

1. Referring to figure 14.9, we see that for the photon propagation direction \mathbf{n} , the polarization direction of the positive and negative helicity are correspondingly

$$\epsilon_{\pm} = \frac{\epsilon_{\parallel} \pm i\epsilon_{\perp}}{\sqrt{2}} \quad (1)$$

By (14.74), the vectorial amplitude inside the absolute sign is

$$\mathbf{A}(\omega) = -\epsilon_{\parallel} A_{\parallel}(\omega) + \epsilon_{\perp} A_{\perp}(\omega) \quad (2)$$

therefore to get the frequency-angle spectra of radiation with positive/negative helicity, we take the scalar product of \mathbf{A} and ϵ_{\pm}^* before taking the absolute square, i.e.,

$$\frac{d^2 I_{\pm}}{d\omega d\Omega} = \frac{e^2 \omega^2}{4\pi^2 c} |\mathbf{A}(\omega) \cdot \epsilon_{\pm}^*|^2 \quad (3)$$

The scalar product can be calculated as

$$\mathbf{A}(\omega) \cdot \epsilon_{\pm}^* = [-\epsilon_{\parallel} A_{\parallel}(\omega) + \epsilon_{\perp} A_{\perp}(\omega)] \left(\frac{\epsilon_{\parallel} \mp i\epsilon_{\perp}}{\sqrt{2}} \right) = \frac{-A_{\parallel}(\omega) \mp iA_{\perp}(\omega)}{\sqrt{2}} \quad (4)$$

From (14.77), (14.78) we have

$$A_{\parallel}(\omega) = \frac{\rho}{c} \left(\frac{1}{\gamma^2} + \theta^2 \right) \cdot \frac{2i}{\sqrt{3}} K_{2/3}(\xi) \quad (5)$$

$$A_{\perp}(\omega) = \frac{\rho}{c} \theta \left(\frac{1}{\gamma^2} + \theta^2 \right)^{1/2} \cdot \frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} K_{1/3}(\xi) \quad (6)$$

giving

$$\frac{d^2 I_{\pm}}{d\omega d\Omega} = \frac{e^2}{6\pi^2 c} \left(\frac{\omega \rho}{c} \right)^2 \left(\frac{1}{\gamma^2} + \theta^2 \right)^2 \left| K_{2/3}(\xi) \pm \frac{\theta}{\left(\frac{1}{\gamma^2} + \theta^2 \right)^{1/2}} K_{1/3}(\xi) \right|^2 \quad (7)$$

2. Similar to (10.8), we can define the degree of circular polarization as

$$\Pi_c \equiv \frac{d^2 I_+ - d^2 I_-}{d^2 I_+ + d^2 I_-} = \frac{2\alpha K_{2/3}(\xi) K_{1/3}(\xi)}{K_{2/3}^2(\xi) + \alpha^2 K_{1/3}^2(\xi)} \quad \text{where } \alpha \equiv \frac{\theta}{\sqrt{1/\gamma^2 + \theta^2}} \quad (8)$$

- (a) High frequencies ($\omega \gg \omega_c$), all angles.

The discussion around (14.86) and (14.87) is relevant. From (14.87), the critical angle is

$$\theta_c = \frac{1}{\gamma} \left(\frac{2\omega_c}{3\omega} \right)^{1/2} \quad (9)$$

so all appreciable radiation has $\gamma\theta \ll 1$, hence $\alpha \approx \gamma\theta \ll 1$. Moreover when $\xi \gg 1$, $K_{2/3}(\xi) \approx \sqrt{\pi/2\xi} e^{-\xi} \approx K_{1/3}(\xi)$ so $K_{2/3}(\xi) \gg \alpha K_{1/3}(\xi)$ due to small α . Therefore $\Pi_c \approx 0$ and the radiation is linearly polarized in the orbital plane (in the direction of ϵ_{\parallel}).

- (b) Low/intermediate frequencies ($\omega \ll \omega_c$), large angles ($|\theta| \gg 1/\gamma$).

Here $\alpha \approx \text{sgn}(\theta)$. Since $K_{2/3}$ and $K_{1/3}$ are both positive and of comparable magnitude for ξ of order unity (where the bulk of the emission occurs, near $\theta \sim \theta_c$), one helicity strongly dominates:

$$\Pi_c \approx \frac{2K_{2/3}(\xi) K_{1/3}(\xi)}{K_{2/3}^2(\xi) + K_{1/3}^2(\xi)} \text{sgn}(\theta) \approx \text{sgn}(\theta) \quad (10)$$

The radiation is nearly circularly polarized, with the sign of helicity matching the sign of θ .

- (c) Low/intermediate frequencies ($\omega \ll \omega_c$), very small angles ($|\theta| \ll 1/\gamma$).

Here $\alpha \approx \gamma\theta \ll 1$ and $\xi \approx \omega\rho/(3c\gamma^3) = \omega/2\omega_c \ll 1$, where $K_{2/3}(\xi)$ dominates $K_{1/3}(\xi)$. So the circular polarization is doubly suppressed (by α and by the smallness of $K_{1/3}$ relative to $K_{2/3}$). The radiation is again linearly polarized in the orbital plane.

The overall picture: in the orbital plane, the radiation is always linearly polarized (by symmetry, the perpendicular component vanishes at $\theta = 0$). Moving off-plane, the ellipticity grows. At low frequencies the critical angle $\theta_c \sim (3c/\omega\rho)^{1/3} \gg 1/\gamma$ is large, so there is a wide angular range with $|\theta| \gg 1/\gamma$ where circular polarization dominates. At high frequencies $\theta_c \ll 1/\gamma$, and the radiation is essentially linearly polarized at all angles of appreciable intensity.