



COLOR THEORY: HISTORY OF BLACK COLOR

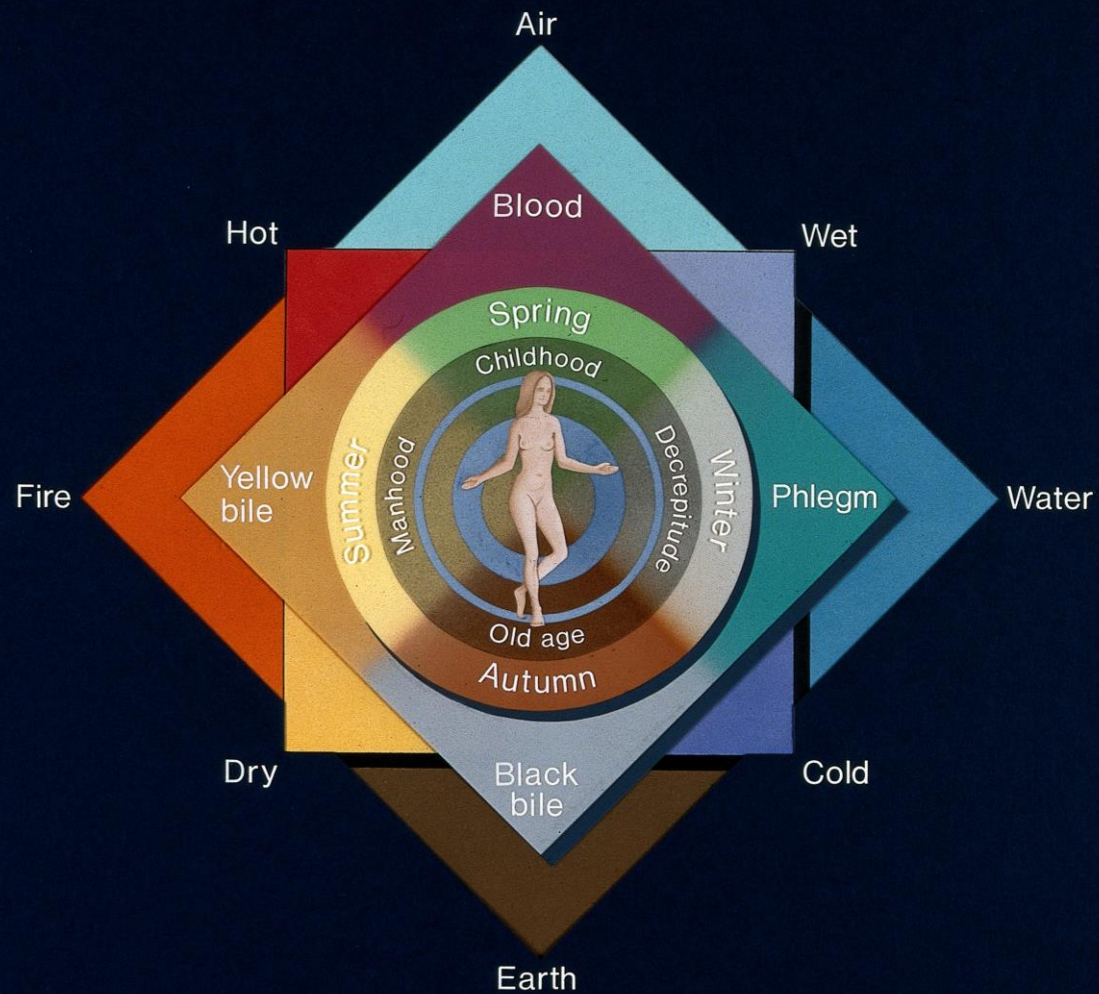
THE HISTORY OF COLOR THEORY CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HISTORY OF ALL NATURAL SCIENCES. BECAUSE, FOR INSIGHT INTO THE SMALLEST COMPONENT, A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF THE WHOLE IS NECESSARY.

