Equivalence classes of Vogan diagrams

Meng-Kiat Chuah *, Chu-Chin Hu

Department of Applied Mathematics, National Chiao Tung University, Hsinchu, Taiwan
Received 15 December 2002

Communicated by Geoffrey Mason

Abstract

A Vogan diagram is a Dynkin diagram with an involution, and the vertices fixed by the involution may be painted. They represent real simple Lie algebras, and two diagrams are said to be equivalent if they represent the same Lie algebra. In this article we classify the equivalence classes of all Vogan diagrams. In doing so, we find that the underlying Dynkin diagrams have certain properties in graph painting. We show that this combinatorial property provides an easy classification for most of the simply-laced Dynkin diagrams.

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Keywords: Vogan diagram; Dynkin diagram; Simple Lie algebra; Graph painting

1. Introduction

A Vogan diagram [4] is a Dynkin diagram with two extra data: There is an automorphism \( \theta \) on the diagram with \( \theta^2 = 1 \), and the vertices fixed by \( \theta \) may be painted or unpainted. Each Vogan diagram corresponds to a real simple Lie algebra. Two diagrams are said to be equivalent if they represent the same Lie algebra. We are interested in equivalence classes of the Vogan diagrams. In this respect, we can ignore once and for all the diagrams with no painted vertex, as they represent Lie algebras without noncompact imaginary root and so cannot be equivalent to any diagram with painted vertices. Then the Borel–de Siebenthal theorem [3] says that every Vogan diagram is equivalent to one with a single painted vertex. However, it does not give the explicit equivalence. We shall develop algorithms which convert a diagram to an equivalent one with fewer painted vertices. As a result, not only we

* This work is supported in part by the National Science Council of Taiwan.
* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: chuah@math.nctu.edu.tw (M.K. Chuah).
have reproved the Borel–de Siebenthal theorem, we give the equivalence classes explicitly. We shall label the vertices of the underlying Dynkin diagram with 1, . . . , n. Then the Vogan diagram with vertices $i_1, \ldots, i_k$ painted, where $i_1 \prec \cdots \prec i_k$ is denoted by $(i_1, \ldots, i_k)$. For diagrams with $\theta = 1$, the equivalence classes are listed in Table 1.

The left column labels the vertices with 1, 2, 3, . . . and so on. The middle column lists the diagrams with single painted vertex, for example, (2) corresponds to the diagram with vertex 2 painted. The right column provides all the Vogan diagrams in their equivalence classes. For example, if we consider $(1, 3, 4)$ in $A_5$, then the formula $i_3 - i_2 + i_1 = 4 - 3 + 1 = 2$ says that it is equivalent to the diagram with vertex 2 painted.

It turns out that $E_n$ are the most complicated ones. The following methods explain how to use Table 1 for Vogan diagrams of $E_n$:

(1) Diagonals in the following special cases:

\[(2, 4), (1, 3, 4), (3, 5), (2, 4, *), (1, 3, 4, *), (3, 5, *), (3, 4, 6), (3, 4, 5, 6), (3, 4, 6, *), (3, 4, 5, 6, *) \text{ in } E_6 \text{ and } E_7. \quad (1.1)\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynkin diagram</th>
<th>Single painted vertex</th>
<th>Equivalent diagrams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$A_n$</td>
<td>1 $\cdots$ n</td>
<td>(N), $1 \leq N \leq (n + 1)/2$ $(i_1, \ldots, i_k), \sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} p_i = N, n + 1 - N$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$B_n$</td>
<td>1 $\cdots$ n</td>
<td>(N), $1 \leq N \leq n$ $(i_1, \ldots, i_k), \sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} p_i = N$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C_n$</td>
<td>1 $\cdots$ n</td>
<td>(N), $1 \leq N \leq n$ $(i_1, \ldots, i_k), i_k \leq n - 1, \sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} p_i = N, n - N$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D_n$</td>
<td>1 $\cdots$ n</td>
<td>(N), $1 \leq N \leq n/2$ $(i_1, \ldots, i_k), i_k \leq n - 2, \sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} p_i = N, n - N$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$E_6$</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>(n) $(i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1), \sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} p_i = N, n - 1$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynkin diagram</th>
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<th>Equivalent diagrams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E7 *</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2), (3), (5), (3, 5), (3, 4, 6), (3, 4, 5, 6), (4, *), (6, *), (2, 4, *), (1, 3, 4, *)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( (i_1, \ldots, i_l, i_j, \ldots, i_s) ), ( l \neq 1 ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( J = \begin{cases} 1 - I, &amp; 3 - I, \text{ and } I + s \text{ is odd,} \ 2 - I, &amp; 4 - I, \text{ and } I + s \text{ is even.} \end{cases} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( j_1 = \begin{cases} 1 + I, &amp; 2 + I, \ 3 + I, \ 5 + I, \ \text{and } I + s \text{ is even,} \ 4 + I \text{ and } I + s \text{ is odd.} \end{cases} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( (2, 4), (1, 3, 4), (1, *), (2, *), (5, *), (3, 5, *), (3, 4, 6, *), (3, 4, 5, 6, *) )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( (i_1, \ldots, i_l, i_j, \ldots, i_s) ), ( l \neq 1 ).</td>
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<td>( j_1 = 1 + I, \ 2 + I, \ 5 + I, \ \text{and } I + s \text{ is odd.} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( (4), (3, *) )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( (i_1, \ldots, i_l, i_j, \ldots, i_s) ), ( l \neq 1 ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( J = \begin{cases} 3 - I \text{ and } I + s \text{ is even,} \ 4 - I \text{ and } I + s \text{ is odd.} \end{cases} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( j_1 = 3 + I \text{ and } I + s \text{ is odd,} \ 4 + I \text{ and } I + s \text{ is even.} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( (7), (2), (3), (6), (1, *), (2, *), (5, *), (6, *) )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( (i_1, \ldots, i_l, i_j, \ldots, i_s) ), ( l \neq 1 ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( J = \begin{cases} 1 - I, &amp; 5 - I, \text{ and } I + s \text{ is even,} \ 2 - I, &amp; 6 - I. \end{cases} )</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( j_1 = \begin{cases} 1 + I, &amp; 5 + I, \text{ and } I + s \text{ is odd,} \ 3 + I \text{ and } I + s \text{ is even,} \ 2 + I, &amp; 6 + I. \end{cases} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( (1), (4, *) )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( (i_1, \ldots, i_l, i_j, \ldots, i_s) ), ( l \neq 1 ).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( J = \begin{cases} 1 - I, &amp; 5 - I, \text{ and } I + s \text{ is odd,} \ 4 - I. \end{cases} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( j_1 = \begin{cases} 1 + I, &amp; 5 + I, \text{ and } I + s \text{ is even,} \ 3 + I \text{ and } I + s \text{ is odd,} \ 4 + I. \end{cases} )</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
Table 1 (continued)

