

EVERT NASEDKIN

SUB-STELLAR ATMOSPHERES IN
THE MID INFRARED

Simulated Instrumental Constraints on Sub-Stellar Atmospheric Retrievals for the James Webb Space Telescope's Mid-Infrared Instrument.

Evert Nasedkin

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ABSTRACT

Following its launch in 2021, the James Webb Telescope will provide the best infrared observations of exoplanets and brown dwarfs to date. In particular, the Mid-Infrared Instrument (MIRI), will allow for medium resolution spectroscopy across a wide wavelength band, from $4.9\text{-}28.8\mu\text{m}$. This will allow us to derive atmospheric properties of objects at lower temperatures than currently possible. MIRI's medium resolution spectrometer (MRS) is an integrated field unit that will perform these observations, providing both spatial and spectral information about targets. Understanding the instrumental effects is critical to analyzing data from MIRI. With that in mind, the MIRISIM instrumental simulator was developed to provide observational simulations of the various sub instruments of MIRI.

This thesis improves the implementation of a thin-film fringing model for point sources to MIRISIM, considering how the fringing effect from the detector layers varies with position. Fringing is a periodic, wavelength dependent effect, and thus has a strong impact on any spectroscopic observations. A comparison to the existing model was made, demonstrating the necessity of considering this effect when analyzing data. We will improve the fringing removal by identifying the point source location from the constructed data cube, and select the correct fringe flat for removal.

Understanding the instrumental effects is key to quantifying the ability of MIRI to derive atmospheric properties. Existing literature has considered the NIRCAM instrument and the MIRI Low-Resolution Spectrometer, but to date no retrieval studies have been performed using MIRISIM, or for the MIRI MRS, though it is critical to extend wavelength coverage to improve the results of an atmospheric retrieval. Model atmospheres will be generated using PetitRadTrans, and processed using MIRISIM and the JWST pipeline to produce a mock observation. An atmospheric retrieval will be performed, demonstrating to what extent MIRI will be able to retrieve atmospheric parameters such as temperature, pressure and composition. The posterior distributions of these parameters are compared with and without the fringing removal, again demonstrating the importance of correcting for this effect.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the first detection of a planet around a sun-like star (Mayor and Queloz, 1995) the field of exoplanets has evolved rapidly. Thousands of companions have been identified using the radial velocity and transit detection methods, and a handful have been imaged directly using both ground and space based observatories. In the last decade, many advances have been made that allow us to begin to characterize the properties of a few of these planets using spectroscopy. With the launch of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) in 2021, and the dawn of the era of extremely large telescopes, we will be able to peer deeper into these planets and further constrain atmospheric or geological properties, allowing us to answer questions about their formation history, climate, and even the prospects for habitability and life.

JWST will operate in near to mid infrared wavelengths, which will provide a new window into studying the atmospheres of exoplanets and brown dwarfs. The Mid Infrared Instrument (MIRI) will provide unprecedented spectral resolution in the mid infrared, allowing for the measurement of composition, pressure and temperature. Novel instrumentation does not come without challenges. Optical and instrumental effects will constrain the ability to which we can measure spectral features, which will ultimately limit the science that can be accomplished.

In this thesis, we will measure the impact of thin-film fringing in the layers of the detectors in the MIRI Medium-Resolution Spectrometer on measurements of atmospheric parameters of brown dwarfs and exoplanets. This will provide a baseline for determining the level of correction necessary to minimize the impact of fringing, as well as providing a first look into the ability of the MRS to characterize atmospheres.

1.1 EXOPLANETS

The last quarter century of observations has revealed the diversity of exoplanets and extra-solar systems. Both the architecture and individual planetary characteristics vary greatly when compared to each other, as well as to our own solar system. From the hot Jupiters initially found by Mayor and Queloz (Mayor and Queloz, 1995) to the thousands of planets discovered by the Kepler mission, the variety in exoplanets has raised questions about their formation and development, as well as their present day structure, climate, and even prospects for life. Improvements to observational techniques have allowed us to improve our understanding of these planets. Secondary eclipse and transmission spectroscopy has opened the door to the study of planets in close orbits to their host stars, while emission spectroscopy of young planet has allowed for constraints on models of planet formation. Over the next decades, new instruments will be developed that

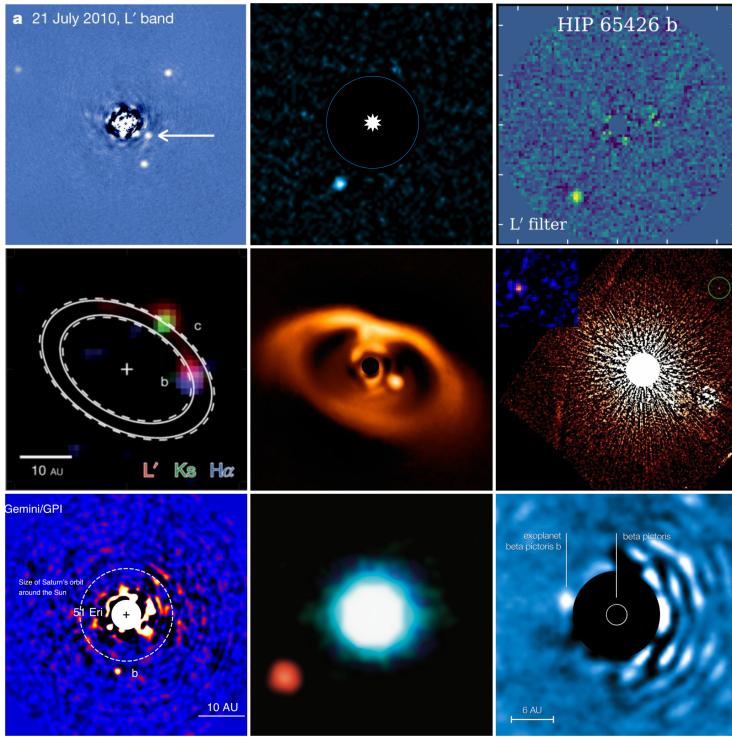


Figure 1: A family portrait of some of the directly imaged exoplanets. In order: (Marois et al., 2010), (Rameau et al., 2013), (Stolker et al., 2020), (Sallum et al., 2015), (M. Keppler et al., 2018), (Currie et al., 2012), (Macintosh et al., 2015), (Chauvin et al., 2004), (Quanz et al., 2010).

improve sensitivity, allowing us to study smaller, colder and fainter planets: with the ultimate goal of studying atmospheric and surface features of an earth-like planet.

Of particular interest are observable features that allow us to measure physical properties of exoplanets. The radial velocity (RV) method provides a measure of the planet mass, while a transit can constrain the radius. Already these properties tell us something about the overall structure of the planet. Spectroscopy can provide insight into the composition of the planet’s atmosphere, as well as its temperature and pressure. These properties are linked to its age and location of formation in the circumstellar disk. The atmosphere, combined with the distance between the planet and its star determine the climate of the planet.

Direct Imaging

While the majority of exoplanet detections have been made using the radial velocity or transit techniques, direct imaging opens up the possibility of collecting light from the planet itself. This provides a window into the planet’s atmosphere and surface. Most direct imaging to date has used near-to-mid infrared wavelengths, where the contrast between the thermal emission from the planet and the star is at a minimum, as in Fig. 2. This has its drawbacks: we are so far only able to image young planets that have retained some of the heat from their formation.

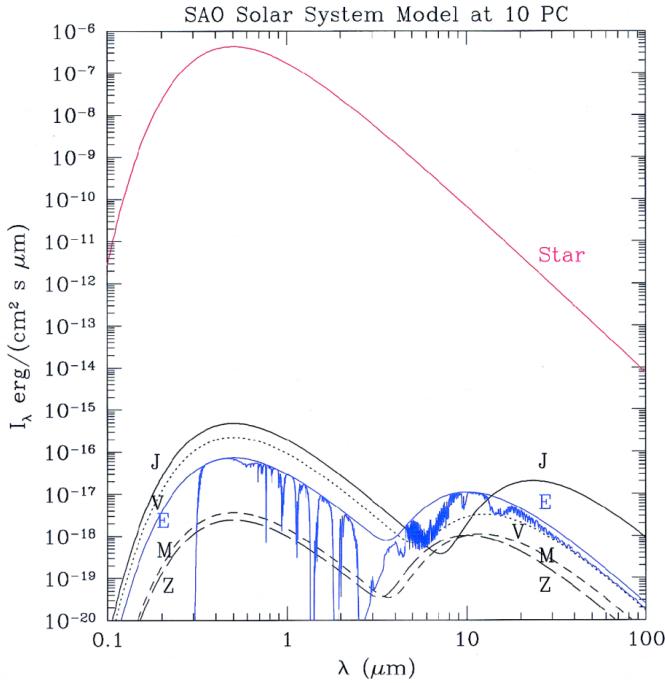


Figure 2: SAO solar system model at 10pc, illustrating the vast difference in luminosity between the Sun and the surrounding planets. However, in the mid infrared the contrast is dramatically reduced at the peak of the planet’s emission spectra (Des Marais et al., 2002).

Direct imaging can make use of both ground and space based observatories. However, the high spatial resolution required drives the need for a large primary mirror, limiting the possibilities of space-based telescopes. On the other hand, atmospheric turbulence necessitates the use of an adaptive optics equipped facility to observe from the ground. Atmospheric absorption due to telluric lines (absorption lines of Earth’s atmosphere) also restrict infrared observations to narrow bands.

In addition to the requiring high spatial resolution, it is also challenging to separate the light emitted by the planet from that of the star. Imaging techniques such as Angular Differential Imaging (ADI) (Marois et al., 2006) and Reference Differential Imaging (RDI) (Lafrenière et al., 2009; Soummer et al., 2011) provide methods for reducing the stellar point-spread-function (PSF). Coronagraphs are optical elements which suppress the stellar PSF through self-destructive interference or physical occultation, depending on the position in the optical path. The difference in spectra between the planet and the star can also be used to separate the two sources.

Presently, 10m class telescopes such as the Very Large Telescope (VLT) in Paranal, Chile or the Gemini Observatory split between Hawaii and Chile provide the best combination of resolution and instrumentation to perform direct imaging of exoplanets. The NACO instrument at the VLT provided the first image of an exoplanet in 2004 (Chauvin et al., 2004). These observatories are among those equipped with an adaptive optics system, coronagraphic instrumentation and near to mid infrared imaging and spectroscopic capabilities to directly image exoplanets, with several exemplar systems becoming standard objects of interest. While it’s terribly interesting to explore

the details of each of these objects, we will focus our discussion on objects will be used further in this study, due to their scheduled observation as part of the JWST GTO and Early Release Science (ERS) programs (Charles A Beichman et al., 2019c). The parameters of these and other directly imaged exoplanets and brown dwarfs are summarized in table 1.

In order to understand these objects, we must use a measured spectrum in order to infer physical properties. Parameters such as the carbon-to-oxygen (C/O) ratio provide insight into formation mechanisms (Nikku Madhusudhan, 2012). A planet that forms near its star will form in a hot region of the circumstellar disk, with a depletion of volatiles due to the high temperature - various species will freeze out at different radii within the disk. The measured C/O ratio of a planet will thus depend on its initial formation location and its migration path. (Turrini et al., 2015) outlines several formation pathways and how the C/O ratio will be affected. The current climate of exoplanets is also of interest. This requires inferences of atmospheric composition and structure from the spectrum, and will ultimately require time resolved measurements in order to study dynamics and variability.

