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$$\begin{aligned}
& b_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} b_{y_2} \lambda_{f_2}' \dots b_{y_s} \lambda_{f_s}' b_v R \\
&= a_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} \lambda_{\bar{f}_1} a_{x_1}^{-1} b_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} b_{y_2} \lambda_{f_2}' \dots b_{y_s} \lambda_{f_s}' b_v R \\
&= a_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} \lambda_{\bar{f}_1} c_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} b_{y_2} \lambda_{f_2}' \dots b_{y_s} \lambda_{f_s}' b_v R \\
&= a_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} (\gamma_{\bar{f}_1} c \gamma_{f_1})_{z_1} b_{y_2} \lambda_{f_2}' \dots b_{y_s} \lambda_{f_s}' b_v R \\
&= a_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} (\gamma_{\bar{f}_1} c \gamma_{f_1})_{x_2} b_{y_2} \lambda_{f_2}' \dots b_{y_s} \lambda_{f_s}' b_v R \\
&= a_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} a'_{x_2} b_{y_2} \lambda_{f_2}' \dots b_{y_s} \lambda_{f_s}' b_v R
\end{aligned}$$

where $a'_{x_2} = (\gamma_{\bar{f}_1} c \gamma_{f_1})_{x_2}$. If x_2 happens to equal y_2 then we simplify this further to

$$a_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} a''_{x_2} \lambda_{f_2} b_{y_3} \lambda_{f_3}' \dots b_{y_s} \lambda_{f_s}' b_v R$$

where a''_{x_2} is the product $a'_{x_2} b_{y_2}$ in G_{x_2} . We now compare a_{x_2} with a'_{x_2} if $x_2 \neq y_2$, noting that $\gamma_{f_2} = 1$ in this case, or with a''_{x_2} if $x_2 = y_2$, and repeat the process. Eventually we obtain

$$b_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} b_{y_2} \lambda_{f_2}' \dots b_{y_s} \lambda_{f_s}' b_v R = a_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} a_{x_2} \lambda_{f_2} \dots a_{x_r} \lambda_{f_r} a''_v R.$$

As $g = a_{x_1} \gamma_{f_1} \dots a_{x_r} \gamma_{f_r} a_v = a_{x_1} \gamma_{f_1} \dots a_{x_r} \gamma_{f_r} a''_v$ we see that $a''_v = a_v$. This completes the proof that ψ is well defined.

5. NEAREST FIXED POINTS

To show ψ is a homomorphism we shall verify

$$\psi(hg) = \psi(h)\psi(g)$$

under the assumption that h either leaves some vertex of T fixed or is one of the elements γ_f . This is sufficient because the elements of the G_w (w a vertex of T) together with the γ_f (f an edge of $X/G-M$) form a set of generators for G .

Suppose h fixes the vertex w of T . Walk along the geodesic \overrightarrow{vw} and let x be the first vertex we meet which is left fixed by h . Then \overrightarrow{vx} is contained in T , and \overrightarrow{vx} followed by $h(\overrightarrow{xv})$ is the geodesic from v to hv . This quits T for the first time at x and we see that

$$\psi(h) = h_x R.$$

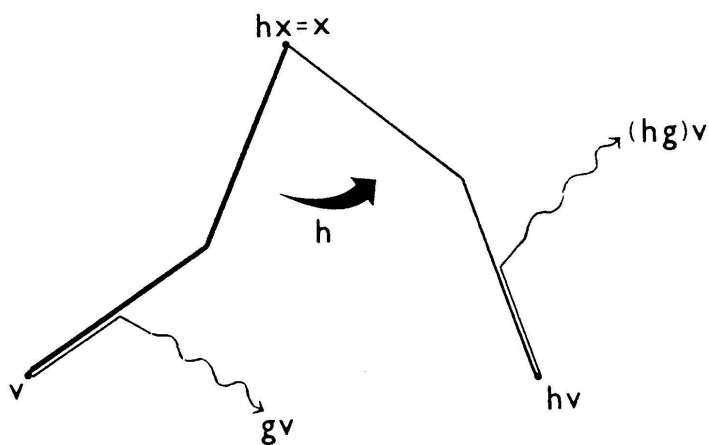


FIGURE 3

Using the geodesic from v to gv we have $\psi(g) = a_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} \dots a_{x_r} \lambda_{f_r} a_v R$ in the usual way. Therefore

$$\psi(h)\psi(g) = h_x a_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} \dots a_{x_r} \lambda_{f_r} a_v R.$$

In order to compute $\psi(hg)$ we need the geodesic from v to $(hg)v$. We can construct this as follows, take \overrightarrow{vhv} followed by the image of $\overrightarrow{v gv}$ under h and remove any round trips.

