a meromorphic map \(\varphi : S_i \to \mathcal{C}(Y)\). Note \(S_i^*\) the normalization of the closure of the image, then \(S_i^*\) parametrizes an analytic family on \(Y\). It is even an irreducible compact covering family as \(S_i\) is \(f\)-covering.
If we restrict $S_i^*$, a bit further, an application of Lemma 1.30 shows that $Z_s := f^{-1}(f(|Z_s|))$ for $s \in S_i^*$ defines an analytic family in $X$. As before, passing by the closure of the graph, we get a meromorphic map from $S_i$ to $\mathcal{C}(X)$. Normalizing its image, we obtain an irreducible analytic family $S'$, which is compact by Theorem 1.7, the generic member of which is some $Z_s'$, constructed above. This is a covering family, since it contains the dense family $(Z_s')_{s \in S_i^*}$.

Let $q_{S'} : X \to X_{S'}$ be the $S'$-quotient of $X$. By construction, a generic fibre of $f$ is contained in some $Z_s'$ (which is an $S'$-chain of length one). It follows that a general fibre of $f$ is contained in a $S'$-equivalence class and we use the above universal property of the $S'$-quotient to obtain an almost holomorphic $g : Y \to X_{S'}$ such that $q_{S'} = g \circ f$.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
X \\
\downarrow f \\
Y \\
\uparrow g \\
X_{S'}
\end{array}
\]

We check the other properties stated:

a) A generic $q_{S'}$-fibre is an $S'$-equivalence class, so contains at least one $|Z_s'|$. By hypothesis its image $f(|Z_s|) = f(|Z_s|)$ is of positive dimension, so a generic fibre of $g$ is positive dimensional, hence $\dim(Y) > \dim(X_{S'})$.

b) By construction of $S'$, a generic $S_i$-chain of length one is contained in a similar $S'$-chain. So, $R_1(S_i) \subset R_1(S')$ by irreducibility of both sides, and we conclude by the infinity lemma.

c) It is sufficient to show that $R_1(S') \subset R(S)$ (by the infinity lemma, again). By a density and irreducibility argument, we are left to show that $Z_s' = f^{-1}(f(|Z_s|))$ is contained in some $S$-equivalence class, for $s \in S_i^*$ generic.

However, $f$ is subordinate to $S$, and so for $y \in f(|Z_s|)$ generic, the fibre $f^{-1}(y)$ is contained in one $S$-equivalence class, depending on $y$. But each such fibre of $f$ contains some element of the length one $S_i$-chain $|Z_s|$. As $S_i$ is a subset of $S$, $|Z_s|$ is in a single $S$-equivalence class, and so, any $x \in f^{-1}(f(|Z_s|))$ generic there belongs to the $S$-equivalence class containing $|Z_s|$. Thus also $R_1(S') \subset R(S)$, as claimed.

In the course of the preceding proof, we used the following:
LEMMA 1.30. — Let $S$ be an irreducible covering family for $Y$ and $f : X \to Y$ an almost holomorphic fibration between compact connected normal complex spaces. Then there exists a Zariski open set $S^* \subset S$ such that

$$Z_s^* := \overline{f^{-1}(|Z_s^*|)} \quad \forall \ s \in S^*$$

defines an analytic family of cycles on $X$, where $|Z_s^*| = |Z_s| \setminus f(I_f)$ and the closure is taken in the Zariski topology.

Proof. — The support of a generic cycle $Z_s$ is not contained in the image of the indeterminacy locus $f(I_f)$ (cf. 1.2). Note that for $y \notin f(I_f)$ the usual and the Chow-theoretic fibre coincide, so no distinction will be necessary in the following.

As $Z_s$ is irreducible, $|Z_s^*| = |Z_s| \setminus f(I_f)$ is an irreducible relatively Zariski open set in $|Z_s|$. As $f$ is a fibration, we may apply the remark after the irreducibility lemma to obtain that for a generic $s$, $f^{-1}(|Z_s^*|)$ is open and irreducible in $X$. Let $S^* \subset S$ be the Zariski open set where this is satisfied and the Zariski closure $Z_s^* := \overline{f^{-1}(|Z_s^*|)}$ is of dimension $\dim(|Z_s|) + \dim(X) - \dim(Y)$.