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<tr>
<th>Dynkin diagram</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$E_4$</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>$(i_1, \ldots, i_k), (i_1, \ldots, i_k) \cap {1, 2} \neq \emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>$(i_1, \ldots, i_k), (i_1, \ldots, i_k) \cap {1, 2} = \emptyset$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$G_2$</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>$(i_1, \ldots, i_k), (i_1, \ldots, i_k) \cap {1, 2} = \emptyset$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obviously we disregard the second row of (1.1) in $E_6$ because there is no vertex 6. Their equivalence classes can be found directly in Table 1.

(2) Diagrams not in (1.1):

Write it in the form

$$(i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_l, s),$$

where $1 \leq i_1 < \cdots < i_k \leq 3 < j_1 < \cdots < j_l \leq n - 1$, and $s$ is either $*$ or empty depending on whether $*$ is painted or not. In this case, let

$$I = \sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} i_p \quad (I = 0 \text{ if no } i \text{ appears}),$$

$$J = \sum_{p=1}^{l} (-1)^{l-p} j_p \quad (J = 0 \text{ if no } j \text{ appears}).$$

In computing the sign of $I + s$, we make the convention that $s = *$ is odd and $s = \emptyset$ is even. Then find the equivalence class in Table 1.

Note that method (2) cannot be used against the diagrams in (1.1), because that would lead to the wrong equivalence classes. The significance of (1.1) will be explained in Proposition 3.2.

For example, consider $(1, 2, 3, 5, *)$ in $E_7$, which is not in (1.1). We see that $l = 1$,

$$I = i_3 - i_2 + i_1 = 3 - 2 + 1 = 2 \quad \text{and} \quad J = j_1 = 5 = 3 + I.$$  

Here $s = *$, and $I + s = 2 + *$ is odd. By Table 1, $(1, 2, 3, 5, *) \sim (*)$ in $E_7$.

We shall prove Table 1, for the classical diagrams in Section 2, and the exceptional diagrams in Section 3. We shall only prove the equivalence of each grouping in Table 1. We need not prove inequivalence of different groupings, since this is done in [4]. For instance [4, p. 355] says that in $A_4$, (1) is $su(1, 4)$, and (2) is $su(2, 3)$, so (1) and (2) are not equivalent.

Next we consider the Vogan diagrams with nontrivial involutions $\theta$. Here $\theta$ imposes a symmetry requirement on the underlying Dynkin diagrams, and the only vertices fixed by $\theta$ may be painted. Therefore, such Vogan diagrams are limited. They are listed in Table 2, together with their equivalence classes, where “$\leftrightarrow$” indicates the two-element-orbits of $\theta$. 

[Continued on the next page]
Once again, we ignore the ones without painted vertex, which are obviously not equivalent to any other diagram.

We shall prove Table 2 in Section 4. Tables 1 and 2 confirm the Borel–de Siebenthal theorem. Their proofs use some algorithms $F[i]$ (see (2.1)) which reduce the number of painted vertices to one. In Section 5, we show that these algorithms lead to a necessary condition for a graph to be Dynkin (Corollary 5.2). We shall see that this necessary condition is almost sufficient, thereby providing a very easy classification for almost all simply-laced Dynkin diagrams.

2. Classical diagrams

In this section we consider Vogan diagrams of types $A$, $B$, $C$, $D$ in Table 1, with $\theta = 1$. We label their vertices with $1, \ldots, n$ as in Table 1. A Vogan diagram with painted vertices $i_1, \ldots, i_k$, where $1 \leq i_1 < \cdots < i_k \leq n$, is denoted by $(i_1, \ldots, i_k)$. Suppose that $i \in \{i_1, \ldots, i_k\}$, so that $i$ is a painted vertex. We introduce an operation $F[i]$ on the Vogan diagram as follows. Let $F[i]$ act on the root system by reflection corresponding to the noncompact simple root $i$. As a result, it leads an equivalent Vogan diagram. The effect of $F[i]$ on the Vogan diagram is as follows (developed in [1], see also [2, p. 89]):

\[ F[i]: \]

- The colors of $i$ and all vertices not adjacent to $i$ remain unchanged.
- If $j$ is joined to $i$ by a double edge and $j$ is long, the color of $j$ remains unchanged.
- Apart from the above exceptions, reverse the colors of all vertices adjacent to $i$. \hspace{6cm} (2.1)

For instance, if we apply $F[4]$ to $(1, 3, 4, 7)$, then we reverse the colors of 3, 5 and get $(1, 4, 5, 7)$. Thus $(1, 3, 4, 7)$ is equivalent to $(1, 4, 5, 7)$.

