

A COUNTEREXAMPLE IN THE PERTURBATION THEORY OF C^* -ALGEBRAS

BY
B. E. JOHNSON

ABSTRACT. The strongest positive results in the stability theory of C^* -algebras assert that if $\mathfrak{A}, \mathfrak{B}$ are sufficiently close C^* -subalgebras of $\mathfrak{L}(H)$ of certain kinds, then there is a unitary operator U on H near I , such that $U^*\mathfrak{B}U = \mathfrak{A}$. We give examples of C^* -algebras $\mathfrak{A}, \mathfrak{B}$, both isomorphic to the algebra of continuous functions from $[0, 1]$ to the algebra of compact operators on Hilbert space, which can be as close as we like, yet for which there is no isomorphism $\alpha: \mathfrak{B} \rightarrow \mathfrak{A}$ with $\|b - \alpha b\| \leq 1/70 \|b\|$ ($b \in \mathfrak{B}$). Thus the results mentioned do not extend to these C^* -algebras.

We shall describe, for each $\varepsilon' > 0$, two C^* -subalgebras \mathfrak{A} and \mathfrak{B} of $\mathfrak{L}(K)$, the algebra of bounded operators on a Hilbert space K whose Hausdorff distance

$$d(\mathfrak{A}, \mathfrak{B}) = \max \left(\sup_{a \in \mathfrak{A}_1} \inf_{b \in \mathfrak{B}_1} \|a - b\|, \sup_{b \in \mathfrak{B}_1} \inf_{a \in \mathfrak{A}_1} \|a - b\| \right)$$

satisfies $d(\mathfrak{A}, \mathfrak{B}) < \varepsilon'$ yet for which there is no isomorphism $\alpha: \mathfrak{B} \rightarrow \mathfrak{A}$ with $\|b - \alpha(b)\| \leq 1/70 \|b\|$ ($b \in \mathfrak{B}$). ($\mathfrak{A}_1, \mathfrak{B}_1$ denote the unit balls of the respective algebras.) The algebras \mathfrak{A} and \mathfrak{B} are both isomorphic to the algebra of continuous functions from $[0, 1]$ into $\mathcal{L}^c(L)$, the algebra of compact operators on the Hilbert space L . In fact we show that \mathfrak{B} has a subalgebra \mathfrak{C} isomorphic with $\mathcal{L}^c(L)$ so that $\mathfrak{C} \stackrel{\varepsilon'}{\subseteq} \mathfrak{A}$ in the notation of [2; Definition 2.1] yet there is no homomorphism $\beta: \mathfrak{C} \rightarrow \mathfrak{A}$ with $\|c - \beta(c)\| \leq 1/70 \|c\|$ ($c \in \mathfrak{C}$). Replacing 70^{-1} by 1000^{-1} we get the same result for a subalgebra \mathfrak{C}_0 of \mathfrak{C} isomorphic with c_0 . Phillips and Raeburn have shown ([7] Theorem 4.22) that there are $s, t > 0$ such that if \mathfrak{A} is a unital continuous trace C^* -algebra and $d(\mathfrak{A}, \mathfrak{B}) < \varepsilon < s$ then there is a isomorphism $\alpha: \mathfrak{B} \rightarrow \mathfrak{A}$ with $\|b - \alpha(b)\| \leq t\varepsilon^{1/2} \|b\|$ ($b \in \mathfrak{B}$). Thus our example shows that their theorem cannot be extended to non-unital continuous trace C^* -algebras. Christensen [2; Corollary 6.3] has shown that if \mathfrak{C} is a finite dimensional abelian C^* -algebra and $\mathfrak{C} \stackrel{\varepsilon}{\subseteq} \mathfrak{A}$ then there is a $*$ homomorphism $\alpha: \mathfrak{C} \rightarrow \mathfrak{A}$ with $\|c - \alpha(c)\| < 22\varepsilon^{1/2} \|c\|$ ($c \in \mathfrak{C}$). Thus our example also shows that this result does not extend to the case of an *AF* algebra \mathfrak{C} .

