

massives qui génèrent des bouffées d'éjecta riches en oxygène lors des sursauts épisodiques de formation d'étoiles. Cependant ce halo perd continuellement de la masse par vent galactique.

En même temps que le vent galactique écoule rapidement le gaz chaud brusquement enrichi en oxygène vers le milieu intergalactique, ce même gaz chaud se dilue avec le H I qui sera donc pollué par du gaz de halo à teneur en oxygène relativement basse en moyenne.

D'autre part, les étoiles de masse intermédiaire expulsent partout dans le H I de la galaxie de grandes quantités d'éjecta enrichis en azote et carbone, mais pas en oxygène. Puisqu'une large fraction de l'oxygène est évacuée du système, les rapports C/O et N/O augmentent donc malgré la faible rapport O/H. La clef du modèle est donc l'expulsion par les régions "starburst," qui produisent l'oxygène, des produits riches en O. Nous avons peut-être trouvé dans NGC 2363 une cheminée éjectant hors de NGC 2366 et dans le milieu intergalactique environnant de la matière riche en oxygène.

Est-ce que NGC 2363 est un cas isolé, ou un exemple proche d'un phénomène courant? Un programme d'observation spectroscopique d'une douzaine de grands complexes H II extragalactiques apporterait une réponse à cette question.

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