

MATH 325 HW 1

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Problem 1: Let $V = k^n$ and $P_d \subseteq k[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ be the space of degree- d polynomials in n variables over k . Let $a : V \rightarrow V$ be some linear map with eigenvalues $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n$. Show the following generating-function identities:

(a)

$$\sum_{d \geq 0} \text{tr}_{V^{\otimes d}}(a^{\otimes d}) \cdot t^d = \frac{1}{1 - \text{tr}_V(a) \cdot t}.$$

(b)

$$\sum_{d \geq 0} \text{tr}_{\text{Sym}^d V}(\text{Sym}^d(a)) \cdot t^d = \prod_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{1 - \lambda_i t}.$$

(c)

$$\sum_{d \geq 0} \text{tr}_{\wedge^d V}(\wedge^d a) \cdot t^d = \prod_{i=1}^n (1 + \lambda_i t).$$

Proof. (a): The trace of $a^{\otimes d}$ is $\text{tr}(a)^d$. It suffices to take some basis where a is in Jordan normal form, as trace is invariant under conjugation. In this case, $a^{\otimes d}$ acts by

$$a^{\otimes d}(e_{k_1} \otimes \dots \otimes e_{k_d}) = \left(\prod_j \lambda_{k_j} \right) (e_{k_1} \otimes \dots \otimes e_{k_d}) + \text{off-diagonal terms}$$

and the trace is thus

$$\sum_{(k_j) \in [n]^d} \prod_j \lambda_{k_j} = \left(\sum_k \lambda_k \right)^d = \text{tr}(a)^d$$

as desired. The generating function immediately follows from the geometric sum formula.

(b): The trace of $\text{Sym}^d(a)$ is the sum of all degree- d monomials in $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n$. Again we can assume that a is in Jordan normal form wrt some basis. Then $\text{Sym}^d(a)$ acts by

$$e_1^{d_1} \cdot e_2^{d_2} \dots e_n^{d_n} \mapsto \lambda_1^{d_1} \lambda_2^{d_2} \dots \lambda_n^{d_n} (e_1^{d_1} \cdot e_2^{d_2} \dots e_n^{d_n}) + \text{off-diagonal terms}$$

giving the trace as desired. From there, the generating function is

$$\sum_{d \geq 0} \text{tr}(\text{Sym}^d(a)) \cdot t^d = \prod_i \sum_{d_i \geq 0} \lambda_i^{d_i} t^{d_i} = \prod_i \frac{1}{1 - \lambda_i t}.$$

(c): The trace of $\wedge^d a$ is the sum of all degree d monomials in $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n$ without repeating terms. Again we assume that a is in Jordan normal form wrt some basis. $\wedge^d a$ acts by

$$e_{k_1} \wedge \dots \wedge e_{k_d} \mapsto \lambda_{k_1} \dots \lambda_{k_d} (e_1 \wedge \dots \wedge e_d)$$

giving the desired trace. The generating function follows. It is like in (b) except that terms cannot repeat, thus we have $1 + \lambda_i t$ instead of the full series $1 + \lambda_i t + \lambda_i^2 t^2 + \dots$. \square

Problem 2: Prove the following claims made in class:

- (a) The algebra $\mathbb{C}[x_1, \dots, x_n]^{\text{SO}_n}$ is the free algebra generated by $R := x_1^2 + \dots + x_n^2$.
- (b) The algebra $\mathbb{C}[x_1, \dots, x_n]^{\text{SO}_{n-1}}$ is the free algebra generated by R and x_n .

Proof. (a): Let p be a polynomial fixed by SO_n . Let $q(t)$ be the polynomial

$$q(t) := p(t, 0, 0, \dots, 0).$$

Because p is fixed by SO_n , we have $p(x_1, \dots, x_n) = q(\sqrt{R})$ for all x_1, \dots, x_n . Moreover, q has no odd-degree terms, since $q(t)$ is invariant under switching the sign of t (as this corresponds to a π -rotation about the x_2 axis, which is in SO_n). Thus, $q(\sqrt{R})$ is a polynomial in R , and hence p is as well.

(b) If p is fixed by SO_{n-1} , then we can think of p as a polynomial in $\mathbb{C}[x_n][x_1, \dots, x_{n-1}]$, from which the same method from part (a) shows that p is generated by $x_1^2 + \dots + x_{n-1}^2$ over $\mathbb{C}[x_n]$, and thus that p is generated by $x_1^2 + \dots + x_{n-1}^2$ and x_n over \mathbb{C} , or equivalently R and x_n . \square

Problem 3: The case $n = 2$: Let $H_d \subseteq P_d$ be the space of degree- d harmonic homogeneous polynomials in x, y over \mathbb{C} .

