

PREF-CONCLUDING REMARKS

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In the same spirit as the local organising committee's "post-final announcement" I should like, as chairman of this session, to extend an invitation to myself to present a few pre-concluding remarks before asking Brian to summarise his view of the highlights of the past few days. My comments will be eclectic, coloured by a theorist's wish to impose pattern on chaos; order on the anarchy of observations.

It seems to me that one of the central themes which has run through this meeting, and which marks a new departure in research on cataclysmic variables, has been the spectroscopic, polarimetric and photometric evidence for anisotropic radiation patterns about the binary rotation axis, and their interpretation in terms of a whole range of antisymmetric physical processes. The variety of these suggestions rightly depends only on the limits of the imagination, but if we move out through the gravitational potential well of the accreting star, I noted the following processes under discussion at the meeting:

- (1) Magnetic accretion columns on the white dwarf or neutron star.
- (2) Localised spots of nuclear burning.
- (3) Disc structure and "blobs" orbiting within the disc.
- (4) Disc anisotropy over extensive disc regions due to stream penetration or non-circular orbits.
- (5) The classic picture of hot-spot (or, rather, bright-spot) radiation from stream impact at the disc edge.
- (6) Active regions (excited by bursting mass transfer) on a non-synchronously rotating companion star.
- (7) Absorption in material orbiting the whole system.

This is clearly not an exhaustive list of possibilities, and each of us, theorist and observer alike, has his own partiality towards favourites that have served him well in the past. In several cases it is still unclear on simple observational grounds just what is the

dominant process at any time, and the theorist's role must be to develop means of distinguishing more rigorously between these possibilities. In this regard let me "blow my own recorder" and remind you of the possible utility of "peapod" diagrams in providing a link between theory and observation, and mapping the structure of these sources. I sense that one of my favourites, the suggestion that Brian Warner was right in 1975 with his original model for the origin of the superhump phenomena, has been coolly received, even by Brian himself. Why I have not fathomed, but there are observational tests, so you observers should get out and prove me wrong, if possible by substituting what is right. Until then I would remind you that some ten years ago when Doug Hall was advocating the star spot model of RS CVn stars, it was spurned by the establishment and even such rebels of the time as John Whelan described it as "Doug's square star model".

Before I hand over to Brian for the observer's view of the reality, rather than my theorist's vision of the ideal, I'd like to read you an excerpt from one of my favourite pieces of poetry, by Rilke - perhaps the greatest poet of the past hundred years. It comes from the first elegy of the Duino Elegies.

"Many a star
 was waiting for you to perceive it. Many a wave
 would rise in the past towards you; or else, perhaps,
 as you went by an open window, a violin
 would be utterly giving itself. All this was commission
 But were you equal to it? Were you not still
 distraught by expectancy, as though all were announcing
 some beloved's approach? (As if you could hope
 to house her with all those great strange thoughts
 going in and out and often staying overnight!)"

Before we go on our various routes to be distraught by expectancy I'm sure I speak for us all in expressing our debt to Mario Livio and Giora Shaviv for the commission we've enjoyed throughout this meeting.