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Technical Memorandum 83873

Astrophysical Tests for Radiative Decay of Neutrinos and Fundamental Physics Implications

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(NASA-TM-83873) ASTROPHYSICAL TESTS FOR
RADIATIVE DECAY OF NEUTRINOS AND FUNDAMENTAL
PHYSICS IMPLICATIONS (NASA) 31 p
HC A03/MF A01

N82-20098

CSCL 03B

Unclass

G3/90 16370

DECEMBER 1981

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Goddard Space Flight Center
Greenbelt, Maryland 20771



ASTROPHYSICAL TESTS FOR RADIATIVE DECAY OF
NEUTRINOS AND FUNDAMENTAL PHYSICS IMPLICATIONS

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Received 1981 October 30

ABSTRACT:

The radiative lifetime τ for the decay of massious neutrinos is calculated using various physical models for neutrino decay. The results are then related to the astrophysical problem of the detectability of the decay photons from cosmic neutrinos. Conversely, the astrophysical data are used to place lower limits on τ . These limits are all well below predicted values. However, an observed feature at $\sim 1700 \text{ \AA}$ in the ultraviolet background radiation at high galactic latitudes may be from the decay of neutrinos with mass $\sim 14 \text{ eV}$. This would require a decay rate much larger than the predictions of "standard" models but could be indicative of a decay rate possible in composite models or other new physics. We may thus have found an important test for substructure in leptons and quarks or other physics beyond the standard electroweak model.

Subject headings: cosmology - elementary particles - neutrinos -
ultraviolet: spectra

I. INTRODUCTION

While suggestions tying astrophysical observations with the possibility of massious¹ neutrinos have been around for some time (Gerstein and Zel'dovich

1. The literature heretofore on this subject uses either the phrase "non-zero neutrino rest mass" or the adjective "massive". The former phrase is technically accurate but cumbersome. The adjective "massive" in standard English usage connotes heavy, bulky, or large objects, hardly appropriate for $m_\nu \leq 10^{-7} m_p$. The adjective "massy" seldom used, has an even more pronounced connotation in this direction. We prefer here to coin the adjective "massious" (having the property of mass) as more appropriate for present physics usage.

1966, Cowsik and McClelland 1972, Szalay and Marx 1976), the advent of grand unification theories (see, e.g., Langacker 1981) and (as we will suggest here) composite models of quarks and leptons (see review by Harari 1980) as well as recently reported experimental results implying finite (Reines, Sobel and Pasierb 1980) and cosmologically significant (Lyubimov, et al. 1980) neutrino masses, are stimulating much interest and work on the subject of massious neutrinos and their cosmological implications (Schramm and Steigman 1981, Dolgov and Zel'dovich 1981). We begin with a brief summary of the basic cosmological setting for a discussion of this topic.

II. COSMOLOGICAL SETTING

Since the radiative lifetimes of light massious neutrinos are expected to be much larger than the age of the universe, both from theoretical (de Rújula

and Glashow 1980) and some observational (Cowsik 1980) considerations, one must look for the most copious source of neutrinos in the universe in order to look for photons from their decay. This source is the big-bang itself. For each neutrino flavor f and helicity ϵ_f , the number density of neutrinos plus antineutrinos in the universe is

$$n_{\nu_{f\epsilon}} = 1.1 \times 10^2 \left(\frac{T}{2.7K}\right)^3 \text{ cm}^{-3} \quad (1)$$

(see, e.g., Weinberg 1972).

The total number density is thus

$$n_{\nu} = 110 \sum g_f \quad (2)$$

taking $T = 2.7K$ and the total mass is

$$\Sigma_{\nu} = 110 \sum g_f m_{\nu_f} \quad (3)$$

Denoting $\Omega_{\nu} = \Sigma_{\nu}/\rho_C$ the fraction of the closure density of the universe in neutrinos, it follows that

$$\Omega_{\nu} = 0.01 h_0^{-2} \Sigma_{\nu} \quad (4)$$

where h_0 is the present Hubble constant in units of $100 \text{ km s}^{-1} \text{ Mpc}^{-1}$ and Σ_{ν} is in eV. Thus a value for $25 < \Sigma_{\nu} < 100 \text{ eV}$ could close the universe ($0.5 \lesssim h_0 \lesssim 1$). We may compare equation (4) with the various values of Ω associated with objects on different astronomical scales. The ratio of mass-to-light based on dynamical mass measurements increases with the increasing scale size. It is found that over distances much larger than typical

interstellar scales, M/L is proportional to scale size ($M/L \propto r$) up to distances of the order of ~ 1 Mpc (Davis, Tonry, Huchra and Latham 1980). Our version of Figure 2 of Davis et al. (1980), which takes account of additional data (Blitz 1979; Hoffman, Olsen and Salpeter 1980) is shown in Figure 1. The curve shown in Figure 1 gives a functional approximation to the data of the form

$$(M/L) = \mu_0 [1 - \exp(-r/\Lambda)] \quad (5)$$

in solar units. At extragalactic distances, the h dependence is also shown on the scale. The function (5) has the virtue that $M/L \propto r$ for $r \ll \Lambda$ and $M/L \rightarrow \text{const}$ for $r \gg \Lambda$ as required by the observational constraint $\Omega \lesssim 2$. The value for M/L corresponding to the critical density (i.e., $\Omega = 1$) is shown by the circle marked C. It can be seen that there appears to be a scale size $\Lambda \sim$ a few Mpc which is characteristic of the non-luminous mass in the universe. This size is interestingly close to the galaxy clustering size ~ 4 Mpc (Peebles 1980) and is of the order of the Jeans length (scaled to the present time) which one would obtain from the growth of gravitational perturbations of neutrinos in the range

$$\text{a few eV} \lesssim m_\nu \lesssim \text{a few tens of eV} \quad (6)$$

(Bisnovatyi-Kogan and Novikov 1980; Bond, Efsthathiou and Silk 1980; Doroshkevich, et al. 1980; Sata and Takahara 1981) This range of masses is also relevant to the dynamical studies of Tremaine and Gunn (1979). It should also be noted that cosmological neutrinos can undergo violent relaxation (Lynden-Bell 1967; Steigman, Sarazin, Quintana and Faulkner 1978) to produce a

density distribution $n_\nu \propto r^{-2}$ as implied by rotation curve studies of the outer parts of galaxies (Blitz 1979) and that such a density distribution, when extrapolated to galaxy clusters, can give the observed relation $M/L \propto r$. It may also be noted that massious neutrinos in the mass range (6), could close the universe (see equation (4)) and thereby "solve" the "flatness problem" as proposed by Guth (1981). (Of course, many workers do not share the view that Ω must equal 1 and do not recognize a flatness problem). Without getting into such controversial areas as to whether or not $\Omega = 1$ or whether neutrinos cluster on the scale of galaxy clusters, galaxy halos, or both, we will therefore concentrate our further discussion on the radiative decay of neutrinos in the mass range (6) and the consequences of searching for the decay photons.

