

Pacific Journal of Mathematics

ON NEARLY COMMUTATIVE DEGREE ONE ALGEBRAS

JOHN D. ARRISON AND MICHAEL RICH

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The main result in this paper establishes that there do not exist nodal algebras A satisfying the conditions:

(I) $x(xy) + (yx)x = 2(xy)x$

(II) $(xy)x - x(yx)$ is in N , the set of nilpotent elements of A over any field F whose characteristic is not two.

Recall that a finite dimensional, power-associative algebra A with identity 1 over a field F is called a nodal algebra if every x in A is of the form $x = \alpha 1 + n$ with α in F and n nilpotent, and if the set N of nilpotent elements of A does not form a subalgebra of A . Following the convention laid down in [5] we call any ring satisfying (I) a nearly commutative ring.

In a recent paper [4] one of the authors has established the results given here if the field F has characteristic zero. In that paper the theorem of Albert [1] that there do not exist commutative, power-associative nodal algebras over fields of characteristic zero was used extensively. Recently, Oehmke [3] proved the same result if the field has characteristic $P \neq 2$. This result of Oehmke's will be used throughout this paper.

The known class of nodal algebras over fields of characteristic P are the truncated polynomial algebras of Kokoris [2] which are flexible. Our results show that if nearly commutative nodal algebras exist over fields of characteristic P they will not fall into the class of Kokoris algebras. In [5] one of the authors has shown that there do not exist nearly commutative nodal algebras over fields of characteristic zero.

Let A be a nearly commutative nodal algebra over a field F whose characteristic is $P \neq 2$. Then A^+ is a commutative, power-associative algebra over F . Therefore by [3] N^+ is a subalgebra of A^+ . In particular, N is a subspace of A . The nilindex of A is defined to be the least positive integer k such that $n^k = 0$ for every n in N .

LEMMA 1. *There do not exist any nearly commutative nodal algebras whose nilindex is two over any field of characteristic $P \neq 2$.*

Proof. Let A be such an algebra. Then since $z^2 = 0$ for every z in N and N is a subspace of A we may linearize to get $xy = -yx$ for all x, y in N . Let $xy = \alpha 1 + n$, $yx = -\alpha 1 - n$. It suffices to

show that $\alpha = 0$. Using (I) we get $\alpha x + xn - \alpha x - nx = 2\alpha x + 2nx$. Since $xn = -nx$ we have $4xn = 2\alpha x$ and since $P \neq 2$ $xn = (\alpha/2)x$ and $nx = (-\alpha/2)x$. Using (I) again we have $n(nx) + (xn)n = 2(nx)n$ or $(\alpha^2/2)x = (-\alpha^2/2)x$. Thus $\alpha = 0$ and A cannot be nodal.

LEMMA 2. *Let A be a nodal algebra satisfying (II) over a field F whose characteristic is not two. Then if $N^{\cdot 2} = \{x \cdot y | x, y \text{ in } N\}$, then $N^{\cdot 2}N \subseteq N$ and $NN^{\cdot 2} \subseteq N$. (Here $x \cdot y$ denotes the multiplication in A^+)*

Proof. Let x and y be elements of N such that $xy = \alpha 1 + n$ with α in F and n in N . Then $yx = 2x \cdot y - \alpha 1 - n$ and $(x, y, x) = 2\alpha x + nx + xn - 2x(x \cdot y)$. But $nx + xn = 2x \cdot n$ is in N , $2\alpha x$ is in N , and by (II) (x, y, x) is in N . Therefore $x(x \cdot y)$ is in N . Linearizing this we have:

$$(1) \quad x(z \cdot y) + z(x \cdot y) \text{ is in } N \text{ if } x, y, z \text{ in } N.$$

Let $z = y$ in (1). Then $xy^2 + y(x \cdot y)$ is in N . But by the previous remark $y(y \cdot x)$ is in N . Thus we conclude that for all x, y in N , xy^2 is in N . Linearizing this we have that $x(z \cdot y)$ is in N . Since N is an ideal of A^+ [3], $x \cdot (z \cdot y)$ and hence $(z \cdot y)x$ is also in N . Thus $N^{\cdot 2}N$ and $NN^{\cdot 2}$ are contained in N .

