Goethe and Steiner’s Color Theory

From Experiential Phenomenon to Spiritual Perceiving

Stephen Hawks
Goethe: Poet, Philosopher, Scientist, Artist

Goethean Science

1. The morphology of bones
2. The Morphology of Plants/ The Ur-plan
3. The phenomenology of color
Original Color Wheel of Goethe
Goethean Science

1. The morphology of bones
2. The Morphology of Plants/ The Ur-plan
3. The phenomenology of color
Goethean Color Theory

"Color itself is a degree of darkness."

The eye, especially demands completeness and seeks to eke out the colorific circle within itself.

Goethe's scientific writings include evolutionary ideas on plants and bones as well as extensive writings on color.

Brightness and darkness superimpose each other and that is the reason for the genesis of color.

The eye will seek to balance the color it sees in the external world with correlating internal color.
• Why does the Sky appear Blue?
• Why does the sun appear reddish/orange when it is low on the horizon?
Goethe’s Color Wheel Related to Personality
The 4 Evangels and the Chakras
4 Temperaments

- Sanguine
- Choleric
- Phlegmatic
- Melancholy

- Hot
- Moist
- Dry
- Cold
4 Temperaments and the Chakras
7 CHAKRAS
Alex Gray
Rudolf Steiner
Steiners Color Theory

Four Image Colors:

"**Green** is the dead image of the living, **peach** blossom the living image of the soul, white or light the soul's image of the mind, and **black** is the mind's image of death".

Three Radiant Colors:

**yellow** radiates, **blue** congeals, **red** neither radiates nor congeal.
Gotheanum
Artists

Wassily Kandinsky

Pousett Dart
Wassily Kandinsky. *Black Lines (Schwarze Linien)*. December 1913. 
51 x 51 5/8 in.
The Seven Apocalyptic Seals

BARON ARILD ROSENKRANTZ
(1870-1964)

Rudolf Steiner's designs,
painted by Clara Rettich 1911
The Seven Apocalyptic Seals

Clara Rettich
Lazure Painting
Color Chamber
Eurythmy
Scriabin’s Colour System

- Like Bely, Kandinsky and Steiner, Scriabin did not believe in accepting the boundaries between the different art mediums. He believed that each tone has a color inherently connected to it. Additionally, Scriabin played with the connection between words and music, creating some of his own poetry, much in the same way that Bely was interested in the musical qualities of written words.
### Color and Music

**Scriabin and Syesthesia**

#### Three Centuries of Color Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Newton</td>
<td>1704</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louis Bertrand Castel</td>
<td>1734</td>
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<td>George Field</td>
<td>1816</td>
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<td>D. D. Jameson</td>
<td>1844</td>
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<td>Theodor Seemann</td>
<td>1881</td>
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<td>A. Wallace Rimington</td>
<td>1893</td>
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<td>Bainbridge Bishop</td>
<td>1893</td>
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<td>H. von Helmholtz</td>
<td>1910</td>
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<td>Alexander Scriabin</td>
<td>1911</td>
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<td>Adrian Bernard Klein</td>
<td>1930</td>
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<td>August Aeppli</td>
<td>1940</td>
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<td>I. J. Belmont</td>
<td>1944</td>
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<td>Steve Zieverink</td>
<td>2004</td>
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Symbolic Significance of Color

Melancholic

Choleric

Sanguine

Reason

Good Usefulness

Understanding

Imagination

Chivalry

Heroes

Lovers

Orators

Phlegmatic

Despots

Monarchs

Scholars

Philosophers

Noble

Beautiful

Sacred

Intermediary

Historians

Teachers

Affinity with acids

Plus

yellow

action

Light

brightness

force

Warmth

proximity

repulsion

affinity

Minus

blue

demotion

deprivation

darkness

weakness

coldness

distance

attraction

affinity with alkalis

The phenomenon of colors is by far more physiological than is thought but here the difficulty is even greater than in other cases to differentiate between the objective and subjective. - Jan/Feb 1794 Goethe