THE BRAUER GROUP OF POLYNOMIAL RINGS

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Let $R$ be a commutative ring and $S$ a commutative $R$-algebra. The induced homomorphism $B(R) \to B(S)$ of Brauer groups is studied for the following choices of $S$. First, $S = R/I$ where $I$ is an ideal in the radical of $R$. Second, $S = R[x]$ the ring of polynomials in one variable over $R$. Third, $S = K$ the quotient field of $R$ when $R$ is a domain.

In [3] M. Auslander and O. Goldman introduced the Brauer group $B(R)$ of a commutative ring $R$. If $S$ is a commutative $R$-algebra there is a homomorphism $B(R) \to B(S)$ induced by the homomorphism from $R$ to $S$. Some of the choices for $S$ considered in [3] are $S = R/I$ for an ideal $I$ of $R$, or $S = K$ the quotient field of $R$ when $R$ is a domain, or $S = R[x]$ the ring of polynomials in one variable over $R$.

We observe here relationships between the homomorphisms of Brauer groups induced from these choices for $S$. We show that if $I$ is an ideal in the radical of $R$ and $R$ is complete in its $I$-adic topology then $B(R) \cong B(R/I)$. This answers a question raised in [11]. If $I$ is a nil ideal in $R$ then $B(R) \cong B(R/I)$. If $R[[x]]$ is the ring of formal power series over $R$ then $B(R[[x]]) \cong B(R)$. If we assume $R$ is a domain with quotient field $K$ an algebraic number field and $t_1, \ldots, t_n$ are indeterminates the homomorphism $B(R[t_1, \ldots, t_n]) \to B(K(t_1, \ldots, t_n))$ is a monomorphism where $K(t_1, \ldots, t_n)$ is the function field in $n$-variables over $K$. Let $B'(R[x])$ be the kernel of the natural homomorphism $B(R[x]) \to B(R)$ where $x$ is an indeterminate. If $R$ is a domain there is a procedure given in [13] for calculating $B'(R[x])$ in terms of $B'(R[x])$ where $R$ is the integral closure of $R$. In [3] it is shown that $B'(R[x]) = 0$ if $R$ is a regular domain of characteristic $= 0$. We fill in the gap between these two results in the Noetherian case.

If $R$ is an integrally closed Noetherian domain, let $\text{Ref}(R)$ denote the isomorphism classes of finitely generated reflexive $R$-modules $M$ with $\text{End}_R(M)$ projective over $R$ and let $\text{Pro}(R)$ be the projective elements in $\text{Ref}(R)$. Under the multiplication $|M| \cdot |N| = |(M \otimes N)^{**}|$ $\text{Ref}(R)$ is a monoid, $\text{Pro}(R)$ is a submonoid and $\text{Ref}(R)/\text{Pro}(R)$ is a group (see [6]). There is a split exact sequence.

$$0 \to \text{Ref}'(R[x]) \to \text{Ref}(R[x])/\text{Pro}(R[x]) \to \text{Ref}(R)/\text{Pro}(R) \to 0$$

where $\text{Ref}'(R[x]) = \text{Ref}(R[x])/(\text{Pro}(R[x]) + \text{Ref}(R))$. Utilizing results in [1] we show that the sequence.

$$0 \to \text{Ref}'(R[x]) \to B'(R[x]) \to B'(K[x])$$

is exact. If $R$ is any von
Neumann regular ring then $B'(R[x])$ is trivial if and only if $R/m$ is a perfect field for each maximal ideal $m$ of $R$. If $R$ is a Boolean ring, $B(R[x]) = (0)$.

We adapt an example from [14] to obtain a Noetherian domain $R$ with quotient field $K$ such that $B(R) → B(K)$ is monomorphism but $B(R[x]) → B(K(x))$ has an infinite kernel. We also give some examples of domains $R$ containing a prime ideal $I$ such that the homomorphism $B(R) → B(R/I)$ is not onto.

Throughout $R$ denotes a commutative ring and unless otherwise specified $⊗$ means $⊗_R$. An Azumaya algebra is called central separable in [3] and [10].

