Die Geburt der Sterne



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- star formation theory
 - phenomenology
 - historic remarks
 - our current understanding and its limitations
- application
 - the stellar mass function at birth (IMF)



phenomenology





bble Ultra-Deep

- star formation sets in very early after the big bang
- stars always form in galaxies and protogalaxies
- we cannot see the first generation of stars, but maybe the second one

- correlation between stellar birth and large-scale dynamics
- spiral arms
- tidal perturbation from neighboring galaxy

galaxies from THINGS and HERACLES survey (images from Frank Bigiel, ZAH/ITA)

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distribution of molecular gas in the Milky Way as traced by CO emission

data from T. Dame (CfA Harvard)

Orion Nebula Cluster (ESO, VLT, M. McCaughrean)

 (protostellar) feedback is very important

strong feedback: UV radiation from ΘIC Orionis affects star formation on all cluster scales

Trapezium stars in the center of the ONC (HST, Johnstone et al. 1998)

eventually, clusters like the ONC (1 Myr) will evolve into clusters like the Pleiades (100 Myr)

Pleiades (DSS, Palomar Observatory Sky Survey)

decrease in spatial scale / increase in density

Proplyd in Orion (Hubble)

- density
 - density of ISM: few particles per cm³
 - density of molecular cloud: few 100 particles per cm³
 - density of Sun: I.4 g/cm³
- spatial scale
 - size of molecular cloud: few 10s of pc
 - size of young cluster: ~ I pc
 - size of Sun: 1.4×10^{10} cm

decrease in spatial scale / increase in density

- contracting force
 - only force that can do this compression is **GRAVITY**
- Proplyd in Orion (Hubble)

- opposing forces
 - there are several processes that can oppose gravity
 - GAS PRESSURE
 - TURBULENCE
 - MAGNETIC FIELDS
 - RADIATION PRESSURE

Modern star formation theory is based on the complex interplay between *all* these processes.

early theoretical models

- Jeans (1902): Interplay between self-gravity and thermal pressure
 - stability of homogeneous spherical density enhancements against gravitational collapse
 - dispersion relation:

Sir James Jeans, 1877 - 1946

$$\omega^2 = c_s^2 k^2 - 4\pi G \rho_0$$

instability when

$$\omega^2 < 0$$

- minimal mass:

$$M_{J} = \frac{1}{6}\pi^{-5/2} G^{-3/2} \rho_{0}^{-1/2} c_{s}^{3} \propto \rho_{0}^{-1/2} T^{+3/2}$$

first approach to turbulence

- von Weizsäcker (1943, 1951) and Chandrasekhar (1951): concept of MICROTURBULENCE
 - BASIC ASSUMPTION: separation of scales between dynamics and turbulence

 $\ell_{\rm turb} \ll \ell_{\rm dyn}$

 then turbulent velocity dispersion contributes to effective soundspeed:

$$c_c^2 \mapsto c_c^2 + \sigma_{rms}^2$$

- \rightarrow Larger effective Jeans masses \rightarrow more stability
- BUT: (1) turbulence depends on k: $\sigma_{rms}^2(k)$
 - (2) supersonic turbulence $\rightarrow \sigma_{rms}^{2}(k) >> C_{s}^{2}$ usually

S. Chandrasekhar, 1910 - 1995

C.F. von Weiszäcker, 1912 - 2007

problems of early dynamical theory

- molecular clouds are *highly Jeans-unstable*, yet, they do *NOT* form stars at high rate and with high efficiency (Zuckerman & Evans 1974 conundrum) (the observed global SFE in molecular clouds is ~5%)
 → something prevents large-scale collapse.
- all throughout the early 1990's, molecular clouds had been thought to be long-lived quasi-equilibrium entities.
- molecular clouds are *magnetized*

magnetic star formation

- Mestel & Spitzer (1956): Magnetic fields can prevent collapse!!!
 - Critical mass for gravitational collapse in presence of B-field

$$M_{cr} = \frac{5^{3/2}}{48\pi^2} \frac{B^3}{G^{3/2}\rho^2}$$

 Critical mass-to-flux ratio (Mouschovias & Spitzer 1976)

$$\left[\frac{M}{\Phi}\right]_{cr} = \frac{\zeta}{3\pi} \left[\frac{5}{G}\right]^{1/2}$$

