

Lorentzian CFT 3-point functions in momentum space

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ABSTRACT

In a conformal field theory, two and three-point functions of scalar operators and conserved currents are completely determined, up to constants, by conformal invariance. The expressions for these correlators in Euclidean signature are long known in position space, and were fully worked out in recent years in momentum space. In Lorentzian signature, the position-space correlators simply follow from the Euclidean ones by means of the $i\epsilon$ prescription. In this paper, we compute the Lorentzian correlators in momentum space and in arbitrary dimensions for three scalar operators by means of a formal Wick rotation. We explain how tensorial three-point correlators can be obtained and, in particular, compute the correlator with two identical scalars and one energy-momentum tensor. As an application, we show that expectation values of the ANEC operator simplify in this approach.

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1 Introduction

Much work on conformal field theories, and quantum field theories in general, has focused on the Euclidean theory rather than the Lorentzian theory. In the former setting, correlation functions are simpler and obey satisfying properties, for example they are symmetric under permutations of operators or they are analytic when points are non-coincident. Furthermore, one can always ‘return’ to the Lorentzian theory provided that certain requirements are satisfied via the Osterwalder-Schrader reconstruction theorem [1]. However, it has recently been shown that a lot of mileage can be gained by instead thinking of the theory in the Lorentzian setting. While Wightman functions do not share the simplicity of their Euclidean cousins, their richer structure encodes important information about the theory. One such powerful property is causality, which has been recently used to, for example, prove the average null energy condition (ANEC) [2] or in the analytic bootstrap program, see for example Refs. [3–7], which among other things has lead to the Lorentzian inversion formula for CFTs [8].

Despite the recent interest in Lorentzian CFTs (see for example Refs. [9, 10] among many others), an expression of the correlation functions in momentum space beyond 2 points has hitherto been lacking. Even the Euclidean correlators in momentum space have only been fully worked out relatively recently [11–17], despite the need for them mainly from applications to cosmology in the context of which they were partially studied [18, 19].

It is well known that conformal symmetry places restrictions on the form of correlators in a conformal field theory, fixing the 2-point functions, up to a normalisation, and 3-point functions, up to constants that are part of the CFT data. Solving the constraints on correlators from conformal symmetry in Euclidean signature has been done in position [20–22] and momentum space [12, 16]. The complication in momentum space is that the special conformal Ward identity is a second order differential equation of generalised hypergeometric type [12], whereas in position space the solutions can be shown to be derivatives of powers of separation distances between the points at which operators are inserted. Directly Fourier transforming the position space correlators, while manageable for the scalar 3-point function [12], is unwieldy for tensorial correlators.

Given the recent attention to Lorentzian CFTs and the fact that it is often convenient to work in momentum space, in this paper we study 3-point functions of Lorentzian CFTs in momentum space. While these correlators can in principle be found by Fourier transforming the Lorentzian correlators in position space, which is already more difficult than the analogous Fourier transform in Euclidean space, we instead show that these correlators can be derived from the Euclidean expressions by a careful Wick rotation. The advantage of working in Lorentzian space is that the $i\epsilon$ prescription precludes coincident singularities, which means that the functions do not require regularisation or renormalisation.

As an application of our results, we revisit the expectation values of the ANEC operator on the Hofman-Maldacena states [23] produced by scalar operators, which were calculated using correlators in position space. While this result is not new, it is illustrative of the fact that such calculations are much more natural in momentum space where interesting features are not obscured. For example, it becomes clearer that the Hofman-Maldacena quantities are an expectation value. We believe that this perspective will also be indispensable in attempts to understand the implications of ANEC away from criticality.

We begin, in section 2, by outlining the general procedure for Wick rotating from Euclidean to Lorentzian correlators. We use the scalar 2-point function as an example to elucidate the approach, which has applicability beyond the subject of interest in this paper. In section 3, it is

shown that the scalar 3-point function can be bootstrapped from the 2-point function results and given in terms of an integral over an auxiliary momentum; as a check, in appendix B we arrive at the same result in 4-dimensions by Fourier transforming the 3-point function in position space. We also present the scalar 3-point function as an integral over triple Bessel functions, section 3.1, by Wick rotating the analogous Euclidean 3-point function given in terms of an integral of three K -Bessel functions. In the Lorentzian case, the integral includes both Bessel and modified Bessel functions. In section 4, we give a general prescription for determining tensorial correlators from scalar correlators and apply this to find the correlation function of the energy-momentum tensor and two identical scalar operators. This example is particularly considered, not only because it is simple enough that the general prescription can be illustrated clearly, but also on account of its application in section 5. As a demonstration of the utility of Lorentzian correlators in momentum space, we calculate the expectation value of the ANEC operator in a state produced by a scalar operator. In appendix A, we set out our notations and conventions.

2 2-point function

We consider the 2-point function of scalar operators. This provides a useful playing ground to explore the relation between Euclidean and Lorentzian correlators in position and momentum space. For time-ordered 2-point function or 2-point functions of higher-spin operators see Ref. [24].

The Euclidean 2-point function of scalar operators \mathcal{O}_1 and \mathcal{O}_2 with dimensions Δ_1, Δ_2 is given by

$$G_E(x) \equiv \langle \mathcal{O}_1(x) \mathcal{O}_2(0) \rangle_E = \frac{\delta_{\Delta_1, \Delta_2}}{x^{2\Delta}}, \quad (2.1)$$

where $\Delta \equiv \Delta_1 = \Delta_2$; we have set the normalisation constant to be one and we have used translation invariance to set one of the positions to the origin. The 2-point function is non-zero only if the two operators have the same conformal dimension— we assume this in the expressions that follow and henceforth drop the Kronecker delta.¹

The Lorentzian 2-point function follows from performing a Wick rotation to Lorentzian time $t_E = it$ in the Euclidean correlator (2.1). Since the correlator has a branch cut in the t_E plane starting at $i|\vec{x}|$ and running upwards and from $-i\infty$ until $-i|\vec{x}|$, the Wick rotation is ambiguous for $|t| \geq |\vec{x}|$: t can be defined to be either on the right or on the left of the cut (see figure 1).

¹If the operators are characterised by other quantum numbers, they must also both have the same number in order for the 2-point function to be non-trivial. We also assume this henceforth.

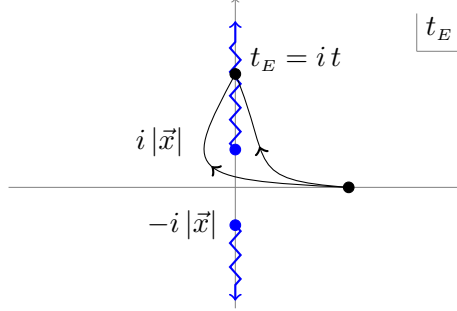


Figure 1: The two different Wick rotations from Euclidean to Lorentzian time, corresponding to passing either to the right or the left of the branch cut, define the two possible Wightman 2-point functions. The contour on the right corresponds to $\langle \mathcal{O}(x)\mathcal{O}(0) \rangle$ and the contour on the left to $\langle \mathcal{O}(0)\mathcal{O}(x) \rangle$.

This ambiguity can be resolved by adding either a positive or a negative infinitesimal real part to t_E , $t_E = i(t \pm i\epsilon)$. Each one of these two options defines then a different Wightman function, and the so-called $i\epsilon$ prescription dictates that the imaginary part of the Lorentzian time of the operator to the left is more negative than that of the operator to the right, *viz.*

$$G(x) \equiv \langle \mathcal{O}(x)\mathcal{O}(0) \rangle = \frac{1}{(-(t - i\epsilon)^2 + |\vec{x}|^2)^\Delta}, \quad (2.2)$$

where for the ordering given above $\epsilon > 0$. For the Wightman function with the operator $\mathcal{O}(0)$ to the left, we then require $\epsilon < 0$.

An intuitive way to understand the $i\epsilon$ prescription is that given a particular ordering of (any number of) operators, the $i\epsilon$'s are chosen in such a way that

$$\dots e^{iH(t_i - i\epsilon_i)} \mathcal{O}_i(\vec{x}_i) e^{-iH((t_i - t_j) - i(\epsilon_i - \epsilon_j))} \mathcal{O}_j(\vec{x}_j) e^{-iH(t_j - i\epsilon_j)} \dots \quad (2.3)$$

is well defined when the Hamiltonian is bounded from below. This means that in the correlator, an operator $\mathcal{O}_i(t_i - i\epsilon_i)$ to the left of $\mathcal{O}_j(t_j - i\epsilon_j)$ requires $\epsilon_i > \epsilon_j$ to have a decaying exponential.²

The momentum space expression for both the Euclidean and Lorentzian 2-point functions can be obtained by simply Fourier transforming the expressions (2.1) and (2.2) respectively. The Euclidean 2-point function in momentum space is

$$G_E^\Delta(p) \equiv \langle\langle \mathcal{O}(p)\mathcal{O}(-p) \rangle\rangle_E = \frac{\pi^{d/2} \Gamma(d/2 - \Delta)}{2^{2\Delta-d} \Gamma(\Delta)} |p|^{2\Delta-d}, \quad (2.4)$$

²For a review of the $i\epsilon$ prescription for n -point functions and its interpretation in terms of the different Wick rotations around the branch cuts see [5].

where we have removed the momentum-conserving δ -function ³

$$\langle \mathcal{O}(p)\mathcal{O}(q) \rangle_E = (2\pi)^d \delta^{(d)}(p+q) G_E(p), \quad (2.5)$$

and d is the dimension of space. Despite the Fourier transform requiring $0 < \text{Re } \Delta < d/2$ for convergence, the above expression is analytic in Δ and d and can therefore be analytically-continued to any conformal dimension $\Delta - d/2 \notin \mathbb{N}^0$ above the unitarity bound $\Delta > 0$.

When $\Delta - d/2 \in \mathbb{N}^0$, the Euclidean 2-point function has no Fourier transform and must be regularised and renormalised. This renormalisation is what leads to anomalies. In position space, the 2-point function can be regularised by differential regularisation [25]. The renormalised 2-point function depends on the renormalisation scale, and this dependence is given by the trace anomaly coefficient of a background scalar current [22]. In momentum space, the 2-point function can be regularised by dimensional regularisation, as is clear from the fact that the problem occurs for negative integer arguments of the Γ -function in (2.4), and the renormalised 2-point function gains a logarithmic dependence in the momentum p .

The Lorentzian 2-point function in momentum space follows from the Fourier transform of (2.2), ⁴

$$G^\Delta(p) \equiv \langle\langle \mathcal{O}(p)\mathcal{O}(-p) \rangle\rangle = \frac{\pi^{d/2+1}}{2^{2\Delta-d-1} \Gamma(\Delta - d/2 + 1) \Gamma(\Delta)} \theta(p^0 - |\vec{p}|) |p|^{2\Delta-d}, \quad (2.6)$$

where unambiguously

$$|p| = \sqrt{(p^0)^2 - |\vec{p}|^2} \quad (2.7)$$

thanks to the Heaviside step function,

$$\theta(x) = \begin{cases} 1 & x > 0, \\ 0 & x \leq 0. \end{cases} \quad (2.8)$$

In all expressions where the norm of a Lorentzian momentum appears, the argument inside the square-root can unambiguously be written without the absolute-value sign because of the presence of a step function.

