



# THE GAVEL

MONTEZUMA LODGE NO. 1 AF & AM

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Volume 20 Issue 3

*"The Oldest Masonic Lodge in the Rockies" Organized May 8, 1851*

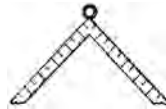
March 2020

Dear Brethren of Montezuma Lodge No.1,

As I write to you, the world is facing a public health crisis. The coronavirus and the disease COVID-19 has led to a total shut-down of life and it may be sometime before we can return to normalcy. Most Worshipful Grand Master Ralph Easley has issued an edict that all Masonic meetings and event be postponed until further notice. Therefore, all regular communication and other masonic events scheduled at Montezuma Lodge has been suspended. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has advised that all New Mexicans practice social distancing and stay at home if possible. In these uncertain times where we called on to isolate ourselves, there can be a lot of loneliness for those who have no family nearby. If you know a brother or a widow who could use a friendly phone call or help in picking up items such as groceries and medication, please give them a call and see how they are doing. A little bit of reaching out can do a lot in cheering someone up. Please be safe and healthy.

Sincerely and Fraternally,

Jee W. Hwang  
Worshipful Master



## **All Meetings of Montezuma Lodge**

**As a result of the Convid-19 virus, ALL meetings of Masonic bodies in the state of New Mexico are suspended until further notice by order of the Grand Master.**

**If any Brother or his family is in need as a result of the Covid-19 virus and/or social distancing, please contact secretary Don Helberg at (505) 982-0971.**

**Brethren, we are all here for you.**

## Regular Meetings

### RECURRENCE

First Monday  
Fourth Wednesday  
Second Tuesday  
Third Tuesday  
Second Wednesday  
First Thursday

### EVENT

Regular Communication at 7:00 PM, Dinner at 6:00 PM  
Property Management Board at 6:00 PM  
Regular Communication at 7:30 PM  
Regular Communication at 5:30 PM  
Regular Communication at 7:30 PM, Dinner at 6:30 PM  
Regular Communication at 7:00 PM, Dinner at 5:30 PM

### ORGANIZATION

Montezuma Lodge No. 1  
Montezuma Lodge No. 1  
York Rite Bodies  
Santa Fe Shrine Club  
Cerrillos Lodge No. 19  
Santa Fe No. 19 Eastern Star

*We have been holding our Quest meetings every Saturday morning at 10:00 AM. Quest Club is a forum for everyone. Mason and non-Mason alike can voice ideas and discuss any topic.*



## *Special Notices And Events*

### *Property Management Board*

The monthly meeting of the Property Management Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>** at 6:00 PM in the library.

The Property Management Board meeting was delayed to a later date.

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## *Edict #1*



### THE GRAND LODGE OF ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF NEW MEXICO

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To all Constituent Lodges and Masons of the Grand Lodge of New Mexico, A.F.&A.M.  
This communication is to be given the widest possible distribution among the Brethren and placed within your Lodge Minutes. Masters and Secretaries are responsible for its dissemination.

As provided in Chapter II. Powers And Duties Of Grand Lodge Officers

Code 20. Grand Master (g)

The following Edict is issued:

#### **EDICT NO. 1**

**March 14, 2020**

**In light of the worldwide outbreak of the COVID-19 Coronavirus and the Governor of New Mexico and the Secretary of Health's emergency declaration and restrictions, and consistent with historical precedent (attached), I hereby issue the following Edict:**

**All meetings and events that would be held under the auspices of any Masonic body are hereby postponed until further notice. It is anticipated that such further notice will coincide with the state issued emergency declarations; however, this Edict will be in effect until modified or rescinded by the Grand Master. The Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of New Mexico will be postponed until further notice. Coaching of candidates should continue. All Lodge and Grand Lodge officers' stations, duties, and responsibilities will continue consistent with this Edict. All dispensations normally required while conforming to this Edict are considered granted. Masters and Secretaries are responsible for the widest possible dissemination of this message.**

**Be aware of the resources available to you if you suspect you are sick. New Mexico Coronavirus Hotline is available at 855-600-3453. Do not go to your doctor until you call the hotline first. And stay informed and monitor spread by visiting:  
<http://cv.nmhealth.org/>**

## *From the Grand Historian*

There is a precedent for the postponement of an Annual Grand Lodge Session due to health emergency.

In 1920, the Spanish Flu pandemic was still severely impacting the State and the World. Additionally, tuberculosis was rapidly spreading globally at the same time. In an era before modern medicine, epidemiology, and departments of health—a precursor to the Federal Department of Health as we know it was not created until 1939—rational public planning and response to large health events were comparatively unknown.

Perhaps unwisely, despite the continued impact particularly of the Spanish Flu in the state, a Grand Lodge communication was attempted in February of 1920, but failed to attract a quorum. Bear in mind: the quorum of Lodges necessary to conduct business in 1920 was only eight.

As a result, the Grand Lodge (which did open itself as the Grand Body), was called to recess until the following month. While the Communication took place out of date, at that meeting representatives of 42 lodges were present, and the Grand Lodge Annual Communication was held, starting March 15th, 1920.

## *Br. John Brady*



Brother John Brady is installed as Senior Steward



Southern California Research Lodge

# Fraternal Review

MARCH 2020



## FREEMASONRY, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

HOW CAN WE APPLY SPIRITUAL VALUES IN A MATERIAL WORLD?



## GUEST EDITOR'S WORD



### Freemasonry and the Redemption of Technology

*"Where danger is, grows / The saving power also..."*

—Friedrich Hölderlin

This issue takes an in-depth look at the role of the Freemason as premier constructor of technological, spiritual, and social realities. With this as our departure, we try to understand the inherent responsibilities of such a role. From the first passages of Genesis to the recent trend of transhumanism, the idea that the world and its inhabitants are *created* is one with deep historical and unconscious roots. The raw materials of nature, forged by something Divine, were given to the charge of human beings. This philosophy of spiritual and material innovation and progress was incorporated into the teachings of modern Freemasonry.