Using the operation $F[i]$, the next lemma shows that a pair of painted vertices can be shifted leftward or rightward.

---

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynkin diagram</th>
<th>Single painted vertex</th>
<th>Equivalent diagrams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$A_n$</td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>$(n + 1)/2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D_n$</td>
<td>$n - 1$</td>
<td>$(N), N \leq (n - 1)/2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$E_6$</td>
<td>$4$</td>
<td>$(*)$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lemma 2.1. Let $i_1 < \cdots < i_k$.

(a) $(i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (i_1, \ldots, i_{r-1}, i_r - c, i_{r+1} - c, i_{r+2}, \ldots, i_k)$ whenever $i_{r-1} < i_r - c$.
(b) $(i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (i_1, \ldots, i_{r-1}, i_r + c, i_{r+1} + c, i_{r+2}, \ldots, i_k)$ whenever $i_{r+1} + c < i_{r+2}$.

We require $i_{r+1} + c \leq n - 1$ in $C_n$ and $i_{r+1} + c \leq n - 2$ in $D_n$.

Proof. We now prove (a). Suppose we want to move $i_r$, $i_{r+1}$ leftward $c$ steps, where $i_{r-1} < i_r - c$. It is equivalent to moving them 1 step for $c$ times, namely it suffices to show that

$$(i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (i_1, \ldots, i_{r-1}, i_r - 1, i_{r+1} - 1, i_{r+2}, \ldots, i_k).$$  \hfill (2.2)

By applying $F[i_r + 1], F[i_r + 2], \ldots, F[i_{r+1} - 1]$ consecutively to $(i_1, \ldots, i_k)$, we get (2.2), and (a) follows.

The proof of (b) is similar. The restrictions on $C_n$, $D_n$ are added because $F[n - 1]$ does not change the color of $n$ in $C_n$, and $F[n - 2]$ changes the colors of $n - 1, n$ in $D_n$. \hfill \Box

For example, in $(1, 5, 7, 9)$, we can move the pair 5, 7 leftward three steps and get $(1, 5, 7, 9) \sim (1, 2, 4, 9)$. The following lemma provides a way to reduce the number of painted vertices.

Lemma 2.2. In $A_n$, $B_n$, $(i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (i_2 - i_1, i_3, \ldots, i_k)$. If $i_2 \leq n - 1$, this is true in $C_n$, if $i_2 \leq n - 2$, this is true in $D_n$.

Proof. We divide the arguments for $(i_1, \ldots, i_k)$ into two cases.

Case 1: $i_1 = 1$. If $i_2 = 2$ then $F[1](1, 2, i_3, \ldots, i_k) = (1, i_3, \ldots, i_k)$ and we are done. So suppose that $i_2 > 2$. Apply $F[1], F[2], \ldots, F[i_2 - 1]$ to $(1, i_2, \ldots, i_k)$, we get $(1, i_2, \ldots, i_k) \sim (i_2 - 1, i_3, \ldots, i_k)$. This solves Case 1.

Case 2: $i_1 > 1$. By Lemma 2.1(a), $(i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (1, i_2 - i_1 + 1, i_3, \ldots, i_k)$. This is reduced to case 1, so we get $(1, i_2 - i_1 + 1, i_3, \ldots, i_k) \sim (i_2 - i_1, i_3, \ldots, i_k)$. This solves Case 2.

The extra conditions are imposed to deal with the special cases of $F[n - 1]$ in $C_n$ and $F[n - 2], F[n - 1], F[n]$ in $D_n$, as explained in Lemma 2.1. This proves the lemma. \hfill \Box

Proposition 2.3. In $A_n$ and $B_n$, $(i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (\sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p}i_p)$.

Proof. Consider $(i_1, \ldots, i_k)$ in $A_n$ or $B_n$. By Lemma 2.2,

$$(i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (i_2 - i_1, i_3, \ldots, i_k) \sim (i_3 - i_2 - i_1, i_4, \ldots, i_k) \sim \cdots \sim \left(\sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p}i_p\right).$$  \hfill (2.3)

This proves the proposition. \hfill \Box
Obviously \((N) \sim (n + 1 - N)\) in \(A_n\), by symmetry of the diagram. Therefore, by Proposition 2.3, we have verified the equivalence classes of diagrams of types \(A\) and \(B\) in Table 1. The next proposition considers the type \(C\) diagrams of Table 1. The argument is similar unless the vertex \(n\) is painted.

**Proposition 2.4.** Consider \((i_1, \ldots, i_k)\) in \(C_n\).

(a) If \(i_k < n\), then \((i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim \left(\sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} i_p\right)\).

(b) If \(i_k = n\), then \((i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (n)\).

