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On the absence of simultaneous reflection and transmission in integrable impurity systems

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Abstract

We establish that the Yang-Baxter equations in the presence of an impurity can in general only admit solutions of simultaneous transmission and reflection when the transmission and reflection amplitudes commute in the defect degrees of freedom with an additional exchange of the corresponding rapidities. In the absence of defect degrees of freedom we show in complete generality, that the only exceptions to this are theories which possess rapidity independent bulk scattering matrices. In particular bulk theories with diagonal scattering matrices, can only be the free Boson and Fermion, the Federbush model and their generalizations. These anyonic solutions do not admit the possibility of excited impurity states.

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1 Introduction

Integrable quantum field theories in 1+1 space-time dimensions in the presence of a boundary have received a considerable amount of attention in recent years. One of the central aims is to find explicit solutions to the consistency equations in the presence of a boundary, which result as a consequence of factorizability, namely the Yang-Baxter equation [1, 2], the bootstrap equation [3] and also crossing [4, 5]. Explicit solutions are known for various theories, such as affine Toda field theories with real [6, 7, 8, 9] and purely imaginary coupling [10, 11], (in particular the sine-Gordon model [4, 12, 13, 14, 15] and its supersymmetric version [16, 17]), the Gross-Neveu model [18], $N = 1$ [19] and $N = 2$ [20] supersymmetric theories, the nonlinear sigma models [21, 22, 23] and theories with infinite resonance states [24].

Part of the motivation for this great interest is resulting from the fact that boundaries play a natural role in string theory. In the context of condensed matter physics, boundaries allow for instance the description of non-trivial constrictions in quantum wires. In order to understand realistic materials, it is in addition further important to investigate the effects of impurities (defects, inhomogeneities). For this latter situation much less is known at present. Besides the purely reflecting case, which is equivalent to the aforementioned boundary problem, there exist some solutions for purely transmitting impurities [25]. However, hitherto only few examples are known for the situation of simultaneously occurring reflection and transmission [26, 27, 28]. All these examples studied so far are related either to the free Fermion or Boson.

In [26] an argument was provided, which manifests that integrable parity invariant impurity systems with a diagonal bulk S-matrix, apart from $S = \pm 1$, do not allow simultaneously non-trivial reflection and transmission amplitudes. In this note we address the question, whether the set of possible bulk theories, which admit such a behaviour of the impurity, can be enlarged when the corresponding S-matrix is taken to be non-diagonal and parity is allowed to be broken. Without making any assumptions it will turn out that non-diagonal bulk scattering theories do not admit the possibility of simultaneous reflection and transmission on the defect when integrability of the theory is maintained and degrees of freedom in the defect are absent. When allowing additional degrees of freedom in the impurity one can only have simultaneous transmission and reflection for non-diagonal bulk theories when the assumption (22) does not hold. We show that when allowing parity breaking the set of possible bulk theories with such a behaviour of the defect can be slightly enlarged to those which are of anyonic type. We demonstrate that, whenever reflection and transmission occur at the same time, the defect can only have one degree of freedom.

2 Defect Yang-Baxter equations

Integrability is, as usual in this context, identified with the factorization of the n -particle scattering matrix into two-particles ones. Many of the properties, these two-particle scattering matrices have to satisfy, result from the exploitation of the associativity of the so-called Faddeev-Zamolodchikov (FZ) algebra [29]. This also holds in the presence of a boundary [1, 2, 3] or an impurity [26], which formally can be associated to an element of the algebra with zero rapidity. We briefly want to recall this derivation, by following largely [26], with the difference that we also allow additional degrees of freedom in the inhomogeneity, corresponding to possible excited impurity states, and pay attention to parity. The latter means in particular, that amplitudes may be different when particles hit the defect from the left or from the right, a property known for instance in the context of lattice integrable models, see e.g. [30]. Indicating particle types by Latin and degrees of freedom of the impurity by Greek letters, the “braiding” relations of creation operators $Z_i(\theta)$ of a particle of type i with rapidity θ and defect operators Z_α in the state α can be written as

