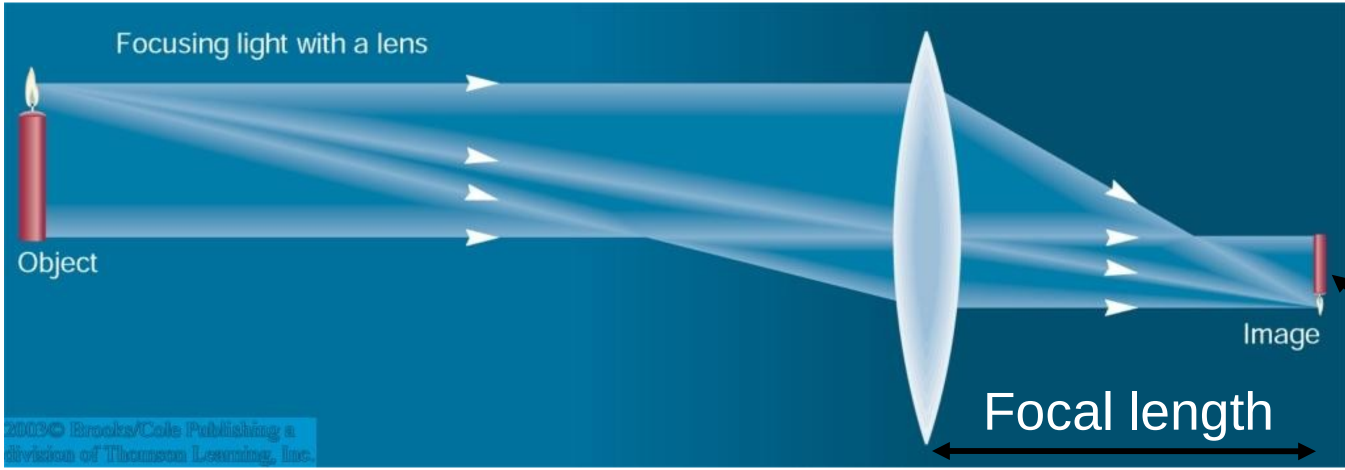
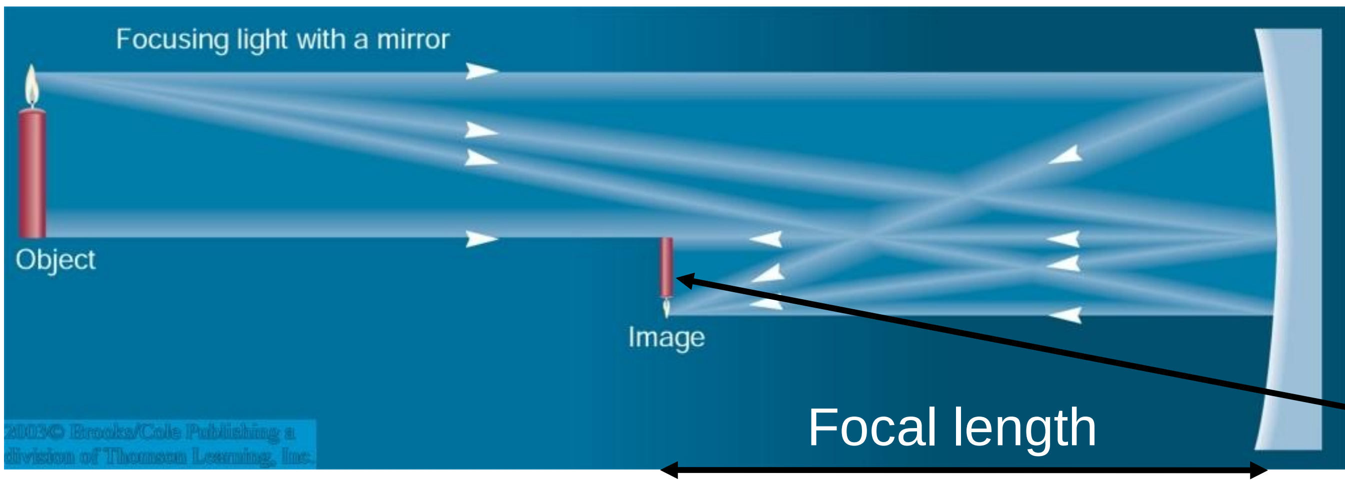
ASTR 2310: Chapter 6

- <u>**Astronomical Detection of Light**</u>
- The Telescope as a Camera
- Refraction and Reflection Telescopes
- Quality of Images
- Astronomical Instruments and Detectors
- Observations and Photon Counting
- Other Wavelengths
- Modern Telescopes

Refracting / Reflecting Telescopes



Refracting Telescope: Lens focuses light onto the focal plane



Reflecting Telescope: Concave Mirror focuses light onto the focal plane

Almost all modern telescopes are reflecting telescopes.

Secondary Optics

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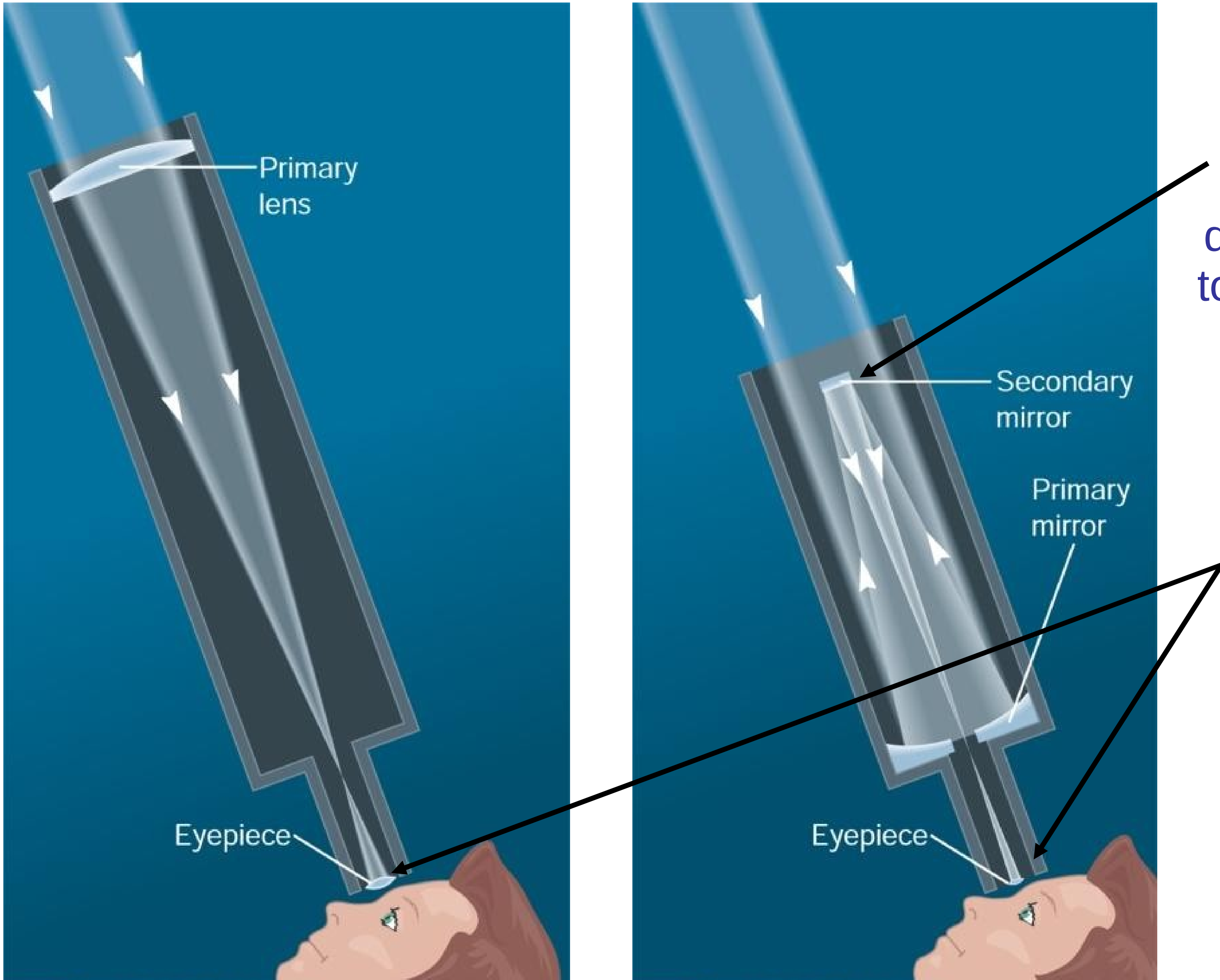
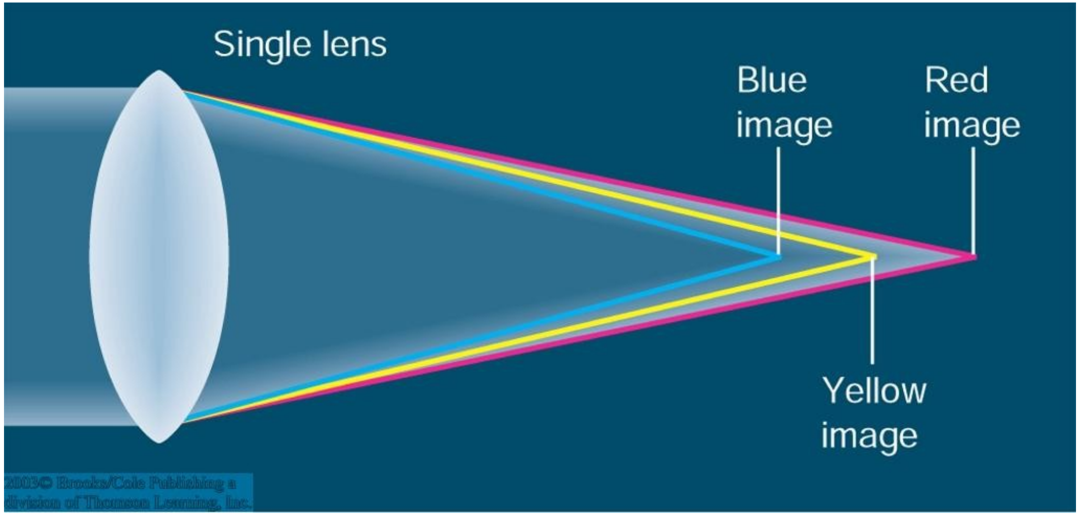


In reflecting telescopes: Secondary mirror, to re-direct light path towards back or side of incoming light path.

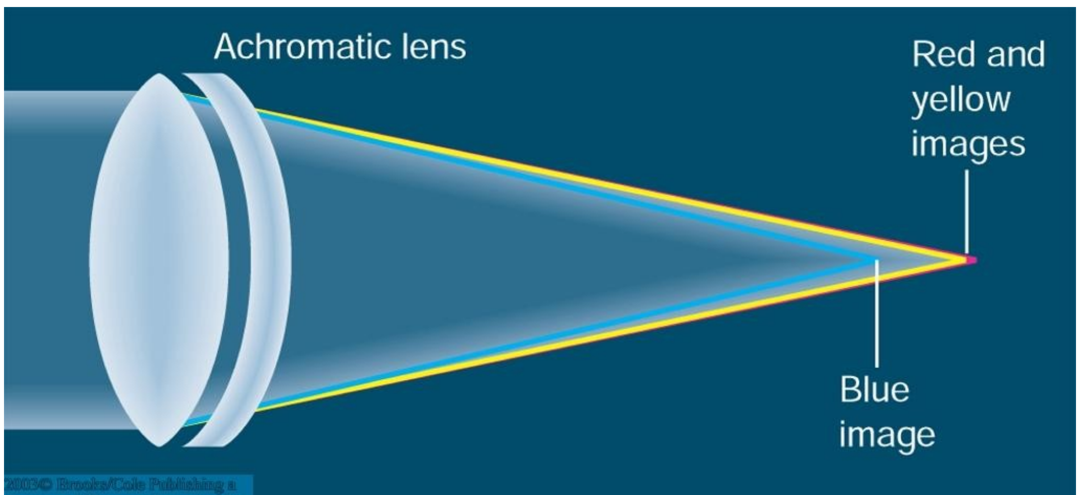
Eyepiece: To view and enlarge the small image produced in the focal plane of the primary optics.

