



The
**BRITISH
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The Abdus Salam
**International Centre
for Theoretical Physics**



EGY  **plasma**

Dusty Plasma

Waleed Moslem
Port Said University
The British University
6 April 2026



Aim of the Lect.

- **Why Dusty Plasma Is an Unusual State of Matter?**
- **Why Dusty Plasmas Have Many Applications?**
- **Dusty Plasma Terminology**

Types of plasma

- **(I) Classical plasma (electron-ion plasma)**
+ve ions / electrons / -ve ions / positrons
- **(II) Dusty (complex) plasma**
+ve dust / -ve dust / +ve ions / electrons / -ve ions
- **(III) Quantum (Dense) plasma**
Electrons / positrons / holes / +ve ions

Occurance of dusty plasma

Natural

- **Solar nebula**
- **Planetary rings**
- **Interstellar medium**
- **Comet tails**
- **Noctilucent clouds**
- **Lightning**

Man-made

- **Microelectronic processing**
- **Rocket exhaust**
- **Fusion devices**

Occurance of dusty plasma



Rosette Nebula



Eagle Nebula

Our solar system accumulated out of a dense cloud of gas and dust, forming everything that is now part of our world.

Occurance of dusty plasma

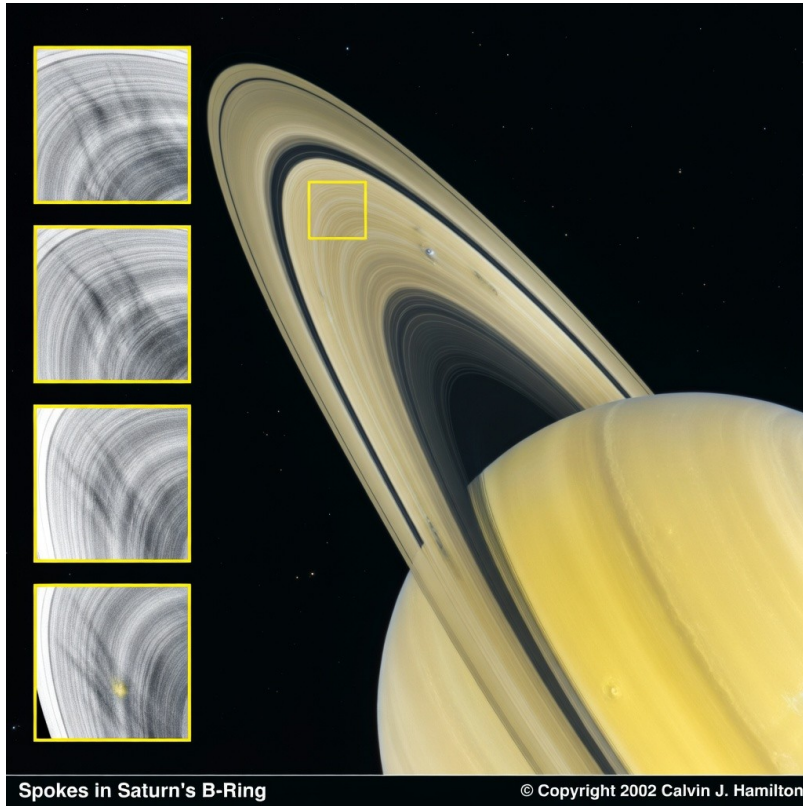


Hyakutake

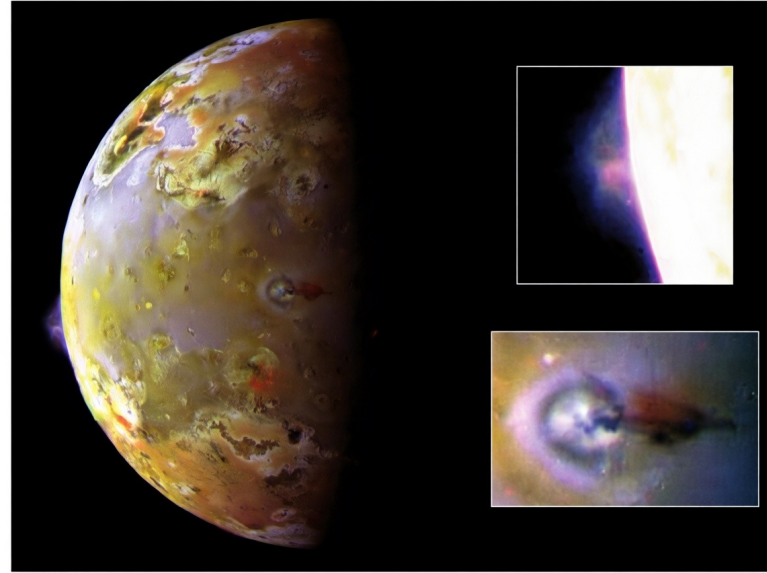


Hale-Bopp

Occurance of dusty plasma



Saturn

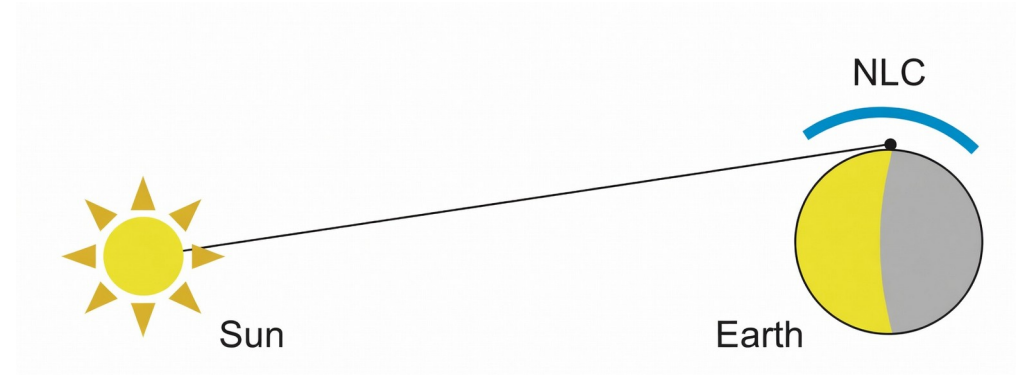


Io moon



Jupiter

Occurance of dusty plasma



- **Noctilucent clouds (NLCs)** are the **highest** clouds in Earth's atmosphere.
- They form at altitudes of **75–80 km**.
- NLCs appear mostly during **summer**.
- They are made of **tiny water ice particles**, about **100 nanometers** in size.
- These ice particles are often **electrically charged**.