$$Z_i(\theta_1)Z_j(\theta_2) = S_{ij}^{kl}(\theta_1 - \theta_2)Z_k(\theta_2)Z_l(\theta_1), \quad (1)$$

$$Z_i(\theta)Z_\alpha = R_{i\alpha}^{j\beta}(\theta)Z_j(-\theta)Z_\beta + T_{i\alpha}^{j\beta}(\theta)Z_\beta Z_j(\theta), \quad (2)$$

$$Z_\alpha Z_i(\theta) = \tilde{R}_{i\alpha}^{j\beta}(-\theta)Z_\beta Z_j(-\theta) + \tilde{T}_{i\alpha}^{j\beta}(-\theta)Z_j(\theta)Z_\beta. \quad (3)$$

We employed Einstein’s sum convention, that is we assume sums over doubly occurring indices. The left/right reflection and transmission amplitudes are denoted by R/\tilde{R} and T/\tilde{T} , respectively. We suppress the explicit mentioning of the dependence of Z_α on the position in space and assume that it is included in α . For the treatment of a single defect this is not relevant anyhow, but it becomes of course important when considering multiple defects.

The algebra (1)-(3) can be used to derive various relations amongst the scattering amplitudes. Using them twice leads to the constraints

$$S_{ij}^{kl}(\theta)S_{kl}^{mn}(-\theta) = \delta_i^m \delta_j^n, \quad (4)$$

$$R_{i\alpha}^{j\beta}(\theta)R_{j\beta}^{k\gamma}(-\theta) + T_{i\alpha}^{j\beta}(\theta)\tilde{T}_{j\beta}^{k\gamma}(-\theta) = \delta_i^k \delta_\alpha^\gamma, \quad (5)$$

$$R_{i\alpha}^{j\beta}(\theta)T_{j\beta}^{k\gamma}(-\theta) + T_{i\alpha}^{j\beta}(\theta)\tilde{R}_{j\beta}^{k\gamma}(-\theta) = 0. \quad (6)$$

The same equations also hold after performing a parity transformation, that is for $R \leftrightarrow \tilde{R}$ and $T \leftrightarrow \tilde{T}$ in (5)-(6).

The Yang-Baxter equations are derived as usual by exploiting the associativity of the ZF-algebra. Commencing with an initial state of the form $Z_i(\theta_1)Z_j(\theta_2)Z_\alpha$ and commuting in the order as depicted in figure 1 (the picture is to be read as equality, in the sense that the two scattering events are equal and the part in the middle of the defects serves as the income on the right and as the outcome for

the left defect scattering process), we obtain the defect Yang-Baxter equations by reading off the coefficients from the linear independent asymptotic states of the form $Z_i(-\theta_1)Z_j(-\theta_2)Z_\alpha$, $Z_i(-\theta_1)Z_\alpha Z_j(\theta_2)$, $Z_i(-\theta_2)Z_\alpha Z_j(\theta_1)$ and $Z_\alpha Z_j(\theta_2)Z_i(\theta_1)$ as

$$S_{ij}^{kl}(\theta_{12})R_{l\alpha}^{m\beta}(\theta_1)S_{km}^{np}(\hat{\theta}_{12})R_{p\beta}^{t\gamma}(\theta_2) = R_{j\alpha}^{l\beta}(\theta_2)S_{il}^{mp}(\hat{\theta}_{12})R_{p\beta}^{k\gamma}(\theta_1)S_{mk}^{nt}(\theta_{12}), \quad (7)$$

$$S_{ij}^{kl}(\theta_{12})R_{l\alpha}^{m\beta}(\theta_1)S_{km}^{np}(\hat{\theta}_{12})T_{p\beta}^{t\gamma}(\theta_2) = T_{j\alpha}^{t\beta}(\theta_2)R_{i\beta}^{n\gamma}(\theta_1), \quad (8)$$