J GOETHE, FARBENLEHRE

EMPEDOCLES' FOUR ELEMENTS AND FOUR COLORS

Empedocles of Akragas (490-435 bc; akragas is the present-day Agrigento) is the first greek philosopher to write on color. He is a many-sided genius: poet, philosopher, doctor and priest. Far from shutting himself up in the ivory tower of pure science, empedocles travels through sicily as a prophet and miracle-worker, surrounded by a host of followers.



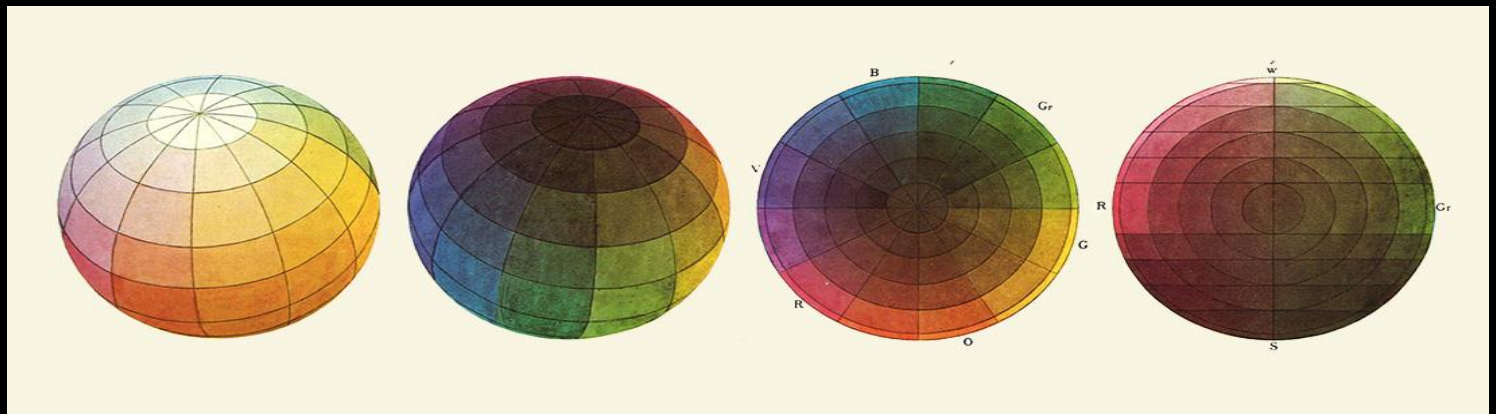
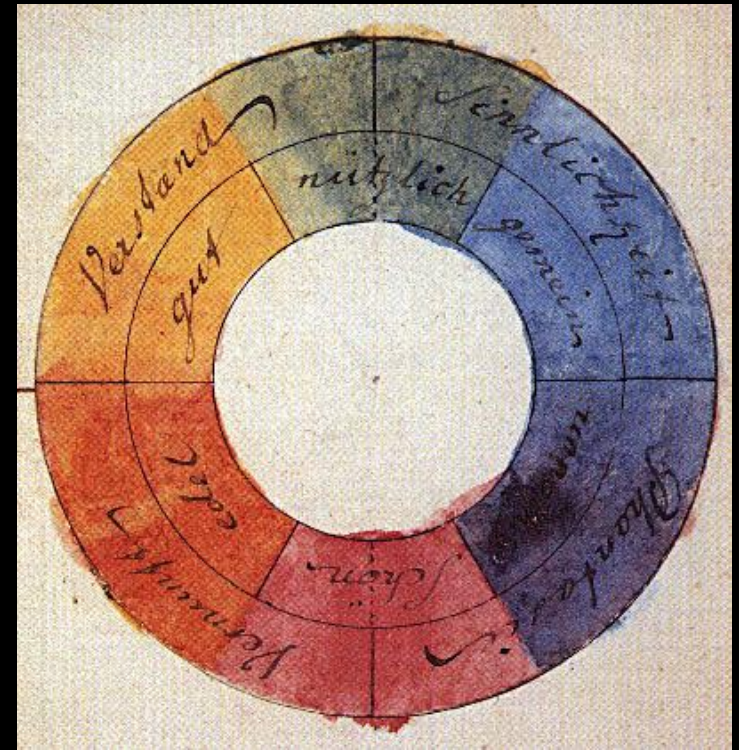
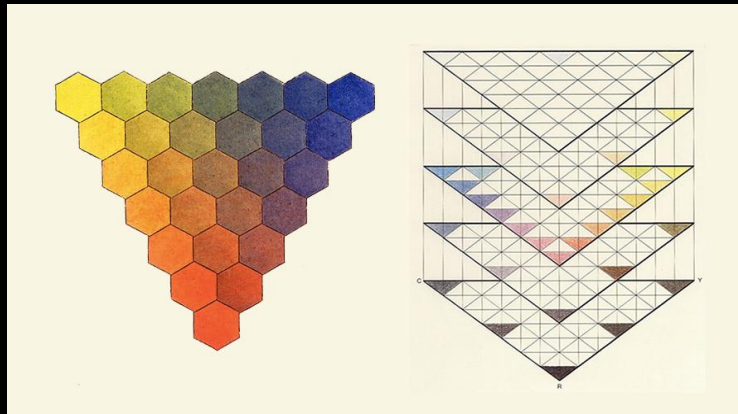
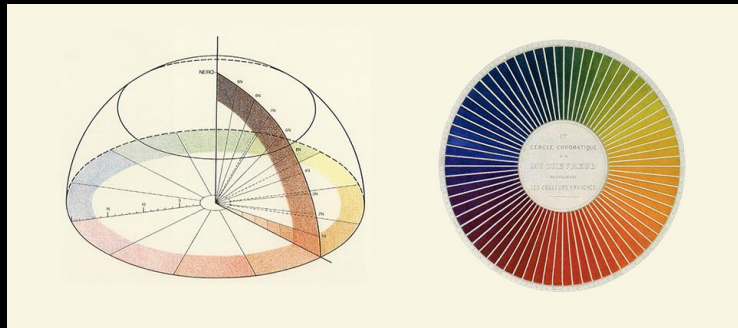


