# theory of star formation



Zentrum für Astronomie der Universität Heidelberg Institut für Theoretische Astrophysik



# theory of star formation

## Ralf Klessen

this talk contains

strong personal biases

and selection effects

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# agenda

- prolegomenon
- theoretical remarks
- ISM dynamics and star formation on large scales
- some thoughts about the future

# prolegomenon



Platon 428/427 – 348/347 BC

Capitoline Museum, Rome.

### **Plato's allegory of the cave\***



Laszlo Szücs, image from criticalthinking-mc205.wikispaces.com

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### **Plato's allegory of the cave\*** ↔ **Astronomical observations**



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### Plato's allegory of the cave<sup>\*</sup> ↔ Astronomical observations



Laszlo Szücs, image from criticalthinking-mc205.wikispaces.com

## **Example: from CO emission to total column density**



# thoughts on theory

decrease in spatial scale / increase in density





- density
  - density of ISM: few particles per cm<sup>3</sup>
  - density of molecular cloud: few 100 particles per cm<sup>3</sup>
  - density of Sun: I.4 g/cm<sup>3</sup>
- spatial scale
  - size of molecular cloud: few 10s of pc
  - size of young cluster: ~ I pc
  - size of Sun:  $1.4 \times 10^{10}$  cm







decrease in spatial scale / increase in density





- contracting force
  - only force that can do this compression is **GRAVITY**
- opposing forces
  - there are several processes that can oppose gravity
  - GAS PRESSURE
  - TURBULENCE
  - MAGNETIC FIELDS
  - RADIATION PRESSURE







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- contracting force
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  - 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:



- instability when

$$\omega^2 < 0$$

- minimal mass:

$$M_J = \frac{1}{6}\pi^{-5/2} G^{-3/2} \rho_0^{-1/2} c_s^3 \propto \rho_0^{-1/2} T^{+3/2}$$



Sir James Jeans, 1877 - 1946

## first approach to turbulence

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

l<sub>turb</sub> « l<sub>dyn</sub>

- then turbulent velocity dispersion contributes to effective sound speed:

$$\mathbf{C}_{c}^{2}\mapsto\mathbf{C}_{c}^{2}+\sigma_{rms}^{2}$$

- $\rightarrow$  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%)
  - $\rightarrow$  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

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



Lyman Spitzer, Jr., 1914 - 1997

 Critical mass-to-flux ratio (Mouschovias & Spitzer 1976)
[M] & [5]<sup>1/2</sup>

$$\left\lfloor \frac{M}{\Phi} \right\rfloor_{cr} = \frac{\zeta}{3\pi} \left\lfloor \frac{5}{G} \right\rfloor$$

- Ambipolar diffusion can initiate collapse

# "standard theory" of star formation

- BASIC ASSUMPTION: Stars form from magnetically highly subcritical cores
- Ambipolar diffusion slowly increases (M/ $\Phi$ ):  $\tau_{AD} \approx 10\tau_{ff}$
- Once (M/Φ) > (M/Φ)<sub>crit</sub> : 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<sub>ff</sub> << τ<sub>AD</sub>) (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 Klessen & Glover, 2016, Saas Fee Lecture, 43, 85

## properties of turbulence

• laminar flows turn *turbulent* at *high Reynolds* numbers

$$Re = \frac{\text{advection}}{\text{dissipation}} = \frac{VL}{\nu}$$

V= typical velocity on scale L,  $v = \eta/\rho$  = kinematic viscosity, turbulence for Re > 1000  $\rightarrow$  typical values in ISM 10<sup>8</sup>-10<sup>10</sup>

• Navier-Stokes equation (transport of momentum)

viscous stress tensor



# properties of turbulence

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 vortex streching --> turbulence is intrinsically anisotropic (only on large scales you may get homogeneity & isotropy in a statistical sense; see Landau & Lifschitz, Chandrasekhar, Taylor, etc.)

(ISM turbulence: shocks & B-field cause additional inhomogeneity)





## turbulent cascade in the ISM



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

 $\sigma_{\rm rms} \ll 1$  km/s M<sub>rms</sub>  $\leq 1$ L  $\approx 0.1$  pc dissipation scale not known (ambipolar diffusion, molecular diffusion?)



turbulence creates a hierarchy of clumps



as turbulence decays locally, contraction sets in



as turbulence decays locally, contraction sets in



while region contracts, individual clumps collapse to form stars



while region contracts, individual clumps collapse to form stars



individual clumps collapse to form stars



individual clumps collapse to form stars





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



# relation between ISM dynamics and star formation

# relation between ISM dynamics and star formation





## Considering the molecular gas SF law alone does not change matters...



# Considering the molecular gas SF law alone does not change matters...

- recall *scale-free physics* gives rise to *power-law* behavior!
  many 'simple models' of star
- formation rely on that (often without realizing....):
  - gravity

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<sup>1</sup> kpc<sup>-2</sup>]

- turbulence
- maybe we have different regimes, in which different processes dominate star formation ...





data from STING survey (Rahman et al. 2011, 2012)

• is there really a universal  $\Sigma_{H2}$  -  $\Sigma_{SFR}$  relation?



data from STING survey (Rahman et al. 2011, 2012)

- is there really a universal  $\Sigma_{H2}$   $\Sigma_{SFR}$  relation?
- there seem to be large galaxy-to-galaxy variations - relation is often sublinear



- analysis of THINGS/ HERACLES data
- many galaxies show sublinear KS-type relation

Image from R. Shetty / thanks to THINGS/HERACLES collaboration for providing the data.