- Ambipolar diffusion can initiate collapse

Lyman Spitzer, Jr., 1914 - 1997

"standard theory" of star formation

- BASIC ASSUMPTION: Stars form from magnetically highly subcritical cores
- Ambipolar diffusion slowly increases (M/ Φ): $\tau_{AD} \approx 10\tau_{ff}$
- Once (M/Φ) > (M/Φ)_{crit} : dynamical collapse of SIS
 - Shu (1977) collapse solution
 - $dM/dt = 0.975 c_s^3/G = const.$
- Was (in principle) only intended for isolated, low-mass stars

Frank Shu, 1943 -

magnetic field

problems of "standard theory"

- Observed B-fields are weak, at most marginally critical (Crutcher 1999, Bourke et al. 2001)
- Magnetic fields cannot prevent decay of turbulence (Mac Low et al. 1998, Stone et al. 1998, Padoan & Nordlund 1999)
- Structure of prestellar cores (e.g. Bacman et al. 2000, Alves et al. 2001)
- Strongly time varying dM/dt (e.g. Hendriksen et al. 1997, André et al. 2000)
- More extended infall motions than predicted by the standard model (Williams & Myers 2000, Myers et al. 2000)
- Most stars form as binaries (e.g. Lada 2006)

- As many prestellar cores as protostellar cores in SF regions (e.g. André et al 2002)
- Molecular cloud clumps are chemically young (Bergin & Langer 1997, Pratap et al 1997, Aikawa et al 2001)
- Stellar age distribution small (τ_{ff} << τ_{AD}) (Ballesteros-Paredes et al. 1999, Elmegreen 2000, Hartmann 2001)
- Strong theoretical criticism of the SIS as starting condition for gravitational collapse (e.g. Whitworth et al 1996, Nakano 1998, as summarized in Klessen & Mac Low 2004)
- Standard AD-dominated theory is incompatible with observations (Crutcher et al. 2009, 2010ab, Bertram et al. 2011)

gravoturbulent star formation

• BASIC ASSUMPTION:

star formation is controlled by interplay between supersonic turbulence and self-gravity

- turbulence plays a *dual role*:
- on large scales it provides support
- on *small scales* it can *trigger collapse*
- some predictions:
- dynamical star formation timescale $\tau_{\rm ff}$
- high binary fraction
- complex spatial structure of embedded star clusters
- and many more . . .

Mac Low & Klessen, 2004, Rev. Mod. Phys., 76, 125-194 McKee & Ostriker, 2007, ARAA, 45, 565

turbulent cascade in the ISM

energy source & scale *NOT known* (supernovae, winds, spiral density waves?)

 $\sigma_{\rm rms} << 1$ km/s M_{rms} ≤ 1 L ≈ 0.1 pc dissipation scale not known (ambipolar diffusion, molecular diffusion?)

turbulence creates a hierarchy of clumps

as turbulence decays locally, contraction sets in

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while region contracts, individual clumps collapse to form stars

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in *dense clusters*, clumps may merge while collapsing --> then contain multiple protostars


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in *dense clusters*, competitive mass growth becomes important



in *dense clusters*, competitive mass growth becomes important



in dense clusters, N-body effects influence mass growth



become ejected --> accretion stops



feedback terminates star formation



result: star cluster, possibly with HII region



current status

- stars form from the complex interplay of self-gravity and a large number of competing processes (such as turbulence, B-field, feedback, thermal pressure)
- the relative importance of these processes depends on the environment
 - prestellar cores --> thermal pressure is important molecular clouds --> turbulence dominates $\left\{ \text{(Larson's relation: } \sigma \propto L^{1/2}) \right\}$
 - massive star forming regions (NGC602): radiative feedback is important small clusters (Taurus): evolution maybe dominated by external turbulence
- star formation is regulated by various feedback processes
- star formation is closely linked to global galactic dynamics (KS relation)

Star formation is intrinsically a multi-scale and multi-physics problem, where it is difficult to single out individual processes. Simple theoretical approaches usually fail.

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selected open questions

• what processes determine the initial mass function (IMF) of stars?

