

Fraternity

"To bring together free and benevolent human beings!"

Summary

Nº2

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Margarita Rojas Blanco

Woman, Freemason, committed to promoting Fraternity

Exclusive interview

What led you to become interested in an initiatic fraternal organization like Freemasonry?

From the very beginning, I was drawn to its symbolism and the promise of inner growth that initiation offers. In Freemasonry, I found tools for personal transformation. I was also fascinated by the idea of working alongside my brothers and sisters to build a more just and fraternal society. That's why, at my first encounter with Freemasons, I discovered I had found a home—a space where I could develop my intellectual concerns.

Which lodges have you belonged to, and where have you found the practice of Freemasonry that most resonates with you?

Due to my work, I've lived in different cities, which gave me the fortune of belonging to three very different lodges, each enriching me with its own light. In my first lodge, I found absolute secularism, which encouraged me to stay in the Order. There I also discovered the warmth of fraternity and my first lessons in our symbols. The second lodge deepened my scholarly vocation—I found brothers who

were devoted researchers, constant writers, obstinate readers, and engaged in heated weekly debates on taboo topics like atheism, to name just one. These brethren taught me to scrutinize the wisdom in every word of the ritual. The third lodge, which I helped found with other brothers, challenged me to serve with humility and commitment, preparing me to take on greater responsibilities. This combination of experiences lights the path I now walk as Worshipful Master of the lodge I lead.

What has Freemasonry brought to your life—how would your life be without the initiatic experience? Has it been worth it?

Freemasonry has above all given me a family of brothers and sisters who share my values. Thanks to it, I understood the value of constant work to polish my own rough ashlar. Without the initiatic experience, my life would be very different. I would lack the fraternal support network and that space for deep reflection that is our workshop. Honestly, everything I've experienced within the Order has been worth it. Every effort, every ceremony, and every challenge has been rewarded with the light and wisdom I receive day by day. Through Freemasonry, I discovered global spaces of fraternity like CLIPSAS, where I now serve as representative to Masonic organizations in the Americas.



When time passes, what would you like your legacy to be for future generations of Freemasons?

In the end, I hope to leave future generations with the flame of passion for knowledge and fraternal service still burning. I want to be remembered not for grand gestures, but for having worked tirelessly with love—polishing my own stone and encouraging every brother and sister to do the same.

My dream is to see the seeds of wisdom I planted continue to grow through their work, inspiring them to keep building a more just world. In short, my greatest legacy would be to have once ignited a spark of light in those who follow, showing through my example that Freemasonry is a path of perseverance, fraternity, and hope.



Are you aware of the growing interest you're generating?

I'm not indifferent to the fact that many brothers and sisters, as well as non-Masons, read my work with attention and write to me generously. But I don't take it as a personal achievement, because I believe this interest reflects more a shared need to see ourselves represented in our own voice, in a space that has historically denied us the word.

If I draw interest, it is because I am a woman, a Freemason, a Colombian—and I do not remain silent. Because I write from a place that is both symbolic and concrete, and because I refuse to let Freemasonry become a hall of rear-view mirrors.

What is your opinion on the multiple forms of aggression suffered by women in many parts of the world?

They are not isolated events, nor exaggerations, nor "cultural issues," but symptoms of a patriarchal system of domination that spans centuries and continents. Violence against women is not just physical—it also manifests in symbolic exclusion, in the infantilization of our voices, in being interrupted mid-sentence, even in spaces that claim to be enlightened. It hurts me, and it compels me. That is why every word I write is a form of resistance—and of combative tenderness. Every mixed or women-only Masonic meeting is also an act of historical reparation.

Can you tell us about what shaped your personality during childhood and your university years?

My childhood was a blend of the practical words of my mother and grandmother—hardworking and wise women—and the silences of a society I learned to listen to. I grew up in a wounded country, amid a 50-year armed conflict, but one still fertile with small hopes—those that sprout in the shadows. Later, in the classroom, I discovered that philosophy wasn't just for bearded Greeks—it was a way to ask questions amid the ordinary. That's where I became free—not because someone unchained me, but because I learned not to believe the chains were natural.

[**Read more**](#)

Fraternity?

A myth, in this mad world that can become a reality!

All definitions and approaches to Fraternity point to two fundamental axes:

- horizontal fraternity, based on proximity,
- and vertical fraternity, founded on the Common Good.

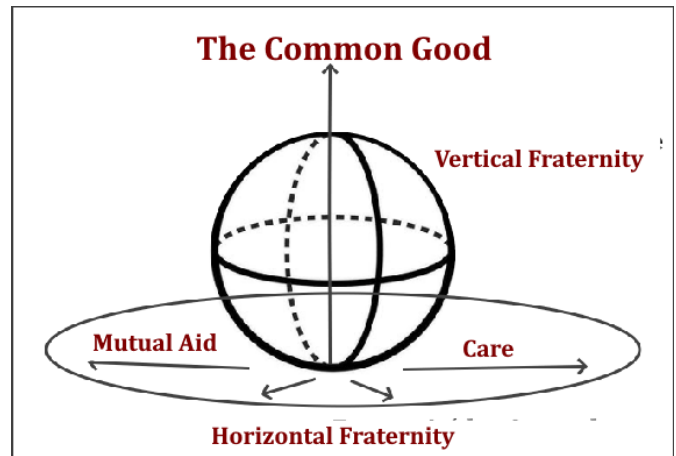
The first refers essentially to neighborhood relations beginning with the family nucleus, while the second alludes to the Common Good (God for believers), which allows individual transcendence.

Although a certain “fraternity” may manifest itself in specific circumstances, Fraternity, in all its grandeur, is naturally a myth. Everyone knows that the function of myths is to take part in that social game present in all societies: making people believe that harmony—or even a beyond—could be within reach.

The myth makes us dream, and with just a little humanity, one might think that by making the effort, we could achieve it! The contributors to this journal are explorers of Fraternity. As is usually the case, as soon as one takes an interest in a subject, complexity arises!

In this issue, in addition to the regular sections, you will find a special report devoted to a pressing social issue: the use of pathogenic addictions.

The boom in pathogenic addictive behaviors is a new social phenomenon, linked both to the globalization of exchanges and to scientific discoveries that foster the production of synthetic chemical substances. For reasons addressed in this



report, the magnitude of the phenomenon generates multiple problems and makes the establishment of genuine Fraternity even more difficult. Science, politics, the economy, and even religions are being contaminated by the pathogenic addictive phenomenon. The rules of societies are bypassed to such an extent that a parallel world manages to impose its law.

Today, everything happens as if there were a tacit tolerance toward this pathogenic addiction phenomenon. Consumers, present in all social environments—even within the National Assembly—seem to go unpunished.

Understanding in order to propose is also one of our concerns, since it would be too easy to leave everything to the classic “We should...” or “It must be done...”.

As our illustrator YaKaYaka suggests, it would indeed be wonderful to be addicted to a Fraternity that is not just a powder!

Dr. Alain Bréant
Editor-in-Chief

Pathogenic Addiction and the Deficit of Fraternity

Fraternity is a cross-cutting concept that is not easy to quantify. Depending on whether we speak of horizontal fraternity, which concerns relations of proximity, or of vertical Fraternity, which refers to commitment to the Common Good, the economic indicators will not be the same.