The other Wightman function corresponding to the Fourier transform of $\langle \mathcal{O}(0)\mathcal{O}(x) \rangle$, i.e. the

³We will often suppress the explicit dependence of G_E^Δ on the dimension of the operators, and write $G_E(p)$.

⁴See footnote 3.

Fourier transform of (2.2) but with negative ϵ , is

$$G^\Delta(-p) \equiv \langle\langle \mathcal{O}(-p)\mathcal{O}(p) \rangle\rangle = \frac{\pi^{d/2+1}}{2^{2\Delta-d-1} \Gamma(\Delta - d/2 + 1) \Gamma(\Delta)} \theta(-p^0 - |\vec{p}|) |p|^{2\Delta-d}. \quad (2.9)$$

It becomes clear that the ordering of the operators is reflected in the sign of p^0 in the Heaviside step function. At a technical level, after the \vec{x} integrals have been done, there is a factor of $e^{i(p^0 - |\vec{p}|)t}$ for $G(p)$ or a factor of $e^{i(p^0 + |\vec{p}|)t}$ for $G(-p)$, and the integrand only has a singularity in the upper or lower half t -plane respectively. Therefore, the integral over t is zero unless $p^0 - |\vec{p}| \geq 0$ or $p^0 + |\vec{p}| \leq 0$ in each case, thus producing the respective step functions.

It is straightforward to see that since the operators are the same, swapping the ordering just amounts to swapping their respective momenta, p and $-p$.

Both Wightman functions vanish when the momentum is spacelike or null, so they only have support in the future momentum-space light-cone in the case of $G(p)$, or the past momentum-space light-cone in the case of $G(-p)$.

As opposed to the Euclidean 2-point function (2.4), which has a Γ -function in the numerator, a factor $\Gamma(\Delta - d/2 + 1)$ appears now in the denominator of the Lorentzian 2-point function, (2.6). Therefore the Wightman functions do not diverge for particular values of Δ , and so do not require renormalisation.

It is already clear at the level of the 2-point function that the Wick rotation from Euclidean to Lorentzian signature in momentum space is not as straightforward as the $i\epsilon$ prescription in position space. Indeed, even if one can ‘prescribe’ the correct step functions (as following from the above singularity-based or support arguments), the Δ - and d -dependent coefficients are hard to predict. Furthermore, for higher-point functions even ‘prescribing’ the correct step functions becomes difficult. Therefore, a pertinent question is how to obtain the Wightman function expressions (2.6) and (2.9) from the Euclidean 2-point function (2.4), instead of from a direct Fourier transform. We address this next.

Consider the Euclidean 2-point function as a Fourier transform,

$$G_E(x) = \int \frac{d^d p}{(2\pi)^d} e^{ip \cdot x} G_E(p), \quad (2.10)$$

where it is understood that the volume element and the inner product in the exponential are Euclidean. As reviewed above, the Lorentzian function in position space is easily obtained by a

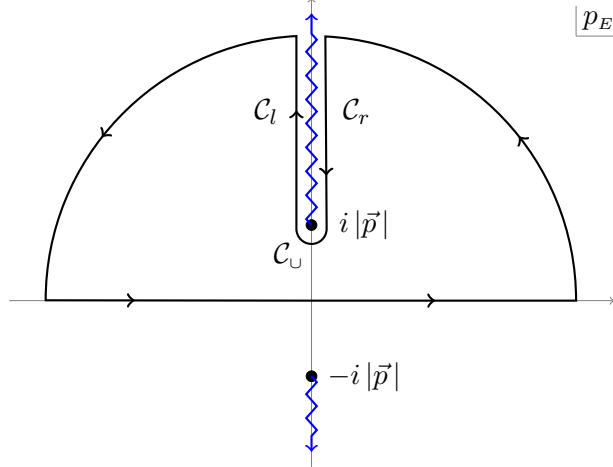


Figure 2: Closed contour of integration. The contribution from the arc at infinity vanishes, as well as that from the cup around the branch point C_U .

Wick rotation together with the $i\epsilon$ prescription, hence we can write:

$$G(x) = G_E(i(t - i\epsilon), \vec{x}) = \int \frac{d^{d-1}\vec{p}}{(2\pi)^{d-1}} e^{i\vec{p}\cdot\vec{x}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{dp_E}{2\pi} e^{-p_E(t-i\epsilon)} G_E(p_E, \vec{p}), \quad (2.11)$$

where for the last equality we have used (2.10).

The integral above is no longer a Fourier transform, but it can be recast into a Fourier transform by Wick-rotating p_E to the imaginary axis. However, this must be done carefully, taking into consideration the analytical properties of $G_E(p_E, \vec{p})$ on the complex p_E plane. Indeed from (2.4) it is clear that for general Δ , $G_E(p_E, \vec{p})$ has branch points at $p_E = \pm i|\vec{p}|$ and $|p_E| \rightarrow \infty$. We consider then extending the contour of integration along the real axis, into the upper half of the complex plane and around the branch cut from $i|\vec{p}|$ to $i\infty$, forming the closed contour depicted in figure 2. Because of the $i\epsilon$ term in the exponential with $\epsilon > 0$, the integral over the arc at infinity vanishes. If the operators were ordered oppositely so that ϵ were negative, we would instead close the contour on the lower half complex plane to get a vanishing contribution from the arc at infinity.

Since the function is analytic inside the closed contour, the integral in (2.11) is equal to that along the contours on each side of the branch cut (C_r and C_l in figure 2), hence

$$G(x) = - \int \frac{d^{d-1}\vec{p}}{(2\pi)^{d-1}} e^{i\vec{p}\cdot\vec{x}} \int_{C_r \cup C_l} \frac{dp_E}{2\pi} e^{-p_E(t-i\epsilon)} G_E(p_E, \vec{p}). \quad (2.12)$$

Changing now the integration variable to $p^0 = -ip^E$ implements the Wick rotation for the time component of the momentum. Taking into account the phase difference on both sides of the cut, the p_E integral becomes

$$-2 \sin(\pi(\Delta - d/2)) \frac{\pi^{d/2} \Gamma(d/2 - \Delta)}{2^{2\Delta-d} \Gamma(\Delta)} \int_{|\vec{p}|}^{\infty} dp^0 e^{-ip^0(t-i\epsilon)} ((p^0)^2 - |\vec{p}|^2)^{\Delta-d/2},$$

which when plugged back into (2.12) gives $G(x)$ as a Fourier transform

$$G(x) = \int \frac{d^d p}{(2\pi)^d} e^{ip \cdot x} \frac{\pi^{d/2+1} \theta(p^0 - |\vec{p}|)}{2^{2\Delta-d-1} \Gamma(\Delta - d/2 + 1) \Gamma(\Delta)} |p|^{2\Delta-d}, \quad (2.13)$$

whose integrand corresponds to the Wightman 2-point function in momentum space $G(p)$. And indeed, the above reproduces expression (2.6) obtained by Fourier transforming. Namely, using the Euclidean Fourier transform, we have derived the Lorentzian Fourier transform.

The other Wightman function (2.9) can be found by complex conjugation of (2.13) and letting $p \rightarrow -p$ in the integral, since it corresponds to letting $i\epsilon \rightarrow -i\epsilon$ on the right-hand side of (2.2).

With this second method of computing the momentum-space 2-point function by means of a formal Wick rotation, the Heaviside step function appears as a result of deforming the contour around the branch point in the complex plane where the momentum becomes null. This is analogous to the fact that in position space the ordering of operators in Lorentzian correlators is given by how one analytically continues around branch points corresponding to points where operators become null-separated, and hence no longer commute with each other by microcausality [1, 5].

This second method has the advantage that it does not require us to perform complicated integrals, as opposed to the Fourier transform method.

In deriving (2.13), we have assumed that $\Delta > 0$ and $\Delta - d/2$ is non-integer. The positivity condition is required because the Euclidean Fourier transform (2.4), from which we start our analysis, is derived using Schwinger parametrisation (A.3). However, we observe that as long as Δ is not an integer, the result (2.4) can be analytically continued to negative Δ . The condition that $\Delta > 0$ is a natural consequence of unitarity, but as we will see in the next section, in order to derive 3-point functions in momentum space in some cases, we require the expressions for G_E and G (as given by the Fourier transform of the position space expressions) for $\Delta < 0$. Therefore, we need to consider the case when $-\Delta \in \mathbb{N}^0$.

The second condition, $\Delta - d/2$ a non-integer, is required because in performing the Wick

rotation, we have assumed the existence of branch points, while an integer exponent $\Delta - d/2$ leads to poles instead. When $\Delta - d/2 \in \mathbb{N}^0$, we have already remarked that the Euclidean expression requires regularisation and renormalisation, hence in this case, the formal Wick rotation method cannot be implemented as above. However, the Lorentzian expression (2.6) as computed by Fourier transform is nevertheless valid for these cases, essentially because the $i\epsilon$ prescription precludes the existence of contact singularities in the correlator. Therefore, we only consider separately the case $d/2 - \Delta \in \mathbb{N}$.

We consider these two cases below:

Case I: $-\Delta \in \mathbb{N}^0$

Renaming $-\Delta = n \in \mathbb{N}^0$, the Euclidean 2-point function can simply be found in this case by using

$$\int d^d x x^{2n} e^{-ip \cdot x} = (2\pi)^d (-\partial_p^2)^n \delta^{(d)}(p), \quad n \in \mathbb{N}^0. \quad (2.14)$$

In Lorentzian signature we have the same expression with x^2 being the Lorentzian norm, and hence with

$$\partial_p^2 = \eta^{\mu\nu} \partial_{p^\mu} \partial_{p^\nu}. \quad (2.15)$$

Case II: $d/2 - \Delta \in \mathbb{N}$

In this case, there are two possibilities. If d is an even integer, for large enough \mathbb{N} such that $\Delta < 0$, this case becomes the same as case I. For small enough \mathbb{N} such that $\Delta > 0$, or more generically when d is not an even integer, this case is different from the previous, and we address it in the following.

Since the Euclidean 2-point function (2.4) is well-defined when $d/2 - \Delta = n \in \mathbb{N}$, we can proceed as in the general case and perform a Wick rotation so as to rewrite (2.11) as a Lorentzian Fourier transform.

