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# Fundamental weights, permutation weights and Weyl character formula

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**Abstract.** For a finite Lie algebra  $G_N$  of rank  $N$ , the Weyl orbits  $W(\Lambda^{++})$  of strictly dominant weights  $\Lambda^{++}$  contain  $\dim W(G_N)$  number of weights, where  $\dim W(G_N)$  is the dimension of its Weyl group  $W(G_N)$ . For any  $W(\Lambda^{++})$ , there is a very peculiar subset  $\varrho(\Lambda^{++})$  for which we always have

$$\dim \varrho(\Lambda^{++}) = \dim W(G_N) / \dim W(A_{N-1}).$$

For any dominant weight  $\Lambda^+$ , the elements of  $\varrho(\Lambda^+)$  are called *permutation weights*.

It is shown that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the elements of  $\varrho(\Lambda^{++})$  and  $\varrho(\rho)$  where  $\rho$  is the Weyl vector of  $G_N$ . The concept of the signature factor which enters the Weyl character formula can be relaxed in such a way that signatures are preserved under this one-to-one correspondence in the sense that corresponding permutation weights have the same signature. Once the permutation weights and their signatures are specified for a dominant  $\Lambda^+$ , calculation of the character  $\text{Ch } R(\Lambda^+)$  for the irreducible representation  $R(\Lambda^+)$  will then be provided by  $A_N$  multiplicity rules governing the generalized Schur functions. The main idea is again to express everything in terms of the so-called *fundamental weights* with which we obtain a quite relevant specialization in applications of the Weyl character formula. To provide simplifications in practical calculations, a reduction formula governing the classical Schur functions is also given. As the most suitable example,  $E_6$ , which requires a sum over 51 840 Weyl group elements, is studied explicitly. This will be instructive also for an explicit application of  $A_5$  multiplicity rules.

As a result, it will be seen that the Weyl or Weyl–Kac character formulae find explicit applications no matter how large the rank of the underlying algebra.

## 1. Introduction

It is well known that summations over Weyl groups of Lie algebras enter many areas of physics as well as mathematics. They are at the heart of all character calculations for finite [1] and also affine [2] Lie algebras and hence are of great importance in calculations of weight multiplicities [3] or in decompositions [4] of tensor products of irreducible representations. In high-energy physics, it is known that calculations of fusion coefficients [5] or  $S$ -matrices which appear in modular transformations [6] of affine characters are directly related to summations over Weyl groups. This, however, is not an easy task, except for a few cases which correspond to some Lie algebras of low rank. Let us emphasize, for instance, that the summations are over 51 840, 2 903 040 and 696 729 600 Weyl group elements for  $E_6$ ,  $E_7$  and  $E_8$  Lie algebras, respectively. It is therefore worthwhile to study the problem more closely.

In a previous work [7] we showed that in applications of the Weyl character formula for  $A_N$  Lie algebras the sums over Weyl groups can be represented by permutations. This is

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in essence in line with the fact that  $A_N$  Weyl groups are already the permutation groups of  $(N + 1)$  objects. It is interesting to note, however, that this can be seen only when one uses some properly chosen set of weights which we call *fundamental weights*. We also showed that the signatures of the Weyl reflections can then be given precisely. One could therefore expect there to be a way of extending this procedure to any other finite Lie algebra  $\mathbf{G}_N$  in view of the fact that it always has an  $A_{N-1}$  subalgebra.

For this, let us recall that for any dominant weight  $\Lambda^+$  of  $\mathbf{G}_N$  one has a strictly dominant weight  $\Lambda^{++} \equiv \Lambda^+ + \rho$ , where  $\rho$  is the Weyl vector of  $\mathbf{G}_N$ . The character  $\text{Ch } R(\Lambda^+)$  of the corresponding irreducible representation  $R(\Lambda^+)$  is then given by

