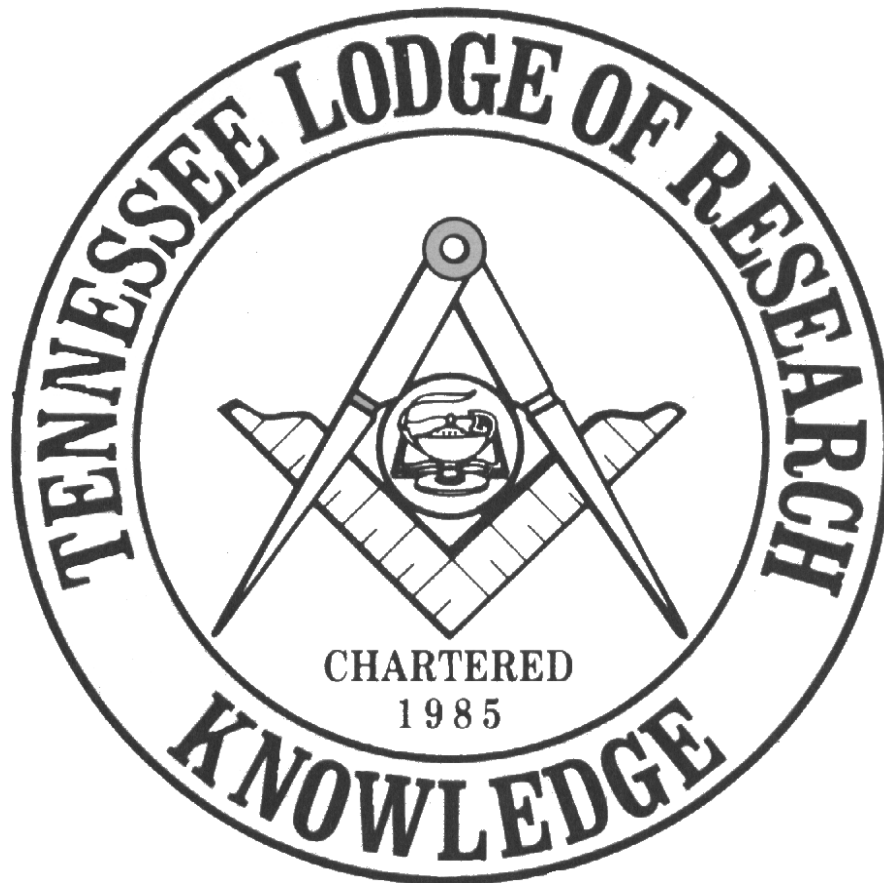


**TENNESSEE LODGE OF RESEARCH
F. & A. M.
ANNUAL PROCEEDINGS**



2020—PECK

**2020 ANNUAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
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F. & A. M.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
Flyleaf.....	i
Table of Contents.....	ii
Forum	
Editorial Note.....	1
Papers	
March Presentation—Neulander, The Tyranny of Egypt Over Freemasonry: A Study of the Influence Exercised by The Ancient Mysteries on Freemasonry.....	2
June Presentation—Martin, Id, Ego and Super Ego: The Three Craftsmen.....	39
September Presentation—Meldorf, Whence Cometh Us?.....	43
December Presentation—Hill, Joseph Lyndol Edwards, Melvin David Sloan.....	48
Book Reviews	
Neulander—”Freemasonry In Tolstoy’s <i>War and Peace</i> ”.....	53
Neulander—”The Meaning of Masonry” by Walter Leslie Wilmshurst.....	72
Short Talk Bulletins from the Masonic Service Association of North America	
January, To Polish and Adorn the Mind.....	75
February, The Lights: Three by Three	77
March, 10 Signs You’re Doing It Wrong.....	79
April, Gloves In Masonry.....	81
May, Masonic Couplets.....	84
June, Politics and Freemasonry.....	86
July, Civilization In Our Minds.....	88
August, Clarity in Freemasonry.....	90
September, William Jennings Bryan.....	92
October, Halloween, A Time For Spirits.....	94
November, Training and Doing it Right.....	96
December, Why So Many Symbols?.....	98
Masonic Service Association Emessay Notes February 2020.....	100
Masonic Service Association Emessay Notes April 2020.....	101
Masonic Service Association Emessay Notes November 2020.....	102
Fellows of the Tennessee Lodge of Research.....	103

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The entire document should be in 12 point Times New Roman font, including the title, which should be centered at the top of the page in **Bold**. The **By** Line should be centered and should contain the author's full **Name**.

All quoted or paraphrased material should be cited parenthetically, and all sources should be listed on a Works Cited page. Parenthetical citations, notes, and Works Cited should follow the guidelines found in *MLA Handbook, 8th edition*. An overview of general MLA guidelines may be found online at the "MLA Formatting and Style Guide" web page of Purdue University's

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The Tyranny of Egypt Over Freemasonry: A Study of The Influence Exercised by The Ancient Mysteries on Freemasonry

By
Michael Adam Neulander, 32°

Rt. Wor. Bro. Neulander is a Past Master of Transportation Lodge # 337, Past District Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, and the first member of the Tennessee Lodge of Research to earn the title of Tennessee Masonic Scholar.

Introduction

Since childhood I have had a fascination and a real “thirst” for conducting an in-depth study of the Egyptian civilization. However, I did not have the opportunity to “slake my thirst” for most of my life due to work requirements. The last ten years of my working life were spent as an Adjunct Professor of History at Old Dominion University, in Norfolk Virginia. My area of expertise was history of Asia. It was in the last two years before I retired that I was finally able to satisfy my long-held desire to embark on my “journey of discovery” regarding Egyptian history, culture, and especially its language. Part of my journey has led me down the path towards learning Egyptian hieroglyphs; so far, I have memorized over 500 of them. One of the other passions of my adult life has been my over thirty-six-year membership in Freemasonry. I am grateful for how its moral philosophy has made me a better man by teaching me how to “subdue my passions and keep me in due bounds towards all mankind.” I have also enjoyed researching its rich allegory steeped in history hearkening back to the building of King Solomon’s Temple. Thus, when the Tennessee Lodge of Research started its “Academy of Masonic Knowledge” program I eagerly enrolled. It is in this past year as I started to read books and write reviews about them that I came to realize two of my life passions, Egyptology and Freemasonry, would cross paths. I was so pleased by this nexus of intellectual pleasure that I knew I had to write about Egypt’s influence on Freemasonry and present my paper at a meeting of the Tennessee Lodge of Research.

My discovery of the nexus between Egyptology and Freemasonry started with the second book I read for the “Academy of Knowledge” program. The book was *The Builders: A Story and Study of Masonry*, which was authored by the imminent Masonic scholar, Joseph Fort Newton, (1876-1950). I was pleasantly surprised when Newton in this book looked to Egyptian hieroglyphs and the importance of their symbolism to both Egyptian culture and Freemasonry. Newton made a fascinating connection for me between the Egyptian hieroglyph ☉ for the “Sun God” Ra and the Masonic significance of the “All seeing-eye.” Newton stated: “There is less mystery about the Circle, which was an image of the disk of the Sun and a natural symbol of completeness, of eternity. With a point within the center it became, as naturally, the emblem of the Eye of the World—that All-seeing eye of the eternal Watcher of the human scene” (Newton, 14). Therefore, like the Egyptian Ra, the Masonic “All seeing-eye” is the symbol for the omniscience of the “Great Architect of the Universe.” It is important to note that Newton like so many other distinguished Masonic scholars, such as: Albert Mackey, (1807-81), William Leslie Wilmhurst, (1867-1939), and Oliver Day Street, (1886-1944), understood that Masonic symbolism which took “root” in the Egyptian mysteries continued to “flower” through the various ancient mysteries that developed throughout history. After reading Newton’s book, I had

an epiphany, Newton's book re-awakened in me my lifelong belief, formulated by my rigorous academic study of over forty years, that so much of what happens in history and philosophy is connected. Frequently, these connections are esoteric and thus, hidden from a cursory view of events. However, with rigorous examination and study the connections can be found. Thus, it is because of the connection of Egyptology and Freemasonry that I decided to title my paper and presentation, *The Tyranny of Egypt Over Freemasonry: A Study of The Influence Exercised by The Ancient Mysteries Over Freemasonry*.

Upon seeing this title, I am sure many of you are curious as to why I selected it; thus, it deserves a brief explanation. Over twenty years ago, when I was a graduate student studying philosophy and history at Old Dominion University, in Norfolk Virginia, I came across a curiously titled book that just compelled me to take it off the library shelf and read it. The book was authored by Eliza Marian Butler in 1935 and it was entitled *The Tyranny of Greece Over Germany: A Study of The Influence Exercised by Greek Art and Poetry Over the Great German Writers of the 18th, 19th, and 20th Centuries*. It is no wonder that I had such a visceral compulsion to picking the book off the shelf after its title caught my eye. After all, I was double majoring in graduate school because ever since I was a student in the late 1970's at the University of Miami in Coral Gables Florida, I came to realize that rarely does any idea or any phenomena spring out of a vacuum. My studies in the Liberal Arts taught me that different academic disciplines are intertwined by sharing ideas. In addition, I also learned that different historical epochs are intertwined as well. Thus, I was not surprised that when I became a Freemason over thirty-six years ago I rapidly learned that the Masonic allegory and symbolism used to teach us "wise and serious truths" were handed down to us by a plethora of wise men from all different cultures and periods of time. It is only after reading Newton's book that I realized that Masonic "truths" reached all the way back to ancient Egypt. This epiphany caused me to continue my research and I soon came across another book, Erik Hornung's *The Secret Lore of Egypt: Its Impact on the West*. Hornung's book helped me to understand the nexus between ancient Egyptian wisdom, which he defines as "Egyptosophy," and Freemasonry. Hornung argued that Egyptosophy was the prevailing discipline that researchers studied to understand the history, culture, and "ancient wisdom" of ancient Egypt. "It was only after the decipherment of hieroglyphs by Jean-François Champollion in 1822 that its younger sister, the discipline of Egyptology, made its appearance" (Hornung, 1). In essence, this handing down of our "wise and serious truths" from time immemorial to when "speculative" Freemasonry came into being in the eighteenth century in Great Britain is the reason why I embarked on trying to discover the nexus between Egyptosophy and Freemasonry. After all, my studies in Freemasonry, much of it conducted after I retired from being an Adjunct Professor at Old Dominion University, have convinced me that the greatness of Freemasonry was created by "men who stood on the shoulders of giants." With this idea in mind, it was only natural for me to borrow Butler's title of her book and use it for the title of my paper. Thus, I present for the pleasure of the audience my paper entitled; *The Tyranny of Egypt Over Freemasonry: A Study of The Influence Exercised by The Ancient Mysteries Over Freemasonry*.

The thesis of my paper is really a simple notion. All my years of academic studies have thoroughly convinced me that there is an "unbroken chain" of Egyptian wisdom that has been transmitted through several epochs of history and found its way into Freemasonry during the "Age of Enlightenment." Now I am not arguing that this "unbroken chain" of Egyptian wisdom has been passed down verbatim by word of mouth through every generation of humans from ancient Egypt to "speculative" Freemasonry. However, I do argue that the ancient Egyptian

wisdom, (known as hermeticism, which I will define in this paper when I write about Egyptian history), has been discovered by the initiated intelligentsia during every major historical epoch of history up to the “Age of Enlightenment.” In addition, I assert that in every one of these historical epochs of history, these men of intelligentsia, who have been initiated into various rites and societies, often secretive in nature, believed that they were chosen to spread the hermetic wisdom of ancient Egypt. These initiated intelligentsia also believed that this “revealed” wisdom could be used to interpret the esoteric knowledge necessary to better understand their place in the universe, the “truth” behind human existence, and their relationship with their G-d.

Although I stated that my thesis is a simple notion, it is a complex story to explain, since much of the evidence is hidden in esoteric allegory. In addition, the scope of my paper covers a vast timeline of history. However, the historical methodology I will use to examine the “long march” that Egyptosophy has made through different historical epochs culminating with the “Age of Enlightenment” and 18th century Freemasonry will clearly “illuminate” the proof of my thesis. Since I have become a professional historian, I have viewed all my historical data through the “hermeneutic lens.” Hermeneuticism is defined by historians and philosophers as the necessity to immerse oneself in the entire social milieu associated with a historical epoch to fully understand its significance on a historical event. Sometimes this is not an easy task. Borrowing a phrase used by Winston Churchill to describe Communism, one can describe Freemasonry’s allegory and symbolism as a “mystery wrapped in an enigma.” More academically defined, Freemasonry is steeped in esotericism which is defined as follows. The concept of the “esoteric” originated in the second century CE with the coining of the ancient Greek adjective *esôterikós*, meaning “belonging to an inner circle.” Historically esotericism was concerned with “metaphysical truths” deliberately obscured from all but a very few that were initiated into several ancient mysteries. Often these “chosen few” were identified throughout history as “adepts,” “magi,” and “seers” who were trained to grasp the real “metaphysical truth” of the universe which had been “hidden in plain sight” from the uninitiated. I will show in this paper that esoteric wisdom really began to be revealed to only a small coterie of the intelligentsia, first in ancient Egypt, and then fully flourishing during the “Age of Enlightenment.” These initiated philosophes of the “Age of Enlightenment” were often Freemasons, Illuminati, and/or Rosicrucians. They were the last group of men to use the Hermetic teachings which “beckoned” to them from ancient Egypt as a way of searching for and understanding the esoteric meaning in ideas and written text. In addition, they also conducted their scrupulous examination of data by using such disciplines as philosophy, science, and art. I end my introduction using a Bible quote which I think sums up the need, in each generation, for at least an “initiated few” throughout history to be able to use the hermetic knowledge, born in ancient Egypt, to interpret the esoteric wisdom of our metaphysical world which has been “hidden in plain sight” throughout history. “Wisdom crieth aloud in the street, She uttereth her voice in broad places;” (Proverbs 1:20). “Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man attended.” (Proverbs 1:24).

Egypt: 3,100-30 BCE

It all starts in Egypt! Architecture, religion, mythology, and esotericism all sprang up from the banks of the Nile River. Before I tell you about how the ancient mysteries started in Egypt, I need to show you a view of Egypt through the “hermeneutic lens.” Ancient Egypt was known as the “breadbasket” of the ancient world due to its rich harvest of wheat which sprouted up every

year along the banks of the Nile River. There were two factors that contributed to their rich bounty. The Nile would overflow its banks every year, this phenomenon was known as the “inundation season,” which was predictably marked by ancient Egyptian calendars for several millennia. The flood that it caused irrigated several million square miles of land. In addition, the flood would bring with it extraordinarily rich silt from its source, Lake Victoria in Tanzania. This phenomenon naturally fertilized the land along the banks of the Nile making it the best land for agricultural growth on the planet. The rich agricultural properties of Egypt allowed its population to have more leisure time away from the arduous farming activity that was necessary for survival in most other locations in the ancient world. With leisure time human imagination is allowed to grow which allows several aspects of culture to flourish, such as, a written language, literature, religion, government, art, and architecture. All this development was made possible earlier than in almost any other civilization in human history. This phenomenon is known as “Geographic Determinism,” which is a term used by historians to note when geography creates an agricultural advantage for a civilization to develop faster than in other regions. I now examine the development of Hermeticism which also sprung from the banks of the Nile.

Hornung stated in his book, *The Secret Lore of Egypt: Its Impact on the West*, that he would concentrate on Egyptosophy: “the study of an imaginary Egypt viewed as the profound source of all esoteric lore. This Egypt is a timeless idea bearing only on a loose relationship to the historical reality” (3). This esoteric ancient wisdom of Egypt is commonly known as hermeticism; which I will now explain in greater detail. Hermeticism originated out of the description of the Egyptian deity Thoth and his function in Egyptian religion. The first thing to remember about ancient Egypt is that they invented an extraordinarily complex polytheistic religion which literally contained over 100 deities. My extensive research in Egyptology has led me to rely on the book from one of the most renowned Egyptologists who teaches at Oxford University, Geraldine Pinch. Her book, *Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt*, is my source of knowledge regarding Egyptian religious practice. The deity Thoth was portrayed as an ape or ibis headed man. He was considered in Egyptian mythology as the deity that invented all spoken languages, writing, wisdom, and secret knowledge. His main Temple where he was worshipped by his priests was in the city of Hermopolis. He was also known as the scribe for the Gods, and an incorruptible judge. “Thoth acted as the advocate of the murdered Osiris before the Divine Tribunal” (210). In fact, Thoth had an instrumental effect in the afterlife of all Egyptians. During the twelfth Dynasty of the Middle Kingdom (c. 1938-1759 BCE), Thoth was credited with authoring the first hermetic text, *The Book of Two Ways*, which is the first account of the afterlife. In the famous Egyptian Book of the Dead, Thoth’s responsibility was to stand next to every Egyptian soul wanting to gain entrance to the heavens. Any soul that had trepidation regarding their entrance into the heavens asked Thoth to advocate their case for them as he did for Osiris. When the soul’s heart was weighed on the scales against the feather of *maat*, “truth,” Thoth recorded the verdict. It is the next attributes of Thoth that are the subject of this paper. “A tradition grew up that Thoth had written forty-two books containing all the knowledge needed by humanity. Some of this was occult knowledge to be revealed only to initiates who would not misuse the power it gave them” (211). You will see in this paper that occult knowledge, often also termed alchemy throughout history, figures prominently in esoteric knowledge. As I will explain in greater detail under this paper’s heading on “Greece,” Thoth is renamed Hermes in Greek mythology. Therefore: “The body of literature known as the *Hermetica* claimed to preserve the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus (Thoth the Thrice Great). Hermes Trismegistus was eventually reinterpreted as a

great thinker who had lived thousands of years in the past” (211). Thus, the knowledge imparted by Hermes Trismegistus became the bulk of the knowledge that started the “unbroken chain” of esotericism that was communicated by most of the ancient mysteries. This esotericism wound (“travelled”) through all the historical epochs up to the “Age of Enlightenment,” and “burrowed” its way into Masonic allegory and symbolism. Now is a good time to “illuminate” some of the Egyptian esoterica that made its way into Masonic allegory and symbolism; especially when it concerns architecture and the resurrection of the soul as told in our “Hiramic” legend.

Newton noted in his book, *The Builders: A Story and Study of Masonry* that humans have always been builders. There is plenty of evidence for this claim; especially, when one studies the early civilizations of Egypt, Sumer, India, and China. Of course, for Masonic purposes, Newton focused his attention on the Egyptian civilization; with the building of the great pyramids and temples in Egypt starting about 5,000 years ago. Newton correctly pointed out that agricultural life in Egypt was essentially an effortless endeavor due to the yearly “inundation cycle” of the Nile River. Therefore, Egyptians had plenty of “free time” on their hands to spend on other pursuits; thus, they were able to turn their attention to architecture. One only has to observe the collective “genius” that was required to construct the magnificent Great Pyramid of Giza, the tallest man-made edifice in the world until the Lincoln Cathedral was finished in 1311 CE, to realize the great contribution the Egyptians made to the “architectural arts.” As Newton most beautifully stated: “Here then are the real foundations of Masonry, both material and moral: in the deep need and aspiration of man, and his creative impulses; in his instinctive Faith, the quest of the Ideal, and his love of the Light” (10). Therefore, it should come as no surprise to anyone that “speculative” Freemasons, during the “Age of Enlightenment,” would focus on Egyptian civilization’s architectural achievements as the “starting point” for some of its own symbolism and allegory.

Oliver Day Street, (1886-1944), was a distinguished Freemason who served two terms as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alabama from 1925-27. His article “Symbolism of the Three Degrees” in *The Freemason’s Key: A Study of Masonic Symbolism*, edited by Michael R. Poll, contains a plethora of information concerning the three degrees of Freemasonry. However, I was able to “dig out” some real “nuggets” of useful information on symbolism and myth. In Street’s section explaining symbolism and myth of the Master Mason’s degree, he asked the following question. “Do we find any institutions in ancient time similar to our own and employing our symbols for like purposes? I answer at once that we do” (113). Street’s answer pointed him towards the history of the ancient mysteries, starting with Egyptian mythology as a source for the allegory of the “Hiramic” legend in the Master Mason degree. On this notion of the ancient mysteries, Street walked a familiar path with such eminent Masonic scholars as: Albert Mackey, William Leslie Wilmhurst, and Joseph Fort Newton. Street, along with the Freemasons just listed, agreed that Freemasonry’s “Hiramic” legend was based on many ancient mysteries that followed a historical lineage all the way back to ancient Egypt. “In Egypt they were known as the Mysteries of Osiris and Isis, and these appear to have been the model for all others” (113). Freemasons are obviously knowledgeable about the “Hiramic” legend; and most probably recognize that it has a direct parallel relationship to the resurrection of Jesus. However, most Freemasons have no idea that the “Hiramic” legend owes its conception to the legend of the murder of the Egyptian deity Osiris and his resurrection, which is history’s earliest resurrection story.

Pinch noted that the Osiris myth first appeared during Egypt’s Fifth Dynasty, during the 24th century BCE, on the walls of pyramid burial chambers. After their translation in the

nineteenth century, these funerary texts became known as the *Pyramid Texts*. Since the texts explained the Osiris myth, and his and afterlife, they served as a script explaining the reign of the kings buried in their own funeral chambers. All these kings were expecting to be resurrected, as Osiris was, so that they could reign in the heavens. In addition, the *Pyramid Texts* contained healing incantations that were popularly used by all Egyptians (Pinch 41-42). Although the Osiris myth is Egyptian, its impact on esoteric knowledge really got its start from the pen of one of the greatest historians of the ancient world, Plutarch (c. 46 CE-120 CE). His writing style is still studied and emulated by professional historians today. Plutarch was Greek by birth and a citizen of the Roman Empire. He was famous for being the first historian who, when he wrote historical biographies about Greek and Roman political leaders, examined and opined on the moral nature of their actions and decisions. It is interesting to note that Plutarch received some esoteric knowledge himself since he spent the last thirty years of his life serving as an oracle and priest at the Temple in Delphi. In addition, he was enamored with Egyptian history and culture, understanding that it was the fount of much of Greek culture, and he wrote extensively on the subject. Plutarch wrote the most comprehensive ancient account of Egyptian religious practices and of the Osiris myth in his book, *On Isis and Osiris*. His version of the Osiris myth is the most popular retelling of the story and still used by historians today. Below is a brief synopsis.

Osiris ruled over Egypt, having inherited the kingship from his ancestors in a lineage stretching back to the creator of the world, Ra or Atum. His queen was Isis, who, along with Osiris and his murderer, Set, were all the children of the earth god Geb and the sky goddess Nut. The evil Set was jealous of Osiris and devised a scheme to murder him. Set had an elaborate chest made to fit Osiris's exact measurements and then, at a banquet, declared that he would give the chest as a gift to whoever could fit inside it. The guests, in turn, lay down inside the coffin, but none fit inside except Osiris. When he lay down in the chest, Set and his accomplices slammed the cover shut, sealed it, and threw it into the Nile. With Osiris's corpse inside, the chest floated out into the sea, arriving at the city of Byblos, where a tree grew around it. The king of Byblos had the tree cut down and made into a pillar for his palace, still with the chest inside. Meanwhile, Isis searched for her husband's body and found out it was in Byblos. Isis found the chest and removed it from within the tree in order to retrieve her husband's body. Having taken the chest, she left the tree in Byblos, where it became an object of worship for the local populace. Isis returned the body to Egypt; however, Set stole it and cut it into forty-two pieces and buried the pieces throughout the land. Isis then searched for her husband's bodily parts with the aid of her sister Nephthys. Isis restored Osiris's body parts with the help of other deities, including Thoth, a deity credited with great magical and healing powers, and Anubis, the god of embalming and funerary rites. Thus, Osiris becomes the first mummy. With the gods' Thoth and Anubis' efforts to restore his body are born the mythological basis for Egyptian embalming practices, which sought to prevent and reverse the decay that follows death. Mummification allowed for Osiris's resurrection as king of the underworld, where he ruled and judged the dead in the Hall of Two Truths (376-380).

Pinch pointed out that besides Osiris being the example of the first resurrected entity in history; he was also connected with life-giving power. He also epitomizes righteous kingship, and the rule of *maat* "truth," which is the ideal natural order of the world; whose maintenance was a fundamental goal in ancient Egyptian culture. By contrast, Set is depicted as an evil force in Egyptian mythology. In addition, Set is associated with violence and chaos. Therefore, the slaying of Osiris symbolized the struggle between "good and order" and "evil and disorder," and the disruption of life by death (41-42). Once Freemasons learn of the Osiris myth, they instantly

realize its parallels to our “Hiramic” legend. Thus, one should not be surprised that the progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry understood that fashioning the Osiris myth into the “Hiramic” legend would become a useful tool to allegorically cause every Freemason to go through their own resurrection—teaching each Freemason being “reborn” that with his newly revealed “truth” from Masonic moral teachings he will be in a titanic struggle with his own passions and desires. Thus, each Freemason will emulate how ancient Egyptians saw the struggle between “good and order” and “evil and disorder” in the world. The Freemason will eternalize that struggle for himself with the goal of having “good, order, and truth” being victorious, which is the ideal natural order of the world. The one Masonic scholar that understood this concept better than any other I have ever read is Walter Leslie Wilmshurst.

I bring to your attention the last Masonic source I want to use for the “Egypt” part of the paper. Wilmshurst, a British Freemason, is one of the most widely read Masonic scholars in history. His book, *The Meaning of Masonry*, is one of the best books I have ever read explaining the philosophical teachings of Freemasonry. As a historian, I wholeheartedly agree with Wilmshurst’s acknowledgement that Masonic philosophy and its “Hiramic” legend borrowed heavily from ancient mysteries dating as far back as to the Egyptian civilization. Wilmshurst also correctly recognized that there was no direct historical continuity between the Egyptian mysteries running through the long line of historical epochs up to the start of speculative Masonry in the 18th century. However, he did correctly recognize that the “Hiramic” legend had elements that harkened back to the very first “regeneration myth” from Egypt which told of the “resurrection” of their deity Osiris, and ran through other legends of “rebirth” up to that of Jesus (43-45). Wilmshurst noticed that the purpose of our “Hiramic” legend is to turn the ordinary man into a “superman” through resurrection. Thus, Wilmshurst sums up his notion about the importance of the resurrection myth with the following passage. “This—the evolution of man into superman—was always the purpose of the ancient “Mysteries,” and the real purpose of modern Masonry, is...the expediting of the spiritual evolution of those who aspire to perfect their own nature and transform it into a more god-like quality” (47).

Greece: 12th century BCE to c. 600 CE.

“In the world of the intellect the Greeks pushed to limits of accomplishment which mankind must not fail to appreciate and aspire to, even when it cannot equal the Greeks in achievement” (Burkhardt, VI). This is a quote from the book, *History of Greek Culture*, authored by one of the most respected historians in the profession, Jacob Burkhardt, (1818-97). I think it describes perfectly what Western Civilization owes to ancient Greek culture—almost everything! For example, ancient Greece is responsible for contributing its unique DNA to the following bulwark of institutions that comprise what historians classify as components of Western Civilization: democracy, philosophy, medicine, rhetoric, geometry, grammar, literature, religion, art, and architecture, just to name a few. Of course, many of these disciplines should be readily recognizable by my Masonic brethren from their Fellow Craft lecture. Developed during the classical times in ancient Greece; the seven liberal arts were the dominant and oldest form of education for all scholars in Europe. These arts are classified into two groups: the *trivium*, or “lower studies”—grammar, rhetoric, and logic—and the *quadrivium*, or “higher studies”—arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. “The ancient Greeks considered knowledge of the seven liberal arts to be essential for all free men to properly take an active role in civic life” (Curtius, 37). In addition, without a thorough knowledge in the seven liberal arts no man could

hope to have the intellectual capacity necessary to understand esoteric knowledge of the metaphysical world. In this section of the paper I will also show how the legend of Hermes Trismegistus really blossomed during the Greek epoch of history. Another tool that the initiates in all the ancient mysteries had at their disposal to learn and remember their esoteric knowledge was the art of memory. This art was invented in ancient Greece, and I will write about it in this section of the paper since it is so important to the attainment of knowledge before the invention of the printing press in the 16th century, and is still used today for how Freemasons learn and distribute knowledge to their initiates.

Interestingly, the Ancient Greeks understood full well that they, too, “stood on the shoulders of giants”—the ancient Egyptian culture. Great luminary intellects such as Herodotus, Pythagoras, Euclid, and Plato travelled to Egypt and wrote extensively about the knowledge they gained after being initiated into ancient Egyptian mysteries. Sadly today, most average people do not realize how much of ancient Greek culture “had its roots in, and grew out of,” ancient Egyptian culture. For example, almost the entire pantheon of Greek mythological deities was copied from Egyptian mythology. For instance, the Egyptian deity Thoth was renamed Hermes in ancient Greek religious mythology. Thus, the ancient Greeks are the next link in the unbroken chain of esotericism to inherit the wisdom of Hermes Trismegistus, and to add their unique DNA to his esoteric wisdom that eventually is transmitted through the ages.

Florian Ebeling is currently a lecturer at Heidelberg University in Germany. His book, *The Secret History of Hermes Trismegistus: Hermeticism from Ancient to Modern Times* is one of several great books explaining the historical path hermeticism travelled. Ebeling, like other historians, commented on the time and place of the “invention” of Hermes Trismegistus. “In Hellenistic Egypt Hermes Trismegistus arose from a merging of the figures of Thoth and Hermes. After the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great in the year 332 BCE, the Greeks in Egypt adopted the outward forms of Egyptian culture, investing them, however, with their own Greek content” (6). Thus, Hermes Trismegistus in Hellenized Egypt becomes metamorphosized into a human who winds up teaching wisdom to a select few. His written wisdom first started out historically from Egyptian works mentioned earlier in this paper, such as The Book of Two Ways, Pyramid Texts, and The Book of the Dead. While they are difficult to date with precision, these Egyptian-Greek writings of the wisdom of Hermes Trismegistus were compiled in book form, known as *Corpus Hermeticum*, between the 1st and 3rd centuries CE. The *Corpus Hermeticum* touch on a wide variety of topics, such as, G-d, the cosmos, nature, and humankind’s place in the world. The hermetic philosophy systematically rationalized a religious cult like practice and illuminated for their “adepts,” (a frequently used term in the *Corpus Hermeticum*) a personal path for their souls to ascend from the physical world to a place of bliss. Thus, all the ancient mystery rites I illuminate in this paper all share this philosophical belief. In addition, some of the *Corpus Hermeticum* delves into astrology and alchemy. The *Corpus Hermeticum* was written in dialogue form whereby Hermes Trismegistus is lecturing to his enlightened student (7-18). As a philosopher I recognize that this dialogue form of imparting wisdom was used by many great sages in history. For example, all of Plato’s writings regarding the wisdom he received from Socrates are in dialogue form. It was also the literary structure used by Confucius to impart his wisdom to his students in his Confucian Analects. The Gospels in the New Testament are the teachings of Jesus in dialogue form with his disciples. Ebeling’s research brought him to understand that: “This ‘lord of reason and rational speech’ was viewed as the forefather of all wisdom, philosophy, and theology, and Egyptian priests supposedly instructed Democritus, Plato, Pythagoras, and Eudoxus in the knowledge of Hermes” (6). Hermes

Trismegistus remained a human figure throughout the rest of human history. I will now examine the evidence showing how some of the Greek intelligentsia were initiated into ancient mysteries. Besides all these ancient mysteries teaching a belief in the immortality of the soul, they also shared a commonality of their tenets being built on esoteric wisdom grounded in hermetic thought.

As a Freemason, the name on the list of ancient Greek initiates that piqued my interest is Pythagoras (c. 570-c. 495 BCE). I well remember from my Master Mason lecture that we Freemasons are taught that he “was initiated into several orders of priesthood” when he travelled throughout the world. I admit that other than the information imparted to me in the Master Mason lecture about Pythagoras, I did not know much about this wise sage until I started to do my research for this paper. I had no idea about the breadth of knowledge he received from several of the ancient mysteries he was initiated into from various distant lands. Only after my research do I fully realize now why Pythagoras became such an honored figure in our rituals. According to Hornung’s research on Pythagoras he found from ancient Greek writings: “...he was supposed to have spent twenty-two years in Egypt, where he was initiated into all the mysteries, after which the Persian conquest (525 BCE) took him into the magi of Babylon (Hornung, 22). There is no doubt that the progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry, men who were well versed in classical writings from history, received their information about Pythagoras from the ancient Greek biography, *The Life of Pythagoras*, written by the Greek philosopher Iamblichus, (c. 245-c. 325 CE). Of course, Freemasons know Pythagoras from his famous Pythagorean Theorem. However, most Freemasons have no idea about his other great achievements, which I am sure is the real reason he attracted the attention of our progenitors and insured he would be forever honored with the title of “our ancient brother” in our ritual. Iamblichus stated that Pythagoras studied with the Egyptian priests at Diospolis, “Thebes,” and that he was the only foreigner ever “initiated” into their rites and allowed the privileges of taking part in their worship. Pythagoras also received instruction from the Egyptian priest Oenuphis of Heliopolis (Iamblichus, 78). In addition to the Egyptians, Pythagoras also studied under Hindu Brahman priests in India. He learned from them their religious tenet of the Samsara, “reincarnation cycle.” Pythagoras brought this notion back with him to ancient Greece and taught it as a philosophy of the “transmigration of souls.” He believed that our souls were immortal and that soon after the body died the soul entered a new body (Iamblichus, 42). Another belief the ancients attributed to Pythagoras was what he called the “harmony of the spheres,” in which he postulated that the planets and stars move across the night sky according to mathematical equations. He believed this movement of the celestial bodies corresponded to musical notes and thus produced an inaudible symphony together (Iamblichus, 45-47). Pythagoras is credited with discovering that musical notes could be translated into mathematical formulas. He discovered this notion by “accident” one day when he passed several blacksmiths at work and heard the sound their hammers made when they were banging against the anvils (Iamblichus, 49-51).