Disadvantages of Refracting Telescopes



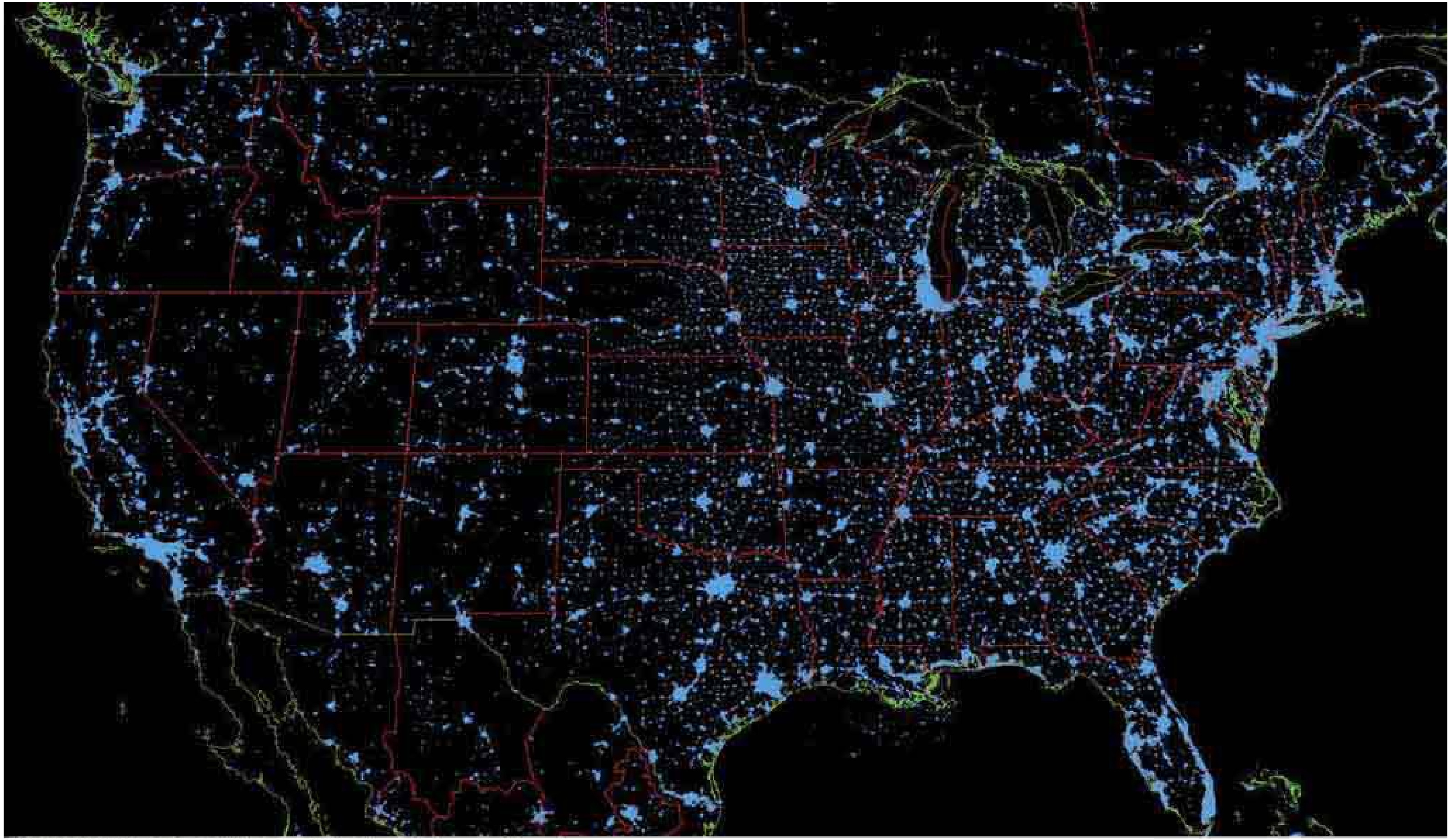
- Chromatic aberration: Different wavelengths are focused at different focal lengths (prism effect).

Can be corrected, but not eliminated by second lens out of different material.



- Difficult and expensive to produce: All surfaces must be perfectly shaped; glass must be flawless; lens can only be supported at the edges.

The Best Location for a Telescope



Far away from civilization – to avoid light pollution

The Best Location for a Telescope (II)

Paranal Observatory (ESO), Chile

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paranal_Observatory

On high mountain-tops – to avoid atmospheric turbulence (→seeing) and other weather effects

The Powers of a Telescope: Size does matter!

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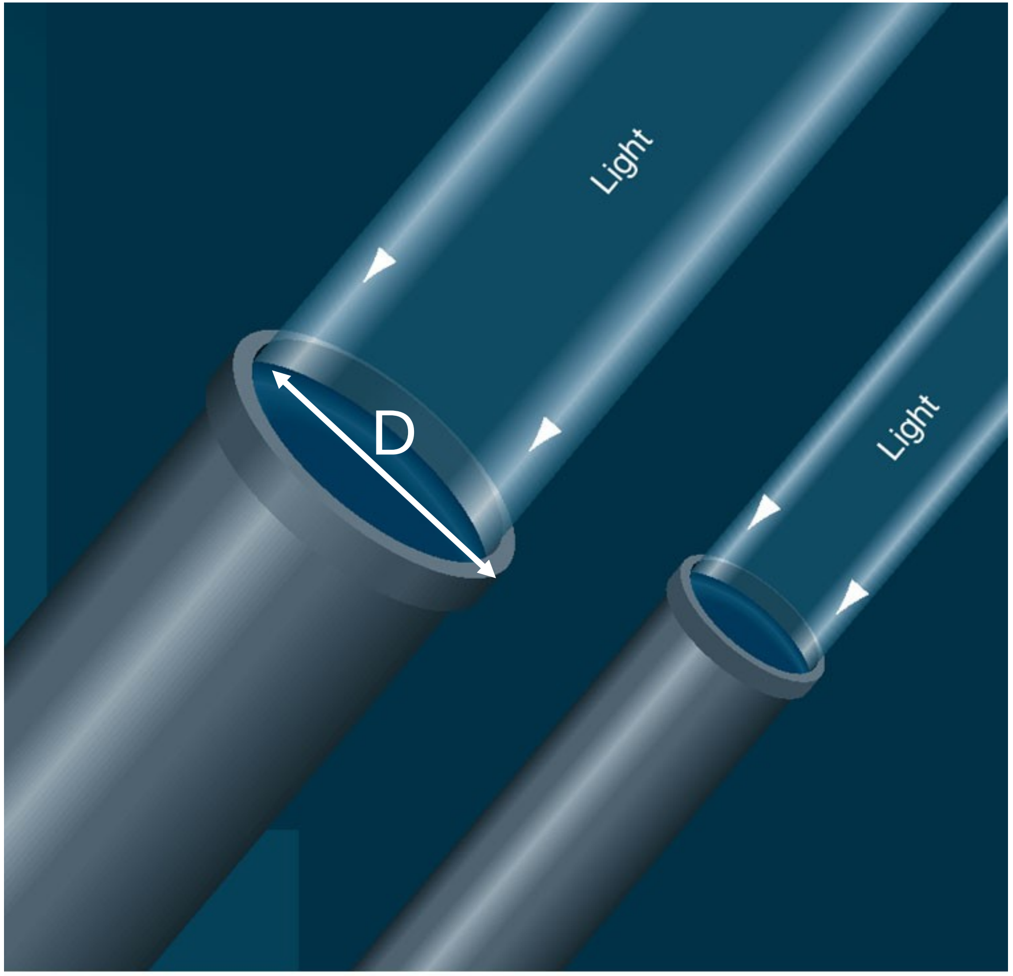
1. Light-gathering power: Depends on the surface area A of the primary lens / mirror, proportional to diameter squared:

$$\Theta = \pi \, (D/2)^2$$



The Powers of a Telescope (II)

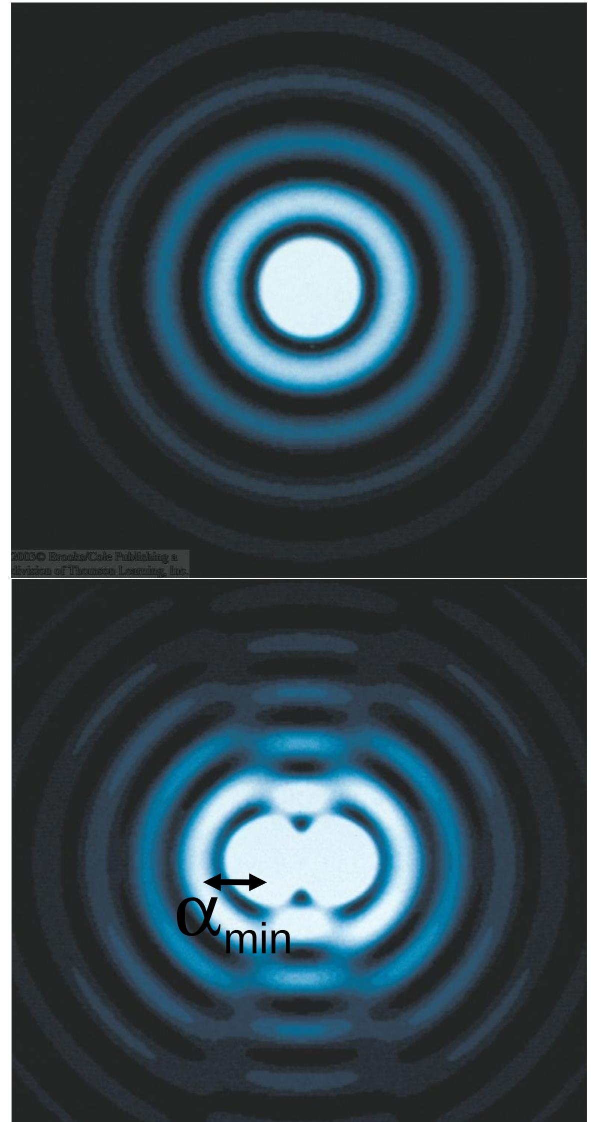
2. Resolving power: Wave nature of light => The telescope aperture produces fringe rings that set a limit to the resolution of the telescope.

Astronomers can't eliminate these diffraction fringes, but the larger a telescope is in diameter, the smaller the diffraction fringes are. Thus the larger the telescope, the better its resolving power.

