

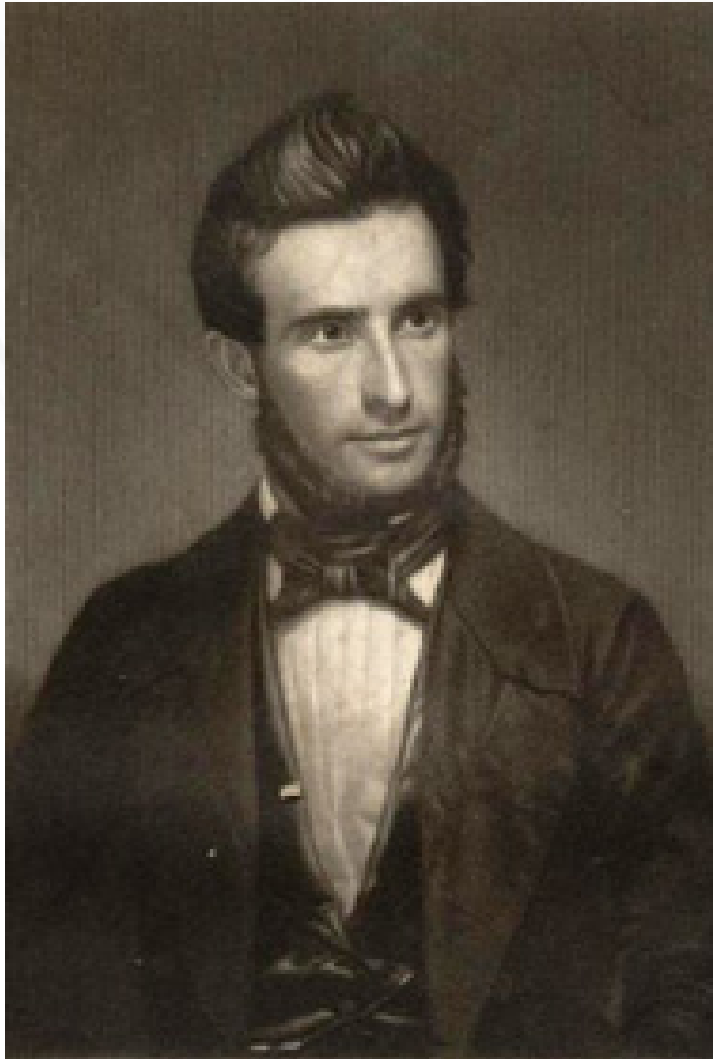
“Poets are no Dreamers!”: Swedenborgian  
Correspondence, Progression, and the Arts in the  
Writings of Andrew Jackson Davis

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*What is a poet?...*Combine the qualities of the Patriot, the Hero, and the Legislator, with a love of the Sublime and Beautiful, and you have a Poet. And he, too, is a reformer. The illumination of genius lights up the mysterious caverns of his Soul, and unfolds serene thoughts in the inmost sanctuary of his being. The sympathies of humanity expand his heart; and prophecies of future peace press his pen to utterance.

*The Great Harmonia*, vol. 2 (1851), p.84.

Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910)  
“The Poughkeepsie Seer”



1847



c.1860

Even the *laws* of *art* are in accordance with Nature, and coincide with all general principles which are correct and infallibly true...The manifestations of Nature are by him constantly intended to be impressed upon the understanding, so that these may answer as symbols and types, shadowing forth to the mind the internal and invisible causes.

*The Principles of Nature* (1847), p.93

He [i.e. the artist] is an interpreter and a representative of nature. He is to address the feelings and attributes of the spirit through the medium of the senses—to refine and elevate them by representations of native purity and divine images.

*The Great Harmonia*, vol. 2 (1851), p.86

And the innumerable processes by which he has explored the many parts and avenues of Nature, bring convictions to his mind corresponding to the conclusions drawn from all palætiological [sic] sciences; and as these convictions emanate from the Source of all true and correct impressions, they should be, and are received.

*The Principles of Nature* (1847), p.94

Back of Nature, he silently contemplates the *Cause* which produced this theatre of human existence; and with the highest reverence for truths pertaining thereunto, he can almost associate with the first Principle of Life and activity!...But in observing the many forms and substances which are constantly developing and reflecting new truths to his mind, he recognises something infinitely surpassing that which he vainly supposed to be created by his skill.... For Nature, with a renewed reflection, impresses his mind with more intrinsic *truth* than is represented in his imitation, which is of a shadowy and evanescent a character.