Iamblichus writes in his biography, *The Life of Pythagoras*, that, around 530 BCE, Pythagoras journeyed to Croton, in southern Italy today, and founded an academy in which “initiates” took a vow of secrecy and lived in a monastic ascetic commune. The academy’s purpose was to teach logic and an ethical “way of life” to its “initiates.” The academy’s reputation enabled it to attract the brightest men in all of Greece to hear Pythagoras lecture and follow this new “way of life.” His “initiates” called themselves “Pythagoreans,” and he developed a whole new school of philosophy known as “Pythagorean philosophy.” Plato, some 200 years later, wrote that this commune was probably Pythagoras’s greatest achievement since

it pointed to a new “way of life” not offered anywhere else in the world. Although it was called an “academy,” in many ways it was akin to a monastery. The initiates were bound by an oath to their leader Pythagoras and each other in order to pursue the ascetic doctrines of Pythagoras’s philosophical theories (60-82). In addition, Pythagoras taught his initiates the esoteric knowledge of numerology. He used mathematics for this mystical study of numbers. Pythagoras touted that “ten” was the “perfect number.” Pythagoreans honored this notion by never meeting in groups larger than ten. In addition, Pythagoras learned about the tetractys on his travels in Babylon. Tetractys is a Greek word meaning four; because, the tetractys is an arrangement of ten points in a triangular form with each of the sides of the triangle consisting of four points, and the whole number of ten was made up by the summation of the first four figures, $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$. The tetractys became a mystical symbol of importance in the academy. Iamblichus wrote that the tetractys was considered: “so admirable, and so divinized by those who understood it, that Pythagoras’s students would swear oaths by it” (78). It has to be obvious to all Freemasons who have been initiated in the York Rite and/or Scottish Rite degrees that our progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry saw the same mystical beauty of the tetractys that our “ancient brother” Pythagoras saw! This monastic commune required that its “initiates” share all their worldly possessions in common. In addition, they ate their vegetarian meals in a communal setting. One Pythagorean maxim of the academy was *koinà tà philōn*, “All things in common among friends” (63). This maxim has a “ring” of Masonic moral philosophy to me. Iamblichus very much portrayed Pythagoras, in his biography, as a divine-like figure, sent by the gods to make all humankind better. In addition, Iamblichus touts this “Pythagorean Way of Life” as a pagan alternative to the Christian monastic orders of his own time (60-82). Soon after Pythagoras’s death the commune disbanded. However, his initiates carried with them and spread the Pythagorean philosophy wherever they travelled. “The Pythagoreans had signs and symbols by which those who had never seen each other in the body could perform acts of friendship when necessary. Worthy men who dwelt in the most remote parts of the earth were mutually friends even before they had become known to and saluted each other” (60-82). For me, the Pythagorean philosophy has many parallels to the tenets of Freemasonry. After my research on Pythagoras, there is no doubt in my mind he was the earliest of the great esoteric initiates in the world, and the rules of his academy and its philosophy had a profound influence on our progenitors who invented “speculative” Freemasonry.

Before I write about two of the most important ancient Greek mystery rites, it is imperative that I impress upon the reader how important mythology is to human understanding of the metaphysical world. As I did the research for this paper, I found myself “transported” back to my graduate school days sitting in class, in rapt attention, to one of my favorite philosophy professors, Lawrence Hatab. Hatab’s lectures on “Myth and Philosophy” were so erudite on the subject of mythology and its effect on philosophy and history. The semester I spent learning with professor Hatab was a life altering experience for me; it forever changed the way I understand what “truth” is. Thus, I found that the “truths” taught in the ancient mysteries so neatly “dove-tailed” with what professor Hatab wrote in his book concerning the importance of mythology to human understanding. “There is a deep meaning in mythological language which expresses what cannot be expressed in rational or scientific language. Such matters include, among other things, existential meaning, the lived world, and primal origins” (12). I always found Hatab’s quote on the worth of mythology to human understanding an incredibly beautiful and astute description of Freemasonry’s “Hiramic” legend.

The ancient Greeks developed their own ancient mystery based on Greek mythology. One of the great scholars of ancient Greek religion was Harold R. Willoughby, (1890-1962). He was a classical scholar at the University of Chicago. I used his book *Pagan Regeneration: A Study of Mystery Initiations in the Graeco Roman World*, as my main source for the history of Orphism. The Orphic Mysteries were a state recognized religious cult which was started in the 6th century BCE and lasted well into the Roman Empire period of history. Ancient Greek history credits the poet Orpheus with writing poems that embodied the philosophical and religious doctrine that served as the basis of the Orphic Mysteries. There is scant factual knowledge about Orpheus other than the fact that he was born in Thrace. However, the folklore built around him is quite remarkable. Orpheus is famous for his lyrical voice and the poetry he wrote titled the Rhapsodies. Even the ancient Greeks understood that music, one of the seven liberal arts, was known to tame the breast of the savage beast. He also served a role in the classic legend of the “Golden Fleece,” as the poet who tames the Sirens with his lyric voice. His reputation as a divine like figure was sealed in the myth of his ability to travel down to Hades to save the love of his life, the nymph Eurydice. The myth ends sadly though; for Orpheus loses Eurydice forever when he looks back to see if she is following him as they are making their escape from Hades. It is no wonder then that, in similar fashion to Hermes Trismegistus, the ancient Greeks believed Orpheus to be a pseudo-mythical and deified figure. Orphism’s rites were based on the myth pertaining to the Greek deity Dionysus (known as Bacchus in Roman mythology). Dionysus is the god of wine, vegetation, fertility, ecstasy, and resurrection. Greek mythological tradition says he was the son of Zeus and Persephone, who was not the wife of Zeus. Zeus’s jealous wife Hera had Dionysus murdered when he was a small boy. However, the Greek goddess Athena was able to save his heart from destruction, thus saving his life. It is through this act of altruism and empathy that Dionysus is resurrected. This act of empathy and resurrection became the model for the main philosophical tenets that “initiates” into the Orphic Mystery cult adhered to. The Orphics believed that our souls had a divine origin and would become reincarnated for eternity. In addition, the Orphics believed that only through initiation into the Orphic Mysteries could the soul be perfected. The perfected soul would then break the cycle of reincarnation and rest in eternal bliss. The actions that Orphics took to perfect their souls was to adopt certain ascetic practices such as vegetarianism and living by a strict ethical and moral philosophy. These practices enabled the initiates to purge their evil inclinations and cultivate, as the modern quote says, “the better angels of their nature” (90-113).

Another seminal book on ancient mysteries that I read for this paper was authored by Joscelyn Godwin, a music professor at Colgate University. Interestingly, he has become an authority on esotericism. Although his scholarship on ancient Greek mysteries tracks with Willoughby’s work, he made a very insightful observation about Orphism that I bring to your attention. He noted in his book, *The Golden Thread: The Ageless Wisdom of the Western Mystery Traditions*, that there were two aspects of Orphism that classified it as the first esoteric religion. “First, it imposed the seal of the Mysteries, so that the teachings given in initiation were not revealed to outsiders. Second, it gave a profounder, symbolic interpretation to existing myths...mysteries and the knowledge of hidden meanings in the scriptures have since been two of the chief marks of esotericism” (25). Thus, I find that this description of Orphism shows parallels not only to the Pythagorean philosophy, but also to the Dionysian rite that I will write about next, and Freemasonry’s philosophy. In addition, the notion of resurrection is a prominent feature in Orphism as it was with the Osiris legend, the Pythagorean philosophy, the Dionysian rite, Freemasonry’s “Hiramic” legend and the life of Jesus.

I need to introduce some notions from a “revolutionary” philosopher of the nineteenth century before I write about the Dionysian mystery rite. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) was the first modern philosopher who studied Greek mythology to shine a light on the eternal struggles that humans still wrestle with today, such as life and death, and good versus evil. Nietzsche received his Ph.D. in Greek philology but quickly became a monumental philosopher. His aphoristic writing style makes him an exceedingly difficult philosopher to understand. I was lucky to have Dr. Hatab, a Nietzsche scholar, as my “Sherpa” to guide me down the path of understanding his philosophy. Nietzsche’s first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, is a great treatise on ancient Greek mythology’s effect on not only the psyche of the ancient Greeks, but on the condition of humankind’s place in the metaphysical world today.

Nietzsche noted that Dionysus, Bacchus in Roman mythology, was a deity of earthly forces associated with wine, fertility, divine ecstasy, and the natural cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. There are a few different versions of the mythology of Dionysus. The most prevalent version describes the myth of Dionysus in similar fashion to that of Orpheus. Both were born from the illicit union between Zeus and Persephone. Hera, the wife of Zeus, had Dionysus murdered just like she had done with Orpheus. In the Dionysian myth, Hera gets the Titans to inflict a heinous death on Dionysus by dismembering his body. However, when his body parts were buried, Persephone’s mother, the goddess Demeter, responsible for the harvest, agriculture, fertility, the sacred law, and life and death, restored Dionysus to life again. From this mythology of Dionysus, Nietzsche observed that the Dionysian mystery rite started in ancient Greece and was practiced all the way through Roman history. The Dionysian “initiates” were taught to believe in reincarnation. They frequently became intoxicated and committed frequent acts of debauchery, which they believed were acts of divine ecstasy. Thus, these initiates had a close association with wine, which in turn was connected with fertility, the spring, and again rebirth. Despite the Dionysian practices of ecstasy, Nietzsche observed a close relationship between the Orphic and Dionysian rites when it came to their notions on reincarnation. In addition, Nietzsche recognized in Greek mythology a theme of a religious view that made sacred all the conditions of earthly life, benevolent, terrible, constructive, and destructive. He also noted two common features in all the ancient Greek mysteries. First, Greek mythology was polytheistic; thus, not organized around any one deity. Second, Greek mythology often emphasized the tension between opposites, such as birth and death. Finally, Nietzsche realized that Greek mythology viewed the metaphysical world as a contrast between the beautiful deities who dwelled in Mt. Olympus above and the cruel deities who inhabited the Underworld below. Humans live between these two realms and experience the tension of their alternating forces, such as life and death, reason and unbridled passion (Nietzsche, 119-138). One cannot help but observe that the description of the dismemberment of Dionysus’s body and his rebirth is a virtual copy of the ancient Egyptian myth of Osiris.

As mentioned earlier, another tool that the initiates in all ancient mysteries have at their disposal to learn and remember their esoteric knowledge is the art of memory. Frances Yates, (1899-1981) is one of the preeminent authorities on medieval and Renaissance history. Yates attained this status because, for over twenty years, she conducted research at the prestigious Warburg Institute of the University of London and wrote over fourteen books, four of them dealing with the art of memory. In her book *The Art of Memory*, Yates relates the ancient Greek story of the inventor of the art of memory, Simonides of Ceos, (c. 556-468 BCE), who was a Greek lyric poet. In explaining this art of memory, Yates wrote: “In the ages before printing a trained memory was vitally important. This art seeks to memorize through a technique of

impressing ‘places’ and ‘images’ on memory” (11). As she explained later in her book, architecture was the key tool to the art of memory which is classified today as “mnemotechnics.” I will show in this paper how the art of memory along with esoteric knowledge was passed along through every epoch of history up to the “Age of Enlightenment.” Interestingly, after this historical time period, the only institution I can think of that still actively practices the art of memory today is Freemasonry. I find it interesting that after the invention of the printing press Freemasonry still uses the art to transmit our allegorical philosophy. After all, our progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry were “children” of the Enlightenment. These men of the “intelligentsia” were noted for their voracious reading appetite. Gaining knowledge through reading is obviously a much more efficient way to gain knowledge than passing it on by word of mouth. Thus, I can only think of two reasons why Freemasonry still uses the ancient art of memory. First, if one wants to keep a secret, do not write it down. Since our “operative” masonic brethren closely guarded the secrets of their craft, it is not unreasonable to assume our progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry wanted to guard their secrets thus following the traditional practice of our “operative” stonemason brethren. Second, as Yates explained in her book, architecture was a major tool used for people to use the art of memory. Thus, I am not surprised that our “operative” masonic brethren used it to learn and remember the myriad of facts necessary for their trade craft. Once again, I think our progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry wanted to honor our connection to our ancient brethren.

I close this portion of my paper with looking at the connection that the ancient Greek mysteries had with Freemasonry. A Masonic scholar whose work I used in the “Egypt” section of my paper, Oliver Day Street, elucidates that the myth of Osiris and Isis gave “root” to later ancient mysteries around the world. Two examples he included were: the “Dionysian Mystery” in Greece, which I have just written about, and the “Mithras Mystery” of Persia which I will write about next in my section on “Rome.” Street also pointed out that all these ancient mysteries had the similarity of having a Deity or “heroic figure” at the center of their mythology. In addition, they emphasized in their teachings death, resurrection, and the immortality of the soul to all their followers. Not surprisingly, one could also see that the story of Jesus and the “Hiramite” legend followed the same formula from the ancient mysteries. Thus, Street correctly surmised that when he studied the form and tenets of many of these ancient mysteries, they had other similarities as well. These similarities included the following practices. Members went through an initiation to welcome them into the “mystery.” Members had to show a proficiency in the “mystery’s” tenets so that they could proceed along their journey through the “mystery.” Members were taught certain “signs” or modes of recognition that could be used to identify each other. Finally, members took secret oaths (113-117). Obviously, Street’s description of the dogmas and practices of the initiates of these ancient mysteries must be familiar to Freemasons.

Rome: 753 BCE–476 CE.

Roman culture developed out of Greek culture and it was the rule and guide over the Roman civilization during their entire existence. The only new innovations to Western Civilization that the Romans are credited with are the following: government administration and cement. Since Roman culture was virtually a “carbon copy” of ancient Greek culture, it stands to reason that all of the ancient Greek mystery rites had “initiates” in Rome who built temples to their deities and continued practicing the precepts that they had inherited from the ancient Greeks. At the height of the Roman Empire period they conquered much of the known ancient world at the time. This

conquest brought them into contact with other esoteric knowledge from far off cultures. Thus, for this paper I am going to highlight an ancient mystery rite that was inherited from Persia instead of Egypt or Greece, the Mithras mystery rite. In addition, in this paper I will illuminate how the art of memory developed under Roman influence.

Franz Cumont (1868-1947) was a Belgian archaeologist, historian, and philologist. He is best known for his expertise on the Pagan mystery rites, and their impact on the Roman Empire. He asserted that the Pagan religions “gave greater satisfaction first, to the senses and passions, secondly, to the intelligence, finally, and above all, to the conscience” (Cumont, X). I found this to be a very erudite description of all the ancient mysteries that I have studied. His archaeological excavations in lands that once comprised the Roman Empire afforded him a special insight into the Mithras mystery rite, known in the modern world as Mithraism. Thus, I used his book, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, to research Mithraism for this paper.

Since Cumont was an archeologist as well as a historian he was enabled to gather a plethora of knowledge about the tenets, allegorical symbolism, and initiation rites of Mithraism. Historically, it was a religion that migrated to Rome from ancient Persia and was prevalent from the 1st to the 4th century CE. The central deity was Mithra, the same god worshipped by the ancient Zoroastrian religion. Members met in *mithraea*, “underground temples,” large numbers of which still exist today. Rome appeared to be the central city for the rite; however, *mithraea* have been found scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Thus, Cumont surmised that Mithraism was extremely popular, especially in the western part of the empire. *Mithraea* have been located in Roman Africa, Syria, Egypt, Dalmatia, Britain, and along the Rhine and Danube frontier. In every excavation of a *mithraeum*, archaeologists have found images of Mithra slaughtering a bull. Another important image found is a depiction of Mithras and the Roman deity Sol Invictus, “Unconquered Sun,” banqueting on the slaughtered bull. By the way, the deity Sol Invictus was made the official sun god by Emperor Aurelian on 25 December 274 CE. This deity wound up being the “patron” of Roman soldiers as did Mithra. In Roman art, Mithras was portrayed being born as a nude youth, who emerged from a rock, with a torch in one hand and a dagger in the other. *Mithraeum* were built below ground and, windowless, they emulated caves—always located near a fresh water source with a baptismal like basin built inside the structure. Cumont surmised that this meant that ritual cleansing was used to “purify” the initiates. He also noted that their structure was different than all the other ancient Mystery temple structures. Cumont’s archaeological excavations revealed that most Mithraic rituals revolved around feasting. He found large amounts of food residue consisting of animal bones and pits from a variety of fruits. All the altars had burn marks on them denoting that animal sacrifice was a common feature of the rite (145-161).

No man was initiated into the rite until he could prove himself to be holy and steadfast. Initiates into each degree had to endure physical tests, exposing their bodies to cold, heat, and physical peril. Actual membership lists of names were inscribed on the walls of the *Mithraeum*, they were all male. It is a well-known fact that the rite was a favorite of Roman soldiers. Cumont found that the ethics of the rite is probably the reason it attracted soldiers to its membership. Very few members were from the upper-class families or senatorial families of Rome. “The world is the scene and stake of a contest between good and evil. Life is a combat: soldiers under the command of Mithra, invincible heroes of the faith, must ceaselessly oppose the undertakings of the infernal powers which sow corruption” (191). As a retired army officer and historian, I viewed through the “hermeneutic lens” the description of the requirements to join the rite and the explanation of its ethical tenets, and I am in no doubt that this was a military religious order

which has parallels to the future order of the Knights Templar founded in 1119 CE. I am also not surprised that the rite conducted frequent banquets. I have first-hand experience in knowing that when soldiers fight hard, they build up a voracious appetite.

Initiates swore an oath of secrecy, and had to progress through seven degrees, culminating in attaining the title pater, “father.” Evidence has even been found that some of the degrees had ritual oral catechisms that members had to pass in order to matriculate to higher degrees. Full admission to the rite happened when the member received his “handshake” from a pater. The receiving of the “handshake” allowed members to be known as *syndexioi*, “those united by the handshake.” Cumont observed that the members believed in the notion that when the world came to an end, Mithra would raise their bodies from the grave and those who led a good life would enjoy eternal bliss; the evil doers would be annihilated by fire. I believe Christian doctrine was already creeping into Mithraic ethics with this notion. They prayed to the Sun three times daily, Sunday was their sacred day of the calendar. Although they held no public festival ceremonies, they participated in the Roman festival of *Natalis Invicti*, celebrated by several ancient mysteries on the 25th of December. For centuries, Christianity in Rome viewed Mithraism as a major rival religion. Once the Roman Empire turned Christian, the rite’s membership was persecuted and suppressed into extinction by the end of the 4th century (145-161).

There are a few observations to consider about this Roman festival. One cannot help but see how prominent Sunday prayer and the December 25th festival were to Roman Pagan religious practice. I am not surprised that when Christianity developed in Rome it would co-opt these practices and make them central to their religious practice. Although it is outside of the purview of this paper, I wonder if the men who started the Knights Templars order were aware of Mithraism and used its tenets as a basic model for their military order. Once again, I cannot help but think that the progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry were exposed to many of the tenets and initiation practices of Mithraism. Ancient Roman structures and art were discovered and excavated during the Renaissance era. Thus, since so much information of the rite was unearthed before the “Age of Enlightenment,” I find it only natural that it became a part of the “mosaic” of esoteric information our progenitors relied on to develop “speculative” Freemasonry. Another “tile” in the “mosaic” is the art of memory, and it became a major factor in humans learning Hermetic and esoteric wisdom during the Roman period of history.

Marcus Tullius Cicero, (106-43 BCE), was a Roman senator, orator, lawyer, and philosopher. He is really the ancient historical figure that “propelled” the art of memory into the world. His reputation as the greatest orator in the ancient world is still recognized by historians and rhetoricians to this day. His reputation is “burnished” as well by the fact that he was a staunch defender of liberty over tyranny and democracy over despotism during Rome’s tumultuous period of change when Gaius Caesar imposed himself as Emperor of Rome. Cicero’s “enlightened” speeches were well known by the intelligentsia of the “Age of Enlightenment” and served as a model for all who were looking to bring about individual freedom and democratic rule. Thus, it is no wonder that his writings in his book, *De Oratore*, “The Orator,” which highlighted his reliance on using the technique of the art of memory to help him deliver his passionate arguments advocating for liberty and democracy, was widely read from its time of publication until today. Yates noted in her book, *The Art of Memory*, that the genesis of the art of memory came from the liberal art of rhetoric. She stated that it was: “A technique by which the orator could improve his memory, which would enable him to deliver long speeches from memory with unfailing accuracy” (18). Thus, men like Cicero, who were politicians and/or lawyers found the techniques especially useful in the historical period before the printing press.

Yates points out that the technique relied heavily on architecture. Thus, to memorize a long speech, the orator would envision a building familiar to him like his own home or a larger public building familiar to him. “We have to think of the ancient orator as moving in imagination through the memory building whilst he is making his speech, drawing from the memorized places the images he has placed on them. The method ensures that the points are remembered in the right order, since the order is fixed by the sequence of places in the building” (18-19). Later in this paper you will learn how this architectural technique became more elaborate and sophisticated, especially during the Renaissance. For now, I want to highlight an obvious observation that Yates made about the art of memory vis-à-vis Freemasonry. Yates surmised that it was only natural that “speculative” Freemasonry would adopt for its use the art of memory—especially since the Craft relied on “...its symbolic use of columns, arches, and other architectural features, and of geometrical symbolism, as the framework within which it presents a moral teaching and a mystical outlook directed towards the divine architect of the universe” (294-295).

As a historian I am compelled to make the following comment. One of the most significant historical movements on the timeline of humanity is the birth of Christianity out of Judaism, which took place in Rome, under the leadership of the Apostle Paul, during the 1st century CE. This event is responsible for a whole new body of religious text, the “New Testament” of the Bible. As part of hearkening back to its Jewish roots, the book of Acts has a very curious quote. “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and in deeds.” Acts 7:22, King James Version. This quote compels me to think that the early church fathers recognized that as Judaism was the “mother” of Christianity, they also recognized that ancient Egypt was its “grandmother.” Once again, I maintain that the progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry understood that Egyptian esoteric knowledge was the Craft’s “grandmother” as well.

Gnosticism:

For my research on Gnosticism I relied on the works of two erudite scholars on the subject. First, I return to Hornung’s work, *The Secret Lore of Egypt: Its Impact on the West*. Gnosticism, from the ancient Greek: *gnōstikós*, “having knowledge,” started c. 1st century CE as a religious movement that relied on the esoteric ideas from not only Pagan religions, but also Judaism and Christianity. There were several groups known as “Gnostics” by their detractors. Hornung stated that “Simon Magus, one of its founding fathers, was supposed to have acquired his learning in Egypt—and with Alexandria as one of its most important centers; it also incorporated concepts from Pharaonic Egypt” (43). The biggest detractor of Gnosticism is the Roman Catholic Church since Gnostics were taught to place emphasis on their spiritual development through personal spiritual knowledge, “Gnosis,” above church orthodox teachings and ecclesiastical authority. Gnostics proclaimed that the soul’s salvation relied on gaining knowledge of G-d through esoteric insight. The Gnostics of the Christian tradition viewed Jesus as a deity who had taken human form so that he could lead people to the “Light.” Christianity’s leadership observed that many leaders of the Gnostic groups in the Roman Empire were Jewish Christians still using the Hebrew words and names to identify G-d. Most Gnostic literature ignores the concepts of sin and repentance and emphasizes “enlightenment.” Thus, it is not hard to understand why the early Roman Catholic Church leadership, who worked so hard to spread their religion across the known world, would view Gnostics as heretics and use all their powers to eradicate its doctrine.

Hornung also found that Gnosticism came in for criticism from Rabbinic Judaism as well. “With respect to the Jewish influence, we must recollect that proportion of Jews in the population of Alexandria in the Roman Period is estimated to have been forty percent. But Gnosticism thoroughly rejected and scorned all laws, especially those of the Old Testament” (45). In fact Alexandria was the capitol of Gnosticism and was a very cosmopolitan port city on the coast of Egypt, with the largest library of the ancient world. Thus, Gnosticism attracted adherents from several ancient mystery rites as well.

The second erudite researcher on Gnosticism whose work I relied on is Garth Fowden, who is a research fellow at the Center for Greek and Roman Antiquity of the National Hellenic Research Foundation in Athens. In his seminal work, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*, he especially focuses on Gnosticism’s more esoteric teachings, which came from the Corpus Hermeticum, regarding humanity’s connection with the metaphysical world around it. “In the first place, Man’s contemplation of G-d is in some sense a two-way process. Not only does Man wish to know G-d, but G-d too desires to be known by the most glorious of his creations, Man; and to this end He freely bestows on the initiate some of His own power, mediated through a spiritual instructor” (104). What the Corpus Hermeticum is alluding to is that there is actual interaction between G-d and Man. Hermeticism and Gnosticism purport the notion that Man received the “divine spark” from G-d, thus, Man is a divine being as well, albeit a “lesser divinity.” Thus, “Man is of a double nature, and so the difference between the divine and human spheres is less substantial than it seems” (105). Fowden observed that most Gnostics practiced asceticism in their dietary and sexual practice. Gnostics did not marry which would be another reason both Christianity and Judaism would oppose their doctrinal precepts. For Gnostics ritualistic practice was unimportant unless it was “rooted in” one’s internal motivation to seek knowledge. Fowden found that Gnostics borrowed wisdom from the Corpus Hermeticum concerning the stages necessary for an adherent to be reborn. “The divine vision is only granted to those that are reborn—and rebirth can be brought about only by divine action. But before the initiate can be reborn he must acquire wisdom and virtue” (98). After reading this quote and the ideas concerning Man’s relationship with G-d, I have no doubt that the progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry were well versed in the teachings of Gnosticism, and more especially the wisdom from the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

Medieval Europe: 5th to the 15th century

Medieval Europe has been often referred to by historians as the “Dark Ages.” However, in the last 100 years, historians have been involved in reassessing this “bleak” moniker attached to the medieval era of history. No doubt there was a slowdown in the development of scientific knowledge, technology, and human liberty. However, what modern historians are learning about the era is that there were rich contributions made in other fields. Gothic architecture saw advances with the use of flying buttresses which enabled stonemasons to create such magnificent cathedrals as Notre-Dame de Paris, (1160-1260 CE). Christianity became a stabilizing force in Europe politically, although it was not without its problems. In addition, philosophy continued to grow under the wisdom of such luminary thinkers, who also happened to be church theologians, as Peter Abelard (c. 1079-1142), Albertus Magnus and (1200-1280), and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). In addition, there was created a very sophisticated monastery system devoted to copying out by hand the wisdom of the ancient world that survived the destruction of the library of Alexandria which contained over 700,00 scrolls. These achievements of the monastic scribes

alone make the medieval historical era important to the advancement of hermeticism, esotericism, art of memory, and the establishment of stonemason guilds throughout Europe. It is these achievements that I will cover in this section of the paper.

Hornung's research revealed that during medieval times the luminary thinkers of the Catholic Church were also the intelligentsia of their day. Thus, many of the church intelligentsia were familiar with Hermes Trismegistus and studied the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Although Gnosticism and other ancient mysteries were eradicated by the early Catholic Church, "Their ideas resurfaced in the Middle Ages....Later, they would be claimed as precursors by Freemasons and the Rosicrucians, and they would be discovered anew by Romantics" (47). Even some of the theologians I just mentioned above relied on the wisdom of Hermes Trismegistus. "In his *Theologia Christiana*, Peter Abelard knows Hermes Trismegistus as a celebrated philosopher of great antiquity, while for Albertus Magnus; the "Egyptian Hermes" was above all a leading authority on astrology" (79). Hornung also noted that medieval Europe had its first face-to-face contact with the Arab world due to the five Crusades with the first one starting in 1095 CE and the fifth one ending in 1221CE. It was this "clash of cultures" that ultimately brought about more genteel contact between them, which in turn brought about the "cross fertilization" of ideas between them. One of the benefits of this "cross fertilization" of knowledge was that Arabic scribes saved much of the wisdom of the ancient world before it had been lost in the destruction of the library of Alexandria in 297 CE. Albertus Magnus was one of the important astronomers of his time. In his book, *Speculum Astronomiae* "The Mirror of Astronomy," he postulated, with the help from his readings of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, that the wise "adept" could deduce the movement of the stars and planets to prove that astrology improved rather than negated the free will of mankind. This was an unusual belief to hold for a church father. Hermeticism became enamored with astrology during the Hellenistic period of Egyptian rule under the Ptolemaic Period, (middle 1st century CE). Hornung noted: "The best-known example of integration of the zodiac into traditional Egyptian representation of the sky is the round zodiac on the ceiling of the Osiris chapel at Dendara" (31).

Yates noted that one of the few books of wisdom that survived the sacking of Rome by the Vandals in 410 CE was a treatise on the importance of the seven liberal arts to spreading knowledge. Martianus Capella (c. 410-420 CE) wrote in his treatise a description of the art of memory while writing on rhetoric. "He thus handed on the art to the Middle Ages firmly lodged in its correct niche in the scheme of the liberal arts" (18-19). Yates found that Albertus Magnus was not only interested in the esoteric knowledge of astronomy, but he also had a great interest in ethics. His book *De Bono*, "On the Good" is about the four cardinal virtues of Fortitude, Temperance, Justice, and Prudence. These virtues are also ancient wisdom that was transmitted through the ages that our progenitors of "speculative" Freemasonry relied on to form our moral precepts taught to all Entered Apprentice initiates. When Albertus wrote about the virtue of prudence, he included Capella's writings on the art of memory and believed that he was: "...recommending an art which seems to be forcing the lower power of imagination up into a higher rational part of the soul" (76). Thus, even the art of memory is entering into the realm of esoteric wisdom that the intelligentsia throughout history will become attracted to. Another of the great sages of the church that wrote on the efficacy of the art of memory was St. Thomas Aquinas, who also happened to be a student of Albertus Magnus. Yates did groundbreaking work on exposing the writings of Aquinas regarding his thoughts on the art of memory. Before Yates, historians paid little attention to this facet of Aquinas' intellect. Aquinas understood that the followers of Catholicism were largely illiterate during his lifetime. Thus, for parishioners to

receive the “bliss” of the Gospels and other church doctrine they could only receive it through the sermons of their parish priests. The scrupulous research conducted by Yates found the following quote attributed to Aquinas. “For every ‘thing’ which the preacher might have to treat is based on the memory principle. To make people remember things, preach them to them in ‘unusual’ similitudes for these will stick better in memory than the spiritual intentions will do” (96). What Aquinas is emphasizing to church leaders is that for sermons to make a proper impact on the minds and passions of parishioners, priests would have to use powerful language and skilled rhetorical devices to, as we say in Freemasonry, “imprint on the mind wise and serious truths” of their sermons. Obviously, the progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry agreed that their moral precepts and allegorical teachings needed to make the same impact on the minds and passions of their members.

Besides the Catholic Church’s political control over Europe, and its monastic system of saving knowledge from the ancient world, I think cathedral building is one of great achievements of medieval history. Joscelyn Godwin whose book, *The Golden Thread: The Ageless Wisdom of the Western Mystery Traditions*, I introduced earlier in this paper reinforces my assertion. He referred to these great edifices as “cathedrals of light.” When I read his book, I was drawn to the “magnetic” language he used to describe these cathedrals as a physical manifestation of man’s understanding of the esoteric knowledge of G-d. For example, he described cathedrals in the following way. “The towers and spires point to heaven as a symbol of aspiration to G-d. But they could also be seen as lighting-rods, drawing down celestial influences into the soil. In either sense, the cathedral, with its unearthly bulk and height, seems to loom somewhere between heaven and earth” (76.). Godwin states the obvious that all buildings start with design, encompassing arithmetic and geometry. He makes an interesting biblical connection between geometry and G-d’s creation of the world. He noted that the apocryphal New Testament book Wisdom of Solomon, which is thought to have been written in Alexandria Egypt, in the 1st century CE, described G-d in the following way: “Thou hast created all things in number and weight and measure.” (Solomon 11:20). Godwin noted that this scripture has affected the way humans have described G-d both in word and art as: “...the Geometer mapping out the cosmos with a pair of compasses” (79). As a Freemason, I must make a Masonic observation on this subject. Godwin brought to my attention that the first artistic depiction of this biblical verse appeared in the French 13th century illuminated Bible *Moralisée*. In it there is a picture titled, God as architect of the world. Needless to say, Godwin’s research on the nexus between G-d’s creation of the universe and geometry really got me thinking about Freemasonry’s description of G-d as “Grand Architect of the Universe.” I am not sure how many of our progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry may have seen the illuminated Bible *Moralisée* picture. However, knowing that they were well versed in biblical scripture, especially a book named the Wisdom of Solomon, there is no doubt that they were compelled to name G-d in their allegory as “Grand Architect of the Universe.” Of course, they made this connection even more clear with our beautiful lecture on geometry in our Fellow Craft degree. Thus, Godwin perceptively observed that: “The cathedrals—are the supreme human effort to imitate G-d by imposing geometry and number on matter. One can say the same of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman temples, indeed of sacred structures the world over” (79). Thus, the stonemasons who were responsible for building these esoteric monuments reaching out towards a better understanding of G-d are all, in a sense, practitioners of esotericism that they learned in their stonemason’s guild lodges which I will now explain in further detail.

The men that created these beautiful and technologically demanding cathedrals also created one of the first trade guilds in European society. The guild system was a way wherein a group of men could control the numbers of men allowed to work in a profession for the following reasons. First, it made sure that there was not an overabundance of workers which would have the effect of depressing wages below a comfortable living wage. Second, it made sure that, through a rigorous apprentice system and series of tests, their members insured to maintain the high quality of their work, and their cathedrals were safe for parishioners to pray in. Third, since the stonemason guild was primarily responsible for building church structures it had a close affinity to the ecclesiastical leadership in all the villages and towns that had a guild. This connection to their church “patrons” caused them to make sure that they only accepted men in the guild of strong moral character. All of these factors I have just listed makes me believe that the “operative” stonemasons had several reasons to be interested in learning the following social conventions, such as, the seven liberal arts, esoteric knowledge, and the art of memory. Thus, in line with my thesis, I maintain that starting in Medieval Europe, it is our “operative” stonemason brethren that will be one of the main conduits for learning and transmitting down to their “speculative” Freemason brethren esoteric knowledge which reached all the way back to ancient Egypt. To help prove my case I will use the scholarship of two Masonic authors and one professional historian. The first is from a man who was the first scholar to study what is referred to in Freemasonry as “the old charges,” Edward Conder, Jr.

The reprinted book of the *Records of the Hole Crafte and Fellowship of Freemasons*, written by Edward Conder, Jr., (1861-1934), is an important book that helped to “illuminate” my path on the quest for a better understanding of Freemasonry’s antecedents. Conder’s book is useful to the Masonic researcher because, besides just translating the old documents into modern English, he gave a good treatise on the history of the building of Pyramids and Temples by ancient civilizations, as well as the history of masonry from its introduction to Britain by the Romans in 43 CE up to modernity. Conder felt compelled to do this because he noticed how the old documents hearkened back to ancient history to give its membership a historical context to how important their profession was to human civilization from time immemorial. Thus, the old documents that Conder investigated taught their membership that the mason’s art had its antecedents back to the building of magnificent temples in early civilization to honor their Deities. As a for instance, Conder found in the *Regius Manuscript*, which experts have dated to 1390 CE, the following statement concerning the birth of the “operative” stonemason’s craft. “On this manner, through good wit of geometry, began first the craft of masonry; the clerk Euclid on this wise it found, this craft of geometry in Egypt land” (42). Conder understood that much of the accounts of the magnificence of the Egyptian Pyramids and Temples taught to early stonemasons came from the ancient Greek historian Herodotus (c. 484-425 BCE). For his information on the Egyptian civilization Conder relied on the scholarship of some imminent historians and antiquarians, such as Richard Rawlinson (1690-1755) and Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (1797-1875), the Father of British Egyptology. Of course Conder, in similar vein to other contemporary Masonic scholars such as Albert Mackey, (1807-81), William Leslie Wilmhurst, (1867-1939), and Joseph Fort Newton, (1876-1950), came to the conclusion that Masonic symbolism which took “root” in the Egyptian mysteries continued to “flower” through the various ancient mysteries that developed throughout history and reached its “tentacles” into the old charges of “operative” masonry. Additionally, Conder noted that the stonemason’s guild system rapidly spread throughout the land in the fifty years since the start of the London Masons Company. The *Regius Manuscript* was written during the reign of King Richard II; however, it

makes special mention of how the craft of stonemasons came to England during the reign of King Athelstan who was also responsible for instituting the first “charges,” which were fifteen rules for master masons to live by (37-42).