VHS-1256 b

Originally discovered in 2015 (Gauza et al., 2015) as part of the VISTA Hemisphere Survey, VHS-1256b is a late-L dwarf in a 102 AU orbit around an M dwarf. (Gauza et al., 2015) present astrometric, photometric and spectroscopic data on the planet, finding an age of 150-300 Myr from a moving group association, a luminosity $\log(L_{bol}/L_{\odot})$ of -5.05 ± 0.22 and infer a mass of $11.2^{+9.2}_{-1.8} M_{\oplus}$. The effective temperature is found to be 880^{+140}_{-110} K from evolutionary models. This is substantially colder than field dwarfs of a similar spectral type (typically 1400K), and so it is proposed that a thick Fe and Mg-Si cloud layer acts to reduce the effective temperature. Similar findings are presented by (Rich et al., 2016) using Subaru/IRCS.

In (Miles et al., 2018), methane is detected using KECK/NIRSPEC in the L-band. The shallow depth of the feature indicates chemical disequilibrium in the photosphere, as the derived abundance departs from an equilibrium abundance by a factor of 10-100. However, the best fit model retrieves substantially different parameters for temperature (1240 K) when compared to previously published results.

The wide separation ($8''$) and proximity to Earth make VHS-1256b an ideal target for studying atmospheric properties. It will be observed as part of the JWST ERS Program (Hinkley et al., 2019), where a medium resolution spectrum ($R \geq 1700$) will be measured from 0.6-28 micron. This will enable a more precise measurement

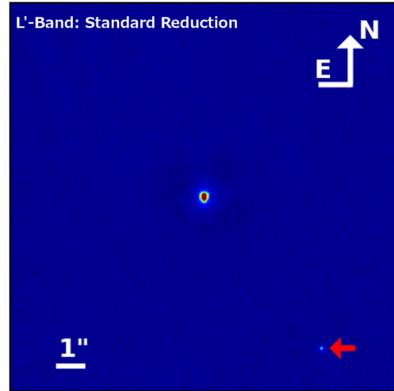


Figure 3: VHS-1256b as observed with Subaru/IRCS in the L'-band (Rich et al., 2016), reduced using the LOCI algorithm (Galicher et al., 2011).

of the abundance of methane and other species in the atmosphere, and will allow for investigation of the cloud properties in the mid infrared.

2M1207b

Using VLT/NACO, (Chauvin et al., 2004) discovered a low mass companion to the brown dwarf 2MASSWJ 1207334-393254 (2M1207) at a separation of 0.8", or 55AU, shown bottom-center in Fig 1. From their H,K and L'-band photometric observations and NIR spectroscopic measurements, 2M1207b was found to have a spectral type of L5-L9.5, a mass of $5 \pm 2 M_J$ and an effective temperature of 1250 ± 200 K. Followup VLT/NACO observations from (Mohanty et al., 2007) found a higher effective temperature of 1600 ± 100 K, and a higher mass of $8 \pm 2 M_J$, pushing it closer to the deuterium burning limit. More recent observations have measured periodic signals due to rotation and variability, but failed to constrain the rotation rate due to pointing variance (Zhou et al., 2019).

(Zhou et al., 2019) Also present simulated JWST/NIRCam observations of 2M1207b. Access to medium resolution spectroscopy in the mid infrared will allow the characterization of cloud condensate properties. The improvement in photometric precision by an order of magnitude will allow better measurement of the rotation rate and variability, and the increase in sensitivity will place lower limits on the possibility of further companions within the system. It will be observed as part of the JWST GTO program (Birkmann et al., 2019).

Name	d [pc]	Mass [M_J]	Sep [au]	Sep ["]	Age [Myr]	$\log(L_{bo}/L_\odot)$	T_{eff} [K]	References
Widely separated companions								
Close in companions								
2M1207b	152.4 ± 1.1	2 ± 1	41	0.8	10 ± 3	-4.68 ± 0.05	1600 ± 100	
51 Eridani b	29.4 ± 0.3	2 ± 1	13	0.45	23 ± 3	-5.06 ± 0.2	700	(Macintosh et al., 2015)
β Pic b	19.3 ± 0.2	2 ± 1	9	0.4	23 ± 3	-3.78 ± 0.03	1600 ± 100	(Quanz et al., 2010)
GJ 504b	17.56 ± 0.08	3 – 30	44	2.5	100 – 6500	-6.13 ± 0.03	544	(Skemer et al., 2016a)
HD 95086b	90.4 ± 3.3	5 ± 2	56	0.6	17 ± 4	-4.96 ± 0.10	1050	(De Rosa et al., 2016)
HR8799b	39.4 ± 1.0	5 ± 1	68	1.7	40 ± 5	-5.1 ± 0.1	870 ⁺³⁰ ₋₇₀	(Marois et al., 2008; Skemer et al., 2012)
HR8799c	39.4 ± 1.0	7 ± 2	38	0.95	40 ± 5	-4.7 ± 0.1	1090 ⁺¹⁰ ₋₉₀	(Marois et al., 2008; Skemer et al., 2012)
HR8799d	39.4 ± 1.0	7 ± 2	24	0.62	40 ± 5	-4.7 ± 0.2	1090 ⁺¹⁰ ₋₉₀	(Marois et al., 2008; Skemer et al., 2012)
HR8799e	39.4 ± 1.0	7 ± 2	14	0.38	40 ± 5	-4.7 ± 0.2	1000	(Marois et al., 2008; Skemer et al., 2012)
LkCa 15b	145 ± 15	6 ± 4	20	0.08	2 ± 1	
PDS 70b	113.43 ± 0.52	7 ± 2	23	0.19	5 ± 1	...	900	(Haffert et al., 2019)
PDS 70c	113.43 ± 0.52	4.4 ± 1	30	0.24	5 ± 1	...	10 ⁴	(Haffert et al., 2019)
Nearby Brown Dwarfs								
WISE 0855	2.2 ± 0.2	3 – 10	$10^3 – 10^4$	-10.5	225 – 260	(Luhman, 2014; Tinney et al., 2014)
Luhman 16B	1.998 ± 0.0004	28.6 ± 0.3	600 – 800	-4.68	1201	(Garcia et al., 2017; Sahlmann and Lazorenko, 2015)

Table 1: Summary of directly imaged planet and brown dwarf parameters based on (Bowler, 2016) and references therein. Luminosity for WISE 0855 is calculated in H band.

1.2 BROWN DWARFS

Brown dwarfs are the low mass result of a failed star formation process. On the low end of the mass scale, an object is considered a brown dwarf at $>13M_J$, which is the deuterium burning limit. By $75M_J$, the object is heavy enough to sustain hydrogen fusion and the object is considered a star. However, there have recently been observations even lower mass brown dwarfs, down to several Jupiter masses, raising questions of formation processes (Luhman, 2014). It is generally thought that brown dwarfs form during the gravitational collapse of a molecular cloud, while exoplanets form through a core accretion process in a circumstellar disk. Observations of high mass companions and low mass field objects then challenge these standard models.

While brown dwarfs are objects of scientific interest in their own right, we are particularly interested in their use as analogs for exoplanets due to their similar temperatures and pressures. Without the issue of contrast between an exoplanet and its host star, brown dwarfs are ideal targets for medium and high resolution spectroscopic characterization. As shown in table 1, they are also some of the closest known objects to the solar system, with several having been observed at around 2pc.

1.2.1 Observational Properties

Brown dwarfs are characterized by their spectral type, either by comparison to spectral templates, using indices derived from spectral parameters or through broadband photometric comparison (Helling and Casewell, 2014). Directly imaged exoplanets can also be classified using brown dwarf spectral types. Unlike stars which maintain their temperature and luminosity through fusion, brown dwarfs cool and change their spectral type with age, leading to a degeneracy between mass and age (Burrows et al., 2001). This spectral series is shown in Fig. 4.

As a brown dwarf cools and contracts over time, its surface gravity will increase, leading to the use of $\log(g)$ as a tracer of age (Manjavacas, 2014). Young, low surface gravity objects are particularly comparable to directly imaged exoplanets. In these young objects, clouds are a nearly universal feature (Cooper et al., 2003; Helling and Casewell, 2014), with thicker cloud decks appearing in low gravity objects (Helling and Casewell, 2014).

L-Type

L-dwarfs are the hottest brown dwarfs, with typical effective temperatures between 1300K and 2100K (Burrows et al., 2001). L-type spectra are notable for the disappearance of VO and TiO NIR absorption lines and the onset of molecular absorption features such as H_2O and CO, with CH₄ appearing in late L types (Manjavacas, 2014). Further key features of L-dwarfs is the formation of iron and silicate condensate, as well as the growth of neutral alkali lines (Burrows et al., 2001).

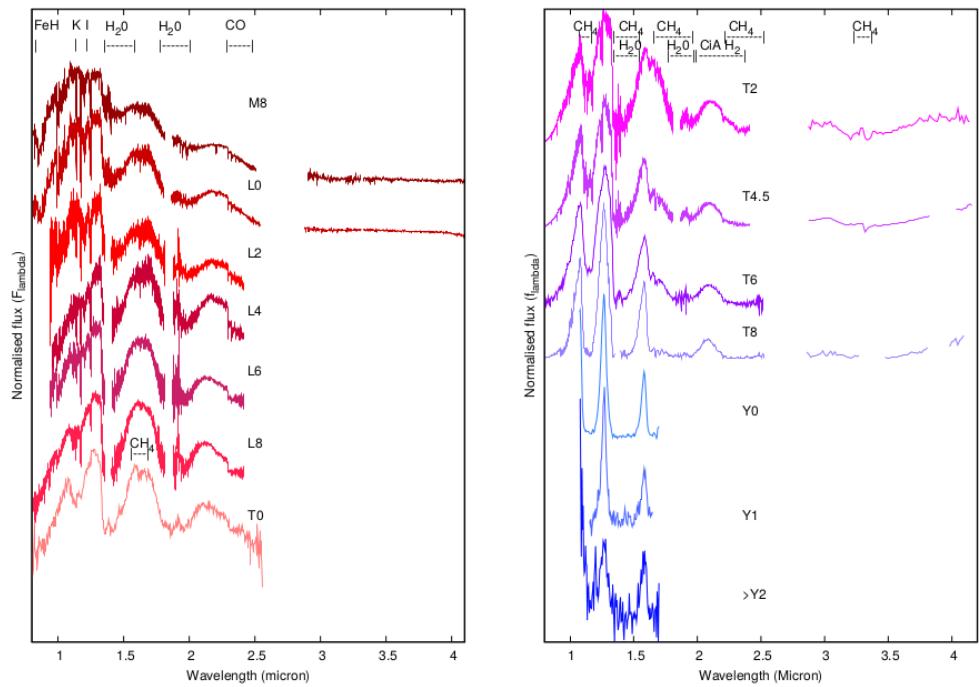


Figure 4: Near Infrared spectral series of brown dwarfs from early-M to early-Y as shown in (Helling and Casewell, 2014).

T-Type

As a brown dwarf ages it moves towards a T-type spectrum. The L/T transition occurs with the appearance of both CH_4 and CO absorption, and is characterized by increasingly blue J-H colour as the temperature decreases. There are several proposed mechanisms for this transition, with cloud fragmentation due to particle microphysics (Burningham et al., 2017) and convection processes being two examples (Tremblin et al., 2015). Both T- and L-dwarfs are highly variable due to complex atmospheric dynamics ranging from clouds to banding structures to hot spots and more (B. Biller, 2017). (Vos et al., 2019) presents how monitoring with JWST/MIRI will be able to constrain the mechanism behind this transition.

Y-Type

Y-type dwarfs are ultracool objects first discovered in (Cushing et al., 2011). With such cold temperatures, they contain deeper water and methane absorption features than present in T-dwarfs, and likely have ammonia present as well. Atmospheric models suggest typical temperatures between 300-500 K, which places them as the coldest detected and spectroscopically measured brown dwarfs to date (Cushing et al., 2011).

