

Art and Freemasonry



« Méditation » by Gérard Bouilly

Artistic Expression in the Masonic Journey

QUADRIVIUM			
1	Arithmetic	△ Air	The study of quantity involving the combination of numbers through addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. (pure construct, abstraction)
2	Geometry	▽ Earth	A branch of mathematics concerned with shape, size, relative position, and the properties of space. (Arithmetic of Space)
3	Music	▽ Water	An art form which employs vibration, rhythm, dynamics, and the interplay between sound and silence as its mediums for expression. (Arithmetic of Time)
4	Astronomy	△ Fire	A natural science that deals with the study of celestial objects such as stars, planets, comets, nebulae, and galaxies. (Arithmetic of Time and Space)

from <https://freemasonrymatters.co.uk>

It is evident that art and Freemasonry go hand in hand! Since Freemasonry has existed, many artists have joined the lodges. Famous or not, they have been inspired by the symbolism and Masonic approach to spirituality.

Why? Even today, it remains a mystery!

In reality, Masonic ritual work is so structured that participants have little capacity to innovate or mod-

ify. Moreover, Masonic artists often find themselves outside the obediencial circuit.

In an ordinary lodge, artistic expression can take on many different forms:

- the quality of the lodge painting,
- decorations (cords, aprons, saltires)
- clothing,
- choice of furniture,
- forecourt decoration.

In this special issue, you will find different approaches to tackle this topic of reflection.

What do you think?

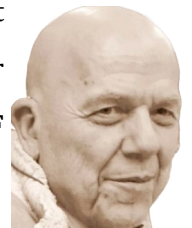
Do you have experience in artistic creation? Do you express it in the lodge?

Fraternally,

Alain Breant

Publication Director

Lodge Quo Vadis—Vichy— GODF



Rembrandt's "The Night Watch"

One of the most famous examples of Freemasonry in visual arts is Rembrandt's masterpiece, "The Night Watch." This painting, created in 1642, depicts a group of men, some of whom are believed to be Freemasons, gathered in front of a building. The composition is rich in symbolism, with light and dark representing the duality of good and evil.

Sources : <https://www.thesquaremagazine.com/mag/article/045-creative-brotherhood-freemasonrys-influence-on-art-culture/>

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ARS REGIA: SILENCE, PARRHESIA AND CONSTRUCTIVE ART OF THE MASON

The philosopher Maimonides says:

"With everything you learn, my son, learn that number one is knowledge, number two is what is known, and number three is what can be known; and if you bring together these three numbers, you possess the synthesis of yourself and of all that you can know."

My thesis is that when we integrate these three principles: silence, parrhesia, and constructive art into our Masonic life, we achieve the synthesis of ourselves and of all we can know to be able to act, that is, to fulfill the artistic constructive work both of the Inner Temple and the Social Temple.

With this, I mean that it is not possible to carry out a true constructive and transformative art of ourselves and our society without the dialectical relationship between silence and parrhesia. This synthesis is the basis of our personal and spiritual growth and the essence of our constructive work as Masons, allowing us to realize the Ars Regia or Royal Art.

As the logic of the probable, it is the art of dialogue and argumentation that deals with probable or plausible reasoning. As logic, it is the art of reasoning correctly and examining arguments rigorously to distinguish true from false and to reach valid conclusions. And as the synthesis of opposites, it is the process of clash of opposites and contradictions and the synthesis they generate, which is, in the end, the constant dynamic of change that produces, generates, and regenerates reality. With this clear, let us proceed.

Silence

Silence is the first point of the triangle or the first extreme of the dialectical relationship. When we are received as apprentices, the importance of silence is emphasized, and it is mythically and symbolically related to the period of silence of the novitiate of the ancient initiates of the Pythagorean mysteries, but



the purpose of that silence is rarely emphasized enough.

Understanding the purpose of silence is fundamental for every Mason. This is so because silence can be imposed by power over individuals or groups and used as a consequence of exercising that power to control or suppress the truth to maintain the status quo and avoid disruption.

Furthermore, with this type of silence, the silenced are excluded from rational discourse, becoming a defense mechanism of power against the threat of disruptive truth.

This is not what the silence of the Apprentice Mason should serve for. Only in the quiet of study, reflection, and silent meditation can we learn to master the first three liberal arts: Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric. Therefore, every apprentice and, by extension, every Mason must use silence as a space for reflection and introspection essential to know, think, and find the truth.

Parrhesia

Saying all that one knows, telling the whole truth, is the second point of the triangle. For the Mason, rhetoric should not be vain and ornate speech but a practice of frank and courageous discourse where the speaker tells the whole truth directly and without embellishment.

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Hence, I bring in this work the word Parrhesia, which is a Greek term meaning "to say everything."