$$S_{ij}^{kl}(\theta_{12})T_{l\alpha}^{m\beta}(\theta_1)R_{k\beta}^{p\gamma}(\theta_2) = R_{j\alpha}^{l\beta}(\theta_2)S_{il}^{pn}(\hat{\theta}_{12})T_{n\beta}^{m\gamma}(\theta_1), \quad (9)$$

$$S_{ij}^{kl}(\theta_{12})T_{l\alpha}^{m\beta}(\theta_1)T_{k\beta}^{p\gamma}(\theta_2) = T_{j\alpha}^{l\beta}(\theta_2)T_{i\beta}^{k\gamma}(\theta_1)S_{kl}^{pm}(\theta_{12}). \quad (10)$$

We abbreviated here the rapidity sum $\hat{\theta}_{12} = \theta_1 + \theta_2$ and difference $\theta_{12} = \theta_1 - \theta_2$. In the absence of degrees of freedom in the impurity, the first relation (7) was originally obtained in [1, 2], whereas (8)-(10), apart from a few obvious typos in the indices, were first derived in [26]. A systematic investigation with the addition of degrees of freedom in the boundary for the purely reflecting case was initiated in [31]. Note that when multiplying the equation (9) by $S(\theta_{21})$ from the left, it becomes identical to equation (8) upon using the unitarity relation (4) and a subsequent exchange of θ_1 and θ_2 . Thus, we only need to treat three independent equations.

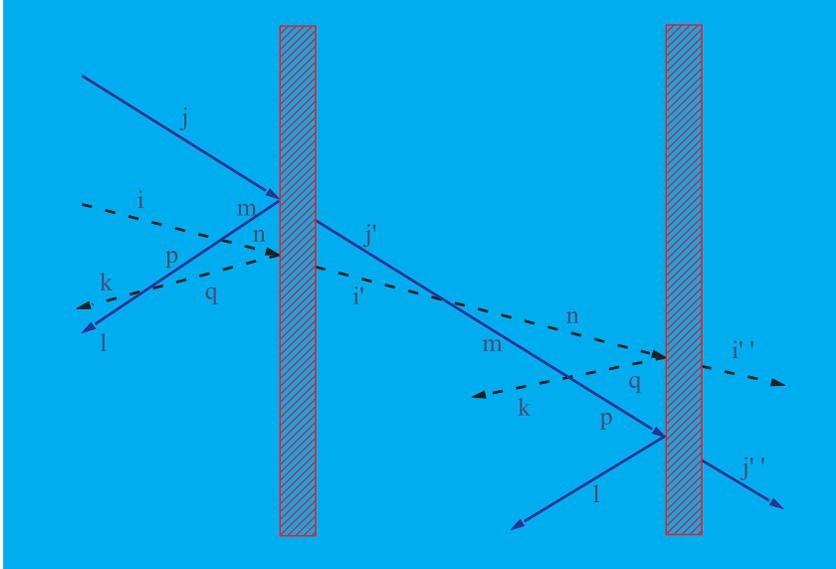


Figure 1: Defect Yang-Baxter equations.

Starting with an initial state in a different order leads to non-equivalent sets of equations. For instance taking $Z_\alpha Z_i(\theta_1)Z_j(\theta_2)$ as the initial state simply leads to the same equations as (7)-(10) with $R \leftrightarrow \bar{R}$ and $T \leftrightarrow \bar{T}$. Commencing on the other hand with $Z_i(\theta_1)Z_\alpha Z_j(\theta_2)$ and reading off the coefficients from the linear independent asymptotic states of the form $Z_i(-\theta_1)Z_\alpha Z_j(-\theta_2)$, $Z_i(-\theta_1)Z_j(\theta_2)Z_\alpha$,

