

Application of Commutator Theorems to the Integration of Representations of Lie Algebras and Commutation Relations*

J. Fröhlich**

Department of Mathematics, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08540, USA

Abstract. Sufficient conditions on unbounded, symmetric operators A and B which imply that

$$\exp(itA)\exp(isB)\exp(-itA)$$

satisfies the well known “multiple commutator” formula are derived. The formula is then applied to prove new necessary and sufficient conditions for the integrability of representations of Lie algebras and canonical commutation relations and the commutativity of the spectral projections of two commuting unbounded, self-adjoint operators. A classic theorem of Nelson’s is obtained as a corollary. Our results are useful in relativistic quantum field theory.

1. Introduction

In this note we discuss sufficient conditions for the multiple commutator formula

$$e^{itA}e^{isB}e^{-itA} = \exp is \left\{ B + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{(it)^n}{n!} \operatorname{ad}^n A(B) \right\}, \tag{1.1}$$

to hold. Here A and B are unbounded operators and, formally,

$$\begin{aligned} \operatorname{ad} A(B) &= [A, B], \\ \operatorname{ad}^n A(B) &= [A, \operatorname{ad}^{n-1} A(B)]. \end{aligned} \tag{1.2}$$

Our results have applications in group theory and quantum field theory.

They are a direct outgrowth of recent work of Driessler and the author [2] concerning the Haag-Kastler axioms [12] in relativistic quantum field theory and subsequent alternate proof of the main result of [2] due to Glimm and Jaffe [3].

The main result of [2, 3], a sufficient condition for the bounded functions of two unbounded, symmetric operators A and B to commute, is a special case of the results proven in the following sections.

* Research supported in part by the US National Science Foundation under Grant MPS 75-1180

** A Sloan Foundation Fellow