RENDICONTI
del
SEMINARIO MATEMATICO
della
UNIVERSITÀ DI PADOVA

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Rendiconti del Seminario Matematico della Università di Padova, tome 64 (1981), p. 93-107

<http://www.numdam.org/item?id=RSMUP_1981__64__93_0>

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REND. SEM. MAT. UNIV. PADOVA, Vol. 64 (1981)

A Subspace of Spec(A) and Its Connexions with the Maximal Ring of Quotients.

GIULIANO ARTICO - UMBERTO MARCONI - ROBERTO MORESCO (*)

Introduction.

The results exposed in this paper have originated from a notion which arises in a natural way in the study of the rings of real-valued continuous functions and which can be generalized to arbitrary rings: we mean to refer to ζ-ideals, which we define in 2.1 (see also 4.1); we use a notation which clearly recalls the familiar one of z-ideal [GJ], because of the likeness of the two concepts.

The second section and part of the fourth one are devoted to the description of the properties of ζ-ideals and to their relations with z-ideals: for instance we show that there exist some analogies (2.4), that in the semisimple rings the notion of ζ-ideal is finer (2.3) and we discuss some conditions under which the two concepts coincide.

Furthermore we prove that there is a connection between the ζ-ideals of a ring A and the prime spectrum of the maximal ring of quotients $Q(A)$: in fact if we consider the map $\eta\colon \mathrm{Max}\,(Q(A)) \to \mathrm{Spec}\,(A)$ so defined: $\eta(M) = M \cap A$, it turns out (3.3) that the subspace of the ζ-ideals coincides with the image of the map η; the same theorem provides other conditions equivalent to being a ζ-ideal. The third section ends with a study of the injectivity of the map η.

Finally, in the theorems 4.5, 4.5 *bis* we give some necessary and sufficient conditions in order that the universal regular ring is a ring of quotients: one of them is that every prime ideal is a ζ-ideal;

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moreover we show that this situation takes place in $C(X)$ if and only if X is a P-space.

We wish to thank G. De Marco and A. Orsatti for the helpful hints they gave discussing with us some problems connected with the matter of this paper.

1. Preliminary results.

1.0. Throughout the present paper the word «ring» will always mean commutative semiprime (i.e. without non-zero nilpotents) ring with 1. Let A be a ring, $Q(A)$ the maximal ring of quotients of A, $K(A)$ the total ring of fractions, Spec (A), Max (A) and Min (A) respectively the prime, maximal and minimal spectra of A equipped with the Zariski topology. For every a belonging to A, we put: $\mathcal{V}(a) = \{P \in \operatorname{Spec}(A): a \in P\}$, $\mathcal{D}(a) = \operatorname{Spec}(A) \setminus \mathcal{V}(a)$, $V(a) = \mathcal{V}(a) \cap \cap \operatorname{Max}(A)$, $\mathcal{V}_0(a) = \operatorname{Min}(A) \cap \mathcal{V}(a)$ and analogously for $D(a)$ and $\mathcal{D}_0(a)$. If we replace a with any subset S of A, the previous symbols get the obvious significance; if Y is a subspace of Spec (A), we denote $\mathcal{V}_Y(S)$ the space $\mathcal{V}(S) \cap Y$, analogously for $\mathcal{D}_Y(S)$. Then we put $S^\perp = \{a \in A: sa = 0, \forall s \in S\}$ the annihilator of S in A.

For $a \in A$ we say that $a^{\dashv}$ is the quasi-inverse of a if it is the (unique) element of A which satisfies the system:

$$\begin{cases} x^2 \cdot a = x \\ a^2 \cdot x = a; \end{cases}$$

if every element of A has a quasi-inverse we say that the ring A is regular: this is equivalent to say $\operatorname{Max}(A) = \operatorname{Spec}(A)$.

We call singular an ideal whose elements are all zero-divisors.

We recall a characterization of the minimal prime ideals ([HJ]) which we shall need in the following: a prime ideal P is minimal if and only if the annihilator of every element of P is not contained in P.

1.1 Proposition. *Let $S \subseteq A$, Y a subspace of* Spec (A) *containing* Min (A). *Then* $\operatorname{int}_Y(\mathcal{V}_Y(S)) = \mathcal{D}_Y(S^\perp)$.

Proof. Clearly $\mathcal{V}_Y(S) \supseteq \mathcal{D}_Y(S^\perp)$ which is open. For the converse inclusion take $P \in \operatorname{int}_Y(\mathcal{V}(S))$: there exists $a \notin P$ such that $\mathcal{D}_Y(a) \subseteq \subseteq \mathcal{V}_Y(S)$. We claim that a belongs to $S^\perp$: otherwise there would exist $s \in S$ such that $\{(s \cdot a)^n: n \in \mathbf{N}\}$ is a multiplicatively closed set which

does not contain zero, hence there would be a minimal prime Q not containing $s \cdot a$, therefore $Q \in \mathfrak{D}_Y(a) \setminus \mathfrak{V}_Y(S)$ against the assumption. Then P belongs to $\mathfrak{D}_Y(S^\perp)$. ■

It is now easy to prove the following proposition, stated in [HJ] for $Y = \mathrm{Min}\,(A)$.