We denote the set of strictly positive integers by \mathbb{Z}^+ , $L = \ell^2(\mathbb{Z}^+)$ and ξ_1, ξ_2, \dots is the standard basis of L . E_n is the orthogonal projection onto the span of

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ξ_1, \dots, ξ_n . Any $A \in \mathcal{L}(L)$ is given by a matrix $A_{ij} = \langle A\xi_j, \xi_i \rangle$. If $d = \{d_1, d_2, \dots\}$ is a strictly increasing sequence from \mathbb{Z}^+ and $A \in \mathcal{L}(L)$ we define A_d by

$$\begin{aligned} (A_d)_{ij} &= 0 && \text{if for some } k \\ & && d_{k-1} < i \leq d_k \quad \text{and} \quad d_{k-2} < j \leq d_{k+1} \\ &= A_{ij} && \text{otherwise} \end{aligned}$$

where $d_{-1} = d_0 = 0$. If we partition the basis into blocks of length $d_k - d_{k-1}$ and make a corresponding partition of the matrix for A then A_d is obtained from A by replacing the blocks on the main diagonal and the two adjacent diagonals by zero. Since the diagonal maps

$$A \mapsto \sum_k (E_k - E_{k-1})A(E_{k+1} - E_{k+1-1})$$

have norm 1 ($l \in \mathbb{Z}$ and we put $E_m = 0$ if $m \leq 0$) we see $A_d \in \mathcal{L}(L)$ and $\|A_d\| \leq 4 \|A\|$.

LEMMA 1. For each $\varepsilon > 0$ and each $d_1 < d_2 < \dots$ there exists a self-adjoint element A of $\mathcal{L}(L)$ with

$$\begin{aligned} \|A\| &\leq 1 \\ \|A_d\| &= 1 \\ \|AE_n - E_nA\| &\leq \varepsilon \quad n \in \mathbb{Z}^+. \end{aligned}$$

Proof. Let α_n ($n \in \mathbb{Z}$) be the Fourier coefficients of the function $f(e^{i\theta}) = i\theta/\pi$ ($-\pi < \theta \leq \pi$) in $L^\infty(\mathbb{T})$. Then $\alpha_n = (-1)^{n+1}/n\pi$ ($n \neq 0$) and $\alpha_0 = 0$. However $\sum \alpha_{|n|}e^{in\theta}$ is the Fourier series of the L^2 function $2\pi^{-1} \log |1 + e^{i\theta}|$ which is not in $L^\infty(\mathbb{T})$. Thus [4; p. 135] the matrix $[\alpha_{j-i}]$ represents an operator on $\ell^2(\mathbb{Z})$ of norm 1 but $[\alpha_{|j-i|}]$ does not represent a bounded operator. Thus taking only $i, j > 0$, $[\alpha_{j-i}]$ is an operator on L of norm 1 [4; p. 139] whereas $[\alpha_{|j-i|}]$ is not because, writing $\ell^2(\mathbb{Z}) = L \oplus L^\perp$ divides $[\alpha_{|j-i|}]$ into four blocks of which the off diagonal blocks are the same as the corresponding blocks in $\pm[\alpha_{j-i}]$ and so represent a bounded operator whereas the two blocks on the main diagonal are in fact the same and so must both represent unbounded operators.

By taking m sufficiently large the matrix $C = E_m[\alpha_{|i-j|}]E_m$ represents an element of $\mathcal{L}(L)$ of norm $> \varepsilon^{-1}$. Define $S_d, T_d : \mathcal{L}(L) \rightarrow \mathcal{L}(L)$ by

$$\begin{aligned} (S_d B)_{ij} &= B_{d_2i, d_2j} \\ (T_d B)_{ij} &= B_{kl} && \text{if } i = d_{2k}, j = d_{2l} \\ &= 0 && \text{if } (i, j) \text{ is not of the form} \\ & && (d_{2k}, d_{2l}). \end{aligned}$$

T_d is an isometry, S_d is a contraction and $S_d T_d = \text{identity}$. Put $A = \|C\|^{-1} T_d C$.

