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Contribution ID: 90

Type: **not specified**

A Primer on Nucleosynthesis

Saturday, 27 September 2014 09:15 (45 minutes)

Where do the atoms in your body come from? This question can be answered by invoking ideas from nuclear, particle, and astro physics. The field of nucleosynthesis combines these disciplines by studying processes in nature that create nuclei from pre-existing nucleons or from other nuclei. In this talk I discuss basic concepts of nuclear reactions and astrophysical environments. I provide an overview of the different nucleosynthesis processes observed thus far. From the big bang to supernova explosions each event creates different sectors of isotopes found on the periodic table. Studying the outcome of nucleosynthesis events can teach us not only about astrophysical scenarios but offer great insight into the various epochs of the universe.

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Session Classification: Talks