$$\text{Ch } R(\Lambda^+) = \frac{A(\Lambda^{++})}{A(\rho)} \quad (1.1)$$

where

$$A(\mu) \equiv \sum_{\omega} \epsilon(\omega) e^{\omega(\mu)} \quad (1.2)$$

can be defined for any weight  $\mu$ . The sum here is over the Weyl group  $W(G_N)$  and  $\epsilon(\omega)$  is the signature of the Weyl reflection  $\omega$ . The main emphasis now is on the fact that, for any strictly positive dominant weight  $\Lambda^{++}$ , the number of elements of Weyl orbit  $W(\Lambda^{++})$  is always equal to the dimension of the corresponding Weyl group. Hence this allows us to re-write (1.2) in the form

$$A(\Lambda^{++}) \equiv \sum_{\mu \in W(\Lambda^{++})} \epsilon(\mu) e^{\mu} \quad (1.3)$$

where  $W(\Lambda^{++})$  is the corresponding Weyl orbit. One must immediately note here that the concept of signature encountered in (1.2) is conveniently relaxed in (1.3) in such a way that we introduce a signature  $\epsilon(\mu)$  for each and every weight  $\mu$  within the Weyl orbit  $W(\Lambda^{++})$ . It will be seen in what follows that (1.3) is a quite relevant form of (1.2) if one aims to use it in the Weyl character formula (1.1). To this end, the concept of *permutation weight* is of central importance.

## 2. Permutation weights

It is known that the branching rules  $\mathbf{G}_N \rightarrow A_{N-1}$  give us irreducible  $A_{N-1}$  representations which participate in the decomposition of an irreducible representation of  $G_N$ . Instead, here we want to do the same for Weyl orbits rather than representations. For this, the following definition seems to be useful.

A Weyl orbit  $W(\Lambda^+)$  always includes a subset  $\varrho(\Lambda^+)$  of weights having the form

$$\sum_{i=1}^{N-1} k_i \lambda_i - k \lambda_N \quad k_i \in \mathbb{Z}^+ \quad k \in \mathbb{Z} \quad (2.1)$$

where  $\mathbb{Z} (\mathbb{Z}^+)$  is the set of integers (positive integers). The elements of  $\varrho(\Lambda^+)$  are called the *permutation weights* of  $\Lambda^+$ .

The  $\lambda_I$  and  $\alpha_I$  ( $I = 1, 2, \dots, N$ ) are respectively the fundamental dominant weights and the simple roots of  $G_N$ . For details of Lie algebra technology we refer to the excellent book of Humphreys [8]. As will be seen from the permutational lemma given in our previous work [9], the Weyl orbits of  $A_N$  Lie algebras are stable under permutations and hence this allows us to determine the complete weight structure of an  $A_N$  Weyl orbit. The permutation weights will give us the same possibility, but for any finite Lie algebra  $G_N$  other than  $A_N$  Lie algebras. We

will therefore show now an explicit way of obtaining all permutation weights of a Weyl orbit  $W(\Lambda^+)$  of  $G_N$ .

Let us first emphasize by definition that the sum of two permutation weights is again a permutation weight. Let  $\varrho(\lambda)$  and  $\varrho(\lambda')$  be the sets of permutation weights for  $\lambda$  and  $\lambda'$ . It is then clear that

$$\varrho(\lambda + \lambda') \subset \varrho(\lambda) \cup \varrho(\lambda') \tag{2.2}$$

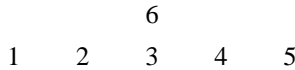
and for any element  $\mu \in \varrho(\lambda) \cup \varrho(\lambda')$  one can also state  $\mu \in \varrho(\lambda + \lambda')$  on condition that

$$(\mu, \mu) = (\lambda + \lambda', \lambda + \lambda') \tag{2.3}$$

where  $(\cdot, \cdot)$  is the scalar product which can be introduced on the weight lattice of  $\mathbf{G}_N$ . It is therefore sufficient to know the  $\varrho(\lambda_I)$  ( $I = 1, 2, \dots, N$ ) in order to obtain the set  $\varrho(\Lambda^+)$  of permutation weights for any dominant weight  $\Lambda^+$  which is known to be expressed by

$$\Lambda^+ = \sum_{I=1}^N k_I \lambda_I \quad k_I \in \mathbb{Z}^+.$$

We find it convenient here to exemplify our work in the Lie algebra of  $E_6$  with the following Coxeter–Dynkin diagram:



The permutation weight subsets of its fundamental Weyl orbits will then be given by

$$\begin{aligned} \varrho(\lambda_1) &\equiv \{\lambda_1, \lambda_1 - \lambda_6, \lambda_4 - \lambda_6\} \\ \varrho(\lambda_2) &\equiv \{\lambda_2, \lambda_2 - 2\lambda_6, \lambda_3 + \lambda_5 - 2\lambda_6, \lambda_1 + \lambda_4 - \lambda_6, \lambda_1 + \lambda_4 - 2\lambda_6, 2\lambda_1 - \lambda_6\} \\ \varrho(\lambda_3) &\equiv \{\lambda_3, \lambda_1 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_5 - 3\lambda_6, \lambda_1 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_5 - 2\lambda_6, \lambda_2 + 2\lambda_5 - 2\lambda_6, \\ &\quad \lambda_2 + \lambda_4 - 3\lambda_6, \lambda_2 + \lambda_4 - \lambda_6, \lambda_3 - 3\lambda_6, 2\lambda_3 - 3\lambda_6, 2\lambda_1 + \lambda_4 - 2\lambda_6\} \\ \varrho(\lambda_4) &\equiv \{\lambda_4, \lambda_4 - 2\lambda_6, \lambda_1 + \lambda_3 - 2\lambda_6, \lambda_2 + \lambda_5 - \lambda_6, \lambda_2 + \lambda_5 - 2\lambda_6, 2\lambda_5 - \lambda_6\} \\ \varrho(\lambda_5) &\equiv \{\lambda_5, \lambda_2 - \lambda_6, \lambda_5 - \lambda_6\} \\ \varrho(\lambda_6) &\equiv \{\lambda_6, -\lambda_6, \lambda_1 + \lambda_5 - \lambda_6, \lambda_3 - \lambda_6, \lambda_3 - 2\lambda_6\}. \end{aligned} \tag{2.4}$$

In the notation of  $(k_1, k_2, k_3, k_4, k_5, k_6)$  for  $\sum_{I=1}^6 k_I \lambda_I$ , half of the 72 elements of  $\varrho(\rho)$  can now be chosen, by direct use of (2.3), from the elements of  $\sum_{I=1}^6 \varrho(\lambda_I)$  as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \rho(1) &= (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1) & \rho(13) &= (3, 2, 2, 1, 2, -6) & \rho(25) &= (3, 1, 3, 2, 1, -8) \\ \rho(2) &= (1, 1, 2, 1, 1, -1) & \rho(14) &= (2, 1, 2, 2, 3, -6) & \rho(26) &= (6, 1, 1, 2, 1, -7) \\ \rho(3) &= (1, 2, 1, 2, 1, -2) & \rho(15) &= (1, 3, 1, 3, 1, -6) & \rho(27) &= (1, 2, 1, 1, 6, -7) \\ \rho(4) &= (1, 3, 1, 1, 2, -3) & \rho(16) &= (4, 2, 1, 1, 3, -6) & \rho(28) &= (2, 2, 2, 1, 4, -8) \\ \rho(5) &= (2, 1, 1, 3, 1, -3) & \rho(17) &= (3, 1, 1, 2, 4, -6) & \rho(29) &= (4, 1, 2, 2, 2, -8) \\ \rho(6) &= (2, 2, 1, 2, 2, -4) & \rho(18) &= (4, 1, 3, 1, 1, -7) & \rho(30) &= (2, 1, 4, 1, 2, -9) \\ \rho(7) &= (1, 4, 1, 1, 1, -4) & \rho(19) &= (1, 1, 3, 1, 4, -7) & \rho(31) &= (7, 1, 1, 1, 1, -7) \\ \rho(8) &= (1, 1, 1, 4, 1, -4) & \rho(20) &= (2, 2, 2, 2, 2, -7) & \rho(32) &= (1, 1, 1, 1, 7, -7) \\ \rho(9) &= (3, 1, 2, 1, 3, -5) & \rho(21) &= (5, 1, 2, 1, 2, -7) & \rho(33) &= (1, 3, 1, 1, 5, -8) \\ \rho(10) &= (2, 3, 1, 2, 1, -5) & \rho(22) &= (2, 1, 2, 1, 5, -7) & \rho(34) &= (5, 1, 1, 3, 1, -8) \\ \rho(11) &= (1, 2, 1, 3, 2, -5) & \rho(23) &= (3, 2, 1, 2, 3, -7) & \rho(35) &= (3, 1, 3, 1, 3, -9) \\ \rho(12) &= (4, 1, 1, 1, 4, -5) & \rho(24) &= (1, 2, 3, 1, 3, -8) & \rho(36) &= (1, 1, 5, 1, 1, -10). \end{aligned} \tag{2.5}$$