The second book I am using to help prove my thesis is from a man whom I have relied on earlier in this paper, Joseph Fort Newton. In the second part of Newton’s book, *The Builders: A Story and Study of Masonry*, he expounded on the rich history of the “operative” stonemasons’ guilds of the “Middle Ages” and how they eventually gave birth to “speculative” Freemasonry in the British Isles. Newton, like Conder, astutely noted with his reading of the *Regius Manuscript* that “operative” stonemasons like their later “speculative” brethren were interested in teaching their members about the historical antecedents of their profession, as well as how to act morally in society. Historically, the transition between “operative” and “speculative” Freemasonry started during the beginning of the 17th century. Newton perceptively wrote about this transitory period in the following way: “For the Free-masons, be it once more noted, were not only artists doing a more difficult and finished kind of work, but an intellectual order, having a great tradition of science and symbolism which they guarded” (51-105). Newton’s claim throughout the rest of this chapter is that, although most “operative” stonemasons were illiterate, they were enabled to learn many of the “arts and sciences” required to build the miraculous cathedrals of Europe through an oral tradition of learning using allegory and symbolism. After reading Yates book on the *Art of Memory*, I have no doubt that our “operative” stonemason forefathers were taught to practice the ancient art of memory. After all, it is only natural for a group of men who were builders and architects to use this art since it used architecture as its “tool” to increase one’s memory.

The third book I am using to help prove my thesis is from David Stevenson (1942-present), who is one of the very few modern-day historians who has decided to look at the effect that Freemasonry has had on social history. He is not a Freemason which he understands gives him a measure of credibility against accusations of bias when it comes to his historical conclusions regarding the influence Freemasonry has had on history. His book, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland’s century, 1590-1710*, is a very insightful investigation into the history of Scotland’s “operative” stonemasons, and how their guild “metamorphosized” into “speculative” Freemasonry. Stevenson turned to the “old charges” of the *Kilwinning Manuscript*, which were in essence a facsimile copy of the English *Regius Manuscript* from the 1390’s and were replete with references to esoteric symbolism, the antecedents of the stonemason’s craft, and the rituals that found their way into “speculative” Freemasonry—for example: the teaching of the seven liberal arts, with a special emphasis on geometry. “It taught the measurement of the earth, and all crafts are based on measurement and weighing, from agriculture to astronomy. Therefore, it is the most worthy of sciences and underlies the rest” (20). To me, this quote once again is an obvious recognition of the verse in the Book Wisdom of Solomon 11:20. Another example of esotericism that Stevenson found in the *Kilwinning Manuscript* includes the description of the teaching of the ancient mysteries, which it says started in Egypt where knowledge of building pillars for temples was: “...discovered by ‘The great Hermarius,’ a great grandson of Noah” (20). Stevenson noted that this quote from the manuscript was making a direct reference to Hermes Trismegistus who was credited with teaching the sciences to man, including knowledge of masonry and geometry. The transcript then describes how this new knowledge spread to Babylon where they tried to build the Tower of Babel, and then progressed to King Solomon’s Temple. The *Kilwinning Manuscript* continues to weave a tale that the knowledge learned from Hermes Trismegistus continued to wind its way through Medieval history, culminating in St.

Alban, (c. 3rd or 4th century CE), bringing masonry to England where it was adopted by King Athelstan of the Anglo-Saxons, (c. 894-939). In addition, the “old charges” in the *Kilwinning Manuscript* laid out the ethical rules which all members of the stonemason’s guild would have to follow. Thus, what Stevenson found was that “speculative” Freemasonry was built on a foundation of a long history of esotericism which was used to create a system of “ethical symbolism” using stonemason’s working tools to teach a moral philosophy (18-25). I will be returning to Stevenson’s book again in my summation of this paper. Now I introduce an epoch of history that most people have some knowledge about from their primary school days and are familiar with some of its artistic achievements, the Renaissance.

Renaissance 15th and 16th centuries:

The classical philologist and scholar, Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614), proved, through a meticulous analysis of the Greek language used in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, that those texts believed to be of ancient Egyptian origin were in fact written in 300 CE; most probably in Hellenized Alexandria Egypt. Despite this fact, hermeticism and esotericism had its greatest impact on human thought during the Renaissance. Frances Yates in her book, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, summed up what the Renaissance was all about. “The great forward movements of the Renaissance all derive their vigour, their emotional impulse, from looking backwards” (1). The Renaissance saw the full blossoming of human capacity concerning the arts. Since the discovery of Greco-Roman art in the excavations of Rome at the time, human imagination was finally unleashed from the stultifying conventions of Gothic art. My “minor” course of study at the University of Miami was “Art History.” I remember well how many of my professors would say that the pinnacle of art occurred in the Renaissance. For example, one only has to look at the “Mona Lisa” or “The Last Supper” painted by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) as an example of the supreme heights that Renaissance art reached with his invention of “perspective” to make a two dimensional painting look three dimensional. Thus, the works of Leonardo stand as an example for anyone to truly understand the sublime apex that Renaissance art achieved. However, the other achievement that the Renaissance epoch of history became responsible for was to shine a “light” of knowledge on the Dark Ages. This new “light” is known as Renaissance humanism, which started in Italy and spread rapidly throughout Europe, and was based on the revival of learning classical knowledge. Margaret C. Jacob (1943-present), is presently a professor of history at the University of California Los Angeles. She is the preeminent historical authority living today who analyzes Freemasonry’s effects on the social history of the “Age of Enlightenment.” Jacob attained this status because, for over forty years, she was the first modern historian who “rolled up her sleeves” and did the hard work of “rummaging” through the ignored and “dusty” archives in Europe. Her research has brought to light the nexus between “speculative” Freemasonry and the “Age of Enlightenment’s” social, political, and religious history. In her book *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons, and Republicans*, she laid out a good explanation of the knowledge the Renaissance era “bestowed” on the “Age of Enlightenment.” “Enlightenment radicals searched for their philosophical foundations in two intellectual traditions. They embraced aspects of the new science while attempting to salvage and to revitalize purely naturalistic explanations of the universe that had largely flourished during the late Renaissance” (4). Thus, Jacob found that much of the classical knowledge that the Renaissance intelligentsia relied on was the ancient esotericism which reached all the way back to Hermes Trismegistus and earlier to ancient Egypt

itself. She stated in her book that the Renaissance intelligentsia searched for the “ancient writings of the Egyptian priests, Hermes Trismegistus, for the key to this ancient wisdom, for gnosis, an immediate and direct comprehension that would unlock the secrets of nature” (5). With this description of the importance that esotericism was to the Renaissance, for the rest of this paper I am really going to hone in on the nexus between all of esoterica, such as Hermeticism and the art of memory, and “operative” and “speculative” Masonry.

Many historians and philosophers from the time of Plato to today have agreed that artists and art movements have helped to shape all the historical movements throughout human history. In this context, it should not be surprising that Leonardo da Vinci was not just an artist, he also studied esotericism as well, and I will write about him now in that context. Leonardo was an Italian polymath whose skills were unparalleled in such areas as drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, science, mathematics, engineering, literature, astronomy, and anatomy just to mention a few! I learned about the genius of Leonardo in my introductory Humanities class as a graduate student at Old Dominion University. My professor, Dr. Dana Heller, had us read *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, which gave us a fascinating insight into the complex mind of this polymath. He was the epitome of Renaissance humanism, constantly learning from the classical age in art and the sciences. However, his “thirst” for knowledge caused him to use classical ideas to expand knowledge in new ways, especially when it came to the knowledge of human anatomy. At first, he started his study of human anatomy as a way of improving the knowledge of the human body, which, in turn, made him a better artist. However, we learned that he was also using his studies in an esoteric sense as a way of understanding the natural world. As Heller taught us, Leonardo first appeared to be quite a traditionalist; he studied the ancient Greek forms of art. When he viewed their statuary, he believed the ancient Greeks had a better understanding of human anatomy than he did. Thus, he decided to break the church prohibition of performing dissections on dead bodies and decided to spend years dissecting human bodies and drawing sketches of what he observed in his journals. What we learn from his notes in his journals is that his anatomical studies took him down the path of seeking esoteric knowledge of the natural world. His studies caused him to compare the microcosm of the body and the macrocosm of the world. As a for instance, he wrote: “The human body is a complex unity within the larger field of nature, a microcosm wherein the Elements and Powers of the universe were incorporated” (149-150). These analogies extended to everything that he attempted to trace, to record, and to know about the human form. In his journals, he made comparisons between the arteries in the body and the underground rivers of the earth. He believed that almost everything that occurred in the human body could be found in the natural world. His interest in these analogies became very evident in his notebooks and sketchbooks. Scholars found that his microcosm and macrocosm analogies were more than outright comparisons that belonged to a prescientific age; they led him to compare the study of the body and the first century CE Greek scientist Ptolemy’s study of the earth. So, anatomy and geography here became one in Leonardo’s mind. The forms of the earth and those of the human body have a parallel. Heller emphasized to us that within the intricate details of human anatomy Leonardo discovered a way of describing and recording not only the geographical construction of the natural world, but of the Divinity itself.

I return to David Stevenson’s book, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland’s century, 1590-1710*, to show how esoteric knowledge and Hermeticism reached its apex of importance during the Renaissance era. Stevenson observed in his book that when the Renaissance intelligentsia was first being exposed to art of the classical Greco-Roman world it caused them to wonder what

other wisdom could be found in studying the ancient mysteries. Thus, they started to think that: "If old was good, oldest must be best. Ancient Egypt was the oldest civilization of which Renaissance man had any real knowledge; therefore, it must represent the knowledge of the ancient world in its purest form" (82). Stevenson argued that this thirst for "pure knowledge" by the Renaissance intelligentsia was the reason why modern historians were reassessing the importance that such esoteric subjects like alchemy, magic, and astrology had to the time period, and should not just be ignored out of hand as embarrassing endeavors. The interest by the intelligentsia of the Renaissance, like Leonardo, in these subjects caused them to become more aware of their metaphysical world around them and to start to search for answers. Thus, Stevenson remarked that these esoteric ideas, "Dead ends in themselves, they were based on the belief that man could understand the world around him and would then be able to alter it, bending the powers of nature to his own ends, a novel and optimistic attitude changing man's whole idea of his position in the universe" (77). Once again this is the real important reason the intelligentsia delved into esotericism and hermeticism; so that they could gain knowledge of the metaphysical world, and to come closer to understanding God and to emulate his creative powers. One of the popular areas of esoteric wisdom during the Renaissance was alchemy. I have not mentioned it much but will now write on its popularity with the intelligentsia during the Renaissance. Stevenson noted that; "...alchemy had been described as the greatest passion of the age in Central Europe" (77). The one document that fired the imaginations of alchemists was what they commonly referred to as the "philosopher's stone," the act of transmutation, turning base metals into gold. Alchemy had been around since the times of ancient Egypt. Its knowledge waxed and waned throughout the ages. It got its real impetus once again during the Renaissance with a newly revealed Latin translation of a document that became known as the *Emerald Tablet*. It is a cryptic portion of hermitical writings originally believed to have been penned by Hermes Trismegistus himself. The *Emerald Tablet* was supposed to be the "philosopher's stone;" however, since it was written in cryptic form no one was able to truly uncover its hidden formula for transmutation. It is not as if some of the greatest minds did not try to uncover its secrets. None other than Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1726), one of the smartest human beings who ever walked the earth, spent years trying to find the "philosopher's stone," to no avail. Stevenson noted that there was another reason for trying to find the "truth" in the "philosopher's stone." It was esotericism's search for the Divine and not "... merely a materialistic search for ways of turning base metals into gold, but an attempt to achieve the moral and spiritual rebirth of mankind" (78). Cannot the same thing be said of Freemasonry? We are not just interested in taking "good men and making them better." Freemasonry wants to help men to change their nature and hearts to search for the Divine; so that they can perfect their souls so that they may be "admitted into that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." I will now write about the art of memory, which also reached its apex during the Renaissance, using the scholarship of Stevenson and Yates once again.

If Cicero was the prime mover in propelling the art of memory forward into the future from ancient Rome, Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) was responsible for bringing the art in full view during the Renaissance. Although Bruno's story is an amazing one concerning his "thirst" for esoteric knowledge, it ends in tragedy. Bruno's tragic end still evokes a feeling of disgust, by all liberty loving people, toward the Roman Catholic Church for burning him at the stake for the crime of heresy. Bruno was an Italian Dominican friar, philosopher, mathematician, and hermetic occultist. Bruno was seventeen years old when he joined the Dominican Order and became an ordained priest at twenty-four years of age in 1572. He learned the art of memory at a young age

and his supreme grasp of the skill made him famous throughout Italy. He even travelled to Rome where he was invited to demonstrate his art for Pope Pius V. However, Bruno had another side to his intellect that would ultimately cause his life to end in tragedy; he was one of the great proponents of hermetic philosophy of the Renaissance era. He held some extremely controversial views that were obviously heretical in the eyes of the Church. Stevenson noted that Bruno: "...took up an extreme position, holding that the Egyptian religion was the only true religion, Christianity being a corruption of it" (83-84). With the Church already under siege from the Protestant Reformation rapidly spreading across Europe, there was no way it would ignore Bruno's heresy. Thus, as he started to espouse his hermetical philosophy, he started to raise the ire of the ecclesiastical leaders who heard his ideas, and he had to flee Italy in 1580. From this time forward he became a "man on the run." In fact, his story becomes one of a man who, soon after he arrived, became persona non grata wherever he went. In her book, *The Art of Memory*, Yates asserted that: "For his secret, the Hermetic secret, was a secret of the whole Renaissance. As he travels from country to country with his 'Egyptian' message Bruno is transmitting the Renaissance in a very late but peculiarly intense form" (296). Bruno fled to Toulouse France in 1580, where he earned a doctorate in theology and became a popular lecturer of philosophy with his students. It was in this new position that Bruno was able to show off his prodigious skill in the art of memory when he gave thirty lectures on theology. His fame for the art of memory reached the "ears" of the French king Henry III, who summoned him to the court to demonstrate his powers of memory. Yates relates the following story that Bruno relayed to friends on meeting King Henry III in her book, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*. "King Henry III sent for him and asked him whether the art of memory which he taught was natural or done by magic art. Bruno says that he proved to the King that it was not magical. He then said that he dedicated a book called *De Umbris Idearum*, "The Shadows of Ideas," to the King" (203). The King was so impressed; he bestowed an "Extraordinary Lectureship" with a salary on Bruno. Yates noted that Bruno started to make a connection with the art of memory and his Hermetic philosophy in his book, *The Shadows of Ideas*. "Thus, the classical art of memory, in the truly extraordinary Renaissance and Hermetic transformation of it which we see in the memory system of Shadows, has become the vehicle for the formation of the psyche of a Hermetic mystic and Magus" (225). However, Bruno quickly wore out his welcome with his espousing hermetical philosophy. Thus, in April 1583 Bruno travelled to England with letters of recommendation from Henry III, he stayed there for two years as a guest of the French ambassador. He was given a unique opportunity to give a guest lecture at Oxford University; however, he was unsuccessful in obtaining a permanent position there. His ideas became too controversial for John Underhill, bishop of Oxford, and George Abbot, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury—most notably for his supposition that he espoused in his lecture that "The marvelous magical religion of Egyptians will return, their moral laws will replace the chaos of the present age" (215). In 1586 he travelled to Germany to accept a lectureship in Wittenberg. Five years later, believing that his controversial teachings were forgotten in Italy, he accepted an invitation to privately tutor a rich patron of Venice, Giovanni Mocenigo, in the art of memory. His tragic story ends when his patron denounced him as a heretic to the Venetian Inquisition in 1592. He was transferred to the ecclesiastical authorities in Rome to stand trial for heresy in 1593. After languishing in jail for seven years, he was tried in 1600 and found guilty of heresy. Some of the heretical crimes the Church found him guilty of included Bruno's denial of Christian doctrinal teachings regarding the Divinity of Jesus, the virginity of Mary, and the Trinity. He was also guilty of being a pantheist and teaching the transmigration of the soul, known as reincarnation.

For these crimes he was burned at the stake. Despite this sad ending, the Church was unsuccessful in killing off the insatiable “thirst” other members of the intelligentsia had for Hermeticism and esoteric knowledge. Some of these men were the progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry and I will look at this burgeoning movement now.

Once again, I return to Stevenson’s groundbreaking work on the metamorphosis of “operative” stonemasonry into speculative Freemasonry. His thesis is that around 1600 in Scotland “Aspects of Renaissance thought were then spliced onto the medieval legends, along with an institutional structure based on lodges and the rituals and the secret procedures for recognition known as the Mason Word. It is in this late Renaissance Scottish phase, according to the main argument of this book, that modern Freemasonry was created” (6). The man responsible for this metamorphosis in Scotland is William Schaw, (c. 1550-1602), who was Master of Works and General Warden of the master stonemasons to James VI of Scotland. Schaw became a favorite courtier of the King and was entrusted by him with diplomatic missions in France and Denmark. More interestingly for Freemasonry’s development, Stevenson’s research revealed that Schaw was himself a student of esotericism and in particular a proponent of the art of memory. Thus, Schaw infused his esoteric beliefs in the already existing stonemason guild system which he was put in charge of in Scotland. He decided that after reading the existing Kilwinning Manuscript, he would write a new set of statutes to govern the guild members by. “He wanted masons to be an exclusive body of men qualified as masons both through training in trade skills and through initiation to esoteric lore of the craft” (43). Adding esoteric wisdom into his new Statutes would not be a wholly foreign concept for these Scottish stonemasons. As pointed out earlier in this paper the Kilwinning Manuscript contained the history of architecture from the ancient Egyptians up to its arrival on the British Isles. In addition, stonemasons were already taught that: “...Hermes Trismegistus was their patron” (85). Stevenson argued that this long historical record also gave the stonemason guild a most unique pedigree that would make it stand out from all the other professional guilds that existed at the time. Thus, what became known as the Schaw Statutes were written in 1599. Another one of the important aspects of the Schaw Statutes is its emphasis on the art of memory. Stevenson noted that in the 13th statute: “The warden of Kilwinning Lodge was ordered to test every entered apprentice and fellow craft in ‘the art of [memorie] and science [their of]’” (49). When Stevenson saw this requirement in the Schaw Statutes he made an assertion that I am not sure I agree with. He believed that these lodges might have been “dabbling in occult and mystical strands of late Renaissance thought” (49). I believe that Schaw, who was a practitioner of the art of memory, was really introducing the art to the craft as a way for members to use as a convenient “tool” to remember the secrets of their craft. It would come naturally to them since the art always relied on architecture as the “tool” for practitioners to use to improve their memory skills.

Returning to Jacobs to end this section on the Renaissance, she made a statement about Freemasonry serving as a “bridge” between the Renaissance and the “Age of Enlightenment” that I found most cogent. “Freemasonry provides one link between Renaissance hermeticism, with the strongly naturalistic tendencies, and the early stages of the Enlightenment in England. Gradually the Hermetic lore would be replaced by the ‘magic’ of Newtonian science, just as the artisans would be displaced from this ‘speculative’ institution” (85).

Enlightenment: 17th to 19th century.

Since I ended my Renaissance section of this paper with wisdom from Margret Jacob, I find it only fitting that I open my section of this paper exploring the “Age of Enlightenment” with more wisdom from her. “The importance of this ostensible link with the past should not be underestimated. Part of the appeal of Freemasonry in the eighteenth century lay in its claim to being in contact with a universal and ancient wisdom made manifest in the mathematical and architectural skills displayed in those early artisan achievements” (85).

When I attended graduate school at Old Dominion University, I double majored in philosophy and history. The most intelligent and the most academically demanding professor I studied under was Dr. Michael Carhart. He had a Master’s degree in philosophy and a Doctorate in history. Thus, we were “kindred spirits” in the sense that we both realized one could not fully grasp an understanding of history without a deep knowledge of philosophy, and vice versa. Dr. Carhart virtually taught me how to truly “see” and ultimately understand all the historical, social, and philosophical complexities that made up what is known as the “Age of Enlightenment.” After I completed Carhart’s course on the “Age of Enlightenment,” one definite effect it had on me personally was that I gained a much deeper and better understanding of Freemasonry and its proper place it had in cultural and philosophical history.

I would define the “Age of Enlightenment” in the following way. The “Age of Enlightenment” was an eighteenth-century intellectual movement which started in Europe and spread through the rest of the Western Civilized world; it emphasized reason, knowledge, science, philosophy, individualism, liberty, democracy, and the study of human culture and the natural world. To help view this epoch of history through a hermeneutic lens I turn to the wisdom of one of the most imminent scholars on the “Age of Enlightenment,” Dr. Jürgen Habermas; (1929-present), a German philosopher and sociologist.

Thomas McCarthy did the best translation of his works in his book, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas*. Habermas believed that “Enlightened” philosophes understood that science contained universal truths, and that progress was a process of discovery, with perfection at the end of a linear progression. To be “Enlightened,” a person had to know themselves. The philosophes believed that one way to do this in the eighteenth-century was through the arts. Now I can hear some of my Masonic brethren asking the question; “what does art have to do with it?” Habermas would answer, and I whole heartedly agree with him, that many imminent philosophers from as early as Plato and Aristotle and running up through many modern philosophers, such as Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer and Habermas, have all agreed that artists and art movements have helped to shape historical movements throughout human history. Examples of the historical epochs that were shaped by and in many ways even defined by the arts are as follows: the Greco-Roman classical period, the Renaissance, the “Age of Enlightenment,” Romanticism, Modernism, and post-Modernism just to mention a few. In fact, Habermas argued that the “Age of Enlightenment” gave birth to the development of the “public sphere,” a phrase he coined in his doctoral dissertation, where rational private people took their ideas and judgments and publicly developed them through the arts and communal associations. For example, Habermas noted that during the “Age of Enlightenment,” the “public sphere” invented the modern novel with character development. In addition, Habermas noted that this great historical epoch spawned the “public sphere” of newspapers, coffee houses, salons, and Freemasonry. Finally, Habermas maintained that since Great Britain was the most liberal country in Europe during the “Age of Enlightenment,” the culture of the “public sphere” emerged first

from there, around 1700. The “public sphere” culture then spread throughout most of Continental Europe during the rest of the eighteenth-century (76-83). Thus, I am convinced that Habermas superbly described the social conditions that “spawned” the “Age of Enlightenment.” In addition, he has definitely proved to me that this historic epoch gave birth to “speculative” Freemasonry, leaving no doubt in my mind that “speculative” Freemasonry is the “longest living child” of the “Age of Enlightenment.” Now that I have provided a more nuanced definition of the “Age of Enlightenment” and have given some historical context to it vis-à-vis to the birth of “speculative” Freemasonry, it is time to take a unique view of how art infused with esoteric knowledge from ancient Egypt entered the “Age of Enlightenment.” My view is through the work of genius of one of the epoch’s greatest “children,” Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) a Freemason.

Unfortunately, most Freemasons have no idea that one of the greatest classical composers of music, Mozart, was a Freemason and composed beautiful music specifically for use in the Masonic Lodge. The French musicologist Dr. Jacques Henry, who was also a Freemason, in his book, *Mozart the Freemason: The Masonic Influence on His Musical Genius*, clearly recognized Freemasonry’s importance to the “Age of Enlightenment” when he wrote: “Among the currents of thought of the period, freemasonry stands out as one that has most deeply influenced intellectual society. In Mozart’s time, the Masonic order assembled everything that Europe considered brilliant. Thinkers and artists fully supported the great principle of Masonic thought, the betterment of man through the respect and observance of ideals of a rigorous morality” (2). I found Henry’s quote a most incisive description of Freemasonry’s influence on one of mankind’s greatest intellectual movements in history. I am not surprised by his understanding of Freemasonry’s influence on the “Age of Enlightenment” since he “understood that in order to rigorously evaluate the influence of Masonic symbolism, it would be necessary to study it not from the outside but to live in it in its context within the fraternity and above all to practice the rite and its ceremonies” (XVI). Henry elaborates on this sentiment in his thesis for the book. He essentially takes a “deep dive” in analyzing the initiatory symbols and Masonic philosophy to “see” the “light” they projected on Mozart. Henry fully understood how the light of Freemasonry had a profound influence on Mozart’s music. However, for this paper it is necessary for me to point out two important moments in Mozart’s life that not only influenced his music, but also allowed him to influence two other institutions of the day, the Monarchy and the Roman Catholic Church. I think that, unlike any other fraternity of his time, Mozart was uniquely suited to be the best spokesperson for Freemasonry to allay the fears that the Austrian government and the Roman Catholic Church held regarding Freemasonry. I think that there are two examples from Mozart’s early age to prove this point. Mozart throughout his life was a staunch supporter of the Austrian monarchy. The precocious six-year-old performed for the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa and then climbed up onto her lap and kissed her on the cheek. From that time until his death, he was always a welcomed visitor at court not only by the Empress, but by her two sons who reigned after her. At the age of fourteen, Mozart had already composed beautiful religious music and performed for Pope Clement XIV. The Pope was so moved by the religious fervency this child prodigy displayed that he bestowed on him the monastic “Order of the Golden Spur.” Thus, from an early age, Mozart’s zeal for his Roman Catholicism never waned; he was composing spiritually uplifting music for his Church until his death (2-14).

The brief biography of Mozart shows that his fervent religious beliefs along with his zeal for learning and living Freemasonry’s philosophical teachings acted as the “rule and guide” for his musical compositions. Thus, at the age of twenty-eight Mozart “took his first step in

Freemasonry.” Initiated in the Viennese Masonic lodge “*Zur Wohltätigkeit*” (“Beneficence”) on 14 December 1784, he was passed to the Fellow Craft degree on 7 January 1785 and became a Master Mason shortly thereafter. Mozart also attended the meetings of another lodge, named “*Zur wahren Eintracht*” (“True Concord”). When Mozart’s father Leopold came to visit him in Vienna in 1785, he was initiated a Freemason in his son’s Lodge. Mozart met two Lodge brothers that had a profound influence on Mozart’s musical works. Emanuel Schikaneder was an actor, theatre owner and playwright. He would become very friendly with Mozart, producing many of Mozart’s operas in his theatre and he wrote the libretto for Mozart’s great opera “*Die Zauberflöte*, The Magic Flute.” Thus, Schikaneder as a fellow artist like Mozart really served as a “kindred spirit” in helping Mozart produce Masonic music. Mozart was drawn into Baron Ignaz von Born’s, “orbit of influence” soon after he was initiated a Freemason. Born was the General Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Austria and was one of the great luminaries of the “Age of Enlightenment” in Europe. Mozart obviously admired Born so much that he composed a cantata in his honor. *Die Maurerfreude*, “Masonic Joy” was composed to honor Born on April 20, 1785. Born was a major progenitor of the idea that much of Freemasonry’s rituals were borrowed from the ancient Egyptian mysteries. There is no doubt most of the Masonic knowledge and philosophy that Mozart learned came from the very close relationship Mozart had with Born (2-14). Thus, it is not surprising that both Mozart and Schikaneder would rely heavily on Born’s intellect and why Mozart’s great opera *Die Zauberflöte*, “The Magic Flute” was “dripping” with Egyptian motifs and hermetic philosophy.

To explore this opera, I used the expert research of Dr. Jacques Chailley, in his book *The Magic Flute: Esoteric Symbolism in Mozart’s Masonic Opera*. The creators of the opera were all Freemasons. The music was composed by Mozart, the libretto written by Freemason Emanuel Schikaneder, and with a fair amount of collaboration from both Mozart and Born. “The Magic Flute” premiered on 30 September 1791 at Schikaneder’s theatre; its debut was only two months before the premature death of Mozart at thirty-five years old. Mozart’s opera is his last great composition and occupied his mind even after its completion; he was literally commenting about it on his death bed. Opera goers initially had a hard time understanding the genius of his work (56-73). Chailley succinctly described the plot as follows: “The first act begins as a fairy tale, continues as a commedia buffa, and ends in philosophic tirades. The second act is even less comprehensible: we watch the chief protagonists being subjected to unexplained trials of astonishing arbitrariness and then suddenly learn that they have earned the right to places of honor in glory of Isis and Osiris” (5). I agree with Chailley’s assessment that initially the lack of understanding by audiences was due to their being exposed to new information not known to most viewers in Viennese society. I describe the opera by borrowing a phrase used by Winston Churchill to describe Communism. For the audience, Mozart’s opera was a “mystery” of Masonic symbolism “wrapped in an enigma” of Egyptian motifs. I find that Mozart and Schikaneder’s purpose for this opera was unlike any other work they created. There is no doubt in my mind that they were on a special mission to shine a light on the virtues of Freemasonry with this opera and were most enthusiastically supported in their mission by the high-ranking Freemason Born. Thus, I believe that these three men in essence formed a *Troika* for the purpose of “revealing” some Masonic philosophical light to the world. It is important to “illuminate” the influence Born had on the opera and what possible motivation he would have had in giving his expertise on esoteric Masonry to Mozart and Schikaneder for the opera. As I stated earlier in this paper, Mozart became friendly with Born after he was initiated a Freemason. They maintained a remarkably close relationship until Born’s death during the rehearsals of the opera in July 1791.

Born was one of the great luminaries of the “Age of Enlightenment” in Europe. He was a frequent correspondent with Benjamin Franklin during Franklin’s time spent in France lobbying the French government to help the American Revolutionary cause. Born was a major progenitor of the idea that much of Freemasonry’s rituals were borrowed from the ancient Egyptian mysteries. Born authored a long article supporting this idea published in 1784 in the *Journal for Freemasons*, which had a wide circulation in Europe. As Chailley pointed out: “Rumors spread that he [Born] had inspired it, and that the librettist and composer had portrayed him in the personage of the wise Sarastro” (7). I return to Florian Ebeling’s research in his book, *The Secret History of Hermes Trismegistus: Hermeticism from Ancient to Modern Times*, to give us a more insightful look at Born’s beliefs regarding his notion that the ancient Egyptian mysteries were the real antecedents of both “The Age of Enlightenment” and Freemasonry. “Born extensively paraphrased and quoted from classical sources on ancient Egyptian religion. He interpreted Egyptian culture as fostering proto-Enlightenment scientific pursuits...The Egyptian priests had been in the service of an ancient Enlightenment, pursuing the single-minded goal of improving the welfare of the people” (122).

Unlike all of Mozart’s other Masonic compositions, his Masonic opera was not composed for use in the lodge, but to proclaim the wisdom of Freemasonry’s philosophy to the world. I am thoroughly convinced that the *Troika* composed the opera for several reasons and they were inspired to do so with the prodding and assistance of Born. First, the *Troika* used the opera as a recruitment tool to attract “enlightened” like minded men to join Freemasonry. Secondly, I believe that the *Troika* used the opera as a “vehicle” to show profanes that Freemasonry was an organization whose primary purpose was to improve society through improving the characters of individual men by using the ideals espoused by Enlightenment philosophy. Thirdly, Freemasonry had raised the suspicions of Emperor Leopold II and the Roman Catholic Church, and I believe the *Troika*, with Mozart as their “front man,” was speaking directly to the government and ecclesiastical authorities by showing them through the opera that Freemasonry was not a danger to their rule. I think that the *Troika* understood that, unlike any other Freemason of his time, Mozart was uniquely suited to be the best spokesperson for the Fraternity to allay the fears that the Austrian government and the Roman Catholic Church held regarding Freemasonry. I reacquaint you with two examples from Mozart’s early age to prove this point. Mozart throughout his life was a staunch supporter of the Austrian monarchy. First, the precocious six-year-old performed for the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa and then climbed up onto her lap and kissed her on the cheek. From that time until his death, he was always a welcomed visitor at court not only by the Empress, but by her two sons who reigned after her. Second, remember that at the age of fourteen, Mozart had already composed beautiful religious music and performed for Pope Clement XIV. The Pope was so moved by the religious fervency this child prodigy displayed that he bestowed on him the monastic “Order of the Golden Spur.” Thus, from an early age, Mozart’s zeal for his Roman Catholicism never waned; he was composing spiritually uplifting music for his Church until his death (7-10, 56-73). Thus, I am convinced that, because of the “cache” Mozart earned from these two institutions, the *Troika* thought him uniquely suited to prove with this opera that the moral teachings of Freemasonry were compatible with both government and church authority. Undoubtedly, this was a brave artistic move on Mozart’s part, both with regard to the attention he drew to himself from the political and ecclesiastical authorities, and the attention he brought to the Fraternity he loved. It must be understood that the *Troika*’s action of revealing Masonic “secrets” was a radical idea for Freemasons of their time, especially since the Fraternity was even more secretive during their time than it is in today’s world. To amplify this

point, soon after the opera's debut and up until modern times, the popular movie *Amadeus* (1984) being the most recent example, there had been speculation that it was Mozart's own brethren who poisoned him to death because he revealed Masonic "secrets" to the world through his opera. There is too much evidence to prove that this is just another slanderous claim made by anti-Masons. As a matter of fact, this slander was most recently perpetuated by the Nazis in the 1930's; not surprising since they were virulently anti-Masonic themselves. This claim is baseless since we know that the opera, which premiered on 30 September 1791, received rave reviews and had over 100 showings in less than a year. The entire Masonic community in Vienna came out to watch it and spoke in its support as a great achievement for spreading Masonic philosophy to the world (56-73).

At this point in the paper it is important to focus in on some of the obvious uses of hermetic and Masonic symbolism in the opera that the *Troika* deployed to educate the masses about Freemasonry. As a for instance, Chailley noted that the number three, which is Masonry's most important number, plays a prominent role in the opera. "Not only 3 Ladies, 3 Boys, etc., but also 3 temples, 3 virtues praised 3 times by the Boys" (159). In hermeticism the number three is also of great importance. First and foremost, the number three helps to comprise Hermes honorific title, the Latin word *Trismegistus*, which means "thrice-greatest." Central to the opera's plot in Act II of the opera are the three trials the protagonists must endure which culminate with initiatory ceremonies. The *Troika* really "pulled back the curtain" and gave their audience a detailed glimpse into the importance of the act of initiating a candidate had regarding Masonic ritual. One important feature of Masonic initiation that the *Troika* revealed to the audience is the requirement of initiates remaining silent concerning the actual initiation rituals Freemasons participated in. In this paper I have already shown that in fact all the ancient mysteries demanded that their initiates keep secret about certain tenets of their rites. Yet, as a "titillating" device that the *Troika* deployed to capture the attention of their audience, they made their audience privy to the "innermost secrets" of Freemasonry by portraying the true meaning of Masonic initiation in the opera. Chailley wrote that: "Every cycle of trials presupposes a complete transformation of the personality: the future elect must first die in their former life if they are to be born into the new one later" (127). Thus, the *Troika* were communicating to the audience that we Freemasons were ritually tested just like the protagonists were in the opera; as well as the Egyptian Deity Osiris was, as "poor Hiram" was, and of course as Jesus was as well. Thus, they were all tried, die, and were reborn. I think that this was the key concept of Freemasonry that the *Troika* wanted to communicate to their audience. They were telling the audience through this opera that all good men could join Freemasonry and learn its philosophy. Freemasonry offered an enlightened moral philosophy to all men who only had to believe in a Supreme Being and an eternal soul. Freemasonry's moral philosophy, when "practiced in life," could "purify one's character," thus "perfecting themselves" to be "re-born" with a "purified soul." Their "purified soul" would then enjoy eternal bliss to occupy that "Temple not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens." Chailley also understood that the *Troika* conveyed to their audience the notion that only after the protagonists successfully complete their trials will they be allowed "To take the oath and the blindfold be permanently lifted from their eyes, whereupon the most blinding light will dazzle them" (136).