Occurance of dusty plasma

A flame is a very weakly ionized plasma that contains soot particles



An early temperature measurement in a dusty plasma

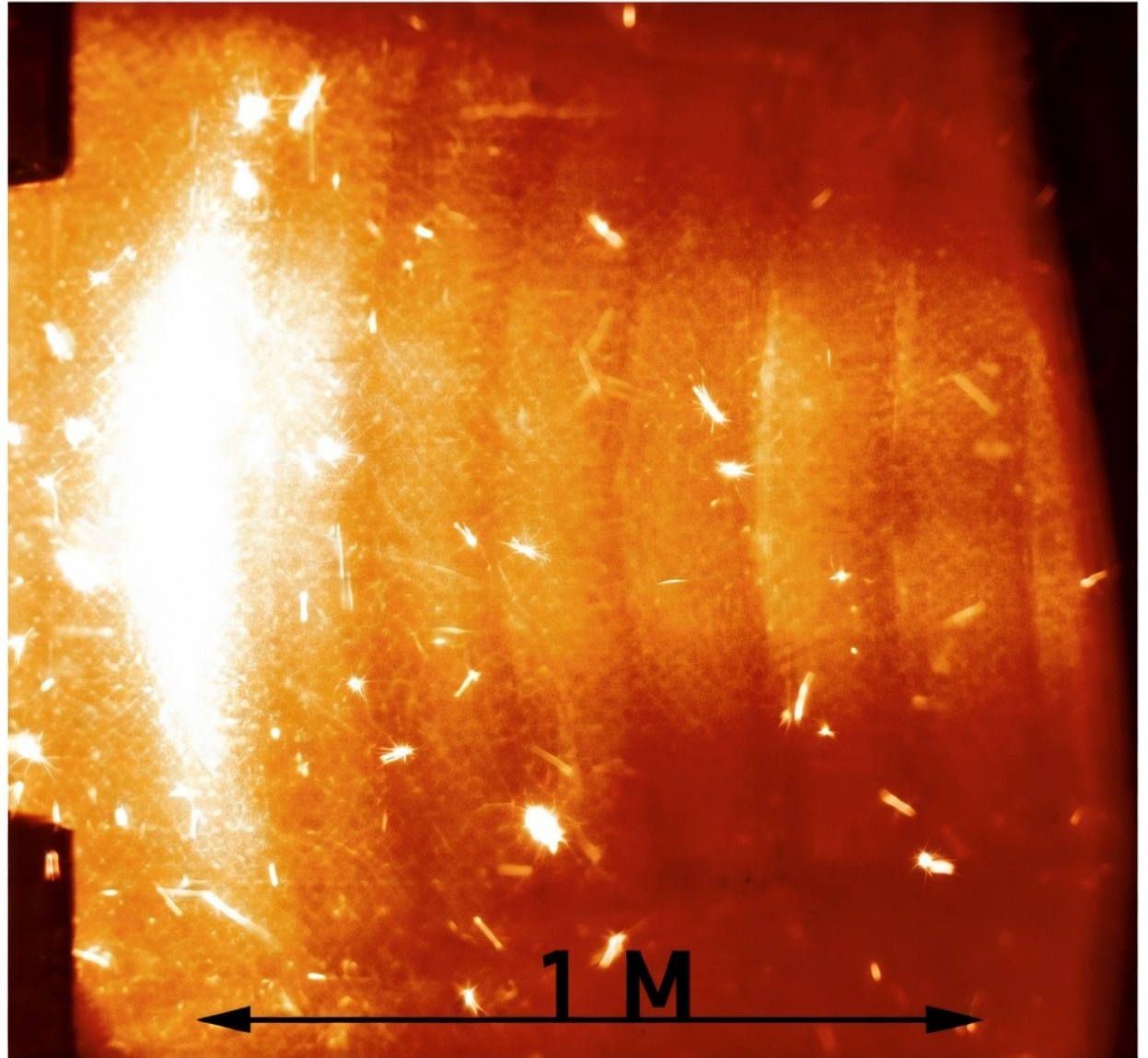
Occurance of dusty plasma



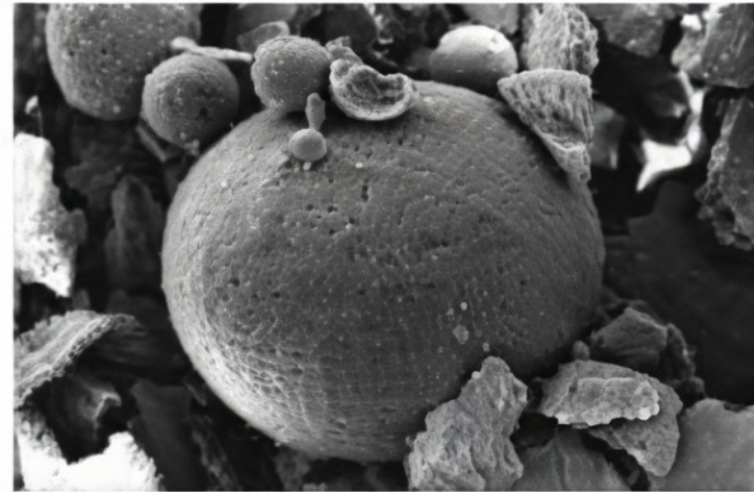
- **Space Shuttle exhaust** releases water vapor into the **upper mesosphere**.
- This water vapor **freezes into tiny ice particles** at high altitudes (~80 km).
- The ice particles become **electrically charged**, forming a **dusty plasma**.
- This process can **enhance Noctilucent Cloud** formation.
- Observations show a **temporary increase** in NLCs after Shuttle launches.