We want to show that $(Z_s^*)_{s \in S^*}$ is an analytic family. But $S^*$ being normal, [Ba75, par. 1, Thm. 1] states that if the incidence graph $G_{S^*} = \{(s, x) \mid x \in |Z_s^*|\} \subset S^* \times X$ is analytic and the projection $p_{S^*} : G_{S^*} \to S^*$ is proper surjective with equidimensional fibres, the family $Z_s^*$ is analytic.

The family $(Z_s)_{s \in S^*} \subset Y$ being analytic, its incidence graph

$$G_S = \{(s, x) \mid x \in |Z_s|\} \subset S^* \times Y$$

is analytic and the meromorphic map $(id, f) : G_{S^*} \to G_{S^*}$ is holomorphic on a dense subset $V$ of $G_{S^*}$ (for $s$ fixed, $(id, f)$ is holomorphic on $\{s\} \times f^{-1}(|Z_s^*|)$). Being by definition the preimage of the analytic space $G_{S^*}$, $V$ is locally analytic, so its Zariski closure $G_{S^*}$ is locally analytic and closed, hence analytic. As $X$ is compact, $p_{S^*}$ is proper surjective and by the condition on the dimension imposed above, its fibres are equidimensional. □

Proof of Theorem 1.1. —

Let $f : X \to Y$, $f \in F(X, S)$ be an almost holomorphic fibration such that $\dim(Y)$ is minimal and note $(S_i)_{i \in I}$ the irreducible components of $S$. We show that $f$ is the $S$-quotient. Define

$$J := \{i \in I \mid S_i \text{ is not } f\text{-covering}\}$$

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For $i \in J$, by definition of $f$-covering, $f \circ p_X^i(G_{S_i})$ is analytic of codimension 1 or more in every point, and so:

$$E := \cup_{i \in J} (f \circ p_X^i(G_{S_i}))$$

is contained in a countable union of proper analytic subsets of $Y$.

If $F = f^{-1}(y)$ is a general fibre such that $y \notin (f(I_f) \cup E)$, then $F$ is an $R(f)$-equivalence class as it does not meet $I_f$, so has no intersection with other $f$-chains of length one.

Now on the one hand, by Lemma 1.29, for $i \in (I \setminus J)$, we have $R(S_i) \subset R(f)$, so if $Z_s$ is a cycle parametrized by $S_i$, $i \in (I \setminus J)$, we have either $|Z_s| \subset F$, or $F \cap |Z_s| = \emptyset$. On the other hand if $Z_s$ a cycle parametrized by $S_i$, $i \in J$, as $F$ is general, we have $F \cap |Z_s| = \emptyset$.

It follows that $F$ is $S$-saturated, as it is the union of the $R(S)$-equivalence classes generated by the cycles it contains. As $f$ is supposed to be $S$-subordinate, $F$ is contained in a single $S$-equivalence class.

We conclude that a general $f$-fibre is an $R(S)$-equivalence class. □

### 1.8 An estimate of the length of $S$-chains.

The above proof of Theorem 1.1 easily gives an estimate of the length of the $S$-chains connecting two general $S$-equivalent points of $X$ (see [K-M-M92] and [DeOl] for similar results).

**Proposition 1.31.** Let $S$ be an irreducible covering family of a normal variety $X$. Let $q_S : X - \rightarrow X_S$ be the $S$-quotient of $X$ and $F$ a regular fibre of $q_S$ (i.e., $F$ is assumed to be contained in the locus where $q_S$ is regular, or holomorphic. The existence of regular fibres is equivalent to $q_S$ being almost-holomorphic). Then any two points of $F$ are joined by an $S$-chain of length at most $l := 2f-r$, where $r := \dim(Z_s)$, and $f := \dim(X) - \dim(X_S)$ is the dimension of a generic fibre of $q_S$. In particular, $l \leq 2f-1$, unless $S$ is the family of points of $X$.

