

# LINE

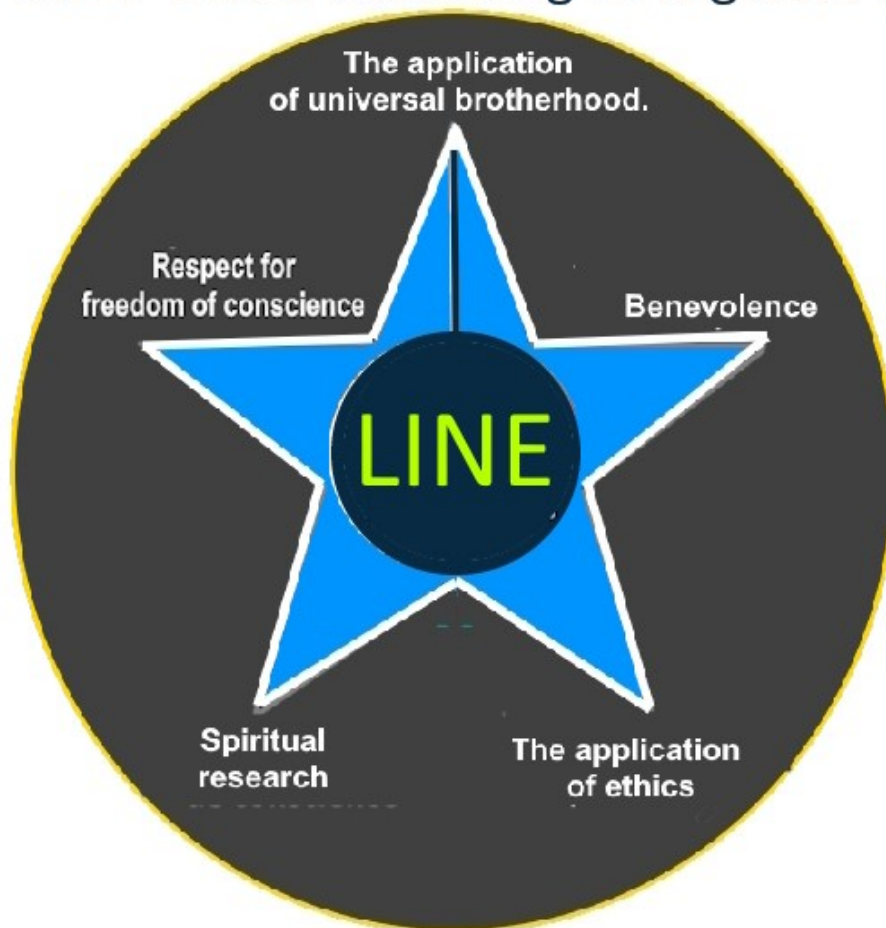
International Secular Brotherhood

N°16 - March 2025



**Hitler, Putin and Trump: What do they have in common?**

## The 5 values that bring us together!



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Parce que le fil à plomb symbolise la rigueur, l'élévation et le désintéressement !  
**Porque la plomada simboliza el rigor, la elevación y la abnegación.**  
Because the plumb line symbolises rigour, elevation and selflessness!



# Hitler, Putin and Trump: What do they have in common?

by Mateo Simoita

**Committed to democracy and checks and balances, Freemasons cannot help but feel concerned about the growing grip of the far right within the ranks of world leaders.**

All three have affixed the adjective «Great» to the name of their countries. Each, in his own way, is convinced that he has been «chosen» to save the «Great» Germany, the «Great» Russia, or, of course, the «Great» America.

For them, this is their «Mission», handed down by a supernatural power—namely, God.

It is this certainty of having an intimate connection with God that allows them to be classified as mystical perverts.

They must combat evil, and for this, the knight's sword is at their disposal.

In the fusion of mysticism and fascism, religion becomes a key asset for populists.

A mystical pervert is generally defined as a person who uses the language, symbols, or ideas of mysticism, religion, or spirituality to exert psychological control for the purpose of domination.

## Adolf Hitler and the Vision of a “Great Germany” (Großdeutschland)



Hitler's ideology contained an apocalyptic and quasi-mystical vision of his destiny.

### 1. Rejection of Institutional Christianity, but Instrumentalization of Faith

- Hitler despised Christianity, seeing it as a religion of weakness inherited from Judaism.

- However, he avoided direct confrontation with the Church, preferring to use it as a political tool.

### 2. A Reinterpreted Version of Christianity Under Nazism

- The Nazi regime promoted «Positive Christianity», a modified version stripped of Jewish roots and focused on strength and hierarchy.

- Some Nazi leaders, like Himmler, sought to replace Christianity with a spirituality inspired by Germanic paganism.

### 3. Hitler as a “Savior” of Germany

- Nazism developed a Führer cult in which Hitler was venerated as a quasi-divine, infallible figure.

- Major Nazi rallies took on characteristics of religious ceremonies.

## Vladimir Putin and the Vision of a “Great Russia”

Putin's strategy for a «Great Russia» also has a religious dimension.

### 1. A Strategic Alliance with the Russian Orthodox Church

- Under Putin, the Russian Orthodox Church, led by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, has become a key player in political power.

- Orthodoxy is used to legitimize Putin's vision of Russia as a protector of Christian values and a bulwark against the «decadent» West.

- The Russian Orthodox Church supported the invasion of Ukraine, framing it as a spiritual war against the West.



## 2. Russia as the “Third Rome” and Last Bastion of Christianity

- Since the fall of Constantinople (1453), some Russians have regarded Moscow as the «Third Rome», heir to Orthodox Christianity.
- Putin revives this myth to assert that Russia is the guardian of «true Christian values» against a corrupt and materialistic West.
- The idea that Russia has a divine mission to protect Christianity is used to justify expansionism and repression of opponents.

