

# The relation between stars and gas in distant galaxies

Jacky Cao

Level 4 Project, MPhys Physics

Supervisor: Dr. Mark Swinbank

Department of Physics, Durham University

Submitted: 18th November 2018

Observing any galaxy in the universe will yield the fact that it contains stars and also gas. The dynamics of both can be explored by observing galaxies and collecting spectroscopic data.

## Contents

## 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Introduction

- a. Galactic classification
  - b. Galactic and stellar formation
  - c. Data
    - 1. HUDF and MUSE
  - d. Project Aims

## 2. Analysis

- a. Cube extraction
  - b. Line fittings and pPXF

### 3. Discussion

#### 4. Conclusions

## Acknowledgments

## References

1 Amongst the different types of cosmic  
2 structure within our universe, galaxies can  
3 be seen as the island powerhouses of in-  
4 dustry and activity. Containing countless  
5 stars, gas, dust, and dark matter [1], it  
6 would be difficult not to express the state-  
7 ment that the motions of these objects must  
8 be linked in some galactic relationship.

3 By utilising the most powerful tool in as-  
4 tronomy, observation, galaxies, their struc-  
4 ture and the motions of the objects within  
them can be studied to a great depth. As an  
4 example, if we took optical measurements  
4 of the stellar population, we could use that  
4 information to infer and estimate the poten-  
4 tial age of the galaxy. We know that redder  
4 stars are older and bluer stars represent a  
younger set of objects [1]. Or if we wanted  
to know about the material composition or  
even the distance to a certain galaxy, we  
could split the collected light in a spectro-  
graph to produce a spectrum. Values of red-  
shift and the content of a galaxy can then be  
obtained by looking at the absorption and  
emission lines [1].

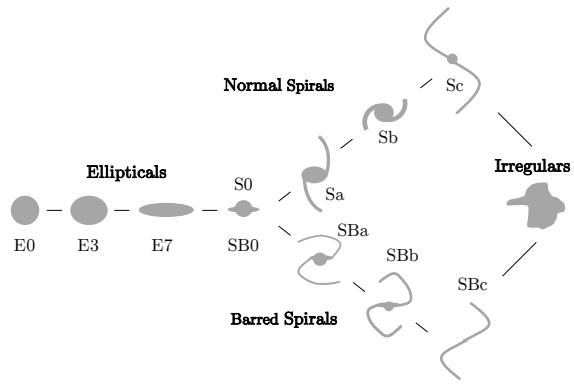
Gathering and processing this optical and spectroscopic information allows us to build a broad picture of the internal workings of a galaxy. To begin with however, we must consider galaxies in their generality,

after which we will be able to explore the intricacies from the how a galaxy evolves from the early stages of being a gas cloud to the eventual relation of the stellar population to that gas.

### a. Galactic classification

As we stated previously, a galaxy can be quite broadly defined as a collection of gas, dust, stars and dark matter. But if we were to observe a large enough sample then we would begin to see that the galaxies can be grouped and classified together.

This categorisation is called the *Hubble Sequence* or the *Hubble Tuning Fork* [1]. From Figure 1 we can see that galaxies can be divided into ellipticals, spirals and irregulars. With early Hubble type ellipticals along the horizontal handle, the two prongs containing normal and barred spirals (also known as the later Hubble types), and irregulars as the third category. What we see from the diagram is a summarised view of the main galaxy types, in reality there are more than the 11 named.



**Figure 1:** The Hubble Sequence, displaying the three general groups of galaxies: ellipticals, spirals, and irregulars, and the main galaxy types from each category. A pictogram and the classification name is shown for each of them. The sequence does not show the evolution of galaxies but their classification.