There are indicators that make it possible to approach the existence of fraternity within a human group; here are some of them:

- Suicide rate
- Prevalence of loneliness (perceived social distress index)
- Use of antidepressants or anxiolytics
- Absenteeism at work and in schools
- Long-term unemployment
- Poverty rate
- Human Development Index
- Global Peace Index
- Social Cohesion Index
- Freedom House Index

The evaluation of the degree of social isolation seems to us the most appropriate criterion to reflect the reality of a lack of horizontal fraternity.

For an assessment of vertical fraternity, other criteria may be considered, such as:

Selfishness of ruling classes

- Class-based justice
- Incivility
- Privileges
- Number of regional wars
- Militarization of society
- Rise of nationalisms
- Inter-ethnic conflicts
- Inter-religious tolerance

More detailed surveys can also provide valuable information. In general terms, the implementation of fraternity presup-

poses a political will within the framework of a social consensus. A favorable environment can facilitate progress. Among the enabling factors, we may mention:

- States with efficient public administrations and adequate social budgets
- Civil society organizations that are dynamic and well established
- A legal framework guaranteeing respect for minorities and freedom of conscience

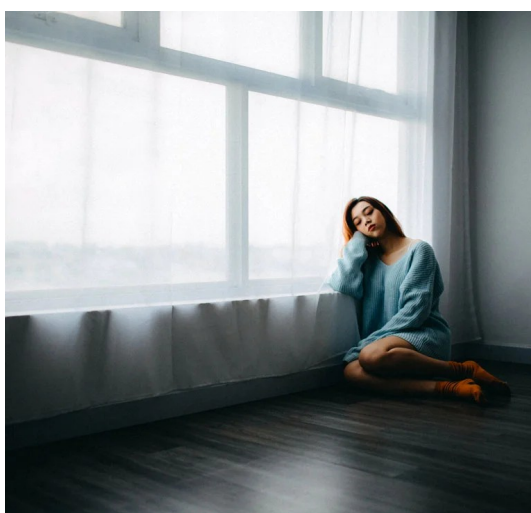
Overall, it is clear that Fraternity manifests itself in very different ways in different parts of the world. It is not always a priority for governments.

Several authors have examined the concept of a deficit of fraternity; we may cite in particular Cynthia Fleury, French philosopher and psychoanalyst (author of *The Irreplaceable*, *The Clinic of Dignity*).

“To speak of human dignity is inevitably to evoke the singularity of lives, the irreducible character of the dignity of each life. No material reality, neither our stigmas nor our poverty, can symbolically call our dignity into question.” (Source: carenews.com)

Could this deficit of fraternity be a possible cause of recourse to pathogenic addictions?

If it is accepted that this addictive behavior occurs mainly in psychologically disturbed individuals, one might think that the deficit of fraternity—through loneliness and emotional isolation—is not insignificant.



(Suite page 7)

The Need for Addiction

Addiction often responds to a fundamental psychological, neurobiological, or existential need. Our brain naturally seeks rewards (through the dopaminergic circuit), stable habits (to save cognitive energy), and emotional anchors (security, comfort, recognition).

In his work on resilience, Boris Cyrulnik explains that attachment is vital. If the environment is insecure, the individual may turn to objects of dependence in order to survive psychologically.

Jean Bergeret (psychiatrist) distinguishes between "positive" addictions (creativity, faith, romantic commitment...) and pathological addictions. He speaks of a need for affective or identity anchoring.

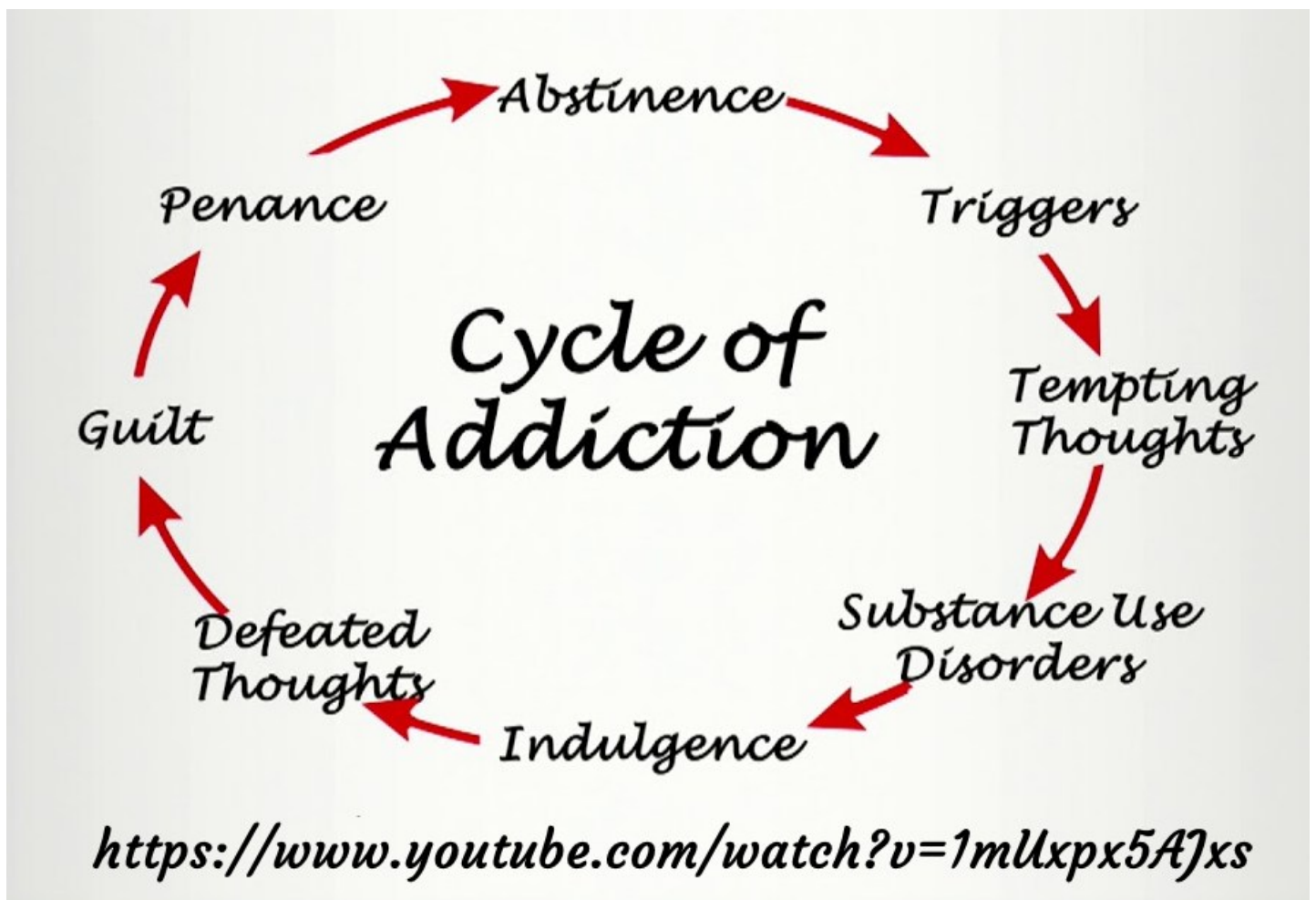
Marc Valleur and Claude Olivenstein, in their approaches to drug addiction, affirm that addiction fills an existential void or suffering. It often functions as a psychic crutch in destabilized societies.

The human brain seeks pleasure and the avoidance of suffering.