III. ASTROPHYSICAL NEUTRINO FLUXES AND RADIATIVE LIFETIMES

It has been pointed out by De Rújula and Glashow (1980) that the wavelength range to search for photons from the decay of cosmologically produced neutrinos (mass range given by (6)) lies in the far ultraviolet. This is because for the decay from a heavier (ν') to a lighter mass (ν) neutrino

$$\nu' \rightarrow \nu + \gamma \quad (7)$$

the emitted photon has an energy

$$E_0 = \frac{m'^2 - m^2}{2m'} \quad (8)$$

in the rest system of the decaying neutrinos.

The neutrinos have been "adiabatically cooled" by the expansion of the universe so that their velocity spread is determined by the dynamics of their gravitational interaction rather than by thermal velocities. Typical velocities for neutrinos bound in galaxy halos would be ~ 300 km/s. For neutrinos in galaxy clusters, the dynamical velocities would be $\sim 10^3$ km/s. Thus, for E_0 corresponding to a wavelength $\lambda_0 \sim 1000 \text{ \AA}$ ($E_0 \sim 12\text{eV}$) the Doppler spread of the lines would be $\Delta\lambda \sim 1 \text{ \AA}$ for neutrinos in galaxy halos and $\sim 3 \text{ \AA}$ for neutrinos in galaxy clusters ($\Delta\lambda/\lambda_0 \sim v_v/c$). For the case where $m' \gg m$, which might be expected in light of the large mass differences known to exist among the charged leptons, equation (8) reduces to

$$E_0 = m'/2, \quad m' \gg m \quad (9)$$

In contrast to the narrow monochromatic radiation expected from nearby objects, there should also be continuum radiation at $E < E_0$ ($\lambda > \lambda_0$) from the decay of neutrinos which occurred in the past when we integrate the line emission over all redshifts.

The formulas for the astrophysical photon fluxes are as follows:

- 1) The diffuse line intensity from the galactic halo is given by

$$I_\lambda = \frac{1}{4\pi\tau\Delta\lambda} \int n' d\ell \quad \text{cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ sr}^{-1} \text{ \AA}^{-1} \quad (10)$$

where τ and n' are the lifetime and density of ν' neutrinos and the integral is along the line-of-sight of the telescope.

- 2) The flux from an extragalactic source such as the halo of a nearby galaxy or a nearby galaxy cluster is given by

$$F_\lambda = \frac{1}{4\pi R^2 \tau \Delta\lambda} \int n' dV = \frac{N}{4\pi R^2 \tau \Delta\lambda} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ \AA}^{-1} \quad (11)$$

where the volume integral

$$N = \int n' dV \quad (12)$$

gives the total number of ν neutrinos in the source and R is the distance to the source. If the mass of a galaxy cluster or halo is assumed to be mainly from ν_2 neutrinos, then

$$N = \frac{2. \times 10^{66} (M_s/M_\odot)}{m'(\text{eV})} \quad (13)$$

where M_s is the total mass of the source, usually given in solar mass (M_\odot) units.

3) The continuum flux from the decay of cosmological neutrinos is

$$I(E) = \frac{c}{4\pi H_0} \frac{n'_0}{\tau} \int_0^{z_c} dz \frac{\delta[(1+z)E - E_0]}{(1+z)(1+\Omega z)^{1/2}} \text{ cm}^2 \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ sr}^{-1} \text{ eV}^{-1} \quad (14)$$

(see, e.g., Stecker, 1971)

where z_c is the critical redshift of absorption of the UV flux.

Since $E = K/\lambda$ where $K = 1.24 \times 10^{-5} \text{ eV } \text{\AA} = hc$, in wavelength units and for $\lambda_0 = hc/E_0$, equation (14) becomes

$$I_\lambda = \frac{cn'_0}{4\pi H_0 \tau} \frac{\lambda_0^{3/2}}{\lambda^{5/2}} [1 + (\Omega-1)(1-\lambda_0/\lambda)]^{-1/2}, \quad (15)$$

$$\lambda_0 < \lambda < \lambda_0(1 + z_c)$$

or, in numerical units (Stecker 1980; Kimbie, Bowyer and Jacobsen 1981).

$$I_{\lambda} = 7.8 \times 10^{28} h_0^{-1} \tau^{-1} \frac{\lambda_0^{3/2}}{\lambda^{5/2}} [1 - (\Omega-1)(1-\lambda_0/\lambda)]^{-1/2} \text{cm}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1} \text{sr}^{-1} \text{\AA}^{-1} \quad (16)$$

Since the expected ultraviolet fluxes (10), (11) and (16) are proportional to the neutrino decay rate τ^{-1} , the physics of neutrino decay (τ for $\nu' \rightarrow \nu + \gamma$) and the astrophysical observations are both related to the problem of determining the lifetime of putative massious neutrinos in the mass range (6).

IV. MODELS FOR RADIATIVE NEUTRINO DECAY

To compute the radiative neutrino decay rate $\Gamma = \tau^{-1}$, we first note that the most general form for the amplitude is

$$\mathcal{T}(\nu' \rightarrow \nu + \gamma) = i \frac{e}{\Lambda} \bar{\psi}(p-q) \sigma_{\mu\nu} \epsilon^{\mu} q^{\nu} (a + b\gamma_5) \psi(p) \quad (17)$$

where $p^2 = m'^2$, $(p-q)^2 = m^2$. a and b are dimensionless numbers while Λ characterizes the relevant mass scale, or combination of mass scales, involved in the decay interaction. Equation (17) follows from gauge and Lorentz invariance and leads to the decay rate

$$\Gamma = \frac{\alpha}{2\Lambda^2} \left(\frac{m'^2 - m^2}{m} \right)^3 (|a|^2 + |b|^2) \quad (18)$$

If $m' \gg m$,

$$\Gamma = 3.65 \times 10^{-21} \frac{[m'(\text{eV})]^3}{[\Lambda(\text{GeV})]^2} (|a|^2 + |b|^2) \text{ eV} \quad (19)$$

or

$$\tau = 1.80 \times 10^5 \frac{[\Lambda(\text{GeV})]^2}{[m'(\text{eV})]^3} (|a|^2 + |b|^2)^{-1} \text{ sec.} \quad (20)$$

Equation (20) is the basis for a discussion about the lifetimes predicted in various models. The models have a wide range of characteristics, and it is useful to characterize them by the parameters a , b , and Λ .