More Masonic and hermetic symbolism that I think is important to take notice of is that each act of the opera is divided into three scenes. Musically, Chailley noticed how Mozart artfully deployed the number three throughout the score. "With the significance of the Number is born the hieratic preeminence of E-flat major, which brings together the Three of perfection, the major

of serenity, and the flats of solemnity... This tonality, which encloses the entire opera, will be not only that of the grand initiatory scenes, but also that of most of the pieces, and even phrases, having solemn or didactic meaning” (161). Besides words and music, a successful opera uses the visual arts, such as set design and costumes, to help convey an idea. Thus, it is not surprising that the setting for the opera takes place in ancient Egypt, which was believed by many Freemasons of the time period to be the true historical antecedent of Freemasonry. By the *Troika* imbuing the opera with an Egyptian motif, they were portraying to the audience a notion that was becoming increasingly popular to their fellow enlightened Europeans, that the ancient Egyptian mysteries represented the earliest progenitors of human knowledge. This idea would be greatly boosted in just a few years after the opera’s debut by Napoleon’s military foray into Egypt and the wondrous artifacts and knowledge Napoleon’s “army” of academics sent back to France. The Egyptian motif is placed front and center for the audience in Act II during the Chorus of Priests scene. It portrays a retinue of priests marching onto stage depicting the inner vault of a pyramid. Each priest carries an illuminated lantern in the shape of a pyramid, and two priests carry a much larger pyramid that they bear on their shoulders in the same fashion that the Hebrews would carry the Ark of the Covenant. The opening singing for this scene has the priests praising Isis and Osiris for the early morning’s Sun’s rays illuminating the inner chamber of the pyramid. Mozart’s music reinforces the joy of the Sun’s radiance with the sharps climbing up the musical scale. As the Sun’s rays are causing the dark of the “Night” to recede, Mozart’s music matches the words with the musical flats descending the musical scale in a somber tone. Then the priests sing the following phrase in unison, and it is important to note that the following phrase is repeated three times. “Soon the noble young man will feel new life; soon he will be given over to our service. His spirit is bold; his heart is pure; soon he will be worthy of us” (265). Once again, they were really exposing the true meaning of Freemasonry’s rituals and moral philosophy to the audience. Thus, what the *Troika* revealed about Freemasonry to the audience is that by obligating ourselves to learn the moral philosophy of Freemasonry we are giving ourselves over to the “service” of the fraternity. By following Freemasonry’s moral precepts and “circumscribing our desires” we “purify our hearts” and “prepare our souls.” Thus, when we Freemasons perform these tasks our souls will “become worthy” of “a new life;” thus, we are “reborn.”

The opera was a great success, one of its great admirers was none other than Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, (1749-1832) who was a German luminary author of his time. Brothers Goethe and Mozart were friends since Mozart’s early age. Henry reports that “Goethe, also a freemason, perfectly perceived the profound meaning of the work and the value of its message. He considered ‘The Magic Flute’ to be one of the most beautiful and most noble of opera; even began writing a sequel to it” (105). I think Henry detected the key philosophical concept of the opera; I am sure it was what Goethe saw as well. “Can good vanquish evil? Can any layman be initiated? Despite the diversity of their culture, their beliefs, or their social standing, all men have a right to attain happiness and love. For such a subject one must have a morality like that referred to in the libretto: the man who takes as an ideal the attainment of the light reaches through initiation to a greater, purer happiness and a more perfect love” (110). I hope this example of the *Troika* formed by Mozart, Schikaneder, and Born, using art to spread the “wise and serious truths” of Freemasonry gives the reader a better understanding of how the intelligentsia of the “Age of Enlightenment,” much like the progenitors of the ancient mysteries, used rational thought “clothed” in a passionate emotional appeal to draw attention to their teachings. I am now going to highlight how the progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry, many members of the intelligentsia themselves, used the esoteric wisdom of the past fused with the

new ideas from this epoch of history to create the greatest non-sectarian organization dedicated to improving the souls of men—Freemasonry.

Freemasonry:

I found that it took a mix of “profane” historians and Masonic scholars to “weave the tapestry” of Freemasonry’s important place in social history of the “Age of Enlightenment.” Thus, I will now write about what that Masonic “tapestry” looks like. I am going to use a long quote from Frances Yates book *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, whose scholarship I have relied on so much in this paper. Even though I have been a Freemason for over thirty-six years, I have learned so much from her books about the Craft. I am amazed that she was so perceptive about Freemasonry’s importance to the historical milieu of the “Age of Enlightenment.”

Where is there such a combination as this of religious toleration, emotional linkage with the medieval past, emphasis on good works for others, and imaginative attachment to the religion and the symbolism of the Egyptians? The only answer to this question that I can think of is —Freemasonry, with its mythical link with the medieval masons, its toleration, its philanthropy, and its Egyptian symbolism. Freemasonry does not appear in England as a recognizable institution until the early seventeenth century, but it certainly had predecessors, antecedents, traditions of some kind going back much earlier, though this is a most obscure subject. We are fumbling in the dark here, among strange mysteries, but one cannot help wondering whether it might have been among the spiritually dissatisfied in England, who perhaps heard in Bruno’s “Egyptian” message some hint of relief, that the strains of the Magic Flute were first breathed upon the air (274).

Yates homed in on the notion that the progenitors of “speculative” Freemasonry, like their “operative” stonemason brothers before them, believed that the ancient Egyptian mysteries, essentially hermeticism, were passed down through history as an “inheritance” to the Craft. This notion was recognized by David Boyd Haycock, who wrote in his article *Ancient Egypt in 17th and 18th Century England*, that: “This argument from ancient history, the passing down of ancient knowledge to the present day, appears to have remained a strong historical force in the early decades of the 18th century England. It was enshrined in the history of the Freemasons, who emerge into the full light of history in 1717, with the establishment in London of the Grand Lodge” (11). I will now include further research from some of the Masonic scholars I have used in this paper.

I have shown plenty of evidence in this paper regarding how every ancient mystery rite, as well as all esoteric schools of knowledge, have used symbolism to teach its initiates how to improve their lives and perfect their souls. Freemasonry has once again gained a lucrative “inheritance” of symbolism from these groups as well. One of the greatest Masonic scholars recognized how Masonic allegorical myth followed a similar pattern from the ancient mysteries. In chapter V. *Freemasonry In Relation To the Ancient Mysteries*, Wilmhurst illuminated further his notions on the Craft’s connections to the ancient mysteries which had been handed down from time immemorial. He went into greater detail in this chapter on how one could not miss the similarities that many civilizations and various religions shared. “Now one of the first things to

strike any student of Masonic literature and comparative religion is the remarkable presence of common factors, common beliefs, doctrines, practices and symbols, in the religions of all races alike, whether ancient or modern, eastern or western, civilized or barbarian, Christian or pagan” (170). Thus, Wilmhurst perceptively picked up on the fact that the Craft, following in the footsteps of the ancient mysteries, used myth to impart wisdom to its initiates.

I bring to light another article concerning symbolism. In “The System of Symbolic Introduction,” written by the very renowned Masonic author Albert Mackey, (1807-81), he stated that our English brethren had the best definition of Freemasonry. “Freemasonry is a science of morality, developed and inculcated by the ancient method of symbolism” (11). Mackey correctly asserted, in my opinion, that if you stripped away symbolism from Freemasonry then what is left is a lifeless and soulless institution. In fact, Freemasonry relies on symbolism more than any other civic organization, and as much as any religion that I have ever studied. Mackey astutely recognized the importance of symbolism to the development of ancient humankind from his reading of the eminent classical historian, George Grote (1794-1871). Grote’s following quote is well known among all historians. “At a time when language was in its infancy, visible symbols were the most vivid means of acting upon the minds of ignorant hearers” (12). I think that Grote’s quote about symbolism serves as a perfect example of how the adherents of Hinduism, the vast majority of whom were illiterate, have learned the teachings of their religion over the past five millennia. In addition, Grote’s quote also explains how our ancient “operative” brethren, the medieval stonemasons, many of whom were illiterate as well, learned their craft. I found that Mackey made a remarkably interesting observation about the development of symbolism and the use of language vis-à-vis religious development throughout mankind’s history. For example, Mackey found that the Egyptian religion was “heavily laden” with symbolism; however, with the advent of written language, Judaism was less reliant on symbolism, and Christianity even less so than Judaism (12-13).

In the article, “What is Symbolism?” by R. L. Meekren, I found a common idea for the entire paper. “Nothing is actually isolated in the world” (1). I find that Meekren’s idea is right on target with my understanding of how human cognition works. Since humankind’s inception, we have been comparing, contrasting, and categorizing things from the “metaphysical” world around us to gain a better understanding of “particulars.” Thus, what Meekren essentially purports in his thesis is that in order to truly understand symbolism one must use a “comparative” approach to the subject. Thus, Meekren argued that to understand the “metaphysical” Masonic world one must have the following realization. “Masonry cannot be understood fully as an isolated fact. Its history cannot be properly understood in ignorance of the secular history of the countries and communities in which it has appeared” (1).

In the article, *Symbolism in Mythology*, written by C. T. Sego, he, like the other Masonic scholars in this section of my paper, recognized the importance of symbolism and myth to how humans understood the “metaphysical” world. “There is a psychological need for symbols, a real demand for stories, which man has ever supplied” (23). Sego made a fascinating and important observation about the use of myth throughout social history. Sego argued that based on what the goal of a myth was depended on whether it evolved over time or not. For example, when myths were employed for entertainment purposes, they tended to be changed by the bards who told them with each new generation. An example of this is our knowledge of the development of Homer’s *Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Literary experts for over the last 100 years have convincingly been able to prove that Homer did not invent those myths credited to him; however, he was the first bard to write them down, and he no doubt made substantial changes as he transcribed them.

In addition, Sego convincingly pointed out that when myths were not employed for entertainment purposes, then their form and lessons did not change or evolve over time. Thus, the myth of the Egyptian Deity Osiris, Freemasonry's "Hiramic myth," and of course Christianity's story of the resurrection of Jesus are connected and have not changed over time. Thus, Sego stated: "So the legend of the third degree, introduced into our body I do not know when, is the same today as it was when we first learned it" (24).

Stevenson, a "profane," realized that to understand what was taking place during the transformative period between "operative" and "speculative" Freemasonry he had to find a nexus of ritual and symbolic practice that continued between the two organizations. Thus, Stevenson had to investigate some of the central features of what was practiced in "speculative" lodges that found its origins in "operative" lodges; as well as who or what was the "primal force" behind the creation of Masonic symbolism and ritual in "operative" lodges. In his search for the answer to his question, Stevenson turned to the "old charges" of the *Kilwinning Manuscript*, which were in essence a facsimile copy of the English *Regius Manuscript* from the 1390's and were replete with symbolism, the antecedents of the stonemason's craft, and the rituals that found their way into "speculative" Freemasonry. A few examples include the following: the teaching of the seven liberal arts, the teaching of the ancient mysteries, which started in Egypt and progressed to King Solomon's Temple, ultimately winding their way through medieval history including St. Alban, and finally bringing masonry to England. In addition, the "old charges" in the *Kilwinning Manuscript* laid out the ethical rules by which all members of the stonemason's guild would have to adhere (18-25). Thus, what Stevenson found was that "speculative" Freemasonry was built on a foundation of a long history of "ethical symbolism" which used stonemason's working tools to teach a moral philosophy. Finally, I think the progenitors of "speculative" Freemasonry understood how much our Craft was "shaped" from the knowledge it "inherited" from ancient Egypt when they included the following beautiful language in the Fellow Craft lecture. "Tools and implements of architecture and symbolic emblems most expressive are selected by the Fraternity to imprint on the mind wise and serious truths, and thus, through a succession of ages, are transmitted unimpaired the most excellent tenets of our Institution." In fact, I believe that this quote proves my thesis.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, I believe that the facts that I brought to "light" in this paper have proven my thesis which I restate now. The thesis of my paper is really a simple notion. All my years of academic studies have thoroughly convinced me that there is an "unbroken chain" of Egyptian wisdom that has been transmitted through several epochs of history and found its way into Freemasonry during the "Age of Enlightenment." Now I am not arguing that this "unbroken chain" of Egyptian wisdom has been passed down verbatim by word of mouth through every generation of humans from ancient Egypt to "speculative" Freemasonry. However, I do argue that the ancient Egyptian wisdom, (known as hermeticism, which I defined in this paper when I wrote about Egyptian history), has been discovered by the initiated intelligentsia during every major historical epoch of history up to the "Age of Enlightenment." In addition, I assert that in every one of these historical epochs of history, these men of intelligentsia, who have been initiated into various rites and societies, often secretive in nature, believed that they were chosen to spread the hermetic wisdom of ancient Egypt. These initiated intelligentsia also believed that this "revealed" wisdom could be used to interpret the esoteric knowledge necessary to better

understand their place in the universe, the “truth” behind human existence, and their relationship with their G-d.

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Id, Ego, and Super Ego: The Three Craftsmen

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In 1923 Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud theorized a new form of clinical method known as psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is a system of psychological theory and therapy which aims to treat mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into the conscious mind by techniques such as dream interpretation and free association. In his theory he utilized three constructs: the Id, Ego, and Superego which represented systems that are developed by the personality at certain stages of life.

The Id is the first system. It is present at birth and consists of all the primal and instinctive components such as sex (life) instinct, Eros, and the aggressive (death) instinct (*Thanatos*). “It is the impulsive part of the human psyche which requires immediate gratification to impulses. Remaining infantile throughout life, it does not change with time or experience. The id engages in primary process thinking, which is primitive, illogical, irrational, and fantasy oriented. This form of process thinking has no comprehension of objective reality, and is selfish and wishful in nature” (MacLeod, 2019). If man were to operate on id alone, it is unlikely that the species would have survived, much less flourished to develop civilization. The id could be considered as the uninitiated man that has yet been brought from darkness to light.

The Ego is the second system to develop and is fully developed by the age of three. The Ego is “that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world.” (Freud, 1923, p. 25) It serves as a mediator between the illogical id and the realistic external world. The ego represents the logical part of our personality that operates according to the reality principle, and finds a realistic way of satiating the id’s illogical demands. It allows man to function within a social group from a purely logical perspective, but does not incorporate a sense of empathy or compassion. The ego serves as the equivalent of the Fellow Craft who comes out of ignorance into knowledge.

The Superego is the final system to develop, and does so by age five. It utilizes the value and morals that are the framework of our society and are taught to us by our parents and others who are close to us. The superego exists to control the id’s impulses by means of moralistic goals rather than logical goals. It is comprised of two systems: the conscience and the ideal self. The conscience serves as the punisher of the ego for letting the id get its way and uses the ideal self, which is an impossible standard to meet, as the basis on which to punish. This results in feelings of guilt and anxiety when the id is allowed to have its way. The superego represents the Master Mason, who has been raised from the dead and learns to incorporate compassion and charity into their interactions with their fellow man.

How does this relate to the three Craftsmen that are ordered by wise King Solomon to hunt down the murderers of Hiram Abif and bring them to justice? The third craftsman, who represents the young man in Masonic ritual, is an example of the id. The second craftsman, who represents the middle-aged man, is an example of the ego. The first craftsman, who represents the aged man, is an example of superego.

During the search for the ruffians, the third Craftsman, succumbing to his id and placated by the pure logic of his ego, vies for self-preservation by fleeing the realm and abandoning the task before them. The second Craftsman, who shares the same fear, initially agrees with the first Craftsman, until the third Craftsman utilizes the superego to find the higher path and persuades his brother to side with him. Upon finding himself in the minority, the first Craftsman finds himself in a situation where abandonment becomes the primary focus, and reluctantly agrees to continue travels with the others. Later in the degree, the first Craftsman once again succumbs to his primal impulses, sits down and refuses to go any further. The scene once again plays out, with the moralistic views of the third Craftsman winning out, and persuading him to continue the journey. This, of course, leads to their locating of the ruffians, and once again the self-preservation instinct of the first Craftsman kicks in as the ego is utilized to satiate the desire to run away, and once again it is the superego of the first Craftsman that provides the moralistic perspective that leads to the apprehension of the ruffians.

In Freemasonry it is a common belief that there is a spark of divinity in all of us. This spark is what makes us in the image of the Supreme Architect of the Universe. As Masons we are taught to use logic and reason, to subdue our passions, and to act upon the square. Our lessons go hand-in-hand with Freud's constructs of the id, ego and superego. The id is the underlying mechanism of our personality that we must subdue. It cares only for its own satisfaction, not the betterment of the individual from a moral or intellectual perspective. To submit to the whims of the id is to follow a path of pure, unadulterated hedonism, that thing that is not the teaching of masonry. Masons are taught to be free thinkers, using logic and reason rather than emotion to contemplate the world and its affairs. This is Freud's construct of the id and operates in the realm of the conscious mind as opposes to the id's dwelling in the unconscious mind. Through the ego we provide the id with its desires, but by the utilization of logic and reason. Logic and reason are not enough to provide us with the complete life and this is where the superego plays its part. The superego construct, like the ego, exists in both the unconscious and conscious mind, though the largest portion resides in the unconscious. The conscious mind portion of the superego provides the morality that we are taught by our parents, friends, families and by society; just as the conscious portion of the ego creates logic from external sources.

The morality of the superego that exists within the unconscious mind is very curious. It is the basis of the morality we find in the physical world. Where does it come from? While Freud makes the claim that all religious beliefs are "illusions and insusceptible to truth" (Freud, 1933, p. 31); and that "in the long run nothing can withstand reason and experience, and the contradiction which religion offers to both is all too palpable." (Freud, 1933, p. 54); a Freemason will make the counter argument that morality comes from the Divine. It exists in a pure, undefiled state in our minds and hearts. Plato spoke of a "World of Forms" that offers an excellent definition of the perfection of the morality that the superego draws from. "Behind this unreliable world of appearances is a world of permanence and reliability. Plato calls this more real (because permanent) world, the world of 'Forms' or 'Ideas'" (Macintosh, 2012). Plato's theory coincides with Masonic belief in a very unique way. He believed that the physical realm was a mere shadow of the true world where perfection existed. As Masons, we follow the belief that the realm of Deity is the equivalent of perfection, as Deity is the only perfection in existence. All tangible objects and intangible ideas exist in a perfect state within Deity. This serves as the basis for the perfect moral compass that the superego draws from. The imperfection of the superego is derived from the morality of man that operates within the conscious mind. It is the divine spark in all of us that the unconscious portion of the superego taps into to provide us

with the ideas of moral perfection that are necessary to “subdue our passions and keep us within due bounds with all mankind, especially the brethren.”

Looking a bit deeper into psychoanalysis, Freud devised five stages of development: the oral stage, anal stage, phallic stage, latency stage and genital stage. These were considered the normal phases of human development and would determine future behavior. The libido or survival/sexual energy is an important piece of the psychoanalytic equation. While today libido has taken on a purely sexual connotation, to Freud it represented the whole of psychic energy within a person.

The oral stage is the first phase one enters and lasts from birth to age one. It is during this stage that the ego develops. During this stage, the entire libido is focused on the baby’s mouth. “It gets much satisfaction from putting all sorts of things in its mouth to satisfy the libido, and thus its id demands. Which at this stage in life are oral, or mouth orientated, such as sucking, biting, and breastfeeding” (MacLeod, 2019). Freud theorized that during this stage if a child fell behind in development or refused to move forward that a resulting fixation would result. This would be evidenced later in life by habits such as smoking, nail biting or chewing on foreign objects. One could imagine the third Craftsman busily biting his nails as he worried about confronting the ruffians or the repercussions of failing to find them. While this is entirely speculative, it would fit with the nervous tendencies of the dialog we are provided.

The anal stage follows the oral stage and takes place between one to three years old. As the ego has developed, the child now has self-awareness. The libido is now focused on the anus and the defecation process. “Freud believed that this type of conflict tends to come to a head in potty training, in which adults impose restrictions on when and where the child can defecate. The nature of this first conflict with authority can determine the child’s future relationship with all forms of authority” (MacLeod, 2019). Conflict that is resolved negatively can result in retentive or expulsive behavior later in life. Anal retentive behavior results in extreme tidiness and submissiveness toward authority. The anal expulsive personality tends to be obsessively giving, messy and disrespectful of authority. One could imagine the second Craftsman as an anal retentive type personality, always trying to comply with the more dominant authorities of the first and third Craftsmen, representing the superego and id. He would likely be very neat in appearance and obsessed with the group getting along.

The phallic stage follows the anal stage and takes place from ages three through six. Here, the focus of the libido is the genitals and leads to masturbation in both sexes. “The child becomes aware of anatomical sex differences, which sets in motion the conflict between erotic attraction, resentment, rivalry, jealousy and fear which Freud called the **Oedipus complex** (in boys) and the **Electra complex** (in girls). This is resolved through the process of identification, which involves the child adopting the characteristics of the same sex parent” (MacLeod, 2019). Fashioned after the characters of Greek mythology, these complexes describe the gender identification and desires of the child to possess the opposite sex parent for themselves. Fearing threat from the same sex parent, they begin to identify with the same sex parent and to copy their behavior and values. This eventually leads to the resolving of the conflict. A fixation in this stage can lead to many negative behaviors such as inflated ego, shyness, low self-esteem, promiscuous behavior, and misogyny. From the perspective of the Craftsmen, these men likely followed their fathers into the line of work of stonemasonry, thus showing a positive resolution to the phallic conflict.

The latency stage follows the phallic stage and lasts from years six to puberty. Here the libido is repressed and the developing child spends his energy on school work, hobbies and

developing friendships. It could realistically be viewed during the era of the Craftsmen as the time they continued the family trade and began their apprenticeships.

The final stage is the genital stage and lasts from puberty through adulthood. At this point the individual libido is focused on sexual experimentation and a healthy resolution to conflict results in marriage to a member of the opposite sex. Unhealthy resolution to conflict or fixations can lead to sexual perversion. “For example, fixation at the oral stage may result in a person gaining sexual pleasure primarily from kissing and oral sex, rather than sexual intercourse” (MacLeod, 2019). As we only see a specific instance in the life of the three Craftsmen, it is impossible to know, from dialog alone, if there are any issues that have resulted from unresolved conflict or fixation in the genital stage.

In conclusion, the three Craftsmen make an excellent example of the principle of psychoanalysis as proposed by Dr. Sigmund Freud. Their behaviors adequately display the defining characteristics of the dominant system of id, ego and superego. While psychoanalysis is still practiced on a limited basis in the modern world, many of Freud’s theories have been built upon or outright rejected by modern day psychologists. Regardless, he was a pioneer in the field of psychology and his work has been the inspiration of many who have taken his place and carried on the good work of mental health.

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WHENCE COMETH US?

By

John Russell Meldorf III

Wor. Bro. Meldorf is a Past Master of Hixson Lodge No. 747 and was the Charter Master of the Tennessee Lodge of Research. This presentation was given via Zoom at Volunteer Lodge No. 199 in Chattanooga, and commemorates the 25th Anniversary of the Chartering of the Lodge of Research. Our Charter was issued March 27, 1985.

To the Worshipful Master, Wardens, and brethren of the Tennessee Lodge of Research, thank you for the opportunity to be with you today and present this paper, at least in spirit. To the brethren of Volunteer Lodge, No. 549 F&AM, thank you for the invitation to host this meeting of the Tennessee Lodge of Research. I especially want to thank my worthy Bro. Gary Youngberg for feeling the tug on his “cabletow” and agreeing to present this paper in my absence. My wife and I have been in quarantine since March 12, 2020, and I have not been in a room with more than four to five persons since. I look forward to seeing you all again after I can get vaccinated for Covid-19.

Where did we come from? Those questions have been pondered by Freemasons for generations. October 16, 1646, is the date of the earliest recorded Masonic degree. But our fraternity is older than that; after all, whoever conferred the degrees in October, 1646, had to first receive them.

Did Freemasonry start in Scotland? Or perhaps Mother Kilwinning Lodge? Or did it start in Ireland? We know that the *Regius Manuscript*, containing the “old charges,” dates from c. 1390, and copied at that time from a prior, lost document. The *Regius Manuscript* is the oldest known document to contain a history of the “operative” stonemasons’ craft, to list the seven liberal arts, and to contain a list of duties of the craft and its officers. Or does Freemasonry indeed date back to the rudimentary efforts of the remnants of the Knights Templar? An artificial cave, built near Royston, UK, has been discovered. It was clearly built by the Templars and dates to the 1200’s. Its walls are covered with Christian and Templar symbols and drawings, and in its center were the remnants of an octagonal-shaped wooden table.

We know that Freemasonry has always stood for morals and principles, but those are not fixed and unanimously agreed-upon ideas. They have changed over time. We know that even today, the Ancient Landmarks vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

Over the years, the customs of the Craft have changed as well. We no longer wear suits and gloves to lodge, although were one to travel to Jamaica, you still would be kindly invited to the anteroom where a lodge porter would find you a dress coat that fits, a tie, and gloves, and properly dress you before you entered the lodge.

Today, we carry a dues card and show it to seek admittance to a lodge in distant states when we travel. But before that, Masons like Chief John Ross were given a large sheet of parchment or paper, certifying their membership in the Craft. A copy of his traveling warrant is hanging in Olive Branch Lodge in Jasper, Tennessee; Chief Ross was made a Mason in the original Olive Branch Lodge.

Today, we do not drink alcohol in our lodges, but that is a recent change, and who among us would ever propose a raffle to raise money for a lodge hall? But that is exactly how Wilkes Tannehill, our first Grand Master, funded the building of Tennessee’s first Grand Lodge.

We are taught in lodge today that Freemasonry consists of three degrees. However, when founded in 1717, the Premier Grand Lodge of England recognized only two degrees. Later, when it merged with a rival Grand Lodge, it changed its Constitution to state that there were only three degrees of Masonry, "...including the Holy Royal Arch." The Royal Arch Degree is not now a part of the three degrees of Masonry as we know them in Tennessee. However, the Premier Grand Lodge stubbornly held onto one result of being formed based on only two degrees, and to this day, the Grand Master of the Premier Grand Lodge of England is only required to be a Fellow Craft.

We are also taught that we can only have Masonic communication with lodges that are within the jurisdiction of a grand lodge recognized by our grand lodge. Yet before the grand lodge era began, many lodges worked in several locations throughout Europe, and most of them refused to join any grand lodge for many years; some over a century later were still not a part of a grand lodge, but they continued to make Masons and hold meetings. These were referred to generally as Saints John lodges, and were as Masonically regular as any lodge created today.

We believe that our ritual has ancient roots, which it does. But many Masons were raised in lodges in early times when knowledge of the degree work or how to provide proper instruction was spotty. In the early 1800's, certain recognized ritualists such as Thomas Smith Webb and Jeremy Ladd Cross would visit grand lodges, exemplify and explain their rituals, and if the grand lodge liked the ritual they would adopt it. These men would then be appointed Grand Lecturers and would travel each year to the various grand lodges and teach degree work. Fortunately, these ritualists also happened to have written copies of their rituals, which they would sell to the grand lodges. Thus, some uniformity came to the ritual in Tennessee and throughout the United States.

Webb and Cross, in turn, took their cue from William Preston, a Scotsman who had received his Degrees in England. Preston became concerned about perpetuating the Masonic ritual when the elderly man who had taught him became too ill to attend lodge. Preston decided to travel all across the British Isles to learn from old, experienced Masons as much about the rituals and history of the Craft as he could. His efforts enabled him to pull together what he considered to be the fundamental threads of the three Craft degrees as best as he could determine. He had weekly sessions with his Masonic friends to discuss what he had learned and how it fit into the ritual work, and he began to reformulate newly-worded Craft degrees. Finally, on May 21, 1772, at his own expense, Preston rented an expensive room at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in London and exemplified his first degree before eminent respected members of the Craft in London, to determine whether his degree was valid. His efforts being successful, he then wrote and published in 1772 the framework for the current three degrees in the book, *Illustrations of Freemasonry*.

We also learn of various "signs and symbols" which we have come to respect and perhaps even venerate in our love of the Craft. However, those "signs and symbols" have changed. We hear little about Noah or the Saxon King Athelstan in lodge anymore. The Ark has been removed to a separate degree. And surprisingly, even the position of the square and compasses during degree work has also been changed.

If you are a visitor, I cannot help but believe that these brief introductory comments have piqued your curiosity and made you want to know more. Good. I hope you will take your first step into Masonic history by petitioning the Tennessee Lodge of Research for membership. If you are already a member of this lodge, then I greet you as a fellow history buff, who will forever find greater meaning in his lodge activity by forever seeking greater knowledge of the history of our wonderful Craft.

To tell the history of the Tennessee Lodge of Research, I want to begin with a brief anecdote about myself. All my life, I had intended on returning to my old high school in a small farm town in Illinois to teach history—right after I finished my career as a first-baseman for my beloved Boston Red Sox! So, I was already a history buff. Then, as a young lawyer, I followed my maternal grandfather into the Craft. I was struck by the living history that was epitomized by the lodge and its degrees. That following autumn, I was encouraged by some of my brethren to petition the York Rite, which I did. Those degrees only sparked my interest further in the historical side of Freemasonry. Several of those degrees had been a part of the appendices of ancient Craft Masonry for 300 years or more, most especially the Mark and Royal Arch degrees and the Red Cross degree in Templar Masonry. Later, I received the Royal Order of Scotland and studying its degrees only furthered my interest in the history of our Craft.

Throughout all of this, I had the good fortune to meet our late Past Grand Master, John Arp. At the time, he was a Grand Lecturer for East Tennessee. He was a member of Union Lodge No.38, in Kingston, just an hour and a quarter from here, so I had lots of opportunity to encounter him as I traveled. He was jovial and very outgoing, and he loved Masonic history as much as anyone I had ever met. Through him, I became a member of a couple of Masonic history groups: the Philalethes Society, the Masonic Book Club, the Grand College of Rites, and *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge, the oldest Masonic historical research lodge in the world.

Of course, my curiosity only grew, and upon his election as Grand Master in 1983, Most Worshipful Brother Arp encouraged me to seek out other Masonic historical societies in other jurisdictions. I contacted all of the forty-nine Masonic historical groups and lodges I could find, which was long before the internet; thirty-one actually responded to me. I asked for information about how they were organized, membership issues, meetings, etc. They were kind enough to answer my inquiries and send me copies of their publications. I then submitted the information I received to the Grand Master.

Bro. Arp and I agreed that Tennessee needed a lodge of research. The reasoning was that if the meetings were held in a tiled lodge, the brethren at the meeting could then hear about, and discuss, the esoteric aspects of Freemasonry “not lawful to be written” or discussed in the presence of profanes. A historical society would not permit this.

To create a lodge of research, the Tennessee Masonic Code had to be amended to permit a Tennessee Lodge of Research. This meant the abolition of jurisdictional control by the local lodges over membership, and the creation of a special in-state dual membership to allow Tennessee Masons to also join the lodge of research. Bro. Arp directed the Grand Secretary to draft the necessary Code revisions to present to the Grand Lodge of Tennessee.

I will never forget my first speaking appearance at the Grand Lodge. It is intimidating to walk down the aisles past the brethren and approach the high stage where the Grand East presides. I moved the adoption of the code change, and answered several questions, mostly about the legal side of things such as the new dual-membership proposal and the limit prohibiting the lodge of research from conferring degrees. The code revisions necessary to create a lodge of research in Tennessee passed easily.

The next step in the process was to create a proposed leadership group and plan for our meetings. Bro. Arp believed that to get us off on a strong footing, we needed to be sure the officers came from different parts of the state, and I suggested early on that we have quarterly meetings around the state, and that the December meeting always be held in Middle Tennessee, for the convenience of the brethren to participate in the election of officers. Bro. Arp suggested

that I speak with and meet a list of strong brethren from across the state, to insure broad support and diversity for the lodge. This I did and his idea bore fruit.

On June 9, 1984, we held an organizational meeting at Corinthian Lodge No. 414 in Nashville, a beautiful lodge convenient to all Masons from all parts of the state. By then, 366 Masons from 92 subordinate lodges in Tennessee had petitioned to form the Tennessee Lodge of Research. There were seventy of those brethren in attendance that day, and the meeting was chaired by our immediate Past Grand Master, Bro. Arp. At the meeting, the brothers present voted to request a dispensation for the Tennessee Lodge of Research to “work,” and passed a proposed set of by-laws, and elected a proposed slate of officers: J. C. McCarley from Memphis was elected senior warden, Fritz Meyers from Nashville was elected junior warden, Rev. James Marshall from Elizabethton was elected treasurer, and M. D. Manning from Red Bank was elected secretary. I had the privilege of being asked to server as Charter Master. I was grateful to appoint Perry Gadd, an elderly traveling companion of mine, as senior deacon, Paul Gilreath as junior deacon, Harold Richards from Alamo as senior steward, Jerry Betterton from Sparta as junior steward, Tommy Brooks from Clinton as tiler, and Daran McCutcheon as chaplain. Several of our charter officers I had never personally met until that very first meeting! But Bro. Arp had brought the entire state together to create this new lodge, and his leadership knit as fine a group of officers together for the lodge as I could ever have hoped.

We also utilized a system of “District Stewards,” one for most, but not all, of the Masonic districts. This worked well to plan meetings in the area and to advertise the coming meeting as those brethren visited around this geographically very large State of Tennessee.

On July 31, 1984, M. W. Brother James McDaniel, our new Grand Master, issued the Tennessee Lodge of Research a dispensation for work. Our first meeting was held at my home lodge, then known as Hixson No. 727. P.G.M. Arp was our principal speaker on “The Origins of Freemasonry,” and the late, very colorful Bro. Harold Cristil from Memphis also spoke on the difficulties of Masonic historical research. Later that year, pursuant to our by-laws to meet quarterly in various parts of our three grand divisions, we held lodge at Hamblen No. 767, at Morristown, in Angerona Lodge No. 168, at Memphis, and Cumberland Lodge No. 8, in Nashville. After laboring in the Quarries together for that year, we received our reward: On September 14, 1985, then Worshipful Grand Master Sam Chandler presented us with our Charter at our fall meeting at Red Bank Lodge No. 717, following the vote of the grand lodge the previous March.

We always had several grand officers or grand committee members at our meetings. We always tried to arrange an annual meeting each year when a prominent speaker could attend and provide special knowledge to the lodge. I was blessed in that regard by all the contacts I had made earlier at Bro. Arp’s suggestion. Our first special speaker was the late Bro. Cyril N. Batham, one of only thirty members world-wide, of the *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge, the first lodge of research in the world. We rented a hotel and he came to Nashville and he gave a wonderful speech to a couple of hundred of our brethren. Another year, we enjoyed our late Bro. Allen Roberts, who wrote *House Undivided: The Story of Freemasonry and the Civil War*. On a much lesser note, Bro. Tommy Brooks invited the mayor of Clinton, Tennessee to come to our pre-lodge dinner one year. She surprised me with a Key to the City, which I still have, of course.

When it came time to design a pin, the brethren deferred to me because yellow is my favorite color; ditto when we needed a color for our first publication. You’ll have to excuse me on that.

Some of you might be thinking, “History was never my strong point in school.” Or perhaps you might believe that “the past is the past, it is today and tomorrow that count.” My brother, you are entirely correct in what you may be thinking. However, the Tennessee Lodge of Research was built

for your today, and your tomorrow. The ritual we use in lodge, the degrees we confer on new members—these are changeless, for now. The Tennessee Lodge of Research was not created to, nor can it ever, change that.

