January 27, 2010

Reading assignment, Cosmic Catastrophes, Chapter 6 plus Section 5.1, Section 1.2.4, Section 2.3 for background

Also § 2.1, 2.2, 2.4 & 2.5 for background

Astronomy in the News? See if President Obama says anything about science, NASA in the State of the Union Address. What is the future of the US human space flight program, and the NASA science program?

Pic of the Day - Saturn's moons Titan and Tethys from the Cassini spacecraft orbiting Saturn.

Same mass in all three cases

One Minute Exam: Where is gravity strongest?

- A,
- B,
- C.
- Insufficient information

Discussion point:

How does the different form of the pressure, thermal or quantum, affect the behavior of stars?

What happens if the star puts in excess nuclear energy?

What happens if the star loses excess energy to space?

Quantum Pressure -- just depends on squeezing particles,
electrons for white dwarf, to very high density
-- depends on density only
-- *does not* depend on temperature

Important Implication:

Normal ★ Radiate energy, pressure tries to drop, star contracts and gets **hotter** (and higher pressure)

White Dwarf Radiate energy, *temperature does not matter*, pressure, size, remain constant, star gets **cooler**

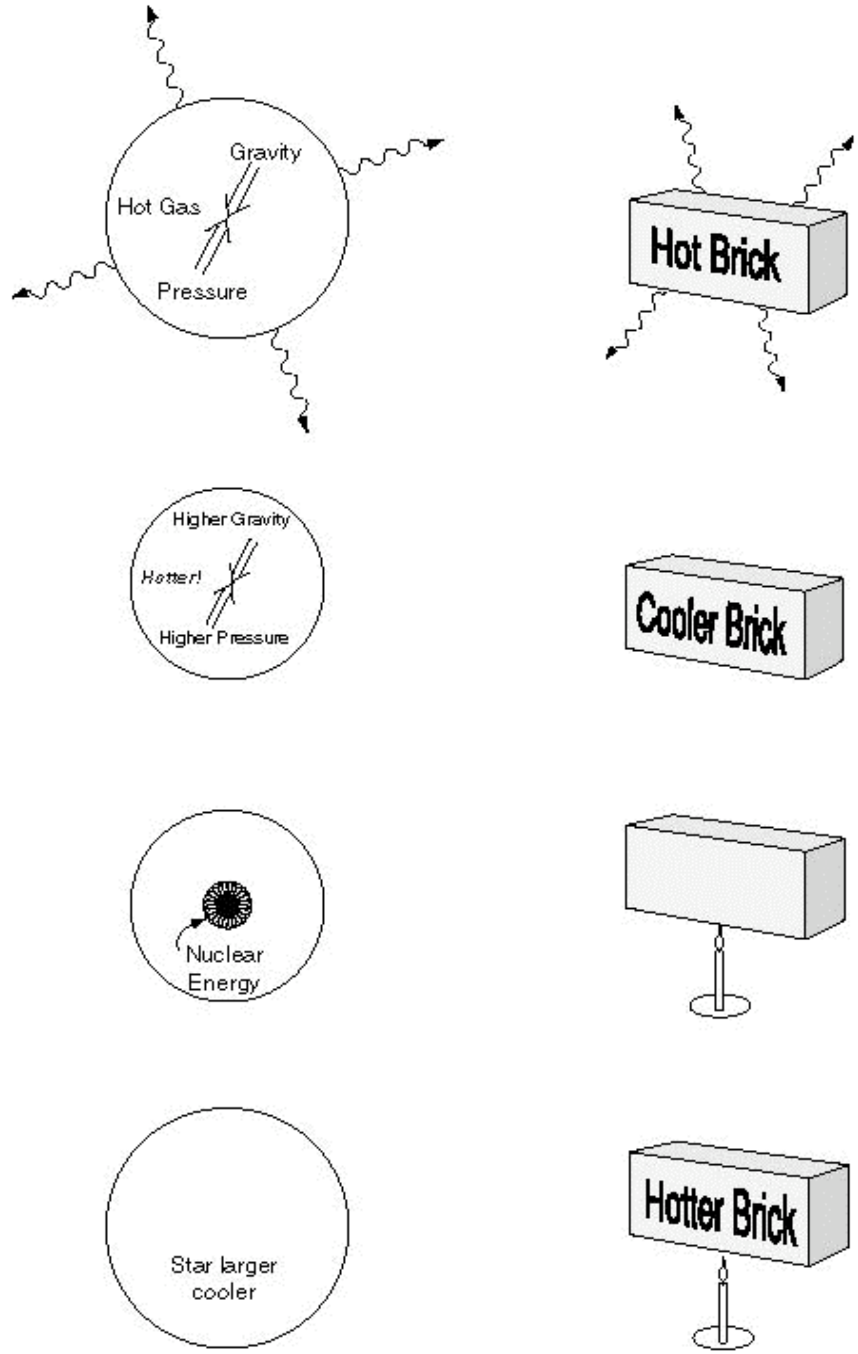
Opposite behavior	Normal Star - *Regulated*	put in energy, star expands, cools
	White Dwarf - *Unregulated*	put in energy, hotter, more nuclear burning -- explosion!

Figure 1.3

A normal star can and will radiate away thermal energy and hence structural energy.

A brick cannot radiate its structural energy,

A white dwarf cannot radiate away its quantum energy.



