Eur. Phys. J. C 4, 101–106 (1998)
DOI 10.1007/s100529800749

THE EUROPEAN PHYSICAL JOURNAL C
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The analytic continuation of the high-energy quark-quark scattering amplitude

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Received: 18 April 1997 / Revised version: 27 August 1997/ Published online: 20 February 1998

Abstract. It is known that the high-energy quark-quark scattering amplitude can be described by the expectation value of two lightlike Wilson lines, running along the classical trajectories of the two colliding particles. Generalizing the results of a previous paper, we give here the general proof that the expectation value of two infinite Wilson lines, forming a certain hyperbolic angle in Minkowski space-time, and the expectation value of two infinite Euclidean Wilson lines, forming a certain angle in Euclidean four-space, are connected by an analytic continuation in the angular variables. This result could be used to evaluate the high-energy scattering amplitude directly on the lattice.

1 Introduction

It is well known that the quark-quark scattering amplitude, at high squared energies s in the center of mass and small squared transferred momentum t (that is $s \to \infty$ and $|t| \ll s$, let us say $|t| \leq 1\,\mathrm{GeV}^2$), can be described by the expectation value of two lightlike Wilson lines, running along the classical trajectories of the two colliding particles [1], [2].

In the center-of-mass reference system (c.m.s.), taking for example the initial trajectories of the two quarks along the x^1-axis, the scattering amplitude has the following form [explicitly indicating the color indices $(i, j, \ldots)$ and the spin indices $(\alpha, \beta, \ldots)$ of the quarks]

$$\begin{aligned} M_{fi} &= \langle \psi_{i\alpha}(p_1')\psi_{k\gamma}(p_2')|M|\psi_{j\beta}(p_1)\psi_{l\delta}(p_2)\rangle \\ &\underset{s\to\infty}{\sim} -\frac{i}{Z_\psi^2}\cdot\delta_{\alpha\beta}\delta_{\gamma\delta}\cdot 2s \\ &\quad\times\int d^2\mathbf{z}_t e^{i\mathbf{q}\cdot\mathbf{z}_t}\langle[W_1(z_t)-\mathbf{1}]_{ij}[W_2(0)-\mathbf{1}]_{kl}\rangle\,, \end{aligned} \tag{1.1}$$

where $q = (0, 0, \mathbf{q})$, with $t = q^2 = -\mathbf{q}^2$, is the tranferred four-momentum and $z_t = (0, 0, \mathbf{z}_t)$, with $\mathbf{z}_t = (z^2, z^3)$, is the distance between the two trajectories in the *transverse* plane [the coordinates (x^0, x^1) are often called *longitudinal* coordinates]. The expectation value $\langle f(A)\rangle$ is the average of $f(A)$ in the sense of the functional integration over the gluon field A^μ (including also the determinant of the fermion matrix, i.e., $\det[i\gamma^\mu D_\mu - m]$, where $D^\mu = \partial^\mu + igA^\mu$ is the covariant derivative) [1], [2]. The two lightlike Wilson lines $W_1(z_t)$ and $W_2(0)$ in (1.1) are defined as

$$W_1(z_t) = P\exp\left[-ig\int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} A_\mu(z_t + p_1\tau)p_1^\mu d\tau\right];$$

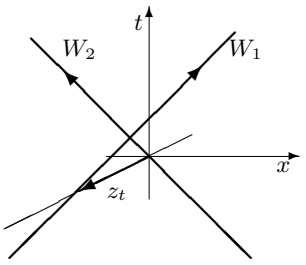

Fig. 1. The space-time configuration of the two lightlike Wilson lines W_1 and W_2 entering in the expression (1.1) for the high-energy quark-quark elastic scattering amplitude

$$W_2(0) = P\exp\left[-ig\int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} A_\mu(p_2\tau)p_2^\mu d\tau\right], \tag{1.2}$$

where P stands for "*path ordering*" and $A_\mu = A_\mu^a T^a$; $p_1 \simeq (E, E, \mathbf{0}_t)$ and $p_2 \simeq (E, -E, \mathbf{0}_t)$ are the initial four-momenta of the two quarks. The space-time configuration of these two Wilson lines is shown in Fig. 1.

Finally, Z_ψ in (1.1) is the fermion-field renormalization constant, which can be written in the eikonal approximation as [1]

$$\begin{aligned} Z_\psi &\simeq \frac{1}{N_c}\langle\mathrm{Tr}[W_1(z_t)]\rangle = \frac{1}{N_c}\langle\mathrm{Tr}[W_1(0)]\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{N_c}\langle\mathrm{Tr}[W_2(0)]\rangle\,, \end{aligned} \tag{1.3}$$

where N_c is the number of colours.