$$\theta_{min} = 1.22\ (\lambda/D)\ \text{(radians)}$$

For optical wavelengths, this gives

$$\theta_{min} = 11.6\ \text{arcsec} / D[\text{cm}]$$

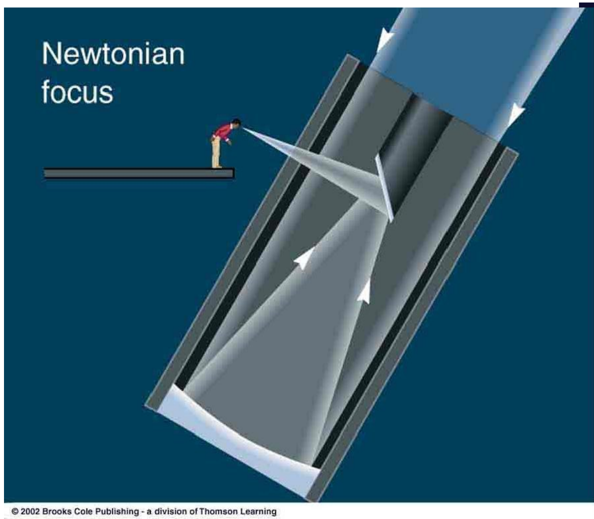


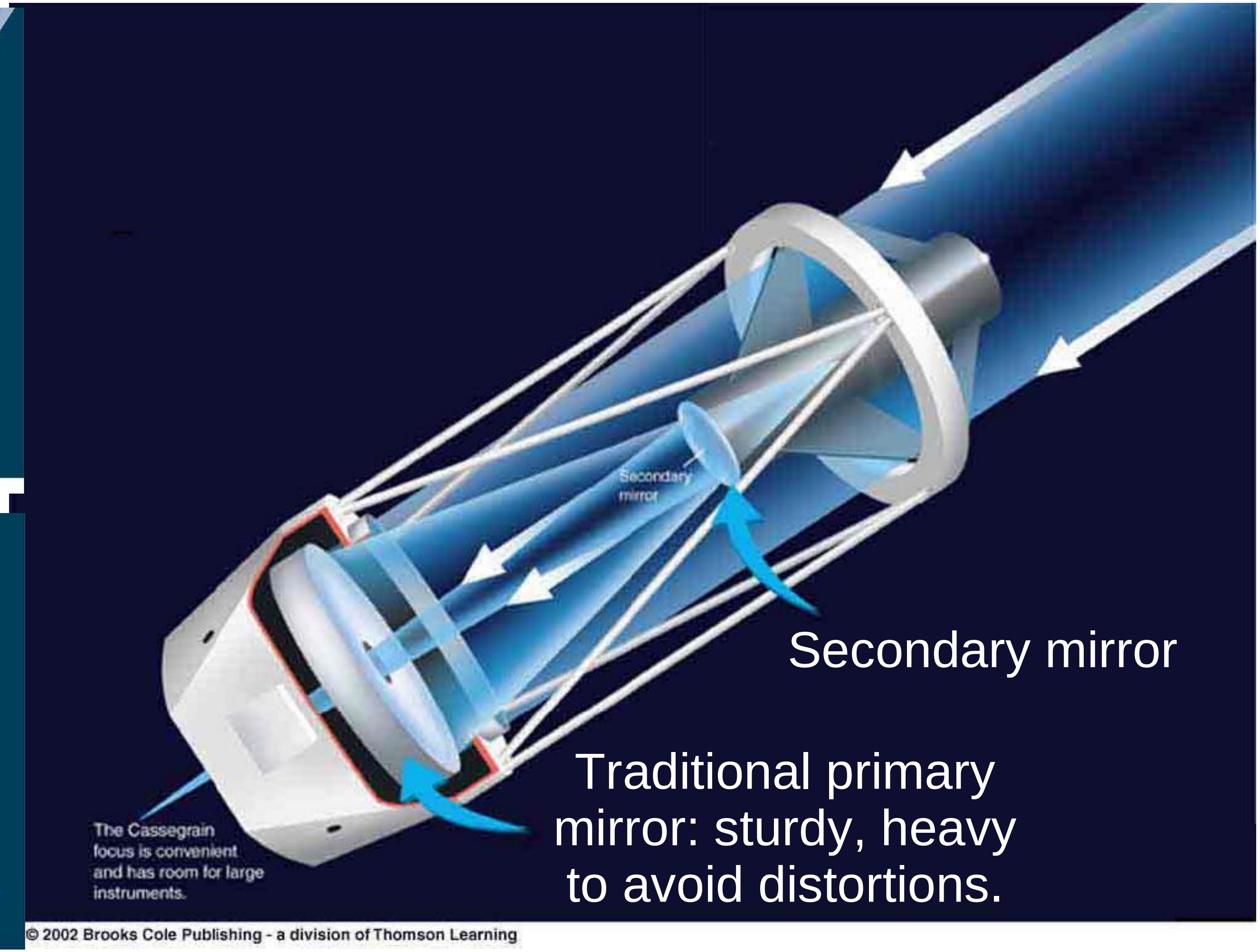
The Powers of a Telescope (III)

3. Magnifying Power = ability of the telescope to make the image appear bigger.

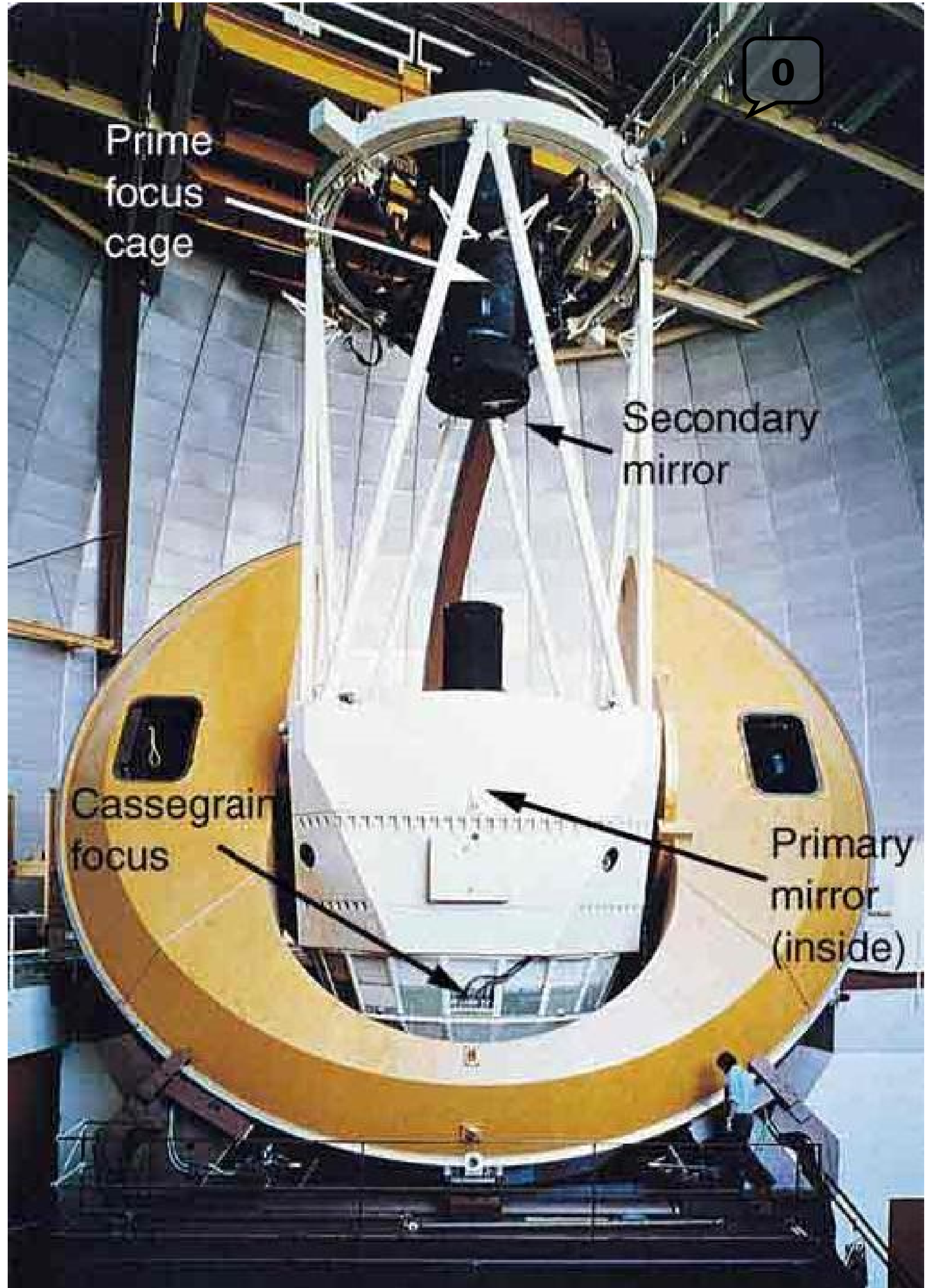
A larger magnification does not improve the resolving power of the telescope!

Traditional Telescopes (I)





Traditional Telescopes (II)



The 4-m Mayall Telescope at Kitt Peak National Observatory (Arizona)

Astronomical Telescopes

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Often very large to gather large amounts of light.

In order to observe forms of radiation other than visible light, very different telescope designs are needed.

The northern Gemini Telescope on Hawaii

Examples of Modern Telescope Design

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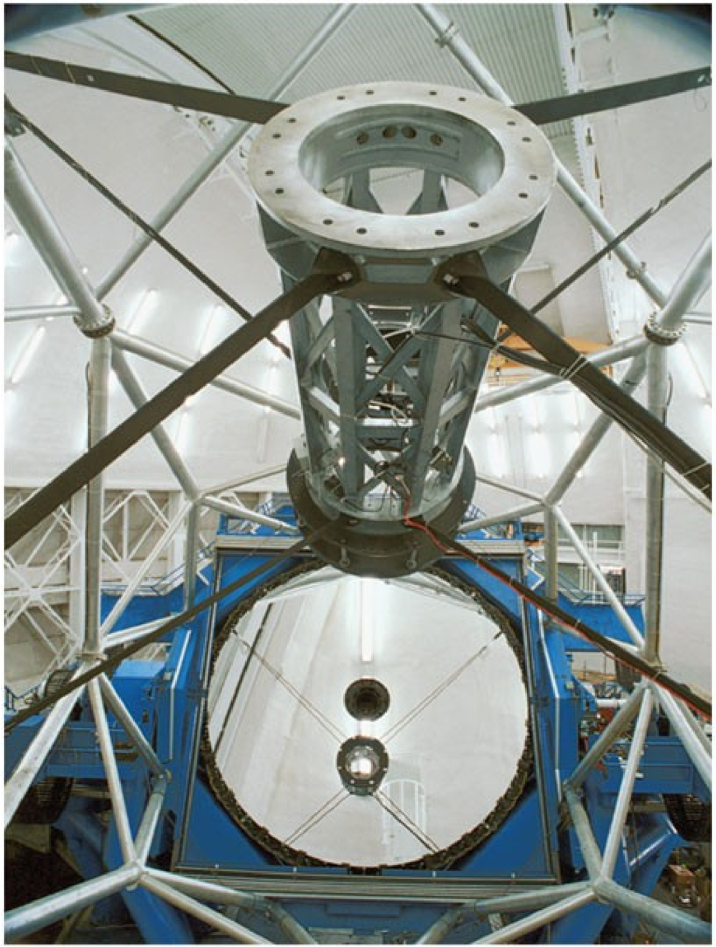


The Very Large Telescope (VLT)

8.1-m mirror of the Gemini Telescopes

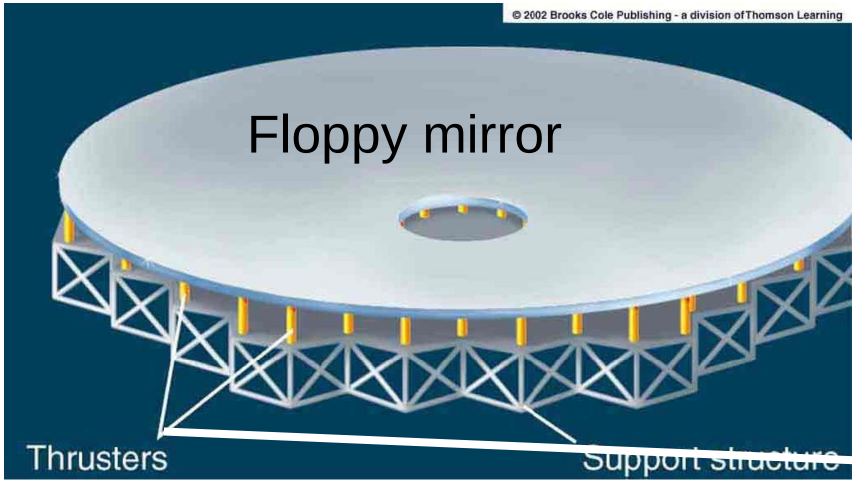
Seeing

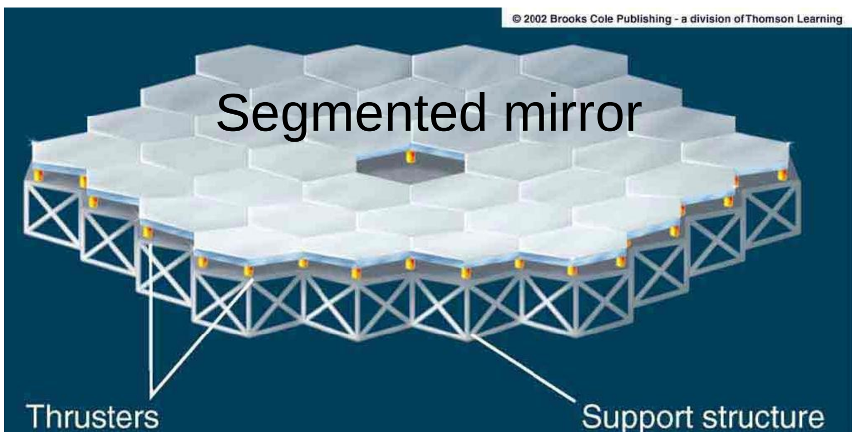
Weather conditions and turbulence in the atmosphere set further limits to the quality of astronomical images