This saying everything of the Mason, in line with what Michel Foucault expounded in his work on discourse and truth, must meet certain minimum conditions:

- Frankness and Sincerity,
- Commitment to the Truth,
- Direct and Personal Relationship,
- Disruption and Criticism,
- Act of Courage.

You may be wondering what I mean by "truth" when I say "tell the whole truth," and here I once again subscribe to Foucault.

The truth is not an objective or universal truth but an ethical and political truth that arises from one's own experience, from one's self-examination, the capacity to think for oneself, critical analysis, and understanding of reality and situations, and from one's own conviction, the result of that capacity and analysis, and the moral courage of the speaking Mason practicing parrhesia.

The Constructive Art of the Mason

The synthesis of the opposition between reflective and introspective silence and parrhesia gives rise to a third condition that is different from the previous two but incorporates and synthesizes them, which is the third point of the triangle, the Constructive Art of the Mason.

When referring to the Constructive Art of the Mason, we refer to art as the "aesthetics of existence," as a life practice that treats one's own individual and social existence as an artistic project.

Conclusion

I will say that the dialectical relationship between silence and parrhesia leads us to the possibility of realizing the Ars Regia through the edification of the inner Temple and the social Temple of humanity from a deeper understanding of ourselves, the world around us, how we are subjectivized and therefore how we relate, interact, act, and transform it through constructive art.

In this way, language plays a fundamental role in the construction of social reality and subjectivity, as it is not a simple transparent and neutral means to represent or reflect the objective reality of the world as if it were a mirror that passively reflects things as they are, but language and the act of telling the whole truth play an active role in producing and shaping reality, both internal and social.

Discourses understood as sets of statements and discursive practices configure our understanding of reality and regulate what is considered true and acceptable through dialogical interactions with the other that allow the construction of consensus and dissensus and enable us to orient our individual and collective action founded on this discursive rationality and our understanding of how dominant discourses offer subject positions and modes of subjectivation that shape the ways in which individuals perceive themselves and relate to the world.

My Brothers and Sisters, let us reflect and always tell the whole truth to be able to call ourselves Masons, to be able to call ourselves Constructive Artists.

Roberto Certain-Ruiz

PWM. Respectable Lodge



Workers of Liberty
Number 11.

Colombian Federation of Masonic Lodges.

The Secret Art of the Masonic Method

The word "rite" shares its phonetic and etymological roots with the Latin "ritus" and the Sanskrit "rita," both evoking concepts of order, custom, and cycle. Thus, a rite is defined as the orderly repetition of an act or gesture within a ceremony.

The initiatory rite is understood as a dynamic symbol, a tangible manifestation of an idea or archetype. This dynamic symbol, in turn, establishes an essential rite, anchoring the transient in the enduring and becoming a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge and learning.

While the study of graphic and geometric symbols is based on concentration and intellectual rigor, ceremonial rites encompass a series of acts and postures that profoundly impact the psychosomatic plane of the human being. Symbols challenge the mind and lead it to higher levels of abstraction and understanding; rites, on the other hand, penetrate deep into the being, affecting both the body and the spirit, inducing transformations that transcend the purely rational.

The Masonic art method confronts the Freemason with a ritual drama, a lived representation that communicates ethical messages and symbolic knowledge, gradually revealed to the initiate. This knowledge, devoid of dogmatic connotations, is part of an open philosophical speculation, allowing for an assimilation that is both spiritual and symbolic as well as conceptual.

The initiatory drama acts as a catalyst for understanding, where every gesture and word in the ritual is laden with deep meanings, designed to awaken in the initiate a higher awareness of their own existence and the universal order.

Masonic initiation can be conceptualized as a threshold, an opening towards a new state of consciousness and being. This process aims to harmonize the Freemason with the surrounding reality, nature, and their own inner self. It is an entry that marks the beginning of a profound transformation, where the initiate tunes into a broader knowledge of themselves and their environment.

Through gradual and progressive initiations, the initiate is guided towards a philosophical speculation



that drives them to seek the truth. This truth is secular and devoid of fundamentalism; it is a truth that belongs to the individual, meaning it is only valid for those who directly experience it and cannot be imposed on others.

In the Masonic realm, there is no dogmatic truth, but rather an initiatory truth that is revealed intimately and uniquely to each individual.

The primary objective of this initiatory truth is to connect the initiate with reality in its purest and most authentic form. Consequently, the ultimate goal of the Masonic method is the evolution of the individual towards becoming a more complete, free, and conscious human being.

A transformed Freemason is someone who can interact in the modern world with awareness and without constraints, capable of living with integrity and contributing to the collective well-being.