The dopamine circuits are designed to reward behaviors that favor survival (eating, drinking, social bonding, sexuality). But these circuits can be hijacked by substances or behaviors that produce an overload of pleasure → the need becomes dependence.

Some forms of addiction respond to a lack of meaning, an existential anxiety, a need for control, ritual, or consolation. In this sense, addiction can be seen as a misguided attempt to respond to a real human need.

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Pathogenic Addictions: The Case of France

Here are the available estimates for France regarding the number of people affected (Sources: OFDT and Santé Publique France).

Estimates by type of addictive behavior:

- Alcoholism: about 8% of adults in France are affected (~4 million people)
- Smoking (regular addiction): 27% of the adult population (in 2019), or nearly 12 million people (Inserm)
- Cannabis use (regular, ages 15–64): 2.2%, or several hundred thousand people
- Use of other drugs (opiates, cocaine, amphetamines, etc.): between 220,000 and 340,000 people (7.5 users per 1,000 inhabitants aged 15–64)

Estimates for non-pharmacological addictive behaviors:

- Online gambling (chance / betting): 10% present a moderate or excessive risk practice (E-Games, France 2017 – Inserm)
- Compulsive shopping (shopping addiction): between 2% and 5% of the adult population suffer from a clinically detectable disorder; up to 33% show moderate to severe difficulties with control
- Other behavioral addictions (screens, video games, social networks, etc.): around 5% (1 to 10%) of the population
- Addictive eating disorders (binge eating, bulimia): between 3% and 5%

In total, and knowing that many individuals accumulate several addictions, it can be estimated that nearly 30% of the French population regularly engages in pathogenic addictive behavior. The total cost of addictions for French society is colossal — equivalent to tens of billions of euros per year — but public spending devoted to combating addictions remains, by comparison, relatively modest.

To grasp this, it is enough to recall that in 2019 alone, the social cost of tobacco and alcohol was €156 billion and €102 billion respectively. For illicit drugs, the figure was €7.7 billion.

Moreover, economically, pathogenic addictions feed a parallel economy, difficult to measure, but capable of placing States in default of their responsibilities.

That a modern state is able to tolerate this parallel economy, controlled largely by mafia gangs, does not seem to alarm anyone! “No problem, move along!”

This goes hand in hand with the irresponsibility of consumers, who themselves have no awareness of the Common Good.

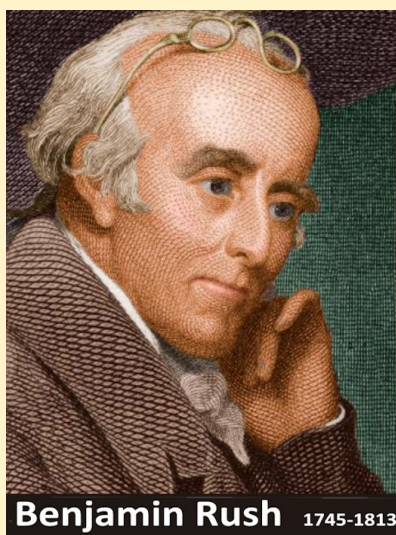


Addictive Practice

A misunderstood behavior

The Concept of Addiction in Public Health: an Idea of Dr. Benjamin Rush (1746–1813)

If



Addictus, for the Romans, referred to an individual handed over to a creditor (legal servitude), and if in the Middle Ages it referred to religious devotion or moral dependence, Dr. Benjamin Rush, the renowned American physician and one of the fifty Founding Fathers of the American nation, used the term to designate dependence on alcoholic beverages, which he considered a disease, at a time when it was still understood as a moral failing.

Today, certain medical sectors regard addiction as a pathological behavior, while others believe it is appropriate to distinguish between non-pathogenic addictive behaviors and those that can indeed have consequences for users' health.

The observation of human behavior shows that every individual, under the influence of a feeling of discomfort, tends to adopt an adaptive behavior. This gesture allows them to cope with that temporary unease. Do we not, for instance, speak of “nervousness” when a child fidgets in a situation of anxiety?

Whether it be biting one's nails, running a hand through the hair, or looking into the mirror a hundred times, there are countless ways of adopting a behavior that accompanies a sensation of unease.

Addiction is born when the person realizes that this behavior provides genuine relief. One step further, we speak of obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD).

There is also the fact that such behavior may become associated with a product; such is the case with eating or smoking, which are tied to the gesture.

Beyond discomfort, there is also the evidence that behavior—whether alone or combined with a substance—can give the individual a sense of greater self-confidence, efficiency, or even enhanced seductiveness thanks to a sudden and surprising eloquence.

And then, there appears a more intense pleasure, as if one could become someone different.

Sylvie Moy's article on Berlioz shows clearly that the drug he used gave the musician the impression that his abilities were multiplied.

Thus, addictive behavior, which at first was only episodic and circumstantial, can impose itself as an existential need that follows its own logic— and sweeps everything aside in its path!



Creation Favored by Addiction:

Berlioz and the *Symphonie Fantastique*

by Sylvie Moy

At the age of 25, Hector Berlioz was seized by feverish exaltations, insomnia, fatigue, and depression. He was tormented by an overwhelming need to compose, which carried him into periods of intense creativity followed by stretches of absolute emptiness.

He wrote to a friend:

"So many musical ideas have taken hold of me. Is my destiny doomed to be swept away by this overflowing passion? This imaginary world has become a true illness."

But what Berlioz felt remained impossible for him to fully express.

Then suddenly, in March 1830, he was overcome by severe bouts of fever. During the following six weeks, he composed the entirety of the **Symphonie Fantastique**. Some movements were even written in a single night. On April 16, he sent the first draft of his symphony to Humbert Ferrand, his librettist and friend.

To understand what had happened, it is essential to remember that the **Symphonie Fantastique** is an autobiographical work. In 1827, while attending a performance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Berlioz fell madly in love with the actress playing Ophelia: **Harriet Smithson**.

He tried by every means to contact her, but nothing worked. Harriet remained indifferent. It is the cruelty of this unrequited passion that lies at the heart of the **Symphonie Fantastique**.

Composed of five movements, the work paints the portrait of a young artist madly in love with a woman who embodies all the charms of the ideal being.



This is the "**idée fixe**", the obsessive idea that haunts Berlioz: a recurring musical theme representing the beloved woman.

This melodic leitmotif forms the backbone of the symphony and embodies the composer's obsessive love for Harriet Smithson, whom he represents in a fantasized and autobiographical way in his work.

The fourth movement, *March to the Scaffold*, marks a sudden change of style. Crushed by despair, the artist takes a strong dose of opium, which plunges him into dark nightmares: he dreams that he has killed his beloved and is condemned to the guillotine.

The fifth movement, *Dream of a Witches' Sabbath*, depicts his own funeral, surrounded by monsters of every kind. It is the most demonic moment of the symphony.

These last two movements represent dreamlike scenes that were only possible after the ingestion of a large dose of opium.

The composition of the symphony unfolded over a year of delirium and extreme fatigue. The origin of his torment was what Berlioz called his **idée fixe**, a strange, almost supernatural obsession. In this context, there was also a heavy consumption of opium.

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In his last letter to his father before composing the symphony, he wrote:

"I see myself in a mirror. I regularly experience extraordinary things, which I would find very difficult to account for... except by comparing them to the effects of opium."

For Berlioz, when his nerves were stretched to the limit, the only solution was to take "ten drops of laudanum, and then forget everything until the next day."