But as you watch the senior deacon performing his duties at the opening, closing, or calling off of the lodge, as you watch a candidate receive a degree, or hear a charge voiced by the Master or a stationed officer, those actions, those words, and those symbols you observe before you will be enriched in your mind and have more meaning to you as you recall some talk you heard at or some article you read from the Tennessee Lodge of Research.

**GENERAL GRAND COUNCIL CRYPTIC MASONS INTERNATIONAL
TRIENNIAL ENTERTAINER AWARD**

By
Luther Alvin Hill Sr., 32° KCCH

Wor. Bro. Hill is a Past Master of Mount Juliet Lodge # 642, Past Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, charter member of the Tennessee Lodge of Research, and is member of the Anchorage Valley Orient of Alaska of Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

JOSEPH LYNDOL EDWARDS



The General Grand Council has recognized the need to institute an Award to recognize members of the Fraternity who are in the entertainment industry and have made a major contribution to the Fraternity. The Triennial Entertainer Award has been implemented for that purpose and is to be presented at each Triennial meeting of the General Grand Council to an individual who has made a major contribution of his time and talent in support of the Fraternity.

The recipient of this Award for this triennium is Companion Joseph Lyndol Edwards of Nashville, Tennessee. Professionally, Companion Edwards retired in March 2003 after having been a regular performer on the Grand Ole Opry for 48 years. During this time he has been a musician in the band of several of the outstanding Country Music Legends including such names as Bill Carlisle, Roy Acuff, Jimmy Dickens, Grandpa Jones, Stringbean, Curley Fox, Cowboy Copas, George Morgan, Bobby Helms, Mother Maybelle and the Carter Sisters, Faron Young, George Hamilton IV, the "Duke of Paducah," Dell Wood, Minnie Pearl, Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper, Martha Carson, Ferlin Huskey, Les Paul, and many others. He was inducted into the Guitar Pickers Hall of Fame in August 2003.

In the Fraternity, he became a Master Mason in John B. Garrett Lodge No. 711 of Nashville, Tennessee on April 30, 1973. He is a member of the Nashville York Rite Bodies, the Nashville Scottish Rite Bodies where he received the rank and distinction of the 33rd Degree and has served as the Chairman of the Scottish Rite Study Club for over five years, the Eastern Star, the Amaranth, and the Shrine. Companion Edwards loves the Craft and has given his time and talent without the hope of fee or reward in support of the Fraternity as follows: he has performed at every Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee for over twenty years; the Grand Chapter/Grand Council of Tennessee Annual meeting for over 10 years, the Grand Commandery of Tennessee Annual Conclave for over ten years, the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, and the Grand Lodge of Illinois on numerous occasions, various fund raisers for the Shrine in Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, twice annually he has supplied the entertainment for the Nashville Scottish Rite Bodies classes for the past fifteen years, and the Grand Chapter of the Eastern Star annual meeting for Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and Indiana on numerous occasions, the International Communication of the Order of the Amaranth held in Florida and in Ohio, and others. He supplied the entertainment for the 61st Triennial of the Grand Encampment Knights Templar of the United States of America held in Nashville, Tennessee during 2000 and the entertainment for the Southeastern York Rite Conference held in Kingsport, Tennessee during 2004. Additionally, Companion Edwards has performed at numerous local Masonic functions in the Mid-Western and South Eastern states.

Companion Edwards has on several occasions stated that because of his vocation, time did not permit him to participate in the Fraternity to the extent he desired and therefore he was unable to serve in any branch of Freemasonry as an officer. He still wanted to express his love for the Fraternity and for the effect it has made on his life. Therefore, he did the only thing he could by giving of his time and talent to provide entertainment for the enjoyment of his friends and Brothers and as a result he has made a major contribution to the Craft.

It is with great pride that I present the GENERAL GRAND COUNCIL TRIENNIAL ENTERTAINER AWARD for this Triennial to my friend and Brother, Joseph Lyndol Edwards.

**GENERAL GRAND CHAPTER ROYAL ARCH MASONS INTERNATIONAL
TRIENNIAL ENTERTAINER AWARD**

By
Luther Alvin Hill Sr., 32° KCCH

MELVIN DAVID SLOAN



The General Grand Chapter Triennial Entertainer Award is to be presented at each Triennial meeting of the General Grand Chapter to recognize an individual in the entertainment industry who has made a major contribution of his time and talent in support of the Fraternity and has distinguished himself in his profession. The recipient of the Triennial Entertainer Award for this Triennium is Companion Melvin David Sloan of Lebanon, Tennessee.

In the beginning, when the Cedars of Lebanon State Park and Forrest were first developed, some of the houses on the original home sites were rented. Earl Sloan (Melvin's father) began working for the park in 1940, and moved his family into one of those two-room log rental houses on the Drennon place. Earl Sloan, Melvin's father, had two sons; Ralph, 15 years old, and Melvin, the last of six children, who was born on March 27, 1940, three months after the family moved into the park. The Sloan family home had no modern conveniences and home life always centered around music. Ralph and Melvin grew up hearing dance music from their front porch. Ralph soon became part of the Cedar Forest dance, working the door and taking up admission.

It did not take Ralph very long to become part of the band. He began playing, singing and calling. Ralph's reputation soon developed and he started his own dance elsewhere. The Ralph Sloan Dancers were then born. They put on public shows, entered dance contests, performed at

fairs, or anywhere that took them in front of the public. Ralph's dance team was soon asked to make a guest appearance at the Grand Ole Opry. He and his group, The Tennessee Travelers, made such an impression they were then asked to become full-time members. Ralph knew no strangers and his profession and showmanship projected him to stardom.

Melvin's mother who was the church pianist, had Melvin singing in front of the church congregation at the early age of 3, at age 9 he was the song leader of the children's choir, and by age 13 he was the song leader of the entire congregation. Although this was a small congregation, the training had a tremendous influence on Melvin's future musical career.

About this same time Ralph, Melvin's brother, gave him his first guitar. During his early high school years, Melvin was a member of a string band that performed on the Junior Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. The act won numerous talent contests across Middle Tennessee. Melvin also played trombone in the high school band and sang in the high school chorus.

At the age of 21, Melvin organized his own band, performing throughout the Southeast. His group was often a backup band for country music stars such as Crystal Gayle, Jimmy Newman, The Kendalls, Johnny Carver, and others. During this time Melvin and his musicians also shared stages with his brother Ralph and the Tennessee Travelers.

The Dancers became a part of the WSM Grand Ole Opry on July 5, 1952, and since that date have never missed a scheduled performance on the Grand Ole Opry. Melvin retired from being an active member of the Grand Ole Opry on July 6, 2002.

In 1977, CBS and Opryland USA collaborated to bring the Grand Ole Opry to a nation-wide television audience. A special recording session of a square dance was set up and taped at the Assembly Hall at Cedars of Lebanon State Park and Forest to be used during the program. Ralph organized the event by bringing the best dance musicians with his dancers to a packed house of several hundred fans. While Ralph was performing with the Opry, Melvin continued to play and sing at dances. After Ralph's untimely death in 1980, Melvin continued the Sloan tradition with The Tennessee Travelers and became the dance group's leader. That same year, the Tennessee State Legislature designated Southern Appalachian square dancing as the official state dance and named Ralph Sloan as the Ambassador of the Dance.

The dancers, under Melvin's leadership, were invited in May of 1984 by former President Ronald Reagan to perform at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington DC as part of a tribute to the late country legend Roy Acuff.

Under Ralph and Melvin's leadership, The Sloan Dancers have accrued over 2,500 Grand Ole Opry performances and hundreds of television appearances. They also have danced on countless other stages in the United States and abroad, and have entertained millions of people around the world via television, appearing on programs such as The Jack Benny Show, the Dinah Shore Show, That Nashville Music (for 16 years), The Today Show, Hee Haw, The Dolly Parton Show, the Grand Ole Opry's 50th, 60th, and 65th anniversary shows, Grand Ole Opry Live and The Nashville Network's (TNN) Nashville Now, Music City Tonight, and Primetime Country.

Melvin David Sloan, a patriarch of Southern Appalachian freestyle square dancing and his late brother, Ralph Sloan, were inducted into America's Clogging Hall of Fame during a special ceremony held at the Stompin' Grounds dance venue in Maggie Valley, NC on October 25, 1997.

Several members of the Sloan family have been involved in Masonry as far back as Melvin's great grandfather. Ralph Sloan became a Master Mason in 1952 and Melvin, having witnessed his brother's performances at numerous fundraisers for the fraternity and having visited hospitals and charities thus supported, was so impressed with the good being

accomplished by these efforts that he had a sincere desire to become a member thereof. Having petitioned the Lodge and being elected to receive the degrees, he became a Master Mason in Lebanon Lodge No. 98 of Lebanon, Tennessee on October 27, 1980. He is a member of the Lebanon York Rite Bodies, the Nashville Scottish Rite Bodies, and the Nashville Shrine. Companion Sloan loves the Craft and has given his time and talent without the hope of fee or reward in support of the Fraternity as follows: he has performed at every Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee for over five years, the Grand Chapter/Grand Council of Tennessee Annual meeting, the Grand Commandery of Tennessee Annual Conclave, the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, and the Grand Lodge of Alabama on several occasions; the Charlie Walker Louisville, Kentucky Scottish Rite Foundation Celebrity Golf Scramble, the Clark County Shrine Concerts for Shriner's Hospital for Children of Casey, Illinois, numerous fund raisers for the Shrine in Tennessee, the Wilson County Shrine Club annual fund raiser for special needs children of Wilson County held in Lebanon, Tennessee for over twenty years (a tradition he has continued which was started by his brother Ralph), the Baptist Hospital of Nashville, Tennessee Summer Harvest Festival, the Tennessee Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and other local Masonic functions too numerous to list individually. In 2003 he supplied the entertainment for the National Masonic Campers Association annual meeting held in Lebanon, Tennessee. Additionally he supplied the entertainment for the 61st Triennial of the Grand Encampment Knights Templar of the United States of America held in Nashville, Tennessee during 2000.

Even with all of Melvin's notoriety, he still calls Cedars of Lebanon State Park and Forest home and he has never refused any reasonable request to help the fraternity and to assist those who are unable to help themselves. Therefore, it is with great pride that I present the GENERAL GRAND CHAPTER TRIENNIAL ENTERTAINER AWARD for this Triennium to my friend and Brother Melvin David Sloan in recognition of his many accomplishments and for all that he has done to help, aid, and assist those in need.

FREEMASONRY IN TOLSTOY'S *WAR AND PEACE*

By

Michael Adam Neulander, 32°

I have an insatiable thirst for learning; however, this passion emerged later in my life for me than it did in most students. When I was in grammar school, I did not care for the education I received; except when it came to my art and history classes. When I attended high school in the mid 1970's I had more fun than should have been allowed. It was not until I attended the University of Miami in Florida that my love of learning was awakened in me. As I look back on that time, having recently celebrated my sixty-second birthday, I am indebted to my year of studying world literature in my freshman year for developing my lifelong love affair for learning; which awakened in me an insatiable desire for seeking out truth and knowledge in my life. My exposure to the classic literary works of Western Civilization written by such luminaries as: Homer, Euripides, Plato, Aristotle, Abelard, Eschenbach, Dante, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton, Burns, Byron, Coleridge, Melville, Goethe, Kipling, Elliott, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Orwell "expanded my horizons" in ways I did not think possible at the time.

I was especially impressed with the depth of understanding many Russian authors displayed in their works regarding the human psyche and the range of emotions that motivate human activity. More so I believe than any other ethnicity, Russian authors, such as: Pushkin, Chekov, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Pasternak truly "plumb the depths" of human emotions in their works. I submit the following anecdote, told by my World Literature Professor about Russia's Communist dictator Josef Stalin, to illustrate my belief. Upon being asked who he thought was the world's greatest author, Stalin instantly answered: "Dostoevsky, because he understood the human psyche better than any other writer in history; that is why I banned his books!" (Rees, 536). In addition, my year of studying world literature impressed upon me an indelible realization that every new generation of humans truly "stands on the shoulders of giants." Thus, my university education was the most transformative event in my life. It launched me on a long and often "crooked path" on the quest for knowledge that I am sure to journey down until the day that I am called by the Great Architect of the Universe to "lay down my working tools."

Even after I graduated and spent a wonderful career as an officer in the U. S. Army, I was constantly feeding my hunger for learning. So, after I retired, I was drawn to the realization that as much as I needed to draw air to breathe, or eat food to survive, or be in a loving relationship with my wife and family to sustain me, I had to constantly "slake my thirst" for seeking knowledge in order to survive. Thus, my love affair for learning caused in me a burning desire to restart my journey down the "crooked path" to once again take up my quest for knowledge. My quest manifested itself in my attending graduate school after my army career; which finally culminated in my becoming an Adjunct Professor of History and Philosophy at Old Dominion University in Virginia.

In addition, my "crooked journey" down the path for knowledge took another turn in my young life when soon after I graduated from the University of Miami, I became a Freemason. I have found Freemasonry has fulfilled two needs in my life over the past thirty-six years. My practice of Freemasonry's moral philosophy has made me a better person, and I hope it has prepared my soul to enter the "celestial lodge above" when I am called to "lay down my working tools." In addition, it has spurred on my love affair for learning. I am constantly studying the history of Freemasonry and how its precepts have been espoused by some of history's greatest

actors on the world stage. Enlightened members of the Craft such as: Franklin, Washington, Lafayette, Diderot, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Goethe, Mozart, Bolivar, and Garibaldi who were world leaders in the fields of science, politics, philosophy, and the arts were instrumental in helping to shape world history over the last three centuries.

Ever since I became a Freemason, I have become hypersensitive to looking for Masonic references in my reading of classic works of literature. I have been richly rewarded in my endeavor throughout the years in examining how literary luminaries have viewed and written about our fraternity. It is with this thought in mind that I was motivated to write this article about one of the most prescient and interesting descriptions of Freemasonry in any work of fiction I have ever read. Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) penned his classic novel *War and Peace* between 1865-69 when he was only thirty-seven years old. He was a member of the Russian aristocracy and his family was well to do financially. Like the vast majority of the Russian aristocracy of his day, Tolstoy was educated by French tutors who exposed him to the enlightened ideas of the time. Interestingly, the vast majority of Russian aristocrats were educated to speak French as their primary language; incredibly few knew how to speak Russian at all. This fact alone sheds light on how detached the Russian aristocracy was from the common citizenry and Russian culture as a whole. Tolstoy served as an officer in the Russian army for over five years and participated in the Crimean War in 1853-56. He also spent several years travelling in Europe in 1857 and in 1860–61; where he was befriended by the famous French novelist Victor Hugo.

Tolstoy was considered one of Russia's greatest authors due to his in-depth psychological analysis in his character development in his written works. He was also well known in Russian society as one of its greatest moral philosophers of his age and a proponent of religious mysticism. Although Tolstoy was an aristocrat; "...he eventually became discontented, developing a system of thought which emphasized simplicity, faith, love and the Christian brotherhood of man, and deplored man-made institutions such as governments, churches, and creeds" (Benet, 1127).

As a former Adjunct Professor of History who specialized in teaching the history of Asia, I am compelled to point out one last fascinating fact about Tolstoy's life. In 1909, a year before Tolstoy's death, he wrote a letter entitled *A Letter to a Hindu* to the Indian newspaper Free Hindustan, espousing the notion that only through the principle of love could the Indian people free themselves from British Colonial rule. After reading Tolstoy's letter in the newspaper, a young Mohandas Gandhi wrote a letter to Tolstoy asking for permission to re-publish it in his own South African newspaper, *Indian Opinion*. Mohandas Gandhi was working in South Africa at the time and just began his struggle for Indian independence. Gandhi credited his adoption of a non-violent resistance against Colonial rule to his correspondence with Tolstoy and the reading of Tolstoy's book *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*, (Gandhi, 154-160).

Unfortunately, Tolstoy's masterpiece *War and Peace* which is an epic novel about Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 is most famous for being a classic book of literature purchased by millions of readers who have never read it! Most people have embarked on reading it only to find it too daunting a tome to get through; it being 1,035 pages in length. The vast majority of readers may get through twenty or so pages and then wind up putting it back on their bookshelves never cracking it open again. I surmise most of my Masonic Brethren have never read the book. It is for this reason that I have been motivated to write this article, because I believe many Freemasons would be intrigued by the description of the Masonic Fraternity, seen through the eyes of Tolstoy.

Tolstoy's knowledge of Freemasonry first came from his studying the 1825 Decembrists Revolutionary movement in Russia, which had many adherents of Freemasonry. This revolt of some 3,000 Russian army officers was spurred on by the enlightened ideas sweeping through much of Europe at the time. Tolstoy found these officers learned of the equality of man mainly through their travels in France where they were initiated into the mystic degrees of Freemasonry. Tolstoy's rendering of the moral philosophy of Freemasonry, and his very vivid description of its initiatory rites, is richly illustrated in *War and Peace* which I find remarkable considering he was not a member of the Craft.

His portrayal of Freemasonry is communicated in his book through its main character, Count Pierre Bezukhov, who is believed by many literary critics to be an autobiographical depiction of Tolstoy himself. For example, Tolstoy like Bezukhov was constantly seeking the answers to the great questions of life. Tolstoy displays a detailed knowledge of the Craft; this has led me to believe that Tolstoy made a great study of Freemasonry for the purpose of joining the fraternity, because he was drawn to its moral philosophy and its enlightened precepts of equality, democracy, and liberty as was espoused by Freemasonry in eighteenth century France.

Russia was the strictest monarchy in Europe in regard to individual liberty during Tolstoy's life. When Tolstoy wrote *War and Peace* in 1865-1869, he observed the decadence of the Russian aristocracy which ultimately led to the rot which permeated throughout the Romanov monarchy. This astute observation by Tolstoy was prophesized in *War and Peace* the Russian monarchy's eventual downfall, some fifty-two years before the Communist Revolution of 1917. I am convinced that Tolstoy initially believed that if enough men in the ranks of the aristocracy joined Freemasonry and infused its enlightened teachings into the Russian aristocracy it would eventually bring the country to a more enlightened state; thus, possibly stopping the decay and rot which weakened Russian society which ultimately made it susceptible to revolution. However, as you read this article where I feature Tolstoy's writings about Freemasonry one cannot help but to come away with the feeling that he did not join the fraternity because he believed that the members of the Russian aristocracy would see Freemasonry's enlightened ideals as too radical for Russian society to take root in. The Romanov aristocracy countenanced little change in its 300 years of rule.

Unfortunately, Tolstoy was right, the fraternity first migrated to Russia in 1771 but the monarchy suppressed it in 1821. Thus, Freemasonry never had a chance to take root and eventually flourish with the possibility of affecting a change in Russian society. I am saddened that Tolstoy did not become a member of the Craft; being a member of the aristocracy himself, and being a major figure in Russian society, he might have been able to spark the younger men of the aristocracy to pick up the "mantle" of Masonic philosophy and just might have effected a change in Russia for the better. As a historian and Freemason, it is an intriguing dream to think that Freemasonry could have had a chance of saving Russia from the scourge of Communism. I am now going to provide the long passages of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* concerning his Masonic depictions. I will make comment from time to time on parts of the passages.

The first introduction of Freemasonry in War and Peace starts in Book 5, chapter ii p. 289-93.

"I have the pleasure of addressing Count Bezukhov, if I am not mistaken," said the stranger in a deliberate and loud voice. Pierre looked silently and inquiringly at him over his spectacles. "I have heard of you, my dear sir," continued the stranger, "and of your misfortune." He seemed to emphasize the last word, as if to say—"Yes, misfortune! Call it what you please, I know that what happened to you in Moscow was a misfortune."—"I regret it very much, my dear sir."

Pierre flushed and, hurriedly putting his legs down from the bed, bent forward toward the old man with a forced and timid smile. "I have not referred to this out of curiosity, my dear sir, but for greater reasons." He paused, his gaze still on Pierre, and moved aside on the sofa by way of inviting the other to take a seat beside him. Pierre felt reluctant to enter into conversation with this old man, but, submitting to him involuntarily, came up and sat down beside him.

"You are unhappy, my dear sir," the stranger continued. "You are young and I am old. I should like to help you as far as lies in my power." "Oh, yes!" said Pierre, with a forced smile. "I am very grateful to you. Where are you traveling from?"

The stranger's face was not genial, it was even cold and severe, but in spite of this, both the face and words of his new acquaintance were irresistibly attractive to Pierre. "But if for reason you don't feel inclined to talk to me," said the old man, "say so, my dear sir." And he suddenly smiled, in an unexpected and tenderly paternal way.

"Oh no, not at all! On the contrary, I am very glad to make your acquaintance," said Pierre. And again, glancing at the stranger's hands, he looked more closely at the ring, with its skull—a Masonic sign. "Allow me to ask," he said, "are you a Mason?"

"Yes, I belong to the Brotherhood of the Freemasons," said the stranger, looking deeper and deeper into Pierre's eyes. "And in their name and my own I hold out a brotherly hand to you." "I am afraid," said Pierre, smiling, and wavering between the confidence the personality of the Freemason inspired in him and his own habit of ridiculing the Masonic beliefs—"I am afraid I am very far from understanding—how am I to put it?—I am afraid my way of looking at the world is so opposed to yours that we shall not understand one another."

"I know your outlook," said the Mason, "and the view of life you mention, and which you think is the result of your own mental efforts, is the one held by the majority of people, and is the invariable fruit of pride, indolence, and ignorance. Forgive me, my dear sir, but if I had not known it I should not have addressed you. Your view of life is a regrettable delusion."

Comment: These first few passages give the reader an insight into Bezukhov's mind set at this stage in his life. Like many young aristocrats he is living a carefree life of decadence. The Freemason, Joseph Alexeevich Bazdeev, has approached Bezukhov at the moment in his life where he realizes that he must find a meaning and purpose to living. He thought he could find meaning in life first through military distinction in war. Next, he thought he could find meaning in love; however, as the saying goes, "he has been looking for love in all the wrong places." He has even gone through bouts of isolation. Everything he has done thus far has left him disenchanted with life.

"Just as I may suppose you to be deluded," said Pierre, with a faint smile. "I should never dare to say that I know the truth," said the Mason, whose words struck Pierre more and more by their precision and firmness. "No one can attain to truth by himself. Only by laying stone on stone with the cooperation of all, by the millions of generations from our forefather Adam to our own times, is that temple reared which is to be a worthy dwelling place of the Great God," he added, and closed his eyes.

"I ought to tell you that I do not believe... do not believe in God, said Pierre, regretfully and with an effort, feeling it essential to speak the whole truth. The Mason looked intently at Pierre and smiled as a rich man with millions in hand might smile at a poor fellow who told him that he, poor man, had not the five rubles that would make him happy.

"Yes, you do not know Him, my dear sir," said the Mason. "You cannot know Him. You do not know Him and that is why you are unhappy." "Yes, yes, I am unhappy," assented Pierre. "But what am I to do?"

“You know Him not, my dear sir, and so you are very unhappy. You do not know Him, but He is here, He is in me, He is in my words, He is in thee, and even in those blasphemous words thou hast just uttered!” pronounced the Mason in a stern and tremulous voice. He paused and sighed, evidently trying to calm himself.

“If He were not,” he said quietly, “you and I would not be speaking of Him, my dear sir. Of what, of whom, are we speaking? Whom hast thou denied?” he suddenly asked with exulting austerity and authority in his voice. “Who invented Him, if He did not exist? Whence came thy conception of the existence of such an incomprehensible Being? didst thou, and why did the whole world, conceive the idea of the existence of such an incomprehensible Being, a Being all-powerful, eternal, and infinite in all His attributes?...”

He stopped and remained silent for a long time. Pierre could not and did not wish to break this silence. “He exists, but to understand Him is hard,” the Mason began again, looking not at Pierre but straight before him, and turning the leaves of his book with his old hands which from excitement he could not keep still. “If it were a man whose existence thou didst doubt I could bring him to thee, could take him by the hand and show him to thee. But how can I, an insignificant mortal, show His omnipotence, His infinity, and all His mercy to one who is blind, or who shuts his eyes that he may not see or understand Him and may not see or understand his own vileness and sinfulness?” He paused again. “Who art thou? Thou dreamest that thou art wise because thou couldst utter those blasphemous words,” he went on, with a somber and scornful smile. “And thou art more foolish and unreasonable than a little child, who, playing with the parts of a skillfully made watch, dares to say that, as he does not understand its use, he does not believe in the master who made it. To know Him is hard.... For ages, from our forefather Adam to our own day, we labor to attain that knowledge and are still infinitely far from our aim; but in our lack of understanding we see only our weakness and His greatness....”

Pierre listened with swelling heart, gazing into the Mason’s face with shining eyes, not interrupting or questioning him, but believing with his whole soul what the stranger said. Whether he accepted the wise reasoning contained in the Mason’s words, or believed as a child believes, in the speaker’s tone of conviction and earnestness, or the tremor of the speaker’s voice—which sometimes almost broke—or those brilliant aged eyes grown old in this conviction, or the calm firmness and certainty of his vocation, which radiated from his whole being (and which struck Pierre especially by contrast with his own dejection and hopelessness)—at any rate, Pierre longed with his whole soul to believe and he did believe, and felt a joyful sense of comfort, regeneration, and return to life.

“He is not to be apprehended by reason, but by life,” said the Mason. “I do not understand,” said Pierre, feeling with dismay doubts reawakening. He was afraid of any want of clearness, any weakness, in the Mason’s arguments; he dreaded not to be able to believe in him. “I don’t understand,” he said, “how it is that the mind of man cannot attain the knowledge of which you speak.”

The Mason smiled with his gentle fatherly smile. “The highest wisdom and truth are like the purest liquid we may wish to imbibe,” he said. “Can I receive that pure liquid into an impure vessel and judge of its purity? Only by the inner purification of myself can I retain in some degree of purity the liquid I receive.”

“Yes, yes, that is so,” said Pierre joyfully.

“The highest wisdom is not founded on reason alone, not on those worldly sciences of physics, history, chemistry, and the like, into which intellectual knowledge is divided. The highest wisdom is one. The highest wisdom has but one science—the science of the whole—the

science explaining the whole creation and man's place in it. To receive that science it is necessary to purify and renew one's inner self, and so before one can know, it is necessary to believe and to perfect one's self. And to attain this end, we have the light called conscience that God has implanted in our souls."

Comment: These passages by Tolstoy are a very powerful argument for the existence of G-d. Tolstoy understands that at the very root of human existence, in fact ever since our cave dwelling ancestors stepped out into the "starry night" to wonder at the celestial sky above, we have been in search for the creator, a power greater than ourselves. Tolstoy rightly argues through his character, Joseph Alexeevich Bazdeev, that using human reason to try to derive an existence of G-d will never supply a satisfactory answer. Tolstoy was a very spiritual man; his deep religious spirituality was more akin to the religious fervency of the Russian peasants of his day than to the detached religious practice of his fellow aristocrats. Thus, Tolstoy argued in his book that G-d's existence was a visceral feeling of unwavering faith; thus, it is a power working on humankind that reason could never approach.

"Yes, yes," assented Pierre.

"Look then at thy inner self with the eyes of the spirit, and ask thyself whether thou art content with thyself. What hast thou attained relying on reason only? What art thou? You are young, you are rich, you are clever, you are well educated. And what have you done with all these good gifts? Are you content with yourself and with your life?"

"No, I hate my life," Pierre muttered, wincing.

"Thou hatest it. Then change it, purify thyself; and as thou art purified, thou wilt gain wisdom. Look at your life, my dear sir. How have you spent it? In riotous orgies and debauchery, receiving everything from society and giving nothing in return. You have become the possessor of wealth. How have you used it? What have you done for your neighbor? Have you ever thought of your tens of thousands of slaves? Have you helped them physically and morally? No! You have profited by their toil to lead a profligate life. That is what you have done. Have you chosen a post in which you might be of service to your neighbor? No! You have spent your life in idleness. Then you married, my dear sir—took on yourself responsibility for the guidance of a young woman; and what have you done? You have not helped her to find the way of truth, my dear sir, but have thrust her into an abyss of deceit and misery. A man offended you and you shot him, and you say you do not know God and hate your life. There is nothing strange in that, my dear sir!"

After these words, the Mason, as if tired by his long discourse, again leaned his arms on the back of the sofa and closed his eyes. Pierre looked at that aged, stern, motionless, almost lifeless face and moved his lips without uttering a sound. He wished to say, "Yes, a vile, idle, vicious life!" but dared not break the silence.

Comment: In Tolstoy's passages one understands that he is in agreement with the notion that humans are social animals by nature, as espoused by the great philosophers Aristotle and Confucius. Thus, Tolstoy understood, and my studies in philosophy and history cause me to agree, that the urge in the human psyche to follow some sort of creed, or first principles to rule and guide our lives is buried deep in the human DNA. Thus, Tolstoy shows us that Bezukhov is feeling the need to believe in a supreme being in hopes that a renewed religious belief will provide him a moral compass to give him direction in his life.

The Mason cleared his throat huskily, as old men do, and called his servant.

"How about the horses?" he asked, without looking at Pierre.

"The exchange horses have just come," answered the servant. "Will you not rest here?"

“No, tell them to harness.”

“Can he really be going away leaving me alone without having told me all, and without promising to help me?” thought Pierre, rising with downcast head; and he began to pace the room, glancing occasionally at the Mason. “Yes, I never thought of it, but I have led a contemptible and profligate life, though I did not like it and did not want to,” thought Pierre. “But this man knows the truth and, if he wished to, could disclose it to me.”

Pierre wished to say this to the Mason, but did not dare to. The traveler, having packed his things with his practiced hands, began fastening his coat. When he had finished, he turned to Bezukhov, and said in a tone of indifferent politeness:

“Where are you going to now, my dear sir?”

“I?... I’m going to Petersburg,” answered Pierre, in a childlike, hesitating voice. “I thank you. I agree with all you have said. But do not suppose me to be so bad. With my whole soul I wish to be what you would have me be, but I have never had help from anyone.... But it is I, above all, who am to blame for everything. Help me, teach me, and perhaps I may...”

Pierre could not go on. He gulped and turned away.

The mason remained silent for a long time, evidently considering.

“Help comes from God alone,” he said, “but such measure of help as our Order can bestow it will render you, my dear sir. You are going to Petersburg. Hand this to Count Willarski” (he took out his notebook and wrote a few words on a large sheet of paper folded in four). “Allow me to give you a piece of advice. When you reach the capital, first of all devote some time to solitude and self-examination and do not resume your former way of life. And now I wish you a good journey, my dear sir,” he added, seeing that his servant had entered... “and success.”

The traveler was Joseph Alexeevich Bazdeev, as Pierre saw from the postmaster’s book. Bazdeev had been one of the best-known Freemasons and Martinists, even in Novikov’s time. For a long while after he had gone, Pierre did not go to bed or order horses but paced up and down the room, pondering over his vicious past, and with a rapturous sense of beginning anew pictured to himself the blissful, irreproachable, virtuous future that seemed to him so easy. It seemed to him that he had been vicious only because he had somehow forgotten how good it is to be virtuous. Not a trace of his former doubts remained in his soul. He firmly believed in the possibility of the brotherhood of men united in the aim of supporting one another in the path of virtue, and that is how Freemasonry presented itself to him.

Book five, chapter iii p. 293-297. Count Pierre Bezukhov is approached about joining a Masonic lodge.

“I have come to you with a message and an offer, Count,” he said without sitting down. “A person of very high standing in our Brotherhood has made application for you to be received into our Order before the usual term and has proposed to me to be your sponsor. I consider it a sacred duty to fulfill that person’s wishes. Do you wish to enter the Brotherhood of Freemasons under my sponsorship?”

Comment: I am sure that my Masonic brethren are surprised to see that Russian Freemasons are deviating from the usual practice of not recruiting members into the Fraternity.

The cold, austere tone of this man, whom he had almost always before met at balls, amiably smiling in the society of the most brilliant women, surprised Pierre.

“Yes, I do wish it,” said he.

Willarski bowed his head.

“One more question, Count,” he said, “which beg you to answer in all sincerity—not as a future Mason but as an honest man: have you renounced your former convictions—do you believe in God?”

Pierre considered.

“Yes... yes, I believe in God,” he said.

“In that case...” began Willarski, but Pierre interrupted him.

“Yes, I do believe in God,” he repeated.

“In that case we can go,” said Willarski. “My carriage is at your service.”

Comment: Russian Freemasons are adhering to the ancient landmark of members having to believe in a supreme being. Tolstoy portrays Bezukhov as seeking initiation into Freemasonry as a way of obtaining self-knowledge, which is one of the main themes of the book. In essence, Bezukhov, as did many young aristocrats of his time, hoped that Freemasonry’s enlightened ideals would become his compass to point him in the right direction on his quest for self-improvement.

Willarski was silent throughout the drive. To Pierre’s inquiries as to what he must do and how he should answer, Willarski only replied that brothers more worthy than he would test him and that Pierre had only to tell the truth. Having entered the courtyard of a large house where the Lodge had its headquarters, and having ascended a dark staircase, they entered a small well-lit anteroom where they took off their cloaks without the aid of a servant. From there they passed into another room. A man in strange attire appeared at the door. Willarski, stepping toward him, said something to him in French in an undertone and then went up to a small wardrobe in which Pierre noticed garments such as he had never seen before. Having taken a kerchief from the cupboard, Willarski bound Pierre’s eyes with it and tied it in a knot behind, catching some hairs painfully in the knot. Then he drew his face down, kissed him, and taking him by the hand led him forward. The hairs tied in the knot hurt Pierre and there were lines of pain on his face and a shamefaced smile. His huge figure, with arms hanging down and with a puckered, though smiling face, moved after Willarski with uncertain, timid steps.

Having led him about ten paces, Willarski stopped.

“Whatever happens to you,” he said, “you must bear it all manfully if you have firmly resolved to join our Brotherhood.” (Pierre nodded affirmatively.) “When you hear a knock at the door, you will uncover your eyes,” added Willarski. “I wish you courage and success,” and, pressing Pierre’s hand, he went out.

Left alone, Pierre went on smiling in the same way. Once or twice he shrugged his shoulders and raised his hand to the kerchief, as if wishing to take it off, but let it drop again. The five minutes spent with his eyes bandaged seemed to him an hour. His arms felt numb, his legs almost gave way, it seemed to him that he was tired out. He experienced a variety of most complex sensations. He felt afraid of what would happen to him and still more afraid of showing his fear. He felt curious to know what was going to happen and what would be revealed to him; but most of all, he felt joyful that the moment had come when he would at last start on that path of regeneration and on the actively virtuous life of which he had been dreaming since he met Joseph Alexeevich. Loud knocks were heard at the door. Pierre took the bandage off his eyes and glanced around him. The room was in black darkness, only a small lamp was burning inside something white. Pierre went nearer and saw that the lamp stood on a black table on which lay an open book. The book was the Gospel, and the white thing with the lamp inside was a human skull with its cavities and teeth. After reading the first words of the Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God,” Pierre went round the table and saw a large open

box filled with something. It was a coffin with bones inside. He was not at all surprised by what he saw. Hoping to enter on an entirely new life quite unlike the old one, he expected everything to be unusual, even more unusual than what he was seeing. A skull, a coffin, the Gospel—it seemed to him that he had expected all this and even more. Trying to stimulate his emotions he looked around. “God, death, love, the brotherhood of man,” he kept saying to himself, associating these words with vague yet joyful ideas. The door opened and someone came in.

