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"Astrobiology and the Ultraviolet World"

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Astrobiology is normally envisaged as the scientific endeavor preoccupied with the search for life beyond Earth. What remains underappreciated, however, is that it is also a hotbed of transversal thinking. It links disciplines that have historically grown up in isolation from each other—such as solar physics, atmospheric science, dermatology, and ophthalmology (eye biology)—in remarkable ways. And even though these links may cast new light on the question of extraterrestrial life, they are an interesting topic of study in their own right. The present study illustrates this ethnographically, by using the angle of ultraviolet. Specifically, I focus on the ultraviolet spectrum to examine how astrobiologists look at celestial bodies, planetary atmospheres, the skin, and the eye. More generally, this article is a reflection on how outer space can be apprehended from a humanities perspective. (Text from author's abstract)

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