Otherwise all our undefined terminology, conventions, and notations are as in [10]. This paper was written while the author visited at the Forschungsinstitut für Mathematik in Zürich. The author thanks the people of the Institute, and especially Professor M. Knus for a sympathetic ear.

1.

**Lemma 1.** Let $I$ be an ideal in the radical of a commutative ring $R$. If for any Azumaya $R$-algebra $A$ idempotents can be lifted from $A/IA$ to $A$ then the induced homomorphism $B(R) → B(R/I)$ is a monomorphism.

In [9] we showed that if $I$ is nilpotent then $B(R)$ is isomorphic to $B(R/I)$. The proof there that $B(R) → B(R/I)$ is a monomorphism also proves Lemma 1. See also [16].

**Theorem 2.** Let $I$ be an ideal in the radical of a commutative ring $R$. If $R$ is complete in its $I$-adic topology then the homomorphism $B(R) → B(R/I)$ is an isomorphism.

**Proof.** Let $A$ be a Azumaya $R$-algebra. Since $R$ is $I$-adically complete and $A$ is finitely generated as an $R$-module, we have $A$ is complete with respect to the ideal $IA$. Thus idempotents can be lifted from $A/IA$ to $A$ so by Lemma 1 $B(R) → B(R/I)$ is a monomorphism.

Next let $A_0$ be a Azumaya $R/I$-algebra. We showed in [9] in proving that $B(R) → B(R/I)$ is onto when $I$ is nilpotent that one can construct a sequence $A_i$ of Azumaya algebras over $R/I^i$ with $A_i/I^{i-1}A_i ≅ A_{i-1}$ by a natural homomorphism $φ_i$. We let $A = \lim_→ (A_i)$. Then $A$ is an $R$-algebra with $A/I^i ≅ A_i$. If $a ∈ A$ we let the natural image of $a$ in $A_i$ be $a_i$. Let $a_1, \ldots, a_n$ be elements of $A$ with $a_1^i, \ldots, a_n^i$ generating $A/I = A_0$ as an $R$-module. By Nakayama’s lemma (Prop.
2.2 p. 85 \([5]\)) the elements \(a_1, \ldots, a_n\) generate \(A_i\) as an \(R\)-module for each \(i\). Let \(a \in A\). Then

\[
a^0 = \sum_{j=1}^{n} \alpha_j a_j^0 \quad \alpha_j, 0 \in R.
\]

Thus

\[
a^1 = \sum_{j=1}^{n} \alpha_j a_j^1 + x^1 \quad \text{where} \quad x^1 \in I(A/I^1),
\]

we can write

\[
x^1 = \sum_{j=1}^{n} \gamma_j a_j^1 \quad \text{where} \quad \gamma_j, 0 \in I.
\]

Thus

\[
a^1 = \sum_{j=1}^{n} (\alpha_j a_j^1 + \gamma_j a_j^1).
\]

Let \(\alpha_{j,i} = \alpha_{j,0} + \gamma_{j,0}\), then \(a^i = \sum_{j=1}^{n} \alpha_{j,i} a_j^i\) and \(\alpha_{j,i} - \alpha_{j,0} \in I\). Continuing inductively we find

\[
a^i = \sum_{j=1}^{n} \alpha_{j,i} a_j^i \quad \text{with} \quad \alpha_{j,i} \in R, \alpha_{j,i} - \alpha_{j,i-1} \in I^{i-1}.
\]

Let \(\alpha_i = \lim_{i \to \infty} \alpha_{j,i}\) and let \(b = \sum_{j=1}^{n} \alpha_j a_j\). For any \(i\), \(a^i = b^i \) so \(b = a\) and \(A\) is finitely generated as an \(R\)-module.