$Z_j(\theta_2)Z_\alpha Z_i(\theta_1)$ and $Z_\alpha Z_j(-\theta_2)Z_i(\theta_1)$ leads to

$$R_{i\alpha}^{k\beta}(\theta_1)\tilde{R}_{j\beta}^{l\gamma}(\theta_2) = R_{i\beta}^{k\gamma}(\theta_1)\tilde{R}_{j\alpha}^{l\beta}(\theta_2), \quad (11)$$

$$\tilde{R}_{l\beta}^{q\gamma}(\theta_2)S_{kj}^{lp}(\hat{\theta}_{12})T_{i\alpha}^{k\beta}(\theta_1) = S_{lk}^{qp}(\theta_{12})T_{i\beta}^{l\gamma}(\theta_1)\tilde{R}_{j\alpha}^{k\beta}(\theta_2), \quad (12)$$

$$S_{lq}^{st}(\theta_{12})R_{p\beta}^{q\gamma}(\theta_1)S_{ik}^{lp}(\hat{\theta}_{12})\tilde{T}_{j\alpha}^{k\beta}(\theta_2) = R_{i\alpha}^{s\beta}(\theta_1)\tilde{T}_{j\beta}^{t\gamma}(\theta_2), \quad (13)$$

$$\tilde{T}_{l\beta}^{q\gamma}(\theta_2)S_{kj}^{lp}(\hat{\theta}_{12})T_{i\alpha}^{k\beta}(\theta_1) = T_{t\beta}^{p\gamma}(\theta_1)S_{ik}^{qt}(\hat{\theta}_{12})\tilde{T}_{j\alpha}^{k\beta}(\theta_2). \quad (14)$$

Clearly the three sets of Yang-Baxter equations (7)-(10), (7)-(10) with $R \leftrightarrow \tilde{R}$ and $T \leftrightarrow \tilde{T}$ and (11)-(14) are not equivalent. In the special case when $R = 0$ the equation (10) can be turned into (14) by means of the unitarity relation (5). On the other hand, when $T = 0$ the equations (11) remain a non-trivial requirement which links the left and right reflection amplitude via the impurity degrees of freedom.

In order to achieve a more concise formulation, let us re-write the defect Yang-Baxter equations in tensor form in the bulk indices. Employing the usual convention $(A \otimes B)_{ij}^{kl} = A_i^k B_j^l$ for the tensor product, the three non-equivalent equations in (7)-(10) take on the form

$$S(\theta_{12})[\mathbb{I} \otimes R_\alpha^\beta(\theta_1)]S(\hat{\theta}_{12})[\mathbb{I} \otimes R_\beta^\gamma(\theta_2)] = [\mathbb{I} \otimes R_\alpha^\beta(\theta_2)]S(\hat{\theta}_{12})[\mathbb{I} \otimes R_\beta^\gamma(\theta_1)]S(\theta_{12}), \quad (15)$$

$$S(\theta_{12})[\mathbb{I} \otimes R_\alpha^\beta(\theta_1)]S(\hat{\theta}_{12})[\mathbb{I} \otimes T_\beta^\gamma(\theta_2)] = R_\beta^\gamma(\theta_1) \otimes T_\alpha^\beta(\theta_2), \quad (16)$$

$$S(\theta_{12})[T_\alpha^\beta(\theta_2) \otimes T_\beta^\gamma(\theta_1)] = [T_\alpha^\beta(\theta_1) \otimes T_\beta^\gamma(\theta_2)]S(\theta_{12}), \quad (17)$$

whereas (11)-(14) can be equivalently written as

$$R_\alpha^\beta(\theta_1) \otimes \tilde{R}_\beta^\gamma(\theta_2) = R_\beta^\gamma(\theta_1) \otimes \tilde{R}_\alpha^\beta(\theta_2), \quad (18)$$

$$[T_\alpha^\beta(\theta_2) \otimes \mathbb{I}]S(\hat{\theta}_{12})[\tilde{R}_\beta^\gamma(\theta_1) \otimes \mathbb{I}]S(\theta_{12}) = T_\beta^\gamma(\theta_2) \otimes \tilde{R}_\alpha^\beta(\theta_1), \quad (19)$$