1.2 PROPOSITION. *Consider the following*:

i) *Y is extremally disconnected*;

ii) *for every ideal I of A, $\mathfrak{V}_Y(I^\perp)$ is open*;

iii) *for every ideal I of A, $\mathfrak{V}_Y(I^\perp)$ and $\mathfrak{V}_Y(I^{\perp\perp})$ are complementary in Y*;

iv) *for every ideal I of A, $\mathfrak{V}_Y(I^\perp + I^{\perp\perp})$ is empty*;

v) *for every ideal I of A, $I^\perp$ is a direct summand, that is $I^\perp = e \cdot A$ for an idempotent e of A.*

Conditions i)-iv) *are equivalent and are implied by* v), for *every Y containing Min (A); all the conditions are equivalent if $Y = Spec\,(A)$.*

PROOF. i) $\Leftrightarrow$ ii) $\Leftrightarrow$ iii): take the complements in proposition 1.1.

iii) $\Leftrightarrow$ iv): obvious since $\mathfrak{V}_Y(I^\perp + I^{\perp\perp}) = \mathfrak{V}_Y(I^\perp) \cap \mathfrak{V}_Y(I^{\perp\perp})$ and $I^\perp \cap I^{\perp\perp} = (0)$, A being a semiprime ring.

v) $\Rightarrow$ iv): trivial.

iv) $\Rightarrow$ v): $\mathfrak{V}(I^\perp + I^{\perp\perp}) = \emptyset$ implies $I^\perp + I^{\perp\perp} = A$. ■

1.3 THEOREM. ([HJ] 2.3) *For every $a \in A$, $\mathfrak{D}_0(a) = \mathfrak{V}_0(a^\perp)$; hence* Min (A) *is Hausdorff and has a basis of clopen sets.* ■

One can equip the set of prime ideals of A with the patch-topology ([H], [G]) which has as a basis the clopen subsets of the form $\mathfrak{D}(a) \cap \mathfrak{V}(a_1) \cap \ldots \cap \mathfrak{V}(a_n)$ $a, a_i \in A$. We denote by $\mathfrak{P}(A)$ this topological space; $\mathfrak{P}(A)$ is Hausdorff, compact, totally disconnected and Min (A) is a subspace of $\mathfrak{P}(A)$. Furthermore if A, B are rings and $\varphi\colon A \to B$ is a ring homomorphism, then the adjoint map ${}^a\varphi\colon \mathfrak{P}(B) \to \mathfrak{P}(A)$ given by ${}^a\varphi(P) = \varphi^{\leftarrow}[P]$ is continuous.

We indicate by $j\colon A \to \hat{A}$ the canonical embedding of A into the universal regular ring associated to A ([W], [G]). It is known that every morphism of A into a regular ring R extends uniquely to a morphism of $\hat{A}$ into R. Moreover the adjoint map ${}^aj\colon \mathrm{Max}\,(\hat{A}) \to \mathfrak{P}(A)$ is a homeomorphism. For every $P \in \mathfrak{P}(A)$ we shall denote by $\hat{P}$ the maximal ideal such that ${}^aj(\hat{P}) = P = \hat{P} \cap A$.

We recall that if A is rationally complete (i.e. $A = Q(A)$) then A is self-injective and regular.

1.4 THEOREM. *If A is a self-injective ring, then* $\mathrm{Max}(A) = \mathrm{Spec}(A)$ *is extremally disconnected.*

PROOF. Let I be an ideal of A. Since A is semiprime, $I^{\perp} \cap I^{\perp\perp} = (0)$. Let π_1, π_2 be the projections of $I^{\perp} \oplus I^{\perp\perp}$ onto $I^{\perp}, I^{\perp\perp}$ respectively; as A is self-injective, $\pi_1, \pi_2, \pi_1 + \pi_2$, extend to endomorphisms π_1^*, π_2^*, $(\pi_1 + \pi_2)^*$ of the A-module A. Since $M = I^{\perp} \oplus I^{\perp\perp}$ is dense in A (i.e. its annihilator is (0)) and $\pi_1 + \pi_2$ is the identity of M, then $(\pi_1 + \pi_2)^*$ is the identity of A. On the other hand $(\pi_1 + \pi_2)^* = \pi_1^* + \pi_2^*$ because the equality holds in M. At last π_1^*, π_2^* are orthogonal idempotents because they are such in $\mathrm{Hom}_A(M, M)$. Hence $A = \mathrm{Im}(\pi_1^*) \oplus \mathrm{Im}(\pi_2^*)$; since $\mathrm{Im}(\pi_1^*) \supseteq I^{\perp}$ and $\mathrm{Im}(\pi_2^*) \supseteq I^{\perp\perp}$ we get that $\mathrm{Im}(\pi_2^*) = I^{\perp\perp}$ and $\mathrm{Im}(\pi_1^*) = I^{\perp}$, that is $A = I^{\perp} \oplus I^{\perp\perp}$. The conclusion follows from 1.2. ∎

The proof of theorem 1.4 implies:

1.5 COROLLARY. *For any subset S of A: $S^{\perp} = A \cap e \cdot Q(A)$ for e idempotent of $Q(A)$; hence $S^{\perp\perp} = A \cap (1 - e) \cdot Q(A)$.* ∎

2. ζ-ideals.

