

ESSENTIALLY NORMAL OPERATOR + COMPACT OPERATOR = STRONGLY IRREDUCIBLE OPERATOR

CHUNLAN JIANG, SHUNHUA SUN, AND ZONGYAO WANG

ABSTRACT. It is shown that given an essentially normal operator T with connected spectrum, there exists a compact operator K such that $T+K$ is strongly irreducible.

1. INTRODUCTION

Let $\mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$ denote the algebra of all bounded linear operators acting on a complex, separable, infinite dimensional Hilbert space \mathcal{H} . An operator $T \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$ is said to be *strongly irreducible* if it does not commute with any nontrivial idempotent [10], [15]. The strong irreducibility is invariant under similarity. Chun-lan Jiang and Zong-yao Wang proved that for each operator T with connected spectrum $\sigma(T)$, there exists a strongly irreducible operator A and a sequence $\{X_n\}$ of invertible operators such that $\|X_n A X_n^{-1} - T\| \rightarrow 0$ ($n \rightarrow \infty$) [13]. This result strengthened the following result of D. A. Herrero and Chun-lan Jiang: The norm closure of the set of strongly irreducible operators = the set of the operators with connected spectra.

An operator $T \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$ is *irreducible* if it does not commute with any nontrivial orthogonal projection. P. R. Halmos proved that for each $T \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$ and $\epsilon > 0$, there exists a K compact with $\|K\| < \epsilon$ such that $T + K$ is irreducible [11]. It is obvious that if $\sigma(T)$ is not connected, then for each K compact, $T + K$ is still strongly reducible. Thus D. A. Herrero asked the following questions in personal communications:

1. Given $T \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$ with connected $\sigma(T)$, does there exist a compact operator K such that $T + K$ is strongly irreducible?
2. Given an essentially normal operator T with connected $\sigma(T)$, does there exist a compact operator K such that $T + K$ is strongly irreducible? An operator T is *essentially normal* if $T^*T - TT^*$ is compact, where T^* denotes the dual of T .

This article proves that the second question has an affirmative answer.

Main Theorem. *Given an essentially normal operator T with connected spectrum, there exists a compact operator K such that $T + K$ is strongly irreducible.*

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If we can construct a strongly irreducible essentially normal operator S such that $\sigma_e(S) = \sigma_e(T)$ and $\text{ind}(\lambda - S) = \text{ind}(\lambda - T)$ for all $\lambda \notin \sigma_e(S)$, then by Brown-Douglas-Fillmore Theorem S is unitarily equivalent to some compact perturbation $T + K$ of T . Thus, the proof of the main theorem is reduced to constructing a strongly irreducible essentially normal operator with the right spectral picture. A more interesting question is if we can manage to obtain a small compact perturbation in the main theorem. Here the Brown-Douglas-Fillmore Theorem does not work. We have to develop more special techniques. In another paper, the authors and Y. Q. Ji have obtained the following result.

Theorem (J-J-W). *Given an essentially normal operator T with connected spectrum. If $\text{ind}(\lambda I - T) > 0$ for all $\lambda \in \rho_F(T)$, then for each $\epsilon > 0$, there exists K compact with $\|K\| < \epsilon$ such that $T + K$ is strongly irreducible.*

2. PREPARATION

In what follows, $T \in (\text{SI})$ means that T is a strongly irreducible operator on its acting space and Ω always denotes a bounded, connected open set in \mathbb{C} . Recall that for natural number n , $\mathcal{B}_n(\Omega)$, the set of Cowen-Douglas operators of index n , is the set of all operators B on \mathcal{H} satisfying

- (i) $\sigma(B) \supset \Omega$;
- (ii) $\text{nul}(\lambda - B) = \text{ind}(\lambda - B) = n$ ($\lambda \in \Omega$);
- (iii) $\bigvee \{\ker(\lambda - B) : \lambda \in \Omega\} = \mathcal{H}$ [5], [6];

Note that (iii) can be replaced by (iii)' [6]:

- (iii)' $\bigvee \{\ker(\lambda_0 - B)^k : k = 1, 2, \dots\} = \mathcal{H}$ for each $\lambda_0 \in \Omega$.

Also note that each operator B in $\mathcal{B}_1(\Omega)$ is strongly irreducible [6], and recall that if $N(\Omega)$ is the “multiplication by λ ” operator acting on $L^2(\Omega)$ and $N_+(\Omega)$, the Bergman operator, is the restriction of $N(\Omega)$ to $L_a^2(\Omega)$, the subspace of $L^2(\Omega)$ spanned by the rational functions with poles outside $\bar{\Omega}$, then

- (i) $\mathcal{A}'(N_+(\Omega)) = \mathcal{H}^\infty(\Omega)$ [12] and $N_+(\Omega)$ is subnormal and essentially normal, where $\mathcal{A}'(N_+(\Omega))$ denotes the commutant of $N_+(\Omega)$;
- (ii) If $N = N_+(\Omega^*)^*$, then $N \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega)$, $\sigma_l(N) = \sigma(N) = \bar{\Omega}$, $\sigma_e(N) = \sigma_r(N) = \partial\bar{\Omega}$, where $\Omega^* = \{\lambda \in \mathbb{C} : \bar{\lambda} \in \Omega\}$ and $\partial\bar{\Omega}$ denotes the boundary of $\bar{\Omega}$.

Given $A, B \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$, the Rosenblum operator $\tau_{AB} \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}))$ is defined by $\tau_{AB}(X) = AX - XB$. It is well known that

- (i) $\sigma(\tau_{AB}) = \sigma(A) - \sigma(B)$;
- (ii) τ_{AB} is surjective if and only if $\sigma_r(A) \cap \sigma_l(B) = \emptyset$ [12].

Lemma 2.1 ([13, Lemma 2]). *Let $A, B \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$. Assume that*

$$\mathcal{H} = \bigvee \{\ker(\lambda - B)^k : \lambda \in \Gamma, k \geq 1\}$$

for certain subset Γ of the point spectrum $\sigma_p(B)$ of B and $\sigma_p(A) \cap \Gamma = \emptyset$; then $\ker \tau_{AB} = \{0\}$.

Lemma 2.2. *Given $A \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega)$ and $\lambda_0 \in \Omega$, then there exist an ONB $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$ of \mathcal{H} and $r > 0$ such that*

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_0 & a_{12} & a_{13} & \dots \\ & \lambda_0 & a_{23} & \dots \\ & & \lambda_0 & \dots \\ 0 & & & \dots \end{pmatrix} \begin{matrix} e_1 \\ e_2 \\ e_2 \\ \vdots \end{matrix}$$

and $|a_{k,k+1}| > r > 0$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$).

Proof. Assume that $e_1 \in \ker(A - \lambda_0)$ and $\|e_1\| = 1$. Let B be the right inverse of $A - \lambda_0$. Since $\ker B^k = \{0\}$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$) and $e_1 \notin \text{ran } B$, $\{e_1, Be_1, B^2e_1, \dots\}$ is linearly independent. Since $B^{k-1}e_1 \in \ker(A - \lambda_0)^k$ and $\text{nul}(A - \lambda_0)^k = k$, $\ker(A - \lambda_0)^k = \bigvee \{e_1, Be_1, B^2e_1, \dots, B^{k-1}e_1\}$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$). Since $\bigvee \{\ker(A - \lambda_0)^k, k = 1, 2, \dots\} = \mathcal{H}$, $\bigvee \{B^k e_1 : k = 0, 1, 2, \dots\} = \mathcal{H}$. Let $\{e_k\}_{k=1}^\infty$ be the Gram-Schmidt orthonormalization of $\{B^k e_1\}_{k=0}^\infty$. Then A has an upper triangular matrix representation

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_0 & a_{12} & a_{13} & \dots \\ & \lambda_0 & a_{23} & \dots \\ & & \lambda_0 & \dots \\ 0 & & & \dots \end{pmatrix}$$

with respect to the ONB $\{e_k\}_{k=1}^\infty$. Note that $A - \lambda_0$ is bounded from below; thus there exists $r > 0$ such that $\|(A - \lambda_0)y\| \geq r\|y\|$ for each $y \in [e_1]^\perp$. Set $x_k = a_{k,k+1}e_k$ and $x_k^1 = -\sum_{i=1}^{k-1} a_{i,k+1}e_i$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$). Since $A - \lambda_0$ is onto, there is a vector $y_k \in \bigvee \{e_i : i = 2, 3, \dots, k\}$ such that $x_k^1 = (A - \lambda_0)y_k$. Thus $x_k = (A - \lambda_0)(e_{k+1} + y_k)$ and

$$\begin{aligned} |a_{k,k+1}| &= \|x_k\| = \|(A - \lambda_0)(e_{k+1} + y_k)\| \\ &\geq r\|e_{k+1} + y_k\| \\ &= r\sqrt{\|e_{k+1}\|^2 + \|y_k\|^2} \geq r \quad (k = 1, 2, \dots). \quad \square \end{aligned}$$