$$[\mathbb{I} \otimes \tilde{T}_\alpha^\beta(\theta_2)]S(\hat{\theta}_{12})[\mathbb{I} \otimes R_\beta^\gamma(\theta_1)]S(\theta_{12}) = R_\alpha^\beta(\theta_1) \otimes \tilde{T}_\beta^\gamma(\theta_2), \quad (20)$$

$$[T_\alpha^\beta(\theta_1) \otimes \mathbb{I}]S(\hat{\theta}_{12})[\tilde{T}_\beta^\gamma(\theta_2) \otimes \mathbb{I}] = [\mathbb{I} \otimes \tilde{T}_\alpha^\beta(\theta_2)]S(\hat{\theta}_{12})[\mathbb{I} \otimes T_\beta^\gamma(\theta_1)]. \quad (21)$$

Making now the following assumption* on the product of R and T in the impurity

*Similar conclusions can be drawn by presuming

$$\tilde{T}_\alpha^\beta(\theta_1) \otimes \tilde{R}_\beta^\gamma(\theta_2) = \tilde{T}_\beta^\gamma(\theta_1) \otimes \tilde{R}_\alpha^\beta(\theta_2)$$

from the Yang-Baxter equations (16) with $T \rightarrow \tilde{T}$, $R \rightarrow \tilde{R}$. Alternatively, assuming

$$T_\alpha^\beta(\theta_1) \otimes \tilde{R}_\beta^\gamma(\theta_2) = T_\beta^\gamma(\theta_1) \otimes \tilde{R}_\alpha^\beta(\theta_2)$$

or

$$\tilde{T}_\alpha^\beta(\theta_1) \otimes R_\beta^\gamma(\theta_2) = \tilde{T}_\beta^\gamma(\theta_1) \otimes R_\alpha^\beta(\theta_2)$$

we can draw the same conclusions from (19) or (20), respectively. Notice that only one of these four assumptions is sufficient. Furthermore, it is enough if only one of the matrices involved in the product is diagonal (abelian) in the impurity degrees of freedom. This implies of course that the other matrix can be completely generic.

degrees of freedom

$$T_\alpha^\beta(\theta_1) \otimes R_\beta^\gamma(\theta_2) = T_\beta^\gamma(\theta_1) \otimes R_\alpha^\beta(\theta_2). \quad (22)$$

we can for instance eliminate $T(\theta)$ in (16). Taking thereafter $\theta_2 = 0$, we obtain

$$S(\theta) [\mathbb{I} \otimes R_\alpha^\beta(\theta)] S(\theta) = R_\alpha^\beta(\theta) \otimes \mathbb{I}. \quad (23)$$

Therefore it follows by relativistic invariance that the scattering matrix has to be rapidity independent, i.e. a constant matrix that is of the form

$$S(\theta) = \mathbb{P}\sigma, \quad (24)$$

where \mathbb{P} is a permutation operator and σ a constant matrix. One may of course reverse the argument and take σ to be a phase with properties $\sigma_{ij}\sigma_{ji} = 1$, substitute (24) back into (16) and deduce (22). Obviously similar conclusions can be reached when solving (16) for $S(\hat{\theta}_{12})$ or when considering (19), (20) in the same manner.

In summary: *Apart from rapidity independent scattering matrices, simultaneous reflection and transmission in an integrable system with an impurity is always absent when there are no degrees of freedom in the defect. If there are degrees of freedom in the defect, reflection and transmission can only occur for non-diagonal bulk theories when (22) does not hold.*

3 Defect bootstrap equations

Besides exploiting the associativity of the ZF-algebra in the above version, the presence of bound states in the bulk theory also leads to powerful constraints. Despite the fact that equation (24) already manifests that S is independent of the rapidity, let us exploit the associativity of the expression which reflects this situation

$$Z_a(\theta + i\eta_{ac}^b + i\varepsilon/2) Z_b(\theta - i\eta_{bc}^a - i\varepsilon/2) = i\Gamma_{ab}^c Z_c(\theta) / \varepsilon, \quad (25)$$

for $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$. As conventional we denote here the three particle vertex on mass-shell by Γ_{ab}^c and the real fusing angles by η .