A. Conservative GWS

It may yet turn out that neutrinos really are massless and hence do not oscillate, as in the standard Glashow-Weinberg-Salam (GWS) model with no right-handed neutrinos. In this case, $a = b = 0$, and

$$\tau = \infty \text{ (GWS)} \quad (21)$$

and there would be no more story to tell. This would also be the case for massless neutrinos with conserved lepton number (flavor).

B. Extended GWS

On the other hand, it is easy to extend GWS to include neutrino masses and mixing. (The mass eigenstates ν_i differ from the weak-interaction basis ν_α .) Neutrino electromagnetic decay can now proceed by an intermediate state consisting of a weak boson W and a charged lepton ℓ both of which can

couple to the photon (see Figure 2). For three generations ($i = 1, 2, 3$; $l = e, \mu, \tau$) of Dirac neutrinos, and for $m_3 > m_1$, for example, the $\nu_3 \rightarrow \nu_1 + \gamma$ decay rate is (Marciano and Sanda 1977)

$$\Gamma(\nu_3 \rightarrow \nu_1 + \gamma) = \frac{9G_F^2 \alpha}{2048\pi^4} \left(\frac{m_3^2 - m_1^2}{m_3} \right)^3 (m_3^2 + m_1^2) \times \left[\frac{m_\tau^2 s_2^2 + m_\mu^2 c_2^2 - m_e^2}{M_W^2} s_1 c_1 s_3 - \frac{m_\tau^2 - m_\mu^2}{M_W^2} s_1 s_2 c_2 c_3 \right]^2 \quad (22)$$

in terms of the Kobayashi-Maskawa-like neutrino mixing angles ($s_i \equiv \sin \theta_i$, $c_i \equiv \cos \theta_i$) (Kobayashi and Maskawa 1973) with no CP violation. For a general $\nu' \rightarrow \nu + \gamma$, the scale is

$$\Lambda = (G_F m')^{-1} = \frac{10^{14}}{m'(\text{eV})} \text{ GeV} \quad (23)$$

and the numbers a and b are (ignoring s_i , c_i factors)

$$|a|, |b| = \frac{3}{32\pi^2} \frac{m_\tau^2}{m_W^2} = 4.3 \times 10^{-6} \quad (24)$$

This is consistent with (22). Therefore we have

$$\tau = \frac{10^{44} \text{ s}}{[m'(\text{eV})]^5} \quad (\text{Extended GWS}) \quad (25)$$

It must be remembered that the mixing angles may increase this significantly (e.g., $\tau = \infty$ if $\theta_1 = 0!$).

C. Heavy Lepton

The leptonic version of the Glashow-Iliopoulos-Maiani (GIM) suppression

mechanism was operative in (22) and led to the $O(m_\tau^2/m_W^2)$ numbers in (24). We can therefore achieve a larger decay rate by going to some model involving heavier leptons. Equation (24) is then changed to

$$|a|, |b| = \frac{3}{32\pi^2} = 10^{-2} \quad (26)$$

and so

$$\tau = \frac{10^{37} \text{ s}}{[m'(\text{eV})]^5} \quad (\text{Heavy Lepton}) \quad (27)$$

This agrees with detailed model calculations with an additional very heavy lepton (Pal and Wolfenstein 1981; Aliev and Vysotsky 1981) (fourth generation) and was first estimated by de Rújula and Glashow (1980).

D. GIM-less

Models where the GIM mechanism is absent altogether could also decrease the lifetime to the order-of-magnitude (27) (de Rújula and Glashow 1980; Pal and Wolfenstein 1981). We may write

$$\tau = \frac{10^{37} \text{ s}}{[m'(\text{eV})]^5} \quad (\text{NO GIM}) \quad (28)$$

with the caveat that this, as well as our other estimates, could be significantly larger if mixing angles are sufficiently small.

E. Majorana-Dirac Neutrinos

We may try to evade GIM suppression by considering both Dirac and Majorana mass terms in the Lagrangian, a circumstance which can arise in

certain grand unified theories where the Majorana masses can be induced by radiative corrections. Cheng and Li (1980) have studied the rates for $\mu \rightarrow e\gamma$ for these general neutrino mass eigenstates in an extended GWS model, and we can adopt their work to $\nu' \rightarrow \nu\gamma$. If all six of the masses are small, we still have GIM cancellations. If we choose three of the masses to be as large as we wish, a fine tuning of the parameters in a most general mass matrix can enhance the decay rate. However, we still see the same lower limit

$$\tau \gtrsim \frac{10^{37} \text{ s}}{[m'(\text{eV})]^5} \quad (\text{Majorana/Dirac}) \quad (29)$$

F. Higgs

Pal and Wolfenstein (1981) have also pointed out that Higgs intermediate states could enhance amplitudes by a factor of $(M_W/M_\phi)^2$ where M_ϕ is a Higgs mass. If there is no GIM-like cancellation in the remaining factors, then we can optimistically guess that

$$\tau \gtrsim \left(\frac{M_\phi}{M_W}\right)^4 \frac{10^{37} \text{ s}}{[m'(\text{eV})]^5} \quad (\text{Higgs}) \quad (30)$$

In the case where $M_\phi/M_W = 0.1$, a four order-of-magnitude reduction would result.

G. Composite Models

There has been much effort in recent years constructing composite models of quarks and leptons out of more basic particles. The research area is quite new. We have no single calculation to offer as a good indication of what to expect for a decay lifetime. However, we are able to obtain order of magnitude estimates for lifetimes if a scale Λ (composite size Λ^{-1}) is

given. This holds for a reasonably large class of models, an important consideration since we want to be sure that there is no general principle which states that the electromagnetic decay rate for composite neutrinos is vanishingly small.

The reasons for believing that the leptons and quarks are bound states or something else, have to do with the proliferation of particles and parameters with the fact that the higher generations resemble excitations of the "ground state" generation, with the mismatch between fundamental supersymmetry multiplets, and known particles, and so forth (Harari, 1980). Responding to such incentive, many composite models have been proposed and, although neutrino radiative decay has not been studied, most of these models do embrace non-zero mass neutrinos and neutrino flavor nonconservation. The problems in building very light and very small particles with pointlike magnetic moments have not yet been solved, but only the scales for each class of models are needed for order-of-magnitude lifetime estimates.