**Proof.** Assume the sequence $d_1, d_2, d_4, \ldots, d_{2k}$ is strictly increasing, while $d_{2k} = d_{2k+1}$. Thus $d_{2k} \geq d_1 + k$. From the proof of 1.1, we see that $d_1 = m + r$, while $d_{2k} = m + f$, if $m := \dim(X)$. Thus $m + f = d_{2k} \geq d_1 + k = m + r + k$, and $k \leq f - r$. Hence the claim, since by construction, two points of $F$ are connected by a $T$-chain of length $2^k$. □

**Remark.** The proofs given here work also when $S$ has all of its components $S_i$ covering, if $r$ denotes the infimum of the corresponding $r_i$’s.
So, in this case, we always get: \( l \leq 2^{f-1} \). The estimate is then in this case slightly sharper than the one \( l \leq 2^f - 1 \) given in [K-M-M92], [De01]. The estimate \( l \leq 2^f - 1 \) can easily be deduced but apparently not improved in the general case from 1.31, by the reduction process described in the previous section.

In the general case, we have:

**PROPOSITION 1.32 ([De01], [K-M-M92]).** — Any two points of a regular fibre \( F' \) of \( q : X \to X_{S'} \) can be connected by an \( S' \)-chain of length at most \( l' \leq 2^b - 1 \), if \( b = \dim(X) - \dim(X_{S'}) \) is the dimension of \( F' \).

(Recall from 1.31 that a fibre of an holomorphic fibration is said to be regular if it does not meet the indeterminacy locus of that fibration, or equivalently: is contained in the locus where \( q \) is holomorphic).

**Proof.** — Using the same notations as in the proof of 1.29 above, we just need to show that if this estimates holds for \( f \) in place of \( q_{S'} \), it holds also for \( f' := q_{S'} \), where \( R(q_{S'}) \) is the equivalence relation generated by \( R^1(f) \) and \( R^1(S_i) \), \( S' \) being constructed as in 1.29 from \( f \) and \( S_i \), an irreducible \( f \)-covering family of \( X \).

By 1.31, any two points of any regular fibre \( F' \) of \( f' \) are connected by an \( S' \)-chain of length \( l'' \leq 2^{b'-r'} \leq 2^{b'-b-1} \), where \( b' := \dim(F') \), \( r' := \dim(Z_{S'}) \geq b + 1 \), with \( b := \dim(F) \), and \( F \) any regular fibre of \( f \). By the definition of \( Z_{S'} \), we immediately see that any two of its points are connected by an \((S_i,f)\)-chain of length at most \( 2l + 1 \), if any two points of any fibre of \( f \) can be connected by a \( f \)-chain of length \( l \). By the induction hypothesis on \( f \), we can take \( l := (2^b - 1) \). So that any two points of any fibre of \( f' \) can be connected by an \( S' \)-chain of length at most \( l' \leq l''(2l + 1) \leq 2^{b'-b-1}(2(2^b - 1) + 1) \leq 2^{b'} - 1 \), as claimed. \( \square \)

2. Zariski regularity.

We shall now introduce the notion of \( Z \)-regularity for subsets of arbitrary analytic spaces. This is a weak notion of countable constructibility which seems to be satisfied by the set of fibres enjoying an "analytic" property, for (essentially) arbitrary holomorphic maps between complex spaces.

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DEFINITION 2.1. — Let $A \subset S$, where $S$ is a complex space. We say that $A$ is $\mathcal{Z}$-regular (in $S$) if for each irreducible Zariski closed subset $T$ of $S$, $A \cap T$ either contains the general point of $T$, or is contained in a countable union of Zariski closed proper subsets of $T$. In the latter case, we say that $A$ is of first Zariski category in $T$.

There are many examples of this situation (actually it rather seems that counterexamples are unnatural in algebraic or analytic geometry).

THEOREM 2.2. — Let $X \in \mathcal{C}$. Let $A_P(X) = A_P \subset \mathcal{C}(X)$ be the set of points $t$ parametrising the set of irreducible reduced subvarieties $Y_t$ of $X$ possessing a certain property $P$.

Then $A_P(X) = A_P$ is $\mathcal{Z}$-regular in $\mathcal{C}(X)$ if $P$ is any one of the following properties.

1. $Y_t$ is special.
2. $Y_t$ is a (possibly singular) rational curve.
3. $Y_t$ has algebraic dimension at least $d$, $d$ any given nonnegative integer.
4. $\pi_1(\bar{V}_t)_X \in \mathcal{G}$, where $\mathcal{G}$ is a class of (isomorphism classes) of groups, and $\pi_1(\bar{V}_t)_X$ is the image in $\pi_1(X)$ of the fundamental group of the normalisation of $V_t$.