*The Principles of Nature* (1847), p.95

Being convinced of this truth, he does not strain his mental and physical powers to outdo or misrepresent that which is before him, but he is contented if his production is a *fac-simile* of that which does constantly develop itself to the senses.

*The Principles of Nature* (1847), p.96



His occupation also tends to impress his mind with the truth that *generals* and *universals* are the only reliable evidence of truth in contemplating the boundless landscapes of Nature. He finds that in *detailing* and *particularizing*, he spoils the grand and sublime effect that it is his intention to reproduce....He finds that the *parts*—the lights and shades, the distance and perspective—compose the whole, and that the whole is necessary to the parts. The whole combined presents the internal conviction that the Effect must, in quality and principle, be like that which originally produced it.

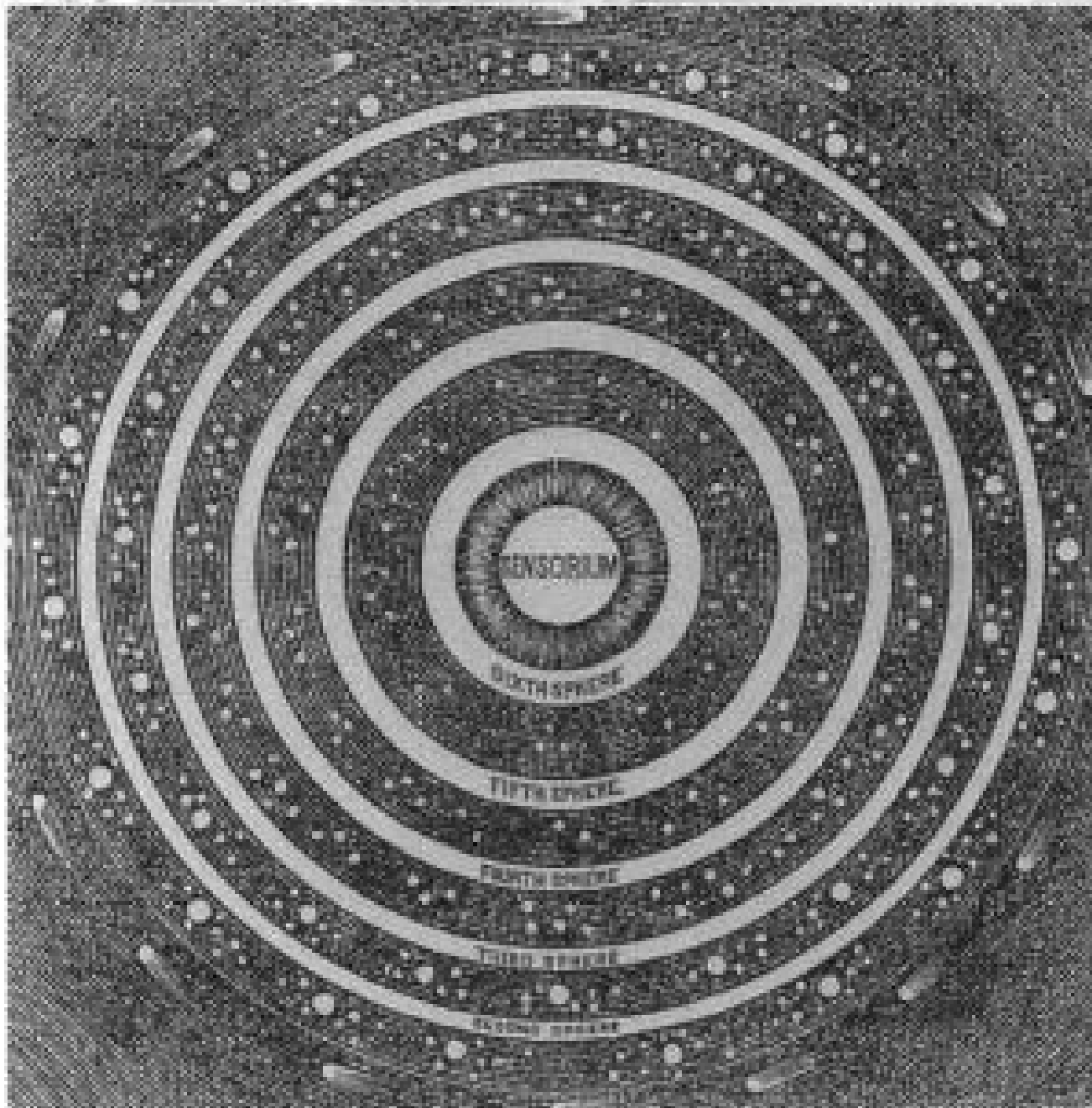
*The Principles of Nature* (1847), p.96

He [i.e. Swedenborg] vibrated constantly between two extremes—between reality and supposition; and he saw into “Heaven and Hell” *inferentially* and *analogically*, (not literally,) just as Milton saw the Prince of Darkness and the splendid compartments of pandemonium.

*The Great Harmonia*, vol. 3 (1852), p.214

To the searcher and observer of external manifestations, the Universe is a symbol, a type of that which was and is, and of that which must and will be....Therefore, the *First* and *Ultimate* of all things are rational and irresistible inductions that can be drawn from the prolific, fertile, and truthful experience and meditation of the *true artist*, and who associates with Nature's inimitable beauties.

*The Principles of Nature* (1847), p.98



1. SOCIAL STATE.	2. DEVELOPMENT.
1. SAVAGISM.	1. Negro.
2. BARBARISM.	2. Aborig-American.
3. PATRIARCHISM.	3. Malay-Mongolian.
4. CIVILISM.	4. Caucasian.
5. REPUBLICANISM.	5. Anglo-American.
1. The infancy of the race; an age of wildness, penury, spoliation, servitude, ignorance, and selfishness.	1. BLACK was the color of the first types of man, which were very imperfect, and confined to Africa.