In what follows, we shall deal with the quantity

$$g_{M(ij,kl)}(s;t) \equiv \frac{1}{Z_\psi^2}\int d^2\mathbf{z}_t e^{i\mathbf{q}\cdot\mathbf{z}_t}\langle[W_1(z_t)-\mathbf{1}]_{ij}[W_2(0)-\mathbf{1}]_{kl}\rangle\,, \tag{1.4}$$

in terms of which the scattering amplitude can be written as

$$\begin{aligned} M_{fi} &= \langle\psi_{i\alpha}(p_1')\psi_{k\gamma}(p_2')|M|\psi_{j\beta}(p_1)\psi_{l\delta}(p_2)\rangle \\ &\underset{s\to\infty}{\sim} -i\cdot 2s\cdot\delta_{\alpha\beta}\delta_{\gamma\delta}\cdot g_{M(ij,kl)}(s;t)\,. \end{aligned} \tag{1.5}$$

The quantity $g_{M(ij,kl)}(s;t)$ depends not only on $t=-\mathbf{q}^2$, but also on s. In fact, as was pointed out by Verlinde and Verlinde in [3], it is a singular limit to take the Wilson lines in (1.4) exactly lightlike. A way to regularize this sort of "infrared" divergence (so called because it essentially comes from the limit $m\to 0$, where m is the quark mass) consists in letting each line have a small timelike component, so that they coincide with the classical trajectories for quarks with a finite mass m (see also [4] for a discussion about this point). In other words, one first evaluates the quantity $g_{M(ij,kl)}(\beta;t)$ for two Wilson lines along the trajectories of two quarks (with mass m) moving with velocity β and $-\beta$ ($0<\beta<1$) in the x^1-direction. This is equivalent to consider two infinite Wilson lines forming a certain (finite) hyperbolic angle χ in Minkowski space-time. Then, to obtain the correct high-energy scattering amplitude, one has to perform the limit $\beta\to 1$, that is $\chi\to\infty$, in the expression for $g_{M(ij,kl)}(\beta;t)$:

$$\begin{aligned} M_{fi} &= \langle\psi_{i\alpha}(p_1')\psi_{k\gamma}(p_2')|M|\psi_{j\beta}(p_1)\psi_{l\delta}(p_2)\rangle \\ &\underset{s\to\infty}{\sim} -i\cdot 2s\cdot\delta_{\alpha\beta}\delta_{\gamma\delta}\cdot g_{M(ij,kl)}(\beta\to 1;t)\,. \end{aligned} \tag{1.6}$$

Proceeding in this way one obtains a $\ln s$ dependence of the amplitude, as expected from ordinary perturbation theory and as confirmed by the experiments on hadron-hadron scattering processes [5], [6]. In Sect. 3 of [4] we have followed this procedure to explicitly evaluate the second member of (1.6) up to the fourth order in the expansion in the renormalized coupling constant: the results so derived are in agreement with those obtained from ordinary perturbation theory.

The direct evaluation of the expectation value (1.4) is a highly non-trivial matter and it is strictly connected with the ultraviolet properties of Wilson-line operators [7], [8]. Some non-perturbative approaches for the calculation of (1.4) have been proposed in [9] and [10].

In a recent paper [4] we have proposed a new approach, which consists in adapting the scattering amplitude to the Euclidean world: this approach could open the way for the direct evaluation of the scattering amplitude on the lattice. More explicitly, in [4] we have given arguments showing that the expectation value of two infinite Wilson lines, forming a certain hyperbolic angle in Minkowski space-time, and the expectation value of two infinite Euclidean Wilson lines, forming a certain angle in Euclidean four-space, are likely to be connected by an analytic continuation in the angular variables. This relation of analytic continuation has been proven in [4] for an Abelian gauge theory (QED) in the so-called *quenched* approximation and for a non-Abelian gauge theory (QCD) up to the fourth order in the renormalized coupling constant in perturbation theory: a general proof was missing up to now.

In this paper, we shall generalize the results of [4] and give the rigorous proof of the above-mentioned relation of analytic continuation for a non-Abelian gauge theory with gauge group $SU(N_c)$ [as well as for an Abelian gauge theory (QED)]. The approach adopted in [4] consisted in explicitly evaluating the amplitudes $g_M(\chi;t)$ and $g_E(\theta;t)$, in the Minkowski and the Euclidean world, in some given approximation (such as the *quenched* approximation) or up to some order in perturbation theory and in finally comparing the two expressions so obtained. Instead, in this paper we shall give a general proof, which essentially exploits the relation between the gluonic Green functions in the two theories.

2 From Minkowskian to Euclidean theory

Let us consider the following quantity, defined in Minkowski space-time:

$$g_M(p_1,p_2;t) = \frac{M(p_1,p_2;t)}{Z_W^2}\,, \tag{2.1}$$

$$M(p_1,p_2;t) = \int d^2\mathbf{z}_t e^{i\mathbf{q}\cdot\mathbf{z}_t}\langle[W_1(z_t)-\mathbf{1}]_{ij}[W_2(0)-\mathbf{1}]_{kl}\rangle\,,$$

where p_1 and p_2 are the four-momenta [lying (for example) in the plane (x^0,x^1)], which define the trajectories of the two Wilson lines W_1 and W_2 ($A_\mu = A_\mu^a T^a$ and m is the fermion mass):

$$\begin{aligned} W_1(z_t) &\equiv P\exp\left[-ig\int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} A_\mu(z_t+\frac{p_1}{m}\tau)\frac{p_1^\mu}{m}d\tau\right]\,; \\ W_2(0) &\equiv P\exp\left[-ig\int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} A_\mu(\frac{p_2}{m}\tau)\frac{p_2^\mu}{m}d\tau\right]\,. \end{aligned} \tag{2.2}$$

Z_W in (2.1) is defined as (N_c being the number of colours)

$$\begin{aligned} Z_W &\equiv \frac{1}{N_c}\langle\mathrm{Tr}[W_1(z_t)]\rangle = \frac{1}{N_c}\langle\mathrm{Tr}[W_1(0)]\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{N_c}\langle\mathrm{Tr}[W_2(0)]\rangle\,. \end{aligned} \tag{2.3}$$

(The two last equalities come from the Poincaré invariance.) This is a sort of Wilson-line's renormalization constant: as shown in [1], Z_W coincides with the fermion renormalization constant Z_ψ in the eikonal approximation.