Proof. — For 1 (resp. 3, 4), use [Ca04] and Proposition 2.3 below (resp. [Ca80'], [Ca99]). Assertion 2 is easy. □

Recall that a compact complex manifold $X$ is said to be in Fujiki’s class $\mathcal{C}$ if it is bimeromorphic to some compact Kähler manifold $X'$ (depending on $X$).

PROPOSITION 2.3. — Let $P$ be a property such that if $f : X \to Y$ is any fibration such that $X \in \mathcal{C}$, then the set of irreducible fibres of $f$ having property $P$ is $\mathcal{Z}$-regular (in $Y$). Then, for any $X \in \mathcal{C}$, $A_P(X)$ is $\mathcal{Z}$-regular in $\mathcal{C}(X)$.

Proof. — Let $T \subset \mathcal{C}(X)$ be irreducible Zariski closed. Let $V = V_T$ be the incidence graph of the family $T$. By [Ca80], $V \in \mathcal{C}$. Thus $A_P(X) \cap T$ is $\mathcal{Z}$-regular in $\mathcal{C}(X)$, by the hypothesis made on $P$. □

PROPOSITION 2.4. — Let $A \subset S$ be $\mathcal{Z}$-regular. There exists a countable or finite family of Zariski closed irreducible subsets $S_i$ of $S$ such that:
1. for each $i$, $A_i := A \cap S_i$ contains the general point of $S_i$,

2. $A$ is the union of the $A_i$’s.

The family $S_i$ is moreover unique if it is irredundant. (That is, if there is no inclusion among the $S_i$’s in the sense that if $i \neq j$, then $S_i$ is not included in $S_j$, and conversely $S_j$ is not included in $S_i$).

The $S_i$’s are then called the components of $A$.

Proof. — Let $\overline{A}$ be the Zariski closure of $A$ in $S$, and let $A'$ be an irreducible component of $\overline{A}$. Consider $A \cap A'$: it either contains the general point of $A'$, or is contained in a countable union $B$ of Zariski closed subsets of $A'$. In the first case, $A'$ is a component of $A$. Proceed then in the same way with $\overline{A}$, but after removing its component $A'$. In the second case, remove $A'$ from $\overline{A}$, and replace it by $B$. Repeat this process, observing that for each component of $\overline{A}$, we let at each step decrease the dimension of the remaining irreducible components. So the process ends in finitely many steps for each irreducible component of $S$, which shows the existence statement.

The uniqueness statement is easy to check: assume we have two irredundant families $S_i$ and $S_j'$ of components of $A$. It is sufficient to show that any $S_i$ is contained in some $S_j'$. If not, $A \cap S_i$ is contained in the countable union of the $A \cap S_j'$. It is then of first Zariski category in $\overline{A}$, which contradicts to the definition of a component of $A$. \(\square\)

The notion of $Z$-regularity has applications to the construction of meromorphic quotients.

**Theorem 2.5.** — Let $X \in C$ be normal. Let $A \subset C(X)$ be $Z$-regular. Let $T := T(A)$ be the family of components of $A$, as defined in 2.4. (If $T$ is not covering, we add the family of points of $X$). Let $q_A := q_T : X -\to X_T := X_A$ be the $T$-quotient of $X$. Let $t \in A$ such that $V_t$ meets some general fibre $F$ of $q_T$.

Then $V_t$ is contained in $F$. We call $q_T$ the $A$-reduction of $X$.

Proof. — By the defining property of $q_T$, its general fibre $F$ is an equivalence class for $R(T(A))$. In particular, any $V_t$, $t \in A$, is either disjoint from, or contained in $F$. \(\square\)
Remark. — Two points in such a fibre are joined by a $T(A)$-chain, but not necessarily by an $A$-chain. Such a $T(A)$-chain turns out to be an $A$-chain if $A$ is stable under specialisation, in the sense defined in the question just below for a family of special subvarieties of $X$.

For example, this is the case for properties 2, and 3 in 2.2 above. For property 2, this is simply because rational curves specialise to unions of such. For property 3, see [Ca80']. The case of property 1 is not presently known, but a positive answer to the following question is expected.