The composite scale Λ is unknown, with the lower limit

$$\Lambda \gtrsim 1-10^3 \text{ TeV} \quad (31)$$

based on the absence of non-QED anomalous magnetic moments, on the absence of structure in scattering, and on Higgs compositeness. The limit from the absence of proton decay is assumed to be no more severe (Chandra and Ray 1980). The $\mu \rightarrow e\gamma$ decay limit implies $\Lambda \gtrsim 10^8 \text{ TeV}$ in first-order and $\Lambda \gtrsim 10^2 \text{ TeV}$ in second-order (Barbieri et al. 1980).

The standard weak-induced decay models have a suppression mechanism due to the conflict between the spin flip of the radiative decay and the chiral coupling of the weak boson. Therefore the transition magnetic moment fights

the V-A coupling (a coupling that would fix the helicity of a massless fermion line) so that the amplitude is proportional to and vanishes with the neutrino masses. This inhibitory factor is separate from phase space, the magnetic dipole factor, and any GIM suppression. The situation can be different in a composite theory. We still must have the overall spin flip, but the role of chiral symmetry is less certain. If there is no chiral symmetry involved in the dynamics, this suppression mechanism is not operative. Even if there are chiral symmetries of "naturalness", some of them must be broken by a set of nonvanishing mass scales. The constraint that fixes the composite wave function spin in a chiral limit may be satisfied by the presence of the other scale factors.

If the dimensionless functions (of any mass ratios in the dynamics), a and b in equation (18), entail chiral suppression, a and b are of the form

$$a \equiv \frac{m'}{\Lambda'} a', \quad b \equiv \frac{m'}{\Lambda'} b' \quad (32)$$

with the mass scale Λ' possibly different from G . The radiative decay rate is (from (18))

$$\Gamma = \frac{a}{\Lambda^2} \left(\frac{m'^2 - m^2}{m'} \right)^3 G, \quad G \equiv \frac{1}{2} (|a|^2 + |b|^2). \quad (33)$$

For the chiral case, we define

$$G = \left(\frac{m'}{\Lambda'} \right)^2 G', \quad G' \equiv \frac{1}{2} (|a'|^2 + |b'|^2) \quad (34)$$

We see that two mass powers come from the magnetic dipole q -factor, two powers from the chiral suppression, and one power from phase space. The radiative

lifetime is

$$\tau = \frac{9.0 \times 10^{11}}{G} \frac{[\Lambda(\text{TeV})]^2}{[m'(\text{eV})]^3} \text{ s} \quad (35)$$

or, from (34)

$$\tau = \frac{9.0 \times 10^{35}}{G} \frac{[\Lambda(\text{TeV})\Lambda'(\text{TeV})]^2}{[m'(\text{eV})]^5} \text{ s} \quad (36)$$

In the composite approach, protons are composites of composites and there are various ways in which its decay may be inhibited, with no direct implication for $\nu' \rightarrow \nu\gamma$ decays. On the other hand, $\mu \rightarrow e\gamma$ is much more closely related in structure. de Rújula and Glashow (1980) relate the two decays by

$$\tau = \left(\frac{m_\mu}{m'}\right)^3 \tau(\mu \rightarrow e\gamma) = \left(\frac{m_\mu}{m'}\right)^3 \frac{\tau(\mu \rightarrow e\nu\bar{\nu})}{B(\mu \rightarrow e\gamma)} \quad (37)$$

which, in our discussion, corresponds to a common G and G' . The lower limit on the $\mu \rightarrow e\gamma$ branching ratio of 1.9×10^{-10} (Bowman, et al. 1979) and the $\mu \rightarrow e\nu\bar{\nu}$ lifetime of 2×10^{-6} s combine to yield

$$\tau \geq \frac{10^{28} \text{ s}}{[m'(\text{eV})]^3} \quad (38)$$

For chiral theories, G' (rather than G) might be the same which would give $\tau = (m_\mu/m')^5 \tau(\mu \rightarrow e\gamma) \geq 10^{44}/[m'(\text{eV})]^5 \text{ s}$. However, neutrinos have no charge, far smaller mass, perhaps Majorana character, and thus could have different constituents and selection rules. (Even in the standard models we have problems: The chiral heavy lepton model gives $G'(\nu)/G'(\mu) = O(10^8)$.) We shall thus ignore any direct $\mu \rightarrow e\gamma$ formula.

Three composite model categories can be defined, showing a range of

lifetimes. (Thus, we cannot make a firm prediction. However, our main point is that composite models can give lifetimes which are much shorter than those predicted by the standard GWS model). The first category corresponds to second-order (or higher) radiative transitions where the amplitude $\lesssim (em/\Lambda)^2$ and $\tau \gtrsim 10^{36}/[m'(eV)]^5$ s from (31) and (36). This includes models where the heavier quark and lepton generations are viewed as radial excitations (e.g., Ansel'm (1980), note that $O(q^n)$ is effectively $O(m^n)$). The second category corresponds to $O(em/\Lambda')$ amplitudes. If Λ' were as low as a GeV, $\tau \gtrsim 10^{30}/[m'(eV)]^5$ s. The manner in which the chiral symmetries are broken (and hence the size of the number $\epsilon \equiv m'/\Lambda'$) is very uncertain. The third category corresponds to models with no chiral suppression so naively $\tau \gtrsim 10^{12}/[m'(eV)]^3$ s. As an example, we may estimate the transition magnetic moment by adapting the anomalous magnetic moment calculations of Shaw, Silverman and Slansky (1980) for bound states of a fermion and a boson with masses $m_f \ll m_b$. We find,

$$\frac{a}{\Lambda} = \frac{ig'g}{16\pi^2} \left(\frac{m_f}{m_b} \right) (1 + \ln r) \quad (39)$$

where r is defined to be $m_f^2/m_b^2 \ll 1$. Here g and g' are the couplings between the neutrino composites and the two-particle states, and we have chosen $m_f \ll m_b$. If $m_b = 10^3$ TeV, $m_f = 10^2$ TeV and $g = g' = 1$ as some sort of hyperstrong interaction, then we get $\tau \approx 10^{22}/[m'(eV)]^3$ s.

The smallest lifetime in those models whose neutrinos are fundamental fields corresponds to estimates like (28), yet still appears to be too large to account for any cosmic UV background flux observed. We propose here that significantly smaller lifetimes can be found in the case where the neutrino is not elementary, and that cosmic UV observations may give the first evidence

for composite structure of leptons.