Then $A = A^* = A_d$ and $\|A\| = 1$. Also if $d_{2k} \leq n < d_{2k+2}$

$$\begin{aligned} \|AE_n - E_nA\| &= \|S_d(AE_n - E_nA)\| \\ &= \|(S_dA)E_k - E_k(S_dA)\| \\ &= \|C\|^{-1} \|CE_k - E_kC\| \\ &= \|C\|^{-1} \max(\|(I - E_k)CE_k\|, \|E_kC(I - E_k)\|) \\ &= \|C\|^{-1} \max(\|(I - E_k)E_m[\alpha_{j-i}]E_mE_k\|, \|E_kE_m[\alpha_{j-i}]E_m(I - E_k)\|) \\ &\leq \|C\|^{-1} < \epsilon. \end{aligned}$$

We denote the set of self adjoint operators in $\mathcal{L}(L)$ by $\mathcal{L}(L)_{s.a.}$.

LEMMA 2. For each $\epsilon > 0$ there is a function $A : [0, 1] \rightarrow \mathcal{L}(L)_{s.a.}$ and functions $A_n : [0, 1] \rightarrow \mathcal{L}(L)_{s.a.}$ $n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ such that

1. $\|A_n(x) - A(x)\| \leq \epsilon$ ($n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$)
2. $\|A(x)\| \leq 1$ ($x \in [0, 1]$)
3. A is continuous in the weak operator topology and $x \mapsto A_n(x)\xi_i$ $i = 1, \dots, n$ are norm continuous.
4. There is no function $A_\infty : [0, 1] \rightarrow \mathcal{L}(L)$, continuous in the strong $*$ operator topology, for which

$$\|A_\infty(x) - A(x)\| \leq \frac{1}{5} \quad (x \in [0, 1]).$$

The strong $*$ operator topology is that determined by the semi norms $\|B\xi\|, \|B^*\xi\|, \xi \in L$.

Proof. Consider the set

$$\mathcal{A}_\epsilon = \{A; A \in \mathcal{L}(L)_{s.a.}, \|A\| \leq 1, \|AE_n - E_nA\| \leq \epsilon \ (n \in \mathbb{Z}^+)\}$$

with the weak operator topology. \mathcal{A}_ϵ is a weak operator closed bounded convex subset of $\mathcal{L}(L)$ and so is compact. It is also metrisable and so if $X \subseteq [0, 1]$ is the Cantor set there is a continuous surjection $A_0 : X \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_\epsilon$ [6, p. 166]. We extend A_0 to a continuous surjection $A : [0, 1] \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_\epsilon$ by linear interpolation on each interval of $[0, 1] \setminus X$ whose endpoints are in X . For each n put $A_n(x) = E_nA(x)E_n + (I - E_n)A(x)(I - E_n)$. We have

$$\begin{aligned} \|A_n(x) - A(x)\| &= \|-E_nA(x)(I - E_n) - (I - E_n)A(x)E_n\| \\ &= \max(\|E_nA(x)(I - E_n)\|, \|(I - E_n)A(x)E_n\|) \\ &= \|A(x)E_n - E_nA(x)\| \leq \epsilon, \end{aligned}$$

giving 1. 2 is obvious and A is weak operator continuous so $x \mapsto A_n(x)\xi_i$ ($i \leq n$) is weakly continuous. As its range is in the finite dimensional space E_nL , on which the weak and norm topologies coincide, it is norm continuous.

Suppose a function A_∞ as in 4 existed. For each i the sets $\{A_\infty(x)\xi_i; x \in [0, 1]\}$ and $\{A_\infty(x)^*\xi_i; x \in [0, 1]\}$ are norm compact. Thus we can define inductively a

sequence $0 < d_1 < d_2 < d_3 \cdots$ of integers such that for each i ,

$$\|E_{d_i}A_\infty(x)(I - E_{d_{i+1}})\| < (5.2^{i+2})^{-1} \quad \text{and} \quad \|(I - E_{d_{i+1}})A_\infty(x)E_{d_i}\| < (5.2^{i+2})^{-1}.$$

