

Tunneling Into a Luttinger Liquid Revisited

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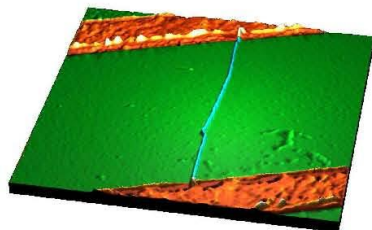
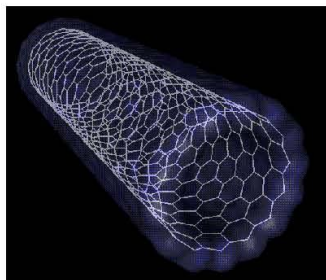
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Peter Wölfle (*KIT*)

Outline

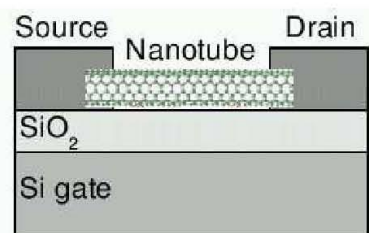
- *Introduction:*
experimental motivation, why 1D is special
- *Simplest model of the tunneling junction:*
point contact, tunneling Hamiltonian
- *Infinitesimally weak tunneling coupling:*
suppression of tunneling density of states
(conventional zero bias anomaly)
- *Coupling is not infinitesimally weak* → *new physics:* non-trivial zero bias anomaly, intermediate-coupling fixed point → **suppression vs enhancement**
- *Fermionic S-matrix RG:* renormalization of the generic contact

Single-channel quantum wires (aka Nanowires)



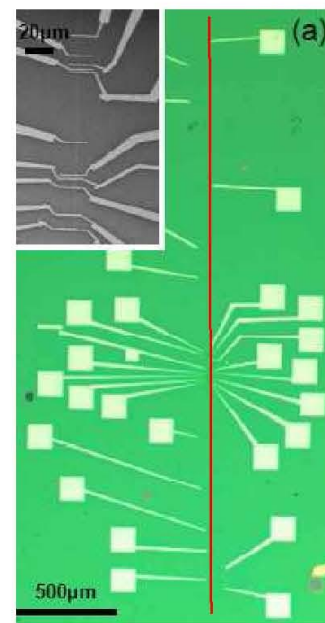
- Carbon nanotubes
- Semiconductor quantum wires
- Quantum Hall edges
- Polymer nanofibers
- Metallic nanowires
- ...

Single-wall carbon nanotube = cylindrical roll of graphene



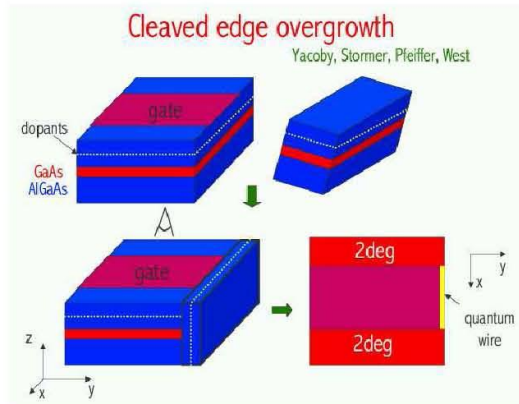
$$R \sim \underline{1 \text{ nm}}, L \sim \underline{1 \mu\text{m}} - \underline{1 \text{ mm}}$$

Metallic nanotubes: Mean free path $l \sim \underline{1 \mu\text{m}}$



From Purewal et al., PRL '07

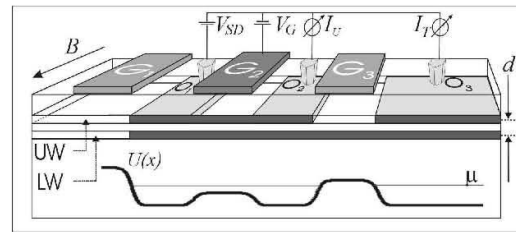
Single-channel quantum wires (*aka* Nanowires)



$$R \sim \underline{10 \text{ nm}}$$

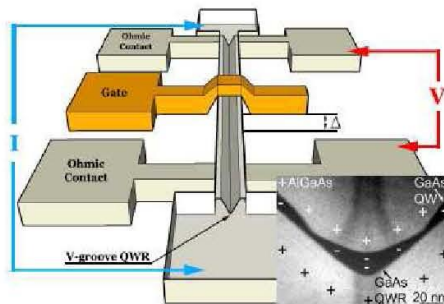
Atomic-precision “cleaved-edge”
single-channel GaAs wires
at the intersection of two
quantum wells

- Carbon nanotubes
- Semiconductor quantum wires
- Quantum Hall edges
- Polymer nanofibers
- Metallic nanowires
- ...



From Auslaender et al., *Spin-charge separation and localization in one dimension*, Science '05

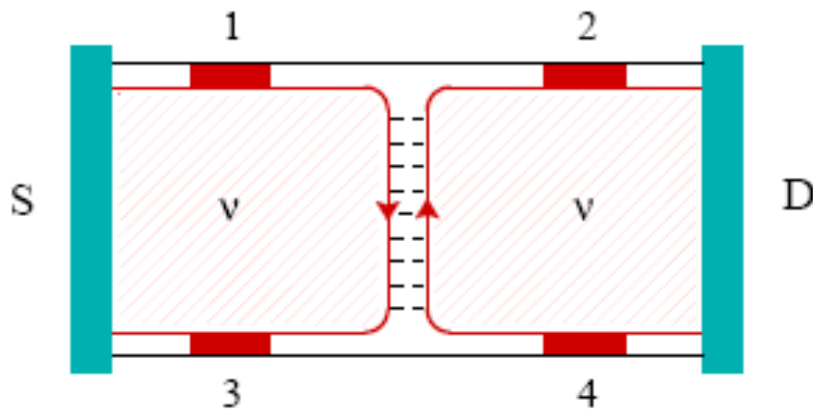
V-groove
nanowire



From Levy et al., *Luttinger-liquid behavior in weakly disordered quantum wires*, PRL '06

Semiconductor nanowires:
Mean free path $l \sim \underline{10 \mu\text{m}}$

Single-channel quantum wires (*aka* Nanowires)



Quantum-Hall line junctions :
longest ($L \sim \underline{1\text{ cm}}$) single-channel
GaAs quantum wires

- Carbon nanotubes
- Semiconductor quantum wires
- Quantum Hall edges
- Polymer nanofibers
- Metallic nanowires
- ...

backscattering disorder = random interedge tunneling

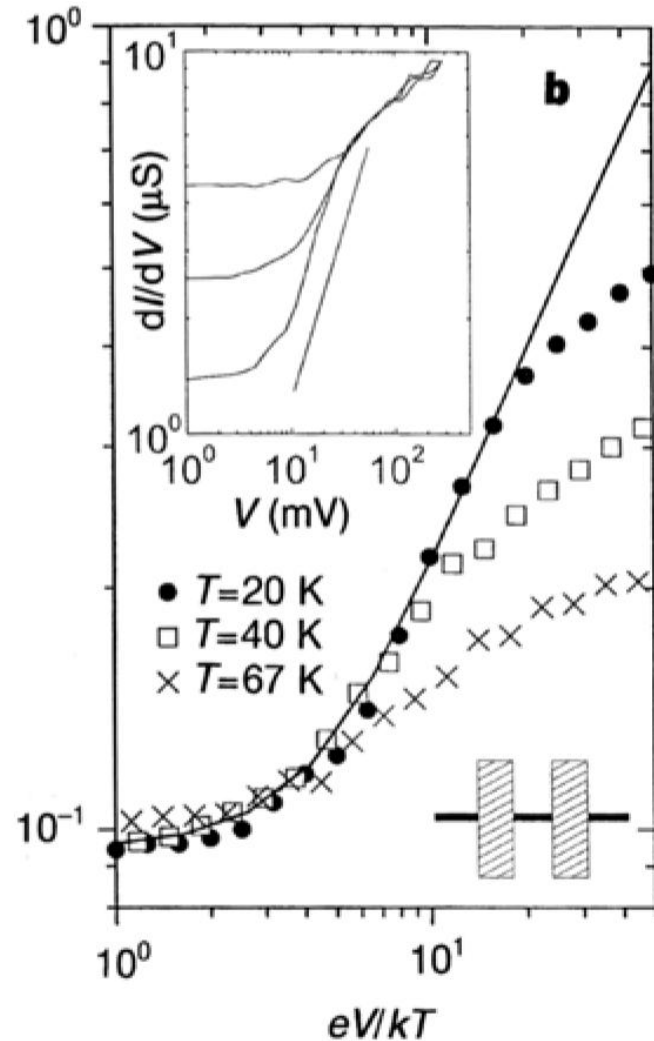
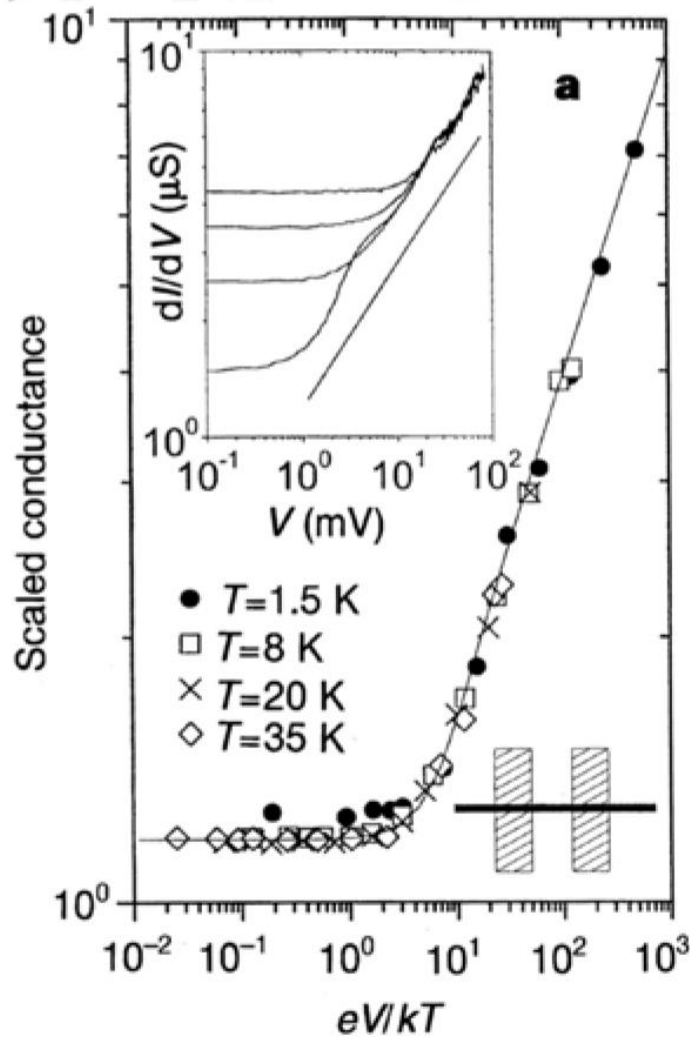
1D barrier in 2D : Kang et al., Nature '00; Yang et al., PRL '04