V. ULTRAVIOLET BACKGROUND DATA

The observational situation regarding the cosmic ultraviolet background fluxes, particularly at high galactic latitudes, is still in a relatively primitive state owing to fundamental observational difficulties. These observations have been reviewed quite recently (Paresce and Jacobsen, 1980; Henry 1981) and the reviews point out, among other things, conflicts in both observations and interpretation. Nevertheless, the contributions from various sources of background contamination can be estimated and general cosmic flux levels can be established. Although it was originally suggested by de Rújula and Glashow (1980) that the UV flux from decay of neutrinos in the galactic halo would have a peak intensity in the direction of the galactic center, fluxes from stars and a large dust opacity make searches in this direction impractical. Rather, one should look in the direction of the galactic poles where these effects are minimized. Indeed, significant portions of the sky near the galactic poles may be almost totally free of dust (Shane and Wirtanen 1954; Heiles and Jenkins 1976)

The UV observations (Maucherat-Joubert, Gruvellier and Deharveng 1978; Anderson et al. 1979) may be summarized as follows: With all numbers in units of photons $\text{cm}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1} \text{sr}^{-1} \text{\AA}^{-1}$, the diffuse high-latitude far UV spectrum appears to be flat between $\sim 1300 \text{\AA}$ and $\sim 1525 \text{\AA}$ with an intensity of 260 ± 40 . (Allowance for up to 0.2 mag of extinction by high latitude dust could bring this number up by as much as 20 percent, but this is still within the error of the measurements.) In the range between 1680\AA and 1800\AA , the mean flux level increases to ~ 600 . The big question here is how much of the flux

could be from such things as scattered starlight, airglow, and the integrated flux of distant galaxies. It has been argued that backscattering of starlight is negligible (Henry 1981). The $\sim 1700 \text{ \AA}$ feature is not consistent with calculations of the spectrum from distant galaxies but may be due to airglow (another point of contention). In the next section, we will use the "flat" flux level to derive a lower limit on the neutrino lifetime, and we will also discuss the possibility that the $\sim 1700 \text{ \AA}$ feature may be from neutrino decay (Stecker 1980) and the implications of this hypothesis.

VI. ASTROPHYSICAL LOWER LIMITS ON τ AND OTHER ASTROPHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS:

By making use of equation (16), the measurements of I_λ discussed in section V can be used to place lower limits on τ . The most stringent limits are obtained for the case $\Omega = 1$ ($I_\lambda \propto \lambda^{-5/2}$) and using the data at the shortest wavelengths. For this purpose, we take

$$I_{1250 \text{ \AA}} \lesssim 200 \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ sr}^{-1} \text{ \AA}^{-1} \quad (40)$$

(Anderson et al. 1979).

Most previous workers when using measurements or limits of the background radiation at various discrete wavelengths to obtain $\tau(E_0)$ or $\tau(m_\nu)$ have erred in connecting these discrete points to generate a smooth function $\tau(E_0)$. This method can be quite misleading, as it fails to account for the fact that local neutrino decay emission would occur in very narrow lines ($\Delta\lambda \sim 1 \text{ \AA}$) at specific wavelengths not covered by the data set used (see Figure 3a). There is, however, a way to obtain a correct continuous function $\tau(E_0)$ by utilizing the fact that cosmological neutrinos produce a redshifted continuum spectrum given by equation (15). Figure (3b) shows the characteristic triangular

shaped spectrum obtained on a $\log I_\lambda - \log \lambda$ plot obtained from equation (15) if neutrino decay at an observation wavelength corresponding to point 0 is responsible for the flux at 0 (solid triangle). However redshifted radiation from the decay of higher mass neutrinos can also account for the flux at 0 (dashed triangle). The triangles are inverted on a $\log \tau - \log m_\nu$ graph (see Figure 3b). Adding together the limits thus obtained from flux measurements at several wavelengths gives a typical zig-zag limit function for $\tau(m_\nu)$ as indicated in Figure 3c. For this purpose, background fluxes and limits were obtained using the infrared and optical data of Matilla (1976) and Dube, Wickes and Wilkinson (1979) and the UV as compiled and reviewed by Henry (1981). The resulting limit function from observational data over the whole frequency range of interest (infrared-optical-ultraviolet) is shown in Figure 4. The limits obtained from actual photon flux measurements correspond to the line labeled SB_F . For data compilations where the fluxes are given in units of $F(\text{erg cm}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1} \text{sr}^{-1} \text{Hz}^{-1})$, the individual sections of SB_F are given by the formula

$$h_0 \tau_{\min}(E_0) = 517 F_{\nu_{\text{ob}}}^{-1} (h\nu_{\text{ob}}/E_0)^{5/2} \eta_+(E_0 - h\nu_{\text{ob}}). \quad (41)$$

where $h\nu_{\text{ob}}$ is the energy corresponding to the frequency of the observation ν_{ob} and η_+ is the Heavyside function: $\eta_+(x) = 1$ for $x > 0$ and $\eta_+(x) = 0$ for $x < 0$.

In the case where $E_0 > 13.6 \text{ eV}$ (the Lyman limit $\lambda_0 < 912 \text{ \AA}$) the decay photons are not generally directly observable (however, see footnote 41 later), but the indirect ionizing properties of the photons can be used to place limits on the decay time. This can be done by requiring that photoionization of high velocity clouds of neutral hydrogen (HI) near our

galaxy not exceed observational limits (Melott and Sciama 1981).

Utilizing the condition that the ionization rate from ν -decay photons not exceed the recombination rate, Melott and Sciama (1981) obtain the lower limit

$$\tau > (4 \times 10^{22} \text{ s}) \left(\frac{T}{10^4}\right)^{3/4} \frac{n_{\text{HII}}^2}{d} \left(\frac{\phi}{0.05}\right) \left\{ \frac{30 \text{ eV}}{m'} + h_0^{-1} \left[1 - \left(\frac{\lambda_0}{912 \text{ \AA}}\right)^{3/2} \right] N \right\} \quad (42)$$

where n_{HII} is the density of ionized hydrogen in cm^{-3} , T is temperature, d is the distance of the cloud in kpc, ϕ is the angular extent of the cloud on the sky, m' is in eV and N is the number of ionization per photon. Equation (42) gives a conservative lower limit on τ of $\sim 10^{24}$ s if the clouds are at a distance of ~ 1 kpc.

Another method of computing τ from ionization arguments is to note that the lifetime of the clouds $T_{\text{cl}} > 10^{14}$ s. In order for the clouds to exist in their neutral state, the ionization rate Γ_i must therefore be low enough such that the photons cannot eat through the cloud in a time T_{cl} . Therefore, the flux from neutrino decay F_Y^ν must satisfy

$$F_Y^\nu T_{\text{cl}} \lesssim n_{\text{HI}} \lambda \quad (43)$$

from which a rough limit is obtained on the neutrino lifetime

$$\tau \gtrsim 4 \times 10^{23} \text{ s} \quad (44)$$

in agreement with that obtained from equation (42).