For any maximal ideal \(m\) of \(R\), \(R/m \otimes A = R/m \otimes R/I \otimes A = R/m \otimes A\). Thus \(R/m \otimes A\) is separable over \(R/m\). By Theorem 2.7.1. of \([10]\), \(A\) is separable over \(R\). Let \(Z(A)\) be the center of \(A\), then \(Z(A)\) is a direct summand of \(A\) so \(Z(A)\) is finitely generated over \(R\). Moreover, \(0 \to R/m \otimes Z(A) \to R/m \otimes A\) is exact so for every maximal ideal \(m\) of \(R\), \(R/m \otimes Z(A)/R = 0\). Thus \(Z(A) = R\) and \(A\) is an Azumaya \(R\)-algebra completing the proof.

**Corollary 3.** Let \(N\) be a nil ideal in the commutative ring \(R\), then \(B(R) \cong B(R/N)\).

**Proof.** The hypothesis of Lemma 1 are satisfied since idempotents can be lifted modulo a nil ideal so the map from \(B(R)\) to \(B(R/N)\) is one-to-one.

Let \(\bar{A}\) be an Azumaya algebra over \(RN = \bar{R}\). There is a finitely generated subring \(\bar{S}\) of \(\bar{R}\) and an Azumaya \(\bar{S}\)-algebra \(\bar{B}\) with \(\bar{B} \otimes_{\bar{S}} \bar{R} = \bar{A}\). Let \(s_1, \ldots, s_m\) be the generators of \(\bar{S}\) over its prime ring and let \(s_1, \ldots, s_m\) be corresponding elements in \(R\). Let \(S\) be the subring of \(R\) generated by \(s_1, \ldots, s_m\). Now \(N\) consists of nilpotent
elements in $R$ so $N \cap S$ is a nil-ideal in $S$ and $S/N \cap S \cong \bar{S}$. Since $S$ is Noetherian, $N \cap S$ is nilpotent. As we saw in the proof of Theorem 2 there is an Azumaya $S$-algebra $B$ with $\bar{S} \otimes_S B = \bar{B}$. Let $A = R \otimes_S B$, then

$$\bar{R} \otimes A \cong \bar{R} \otimes R \otimes_S B \cong \bar{R} \otimes \bar{S} \otimes_S B \cong \bar{R} \otimes \bar{S} \bar{B} \cong \bar{A}$$

thus the homomorphism from $B(R)$ to $B(R/N)$ is onto.

**Corollary 4.** Let $R[[x]]$ be the ring of formal power series in $x$ over $R$, then $B(R) \cong B(R[[x]])$.

*Proof.* The ideal $(x)$ generated by $x$ is in the radical of $R[[x]]$ and $R[[x]]$ is complete in the topology induced by this ideal. Thus by Theorem 2, $B(R) \cong B(R[[x]])$.

**Lemma 5.** Let $R$ be a commutative ring and $S$ a commutative $R$-algebra. Then the sequence

$$0 \rightarrow B(S[x]/R[x])/B(S/R) \rightarrow B'(R[x]) \rightarrow B'(S[x])$$

is exact and $B(S[x]/R[x]) \cong B(S/R) \oplus L$ for an abelian group $L$.

*Proof.* Consider the diagram of Brauer groups where the maps are all natural.

```
0 0 0
\uparrow \uparrow \uparrow
0 \rightarrow B(S/R) \rightarrow B(R) \rightarrow B(S)
\uparrow \uparrow \uparrow
0 \rightarrow B(S[x]/R[x]) \rightarrow B(R[x]) \rightarrow B(S[x])
\uparrow \uparrow \uparrow
0 \rightarrow L \rightarrow B'(R[x]) \rightarrow B'(S[x])
\uparrow \uparrow \uparrow
0 0 0
```

The first two horizontal rows are exact by definition and the last two vertical rows are split exact. The exactness of the third horizontal row follows as does the split exactness of the first vertical row. This gives the lemma.

Let $R$ be a domain with quotient field $K$. Let $K(x)$ be the field of fractions of $K[x]$. If $K$ is perfect then $L$ in Lemma 5 is $B'(R[x])$
since $B'(K[x]) = 0$ by Theorem 7.5 of [3]. Thus $B(K[x]/R[x]) \cong B(K/R) \oplus B'(R[x])$. Later we give an example where $B'(R[x])$ is infinite and $B(K/R) = 0$. If $K$ is any field then $0 \to B(K[x]) \to B(K(x))$ is exact so $B(K(x)/R[x]) \cong B(K[x]/R[x])$.