For Empedocles everything that is permanent is fourfold: fire, water, air and earth are the 'roots' of all things. These 'elements' are represented by the sun, the sea, the sky and the earth. The elements are ungenerated, indestructible, qualitatively unalterable and homogeneous throughout.

Analogous to the four elements: air, water, fire and earth - there are four basic colors: white, black, red and yellowish green - and four sorts of pores through which they enter the eye. The pores see to it that things which are alike in man and in the outside world come into contact with each other.

(Crone, Robert A. 1999. *A History of Color; The Evolutions of Theories of Lights and a Colors*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publisher.)

German poet Wolfgang von Goethe dedicated his book *Theory of Colors* from 1810 to a more human-centered analysis of the perception of color. Through a series of experiments that measured the eye's response to certain colors, Goethe created what is arguably the most famous color circle of all time. The circle had three primary colors – magenta, yellow, and blue – which he believed could mix all other colors in the spectrum.





BLACK COLOR DISCOVERY

Lascaux caves in France.

Prehistoric

Ancient

Greeks, Egyptians, Latin.

12th-13th centuries,
14th-15th centuries.

Postclassical



PREHISTORIC BLACK: LASCAUX CAVES IN FRANCE

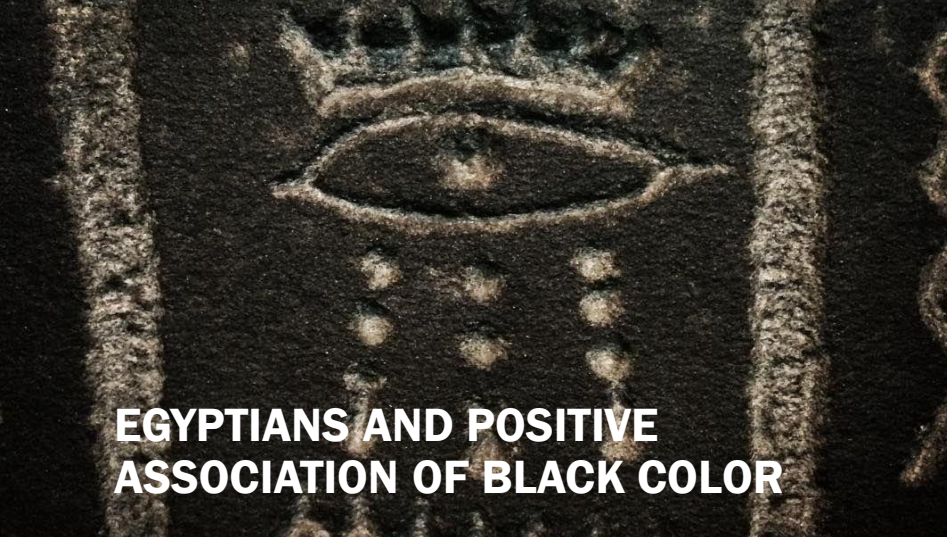
Black was one of the first colors used in art. The Lascaux cave in France contains drawings of bulls and other animals drawn by paleolithic artists between 18,000 and 17,000 years ago. They began by using charcoal, and then made more vivid black pigments by burning bones or grinding a powder of manganese oxide.