2.1. Let $i: A \to Q(A)$ be the canonical embedding, $\eta: \mathrm{Max}(Q(A)) \to \mathfrak{I}(A)$ the adjoint map; our purpose is to investigate the properties of η. The notion of z-ideal used in the study of $C(X)$ has been extended to arbitrary rings by Mason [M]; for our aim it will be helpful to introduce the concept of ζ-ideal which arises quite naturally in $C(X)$ (see section 4) and extends to arbitrary rings.

DEFINITIONS. Let I be an ideal of A.

a) I is a z-ideal if $a \in A$, $b \in I$, $V(a) = V(b)$ implies $a \in I$;

b) I is a ζ-ideal if $a \in A$, $b_1, \ldots, b_n \in I$, $\mathfrak{U}(a) \supseteq \mathfrak{D}((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^{\perp})$ implies $a \in I$.

Notice that by 1.1 $\mathfrak{D}((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^{\perp}) = \mathrm{int}(\mathfrak{U}(b_1, \ldots, b_n))$.

2.2 LEMMA. *Every minimal prime ideal P is a ζ-ideal.*

PROOF. Let $b_1, \ldots, b_n \in P$, $a \in A$, $\mathfrak{V}(a) \supseteq \mathfrak{D}((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^\perp)$. By the characterization of the minimal prime ideals cited in 1.0, P belongs to $\mathfrak{D}((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^\perp)$, hence a belongs to P. ■

2.3 THEOREM. *Let A be a ring, $J(A)$ its Jacobson radical. The following are equivalent:*

i) $J(A) = 0$;

ii) $\mathfrak{V}(a) \supseteq \mathfrak{D}((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^\perp)$ *if and only if* $V(a) \supseteq D((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^\perp)$ *for* $a, b_i \in A$;

iii) *every ζ-ideal is a z-ideal.*

PROOF. i) $\Rightarrow$ ii): $\mathfrak{V}(a) \supseteq \mathfrak{D}((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^\perp)$ implies trivially $V(a) \supseteq D((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^\perp)$; conversely if there exists $P \in \mathfrak{D}((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^\perp) \setminus \mathfrak{V}(a)$, there is $s \in (b_1, \ldots, b_n)^\perp$ such that $s \cdot a \notin P$. By i) there exists a maximal ideal M which does not contain $s \cdot a$, hence $M \in D((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^\perp) \setminus V(a)$.

ii) $\Rightarrow$ iii): trivial.

iii) $\Rightarrow$ i): ab absurdo, suppose $a \neq 0$ belongs to $J(A)$ and take a minimal prime ideal $P \in \mathfrak{D}(a)$. Then P is a ζ-ideal and it is not a z-ideal for $V(a) = V(0) = \operatorname{Max}(A)$ and a does not belong to P. ■

If $J(A) = 0$, theorem 2.3 allows us to state definition 2.1 *b*) looking only at the maximal spectrum, that is replacing $\mathfrak{V}$, $\mathfrak{D}$ by V, D respectively.

Clearly by the definition every proper ζ-ideal is singular; and if an ideal I is intersection or (set theoretic) union of ζ-ideals, it is a ζ-ideal.

We indicate by $\mathfrak{Z}^0(A)$ the open sets of the form $\mathfrak{D}((a_1, \ldots, a_n)^\perp)$, $a_i \in A$. The proof of next proposition is routine.

2.4 PROPOSITION. i) *If I is an ideal then $\zeta(I) = \{\mathfrak{D}((a_1, \ldots, a_n)^\perp) : a_i \in I\}$ is a basis for a filter (possibly non-proper) in $\mathfrak{Z}^0(A)$; if I is a proper ζ-ideal, $\zeta(I)$ is a proper filter.*

ii) *If $\mathcal{F}$ is a filter basis in $\mathfrak{Z}^0(A)$ then $\zeta^{\leftarrow}(\mathcal{F}) = \{a \in A : \exists F \in \mathcal{F}, \mathfrak{D}(a^\perp) \supseteq F\}$ is a ζ-ideal, proper if $\mathcal{F}$ is proper.*

iii) *The assignation $I \to \zeta(I)$ is a $1-1$ correspondence between ζ-ideals and filters on $\mathfrak{Z}^0(A)$, whose inverse is $\zeta^{\leftarrow}$.* ■

As an easy consequence we obtain that $\zeta^{\leftarrow}(\zeta(I))$ is the smallest ζ-ideal containing I, not necessarily proper even if I is a singular ideal, as the following theorem shows:

2.5 THEOREM. *The following are equivalent:*

i) *every singular ideal I is contained in a proper ζ-ideal;*

ii) *every finitely generated singular ideal I is contained in a minimal prime;*

iii) *every ideal maximal among the singular ones is a (prime) ζ-ideal.*

PROOF. i) $\Leftrightarrow$ ii): observe that $\zeta^{\leftarrow}(\zeta(I))$ is proper if and only if $\zeta(I) \not\ni \emptyset$ if and only if for every $b_1, \ldots, b_n \in I$, $\mathfrak{D}((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^{\perp}) \neq \emptyset$ if and only if $\mathfrak{V}_0(b_1, \ldots, b_n) = \mathfrak{D}_0((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^{\perp}) \neq \emptyset$; the conclusion follows.

i) $\Leftrightarrow$ iii): trivial. ■

It is easy to see that the condition ii) in the previous theorem is equivalent to the condition « C » of Quentel [Q]:

C Every finitely generated ideal such that its annihilator is (0) contains a non-zero–divisor.