2. An age of cupidity, superstition, dogmatism, war, rapine, and the brutal subjugation of females.	2. RED. Migrated, previously to the formation of the Pacific ocean, into the north of South America.
3. An age of despotism, arrogance, perfidy, pride, oppression, physical prowess, and deification.	3. YELLOW (transition). Located in eastern Asia, and extend to the isles of the south Pacific ocean.
4. An age of autocracy, aristocracy, feudality, democracy, and civilization. Aspiration for freedom.	4. WHITE. Extended from India into north Africa and into Europe; hence called "Indo-Europeans."
5. This will be an age of general industry, female elevation, peace, light, security, and . . . . . UNITY.	5. CONCRETE. Combination of various Europeans in America; the highest specimens of mankind; others in . . . . . UNITY.

3. ARCHITECTURE.	4. COMMERCE.
1. Cavernism.	1. Nundinantal.
2. Pyramidalism.	2. Demi-Personal.
3. Palatialism.	3. Duplicism.
4. Domesticism.	4. Demi-National.
5. Edificalism.	5. Reciprocal.
1. Huts, caverns, excavations, tents, cabins, &c., &c.; the rudest and simplest dwellings and structures.	1. Collection of hunting, fishing, and wearing materials, at fixed times and places for purposes of trade.
2. Sacred piles, altars, and monuments. Examples of the perfection of this stage of architecture in Upper Egypt.	2. Exchange of metals, implements of war, animals, and other articles for women.
3. Palaces, towers, sacred edifices, temples, and sanctuaries. Of sacred structures, the Pantheon is an example.	3. Converting wealth into idols; tithing; appropriations for sacrifices and to kingly ambition.
4. Mansions and cottages;—buildings less for purposes of defence—more for convenience and utility.	4. Restrictions, tariffs, antagonism of capital and labor, and of general interests and productions.
5. Will combine the vastness, grandeur, utility, simplicity, and beauty, of all previous ages . . . . . a UNITY.	5. International communication, free trade, universal reciprocity of exchanges . . . . . UNITY.