Occurance of dusty plasma

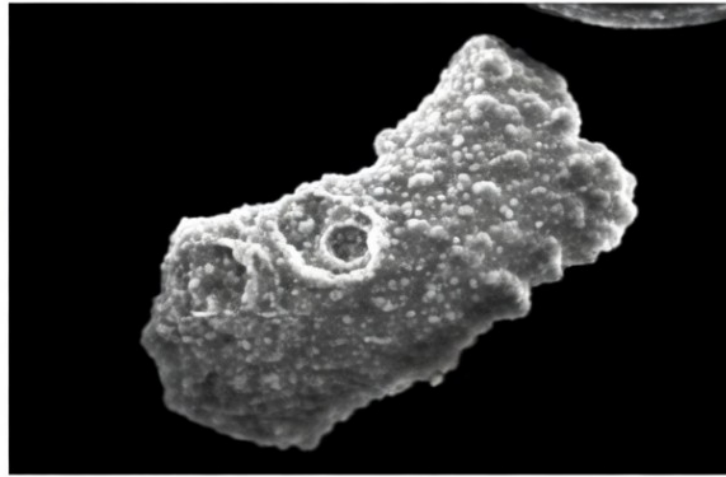
Dust in Tokamak



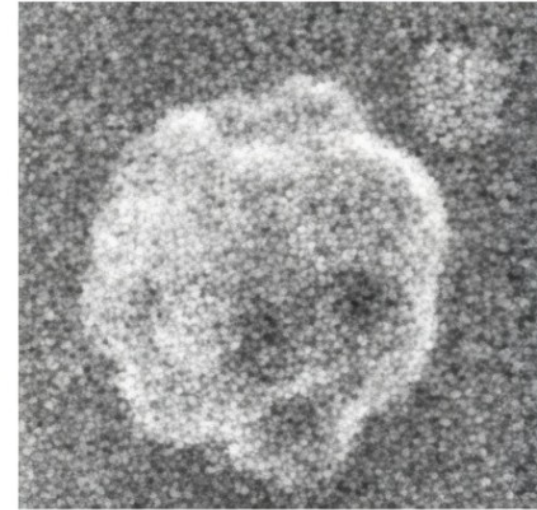
Different shapes of dust grains



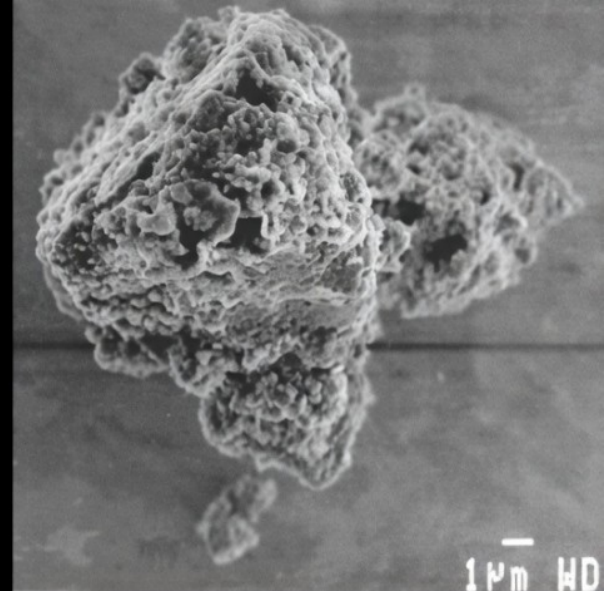
0.1 mm



1 μ m



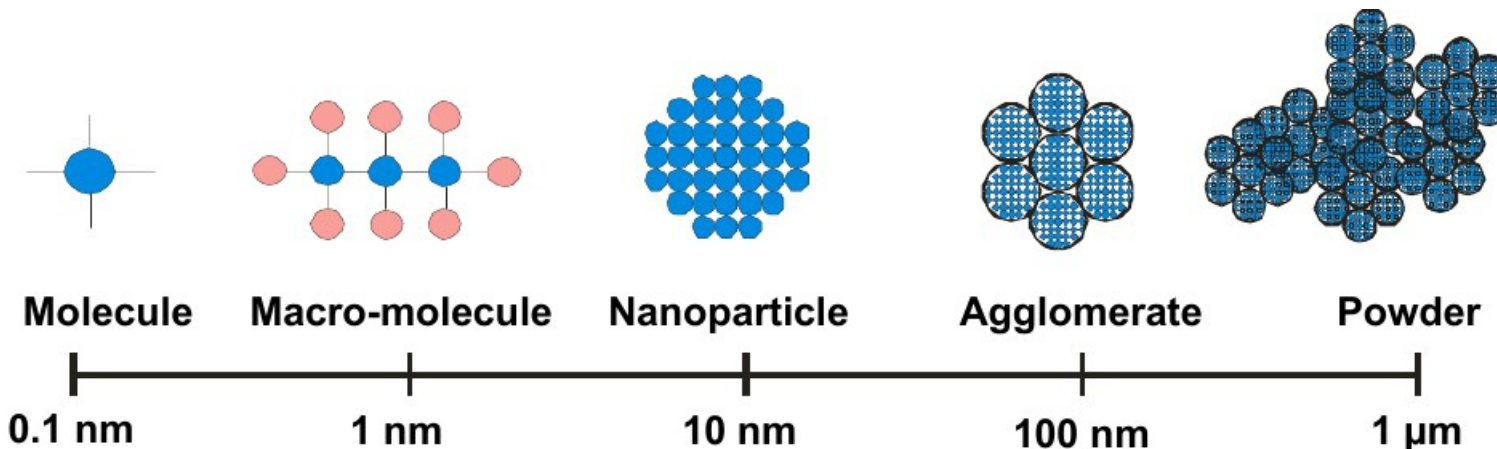
200 nm



1 μ m WD

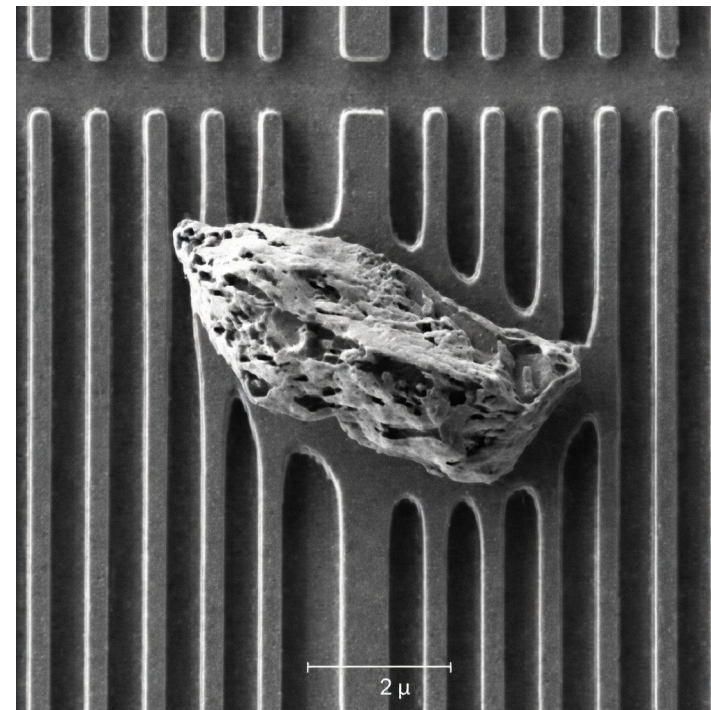
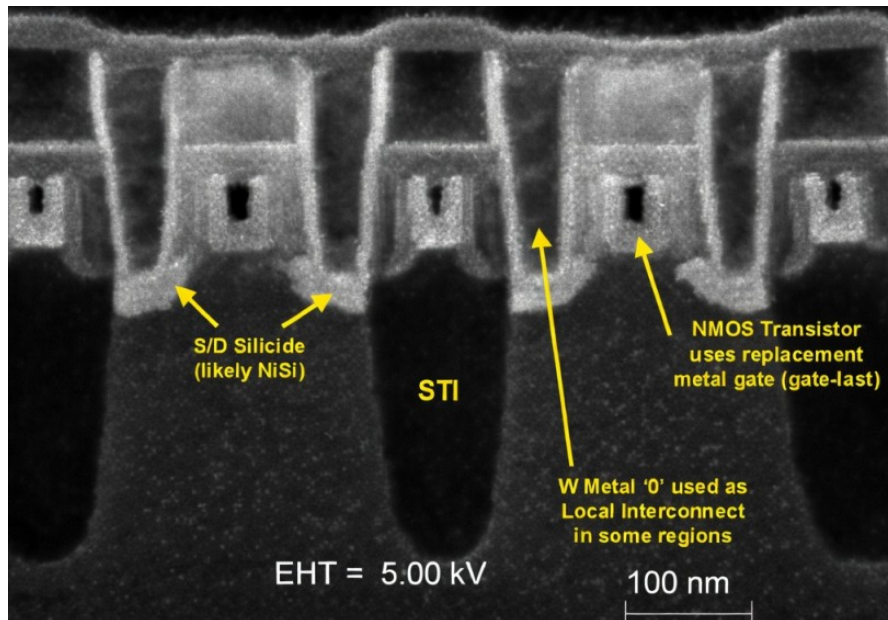
Occurance of dusty plasma

- The “dust” is a result of the strong interaction between the material walls and energetic plasma.
- Studies indicate that dust can be transported deep into the plasma, causing a serious contamination problem.

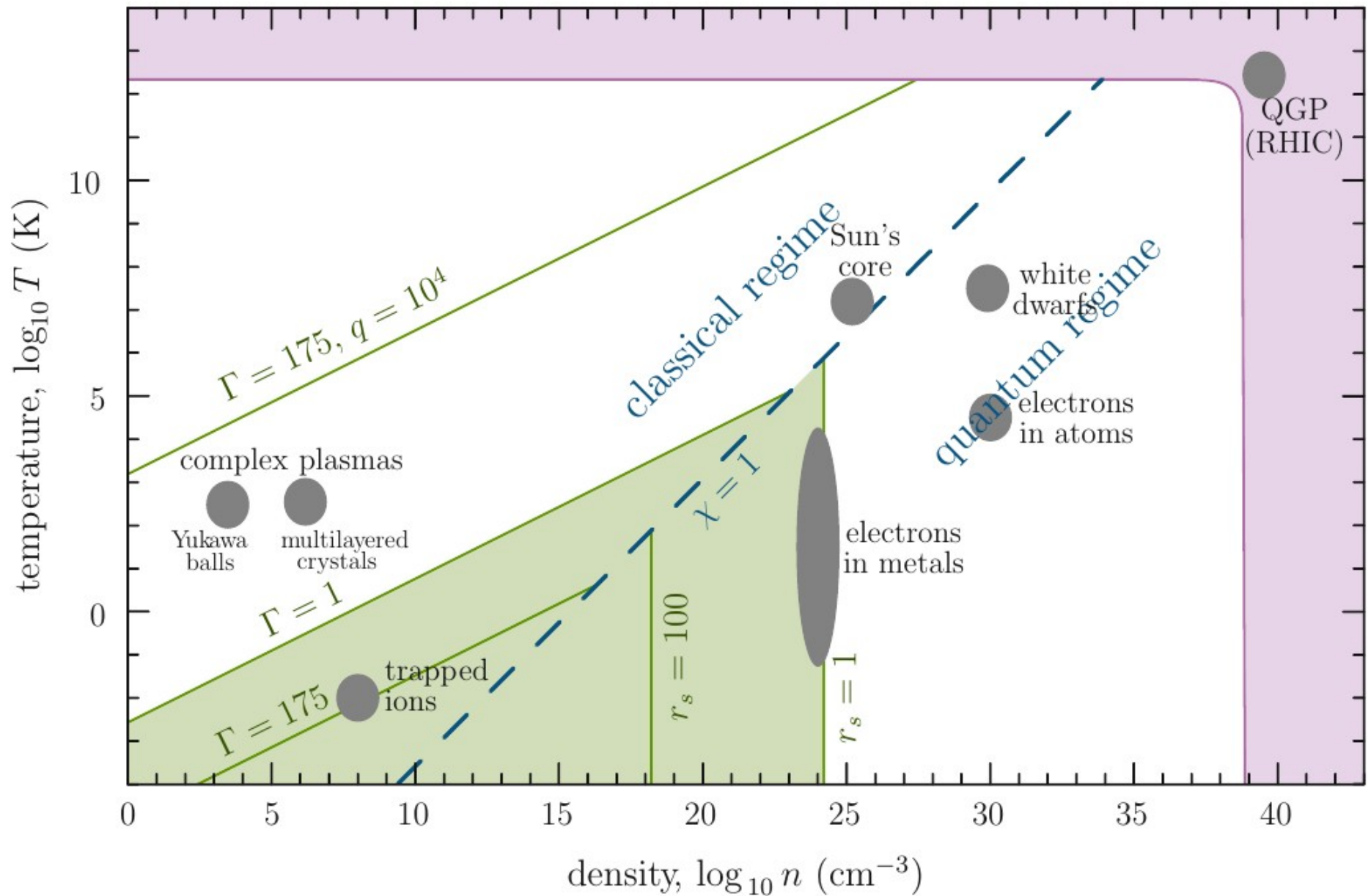


Occurance of dusty plasma

- Microelectronic processing
- Plasma chemistry and nanotechnology → coagulation of macroparticles



Occurance of dusty plasma



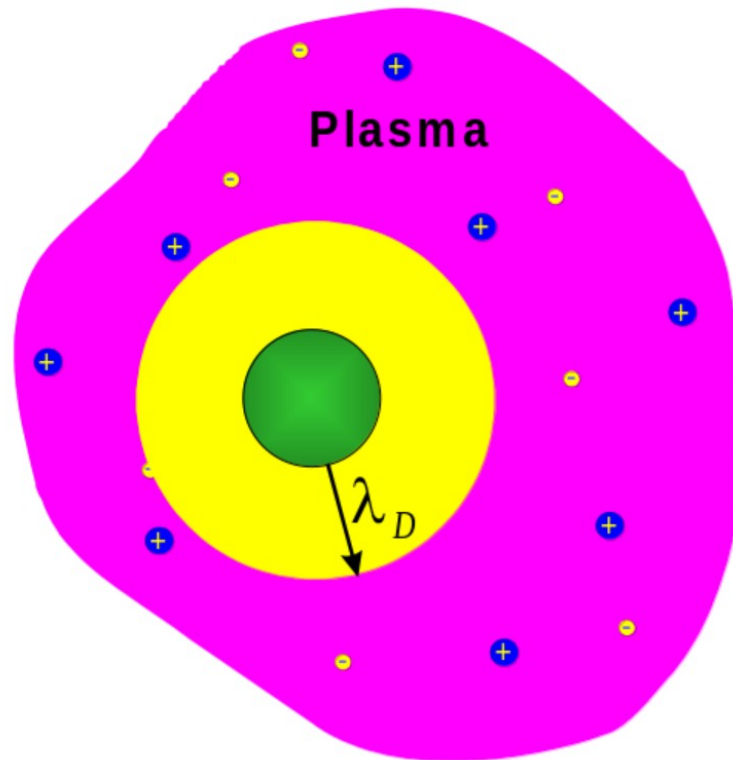


Questions

Dusty Plasma – Why It Is an Unusual State of Matter?