If $\overrightarrow{v gv}$ does not contain all of \overrightarrow{vx} (Figure 3) then $\overrightarrow{v(hg)v}$ leaves T for the first time at x . A tail wag of $\overrightarrow{v(hg)v}$ using h_x^{-1} leads us to a path which has the same tail as $\overrightarrow{v gv}$, then the process continues as for g . Thus

$$\psi(hg) = h_x a_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} \dots a_{x_r} \lambda_{f_r} a_v R = \psi(h)\psi(g).$$

Otherwise $\overrightarrow{v gv}$ contains all of \overrightarrow{vx} (Figure 4) and we split the argument into three cases.

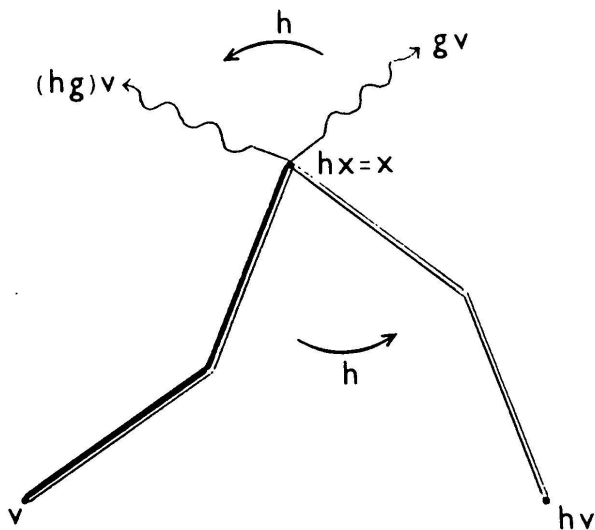


FIGURE 4

(a) $\overrightarrow{v g v}$ stays in T for at least one more edge after x . Then $\overrightarrow{v(hg)v}$ must leave T at x . As above, a first choice of h_x^{-1} leads to a path with the same tail as $\overrightarrow{v g v}$.

(b) $\overrightarrow{v g v}$ and $\overrightarrow{v(hg)v}$ both leave T at x . Then $x_1 = x$ and we write a_x instead of a_{x_1} . A first tail wag of $\overrightarrow{v(hg)v}$ using $\gamma_{f_1}(h_x a_x)^{-1}$ produces the same path as a first tail wag of $\overrightarrow{v g v}$ using $\gamma_{f_1} a_x^{-1}$. Thus

$$\psi(hg) = h_x a_x \lambda_{f_1} a_{x_2} \lambda_{f_2} \dots a_{x_r} \lambda_{f_r} a_v R = \psi(h)\psi(g).$$

(c) $\overrightarrow{v g v}$ leaves T at x , but $\overrightarrow{v(hg)v}$ stays in T for at least one more edge after x . Then $x_1 = x$, $\gamma_{f_1} = 1$ and we may as well equate a_{x_1} with h_x^{-1} . A first tail wag of $\overrightarrow{v g v}$ using h_x gives a path with the same tail as $\overrightarrow{v(hg)v}$. Thus

$$\begin{aligned} \psi(hg) &= a_{x_2} \lambda_{f_2} \dots a_{x_r} \lambda_{f_r} a_v R \\ &= h_x h_x^{-1} a_{x_2} \lambda_{f_2} \dots a_{x_r} \lambda_{f_r} a_v R \\ &= \psi(h)\psi(g). \end{aligned}$$