Commuting then in the manner as depicted in figure 2 leads to non-trivial constraints for the defect scattering matrices. This means scattering the particles a and b on the defect and fusing afterwards to particle c should be equivalent to fusing first to particle c and scatter thereafter onto the defect. We end up with the following sets of equations

$$R_a(\theta + i\eta_{ac}^b) R_b(\theta - i\eta_{bc}^a) S_{ab}(2\theta + i\eta_{ac}^b - i\eta_{bc}^a) = R_c(\theta), \quad (26)$$

$$T_a(\theta + i\eta_{ac}^b) T_b(\theta - i\eta_{bc}^a) = T_c(\theta), \quad (27)$$

$$T_a(\theta + i\eta_{ac}^b) R_b(\theta - i\eta_{bc}^a) S_{ab}(\theta + i\eta_{ac}^b - i\eta_{bc}^a) = 0, \quad (28)$$

$$R_a(\theta + i\eta_{ac}^b) T_b(\theta - i\eta_{bc}^a) = 0, \quad (29)$$

where we suppressed the explicit mentioning of the degrees of freedom of the impurity. Obviously we can derive the same equations also for $R \leftrightarrow \tilde{R}$ and $T \leftrightarrow \tilde{T}$. It is evident that the equations (26)-(29) only make sense when either $T = 0$ or $R = 0$, in which case the reflection bootstrap equation (26) (proposed first in [3]) and the transmission bootstrap (27) (proposed first in [25]) separately become meaningful. Hence, we have confirmed in an alternative way a statement which already followed from the previous section, namely: *A bulk theory which possesses bound states associated with a diagonal scattering matrix does not allow simultaneously non-vanishing transmission and reflection through a defect.* The argument leading to the equations (26)-(29) gives a slightly more intuitive understanding for the exclusion of this possibility, since it shows that one produces inevitably terms made up of particles on the left and on the right of the defect which can not be reconciled anymore such that (28) and (29) have to hold. Nonetheless, one should note that equation (24) is more restrictive since it also excludes theories which do not permit fusing at all, such as the sinh-Gordon model, etc.

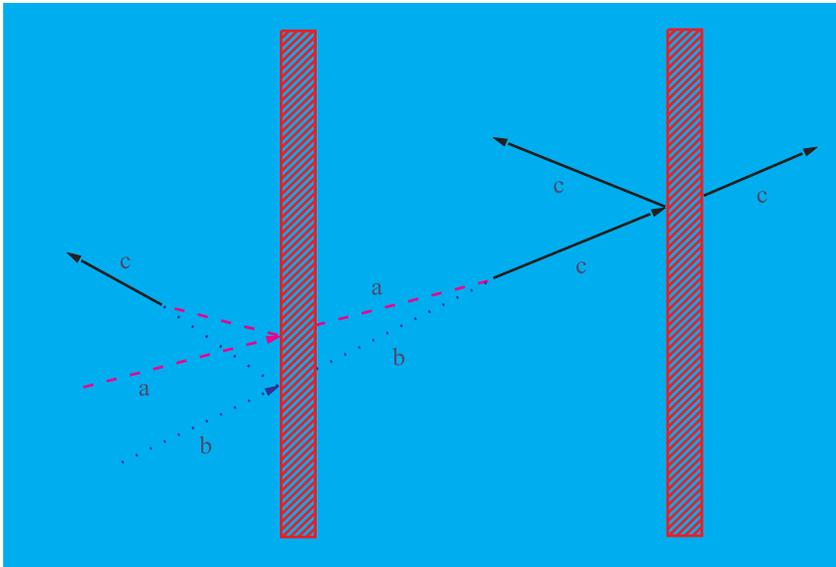


Figure 2: Defect bootstrap equations.

