One-sided clean rings.

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Abstract

Replacing units by one-sided units in the definition of clean rings (and modules), new classes of rings (and modules) are defined and studied, generalizing most of the properties known in the clean case.

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1 Introduction

For a ring with identity, we denote by $U(R)$ the units, $U_l(R)$ and $U_r(R)$ the left respectively right invertible elements of R (shortly, right-units or left-units), and by $N(R)$ the nilpotent elements.

An element in a ring R is *right (or left) clean* if it is a sum of an idempotent and a right (respectively left) unit. A ring R is *right clean* if all its elements are right clean and it is *left clean* if R^{op} is right clean. Moreover, it is *one-sided clean* if each element is left or right clean. These classes are included in the class of *almost clean* rings considered by McGovern ([8]: every element is a sum of a non-zero divisor and an idempotent) and studied further (in the commutative case) by Ahn and D.D.Anderson ([1]).

Further, a ring R is *weakly right exchange* if for every element $a \in R$ there are two orthogonal idempotents f, f' with $f \in aR$, $f' \in (1-a)R$, such that $f + f' \cong 1$.

In this paper the main results are the following

Proposition 3. *Let* $e^2 = e \in R$ *be such that* eRe *and* $(1-e)R(1-e)$ *are both right clean rings. Then* R *is a right clean ring.*

Proposition 6. *Any ring* $R = U_l(R) \cup U_r(R) \cup N(R)$ *is both right and left clean.*

Theorem 9. *Any right clean ring is weakly right exchange.*

and,

Theorem 10. *A ring* R *is weakly right exchange if and only if for every* $a \in R$ *there are elements* $b, c \in R$ *such that* $bab = b$, $c(1-a)c = c$, $ab(1-a)c = 0 = (1-a)cab$.

Finally results on strongly respectively weakly one-sided clean rings are given.

2 Right clean rings

In the sequel we will merely state our results for right clean rings, but most of them have a left or one-sided analogue.

Obviously Dedekind finite (and in particular abelian or commutative) one-sided clean rings are (strongly) clean.

The following is immediate from definitions

Lemma 1 *(i) Every homomorphic image of a right clean ring is right clean.*

(ii) A direct product of rings $\prod R_i$ *is right clean if and only if each* R_i *is right clean.*

The next result is elementary. We supply a proof for later reference.

Proposition 2 *Let* A*,* B *be rings,* ${}_AC_B$ *a bimodule and* $R = \begin{bmatrix} A & C \\ 0 & B \end{bmatrix}$*. Then* R *is right clean if and only if* A *and* B *are right clean.*

Proof. If R is right clean, the maps $f : R \longrightarrow A$, $f(\begin{bmatrix} a & c \\ 0 & b \end{bmatrix}) = a$ and $g : R \longrightarrow B$, $g(\begin{bmatrix} a & c \\ 0 & b \end{bmatrix}) = b$ are ring epimorphisms, and so A, B are right clean by (i), previous Lemma.

Conversely, let $\begin{bmatrix} a & c \\ 0 & b \end{bmatrix} \in R$. Then there are $u_a \in U_l(A)$, $e_a = e_a^2 \in A$ with $a = u_a + e_a$ and a similar decomposition for b. Suppose $v_a u_a = 1 = v_b u_b$. Clearly $\begin{bmatrix} a & c \\ 0 & b \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} u_a & c \\ 0 & u_b \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} e_a & 0 \\ 0 & e_b \end{bmatrix}$ where $\begin{bmatrix} e_a & 0 \\ 0 & e_b \end{bmatrix}^2 = \begin{bmatrix} e_a & 0 \\ 0 & e_b \end{bmatrix}$ and $\begin{bmatrix} u_a & c \\ 0 & u_b \end{bmatrix} \in U_l(R)$. Indeed, $\begin{bmatrix} v_a & -v_a c v_b \\ 0 & v_b \end{bmatrix}$ is a left inverse for $\begin{bmatrix} u_a & c \\ 0 & u_b \end{bmatrix}$. ■

Remark. This property fails for one-sided clean rings A and B.