5. LANGUAGE.	6. SCIENCE.
1. Automatical.	1. Simplism.
2. Hieroglyphical.	2. Alchemy.
3. Symbolical.	3. Transition.
4. Alphabetical.	4. Chemistry.
5. Axiomatical.	5. Compound.
1. Configuration of countenance, gesticulation, simple expression, discordant and ambiguous speech.	1. Perceptive, observation of surrounding things, superficial application, uses scarcely known.
2. Representations on stones, trees, and plates; significant figures, simple letters and sounds.	2. Superstitious deductions, metal-mania, magic, divination, demonology, astrology.
3. Allegorical structures, typed ideas, significant carvings, sculpture, statuary, and idols.	3. Chimeras, supernaturalism, chronology, much of the imaginary but little of the practical.
4. Conventional signs, letters, words, conjugations, inflexions, syntax — (grammar).	4. Practico-inductive, knowledge of uses, general practical application, e. g., in inventions, navigation, &c.
5. Natural grammar, clear rules, spontaneous and unequivocal expression, interior sense . UNITY.	5. Science the subject of primary education, applied to all departments; knowledge systemized . . . . . UNITY.

7. PHILOSOPHY.	8. THEOLOGY.
1. Material.	1. Fetichism.
2. Analytical.	2. Polytheism.
3. Transition.	3. Pantheism.
4. Synthetical.	4. Dualism.
5. Spiritual.	5. Monotheism.
1. Imaginary causes, fantastic origins, gigantic gods, wild speculations on cosmogony, &c.	1. First phase of idolatry, worship of exterior objects in Nature, images, chieftains, &c.; adoration.
2. Broken inquiry, imaginary researches, invisible arbitrators, speculations on the formation of the earth.	2. Invisible deities with diverse attributes; rites, ceremonies, sacrifices, fasts, feasts, &c.; expiation.
3. Experience, data, <i>a priori</i> , classifications of elements, geometry, dialectic subtleties, metaphysics.	3. Resolution of matter into spirit; supposition that all things are God; superstition, fanaticism.
4. Development of physical systems, doctrines of chance, fatalism, freedom of the will, astronomy, geology.	4. Antagonistic deities, good God and evil God (or devil), Church, Pope, Bible, Clergy; sectarianism and prejudice.
5. Knowledge of causes, relations, degrees; definiteness, method, interior investigations, all in . . . . . UNITY.	5. No arbitrary deities, ONE Cause, ONE Father, ONE Destiny, ONE family, ONE purpose. . . . . UNITY.

9. GOVERNMENT.	10. AUTHORITY.
1. Nulli-Autonicism.	1. Desire and Fear.
2. Anarchism.	2. Strength & Mystery.
3. Hierarchism.	3. Position and Title.
4. Feudalism.	4. Doctrine and Wealth.
5. Natural-right-ism.	5. Nature and Reason.
1. Individual isolation; invasion, local and temporary power; force, torture; distributive justice unknown.	1. Impulse, inclination; the imaginary will of idols; fire, light; superstitions and impressions.
2. Confusion, perversity, instability; artificial standards; enslaving of the weak and conquered; family orders.	2. Power, arbitrary will of chieftains; sorcery, soothsaying, oracles, demons, imaginary divinities.
3. Voluntary choice of chieftains and rules; successful warriors become monarchs; the weak oppressed.	3. Prophets, kings, nobles, priests; arbitrary and irrevocable laws based upon selfishness and superstition.
4. Hereditary aristocracy; serfdom, allegiance, exclusive elective franchise; monarchy, democracy.	4. Church, pope, bible; established articles of faith; hereditary opulence and grandeur; wealth.
5. General consent; qualification, attraction, (equitable and) natural legislation, distributive justice . . . . . UNITY.	5. Interpretation of Nature; native truth; intuition, Reason, Wisdom, and Righteousness . . . . . UNITY.

11. ART.	12. MUSIC.
1. Lifeless.	1. Discordant.
2. Simple Imitation.	2. Exciting.
3. Transition.	3. Melodious.
4. Compound.	4. Soothing.
5. Living.	5. Harmonious.
1. Simple outline; rude and grotesque figures with parts disproportionate and incoherent; colorless, lifeless.	1. Confused, incoherent, clamorous, sonorous, discordant; horns, gongs, drums, &c., mere noise.
2. Rude and imperfect imitation; color deep, coarse, unshaded, and noneffective; statuary rough and uncouth.	2. Intensely vociferous; simultaneous sounds; imperfect rules and time; approximation to order.
3. Bold, rugged, and attractive; due regard to symmetry and proportions; color simple but effective.	3. Periodical beats; invention, variety, melody; orphic strains, chants, praises; harps, flutes, &c.
4. Color less effective; greater regard to exactness in delineation; delicate tenderness.	4. Sacred, solemn, martial, penetrating, sentimental, eolian; perfect time, order, and harmony.
5. Soft, lively color; graceful, sentimental, spiritual; profoundly effective; influence pure and refining . . . . . UNITY.	5. Symphonious, euphonious, harmonious, lofty, delicate, expressive; exquisite order and time . . . . . UNITY.

