

## Heterogeneous Viscoelasticity: A Combined Theory of Dynamic and Elastic Heterogeneity

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We present a heterogeneous version of Maxwell’s theory of viscoelasticity based on the assumption of spatially fluctuating local viscoelastic coefficients. The model is solved in coherent-potential approximation. The theory predicts an Arrhenius-type temperature dependence of the viscosity in the vanishing-frequency limit, independent of the distribution of the activation energies. It is shown that this activation energy is generally different from that of a diffusing particle with the same barrier-height distribution, which explains the violation of the Stokes-Einstein relation observed frequently in glasses. At finite but low frequencies, the theory describes low-temperature asymmetric alpha relaxation. As examples, we report the good agreement obtained for selected inorganic, metallic, and organic glasses. At high frequencies, the theory reduces to heterogeneous elasticity theory, which explains the occurrence of the boson peak and related vibrational anomalies.

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The interplay between relaxation and elasticity in very viscous glass-forming supercooled liquids has been in the focus of glass scientists since the pioneering work of Maxwell on viscoelasticity [1]. Within Maxwell’s theory, the glass transition is a very simple matter. The relaxation time is given by  $\tau = \eta/G_\infty$ , where  $\eta = \eta(T)$  is the shear viscosity and  $G_\infty$  is the high-frequency shear modulus. If this quantity is (much) larger than the observation time or the typical time for glassblower’s manipulations, the material has transformed effectively to a solid. The corresponding temperature is the conventional glass-transition temperature  $T_g$ . Within Maxwell’s theory, the loss part of the frequency-dependent shear modulus exhibits a Debye peak of the form  $G''(\omega) = \eta\omega/(1 + \omega^2\tau^2)$ , which gives a peak at the frequency  $\tau^{-1}$ . The peak positions of mechanical and dielectrical response spectra exhibit the same temperature dependence as the inverse viscosity. The viscosity varies exponentially with the inverse temperature as  $\ln \eta(T) \propto E_A(T)/k_B T$ . Near and above the glass transition temperature  $T_g$  (defined in the above way), the differential activation energy  $E_A$  follows a Vogel-Fulcher-Tammann (VFT) law  $E_A \propto T/(T - T_0)$ . At lower temperatures, it levels off towards a temperature-independent value. There is some evidence that this temperature dependence of  $E_A$  is very similar to that of the shear modulus [2–4]. The idea behind this finding is that activation barriers are related via the yield stress to the shear stiffness [5]. The ratio between the low-temperature and high-temperature activation energies may serve as a measure of Angell’s fragility classification. It is 1 for “strong” materials and up to 4 for “fragile” materials [6,7]. In fragile glasses, the elastic and

dielectric loss peaks ( $\alpha$  relaxation peaks), however, do not have the above Debye form but are broadened on a logarithmic frequency scale, which is called “stretching” [8]. The alpha peak in the low-temperature regime below  $T_g$  becomes quite asymmetric [9–13]. In this temperature regime, the stretched alpha peaks have been described with phenomenological formulas like the Cole-Davidson or Kohlrausch equations [8].

Above the glass transition, the mode-coupling theory (MCT) [14–16] gives a convincing and detailed account of the stretching phenomenon plus an anomalous increase beyond the alpha peak (short-time  $\beta$  relaxation). The glass transition  $T_c$  predicted by MCT is located somewhat above  $T_g$ . This ideal glass transition is described as an ergodicity-breaking transition with a corresponding divergence of the viscosity according to  $\eta \propto [T - T_c]^{-\gamma}$ , which describes the temperature dependence of fragile glasses above  $T_c$  as well as the VFT law. Below  $T_c$ , real glasses do not show a divergence of the viscosity, but the crossover to the high- $E_A$  activation law. The activation energy of the viscosity in this regime is not equal to that of the diffusivity, a phenomenon, which has been called Stokes-Einstein violation [17,18] for which an explanation will be given in the present treatment. There is evidence that in this temperature regime relaxation processes are governed by a free-energy “landscape,” implying a broad distribution of activation barriers, which have to be overcome for single relaxational steps [19–21]. This spatial heterogeneity of activation barriers implies a strong heterogeneity of the local relaxation processes (dynamical or relaxational heterogeneity). Dynamical heterogeneities are not only visible in the relaxation spectra

but also in the vibrational spectra (elastic heterogeneity), leading to vibrational anomalies, which violate Debye's predictions based on elasticity theory [22–26].