Perhaps you are thinking, what a strange theme? I chose to focus on this because the subject of technology is becoming more relevant in our day and age. At every scale, from the planetary to the personal, technological devices and systems are omnipresent. Technology is saturating our societies and making our most complex decisions. It is even determining how we live our lives. In a certain sense, this has always been true, especially since the invention of the printing press and steam pump. But there is something uniquely pressing about the current moment. The acceleration *and* escalation of technological advancement seems unparalleled. Perhaps this is due to the invention of the computer, or the internet, or the smartphone, or the implementation of machine learning and neural networks. I'm not sure. But wherever we lay the cursor, these things are on the road to converging. The technologists have correctly labeled this culmination a future *singularity*.

My question is, how does Freemasonry stand in relation to this situation? Moreover, what has Masonry to say about this potential future, which seems each day to be knocking at our door? As a Mason, I always seek for ways to interpret the teachings of the Fraternity through the fabric of societal life. This is, for me, a way I can turn Masonry into less of a purely intellectual activity and more of an applied philosophical system. Of course, the connection between Masonry and technology is not so difficult to imagine. In my mind, the legacy of Masonry remains closely connected to the histories of architecture, building, alchemy, industry, and engineering. What is technology but the consideration, implementation, execution, and carrying out of these spheres of human activity?

So, when I was asked to guest edit another issue of *Fraternal Review*, I couldn't help but jump at the opportunity to explore this theme. I think the result is unique. I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as I enjoyed putting it together.

A final area I found relevant is the subject of the worker. As I delved more deeply into the research, I realized how closely the figure of the worker is connected to technology, both as those entities who operate tools and machines, as well as those who are frequently replaced by new machines. Freemasonry's symbols focus on the spiritualization of working tools, teaching Masons how to labor together and deal with one another fairly in the workplace. The archetypal stonemason is the idealized worker who helps usher in a better world through the elevation of labor to a level of holiness. This is Prometheus; this is Hiram. I find here another important element of Freemasonry that can be harnessed to think about these new forms of technology and their entanglement with future societies.

Bro. Jedediah French, Templum Rosae Lodge No. 863, Oakland, California

SCRL Fraternal Review

**MARCH 2020**

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### COVER IMAGE:

"Chop A Clock at 6"

Artist: MRBIT

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## COVER STORY



Freemasonry contains a heavy dose of natural philosophy, an emphasis on science, which is to say the use of reason to comprehend matter. The essence of such an approach to the natural world can be traced back to texts like the *Magia Naturalis* written by Giambattista della Porta and first published in Naples in 1558. This work stressed the underlying order of the world that could be discerned in the Book of Nature. Natural philosophers like Newton postulated two books: the Bible and the Book of Nature. This view is what led Robert Boyle, Newton's predecessor, to famously conclude that natural philosophers were the real priests because they could read the Book of Nature. This new scientific method placed more importance on empirical investigations of the natural world. An example of this is the Flammarion engraving [shown above], a wood engraving by an unknown artist that first appeared in Camille Flammarion's 1888 book *L'atmosphère: Météorologie Populaire*. This image depicts a man with a staff, dressed in something close to a monkish habit, kneeling while poking his head through the firmament to glimpse beyond the star-studded canopy into the cosmos. What he sees there are the cogs, gears and wheels of creation, the often invisible yet empirically calculable mechanisms that control and create the universe, a representation not unlike the vision of God beheld by Ezekiel in the Hebrew Scriptures. A caption below reads: "A missionary of the Middle Ages tells that he had found the point where the sky and the Earth touch." The degrees of Freemasonry, with their focus on geometry, architecture, and the application of math within the useful arts and broader natural world, leads candidates to a similar view of the cosmos, as that of the traveler in the Flammarion engraving.

[Jedediah French, "John Desaguliers: The Balance of Religion and Science," in *Exploring Early Grand Lodge Freemasonry*, Christopher B. Murphy and Shawn Eyer, eds., (Alexandria, VA: Plumbstone, 2017), 384-85.]



## FRAGMENTS

This—the evolution of man into superman—was always the purpose of the ancient Mysteries, and the real purpose of modern Masonry is, not only the social and charitable purposes to which so much attention is paid, but the expediting of the spiritual evolution of those who aspire to perfect their own nature and transform it into a more god-like quality. And this is a definite science, a royal art, which it is possible for each of us to put into practice; whilst to join the Craft for any other purpose than to study and pursue this science is to misunderstand its meaning.

[W.L. Wilmshurst, *The Meaning of Masonry, Revised and Expanded*. (San Francisco: Plumbstone, 2007, first published 1922), 34-35.]

The bee was among the Egyptians the symbol of an obedient people, because, says Horapollo, of all animals, the bee alone had a king. Hence, looking at the regulated labor of these insects when congregated in their hive, it is not surprising that a beehive should have been deemed an appropriate emblem of systemized industry. Freemasonry has therefore adopted the beehive as a symbol of industry, a virtue taught in the ritual, which says that a Master Mason “works that he may receive wages, the better to support himself and family, and contribute to the relief of a worthy, distressed brother, his widow and orphans.” And in the Old Charges, which tell us that “all Masons shall work honestly on working days, that they may live creditably on holidays.”

[Albert Mackey, “Beehive,” *Mackey’s Revised Encyclopedia Vol. I*. (Chicago: The Masonic History Company, 1946), 129.]



Man has been always a builder, and nowhere has he shown himself more significantly than the buildings he has erected. When we stand before them—whether it be a mud hut, the house of a cliff-dweller stuck like the nest of a swallow on the side of a canyon, a Pyramid, a Parthenon, or a Pantheon—we seem to read into his soul. The builder may have gone, perhaps ages before, but here he has left something of himself, his hopes, his fears, his ideas, his dreams. Even in the remote recesses of the Andes, amidst the riot of nature, we come upon the remains of vast, vanished civilizations, where art and science and religion reached unknown heights. Wherever humanity has lived and wrought, we find the crumbling ruins of towers, temples, and tombs, monuments of its industry and its aspiration. ... If architecture was born of need it soon showed its magic quality, and all true building touched depths of feeling and opened gates of wonder. No doubt the men who first balanced one stone over two others must have looked with astonishment at the work of their hands and have worshiped the stones they had set up. This element of mystical wonder and awe lasted long through the ages and is still felt when work is done in the old way by keeping close to nature, necessity, and faith. From the first, ideas of sacredness, of sacrifice, of ritual rightness, of magic stability, of likeness to the universe, of perfection of form and proportion glowed in the heart of the builder and guided his arm.