LEMMA 3. *Let A be a nodal algebra satisfying (I) and (II) over a field F whose characteristic is not two. Then $S = N^{\cdot 2} + N^{\cdot 2}N$ is an ideal of A which is contained in N .*

Proof. Linearizing (I) we have

$$(I') \quad x(zy) + z(xy) + (yx)z + (yz)x = 2(xy)z + 2(zx)y.$$

Let $z = u \cdot v$ with u, v in N . Then we have

$$(2) \quad \begin{aligned} &x((u \cdot v)y) + (y(u \cdot v))x - 2((u \cdot v)y)x \\ &= 2(xy)(u \cdot v) - (u \cdot v)(xy) - (yx)(u \cdot v). \end{aligned}$$

Clearly the right hand side is in S . Therefore

$$(3) \quad x((u \cdot v)y) + (y(u \cdot v))x - 2((u \cdot v)y)x \text{ is in } S \text{ if } x, y, u, v, \text{ are in } N.$$

Adding and subtracting $2((u \cdot v)y)x$ to (3) we have: $2x \cdot ((u \cdot v)y) + 2(y \cdot (u \cdot v))x - 4((u \cdot v)y)x$ is in S . But $((u \cdot v) \cdot y)x \in N^{\cdot 3}x \subseteq N^{\cdot 2}x \subseteq S$. Also by Lemma 2

$$(u \cdot v)y \in N, x \cdot ((u \cdot v)y) \in N^{\cdot 2} \subseteq S.$$

Thus, $((u \cdot v)y)x \in S$ and combining this with $2x \cdot ((u \cdot v)y) \in S$ we have

$x((u \cdot v)y) \in S$. This shows that $(N \cdot^2 N)N \subseteq S$ and $N(N \cdot^2 N) \subseteq S$ which proves that S is an ideal of A . The fact that $S \subseteq N$ follows directly from Lemma 2.

THEOREM 1. *There do not exist any simple nodal algebras satisfying (I) and (II) over any field F whose characteristic is not two.*

Proof. We show that if A is a simple nodal algebra satisfying (I) and (II) then the nilindex of A is two contradicting Lemma 1. By Lemma 3, S is an ideal of A contained in N . Then by the simplicity of A , $S = 0$. Let y be any element of N . Clearly $y^2 \in S$. Therefore $y^2 = 0$ and the nilindex of A is two.

THEOREM 2. *There do not exist any nodal algebras satisfying (I) and (II) over any field whose characteristic is not two.*

Proof. For if B is such an algebra it would have a homomorphic image which is a simple nodal algebra contradicting Theorem 1.

COROLLARY 1. *There are no nearly commutative nodal algebras satisfying $(x, x, z) = (z, x, x)$ over any field F whose characteristic is not two.*

Proof. Let A be such an algebra with x, z in N . From $(x, x, z) = (z, x, x)$ we obtain: $(zx)x + x(xz) = zx^2 + x^2z$. The right hand side is in N by [3] and the left hand side is just $2(xz)x$ by (I). Therefore $(xz)x$ is in N . Using (I) it is an easy matter to show that $x(zx)$ is also in N . Thus (x, z, x) is in N if x and z are in N . Therefore A satisfies condition (II) and by Theorem 2, A cannot be nodal.

An algebra satisfying the identity $(x, x, z) = (z, x, x)$ is called an anti-flexible algebra [6].

COROLLARY 2. *If A is a nearly commutative algebra over a field F of characteristic not two and if A has an anti-automorphism then A cannot be nodal.*

Proof. Let ϕ be the anti-automorphism and let $x\phi = x'$ for every x in A . Applying ϕ to the identity (I) we get:

$$(4) \quad x'(x'y') + (y'x')x' = 2x'(y'x').$$

But by (I) $x'(x'y') + (y'x')x' = 2(x'y')x'$. Therefore we have $(x'y')x' = x'(y'x')$ for all x', y' in A . But ϕ is onto. Therefore $(xy)x = x(yx)$ for all x, y in A and A is flexible. By Theorem 2, A cannot be nodal.

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Received December 19, 1969, and in revised form February 5, 1970.

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The *Pacific Journal of Mathematics* is published monthly. Effective with Volume 16 the price per volume (3 numbers) is \$8.00; single issues, \$3.00. Special price for current issues to individual faculty members of supporting institutions and to individual members of the American Mathematical Society: \$4.00 per volume; single issues \$1.50. Back numbers are available.

Subscriptions, orders for back numbers, and changes of address should be sent to Pacific Journal of Mathematics, 103 Highland Boulevard, Berkeley, California, 94708.

PUBLISHED BY PACIFIC JOURNAL OF MATHEMATICS, A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

Printed at Kokusai Bunken Insatsusha (International Academic Printing Co., Ltd.), 7-17, Fujimi 2-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

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