WISE 0855-0714

WISE-0855 is the coldest known brown dwarf at 250K, with an inferred mass of 5 M_J (Luhman, 2014), and a Y2-4 spectral type (Leggett et al., 2015). Although faint, with a J-band magnitude of 25, its proximity to the sun makes allows for its spectral characterization. Present measurements indi-

cate the presence of ammonia (Leggett et al., 2015) and water clouds (Jacqueline K Faherty et al., 2018; Morley et al., 2014) in its atmosphere.

WISE 0855, along with other Y-dwarfs will be the subject of JWST investigation (Oliveira, 2015; Oliveira et al., 2019). Its low mass and cold temperature make it the closest analog to solar system objects, especially to Jupiter. Further observations will allow for tighter constraints on atmospheric composition and cloud properties, as well as insight into whether such objects are the result of a star-like formation process or are an ejected, free floating planet (C. Beichman et al., 2014).

1.3 MOTIVATION

1.3.1 Current Status of Atmospheric Characterization

Both exoplanets and brown dwarfs raise interesting questions with regards to atmospheric properties, but there are substantial challenges both in gathering the data necessary to answer them and modeling the physics underlying the observable parameters. The best methods currently in use involve taking spectroscopic data and inferring atmospheric properties from the spectral features. The light we measure may be thermal emission from the planet, where it is absorbed and scattered as it passes through the planet's atmosphere, or it may be light from the planet's host star which passes through the upper layers of the atmosphere. These provide complementary information about the composition and structure of the atmosphere, probing different altitudes and pressures. While a more complete overview of exoplanet atmospheres is covered in the literature, e.g. (Nikku Madhusudhan et al., 2014; Sara Seager and Deming, 2010; Sing et al., 2018), we will briefly summarize the current methods used and what has been learned so far.

Transmission Spectroscopy

Many exoplanets have been discovered using the transit technique in which the planet passes in front of its host star, blocking a small fraction of its light. Through time series observations, particularly with satellites such as Hubble, Kepler, and TESS, we can observe this dip in stellar brightness, and infer properties of the planet. A key feature of this observation is that in the case the planet has an atmosphere, the brightness dip is wavelength dependent. Depending on the wavelength, different species within the atmosphere will absorb the light to a greater or lesser extent. Thus if a species is abundant within the atmosphere, it will create deep absorption features, which will make the apparent radius of the planet larger, increasing the transit

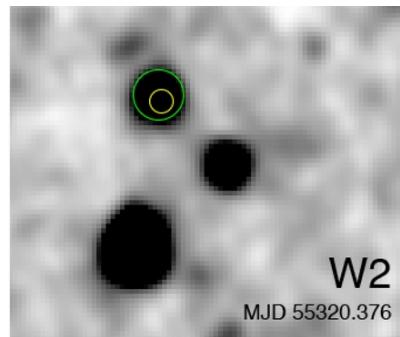


Figure 5: W₂, epoch 1 image of WISE0855 on top of a known background clump. The green circle represents the location of WISE0855, the yellow is the position of the background source (E. L. Wright et al., 2014).

depth. Measuring this radius variation is the procedure of transmission spectroscopy, and is used to probe the composition and structure of the upper atmospheres of transiting planets. In addition to transmission spectroscopy, secondary eclipse spectroscopy is another transit measurement that uses the reflected light and thermal emission of the planet, and measures the dip in total luminosity as the planet passes behind its host star. This provides a more direct measurement of the planet's reflection or emission spectrum. (Kreidberg, 2018) presents a concise overview of transmission and eclipse spectroscopy.

Transmission spectroscopy attempts to answer questions about atmospheric composition, formation history and present climate. To date, water features and carbon-bearing molecules have been detected, though molecules commonly present in the solar system such as methane and ammonia have not been detected, largely due to lack of long wavelength coverage and the high temperatures of most transiting planets (Kreidberg, 2018; Lee et al., 2012). The C/O ratio has been measured in some hot Jupiters, including WASP-12b, which provides a trace for formation history and current composition (Nikku Madhusudhan et al., 2011). For WASP-12b, the high C/O ratio (>1) and the lack of an observed thermal inversion in the highly irradiated atmosphere both stand in contrast to theoretical predictions, and demonstrate the necessity for improvements in atmospheric and formation modeling (Nikku Madhusudhan et al., 2011). In other atmospheres, nitrogen chemistry has been observed, and condensates (clouds and hazes) are nearly universal (MacDonald and Nikku Madhusudhan, 2017).

Future observations will increase the spectral resolution of transit observations, and will also extend the wavelength coverage. By probing the mid infrared, it may be possible to determine the composition of the clouds observed, and place tighter constraints of the abundances of species present within atmospheres (Kreidberg, 2018).

Emission Spectroscopy

In contrast to transit observations, emission spectroscopy is a direct measurement of the light emitted by the planet, usually in the infrared, where the planet's luminosity peaks due to Wein's law. Due to the low levels of flux emitted from most planets, most emission spectroscopy to date has been low to medium resolution, in order to collect enough light for measurement. However, this has already allowed us to begin to answer similar questions as posed for transmission spectroscopy. What are these atmospheres made of? How did these planets form? In many ways though, emission and transmission spectroscopy provide complementary information, and multiple ways of approaching these problems. Due to the different wavelength regimes, they are able to identify different species and probe different atmospheric depths.

Only recently has high quality exoplanet emission spectroscopy become possible, and a comprehensive overview is provided in (B. A. Biller and Bonnefoy, 2018). Measurements of H α emission in LkCa 15b have allowed for inferences of the mass accretion rate of a forming planet (Sallum et al., 2015), while observations of the PDS 70 system indicate the presence of a

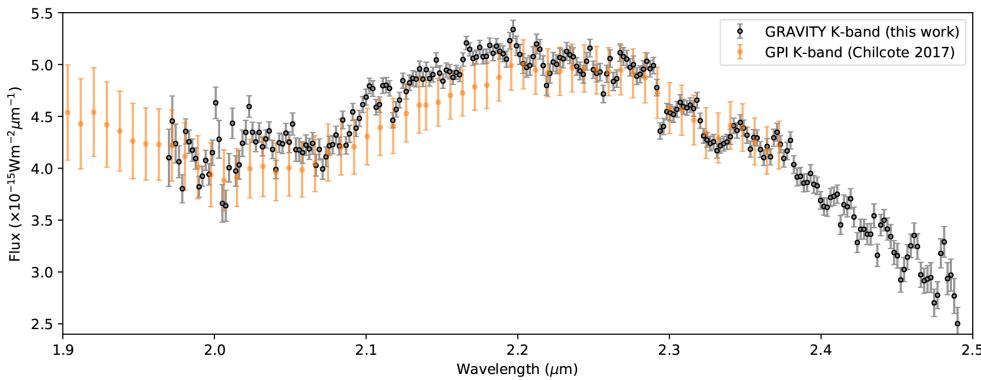


Figure 6: Flux calibrated K-Band emission spectrum of β Pic b as measured using the VLTI/GRAVITY at $R=500$ (GRAVITY Collaboration et al., 2020), along with the GPI K-Band spectrum from (Chilcote et al., 2017).

circumplanetary disk around PDS 70b (Christiaens et al., 2019; M. Keppler et al., 2018). With integrated field spectroscopy, (Hoeijmakers et al., 2018) show how spectroscopy can identify the presence of molecular species in a spectrum and how this can be used to discover companions within the contrast-limited regime. Using the VLTI/GRAVITY instrument, which combines light from all four Unit Telescopes (UTs) of the VLT into a single interferometer, medium resolution ($R=500$) spectra have been taken of HR 8799e (Lacour et al., 2019) and β Pic b (GRAVITY Collaboration et al., 2020), the latter of which is shown in Fig. 6. These spectra represent some of the best data available to date for exoplanets, and additional observations of well-known directly imaged planets are planned in the near future. While not yet accomplished for an exoplanet, it may be possible in the near future to longitudinally map cloud features of exoplanets, as has already been accomplished for brown dwarfs using the CRIRES instrument (Crossfield et al., 2014).

As most older planets will emit primarily in the thermal infrared, JWST/MIRI will provide unprecedented capabilities at imaging and characterizing these systems. (Danielski et al., 2018) shows that the MIRI LRS will allow for the detection of ammonia in the coldest targets, as well as characterize the abundances of other molecules such as CH₄, H₂O, CO₂ and PH₃. Many direct imaging observations of exoplanets have been proposed as part of the JWST GTO and ERS programs. In a white paper, (Charles A Beichman et al., 2019c) discuss how JWST will provide new insight into exoplanet atmospheres using direct emission imaging and spectroscopy, while (Michael R Line et al., 2019) examines the possibility of characterizing terrestrial planets using thermal emission spectroscopy.

1.3.2 JWST Studies

With the launch of JWST imminent, many proposals have been made to cover a wide range of science cases, as well as performing instrumental testing, calibration and validation. Exoplanet science is well represented within these first observations, and several of the proposals will be presented here.

Early Release Science

The Early Release Science program is an initiative designed to help scientists develop an understanding of the instruments available on JWST, as well as the tools needed to process the data. Thus the ERS provides an extensive catalog of public data immediately upon observation, and will take place within the first 5 months of JWST science operations. Both a transiting program (Bean et al., 2018) and a direct imaging program (Hinkley et al., 2019) have been approved. The direct imaging proposal has 52 hours observing time in order to take data using the full range of JWST instrumentation and observing modes. The goal is to image a representative sample of known directly imaged planets, including VHS-1256b, in order to develop the tools and techniques necessary to push the limits of the instrumentation.

GTO Programs

In addition to the ERS program, the Guaranteed Time Observations (GTO) program is designed to provide scientists who helped in the development of JWST hardware and software with a set amount of observing time. Many GTO programs focused on exoplanet science have been approved, including spectroscopic studies of 2M1207b and other commonly studied systems (Birkmann et al., 2019). Brown dwarf science is also well represented within the GTO program, with WISE-0855 receiving full spectroscopic coverage from 0.6-28 μm (Oliveira et al., 2019). Details of the observations for VHS-1256b, 2M1207b and WISE-0855 are discussed in 4.3.

1.3.3 Biosignatures and Future Missions

While JWST will provide higher spectral and spatial resolution in the infrared than any previous observatory, many questions will remain open for future missions. One of the ultimate unanswered questions in science is "Are we alone?". The detection of biosignatures in the near future with next generation 40m class telescopes (López-Morales et al., 2019) or proposed space missions such as LIFE (Quanz et al., 2019) and LUVOIR (LUVOIR Mission Concept Study Team, 2019) may provide our best chance at answering such questions. Instruments such as METIS on the ELT will offer high resolution ($R=100000$) integral field spectroscopy of nearby terrestrial planets, while both proposed space missions will have the spatial and spectral resolution necessary to characterize a nearby earth like planet. With such a goal in mind, it is necessary to develop the technical capabilities in both theory and observation order to achieve such ambitious goals in the not-so-distant future.

1.4 THESIS OVERVIEW

With sufficient background and motivation, we will now outline the remainder of this thesis.

Chapter 2 will provide a more extensive background of the James Webb Space Telescope, and in particular the MIRI Medium Resolution Spectrometer (MRS). We will outline the principle optical components dedicated to integral field spectroscopy, as well as the detector characteristics of MIRI. This will provide the necessary background to understand the instrumental and optical effects discussed in Chapter 3.