[Joseph Fort Newton, *The Builders*. (New York: Macoy Publishing, 1951, first American edition 1914), 6-9.]



# ESOTERICA

Labor is the truest emblem of God, the Architect and Eternal Maker; noble Labor, which is yet to be the King of this Earth and sit on the highest Throne. Sympathy with the great laboring classes, respect for labor itself, and resolution to do some good *work* in our day and generation, these are the lessons of this Degree, and they are purely Masonic. Masonry has made a working man and his associates the heroes of her principal legend, and himself the companion of Kings. The idea is as simple and true as it is sublime. From first to last, Masonry is *work*. It venerates the Grand *Architect* of the Universe. It commemorates the *building* of a Temple. Its principal emblems are *the working tools* of Masons and Artisans. It preserves the name of the first *worker* in *brass* and *iron* as one of its passwords. When the Brethren meet together, they are at *labor*. The Master is the *overseer* who sets the craft *to work* and gives them proper instruction. Masonry is the apotheosis of Work.


Even in the meanest sort of labor, the whole soul of man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the moment he begins to work. Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, and even Despair shrink murmuring far off into their caves, whenever the man bends himself resolutely against his task. Labor is life. From the inmost heart of the worker rises his God-given Force, the Sacred Celestial Life-essence, breathed into him by Almighty God, and awakens him to all nobleness, as soon as work fitly begins.

Let him who toils complain not, nor feel humiliated. Let him look up and see his fellow workmen there, in God's Eternity; they *alone* surviving there. Even in the weak human memory they long survive, as Saints, as Heroes and as Gods: they *alone* survive and people the unmeasured solitudes of Time.

To work with the hands or brain, according to our acquirements and our capacities, to do that which lies before us to do, is more honorable than rank and "title." Ploughers, spinners and builders, inventors and men of science, poets, advocates and writers, all stand upon one common level, and form one grand innumerable host, marching ever onward.

To be ashamed of toil; of the dingy workshop and dusty labor field; of the hard hand, stained with service more honorable than that of war; of the soiled and weather-stained garments, on which Mother Nature has stamped, midst sun and rain, midst fire and steam, her own heraldic honors. To be ashamed of these tokens and titles and envious of the flaunting robes of imbecile idleness and vanity is treason to Nature, impiety to Heaven, a breach of Heaven's great Ordinance.

The Earth and the Atmosphere are man's laboratory. With spade and plough, with mining-shafts and furnaces and forges, with fire and steam; amidst the noise and whirl of swift and bright machinery, and abroad in the silent fields, man was made to be ever working, ever



experimenting. And while he and all his dwellings of care and toil are borne onward with the circling skies, and the splendors of heaven are around him, and their infinite depths image and invite his thought, still in all the worlds of philosophy, in the universe of intellect, man must be a worker. He is nothing, he can be nothing, can achieve nothing, fulfill nothing, without working. Without it, he can gain neither lofty improvement nor tolerable happiness.

All men desire distinction and feel the need of some ennobling object in life. Those persons are usually most happy and satisfied in their pursuits, who have the loftiest ends in view. Artists, mechanics and inventors, all who seek to find principles or develop beauty in their work, seem most to enjoy it. The farmer who labors for the beautifying and scientific cultivation of his estate is happier in his labors, than one who tills his own land for a mere subsistence. This is one of the signal testimonies which all human employments give to the high demands of our nature. To gather wealth never gives such satisfaction as to bring the humblest piece of machinery to perfection; at least, when wealth is sought for display and ostentation, or mere luxury and ease and pleasure, and not for ends of philanthropy, the relief of kindred, or the payment of just debts.

Masonry seeks to ennoble common life. Its work is to go down into the obscure and unsearched records of daily conduct and feeling, and to portray not the ordinary virtue of an extraordinary life, but the more extraordinary virtue of ordinary life. To aid in securing to all labor permanent employment and its just reward: to help to hasten the coming of that time when no one shall suffer from hunger or destitution because, though willing and able to work, he can find no employment, or because he has been overtaken by sickness in the midst of his labor, are part of your duties as a Knight of the Royal Axe. [Edited excerpts from Albert Pike, "The History and Lecture of the Twenty-Second Degree, Knight of the Royal Axe, or Prince of Libanus," in *Magnum Opus*. (Lafayette, LA: Cornerstone Book Publishers, 2004), 292-298.]

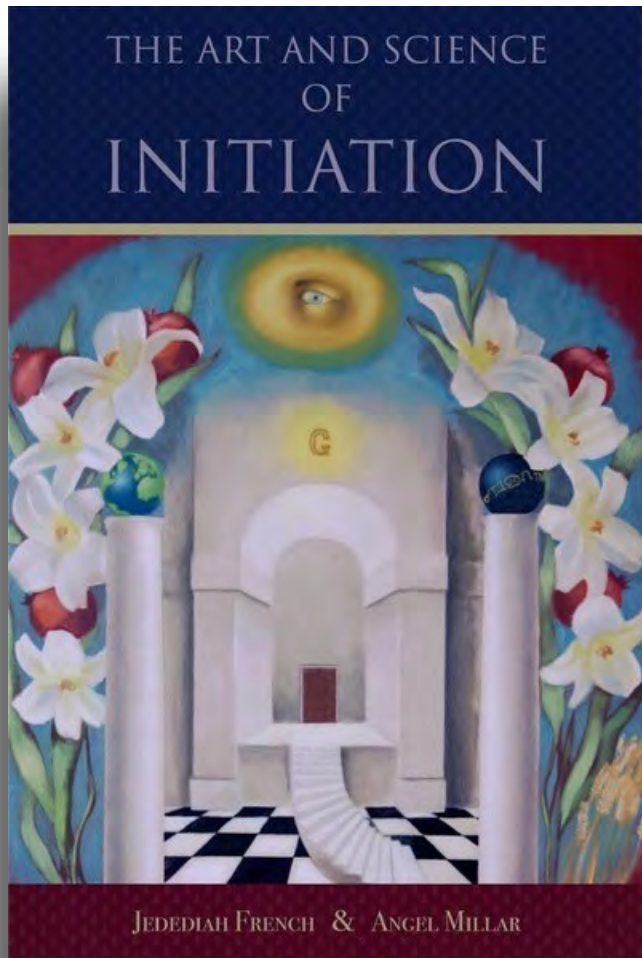
# MASONIC POP CULTURE

## READ IT

### *The Art and Science of Initiation*

Edited by Jedediah French and Angel Millar

Paperback 285 pages, Lewis Masonic, 2019



Publisher's Announcement:

Through essays written by Freemasons, scholars of history, and mainstream authors and practitioners, *The Art and Science of Initiation* illuminates the theory and practice of various mystical/philosophical traditions and their processes of initiation. This book takes the reader into the heart of the initiatic experience. The method by which to enter into communion with spiritual worlds and reach higher levels of consciousness and soul maturation, i.e., initiation, remains as relevant for us today as it was for the people of antiquity.