**Question:** Let $f : X \to Y$ be a special fibration, with $X \in \mathcal{C}$. Is each irreducible component of $X_y$ special, for each $y \in Y$?

An immediate application of 2.5 above, obtained explicitly in [Ca92] from [Ca81] by taking for $A$ the family of rational curves, and in [K-M-M92] in the algebraic case by using their glueing lemma, is the following.

**Theorem 2.6.** — Let $X \in \mathcal{C}$ be normal. There exists an almost holomorphic map $r_X : X \to R(X)$, called the rational quotient of $X$ such that:

1. the fibres of $r_X$ are rationally connected (i.e. any two of their points are contained in a connected union of finitely many rational curves),
2. if a rational curve $C$ inside $X$ meets some general fibre $F$ of $r_X$, then $C$ is contained in $F$.

Moreover, $A$-reductions can be constructed in a relative situation as well.

**Theorem 2.7.** — Let $X \in \mathcal{C}$ be normal. Let $f : X \to Y$ be a holomorphic fibration. Let $A \subset C(X)$ be $Z$-regular. Let $A_f \subset A$ be the set of all $t's \in A$ such that $V_t$ is contained in some fibre of $f$ (depending on $t$).

Then:

1. $A_f \subset C(X)$ is also $Z$-regular.

2. If $q_{A_f} : X \to X_{A_f}$ is the $A_f$-reduction of $X$, there exists a factorisation $h_{A_f} : X_{A_f} \to Y$ such that $f = h_{A_f} \circ q_{A_f}$.

3. Moreover, for $y \in Y$ general, the restriction of $q_{A_f}$ to $X_y$ is the $A_y$-reduction of $X_y$, if $A_y := A_f \cap C(X_y)$.

The map $q_{A_f}$ is called the $A$-reduction of $f$. 
Proof. — The fact that $A_f$ is $Z$-regular is obvious, because $A$ is $Z$-regular, and $A_f$ is the intersection of $A$ with its Zariski closed subset $C(X/Y)$ consisting of $t'$s such that $V_t$ is contained in some fibre of $f$. We thus have a quotient $q_{A_f}$ for $A_f$.

The natural map $f : (X ) \to Y$ now defines the factorisation $f = h_{A_f} \circ q_{A_f}$, because the generic equivalence classe for $T(A_f)$ is obviously contained in some fibre of $f$. (Recall indeed that, according to the notations introduced in 2.5, $T(A_f)$ stands for the family of components of $A_f$, defined in 2.4).

We shall now show that, for $y$ general in $Y$, $(T(A_f))_y = T(A_y)$. This will immediately imply that $(X_y)_{A_y} = (X_y)_{(A_f)}$, and so the claim. (Recall that we denote by $Z_y$ the fibre over $y$ of a map $Q : Z \to Y$, for $y \in Y$, and by $Z_S$ the meromorphic quotient of $Z$ by the equivalence relation generated by a family $S$ of subvarieties $(S_i)_{i \in J}$ in $C(Z)$).

Notice first that, by definition, $A_y = (A_f)_y$, for any $y$. Next, if $T'(A_f)$ is the union of all components of $T(A_f)$ surjectively mapped to $Y$ by $f_*$, then $(T'(A_f))_y = (T(A_f))_y$ for $y$ general in $Y$. It is thus sufficient to show that $(T'(A_f))_y = T(A_y)$ for $y$ general in $Y$.

We shall now show this statement. First, we have, for $y$ general, $A_y = (A_f)_y \subset (T'(A_f))_y$. This gives the inclusion: $T(A_y) \subset (T'(A_f))_y$.

To show the reverse inclusion, let $T$ be a component of $T'(A_f)$. Then: $T_y \subset T(A_y)$ for general $y$. Indeed: $(T - (A_f \cap T))$ is contained in a countable union of Zariski closed proper subsets $B_j$ of $T$ (by $Z$-regularity). For each $j$, the set $C_j$ of $y$'s in $Y$ such that $(B_j \cap T_y)$ has empty interior in $T_y$ is Zariski closed, and proper in $Y$. If $C$ is the union of the $C_j$'s, and $y$ is not in $C$, we conclude that $(T'(A_f))_y \subset T(A_y)$, as claimed. □

The main applications of 2.7 are to construct relative versions of the rational quotient, of the core, and other natural fibrations. For example, applying 2.7 to the family of rational curves on $X \in C$, we get:

Proposition 2.8. — Let $f : X \to Y$ be a holomorphic fibration, with $X \in C$, normal. Then $f$ has a rational quotient, that is, a factorisation $f = R_f \circ r_f$, where $r_f : X \to R(f)$ is a fibration which induces the rational quotient $r_{X_y} : X_y \to R(X_y) = (R(f))_y$ for $y$ general in $Y$. 