The third chapter examines the fringing effect in the MIRI MRS instrument. We discuss the optical effects that result in fringing patterns, as well as outlining current and future strategies for fringe correction. We describe the creation and processing of our mock observations using the MIRI instrumental simulator and the JWST data reduction pipeline. With the degraded spectra from the simulated data, we measure the impact of fringing on spectral extraction using cross correlation techniques, and how this impacts molecular mapping studies. This in turn motivates Chapter 4, where the species identified using molecular mapping can justify the inclusion or exclusion of particular species in an atmospheric retrieval.

In Chapter 4 we explore atmospheric retrievals with the MIRI MRS. We outline our procedure for performing a retrieval using the petitRADTRANS radiative transfer code and Multinest as an implementation of the nested sampling strategy for parameter space exploration. We measure the impact of fringing on parameter estimation, and also investigate how observing parameters will impact retrievals, discussing the advantages and challenges of studying atmospheres in the mid infrared.

Finally we summarize and discuss our findings and future investigations in the final chapter.

2

MIRI: THE MID-INFRARED INSTRUMENT

MIRI is an instrument that will provide unique capabilities for studying exoplanets and other cold and distant objects. This chapter will provide a detailed overview of the technical details and capabilities of the instrument. A complete description of MIRI is provided in a series of papers from (Boccaletti et al., 2015; Bouchet et al., 2015; Glasse et al., 2015; P. Lagage et al., 2015; Ressler et al., 2015; Rieke et al., 2015a,c; Wells et al., 2015; G. S. Wright et al., 2015).

2.1 THE JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE

JWST is a 6.5m space based observatory built in collaboration between NASA, ESA and CSA that will be located in a halo orbit at the L₂ Earth-Sun Lagrange point. As the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope and the Spitzer Space Telescope, it will provide a new perspective for infrared astronomy. It is currently scheduled to launch in March 2021.

James Webb is fully optimized for infrared astronomy. To reduce instrumental thermal background, the entire telescope will operate at cryogenic temperatures. A large sun-shield will help block solar infrared radiation. The lightweight beryllium mirrors are coated in gold to maximize reflectivity out to the mid infrared.

Of key interest to exoplanet science is the both the sensitivity and spatial resolution of the instrument. With its 6.5m primary, JWST will have a spatial resolution from 0.01" at 0.6 micron to 0.92" at 29 micron. The increase in sensitivity is due in part to the larger collecting area, but also to advances in detector technology since the previous generation of infrared observatories. For example, the MIRI instrument will have a minimum detectable flux of 0.13 μ Jy at 5.6 micron, or roughly a factor of 1000 better than what was possible with the Spitzer Space Telescope (Glasse et al., 2015).

There are four primary instruments that constitute the Integrated Science Instrument Module (ISIM). Near-Infrared Camera (NIRCam), which provides imaging with coronagraphic capabilities from 0.6-5 micron. The Near-Infrared Spectrograph (NIRSpec) provides fixed slit and integrated field unit spectroscopy capable of analyzing multiple objects simultaneously, and operates in the same wavelength range as NIRCam. The Fine Guidance Sensor/ Near-Infrared Imager and Slitless Spectrograph (FGS/NIRISS) allows for low and medium resolution spectroscopy with high photometric stability, as well as aperture masking interferometry. The final instrument, MIRI, is the subject of this thesis.



Figure 7: The James Webb Space Telescope during integration of the telescope into the Spacecraft Element (**assembled**).

Subsystem

Imaging
 4QPM Coronagraphic Imaging
 Lyot Coronagraphic Imaging
 Low Resolution Spectroscopy
 Medium Resolution Spectroscopy

Table 2: Summary of MIRI observing modes.

2.2 MIRI

The Mid-Infrared Instrument (MIRI) provides imaging, fixed slit and integrated field spectroscopy between 4.8 and 28 micron (Rieke2015). It will operate at a temperature of 6.7K to reduce instrumental backgrounds over its wavelength range of 0.6-28.8 micron.

(Kendrew2015)

2.3 THE MEDIUM RESOLUTION SPECTROGRAPH

The Medium Resolution Spectrograph (MRS) consists of four integrated field spectrographs projected onto two detectors, covering 4.8-28 micron with a spectral resolution varying from R=1700 to R=3500.

(Wells2015)

Channel	Sub-band	Band	Detector	λ Range [μm]	FOV [as]	$\lambda/\Delta\lambda$
1	Short	1A	SW	4.83 - 5.82	3.46×3.72	3500
	Medium	1B		5.62 - 6.73	3.46×3.72	3500
	Long	1C		6.46 - 7.76	3.41×3.72	3300
2	Short	2A	SW	7.44 - 8.90	4.16×4.76	3000
	Medium	2B		8.61 - 10.28	4.16×4.76	3000
	Long	2C		9.94 - 11.87	4.12×4.76	3000
3	Short	3A	LW	11.47 - 13.67	6.00×6.24	2700
	Medium	3B		13.25 - 15.80	5.96×6.24	2300
	Long	3C		15.30 - 18.24	5.91×6.24	2300
4	Short	3A	LW	17.54 - 21.10	7.14×7.87	1700
	Medium	3B		20.44 - 24.72	7.06×7.06	1700
	Long	3C		23.84 - 28.82	6.99×7.87	1500

Table 3: Properties of the MIRI MRS channels (Wells et al., 2015).

2.3.1 Coordinates

There are three primary coordinate systems in use with JWST/MIRI-MRS, of which two will be relevant for this thesis, with the detector and local MRS coordinates described in Fig. 8 (Argyriou et al., [nodate](#)).

The detector coordinate grid is formed by counting x/y pixels, as well as the slice number. Each of the two MRS detectors is an array of 1032×1024 pixels, though only 1024 are photosensitive in the horizontal direction. Each image slice from the IFU appears as a curved stripe on the detector, though neighboring stripes on the detector do not correspond to neighbouring slices of the image.

The local MRS coordinate system is described in terms of α , β and λ . The continuous α coordinate is the along slice direction, while β is perpendicular and discrete, corresponding to the slice number. λ is the wavelength. Both α and λ are fit by a second order polynomial to account for along and across slice distortion (Wells et al., 2015). Each detector sub array has its own mapping to α , β , λ space, due to the differences in FoV, slice count, distortion and spectral resolution.

The third coordinate frame is the global coordinate system of JWST itself, V₁, V₂, V₃. The V₁ coordinate refers to the symmetry axis of the telescope, V₃ points towards the foldable secondary mirror support structure strut. V₂ completes the coordinate system, being orthogonal to V₁ and V₃. This coordinate system will not be used in this thesis.

2.3.2 Integrated Field Spectroscopy

2.3.3 Optical Systems

Channels, bands, etc [ref:Chen2019](#)

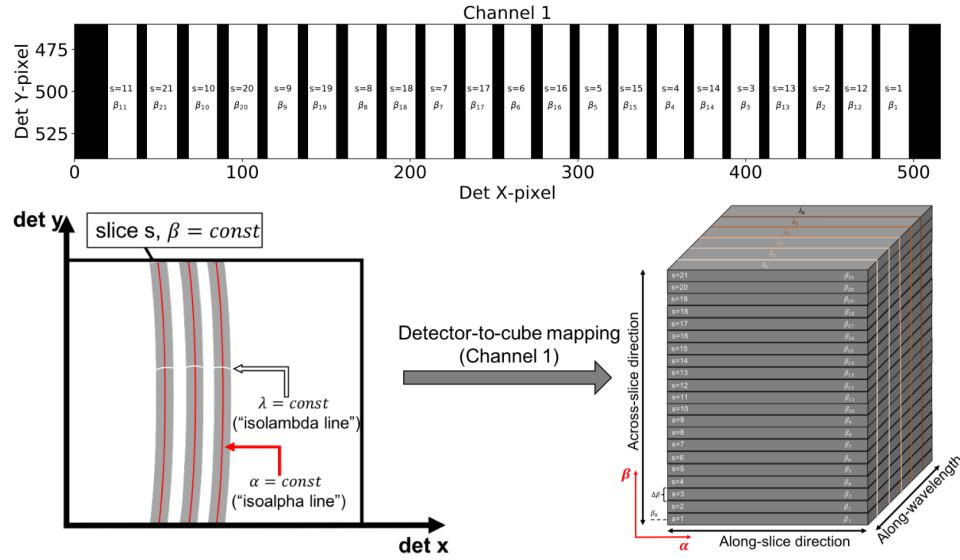


Figure 8: Description of the MRS detector (x, y, s) coordinate system to the local MRS (α, β, λ) cube coordinates. **Top:** Detector coordinates. Note that the consecutive stripe numbers s_i, s_{i+1} correspond to neighbouring image slices. **Bottom:** Description of the (invertible) detector-to-cube transformation (Argyriou et al., [nodate](#)).

Figure 9: Detector images of a spatially and spectrally flat calibration source for the SW detector (left) and LW detector (right).

2.3.4 Detectors

Readout Modes

2.4 OBSERVATIONS

2.4.1 Dithering

2.4.2 Exposure time calculations

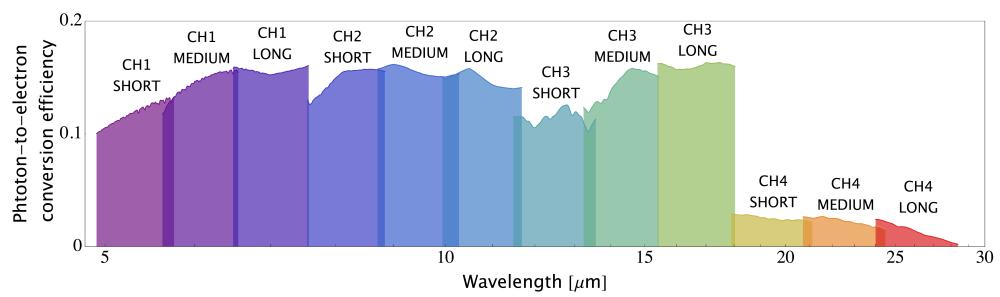


Figure 10: Average photon-to-electron conversion efficiencies for the MIRI MRS detectors

3

FRINGING EFFECTS IN MIRI

Understanding optical and instrumental effects is critical for creating accurate simulated observations and for characterizing systematics. These systematics and uncertainties in turn impact the potential science results from any instrument by biasing measurements, reducing the signal to noise ratio of measurements or by injecting non-physical signals and correlations. The aim of this chapter is to examine fringing in the MIRI detectors and how this effect is modeled in the instrumental simulator (MIRISIM). We will examine the current status of fringe modeling and correction before discussing the modifications made to the MIRI instrumental simulator in order to model point-source fringing effects.

In order to quantify the effect of fringing on a spectrum, we examine the effect of fringing on a cross correlation between the extracted spectrum from the instrument and a known template. This provides a measure of the extent to which the signal has been degraded. In addition we examine the impact of this on the science case of molecular mapping, where cross correlations between a cube of IFU data and a molecular spectral template are used to identify the presence of a given species in an observed object.

3.1 FRINGING

Thin film interference occurs when light is coherently reflected at the boundary between two layers and interferes with the incident light. This is the principle on which Fabry-Pérot interferometers function. As we wish to determine the effect of fringing on the amplitude of the signal received by the detector as a function of wavelength, we are effectively interested in the transmittance of a series of Fabry-Pérot interferometers. Assuming an ideal plane-parallel optical cavity with a reflectance R at both boundaries, thickness D , and an angle θ at which the light travels within the cavity, we can compute the transmittance as:

$$T_c = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{4R}{(1-R)^2} \sin^2\left(\frac{\delta}{2}\right)} \quad (1)$$

Where the phase δ at half a wavelength ($\phi = \pi$), with wavenumber σ is:

$$\delta = 4\pi\sigma D \cos\theta - (\phi - \pi) \quad (2)$$

Systems with a spacing on the order of micrometers to millimeters produces significant interference for infrared light (Lahuis and Boogert, 2003).