In the general case a singular prime z-ideal is not necessarily a ζ-ideal even if $J(A) = 0$ and A satisfies the condition « C » as we shall show in 4.3.

3. Relations between $\operatorname{Spec}(A)$ and $\operatorname{Max}(Q(A))$.

We are now ready to begin the study of the map η introduced in the previous section.

3.1 LEMMA. *Let A be a subring of the regular ring R and R be a ring of quotients of A. For every finite subset $a_1, \ldots, a_n$ of A, one has* $(a_1, \ldots, a_n)^{\perp\perp} = \left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} R \cdot a_i\right) \cap A$.

PROOF. We have $\sum_{i=1}^{n} R \cdot a_i = R \cdot e$, for an idempotent e of R. Observe that $R \cdot e \cap A \subseteq (a_1, \ldots, a_n)^{\perp\perp}$ since $R \cdot (1-e) \supseteq (a_1, \ldots, a_n)^{\perp}$. Now let x belong to $A \setminus R \cdot e$. So $x \cdot (1-e) \neq 0$ and as R is a ring of quotients of A, there exists t belonging to A such that $x \cdot t(1-e) \in A$, $x \cdot t(1-e) \neq 0$. Hence $x \cdot xt(1-e) \neq 0$ otherwise $(xt(1-e))^2 = 0$. It follows that $x \in (a_1, \ldots, a_n)^{\perp\perp}$ since $xt(1-e) \in (a_1, \ldots, a_n)^{\perp} = A \cap \cap R \cdot (1-e)$. ■

3.2 LEMMA. *Let R and A be as above. An ideal I of A is of the form $J \cap A$ for an ideal J of R if and only if for every $a_1, \ldots, a_n \in I$ we have $(a_1, \ldots, a_n)^{\perp\perp} \subseteq I$.*

PROOF. Necessity: let $I = J \cap A$, $a_1, \ldots, a_n \in I$. The ideal K spanned by $a_1, \ldots, a_n$ in R is contained in J; furthermore $K \cap A = (a_1, \ldots, a_n)^{\perp\perp}$ by lemma 3.1.

Sufficiency: consider the ideal J spanned by I in R. Clearly $J \cap A \supseteq I$. Now take x belonging to $J \cap A$; then $x = \sum_{i=1}^{n} r_i a_i$ for certain $a_i \in A$, $r_i \in R$. By lemma 3.1 x belongs to $(a_1, \ldots, a_n)^{\perp\perp}$ which is contained in I by hypothesis. ■

3.3 THEOREM. *Let P belong to* Spec (A). *The following are equivalent:*

i) *P is a ζ-ideal;*

ii) *P belongs to* $\mathrm{cl}_{\mathcal{T}(A)}(\mathrm{Min}\,(A))$;

iii) *for every $b_1, \ldots, b_n \in P$, $a \in A \setminus P$, there exists $s \in (b_1, \ldots, b_n)^{\perp}$ such that $s \cdot a \neq 0$;*

iv) *for every $b_1, \ldots, b_n \in P$, $(b_1, \ldots, b_n)^{\perp\perp} \subseteq P$;*

v) *P belongs to $\eta(\mathrm{Max}\,(Q(A)))$;*

vi) *P belongs to ${}^{a}i(\mathrm{Max}\,(R))$ if R is a regular ring of quotients of A.*

PROOF. i) $\Rightarrow$ iv): take $b_1, \ldots, b_n \in P$, $s \in (b_1, \ldots, b_n)^{\perp\perp}$; then $\mathcal{V}(s) \supseteq \mathcal{D}((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^{\perp})$, hence s belongs to P.

iv) $\Rightarrow$ iii): trivial.

iii) $\Rightarrow$ ii): a neighborhood of P contains a set of the form $\mathcal{D}(a) \cap \mathcal{V}(b_1) \cap \ldots \cap \mathcal{V}(b_n)$, $a \notin P$, $b_1, \ldots, b_n \in P$. If s is given as in iii), take a minimal prime Q which does not contain $s \cdot a$; hence $Q \in \mathcal{D}(a) \cap \mathcal{V}(b_1) \cap \ldots \cap \mathcal{V}(b_n)$.

ii) $\Rightarrow$ i): let $b_1, \ldots, b_n$ belong to P, a belong to A, $\mathcal{V}(a) \supseteq \mathcal{D}((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^{\perp})$. If a does not belong to P, $\mathcal{D}(a) \cap \mathcal{V}(b_1) \cap \ldots \cap \mathcal{V}(b_n)$ is a neighborhood of P, and therefore it contains a minimal prime ideal Q. By lemma 2.2 Q is a ζ-ideal, so it needs to contain a.