In the present treatment, which addresses the temperature regime near and below  $T_g$ , we assume that the dynamical heterogeneities are frozen in. Contrary to other treatments based on such an assumption [27–29], we do not assume that the relaxation processes occur in parallel. To achieve this goal, we use the coherent-potential approximation (CPA) [30–32], which is known to capture the percolation aspects, which are inherent in heterogeneous transport: the conductivity of a strongly heterogeneous system is neither obtained by averaging over the microscopic resistances (series equivalent circuit), nor by averaging the conductances (parallel equivalent circuit), but the current follows the percolative path of least resistance.

Applying our theory to both the heterogeneous viscosity and diffusivity problem, we are able to put our finger on the fact that these dynamical problems involve different percolative aspects, which then lead to the Stokes-Einstein violation. These aspects have been addressed indirectly recently by the hard-sphere glass-transition theory [33].

At finite frequencies our heterogeneous viscoelastic CPA theory develops its power in describing the strong asymmetry of the  $\alpha$  relaxation peak in terms of the distribution of the free-energy barriers. The increase of the loss modulus on the low-frequency side of the  $\alpha$  peak as  $G''(\omega) \propto \eta(T)\omega$  and hence its time-temperature superposition behavior is included automatically. The high-frequency part of the alpha maximum is nonuniversal in accordance with experiment. It reflects the details of the barrier distribution of the material, as anticipated by the seminal ideas of Goldstein [19] and Johari [9].

At very high frequencies, i.e., below and near the Debye frequency, our theory reduces to the CPA version of heterogeneous elasticity theory, which accounts for the vibrational anomalies of glasses [32].

We now start the description of our model in detail. We consider a viscoelastic fluid in which both the viscosity  $\eta(\mathbf{r})$  and the high-frequency shear modulus  $G(\mathbf{r})$  are assumed to vary in space. The local viscosity is assumed to be governed by a local free energy  $\ln[\eta(\mathbf{r})/\eta_0] = F(\mathbf{r})/k_B T$  with  $F(\mathbf{r}) = E(\mathbf{r}) - TS(\mathbf{r})$ .  $E$  is the local energy barrier and  $S$  is a multiexcitation entropy [34,35], which is related to  $E$  by a compensation (Meyer-Neldel) rule [34–37],  $S(\mathbf{r})/k_B = \alpha E(\mathbf{r})$ , so that we have  $\eta(\mathbf{r}) = \eta_0 e^{\beta_{\text{eff}} E(\mathbf{r})}$  with  $\beta_{\text{eff}} = [k_B T]^{-1} - \alpha$ . The activation barrier, in turn, is assumed [3,4] to be related by  $E(\mathbf{r}) = VG(\mathbf{r})$  to the local high-frequency shear modulus, where  $V$  is an activation volume. The spatial fluctuations of  $E$  are assumed to be statistically independent; i.e., we work in terms of a coarse-grained model over volumina of size  $\xi$ , which is the correlation length of the fluctuations [32]. The statistics is then given by a common density  $P(E_i)$ , where

$E_i$  is the average value of  $E(\mathbf{r})$  inside a coarse-graining volume, centered at  $\mathbf{r}_i$ .

We start working out our theory by writing down the linear Navier-Stokes equations in frequency space ( $\partial/\partial t \rightarrow s = -i\omega + \epsilon$ ) for this model,

$$s\rho_m v_\ell(\mathbf{r}, s) = \frac{K}{s} \nabla_\ell \nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} + 2 \sum_j \nabla_j \eta_{\text{eff}}(\mathbf{r}, s) \hat{\mathcal{V}}_{\ell j}(\mathbf{r}, s). \quad (1)$$