*The Art and Science of Initiation* brings together thirteen all-new essays from some of the biggest established and upcoming authors of Freemasonry, spirituality, and esotericism, featuring work by Angel Millar, Joscelyn Godwin, Mark Booth, Richard Smoley, Donald Tyson, Susanna Åkerman, Herbie Brennan, Richard Kaczynski, C.R. Dunning, Jr., Greg Kaminsky, Jeffrey S. Kupperman, Adam Kendall, and Timothy Scott.

## SEE IT



**YouTube:**  
*Initiation and Counter Initiation*  
Published August 7, 2019  
13 minutes

What is initiation? And why is it important? Here, we explore the phenomenon of initiation from shamanism to Freemasonry. And we also look at counter-initiation—what it is and why we should understand counter-initiation today. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KI7JE88rA5g>

## OCCULT OF PERSONALITY



Esoteric Podcast Extraordinaire

EST. MMXVI

In the Chamber of Reflection, Jedediah French and I begin the second half of the interview by discussing his research into the Asiatic Brethren, Sabbatean Frankism, Lurianic Kabbalah, and high-degree European Freemasonry. <https://www.spreaker.com/user/occultofpersonality/ooopodcast199-jedediahfrench>

## HEAR IT

**Occult of Personality:**  
*Interview with Jedediah French*  
Published: November 2019,  
70 minutes

March 2020 ~ TheResearchLodge.org ~ 7



# Q&A:

## Andreas Önerfors

Bro. Andreas Önerfors was raised in Trier, Germany, and later studied at the University of Lund in Sweden. He is the author of *Freemasonry – A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2017) and numerous papers on Freemasonry and fraternal culture. Brother Önerfors was initiated in the Swedish Rite in 1996 and has its X Degree. He is a member of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Scania, the research lodge Carl Friedrich Eckleff in Uppsala, and is currently Worshipful Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, London. INTERVIEW BY JEDEDIAH FRENCH



**Q: How did you become interested in Freemasonry?**

A: Funny story—through a form of inverted teenage revolt. When I was sixteen, I went to the opera to see Mozart's *Magic Flute* with my parents, but my dad left after the first act because he loathed the Masonic references. This made me curious and I started reading everything I could about the subject. Then, while doing my military service in Sweden, the best and most humane of all trainers turned out to be masons and later my sponsors in the oldest Swedish Craft Lodge, St. Erik in Stockholm. This was at the age of 25.

**Q: Can you tell us about your Masonic academic activities, any books you have written, etc.?**

A: Swedish Freemasonry has preserved the ritual and language of its eighteenth-century origins, which caused me to reflect on the history of certain concepts and their meaning. The performance of the Swedish Rite is like a time capsule throwing you right into the complex world of the Enlightenment and back into our own time. This movement back and forth

fascinated me for a long while. When writing on my doctoral thesis on intellectual encounters between Sweden and Germany during the eighteenth century, I suddenly discovered that my favorite characters turned out to be Freemasons. However, no one had written anything substantial about it. I started to dig into the sources and the entrance was opened to archival treasures that had been hidden for centuries. The archives of German lodges had been looted by Nazis and then communists, but were suddenly available again after 1990. As a post-doc, I decided to convince my colleagues that Swedish Freemasonry was one of the largest cultural phenomena of the Enlightenment. What I did was (for the first time) to publish the names of 4300 members of Swedish lodges before 1800. This, together with other research I had been doing, led me to assume the Directorship of the Centre for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism at the University of Sheffield, UK. There I published three volumes with my Ph.D. student and two post-docs: "Freemasonry and Fraternalism in the Middle East," "Freemasonry and Fraternalism in Eighteenth-Century Russia," and "1717-2017: 300 Years of British Freemasonry," all of which are available on my academia.edu page. Recently I wrote a volume on Freemasonry in the Oxford University Press Series, *Very Short Introductions* (2017), and simultaneously I joined Quatuor Coronati No. 2076 in London.

**Q: The theme of this issue is "Technology and Freemasonry." Do you see a possible connection here?**

A: The connection is substantial. It has been argued convincingly that the first decades of the Craft involved a type of "Newtonian" Freemasonry that promoted the knowledge of the Enlightenment. This association with science constitutes a core cluster of ideas in eighteenth-century Freemasonry. Over the century, and when blended with concepts of Romanticism, this association turns more complex, but it is still valid. Just as architecture was perceived as an art in the service of mankind (for instance in both Anderson 1723 and Ramsay 1738), technology could occupy the same function. At the end of the eighteenth century, English lodges celebrated technological progress such as the inauguration of iron bridges. Moreover, in establishing mutual trust and arenas of civil society, Freemasonry prepared the way for the modernization of social relations during the age of industrialization and global expansion. My position is that our Founding Fathers had in mind that scientific and technological progress are a result of the ingenuity of

humanity but must prove beneficial *for* humanity. Just as the ritual aims to refine the individual inside the lodge, it is outside its walls a mason demonstrates his philanthropic willingness to serve.

