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ON THE ANNIHILATOR IDEALS OF THE RADICAL OF A GROUP ALGEBRA

Dedicated to Professor K. Asano for his 60th birthday

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1. Introduction

Let G be a finite group, and k a field of characteristic p . Let \mathfrak{n} denote the Jacobson radical of the group algebra kG , and $r(\mathfrak{n})$ the right annihilator ideal of \mathfrak{n} . In this paper we shall show some connections between $r(\mathfrak{n})$ and p -elements of G . One of them will state that $r(\mathfrak{n})$ contains the sum of all p -elements of G (including the identity). This may be regarded in a sense as a refinement of Maschke's theorem. In fact, if p does not divide the order of G then the identity is the only p -element, which implies $r(\mathfrak{n}) \ni 1$ and hence $\mathfrak{n} = 0$. On the other hand, as is easily seen from a theorem of T. Nakayama on Frobenius algebras (see §2), $r(\mathfrak{n})$ is a principal ideal. We shall show that it is generated by an element which is left invariant by every automorphism of kG induced by that of G . As an application of this fact, we shall give a lower bound for the first Cartan invariant in terms of the chief composition factors of G . The present study owes heavily to some general results on Frobenius algebras and symmetric algebras, which will be summarized in the next section.

NOTATION. If A is a ring, $\text{rad}(A)$ will denote the Jacobson radical of A . For a subset T of A , $r(T)$ and $l(T)$ will denote respectively the set of right annihilators and the set of left annihilators of T in A . If M is a subset of a finite group G , then $\Delta_M = \sum_{\sigma \in M} \sigma \in kG$.

2. Preliminary results

Let $A (\ni 1)$ be a finite dimensional algebra over a field k .

DEFINITION. A linear function $\lambda (\in A^* = \text{Hom}_k(A, k))$ is called *non-singular* if its kernel contains no left or right ideals other than zero. While, λ is called *symmetric* if $\lambda(ab) = \lambda(ba)$ for all $a, b \in A$.

If λ is a linear function and $a \in A$, we denote by λ_a the linear function defined

by $\lambda_a(x) = \lambda(xa)$, $x \in A$. One may remark here that $f: a \rightarrow \lambda_a$ is a left A -homomorphism from A into A^* . It is an (onto) isomorphism if and only if λ is non-singular. A is a Frobenius [symmetric] algebra if and only if it has (at least) one non-singular [symmetric, non-singular] linear function.

Theorem A (T. Nakayama [6], [8], see also [2]). *Let A be a Frobenius [symmetric] algebra, λ a non-singular [symmetric, non-singular] linear function on A , and \mathfrak{z} a two-sided ideal of A . If A/\mathfrak{z} is Frobenius [symmetric], and μ a non-singular [symmetric, non-singular] linear function on A/\mathfrak{z} then there exists an element [central element] $c \in A$ such that $\mu\psi = \lambda_c$ and $r(\mathfrak{z}) = cA$, where ψ is the natural map $A \rightarrow A/\mathfrak{z}$. Conversely, if there exists an element [central element] $c \in A$ such that $r(\mathfrak{z}) = cA$ then A/\mathfrak{z} is Frobenius [symmetric].*

Proof. As was noted above, there exists an element $c \in A$ such that $\mu\psi = \lambda_c$. We shall show $r(\mathfrak{z}) = cA$. Since $\lambda(\mathfrak{z}c) = \lambda_c(\mathfrak{z}) = 0$ and λ is non-singular, it follows at once $cA \subset r(\mathfrak{z})$. On the other hand, if $xc = 0$ then $\lambda_c(Ax) = \lambda(Axc) = 0$. Since λ_c is non-singular as a linear function on A/\mathfrak{z} , it follows $x \in \mathfrak{z}$ and hence $l(cA) \subset \mathfrak{z}$. Recalling here that A is Frobenius, we have then $cA = r(l(cA)) \supset r(\mathfrak{z})$. Now, suppose further both λ and μ are symmetric. Then $\lambda(xyc) = \lambda_c(xy) = \lambda_c(yx) = \lambda(yxc) = \lambda(xcy)$ for all $x, y \in A$. Therefore, $yc = cy$ and c is central. Next, we shall prove the converse. Suppose $r(\mathfrak{z}) = cA$. Then λ_c gives rise to a non-singular linear function on A/\mathfrak{z} . If c is central, the linear function is evidently symmetric.