Lemma 2.3. *Let $A_1 \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega)$ and let n be a natural number. Given $\epsilon > 0$, there exist $A_k \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega)$ ($k = 2, 3, \dots, n$) and K_k compact with $\|K_k\| < \frac{\epsilon}{2^k}$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots, n-1$) such that $A_k = A_{k-1} + K_{k-1}$ ($k = 2, 3, \dots, n$), $\ker \tau_{A_i A_j} = \{0\}$ ($i < j$) and A_k ($k = 1, 2, \dots, n$) admits an upper triangular representation with respect to an ONB $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$ of \mathcal{H} .*

Proof. Let λ_0 be in Ω . From Lemma 2.2, A_1 admits an upper triangular matrix of the form

$$A_1 = \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_0 & a_{12}^1 & a_{13}^1 & \dots \\ & \lambda_0 & a_{23}^1 & \dots \\ & & \lambda_0 & \dots \\ 0 & & & \dots \end{pmatrix} \begin{matrix} e_1 \\ e_2 \\ e_2 \\ \vdots \end{matrix}$$

with respect to an ONB $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$ of \mathcal{H} and $|a_{k,k+1}^1| > r > 0$ for some $r > 0$. Fix a natural number N so that $\|a_k A_1\| < \frac{\epsilon}{2}$ ($k > N$), where $\binom{k+1}{k}^{1/2} = 1 + a_k$.

Set

$$A_2 = \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_0 & a_{12}^2 & a_{13}^2 & \cdots \\ & \lambda_0 & a_{23}^2 & \cdots \\ & & \lambda_0 & \cdots \\ 0 & & & \cdots \end{pmatrix} \begin{matrix} e_1 \\ e_2 \\ e_2 \\ \vdots \end{matrix}$$

with respect to the ONB $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$, where

$$a_{k,k+1}^2 = \begin{cases} a_{k,k+1}^1, & k \leq N; \\ \left(\frac{k+1}{k}\right)^{1/2} a_{k,k+1}^1, & k > N, \end{cases}$$

$$a_{ij}^2 = a_{ij}^1, \quad j \neq i+1.$$

Thus $A_2 = A_1 + K_1$ and K_1 is compact with $\|K_1\| < \frac{\epsilon}{2}$. Since $a_{k,k+1}^2 \neq 0$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$), $\dim \ker(A_2 - \lambda_0)^* = 0$ and $\bigvee \{\ker(A_2 - \lambda_0)^k : k = 1, 2, \dots\} = \mathcal{H}$. Thus $A_2 \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega)$. If $X \in \ker \tau_{A_1 A_2}$, then $(A_1 - \lambda_0)X = X(A_2 - \lambda_0)$. From $(A_1 - \lambda_0)X e_1 = X(A_2 - \lambda_0)e_1 = 0$ and $\ker(A_1 - \lambda_0) = \bigvee \{e_1\}$, $X e_1 = x_{11}e_1$ for some number x_{11} . Since $(A_1 - \lambda_0)^2 X e_2 = 0$, $X e_2 \in \bigvee \{e_1, e_2\}$, i.e. $X e_2 = x_{12}e_1 + x_{22}e_2$. In general, we can prove that $X e_k = \sum_{i=1}^k x_{ik}e_i$, i.e. X admits an upper triangular matrix representation with respect to the ONB $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$. Computations show that

$$x_{kk} = \frac{\prod_{i=1}^{k-1} a_{i,i+1}^2}{\prod_{i=1}^{k-1} a_{i,i+1}^1} x_{11} = \begin{cases} \left(\frac{k}{N+1}\right)^{1/2} x_{11} & (k > N), \\ x_{11} & (k \leq N). \end{cases}$$

Since $|x_{k,k}| \leq \|X\|$, $x_{k,k} = 0$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$).

Similarly,

$$x_{k,k+1} = \frac{a_{k,k+1}^2 \prod_{i=2}^{k-1} a_{i,i+1}^2}{a_{12}^1 \prod_{i=2}^{k-1} a_{i,i+1}^1} x_{12} = \begin{cases} \frac{a_{k,k+1}^2}{a_{12}^1} \left(\frac{k}{N+1}\right)^{1/2} x_{12} & (k > N), \\ \frac{a_{k,k+1}^2}{a_{12}^1} x_{12} & (k \leq N). \end{cases}$$

Since $|a_{k,k+1}^2| > r > 0$ and $|x_{k,k+1}| \leq \|X\|$, $x_{k,k+1} = 0$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$). The same argument shows that $x_{ij} = 0$ ($j - i \geq 2$), i.e. $X = 0$ and $\ker \tau_{A_1 A_2} = \{0\}$.

Define A_3, \dots, A_n inductively such that $A_k = A_{k-1} + K_{k-1}$ where K_k is compact with $\|K_k\| < \frac{\epsilon}{2^k}$. The similar arguments indicate that $\{A_k\}_{k=1}^n$, $\{K_k\}_{k=1}^{n-1}$ satisfy the requirements of the lemma. \square

Lemma 2.4. *Let $\{A_k\}_{k=1}^n$ be given in Lemma 2.3 and let $\epsilon > 0$; then there exists $Q_{k,k-1}$ compact with $\|Q_{k,k-1}\| < \epsilon$ such that $Q_{k,k-1} \notin \text{ran } \tau_{A_k A_{k-1}}$ ($k = 2, 3, \dots, n$).*

Proof. Set

$$Q_{21} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & a_1 & 0 & 0 & \cdots \\ 0 & 0 & a_2 & 0 & \cdots \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & a_3 & \cdots \\ & & & & \ddots \\ & & & & & \ddots \end{pmatrix} \begin{matrix} e_1 \\ e_2 \\ e_3 \\ \vdots \end{matrix}$$

where $a_i = \frac{\epsilon}{2\sqrt{i}\|A_2\|^2} a_{i,i+1}^2$ ($i = 1, 2, \dots$); then Q_{21} is compact with $\|Q_{21}\| < \epsilon$. If $X \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$ satisfies $A_2 X - X A_1 = Q_{21}$, then

$$(A_2 - \lambda_0)X e_1 = Q_{21}e_1 + X(A_1 - \lambda_0)e_1 = 0.$$

Thus $Xe_1 \in \ker(A_2 - \lambda_0)$, i.e. $Xe_1 = x_{11}e_1$ for some number x_{11} . Again, $(A_2 - \lambda_0)Xe_2 = a_1e_1 + X(A_1 - \lambda_0)e_2$ and $Xe_2 \in \ker(A_2 - \lambda_0)^2$. i.e. $Xe_2 = x_{12}e_1 + x_{22}e_2$. In general, $Xe_k = x_{1k}e_1 + \cdots + x_{kk}e_k$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$) and X has an upper triangular form with respect to $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$.

Computations indicate that

$$\begin{aligned} x_{22} &= \frac{a_{12}^1}{a_{12}^2}x_{11} + \frac{a_1}{a_{12}^2}, \\ x_{33} &= \frac{a_{12}^1 a_{23}^1}{a_{12}^2 a_{23}^2}x_{11} + \frac{a_1}{a_{12}^2} \cdot \frac{a_{23}^1}{a_{23}^2} + \frac{a_2}{a_{23}^2}, \\ &\dots\dots\dots \\ x_{k+1,k+1} &= \prod_{i=1}^k \frac{a_{i,i+1}^1}{a_{i,i+1}^2}x_{11} + \frac{a_1}{a_{12}^2} \prod_{i=2}^k \frac{a_{i,i+1}^1}{a_{i,i+1}^2} + \frac{a_2}{a_{23}^2} \prod_{i=3}^k \frac{a_{i,i+1}^1}{a_{i,i+1}^2} + \cdots \\ &\quad + \frac{a_{k-1}}{a_{k-1,k}^2} \frac{a_{k,k+1}^1}{a_{k,k+1}^2} + \frac{a_k}{a_{k,k+1}^2}. \end{aligned}$$

From the proof of Lemma 2.3,

$$a_{i,i+1}^2 = \begin{cases} a_{i,i+1}^1, & i \leq N; \\ \left(\frac{i+1}{i}\right)^{1/2} a_{i,i+1}^1, & i > N. \end{cases}$$