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**Definition 3.1.** — Let \( A \subset C(X) \) be \( \mathbb{Z} \)-regular, for \( X \in C \), normal. We say that \( A \) is stable if it has the following two properties.

1. **(stabl)** The general fibre of \( q_T : X \to X_T \) is in \( A \) if \( T \) is any covering irreducible component of \( A \), in the sense of definition 2.4 above.
2. **(stab2)** If \( V \subset X \) is a subvariety and \( f : V \to W \) is a fibration with general fibre \( V_w \) in \( A \), and if there exists a subvariety \( W' \subset V \) such that \([W'] \in A\), and \( f(W') = W\), then \([V] \in A\). (Said otherwise: \( V \) is in \( A \) if it is fibered over \( W \) with fibers in \( A \), and with a transversal \( W' \) also in \( A \)).

(By abuse of language, we say that a subvariety \( Z \) of \( X \) is in \( A \) if the point \([Z] \in C(X)\) which parametrises this subvariety is in \( A \)).

Let us give some examples.

**Theorem 3.2.** — Let \( X \in C \), and let \( A_P(X) \subset C(X) \) be as in 2.2. Then:

1. \( A_P \) is stable, if \( P \) is the property of being special and \( X \) is smooth.
2. \( A_P \) is stable, if \( P \) is the property that \( \pi_1(V_t)_X \in \mathcal{G} \), where \( \mathcal{G} \) is a class of (isomorphism classes) groups which is stable in the sense of [Ca99]. (Such classes are the class of finite, or solvable groups, for example).

The proof is given in [Ca04] for assertion 1, and in [Ca99] for assertion 2. \( \square \)

The basic result about stability is the following.

**Theorem 3.3.** — Let \( A \subset C(X) \) be \( \mathbb{Z} \)-regular and stable, for \( X \in C \), normal. Let \( q_A : X \to X_A \) be the \( A \)-reduction of \( X \), as defined in 2.5. Then the general fibre of \( q_A \) is in \( A \).

**Proof.** — Because of [stabl], the statement is obviously satisfied for the quotient of \( X \) by any of the covering irreducible components of \( T(A) \), and so for the first step of the construction of \( q_A \), as exposed in 1.6.

To deal with the general case, we proceed by induction on the number of steps needed to construct \( q_T \), with \( T = T(A) \), this number \( k \) of steps being defined as in the proof of 1.32. We are thus reduced to show that, if \( f : X \to Y \) is an almost holomorphic fibration with its general fibre
in $A$, and if $T' \subset T(A)$ is irreducible compact, and parametrises a family $V_t$ of cycles of $X$ such that $V_t$ is irreducible, reduced and is in $A$ for $t$ general in $T'$, and if, moreover, the family $T'$ is $f$-covering and such that $\dim(f(V_t)) > 0$, for $t$ generic in $T$, the $T''$-quotient $q_{T''} : X \rightarrow X_{T''}$ of $X$ has general fibres in $A$, if $T'' \subset C(X)$ is defined as in the proof of Lemma 1.29. By the property [stab 1], it is sufficient to show that the general member $V_t'$ of the family parametrised by $T''$ is in $A$ for $t$ general in $T'$. But this is immediate, by property [stab 2], since by its very definition, $f|V_t' : V_t' := f^{-1}(f(V_t)) \rightarrow W := f(V_t)$ has general fibres in $A$, and has a subvariety $W'$ (namely: $W' := V_t$) which is in $A$, and is mapped surjectively onto $W$ by $f|V_t'$.

From 3.2 and 3.3, we immediately deduce:

**COROLLARY 1.** — If $X \in C$ is smooth, the general fibre of the core of $X$ is special.

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