(*This diagram has been adapted from An Introduction to Modern Astrophysics [1].*)

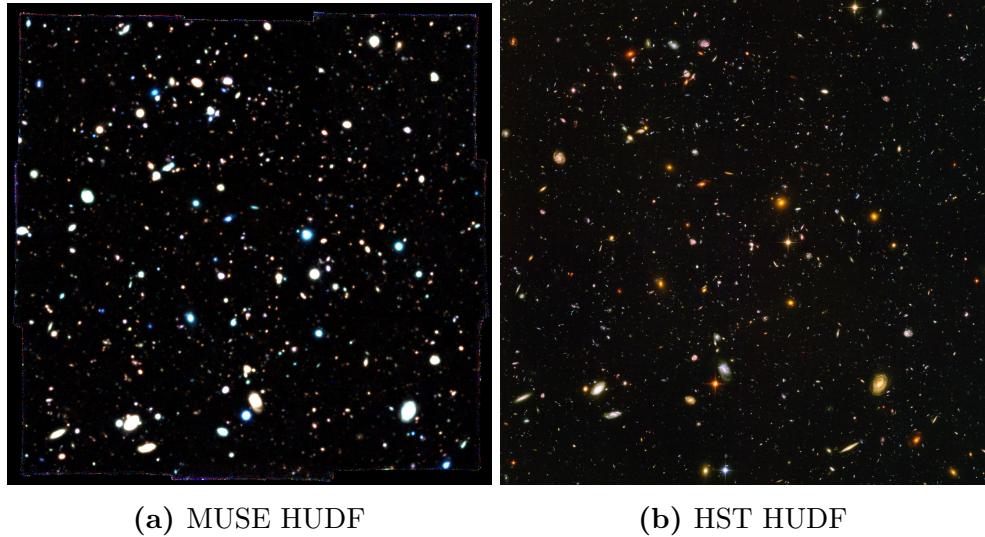
The sequence itself does not show the evolution of the galaxies, rather it provides

a way to view the different morphologies of them. We must ask ourselves then what each general grouping represents in relation to the make-up of the galaxy. Alongside the classification from appearance we can also explore the basic component composition.

Take ellipticals, we see from the Hubble Tuning Fork that they can be described as spherical-like distributions. In fact, they actually range from being virtually spherical (E0) to highly flattened (E7) collections of gas, dust, and dark matter [2]. Through observation of the stars within them, we find that the majority of them are the older, red coloured variety. This may be due to the fact that early on in the creation of ellipticals, a considerable proportion of the gas went into the formation of stars, thus viewing these galaxies now we find that their stars are predominantly older types [1] as new stars are not being born. This could also explain the lack of disks which can be otherwise seen in the spiral galaxies. With not enough material the disk and arms features would not form.

Comparatively, we can describe spiral galaxies as being composed of a central nucleus which has a surrounding disk of material. This disk then has denser regions which can coalesce and form the protruding arms which we can see around the main bulge [1]. The later type spirals (Sc and SBc) have arms which are more loosely wound than their earlier types (Sa and SBa) [2]. With more available gas and dust [1], we would assume that spirals in their various forms would have more opportunities to form new stars than ellipticals.

It is within the arms of spiral galaxies that we find the creation of new stars. It is within the spiral structure that we find the gravitational field which allows for angular momentum to be transported outwards. Older and less massive stars in the galaxy produce a gravitational field which eventually leads to the shocking of the interstellar gas [3]. As a result the density of the gas in the arms increase and certain regions then collapse to form new young, blue, and massive stars.



**Figure 2:** (a) A colour image created from the MUSE spectroscopic data of the HUDF. The wavelength range was split into three equal regions and then collapsed to create three bands (R, G, B). A final colour image was produced by combining these separate frames together. (b) The optical HUDF as captured by the Advanced Camera for Surveys instrument on the Hubble Space Telescope [4].

Spiral galaxies therefore have a mix of ages in relation to their stellar population. The arms in a spiral contain young stars whilst the central nucleus is similar to that of elliptical galaxies where the population of stars is composed of older types [1, 3].

Irregular galaxies have no noticeable symmetry and no obvious central nucleus, so they do not fall into either of the other two categories.