#### data from STING survey (Rahman et al. 2011, 2012)

all galaxies

Shetty et al. (2014, MNRAS, 437, L61, see also Shetty, Kelly, Bigiel, 2013, MNRAS, 430, 288)





Hierarchical Bayesian model for STING galaxies indicate varying depleting times. Depletion time increases with increasing density. Why ??

- COLD GASS survey
- large number of different galaxies
- depletion times vary widely across different types of galaxies.



#### • EMPIRE survey

- IR-to-HCN ratio varies systematically as function of local disk structure (here stellar surface density)
- dense gas is less good in forming stars in overall dense regions (longer depletion time)





Longmore et al. (2013, MNRAS 429, 987)





all galaxies

#### physical origin of this behavior?

- maybe strong shear in dense arms (example M51, Meidt et al. 2013)...
- maybe non-star forming H<sub>2</sub> gas becomes traced by CO at high column densities (recall H<sub>2</sub> needs A<sub>v</sub>~I, CO needs A<sub>v</sub>~2,)...



### observational approach



Exeter-Five College Radio Astronomy Observatory (EXFC) Galactic Ring Survey (GRS)

INNER GALAXY: Galactic Ring Survey (GRS)

Roman-Duval et al. (2016, ApJ, 818, 144)



observational approach:

 comparison of <sup>13</sup>CO (tracing mostly dense clouds) and <sup>12</sup>CO tracing all the gas (including the more diffuse component)

### dense gas fraction as function of radius



**Figure 13.** Average Galactic H<sub>2</sub> surface densities of the diffuse (red, detected in <sup>12</sup>CO, undetected in <sup>13</sup>CO) and dense (green, detected in <sup>12</sup>CO and <sup>13</sup>CO) components as a function of Galactocentric radius (in bins of width 0.1 kpc), in logarithmic scale, combining all data sets. In the inner Galaxy, the pink line indicates the surface density of H<sub>2</sub> in molecular clouds identified in Roman-Duval et al. (2010).

### dense gas fraction as function of radius



Roman-Duval et al. (2016, ApJ, 818, 144)

# modeling the galactic ecosystem

## modeling the multi-phase ISM



Simulation of a spiral galaxy with time-dependent chemistry, star formation, SN feedback.

Molecular gas indicated in grey, stellar ages color codes.

- Arepo moving mesh code (Springel 2010)
- more realistic potential (better disk scale height)
- with self-gravity and supernovae feedback!
- star formation
- full-chemistry
- possibility to define zoom-in regions

#### total column density



#### HI column density













### relation between CO and H<sub>2</sub>



(Smith et al., 2014, MNRAS, 441, 1628)

### relation between CO and H<sub>2</sub>


# further evidence form detailed colliding flow calculations



**Figure 3.** Evolution with time of the maximum density (blue, solid line) and minimum temperature (red, dashed line) in the slow flow (top panel) and the fast flow (bottom panel). Note that at any given instant, the coldest SPH particle is not necessarily the densest, and so the lines plotted are strictly independent of one another.





Clark et al. (2012, MNRAS, 424, 2599)

see also Pringle, Allen, Lubov (2001), Hosokawa & Inutsuka (2007)

# further evidence form detailed colliding flow calculations



**Figure 6.** Chemical evolution of the gas in the flow. In the left-hand column, we show the time evolution of the fraction of the total mass of hydrogen that is in the form of H<sub>2</sub> (red solid line) for the 6.8 km s<sup>-1</sup> flow (upper panel) and the 13.6 km s<sup>-1</sup> flow (lower panel). We also show the time evolution of the fraction of the total mass of carbon that is in the form of C<sup>+</sup> (green dashed line), C (orange dot–dashed line) and CO (blue double-dot–dashed line). In the right-hand column, we show the peak values of the fractional abundances of H<sub>2</sub> and CO. These are computed relative to the total number of hydrogen nuclei, and so the maximum fractional abundances of H<sub>2</sub> and CO are 0.5 and  $1.4 \times 10^{-4}$ , respectively. Again, we show results for the 6.8 km s<sup>-1</sup> flow in the upper panel and the 13.6 km s<sup>-1</sup> flow in the lower panel. Note that the scale of the horizontal axis differs between the upper and lower panels.