**Proof.** If \(i_k < n\), we can repeat the argument as in (2.3) and get the desired result. We now consider the case \(i_k = n\), namely \((i_1, \ldots, i_k-1, n)\). Let \(c = n - 1 - i_{k-1}\). Then

\[
(i_1, \ldots, i_{k-1}, n) \sim (i_1, \ldots, i_{k-3}, i_{k-2} + c, n-1, n) \quad \text{by Lemma 2.1(b)}
\]

\[
\sim (i_1, \ldots, i_{k-3}, i_{k-2} + n - 1 - i_{k-1}, n) \quad \text{by } F[n].
\] (2.4)

Thus the number of entries has gone from \(k\) to \(k-1\). Repeat the applications of Lemma 2.1(b) and \(F[n]\) as in (2.4), we end up with \((n)\). □

Most of \(C_n\) in Table 1 follow from Proposition 2.4. It remains only to check that if \((i_1, \ldots, i_k)\) with \(i_k < n\) satisfies \(\sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} i_p = n - N\), then \((i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (N)\). This can be done by modifying (2.3) to \((i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (i_1, \ldots, i_{k-2}, n - (i_k - i_{k-1})) \sim \cdots \sim (n - \sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} i_p)\) and proceed with similar arguments, or by observing that \((N)\) and \((n - N)\) correspond to the Lie algebras \(sp(N, n-N) \cong sp(n-N, N)\) [4, p. 355]. This proves Table 1 for \(C_n\).

For \(D_n\), the following proposition considers the various situations based on the colors of \(n-1\) and \(n\).

**Proposition 2.5.** In \(D_n\):

(a) If \(i_k \leq n - 2\), then \((i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (\sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} i_p)\).

(b) \((i_1, \ldots, i_k, n-1, n) \sim (1 + \sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} i_p)\).

(c) \((i_1, \ldots, i_k, n-1) \sim (n-1)\).

**Proof.** The argument for (a) is similar to \(A_n\); we simply move pairs of painted vertices to the left by Lemma 2.1(a). We perform this operation in (b), and get

\[
(i_1, \ldots, i_k, n-1, n) \sim \left(\sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} i_p, n-1, n\right).
\]

By \(F[n-1]\) followed by \(F[n-2]\), we get

\[
\left(\sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} i_p, n-1, n\right) \sim \left(\sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} i_p, n-3, n-2\right).
\]
We first treat the diagrams of $E_n$. Then for $n = 3$. Exceptional diagrams

Proof. For one of $n$ symmetry of the diagram. in Table 1. The next section considers the diagrams of types $E_{1,2}$ desired results. cannot be applied to (1.1) of $E_8$ below. We will deal with them separately in Proposition 3.5. Although argument (3.7) also excludes the special cases in (1.1) because they are not valid in argument (3.7). Although argument (3.7) also excludes the special cases in (1.1) because they are not valid in argument (3.7). When $n = 1$, $n = 2$, we need not exclude (1.1) of $E_n$. We have checked the equivalence classes of Vogan diagrams of types $A_n$ and $B_n$ and we are done. □

Most equivalence classes of type $D$ in Table 1 are covered by Proposition 2.5. The remaining cases follow from two simple observations. Firstly, $(N) \sim (n - N)$ because they correspond to Lie algebras $so(2N, 2n = 2N) \equiv so(2n - 2N, 2N)$. Secondly, if exactly one of $n - 1$, $n$ is painted, obviously it does not matter which of them is painted due to symmetry of the diagram.

We have checked the equivalence classes of Vogan diagrams of types $A$, $B$, $C$, $D$ given in Table 1. The next section considers the diagrams of types $E$, $F$, $G$.

3. Exceptional diagrams

In this section, we consider the Vogan diagrams of types $E$, $F$, $G$ in Table 1 with $\theta = 1$. We first treat the diagrams of $E_n$. Label the vertices as follows:

```
       *
       \   /
       O  1  2  3  \  \  \  \  n-1
```

Lemma 3.1.

(a) For $q \geq 4$ and $p = 2, 3$, we get $(p, q) \sim (p - 1, q - 1, \*)$ and $(p, q, \*) \sim (p - 1, q - 1)$. (b) For $q \geq 4$, $(1, q) \sim (q - 1, \*)$ and $(1, q, \*) \sim (q - 1)$.

Proof. For $(p, q)$ or $(p, q, \*)$, where $q \geq 4$, apply $F[p], \ldots, F[q - 1]$ to it and we get the desired results. □

The next proposition simplifies a Vogan diagram to one of the form $(\alpha)$ or $(\alpha, \*)$. However, it excludes the special cases in (1.1) because they are not valid in argument (3.7) below. We will deal with them separately in Proposition 3.5. Although argument (3.7) also cannot be applied to (1.1) of $E_8$, Propositions 3.3 and 3.5 show that they all happen to be equivalent to (7) in $E_8$, which coincides with the formulae in Proposition 3.2. Therefore, we need not exclude (1.1) of $E_8$ in Proposition 3.2.

As in (1.2), the Vogan diagrams are denoted by $(i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_{i_1}, s)$, where $1 \leq i_1 < \cdots < i_k \leq 3 < j_1 < \cdots < j_{i_1} \leq n - 1$ and $s$ is $\*$ or empty. Throughout this section, let $I, J$ be defined as in (1.3), and let

$$\alpha = \begin{cases} J - I & \text{if } J \geq 4, \\ n - J - I & \text{if } J < 4. \end{cases}$$

(3.1)

The next proposition simplifies $(i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_{i_1}, s)$ to $(\alpha, t)$, where $t$ is $\*$ or empty.
Proposition 3.2. Consider \((i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_l)\) or \((i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_l, *)\) other than in (1.1). Then \((i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_l, s) \sim (\alpha, t)\), where \(s = t\) if \(I\) is even, and \(s \neq t\) if \(I\) is odd.