$v_\ell(\mathbf{r}, s)$  are the Cartesian coefficients of the Eulerian velocity field,  $K$  is the bulk modulus [38], and  $\hat{\mathcal{V}}$  is the traceless shear strain rate tensor  $\hat{\mathcal{V}}_{\ell j} = \mathcal{V}_{\ell j} - \frac{1}{3} \text{Tr}\{\mathcal{V}\delta_{\ell j}\}$  with  $\mathcal{V}_{\ell j} = \frac{1}{2}(\nabla_\ell v_j + \nabla_j v_\ell)$ . The space-dependent Maxwellian viscoelastic term is given by

$$\frac{1}{\eta_{\text{eff}}(\mathbf{r}, s)} = \frac{s}{G_{\text{eff}}(\mathbf{r}, s)} = \frac{1}{\eta(\mathbf{r})} + \frac{s}{G(\mathbf{r})}. \quad (2)$$

Replacing in Eq. (1)  $\eta_{\text{eff}}$  by  $G_{\text{eff}}/s$  and  $v_i$  by  $su_i$ , where  $u_i$  are the dynamic displacements, one obtains the equations of motion of linear elasticity with a space- and frequency-dependent shear modulus. These equations can be solved approximately in coherent-potential approximation [32], giving a macroscopic frequency-dependent shear modulus  $G(\omega) = s\eta(\omega) = G'(\omega) - iG''(\omega)$ , where  $G'(\omega) = \omega\eta'(\omega)$  is the storage modulus and  $G''(\omega) = \omega\eta''(\omega)$  is the loss modulus.  $\eta(s) = \eta'(\omega) + i\eta''(\omega)$  is the frequency-dependent viscosity. The self-consistent CPA equations for  $\eta(s)$  are [32]

$$\eta(s) = \left\langle \frac{\eta_{\text{eff}}^{(i)}(s)}{1 + \frac{\tilde{\nu}}{3} [\eta_{\text{eff}}^{(i)}(s) - \eta(s)] \Lambda_\eta(s)} \right\rangle_i, \quad (3a)$$

$$\Lambda_\eta(s) = \frac{3}{k_\xi^2} \int_0^{k_\xi} dk k^2 \left( \frac{\frac{4}{3} s k^2}{s^2 + [K + \frac{4}{3} s \eta(s)] k^2} + \frac{2k^2}{s + \eta(s)k^2} \right) \xrightarrow{s \rightarrow 0} \frac{2}{\eta(s)}. \quad (3b)$$

$\tilde{\nu}$  is an adjustable number of order unity, related to the ultraviolet cutoff  $k_\xi$  of the theory [32].  $\eta_{\text{eff}}^{(i)}(s)$  is the local effective viscosity, i.e., Eq. (2), averaged over a coarse-graining volume, centered around  $\mathbf{r}_i$ .  $\langle \dots \rangle_i$  denotes an average with respect to the local energies  $E_i$ . The explicit form of  $\eta_{\text{eff}}^{(i)}$  is

$$\frac{1}{\eta_{\text{eff}}^{(i)}(E, s)} = \frac{1}{\eta_0} e^{-\beta_{\text{eff}} E} + \frac{sV}{E}. \quad (4)$$

We emphasize that in the very-high-frequency regime, where viscous effects become irrelevant, our theory reduces to heterogeneous elasticity theory [26,32], which describes the high-frequency vibrational anomalies of glasses

associated with the boson peak [see the discussion of Eqs. (8)–(10) and Fig. 2 at the end of this Letter]. This means that the present theory describes both dynamical and vibrational heterogeneities.

As we want to compare in the following the behavior of the heterogeneous viscosity with diffusive single-particle motion in the same energy landscape, (heterogeneous diffusivity) in the  $\omega \rightarrow 0$  limit, we quote the CPA equations for this problem from Köhler *et al.* [32],

$$D(s) = \left\langle \frac{D^{(i)}}{1 + \frac{\tilde{\nu}}{3} [D^{(i)}(s) - D(s)] \Lambda_D(s)} \right\rangle_i, \quad (5)$$

with  $\Lambda_D(s) = (3/k_\xi^3) \int_0^{k_\xi} dk k^4 [s + D(s)k^2]^{-1}$ . Here  $D(s)$  is the dynamic diffusivity and  $D^{(i)} = D_0 e^{-\beta_{\text{eff},D} E^{(i)}}$  are the local diffusivities with  $\beta_{\text{eff},D} = [k_B T]^{-1} - \alpha_D$  [39].