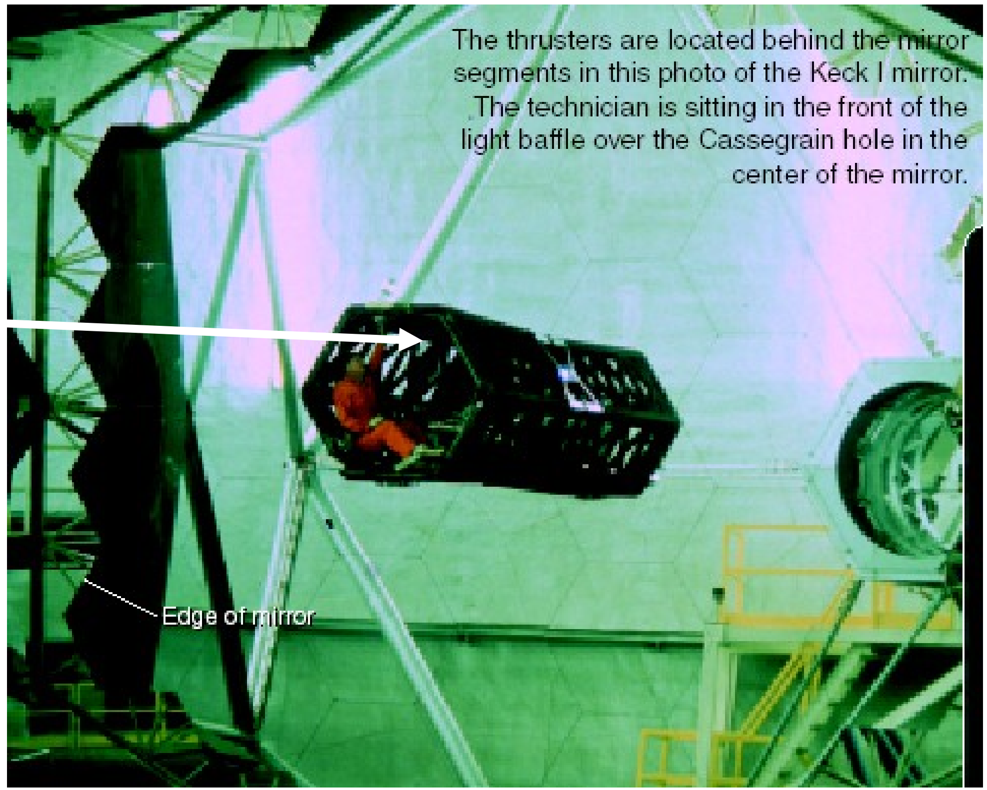
Bad seeing Good seeing

Advances in Modern Telescope Design

Lighter mirrors with lighter support structures,
to be controlled dynamically by computers







Adaptive Optics

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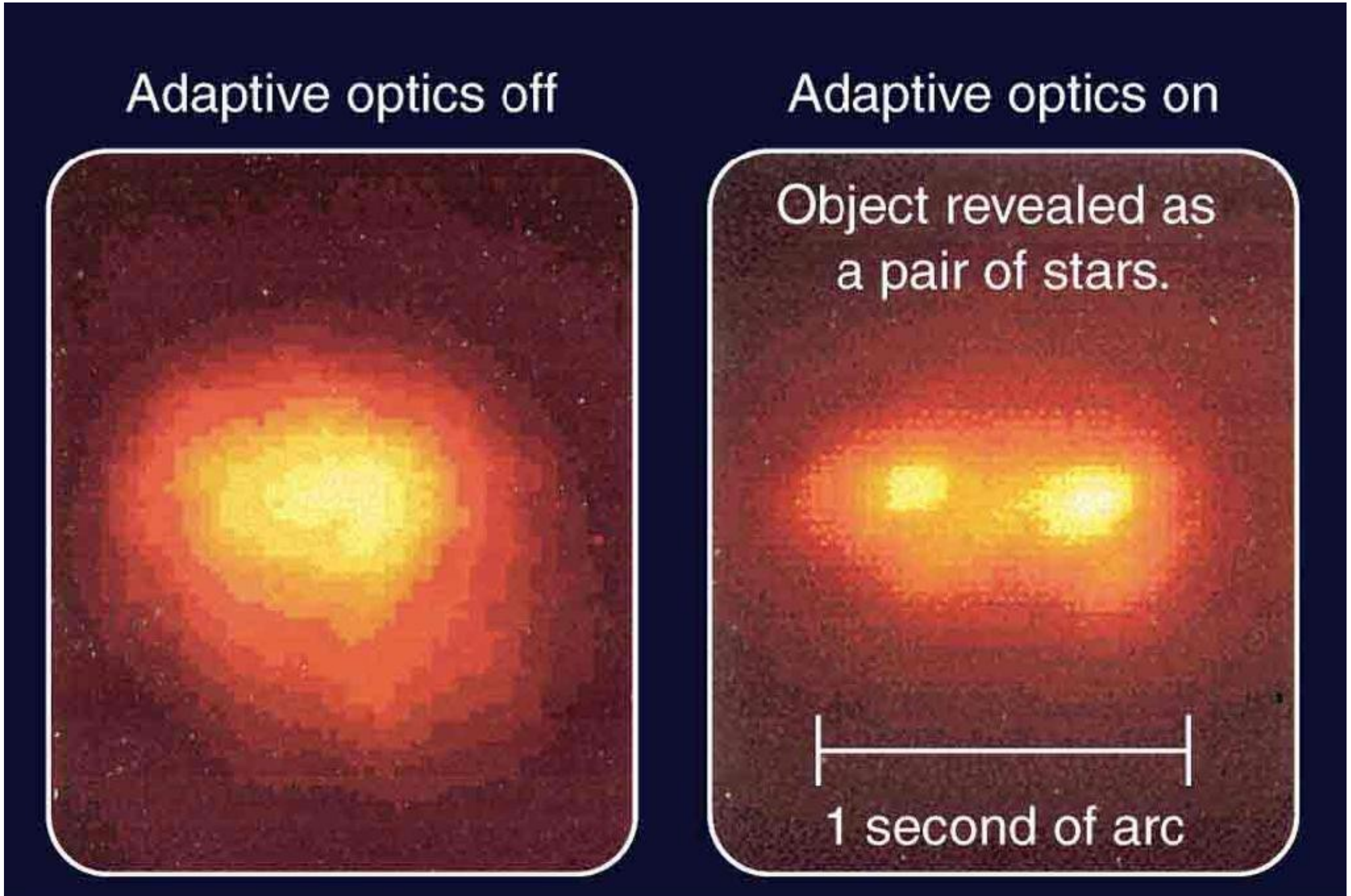
Computer-controlled mirror support adjusts the mirror surface (many times per second) to compensate for distortions by atmospheric turbulence



Interferometry

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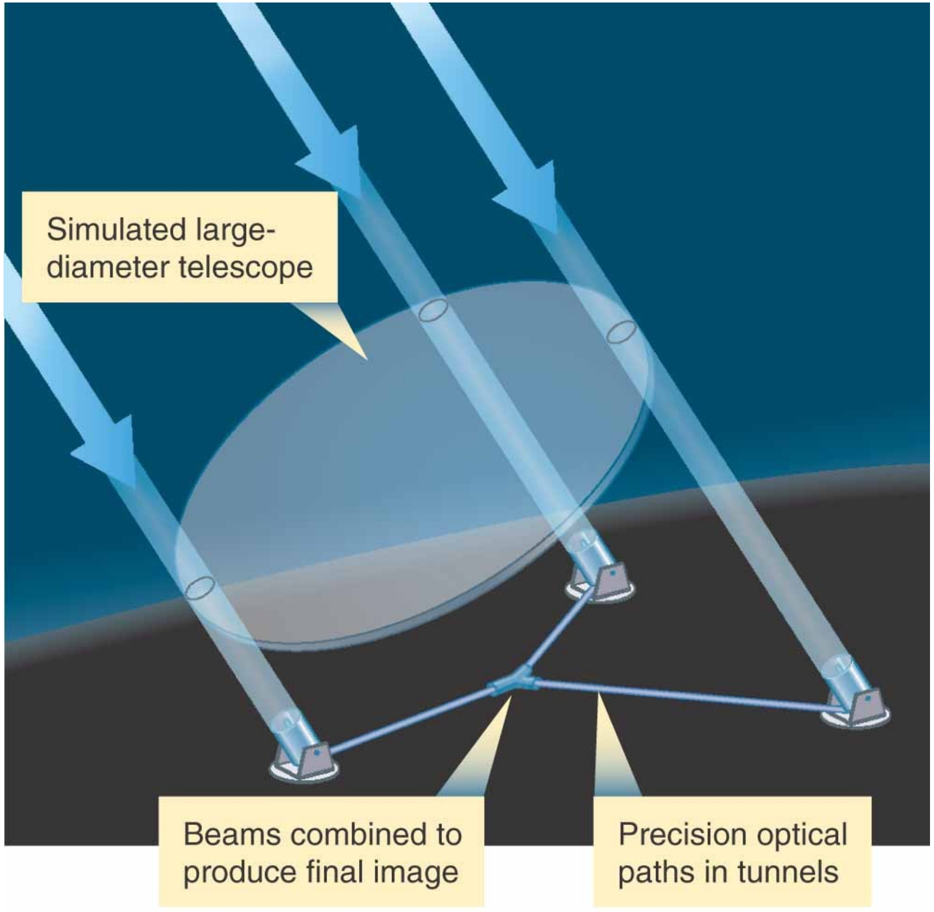
Recall: Resolving power of a telescope depends on diameter D.

→Combine the signals from several smaller telescopes to simulate one big mirror → Interferometry



CCD Imaging

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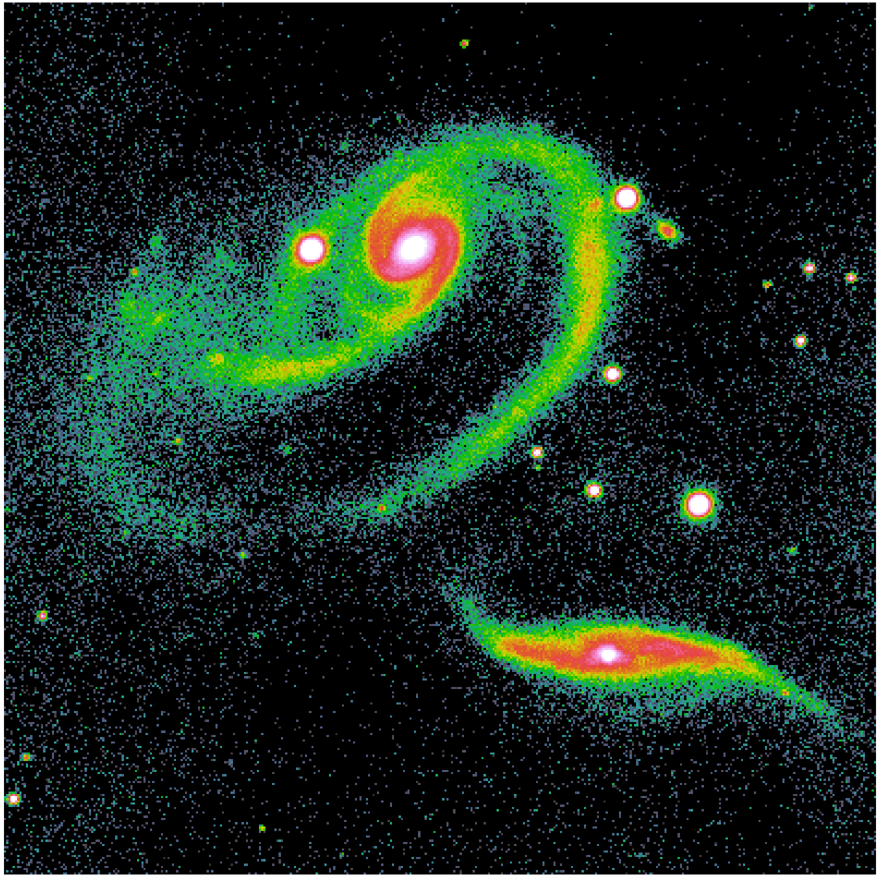
CCD = Charge-coupled device