**Theorem 6.** Let $R$ be a domain whose quotient field $K$ is an algebraic number field. Then $0 \to B(R[x_1, \ldots, x_n]) \to B(K(x_1, \ldots, x_n))$ is exact.

**Proof.** The case $n = 0$ is in [7]. By Corollary 3.9 of [14] $B'(R[x_1, \ldots, x_{n-1}][x_n]) = 0$. Now $K(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ is a perfect field thus $B(K(x_1, \ldots, x_n)/R[x_1, \ldots, x_n]) = B(K(x_1, \ldots, x_{n-1})/R[x_1, \ldots, x_{n-1}])$ the proof is complete by induction.

Next let $R$ be a Noetherian integrally closed domain. Let $\text{Ref}(R)$ denote the isomorphism classes of finitely generated reflexive $R$-modules $M$ with $\text{End}_R(M)$ projective. Multiply two such classes by $|M| \cdot |N| = |M \otimes N|^\star$ where $M^\star = \text{Hom}_R(M, R)$. Then $\text{Ref}(R)$ is a commutative monoid. Let $\text{Pro}(R)$ be the submonoid of those $M$ which are projective. Then $\text{Ref}(R)/\text{Pro}(R)$ is a group (see [6]).

The natural homomorphism from $R[x]$ onto $R$ and its splitting map from $R$ to $R[x]$ induces a split exact sequence

\[ 0 \to \text{Ref}(R[x])/(\text{Ref}(R) + \text{Pro}(R[x])) \to \text{Ref}(R[x])/\text{Pro}(R[x]) \to 0. \]

Let $\text{Ref}'(R[x]) = \text{Ref}(R[x])/(\text{Ref}(R) + \text{Pro}(R[x]))$.

**Theorem 7.** Let $R$ be a Noetherian integrally closed domain with quotient field $K$. Then the sequence

\[ 0 \to \text{Ref}'(R[x]) \to B'(R[x]) \to B'(K[x]) \]

is exact. If $K$ is perfect then $\text{Ref}'(R[x]) \cong B'(R[x])$.

**Proof.** Let $\text{Cl}(R)$ be the elements of $\text{Ref}(R)$ of rank $= 1$ and let $\text{Pic}(R)$ be the subgroup of projective modules in $\text{Cl}(R)$. Consider the next diagram. By a theorem of B. Auslander (Theorem 2 in [8]) the first horizontal row is exact. By 7.19 p. 147 of [5] the first vertical row is exact. The last three vertical rows are split exact. Thus the bottom horizontal row is exact. If $K$ is perfect then $B'(K[x]) = 0$ and $B'(R[x]) \cong \text{Ref}(R[x])/(\text{Ref}(R) + \text{Pro}(R[x]))$. This completes the proof.
Let \( R \) be a commutative von Neumann regular ring and let \( \mathfrak{s} \) be the collection of ideals \( I \) in \( R \) maximal with respect to the property that \( I \) is generated by idempotents. Then \( \mathfrak{s} \) is the set of maximal ideals of \( R \) and \( R \) is isomorphic to a subring of \( \prod_{I \in \mathfrak{s}} R/I \) (direct product).

**Theorem 8.** Let \( R \) be a commutative von Neumann regular ring, then \( B(R) \cong B(R[x]) \) if and only if \( R/I \) is a perfect field for each maximal ideal \( I \) of \( R \). If \( R \) is a Boolean ring then \( B(R[x]) = 0 \).