The p_E integral in (c.f. (2.11))

$$G(x) = \frac{2^{2n} \pi^{d/2} \Gamma(n)}{\Gamma(d/2 - n)} \int \frac{d^{d-1} \vec{p}}{(2\pi)^{d-1}} e^{i\vec{p} \cdot \vec{x}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{dp_E}{2\pi} \frac{e^{-p_E(t-i\epsilon)}}{|p|^{2n}}, \quad (2.16)$$

can now no longer be rotated in the same way, since its integrand has poles rather than branch cuts. However, this integral is now easier as it can be evaluated by the residue theorem. The resulting expression can then be rewritten in terms of an integral over p^0 with a Dirac δ -function,

and gives

$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{dp_E}{2\pi} \frac{e^{-p_E(t-i\epsilon)}}{(p_E^2 + |\vec{p}|^2)^n} = \frac{2\pi}{\Gamma(n)} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{dp^0}{2\pi} \frac{e^{-ip^0(t-i\epsilon)}}{(p^0 + |\vec{p}|)^n} \partial_{p^0}^{n-1} \delta(p^0 - |\vec{p}|). \quad (2.17)$$

In the above step, the derivatives acting on the Dirac δ -function come from integrating by parts the derivatives coming from the residue of the integral. Therefore, for $d/2 - \Delta = n \in \mathbb{N}$

$$\int d^d x \frac{e^{-ip \cdot x}}{(-(t-i\epsilon)^2 + |\vec{x}|^2)^\Delta} = \frac{2^{2n+1} \pi^{d/2+1}}{\Gamma(d/2 - n)} \frac{\partial_{p^0}^{n-1} \delta(p^0 - |\vec{p}|)}{(p^0 + |\vec{p}|)^n}. \quad (2.18)$$

In summary, from equations (2.6), (2.14) and (2.18), the Lorentzian 2-point function of scalars with dimensions Δ is

$$G^\Delta(p) = \int d^d x \frac{e^{-ip \cdot x}}{(-(t-i\epsilon)^2 + |\vec{x}|^2)^\Delta} = \begin{cases} (2\pi)^d (-\partial_p^2)^{-\Delta} \delta^{(d)}(p) & -\Delta \in \mathbb{N}^0 \\ \frac{\pi^{d/2+1}}{2^{2\Delta-d-1} \Gamma(\Delta)} \frac{\partial_{p^0}^{d/2-\Delta-1} \delta(p^0 - |\vec{p}|)}{(p^0 + |\vec{p}|)^{d/2-\Delta}} & d/2 - \Delta \in \mathbb{N} \\ \frac{\pi^{d/2+1} \theta(p^0 - |\vec{p}|)}{2^{2\Delta-d-1} \Gamma(\Delta-d/2+1) \Gamma(\Delta)} |p|^{2\Delta-d} & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \quad (2.19)$$

3 3-point function of scalars

In this section we compute the Lorentzian 3-point function of scalar operators in momentum space. We do this by means of a formal Wick rotation of the Euclidean correlator, and obtain (in the general case) two different expressions for it, as originating from two analogous Euclidean expressions: the momentum-integrated and the triple-Bessel expressions. In appendix B we compute the 3-point correlator from a direct Fourier transform, albeit for the case of $d = 4$ dimensions.

The 3-point function of scalar operators in position space is given by [22],

$$\langle \mathcal{O}_1(x_1) \mathcal{O}_2(x_2) \mathcal{O}_3(x_3) \rangle = \frac{c_{123}}{(x_{23}^2)^{\beta_1} (x_{13}^2)^{\beta_2} (x_{12}^2)^{\beta_3}}, \quad (3.1)$$

where

$$\beta_j = \frac{\Delta_t}{2} - \Delta_j, \quad \Delta_t = \Delta_1 + \Delta_2 + \Delta_3, \quad \Delta_t = 2\beta_t. \quad (3.2)$$

The conformal dimension of operator \mathcal{O}_j is Δ_j and the norm $|x_{ij}|^2$ is the Euclidean, Lorentzian norm of the separation $x_i - x_j$ in Euclidean, Lorentzian signature respectively. In Lorentzian

signature we also specify an $i\epsilon$ prescription, $t_j - i\epsilon_j$, that dictates the ordering of operators as discussed in the previous section. In the above correlator it is $\epsilon_1 > \epsilon_2 > \epsilon_3$. The factor c_{123} is the structure constant and depends on the conformal dimensions Δ_j of the operators.

The Fourier transform, and hence the correlator in momentum space is then given by

$$\begin{aligned}\langle \mathcal{O}_1(p_1) \mathcal{O}_2(p_2) \mathcal{O}_3(p_3) \rangle &= \int \prod_{j=1}^3 \left(d^d x_j e^{-ip_j \cdot x_j} \right) \frac{c_{123}}{(x_{23}^2)^{\beta_1} (x_{13}^2)^{\beta_2} (x_{12}^2)^{\beta_3}} \\ &= (2\pi)^d \delta^{(d)}(p_1 + p_2 + p_3) C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}),\end{aligned}\tag{3.3}$$

where

$$C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}) = c_{123} \int d^d x_1 d^d x_2 \frac{e^{-ip_1 \cdot x_1} e^{-ip_2 \cdot x_2}}{(x_2^2)^{\beta_1} (x_1^2)^{\beta_2} (x_{12}^2)^{\beta_3}}.\tag{3.4}$$

In the above, we have used the translation invariance of the position space correlator to extract a momentum preserving δ -function. The δ -function stripped correlator is also denoted using double angle brackets in the literature,

$$C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}) \equiv \langle\langle \mathcal{O}_1(p_1) \mathcal{O}_2(p_2) \mathcal{O}_3(p_3) \rangle\rangle.\tag{3.5}$$

We will suppress the momentum dependence of $C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\})$, *viz.* write $C(\{\beta_j\})$, when the momentum dependence is clear.

To compute the δ -function stripped correlator (3.4), it is convenient to reexpress it as a product of three 2-point functions, so that we can use the expression for the latter presented in section 2. This can be achieved at the expense of an extra momentum integral,

$$C(\{\beta_j\}) = c_{123} \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} G^{\beta_1}(p_2 + k) G^{\beta_2}(p_1 - k) G^{\beta_3}(k).\tag{3.6}$$

The same holds in the Euclidean case for $C_E(\{\beta_j\})$, but with the 2-point functions above given by G_E . In this case, when the β_j s are general, we insert the 2-point function result (2.4), and the resulting δ -function stripped correlator is

$$C_E(\{\beta_j\}) = c_{123} \pi^{3d/2} 2^{3d-2\beta_t} \prod_{j=1}^3 \frac{\Gamma(d/2 - \beta_j)}{\Gamma(\beta_j)} \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{1}{|p_2 + k|^{d-2\beta_1} |p_1 - k|^{d-2\beta_2} |k|^{d-2\beta_3}}.\tag{3.7}$$

This expression for the Euclidean 3-point function is not well defined for two special sets of values of the β_j s. These are in correspondence with the special values of β_j for which the Euclidean

2-point function itself is not well-defined, since the coefficient in (3.7) is inherited from the 2-point functions product. First, because of the Γ -functions in the coefficient's numerator, (3.7) is divergent when

$$\beta_j - \frac{d}{2} \in \mathbb{N}^0, \quad (3.8)$$

whereupon the correlation function needs to be regularised. This has been done in [13].

The second special case is when one of the β_j s is a non-positive integer,

$$-\beta_j \in \mathbb{N}^0, \quad (3.9)$$

for which (3.7) would seem to vanish because of the corresponding Γ -function in the denominator. (This is inherited from the ‘case I’ of the 2-point function, see (2.14).) Notice that this can only be the case for one of the β_j s. For two or all of the β_j s to be simultaneously non-positive, at least one of the conformal dimensions Δ_j would have to be negative, and this would violate the unitarity bound.

As explained in section 2, in computing the Fourier transform G_E (2.4), the Schwinger parametrisation (A.3) is used for the distance factor $|x|^{2\beta}$ in the denominator of the position-space expression—this is where the $\Gamma(\beta_j)$ in the denominator of G_E come from. This parametrisation can no longer be used if β_j is a non-positive integer. However, this Fourier transform can be computed differently for this particular case, and as shown in section 2 is given by derivatives of a momentum Dirac delta, equation (2.14). Therefore, for example,

$$C_E(-n, \beta_2, \beta_3) = c_{123} \frac{\pi^d \Gamma(d/2 - \beta_2) \Gamma(d/2 - \beta_3)}{4^{\beta_2 + \beta_3 - d} \Gamma(\beta_2) \Gamma(\beta_3)} (-\partial_{p_2}^2)^n \frac{1}{|p_1 + p_2|^{d-2\beta_2} |p_2|^{d-2\beta_3}}. \quad (3.10)$$

We now turn to the Lorentzian case. Since the 3-point function (3.6) is given in terms of the 2-point functions G^{β_j} , we consider the case where β_j s are general separately from the special ‘cases I and II’ discussed in section 2, for which the 2-point function is given in terms of a Dirac δ -function.

We first consider the general case, i.e. when β_j s are such that

$$\beta_j \notin \left\{ \frac{d}{2} - \mathbb{N}, -\mathbb{N}^0 \right\}. \quad (3.11)$$

Using equations (3.6) and (2.19),

$$C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}) = c(\{\beta_j\}) \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{\theta(p_2^0 + k^0 - |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|) \theta(p_1^0 - k^0 - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|) \theta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|)}{|p_2 + k|^{d-2\beta_1} |p_1 - k|^{d-2\beta_2} |k|^{d-2\beta_3}} \quad (3.12)$$

with

$$c(\{\beta_j\}) = c_{123} \frac{2^{3(d+1)-2\beta_t} \pi^{3(d/2+1)}}{\prod_{j=1}^3 \Gamma(\beta_j - d/2 + 1) \Gamma(\beta_j)} . \quad (3.13)$$

This is the generic Lorentzian 3-point function. From this expression follows that $p_1^0 > 0$ and $p_3^0 < 0$, owing to the step functions. In other words, as for the 2-point function, the correlator vanishes unless the left-most operator has a positive energy and the right-most operator has a negative energy. In particular, the 3-point correlator vanishes when $p_1 = 0$, and when $p_3 = 0$ since then $p_1 = -p_2$. However, it does not when $p_2 = 0$. This can be understood from the formal expression of the Fourier transform (3.3). When $p_1 = 0$, the transform involves the integral

$$\langle \mathcal{O}_1(0) \mathcal{O}_2(p_2) \mathcal{O}_3(p_3) \rangle \sim \int d^d x_1 \frac{1}{(x_{13}^2)^{\beta_2} (x_{12}^2)^{\beta_3}} .$$

The t_1 integrand has now four branch cuts which can all be put to lie on the upper half plane thanks to $\epsilon_1 > \epsilon_2 > \epsilon_3$. The integral contour can then be closed on the lower half plane, which then makes the above integral vanish. Similarly, if $p_3 = 0$, the branch cuts all lie in the lower half plane, and enclosing the contour on the upper half plane gives a vanishing integral. In the case $p_2 = 0$, two branch cuts lie on the upper half plane, and two in the lower, therefore the integral does not vanish.

The above expression for the Lorentzian 3-point function (3.12) is well defined for $\beta_j - d/2 \in \mathbb{N}^0$. Again, this is the case when the coefficient of the Euclidean 3-point function (3.7) diverges and hence requires renormalisation. The Lorentzian expression manages to nevertheless be finite because the diverging coefficient multiplies an integral of the form (2.11), which is now an integral over an analytic function that decays exponentially at infinity of the upper half plane, and hence vanishes.⁵ Therefore, even if the Euclidean 3-point function is not well-defined in these cases, the Lorentzian 3-point function is, and hence does not require regularisation or renormalisation.

