COMMUTATIVE ALGEBRAS SATISFYING
AN IDENTITY OF DEGREE FOUR

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In another paper [2] we have established the following result:

**Theorem.** Let $A$ be a commutative (nonassociative) algebra with
unity element over a field of characteristic not 2 or 3, and let $A$ satisfy
an identity of degree $\leq 4$ not implied by the commutative law. Then $A$
satisfies at least one of the following three identities:

1. $(x^2x)x = x^2x^2$,
2. $2(yx \cdot x)x + yx^3 = 3(yx^2)x$,
3. $2(y^2x)x - 2(yx \cdot y)x - 2(yx \cdot x)y + 2(x^2y)y - y^2x^2 + (yx)(yx) = 0$.

In view of this theorem, the study of the structure of commutative
algebras with unity element satisfying an identity of degree $\leq 4$ is
immediately reduced to the study of algebras satisfying one of the
identities (1)–(3). The first of these identities is well-known to be
equivalent to power-associativity in a commutative algebra of char-
acteristic not 2, 3, or 5 and has been studied extensively [1]. The iden-
tities (2) and (3) do not seem to have been investigated in the litera-
ture.

The purpose of the present paper is to study commutative rings
which satisfy (2). As we shall see in §1, this identity also arises in a
very natural way as a consequence of the Jordan identity, $(x^2y)x = x^2(yx)$. From this it is not difficult to see that a commutative ring
of characteristic relatively prime to 2 or 3 satisfies the Jordan identity
if and only if it satisfies both (1) and (2). For any characteristic one
can find commutative algebras with unity element satisfying either
(1) or (2), but which do not satisfy the Jordan identity. Thus the
class of commutative rings satisfying (2) is strictly larger than the
class of Jordan rings and is not included in the class of power-associa-
tive rings. The main results of this paper are summarized by the fol-
lowing two theorems:

**Theorem 1.** Let $A$ be a commutative ring satisfying (2) of character-
istic relatively prime to 2, and let $A$ contain an idempotent $e$ which is not
a unity element. Then $A$ is a Jordan ring if and only if $A(e)$ and $A(eo)$
are Jordan rings. In particular, if \( A \) is simple, then it is a Jordan ring.

**Theorem 2.** Let \( A \) be a finite-dimensional algebra satisfying (2) of characteristic not 2, and let every nonzero ideal of \( A \) contain an idempotent. Then \( A \) has a unity element and is the direct sum of simple algebras.

In view of these results, the study of commutative algebras satisfying (2) is largely reduced to the question of determining the algebras of degree one satisfying (2). It would also be interesting to know whether a finite-dimensional algebra \( A \) satisfying (2) necessarily contains a unique ideal \( N \) which is maximal with respect to the property of not containing an idempotent, and whether \( A_e(0) + A_e(1/2) \) is contained in \( N \) for any principal idempotent \( e \) of \( A \).

1. **Preliminary results.** Linearizing (1) completely, we obtain

\[
\begin{align*}
2 \sum_{\sigma=1}^3 (yx \cdot z)w + 2 \sum_{\sigma=1}^3 y(xz \cdot w) &= 6 \sum_{\sigma=1}^3 (y \cdot xz)w,
\end{align*}
\]

where each summation stands for the sum of all distinct terms obtained from the given term by permuting \( x, z \) and \( w \). Setting

\[
H(y; x, z, w) = (y - xz)w + (y - zw)x + (y - wx)z,
\]

we may write (4) in the form

\[
H(z; x, y, w) + H(w; x, y, z) + H(x; y, z, w) = 3H(y; x, z, w)
\]

after dividing by 2. Adding \( H(y; x, z, w) \) to this equation, we get

\[
H(y; x, z, w) + H(z; x, y, w) + H(w; x, y, z) + H(w; x, y, z)
= 4H(y; x, z, w)
\]

the left side of which is symmetric in \( x, y, z, w \). Thus, for characteristic relatively prime to 2, the function \( H \) is symmetric in its arguments, giving

\[
H(x; y, z, w) = H(y; x, z, w),
\]

or

\[
(x \cdot yz)w + (x \cdot zw)y + (x \cdot wy)z = (y \cdot xz)w + (y \cdot zw)x + (y \cdot wx)z.
\]

Setting \( w = z = x \) in (5) yields (2) again, so that (5) is equivalent to (2) for characteristic relatively prime to 2.