By virtue of the Lorentz symmetry, we can define p_1 and p_2 in the c.m.s. of the two particles, moving with speed β and $-\beta$ along the x^1-direction:

$$\begin{aligned} p_1^\mu &= E(1,\beta,\mathbf{0}_t)\,, \\ p_2^\mu &= E(1,-\beta,\mathbf{0}_t)\,, \end{aligned} \tag{2.4}$$

where $E = m/\sqrt{1-\beta^2}$ (in units with $c = 1$) is the energy of each particle (so that: $s = 4E^2$).

We now introduce the hyperbolic angle ψ [in the plane (x^0, x^1)] of the trajectory of W_1: it is given by $\beta = \tanh\psi$. We can give the explicit form of the Minkowski four-vectors $u_1 = p_1/m$ and $u_2 = p_2/m$ in terms of the hyperbolic angle ψ:

$$\begin{aligned} u_1 &= \frac{p_1}{m} = (\cosh\psi, \sinh\psi, \mathbf{0}_t)\,, \\ u_2 &= \frac{p_2}{m} = (\cosh\psi, -\sinh\psi, \mathbf{0}_t)\,. \end{aligned} \tag{2.5}$$

Clearly, $u_1^2 = u_2^2 = 1$ and

$$u_1 \cdot u_2 = \cosh(2\psi) = \cosh\chi\,, \tag{2.6}$$

where $\chi = 2\psi$ is the hyperbolic angle [in the plane (x^0, x^1)] between the two trajectories of W_1 and W_2.

In an analogous way, we can consider the following quantity, defined in Euclidean space-time:

$$\begin{aligned} g_E(p_{1E}, p_{2E}; t) &= \frac{E(p_{1E}, p_{2E}; t)}{Z_{WE}^2}\,, \\ E(p_{1E}, p_{2E}; t) &= \int d^2\mathbf{z}_t e^{i\mathbf{q}\cdot\mathbf{z}_t} \\ &\quad \times \langle [W_{1E}(z_{tE}) - \mathbf{1}]_{ij} [W_{2E}(0) - \mathbf{1}]_{kl} \rangle_E\,, \end{aligned} \tag{2.7}$$

where $z_{tE} = (z_1, z_2, z_3, z_4) = (0, \mathbf{z}_t, 0)$ and $q_E = (0, \mathbf{q}, 0)$ (so that: $q_E^2 = \mathbf{q}^2 = -t$). The expectation value $\langle \ldots \rangle_E$ must be intended now as a functional integration with respect to the gauge variable $A_\mu^{(E)} = A_\mu^{(E)a} T^a$ in the Euclidean theory. The Euclidean four-vectors p_{1E} and p_{2E} [lying (for example) in the plane (x_1, x_4)] define the trajectories of the two Euclidean Wilson lines W_{1E} and W_{2E}:

$$\begin{aligned} W_{1E}(z_{tE}) &\equiv P \exp\left[-ig \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} A_\mu^{(E)}(z_{tE} + p_{1E}\tau) p_{1E\mu} d\tau \right]\,; \\ W_{2E}(0) &\equiv P \exp\left[-ig \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} A_\mu^{(E)}(p_{2E}\tau) p_{2E\mu} d\tau \right]\,. \end{aligned} \tag{2.8}$$

Z_{WE} in (2.7) is defined analogously to Z_W in (2.3):

$$\begin{aligned} Z_{WE} &\equiv \frac{1}{N_c} \langle \mathrm{Tr}[W_{1E}(z_{tE})] \rangle = \frac{1}{N_c} \langle \mathrm{Tr}[W_{1E}(0)] \rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{N_c} \langle \mathrm{Tr}[W_{2E}(0)] \rangle\,. \end{aligned} \tag{2.9}$$

(The two last equalities come from the $O(4)$ *plus* translation invariance.)

We can now use the definition of the path-ordered exponential in (2.2) to explicitly write the Wilson lines W_1 and W_2 as power series in the exponents $g \cdot A$. Therefore, the quantity $M(p_1, p_2; t)$ is defined to be the series $M = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \sum_{r=1}^{\infty} M_{(n,r)}$, where $M_{(n,r)}$ is the contribution from the piece with $(g \cdot A)^n$ in the expansion of W_1 and from the piece with $(g \cdot A)^r$ in the expansion of W_2; it is given by:

$$\begin{aligned} &M_{(n,r)}(p_1, p_2; t) \\ &= (-ig)^{(n+r)} (T^{a_1} \ldots T^{a_n})_{ij} (T^{b_1} \ldots T^{b_r})_{kl} \int d^2\mathbf{z}_t e^{i\mathbf{q}\cdot\mathbf{z}_t} \\ &\quad \times \int d\tau_1 \frac{p_1^{\mu_1}}{m} \ldots \int d\tau_n \frac{p_1^{\mu_n}}{m} \int d\omega_1 \frac{p_2^{\nu_1}}{m} \ldots \int d\omega_r \frac{p_2^{\nu_r}}{m} \\ &\quad \times \theta(\tau_n - \tau_{n-1}) \ldots \theta(\tau_2 - \tau_1) \theta(\omega_r - \omega_{r-1}) \ldots \theta(\omega_2 - \omega_1) \\ &\quad \times \langle A_{\mu_1}^{a_1}(z_t + \frac{p_1}{m}\tau_1) \ldots A_{\mu_n}^{a_n}(z_t + \frac{p_1}{m}\tau_n) A_{\nu_1}^{b_1}(\frac{p_2}{m}\omega_1) \\ &\quad \times \ldots A_{\nu_r}^{b_r}(\frac{p_2}{m}\omega_r) \rangle\,. \end{aligned} \tag{2.10}$$

Analogously, the Euclidean quantity $E(p_{1E}, p_{2E}; t)$ is defined to be the series $E = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \sum_{r=1}^{\infty} E_{(n,r)}$, where $E_{(n,r)}$ is the contribution from the pieces with $(g \cdot A_{(E)})^n$ and $(g \cdot A_{(E)})^r$ in the expansions of the Euclidean Wilson lines W_{1E} and W_{2E} respectively; it is given by:

$$\begin{aligned} &E_{(n,r)}(p_{1E}, p_{2E}; t) \\ &= (-ig)^{(n+r)} (T^{a_1} \ldots T^{a_n})_{ij} (T^{b_1} \ldots T^{b_r})_{kl} \int d^2\mathbf{z}_t e^{i\mathbf{q}\cdot\mathbf{z}_t} \\ &\quad \times \int d\tau_1 p_{1E}^{\mu_1} \ldots \int d\tau_n p_{1E}^{\mu_n} \int d\omega_1 p_{2E}^{\nu_1} \\ &\quad \ldots \times \int d\omega_r p_{2E}^{\nu_r} \theta(\tau_n - \tau_{n-1}) \ldots \theta(\tau_2 - \tau_1) \theta(\omega_r - \omega_{r-1}) \\ &\quad \ldots \times \theta(\omega_2 - \omega_1) \langle A_{(E)\mu_1}^{a_1}(z_{tE} + p_{1E}\tau_1) \\ &\quad \ldots \times A_{(E)\mu_n}^{a_n}(z_{tE} + p_{1E}\tau_n) A_{(E)\nu_1}^{b_1}(p_{2E}\omega_1) \\ &\quad \ldots \times A_{(E)\nu_r}^{b_r}(p_{2E}\omega_r) \rangle_E\,. \end{aligned} \tag{2.11}$$

A short comment is necessary at this point. The coupling constant g and the gauge field A in (2.10) and (2.11) [that is, in (2.2) and (2.8)] are the unrenormalized (*bare*) ones. One could equally well work with the renormalized quantities g_R and A_R, using for example the background-field gauge, where the unrenormalized product $g \cdot A$ is equal to the renormalized product $g_R \cdot A_R$. Anyway, not to make the notation heavier, we shall omit in what follows the index "R" for the renormalized quantities.

It is known that, making use of the correspondence

$$\begin{aligned} &A_0(x) \to i A_4^{(E)}(x_E)\,,\ A_k(x) \to A_k^{(E)}(x_E) \\ &\text{with}: \quad x^0 \to -i x_{E4}\,,\ \mathbf{x} \to \mathbf{x}_E\,, \end{aligned} \tag{2.12}$$

between the Minkowski and the Euclidean world, the following relationship is derived between the gluonic Green functions in the two theories:

$$\begin{aligned} &\tilde{B}_{(1)}^{\mu_1} \ldots \tilde{B}_{(N)}^{\mu_N} \langle A_{\mu_1}^{a_1}(\tilde{x}_{(1)}) \ldots A_{\mu_N}^{a_N}(\tilde{x}_{(N)}) \rangle \\ &= B_{(1)E\mu_1} \ldots B_{(N)E\mu_N} \\ &\quad \times \langle A_{(E)\mu_1}^{a_1}(x_{(1)E}) \ldots A_{(E)\mu_N}^{a_N}(x_{(N)E}) \rangle_E\,, \end{aligned} \tag{2.13}$$

where $x_{(i)E} = (\mathbf{x}_{(i)E}, x_{(i)E4})$ are Euclidean four-coordinates and $B_{(i)E} = (\mathbf{B}_{(i)E}, B_{(i)E4})$ are any Euclidean four-vectors, while $\tilde{x}_{(i)}$ and $\tilde{B}_{(i)}$ are Minkowski four-vectors

defined as

$$\tilde{x}_{(i)} = (\tilde{x}^0_{(i)}, \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{(i)}) = (-ix_{(i)E4}, \mathbf{x}_{(i)E}) \,,$$
$$\tilde{B}_{(i)} = (\tilde{B}^0_{(i)}, \tilde{\mathbf{B}}_{(i)}) = (-iB_{(i)E4}, \mathbf{B}_{(i)E}) \,. \quad (2.14)$$