Proposition 3 *Let* $e^2 = e \in R$ *be such that* eRe *and* $(1-e)R(1-e)$ *are both right clean rings. Then* R *is a right clean ring.*

Proof. Using the Pierce decomposition of the ring R, let $\begin{bmatrix} a & x \\ y & b \end{bmatrix} \in R = \begin{bmatrix} eRe & eR(1-e) \\ (1-e)Re & (1-e)R(1-e) \end{bmatrix}$. For $u_1 u = e$ and $a = f + u$ in eRe, $v_1 v = 1 - e$

and $b-yu_1x=g+v$ in $(1-e)R(1-e)$, $\begin{bmatrix} a & x \\ y & b \end{bmatrix}$ decomposes into $\begin{bmatrix} f & 0 \\ 0 & g \end{bmatrix}+$ $\begin{bmatrix} u & x \\ y & v+yu_1x \end{bmatrix}$ and all we need is a left inverse for the latter. But this is $\begin{bmatrix} e & -u_1x \\ 0 & 1-e \end{bmatrix}\begin{bmatrix} u_1 & 0 \\ 0 & v_1 \end{bmatrix}\begin{bmatrix} e & 0 \\ -yu_1 & 1-e \end{bmatrix}=\begin{bmatrix} u_1+u_1xv_1yu_1 & -u_1xv_1 \\ -v_1yu_1 & v_1 \end{bmatrix}$. ■

By induction, we have

Theorem 4 *If $1=e_1+e_2+...+e_n$ in a ring R where e_i are orthogonal idempotents and each e_iRe_i is right clean, then R is right clean.*

Hence

Corollary 5 *If R is right clean then so is the matrix ring $\mathcal{M}_n(R)$.*

As in the clean case, we were not able to prove that corner rings (even full) of right (or left or one-sided) clean rings have the same property.

Only recently, classes of rings defined by equalities like: $R=U(R)\cup \mathrm{Id}(R)$ or, $R=U(R)\cup \mathrm{Id}(R)\cup -\mathrm{Id}(R)$ (here $\mathrm{Id}(R)$ denotes the idempotent elements of R), have received a great deal of attention (see [2] and [1] for the commutative case). In a similar vein, examples of right clean rings are provided by the next Proposition.

Proposition 6 *Any ring $R=U_l(R)\cup U_r(R)\cup N(R)$ is both right and left clean.*

Proof. We first show that *every right unit is right clean.* Let $a\in U_l(R)$ and $ba=1$. Then $e=ab$ is an idempotent, so is $1-e$, and using the decomposition $a=(1-e)+(a+(e-1))$ we have to find a left inverse for $a+(e-1)$. But this is $ebe+(e-1)$ since $(ebe+(e-1))(a+(e-1))=ebea+ea-a+0+1-e=1$ (because $ebea=abbaba=ab=e$).

Coming back to the proof of the Proposition, if $a\in N(R)$ it is well-known that $1-a=u\in U(R)$ and so $a=1-u$ is even strongly clean. If $a\in U_l(R)\cup U_r(R)$ we just use the previous result and its left analogue. ■

Remarks. 1) In general $(a+(e-1))(ebe+(e-1))=1$ fails (equivalently $(e-1)(b+1)=0$).

2) A slightly larger class is suggested by the following example which can be found in David Arnold's 1982 book ([3]): " In the endomorphism ring of a torsion-free strongly indecomposable Abelian group of finite rank, every element is a monomorphism (i.e., a non-zero divisor) or nilpotent".

3) Recently, H. Chen (see [5]) has proved that regular one-sided unit-regular rings are (though he does not consider this notion) exactly one-sided clean. So these are also examples for the notion we deal with.

