Pathlength of cosmic rays

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Composition of Cosmic-Ray Nuclei at High Energies*

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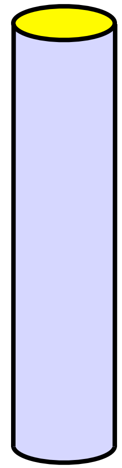
We have measured the charge composition of cosmic-ray nuclei from Li to Fe with energies up to about 100 GeV/nucleon. A balloon-borne counter telescope with gas Cherenkov counters for energy determination was used for this experiment. Our first results show that, in contrast to low-energy observations, the relative abundances change as a function of energy. We find that the ratio of the galactic secondary nuclei to primary-source nuclei decreases at energies above about 30 GeV/nucleon.

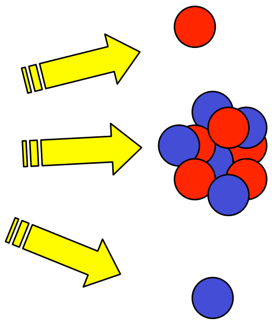
g/cm²



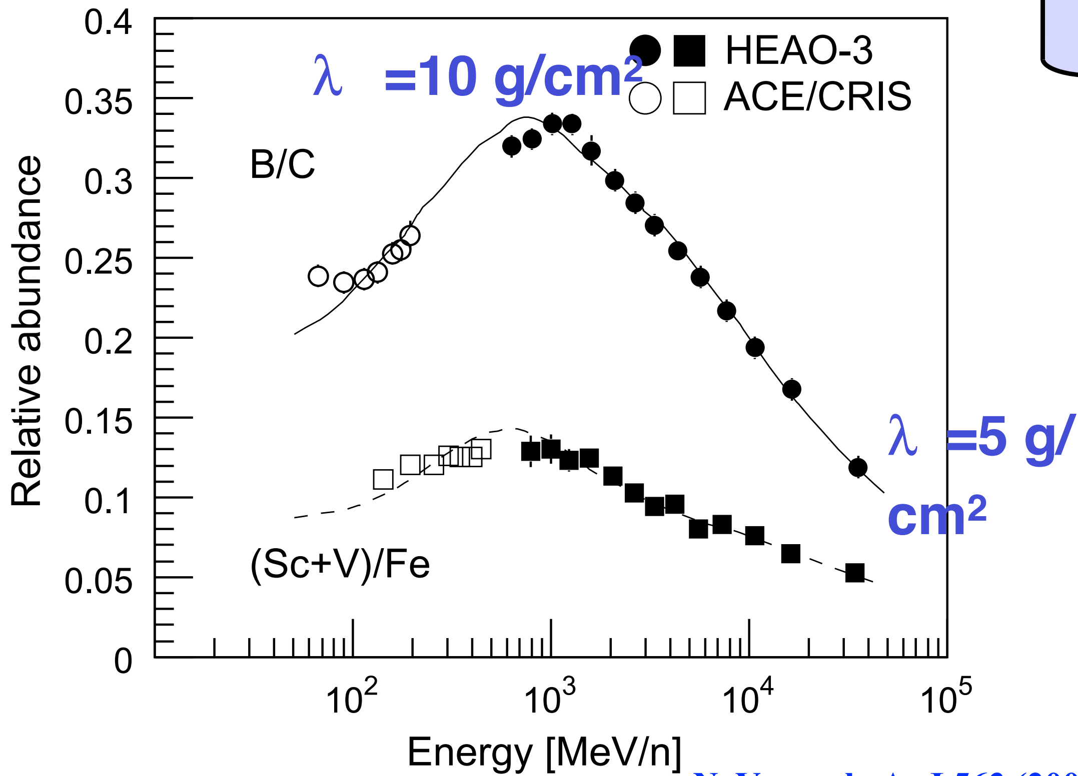
primary/secondary-ratio

spallation

C → B + n + p

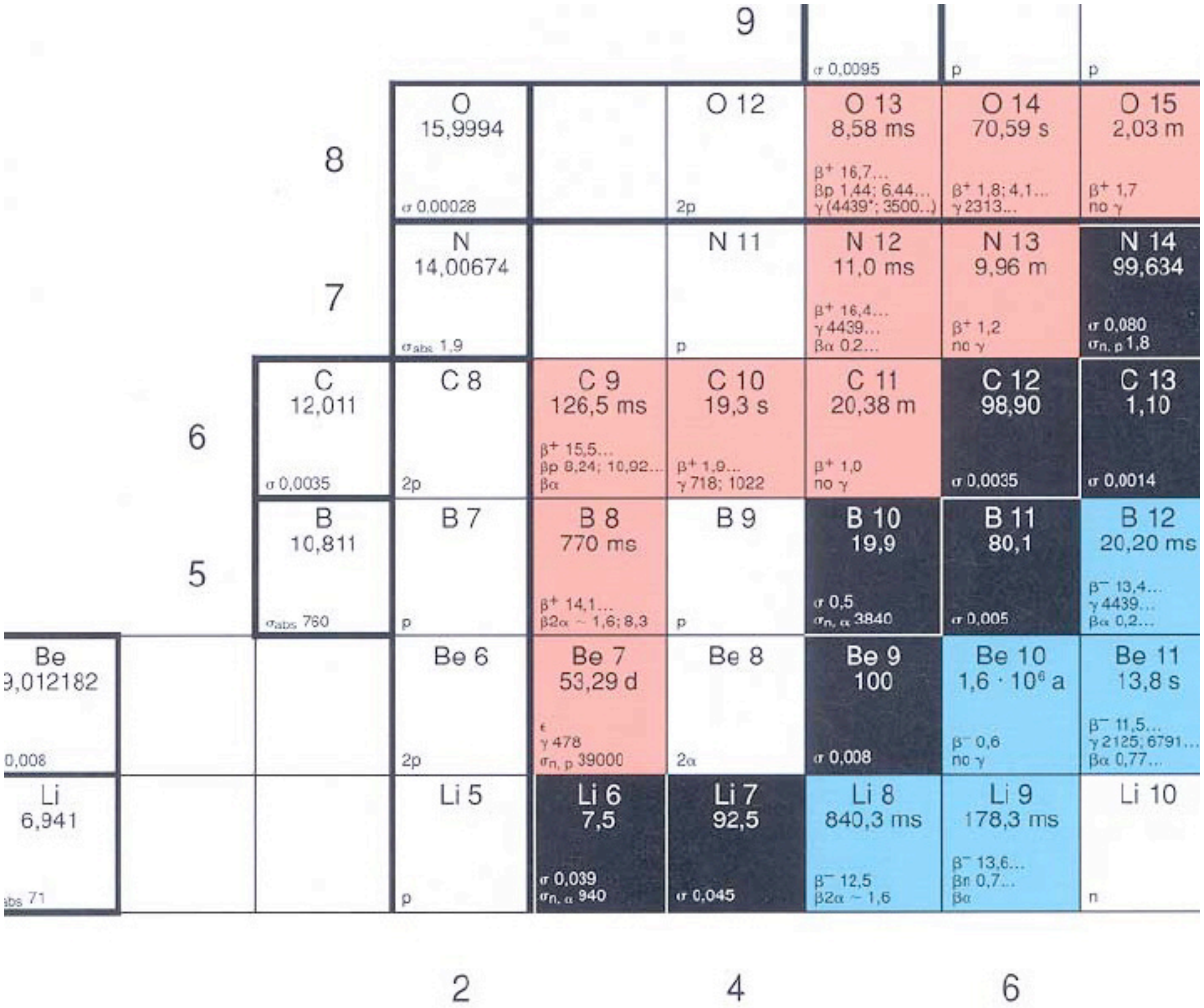


$$\lambda(E) \propto E^{-0.6}$$



N. Yanasak, ApJ 563 (2001) 768

Chart of the nuclides



„Age“ of galactic cosmic rays

THE AGE OF THE GALACTIC COSMIC RAYS DERIVED FROM THE ABUNDANCE OF ^{10}Be*

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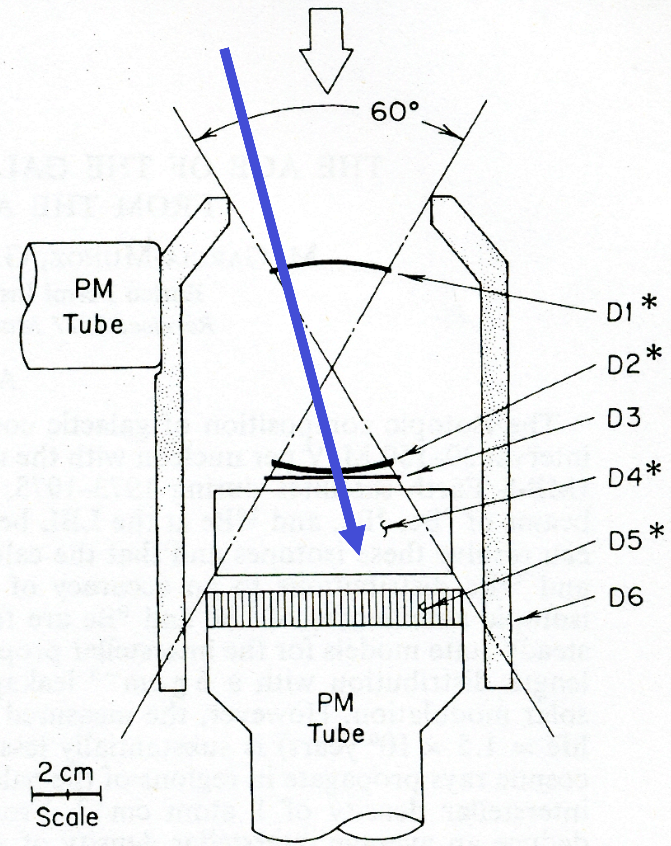
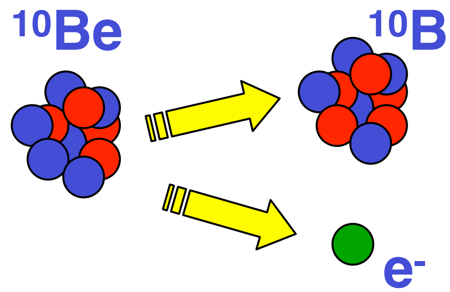


FIG. 1.—Cross section of the IMP-7 and IMP-8 telescopes. D1, D2, and D3 are lithium-drifted silicon detectors of thickness 750, 1450, and 800 μm, respectively. D4 is an 11.5 g cm^{-2} thick CsI (T1) scintillator viewed by four photodiodes. D5 is a sapphire scintillator/Cerenkov radiator of thickness 3.98 g cm^{-2}, and D6 is a plastic scintillation guard counter viewed by a photomultiplier tube. Asterisks denote detectors whose output is pulse-height analyzed.

Residence time in Galaxy

^{10}Be → ^{10}B + e$^-$ (τ =2.4 10^6 a)