For example, in the case $N = 2$, if one defines the gluonic propagators as

$$G^{ab}_{\mu\nu}(x,y) \equiv \langle A^a_\mu(x) A^b_\nu(y)\rangle \,,$$
$$G^{ab}_{(E)\mu\nu}(x_E,y_E) \equiv \langle A^a_{(E)\mu}(x_E) A^b_{(E)\nu}(y_E)\rangle_E \,, \quad (2.15)$$

one finds that

$$G^{ab}_{00}(\tilde{x},\tilde{y}) = -G^{ab}_{(E)44}(x_E,y_E) \,,$$
$$G^{ab}_{0j}(\tilde{x},\tilde{y}) = iG^{ab}_{(E)4j}(x_E,y_E) \,,$$
$$G^{ab}_{j0}(\tilde{x},\tilde{y}) = iG^{ab}_{(E)j4}(x_E,y_E) \,,$$
$$G^{ab}_{jk}(\tilde{x},\tilde{y}) = G^{ab}_{(E)jk}(x_E,y_E) \,, \quad (2.16)$$

where $j,k = 1,2,3$ are indices for the spatial components and $\tilde{x}$ and $\tilde{y}$ are defined as in (2.14). From these relations, one immediately derives (2.13) for $N = 2$, with $\tilde{B}$ defined as in (2.14). The result can be trivially generalized to every N.

In our specific case, we can use (2.13) to state that

$$\begin{aligned}
&\frac{\tilde{p}_1^{\mu_1}}{m} \dots \frac{\tilde{p}_1^{\mu_n}}{m} \frac{\tilde{p}_2^{\nu_1}}{m} \dots \frac{\tilde{p}_2^{\nu_r}}{m} \langle A^{a_1}_{\mu_1}(z_t + \frac{\tilde{p}_1}{m}\tau_1) \dots \\
&\dots \times A^{a_n}_{\mu_n}(z_t + \frac{\tilde{p}_1}{m}\tau_n) A^{b_1}_{\nu_1}(\frac{\tilde{p}_2}{m}\omega_1) \dots A^{b_r}_{\nu_r}(\frac{\tilde{p}_2}{m}\omega_r)\rangle \\
&= \frac{p_{1E}^{\mu_1}}{m} \dots \frac{p_{1E}^{\mu_n}}{m} \frac{p_{2E}^{\nu_1}}{m} \dots \frac{p_{2E}^{\nu_r}}{m} \\
&\quad \times \langle A^{a_1}_{(E)\mu_1}(z_{tE} + \frac{p_{1E}}{m}\tau_1) \dots A^{a_n}_{(E)\mu_n}(z_{tE} + \frac{p_{1E}}{m}\tau_n) \\
&\quad \times A^{b_1}_{(E)\nu_1}(\frac{p_{2E}}{m}\omega_1) \dots A^{b_r}_{(E)\nu_r}(\frac{p_{2E}}{m}\omega_r)\rangle_E \,, \quad (2.17)
\end{aligned}$$

where $p_{iE} = (\mathbf{p}_{iE}, p_{iE4})$, for $i = 1,2$, are two Euclidean four-vectors and $\tilde{p}_i$ are the two corresponding Minkowski four-vectors, obtained according to (2.14):

$$\tilde{p}_i = (\tilde{p}^0_i, \tilde{\mathbf{p}}_i) = (-ip_{iE4}, \mathbf{p}_{iE}) \,. \quad (2.18)$$

By virtue of the definitions (2.10) and (2.11) for $M_{(n,r)}$ and $E_{(n,r)}$ respectively, (2.17) implies that:

$$E_{(n,r)}(\frac{p_{1E}}{m}, \frac{p_{2E}}{m}; t) = M_{(n,r)}(\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{p}_2; t) \,. \quad (2.19)$$

This relation is valid for every couple of integer numbers (n,r), so that, more generally, $\sum_{n=1}^\infty \sum_{r=1}^\infty E_{(n,r)}(p_{1E}/m, p_{2E}/m; t) = \sum_{n=1}^\infty \sum_{r=1}^\infty M_{(n,r)}(\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{p}_2; t)$; and therefore, by definition:

$$E(\frac{p_{1E}}{m}, \frac{p_{2E}}{m}; t) = M(\tilde{p}_1, \tilde{p}_2; t) \,. \quad (2.20)$$

Of course M, considered as a general function of p_1, p_2 [and $q = (0,0,\mathbf{q})$], can only depend on the scalar quantities constructed with the vectors p_1, p_2 and $q = (0,0,\mathbf{q})$: the only possibilities are $q^2 = -\mathbf{q}^2 = t$, $p_1 \cdot p_2$, p_1^2 and p_2^2, since $p_1 \cdot q = p_2 \cdot q = 0$. Moreover, it is clear from the definitions (2.1) and (2.2) that M cannot depend on the (positive) normalizations of the four-vectors p_1 and p_2: in other words, we obtain the same result for M if we substitute (p_1, p_2) with $(\alpha_1 p_1, \alpha_2 p_2)$, α_1 and α_2 being arbitrary positive constants.