(a) Find an explicit \mathbb{C} -basis for H_d .

(b) Show that the representation of SO_2 in H_d is not irreducible.

Proof. (a): For all d , $\dim(H_d) = 2$. Let A be the homogeneous polynomial

$$A(x, y) := \sum_{k=0}^d a_k x^k y^{d-k}.$$

If $A \in H_d$, then

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= \Delta(A) \\ &= \sum_{k=0}^d a_k \cdot (k)(k-1)x^{k-2}y^{d-k} + a_k \cdot (d-k)(d-k-1)x^k y^{d-k-2} \\ &= \sum_{k=0}^{d-2} \left(a_k(d-k)(d-k-1) + a_{k+2}(k+2)(k+1) \right) x^k y^{d-k-2} \end{aligned}$$

and thus

$$a_k(d-k)(d-k-1) + a_{k+2}(k+2)(k+1) = 0$$

for all $0 \leq k \leq d-2$. Thus, given that A is harmonic, the ratios between all even coefficients are fixed, and the ratios between all odd coefficients are fixed, i.e. A is a linear combination of the two harmonic polynomials

$$y^d - \left(\frac{d(d-1)}{2} \right) x^2 y^{d-2} + \left(\frac{d(d-1)(d-2)(d-3)}{(4)(3)(2)} \right) x^4 y^{d-4} - \dots$$

and

$$xy^{d-1} - \left(\frac{(d-1)(d-2)}{(3)(2)} \right) x^3 y^{d-3} + \left(\frac{(d-1)(d-2)(d-3)(d-4)}{(5)(4)(3)(2)} \right) x^5 y^{d-5} - \dots$$

which are also proportional to the real and imaginary parts of $(ix + y)^d$.

(b): The action of SO_2 on H_d preserves the 1-dimensional subspace $\mathbb{C}\langle (ix + y)^d \rangle \subset H_d$. All elements of SO_2 are rotations by some θ , corresponding to matrices

$$\begin{bmatrix} \cos \theta & \sin \theta \\ -\sin \theta & \cos \theta \end{bmatrix}$$

which maps $(ix + y)^d$ to

$$(i(\cos \theta x + \sin \theta y) + \cos \theta y - \sin \theta x)^d = (e^{i\theta}(ix + y))^d = e^{i\theta d}(ix + y)^d$$

and thus preserves the subspace. Thus the action of SO_2 is reducible. □

Problem 4: In the case $n = 3$:

- (a) Check that $\dim(H_d) = 2d + 1$ and find a nonzero element of H_2 which is fixed by SO_2 .
- (b) For each $d \geq 0$, find the trace of the operator g_θ , which is the rotation by θ about the z axis.

Proof. (a): To show that $\dim(H_d) = 2d + 1$, we use the decomposition of P_d as

$$P_d = H_d \oplus R \cdot P_{d-2}$$

which gives

$$\begin{aligned} \dim(P_d) &= \dim(H_d) + \dim(P_{d-2}) \\ \binom{d+2}{2} &= \dim(H_2) + \binom{d}{2} \\ \dim(H_2) &= \frac{(d+2)(d+1) - d(d-1)}{2} \\ &= \frac{4d+2}{2} = 2d+1 \end{aligned}$$

as expected.

To give a nonzero element of H_2 fixed by SO_2 , take $x^2 + y^2 - 2z^2$. Clearly $x^2 + y^2$ and z^2 are each fixed by SO_2 , so $x^2 + y^2 - 2z^2$ is also fixed, and it is harmonic.

(b): g_θ can be represented by the matrix

$$g_\theta = \begin{pmatrix} e^{i\theta} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & e^{-i\theta} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

and its action on the basis elements of P_d is

$$g_\theta : x^a y^b z^c \mapsto (e^{i\theta} x)^a (e^{-i\theta} y)^b z^c = e^{(a-b)i\theta} \cdot x^a y^b z^c.$$

