Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory

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FERMILAB-Conf-91/239-A
September 1991

SUPERFLUID-LIKE TURBULENCE IN COSMOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

A network of vortices in a superfluid system exhibits turbulent behavior. We argue that the universe may have experienced such a phase of superfluid-like turbulence due to the existence of a coherent state with non-topological charge and a network of global strings. The unique feature of a distribution of turbulent domains is that it can yield non-gravitationally induced large-scale coherent velocities. It may be difficult, however, to relate these velocities to the observed large-scale bulk motion.

to be published in Proceedings of the
Sixth Marcel Grossmann Meeting on General Relativity,
Kyoto, Japan, June 24 – June 29, 1991

1. Introduction

The idea that the cosmic plasma could be in a state of turbulence during the radiation dominated epoch is almost half a century old[1]. It was initially hoped that a primeval turbulent velocity field could generate the needed perturbation for galaxy formation, explain the peculiar velocities and angular momentum of galaxies and explain the origin of intergalactic magnetic fields. Peebles, however, claims[2] that this concept of turbulent behavior is probably ruled out, since the amount of turbulence needed to explain the residual matter velocities on galactic scales leads to structure formation too early on.

On the other hand, in the standard instability picture large-scale structure forms gravitationally out of small initial perturbations and at the same time initiates the growth of peculiar velocities[3]. In fact, based on this very process, one can deduce the mass density of the universe from the observed large–scale streaming velocities. This has lately been one of the most attractive means of 'weighing the universe' and hints strongly towards a density parameter[4] $\Omega \gtrsim 0.5$. ($\Omega = \rho/\rho_c$ is the ratio of the actual to the critical density.)

We would like to challenge the link between perturbations, velocities and mass density and reintroduce *non-gravitationally* induced velocities that are remnants of a cosmic turbulent phase. But instead of seeking again turbulence in the primeval plasma, we propose a late–time *superfluid*–like epoch[5], which could in principle take place after decoupling. Inspired by low–temperature ^{4}He, we argue that part of the matter content of the universe can undergo bose condensation. This is equivalent to the 'injection' of a non–topological charge into the vacuum. In the presence of global strings, alias superfluid vortices, this non–topological charge is identified with angular momentum and leads to turbulent domains on the scale of the inter–string distance.

2. Background

There are at least three different approaches for baryogenesis which involve some kind of a bose condensate[6]. (Bose condensation can, of course, also arise in completely different circumstances.) Condensation is here related to the existence of a coherent background field with nonzero charge (particle) density. We will not follow any specific theory, but consider only the general concept.

Let us focus on a complex scalar field ϕ with a global U(1) symmetry. We assume that the symmetry is spontaneously broken and ϕ acquires a non-vanishing vacuum expectation value, $<\phi>=\nu$, where

$$\phi = \frac{\nu}{\sqrt{2}} e^{i\Theta(t)} . \tag{1}$$

The coherent ϕ-field can 'hide' a density of ϕ-particles through a time-dependent Goldstone field Θ. The number (charge) density is given by the time-component of the conserved Noether current of the U(1) symmetry,

$$n_\phi \equiv j^0 = \nu^2 \dot{\Theta} . \tag{2}$$

This is reminiscent of the interior of non-topological solitons and Q-balls. Cosmic expansion conserves the total charge, $Q = n_\phi V$, inside a comoving volume.

3. Vortices

Our system generically also contains global strings, one-dimensional topological defects. However, in the presence of strings, the spatially homogeneous state (1) must be modified to

$$\phi = \frac{\nu}{\sqrt{2}} e^{i[n\theta+\Theta(t)]} , \tag{3}$$

where we have taken the string to lay along the z-axis, θ is the polar angle in the x-y plane and n denotes the winding number (the *topological* charge). Neglecting the core structure of the string, the non-topological charge Q is unchanged.

The crucial observation is that ϕ now describes a fluid. In the presence of a charge density, the gradient of the Goldstone field becomes time-like (it is space-like in the absence of any charge) and describes a velocity field[7], the Goldstone mode playing the role of the velocity potential. The system now also contains angular momentum[5],

$$J = n\, Q , \tag{4}$$

correlated over a volume $V_\xi \sim \xi^3$, where ξ is of order the inter-string distance. We thus end up with turbulent domains of volume V_ξ. Note that angular mo-