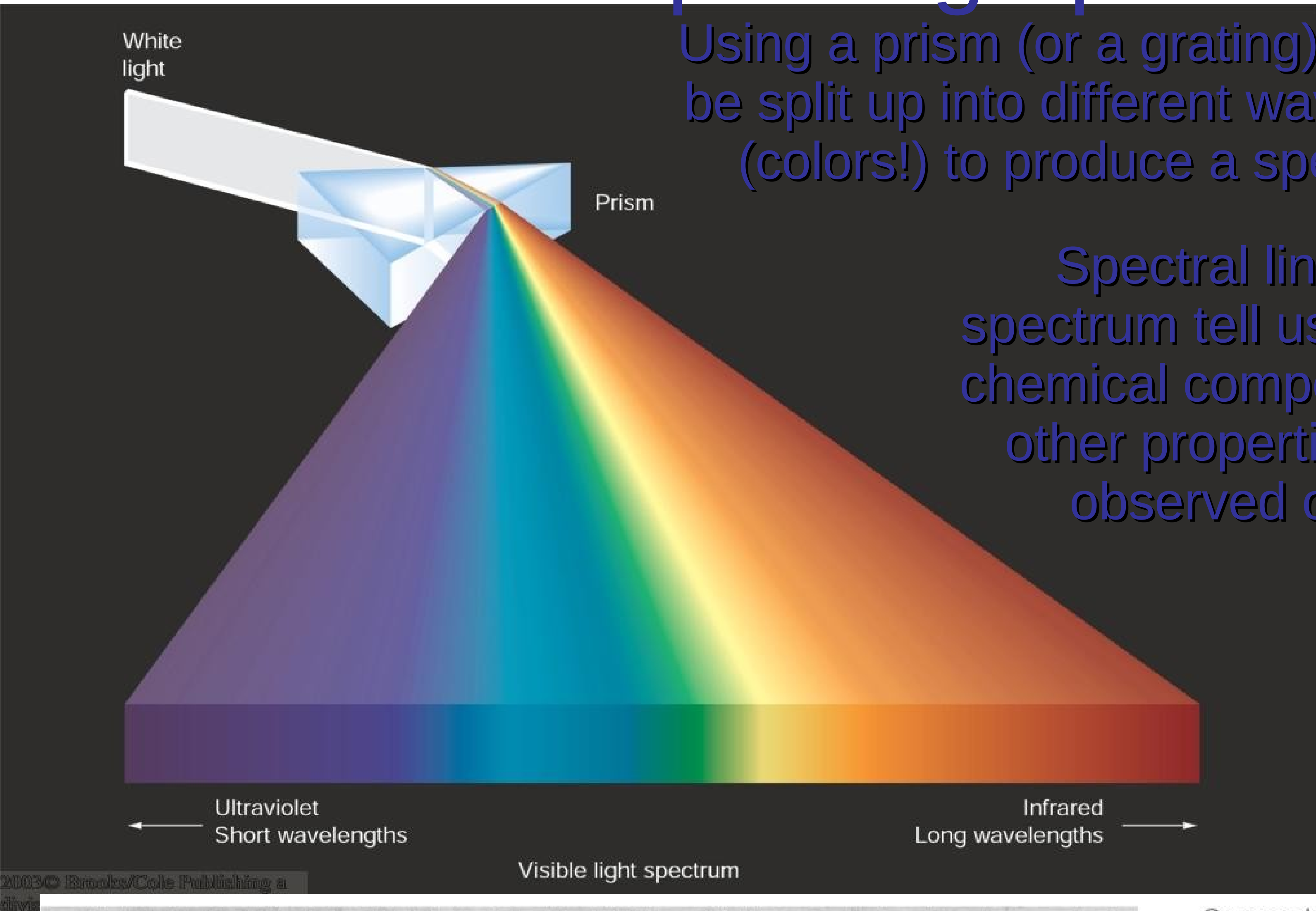
- More sensitive than photographic plates

- Data can be read directly into computer memory, allowing easy electronic manipulations



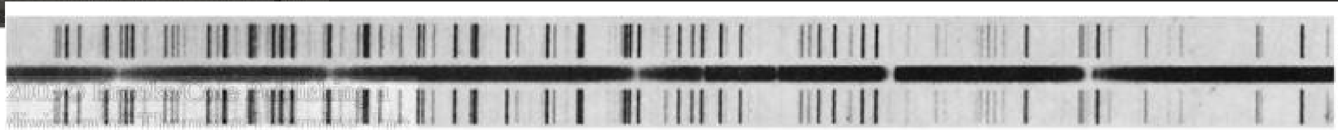
False-color image to visualize brightness contours

The Spectrograph



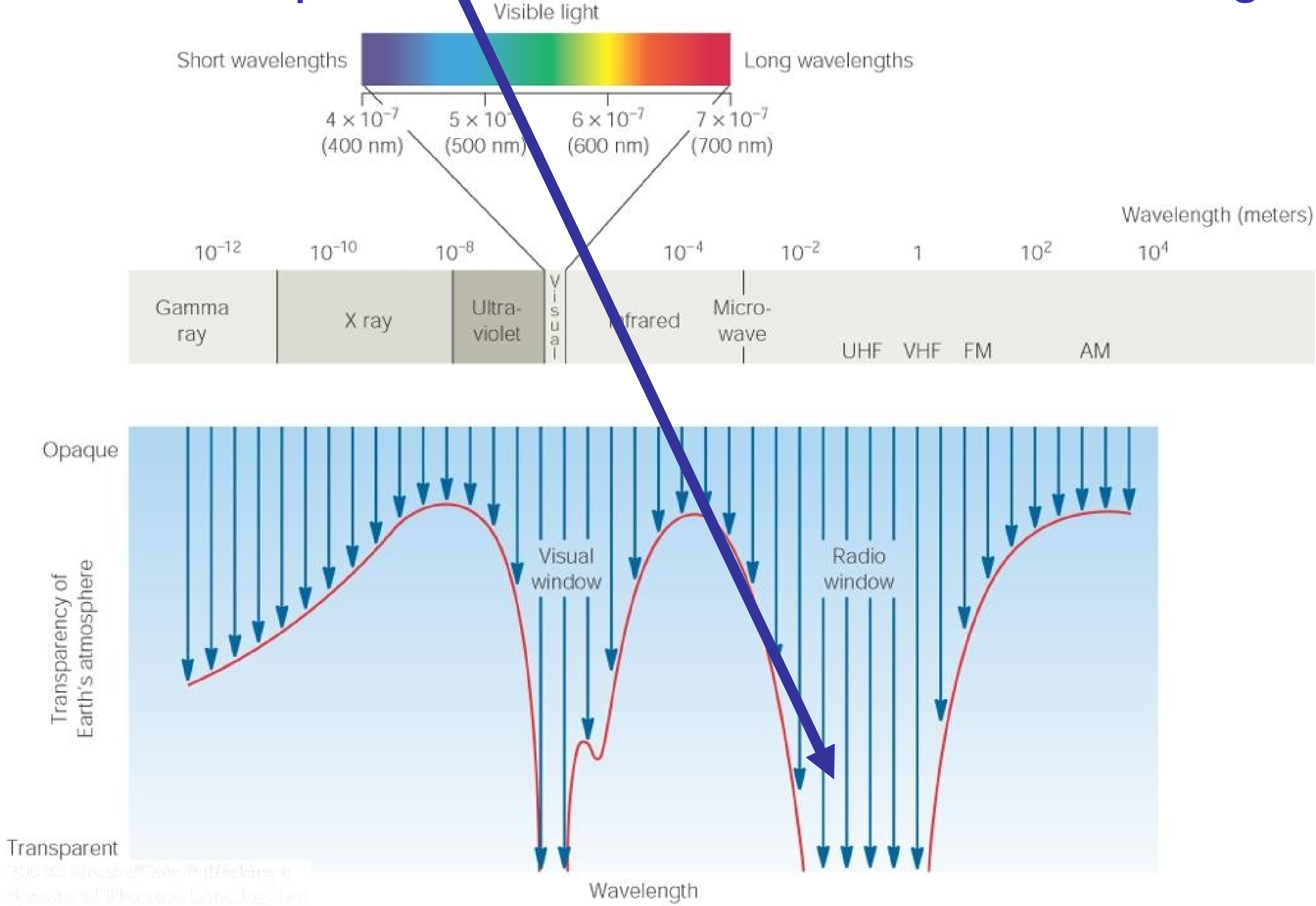
Using a prism (or a grating), light can be split up into different wavelengths (colors!) to produce a spectrum.

Spectral lines in a spectrum tell us about the chemical composition and other properties of the observed object



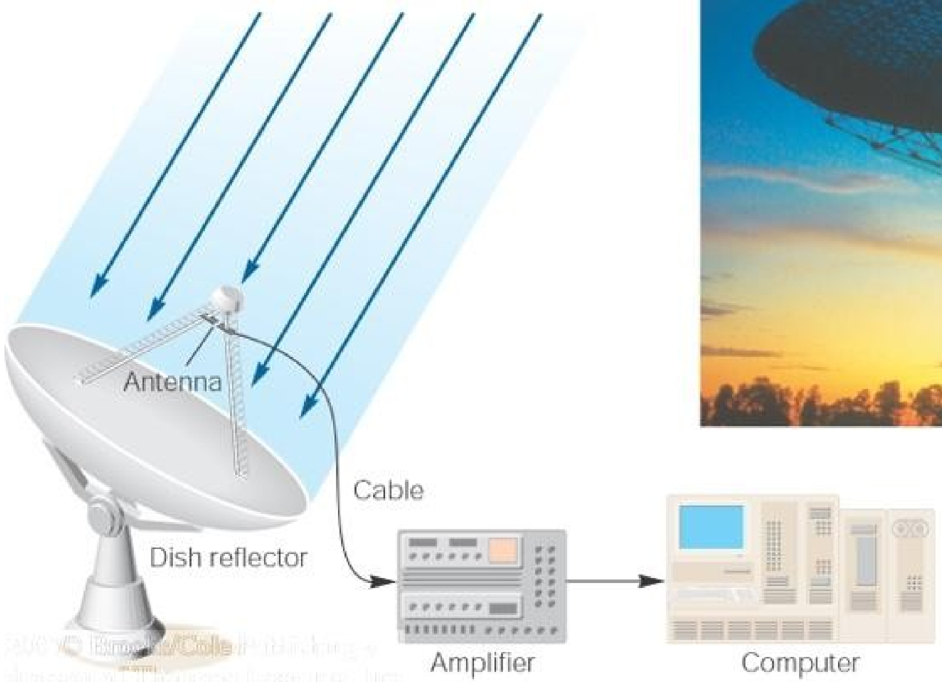
Radio Astronomy

Recall: Radio waves of λ ~ 1 cm – 1 m also penetrate the Earth’s atmosphere and can be observed from the ground.



Radio Telescopes

Large dish focuses the energy of radio waves onto a small receiver (antenna)



Amplified signals are stored in computers and converted into images, spectra, etc.

Radio Interferometry

Just as for optical telescopes, the resolving power of a radio telescope depends on the diameter of the objective lens or mirror $\alpha_{min} = 1.22\ \lambda/D$.

For radio telescopes, this is a big problem: Radio waves are much longer than visible light

→Use interferometry to improve resolution!

The Very Large Array (VLA): 27 dishes are combined to simulate a large dish of 36 km in diameter.

The Largest Radio Telescopes

The 100-m Green Bank Telescope in Green Bank, West Virginia.

The 300-m telescope in Arecibo, Puerto Rico

Science of Radio Astronomy

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Radio astronomy reveals several features, not visible at other wavelengths:

- Neutral hydrogen clouds (which don't emit any visible light), containing ~ 90 % of all the atoms in the universe.
- Molecules (often located in dense clouds, where visible light is completely absorbed).
- Radio waves penetrate gas and dust clouds, so we can observe regions from which visible light is heavily absorbed.

Infrared Astronomy

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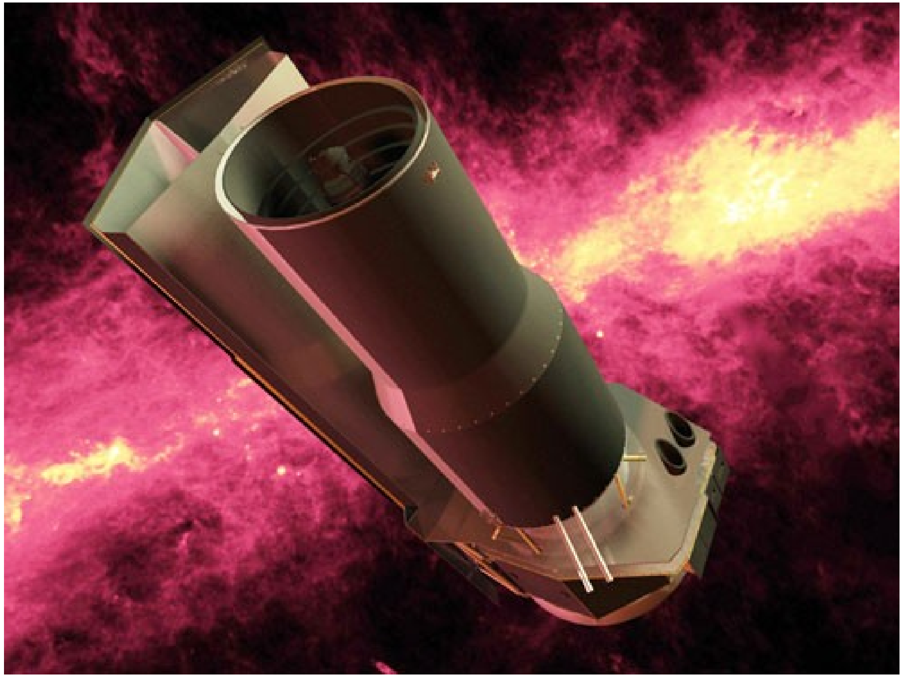
Most infrared radiation is absorbed in the lower atmosphere.

