

HIDDEN CORRESPONDENCES: TRACES OF SWEDENBORG IN KANDINSKY'S *CONCERNING THE SPIRITUAL IN ART*

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KANDINSKY



**ÜBER
DAS GEISTIGE
IN DER KUNST**

Dritte Auflage



Wassily Kandinsky,
*Concerning the
Spiritual in Art*
1911/12



Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772)

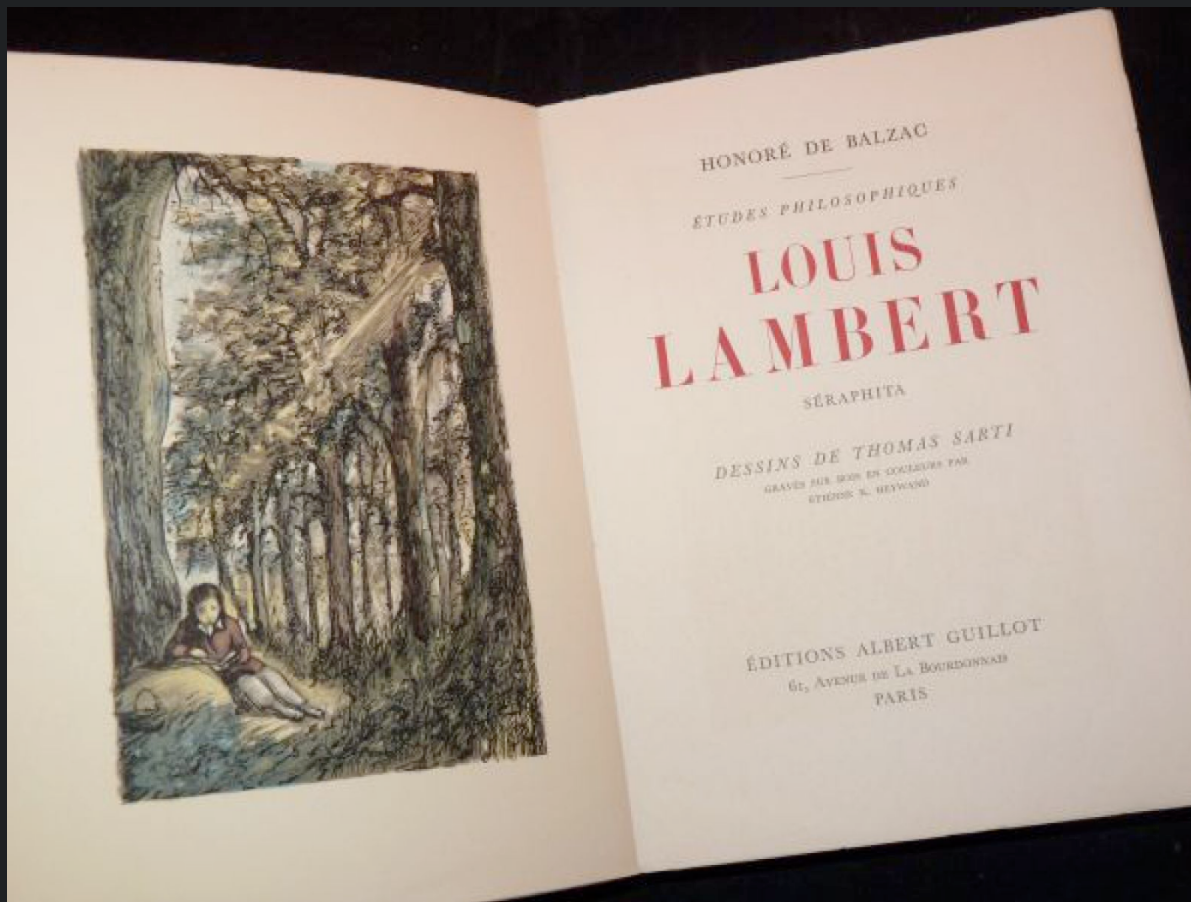
“Any study of the literary backgrounds of nineteenth-century literature has specific allusions to the popularity of Swedenborgism as the basic mysticism of the time.”

—Anna Balakian, *The Symbolist Movement*

Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850)

Séraphita, 1834

Louis Lambert, 1832



Correspondances

LA Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.

Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent,
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.

Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,
Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies;
Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants,

Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,
Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,
Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens.



Charles Baudelaire
(1821-1867)

Correspondances, 1857

Correspondences

Nature is a temple where living pillars
Let sometimes emerge confused words;
Man comes there over forests of symbols
Which watch him with intimate eyes.

Like those deep echoes that meet from afar
In a dark and profound harmony,
As vast as night and clarity,
So perfumes, colors, tones answer each other.

There are perfumes fresh as children's flesh,
Soft like oboes, green as meadows,
And others corrupted, rich, triumphant

Possessing the diffusion of infinite things,
Like amber, musk, incense, and aromatic
resin,
Chanting the ecstasies of spirit and senses.

