

ASTRONOMY

**Night Sky Brighter
In Ultraviolet Light**

► THE NIGHT SKY would be drastically altered if the human eye saw ultraviolet light to which it is insensible.

The moon, instead of being the brightest object in the nighttime sky, would be very inconspicuous. At least 21 stars are brighter in the ultraviolet than a minus one on the astronomer's magnitude scale. Only one star, Sirius, is that bright in visible light.

The ultraviolet view of the sky was predicted by Dr. Robert J. Davis of Harvard College Observatory. His calculations were made because rockets have allowed photographing the sun in ultraviolet light and it may soon be possible to observe other objects of the starry sky from rockets or artificial satellites.

The earth's atmosphere now cuts out ultraviolet light of short wavelengths.

Brightest object in the sky in ultraviolet light would be the sun, although its brilliance would be reduced about 100,000 times. The moon's magnitude would be about plus five, which is near the limit of dim stars visible to the naked eye.

The constellations would probably not be recognizable and the night sky in ultraviolet light would be dominated by hot, blue stars. Cooler stars, even those very bright to the eye, would be inconspicuous, according to a report of Dr. Davis' study in *Sky and Telescope* (July).

Science News Letter, July 21, 1956

PSYCHOLOGY

**Familiar Words Are
Heard Better in Noise**

► TO BE UNDERSTOOD in a very noisy place or over a noisy phone, use words that are very familiar to the listener, Dr. Mark R. Rosenzweig, psychologist of the University of California, advises.

Dr. Rosenzweig studied recognition of words recorded with very noisy surroundings, picking the words according to the frequency of their use in English speech. They were recorded with a background of noise at various levels, very loud at first and softer later. Each word was repeated at each noise level, so it was possible to find out for each word just how much noise was needed to make it unintelligible.

College students listened to the recordings and wrote down what they could hear.

Results showed clearly, Dr. Rosenzweig reports, that the more frequently a word is used in the language, the more readily it can be heard through noise.

Dr. Rosenzweig's experiments were repeated in French, with students at the Sorbonne in Paris. Results were similar.

The results are interesting to psychologists, Dr. Rosenzweig points out, because they show how perception is influenced by previous training and experience.

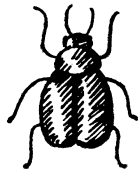
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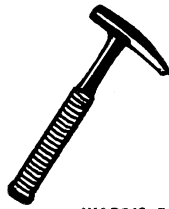
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