The above expression is though now undefined when $-\beta_j \in \mathbb{N}^0$ or $d/2 - \beta_j \in \mathbb{N}$, due to the Γ -factors in the denominator of (3.13). These are eventually inherited from the special cases I and II of the 2-point function in the triple product of (3.6). We consider these cases next.

⁵The $i\epsilon$ is crucial and allows the exponential along the arcs at infinity to vanish.

Case I: $-\beta_j \in \mathbb{N}^0$

As we have remarked earlier, consistency with unitarity allows at most one of β_j to be negative. Without loss of generality we let $\beta_1 = -n$, with $n \in \mathbb{N}^0$. In this case, using (3.6) and (2.19), we find

$$C(-n, \beta_2, \beta_3) = c(-n, \beta_2, \beta_3) (-\partial_{p_2}^2)^n \frac{\theta(p_1^0 + p_2^0 - |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|) \theta(-p_2^0 - |\vec{p}_2|)}{|p_1 + p_2|^{d-2\beta_2} |p_2|^{d-2\beta_3}}, \quad (3.14)$$

where

$$c(-n, \beta_2, \beta_3) = c_{123} \frac{2^{2(d-\beta_2-\beta_3+1)} \pi^{d+2}}{\prod_{j=2}^3 \Gamma(\beta_j - d/2 + 1) \Gamma(\beta_j)}. \quad (3.15)$$

Case II: $d/2 - \beta_j \in \mathbb{N}$

Just as for the 2-point function, in this case there are two possibilities. If d is an even integer, for large enough \mathbb{N} such that $\beta_j < 0$, this case becomes the same as the previous one. For small enough \mathbb{N} such that $\beta_j > 0$, or more generically when d is not an even integer, this case is different from the previous, and the expression for the 2-point function to be used is given by (2.18).

Without loss of generality we let $\beta_1 = d/2 - n$, with $n \in \mathbb{N}$. Using equation (3.6) and (2.19),

$$C(d/2 - n, \beta_2, \beta_3) = c(d/2 - n, \beta_2, \beta_3) \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{\theta(p_1^0 - k^0 - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|) \theta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|)}{|p_1 - k|^{d-2\beta_2} |k|^{d-2\beta_3}} \times \frac{\partial_{p_2^0}^{n-1} \delta(p_2^0 + k^0 - |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|)}{(p_2^0 + k^0 + |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|)^n}, \quad (3.16)$$

with

$$c(d/2 - n, \beta_2, \beta_3) = c_{123} \frac{4^{d+n-\beta_2-\beta_3+3/2} \pi^{3(d/2+1)}}{\Gamma(d/2 - n) \prod_{j=2}^3 \Gamma(\beta_j - d/2 + 1) \Gamma(\beta_j)}. \quad (3.17)$$

Since $\beta_j = d/2 - n$ with n a positive integer, can be positive for small enough n , it is possible for two or the three β_j s to satisfy this condition $d/2 - \beta_j \in \mathbb{N}$. The expression in these cases follows likewise from the appropriate replacements of the 2-point function (2.18) in expression (3.6).

All of the different β_j cases, for both the Euclidean and Lorentzian signatures, are summarised in table 1.

	Euclidean : $c_E \sim \prod_j \frac{\Gamma(d/2 - \beta_j)}{\Gamma(\beta_j)}$	Lorentzian : $c \sim \prod_j \frac{1}{\Gamma(\beta_j - d/2 + 1) \Gamma(\beta_j)}$
general $\{\beta_j\}$	general expression (3.7) (Fourier transform)	general expression (3.12) (Wick rotation with branch cuts)
$\beta_j - d/2 \in \mathbb{N}^0$	renormalisation needed	general expression (3.12)
one of the $-\beta_j \in \mathbb{N}^0$	special case (3.10) (Fourier transform)	special case (3.14) (Fourier transform)
(one of the) $d/2 - \beta_j \in \mathbb{N}$	general expression (3.7)	special case (3.16) (Wick rotation with poles)

Table 1: List of the different cases of $\{\beta_j\}$ and the corresponding Euclidean and Lorentzian 3-point functions. The different cases can be seen as appearing because of the Γ -functions in the coefficients c_E and c for Euclidean and Lorentzian general expressions respectively. Due to unitarity, only one of the β_j s can be non-positive. Therefore, the second special case can only be satisfied by one of the β_j s, and similarly for the third case when $d/2 - \mathbb{N} < 0$. Finally, when d is an even integer, this last third case is the same as the second for a large enough integer.

3.1 Triple-Bessel expression

Equation (3.6) shows that the 3-point function, both in Euclidean and Lorentzian signatures, can be written as the integral over an auxiliary momentum of a triple product of 2-point functions. In Euclidean space, the 3-point function can also be written as a single integral over a triple product of modified Bessel functions of the second kind K_ν [12],

$$C_E(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}) = c_E(\{\beta_j\}) \int_0^\infty dt t^{d/2-1} \prod_{j=1}^3 |p_j|^{\nu_j} K_{\nu_j}(|p_j| t), \quad (3.18)$$

where

$$c_E(\{\beta_j\}) = \frac{c_{123} \pi^d 2^{4+3d/2-\Delta_t}}{\Gamma(\frac{\Delta_t-d}{2}) \prod_{j=1}^3 \Gamma(\beta_j)}, \quad \nu_j = \Delta_j - \frac{d}{2} = \frac{\Delta_t - d}{2} - \beta_j \quad (3.19)$$

and $p_3 = -(p_1 + p_2)$.

The method used in the Euclidean case to arrive at the triple- K formula (3.18), fails in the Lorentzian case essentially because p_j is no longer positive definite. Nevertheless, we can again compute the analogous expression for the Lorentzian 3-point function by means of a formal Wick rotation. As we emphasised in section 2, in order to do this we must take into account the analytic properties of Euclidean function.

The starting point is

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \mathcal{O}_1(x_1) \mathcal{O}_2(x_2) \mathcal{O}_3(x_3) \rangle &= \langle \mathcal{O}_1(t_1^E, \vec{x}_1) \mathcal{O}_2(t_2^E, \vec{x}_2) \mathcal{O}_3(t_3^E, \vec{x}_3) \rangle_E \Big|_{t_j^E = i(t_j - i\epsilon_j)} \\ &= \int \frac{d^d p_1}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{d^d p_2}{(2\pi)^d} C_E(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}) e^{i p_1 \cdot x_{13}} e^{i p_2 \cdot x_{23}} \Big|_{t_j^E = i(t_j - i\epsilon_j)} . \end{aligned} \quad (3.20)$$

In the first line, the Lorentzian correlator is written in terms of the Euclidean one but with Wick-rotated time coordinates and with the appropriate $i\epsilon$ prescription, $\epsilon_1 > \epsilon_2 > \epsilon_3$. In the second line, the Euclidean 3-point function has been rewritten in terms of its Fourier transform, therefore the momenta are $p_j = (p_j^E, \vec{p}_j)$, and the inner product is $p \cdot x = p^E \tau + \vec{p} \cdot \vec{x}$.

Inserting the Wick-rotated time coordinates,⁶

$$\langle \mathcal{O}_1(x_1) \mathcal{O}_2(x_2) \mathcal{O}_3(x_3) \rangle = \int \frac{d^d p_1}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{d^d p_2}{(2\pi)^d} C_E(p_1, p_2) e^{-p_1^E(t_{13} - i\epsilon_{13})} e^{-p_2^E(t_{23} - i\epsilon_{23})} e^{i \vec{p}_1 \cdot \vec{x}_{13}} e^{i \vec{p}_2 \cdot \vec{x}_{23}} . \quad (3.21)$$

The Lorentzian correlator in momentum space is now simply found by rewriting the above integrals as a (Lorentzian) Fourier transform, i.e. we need to Wick rotate $p^E = i p^0$.

We assume that the CFT is interacting and hence the operator dimensions are non-integer, so that the ν_j are generic. We consider the integral over p_1^E first. From (3.18), $C_E(p_1, p_2)$ has branch points on the p_1^E complex plane at

$$p_1^E = \pm i |\vec{p}_1|, \quad p_1^E = -p_2^E \pm i |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|, \quad (3.22)$$

and at $|p_1^E| \rightarrow \infty$.

Since $\epsilon_{13} > 0$, we consider a contour in the upper half going around the branch cuts, which extend from $i |\vec{p}_1|$ to $+i\infty$, and from $-p_2^E + i |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|$ to $-p_2^E + i\infty$ (see figure 3). The contributions from the arcs at infinity vanish because $\epsilon_{13} > 0$. Since the integrand is analytic in the region

⁶We denote the 3-point function (3.18) as $C_E(p_1, p_2)$, notationally dropping the explicit dependence on the conformal dimensions of the operators.

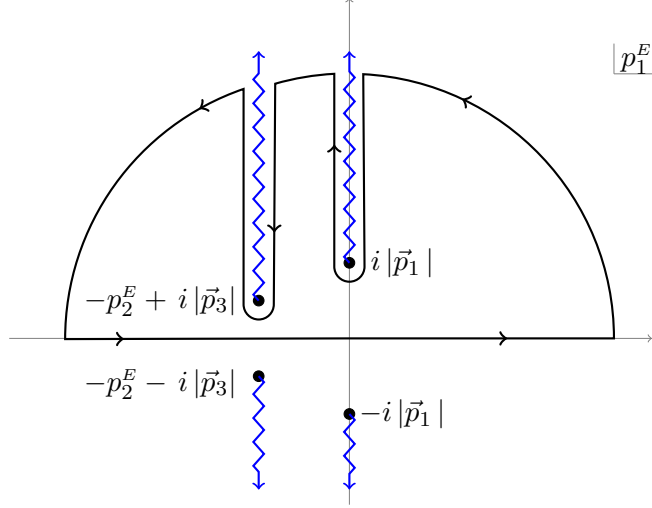


Figure 3: Closed contour of integration for the p_1^E integral. The contribution from the arc at infinity vanishes, so the integral along the real axis is equal to that on each side of the two branch cuts on the upper-half plane.

inside the contour, the integral over the real axis equals that along each side of the branch cuts

$$\begin{aligned}
& \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{dp_1^E}{2\pi} e^{-p_1^E(t_{13}-i\epsilon_{13})} |p_1|^{\nu_1} |p_1 + p_2|^{\nu_3} K_{\nu_1}(|p_1|t) K_{\nu_3}(|p_1 + p_2|t) \\
&= \pi \int_{|\vec{p}_1|}^{\infty} \frac{dp_1^0}{2\pi} e^{-ip_1^0(t_{13}-i\epsilon_{13})} [(p_1^0)^2 - |\vec{p}_1|^2]^{\nu_1} [(ip_1^0 + p_2^E)^2 + |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|^2]^{\nu_3/2} \\
&\quad \times J_{\nu_1} \left(\sqrt{(p_1^0)^2 - |\vec{p}_1|^2} t \right) K_{\nu_3} \left(\sqrt{(ip_1^0 + p_2^E)^2 + |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|^2} t \right) \\
&\quad + \pi \int_{|\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|}^{\infty} \frac{dp_1^0}{2\pi} e^{-(ip_1^0 - p_2^E)(t_{13}-i\epsilon_{13})} [(ip_1^0 - p_2^E)^2 + |\vec{p}_1|^2]^{\nu_1/2} [(p_1^0)^2 - |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|^2]^{\nu_3/2} \\
&\quad \times K_{\nu_1} \left(\sqrt{(ip_1^0 - p_2^E)^2 + |\vec{p}_1|^2} t \right) J_{\nu_3} \left(\sqrt{(p_1^0)^2 - |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|^2} t \right), \quad (3.23)
\end{aligned}$$

where in the first line $|p|$ is the Euclidean norm and we have used the identity ⁷

$$- \pi i J_{\nu}(z) = e^{\nu\pi i/2} K_{\nu}(z e^{i\pi/2}) - e^{-\nu\pi i/2} K_{\nu}(z e^{-i\pi/2}) \quad (3.24)$$

⁷Note that we have chosen the branch cut for the K -Bessel function to run along the imaginary axis rather than the negative real line hence there's a subtlety in translating standard identities to our case. However, in most cases, such as here, the identities are unaffected by this issue.

to rewrite the K -Bessel function in terms of the Bessel function of the first kind.

