1 Hamiltonians and EOM

1.1 Toy Problem

Consider simplest spin Hamiltonian $H = -\vec{B}\cdot\vec{s}$. It's clear that if we set up initial conditions $\vec{s}$ misaligned from $\vec{B}$, it will simply spin around $\vec{B}$, which is fixed. Thus, let $\hat{B}\cdot\hat{s} = \cos\theta$ the angle between the two, and let ϕ measure the azimuthal angle.

We claim that $\cos\theta, \phi$ are canonical variables. Since ϕ is ignorable, immediately $\frac{\mathrm{d}\theta}{\mathrm{d}t} = \frac{\mathrm{d}\cos\theta}{\mathrm{d}t} = -\frac{\partial H}{\partial\phi} = 0$, while $\frac{\mathrm{d}\phi}{\mathrm{d}t} = \frac{\partial H}{\partial(\cos\theta)} = Bs$ tells us the rate at which the spin precesses around $\vec{B}$.

1.2 Cassini State Hamilttonian

This Hamiltonian is Kassandras Eq. 13, in the co-rotating frame with the perturber's angular momentum:

$$\mathcal{H} = \frac{1}{2}\left(\hat{s}\cdot\hat{l}\right)^2 - \eta\left(\hat{s}\cdot\hat{l}_p\right). \tag{1}$$

In this frame, we can choose $\hat{l} \equiv \hat{z}$ fixed, and $\hat{l}_p = \cos I\hat{z} + \sin I\hat{x}$ fixed as well. Then

$$\hat{s} = \cos\theta\hat{z} - \sin\theta\left(\sin\phi\hat{y} + \cos\phi\hat{x}\right).$$

We can choose the convention for $\phi = \phi$ azimuthal angle requiring $\phi = 0, \pi$ mean coplanarity between $\hat{s}, \hat{l}, \hat{l}_p$ in the $\hat{x}, \hat{z}$ plane such that $\hat{l}_p, \hat{s}$ lie on the same side of $\hat{l}$. Then we can evaluate in coordinates

$$\begin{aligned}
\hat{s}\cdot\hat{l} &= \cos\theta,\\
\hat{s}\cdot\hat{l}_p &= \cos\theta\cos I - \sin I\sin\theta\cos\phi,\\
\mathcal{H} &= \frac{1}{2}\cos^2\theta - \eta\left(\cos\theta\cos I - \sin I\sin\theta\cos\phi\right).
\end{aligned}$$

Note that if we take $\cos\theta$ to be our canonical variable, $\sin\theta = \sqrt{1-\cos^2\theta}$ can be used.

1.3 Equation of Motion

The correct EOM comes from Kassandra's Eq. 12:

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{\mathrm{d}\hat{s}}{\mathrm{d}t} &= \left(\hat{s}\cdot\hat{l}\right)\left(\hat{s}\times\hat{l}\right) - \eta\left(\hat{s}\times\hat{l}_p\right),\\
&= \left(s_y s_z - \eta s_y\cos(I)\right)\hat{x} - \left(s_x s_z + \eta(s_x\cos I - s_z\sin I)\right)\hat{y} + \eta s_y\sin(I)\hat{z}.
\end{aligned}$$

Alternatively, consider Hamilton's equations applied to the Hamiltonian:

$$\frac{\partial\phi}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial\mathcal{H}}{\partial(\cos\theta)} = \cos\theta - \eta\left(\cos I + \sin I\cot\theta\cos\phi\right), \tag{2}$$

$$\frac{\partial(\cos\theta)}{\partial t} = -\frac{\partial\mathcal{H}}{\partial\phi} = +\eta\sin I\sin\theta\sin\phi. \tag{3}$$

This produces the same trajectories as the Cartesian EOM, so this is correct. However, since $\frac{\partial\phi}{\partial t} \propto 1/\sin\theta$, this is not a desirable system of equations to use, as they are very stiff near $\theta \approx 0$.

1.4 Tidal Dissipation

We can add a tidal dissipation term; we write it in form $\left(\frac{\mathrm{d}\hat{s}}{\mathrm{d}t}\right)_{tide} = \epsilon\hat{s}\times\left(\hat{l}\times\hat{s}\right)$. Expanding,

$$\begin{aligned}\left(\frac{\mathrm{d}\hat{s}}{\mathrm{d}t}\right)_{tide} &= \epsilon(\hat{z} - s_z\hat{s}),\\ &= \epsilon\left(-s_z s_x\hat{x} - s_z s_y\hat{y} + \left(1 - s_z^2\right)\hat{z}\right).\end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

We run numerical simulations for weaker $\epsilon \ll \eta \ll 1$ and stronger $\epsilon \lesssim \eta \ll 1$.