The detectors of the MRS consist of several layers, as shown in Fig. 11, with a characteristic thickness of tens of micron, which results in significant (10%-30%) ‘fringing’ in a spectrally flat signal - visible in Fig. 9. The geometric thicknesses of the detector layers are given in table 4.

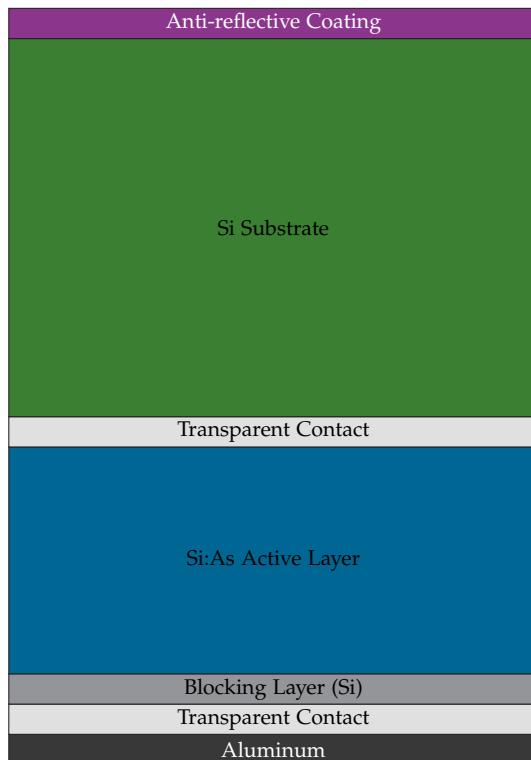


Figure 11: Layers of the MIRI MRS detectors. Note that thicknesses are not to scale (Rieke et al., 2015c).

While this is typical for infrared detectors such as those in the Spitzer Space Telescope (Lahuis and Boogert, 2003) or in the Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph on board HST (Malumuth2003), the sensitivity and spectral resolution of the MRS increase the significance of this issue. The MIRI consortium has stated that the error budget for all detector effects must be 3.3% or less. Present fringing corrections result in a 5% deviation from a photometrically accurate signal, and can introduce correlated noise which will degrade any measured spectrum. Therefore it is critical to examine the impact of fringing on a signal, the parameters that influence the fringing strength and phase, and possible solutions for fringe correction. If all of the geometric and optical parameters were known, this would be sufficient to numerically solve for the fringing pattern within MIRI using eqn 1. Unfortunately, uncertainties in the thickness in the detector layers, variations in the layer deposition thickness, and the uncertainty of transmittance and reflectance of the materials used at cryogenic temperatures prevents the implementation of such a numerical model. Instead, we will turn to calibration data taken to empirically characterize the fringing pattern.

While a more complete treatment of proposed fringe correction can be found in (Argyriou2020) and (Fred Lahuis and Muller, 2018), this work will examine the implementation of fringing into the MIRI instrumental simulator and address the current state of fringe correction in the JWST Data Calibration Pipeline. We will discuss the architecture and usage of MIRISIM, along with the modifications we have made in order to model point-source fringing.

Layer	Material	Depth [μm]	Comments
Anti-Reflection Coating	ZnS	0.66	Optimized for $\lambda = 6\mu\text{m}$.
Substrate (raw wafer)	Si	460	Inactive layer.
Bottom Transparent contact	?	?	Not transparent, negative applied bias voltage.
Active layer	Si:As	35	Photoelectric absorption layer.
Blocking layer	Si	4	Inactive layer.
Top transparent contact	?	?	Not transparent. Positive applied bias voltage.
Pixel metalization	Al	semi-infinite	Forms metallized electrical contact with top transparent layer.

Table 4: Detector layer compositions and mean geometric thicknesses.

3.1.1 Current Status of Fringing Correction

Three test campaigns have been run in order to characterize MIRI: the Flight Model (FM) in 2008-09, the Cryogenic Vacuum (CV) in 2015-16, and the Optical Telescope element/ Integrated Science (OTIS) tests in 2017. Fringing was a major subject of both the FM and CV campaigns. The first fringe model is fit to a spectrally flat, spatially extended source based on the FM test data. This is used to derive a ‘fringe flat’, and example of which is presented in [13](#).

However, due to the dependance of fringing on the incident angle of the light, a single model of fringing is insufficient to describe the full effect. Therefore, we use data taken in XXXXXXXXXX at various points across the detector and quantify how this changes the extracted spectra after processing in the JWST pipeline.

DESCRIBE HOW THE DATA WAS TAKEN HERE. - Problems with point vs extended sources - multiple collection runs ([VanderPlas, 2018](#))

Fred Lahuis and Muller, [2018](#)

3.2 MIRISIM

The MIRI instrument has been modeled in python as a program known unsurprisingly as MIRISIM ([Consortium, 2018](#)). This program takes in an astronomical ‘scene’ along with some configuration parameters to output a detector data product, similar to what will be produced by the actual instrument. MIRISIM is relatively full-featured simulator, modeling the instrumental PSF, various noise sources and distortion maps, among other effects. While MIRISIM is functional for all of the MIRI sub-instruments, this report will only deal with the Medium-Resolution Spectrometer (MRS) sub instrument, described in section [2.3](#). The objective of this section is to describe the implementation and testing of an updated optical model of the ‘fringing’ effect - an optical effect caused by thin film interference from the multiple layers of the detector.

3.2.1 Architecture

While the full documentation for MIRISIM is available in (Consortium, 2018) and with python documentation in (Cossou, 2018), in this section we will outline the procedure for generating a simulated detector image. In particular, we will emphasize the parameter choices made in the setup for our simulations.

A MIRISIM simulation begins by setting up a **scene** using the `skysim`. This represents the view that the telescope will have of some astrophysical system. In general, a scene can be built from nearly anything: a fits file of an actual observation, models of galaxies and more. Built in are tools for producing simple point source and extended source objects. An SED of arbitrary spectral resolution is then attached to the object from an external file, with units of micron for the wavelength and μJy for the incident flux on the detector. There are also built in tools for blackbody SEDs, and individual lines of arbitrary position and depth. All of our SEDs are generated using `petitRADTRANS`, and attached as an external spectrum. A background can be applied, representing both astrophysical emission sources as well as thermal emission from the telescope itself. We chose not to include a background term, as background subtraction is using a simple model and image-from-image subtraction will result in an ideal correction.

For our observations, we only consider a single point source within the field of view. While this is an oversimplification, particularly in the case of close in planets, it is not the purpose of this thesis to explore the procedures for extracting a companion spectrum in a contrast limited regime. Instead, we assume that the spectral extraction will be adequate, though our simplification provides somewhat of a best case scenario.

The scene is then processed using a set of instrument and detector simulators `obssim`, `scasim` and `specsim`. These make use of the calibration data products (CDPs) in order to model optical distortions and detector effects. The output of this simulation is a set of uncalibrated data files, similar to what will be produced with on-sky observations. From the scene, an illumination model is produced. This transforms the on sky image using telescope and instrument optics in order to produce the intensity pattern incident on the detector itself. As our observations make use only of the MRS, they are then processed using `specsim`, which makes use of the `pySpecSim` module. This module is where most instrumental effects are applied, including detector sensitivities and fringing. These are applied by multiplying the illumination model by the CDPs. The set of fringe CDPs covers each of the MRS sub-bands, and contains a fringe flat. This is a 2D array of multiplicative factors used to apply the fringe pattern to the illumination model, an example of which is given in Fig 13. Presently, these are derived from extended source CV data, CDP version 07.02.05. Once detector effects are applied, and the incident flux is converted into DN counts, a detector image is produced and stored in a fits file. A raw detector image for WISE 0855 is shown in Fig. 12

When running a simulation, the user must set the observation parameters. This includes setting the instrument used (MRS), dither pattern, readout mode, and further MRS parameters. Our parameter selections are based

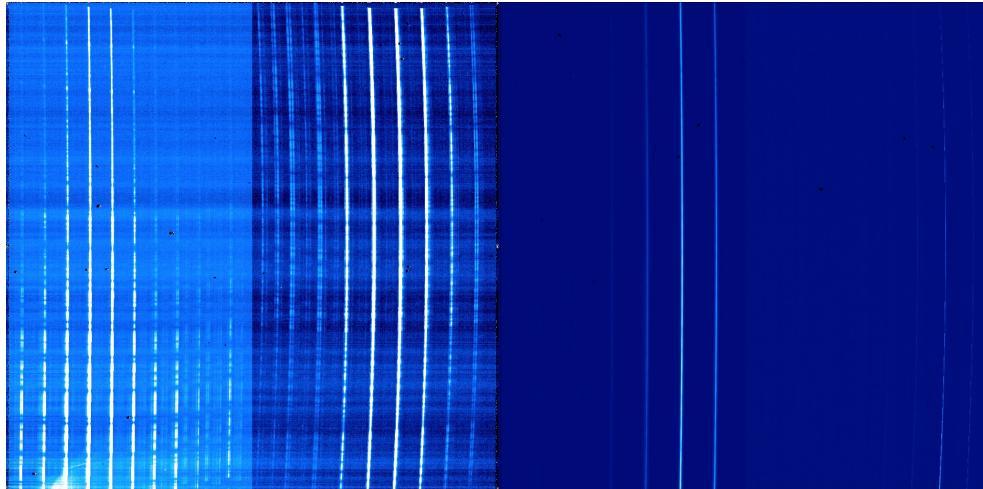


Figure 12: **Right Panel:** Channel 1 (left) and Channel 2 (right). **Left Panel:** Channels 3 (right) and 4 (left). Observation of WISE 0855 using the SHORT disperser. Fringing has been disabled for this particular observation. The color scale is in sqrt(DN) to highlight faint features.

on the parameters used in the JWST ERS and GTO proposals for our target objects, described in more detail in [4.3](#) and summarized in table [6](#).

3.2.2 Data Products

All of the CDP files are derived from test campaign data, and represent the best empirical knowledge of the instrument. The primary CDPs of interest for this project are the photometric calibration data products and the fringe flats. The PHOTOM files map the sensitivity of each detector pixel in order to represent the varying sensitivity of the detectors with wavelength. They convert from an incident flux to detector counts based on measured efficiencies. Recently the PHOTOM files were modified from being divided into the illumination model to being multiplied in. This, along with other issues, has led to inconsistencies between the input flux and output of the JWST pipeline. To best correct for this, we ensure that we are using the most up-to-date PHOTOM files (v8B.04.00) in both MIRISIM and the JWST pipeline.

The FRINGE CDP files contain fringe flats which are multiplied into the illumination model. Presently, these are based off extended source CV data (v07.02.05). However, for point source observations this produces results very different than is measured (Argyriou et al., [2018b](#)). Thus we attempt to improve the fringing model by using a set of fringe flats derived from point

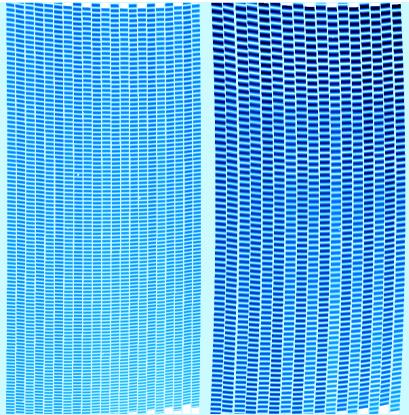


Figure 13: Fringe flat derived from FM data for the SW detector, in the SHORT sub-band v07.02.00. Color scale is linear.

source FM data. In principle, a complete set of fringe flats that cover point sources located at each position in the detector plane would reproduce an extended source fringe flat. Indeed, at the center of the PSF, the extended source fringe flat models the point source fairly well, with discrepancies increasing towards the PSF wings (Argyriou et al., [nodate](#)). In order to fairly compare our improvements, we will also compare to an older version of the fringe CDPs (v07.02.00) which is based of FM extended source data.