iv) $\Rightarrow$ vi): by lemma 3.2 there exists an ideal I of R such that $I \cap A = P$; then there exists a prime one which contains I and does not meet $A \setminus P$.

vi) $\Rightarrow$ v): trivial.

v) $\Rightarrow$ iv): by lemma 3.2. ■

3.4 COROLLARY ([Me]). $\mathrm{Min}(A)$ *is compact if and only if* $\mathrm{Min}(A) = \eta(\mathrm{Max}(Q(A)))$. ■

Consider the following commutative diagram:

$$\begin{tikzcd} A \arrow[r, "j"] \arrow[d, "i"'] & \hat{A} \arrow[dl, "\hat{\imath}"] \\ Q(A) & \end{tikzcd}$$

where $\hat{A}$ is the universal regular ring associated to A, i and j are the canonical embeddings.

Put $\tilde{A} = \hat{\imath}(\hat{A})$. Plainly $\tilde{A}$ is the smallest regular subring of $Q(A)$ containing A, and it coincides with $A[\{a^{-1}: a \in A\}]$ ([G]). Put $\mathcal{C}(A) = \mathrm{cl}_{\mathcal{T}(A)}(\mathrm{Min}(A))$.

3.5 COROLLARY ([Me]). $\mathrm{Max}(\tilde{A})$ *is homeomorphic to* $\mathcal{C}(A)$.

PROOF. In the above diagram replace $Q(A)$ with $\tilde{A}$. Consider ${}^a j \circ {}^a\hat{\imath} = {}^a i: \mathrm{Max}(\tilde{A}) \to \mathcal{C}(A)$: ${}^a i$ is onto by 3.3 vi), ${}^a\hat{\imath}$ is $1-1$ and ${}^a j$ is $1-1$ onto; hence ${}^a i$, being $1-1$, onto and continuous between Hausdorff compact spaces, is a homeomorphism. ■

The following theorem will be useful later on:

3.6 THEOREM. *Using the above notations, we have*:

i) $\ker(\hat{\imath}) = \cap \{\hat{P}: P \in \mathcal{C}(A)\}$;

ii) $\ker(\hat{\imath}) = \cap \{\hat{P}: P \in \mathrm{Min}(A)\}$;

iii) $\hat{\imath}$ *is* $1-1$ *if and only if* $\mathcal{C}(A) = \mathcal{T}(A)$.

PROOF. i): $\ker(\hat{\imath}) = \hat{\imath}^{\leftarrow}[0] = \cap \{\hat{\imath}^{\leftarrow}[M]: M \in \mathrm{Max}(Q(A))\}$. The commutativity of the previous diagram ensures that $\hat{\imath}^{\leftarrow}[M] = (M \cap A)\hat{}$.

ii): follows from i) since $\mathrm{Min}(A)$ is dense in $\mathcal{C}(A)$.

iii): if $\hat{\imath}$ is $1-1$ we have $\mathrm{Max}(\tilde{A}) \simeq \mathrm{Max}(\hat{A})$; on the other hand $\mathrm{Max}(\tilde{A}) \simeq \mathcal{C}(A)$ by 3.5 and $\mathrm{Max}(\hat{A}) \simeq \mathcal{T}(A)$ (section 1). Conversely: $\ker(\hat{\imath}) = \cap \{\hat{P}: P \in \mathcal{T}(A)\} = \cap \{P: P \in \mathrm{Max}(\hat{A})\} = 0$. ■

For every idempotent e of $Q(A)$ put $I_e = A \cap eQ(A)$. We recall that the ideals I_e are exactly the annihilator ideals in A (1.5).

3.7 LEMMA. *For every ideal P belonging to* Min (A) *the following are equivalent*:

i) *there exist $M, N \in$* Max $(Q(A))$, $M \neq N$ *such that $P = M \cap \cap A = N \cap A$;*

ii) *there exists an idempotent $e \in Q(A)$ such that $I_e + I_{1-e} \subseteq P$;*

iii) *there exist two idempotents $e, f \in Q(A)$ such that $I_e + I_f \subseteq P$ and $eQ(A) + fQ(A) = Q(A)$.*

PROOF. i) $\Rightarrow$ ii): let e be an idempotent of $Q(A)$ belonging to $M \setminus N$; then $1 - e$ belongs to N, hence $I_e + I_{1-e} \subseteq P$.

ii) $\Rightarrow$ iii): trivial.

iii) $\Rightarrow$ i): let $S = A \setminus P$; S is a multiplicatively closed subset of $Q(A)$ which does not meet the ideals $eQ(A), fQ(A)$. Let M, N be prime ideals of $Q(A)$ containing respectively e and f, which do not meet S. M and N do not coincide since $eQ(A) + fQ(A) = Q(A)$, and $P = M \cap A = N \cap A$ since P is minimal. ■