Suppose finally that $h = \gamma_f$ for some edge f of $X/G - M$. As usual e is the chosen lift of f into X with $x = i(e) \in T$ and $z = t(\gamma_f e)$. Let $y = i(\gamma_f e)$. The geodesic from v to $\gamma_f v$ is made up of $\overrightarrow{v x}$ followed by e followed by $\gamma_f(zv)$. This leaves T for the first time at x and a single tail wag using γ_f produces $\overrightarrow{z v}$. Therefore

$$\psi(\gamma_f) = \lambda_f R.$$

To obtain the geodesic from v to $(\gamma_f g)v$ we follow $\overrightarrow{v \gamma_f v}$ by $\gamma_f(\overrightarrow{v g v})$ and then remove any round trips (Figure 5). If $\overrightarrow{v g v}$ does not contain $\overrightarrow{v y}$, then $\overrightarrow{v(\gamma_f g)v}$ leaves T for the first time at x and a single tail wag using γ_f

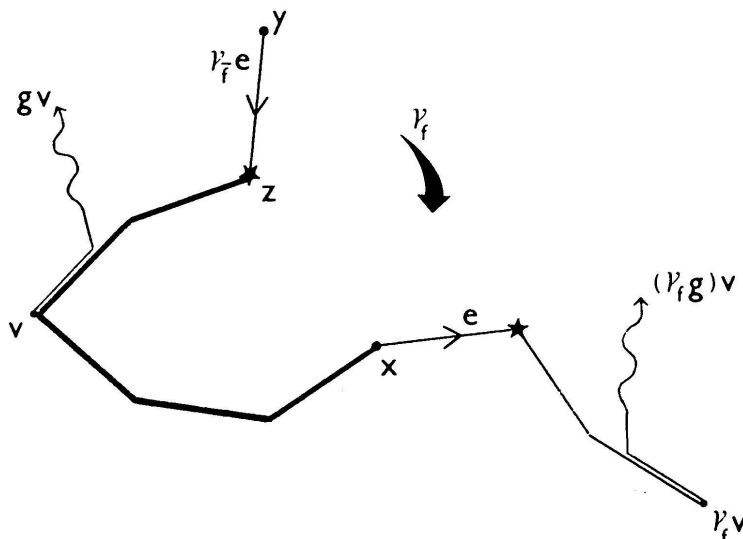


FIGURE 5

produces a path with the same tail as $\overrightarrow{v g v}$. The process then continues as for g and

$$\psi(\gamma_f g) = \lambda_f a_{x_1} \lambda_{f_1} \dots a_{x_r} \lambda_{f_r} a_v R = \psi(\gamma_f) \psi(g).$$

Otherwise $\overrightarrow{v g v}$ contains $\overrightarrow{v y}$. Then $x_1 = z$, $\gamma_{f_1} = \gamma_{\bar{f}}$ and we may as well take $a_{x_1} = 1$. A first tail wag of $\overrightarrow{v g v}$ using γ_f leaves a path with the same tail as $\overrightarrow{v(\gamma_f g)v}$. Thus

$$\begin{aligned} \psi(\gamma_f g) &= a_{x_2} \lambda_{f_2} \dots a_{x_r} \lambda_{f_r} a_v R \\ &= \lambda_f \lambda_{\bar{f}} a_{x_2} \lambda_{f_2} \dots a_{x_r} \lambda_{f_r} a_v R \\ &= \psi(\gamma_f) \psi(g). \end{aligned}$$

This completes the proof that ψ is a homomorphism.

Our construction of ψ ensures that if $\psi(g) = R$ then $g = 1$. So ψ is injective. The cosets $h_w R$ (w a vertex of T and $h(w) = w$) and $\lambda_f R$ (f an edge of X/G) together generate $[(\ast G_w) \ast F]/R$. Now $\psi(h) = h_x R$ where x is the nearest fixed point of h to v . But h fixes all of $\overrightarrow{x w}$ so

$$\psi(h) = h_x R = h_w R.$$

Also

$$\psi(\gamma_f) = \lambda_f R.$$

Therefore the image of ψ is all of $[(\ast G_w) \ast F]/R$ and we have shown that ψ is an isomorphism.

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