From Wick rotating p_1^E we get two integrals, hence we need to consider two p_2^E integrals:

$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{dp_2^E}{2\pi} e^{-p_2^E(t_{23}-i\epsilon_{23})} |p_2|^{\nu_2} [(ip_1^0 + p_2^E)^2 + |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|^2]^{\nu_3/2} \times K_{\nu_2}(|p_2|t) K_{\nu_3}\left(\sqrt{(ip_1^0 + p_2^E)^2 + |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|^2}t\right) \quad (3.25)$$

with $p_1^0 \geq |\vec{p}_1|$, coming from the first integral on the rhs of (3.23), and

$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{dp_2^E}{2\pi} e^{p_2^E(t_{12}-i\epsilon_{12})} [(ip_1^0 - p_2^E)^2 + |\vec{p}_1|^2]^{\nu_3/2} |p_2|^{\nu_2} \times K_{\nu_1}\left(\sqrt{(ip_1^0 - p_2^E)^2 + |\vec{p}_1|^2}t\right) K_{\nu_2}(|p_2|t) \quad (3.26)$$

with $p_1^0 \geq |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|$, coming from the second integral on the rhs of (3.23). Note that the exponential in the second integral is slightly modified because of the $e^{p_2^E(t_{13}-i\epsilon_{13})}$ factor coming from the second integral in the Wick rotation of the p_1^E integral, (3.23).

For the first integral, (3.25), we again consider a closed contour in the upper half complex p_2^E -plane going around the branch cuts. The integrand has branch points at

$$p_2^E = \pm i|\vec{p}_2|, \quad p_2^E = -ip_1^0 \pm i|\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2| \quad (3.27)$$

and at $|p_2^E| \rightarrow \infty$. We are only interested in branch points in the upper half plane, i.e. $i|\vec{p}_2|$, and also possibly $-ip_1^0 + i|\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|$ depending on whether $|\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2| > p_1^0$. In any case, using the triangle inequality and $p_1^0 \geq |\vec{p}_1|$,

$$-p_1^0 + |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2| \leq |\vec{p}_2|. \quad (3.28)$$

Considering separately the two cases where there are one or two branch points on the upper half plane, the p_2^E integral can be written in terms of an integral over p_2^0 , as was done for p_1^E in equation (3.23).

The second integral (3.26) can be treated in the same way. For this one though, because of the modification in the exponent and the fact that $\epsilon_{12} > 0$, we need to consider a contour in the

lower half of the p_2^E -plane. The branch points of the integrand in (3.26) are at

$$p_2^E = \pm i |\vec{p}_2|, \quad p_2^E = i p_1^0 \pm i |\vec{p}_1| \quad (3.29)$$

and $|p_2^E| \rightarrow \infty$. Since in this case $p_1^0 \geq |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2|$, using the triangle inequality

$$p_1^0 - |\vec{p}_1| > -|\vec{p}_2|.$$

Hence we again have two cases to consider depending on whether $p_1^0 - |\vec{p}_1|$ is positive or negative.

Putting all these results together we rewrite the integral (3.21) as a Fourier transform, from which we identify the Lorentzian 3-point function in momentum space to be

$$\begin{aligned} C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}) &= \frac{\pi^2}{2} c_E(\{\beta_j\}) \int_0^\infty dt t^{d/2-1} \prod_{j=1}^3 p_j^{\nu_j} \\ &\times \left\{ \begin{aligned} &-\pi \theta(p_1^0 - |\vec{p}_1|) \theta(p_2^0 - |\vec{p}_2|) J_{\nu_1}(p_1 t) J_{\nu_2}(p_2 t) Y_{\nu_3}(p_3 t) \\ &-\pi \theta(-p_3^0 - |\vec{p}_3|) \theta(-p_2^0 - |\vec{p}_2|) Y_{\nu_1}(p_1 t) J_{\nu_2}(p_2 t) J_{\nu_3}(p_3 t) \\ &-\pi \theta(p_1^0 - |\vec{p}_1|) \theta(-p_1^0 + |\vec{p}_3|) \theta(p_2^0 - |\vec{p}_2|) J_{\nu_1}(p_1 t) Y_{\nu_2}(p_2 t) J_{\nu_3}(p_3 t) \\ &-\pi \theta(p_3^0 + |\vec{p}_1|) \theta(-p_3^0 - |\vec{p}_3|) \theta(-p_2^0 - |\vec{p}_2|) J_{\nu_1}(p_1 t) Y_{\nu_2}(p_2 t) J_{\nu_3}(p_3 t) \\ &+ 2 \theta(p_1^0 - |\vec{p}_1|) \theta(-p_3^0 - |\vec{p}_3|) \theta(-p_1^0 + |\vec{p}_3|) \theta(-p_2^0 + |\vec{p}_2|) J_{\nu_1}(p_1 t) K_{\nu_2}(p_2 t) J_{\nu_3}(p_3 t) \\ &+ 2 \theta(p_1^0 - |\vec{p}_1|) \theta(-p_3^0 - |\vec{p}_3|) \theta(p_3^0 + |\vec{p}_1|) \theta(p_2^0 + |\vec{p}_2|) J_{\nu_1}(p_1 t) K_{\nu_2}(p_2 t) J_{\nu_3}(p_3 t) \\ &- i \pi \theta(p_1^0 - |\vec{p}_1|) \theta(p_1^0 - |\vec{p}_3|) \theta(p_2^0 - |\vec{p}_2|) J_{\nu_1}(p_1 t) J_{\nu_2}(p_2 t) J_{\nu_3}(p_3 t) \\ &+ i \pi \theta(-p_3^0 - |\vec{p}_3|) \theta(-p_3^0 - |\vec{p}_1|) \theta(-p_2^0 - |\vec{p}_2|) J_{\nu_1}(p_1 t) J_{\nu_2}(p_2 t) J_{\nu_3}(p_3 t) \end{aligned} \right\}, \quad (3.30) \end{aligned}$$

where on the rhs p_j denotes the Lorentzian norm $\sqrt{|(p_j^0)^2 - |\vec{p}_j|^2|}$; $p_3 = -(p_1 + p_2)$ as a d -vector; the coefficient c_E is defined in (3.19); and $Y_\nu(z)$ is the Bessel function of the second kind. In deriving the above expression we have used

$$e^{-\nu\pi i/2} K_\nu(e^{-i\pi/2} z) = \frac{i\pi}{2} (J_\nu(z) + i Y_\nu(z)) , \quad z \in \mathbb{R}, \quad (3.31)$$

and its complex conjugate.

In comparison to the Euclidean 3-point function (3.18), it is clear that the Lorentzian one is much more complex because it has to incorporate complicated causal relations which are partly achieved through the Heaviside step functions. In particular, unlike the Euclidean 3-point function, expression (3.30) is not obviously real. Of course, given that expression (3.12) is real and expression (3.30) is simply a different representation of the same function, it should be real. This implies an extremely non-trivial identity for the integral over three Bessel functions with their arguments restricted to the domain prescribed by the step functions in the last two lines of expression (3.30), which has to vanish.

However, in order to see that all is in fact consistent, consider complex conjugating the definition of $C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\})$,

$$\langle \mathcal{O}_1(x_1) \mathcal{O}_2(x_2) \mathcal{O}_3(x_3) \rangle^* = \int \frac{d^d p_1}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{d^d p_2}{(2\pi)^d} e^{-i p_1 \cdot x_{13}} e^{-i p_2 \cdot x_{23}} C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\})^*. \quad (3.32)$$

First let us consider the Euclidean case. The Euclidean correlator in position space is real, hence reparametrising the momenta integrals by letting $p_j \rightarrow -p_j$, we find that

$$C_E(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\})^* = C_E(-p_1, -p_2; \{\beta_j\}). \quad (3.33)$$

We can verify that the expression given in equation (3.18) indeed satisfies the consistency condition above; for C_E is real and only depends of the norm of the momenta.

In the Lorentzian case, the consistency condition is complicated by the fact that the correlators in position space are not strictly real because of the $i\epsilon$ prescription that specifies the order of operators in the correlation function. In fact

$$\langle \mathcal{O}_1(x_1) \mathcal{O}_2(x_2) \mathcal{O}_3(x_3) \rangle^* = \langle \mathcal{O}_3(x_3) \mathcal{O}_2(x_2) \mathcal{O}_1(x_1) \rangle. \quad (3.34)$$

Hence equation (3.32) becomes

$$\langle \mathcal{O}_3(x_3) \mathcal{O}_2(x_2) \mathcal{O}_1(x_1) \rangle = \int \frac{d^d p_1}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{d^d p_2}{(2\pi)^d} e^{i(p_1 + p_2) \cdot x_{31}} e^{-i p_2 \cdot x_{21}} C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\})^*, \quad (3.35)$$

where on the rhs we have rearranged the terms so that the x -dependence of the exponentials are such that they define an appropriate Fourier transform of the correlator on the lhs. Therefore, from the above equation the consistency condition on the Lorentzian 3-point function in

momentum space is

$$C(p_1, p_2; \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3)^* = C(p_1 + p_2, -p_2; \beta_3, \beta_2, \beta_1). \quad (3.36)$$

It is straightforward to verify that the Lorentzian 3-point function given in (3.30) satisfies the above relation.

4 Tensorial correlators

There are at least two ways to calculate tensorial correlators in momentum space. The first is to write down a tensorial decomposition in terms of the momenta that satisfy the properties of the tensors in the correlator—for example conservation or tracelessness. The form factors are then found by solving conformal Ward identities. This is the method that is used in Ref. [12] in order to find Euclidean 3-point correlators. The form factors in the Euclidean case are given by triple K -integrals of the form (3.18) with general exponents for the variables in the integral that are determined in each case. The advantage of this approach is that the properties of the tensors in the correlator are explicit and all correlators are given by the same basic building blocks, namely the triple K -integral.