By knowing these general characteristics, as we continually improve our observational instruments we can then view deeper into the Universe's past. This means the galactic objects are becoming more and more younger, this is a powerful way for us to build a picture of the evolutionary nature of galaxies and their structure.

asdasd

## b. Galactic and stellar formation

We introduced the concept that through optical measurements of the stars

## c. Data

askjdnakslsd

### 1. HUDF and MUSE

To obtain spectroscopic information on the Hubble UDF objects, the Multi-Unit Spectroscopic Explorer or MUSE was employed. This instrument is

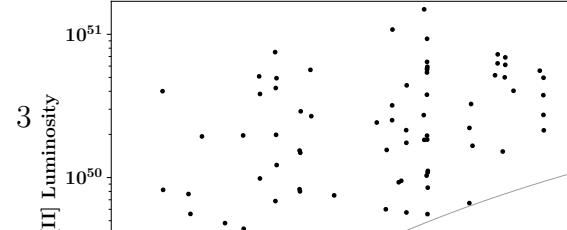
#### a. Cube extraction

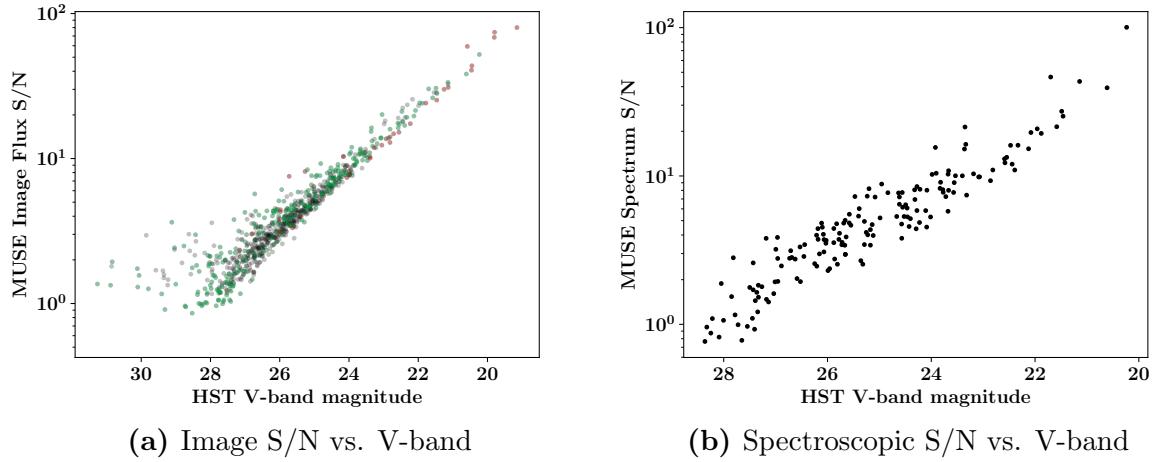
## d. Project Aims

## 2. ANALYSIS

sfsadf  
asdasd

asdasd





**Figure 3:** (a) The signal-to-noise of the image flux for every object in the MUSE collapsed image plotted against their respective V-band magnitudes from the HST catalogue. The red points represent those with redshifts  $z < 0.3$ , and the green points are a chosen sample of 300 points as defined by the sextractor probability that they are not stars. (b)

**Figure 4:** Graph showing the calculated luminosity for the O[II] doublet plotted against redshift. Data points are plotted as well as a model line representing the lower-limit of the flux from the sample. [???]a

their continual help and support throughout the project period, without which, the project would have been experimentally grounded.

aasdasd

### b. Line fittings and pPXF

### 3. DISCUSSION

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, through extensive data and statistical analysis it can be said that the dynamics of stars and gas in galaxies are ... (?)

### Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Dr. M. Swinbank and Alfie Tiley for

## References

- [1] Bradley W. Carroll and Dale A. Ostlie. An Introduction to Modern Astrophysics. Pearson, 2nd edition, 2007.
  - [2] Patrick Moore and Robin Rees. Patrick Moore's Data Book of Astronomy, pages 357 – 362. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
  - [3] James Binney. Astrophysics: A Very Short Introduction, volume 1. Oxford Very Short Introductions, 2016.
  - [4] NASA, ESA, S. Beckwith, and HUDF Team. Hubble Ultra Deep Field. <https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/30946>, May 2018. [Online; accessed 5th November 2018].