However, from high mountain tops or high-flying aircraft, some infrared radiation can still be observed.

NASA infrared telescope on Mauna Kea, Hawaii

Infrared Telescopes

WIRO 2.3m



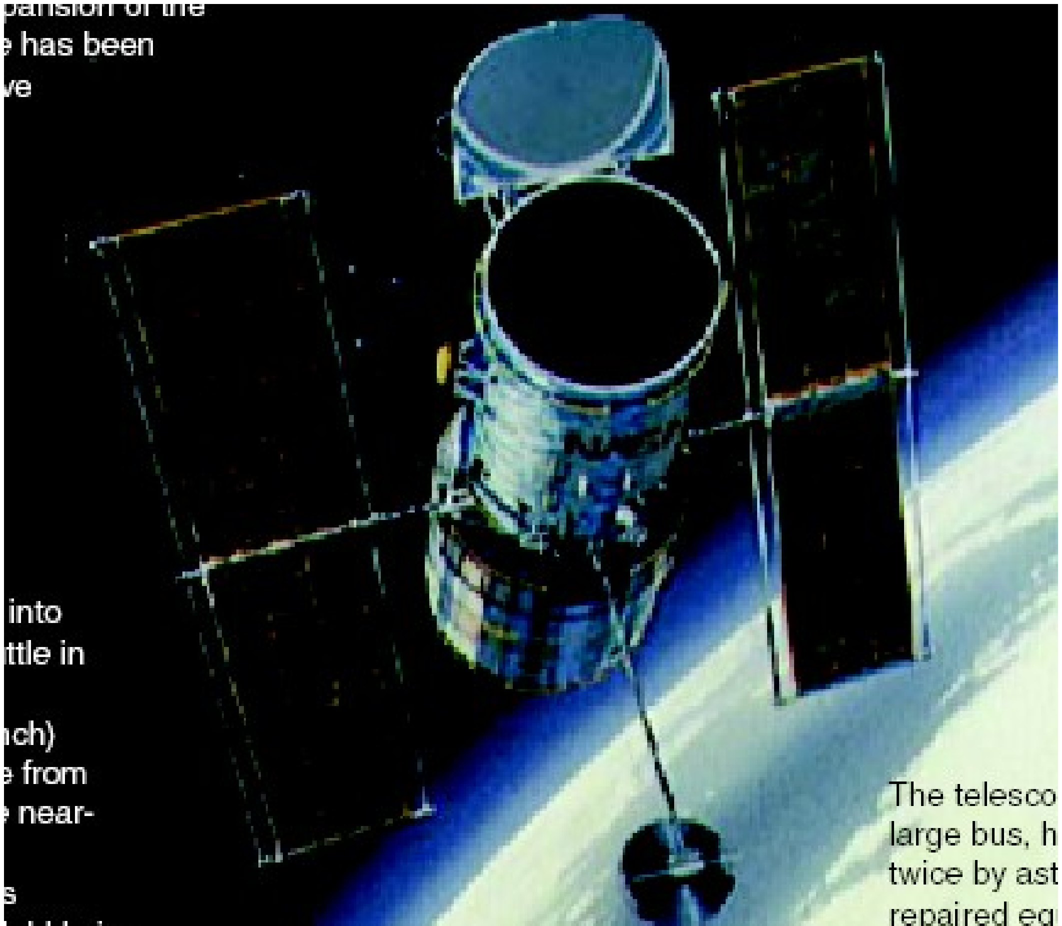
Spitzer Space Telescope

Ultraviolet Astronomy

- Ultraviolet radiation with $\lambda < 290$ nm is completely absorbed in the ozone layer of the atmosphere.
- Ultraviolet astronomy has to be done from satellites.
- Several successful ultraviolet astronomy satellites: IUE, EUVE, FUSE
- Ultraviolet radiation traces hot (tens of thousands of degrees), moderately ionized gas in the universe.

NASA’s Great Observatories in Space (I)

The Hubble Space Telescope



- Launched in 1990; maintained and upgraded by several space shuttle service missions throughout the 1990s and early 2000’s
- Avoids turbulence in Earth’s atmosphere
- Extends imaging and spectroscopy to (invisible) infrared and ultraviolet

Hubble Space Telescope Images

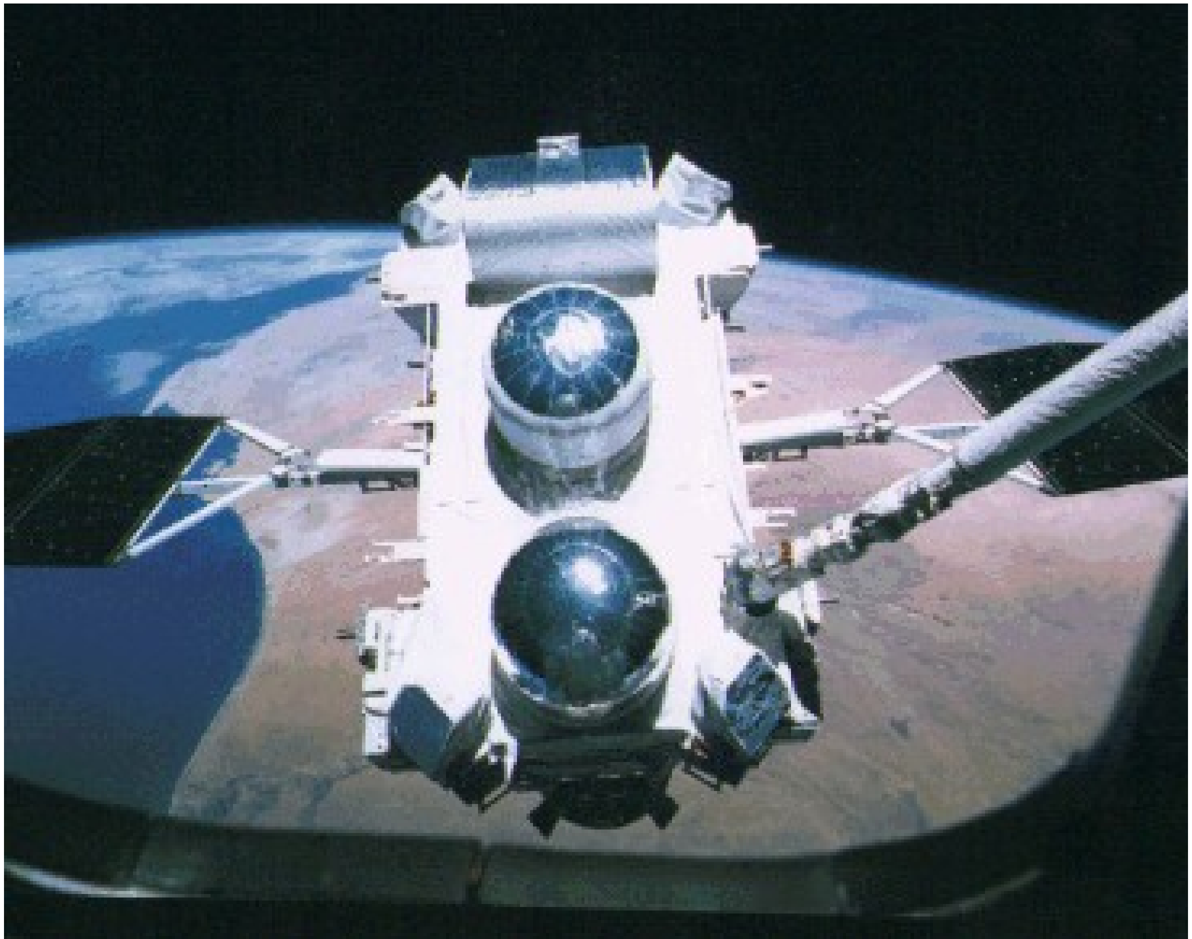
Mars with its polar ice cap

Nebula around an aging star

A dust-filled galaxy

NASA’s Great Observatories in Space (II)

The Compton Gamma-Ray Observatory



Operated from 1991 to 2000

Observation of high-energy gamma-ray emission, tracing the most violent processes in the universe.

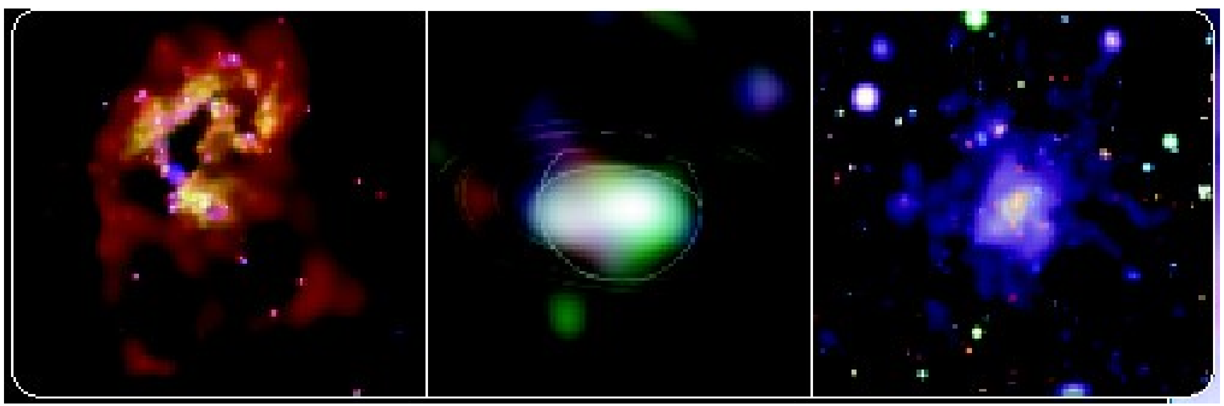
NASA’s Great Observatories in Space (III)

The Chandra X-ray Telescope

Launched in 1999 into a highly eccentric orbit that takes it 1/3 of the way to the moon!

X-rays trace hot (million degrees), highly ionized gas in the universe.

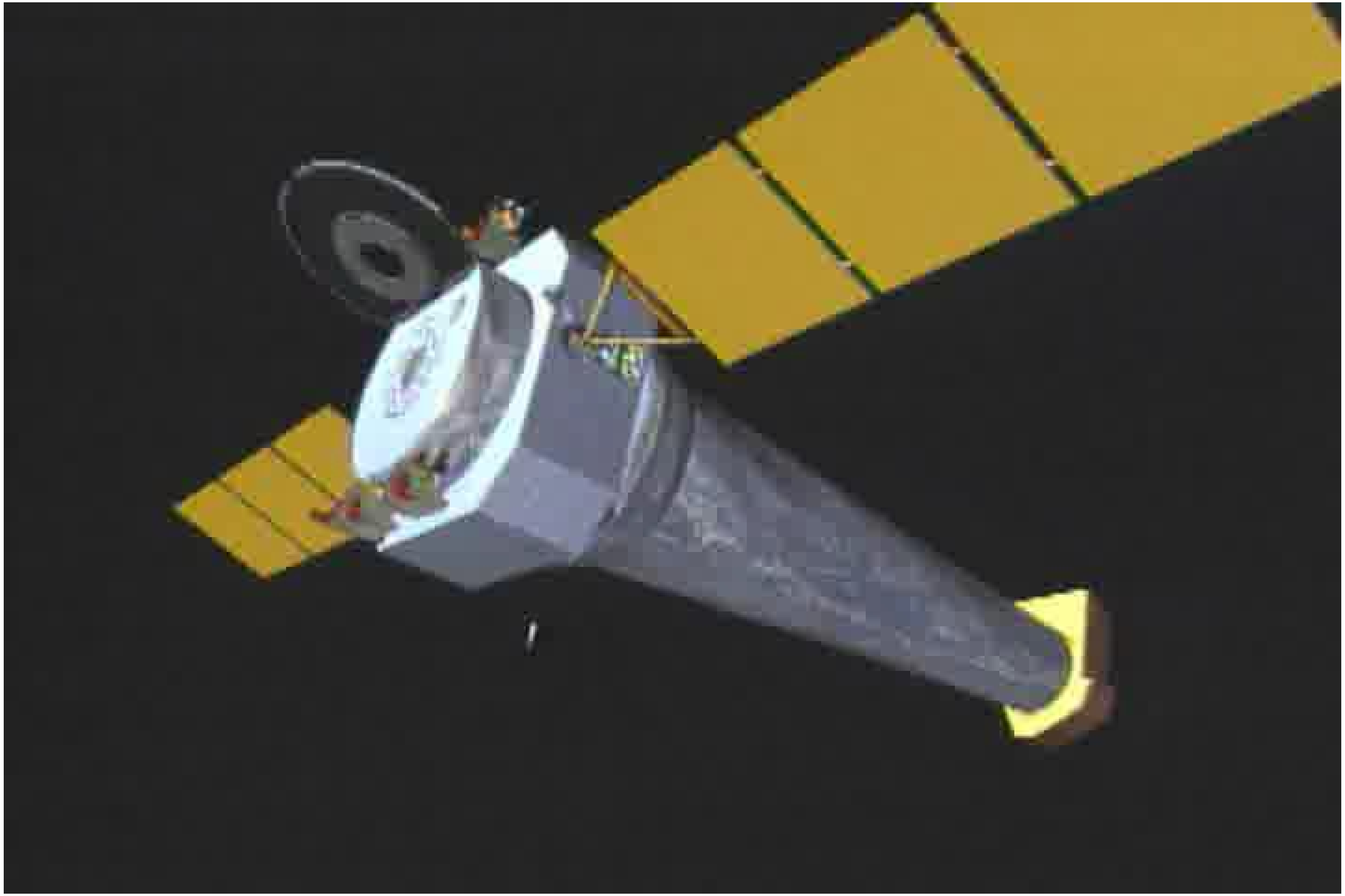
Two colliding galaxies, triggering a burst of star formation