Since (5) is an immediate consequence of the linearized Jordan identity, the class of rings studied here includes the class of Jordan rings. On the other hand using (5), the linearized power-associative
identity may be reduced to the Jordan identity, so that our class of rings doesn’t include any power-associative rings which are not already Jordan rings. The class of rings satisfying (2) are not all Jordan rings, however, since it was shown in [2] that there exists a commutative algebra with unity element over any field of characteristic not 2 or 3 satisfying (2) but not \( x^3 = x^2 x \).

Next, letting \( x = e \) (an idempotent) in (2), we get the relation 
\[
2R_e^3 - 3R_e^2 + R_e = 0, \quad \text{or} \quad R_e (2R_e - I)(R_e - I) = 0.
\]
Defining \( A_\lambda = A_\lambda(\lambda) = \{ x | x e A, xe = \lambda x \} \), it is easy to check that each \( A_\lambda(\lambda) \) is an additive subgroup of \( A \), and that we have the additive direct sum decomposition

\[
(6) \quad A = A_\lambda(1) + A_\lambda(1/2) + A_\lambda(0)
\]

for each idempotent \( e \) of \( A \). To discover what can be said about products of the \( A_\lambda \)'s, we set \( x = w = e, ye = jy, ze = kx \) in (5) to get \( (yz)R_e^3 + k^2(yz) + j^2(yz) = 2k(yz)R_e + j(yz) \), or

\[
(7) \quad (yz)[R_e^3 - 2kR_e + (k^2 + j^2 - j)I] = 0.
\]

Setting \( j \) and \( k \) equal to 0, 1/2, 1 in all possible ways in (7), we get a set of relations which can be restated as

**Lemma 1.** For a fixed \( e \), products between the \( A_\lambda \)'s are governed by the relations \( A_1^1 \subset A_1, A_0^1 \subset A_0, A_1A_0 = 0, A_1A_{1/2} \subset A_{1/2}, A_0A_{1/3} \subset A_{1/2}, \) and \( A_{1/3} \subset A_1 + A_0 \).

If \( u \) and \( v \) are orthogonal idempotents, we see from this lemma that \( A_\lambda(1) \subset A_u(0), A_\lambda(1/2) \subset A_u(1/2), \) and \( A_\lambda(0) \subset A_u(0) \). Hence for \( y \in A_u(1/2) \), we get \( yv \cdot u = \frac{1}{2}yv = yu \cdot v \). Similarly \( yv \cdot u = yu \cdot v \) holds for \( y \) in \( A_u(1) \) or \( A_u(0) \), to give the relation \( R_uR_u = R_uR_u \) in the ring \( A \). This leads easily to the usual simultaneous decomposition of \( A \) with respect to two or more orthogonal idempotents which is familiar from Jordan theory.

To find out more information about how elements of the \( A_\lambda \)'s multiply, we now set \( w = e, xe = ix, ye = jy, ze = kx \) in (5) to obtain

\[
(x \cdot yz)R_e + kxz \cdot y + j(xy \cdot z) = (y \cdot xz)R_e + k(yz \cdot x) + i(yx \cdot z),
\]
or

\[
(8) \quad (y, z, x)[R_e - kI] + (j - i)(xy \cdot z) = 0.
\]