Theorem B (T. Nakayama [6]). *If \mathfrak{z} is a two-sided ideal of a symmetric algebra A then $r(\mathfrak{z}) = l(\mathfrak{z})$.*

Proof. Let λ be a symmetric, non-singular linear function on A . Then $r(\mathfrak{z}) = \{x \in A \mid \lambda(\mathfrak{z}x) = 0\} = \{x \in A \mid \lambda(x\mathfrak{z}) = 0\} = l(\mathfrak{z})$.

3. The generator of $r(\mathfrak{n})$

From now on, k will denote a field of characteristic p , and G a finite group of order $|G| = p^n g_0$, where $(p, g_0) = 1$. Let $\nu_p(l)$ denote the exponent of p in the primary decomposition of an integer l . Let \mathfrak{n} be the radical of the group algebra kG as before. To be easily seen, kG is a symmetric algebra through the following linear function λ which will be fixed throughout the subsequent study: $\lambda(\sum_{\sigma \in G} a_\sigma \sigma) = a_1$, where $a_\sigma \in k$ and 1 denotes the identity of G .

REMARK 1. Since there exists a splitting field for G which is finite separable over k , kG/\mathfrak{n} is a separable algebra over k . In particular, if K is an arbitrary extension field of k and \mathfrak{n}_K denotes the radical of KG , then $\mathfrak{n}_K = K\mathfrak{n}$ and $\mathfrak{n}_K \cap kG = \mathfrak{n}$. Similar relations hold for $r(\mathfrak{n})$ and the right annihilator ideal of \mathfrak{n}_K in KG .

Let $\bar{\phi}_1, \bar{\phi}_2, \dots, \bar{\phi}_r$ be the distinct irreducible characters over a suitable splitting field for G containing k , and let $\bar{\phi} = \sum_{i=1}^r \phi_i$. Then, it is clear that $\bar{\phi}(\sigma)$ is contained in the prime field for every $\sigma \in G$.

Proposition 1. *If $v = \sum_{\sigma \in G} \bar{\phi}(\sigma^{-1})\sigma$ then $r(n) = (kG)v$.*

Proof. By the above remark, we may assume that k is a splitting field for G . Then, kG/n is a direct sum of total matrix algebras over k : $kG/n = \sum_{i=1}^r (k)_{n_i}$. Let ψ and p_i denote respectively the natural map $kG \rightarrow kG/n$ and the projection $kG/n \rightarrow (k)_{n_i}$. Since the trace map $tr_i: (k)_{n_i} \rightarrow k$ is a symmetric, non-singular linear function, so is $\mu = \sum_{i=1}^r tr_i p_i$ on kG/n . Therefore, by Theorem A, there exists a central element $v = \sum_{\sigma} a_{\sigma} \sigma \in kG$ such that $\mu\psi = \lambda_v$ and $r(n) = v(kG)$. Noting here that $\mu\psi = \bar{\phi}$ on G , we obtain $a_{\sigma} = \lambda(\sigma^{-1}v) = \lambda_v(\sigma^{-1}) = \bar{\phi}(\sigma^{-1})$. This completes the proof.

REMARK 2. Let f be an arbitrary automorphism of G . Then, it permutes the irreducible characters by $\bar{\phi}_i \rightarrow \bar{\phi}_i^f$, where $\bar{\phi}_i^f(\sigma) = \bar{\phi}_i(\sigma^f)$, $\sigma \in G$. In particular, it follows $\bar{\phi}(\sigma^f) = \bar{\phi}^f(\sigma) = \bar{\phi}(\sigma)$ for all $\sigma \in G$. Hence, regarding f naturally as an automorphism of kG , we obtain $v^f = \sum_{\sigma} \bar{\phi}(\sigma^{-1})\sigma^f = \sum_{\sigma} \bar{\phi}((\sigma^f)^{-1})\sigma^f = \sum_{\tau} \bar{\phi}(\tau^{-1})\tau = v$.

Now, let H be a normal subgroup of G , and $m = \text{rad } kH$. Then $I = (kG)m = m(kG)$ is a nilpotent two-sided ideal of kG .

Corollary 1. *Under the above notation, there holds the following:*

- (1) kG/I is a symmetric algebra over k .
- (2) Let $(I: n) = \{x \in kG \mid nx \subset I\}$. Then, for an arbitrary primitive idempotent e of kG there holds $(kG)e/ne \cong (I: n)e/Ie$.