#### Clark et al. (2012, MNRAS, 424, 2599)

#### see also Pringle, Allen, Lubov (2001), Hosokawa & Inutsuka (2007)

# H<sub>2</sub> column CO emission





1.0 10.0 W<sub>co</sub> [K km s<sup>-1</sup>]

some tools

# Polaris RT tool

- MC dust heating: Combined heating algorithm of continuous absorption and immediate temperature correction
- Grid: Octree-grid with adaptive refinement
- Polarization mechanism: Dichroic extinction, thermal reemission, and scattering
- Dust grain alignment mechanisms:
  - Imperfect Davis-Greenstein (IDG)
  - Radiative torques (RAT)
  - Mechanical alignment (GOLD)
  - Imperfect internal alignement
  - Independent dust grain composition
- Optimization: Enforced scattering, wavelength range selection, and modified random walk



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Polaris website in Kiel: http://www1.astrophysik.uni-kiel.de/~polaris/





lin, polarization Pl

Polaris website in Kiel: http://www1.astrophysik.uni-kiel.de/~polaris/



## 1D cloud/cluster model

#### WARPFIELD:

- 1D model of cluster embedded in spherical cloud
- starburst99 cluster evolution
- · dynamics of think shell is calculated consistently
- with all relevant forms of stellar feedback
- · fast, allowing for large parameter studies





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**Figure 5.** Comparison of relative forces from direct and indirect radiation pressure, winds, SNe, and gravity. If the contribution from gravity is above the 50 per cent margin (dashed horizontal line), the shell loses momentum. *Top*:  $M_{cl} = 10^5 \text{ M}_{\odot}$ ,  $\epsilon = 0.1$ ,  $Z = Z_{\odot}$ , and  $n_{cl} = 1000 \text{ cm}^{-3}$  (same parameters as in Fig. 3). The contribution from indirect radiation pressure fraction is so small, it is barely visible (<1 per cent). *Bottom*: same  $n_{cl}$  and Z as in the top panel, but with a higher cloud mass and star formation efficiency  $(M_{cl} = 3 \times 10^7 \text{ M}_{\odot} \text{ and } \epsilon = 0.25)$ . For more information see Section 5.





# 1D cloud/cluster model

Polaris:

- detailed dust scattering and absorption model
- 120 frequency bin
- Monte Carlo RT





## 1D cloud/cluster model

Polaris:

- detailed dust scattering and absorption model
- 120 frequency bin
- Monte Carlo RT
- —> for Milky Way clouds, radiation pressure is not dominating over gravity!

red: gravity blue: radiation pressure purple: ratio



Fig. 5: Gravity ( $F_{\text{gra}}$ , red lines) in comparison to radiative forces ( $F_{\text{rad}}$ , blue lines) for models M4 (top left), M5 (top right left), M6 (bottom left), and M7 (bottom right). The ratio of forces is defined as  $\zeta = F_{\text{rad}}/F_{\text{gra}}$  (purple lines). All cases have a *constant* dust temperature of  $T_d = 20$  K, an outer radius of  $R_{\text{out}} = 5$  pc and use dust model D2. Note that  $\zeta < 1$  everywhere, implying that radiation pressure does not support the cloud against gravitational contraction. The vertical black line marks the sublimation radius.

Reissl et al. (2018, A&A in press, arXiv171002854)



# 1D cloud/cluster model

#### WARPFIELD-EMP:

- 1D model of cluster embedded in spherical cloud
- starburst99 cluster evolution
- dynamics of think shell is calculated consistently
- with all relevant forms of stellar feedback
- fast, allowing for large parameter studies
- coupled to CLOUDY and 1D RT
- many different emission woli R gby D tightel Rahner, Eric Pellegrini



### synthetic BPT diagrams

#### WARPFIELD-EMP:

- example synthetic BPT diagrams
- plans: extend to larger/ smaller clusters
- produce large statistical samples
- employ machine learning both as diagnostic and generative tool to produce database of emission measures

# Le HOUTE

work by Daniel Rahner, Eric Pellegrini







### synthetic BPT diagrams



 synthetic population of cloud/cluster models in BPT diagram compared to data from SITELLE



NGC 628: data from Rousseau-Nepton et al. (2018)

Pellegrini et al. (2018, to be submitted)



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### invertible neural networks





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## invertible neural networks



- new surveys
  - SDSS-V (Kollmeier/Rix):
    - LVM (~25 million spectra in Milky Way)
  - CFHT: SIGNALS (Rousseau-Nepton) (~50.000 HI regions in different galaxies)
  - PHANGS (MUSE)

# summary

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- star formation
- tools

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- need to bring theory closer to observations
- stars form in competition between gravity and a large number of competing processes
- lots of CO-traced H<sub>2</sub> gas is in diffuse form
- larger reservoir of CO-dark H<sub>2</sub>



# summary

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# many thanks



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