Correspondences (*quatrains*)

Nature is a temple where living pillars
Let sometimes emerge confused words;
Man comes there over forests of symbols
Which watch him with intimate eyes.

Like those deep echoes that meet from afar
In a dark and profound harmony,
As vast as night and clarity,
So perfumes, colors, tones answer each other.

(tercets)

There are perfumes fresh as children's flesh,
Soft like oboes, green as meadows,
And others corrupted, rich, triumphant

Possessing the diffusion of infinite things,
Like amber, musk, incense, and aromatic resin,
Chanting the ecstasies of spirit and senses.



Kandinsky,
The Blue Rider, 1903



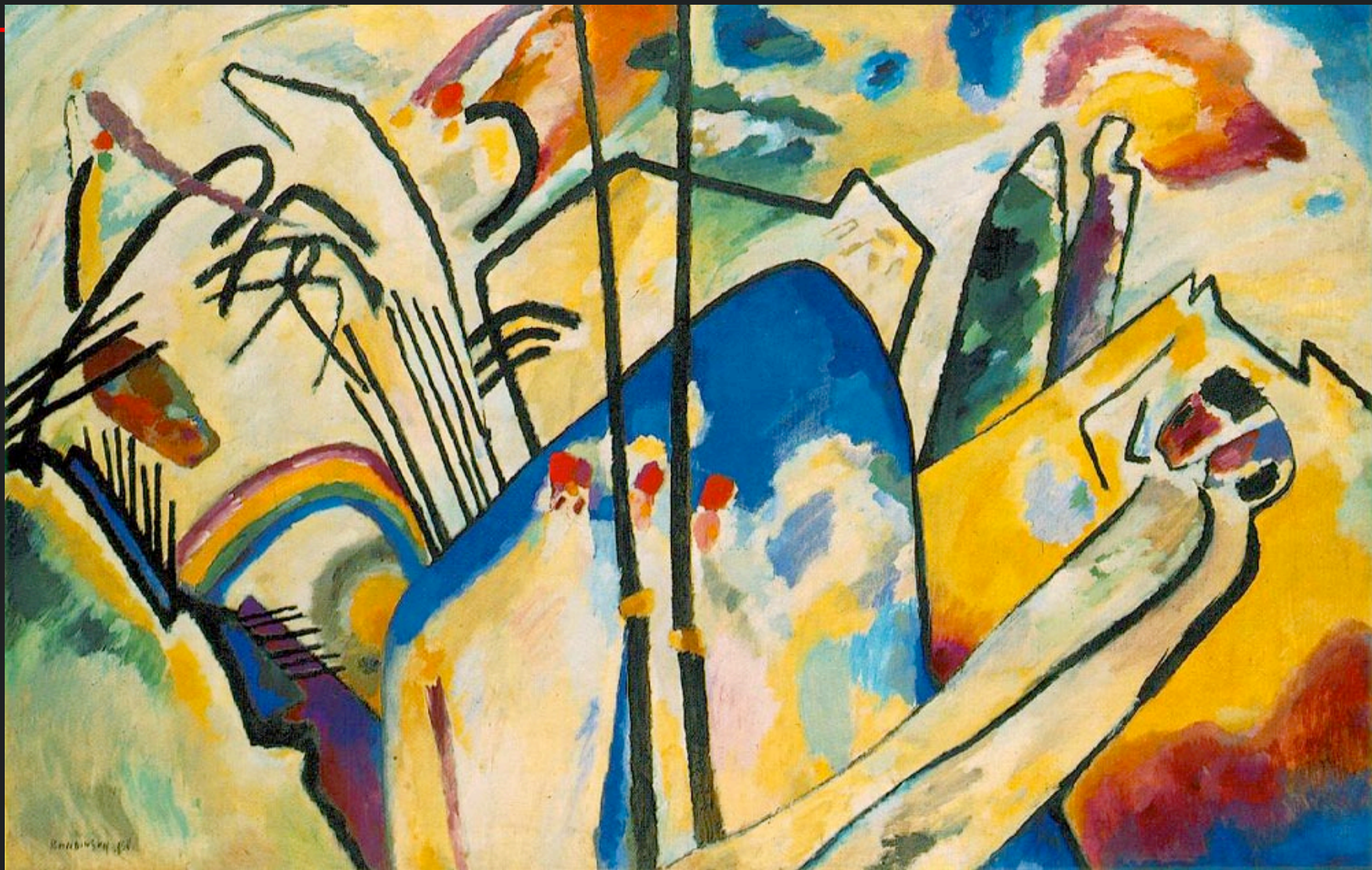
Kandinsky,
Colorful Life, 1907



Kandinsky, *Impression V (Park)*, 1911

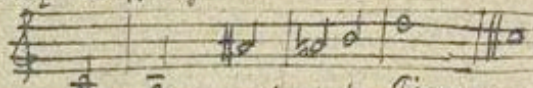


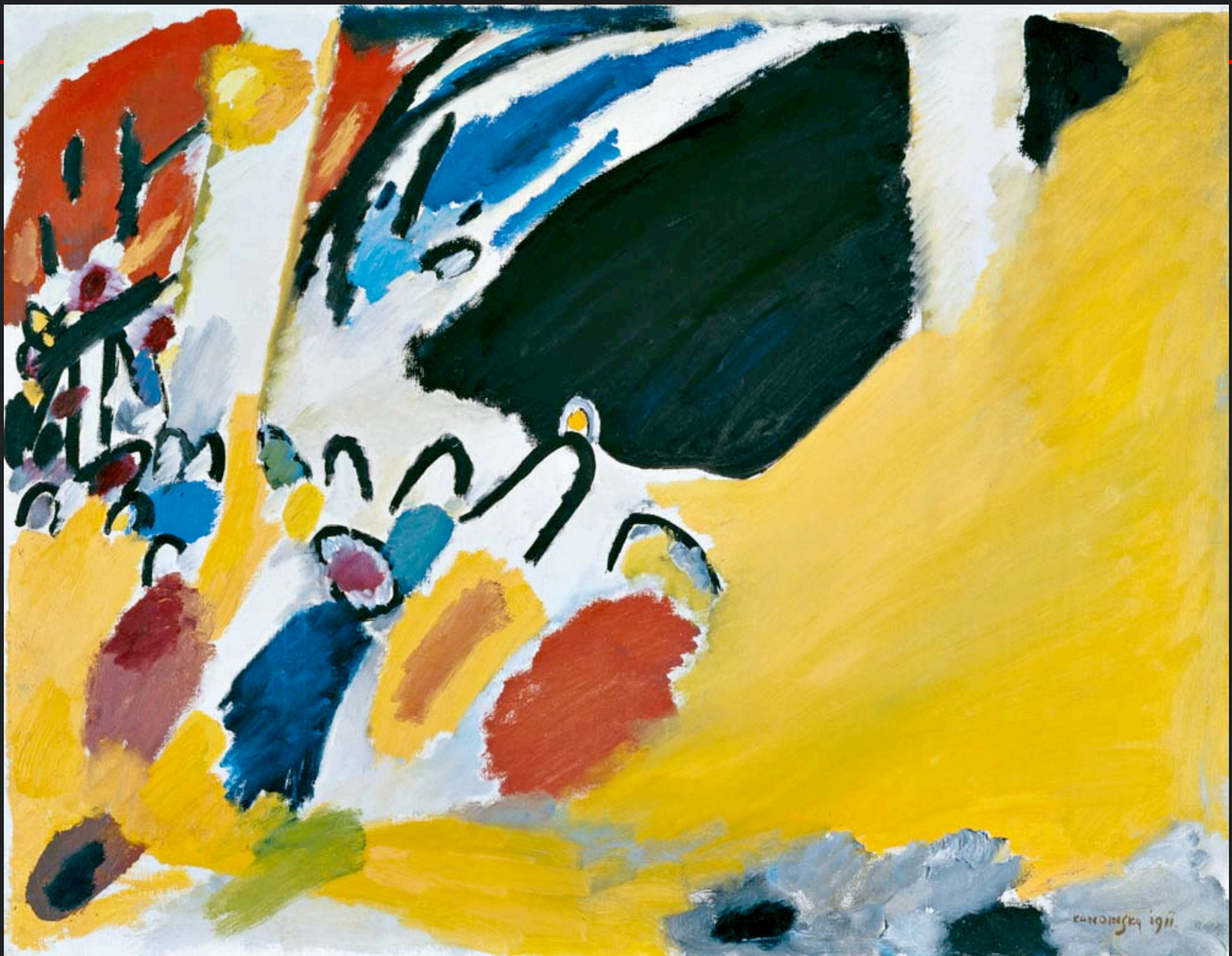
Kandinsky, *Improvisation 28 (second version)*, 1912



Kandinsky, *Composition IV*, 1911



II. Streichquintett. IV. Satz. *Lied für Kandinsky,*

 Ich liebf mich in Tönen — und liebf
 von einem Kunstflüchtling, der in seiner Kunst
 auf der Welt. 12/12. 1911. Arnold Schönberg



Kandinsky, *Impression III (Concert)*, 1911

“... there are puzzles around us. And we must find the courage to look these puzzles in the eye without timidly asking about ‘the solution.’ It is important that our creation of such puzzles mirror the puzzles with which we are surrounded, so that our soul may endeavor – not to solve them – but to decipher them. What we gain thereby should not be the solution, but a new method of coding or decoding. ... For the puzzles are an image of the ungraspable.... if we can only learn from them to consider the ungraspable as possible, we get nearer to God....”

—Schönberg to Kandinsky, August 1912