Proof. (1) Let $r_H(m)$ be the right annihilator ideal of m in kH . Let v be as in Proposition 1 applied to kH . Since G induces an automorphism group on H , Remark 2 proves that v lies in the center of kG . Hence, $r(I) = kG \cdot r_H(I) = (kG)v$ is a principal ideal generated by a central element. Theorem A proves therefore kG/I is a symmetric algebra.

(2) Evidently, the residue class \bar{e} of e modulo I is a primitive idempotent of the symmetric algebra kG/I . Since $(I: n)/I$ is the right annihilator ideal of $n/I = \text{rad}(kG/I)$, there holds then $(kG/I)\bar{e}/(n/I)\bar{e} \cong ((I: n)/I)\bar{e}$, which proves $(kG)e/ne \cong (I: n)e/Ie$.

Under the above notation, if H is a non-trivial p -group, then it is well-known that m coincides with the augmentation ideal $I(H) = \{\sum_{\sigma \in H} a_{\sigma} \sigma \mid \sum_{\sigma} a_{\sigma} = 0\}$, so that $r_H(m) = kH \cdot \Delta_H = k\Delta_H$. We obtain therefore $r(n) \subset r(I) = kG \cdot \Delta_H \subset I$.

Lemma 1. *Let $P_1 \supseteq H_1$ be normal subgroups of G such that P_1/H_1 is a*

p-group. Let $I_1 = kG \cdot \text{rad } kP_1$, and $\mathfrak{h}_1 = \ker(kG \rightarrow k(G/H_1))$. Then, there holds the following:

- (1) If e is a primitive idempotent of kG not contained in \mathfrak{h}_1 then $(I_1 + \mathfrak{h}_1 : n)e / (I_1 + \mathfrak{h}_1)e \cong (kG)e / ne$ and $(I_1 + \mathfrak{h}_1)e$ contains a submodule isomorphic to $(kG)e / ne$.
- (2) If $P_2 \supseteq H_2$ are normal subgroups of G containing P_1 such that P_2/H_2 is a *p*-group then $I_2 + \mathfrak{h}_2 \supset (I_1 + \mathfrak{h}_1 : n)$, where $I_2 = kG \cdot \text{rad } kP_2$ and $\mathfrak{h}_2 = \ker(kG \rightarrow k(G/H_2))$.

Proof. (1) Since $I_1 + \mathfrak{h}_1 = k(G/H_1) \cdot \text{rad } k(P_1/H_1)$ and P_1/H_1 is a non-trivial *p*-group, the above remark proves $r(\text{rad } k(G/H_1)) \subset I_1 + \mathfrak{h}_1/\mathfrak{h}_1$. Let \bar{e} be the residue class of e modulo \mathfrak{h}_1 . Then, it is still primitive by assumption, and the former is evident by Corollary 1. Further, noting that $(I_1 + \mathfrak{h}_1/\mathfrak{h}_1)\bar{e} \neq 0$, it follows at once $0 \neq (I_1 + \mathfrak{h}_1)e \supset r(n)e \cong (kG)e / ne$, proving the latter.

(2) As in (1), we obtain $r(\text{rad } k(G/H_2)) \subset I_2 + \mathfrak{h}_2/\mathfrak{h}_2$. If $\mathfrak{p}_1 = \ker(kG \rightarrow k(G/P_1))$ then $(I_1 + \mathfrak{h}_1 : n) + \mathfrak{p}_1/\mathfrak{p}_1 \subset (I_1 + \mathfrak{p}_1/\mathfrak{p}_1 : n + \mathfrak{p}_1/\mathfrak{p}_1) = r(\text{rad } k(G/P_1))$. Since the natural map $k(G/P_1) \rightarrow k(G/H_2)$ is an epimorphism, it sends $r(\text{rad } k(G/P_1))$ into $r(\text{rad } k(G/H_2))$. Therefore, $(I_1 + \mathfrak{h}_1 : n) + \mathfrak{h}_2/\mathfrak{h}_2 \subset r(\text{rad } k(G/H_2)) \subset I_2 + \mathfrak{h}_2/\mathfrak{h}_2$.

Theorem 1. Let m be the number of the chief composition factors of G which are (non-trivial) *p*-groups. Then the first Cartan invariant c_{11} is at least $m+1$.