Initiation, therefore, is not simply a ritual but a continuous process of self-discovery and self-realization. Each stage of initiation adds layers of understanding and wisdom, bringing the initiate closer to an experiential truth. This truth is not static; it evolves with time and experience, reflecting the growth and maturation of the inner being.

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Masonic initiation is a philosophical and spiritual journey that profoundly transforms the individual. As they traverse this path, the Freemason not only discovers new perspectives on their life and environment but also finds themselves on a deeper level.

This process of transformation and self-discovery is what makes the Masonic method such a powerful and meaningful practice, capable of elevating the individual and, by extension, humanity as a whole.

The initiatic art is an intrinsically human method, employed since the dawn of civilization, when the first societies began to organize in a structured manner. According to Professor Hutton Webster, initiatic societies are reminiscent of the "Men's House" in primitive communities.

In these settings, adult men were initiated into the secret laws, legends, traditions, and beliefs of their people. Recent research has revealed that these long-hidden institutions constituted the true core of the tribe. The council chamber was not only the place where legislation was enacted and courts were held but also where war trophies were kept and crucial decisions for the community were made.

The art of the Masonic method is articulated in four fundamental phases, each designed to guide the initiate on their journey towards greater understanding and realization:

The psychodramatic experiences of the initiation ceremonies: These ceremonies are meticulously structured to immerse the initiate in a symbolic drama. Through these rituals, they are confronted with archetypes and myths that evoke deep internal transformations. The psychodramatic ceremonies act as catalysts, facilitating an awakening of consciousness and a more intimate connection with universal mysteries.

The spiritual, symbolic, and conceptual assimilation of the initiation within the context of the initiate's philosophical speculation: After the ceremonies, the initiate embarks on a deep reflection on the experiences lived. This phase involves a spiritual and symbolic integration of the rituals, where each sym-



bol and act is deciphered and assimilated. Philosophical speculation allows the initiate to develop a more nuanced and personal understanding of Masonic principles, transforming abstract knowledge into lived wisdom.

The socialization of Masonic symbolic study and initiatory experience through the presentation of work in Masonic meetings: The knowledge acquired and experiences lived do not remain in the individual realm. In this phase, the initiate shares their discoveries and reflections with the lodge through presentations and discussions. This exchange fosters collective learning, enriching both the presenter and the listeners, and strengthening community bonds within the lodge.

The construction of the personal ethos of the initiate, but also of a collective ethos, as all Freemasons of the lodge actively participate in the entire initiatory process: The initiatory journey culminates in the formation of an ethos, a morality, and a character that reflect Masonic values. This development is not only personal; it is a collective effort. Each member of the lodge contributes to the growth and strengthening of the common ethos, creating a cohesive community committed to the principles of fraternity, truth, and justice.

Milton ARRIETA-LÓPEZ
Associate Professor, Oakton College, Illinois, USA



Dance: An Art that Unites Us

Artistic expression through the arts opens the prism of Masonic symbolism for us. In the profane cultural life, the art of dance occupies a prominent place. Today, I have chosen to highlight the choreographer Jean-Claude Gallota and his disciple Bruno Maréchal.

Three Questions for Jean-Claude Gallota:

Pauline: You have gained your notoriety by creating choreographies such as Ulysses or The Man with the Cabbage Head. "The Gallota style" is characterized by the use of extended arms and small steps in your choreographies. How have you cultivated this symbolism that makes you recognizable among your peers?

Jean-Claude Gallota: I am above all an artist who could be described as intuitive and, as such, I do not precisely know my style. You describe some gestures to define me, which might not be the same for someone else. I often experience these differences through critiques or encounters with the audience after performances. I learn about myself through these various testimonies. However, if I try to answer this question, I would say that something seems to animate me: the rhythm and the play of children. In this impulse, a gestural expression can emerge despite myself and thus become my style. Dance is a practice that requires initiation through a master and regular work that leads to mastery.

Pauline: You are attributed with a playful method of transmission. How is this altered state of consciousness characterized in your dancers?

Jean-Claude Gallota: The dancers learn the gestural writing that I propose to them, play with it, often adding personal interpretations and improvisations.



They try to understand my way of working, and I help them stay on course to foster a sense of belonging to the group and the company. I also emphasize the specificity of each creation.

Pauline: Dance promotes motor, psychic, and emotional unity. Can we talk about a mind/body unity?

Jean-Claude Gallota: Absolutely! A good performer achieves this fusion at its best. The strength of the athlete combined with the talent of the actor.

1, 2, 3... Bruno, it's your turn!

Pauline: Can you tell me about your journey and the path you've taken to become the dancer and performer you are today?