Proof. For the case \((i_1, j_1) = (3, 4)\), by \(F[3], F[2], F[1]\), we get \((1, *)\). Now consider the case \((i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_l)\), we may regard \((i_1, \ldots, i_k)\) and \((j_1, \ldots, j_l)\) as painted diagrams of \(A_3\) and \(A_{n-4}\), respectively. By Proposition 2.3, we have

\[
(i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim \left( \sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} i_p \right) = (I) \quad \text{in } A_3 \quad \text{and} \quad (3.2)
\]

\[
(j_1, \ldots, j_l) \sim \left( \sum_{p=1}^{l} (-1)^{l-p} j_p \right) = (J) \quad \text{in } A_{n-4}. \quad (3.3)
\]

Notice that \(J \geq 4\) if and only if \(l = 1\), this implies that there is a single painted vertex in \(\{j_1, \ldots, j_l\}\); and if \(J < 4\), then the corresponding single painted vertex of \(E_n\) is \(n - J\). Let \(\beta\) denote the single painted vertex of \(E_n\) reduced from the painted vertices \(\{j_1, \ldots, j_l\}\), then

\[
\beta = \begin{cases} 
  n - J & \text{if } J < 4, \\
  J & \text{if } J \geq 4,
\end{cases} \quad \text{and} \quad \alpha = \beta - I. \quad (3.4)
\]

In reducing the diagrams (3.2) and (3.3), we did not use the operation \(F[3]\). So * does not occur and

\[
(i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_l) \sim (I, \beta). \quad (3.5)
\]

Since \(\beta \geq 4\) and by Lemma 3.1(a), we see that

\[
(I, \beta) \sim (I - 1, \beta - 1, *) \sim (I - 2, \beta - 2) \sim \ldots \sim \begin{cases} 
  (1, \beta - I + 1, *) & \text{if } I - 1 \text{ is odd}, \\
  (1, \beta - I + 1) & \text{if } I - 1 \text{ is even},
\end{cases} \quad (3.6)
\]

Hence we have

\[
(i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_l) \sim (I, \beta) \quad \text{by (3.5)}
\]

\[
\sim \begin{cases} 
  (1, \beta - I + 1) & \text{if } I - 1 \text{ is even}, \\
  (1, \beta - I + 1, *) & \text{if } I - 1 \text{ is odd},
\end{cases} \quad \text{by (3.6)}
\]

\[
\sim \begin{cases} 
  (\beta - I, *) & \text{if } I \text{ is odd}, \\
  (\beta - I) & \text{if } I \text{ is even},
\end{cases} \quad \text{by Lemma 3.1(b)}
\]

\[
\sim \begin{cases} 
  (\alpha, *) & \text{if } I \text{ is odd}, \\
  (\alpha) & \text{if } I \text{ is even},
\end{cases} \quad \text{by (3.4).} \quad (3.7)
\]
The use of Lemma 3.1(b) in (3.7) requires $\beta - I + 1 \geq 4$, which is not valid for the diagrams in (1.1). This is the reason which excludes them from this proposition.

By (3.7), we solve the case $(i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_l)$. The case of $(i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_l, *)$ follows from similar argument. This completes the proof. \Box

The above proposition shows how a Vogan diagram is equivalent to one of the form $(\alpha)$ or $(\alpha, *)$. The next two propositions deal with $(\alpha, *)$ and $(\alpha)$, respectively.

![Table 3](https://example.com/table3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$(\alpha, *)$</th>
<th>$E_6$</th>
<th>$E_7$</th>
<th>$E_8$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$(1, *)$</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$(2, *)$</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$(3, *)$</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$(4, *)$</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$(5, *)$</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$(6, *)$</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$(7, *)$</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proposition 3.3.** The Vogan diagrams of the form $(\alpha, *)$ are equivalent to diagrams with single painted vertex in Table 3.

**Proof.** For $(1, *)$, we apply $F[1], F[2], \ldots, F[n - 1]$ consecutively and get

$$(1, *) \sim (1, 2, *) \sim (2, 3, *) \sim (3, 4) \sim \cdots \sim (n - 1).$$

(3.8)

For $(2, *)$, we apply $F[*]$ to it and get $(2, 3, *)$, then proceed as in (3.8). Clearly, $(3, *) \sim (3)$. For $(4, *)$, we apply $F[*], F[3], F[2], F[1]$ to it and get $(4, *) \sim (1)$.

We next show that $(5, *) \sim (2, *)$, so that we can proceed with $(2, *)$ as above. By $F[*], F[3], F[4]$, we get $(5, *) \sim (2, 4)$. By Lemma 3.1(a), $(2, 4) \sim (1, 3, *)$. Then apply $F[1], F[2]$ to $(1, 3, *)$, we get $(2, *)$. This solves $(5, *)$.

We now consider $(6, *)$ in $E_7$ and $E_8$. In $E_7$, apply $F[6], \ldots, F[1]$ consecutively to $(6, *)$ and we get $(1)$. In $E_8$, by Lemma 3.1(b), $(6, *) \sim (1, 7)$. Apply $F[7], F[6], \ldots, F[2]$ to $(1, 7)$ and we get $(2, *)$. This solves $(6, *)$.

Finally, for $(7, *)$ in $E_8$, we apply $F[7], \ldots, F[1]$ to it and get $(1)$. This proves the proposition. \Box

By Propositions 3.2 and 3.3, we have simplified all type $E$ diagrams to single painted vertex diagrams. We consider these single painted vertex diagrams in the following proposition.

**Proposition 3.4.**

(a) $E_6$ has two equivalence classes $(1) \sim (5)$ and $(2) \sim (3) \sim (4) \sim (*)$.