L-shaped quantum wells : Grayson et al., APL '05, PRB '07

Scaling of the tunneling conductance

$$\frac{dI}{dV} = V^\alpha f\left(\frac{V}{T}\right)$$

$$\alpha_{\text{end}} \simeq 2\alpha_{\text{bulk}}$$



Bockrath et al, Nature, 1999

Interacting electrons in 1D → Luttinger liquid

exact excitations: plasmons (+spinons)

Fermionic description:

$$H_F = \sum_{\mu} \int dx \left(i v_{\mu} \psi_{\mu}^{\dagger} \partial_x \psi_{\mu} + \frac{V_0}{2} n_{\mu} n_{-\mu} \right)$$

$\mu = (+, -)$ right/left movers,



$$n_{\mu} = \psi_{\mu}^{\dagger} \psi_{\mu}$$

linear dispersion relation, short-range interaction V_0 , spinless

dimensionless
interaction
strength

$$g = \frac{V_0}{2\pi v} \ll 1$$

Luttinger
parameter

$$K = \left(\frac{1-g}{1+g} \right)^{1/2}$$

Bosonic description:

$$H_B = \frac{u}{2} \int dx \left[\frac{1}{K} (\partial_x \phi)^2 + K (\partial_x \theta)^2 \right]$$

Electron
operators:

$$\psi_{\pm} \rightarrow e^{i(\theta \pm \phi)}$$

$$\partial_x \theta = \pi \Pi, \quad [\phi(x), \Pi(x')] = i\delta(x - x')$$

$u = v_F / K$ -plasmon velocity

Zero bias anomaly

Dzyaloshinskii & Larkin (1973)

Luther & Peschel; Luther & Emery (1974)

Kane & Fisher (1992)

“bulk” tunneling
DOS

$$\rho(\epsilon) \propto |\epsilon|^{\alpha_b}$$

$$\alpha_b = \frac{(1-K)^2}{2K}$$

Scaling of the tunneling conductance

$$G_t \propto \begin{cases} |t_0|^2 \left(\frac{eV}{\Lambda}\right)^{\alpha_b}, & \text{for } eV \gg T \\ |t_0|^2 \left(\frac{T}{\Lambda}\right)^{\alpha_b}, & \text{for } eV \ll T. \end{cases}$$

usual assumption:
tunneling matrix
element t_0
is infinitesimally
small !!!

tunneling into the end
of a semi-infinite wire

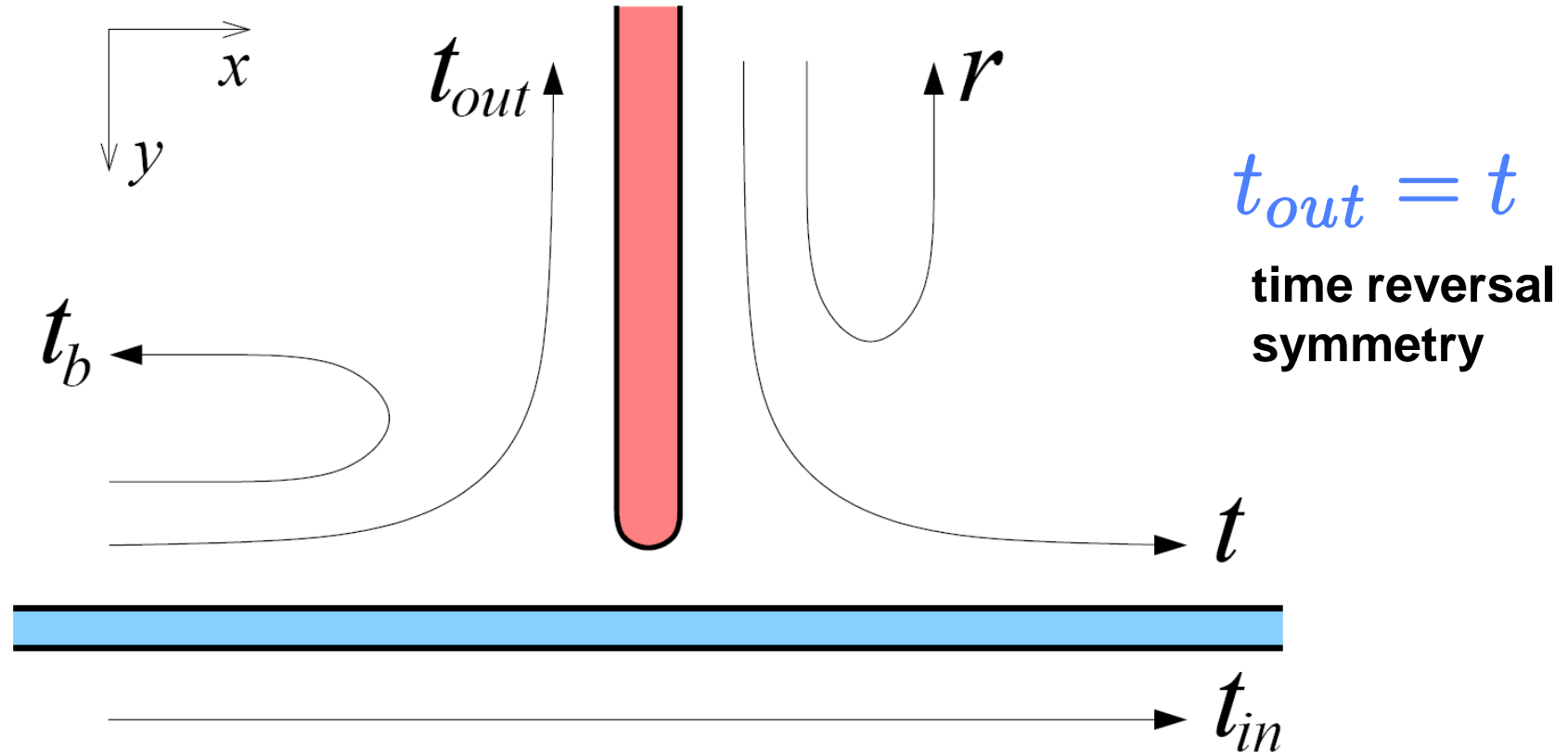
$$\alpha_b \rightarrow \alpha_e$$

$$\alpha_e = \frac{1-K}{K}$$

$$g \ll 1: \quad \alpha_b \approx g^2/2 \ll \alpha_e \approx g$$

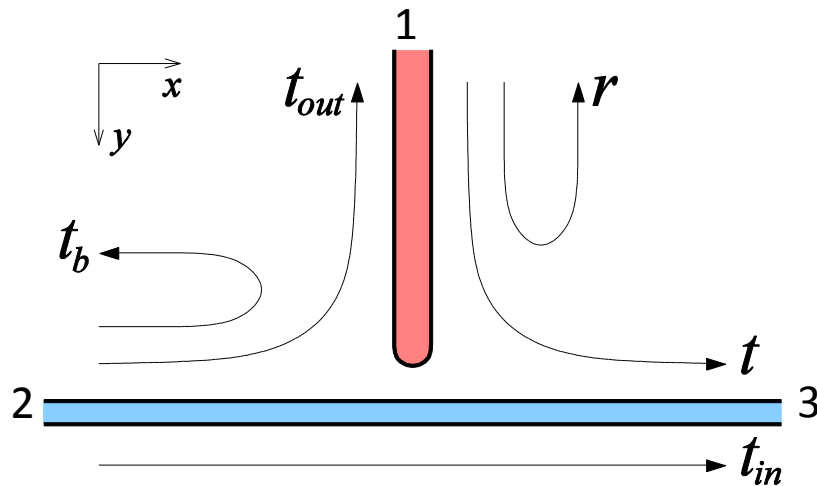
Setup

tunnel electrode: noninteracting, single channel



quantum wire:
single channel, spinless, ballistic,
interaction is described by LL model