3 Right clean modules

For the sake of completeness we first restate some results given in [4]: let $f, e \in S = \mathrm{End}(M_R)$ with $e^2 = e$, $A = \ker e$ and $B = \mathrm{im} e$.

Proposition 4.4 *$f - e$ is a monomorphism if and only if the restrictions $f|_A$, $(1-f)|_B$ are monomorphisms and $fA \cap (1-f)B = 0$.*

Footnote *$f - e$ is an epimorphism if and only if and $fA + (1-f)B = M$.*

Lemma 2.1 *$f - e$ is a unit in S if and only if the restrictions $f|_A$, $(1-f)|_B$ are monomorphisms and $fA \oplus (1-f)B = M$.*

Observe that the (double) restriction (for the domain - we use | and for the codomain - we use$\widetilde{\ }$) $\widetilde{f|_A} : A \longrightarrow fA$ and $\widetilde{(1-f)|_B} : B \longrightarrow (1-f)B$ are always onto, so $f|_A$, $(1-f)|_B$ are monomorphisms if and only if $\widetilde{f|_A}$ and $\widetilde{(1-f)|_B}$ are isomorphisms. If $fA \cap (1-f)B = 0$, then $u = \widetilde{f|_A} \oplus \widetilde{(1-f)|_B} : A \oplus B \longrightarrow fA \oplus (1-f)B$ is an isomorphism too (the codomain sum is direct, but not necessarily equal to M).

Therefore, our analogues are

Lemma 7 *Let $f, e \in S = \mathrm{End}(M_R)$ with $e^2 = e$, $A = \ker e$ and $B = \mathrm{im} e$. Then $f - e \in U_l(S)$ if and only if the restrictions $f|_A$, $(1-f)|_B$ are monomorphisms, $fA \cap (1-f)B = 0$ and the monomorphism $\widetilde{f|_A} \oplus \widetilde{(1-f)|_B} \in S$ has a left inverse in S.*

Proposition 8 *An element $f \in \mathrm{End}(M_R)$ is right clean if and only if there is a R-module decomposition $M = A \oplus B$ such that the restrictions $f|_A$, $(1-f)|_B$ are monomorphisms, $fA \cap (1-f)B = 0$ and the monomorphism $\widetilde{f|_A} \oplus \widetilde{(1-f)|_B} : M \longrightarrow M$ has a left inverse in* $\mathrm{End}(M_R)$.

Remarks. 1) Due to Theorem 1, finite direct sums of right clean modules are right clean.

2) Using Lemma 1, if $M_R = A \oplus B$ and $\mathrm{Hom}_R(A, B) = 0$, then M is right clean if and only if A, B are right clean.

4 Weakly exchange rings

A ring is called (right) *exchange* (or *suitable* in [10]) if for every equation $a + a' = 1$ there are idempotents $e \in aR$ and $e' \in a'R$ such that $e + e' = 1$.

Since these idempotents are complementary, they must be orthogonal (and commute).

Recall that an idempotent $e \in R$ is *isomorphic* to 1 if and only if there are elements $u, v \in R$ with $vu = 1$ and $e = uv$ (equivalently, $eR \cong R$ as right R-modules). If $e \neq 1$, such a ring is not Dedekind finite.

We define *weakly right exchange* rings R by the conditions: for every equation $a + a' = 1$ there are two orthogonal idempotents f, f' with $f \in aR$, $f' \in a'R$, such that $f + f' \cong 1$ (obviously, since the idempotents f, f' are orthogonal, their sum is also an idempotent).

According to the above definition, there are elements $u, v \in R$ with $vu = 1$ and $f + f' = uv$.

Remark. We must require these two idempotents to be orthogonal. Indeed, if we require only $vu = 1$ and $f + f' = uv$ (i.e., $f + f' \cong 1$), then $f + f'$ is an idempotent ($uvuv = uv$) and this implies $f + f' = (f + f')^2 = ff' + f'f + f + f'$ and so only $ff' + f'f = 0$ (so not orthogonal nor commuting).