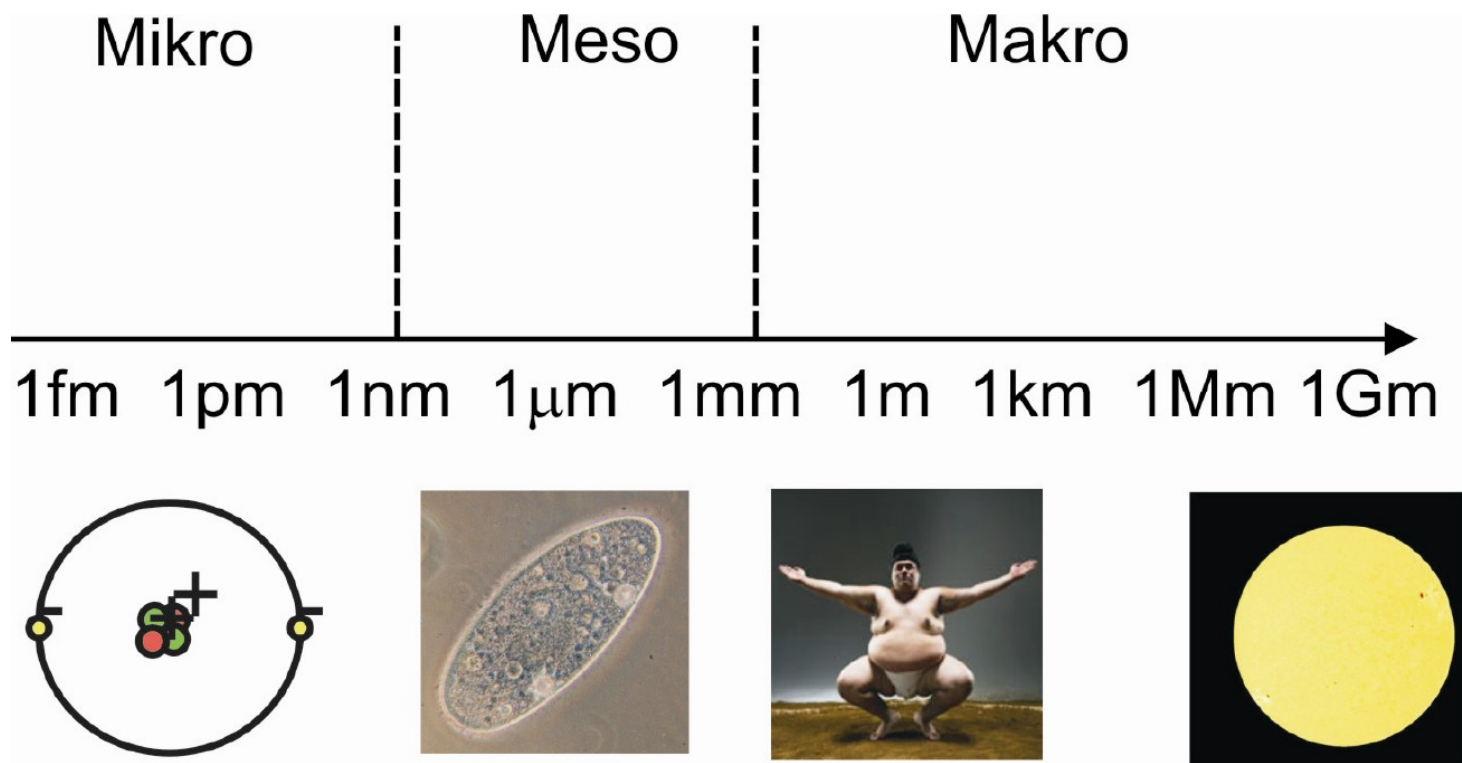
Properties of dusty plasma

- Type
- Dusty plasma is a **multi-component** plasma
- It contains electrons, ions, neutral atoms/molecules, and **micro-particles**/charged dust grains