We then have

$$A_\infty(x)_d = \sum (E_{d_i} - E_{d_{i-1}})A_\infty(x)(I - E_{d_{i+1}}) + \sum (I - E_{d_{i+1}})A_\infty(x)(E_{d_i} - E_{d_{i-1}})$$

so that $\|A_\infty(x)_d\| < \frac{1}{5}$. As the map $A \mapsto A_d$ has norm ≤ 4 we see $\|A_\infty(x)_d - A(x)_d\| \leq \frac{4}{5}$ so $\|A(x)_d\| < 1$. However by Lemma 1 there are values of x with $\|A(x)_d\| = 1$.

We denote the C^* -algebra of bounded functions $[0, 1] \rightarrow \mathcal{L}(L)$ by \mathfrak{D} and the subalgebra of norm continuous functions with values in $\mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(H)$ by \mathfrak{A} . Given $\varepsilon > 0$ let $A \in \mathfrak{D}$ as in Lemma 2 and put $U = \exp i\pi A/8$ and $\alpha = \text{ad } U$ (that is $\alpha(B) = U^*BU$) and $\alpha(x) = \text{ad } U(x)$. We denote the map $C \mapsto CB - BC$ by δB . For $c \in \mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L)$ let $j(c) \in \mathfrak{A}$ be the constant function with value c , that is $j(c)(x) = c, 0 \leq x \leq 1$.

THEOREM 3. *Let $\varepsilon' > 0$. For $\varepsilon < \min\{\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}\varepsilon' \exp -3\pi/4\}$ we have $d(\mathfrak{A}, \alpha\mathfrak{A}) < \varepsilon'$ and hence $\mathfrak{C} = \alpha j(\mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L)) \stackrel{\varepsilon'}{\subseteq} \mathfrak{A}$. There is no homomorphism $\beta: \mathfrak{C} \rightarrow \mathfrak{A}$ with $\|c - \beta(c)\| \leq \frac{1}{70} \|c\| (c \in \mathfrak{C})$.*

Proof. Let $D = \delta A, a \in \mathfrak{A}$. Then $\|D\| \leq 2$ and $E_n a(x) E_n \rightarrow a(x)$ uniformly for $0 \leq x \leq 1$ so for some value of $n, \|E_n a(x) E_n - a(x)\| \leq \varepsilon \|a\| (x \in [0, 1])$. Then $\|Da - (\delta A_n)(E_n a E_n)\| \leq \|D(a - E_n a E_n)\| + \|(D - \delta A_n)(E_n a E_n)\| \leq 4\varepsilon \|a\|$. However, $(\delta A_n)(E_n a E_n)(x) = E_n a(x) E_n A_n(x) - A_n(x) E_n a(x) E_n \in \mathfrak{A}$ because $E_n A_n$ and $A_n E_n \in \mathfrak{A}$. Thus for each $a \in \mathfrak{A}$ there is $b \in \mathfrak{A}$ with $\|b - Da\| \leq 4\varepsilon \|a\|$. Using this we can show by induction that for each n there is $b_n \in \mathfrak{A}$ with $\|b_n - D^n a\| \leq 6^n \varepsilon \|a\|$ and hence $\text{dist}(\alpha(a), \mathfrak{A}) \leq \varepsilon \|a\| \exp 3\pi/4 \leq \frac{1}{2}\varepsilon' \|a\|$. Similarly $\text{dist}(\alpha^{-1}(a), \mathfrak{A}) = \text{dist}(a, \alpha\mathfrak{A}) \leq \frac{1}{2}\varepsilon' \|a\|$ and so $d(\mathfrak{A}, \alpha\mathfrak{A}) \leq \varepsilon'$.