- what are the initial conditions for star cluster formation? how does cloud structure translate into cluster structure?
- how do molecular clouds form and evolve?
- what drives turbulence?
- what triggers / regulates star formation on galactic scales?
- how does star formation depend on metallicity? how do the first stars form?
- star formation in extreme environments (galactic center, starburst, etc.), how does it differ from a more "normal" mode?



stellar mass fuction

stars seem to follow a universal mass function at birth --> IMF





Orion, NGC 3603, 30 Doradus (Zinnecker & Yorke 2007)

stellar masses

- distribution of stellar masses depends on
 - turbulent initial conditions
 --> mass spectrum of prestellar cloud cores
 - collapse and interaction of prestellar cores
 --> accretion and N-body effects
 - thermodynamic properties of gas
 --> balance between heating and cooling
 --> EOS (determines which cores go into collapse)
 - (proto) stellar feedback terminates star formation ionizing radiation, bipolar outflows, winds, SN



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image from Alyssa Goodman: COMPLETE survey



Schmidt et al. (2009, A&A, 494, 127)





example: model of Orion cloud

"model" of Orion cloud: 15.000.000 SPH particles, $10^4 M_{sun}$ in 10 pc, mass resolution 0,02 M_{sun} , forms ~2.500 "stars" (sink particles)

isothermal EOS, top bound, bottom unbound

has clustered as well as distributed "star" formation

efficiency varies from 1% to 20%

develops full IMF (distribution of sink particle masses)







example: model of Orion cloud







dynamics of nascent star cluster

in dense clusters protostellar interaction may be come important!



Trajectories of protostars in a nascent dense cluster created by gravoturbulent fragmentation (from Klessen & Burkert 2000, ApJS, 128, 287)



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application to early star formation



thermodynamics & fragmentation

degree of fragmentation depends on EOS!

polytropic EOS: $\mathbf{p} \propto \rho^{\gamma}$ $\gamma < \mathbf{I}$: dense cluster of low-mass stars $\gamma > \mathbf{I}$: isolated high-mass stars

(see Li et al. 2003; also Kawachi & Hanawa 1998, Larson 2003)

dependency on EOS



for $\gamma > 1$ it is suppressed \rightarrow isolated massive stars











present-day star formation



IMF in nearby molecular clouds




EOS as function of metallicity



metal-free star formation

 most current numerical simulations of Pop III star formation predict very massive objects

(e.g. Abel et al. 2002, Yoshida et al. 2008, Bromm et al. 2009)

- similar for theoretical models (e.g. Tan & McKee 2004)
- there are some first hints of fragmentation, however (Turk et al. 2009, Stacy et al. 2010)



Figure 1 | **Projected gas distribution around a primordial protostar.** Shown is the gas density (colour-coded so that red denotes highest density) of a single object on different spatial scales. **a**, The large-scale gas distribution around the cosmological minihalo; **b**, a self-gravitating, star-forming cloud; **c**, the central part of the fully molecular core; and **d**, the final protostar. Reproduced by permission of the AAAS (from ref. 20).

(Yoshida et al. 2008, Science, 321, 669)

turbulence in Pop III halos

- star formation will depend on degree of turbulence in protogalactic halo
- speculation: differences in stellar mass function, just like in present-day star formation



(Greif et al. 2008)

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turbulence developing in an atomic cooling halo



detailed look at accretion disk around first star



detailed look at accretion disk around first star

successive zoom-in calculation from cosmological initial conditions (using SPH and new grid-code AREPO)





Figure 1: Density evolution in a 120 AU region around the first protostar, showing the build-up of the protostellar disk and its eventual fragmentation. We also see 'wakes' in the low-density regions, produced by the previous passage of the spiral arms.



similar study with very different numerical method (AREPO)



one out of five halos

(Greif et al. 201 Ia, ApJ)

expected mass spectrum

- expected IMF is flat and covers a wide range of masses
- implications
 - because slope > -2, most mass is in massive objects as predicted by most previous calculations
 - most high-mass Pop III stars should be in binary systems
 --> source of high-redshift gamma-ray bursts
 - because of ejection, some *low-mass objects* (< 0.8 M_☉) might have *survived* until today and could potentially be found in the Milky Way
- consistent with abundance patterns found in second generation stars



⁽Joggerst et al. 2009, 2010)



The metallicities of extremely metalpoor stars in the halo are consistent with the yields of core-collapse supernovae, i.e. progenitor stars with 20 - 40 M_☉

(e.g. Tominaga et al. 2007, Izutani et al. 2009, Joggerst et al. 2009, 2010)



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Star formation is intrinsically a multi-scale and multi-physics problem, where it is difficult to single out individual processes.

- stars form from the complex interplay of self-gravity and a large number of competing processes (such as turbulence, B-field, feedback, thermal pressure)
- thermodynamic properties of the gas (heating vs cooling) play a key role in the star formation process
- detailed studies require the consistent treatment of many different physical and chemical processes (theoretical and computational challenge)
- star formation is regulated by several feedback loops, which are still poorly understood
- primordial star formation shares the same complexities as present-day star formation

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