Laudanum, a tincture of opium diluted in alcohol, was a very common remedy at the time, prescribed by physicians. It acted as an analgesic, but it also soothed the torments of the mind.

For Berlioz, laudanum eased his physical pain and freed him from the grip of his *idée fixe*, offering him respite and a zone of emotional comfort. His writing and composition could then flourish.

Opium ceased to be merely therapeutic: it became a powerful creative adjuvant, fueled by the very source of his inspiration.

Sylvie Moy
Professor of Music



Does addictive behavior belong to the reserved domain?

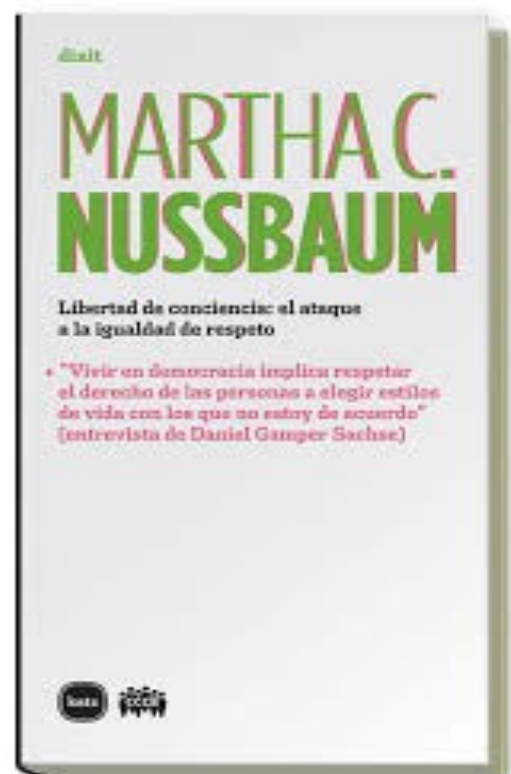
It is a difficult subject, because one might think that each person has the right to harm themselves, and even to bring about their own death.

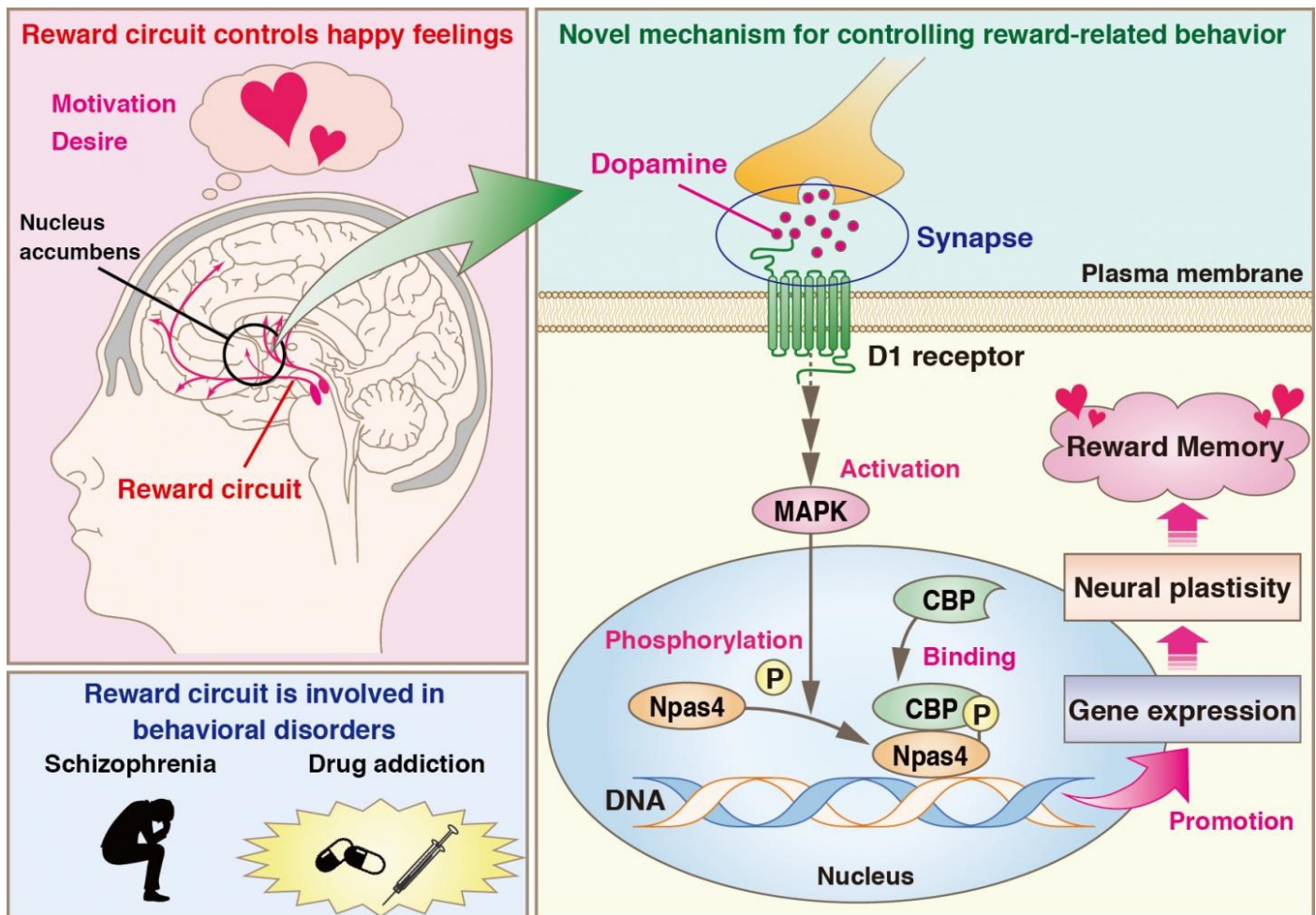
But in the case of addiction to pathogenic substances, there is no longer any real choice. The need is so strong that increasing the dosage inevitably leads to death.

Does not fraternity impose the duty to care about a distress that has annihilated all capacity for reflection?

Here we are confronted with the difficulty of convincing our fellow human being of the dead end in which they find themselves, and of the possibility of fully regaining their freedom by following another path.

The philosopher Martha Nussbaum addresses this issue in her reflection on capabilities: "It is therefore not simply about the capabilities with which a person is endowed, but about the freedoms or possibilities created by a combination of personal capabilities and a political, social, and economic environment."





Novel mechanism for regulating the reward behavior can potentially be explored for new treatments of Schizophrenia & other addiction-based disorders CREDIT : Kozo Kaibuchi and Yasuhiro Funahashi

In the section “Know Thyself!”, one cannot understand the modes of human functioning without drawing on scientific knowledge.

Philosophy only makes sense if it is able to integrate such knowledge. For this reason, traditional thought has its limits.

It was in 1954 that two American researchers, James Olds and Peter Milner, demonstrated in rats that they were capable of self-stimulating certain areas of the brain to produce pleasure — to the point of dying, since they no longer felt the need to eat!

The various neuronal connections that lead to this result were grouped under the term “reward circuit.”

If this model allows us to understand the originality of addictive behavior —seeking the repetition of the stimulus capable of generating pleasure— we could also apply it to that cancer represented by the pursuit of the pleasure called “Money,” which has contaminated all social and economic relations, to the extent of trampling upon ethical values and even common sense, when we witness the risk of life on our planet coming to an end!