By the dim light, to which Pierre had already become accustomed, he saw rather short man. Having evidently come from the light into the darkness, the man paused, then moved with cautious steps toward the table and placed on it his small leather-gloved hands.

This short man had on a white leather apron which covered his chest and part of his legs; he had on a kind of necklace above which rose a high white ruffle, outlining his rather long face which was lit up from below.

“For what have you come hither?” asked the newcomer, turning in Pierre’s direction at a slight rustle made by the latter. “Why have you, who do not believe in the truth of the light and who have not seen the light, come here? What do you seek from us? Wisdom, virtue, enlightenment?”

At the moment the door opened and the stranger came in, Pierre felt a sense of awe and veneration such as he had experienced in his boyhood at confession; he felt himself in the presence of one socially a complete stranger, yet nearer to him through the brotherhood of man. With bated breath and beating heart he moved toward the Rhetor (by which name the brother who prepared a seeker for entrance into the Brotherhood was known). Drawing nearer, he recognized in the Rhetor a man he knew, Smolyaninov, and it mortified him to think that the newcomer was an acquaintance—he wished him simply a brother and a virtuous instructor. For a long time he could not utter a word, so that the Rhetor had to repeat his question.

“Yes... I... I... desire regeneration,” Pierre uttered with difficulty.

“Very well,” said Smolyaninov, and went on at once: “Have you any idea of the means by which our holy Order will help you to reach your aim?” said he quietly and quickly.

“I... hope... for guidance... help... in regeneration,” said Pierre, with a trembling voice and some difficulty in utterance due to his excitement and to being unaccustomed to speak of abstract matters in Russian.

“What is your conception of Freemasonry?”

“I imagine that Freemasonry is the fraternity and equality of men who have virtuous aims,” said Pierre, feeling ashamed of the inadequacy of his words for the solemnity of the moment, as he spoke. “I imagine...”

“Good!” said the Rhetor quickly, apparently satisfied with this answer. “Have you sought for means of attaining your aim in religion?”

“No, I considered it erroneous and did not follow it,” said Pierre, so softly that the Rhetor did not hear him and asked him what he was saying. “I have been an atheist,” answered Pierre.

“You are seeking for truth in order to follow its laws in your life, therefore you seek wisdom and virtue. Is that not so?” said the Rhetor, after a moment’s pause.

“Yes, yes,” assented Pierre.

The Rhetor cleared his throat, crossed his gloved hands on his breast, and began to speak.

“Now I must disclose to you the chief aim of our Order,” he said, “and if this aim coincides with yours, you may enter our Brotherhood with profit. The first and chief object of our Order, the foundation on which it rests and which no human power can destroy, is the preservation and handing on to posterity of a certain important mystery... which has come down to us from the

remotest ages, even from the first man—a mystery on which perhaps the fate of mankind depends. But since this mystery is of such a nature that nobody can know or use it unless he be prepared by long and diligent self-purification, not everyone can hope to attain it quickly. Hence we have a secondary aim, that of preparing our members as much as possible to reform their hearts, to purify and enlighten their minds, by means handed on to us by tradition from those who have striven to attain this mystery, and thereby to render them capable of receiving it.

“By purifying and regenerating our members we try, thirdly, to improve the whole human race, offering it in our members an example of piety and virtue, and thereby try with all our might to combat the evil which sways the world. Think this over and I will come to you again.”

“To combat the evil which sways the world...” Pierre repeated, and a mental image of his future activity in this direction rose in his mind. He imagined men such as he had himself been a fortnight ago, and he addressed an edifying exhortation to them. He imagined to himself vicious and unfortunate people whom he would assist by word and deed, imagined oppressors whose victims he would rescue. Of the three objects mentioned by the Rhetor, this last, that of improving mankind, especially appealed to Pierre. The important mystery mentioned by the Rhetor, though it aroused his curiosity, did not seem to him essential, and the second aim, that of purifying and regenerating himself, did not much interest him because at that moment he felt with delight that he was already perfectly cured of his former faults and was ready for all that was good.

Comment: These passages reveal Tolstoy’s lifelong foray into the study of and writing about moral philosophy. For example, Tolstoy wrote a sermon some years after *War and Peace* using much of Bazdeev’s speech to Bezukhov concerning the need for one to “square their own actions” to obtain salvation. This idea is borne out in Tolstoy’s book written in 1894, *The Kingdom of God is Within Us*; in which he espoused the notion that a person’s source of salvation is not to be found externally by simply following religious dogma; but salvation would come by searching for and practicing the moral good to be found within themselves. Thus, what Tolstoy is telling us is that to obtain salvation one must take an “active” part in their own salvation; Tolstoy is saying they cannot just rely on accepting the divinity of Jesus to gain salvation. The best way to take an active role in one’s salvation is to live a virtuous life. Thus, these passages once again prove to me that Tolstoy studied the moral philosophy of Freemasonry and observed that the fraternity was providing a pathway to salvation for its members through Freemasonry’s precepts concerning “taking good men and making them better men.” For example, in Bazdeev’s speech to Bezukhov concerning “purification;” Tolstoy explains that what Freemasonry offers its members is an illuminating light of ethical teachings for its members to follow down a pathway towards practicing a “purity” of life in this world. By adopting and living a virtuous life in this world the Freemason obtains every person’s ultimate goal, to purify their souls to enjoy the rewards of salvation in the next world.

Half an hour later, the Rhetor returned to inform the seeker of the seven virtues, corresponding to the seven steps of Solomon’s temple, which every Freemason should cultivate in himself. These virtues were: 1. Discretion, the keeping of the secrets of the Order. 2. Obedience to those of higher ranks in the Order. 3. Morality. 4. Love of mankind. 5. Courage. 6. Generosity. 7. The love of death.

Comment: Here I will compare the seven virtues of Russian Freemasonry to what we teach in our Entered Apprentice lecture as the three great tenets of Freemasonry and our four cardinal virtues. 1. Discretion, the keeping of the secrets of the Order; corresponds to our cardinal virtues of prudence and temperance. 2. Obedience to those of higher ranks in the Order. This idea is not

found in our Entered Apprentice lecture; however, it is one of the ancient landmarks of the fraternity. 3. Morality; loosely corresponds to our cardinal virtue of justice. 4. Love of mankind; corresponds to our great tenet of brotherly love. 5. Courage; corresponds to our cardinal virtue of fortitude. 6. Generosity; corresponds to our great tenet of relief. 7. The love of death is an idea that is not really talked about until the Master Mason degree.

“In the seventh place, try, by the frequent thought of death,” the Rhetor said, “to bring yourself to regard it not as a dreaded foe, but as a friend that frees the soul grown weary in the labors of virtue from this distressful life, and leads it to its place of recompense and peace.”

“Yes, that must be so,” thought Pierre, when after these words the Rhetor went away, leaving him to solitary meditation. “It must be so, but I am still so weak that I love my life, the meaning of which is only now gradually opening before me.” But five of the other virtues which Pierre recalled, counting them on his fingers, he felt already in his soul: courage, generosity, morality, love of mankind, and especially obedience—which did not even seem to him a virtue, but a joy. (He now felt so glad to be free from his own lawlessness and to submit his will to those who knew the indubitable truth.) He forgot what the seventh virtue was and could not recall it.

The third time the Rhetor came back more quickly and asked Pierre whether he was still firm in his intention and determined to submit to all that would be required of him.

“I am ready for everything,” said Pierre.

“I must also inform you,” said the Rhetor, “that our Order delivers its teaching not in words only but also by other means, which may perhaps have a stronger effect on the sincere seeker after wisdom and virtue than mere words. This chamber with what you see therein should already have suggested to your heart, if it is sincere, more than words could do. You will perhaps also see in your further initiation a like method of enlightenment. Our Order imitates the ancient societies that explained their teaching by hieroglyphics. A hieroglyph,” said the Rhetor, “is an emblem of something not cognizable by the senses but which possesses qualities resembling those of the symbol.”

Comment: The mention of “Our Order imitates the ancient societies that explained their teaching by hieroglyphics;” is an obvious reference to the belief by many nineteenth century Freemasons that the order has a connection to the ancient mysteries and hermeticism first found in ancient Egypt. The Egyptian ancient mysteries were very prevalent in French Freemasonry, and obviously they were brought to Russian Freemasonry by many of the Russian officers who were initiated into Freemasonry on their visits to France.

Pierre knew very well what a hieroglyph was, but dared not speak. He listened to the Rhetor in silence, feeling from all he said that his ordeal was about to begin.

“If you are resolved, I must begin your initiation,” said the Rhetor coming closer to Pierre. “In token of generosity I ask you to give me all your valuables.”

“But I have nothing here,” replied Pierre, supposing that he was asked to give up all he possessed.

“What you have with you: watch, money, rings....”

Pierre quickly took out his purse and watch, but could not manage for some time to get the wedding ring off his fat finger. When that had been done, the Rhetor said:

“In token of obedience, I ask you to undress.”

Pierre took off his coat, waistcoat, and left boot according to the Rhetor’s instructions. The Mason drew the shirt back from Pierre’s left breast, and stooping down pulled up the left leg of his trousers to above the knee. Pierre hurriedly began taking off his right boot also and was going to tuck up the other trouser leg to save this stranger the trouble, but the Mason told him that was

not necessary and gave him a slipper for his left foot. With a childlike smile of embarrassment, doubt, and self-derision, which appeared on his face against his will, Pierre stood with his arms hanging down and legs apart, before his brother Rhetor, and awaited his further commands.

“And now, in token of candor, I ask you to reveal to me your chief passion,” said the latter.

“My passion! I have had so many,” replied Pierre.

“That passion which more than all others caused you to waver on the path of virtue,” said the Mason. Pierre paused, seeking a reply.

“Wine? Gluttony? Idleness? Laziness? Irritability? Anger? Women?” He went over his vices in his mind, not knowing to which of them to give the pre-eminence.

“Women,” he said in a low, scarcely audible voice.

The Mason did not move and for a long time said nothing after this answer. At last he moved up to Pierre and, taking the kerchief that lay on the table, again bound his eyes.

“For the last time I say to you—turn all your attention upon yourself, put a bridle on your senses, and seek blessedness, not in passion but in your own heart. The source of blessedness is not without us but within....”

Pierre had already long been feeling in himself that refreshing source of blessedness which now flooded his heart with glad emotion.

Book five, chapter v p. 297-299. Masonic Initiation.

Soon after this there came into the dark chamber to fetch Pierre, not the Rhetor but Pierre’s sponsor, Willarski, whom he recognized by his voice. To fresh questions as to the firmness of his resolution Pierre replied: “Yes, yes, I agree,” and with a beaming, childlike smile, his fat chest uncovered, stepping unevenly and timidly in one slippered and one booted foot, he advanced, while Willarski held a sword to his bare chest. He was conducted from that room along passages that turned backwards and forwards and was at last brought to the doors of the Lodge. Willarski coughed, he was answered by the Masonic knock with mallets, the doors opened before them.

A bass voice (Pierre was still blindfold) questioned him as to who he was, when and where he was born, and so on. Then he was again led somewhere still blindfold, and as they went along he was told allegories of the toils of his pilgrimage, of holy friendship, of the Eternal Architect of the universe, and of the courage with which he should endure toils and dangers. During these wanderings, Pierre noticed that he was spoken of now as the “Seeker,” now as the “Sufferer,” and now as the “Postulant,” to the accompaniment of various knockings with mallets and swords. As he was being led up to some object he noticed a hesitation and uncertainty among his conductors. He heard those around him disputing in whispers and one of them insisting that he should be led along a certain carpet. After that they took his right hand, placed it on something, and told him to hold a pair of compasses to his left breast with the other hand and to repeat after someone who read aloud an oath of fidelity to the laws of the Order. The candles were then extinguished and some spirit lighted, as Pierre knew by the smell, and he was told that he would now see the lesser light. The bandage was taken off his eyes and, by the faint light of the burning spirit, Pierre, as in a dream, saw several men standing before him, wearing aprons like the Rhetor’s and holding swords in their hands pointed at his breast. Among them stood a man whose white shirt was stained with blood. On seeing this, Pierre moved forward with his breast toward the swords, meaning them to pierce it. But the swords were drawn back from him and he was at once blindfolded again.

Comment: Notice the oath is not taken at the altar and his hands are not placed on the Bible. This is not a requirement according to the ancient landmarks of Freemasonry. However, in an

earlier passage of the initiation scene, the “Gospel” as Tolstoy described the Bible was on the altar next to a human skull with a lit candle in it.

“Now thou hast seen the lesser light,” uttered a voice. Then the candles were relit and he was told that he would see the full light; the bandage was again removed and more than ten voices said together: “Sic transit gloria mundi.”

Comment: “*Sic transit gloria mundi*, ‘Thus passes the glory of the world.’ is a Latin sentence spoken during the coronation of a new Pope, while flax is burned to represent the transitoriness of earthly glory.” Interestingly, the earliest use of this phrase is during Papal coronations that took place between 1409 to 1963.

Pierre gradually began to recover himself and looked about at the room and at the people in it. Round a long table covered with black sat some twelve men in garments like those he had already seen. Some of them Pierre had met in Petersburg society. In the President’s chair sat a young man he did not know, with a peculiar cross hanging from his neck. On his right sat the Italian abbe whom Pierre had met at Anna Pavlovna’s two years before. There were also present a very distinguished dignitary and a Swiss who had formerly been tutor at the Kuragins’. All maintained a solemn silence, listening to the words of the President, who held a mallet in his hand. Let into the wall was a star-shaped light. At one side of the table was a small carpet with various figures worked upon it, at the other was something resembling an altar on which lay a Testament and a skull. Round it stood seven large candlesticks like those used in churches. Two of the brothers led Pierre up to the altar, placed his feet at right angles, and bade him lie down, saying that he must prostrate himself at the Gates of the Temple.

“He must first receive the trowel,” whispered one of the brothers.

“Oh, hush, please!” said another.

Pierre, perplexed, looked round with his shortsighted eyes without obeying, and suddenly doubts arose in his mind. “Where am I? What am I doing? Aren’t they laughing at me? Shan’t I be ashamed to remember this?” But these doubts only lasted a moment. Pierre glanced at the serious faces of those around, remembered all he had already gone through, and realized that he could not stop halfway. He was aghast at his hesitation and, trying to arouse his former devotional feeling, prostrated himself before the Gates of the Temple. And really, the feeling of devotion returned to him even more strongly than before.

When he had lain there some time, he was told to get up, and a white leather apron, such as the others wore, was put on him: he was given a trowel and three pairs of gloves, and then the Grand Master addressed him. He told him that he should try to do nothing to stain the whiteness of that apron, which symbolized strength and purity; then of the unexplained trowel, he told him to toil with it to cleanse his own heart from vice, and indulgently to smooth with it the heart of his neighbor.

As to the first pair of gloves, a man’s, he said that Pierre could not know their meaning but must keep them. The second pair of man’s gloves he was to wear at the meetings, and finally of the third, a pair of women’s gloves, he said: “Dear brother, these woman’s gloves are intended for you too. Give them to the woman whom you shall honor most of all. This gift will be a pledge of your purity of heart to her whom you select to be your worthy helpmeet in Masonry.” And after a pause, he added: “But beware, dear brother, that these gloves do not deck hands that are unclean.” While the Grand Master said these last words it seemed to Pierre that he grew embarrassed. Pierre himself grew still more confused, blushed like a child till tears came to his eyes, began looking about him uneasily, and an awkward pause followed.

Comment: Since Tolstoy was not a Freemason, he must have derived his information about Freemasonry's initiation rites from either a member of the Craft, or from one of the many Masonic monitors that were in circulation during his lifetime. It seems to me that his description of Bezukhov's initiation ceremony is an amalgamation of different initiation rites of the three degrees in Freemasonry. Case in point here is the introduction in this Entered Apprentice degree of the trowel as a "working tool" of "speculative Freemasonry;" which is not revealed to our members until they receive the Master Mason degree in our system.

This silence was broken by one of the brethren, who led Pierre up to the rug and began reading to him from a manuscript book an explanation of all the figures on it: the sun, the moon, a hammer, a plumb line, a trowel, a rough stone and a squared stone, a pillar, three windows, and so on. Then a place was assigned to Pierre, he was shown the signs of the Lodge, told the password, and at last was permitted to sit down. The Grand Master began reading the statutes. They were very long, and Pierre, from joy, agitation, and embarrassment, was not in a state to understand what was being read. He managed to follow only the last words of the statutes and these remained in his mind.

"In our temples we recognize no other distinctions," read the Grand Master, "but those between virtue and vice. Beware of making any distinctions which may infringe equality. Fly to a brother's aid whoever he may be, exhort him who goeth astray, raise him that falleth, never bear malice or enmity toward thy brother. Be kindly and courteous. Kindle in all hearts the flame of virtue. Share thy happiness with thy neighbor, and may envy never dim the purity of that bliss. Forgive thy enemy, do not avenge thyself except by doing him good. Thus fulfilling the highest law thou shalt regain traces of the ancient dignity which thou hast lost."

He finished and, getting up, embraced and kissed Pierre, who, with tears of joy in his eyes, looked round him, not knowing how to answer the congratulations and greetings from acquaintances that met him on all sides. He acknowledged no acquaintances but saw in all these men only brothers, and burned with impatience to set to work with them.

The Grand Master rapped with his mallet. All the Masons sat down in their places, and one of them read an exhortation on the necessity of humility.

The Grand Master proposed that the last duty should be performed, and the distinguished dignitary who bore the title of "Collector of Alms" went round to all the brothers. Pierre would have liked to subscribe all he had, but fearing that it might look like pride subscribed the same amount as the others.

The meeting was at an end, and on reaching home Pierre felt as if he had returned from a long journey on which he had spent dozens of years, had become completely changed, and had quite left behind his former habits and way of life.

Comment: I am pleased to read that Bezukhov came away from his initiation with the same range of emotions of spiritual renewal that most members of the fraternity experienced in their initiations.

Book six, chapter vii p. 359-362. Pierre further develops his ideas of Freemasonry.

Nearly two years before this, in 1808, Pierre on returning to Petersburg after visiting his estates had involuntarily found himself in a leading position among the Petersburg Freemasons. He arranged dining and funeral lodge meetings, enrolled new members, and busied himself uniting various lodges and acquiring authentic charters. He gave money for the erection of temples and supplemented as far as he could the collection of alms, in regard to which the majority of members were stingy and irregular. He supported almost singlehanded a poorhouse the order had founded in Petersburg.

His life meanwhile continued as before, with the same infatuations and dissipations. He liked to dine and drink well, and though he considered it immoral and humiliating could not resist the temptations of the bachelor circles in which he moved.

Comment: Tolstoy is now starting to point out what he observed as the fallacies and contradictions of Freemasonry. Bezukhov is backsliding morally and giving in to his old decadent ways. Thus, I am thoroughly convinced that the following passages reflect Tolstoy's disappointment with the ability of Freemasonry to effect any real change in the Russian aristocracy and subsequently the society as a whole. I am thoroughly convinced it was his opinion of Freemasonry's failure to be a force for change in society that ultimately led him away from ever becoming a member of the fraternity.

Amid the turmoil of his activities and distractions, however, Pierre at the end of a year began to feel that the more firmly he tried to rest upon it, the more Masonic ground on which he stood gave way under him. At the same time he felt that the deeper the ground sank under him the closer bound he involuntarily became to the order. When he had joined the Freemasons he had experienced the feeling of one who confidently steps onto the smooth surface of a bog. When he put his foot down it sank in. To make quite sure of the firmness the ground, he put his other foot down and sank deeper still, became stuck in it, and involuntarily waded knee-deep in the bog.

Joseph Alexeevich was not in Petersburg—he had of late stood aside from the affairs of the Petersburg lodges, and lived almost entirely in Moscow. All the members of the lodges were men Pierre knew in ordinary life, and it was difficult for him to regard them merely as Brothers in Freemasonry and not as Prince B. or Ivan Vasilevich D., whom he knew in society mostly as weak and insignificant men. Under the Masonic aprons and insignia he saw the uniforms and decorations at which they aimed in ordinary life. Often after collecting alms, and reckoning up twenty to thirty rubles received for the most part in promises from a dozen members, of whom half were as well able to pay as himself, Pierre remembered the Masonic vow in which each Brother promised to devote all his belongings to his neighbor, and doubts on which he tried not to dwell arose in his soul.

He divided the Brothers he knew into four categories. In the first he put those who did not take an active part in the affairs of the lodges or in human affairs, but were exclusively occupied with the mystical science of the order: with questions of the threefold designation of God, the three primordial elements—sulphur, mercury, and salt—or the meaning of the square and all the various figures of the temple of Solomon. Pierre respected this class of Brothers to which the elder ones chiefly belonged, including, Pierre thought, Joseph Alexeevich himself, but he did not share their interests. His heart was not in the mystical aspect of Freemasonry.

In the second category Pierre reckoned himself and others like him, seeking and vacillating, who had not yet found in Freemasonry a straight and comprehensible path, but hoped to do so.

In the third category he included those Brothers (the majority) who saw nothing in Freemasonry but the external forms and ceremonies, and prized the strict performance of these forms without troubling about their purport or significance. Such were Willarski and even the Grand Master of the principal lodge.

Finally, to the fourth category also a great many Brothers belonged, particularly those who had lately joined. These according to Pierre's observations were men who had no belief in anything, nor desire for anything, but joined the Freemasons merely to associate with the wealthy young Brothers who were influential through their connections or rank, and of whom there were very many in the lodge.

Comment: Tolstoy's four categories of Freemasons is unfortunately a very prescient description of the membership of not only Russian Freemasonry of his time, but an apt description of our modern Masonic membership. In my thirty-six years of membership I have observed members that fit very neatly in all four categories. In addition, it is my experience that many members will throughout their membership in the fraternity move between some or all of the different categories as Tolstoy described them; I know this to be true, I have done so myself.

Pierre began to feel dissatisfied with what he was doing. Freemasonry, at any rate as he saw it here, sometimes seemed to him based merely on externals. He did not think of doubting Freemasonry itself, but suspected that Russian Masonry had taken a wrong path and deviated from its original principles. And so toward the end of the year he went abroad to be initiated into the higher secrets of the order.

Comment: Tolstoy makes another astute observation about the actions of many newly initiated Freemasons that is apropos to today. Many newly initiated Freemasons often quickly become disillusioned with what was revealed to them as "great wisdom" in the Blue Lodge. Their disappointment will often lead them down one of two paths of action regarding their future membership in the Craft. The first path, which is the most prevalent one chosen by members, is that of dropping their membership in the lodge, or more often than not, they just quit attending lodge meetings. The second path taken by only a minority of members is to continue their quest to seek more "light;" by joining other Masonic appendant bodies.

In the summer of 1809 Pierre returned to Petersburg. Our Freemasons knew from correspondence with those abroad that Bezukhov had obtained the confidence of many highly placed persons, had been initiated into many mysteries, had been raised to a higher grade, and was bringing back with him much that might conduce to the advantage of the Masonic cause in Russia. The Petersburg Freemasons all came to see him, tried to ingratiate themselves with him, and it seemed to them all that he was preparing something for them and concealing it.

A solemn meeting of the lodge of the second degree was convened, at which Pierre promised to communicate to the Petersburg Brothers what he had to deliver to them from the highest leaders of their order. The meeting was a full one. After the usual ceremonies Pierre rose and began his address.

"Dear Brothers," he began, blushing and stammering, with a written speech in his hand, "it is not sufficient to observe our mysteries in the seclusion of our lodge—we must act—act! We are drowsing, but we must act." Pierre raised his notebook and began to read.

"For the dissemination of pure truth and to secure the triumph of virtue," he read, "we must cleanse men from prejudice, diffuse principles in harmony with the spirit of the times, undertake the education of the young, unite ourselves in indissoluble bonds with the wisest men, boldly yet prudently overcome superstitions, infidelity, and folly, and form of those devoted to us a body linked together by unity of purpose and possessed of authority and power.

"To attain this end we must secure a preponderance of virtue over vice and must endeavor to secure that the honest man may, even in this world, receive a lasting reward for his virtue. But in these great endeavors we are gravely hampered by the political institutions of today. What is to be done in these circumstances? To favor revolutions, overthrow everything, repel force by force?... No! We are very far from that. Every violent reform deserves censure, for it quite fails to remedy evil while men remain what they are, and also because wisdom needs no violence.

"The whole plan of our order should be based on the idea of preparing men of firmness and virtue bound together by unity of conviction—aiming at the punishment of vice and folly, and patronizing talent and virtue: raising worthy men from the dust and attaching them to our

Brotherhood. Only then will our order have the power unobtrusively to bind the hands of the protectors of disorder and to control them without their being aware of it. In a word, we must found a form of government holding universal sway, which should be diffused over the whole world without destroying the bonds of citizenship, and beside which all other governments can continue in their customary course and do everything except what impedes the great aim of our order, which is to obtain for virtue the victory over vice. This aim was that of Christianity itself. It taught men to be wise and good and for their own benefit to follow the example and instruction of the best and wisest men.

“At that time, when everything was plunged in darkness, preaching alone was of course sufficient. The novelty of Truth endowed her with special strength, but now we need much more powerful methods. It is now necessary that man, governed by his senses, should find in virtue a charm palpable to those senses. It is impossible to eradicate the passions; but we must strive to direct them to a noble aim, and it is therefore necessary that everyone should be able to satisfy his passions within the limits of virtue. Our order should provide means to that end.

“As soon as we have a certain number of worthy men in every state, each of them again training two others and all being closely united, everything will be possible for our order, which has already in secret accomplished much for the welfare of mankind.”

This speech not only made a strong impression, but created excitement in the lodge. The majority of the Brothers, seeing in it dangerous designs of Illuminism,* met it with a coldness that surprised Pierre. The Grand Master began answering him, and Pierre began developing his views with more and more warmth. It was long since there had been so stormy a meeting. Parties were formed, some accusing Pierre of Illuminism, others supporting him. At that meeting he was struck for the first time by the endless variety of men’s minds, which prevents a truth from ever presenting itself identically to two persons. Even those members who seemed to be on his side understood him in their own way with limitations and alterations he could not agree to, as what he always wanted most was to convey his thought to others just as he himself understood it.

***The Illuminati sought to substitute republican for monarchical institutions.**

At the end of the meeting the Grand Master with irony and ill-will reproved Bezukhov for his vehemence and said it was not love of virtue alone, but also a love of strife that had moved him in the dispute. Pierre did not answer him and asked briefly whether his proposal would be accepted. He was told that it would not, and without waiting for the usual formalities he left the lodge and went home.

Comment: In conclusion, this last speech that Bezukhov gave trying to convince his brethren that they can truly become a force for good in Russian society if they made what he believed were critical changes to their practice of the Craft is the real reason I was compelled to write this article. My purpose for this article is twofold. First, the reason I have such an unbridled passion for classical literature is that it has often illuminated for me the answers to the great questions of life; some of which are: “Is there a supreme being?” “Do I have an eternal soul?” “What is our purpose in life?” “How do I become a force for good in the world?” After reading Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* I found all four of these questions answered in such a vivid, visceral, and succinct way that I have not found in any other book, including my reading of the Bible. I hope that by my bringing the wisdom of this great book to my brethren will spark in them the realization that Masonic wisdom can be found in other places besides in our own degree work conducted in our lodges. The second reason I wrote this article is that I believe that what Tolstoy was saying through the speech that Bezukhov made to his brethren was that Freemasonry, as it was practiced in Russia at the time, had to reform itself to embrace the enlightened ideals that

were at the heart of Freemasonry in other more enlightened European countries. Tolstoy astutely perceived that if Freemasonry failed to embrace the changes urged in Bezukhov's speech it would abdicate its only chance to become "a force for good and change" that Tolstoy foresaw was needed to save Russian society from decay and anarchy.

Tolstoy knew that this eventual rot of Russian society would be a harbinger of something terrible happening to threaten the "good order" of Russian society. Unfortunately, he was right; the Communist Revolution came some fifty-two years later from the publication of *War and Peace*. In essence, Tolstoy was communicating a challenge to the leadership of Freemasonry of needing to effect change. His challenge was not just prescient for his own time in Russia; his challenge is just as prescient to the leadership of Freemasonry around the world today.

The challenge for Freemasonry that he conveyed in his book is that Freemasonry must make our fraternity relevant to young men today. Freemasonry needs to help fill a void in their lives that modern culture has not been able to satisfy. Young men today do have a yearning to better the world around them. The task for Freemasonry that Tolstoy has charged us to tackle in his book is can we successfully communicate today in this multi-media world? Amidst all the "din and cacophony" of decadence that emanates from Hollywood and that permeates our culture, can we effectively communicate our moral teachings to "illuminate a path" for young men to take towards the goal of improving their own lives and society as a whole. If we Freemasons do not meet Tolstoy's challenge, then I fear we face "dark times" ahead for human society.

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Book Review: *The Meaning of Masonry* by Walter Leslie Wilmshurst

Reviewed by
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The Meaning of Masonry, by Walter Leslie Wilmshurst (1867-1939) is one of the best books I have ever read explaining the philosophical teachings of Freemasonry. Wilmhurst accurately described Freemasonry as a fraternity that teaches its members the great principles of “brotherly love,” “relief,” and “truth.” However, Wilmhurst was concerned that throughout the Craft’s history “brotherly love,” and “relief” had been overly stressed, and he saw this as a “fatal flaw” which resulted in the Craft’s ignoring its most important “mission”—the search for “truth.” Thus, Wilmhurst believed that this “fatal flaw,” if allowed to grow within the Craft unchallenged, would become the major contributing factor in turning it into just another one of the many social charities that exist today. Wilmhurst’s most important lesson that he emphasized several times throughout this book was that the Craft’s real *raison d’être* was improving a Freemason’s life; and ultimately his soul, through his life affirming journey in the pursuit of “truth.” Wilmhurst’s thesis, which I whole heartedly agree with, is that what sets Freemasonry apart from all social charities is its requirement for its members to search for “truth.” When one reads this book it is important to understand that Wilmhurst used the words “truth” and “regeneration” as his way of describing a “spiritual rebirth” within each individual Mason. He also underscored that neither charitable work nor expert ritual practice could bring about a “spiritual rebirth” to the Freemason. Finally, Wilmhurst was extremely fearful that since “truth” was so hard for its members to recognize, learn, and thus achieve; it has too often been neglected by the Craft (3-18).

The five chapters of Wilmhurst’s book are drawn from five separate papers that he wrote throughout his life. These chapters are packed with explanations of Masonic symbolism and philosophical teachings that can be a bit overbearing for the less informed initiate. However, I found many of his ideas about Masonic “truth” helped to “illuminate the path” for my own spiritual journey. It is some of Wilmhurst’s key ideas explaining Masonic rituals and symbols dispersed through his five chapters that this book review will hone in on.

In chapter I. *The Deeper Symbolism of Freemasonry*, Wilmhurst defined what he believed to be the real meaning of the Masonic system. “To state things briefly, Masonry offers us, in dramatic form and by means of dramatic ceremonial a philosophy of spiritual life of man and a diagram of the process of regeneration” (27). Wilmhurst further correctly stated that Masonic philosophy was consistent with all religious doctrines; thus, it supported the notion born out of the “Age of Enlightenment” of the universal “brotherhood of man.” In addition, his statement placed particular importance on the notion of “regeneration;” which he explained as a rebirth of the Mason as described through the Craft’s “Hiramic” legend. As a historian, I wholeheartedly agree with Wilmhurst’s acknowledgement that Masonic philosophy and its “Hiramic” legend borrowed heavily from secret Mysteries dating as far back as to the Egyptian civilization. In addition, Wilmhurst recognized that there were other Mysteries running through later epochs of history from both Eastern and Western civilization. His list of luminary figures who taught the knowledge of these Mysteries included: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Moses, and St. John just to mention a few. Wilmhurst also correctly recognized that there was no direct historical continuity between the Egyptian Mysteries running through the long line of historical epochs up to the start of speculative Masonry in the 18th century. However, he did correctly

recognize that the “Hiramic” legend had elements that harkened back to the very first “regeneration myth” from Egypt; which told of the “resurrection” of their god Osiris, and ran through other legends of “rebirth” up to that of Jesus (21-45).

Wilmhurst introduced me to what I found to be the most erudite explanation of the philosophical teaching behind the placing of Masonic initiates at the N.E. corner of the lodge. He explained that a new initiate to Freemasonry was placed in the Northeast corner of the lodge to teach him that at that very moment there were two paths in life before him to travel. One path was to the East, towards the “light” which represented goodness. This was the path that the initiate was encouraged to take which would eventually lead him towards his eventual “regeneration.” The other path was to the North, towards “darkness,” spiritual deprivation, ignorance, and evil. Thus, Wilmhurst asserted that the Masonic degrees metaphorically represented the “metamorphosis of man.” Thus, man, as I believe was so aptly described by the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, (1588-1679), starts out in life in a “state of nature” ergo without wisdom. A Mason’s metamorphosis into a “regenerated” man takes place when he travels “East” taking the path of “light;” thus, subduing his natural inclinations through spiritual purification which brings him towards “truth” and “rebirth” (33-52). I found this very wise explanation most helpful in my understanding of the importance of taking the right path towards “Masonic Light” to obtain “truth.”

In chapter II. *Masonry as a Philosophy*, Wilmhurst introduced another key term in his book to help explain the “Hiramic” legend, “the Fall of Man.” “‘Paradise Lost’ is the real theme of Masonry no less than of Milton, as it is also of all ancient systems of Mysteries” (61). Thus, Wilmhurst insightfully explained that the real tragedy of the “Hiramic” legend was about the conspiracy that the Temple craftsmen entered into to “extort” the “knowledge” that they were not “spiritually” prepared to possess. This conspiracy unfortunately culminated in the murder of the Grand Architect. Thus, in the process of trying to “extort” this “knowledge” from the Grand Architect they brought about a moral disaster—“the Fall of Man.” Thus, Wilmhurst demonstrated in his writings that the “Hiramic” legend could be seen as a two part story. The first half of the “Hiramic” legend served as a metaphor for the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The second half of the “Hiramic” legend explained how the Temple craftsmen were ordered by King Solomon to embark on a quest, to “find what had been lost,” with the murder of their Grand Architect. This quest teaches every Freemason that King Solomon’s Temple served as the metaphorical Garden of Eden. Thus, Wilmhurst asserts that in actuality what the Freemason needs to complete the construction of is not a physical building; but his own temple, “not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.” Therefore, the Freemason must prepare himself for “regeneration” (61-73).

In chapter III. *Further Notes on Craft Symbolism*, Wilmhurst reiterated a key notion that I have always believed was never stressed enough to our new brethren; that man was his own “Temple.” “It must be remembered that everything in Masonry is figurative of man and his human constitution and spiritual evolution” (91). In essence, what Wilmhurst wrote was that it was the Freemason’s immortal soul, “his Temple,” that was in “rubble and ruin.” Therefore, the Freemason’s “Temple” needed to be rebuilt using Masonic moral teachings to “clear away the rubble;” which stood for their impure natural inclinations. Thus, only when the “rubble” was cleared out of his life in this world; could the Mason then perfect “his spiritual Temple” for the next world (89-91).