### 3. Explicit construction of Weyl orbits

It is known that the complete set of weights of a Weyl orbit is obtained from the fact that the Weyl orbits are by definition stable under Weyl reflections. Instead, we want to construct Weyl orbits here solely by knowing their permutation weights. As above, let the  $\lambda_I$  be the fundamental dominant weights of  $\mathbf{G}_N$ , and let the  $\sigma_i$  be those of its  $A_{N-1}$  subalgebra.

The existence of such a subalgebra can always be shown explicitly by taking

$$\sigma_i = \lambda_i - n_i \lambda_N \quad (3.1)$$

where the  $n_i$  are some specified rational numbers. Let us recall from our previous articles [7, 9] that the fundamental weights  $\mu_I$  ( $I = 1, 2, \dots, N$ ) for the  $A_{N-1}$  subalgebra are defined by

$$\sigma_i \equiv \mu_1 + \mu_2 + \dots + \mu_i \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, N - 1 \quad (3.2)$$

together with the condition that

$$\mu_1 + \mu_2 + \dots + \mu_N \equiv 0 \quad (3.3)$$

and also

$$(\mu_I, \lambda_N) \equiv 0. \quad (3.4)$$

The permutational lemma then states for an  $A_{N-1}$  dominant weight

$$\sigma^+ = s_1 \mu_1 + s_2 \mu_2 + \dots + s_N \mu_N \quad s_1 \geq s_2 \geq \dots \geq s_N \geq 0 \quad (3.5)$$

that its Weyl orbits  $W(\sigma^+)$  are obtained as

$$W(\sigma^+) = \{s_1 \mu_{I_1} + s_2 \mu_{I_2} + \dots + s_N \mu_{I_N}\} \quad (3.6)$$

by permuting the fundamental weights  $\mu_I$ . Note here that no two of the indices  $I_1, I_2, \dots, I_N$  ( $= 1, 2, \dots, N$ ) take the same value. This is also true for all permutation weights because, for  $\lambda_N \rightarrow 0$ , they turn out to be  $A_{N-1}$  dominant weights. We then obtain an extension of the permutational lemma for any finite Lie algebra other than the  $A_N$  Lie algebras.

An example will again be helpful here. Let us consider the  $E_6 \rightarrow A_5$  decomposition which is specified by

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma_1 &= \lambda_1 - \frac{1}{2} \lambda_6 & \sigma_2 &= \lambda_2 - \frac{2}{2} \lambda_6 & \sigma_3 &= \lambda_3 - \frac{3}{2} \lambda_6 \\ \sigma_4 &= \lambda_4 - \frac{2}{2} \lambda_6 & \sigma_5 &= \lambda_5 - \frac{1}{2} \lambda_6 \end{aligned} \quad (3.7)$$

where the  $\lambda_I$  ( $I = 1, 2, \dots, 6$ ) are the  $E_6$  fundamental dominant weights, while the  $\sigma_i$  ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, 5$ ) are those of  $A_5$ . The influence of the  $A_5$  permutational lemma for the  $E_6$  Weyl orbits can be illustrated, in view of (2.4), in the following example:

$$W(\lambda_1) = \{W(\sigma_1) + \frac{1}{2} \Omega, W(\sigma_1) - \frac{1}{2} \Omega, W(\sigma_4)\} \quad (3.8)$$

where, for  $A_5$  Weyl orbits, we know that

$$W(\sigma_1) = \{\mu_{I_1}\}, \quad W(\sigma_4) = \{\mu_{I_1} + \mu_{I_2} + \mu_{I_3} + \mu_{I_4}\} \quad I_1 \geq I_2 \geq I_3 \geq I_4 = 1, 2, \dots, 6.$$

In (3.8) one keeps the notation  $\Omega \equiv \lambda_6$ , for which we know that  $(\Omega, \mu_I) = 0$ . It is, in fact, simply an example of the *branching rule of Weyl orbits* which is at the heart of our definition of permutation weights. The branching rules for the remaining fundamental  $E_6$  Weyl orbits  $W(\lambda_i)$  for  $i = 2, 3, \dots, 6$  can be similarly obtained from the permutation weights given in (2.4).

What we want to emphasize here is mainly that the 72 permutation weights of  $W(\rho)$  of  $E_6$  will be given by

$$\varrho(\rho) = (\sigma(k)^{++} + r(k) \Omega, \sigma(k)^{++} - r(k) \Omega) \quad (3.9)$$

where the  $\Omega$  extension parameters  $r(k)$  are some *positive* rational numbers. The 36 strictly dominant weights  $\sigma(k)^{++}$  and their parameters  $r(k)$  can respectively be determined from (2.5) ( $k = 1, 2, \dots, 36$ ).

**4. Applications of the Weyl formula and a lemma**

Since we have in mind to perform the summations over the Weyl groups explicitly, the decomposition (3.9) gives us the possibility for  $E_6$  of calculating  $A(\rho)$  with the aid of (1.3). Let us recall from [7] that for any one of the  $A_5$  dominant weights

$$\sigma^{++}(k) \equiv \sigma^+(k) + \rho_\sigma$$

in the list (3.9), one has

$$A(\sigma^{++}(k) + r(k) \Omega) = A(\rho_\sigma) S(\sigma^+(k)) u^{r(k)} \tag{4.1}$$

where  $\rho_\sigma$  is the Weyl vector of  $A_5$ . In the specialization

$$e^\Omega \equiv u \quad e^{\mu_I} \equiv u_I \quad I = 1, 2, \dots, 6 \tag{4.2}$$

of formal exponentials, we know that  $S(\sigma^+(k))$  is a generalized Schur function [7, 10] which can be reduced via the  $A_5$  multiplicity rules to a polynomial expression in terms of five indeterminates  $x_i$  ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, 5$ ) which are defined by

$$u_1^M + u_2^M + u_3^M + u_4^M + u_5^M + u_6^M \equiv M x_M \quad M = 1, 2, \dots \tag{4.3}$$

Note here as a result of (3.3) that six indeterminates  $u_I$  are constrained by

$$\prod_{I=1}^6 u_I \equiv 1 \tag{4.4}$$

and hence one can immediately see from definitions (4.3) that, for  $M > 5$ , all indeterminates  $x_M$  depend nonlinearly on the first five indeterminates  $x_i$  ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, 5$ ). This will also give rise to some reduction rules governing classical Schur functions [7] which are defined by

$$S(M \lambda_1) \equiv S_M(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_5) \quad M = 1, 2, \dots, 5, 6, \dots \tag{4.5}$$

where the  $S_M(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_5)$  are some polynomials which can be obtained for  $M = 1, 2, \dots, 5$  directly. For  $M > 5$ , however, one must take into account the above-mentioned nonlinear relations between the indeterminates  $x_M$ . Practical calculations could become complicated in general for  $A_N$  multiplicity rules. For this, we find it convenient to give some clarifying details here. It will be seen in fact that these nonlinear relations governing the indeterminates  $x_M$  for  $M > N$  result in the following reduction rules between the polynomials  $S_M(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_N) \equiv S_M(N)$  which correspond to the classical Schur functions as in (4.5):

$$S_M(N) = (-1)^N S_{M-N-1}(N) - \sum_{i=1}^N S_i^*(N) S_{M-i}(N) \quad M > N \tag{4.6}$$

where  $S_M^*(N)$  is obtained from  $S_M(N)$  under the replacements  $x_i \rightarrow -x_i$ . It will be seen that the reduction rules given in (4.6) prove extremely useful in applications of  $A_N$  multiplicity rules, especially for higher values of the rank  $N$ .