If β is as stated then α and $\beta\alpha$ are homomorphisms $j(\mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L)) \rightarrow \mathfrak{D}$ with $\|\alpha - \beta\alpha \mid j(\mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L))\| \leq 70^{-1}$. For each $x \in [0, 1], \gamma(x)(c) = \beta\alpha j(c)x$ defines a homomorphism $\gamma(x); \mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L) \rightarrow \mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L)$ with $\|\alpha(x) - \gamma(x)\| \leq 70^{-1}$. As $\|\alpha - \text{id}\mathfrak{D}\| \leq 2 \sin \pi/8 < \frac{7}{9}$ this implies $\|\gamma(x) - \text{id}\mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}\| < \frac{4}{5}$ so $\gamma(x)$ is an isomorphism. As $x \mapsto \gamma(x)(c) = \beta\alpha j(c)(x)$ defines an element of \mathfrak{A} the map $x \mapsto \gamma(x)$ is continuous with respect to the point-norm topology (that is the topology defined by the semi-norms $\lambda \mapsto \|\lambda(C)\|, C \in \mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L)$). Let $\mu(x) = \log \gamma(x)$ (using the principal value). Then $\mu(x)$ is a derivation on $\mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L)$ [3; p. 313]. If p is a polynomial in one variable then $\lambda \mapsto p(\lambda); \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L)) \rightarrow \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L))$ is point-norm continuous on bounded sets and so $x \mapsto \mu(x)$ is point-norm continuous. We have $\log \alpha(x) = \delta(x)$ where $\delta(x)(a) = i\pi(aA(x) - A(x)a)/8$. Also $\|\delta(x) - \mu(x)\| = \|\log \alpha(x) - \log \gamma(x)\| \leq \sum_{n>0} n^{-1} \|(\alpha(x) - \text{id } \mathcal{L}\mathcal{C})^n - (\gamma(x) - \text{id } \mathcal{L}\mathcal{C})^n\| \leq \sum_{n>0} (\frac{4}{5})^{n-1} \|\alpha(x) - \gamma(x)\| \leq 5\frac{1}{70} < \pi/40$. For each $x \in [0, 1]$ define $B(x) \in \mathcal{L}(L)$ by $B(x)c\xi_1 = (\delta(x) - \mu(x))(c\xi_1)\xi_1 (c \in \mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L))$. Then as in [5; Theorem 3.1], $(\delta(x) - \mu(x))c = cB(x) - B(x)c, \|B(x)\| \leq \pi/40$ and $\langle B(x)\xi_1, \xi_1 \rangle = 0$. Put $A_\infty(x) =$

$A(x) - 8B(x)/\pi i$. Then $\|A_\infty(x) - A(x)\| \leq \frac{1}{5}$ and $\mu(x)a = i\pi(aA_\infty(x) - A_\infty(x)a)/8$. For $\eta, \zeta \in L$ let $\eta \otimes \zeta$ be the rank one operator $\xi \mapsto \langle \xi, \zeta \rangle \eta$ and put $e_{ij} = \xi_i \otimes \xi_j$. We have

$$\begin{aligned} 8e_{ii}\mu(x)(e_{ii}) &= i\pi\xi_i \otimes (A_\infty^*(x)\xi_i - (A_\infty(x)_{ii})^{-1}\xi_i) \\ 8\mu(x)(e_{ii})e_{ii} &= i\pi(A_\infty(x)_{ii}\xi_i - A_\infty(x)\xi_i) \otimes \xi_i \\ 8e_{ii}\mu(x)(e_{ij})e_{ij} &= i\pi(A_\infty(x)_{ij} - A_\infty(x)_{ii})e_{ij} \\ A(x)_{11} &= A_\infty(x)_{11} \end{aligned}$$

Since the left of the first three equations is a norm continuous function of x and $A(x)_{11}$ is continuous we see that all the $A_\infty(x)_{ii}$ are continuous and $x \mapsto A_\infty(x)$ is strong $*$ continuous. This contradicts the properties of A in Lemma 2.

By identifying a diagonal matrix with its diagonal sequence we can consider $c_0 \subseteq \mathcal{L}\mathcal{L}(L)$.