Non-Pathogenic Addictions

They are also called “**positive addictions**”, and are associated with the acronym **PPRE**, referring to Passion, Pleasure, Reward, and Emotion. This concept was introduced by the American psychiatrist **William Glasser** in 1976, in his book *Positive Addiction*.

In that work, Glasser argues that certain repetitive activities can **strengthen physical and mental health instead of deteriorating it**, provided they meet four conditions:

- They are freely chosen
- They do not cause physical or social harm
- They contribute to self-esteem and autonomy
- They are integrated into daily life

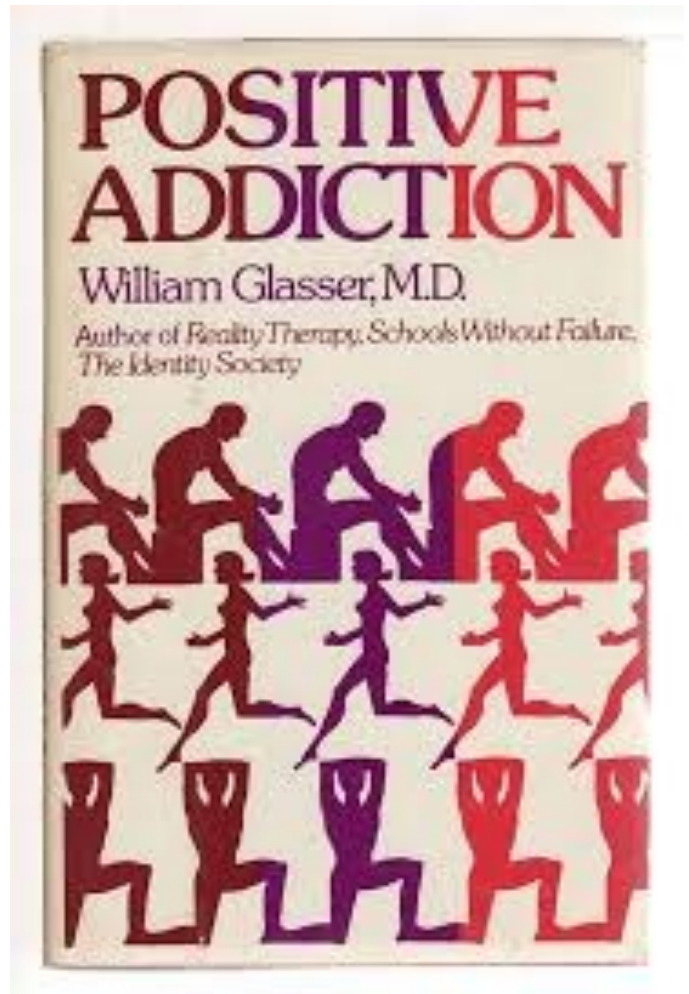
Some examples of activities that can foster a **positive addiction**:

- Regular physical exercise
- Meditation or prayer
- Rituals
- Artistic practice
- Daily reading
- Social engagement or volunteering

The concept of positive addiction has another key benefit: it offers **pathological addicts a viable alternative**.

Currently, in many therapeutic approaches, everything is focused on suppressing the addiction to the main pathogenic product. The person is then confronted with a **double penalty**:

- Suppression of the addictive behavior
- Withdrawal syndrome linked to the pathogenic product



To help cope with this rupture, legal drugs such as **neuroleptics or other psychotropics** are often used, supposedly to facilitate the transition.

Thanks to the concept of positive addiction, the addictive structure can be preserved, but redirected toward **non-pathogenic products or practices**. Of course, psychotherapeutic support remains indispensable, but the emotional impact of the change proves to be much more bearable.



Addictions and Freemasonry, or Addictions within Freemasonry

by Eduardo Montenegro

An addiction profoundly affects a person's moral growth, disturbing not only individual development but also the Masonic environment and society at large. This complex social phenomenon, tied to family and education, triggers a crisis of values, fosters escape, and erodes honesty and trust. In the Masonic context—where the principles of honor, probity, and self-perfection are fundamental—the presence of addiction contradicts the ethical tenets of the Order and can damage its prestige and its guiding mission in society.

The indiscriminate use of psychoactive substances, including painkillers, constitutes an addiction that undermines both personal and Masonic values. The presence of addictions among members compromises the Order's ethical coherence, erodes internal trust, and harms its capacity to exert a positive influence on society. Through preventive and supportive mechanisms, Freemasonry seeks to preserve its integrity and fulfill its mission of moral improvement and service to humanity.

Alcohol and tobacco are the most widespread and socially tolerated addictive substances. Their problematic use is often minimized, especially within certain demographic groups or social cliques. Psychoactive medications taken without prescription—cloaked in a veneer of legality—constitute a particularly concealed and very dangerous addiction. Ignorance of the complexity of the addictive process leads to superficial judgments and reproaches, hindering recovery and undermining trust.

Disruption of moral growth

Addiction generates a crisis of values in a world where the obsolete and the new coexist in perpetual tension. This confusion leads to perplexi-



ty about what is valuable and what is superfluous. Those who do not find immediate solutions to their problems often resort to drugs as an escape, deepening their alienation. People with addictions lack a clear sense of purpose, which drives them to seek satisfaction in substances and hinders their social, work, and family integration. This absence of ideals makes them more vulnerable to setbacks and less psychologically stable.

Lying becomes a habitual tool for the addict, who falsifies expenses, absences, or promises. This dishonest behavior demands a monumental effort to recover fidelity to lost values and to assume responsibilities—an attitude that stands in stark contrast to the Masonic obligation to be men of honor and probity. Failed attempts to overcome addiction fuel distrust within one's close circle, eroding relationships and corrupting sound morals and good customs.

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Detriment to the Masonic lodge

Freemasonry, as a school of initiatic formation, seeks the moral and cultural improvement of its members. A Mason suffering from addiction contradicts fundamental principles such as purity of soul, attention to conscience, and fraternal loyalty. Conduct marked by a lack of integrity distorts essential postulates of the Masonic moral code.

Ethical coherence is imperative for every Mason, who must harmonize thought, word, and deed. Addiction breaks this coherence, revealing a failure to assimilate the teachings received in the lodge. Humility—a transcendent Masonic virtue—tends to be undermined by the arrogance or pride that often accompanies addiction, stalling personal development and the capacity for service.

Although Freemasonry does not coercively control the conduct of its members, the deviation of a brother does not leave it indifferent. The Order possesses the moral authority to judge such conduct with reprobation and to act in the face of non-fulfillment of Masonic duties. The actions of bad Masons can elicit moral reproach and affect the institution's prestige, exposing it to criticism—unjust yet inevitable.

Impact on society

Addiction weakens the social fabric, especially among the young, during a crucial period of development. Abandoning humanistic values such as justice, truth, and solidarity in favor of consumerism and aggression leaves a vacuum that addictions and violence readily fill. Freemasonry projects a beneficent action grounded in fraternity, equity, and peace; therefore, unworthy conduct by its members stains its image and hampers its guiding mission.

Ineffectiveness in the perfection of a Mason with addiction compromises the magisterium that an Obedience or institution should exercise in pro-



fane society. Moreover, deviant conduct feeds the stereotypes and conspiracy theories historically associated with the Order, reinforcing negative perceptions and distrust.

Prevention and support mechanisms

The Masonic admission process is rigorous and seeks to ensure that candidates meet the Order's principles. Certificates of good standing, application forms, and the reports of the investigating committee look more or less thoroughly into the life of the profane, including values, rules of life, and family attitude. The assessment of qualities such as solidarity, tolerance, and fraternity helps detect potential conflicts with addictive behaviors.