The limits obtained from equations (42) and (43) are also shown in Figure 4. These limits can be compared with the limits given by equation (15). Equations (42) and (43) only refer to the wavelength region $\lambda < 912 \text{ \AA}$ which represents $m' > 27.2 \text{ eV}$. The decay of lighter mass neutrinos, of course, will not produce

ionizing radiation. It should be noted that if the high velocity clouds originate in the galactic plane, they could be continually in the process of "evaporating" by ionization once they leave the protection of the galactic disk. They can therefore start out with higher values of n_e than observed. Also the corona of ionized plasma which would form around the neutral core of the cloud could significantly slow the ionization rate (Felten and Bergeron 1969). Both these considerations could make the limits obtained from equations (42) and (43) somewhat too restrictive, but we assume here that they are "reasonable" to within an order of magnitude².

2. Recently, preprints by Sciama and Sciama and Melott have come to our attention which conjecture that decay of ~ 100 eV neutrinos could provide a source for ionizing the intergalactic medium and for ionization in the galactic halo. Cruddace et al. (Astrophys. J., 187, 497 (1974)); have shown that some radiation at such wavelengths ($\sim 250 \text{ \AA}$) may be directly observable in very restricted regions of the sky where the hydrogen column densities are known to be abnormally low owing to the opacity of hydrogen dropping off steeply with energy for photon energies above the Lyman limit. Another recent discussion of ionization of galactic and intergalactic gas by photons from this decay of 30eV-150eV neutrinos is given by Raphaeli and Szalay (Preprint NSF-ITP-81-52). They find $\tau \geq 10^{24}$ s in agreement with the results shown in Figure 4. They also show that in the case $\tau \ll 10^{24}$ s (higher ionizing fluxes) would have serious consequences for the evolution of the universe.

Recently, Shipman and Cowsik (1981) and Henry and Feldman (1981) have employed another method to obtain limits on τ from UV observations. These authors have used data on the UV flux spectrum in the directions of the Virgo and

Coma clusters. Assuming that this radiation may be partially due to neutrino decay and assuming that the dynamical mass of these clusters is dominated by neutrinos of a given mass equal to twice the energy of the UV photon (see equation (9)), equations (11) and (13) can be used to determine a lower limit on τ as a function of UV photon energy. The limits obtained by these authors are also shown in Figure 4.

Having summarized the limits on τ in Figure 4, we now discuss the interesting conjecture that the $\sim 1700 \text{ \AA}$ feature (see section V) could be due to neutrino decay (Stecker 1980). This feature could then be hypothesized to be from a decay line somewhere in the band pass region of the photometers of Maucherat-Joubert, et al. (1978) and Anderson et al. (1979a, b) i.e., in the wavelength range 1680 \AA - 1800 \AA corresponding to an energy range 6.9-7.4 eV and a neutrino mass m' in the range 13.8-14.8 eV. Of course, such neutrinos would have all of the desirable cosmological properties discussed in Section II by satisfying the condition (6). The line would have an expected width $\sim 2 \text{ \AA}$ and for neutrinos in a large galactic halo would require a neutrino lifetime $= 6 \times 10^{24}$ s with the points shown on Figure 4. (Although it is not too clear on the figure, this wavelength range was not covered in the observation of Henry and Feldman (1951)). This lifetime is within the limits obtained from our astrophysical arguments; however, it is much shorter than that given by the "standard" calculations (see Figure 4). But within the framework of the new substructure models for leptons and quarks (see Section IV) such decay rates are possible, (although not required).

Thus, if the $\sim 1700 \text{ \AA}$ feature or some similar feature, shown by future observations to be narrow, could be shown to be from neutrino decay, it would be a test which would determine neutrino mass from equation (8) or (9) and may be the best way to prove that substructure for leptons and quarks or other new

physics exists. We therefore urge that improved high galactic latitude searches be made with a field-of-view small enough to exclude hot stars and dust patches and with good spectral resolution³. We also suggest that such searches should begin with the 1680 Å-1800 Å region⁴.

3. Conversely, Henry (1980) has suggested going to a very large (40° diameter) field-of-view and subtracting out a contribution from stars of $\sim 500 \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ sr}^{-1} \text{ Å}^{-1}$. This would minimize the error from individual faint stars. In looking for emission from galaxy clusters such as Virgo and Coma, one should go to a field-of-view comparable with the size of these objects, i.e., of the order of a degree.

4. Fritsch (Proc. Oxford Intl. Symp. on Progress in Cosmology, 1981) has reported that there is now experimental evidence obtained by the CDHS accelerator group that the weak intermediate vector boson has a mass greater than 100 GeV, in accord with predictions based on composite models but in disagreement with the standard GWS prediction of 83 GeV. If this result should hold up, it would provide a strong motivation for considerations of the astrophysical implications of composite models such as those given here.

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FIGURE CAPTIONS

- Figure 1. Mass/Luminosity ratio in solar units as a function of cosmic scale size. For extragalactic objects the dependences on h_0 are as shown on the scales.
- Figure 2. Feynman diagrams for radiative neutrino decay for GWS models with neutrino mixing.
- Figure 3. Improper and proper methods for obtaining $\tau(E_0)$ and $\tau(m_\nu)$.
 (a) Given a discontinuous set of data points $0, 0', 0'', \dots$ for I_λ at various λ , one cannot smoothly interpolate to get $\tau(m_\nu)$ (see text). (b) Cosmological continuum spectrum for redshifted emission generated by higher mass (----) and minimal mass (____) neutrinos to account for observation 0 and resulting $\tau(m_\nu)$ limits (see text). (c) Limits obtained from a set of observations $0, 0', 0'', \dots$ using the construction shown in (b).
- Figure 4. Theoretical model predictions for $\tau(m_\nu)$ and astrophysical lower limits on $h_0\tau(E_0)$. (It is assumed that $m_\nu = 2E_0$, see equation (9)). The limits marked SB_F (Stecker-Brown, this work) were obtained directly from cosmic photon fluxes. The limits MS_I (Melott and Sciamma 1981) and SB_I (this work) are from ionizing flux limits (see text). The point S is obtained from the $\sim 1700 \text{ \AA}$ feature (Stecker 1980). The limits marked SCC and SCV were obtained by Shipman and Cowsik (1981) from observations of the Coma cluster and the Virgo cluster. Limits obtained from other observations of Coma and Virgo by Henry and Feldman (1981) are labeled HC and HV, respectively.