An alternative approach to find tensorial correlators is to directly use the 3-point function of scalars. As we explain below, since tensorial correlators in position space are given by tensorial structures involving positions, tensorial correlators in momentum space are then just momentum derivatives of scalar correlators. The advantage of this approach is that once the scalar correlator is known, it is straightforward, in principle, to find all the tensorial correlators. The disadvantage is that the properties of tensors in the correlation functions, such as tracelessness, are obscured and are not explicit. For example, in the Euclidean case this approach leads to correlators that are not immediately the same as the tensorial correlators in Ref. [12]. They are related to each other up to boundary terms, which is subtle when the triple- K integral is divergent.

Of course, we can also Wick rotate the tensorial correlators in Ref. [12]. However, already for the scalar case, the Lorentzian triple Bessel function form (3.30) is significantly more involved than the Euclidean triple- K integral. Hence we will take the second approach outlined above to find tensorial 3-point correlators using the scalar correlator.

By translation invariance the tensorial part of correlators with tensors is given by the differences of the position vectors $x_1^\mu, x_2^\mu, x_3^\mu$. Namely a general correlator will be a sum of terms of the

form

$$\frac{x_{ij}^{\mu_1} x_{kl}^{\mu_2} \dots}{(x_{23}^2)^{\beta_1} (x_{13}^2)^{\beta_2} (x_{12}^2)^{\beta_3}}, \quad (4.1)$$

where $i \neq j, k \neq l \in \{1, 2, 3\}$, as can be verified by referring to the expressions in Ref. [22]. Consider again the Fourier transform of the Lorentzian 3-point function of scalar operators, (3.3),⁸

$$\int \prod_{j=1}^3 \left(d^d x_j e^{-ip_j \cdot x_j} \right) \frac{1}{(x_{23}^2)^{\beta_1} (x_{13}^2)^{\beta_2} (x_{12}^2)^{\beta_3}} = (2\pi)^d \delta^{(d)}(p_1 + p_2 + p_3) C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}). \quad (4.2)$$

When we write the Fourier transform of a tensorial correlator, the $x_{ij}^{\mu_1}$ from expression (4.1) becomes a difference of partial derivatives with respect to the momenta p_i and p_j , which then act on the scalar Fourier transform above. On the rhs, the momentum preserving δ -function commutes with the difference of partial derivatives, hence we need just consider derivatives of the δ -function stripped correlator $C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\})$.

For example consider the following integral

$$\begin{aligned} & \int \prod_i d^d x_i e^{-ip_i \cdot x_i} \frac{x_{12}^\mu x_{12}^\nu}{(x_{23}^2)^{\beta_1} (x_{13}^2)^{\beta_2} (x_{12}^2)^{\beta_3}} \\ &= -(2\pi)^d \delta(p_1 + p_2 + p_3) \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial p_1^\mu} - \frac{\partial}{\partial p_2^\mu} \right) \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial p_1^\nu} - \frac{\partial}{\partial p_2^\nu} \right) C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}) \end{aligned} \quad (4.3)$$

with $\beta_3 > d/2 + 1$.

Consider first

$$\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial p_1^\nu} - \frac{\partial}{\partial p_2^\nu} \right) C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}). \quad (4.4)$$

Using the expression (3.12) for $C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\})$, and reparametrising the k -integral as $k \rightarrow k - p_2$, only one derivative needs to be computed, and this becomes equal to

$$(2\beta_3 - d)c(\{\beta_j\}) \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{\theta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|) \theta(p_1^0 + p_2^0 - k^0 - |\vec{p}_1 + \vec{p}_2 - \vec{k}|) \theta(k^0 - p_2^0 - |\vec{k} - \vec{p}_2|)}{|k|^{d-2\beta_1} |p_1 + p_2 - k|^{d-2\beta_2} |k - p_2|^{d-2\beta_3+2}} (p_2 - k)_\nu, \quad (4.5)$$

where notice that

$$|k - p_2|^2 = -(k - p_2)^2 \quad (4.6)$$

⁸In all of this section, the $C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\})$ function and the coefficients $c(\{\beta_j\})$ do not include the 3-point function coefficient c_{123} .

and the derivative of the Heaviside step function

$$\partial_{p_2^\mu} \theta(k^0 - p_2^0 - |\vec{k} - \vec{p}_2|) = (k - p_2)_\mu \delta(k^0 - p_2^0 - |\vec{k} - \vec{p}_2|), \quad (4.7)$$

gives a vanishing contribution because of the factor of $(k - p_2)^2$ with a positive power. If we had not chosen β_3 large enough, this derivative would also contribute.

Acting next with $-(\partial_{p_1^\mu} - \partial_{p_2^\mu})$ on (4.5), and reparametrising $k \rightarrow k + p_2$ gives

$$\begin{aligned} & -(2\beta_3 - d) c(\{\beta_j\}) \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{\theta(p_2^0 + k^0 - |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|) \theta(p_1^0 - k^0 - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|) \theta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|)}{|p_2 + k|^{d-2\beta_1} |p_1 - k|^{d-2\beta_2} |k|^{d-2\beta_3}} \\ & \quad \times \frac{(2\beta_3 - 2 - d) k_\mu k_\nu - |k|^2 \eta_{\mu\nu}}{|k|^4}. \end{aligned} \quad (4.8)$$

Hence this is the δ -function stripped Fourier transform on the lhs of equation (4.3).

As a consistency check, we take the trace of the above expression (4.8), and obtain

$$c(\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3 - 1) \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{\theta(p_2^0 + k^0 - |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|) \theta(p_1^0 - k^0 - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|) \theta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|)}{|p_2 + k|^{d-2\beta_1} |p_1 - k|^{d-2\beta_2} |k|^{d-2(\beta_3-1)}}, \quad (4.9)$$

confirming that

$$\eta^{\mu\nu} \int \prod_i d^d x_i e^{-ip_i \cdot x_i} \frac{x_{12}^\mu x_{12}^\nu}{(x_{23}^2)^{\beta_1} (x_{13}^2)^{\beta_2} (x_{12}^2)^{\beta_3}} = \int \prod_i d^d x_i e^{-ip_i \cdot x_i} \frac{1}{(x_{23}^2)^{\beta_1} (x_{13}^2)^{\beta_2} (x_{12}^2)^{\beta_3-1}}. \quad (4.10)$$

4.1 $\langle \mathcal{O} T_{\mu\nu} \mathcal{O} \rangle$ correlator

Having explained the general method for calculating tensorial correlators in the previous section, we apply the procedure to a correlator of two identical scalar operators \mathcal{O} and a energy-momentum tensor $T_{\mu\nu}$. This correlator is used in the next section to calculate the expectation value of the ANEC operator in a state created by the operator \mathcal{O} .

In position space [22],

$$\langle \mathcal{O}(x_1) T_{\mu\nu}(x_2) \mathcal{O}(x_3) \rangle = \frac{a}{x_{23}^{d-2} x_{13}^2 x_{12}^{d-2}} \left(\left(\frac{x_{12}^\mu}{x_{12}^2} - \frac{x_{32}^\mu}{x_{32}^2} \right) \left(\frac{x_{12}^\nu}{x_{12}^2} - \frac{x_{32}^\nu}{x_{32}^2} \right) - \frac{1}{d} \frac{x_{13}^2}{x_{12}^2 x_{23}^2} \eta_{\mu\nu} \right) \quad (4.11)$$

where

$$x_{ij}^\mu = (t_{ij} - i\epsilon_{ij}, \vec{x}_{ij}) \quad (4.12)$$

and $\epsilon_{ij} > 0$ for $i < j$, otherwise negative.

The δ -function stripped correlator in momentum space is then

$$\begin{aligned}
\langle\langle \mathcal{O}(p_1) T_{\mu\nu}(p_2) \mathcal{O}(p_3) \rangle\rangle &= a \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial p_2^\mu} - \frac{\partial}{\partial p_1^\mu} \right) \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial p_1^\nu} - \frac{\partial}{\partial p_2^\nu} \right) C(p_1, p_2; \frac{d-2}{2}, \Delta+1 - \frac{d}{2}, \frac{d+2}{2}) \\
&\quad + 2a \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial p_2^{(\mu}} - \frac{\partial}{\partial p_1^{(\mu}} \right) \frac{\partial}{\partial p_2^{\nu)}} C(p_1, p_2; \frac{d}{2}, \Delta+1 - \frac{d}{2}, \frac{d}{2}) \\
&\quad - a \frac{\partial}{\partial p_2^\mu} \frac{\partial}{\partial p_2^\nu} C(p_1, p_2; \frac{d+2}{2}, \Delta+1 - \frac{d}{2}, \frac{d-2}{2}) \\
&\quad - \frac{a}{d} \eta_{\mu\nu} C(p_1, p_2; \frac{d}{2}, \Delta - \frac{d}{2}, \frac{d}{2}),
\end{aligned} \tag{4.13}$$

where using the results of section 3,

$$\begin{aligned}
C(\frac{d-2}{2}, \Delta+1 - \frac{d}{2}, \frac{d+2}{2}) &= \frac{2^{2(d-1-\Delta)} \pi^{3(d/2+1)} d(d-2)}{\Gamma(\Delta+1-d/2) \Gamma(\Delta+2-d) \Gamma(d/2+1)^2} \\
&\quad \times \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{\theta(p_1^0 - k^0 - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|) \theta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|) \delta(p_2^0 + k^0 - |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|)}{|p_1 - k|^{2(d-1-\Delta)} |k|^{-2} |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|},
\end{aligned} \tag{4.14}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
C(\frac{d+2}{2}, \Delta+1 - \frac{d}{2}, \frac{d-2}{2}) &= \frac{2^{2(d-1-\Delta)} \pi^{3(d/2+1)} d(d-2)}{\Gamma(\Delta+1-d/2) \Gamma(\Delta+2-d) \Gamma(d/2+1)^2} \\
&\quad \times \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{\theta(p_1^0 - k^0 - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|) \theta(p_2^0 + k^0 - |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|) \delta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|)}{|p_1 - k|^{2(d-1-\Delta)} |p_2 + k|^{-2} |\vec{k}|},
\end{aligned} \tag{4.15}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
C(\frac{d}{2}, \Delta+1 - \frac{d}{2}, \frac{d}{2}) &= \frac{2^{2d+1-2\Delta} \pi^{3(d/2+1)}}{\Gamma(\Delta+1-d/2) \Gamma(\Delta+2-d) \Gamma(d/2)^2} \\
&\quad \times \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{\theta(p_2^0 + k^0 - |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|) \theta(p_1^0 - k^0 - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|) \theta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|)}{|p_1 - k|^{2(d-1-\Delta)}},
\end{aligned} \tag{4.16}$$

and we have used the fact that the C have no dependence on p_3 .