Thus, if $k > N$ we have

$$\prod_{j=i}^k \frac{a_{j,j+1}^1}{a_{j,j+1}^2} = \begin{cases} \prod_{j=N+1}^k \left(\frac{j}{j+1}\right)^{1/2} = \left(\frac{N+1}{k+1}\right)^{1/2}, & i \leq N; \\ \prod_{j=i}^k \left(\frac{j}{j+1}\right)^{1/2} = \left(\frac{i}{k+1}\right)^{1/2}, & i > N, \end{cases}$$

and

$$\frac{a_i}{a_{i,i+1}^2} \prod_{j=i}^k \frac{a_{j,j+1}^1}{a_{j,j+1}^2} \geq \frac{\epsilon}{2\|A_2\|(k+1)^{1/2}} \quad (i = 2, \dots, k).$$

Thus $|x_{k+1,k+1}| \geq \frac{k\epsilon}{2\|A_2\|(k+1)^{1/2}} \rightarrow \infty$ ($k \rightarrow \infty$). The contradiction indicates that $Q_{21} \notin \text{ran } \tau_{A_2 A_1}$. By the same arguments we can prove the conclusion for $k = 3, \dots, n$. \square

Lemma 2.5. *Let $A_1 \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega)$ and let n be a natural number, $\epsilon > 0$; then there exist $\bar{A}(\Omega) \in (SI)$, K , $Q(\Omega)$ compact with $\|K\| < \epsilon$ and $\|Q(\Omega)\| < \epsilon$ such that*

$$\bar{A}(\Omega) = A_1^{(n-1)} + K \in \mathcal{B}_{n-1}(\Omega), \quad Q(\Omega) \notin \text{ran } \tau_{\bar{A}(\Omega), A_1}$$

and $\ker \tau_{A_1, \bar{A}(\Omega)} = \{0\}$.

Proof. Assume that A_2, \dots, A_n are given in Lemma 2.3 such that

$$A_k = A_{k-1} + K_{k-1} = A_1 + \sum_{i=1}^{k-1} K_i = A_1 + K'_k.$$

Thus K'_k is compact with $\|K'_k\| < \epsilon$. Assume that $Q_{2,1}, \dots, Q_{n,n-1}$ are given in Lemma 2.4 such that $Q_{k,k-1}$ is compact with $\|Q_{k,k-1}\| < \epsilon$ and $Q_{k,k-1} \notin \text{ran } \tau_{A_k A_{k-1}}$ ($k = 2, 3, \dots, n$).

Set

$$\bar{A}(\Omega) = \begin{pmatrix} A_n & Q_{n,n-1} & & & \\ & A_{n-1} & Q_{n-1,n-2} & & \\ & & A_{n-2} & \ddots & \\ & & & \ddots & Q_{3,2} \\ 0 & & & & A_2 \end{pmatrix}$$

on $\mathcal{H}^{(n-1)}$. Then $\bar{A}(\Omega) = A_1^{(n-1)} + K$, where

$$K = \begin{pmatrix} K'_n & Q_{n,n-1} & & & \\ & K'_{n-1} & Q_{n-1,n-2} & & \\ & & K'_{n-2} & \ddots & \\ & & & \ddots & Q_{3,2} \\ 0 & & & & K'_2 \end{pmatrix}$$

Thus it is obvious that K is compact with $\|K\| < \epsilon$.
Suppose that $P \in \mathcal{A}'(\bar{A}(\Omega))$ is an idempotent and

$$P = \begin{pmatrix} P_{nn} & \cdots & P_{n2} \\ & \cdots & \\ P_{2n} & \cdots & P_{22} \end{pmatrix} \begin{matrix} \mathcal{H} \\ \vdots \\ \mathcal{H} \end{matrix}$$

Then $P\bar{A}(\Omega) = \bar{A}(\Omega)P$ implies that

$$P_{2n}A_n = A_2P_{2n}.$$

Since $\ker \tau_{A_2A_n} = \{0\}$, $P_{2n} = 0$. By the same argument we can prove

$$P_{ij} = 0 \quad (i < j).$$

Thus $P_{ii} \in \mathcal{A}'(A_i)$ ($i = 2, \dots, n$). Since each $\mathcal{B}_1(\Omega)$ operator is in (SI), $P_{ii} = \delta_i I$, where $\delta_i = 0$ or 1 and I is the identity of \mathcal{H} . Assume that $\delta_n = 0$ (if $\delta_n = 1$, consider $I^{(n-1)} - P$); then

$$P_{n,n-1}A_{n-1} = A_nP_{n,n-1} + \delta_{n-1}Q_{n,n-1}.$$

Since $Q_{n,n-1} \notin \text{ran } \tau_{A_nA_{n-1}}$, $\delta_{n-1} = 0$. Similarly $\delta_i = 0$ ($i = 2, 3, \dots, n-2$). Thus $P = 0$ and $\bar{A}(\Omega) \in (\text{SI})$. It is a routine exercise to check that $\bar{A}(\Omega) \in \mathcal{B}_{n-1}(\Omega)$.

Set

$$Q(\Omega) = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \vdots \\ 0 \\ Q_{21} \end{pmatrix} \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}, \mathcal{H}^{(n-1)}).$$

If $X \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}, \mathcal{H}^{(n-1)})$ satisfies $\bar{A}(\Omega)X - XA_1 = Q(\Omega)$ and assuming that

$$X = \begin{pmatrix} X_1 \\ \vdots \\ X_{n-1} \end{pmatrix},$$

then $A_2X_{n-1} - X_{n-1}A_1 = Q_{21}$, i.e. $Q_{21} \in \text{ran } \tau_{A_2A_1}$. Thus $Q(\Omega) \notin \text{ran } \tau_{\bar{A}(\Omega)A_1}$.

If $Y \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}^{(n-1)}, \mathcal{H})$ satisfies $A_1 Y = Y \bar{A}(\Omega)$ and assume that

$$Y = (Y_1, Y_2, \dots, Y_{n-1}).$$

Since $\ker \tau_{A_i A_j} = \{0\}$ ($1 \leq i < j \leq n-1$), $Y_i = 0$ ($i = 1, 2, \dots, n-1$), i.e. $\ker \tau_{A_1 \bar{A}(\Omega)} = \{0\}$. \square

Lemma 2.6. *Given $A, B \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$. Let $\Gamma = \{a_n\}_{n=1}^\infty \subset \sigma_p(A)$ and $\beta \in \sigma_p(B)$ satisfy*

- (i) $\beta \notin \sigma_p(A)$ but $\beta \in \bar{\Gamma}$;
- (ii) $\dim \ker(A - a_n) < \infty$ ($n = 1, 2, \dots$), $\dim \ker(B - \beta) < \infty$;
- (iii) $\bigvee \{\ker(A - a_n) : n = 1, 2, \dots\} = \bigvee \{\ker(B - \beta)^n : n = 1, 2, \dots\} = \mathcal{H}$.

Then for each $\epsilon > 0$, there exists K compact with $\|K\| < \epsilon$ such that $K \notin \text{ran } \tau_{AB}$.

Proof. From (ii), (iii), there is an ONB $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$ of \mathcal{H} such that

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} a_1 & & & \\ & a_2 & & * \\ & & \ddots & \\ 0 & & & \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} e_1 \\ e_2 \\ \vdots \\ \vdots \end{pmatrix},$$

$$UBU^* = B' = \begin{pmatrix} \beta & & & \\ & \beta & & * \\ & & \ddots & \\ 0 & & & \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} e_1 \\ e_2 \\ \vdots \\ \vdots \end{pmatrix}$$

where U is a unitary. Assume that subsequence $\{a_{n_k}\}_{k=1}^\infty$ of $\{a_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$ satisfies

$$|a_{n_k} - \beta| < \frac{1}{2^k} \quad (k = 1, 2, \dots).$$

Let $K' \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$ be defined by $K'e_n = \lambda_n e_n$, where

$$\lambda_n = \begin{cases} \frac{\epsilon}{2^k}, & \text{if } n = n_k \text{ for some } k; \\ 0, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Then K' is compact and $\|K'\| < \epsilon$. If $X \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$ satisfies $AX - XB' = K'$, then $(A - \beta)Xe_1 = X(B' - \beta)e_1 + K'e_1 \in \bigvee \{e_1\}$. Since $A - \beta$ is injective and upper triangular, $Xe_1 = x_{11}e_1$ for some number x_{11} . Similarly $(A - \beta)Xe_2 = X(B' - \beta)e_2 + K'e_2 \in \bigvee \{e_1, e_2\}$, and thus $Xe_2 = x_{12}e_1 + x_{22}e_2$. In general, $Xe_n = x_{1n}e_1 + \dots + x_{nn}e_n$ and X admits an upper triangular representation with respect to the ONB $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$. Computation shows that $x_{nn} = \frac{\lambda_n}{a_n - \beta}$ ($n = 1, 2, \dots$). Thus $|x_{n_k n_k}| \rightarrow \infty$ ($k \rightarrow \infty$). Therefore $K = K'U \notin \text{ran } \tau_{AB}$. \square