Selecting appropriate values for \( i, j, k \) and adding subscripts to our symbols to indicate which \( A_\lambda \) they are assumed to belong to, equation (8) yields the relations given in
Lemma 2. Products of elements from different \( A_i \)'s satisfy the following relations:

\[
y_{1/2}x_{1/2} = (y_{1/2}x_{1/2})_{1/2} + (y_{1/2}x_{1/2})_{1/2},
\]

\[
y_{1/2}x_{0} = (y_{1/2}x_{0})_{1/2} + (y_{1/2}x_{0})_{0},
\]

\[
x_{1}(y_{1/2}z_{1/2}) = [(x_{1}y_{1/2})z_{1/2} + (x_{1}z_{1/2})y_{1/2}]_{1},
\]

\[
x_{0}(y_{1/2}z_{1/2}) = [(x_{0}y_{1/2})z_{1/2} + (x_{0}z_{1/2})y_{1/2}]_{0},
\]

\[
[x_{1}y_{1/2}]_{0} = [(x_{1}z_{1/2})y_{1/2}]_{0},
\]

\[
[(x_{0}y_{1/2})z_{1/2}]_{1} = [(x_{0}z_{1/2})y_{1/2}]_{1},
\]

(12) \( (x_{1}y_{1/2})z_{0} = x_{1}(y_{1/2}z_{0}). \)

2. Proof of Theorem 1. If we define \( K(x, y, z, w) = (xy)(zw) + (xz)(yw) + (xw)(yz) \), the ring \( A \) will be Jordan if and only if

\[
H(x; y, z, w) = K(x, y, z, w)
\]

for all ways of choosing \( x, y, z, w \) in \( A_{1/2}, A_{0} \). We begin with the case \( x \in A_{1/2} \) and \( y, z, w \in A_{1} \). Here, \( K(x, y, z, w) = (yx)(zw) + (xz)(yw) + (xw)(yz) \)

\[
= (xy)(zw) + (xz)(yw) + (xw)(yz)
\]

Using (9), (12) and (15), we can now establish (13):
(xy)(sw) + (xz)(yw) + (xw)(yz) = [(sw)(yz)] + [(xz)(yw)] + [(xw)(yz)]

To prove the last part of Theorem 1, it suffices to show that $A_1$ and $A_0$ are Jordan rings if $A$ is simple. But (9) induces a homomorphism of $A_1$ into the ring of all Jordan endomorphisms on $A_{1/2}$, and the
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kernel $C_1$ of this homomorphism is an ideal of $A_1$ which annihilates both $A_{1/2}$ and $A_0$. Hence $C_1$ is an ideal of $A$. Since $e$ is not the unity element of $A$ by hypothesis, we have $C_1 \subseteq A_1 \neq A$, showing that $C_1 = 0$ and that $A_1$ is a Jordan ring. By symmetry, the simplicity of $A$ also implies that $A_0$ is a Jordan ring.

Suppose now that $e$ is the sum of the orthogonal idempotents $e'$ and $e''$. Then Theorem 1 implies that $A_{e}(1)$ is a Jordan ring if and only if $A_{e'}(1)$ and $A_{e''}(0)$ are Jordan rings, and hence $A$ is a Jordan ring if and only if $A_{e'}(1)$, $A_{e''}(1)$, and $A_{e}(0)$ are Jordan rings. By inducting on this argument it is easy to establish the following

**Corollary.** Let $A$ be a commutative ring satisfying (2) of characteristic relatively prime to 2, and let $A$ contain the mutually orthogonal idempotents $e_1, \ldots, e_n$ for $n \geq 2$. Then $A$ is a Jordan ring if and only if $A_{e_1}(1), \ldots, A_{e_n}(1)$, and $\cap_{i=1}^{n} A_{e_i}(0)$ are all Jordan rings.