### 3. A Crusade Against the “Decadent” West

- Putin depicts the West as a civilization in decline, corrupted by liberalism, LGBTQ+ rights, and individualism.
- The invasion of Ukraine is justified not only for geopolitical reasons but also as a struggle between good (Christian Russia) and evil (immoral West).
- The Kremlin portrays Russia as a «Christian knight» defending civilization against Western «perversion».

## Donald Trump and the Vision of a “Great America”

Trump’s strategy for a «Great America» (Make America Great Again – MAGA) relies on the calculated use of religion for political ends, particularly targeting conservative Christian voters.

### 1. Trump frequently uses religious language



in his addresses: with invocations of God and Providence («God Bless America»). Claims of a divine mission to save America. Portraying himself as a defender of Christianity against «anti-American» forces.

### 2. Strong Support from Evangelical Chris-

## tians

- White evangelicals, representing about 25% of the U.S. electorate, overwhelmingly voted for Trump.
- They see him as an «unlikely champion» entrusted with protecting their values despite his non-religious past.

### 3. A Political Messianism Around Trump

- Some of his supporters view him as a near-messianic figure:
  - ☑ Compared to biblical figures like Cyrus the Great, a pagan king who aided the Jews.
  - ☑ Presented as a man «sent by God» to save America from progressive and globalist forces.
  - ☑ The QAnon movement even developed a mythology in which Trump battles a satanic elite.

### 4. Instrumentalization of Religion Rather Than Personal Faith

- Unlike presidents such as Jimmy Carter or George W. Bush, Trump has never been a practicing religious man.
- He has little knowledge of biblical texts and has been criticized for his insincerity in using religious rhetoric.
- His alliance with the Christian right is primarily strategic: he offers them political victories in exchange for electoral support.

Mateo Simoita



# Women's Freemasonry and its Contributions to the Development of Peoples

by Margarita ROJAS BLANCO

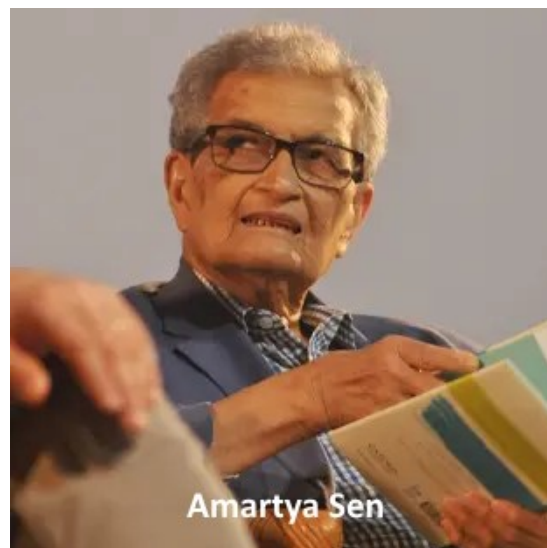
Development as freedom is one of the most modern concepts applied to overcoming poverty among nations. For development to exist, there must be freedom of movement within the environment, and freedom of movement is understood as the ability of an individual or a community to choose their own path without any kind of obstacles.

For example, if a person chooses to be a farmer, wakes up every day at 4:00 AM to work the land with satisfaction, raises animals, and produces their own food, then this person is free and, therefore, on the path of development—provided, of course, that their basic needs are met. However, if another person, an office worker, carries out their tasks out of obligation, because they have no other choice, because their environment offers no alternatives, and they would rather be doing something else—but, worse still, they perform these tasks without joy or motivation, simply because they lack the ability to choose—then this person is not free and, therefore, is not exercising their legitimate right to development.

Thus, poverty and the lack of opportunities (economic, social, and human) are the main obstacles to a person's exercise of freedom. For development to exist, human beings must be free to choose.

Freedom to act and freedom not to act—this latter being one of the least studied but, in my opinion, one of the most important.

Amartya Sen is one of the great exponents of the concept of freedom as development. That very freedom—and freedom in general—has historically been associated with men, who



have exercised it as a natural part of social evolution—an artificial evolution.

Amartya Sen is known for his work on famines, human development theory, welfare economics, and the underlying mechanisms of poverty. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Sen's writings helped define the field of public choice theory, challenging dominant utilitarianism and proposing the integration of “goods” such as freedom and justice into development calculations.

Sen's most renowned work is his 1981 essay *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, in which he demonstrated that hunger is not caused by a lack of food, but rather by inequalities in food distribution mechanisms. Beyond his research on the causes of famines, his work in economic development has had a significant influence on the formulation of the Human Development Index (HDI) by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Years before Sen, there was a woman ahead of her time—a free thinker of the 18th century,



an exceptional woman: Maria Deraismes. She argued that education was the most powerful weapon for women, emphasized the rigor of science as a great tool to dismantle false beliefs, myths, and above all, accusatory religions. “Power has sought to degrade women and has only managed to degrade itself,” said Maria.

Deraismes thought not only of the women of her time but also of those in the future. If Maria could sit down for coffee with Amartya Sen, she would surely consider it a triumph to be able to discuss these topics so naturally, as some women today are privileged to do—though that privilege has been hard-won. And surely, these two free thinkers would conclude that women remain the segment of society with the least freedom.

Thanks to Maria Deraismes and those who supported her, women can now enter the august mysteries of Freemasonry. In 1893, she co-founded Le Droit Humain, the first Mixed Masonic Obedience, alongside George Martin.