3.2.3 Fringing Model Implementation

Ultimately this data collection produced a series of fringe flats of an almost point like at various position across the detector and in each channel. We implemented a new routine into the `pySpecSim` module of MIRISIM to read in the location of point sources within a scene, and apply the correct position dependent fringe flat. This implementation comes with several caveats: namely that the fringing model is not yet fully developed, so it can only be considered accurate for point sources located at the same (α, β) location as the source used to produce the fringe flat. Additionally, the source used to generate the data is not a true point source, nor are there fringe flats produced for the full MRS wavelength range. We stress that the goal of this testing is to demonstrate the significance of this effect to justify the need for a more complete model along with additional calibration data to constrain the detector layer parameters.

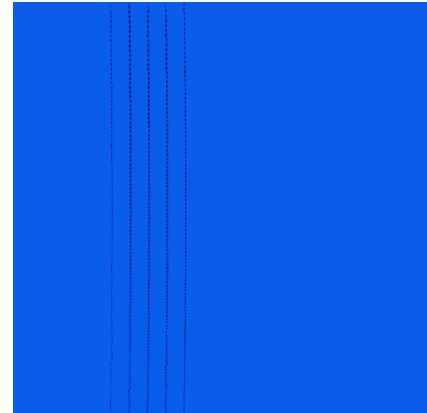


Figure 14: Point source fringe flat derived from FM data for channel 1A at $\alpha = 1.001$, $\beta = 0.602$. Color scale is linear.

3.3 JWST PIPELINE

(Bushouse et al., [2015](#))

3.3.1 Stage 1 Processing

The raw data files read from MIRISIM (or eventually the MIRI instrument itself) are a series of *exposures*, each made up of set of *integrations* containing a some number of *groups* or frames. Each group is a non-destructive read-out of the detector arrays, providing a series of increasing counts known as ramps in DN/s (digital number per second). The first stage of the JWST pipeline takes these raw files, applies a series of steps and outputs a single file for each input exposure in units of countrate. This procedure is applied to any MIRI data. We used default pipeline settings to apply this procedure, and applied all steps applicable to the MIRI instrument. The particular cali-

bration procedures for MIRI MRS data is described in (Labiano-Ortega et al., 2016).

3.3.2 Stage 2 Processing

For the second stage of processing we use the Stage 2 Spectroscopic Processing pipeline, and apply the steps individually to maintain control over parameters. The second stage pipeline applies instrument specific corrections that result in a photometrically calibrated exposure. For the MRS, this involves the following series of steps, some of which will be described in further detail below.

1. `assign_wcs` Assign a World Coordinate System (WCS) to each exposure.
2. `flat_field` Flatten photometric variation from differences in gain and dark current.
3. `srctype` Assign whether the target is a point or extended source based on input from the raw data files or observation parameters.
4. `straylight` Remove known stray light component.
5. `fringe` Divide by an extended source fringe flat.
6. `photom` Photometrically calibrate the exposure based on known pixel sensitivities and areas.
7. `cube_build` Transform from a (set of) 2D detector images to a 3D IFU cube in (α, β, λ) .

Photometric Calibration

Photometric calibration is the process of removing detector and optical biases to ensure that the measured output corresponds to the true flux incident onto the telescope. This process occurs in the PHOTOM step of the JWST pipeline, and uses reference files which store per-pixel photon-to-electron conversion efficiencies along with pixel areas in arcsec to transform the count rate data product to a surface brightness measurement. This corrects for the wavelength dependent bias shown in Fig. 10.

However, this step remains under development, and does not produce absolutely calibrated images. In particular, even using the most up to date reference files (v8D.04.00) there remains discontinuities between channels, and poorly calibrated slopes.

Fringing correction

Carnall, 2017

Cube Building

Aperture Photometry

Once the data from the pipeline has been transformed into a spectral cube, we can perform aperture photometry using the `photutils` package to extract a 1D spectrum of the source. For each frame in each sub-band the coordinates of the spaxel at with the peak flux is detected using `photutils find_peaks`, which provides the location for the center of a circular aperture. A radius of 5 spaxels is used to encompass the entire PSF for a point source. The input file must be photometrically calibrated, with units of surface brightness in mJy/as². Using the `aperture_photometry` function, we sum all of the contributions within the central aperture. Using a set of additional apertures, we measure and subtract the median background surface brightness. This measurement is then converted into flux units by multiplying by the spaxel area in as². The standard deviation of the background measurements is used to define the error on the flux measurement. While optimal extraction techniques exist, given our known input signal and background, this procedure is adequate for producing a spectrum in each sub-band, which can then be combined into a single spectrum for all measured sub-band.

Unfortunately, due to the issues described above with the PHOTOM step of the JWST pipeline, the spectrum built using aperture photometry does not accurately reflect the input spectrum in slope or absolute photometry. Therefore, we correct the extracted spectrum channel by channel. We fit a cubic polynomial to a median filtered copy of both the template spectrum and the extracted spectra. The cubic fit to the extracted spectra is subtracted from the data, and the fit to the template is added. Thus this procedure corrects the slope and median flux value, but does not affect high frequency noise or signals. Fig. 15 shows an example of the results of this procedure. We believe that this is a justified measure, as the errors with photometric calibration in the pipeline should be resolved before first light of the telescope.

3.3.3 Cross-Correlation

Ignas Snellen et al., 2014 Simkin, 1974 Tonry 1979 Petermann, 2019 Bodis, 2007 To quantify the similarity of the spectrum output by the JWST pipeline to the input into MIRISIM, we rely on the technique of cross correlation. For two arbitrary, complex-valued functions $f(t)$ and $g(t)$, we can compute the cross correlation as a function of the shift τ between the functions (typically in time or velocity space):

$$(f \star g)(\tau) \equiv \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f^*(t)g(t + \tau)dt \quad (3)$$

Our signals of interest are astrophysical spectra, measured in a finite number of discrete wavelength bins. For such a signal with M bins:

$$(f \star g)[n] \equiv \sum_{m=0}^M f^*[m]g[m + n] \quad (4)$$

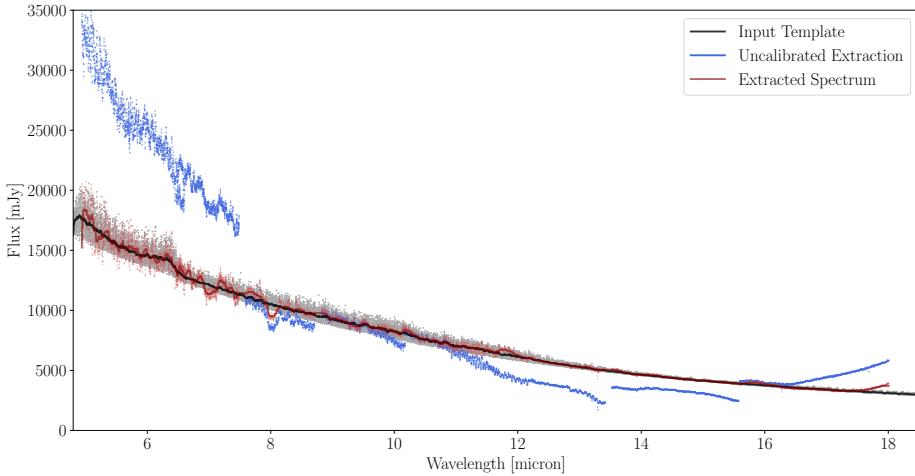


Figure 15: Comparison of an input spectrum generated using petitRadTrans and the empirically calibrated output spectrum after extraction from the cube produced by the JWST pipeline.

Care must be taken when cross-correlating signals, as differences in normalization can result in changes in the correlation coefficient. Our procedure takes in two spectra. The first is an emission spectrum produced by the petitRadTrans program P. Mollière et al., 2019, which provides our forward model with which we compare our data spectrum. Our data is the result of passing the template spectrum through MIRISIM, and extracting it from the resulting detector image using the JWST pipeline. We then rebin the high-resolution input spectrum to the same wavelength bins as the data spectrum, using the `spectres` package. Prior to normalization, we remove any outliers from the spectrum (due to binning errors or instrumental effects) by setting any data points separator by more than 15 standard deviations from the mean to the median value of the spectrum. For each spectrum, we subtract the minimum value to remove any offset in the spectrum, and divide by the maximum value to restrict the range to [0,1]. We then use apply a Savitzky-Golay filter with a window of 1/4 the length of the spectrum and a polynomial order of 3, which we then subtract from the unfiltered spectrum. This removes the continuum emission from the spectrum, and centers it around 0. We then renormalize the spectrum by dividing by the maximum absolute value such that the range is in [-1,1]. The cross correlation between the forward model and itself is computed, excluding the region of interest around 0 offset. This ‘autocorrelation’ is subtracted from the cross correlation between the forward model and the data spectrum in order to remove secondary peaks. Finally, we normalize the cross correlation by the standard deviation of the cross correlation (excluding the central peak), giving an output measured as a signal to noise ratio.

		MIRISIM Fringing Model			
		None	FM Extended	FM Point On Axis	FM Point Off Axis
Correction	None				
	Ext. Flat				

Figure 16: Normalised Input/Output Spectrum for VHS-1256b, Residuals, Hists, Cross Corr

3.4 RESULTS

3.4.1 Residual Statistics

In addition to computing the cross correlation between the forward model and the data spectrum, we also examine the residuals between the two spectra. Here we can see any unexpected variations between the two (periodic signals, offsets or other features). We can also examine a histogram of the residuals, normalized by the standard deviation of the data spectrum. This provides us with a distribution which should have a mean of 0 and unit width if the data are unbiased and share a distribution with the true input spectrum.

3.4.2 Fringing Results

1. A stronger input signal results in a stronger correlation.
2. Fringing does NOT necessarily degrade the cross correlation SNR, but rather increases it. The scale of this increase seems to depend on the absolute magnitude of the correlation (ie, a larger increase at higher SNR)
3. The residuals from subtracting the template from the data has structure.
4. If the residuals are histogrammed (and normalized by the standard deviation of the data), the width of the distribution may correspond to the cross correlation SNR (wider distribution = lower SNR)
5. Only when strongly increasing the fringing effect does the SNR decrease.
6. Correcting for fringing using the standard JWST fringe map decreases the SNR when compared to the case of fringing with no correction, but is typically still above the no-fringing case.
7. The JWST correction performs worse in the off axis case, as the fringe pattern begins to vary more when compared to the CV fringing model.

3.4.3 Molecular Mapping

4

ATMOSPHERIC RETRIVALS

Everything photon of light that we receive from an exoplanet will interact with its atmosphere, and will therefore provide us with a hint of what that atmosphere may look like. An atmospheric retrieval is the process of reconstructing the atmosphere of an object based on an observed spectrum. This process relies heavily on having accurate models which can be parameterized by the physical quantities we are interested in: generally the temperature, pressure and composition (Nikku Madhusudhan, 2018). As these models cover a very large parameter space (>10 parameters, each covering several orders of magnitude), it is necessary to have an efficient method for sampling this space, computing a model and comparing this model to the data (Björn Benneke and Sara Seager, 2012).

This chapter will outline the process of an atmospheric retrieval from modelling to marginalization of posteriors, and will examine the impact that the instrumental effects described in chapter 3 have on the retrieved parameters. Additionally, this will provide an example of how the MIRI MRS can be used to explore exoplanet and brown dwarf atmospheres, and what observational parameters should be considered when studying these objects.