Contact: 3x3 scattering matrix



$$\hat{S} = \begin{pmatrix} r & t_{out} & t_{out} \\ t & t_b & t_{in} \\ t & t_{in} & t_b \end{pmatrix}$$

for finite
tunneling $t_b \neq 0$!!!

Symmetry: 1) time-reversal
2) 2 \leftrightarrow 3

Most general parametrization

$$t_b = -e^{i\beta} \gamma, \quad t = t_{out} = e^{i(\chi - \beta - \varphi)/2} \sqrt{2\gamma (\cos \varphi - \gamma)},$$

$$t_{in} = e^{i\beta} (e^{i\varphi} - \gamma), \quad r = e^{i(\chi - 2\beta - \varphi)} (2\gamma - e^{-i\varphi}),$$

$$-\pi/2 < \varphi < \pi/2, \quad 0 < \gamma < \cos \varphi, \quad -2\pi < \beta, \chi < 2\pi.$$

Hamiltonian

$$H = H_w + H_e + H_{\text{tun}},$$

$$H_w = \sum_{\mu} \int dx \left(-i\mu v \psi_{\mu}^{\dagger} \partial_x \psi_{\mu} + \frac{1}{2} V_0 n_{\mu} n_{-\mu} \right)$$

$$H_e = -iv_e \sum_{\mu} \mu \int_{-\infty}^0 dy \psi_{\mu}^{\dagger} \partial_y \psi_{\mu}$$

Simplest model of the tunneling contact

$$H_{\text{tun}} = t_0 \psi^{\dagger}(y = -0) \psi(x = 0) + h.c.$$

point-like contact described by the tunneling Hamiltonian

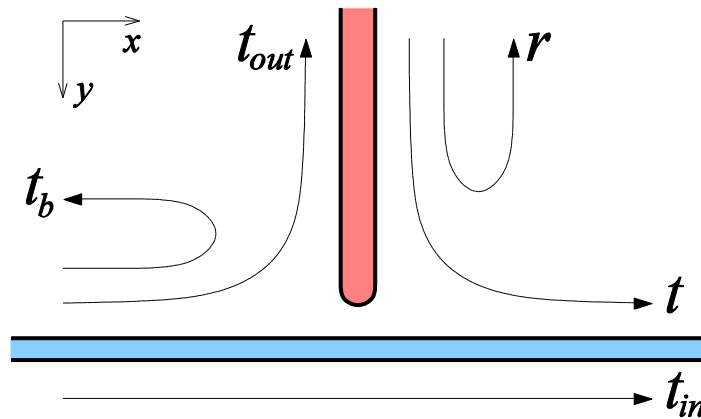
Tunneling Hamiltonian: noninteracting case

Specific choice of the S-matrix

$$t = t_{out} = -i\sqrt{2\gamma(1-\gamma)}$$

$$r = 1 - 2\gamma$$

$$t_b = -\gamma, \quad t_{in} = 1 - \gamma$$



$$\gamma = \frac{2t_0^2}{vv_e + 2t_0^2}$$

← single parameter

tunnel conductance

$$G_t = 2|t|^2 = 4\gamma(1-\gamma)$$

tunneling transparency
of the contact

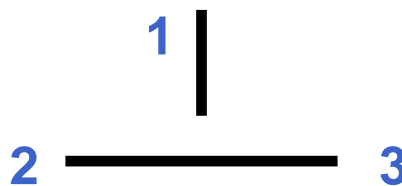
$$t_0 \rightarrow 0 \quad \gamma \approx 2t_0^2 \frac{1}{v} \frac{1}{v_e} \rightarrow 0, \quad G_t \rightarrow 0$$

$$t \sim t_0, \quad t_b \sim t_0^2 \Rightarrow |t_b| \ll |t|$$

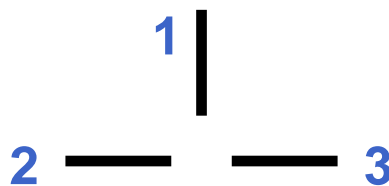
$$t_0 \rightarrow \infty \quad \gamma \rightarrow 1, \quad G_t \rightarrow 0$$

$$t \sim 1/t_0, \quad t_b \rightarrow 1$$

tunnel contact
decouples
from the wire



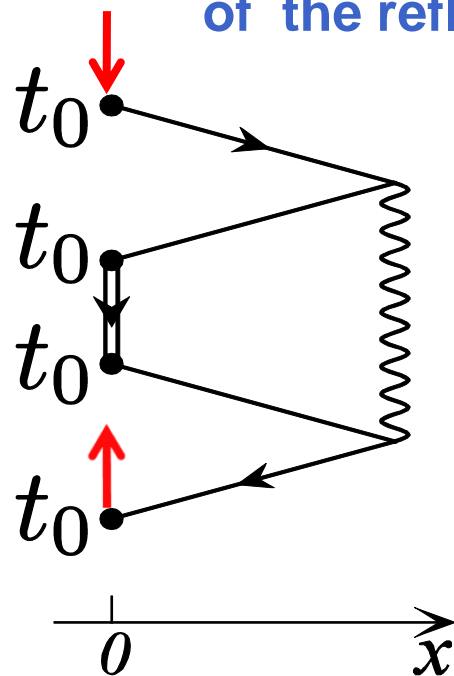
all three
channels
decouple



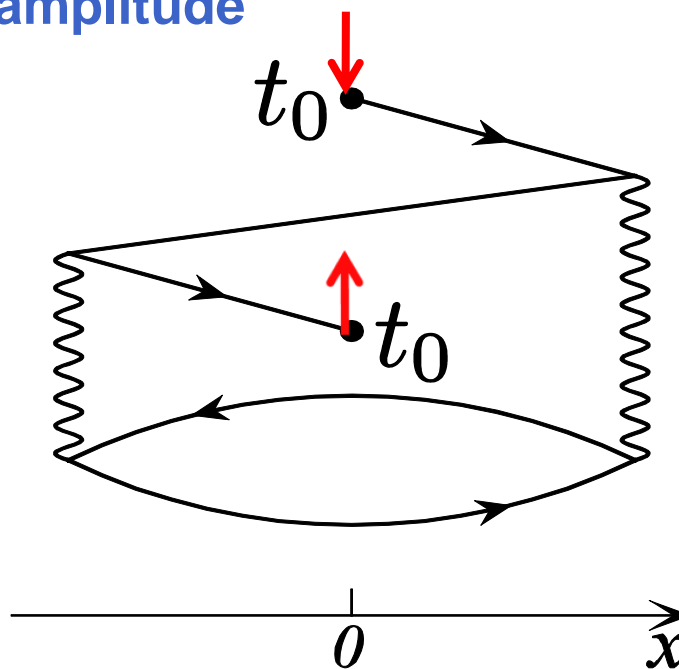
Tunneling Hamiltonian (point contact): small γ

$$g \ll 1, \quad t_0 \rightarrow 0, \quad \gamma \approx 2t_0^2/vv_e \ll 1$$

Lowest-order processes leading to the renormalization of the reflection amplitude