Let B be a ring containing A, i the inclusion map of A in B; put $Y = {}^a i^{\leftarrow}\{\text{Min}(A)\} = \{M \in \text{Spec}(B) \colon M \cap A \in \text{Min}(A)\}$. Observe that ${}^a i(Y) = \text{Min}(A)$ and if B is a ring of quotients of A, Y is a dense subspace of Spec (B). Using the notations introduced in 1.0:

3.8 LEMMA. *Let I be an ideal of B. We have*:

$$\mathcal{V}_0(I \cap A) = {}^a i\{\mathcal{V}_Y(I)\}\,.$$

PROOF. Clearly $\mathcal{V}_0(I \cap A)$ contains ${}^a i\{\mathcal{V}_Y(I)\}$; for the converse take P belonging to $\mathcal{V}_0(I \cap A)$. There exists a prime $P' \in \text{Spec}(B)$ which contains I and does not meet $A \setminus P$: then $P' \cap A = P$ since P is minimal. ■

Remark that lemma 3.8 says that ${}^a i|_Y$ is a closed map. This fact becomes rather interesting in the case $B = Q(A)$ (hence ${}^a i = \eta$) since it is used to get some conditions equivalent to the injectivity of $\eta|_Y$.

3.9 THEOREM. *Let A be a ring, $Y = \eta^{\leftarrow}\{\text{Min}(A)\}$. The following are equivalent*:

i) $\mathrm{Min}(A)$ *is extremally disconnected*;

ii) *for every idempotent* $e \in Q(A)$, $\mathcal{V}_0(I_e)$ *is open*;

iii) *if* e, f *are idempotents of* $Q(A)$ *such that* $eQ(A) + fQ(A) = Q(A)$, *then* $\mathcal{V}_0(I_e + I_f) = \emptyset$;

iv) $\eta|_Y$ *is* $1-1$;

v) $\eta|_Y$ *is a homeomorphism of* Y *onto* $\mathrm{Min}(A)$;

vi) $\mathrm{Max}(Q(A))$ *is a compactification of* $\mathrm{Min}(A)$;

vii) $\mathrm{Max}(Q(A))$ *is the Stone-Čech compactification of* $\mathrm{Min}(A)$.

PROOF. i) $\Leftrightarrow$ ii): by 1.2.

ii) $\Leftrightarrow$ iii): by lemma 3.7, condition iii) is true if and only if it is verified with $f = 1 - e$; the conclusion follows by 1.2.

iii) $\Leftrightarrow$ iv): by 3.7.

iv) $\Leftrightarrow$ v): by 3.8.

v) $\Rightarrow$ vi): trivial since Y is dense in $\mathrm{Max}(Q(A))$.

vi) $\Rightarrow$ vii): $\mathrm{Max}(Q(A))$ is compact and extremally disconnected, hence it is the Stone-Čech compactification of any dense subset ([GJ] $6M$).

vii) $\Rightarrow$ i): [GJ] $6M$. ■

We conclude with a theorem which gives a condition equivalent to the injectivity of η.

3.10 LEMMA. *Let* R, S *be regular rings,* $R \subseteq S$, $E(R)$ *and* $E(S)$ *the sets of the idempotents of* R *and* S *respectively. Then* $E(R) = E(S)$ *if and only if the natural map* ${}^a i$: $\mathrm{Max}(S) \to \mathrm{Max}(R)$ *is a homeomorphism.*

PROOF. Necessity: it is enough to show that ${}^a i$ is $1-1$. Let M, N belong to $\mathrm{Max}(S)$, $M \neq N$. There exists an idempotent $e \in M \setminus N$, hence e belongs to $(M \cap R) \setminus (N \cap R)$.

Sufficiency: Let e be an idempotent of S. $V_S(e)$ is a clopen set in $\mathrm{Max}(S)$, hence ${}^a i[V_S(e)]$ is a clopen in $\mathrm{Max}(R)$; therefore ${}^a i[V_S(e)] = V_R(f)$, $f \in R$ so that $V_S(e) = V_S(f)$ which implies $e = f$. ■

3.11 PROPOSITION. *The following are equivalent*:

i) η *is* $1-1$;

ii) η: Max $(Q(A)) \to \mathcal{C}(A)$ *is a homeomorphism*;

iii) $\tilde{A}$ *contains* $E(Q(A))$.

PROOF. i) $\Leftrightarrow$ ii): trivial.

ii) $\Leftrightarrow$ iii): use 3.5 and 3.10. ■

4. Applications to $C(X)$.

Let X be a Tychonoff space, $C(X)$ its ring of real-valued continuous functions. The notion of ζ-ideal applied to $C(X)$ may be formulated by means of the topology of X. Hence this notion turns out to be similar to the one of z-ideal ([GJ]).

For f belonging to $C(X)$, call $Z(f)$ the zero-set of f, Coz (f) its complement; then putting $M_x = \{f \in C(X): f(x) = 0\}$ we have that $\vartheta[X] = \{M_x: x \in X\}$ is a dense subspace of Max $(C(X))$. Observe that for $f_1, \ldots, f_n$ belonging to $C(X)$, $(f_1, \ldots, f_n)^\perp = (f_1^2 + \ldots + f_n^2)^\perp$; furthermore $J(C(X)) = 0$, hence by proposition 2.3 I is a ζ-ideal if (and only if) for any g belonging to I and f belonging to $C(X)$ such that $V(f) \supseteq D(g^\perp)$ we have that f belongs to I; moreover every ζ-ideal is a z-ideal.

