

Lecture Notes in Physics

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255

Radiation Hydrodynamics in Stars and Compact Objects

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Edited by D. Mihalas and K.-H.A. Winkler



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Preface

One of the most exciting developments in astrophysics over the past few years has been the discovery, usually through observations that were technically impossible a decade ago, of the ubiquity of energetic (often violent) flows in an astonishingly wide variety of objects. As theoreticians have struggled to keep pace with these discoveries and to provide even a rough descriptive framework for the observed phenomena, there has been a growing realization of the decisive role that radiation frequently plays in determining the nature of the flow. But too often important developments in this area have occurred in relative isolation in various subdisciplines of astrophysics, with the undesirable consequence that their full implications have not been widely understood or appreciated.

Thus it seemed to be an opportune time to hold a broad interdisciplinary conference, having as a major goal the exposure of a wide cross-section of astronomers to the fundamental importance of radiation hydrodynamics in extremely diverse astrophysical contexts. It was the hope of the organizers that the meeting would promote communication and exchanges of ideas among active workers in several fields.

The meeting was cosponsored by IAU Commissions 35 and 36, and approved by the IAU Executive Committee as IAU Colloquium No. 89. The program was developed by a Scientific Organizing Committee composed of G. T. Bath, A. N. Cox, J. M. Marlborough, R. McCray, D. Mihalas (chairman), A. Nordlund, Y. Osaki, A. Peraiah, M. J. Rees, E. A. Spiegel, and K.-H. Winkler. Although he insisted that he not be listed as a member of the SOC, Bengt Gustafsson was de facto an important participant in all of its deliberations, and consistently contributed wise advice and fruitful suggestions and ideas. As plans for the conference began to take definite form, we were extremely fortunate to receive generous financial support from the Danish National Science Research Council, the Swedish Natural Science Research Council, the Max Planck Institut für Astrophysik (Garching), and NORDITA. In addition, the home institutions of many of the invited speakers contributed partial or complete support for travel. Without this support it would have been impossible to assemble such a large group of experts from all over the world.

The practical arrangements for this rather large meeting were handled very efficiently by the Local Organizing Committee consisting of A. Nordlund (chairman), H. Kailerich, D. Dravins, B. Gustafsson, and H. Schnopper. We wish particularly to acknowledge the truly heroic efforts made by Åke Nordlund on behalf of the Colloquium. In addition to the very large amount of work he did in securing financial support from the Scandinavian organizations mentioned above, he patiently and effectively dealt with the innumerable last-minute crises that inevitably bedevil any international meeting.

From all remarks made to us by participants, it would appear that the meeting was a great success. To a large extent this happy outcome can be attributed to the diligent efforts of the invited speakers, who presented interesting, comprehensible, and stimulating descriptions of progress in their respective fields. As the editors of this volume we wish to express our sincere appreciation to these individuals for preparing incisive accounts of their contributions to the meeting in a very timely fashion. Another factor contributing to the success of the meeting was the lively interchange between the speakers and the audience in far-ranging discussion periods. We hope that the readers of this volume will get at least the flavor of these often spirited discussions from the questions and answers appended to each paper.

Another effective part of the meeting was the large number of contributed papers, all of which appeared as poster papers on display for the entire conference during a definite time period of each day. This novel (at least to us) approach eliminated the need for speakers to attempt to compress large bodies of detailed information into too-hurried (and therefore usually incomprehensible) verbal presentations, offering instead a format in which contributors and participants could interact repeatedly in a relaxed atmosphere conducive to in-depth exchange. A significant part of the long range impact of the meeting may well come from these

exchanges. We regret that it proved impossible for us to reproduce these contributions even in abstract form: the material submitted was far too inhomogeneous to deal with effectively, and moreover did not really give a fair representation of either the science actually presented or the complex interchanges it engendered.

We believe that if a conference on the subjects covered in this book is held again in, say, five years, we will all be amazed at the rapid progress that has been made. All of us who participated in this Colloquium will be gratified indeed if this volume has assisted that progress by facilitating communication among experts, and by providing inspiration to students.

April 1986

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Overview	1
D. Mihalas	
1. Protostellar Objects	
Jets from Young Stars	7
R. Mundt	
Theory of Protostellar Objects	10
F.H. Shu	
2. Normal Stars	
Radiation Hydrodynamics in Pulsating Stars	37
R.F. Stellingwerf	
Radiation Hydrodynamics in Solar Flares	53
G.H. Fisher	
Radiatively-Driven Stellar Winds	75
L.B. Lucy	
3. Supernovae	
The Physics of Supernovae	91
S.E. Woosley and T.A. Weaver	
Neutrino Transport in a Type II Supernova Environment	121
P.J. Schinder and S.L. Shapiro	
The Early Evolution of Supernova Remnants	141
C. Fransson	
The Optical Radiation of Supernovae	166
R. Harkness	
4. Stellar X-Ray Sources	
Compact Binary X-Ray Sources	185
R. McCray	
Observations of Compact X-Ray Sources	198
Y. Tanaka	
5. Novae and Accretion Disks	
The Classical Nova Outburst	225
S.G. Starrfield	
Accretion Disk Instabilities	249
F. Meyer	
Novae and Accretion Disc Evolution	268
G.T. Bath	

6.	X-Ray and Gamma-Ray Bursters	
	X-Ray Burst Sources	
	F. Melia and P.C. Joss	283
	Physical Constraints on Models of Gamma-Ray Bursters	
	R.I. Epstein	305
7.	Active Galactic Nuclei	
	Physical Processes in Active Galactic Nuclei	
	R. Svensson	325
	Radiation Hydrodynamics of the Broad Line Region in Seyfert Galaxies and Quasars	
	W.G. Mathews	346
	Hydrodynamics near the Central Engine	
	J.F. Hawley	369
8.	Stellar and Extragalactic Jets	
	Theory of Stellar and Extragalactic Jets	
	R.D. Blandford	387
	Observations of Galactic and Extragalactic Jets	
	R.A. Perley	403
	Interpretation of Extragalactic Jets	
	M.L. Norman	425
9.	Summary	
	Radiation Hydrodynamics: Conference Themes and Unsolved Problems	
	J.M. Shull	441
	Participants	451