For members already initiated who develop addictions, the lodge has support mechanisms. The fight against vices and self-perfection are pillars of the Masonic path. The Order exercises moral authority to evaluate deviant conduct and to adopt appropriate decisions, including expulsion in very serious cases. The ethical codes of some lodges restrict alcohol consumption during agape (the Festive Board) and strictly prohibit illegal transactions or any ties to drug trafficking—measures that may seem unusual or excessive to lodges that do not operate in such contaminated environments.

[Read more](#)



Eduardo Montenegro

In the beginning, there was... discomfort.

by Alain Bréant

This reflection highlights the importance of resorting to pathogenic addictions as a way of attempting to overcome existential malaise.

It is commonly stated that the new human being is primarily shaped by what happens in their earliest years of life. The entire difficulty will depend on their ability to satisfy their fundamental needs (let us cite the four main ones: self-protection, nourishment, socialization, and reproduction).

From this childhood and from one's own self-formation will arise both a space of security and, in contrast, another open to malaise.

On the biological level, malaise may be defined as a state of abnormal physiological and neurochemical activation. It is an integrated bodily response involving the central nervous system, the neuroendocrine system, and the immune system, in the face of a situation perceived as threatening, unsatisfactory, or painful — whether real or anticipated—.

Four main causes of malaise are generally identified:

- the risk (or sensation) of possible death,
- loneliness,
- the absence of meaning in lived life,
- the authoritarian pressure of the environment.

In such situations of malaise, help may come from:

- First resort: the potentially accessible fraternal environment.
- Second resort: recourse to a positive addiction.
- Third resort: the use of a pathogenic addictive behavior.

In a context of malaise, it is evident that modesty or the difficulty of confiding leads to silence



about what the addicted person is experiencing.

Malaise, an Ill of Society

Several elements of modern society accentuate the recourse to pathogenic addictions:

- Hyperstimulation (digital, consumption, performance).
- The lack of collective reference points (rites, lasting relationships).
- Individualism and isolation: artificial social relationships, under the pressures of the macho myth.
- The culture of immediate reward, to the detriment of patience and constructive growth.
- The temptations of the informal society.
- The law of the strongest.
- The irresponsibility of those who, by virtue of their function, could intervene but prefer to look away.



Toward the Light...

by Françoise Renaud-Gurtner

You believed that, in order to live and fulfill your destiny, one had to fight against everything, and from the break of day arm oneself against others to make one's way, pushing aside without hesitation the stubborn obstacles.

To succeed: always clothed, always provided with what is necessary, climbing ever higher, agitated in the doing, seeking in appearances some form of satisfaction, and looking down from above as others fell apart...

And then, one day, by chance, to look into the mirror with a penetrating gaze; one day, finally, to see oneself laden with darkness, to ask: why this step? Toward a new path, empty of allure, lost in that vast void we ourselves have dug, we find ourselves without bearings, astonished, almost pale, for having wasted time, forgetful, squandering, for having sought the nothingness that leads to Misfortune. Possessing, possessed, living on the surface, paying heed to that semblance of space...

And then, that long silence like a crossing, and then, that beautiful flight, a true breakthrough piercing the sterile night of a life enclosed, that half-open door for our clumsy steps, burdened with metals and fragile thoughts. Dazed to be new, recreated for an instant...

A new universe, whose ascent can be felt, opens to the mind a new path at the center of which, as true craftsmen, we must work — prudently, ardently — to build ourselves, seeking precisely the tool most apt for that unending work.

We are no longer alone in this urgent task. A hand takes ours, and within us, what thinks turns toward the other, whose gaze is enlivened along the same path.



On that path of esteem, which slowly grows brighter at the cost of our hopes, on the declared day of an immense Orient, the light awaits us, and we place our hope in it. To reach it is the goal, and by remaining faithful to it, our unfaithful eyes are at last unveiled. But we must take care not to forget that, at every passing moment, our soul may become the traitor, lurking with instincts, with our vile weaknesses...

Beneath the starry sky, something throbs! Something vast, that must be meditated upon!

The infinite finally opens to our steadfast hope, intent on creating within our hearts a model that clears from our path rigid certainties, that removes from our steps vain habits.

With our head at last raised toward the Whole, immense sky, we divine, behind the advancing clouds, one more reason to pursue our steps, to think that having does not concern us, that it is being which matters, and which must give itself entirely, so that it may be reborn without abandoning all.

The Other recognizes me; it is through him that I exist. The I is detestable, if it persists too long...

My Brother, let us look upon each other in peace. And with trust, let us make of the three lights an intimate alliance, so that in our hearts, pacified, illuminated without mistrust, a place may be born where Peace and Wisdom are joined, where Fraternal Love at last crowns this

edifice, where Fraternal Love may never be a vain artifice, but shine within us, from us, whatever our sorrows — and so that, with all our Brothers, we may be heart to heart.

Françoise Renaud-Gurtner

How can an occasional user of pathogenic addictions be helped to detoxify?

Helping a person who makes occasional use of pathogenic addictions constitutes a secondary prevention intervention: it is not yet a case of established dependence, but rather of a consumption pattern that could develop into addiction. In such cases, the intervention of a professional specialized in addiction cessation is indispensable.

The main objective is, naturally, to welcome the person's emotional experience, provide appropriate guidance, and build trust.

Three fundamental aspects must be taken into account:

Distinguishing between the need for addiction and the recourse to a pathogenic addictive substance or behavior.

Supporting the detoxification process.

Helping to resolve an existing, often repressed, vulnerability.

The Role of Close Relatives is Fundamental

It is they who can welcome the person's emotions and be available to listen without judgment.

The goal is not to give advice, but to offer an empathetic and respectful presence.

Relatives should act as helpers by, for example:

Eliminating or limiting the use of pathogenic products in the environment: if someone wishes to stop smoking, they should not be tempted by others smoking nearby.

Accepting a certain degree of temporary irritability.

Inspiring trust, without pressure or demanding immediate results.

The Need for Addiction Deserves Respect

To satisfy it without risk, the most advisable path is to adopt a non-pathogenic addiction. By practicing a new, healthy addictive activity, the person stimulates their reward circuit in a natural way.

In general, several non-pathogenic addictions can be practiced, such as:

Daily physical activity.

- An artistic practice that allows the expression of emotions: painting, sculpture, music, etc.
- Daily meditation (30 minutes per day), which is a reliable and accessible tool.
- A ritualized gesture linked to a personal object that symbolically supports the process and can be easily activated in moments of vulnerability.

A Help Accessible to All: Meditation

Meditation has an original mode of action. It is not merely relaxation — although it does bring a certain sense of well-being — but rather a method of brain stimulation, recognized for helping the brain to regain its natural balance.

Provided it is practiced daily for about 30 minutes, its effects begin to be felt after 8 weeks.

It is a free, effective, and universal aid, based on two essential principles:

- Conscious abdominal breathing
- Deliberate focus of attention

Meditation needs to be taught at the beginning, in order to make its practice accessible and sustainable.



Peace: The Most Important Right of Fraternity

by Milton Arrieta-López



Introduction

The modern triad of liberty, equality, and fraternity helped shape constitutionalism and guided Public International Law (PIL) toward the goal of "peace through law." However, fraternity, as an operative principle of solidarity, fell behind the legal and political techniques associated with liberty and equality.