Bruno Maréchal: I was born in Grenoble, in the popular neighborhood of La Villeneuve. I took my first steps in a dance school in Place de Verdun. This allowed me to get on stage and develop my potential. Being a boy was not a hindrance; on the contrary, I was even a bit pampered. From the age of five to

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eighteen, I worked on my art and forged myself to become a professional. My journey was marked by encounters with different choreographers from various backgrounds.

The year 2012 was decisive in my career because, after a successful audition, I was able to join the Grenoble Choreographic Center run by Jean-Claude Gallota. We have now been working together for fourteen years. The fraternal bond that unites us is that of dance. As a performer and choreographer, we work together.

Pauline: Having had the pleasure of working with you, I have noticed that you include the imaginary in your movements. Can you tell us about some allegories that inspire you?

Bruno Maréchal: I like to use the imaginary. I use the allegory of the house: each person has their own, we start to add color to it and then spread that color to the surroundings.

Pauline Léon



Jean-Claude Gallotta' biography

"Born in France (Grenoble) on 20 March 1950, Jean-Claude Gallotta discovered dance late in life through tap dance, classical dance and then modern dance, and in particular the art of Merce Cunningham, whose teaching he followed to the United States. At the end of the 1970s, he returned to Grenoble and, with his wife, the dancer Mathilde Altaraz, founded the 'Groupe Émile-Dubois', a company that has remained with him ever since. Émile Dubois is nobody. The name is that of a complete stranger whose life becomes an epic. "

Fil-Infos-Loges is an international association created in France to bring together Freemasons and lay people wishing to support the five essential Masonic values:

- Benevolence,
- Respect for freedom of conscience,
- Spiritual quest,
- The appropriation of irreproachable ethics,
- And the desire to contribute to universal brotherhood.

Contact us
fil.infosloge@gmail.com

The Tapestry / Tracing Board of the Lodge

There are very beautiful and surprising lodge tapestries according to the rites, times, and traditions. At the beginning of my Masonic journey, I did not find anything artistic in the Lodge tapestry, which seemed to me, on the contrary, a clumsy attempt to reproduce some symbols. However, those I have seen in my travels and readings could be true works of art, with spiral staircases and representations of stars illuminating a mysterious scene. Before being captivated by the magnetism of these boards, it is necessary to decode their symbols and utility. In some rites, this board is entirely hand-drawn and must be completely erased for a return to the profane life, which adds to its mystery: it is both a figurative board and a strong symbolic component, a living work of art that is constantly renewed.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TAPESTRY / TRACING BOARD OF THE LODGE

Understanding the origins

At least two origins can be identified for this Lodge board.

The first is biblical: "David gave his son Solomon the plans of the vestibule and its buildings, the treasuries, the upper rooms, the inner rooms, and the place of the mercy seat... All this he made clear by the writing from the hand of YHVH concerning it, all the works of this plan." (1 Chronicles 28:11,19) Later, when the Jews were in exile and the Temple had been destroyed twice, Ezekiel was commanded to draw the plan of Jerusalem and its Temple. His vision was very precise, as he was given the number of cubits for each architectural element. (Ezekiel 40).

This story of cubits is found in the instruction of the second degree. The fact that a diagram drawn on the ground represents the plan of a temple is not unique to Israel. It is also found in Tantric Buddhism. The Bible thus recalls a universal principle born in antiquity, according to which symbolic diagrams are simple reproductions on a flat surface of the plan of the temple constructed in three dimensions.



The second origin is operative. With the barbarian invasions at the end of the Carolingian era, Europe experienced a true catastrophe. What remained of culture took refuge in the monasteries. It is almost certain that the Romanesque art of the first cathedrals was essentially the work of Benedictine monks or at least inspired by them from the 10th century. These monks developed a dual competence: stoneworkers and specialists in sacred texts. But very quickly, with the development of cities, Chapters took over from monasteries, and operative guilds, formed almost exclusively of laymen, began to appear. Inside the lodge (an area adjacent to the building under construction) and at the

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worksite, young workers received secret training from master builders and architects. This was done verbally and graphically, as they could neither read nor write. Then they learned to use tools such as the level, the plumb line, the tracing board, geometry... The board was drawn directly on the ground, with black lime or in "hollows" in the earth. Operative masons met in public places, the back room of a tavern, or the apartment of one of the companions, using the tracing board to materialize the work, starting to trace and then erasing everything at the end.

Over the centuries, these secret transmissions were no longer limited to operative masons but also included aristocrats, cultured men, Enlightenment thinkers, and political partisans. At the beginning of speculative Masonry, Lodges practiced a form of nomadism, and the tracing board allowed any place to be transformed into a temple (a sacred space) and return to the profane life after each meeting. (London: The Goose and Gridiron). It is quite interesting to note that Freemasonry built ephemeral sacred spaces. This tells us that the Temple is not contained in the construction of an adapted place but is built by us through the opening rituals and the group we form.