Lemma 2.7. *Let $A, K \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$ be given by $Ae_1 = 0$, $Ae_{n+1} = \frac{1}{n}e_n$ and $Ke_n = \frac{\epsilon}{2\sqrt{n}}e_n$ ($n = 1, 2, \dots$), where $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$ is an ONB of \mathcal{H} . Then K is compact with $\|K\| < \epsilon$ and $K \notin \text{ran } \tau_{AA^*}$.*

Proof. If $AX - XA^* = K$ for some $X \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H})$ and assuming that

$$X = \begin{pmatrix} x_{11} & x_{12} & \cdots \\ x_{21} & x_{22} & \cdots \\ \cdots & \cdots & \cdots \\ \cdots & \cdots & \cdots \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} e_1 \\ e_2 \\ \vdots \\ \vdots \end{pmatrix},$$

then $\frac{1}{n}(x_{n+1,n} - x_{n,n+1}) = \frac{\epsilon}{\sqrt{n}}$ and $|x_{n+1,n} - x_{n,n+1}| = \sqrt{n}\epsilon \rightarrow \infty$ ($n \rightarrow \infty$). Thus $K \notin \text{ran } \tau_{AA^*}$. \square

Lemma 2.8. *Given a domain Ω , there exists an essentially normal and co-subnormal operator N such that for each $\epsilon > 0$, there is K compact with $\|K\| < \epsilon$ satisfying*

- (i) $A(\Omega) = N + K \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega)$;
- (ii) $\sigma(A(\Omega)) = \bar{\Omega}$ and $\sigma_e(A) = \partial\Omega$;
- (iii) $\sigma_p(A(\Omega)) \cap \partial\bar{\Omega} = \emptyset$.

Proof. Let $N_+(\Omega_1^*)$ be the Bergman operator on $\mathcal{H}_0 = L_a^2(\Omega_1^*)$ and $S_0 = N_+(\Omega_1^*)^*$, where $\Omega_1 = \bar{\Omega}^0$. Denote $\sigma = \Omega_1 - \Omega$. Let $\{\mu_n\}_{n=1}^l$ ($0 \leq l \leq \infty$) be a dense subset of σ and let $\{\mathcal{H}_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$ be a sequence of Hilbert spaces and $\{e_k^n\}_{k=1}^\infty$ be an ONB of Hilbert space \mathcal{H}_n ($n = 0, 1, 2, \dots$). Define $A_n e_k^n = \frac{\epsilon}{(k!)^\pi} e_{k+1}^n = a_k^n e_{k+1}^n$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$) and $S_n = \mu_n I_n + A_n$, where I_n is the identity on \mathcal{H}_n ($n = 1, 2, \dots$). From a result of M. Cowen and R. G. Douglas [6], there is an analytic function $f : \Omega_1 \rightarrow \mathcal{H}_0$ such that $f(\lambda) \neq 0$ and

$$(S_0 - \lambda)f(\lambda) \equiv 0 \quad (\lambda \in \Omega_1).$$

Define

$$A(\Omega) = \begin{pmatrix} S_0 & & 0 \\ C_1 & S_1 & \\ C_2 & 0 & S_2 \\ \vdots & & \ddots \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \mathcal{H}_0 \\ \mathcal{H}_1 \\ \mathcal{H}_2 \\ \vdots \end{pmatrix}$$

with respect to $\mathcal{H} = \bigoplus_{i=0}^l \mathcal{H}_i$, where

$$C_n = \frac{\epsilon}{2^n \|f(\mu_n)\|} e_1^n \otimes f(\mu_n)^* \quad (n = 1, 2, \dots).$$

Then $A(\Omega) = N + K$, where

$$N = S_0 \oplus \left(\bigoplus_{n=1}^l \mu_n I_n \right)$$

is essentially normal and co-subnormal and

$$K = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & & 0 \\ C_1 & A_1 & \\ C_2 & 0 & A_2 \\ \vdots & & \ddots \end{pmatrix}$$

is compact with $\|K\| < \epsilon$.

Thus $\sigma(A(\Omega)) \supset \Omega_1$, $\text{ind}(\lambda - A(\Omega)) = 1$ ($\lambda \in \Omega_1$) and $\sigma_e(A(\Omega)) = \sigma_e(N) = \partial\Omega$. Since $\sigma_p(S_n^*) \cap \Omega = \emptyset$ ($n = 0, 1, 2, \dots$), $\ker(\lambda - A(\Omega))^* = 0$ ($\lambda \in \Omega_1$). Set

$$\begin{aligned} x(\lambda) = f(\lambda) \oplus & \left[-\frac{\epsilon(f(\lambda), f(\mu_1))}{2\|f(\mu_1)\|} \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^{k+1} a_1^1 \cdots a_{k-1}^1}{(\mu_1 - \lambda)^k} e_k^1 \right] \oplus \cdots \\ & \oplus \left[-\frac{\epsilon(f(\lambda), f(\mu_n))}{2^n \|f(\mu_n)\|} \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^{k+1} a_1^n \cdots a_{k-1}^n}{(\mu_n - \lambda)^k} e_k^n \right] \oplus \cdots. \end{aligned}$$

Then computation shows that $x(\lambda) \in \ker(A(\Omega) - \lambda)$ ($\lambda \in \Omega_1$).

Set $\bigvee \{x(\lambda) : \lambda \in \Omega\} = \mathcal{H}'$ and assume that $\bigoplus_{n=0}^l y_n \in \mathcal{H}'^\perp$, where $y_n \in \mathcal{H}_n$ and $y_n = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} b_k^n e_k^n$ ($n = 0, 1, 2, \dots$); then

$$\begin{aligned} (f(\lambda), y_0) = & \frac{\epsilon(f(\lambda), f(\mu_1))}{2\|f(\mu_1)\|} \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^{k+1} a_1^1 \cdots a_{k-1}^1 b_k^1}{(\mu_1 - \lambda)^k} + \cdots \\ & + \frac{\epsilon(f(\lambda), f(\mu_n))}{2^n \|f(\mu_n)\|} \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{a_1^n \cdots a_{k-1}^n b_k^n}{(\mu_n - \lambda)^k} + \cdots. \end{aligned}$$

Since $(f(\lambda), y_0)$ is analytic in Ω_1 (including μ_k ($k = 1, 2, \dots$)) and since $f(\mu_k) \neq 0$, $b_k^n = 0$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$; $n = 1, 2, \dots$). Therefore $\bigvee \{x(\lambda) : \lambda \in \Omega\} = \mathcal{H}$ and $A(\Omega) \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega)$.

If $\lambda \notin \bar{\Omega}$, then $\lambda \in \rho(N)$. Since $\lambda \notin \sigma_p(A(\Omega)^*)$, $\lambda \in \rho(A(\Omega))$ and $\sigma(A(\Omega)) = \bar{\Omega}$. Since $\sigma_p(S_0) \cap \partial\Omega_1 = \emptyset$ and since $\partial\Omega_1 \subset \rho(S_n)$ ($n = 1, 2, \dots$), $\sigma_p(A(\Omega)) \cap \partial\Omega_1 = \emptyset$. \square

Given a compact subset σ of C , consider the Sobolev space

$$W^{22}(\mathcal{D}) = \left\{ f \in L^2(\mathcal{D}, dA) : \begin{array}{l} \text{the distributional partial derivatives of first} \\ \text{and second order of } f \text{ belong to } L^2(\mathcal{D}, dA) \end{array} \right\},$$

where $\mathcal{D} = (a, b)^2 \supset \sigma$ and dA denotes the planar Lebesgue measure. It is well known that $W^{22}(\mathcal{D})$ is a Hilbert space of continuous functions (by Sobolev's embedding theorem) under the norm

$$\|f\|_{W^{22}(\mathcal{D})} = \left(\int_{\mathcal{D}} \sum_{|\alpha| \leq 2} |D^\alpha f|^2 dA \right)^{1/2},$$

$W^{22}(\mathcal{D})$ is a regular Banach algebra with identity under pointwise multiplication and an equivalent norm whose maximal ideal space can be naturally identified with $\bar{\mathcal{D}}$ via "point evaluations".