Properties of dusty plasma

- Range size

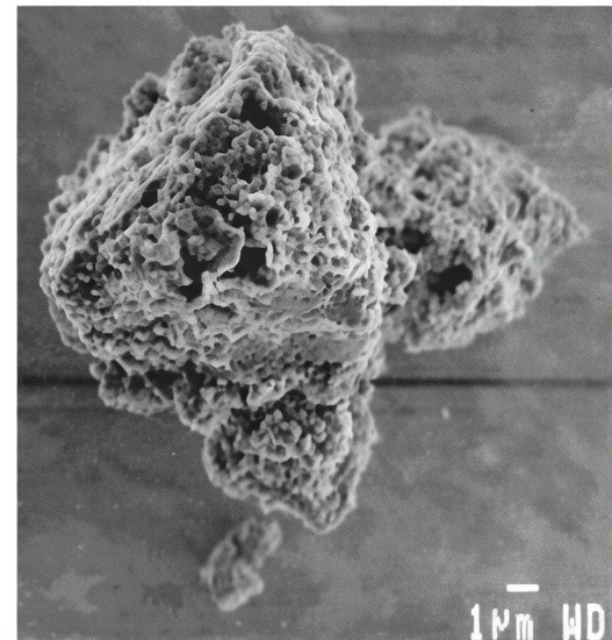


Properties of dusty plasma

- Dust size distributions



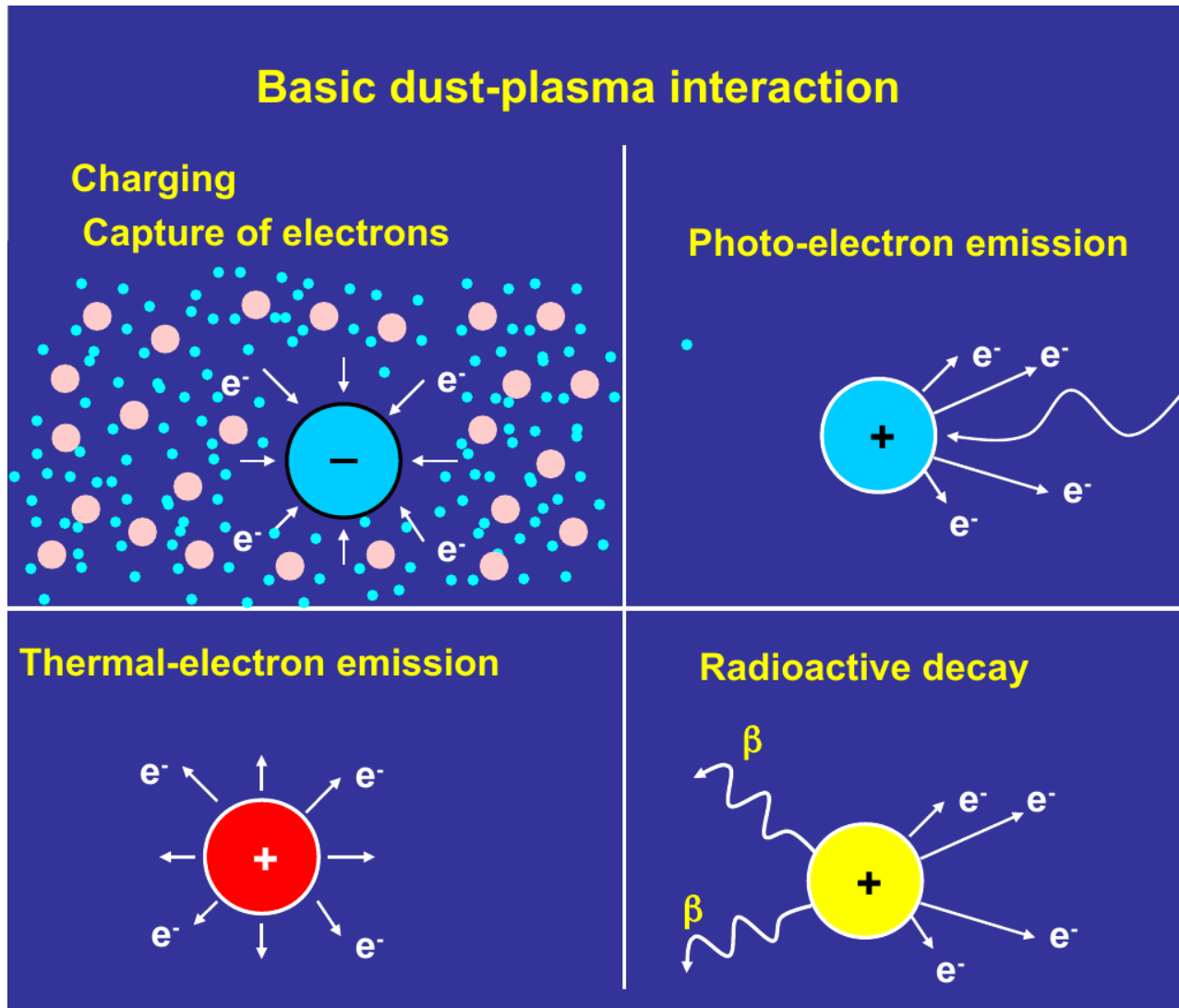
----- 0.1 mm



1 μ m WD

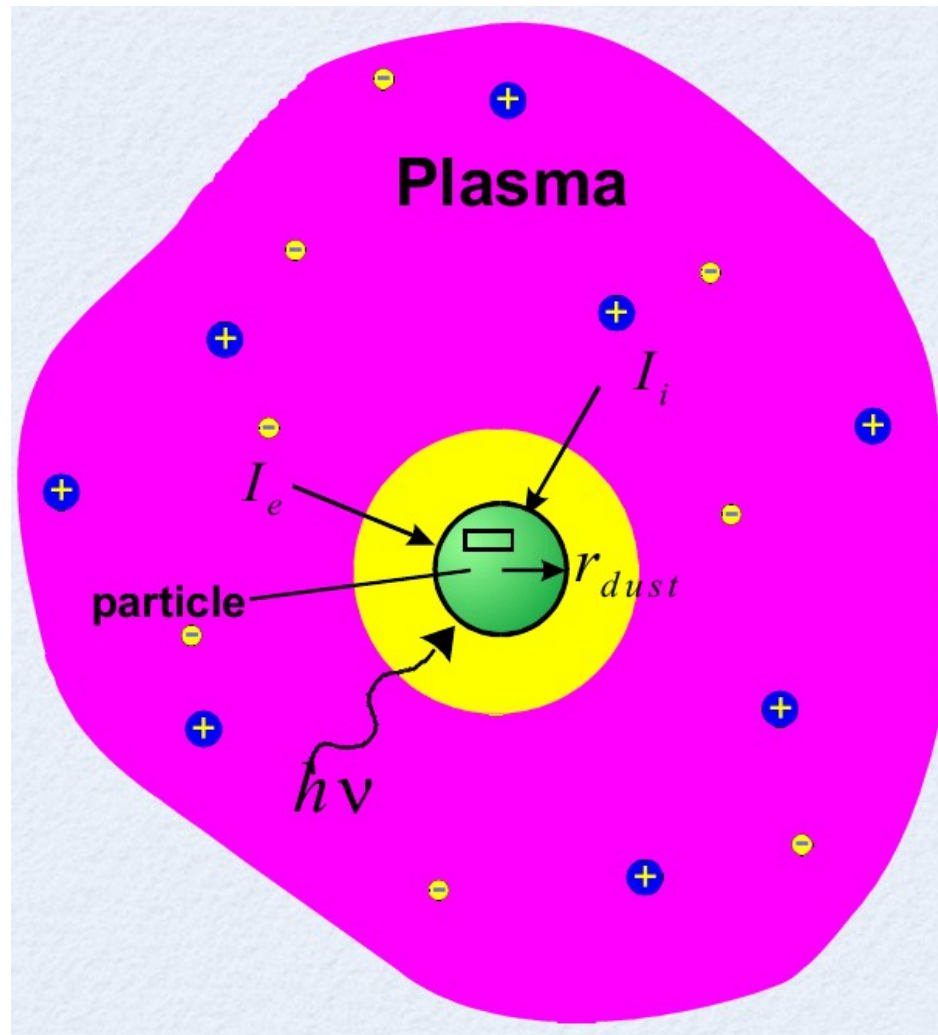
Properties of dusty plasma

- Dynamic dust charging



Properties of dusty plasma

- Dynamic dust charging



Dusty plasma terminology

- Debye shielding

$$\lambda_D = \frac{\lambda_{De}\lambda_{Di}}{\sqrt{\lambda_{De}^2 + \lambda_{Di}^2}}$$

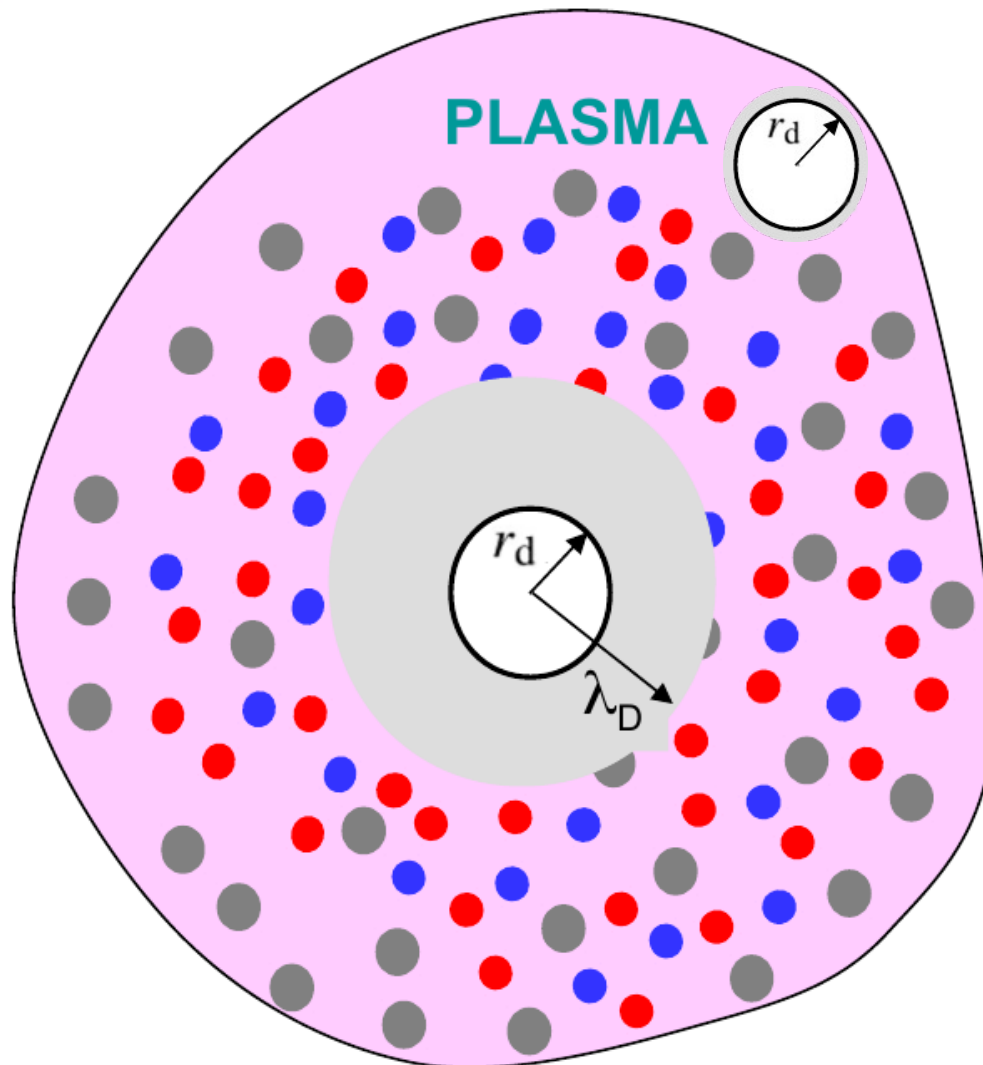
$$\lambda_{De} = (k_B T_e / 4\pi n_{e0} e^2)^{1/2} \text{ and } \lambda_{Di} = (k_B T_i / 4\pi n_{i0} e^2)^{1/2}$$

- -ve dust \rightarrow what happen?
- +ve dust \rightarrow what happen?
- Dusty plasma frequency

$$\omega_{pd} = (4\pi n_{d0} Z_d^2 e^2 / m_d)^{1/2}$$

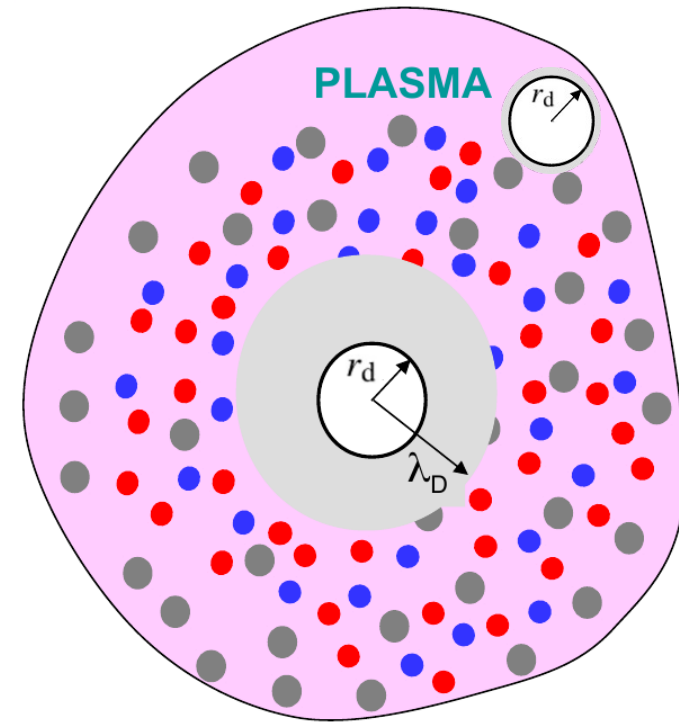
Dusty plasma terminology

Dust radius & Intergrain distance & Debye length (shielding)