Proof. We take a primitive idempotent e of kG such that $(kG)e / ne$ is isomorphic to the trivial kG -module $k \cong k\Delta_G$. Then, $e\Delta_G$ being non-zero, e is not contained in $\ker(kG \rightarrow k(G/N))$ ($=$ the ideal generated by $\{1 - \eta \mid \eta \in N\}$) for any normal subgroup N of G . Hence, by Lemma 1, we can easily see that $(kG)e$ possesses at least $m+1$ composition factors isomorphic to k , namely, $c_{11} \geq m+1$.

4. The sum of all *p*-elements

First, we shall introduce some notations. Let $\bar{\varepsilon}$ be a primitive g_0 -th root of unity over the prime field of characteristic p . In what follows, whenever we consider Brauer characters, it is assumed that there is defined (and fixed) a homomorphism $Z[\varepsilon] \rightarrow k[\bar{\varepsilon}]$ such that $\bar{\varepsilon}$ is the image of a primitive g_0 -th root of unity ε in the complex number field. As is well-known, there exists a unique (up to isomorphisms) indecomposable projective module P_i such that P_i/nP_i affords the irreducible character $\bar{\phi}_i$. Let $\bar{\eta}_i$ be the character of the representation afforded by P_i and u_i the dimension of P_i . As is well-known, u_i is divisible by p^n . Let $u_i = p^n h_i$. We may assume, after a suitable change of index if necessary, the first u_1, u_2, \dots, u_t are all such that $\nu_p(u_i) = n$. Let ϕ_i and η_i be the Brauer characters of ϕ_i and η_i , respectively.

Noting that $h_j = 0$ in k for $t < j \leq r$ and $\phi_i(\sigma) = \phi_i(\sigma')$ for the *p*-regular part σ' or σ , the orthogonality relation ([3] p. 561)

$$\sum_{i=1}^r \eta_i(\sigma^{-1})\phi_i(\tau) = \begin{cases} |C_G(\sigma)| & \text{if } \sigma \text{ is conjugate to } \tau, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

implies

$$(*) \quad \sum_{i=1}^t h_i \bar{\phi}_i(\tau) = \begin{cases} g_0 & \text{if } \tau \text{ is a } p\text{-element,} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Lemma 2. *Assume that k is a splitting field for G . Let $\mathfrak{z} = \sum_e (kG)e + \mathfrak{n}$, where e runs over the primitive idempotents such that $\nu_p(\dim_k(kG)e) > n$. Let c be the sum of all p -elements of G . Then there holds $r(\mathfrak{z}) = (kG)c$.*

Proof. We use the same notation as in the proof of Proposition 1. Then, $kG/\mathfrak{n} = \sum_{i=1}^t (k)_{\mathfrak{n}_i} + \sum_{j=t+1}^r (k)_{\mathfrak{n}_j}$ (direct sum), where $\mathfrak{n}_i = \dim_k P_i/\mathfrak{n}P_i$. It is clear that \mathfrak{z} is the inverse image of $\sum_{j=t+1}^r (k)_{\mathfrak{n}_j}$ by the natural map ψ . Hence, it is a two-sided ideal and there holds $kG/\mathfrak{z} \cong \sum_{i=1}^t (k)_{\mathfrak{n}_i}$. We set here $\mu = \sum_{i=1}^t h_i \text{tr}_i p_i$. Since $h_i \neq 0$ in k , μ is a symmetric, non-singular linear function on kG/\mathfrak{z} . Then, by Theorem A, there exists a central element $c' \in kG$ such that $\mu\psi' = \lambda_{c'}$ and $r(\mathfrak{z}) = (kG)c'$, where ψ' is the natural map $kG \rightarrow kG/\mathfrak{z}$. Now, by making use of (*), we can prove $c' = g_0 c$ in the same way as in the last part of the proof of Proposition 1. This completes the proof.

Since $\mathfrak{z} \supset \mathfrak{n}$, we obtain in particular $r(\mathfrak{n}) \ni c$. However, in virtue of Remark 1, this holds without assuming that k is a splitting field. Thus, we have shown

Theorem 2. *$r(\mathfrak{n})$ contains the sum of all p -elements of G .*

Corollary 2. *Let $x = \sum_{\sigma} a_{\sigma} \sigma$ be an element of kG , and $x(p)$ the sum of the coefficient a_{σ} of p -elements σ . If x is in \mathfrak{n} then $x(p) = 0$.*

Proof. Note that $x(p)$ is equal to the coefficient of 1 in xc . If x is in \mathfrak{n} then $xc = 0$, and hence $x(p) = 0$.