Consider the subalgebra $W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D})$ of $W^{22}(\mathcal{D})$

$$W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D}) = \{f \in W^{22}(\mathcal{D}), f|_{\partial\mathcal{D}} \equiv 0\}.$$

For each $f \in W^{22}(\mathcal{D})$, the operator $M_f^0 \in \mathcal{L}(W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D}))$ is given by

$$M_f^0 g(\lambda) = f(\lambda)g(\lambda), \quad g \in W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D}).$$

Set $m_0(\sigma) = \{f \in W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D}) : f|_\sigma \equiv 0\}$. Then it is clear that $m_0(\sigma)$ leaves invariant under M_λ^0 , i.e.

$$M_\lambda^0 = \begin{pmatrix} M_\lambda^0|_{m_0(\sigma)} & * \\ 0 & M_\lambda^0(\sigma) \end{pmatrix}.$$

with respect to the decomposition $W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D}) = m_0(\sigma) \oplus [W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D}) \ominus m_0(\sigma)]$, where M_λ^0 is the operator “multiplication by λ ” and $M_\lambda^0(\sigma)$ is the compression of M_λ^0 to $W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D}) \ominus m_0(\sigma)$.

Lemma 2.9 ([20, Propositions 3.1, 3.2]). (i) $\sigma(M_\lambda^0(\sigma)) = \sigma_e(M_\lambda^0(\sigma)) = \sigma$;
(ii) $\text{nul}(\lambda - M_\lambda^0(\sigma)) = 0$ and $\text{nul}(\lambda - M_\lambda^0(\sigma))^* = 1$ ($\lambda \in \sigma$);
(iii) For each dense subset $\{\lambda_i\}_{i=1}^\infty$ of σ , $\bigvee_{i=1}^\infty \ker(\lambda_i - M_\lambda^0(\sigma))^* = W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D}) \ominus m_0(\sigma)$;
(iv) $M_\lambda^0(\sigma) \simeq \text{normal} + \text{compact}$;
(v) If σ is connected, then $M_\lambda^0(\sigma) \in (SI)$.

Denote $W_0(\sigma) = \{M_f^0(\sigma) : f \in W^{22}(\mathcal{D})\}$; then it is easy to see that $W_0(\sigma)$ is a strictly cyclic operator algebra, where $M_f^0(\sigma)$ is the compression of M_f^0 , the multiplication by function f , to the subspace $W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D}) \ominus m_0(\sigma)$. It was proved in [20] that $\mathcal{A}'(M_\lambda^0(\sigma)) = W_0(\sigma)$ and there is a vector $f_\mu \in \ker(M_\lambda^0(\sigma) - \mu)^*$ such that $(f, f_\mu) = f(\mu)$ for each $f \in W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D}) \ominus m_0(\sigma)$ and $\mu \in \sigma$. Thus, if P is an idempotent and $PM_\lambda^0(\sigma)^* = M_\lambda^0(\sigma)^*P$, then $Pf_\mu \in \ker(M_\lambda^0(\sigma) - \mu)^*$. Since $\dim \ker(M_\lambda^0(\sigma) - \mu)^* = 1$, $Pf_\mu = a(\mu)f_\mu$ for some number $a(\mu)$. Since $P^2 = P$, $a(\mu) = 0$ or 1 ($\mu \in \sigma$).

Lemma 2.10. Let Ω be a bounded domain, and let A be an operator on \mathcal{H} in $\mathcal{B}_1(\Omega)$ such that $\sigma(A) = \bar{\Omega}$ and $\sigma_p(A) \cap \partial\bar{\Omega} = \emptyset$. Also let σ be a compact subset of the plane such that the components $\{\sigma_n\}_{n \in \Lambda}$ of σ each have more than one point. Let σ' denote the union of those components of σ which intersect $\partial\bar{\Omega}$. Let \mathcal{D} be an open square containing σ^* , and set $B = M_\lambda^0(\sigma^*)^*$ acting on $\mathcal{H}_1 = W^{22}(\mathcal{D}) \ominus m_0(\sigma^*)$. Then given $\epsilon > 0$, there is a compact operator $D \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}_1, \mathcal{H})$ with $\|D\| < \epsilon$ such that $D \notin \text{ran } \tau_{AB}$ and having the property: if there are an idempotent P in $\mathcal{A}'(B)$ and an operator $X \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}_1, \mathcal{H})$ such that $AXP - XPB = DP$, then $a(\lambda)|_{\sigma'^*} = 0$ and $Pf_\mu = a(\mu)f_\mu$ for $\mu \in \sigma^*$.

Similarly, there is a compact operator $D' \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}, \mathcal{H}_1)$ with $\|D'\| < \epsilon$ such that $D' \notin \text{ran } \tau_{BA}$ and having the property: if there are an idempotent P in $\mathcal{A}'(B)$ and an operator $X \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}, \mathcal{H}_1)$ such that $BPX - PXA = PD$, then $a(\lambda)|_{\sigma'^*} = 0$ and $Pf_\mu = a(\mu)f_\mu$ for $\mu \in \sigma^*$.

Proof. Choose two sets $\{\lambda_i^1\}_{i=1}^\infty$ and $\{\mu_i^1\}_{i=1}^\infty$ of distinct complex numbers satisfying

- (i) $\{\lambda_i^1\}_{i=1}^\infty \subset \Omega$ and $\{\mu_i^1\}_{i=1}^\infty \subset \sigma'$;
- (ii) $\text{card}\{i, \mu_i^1 \in \sigma_n\} = \infty$ for each σ_n , $\sigma_n \cap \partial\bar{\Omega} \neq \emptyset$;
- (iii) $|\mu_i^1 - \lambda_i^1| < \frac{1}{2^i}$ ($i = 1, 2, \dots$).

Choose dense subsets $\{\lambda_k\}_{k=1}^\infty$ of Ω and $\{\mu_k\}_{k=1}^\infty$ of σ such that $\lambda_i^1 = \lambda_{2i}$, $\mu_i^1 = \mu_{2i}$ ($i = 1, 2, \dots$) and $\lambda_i \neq \lambda_j$, $\mu_i \neq \mu_j$ ($i \neq j$). Since $\bigvee \{\ker(\lambda_i - A) : i = 1, 2, \dots\} = \mathcal{H}$ and $\bigvee \{\ker(\mu_i - B) : i = 1, 2, \dots\} = \mathcal{H}_1$, it is completely apparent that A and B have upper triangular matrices with respect to ONB $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$ of \mathcal{H} and respectively, $\{f_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$ of \mathcal{H}_1 obtained by Gram-Schmidt orthonormalization of unit vectors in $\bigcup_{i=1}^\infty \{\ker(\lambda_i - A)\}$ and $\bigcup_{i=1}^\infty \{\ker(\mu_i - B)\}$ respectively

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_1 & & * \\ & \lambda_2 & \\ 0 & & \ddots \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} e_1 \\ e_2 \\ \vdots \end{pmatrix},$$

$$B = \begin{pmatrix} \mu_1 & & * \\ & \mu_2 & \\ 0 & & \ddots \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} f_1 \\ f_2 \\ \vdots \end{pmatrix}$$

and

$$UBU^* = B' = \begin{pmatrix} \mu_1 & & * \\ & \mu_2 & \\ 0 & & \ddots \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} e_1 \\ e_2 \\ \vdots \end{pmatrix}$$

where U is an unitary, $Uf_i = e_i$ ($i = 1, 2, \dots$).

Define $D'e_k = a_k e_k$ where

$$a_k = \begin{cases} \frac{\epsilon}{2i}, & \text{if } k = 2i, \\ 0, & \text{otherwise;} \end{cases}$$

then D' is compact with $\|D'\| < \epsilon$.

If $AX - XB' = D'$ for some X , then calculations show that X admits an upper triangular matrix with respect to $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$. Thus $|x_{2i,2i}| = \frac{a_{2i}}{|\lambda_{2i} - \mu_{2i}|} \geq \frac{2^{i-1}\epsilon}{i} \rightarrow \infty$ ($i \rightarrow \infty$), where $x_{2i,2i} = (Xe_{2i}, e_{2i})$ ($i = 1, 2, \dots$).

Therefore $D' \notin \text{ran } \tau_{AB'}$ and $D = D'U \notin \text{ran } \tau_{AB}$. Suppose that $P \in \mathcal{A}'(B)$ is an idempotent and $Pf_\mu = a(\mu)f_\mu$ ($\mu \in \sigma^*$). If the function $a(\mu)$ takes two values 1 and 0 on a σ_n^* , then there is a sequence $\{h_k\}_{k=0}^\infty \subset \sigma_n$ such that $h_k \rightarrow h_0$ ($k \rightarrow \infty$), $a(h_k) = 0$ ($k \geq 1$) and $a(h_0) = 1$ (if $a(h_k) = 1$ ($k \geq 1$) and $a(h_0) = 0$, consider the idempotent $I_1 - P$, where I_1 is the identity on \mathcal{H}_1).