**Q: You have also written about the Copiale cipher and a secret society called the Oculists.**

**A:** Indeed. Most of what we have read so far about the Copiale cipher relates to its exposure of Freemasonry, which is spectacular. Not only are the Craft Degrees exposed in a version that mirrors the complex influences in the German lodges of the 1740s, but the cipher also captured the development of one of the most productive first higher degrees, the Scottish Master. I have argued elsewhere that the Copiale cipher demonstrates that German Scottish Master lodges combined a chivalric and sacerdotal component, creating both Masonic knights and priests. However, if we analyze the Oculists and their rituals, another interesting position is revealed. As in Freemasonry, the symbol of the eye occupies a central place. In one of the degrees, a ritual eye operation is performed, aiming to enhance vision and make the candidate see, in the sense of understanding deeper, not only the dangers of Freemasonry, but of life's realities in general.

**Q: The theme of the eye is quite prevalent. How close is the relationship between vision and seeing in this context?**

**A:** In my paper "Extending the Horizon: How to Bring the Study of Freemasonry Further," I argue that modern Freemasonry locates itself at the revolution of vision that occurred during the Renaissance period, basically when three-dimensionality and perspectivity were recovered as a way of virtual representation in space. Starting with Plato's cave allegory, some argue that what we see are only projections of pure ideas, eternally separated from human sensual perception in a completely virtual realm of imagination to which we have no access. However, with Renaissance Neo-Platonism this concept of a strict separation was questioned. As Renaissance philosopher Pico Della Mirandola argued, by assuming a superior vantage point (a sort of "all-seeing eye") located between invisible creator and visible creation, human beings were enabled to oversee a ladder or scale ranging from minerals to the angels. Nicolaus of Cusa branded this quality as a *visio intellectualis*, an intellectual vision that made it possible to imagine motion and stasis at the same time. In other words, human imagination is not limited by the senses (seeing) but extends to the (physically) invisible through an intellectual vision. To my mind, this is what Freemasonry trains for. In many tracing boards of the European Masonic tradition, objects are placed on top of a checkered floor, which makes them appear as located in virtual three-dimensional space rather than in two dimensions.

**Q: In this issue we explore Transhumanism and Artificial Intelligence. You have given a presentation on Posthumanism. How is that different from Transhumanism?**

**A:** Both operate from the vantagepoint of technological progress and ask the question, "What does it mean to be human?" Yet there are similarities and differences.

Transhumanism focuses on how technology can transform humanity and transgress its limitations, whereas posthumanism discusses the future of humanity beyond human existence in hybridity or coexistence with artificial intelligence, such as cyborgs or other autonomous "machines/beings." In our relationship to other species—and since the last two or three centuries also to machines—humans have always assumed two diametrically opposed positions: idealization or dystopia. Take, for example, Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963), which portrays a takeover by another living species. The motif of takeover was adapted to human-machine interrelations in *Westworld* (1973) and its recent HBO-adaptation. A more salient distinction between posthumanism and transhumanism would be that transhumanism adopts the—rather limited—definition of human consciousness as outlined by René Descartes; whereas posthumanism considers human consciousness as always going beyond the human situation as such.

**Q: Is there a connection between Transhumanism or Posthumanism and Freemasonry?**

**A:** It depends on whether we buy into the Cartesian distinction between mind and body/matter. Descartes believed that human cognition was non-physical, that our thoughts have no other extension than in the mind. This implies that the mental can exist outside the body and the body cannot think. Transhumanism would imply the continuation of such a strict distinction by means of technological progress. On the other hand, if we do not accept mind and body as separate, then we could embrace the posthumanist position and apply it to technological progress. To simplify, as a transhumanist you would continue to perceive a cyborg as simply a machine, whereas as a posthumanist you would ask if autonomous intelligence also has a soul, or other qualities such as free choice, the right to self-determination, and moral judgment. In masonic ritual—at least in a self-contained system like the Swedish Rite, which has ten subsequent degrees that interrelate—there is a level of path-dependency with little leeway for free choices, like a script, a musical score, or even an algorithm. We imagine that by going through the ritual and experiencing it again and again, we internalize the values of Freemasonry so that, when leaving the virtuality of time and space in the lodge, we can apply them out in the world. Would it be different to program an A.I. robot to act as a Freemason? To insert a printed circuit board which instructs it to make the "right" decisions? Is it possible to initiate a cyborg? What makes initiation different from programming a machine?

**Q: Why is it important for Freemasons to think about these ideas?**

**A:** Freemasonry is always placed within the societies in which it recruits its members. As in the case of transgender persons recently joining several Masonic lodges worldwide, we need to develop a solid position toward new challenges such as the redefinition of the human condition prompted by technological progress. Like the architect/stonemason on the frontispiece of Zahn's *Oculus Artificialis*, who faced the choice of using artificial equipment to augment his vision, we are faced with similar choices. What are the borders between human and artificial intelligence, and what does it imply for our understanding of true and false and right and wrong?



# THE ROLE OF FREEMASONRY IN THE A.I. TRANSHUMANIST FUTURE

BY BRO. SALMAN S. SHEIKH, WILLIAM  
PRESTON LODGE NO. 766

At the current stage of human history, advanced technology and artificial intelligence have become prominent factors. The transhumanist movement is a major part of this situation. Transhumanism is a movement in favor of using technology and artificial intelligence to better human health, increase lifespan, and enhance cognitive capabilities.

The role that A.I. and transhumanism are currently playing in our world is one that is taking us away from the human spirit. Face to face human interactions are decreasing, while relationships, jobs, and other aspects of human life are getting digitized. We are now dependent on this technology, for we see that any business or social interaction requires internet or some connection to the World Wide Web. Jobs, schools, and even everyday life have reached a point where things will no longer function without internet or smart phone technology. It makes you wonder how our ancient ancestors acquired the knowledge to build the magnificent structures throughout the world, and whether the current technology is meant to harm us or increase our growth.

Modern technology has made things easier, but its dark side is enveloping us into a web of control. People and especially the younger generation feel lonely and depressed, and they lack a sense of purpose now more than ever—even though the world is more connected. Children growing up would rather be given a smartphone or tablet than go outside, play, and interact with others. Even worse, the A.I. network basically surveils you at a constant level. You have perhaps noticed that whatever you say will trigger related advertisements on all the networks you use, even concerning very personal matters. This is scary because it seems like the A.I. is becoming a sentient living being.

On the positive side, humanity can change the course of this A.I./transhumanist wave sweeping the globe by repurposing it for good. This concept applies to all things. We can use technology for good or bad; it will ultimately become whatever we feed into it. Technology must be used to spread messages of love, peace, unity and positivity in a country/world that is becoming increasingly divided. We have been given divine free will, and even this A.I. entity is going to become what we allow it to become through our collective action.