If e is a primitive idempotent of kG , then $r(\mathfrak{n})e$ is a minimal left ideal of kG and contains $(kG)ce$.

Corollary 3. *Let e be a primitive idempotent of kG . If $\nu_p(\dim_k(kG)e) = n$ then $r(\mathfrak{n})e = (kG)ce$. The converse holds, provided k is a splitting field for G .*

Proof. First, we assume that k is a splitting field. By Lemma 2, if $ce = 0$, or what is the same, if $e \in l(c) = \mathfrak{z}$, then $\nu_p(\dim_k(kG)e) > n$, and conversely. We have seen therefore that $ce \neq 0$ and $\nu_p(\dim_k(kG)e) = n$ are equivalent.

Secondly, we assume that $\nu_p(\dim_k(kG)e) = n$. Let K be a splitting field for G containing k , and $e = \sum_j e_j$ a decomposition of e into orthogonal primitive idempotents of KG . Then, by assumption there exists at least one e_i such that $\nu_p(\dim_k(KGe_i)) = n$. Since $ce_i \neq 0$ by the first step, we have $ce \neq 0$, completing the proof.

Now, if G is p -solvable then $\nu_p(\dim_k(kG)e)=n$ for every primitive idempotent e (P. Fong [5]), whence it follows $z=n$ and therefore $r(n)=r(z)=(kG)c$.

Corollary 4. *If G is p -solvable then $r(n)=(kG)c$.*

5. Some nilpotent ideal of kG

The present section is independent of the preceding ones. Let T be a subgroup of G , and m a left nilpotent ideal of kT . Let $m^\sigma = \{\sigma^{-1}x\sigma \mid x \in m\}$ for $\sigma \in G$, and $r_T(m)$ the right annihilator ideal of m in kT .

Proposition 2. *Let $\tilde{m} = \bigcap_{\sigma \in G} kG \cdot m^\sigma$. Then there hold the following :*

- (1) \tilde{m} is a nilpotent two-sided ideal of kG .
- (2) $r(\tilde{m}) = \sum_{\sigma \in G} r_T(m)^\sigma kG$.
- (3) *If m is a two-sided ideal of KT , then $\tilde{m} = \bigcap_{\sigma \in G} m^\sigma \cdot kG$.*

Proof. (1) For every $\tau \in G$, there holds $\tilde{m}\tau \subset \bigcap_{\sigma \in G} kG \cdot m^{\sigma\tau} = \tilde{m}$, and hence \tilde{m} is a two-sided ideal. Accordingly, $m^2 \subset m(kG \cdot m) = m \cdot m \subset kG \cdot m^2$, so that $\tilde{m}^t \subset kG \cdot m^t$ for every positive integer t . We see therefore \tilde{m} is nilpotent.

(2) Since kT is Frobenius, there holds $m = l_T(r_T(m))$. Then, one will easily see that $kG \cdot m = l(r_T(m) \cdot kG)$ and $kG \cdot m^\sigma = l(r_{T\sigma}(m^\sigma) \cdot kG) = l(r_T(m)^\sigma \cdot kG)$. Hence, $\tilde{m} = \bigcap_{\sigma} l(r_T(m)^\sigma \cdot kG) = l(\sum_{\sigma} r_T(m)^\sigma \cdot kG)$. Since kG is Frobenius, our assertion is clear by the last.

(3) Using freely the fact that the left annihilator ideal of a two-sided ideal in a symmetric algebra coincides with the right one (Theorem B), we obtain $\tilde{m} = l(\sum_{\sigma} r_T(m)^\sigma \cdot kG) = r(\sum_{\sigma} l_T(m)^\sigma \cdot kG) = r(\sum_{\sigma} kG \cdot l_T(m)^\sigma) = \bigcap_{\sigma} m^\sigma \cdot kG$.

Theorem 3. *Let Ω be the set of all Sylow p -subgroups of G . Then, $r(n) \subset \sum_{S \in \Omega} \Delta_S \cdot kG$.*

Proof. In proposition 2, we set $T=S \in \Omega$ and $m = \text{rad}(kS) = I(S)$. Since every Sylow p -subgroup is conjugate to each other, Proposition 2 proves that $\tilde{m} = \bigcap_{S \in \Omega} kG \cdot I(S)$ is contained in n . We obtain therefore $r(n) \subset r(\tilde{m}) = \sum_{S \in \Omega} \Delta_S \cdot kG$.

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