Set $\mathcal{M} = \bigvee \{f_{\bar{\mu}} : a(\bar{\mu}) = 1, \mu \in \sigma\}$, $\mathcal{N} = \bigvee \{f_{\bar{\mu}} : a(\bar{\mu}) = 0, \mu \in \sigma\}$; then $f_{\bar{h}_k} \in \mathcal{M}$ ($k \geq 1$) and $f_{\bar{h}_0} \in \mathcal{N}$. Since $\mathcal{M} \subset \text{ran } P$ and $\mathcal{N} \subset \ker P$, $\mathcal{M} \cap \mathcal{N} = \{0\}$.

Since $f_{\bar{h}_k} \rightarrow f_{\bar{h}_0}$ weakly, $f_{\bar{h}_0} \in \mathcal{M} \cap \mathcal{N}$. This contradiction implies that $a(\mu)$ takes the same value (1 or 0) on each σ_n^* . Similar arguments show that $a(\mu)$ is continuous on σ_n^* .

Assume that P satisfies $AXP - XPB = DP$ for some $X \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}_1, \mathcal{H})$. Note that P has an upper triangular matrix representation

$$P = \begin{pmatrix} p_1 & & * \\ & p_2 & \\ 0 & & \ddots \end{pmatrix}$$

with respect to the ONB $\{f_i\}_{i=1}^\infty$. Thus XP admits an upper triangular matrix form

$$XP = \begin{pmatrix} y_1 & & * \\ & y_2 & \\ 0 & & \ddots \end{pmatrix}$$

with respect to the ONB's $\{e_i\}_{i=1}^\infty$ and $\{f_i\}_{i=1}^\infty$.

Suppose that $\sigma_n \cap \partial\bar{\Omega} \neq \emptyset$ and $a(\bar{\mu}) = 1$ ($\mu \in \sigma_n$). Also, suppose that $\mu_{i_j}^1 \in \sigma_n$ ($j = 1, 2, \dots$). Thus $AXP - XPB = DP$ indicates that $\lambda_{2i_j} y_{2i_j} - y_{2i_j} \mu_{2i_j} = a_{2i_j} p_{2i_j}$.

Since $a(\bar{\mu}_{2i_j}) = 1$, $p_{2i_j} = 1$. Thus $y_{2i_j} = \frac{2^{i_j-1}\epsilon}{i_j} \rightarrow \infty$ ($j \rightarrow \infty$). This contradiction implies that $a(\mu)|_{\sigma^*} = 0$. Same arguments work in the case that P satisfies $BPX - PXA = PD$ for some $X \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}, \mathcal{H}_1)$. \square

3. THE PROOF OF THE MAIN THEOREM

Let T be an essentially normal operator with connected spectrum. The spectral picture of T is determined by the sets

$$\begin{aligned}\rho_F^0(T) \cap \sigma(T) &:= \{\lambda \in \sigma(T) : \text{ind}(T - \lambda I) = 0\} = \bigcup_{i \in \Lambda_1} \Omega_{1i}, \\ \rho_F^+(T) &:= \{\lambda \in \sigma(T) : \text{ind}(T - \lambda I) > 0\} = \bigcup_{i \in \Lambda_2} \Omega_{2i}, \\ \rho_F^-(T) &:= \{\lambda \in \sigma(T) : \text{ind}(T - \lambda I) < 0\} = \bigcup_{i \in \Lambda_3} \Omega_{3i}, \\ \sigma &= \sigma(T) \setminus \text{int}[\rho_F(T)^-],\end{aligned}$$

where Ω_{1i} , Ω_{2i} , Ω_{3i} are connected components.

Choose $\bigcup_{l \in \Lambda_4} \sigma_l \subset \sigma$, where σ_l is a connected compact set consisting of more than one point, $\sigma_l \cap \sigma_{l'} = \emptyset$ ($l \neq l'$) and for each l , there exists at least one connected component Ω of $\rho_F(T) \cap \sigma(T)$ such that $\sigma_l \cap \partial\Omega \neq \emptyset$ and $\sigma = \overline{\bigcup_{l \in \Lambda_4} \sigma_l}$.

Construct operators $A(\Omega_{1i}) \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega_{1i})$ and $A(\Omega_{1i}^*) \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega_{1i}^*)$ (Lemma 2.8) with respect to Ω_{1i} and, respectively, Ω_{1i}^* ($i \in \Lambda_1$) and let the norm of the compact operator K (in Lemma 2.8) be so small that $\bigoplus_{i \in \Lambda_1} A(\Omega_{1i})$ and $\bigoplus_{i \in \Lambda_1} A(\Omega_{1i}^*)$ are sums of an essentially normal and co-subnormal operator and a compact operator. Set $C(\Omega_{1i}) = A(\Omega_{1i}^*)^*$ ($i \in \Lambda_1$).

For each domain Ω_{2j} , according to Lemma 2.5 and Lemma 2.8 construct operator $A(\Omega_{2j}) \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega_{2j})$ and compact operator $Q(\Omega_{2j})$. Let

$$n_j = \text{ind}(T - \lambda) \text{ for } \lambda \in \Omega_{2j}.$$

Using Lemma 2.8 construct operator

$$\bar{A}(\Omega_{2j}) \in \mathcal{B}_{n_j-1}(\Omega_{2j})$$

if $n_j > 1$ such that $Q(\Omega_{2j}) \notin \text{ran} \tau_{\bar{A}(\Omega_{2j})A(\Omega_{2j})}$ and $\ker \tau_{A(\Omega_{2j})\bar{A}(\Omega_{2j})} = \{0\}$ and the norm of $Q(\Omega_{2j})$ is so small that $\bigoplus Q(\Omega_{2j})$ is compact. Let the norm of the compact operator K in Lemma 2.8 and Lemma 2.5 be so small that $\bigoplus_{j \in \Lambda_2} A(\Omega_{2j})$ and $\bigoplus \bar{A}(\Omega_{2j})$ are sums of an essentially normal co-subnormal operator and a compact operator.

For each domain Ω_{3k} , according to Lemma 2.8 construct operators $A(\Omega_{3k}) \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega_{3k})$ and $A(\Omega_{3k}^*) \in \mathcal{B}_1(\Omega_{3k}^*)$. Let $n_k = \text{ind}(T - \lambda)$ for $\lambda \in \Omega_{3k}$. Using Lemma 2.5 and Lemma 2.8, construct operators $\bar{A}(\Omega_{3k}^*) \in \mathcal{B}_{|n_k|}(\Omega_{3k}^*)$ and $Q(\Omega_{3k}^*)$ compact if $|n_k| > 1$ such that

$$Q(\Omega_{3k}^*) \notin \text{ran} \tau_{\bar{A}(\Omega_{3k}^*)A(\Omega_{3k}^*)}, \quad \ker \tau_{A(\Omega_{3k}^*)\bar{A}(\Omega_{3k}^*)} = \{0\}$$

and the norm of $Q(\Omega_{3k}^*)$ is so small that $\bigoplus Q(\Omega_{3k}^*)$ is compact. Let the norm of the compact operator K in Lemma 2.5 and Lemma 2.8 is so small that $\bigoplus_{k \in \Lambda_3} A(\Omega_{3k})$, $\bigoplus_{k \in \Lambda_3} A(\Omega_{3k}^*)$ and $\bigoplus \bar{A}(\Omega_{3k}^*)$ are sums of an essentially normal co-subnormal operator and a compact operator.

Set $C(\Omega_{3k}) = A(\Omega_{3k}^*)^*$ and $\bar{C}(\Omega_{3k}) = \bar{A}(\Omega_{3k}^*)^*$.

Construct $B = [M_\lambda^0(\sigma^*)]^*$ on Hilbert space $W_0^{22}(\mathcal{D}) \ominus m_0(\sigma^*)$ where $\mathcal{D} = (a, b)^2 \supset \sigma^*$.

The first step:

Rearrange

$$\{A(\Omega_{2j}) : j \in \Lambda_2\} = \{A_k\}_{k=1}^{l_1} \quad (0 \leq l_1 \leq \infty)$$

and

$$\{A(\Omega_{1j}) : j \in \Lambda_1, A(\Omega_{3k}); k \in \Lambda_3\} = \{A_k^a\}_{k=1}^{l_2} \quad (0 \leq l_2 \leq \infty).$$

Thus $\bigoplus_{k=1}^{l_1} A_k$ and $\bigoplus_{k=1}^{l_2} A_k^a$ are essentially normal and co-subnormal + compact type. Therefore,

$$\sigma \left[\bigoplus_{k=1}^{l_1} A_k \right] = \left[\bigcup_{k=1}^{l_1} \sigma(A_k) \right]^{-}, \quad \sigma \left[\bigoplus_{k=1}^{l_2} A_k^a \right] = \left[\bigcup_{k=1}^{l_2} \sigma(A_k^a) \right]^{-}.$$

Define

$$G = \begin{pmatrix} \bigoplus A_k & D_1 & 0 \\ 0 & B & D_2 \\ 0 & 0 & \bigoplus A_k^a \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{on } \mathcal{H}_1 \oplus \mathcal{H}_2 \oplus \mathcal{H}_3,$$

where $\mathcal{H}_1 = \bigoplus_{k=1}^{l_1} \mathcal{H}_k^1$, $\mathcal{H}_2 = W_0^{22}(D) \ominus m_0(\sigma^*)$, $\mathcal{H}_3 = \bigoplus_{k=1}^{l_2} \mathcal{H}_k^3$, and for each k , $A_k \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}_k^1)$, $A_k^a \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}_k^3)$. Assume that

$$D_1 = \begin{pmatrix} D_1^1 \\ D_2^1 \\ \vdots \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad D_2 = (D_1^2, D_2^2, \dots).$$

Choose $D_k^1 \notin \text{ran } \tau_{A_k B}$ and $D_k^2 \notin \text{ran } \tau_{B A_k^a}$, D_k^1, D_k^2 are compact and the norms of them are so small that D_1, D_2 are compact (Lemma 2.10).