(www.artandculture.google.com)



THE GREEKS PAINT

- The Greeks developed a highly sophisticated technique for painting black silhouettes on clay pottery. Later, they inverted the technique to paint red figures on black backgrounds. These “red figure” and “black figure” vases were signed by their makers, making them the first signed piece of art on history. This phase is first apparent in works made in Corinth in about 700 BC. (www.britannica.com/art/Greek-pottery)



EGYPTIANS AND POSITIVE ASSOCIATION OF BLACK COLOR

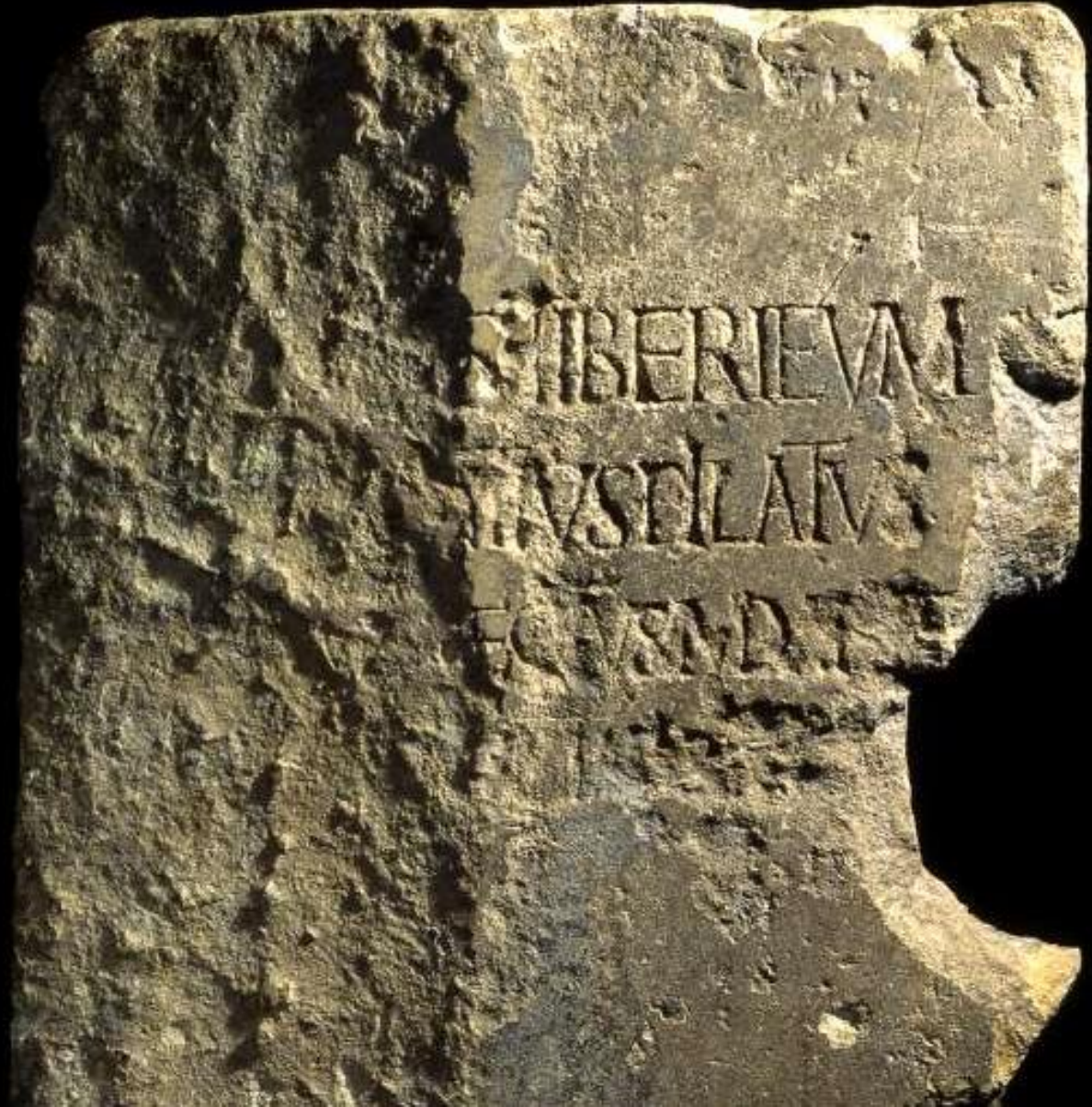
Color in ancient Egypt was used not only in realistic representations of scenes from every life but to illustrate the heavenly realms of the gods, the afterlife, and the stories and histories of the deities of the Egyptian pantheon. made from carbon, ground charcoal, mixed with water and sometimes burnt animal bones, Egyptians used black color to write Hieroglyphic, Hieroglyphs were written on papyrus reed, which is a water or marsh plant, with tall straight hollow stems. The reeds were flattened, dried, and stuck together to make pages. The Egyptians also carved hieroglyphs onto stone and painted them on the walls of the tombs.

