

Problem A.23

Show that if two matrices commute in *one* basis, then they commute in *any* basis. That is:

$$[T_1^e, T_2^e] = 0 \Rightarrow [T_1^f, T_2^f] = 0. \quad (\text{A.94})$$

Hint: Use Equation A.64.

Solution

Suppose that

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= [T_1^e, T_2^e] \\ &= T_1^e T_2^e - T_2^e T_1^e. \end{aligned}$$

Then $T_1^e T_2^e = T_2^e T_1^e$. Now calculate the commutator of the two matrices in a new basis.

$$\begin{aligned} [T_1^f, T_2^f] &= T_1^f T_2^f - T_2^f T_1^f \\ &= (S T_1^e S^{-1})(S T_2^e S^{-1}) - (S T_2^e S^{-1})(S T_1^e S^{-1}) \\ &= S T_1^e (S^{-1} S) T_2^e S^{-1} - S T_2^e (S^{-1} S) T_1^e S^{-1} \\ &= S T_1^e (I) T_2^e S^{-1} - S T_2^e (I) T_1^e S^{-1} \\ &= S T_1^e T_2^e S^{-1} - S T_2^e T_1^e S^{-1} \\ &= S (T_1^e T_2^e) S^{-1} - S (T_2^e T_1^e) S^{-1} \\ &= S (T_1^e T_2^e) S^{-1} - S (T_1^e T_2^e) S^{-1} \\ &= 0 \end{aligned}$$