Suppose that $P \in \mathcal{A}'(G)$ is an idempotent and

$$P = \begin{pmatrix} P_{11} & P_{12} & P_{13} \\ P_{21} & P_{22} & P_{23} \\ P_{31} & P_{32} & P_{33} \end{pmatrix} \begin{matrix} \mathcal{H}_1 \\ \mathcal{H}_2 \\ \mathcal{H}_3 \end{matrix}$$

Then $P_{31} = 0$, $P_{21} = 0$ and $P_{32} = 0$ by Lemma 2.1. Since $A_k \in (\text{SI})$ and $A_k^a \in (\text{SI})$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$), from Lemma 2.1, $P_{11} = \bigoplus_{i=1}^{l_1} \delta_i^1 I_i^1$ and $P_{33} = \bigoplus_{i=1}^{l_2} \delta_i^3 I_i^3$, where $\delta_i^1(\delta_i^3)$ is 0 or 1, and $I_i^1(I_i^3)$ is the identity operator on $\mathcal{H}_i^1(\mathcal{H}_i^3)$, $i = 1, 2, \dots$. Since $P_{22} \in \mathcal{A}'(B)$ is an idempotent, $P_{22}f_\mu = a(\bar{\mu})f_\mu$ ($\mu \in \sigma$) and $a(\mu)$ takes constant (1 or 0) on each σ_l (Lemma 2.10). Set $\Delta_1 = \{\sigma_l : a(\mu)|_{\sigma_l^*} \equiv 0\}$, $\Delta_2 = \{\sigma_l : a(\mu)|_{\sigma_l^*} \equiv 1\}$ and denote $\Gamma_1 = \bigcup_{\Delta_1} \sigma_l$, $\Gamma_2 = \bigcup_{\Delta_2} \sigma_l$. Thus $\Gamma_1 \cup \Gamma_2 = \sigma$ and $\Gamma_1 \cap \Gamma_2 = \emptyset$. Rearrange $\{\Omega_{1i} (i \in \Lambda_1), \Omega_{2i} (i \in \Lambda_2), \Omega_{3i} (i \in \Lambda_3)\} = \{\Omega_k\}_{k=1}^l$, set $\Delta_3 = \{\bar{\Omega} : a(\bar{\mu}) \equiv 0, \mu \in \partial \bar{\Omega}_k\}$, $\Delta_4 = \{\bar{\Omega}_k : a(\bar{\mu}) \equiv 1, \mu \in \partial \bar{\Omega}_k\}$. Denote $\Sigma_1 = \Gamma_1 \cup [\bigcup_{\Delta_3} \bar{\Omega}_k]$ and $\Sigma_2 = \Gamma_2 \cup [\bigcup_{\Delta_4} \bar{\Omega}_k]$. Thus $\sigma(T) = \bar{\Sigma}_1 \cup \bar{\Sigma}_2$. If $\mu_0 \in \bar{\Sigma}_1 \cup \bar{\Sigma}_2$, $\mu_0 \in \sigma$, since μ_0 is not in any $(\bar{\Omega}_k)^0$. Suppose that $\mu_0 \in \Gamma_1$. Since $\mu_0 \in \bar{\Sigma}_2$, it is always possible to find a sequence $\{\mu_k\}_{k=1}^\infty \subset \Gamma_2$ such that $\mu_k \rightarrow \mu_0$. Since $a(\bar{\mu})$ is continuous, $a(\bar{\mu}_0) = 1$. Similarly, if $\mu_0 \in \Gamma_2$, we get $a(\bar{\mu}_0) = 0$. The contradiction implies that $\bar{\Sigma}_1 \cap \bar{\Sigma}_2 = \emptyset$. Since $\sigma(T) = \sigma(G)$ is connected, one of $\bar{\Sigma}_1$ and $\bar{\Sigma}_2$ must be empty. Thus one of Γ_1 and Γ_2 must be empty and $a(\bar{\mu}) \equiv 0$ or 1 ($\mu \in \sigma$), i.e. $P_{22} = \delta_2 I_2$, $\delta_2 = 0$ or 1, where I_2 is the identity operator on \mathcal{H}_2 .

Assume that

$$P_{12} = \begin{pmatrix} P_1^1 \\ P_2^1 \\ \vdots \end{pmatrix}, \quad P_{23} = (P_1^2, P_2^2, \dots).$$

Then

$$(\bigoplus \delta_k^1 I_k^1) D_1 + P_{12} B = (\bigoplus A_k) P_{12} + D_1 P_{22}$$

and

$$P_{22} D_2 + P_{23} (\bigoplus A_k^a) = B P_{23} + D_2 (\bigoplus \delta_k^3 I_k^3)$$

imply

$$A_k P_k^1 - P_k^1 B = D_k^1 (\delta_k^1 - \delta_2) I_2 \quad (k = 1, 2, \dots, l_1)$$

and

$$B P_k^2 - P_k^2 A_k^a = (\delta_2 - \delta_k^3) I_2 D_k^2 \quad (k = 1, 2, \dots, l_2).$$

Using Lemma 2.10 with respect to the idempotents $(\delta_k^1 - \delta_2) I_2$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots, l_1$) and $(\delta_2 - \delta_k^3) I_2$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots, l_2$), we know that $\delta_k^1 = \delta_k^2 = \delta_2$ for all k . i.e. $P = 0$ or I , where I is the identity operator on $\mathcal{H}_1 \oplus \mathcal{H}_2 \oplus \mathcal{H}_3$. Thus $G \in (\text{SI})$.

The second step: Recovery of the positive indices.

Rearrange and reexpress $\{\bar{A}(\Omega_{2j})\} = \{\bar{A}_k\}$. Then $\sigma(\bigoplus \bar{A}_k) = [\bigcup \sigma(\bar{A}_k)]^-$.

Define

$$M = \begin{pmatrix} \bigoplus \bar{A}_k & D_3 & 0 \\ & \bigoplus A_k & D_1 \\ 0 & & B & D_2 \\ & & & \bigoplus A_k^a \end{pmatrix} \text{ on } \mathcal{H}_4 \oplus \mathcal{H}_1 \oplus \mathcal{H}_2 \oplus \mathcal{H}_3,$$

where $\mathcal{H}_4 = \bigoplus \mathcal{H}_k^4$, $\bar{A}_k \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}_k)$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$), and

$$D_3 = \begin{pmatrix} D_{11}^3 & D_{12}^3 & \dots \\ D_{21}^3 & D_{22}^3 & \dots \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \end{pmatrix},$$

$$D_{ki}^3 = \begin{cases} Q(\Omega_{2j}), & \text{if } \sigma(\bar{A}_k) = \sigma(A_i) = \bar{\Omega}_{2j}; \\ 0, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Thus D_3 is compact.