We can naturally associate with these (orthogonal but not necessarily complementary) idempotents two complementary idempotents, two by two isomorphic, namely vfu and $vf'u$.

1) $vfu + vf'u = v(f + f')u = vuvu = vu = 1$

2) $(vfu)^2 = vfuvfu = vf(f + f')fu = vfu$ (and so is $vf'u$)

3) $vfu \cong f$ and $vf'u \cong f'$: indeed, $vfu = (vfu)^2 = vf.uvfu \cong uvfu.vf = (f + f')f(f + f')f = f$, and similarly, $vf'u \cong f'$.

Remark. Related to lifting idempotents, since $f \in aR$ and $f' \in (1 - a)R$, all we can check is

$$f - a(f + f') = (1 - a)f - af' \in (a - a^2)R.$$

Obviously, if u is a unit, $f + f' = 1$ and $f - a \in (a - a^2)R$ shows that idempotents can be lifted.

Theorem 9 *Any right clean ring is weakly right exchange.*

Proof. If $a = u + e$ with $e^2 = e$ and $vu = 1$ (but not necessarily $uv = 1$), since $(uev)^2 = uevuev = uev$, we consider the idempotent

$$f' = uev.$$

Similarly, $(u(1 - e)v)^2 = u(1 - e)vu(1 - e)v = u(1 - e)v$ and we denote

$$f = u(1 - e)v = uv - uev.$$

Take $b = uv + (1 - a)v = (1 - e)v$ and $c = uv - av = -ev$. Then $ab = f$, $(1 - a)c = f'$ and so $f \in aR$ and $f' \in (1 - a)R$.

Thus $ff' = f'f = 0$ (these idempotents are orthogonal) and the sum $f+f' = uv$ (is an idempotent) isomorphic with 1.

Moreover $vfu = 1 - e$ is idempotent (and f, f' are isomorphic to complementary idempotents: $f \cong 1 - e$, and $f' \cong e$). ■

Remarks. In a right clean ring the following is also true:

(a) We have $bf = b$ (i.e., $bab = b$) and $bf' = 0$ and similarly $cf' = c$ (i.e., $c(1-a)c = c$) and $cf = 0$. We also have $f'u = (1-f)u$ and $vf' = v(1-f)$.

(b) As in the clean initial case, $c = b+v$, and $a^2 - a = (a-1+f)u = (a-f')u$, and since this relation cannot be solved for $f - 1 + a$ or for $f' - a$ (in order to obtain $f - 1 + a$ or $f' - a$ in $(a-a^2)R$), idempotents cannot be lifted modulo any right (or left) ideal.

Actually, since $f \in aR$ and $f' \in (1-a)R$, all we can check is

$$f - a(f + f') = (1-a)f - af' \in (a - a^2)R.$$

(c) Obviously, if u is a unit, $f + f' = 1$ and $f - a \in (a - a^2)R$ shows that idempotents can be lifted.

It is well-known that exchange rings were ring theoretic described by Monk (see [9]). Here is the characterization for weakly right exchange rings.

Theorem 10 *A ring R is weakly right exchange if and only if for every $a \in R$ there are elements $b, c \in R$ such that $bab = b$, $c(1-a)c = c$, $ab(1-a)c = 0 = (1-a)cab$.*

Proof. If R is weakly right exchange, take orthogonal idempotents $f = at \in aR$ and $f' = (1-a)s \in (1-a)R$. Then $b = tat$ satisfies $bab = b$, $ab = f$ and $c = s(1-a)s$ satisfies $c(1-a)c = c$ and $f' = (1-a)c$. Since f, f' are orthogonal, we also have $ab(1-a)c = 0 = (1-a)ca$ and $(1-ab)(1-a)c+ab = (1-f)f'+f = f+f'$ is (an idempotent) isomorphic to 1.