History tells us that on January 14, 1882, in Le Pecq, a small town in France, the Freethinkers Lodge initiated the esteemed sister Maria Deraismes—an initiation condemned by all Masonic obediences. She was the first woman in history, officially received into a Masonic order using the same ritual practiced in male initiations. It was a scandalous sacrilege at the time. The Freethinkers Lodge was consequently suspended from its obedience (the Grand Symbolic Scottish Lodge), forcing Deraismes to distance herself from the lodge and its work. A female worker had abandoned the construction... for the first time.

Eleven years later, on April 4, 1893, Maria Deraismes, with the help of Georges Martin—who had supported her admission into Freemasonry—created the first Mixed Lodge in Paris. This was the beginning of what would later become known as the International Mixed Masonic Order of Le Droit Humain.



The Order of Le Droit Humain has three fundamental characteristics:

- It is a Mixed Masonic Order where men and women work together in perfect equality and harmony.
- It is the only international Masonic Order.
- It is an initiatory Order that operates from the First Degree to the 33rd Degree.

The Freemasons of the International Mixed Masonic Order Le Droit Humain began working towards absolute freedom of conscience, tolerance, and harmony in a fraternally united society without distinction of ethnic, social, philosophical, or religious origin. In this regard, they fully embraced the principles of Amartya Sen: freedom as a prerequisite for development.

[Read more](#)

Margarita  
ROJAS BLANCO





# Today's World is a Reality Show

## Keep Watching or Change the Channel with Aretocracy?

By Milton ARRIETA-LÓPEZ

<https://miltonarrietalopez.academia.edu/>

Fear is, without a doubt, the most powerful political instrument. Through it, totalitarian regimes have built empires, and populists have inflamed multitudes. Terror manifests itself as the extreme expression of that latent threat, used by autocrats and demagogues to subjugate entire societies. In this context, fascism is born out of fear and terror, while populism emerges as an effective manipulation mechanism at both ends of the political spectrum. In the 21st century, however, these dynamics have taken on a new form: political spectacle, where governance becomes entertainment, and the New World Order resembles a Reality Show.

### From Hard and Soft Power to Spectacle Power

In past times, international dynamics were governed by the doctrines of hard power and soft power, where war, diplomacy, economics, and culture followed long-term strategies. Today, however, the immediacy of the image, the virality of a video, and the effectiveness of a slogan have taken control. International politics is no longer guided by carefully crafted policies but rather by the immediate impact on social media and the news cycle; this is the triumph of spectacle power, where governance is no longer about leadership but about generating engagement. This trend not only ensures the continuity of the architects of the political spectacle but also fosters the rise of new actors.

Recently, at a ceremony held at the Capital One Arena in Washington, D.C., the power of entertainment in politics became evident. A young heir—whose gesture of touching his ear to provoke greater applause spoke for itself—subtly



symbolized how this system perpetuates itself. This moment inscribed a new era in which image and spectacle become the main instruments for sustaining power.

A worrying example of this New World Order is found in the globally televised broadcast of spectacle power. In this setting, figures such as Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky debated the war in Ukraine with the same dynamics of a Reality Show. Trump, in his usual imposing tone and grandiloquent rhetoric, threatened the possibility of a Third World War if Ukraine did not surrender to the conditions agreed upon between its invader and the America First government. Zelensky, on the other hand, warned of Putin's unreliability, citing previous broken agreements, making any deal with the Russian leader worthless. The climactic moment came when Trump, exhausted, resorted to the fallacy of authority, declaring: «You don't have the cards», as if geopolitics were a televised poker game, where world leaders are merely characters in a script designed to entertain the masses.

### Populism: The Strategy of the 21st Century

Populism is not confined to one end of the political spectrum; it is a strategy of power. Hugo

Chávez and Donald Trump, Nicolás Maduro and Javier Milei—despite representing opposing ideological extremes—follow the same playbook: victimizing society, constructing a common enemy (whether it be «Yankee imperialism» or «cultural Marxism»), and delegitimizing democratic institutions. History repeats itself with different faces but always following the same script.

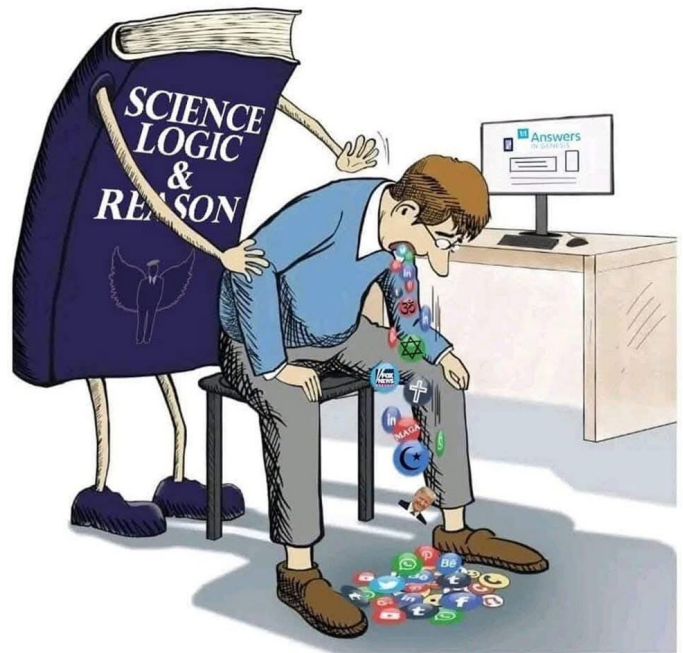
### **The Myth of the Good Billionaire: Batman and False Philanthropy**

Another key question arises: where do the oligarchs stand in this new landscape? Fascism cultivates a childlike fascination with the «good billionaire». Society has been sold the image of the multimillionaire philanthropist who, much like a modern Batman, uses his fortune to fight for justice. The reality, however, is quite different. The billionaires of today are not justice warriors; they are oligarchs who seek to possess everything. They do not aim to save the world but rather to dominate it, with some even dreaming of owning planet Mars.