COROLLARY 4. *Let $\mathfrak{C}_0 = \alpha j(c_0)$ and $\varepsilon' < (1000^{-1})$. Then there is no $*$ homomorphism $\beta_0: \mathfrak{C}_0 \rightarrow \mathfrak{A}$ with $\|c - \beta_0(c)\| \leq 1000^{-1} \|c\|$ ($c \in \mathfrak{C}_0$).*

Proof. We shall use the method of [2; Theorem 6.4] to extend β_0 to \mathfrak{C} . Consider \mathfrak{D} as an algebra of operators on the Hilbert space $K = \ell^2_L[0, 1]$. Then there is a unitary operator W on K with $\|I - W\| < 999^{-1}$ [1; Theorem 5.4] and $\beta_0(c) = W^*cW$ ($c \in \mathfrak{C}_0$). Put $\mathfrak{C}_1 = W^*\mathfrak{C}W$. Then $\mathfrak{C}_1 \subseteq_{\varepsilon''} \mathfrak{A}$ where $\varepsilon'' = 3(999)^{-1}$ and $\beta_0(\mathfrak{C}_0) \subseteq \mathfrak{C}_1 \cap \mathfrak{A}$. Put $p_{ij} = W^*\alpha j(E_{ij})W$. For each $n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ let $f'_n \in \mathfrak{A}$ with $\|p_{1n} - f'_n\| \leq 332^{-1}$ and put $f_n = p_{11}f'_np_{nn}$ so $\|p_{1n} - f_n\| < 332^{-1}$. Thus $\|f_n f_n^* - p_{11}\| \leq \|f_n\| \|p_{1n} - f_n\| + \|p_{1n} - f_n\| < 165^{-1}$ and so $(f_n f_n^*)^{-1/2}$ exists in the algebra $p_{11}\mathfrak{A}p_{11}$ and we have $\|p_{11} - (f_n f_n^*)^{-1/2}\| < (1 - 165^{-1})^{-1/2} - 1 < 328^{-1}$ so that $g_n = (f_n f_n^*)^{-1/2} f_n$ has $\|g_n - f_n\| \leq 328^{-1}(1 + 332^{-1}) < 327^{-1}$. Also $g_n \in p_{11}\mathfrak{A}p_{nn}$ and $g_n g_n^* = p_{11}$ so $g_n^* g_n$ is a projection in $p_{nn}\mathfrak{A}p_{nn}$ with $\|g_n^* g_n - p_{nn}\| < \|g_n\| \|g_n - p_{1n}\| + \|g_n - p_{1n}\| < 4.327^{-1}$ and so $g_n^* g_n = p_{nn}$. Put $V = \sum_n p_{n1} g_n$, the series converging because for each n the n th term is a unitary operator on $p_{nn}K$. As $\sum_n j(e_{nn})$ converges weakly to I on K we see $\sum p_{nn}$ converges weakly to I and so V is unitary and $\|I - V\| = \sup_n \|p_{nn} - p_{n1} g_n\| = \sup_n \|p_{1n} - g_n\| < 2.327^{-1}$. Now put $\beta(c) = V^*W^*cWV$ ($c \in \mathfrak{C}$). Then $\beta\alpha(j(e_{ij})) = V^*p_{ij}V = g_i^* p_{11} g_j \in \mathfrak{A}$, so that

$$\beta(\mathfrak{C}) \subseteq \mathfrak{A}$$

and

$$\|c - \beta(c)\| \leq 2\|I - WV\| \|c\| \leq 2(\|I - W\| + \|I - V\|) \|c\| \leq 70^{-1} \|c\| \quad (c \in \mathfrak{C}).$$

Although K is not separable the subalgebra of \mathfrak{D} generated by \mathfrak{A} and $\alpha\mathfrak{A}$ is and so could be represented on a separable Hilbert space. The algebras \mathfrak{A} and

$\alpha(\mathfrak{A})$ do not have units but we could adjoin the identity on K to \mathfrak{A} , $\alpha(\mathfrak{A})$ and \mathfrak{C} and the identity on L to $\mathcal{L}\mathcal{C}(L)$ and the proofs would apply. The algebra obtained by adjoining a unit to \mathfrak{A} is postliminal but does not have continuous trace.

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THE UNIVERSITY
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, ENGLAND