This gives the trace

$$\text{tr}_{P_d}(g_\theta) = \sum_{a+b \leq d} e^{(a-b)i\theta}.$$

Now to determine $\text{tr}_{H_d}(g_\theta)$ from this. We can decompose P_d into subspaces $H_d \oplus R \cdot P_{d-2}$. Thus, the trace of g_θ is the sum of its trace on the subspaces H_d and $R \cdot P_{d-2}$. In the latter subspace, the trace is not affected by R , since g_θ preserves R . Thus,

$$\begin{aligned} \text{tr}_{H_d}(g_\theta) &= \text{tr}_{P_d}(g_\theta) - \text{tr}_{P_{d-2}}(g_\theta) \\ &= \sum_{a+b \in \{d-1, d\}} e^{i\theta(a-b)} \\ &= \sum_{k=-d}^d e^{ki\theta} \\ &= 1 + 2 \left(\sum_{k=1}^d \cos(k\theta) \right). \end{aligned}$$

In the case $\theta = 0$, this yields $\text{tr}_{H_d}(\text{id}) = \dim(H_d) = 2d + 1$ as expected. □

Problem 5: For $n \geq 3$, prove the following generating function identity:

$$\sum_{d \geq 0} \dim(H_d) \cdot t^d = \frac{1+t}{(1-t)^{n-1}}.$$

Proof. For general n , $\dim(H_d)$ is

$$\dim(H_d) = \dim(P_d) - \dim(P_{d-2}) = \binom{d+n-1}{n-1} - \binom{d+n-3}{n-1}$$

which yields the generating function

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{d \geq 0} \dim(H_d) t^d &= \sum_{d \geq 0} \left(\binom{d+n-1}{n-1} - \binom{d+n-3}{n-1} \right) t^d \\ &= \frac{1}{(1-t)^n} - \frac{t^2}{(1-t)^n} \\ &= \frac{1+t}{(1-t)^{n-1}} \end{aligned}$$

as desired. Here we used the generating function identity

$$\frac{1}{(1-t)^m} = \sum_{d \geq 0} \binom{d+m}{m} t^d$$

which can be proven by the generalized binomial theorem:

$$(1-t)^{-m} = \sum_{d \geq 0} \binom{-m}{d} (-t)^d = \sum_{d \geq 0} \binom{m+d}{d} t^d = \sum_{d \geq 0} \binom{m+d}{m} t^d.$$

□

Problem 6: Let $\text{res} : \mathbb{C}[x_1, \dots, x_n] \rightarrow C(S^{n-1})$ be the restriction map to S^{n-1} . If $\overline{P_d} := \text{res}(P_d)$, let M_d be the orthogonal complement of $\overline{P_{d-2}}$ in $\overline{P_d}$. Show that res induces an isomorphism $H_d \rightarrow M_d$ of SO_n -representations.

Proof. For any $p \in P_d$ and $q \in P_{d-1}$, $pq \in P_{2d-1}$, and thus

$$\langle \text{res}(p), \text{res}(q) \rangle = \int_{S^{n-1}} p\bar{q} = 0$$

by symmetry (the degree is odd). So $\text{res}(P_d) \subseteq M_d$.

Now to show that this induces an *isomorphism* of representations, by Schur's Lemma it suffices to show that both H_d and M_d are irreducible representations of SO_n (since res is clearly nontrivial). We showed H_d to be irreducible in class.

The induced representation of M_d

□

Problem 7: Prove that for $d \geq 0$, there is a constant $c_d > 0$ such that for all $p, q \in H_d$,

$$p(\partial)(\bar{q})(0) = c_d \cdot \langle \text{res}(p), \text{res}(q) \rangle_{L^2}$$

where the inner product $\langle \bullet, \bullet \rangle_{L^2}$ is given by

$$\langle f, g \rangle := \int_{S^{n-1}} f(x) \bar{g}(x) \, dx.$$

Proof.

□

Problem 8 (Optional): Show that the kernel of res is exactly the principal ideal generated by $R - 1$.

Proof. By Hilbert's Nullstellensatz, the ideal of polynomials vanishing on S^{n-1} is exactly $\sqrt{R - 1}$. But $R - 1$ is irreducible so $\sqrt{R - 1} = (R - 1)$. One can see this by using Eisenstein's criterion:

We'll show this by induction on n . For the base case $n = 2$, $x^2 + y^2 - 1$ is irreducible as a polynomial in $\mathbb{C}[x][y]$, as $(x - 1)$ is prime and divides (only once) the constant term $(x^2 - 1)$ and the linear term 0 , but not the leading term y^2 (Eisenstein's Criterion). Thus it is irreducible as a polynomial in $\mathbb{C}[x, y]$ as well.

For the inductive step, the x_n^0 term $x_1^2 + \cdots + x_{n-1}^2 - 1$ is prime by the inductive hypothesis, and it also divides the x_n^1 term (which is 0), but not the x_n^2 term, so $x_1^2 + \cdots + x_n^2 - 1$ is also irreducible. \square