(b) $E_7$ has three equivalence classes $(6), (1) \sim (2) \sim (3) \sim (5)$, and $(4) \sim (*)$.

(c) $E_8$ has two equivalence classes $(1) \sim (4) \sim (5) \sim (*)$ and $(2) \sim (3) \sim (6) \sim (7)$. 
Proof. We only have to prove the equivalence claimed in this proposition. The inequivalence of different groupings follows from [4]. For example, [4, pp. 533–534] says that (1) and (4) in $E_6$ are not equivalent.

We first claim that $(*) \sim (4)$ in all $E_n$:

\[
(*) \sim (3, *) \quad \text{apply } F[\ast] \\
\sim (2, 5, *) \quad \text{by Proposition 3.2} \\
\sim (4) \quad \text{apply } F[3], F[4].
\] (3.9)

Hence $(*) \sim (4)$ as claimed. In the following we consider $E_6$, $E_7$, $E_8$ separately.

In $E_6$, clearly $(1) \sim (5)$ and $(2) \sim (4)$ by symmetry of the diagram. So by (3.9) it suffices to show that $(3) \sim (*).$ By applying $F[3], F[4], F[5]$ to $(3)$, we get $(2, 5, *)$, and by Proposition 3.2, $(2, 5, *) \sim (3, *)$. Clearly $(3, *) \sim (*).$ This proves (a).

We next consider $E_7$ in (b):

\[
(3) \sim (3, 6, *) \quad \text{by Proposition 3.2} \\
\sim (4, *) \quad \text{apply } F[6], F[5], F[4] \\
\sim (1) \quad \text{by Proposition 3.3}.
\]

We conclude that $(3) \sim (1)$. Next we claim that $(2) \sim (3)$:

\[
(2) \sim (1, 3) \quad \text{apply } F[2], F[1] \\
\sim (2, 4, *) \quad \text{by Lemma 3.1(a)} \\
\sim (3) \quad \text{apply } F[\ast], F[3].
\]

Hence $(2) \sim (3)$ as claimed. We next prove that $(5) \sim (2)$:

\[
(5) \sim (1, 6, *) \quad \text{by Proposition 3.2} \\
\sim (2) \quad \text{apply } F[6], F[5], \ldots, F[2].
\]

Together with (3.9), this proves (b).

Finally, we consider $E_8$ in (c):

\[
(5) \sim (2, 7) \quad \text{by Proposition 3.2} \\
\sim (3, *) \quad \text{apply } F[7], F[6], \ldots, F[3] \\
\sim (*) \quad \text{apply } F[\ast].
\]

On the other hand,

\[
(4) \sim (3, 7, *) \quad \text{by Proposition 3.2} \\
\sim (4, *) \quad \text{apply } F[7], F[6], \ldots, F[4] \\
\sim (1) \quad \text{by Proposition 3.3}.
\]

Recall that $(4) \sim (*)$ by (3.9), so we conclude that $(1) \sim (4) \sim (5) \sim (*).$ We next check the other equivalence class $(2) \sim (3) \sim (6) \sim (7)$:
(6) \(\sim (1, 7, *)\) by Proposition 3.2
\(\sim (2)\) apply \(F[7], F[6], \ldots, F[2]\)
\(\sim (1, 4, *)\) apply \(F[2], F[3], F[*]\)
\(\sim (3)\) by Proposition 3.2
\(\sim (3, 6, *)\) by Proposition 3.2
\(\sim (6, *)\) apply \(F[*]\)
\(\sim (7)\) by Proposition 3.3.

That is, \((6) \sim (2) \sim (3) \sim (7)\). This completes the proof. \(\square\)

The next proposition deals with the Vogan diagrams in (1.1). They have been excluded by Proposition 3.2.

**Proposition 3.5.** The equivalence classes of the Vogan diagrams in (1.1) are given in Table 4. In particular, each of them is equivalent to \((n - 2, *)\) or \((n - 2)\).

**Proof.** In all \(E_n\),

\[
(3, 5, *) \sim (2, 4) \quad \text{by Lemma 3.1(a)}
\sim (1, 3, 4) \quad \text{apply } F[2], F[1]
\sim (1, n - 1) \quad \text{apply } F[4], \ldots, F[n - 1]
\sim (n - 2, *) \quad \text{by Lemma 3.1(b)}.
\]

The equivalence class of \((n - 2, *)\) is given by Proposition 3.3. By similar arguments, we have \((3, 5) \sim (2, 4, *) \sim (1, 3, 4, *) \sim (n - 2)\). The equivalence class of \((n - 2)\) is given by Proposition 3.4. And clearly, in \(E_7\), \((3, 4, 6) \sim (3, 4, 5, 6) \sim (3, 5)\) and \((3, 4, 6, *) \sim (3, 4, 5, 6, *) \sim (3, 5, *)\). This completes the proof. \(\square\)