Freemasonry can help. Our Fraternity is a benevolent organization designed to uplift a fallen humanity. But

Masons must be more involved in the local communities in which they reside. We have no excuse in the USA with an organization as significant as ours, designed to uplift humanity; and yet we have issues like suicide, drug overdoses, loneliness, and an overall lack of purpose among young people, as with the “doomer generation” memes going around on the internet.

Our brotherhood needs to progress its leadership and ideas into the 21st century. We are a work in progress, and the “we’ve always done it this way” approach doesn’t benefit an organization meant to labor in the quest of uplifting humanity. We encourage Masons to use technology in a good way and represent their true selves, refraining from bigotry, egoism, pride, racism, and everything of a “lower nature,” for this will drive young people away from you on a public forum.

Our job is to unite humanity, not divide it. We cannot allow those who post anything against someone else’s faith/race and then show up in lodge to call that same person “brother.” This will not work. The younger generation of today are to be the leaders of tomorrow, and we must utilize technology and design apps and online forms to make ourselves approachable to this younger generation who are hungry for outlets promoting social changes.

We can get involved in our communities and find schools that need our help, where the teachers are paying for supplies and lunch debts. We can help set up tables in local schools and colleges, which will eliminate misconceptions about us. We are *one* human family. Get to know your community and tell them about yourself and how you can be a part of their lives and they can be a part of yours. It is beneficial to use money out of your lodge budget, an average of only \$50, to run ads on social media for parties for other events throughout the year, welcoming the local community into your lives for occasions such as Halloween. If this is followed, most people would not keep walking or look the other way when passing a Masonic temple.

With this generation of young people, if they don’t feel an emotional connection to you then they would rather stay home and be entertained by technology and let all Masonic buildings have a “for sale” sign. In order to





survive, we must get involved in the social campaign using this technology to address issues the young people are facing. It's not about numbers, as the higher-ups always like to promote in their seminars. They will have to face reality and make Freemasonry an organization whose values live in the hearts of all individuals. This will immortalize our ideas, even if technology completely takes over.

To give an example, there are many rehab centers and homeless shelters where we could serve hot meals or just give someone a shoulder to lean on. There is a spiritual price to pay for our actions and inactions. We owe it to ourselves and our brothers not to turn our backs and just circulate monies within Masonic charities rather than gifting it to local communities. We need to inform the younger generation through technological means that our organization unites people no matter what religious or racial background. We must give them a reason to put their phones down and come hang with us by promoting relationships, education, and brotherhood. There is much more to Masonry than memorizing lines and falling into the corporate trap of just needing enough bodies to run the show.

In conclusion, the reality is that our organization needs to use both the technological and the in-person approach to welcome young people. If we don't then the inevitable future awaits us, in which the anti-human values enshrined in A.I. and transhumanism will ultimately overtake our lives and people won't care anymore for an outdated social club that is not helping the community. The ball is in our court. The choice is yours. When you make your organization a household name as a *benevolent* organization, then our idea of immortality comes to fruition, no matter what technological age we find ourselves in.

So the next time you go to lodge, take a moment and think about how your local lodge is helping the community and its members. And maybe ask yourself, what are we doing any of this for? Please take charge and become the shepherds of your communities. Thank you for your time and may God bless all of you and your families.

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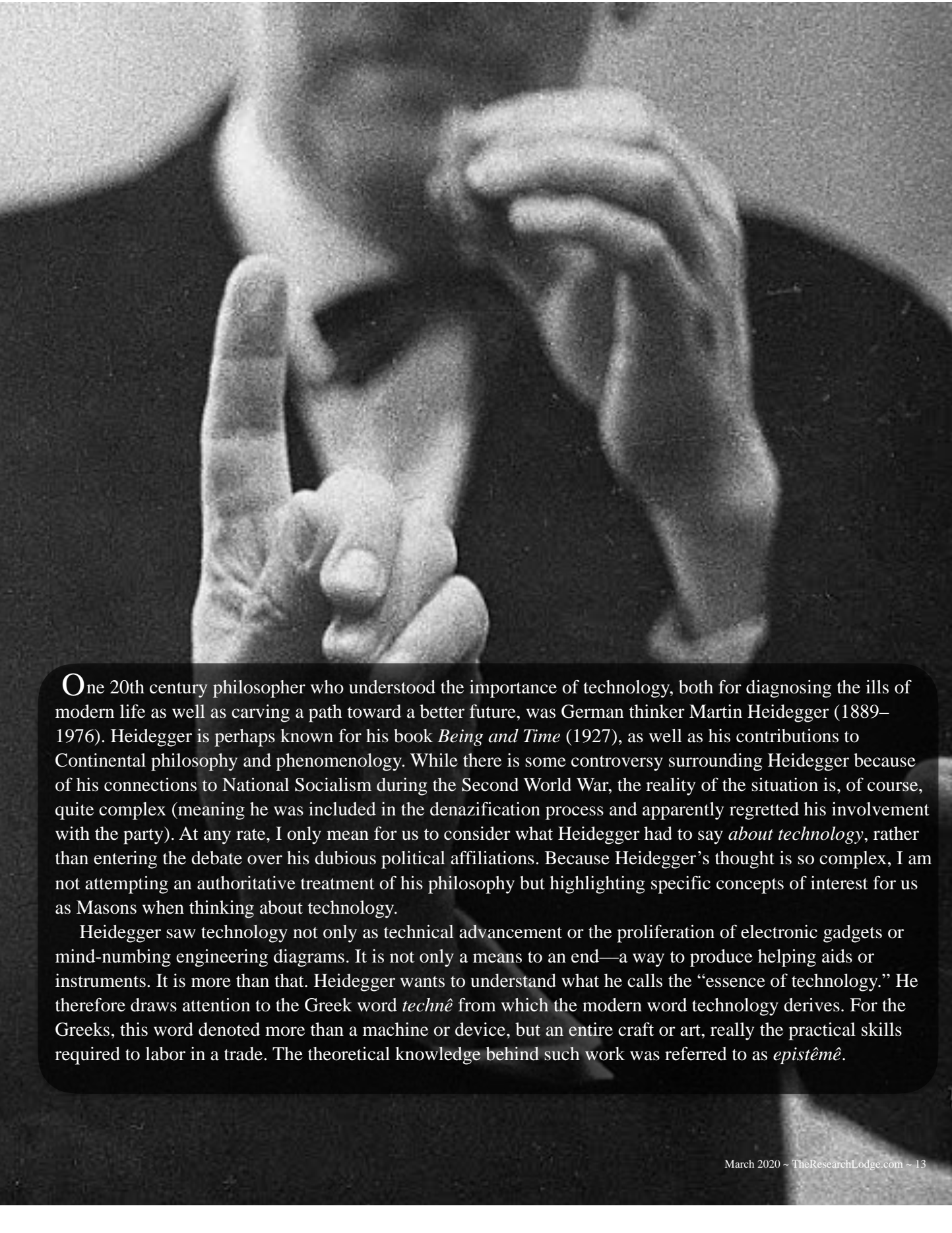