In the  $s \rightarrow 0$  limit,  $\Lambda_\eta \rightarrow 2/\eta(s=0) \equiv 2/\eta$  and  $\Lambda_D \rightarrow 1/D(s=0) \equiv 1/D$ , and we obtain for the  $\omega \rightarrow 0$  limit of the viscosity and diffusivity the CPA equations,

$$\frac{2\tilde{\nu}}{3} = \int_0^\infty dE P(E) \frac{1}{\left(\frac{3}{2\tilde{\nu}} - 1\right) \frac{\eta}{\eta^{(i)}} + 1}, \quad (6a)$$

$$\frac{\tilde{\nu}}{3} = \int_0^\infty dE P(E) \frac{1}{\left(\frac{3}{\tilde{\nu}} - 1\right) \frac{D}{D^{(i)}} + 1}. \quad (6b)$$

If the macroscopic viscosity and diffusivity are parametrized as  $\eta \propto e^{\beta_{\text{eff}} \mu_\eta}$ ,  $D \propto e^{-\beta_{\text{eff},D} \mu_D}$ , the integrands in Eqs. (6a) and (6b) become step functions  $\theta(E - \mu_\eta)$  and  $\theta(\mu_D - E)$ , respectively, in the low-temperature limit, and we arrive at

$$1 - \frac{2\tilde{\nu}}{3} = \int_0^{\mu_\eta} dE P(E) \quad \frac{\tilde{\nu}}{3} = \int_0^{\mu_D} dE P(E). \quad (7)$$

This means that (within CPA) both the diffusivity and viscosity with spatially fluctuating activation energies acquire an Arrhenius behavior, independently of the details of  $P(E)$ . This result is well known for the diffusivity and (for charged carriers) conductivity in disordered materials [32,40]. It reflects the fact that the carrier looks for a path of minimum resistance through the material, which is a percolation path. In the percolation theory of hopping conduction [40], the number  $\tilde{\nu}/3$  is the continuum percolation threshold, which we now call  $p_D$ . The analogous quantity for the viscosity is  $p_\eta = 1 - 2p_D$ , where the factor 2 can be traced back to the two transverse Cartesian degrees of freedom of the shear motion [32]. As pointed out in Köhler *et al.* [32], Eq. (5b) is also equivalent to an effective-medium theory for a conductance network, where the parameter  $p_D$  is  $2/Z$ ,  $Z$  being the functionality of the network. So we note the result that, except for the special case  $p_D = 1/3$ , the activation energy for diffusion and

viscosity should be different. The explanation is that the percolation process for a single particle and cooperative motion in three dimensions is different. This is nicely described by the CPA in the  $\omega \rightarrow 0$  limit. If we take for  $p_D = \tilde{\nu}/3$  the three-dimensional continuum percolation threshold  $\approx 0.3$ , we arrive at  $p_\eta = 1 - 2p_D = 0.4$ . Using Eqs. (7), we obtain for a Gaussian distribution centered at  $E_0$  with width parameter  $\sigma/E_0 = 0.3$  the activation energies  $\mu_D/E_0 = 0.843$  and  $\mu_\eta/E_0 = 0.925$ ; i.e., the ratio is  $\mu_D/\mu_\eta = 0.91$ . This ratio (Einstein-violation parameter) depends on dimensionality through  $p_D$ , but it is nonuniversal, as it depends on (and becomes smaller with) the shape of the distribution.

We now turn to the finite-frequency regime. This is the regime around and above the alpha peak. In this frequency regime, the function  $\Lambda_\eta(s)$  can be replaced by its low-frequency limit  $\Lambda_\eta(s) = [2/\eta(s)]$ . Below the alpha peak, the shear loss modulus is just given by  $G'' = \omega\eta(0)$ , which describes the linear increase of  $G''$  below the  $\alpha$  peak. Such a behavior is (to the best of our knowledge) obeyed in all mechanical relaxation data [41].