**Proof.** Consider the diagram

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
0 & \rightarrow & B(R) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow \\
0 & \rightarrow & \prod_{I \in \mathfrak{s}} B(R/I) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow \\
0 & \rightarrow & B(R[x]) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow \\
0 & \rightarrow & \prod_{I \in \mathfrak{s}} B(R/I[x]) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow \\
0 & \rightarrow & B'(R[x]) \\
\uparrow & & \uparrow \\
0 & \rightarrow & \prod_{I \in \mathfrak{s}} B'(R/I[x]) \\
\end{array}
\]

The idempotents of \( R[x] \) are precisely the idempotents of \( R \) so \( \mathfrak{s} \) is the Boolean spectrum of \( R \) and the set \( \{I \cdot R[x]/I \in \mathfrak{s}\} \) is the Boolean spectrum of \( R[x] \). In [15] it is shown that the first two rows of the diagram are exact, thus the third row is exact. If \( R/I \) is perfect for all \( I \in \mathfrak{s} \) then \( \prod_{I \in \mathfrak{s}} B'(R/I[x]) = 0 \) and \( B'(S[x]) = 0 \).

If \( B'(R[x]) \neq 0 \) then \( B'(R/I[x]) \neq 0 \) for some \( I \). For this \( I \) the field \( R/I \) is not perfect. If \( R \) is a Boolean ring then \( R \) is von Neumann regular and \( R/I \) is the field with two elements for each \( I \in \mathfrak{s} \). Thus
\[ B(R) \cong B(R[x]) \text{ and } B(R) = (0) \text{ so } B(R[x]) = 0. \]

2. First we consider two examples also contained in [14]. Let \( F \) be the algebraic closure of the field with \( p \)-elements and let \( R = F[t] \) be the ring of polynomials in one variable over \( F \). Then \( R \) is a principal ideal domain with a nonperfect quotient field \( K \). By Theorem 7 \( B'(R[x]) \) is a subgroup of \( B'(K[x]) \). On p. 390 of [3] a nontrivial element of \( B'(R[x]) \) is given.

Next let \( R = \mathbb{Z}[\sqrt{2}(s^2 + 1), s] \) where \( s \) is an indeterminate and \( \mathbb{Z} \) is the ring of rational integers. The integral closure \( \bar{R} \) of \( R \) is \( \mathbb{Z}[\sqrt{2}, s] \) and the conductor \( c = (s^2 + 1)\bar{R} \). It is shown in [13] that \( B'(R[x]) \cong \mathbb{Z}/(2)[t] \) but that \( B(K/R) \cong \mathbb{Z}/\bar{R}/(R) = 0 \) where \( K \) is the quotient field of \( R \). Now \( K \) is a field of characteristic = 0 so \( B'(K[x]) = 0 \) and \( B(K[x]) \rightarrow B(K(x)) \) is a monomorphism.

Apply Lemma 5 with \( S = K \) and we have \[ B'(R[x]) \cong B(K[x]/R[x]) \cong B(K[x]/R[x]) \cong \mathbb{Z}/(2)[t]. \]

Thus \( R \) is a domain with \( B(R) \rightarrow B(K) \) a monomorphism yet \( B(R[x]) \rightarrow B(K[x]) \) has an infinite kernel.

Next let \( Z \) denote the rational integers, it is well known that \( B(Z) = 0 \). Thus \( B(Z[x]) = 0 \) since \( Z \) is a principal ideal domain of characteristic = 0. However, \( B(Z[x]/(2x - 1)) = B(Z[1/2]) \neq 0 \) since the ordinary quaternion algebra represents a nonzero class in \( B(Z[1/2]) \).

Now let \( L \) be a finite extension of the perfect field \( k \). Then \( L \cong k[x]/(p(x)) \) for some irreducible polynomial \( p(x) \in k[x] \). Choose \( k, L \) so that the natural map \( B(k) \rightarrow B(L) \) is not onto. Then one has the commuting diagram

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
B(k[x]) & \rightarrow & B(L) \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
B(k) & & \\
\end{array}
\]

Since \( B(k) \cong B(k[x]) \) we have \( B(k[x]) \rightarrow B(L) \) is not onto. The ideal generated by \( p(x) \) is maximal in \( k[x] \).