Fig. 1

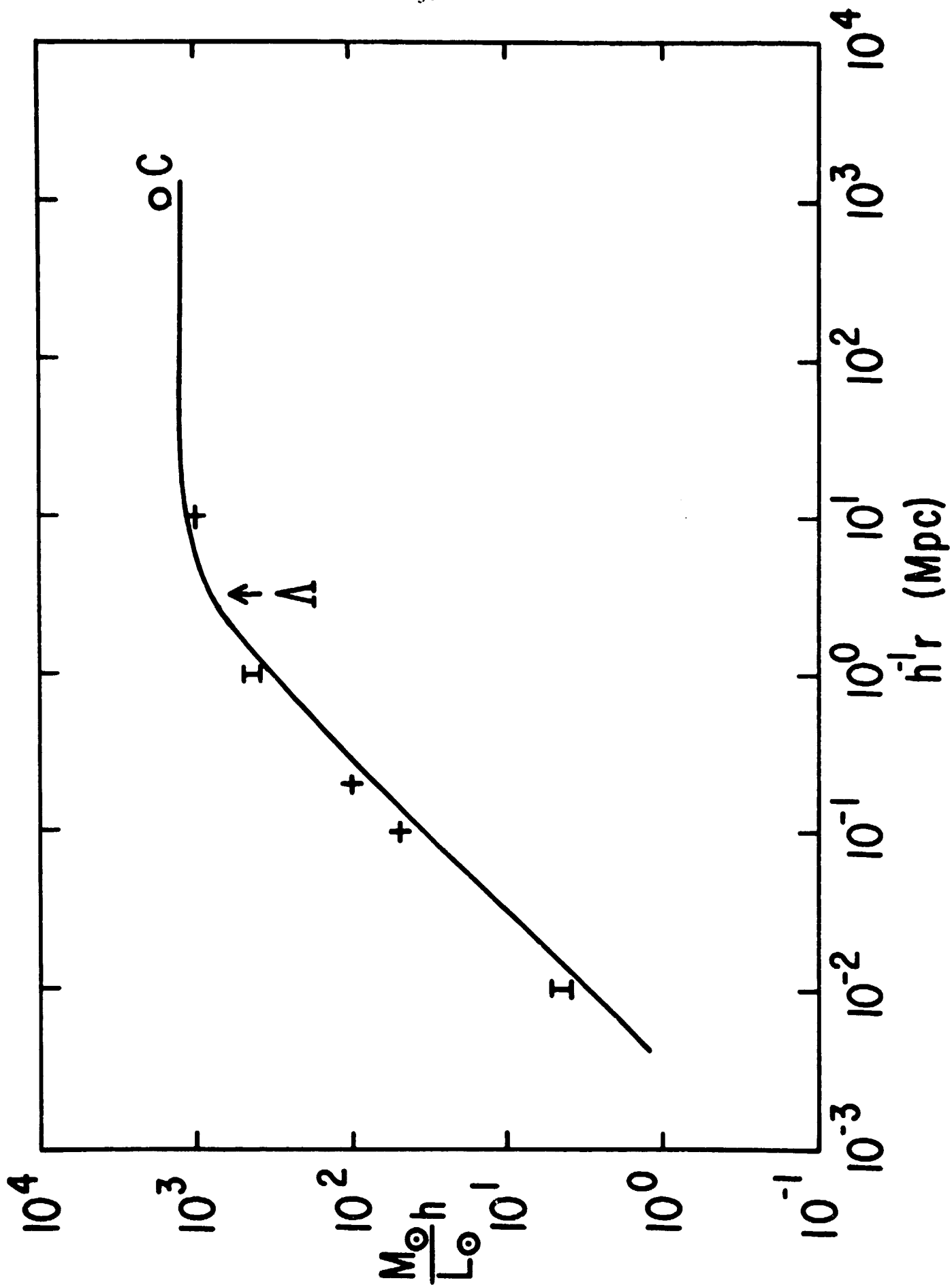


Fig. 2

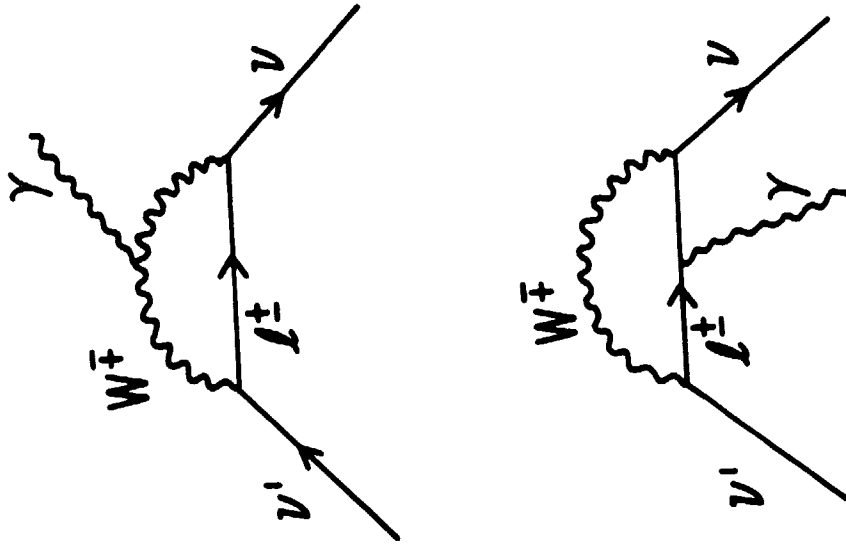


Fig. 3