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynkin diagram</th>
<th>Single painted vertex</th>
<th>Equivalent diagrams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(E_6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) (5), (2, 4), (1, 3, 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3, 5, *), ((\alpha, *), \alpha = 1, 2, 4, 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(5, 2, 4, (1, 3, 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3, 5, *), ((\alpha, *), \alpha = 1, 2, 4, 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2, 4, (1, 3, 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3, 5, *), ((\alpha, *), \alpha = 1, 2, 4, 5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(E_7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(6) (2, 4), (1, 3, 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3, 5, *), (3, 4, 6, *), ((\alpha, *), \alpha = 1, 2, 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4), (3, *)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(E_8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(7) (2, 3, 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>((\alpha, *), (\alpha = 1, 2, 5, 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1, 4, 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>((\alpha, *), (\alpha = 3, 4, 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(7) (2, 3, 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>((\alpha, *), (\alpha = 1, 2, 5, 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1, 4, 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>((\alpha, *), (\alpha = 3, 4, 7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The equivalence class of \((n - 2, *)\) is given by Proposition 3.3. By similar arguments, we have \((3, 5) \sim (2, 4, *) \sim (1, 3, 4, *) \sim (n - 2)\). The equivalence class of \((n - 2)\) is given by Proposition 3.4. And clearly, in \(E_7\), \((3, 4, 6) \sim (3, 4, 5, 6) \sim (3, 5)\) and \((3, 4, 6, *) \sim (3, 4, 5, 6, *) \sim (3, 5, *)\). This completes the proof. \(\square\)
By Propositions 3.2–3.5, we have completely characterized all the equivalence classes of Vogan diagrams of type $E$. We summarize these results in Table 4. Recall that $\alpha$ is defined in (3.1).

Table 4 summarizes the following method to determine the equivalence class of a Vogan diagram of $E_n$:

1. Diagrams belong to the special cases (1.1).
   Use Proposition 3.5 to reduce it to the form $(n - 2, *)$ or $(n - 2)$, then use Proposition 3.3 or 3.4 to find the equivalence class. The result is in Table 4.

2. Diagrams not in (1.1).
   Write it as $(i_1, \ldots, i_k, j_1, \ldots, j_l, s)$, then use (1.3) and (3.1) to compute $I$, $J$, $\alpha$. Use Proposition 3.2 to reduce it to $(\alpha, *)$ or $(\alpha)$. The equivalence classes of $(\alpha, *)$ and $(\alpha)$ are given in Propositions 3.3 and 3.4, and are summarized in Table 4.

Methods (1) and (2) here correspond to methods (1) and (2) for Table 1. The methods for Table 4 have been simplified to the various cases of Table 1.

For example, consider $(1, 2, 3, 5, *)$ in $E_7$. It does not belong to (1.1), so we compute

$$I = i_3 - i_2 + i_1 = 3 - 2 + 1 = 2$$
$$J = j_1 = 5 > 4,$$

hence $\alpha = J - I = 3$. Since $I$ is even, by Proposition 3.2, $(1, 2, 3, 5, *) \sim (3, *)$. By Proposition 3.3, $(3, *) \sim (*).$ So Table 4 shows that $(1, 2, 3, 5, *) \sim (\ast)$ in $E_7$.

Alternatively, from $j_1 = 3 + I$ and $I + s = 2 + \ast$ is odd, we find $(1, 2, 3, 5, *) \sim (\ast)$ in $E_7$ of Table 1.

We next consider the Vogan diagrams of $F_4$. We label the vertices as follows:

$$
\begin{array}{cccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\
\end{array}
$$

**Proposition 3.6.** In $F_4$, $(i_1, \ldots, i_k) \sim (1)$ if and only if $\{i_1, \ldots, i_k\} \cap \{1, 2\} \neq \emptyset$.

**Proof.** Suppose that $(i_1, \ldots, i_k)$ does not contain 1 or 2. That is $(3, 4) \sim (4)$ or $(3)$. It follows either from [4, pp. 541–542] or Theorem 5.1 later that $(3) \not\sim (2)$ and $(3) \not\sim (1)$. By applying $F[4], F[3]$ on (4), we get (3). Conversely,

$$(1) \sim (1, 2) \quad \text{by } F[1]$$

$$(2) \sim (2, 3) \quad \text{by } F[2]$$

$$(2) \sim (2, 3, 4) \quad \text{by } F[3]$$

$$(2) \sim (2, 4) \quad \text{by } F[4]$$

$$(2) \sim (1, 2, 3, 4) \quad \text{by } F[2]$$

$$(2) \sim (1, 2, 3) \quad \text{by } F[3]$$

$$(2) \sim (2) \quad \text{by } F[2].$$

(3.10)
And clearly,

\[(1, 2, 3, 4) \sim (1, 3, 4) \sim (1, 4) \sim (1, 2, 4) \quad \text{and} \quad (1, 2, 3) \sim (1, 3). \quad (3.11)\]

All cases of \(\{i_1, \ldots, i_k\} \cap \{1, 2\} \neq 0\) are considered in (3.10) and (3.11), this completes the proof. □

Proposition 3.6 shows that there are only two equivalence classes of Vogan diagrams of \(F_4\) as listed in Table 1.

It is clear that all paintings on \(G_2\) (unless we keep all vertices unpainted) are equivalent to one another. This can be checked by performing various \(F[i]\), or by looking at its painted root system.

4. Nontrivial involutions

In this section we study the equivalence classes of the Vogan diagrams with nontrivial involutions, and prove the informations in Table 2.

The condition \(\theta \neq 1\) restricts the underlying Dynkin diagrams to \(A_n, D_n, \text{and } E_6\). We also ignore the diagrams without painted vertex, since they cannot be equivalent to one with painted vertices. So the possibilities for \(\theta \neq 1\) and with painted vertices are limited to \(A_n\) (\(n\) odd), \(D_n\), and \(E_6\). We may not paint vertices that are not fixed by \(\theta\) (since compactness of roots makes sense only on the imaginary ones). We label the vertices as in Table 2. The only way to paint \(A_n\) (\(n\) odd) is by painting the vertex \((n + 1)/2\), so it is not equivalent to any other diagram.