Dusty plasma terminology

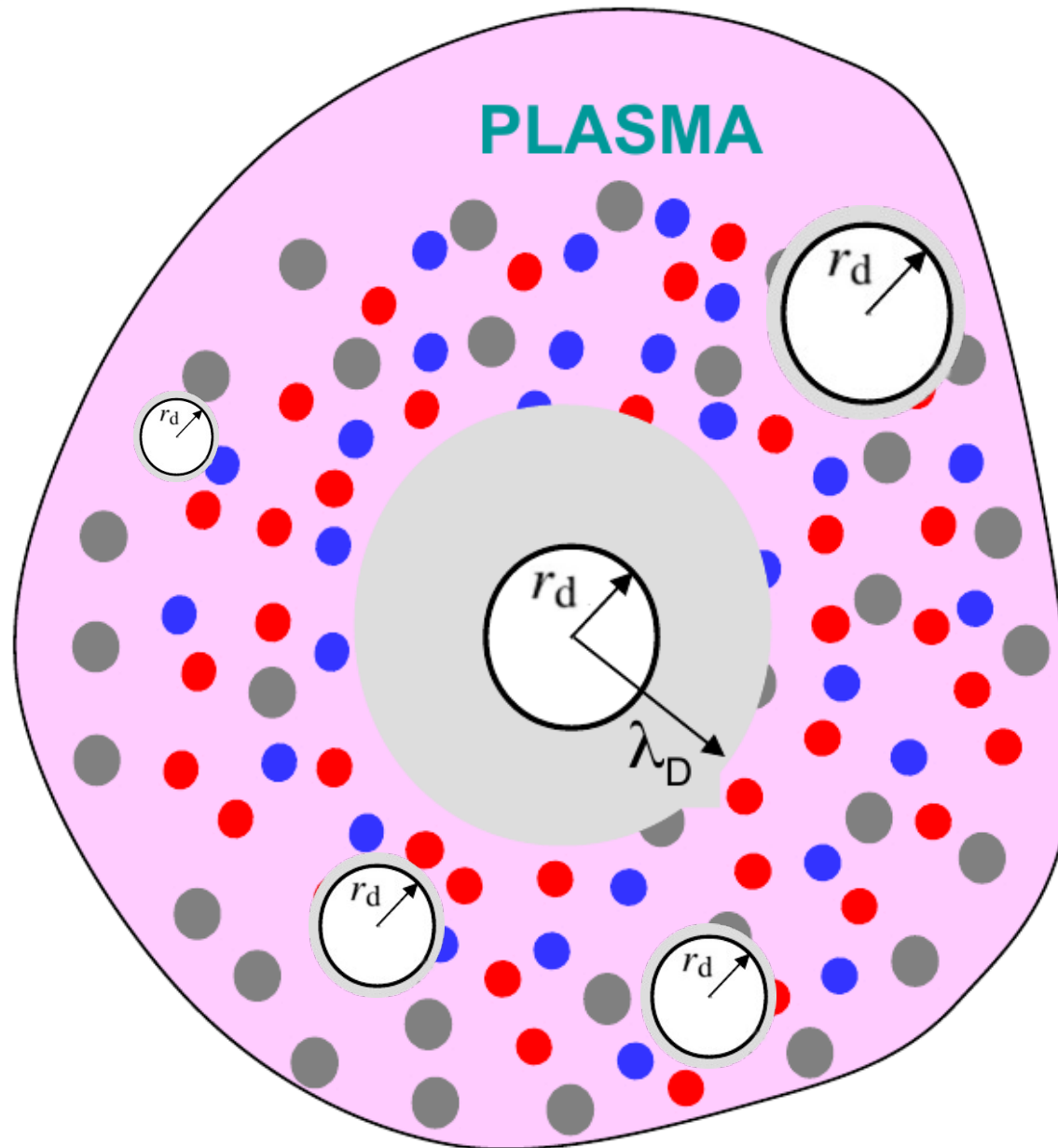
- Intergrain distance $>$ Debye length
- Intergrain distance $<$ Debye length



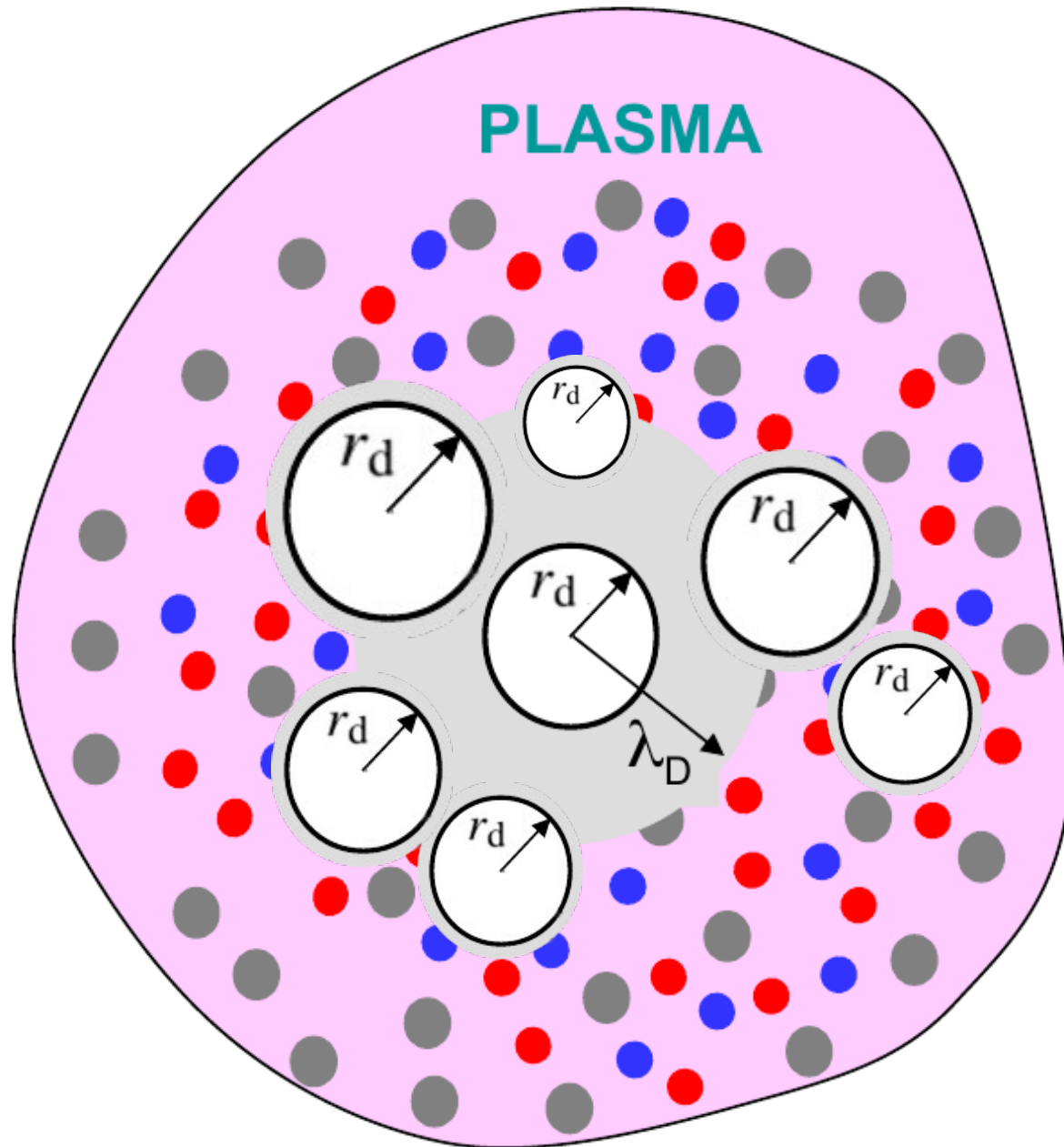
Dusty plasma terminology

- **Intergrain distance > Debye length** → **Dust-in-a plasma**
 $r_d \ll \lambda_D < a$
- **Intergrain distance < Debye length** → **Dusty plasma**
 $r_d \ll a < \lambda_D$ **(collective behavior)**