Then, some lodges began to draw the required elements for work on cloth. The board thus became a "lodge carpet." It is called a lodge carpet because, in the 18th century, it was painted on a sheet that was rolled out on the floor.

Understanding the meaning of unveiling

Whether drawn at the time of opening or unveiled, the Lodge board exists and constitutes the sacred space through the magic of its unveiling. It is this unveiled board that creates the space-time of the meeting. It is at the moment of its unveiling that the Lodge space is consecrated with the lighting of the candles and the ritual words opening the work.

In some rites, the Lodge board is unveiled at the same time the columns Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty are lit. The image is thus "illuminated" and "revealed" to the Brethren and Sisters of the workshop by a Light coming from the East.

The unveiling is equivalent to the hand-drawn tracing: it is at the moment of unveiling when all eyes converge and all the Brethren and Sisters turn towards it, and the light is made. The tracing of the board, therefore, establishes a community of experience because I only share its unveiling with initiates like me. The board remains hidden from the profane.

What is the effect of the unveiling? The unveiling is first a curtain-raising; it is a theatrical rite at the beginning of the work, at the beginning of the piece. It is an artistic moment, a sacred moment that we will live together.

Delphine Horvilleur said that, in her opinion, it is not the gaze that should be veiled but the text. It is not the object of desire that must be concealed, but the unveiling indicates that the board is free from all other gazes previously placed upon it and that a new perspective, mine here and now, is possible. I know that afterwards, everything will be erased: the play will be over, making way for life outside, in another theater, giving way to my new vision enhanced by what I have nourished in the Temple.

Is the board a work of art?

After attempting to understand the meaning of the very presence of the Lodge board and its symbols in the middle of the lodge, I would now like to speak of it as an object of art. "Art, says Nietzsche, is given to us to prevent us from dying of the truth" (The Will to Power).

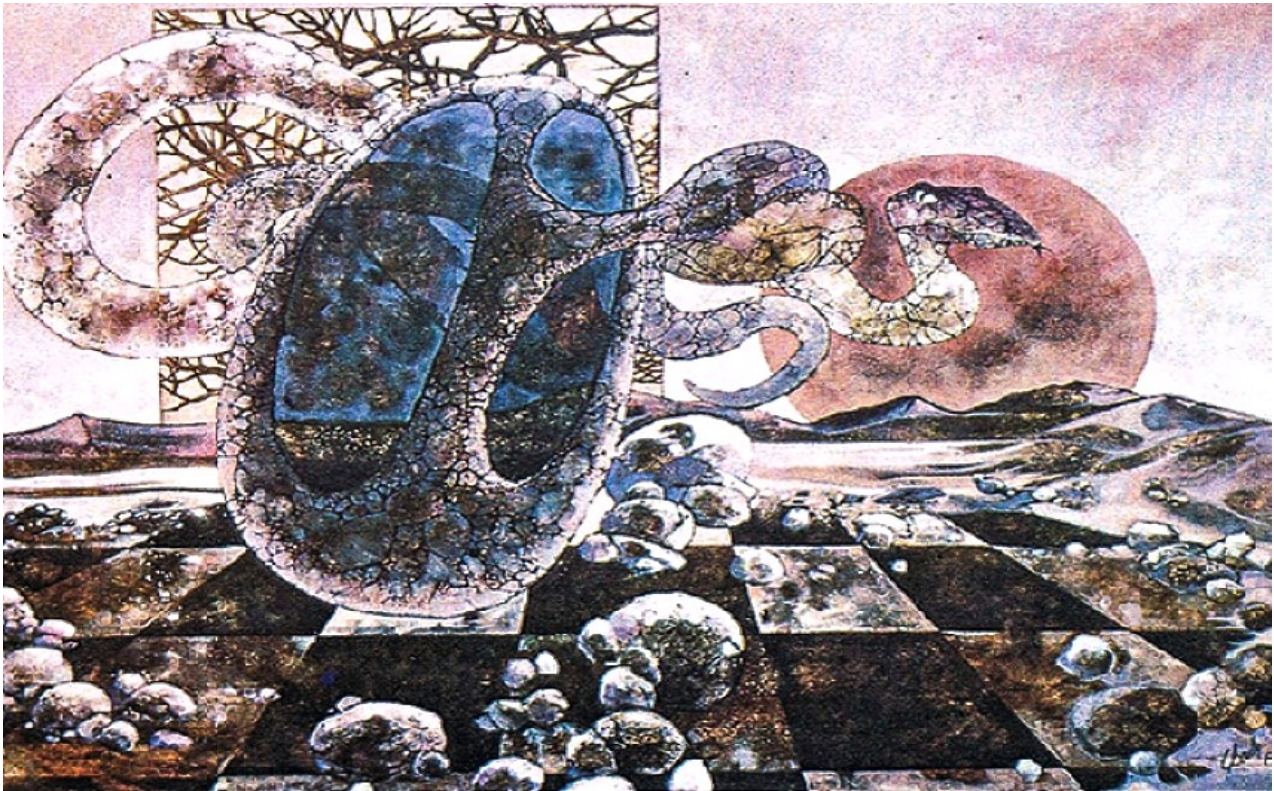
The Lodge board refers us to architecture and construction, but I notice that ours does not represent real architecture, except very schematically: a door, closed by the way, columns, windows. The work of art is not a simple mirror of reality, it opens a world that is that of meaning in general.