$$\tau_{esc} = 17 \cdot 10^6 \text{ a}$$

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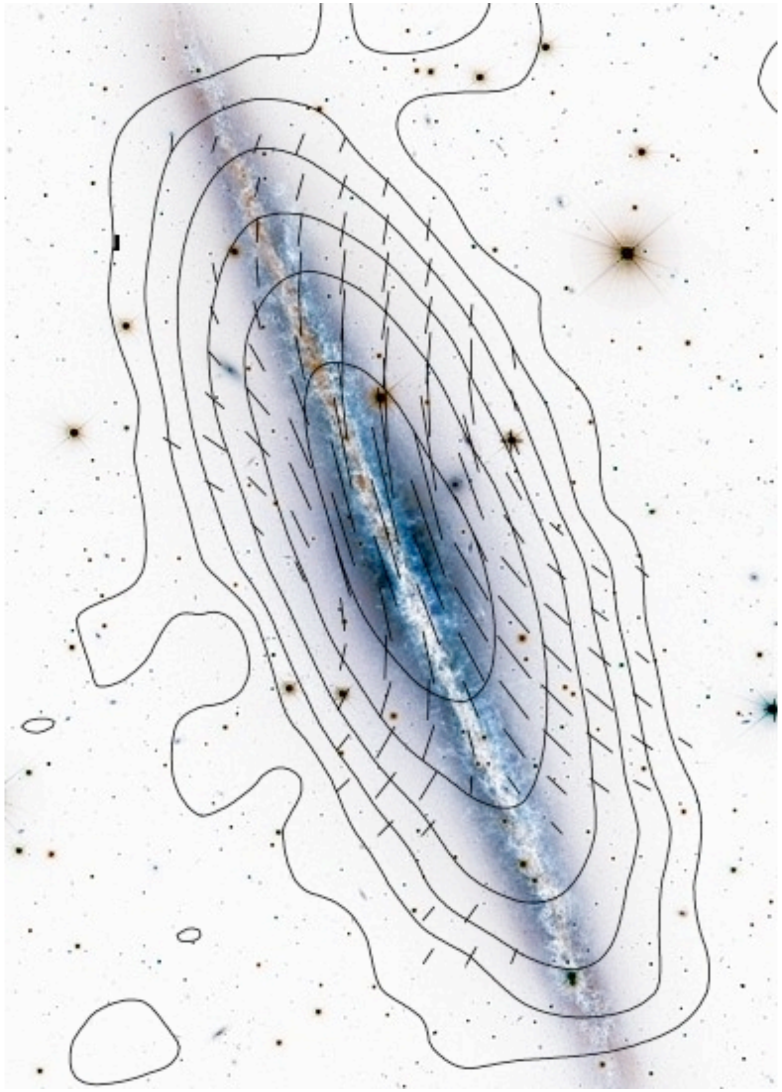
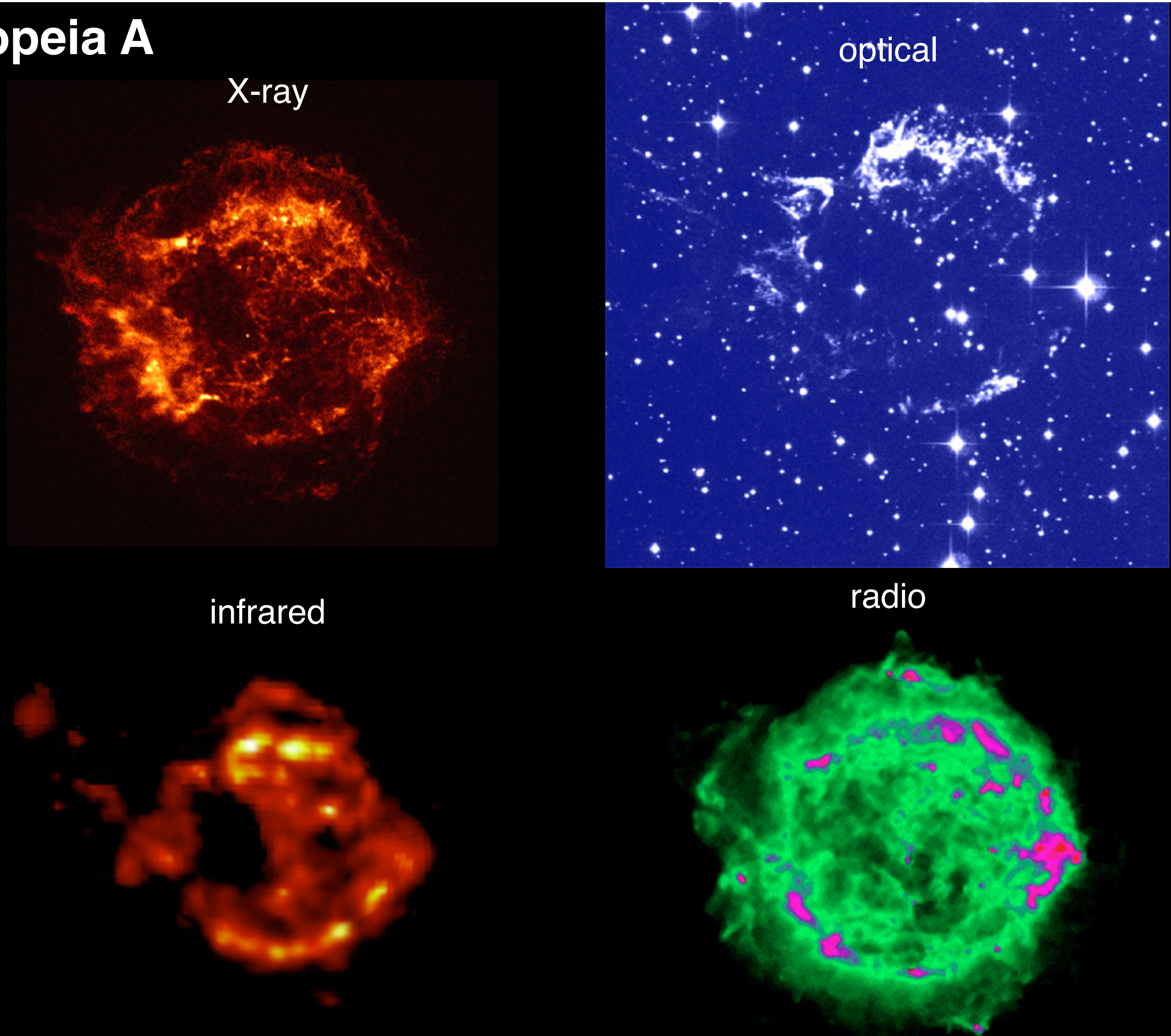