Dusty plasma terminology



Dusty plasma terminology



Dusty plasma terminology

- Coupling parameter

$$\Gamma = \frac{|E_{\text{int}}|}{E_{\text{therm}}}$$

$$\Gamma = \frac{\text{interparticle potential energy}}{\text{particle kinetic energy}} = \frac{Q^2 / 4\pi\epsilon_0 r_w}{k_B T}$$

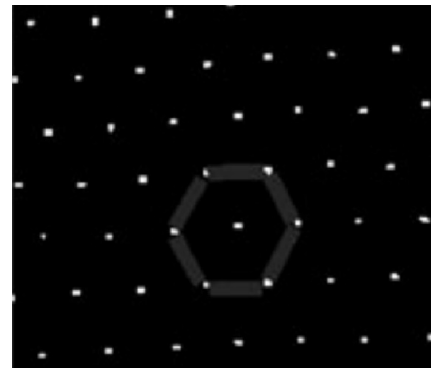
- E_{int} is the interparticle potential energy
- E_{therm} is the particle kinetic energy

Dusty plasma terminology

$\Gamma \ll 1$ gas-like
CB
(waves)

$\Gamma \gtrsim 1$ liquid-like
Strongly Coupled

$\Gamma \geq \Gamma_{\text{cr}} \approx 100$ solid-like
crystalline



DIFFERENCES

Solid State Crystals	Dust Crystals
$Z_i > 1$	$Z_d \sim 10^3 - 10^5$
$\mathcal{E}_{\text{interaction}}$ a few eV	$\mathcal{E}_{\text{interaction}} \geq 900$ eV
Lattice Spacing $L \sim 0.1$ nm	$L \sim 1$ mm

DIFFERENCES

Electron-ion plasma	Dusty plasma
$n_{e0} = \sum_i Z_i n_{i0}$	$Q_d n_{d0} + e n_{e0} = e \sum_i Z_i n_{i0}$
$Q_i = Z_i e$	$Q_d = Z_d e \gg Q_i$
$Z_i = \text{const.}$	$dQ_d/dt = I_e + I_i + I_s + \dots$
m_i	$m_d \sim 10^{12} m_i$
λ_{De}	$\lambda_D \sim \lambda_{Di}$
Uniform particle sizes	Size distributions
IAW, EIC, $f \sim 1$ kHz	DAW, DLW, $f \sim 10$ Hz,

Questions

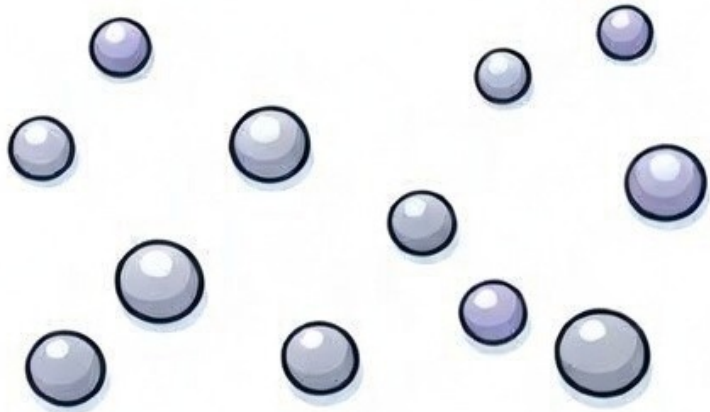
Dusty Plasma – Why It Is an Unusual State of Matter?

Complex Plasma vs. Ordinary Matter

- 1) *The grain charges are very high ($\sim 10^6 e$) \rightarrow strong grain-grain interactions, i.e., strong Coulomb force \rightarrow collective behavior*
- 2) *The grains strongly absorb plasma components \rightarrow making the system highly dissipative and thermodynamically open \rightarrow high tendency to self-organize into complex structures (waves or crystals).*

Ordinary Matter

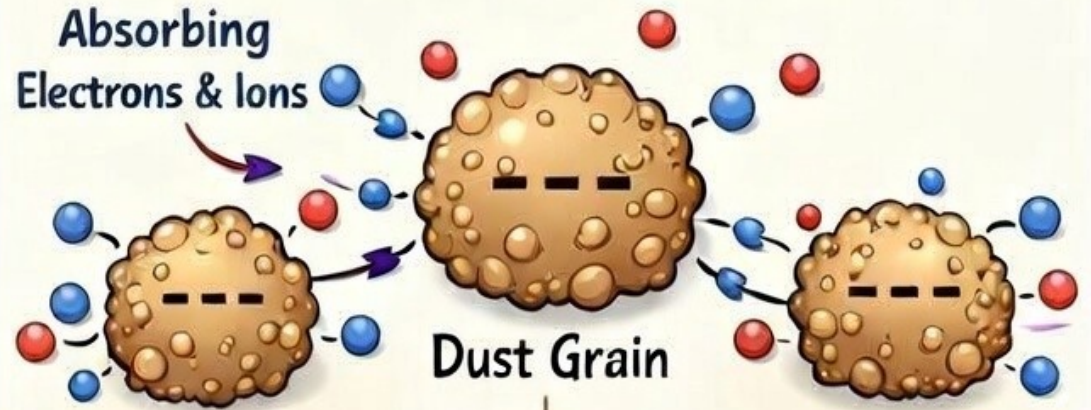
Random, No Interaction



Neutral Atoms & Molecules

Complex Plasma

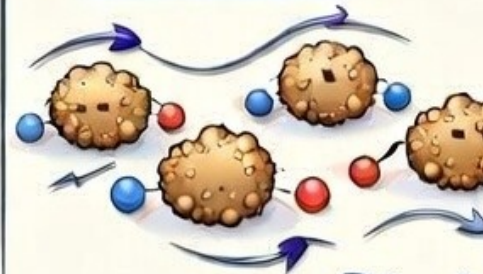
Collective Behavior



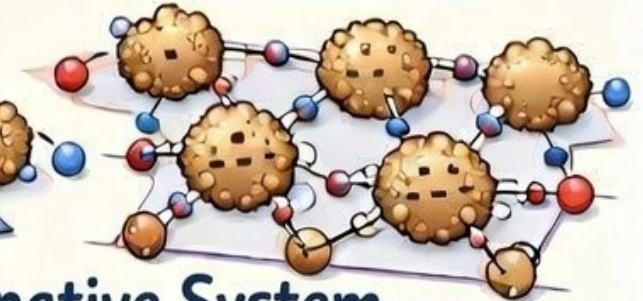
Dust Grain

Strong Coupling & Self-Organization

Dust Waves



Dust Crystal



Dissipative System
& Thermodynamically Open

Questions

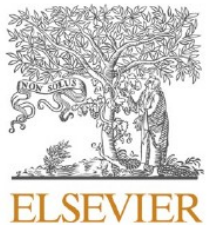
Why Complex Plasmas Have Many Applications?

- Semiconductor manufacturing
- Nanotechnology
- New materials and photonic crystals
- Fusion energy reactors
- Soft matter physics
- Non-equilibrium thermodynamics research
- Self-assembling materials
- Plasma processing technology
- Space exploration and planetary science
- Dust mitigation on the Moon and Mars

Semiconductor Manufacturing

- Plasma etching and deposition are essential for microchip fabrication.
- Understanding the dusty plasma helps control contamination and nanoparticle formation.

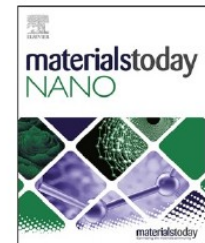
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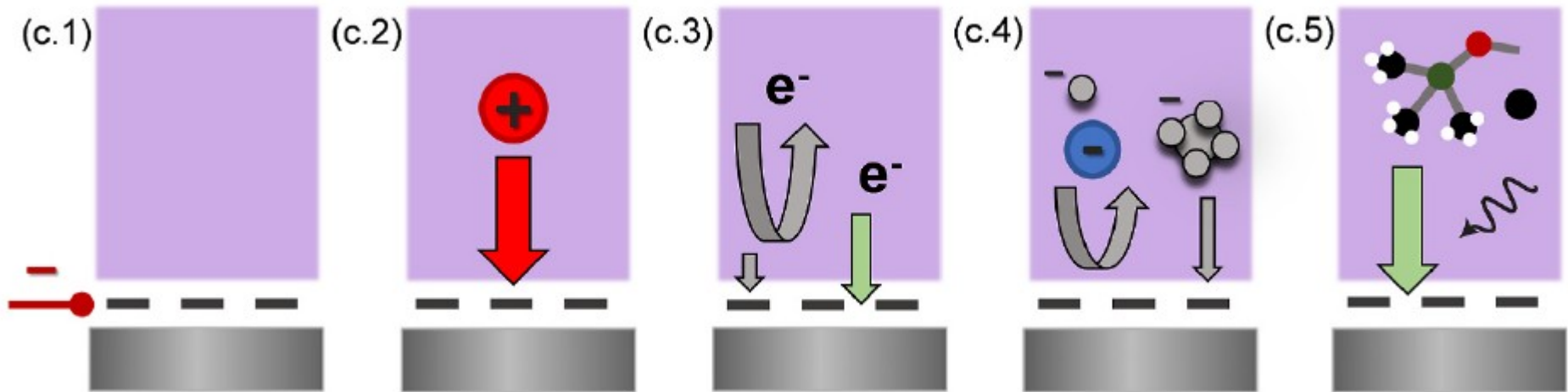
Avoiding dust contamination by near-plasma chemical surface engineering

Dirk Hegemann^{a, **}, Michał Góra^{a, b}, Flaela Kalemi^a, Paula Navascués^{a, *}

^a Plasma & Coating Group, Laboratory of Advanced Fibers, Empa, Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology, St. Gallen, Switzerland

^b Department of Materials, ETH Zürich, 8092, Zürich, Switzerland

Semiconductor Manufacturing



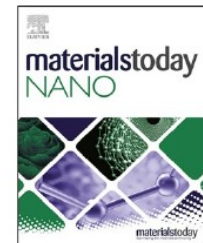
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^a Plasma & Coating Group, Laboratory of Advanced Fibers, Empa, Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology, St. Gallen, Switzerland

^b Department of Materials, ETH Zürich, 8092, Zürich, Switzerland

Nanotechnology

- Plasma enables synthesis of nanoparticles and quantum structures.
- Used in nanoelectronics and advanced coatings.