These magnates, who control social media, digital censorship, space technology, and biotechnology, are not interested in balancing the world but in shaping it to their will. They have taken the place of nation-states and now dictate the rules of the global game. In Latin America, plutocrats—such as the Odebrecht magnates or bankers who finance political campaigns to secure government contracts—represent the other side of the same coin.

### **Demagoguery as a Global Threat**

The threat does not come solely from plutocracy. Demagoguery and populism have proven equally effective in corrupting democracy. A system that allows governance without preparation is doomed to collapse. It is unacceptable that the executive branch (presidents, prime ministers,



or chancellors) is the only profession where no rigorous credentials are required.

A doctor cannot practice without a license, a pilot cannot fly without certification, and an engineer cannot build without accreditation. Yet, a president, prime minister, or chancellor can rise to power without ever demonstrating the ability to govern. This absurdity allows corrupt figures, opportunists, and demagogues to seize power without any solid plans, guarantees, or accountability.

### [Read more](#)

Milton Arrieta-Lopez





# March 8: International Women's Rights Day, not Women's Day

## Perspective of a Woman and Freemason

by Annick S.

**When I took the step of experiencing Masonic initiation, I was determined to join a mixed-gender lodge rather than an all-female one, in part because I consider Freemasonry to be a universal space and, by definition, mixed.**

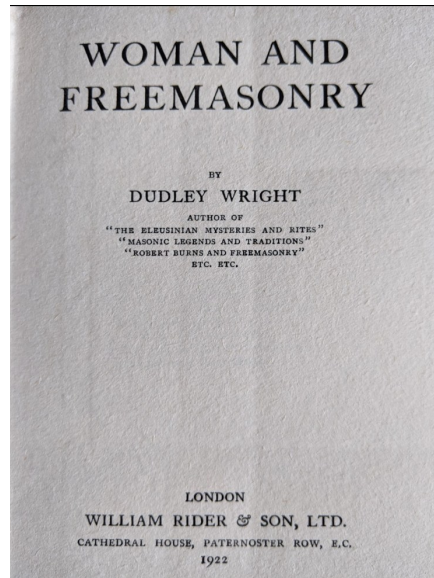
Nature and its laws balance masculine and feminine elements without concern for dominance or value judgment—each has its role according to necessity. It is only human society that, for centuries, decided that women should stay at home while men went to work (I'm simplifying, of course!).

Things are changing little by little—perhaps Freemasonry has played a role in this?

In Lodge, I am a Sister, theoretically asexual, but of course, it is more complicated than that!

Once, I noticed lingering glances at my exposed shoulder, but how can one prevent others from looking? Appropriate attire for attending a meeting seems to me to be the first requirement for everyone. A Brother showing up in underwear would be just as out of place. Femininity is expressed both in clothing and in the choice of an empathetic and fraternal attitude. A smile has no sex or gender.

I have never felt harassed, neither inside nor outside the Lodge, although unfortunately, the first gaze upon a woman is often a judgment: « she's gorgeous », « she's got a nice pair », « the fat one », etc. But the reverse is also true.



Interest in a woman's ideas often comes second, and an attractive woman will always be defined by her appearance first and foremost. Inclusion policies in the media, for example, only highlight differences through comparison rather than erasing them. The dictatorship of image and the pursuit of the perfect woman is relentless.

I do not consider this an aggression because I am nearing 70 years old and have always known this reality, but new generations are outraged by it—and they are probably right.

Parity is a good thing, but it should not be imposed at all costs to the detriment of quality in recruitment.

I feel as free as possible while still applying a necessary filter of reason to communicate serenely in society, and sometimes a slight self-censorship in Lodge, to maintain harmony. Where men speak openly, a woman may show more restraint or even remain silent. Then again, I am speaking for myself—because I know women raised with « testosterone-driven » assertiveness. Everyone has their own way of expressing themselves.

I have spoken.

Annick S.





**This free digital magazine is the press organ of  
the Fraternité Internationale Laïque association.**

**This association aims to bring together all those who  
recognize themselves in five values:**

- Respect for freedom of conscience**
- benevolence**
- Ethics**
- Spiritual quest**
- The practice of brotherhood**

**Wherever you are, if you want to follow us, send us  
([fil.infosloges@gmail.com](mailto:fil.infosloges@gmail.com)) a few words to confirm  
your interest in our approach!**

**Fraternity!**

**Alain Bréant  
FIL President**

## **What can we expect from a Freemason ?**

Good manners and in particular exquisite politeness,  
Respect for one's commitments,  
An irreproachable ethics and in particular the absence of conflicts of interest,  
An ability to listen and respect for others,  
The practice of conventions aimed at facilitating exchanges, in particular during debates,  
The refusal of vindictive, sexist, authoritarian and xenophobic behaviour,  
The absence of proselytising,  
The need to learn,  
The refusal to harm one's body and mind and the obligation to  
take care of oneself in case of health problems,  
Regular physical exercise





# MASONIC FRATERNITY IN DANGER:

## HOW NEOLIBERALISM AND THE FAR RIGHT DESTROY FRATERNAL AND SOLIDARITY BONDS

by Roberto CERTAIN-RUIZ

### INTRODUCTION

Fraternity and solidarity are essential pillars of Freemasonry. Fraternity represents the indissoluble bond between Freemasons, symbolically extending to all of humanity, while solidarity is its practical expression, manifesting in mutual support and the defense of the common good.

