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NOTE ADDED IN PROOF

It appears to be useful to look at the effect of viscosity on decay in the following way. In the case of a discontinuous shock followed by a rarefaction, the rate of hydrodynamic attenuation is determined by the difference between the square roots of the slopes of the Rayleigh line and the rarefaction isentrope where they meet on the Hugoniot curve. When viscosity is present, these two curves do not join in a cusp and the pertinent slopes are somewhat below the maximum value of p_x ; they are now to be taken where the true locus of states falls into the Rayleigh line and isentrope. The difference in slopes is then somewhat smaller than that for the sharp shock and the rate of decay will be somewhat reduced. It is not yet clear that this consideration is amenable to quantitative treatment.