Next we consider \(D_n\) with vertex \(N\) painted, where \(N \leq n - 2\). In the previous case where \(\theta = 1\), we have shown in Proposition 2.5(a) that

\[(N) \sim (i_1, \ldots, i_k) \quad \text{for } N = \sum_{p=1}^{k} (-1)^{k-p} i_p \quad \text{and} \quad i_k \leq n - 2. \quad (4.1)\]

This argument uses \(F[i]\) for \(i \leq n - 3\). In general, \(F[i]\) differs in the cases \(\theta = 1\) and \(\theta \neq 1\) only if a vertex adjacent to \(i\) is not fixed by \(\theta\). Therefore, since \(n - 1\) and \(n\) are the only vertices not fixed by \(\theta\) here, the arguments in Proposition 2.5(a) are still valid in our present situation. Namely, we also have (4.1) for \(\theta \neq 1\). Also, \((N) \sim (n - N - 1)\) because they represent the Lie algebras \(so(2N + 1, 2n - 2N - 1) \equiv so(2n - 2N - 1, 2N + 1)\). This proves \(D_n\) in Table 2.

Finally in \(E_6\), there is only one equivalence class with \(\theta \neq 1\) and with some vertices painted [4, pp. 532–535]. Therefore, all such cases are equivalent to one another. This completely verifies Table 2.

5. Graph paintings

This section develops an idea in the opposite direction: The Vogan diagrams can classify almost all the simply-laced Dynkin diagrams. Since we are interested in the
underlying Dynkin diagrams, we may consider only the Vogan diagrams with $\theta = 1$ in this section.

Recall that the algorithm $F[i]$ in (2.1) is used to reduce the number of painted vertices within an equivalence class of Vogan diagrams until we end up with a single painted vertex. This is not so surprising, by the following theorem.

**Theorem 5.1.** Two Vogan diagrams with $\theta = 1$ are equivalent if and only if one can be transformed to the other by a sequence of $F[i]$ operations.

**Proof.** The “if” part of the theorem is obvious, since $F[i]$ preserves equivalence classes. The converse has been verified explicitly for each Dynkin diagram in Sections 2, 3 when we check Table 1. We now give a more intrinsic argument which does not take into account the shapes of the Dynkin diagrams. Recall that two equivalent Vogan diagrams correspond to the same Lie algebra under different choices of Weyl chambers. The Weyl group $W$ acts transitively on the chambers, and so it acts transitively on each equivalence class of Vogan diagrams. Since $\theta = 1$, all roots are imaginary, and they are either compact or noncompact. Let $W_c$ and $W_n$ denote the subgroups generated by reflections about the compact and noncompact simple roots, respectively. Clearly, $W$ is generated by $W_c$ and $W_n$. Further, since $W_c$ acts trivially on the Vogan diagrams, it follows that $W_n$ acts transitively on each equivalence class of Vogan diagrams. Since $F[i]$ corresponds to reflection about the noncompact simple root labelled $i$, this proves the theorem. \(\square\)

The proof of this theorem does not make use of knowledge on the shapes of the Dynkin diagrams. Therefore, if we accept the Borel–de Siebenthal theorem, then it gives a necessary condition for a connected graph to be a Dynkin diagram.

**Corollary 5.2.** If a connected graph $\Gamma$ is a Dynkin diagram, then

(a) every painting on $\Gamma$ can be simplified via a sequence of $F[i]$ to a painting with single painted vertex;

(b) every connected subgraph of $\Gamma$ satisfies property (a).

**Proof.** To prove (a), let $\Gamma$ be a Dynkin diagram. Suppose that $p$ is a painting on $\Gamma$. By the Borel–de Siebenthal theorem, $(\Gamma, p) \sim (\Gamma, s)$, where $s$ paints just a single vertex of $\Gamma$. By Theorem 5.1, $(\Gamma, p)$ can be transformed to $(\Gamma, s)$ with some sequence of $F[i]$ operations. This proves (a). Since connected subgraphs of a Dynkin diagram correspond to simple subalgebras, condition (b) is trivial. The corollary follows. \(\square\)

The corollary provides an obstruction for a graph to be Dynkin via conditions (a) and (b). We shall see that they come close to being sufficient conditions. The simply-laced Dynkin diagrams are classified by showing that they cannot contain the following subgraphs:
In the top row of (5.1), the first two diagrams say that a Dynkin diagram has no loop and no node (branch point) with more than three edges. The third diagram says that there is at most one node. In this case we can topologically think of the node as being joined to three “lines” $l_1$, $l_2$, $l_3$ whose lengths are defined in the obvious manner. The fourth diagram of the top row says that one of the $l_i$, say $l_1$, is of length 1. Then the remaining diagrams put some restrictions based on the lengths of $l_2$ and $l_3$.

Corollary 5.2(b) says that a connected subgraph of a Dynkin diagram is again Dynkin; so it suffices to show that the six graphs in (5.1) are not Dynkin. We attempt to use Corollary 5.2(a) to achieve this; namely, we find a painting which cannot be simplified to a graph with single painted vertex via the algorithms $F[i]$. Such attempt is successful for all but one of them:

For instance, in the loop in (5.2), no matter how we apply $F[i]$, we always end up with a loop with two painted vertices. So we conclude that every Dynkin diagram cannot contain any loop. Unfortunately, in the last graph of (5.1), any painting can be reduced to a diagram with a single painted vertex. This “fake $E_9$” is the only structure which does not exist in Dynkin diagrams but cannot be dismissed by the algorithms $F[i]$.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank David Vogan and the referee for many helpful suggestions.

References