Conversely, $f = ab$ and $f' = (1-a)c$ are readily checked to be orthogonal idempotents and $f + f' = (1-ab)(1-a)c + ab$ is (an idempotent) isomorphic to 1. ■

Similarly (right exchange and left exchange properties are equivalent), an **open problem** remains: are weakly right exchange rings also weakly left exchange ?

5 Strongly one-sided clean rings

All the above one-sided clean notions have corresponding strongly versions.

Unlike the strongly clean version, here $ue = eu$ does not imply $u^{-1}e = eu^{-1}$. Therefore R is *strongly right clean* if it is right clean, $ue = eu$ and $ve = ev$.

Proposition 11 *Let $e^2 = e \in R$. An element $a \in eRe$ is strongly right clean in R if and only if a is strongly right clean in eRe.*

Proof. First notice that if $a \in eRe$ then $a(1-e) = (1-e)a = 0$ and so $a = ae = ea = eae$.

If $a = g + u$ is strongly right clean in R, then $(g+u)(1-e) = 0$ implies $1-e = -vg(1-e) = -gv(1-e)$ and so (by left multiplication with g) $g(1-e) = 1-e$. Thus (using also $(1-e)a = 0$) $eg = ge$. Therefore $eg = ege = ge$ is an idempotent in eRe. Since a and g commute with e, so is $u = a - g$. Hence $eu = eue = ue$ has eve as left inverse in eRe. Finally, $a = eae = e(g+u)e = ege + eue$ is strongly right clean in eRe.

Conversely, if $a = f + v$ is strongly right clean in eRe with $fv = vf$, $f^2 = f \in eRe$ and $w \in eRe$, $wv = e$ then $a = (a-u) + u$ is strongly right clean in R as $w + (1-e)$ is a left inverse for $u = v + (1-e)$ and $a - u = f + (1-e)$ is idempotent (sum of two orthogonal idempotents). ∎

Remark. The converse does not use $ev = ve$ from our definition.

Corollary 12 *Corner rings of strongly right clean rings are strongly right clean.*

Further, strongly right clean is not a Morita invariant property. The example given in [11], i.e. the localization $\mathbf{Z}_{(2)}$ can be used in order to disprove: R strongly right clean implies $\mathcal{M}_n(R)$ strongly right clean.

6 Weakly left-clean rings

We can get even closer to almost clean rings by weakening our right clean elements as follows: an element $a \in R$ is *weakly left-clean* if it is the sum of an idempotent e and a left nonzero-divisor (or left cancellable element) u of R, and a ring is *weakly left-clean* if all its elements share this property.

Remark. For regular rings, right clean and weakly left-clean coincide (Ex. 1.4, [7]).

In this setting, the *weak left-clean modules* are characterized by Proposition 4.4 in [4].

However, since images of non-zero divisors may not be non-zero divisors, properties for such rings are worse, compared with the right clean rings.

Direct products of weakly left-clean rings are weakly left-clean.
Homomorphic images of weakly left-clean rings may not be weakly left-clean.

Thus, (see Lemma 1) *if A, B are rings,* ${}_AC_B$ *a bimodule and* $R = \begin{bmatrix} A & C \\ 0 & B \end{bmatrix}$, *then R weakly left-clean generally does not imply A and B weakly left-clean.*

Nevertheless, the converse is true:

Proposition 13 *If A, B are weakly left-clean rings and* ${}_AC_B$ *is a bimodule then* $R = \begin{bmatrix} A & C \\ 0 & B \end{bmatrix}$ *is also weakly left-clean.*

Proof. With the notations in the proof of Lemma 1, if u_a, u_b are left non-zero divisors, so is $\begin{bmatrix} u_a & c \\ 0 & u_b \end{bmatrix}$ in R.

Indeed, it is readily checked that matrices of the type $\begin{bmatrix} x & y \\ 0 & z \end{bmatrix}$ with left non-zero divisors x and z, are left non-zero divisors in R. ■

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