Behavior of white dwarf, Quantum Pressure, worked out by S. Chandrasekhar in the 1930's

Limit to mass the Quantum Pressure of electrons can support

Chandrasekhar limit ~ 1.4 $M_\odot$

density ~ billion grams/cc ~ 1000 tons/cubic centimeter

Maximum mass of white dwarf.

If more mass is added, the white dwarf must collapse or explode!

One Minute Exam

If nuclear reactions start burning in an ordinary star like the Sun, what happens to the temperature?

➡ The temperature goes up

⬅ The temperature remains constant

⬆ The temperature goes down

⬇ Insufficient information to answer the question

One Minute Exam

If nuclear reactions start burning in a white dwarf, what happens to the temperature?

- The temperature goes up
- The temperature remains constant
- The temperature goes down
- Insufficient information to answer the question One Minute Exam

SUPERNOVAE

Catastrophic explosions that end the lives of stars,

Provide the heavy elements on which planets and life as we know it depends,

Energize the interstellar gas to form new stars,

Produce exotic compact objects, neutron stars and black holes,

Provide yardsticks to measure the history and fate of the Universe.

Reading:

Chapter 6 Supernovae

Also § 2.1, 2.2, 2.4 & 2.5 for background

Issues to look for in background:

Why is it necessary for a thermonuclear fuel to get hot to burn - charge repulsion § 2.1 & 2.2

Core Collapse § 2.4 & 2.5

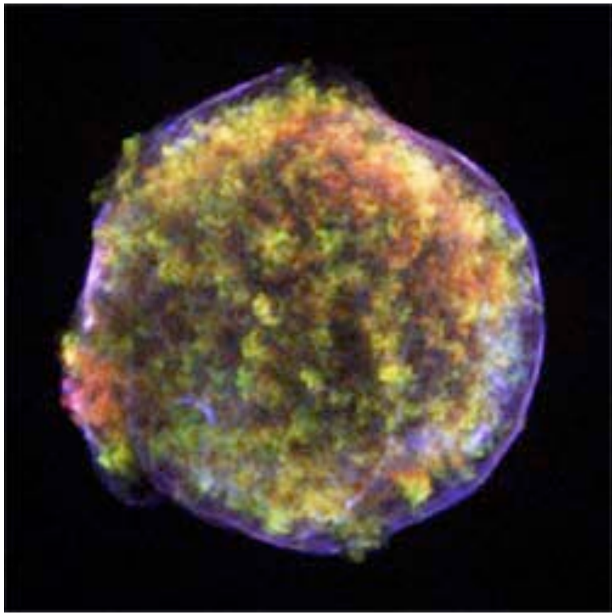
One type of supernova is powered by the ***collapse*** of the core of a massive star to produce

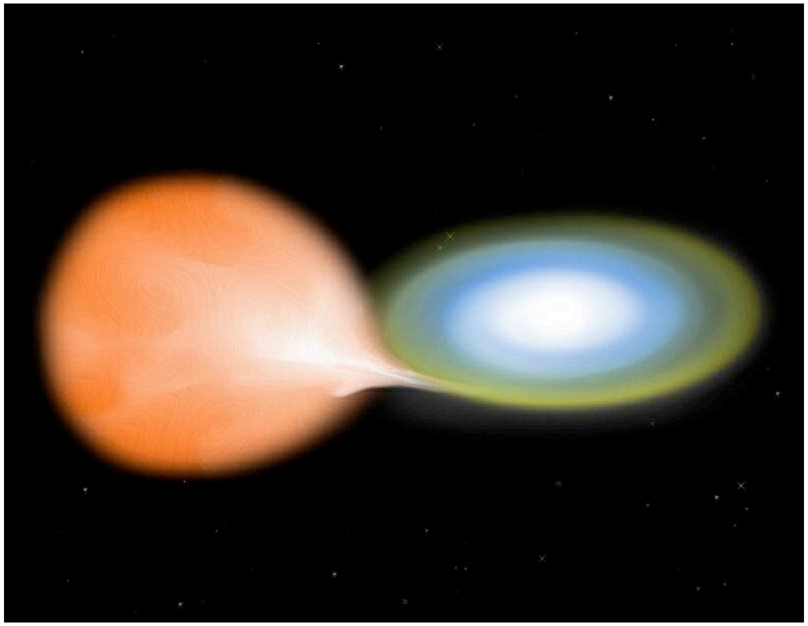
a ***neutron star***, or perhaps a ***black hole***

The mechanism of the explosion is still a mystery.

The other type of supernovae (Type Ia) is thought to come from a white dwarf that grows to an explosive condition in a binary system.

Chandra X-ray Observatory image
Of Tycho's supernova of 1572





These explode completely, like a stick of dynamite, and leave no compact object (neutron star or black hole) behind.

Chapter 6 Supernovae

Historical Supernovae - ***in our Milky Way Galaxy*** observed with naked eye over 2000 years especially by Chinese (preserved records), but also Japanese, Koreans, Arabs, Native Americans, finally Europeans.

SN 386	earliest record	NS, jet?
SN 1006	brightest	No NS
SN 1054	Crab Nebula	NS, jets
SN 1181	(Radio Source 3C58)	NS, jets
SN 1572	Tycho	No NS
SN 1604	Kepler	No NS
~1680	Cas A	NS? jets
SN 1987A	nearby galaxy	NS? jets
Vela	10,000 years ago	NS, jets