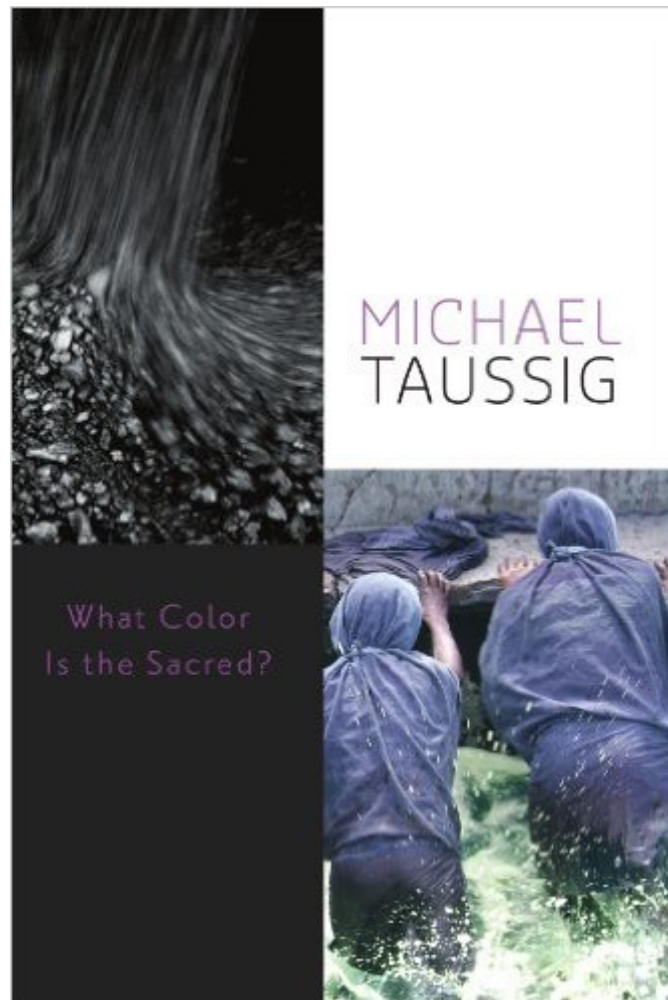


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# What Color Is The Sacred?



## Synopsis

Over the past thirty years, visionary anthropologist Michael Taussig has crafted a highly distinctive body of work. Playful, enthralling, and whip-smart, his writing makes ingenious connections between ideas, thinkers, and things. An extended meditation on the mysteries of color and the fascination they provoke, *What Color Is the Sacred?* is the next step on Taussig's remarkable intellectual path. Following his interest in magic and surrealism, his earlier work on mimesis, and his recent discussion of heat, gold, and cocaine in *My Cocaine Museum*, this book uses color to explore further dimensions of what Taussig calls "the bodily unconscious" in an age of global warming. Drawing on classic ethnography as well as the work of Benjamin, Burroughs, and Proust, he takes up the notion that color invites the viewer into images and into the world. Yet, as Taussig makes clear, color has a history—a manifestly colonial history rooted in the West's discomfort with color, especially bright color, and its associations with the so-called primitive. He begins by noting Goethe's belief that Europeans are physically averse to vivid color while the uncivilized revel in it, which prompts Taussig to reconsider colonialism as a tension between chromophobes and chromophiliacs. And he ends with the strange story of coal, which, he argues, displaced colonial color by giving birth to synthetic colors, organic chemistry, and IG Farben, the giant chemical corporation behind the Third Reich. Nietzsche once wrote, "So far, all that has given colour to existence still lacks a history." With *What Color Is the Sacred?* Taussig has taken up that challenge with all the radiant intelligence and inspiration we've come to expect from him.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Taussig is a great writer. Really enjoy his range of knowledge and his references-- good reference book on color. w

I've read a couple of this guy's books. I liked them all and I really loved this book. I'm a painter and have used raw pigments for most of my lifeâ |.( a long one). Thinking about the history, sources and significance of pigments and of color is right up my alley, I learned in school that explorers traveled and explored the world beyond Europe in search of spices. I know realize that they were also in search of color. I like thinking about the fact that these great changes were induced by the search for the luxuries of flavor and color, rather than bare necessities.

there were passages in this book i thought were really brilliant. it can be a wee bit verbose, but i slogged thru those areas and generally found the book thought provoking.

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