We note that $C(\frac{d-2}{2}, \Delta+1 - \frac{d}{2}, \frac{d+2}{2})$ has a $\delta(p_2^0 + k^0 - |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|)$. Reparametrising the k -integral by letting $k \rightarrow k - p_2$ as we did in the general tensorial example, turns the argument of

the δ -function into $k^0 - |\vec{k}|$, hence becoming independent of p_1 and p_2 . This allows us to avoid derivatives of the Dirac δ -function when evaluating the rhs of (4.13).

Using identity (4.7), it is straightforward to show that

$$\begin{aligned}
\langle\langle \mathcal{O}(p_1) T_{\mu\nu}(p_2) \mathcal{O}(p_3) \rangle\rangle &= c \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{\theta(k^0) \theta(p_2^0 + k^0) \theta(p_1^0 - k^0 - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|)}{|p_1 - k|^{2(d-1-\Delta)}} \\
&\times \left(\left[\frac{8(d-1)}{d-2} (k_\mu k_\nu + k_{(\mu} p_{2\ \nu)}) + 2 p_{2\ \mu} p_{2\ \nu} \right] \delta(k^2) \delta((p_2 + k)^2) \right. \\
&\quad - \theta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|) \delta((p_2 + k)^2) \eta_{\mu\nu} - \theta(p_2^0 + k^0 - |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|) \delta(k^2) \eta_{\mu\nu} \\
&\quad \left. + \frac{2(\Delta-2)(\Delta-3)}{d-2} \frac{\theta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|) \theta(p_2^0 + k^0 - |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|)}{|p_1 - k|^2} \eta_{\mu\nu} \right),
\end{aligned} \tag{4.17}$$

where

$$c = - \frac{4^{d-\Delta} \pi^{3(d/2+1)} d(d-2) a}{\Gamma(\Delta+1-d/2) \Gamma(\Delta+2-d) \Gamma(d/2+1)^2} \tag{4.18}$$

and we have used

$$\theta(p^0) \delta(p^2) = \frac{\delta(p^0 - |\vec{p}|)}{2|\vec{p}|}. \tag{4.19}$$

Equation (4.17) is valid for any dimension except for $d = 2$ dimensions. This is because in that case, the first and third C -functions required in (4.13) are not of the ‘case II’ type, but rather of the ‘case I’ type, and hence are not given by (4.14), (4.15). The $d = 2$ correlator can then be computed by using (3.14) instead.

Note that the expression we have given, (4.17), is not manifestly traceless. As we have already mentioned, when the tensorial properties are not manifest, integration by parts is required to show them.

In the example at the start of this section, we calculated the rhs of expression (4.3) by first reparametrising the integration variable k ; had we not done this we would have obtained a more complicated expression for which the trace consistency check would not have been straightforward. In fact, to prove expression (4.10) in that case requires integration by parts. This illustrates the point made at the start of this section that tensorial identities are not guaranteed to be manifest in this method and that one may have to use integration by parts in order to prove them.

We can use the same methods outlined in this section to calculate other tensorial correlators. While the procedure in all cases is simple, technically the calculation does become quite complicated if there are a lot of tensors. It is foreseeable that there is a structure underlying these expressions that lends itself to generalisation; such a structure would, for example, make the tensorial properties of the correlators manifest. We, however, wish to report on this direction in a separate manuscript.

5 ANEC expectation values on Hofman-Maldacena states

As an application of the expression obtained in the previous section for $\langle \mathcal{O} T_{\mu\nu} \mathcal{O} \rangle$ we use it here to reproduce the positivity of the ANEC operator when evaluated on the simplest type of the Hofman-Maldacena states, namely those generated by scalar operators [2, 23, 26], but in momentum space. Also, we generalise this to general dimension d .

In the conformal-collider experiments [23], one places calorimeters on a 2-sphere at infinity. These calorimeters measure the energy produced by some CFT operator \mathcal{O} localised around the center of the sphere. The measurement of a calorimeter is then given by the expectation value of the time-integrated energy-momentum tensor on a state created by the operator \mathcal{O} , hence by a conformal 3-point function of the type $\langle \mathcal{O} \int T \mathcal{O} \rangle$. In fact, since the energy-momentum tensor is inserted at infinity, the integral over time of its energy component becomes the ANEC operator, i.e. the integral over null infinity of its null-null component.

Given that conformal 3-point correlators are completely fixed up to constants, requiring positivity of the integrated energy measurement places bounds on these constants. Concretely, when the normalised expectation value is computed on a state created by a scalar operator, the constant is simply a numerical coefficient, and is indeed positive. When the normalised expectation value is computed on a state created by the energy-momentum tensor itself, the constants depend on the conformal anomalies, and thus in four dimensions the positivity condition puts bounds on the a and c central charges.

To compute the bounds, Hofman-Maldacena used a particular type of states, namely wave packets with purely-timelike momentum

$$|\mathcal{O}(q)\rangle \equiv \int d^d x e^{-iqt} e^{-\frac{t^2 + \vec{x}^2}{\sigma^2}} \mathcal{O}(x) |0\rangle. \quad (5.1)$$

They consider them in the regime $q\sigma \gg 1$, which ensures that the operator has finite norm and is localised near the origin, which can be understood as a requirement for IR finiteness. In the

calculation however, the Gaussian factor can be dropped. As pointed out in Ref. [2], this can lead to unphysical divergences, but these can be regularised with dimensional regularisation, we disregard this issue in the following.

The Hofman-Maldacena states yield optimal bounds for the ratios of the two anomaly coefficients [2], because of the fact that the ANEC operator is inserted at null infinity. There, it commutes with the momentum operator $[\mathcal{E}, P] = 0$, hence momentum eigenstates are also eigenstates of the ANEC operator.⁹ As a consequence, $\langle \mathcal{E} \rangle$ becomes diagonal on these wave packets, and its positivity gives the most stringent constraints.

For simplicity, the ANEC operator can be placed at $x_2 = (t, r, \vec{0})$, which would correspond to putting a calorimeter in the ‘ x ’ direction. We define light-cone coordinates for this point $x^\pm = t \pm r$. Positivity of the ANEC operator on these states then reads

$$\langle \mathcal{E} \rangle = \lim_{r \rightarrow \infty} r^{d-2} \langle \mathcal{O}(q)^\dagger \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dx^- T_{--}(x^+, x^-) \mathcal{O}(q) \rangle \geq 0. \quad (5.2)$$

Once expression (5.1) for the states is introduced in the above and the position integrals have been pulled out of the correlator, we can use translation invariance to put the scalar operator to the right at $x_3 = 0$. The corresponding $d^d x_3$ integral becomes an overall factor, which will cancel with an identical factor when normalising $\langle \mathcal{E} \rangle$ with the 2-point function $\langle \mathcal{O}(q) \mathcal{O}(-q) \rangle$, see (5.14) (we will henceforth omit this factor). With these manipulations, and assuming that the scalar operator is real, the expectation value becomes

$$\langle \mathcal{E} \rangle = \lim_{r \rightarrow \infty} r^{d-2} \int d^d x_1 e^{iqt_1} \langle \mathcal{O}(x_1) \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dx^- T_{--}(x^+, x^-) \mathcal{O}(0) \rangle. \quad (5.3)$$

To compute this expectation value in momentum space, we note that the scalar operator to the left is effectively already in momentum space, with momentum $(q, \vec{0})$. We further rewrite the other two operators in terms of their Fourier transforms. In particular, for the ANEC operator,

$$\int dx^- \int \frac{d^d p}{(2\pi)^d} e^{i(-p^0 t + p^1 r)} T_{--}(p) = 2 \int \frac{d^d p}{(2\pi)^{d-1}} \delta(p^0 + p^1) e^{-i \frac{p^0 - p^1}{2} x^+} T_{--}(p), \quad (5.4)$$

⁹We thank Alexander Zhiboedov for pointing this out to us.

where the Dirac delta can be further integrated. Substituting the Fourier transforms in (5.3),

$$\langle \mathcal{E} \rangle = 2 \lim_{r \rightarrow \infty} r^{d-2} \int \frac{d^{d-1} \vec{p}}{(2\pi)^{d-1}} e^{2ip^1 r} \langle\langle \mathcal{O}(q, \vec{0}) T_{--}(-p^1, \vec{p}) \mathcal{O}(p^1 - q, -\vec{p}) \rangle\rangle. \quad (5.5)$$

Using

$$k_- = -\frac{1}{2} k^+, \quad \text{where} \quad k^+ = k^0 + k^1, \quad (5.6)$$

and expression (4.17) calculated in last section, the expectation value (5.5) becomes

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \mathcal{E} \rangle = \frac{(d-1)c}{d-2} \lim_{r \rightarrow \infty} r^{d-2} \int \frac{d^{d-1} \vec{p}}{(2\pi)^{d-1}} e^{2ip^1 r} \int \frac{d^d k}{(2\pi)^d} \frac{\theta(q - k^0 - |\vec{k}|)}{((q - k^0)^2 - |\vec{k}|^2)^{d-1-\Delta}} \\ \times k^+ \frac{\delta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|)}{|\vec{k}|} \delta(p^1 + p_s^1), \end{aligned} \quad (5.7)$$

where c is defined in (4.18), and $p_s^1 = \frac{2\hat{k} \cdot \hat{p} + |\hat{p}|^2}{2k^+}$. \hat{k} is the $(d-2)$ -dimensional transversal vector, $k = (k^0, \vec{k}) = (k^0, k^1, \hat{k})$, and similarly for p . We have also used

$$\delta(k^2) = \frac{\delta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|)}{2|\vec{k}|} \quad (5.8)$$

(since $k^0 > 0$), to simplify

$$\theta(k^0 - p^1) \delta((q - k^0)^2 - |\vec{k} + \vec{p}|^2) = \frac{1}{2k^+} \delta(p^1 + p_s^1). \quad (5.9)$$

The p^1 integral can now be evaluated with the Dirac δ -function, leaving a $d^{d-2} \hat{p}$ integral. We next perform the change of variables

$$\hat{k} = \frac{\hat{l}}{x^+} - \frac{\hat{p}}{2} \quad (5.10)$$

with which the factor r^{d-2} in front of the integral is reabsorbed in the measure of the $d^{d-2} \hat{k}$, making the integral finite. With this change of variables $p_s^1 \sim 1/x^+$, hence goes to zero except in the exponential, which becomes

$$e^{-i \frac{\hat{p} \cdot \hat{l}}{k^+}}. \quad (5.11)$$

The $d^{d-2} \hat{l}$ integral of the above exponential gives now a Dirac delta $\delta^{(d-2)}(\hat{p})$. Together with the previous one in (5.7), which after the limit becomes $\delta(p^1)$, these $d-1$ Dirac deltas $\delta^{(d-1)}(\vec{p})$

make explicit that $\langle \mathcal{E} \rangle$ is an expectation value, since they turn (5.5) into

$$\langle \mathcal{E} \rangle \sim \langle\langle \mathcal{O}(q, \vec{0}) T_{--}(0, \vec{0}) \mathcal{O}(-q, \vec{0}) \rangle\rangle. \quad (5.12)$$

The need for the $r \rightarrow \infty$ limit and the nature of this expectation value is therefore much more clear in momentum space.