Suppose that $E \in \mathcal{A}'(M)$ is an idempotent and

$$E = \begin{pmatrix} E_{11} & E_{12} & E_{13} & E_{14} \\ E_{21} & E_{22} & E_{23} & E_{24} \\ E_{31} & E_{32} & E_{33} & E_{34} \\ E_{41} & E_{42} & E_{43} & E_{44} \end{pmatrix} \begin{matrix} \mathcal{H}_4 \\ \mathcal{H}_1 \\ \mathcal{H}_2 \\ \mathcal{H}_3 \end{matrix} = \begin{pmatrix} E_{11} & E'_{12} \\ E'_{21} & E'_{22} \end{pmatrix} \begin{matrix} \mathcal{H}_4 \\ \mathcal{H}_1 \oplus \mathcal{H}_2 \oplus \mathcal{H}_3 \end{matrix}.$$

Then $E_{41} = 0$ and $E_{31} = 0$, since Lemma 2.1. From Lemma 2.1 and Lemma 2.5, $E_{21} = 0$. Since $\sigma(\bar{A}_k)^0 \cap \sigma(\bar{A}_j)^0 = \emptyset$ ($k \neq j$) and since $\bar{A}_k \in (\text{SI})$, $E_{11} = \bigoplus \delta_k^4 I_k^4$, $\delta_k^4 = 0$ or 1 , where I_k^4 is the identity operator on \mathcal{H}_k^4 ($k = 1, 2, \dots$). Since $G \in (\text{SI})$, $E'_{22} = 0$ or $I_1 \oplus I_2 \oplus I_3$. Assume that $E'_{22} = 0$ (if $E'_{22} = I_1 \oplus I_2 \oplus I_3$, consider

$I_4 \oplus I_1 \oplus I_2 \oplus I_3 - E$). Thus we have $E_{11}D_3 + E_{12}(\bigoplus A_k) = (\bigoplus \bar{A}_k)E_{12}$. Suppose that

$$E_{12} = \begin{pmatrix} L_{11} & L_{12} & \dots \\ L_{21} & L_{22} & \dots \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \end{pmatrix},$$

For each k , find i such that $\sigma(\bar{A}_k) = \sigma(A_i)$; then $\bar{A}_k L_{ki} - L_{ki} A_i = \delta_k^4 D_{ki}^4$ implies $\delta_k^4 = 0$. Therefore $E = 0$ and $M \in (\text{SI})$.

The third step. The recovery of the zero indices.

Take $\lambda_{1k} \in \partial\bar{\Omega}_{1k}$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots, l_1$), $\lambda_{3k} \in \partial\Omega_{3k}$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots, l_2$). Rearrange

$$\{\lambda_{1k} \ (k = 1, 2, \dots, l_1), \ \lambda_{3k} \ (k = 1, 2, \dots, l_2)\} = \{\lambda_k\}_{k=1}^{l_1+l_2}.$$

Define $B_k \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}_k)$ by $B_k e_n = \frac{1}{n} e_{n-1}$ ($n = 2, 3, \dots$), $B_k e_1 = 0$, where $\{e_n\}_{n=1}^\infty$ is an ONB of Hilbert space $R_k = \mathcal{H}$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots, l_1 + l_2$). Set $\bar{B} = \bigoplus B_k \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}_5)$, where $\mathcal{H}_5 = \bigoplus R_k$.

Define

$$L = \begin{pmatrix} \bigoplus \bar{A}_k & D_3 & & & 0 \\ & \bigoplus A_k & D_1 & & \\ & & B & D_2 & \\ & & & \bigoplus A_k^a & D_4 \\ 0 & & & & \bar{B} \end{pmatrix} \begin{matrix} \mathcal{H}_4 \\ \mathcal{H}_1 \\ \mathcal{H}_2 \\ \mathcal{H}_3 \\ \mathcal{H}_5 \end{matrix}$$

where

$$D_4 = \begin{pmatrix} D_{11}^4 & D_{12}^4 & \dots \\ D_{21}^4 & D_{22}^4 & \dots \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \end{pmatrix}$$

and $D_{kj}^4 \notin \text{ran } \tau_{A_k^a B_j}$, D_{kj}^4 is compact if $\sigma(A_k^a) \cap \sigma(B_j) \neq \emptyset$ (Lemma 2.6), otherwise $D_{kj}^4 = 0$. Choose $\|D_{kj}^4\|$ so small that D_4 is compact. By the same arguments used above, $L \in (\text{SI})$.

Set $B'_k = \lambda_k + B_k \in \mathcal{L}(R_k)$ and $B' = \bigoplus B'_k \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{H}_6)$, where $\mathcal{H}_6 = \bigoplus R_k$.

Define

$$Q = \begin{pmatrix} \bigoplus \bar{A}_k & D_3 & & & 0 \\ & \bigoplus A_k & D_1 & & \\ & & B & D_2 & \\ & & & \bigoplus A_k^a & D_4 \\ 0 & & & & \bar{B} \end{pmatrix} \begin{matrix} \mathcal{H}_4 \\ \mathcal{H}_1 \\ \mathcal{H}_2 \\ \mathcal{H}_3 \\ \mathcal{H}_5 \end{matrix}$$

where

$$D_5 = \begin{pmatrix} D_1^5 & & 0 \\ & D_2^5 & \\ 0 & & \ddots \end{pmatrix}$$

and $D_k^5 \notin \text{ran } \tau_{B_k B'_k}$, D_k^5 is compact ($k = 1, 2, \dots$) (Lemma 2.7) and choose $\|D_k^5\|$ so small that D_5 is compact. Then $Q \in (\text{SI})$.

Rearrange $\{C(\Omega_{1i}) \ (i \in \Lambda_1), \ C(\Omega_{3k}) \ (k \in \Lambda_3)\} = \{C_k\}_{k=1}^l$.

Set $C = \bigoplus C_k$ on \mathcal{H}_7 , where $\mathcal{H}_7 = \bigoplus_{k=1}^l \mathcal{M}_k$, $C_k \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{M}_k)$; then $\sigma(C) = [\bigcup \sigma(C_k)]^-$.

Define

$$R = \begin{pmatrix} \oplus \bar{A}_k & D_3 & & & & & 0 \\ & \oplus A_k & D_1 & & & & \\ & & B & D_2 & & & \\ & & & \oplus A_k^a & D_4 & & \\ & & & & \bar{B} & D_5 & \\ & & & & & B' & D_6 \\ 0 & & & & & & C \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \mathcal{H}_4 \\ \mathcal{H}_1 \\ \mathcal{H}_2 \\ \mathcal{H}_3 \\ \mathcal{H}_5 \\ \mathcal{H}_6 \\ \mathcal{H}_7 \end{pmatrix}$$

where

$$D_6 = \begin{pmatrix} D_1^6 & & 0 \\ & D_2^6 & \\ 0 & & \ddots \end{pmatrix}$$

and $D_k^{6*} \notin \text{ran } \tau_{C_k^* B_K'^*}$, D_k^6 is compact ($k = 1, 2, \dots$) (Lemma 2.7) and choose $\|D_k^6\|$ so small that D_6 is compact. Then $R \in (\text{SI})$.

The fourth step. The recovery of the negative indices.

Assume that $\{\bar{C}(\Omega_{3k})\} = \{\bar{C}_k\}$ and set $\bar{C} = \bigoplus \bar{C}_k$ on $\mathcal{H}_8 = \bigoplus \mathcal{N}_k$ where $\bar{C}_k \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{N}_k)$ ($k = 1, 2, \dots$); then $\sigma(\bar{C}) = [\cup \sigma(\bar{C}_k)]^-$.

Define

$$S = \begin{pmatrix} \oplus \bar{A}_k & D_3 & & & & & 0 \\ & \oplus A_k & D_1 & & & & \\ & & B & D_2 & & & \\ & & & \oplus A_k^a & D_4 & & \\ & & & & \bar{B} & D_5 & \\ & & & & & B' & D_6 \\ & & & & & & C \\ 0 & & & & & & \bar{C} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \mathcal{H}_4 \\ \mathcal{H}_1 \\ \mathcal{H}_2 \\ \mathcal{H}_3 \\ \mathcal{H}_5 \\ \mathcal{H}_6 \\ \mathcal{H}_7 \\ \mathcal{H}_8 \end{pmatrix}$$

where

$$D_7 = \begin{pmatrix} D_{11}^7 & D_{12}^7 & \dots \\ D_{21}^7 & D_{22}^7 & \dots \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \end{pmatrix}$$

and $D_{ik}^7 \notin \text{ran } \tau_{C_i, \bar{C}_k}$, D_{ik}^7 is compact if $\sigma(C_i) = \sigma(\bar{C}_k)$ (Lemma 2.5), otherwise $D_{ik}^7 = 0$. Choose $\|D_{ik}^7\|$ so small that D_7 is compact. Then $S \in (\text{SI})$. It is a routine exercise to check that $S = \text{essentially normal} + \text{compact}$, $\sigma(T) = \sigma(S)$, $\sigma_e(T) = \sigma_e(S)$ and $\text{ind}(\lambda - T) = \text{ind}(\lambda - S)$ ($\lambda \in \rho_F(T)$). Thus by the Brown-Douglas-Fillmore Theorem [3], there is a compact operator K such that $T + K$ is unitarily equivalent to S and the proof of the Main Theorem is now complete. \square

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DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS, JILIN UNIVERSITY, CHANGCHUN 130023, P.R. OF CHINA

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS, SICHUAN UNIVERSITY, CHENGDU 610064, P.R. OF CHINA

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS, EAST CHINA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SHANGHAI, 200237, P.R. OF CHINA