Saturn

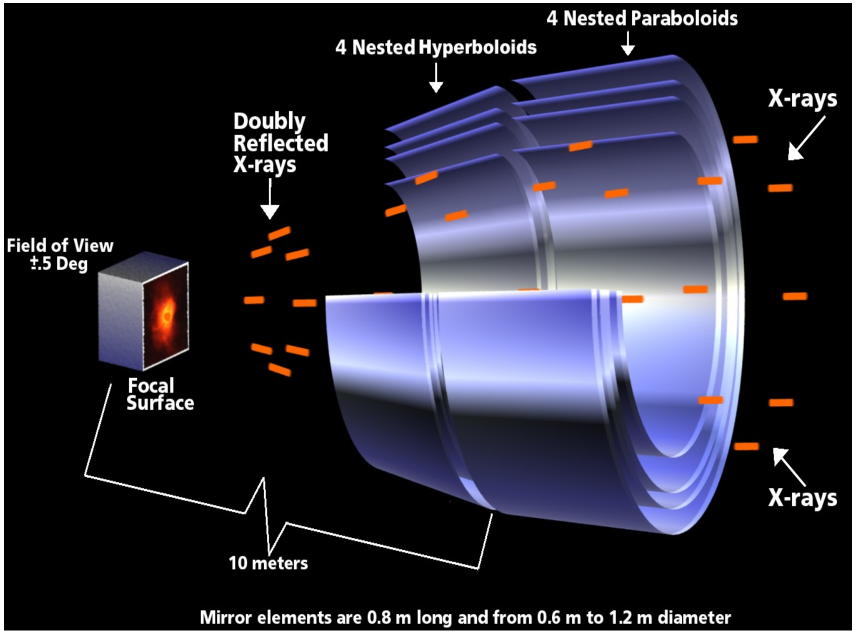
Very hot gas in a cluster of galaxies

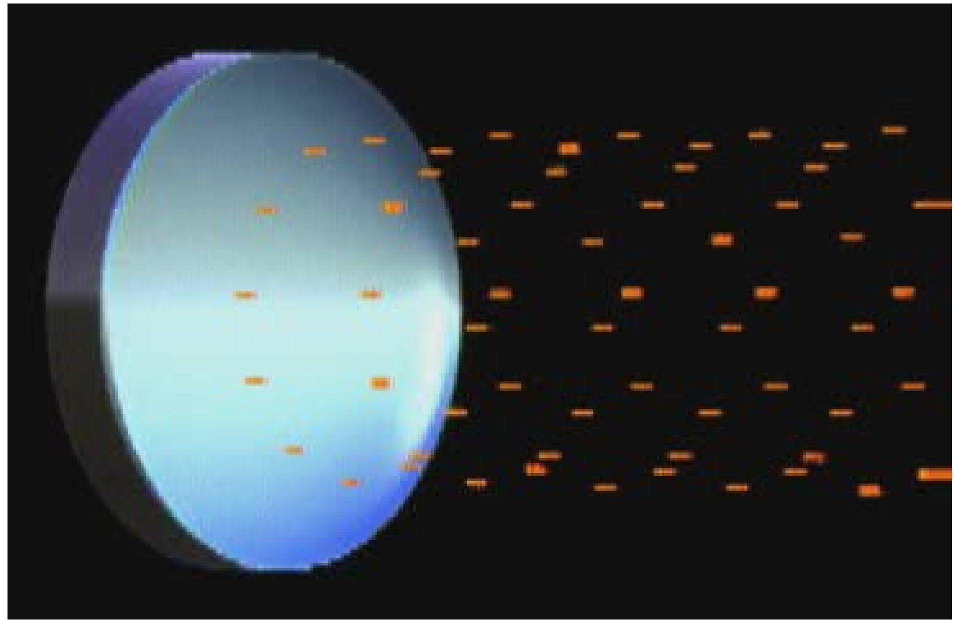
Chandra X-ray Observatory



Shuttle launched, highly eccentric orbit.

The Highest Tech Mirrors Ever!

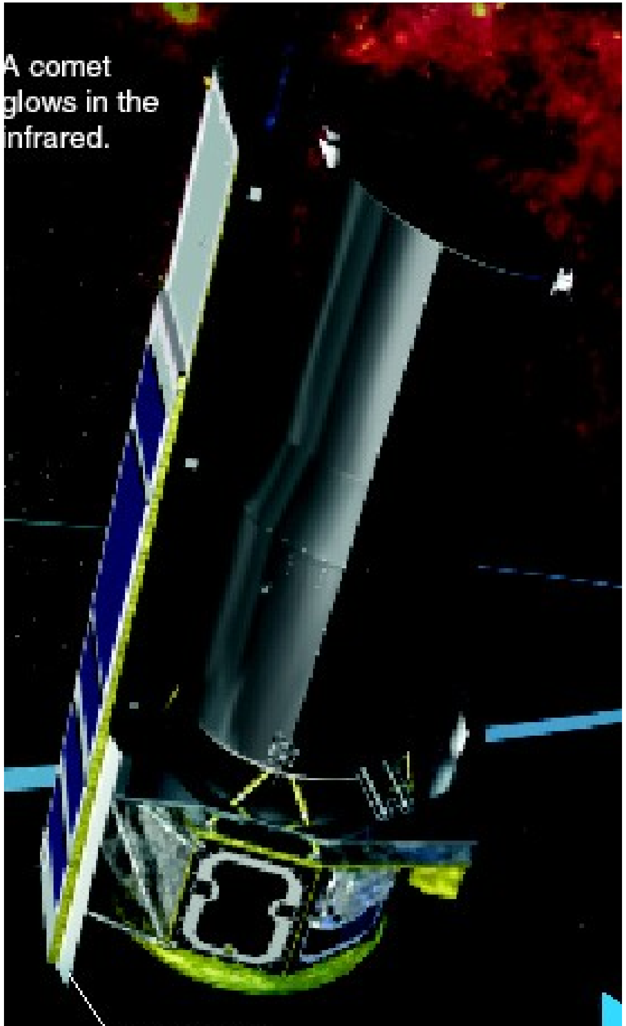




- **Chandra is the first X-ray telescope to have image as sharp as optical telescopes**

NASA’s Great Observatories in Space (IV)

The Spitzer Space Telescope



Launched in 2003

Infrared light traces warm dust in the universe.

The detector needs to be cooled to -273 ^{o}C (-459 ^{o}F).

Spitzer Space Telescope Images

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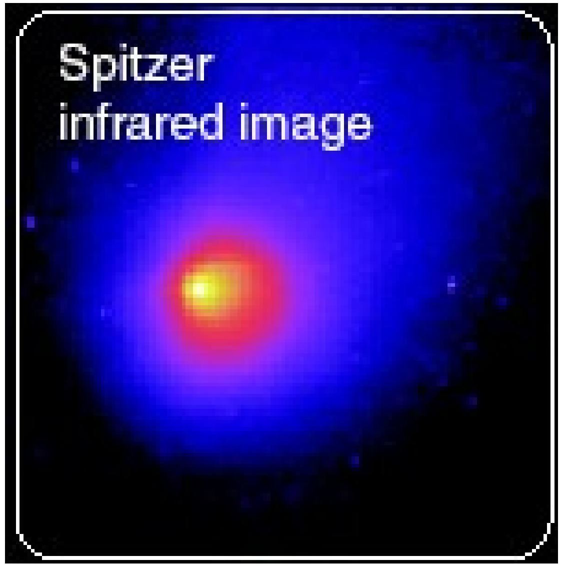
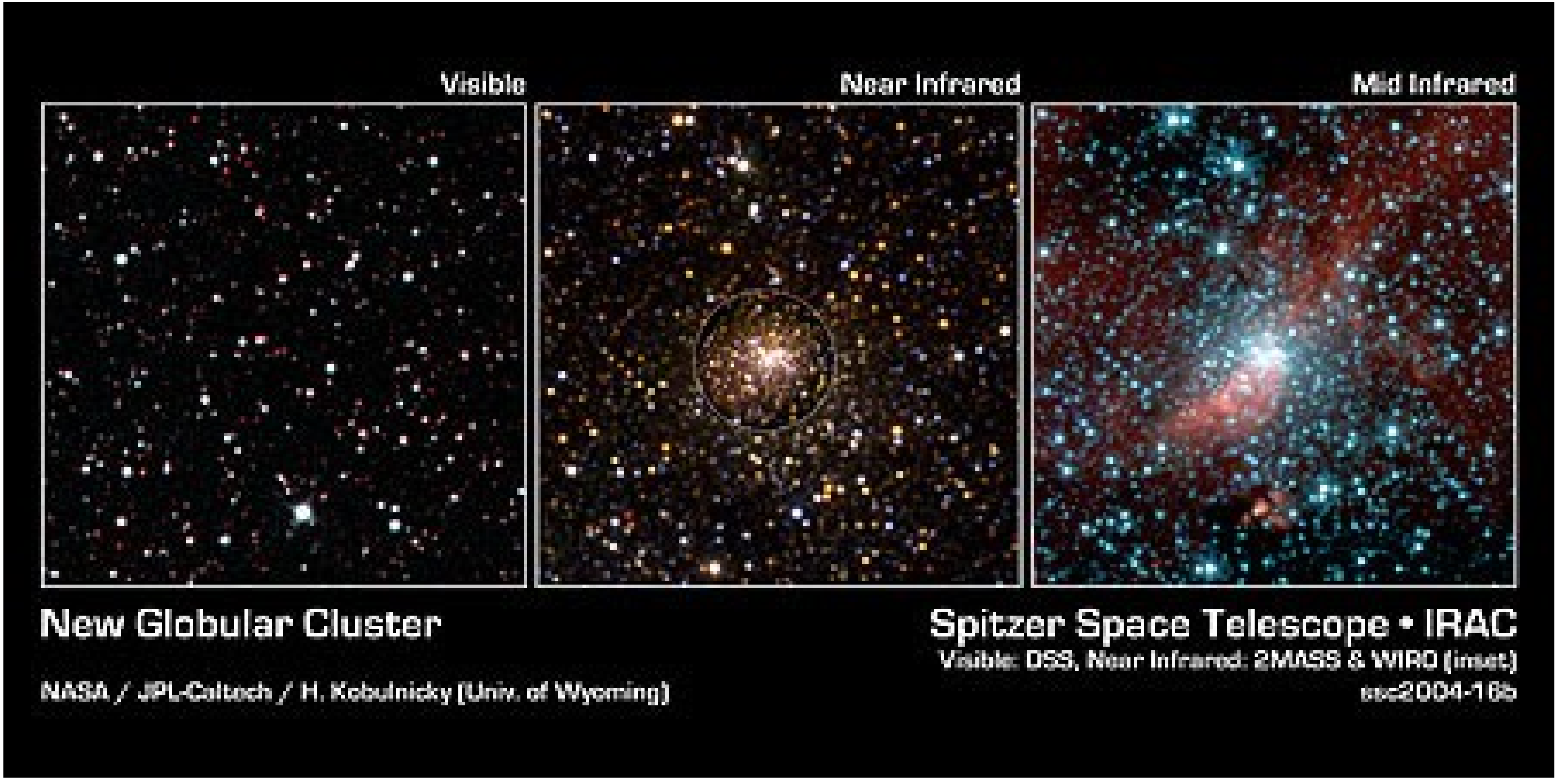
A Comet