13. POETRY.	14. AMUSEMENTS.
1. Perceptism.	1. Sensual.
2. Eratoism.	2. Mytho-Tragical.
3. Transition.	3. Gladio-Gymnastic.
4. Conceptism.	4. Melo-Dramatic.
5. Intuitism.	5. Intellectual.
1. External, wild, startling; abounding with huge and stupendous fancies; — subjects: genii, hunting, war, &c.	1. In a state of nudity; physical, lascivious, great animality; hunting, fishing, and muscular exploits.
2. Erato-inspired, lyric, eccentric, bold, diffusive; — subjects: gods, heroes, warriors, battles, &c.	2. Representations of mythological scenes with tragical terminations; marvellous, exciting.
3. Cantos to God, mythological, tragical, amorous, epic, sublime, nervous, and instructive.	3. Cruel, destructive, gladiatorial; games, such as running, wrestling, &c. Olympic games.
4. Embodying mythology, theology, science, philosophy; didactic, descriptive, sacred, effeminate.	4. Representations of historical events and of human passions, foibles, &c.; musical and instructive.
5. Instructive, elevating, refining; the vehicle of truth, and the promoter of peace, progress, and . . . . . UNITY.	5. Useful, educational, spiritual; embracing science, art, music, poetry, truth . . . . . UNITY.

15. IDIOM.	16. KINGDOM.
1. Sanscrit.	1. Babylonian.
2. Greek.	2. Medo-Persian.
3. Hebrew.	3. Grecio-Roman.
4. Latin.	4. European.
5. English.	5. American.
1. Ancient Indian, Chinese, Persian, Sclavonic, Celtic, and Gothic: Sanscrit most prominent.	1. Includes the savage and barbarian ages, developing the monarchical system represented in the Babylonian.
2. A pure language formed from the materials of the primitive languages, mainly of the Sanscrit.	2. Glides from the first into a new reign; the Zoroasterian era; Medes and Persians hold the sway.
3. The sacred languages of the Egyptians and Jews, the Bible idiom, and other dialects from the parent stock.	3. Kingdoms following Alexander the Great, the era being one of carnage, hostility, and wealth.
4. Latin, German, Italian, Spanish, French, English, Swedish, Danish, and other languages now in use.	4. The Roman empire and subsequent European monarchies, now nearly closed.
5. The English perfected, being a compound of other languages; a general and final . . . . . UNITY.	5. A general Republic, the stepping-stone to Freedom, Association, Justice, Accord, and . . . . . UNITY.



In this age, poetry—true poetry—is more universally understood and applied to practical purposes than formerly. As the soul, and the human race, approach the era of social and spiritual harmony, which is just beginning to dawn on the world, the principle of Poetry which is music, and which is Harmony, is more easily comprehended and practiced.

*The Great Harmonia*, vol. 2 (1851), p.85

This devotion to Man-authority is disastrous to every attempt at progression in the science of revealing thoughts. ...They [i.e. the old Masters] represented their own thoughts, and their own discoveries in the combination of colors. And this independence made them great and immortal! We will have New Masters when originality, and independence of popular opinion, inspires some refined and elevated spirit to express on canvas his own perceptions of the beauties of Nature, and his own intuitions of invisible things.

*The Great Harmonia*, vol. 2 (1851), p.87

Poets are no dreamers! Prophets are no impostors! Seers are no visionists! Philosophers are not insane! No, no! Poets all have sung of an “Elysium.” Prophets have foretold of a “New Jerusalem.” Seers have seen an “Era of Universal Unity.” Philosophers have ciphered out a “New Atlantis.” The Millennial day, the Utopian period, the reign of Justice, the age of Happiness—all! yes, all—is but one declaration of Father-God through the several inspired offspring of Mother-Nature.

*The Magic Staff* (1857), p.382-83.