$$gt_0^4$$



$$-g^2 t_0^2$$

opposite sign

→ GF in the wire
 ⇨ GF in the electrode

$$\beta(\gamma) \simeq g\gamma^2 - g^2\gamma/2, \quad \gamma \ll 1$$

RG in the weak-tunneling limit

$$\frac{d\gamma}{d\mathcal{L}} = g\gamma^2 - \frac{g^2\gamma}{2}$$

γ -tunneling transparency
of the contact

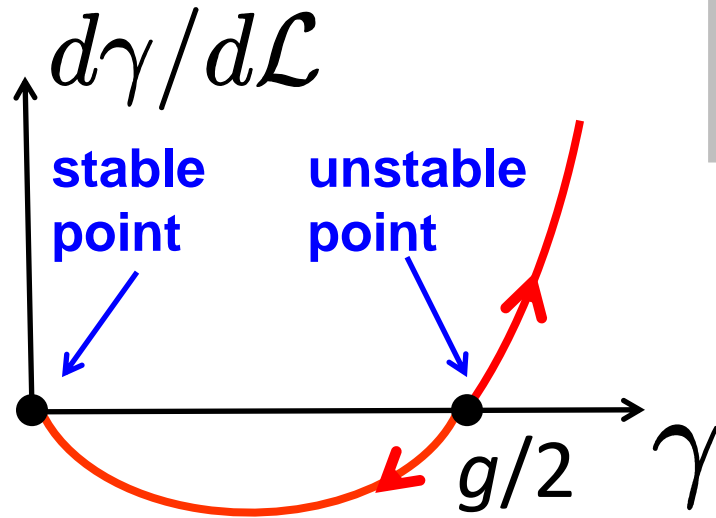
$$\mathcal{L} = \ln(\Lambda/|\epsilon|)$$

non-trivial geometry, junction
of 3 wires

renormalization of the bulk
tunneling density of states

Das, Rao, Sen '02, '04

$$\gamma \simeq \frac{\gamma_0}{2\gamma_0/g + (1 - 2\gamma_0/g)(\Lambda/|\epsilon|)^{g^2/2}}$$



$$\gamma_0 < g/2 \rightarrow$$

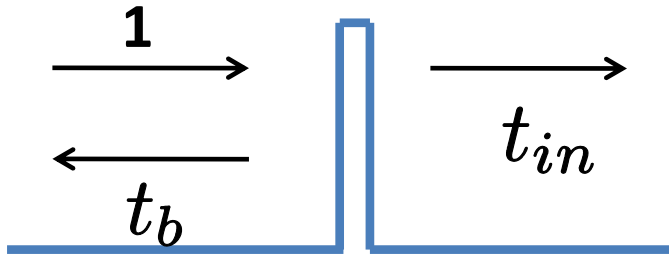
renormalization
of the density of
states dominates

$$\gamma_0 > g/2 \rightarrow$$

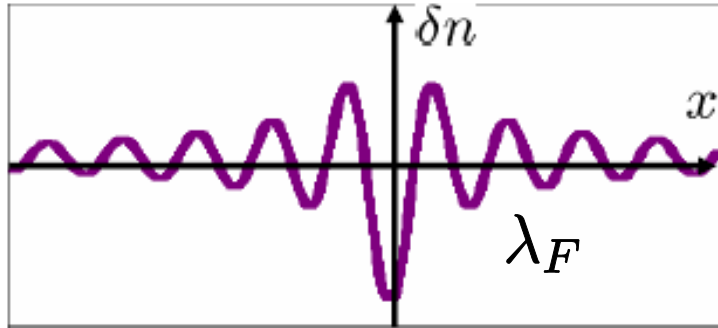
enhancement
of the tunneling

Physics behind: scattering off Friedel oscillations vs. bulk ZBA

Friedel oscillations in 1D



$$x < 0: \quad \psi(x) = e^{ikx} + t_b e^{-ikx}$$



$$\delta n = \frac{|t_b|}{2\pi|x|} \sin(2k_F|x| + \phi_b)$$

$$|x| \gg \lambda_F \quad t_b = |t_b| e^{i\phi_b}$$

Hartree potential $V_H(x) = \int dx_1 V(x - x_1) \delta n(x_1)$ **oscillates with the period $\lambda_F/2$ at $x \rightarrow \infty$**

$$\delta t_b \propto \int dx e^{-2ikx} V_H(x) \propto g\mathcal{L} = g \ln(\Lambda/|\epsilon|)$$

$$\epsilon = E - E_F$$

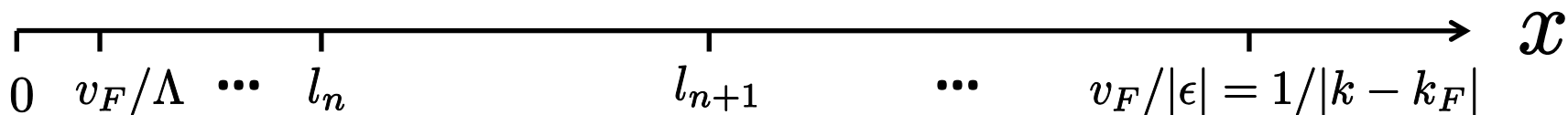
Exchange contribution — similar

Leading-log summation:

sums up the most divergent terms, $[g \ln(\Lambda/|\epsilon|)]^n$, of the perturbation theory

Split the important interval, $[v_F/\Lambda, v_F/|\epsilon|]$, on smaller pieces,

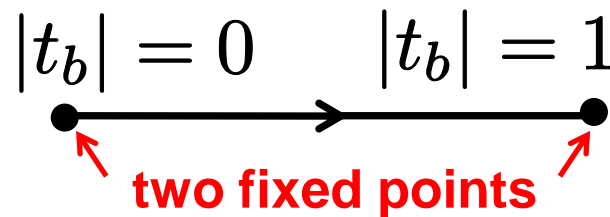
so that $l_{n+1}/l_n = \text{const} \gg 1$ but $g \ln(l_{n+1}/l_n) \ll 1$



Single impurity: fermionic RG for the backscattering and transmission

$$\delta t_b = t_b^{n+1} - t_b^n = g t_b^n (1 - |t_b^n|^2) \ln(l_{n+1}/l_n)$$

$$\frac{dt_b}{d\mathcal{L}} = g t_b (1 - |t_b|^2)$$



β -function in the first order in g

Fermionic RG: explicit connection between fixed points for weak interaction, Matveev, Yue, Glazman '93

Bosonic RG: exact exponents at fixed points for arbitrary interaction, Kane, Fisher '92


Single impurity

$$dt_b/d\mathcal{L} = gt_b(1 - |t_b|^2) \implies \beta(t_b) \simeq gt_b, \quad |t_b| \ll 1$$

Tunneling contact

$$t_b = -\gamma$$

$$\beta(\gamma) \simeq g\gamma^2 - g^2\gamma/2, \quad \gamma \ll 1$$


$$gt_b^2 \longrightarrow$$

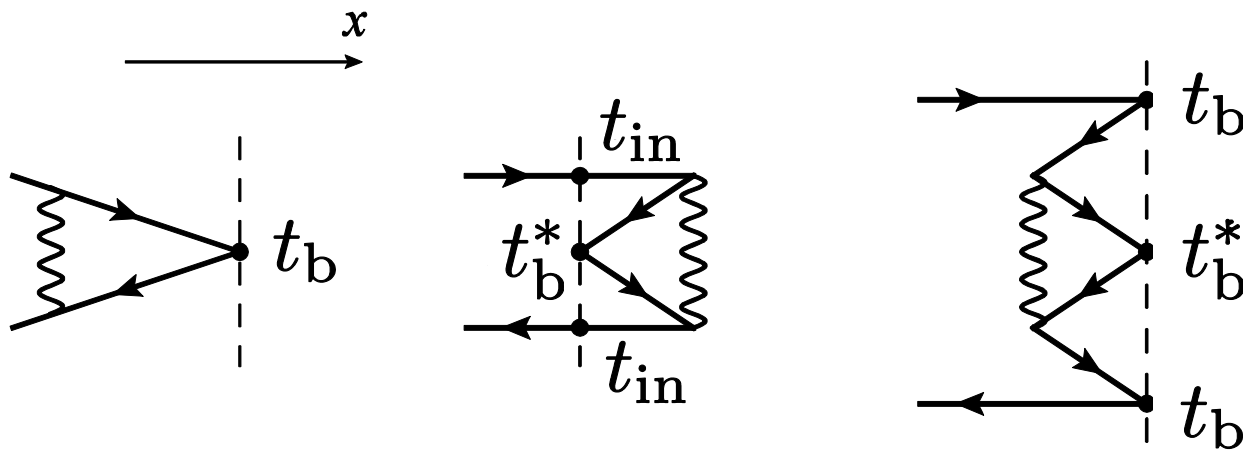
Key difference:
 gt_b absent

Phase of the Friedel osc's is important

Weak impurity: $\phi_b = \pi/2$

Point tunnel contact: $\phi_b = 0$

Renormalization of backscattering



$$\delta t_b = \frac{g}{2} \left[t_b \int_0^\Lambda \frac{d\epsilon'}{\epsilon' - \epsilon} + t_b^* (t_{in}^2 + t_b^2) \int_{-\Lambda}^0 \frac{d\epsilon'}{\epsilon' - \epsilon} \right]$$

$$\frac{dt_b}{d\mathcal{L}} = \frac{g}{2} \left[t_b - t_b^* (t_{in}^2 + t_b^2) \right] \underset{t_b \rightarrow 0}{\simeq} \frac{g}{2} (t_b - t_b^*)$$

Weak impurity:

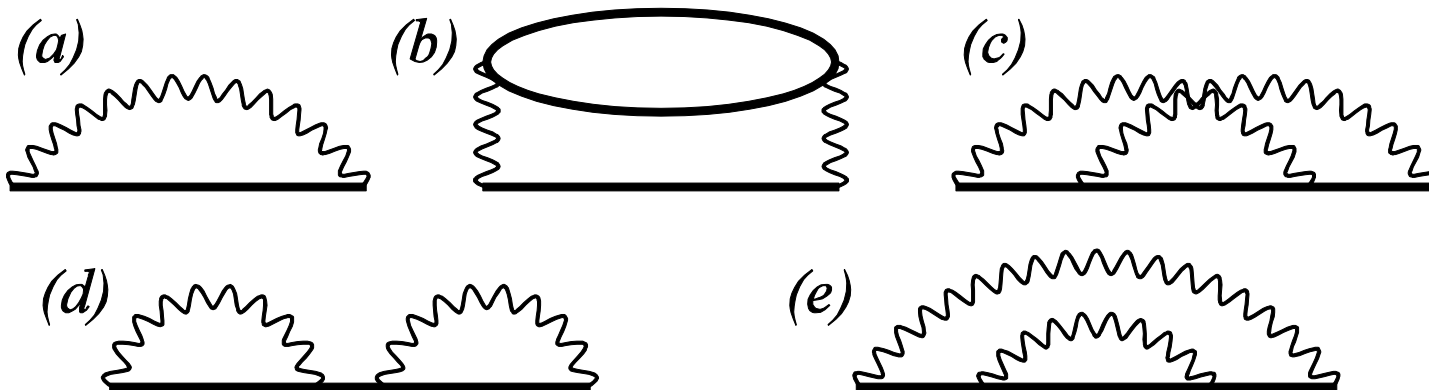
$$\phi_b = \pi/2 \quad \longrightarrow \quad (g/2)(t_b - t_b^*) = gt_b$$

Point tunnel contact:

$$\phi_b = 0 \quad \longrightarrow \quad (g/2)(t_b - t_b^*) = 0$$

Generic tunnel contact

fermionic S-matrix RG: exact in S-matrix and perturbative in g



thick lines: exact noninteracting GF (fully dressed by the tunneling vertices)

One-loop skeletons (a),(b) contribute to the exact-in- γ β -function, diagrams (c)-(e) do not

For tunneling problem the quadratic in g terms has to be included into β -function

$$\mathbf{A} = \begin{pmatrix} t_b \\ t_{in} \\ t \\ r \end{pmatrix},$$

$$\delta \mathbf{A} = [g\vec{\beta}_1(\mathbf{A}_0) + g^2\vec{\beta}_2(\mathbf{A}_0)]\mathcal{L} + \frac{1}{2}g^2\vec{\eta}(\mathbf{A}_0)\mathcal{L}^2$$

$$\rightarrow [g\vec{\beta}_1(\mathbf{A}) + g^2\vec{\beta}_2(\mathbf{A})]\mathcal{L}$$

$$\partial \mathbf{A} / \partial \mathcal{L} = \beta(\mathbf{A})$$

S-matrix of the tunnel contact is renormalizable to order g^2

Four (two)-parameter scaling for the tunnel contact

$$\partial t_b / \partial \mathcal{L} = (g/2) [t_b - t_b^* (t_{in}^2 + t_b^2)] - (g^2/4) [t_b^* |t_b|^2 (t_{in}^2 + t_b^2) + 2t_b |t_{in}|^4 - t_b |t_b|^2]$$

$$\partial t_{in} / \partial \mathcal{L} = -gt_{in} |t_b|^2 + (g^2/4) t_{in} [|t_{in}|^2 - (t_{in}^*)^2 (t_{in}^2 + t_b^2) - 2|t_b|^4]$$

$$\partial t / \partial \mathcal{L} = -(g/2) t t_b^* (t_{in} + t_b) - (g^2/4) t (t_{in} + t_b) (t_b^* |t_b|^2 + t_{in}^* |t_{in}|^2)$$

$$\partial r / \partial \mathcal{L} = -gt^2 t_b^* - (g^2/2) t^2 (t_{in}^* |t_{in}|^2 + t_b^* |t_b|^2)$$

Equations for t_b and t_{in} are closed \longrightarrow two “leading equations”

$$t_b = -e^{i\beta} \gamma, \quad t = t_{out} = e^{i(\chi - \beta - \varphi)/2} \sqrt{2\gamma (\cos \varphi - \gamma)},$$

$$t_{in} = e^{i\beta} (e^{i\varphi} - \gamma), \quad r = e^{i(\chi - 2\beta - \varphi)} (2\gamma - e^{-i\varphi}),$$

$$\frac{\partial \gamma}{\partial \mathcal{L}} = \beta_\gamma(\gamma, \varphi)$$

$$\frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial \mathcal{L}} = \beta_\varphi(\gamma, \varphi)$$

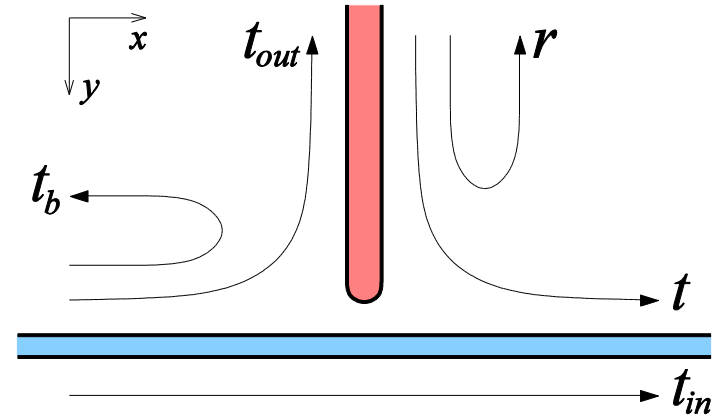
Point tunnel contact: $\beta_\varphi \equiv 0$, four RG equations “collapse” onto a single one

$$d\gamma/d\mathcal{L} = \beta(\gamma), \quad \varphi = \beta = 0, \quad \chi = -\pi$$

Tunneling Hamiltonian (point contact): arbitrary γ

$$t_b = -\gamma, \quad t_{in} = 1 - \gamma, \quad r = 1 - 2\gamma$$

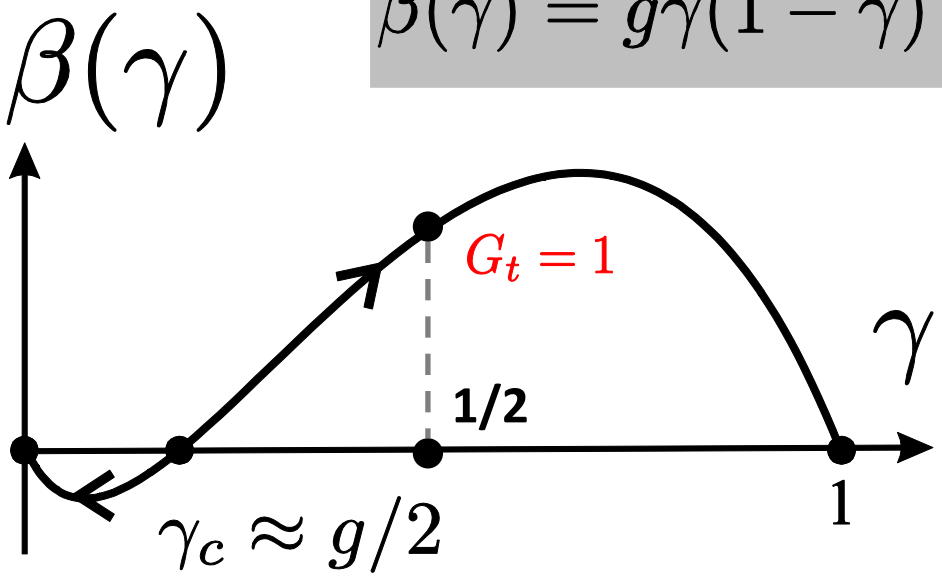
$$t = t_{out} = -i\sqrt{2\gamma(1-\gamma)}, \quad G_t = 4\gamma(1-\gamma)$$



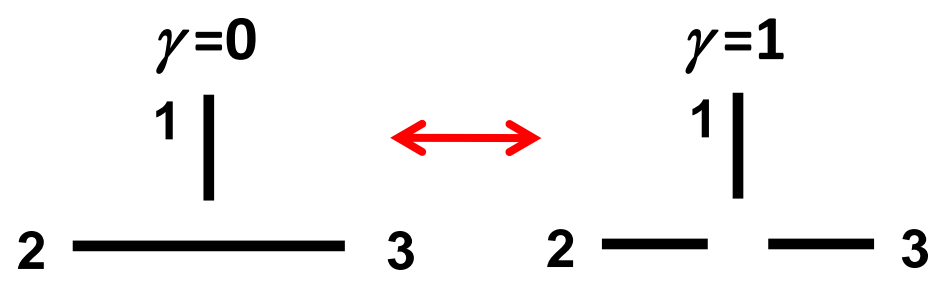
$$\gamma = \frac{2t_0^2}{vv_e + 2t_0^2}$$

t_0 – amplitude entering tunn. Ham.