(<https://www.ancient.eu/article/999/color-in-ancient-egypt/>)



LATIN AND TOGA PULLA

Black was also the Roman color of death and mourning. In the 2nd century BC Roman magistrates began to wear a dark toga, called a *toga pulla*, to funeral ceremonies. Later, under the Empire, the family of the deceased also wore dark colors for a long period; then, after a banquet to mark the end of mourning, exchanged the black for a white toga. In Roman poetry, death was called the *hora nigra*, the black hour.



**POSTCLASSICAL:
12TH AND 13TH CENTURIES.**

Black ink, invented in China, was traditionally used in the Middle Ages for writing, for the simple reason that black was the darkest color and therefore provided the greatest contrast with white paper or parchment, making it the easiest color to read.

[*Second, the ink history of the development*], National Chang-Hua Hall of Social Education, on November 26, 2004]



14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES

In the 14th century, the status of black began to change. First, high-quality black dyes began to arrive on the market, allowing garments of a deep, rich black. Magistrates and government officials began to wear black robes, as a sign of the importance and seriousness of their positions.





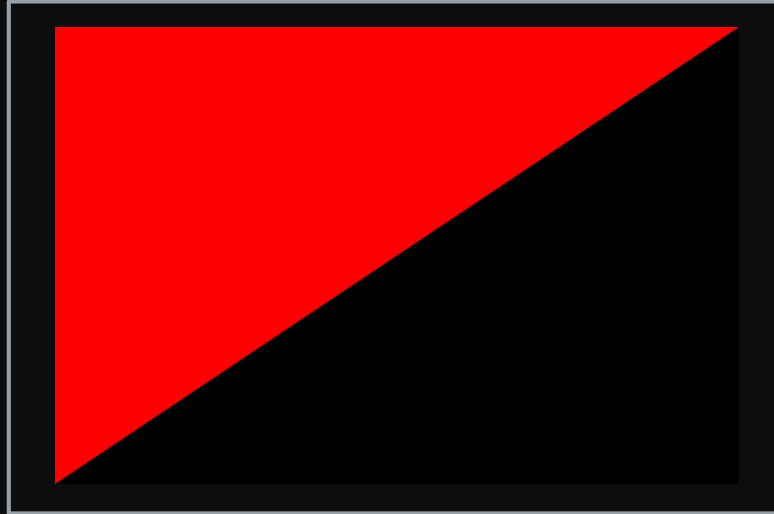
WHY IT NAMED BLACK?