In chapter IV. *Further Notes on Craft Symbolism*, I found Wilmhurst’s definition of the Royal Arch Degree and the degree’s importance to the body of Freemasonry to be “another

important brick placed in my path” to spiritual “truth.” “The Royal Arch Degree seeks to express that new and intensified life to which the candidate can be raised and the exalted degree of consciousness that comes with it” (89-91). Thus, Wilmhurst asserted that only in this degree could a Mason while still a creature of the flesh perfect his soul and be able to obtain “Divine consciousness.” For Wilmhurst, obtaining “Divine consciousness” incorporated the Mason realizing that the “Temple” of his old-self “lay waste and was in ruins,” because of his natural impure instincts. Thus, Wilmhurst pointed out that the Freemason had to “metaphorically” emulate the Jews in Babylonian captivity. The Freemason, in similar fashion like the Jews, would have to once again embark on a journey to his own “spiritual home” to erect a new “Temple” on the site of the old one (154-158). Much to my delight; as a student of Eastern religion and philosophy I found Wilmhurst’s explanation of the Royal Arch Degree touching on many themes taught in Hinduism, and Buddhism. Wilmhurst’s explanation of perfecting the soul in his book reminds me of the Hindu belief in that only the perfected soul reaches *Moksha* (heaven); for Buddhists the perfected soul attains *Nirvana*.

In chapter V. Freemasonry In Relation To the Ancient Mysteries, Wilmhurst illuminated further his notions on the Craft’s connections to the ancient Mysteries which had been handed down from time immemorial. He went into greater detail in this chapter on how one could not miss the similarities that many civilizations and various religions shared. He perceptively picked up on the fact that the Craft, following in the footsteps of the ancient Mysteries, used myth to impart wisdom to its initiates (170-192). On this point Wilmhurst would get no argument from the Twentieth Century’s two greatest minds on the subject; Joseph Campbell, (1904-87), and Karl Jaspers, (1883-1969). There is no doubt in my mind that speculative Freemasonry is the “longest living child of the Enlightenment.” Thus, “As children of the Enlightenment,” Freemasonry’s founders borrowed heavily from the new knowledge of antiquity obtained during the Enlightenment; such as, knowledge about the Mysteries of earlier civilizations and religious teachings outside of Christianity.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading *The Meaning of Masonry*, by Walter Leslie Wilmhurst. However, I would not recommend the book to be read by a newly raised Mason. One needs to be well versed in the basic philosophical concepts of Freemasonry before tackling this book. I do emphatically recommend the reading of this book by all Freemason’s who want to have a deeper understanding of the Masonic philosophy behind the search for “truth” and the need for preparing their souls for “rebirth.” After all, that inevitable day comes for all of us when we are called to “lay down our working tools to travel to that celestial abode above; that house not made with hands eternal in the Heavens.”

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To Polish and Adorn the Mind

By David R. Sandy

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Technology is making us less intelligent. There was a time when people were able to absorb and retain large amounts of information and knowledge. In many cases, technology has taken away the need and the desire to do so. When a piece of information can be stored and retrieved without using our brains, we become easily distracted, our attention spans are lessened, we experience diminished capacity for memory, and we can suffer academically. Technology bombards us with an endless stream of distractions. Hypertext is a major culprit. These are the colorful little links that are peppered throughout online articles. They make our brains work harder than they would otherwise, and the result is less brain power for processing what is read, i.e., diminished comprehension. Our attention span is further lessened by the conditioning we get from Hollywood. Notice how the average length of a movie shot is now about 1¹/₂ seconds!

There have been studies of the body's release of melatonin, the hormone that has a significant role in regulating the internal clock. Devices like smartphones, laptops and tablets emit a blue-enriched light that has disruptive effects on its release, causing less restful sleep. Other studies have identified a growing concern for what is being called "Internet addiction." The stereotypical Internet addicts are notably gamers who shun food and sleep in order to play for days on end. Spending a lot of time on the Internet can cause changes in the brain that mimic those caused by drug and alcohol dependence. Abnormalities appear in select areas of the brain, thereby disrupting emotions, attention span, and decision making.

The hippocampus is an area of the brain involved with navigation and memory. Those who rely on GPS to navigate have less activity in this portion of the brain. Researchers have found that the use of spatial memory and using visual cues to remember routes and develop cognitive maps can help deter problems with memory loss in later life.

So, what can Freemasonry offer in this digital age to help assist mankind against the detrimental side effects of living with technology? What can Freemasonry offer to men living in a world that devalues memorization and debases the benefits of mentally retaining useful information and maxims? Over the last four centuries, Freemasonry has survived and flourished for multiple reasons. The main reason is that it finds a way to maintain its relevance by filling voids and providing needs for mankind. We see this in each century, and it is as significant today as it was 300 years ago.

In the Fellow Craft degree, the candidate symbolically negotiates a winding stairway consisting of three, five, and seven steps. Why a winding stair? Why not straight staircase? Perhaps because a winding stair can be a metaphor for human life. We can't see very much of what lies ahead. Just as things are gradually revealed to us in life, so are the lessons of the degree incrementally revealed to the candidate. As he moves up the stairs, his attention is called to the seven liberal arts and sciences. Curiously, there is little explanation in the ritual regarding six of these seven subjects and no effort to bring their significance to the candidate. After the degree has been conferred, the candidate is charged with, "The study of the liberal arts, that valuable branch of education, which tends so effectually to polish and adorn

the mind, is earnestly recommended to your consideration.” That charge is telling us to continue to be students, to be learners. Our edification should never stop, and we should continue our Masonic passage and journey of self-improvement. We symbolize this goal in our lodges with the rough and perfect ashlar and by the Masonic agenda of making good men better. In our journey to become better men, we must work diligently to understand the world that surrounds us. To the modern Freemason, the study of the seven liberal arts and sciences can serve as an appropriate allegory for a life of self-improvement and mental growth. Although the soul’s path to virtue is not easily navigated, the study of the seven liberal arts and sciences does help to point the way.

Reflect on how these classics can be applied to Freemasonry and life. When we consider grammar, remember that in earlier times, grammar meant Latin grammar. It was not the wearisome process of determining the parts of speech; instead, it was the art of writing. Grammar is the art of producing well-written compositions and skillful speaking. Studying great poetry and oratorical works enables one to write and speak elegantly. Generally, logic is the art and science of precise and factual thinking. By practicing logic, we process and analyze inputs of information or data, culling out the erroneous, deceptive, false, and contradictory. Through logic, one sifts through incoming material or evidence, identifying fallacious arguments and statements, and then systematically removing untruths and contradictions, thereby yielding authentic, honest, and trusted knowledge. Rhetoric is an art of communication, either oral or written. Through rhetoric, a speaker or author endeavors to persuade, apprise, or motivate their target audience. Rhetoric uses facts derived from the practice of logic and presents them skillfully through the use of grammar. The result is a persuasive argument based on truth. Arithmetic is the science of real (non-negative) numbers, their properties, computation, and manipulation. Arithmetic deals with integers, rational numbers, and remainders after division. No further enumeration on geometry is needed here other than to remember that it is the Greek idealization of geometry that has passed over into Freemasonry. During the time of Pythagoras, the study of music was viewed as mathematical in nature. In a much earlier time, man discovered that the lengths of the strings of his musical instruments resulted in different sounds. Shortening or increasing the lengths of the strings would raise or lower the pitch. He further discovered that joining several strings together would produce sounds especially pleasing to the ear, i.e. harmony. Further discoveries revealed that the ratio of the lengths of the strings corresponded to whole numbers. Through music, the soul feels pleasure in counting without realizing it is counting. Freemasonry has venerated astronomy nearly as much as it has geometry. In all cultures, astronomy is the science of the heavens and is intimately connected with religious tradition. The sun, moon, comets, stars, the ecliptic, and meridian have places in our Masonic lessons.

The seven liberal arts signify education, wisdom, and learning. We should better comprehend the use of music, plays, and art in our lives. We should use mathematics and geometry. We need to expand our vocabulary and practice writing. As we persevere in learning throughout our lives, we will become better men in Masonry.

In closing, let us remember that Freemasonry promotes repetition and we must not lose sight of its power. The repetition of learning and reciting ritual has a latent purpose. It exercises our minds and facilitates learning. The key to knowledge and learning is repetition. Repetition readies the mind for further light. We will not notice and benefit from all the beauties of Freemasonry if we do not develop our minds. The Masonic experience is designed to distinguish the Mason from the profane. The repeating of affirmations leads to beliefs. When beliefs develop into convictions, *things start happening*.

The Lights: Three by Three

By Bob Lingerfelt

The author is chairman of the Masonic Education Committee for the Grand Lodge of Nebraska.

It is not without irony that a Mason studying the three great and the three lesser lights of Masonry may ultimately find himself unenlightened. Opinions on the meanings of these lights abound. Some rather mundane commentaries are often repeated because they are safe—their dull edges prevent injury to either the author or the reader. Those opinions which might pique the interest of readers are often seen as dangerous and disruptive novelties because they conflict with what is stated in the literature provided to newly-made Masons. Nevertheless, the study of all things Masonic, to include the three great and three lesser lights, must continue if we are to live up to our reputation as a “progressive science.” Let us start with a question that many Masons would consider unnecessary, but which I hope to show merits contemplation: Are the three lesser lights and three great lights actually connected in any meaningful way? Common wisdom is that they are, and it is easy to understand why. Physically, they are juxtaposed at the altar. They are presented almost simultaneously, and are described in almost the same breath when introduced. They are alike in number (three), in substance (light), and in name, save that three are great and three are lesser. Surely, given all this, we are to assume that these lights are closely linked in some deeply meaningful way?

Let’s take a step back and consider the matter with fresh eyes. The language used in describing the lights is rather peculiar. We are told as that the three great lights are to be discovered by the light of the “representatives” of the three lesser lights—not by the light of the lesser lights themselves. The inclusion of “representatives” was quite deliberate. The representatives of the three lesser lights are three burning tapers, or candles (today, of course, they more often burn electricity than wicks). They are emphatically not the lesser lights, just as a square is not morality, but rather a symbol of morality.

It’s likely the original purpose of the candles was simply to illuminate the objects on the altar, which is why, in past centuries; they were not clustered together to one side of the altar, as is commonly done today. Squeezing them together would not have provided sufficient physical light to illuminate the objects on the altar. Another point in favor of disentangling the lesser lights and their representatives can be found in Genesis 1:3, in which God says, “Let there be light.” It is important to note that God’s command occurs on Day 1, and that the sun and moon were not created until Day 4. Thus, the light that appears the first day was not from the sun or moon. It was, instead, “divine” light of the type celebrated by Neo-Platonists, Christians, and others. “The light of God.” The three great* lights can be characterized as divine, moral, or spiritual, but not physical. One does not expect the Bible, square, or compass to emit photons into the eyes of those present. It is appropriate that the three great lights be introduced on “Day 1,” when God introduced His light into the universe, which was of a non-physical nature.

The same cannot be said for either the lesser lights (the sun, moon, and Master of the lodge) or their three representatives (the burning tapers). The sun and moon did not exist on Day 1, nor did the Master of any lodge. Nor, obviously, were there any candles or electric lights on the first day. That is why the word “representatives” is used for the tapers. The physical objects on the altar, which are the three great lights, are physically illuminated by the three physical objects representing the three lesser lights. There is no stated higher connection between the lesser and great lights, or

between them and the representatives of the lesser lights. It is an unfortunate coincidence that the names and proximity imply a connection.

The three lesser lights do serve a purpose, of course—it is simply unconnected with that of the three great lights (or if connected, then in a very roundabout manner). Again, interpretations vary, but the three lesser lights may be meant to address a single phenomenon: Time. The movement of the earth around the sun is used to measure a year (365.25 days), while the movement of the moon around the earth forms the basis for our measurement of a month (a lunar phase cycle taking 29.5 days). It may not be a coincidence that burning tapers, or candles, were once used to gauge the passing of time (for example, each inch of height lost as a candle burned down might equal one hour of time). Their burn rate is regular and predictable, as should be the appearance of the Master of a Lodge. Returning to the question of the relationship, if any, of the three great lights to the three lesser lights, an argument could be made that while they are not causally related, they are alike in that, when paired, they encompass the two varieties of light promoted by Neo-Platonists: physical light and divine (or spiritual) light.

Giordano Bruno, burned at the stake in 1600 by the Inquisition, espoused an evolved form of Neo-Platonism which some believe inspired Speculative Masonry's early proponents. He wrote that "eyesight differs from the seeing power of the internal spirit." Our spirit views the world via divine light, which is the greater light because, being from God, it is eternal, always present, and allows man to see things as they truly are, if only he would do so. In the dedicatory epistle of his book "On the Composition of Images," Bruno wrote that divine light "is more present, clear and arrayed for our intelligence than sunlight which can be marshalled for our outer eyes. For it [the sun] rises and sets, and as often as we turn ourselves toward it, it is not there. But that other magical light is no less present to us than to itself for us...it is even in mind itself." In this sense, we could say that the three lesser and three great lights represent the two aspects of man's existence: the physical (which is lesser) and spiritual (which is greater). We are both body and spirit and can "see" both physical and spiritual light.

Where, then, does this leave the three representatives? Aside from physically illuminating the three great lights, a purely utilitarian function, and serving as substitutes for the three lesser lights, can they be interpreted as having any higher purpose? Perhaps. They could be considered the intermediaries between the lesser and great lights. This, too, is an important component of some varieties of Neo-Platonism and Hermeticism. Bruno, for example, taught that man perceives the world via an intermingling of divine and physical light, or put another way, we see the world thru two lenses stacked atop one another. When divine and physical light intermingle, they cast a complicated pattern of light and shadow in the mind, which we perceive as our "rational" world. One could view the representatives of the three lesser lights as that intermediary state, which effectively makes the three representatives a proxy for dual-natured mankind. If this is allowed, the proximity of all three sets of lights—great (divine/spiritual), lesser (physical), and representative (intermediary)—is appropriate. The observant Mason will note that this relationship could be properly described as "three by three."

10 Signs You're Doing It Wrong

By Matt Gallagher

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You might like to think you're worthy of this Masonic institution and that you're doing things correctly. Yet is this really the case? You could have "Grand" in front of every title you've earned in the Craft, and yet your day-to-day fraternal interactions could be poisoning your lodge and brothers.

Here are 10 signs that you might be contributing to a downward trajectory in your lodge.

1. You're sitting alone: I myself am an introvert, so I understand the appeal of sitting on a distant couch or in a darkened corner and scrolling the iPhone while the lodge brothers are whooping it up some distance away. Introverts often like to remain quiet and or enjoy the company of one or two close friends, as they might be simply overwhelmed and exhausted by interaction. While understandable, this is nonetheless a disservice to you and your brethren.

Daniel Coyle, the author of *Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups* cites studies which claim that strong groups sit together. This is an animal instinct. When the pack is together, there is safety, and safety lowers anxiety, thus opening the emotional pores. When a lone wolf is sitting off alone, not only is he in more danger, raising his own anxiety, but the pack, too, will be concerned for his safety, raising the anxiety level of the pack as a whole. Even if you'd rather scroll through your phone and not talk, signal some effort, such as scooching your chair to within at least five feet of the group.

2. You're with the same few guys: Avoid the appearances of cliques and cabals. There will always be some who are more than brothers; they're personal friends whose company you enjoy. Yet don't ignore the other guys, conversing with your own set too deeply or too long. Always remember the other Masons in the room are your brothers with whom you stand in a close relationship. Unless you talk with others and get to know them, you'll never know when there is a mutual interest you may discover. Remember this by-word: "Your brothers are your business, because we're in the business of brotherhood."

3. You come and go without a handshake: Life is busy, and we don't like interruptions going from A to B. Yet Freemasonry is supposed to be an interruption to let pause, breathe, and take stock of who you are. Human touch is important to this process. It's not just the classic greeting, or an exchange of niceties, though it certainly is all that. A handshake is like an anchor. Like someone reaching out and grabbing you and pulling you out of the rapids of life's river, and onto the shore of a safe harbor.

4. You give the ol' "No Look Pass:" Everyone's done it. You feel a pat on the arm and see a palm out of the corner of your eye. You grab the hand and shake without even breaking the stride of your conversation. The handshake was historical shorthand for "I'm not going to kill you right now," and eventually came to signify, "I'm glad you're here, because I trust you." As good times went on to breed weak men, the handshake turned more into, "Hey, I'm sticking out my hand because here's a thing I guess I have to do." As Masons, we aim for the

above middle definition of hospitality. Face your brother, hold your hand out, grip, and look your interlocutor in the eye. Be as kind as you can muster!

5. You go from meeting to car to home: If your meetings are so great that it's all you need, then congratulations, and send me your minutes! Yet I really cannot relate to this. Don't you want to do something else, such as talk? Perhaps go outside for a smoke, have a drink somewhere up the street, or vent about work? Discuss movies? Discuss ghosts? Discuss movies about ghost hunting? For a lot of us, lodge night is our one night out of the house. Let's live it up a bit and enjoy Craft fellowship.

6. You're sitting while a brother is working: Almost every lodge has the three or four guys who do all the work. They do the cooking and the dishes. They're the ones who show up with a truck when someone puts out the signal for help.

If you're not that guy, and you can't name the three or four guys in your lodge who are, you've probably already tired them out. They're done and have moved on. And that's when a lodge starts dying. I'm not saying you have to be one of those guys. But if you're sitting there and you're hearing the clattering of pots and pans, get up and ask how you can help.

7. You're in the weeds, and you're not asking for help: I admit, it may be kind of fun to curse your lazy brethren and seethe when you have cooked for the lodge and done the dishes. You feel you are up to your knees alone in Masonic chores. At this point, do yourself and everyone else a favor by asking for help. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and the kitchen door shall be opened and others will be ready to come in and help!

8. There's a brother you're not talking to: My mentor, on the day I met him, told me that your Masonic family is like your actual family. You love them all, but that doesn't mean you will always like them all. If there is a brother who is not talking to you or to whom you are not speaking, break the ice by talking to that brother on the level, on the plumb, on the square. Will it work? In some cases not, but this does not absolve you from having to try.

9. You're talking unkindly about a brother who is out of earshot: Gossip is human nature but can be very destructive. Even if you do not start with bad intentions and rationalize that you're being constructive, I caution you to tread lightly. Idle gossip holds the door open, letting in his pals: cliquishness, plotting, and disharmony.

10. It never hurts: Let me be clear: all of us do all the above things sometimes. I've done all of them, I still do some of them, and between writing and publishing this article I will have done them. No Mason is a perfect ashlar. If this truth hurts, remember a quote attributed to Alexis Carrel, written as if for Masons: "Man cannot remake himself without suffering, for he is both the marble and the sculptor."

Gloves In Masonry

By Leon Zeldis

The author is a retired textile engineer and translator. An active Mason since 1959, he is a Past Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite Supreme Council of Israel and Honorary Assistant Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Israel.

Apart from their practical uses to protect the hands from cold and injury, gloves have symbolic connotations. The custom of presenting a pair of white gloves to the neophyte at the conclusion of an initiation ceremony has a long historical tradition, and it was recorded already in the 10th Century. A chronicle relates that in the year 960, “the monks of Saint Alban’s Monastery in Mainz (Germany), presented a pair of gloves to the bishop at his investiture.” (Knoop, 320).

The Rule of the Templar Order singled out “Brother Masons,” along with the priests, as being the only members of the Order allowed to wear white gloves. The masons used gloves to protect their hands from the harshness of their work, the priests to protect the host and other sacred objects they handled (Knoop, 69).

The use of gloves by medieval masons is confirmed by documentary evidence. In the year 1322, at Ely (a cathedral city of England), the sacristy purchased gloves for the masons engaged in the “new work”, and in 1456, at Eton College, five pairs of gloves were presented to the “layers” of the walls, “as custom may have required” (Stephens, 139). Another document indicates that in Canterbury College at Oxford, the Head Steward noted in his accounts that “twenty pence were given as glove money to all the masons occupied in rebuilding the College” (Heisler, 36). In the reign of Henry VI (15th Century), the parish of Suffolk was required to give the Freemasons white leather gloves and white aprons, along with a tiled lodge for their meetings (Stephens, 139).

There are numerous reports of gloves being supplied to “hewers” and “layers” in Scotland, from 1598 to 1688. The documents quoted at the beginning refer to operative masons. The tradition, however, was continued in Speculative Masonry. Since 1599 there is evidence that each Mason, at his initiation, had to receive a pair of gloves (paid out of his own pocket!). The oldest document on this matter is known as the *Shaw Statutes*, addressed to Kilwinning Lodge and dated 28 December 1599, which prescribe that Fellows of the Craft, at their reception to that degree, were to pay a fee of 10 Scottish pounds and 10 shillings for the gloves (Knoop, 43-44).

Sometimes, the new Mason had to provide gloves for the entire company as part of his entrance fees. The practice was known as “clothing the lodge.” Anderson’s Constitutions of 1723, in article II it stipulates that “Every new Brother at his making is decently to cloath the Lodge, that is, all the Brethren present...” (Carr, 32). Documents of the Lodge of Melrose for the years 1674-1675 demonstrate that both apprentices and fellow-crafts had to pay entrance fees “with sufficient gloves to ye whole company” (Vernon, 13). An Aberdeen document of 1670 requires the Apprentice to pay four royal dollars as well as a linen apron and a pair of good gloves for each of the brethren (Miller, 61). The use of linen instead of leather is remarkable, but it is explained by the abundance of high-quality flax in the region. Leather was more expensive.

In 1724 a lodge at Dunblane is recorded as delivering gloves and aprons to the “intrants,” and in 1754, in Haughfoot, England, the local lodge established that “no one can enter the lodge without a pair of gloves for each member of that lodge” (Carr, 32).

In *The Natural History of Staffordshire* (1688), Robert Plot, LL.D. relates that it was a custom among Freemasons “that when any are admitted, they call a meeting (or Lodge, as they term it in some places), which must consist of at least of 5 or 6 of the Ancients of the Order, whom the candidates present with gloves, and so likewise to their wives...” (Vernon, 13). This appears to be the first mention of the custom of presenting a second pair of gloves for the woman as part of the initiation ceremony.

An exposure called “A Mason’s Examination,” published in 1723 in a London newspaper, *The Flying Post*, begins thus: “When a Free-Mason is enter’d, after having given to all present of the Fraternity a Pair of Men and Women’s Gloves and Leathern Apron ...” (Blatchley). This became the tradition in all initiations, and it is specifically mentioned in the French initiation rituals of the 18th Century, as described in the “exposures.” Already the first known French “exposure,” dating from 1737, called Reception d’un Frey-Macon, notes that in the initiation ceremony, the candidate “is given the apron of a Free-Mason, which is of white Skin, a pair of men’s Gloves for himself, and another [pair of] ladies’ Gloves, for her whom he esteems the most” (Carr, 3).

The custom, however, appears to have been abandoned in England and Scotland, because since the beginnings of the 19th Century it is no longer mentioned in the regulations and minutes of the lodges. The Emulation Ritual (post 1813) ignores the practice. In Europe and other countries, particularly in lodges working the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the tradition remains in force until this very day. The presentation of the gloves comes normally at the end of the ceremony, and the Master of the Lodge then adds some words to the effect that the hands of the newly-made Mason, purified by the initiation, must never be sullied again, and as for the second pair, it is intended to stress the high respect in which Masons hold women in general, and the one closest to one’s heart in particular.

The glove’s protection is not only material but also spiritual. For this reason, when touching the Holy Book, (in the obligation, for example) the hand must not be covered. Likewise, when forming the “fraternal chain” customary in some rituals, the hands must not wear gloves; this, to allow the subtle energy of the magic circle to circulate freely. In the higher degrees of the Scottish Rite gloves of various colors: white, black or green, are prescribed for the regalia of various degrees, the symbolism of the color being related to that of the degree.

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Masonic Couplets

By R. Stephen Doan

The author is a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of California. He is a Fellow and Past President of The Philalethes Society, the oldest independent Masonic research society in North America. His message below comes from one of his Philalethes E-Bulletins.

Ever wonder why our Masonic ritual sometimes has us say things in pairs? “Free will and accord” and “promise and swear” are two examples. I call these Masonic couplets. What is a Masonic couplet? A Masonic couplet is two words used in sequence which have the same or similar original meaning, although through use over time may have acquired slightly different colors of connotation.

Why do we have Masonic couplets? Before 1066, the people in what we know today as England spoke what is known now as Old English, although often with distinct local dialects. In 1066, William the Conqueror came from Normandy in France and conquered England, replacing the indigenous elite with his own supporters, whose predominant language was the French of Normandy, known now as Norman French, although his army included mercenaries from Italy and elsewhere in Europe.

For the next 200 years, the language of the English court, government and the elites among themselves was Norman French. It varied from French elsewhere in France because the Normans were largely descendants of the Norwegian Vikings and therefore Viking words had found their way into Norman French. Also, the Norman French dialect had certain pronunciation changes from the French of Paris, such as the substitution of the “g” sound with the “w” sound. The writing of Norman French preserved these distinctions.

There were three major consequences linguistically from the Norman French conquest of England:

1. English was no longer written. The English soon became illiterate in their own language. The displaced indigenous English elites became subject to the Norman French and had to learn Norman French to maintain any position. When a language is no longer written, it loses its anchor and can drift more quickly.

2. In order for the Norman French rulers and the Old English-speaking peasants to make themselves known to each other, a Pidgin English evolved. While Old English was highly inflected, like German and Latin, with word endings denoting the word’s part of speech, like subject and object, word endings were eliminated and sentence order became important. With the need for effective communication between the rulers and the subjects, and freed from the anchor of a written language, English became simpler and thus more modern relatively quickly and earlier than other European languages.

3. This Pidgin English borrowed many words from French. An example as background: You will see “puerco” on the menu in a Mexican restaurant, and “puerco” is the barnyard animal whence this dish comes. Not so in English. We eat pork, but the meat comes from a pig. In feudal England, sumptuary laws prevented peasants from eating meat cutlets. Only the nobility should. Therefore, a Norman nobleman would ask an English speaking servant to bring him pork for dinner, pork being derived from a word in Norman French, but the servant would go to the barnyard and order the attendant of the swine to slaughter a pig for the meal, pig being derived from a word in Old English. Norman French words were therefore borrowed by English, but often were used to

describe the doings of the aristocracy while the doings of the peasants retained the English derived word.

This dual language system found its way into the law. Royal edicts had to be in two languages so that the Norman French and English speakers could both understand. Because even many of the aristocracy were illiterate, these edicts had to be read. There are two ways in which this could have been done. The messenger could read it entirely in Norman French and then again but in English. Alternatively, he could read it once but use both French and English words in couplets, thusly: People *and People*, hear this *and hear this*, by order *and by order* of your king *and of your king*, all inhabitants *and all inhabitants* are ordered *and are ordered* . . . Every word was said and then repeated once again as the edict was read, but the first use would have been Norman French and the second use English (here in italics for emphasis).

By the late 1200's, this Pidgin English, greatly simplified from Old English and with many Norman French borrowed words, became Middle English and was spoken at court and in the government. Modern English evolved from Middle English largely by the time of Shakespeare. Once Middle English was spoken at court and in the government, the use of Norman French in England largely disappeared. However, many traditions which emerged in the bilingual England of the Eleventh through the Thirteenth Centuries remained.

Importantly for this discussion, the tradition continued of using in formal, oral promises and in legal documents couplets, pairing one Norman French derived word with one Old English derived word, to emphasize to all parties the seriousness of the undertaking, just like the bilingual edicts of old.

This tradition is also preserved in our Masonic ritual. Here are some examples:

Norman French derivation	Old English derivation
Accord	Free will
Promise	Swear
Conceal (born French)	Hale (derived from an Old English word. and a Saxon word before that)
Indite	Write
Print, letter and engrave (more sophisticated processes)	Cut, carve, hack, hew, etch (processes which were more common and less technical)
Fixed	Steady

Our Masonic obligations are covenants creating obligations and benefits among ourselves which extend to yet unborn Masons of the future. They are what made us a Mason. We should not be surprised that they use the English jurisprudential tradition of couplets to reinforce the seriousness of our undertakings. Our Masonic history and tradition are rich, and the use of couplets is one of many examples of this rich heritage.

Politics and Freemasonry

As we reach the midpoint of 2020, it has so far been a tumultuous year for our nation and the world. The COVID-19 virus has spread death and illness around the globe. Employment, church, sports, entertainment, the ability to congregate, and many other items in our lives have been radically changed. Masonic gatherings have ground to a virtual standstill. Yet, 2020 is also a presidential election year, which brings into focus: politics. This subject, along with religion, is forbidden in Masonic discussions. Even the Coronavirus pandemic has become a major part of political discussions. What is the proper role for a Mason in a political year?

Here are portions of two essays about Masonic behavior in an election year, written by well-known Masonic leaders and writers — David R. Ritchie, Senior Grand Deacon of the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin, and George D. Seghers, Executive Director of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. Both were written before the Coronavirus pandemic.

“The Gentleman in the Room,” is excerpted from the February, 2020, issue of The Wisconsin Masonic Journal. “The Practice of a Virtuous Policy” is taken from a 2019 issue of Light of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.

The Gentleman in the Room

By David R. Ritchie

During this year, 2020, something special happens that only occurs every four years, a presidential election. As Masons we all know that two things are prohibited from being talked about in Lodge. Religion and Politics. The problem is, “What defines politics?” At one time, this was a very clear topic with defined boundaries. Today, sadly, we are divided along so many lines that it is difficult even to agree upon a definition of what constitutes politics. Schools and education, hunting, the weather, etc. . . . If someone would have told me 20 years ago that the NFL would be a politically charged topic, I would have laughed. If America could withstand the Designated Hitter in baseball, the NFL would never create controversy, I thought. But today, if a man talks about the strange weather we are having, is he making a political statement? This is where I call on you to be the gentlemen. First, please, understand a person may not consider a topic political, like the weather, and is just making conversation.

Consider what would happen if that person were admonished, especially in public, because you or another considered the topic too controversial. If the subject was brought up to spark controversy and you admonish, especially forcefully, it is easy to see how emotions and tension would escalate. So, please give the other person the benefit of the doubt. Confrontation is only going to make matters worse. Have you ever made a statement and, expecting a reply, hear only crickets? Sometimes silence can be the strongest admonishment. If you feel a person’s statements need to be addressed, do so respecting the harmony and brotherly love expected in Lodge. Find a private place and moment to speak with the person.

Outside the Lodge, remember that you are the greatest symbol of Freemasonry that your friends, coworkers, and neighbors know. While it is our right and duty to enter into discussions on affairs of state, sometimes you may be called upon to defend your beliefs. You may feel the other person is ethically or morally wrong. Remember that people will be listening and watching. Will they see a Mason discussing a topic rationally and without personal attack?

Will they hear a Mason speaking his mind without anger or malice? Remember who you are and what you have been taught. Remember who you represent in the eyes of society. Speak your mind, enter into civil debate, challenge the statements of others, but as a gentleman and a Mason.

The Practice of a Virtuous Policy

By George D. Seghers

George Washington was involved in politics from the age of 23 and throughout his life. His first attempt was when he ran for, and lost, his bid to represent Frederick County in the Virginia House of Burgesses. This was the only political defeat he experienced. In 1758, he was successful in representing Frederick County until the Revolution. In 1769, Washington and George Mason presented a Virginia non-importation resolution to the House of Burgesses. This was an economic rebuttal to British taxes, which called for a boycott of certain imported items bearing what was seen as unfair taxation.

His next service was in the First and Second Continental Congresses. He then presided over the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Washington's final elected service began in 1789, when he was elected the first President of the new nation. As President, he established precedents which continue to this day. He presided over the beginning of a unique party system of government. Washington believed that political parties would fracture rather than cement the Union.

This is certainly the case today. Now more than ever we need the example of Washington to bind and hold the Union of States under one Federal head. In a letter written to Comte De Moustier on November 1, 1790, Washington wrote: "The aggregate happiness of the society, which is best promoted by the practice of a virtuous policy, is, or ought to be, the end of all government..."

It seems we have strayed far from a virtuous policy and that we have indeed become a fractured society. As Freemasons, we know that all humanity should exist as the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.

Of the many gifts George Washington gave us, our freedom and security were surely the greatest. Our Masonic Forefathers built the George Washington Masonic National Memorial to acknowledge all that Washington did and gave for the creation of this truly incredible nation of which we are privileged to be citizens.

Civilization In Our Minds

By Walter M. MacDougall

This author's first Short Talk Bulletin article was published in 1965, when he was Master of his Lodge. During the past 65 years, Brother MacDougall has written, taught, been a faculty member at the University of Maine, and served as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Maine. He is welcomed back, again, as an STB author.

Although this article was written prior to the recent situations of pandemics and protests, its message speaks to us in their light.

One can imagine a "Lone Ranger," but a "Lone Freemason" seems a contradiction. Freemasons are a band; a working team of men. Not only are we a team, we are one of the busiest groups one can find. One often hears from Masons that they have been so busy that they meet themselves either coming or going. In all this doing, it is wise to stop for a moment and to reflect on our lives as Freemasons. Be forewarned, when one allows one's mind the quiet for remembering, the memories of Masonic experiences may come rushing in like the water which threatens to overflow the transom when a motorboat comes to a stop.

As I write, I remember, as a young Mason, going with my lodge to visit a dying brother. As we were leaving, he insisted on standing by the door and shaking every brother's hand. He passed away soon after that night. All these busy days, we have been witnessing bravery, a civility, a caring of first-class magnitude. My first experience as Master at a graveside, Masonic service is still vivid in my mind. In the late fall, we stood in a graveyard. It snowed huge, solemn flakes floating down on our bare heads and the top of our brother's casket. What we have been doing as Masons has sometimes been difficult. We have learned, at least in part, the lesson of the Third Degree and striven to build a character that commands us to do not necessarily what is grand and glorious but, rather, what is right.

I also remembered the night I became an Entered Apprentice. Hoodwinked, the lodge room we entered seemed to have grown huge and the knocks that sounded seemed suspended in time. I remembered thinking I am totally in the hands of others. Then came the moment when I was addressed as Brother. It was one of those moments that have made for me, as it has for you, so much difference.

We say that we are builders and that the image of building lives as the very center of Masonry. What have we been building? Probably many things. For one, we have been building a brotherhood of belonging. That is a wonderful accomplishment! Yet I think that we have been building something of even greater import. As Masons, we have been involved in building a *civilization in our minds*.

Throughout man's long, red history of growl and batter, a finer way has found voice. It speaks a new language that calls for individual dignity, for justice, for freedom, for responsibility and the lifting up of the unfortunate. This voice also champions the opening of new horizons through science and new vantage points through the arts. This rational and caring voice also speaks in Freemasonry. One could make a useful list of behaviors one should or should not practice as stipulated in Masonic lessons and lectures, but as useful as such admonitions are, Masonry is primarily about enlarging the methods and practices of judgment, rationality and reliability built within our minds. The Roman poet Horace wrote to a friend these words concerning this civilization within: "Remember when life's path is steep to keep an even

mind.” Freemasonry is about having an even mind, a mind prepared to deal rationally and with compassion in all eventualities.

Every time we have employed the plumb to test our uprightness, or used the square of just practices, or applied the level to our egos, we have been building that civilization within. Whenever we talk, think about or use some portion of the Arts and Sciences, however small, we are developing an understanding and new capacity which becomes a part of what we are. Through all this Masonic experience, we have been assembling a crucial awareness of our human situation as well as a mosaic of critical concerns or categories which become the hallmarks of our response and the dimensions of a civilization in our minds.