# Heidegger, Technology and Freemasonry

by Jedediah French

MARTIN HEIDEGGER (1889-1976).

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One 20th century philosopher who understood the importance of technology, both for diagnosing the ills of modern life as well as carving a path toward a better future, was German thinker Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). Heidegger is perhaps known for his book *Being and Time* (1927), as well as his contributions to Continental philosophy and phenomenology. While there is some controversy surrounding Heidegger because of his connections to National Socialism during the Second World War, the reality of the situation is, of course, quite complex (meaning he was included in the denazification process and apparently regretted his involvement with the party). At any rate, I only mean for us to consider what Heidegger had to say *about technology*, rather than entering the debate over his dubious political affiliations. Because Heidegger’s thought is so complex, I am not attempting an authoritative treatment of his philosophy but highlighting specific concepts of interest for us as Masons when thinking about technology.

Heidegger saw technology not only as technical advancement or the proliferation of electronic gadgets or mind-numbing engineering diagrams. It is not only a means to an end—a way to produce helping aids or instruments. It is more than that. Heidegger wants to understand what he calls the “essence of technology.” He therefore draws attention to the Greek word *technê* from which the modern word technology derives. For the Greeks, this word denoted more than a machine or device, but an entire craft or art, really the practical skills required to labor in a trade. The theoretical knowledge behind such work was referred to as *epistêmê*.



These ideas are important for Heidegger because he wants to see the relationship between theory, ideas, and technology as ultimately revealing something hidden, something metaphysical even, and bringing this something into the world. He referred to this as *Being*. Simplifying to the extreme, Being is our experience of the world, a person's *Da-sein* (literally "being there"; you are alive, you find yourself in the world, clearing a space for yourself, and suddenly there you are). *Epistêmê* and *technê* comprise the ability to craft this world into a new world.

Another important Greek word for Heidegger is *poiesis*. This is specifically the activity of bringing into existence something *out of oneself*. This part is important. Heidegger speaks about technology as a mode of revealing, bringing into "presencing" what was formerly hidden—for example, your iPhone. Smartphones were hidden for thousands of years. Now they have been brought into *presencing*, meaning they exist, through a combination of *epistêmê* and *technê*.

Technology always has an "as-yet" quality, an ability to unveil a world that is not-yet present; rather hidden, occulted. This is a poetic process, an artistic bringing of something into being. That is what technology is and has been in the past. I think you can see how Masonry is important here; the Craft has, since its beginnings, been referred to as the Royal Art. We might easily change that to the Royal Technê. The Operative Masonry of our ancestors possessed this quality of bringing poetic truth into the world. Speculative Masonry aims at bringing, not only a building, but a new society—dare we say *a world*—into existence, a world that is founded on universal brotherhood (or humanity), certain rational principles, and aesthetic ideals. Yet this world is transmitted via the symbols of working tools and the *technê* of the Craft. Freemasonry embodies a poetic "bringing-forth" that, for Heidegger, relates to the ancient *technê* and ancient science.

But modern technology is different. Due to its revealing nature, modern technology is bringing into being something peculiar. This has, in part, to do with the metaphysical rational system imposed on Being. This metaphysical system is what we created—that is, for example, mathematics and theoretical schemas and systems—and technology is how we are bringing it into presencing. Humans use these activities to create the world in which we live. So what's wrong with that? Why is modern technology different?

For Heidegger, it is different because it moves away from the poetic, symbiotic relationship with nature and toward the technical, rational, and mechanical; toward manipulation and control over natural resources, especially stockpiling reserves. In simplistic terms, it is no longer creating for the sake of presencing a work of genuine art; but rather modern technology is after efficiency, a sort of functionalism, a process, an "in order to." In order to communicate with my friend via the internet on the other side of the globe, there must be satellite communications in place, therefore we construct them. In order for there to be enough power for human civilization, we need enough electricity, so we build nuclear power plants. In this way of thinking, outer space becomes no longer cosmos but a region to colonize and launch up satellites. Heidegger calls this activity "enframing."

But it gets worse. Heidegger thinks modern technology is a combination of applied science (or metaphysics, i.e. mathematics plus rational laws) and labor, wherein the theoretical laws of science are brought into the industrial sphere and organize everything using rationalistic and mechanical systems of logic. It therefore has no meaning, but rather serves only to engender efficiency and stockpile reserves. Our doing this is our "will to will," as Heidegger calls it, which is (basically) his version of Nietzsche's will to power externalized in technology.

While this is a seemingly *rational* will extended into technology, the devices that become its offspring

are designed to satisfy what Heidegger refers to as animal or instinctual needs and desires, which are, of course, *irrational*. Online social media and shopping algorithms are a great example, because they operate using a rational logic yet cater to our desires and irrational needs, never showing us what we might *need* but always *what we might want*.