Black derives from words invariably meaning the color black, as well as dark, ink and “to burn.”

Originally meaning, burning, blazing, glowing and shining, in PIE it was **bhleg*. This was changed to **blakkaz* in Proto-Germanic, to *blaken* in Dutch and *blaec*, in Old English. This last word, *blaec*, also meant ink, as did *blak* (Old Saxon) and *black* (Swedish).

The color was called *blach* in Old High German and written *blaec* in Old English. One final meaning, dark (also *blaec* in Old English) derived from the Old Norse *blakkr*.

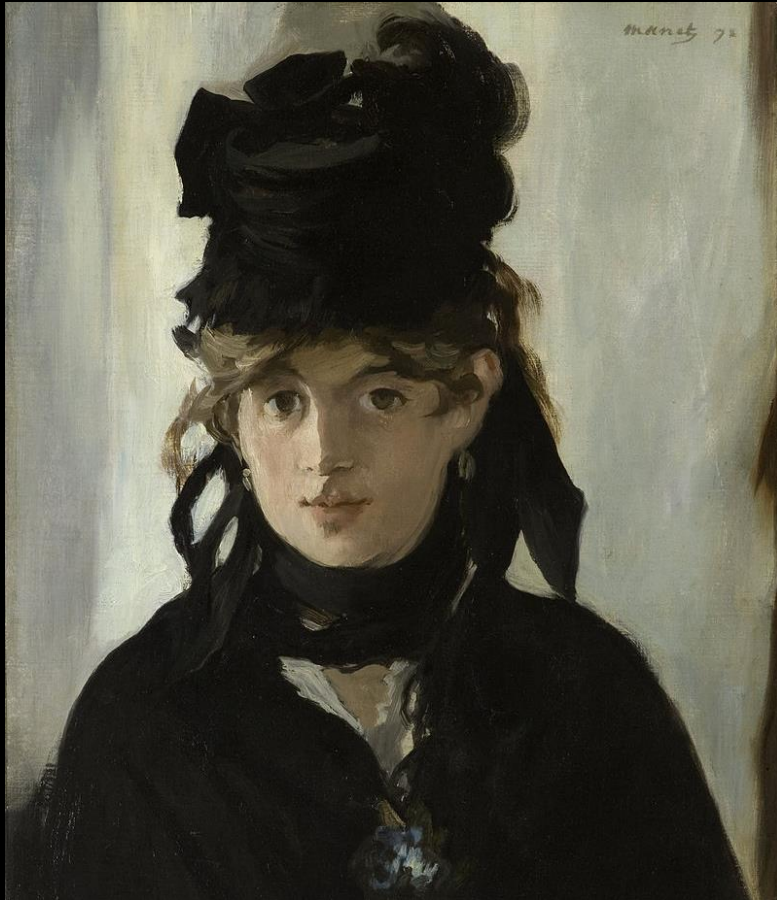
HOW BLACK COLOR INFLUENCED CULTURE



POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

Anarchism is a political philosophy, most popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which holds that governments and capitalism are harmful and undesirable. The symbols of anarchism was usually either a black flag or a black letter A. More recently it is usually represented with a bisected red and black flag, to emphasise the movement's socialist roots in the First International.