However, these values are under threat from neoliberalism and the resurgent far right, which is seizing political power and fracturing democracy. Neoliberalism, with its emphasis on individualism and competition, erodes communal ties, while the far right promotes exclusion and the rejection of the «other».

This article analyzes how these ideologies undermine fraternity and solidarity and proposes solutions from a Masonic perspective, arguing that these values are essential tools for building a more just society.

### FRATERNITY AND SOLIDARITY IN FREEMASONRY

Masonic fraternity is a profound bond that unites Freemasons beyond their differences, reminding them that we all share a common humanity. Symbolically, it extends to all humankind, promoting unity in diversity.

Solidarity, in turn, is the materialization of this bond, expressed through mutual support, philanthropy, and the fight for social justice. Historically, Freemasonry has been a beacon of these values, inspiring movements such as the French Revolution and the civil rights struggle. «Fraternity is not a luxury; it is a necessity in an increasingly divided world».



### NEOLIBERALISM AND THE FAR RIGHT: INDIVIDUALISM AND EXCLUSION VS. FRATERNITY

Neoliberalism prioritizes the market, individualism, and deregulation, generating inequality and social fragmentation. It fosters an ethos of «every man for himself», where fraternity and its expression as solidarity are seen as weaknesses. This model has eroded social protection systems and exacerbated economic inequality, as evidenced by the fact that the richest 1% owns more than twice the wealth of the poorest 90%, according to an Oxfam report.

In contrast, Freemasonry proposes a model based on collaboration and the common good: Against «every man for himself», Freemasonry proposes «we all rise together».

Within this model, the far-right gains strength, promoting exclusionary nationalism, xenophobia, and hate speech—dividing society and attacking minorities and vulnerable groups. This approach is incompatible with Masonic fraterni-



ty, which upholds equality and unity in diversity. Examples such as anti-immigration policies in Hungary and the United States, or the hate-driven rhetoric of figures like Giorgia Meloni and Javier Milei, illustrate this growing threat.

As social cohesion weakens and distrust and ruthless competition rise, fraternity expressed through solidarity remains our only refuge. Solidarity is the antidote to the selfishness and hatred propagated by neoliberalism and the far right. This fragmentation not only affects society but also poses a risk to Freemasonry itself, whose values of unity and cooperation are under siege. It is crucial to preserve the purity of these principles and resist external pressures.

#### EDUCATION AS A TOOL OF RESISTANCE

From a Masonic perspective, education emerges as a fundamental tool of resistance against the dominant narratives of neoliberalism and the far right. Freemasonry has both the ability and the responsibility to promote an educational model based on values such as empathy, collaboration, solidarity, respect for difference, and secularism. This approach is not limited to the transmission of technical or academic knowledge but must also aim to form critical citizens, aware of their role in society and committed to the common good.

In a world where individualism and exclusion have been normalized, Freemasonry proposes an alternative path—one that fosters reflection, dialogue, and the capacity to question the power structures that perpetuate inequality and division. In this sense, education is not merely an act of teaching but an act of resistance against ideologies that seek to fragment society and undermine fraternal bonds.

By cultivating critical thinkers, Freemasonry helps dismantle narratives that legitimize selfishness and hatred. An education based on solidarity and respect for diversity not only enriches individuals but also builds more cohesive and resilient communities.

In a context where neoliberalism reduces human beings to mere consumers and the far right divides them into exclusionary categories, Masonic education and formation emerge as powerful antidotes. By teaching the value of fraternity and encouraging empathy, we plant the seeds of a future where collaboration prevails over competition and unity over exclusion. Thus, education becomes a revolutionary act, a light that illuminates the path toward a more just and humane society. «To educate is not merely to transmit knowledge; it is to awaken consciousness and build bridges between people».

#### IN CONCLUSION

It is urgent to actively defend Masonic values against the threats of neoliberalism and the far right. Fraternity and solidarity are not merely ideals; they are powerful tools for transforming society.

In times of individualism and exclusion, Freemasonry must serve as a beacon of hope. «Freemasonry is not just an institution; it is a call to humanity to remember that, together, we can build a better future».

Roberto CERTAIN-RUIZ



# Fraternity in the Service of Education: How to Implement It ?

by Davell Sitou

**The continuity of our species is undoubtedly conditioned by transmission — the act of preserving knowledge, a simple habit, or even a means of reproduction.**

From this perspective, one key word emerges without the intention of imposing it: education — a word that, with remarkable ease, allows us to classify our fellow beings according to their demeanor.

Do we not say that one pleases by their appearance but shines by their stature?

From a universal tradition, it is often considered that a well-educated child — or not — reflects the social standing of their parents. True or false? Reality sometimes leads us to believe that education quality can tacitly reveal one's social class.

But what kind of education are we talking about lately? Is it the transmission of ancestral or ethnic knowledge, or that of universal human values capable of ensuring the survival of our species and, even further, our ecosystem?

UNESCO has elevated education to the status of a public good through its definition:

«Education is a fundamental human right and a global public good that has the power to positively transform the lives of individuals, communities, and the planet across generations.»

This comprehensive yet distinct consideration of both the sources and purpose of education arouses my curiosity, prompting me to pay heartfelt tribute to the researchers whose talents gave rise to this definition.

On that note...



Contemporary thought suggests that if the question arises, it is because a minor issue is brewing — or has already surfaced. Our society lives in cycles of reminders, since everything renews itself, and nothing is ever truly lost, according to certain scientific thought (am I being sufficiently critical?).

