

Atoms are phenomenally complex objects. You could spend a whole career studying these things and never fully understand them.

In order for the millions of years of evolutionary history to make sense, scientists believe that the elements, which makeup everything in the universe, need to have been formed in the hearts of stars.

Stars generate their vast power by fusing hydrogen atoms to create helium (Figure 5.1.1). This is a process known as nuclear fusion.

Now the bigger the atom, the more difficult it is to fuse. You can melt different types of metal, but they are still made from the same atoms that you started with. It does not make a new element. New elements require a more complicated process.

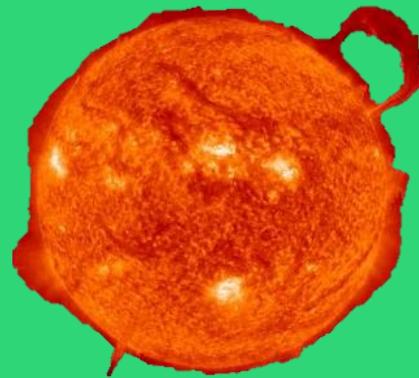


Fig. 5.1.1 A star uses fusion for power.

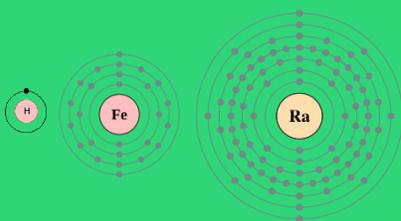


Fig. 5.1.2 Hydrogen, iron, and radium atoms

Going up the periodic table drastically increases the complexities of the atom (Figure 5.1.2).

Fusing the atoms together to create new atoms is a different story altogether. So far, scientists have been

unable to find a star that can fuse past iron. Iron is only number 26 of 86 naturally occurring elements. The remaining 60 exist, but could not have formed by fusion, at least with the present model.

It has been suggested that multiple stars dying simultaneously could produce enough heat to fuse past iron. With all the heavy elements such as Zinc (30), Cesium (55), and Platinum (78) on Earth and in asteroids it is illogical to think that these formed from dying stars. If all of the advanced elements in the universe were formed from multiple stars dying concurrently, there should not be any stars left.

The process of nuclear fusion is responsible for forming the elements above hydrogen. These elements then came together to form the stars. Stars are formed by the super-compression of elements. This will be further discussed in Chapter 9.



Fig. 5.1.3 The chicken and the egg.

Therefore, the elements are needed to make the stars, but the stars are needed to make the elements. One cannot have come into existence by purely natural forces without the other. The elements would need to form so that they could produce a star and the star

was needed to produce the elements (Figure 5.1.3).

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Chapter 5

Forming Elements

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