The result of this—of the imposition of modern metaphysics on Being and the loss of meaning in technology—is nihilism. The implication is that we are now living in a non-world, a fake world (i.e. *The Matrix*). In Heidegger's thinking, "the 'world' has become an unworld as a consequence of the abandonment of beings by the truth of being."<sup>1</sup> Humans no longer have Being, that is to say existence, but have become *beings*, cogs in the meaningless mechanistic unworld of their own creation. Through modern technology labor is transformed and the human "is left to the giddy whirl of its products so that it may tear itself to pieces and annihilate itself in empty nothingness."<sup>2</sup> Because we have mastered nature by subjecting it to a "will to will" via modern technology (oriented toward animality); it then takes on a life of its own, subverting the paradigm and effectively mastering humans through the total demand for maximum efficiency. Heidegger again: "Technology itself commands out of itself and for itself and develops in itself its own type of discipline and its own type of consciousness of victory."<sup>3</sup> The recent remarks by transhumanists and technophiles about artificially intelligent machines over-coming humanity and eradicating it should sound familiar.

But hope is not lost. This is where Freemasonry comes in. In fact, the path to a brighter vision leads *through* technology. Heidegger was not a Luddite. The answer lies in what he referred to as "poeticizing building."<sup>4</sup> Heidegger's vision of the future rests in the hands of "shepherds" who will come to care for the community and transform both work and building (and thereby *technê* and the world) into a source for common good. In the words of one Heideggerian scholar: "This transformation is brought about by the poeticization of work. Poeticized work cares for and serves the properly divine and restores humans to their proper home and place in the order of things."<sup>5</sup> This activity will disclose a new world, one in which the truth of Being (*aletheia*) is revealed.

To my mind, Masonry has laid out a similar problem and agenda (and in much more simplistic terms). Through its rituals and symbolism, it redeems the individual worker as a "Hiram" and grants him the holiness of his work. Yet he is set among a collective of other "masters" all working together to ennoble creation by collaborating in the name of humanity. The Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences are the Mason's *epistêmê*, the working tools his *technê*. It is only a matter of embracing this as a daily practice and setting to work. It doesn't matter that the technology of today is exceedingly more advanced and complex than that of our ancient operative brethren. We should be emboldened by this. Is it possible to see the keyboard and mouse as the new square and compass, the circuit board as the designs upon the Trestleboard? I don't know, but I suspect something along these lines is what Masonry will offer to the current technological situation. Thinking through the questions that Heidegger raises about modern technology can help us get there.

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<sup>1</sup> "Overcoming Metaphysics," 84.

<sup>2</sup> "Overcoming Metaphysics," 69.

<sup>3</sup> *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 53, 53–54.

<sup>4</sup> "Overcoming Metaphysics," 90.

<sup>5</sup> *Revolutionary Saints*, 154.

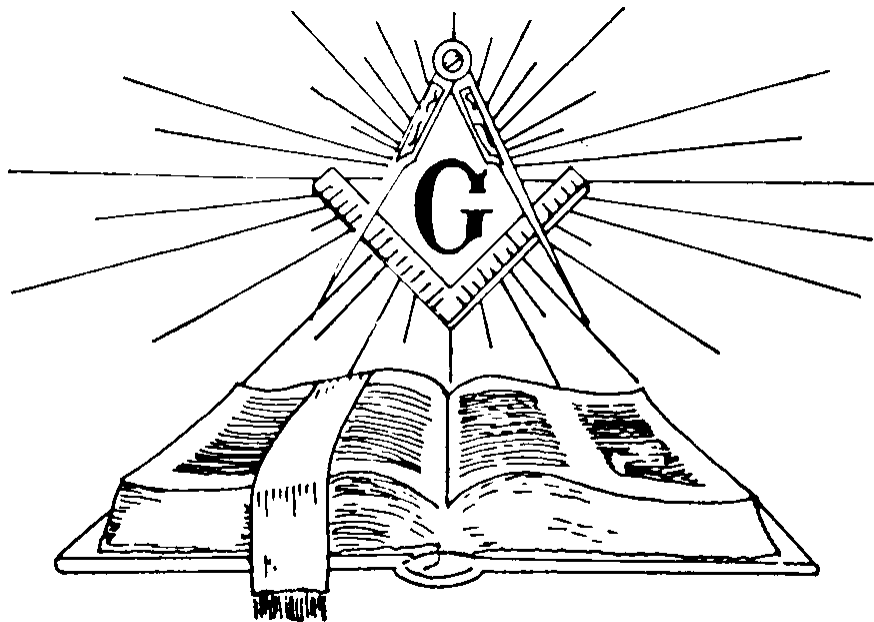


# FINAL WORD



The world is in crisis, and it is the duty of Masons to assist as custodians of the societies they helped usher in through the Industrial Revolution. The duty of a Mason and the oaths he takes are no small thing. They are of the utmost importance and seriousness. The initiations the Mason undergoes should not be squandered but rather produce real transformational change down to the roots of the soul. For this reason, it is imperative that we learn to understand, harness, and enhance the Masonic initiatory rituals to their fullest capacity. Only this will bring about the type of change in Being, and in Thinking, that we will need to be successful moving forward. Masons should not become better men, but the best. The duty of every true Mason must be to view the world—regardless of race, skin tone, sex, class, or creed—as one human family, as one interconnected lodge. When economists today speak of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), this is where Masons should be especially active as the work force and foundational infrastructure of our societies yield to advanced technologies and robotics. Masons must make sure this new industry does not lose sight of the spiritual implications of this massive change and help guide these technologies toward the spiritual wellbeing and betterment of everyone on the planet. As the operative Masons who built the Cathedrals strove to fashion base matter into spiritual harmony for the good of the souls of local people, so should modern Masons strive for the same in advanced technology, turning the scientific and engineering laboratories again into sacred spaces and altars dedicated to the spiritual upliftment of all.

[Excerpted from Jedediah French, "Introduction," in *The Art and Science of Initiation*, Jedediah French and Angel Millar, eds., (Shepperton, Surrey, UK: Lewis Masonic, 2019), 14.]





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## *April Dinner Menu*



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### ***What is the purpose of Freemasonry?***

“To admit, make and pass Freemasons according to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Grand Lodge. To advance the moral and social interests of its membership; to foster good citizenship, honest industry and upright living; to cultivate the exercise of charity in its best and broadest sense; to assist the widows and orphans of its deceased members; to stimulate friendship, harmony and Brotherly love and generally to promote, in its own way, the happiness of mankind — it is a fraternity of good men, linked together by honorable and indissoluble bonds, to accomplish these noble purposes, eschewing all interests in factional politics and sectarian religion and free from the dictation of both.”

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