The ancestors of humanity laid the foundations for a solid education, and most values are already known (a bit of trust in common sense). Yet, why then do conflicts, wars, youth violence, social injustices, and discrimination persist? Why does mankind live by exploiting their fellow beings?

The obsession with profit has led humanity to disregard its true nature and the ultimate purpose of its journey on this planet — a nod to the capitalist system. Society permanently pits men and women against each other in a competitive race shaped by social class hierarchies and the dominance of majorities.

Yet, we must live in society while respecting social codes. Then emerges the instinct for survival — a source of social conflict — and a need to express oneself from what seems to be an unfavorable position.

## Can one succeed without stepping on others?

Martin Luther King once said:

*«We have become neighbors through our scientific and technological progress. Now, through our moral and ethical commitment, we must turn that neighborhood into a fraternity. We must learn to live together as brothers, or we will perish together as fools. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. We are all tied in a single garment of destiny.»*

In light of this reflection, a glimmer of hope emerges. Is this something new?

Certainly not. Fraternity has always existed; it was once expressed through attachment to members of one's social class, tribe, or religious group.

## What About Fraternity in the Service of Education?

There are numerous and varied definitions. First, there's the one offered by religious groups, defining fraternity as a bond of friendship and solidarity. For the President of FIL-Infos Loges, human fraternity refers to the concept of the common good. Indeed, fraternity can be understood as the ability to accept differences and believe in a collective ideal without discrimination.

How Can This Concept Influence Education?

Fraternity as the Moral Foundation of a Balanced Education

Through concrete actions, fraternity can encourage the creation of an international program dedicated to civic and fraternal education. This program could emphasize fraternal values, particularly solidarity, benevolence, and more.

On Academic Failure

It is difficult to address education without mentioning one of its most painful aspects: failure. Students increasingly fear this great teacher of



life, and some ultimately succumb to it.

The initiatic path allows us to experience something similar: rebirth... one must die to be born again. Thus, failure appears to be a way of rediscovering oneself — of uncovering one's capacity to overcome trials and build one's inner self.

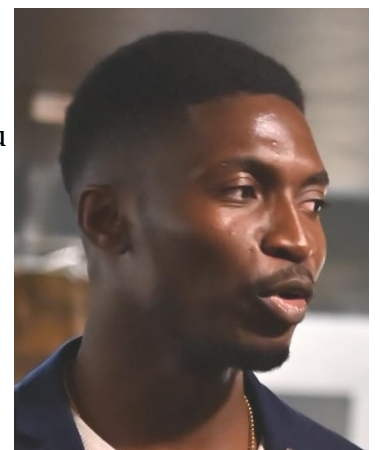
Should we fear failure?

Failure resembles a form of rebirth (without exaggerating). Consequently, we possess the right words to encourage and motivate the most vulnerable without distorting the samskara, often mistakenly called karma. Human beings grow through corrected mistakes.

This service can be offered within our reach — through mentorship, conferences, and other means.

How can we support education on an international scale without overlooking the one closest to us — that is, on a national level? The best education is one that does not impose itself but instead aligns with human values while respecting everyone's rights.

Davell Sitou





# Environmental Ethics and Universalism

by Charles SUSANNE

It took the perseverance of scientists starting in the 1970s, along with the alarming IPCC reports beginning in 1990, for environmental issues to carve out a place among political and international concerns — not without ridicule at first.

After all these years, it's no surprise that some scientists, and even the IPCC, are beginning to grow frustrated with the slow responses from policymakers; they sometimes feel as if they are speaking into a void.

If, according to geologists, we are currently in the Holocene — an interglacial period of the past 10,000 years — recent decades may better be described as the Anthropocene, a period in which Homo sapiens significantly alters the entirety of Earth's biotopes, pushing a portion of flora and fauna toward extinction. This loss of biodiversity is occurring over decades, whereas previous mass extinctions unfolded over hundreds of thousands of years.

We have only one spaceship Earth, so it's natural to ask questions about its future, knowing that we can be the builders of a renewal. Could such reflections lead to a collective or even universal destiny? We will only be able to face the perils ahead with a commitment to cooperation and harmony, not through struggles between opposing ideologies; solidarity will be essential to overcoming these challenges. Humanity must undergo a transition — from childhood to adulthood.

The ethics of progress demand that we rethink our relationship with the environment on both individual and collective levels. We must preserve our ecosystems — it's our "global village" that's at risk. Efforts are made to reassure us with talk of green growth, but in truth, we must

## What is your responsibility?



### Environmental Ethics

REL2104 — SPRING 2021 — MWF-9, 4:05 - 4:55 PM — DR. ERIN PROPHET

- What is our moral responsibility towards the natural world?
- What is the role of religion?
- Explore environmental ethics in the 20th and 21st centuries

invent a new paradigm — one that involves a profound social transformation and a complete re-evaluation of market power. We must decouple economic growth from environmental degradation. The notion of "all for the economy" and endless growth is an illusion.

Is the conscience of a Freemason compatible with consumerism? We cannot lose our sense of being in the pursuit of having. We must remain true to ourselves and not become preoccupied with acquiring in possessions what we could achieve in personal growth.

How should we, as Brother and Senior Master, respond to the clear degradation of Earth's livability conditions?

1. Is Ecology a Masonic Question?

Ecology unsettles us, challenges humanism, and

questions our certainties about nature and the very concept of humanity itself. It compels us to rethink humanism, since all of humanity faces this crisis. Therefore, it is indeed a Masonic question!