After the failure of the League of Nations to prevent World War II, the United Nations Charter repositioned peace at the core of the international order as a universal legal and political commitment.

Despite this shift, peace as a human right still lacks robust codification. In 2016, the General Assembly recognized that everyone should enjoy peace, but framed it as an ideal linked to the promotion of other rights, rather than elevating it to the status of a fully enforceable human right. This is insufficient in the face of ongoing armed conflicts, structural and cultural violence.

This article argues that peace is the most important right arising from fraternity—or, in PIL terminology, from solidarity—because it enables the en-

forceability of all other rights. It proposes its codification within a binding instrument on solidarity rights, ideally as a Third Covenant, which is a more appropriate alternative than an additional protocol or a merely programmatic declaration.

Toward a Deep Peace

What do we mean by the rights of fraternity? In international legal doctrine, they are known as rights of solidarity or "third-generation rights." They emerge from decolonization, globalization, and common environmental, technological, and humanitarian problems that exceed state capacities and demand coordinated action.

Their axiological foundation appears in Article 1 of the 1948 Universal Declaration: human beings, "endowed with reason and conscience, should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Fraternity names a duty of solidarity to confront collective challenges.

These rights differ from those of liberty and equality because they are *synthesis-rights*: they are realized only when freedoms and equalities are effectively guaranteed. Their implementation therefore presupposes the contents of first- and second-generation rights.

In PIL, liberty rights were codified and protected in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR): life, integrity, due process, freedom of conscience, among others, with over 170 states party.

Equality rights—economic, social, and cultural—responded to the asymmetries of industrialization and were formulated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).



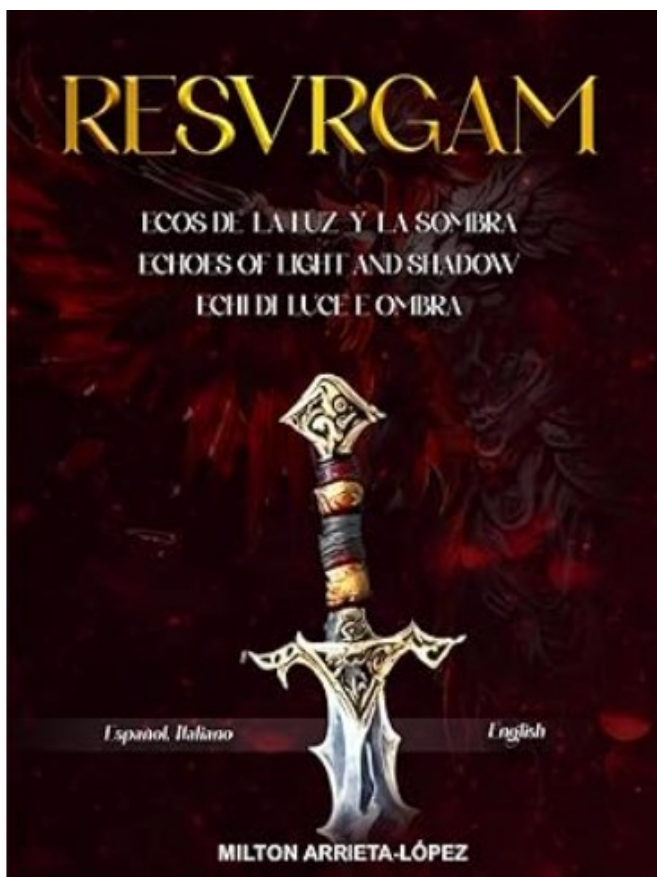
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These imposed duties of provision and non-discrimination, completing the universal rights architecture.

Solidarity rights include, among others, peace, development, and the environment. The most recent progress was the recognition of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment by the Human Rights Council (2021) and the General Assembly (2022), opening a window of opportunity for the institutionalization of all third-generation rights.

Unlike liberty/equality rights, solidarity rights have dual ownership: they belong to both individuals and collectives (peoples, minorities). This dual ownership enables both individual and collective remedies in case of violation.

Their operational core is cooperation. Many threats—proxy wars, mass displacements, pandemics, climate crisis—require cooperative and solidaristic solutions between states and societies. In the absence of cooperation, protection becomes impossible or delayed.



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This dynamic has already materialized regionally. European integration has accustomed peoples to institutionalized peace and practices of political fraternity, although this alone is not enough to ensure stability without a broader horizon of solidarity.

Conceptually, peace includes a negative dimension (absence of direct violence) and a positive one (transformation of the conditions that generate violence). The Santiago Declaration—a process driven by civil society—has spread this holistic vision.

Positive peace requires satisfying basic needs, eradicating structural and cultural violence, and ensuring the effective respect of human rights. It also implies reorienting the economic model toward sustainability and social justice.

Structural violence—poverty, inequality, exclusion—blocks positive peace and, with it, the full enforceability of other rights. Without transforming these structures, cycles of violence regenerate.

Hence the importance of peace education and a culture of peace as both state and international community policies: values, attitudes, and practices (dialogue, cooperation, substantive equality, freedom of expression) that allow violence to be prevented and conflicts managed.

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Milton Arrieta-Lopez

Brotherhood and Fraternity in Contemporary Greek Society

by Giorgos Bousoutas Thanasoulas

In the Greek language, every word we use has a particular meaning and defines, with subtle nuances, something different from another word we might consider or assume to carry the same meaning. I believe that something similar happens in many other languages. For this reason, before anything else, this text will identify the distinction between the terms "Brotherhood" (*Adelfotita*) and "Fraternity" (*Adelfosyni*). The former has a specific historical and social context and refers to organized social groups or associations. The latter is a term related to fraternal bonds and shared values.

In Greece, "Brotherhood" is more deeply embedded in the culture of the people than "Fraternity". "Brotherhood" has deep roots in Greek civilization and is expressed in many and varied ways. Its roots lie in Ancient Greece through the concept of friendship and civic participation, in the ecclesiastical tradition of the Eastern Christian dogma where love and care for the Other are emphasized, and in history, where it emerges as an element of unity during times of crisis.

In the daily lives of Greeks, "Brotherhood" is evident in hospitality — which is considered a traditional practice — with a warm and giving attitude towards those who ask for it, in strong family ties, which in many cases provide support to family members, and in relationships developed among people living in the same community or neighbourhood. Even today, communal celebrations, caring for the neighbour's child, or offering a plate of food or dessert from one household to another are some of the elements that compose it.

A more contemporary expression of "Brotherhood" is the support and participation of individuals in local collective initiatives on issues affecting the community. In Greece, espe-



cially after the financial crisis and refugee flows, local or community organizations and citizen groups established clinics, soup kitchens, and solidarity structures that supported people facing survival challenges. Within this context, "Brotherhood" expanded to include migrants, refugees, and minorities.

Younger people, in particular, seek a more humane and universal form of "Brotherhood" based on human equality and rights. Having largely experienced harsh working and living conditions during the recent economic crisis in Greece, and later due to adverse changes in labor relations, they strengthened "Brotherhood" through the creation of informal networks and activist movements based on friendship, mutual support, and cooperation.

A significant expression of fraternal bonds is the participation of community members in various events. These include taking part in city or village festivals, visiting homes of those celebrating a birth or name day, hosting parties for anniversaries or happy events, offering emotional support to those experiencing loss or hardship, and attending national commemorative events. These practices reinforce the sense of community and unity among its members.