As stated above, the frequency-dependent viscosity  $\eta(s)$  depends on the detailed shape of  $P(E)$ . A good choice for this function is a Gaussian, truncated at  $E = 0$  [42], i.e.,  $P(E) = P_0 \theta(E) e^{-(E-E_0)^2/2\sigma^2}$ , because the local shear moduli in simulations of metallic [43,44] and other glasses with soft-sphere interaction [25,45,46] were shown—by evaluating the statistics—to exhibit a Gaussian distribution. In Fig. 1, we show the loss modulus  $G''(\omega) = \eta'(\omega)\omega$  as a function of the rescaled frequency  $\tilde{\omega} = \omega\eta(0)$ . If the main  $\alpha$  relaxation peak remains near  $\tilde{\omega} = 1$ , this means that the time-temperature superposition principle is obeyed. We compare our calculations for various values of the parameters  $\beta_{\text{eff}} E_0$  and  $\sigma/E_0$  with a recent compilation of relaxation data of bulk metallic glasses near the calorimetric glass transition  $T_g$  [10]. In order to demonstrate the robustness of the results with respect to the shape of  $P(E)$ , we included also a flat distribution  $P(E) = 0.5\theta(E[2-E])$ . We see that the data fit best to  $\beta_{\text{eff}} E_0 = 26$  and  $\sigma/E_0 = 0.3$ . As the activation energies of the viscosity for bulk metallic glasses are in the 3 eV range and the glass transition is around 700 K [47], we arrive at a relative inverse temperature of  $E_a/k_B T \approx 50$ , which leaves for the Meyer-Neldel entropy parameter a value of  $\alpha/E_A \approx 24$ , where we used our CPA result  $E_a/E_0 \approx 1$ . In the inset of Fig. 1, we show also relaxation data of two organic glasses [11], one inorganic glass [12], and one highly disordered mineral [13] in order to demonstrate the generality of our approach.

In the beginning, we mentioned that at high frequency our theory becomes equivalent to the CPA version of heterogeneous-elasticity theory [26,32], which explains the boson-peak-related glassy vibrational anomalies in the THz range. In this regime, the viscosity term in Eq. (2) is negligible, leaving the fluctuating shear modulus  $G(\mathbf{r}_i) \equiv G^{(i)}$ . In terms of the frequency-dependent shear

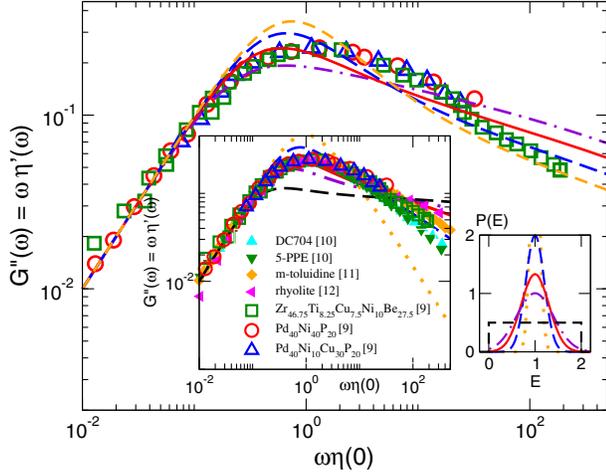


FIG. 1 (color online). Relaxation curves  $G''(\omega) = \omega\eta'(\omega)$  vs  $\omega\eta(0)$  for Gaussian distributions with width  $\sigma/E_0 = 0.3$  and effective inverse temperatures  $\beta_{\text{eff}}E_0 = 24$  (violet dash-dotted line), 26 (red continuous line), 28 (blue long-dashed line) and 30 (orange short-dashed line). The open symbols are representative data of three bulk metallic glasses compiled by Wang *et al.* [10]. For the percolation threshold, we used  $\tilde{\nu}/3 = 0.3$ . Big inset: same as in the main body but for fixed inverse temperature  $\beta_{\text{eff}}E_0 = 26$  and varied widths  $\sigma/E_0 = 0.1$  (orange dotted line), 0.2 (blue long-dashed line), 0.3 (red continuous line, same as in the main body), and 0.4 (violet dash-dotted line). The black short-dashed curve has been obtained with a flat distribution  $P(E) = 0.5$  for  $0 \leq E \leq 2$ . We included relaxation data of nonmetallic organic and inorganic glasses (full symbols) [11–13]. The full chemical formulas of the organic glasses are tetraphenyl-tetramethyl-trisiloxane (DC704) and 5-phenyl-4-ether (5-PPE). Small inset: the distribution densities  $P(E)$  used for the calculations of the big inset. Color and line codes are the same for the two insets.

