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Impact of future gamma ray observations on the study of the interstellar medium, and galactic cosmic ray accelerators

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More than a century after their discovery, the origin of cosmic rays is still a matter of debate. Gamma ray observations are one of the most powerful ways to test our ideas about cosmic ray origin. This is because gamma-ray photons are unavoidably produced in interactions between these energetic particles and interstellar matter. In this talk, I will briefly review the status of the field, and describe how gamma ray observations can be used to learn something about both cosmic rays and the interstellar medium. Particular attention will be devoted to the role that will be played by future gamma ray facilities such as the Cherenkov Telescope Array.

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