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The unity of members of Greek communities is also expressed internationally through the establishment of diaspora communities in countries where people of Greek origin live. In this way, a strong connection with Greece is maintained, reinforcing the bonds of "Brotherhood", which in many cases are more strongly expressed than in Greece itself. These diaspora communities' function like families, preserving and strengthening cultural identity and demonstrating that "Brotherhood" also has a cosmopolitan dimension.

All of this is evident in expressions of everyday language. "Brotherhood" is conveyed when someone says, "We are like a family" or "we support each other." All of the above show that even modern Greeks care greatly for the Other and honor and remember the shared past that unites them, adapting to the conditions of the 21st century. In an era where individualism is a dominant characteristic in human behavior, in Greece, through "Brotherhood" collective bond is maintained that in many cases is particularly strong and acts as a counterbalance to individualism. In this way, a humane social face is preserved, reminding us that Life is not promot-

ed or improved by the "I" but mainly by the "We."

Despite these previous references to expressions of "Brotherhood" in Greece, it would be an omission not to mention a rather paradoxical phenomenon observed in Greek society. Even though "Brotherhood" is a significant value, Greek society is often divided over political or social issues. In most cases, this division is expressed intensely and violently. Similar behavior that does not represent

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Giorgos
Bousoutas
Thanasoulas



Have the Giants of the Food Industry Succeeded in Dominating our Taste Buds and Our Thinking at the Expense of Our Health?

by Leo Goeyens

A recent article published in Nature Medicine sparked surprise reactions: it is now time to recognize dependence on ultra-processed foods.

Have we become addicted to ultra-processed foods such as sweets, cakes, or chips? According to new research conducted at the University of Michigan, ultra-processed foods not only appeal to our palates; they can also become addictive.

The article refers to nearly 300 studies conducted across 36 countries, demonstrating that these foods can hijack the brain's reward system, triggering cravings, loss of control, and persistent consumption despite the negative consequences characteristic of addiction.

Numerous brain imaging studies reveal that individuals who compulsively consume ultra-processed foods show neural system alterations similar to those observed in people addicted to alcohol or cocaine. Moreover, treatments that reduce the appetite for these specific foods have also been found to diminish excessive alcohol or cocaine consumption, highlighting similar neuronal processes.

All this is not without consequence. Increasing evidence suggests that high consumption of ultra-processed foods is associated with a rise in non-communicable diseases, overweight, and obesity. However, it must be emphasized that the causes of these disorders are often multiple. Consequently, certainty about the direct link between ultra-processed food consumption and these health problems is generally limited. Still, given that such consumption has been found to create dependency, it is clearly appropriate to



remain vigilant and to reduce intake as quickly as possible.

Beyond public health concerns, it is crucial to consider the environmental impact of ultra-processed foods. For example, many of these products contain palm oil and soy, the harmful environmental effects of which are well known. Life cycle analysis is the most widespread method for assessing the ecological footprint of food. Yet this is precisely where the problem lies: do we take into account all aspects related to industrial production, including the addition of synthetic additives massively used by the industry, as well as packaging filled with chemical substances?

Consuming drugs—whether ultra-processed food, alcohol, or cocaine—does not solve problems and may even aggravate them. But drugs alter perception, anesthetizing the senses and instilling a deceptive boldness.

It might seem fair to claim that people who consume large quantities of ultra-processed food

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A Fraternal Gravitation

by Patrick Chambard

We all know, without needing scientific formulas, that everything that rises eventually comes down. Objects fall, bodies drop, gravity pulls. But human beings do not simply endure. They rise again, they lift themselves, they reach toward what unites.

There exists within us another force, more discreet yet more powerful: the fraternal impulse. This moral gravitation pushes us to leave isolation and enter into shared humanity. I felt this call as a vital need: to find my place, not at the summit, but among. Neither above, nor on the margins.

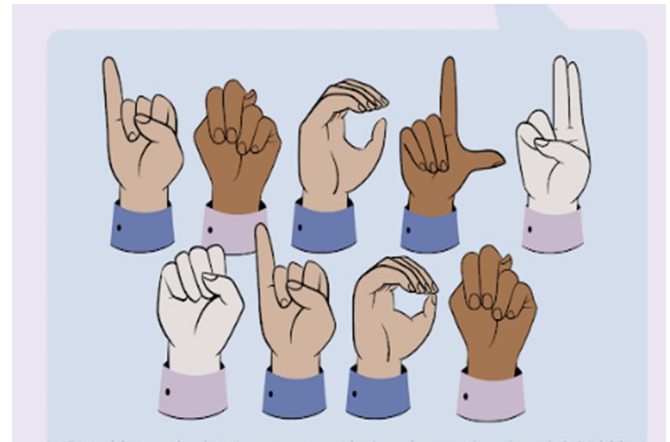
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are entirely responsible for their own health. However, let us not forget that this dependency also has a negative impact on the environment and on related social and societal issues.

Should we not promote fraternity and solidarity toward those in need, rather than focusing solely on our own personal interests? Should we not renounce our materialistic greed and our unbridled thirst for power and financial gain?

Addiction can be repugnant; our indifference is just as much so.

Léo Goeyens



My path is not that of a solitary being. It has been traced within the fabric of a community of equals, a people standing upright, without dogma or hierarchy, but with one requirement: to be there, together, responsible for one another. We are born from a body, but we are brought into the world by a society.

I was born of a woman, but it was a community of free and equal beings that truly brought me into the world. This bringing-into-the-world is not a biological event: it is a slow construction, woven from glances, from demands, from examples.

I received an invisible legacy: the rigor of an ethic, the warmth of solidarity, the joy of a lived equality. To those who transmitted without imposing, guided without dominating, awakened without converting, I owe a fraternal debt that I repay through my commitment.

On my journey, I encountered upright figures. Not heroes. Committed, coherent, human people.

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Their strength came from their constancy. From their way of serving quietly, of acting without showing off. By observing them, I understood: truth is not taught, it is lived. And it is within plurality, sometimes within conflict, within collective construction, that it is refined.

I did not seek power. I sought silence. But I was called upon — to listen, to support, to arbitrate. And I said yes. Because true power is the power that makes others more free. I left the comfort of thought for the burden of reality. And in that burden, I found my rightful place.

When peril came, some fled. I chose to stay. You do not abandon a common house when it trembles. It was not courage. It was fidelity. Fidelity to the idea that a fraternal society can only stand if everyone remains at their post. I had neither fortune, nor empire, nor inheritance to pass on.

But I left what I had most precious: my words, my actions, my commitments. I left spaces for exchange, dynamics of cooperation, gestures that, I hope, will sow new commitments.

What I believe, deeply, is that Fraternity — true, secular, universal Fraternity — is a discipline. It does not depend on circumstances; it is a choice.

It obliges, it structures, it binds. I chose to live it not as a utopia, but as a daily practice — modest, yet uncompromising. And if I had to summarize my life in one word, it would be this: presence.

Presence with others, with their pains, their struggles, their hopes.



It is not spectacular. It is what makes me human.

Patrick Chambard
Président of the
associacion Fraternité
Internationale Laïque

“



Try not to become your own excuse for giving up. No one can dissuade you from success but yourself.”

Editor's Note

The next issue of our journal “La Fraternidad” will be published in early January 2026 and will be dedicated to the theme “Music and Fraternity.”

If you would like to contribute, please send your text and illustrations to: revue.fraternite@gmail.com

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Fraternity: a shared concept!



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