4.1 PROPOSITION. *For every ideal I of $C(X)$ the following are equivalent*:

i) *I is a ζ-ideal*;

ii) *if* $Z(f) \supseteq \operatorname{int}(Z(g))$ *and* $g \in I$ *then* $f \in I$.

PROOF. For every $f, g \in C(X)$ we have: $V(f) \supseteq D(g^\perp)$ if and only if $V(f) \cap \vartheta[X] \supseteq D(g^\perp) \cap \vartheta[X]$; then observe that $Z(f) = \{x \in X: M_x \in V(f) \cap \vartheta[X]\}$ and $\operatorname{int}(Z(g)) = \{x \in X: M_x \in D(g^\perp) \cap \vartheta[X]\}$. The conclusion follows. ■

We notice that, in view of the previous proposition, 2.4 may be expressed in a more significant way replacing $\mathfrak{Z}^0(C(X))$ with the family of open sets of X: $\{\operatorname{int}(Z(f)): f \in C(X)\}$.

It is easily seen that $C(X)$ satisfies the condition « C » of Quentel (2.5); so that every singular ideal is contained in a proper (prime) ζ-ideal. Moreover if P is a prime ideal of $C(X)$, the smallest ζ-ideal containing P is prime (see [GJ] 2.9).

One may wonder when ζ-ideals and z-ideals coincide; furthermore, since we have already remarked that a proper ζ-ideal must be singular, it is reasonable to ask when singular z-ideals and ζ-ideals coincide; we have:

4.2 THEOREM. *The following are equivalent*:

i) *every z-ideal is a ζ-ideal*;

ii) *every singular z-ideal is a ζ-ideal*;

iii) *every non-empty zero-set has non-empty interior*;

iv) $C(X) = K(C(X))$.

PROOF. i) $\Rightarrow$ ii): trivial. ii) $\Rightarrow$ iii): suppose there exists $f \in C(X)$ such that $Z(f) \neq \emptyset$, $\operatorname{int}(Z(f)) = \emptyset$ and take $x \in X \setminus Z(f)$. Consider the singular z-ideal I of the functions which vanish on $Z(f)$ and on a neighborhood of x: I is not a ζ-ideal since there exists a function g such that $g[Z(f)] = \{1\}$ and $Z(g)$ is a neighborhood of x: $g \notin I$ while $\operatorname{int}(Z(g)) = \operatorname{int}(Z(f \cdot g))$ and $f \cdot g$ belongs to I.

iii) $\Rightarrow$ i): let f belong to the z-ideal I and $Z(g) \supseteq \operatorname{int}(Z(f))$. We claim that $Z(g)$ contains $Z(f)$: otherwise there would exist a point $x \in Z(f) \setminus Z(g)$ and a function h such that $h[Z(g)] = \{1\}$, $h(x) = 0$; hence the interior of $Z(f^2 + h^2)$ (non-empty by hypothesis) is contained in $Z(g)$; but $Z(f^2 + h^2) \cap Z(g) = \emptyset$. Since I is a z-ideal, I contains g.

iii) $\Leftrightarrow$ iv): trivial; however see [FGL]. ∎

4.3. Theorem 4.2 does not explain the situation among the prime ideals: one may still think that the singular prime z-ideals are always ζ-ideals. The following example provides a negative answer.

EXAMPLE. Let $W^* = \{\sigma: \sigma \leqslant \omega_1\}$, ω_1 denoting the first uncountable ordinal, $I = [0, 1] \subseteq \mathbb{R}$; define $X = \{\mathbb{N} \times I\} \dot{\cup} W^*$ where $\mathbb{N} \times I$ has the product topology, $W^* \setminus \{\omega_1\}$ has its order topology and the filter $\mathcal{F}$ of neighborhoods of the point ω_1 is defined as follows: let $\mathcal{A}$ be a free ultrafilter on $\mathbb{N}$; U belongs to $\mathcal{F}$ if $U \cap W^*$ contains a tail of W^* and $\{n: U \cap \{\mathbb{N} \times I\}$ is a neighborhood of $(n, 0)\}$ belongs to $\mathcal{A}$. X is a σ-compact space.

Take $P = \{f \in C(X): \{n: f(n, 0) = 0\} \in \mathcal{A}\}$; we observe that any f belonging to P vanishes on a tail of W^*; hence, using the fact that

an ultrafilter is prime, we can say that P is a prime ideal. Clearly P is a singular z-ideal but it is not a ζ-ideal: in fact if f, g vanish on W^* and f takes the value x and g takes the value $1/n$ at the point (n, x), we have that f, g belong to $C(X)$, $\operatorname{int}(Z(f)) = \operatorname{int}(Z(g)) = W^* \setminus \{\omega_1\}$, and P contains f but it does not contain g. Finally we may remark that $\zeta^{\leftarrow}(\zeta(P))$ is the maximal ideal M_{ω_1} which is therefore the unique ζ-ideal containing P.