Next let \( \mathbb{Z}_p \) be the \( p \)-adic completion of the ring \( Z \) of integers for a finite prime \( p \). Let \( R \) be the completion of the localization at \( (p) \) of \( \mathbb{Z}_p[t] \). We get the following diagram

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
B(k[x]) & \rightarrow & B(L) \\
\downarrow & & \downarrow \\
B(k) & & \\
\end{array}
\]

Also \( R \) is a principal ideal domain of characteristic = 0 so \( B'(R[x]) = 0 \). Since \( B(R/(p)) \cong B(R) \) by Theorem 2 we have \( B(R/(p)) \cong B(R) \cong B(k[x]) \), and thus \( K = 0 \). However \( R/(p) \) is not a perfect field so \( B'(R/(p)[x]) \neq 0 \) (p. 390 of [3]). Thus \( B(R[x]) \rightarrow B(R/(p)[x]) \) is not onto.
If $R$ is a local ring with maximal ideal $m$ is the induced homomorphism $B(R)\to B(R/m)$ onto? If $R$ is a Noetherian integrally closed domain with characteristic $p = 0$ is $B(R) \cong B(R[p])$? If $R$ is a Noetherian integrally closed domain is $\text{Ref}'(R[x]) = 0$?

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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
Aharon Atzmon, *A moment problem for positive measures on the unit disc* .............. 317
Peter W. Bates and Grant Bernard Gustafson, *Green’s function inequalities for two-point boundary value problems* ................................................................. 327
Howard Edwin Bell, *Infinite subrings of infinite rings and near-rings* ................. 345
Beverly L. Brechner, *Almost periodic homeomorphisms of \( E^2 \) are periodic* ........ 367
Beverly L. Brechner and R. Daniel Mauldin, *Homeomorphisms of the plane* ........ 375
Jia-Arng Chao, *Lusin area functions on local fields* ............................................. 383
Frank Rimi DeMeyer, *The Brauer group of polynomial rings* ......................... 391
M. V. Deshpande, *Collectively compact sets and the ergodic theory of semi-groups* .............................................................. 399
Raymond Frank Dickman and Jack Ray Porter, *\( \theta \)-closed subsets of Hausdorff spaces* .......................................................... 407
Charles P. Downey, *Classification of singular integrals over a local field* .............. 417
Daniel Reuven Farkas, *Miscellany on Bieberbach group algebras* ................. 427
Peter A. Fowler, *Infimum and domination principles in vector lattices* ............... 437
Barry J. Gardner, *Some aspects of \( T \)-nilpotence. II: Lifting properties over \( T \)-nilpotent ideals* ............................................................. 445
Gary Fred Gruenhage and Phillip Lee Zenor, *Metrization of spaces with countable large basis dimension* ................................................ 455
J. L. Hickman, *Reducing series of ordinals* ....................................................... 461
Hugh M. Hilden, *Generators for two groups related to the braid group* ............... 475
Tom (Roy Thomas Jr.) Jacob, *Some matrix transformations on analytic sequence spaces* .............................................................. 487
Elyahu Katz, *Free products in the category of \( k_w \)-groups* ............................. 493
Tsang Hai Kuo, *On conjugate Banach spaces with the Radon-Nikodým property* .... 497
Norman Eugene Liden, *K-spaces, their antispaces and related mappings* ............. 505
Clinton M. Petty, *Radon partitions in real linear spaces* .................................... 515
Alan Saleski, *A conditional entropy for the space of pseudo-Menger maps* ....... 525
Eugene Spiegel and Allan Trojan, *On semi-simple group algebras. I* ................. 549
Charles Madison Stanton, *Bounded analytic functions on a class of open Riemann surfaces* .............................................................. 557
Sherman K. Stein, *Transversals of Latin squares and their generalizations* ........... 567
Ivan Ernest Stux, *Distribution of squarefree integers in non-linear sequences* ....... 577
Lowell G. Sweet, *On homogeneous algebras* ..................................................... 585
Lowell G. Sweet, *On doubly homogeneous algebras* ........................................ 595
Florian Vasilescu, *The closed range modulus of operators* ............................... 599
Arthur Anthony Yanushka, *A characterization of the symplectic groups \( \text{PSp}(2m, q) \) as rank 3 permutation groups* ................................. 611
James Juei-Chin Yeh, *Inversion of conditional Wiener integrals* ......................... 623