$$\beta(\gamma) = g\gamma(1-\gamma) \left[\gamma - \frac{g}{2}(1-2\gamma)(1-\gamma+\gamma^2) \right]$$

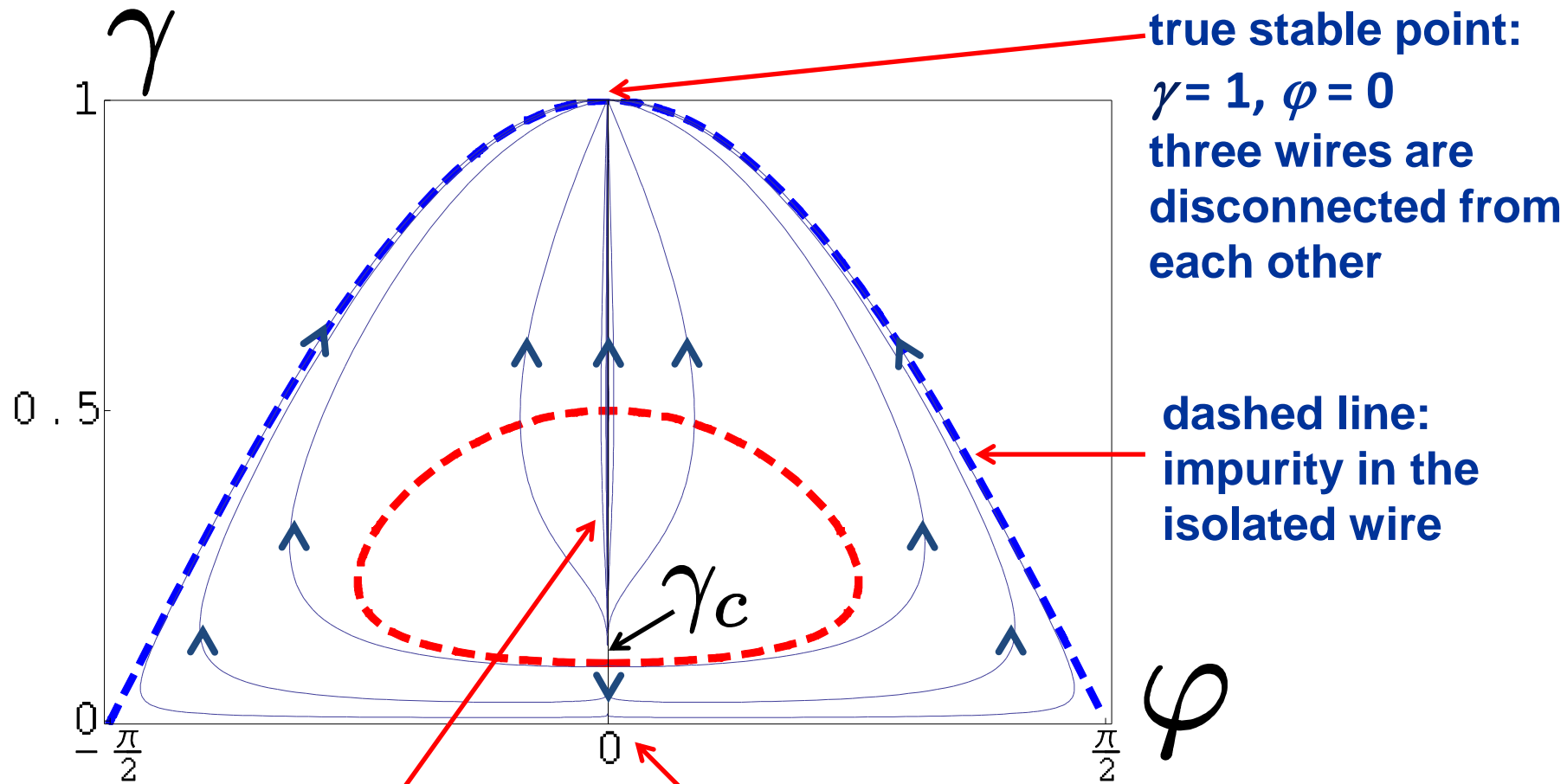


- 1) unstable point: $\gamma = \gamma_c$
- 2) stable points: $\gamma = 0, \gamma = 1, G_t = 4\gamma(1-\gamma) = 0$



Phase transition

But! In fact, $\gamma=0$ is not a *stable* point, it is a *saddle* point \rightarrow no phase transition!!



vertical line:
point contact,
tunneling
hamiltonian

saddle point

true stable point:
 $\gamma=1, \varphi=0$
three wires are
disconnected from
each other

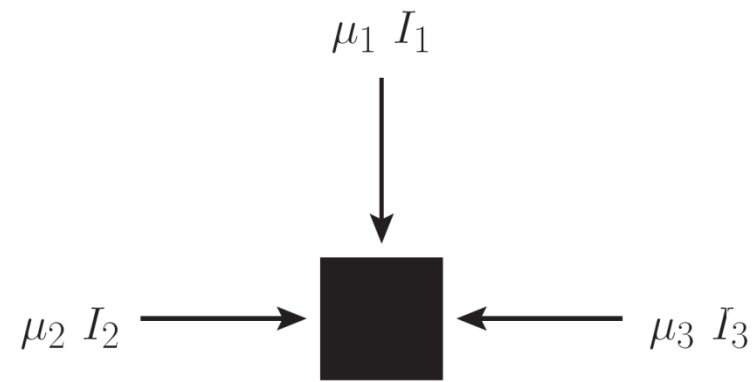
dashed line:
impurity in the
isolated wire

$$t_b = -e^{i\beta}\gamma, \quad t = t_{out} = e^{i(\chi-\beta-\varphi)/2} \sqrt{2\gamma(\cos\varphi - \gamma)},$$

$$t_{in} = e^{i\beta}(e^{i\varphi} - \gamma), \quad r = e^{i(\chi-2\beta-\varphi)}(2\gamma - e^{-i\varphi}),$$

Conductances

$$I_i = \sum_j G_{ij} \mu_j$$



time reversal and $2 \leftrightarrow 3$ symmetries \rightarrow 2 independent conductances:

$$G_t = 2|t|^2, \quad G_w = |t_{\text{in}}|^2 + |t|^2/2$$

\uparrow
tunneling
conductance

\uparrow
current in the wire if
no current flows in
the tunnel electrode

$$I_1 = G_t V_t$$

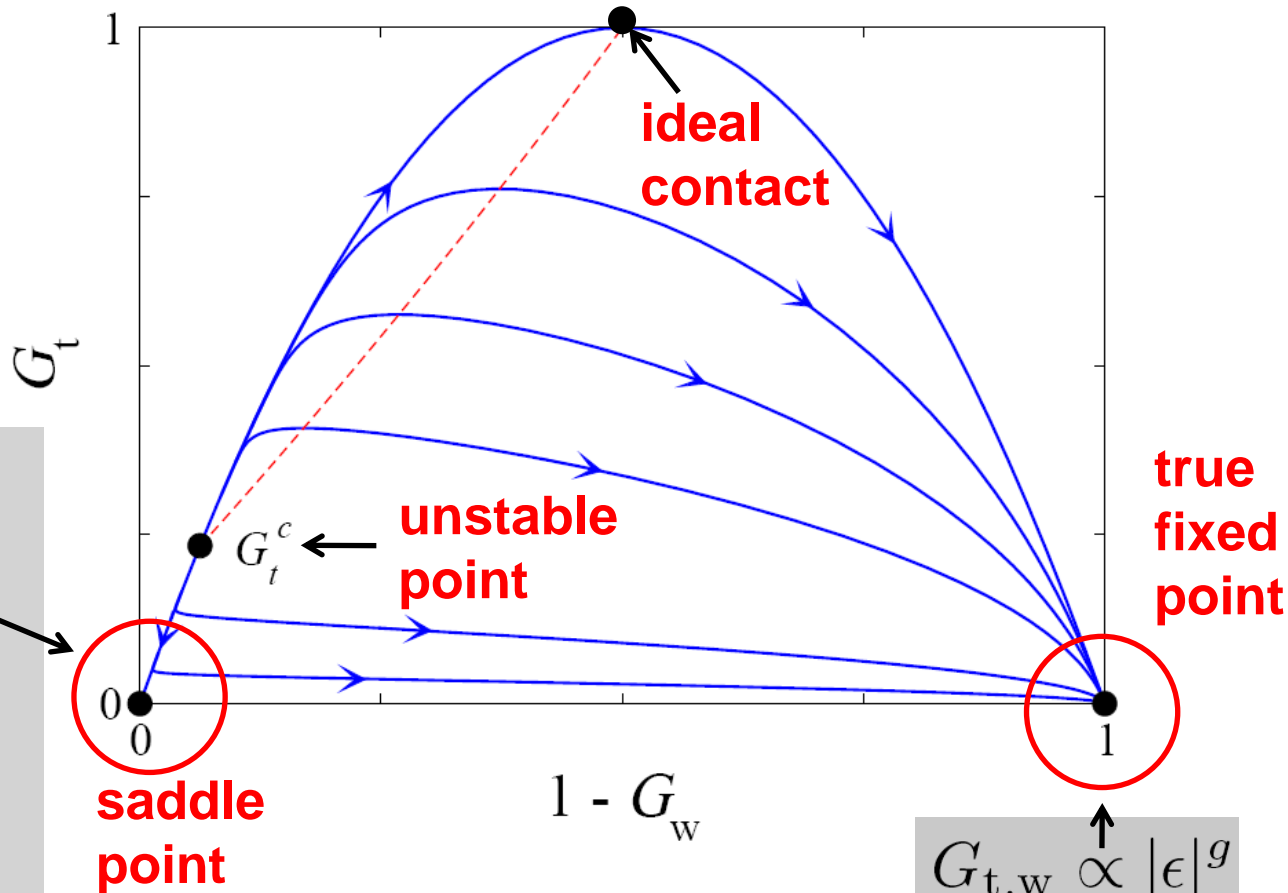
$$I_2 = -G_t V_t/2 - G_w V$$

$$I_3 = -G_t V_t/2 + G_w V$$

$$V_t = \mu_1 - (\mu_2 + \mu_3)/2$$

$$V = \mu_3 - \mu_2$$

RG flows for $G_t = 2|t|^2$, $G_w = |t_{\text{in}}|^2 + |t|^2/2$



before the turn:

$$G_t, 1 - G_w \propto |\epsilon|^{g^2/2}$$

after the turn:

$$G_t \propto |\epsilon|^{g^2/2},$$

$$1 - G_w \propto |\epsilon|^{-2g}$$

$$\frac{1 - G_w - G_t/4}{1 - G_{w0} - G_{t0}/4} \simeq \left(\frac{G_{t0}}{G_t} \right)^\kappa,$$

$$\kappa \simeq 2(2 - g)/g$$

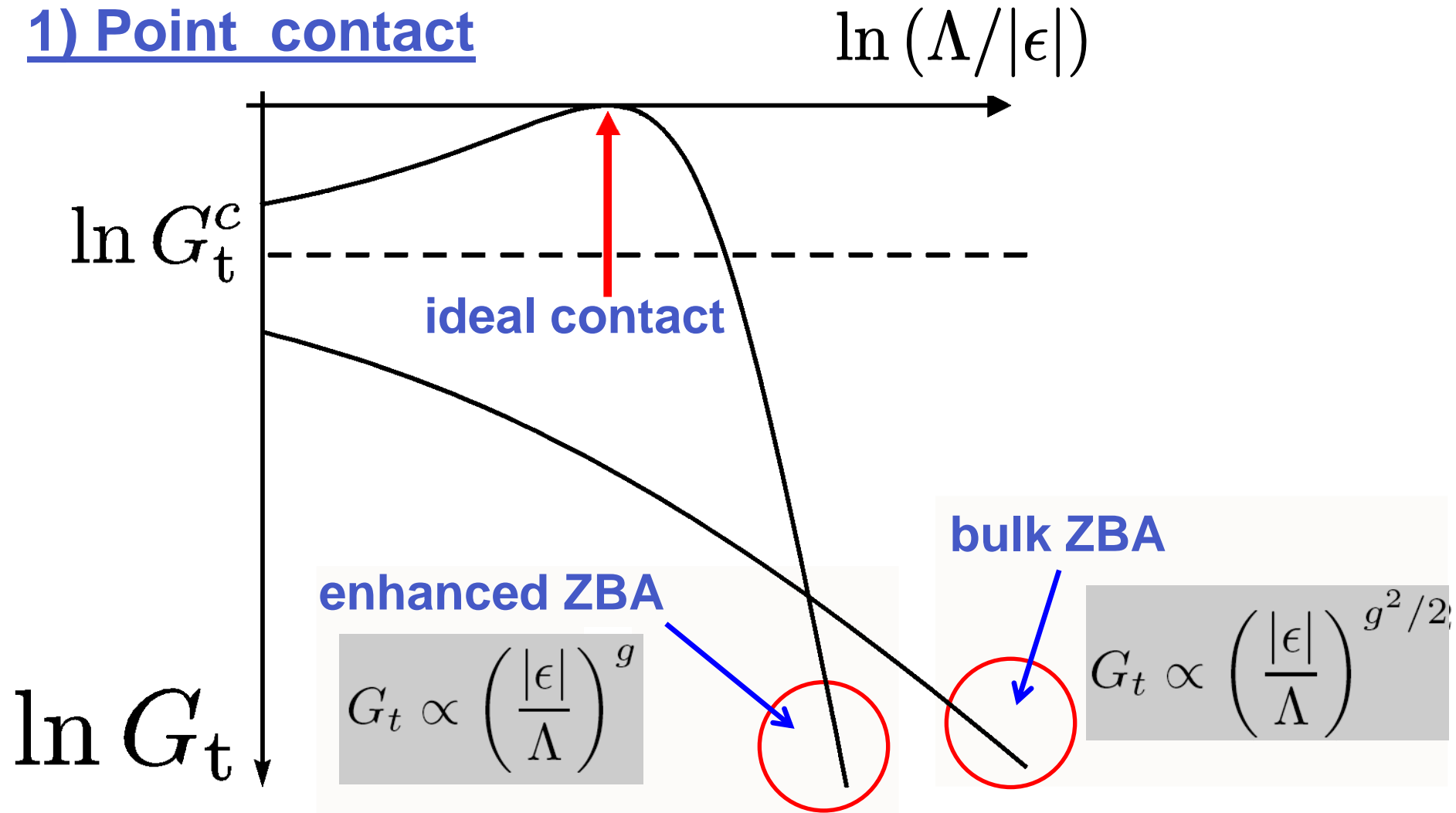
Limiting curves:

- 1) $G_t = 4G_w(1 - G_w)$ - point tunnel contact,
- 2) $G_t = 0$ - impurity in the isolated wire

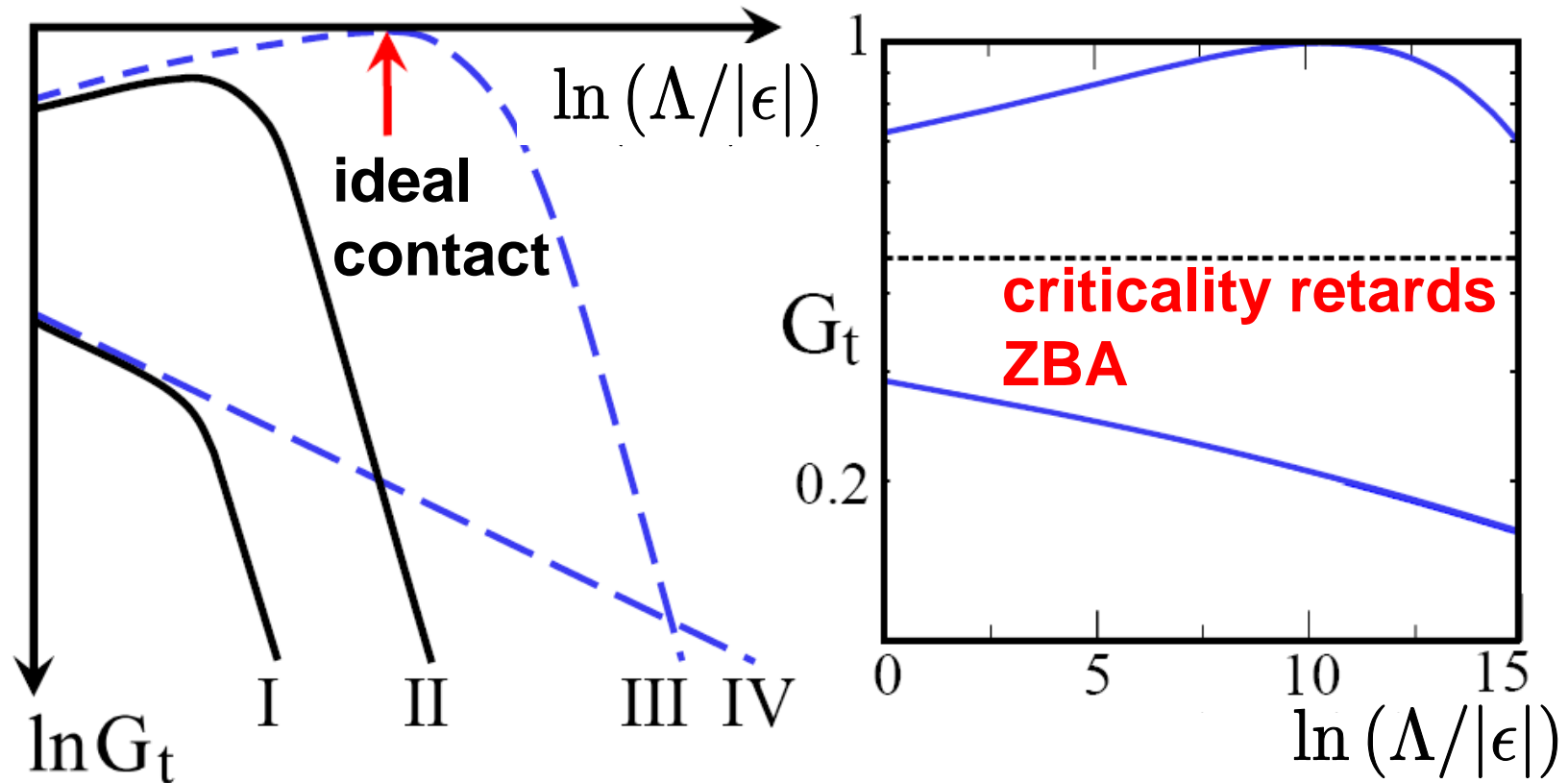
Fixed points → bosonic RG
Kane, Fisher'92