4.4 Remark. A positive answer to the previous question may be given in a certain class of spaces (larger than the class of perfectly normal spaces). In view of [HJ] 5.5, using corollary 3.4 and the characterization of minimal prime ideals, we may observe that the following are equivalent:

i) $\operatorname{Min}(C(X))$ is compact;

ii) for every $f \in C(X)$ there exists $f' \in C(X)$ such that $Z(f) \cup \cup Z(f') = X$ and $\operatorname{int}(Z(f) \cap Z(f')) = \emptyset$;

iii) every singular prime ideal is minimal.

In particular, singular prime z-ideals, prime ζ-ideals and singular prime ideals coincide if $\operatorname{Min}(C(X))$ is compact: e.g. if the support of each function of $C(X)$ is a zero-set (hence if X is basically disconnected) or if the closure of each open set in X is the support of a continuous function (see [HJ]); observe also that X is basically disconnected if and only if $C(X)$ is a Baer ring [AM]; on the other hand every Baer ring A satisfies condition iii), hence if $J(A) = 0$ singular prime z-ideals and prime ζ-ideals coincide.

In [W] R. Wiegand has provided necessary and sufficient conditions in order that $\hat{A}$ is a ring of quotients of A. We can enrich his theorem with some more conditions and we shall show that this situation is never verified in $C(X)$ unless $C(X)$ is regular itself.

4.5 Theorem. *The following are equivalent*:

i) *$\hat{A}$ is a ring of quotients of A*;

ii) *there exists a homomorphism $\varphi\colon \tilde{A} \to \hat{A}$ which is the identity on A*;

iii) *$\hat{A}$ is isomorphic to $\tilde{A}$*;

iv) $\mathfrak{C}(A) = \mathfrak{T}(A)$;

v) *every prime ideal is a ζ-ideal*;

vi) *for every finitely generated ideal I, the radical of I is the intersection of the minimal prime ideals containing I.*

PROOF. i) $\Rightarrow$ ii): we have $\tilde{A} \subseteq \hat{A} \subseteq Q(A)$.

ii) $\Rightarrow$ iii): let ψ be a homomorphism from A into a regular ring R, $\hat{\psi}$ its extension to $\hat{A}$; $\hat{\psi} \circ \varphi$ extends ψ to $\tilde{A}$, therefore $\tilde{A}$ satisfies the universal property, hence it is isomorphic to $\hat{A}$.

iii) $\Rightarrow$ i): trivial.

iii) $\Leftrightarrow$ iv): by theorem 3.6.

iv) $\Leftrightarrow$ v): by theorem 3.3.

v) $\Rightarrow$ vi): take $I = (b_1, \ldots, b_n)$, $a \notin \sqrt{I}$; there exists a prime P containing I and not containing a. Since P is a ζ-ideal, given s as in 3.3 iii), there exists a minimal prime which does not contain $s \cdot a$.

vi) $\Rightarrow$ v): let P be a prime, $b_1, \ldots, b_n \in P$, $a \in A$, $\mathcal{V}(a) \supseteq \mathcal{D}((b_1, \ldots, b_n)^{\perp})$. Since the minimal prime ideals are ζ-ideals, a belongs to every minimal prime ideal containing $b_1, \ldots, b_n$ hence to the radical of the ideal generated by $b_1, \ldots, b_n$. ■

4.5 *bis* THEOREM. *Let X be a Tychonoff space. If $A = C(X)$ the following conditions are equivalent to the conditions* i)-vi) *of theorem* 4.5:

vii) *every prime is a z-ideal*;

viii) *X is a P-space.*

PROOF. v) $\Rightarrow$ vii): by theorem 2.3.

vii) $\Rightarrow$ viii): let f belong to $C(X)$, $Z(f) \neq \emptyset$. Define

$$g(x) = \exp\left(-1/f^2(x)\right) \quad \text{for} \quad x \notin Z(f), \quad g(x) = 0 \text{ for } x \in Z(f) .$$

Clearly g belongs to $C(X)$. Since every prime is a z-ideal, there exist $n \in \mathbf{N}$, $h \in C(X)$ such that $f^n = h \cdot g$. If $Z(f)$ is not open, there exists a net of points of $\operatorname{Coz}(f)$, say x_λ, $\lambda \in \Lambda$, convergent to a point $x \in Z(f)$. But

$$\lim_{\lambda \in \Lambda} h(x_\lambda) = \lim_{\lambda \in \Lambda} \frac{f^n(x_\lambda)}{g(x_\lambda)} = \infty , \qquad \text{absurd} .$$

viii) $\Rightarrow$ i): $C(X)$ is regular. ■

The condition vii) is not equivalent to the ones of theorem 4.5 in the general case, as one may easily verify by looking at the ring **Z**. At last we notice that R. Wiegand has provided an example of a ring which satisfies the conditions of theorem 4.5 without being regular.

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Manoscritto pervenuto in redazione il 18 dicembre 1979.