In the work of the artist, the architect, the material comes to the brilliance of appearance, the temple, the building, the construction highlight the weight of the stone..

Odile Griver

From the Grande Loge Féminine de France

Art and Symbolism



« Beyond Silence » by Gerard Bouilly

***Editor's Note:** Gérard B. was a painter and also a brother of a lodge of the Grand Orient of France (GODF). He entrusted me with his board a few years ago. He incorporated Masonic symbolism into some of his works. Unfortunately, he has passed to the Eternal East.*

Art can be considered a place of tension that presents numerous analogies and interconnections with symbolism.

Pictorial art, seen as a privileged place of the imagination, raises the problem of this "madness of the attic," as Blaise Pascal called it, so criticized by rationalists of all kinds and by Plato himself, who only sees in it a limited process of imitation as a clumsy, partial, and incomplete representation of the reality of the "sensible" world.

Plato distrusts the artistic enterprise and its pretension to play recklessly with the power of the symbol.

He reproaches it for stagnating at the lowest level of perception of being and, consequently, for being a deception all the more dangerous because of its am-

bition. The illusion, an additional barrier to the perception of ideas, would make the world of images a diversion from the ideal form in favor of the sensible form.

If I address this Platonic point of view from the outset, it is to indicate where our reflection will lead, which will strive to reveal the profound originality of the symbol in Art.

On the relationship between the image and the meaning:

Undoubtedly, due to the distrust towards what touches the imagination in the West, the corresponding vocabulary is unclear or even devalued: we speak indifferently of "image," "sign," "symbol," or "allegory."

The sign: The first category of signs includes those that save time and refer to something sensible and indisputable; they are, therefore, arbitrary, variable, and can be expressed by a number, a letter, or a drawing; thus, it is to in-

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stantly signal that a street is one-way or that Mr. Martin lives at number 3.

The allegory: It mainly refers to abstract concepts; thus, Justice is represented by an allegory in which each of its elements corresponds to a part of the meaning: for example, a character carrying a scale. The allegory is often superimposed on a prior thought, which is the only condition for its meaning.

The symbol: We could define the symbol as the reverse of the allegory; as Paul Godet writes in "Sujet symbole dans les arts plastiques" (Subject symbol in the plastic arts), "If the allegory starts from the abstract idea to arrive at a figure, the symbol is first a figure and, as such, a source among other things of ideas." By its nature, the symbol is, therefore, an appearance of the unspeakable, an epiphany of a part of Reality that escapes the organs of perception or rational understanding. Gilbert Durand, philosopher and anthropologist of the imagination, specifies: "Unable to depict the unfigurable transcendence, the symbolic image is a transfiguration of a concrete representation by an abstract sense forever."

According to Paul Ricoeur, the symbol thus acquires a triple dimension: cosmic, since it is an element of the world around us; oneiric, insofar as it is rooted in dreams, memories, and the great memory of the species; and poetic, since it belongs to discourse in its most "augmentative" aspect.

Just as the idol-image closes in on itself, the symbol-image establishes a sense and leads to a beyond of the sensible.

In his autobiography, Goethe explains that "*In Nature, living and lifeless, animated and inanimate, I believed I recognized something that only manifested itself through contradictions and therefore could not be understood in any concept, much less in a word. It seemed random, as no consequence was manifested; it seemed close to Providence; it hinted at a relationship.*"

Symbolic knowledge is never definitive, never closed, never explicit because it does not refer to a

previously established discourse. It is an open door, reminiscence, reconnection of the sensible to forms. Acquisition of an unspeakable knowledge, presentiment, the symbol defines the freedom of the human being in its creative dimension.

Art and Symbolism

It is striking to observe that our contemporaries, at the same time that they have lost access to the soul, turn as compensation towards artistic production.

Symbolic art rejects the idea of continuous progress; on the contrary, it imagines a progression of the consciousness of our belonging to the world and of our connection with our origins. Symbolic art is nourished by our experience of destiny, which always begins in the present moment.