Scaling of the tunneling conductance

1) Point contact



2) Generic contact



————— generic tunnel contact $\varphi \neq 0$
 - - - - - point tunnel contact $\varphi = 0$

I - enhancement of ZBA
II, III - interaction first make the tunneling contact more transparent
IV - conventional (bulk) ZBA

Summary

- **Tunneling into a Luttinger liquid is described by RG flow of 3x3 S-matrix**
- **Conventional fixed point has a finite basin of attraction only in the point contact model**
- **Bulk ZBA generically unstable to the breakup of the liquid into two parts**
- **Interaction-induced enhancement of tunneling**
- **Nonmonotonic behavior of the tunneling current with temperature or bias voltage**

Stability analysis:

point-contact fixed point $\gamma = 0, \varphi = 0$ is a saddle point in (γ, φ) space

RG equations for small γ :

$$\frac{\partial \gamma}{\partial \mathcal{L}} \simeq g\gamma^2 \cos \varphi - \frac{g^2 \gamma}{2} + g\gamma \sin^2 \varphi$$

$$\frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial \mathcal{L}} \simeq (g/2) \sin 2\varphi \quad \longrightarrow \text{instability}$$

Compare to
point contact
(tunneling ham.)

$$\frac{d\gamma}{d\mathcal{L}} = g\gamma^2 - \frac{g^2 \gamma}{2}$$
$$\varphi \equiv 0$$

Linear in $g\gamma$ term

$$g \operatorname{Re}(t_b - t_b^* t_{\text{in}}^2) \propto g\gamma \sin^2 \varphi + \mathcal{O}(\gamma^2)$$

no exact cancelation at order $\mathcal{O}(g\gamma)$ of the contributions to β -function from the Friedel osc's that screen the junction at $x < 0$ and $x > 0$

Impurity in the isolated wire

$$t_b = -e^{i\beta} \gamma, \quad t = t_{out} = e^{i(x-\beta-\varphi)/2} \sqrt{2\gamma(\cos\varphi - \gamma)},$$

$$t_{in} = e^{i\beta} (e^{i\varphi} - \gamma), \quad r = e^{i(x-2\beta-\varphi)} (2\gamma - e^{-i\varphi}),$$

$$\gamma = \cos\varphi \Rightarrow t = 0, G_t = 0, \quad t_b = -e^{i\beta} \cos\varphi, \quad t_{in} = ie^{i\beta} \sin\varphi$$

$$d\beta/d\mathcal{L} = 0$$

RG equations

$$d\varphi/d\mathcal{L} = -(g/2) \sin 2\varphi [1 + (g/2) \cos 2\varphi]$$



$$d\gamma/d\mathcal{L} = g\gamma(1 - \gamma^2) [1 + (g/2)(2\gamma^2 - 1)]$$

$$\simeq g\gamma(1 - \gamma^2)$$

↑ beyond

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RG equations for the conductances

$$G_t = 2|t|^2, \quad G_w = |t_{\text{in}}|^2 + |t|^2/2$$

$$\begin{aligned}\partial G_t / \partial \mathcal{L} &= g G_t (f_1 + g f_2) \\ \partial G_w / \partial \mathcal{L} &= g (f_3 + g f_4)\end{aligned}$$

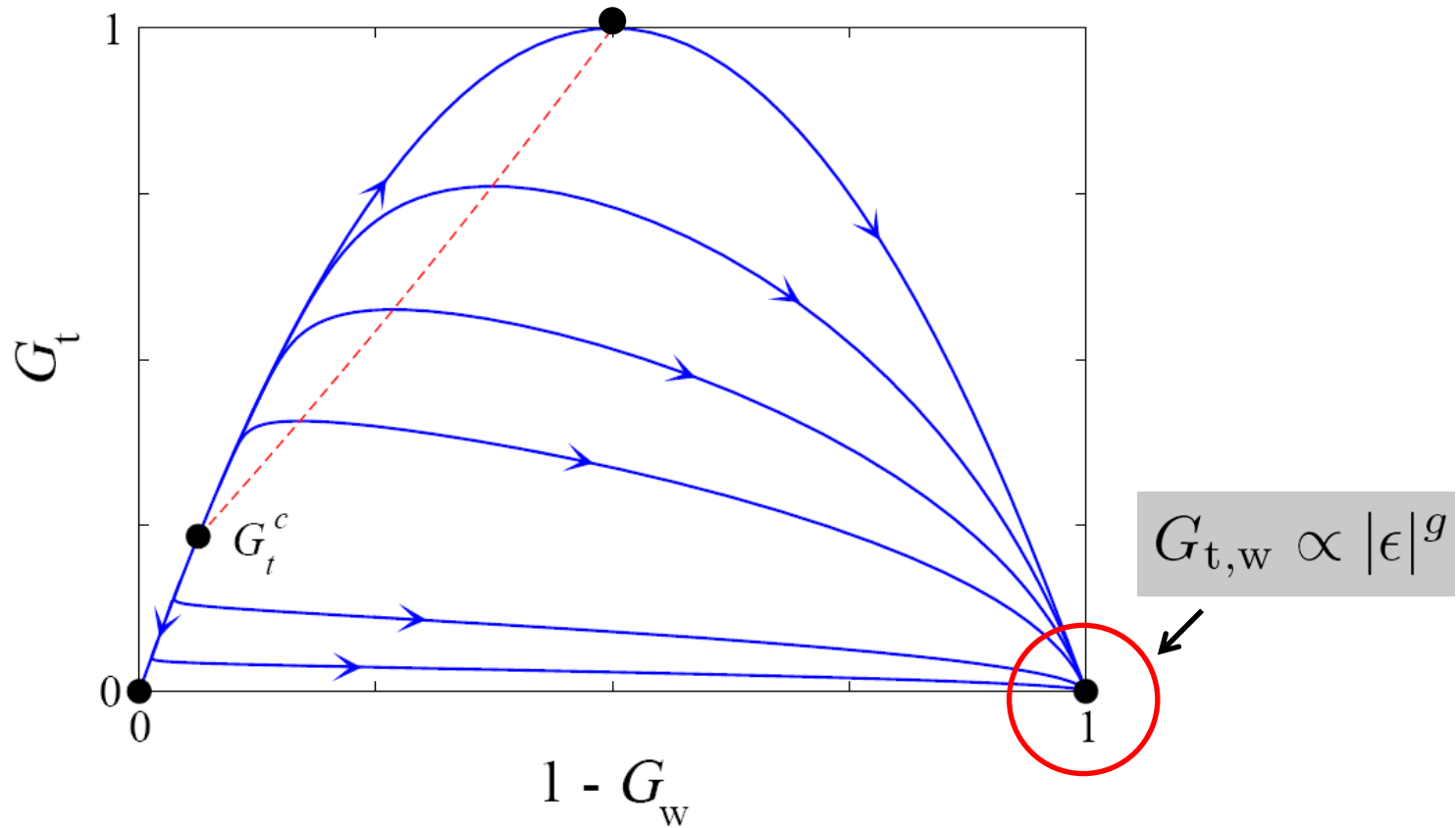
$$f_1 = -1 + G_t/2 + G_w$$

$$f_2 = -1/2 + G_t(3 - G_t)/8 + G_w(1 - G_w)$$

$$f_3 = G_t(1 + G_w)/4 - 2G_w(1 - G_w)$$

$$f_4 = (1 - 2G_w)[G_t(4 + G_t)/32 - G_w(1 - G_w)]$$

Tunneling DOS at the site of a weak impurity



Linearizing the RG equations in G_t around the stable fixed point tunneling DOS $\rho(\epsilon)$ at $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ for an arbitrary bare strength of impurity U_0

$$\rho(\epsilon) \propto |\epsilon|^{\alpha_e} \quad \alpha_e = g + g^2/2 + \dots$$