Perhaps the best way to emphasize the importance of what we are calling an *internal civilization of the mind* is to indicate the social and moral catastrophe which comes with its absence. Some years ago, Lance Morrow, Senior Fellow at the Ethics and Policy Center, wrote an essay in Time Magazine on a horrendous murder which was then in the news. A mother who was on drugs had murdered her children. Morrow used in his essay an image of terror, the invasion of barbaric hordes which once savaged and destroyed so much of European civilization. He wrote: “The drug broke into her brain like a Visigoth and destroyed the civilization there.”

The Renaissance Duke of Urbino was asked what was necessary to govern well. He answered *essere umano*, to be human. One of my students made a large sign bearing that motto, and we hung it at the head of the classroom in which we met. It stayed there for several years which was unusual as each summer the custodial crew cleared the classrooms of everything left behind or hung on the walls. A janitor told me he had left that sign where it was because he knew it must be important. To be truly human is to possess a working civilization in one’s being and to labor upon its goodly expression in the deeds of one’s hands and the compassion of one’s heart. When such a state of consciousness fails or is not present for whatever reason, all hell breaks loose and the edifice we might have completed comes tumbling down.

I have come to believe that this building of a civilization in the mind is a prime aim of Freemasonry, for without such inward scope, balance, and practiced art what will be the cost and the ruin? In our vexed times, we should remember that old challenge: *What came you here to do?* In answer we should become aware of civilization’s growing voice announcing throughout human history the intention to build a habitation of knowledge and understanding shining in the light of caring and inspiration. Having internalized this intention, we must pick up our tools and go to work.

Clarity in Freemasonry

By Stephen F. Oakley

The author is currently serving as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois. This Short Talk Bulletin is taken from his message to his brethren in the Illinois Freemason Magazine, winter 2020 issue, which had a theme of “Clarity.”

We ought to strive for “Clarity” when it comes to every decision we make in life. One of these is the incredibly impactful decision we make to become Masons, starting with the attitude we uphold as we go through our initiation. Clarity allows us to see things as they are and to choose to be the best we can be: to desire knowledge and truth, to be devoted to living altruistically, to contribute to our communities.

I recall very fondly the process of petitioning, how I came to experience greater clarity after becoming a Mason, but it’s interesting how the first thing about Freemasonry that made a deep impression on me was unexpected. I have never been someone who likes to arrive late to anything (in hopes that I do not offend any of my Bears Fans, I believe in Lombardi time or even earlier than that), so I frequently arrive places with plenty of time to spare.

On the night I was to receive my First Degree, I arrived at the lodge about 45 minutes early. I was greeted by the lodge secretary with whom I had a short conversation. Though he was busy getting everything ready for the night, his kindness struck me and I was left very impressed by him. As we travel through our lives we are told that we only get one chance to make a good impression. In the short time we talked, that lodge secretary had made an impression on me that still resonates today. He treated everyone as a friend and brother. The work he did was impeccable; he was well respected throughout the fraternity, but he did not seek out praise. The way he presented himself and the way he conducted himself became something for me to try to emulate.

I realize today that his character was probably rooted in an inner sense of Clarity. Masonry provides us with the opportunity to see that our lives are best lived when we are kind, hard-working, eager to learn, and respectful. I believe I have not reached the level of that brother, but he inspired me greatly to be more like him. To look toward him as goal, to be the best man I can be. Am I that man? Are you? If we cannot answer this question with yes, then why not? When a candidate enters the lodge for the first time, he is truly placing his trust in us. Even if someone has already told him everything about the events to follow, he is still uncomfortable. When he meets you, do you give him reassurance? When he looks at you, does he come away with a feeling that this is a special place and that here he will have something to aspire to? That should be the goal of all of us.

I am fortunate to have known one man who inspired me, who did lead and not with supreme effort, but with ease and grace. He was an inspiration thirty-three years ago and he is still an inspiration today. I ask you to think about this story because you are that man. You are the man who that new member judges our fraternity on, whether good or bad. That first impression will be burned into his memory forever. My hope is that we can always strive to see things clearly, that we have the mindset to be the best men we can be — to new members and to everyone we may encounter. If we all collectively seek out Clarity, I have no doubt that our fraternity can only grow stronger and that our impact can only go further.

The Tides

This is a Masonic "Short Talk," taken from the The Short Talk Bulletin, published in November, 1967.

"When the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours" arouses some solemn thought in a Freemason's mind. For centuries before modern science explained the stupendous phenomena which are visible every day along the ocean's shore, men had looked at those happenings with fear and wonder. The ebbing and rising of the tides were regarded as signs and portents. One of the oldest of man's superstitions, for example, especially among sailors and dwellers on the coast, was the belief that deaths occur mostly when the tide is going out.

Aristotle thought that no creature can die, except at low tide. Frazier's *Golden Bough* contains examples of primitive beliefs in the occurrence of death when the tide is falling. A Chilean Indian in the last stages of tuberculosis was heard to ask his sister how the tide was running. When told it was coming in, he smiled and said, "I will have a little more time to live." Shakespeare was acquainted with the superstition, for he has Falstaff die "just between twelve and one, even at the turning of the tide." In Dickens' *David Copperfield*, Peggy says, "People can't die along the coast except when the tide's pretty near out. They can't be born unless it's pretty nigh in." Tennyson's famous elegy, *Crossing the Bar*, uses the image of the turning of the tide as a symbol of death.

Many superstitions have their origin in repeated occurrences which seem to depend on the natural phenomena with which they are associated. There may be some physical cause connecting them. Not infrequently a change of temperature accompanies the turn of the tide. A dying person may react to that. The solemn images suggested by a contemplation of the tides have had a long development in the fables and literature of the human race. "A survey of nature first determined man to imitate the divine plan."

William Jennings Bryan

By Jonathan Paz

This is an edited version of an educational article published in the Nebraska Mason magazine, spring, 2020, and presents a glimpse of U.S. election politics in the 1800s.

On April 15, 1902, a former member of the United States House of Representatives from the State of Nebraska was raised to the sublime Degree of a Master Mason in Lincoln Lodge, No. 19, in Lincoln, Nebraska. This Mason had spent the previous five years running for President of the United States, losing twice, and would later go on to run again six years later. Though he ended his major political career as the 41st Secretary of State for the United States while serving under President Woodrow Wilson, his impact to American politics bely his apparent lack of success in the political arena. William Jennings Bryan was born on March 19, 1860, in Salem, Illinois, to Silas Lillard and Mariah Elizabeth (Jennings) Bryan. His father was himself heavily involved in law and politics, establishing a legal practice, serving in the Illinois State Senate and as a state circuit judge for the Second Judicial Circuit. An admirer of Andrew Jackson (a Mason) and Stephen A. Douglas (a Mason), Silas instilled in his son at an early age a love of the Democratic Party.

To say that William was gifted in oratory would, in many ways, be considered an understatement. By the time he was four, he was giving “little talks” to his playmates from the steps of his house. William entered Illinois College in Jacksonville, where he served as chaplain of the Sigma Pi literary society and further expanded his oratory skill. While at college, he met his wife, Mary Elizabeth Baird, who would become an important part of his career by managing his correspondence and helping him prepare his speeches. After graduating at the top of his class, he took a law degree at Union Law College (later renamed Northwestern University School of Law). After graduating, frustrated by the lack of economic and political opportunities in Jacksonville, Illinois, he moved to the capital of the fast-growing State of Nebraska in 1887. Once in Lincoln, William established a successful legal practice and got involved in the local politics, leading to his successful bid to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1890, only the second Democrat to gain the seat.

At this point, it’s important to have a brief discussion about the state of politics in mid-19th Century America, how we got there, and how our Brother William was going to impact it. Our country had been around for less than 100 years and we had already endured two distinct political party systems and were in the middle of the third. The first party system lasted from 1788-1828 with the Federalist Party centered around John Adams and the Democratic-Republican Party of Thomas Jefferson. The Federalist Party dominated American politics in the first decade of its existence, but after that they slowly marched toward collapse. By the 1820s, the massive Democratic-Republican Party became increasingly fractionated, coming to a head in the election of 1824. The four candidates for President, all Democratic-Republicans—Andrew Jackson (a Mason) (99 elector votes with 41.4% of the popular vote), John Quincy Adams (84 elector votes with 30.9% of the popular vote), Henry Clay (a Mason) (37 elector votes with 13.0% of the popular vote), and William H. Crawford (41 elector votes with 11.2% of the popular vote) — split the electoral college and forced the election to go before the House of Representatives. This event detonated the Party of Jefferson and the system coalesced around either devotion to, or complete hatred of, one man: Andrew Jackson.

Politics began to normalize again, forming around two new parties: The Democrats (formerly the Jacksonians) and the Whigs (formerly the Anti-Jacksonians), heralding the Second Party System. The powerbase of the Democrats was most strongly in the pro-slavery South, while the pro-business Whigs held sway in the industrialized North. This tension quickly grew, where the abolitionist wing of the Whig party broke off from the disinterested core to become the Republican Party around 1854 in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The Whigs dissolved, the Republicans took over, the South seceded, and the Third Party System came into being.

Toward the end of the 1800s, new economic movements were beginning around the issue of bimetallism. During the Civil War, in order to maintain currency reserves needed for the war effort, the United States dropped its gold-silver standard in favor of fiat currency. After the war, the United States moved to a gold-only standard. Farmers, ranchers, Westerners, debtors, and other more disaffected groups felt they were able to participate more freely in the “greenback” era and wanted to institute a policy called “Free Silver,” which allowed for unconditional exchange of silver, which was more prone to market fluctuations, to gold-backed money. Businesses and lenders, understandably, didn’t want to devalue the money that they had lent to these individuals, so they fought vigorously against the efforts. Despite this, some elements of Free Silver had been implemented.

It is in this environment we re-introduce our Brother, William Jennings Bryan. Nebraska being an agrarian state favored the bimetallism issue that Bryan had campaigned on, bringing him the Representative seat. During his second term of office, the Panic of 1893 inspired President Grover Cleveland to push for the elimination of the Free Silver efforts that had succeeded years before. During the debate on repealing the Silver Purchase Act, Bryan spoke out against it in a riveting three-hour long speech! (I don’t know any speech to be riveting, let alone one that lasted three hours!)

By 1896, the issue of bimetallism was coming to a head, and Bryan campaigned for U.S. President, firing up listeners with his explosive oratory. His famous *Cross of Gold* speech is iconic, propelling him to national recognition. In it, he argued the monetary policy was inextricably linked to democracy. An excerpt from that speech:

“If they dare to come out in the open field and defend the gold standard as a good thing , we shall fight them to the uttermost, having behind us the producing masses of the nation and the world. Having behind us the commercial interests and the laboring interests and all the toiling masses, we shall answer their demands for a gold standard by saying to them, you shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.”

This speech galvanized the Democratic Party behind Bryan, who led the charge against the Republican candidate William McKinley (a Mason). Unfortunately, Bryan lost the election, with his oratorical skills never quite winning the day. However, the efforts of William Jennings Bryan successfully steered the Democratic Party away from its broken focus around losing the Civil War into a populist, monetary-based focus that would define the Fourth Party System, and which would last until the Great Depression and the New Deal policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt (a Mason) 30 years later.

Halloween, A Time For Spirits

By Patrick Dey

The author is Editor of the Rocky Mountain Mason magazine. He is an architectural designer in downtown Denver, an avid researcher of Masonic legendry and symbolism, as well as a student of ancient mystery cults.

It is officially autumn! At least in the northern hemisphere. Furthermore, we are quickly approaching *Samhain* (pronounced “souw-in”), an old Gaelic holiday akin to Halloween. It is one of the four Gaelic holidays that are observed halfway between the celebrations of the equinoxes and solstices. Some scholars, such as James Frazer, proposed that the Church, having long endeavored to end the pagan practice of ancestor worship amongst the Gaels and Celts, first tried to replace *Samhain* with All Saints’ Day, then All Souls’ Day, and finally relented and adopted All Hallows’ Eve, where one may render honor to their deceased friends and relatives. Other scholars, such as Ronald Hutton, believe it is the other way around: that the proximity of All Saints’ and All Souls’ Days gave rise to the idea that *Samhain* was anything more than just a harvest festival.

Why this time of year is particularly spiritual and spooky is a matter of debate. *Samhain* is observed halfway between the Autumnal Equinox and the Winter Solstice. This is harvest season, when crops will be cut down and livestock slaughtered; a time that is ruled over by the chthonic deity of Saturn, the god of time and the harvest. Hence, the end of the harvest season was celebrated by the ancient Romans as Saturnalia.

The nights are longer than the day as the sun continues its descent towards the nadir. In hermetic traditions the Winter Solstice—in the constellation of Capricorn—was believed to be the celestial gate by which the soul exited the terrestrial world. All these things together make this a very mystical time for spirits to engage the material world, and so for thousands of years humans have endeavored to appease these spirits during this time. Hence, this is a time of the year that has long been associated with ghosts and spirits.

Samhain is a special season in which the ancient Gaels believed the veil separating the mortal and the spirit worlds was at its thinnest. As a result, the Aos Si or “spirits” could more easily pass into our world and we can better interact with them. Hence, it is why the celebrations centered around this time involve a lot of ancestor veneration, necromancy (literally, magic and divination with the souls of the dead), and other spiritual practices involving spirits of those who were once mortal.

Death is a thing we in the Western world have a problem talking about. We find it difficult to discuss with our loved ones about our wishes for end-of-life care, how we want our final remains handled, et cetera. But we as Masons are all too aware of death. In every Master Mason Degree we are introduced to (if you are a candidate) or reminded of (if you are observing or assisting) the mysteries of death. “We are born to die,” as the saying goes.

Some people are convinced there is nothing after death; no place, no consciousness, no being, nothing. Some people fear that it is little more than a black, empty void one wanders through aimlessly. Others believe the soul travels to the great Paradise beyond, or down into a fiery abyss of pain and torment. Some traditions believe the soul sheds off the sins of the material world as it ascends through the heavenly spheres and is reabsorbed into the All. Other still believe the soul in reincarnated in new flesh. Whatever you believe, the fact is this: one day the body will fail and cease to be animate... everyone will one day die. We honor those who have passed away. Many of these forms of commemorating the dead are pared down forms of ancient necromancy. Saying prayers for or to

the dead, leaving flowers on graves (i.e. offerings), burial rites, memorial celebrations, and so forth are all some excerpted form of necromancy that has been modified from ancient times. We honor the dead so that they may favor us while we still enjoy this life.

And then we have ghosts. I myself live in a haunted house. It really is not so bad. We do not have a poltergeist (literally “noisy spirit”) or anything severe, but sometimes things get weird. It is a bit like having an extra roommate that you never see, but who occasionally makes a mess, and never pays rent. I have lived in several haunted places. While I was in college, I lived in a haunted dorm. On at least five occasions I heard high-heel footsteps walk up and down the balcony and then into my room, through the wall, and through my neighbor’s room. I once lived in an old apartment building in which I was awoken in the middle of the night by my bedsheets being lifted in the air and dropped down upon me. I have been out on a haunted road in South Carolina where I saw a shade walking about fifty feet away from me, and it was one of the most existentially mortifying experiences of my life.

What are ghosts is still a mystery to us. Some people believe they are real, while others do not, and others hesitate to give an opinion. In 1991 the New York Supreme Court ruled *caveat emptor* (“buyer beware”) on a case dealing with a haunted house, in which the seller did not disclose the paranormal activity in the home to the buyer. The Court would not rule in favor of the buyer simply because it would provide a legal precedent for hauntings.

Whether ghosts exist or not, the mysteries of death are nonetheless profound. It is the only veil for mortals that once it is crossed, you can never go back. However, this is the time of the year in which it has traditionally been believed that interaction between the mortal and the divine, between humans and spirits is most potent. If you live in a haunted house, things get weirder than usual. Prayers and petitions to the martyrs and saints are better received and answered. The purpose of these celebrations is to provide a spiritual connection, by praying to the saints or the righteous dead in heaven we living mortals are given communion with the divine and can grow closer to God. For other cultures, this season is ripe for communing with those who are no longer with us. As Masons we profess a belief in the immortality of the soul. What happens to that immortal part which survives the grave is anyone’s guess. Yet, for millennia humans have held a conviction that the souls of the departed may be honored and communicated with, and this was the most potent time of the year to do it.

Happy Halloween!

Training and Doing it Right

By Richard L. Ganion

The author retired after 42 years of active duty, contracting, and civil service for the Department of Defense/United States Air Force. His primary job was operations, training, and evaluation. Such experience enables the insight into Masonic preparation shown in this article. Brother Ganion has been active in many areas of Freemasonry, having presided over his Lodge, Scottish Rite, and York Rite bodies. He is currently Grand Senior Warden of the Grand Commandery, Knights Templar, of Ohio. This article first appeared in the October, 2019 issue of the Knights Templar.

I have been involved with training pretty much my entire life with the Air Force and Department of Defense. I have found many similarities in Masonry; life lessons I learned working those jobs proved themselves extremely valuable in Masonry. During my active duty military career, I flew as a mission specialist on EC-135s. To simplify to the extreme, the aircraft was an airborne NASA tracking station. Sometimes the missions lasted hours; most of the periods of direct mission support were 10 minutes or less of collecting data in a high pressure, high anxiety, and frantic period of activity. Each crew station had its duty to perform, and crew members had to do their parts in concert and coordination with each of the other crew members. They all impacted, and were affected by, the actions of the other crew members.

Could somebody walk into the aircraft, sit down at a crew station, and perform? NO! Could one crew member move from their station to another and perform? With rare exception (that of being cross-trained), NO! Even somebody with years of electronic and telemetry experience could not perform those duties without extensive training. It took upwards of a year to learn each station intimately enough to be able to operate on your own. Hours upon hours of book learning and practical, hands-on training. You had not only to know your system equipment inside and out, but also how your system impacted each of the others and how they impacted yours; working in concert was critical for mission success! If you failed to perform properly, a missile test or space launch, worth millions of dollars would be in jeopardy, and potentially lives could be lost.

After leaving active duty, I found continued employment with the DoD. I worked more specifically with Air Combat training systems; we provided training simulators for each aircraft platform, and a network integrating aircraft simulators together and with other combat training systems into a networked battlespace environment of live, virtual, and constructive training. Live, as in a pilot in a seat in the air; virtual, as in a pilot or operator in a simulator; constructive, as in computer generated—usually adversaries. Why is training so important? During the early days of the Vietnam War, the kill ratio for our pilots was not good. The United States Air Force lost nearly 10,000 aircraft and helicopters in the war while North Vietnam only lost 150-200 aircraft and helicopters. We lost to antiaircraft artillery (AAA), surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), and fighter interceptors (MiGs). The great majority of U.S. combat losses in all areas of Southeast Asia were to AAA.

It didn't take a genius to figure out that going into combat without proper training was a recipe for disaster; we were sending pilots into theater without any combat experience. Hence, the development of "Top Gun" for the Navy, and "Red Flag" for the Air Force to train our fighter pilots not only how to fly, but how to fight.

Going forward to Desert Storm, our pilots rehearsed combat missions in simulators. Result—the enemy never knew what hit them, they didn't have a chance as our side had already repeatedly rehearsed the missions against them in the simulators, practiced defeating enemy suppression systems,

and integrating with support elements and forward controllers to the extent that flying in combat felt like the simulator (only difference was the aircraft was pulled G's.) Note that we haven't lost a F-15 in combat, yet.

OK. That's all well and good, but how does this all relate to Masonry? Our fraternity is a society of "Friends and Brothers." Our ritual and ceremonies are intended to provide a shared, common experience that is the beginning of a lifetime of friendship. Some of us have had to memorize the degrees, orders, and obligations, and we share something that no one else can understand unless and until they have done it. This can be a struggle for some of us. But this struggle teaches us what we all can do with hard work and a true desire to accomplish things. We typically require our members, usually officers, to take upon themselves to learn ritual. And then on top of learning to recite ritual, we also require some level of theatrical performance in the conferral. This means that memorizing ritual is often only part of it; you have to interact with others. And you need them to be equally prepared. Each of you have to know your part, by heart, and know how where to be, what to do, and how to interact in order to give a good conferral for a candidate.

Could you take a part without training, or practice? And perform it well? I'll answer that for you: No! It may take you hours and hours of practice to learn a part. If you don't practice, the conferral of initiation could be ugly. When you do not know your part, it impacts not only you, but those around you. But if the initiation ceremony is not done well, what is the worse that will happen? What does it matter? Nobody is killed, and millions of dollars are not lost. But will that candidate be back? That 'kill ratio' is not shown to be on our side. If you don't do your part well, you have lost your one and only chance to make a good impression on that candidate. If you do not do it right, he is a 'kill'—will walk out the door and you likely will never see him again. A recent study has shown some 30% of candidates do not complete their work in lodge to become a Master Mason. They didn't come back. Why? Somehow the mission of making a positive impression was not successfully completed.

It is often difficult to get everybody together for a practice. This is where virtual or constructive training comes into play. Simulate the missing person. Don't let somebody that is missing stop you from practicing. Do your part, walk your part. If possible, have somebody at least read the part you interact with. But get your part down! Make it second nature, where you can perform without thought, and not thrown off track by others' errors or omissions. There is no excuse for not doing so. Remember when you first entered into your Lodge, Chapter, and Commandery? Likely it was a memorable experience, one that left a lasting, positive impression upon you. Or else you most likely would not be where you are today. It is now your responsibility to provide that positive impression upon others. You need to be the reason they come back! Practice often if you are not conferring often enough upon candidates to maintain proficiency. What if you cannot get your officers to come to practice? Maybe it is time to replace them with somebody that will...but that is another talk.

Why So Many Symbols?

By Leon Zeldis

The author is a retired textile engineer and translator. An active Mason since 1959, he is a Past Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite Supreme Council of Israel and Honorary Assistant Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Israel.

The famous definition of Freemasonry as “A system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols” brings to mind an immediate follow-up question: why so many symbols? Ours is an age of materialism and high-tech. Science explores every little corner of the universe, from the level of elementary particles to that of galaxies and the boundless universe, overwhelming us with an endless flood of facts, while imagination is banished to the sidelines of fiction. If this is our current situation, why do Freemasons insist in conveying our message through the medium of symbolism? Why do we continue performing long and complicated ceremonies? Why is Ritual the foundation of Masonic teaching?

The physicist, the modern demiurge, manages his invisible particles in a world of infinitely precise measurements, elaborate instruments, powerful computers and mathematical analysis. However, the human mind does not appear to work following the rules of computer logic; rather, it works on the basis of symbolic structures. Apprehension and abstraction are symbolic in nature. The language we use to reason with and to convey information is a generally accepted system of symbols. Words do not correspond to measurable physical entities. The word “fire” does not burn, but it immediately evokes in the mind images of a campfire or a burning building and in some cases, it may bring to mind shooting.

Suppose that I hold in my hand the score for Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. You see a book, yet in your mind you hear the four starting notes of the music, destiny knocking at the door, or V for Victory, if you remember the Second World War. I say this a symphony, but a scientist might claim that it is only an object weighing 400 grams, composed of wood pulp beaten into sheets, partly covered with a mixture of carbon black and glue. Who is closer to the truth? Which truth is closer to us? I now pick up a plastic disk and say this too is Beethoven’s Fifth. In my mind, they are closely related; the book and the disk are almost twins. More surprising still, both are representations of another, totally different experience, the actual concert performance of the symphony. The human mind has this extraordinary ability of abstracting these various experiences: attending a concert, listening to a recording, reading a score, and comprising them into a single symbol: Beethoven’s Fifth.

The Greek word *symbolein* means “to throw together” or “to unite”. The symbol unites an outer and visible thing or event with an inner or spiritual meaning. The antonym *diabolein* means “to separate” and is the origin of *diabolos* or *devil!*” (Deepak Chopra, *Panta Rhea*). Symbols, then, are tools for thought, ways to grasp reality and to relate it to ourselves. We sometimes forget that all measurements started as proportions of the human body. An inch is a thumb’s length, a palm is the breadth of a hand, a foot is the length of a foot, a fathom is the breadth of outstretched arms. The scientist has dehumanized his measurements, because his work is not done with tools adapted to the human body, but with instruments adapted to the machine.

In Masonry we look back to our human dimensions. The symbolic tools we use are intended to reveal direct insights about man, the microcosm, and the world about, the macrocosm. Masonry does not teach like in a classroom. We have no professors, because we are all apprentices, learning through work, through

practice, through personal experience. Masonic teachings are acquired and developed only by personal effort and involvement, by experiencing the ritual ceremonies. Masonic degrees cannot be received by mail or through the Internet, like diplomas after concluding a course of study. Ritual and symbols are dead letters when on the printed page. Only when the words and actions come to life, only by personally experiencing the ceremonies they become reality.

Masons assemble in lodge in order to work. Opening the lodge is calling it to labor. We hold work in such high esteem, because work is essentially a personal experience. Working we use our hands, our minds and our hearts. Seeing only the external aspects of ritual, one may be inclined to call it a theatrical game. Indeed, when ritual is performed without proper preparation, as a charade, a series of actions, words and gestures carried out without thought, ritual becomes a parody. But ritual can also become the key to unlock a deeper, more immediate understanding of human nature than what is imparted by logical discourse. Ritual incorporates the accumulated experience of wise men who lived in ages before science and the scientific method were dominant, an experience expressed in legends and symbols. When Freemasonry itself is considered as a philosophical institution, that is, an association of free men, lovers of knowledge, then, and only then, we can begin to appreciate the value of ritual and symbol in our work. Yes, we do play a game in Masonry. It is a very old game, ever full of surprises. It is called the game of life. The tools that Masonry puts in our hands allow us to play the game better, with personal enjoyment and for the benefit of society.

Masonic Service Association Emessay Notes February 2020

Podcasts of Short Talks Bulletins Meet Resounding Success in First Year

Most Masons know about the Short Talk Bulletins (STB), published monthly by the MSA since 1923. The first Podcast of the STBs was released on November 30, 2018, and the first-year report shows outstanding success. Since that start, more than 65,000 Podcast downloads have occurred from all over the world. The numbers are steadily increasing, with 12,675 downloads in a recent 60-day period. Short Talk Bulletins were originally conceived to bring a common stock of Masonic information to all Lodges, by providing a short, chatty discussion of some Masonic topics that could be read in every Lodge every month. They have been written by noted Masonic scholars, but also Brothers and non-members from all walks of life, and serve as a unifying beacon across the broad reach of the Craft.

Unfortunately, the majority of the Craft today have little exposure to such excellent content, unless they have an individual monthly subscription to the Short Talks or have purchased one or more of the six Volumes, which include reprints of hundreds of the STBs. (See www.msana.com for more information.) Nowadays, thousands of Masonic members are interested in listening, not reading, their Masonic information. Podcasts are an option for many of them.

Several Grand Lodge Jurisdictions are now recommending the STB Podcast program to their members. For example, the Illinois Grand Lodge Membership Committee has recommended a specific list of the available Podcasts to its membership. Since that first STB Podcast was released — “Civic Responsibilities of Lodge,” written in November, 1963 — more than 125 episodes have been published. Each month, the new Short Talk Bulletin is added to the list. In addition, the 97-year history of STBs is reviewed for outstanding information of current interest. The splendor of the Short Talk Bulletins is their timelessness of content.

One element of the Podcast program is the attempt to have as many of the authors of the modern STBs record their own work in their own voices, which helps demonstrate the depth and breadth of the palette of Masonic scholarship and knowledge. An amusing aside to this comes from Walter MacDougall (PGM of Maine in 1996) after he recorded “Our Masonic Purpose,” which he wrote in 1965. After finishing the recent recording, Brother MacDougall commented, “That sounds like the raving of a very young person, but I guess it was...ha ha.”

Of the 125 episodes now available, the most popular are titled Freemasonry Defined, Civility, Nebraska’s Return To Proficiency, Symbolism, Is Masonry Relevant, The Legend Of The Lost Word, 9 Questions, and 3, 5, 7, each of which has more than 650 downloads. Anyone, a Mason or not, can access all of these episodes at: <https://shorttalkbulletin.com/>.

Many brothers share these Podcast episodes in Lodge, with Masons and non-Masons, or as content to consume in the car on the commute. Still unsure how to proceed? Most smart devices have an assistant, to which one might say, “Sid (or Alexa or Hey Google), find the Short Talk Bulletin Podcast.” You will be listening in moments.

Masonic Service Association Emessay Notes April 2020 BeAFreemaon.org Launched to Promote Freemasonry

A wealth of positive Masonic information is now on the internet, in what has been called an historic initiative—creating a new “welcome mat” or “front door” to our Fraternity. The new website, BeAFreemason.org was announced by three major Masonic organizations at the Conference of Grand Masters of North America, meeting in Louisville in February.

Together, David A. Glattly, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction (NMJ); James D. Cole, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction (SJ); and Jeffrey L. Sowder, Imperial Potentate of Shriners International, described the program to the Grand Masters and other Masonic leaders present.

BeAFreemason.org features an explanation of Masonic terms, Lodge life, symbolism, degrees and family organizations. The site introduces Freemasonry to men who are looking to “become the best version” of themselves. It has a “Get in Touch” button, so prospects can fill out a short inquiry form, and this information will be referred directly and instantly to Grand Lodge contacts in their local areas. Already, Brother Glattly reported in March that more than 500 names of interested individuals had been reported to Grand Lodges.

This project started at the NMJ as part of an integrated, strategic marketing initiative known as “The Path Forward.” A survey of men across the country from all walks of life about what would motivate them to join an organization such as Freemasonry discovered a significant fact: *The core values of Freemasonry are alive and well and continue to resonate strongly with men in society today.*

The survey of 1,000 non-Masons across the United States found: 79% are looking to associate with an organization that enables them to become a better person while improving the quality of life for others. 90% are interested in organizations built on the principles integrity and justice. 75% are looking to form deep and lasting friendships regardless of race, religion, or geography.

“The Path Forward” launched a public relations campaign, “Not Just a Man. A Mason,” which is now being used in 47 Grand Lodges and 10 other countries. It has been translated into Spanish, French, Portuguese, and a Russian version is underway. Since February, the Scottish Rite is working with the Grand Lodge of South Africa to translate the campaign into Afrikaans.

More than just a website, BeAFreemason.org is emblematic of the historic partnership of the Scottish Rite Northern and Southern Jurisdictions and Shriners International to support the growth of Blue Lodge Masonry.

“Our goal is to raise more worthy men and allow them to find their journey in Masonry. Above all else, this endeavor is to support the growth of Freemasonry, and its long-term sustainability,” the three leaders said in a joint statement. The success of the program will come when Masons spread the word about the BeAFreemason.org website, sharing it with friends and acquaintances who would be interested in learning more about Freemasonry.

Masonic Service Association Emessay Notes November 2020 **Masonic Service Association Moves Back to Its Roots**

The Masonic Service Association has now, in effect, moved back to its roots—relocating its headquarters to Cedar Rapids, Iowa. MSA was created at a meeting of Grand Masters of the United States in 1919 in Cedar Rapids, and now, in its 101st year, it comes back to that birthplace. Most of MSA’s life has been headquartered in the Washington, D.C., and nearby Silver Spring and Burtonsville, MD, areas. MSA has been restructuring its organization in the past year, to provide a more functional and cost-savings method to serve Freemasonry across the continent. Its long-time home near the nation’s capital is a very high rent district.

MSA’s new address and contact information:

813 1st Avenue SE STE 357 Cedar Rapids, IA 52402-5001

Tel: 319-206-5411

Fax: 319-365-1439

msaoffice@msana.com

www.msana.com

MSA now will be operating out of the building housing the Iowa Masonic Library and Museums, which is regarded as one of the best facilities in the world to perform Masonic research. The large marble structure houses the library, several museums, special exhibits, and the offices of the Grand Lodge of Iowa. “What an outstanding location for the Masonic Service Association and its variety of service and information-producing responsibilities,” said Lanny Sander, Chairman of the MSA Board of Commissioners. The Library houses more than 250,000 volumes, of which thousands are rare Masonic books for the serious researcher and a circulating collection for the casual reader. The Library also collects materials dealing with non-Masonic topics.

Last year, as part of the reorganization, Craig Davis was named Administrator for the Masonic Service Association, its chief operating officer. He also serves as Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Iowa. In its new home, MSA will continue its variety of services to Freemasonry in North America, including:

- Service to military Veterans at approximately 150 U.S. Veterans hospitals and clinics in the country. MSA is the only Masonic organization represented on the Veteran’s Administration’s Voluntary Services Organization Advisory Board.
- Preparation and dispersal of Masonic information to assist Lodge education efforts, general Masonic content for the public, and useful data for the benefit of any Mason. These efforts include monthly distribution of the *Short Talk Bulletin* and *Emessay Notes* publications, operation of the Masonic Information Center, and periodic development of brochures and digests.
- Gathering and dispersal of Disaster Relief Funds to Grand Lodges in times of need. Millions of dollars over the years have been collected and provided to assist in times of trouble. MSA has become the key organization trusted by Grand Lodges and Masons to filter such relief to needed areas. Every penny donated through MSA for disaster relief is sent to those in need.

ELECTED FELLOWS OF THE TENNESSEE LODGE OF RESEARCH

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>
Howard Ketron "Jack" Akard	Dec. 13, 1997	Warren Lee Moore	Dec. 10, 1994
*MW John Burton Arp, Jr.	Dec. 10, 1994	MW John Lawrence Palmer	Dec. 12, 2015
*Donald Barrow	Dec. 10, 1994	Philip Edward Phillips, Ph.D.	Dec. 12, 2009
Thomas Ernest Brooks	Dec. 10, 1994	*Paul Frederick Richards	Dec. 11, 1999
*Derial Wayne Bivens	Dec. 14, 2019	Robert Harold Richards	Dec. 10, 1994
*MW Billie Reginald Brown	Dec. 10, 1994	*John Nicholas Sharp	Mar. 9, 1996
MW Ronald Jasper Coates	Dec. 8, 2001	*Donald Martin Smith	Dec. 10, 1994
*Harold Cristil	Dec. 10, 1994	David Edward Stafford, Ed.D.	Dec. 11, 2010
*Bobby Joe DeMott	Dec. 10, 1994	*Louis Steinberg	Dec. 10, 1994
*Jacob Roach Denny	Dec. 10, 1994	Charles McBerry Thames	Dec. 10, 2005
Thomas James Driber, Ph.D.	Dec. 13, 2008	Vincent Lamar Troglen	Dec. 10, 2011
*Charles Jahew Eads, Jr.	Dec. 10, 1994	*Clarence Raymond Wilson, Jr.	Dec. 12, 2015
*Robert Elmer Gooch	Dec. 10, 1994		
*Gary William Hall	Dec. 13, 1997	*Deceased	
Jason Francis Hicks	Dec. 18, 2021		
Sanford Dale Lancaster	Dec. 13, 2008		
Michael Carroll Lett	Dec. 14, 2002		
*Moses Defriese Manning, Jr.	Dec. 10, 1994		
*James Allen Marshall	Dec. 10, 1994		
*James Clifton McCarley	Dec. 10, 1994		
John Russell Meldorf	Dec. 10, 1994		
*Richard Travis Milton Prine	Dec. 10, 1994		