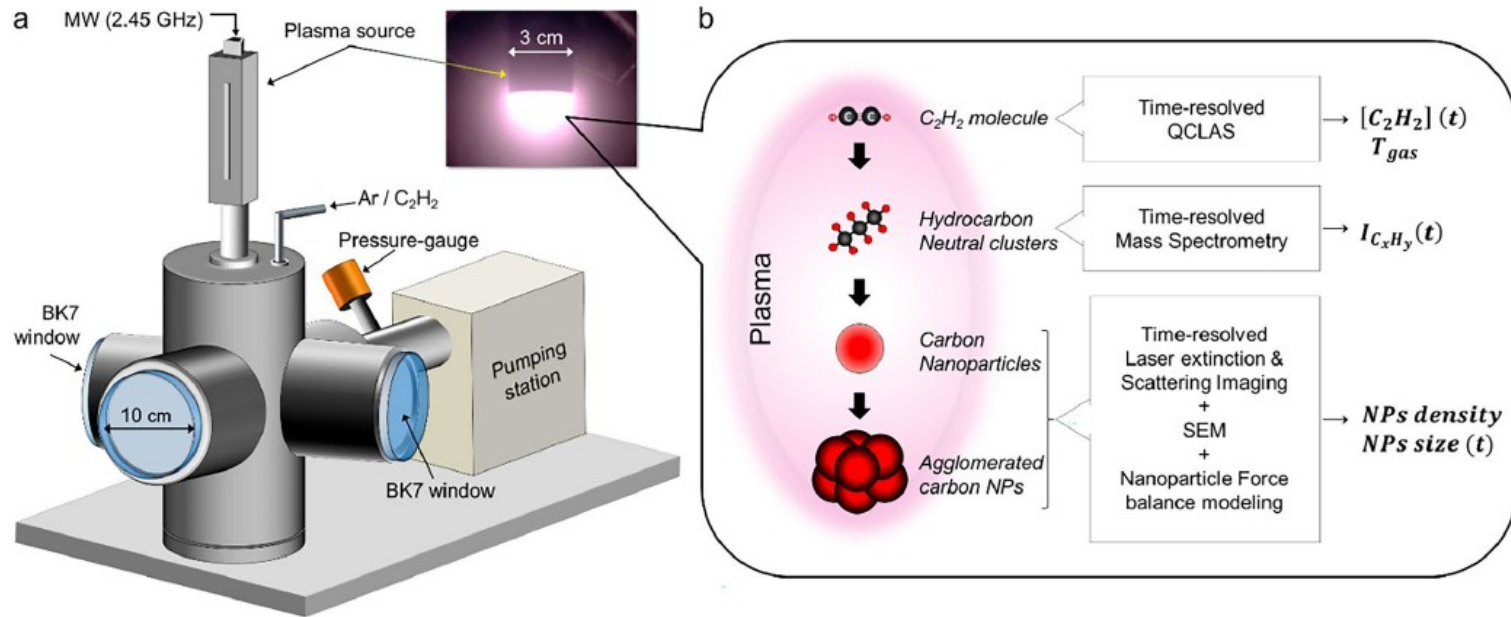
scientific reports



OPEN **Nanoparticles synthesis
in microwave plasmas: peculiarities
and comprehensive insight**

Karim Ouaras ^{1,2}✉, Guillaume Lombardi¹ & Khaled Hassouni¹

Nanotechnology



scientific reports

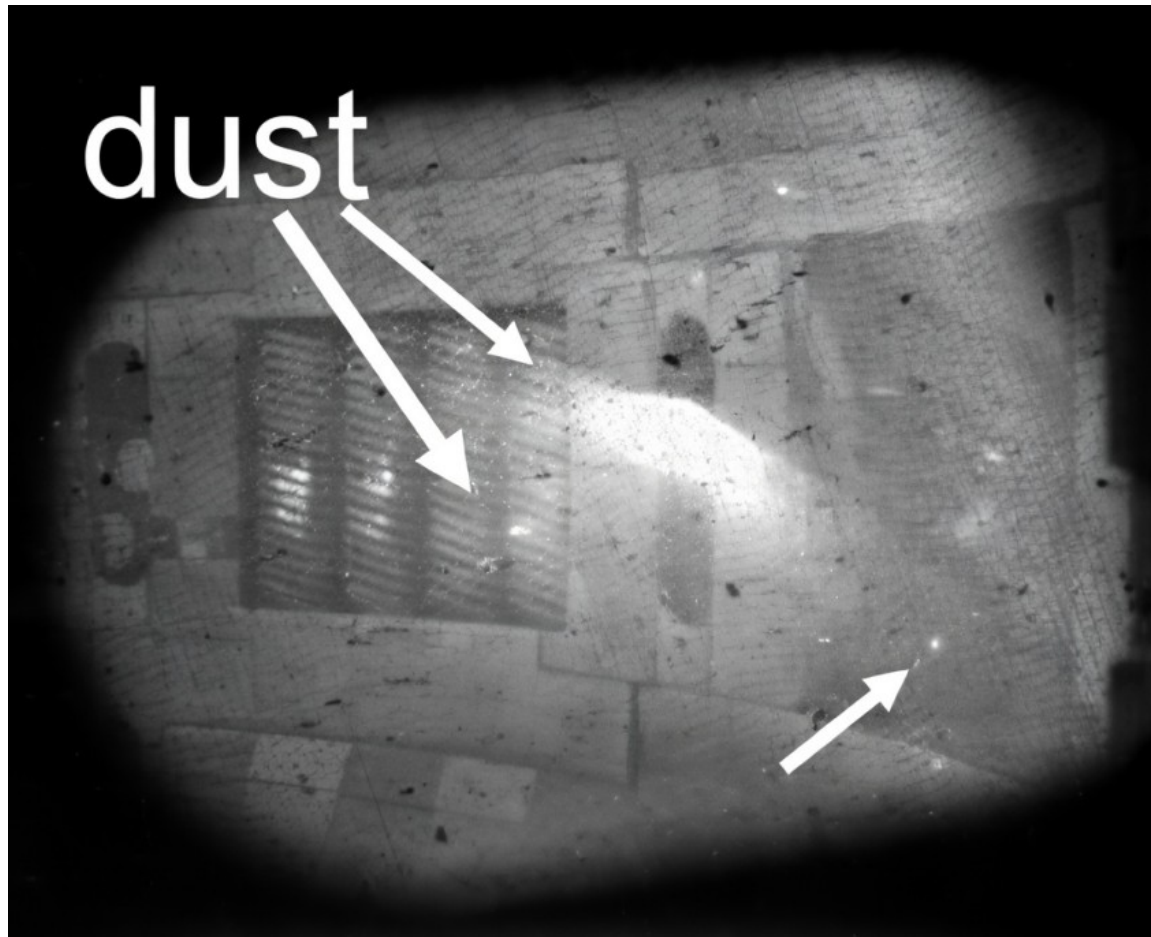
Check for updates

OPEN **Nanoparticles synthesis
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Fusion Energy Reactors

- Dust affects plasma stability and reactor safety.



Space Exploration

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DUSTY
PLASMA

Nonlinear Periodic Wave Structures in the Dusty Earth's Ionosphere

Yu. N. Izvekova^{a,*}, S. I. Popel^a, T. I. Morozova^a, and S. I. Kopnin^a

^a *Space Research Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 117997 Russia*

**e-mail: izvekova@cosmos.ru*

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Summary

Terminology

Concept

- **Dusty plasma (collective behavior)**
- **Dust-in-a plasma**
- **Dust size distribution**
- **Multicomponent plasma**
- **Dynamic dust charging**
- **+ve & -ve dust**
- **Dusty plasma frequency**
- **Dust radius & Intergrain distance**
- **Coupling parameter**

- **?????**
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