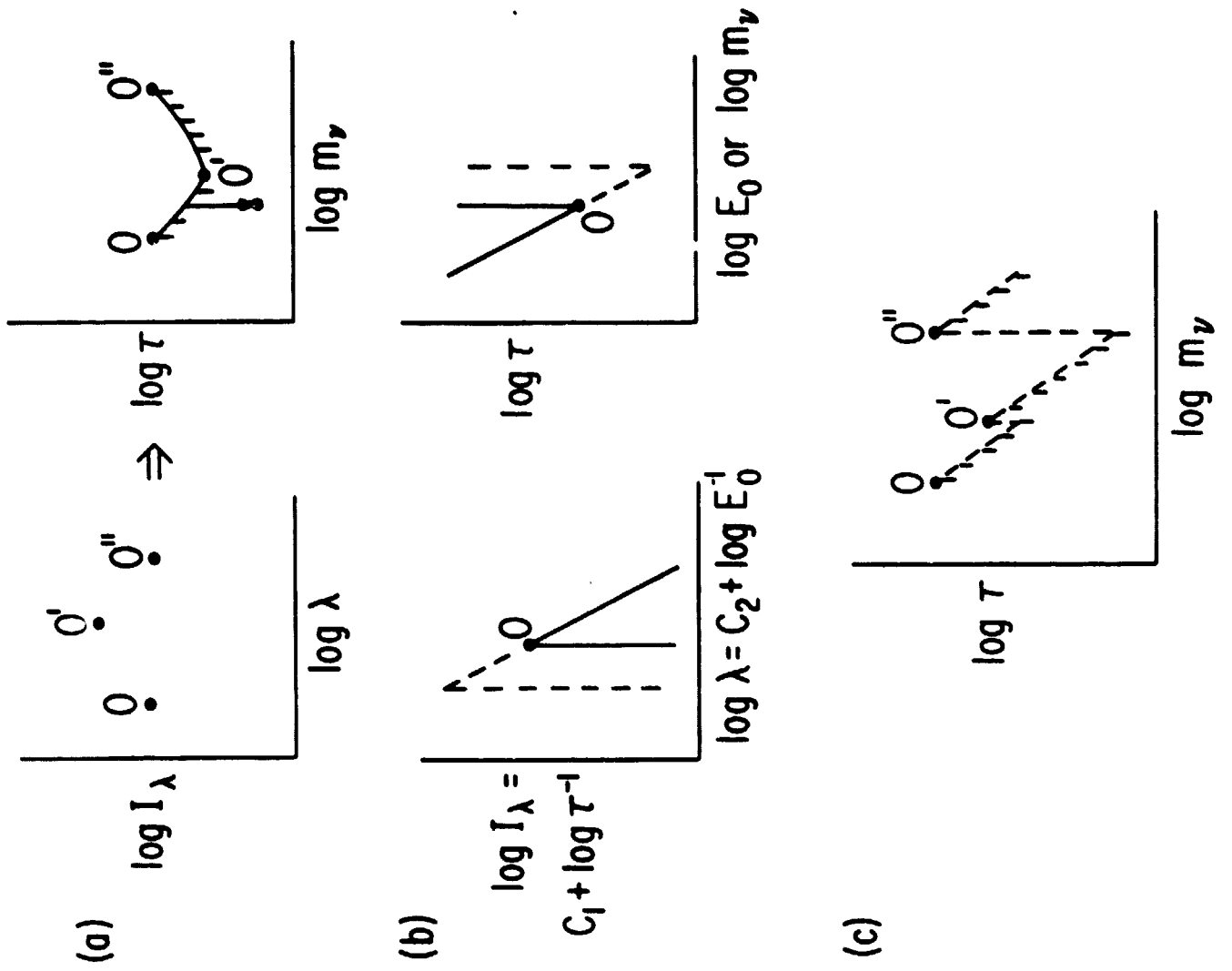
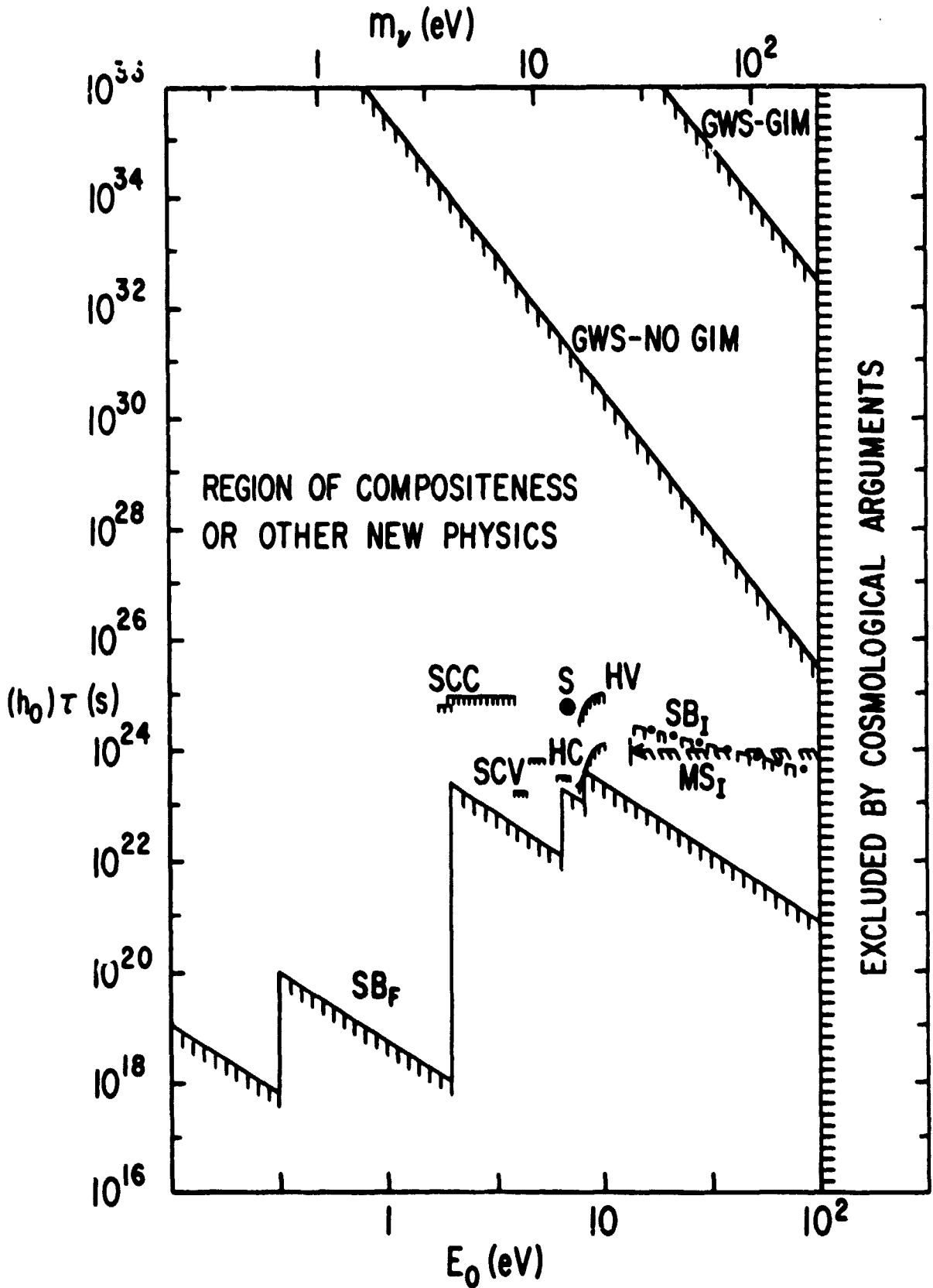


Fig. 4



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