Freemasonry claims both humanism and Enlightenment ideals as its foundations; yet environmental issues challenge the very core of those principles. Would it not be in the best interest of the F&M to open a workshop dedicated to eco-humanism and engage with younger generations, who are seeking renewal and who are increasingly involved in environmental discussions? The F&M would only become more open and more actively engaged in society's evolution — less abstract and less intellectualized.

As Br and Sr MM, are we not convinced that it is possible to live well — even better, even happier — without the constant need to consume more? This is, after all, the challenge of post-growth.

Could the F&M distance itself from an anthropocentric mythology? When speaking of progress, could it not broaden its focus to include the entire living world and its ecosystems? Should it not craft a new narrative that extends the concept of fraternity to encompass the natural world as well?

## 2. And Future Generations?

We know that the Temple is unfinished, that we must (re)build it continually, but do we fully realize that we are accountable for this Temple before future generations?

Are we not colonizing the future, behaving like colonizers of future generations by depriving them of their freedom, even their health? Are we not, in fact, robbing our children?

Is it not anti-Masonic to ignore the challenges of today and those awaiting future generations? Can a F&M simply say, "I have carved my stone, and I believed that was enough"?

The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Humanity speaks of violations of fundamental

## Understanding Environmental Ethics



man rights when global environmental threats arise. This declaration differs from the traditional Declaration of Human Rights in that it no longer centers on the individual but rather on intergenerational relationships, in which the principles of responsibility and solidarity should apply.

Revitalizing Enlightenment ideals would therefore mean extending the principles of equality, freedom, and autonomy toward future generations and moving away from a narrow anthropocentric mindset.

Without turning Gaia into a new supreme value, do not our Masonic values of planetary solidarity demand the protection of the planet — simply to preserve humanity itself?

In the anthropocentric worldview, we lived by the metaphor of the shepherd watching over his flock — but are we not now more like wolves among the flock? It is up to us to prevent the slaughter.

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Charles SUZANNE



# Meditation on the notion of Space

By Gerard Baudou-Platon

Dear Sister, Dear Brother, Dear Friend, a cup of tea? Let us sit for a few moments where the love of sharing fills us with delight...

In our previous meditations we ventured into a dimension that is difficult to grasp – the notion of time. Indeed, what is more relative? We are besieged by this concept, for life – regardless of its plane of existence – intimately incorporates it. There is objective time, subjective time, psychological time, and the time of others (social time, work time, family time, etc.); there is the time imprinted by what we do (creation, application of protocols, ...) or that which surrounds us (that of nature, certainly)... there is the time that subjugates us and builds beings incarnated in a material density with its own demands... Times have their own logic, which reason sometimes ignores and which we must discover to be fully aware. We suffer or benefit from all these times, whatever their characteristic (continuous, alternating, cyclical, spiral, or... non-existent).

All these times, to simplify, act upon our three bodies – skillfully encapsulated – to form the being that we are here and now and, perhaps along the way, in fulfilling our destiny.

As I write these words, I feel it is valuable to contextualize what we are, for “I am alive” implies our awareness of the movement of our inner being as well as that which confronts our relationship with the outside. That which is inner and that which is outer, I would gladly call «Space». Space of unfolding, space of life, space of death, space of breathing, space of regeneration – in a few words, a space of evolution in a world governed by the laws of the universe.



Philosophy examines the epistemological and ontological characteristics... its avenues of investigation are those of immanence and transcendence. Four terms have been laid out to guide our meditation. The reader of these lines will appreciate what may emerge from this reflection. For, once again, the space-time pair is a knot to be «dissolved» in order to become a free being.

– Epistemology

This word is formed from two terms: Epistémologie. It evokes “the theory of knowledge” according to its German origin. Its reference to Greece highlights the word «epistémé», which means “science and knowledge”, derived from the word «epistanaï» (to know).

For proponents of the French language, this designation would refer to the critical study of science. It is defined in Le Petit Robert as the equivalent of the philosophy of science. Thus, epistemology is constituted at a moment when it is no longer philosophy that grants science its status but rather when science itself can become the object of philosophical inquiry. Here we are squarely confronted with the subject of our study... space cannot be described without a scientific perspective. This aspect was per-



fectly underlined in Russell's work (1901) in his essay on the foundations of Geometry.

#### – Ontology

A term used in philosophy to designate the branch of metaphysics concerning "being as such," according to the Aristotelian view. It even extends to medicine, which shows that the evolution of the living in space can interfere both positively and negatively. This aspect already designates two levels for us: the physical plane and the metaphysical plane.

#### – Immanence

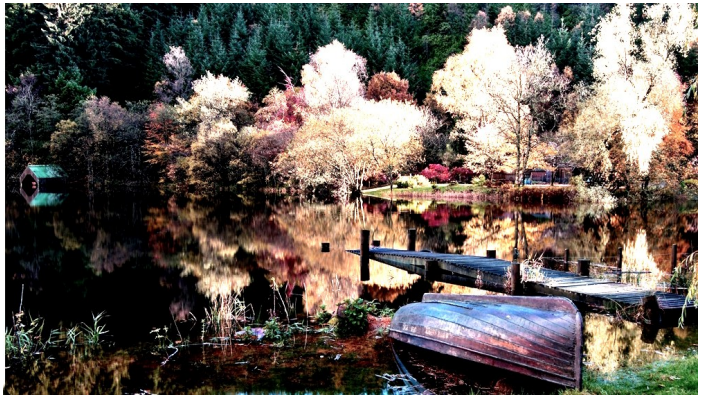
Regarding this term, I have chosen what «Proudhon» designated when defining it as "that whose principle is contained in the thing itself." From this perspective, "the thing" or "things" are naturally those contained within our space – their significance depending, of course, on our ability to become aware of the totality of the "things" it might contain. Therein lies the greatest difficulty.