modulus  $G(s) = s\eta(s)$  and the susceptibility function  $\Lambda_G(s) = \Lambda_\eta(s)/s$ , the CPA equation (3a) takes the form

$$G(s) = \left\langle \frac{G^{(i)}(s)}{1 + \frac{\tilde{\nu}}{3} [G^{(i)}(s) - G(s)] \Lambda_G(s)} \right\rangle_i, \quad (8)$$

from which we can calculate the density of vibrational states  $g(\omega)$  and the specific heat  $C(T)$  as

$$g(\omega) = \frac{2\omega}{3\pi} \text{Im} \left\{ \frac{3}{k_D^3} \int_0^{k_D} dk k^2 \left( \frac{1}{s^2 + [K + \frac{4}{3}G(s)]k^2} + \frac{2}{s^2 + G(s)k^2} \right) \right\}, \quad (9)$$

$$C(T) \propto \int_0^\infty d\omega g(\omega) (\omega/T)^2 \frac{e^{\hbar\omega/k_B T}}{[e^{\hbar\omega/k_B T} - 1]^2}. \quad (10)$$

Here,  $k_D$  is the Debye wave number. In Fig. 2, we show a calculation of the reduced specific heat  $C(T)/C_D(T) \propto C(T)/T^3$  according to the CPA equations (8) to (10), together with experimental data of the same bulk metallic

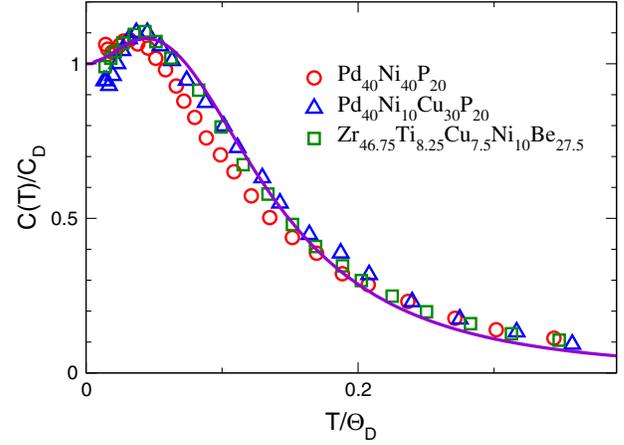


FIG. 2 (color online). Reduced specific heat  $C(T)/C_D(T) \propto C(T)/T^3$  for three bulk metallic glasses [48], compared with the prediction of heterogeneous-elasticity theory, Eqs. (8)–(10) with a Gaussian distribution of shear moduli  $\sigma_G/G_0 = \sigma/E_0 = 0.3$ . For the ratio between the Debye and correlation cutoff we used  $k_D/k_\xi = 1.6$  and for the rescaling of the experimental temperature scale, we used the Debye temperatures  $\Theta_D = 278$  K ( $\text{Pd}_{40}\text{Ni}_{40}\text{P}_{20}$ ), 280 K ( $\text{Pd}_{40}\text{Ni}_{10}\text{Cu}_{30}\text{P}_{20}$ ), and 320 K ( $\text{Zr}_{46.75}\text{Ti}_{8.25}\text{Cu}_{7.5}\text{Ni}_{10}\text{Be}_{27.5}$ ).

glasses referred to in Fig. 1. We used the same width-maximum relation  $\sigma_G/G_0 = \sigma/E_0$  as in the calculations of the blue lines in Fig. 1. The other parameters are given in the caption. This calculation and the agreement to the data demonstrates that the same CPA theory can be used for the relaxation spectrum and the vibrational anomalies.

In conclusion, we can state that we have established a combined theory for the  $\omega \rightarrow 0$  limit of the viscosity, the low-temperature asymmetric  $\alpha$  relaxation and the high-frequency vibrational anomalies within a unified framework. This has been achieved by assuming that the viscous and elastic coefficients of Maxwell's theory of viscoelasticity fluctuate in space according to a frozen distribution of activation barriers. We have found an explanation of the discrepancy of the activation energies for diffusion and viscosity in terms of the different percolative properties of the two heterogeneous transport problems and a theory for the low-temperature alpha relaxation below the glass transition.

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