This figure shows the spiral galaxy **NGC 891**, seen almost edge-on, which is believed to be very similar to our Milky Way. It was observed at 8.4 GHz (3.6 cm wavelength) with the Effelsberg 100m telescope. The background optical image is from the CFHT Observatory. The "X-shaped" structure of the magnetic fields indicates the action of a galactic wind. The observed extent of the radio halo is limited by the large energy losses of the cosmic-ray electrons emitting at this wavelength. At lower frequencies (longer wavelengths) the radio waves are emitted by electrons with lower energies for which the energy lossesare smaller, so that larger radio halos are expected.

Cassiopeia A



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On the Origin of the Cosmic Radiation

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A theory of the origin of cosmic radiation is proposed according to which cosmic rays are originated and accelerated primarily in the interstellar space of the galaxy by collisions against moving magmetic fields. One of the features of the theory is that it yields naturally an inverse power law for the spectral distribution of the cosmic rays. The chief difficulty is that it fails to explain in a straightforward way the heavy nuclei observed in the primary radiation.

I. INTRODUCTION

IN recent discussions on the origin of the cosmic radiation E. Teller[1] has advocated the view that cosmic rays are of solar origin and are kept relatively near the sun by the action of magnetic fields. These views are amplified by Alfvén, Richtmyer, and Teller.[2] The argument against the conventional view that cosmic radiation may extend at least to all the galactic space is the very large amount of energy that should be present in form of cosmic radiation if it were to extend to such a huge space. Indeed, if this were the case, the mechanism of acceleration of the cosmic radiation should be extremely efficient.

I propose in the present note to discuss a hypothesis on the origin of cosmic rays which attempts to meet in part this objection, and according to which cosmic rays originate and are accelerated primarily in the interstellar space, although they

where H is the intensity of the magnetic field and ρ is the density of the interstellar matter.

One finds according to the present theory that a particle that is projected into the interstellar medium with energy above a certain injection threshold gains energy by collisions against the moving irregularities of the interstellar magnetic field. The rate of gain is very slow but appears capable of building up the energy to the maximum values observed. Indeed one finds quite naturally an inverse power law for the energy spectrum of the protons. The experimentally observed exponent of this law appears to be well within the range of the possibilities.

The present theory is incomplete because no satisfactory injection mechanism is proposed except for protons which apparently can be regenerated at least in part in the collision processes of the cosmic radiation itself with the diffuse interstellar matter.