Therefore, M is forced to have the following form:

$$M(p_1,p_2;t) = f_M\left(\frac{p_1}{\sqrt{p_1^2}} \cdot \frac{p_2}{\sqrt{p_2^2}}; t\right) . \quad (2.21)$$

For analogous reasons, E must be of the form:

$$E(p_{1E},p_{2E};t) = f_E\left(\frac{p_{1E}}{|p_{1E}|} \cdot \frac{p_{2E}}{|p_{2E}|}; t\right) , \quad (2.22)$$

where $|B_E| \equiv \sqrt{\sum_{\mu=1}^4 B^2_{E\mu}}$ is the Euclidean norm. (A short remark about the notation: we have denoted everywhere the scalar product by a "$\cdot$", both in the Minkowski and the Euclidean world. Of course, when A and B are Minkowski four-vectors, then $A \cdot B = A^\mu B_\mu = A^0 B^0 - \mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{B}$; while, if A_E and B_E are Euclidean four-vectors, then $A_E \cdot B_E = A_{E\mu} B_{E\mu} = \mathbf{A}_E \cdot \mathbf{B}_E + A_{E4} B_{E4}$.) Therefore, the relation (2.20) can be re-formulated as follows [observing that $(p_{iE}/m)/|(p_{iE}/m)| = p_{iE}/|p_{iE}|$]

$$f_E(v_{1E} \cdot v_{2E}; t) = f_M(\bar{u}_1 \cdot \bar{u}_2; t) \,, \quad (2.23)$$

where v_{1E} and v_{2E} are the Euclidean four-versors corresponding to p_{1E} and p_{2E} ($v_{1E}^2 = v_{2E}^2 = 1$):

$$v_{1E} = \frac{p_{1E}}{|p_{1E}|}, v_{2E} = \frac{p_{2E}}{|p_{2E}|} \,, \quad (2.24)$$

while $\bar{u}_1$ and $\bar{u}_2$ are the Minkowski four-vectors defined as

$$\bar{u}_1 = \frac{\tilde{p}_1}{\sqrt{\tilde{p}_1^2}}, \bar{u}_2 = \frac{\tilde{p}_2}{\sqrt{\tilde{p}_2^2}} \,. \quad (2.25)$$

(It is clear that: $\bar{u}_1^2 = \bar{u}_2^2 = 1$.) By virtue of the $O(4)$ symmetry of the Euclidean theory, we can choose a reference frame in which the spatial vectors $\mathbf{v}_{1E}$ and $\mathbf{v}_{2E} = -\mathbf{v}_{1E}$ are along the x_1-direction. The two four-momenta v_{1E} and v_{2E} are, therefore,

$$v_{1E} = (\sin\phi, \mathbf{0}_t, \cos\phi) \,;$$
$$v_{2E} = (-\sin\phi, \mathbf{0}_t, \cos\phi) \,, \quad (2.26)$$

where ϕ is the angle formed by each trajectory with the x_4-axis. The value of ϕ is between 0 and $\pi/2$, so that the angle $\theta = 2\phi$ between the two Euclidean trajectories W_{1E} and W_{2E} lies in the range $[0,\pi]$: it is always possible to make such a choice by virtue of the $O(4)$ symmetry of the Euclidean theory. In such a reference frame, we can write $v_{1E} \cdot v_{2E} = \cos\theta$.

From (2.18) we have that $\tilde{p}_i^2 = -|p_{iE}|^2 < 0$ and $\sqrt{\tilde{p}_i^2} = -i|p_{iE}|$. The sign of the squared root is fixed in the following way: in the system where $\mathbf{p}_i = \mathbf{0}$, we have that

$\sqrt{p_i^2} = p_i^0$ (if we take $p_i^0 > 0$). This relation is continued so to have $\sqrt{\tilde{p}_i^2} = \tilde{p}_i^0$ in the system where $\tilde{\mathbf{p}}_i = \mathbf{0}$. But $\tilde{\mathbf{p}}_i = \mathbf{p}_{iE} = \mathbf{0}$, so that $\tilde{p}_i^0 = -ip_{iE4} = -i|p_{iE}|$ (if we take $p_{iE4} > 0$). Therefore, in this particular system $\sqrt{\tilde{p}^2} = \tilde{p}^0 = -ip_{iE4} = -i|p_{iE}|$. So we take $\sqrt{\tilde{p}^2} = -i|p_{iE}|$ in every system. This implies that:

$$\bar{u}_i = \frac{\tilde{p}_i}{\sqrt{\tilde{p}_i^2}} = (v_{iE4}, i\mathbf{v}_{iE})\,. \tag{2.27}$$