Schlafwin et al., 2018 Fisher et al., 2019 Oreshenko 2019 Barman et al., 2015
Björn Benneke, 2013 Bjoern Benneke and Sara Seager, 2012 Blanco-Cuaresma 2018
Konopacký et al., 2013

(Morley et al., 2018) Lupu et al., 2016 Gandhi and Nikku Madhusudhan, 2018 Baudino et al., 2017 Michael R. Line et al., 2013 Madhusudhan 2018b
P. G. Irwin et al., 2008 Tyler D. Robinson et al., 2016 Waldmann et al., 2015b
Waldmann et al., 2015a Michael R. Line et al., 2015, 2017; Zalesky et al., 2019

Batalha et al., 2018 Feng et al., 2018 P. Mollière et al., 2019

Atmospheric Modeling

Atmospheric modelling is the task of creating spectra based on the physical properties of the atmosphere. This is a broad task that can range from a 3D Global Circulation Model (GCM) which accounts for self-consistent atmospheric chemistry (Chen et al., 2019) to a 1D model based around an empirical temperature-pressure profile (P. Mollière et al., 2019). The choice of model depends largely on the requirements for accuracy and computational cost. Considering the potentially millions of possible atmospheres that must be examined in a retrieval problem, whatever model is used must be computationally efficient above all else.

4.1 PETITRADTRANS

For this work we chose to use the petitRADTRANS package due to its user-friendly python implementation, high speed computation for retrieval

Property	Description
Temperature	Parameterized, e.g. (Guillot, 2010)
Abundances	Parameterized, e.g. vertically constant
Scattering	Cloud scattering, transmission spectra only
Clouds	Power law and condensation clouds
Cloud particle size	f_{SED} and K_{ZZ} or parameterized
Particle size distribution	log-normal, variable width
Cloud abundance	Parameterized
Wavelength spacing	R=1000 (c-k), 10^6 (lbl)
Valid emission spectra	Clear, from NIR and longer

Table 5: Description of the parameters available in petitRADTRANS. For cloud particles, f_{SED} is the mass-averaged ratio of the cloud particle settling speed and mixing velocity. K_{ZZ} is the atmospheric eddy diffusion coefficient (Ackerman and Mark S. Marley, 2001)

use and extensive high resolution, line-by-line spectral library for generating planetary spectra (P. Mollière et al., 2019). It is a 1D, radiative transfer package with many parameters options, described in table 5. PetitRADTRANS can compute both emission and transmission spectra, with an output spectral resolution of R=1000 in correlated k mode, or R=1 000 000 in line-by-line mode.

Note that much of the following sections applies to many other similar 1D radiative transfer atmospheric modelling programs such as ATMO (Goyal 2018), Planetary Spectrum Generator (Villanueva 2018), HELIOS (Malik et al., 2017, 2019) and others. Many (or even most) of these programs rely on the same set of high-resolution molecular line lists, including HITRAN/HITEMP (Rothman 1973; Gordon et al., 2017; Rothman et al., 2010), ExoMol/ExoCross (Tennyson 2016a; Tennyson et al., 2016; Yurchenko et al., 2018) and others.

4.1.1 Radiative Transfer

In order to compute the emission spectrum an initial featureless black-body spectrum $B(T_{int})$ is passed through multiple discrete layers of the atmosphere, parameterized by their temperature, pressure, and the opacities of each of the species present in a given layer. Modeling each layer as plane parallel, the intensity is computed as in (P. G. Irwin et al., 2008; P. Mollière et al., 2017, 2019)

$$I_{top} = B(T_{int})\mathcal{T}^{atmo} + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=0}^{N_L-1} \left[B(T^i) + B(T^{i+1}) \right] (\mathcal{T}^i - \mathcal{T}^{i+1}) \quad (5)$$

N_L is the number of layers in the atmosphere, and \mathcal{T} is the transmission from a given layer to the top of the atmosphere. All quantities are averaged per wavelength bin in c-k mode, while they are evaluated at each wavelength point in line-by-line mode.

(Guillot, 2010)

4.1.2 Opacity Sources

To compute the emission spectra of an atmosphere, petitRADTRANS accounts for various opacity contributions including absorption and emission lines, collisionally induced absorption, cloud opacity and scattering and Rayleigh scattering cross sections. These sources are described in detail in (P. Mollière et al., 2019), summarized in tables 2 and 3. For this work we consider only the case of a cloud-free atmosphere due to the complexity of realistic cloud modeling.

Line-by-line

In its high resolution line-by-line mode, petitRADTRANS computes emission spectra with $R=10^6$. These spectra are computed using opacity sources for molecular and atomic lines from ExoMol/ExoCross library (Yurchenko et al., 2018). Pressure broadening is taken into account using the coefficients from HITRAN/HITEMP (Rothman et al., 2010, 2013) or from (**Sharp2007**) (Eqn. 15). The line opacities are computed from 80-3000K, and from 0.3- $28\mu\text{m}$ in high resolution mode.

Correlated K

The low resolution mode of petitRADTRANS uses the correlated-k (c-k) method of computing line opacities (Fu and Liou, 1992; Goody et al., 1989; Lacis and Oinas, 1991). This method for calculating emission and absorption features assumes that the opacity distribution functions between differing species are uncorrelated, which permits simple computation of overlapping features. While petitRADTRANS implements a c-k method with a spectral resolution of 1000, in principle it is accurate to much higher resolutions. However, the principle utility of the c-k method is in the dramatic reduction in computational cost for computing a spectra such that petitRADTRANS can be used as the foundation for an atmospheric retrieval code requiring hundreds of thousands or millions of models to be generated. (P. Mollière et al., 2019) discusses the variations between the results of the line-by-line method and the c-k method, finding discrepancy of at most 6%. Typical variation is much lower, as seen in Fig. 2 of (P. Mollière et al., 2019).

Clouds

Michael R. Line and Parmentier, 2016 Jacqueline K Faherty et al., 2018
Morley et al., 2014 Lavie et al., 2017

4.2 BAYESIAN INFERENCE

An atmospheric retrieval is the process of extracting information about physical parameters from a measured spectrum. In general this procedure involves comparing the data to a series of template spectra with known parameters and identifying the best fit model. Unfortunately for astronomers, atmospheres are complicated: typical one 1D models still require many (>15)

parameters to generate a somewhat realistic model. This results in a very large parameter space in which to search for the correct set of properties that describe our measurement.

Monte Carlo methods, including Nested Sampling, are used to effectively search this large space using the Bayesian evidence as a goodness-of-fit metric. Here we will follow (Joshua S. Speagle, 2019) to provide a brief overview of Bayesian inference.

To measure the likelihood of a given model, we turn to Bayes' Theorem:

$$P(\Theta_M | \mathbf{D}, M) = \frac{P(\mathbf{D} | \Theta, M) P(\Theta | M)}{P(\mathbf{D} | M)} \quad (6)$$

In our notation, Θ is the set of parameters that describe a model M , that is fit to the data \mathbf{D} . Bayes' theorem asks what is the probability that the parameters Θ are true given the data and model. The distributions for each parameter are the **posterior** distributions.

This is then related to the **likelihood** $P(\mathbf{D} | \Theta, M)$ of measuring the data given the model, the **prior** probability $P(\Theta | M)$ which describes our degree of belief in our model and the **evidence** $P(\mathbf{D} | M)$, which is marginalized over all possible Θ and quantifies how well the model describes the data. To simplify notation, we adopt the following convention for Bayes' theorem:

$$\mathcal{P}(\Theta) = \frac{\mathcal{L}(\Theta) \pi(\Theta)}{\mathcal{Z}} \quad (7)$$

In general, the goal of an atmospheric retrieval is to find the best fit model by maximizing the evidence \mathcal{Z} , and as a by product finding the marginalized posterior distributions for each parameter. This comes with many challenges, especially when dealing with large numbers of parameters. Selection of the priors and model will determine the extent to which a result can be interpreted, while sampling large parameter spaces and computing likelihoods introduces substantial numerical challenges. The Markov Chain Monte Carlo method and the Nested Sampling method described below attempt to solve the challenges of exploring a large parameter space.

4.2.1 MCMC

Foreman-Mackey et al., 2013 MacKay, 2003

4.2.2 Nested Sampling

Nested sampling attempts to address several of the shortcomings of MCMC methods while simultaneously improving computational efficiency (Skilling, 2004). MCMC methods generate samples ‘proportional to’ the true posterior distributions, which lead to difficulties in computing the evidence \mathcal{Z} (Joshua S Speagle, 2020). In contrast, nested sampling puts the evidence first and provides estimates of the posterior distributions from the importance weights of the final set of samples. First described in (Skilling, 2004), nested sampling has been adopted as the sampling algorithm of choice within the astrophysics community (Buchner et al., 2014; F. Feroz et al., 2009; Farhan Feroz et al., 2019; Joshua S Speagle, 2020).

With the goal of parameter estimation, nested sampling attempts to estimate the evidence \mathcal{Z} rather than directly sampling the posteriors (Skilling, 2004). This is done by integrating over the entire parameter space of Θ

$$\mathcal{Z} = \int_{\Omega_\Theta} \mathcal{L}(\Theta) \pi(\Theta) d\Theta \quad (8)$$

This is difficult.

Rather than attempting to directly solve the entire multidimensional integral, nested sampling transforms this into an integration over the *prior* volume X :

$$\mathcal{Z} = \int_{\Omega_\Theta} \mathcal{L}(\Theta) \pi(\Theta) d\Theta = \int_0^1 \mathcal{L}(X) dX \quad (9)$$

This is now a contour integral over isocontours $\mathcal{L}(X)$ which bound the prior volume

$$X(\lambda) = \int_{\Omega_\Theta : \mathcal{L}(\Theta) \geq \lambda} \pi(\Theta) d\Theta \quad (10)$$

which is the fraction of the prior where the likelihood of the data given the model is above some threshold λ . The integration is now simplified into a 1D integration over X , given proper prior selection.

Method

Consider a parameter space with D dimensions. We will describe this space as a unit hypercube, where each parameter runs from 0 to 1. Priors are thus transformations from this space to a physical parameter space. Often the prior is a uniform distribution, which simply scales the space, but it may also be an informative prior such as a normal distribution centered at an expected physical value. In order to sample this space, N_L ‘live points’ are generated, each of which provides a set of parameters Θ . N_L must be greater than $D + 1$, and typically values on the order of $50 \times D$ are used (F. Feroz et al., 2009). Using a likelihood function $\mathcal{L}(\Theta)$, the evidence \mathcal{Z} can be computed by comparing the model to the data. Having computed the evidence at each point, the live points are then sorted and the point with the lowest evidence is discarded. A set of ellipsoids is drawn around the remaining points. The procedure for computing these ellipsoids is given in (F. Feroz and Hobson, 2008; F. Feroz et al., 2009). By using a set of ellipsoids, multiple modes in the parameter space can be encompassed. Once the ellipsoids bounding the remaining points are drawn, a new sample is drawn from within the restricted sample space. The evidence for the new point is computed, and it is accepted if the evidence is greater than the minimum evidence of the previous remaining set of points. The entire procedure is repeated until some convergence criteria is satisfied, with each iteration resulting in a smaller volume being encompassed by the ellipsoids, nested within the previous volume.

This procedure can be improved in many ways, including importance nested sampling (Farhan Feroz et al., 2019) and dynamic nested sampling (Joshua S Speagle, 2020).