Another important point to note here is to give a precise definition of the signatures for the 72 permutation weights in the decomposition (3.9). The arrangement in (3.9) is in such a way that

$$\begin{aligned} \epsilon(\sigma^{++}(k) + r(k) \Omega) &\equiv +1 \\ \epsilon(\sigma^{++}(k) - r(k) \Omega) &\equiv -1 \end{aligned} \tag{4.7}$$

for  $k = 1, 2, \dots, 36$ . The miraculous factorization (4.1) of the Weyl formula comes out only with the aid of such a choice.

It can thus be seen that the decomposition (3.9) of  $\varrho(\rho)$  allows us to calculate  $A(\rho)$  but nothing is said about any other  $A(\Lambda^{++})$  which we need in the calculation of the character

Ch  $R(\Lambda^+)$ . For this, a lemma which assures one-to-one correspondence between the 72 elements of (3.9) and those of any other  $\varrho(\Lambda^{++})$  would be of great help. In view of condition (2.3), there is a one-to-one correspondence which maps any element of  $\varrho(\rho)$  to one and only one element of  $\varrho(\Lambda^{++})$  in such a way that their signatures are preserved. The generalization leads us to the following lemma.

**Lemma.** *Let, for any dominant weight  $\Lambda^+$ ,  $\varrho(\Lambda^+)$  be the subset of its permutation weights and also*

$$\varrho(\rho) \equiv \{\rho(k)\} \quad \varrho(\Lambda^{++}) \equiv \{\Lambda(k)\} \quad (4.8)$$

for any Lie algebra  $G_N$  with the Weyl vector  $\rho$ . Then, in view of condition (2.3), for

$$k = 1, 2, \dots, \frac{\dim W(G_N)}{\dim W(A_{N-1})}$$

and  $\mu \in \varrho(\Lambda^+)$  there is a one-to-one correspondence  $\Xi$  which provides

$$\Xi : \rho(k) + \mu \rightarrow \Lambda(k) \quad (4.9)$$

in such a way that

$$\epsilon(\Xi(\rho(k))) \equiv \epsilon(\rho(k)). \quad (4.10)$$

Note here that we always have

$$\dim \varrho(\Lambda^{++}) \geq \dim \varrho(\Lambda^+)$$

and for each and every value of  $k$  there is one and only one  $\mu \in \varrho(\Lambda^+)$ .

In conclusion, we can say that the decomposition (2.5) makes any explicit summation over the 51 840 elements of the  $E_6$  Weyl group possible and hence completely solves the problem for the  $E_6$  Lie algebra. One must add, however, that the related definitions must be made precisely case by case for any other Lie algebra. For all the chains  $B_N, C_N, D_N$ , the exceptional Lie algebras  $G_2, F_4$  and even for  $E_7$  the method presented above is tractable as we will show in a subsequent paper. The same could also be true for  $E_8$  but again one must note that we have  $\dim \varrho(\rho) = 17\,280$  for  $E_8$ . We finally remark that a similar analysis can be presented in the framework of the  $A_8$  subalgebra of  $E_8$ , this making the problem more tractable by reducing the number of permutation weights down to 1920. To the knowledge of the authors, this is quite convenient for handling any problem which requires summations over the 696 729 600 elements of the  $E_8$  Weyl group in an explicit manner, and hence it would be worth studying in another publication.

Last but not least, let us add that all these calculations can be performed by the aid of very simple computer programs, say, in the language *Mathematica*<sup>TM</sup> [11].

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