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3. THE CODE ASSOCIATED WITH  $f$ 

We will denote by  $M_n$  the set of square-free monomials in the variables  $x_1, \dots, x_n$ . We consider  $M_n$  as a multiplicative group, by imposing the relations  $x_i^2 = 1$  for all  $i = 1, \dots, n$ . Note that  $M_n$  is then isomorphic to  $\{1, -1\}^n$ .

Let  $f = u_1 + \dots + u_N$  be a polynomial in  $x_1, \dots, x_n$  with non-negative integral coefficients, and with monomials  $u_1, \dots, u_N \in M_n$ . The  $u_i$  need not be distinct, nor necessarily distinct from 1.

*Definition.*

1. The matrix  $\Phi_f = (\Phi_{i,j})$  associated with  $f$  is the  $n \times N$  matrix over  $\mathbf{F}_2$ , defined by

$$\Phi_{i,j} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } x_i \text{ divides } u_j, \\ 0 & \text{if not.} \end{cases}$$

Note that  $\Phi_f$  is defined up to a permutation of its columns.

2. The binary code  $L_f$  associated with  $f$  is the subcode of  $\mathbf{F}_2^N$  generated by the  $n$  rows of the matrix  $\Phi_f$ .

Note that the dual code  $K_f := L_f^\perp$  sits in the following exact sequence:

$$0 \rightarrow K_f \rightarrow \mathbf{F}_2^N \xrightarrow{\Phi_f} \mathbf{F}_2^n.$$

Indeed,  $K_f$  admits  $\Phi_f$  as a parity check matrix. Note also that any binary code  $C$  is of the form  $C = L_f$  for some polynomial  $f$  with non-negative coefficients in  $x_1, \dots, x_n$ . Indeed, such an  $f$  can be obtained as the sum of the monomials corresponding to the columns of any generator matrix for  $C$ .

We will now give a second description of the code  $L_f$ . With any  $p \in \{1, -1\}^n$ , we associate

- a subset  $v_f(p)$  of  $\{1, \dots, N\}$ , defined as

$$v_f(p) = \{i = 1, \dots, N \mid u_i(p) = -1\}, \text{ and}$$

- a codeword  $c_f(p)$  in  $\mathbf{F}_2^N$ , defined as

$$c_f(p) = \sum_{i \in v_f(p)} E_i,$$

where  $\{E_1, \dots, E_N\}$  denotes the standard basis of  $\mathbf{F}_2^N$ .

We claim, among other things, that the image of the map

$$c_f: \{1, -1\}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{F}_2^N$$

is exactly the code  $L_f$  associated with  $f$ .

PROPOSITION 1. Let  $f = u_1 + \dots + u_N$  with  $u_i \in M_n$  for all  $i$ . Let  $c = c_f$  and  $L = L_f$  denote its associated map and code. Then we have:

1. The map  $c : \{1, -1\}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{F}_2^N$  is a group homomorphism;
2.  $\text{Im}(c) = L$ ;
3.  $\text{Ker}(c) = \{p \mid f(p) = N\}$ ;
4. For every  $p \in \{1, -1\}^n$ , the weight of  $c(p)$  is related to the value  $f(p)$  by

$$f(p) = N - 2 |c(p)|.$$

*Proof.*

1. Let  $p, p' \in \{1, -1\}^n$ . Then  $v_f(pp')$  is obviously equal to the symmetric difference of  $v_f(p)$  and  $v_f(p')$ , hence

$$c(pp') = c(p) + c(p').$$

2. For every  $i = 1, \dots, n$ , let  $p_i \in \{1, -1\}^n$  denote the point which has a  $-1$  at the  $i$ -th coordinate, and a  $1$  elsewhere. Since the  $n$  points  $p_1, \dots, p_n$  generate  $\{1, -1\}^n$  as a group, their images under  $c$  generate  $\text{Im}(c)$ . Now,

$$\begin{aligned} v_f(p_i) &= \{j \mid u_j(p_i) = -1\} \quad (\text{by definition}) \\ &= \{j \mid x_i \text{ divides } u_j\}. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore,  $c(p_i)$  coincides with the  $i$ -th row of the matrix  $\Phi_f$ . Since these rows generate  $L$  by definition, the claim is proved.

3. If  $p \in \{1, -1\}^n$ , then

$$c(p) = 0 \Leftrightarrow v_f(p) = \emptyset \Leftrightarrow u_i(p) = 1 \forall i \Leftrightarrow f(p) = N.$$

4. Let  $r = |c(p)| = |v_f(p)|$ . Then

$$f(p) = \sum_{i=1}^N u_i(p) = (r)(-1) + (N-r)(1) = N - 2r. \quad \square$$

We will now show that the value enumerator of  $f$ , defined as

$$V_f(T) = \sum_{p \in \{\pm 1\}^n} T^{f(p)},$$

is completely determined by the weight enumerator of  $L_f$ . (And of  $L_f^\perp$  as well, by the MacWilliams identity.)