HOW BLACK COLOR INFLUENCED CULTURE



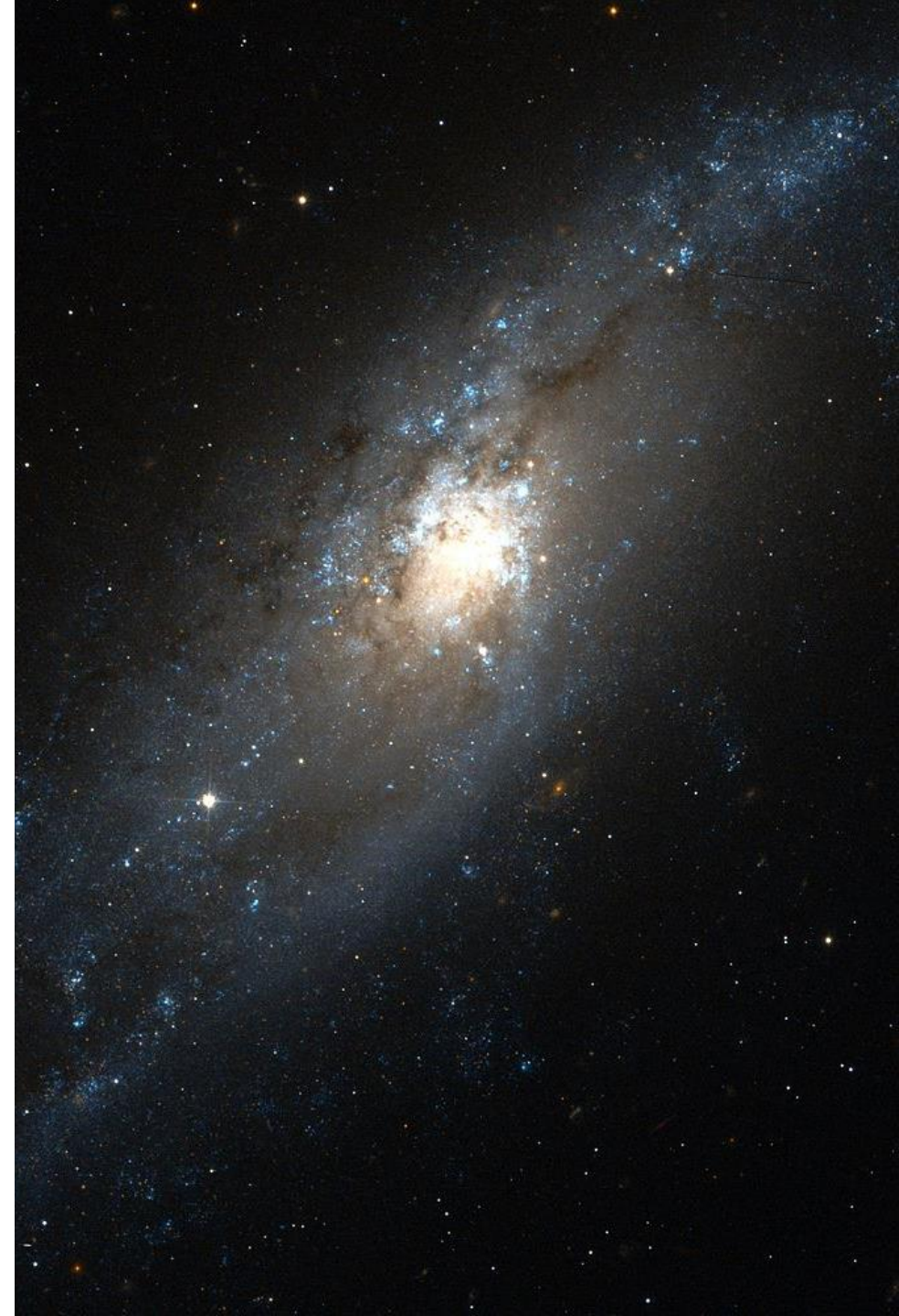
FASHION

In the 18th century, during the European Age of Enlightenment, black receded as a fashion color. Paris became the fashion capital, and pastels, blues, greens, yellow and white became the colors of the nobility and upper classes. But after the French Revolution, black again became the dominant color.

HOW BLACK COLOR INFLUENCED CULTURE

SCIENCE

The fact that outer space is black is sometimes called Olbers' paradox. In theory, because the universe is full of stars, and is believed to be infinitely large, it would be expected that the light of an infinite number of stars would be enough to brilliantly light the whole universe all the time. However, the background color of outer space is black. This contradiction was first noted in 1823 by German astronomer Heinrich Wilhelm Matthias Olbers, who posed the question of why the night sky was black.





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- Anarchism and the History of the Black Flag by Jason Wehling (July 14, 1995)
- <https://www.ancient.eu/article/999/color-in-ancient-egypt/>