Paul Klee formulates this requirement thus: "Within Nature, at the source of creation, where the secret key to all things lies guarded, chosen are those who reach the edges of this secret world where original life nourishes all evolution."

We conclude with this quote from René Huyghe (1906-1997), who had a career as curator of the Louvre Museum, psychologist and philosopher of art, professor at the Collège de France, and French academician:

"Art knows how to grope, similar to a root towards the dark humus from which the sap rises, which only becomes fertile after having been elaborated; if it confines itself to the surface of the soil, it may, like a mirror, capture the splendors of reality, but it will not know how to resist making it the docile material on which to project the imprint of the laws of its thought or the movements of its sensitivity. It can transform itself further and become like a song that rises; it knows it is music; it transforms and transfigures all reality; it carries it in a movement that, taking off from the ground, launches towards the space above."



Gérard Bouilly

He was a member of a lodge of the Great Orient de France

MASONIC CEREMONIAL MUSIC



Masonic ceremonial music has been used in lodges since the 17th century and has roots in an ancient cultural tradition that dates back more than 40,000 years to the Upper Paleolithic period. Anthropologists have discovered that even at that time, flutes were used in rituals.

For example, a bear bone flute dating back about 43,000 years has been found in present-day Slovenia, likely used by Neanderthals. Similarly, another mammoth ivory flute dating back around 35,000 years has been found in Germany, attributed to Cro-Magnons.

When Freemasonry emerged in the early 18th century, the oldest printed songs were found in Anderson's Constitutions of 1723. From that date, they can be found everywhere in very varied forms, whether as hymns, songs, instrumental compositions, marches, etc.

From that date, they experienced a notable flourish-

ing. Their main purpose has been to recreate and set the ambiance for the stories, myths, and legends of Freemasonry, as well as to enliven banquets. These musical compositions adapted to the popular styles of the places and times and were mainly intended for the enjoyment and delight of lodge members. Frequently, the songs also celebrated the virtues and skills of their leaders and culminated with an invitation to toast in their honor.

But we also find them intended for specific moments of the ritual, such as the entrance to the Lodge, the recognition of brothers and sisters, the lighting of the lights, the inquiry about the time to start or conclude the work, the opening of the same, a break, the Widow's Trunk, the Chain of Union, the extinguishing of the lights, the exit from the Lodge, the tests, the purifications, the journeys... In the 18th century, notable composers of Masonic music included Jean Christophe Naudot, Luis Nicolás Cleramboult, François Girourt, and especially Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who gave Masonic music a noble status by composing true masterpieces. At the productive extreme is W. A. Mozart with eleven masterful pieces composed especially for the Order.

Now, what characteristics must a composition have

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to be considered Masonic? The answer is simple: Whether the author is a Mason or not, whether the composition is prepared for exclusive use in lodges or adopted, it should in its composition evoke emotions and, thanks to the lyrics, music, and/or the singer's voice, transcend the different phases of a Masonic ceremony.

The lyrics always refer to moral values or Masonic qualities. For example, the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which became the motto of the French Republic, were proclaimed in the lodges and are found in the text of their songs alongside essential Masonic symbols like the compass, the square, the rough and dressed stone, the chisel, etc.

Scholars have found that there are indeed Masonic musical modes. For example, the key of E-flat major, with three flats, would be Masonic under the explanation that the Order's symbolism often refers to the number three. It is undeniable that Masonic composers successfully introduced symbolic allusions related to Freemasonry in their works.

A clear example is found in the overture of Mozart's "The Magic Flute," whose libretto was written by fellow Mason Emanuel Schikaneder. In this piece, the composer employs the repetition of three sets of three chords, a rhythmic resource that leaves no doubt about his intention to represent the battery of the Entered Apprentice Degree.

However, specialists agree that it is not possible to compose Masonic music by relegating melodic inspiration in favor of a purely mathematical or geometric construction to reflect the Order's symbolism. This would only result in a deficient and low-quality musical marriage, contravening the fundamental principle that the music in meetings should primarily evoke an emotion in the listener that complements and enriches the contents of the ongoing Masonic construction method.

"The Magic Flute" is a work written by and for Masons, and for its full understanding, one must know the Zinnendorf Rite initiation ceremony as it was practiced in Austria in the 1700s, as Mozart knew it, and not as it is carried out in the 21st century. This is an exclusively Christian Trinitarian rite consisting of seven degrees with marked differences from the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the French Rite, York Emulation, or Memphis-Misraim, to name a few of the most practiced in Latin Europe, the British Isles, the three Americas, and Africa.

Otherwise, "The Magic Flute" is nothing more than an entertaining fairy tale sprinkled with some Masonic content based on German popular culture, where Papageno's humor becomes the main focus, eclipsing the exaltation of how virtue, justice, and light dispel the forces of evil, as well as the praises of wisdom based on the knowledge of truth. It is the view from the 18th-century Zinnendorf Rite that provides a full understanding of the elements that give "The Magic Flute" its entire Masonic character.