We can seek equilibria of the the system including tides, which requires

$$\begin{aligned}0 &= s_y s_z - \eta s_y\cos I - \epsilon s_z s_x,\\ 0 &= -s_x s_z - \eta(s_x\cos I - s_z\sin I) - \epsilon s_z s_y,\\ 0 &= \eta s_y\sin(I) + \epsilon\left(1 - s_z^2\right).\end{aligned}$$

We expect at least two equilibria, based on the simulations: one near $s_z \approx 1$ and one $s_z \approx 0$.

For near alignment/near Cassini state 1, $1 - s_z \sim 1 - s_\perp^2$, so we can set $s_z = 1$ to first order: $s_y - \epsilon s_x - \eta s_y\cos I = -s_x - \eta(s_x\cos I - \sin I) - \epsilon s_y = \eta s_y\sin I = 0$. This can be satisfied if we set $s_x = \tan(I) \ll 1, s_y = \mathcal{O}(\epsilon s_x)$; this coarsely corresponds to Cassini state 1.

The other solution should be near Cassini state 2, where $s_x \approx 1$; dropping second order terms forces $\eta s_y + \epsilon s_z = -s_z - \eta(\cos I - s_z\sin I) = \eta s_y\sin(I) + \epsilon = 0$. This can thus be satisfied for $s_y \approx -\frac{\epsilon}{\eta\sin(I)}$. Thus, this explains why as ϵ is increased, we first start to get points that don't converge to Cassini state 2 in the absence of tides, before starting to see points that fail to converge to Cassini state 1.

2 Separatrix Hopping

Inspired by G&H, heteroclinic orbits are topologically unstable for any nonzero perturbation, but opened width $\sim$ perturbation parameter.

We zoom in on Cassini State 4, which has $\cos\theta \approx 0, \phi = 0$. In particular, by using equations of motion

$$\frac{\partial\phi}{\partial t} = \cos\theta - \eta\left(\cos I + \sin I\cot\theta\cos\phi\right), \tag{5}$$

$$\frac{\partial\theta}{\partial t} = -\eta\sin I\sin\phi - [\epsilon\sin\theta], \tag{6}$$

we can compute $\theta_4 \approx -\frac{\pi}{2} + \frac{\eta\sin I}{1+\eta\cos I}, \phi_4 = 0$ in the $\epsilon = 0$ limit (the other solution is $\theta_2 \approx +\frac{\pi}{2} - (\ldots)$). Indeed the signs are correct: near $\theta \approx \frac{\pi}{2}, \phi \approx 0$ we have EOM $\delta\dot{\phi}_4 \approx -\delta\theta_4$ while $\delta\dot{\theta}_4 \approx -\eta\sin I\delta\phi_4$ which is unstable.

Substituting in perturbatively for nonzero ϵ in $\frac{\partial\theta}{\partial t}$ gives $\delta\phi_4 = +\frac{\epsilon}{\eta\sin I}, \delta\theta_4 = 0$. This is in agreement with Dong's result. Note that $\delta\theta_2 = -\frac{\epsilon}{\eta\sin I}$, which I saw in my simulations.

This implies that the stable manifolds of the two saddle points, which once overlapped with each other's unstable manifolds (creating a heteroclinic orbit) now are offset from one another by distance $D \sim \frac{\epsilon}{\eta\sin I}$. The question is how likely it is to thread the needle.

Consider that, very near CS4, the angle of incidence on the desired gap is roughly $\tan\psi \approx \psi = \frac{\Delta\theta}{\Delta\phi}$. Over the course of one orbit, $\Delta\phi$ changes by 2π, while $\Delta\theta \sim \epsilon\sin\theta T$ where T is the period of an orbit. Examining the data, $T \sim 50$, and so $\frac{\Delta\theta}{\Delta\phi} \sim \frac{2\pi}{\epsilon(50)}$.

The effective probability of threading the opened gap between the stable/unstable manifolds is then just $P \propto D\sin\psi \sim \frac{2\pi}{T(\eta\sin I)}$. Plugging in some observational values $T \sim 50, \eta = 0.1, I = 20^\circ$ gives

$P \propto 0.13$. In reality, I find it asymptotes to ~ 0.08, so the constant of proportionality is of order unity. Not bad given the really crappy $\psi \sim \frac{\langle \theta \rangle}{\dot{\phi}}$ argument.