**3. Proof of Theorem 2.** Let $A$ be a finite-dimensional algebra satisfying (2) of characteristic not 2, and suppose that some minimal ideal $B$ of $A$ contain an idempotent. If $e_1, \ldots, e_n$ are a maximal set of mutually orthogonal idempotents in $B$, then $e = e_1 + \cdots + e_n$ is a principal idempotent of $B$. Letting $B = B_1 + B_{1/2} + B_0$ be the decomposition of $B$ with respect to $e$, we observe that the decomposition of $A$ with respect to $e$ is given by $A = B_1 + B_{1/2} + A_0$, since $e \in B$. As in the proof of Theorem 1, we see that $B_1$ and $A_0$ may be represented as Jordan endomorphisms on $B_{1/2}$ using (9) and that the kernels $C_1$ and $C_0$ of these representations are ideals of $A$. But the ideals $C_1$ and $C_0 \cap B$ of $A$ are contained in $B$, so that $C_0 \cap B = 0$ and either $C_1 = B$ or $C_1 = 0$.

Suppose first that $C_1 = 0$. Then $B_1$ and $B_0$ are Jordan algebras, and hence $B$ is a Jordan algebra by Theorem 1. Using the standard theory of Jordan algebras, we may conclude that $B$ contains a unique ideal $M$ maximal with respect to the property of not containing any idempotents, and that $B_{1/2} + B_0 \subseteq M$. But then $MA \subseteq MB_1 + MB_{1/2} + MA_0 \subseteq M + B_{1/2} + B_0 \subseteq M$, showing that $M$ is an ideal of $A$. Since $B$ is a minimal ideal of $A$, we have $M = 0$ and $B_{1/2} + B_0 = 0$. Observing that the case $C_1 = B$ also leads to $B_{1/2} + B_0 = 0$, we see that, in either case, $e$ is the unity element of $B$ and $A = B \oplus A_0$. We have proved that any minimal ideal containing an idempotent in a finite-dimensional algebra satisfying (2) is a direct summand.

It is now easy to establish Theorem 2 by induction on the dimension of $A$. If every ideal of $A$ contains an idempotent, so does every ideal of $A_0$, and hence $A_0$ has a unity element $f$ and is a direct sum of simple algebras by inductive hypothesis. Then $e + f$ is a unity ele-
moment for $A$, and since $B$ is simple, $A$ is also a direct sum of simple algebras.

References


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SOME PROPERTIES OF LOCALIZATION AND NORMALIZATION

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In a recent note [1], S. Abhyankar has given some lemmas concerning localization and normalization for noetherian rings without nilpotent elements. We give a characterization of those rings in which every prime ideal is maximal (Proposition 1) and deduce generalizations of Abhyankar’s results (cf. Corollary 1 and Corollary 2).

Preliminaries. A ring will always be a nonnull commutative ring with identity.

For properties of rings of quotients see [3, §§9–11 of Chapter IV]. Recall that if $R$ is a ring with total quotient ring $K$, and if $M$ is a multiplicative system in $R$, then we may identify the ring of quotients $R_M$ with a subring of $K_M$. When this is done, the total quotient ring of $K_M$ is also the total quotient ring of $R_M$.

Denote by $g_M$ the canonical map of $K$ into $K_M$; the restriction of this map to $R$ is then the canonical map of $R$ into $R_M$; the restricted map may also be denoted by $g_M$ without fear of confusion. If $M$ consists of all the powers of a single element $f$, then we write $R_f$, $K_f$, $g_f$, in place of $R_M$, $K_M$, $g_M$.

If $Q$ is a minimal prime ideal in $R$, and $M$ is the complement of $Q$ in $R$, then $QR_M$, being the only prime ideal in $R_M$, consists entirely of zerodivisors (in fact, of nilpotents). Consequently, if $x \in Q$, then $g_M(x)$ is a zerodivisor, and it follows easily that $x$ is a zerodivisor. Thus any minimal prime ideal in a ring consists entirely of zerodivisors.

**Proposition 1.** For a ring $R$, the following statements are equivalent:

1. Every prime ideal in $R$ is maximal.

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