**THEOREM 2.** *Let  $f = u_1 + \cdots + u_N$  ( $u_i \in M_n$  for all  $i$ ) and let  $L = L_f$  be its associated code. Then*

$$V_f(T) = 2^{n - \dim L} \cdot T^N \cdot P_L \left( \frac{1}{T^2} \right).$$

*Proof.*

$$\begin{aligned} V_f(T) &= \sum_{p \in \{\pm 1\}^n} T^{f(p)} \\ &= \sum_p T^{N - 2|c(p)|} \quad (\text{by Proposition 1}) \\ &= T^N \sum_p \left( \frac{1}{T^2} \right)^{|c(p)|}. \end{aligned}$$

As  $p$  runs through  $\{1, -1\}^n$ ,  $c(p)$  runs through  $L$  by Proposition 1. Furthermore, since  $c$  is a homomorphism, the fiber  $c^{-1}c(p)$  of  $c(p)$  contains  $|\text{Ker } c|$  elements, for every  $p$ . Thus,

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_p \left( \frac{1}{T^2} \right)^{|c(p)|} &= |\text{Ker } c| \cdot \sum_{z \in L} \left( \frac{1}{T^2} \right)^{|z|} \\ &= |\text{Ker } c| \cdot P_L \left( \frac{1}{T^2} \right). \end{aligned}$$

As  $\dim(\text{Ker } c) = n - \dim(\text{Im } c) = n - \dim(L)$ , the claimed formula follows.  $\square$

*Notation.* For any  $v \in \mathbf{Z}$ , we will denote by  $f^{-1}(v)$  the “binary fiber” of  $v$ , i.e. the set

$$f^{-1}(v) = \{p \in \{1, -1\}^n \mid f(p) = v\}.$$

Note that  $f(p) \equiv N \pmod{2}$  for every binary point  $p$ , for  $1 \equiv -1 \pmod{2}$ .

**COROLLARY 3.** *For every  $v \in \mathbf{Z}$ , the cardinality of  $f^{-1}(v)$  is equal to  $2^{n - \dim L}$  times the number of codewords in  $L$  which are of weight  $(N - v)/2$ .*

*Proof.* The cardinality of  $f^{-1}(v)$  is equal to the coefficient  $b_v$  of  $T^v$  in the Laurent polynomial  $V_f(T)$ . By the theorem,

$$b_v = 2^{n - \dim L} \cdot a_w,$$

where  $v = N - 2w$ , and where  $a_w$  is the coefficient of  $T^w$  in  $P_L(T)$ .  $\square$

**EXAMPLE 1:** *the Hamming code.*

Let  $f = (1 + x_1) \cdots (1 + x_n) - 1$ . Developing  $f$  as a sum of monomials in  $M_n$ , we have

$$f = \sum_{u \in M_n \setminus \{1\}} u.$$

Thus the associated matrix  $\Phi_f$  is the  $n \times (2^n - 1)$  matrix over  $\mathbf{F}_2$  whose columns are the elements of  $\mathbf{F}_2^n$ , except 0. By definition, this matrix is the parity check matrix of the Hamming code  $H_n$ . Thus, in our terminology, the Hamming code  $H_n$  is *the dual of the code  $L_f$  associated with  $f$* .

The value enumerator of  $f$  is readily obtained. We have

$$f(p) = \begin{cases} 2^n - 1 & \text{if } p = (1, \dots, 1), \\ -1 & \text{if not.} \end{cases}$$

Therefore,

$$V_f(T) = (2^n - 1)T^{-1} + T^{2^n - 1}.$$

Let  $P_L(T)$  be the weight enumerator of  $L = L_f$ . By Theorem 2, we have

$$\begin{aligned} P_L(T^{-2}) &= T^{1-2^n} \cdot V_f(T) \\ &= T^{1-2^n} \cdot ((2^n - 1)T^{-1} + T^{2^n - 1}) \\ &= (2^n - 1)T^{-2^n} + 1, \end{aligned}$$

and hence  $P_L(T) = 1 + (2^n - 1)T^{2^n - 1}$ .

Finally, by the MacWilliams identity, the weight enumerator of the Hamming code  $H_n = L^\perp$ , is equal to

$$P_{H_n}(T) = \frac{1}{2^n} [(1 + T)^{2^n - 1} + (2^n - 1)(1 + T)^{2^n - 1 - 1}(1 - T)^{2^n - 1}].$$

EXAMPLE 2: *the Reed-Muller code  $\mathcal{R}(r, m)$ .*

Let  $m$  be a positive integer, and let  $[m] := \{1, \dots, m\}$ . We consider  $2^m$  variables  $\{x_a\}$ , indexed by the subsets  $a \subset [m]$ . If  $J$  is a set of subsets of  $[m]$ , we denote by  $u_J$  the monomial

$$u_J := \prod_{a \in J} x_a.$$

If  $a \subset [m]$  and if  $i \leq m$ , we denote by  $a^{(i)}$  the set of subsets of cardinality  $i$  in  $a$ . Now, given a non-negative integer  $r \leq m$ , we define the polynomial

$$f_{r,m} := \sum_{a \subset [m]} u_{a^{(0)}} \cdots u_{a^{(r)}}.$$

The code  $L_f$  associated with  $f = f_{r,m}$ , then, is known as the  $r$ th-order binary Reed-Muller code  $\mathcal{R}(r, m)$ . Checking the claim is left to the reader. The determination of the weight enumerator of  $\mathcal{R}(r, m)$  is an open problem for  $r \geq 3$ . [MS, Chapter 15.]