PLISKA

STUDIA MATHEMATICA BULGARICA

ПЛИСКА

БЪЛГАРСКИ МАТЕМАТИЧЕСКИ СТУДИИ

ON THE CLASSIFICATION OF UNITARY LOWEST
WEIGHT REPRESENTATIONS OF CONFORMAL CURRENT ALGEBRAS

I. T. TODOROV

To the memory of my teacher
Yaroslav Tagamlitzki

1. Introduction. In searching for the extreme elements of a partially ordered set K the good half of the work consists in devising a decomposition of a generic positive element of K into a sum (or a convex linear combination) of positive elements [1]. The purpose of this note is to point out the use of such a decomposition in a context, in which K is not a convex set.

The problem is concerned with the classification of the unitary lowest weight representations of an infinite dimensional Lie algebra VG, which appears in conformal quantum field theory models on the circle. In the rest of this introduction I shall define the algebra and say some words about its physical interpretation (for more detail see, e. g. [2]).

Let G be a simple compact Lie group and let d_G be its Lie algebra. To each element $X \in d_G$ we make correspond a sequence of elements X_n, $n \in Z$ of an infinite dimensional "affine Kac-Moody Lie algebra" $\widehat{d_G}$ in such a way that the following commutation relations hold:

$$[X_n, Y_m] = [X, Y]_{n+m} + kn(X, Y)\delta_{n, -m}$$

where (X, Y) is a suitably normalized invariant inner product (the positive "Killing form") on d_G, and k is a "central charge"

$$[k, X_n] = 0.$$

Thus, $\widehat{d_G}$ appears as a Z-graded infinite Lie algebra which contains d_G as a subalgebra (if we identify X with X_0).

The V i r a s o r o a l g e b r a Vir is a central extension of the algebra of first-order differential operators that generate the diffeomorphisms of the circle. It is another Z-graded algebra with generators L_n and c satisfying

(1.3)
$$[L_n, L_m] = (n-m)L_{n+m} + \frac{c}{12} n(n^2 - 1)\delta_{n, -m}$$

(1.4)
$$[c, L_n] = 0.$$

The c o n f o r m a l c u r r e n t a l g e b r a VG is defined as the semidirect sum of Vir with $\widehat{d_G}$, in which the commutation relations (1.1-1.4) are supplemented by

(1.5)
$$[X_m, L_n] = mX_{n+m}.$$

The physical context in which such an algebra appears is an 1-dimensional c o n f o r m a l q u a n t u m f i e l d t h e o r y on the circle with an internal symmetry group G. The fields of such a theory are defined in general as ope-

rator-valued distributions on a Hilbert space $\mathscr{H}$ (satisfying certain requirements). In our case they include the s t r e s s e n e r g y t e n s o r

(1.6)
$$T(z) = \Sigma_n L_n z^{-n-2}, \; L_n^* = L_{-n} (n \in \mathbf{Z})$$

a nd the current

(1.7)
$$X(z) = \Sigma_n X_n z^{-n-1}, \; X_n^* = X_{-n},$$

(X belongs to a d_G dimensional space, where $d_G = \dim G$). The s t a t e s o f t h e t h e o r y include the v a c u u m v e c t o r $|0\rangle \in \mathscr{H}$ satisfying $\langle 0|0\rangle = 1$ and

(1.8)
$$L_n|0\rangle = 0 \text{ for } n \geq -1, \; X_m|0\rangle = 0 \text{ for } m \geq 0.$$

We make further the following i r r e d u c i b i l i t y a s s u m p t i o n : if a bounded operator B in $\mathscr{H}$ commutes with all the fields of the theory, then it is a multiple of the identity in $\mathscr{H}$. In particular, the central charges c and k act as multiplication of real numbers.

C o r o l l a r i e s. 1. The positivity of the inner product in $\mathscr{H}$ and the hermiticity properties in (1.6) and (1.7) imply that c and k are positive

(1.9)
$$0 < \| L_{-2}|0\rangle \|^2 = \langle 0|L_2 L_{-2}|0\rangle = \frac{c}{2}$$

(1.10)
$$0 < \| X_{-1}|0\rangle \|^2 = \langle 0|X_1 X_{-1}|0\rangle = k(X, X).$$

2. Eqs. (1.6-1.8) allow to find all correlation functions of the stress-energy tensor and the current:

(1.11)
$$\langle 0| T(z_1)T(z_2)|0\rangle = \frac{c}{2} z_{12}^{-4}, \; z_{12} = z_1 - z_2.$$

(1.12)
$$\langle 0| X(z_1)Y(z_2)|0\rangle = \frac{k}{z_{12}^2}(X, Y)$$

(1.13)
$$\langle 0| X(z_1)Y(z_2)T(z_3)|0\rangle = k(X, Y)z_{13}^{-2}z_{23}^{-2} \text{ etc.}$$

The operator L_0 is interpreted physically as the e n e r g y o p e r a t o r. E n e r g y p o s i t i v i t y singles out l o w e s t w e i g h t (LW) representations of VG. Any LW u n i t a r y i r r e d u c i b l e r e p r e s e n t a t i o n (UIR) of VG is characterized by a LW vector $|\Psi\rangle$ such that

(1.14)
$$L_n|\Psi\rangle = 0 = X_n|\Psi\rangle \text{ for } n = 1, 2, \ldots (L_0 - \Delta)|\Psi > 0$$

(which is usually also assumed to be a highest weight eigenvector of a Cartan subalgebra of d_G).

