

Limb-Darkening of WASP-55

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Abstract

Various discoveries of transit exoplanets have led to increased understanding of important features of host stars such as their limb-darkening. Limb-darkening, in simple terms, refers to a phenomenon that is observed about a star that indicates that the star's brightness reduces radially with increasing distance from its center. This implies that the star's limb (edge) tends to appear relatively dark. This is generally assumed for all stars in the known cosmos, WASP-55 inclusive. WASP-55 is a star found in the WASP-55 system that mainly comprises the star itself and a planet currently referred to as WASP-55 b. This research primarily focuses on studying limb-darkening of WASP-55 through observations of light curves generated as WASP-55 b transits across its surface. From data obtained, the surface brightness of WASP-55 with respect to its radius will be analyzed.

Approach

This project will be implemented through the use of a carefully developed Python algorithm and relevant physics equations among which are briefly outlined below.

Linear limb-darkening equation:

$$I(\mu) = I(0)[1 - w(1-\mu)] \quad (1)$$

where $I(0)$ is specific intensity at the center of WASP-55, $\mu = \cos(\theta)$ (Note that θ is the angle between the line of observation and WASP-55's surface), and w refers to the intensity distribution across WASP-55's disc and is defined by;

$$w = \frac{3[(\frac{R_{pl}}{R_*})^2 - \frac{\Delta I}{L}]}{3(\frac{R_{pl}}{R_*})^2(1-\mu) - \frac{\Delta I}{L}} \quad (2)$$

Where R_{pl} is the radius of WASP-55 b, R_* is WASP-55's radius, and $\frac{\Delta I}{L}$ is the change in brightness of WASP-55 as WASP-55 b moves in front of its surface.

$$\frac{\Delta I}{L} = (\frac{R_{pl}}{R_*})^2 (\frac{3}{3-w}) [1 - w(1-\mu)] \quad (3)$$

Input parameters that will be used include;

1. Radius of WASP-55 b $\approx 1.3R_J$, where R_J is the radius of Jupiter
2. Radius of WASP-55 $\approx 1.011R_{SUN}$, where R_{SUN} is the radius of the Sun
3. Effective temperature of WASP-55 ≈ 5900 K
4. Distance of WASP-55 from Earth ≈ 330 pc
5. Inclination of WASP-55 b $\approx 89.2^\circ$
6. Mass of WASP-55 $\approx 1.013M_{SUN}$, where M_{SUN} is the mass of the Sun
7. Mass of WASP-55 $\approx 0.57M_J$, where M_J is the mass of the Jupiter

Goals of Project

1. Simulate transit of WASP-55 b across the surface of WSP-55
2. Plot the surface brightness of WASP-55 versus positions of its radius
3. Plot relative flux of WASP-55 with respect to its radius
4. Modify surface of WASP-55 by including relatively cold spots (regions) and making plot of light curve to analyze effects of stellar spots.