4.2.3 Multinest

For our implementation of an atmospheric retrieval code, we chose to use the Multinest algorithm (F. Feroz et al., 2009) using the pyMultinest wrapper (Buchner et al., 2014) and using importance nested sampling to improve the accuracy of the Bayesian evidence calculation (Farhan Feroz et al., 2019). This particular implementation of nested sampling is commonly used in atmospheric retrieval codes due to its fast Fortran implementation, though it was initially developed for cosmological problems.

Using the pyMultinest package, we implemented the required log-prior function which transforms the unit hypercube to physical parameter space and the log-likelihood function used to compare the model to the data. The full code is available at <https://github.com/nenasedk/petitRetrieval>, and is based of the emission spectrum retrieval described in (P. Mollière et al., 2019). Retrievals were typically performed using 500 or 1000 live points, with the convergence criteria

$$\Delta \ln \mathcal{Z} = \ln Z_i - Z_{i+1} \quad (11)$$

set to 0.3 for parameter estimation and 0.8 for model comparison, as suggested in the pyMultinest documentation.

4.3 OBSERVATIONS

The targets used in our retrieval study ar guided by the JWST ERS and GTO programs. This allows us to use well-defined observing strategies for each object, and present a clear case for the science that can be accomplished with these observations. While all three were discussed in Chapter 1, we will now outline the proposed observing strategies and science cases for each target.

VHS-1256B

VHS-1256b is a young (0.2Gyr), high mass ($11.2M_{Jup}$) planet at a distance of 12.7pc (Bowler, 2016). The wide separation of 8" makes it an easy target for observation with the MRS, as its host star will fall outside of the FoV. It has a J-band magnitude of 16.662, and a late L spectral type (Miles et al., 2018). As an object of interest for the JWST ERS program 1386, it will be observed with the NIRCam imager, along with both the NIRSpec and MRS spectrometers (Hinkley et al., 2019). Using the MRS, VHS-1256b will be observed using a SLOW readout pattern, using 30 groups per integration, with one integration per exposure using a 2 point dither pattern. This results in a total exposure time of 1433.395s in each of the MRS sub-bands, and will cover the full wavelength range of the MRS. It will be simultaneously imaged using the MIRIM instrument. An additional background only exposure will be taken using the same exposure parameters, but without dithering, for a total of half of the science exposure time.

Methane spectral features have been detected in the L-band spectrum of VHS-1256b (Miles et al., 2018), but mid infrared spectroscopy will allow the

use of methane and other molecules to characterize atmospheric properties such as dis-equilibrium chemistry and vertical mixing (Charles A Beichman et al., 2019c).

2M1207b

2M1207b is a 1600K, 10 M_{Jup} object at wide separation from its brown dwarf primary (TWA 27) and a distance of 52.4pc (Bowler, 2016). In comparison to VHS-1256b, 2M1207b has a relatively small separation of 0.77", which is more characteristic of currently known objects. As one of the first directly imaged exoplanets, it provides a template for characterizing young, hot objects, and will be observed in the JWST GTO program 1270 (Birkmann et al., 2019). This observation will use the NIRSpec IFU, MIRIM and the MIRI MRS.

Using the MRS, 2M1207b will be observed using a FAST readout to prevent detector saturation, using 76 groups per integration, and one integration per exposure. It will use a 4 exposure dither pattern, for a total integration time of 843.612s per sub-band, covering the full wavelength range of the MRS. Combined with the NIRSpec observation, this will provide a continuous spectrum over the entire JWST wavelength range. The host star of 2M1207b is faint, allowing for good enough contrast for a straightforward observation (Charles A Beichman et al., 2019c).

WISE 0855-0714

Although it is a Y-type brown dwarf, WISE 0855 is the most similar known object to Jupiter outside our solar system that has been directly observed (Luhman, 2014). At 250K, WISE 0855 is very faint, with an H-band magnitude of 25, but its proximity at 2pc makes it an ideal target for characterization. The JWST GTO Program 1230 will observe WISE 0855 using NIRCam, NIRSpec and the MIRI MRS (Oliveira et al., 2019). It will use a FAST readout, with 180 groups per integration, and one integration per exposure for a total of 999s of integration time for each sub-band. No dithering will be used.

As a cold object, WISE 0855 provides the best known extra-solar template for older planetary mass objects. With the improved sensitivity and long wavelength coverage of JWST, it is hoped that more low mass and colder exoplanets may be directly imaged. Understanding the atmosphere of WISE 0855 will provide a great deal of insight for the challenges of such exoplanetary atmospheres. Clouds are suspected to be present (Jacqueline K Faherty et al., 2018), a feature which will be better understood using mid infrared observations.

Science Goals

Atmospheric retrievals are currently the best tools for characterizing the composition and structure of exoplanet atmospheres. Parameters such as the C/O ratio may trace the formation history of planets, and may be able to settle the debate between gravitational instability and core accretion formation models (Nikku Madhusudhan, 2012; Moses et al., 2013). From solar

Parameter	VHS-1256b	2M1207b	WISE 0855
ObsDate	0.0	0.0	0.0
Path	SHORT/LONG	SHORT/LONG	SHORT/LONG
Dither	2 point	4-point	None
Disperser	ALL	ALL	ALL
Detector	SW/LW	SW/LW	SW/LW
MRS Mode	SLOW	SLOW	FAST
Exposures	1	1	1
Integrations	1	1	1
Groups	30	76	180
Cosmic Rays	None	None	None

Table 6: Observing parameters for each selected target. Observation parameters are based on JWST proposals, and set in order to cover channels 1 through 3. For the disperser, ALL implies running a simulation for each of the SHORT/MEDIUM/LONG sub-bands. A total of 6 simulations are necessary to cover the entire wavelength range. Cosmic rays are turned off due to issues with MIRISIM.

system observations, along with our own experience on Earth, we know atmospheres are constantly changing, and time series observations will open the door to investigation of dynamics and variability. Understanding the composition and chemistry of these atmospheres will also provide insight into the diversity - and similarity - between these systems. Clouds are poorly understood within our own solar system, and are certain to be present in the atmospheres of other worlds. Perhaps the most interesting prospect is uncovering novel features that have not yet been predicted, and will open the door to new avenues of exploration.

For this work, we are primarily concerned with constraining the ability of the MRS to retrieve known input parameters. With simulated spectra from petitRADTRANS providing a ground truth, we can compare the results of retrievals over a range of fringing cases.

4.4 METHODS

Here we will outline how we generated our input spectra, and the procedure we used to perform our atmospheric retrieval.

4.4.1 Spectra Generation

We used petitRADTRANS in high resolution, line-by-line mode in order to calculate a spectrum that can be passed as input to MIRISIM. The parameters chosen for each target are given in table 7. All spectra cover a range of 4.8–18.5 micron in order to fully cover channels 1 through 3 of the MRS. Channel 4 is ignored due to photometric calibration issues.

Parameter	VHS-1256b	2M1207b	WISE 0855
Radius [R _{Jup}]	1.29	1.5	1.17
Distance [pc]	12.7	52.4	2.23
log g	4.25	3.2	4
T _{int} [K]	900	1600	250
T _{equ} [K]	3.4	10	3.4
κ _{IR}	0.01	0.01	0.01
γ	0.3	0.4	0.3
Abundances			
H ₂	0.898	0.74	0.73
He	0.102	0.24	0.25
H ₂ O	1 × 10 ⁻³	5 × 10 ⁻³	5 × 10 ⁻⁴
CO	1 × 10 ⁻⁷	1 × 10 ⁻²	1 × 10 ⁻¹⁵
CO ₂	1 × 10 ⁻⁵	1 × 10 ⁻³	1 × 10 ⁻¹⁴
CH ₄	3 × 10 ⁻³	1 × 10 ⁻⁶	3 × 10 ⁻⁴
NH ₃	1 × 10 ⁻⁵	1 × 10 ⁻⁷	3 × 10 ⁻³
C ₂ H ₂	1 × 10 ⁻⁸	1 × 10 ⁻⁹	...
HCN	1 × 10 ⁻¹⁰	1 × 10 ⁻⁹	1 × 10 ⁻⁹
TiO	...	5 × 10 ⁻⁷	...
SiO	1 × 10 ⁻⁶

Table 7: Input parameters to generate spectra using petitRADTRANS. High resolution line-by-line mode was used. κ_{IR} and γ are the infrared opacity and ratio of visible to IR opacities respectively. The values chosen for these parameters are based on (P. Mollière et al., 2019). The abundances chosen are arbitrary values chosen to encompass a wide range of compositions and to test the ability of the retrieval code to recover small abundances. Where possible, values were chosen to qualitatively reflect known species present (Miles et al., 2018).

The spectra generated by petitRADTRANS are in terms of the emitted flux and are in units of erg cm⁻² m⁻² s⁻¹ Hz⁻¹. MIRISIM requires the flux incident on the detector in units of μJy, so we convert the as

$$F_{inc}[\mu\text{Jy}] = 10^{29} \times F_{em} \times \left(\frac{R_{pl}}{d_{pl}} \right)^2 \quad (12)$$

The wavelength grid produced by petitRADTRANS is log-spaced, and we use the `spectres` python package (Carnall, 2017) in order to convert to a linear spaced grid with R=12000 at 4.0μm. This ensures the input spectrum will oversample the instrumental spectral resolution by a factor of at least 4 across the whole wavelength range.

While it is possible to add a background term to a spectrum using MIRISIM, we chose not to use any background in order to improve our spectral extraction after processing with the JWST pipeline, with the understanding that errors from background subtraction will be negligible in actual data.

Parameter	Prior	Constraints
$\log \delta$	$\mathcal{N}(-5.5, 2.5)$	
$\log \gamma$	$\mathcal{N}(0, 2)$	
T_{int}	$\mathcal{U}(0, 3500)$	
T_{equ}	$\mathcal{U}(0, 30)$	
$\log P_{Trans}$	$\mathcal{N}(-3, 3)$	
α	$\mathcal{N}(0.25, 0.4)$	$\alpha < 1$
$\log g$	$\mathcal{U}(2.0, 4.5)$	
$\log P_0$	$\mathcal{U}(-5, 2)$	
$\ln(X_i)$	$\mathcal{U}(-18, 0)$	$\sum X_i < 1$

Table 8: Prior choices for atmospheric retrievals. $\mathcal{U}(a, b)$ is a uniform distribution from a to b . $\mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma)$ is a normal distribution. T_{int} corresponds to the effective temperature of an object, while T_{equ} is the equilibrium temperature between an object and a host star. For free floating objects, T_{equ} is set to 3.4K, justifying the small range of the prior. δ is in units of bar^{-1} , temperatures are in K, and pressures in bar.

4.4.2 Atmospheric Retrieval Setup

Prior choice

4.5 RESULTS

4.5.1 Model Selection

Figure 17: Bayesian evidence for models of differing dimensionality.

4.5.2 Fringing Comparison

Figure 18: Posterior Distributions for XX for different fringe cases

4.5.3 VHS-1256b

4.5.4 2M1207b

4.5.5 WISE 0855

Figure 19: Posterior Distributions for

Figure 20: Pressure Temperature profile for

Figure 21: Best fit model for

Figure 22: Posterior Distributions for

Figure 23: Pressure Temperature profile for

Figure 24: Best fit model for

Figure 25: Posterior Distributions for

Figure 26: Pressure Temperature profile for

Figure 27: Best fit model for

5 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A | APPENDICES

A.1 PACKAGE REQUIREMENTS

```
astropy==3.2.1
future==0.18.2
json5==0.8.4
jsonschema==3.0.1
matplotlib==3.1.0
mpi4py==3.0.3
mpmath==1.1.0
numpy==1.16.4
pymultinest==2.7
petitradtrans==*
scipy==1.3.0
seaborn==0.9.0
spectres==2.0.0
```


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