#### – Transcendence

This term indicates "that which exceeds the natural or ordinary order." To transcend is "to ascend by going beyond."

These four pillars are perfectly suited to human nature, which is said that we bipeds are composed of at least three bodies: the physical body, the soul, and the spirit. Here is an encapsulation of matter and energy that evolves in a space, manifestly multidimensional. The nature, specifications, and magnitude of this space will therefore differ according to the quality and aptitude of our "consciousness" to apprehend reality.

Lacan pointed out that man is, from this point of view, dependent on three concepts: «the Symbolic», «the Real», and «the Imaginary». It will be complicated for the authentic and sincere researcher to conceive a universal notion of «space», but there is no choice. To live in proper harmony, one must imagine «spaces» that are useful for humanity to live and prosper; how-



ever, it will be crucial for one to know the meaning of one's life on this planet and above all to understand one's context of existence.

In this trinomial context of our nature, we evolve in a space of multiple forms – "mastering" at least three dimensions – and articulated by a fourth dimension that we have already discussed: Time. Thus, the human being belongs to a world of manifestations of which he is not, for the most part, the origin. He must therefore know its ins and outs or at least approximate them. He must conform to the rules of existence imposed on the living. To understand this assertion is to accept a holistic vision of the space in which one unfolds. For several decades, numerous methods of analysis and understanding of complexity have emerged. One of them is known as «system dynamics», adding, however, that all existence is a game involving «entities»... in relation. Thus, the world in which we live must, if we wish to endure within it, be approached with a «global perspective». Descartes would surely turn in his grave! Indeed, in matter:  $1+2$  has never equaled 3. Therefore, 3 cannot be equal to  $1+2$ .

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Gerard Baudou-Platon



# EMPATHY AND FRATERNITY IN THE MODERN WORLD

por David ARRIETA-LÓPEZ

**To begin discussing empathy, one must first reflect on love and will in the human being, linking Eros as the source or origin of life. Eros, with his golden arrows, penetrates the cold bosom of the earth, giving rise to life itself.**

This mythological concept can be connected with empathy, which is the capacity to feel human warmth in the face of another's suffering, allowing one to be affected and transformed from the depths of one's being. Empathy implies a form of love toward one's neighbor that goes beyond a superficial understanding of human behavior or mere sentimentality; it also encompasses caring for the other by putting oneself in their place. As the popular saying goes: «to walk in someone else's shoes» (May, 1969). It is to feel affection for one's neighbor, learning to respect them so that they may develop as they truly are, without pathological subjugation or servitude (Fromm, 1956).

Sentimentalism is very different from empathy. People usually tend to confuse the two terms. Empathy is not merely about understanding the suffering conveyed by others; it is about feeling what the other feels without indifference. It is to experience another's pain, suffering, and illness; it is to put oneself in the place of the downtrodden, the beggar, the unfortunate. Generally, human beings try to shield themselves from empathy as a defense mechanism. One rejects what one does not wish to understand and despises it as if it were a negative or toxic energy. Nowadays, the expression «that person is toxic» is frequently heard, which often implies distancing oneself rather than attempting understanding and help. The opposite of love is not hatred, but apathy (May, 1969). Many people believe they are more human by expressing sen-



timentalism on social networks such as Facebook and YouTube. They post moving videos to demonstrate sensitivity and concern for various causes, such as animals or the environment. However, this is superficial and belongs to the world of appearances. It is an image projection that, like traditional media, does not represent genuine empathy.

Irvin Yalom offers us multiple examples of sentimentalism and a lack of care as a way to evade the guilt and responsibility of our existence (Yalom, 1980). Today, it is common to see corrupt politicians attending churches for propagandistic purposes, attempting to move viewers through a screen. Yalom describes how a person can be moved to tears by a play and, upon leaving, ignore a homeless person asking for help on the street. Here one observes incoherence, hypocrisy, and a lack of true empathy.

Empathy is not an ornament or a decorative word used to make us feel better about our humanity. It is a transformative process. Caring for the well-being of others implies concrete actions, not just fleeting emotions. Another example mentioned by Yalom is his own experience of contemplating a beautiful landscape and concluding that «life is beautiful».



# Examples of Empathy in Daily Life



Sources : <https://fastercapital.com/content/Empathy>

However, he soon realizes his selfish perception: the animals in the ocean, anguished at the fear of being devoured, do not share that idyllic vision.

Erich Fromm also underscores the difference between sentimentalism and empathy when discussing respect. He explains that the word comes from the Latin «*respicere*», which means «to look at the other». To respect is not to submit or show reverence; it is to recognize and understand the humanity of the other.

Fraternity, on the other hand, is the recognition that we all belong to the same community, where the well-being of each individual affects the collective well-being. Without empathy or fraternity, the world becomes cold, indifferent, and hostile. Society fragments, undermining fraternal communication. The world has lost warm, direct contact and has become schizoid—in this sense, a lack of genuine connection. This empathetic and fraternal disconnection translates into coldness, indifference, and conflicts that lead to wars and destruction.

Today, we live in an anti-fraternal society, completely disconnected and experientially isolated, yet artificially connected and moved. Rollo May

predicted this trend long before modern technological advances existed. Despite its benefits, technology also has a dehumanizing side due to its speed. We do not master technology; rather, technology masters us, as evidenced by phenomena such as addiction to social networks.

The challenge for humanity is not to eliminate technology, since it is an extension of the human being and is essential for modern survival. However, it is crucial to recover empathy and fraternity. The fraternal sentiment has diminished, and it is necessary to build bridges for dialogue and to live life more fully.

## [To read more](#)

David Arrieta-Lopez