After the above Dirac δ -functions have been performed, the only two remaining integrals are those of $dk^0 dk^1$. The first can be performed with the remaining $\delta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|)$, and the last integral can then simply be performed. All these steps make clear that, unlike the calculation of $\langle \mathcal{E} \rangle$ in position space where one has to evaluate complicated integrals, in momentum space the expectation value reduces to integrals of δ -functions, hence is much simpler.

The final result is

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \mathcal{E} \rangle &= \frac{2(d-1)c}{(d-2)(2\pi)^{d+1}} q^{\Delta+1-d} \int_0^{q/2} dk^0 (k^0)^{d-2} (q-2k^0)^{\Delta+1-d} \\ &= -\frac{2^{1-2\Delta} \pi^{d/2+2} \Gamma(d+1) a}{\Gamma(\Delta+1) \Gamma(\Delta+1-d/2) \Gamma(d/2+1)^2} q^{2\Delta+1-d}. \end{aligned} \quad (5.13)$$

We now normalise this expectation value with the 2-point function $\langle \mathcal{O}(q) \mathcal{O}(-q) \rangle$, with \mathcal{O} given again by (5.1) (and as before, dropping the Gaussian factors),

$$\langle \mathcal{O}(q) \mathcal{O}(-q) \rangle = \int d^d x_1 d^d x_3 e^{iq(t_1-t_3)} \langle \mathcal{O}(x_1) \mathcal{O}(x_3) \rangle. \quad (5.14)$$

Using translation invariance to put $x_3 = 0$ in the correlator, we are left again with an overall $d^d x_3$ integral, which cancels the identical one in $\langle \mathcal{E} \rangle$ in the numerator. Further writing the correlator in terms of its Fourier transform,

$$\langle \mathcal{O}(q) \mathcal{O}(-q) \rangle = \int d^d x_1 e^{iq t_1} \int \frac{d^d p}{(2\pi)^d} e^{ip \cdot x_1} N G^\Delta(p), \quad (5.15)$$

where N is now the normalization of the 2-point function (which is set to 1 in the rest of the paper). Introducing the expression for $G^\Delta(p)$ given by (2.6), we obtain

$$\langle \mathcal{O}(q) \mathcal{O}(-q) \rangle = N \frac{\pi^{d/2+1}}{2^{2\Delta-d-1} \Gamma(\Delta) \Gamma(\Delta-d/2+1)} q^{2\Delta-d} \quad (5.16)$$

where we have omitted the Heaviside step function since we have assumed $q > 0$.

Using now the relation between the normalization of the 2-point function N and that of the 3-point function a which follows from Ward identities [22],

$$a = -\frac{\Delta \Gamma(d/2 + 1)}{(d-1) \pi^{d/2}} N, \quad (5.17)$$

we find

$$\frac{\langle \mathcal{E} \rangle}{\langle \mathcal{O}(q) \mathcal{O}(-q) \rangle} = \frac{q}{S_{d-2}} \quad (5.18)$$

where

$$S_{d-2} = \frac{2\pi^{(d-1)/2}}{\Gamma(\frac{d-1}{2})} \quad (5.19)$$

is the surface area of a $(d-2)$ -sphere. This confirms the positivity of the ANEC expectation value.

6 Discussion

In this paper we study the 3-point function of Lorentzian CFTs in momentum space. We present the scalar 3-point function and give a prescription for calculating tensorial ones. The scalar 3-point function is presented both as an integral over an auxiliary momentum (3.12) and also as a triple Bessel integral (3.30). While the two expressions can be related via the analogous Euclidean expressions, we have yet to understand the relation between them in Lorentzian space. Such a study could yield much simpler expressions for tensorial correlators and lead to a more comprehensive understanding akin to the Euclidean case [12]. Furthermore, while we show how any tensorial 3-point correlator can be determined from the scalar 3-point function, the tensorial properties of the correlator may be obscured in the result. We hope to address these points in the future.

We use our results to calculate the expectation value of the ANEC operator in states created by scalar operators. While this is the least interesting positivity result, simply stating that the state has positive energy, our calculation shows how natural such a computation is in momentum space compared to the position space calculation [23]. In particular, in momentum space the expectation value simply reduces to integrals over δ -functions with the role of the $r \rightarrow \infty$ limit becoming much clearer—in this limit it is manifest that the transversal momenta of the ANEC operator vanish, (5.12). This is convincing evidence that questions regarding ANEC may be more suitably framed in momentum space. By providing Lorentzian CFT correlators in momentum space, we hope that this is now possible.

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A Conventions and formulae

We use the $(-+++)$ signature. Our convention for the Fourier transform is

$$\tilde{f}(p) = \int d^d x e^{-ip \cdot x} f(x), \quad f(x) = \int \frac{d^d p}{(2\pi)^d} e^{ip \cdot x} \tilde{f}(p). \quad (\text{A.1})$$

The Dirac delta function is

$$\delta^{(d)}(p) = \int \frac{d^d x}{(2\pi)^d} e^{-ip \cdot x}. \quad (\text{A.2})$$

The Schwinger parametrisation formula is

$$\frac{1}{x^n} = \frac{1}{\Gamma(n)} \int_0^\infty dt t^{n-1} e^{-tx}, \quad \text{when } \Re(x) > 0. \quad (\text{A.3})$$

B 3-point function of scalars from Fourier transform

We compute the scalar 3-point function in momentum space by doing a direct Fourier transform of the position-space expression in four dimensions.¹⁰ Consider the Fourier transform of the Lorentzian correlator $\langle \mathcal{O}_1(x_1) \mathcal{O}_2(x_2) \mathcal{O}_3(x_3) \rangle$ for scalar operators with dimensions Δ_i ,

$$\langle \mathcal{O}_1(p_1) \mathcal{O}_2(p_2) \mathcal{O}_3(p_3) \rangle = \int \prod_i d^4 x_i e^{-ip_i \cdot x_i} \frac{c_{123}}{(x_{23}^2)^{\beta_1} (x_{13}^2)^{\beta_2} (x_{12}^2)^{\beta_3}}, \quad (\text{B.1})$$

where $\beta_j = \frac{\Delta_t}{2} - \Delta_j$, $\Delta_t = \Delta_1 + \Delta_2 + \Delta_3$, $x_{ij} = x_i - x_j$, and the $i\epsilon$ prescription dictates $t_j \rightarrow t_j - i\epsilon_j$ with $\epsilon_1 > \epsilon_2 > \epsilon_3$. Translation invariance us allows to strip off the momentum preserving δ -function, which leads to

$$\langle \mathcal{O}_1(p_1) \mathcal{O}_2(p_2) \mathcal{O}_3(p_3) \rangle = (2\pi)^4 \delta^{(4)}(p_1 + p_2 + p_3) C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}), \quad (\text{B.2})$$

¹⁰In general d dimensions, the Fourier transform involves much more complicated integrals over the angles.

with $C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\})$ given by (3.6), which we repeat here

$$C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}) = c_{123} \int \frac{d^4 k}{(2\pi)^4} \int d^4 x_1 d^4 x_2 d^4 x_3 \frac{e^{-i(p_1-k) \cdot x_1} e^{-i(p_2+k) \cdot x_2} e^{-ik \cdot x_3}}{(x_2^2)^{\beta_1} (x_1^2)^{\beta_2} (x_3^2)^{\beta_3}}. \quad (\text{B.3})$$

This last expression is obtained by introducing a third coordinate x_3 via a Dirac delta $\delta^{(4)}(x_3 - x_{12})$, which is then reexpressed in terms of an additional k integral.

We now assume all $\beta_j > 0$. In this case, we can use Schwinger parametrisation (A.3) to exponentiate the distance factors in the denominator of the above integrand. For example, for the x_1 factor,

$$\frac{1}{(x_1^2)^{\beta_2}} = \frac{1}{\Gamma(\beta_2)^2} \int_0^\infty ds_1 ds_2 (s_1 s_2)^{\beta_2-1} e^{-s_1(\epsilon_x + i(t_x + |\vec{x}|))} e^{-s_2(\epsilon_x + i(t_x - |\vec{x}|))}, \quad (\text{B.4})$$

and analogously for the x_2 and x_3 factors. We hence introduce a total of six Schwinger parameters $\{s_i\}$. When performing the Fourier transform in Euclidean signature, one can instead exponentiate the square of the distance factors x_j^2 , thus requiring only three Schwinger parameters. This is possible because these factors are positive in Euclidean signature. In Lorentzian signature instead they need not be, and use of the Schwinger parametrisation is only allowed because the $i\epsilon_{ij}$ added confer a positive real part to the distance factors.

To perform the x_1 integral with the integrand above, we exchange it with the s_1, s_2 integrals. The two angles can then be integrated, and the integral over the time component t_1 produces the Dirac delta $\delta(k^0 - p_1^0 + s_1 + s_2)$, which can be used to integrate one of the Schwinger parameters. To compute the radial integral, we first symmetrise its range of integration by performing a change of variables on the remaining Schwinger parameter s as $u = s - \bar{u}$ with $\bar{u} \equiv (p_1^0 - k^0)/2$. After doing the radial integral we obtain

$$\frac{(2\pi)^3 \theta(p_1^0 - k^0)}{4 \Gamma(\beta_2)^2 |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|} \int_{-\bar{u}}^{\bar{u}} du (\bar{u}^2 - u^2)^{\beta_2-1} \partial_u \left(\delta(2u - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|) - \delta(2u + |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|) \right). \quad (\text{B.5})$$

Assuming $\beta_2 \neq 1$, we do integration by parts and obtain

$$\frac{(2\pi)^3 (\beta_2 - 1)}{4^{\beta_2-1} \Gamma(\beta_2)^2} \theta(p_1^0 - k^0 - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|) |p_1 - k|^{2\beta_2-4}, \quad (\text{B.6})$$

where unambiguously $|p_1 - k| = \sqrt{(p_1^0 - k^0)^2 - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|^2}$. Following analogous steps for the x_2

and x_3 integrals, the 3-point correlator (when all $\beta_i \neq 1$) becomes

$$C(p_1, p_2; \{\beta_j\}) = c(\{\beta_j\}) \int \frac{d^4 k}{(2\pi)^4} \frac{\theta(p_2^0 + k^0 - |\vec{p}_2 + \vec{k}|) \theta(p_1^0 - k^0 - |\vec{p}_1 - \vec{k}|) \theta(k^0 - |\vec{k}|)}{|p_2 + k|^{4-2\beta_1} |p_1 - k|^{4-2\beta_2} |k|^{4-2\beta_3}}, \quad (\text{B.7})$$

where

$$c(\{\beta_j\}) = c_{123} (2\pi)^9 \prod_i \frac{(\beta_i - 1)}{4^{\beta_i - 1} \Gamma(\beta_i)^2}. \quad (\text{B.8})$$

This precisely matches the 3-point function (3.12) calculated by Wick rotation in the case when $d = 4$.

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