With the explicit form of v_{1E} and v_{2E} given by (2.26), we find that

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{u}_1 &= (\cos\phi, i\sin\phi, \mathbf{0}_t)\,, \\ \bar{u}_2 &= (\cos\phi, -i\sin\phi, \mathbf{0}_t)\,, \end{aligned} \tag{2.28}$$

and consequently $\bar{u}_1^2 = \bar{u}_2^2 = 1$ and

$$\bar{u}_1 \cdot \bar{u}_2 = \cos(2\phi) = \cos\theta\,. \tag{2.29}$$

A comparison with the expressions (2.5) for the Minkowski four-vectors u_1 and u_2 reveals that $\bar{u}_1$ and $\bar{u}_2$ are obtained from u_1 and u_2 after the following analytic continuation in the angular variables is made:

$$\chi \to i\theta\,. \tag{2.30}$$

(We remind that $\phi = \theta/2$ and $\psi = \chi/2$.) Therefore, by virtue of (2.21) and (2.22), the relation (2.23) can be formulated as follows:

$$E(\theta; t) = M(\chi \to i\theta; t)\,. \tag{2.31}$$

Let us consider, now, the Wilson-line's renormalization constant Z_W:

$$Z_W \equiv \frac{1}{N_c}\langle \mathrm{Tr}[W_1(0)]\rangle\,. \tag{2.32}$$

Again, we can use the definition of the path-ordered exponential in (2.2) to expand the Wilson line $W_1(0)$ in powers of the exponent $g \cdot A$. The quantity Z_W is thus defined to be the series $Z_W = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} Z_W^{(n)}$, where $Z_W^{(n)}$ is the contribution from the piece with $(g \cdot A)^n$ in the expansion of $W_1(0)$; it is given by:

$$\begin{aligned} Z_W^{(n)} = {} & \frac{(-ig)^n}{N_c}\mathrm{Tr}(T^{a_1}\dots T^{a_n}) \\ & \times \int d\tau_1 \frac{p_1^{\mu_1}}{m} \dots \int d\tau_n \frac{p_1^{\mu_n}}{m} \\ & \times\theta(\tau_n - \tau_{n-1})\dots\theta(\tau_2 - \tau_1) \\ & \times\langle A_{\mu_1}^{a_1}(\frac{p_1}{m}\tau_1)\dots A_{\mu_n}^{a_n}(\frac{p_1}{m}\tau_n)\rangle\,. \end{aligned} \tag{2.33}$$

In the Euclidean theory we have, analogously:

$$Z_{WE} \equiv \frac{1}{N_c}\langle \mathrm{Tr}[W_{1E}(0)]\rangle_E\,, \tag{2.34}$$

and $Z_{WE} = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} Z_{WE}^{(n)}$, with

$$\begin{aligned} Z_{WE}^{(n)} = {} & \frac{(-ig)^n}{N_c}\mathrm{Tr}(T^{a_1}\dots T^{a_n}) \int d\tau_1 p_{1E}^{\mu_1} \dots \int d\tau_n p_{1E}^{\mu_n} \\ & \times\theta(\tau_n - \tau_{n-1})\dots\theta(\tau_2 - \tau_1) \\ & \times\langle A_{(E)\mu_1}^{a_1}(p_{1E}\tau_1)\dots A_{(E)\mu_n}^{a_n}(p_{1E}\tau_n)\rangle_E\,. \end{aligned} \tag{2.35}$$

Using (2.13), we can derive the following relation:

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{\tilde{p}_1^{\mu_1}}{m}\dots\frac{\tilde{p}_1^{\mu_n}}{m}\langle A_{\mu_1}^{a_1}(\frac{\tilde{p}_1}{m}\tau_1)\dots A_{\mu_n}^{a_n}(\frac{\tilde{p}_1}{m}\tau_n)\rangle \\ & = \frac{p_{1E}^{\mu_1}}{m}\dots\frac{p_{1E}^{\mu_n}}{m} \\ & \quad \times\langle A_{(E)\mu_1}^{a_1}(\frac{p_{1E}}{m}\tau_1)\dots A_{(E)\mu_n}^{a_n}(\frac{p_{1E}}{m}\tau_n)\rangle_E\,, \end{aligned} \tag{2.36}$$

where, as usual, $p_{1E} = (\mathbf{p}_{1E}, p_{1E4})$ and $\tilde{p}_1 = (\tilde{p}_1^0, \tilde{\mathbf{p}}_1) = (-ip_{1E4}, \mathbf{p}_{1E})$. If we define

$$\begin{aligned} Z_W \equiv h_M(p_1)\ ,\ Z_W^{(n)} = h_M^{(n)}(p_1)\,, \\ Z_{WE} \equiv h_E(p_{1E})\ ,\ Z_{WE}^{(n)} = h_E^{(n)}(p_{1E})\,, \end{aligned} \tag{2.37}$$

from (2.36) we obtain

$$h_E^{(n)}(\frac{p_{1E}}{m}) = h_M^{(n)}(\tilde{p}_1)\,. \tag{2.38}$$

This relation is valid for every integer number n, so that we also have, more generally, $\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} h_E^{(n)}(p_{1E}/m) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} h_M^{(n)}(\tilde{p}_1)$; and therefore, by definition:

$$h_E(\frac{p_{1E}}{m}) = h_M(\tilde{p}_1)\,. \tag{2.39}$$

From the definitions (2.32) and (2.2), $h_M(p_1)$, considered as a function of a general four-vector p_1, is a scalar function constructed with the only four-vector p_1. In addition, $h_M(p_1)$ does not depend on the (positive) normalization of p_1: in other words, $h_M(\alpha p_1) = h_M(p_1)$ for every positive α. Therefore, $h_M(p_1)$ is forced to have the form

$$h_M(p_1) = H_M(u_1^2) = H_M(1)\,, \tag{2.40}$$

where $u_1 = p_1/\sqrt{p_1^2}$ ($u_1^2 = 1$). In a perfectly analogous way, for the Euclidean case we have that:

$$h_E(p_{1E}) = H_E(v_{1E}^2) = H_E(1)\,, \tag{2.41}$$

where $v_{1E} = p_{1E}/|p_{1E}|$ ($v_{1E}^2 = 1$). Therefore, the first member of (2.39) is just equal to $h_E(p_{1E}/m) = H_E(v_{1E}^2) = H_E(1)$ [observing that $(p_{1E}/m)/|(p_{1E}/m)| = p_{1E}/|p_{1E}|$], and the second member is given by $h_M(\tilde{p}_1) = H_M(\bar{u}_1^2) = H_M(1)$, where $\bar{u}_1 = \tilde{p}_1/\sqrt{\tilde{p}_1^2}$ ($\bar{u}_1^2 = 1$). Then (2.39) implies that

$$H_E(1) = H_M(1)\,. \tag{2.42}$$

That is, from (2.37), (2.40) and (2.41):

$$Z_{WE} = Z_W\,. \tag{2.43}$$

Combining this identity with (2.31), we find the following relation between the amplitudes $g_M(\chi; t) = M(\chi; t)/Z_W^2$ and $g_E(\theta; t) = E(\theta; t)/Z_{WE}^2$:

$$\begin{aligned} & g_M(\chi; t) \underset{\chi\to i\theta}{\longrightarrow} g_M(i\theta; t) = g_E(\theta; t)\,; \\ \text{or}: \quad & g_E(\theta; t) \underset{\theta\to -i\chi}{\longrightarrow} g_E(-i\chi; t) = g_M(\chi; t)\,. \end{aligned} \tag{2.44}$$

We have derived the relation (2.44) of analytic continuation for a non-Abelian gauge theory with gauge group

$SU(N_c)$. It is clear, from the derivation given above, that the same result is valid also for an Abelian gauge theory (QED). We have thus completely generalized the results of [4], where the same relation (2.44) had been proven for an Abelian gauge theory (QED) in the so-called *quenched* approximation and for a non-Abelian gauge theory (QCD) up to the fourth order in the renormalized coupling constant in perturbation theory. The approach adopted in [4] consisted in explicitly evaluating the amplitudes $g_M(\chi;t)$ and $g_E(\theta;t)$, in the Minkowski and the Euclidean world, in some given approximation (such as the *quenched* approximation) or up to some order in perturbation theory and in finally comparing the two expressions so obtained. Instead, in this paper we have given a general proof of (2.44), which essentially exploits the relation (2.13) between the gluonic Green functions in the two theories.

Therefore, it is possible to reconstruct the high-energy scattering amplitude by evaluating a correlation of two infinite Wilson lines forming a certain angle θ in Euclidean four-space, then by continuing this quantity in the angular variable, $\theta \to -i\chi$, where χ is the hyperbolic angle between the two Wilson lines in Minkowski space-time, and finally by performing the limit $\chi \to \infty$ (i.e., $\beta \to 1$). In fact, the high-energy scattering amplitude is given by

$$\begin{aligned} M_{fi} &= \langle \psi_{i\alpha}(p_1')\psi_{k\gamma}(p_2')|M|\psi_{j\beta}(p_1)\psi_{l\delta}(p_2)\rangle \\ &\underset{s\to\infty}{\sim} -i\cdot 2s\cdot \delta_{\alpha\beta}\delta_{\gamma\delta}\cdot g_M(\chi\to\infty;t)\,. \end{aligned} \tag{2.45}$$

The quantity $g_M(\chi;t)$, defined by (2.1) in the Minkowski world, is linked to the corresponding quantity $g_E(\theta;t)$, defined by (2.7) in the Euclidean world, by the analytic continuation (2.44) in the angular variables. The important thing to note here is that the quantity $g_E(\theta;t)$, defined in the Euclidean world, may be computed non perturbatively by well-known and well-established techniques, for example by means of the formulation of the theory on the lattice. In all cases, once one has obtained the quantity $g_E(\theta;t)$, one still has to perform an analytic continuation in the angular variable $\theta \to -i\chi$, and finally one has to extrapolate to the limit $\chi \to \infty$ (i.e., $\beta \to 1$). For deriving the dependence on s one exploits the fact that both β and ψ (or equivalently χ) are dependent on s. In fact, from $E = m/\sqrt{1-\beta^2}$ and from $s = 4E^2$, one immediately finds that

$$\beta = \sqrt{1-\frac{4m^2}{s}}\,. \tag{2.46}$$

By inverting this equation and using the relation $\beta = \tanh\psi$, we derive:

$$s = 4m^2\cosh^2\psi = 2m^2(\cosh\chi + 1)\,. \tag{2.47}$$

Therefore, in the high-energy limit $s \to \infty$ (or $\beta \to 1$), the hyperbolic angle $\chi = 2\psi$ is essentially equal to the logarithm of s (for a finite non-zero quark mass m):

$$\chi = 2\psi \underset{s\to\infty}{\sim} \ln s\,. \tag{2.48}$$

As an example, we have shown in [4] how, using this approach, one can re-derive the well-known *Regge Pole Model* [11]. Of course, the most interesting results are expected from an *exact* non perturbative approach, for example by directly computing $g_E(\theta;t)$ on the lattice: a considerable progress could be achieved along this direction in the near future.

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