Warm dust in a young spiral galaxy

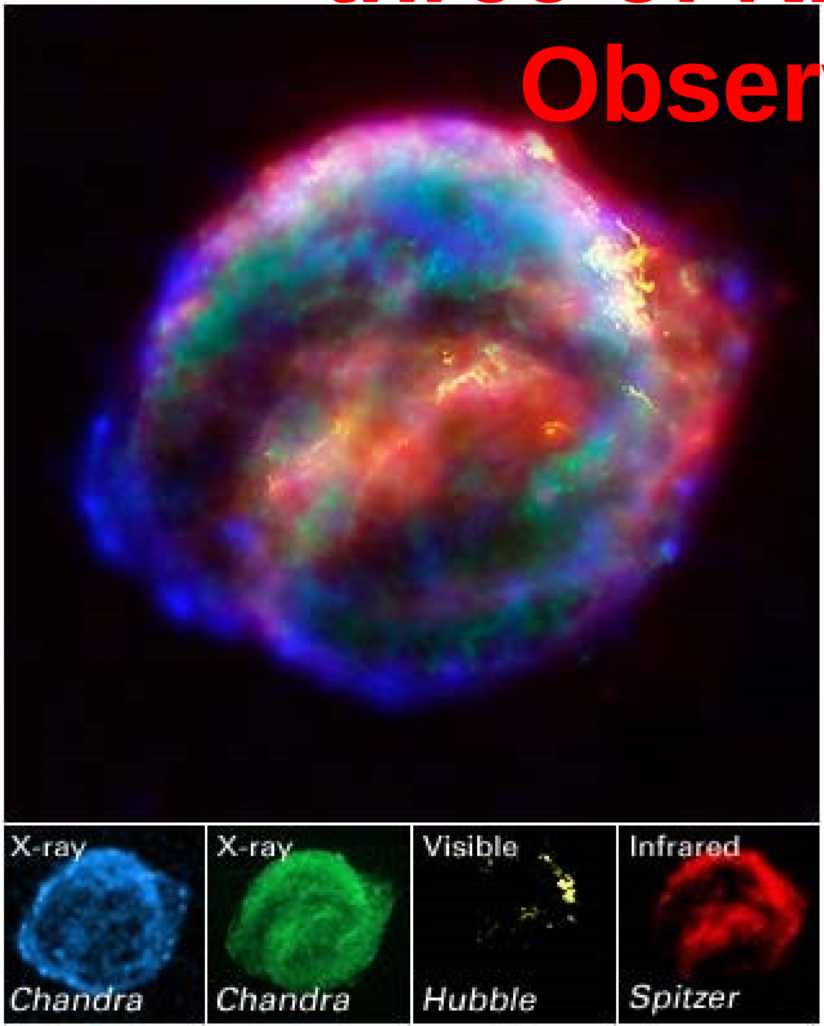
Newborn stars that would be hidden from our view in visible light

Spitzer Space Telescope



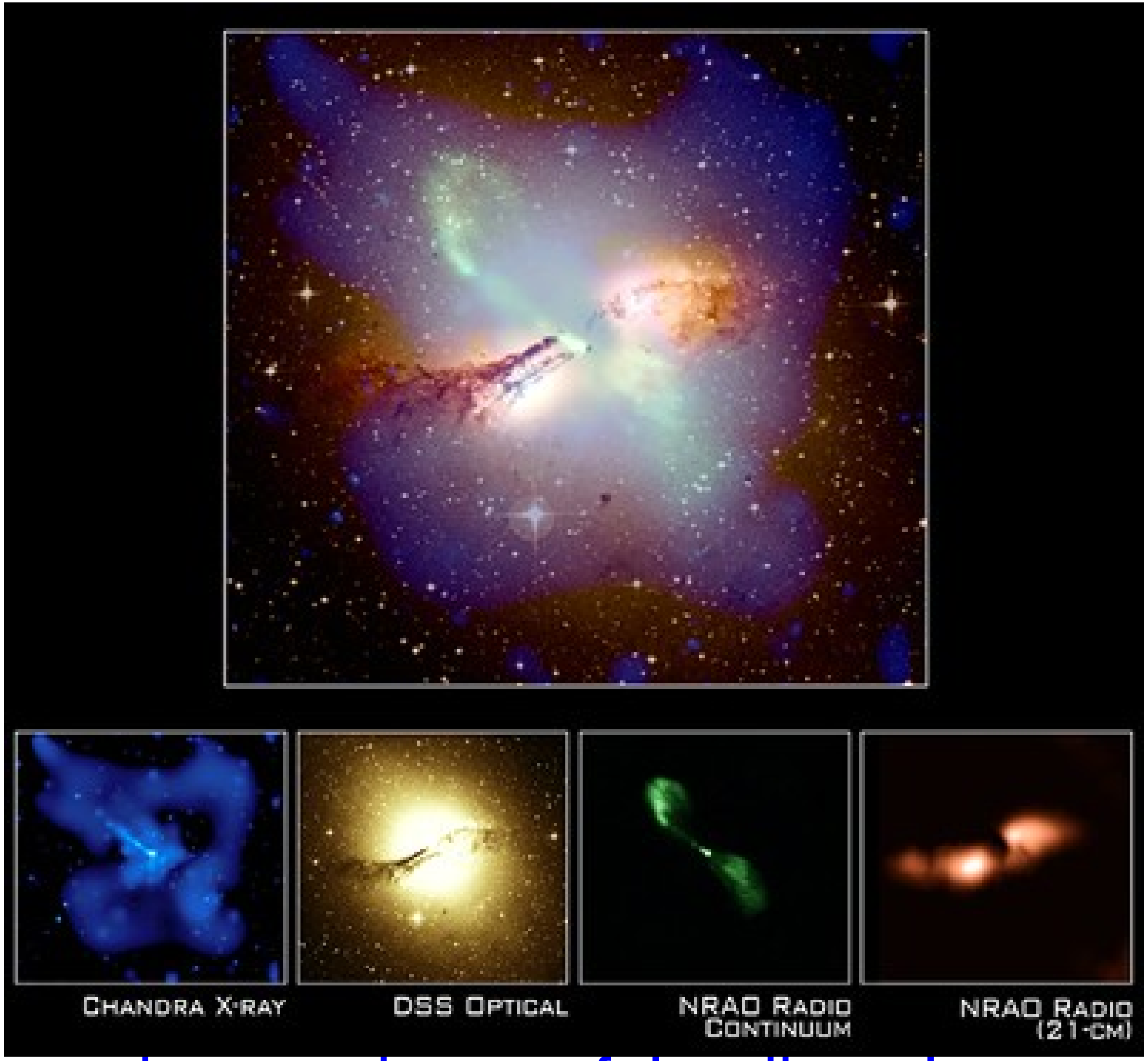
- Discovered by a Wyoming grad student and professor. The "Cowboy Cluster" – a new Globular Cluster.

Kepler's Supernova with all three of NASA's Great Observatories



- Just 400 years ago: (Oct. 9, 1604)
- Then a bright, naked eye object (no telescopes)
- It's still blowing up – now 14 light years wide and expanding at 4 *million* mph.
- There's material there at MANY temperatures, so many wavelengths are needed to understand it.

A Multiwavelength Look at Cygnus A



- A merger-product, and powerful radio galaxy.

NASA - Space Science - Missions - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Tools Help

http://spacescience.nasa.gov/missions/

Firefox Help Firefox Support Plug-in FAQ

FAQ's
Research Solicitations

Site Map

Curator: Craig Tupper

Under study

ANITA
Constellation-X
DUO
EUSO
GEC
Geospace
IBEX
JIMO
JMEX
Juno
JWST (NGST)
Kepler
LISA
Mag Constellation
Mag Multiscale
Mars 2009
Mars - beyond 2009
Moonrise
NEXUS
NuSTAR
Phoenix
SDO
Sentinels
SIM
Solar Probe
TPF
WISE

preliminary concepts

In development

AIM
Astro-E2
CINDI
Dawn
Deep Impact
GLAST
Herschel
Mars '05 Orbiter
New Horizons (Pluto)
Planck
SOFIA
Solar-B
Space Tech 5
Space Tech 6
Space Tech 7
STEREO
Swift
THEMIS
TWINS

Operating

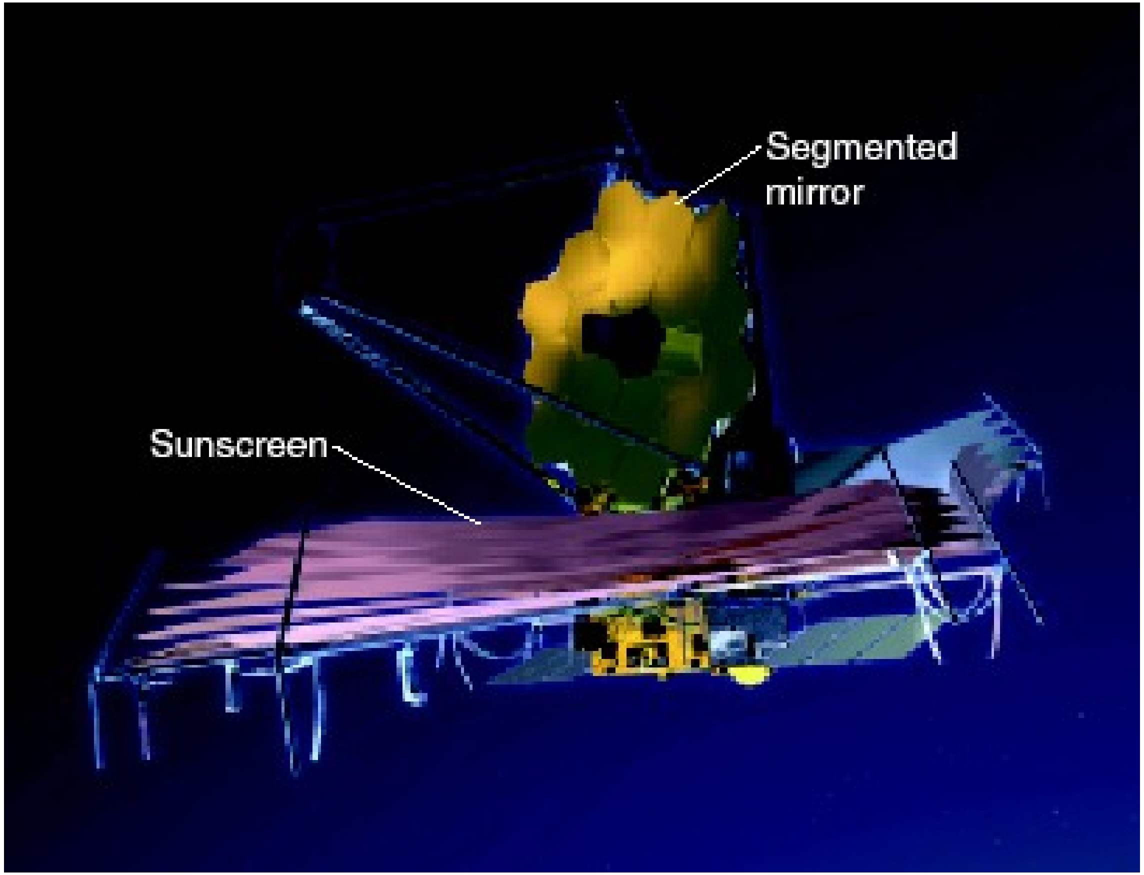
ACE
Cassini
Chandra
CHIPS
Cluster
FAST
FUSE
GALEX
Genesis
Geotail
Gravity Probe B
HETE-2
Hubble (HST)
IMAGE
INTEGRAL
Mars '03 Rovers
Mars Express / ASPERA-3
Mars Global Surv.
Mars Odyssey
MESSENGER
Polar
RHESSI
Rosetta
RXTE
SAMPEX
SOHO
Spitzer (SIRTF)
Stardust
SWAS
TIMED
TRACE
Ulysses
Voyager
Wind

Past missions

Ended after 1989:
ASCA
Astro-1 / Astro-2
BBXRT
Clementine
CGRO
COBE
CONTOUR
CRRES
DE-1
Deep Space 1
Deep Space 2
DXS
Equator-S
EUVE
Galileo
HALCA / VLBI
Hipparcos
Hubble (past)
IEH-3
ISEE-3/ICE
IMP-8
IRTS
ISO
IUE
Kuiper (KAO)
Leonid MAC
Lunar Prospector
Magellan
Mars Clim. Orb.
Mars Observer
Mars Pathfinder
Mars Polar Lander
NEAR
ORFEUS

Done

The Future of Space-Based Optical/Infrared Astronomy:



The James Webb Space Telescope