Let us now consider the possibility of impurity excitations and the related bootstrap equations. Having a particle of type a moving at rapidity $i\eta_{a\alpha}^\beta$ might change the state of the defect from α to β as

$$Z_a(i\eta_{a\alpha}^\beta) Z_\alpha \rightarrow Z_\beta. \quad (30)$$

Using this relation and commuting in accordance with the ZF-algebra (1)-(3) in an order as depicted in figure 3 leads to a set of defect bootstrap equations involving

Here we denote as usual $\bar{\psi} = \psi^\dagger \gamma^0$, where γ^0 is one of the gamma matrices, i.e., satisfying the Clifford algebra. For the defect $\mathcal{D}(\bar{\psi}, \psi) = g\bar{\psi}\psi$ the transmission and reflection amplitudes were computed [26, 28] to be

$$R(\theta, B) = \bar{R}(\theta, -B) = -\frac{i \sin B \cosh \theta}{\sinh \theta + i \sin B}, \quad (34)$$

$$T(\theta, B) = \bar{T}(\theta, -B) = \frac{\cos B \sinh \theta}{\sinh \theta + i \sin B}. \quad (35)$$

Since Dirac Fermions are not self-conjugate, we have to distinguish particle and anti-particle. We denote the amplitudes related to the anti-particle by a “bar”. The coupling constant g is parameterized as $\sin B = -4g/(4 + g^2)$. For this example parity invariance is preserved, such that $R = \bar{R}$ and $T = \bar{T}$. The fact that

$$\underset{\theta \rightarrow -iB}{\text{Res}} R(\theta, B) = \underset{\theta \rightarrow -iB}{\text{Res}} T(\theta, B) = -\underset{\theta \rightarrow iB}{\text{Res}} \bar{R}(\theta, B) = -\underset{\theta \rightarrow iB}{\text{Res}} \bar{T}(\theta, B) = 2\pi \sin B, \quad (36)$$

confirms our previous conclusion, which asserted that there can not be any excited impurity states once reflection and transmission occur simultaneously. Depending on the sign of B , the residues in (36) are either negative or the pole is beyond the physical sheet. Thus, this solution is consistent with regard to the above argumentation. This is in contradiction to the statements in [26], where it was argued that excited impurity states do exist.

As the second example we consider the defect $\mathcal{D}(\bar{\psi}, \psi) = g\bar{\psi}\gamma^0\psi$ for which the related transmission and reflection amplitudes follow from [28] as

$$R(\theta, B) = \bar{R}(\theta, B) = \frac{-i \sin B}{\sinh(\theta + iB)}, \quad (37)$$

$$T(\theta, B) = \bar{T}(\theta, B) = \frac{\sinh \theta}{\sinh(\theta + iB)}. \quad (38)$$

Also in this example parity invariance is preserved, and we have $R = \bar{R}$ and $T = \bar{T}$. We compute

$$\underset{\theta \rightarrow -iB}{\text{Res}} R(\theta, B) = \underset{\theta \rightarrow -iB}{\text{Res}} T(\theta, B) = 2\pi \sin B, \quad (39)$$

such that the interpretation is the same as in the previous example and we confirm once more our general statement.

5 Conclusions

We conclude by re-stating our main results: *When there are no degrees of freedom in the defect, the only integrable, in the sense of factorization, bulk theories which, when doped with some impurity, which allow the occurrence of simultaneous reflection and transmission are those possessing constant, i.e. rapidity independent,*

scattering matrices. Once T and R are taken simultaneously to be non-vanishing these theories do not admit the possibility of excited impurity bound states. For this to happen in complete generality (22) has to be violated.

Unfortunately so far our main results imply that for the treatment of non-trivial impurity systems one has to leave the realm of integrable systems. It would be interesting to construct T and R for some non-diagonal bulk theories, by means of (7)-(10) and (11)-(14) under the violation of (22). For the subset of diagonal bulk theories which remain integrable in this case, the restrictive power of the integrability framework fails, since apart from crossing and unitarity we have no constraining equations at our disposal to determine the transmission and reflection amplitudes. It would be interesting to complete the picture for these anyonic theories and seek also solutions for the Federbush type models [32, 33].

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