The list of Masons who have been musicians is long and, besides those mentioned, includes I. J. Pleyel, Johan Christian Bach, Jean Sibelius, Franz Joseph Haydn, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Hector Berlioz, Nicolo Paganini, Franz Liszt, and John Philip Sousa among the classics, as well as popular music figures like Duke Ellington, Nat "King" Cole, Louis Armstrong... but it must always be distinguished that many of them did not compose works to be performed for Masonic ceremonial purposes, although during their time in the Order they frequently delighted with the fraternal exercise of their talent. Therefore, their music cannot be considered Masonic.



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Former President of CLIPSAS

The Role of Art in the Initiatory Process

From a factual point of view, it is commonplace to observe that human beings have three possible approaches to art:

Adoration (or admiration)

Rejection

Commitment.

Adoration and rejection (in its minimal form, of course, is indifference) refer to the effect produced by the artistic work on those who discover it.

Commitment, on the other hand, proceeds from artistic creation.

Along with the search for food (which implies struggle), maternal care, play (which also includes discovery), and sexual activity, artistic activity is part of the five major « universes » of the human species.

The experience I have been able to accumulate leads me to propose an approach that allows us to understand why Art is important in human existence in general and in the Masonic process in particular.

« It is Aristotle who perhaps first conceptualized the cathartic effect of art. He tells us in his poetics that if we go to the theater, the act of watching the actors allows us to live their emotions by transitivity and, therefore, perhaps to purge our impulses. Aristotle is confirmed by the work of neurosciences. » (source: France Culture « Neurosciences: how art heals us » by Elsa Mourgues)

Whether we are passive or active, our relationship with art is charged with emotion and affectivity.

We all know that it is in the first seven years of life that emotions have the strongest impact, which will mark our personalities.

- When it is creative, artistic activity allows us to express our emotions.

- When it is passive, the encounter with art allows us to associate our past emotions with a present moment in life.

If we become aware that in the cognitive process, emotion is close to imaginative thought, we understand well that art carries these two components, which are affectivity and imagination.

It is naturally towards the concept of deity that artistic expression has found its most used field of application; deity has been throughout human history the source of inspiration for generations of artists using emotional transfer and the power of imagination to create sublime works. This observation is found today in a more diffuse way and on more varied themes.

Knowledge about human psychology allows us to conceive what I call the « **protective symbolic universe** » that each human being creates throughout their existential experience and, in particular, the affects that mark them during the first seven years of their life.

This protective symbolic universe ideally functions as a sort of virtual interface between our Self and the outside world, with the function of preserving us and facilitating our projective investment

In reality, in real life, the impact of the affects felt in childhood, with all the problems that can follow, makes this protective symbolic universe more or less functional. All human beings are thus conditioned in their ability to project themselves into the world by the reality of their protective symbolic universe.

Experience shows that human beings can become aware of their capacity to improve their protective

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Between heaven and earth, human beings can only live if they are able to create a protective symbolic universe for themselves. This creation is most often in the realm of the unconscious.

Artistic creation and expression are part of this creation. Masonic initiation can also play a part!



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symbolic universe in order to make it more « operational. »

It is through the specificity of the impact of artistic influence on the protective symbolic universe that art thus plays a fundamental role in existence.

The Masonic field is just an application of the generality exposed above. My conviction is that the initiatory process can contribute to strengthening this protective symbolic universe that conditions our existence.

By understanding it (cf. «Know thyself» particularly through the analysis of the feeling of the encounter

with art, and by modifying it through the capacity to acquire an artistic activity, the members of the lodge can collectively advance on the path of this collective wisdom which, in the end, is the goal of Masonic initiation.

Mateo Simoita

Member of a lodge of the Grand Orient de France

La franc-maçonnerie rassemble dans une communauté les êtres humains désireux de cultiver les hautes valeurs morales qui permettent de vivre en harmonie dans la Paix et la Bienveillance !

La Massoneria riunisce in una comunità esseri umani che desiderano coltivare gli alti valori morali che ci permettono di vivere in armonia nella Pace e nella Benevolenza!

¡La Masonería reúne en una comunidad a los seres humanos que desean cultivar los altos valores morales que nos permiten vivir en armonía en la Paz y la Benevolencia!

Die Freimaurerei vereint in einer Gemeinschaft Menschen, die die hohen moralischen Werte pflegen wollen, die es ermöglichen, in Harmonie in Frieden und Wohlwollen zu leben!

Freemasonry gathers in a community human beings willing to cultivate the high moral values that allow to live in harmony in Peace and Benevolence!