The classification of LWUIRs of VG has only been completed recently [3], following developments in [4—7] among others. We shall review in Sec. 2 a central point of this derivation, related to a decomposition of $T(z)$.

2. LWUIRs of VG. P r o p o s i t i o n 1. Given any unitary LW representation of d_G, it can be extended to a LW representation of VG by setting

(2.1) $L_{2n}^G = \frac{1}{k+C_2} \{ \vec{Q}_n^2 + 2 \sum\limits_{n=1}^{\infty} \vec{Q}_{n-m} \vec{Q}_{n+m} \}, \; L_{2n+1}^G = \frac{2}{k+C_2} \sum\limits_{l=0}^{\infty} \vec{Q}_{n-m} \vec{Q}_{n+1+m},$

where $\vec{Q} = (Q_1, \ldots, Q^{dG})$ is an orthonormal basis of d_G so that

(2.2)
$$(Q^a, Q^b) = \frac{1}{2}\delta_{ab}, \; [Q_n^a, Q_m^b] = if_{abc}Q_{n+m}^c + \frac{kn}{2}\delta_{n, -m}\delta_{ab}$$

and G_2 is the eigenvalue of the second order Casimir operator for the adjoint representation of d_G

(2.3) $f_{sta}f_{stb} = C_2 \delta_{ab}.$

The Virasoro central charge associated with L_n^G is

(2.4) $c_G(= 2[L_2^G, L_{-2}^G] - 8L_0^G) = \dfrac{k}{k + C_2} \, d_G.$

The proof (2.6) involves a straightforward (albeit somewhat lengthy) computation using (2.1-2.3) (One should first verify $[Q_m^a, L_n^G] = m \, Q_{m+n}^a$ and then (1.3), (2.4)).

Given a LWUIR of d_G, the construction of Proposition 1 gives a m i n i m a l r e p r e s e n t a t i o n of VG in the sense of the following result.

P r o p o s i t i o n 2. Given an arbitrary LWUIR of VG the operators

(2.5) $l_n = L_n - L_n^G$

give rise to a LWUIR of Vir with central charge

(2.6) $c_l = c - c_G \geqq 0.$

P r o o f. It follows from (1.5) and from Proposition 1 that

(2.7) $[Q_m^a, l_n] = 0 = [L_m^G, l_n].$

The rest is straightforward. The inequality (2.6) is a consequence of the assumed unitarity of the representation under consideration.

Propositions 1 and 2 reduce the study of the LWUIRs of VG to the known classification of such representations for d_G and Vir (2.4-2.7).

REFERENCES

1. Я. А. Т а г а м л и ц к и. Изследване на вектори, които са неразложими относно някои конуси. *Изв. Мат. Инст. БАН*, 1, кн. 1, 1953, 57—68.
2. I. T. T o d o r o v. Infinite dimensional Lie algebras in 2-dimensional conformal field theory. — In: *Differential Geometric Methods in Theoretical Physics*, Ed. by H. D. Doebner, T. D. Palev, Singapore, 1986, 297-347.
8. V K a c. Highest weight representation of conformal current algebras. *Proceeding of the Symposium on Topological and Geometrical Methods in Field Theory*, Espoo, Singapore, 1986.
4. V. K a c. Covariant form for infinite dimensional Lie algebras and superalgebras. *Lecture Notes in Physics*, 94, 1979, 441-445 ; Infinite Dimensionai Lie Algebras. An Introduction (Birkhäuser, London, 1983 ; 2nd ed. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985) ane references therein.
5. D. F r i e d a n, Z. Q i u, S. S h e n k e r. Conformal invariance, unitarity, and critical exponents in two dimensions. *Phys. Rev. Lett.*, 52, 1984, 1575-1578, and in: *Vertex Operators in Mathematics and Physics*. Ed. by J. Lepowski, S. Mandelstam, I. M. Singer, N. Y., 1985, 419-449 ; Details of the nonunitarity proof for highest weigt representations of the Virasoro algebra, Chicago preprint EFI, 86-92.
6. P. G o d d a r d, A. K e n t, D. O l i v e. Virasoro algebra and coset space models. *Phys. Lett.*, 152B, 1985, 88-93 ; University representations of the Virasoro and super-Virasoro algebras. *Commun. Math. Phys.*, 103, 1986, 105-119.
7. V. G. K a c, I. T. T o d o r o v. Superconformal current algebras and their unitary representations. *Commun. Math. Phys.*, 102, 1985, 337-347 ; 104, 1986, 175 ; V. G. K a c, M. W a k i m o t o. Unitarizable highest weight representations of the Virasoro, Neveu Schwarz and Ramond algebras. *Proceedings of the Symposium on Conformal Groups and Structures*. Chausthal, 1985, Lecture Notes in Physics, 1986.

Institute of Nuclear Research
and Nuclear Energy
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Sofia 1184, Bulgaria